

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COMMITTEE (RTCC) MEETING

Date: February 6, 2023

Start Time: 2:00 PM

End Time: 3:40 PM

Facilitator: Carrie Ward, Senior Transportation Planner

Study/Project/Task: 6.12 Human Service Agency Transportation

Attendance:

Name	Representing
Audrey Burneson	NYS DOT Region 1 Planning Group
Gretchen Moore	Albany Guardian Society
JoAnne Spoto Decker	Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services
Peggy Osborne	Town of Bethlehem Senior Services
Andy Gilpin	CAPTAIN Community Human Services Saratoga County
Larry Mathews	Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services
Peter Crast O'Donnolly	The Food Pantries
Kim St. Cyr	Eddy Senior Care (St Peter's) in Rotterdam
Brian Cregin	Albany Center for Disability Services
Kathleen Bell	EPA Region 2
Mary Forman	Schenectady County Senior and Long Term Care Services
Deb Engel	Town of New Scotland
Angelina Searles	Town of Colonie Senior Services
Bob O'Connell	CAPTAIN Community Human Services
Judy Dahoda-Taylor	Saratoga County Department of Aging & Youth Services
Diane Conroy-LaCivita	Colonie Senior Services
Marlene Hildenbrandt	Catholic Charities Senior & Caregiver Support Services
Mark Castiglione	CDRPC
Rima Shamieh	CDTC

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome/Introductions

2. Acceptance of prior meeting notes

No changes

3. Colonie Senior Service Centers grant from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

Diane Conroy-LaCivita provided an update on the grant project. Colonie Seniors has been working with a committee including the communities of Menands and Watervliet and volunteers to launch a pilot program. It's working out very well, 50 people have registered to use the service in Watervliet. Grant funding runs through June, 2023. Watervliet has already committed money for the program to continue there.

4. Presentation: Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services

JoAnne Spoto Decker provided a thorough discussion of transportation services supported by Onondaga County's Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services. A door-through-door transportation program had been run by the County Health Department until 2009. At that time there was interest in having other County departments take over the program, and they applied for FTA 5317 money. Over the years the County has obtained \$6-7M exclusively for supporting the transportation needs of seniors and people over 18 who have a disability. We worked with multiple transportation programs that were already existing but small. They were operated through entities such as Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and others, and were located in the City of Syracuse as well as other areas of Onondaga County. They called the new umbrella program "United We Ride." Town councilors and small organizations came together and began to start new transportation programs in more rural areas.

We receive the 5310 funding from NYSDOT and match it with funds from other County Departments like Adult Protective Services, Department of the Aging, and others, in addition to local contributions, including from volunteer drivers. The program is concentrated on low-income areas, the Onondaga Nation (tribal nation south of Syracuse) and close suburbs. Now we have 15 providers. Pre-COVID, we had 42,000-45,000 rides annually. In 2019 providers travelled enough miles to circumnavigate the globe 7.5 times. We stay away from using Uber or Lyft due to liability concerns and also because of the technology gap. We want to know who the drivers are.

Rural areas: The 15 entities are mostly clustered in Syracuse. Outside Syracuse the county becomes rural in character quickly. The Syracuse city-based entities are all attached to a non-profit entity like Salvation Army or the Huntington Family Center that serve the hardest-to-serve populations. In the more rural areas of the county, the entities are not situated within an agency, they're embedded in the community instead. Still not all parts of the county are covered in the rural areas.

Monitoring process: Larry manages the transportation programs for the Department and noted that they do annual monitoring of these entities to ensure that they do what they're supposed to be doing, ensure that they're staffing their programs adequately, that they have the buses they're supposed to have, etc. They report monthly on how many riders they served and new riders, and we send those reports to NYSDOT.

Three programs are more directly supervised out of our office – medical transportation: Suburban transportation; Highland transportation, which provides medical escort (support for outpatient procedures); and Centro, which provides 2-3 rides/month, either medical or something else like to a grocery store. The cost for these rides is about \$24, which is a tiny fraction of what medical transportation costs.

Question: What is your reimbursable rate based on, is it miles- or trip-based? We have a contract with each provider, allocate a lump sum of funding to each transportation program and adjust as needed, so we don't reimburse in that way. Generally, the lump sum is pretty accurate for their needs because we get the monthly report on the number of rides they provide (as previously mentioned above). We do not issue an RFP for our program. Instead, we have letters of support that we submit as part of applying for the grants. If the state approves the vendors, we use them (which they always have). We have never had a problem with audits.

Question: Who schedules the rides? Each of the entities schedule their own rides. Some of the ride scheduling starts with Larry, such as the ones for people who need outpatient procedures done. It's easier for the Point of Contact to be the people who are providing the service.

Question: What is the annual budget? How much from 5310 annually? 5317 back in the day was \$100-200k. We now use 5310 funding at about \$490-\$500k, but we have to match 100% (it's a 50/50 match program). We match through like-services through Office for the Aging services budget and volunteer hours (match in-kind). We also work with partners to help make capital purchases through 5310, so together we use 5310 for capital and operating costs.

Newer initiatives we will be working on will focus on New American Seniors and refugee seniors. Our county is lucky to be home to many New Americans and refugee communities so we are seeking ways to better support them.

5. Coordinated Plan update

a. Photos of vehicles/riders/drivers

We've been using the same photos for the plan for several plan iterations, so please send new photos so we can update the images we use.

b. Subcommittee volunteers

Carrie is looking for volunteers that she can bring drafts and questions to so she doesn't have to take them to the entire group and consume time at general Committee meetings on plan development. Judy Dahoda-Taylor volunteered.

c. Review draft public surveys

- Titled the survey just "Transportation Survey" rather than Senior and Disabled Transportation Survey because each group takes issue with being lumped in with other.

- Income groups coincide with census categories.
- Remove question regarding temporary disability? YES
- Suggestion to distribute through housing authorities – good idea, will do that.
- Additional suggestions on how to ensure we get responses from low income people – let Carrie know. There will also be an online version. Use Meals on Wheels? Although by definition they are homebound. Could put it in newsletters. If you ask to put in a newsletter, make sure you allow them enough time to get it in, some are bi-monthly.

d. Any other client or public surveys happening? (that we might want to coordinate with?)

No comments

e. Review draft provider survey

- Providers survey will be online this time because it is easier to process data. If anyone would like a paper copy, let Carrie know.
- Survey typo: it's NYS OFFICE for the Aging, not Department for Aging
- Add Medicaid as a source of funding, as well as other agency funding
- For who is eligible, specify age, along with "older adults" - don't say "senior citizen", and include geographic restrictions
- Trip purpose: Make senior center and social adult day programs as separate categories, add banking. Add Other field (where they could put casino, beauty parlor)
- Provide rides from: list each County for those servicing whole counties
- The Grid with "From Hour" and "To Hour" is confusing and could just list one timeframe – Carrie will rework it
- There was discussion about the use of the word "denied" for requested rides that weren't provided. One solution is to change to "unmet".
- In asking why rides weren't met, include appropriateness of service (ie for people who have dementia), and destinations that are too far.

f. Issues in 5-30 years?

- Newer tech things coming out?
- If you think of anything, we can try to write that into the document.
- Increase in population we're going to have. Large cohort, and they want to age in place. A big challenge is going to be how to provide services for people who want to live in their homes. Right now there are few affordable housing options for people who want to extend their independence. There aren't enough housing types. Not enough congregate living arrangements. Also, some senior living facilities are poorly sited – not accessible by bus or walking (for example, some in Malta).

g. Data to include:

Demographic data previously included were:

- Total Population: Region, Counties, Largest Cities
- Age Characteristics
- People with Disabilities
- Veterans
- Low-Income Households
- Zero-Vehicle Households
- Limited English Proficiency

Important destinations previously included were

- Adult care facilities
- Dialysis centers
- Nursing homes
- Hospitals
- Shopping centers
- Places of lower income employment

The group discussed adding consideration of density of medical facilities as well as other types of shopping that relate to non-medical social determinants of health, like pharmacies, banks, beauty parlors, grocery stores, etc.

A subcommittee will be helpful on this topic.

6. Updates

a. Saratoga County Transportation Taskforce

Looking at social determinants of health and working with CDTA and other stakeholders to bring people to corridors with amenities and resources in order to improve their quality of life.

b. City of Albany pedestrian infrastructure Transition Plan – for public review

The plan was released and is available for review and comment. Newly funded plans were funded in the City of Troy, Town of Guilderland and Village of Ballston Spa.

7. Announcements:

- **Here Come the Boomers**, a series on aging in Saratoga County, will cover topics like how to navigate the system, how to support caregivers, and transportation. RTCC members are among presenters. Sponsored by Captain Community Human Services. Will be held on May 18.
- **Albany Guardian Society is updating its Housing Directory.** If you know of any senior housing facilities that have newly opened in the past couple years, let us know. Next year we'll be updating the transportation directory.
- No updates from NYSDOT on 5310

8. Next Meeting: To be held on May 8, 2pm