

# Dodge City Public Transportation Program Public Participation Plan (PPP)

## 1. Brief description of **Provider's activities and services**

Dodge City Public Transportation serves Dodge City and Ford County, Kansas. Currently, D-Tran Fixed Route bus service consists of three bus routes and 55 designated stops located throughout Dodge City. Busses arrive at each stop every hour on the hour from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Para-Tran is a door-to-door paratransit service available for persons who, because of a disability, are unable to use the D-Tran Fixed Route Bus Service. The Para-Tran service area is within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of D-Tran routes. R-Tran is for Regional Demand Response service outside the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile Para-Tran zone, and up to 2 miles beyond the city limits.

## 2. Brief description of **activities that would warrant public participation** (i.e. fare changes, changes to service hours, route adjustments, service area changes).

This change will warrant public participation as we have added a Fixed Bus Route Service to our Public Transportation program and could expect some changes which are listed below:

- Adjustments of routes
- Determining location of bus stop
- Changes in Fares or Discounts
- Hours of operation
- Determine eligibility for parallel Paratransit/Demand Response service for persons Unable to use Fixed Route buses.

## 3. Brief description of the **proactive public participation strategies** to be used.

Public Participation will be enabled through the following processes:

- Creation of a **Public Transportation Advisory Committee-**

**Purpose-** This committee is intended to provide a structured and regular mechanism for gathering input from and reporting out to the various population groups that make up our community and our ridership. The committee might be given responsibility for approving such things as program policies and strategic plans, and might also be given responsibility for making recommendations to the governing bodies which must approve budgets and service changes.

**Frequency and Time of Meetings-** This Advisory Committee will meet no less than twice annually but more often as major changes or issues are being considered and implemented. The meetings will be held in a time, place, and manner which most benefit the members of the committee (e.g. meetings might be held in evening hours to be inclusive of those who cannot attend because of daytime work and school schedules: child care might be provided so that parents of young children might be able to attend).

**Membership-** on this committee will be intentionally structured to include representation of each major population group or group with particularly important perspectives. For example, the Advisory Committee should have representatives from groups such as:

- Persons aged 65 and older
- Persons with Disabilities
- Hispanics- as this group makes up the majority of our population, multiple members might represent diversity within this population group (e.g. business owners, elderly Hispanics, Non-English speaking persons parents and their children, recently immigrated workers)

- Caucasian and other population groups should be represented similarly to what is described above for Hispanics
- Students (which might include Community College, High School, or Middle School)
- Major employers (e.g. Cargill, National Beef, Western Plains Regional Hospital)
- Recent Immigrant Groups (e.g. persons from Somalia)

- **Neighborhood-based Public Meetings**

Purpose- When establishing bus stops or making substantive changes in our services, community input should be gathered from those most directly influenced by the decisions, at the point at which they are most likely to attend and offer input.

Time, Frequency and Methodology- These meetings will be held on an as-needed basis and will be open to the public. They will be held in locations where neighborhood or population groups normally gather, and at a time most convenient to the group whose input is sought. Where appropriate, simultaneous translation will be provided to be inclusive of non-English speakers. We will also utilize visuals such as GIS maps to more effectively convey information and gather hands-on input (e.g. about bus stop locations).

- **Use of Social Media and Online Participation Methods**

Purpose Because participation preferences are changing among some population groups, we will consider disseminating information and gathering input through such mechanisms as Facebook, Twitter, and Online Participation methods. This could include posting relevant information on agency website and including methods for submitting public comments.

- **Employ Public-Friendly Methods for Engaging Groups**

- Employ visual techniques when possible to depict the agency's activities/materials to the public(i.e. charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS, artist's renderings, physical models)
- Utilize a variety of advertising platforms (i.e. newspaper, notices on public transportation vehicle, faith-group or neighborhood newsletters or meetings, social media, website, local radio and cable television)

4. Brief description of **Outreach methods to engage minority and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals** (i.e. translation of public meeting materials, providing translation services if requested, targeted media messages in low income neighborhoods of service area, work with existing neighborhood and advocacy organizations).

Spanish speakers who speak English "less than very well" make up 23% of Dodge City's population and meet the Threshold for LEP.

- All Public Transportation Program **materials will be made available in Spanish** as well as English, including all Title VI materials and everything on our website.
- Public Meetings held in English will also have a **Spanish speaking co-facilitator** who can translate should this be necessary
- **Public Meetings will be held in Spanish** at a different time and location so that the large number of Spanish speakers in our community can easily participate. An English speaking co-facilitator will be present who can translate should this be necessary.
- Participation in **Cargill's Monthly employee Engagement meetings which include representatives of the various population and language groups** will provide us access to representatives of many of the 23 nationalities employed at Cargill, and will alert us to new population groups coming into the community of which we might not be aware. For example, previous waves of new employees were coming from Guatemala and El Salvador. The most recent new employees recruited to work at Cargill are largely from Somalia and Sudan.
- We will seek to identify, and gain the trust of, **at least one person in each of the different "communities" within our very diverse and multinational population.** We will seek the aid of that person in setting up a

meeting in which this group can receive information from the Public Transportation Program, and can also provide effective input to the Program. It is expected that this contact can help in translating between English and the preferred language or dialect of the particular community. This method will allow us to better serve and understand the needs of LEP populations whose numbers do not rise to the threshold requiring translation of all documents into their preferred language or dialect.

- We will **seek input and collaboration from organizations** which come into frequent contact with LEP persons in our community. Examples of such organizations are:
  - Multicultural Committee of the Chamber of Commerce which has contacts among Hispanic and other business leaders.
  - Mexican-American Ministries and Catholic Social service come into frequent contact with LEP individuals through the various services and programs they provide.
  - Faith Based Organizations whose membership speaks a language other than English
  - Dodge City's Cultural Affairs Advisory Board has the mission of promoting understanding and communication throughout Dodge City's diverse population.
- When we requested we **provide assistance in Spanish** by utilizing our Spanish speaking staff, including some Drivers and Dispatchers. When persons seeking assistance in languages other than Spanish, we will utilize the **online and telephone interpreter and translation services of Language Line Solutions** at [www.language.com](http://www.language.com).

5. Brief description of the **desired outcomes of the agency's public participation efforts.**

Desired outcomes of the agency's public participation efforts:

- The Public Transportation Program will have an improved understanding of the transportation needs and preferences of each stakeholder group
- Direct feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the Public Transportation services being provided will give us the necessary information to improve the quality and effectiveness of our program
- High quality and timely feedback from the public will help the Public Transportation Program achieve more effective and efficient services.
- Enhanced awareness throughout the community of the services provided by the Public Transportation Program will help overcome objections and misunderstandings, increase utilization of our services, and build community-wide support for the program.
- Greater acceptance of changes (e.g. placement of bus stops in neighborhoods) because the public has been consulted and helped shape the changes.
- A well informed public effectively engaged with development of the Public Transportation Program will become advocates for the program with public officials as they consider annual budgets and program changes.
- Effectively engaging targeted population groups will help assure the Public Transportation Program is providing full and open access to all.

6. Brief summary of recent outreach efforts over the past three years.

Breakthrough Team (200-2012) - With help from KDOT and their consultants, a Breakthrough Team was brought together from 2010-2012 to create breakthroughs in expanding Public Transportation programs in Dodge City and Ford County. The Breakthrough Team included representation from the following groups.

- City of Dodge City
- Cargill, Western plains Medical Center, National Beef (major employers)
- Ford County Government
- Ford County Council on Aging
- Dodge City Community College
- Dodge City/Ford County Economic Development Corporation
- Dodge City Medical Center

- Dodge City Parks & Recreation
- Boot Hill Casino and Convention Center

**Public Meetings (2011-Present)** – As Public Transportation Program service changes were being considered, a variety of public meetings were held to gather input from all stakeholder group throughout the community.

Locations of those meetings included:

- North High Rise (affordable housing location)
- South High Rise (affordable housing location)
- Dodge City Public Library (community meeting room)
- Other Housing Complexes
- Community Center gatherings and gatherings at Senior Center (e.g. monthly Potluck Dinners held at community centers and morning coffee groups at Senior Centers) throughout Ford County as well as in adjacent Gray, Clark and Edwards counties, including:
  - Ford County towns – Dodge City, Wright, Spearville, Ford, Bucklin, Bloom, Kingsdown
  - Clark County towns - Minneola, Ashland
  - Edwards County towns - Kinsley
  - Gray County towns – Cimarron, Copeland, Ingalls, Ensign, Montezuma

Stakeholder Groups participating included:

- Various Age Groups – Senior Citizens, Youth, Working Age
- Persons with Disabilities
- Faith Communities
- Community Service Volunteers
- Social Service Agencies
- Employers
- Elected Officials
- Entertainment Venues
- Educational Institutions
- Participants in English as a Second Language Programs
- Housing Communities
- Public Transportation Users
- Various Population Groups – Hispanics, African Americans, Caucasians, non- English speakers, Recent Immigrants

**Fixed Route Survey (2013)** – In an effort to gather data regarding the potential implementation of a Fixed Route Bus Service in Dodge City and immediate surrounding area, we conducted a written survey in which we gathered nearly 1,000 surveys from a broad spectrum of the community. Survey was available in English and Spanish.

Stakeholder Groups participating included:

- Population (age 60+)
- Middle School Students and Staff
- High School Students and Staff
- Community College Students and Staff
- Adult Learning Center Students and Staff
- Alternative High School Students and Staff
- Current Users of Dodge City Public Transportation services
- Persons with Disabilities
- Participants in English Language Learner programs

- Working Age Population
- Volunteers( including those who volunteer to provide rides to persons in need of transportation)
- Affordable Housing Communities
- Persons gathering at Friendship Feast (local soup kitchen offering free lunch each weekday)
- Various Population Groups – Hispanics, African Americans, Caucasians, non-English speakers, Recent Immigrants

**Local Newspaper Articles and Advertisements** - Approximately 10 newspaper articles in three Ford County newspapers have covered various dimensions of the Public Transportation Program. Display Ads are placed weekly in the Dodge City Daily Globe newspaper, and less often in the Spearville News and the Bucklin Banner weekly newspapers.

**Radio Interviews** - 30 minute radio interviews with the Mobility Manager have been conducted on two separate occasions in the Community News program at local radio station KGNO 1370. These were done to spread awareness of the Dodge City Public Transportation Program, and to disseminate information about upcoming changes.