

DRAFT

Paratransit Coordination Task Force MINUTES – MEETING #6

Wednesday, November 17, 2004, 2:00 – 5:00 pm
Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, ABC Room

Members Present:

Caroline Bliss-Isburg
Michael Bradshaw
Richard Camperud
Kathleen Johnson
Clay Kempf
Paul Marcelin-Sampson
Roger McKowan
Eileen Pavlik
Dennis Papadopulo
Carmen Robles
Stuart Rosenstein
Ernestina Saldana
Ellen Timberlake
Adam Tomaszewski
Arturo Zamudio

Staff Present:

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

Others/Guests Present:

Genevieve Bookwalter, SC Sentinel
Pearl Mendes, Yellow Cab
Michael Molesky, E&DTAC & CCAH
Barbie Schaller, Seniors Commission

Alternates Present (* = voting):

Kirk Ance *
Michael Keogh*
James Monroe
Bonnie Morr
Andy Schiffrin*

1. **Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves
2. **Oral Communications** - None
3. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – Item 6, ADA Paratransit Implementation Update, was moved to be the first item on the Regular Agenda.

Consent Agenda

(Timberlake, Papadopulo) as amended below. Keogh and Saldana abstained.

4. **Approve the Minutes** of the October 20, 2004 Paratransit Coordination Task Force.

Amendments:

- Indicate Eileen Pavlik and Ernestina Saldana were present on the list of members present.
- Paul Marcelin-Sampson had three changes to the Demographics and Definitions presentation on page 4-6 of the minutes: 1) re: the sentence that “an annual growth

rate in the senior population of 2.5% is substantial," the point was to say that there are other more important influences on the cost of providing services rather than percentage of annual population growth; 2) replace the word "unmanageable" for "unbearable" in the sentence "...the pressures on ParaCruz won't be unbearable until 2030"; and, 3) he doesn't remember anyone making the comment that "In 1950, the senior population was 50% of the total population". However, he asserts that this information is incorrect for the County of Santa Cruz. He cited census information which reported it as 14.8%. (Andy Schiffrin said that he had made the statement about the City of Santa Cruz.)

Regular Agenda

6. ADA Paratransit Implementation Update - Bryant Baehr and Sam Storey (oral report)

Bryant Baehr spoke to items 6 a, b and c.

On November 1st, Metro's first day of operating ParaCruz, they provided 500 rides and received 700 phone calls. ParaCruz is now providing 285-350 rides and handling about 400 phone calls daily. Much has been learned since operation began. Continuing education is needed about the ready window and about it being a shared-ride service. ParaCruz staff is working on new outreach materials. On-time performance is improving everyday. Now in 3rd week of operation and doing well. Have been working on correcting issues as they arise.

- a. Cabrillo College Stroke Center rides – Re: prepayment of fares, Stroke Center now pays Metro in advance for rides. When their ParaCruz-qualified students take a ride, it's deducted from the Stroke Center account balance and no money is collected. Metro is doing this as a demonstration project. If it's successful, staff may take it to the Metro board to expand the program. Good communication has been developed with the Stroke Center staff who are letting the Metro know about issues so Metro can adjust and learn from these situations. The Stroke Center is, in fact, the District's largest ParaCruz customer in terms of a one-place pick up and one-place drop off.

Mr. Baehr acknowledged the assistance of Metro staff Mark Dorfman and Peg Gallagher who worked with Cabrillo to set up this pre-payment system.

- b. Prepaid coupons – These are still being offered. Metro has had a rush of people wanting to buy them which is good. The less currency that is exchanged, the better it is for both the customer and Metro.

There was a question about the status of the policy that only clients can buy coupons and not agencies. Metro staff reiterated that others can buy the coupons, but only if they are for a specific ParaCruz-eligible person. Coupons must to be linked to an individual user as it's a restricted service designed only for people eligible for the service. Metro has been able to work through situations where agencies handle client's money. A point was made that only eligible riders were able to call and schedule a ride which should assure Metro that, regardless of who pays for the ride, only an eligible rider could actually schedule a ride and use a coupon.

- c. Large wheelchair issues – If the wheelchair can't be secured in one of Metro's minivans, three Goshen vans are available for use on a first come, first served basis. Metro is identifying customers with oversized chairs and trying to accommodate them using the larger vehicles.

There was a question about the information that went out in recent brochures about the size restrictions of wheelchairs allowed on ParaCruz. In their upcoming January mailing, updated information will go out about accommodating larger chairs.

At this point in the transition, Metro's main ParaCruz concerns are:

- On-time performance. Metro is hampered by the same things as everyone: accidents, traffic, etc...
- Communicating with customers about their needs and how to schedule their trips
- Have a full staff of reservationists. Average wait time hit a high of 2 minutes on a Sunday. Phone system wasn't quite set up correctly. Now averaging from 45 seconds to one minute and 10 seconds in terms of hold times on phone calls.
- Overall doing well. Metro learning new things daily.

A question was asked about the availability of on-time performance statistics. Metro staff responded that they plan to bring this data to the Metro Board (and this Task Force) in December.

A question was asked about a specific person who took a ParaCruz ride for treatment at the Satellite Dialysis Center. Due to treatment complications, the rider needed to be transported to the hospital although it was not an emergency situation and did not require an ambulance. Since ParaCruz does not allow scheduling of same day rides, Metro could not accommodate this change under their current established policy. The rider was referred to LiftLine who said they try to accommodate riders with unanticipated changes such as this.

Link Spooner explained how LiftLine handled these situations when they operated ADA paratransit under contract to Metro. There were two types of rides: Demand Rides and Will Call rides. Demand rides were rides with a pick up location, a destination and a pick up return time. Dialysis set up rides on a demand basis since they know how long people will be on the machines and people get better service if they have a scheduled pick up.

On the rare occasion where a person had a complication, the trip was turned into a Will Call ride to transport the person to the hospital and a Will Call ride for them to return home. They did this since LiftLine's policy was to always provide a means to return if they have taken a person somewhere. This return ride was not always needed since many times a family member provided the ride home from the hospital.

With the new system, it's possible that the person could receive a ride with a medical voucher on LiftLine if they were eligible. However, LiftLine would want to share responsibility for the return ride with Metro since the person took the initial ride on ADA. This round trip now has three legs instead of only two.

Key points in the lengthy discussion that ensued:

- Could medical vouchers be used in such a situation?
- Could ParaCruz provide same day service? Is there a rationale for the current policy which prevents it?
- Metro staff responded that it's a matter of the resource and cost implications, along with the fact that it's not Metro's current adopted policy and it's not required by the ADA.
- Since the ride was scheduled in advance and only the destination was changed, is this really a same day ride? Could the Metro board look at a change in policy (or more flexibility) to allow for a change in destination in emergency situations?
- The ParaCruz system is complementary to the fixed route bus. This may require a different system. Public transit is not set up to handle unforeseen circumstances.
- The number of rides that fall into this category are actually quite few.
- Not asking for policy change at this point. Want more analysis about options, extent of the problem, how many rides like this are taken each month, what are the cost implications etc...
- Could Metro be more flexible within the existing system, possibly incorporating someone with same day ride changes into an existing ride like LiftLine does?
- Several members expressed an interest in seeing Metro look into and prepare a report about the problem of meeting unanticipated same day service needs and identify options for resolution (possibly within the existing system.) Want to see a shift in approach aimed at solving a problem rather than let "policy" be a reason not to attempt to work it out.
- Metro staff said they are talking with lots of people and learning something new everyday. Met with 18 different groups in advance of the transition. Happy to come back at next meeting with more information on this issue of same day changes.

A motion was made (Kempf/Timberlake) to request that Metro review their policy regarding necessary same day destination changes to previously scheduled paratransit service, for example, dialysis.

Ms. Timberlake proposed a friendly amendment to the motion. Not just to review the Metro policy, but also to analyze potential criteria or scheduling change solutions that could address emergency, same day change needs and report back at the next meeting. Staff could propose criteria that would be sufficient to broaden the net.

The Chair clarified the intent of the motion: To have Metro staff return at the next meeting with a report about same day rides that differentiates different kinds of same day service, some handled one way and some another way, depending on the particular situation that

people find themselves in. The intent is to find some balance between the policy that works generally and the particular problems that clients have that can be serious. The Task Force is asking for a report about the issue, and options for what can be done about it, including the pros and cons of different ideas.

Congratulations were expressed to Metro for better customer service since taking over ParaCruz. More kudos were offered in terms of Metro's responsiveness to some of the concerns raised by the Task Force in terms of Stroke Center payments and accommodating large wheelchairs. This issue of same day ride changes is similar.

The Chair also complimented Metro with how they had responded to the Stoke Center's situation. He added that Metro had recognized that there was a real problem and that there were ways to solve it that didn't undermine the integrity of the system.

Due to staffing constraints, Mr. Baehr asked permission to break the request being made of him into two reports: 1) What happens at Satellite Dialysis and with emergency issues and 2) What happens in less than emergency situations. He can bring the first report addressing the emergency same day ride issue to the December meeting.

The motion passed with 10 voting for the motion and 3 voting against.

Mike Molesky said this issue, Scheduling Emergency Trips, was addressed 13 years ago in the paratransit design and agreement between SCMTD and the CTSA outlined in the Paratransit Implementation Plan. He was asked to make this information available to the task force.

Sam Storey spoke to item 6d.

- d. Numbers of people and contractual options for providing rides to people outside the ADA ParaCruz service area – 6 individuals were identified as out of the service area at the time of the transition. This includes both people who had been living outside of the area for some time and people newly out of the area due to recent bus service cuts. LiftLine is accommodating 4 of these people through existing programs so that their transportation is not disrupted. A pre-existing arrangement with Yellow Cab to provide service to the remaining two people was communicated to Metro.

Mr. Baehr indicated that due to district bus stops being moved, one if not both, of the remaining people are no longer outside of the service area and now qualify for ParaCruz.

5. Review and Discuss Task Force Goal 1: Funding Effectiveness and Efficiency

- a. Issues Identified from Initial Survey and during Previous Task Force Meetings

As requested by the Task Force, Karena Pushnik reported that staff had compiled an integrated matrix of the goals and issues identified through stakeholder surveys and items discussed at task force meetings thus far. The matrix includes key discussion points and space for short and long term recommendations.

The Chair suggested the following process for working on this item. Beginning with Goal #1, the task force will review each issue to see if there are recommendations and/or consensus on recommendations. Two lists will be created – one with approved recommendations and one with recommendations proposed, but not approved that could be revisited at a later date.

A question was raised about whether or not all of the issues needed to relate back to the larger goal. The Chair explained that the goals were an organizing tool for the issues and that recommendations don't necessarily need to tie back to goals. The objective is to come up with recommendations to address the issues.

The Task Force began the process of discussing and developing recommendations to address issues listed under Goal #1. Recommendations formulated so far will be distributed with the December Task Force Agenda Packet.

b. **Pick Up** List – Two items were referred to the pick-up list:

- Emergency same-day changes (such as destination) for ParaCruz rides
- Coordination and information and referral to other Transportation/Paratransit Services

7. **Confirm Next Meeting** – The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, December 15, 2004 from 2:00 – 5:00p.m. at the ABC Room of the Civic Auditorium. Agenda topics will be to continue discussion and developing recommendations for Goal 1: Funding Effectiveness and Efficiency and Goal 2: Customer Service and Satisfaction

8. **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 4:55pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tegan Speiser
Sr. Transportation Planner

\\Rtcserv1\Internal\E&DTAC\Paratransit\Task Force\Meetings\Minutes1104.doc