



Minutes for the Special RCC- Steering Committee Meeting November 15, 2023.

A special meeting of the RCC and Steering Committee was held on November 15, 2023, at AAA9 offices, 710 Wheeling Ave, Cambridge, Ohio for the specific purpose of receiving the SROI Impact Calculator presentation by Ohio University. The meeting was called to order slightly after 9am. Twenty were in attendance. The meeting was conducted by Deborah Hill, OMEGA Regional Transit Planner.

Attendees and guests were welcomed. Housekeeping items, including notice that the meeting would be both video and audio recorded for future use by OMEGA or OU in either public or private venues, was reviewed and the meeting agenda was presented. Attendees signed an attendance sheet but also each introduced themselves for the benefit of the speaker and guests. There were five guests and three regions represented.

Regional Business was briefly discussed in the interest of allowing time for the Impact Calculator presentation and discussion. On December 13, 2023 the SROI (Social Return on Investment) Final Report will be presented at the RCC/Steering Committee meeting being held at AAA9 offices, 710 Wheeling Ave., Cambridge, Ohio from 9-11am. Attendance at this meeting is highly suggested, as a study of this kind showing the dollars and cents of value provided by regional transit and transportation has never been done in the country before, and its impact cannot be overstated.

The CY2024 calendar invitations for both the Steering Committee and the Regional Coordinated Council have been sent out. If anyone does not have them, please email Dhill@omegadistrict.org and they can be immediately sent.

The Regional Survey of Unmet Needs is being conducted through the end of this year (and ongoingly). This data is used to help identify regional unmet needs and goals and strategies. Responses to date are only at about 50% of last year's responses but we feel this is partially due to the fact that five surveys were conducted for the SROI analysis in the last six months, and people are just weary of filling out surveys. The data is regionally important though, so we encourage participation by all counties to continue. The survey is available by QR code, weblink, pdf, in brail and in large print. Please contact any mobility manager or Ms. Hill to get survey contact links and/or help with completing the surveys.

There was also a very brief review of regional project goals and their status to date. Several goals, like regional CarFit training events, the regional Medical Outreach Campaign, and the SROI analysis have all been completed with great success.

In progress is the potential pilot project for volunteer transportation companions which is being advanced with the help of a Tuscarawas Leadership Team collaboration.

Also in progress, and on track, is the rewriting of the Regional Coordinated Plan which is due to ODOT at the end of June 2024.

Lastly progress is being made on the development of an impact advisory group to encourage and promote direct feedback/input from persons with disabilities and seniors in our region. We make strong efforts to be inclusive and to ensure the voices of these vulnerable populations are represented in our committee and decision-making processes and procedures, but we also recognize that a representative is not equal to a direct authentic voice, and we wish to include that authentic first-person voice. This project will begin in earnest at the beginning of the year.

Overall, Region 9, took on many ambitious and innovative projects, well above and beyond what is expected, and we have had notable successes with each. There is much to be proud of!

Concluding the regional business, our featured presenter/speaker was introduced. Mandy White with Ohio University, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service presented the first of three project deliverables with the Social Return on Investment Research Project, initiated and funded by OMEGA. The project slides are available in their entirety on the OMEGA website. A study of this type has never been done in the country before and the groundbreaking results were, honestly, astounding. Please see the slides and/or contact Dhill@omegadistrict.org for more information, explanation, and copies of the presentation. The study was conducted specifically in relation to the OMEGA counties and the public transits and transportation providers operating here. The numbers were VERY conservative and directly applicable only to Region 9, though inferences could be made. The study also looked ONLY at CY2022. Some BRIEF highlights included:

In 2022 alone, public transit and transportation providers only in Region 9, generated between \$27.7 and \$36.9 MILLION dollars in decreased mortality rate costs and SAVED 35 LIVES. That is just one year and just our region!

Between \$15 and \$20 MILLION dollars in out-of-pocket costs were saved by those able to age in place rather than be placed in institutional care because of public transit availability and service. Nearly 9% of surveyed riders over 60 said that they would be forced to move to independent living facilities if it were not for public transit.

18% of OMEGA riders surveyed said they would definitely lose their jobs without public transit and this generated, in Region 9 alone, in one year alone, between \$10 and \$15 MILLION dollars of increased human capital.

Public Transit and transportation providers in Region 9 in one year provided a decreased patient health cost to Medicaid of between \$15.5 and \$89 MILLION dollars.

Overall, in CY2022, in Region 9 alone, ONE DOLLAR invested in public transit and transportation created a social return on investment of between 543% and 913%in ONE YEAR, in ONE REGION.

This study, and the final report to be presented in December, will have far-reaching and substantial effects. The full slides also contain other impacts. For certain, the study proves, unequivocally, that rural public transit and rural transportation providers are providing services that are outstandingly effective and efficient (with returns of \$5 to \$9 dollars for every one dollar invested) and that they are just severely underfunded.

There was a lot of information to digest, and we suggest it would be worth your time to look over the slides. 😊

Finally, for the good of the region, we recognized Jeannette Wierzbicki who retired as Executive Director of OMEGA on October 31, 2023, after nearly a decade of service to the region. She was a strong supporter of public transit and specifically of the groundbreaking SROI study and we thank her for her dedicated service to the economic advancement of the region and her recognition that transit and transportation play a vital role in that advancement.

Kevin Hannahs, Director of the Society for Equal Access (SEA) is retiring at the end of December 2023. SEA transports seniors from Tuscarawas County to medical appointments. They provide mostly NMET transportation but are a vital part of meeting the needs of seniors and those on Medicaid in Tuscarawas County. We wish him well and thank him for his dedicated service.

Lastly, we introduced Dr. Vicki Maple who took on the role of the new Executive Director of OMEGA on November 1, 2023. We look forward to working with her and to her support as we continue OMEGA Region 9's strong leadership role in the state conversation of public transit and transportation, and coordination efforts to better serve the riders of our region.

The meeting ended approximately 11:15am.