

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

Minutes of the Meeting

Date, Time, Place: September 3, 2009, 10:00 a.m.
Fasi Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Conference Room
650 South King Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Voting Members Present:

Catholic Charities Hawaii: Tom Baty
Hawaii Disability Rights Center: Ann Collins
Easter Seals Hawaii: Michelle Kane
Hawaii Centers for Independent Living: Charlene Ota

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Department of Transportation Services: James Burke, Eileen Mark, Jackie Shen
Oahu Transit Services, Inc.: Patricia Nielsen, John Black
Disability and Communication Access Board: Judy Paik
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization: Marian Yasuda

Voting Members Excused:

Kokua Program, U.H. at Manoa: Ann Ito
Lanakila Pacific: Dawn Burgener
Ho'opono: Michael Jones
Salvation Army: Stacy Honma

Ex-Officio Members Unexcused:

Department of Health: Wilfred Young
Honolulu Committee on Aging (EAD): Pat Tompkins

Guests:

FLT Consulting, Inc.: Faith Trimble
Innovative Paradigms: Phil McGuire
Hawaii Department of Transportation: Wally Ito
Hawaii Association of the Blind: Landa Phelan
Hui Kupuna VIP: Louise Horio
Citizens For A Fair ADA Ride: Julie Belisario, June Uchima,
Leatrice Ota, Ed Mar, Morris Nakamura
Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii: Sheryl Nelson

1. Call to Order

Chair T. Baty called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. The attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the July 16, 2009 could not be approved due to lack of quorum.

3. New Business

A. Update on the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan

F. Trimble provided an update on the Human Services Transportation Plan. The Coordinated Transportation Strategies and Operations (CTSO) sub-committee met on 9/2/09 to review projects for recommendation for FFY 2008 funding. Projects were prioritized and are being recommended for the CAT's concurrence. Upon concurrence, they will be presented to the Policy Committee for approval to begin the application process for FFY 2008 funds.

Projects being recommended include:

1. Mobility Management Center.
2. Local shuttle service, i.e., the Kalaeloa Shuttle, along with planning for a second local shuttle service.
3. Agency Provided Trips. The Goodwill Industries project will help provide trips to its own program participants. A second agency provided trip project is also planned.
4. Travel Training. To expand travel training from TheHandi-Van riders to everyone facing challenges riding the TheBus.
5. Taxi Subsidy. Project Dana uses grant funds to pay for taxi service to transport clients when there are no volunteer drivers available. Also, the Nelson\Nygaard study found that the optimal use of taxis to supplement TheHandi-Van is for trips less than six miles long. This project would provide taxi subsidies to relieve the demand on TheHandi-Van.

An unprioritized project, Access to Vehicle Loans, was also considered. The YWCA provides up to \$4,000 for women with dependent children to buy their own car if they need transportation for employment but public transportation options are not viable.

F. Trimble presented a matrix with quadrants indicating the CTSO's ranking of these projects in terms of feasibility and meeting goals

identified in the City's Coordination Plan. Goals 1-5 are all rated highly for addressing critical needs and feasibility.

Based on the CTSO's project prioritization list, P. McGuire and F. Trimble recommended the following funding plan:

- Increase the proposed taxi subsidy funding
- Retain only one local shuttle service, i.e., maintain the Kalaeloa Shuttle
- Pursue two agency-provided trips projects
- Continue the Mobility Management project
- Retain the Travel Training project
- Defer the Vehicle Loan project for future consideration.

E. Mark clarified that the Travel Training goal in this project is different from the upcoming paratransit in-person assessment and travel training program. The money allocated for the assessment program in the City Budget is tied in to the contract for In-person assessment and travel training for one year's worth of service. The program will continue to look for more money. Travel Training as a goal in the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan focus on both people with disabilities and also to others.

F. Trimble explained that the Mobility Management Project includes 10 tasks including facilitating coordination meetings, researching funding partners, and identifying barriers to coordination and overcoming them. It also brings project partners together to qualify for grants. It will train Travel Ambassadors about available transportation options and develop a Bus Buddy program by identifying seniors to volunteer as mentors.

P. McGuire responded to a comment that more employees, especially people with disabilities, should be hired, instead of relying on volunteers. P. McGuire explained that the Mobility Center serves primarily in a planning function. It provides analysis of improvements to travel services and is involved in addressing procedural matters related to coordinating transportation. Funding is expected to be available next year and there is still time to consider staffing.

B. Update on the Paratransit In-Person Assessment and Travel Training Program.

P. McGuire presented the upcoming changes in the City's process for applying for TheHandi-Van eligibility. Paratransit Inc. is under contract with the City to implement the change. All new and

renewing applicants will now come to TheHandi-Van Eligibility Center for an in-person assessment. The target date to implement is in mid-October. Three things need to be in place to get the program started:

1. Office – the lease will be signed today or tomorrow. TheHandi-Van Eligibility Center will be in the First Insurance Center, 1100 Ward Avenue, at the corner of South Beretania Street and Ward Avenue.

2. Hiring Staff-local candidates have been interviewed. Staff training will begin two weeks prior to the Center's target opening date of 10/14/09.

3. Assessment Process. The majority of assessments will be conducted by appointment. Depending on the situation, the assessment may only require answering questions or it may also include cognitive and/or stability tests. The assessments are geared towards determining an applicant's ability to ride TheBus. Eligibility for TheHandi-Van is a transit-related decision and not a medical determination. A sophisticated computer system is being developed in preparation for the process to eventually go paperless. Most eligibility determinations will be made on the spot. The option of producing the photo ID at the Center is also being discussed.

In response to a question regarding applicants who need TheHandi-Van in certain circumstances, but may be able to take TheBus at other times, P. McGuire explained that an applicant may be determined eligible under certain conditions. TheHandi-Van system may need to be refined to accommodate applicants whose health condition may vary from day to day and cannot be predicted in advance, but this should not affect the implementation of the new eligibility program. The appeals process for those who are not satisfied with the outcome of their eligibility determination will be handled by the City as before.

When asked why people with disabilities did not know of the employment opportunities, P. McGuire explained that Paratransit Inc. has tried to advertise those job opportunities as broadly as possible. The job opportunities were published through announcements, on websites and through emails to agencies. A second round of hiring is coming up soon, and Paratransit Inc. will notify organizations serving people with disabilities about the job openings. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Phil McGuire at philm@innovativeparadigms.com.

There were comments that the word "assessment" is offensive and subjective, and that it is a waste of money to go through assessments for applicants who are approved by their doctors. P. McGuire

explained that the in-person assessment process is recommended by Nelson\Nygaard in Honolulu's Paratransit Service Study. It helps people to catch the right bus and to become informed of all their travel options. Some people will be directed to Travel Training, which will help them to catch the right bus.

E. Mark explained that the City's current eligibility system needs to be improved because TheHandi-Van is not in compliance with ADA on certain levels. Needed improvements to TheHandi-Van service include: 1. Purchasing more TheHandi-Van vehicles, 2. Purchasing a mix of different vehicles, and 3. Conducting in-person eligibility interviews. Eligibility for TheHandi-Van is not a medical decision, but a transit decision to determine if TheHandi-Van is the best mode of transportation for the applicant.

P. McGuire further explained that in-person assessment is not a new concept. Cities like Pittsburgh and Las Vegas use this process using an assessment module developed by Easter Seals. The process has been rigorously tested by experts and is user friendly. The average time for an assessment is an hour.

A comment was raised that more bus stops are needed. T. Baty commented that the Mobility Center may take up the issue of bus stop locations once it is established.

J. Shen introduced himself as the project manager for the paratransit in-person assessment and travel training program, and invited all future inquiries related to this program to be addressed to him. His phone number is 768-8382.

T. Baty reminded CAT members of the need to have another meeting in the next few weeks because a quorum is required for CAT's concurrence on the prioritization of coordinated transportation projects. He also reminded CAT members there will be a need to serve on the Appeals Panel once the in-person assessment program is in effect.

A. Collins moved and C. Ota seconded a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.