

Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee

MEETING AGENDA

July 21, 2015, 1:30-3:00 PM**

Sonoma County Transportation Authority
SCTA Large Conference Room
490 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 206
Santa Rosa, California 95401

ITEM

1. Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Meeting Notes: May 19, 2015 – **DISCUSSION / ACTION***
4. Roundtable Updates
 - 4.1. Transit / Paratransit Operators
 - 4.2. Other Entities
5. Moving Forward 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Draft ADA Section – Staff Report – Discussion*
6. Articles of interest
 - 6.1. Independence Day For Americans With Disabilities, NPR - <http://www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/06/19/415436391/independence-day-for-americans-with-disabilities>
 - 6.1. The Challenges Of Wheelchair Securement: Searching For Solutions, National Center for Transit Research - <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/pdf/Wheelchair%20Securement.pdf>
7. Other Business / Comments / Announcements
8. Adjourn – **ACTION**

*Materials attached

The next **SCTA** meeting will be held September 14, 2015
The next **TPCC** meeting will be held September 15, 2015

Copies of the full Agenda Packet are available at www.sctainfo.org.

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TRANSIT PARATRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Meeting Notes of May 19, 2015

ITEM

1. Introductions

Meeting called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Stan Gow in Chair Dennis Battenberg's absence.

TPCC Member Attendees: Stan Gow, Vice Chair; Jodi Curtis, Sonoma County Transit; Tracy Repp, Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging; Terry Scussel, Whistlestop; Matthew Wilcox, Santa Rosa CityBus.

Guests: Michael Ivory, MPS Consulting; Dubii Lechuga, citizen; Linda Picton, Mental Health Coalition of Sonoma County.

Staff: Nina Donofrio, Dana Turr y.

2. Public Comment

Dubii Lechuga reported on recent incidents at the Transit Mall, including the collapse of a woman needing medical attention and the slow response by paramedics and Transit Mall staff. She also stated that there have been incidents of people reaching into and trying to steal from the backpacks and bags of the disabled. She cited cases of rude behavior by the staff of the Transit Mall.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes: March 17, 2015 – **DISCUSSION / ACTION***

Approved as submitted.

4. Roundtable Updates

4.1. Transit / Paratransit Operators

Sonoma County Transit: Jodi Curtis announced that staff is still awaiting delivery of 30 and 40 ft. buses.

The free ride program for veterans and students has stabilized to approximately 900-1000 per day.

Ridership for fixed route service has decreased overall this year. Paratransit ridership is up by approximately 7%.

Whistlestop: Terry Scussel reported on behalf of Golden Gate Transit that intercounty transit has seen an increase. On-time performance has been at 90% for the past six months.

In Marin County, On the Move went out of business. They owned three taxi companies (Yellow Cab, Belair and Marin Taxi) and closed without notice, leaving 177 displaced without rides. Most of these rides are being provided now by family members, other agencies, or paratransit. On the Move provided 50% of the subsidized Catch a Ride taxi service.

Mr. Scussel reported that Uber and Lyft are of limited assistance in providing service for the disabled, due to their lack of wheelchair access for vehicles, and also noted the lack of transit service.

Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging: Tracy Repp reported that staff had a Request for Proposal with Older Americans Act funding. They are finishing the contracting for this and now have new volunteer driver programs. These are the Sebastopol area Senior Center Volunteer Driver Program; I Ride, in Petaluma, through Petaluma People Services; Vintage House LIMO in Sonoma; and Catholic Charities



is implementing a pilot program to get to their services for a small section of Santa Rosa; from Windsor to Rohnert Park and Roseland to Bennett Valley. Service will be ramping up in Cloverdale but receipt of this grant funding is not anticipated until 2016, and service is anticipated possibly at the Rohnert Park Senior Center. Scheduling for all these volunteer services will be on the same platform for scheduling software, Assisted Rides.

Santa Rosa CityBus: Matthew Wilcox, the new Transit Planner, reported that staff is renewing the contract for paratransit service with the current vendor, who won the recent bid for service.

Fixed route ridership has decreased 6% and paratransit service has remained relatively flat.

Public outreach has been completed for the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) for the fixed route service. Staff is reviewing information with the consultant and developing service plans. Reports to the public will be forthcoming.

MPS Consulting: Michael Ivory reported that the Area Agency on Aging has grant funding for a pilot voucher program. An ad hoc group of these vendors has been established. This will help in handling some trips for various agencies; e.g., Sonoma County Paratransit, Vintage House, F.I.S.H., Earle Baum Center for the Blind, Vet Connect, and others.

Tracy Repp explained that grant funding currently supports MPS Consulting services, a very part-time mobility management position and a small amount is available for the voucher program; when the larger allocation is received in July 2016 more substantial funding will be available for the voucher programs.

Discussion followed regarding whether the pilot program will extend beyond 2015. This is uncertain and will be determined by the Board of Supervisors. In July staff will be providing the Board an update as to progress of the program.

4.2. Other Entities

5. Planning Activities

5.1. Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update – Discussion

Ms. Turréy reported that all projects have been received for the project list. Staff is working on the content update. A request for information has been submitted to all paratransit operators; Ms. Turréy noted that she would be in contact with Tracy Repp regarding additional information about the Area Agency on Aging's volunteer program. She said she would also be contacting transit operators to get more information on fixed route service.

5.2. Short Range Transit Plan Coordination – Discussion

Ms. Turréy reported that the SCTA has been tasked with developing a coordinated appendix to all transit operators for the SRTP. It will document areas of coordination of service between transit operators and new initiatives that are planned. Some items specifically address paratransit service.

6. Other Business / Comments / Announcements

Mr. Ivory announced that the Sonoma Access website is being upgraded and discussions are under way regarding the possibility of making this available as a mobile application. Plans are to have 2-1-1 Sonoma service linked with Sonoma Access.

The Sonoma Access consortium would like to conduct a survey for holding a symposium with community leaders. This will address coordination of transportation, and is likely to take place in September.

Ms. Lechuga confirmed with Mr. Ivory that when the website is upgraded it will be tested by the technology group at the Earle Baum Center.

Ms. Curtis added that if student bus pass holders have the spring sticker for Santa Rosa Junior College on their pass it will still be honored for free service through the summer.

Ms. Curtis announced that Clipper service is expected to be implemented late this year or early next year. This will result in a change in the fare structure and zone structure.

Ms. Curtis next reported that the Next Bus AVL system is in the process of being installed in vehicles and is anticipated to be operational by the end of the year.

7. Adjourn – ACTION
2:25 p.m.

Staff Report

To: Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee
From: Dana Turrey, Transportation Planner
Item: Moving Forward 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Draft ADA Section
Date: July 21, 2015

Issue:

What is the status of the draft Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) section in the Moving Forward 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Plan?

Background:

The Moving Forward 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Plan includes a chapter focusing on existing conditions of the transportation system in Sonoma County. This chapter includes a section addressing the ADA, paratransit, and other mobility services. The draft language is included below for review by the Committee.

Draft ADA Section:

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. This civil rights legislation mandates equal opportunity in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and places of public accommodation for people with disabilities. As a result, pedestrian facilities are required to accommodate wheel chair use, transit must be accessible, and paratransit, or door to door service, must be provided for the elderly and severely disabled.

PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Transit agencies are required to provide complementary paratransit service to persons unable to use the fixed-route system when operating fixed-route transportation service for the general public. Paratransit service must be comparable to the public transit operator's fixed-route service regarding the following service criteria: comparable response time, similar fares, same geographic area of service, no restriction of trip purpose, equal availability of information, and no constraints on capacity.

All three Sonoma County bus agencies now conduct in-person eligibility assessments for applicants seeking paratransit service. These assessments have replaced the previous paper application process and has improved consistency in the eligibility certification process throughout Sonoma County.

Santa Rosa currently contracts with MV Transportation to provide a curb-to-curb paratransit service that will deliver patrons anywhere within the city limits. Transfer arrangements can be made with Whistlestop Wheels or Volunteer Wheels in the event a scheduled trip destination is outside of Santa Rosa city limits.

In Fiscal Year 2015, Santa Rosa's paratransit service carried an average of 191 passengers per weekday and averaged 2.5 weekday passengers per revenue hour. Paratransit ridership and

productivity has remained relatively flat over the last several years. Santa Rosa Paratransit served 99% of trips within 30 minutes of the scheduled pick-up time during FY 2011, which exceeded its standard of greater than 95%. Santa Rosa Transit's eleven bus and two minivan paratransit fleet is equipped with a full video security system ensuring both increased security and levels of responsibility. CityBus employs thirteen paratransit vehicle operators and uses Trapeze scheduling software to allow increased scheduling efficiency and enhance on-time performance.

Petaluma contracts with MV Transportation to provide door-to-door ADA paratransit services. In FY 2015, Petaluma Paratransit transported approximately 2,089 monthly passengers and averaged 2.88 passengers carried per revenue hour, which is a slight increase from FY 2012. With a six vehicle paratransit fleet, ten vehicle operators, and manageable trip distances, Petaluma Paratransit is able to accommodate most same day requests while enhancing, rather than compromising, productivity. Petaluma Paratransit operates the same time span as the fixed route and provides rides to eligible persons to and from any location in the Petaluma Urbanized Area, regardless of the proximity to active fixed route bus service. Petaluma Paratransit is able to provide this "premium" ADA service while effectively balancing the passenger need and service performance. City staff and MV Transportation work closely together to outreach to the community and manage mobility in a coordinated manner. The City of Petaluma currently uses Trapeze NOVUS scheduling software and is researching new software options.

Sonoma County paratransit offers countywide intercity service as well as local service within the cities of Healdsburg, Windsor, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and the unincorporated communities located in the Sonoma Valley area and the Russian River area. Cloverdale Transit's route 68, which is operated by the City of Cloverdale, provides a "deviated fixed-route" service. This means that route 68 offers door-to-door paratransit service, upon request, within the Cloverdale city limits by deviating, if necessary, from its normal fixed-route schedule. Route 95, operated under contract by Mendocino Transit Authority, is not required to provide ADA paratransit service because it is considered limited peak commute service. Annual paratransit ridership has increased consistently over the past several years, while passengers per revenue vehicle hour has declined slightly. Total annual paratransit ridership for FY 2012 was 43,377 trips, which is an increase of nearly 19 percent since FY 2010.

Sonoma County contracts with the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County to provide paratransit service through Volunteer Wheels in a service area and during service hours comparable to Sonoma County Transit's fixed-route system. Volunteer Wheels operates a combination of lift-equipped mini-buses and sedans provided by the County, which complement each other depending on the demand for service. In 2012 the Volunteer Center employed twenty-nine persons including paratransit drivers, reservationists, schedulers, road supervisors, and management staff.

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) offers inter-county demand-response paratransit service within a ¾ mile radius of all non-commute Golden Gate Transit routes through Marin Transit's current contracted paratransit provider, Whistlestop. GGBHTD has arrangements with Sonoma County Transit, Petaluma Transit and Santa Rosa City Bus to provide a limited amount of intra-county paratransit coverage during very early morning or very late evening hours, when those providers are not in operation.

Golden Gate Transit currently owns fourteen paratransit vehicles which are operated by Whistlestop. Annual paratransit ridership declined by 2.4 percent, from 9,377 to 9,152, between FY 10/11 and FY 12/13, while the vehicle service hours increased by about 4.5 percent. This trend in the balance between ridership and passengers per vehicle service hour could pose a challenge to productivity standards if it continues.

Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station facilities and bicycle/pedestrian improvements, will meet ADA standards and provide transfer opportunities between modes per Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements.

OTHER MOBILITY SERVICES

Volunteer driver programs also help meet the transportation needs of disabled and senior residents in Sonoma County. Volunteers currently provide rides for medical and social service appointments for seniors, visually challenged seniors, and others who are unable to use local transportation systems. The Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging currently manages several mobility programs that support the expansion of existing volunteer driver programs and establishment of new programs, expand taxi voucher programs, and provide mobility planning. Volunteer driver programs currently supported by the Area Agency on Aging include the Sebastopol Area Senior Center, iRide program through Petaluma People Services Center, Catholic Charities' volunteer driver program, and Vintage House LIMO program. A transition to a uniform scheduling software platform, Assisted Rides, for these volunteer services is underway. Friends in Sonoma Helping (F.I.S.H.) also runs a volunteer driver program.

Information about mobility options that address the needs of disabled and senior residents of Sonoma County can be found through Sonoma Access (www.sonomaaccess.org), a one-stop website and referral center. Sonoma Access was established by the City of Santa Rosa and is now administered through the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging with funding from a federal New Freedom grant and a federal Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant. Website improvements to enhance user experience are underway.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the Committee direct any comments on the text draft ADA section above to Dana Turr y, dturrey@sctainfo.org.