



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

October 20, 2021

In person at ODOT District 11 and on TEAMS platform

The meeting was called to order just after 10:00 am by the transit planner, Deborah Hill. The meeting was held in person at the ODOT District 11 office main conference room with safety protocols in effect, and live-streamed on the TEAMS platform. Housekeeping rules and the agenda were reviewed, and roll taken. There were 10 attending in person, 12 attending on the TEAMS platform, 1 excused and 3 absent. Guests included: Kierra Branch of ODOT, and Dan Dalton, Beth Hamby, and Sarah Lasky of KFH.

Kierra Branch, ODOT, spoke briefly. She mentioned that there will be a 5310-vehicle survey coming out from ODOT in the future to help assess the current vehicle circumstances and address the vehicle shortage issue. She also mentioned that any sub-recipient that got awards other than 5310 from ODOT should be receiving those contracts hopefully by mid-November. There were no additional questions.

Next, the consulting firm of KFH made a presentation and held a mid-study planning and discussion session with the group. Slides were presented and will be available on the OMEGA website. The discussion centered around the various potential types of lead agencies that might be able to take over the Mobility Solutions Center project moving forward, and what their responsibilities might be. KFH identified five possible lead categories but also mentioned that both capability and willingness are critical components for any potential lead agency and some that are on the “potential” list may not be willing, or have capacity, to assume a lead role. In the meeting it was announced that any company, agency, organization, nonprofit, transit, governmental body, or any representative of any organizational body wishing to be lead agency for the Mobility Solutions Center Project moving forward, please contact Dan Dalton as soon as possible. A public announcement to that effect will also be sent to all members of the RCC and Steering Committee so that we are certain the information is available to all.

Following that discussion and a period for questions, we discussed the results from the Regional Survey of Needs Assessment. Over 1800 responses to the regional survey were recorded, which was the largest survey response OMEGA has ever achieved. The regional survey is an on-going endeavor, the link and QR code will remain active throughout the years, and the data will be collected yearly about the end of October and the survey “reset” to accumulate data for the next year. The data collected was separated into county specific information and that information along with the collective regional data was sent to each county as they considered their specific unmet needs, as well as the wholistic data being used during consideration of the revised regional unmet needs. After presenting each survey question and its regional response, the group advanced to a discussion of revised 2022 regional unmet needs. The unmet needs contained in the current regional transportation plan were shown and discussed – these unmet needs had been gathered during the planning phase of the regionalization pilot program and were divided into a list of unmet needs from the stakeholder’s viewpoint, and unmet needs from the public viewpoint (collected during public meetings in each

county when plan was being originally developed). Considering the original unmet needs, the current results from the regional assessment of needs survey, and current circumstances in transportation from a regional perspective, there was robust discussion resulting in the following agreed upon list:

2022 Region 9 Unmet Needs

1. Expansion of transportation services.
 - Including, non- medical service hours
 - Saturday and Sunday service
 - Coverage in rural areas
 - Service options after hours
 - Out of County (OOC) and Out of Region (OOR) transportation
2. Education of, advertising to, and increased awareness by the public of available transportation options, including understanding about funding sources.
3. Short-notice trip services, potentially considering uber or micro mobility options.
4. Transfer points and development of coordinated routes especially for OOR trips.
5. Adequate funding sources including increased availability of coordinated funding sources.
6. Available and adequate number and sources of rider escorts/rider guardians.
7. Adequate sidewalks and pathways.

This agreed upon list of 2022 Regional Unmet Needs will be presented for a vote of adoption at the November 17,2021 combined RCC/Steering meeting.

The last issue brought before the group was a discussion of the challenge of both vehicle shortages and driver shortages. Both are expected to continue for at least another year, and perhaps longer. We considered options for both, and whether there was a need for, and willingness for, some possible regional short-term solutions to these issues. The group, as a whole, believe that the driver shortage is a more critical issue than the vehicle shortage. Issues relating to the driver shortage included the fact that transits are not able to be wage competitive , that drivers (who are mostly older retired persons) are still afraid to come back to work because of COVID related fears, and that volunteers and volunteerism is greatly diminished because of health concerns and because the economy is inflationary so the costs of their gas, etc are rising and there is concern that they don't have extra resources right now to be able to volunteer. To combat these issues, we could do a survey of wages but that was not favorable with the group because increasing wages is not a permanent solution. As they said, "You can't buy your way out of this one!" The wage increase would have to be sustainable, or it is ineffective, and funding sources are simply not available for sustained wage increases.

In considering the challenge of vehicle shortages some suggestions were made to help keep vehicles in a condition that they are road-worthy for longer periods. Some suggestions included ODOT relaxing the constraints for disposition, creating a regional vehicle parts repository where parts with workable life could be shared regionally, and trying to establish contracts with local DD since many have empty service garages which could be used to prolong preventative maintenance programs and processes. If several organizations partner to create a coordinated contract leasing a DD garage and sharing the cost of a qualified mechanic, then the cost is manageable.

Finally, some regional successes were shared. The Region 9 Resource Guide is live and available to the public at www.Region9ResourceGuide.com . It is an interactive source of information about transportation options, HHS resources, and counseling resources presented by county for each county in the region. Additionally, the

regional Transit PSA (Public Service Announcement commercials) which highlight every transit in the region were shown. There is a 30 second spot and a 60 second spot. They feature actual drivers and riders of our public transits and help to dispel inaccurate perceptions of public transit. The commercials are being shared via all social media platforms and will shortly be shown on two local television stations which cover the region and a streaming (cable) channel with regional coverage as well.

It was announced that the final meeting of the combined RCC and Steering Committee will be November 17, 2021. A google poll to determine a preferred time will be sent to all Steering members. If it is needed, there is one additional Steering Committee meeting December 15,2021.

There was no additional information for the good of the region and the meeting was concluded at approximately noon.