



Transportation Subcommittee
 Meeting Minutes
 November 26, 2019
 8:30am – 10:00am

Facilitator:	Dave Bulkowski, Sue Sefton		
Meeting Attendees:	Kendrick Heinlein, Bill Kirk, Walt Marston, Jason Prescott, Marie Tubergen, Susan Cervantes, Laura St. Louis, Rich Jones, Debbie Jones, Ken Miguel-Cipriano, Sue Sefton, Gordie Moller, Joan Konyndyk, Bob Barnes, Tamia McGlothin, Tammy Britton, Dave Bulkowski, Wende Randall, Brianne Robach		
Time Convened:	8:35	Time Adjourned:	

Introductions	
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Kent County Community Action Needs Assessment: Transportation	
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Discussion

KCCA is required to do a Community Needs Assessment by their Community Services Block Grant to help them address gaps in services, scan for duplication of services. KCCA provides homeless services, transportation, meals for seniors, case management with these funds. This needs analysis was county-wide. Demographics were collected from survey participants. Also included a section for participants to express how they were feeling about services. In addition, they included a survey for service providers which had decent responses. Report will be available after the governing board has approved.

Transportation was one of the higher identified needs of those who were surveyed. The highest need was housing. Transportation dictates access to many other resources and was interconnected with each issue that came up. Many respondents identified that that did not have access to reliable transportation. The report goes into depth about what KCCA and the community can do. Wheels to Work and senior millage programs would likely fall under the public transportation category. Members noted that this will be helpful to utilize along with assessments that have been done throughout the community in the past.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Kent County Community Transit Update	
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Discussion

County CDBG dollars that have been available for agencies to use for participants for a variety of needs. In the past, this has been distributed by municipality throughout the county. Many townships utilize this service, some utilize their general fund for services. In the past, some townships were not fully utilizing funds, allowing for money to go unused. Recently, the group did some restructuring allowing the funds to be pooled. Along the way, they have used funding more quickly than expected.

One thing they have been working on is funneling riders to RideLink to expend senior millage dollars as compared to CDBG dollars. Last week, discussed what the expansion of RideLink could look like. Susan has indicated that through CSBG funds can purchase another RideLink vehicle. Another thing that came up with the number of riders who use this for workforce development, health providers, others. There have been conversations around how to engage with these sectors and will be adding specialized services funds. Currently, they are going to expend funds by mid-January, with renewal in





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July. Approximately \$50-60,000 would be needed to cover this gap. Wende asked the group for ideas and suggestions moving forward.

Depending on type of Medicaid coverage some rides may be covered. RideLink does not collect Medicaid data. Medicaid transportation line available through DHHS. Staff will determine rider eligibility. Tamia can provide the number to call.

There has been discussion on whether they may need to move to a prioritization model. In addition, they may need to further limit the number of rides per month or stop providing the service on the weekends. Neither of these are ideal but may be necessary until funding is renewed.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

CCIT Update

Discussion

Concerned Citizens for Improved Transportation has been working on setting goals and identified county-wide transit has been identified as their primary goal. A group is working on a proposal for a needs assessment specific to transportation to take to county commissioners. 2010 plans from the county and the Rapid had similar results and recommended an expansion of services. This was funded by specialized MDOT study dollars through GVMC. Past statistics show a need for residents of the 6 cities to go into the townships and come home.

Wende asked how this committee can support the work. Dave noted that it is important to organize people to advocate for these needs. CCIT can continue to provide comprehensive support to the community, as well as working towards getting initiatives on the ballot. There is room at CCIT for participants who are interested in engaging. They are able to provide transportation if needed. Wende asked what interest groups the group should connect to as the work continues to move forward. This will be a January agenda topic. It would be helpful to efficiently pool data and transit needs findings over the past 5-10 years to show that there is data there showing the need. Capacity to synthesize this data would be important, which agency would this lie with? A pre-strategy group will get together early January before January meeting.

Early Childhood millage – First Steps Kent is the administrator, there may be opportunities in the millage for transportation funding for parents and young children.

Joan noted that a lot of funds go towards collecting data and expressed frustration because these funds would allow agencies to serve additional clients whereas a plan may just sit on a shelf. Dave encouraged members to speak to county commissioners to express frustration and the need to county-wide mobility.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Citizen’s Agenda

Discussion

The Rapid: they are halfway through COA. Consultants are looking at inefficiencies and changes. They will have service change scenarios within current budget presented in 2020. Information is beign





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collected through an online interactive ‘survey’ where you can choose improvements that fit within a budget. Transit Oriented Development Implementation Project is ready to kick off. Silver line kicked off in 2014 but the community has not seen the type of improvement hoped. They will be gathering developers, business owners, others to talk about zoning policy to see what can be done to maximize investment.

Wave Card Transition: The Rapid is in the second phase of transition. They stopped selling paper tickets and will stop issuing change cards and transfers if you are not using a Wave Card. Wave allows for quicker boarding, fare capping, simplifies background processing. The Rapid has programs for agencies who provide bus passes for participants. They are working through inventorying programs and developing a standardized system for many agencies. The Rapid can provide information on common misconceptions around the transition. There are a few options for service agencies to sell Wave Cards on site and considerations that are in the works. There was a question around tailoring solutions for populations that have specific needs. The Rapid hopes to go to agencies for feedback. Contact Bill Kirk and Marie Tubergen to schedule.

In the transitional phase the Rapid has been filling institutional paper ticket orders and will continue to do so until there is a solution. One issue is that drivers are saying that cannot accept paper tickers starting soon, Rapid staff has been working to dispel myths. In addition, they have been looking at a way to printing single barcode tickets for partner agencies. In December, they will be putting out a plan for service agencies.

RideLink: board of commissioners approved 2020 funding for the millage. They began discussions with EcoLane for on demand for all RideLink. It has the technology capability for users and on the backend will use ridesharing technology. They will be looking at a Michigan Mobility Grant to fund this.

Wheels to Work: Continues to grow. Can only go as fast as they can hire and keep drivers. Will be expanding service from Muskegon to Tyson in Zeeland. Office staff is growing to help keep up with demand.

Updates on Michigan Mobility Projects

Discussion

Wheels to Work: App has not launched yet.

Rapid on Demand: funding is still strong. The underutilization of busses has led to underutilization of funds. They have been seeing growth and are hearing feedback that participants want this program to continue and to grow. Likely, this will end in February due to funding. They have submitted an RFP to EcoLane to use their software program. The Kaizen Health deadline keeps getting pushed back.

Additional Updates

Discussion

Disability Advocates will be doing Disability Awareness Day on March 27th. #ThisAbilityGR. This Ability Week (Mar 21-28) focuses on what agencies are already doing. If you are interested in helping with planning please, reach out to Laura.

Mobile GR – More information on the sidewalk snow support pilot will be available once details are finalized. Reach out to Ken with questions. Burton Heights and Garfield Park conversations in





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collaboration with the Rapid around the use of Rapid stops by those who are seemingly unhoused. They are working with residents, business owners, others to find a solution. Please send information and resources to Ken.

