

# **SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**DATE:** Monday, October 11, 2010

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Glenn County Public Works Conference Room  
777 North Colusa Street, Willows, CA 95988

### **(1) Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mardy Thomas at 2:07 p.m.

### **(2) Introductions**

Members present: Gloria Ponciano, and James Carlson (sitting in for Michael Miller),

Others present: Michelle Lange

Staff present: John Linhart, Annette Chavez, Mardy Thomas and Jennifer Cannizzaro

### **(3) Action Items:**

#### **A. Program Changes**

##### **1. Transit Card and ADA Service Certification**

Members reviewed the following:

Glenn Transit Service has been operating the New Freedom Program, ADA service, and Volunteer Medical Transport during the past nine months. To qualify for and use the New Freedom and Volunteer Medical Transport, an individual must qualify by age, disability, or income for a Transit Service Card. Individuals qualify for ADA by completing an extensive application detailing their disability and inability to use the fixed route system.

The existence of these two systems has created some confusion among applicants and redundancy with internal processing. Not all persons who qualify for the New Freedom and Volunteer Medical services will qualify for ADA service. In contrast, all persons who qualify for ADA service qualify for the New Freedom and Volunteer Medical Transport. Consequently, those who qualify for the ADA service should also qualify for a Transit Service Card.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee to allow all persons who qualify for ADA service to automatically qualify for a Transit Service Card. Staff also agreed that applications for a Transit Card and ADA Certification should be available at Paratransit Services and the Planning and Public Works Agency.

2. Eliminate Dial-A-Ride service to the general public

Members reviewed the following:

The Dial-A-Ride program has been a part of Glenn Trans for the past few years. Initially, it was called the subsidized taxi service. In 2007, the Regional Transit Committee commissioned the Transit Needs Assessment Study which indicated that the Glenn Ride fixed route system could be enhanced by adding neighborhood circulator routes. The purpose was two-fold: 1) Lower head time to Chico and 2) Move riders from the more costly Dial-A-Ride service to the circulator routes. It requires a subsidy of approximately \$10.53 for each rider using the Dial-A-Ride service as opposed to \$7.02 for the Glenn Ride bus service.

In June of 2010, the city circulator routes were implemented with a complimentary ADA service to provide transportation to those whose physical limitations would not allow them to use the regular city circulator routes. At that same time, it was noted by Paratransit Services, the transit operator, that there was significant downtime for the ADA service and that it be filled with a same day Dial-A-Ride service to the general public. The proposal was recommend by the SSTAC and approved in June of 2010 by the Regional Transit Committee.

As this program has been continued it has been found that more individuals are making their appointments in advance and that a driver and bus must remain on stand-by during the day in the even there is a call for service. In other words, the idle bus and driver incur costs to Glenn Transit without the benefit of transporting individuals.

As budgets have been reduced due to the discontinuation of grant programs or the economic downturn, it is necessary to look for ways to reduce expenditures and maximize funding for transit services. Consequently, it is proposed that the same day Dial-A-Ride service be discontinued. This will leave the complimentary ADA service as an appointment only program for those whose physical limitations do not allow them to use the city circulators.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee to leave the ADA service as an appointment only program for those whose physical limitations do not allow them to use the city circulators.

3. Volunteer Medical service area

Members reviewed the following:

Glenn Transit Service operates a Volunteer Medical Transport service which provides non-emergency medical transport to persons for appointments. In order to use this service person must qualify for a Transit Services card. Fares are determined by destination (\$0.14 per mile) and drivers are reimbursed for this service at the federal mileage rate (\$0.50) with a stipend based on the destination. Currently, the difference of \$0.36 per mile and the driver stipend is subsidized by local transportation funds. For those that qualify for the hardship exemption (\$0.07 per mile) the subsidy is understandably greater. On average, the Volunteer Medical Transport program has a cost per rider of \$91 and a subsidy per rider of \$82. This program fails to meet the 10% fare box return consistently and is aided by the other transit programs.

During the past 9 months the New Freedom program has alleviated much of the pressure on the Volunteer Medical Transport program. It has also provided Glenn Transit with more control over the program with a paid driver, transit owned vehicle, and a way to transport those dependent upon mobility devices. Since its inception, the New Freedom program has reduced demand on the Volunteer Medical Transport program by 78% from the previous year.

The Volunteer Medical Transport service has provided transportation to medical appointments for individuals who have no other transportation alternative. It is limited in the service that it can provide as the drivers are volunteers and in that it receives almost no state or federal funding. Reduction in local transportation funds have further reduced the funds available to operate this program. In order to continue to provide this service and decrease the burden on local transportation resources, services changes to the program have already been suggested in a previous agenda item. In conjunction with those changes it is proposed that the per mileage fee be increased by increasing the \$0.14 per mile fee.

The change would take effect on November 1, 2010.

Mrs. Chavez stated that the service radius needs to be clarified. Discussion then ensued regarding the service radius. Mr. Thomas suggested a zone concept similar to other jurisdictions.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee a zone concept, with the primary zone extending to a 50 mile radius from the center of Glenn County, beyond the zone, patrons would pay the full cost of reimbursement to the driver.

4. Holiday Schedule for Glenn Ride

Members reviewed the following:

Glenn Ride operates Monday through Saturday except for six major holidays (New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day). During other observed holidays, Glenn Ride continues to operate as normal. During the weekdays it makes 7 trips to Chico on the regional service and 12 trips on the city circulator service. On Saturdays, only 3 trips are made to Chico and 7 trips on the city circulator.

Ridership on holidays is generally low as compared to other days of normal operation during. The number of riders is typical of a Saturday's ridership.

In light of this fact and the need to reduce expenditures due to budget constraints, it proposed that Glenn Ride go to a Saturday schedule for both the regional and city circulator routes on the following days when it is in operation:

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday                      Presidents Day

The day after Thanksgiving                              Christmas Eve

This will maintain a level of service comparable to the use the service receives.

Mr. Thomas noted that Butte College is out of session during a majority of the holiday; Mrs. Ponciano noted that all schools are out during the listed holidays.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee to adopt a Saturday schedule for the holidays listed including Veteran's Day and New Year's Eve.

5. Service Reductions due to budget constraints

Members reviewed the following:

As has been discussed in other agenda items, Glenn Transit must consider service reductions due to declining revenues. Much of the funding for the transit programs comes from the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) established by the Transportation Development Act. This ¼ cent sales tax revenue came short of the projections for the last fiscal year by approximately \$50,000 dollars. Additionally, grants for operating transit services have been declining or will need to be used for capital purchases to replace aging equipment.

Glenn County Transportation Commission staff has been working with its service operator Paratransit Services to identify areas where service cuts can be made that will result in enough costs savings to meet projected budgets for 2010-

2011. As the state has not adopted a budget as of the preparation of this agenda item, some budgetary categories have not been finalized. Consequently, a clear budget picture cannot be given.

Among the known items for the budget are:

1. Funding for operation of the New Freedom Program will be less by \$50,000
2. Funding from the 5311 grant program which is used for operational and capital expenses for Glenn Ride will decline by 8%.
3. Funding from the LTF will likely decline or at best remain flat.
4. Costs for the Paratransit Services contract will increase in December by 3%.
5. Proposition 1B money may not be available as bond sales have dropped off. This would affect capital purchases.

Mrs. Ponciano reviewed service reduction recommendations.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee the elimination of ADA and circulator services in Orland and Willows on Saturdays to reduce operating costs to meet projected budgets for 2010-2011.

B. Consideration and Recommendation on changes in fare structure

1. Daily Pass and Transfers between Regional and Circulator Service

Members reviewed the following:

Glenn Ride has expanded its service to provide public transit services within the cities of Orland and Willows know as the Circulator Routes. As these systems are designed to interact with one another, the need to charge for and account for transfers between the circulator service and the regional service has generated a need to clearly identify a fare structure for transfers and how they are handled.

The following is the current fare structure for Glenn Ride:

**City Circulator Service**

***Regular Fare***

***\$.75 per trip***

***Discount Fare\****

***\$.50 per trip***

**Regional Service**

<i>In-county</i>	<i>\$1.25 per one-way trip</i>
<i>Out-of county</i>	<i>\$1.75 per one way trip</i>

**Transfers to Regional Service**

<i>In-county</i>	<i>\$.50 per trip</i>
<i>Out-of-county</i>	<i>\$1.00 per trip</i>

**Transfers to City Circulator**

*Free*

**Monthly Passes**

<i>City Circulator Service Discount*</i>	<i>\$25.00</i>
<i>City Circulator Service</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Regional Service</i>	<i>\$45.00</i>
<i>Universal</i>	<i>\$60.00</i>

***\*Discount for Seniors 60 years and older; Student 6-18 years; and Disabled.***

Transfers were not a part of the fare structure of Glenn until the city circulator routes were implemented. Initially, the fare structure conceived was to allow patrons from the regional service to transfer free of charge to the city circulator. Patrons of the city circulator would be required to pay an additional charge to transfer to the regional service as noted above. During the past 3 months of operations, the Planning & Public Works Agency fiscal staff and Paratransit Services have had some difficulty in tracking and accounting for transfer patrons. The primary issue is the difference in the fare for those for whom we allow to ride the city circulator at a discount when there is no discount established for the regional service. The follow options have been discussed with staff internally and with Paratransit Services as potential solutions to the Glenn Ride fare structure:

1. Establish a \$0.25 discount for Seniors 60 years and older; Students 6-18 years old, and those that are disabled.
2. Not allow transfers
3. Replace transfers with a day pass which would allow unlimited rides for the day it was purchased in the amount of \$4.00.

Option 1 would establish a discount fare of \$1.00 for In-County service and \$1.50 for Out-of-County. The current transfer fare would not change. This option is most likely the easiest to implement; however, it may adversely affect the fare box return for Glenn Ride prompting future changes. It is anticipated that administrative costs would remain the same and would possibly be reduced over time.

Option 2 would eliminate transfers altogether. A Glenn Ride patron switching from the city circulator to the regional service would be required to pay the full fare for each service. As the circulator routes were implemented to reduce head time to Chico, this action may discourage riders from using the system as the city circulators become the primary option for service within the cities. Additionally, the costs to each rider will be greater. The administrative costs to the system would be reduced; however, fare box receipts will likely diminish as well.

Option 3 establishes a \$4.00 day pass which would allow a Glenn Ride patron unlimited access to the system for the day on which the pass is purchased. One-way passengers wishing to transfer between the city circulator and regional service would be required to purchase a day pass at more than twice the cost of a one-way fare for the regional service. Potentially, casual riders and others who may not rely on the service for transportation would be alienated. Administrative costs should increase slightly with the creation of a new pass but will likely be reduced over time. A day pass may also be implemented regardless as another fare option for Glenn Ride patrons.

Discussion ensued regarding the various options. Mrs. Ponciano reported that she was in favor a daily pass at \$4.00 each; members then discussed the option of having a universal daily pass, member Ponciano agreed.

It was the consensus to recommend to the Regional Transit Committee a universal daily pass at a cost of \$4.00 that would allow passengers to transfer between the circulator system and Glenn Ride.

## 2. Increase Volunteer Medical Transport Fees

Members reviewed the following:

Glenn Transit Service operates a Volunteer Medical Transport service which provides non-emergency medical transport to persons for appointments. In order to use this service person must qualify for a Transit Services card. Fares are determined by destination (\$0.14 per mile) and drivers are reimbursed for this service at the federal mileage rate (\$0.50) with a stipend based on the destination. Currently, the difference of \$0.36 per mile and the driver stipend is subsidized by local transportation funds. For those that qualify for the hardship exemption (\$0.07 per mile) the subsidy is understandably greater. On average,

the Volunteer Medical Transport program has a cost per rider of \$91 and a subsidy per rider of \$82. This program fails to meet the 10% fare box return consistently and is aided by the other transit programs.

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The Volunteer Medical Transport service has provided transportation to medical appointments for individuals who have no other transportation alternative. It is limited in the service that it can provide as the drivers are volunteers and in that it receives almost no state or federal funding. Reduction in local transportation funds have further reduced the funds available to operate this program. In order to continue to provide this service and decrease the burden on local transportation resources, services changes to the program have already been suggested in a previous agenda item. In conjunction with those changes it is proposed that the per mileage fee be increased by increasing the \$0.14 per mile fee.

The change would take effect on November 1, 2010.

It was the consensus to recommend the following to the Regional Transit Committee:

**Volunteer Medical Transport**

Increase mandatory fee from \$0.14 per mile to \$0.25 per mile (50% of the federal vehicle mileage reimbursement rate).

Increase Hardship Exemption fee from \$0.07 per mile to \$0.125 per mile (25% of the federal vehicle mileage reimbursement rate).

**New Freedom**

Increase mandatory fee from \$0.14 per mile to \$0.175 per mile (35% of the federal vehicle mileage reimbursement rate).

Increase Hardship Exemption fee from \$0.07 per mile to \$0.125 per mile (25% of the federal vehicle mileage reimbursement rate).

- (4) **New Business**  
None presented.

- (5) **Adjournment of Meeting**-The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.