



Meeting Notes for the Steering Committee Meeting May 18, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 9am by Deborah Hill, OMEGA Regional Transit Planner. Zoom housekeeping rules were read and the meeting was recorded only for the purpose of obtaining minutes. The agenda was presented and attendance, by roll call, was taken. 18 were in attendance, 10 in person and 8 virtually.

Kierra Branch, ODOT, 5310 Program Manager spoke briefly about the next steps in this year's funding applications. OMEGA Region 9 had eight 5310 and MM program applications submitted this year. The deadline for submission of applications has passed and ODOT is now in the review, assessment, and scoring portion of the funding cycle. ODOT intends to have award announcements no later than July 1, 2022.

Next, there was a review of the action steps that had been developed in the prior meeting. The Region 9 Coordinated Transportation Plan has in it 3 goals, 17 strategies for fulfillment, and now 64 proposed action steps to forward the goals and strategies. The goals, strategies, and action steps were all sent to members a week prior to this meeting for final review and consideration before the meeting. After a brief review, the floor was open for further discussion or correction of the proposed action steps. Hearing none, a vote to present the action steps for review and approval of the RCC was taken and the vote unanimously supported sending the action steps to the RCC for approval.

Valerie Shaw, Director, CCCTA, unveiled and explained a new pilot program they are instituting in Coshocton County. Titled, "The Joyride Program" this pilot is a volunteer personal care attendant program for public transit passengers of all ages. The need for care attendants was evidenced in both the regional plan and in the regional survey of unmet needs. The program will begin as a pilot in Coshocton County but then aspires to expand to become a regional pilot. An overview handout of the program was emailed to all members after the meeting and will be included on the OMEGA website with this month's slides and minutes.

A regional discussion was begun concerning the possibility of a regional app that could provide scheduling and payment of trips regionally. First the question was posed: Is the region ready to consider this and is there a need? Several members shared examples of trips that would have been made much easier if the region had an app and there was consensus that there is a need and a readiness for this regional asset. Following the acknowledgement of need, there was a brief discussion of what types of functionalities the region would require if such an app was utilized. This discussion will be on-going as the region attempts to create a "wish list" of functions and requirements that may then be shared with three or four companies who might be able to produce such an app. The companies would then be invited to speak and present to the Steering Committee their app platform and its functions in relation to our wish list, including cost estimates. The Steering Committee can then make a choice of which app platform they think is a best match to regional needs and constraints. Once this occurs, OMEGA could apply for ODOT funds for a regional pilot. It is hoped that the Steering Committee might be able to consider the three or four options and come to some conclusions by the end of CY 2022. This was only the introduction of the discussion.

The meeting then took a jovial turn as the group played “who’s in the room” with fun but little-known facts about each member of the committee presented and the members guessing which clue matched to which member. It was a welcome few minutes of lighthearted, fun entertainment, and, I believe, enjoyed by all.

The meeting schedule for the remainder of the year was presented. The June Steering meeting will be conducted in association with the RCC quarterly meeting on June 15, 2022. This RCC meeting will be held at SSOBC (Senior Services of Belmont County) in the senior center community room with optional lunch to follow at Mehlman’s. The discussion topic for the meeting is “Everything EV” with three great speakers lined up to provide information.

For the good of the region, congrats were issued to Coshocton County on their award of nearly \$818,000 in TAP grant funding for the construction of a multi-use pathway. It was also announced that the VA medical clinic in Chillicothe, Ohio is considering closing operations. Though there might not be much direct impact on Region 9 counties should the closure actually go through, it was valuable information to share.

Attendees were thanked and appreciated for the tireless and often thankless efforts they make every day on behalf of their fellow community members who need transportation help and the nearly miraculous achievements they create to provide that help, and for the valuable privilege of their time at the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:03am.