

# Diane Shaw - Travel Report

Transit Board Member Conference – July 19-22

KCATA hosted the conference and did a great job. Not only did I learn a lot, rekindle friendships, met new board members, but also had fun at the two events that they planned for us. One at Union Station which is the historic train station that was in disrepair and they refurbished it. It not only houses an office for the streetcar but also Amtrak and is home to a science center, museum and a couple of restaurants. We also visited the Jazz Museum and the Negro Baseball League Museum. Both wonderful places to visit with a wealth of information and fun interactive things to do and see.

KCATA – They call themselves the “People Centered Transit”.

Currently free fare but they are moving to cashless fare options in 2026. First phase of free fares was implemented in 2017 as a pilot and went all in Spring of 2020 (Covid). Those in need will be free – so not concerned about Title IV. Veterans will be free as well. Lessons learned:

- More people do ride and there are less fare disputes with operators.
- Surveys show it has improved the quality of life for those that use it.
- But operators feel less safe as do others. Working with community organizations they heard that they would rather supplement fares than have their riders feel unsafe. Everything gets blamed on your agency when you have a zero fare program.
- Paratransit costs went way up as it was free as well.
- Cost an additional \$8M for security so any savings was put into security.

## Additional Presentations/Topics

Board Governance – lots of good information and discussion.

Board/CEO relationships – challenges and information on things that work well.

Procurements - you should have an escalation clause in procurements which is different than contingency. This would be the place that additional tariffs would fall or just escalating costs.

ADA 35 Years Later - While a lot of progress has been made, there are still some key things that need to be accomplished. In addition, we need to go beyond the law and provide parity of service with our fixed route system.

- Parity of cost for paratransit
- Ensure our cities/agencies have self-evaluation and transition plans for the ADA
- Need to have digital accessibility. There are some standards that have been developed which need to be implemented by April 2026. You should also have a policy for digital accessibility.
- Need to include people with disabilities at the table more
- Same day service

When we tell our stories include stories about disabilities and transit. Who is using our system to get to doctors, work, etc. Good stories and stories that show a picture.