

# 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

July 21, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

Five County Association of Governments  
1070 W. 1600 S. Building B, St. George UT

#### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms. Susan Johnson  
Ms. Christine Holliday  
Mr. Curtis Crawford  
Mr. Jeff Turek  
Mr. Dennis Broad  
Ms. Claudia Gutierrez for Neal Smith  
Mr. Johnny Bowman  
Mr. Fred Davies  
Ryan Marshall  
Ms. Fayann Christensen  
Mr. Clint Cottam

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Ms. Donna Chynoweth  
Ms. Sheila Shotwell  
Mr. Todd Edwards

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Dave Demas  
Kathy Pope  
Lisa Young  
Diane Lamoreaux

#### **REPRESENTING**

TURN Community Services  
Washington County Council on Aging  
Iron County Council on Aging  
Washington City Councilmember  
Department of Workforce Services  
Southwest Center for Behavioral Health  
Red Rock Center for Independence  
SunTran Manager  
CATS  
Kane County Council on Aging  
Five County AOG Community Action Planner

#### **REPRESENTING**

Garfield County Council on Aging  
Beaver County Council on Aging  
Washington County Public Works

#### **REPRESENTING**

Five County Association of Governments  
St. George Express  
St. George Express  
Volunteer

## QUORUM & MINUTES

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

Ms. Susan Johnson, Vice- Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was present for conduct of business. It was noted that Ms. Claudia Gutierrez was representing Mr. Neal Smith, Southwest Center for Behavioral Health.

### **II. Approval of May 19, 2016 Minutes**

Ms. Susan Johnson, Vice-Chair, entertained discussion and/or consideration of a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 19, 2016 Regional Mobility Council.

**A motion was made by Fayann Christensen, seconded by Dennis Broad, to approve minutes of the May 19, 2016 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

# REGIONAL MOBILITY COUNCIL

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---

## PLANNING AND REPORTS

### III. Board Introductions

Ms. Susan Johnson asked Board members to provide introductions. Ms. Johnson also reported that Mr. Johnny Bowman is replacing Mr. Mike Earl as the new representative for the Red Rock Center for Independence.

### IV. Selection of New Chair

Mr. Dave Demas reported that with the departure of Mr. Mike Earl it is necessary to appoint a new member to serve as Chair. The Vice-Chair would normally rotate to serve as the Chair, but Ms. Susan Johnson has served in this capacity a number of times. Ms. Susan Johnson called for nominations to fill the vacant position.

Ms. Susan Johnson nominated Mr. Fred Davies to serve as Chair.

**Ms. Fayann Christensen motioned to close the nominations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Susan Johnson, and CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

### V. Transit Directors

Mr. Fred Davies reported that things are going well at SunTran, but a few personnel challenges continue. It is becoming more and more difficult for SunTran to fill vacant part-time driver positions due to requiring a CDL license. The Washington County School District pays their bus drivers \$14.94 per hour to start, drivers who have been with the district average \$17.00 per hour, and the top wage is set at \$20.00 per hour.

He reported that a telephone app has been tested for the past three months which makes it easier for passengers to find and track the location of their bus. It is anticipated that this app will be released within the next few weeks, prior to moving buses to 30 minute routes. The draft study for redesign of the SunTran transit system has been provided to SunTran. The study does not recommend stops where passenger boarding numbers are very low. The redesign recommended alternative provides service to most of the current routes at 30 minute intervals. There will be approximately 3% of customers that are not included in the new routing. Routing calls for a bus through the Dixie Center on the way to Walmart. The stop currently serving DXATC on Dixie Drive and the stop at the Doctors Volunteer Clinic will be discontinued due to low ridership. The tradeoff for shorter headways is reduced service on some routes and is painful those losing service. It was also noted that the study included options for a transit center, but design was not addressed.

Mr. Davies reported that the road and transit tax initiative has been placed on the November ballot by the Washington County Commission. If passed, it is anticipated that this would provide \$1.6 million in funding to SunTran and approximately \$800,000 to surrounding areas. This increased funding would provide the opportunity for SunTran to expand services. It is anticipated that growth will continue throughout Washington County. Ms. Kathy Pope mentioned that the St. George Express would like to partner with SunTran on a transit center. Mr. Davies asked that she schedule an appointment to discuss a possible partnership.

# REGIONAL MOBILITY COUNCIL

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

---

Mr. Ryan Marshall, Cedar City CATS, reported that they are also experiencing staffing issues on the management side as well as with drivers. An issue with insurance premiums for drivers has also surfaced for drivers that have not had a CDL for two years and those over the age of 65. Staff is working to address these issues. The problem is that drivers are letting their CDL licenses expire because they do not want to take the physical exam that is required. He also reported that the CATS rebranding and new logo is being rolled out on signs.

## **VI. COA Director Reports**

Ms. Fayann Christensen, Kane County, reported that things are going well in Kane County. Trips are continuing several times a month to Cedar City and St. George to accommodate doctor appointments and shopping needs. The bus does travel to Page, Arizona at times as well. The insurance allows for crossing state lines to transport passengers to St. George. Not a lot of other transportation services are available in Kane County other than through the Senior Citizens Center. It was noted that if buses are not full, non-seniors can ride by paying \$10.00 to \$15.00 depending on where the bus is traveling. Senior citizens are asked to contribute \$7.00 for their ride, but this is a suggested donation only. Transportation for one person only would be a fee of \$35.00.

Mr. Curtis Crawford, Iron County, reported that their entire fleet of vehicles was serviced last month. The bus travels once a week from Parowan to Cedar City to accommodate doctor appointments and shopping needs. A bus also travels from Beryl to Cedar City as needed to transport senior citizens to appointments and/or doctor appointments.

## **VII. Non-profit Transportation Providers**

Mr. Johnny Bowman provided an introduction as the new representative for the Red Rock Center for Independence. He indicated that he relocated from the Carbon County area and has been on the job for the past five weeks. The vehicle fleet at Red Rock is very well maintained and all vehicles are operable. The organization has a 15 passenger bus and two mini vans to serve disabled clients.

Ms. Susan Johnson, TURN, reported that TURN Community Services is continuing to utilize SunTran whenever the service is available to their clients. Some of their grant funding has been cut and this will necessitate some scaling back in terms of services provided. This makes it even more important to encourage clients to utilize transit services.

Ms. Claudia Gutierrez, Southwest Behavioral Health Center, reported that they have two buses in St. George and one in Cedar City to serve their clients. Neal Smith has asked how other organizations conduct pre and post trip inspections. Most of those in attendance indicated that pre and post trip inspections of their vehicles occur on a daily basis. Mr. Ryan Marshall indicated that these inspections are conducted each time a driver changes on a bus. He noted that UDOT conducts a yearly audit to check vehicles and records such as maintenance and inspection of vehicles. Members noted that inspections conducted by UDOT are pretty comprehensive. Policy changes have

# REGIONAL MOBILITY COUNCIL

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

---

occurred over time in terms of payback for vehicles that are over 5 years old with 100,000 miles. Payback of funds is required even if the sale amount is less than \$5,000. The larger buses require 500,000 miles and 10 years prior to release from UDOT.

## **VIII. Mobility Management Report**

Mr. Dave Demas reported that Jay Aguilar, Five County Mobility Manager, has been busy conducting travel training, working with the homeless case manager, and other duties as assigned. He has been busy working with partners at the UDOT public transit team to work out issues and obtain clarification on various work plan activities.

## **IX. Bus Shelter Work Group**

Mr. Dave Demas reported that the bus shelter at Lin's has been completed and is fully operational. This stop has been long anticipated and is operating very well. Ms. Fred Davies explained that funding was in place for this stop for completion as an Eagle Scout project. This is the culmination of a great community effort. Work is continuing on the 360 North Dixie Drive and DI stop in the Pine View Plaza. These stops will not be completed until the final route study has been approved.

## **OTHER**

## **X. Review Action Items**

Mr. Dave Demas reported that all items on the action list have been completed at this time. Ms. Susan Johnson indicated that Turn Community Services continues to lobby the legislature on an ongoing basis. One item they are trying to accomplish is to increase the salaries for their staff. Individuals working with the handicapped population receive very low pay considering the volatile clients they assist. The current salary is \$9.50 and they are trying to increase the wage to \$10.50 to \$11.00 per hour.

## **XI. Other Business**

Mr. Dave Demas reported that the draft transit study addressing the area from St. George to Springdale is close to completion. The steering committee established to work on this project will meet on August 1<sup>st</sup> to review data and as a group recommend alternatives. The consultant will then prepare cost estimates and an implementation plan. At this point, this transit route appears to be very feasible. The study examines feasibility of the route, funding options, match requirements and implementation. The system could be accomplished under SunTran, an independent provider, and/or transit district. Ms. Kathy Pope suggested examination of funding from UDOT intercity 5311F funding. A similar route has been established and funded with 5311F funds to provide service between Great Falls and Butte, Montana. She noted that St. George Express offers transportation from St. George to Springdale, but it is fairly expensive for clients. She also mentioned that there are a lot of people working in the Springdale area that would likely utilize transit services. An affordable transit or shuttle service to this area would be helpful. Political bodies will examine the final study to determine how a transit system may work. It was noted that the need for partnerships will be an important piece in establishing this route.

# REGIONAL MOBILITY COUNCIL

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

---

Ms. Kathy Pope reported that the St. George Express Shuttle service provides 13 trips each day to the Las Vegas Airport, 13 trips a day to Zion National Park and four trips per day to Salt Lake City. She provided brochures and other information sheets for passing along to clients. The cost to travel to the Las Vegas Airport is \$19.00 one way and this includes WiFi and bottled water. The Salt Lake City route cost is \$39.00 one way. Aztec, St. George Express and Salt Lake Express have merged into one organization. The organization operates successful routes in Idaho, from Salt Lake City to Blanding and Ephraim/Richfield. She expressed interest in coordinating with entities on the St. George to Springdale route for possible participation. A good time to network and establish partnerships is during the URSTA Conference which is scheduled for September 23-24, 2016. Mr. Demas suggested that Kathy schedule an appointment with Jay Aguilar to discuss transit services.

Mr. Fred Davies reported that the agreement between SunTran and Dixie State University has been very successful with over 100 students per day in ridership. The ridership for college students over the summer has remained in the mid 80's. The fall enrollment at DSU is estimated at 8,000 students and 1,000 staff that could potentially ride SunTran free of charge by presenting their ID card. SunTran is anticipating that the number of students riding the bus will increase as word spreads with numbers that could double or even triple. This agreement has been very helpful to St. George City in providing match dollars.

Mr. Clint Cottam, Five County CAP Director, reported that staff is in the process of updating the Needs Assessment for the Community Services Block Grant program. Public forums were conducted in each of the five counties and an online survey has also been made available. Mr. Aguilar participated in administering and collecting data. Results of the forums and surveys depict challenges with a housing crisis and transportation issues. Rental rates are very expensive and affordable housing is being pushed to outlying areas in Washington County. This is creating difficulty with transportation to employment that is mainly located in the St. George area. There is also a huge gap with child care providers, ADA transportation, etc. Transportation is increasingly difficult and routes provided by SunTran and CATs is not able to keep pace with service demands. Another difficulty exists because child care providers are not located on transit routes. Requesting service from local churches or neighbors helping neighbors appears to be the best and most viable options for transportation to child care providers. Mr. Cottam asked that this discussion carry over to the next meeting agenda when additional information will be available. An active discussion may provide options that would provide a solution for these problems.

## **XII. Adjourn**

**A motion was made by Ms. Fayann Christensen, seconded by Mr. Jeff Turek, to adjourn. MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2016 beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Five County AGO office in St. George.

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