

Draft

**Paratransit Coordination Task Force
Minutes - Meeting # 3**

August 18, 2004, 2:00 to 5:00 pm

ABC Rooms of the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium

Members Present:

Michael Bradshaw
Scott Bugental
Richard Camperud
Barbara Flynn
Kathleen Johnson
Clay Kempf
Paul Marcelin-Sampson
Roger McKowan
Eileen Pavlik
Dennis Papadopulo
Emily Reilly
Carmen Robles
Ernestina Saldana
Pat Spence
Ellen Timberlake
Adam Tomaszewski
Arturo Zamudio

Alternates Present (* = voting):

Kirk Ance *
Manual Coto *
Steve Kudlak *
James Monroe
Bonnie Morr
Andy Schiffrin

Staff Present:

Bryant Baehr, Metro
Robyn Brown, Yellow Cab
Peggy Gallagher, Metro
Steve Paulson, Metro
Karena Pushnik, SCCRTC
Tegan Speiser, SCCRTC
Link Spooner, Community

Bridges

Sam Storey, Community Bridges
Les White, Metro

Others/Guests Present:

Barbara Jackson
Trudy Jackson

1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Oral Communications

Barbara Jackson suggested that Lift Line services include reasonable accommodation for hearing impaired individuals and that information about this disability be included in computer records for clients. She also asked that Metro and ADA materials be mailed rather than only available at transit centers.

Paul Marcelin-Sampson announced that Pat Spence would arrive tardy due to a late ride pick up.

Dennis Papadopulo requested that something be done for his wheelchair-using friend in the Pleasant Care facility who has a difficult time visiting his mother because she lives ¼ mile past the bus stop. This item was discussed further with the ADA Paratransit Service item.

Karena Pushnik distributed an updated draft of the Existing Services matrix noting that the chart will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

Mardi Wormhoudt said that she has had many conversations with people about paratransit issues and reminded attendees that the Task Force had come about to try to address practical problems. She expressed hope that the Task Force can help create a plan that provides efficient, effective and compassionate transportation services. She asked members to set aside bad feelings, mistrust and frustration, and use their talents to look toward the future and the long term.

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Karena Pushnik distributed additional materials for Item #5.

Pat Spence requested that future agendas include consent and regular agendas so that items that are not discussed can still be formally accepted. There was no objection.

Ms. Spence also asked why the minutes, Item #4, included the Goals/Issues and Work plan when they were also attached to Item # 5. They were considered in Item #5.

4. Approve Minutes of June 16, 2004 Paratransit Task Force Meeting

(Kempf/Robles, with 1 abstention and 2 no votes to Attachment 1) - Approved the minutes with the following amendments:

- Change IHHS to IHSS defined as In Home Support Services
- Add Bryant Baehr to the list of attendees

Paul Marcelin-Sampson distributed his assessment of changes to Attachment 1, the presentation by Paratransit Inc and additional research he has conducted.

5. Mandates and Program Changes

Mardi Wormhoudt provided an overview and explained that planned changes in the provision of ADA Paratransit services warranted discussion and thus a deviation from the work plan. Karena Pushnik described the background materials on legal requirements were provided in the packet about ADA Paratransit, Medi-Cal and the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency.

Additional materials about the Volunteer Center, Cabrillo College and UCSC specialized transportation program requirements were distributed at the meeting.

Emily Reilly requested that the Task Force do its best to move forward as a group reminding the attendees that regardless of who provides the rides, the goal is to provide the best service for the people that need it. She noted that she has been given unanimous direction from the transit board to find out about people's fears, issues and problems, and find solutions. She encouraged people to be forthright and to express their ideas about ways to build trust.

Scott Bugental cited the adage "actions speak louder than words" and requested that the transit board follow through with expressed community interests.

Adam Tomaszewski felt confident that, once the programs are separate, complaints could be better directed to separate agencies (Community Bridges and Metro). He also noted that seniors are currently confused about the future of specialized transportation to meet their needs.

Mardi Wormhoudt asked whether there were changes to the Work Plan and Goals/Issues. There were none.

Bryant Baehr provided an overview of the ADA Paratransit/ParaCruz transition plan and distributed a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). He noted that: operation of ParaCruz will be fully transitioned to Metro on November 1; space has been leased at 2880 Research Park Drive; transition agreements have been made with the drivers union representing both Metro and Community Bridges; a transition agreement is in place with Community Bridges; Requests for Proposals are out for supplemental service providers (assuming that 1-2 providers will carry 20-30% of the rides), a new telephone system and a mobile communication system; a seamless phone connection between the two agencies has been planned; three new larger vehicles will arrive soon; nineteen vans in storage are being prepared for service; Community Bridges drivers can apply for ParaCruz positions; and a letter has been sent to current clients with information and the new phone number. The plan is to contact current ParaCruz clients a total of three times between now and November. The only update needed to the current ParaCruz Guide (policies and procedures) is the new phone number.

Kathleen Johnson asked what kind of outreach will be provided to 38 residential care facilities and 10 skilled nursing care facilities. Bryant answered that Metro plans to provide information in September to the primary trip generators for ParaCruz.

Michael Bradshaw expressed concern that people who don't read, have cognitive disabilities, use TTY, speak Spanish, etc will have a hard time getting the needed information.

Ellen Timberlake wondered why a supplemental service provider is necessary. Bryant noted that it can be more cost effective to have private operators provide service early in the morning, late at night or on weekends.

Adam Tomaszewski requested that the FAQs for ParaCruz also include information about Community Bridges programs. Bryant suggested that the FAQs for both Community Bridges and ParaCruz be combined for the next wave of outreach to avoid confusion. Sam Storey noted that dispatch operators have also been instructed to provide information about the changes in services.

Michael Bradshaw asked whether the funding for any of the other types of specialized transportation services would be affected by the ParaCruz transition. Bryant answered that he didn't think so.

Clay Kempf wondered whether the several hundred thousand dollar operating deficit experienced by Community Bridges in FY 2002-03 can be paid back by Metro now that Community Bridges will no longer be providing ADA Paratransit services. Sam Storey indicated that Community Bridges will benefit financially by not providing ADA paratransit services and that they may be able to provide more community rides. Bryant answered that Metro had a competitively bid contract with Community Bridges for service and that Metro is not responsible for the deficit.

Sam Storey noted that a possible unintended consequence of the new operations configuration is that private operator and driver availability capacity could be affected. In addition, there could be potential impacts on other services.

Mardi Wormhoudt asked whether a greater percent of service will now be delivered by independent contractors. Bryant answered that currently 55-60% of ParaCruz service is subcontracted to private operators and estimates are that in the future private operators will carry 20-30% of all ParaCruz rides. Mardi also asked whether there will be a net increase in jobs, and both Sam and Bryant answered that they thought it there would be a net increase in jobs.

Tegan Speiser asked for clarification about the total number of ParaCruz clients. Bryant answered that there are 3,600 people in the database and 1,000 frequent users, averaging about 230 trips per day.

Scott Bugental requested clarification about the future of an existing policy that allowed people a ride home if they couldn't pay. Bryant answered that Metro will make every attempt to avoid stranding people, but will be sensitive to patterns. Les White noted that it is likely that staff will make recommendations to the Metro Board at their August, September and October meetings about various ParaCruz policy issues.

Sam Storey provided a presentation about the transition plan from Community Bridges' perspective referring to the FAQs included in the packet. He stated that the approximately 100,000 annual non-ADA rides (Alliance/Medi-Cal, Senior Meal Site, Elderday, TDA, etc.) will continue and that Community Bridges will strive to fill unmet needs in the community beyond ADA Paratransit.

Clay Kempf asked whether Metro intended to pursue funding sources currently used by Community Bridges. Bryant answered that they are currently focused on complying with the law and transitioning ADA ParaCruz and that no other commitments can be provided. The Metro board has not discussed this topic.

Andy Schiffrin asked whether rides will be provided for trips originating outside the ParaCruz service area and whether it will be a connection to ParaCruz or a continuous ride. Sam responded that TDA funds are not sufficient to fulfill requests for all trips throughout the county and, thus far, has focused on medically necessary rides. Bryant will look into the current practice of people getting on and off the vehicle at the service area border and related future policies. Paul Marcelin-Sampson wondered whether Metro perceived an equity difference between bus riders transferring and paratransit riders transferring.

Karena Pushnik will research kinds of contractual/cost sharing arrangements that exist in other areas of the state for rides connecting to ADA Paratransit.

Some attendees provided the suggestions to Metro and Community Bridges to assist with the transition of ADA ParaCruz operations (Attachment 1). ***Both agencies will provide a response to these suggestions to be included in the next Task Force meeting packet.***

The committee decided to postpone the Metro Legal Mandates portion of this item to the next month's agenda due to the lack of time.

6. Upcoming Unmet Paratransit/Transit Needs Public Hearing

Karena Pushnik provided an overview of the purpose of defining Unmet Paratransit and Transit Needs, noting their function as both short and long range needs. She noted that input was received from the Elderly & Disabled

Transportation Advisory Committee, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, Metro Advisory Committee and the Metro Accessible Services Transit Forum to develop a draft list of needs. The Regional Transportation Commission will hold a public hearing on this topic during their September 2 meeting at 9:30 am at the County Government Center to receive additional testimony.

Mardi Wormhoudt asked attendees whether an integrated system run by one agency might be more efficient in the long term. Many agreed with that vision but would need to know more about the financial implications. A long term integration goal with phased interim goals could be a good approach. *The group agreed to work toward a definition or vision of what success would look like.*

7. Review Specialized Transportation Program/CTSA Structure in Other California Communities – Continued from 6/16/04 meeting

This item was again continued.

8. Accept Information Items

- a. Updated Draft Matrix of Existing Services
 - This item was distributed earlier in the meeting.
 - *Information items from the 6/16 agenda were requested to be included in the September agenda: Disability and age data from 2000 census, Projections through 2050 of people over 65 in Santa Cruz County*

7. Confirm Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting date and time & place was confirmed:
Wednesday, September 15, 2004 from 2:00 – 5:00pm at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, ABC Room, 307 Church Street, Santa Cruz.
- b. Agenda Items:
Chair Wormhoudt confirmed that the next meeting would focus on: 1) Legal mandates for both Metro and Community Bridges; 2) Response to suggestions for ParaCruz service; and 3) Customer Service and Satisfaction

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Karena Pushnik, SCCRTC Staff

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