

# REGIONAL MOBILITY COUNCIL

CHAIR – MIKE EARL · VICE CHAIR – SUSAN JOHNSON · PLANNING MANAGER – CURT HUTCHINGS

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## MINUTES

### Five County Regional Mobility Council Meeting

January 21, 2015, 1:00 p.m.

Five County Association of Governments

1070 W. 1600 S. Bldg. B, St. George UT

#### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Mike Earl  
Ms. Susan Johnson  
Ms. Tammy Nay  
Mr. Dennis Broad  
Ms. Christine Holliday  
Mr. Fred Davies  
Mr. Clint Cottam

#### **REPRESENTING**

Red Rock Center for Independence  
TURN Community Services  
Cedar Area Transportation Services  
Department of Workforce Services  
Washington County Council on Aging  
SunTran Manager  
Five County AOG Community Action Planner

#### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE BY PHONE**

Ms. Donna Chynoweth  
Ms. Fayann Christensen

#### **REPRESENTING**

Garfield County Council on Aging  
Kane County Council on Aging

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Ms. Pam McMullin  
Mr. Neal Smith  
Mr. Jeff Turek  
Ms. Connie Lloyd  
Mr. Todd Edwards  
Ms. Carrie Schonlaw

#### **REPRESENTING**

Beaver County Council on Aging  
Southwest Center for Behavioral Health  
Washington City Councilmember  
Iron County Council on Aging  
Washington County Public Works  
Five County AOG Human Services Director

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Levi Roberts  
Curt Hutchings  
Dave Demas

#### **REPRESENTING**

Five County Association of Governments  
Five County Association of Governments  
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## QUORUM & MINUTES

### **I. Welcome and Call to Order**

Mr. Mike Earl, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all present. Ms. Fayann Christensen and Ms. Donna Chynoweth were in attendance and participating via phone. It was noted that a quorum was present for conduct of business.

### **II. Approval of November 19, 2014 Minutes**

Mr. Earl entertained discussion and consideration of a motion to approve the November 19, 2014 meeting minutes. Levi Roberts noted one correction to include Dave Demas on the list of others in attendance.

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**A motion was made by Tammy Nay, seconded by Susan Johnson, to approve minutes of the November 19, 2014 with the one noted correction. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, with Fayann Christensen and Donna Chynoweth acknowledging Aye votes via telephone.**

## PLANNING AND REPORTS

### III. COA Director Reports

Fayann Christensen participated via telephone and reported that Kane County provided one of their vehicles (a jeep) to the county attorney's office. The centers were closed for Christmas, but everything else is going well in Kane County. It has been a quiet month and a lot of people have been sick.

Donna Chynoweth left the conference call to take care of some other business. Tina Pittman reported that a bus from the Escalante Center is being utilized at the Henrieville Center to transport seniors to doctor appointments, shopping, etc. The centers in Garfield County are keeping very busy. Donna rejoined the conference call and reported that the number of riders continues to increase on their buses. Trips into St. George and Richfield are very popular for shopping. The number of seniors utilizing the bus to come into the lunch at the centers is also increasing.

Christine Holliday reported that there have been a number of changes in Washington County, one of the biggest changes being the retirement of Vince McFadden last October. An individual has been hired to assume some of the responsibilities of Vince but also as backup to Christine. The new employee will start next Tuesday. A transportation scheduler is also in place that has taken over scheduling of busses in St. George. It has been convenient for seniors to meet with this individual at the center to schedule rides rather than calling on the phone. It has made a big difference to actually have an employee onsite to meet with people and follow-up on the telephone as needed. At this point, it appears that this may have increased the number of rides provided.

Ms. Holliday reported that there have been some issues in Hurricane with supervisors, but a new person was hired in October that seems to be working out. There are two drivers at the Hurricane Center, one that drives in the morning and one that drives in the afternoon. One of the busses comes into St. George on Wednesdays. The ridership in Hurricane has increased by being able to offer more options. A smaller bus that does not require a CDL is utilized by the coordinator in Springdale to transport seniors around the immediate area. By stationing a bus in Springdale it has helped with fuel costs of driving the bus from Hurricane to Springdale. The Enterprise Senior Center brings a bus into St. George a couple of times a month. Those that want to utilize the bus are, but it is still a limited number of participants. Washington County is considering purchase of a smaller natural gas, wheel chair equipped van to utilize for shorter trips. This would be more effective because clients want the door-to-door service. She noted that the new bus route from Ivins to Bloomington Walmart is exciting, but it is not likely a good option for clients that prefer the door-to-door service. It would be nice to have a study conducted on the senior busses to learn how full they are, where they go, etc. This

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would help to justify the new natural gas van. Mr. Fred Davies indicated that this type of information would be very helpful as they consider the route all the way to Springdale. Ms. Holliday indicated that the information would only be collected in St. George and not in other outlying areas. Washington County does not have the budget to transport seniors from the Springdale/Rockville area into Hurricane/St. George. If individuals can find a ride from Springdale to Hurricane, they can utilize the bus to go into St. George. However, buses coming into St. George from Hurricane once a week are generally full. Buses from Enterprise spend the day in St. George. The Hurricane bus leaves at 12:30 p.m. and returns by 4:30 p.m. Fred Davies mentioned that it would be good to have the number of riders in both Enterprise and Hurricane that are coming into St. George. It is possible that in the future more of the senior citizen population will be utilizing transit options. Mr. Levi Roberts mentioned that he did some travel training with a lady that goes to the senior citizens center in St. George. This individual has utilized dial-a-ride service, but she actually likes to take the bus to feel more independent. Others like to utilize public transit because of the social environment. Mr. Fred Davies indicated that the bus stop for the Bloomington route is close to Wendy's and Walmart.

#### **IV. Transit Director Reports**

**CATS:** Ms. Tammy Nay, CATS, requested an updated copy of the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. She reviewed ridership reports for the Cedar Area Transportation Service. The ridership numbers shared are for 2014, with the exclusion of December numbers. The numbers are not as high as the previous year. This may be attributed to an improving economy and individuals being able to secure their own vehicles. It was also noted that gas is cheaper right now and that may also impact the ridership. However, the dial-a-ride numbers have dropped. Mr. Fred Davies commented that if riders are disqualified that would also drop numbers. She indicated that staff has also started to log all of the disqualified rides. An analysis from 2009 through 2014 and the busiest months are February, March, September, and October. Ridership for other months was also reviewed. The months of May, June and July are historically the slower months. Winter months tend to be busier and this may be associated with the weather and not being able to walk.

Ms. Nay mentioned that a new ordinance requires that each committee has seven members serving on the board. The seven member board has a good representation from Vocational Rehab, a council member, SUU, citizen at-large transportation representative, Southwest Behavioral Center, Iron County School District Bus Garage, and Iron County Care & Share. The ordinance dictates that when members miss three meetings, a replacement member will be selected. Clint Cottam mentioned that April Hill is the new director for the Iron County Care & Share and she is doing an excellent job. April's contact information will be e-mailed to Ms. Nay.

An item of discussion at their last meeting was the student pass which allows unlimited rides at a cost of \$30.00 per month. In looking at the structure of semesters, students would have to purchase a pass for one week in August. This is also the case with the month of December. The group suggested that developing a semester pass may be a good alternative to monthly passes. A tentative price of \$75.00 was suggested. Any

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change would of course have to be approved by the Cedar City Council. Mr. Fred Davies reported that he has been working with Dixie State University to also initiate a semester pass for students. The University denied the request last time it was presented because of the lack of data. SunTran will once again propose a free ride week and see what type of reception it receives this time. SunTran was requesting that DSU pay a dollar per student for each semester. This would be approximately \$20,000. If the university provides some funding, students could actually ride the bus at no cost. Levi Roberts mentioned that if rides are offered for free the ridership would likely increase and you can leverage funds as match with the 5311 funding source. He indicated that a lot of smaller systems in college towns are funded using this approach. SunTran staff feels like this is a good option for DSU because of the limited amount of parking that is available to students. In addition, on-campus housing requires a certain amount of parking. Mr. Levi Roberts pointed out that as DSU continues to expand their facilities, the surface parking can be purposed for a better use. Approximately 45% of the students at Utah State University use transit as their means of transportation to get to the campus. Fred Davies indicated that he approached the student body presidency that has their own funding that they control. Levi Roberts mentioned that he would be happy to assist CATS with some kind of analysis to present to SUU. It is important to leverage funding because of the limited amount of funds that are available.

Ms. Nay also reported that she is still waiting for the UDOT sign contract. Mr. Fred Davies indicated the SunTran has re-designed their signs. The signs are much easier to see and to recognize as a bus stop. It was cheaper to have the sign done at the prison than for the city to produce them. The signs were \$40.00 each on both sides. This was a savings of one-half the cost by printing on both sides and doing it as a flag sign. The new signs have a reflective image of a bus and the remainder of the sign is white. The SunTran logo is small and the signs are illuminated at night.

Ms. Nay mentioned that there is a new taxi service in Cedar City called Anytime Taxi. The company has been going to all of the bus stops where people are waiting and offering them a deal to take the taxi in lieu of the bus. It is difficult to determine how many rides CATS is losing and there would likely be no recourse in this situation. The drivers will continue to monitor this and try to determine how many rides are being lost. Fred Davies commented that this may be an indicator that people are not satisfied with the speed of service. Ms. Nay acknowledged that this is the major complaint of riders. This is an issue with SunTran as well because of the loop system and having to ride the bus through the entire route to reach a destination. It was mentioned that there is also no WiFi on the bus. Mr. Levi Roberts indicated that UTA has WiFi on their commuter trains and buses. It was noted that many cities do provide this but it does have associated costs.

**SunTran:** Mr. Fred Davies reported that their paratransit is over 1,000 rides per month. A handout was provided that depicts the wheelchair and scooter paratransit rides per month as well as fixed route rides per month. Paratransit utilizes three vehicles running from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Those three vehicles carry wheelchairs and scooters in the 250-300 range for a long, and this has not really changed. A small change occurred on the trend line. Fixed route buses are depicted in red on the chart. The fixed route has

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had a standard trend line for years in the 150 range per month of wheelchairs or scooters on the bus. Suddenly in September, it jumped to between 250 and 300. This is significant because the buses only have room for two wheelchairs. In addition, load time for wheelchairs is somewhere in the 3-4 minute range and unload is 1.5 minutes. If these riders jump on and off the bus at various stops, it can cause delays of 10 minutes or more. This has created some challenge, but overall ridership numbers are down by about 2-3 percent. The wheelchair ridership doubled. To meet this challenge, drivers are trying to exit all of the passengers out the rear door to speed up the exit. This allows the wheelchair riders to be loaded through the front door. This helps to increase the speed of riders getting on and off the bus. A request will be presented to the St. George City Council tomorrow for \$150,000 in out of cycle funding to replace all of the tie-downs in all of the seven primary buses. This will provide a faster tie-down system on each bus. SunTran is now doing in-person paratransit assessments. The fact that these individuals are riding and fully functional on the bus means that they do not qualify for paratransit service. The cost to move individuals over to paratransit would be \$160,000 per month. Staff is diligently working to keep the paratransit numbers down because of associated higher costs. Levi Roberts explained that dial-a-ride service is much more expensive to run and people have a lot more independence when riding the bus. Travel training is provided so that individuals are not relying on paratransit services. Mr. Fred Davies indicated that one of the reasons for doing assessments was to determine paratransit eligibility, but it also helped to introduce individuals to the bus system. This has worked to keep the number of paratransit riders from increasing. Mr. Davies noted that there are also a lot of people riding their scooters on the roads throughout the area that are not utilizing bus transit. Many of these individuals are not utilizing the bus because of the length of time the route takes. There needs to be some type of solution to the issues mentioned because routes are running 10-15 minutes late. It is hoped that the City Council will approve the \$150,000 in funding at an 80/20 split. Other funds have been identified for the match portion that will not be taken out of the SunTran budget. He noted that a number of people do utilize walkers and the non-foldable walkers are also becoming an issue. Some walkers also take up as much room folded as they do when open. Strollers are allowed on the bus as long as the space is not needed for disabled clients. ADA trumps strollers and those passengers may be asked to leave the bus to accommodate someone with a disability. A stroller is not considered a mobility device.

Mr. Davies reported that SunTran has had some issues with riders taking their dogs and claiming that they are service animals. After observing the situation for some time, letters have been sent to some riders indicating that they can ride the bus but their dogs cannot because they are not service dogs. Some of the dogs were actually a threat to other passengers as well as the drivers, and the animal had not been trained to perform a task. Mr. Levi Roberts explained that it is difficult to deny rides for this reason because it is hard to dispute that the animal is not a service animal.

Three new 35' buses arrived in December and these vehicles will be taking over routes 3, 4, and 5 and 3, 4, and 6 on a three way cycle. The new buses will solve some of the on and off challenges as well as carrying five additional passengers. It was announced

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that the Ivins Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will begin at 3:30 p.m. at the Ivins City building. There will be two buses available depending on the number of people that want to ride.

Mr. Davies also reported that advertising on the SunTran buses is not at \$100,000 equivalent. There are 20 advertisers on the bus now. The three new buses have opened up \$90,000 in advertising and the first space has already sold. It is anticipated that by the end of 2015 advertising will be at \$200,000. Times this by five and it will pay for \$1 million worth of buses in the following year. This is critically needed by SunTran to provide new buses.

Some new route changes were added, including a route deviation to the Doctor's Free Clinic, and the addition of routes 5 and 6. Adding 44 stops and changing 13 other stops, took a lot of effort. This process took approximately four months and threw other work and reporting behind by about two months. Full Walmart runs from Ivins will start tomorrow.

## **V. Mobility Management Report**

Mr. Levi Roberts reported that staff is working to commission a transit study from St. George to Springdale/Zion National Park. Funding is coming from various sources including the MPO, UDOT, and possible some Council of Government funds from Washington County. This should be a robust service that looks at transit service through this corridor. The study will include an implementation plan outlining how to make this happen. The plan will focus on serving communities, not just initiating a route from St. George to Zion National Park. However, this would need to be a pretty quick route. An RFP will be solicited to bring a consultant on board to complete the study. It was noted that there are some community activists that are pushing for this study.

It was reported that Dave Demas has been doing a lot of work in regard to van pools and Circle Four Farms in Beaver County has been approached about this as a possible option. This business was approached in the past but there were issues and it did not move ahead because of several issues. Staff is trying to work with them again to see if something might work. He is also working with Milgro out of Newcastle to transport workers from the Cedar City area.

Mr. Roberts indicated that a gentleman contacted him recently who has interest in becoming a travel trainer. He is familiar with the bus routes and excited to assist. Staff has also been working on the Regional Transportation Plan update. The transit and bicycle and pedestrian sections are the main areas where Levi has assisted. A coordination piece is included in the Human Services Coordinated Plan to coordinate with regional transportation efforts. Mr. Fred Davies mentioned a transit plan that his boss has approved for him to obtain estimates and a scope of work as long as it does not exceed the current budget. This would be a regional transit plan that would include areas of expansion for the system. The plan would also revamp the current transit system. A Request for Proposals should be released in the near future.

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## **VI. Bus Shelter Work Group Progress Report**

Mr. Mike Earl reported that the bus shelters have arrived, but they will require need to be assembled. Dave Demas reported that after considerable research, it has been determined that the City has sufficient easement to accommodate construction of a bus shelter in front of Target. The Boy Scouts provided \$1,000 in match from a project for a bench. The easements are close for the stops at Lins and the Southwest Behavioral Center. Both of these stops should be moving forward in the near future. The fourth stop, which is located by Desert Industries, is in a difficult situation. If this location does not work, staff will examine other options in the area. The shelters should be in place in the next 2-3 months period of time.

## **VII. Five County CAP Travel Voucher Program**

Mr. Clint Cottam reported that some left over Community Services Block Grant funding from last year is being used to start the flexible gas voucher program. The application form was revamped to make it very clear what is considered self-sufficiency. There were some individuals that wanted to use the gas voucher program as a handout rather than assistance to overcome some type of barrier. These funds can be used in the community for the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low income communities, empowerment of low income families, and supports to help low-income individuals become self-sufficient. It appears that funding will not help as many individuals as was originally planned. A second piece to the program comes through the Social Services Block Grant Program which has a slightly different definition of self-sufficiency. This definition is to provide services that help individuals to be independent. These funds are typically utilized in the senior citizen centers for transportation. The gas voucher for senior citizens will be for medical transportation. There is more flexibility for seniors and people with disabilities on the flexible gas voucher program. Applications are available for those who know someone that may qualify, but vouchers must be tied to a self-sufficiency plan. In other words, by providing the service how is the individual working toward self-sufficiency. However, most people who are really trying have a good plan in place. Staff is working hard to roll this program out into Kane, Garfield and Beaver counties as well. He pointed out that there are eligibility restrictions in Cedar City and St. George where individuals have access to SunTran, CATS and dial-a-ride services. If individuals live within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of bus stop they would not be eligible for the flexible gas voucher program. SunTran and CATS would be the option for those individuals. One aspect of the program requires that it does not duplicate service. This is a great fit for the more rural areas in the Five County region. Donna Chynoweth commented that this will be very helpful in Garfield County to transport seniors to doctor appointments that may not be conducive to the regular bus schedule. This will provide another option for people in the more rural area. Staff will definitely be enforcing the rule regarding the distance to a bus stop because a lot of tax money is going into that system already and it would be a duplicate of service.

Mr. Levi Roberts reiterated how the gas voucher program works. The individual will need to recruit their own driver and assume liability. The mileage reimbursement rate will be \$.38 per mile, but there will be higher caps for Beaver, Garfield and Kane counties. The document will require the signature of the driver as well as verification from the service provider. For example a doctor, DWS, etc. and case managers will be

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calling providers to receive verification of the service. However, individuals that are Medicare may have to use the pick-me-up service first before being eligible for the gas voucher program. It was pointed out that this service does not exist in the rural areas.

## OTHER

### VIII. FTA Grant Application Process Update

Mr. Levi Roberts reported that he spoke to UDOT today because they are not on schedule with their grant applications process. It was initially thought that the applications would be reviewed during this meeting, but the applications are not yet available. It is anticipated that grant applications for this region will be received next week and there would be a 45-day period to review them. The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, which would be right after the window of review opportunity. The meeting date needs to be moved up earlier in March. The first week of March would be the best timing. An e-mail poll will be sent out to Council members to determine the date for the meeting. Those who have not submitted their grant application are too late for this year and will have to wait until the next year's application cycle.

### IX. Committee Membership Announcement

Mr. Roberts reported that staff reviewed which members had been attending meetings. He expressed appreciation to Carrie Schonlaw for her service and indicated that she will no longer be on the committee. She assumed other responsibilities at Five County and will not be able to attend these meetings. This puts the membership of the committee at 14 members currently. As a general rule, most people are attending at least one-half of the time. This means that seven members would constitute a quorum. The bylaws indicate that if members miss three or more meetings a year, their membership will be reviewed. It was noted that Jeff Turek has not attended the meetings for a long time either.

### X. Action Items

Dave Demas provided a spreadsheet outlining action items and indicated that most of the items that were previously on the list have been accomplished.

Items that have not been completed are carried forward from last meeting are as follows:

Item # 10 –The Google maps update process will be transferred to each of the different agencies moving forward so it can be taken off the list. Levi Roberts is still providing the schedule changes but will transition these updates to other agencies.

Item # 13 – Mr. Roberts indicated that he sent out this information, but the link and information is available online.

Item # 35 – This is in regards to the van pool update for the Newcastle area and Circle Four Farms. Staff will continue to pursue this opportunity and to open the lines of communication.

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Item # 37– Ms. Susan Johnson reported that their lobbyist is still working on issues for people with disabilities.

Item # 38 – Mr. Roberts indicated that this item has been completed.

Item # 39– Mr. Roberts indicated that he still needs to follow up on this item. However, he noted that there is an expected service lag, but that does not necessarily mean that you will be put at the top of the priority list when you have reach five years of service or 150,000 miles on the vehicle. Some providers indicated that vehicles have reached beyond their service life and their applications have been denied. This is because funding has been tighter and UDOT has had to re-prioritize projects.

Item # 40 – Mr. Roberts indicated that this item has been completed.

Mr. Demas indicated that the Brian Head Study is not going to move forward at this time. The study is on hold at this point in time. Mr. Roberts indicated that the past studies were somewhat deficient in defining funding that would be available to run the service. Recommendations need to be feasible from a financial point of view. Members should provide any other action items that need to be included to Dave or Levi.

**XI. Other Business**

None

**XII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be voted on by consensus via an e-mail survey that will be sent out to members.

**XIII. Adjournment**

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.