

Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton OR 97801 Room 114
Google Meet option
November 29, 2022 3:00PM

AC Members Present: Kim Beck (U.C. CDDP); Staci Kunz (transit consultant); Heidi Zeigler (DHS); Linda Carter (City of Pendleton)

AC Members Virtually: Teresa Dutcher (Chair); Jose Garcia (New Horizons); and JD Tovey (CTUIR/Kayak)

AC Members not in attendance: Jeremy Umbarger (Clearview Meditation) and Rod Harwood (GOHBI)

County Liaison: Megan Davchevski (Transit Coordinator) and Bob Waldher (Planning Director)

Public In-person: Karen Kendall (GEODC) and Teresa O'Halloran (Americorps Seniors)

Public Virtually: Laurel Sweeney (City of Milton Freewater) and Jessica Reker (Good Shepherd CareVan)

Chair Dutcher greeted the group and called the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee (UCTAC) meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes:

Kim moved to approve the November 7, 2022 minutes as presented. Staci seconded. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

*** JD Tovey joined virtually***

STIF Population Fund Applications:

Megan provided a brief overview of the two transportation project funding sources. The STF and STIF funds have been consolidated, but the senior/disabled projects (population fund) are still separated from the rest of the STIF funds. Today's meeting is regarding the population fund, or senior/disabled transportation projects. The key difference between these projects is whether or not the project is intended to benefit seniors and people with disabilities. Umatilla County's population fund estimate is \$417,666 for the two years and there is carryover in the amount of \$29,884.

There was also an overview of the Umatilla County Coordinated Human Services Plan (CHSP) Goals and the priority order. All projects funded in the STIF plan must align with the CHSP goals.

Project Presentations:

Foster Grandparents/Senior Companion: Teresa O'Halloran presented the project, they provide ride reimbursements and taxi tickets for senior transportation.

Staci asked how the program was open to the public? Teresa said they will help any senior with transportation. Volunteers are low income seniors. They also help people who have recently come out of surgery, and a lot of isolated seniors. The volunteers must be low income to receive the stipend, all volunteers get travel reimbursement. The Senior Companion program has a much greater need than the Foster Grandparent program.

Staci asked how they plan to expand the program? Teresa said they need to rebuild the program, they lost a lot of volunteers and seniors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community Counseling Solutions (healthcare agency) is the sponsor of the program, so the vaccine requirements applied to volunteers, this greatly effected their number of volunteers. Right now, they have 52 volunteers, prior to Covid, they had about 83 volunteers.

The federal funding in the application is the volunteer stipend.

Kim asked if they are currently receiving STF funds? Teresa said yes. Are they using all of their STF funds? Yes. Currently, the two programs received \$9,103 for the biennium. They also fundraise when they need to supplement the STF funds.

Staci asked why the project request increased? Teresa shared the federal mileage rate went up, and they are projecting to grow the program with more volunteers.

Teresa Dutcher stated that the Senior Companion program is clearly public transportation. She thinks the Foster Grandparents program is a great program, but asked is that program actually public transportation? Is the Senior Companion program a duplication of service in the Pendleton, Hermiston and Milton Freewater areas? These cities have taxi programs, is it possible that this is a duplication of service?

Teresa O'Halloran said they use the funds to the Senior Companion program first. She probably agrees that Foster Grandparent is not public transportation. She said the Senior Companion may not be a duplication of services because this service is not just a ride. It is someone to talk to, give a ride, remind a senior to take their pills, etc. If they lose funding it may just be a friendly phone call to the senior rather than the in-person companion that is not provided by a taxi.

Kim shared that she didn't think it was fair to ask applicants if their project is a duplication of service when the other programs are also asking for funding. Linda said the three cities are totally open to the public for seniors and people with disabilities, anyone can go and get a taxi ticket for a ride. This project does have a restriction, so does CareVan. Linda said it's not really public transit – it is a reimbursement. CareVan is restricted because it only provides rides to their facilities. The cities have no restrictions other than those placed by the State, either you are disabled or over 60 years old.

Teresa O'Halloran shared that they do reimburse individuals for subsidized taxi tickets.

Staci said their request has doubled from the last biennium. This would be about \$12/ride. This is because the federal mileage rate went up.

Jose Garcia joined virtually

Good Shepherd CareVan: Jessica Reker provided the project presentation. Good Shepherd operates 5 days a week, 10 hours a day, with three vehicles currently in operation. They have four paid employees and seven volunteers; these individuals do ride scheduling as well as providing the rides. About 80% of their monthly rides are seniors and veterans.

JD asked how many rides they were turning down a month? Jessica answered, 75 to 100. JD said their used to be a lot of coordination between Kayak for the Hart service and Good Shepherd, how much coordination is happening now? Jessica said the Connections Department helps people identify other options like Kayak when they are turned down a ride.

Staci asked what the 20% expansion would entail? Jessica said it would increase the hours of paid drivers, and run an additional vehicle. Volunteer hours are maxed out, employees have been brought on to increase the number of riders.

Teresa Dutcher asked how they could increase coordination instead of expanding? Jessica said she would need to look into data to see how Kayak could provide rides they turn down. Currently if they are unable to provide a ride they call the provider (doctor's office) to reschedule their appointment or cancel.

Linda asked how much the administrative costs were? The total budget is almost \$350,000 for only 15,000 rides. Jessica said the admin costs will go down since the program management has changed. Right now

they have a full time scheduler and four part time drivers. Linda asked what the previous award was? Megan said it was \$18,305 for each year or \$36,410 for the biennium.

Staci asked how the service is provided to the public? Jessica said anyone has access to the services if they are going to/from a Good Shepherd service, this is free. All of the vans are ADA accessible.

Heidi asked if Carevan has been successful in signing up through the brokerage for Medicaid rides? Jessica said not yet, they do not have the correct billing software.

Teresa asked what percentage of their patrons would qualify for brokerage? Jessica said not many. Probably less than 5%. A majority of their rides are Medicare clients, not Medicaid. Jessica's department does sign people up for Medicaid and Medicare and explore brokerage if it is an option.

Jose asked if they have a waiting list, and if yes how long is it? Jessica said they don't have a waiting list; a patient must have an appointment already scheduled. They recommend people call at least two weeks prior to their appointment to schedule a ride. Weekly appointments are scheduled about a month in advance.

City of Hermiston: Mark Morgan with the City wasn't online, Megan provided a brief overview. The City is asking for funding for the reduced fair senior/disabled taxi program and 5310 match. Last biennium they received \$58,254 for the reduced fare senior/disabled taxi ticket program.

Staci Kunz prepared the application for the City. Linda asked how the tickets are disbursed. Staci said folks have to qualify, and they go to City Hall to purchase tickets. It is not known if they can purchase as many tickets as they want. Heidi said they go out 5 miles from city limits.

Linda said she can see the duplication of service with the Hart service. Staci said some seniors can't ride the transit bus.

City of Milton Freewater: Laurel Sweeney presented the request. They previously received \$63,714 for the biennium. Laurel apologized for the confusion but the application wasn't quite accurate and she submitted a letter to the UCTAC explaining this. The City is not requesting any STF money for this biennium. She is only requesting payroll funds (STIF) and 5310 dollars. The City is requesting the 5310 match within the payroll funds.

Teresa asked if there isn't enough 5310 dollars, does she need to compensate with STF (population) funds? Laurel said they are requesting the "left over" 5310 funds, small-urban and the additional 20%. They may be a little short if that money is not available.

Teresa asked what happens if the additional 20% funding doesn't come? Megan shared that ODOT told Qualified Entities to include projects up to 120% of the allocation. If we do not get the additional 20%, ODOT said they will try to find the funding somewhere else. Teresa said ODOT has been faithful about coming up with funding somehow.

Linda said we should be awarding on 100% and acknowledge that everyone would like an additional 20%. Then everyone will get an extra 20%. Megan said if we don't build in the extra 20% we will not get it. Linda said we should have one award at 100% and one award at 120%. Megan clarified the extra 20% only applies to the 5310 projects, not the population fund projects. We are not yet evaluating the 5310 projects.

Kim asked if Milton-Freewater is not asking for population funds, how much are we short? Linda said we need to discuss 5310 before we move forward, especially because the Milton-Freewater application is late. ODOT sent an email that late applications will not be accepted. Megan said that Teresa Dutcher asked Angie (ODOT RTC) if ODOT accepts late applications. Angie responded that ODOT evaluates late applications on a case-by-case basis, and the email that Angie sent out earlier was probably unique to discretionary applications. Staci asked if all of Milton-Freewater applications were late? Megan said no, just the 5310 application.

Staci asked Laurel how many rides were provided in the last two years? Laurel said 3,835 senior/disabled taxi ticket rides. Linda asked how much the taxi program costs for two years? Laurel said the driver contract is \$160,000 for the two years, plus there is some administrative costs. Ridership has lowered significantly since Covid-19.

Linda asked how much they are requesting for 5310 funds? Laurel said \$161,000 for operations and administrative fees. Linda asked why they are not asking for STF dollars? Laurel thought everything was under one pot of money and that they would roll over the previous STIF money for the senior/disabled program. And the 5310 money was about what was available. She didn't realize STF projects were still broken out from the STIF plan.

Teresa asked what the rollover is, is it 5310 match? Laurel said the rollover is STIF match for other grants in the amount of \$60,000. Staci asked to go over the senior/disabled budget. It is about \$220,000 for two years for the senior/disabled program and 3,835 rides?

Laurel shared that the City will be conducting a system study to see what ridership needs are. Staci pointed out that on the application, the number of unduplicated rides was 5,000. But, the senior/disabled population for Milton-Freewater is only 1,824 unduplicated individuals. Laurel said this was likely a typo, and the numbers should have been swapped. Laurel will bring statistics to the meeting tomorrow. Staci asked what the \$60,000 not used for the taxi contract are used for, if the contract is \$160,000? Laurel said the contract hasn't increased in a few years, they are accounting for a 25% increase for fuel and other increases when the contract goes out to bid.

City of Pendleton: Karen Kendall with GEODC is the contracted transit coordinator for the City of Pendleton. Linda also works for Pendleton on this project. The previous biennium this project received \$72,817 for each year, total for two years \$145,634. These services have been around since 1977 or 1972. Ridership numbers for each transportation service were passed around the room. The City provides dial-a-ride services, subsidized taxi tickets, the ADA compliant deviated fixed route and non-emergency Care rides.

Linda pointed out it is not just the one program, they use the population (STF) funds as the local match for the 5310 and 5311 federal grant programs. The City only gives qualifying senior citizens and people with disabilities 50 one-way rides for 6 months. In the past, ODOT requested them to open up the program and the taxi ticket program was utilized so much they ran out of money within 3 months. ODOT found other money to keep the program running for the rest of the fiscal year. They are not currently meeting the demand for the senior/disabled taxi tickets. The Elite Taxi Ticket program picks up that demand but the individual pays more for those tickets. Pendleton's contract price also went up.

Kim asked if the ticket prices went up? Linda said not to the customers, the price the City pays went up. The Elite tickets cost more but are open to the public and not limited in quantity. Dial-a-ride is \$1 and the person has to call a day in advance. The population funds and 5310 grant only go to the senior/disabled transportation program.

Kim asked which program 5311 pays for? Linda said it pays for the general public dial-a-ride, Elite taxi tickets and some administrative costs like drug and alcohol testing and administration. It is outside of the senior and disabled program.

Kim clarified that she is asking this question because the applications make it sound like one big program that is not dependent on one another but they are all funded from the same sources. Linda said population funds and 5310 go hand-in-hand for the senior and disabled transportation programs. The general public portion is paid through the STIF plan and 5311. The County doesn't have oversight over 5311.

Kim said the City is asking for payroll funds as the match for the 5310 grant. Linda said she is asking for several matches for the federal grants as they have large match requirements. Kim asked what happens if she doesn't get funded at the full amount? Linda said it would greatly affect the senior/disabled transportation programs. Same with a cut to the 5310 request.

Linda said they are pretty much the same size as Hermiston and should be funded similarly to Hermiston. And Pendleton is a bedroom community for the senior/disabled whereas Hermiston is not.

Kim asked if they weren't fully funded with the \$1.25 million for all of their grants, what is the most important piece to receive funds? Linda responded with operations of the senior/disabled programs. Any transit operation, keeping operations should be the most important priority. Kim asked what the 5310 match requirement is? Teresa said it is 10.27%.

Staci went through the project budget for the senior and disabled transportation programs. In the past, the City of Pendleton provided 40,000 rides pre-covid. They are anticipating to give 50,000 rides for the two years. People are not yet comfortable sharing rides. Staci asked if they will provide 40,000 or 50,000 rides over the next two years? Linda said she thinks 45,000-50,000 rides. Linda said 5311 allows for a small number of funds for administration. Staci asked if 5311 will cover admin? Linda said she didn't think so.

Discussion and Decision:

There was discussion about the population of senior citizens and persons with disabilities for each city. Linda went through the City of Pendleton's STIF plan payroll projects, and what funds those programs. These will be discussed tomorrow.

Kim asked for clarification on the City's funding requests. She asked why Hermiston's request tripled? Staci said their contracted costs have gone up. Linda said Hermiston's program is a lot smaller and hasn't previously applied for 5310. Kim asked how many more people they are planning to serve with the increase? Staci said they will continue to serve the people they are currently, if they receive the admin project funding they've asked for they will look to expand the ridership. Costs for everyone have exploded.

Kim asked what the funding looks like after taking away Milton-Freewater's request? Megan pulled up the excel sheet, there are still some cuts that need to be made.

Kim said the group should fully fund Hermiston since they are growing. Linda said Good Shepherd and Senior Companion programs should be looked at first for cuts, they are asking for a lot of money and they do not serve the general public. Kim said it is still a free service, and people who use it tell her that it is hard for them to access other services. Especially with wound care. Limiting other providers limits people's choices.

Linda said that Foster Grandparents is very close to not qualifying as it is not really public transportation. Heidi said she agrees that Foster Grandparents is not exactly public transportation but Senior Companion is, they pick seniors up and transport them, it is public transportation. Teresa said Senior Companion is a duplication of service and ODOT and FTA tell us that we need to look at duplication of services and work towards coordination. Both ODOT and FTA want to get rid of duplication of services, which is why she earlier asked if it was a duplication of services. If so, we need to look at the funding regulations to comply.

Linda proposed that Senior Companion and Good Shepherd get an increase of 8% to the previous STF funding. That would be \$10,000 for Senior Companion and \$40,000 for Good Shepherd. Linda doesn't believe they score high on the priority goals, so they shouldn't double their requests. The 8% increase will account for inflation.

Teresa said that Foster Grandparents/Senior Companion and CareVan are great programs with great services. But because of the Federal and State regulations for funding, we cannot increase duplications of services.

To make the funds budget, Linda proposed that Senior Companion receive \$6,775.50/year and Good Shepherd receive \$25,900/year. This equates to about a 15% increase for each program.

Kim added that the group should clarify the funding is just for Senior Companion and not Foster Grandparents.

Jessica Reker (Good Shepherd) clarified that CareVan provides rides to 20 affiliate providers.

Heidi moved to recommend the proposal provided on the board by Linda. The funding for CCS is for Senior Companion only, not Foster Grandparents. Staci seconded. Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

The recommendation is as follows:

PROVIDER	PROJECT	CARRYOVER AMOUNT	FY 2024	FY 2025	TOTAL
CITY OF HERMISTON					
	SENIOR AND DISABLED TAXI PROGRAM	\$ -	\$ 98,344.00	\$ 98,343.00	\$ 196,687.00
	5310 MATCH	\$ -	\$ 9,157.00	\$ 9,156.00	\$ 18,313.00
	TOTAL		\$ 107,501.00	\$ 107,499.00	\$ 215,000.00
CITY OF PENDLETON					
	SENIORS & PEOPLE W/ DISABILITIES TRANSIT PROGRAMS		\$ 83,600.00	\$ 83,600.00	\$ 167,200.00
	TOTAL		\$ 83,600.00	\$ 83,600.00	\$ 167,200.00
CCS SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM					
	SENIOR TRIPS (REIUMBURSEMENT & TAXI TICKETS)		\$ 6,775.00	\$ 6,775.00	\$ 13,550.00
	TOTAL		\$ 6,775.00	\$ 6,775.00	\$ 13,550.00
GOOD SHEPHERD CAREVAN					
	NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRIPS	\$ 20,995.00	\$ 4,905.00	\$ 17,011.00	\$ 51,800.00
		\$ 8,889.00			
	TOTAL		\$ 25,900.00	\$ 25,900.00	\$ 51,800.00
	TOTAL OF ALL PROJECTS		\$ 223,776.00	\$ 223,774.00	\$ 447,550.00

*Note carryover shown on CareVan is from other former STF projects in the 2021-2023 biennium.

5310 Project Applications:

The Committee recognized that these are the same projects that were just evaluated. This is just for a grant request to partially fund those projects. Teresa asked if a proposal could be put together at the 120% funding level.

If the project requests are fully funded, there is enough money at the 120% funding level. There is actually an excess of funds in the amount of \$8,197.80. Kim asked how we could utilize this extra money, since ODOT says they will give it to us. Linda volunteered that the Let'er Bus could take the excess and decrease their Payroll fund request in the same amount. Teresa pointed out these are two separate funding pots. The group asked if there was any feedback online. JD and Jose said it works.

Linda moved that the UCTAC accept Milton-Freewater's late 5310 application. Kim seconded. Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Kim moved that \$8,197.80 be added to the City of Pendleton's 5310 request. Heidi seconded. Motion passed

unanimously 7-0.

Linda moved that \$8,197.80 be removed from the City of Pendleton's deviated fixed route (STIF payroll funds) request under tomorrow's review. Heidi seconded. Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Kim moved that the 5310 requests be approved as presented. Linda seconded. Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Other Business: UCTAC will meet again tomorrow, November 30 in Room 130 at the County Courthouse at 2PM for STIF payroll projects. This is the Commissioners' meeting room down the hall, there is also a virtual option.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm. Submitted by Megan Davchevski, Umatilla County Transit Coordinator