



ITEM 3

SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

DATE

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

The regular meeting of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council was held Tuesday, February 6, 2024, and was called to order by Chair Frank Simonis, at 12:05 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Frank Simonis, Chair, Potential Transit User Who Has a Disability – appeared via Zoom
Bertha Vega, Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means
Michelle Hernandez, Local Social Service Provider for Seniors*
Olga Olivia Saucedo-Garcia, Local Social Service Provider for Seniors
Franklina Bogan, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older
Lynda Schafhauser, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older*
Monty Cox, Social Service Transportation Provider for Seniors
Alycia Falley, Vice Chair, Social Service Provider for Persons with Disabilities*

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vincent Parker, Social Service Transportation Provider for Persons With Disabilities
Rosalind Esqueda, Social Service Transportation Provider for Seniors

MCTC STAFF PRESENT:

Natalia Austin, Senior Regional Planner
Evelyn Espinosa, Senior Regional Planner
Jeff Findley, Principal Regional Planner
Troy McNeil, Deputy Director/Fiscal Supervisor
Sandy Ebersole, Administrative Analyst

VISITORS PRESENT:

John Saucedo, Chukchansi Tribe
Keyomi Jones, Caltrans District 6
Orianna Walker, ICWA
Pamela Mayshack
Phone In – (559) 981-XXXX

1. Roll Call

At 12:05 pm, Chair Frank Simonis called the meeting to order and instructed that the roll call for attendance be taken. Later, after three more members joined after roll call, it was determined that a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment

Pamela Mashack, paratransit rider: Appreciates the changes to the schedules, but is adjusting because the recent changes to the Madera Metro transit schedules came as a big surprise. She has been taking the bus since 2009 and would love it if, when they make major changes, they do it when the weather is nice, and not when it's cold. It is hard for seniors to get around when the weather is cold, so please consider the seniors when making the changes as far as the weather is concerned.

3. Approve Minutes of the November 16, 2023, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

Olga Saucedo-Garcia moved to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2023, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting.

Seconded by Alycia Falley

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Frank Simonis, Bertha Vega, Michelle Hernandez, Olga Saucedo-Garcia, Franklina Bogan, Lynda Schafhauser, Monty Cox, Alycia Falley

Noes: None

Abstain: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Local Transit Agency Updates

Monty Cox from Madera County gave an update on the County's transit system (MCC). Two new staff members, an analyst and an accountant, have joined the transit operations staff in the last year. The County is in the last year of a five-year contract for operations, so they are preparing an RFP to get proposals for a new operator by July 1, 2024. Orders have been placed for six new buses – three electric and three gas. At the Almond Yard, a bus wash, electric infrastructure to accommodate sixteen buses, and solar panels are being installed. The County has hired a consultant to study how microtransit can be implemented in the County. They are currently in the information-gathering phase of the study. The County has become a direct recipient of federal money this year and is in the process of putting schedules at every bus stop. Chair Simonis asked about fares for microtransit. Monty Cox clarified that the microtransit fares would be higher than typical fares but would be lower than Uber or Lyft. The vehicles used for the new microtransit service would be a transit style van. Franklina Bogan asked which drivers would be used for the microtransit service. Monty Cox answered that they will be hiring more drivers to implement the microtransit service. Lynda Schafhauser asked about the relocation of the Madera Amtrak Station to Avenue 12. Monty Cox answered that it is scheduled for 2025 and there will be bus service to the new station since it will be near the Madera College. Natalia Austin also referenced the High-Speed Rail website to find information about the

Madera Station Relocation.

Xochitl Villasenor from the City of Madera gave an update on the City's transit system (Madera Metro). The routes have been assessed and the City is piloting a new route system, starting January 6, 2024. The City went from a numbered route system to a color line system. The stop to Amtrak has been paused until February. The City now has four routes. They are open to feedback from the community and there are some stops that they had to reinstate due to feedback from the community. Since they are still in the pilot phase, they have not printed new schedules but hope to have all the issues worked out by the end of the month. They also had some issues with stops on the highway right-of-way. So, the City is working with Caltrans to get approval for those stops. The unmet transit needs finding for last year was to add shelters and benches at the stops. There has been some progress and some semi-seats have been installed. Franklina Bogan asked how many people the average bus stop accommodates. Xochitl Villasenor answered that the semi-seats only accommodate two people. The benches and shelters accommodate four to six people. Chair Frank Simonis clarified that the city did a cost estimate to determine how many shelters would be needed to accommodate current ridership. Olga Saucedo-Garcia commented that she has received positive feedback regarding the new system changes from the seniors that frequent the senior centers. The seniors ride together to the center and appreciate the new stop locations.

Natalia Austin from MCTC gave an update on the City of Chowchilla's transit system since the City's transit manager was unable to attend the meeting. Chowchilla's finding for FY 2023-2024 is there were no unmet transit needs, but they are always open to feedback from the riders and community to better serve the growing population. In harmony with this, they are planning to electrify the fleet and modernize the infrastructure to include a contactless/mobile payment system with SB 125 funding. All of this aligns with the state's goal of having an all zero-emission bus fleet by 2040. To enhance the service, they have installed two new bus shelters and purchased two new vehicles with LCTOP, SGR, PTMISEA, and Measure T funding, with an emphasis on prioritizing the safety of the riders, efficiency of the transit system, and reliability of the service. The transit department is also collaborating with the City of Chowchilla's Community Development department to install additional bus shelters on the west side of town. Chowchilla Transit will continue to pursue funding opportunities and partnerships with other agencies to provide more innovative services. A map and pictures of the new and proposed shelter improvements were shown. Franklina Bogan asked about lighting at the shelters using solar panels. Xochitl Villasenor mentioned that the shelters that the City of Madera is installing will also have solar panels to power the lights at the shelters.

5. Unmet Transit Needs FY 2024 - 2025

Natalia Austin from MCTC gave a summary of the unmet transit needs process, information about the ways that the public can provide comments, and the location for the unmet transit needs workshops that will be held in March. She also shared that she would send out a social media package to make it easy for the Council and others to share

the information and get the word out. Chair Frank Simonis mentioned that he would help put up flyers and share the information on Facebook. Troy McNeil from MCTC, mentioned that there will be several townhall meetings in March which will be an opportunity for the public to provide comments on transit needs and Measure T.

6. Announcements

Natalia Austin announced that MCTC launched a new quarterly newsletter, The Commission Vision.

7. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Chair Frank Simonis at 12:57 PM