

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES– May 17, 2023

The meeting was held, in-person only, at the ODOT District 11 conference room with appropriate safety precautions available and was called to order at 9:02am by Deborah Hill, OMEGA Regional Transit Planner. A welcome to attendees was offered. Introductions by attendees were made and the agenda for the meeting was reviewed. 16 were in attendance, 2 excused absence, and 3 absent. Of note, Belmont County has a temporary member, Lisa Kazmirski, Director, SSOBC, attending in place of Mike McBride who has left SSOBC for another position. Also, there is a new member, Marianne Mader, Director of Holmes County BoDD, representing Holmes County. This is the first time since the inception of the Steering Committee that every county is represented in the Steering Committee.

Our featured guest speaker was Mark Carr, Director of Sales with SHARE Mobility. SHARE may be a potential contract transportation source offering scheduling, vehicles, and drivers. Regionally the potential to utilize SHARE exists in providing dedicated employment transportation routes or perhaps a dedicated, scheduled medical route to Cleveland or Columbus. SHARE currently operates in 16 states, expecting that to double in 2023. They provide detailed end of the month reporting, can schedule 30-60 days in advance and provide 24/7/365 rider support. They feel their strength is in their advanced software platform and its abilities to optimize ridership. Howard Stewart suggested that if the region, or a provider, wanted to consider SHARE they would be better off utilizing state funding or grant funding and not 5311 dollars. The slide presentation from SHARE may be found in its entirety on the OMEGA website.

The CY 2022 Regional Performance Data and the year-to-year comparison data was then reviewed with the group. For CY 2022 there was a sharp rise in no shows as well as denied and refused trips. There was also a decrease in senior ridership. We held an informal discussion as to thoughts from the group on why this outcome was observed. Steering members pointed out that senior center numbers are down, in general, and some senior centers do not offer wheelchair transportation or any transportation. There is also a region-wide problem with Medicaid no shows and DD no shows. People are not calling to cancel, and with no repercussions for their actions, they are just a no show at the door. This is especially true for Medicaid recipients which account for over 50% of regional no shows. One issue that results from this behavior is that other potential riders are being denied trips because the schedules are booked, and same-day trips are typically overbooked. Another problem is that Medicaid does not reimburse the transits and providers for the time, vehicle, and driver costs of driving to so many no shows. One provider literally had more no shows than actual trips taken for CY 2022! Another possible explanation for some of the results seen in the year-to-year data is that as ridership generally increases, the no show and denial rates will correspondingly increase. Some passengers are also denied trips because Medicaid trips take priority and that “bumps” other requests. Lastly, not all providers track all the performance measures, and some providers did not report the senior ridership separately from total ridership which could account for some of the discrepancy.

The progress made to date on most of the CY2023 regional initiatives was reviewed. The SROI project, CarFit events, Companion Riders Volunteer Program, and increasing senior and disabled population direct participation projects are all in progress. The Medical Scheduling Campaign is completed and ready to be put into action as a regional initiative. This campaign is a three-pronged approach including mobility managers meeting with medical staff and presenting a one-page information/infographic sheet with a call to action of "ASK, Do you need help with transportation? Then, REFER". In addition to the one-page infographic sheet, there will be magnets and tear off note pads given to medical schedulers, social workers, hospital and doctor office staff and others. Each of the three pieces of information provides contact information for mobility managers in each of the OMEGA counties. The cost for the magnets and notepads was 100% funded by ODOT, 5310 Mobility Management Program.

The calendar for the remaining months of 2023 was presented. For the good of the region it was reported that over 20 persons attended and received the free Braun Lift training sponsored by OMEGA and presented by Myers Equipment at the April RCC meeting. CarFit events are scheduled in all OMEGA counties except Holmes, with the intention that a location will also be secured in Holmes County. And, sadly, we wish Mike McBride all the best as he leaves his position at SSOBC for another position. Mile will be missed. In the interim, Lisa Kazmirski will attend the Steering and RCC meetings until a replacement for Mike's position is filled. SSOBC will still be hosting the Belmont County CarFit and the November RCC meeting.

Lastly, we warmly welcome our new member, Marianne Mader, representing Holmes County. She is the superintendent for the Holmes County Board of DD and will be an important member in helping to bring forward the needs of Holmes County and the DD population.

Hearing no other announcements for the good of the region, the meeting was adjourned at 10:44am.