

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes May 19, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Transit Planner, Deborah Hill at 8:32 am. 22 persons were in attendance. After the zoom housekeeping, the agenda was presented, and a full roll call was taken.

Next our new member was introduced. Michael McBride is taking the membership spot left vacant by Peggy Hickenbottom who retired. Mr. McBride is the transportation administrator for Senior Services of Belmont County. The Senior Services of Belmont County will also serve as the lead agency for Belmont County taking the place of National Church Residences, by request of the commissioners of Belmont County.

The regional performance measures were reviewed with the changes that had been made from feedback at the last month's meeting. The Region 9 Performance Measures will be as follows:

1. Increase general ridership by 3% per year.
2. Increase Senior Citizen ridership by 3% per year.
3. Increase Disabled/Otherly Abled ridership by 2% per year.
4. Decrease "No Shows" by 2% per year.

"No Show" being defined as: Any trip that is not taken, not due to provider error, but due solely to passenger-controlled unavailability for pick-up of a scheduled trip within the transit agency's written policy pick-up window, and who has not notified the transit agency within that transit agency's written policy cancellation window to cancel that trip. Trips in which passengers will not be picked up due to circumstances related to the provider/provider vehicle/provider service will NOT be considered a no-show.

Additionally, this data to be reported as No Shows by Medicaid customers and No Shows by all other customers.

5. Decrease Trip Denials by 2% per year. "Trip Denial" being defined as: a trip which cannot be provided within the one hour window before and after the requested trip time. Trip times that are negotiated with the passenger within the one hour prior to the requested time or one hour past the requested time are NOT trip denials. A trip is a denial even if it is taken, but occurs outside the one hour window.
6. Decrease Trip Refusals by 2% per year. "Trip Refusal" being defined as: Trips requested outside the hours of service or service area provided by the transit system.
7. Decrease Overtime hours by 3% per year. (Some systems do not permit overtime hours.)
8. Increase On-Time trips by 3% per year. "On-Time" being defined as within a 30 minute window of the pick-up time, typically meaning within 15 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.
9. Increase same day trips by 3% per year.

A verbal vote to accept and adopt the regional performance measures was taken and all were in favor with none opposed. After the meeting it was brought to management's attention that the definition of "on-time" in performance measure 8 was not clearly defined. A more complete definition was sent to all transit and transportation directors to ensure that the more complete definition did not conflict with any of their stated

policies. There was no conflict, so the definition was amended. The statements above are the final adopted regional performance measures. Data for each of these measures will be collected in CY 2021 and used as a baseline for the performance measures.

Following the adoption of regional performance measures, the Steering Committee heard a presentation from Howard Stewart, Transit Director, SEAT and Andrea Dupler, Operations Manager, SEAT concerning strategies used by SEAT to extend hours of service. Howard began with a general description of SEAT's operations and philosophy. He stated that SEAT was comparable to a mini-CODA operationally. SEAT has made a concerted effort to hold customer service as a central driving force, and Howard credits that and his staff for gains in efficiency of operations. In 2018 they began hiring based more on the good attitude of the applicant and less on prior experience or technical knowledge. They prefer to teach the new hires the technology and how it needs to be used rather than try to break old habits of old ways to accomplish tasks. This change in hiring focus has served SEAT well.

In 2019, SEAT consolidated operations in Muskingum and Guernsey county into one phone number for reservations and consolidated services on their website and scheduling portal. They perform both auto scheduling, several times a day, and manual scheduling.

They have several forms/options for transit provision. SEAT busses are kept for mainly local transport. They also schedule for a fleet of 38 contract vendor drivers who provide the longer and out of town trips. Additionally, they have 5 agency contracts to utilize idle vehicles. SEAT drivers and vendors all work on a blocked schedule which helps control overtime. All vehicles are scheduled through CTS, including vendors. The vendor driver fleet has been operating through SEAT since the mid 2000's. They started with NMET transportation and has grown to provide most longer distance trips. Drivers are under contract with SEAT and are trained according to all the same standards as public transit drivers. They fulfill all requirements for ADA, FTA and Medicaid. They are paid a contract rate and issued a 1099 for taxes. Drivers must cover the cost of CTS, background checks, etc. They communicate with SEAT base through TEAMS and operate sort of like an uber system would. SEAT utilizes local media recruiting and has had success with recruiting drivers from facebook and social media as well.

The agency contracts work in slightly different ways. Vehicles are purchased by the agency but, by contract agreement, are scheduled and managed through SEAT during downtime hours.

SEAT provides 24/7 service because of the addition of contract vendor drivers and agency contracted vehicles. Weekend service is based on pre-scheduling only (you can't call in) but same day reservations can be made by agencies (not the public) through a private, agency only on-call number. Currently SEAT has 11 agencies using the scheduling portal receiving about 1000 portal requests per month.

Andrea also highlighted some of SEAT's statistical data which showed a tremendous increase in effective and efficient transportation. The no show rate in 2017 was about 17%, in 2021 the rate is 2-3%. Overtime hours have decreased from about 360 hours per month in 2017 to 50 or less per month in 2020. This provided a huge cost savings to the organization. Same day trips were non-existent in 2017 and are now about 1300 per month in 2020. Passenger hours increased from about 1.2 in 2017 to 5.2 in 2021. This is partly due to the effective and efficient use of busses and SEAT vehicles used for in town/local transportation and vendor drivers for out of town requests. Andrea also mentioned that while the number of trips provided has increased over 40,000 from 2017 to 2020 their labor costs have stayed relatively the same increasing by only \$40,000. Also impressive, the on time rate has gone from 72% in 2017 to an on time rate of 98.6% in 2021.

Contract revenue has increased by nearly one million dollars a year from \$1.5 Million in 2017 to \$2.3 Million in 2019.

In summary, SEAT credits excellent staff and the more effective use of data for the great increases in efficiency and effectiveness that SEAT operations have experienced.

After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and several were posed about funding sources and qualifications for the vendor driver program as well as better defining how SEAT provides 24/7 service which is outside the stated public transit service hours. Howard responded to all questions.

Next, were updates on the regional projects. Both the Employment Transportation and the OC/OC Strategic Planning Study are underway with respective consultant firms scheduling kick-off meetings. The Regional Resource Guide website is under development with the regional mobility managers helping to supply the information to populate the site. Media outreach is also well underway with agreements being sent to each county in the next week and the individual county projects being developed. There was also an apportionment of funds for a regional media campaign. Two videos were presented to the group for comment and feedback. The videos were well received by the group with all saying they are in agreement with the regional campaign headed in the direction of the production of a regional PSA which could be broadcast on regional TV stations and also on all sorts of social media. OMEGA is going to contact a videographer and have an initial meeting to discuss what the region wants to accomplish with the PSA, using the two videos along with Steering Committee comments that were captured during the meeting.

Meeting dates for the remainder of the year were presented. The next meeting is a combined RCC/Steering Committee meeting scheduled for June 16, 2021. At that meeting Dan Dalton, Lead for KFH consulting will host the kick-off meeting for the OC/OC Strategic Planning Study project. Dan spoke briefly and some general questions were posed so the SC has time to consider what they want a regional call center to look and function like. The goal of the project is to better define the parameters of a regional call center to ensure it will regionally accepted, regionally useful and regional utilized.

There were two announcements for the good of the region. A new mobility manager, Jill Cunningham, has been hired to represent Tuscarawas, Harrison and Carroll counties. Her first day was only two days ago, but to her credit, she was on the call. The second announcement was a caution to keep an eye on federal HR2 which is the infrastructure bill currently being considered in congress. Buried in the bill is a new mandate that would require any vehicle capable of carrying 8 persons (7 people plus one driver) to be driven by a CDL licensed driver. Should this could about it will put a huge burden on rural transits resulting in driver shortages and higher fully allocated costs per trip.

Hearing no further questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned at 10am.