

**CTSA Advisory Committee**  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 14, 2015

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Rygg called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. in the conference room of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) office.

**Present:**

Maureen McEachen	VNA
Kasuko Wessendorf	Interim, Inc.
Ronn Rygg	United Way Monterey County
Virginia Murillo (Alternate)	TAMC
Kathleen Murray-Phillips	DSES-AAA
Laurie Crosby	CSUMB
Roberto Garcia	Public- Veterans Representative
Teresa Sullivan	Alliance on Aging
Rena Weaver Wyant	Blind & Visually Impaired Center
William (Terry) Bare	Veterans Transition Center
Melissa McKenzie	Carmel Foundation
Maria Magana	CCCIL
Aimee Cuda	ITN

**Excused Absent:**

George Dixon	Monterey County Military & Veterans Affair
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**Staff:**

Tom Hicks	CTSA Manager
Cristy Sugabo	Senior Mobility Specialist

**Guest:**

Richard Weiner	Nelson\Nygaard Consulting
Lisa Rheinheimer	MST
Hunter Harvath	MST
William Ziggler	Monterey County Resident
Ella Bekker	Public

## **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **2.1 Minutes of the regular meeting of July 29, 2015.**

Member Garcia made a motion to approve the minutes and Member Murillo seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Member Wessendorf entered the meeting at 1:10p.m**

**Member Magana entered the meeting at 1:12p.m**

## **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Ms. Bekker stated she is a resident of Pacific Meadows Senior Housing in Carmel and a member of the Carmel Foundation. She regularly takes the senior shuttle route to and from the Carmel Foundation as well as trips to and from the Cass Street and Ryan Ranch area. She stated that these trips would take up to 4 hours and asked that the route be re-evaluated. Moreover, she mentioned that she reported to Robert Weber, MST Director of Transportation, that the driver for route 92 in the afternoon is rude and argumentative.

Member Wyant reported on behalf of her constituent Janet Wilson. She stated that Ms. Wilson is legally blind and regularly use MST fixed route. Ms. Wilson is not able to access MST's website using an adaptive reader for a visually impaired person and that she reported this to MST on several occasion. In response, she was told by MST staff that there is no solution at this time. Therefore, she took it upon herself to work with someone who is familiar with website accessibility features and found that MST's website is not accessible to Apple or Windows Operating System *(In response, MST staff Hunter Harvath stated that the Marketing Manager, Planning Director and IT Staff will meet to discuss the issue.)*

## **4. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **4.1 Public hearing on proposed fare classification changes**

Mr. Harvath stated that every three years MST goes through a triennial Federal review (audit) in 20 different areas of compliance that include ADA Paratransit Service. In order to comply with Federal regulations, MST will need to make a small adjustment to the RIDES ADA Paratransit fare structure. Staff reviewed the MST fixed route and the RIDES Program fare structure and found that the RIDES fare needs a slight adjustment to align with the fixed-route fares. Currently, there are three fare categories for the RIDES Program and the adjustment affects the highest level decreasing the distance from 19.7 to 17.0. He stated that Staff did a thorough research of passenger trips taken in the last few months and found that there was no passenger taking trips between 17.0 and 19.7 that the adjustment would affect. He stated that anytime MST makes adjustments to bus fares a public hearing must be conducted. Subsequently, he opened discussion for public comments.

## Comments

Member Wyant stated that her concern with increasing the fare might affect few of the consumers that travel from Salinas to the Blind and Visually Impaired Center in Pacific Grove. For many consumers, the five dollar fare is expensive and that the center has been able to find sponsorship to fund their trip. She asked, if a client has a question, will he or she be able to ask a reservationist to confirm the cost. In response, Mr. Harvath stated that the current system used for making reservations can calculate the distance. He stated that Staff reviewed 3 months worth of data and found that no one has taken a trip equal to or more than 17.0 miles.

Member Philips asked if increasing the fares would increase revenue. In response, Mr. Harvath stated that ADA fares are federally regulated and that paratransit trips cannot be more than twice as much as a fixed-route fare for a similar distance of trips. He stated that there are current fixed-routes that are between 17.0 and 19.7 miles and its fare is \$3.50. If the same trips were to be taken currently on RIDES the cost would only be \$5.00 rather than the required \$7.00. The fare has to align with fixed-route fare in order to comply with regulation.

Member Wyant asked if one of her consumers discovers their trip is between 17.0 and 19.7 miles, and is now required to pay the \$7.00, what recourse will he, or she, have. In response, Mr. Harvath stated that, when the fare change goes into effect, it will apply to all RIDES customers regardless of their personal circumstances.

Ms. Bekker asked how soon she will know about the plans to make changes to the Senior Shuttle route. In response, Chair Rygg stated that the comments currently requested are for the proposed RIDES fare changes.

Closed public comment

**Chair Rygg asked for a motion to recommend the proposed fare classification changes to the MST Board of Directors. Member Phillips made the motion that the committee supports the proposed fare classification changes as proposed and Member Garcia seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Member Bare left at 1:55p.m

## 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1 Receive update on Measure Q 15-Year Plan and provide input to MST staff.

Ms. Rheinheimer distributed a handout and summarized the timeline of the Measure Q planning effort. She stated, in May 2015, MST hired Nelson Nygaard Consulting and began conducting surveys to the targeted population and their advocates. They received 155 responses. Subsequently, a Steering Committee was created consisting of MST staff and Member McEachen. The Steering Committee met in September to discuss potential projects and, in the last four weeks, planning efforts have focused on stakeholder interviews. In

November, the Committee will receive a draft of the plan to review and make recommendations to the MST Board of Directors for approval in January.

Mr. Weiner, from Nelson/Nygaard, stated he had the opportunity to travel and see the South County cities with Member Garcia. Also, he and his colleagues, along with MST staff, interviewed South County Outreach Efforts, CSUMB Center, San Andreas Regional Center, and the Monterey County Veterans Transition Center. MST staff Tom Hicks interviewed the Monterey County Military and Veterans Services staff and MST staff Beronica Carriedo interviewed HOPE Services. Subsequently, Mr. Weiner asked members for feedback on ideas and potential projects that have not already been discussed to address the service gap for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Member Wyant stated that it was brought to her attention that the quantity of taxi vouchers for persons with disabilities decreased to 10 vouchers per quarter. One RIDES eligible consumer expressed her concern since her recent health condition does not allow her to travel on a RIDES vehicle for more than 15-20 minutes. Another consumer also expressed that it is more cost effective for him to use taxi vouchers to and from school. She stated her consumers are asking why the taxi vouchers reduced in quantity after Measure Q passed.

Member Rygg recommended using Measure Q funds to improve MST's website, making it accessible to persons with visually impairments.

Ms. Bekker suggested fewer vouchers given to RIDES eligible participants would overwhelm the RIDES service making it less reliable.

Member Sullivan stated that the Alliance on Aging recently received a large quantity of senior taxi vouchers but distributing four vouchers per month is not enough. She suggested using Measure Q funds to offer more vouchers and to review the TAMC Unmet Needs Survey results. Also, she suggested using Q funds to continue the Travel Training Program. Member Wyant concurred stating that the Travel Training Program and the Navigator Program support group travel training trips for seniors which help preserve their independence while also delaying their dependence on the RIDES service.

Member McKenzie stated that she is unable to get her seniors at the Carmel Foundation to participate in the Travel Training Program. In response, MST staff Beronica Carriedo stated that the Travel Training Program also provides one-on-one travel training for individuals and is designed to meet the trainee's functional abilities. The training consists of meeting trainee at the bus stop closest to their home and taking trips to their desired locations.

Member Bare stated there will be growth in Monterey County and recommended expanding the Taxi Voucher Program to veterans. Also, to offer other veterans' services like free bus passes on fixed-route buses. In response, Mr. Weiner stated that the plan will include a shuttle service designed for specifically for veterans and a travel training program for veterans helping veterans.

Member Cuda stated that ITN clients are using about 8-10 vouchers per month for medical appointment.

Member Kasuko asked why the taxi vouchers for persons with disability decreased.

Mr. Harvath stated that prior to Measuring Q, Federal funding for the Taxi Voucher Program ran out and, instead of discontinuing the program all together, MST decided to subsidize the program with MST general funds. He stated the State started collecting Measure Q money in April and MST started receiving the revenue in mid-July. Moreover, he stated that Measure Q money is for a variety services for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities, and not solely dedicated to the Taxi Voucher Program.

Mr. Harvath stated the planning effort involves identifying all the needs and potential responses, evaluating these programs based on financial impact, and gauging community support for each approach. Also, he asked members to give feedback on other programs that might be important to the other constituents.

Member Rygg asked how long after the January approval will the plan be implemented. In response, Mr. Harvath stated that the plan has a timeline from couple months to few years depending on the project. He anticipates that within the next 6 months a modification to the Taxi Voucher Program should take place.

Member McEachen asked members to think about other potential projects, like expanding accessibility to the entire bus system, rather than focusing primarily on the Taxi Voucher Programs.

Ms. Rheinheimer thanked members for providing their ideas and feedback.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Amend the Prior Unmet Public Transit Needs Finding**

Ms. Murillo stated the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is responsible for conducting annual public hearings to receive comments and make findings as to whether there are unmet transit needs reasonable to meet in Monterey County. She stated that two public hearings were conducted, one in November of 2014 during the Mobility Advisory Committee meeting, and the other in January at the TAMC Board of Directors meeting. In June, TAMC and MST staff met to review the comments received and one comment, a request for service to Russell Road and San Juan Grade Road in Salinas by extending the current bus route 49, met the criteria. However, during the July MAC meeting, Ms. Rheinheimer reported that the request was no longer reasonable to meet due to financial implications and that it would negatively impact the existing bus route 49. Subsequently, Ms. Murrillo asked for a motion to amend the previous unmet transit needs findings and asked that

the committee recommend to the TAMC Board of Directors that, in Monterey County, there are unmet transit needs that are not reasonable to meet.

**Member Garcia made the motion to amend the previous unmet transit needs findings and to recommend that, in Monterey County, there are unmet transit needs that are not reasonable to meet. Member Weaver-Wyant seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

## 6.2 Receive input on senior taxi voucher distribution location

Mr. Hicks stated that the Senior Taxi Voucher Program is currently funded by MST and, in order to appropriately fund the program, Staff used a new calculation method based on the senior population for each participating city to determine the quantity of vouchers to be distributed to each. This year the City of Salinas will receive more vouchers than previously. He asked members for ideas about where, in Salinas, potential distribution sites might be established that would be easily accessible by seniors and which also have adequate staffing. He stated that Staff already received some suggestions like the Meals on Wheels Program as well as local libraries. Member Murray-Phillips stated that to be eligible for Meals on Wheels the client must be housebound, therefore, would not be a candidate to receive taxi vouchers. She stated to use groceries stores and pharmacies.

Member Cuda stated that ITN would be interested in becoming a distribution site as few of her consumers are low income seniors and would be using taxi vouchers to get to or from medical appointments.

Member Rygg stated that the Veterans Transition Center would be a good distribution site.

Member Magana stated that the CHISPA Senior Housing Complex would be another site to consider.

Member Sullivan stated that it would be great to have a distribution site in the East Side Salinas area.

## 7. SUBJECT ITEMS TO FOLLOW-UP

*This item(s) will be included on a future agenda for follow-up*

### 7.1 Receive report on bus service marketing strategy for public awareness.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that she is unable to recall what the question was and asked Member Garcia for more information. In response, Member Garcia stated that he wanted to know how MST markets its services to the public, such as where can the public get program brochures and general information.

Mr. Hicks stated that the request may have originated from previous discussion regarding the On Call service underutilized specifically in South County cities.

Mr. Harvath stated that MST applied and received a grant to market MST services in the South County area but has not yet received the contract. Once the contract is received and signed, a multimedia marketing campaign for South County will be launched.

## **8. SUBJECT ITEMS TO REQUEST**

- 8.1 Receive update on Ella Bekker public comment
  - 8.1.1 Response to coach operators inappropriate behavior
  - 8.1.2 Re-evaluating and/or alternate route for efficient travel on Senior Shuttle to Carmel Foundation
- 8.2 Member Wyant requested update on MST's website accessibility

## **9. REPORTS**

*No action required unless specifically noted*

- 9.1 ADAPTR liaison report

Member Weaver Wyant, ADAPT-R liaison, stated that the committee discussed the following:

- 1) Employee of the month nomination criteria
- 2) Continued discussion about membership recruitment
- 3) Possibility of changing the meeting schedule to accommodate members schedule and review items on a timely manner
- 4) Ms. Knapp requested RIDES policy information regarding passenger assistance to door to door service

- 9.2 MV Transit report

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that Mary Ann Jackson is no longer employed with MV due to health related conditions and that MST staff recently met with the temporary team in her place. Further, she stated that MV services, such as the fixed-route and the RIDES service are in stable condition and that Staff hopes to see a permanent General Manager in place soon.

9.3 Monterey-Salinas Transit Mobility report

Mr. Hicks stated that MST is developing a taxi certification curriculum called Taxi ADA Certification Training (TACT) to minimize customer complaints on trips provided by taxis. This training curriculum is a joint effort with MV Transportation and anticipates that training will start next year. The curriculum will train taxi drivers to provide service to RIDES clients and taxi vouchers customers with more sensitivity to their needs. The certification requirement will prohibit taxi drivers from providing RIDES and taxi vouchers trips prior to receiving certification. He stated that Staff anticipates an increase in quality of service to the customers.

Mr. Hicks stated that Staff is in the preliminary stages of developing a shuttle route dedicated to veterans.

Mr. Hicks stated that the Interactive Voice Response System web interface will be tested in the coming week. Phase I testing will be with MST and MV staff then, after the system has been adjusted, test subjects will be recruited.

Mr. Hicks stated that the MAC Bylaws state membership recruitment should occur in September and that the committee is obligated to let the public know of current vacancies. He stated that he will work with Ms. Sugabo for public announcement.

**10. ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPRECIATION**

**11. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chair Rygg adjourned the meeting at 3:45p.m.



PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cristy Sugabo



APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Hicks