

Lift Line  
Watsonville Law Center  
Child Development Division  
Elderday Adult Day Health Care  
Child and Adult Care Food Program



Live Oak Family Resource Center  
La Manana Community Resources  
Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County  
WIC Women, Infants & Children Nutrition Program

**COMMUNITY BRIDGES**  
Puentes de la Comunidad

August 17, 2005

Pat Dellin, Acting Executive Director  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1523 Pacific Ave.  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911

RE: Response to Paratransit Coordination Task Force Draft Recommendations

Dear Ms. Dellin:

Community Bridges is pleased with the thorough work of the Paratransit Coordination Task Force and we fully embrace the goals developed by the Task Force. We are committed to implementing the recommendations designating Community Bridges as the responsible party, and we look forward to partnering with the RTC, Metro, and others to implement all other recommendations.

We appreciate your request for feedback on the document and would like to address the recommendations directly involving Community Bridges.

Goal 1, Issue I, rec. 3

It is very important that those in need of transportation services receive quality, accurate, and timely information. We are prepared to build on the current "cheat sheet" we use to provide such information to our callers.

Goal 1, Issue I, rec. 4

We strongly support the development of an in-house information and referral expert at Community Bridges and other service providers. Funding this expense is a constraint, however, staff may perform multiple functions for budgetary efficiency.

Goal 1, Issue I, rec. 5

We support high quality customer service training for our staff. In fact, Community Bridges Human Resources Department is already participating in a county-wide service integration project including customer service training to be shared with our program staff.

Goal 1, Issue I, rec. 6

See responses 4 and 5 above.

Goal 1, Issue II, rec. 4

We agree that Medi-Cal and Medicare recipients need greater consideration and support for paratransit services. We have and will continue to work with the Central Coast Alliance for Health to make



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transportation easier for their members. We also believe that medical transportation should be made a reimbursable expense for Medicare recipients.

Goal 1, Issue III, rec. 1

Information and referral is a key component of quality community services and we strongly support efforts to work with other agencies to improve these services. Within Community Bridges we provide information and referral to our eight programs.

Goal, 1, Issue III, rec. 2

We fully support a fair and balanced committee to address coordination between paratransit services.

Goal 1, Issue III, rec. 6

We support maintaining Community Bridges Lift Line as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency and appreciate the work of the Paratransit Coordination Task Force in helping to define the services the CTSA can provide to the community.

Goal 1, Issue III, rec. 7

Feeder paratransit services are an excellent way to maximize efficiency and ease of use. We are interested in working with other providers to facilitate the development of an organized feeder system. For example, clients could be brought into fixed route service centers or bus stops and connected with other in-county and out-of-county transportation providers.

Goal 1, Issue IV, rec. 1

Community Bridges has long advocated for co-mingling of paratransit rides to maximize efficiency. Co-mingling is an important for reducing the number of empty vehicles and miles through maximizing use of "deadhead" travel time, i.e. empty vehicle trips between pick-ups. Inefficiency hampers ease of use for clients, cost effectiveness for providers, a cleaner environment, and traffic flow in the community. We are prepared to continue discussions with Metro with the goal of co-mingling and improved efficiency.

Goal I, Issue IV, rec. 3

Please note a typo in this recommendation. It should read: "Include co-mingling in future discussions about the CTSA." NOT "...about the Community Bridges."

Goal 1, Issue VIII, rec. 1

We support establishment of an annual day to highlight issues and educate elected officials and key staff on paratransit matters. In addition to the agencies named as the responsible parties for the recommendation, we suggest this event be coordinated with the Human Care Alliance.

Goal 1, Issue VIII, rec. 2

We also support the idea of a central location or access point for specialized transportation information, and would be able to participate in such a project as our budget allows. We would also like to offer CTSA as a resource and referral telephone source for paratransit services in the county, contingent on securing funds for this service.

Goal 1, Issue XI, rec. 1

Following input from the E&DTAC, we have also recently reviewed ride and cost issues for the Medi-Cal/Alliance, medical voucher, and Taxi Scrip, and E&DTAC approved our proposal. In June we eliminated the voucher program in an effort to better manage medical rides and where possible direct them to other funding sources. Changes have also been made to the Taxi Scrip program to reduce the waiting list.

Goal 1, Issue XI, rec. 2

This recommendation needs further clarification. We have revised our TDA claim to clarify the relationship between ride type and cost.

Goal 1, Issue XI, rec. 3

In an effort to promote the Taxi Scrip program, we have already increased the TDA allocation for Scrip, and revamped the program to make it available to more individuals and eliminate the waiting list. We have also created a Lift Line brochure to help promote the Scrip program.

Goal 1, Issue XII, rec. 1

Since the ADA Paratransit service was transferred to Metro in November 2004, we have made a concerted effort to support ADA riders whose trip takes them outside the service area or who cannot ride with Metro for other reasons through our existing programs. We are prepared to enter discussions with Metro and other service providers to develop an appropriate administrative mechanism to provide one vehicle per trip, including the possibility of comingling and feeder systems. We believe this goal is important to paratransit riders and significant effort should be made to provide as seamless a ride as possible.

Goal 1, Issue XIV, rec. 2

We will continue to work with the Red Cross to provide inter-county medical transportation. This arrangement has worked well for us for many years and we hope to maintain it.

Goal 2, Issue I, rec. 1

Our only co-pay program is the Taxi Scrip program which already offers a pre-pay option. There are no co-pay requirements for our other services.

Goal 2, Issue III, rec. 1

We heartily applaud this recommendation for all paratransit service providers to distribute to clients a customer guide or "Bill of Rights." At Community Bridges the creation of such a guide has begun, including a mechanism for riders to provide feedback and suggestions.

Goal 2, Issue III, rec. 2

We highly value input on our services from our riders. We recommend working with the Seniors Council and E&DTAC as part of their needs assessment process to solicit feedback from paratransit riders. However, we believe that client input should be sought year round. We provide such opportunities through our monthly board of directors meetings, comment slips on vehicles, promotion of our Lift Line telephone number, and a formalized client complaint procedure including a complaint form and quality assurance staff member.

Goal 2, Issue IV, rec 1

Our dispatchers currently call and will continue to call riders if the pickup is outside the ready window, when possible. We view this as an important part of our customer service. If the client is delivered to an appointment late, we have systems in place to adjust the pick-up time for that rider.

Goal 2, Issue V, rec. 1

We will continue to prioritize funding for low-income individuals that have no other avenues for funded rides.

Goal 2, Issue VI, rec. 4

We are interested in developing mechanisms to assure that policy-making boards stay apprised of community concerns regarding paratransportation. While some mechanisms currently exist, for example the E&DTAC and the Metro Advisory Committee, we welcome creative ideas to improve and implement avenues for input.

Goal 2, Issue VII, rec. 1

We would be pleased to participate in a public forum to solicit input from riders on our services, however, we emphasize that this input should be sought year-round by providers.

Goal 2, Issue VIII, rec. 1

We have already revamped the Taxi Scrip program with the intention of increasing our marketing of this program including an annual review of clients to confirm their eligibility and interest in the program.

Goal 2, Issue VIII, rec. 2

We have already shifted TDA funds to help expand the Taxi Scrip program. Further expansion of the program would be contingent on increased funding.

Goal 2, Issue X, rec. 2

We are interested in discussing emergency ride home services with other providers and the RTC.

Goal 2, Issue X, rec: 3

Current Community Bridges Lift Line policy is designed to make sure that no client is stranded on a trip without a ride home.

Goal 2, Issue X, rec. 4

We are interested in exploring the possibility of providing same-day ride changes. Our new scheduling technology and Mobile Data Computers make this option more feasible than it had been in the past.

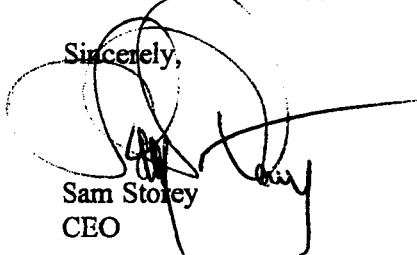
Goal 3, rec. 1

Community Bridges currently meets all legal mandates relating to our transportation services and is strongly committed to continue to meet those standards.

All of our feedback provided here for the Task Force recommendations is positive. In order to provide the best possible service to the community, we are committed to a client-based perspective making the most of efficiency, accessibility, customer service, and independence for the senior and disabled community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these responses.

Sincerely,



Sam Storey  
CEO