

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
P. O. BOX 98 – DOWNIEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95936

Minutes: SSTAC Meeting – April 26, 2023

SSTAC Members Present: Bryan Davey, Sierra County Transportation Planner; Paul Cueto, Transit Representative, Sierra County Transportation Commission; Carolyn Widman, Transit Provider, Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County; Sandra Loving, Transit Provider, Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc., Joyce White, Transit Provider, Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc., Kathy Williams, Transit Provider; Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc., Dee Wallace, Transit User with Disability, Sam White, Transit User over 55; Lila Heuer, Sierra County District 2 Supervisor and Suzanne Smith, Executive Secretary, Sierra County Transportation Commission.

The meeting was conducted at Sierraville School, and telephonically, and was called to order by Bryan Davey.

Bryan Davey reviewed the purpose of the SSTAC and stated that it is set forth as a requirement in the Transportation Development Act and is an annual opportunity to coordinate and share with Social Services, transit providers and system users on efforts and issues about transit. The main objective of the meeting is to assess annually the identification of unmet transit needs and to confirm what needs are reasonable to meet during the next fiscal year.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the after-school transportation unmet need seems to be the same.

Carolyn Widman, Executive Director, Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County made a report regarding the services provided in the eastern County. Ms. Widman explained, although it may not be an exact definition of transit services, the Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County provide a critical part of transit services in making a human connection with the community organizing monthly activities. Ms. Widman expressed the importance of the transit services to get people out and about. Particularly since the isolation of the Covid pandemic there is a concern for the mental stability throughout the area. The essence of the services provided is to support social needs which is an essential and vital part of the community making that human connection. Ms. Widman appreciates the hard work it takes to make sure the trips serve as many purposes as possible.

Joyce White, Vice President, Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc., reported they have hired a new driver although, they still struggle with finding drivers. Identifying challenges for the Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc. in the western County is a lack of willing (or qualified) drivers. Ms. White stated that if there were more drivers available both vans would be in use every day based on requests. Ms. White continued to express the importance of services for Seniors who don't want to admit they need help.

Mr. Davey acknowledged the great job both transit service providers are doing molding a transit program to fit our needs.

Mr. Davey clarified transit services are strictly around transporting people that has been in place since transit service were enacted in 1974. Further stating we are a unique area and have a very good program with our transit services.

Mr. Davey reviewed the list of unmet transit needs that were identified in 2022 as follows:

- *Lack of available after school transportation for the school students who live outside of the communities*
- *Not enough transit available even with the great program that is run*
- *Need more vehicles, more drivers to meet increasing needs*
- *Difficult to integrate the services from Social Services due to confidentiality and other issues*
- *Fixed routes would be very difficult to set up and while desirable are not feasible.*
- *Not enough funding to meet the existing needs*
- *Public understanding of the transit program*

Mr. Davey briefly reviewed the funding sources for the transit program which include the Federal Transit Administration contribution of 1/4 % sales tax; and the State Transit Assistance funding. Mr. Davey reported that SCTC has received proposed budgets from both transit provider agencies for the next fiscal year that fit in with the determined amount of \$150,000 that is available for the program in FY 2023 and which will be divided between the 2 transit provider agencies.

Mr. Davey explained how the farebox works for the transit program. The Transit Providers are responsible to provide 10% match to the funding that comes through the Transit Program. If the farebox receipts do not come to 10%, the match will need to be made by the Transit Provider organizations. Mr. Davey clarified donations are acceptable.

Mr. Davey also read the previous definition of unmet needs and proposed a definition for the current year of what is reasonable to meet. The proposed definitions of “Unmet Needs” and those that are “Reasonable to Meet” were approved by consensus, unchanged from the previous year, as follows:

Unmet Needs

“A lack of available transportation-related services supported by adequate and reasonable findings which restrict or prevent movement of people within Sierra County as identified in the Regional Transportation Plan. Due to Sierra County’s geographical diversity, the cost of transit services are much higher than in an urban setting, insufficient funding and constrictive funding parameters are a need that has been identified as an unmet need. Priority **should** be given to the persons with disabilities and the elderly (defined as age fifty-five and older) who do not have available transportation or transit, due to physical or financial reasons, and to levels of local services not presently provided or which are not provided at a desirable level.”

The definition of Reasonable to Meet is as follows: The transit programs *as they currently exist* fulfill the County’s needs that are reasonable to meet for the upcoming fiscal year as

- a) Any transportation service that offers equitable access to all persons including the young, economically disadvantaged, elderly and disabled, that when evaluated against such criteria as equity, timing, feasibility, economy, community acceptance and cost effectiveness, that service can generate the required 10% fare box recovery match.

- b) A transportation system that when implemented, meets a ten percent (10%) fare box return and does not exceed a yearly total operating cost in transit funds of \$15 0,000.00. This amount is the total programmed by Sierra County Transportation Commission for operations of the transit services within Sierra County, to be divided between the geographic areas of Sierra County - east and west.

These definitions will be reflected in the Unmet Needs Resolution which will be presented to the Sierra County Transportation Commission on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 following the annual unmet needs hearing (to be conducted at 10:10 a.m.) for adoption.

With thanks to the SSTAC members for participating, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Suzanne Smith

