TERRE HAUTE TRANSIT’S PUBLIC COMMENT

 ON FARE INCREASES AND MAJOR

SERVICE REDUCTIONS POLICY

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grantees are required to develop a local process to solicit and consider public comment prior to a fare increase or major service reduction. In addition, FTA grantees (Terre Haute Transit Utility) must solicit public input and consider public comment from low income, minority, and limited English proficient (LEP) and comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights act of 1964 program. Terre Haute Transit Utility (THTU) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin. Public meetings are not a mandatory requirement; however, an opportunity for a public hearing must be given. This policy describes when an opportunity for a public hearing will be provided, how hearings will be conducted, and how the results of the hearings will be considered in the decision-making process.

THTU understands that active public participation is a necessary and integral part of the transit planning and provision of service. THTU will actively seek public input through a variety of techniques and outlets which may include formal and informal public notices, informational meetings, comment periods, public hearings, advertising through our local newspaper and postings on our website.

Public involvement is especially crucial when significant changes to the current service is being considered. Specifically, those significant changes include:

1. Fare increase: increase in basic fare structure. Any increase in fares shall be approved by the Board of Public Works. Fare decreases are excluded.
2. Major Service Reductions: any reduction in service miles or hours exceeding twenty-five (25%) percent of the total service miles or hours provided. All other service reductions are considered routine and minor and are not subject to these procedures. Any major service reductions shall be approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety.
3. Major Route Modifications: a change in any fixed-route transit service that exceeds twenty-five 25%) of the total inbound and outbound trip mileage of a route. All other modifications are considered routine and minor, and are not subject to these procedures

Route modifications are reviewed by THTU’s Transportation Director and Assistant Manager. If the recommendation is to move forward with a major route modification, such modification shall be approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety.

**Public Participation**

Notices will be posted on the city website, [www.terrehaute.IN.gov](http://www.terrehaute.IN.gov), inside buses, at the Transfer Center and our public library indicating when and where the meeting will take place, at least thirty (30) days in advance of the scheduled Board of Public Works and Safety meeting.

An explanation of the content, along with the date, time, and location of the meeting(s) and public hearing will be published along with the instructions for submitting comments, contact information for questions or additional information, any due date for the comments and a note regarding where to find additional information on the website, [www.terrehaute.IN.gov](http://www.terrehaute.IN.gov).

Notices may also be directly provided to interested persons, neighborhood groups, area colleges, area schools, service organizations, local advocacy groups, businesses, senior centers or other organizations, particularly those deemed by the Transit Director to be directly affected by the proposed change.

Comment cards will be provided at the Transfer Center. THTU will also make efforts to include maps or other visual tools to aid in assisting passengers in understanding the proposed changes. When transit plans, maps, or programs are to change, copies of the existing document and proposed changes will be available as well. All information provided will be done at least thirty (30) days in advance of the scheduled public hearing date.

 While written comments are encouraged, THTU staff will record verbal comments. All comment cards and verbal comments will be given to the Director of Transportation.

THTU will make every effort to seek public involvement early before the scheduled public meeting and ensure the scheduling and locations of the meetings are accessible to the public. This includes a location near public transportation, a time when public transportation is available, as well as an accessible building/room for individuals with disabilities. Individuals who are planning to attend the meeting and need a sign language interpreter or other similar accommodations should notify us by phone (812) 235-0109 or letter Terre Haute Transit Utility 901 South 14th Street Terre Haute IN 47807, or email debbie.schroeder@terrehaute.IN.gov or visit us at the transfer center 750 Cherry Street. Request need to be made five days prior to the meeting. Also special services should be available when practical, and subject to the availability of services and resources. These services may include interpreters of those individuals who do not speak English, materials for individuals with visual impairments and sign language interpreters.

**Documentation of Public Comment and Responses**

The public meeting will allow individuals to ask questions, comment and voice their opinions. THTU will document comments received during the course of the public meeting. THTU will respond to questions or comments. THTU is required to consider each suggestion made in the public participation process but not required to implement each suggestion. If THTU staff does not think it is appropriate to implement a suggestion, documentation will indicate the reason the suggestion should be implemented. A written summary of comments and responses of the major points made during the public meetings to the proposed change (fare, service or route) and action will be summarized and provided to the Board of Public Works and Safety prior to the Board of Public Works and Safety meeting.

**Additional Procedures**

If implementation of minor route or service changes are to take place, then at least one (1) week prior to the change, new route schedules will be made available to the public at [www.terrehaute.IN.gov](http://www.terrehaute.IN.gov), printed books at Transfer Center and on buses.

When minor changes take place, THTU staff will be available to provide travel assistance to passengers who may not be aware of the modifications.

Information regarding the changes will remain available to the public for 30-day period beyond the implementation of the changes.