

**HELENA AREA TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
(HATAC)
September 16, 2014 Monthly Meeting Minutes
MTCDD Conference Room, 2714 Billings Avenue (behind Walmart)
2:30 PM to 4:00 PM**

Attendance: Cindy Baril (County Citizen), Allison Batch (SAVE), Les Clark (MILP), Brian Johnson (United Way/Treasurer), Jaymie Sheldahl (RMDC-Head Start/Secretary), Mike Hruska (Capital Taxi), Elizabeth Andrews (HCC District #2/Chair), Walter Hanley (RMDC), Jamie Schell (City of East Helena Mayor), Bob Morgan (Helena Citizens Council), David Kack (WTI/MSU), Andy Hunthausen (L&C County Commissioner), Matt Elsaesser (City of Helena Commissioner), Bob Moffit (MILP), Judy Harris (HTAC Member At Large), Laura Erickson (L&C County), Trish Sorenson (Interested Citizen), Elisa Prescott (L&C County), Denny Lenoir (Congressmen Daines), Patrick Sanders (DPHHS), Deborah Swingley (MT Council on DD/Vice-Chair), Jacob Harrison (Rider), Steve Larson (HATS), Charlie Briggs (Easter Seals-Goodwill), Lisa Coligan (MT Dept. of Administration), Barbara Sheridan (HATS), Paul Kindt (PEERS), Morgan Darlington (Congressmen Steve Daines)

Conference Phone: call-in capabilities not available at meeting site

Introductions: Meeting called to order at 2:30 pm and started with introductions. All in attendance signed sign-in sheet. Membership forms were distributed along with hard copies of meeting materials. HATAC Chair Elizabeth Andrews reviewed the primary role of the HTAC as outlined by the Montana Department of Transportation, a TAC is an advisory council that cooperatively assists the lead agency/transit manager in assessing and prioritizing local needs and enhances coordination among community partners, and includes making recommendations on various transit related issues.

Approval of Minutes: Brian Johnson made motion and Jamie Schell seconded to approve August 19, 2014 minutes, no discussion, minutes approved.

Executive Committee Report/Action Items:

- **Bi-Law Overview/Action:** Les Clark moved to approve revised bi-laws Andy Hunthausen and Trish Sorenson seconded. Discussion:

David Kack suggested that article IVA4 delete words *of the partnership*. Brian Johnson moved to approve bi-laws with amendment to reflect the change in language, second by Judy Harris. No further discussion, called to vote and bi-laws policy approved.

- **FY 2015 Work Plan Overview/Action:** A month to month outline of what the HATAC is working on went out with September meeting minutes. It is the roadmap for the next year. Might need to start working work a little earlier on input for FY 2016 coordinated plan. Steve Larson will let Executive Committee know lead agency timeline. TDP, HITP Grant Round 1 Report and Grant Round 2 Action Areas, and HATAC 2015 Action Plan developed in May by 17 HATAC members were guiding documents. Jacob Harris moved to adopt the 2015 Work Plan. Mike Hruska seconded motion. No discussion. Trish Sorenson did not get copy due to email. Hard copies are available at HATS office. Called to vote and approved.
- **Fiscal Agent and 501 c(3) Update:** United Way is the fiscal agent and there is no cash at the moment. Contact Brian Johnson if you have an in-kind and/or hard money contribution you would like to make to HATAC. At this point there is not an effort being made to create an independent 501 c(3). Not off the table, just not taking place now.
- **In-Kind Project Update:** Chair reminded group that 15% of the Lead Agency's total budget can be in the form of in-kind donations...close to 150K with regards to HATS budget. Bob Maffit explained how in-kind can match the federal dollars as well as cash contributions. In-Kind contributions play an important role in helping lead agency build a more robust budget as long as lead agency and other coordinated partners maintain or increase hard money match rather than reducing it. It also allows partners to contribute if hard money contribution not a fiscal option. Transit systems achieving success work to fully utilize In-Kind opportunity when building yearly budget. Elizabeth Andrews, EAndrews Community Engagement Services, and Deborah Swingley, Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities, made in-kind contributions of their project management work on the HITP Grant to HATS in FY 2014 as a pilot project to help lead agency leverage unexpended FY 2014 funds rather than risk having hard money FTA funds left on the table by lead agency. After the In-kind forms were turned in to the Lead Agency the forms were changed by staff to not allow an organization to restrict the use of the in-kind donation...only make

suggestions...staff asked that Elizabeth and Deborah resubmit their contribution using revised form to help city meet deadline. Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities (MTCDD) wrote a letter with concern about not being able to restrict donations to HATAC and shared in with City Commission at recent Admin. meeting. As a non-profit the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities operates on a federal grant and a non-restrictive pot of money. The HITP Grant Project in-kind dollars have all come from the non-restrictive piece of funding. In regards to the form not allowing donor restrictions on the in-kind forms, Commissioner Matt Elsaesser shared that the City Commission supports transit. He is concerned about the lack of trust in the Lead Agency to use funds effectively. Brian Johnson shared in the world of fund raising best practices while there is some legal rationale behind not allowing restrictions of donations, ethically there is a need to offer the donors the opportunity to restrict donated funds. It is not sustainable long term to use the legal line and say donor restrictions will not be respected. We need to continue working through this issue. The in-kind discussion is not over, there may once again be unexpended funds in FY 2015 that can be matched with in-kind, as well as continued opportunity to use up to 150K in in-kind contributions to build FY 2016 coordinated plan/budget. Coordination Subcommittee will continue to monitor project progress and make recommendations, as needed.

Coordination Subcommittee Meeting Update:

- Steve Larson reported the city is looking to review/update HATS fares. Jaymie Sheldahl, Trish Sorenson, Les Clark and Bob Maffit will work with Steve Larson on fare review. Jaymie Sheldahl will coordinate meeting times and report out to broader group any recommendations that may come from that effort.
- Coordination Subcommittee has been discussing regional transit governance models that run regional transit systems given needs beyond the city limits documented in previous planning efforts. Members are interested in figuring out how best to serve city and the broader area outside the city limits. David Kack will be contracted to expand his work under HITP Grant 2 (Helena Area Transportation Inventory/Mobility Management Program/Travel Training Program) to develop a white paper on best regional transit system governance model(s)/recommendations for our community and how best to make such a transition. Unexpended funds from the HITP Inclusive Grant

Round 2 will fund this add on effort. More on that in future meetings. If you would like to work on the HATAC Coordination Subcommittee and this and other coordination related activities contact Elizabeth Andrews.

Lead Agency Update (HATS): See attached memo. 250 people registered for ADA para-transit service at this time. HATS received final report for MILP demo project which will be on the HATS web-site. It was a great project to have. 4th quarter report went in this morning. HATS was able to pre-load and meet with State about the in-kind. \$33,500 was left unspent. Looking at fare clean-up, FY2016 time-line. Ridership report went into using route match Steve gave the HTAC a map that he shared with the City Commission that has the fixed route and shows the area HATS is required to serve and where ADA residents live who HATS serves currently who live outside that catchment area. Chair Elizabeth Andrews gave tokens to all in attendance to ride the bus and thanked Steve for report and the work he does with Executive Committee to set monthly HTAC meeting agenda. Bob Maffit asked if Steve Larson if he has a feel or idea regarding how many people fall within the boundaries and how many people are not going to get service if they live outside the required area. Steve does not know the answer to that yet. Bob would like information so they could work in partnership to intervene if people are not going to be able to get rides.

HATS Communications and Marketing Presentation/Input:

Selena Barlow – Full power point is available for viewing on HITP Grant Round 2 Project website:

http://helenaareatransportationforall-eandrewscommunityengagement.nationbuilder.com/hats_marketing_and_communications

Selena discussed the role of marketing in public transit systems and the importance of having the transit service meet the needs of the potential user. Even the best service won't work if people don't know about it or how to use it. Have to have the good service and communicate it well to have it productive. Marketing is all the ways we communicate with riders. Branding – marketing at most basic. The name, the log, our packaging – our vehicles and bus stops. Simple difference of color and brand on a vehicle and can be paid for with capital money and once it's on its permanent, you don't have to keep paying for it. Create a consistent look and image so

people automatically know. Branding is about building visibility and awareness. Second key is passenger info – directions for how to use our product. Need to give directions in different ways – internet, print, bus stop, phone with potential user in mind. Web-site needs to be clear and easy to understand. People want to know where the bus goes, how do I get there and how much does it cost and when? Google maps can be used for google transit if city is in google transit, which Selena can work with Lead Agency to get connected to the system. Printed information can be out in community where people can see it. Printed info that is useful and easy for people to understand. People want to know how can I get to where I want to go on the bus. Easy, clear and to the point. 3rd is at the bus stop people want to learn about the service. AVA can be placed on the bus and real time can be used for the rider.

Branding, getting the information out and then identify relevant target markets. News releases, media advertising and social media to communicate with riders. Working through marketing partnerships. Social service agencies, schools, medical providers and the business community can be taught how to use the transit system so they can teach clients. The HTAC has wonderful partners to reach individuals directly.

Take these steps in this order to increase ridership. It has been proven. Brunswick spent 5 years working on a system that did not take off then got Selena on board and ridership took off. Communicate and deliver a quality service you will be more successful. These are not particularly expensive things. Web-site is basic stuff. Outreach does not cost money it takes time to create the relationships, but does not cost money. Selena will give us the tools to move forward with information collection. She has rode the bus and has 15 meetings scheduled to have a good idea of who are the willing partners in our community. She will develop a marketing and communications plan that utilizes t 1% of our budget for marketing and communications. Develop higher visibility branding. Develop user friendly passenger guide and info display. User focused web-site with google transit trip planner.

Discussion: Target markets: state government, growing senior community, commuters in general – current service cannot meet the needs of commuters. Unemployed or underemployed individuals, Carroll College, U of M, HHS, Middle School, disabled folks, senior housing by north medical clinic and is on West side of Montana Ave.

For what point in time do we create the materials, from now are what we want to see happen? Start with soft copies to build ridership. Need to begin now and grow as service expands.

Issue of branding: helpful to have a logo that explains the service and color on bus would be helpful because all the buses in town are white. Bus line and para-transit. More typical to have a split between para and fixed route and have branding on bus a little different so people know the difference between the buses. Barb Sheridan wants to wrap the bus for advertising so the bus sticks out and get money for advertising. Drawback is wrapping bus advertising for others is not creating an identity for our transit system, it is creating someone else's identity. Bold color that becomes identified with you is the best for creating a strong brand. Could do a branding workshop and come up with some alternatives and we decide what we like and don't like on the web. Grant due the November 30th.

Public Comment:

- Allison Batch, with SAVE, is organizing the bike and pedestrian counts for the Fall of 2014. The counts are taking place Wednesday September 24, 2014 from 4pm – 6pm. If anyone would like to help with the data collection please email Allison at savepolicy@gmail.com.
- Jacob Harrison – I'm hoping that as we see Helena grow more we have a process to get the busses to go on Saturdays and Sundays so we can have buses run on week-ends!

HTAC September Meeting Date/Topic/Location Announcements:

- HTAC Chair Elizabeth Andrews thanked County Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, City Commissioner Matt Elsaesser, and East Helena Mayor Schell for attending HTAC meetings and being acting members of HTAC.
- Scott Chapman, with Nelson Nygaard, will meet with the Coordination Subcommittee via conference call to review the four transit service improvement strategies. This is an element of the Action Area 1 - HATS Service Improvement activity - of the Helena Area Inclusive Transit Planning (HITP) Round 2 Project. Participation with the Coordination Subcommittee will be essential as we get on a series of calls to refine this set of service improvement strategies for local bus service down to one preferred alternative. There will be a memorandum discussing the alternatives and the call-in information

passed to coordination subcommittee members after dates and times in the next month are established. If all goes as planned the the Coordination Subcommittee will have a service improvement recommendation ready for broader group action to support or reject moving that recommendation on for discussion of both the city and county commissioners at the November Joint City County Work Session, at the October 21, 2014 HTAC meeting.

- The HATAC Executive Committee meets the first Monday of each month. The agenda for the HATAC monthly meeting is set at that time, please get any coordination related updates and/or requests to be on the agenda to Executive Committee before that date.

Meeting adjourned 4:05pm

HTAC meetings are the 3rd Tuesday in each month and will begin promptly at 2:30 and run until 4 pm.

As outlined by the Montana Department of Transportation, a TAC is an advisory council that cooperatively assists the lead transit agency manager in assessing and prioritizing local needs, as well as discusses and makes recommendations on various transit related issues.

<http://www.helenamt.gov/public-works/hats/helena-transportation-advisory-council.html>

NOTE** All agenda items/issues must be turned into Elizabeth Andrews no later than the first day of each month 2014. Final agenda and materials will go out a week ahead of monthly meeting. A reminder email will go out the day of the meeting. Meeting will be posted on the city web www.helenamt.gov/public-works/hats.html. They will also be available in the HATS conference Room in a binder. Meeting materials will be provided. Thank you!