

Paratransit Coordination Task Force
Minutes - Meeting #5
Wednesday, October 20, 2004, 2:00 – 5:00 pm
Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, ABC Room

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Members Present:

Scott Bugental
Richard Camperud
Clay Kempf
Steve Kudlak
Paul Marcelin-Sampson
Dennis Papadopulo
Emily Reilly
Pat Spence
Ellen Timberlake
Adam Tomazewski
Stuart Rosenstein

Staff Present:

Bryant Baehr, SCMTD
Mark Dorfman, SCMTD
Peg Gallagher, SCMTD
Les White, SCMTD
Karena Pushnik, SCCRTC
Tegan Speiser, SCCRTC
Link Spooner, Community Bridges
Sam Storey, Community Bridges

Others/Guests Present:

Path Star, Stroke Center

Alternates Present (* = voting):

Kirk Ance *
James Monroe
Bonnie Morr*
Andy Schiffrin*
MaryJo Walker*

1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Oral Communications

Karena Pushnik announced that the Guide for Specialized Transportation is very popular and the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) will be reprinting more in the near future. In addition, Spanish language and large print versions will also be developed. A sign-up sheet was distributed for the Spanish and large print versions to assist with determining printing quantities.

Paul Marcelin-Sampson urged members of the Task Force to support Measure J and to write letters to the editors of local papers.

Dennis Papadopulo thanked Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (Metro) and Community Bridges staff for providing a presentation to Pleasant Care residents and staff about the ParaCruz transition.

3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

There were none.

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CONSENT AGENDA

(Reilly/Timberlake with Items 4 and 5f pulled for discussion)

4. Minutes of the September 15, 2004 Paratransit Coordination Task Force

(This item was pulled for discussion, see first item on the regular agenda)

5. Accepted Information Items

- a. 9/24/04 memo from Margaret Gallagher Metro Counsel regarding clarification of issues raised at the September Task Force presentation
- b. 9/27 letter from Metro regarding appointed positions to Task Force
- c. Letters of appreciation for Norm Hagen, Jr. and Kanoa Dynek former Metro Advisory Committee and Consumer of Fixed Route Transit representatives, respectively
- d. ParaCruz Update from October 22 Metro packet
- e. 8/25/04 Correspondence from Human Care Alliance and 9/10/04 response from County
- f. Correspondence from Anne Zhang

(This item was referenced in the discussion for item #7, the ADA Paratransit Transition Update)

REGULAR AGENDA

4. Minutes from the 9/15/04 Paratransit Coordination Task Force meeting

This item was pulled from the consent agenda and approved (Reilly/Timberlake with Flynn, Quintinella and Schiffrin abstaining) with the following amendments:

- Norm Hagen was removed the list of attendees (p.4-1),
- The following sentence regarding eligibility staff was changed from “Discussing the item in the absence of the person currently filling the position (who also sits on the task force) made one person uncomfortable” to “One person thought discussing this item in the absence of the person currently filling the position (who also sits on the task force) was inappropriate” (p.4-7)
- Clarification was provided that recertification figures quoted were from September 2003. (p.4-7)
- Clarification was provided about the recertification numbers to indicate that many of the people previously on the roles were duplicates, have moved or are deceased (p.4-8). Handouts were distributed as additional information.
- The discussion about agency rides was changed to read “Agency trips are when an organization calls Metro and says they want to have a certain number of guaranteed trips for a negotiated price. Booking these rides is outside the ADA paratransit situation and there’s no regulation or limitation on what the paratransit agency can charge.” (pp. 12-13)

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6. Mandates and Program Requirements (Continued from August 18 Meeting)

a. Community Bridges

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Link Spooner provided an overview of the legal requirements and specific transportation program information. Included was background on the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) designation and eligibility information for their primary rides: Elderday Adult Day Care Center, Medi-Cal/Central Coast Alliance for Health, Transportation Development Act rides (Taxi Scrip, Medical Vouchers, Out-of-County Medical Rides/Red Cross and part of Stroke Center ride costs), and Meals on Wheels/Senior Meal Site Centers. Transportation Development Act funds are used not only to provide rides, but also for administration to support the transportation programs. Link highlighted the phone transfer system that will be installed to forward calls back and forth between Community Bridges and Metro.

Michael Bradshaw asked how the CTSA is designated. Karena Pushnik noted that the CTSA statutes were included in the packet which outline how the CTSA is designated, their responsibilities and duties.

Many people wanted to know more about how the Taxi Scrip program works, how many people are on the waiting list, the process to add new people to the waiting list, whether there was a process to regularly reevaluate whether people receiving scrip really need it, whether there was regular clerical review of the eligibility list and whether there were plans to prioritize disbursement of scrip based on prioritizing needs. Link noted that there are about 40 people currently on the waiting list and that the program serves the need for same day or on-demand rides, rides outside the ADA Paratransit service area and rides earlier/later than the ADA Paratransit service hour window. There is no expiration date on the Taxi Scrip, making it difficult to budget for this program. It was clarified that people will continue to call Community Bridges for Taxi Scrip. Community Bridges plans to discuss changes to the program with the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee and will bring their recommendations back to the Paratransit Coordination Task Force. Issues such as higher priority for out of the ADA Paratransit Service area and lower priority for individuals eligible for other transportation programs was discussed.

Questions ensued about differences between the Medi-Cal and Medical Voucher programs and whether there were waiting lists for the programs. Barbara Flynn answered that the Medi-Cal program has no waiting list. The program requires advance authorization which takes Community Bridges about 4 days, but can accommodate immediate need rides if necessary if the person contacts them directly. There are no limits to the number of rides that can be provided for Medi-Cal eligible rides. The Medical Voucher program has no waiting list, requires that a recipient be within 200% of the federal poverty level and was developed before there was an arrangement with Medi-Cal to provide rides. Applications for this program are received at a rate

of about one per week. Medical Vouchers have expiration date and last about three months. This program is limited by the amount of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds available. It was agreed that the Medical Voucher program also warranted reevaluation and that this transition period was an opportunity to reexamine the cost effectiveness of the program.

Clay Kempf reminded the Task Force that the MSSP Taxi Scrip program also sends out taxi scrip to clients working through the County Health Services Agency case workers who are Medi-Cal eligible and at risk for institutionalization.

Proposed changes to the programs will be coordinated with the Paratransit Coordination Task Force recommendations, as the Task Force is charged with looking at the “big picture” and long term solutions. A goal is to get people on the “right ride” to avoid duplication and make the best use of precious resources. The transition of the ADA Paratransit program is seen as an opportunity to make changes in the programs.

Andy Schiffrin noted that the RTC currently does not really evaluate the Transportation Development Act claims and related information for any of the claimants including Community Bridges and Metro, but may request more information in the future.

b. Others and Related information

Paul Marcelin-Sampson called attention to the MedCAP article (pp. 6-16 to 6-19) noting that there were many good legal references in the article. He highlighted language from the article that Medi-Cal pays transportation costs when a client is physically unable to ride in cars, buses or taxis and said that Medi-Cal is required to be the provider of last resort.

Paul also reviewed the list of areas where Metro exceeds the legal requirements for transit and ADA paratransit. He suggested that the Task Force might want to identify priorities of additional services that could be provided should funding be available.

7. ADA Paratransit Implementation Update (*Continued from August 18 meeting*)

Bryant Baehr announced that the following was underway for ADA Paratransit or ParaCruz: Metro is fully gearing up for the November start date, the facility will be ready including computer and phone systems, vehicles will be transferred next Friday, staff is hired and will complete training on November 1, fueling and maintenance procedures are developed, clients have been contacted 3 to 4 times, and new identification cards and lanyards with the program name/phone number are currently being distributed.

Sam Storey noted that Community Bridges is in the process of transitioning staff out of the facility, is retaining eleven drivers and has hired an experienced scheduling manager. Community Bridges staff has been instructed to communicate transition information with everyone who calls.

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Stroke Center representatives asked whether the Transit District would be enforcing the requirement that the rider have the cash fare ready before the trip. Metro staff indicated that a meeting with the Stroke Center was arranged, but had to be cancelled due to schedule conflicts. The Metro allows prepaid coupons that can be purchased by eligible ParaCruz clients. Several people felt that Stroke Center students, due to their cognitive abilities and “newly disabled” status should have flexibility to have the Stroke Center help with payment when they arrive, rather than pay before they take the trip. If there was a need to change the policy, the Metro Board would need to take action. Peg Gallagher noted that the item could be included in the ParaCruz transition item already on the October 22, 2004 agenda.

Emily wondered whether a custom contractual agreement could be drawn up with the Stroke Center. Les White said that there could be an arrangement where the Stroke Center sends a list of their clients who use ParaCruz, Metro mails the tickets directly to the clients and the Metro invoices the Stroke Center for those rides. The Metro will have a meeting with the Stroke Center in the near future. It was clarified that the Stroke Center is considered an educational facility, rather than a medical facility, thereby making it ineligible for ride Medi-Cal reimbursement. Ernestina Saldana questioned whether a special arrangement with the Stroke Center would set a precedent that would also apply to other destinations (such as Dominican Rehabilitation Center which also serves stroke patients or Elderday). Emily requested that the item be on the October Metro agenda. Peggy Gallagher requested a letter from the Stroke Center for the Board packet with more information about the issue.

There was interest in the “pre-paid” coupons. Bryant said that currently they can only be purchased and used by eligible ParaCruz clients. The coupons are not negotiable or transferable, but are not printed with client names. Clients can purchase coupons in person or by mail. Currently has not been a big demand to facilitate people buying tickets for those unable to buy their own tickets (e.g. legal guardians, as presents, etc.). Only individual tickets are currently available, but Metro hopes to make books of tickets available in the future. Andy Schiffrin noted that, because Metro is responsible for controlling all the rides, there would seem to be no down side to selling tickets to a wider range of entities which would ensure more revenue and would increase efficiency. It may make sense to reconsider this aspect of the program.

People expressed hope that, as members of a compassionate community, solutions could be found.

The chair went through the Metro and Community Bridges’ responses to the Task Force transition suggestions. It was clarified that: Metro has bilingual reservation staff, Karena Pushnik will contact Anne Zhang (Letter requesting ADA Paratransit service for oversized wheelchairs, Item #5, pp. 5-13) to let her know that Metro staff will contact her and see if they have vans that could accommodate her, Title 24 will be investigated, training also provided for Yellow Cab and the new private taxi operator, all drivers are First Aid/CPR trained, Metro will now begin to request emergency contact information for clients, Community Bridges and Metro

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will now track people living outside the service area, Metro can provide data about the number of people newly outside the service area due to route changes, Metro and other entities can pursue a Specialized Transportation forum or feature on Community TV's senior programs, another entity such as the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee can pursue an all-purpose phone guide for residential care facilities (condensed version of the Guide for Specialized Transportation), Metro will disseminate refrigerator magnets with ParaCruz and Lift Line phone numbers, Metro hopes to have solution ideas for service provider contractual arrangements for people living outside the service area, and people can call Community Bridges now for rides provided after November 1.

The list, started at previous Task Force meetings, of unresolved issues and rides not apparently covered by existing specialized transportation services was continued this meeting (Attachment 1).

Emily Reilly, Scott Bugental and Paul Marcelin Sampson thanked Metro and Community Bridges for all their great work on the transition, the incorporation of Task Force suggestions and comprehensive outreach efforts.

The next meeting will feature an update on the Stroke Center rides, prepaid coupons, large wheelchair issues, and numbers of people and contractual options for providing rides to people outside the ADA ParaCruz service area.

8. Demographics and Definitions (*Continued from August 18 meeting*)

Paul Marcelin-Sampson and Pat Spence presented demographic information from the Census and Department of Finances outlining past trends, current ParaCruz use and future projections to develop future ridership projections for ParaCruz. Steve Paulson, Metro staff, was acknowledged as inspiration. Paul asked Task Force members to focus on the senior population as a percentage of the whole population. Pat Spence suggested that if Measure J passes, the senior/disabled transportation funds may not be needed until the later years of the 30-year sales tax measure. Paul Marcelin-Sampson projects that the pressures on ParaCruz won't be unbearable until 2030.

Task Force members noted that: the actual numbers are more important than the percentages, since funds are needed on a cost per ride and advance planning will be necessary to have systems in place to meet the needs, trend have been proven wrong (in 1950, the senior population was 50% of the total population, as compared with the current rate of 10%) and that an annual growth rate in the senior population of 2.5% is substantial.

9. Review Task Force Goals and Work Plan

Andy Schiffrin noted that the Task Force developed a set of Goals/Objectives and a Work Plan early in the process and that, given the major changes in the provision of ADA Paratransit service and the time taken to address transition issues, it might be a good idea time for reevaluate of the Work Plan. He asked the group to consider the following questions:

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- Where do we go from here?
- What can be done to focus on long term solutions?
- How should the task force proceed?
- What recommendations can be developed for the short term by the task force?

He proposed that the next two meetings focus on the remaining goals of funding effectiveness/efficiency and customer service/satisfaction. Task Force members asked that previously identified issues be included to build on earlier discussions and avoid “covering ground that was already covered.” Staff reports for the next two meetings will reference prior discussions and the group will work on identifying short and long term recommendations. The Task Force can decide whether it is necessary to schedule meetings beyond December 2004 at the November meeting.

10. Confirm Next Meeting:

The next meeting was confirmed for November 17, 2004 from 2:00 – 5:00p.m at the ABC Room of the Civic Auditorium.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Karena Pushnik
Sr. Transportation Planner

Attachment 1: “Pick Up” List of issues and uncovered ride types

**Paratransit Coordination Task Force
PICK UP LIST**

The following concerns came up during Task Force meetings for future discussion and/or research. Task Force meeting month designated with first letter of relevant month.

ADA Paratransit

1. Eligibility Determination

- Qualified Staff (S)
- Appeals Process (S)

2. Outside Service Area

- Cost/Benefit Analysis (S)
- Pros and Cons (of expanding service area) (S)
- Compare to all Metro Services (S)
- Crossing the county line (outside the jurisdiction) (S)
- Contractual arrangement options to bring people into service area (O)
- Data for:
 - ADA-eligible people outside the service area (S)
 - ADA-eligible people newly outside the service area due to fixed route changes (O)
 - People brought into the ADA Service Area (S)
 - Agency rides covering the area outside the ADA Service Area (S)

3. Group vs. Individual Rides (for ADA-eligible people) (S)

- Payment for individual rides to group facilities when rider's disability may make fare handling difficult (O)

4. Criteria for Travel Time – compare between fixed route and paratransit (S)

4. Subscription Service (avoid no shows) (S)

5. Emergency Ride Home Policy (S, O)

6. Wheelchairs bigger than ADA maximums (O)

Taxi Scrip

1. Taxi Scrip

- Update waiting list (O)
- Process for returning unused scrip (O)
- Prioritizing use (O)
- E/D TAC recommendations (O)

Medical Vouchers

1. Medical Vouchers vs. Medi-Cal/Alliance Rides

- Determine whether program riders overlap (O)
- Make best use of open ended vs. limited funds (O)
- E/D TAC recommendations (O)

Other

1. Multiple Eligibility (how to direct rider to most cost effective ride) (O)
2. Carrying people with large wheelchairs, scooters or other assistive devices

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