

Addison County Older Adults and People with Disabilities (O&D) Committee Quarterly Meeting Agenda

October 15, 2024

The Addison County O&D Committee provides oversight and guidance for Tri-Valley Transit's programs to assist older adults 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.

Attendees: Bill Cunningham (TVT), Michelle Eastman (Age Well), Jasmine Hoffman (CSAC), Erica Marks (Age Well), Jim Moulton (TVT), , Stephanie Stearns (TVT), Emma Tso (VDH), Mike Winslow (ACRPC)

Agenda:

1. Amendments to the Agenda - none
2. Partner Roundtable - a chance to share useful insights about the programs
 - a. VTrans - via Jim Moulton
 - i. VTrans is making updates to the O&D guidance manual which will then be circulated to stakeholders (timing unknown)
 - ii. VTrans has expressed concern about funding for FY26. They are in the process of budget building, and considering limiting eligible categories of rides - particularly social trips. They are looking for feedback on that idea.
 1. TVT will advocate for more trips over fewer trips. However, VTrans needs guidance in the event limits need to be made. Possibilities:
 - a. Restrict the number of funded dialysis trips
 - b. Set a cap on the number of cancer trips
 - c. Reduce the number of allowed social trips (currently six)
 2. Currently, TVT covers 100% of critical care (dialysis and cancer) and six other trips per month. The six other trips may be social, shopping, other medical, or any mixture of those in TVT codes, but all these would be affected by the proposed limit.
 3. Before January, TVT will ask VTrans for guidance on the needed financial reductions. TVT will also analyze FY24 O&D trip data to determine how much was spent on dialysis, cancer, and everything else. This information will allow a more informed discussion at our next meeting. That will still provide time for the committee to provide timely input to the budget making process.

4. The meal trips that Michelle runs are in a different category, because they utilize a full bus. While there may be efficiencies to be gained with these trips, it's important for TVT to maintain the rider numbers.
5. Michelle asked if limitations can be done on a case by case basis? No, federal guidance says all must be treated the same. The committee and TVT can create a framework of rules and regulations, but can't create policies for individuals.
6. Bill noted that, prior to Covid, the limit on non critical care trips was four. EZ Trip may have reduced the number of O&D trips, but only for the Middlebury area. Jasmine - asked if there's more potential for EZ Trip to reduce O&D demand. Yes, and such reduction happens irrespective of purpose (ie. critical care vs. social, etc.).
7. Stephanie acknowledged that TVT does have capacity issues which leads to limitations on social rides
8. Historically, there have been times when rides have been denied for budget reasons, but that has not occurred in a long time.

b. TVT

- i. Down a few volunteer riders for medical reasons, which has made coverage a challenge
- ii. EZ-Trip has had a higher volume of bookings via phone. TVT wants to have bookings via app. They are preparing a survey to help understand how to move more people to the app.
 1. Jasmine suggested offering a class on using the app. TVT has done some of that. Would like to work with O&D partners in setting up those classes. Stephanie noted training the service agency staff might be more efficient.
 2. Erica offered that Age Well has volunteers that can provide one-on-one training
 3. Mike suggested making the user name/password entry easier, and sending a text when the ride has been scheduled.
- iii. A volunteer coordinator has been hired, Rachel Landry. She will start fully in that role once a dispatcher has been hired to replace her.

c. Age Well

- i. Use of the lunch bus to the Vergennes Congregational Church has exploded due to both new riders and a return of previous riders. Age Well has been able to reduce the stigma associated with using the Food Shelf

as part of the rides, by having all riders use the service. No service changes anticipated. Jim asked Michelle to put her positive feedback in a letter so that TVT could share the compliments with staff and volunteers. Such stories are helpful for discussions with VTrans and the legislature, for maintaining staff morale, and for encouraging new riders.

ii. Erica complemented Addison County for their service to riders. Of the four counties she works with, Addison County works the best.

d. CSAC

i. Jasmine has noticed the EZ-Trip bus showing up constantly to CSAC. The service to areas beyond fixed rounds has been a huge boon. More clients are going to school because transportation is less of an issue. Saves CSAC staff from providing personal rides and allows them to expand their service to others.

e. ACHHH - not present

3. Other Business - none

Next Meeting:

January 14, 2025 regularly scheduled meeting