

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
AND  
SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES

**MINUTES**

**Thursday,  
February 5, 2004  
4:00 p.m.**

**Board of Supervisors Chambers  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz CA 95060**

1. Roll Call

Members Present:	Jan Beautz	Dennis Norton
	Tony Campos	Ellen Pirie
	Richard De La Paz	Emily Reilly
	Scott Kennedy	Pat Spence
	Randy Johnson	Mark Stone
	Mike Rotkin (Alt)	Mardi Wormhoudt
Staff Present	Linda Wilshusen	Pat Dellin
	Karena Pushnik	Gini Pineda
	Luis Mendez	

2. Oral Communications

3. Additions or Deletions to Consent and Regular Agendas

4. Public Hearing on the Coordination of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Services and Other Specialized Transportation Services in Santa Cruz County

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik gave the staff report reviewing the scope of paratransit services, including the federally required ADA compliant paratransit services provided by the Metro and Lift Line.

Commissioner Wormhoudt, who wrote the letter that brought the matter before the Commission, said the issue is very complex. She said that the Metro and Lift Line did a good job and that it wasn't the Commission's job to interfere with the internal workings of the transit district. She said that while there wasn't more money to solve the problems, the Commission should be able to find a long term plan to help the clients who are asking for something better.

Les White, SCMTD, described the pressures faced by the Metro in dealing with paratransit issues. He said that the Metro

is accountable to the Department of Justice for their ADA paratransit services.

SCMTD attorney Margaret Gallagher spoke about the legal requirements imposed on the Metro by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act which include being charged with discrimination if it fails to provide next day service to paratransit clients.

Bryant Baehr, SCMTD, said that in 2000 Metro conducted a comprehensive operational and financial study for ParaCruz, the Metro's paratransit service. The two-year study questioned how people accessed services and took suggestions from the public. The transit district designed a recertification process to determine eligibility and produced a ParaCruz guide to let people know what to expect from and how to access the Metro's paratransit services.

Mark Dorfmann discussed the financial impacts of providing complimentary paratransit service saying that the Metro is obligated to provide service to all eligible clients. He said that because sales tax revenues and Transportation Development Act money have declined and the ParaCruz cost per ride has increased, Metro is projecting a deficit of over one million dollars. Mr. Dorfman said that Metro currently spends 9% of its budget on paratransit and predicted an increase to 13% of the budget.

Sam Storey, Lift Line, showed how Lift Line fits into Community Bridges family of programs. He described the various types of rides offered by Lift Line and said that each program had its own set of rules and regulations. Mr. Storey said that ADA ParaCruz rides account for a significant portion of the total Lift Line rides. Mr. Storey referred to spreadsheets illustrating Lift Line's decreasing revenues and increasing costs. He said the largest cost increase was due to the jump in Worker's Compensation insurance.

Mr. Storey showed the Lift Line staff reductions on the organizational chart and said that Lift Line was able to meet demand at this time because demand decreases in the winter. He said that grouping rides was needed and that Lift Line met ADA's performance requirements.

The floor was opened for the public hearing. Chair Beautz asked that comments be limited to three minutes.

**Ernestina Saldania** complained that her ParaCruz rides are late and that she gets the wrong vehicle for her wheelchair. She advised that the Commission listen to testimony from people who use the services.

**Brad Neely** supported a community wide dialogue emphasizing that it was important to understand that ADA paratransit is complimentary to established fixed route transit service. He suggested an overall look at customer service and efficient use of vehicles.

**Jeff Le Blanc** said that there is no time for a task force because the crisis is now.

**Bud Winslow** has not found a concise and clear definition of rights guaranteed by the ADA. He said legislation would require public and private providers to publish guidelines for ADA requirements and publish information about availability of ADA services.

**Rick Baine**, UTU, blames the sub-contractual relationships with the taxi services and would like to see restrictions lifted on Community Bridges.

**Majel Jordan**, Elderday, said the complexity of the system is beyond reason and supports more coordination between the Metro and Lift Line.

**Barbara Schaller** said that taxi script is good and suggested that taxi riders share rides.

**Michael Bradshaw** said that the Americans with Disabilities Act is about protecting civil rights and that segregating services according to who pays the bill is a bad idea. He recommended a moratorium until task force brought a recommendation to the Commission.

**Gloria** uses Lift Line and said the duplication of services is wasteful.

**Caroline Bliss-Isberg**, Stroke Center, said Lift Line was great but the system is broken and said that it worked better when caregivers were allowed to determine who needed specialized transportation. She urged a moratorium on any further fragmentation and recommended forming a task force immediately.

**Jean Goudreau**, a Lift Line user, thought it was dumb that rides could not be co-mingled.

**Gail Goudreau**, Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency, said she supports a simplified system even if the funding sources differ.

**Kathy Hogan** and **Liz McCready** said all the Lift Line drivers

are amazing and supports keeping them.

**Diane Sherron**, Stroke Center, said she looked into the possibility of local churches helping to provide rides but found that liability issues and the lack of handicapped accessible vans made it impossible.

A member of the Twin Lakes Church congregation said that they relied on Lift Line bring the disabled to church. She spoke against duplication of services.

**Judy Gomes**, Stroke Center, said that the system worked better years ago when students could schedule their rides for a semester. She said some students forget to call in and book rides now that they must call every 2 weeks.

**Merritt Tucker**, Stroke Center said that the information that worked in the 80's should be shared now and supports a moratorium until a task force is developed.

**Trudi Jackson**, who rides Lift Line, said that those who complain should realize the drivers have a difficult job and supports Lift Line and the taxi providers.

**Brenda Moss**, Senior Network Services, said a service once called excellent had become so inflexible that a 92 year old woman could not get certified for a ride to the doctor because she can walk to the nearby grocery store.

**Scott Bugental** said there had been improvements with the Metro system and presented a brochure from Paratransit, Inc., which serves as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency for Sacramento County, as a model to study.

**Steve Taylor** said to factor in the cost of emergency care for those who don't get their rides to doctor.

**Karen Delaney**, Volunteer Center, there is more than just a transportation problem and that a single intake system with professionals trained in social services in addition to transportation was needed. She said certification and recertification was very confusing.

**Kathleen Johnson**, Ombudsman Advocate, said certification and recertification is not a one size fits all process and that some disabled people can take a bus on a good day but not on days when they experience more difficulty.

A spokesperson for Pacific Coast Manor said the probably 99% of the residents in skilled nursing facilities are ADA eligible but they had to be recertified with the new ParaCruz process. It was suggested that facility staff be

trusted as to whether clients should be recertified and that Metro could monitor staff on a quarterly basis.

**Bob Yount** made comments on behalf of nine people including a request for help with something to hang on to in the vans and for a client advocate with a dedicated phone number to receive complaints. He said most drivers are highly rated.

**Clay Kempf** said this is a community issue and not just an ADA and paratransit issue. He said a task force is needed to get all policy decision makers at the table along with some less obvious stakeholders like the Volunteer Center and Red Cross. He suggested reviewing the history of how services got where they are and designing an optimal system to develop methods to educate users and providers and to end the movement that segregates by funding source.

**John R. Zee** said the Lift Line gets him everywhere.

**Paul Sampson**, Metro Riders Union, asked who was going to pay if the Metro is pressured to provide more paratransit services. He said in Riverside, volunteers get mileage reimbursement to provide rides and in King County, Washington, vans are provided. He said the community has to come in and pick up where ADA laves off and that ADA should not be broadened at the cost of regular bus service.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner De Pa Paz opened discussion by asking what was the problem with co-mingling rides and why can't it be overcome.

Les White explained that the ADA is legally considered as a civil right and that the Act sets a standard for wait time, etc. He said that communities that have expanded services have suffered lawsuits because the ADA includes a federally mandated guarantee that every trip is filled and that balancing legal requirements with funding requirements is the issue. He said there is some relief with the plan to provide same destination co-mingled service with "first on last off" scheduling.

Commissioner Spence described some of the problems she encountered when using paratransit, including wait times on the phones and the lack of cleanliness of vans. She said that the Metro has a unique responsibility under the law and asked that staff research definitions and criteria to clarify future discussions. Definitions included the most common criteria to be considered a "senior" and the definition of "disability". Ms. Spence asked for demographics showing aging in Santa Cruz County and examples

of paratransit services in peer counties. She said it was important to agree on definitions.

Commissioner Wormhoudt said that Commissioner Spence's information will greatly help the task force. She said she was impressed with the Public Hearing and believed Santa Cruz could make a statewide model. Ms. Wormhoudt noted that imposing a moratorium on further fragmentation was not within the purview of the Commission.

Commissioner Wormhoudt moved to direct staff to meet individually with various stakeholders regarding recommendations for a short-term Task Force to improve coordination of paratransit services in Santa Cruz and return to the April Commission meeting with recommendations regarding the Task Force's work program including membership, focus, timeline, staffing, facilitation and budget. Ms. Wormhoudt added that the information requested by Commissioner Spence be provided to the task force.

Commissioner Reilly seconded.

Commissioners discussed the time frame for forming the task force.

Commissioner Spence said she was specifically interested in meeting with social service providers.

Commissioner Wormhoudt noted that meeting individually with stakeholders was not intended to exclude the public but to get counsel from the providers.

Executive Director Linda Wilshusen said that it was important to include a range of stakeholders and in order to meet expectations, it would be necessary to report back in April.

Commissioner Campos said that sometimes haste makes waste and that the Commission wanted to ensure a good partnership.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Next Meetings/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The next regular SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors

Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

A Public Hearing on the Recreational Rail Environmental Impact Report and Proposition 116 Funds is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gini Pineda, Staff

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