

# Alaska Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board



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## Meeting Notes September 29, 2014

### PRESENT:

- Doug Bridges, Nonprofit Organization
- Duane Mayes, Department of Health and Social Services, Senior and Disability Services
- Glenn Miller, Municipality
- Heidi Frost, Disabilities
- James Starzec, Public At Large
- Jeff Ottesen, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- Jennifer Beckmann, Low Income
- Julianne Baltar, Tribal
- Lawrence Blood, Denali Commission
- Lucas Lind, Alaska Mental Health Trust
- Pat Branson, Seniors
- Sharon Scott, Public at Large

### NOT PRESENT:

- Cheryl Walsh, Department of Labor and Workforce Development

### GUESTS:

- Audrey Aanes, Arctic Access
- David Barton, Access Alaska, Inc.

### STAFF:

- Debbi Howard, DOT&PF
- Eric Taylor, DOT&PF
- Ezekiel Kaufmann, Department of Health and Social Services, Senior Disability Services, Alternate
- Marsha Bracke, Bracke & Associates, Inc., Facilitator

### AGENDA

The Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board (C&PTAB) welcomed new member, Julianne Baltar, to the group, who represents the tribal perspective.

### WORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

For each strategic effort in the work plan, the C&PTAB, as appropriate to the strategy

- Provided a status report
- Presented recommendations
- Solicited inputs and confirmed recommendations
- Reviewed transit conference objectives and processes
- Articulated next steps to reach performance measures

Regarding the *draft Medical Transportation Report*, Doug and Heidi provided background about the product's development, summarized what the subgroup learned, and presented the draft recommendations. Each member of the C&PTAB provided feedback, maintained on flip chart notes and included in Attachment A of this document. Using that guidance, Doug will revise the document by November 1 for presentation to the group on a subsequent conference call. Key points of the discussion included being mindful of the audience – specifically a DHSS transportation committee seeking options for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation in the very near future, and the Governor and State Legislature. During the conference, Doug will provide a verbal summary of the status of the report.

Next Steps:

1. Doug will revise the document by November 1
2. The group will review/ratify the new draft on the subsequent conference call
3. The document will be distributed to its intended audiences, and included and/or referenced in the Annual Report

Regarding the *draft Taxicab Accessibility White Paper*, Heidi and Lawrence provided a summary of their study of other cities and states as well as the interview of two Mayors at a recent conference. Members liked the report layout and the presentation of three options made. The primary suggestion was to provide a little more rationale to support each option – to answer the question 'why?'. Another option proposed for inclusion in the paper is to establish local transportation advisory boards so that recommendations regarding accessibility and other local issues are truly generated in the local context. Heidi and Lawrence will continue the outreach on the issue, including interviewing more local elected officials, interviewing taxicab business owners, and potentially, per Pat's suggestion, reaching out to officials at the regional (rather than state) conferences to engage in this discussion. For the conference, Heidi and Lawrence will provide a similar overview, distribute the draft report, and distribute a questionnaire soliciting feedback to inform the report's further development.

Next Steps:

1. Heidi and Lawrence will revise the document by November 1 for review on the subsequent conference call
2. Lawrence will continue to interview elected officials at regional conferences as those opportunities are available
3. The subgroup will outline a process for interviewing taxicab companies
4. The results of the white paper to date will be included and /or referenced in the Annual Report

Inputs collected during the conference are included in these meeting notes as Attachment B.

Regarding the strategy to identify and use a standardized *Methodology for Calculating Costs and the corresponding measure to have 10 providers using the instrument by June 2015*, Jennifer and James presented a spreadsheet developed by the National Center for Senior Transportation, which is an expanded version of the spreadsheet that DOT&PF currently includes in grant applications. Members liked the spreadsheet, noting places where some potential editing and updating is warranted. The group reviewed and recommended edits to a proposed power point presentation. In reviewing the mix of entities that might sign on as the first 10, it was suggested the expanded

spreadsheet be included in the upcoming grant application instead of the shorter, existing one. The PowerPoint was modified to reflect this change<sup>1</sup> and a resource to provide training to support its use would be provided.

Ezekiel Kaufmann, DHSS, reported the *Interagency Working Group* has met twice, is working to convene another meeting in October and November, and is focusing its efforts right now on generating a shared understanding of what ‘transportation’ means and looks like from each Department and Division perspective. Ezekiel will be compiling information shared by the participating entities and will share those with the group as soon as it is available.

Regarding *increased municipality engagement*, Pat Branson reported both the City of Kodiak and the Borough have increased their funding for community transportation. While the AML conference agenda is full and Pat’s inquiry about a C&PTAB presence is on a waiting list, Pat suggested capitalizing on regional rather than state meetings might be a more effective way to discuss issues with local leaders. Pat will be leading the conference session on local governments and transportation, and will raise with the group the initiatives around accessible taxis and municipal funding.

C&PTAB reviewed the existing needs for informational outreach support, and were asked to specifically identify what outreach tools they will need to reach their intended audiences and achieve their specific performance measures. Specific requests include:

- Information about how an investment in public transportation will leverage or save money
- A glossy, one-page informational piece to communicate the need for and options to secure accessible taxis
- A training or webinar supporting the use of the calculating cost spreadsheet, designed to help those who sign on right away and those who may come to it at some point in the future
- The ability to have a presence at regional conferences
- Strong messaging around the value of community transportation – it is a good idea, makes good economic sense, and there is an urgency for it given existing demographics

C&PTAB also left on the table a request for funding for site visits like those the Trust has conducted in the past. Eric will investigate opportunities to provide these supports.

## **C&PTAB CONFERENCE PRESENTATION**

Given changes in the conference schedule, the C&PTAB modified its presentation approach by having Jeff Ottesen introduce the group and the breakout sessions in his DOT&PF welcoming presentation on Day 1. Detail about the C&PTAB, its deliverables,

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<sup>1</sup> During the conference presentation, some providers took exception to the inclusion of the form without formal notice and without more time to work internally to support the production of the expanded information. Clarity around whether the spreadsheet was to be used to collect actuals or project budgets or both is also needed. Ultimately, a number of entities embraced the tool and volunteered to start using it immediately. Debbi Howard will work with them directly. Updates to the form prior and subsequent to that experience, development of training, and how the spreadsheet may or may not be related to future grant application processes are items to be addressed, coordinated and communicated separate from the pending grant application process.

performance measures, and strategic efforts, will be presented by Pat Branson on Day 2. The group reviewed and edited both sets of material.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

David Barton, Access Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage ADA Commission, addressed the group, noting:

- The accessible taxicab issue is an ongoing issue in Anchorage even with great efforts undertaken
- Tourism and baby boomers are to be considered in the accessible taxicab equation
- He would like to see Alaska be an accessible state, noting it is not just an individual but an entire family who travel together (don't create something separate)
- Small aircraft accessibility is a need for which he would like to see Alaska take a lead role. A local gentleman named Jessie Owens has patented a transfer board. Heidi noted him as a potential speaker to the board

Aubrey Aanes, Arctic Alaska, also addressed the group,

- Reiterating the need to address the issue of aircraft accessibility
- Noting safety risks and training needs for plane workers
- Recommending rural planes be categorized as public transit

Aubrey has access to information differentiating between emergency and non-emergency rides, which she will seek and provide to the group.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

C&PTAB reviewed the draft annual report provided by the facilitator and had no specific comments or suggestions. Marsha pointed out the annual funding review still does not reflect the direction of the law, which requires an "annual funding review of available funding, including state, federal and local governments and private entities that administer or support services...." Currently, the report includes only actuals in different years by C&PTAB member agencies. C&PTAB will be depending on the IWG to help them address this issue from the state agency perspective, and proposed no other specific action to address the rest at this time.

Marsha will generate another version of the Annual Report expanding it to include the specific recommendations generated at this meeting.

## **TRAINING CENTER TOUR**

Four members of the C&PTAB toured the People Mover Travel Training facility supporting people with disabilities, senior citizens, or others who want to learn to ride People Mover buses.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

The group reviewed and made no changes to the Operational Guidelines. Marsha will update the document by providing a review date.

Noting it is time to elect a new chair and vice chair, the group decided to have that election be an item on the next meeting agenda. Meanwhile, members are to give some thought as to whether the position should be one filled by DOT&PF (neither the guidelines or the law require it, but it has been the preference of the group to date), whether Pat should move up as chair and another vice chair be elected, or whether a full election be undertaken.

Marsha will work to schedule a meeting for the group in April in Kenai and in June in Valdez. Marsha will also work to schedule monthly conference calls.

Marsha will update the strategic plan per the commitments made at this meeting.

**ATTACHMENT A: MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION**  
**Feedback and Next Steps: Medical Transportation**  
**September 29, 2014**

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**Feedback:**

- Who is the audience (DHSS transportation committee) too long – needs summary – state officials
- Take out #3 and #4 – not yet relevant to use
- Make argument when appropriate for public transportation – cost savings
- Need consistent billing language
- More crafting of message – statement of pros and cons of brokerages
- Recommendations – rationale is weak – explain why
- Broker model – NEMT – Like #1
- Like #2
- Current guidelines for billing for the service is cost prohibitive
- Regional Health Groups/Native Health organizations
- Format – executive summary and recommendations
- Like #3 – suggest increase
- Expand #2 – add rationale
- Trust can explore potential for site visits – no \$
- Remote Alaska – not covering – a huge portion left out (diabetes, amputees) – make at note it is not covered
- Leave #3 in – needs and intro
- #4 - too broad, leave out – scale of LRTP recommendations
- #1 – a why is needed – is this an either/or?
- Delete site visits
- Should a site visit go first to inform the recommendation?

**Next Steps:**

- Share concept summary and status at conference (15 minutes)
- Request by 11/1

**ATTACHMENT B: ACCESSIBLE TAXICABS**  
**Questionnaire Results**  
**September 30, 2014**

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**1. What are the top two barriers you see associated with securing accessible taxis in your community?**

- The high cost of procurement and operations
- Insurance costs of new accessible vehicle for Cab Company
- Low volume of cab users in communities of less than 5000 people
- Cost of vehicle
- Dispatching/logistics
- Knowledge for maintenance of accessible features
- Lack of training
- Taxicab community not receptive to idea
- Local communities lack political motivation
- Cost of permits; cost of vehicles
- Enough vehicles – need at least 50%

**2. For each barrier, what strategy would you recommend pursuing to help address it?**

- FTA providing some kind of subsidies for dealers/manufacturers by offering cheaper accessible taxis
- Incentivize/assist cab companies for first 2-3 years of insurance payments
- Assist with cost of vehicle
- Pursue fare sharing to subsidize accessible drivers
- Uber
- Education of owners, drivers, discussion of possible incentives
- Give draft ordinances to community
- Deregulate industry; incentivize purchase of accessible cabs

**3. Regarding FTA Section 5310 funding, would you support maintaining a small percentage of that funding to be used exclusively for taxicabs? Why or why not?**

- Only if they could provide service with comparable fares to Para transit
- Yes, if the % is for ACCESSIBLE taxicabs. Cab companies are the most efficient/cost effective public transit
- No. FTA \$ comes with requirements that will drive up costs to operate cab and limit vehicles available to purchase; requires random drug testing, procurement requirements, and a host of FTA certifications and assurances
- Not exclusively – but can be used to incentivize changes
- Yes – it is a good way to incentivize

**4. Would you support requirements for a minimum number of accessible taxicabs serving state facilities? Why or why not?**

- No, dependent on Para transit accessibility and city can choose either/or, depending on service availability
- ABSOLUTELY! Leading by example is always good
- Maybe – concerned about idle time when driver is waiting
- No – why only state facilities? Because RR, airplane and ferries are not easy modes – transit centers?
- Yes, at airports – no one with several cabs in fleet, entitled by...can serve airports or ferry terminals
- Yes –I believe 50% of fleet is good start

**5. In addition to the three options presented, are there other options to be considered?**

- Contract accessible trips with Para transit agencies
- Require a % of trips be accessible and let the market work out how they accomplish that
- Penalties for denials or accessible trips – require recorded dispatch calls
- Sell or give accessible vehicles to cab companies who make pledge to put on road and get training
- Maybe Uber people with private vehicles with lifts or ramps

**6. What other comments or suggestions do you have relative to making accessible taxicabs more readily available to those who need them?**

- Partnerships with cab companies and human service organizations. Cab companies using 'sitting' vehicles owned by human service agencies
- Legislate it. Needs to be required
- Plan for weight issues. What is load capacity on lift ramp? 600 pounds is not adequate
- Voucher programs
- More use of accessible cabs by Medicaid
- Training for drivers

**7. So we can best understand the context of your response, please indicate what community or part of the state you are representing? Contact information helpful but not necessary:**

- People Mover
- Joyanna Geisler, Kenai Peninsula, 907-235-2911
- Anchorage
- Anchorage
- Anchorage