



MINUTES

KCAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

Thursday, April 27, 2023

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting of the Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) was called to order by Ms. Teresa Nickell, KCAG Regional Planner, at 10:05 a.m. on April 27, 2023 at the Kings County Association of Governments conference room and via teleconference, in accordance with COVID-19 Public Meeting Protocol.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Angie Dow, Kings County Area Public Transit Agency
Barbara Lemos, Kings County HHSA Employment Training
Rebecca Donabed, RICV Independent Living
Heather Corder, Kings County Area Public Transit Agency
Nicholas Isla, Caltrans District 6

STAFF PRESENT: Terri King, Executive Director
Teresa Nickell, Regional Planner

VISITORS PRESENT: None

A. UNSCHEDULED APPEARANCES

None.

B. MINUTES

It was moved and seconded (Dow / Lemos) to approve the Minutes of January 26, 2023 as submitted. Motion approved.

II. TRANSPORTATION

A. Unmet Transit Needs and Transit System Review

Ms. Nickell reviewed the process for conducting annual Unmet Transit Needs public hearings and the responsibilities of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council to identify unmet transit needs of the transit dependent or transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly and persons with disability or limited means. Following all public hearings held within the County and jurisdictions, the SSTAC will review all testimony, assess individual requests, and provide a recommendation to the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee that either 1) There are no unmet transit needs; or 2) There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet; or 3) There are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet. Both KCAPTA and the City of Corcoran have held public hearings. KCAG held a public hearing April 26, continued to May 24. Thus far, two requests have been received regarding KART services. Staff will provide instructions to the SSTAC for assessment review of transit requests and a recommendation to the TPC at the next SSTAC meeting scheduled for June 1st.

Ms. Nickell provided an update to the Kings Area Regional Transit (KART) and the Corcoran Area Transit (CAT) systems. KART ridership increased to approximately 500,000 passenger trips in 2022. Passenger farebox increased due to their vanpool program with Enterprise. KCAPTA also contracts

with Green Commuter to provide vanpools to the Corcoran State Prison. The KART system met the threshold of 15% for mixed fare box retention. KART provides fixed route, paratransit, and commuter services to Armona, Avenal, Corcoran, Laton, Stratford, Hardwick, Grangeville, Kettleman City, Visalia, and Fresno.

The CAT buses within the City of Corcoran provide Dial-a-Ride curb-to-curb service. CAT ridership has increased to approximately 22,000 passenger trips in 2022. Increased passenger fares were due to the after-school program serviced by CAT. CAT's farebox retention has decreased to 2.27% based on 2022 estimates due to significant operating expenses. KART commuter Route 13 continues to provide transfers between Hanford and the Corcoran Depot Amtrak station and to the State Prison and Substance Abuse Treatment Center for employees who commute to work. State employees also utilize independent vanpool service and KCAPTA's vanpool services.

Ms. Dow stated an Unmet Needs Transit request was received by KCAPTA to expand Route 17 to Children's Hospital in Madera County. KCAPTA's Uber platform will be discontinued due to impact of transit services on their driver program. To fill the gap in service, KCAPTA plans to introduce in Lemoore a paratransit service with on-demand, curb to curb service with higher fare for direct trips within the next 30 days. City of Avenal opened a new resource center and will run a 3-month pilot on-demand KART service with fares in April through June. Ms. Dow indicated the KART multimodal station will provide 12 electric vehicle charging stations, and construction is planned to be completed by 2025.

Ms. Donabed had questions regarding service to Visalia. Ms. Dow replied about the 35 vanpools that originate from Kings County to various locations, generally riders within a group of 12 to 13 employees use the service for all shifts to various work destinations with an average of 8 to 9 passengers per vehicle. Service requests for vanpool vehicles with ADA access can be requested to Enterprise. About Corcoran trips, currently no buses originate from Corcoran to Visalia, however, bus connections are available from Corcoran-Hanford-Visalia. KART ADA buses provide audible stop announcements and reader marquee boards. Riders may request specific stops to the bus drivers in case they are unable to utilize the stop pull cords above the bus windows. Weekend service to Visalia from Hanford will be reviewed in a feasibility study planned with Tulare County transit agencies to increase routes in the future, along with Amtrak Thruway buses connecting to the CA High Speed Rail station in Hanford via the Cross Valley Rail Corridor between Kings and Tulare Counties.

Mr. Islas inquired about the KART multimodal station's study and the Green Commuter program, which provides a vanpool of EV Tesla passenger cars using volunteer drivers for a contract price. Fares from this program help to keep transit fares lower per Ms. Dow.

B. 2023 Kings County Transit Survey

Ms. Nickell reviewed bus surveys conducted in March at the KART station; that due to very low ridership, buses were not ridden but were examined for arrival/departure, cleanliness, and public advertisements.

Future Meetings

Ms. Nickell provided a review of the public hearing dates for Unmet Transit Needs within the County with the TPC meeting scheduled for May 24, 2023, followed by the next SSTAC meeting on June 1st to analyze Unmet Transit Needs requests and to form a letter of recommendation for the TPC.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the KCAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, the meeting was adjourned on April 27, 2023 at 10:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Nickell

Teresa Nickell, KCAG Regional Planner