



# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COMMITTEE (RTCC)

**Date:** August 14, 2023

**Start Time:** 2:00 pm

**End Time:** 3:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Carrie Ward, Senior Transportation Planner

**Study/Project/Task:** 6.12: Human Services Agency Transportation

## **Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Adam Leach	Catholic Charities Senior & Caregiver Support Services
Audrey Burneson	NYS DOT Region 1
Mary Forman	Schenectady County Long Term Care Services
Brian Monaco	Center for Disability Services
Jennifer Rice	Healthy Alliance
Mark Castiglione	CDRPC
Patrick Curran	Albany County Executive Office
Ethan Warren	CDTA
Judy Dahoda-Taylor	Saratoga County Department of Aging and Youth Services
Gretchen Moore	Albany Guardian Society
Rima Shamieh	Capital Region Transportation Council
Peggy Osborne	Town of Bethlehem Department of Senior Services
Angelina Searles	Town of Colonie
Denise Figueroa	Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley

## **Agenda Items:**

### **1. Welcome/Introductions**

### **2. Acceptance of May 8, 2023 meeting notes**

Accepted with no changes.

### **3. Presentation: Draft Coordinated Plan, including public survey results and recommendations**

The Transportation Council updates its Coordinated plan every 4 years. It's a federally required document. The plan is technically part of our metropolitan transportation plan. We're planning to have a full draft done and released for public review at the October Planning Committee meeting. Pieces are in this presentation. Today we're looking for feedback. Once the full draft is complete, we will circulate it for RTCC review and comments before internal Transportation Council review and public release.

#### **a. STAR % of CDTA fixed-route – trip purposes?**

STAR trips rebounded quickly after COVID. Any thoughts on why? (graphs reflect CDTA FY, so 2020 only has a few weeks of COVID impact, most of COVID impact is reflected in 2021)

Current CDTA ridership is at about 90%, but STAR is at 100%+. COVID-era STAR policy was to not share rides, but that policy is revoked, so that doesn't explain the current numbers. Could it be because other transportation service providers shut down? Some organizations, including some that rely on volunteer drivers, closed or reduced the number of rides. Capitaland Taxi also shut down shortly before the COVID shutdowns.

It was suggested that STAR ridership may have fewer options - for example, they may be less likely to bicycle.

FLEX usage has increased rapidly.

#### **b. "Can't get to medical" zip codes map**

Rima noted that she created this map to try to better determine why people can't get to medical appointments, since people who have a disability should be eligible for Medicaid transportation to medical appointments. Medicaid transportation isn't always easy to use, and people who can't get to medical appointments often don't have Medicaid. Generally, providers prioritize medical appointments, but people may not be aware of services available to them.

It was suggested to look at the data to see if it gives meaningful information on why people can't get to medical/dental appointments. [Note: following the meeting, staff reviewed the data and determined that the results don't suggest any patterns.]

#### **c. Age by senior centers**

There is variation in the average ages at senior center congregate meal sites. Is there anything we want to say about age at senior centers? Does a more detailed breakdown provide any insights useful for the report? No, so we will leave it out.

#### **d. Race/ethnicity:**

Reported data from all surveys, not only senior centers.

#### **e. Provider surveys**

Only 6 responses. One provides information but no services, one is in Washington County but goes into Saratoga County. So, really only 4 providers in our region responded.

Why was the response rate so low? We are aware that some programs closed, and there are driver shortages, so staff may not have time/bandwidth to fill out the survey. Any other insights on why so few responses? Should we do a shorter survey next time?

Committee feedback:

- Issue more reminders. Multiple people indicated that they forgot about it and/or would have benefitted from more reminders.
- Another committee member commented that he couldn't remember whether he filled it out or not, because there is so much going on.
- Follow up phone calls would have helped.
- Consider administering the survey over the phone.
- People want to fill it out but need more prodding.
- Don't go back to mailing a paper survey, that won't help. The paper copy will just get lost/buried.

**f. Recent Initiatives?**

The following initiatives are new:

- National Aging and Disability transportation Center Grant – Colonie expanded services into Watervliet and Menands, just finished that project.
- Saratoga County established a transportation task force and is looking at launching a collaborative approach to transportation for low-income individuals and households, senior citizens, and other community members.
- NYS Master Plan for the Aging

**g. Progress on Strategies and Actions**

Smart growth and coordination items should remain, even though progress hasn't been noticeable in the past 4 years. The Town of Bethlehem does coordinate on a small scale.

Smart growth: Audrey says that NYSDOT provides SEQR input encouraging agencies and companies building facilities and housing, including senior housing, to locate in accessible locations. They have no regulatory authority. SEQR is a process to identify impacts and mitigation measures.

The Guardian Society is not planning to begin updating the Transportation Guide until 2024.

Our region is experiencing an increase in its aging population, 30% increase in the past 10 years. This should be added into the section on issues and opportunities.

Some areas of the state are struggling to engage volunteer drivers because of car insurance issues (topic came up in NYS Master Plan for the Aging meetings), but this doesn't seem to be as big of an issue here. Town of Bethlehem has volunteer drivers who drive its vehicles and they are covered under employee insurance.

Ethan wants to see more on barriers to access to transportation relative to housing choice; seniors can't always live where mobility is easy/non-car mobility is easy. Mark noted that CDRPC is doing an analysis of where multi-family housing (MFH) is being constructed. Preliminary findings are that MFH is being constructed in suburban areas just as much as urban areas. He is looking to tie this into the NYS Master Plan for the Aging.

**h. Needs Gaps Barriers**

**Needs:** Keep the same but remove the insurance item

**Gaps:** We know that some providers stopped their services, but do we know if and how that demand is being filled? Brian shared that he used to be able to help school districts, but he can't help now because of staffing constraints. Schenectady ARC closed their service so now the programs that those people attend are helping with transportation. It is unclear if this is the case for all the services that closed.

**Barriers:** Please send Carrie any additional barriers to coordination that should be included.

**i. New Strategies and Actions**

**4. Section 5310 funding**

**a. Previous grants – sent out 2022 award letters, working with FTA to get grants approved**

Federal awards were made and are higher but matches are also higher. Plan for the higher match!

**b. Upcoming solicitation – anticipated this fall, after 5311 is released**

**5. Updates**

**a. City of Troy, Village of Ballston Spa, Town of Guilderland pedestrian infrastructure Transition Plans**

Data collection is underway now, public input should begin in the fall and will be especially useful for priorities (which areas to fix first).

**b. Safe Streets and Roads for All grant**

The Transportation Council received this grant in coordination with some local governments. The goal is to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes. We plan to include demonstration projects and put together action plans for reducing the speed limit in some municipalities to 25 mph.

**c. Transportation Council [2023 Local Road Safety Education & Encouragement Program](#)**

Rima summarized the program, solicitation is open until November 3

**d. Albany Guardian Society/Capital Pride Center LGBTQ+ Elder Ally booklet**

The guide is almost finished

**6. Announcements:**

- a. The Guardian Society is hosting Aging with Pride: A learning exchange for professionals and caregivers on September 19<sup>th</sup>, where they are planning to launch the LGBTQ+ Elder Ally guide. Register early as capacity is limited (45-50 people). It's free. Learn how to be an ally! Carrie will send out the pdf flier after the meeting.

- b. NYS Master Plan for Aging – Carrie volunteered for the transportation subgroup. The timeline is for subcommittee reports in Jan 2024, a draft in July 2024, and the final report by Jan 2025.
- c. Submit topics or speaker ideas to Carrie for the November 13 RTCC meeting
- d. The draft Coordinated Plan will be released to the committee for comments in 1-2 weeks. It will then be released for public review and comment by the Transportation Council's Planning Committee at its October meeting.

**Next meeting:**

**Monday, November 13, 2pm**