

Addison County E&D Committee Quarterly Meeting

February 25, 2021

The Addison County E&D Committee provides oversight and guidance for Tri-Valley Transit's programs to assist elders and persons with disabilities in Addison County. Programs supported by the committee get users out of their homes to medical appointments, to local adult day-care, to senior meal sites and for essential shopping. These services supplement regular transit services in the area, filling in gaps left by programs like Medicaid.

Attending: Mary-Claire Crogan (TVT), Dan Currier (VTrans), Michelle Eastman (Agewell), Erica Marks (Agewell), Jim Moulton (TVT), Ingrid Pixley (CSAC), (TVT), Mike Winslow (ACRPC)

Agenda items:

- Ridership report and updates from TVT
Jim reported that they are still dealing with the changes in demand created by Covid. E&D Ridership is lower across the board. They have been providing rides for vaccinations; demand has not been overwhelming but they are getting calls. They continue to emphasize safety protocols for volunteers. Mary-Claire noted they have recruited two new volunteers since the last E&D meeting. However six volunteers have chosen to sideline themselves until they are vaccinated. IN all, volunteers have maintained equilibrium with demand. They have not been doing meal deliveries because other entities have filled that niche, but they have let the other entities know they are available to help fill gaps.
TVT has some grant funds still available due to the drop in demand. Jim proposed allowing more trips per rider, which all agreed would be a good use of the funds. Michelle asked if the increased availability would be temporary to which Jim said he hoped they would be able to make it permanent, but TVT is in the process of doing a more detailed cost analysis. All agreed that the wording on how the availability of additional trips was reported to clients would be important in the event the increase was not permanent.
Michelle asked if VTrans might be able to provide rides to dinners for elders that she is setting up. They have a program in Middlebury at the VFW beginning March 1 and providing meals on the first and third Wednesday of the month, and they will be starting programs out of Mary's in Bristol and the Halfway House in Shoreham, though details for those venues have not been finalized. Jim offered that they may be able to either bring elders to the meals or bring the meals to the elders. Michelle and Mary Claire will collaborate on developing appropriate language for advertising.
Ingrid asked if meal delivery might also be an option for the four hotels hosting homeless people during the pandemic. Those deliveries are now made twice per day by volunteers but they have struggled to fill shifts. Mary Claire will reach out to the new program director to make sure he is aware of the availability of TVT. TVT has been seeing more riders from the hotels.
- Updates from VTrans including E&D summit
Dan reported that VTrans is planning a 1 day E&D Summit for June 18th to run from 9AM to 10:30AM. The focus will be on answering the question, "How are we doing for E&D programs on the whole?". Ross McDonald and Katharine Otto are leading the planning efforts.
Dan also stated grant announcements are anticipated for early to mid March.
- Finalize E&D workplan

The draft work plan was shared prior to the meeting and Mike asked if there were any comments, corrections or additions.

Jim raised the question of adding new members to the E&D Committee, citing specifically Elderly Services/Project Independence. While existing programs serve the same population, and Elderly Services has not sought assistance, the lack of funds that constrained program delivery in the past may be less of an issue moving forward. At the least it would be beneficial to have their insight on providing services to elderly populations at the committee.

Dan shared that Washington County developed a tiered approach to bringing in partners. Partners may be brought in to share information without receiving funding, but coming in as a recipient of services requires a more significant commitment including assisting in providing matching funds.

For the work plan, the group agreed to highlight the issue in Appendix E, Possible Projects. Future actions may include inviting a member of the Washington County E&D Committee to share their experience with expanding the group.

Mary Claire observed that the two issues that arose out of the VTrans survey was the need for more frequent service, and the need for improved technology to track drivers for clients. These issues can't be addressed at the local level, but require a greater investment from VTrans.

Following the discussion the work plan was approved.

Next Meeting

Thursday June 3 @11AM.