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## **SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

May 6, 2020

#### Present

#### Voting Attendees:

Victor Torres	Imperial Valley College (IVC)
Ted Ceasar	Consumer
Dr. Kathleen Lang	California Health & Wellness (CH&W)
Rosalina Blankenship	Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
Mitzi Perez	ARC-IV
Alfonso Varela	I.C. Public Authority/IHSS
David Aguirre	CTSA-ICTC
Maricela Galarza	CTSA-ICTC
Gustavo Gomez	CTSA-ICTC

#### Non-Voting Attendees:

Helio Sanchez	IVT
Jose Guillen	IVT MedTrans
Karla Aguilar	IVT Ride
Karla Pacheco	IVT Access
Liz Satuncci	Caltrans

1. Mr. Torres called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. **A quorum was present.** Introductions were made.
2. Minutes adopted for March 4, 2020 ([Blankenship, Lang](#)), **Motion Carried.**
3. UTN “Findings”:
  - Mr. Aguirre presented SSTAC members with the adopted UTN Findings for fiscal year 2020-21, the meeting took place on April 30, 2020, via zoom. Mr. Aguirre reviewed the outcomes of the Unmet Transit Needs comments received on March 4, 2020, that were analyzed and prioritized, may vary depending on available funding. SSTAC members were also provided with the prioritized item list.
  - Mr. Aguirre presented a draft SSTAC response letter for fiscal year 2020-21 findings. SSTAC members motioned to approve the letter as presented, ([Ceasar, Blankenship](#)), **Motion Carried.**

#### 4. CTSA Reports:

Mr. Aguirre had the following announcements:

- The COVID 19 pandemic issue has greatly impacted public transportation. Ridership dropped significantly, about 70% when stay home orders were implemented. This seems to be a common issue seen throughout all other public transit agencies. As a response, service for the fixed-route has been reduced temporarily. It is currently running on Saturdays schedule, still operating Monday through Sunday.
- Local service has been cut back to a quasi hybrid level, still operating from Monday thru Friday. When stores and other public places start opening up it will have a positive correlation with ridership in transit services.
- All transit services are operating to some extent at the moment to allow the public to continue using the services as needed.
- ICTC hopes that IVT services will return to its normal operations in June. This action will depend on the county's pandemic situation, thus ICTC will reevaluate the possibility before the beginning of June.
  - Mr. Torres asked Mr. Aguirre if transportation was being represented in any way in Imperial County's reopening plan, and how the information is available to be accessed to providers and passengers.
  - Any given updates will be posted on ICTC's/Service website and social media. Staff is maintaining up to date information by attending Imperial County's meetings.
  - Mr. Torres stated that there seems to be a disconnect between the cities and the county, based on the latest information obtained the City of El Centro had plans of reopening but the county's plan didn't follow the same direction. "How are we navigating through that?"
  - Dr. Lang stated that she has been working with the Chambers and the Imperial Valley Business Recovery Taskforce, which was formed in response to the pandemic. There are expected revisions to be present by the end of the week based on Governor Newsom's latest directions. Transportation has not been front and center in the conversations, thus the focus is greatly on businesses. There will be plans to meet and take action to add transportation to the focus.
  - Mr. Aguirre agreed that transportation was not mentioned at the last attended Roadmap meeting.
  - Dr. Lang added that the cities and counties are beginning to align their plans in reopening. By the end of the week, there will be a much closer coordination between the cities and the county.
  - Mr. Torres stated that the common terminology in current plans present a 4 phase approach, phase 1 being our current situation. Mr. Torres stated that it would be ideal for SSTAC to align to those phases too as providers begin to increase the services.
  - Mr. Aguirre stated that staff will attend critical meetings in an effort to maintain updated information on the reopening.
- Mr. Aguirre mentioned that IVT Ride sign-ups and IVT Access certifications are being conducted remotely. The ADA interview process can't be completed at the moment therefore a temporary certification is being provided during the wait. The IVT Ride sign-ups are not requiring a photo for the moment and can be completed by phone. The purpose is to make the process more simple to the senior community that relies on the services. ICTC is still open for business, normal hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm. ICTC is still available remotely to providers and the public.

- There were some enhancements in the cleaning procedures for all vehicles. Vehicles are sanitized daily and there are attempts to sanitize in between routes if time permits. Other safety measures that are implemented are that every other seat has been blocked off to adhere to the social distancing order and masks are required for everyone getting on board. If a situation may occur where there is an overflow of passengers, extra buses are readily available to pick up remaining passengers so no person gets left behind.
  - Ms. Lang asked if there have been situations where passengers had to turn away due to the reduced capacity.
  - Mr. Aguirred stated that there were a few trips that it occurs on and its usually from Calexico to El Centro. In this type of situation, there are extra buses ready to go pick up the remaining passengers. These situations don't happen often.
  - Mr. Sanchez added that this usually occurs during the first week of the month. There is a usual increase of about 150 more passengers which causes this overflow, but the shadow buses are ready to pick up any passengers that were not able to get on the first bus.
  - Mr. Torres stated that Coachella Unified School District a few years back implemented a model where they would place buses throughout the city which provided wifi capability for their students. In Imperial County, there have been some wifi issues especially with students and families being provided remote services. Mr. Torres asked that since the IVT buses are equipped with wifi could it be an option to possibly implement. If the resources are available it would a great opportunity to provide the connection to people who need it. The IVC stats indicate there are about 20% of students that don't have wifi capability.
  - Mr. Aguirre stated that it may be a possibility which the Unified School Districts would need to be contacted to talk further about what options there are. The only issue that may arise is that if buses start normal operations most buses will be deployed, but for May it may be possible to do.
  - Ms. Blankenship stated that it would also bridge the digital divide that seniors have during this isolation period where seniors feel depressed, and anxiety, which may be caused by not having that connectivity.

#### 5. Transit Operator Reports:

- All services: Mr. H. Sanchez reported the following:
  - Significant ridership drops throughout all services.
  - Services continue to operate.
  - Enhanced measures are being performed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Those measures include reduced capacity, increased sanitization periods, and placing a plastic barrier between the driver and the passengers.
  - There is a group of girls and boys (ICYAP) who reached out to us to help distribute information. They have reached to the community to collect fabric donations to make face masks. They are creating a kit that may include at least two face masks and other items. Drivers and supervisors will be distributing flyers on how to obtain kits.
  - Ms. Blankenship asked if there are some kits left over if they can kindly be donated to the Area Agency on Aging. Older adults have asked for masks and gloves but unfortunately, AAA has not received those items. Calexico health and wellness provided about 60 bags to seniors. Ms. Blankenship asked that if there are any

agencies that are willing and able to donate those items to share with older adults, it would be greatly appreciated

- Mr. H. Sanchez stated that if there are items or kits left that it will donate them to AAA.

#### 6. General Discussion

- Ms. Blankenship commended IVT Ride, IVT Access, and ICTC staff that have been working with us on this unprecedented time. AAA runs the senior nutrition program and when the stay at home orders were placed, a transition occurred of all congregate sites to home delivery. It was pleasing to see that ICTC stepped up and made themselves available to help. The senior count doubled within the week and IVT Ride agreed to help AAA with the afternoon home deliveries in Brawley, and El Centro. IVT Access recently agreed to also help in the Holtville area. AAA would not be able to do this without the operator's assistance. The program continues to grow from 175 seniors to 628 that are being served today. Ms. Blankenship thanked Mr. Aguirre for all the assistance provided and continues to provide to meet the needs of the older adults and the community.
  - Dr. Lang stated that it was heard that the governor was having restaurants provide those meals. "Has it happened here locally?"
  - Ms. Blankenship stated that the program's name is Green Pleats Delivery program through FEMA. Cal OES was assigned to monitor the program and was offered to all OES centers in California. The program entails the counties and cities that will work together and assign a local administrator. In our County because of what AAA does, it would be natural that AAA administrates the program. However, after reviewing what the program entailed and all the logistics involved to carry it through. It was found that the program requires 3 meals per day, per senior and it has some eligibility requirements. It's only for older adults 65 and above. Also, they have to be over the federal poverty line but can't be over 600%. They can't have received another federal nutrition program. AAA implementing the program would fear that seniors in the nutrition program would transition to the temporary program to receive the 3 meals a day which may cause a hinder for seniors in Calfresh services. This is part of the new programs requirements, seniors can't receive other services while in the program. If seniors then transfer from the nutrition program to the temporary program this causes a concern for future funding for the nutrition program. The nutrition program is continuous, whereas the other program is only temporary and extended up to June 15<sup>th</sup>. For this reason, AAA decided not to be the local administrator for the new program. However, the County is still considering moving forward with the program especially for the outlining areas such as Palo Verde, Winterhaven, and Bombay Beach. The logistics are still being discussed and AAA has not submitted a letter of intent. Today AAA will be notified if the program moves forward.

#### 7. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m. ([Torres](#)), **Motion Carried.**
- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at the Imperial County Transportation Commission Office, 1503 N. Imperial Ave., Suite 104, El Centro, CA 92243.