



OPEN MEETING

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION
MOBILITY AND VEHICLES COMMITTEE**

**Friday, August 31, 2018 – 9:30 a.m.
Laguna Woods Village Community Center Board Room
24351 El Toro Road**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Acknowledgment of Media
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Approval of Meeting Report for August 1, 2018
5. Chair's Remarks
6. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)
7. Response to Member Comments

Reports:

8. Evaluation of Alternative Transportation Options

Concluding Business:

9. Committee Member Comments
10. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 3, 2018
11. Adjournment

Judith Troutman, Chair
Bruce Hartley, Staff Officer
Telephone: 949-597-4650

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**REPORT OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION
MOBILITY AND VEHICLES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, August 1, 2018 – 1:30 p.m.
Laguna Woods Village Community Center Board Room
24351 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judith Troutman, Ray Gros, Bert Moldow, Cash Achrekar, Juanita Skillman for Reza Bastani, Roy Bruninghaus, John Frankel, June Greenwald

ADVISORS: Shelva Lenzkes

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Dalis

OTHERS PRESENT: Annette Sabol Soule, Diane Phelps, Richard Palmer

STAFF PRESENT: Bruce Hartley, Andrew Harrell, Jackie Kupfert, Tiffany Rivas

1. Call to Order

Chair Troutman called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Acknowledgment of Media

Brooke Becher from the Globe attended

3. Approval of the Agenda

Chair moved Item #12 to Item #9. Amended Agenda approved by consensus.

4. Approval of Meeting Report for April 4, 2018

The Regular Meeting Report of April 4, 2018, was approved by consensus.

5. Chair's Remarks

None

6. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)

Grace Sams (3192-B) was called to speak regarding using bus only as docent guide. Buses may not be full, but she would like to see routes continue.

Suellen Zima (823-D) was called to speak regarding the Heritage plan consisting of and 8 bus loop system and the continual modifications that are not working for residents. How much money has been saved?

Mary Wall (239-D) Spoke regarding GRF shared cost and what is included? She would like breakdown of each trip and what it costs.

7. Response to Member Comments

Mr. Hartley responded to each member comment. Transportation will continue to have bus service and will modify to the needs of residents. Heritage plan consists of eight routes that take a different approach to route service.

Director Moldow referenced the government grant buses that are less desirable than the buses purchased.

Chair Troutman would like to add statistics in future agendas and would like to add them in the Globe for ease of resident access.

Mr. Hartley stated federal funding was only for the purchase of a bus and does not cover operational costs. Each grant has restrictions of bus usage.

Chair Troutman stated there is financial information listed under Item #12.

8. Department Head Update

Mr. Hartley stated the budget will be presented to membership in November with the addition of four buses. No changes in routes or service levels for Transportation will be implemented at this time. Bus Driver Training on Plan-A-Ride must occur before obtaining CDL for large bus operation. Transportation will have an additional scheduler starting August 13, 2018. The new scheduler working currently is doing very well. Transportation is working to reduce resident frustration. Mr. Harrell will showcase new software in his report.

Consent:

None

Reports:

#9 (agendized Item #12): Petition Requesting Change in Bus Service

Chair Troutman framed the topic for discussion. Mr. Hartley stated general decline in ridership is the trend in transportation within the Village and the country as a whole. Transportation costs have increased steadily which results in review of existing programs.

Norma Young (126-R) Spoke about Plan-A-Ride van not having proper hardware for those who need assistance.

Patti Holmes (3498-2D) Spoke about the many changes of the bus system. She would like a fixed route seven days a week.

Shirley Massi (5402) Spoke about the many changes to transportation that are not for the good of the community.

Pauline Shusko (1053) Spoke about the return to the previous system and concerned about Plan-A-Ride and its inefficiencies.

Shelva Lenzkes (401) Spoke regarding support of the fixed routes.

Gertrude Robby (579-N) Spoke regarding transportation needed for seven days per week.

Helen Nimmo (785-B) Spoke regarding elimination of bus tours and replace with fixed routes.

Tivis Mobberley (5344-C) Spoke regarding Plan-A-Ride not responsive for same day needs.

Steven Handelman (251) Spoke regarding a previous fixed route system that worked successfully.

Betty Mitchell (5402) Spoke in agreement of other speakers. She moved here due to the bus service and would like to see money spent for those who are not able to be as active.

Harriet Fillmore (251) Spoke regarding her usage of the bus system approximately six times per week. If the bus system is discontinued or reduced, it causes much stress for residents. Plan-A-Ride is undependable.

Joanne Sperling (356-B) Spoke regarding bus transportation being good only half of the time. Plan-A-Ride has not been responsive and is not working.

Mary Wall (239-D) Spoke regarding other amenities being empty just like the buses.

Patricia Luna (243-F) Spoke regarding the similarities of facilities and the bus system; bus service should be available seven days per week.

Marilyn Sipiora (587-A) Appreciated the bus service, but it does need modification. She stated routine schedule often makes residents late. She asked for meeting dates to be posted.

Begonia Erickson (2384-3A) Stated that there are less people taking the buses (public transportation) and using Uber-like transportation creating more traffic.

Leila Hamadani (3498-1B) Spoke regarding the purchase of a manor in Laguna Woods Village for her family due to bus transportation. This system has contributed to longevity of life for her family.

Doris Lissick (113-D) Spoke regarding using Uber instead of current bus transportation.

Gloria Moldow (3503-A) Spoke regarding her role as a 'Bus Buddy'. There are approximately 300 trips to local businesses per week.

Suzanne Model (3314-A) Spoke regarding the many changes made to the bus schedules. Most residents support the buses and would like opinions to be heard.

Larry Irion (682-O) Supported the reinstatement of the previous bus system.

Pat Blomgren (563-A) Spoke regarding four buses pulling up at Trader Joe's at one time recently.

Sharon Davidson (426-C) Spoke regarding bus service making travel safer for residents.

Chair Troutman requested staff to add more financial details to next agenda packet. She stated the committee will try to inform residents more effectively. Transportation will continue Plan-A-Ride and review the fixed route system. Chair Troutman will pass along notes to staff for review. Chair Troutman would like a meeting in 30 days instead of 60 days to discuss this further.

Director Gros stated the committee and transportation are reviewing handicapped access and looking to review the fixed route systems. He would like to supplement with smaller vehicles. The Laguna Woods Village facilities are for all residents, not just active residents. Staff will review all policies and make recommendations to accommodate residents.

Mr. Hartley stated staff is looking for solutions to all that was discussed today.

Director Moldow stated golfers pay money to play, while bus riders do not pay.

Director Skillman stated audience is leaving and continues to talk when committee speaks.

Suellen Zima (823-D) stated she found a smaller van and gave the business card to Chair Troutman.

Motion was made by Director Frankel, second by Director Cash to call an unscheduled meeting 30 days from August 1, 2018. Discussion ensued. Chair Troutman requested the meeting be televised live if possible.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. Transportation & Maintenance Manager Reports

Drew Harrell, Transportation and Maintenance Services Manager, spoke about the Plan-A-Ride ridership trends and the new bus recently received.

Director Moldow made a motion to have staff look into charging residents for the use of the bus for excursions; second by Director Frankel. Discussion ensued. Motion passed 7-1, with Director Skilman opposed.

10. Demonstration of "Ride Now" Plan-A-Ride Scheduling System

Drew Harrell demonstrated the new 'Ride Now' ride scheduling software.

Items for Discussion and Consideration:

11. Charter Review

Mr. Hartley reported that the previous chair of the committee developed a working group to amend the committee charter. The working group never met. The M&V Committee reviewed and recommended changes. The GRF Board declined to consider the amended charter and returned it to the Committee for further refinement. The Committee amended charter which was presented for consideration. Discussion ensued.

Chair Troutman stated that on July 3, 2018, the GRF board declined to consider the charter presented by the committee. The GRF board formed a one day task force to meet on July 25, 2018 to review and revise the standing Charter and present it to the Committee for review today.

A motion was passed by Director Bruninghaus, second by Director Moldow; passing unanimously.

Items for Future Agendas:

12. Financial Information – cost of Transportation

13. Shopping Carts on Buses

Concluding Business:

14. Committee Member Comments

June Greenwald mentioned the problems with the air conditioners on the buses.

Director Achrekar hopes all meetings are just as full.

Chair Troutman thanked the audience for their patience and willingness to speak.

15. Date of Next Special Meeting – Friday, August 31, 2018

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.



Judith Troutman, Chair
GRF Mobility & Vehicles Committee

STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 31, 2018
FOR: Mobility and Vehicles Committee
SUBJECT: Development of Alternative Transportation Options

RECOMMENDATION

Provide staff direction.

BACKGROUND

At the regular meeting of the Mobility and Vehicles Committee (M&V Committee) on August 1, 2018, the Committee Chair directed staff to continue the current transportation programs and evaluate the current Plan-A-Ride and Easy Rider fixed-route system to identify potential alternative transportation options; returning to a Special Meeting within 30 days. The primary focus of the Special Meeting would be to identify and discuss potential improvements that could be made to the weekend transportation services to address rider concerns.

Currently there are two transportation programs that serve the residents and guests of the Village. The Easy Rider fixed-route system consists of a total of eight buses that serve four numbered neighborhoods of the Village and two commercial areas comprised of a wide variety of medical and shopping opportunities. This program operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The daily Plan-A-Ride program provides on-demand type transportation services, connecting residents with their destinations through a reservation system. This program operates Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and on Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. Reservations are typically required the day prior to the trip. The previous policy for assessment and certification of eligibility for the Plan-A-Ride program was eliminated at the beginning of 2018, which allows unrestricted access to the program for all residents, with priority given to medical and therapy appointments. The program currently provides over 600 trips per week to a consistent ridership of nearly 300 residents, with approximately 50 new riders utilizing the program each month.

The Easy Rider fixed-route system does not currently operate on weekends. This program change was approved by the M&V Committee and was part of the 2018 Business Plan approved by the GRF Board in September 2017. It resulted in a net decrease in budget of approximately \$250,000.

DISCUSSION

Staff continuously evaluates the current transportation programs, looking for new efficiencies or alternative routes that would alleviate some of the challenges that riders have experienced and those that staff has observed. The primary deficiencies that have been reported or identified are:

- Weekend Plan-A-Ride service requires advanced planning and submitting a reservation request; with little to no ability for spontaneous travel decisions.
- Easy Rider buses only service commercial destinations once per hour, resulting in long wait times.
- Multiple buses arrive at the same commercial destinations at the same time, leading to confusion for riders, traffic congestion and long wait times for buses to get through the commercial stops.
- Buses service the same commercial locations multiple times per day with few if any riders getting off at the destination, leading to longer travel times.

At the direction of the Committee, staff has developed five alternatives for consideration that would increase weekend service. They are listed below, with a description and cost estimate for each alternative. Staff would develop more detailed cost projections following the Committee's decision on which alternative would be preferred.

Easy Rider 2018 with Plan-A-Ride Support

The Easy Rider is the current system in place that includes fixed-routes operating on weekdays and Plan-A-Ride on weekends and holidays. This option would add one additional Plan-A-Ride vehicle and driver that would be reserved seven days each week for medical appointments only. This concept would address the concerns voiced by residents that it is difficult to schedule trips, especially on the weekends, while still providing dedicated support for medical appointments. This option would free up a vehicle for same-day trip requests, adding capacity for approximately four to five trips per hour. This option would require additional funding in the amount of \$215,000 per year. This alternative would increase the monthly transportation assessment.

Easy Rider Fixed Routes 7 days per week

An alternative to the current system would be to return to the traditional seven day fixed route system, with before and after hours Plan-A-Ride service for all residents and a mobility impaired service during the day for medical appointments only. This was the system in place prior to January 2018, which was supported by an operating budget that was approximately \$500,000 more per year. Plan-A-Ride services would be reduced to a maximum of four vehicles per day. This alternative would increase the monthly transportation assessment.

Reduced Service Hours for Fixed Routes on Weekends

This alternative would return weekend fixed route bus service, but in a reduced service hour capacity. Service would be available from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. only, with Plan-A-Ride operating the usual weekend hours. The estimated cost increase for this alternative would be approximately \$250,000 per year. This alternative would increase the monthly transportation assessment.

Plan-A-Ride Service Seven Days Per Week (no fixed route service)

This alternative would provide Plan-A-Ride service seven days per week with no fixed route service. Residents would call or access electronic media; either the Village website or an

application on their 'smart phone' to schedule their trips. It is estimated that a 100% reservation system would require an additional \$500,000 per year to operate. This alternative would increase the monthly transportation assessment.

2018 Easy Rider and Plan-A-Ride Service

This is the current program with no proposed changes that has been included in the 2019 Proposed Business Plan at a cost of approximately \$16.08 per manor per month (including depreciation).

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends focusing on improving weekend transportation services as requested by the numerous residents that signed petitions and spoke at the M&V meeting of August 1, 2018. Developing and evaluating solutions for weekend travel would address the main concerns of the residents. Improvements in the weekday bus routes could be pursued by Staff, while the more urgent needs of Village residents would be met. Careful analysis of the alternatives could be performed with more accurate results achieved and a higher likelihood of success. All alternatives presented will result in an increase in annual operating costs and will require an increase in the GRF assessment for transportation services.

Several alternative fixed route options could be evaluated and presented at a future meeting. Staff would provide information on the following concepts if directed by the Committee:

- One Route System
- 11-Route System
- 'Hub and Spoke' Residential and Commercial Route Separation
- The Heritage Plan

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The financial impact of the alternative(s) selected will be evaluated and presented to the Committee in greater detail at a future meeting. Currently, members pay as part of their GRF assessment, \$16.08 per manor per month for transportation services as stated in the 2018 Business Plan. Any increase in funding required for modified services would be presented to the GRF Finance Committee for consideration.

Prepared By: Bruce Hartley, General Services Director

Reviewed By: Siobhan Foster, Chief Operating Officer

Betty Parker, Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENT(S):

None

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