



## **Denton County Transportation Authority Public Involvement Plan**

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

This plan seeks to develop a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing service and programs, modifying service or programs and other projects that might impact the public.

DCTA will use a variety of communication methods in order to achieve a level of public awareness and understanding about the agency, its functions, programs and specific initiatives. Additionally, DCTA will seek to engage citizens from various backgrounds, demographics and income levels specifically targeting residents typically underserved in transportation decision making.

**\* The Public Involvement Plan is presented to complement the Title VI Policy. This plan is not intended to supersede DCTA's Title VI policy.**

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

1. Increase the public's awareness of the role public transportation plays in our community.
2. Increase the public's understanding of who we are, what we do, how we are governed, how we are funded and how their tax dollars are spent.
3. Create a dialog that enables the community to contribute to key DCTA initiatives and service changes.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES**

Citizen and stakeholder input will be sought regularly and frequently. At minimum, action plans will be developed to engage the public in the decision making process during:

- Major service reductions
- Fare increases
- Key milestones of project implementation
- Annual Program of Projects development
- Long-range planning

DCTA considers a major service reduction any reduction involving 25% or more of the number of transit route miles in a route or 25% or more of the number of transit revenue vehicle miles in a route.

DCTA staff will review all public comment information received. The comments will be incorporated into the planned changes and initiatives, where feasible. All public comments will be consolidated and given to the DCTA Board of Director's prior to the adoption of any major service change or fare increase.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

DCTA will regularly review and refine the public involvement process to ensure that plan's objectives and goals are being achieved. Following each initiative, DCTA staff will review and report back to the DCTA Board of Director's a measurement of the plan's effectiveness. Measurements could include, but are not limited to:

- How much input was received?
- How relevant was the input received?
- How many people participated in the meetings?
- What type of media coverage did the initiative receive?
- What type of outreach methods was utilized?
- Did the outreach methods reach the desired audience?
- How did the public's input contribute to the final decision?

## **COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT METHODS**

Public involvement approaches and activities need to be customized to be effective with different public and targeted groups. The Vice President of Communications and Marketing will determine appropriate methods and develop an action plan based on the desired outcome and goals of each initiative.

Whenever possible, the public should receive timely notice and have adequate time to provide input to key decisions:

- When a public meeting is being held outside of the DCTA's regularly scheduled meetings such as Board and Committee meetings, the public shall receive at least a two week advance notice. Public notices regarding the proposed changes and soliciting public participation will be placed on all DCTA vehicles and sent to all local media.
- When public participation is sought, the public will have a minimum of 30 days to comment. This does not supersede any state or federal programs or studies that call for longer comment periods.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

DCTA recognizes that the media plays an important role in developing and maintaining a relationship with the public. The media will be utilized whenever possible to provide publicity regarding key events and initiatives and to provide key information to the public. A media database will be developed and maintained ensuring efficient and timely dissemination of information.

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

To increase the public's awareness of the role public transportation plays in our community and to create and maintain an open dialogue with the public, the DCTA must establish regular relationships with key stakeholders and community groups throughout the region. A community database will be developed and maintained ensuring efficient and timely dissemination of information to these stakeholders. The community database should include elected officials, neighborhood groups, civic groups, minority groups, chambers of commerce, social service agencies, municipalities and other groups based on their spheres of influence in the community.

## **CITIZENS ADVISORY TEAMS**

Another method of encouraging dialogue in the community is through the creation of Citizens Advisory Teams. Regular meetings with members from these teams will create a forum to exchange information between DCTA, its passengers and the community on transit related issues.

The Access Citizens Advisory Team is a 12 member advisory group that will provide input to the Authority on local public transportation issues specific to the needs of the elderly and disabled population.

The Fixed Route Citizens Advisory Team is a 12 member advisory group that will provide input to the Authority on local public transportation issues related to the fixed route services.

Citizens Advisory Team members will service two-year terms and are selected by the president to achieve diversity and geographical representation in the DCTA service area. At least one-half of the members of each team must be regular users of the service. Applications are available online or by mail.

While these teams are encouraged to meet quarterly, the frequency of the meetings shall be set by the Citizens Advisory Teams. The meetings shall be held in locations accessible by public transportation.