

CHEROKEE COUNTY TRANSIT

77 HARDIN STREET

MURPHY, NC 28906

PH: (828) 837-1789



Transportation Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Date: 12/30/2020

Attendance: Tom Brownback, Robin Caldwell, Maria Hass, Dennis Myers, Mark Malone, Jennifer West, Rhonda Taylor

Bar graph analysis of a comparison for the services over the last few years shows that while Covid has impacted the ridership, we still have room to expand and we are continuing to move forward to serve the needs of the residents of Cherokee County.

Demand Response- Trips counts are holding steady, but there is still room for growth compared to previous years. We still have the capacity and ability to serve more people. We are continuing to do outreach. We are going to talk about some of these things today.

Deviated-Fixed Route-

- D&A is averaging 25 trips per day. Here again, this is staying steady (last quarter was about 20) but we still have a capacity to help more people.

Andrews Here and There-

- Started Oct27. Only runs on Tuesdays to take advantage of 2 for Tuesday pass. Averaging 8 trips a day. We are using this route to do targeted outreach for customers in Andrews, especially seniors.

Brings us to Block grant update: we have been doing a lot of outreach and our senior routes have really grown. We have the time and availability to transport them more often.

To tell you some more about the senior outreach we have been doing, I'd like to introduce everyone to Mark Malone. He has been our scheduler for a few months now. He has been with Transit for several years. He has been in sales most of his life and is a very aggressive scheduler. He always wants to get people where they need to go. I'd like him to tell you a little about what he has been doing.

Mark-We are trying to build the senior use of the service since we have lost many units who have shopped less and no longer have the nutrition services (congregate meals at the senior centers) that were available to attend pre Covid.

We have increased the ridership by calling the eligible people and informing them of the services that are available to them. We have increased the routes by adding another van/day to the county seniors, which had increased use as well as offering Andrews seniors the opportunity to go to either Andrews or Murphy on Fridays depending on their shopping needs.

We have reached out to faith-based organizations and some businesses that may want to better serve the community and we are in the process of reaching out again to those and expanding more contacts. Maybe

by offering a promotion such as free coffee or a bagel might be helpful to encourage people to visit their establishments.

We would like to get a list of seniors in the county that we could be able to contact to let them know what we have to offer.

Jennifer-Thank you, Mark. I really think we are on track for a lot growth with the senior community.

Previously we have had 700-800 senior units per month plummeted with the entrance of Covid. During the last month we have begun to see the units going back up through adding the routes and outreach. The month of December, even with the holidays and weather days has brought 553 units with two more days to add before the end of the month.

Grant Updates

HCCBG –

Home Community Care Block Grant- Andrews- SR route has had a re-emergence. We have three to four passengers that now ride consistently. Averaging two days a week. We can utilize the operator/ vehicle for the Here and There one of those days to reduce the operating costs.

ROAP– Rural Operating Assistance Program- We didn't receive this grant from the state this year. The state thought counties had enough money from our CARES funds to support our expenses. However, they have had us to continue to track the trips that we normally would have performed with ROAP funds. They are going to use this data to support the return of the Grant for 2022. As of yesterday, we would have performed approximately 800 trips with the ROAP funds if we had it. The expenses from those trips and the local match ROAP provides would equate to about 1/3 of the usual grant amount. (HALF WAY THROUGH THE YEAR)

This will show the state there is still the need to get the elderly, disabled, working families, and the general public transportation in Cherokee County.

CARES NCDOT and Area Agency on Aging- NCDOT CARES is supporting the expenses that ROAP would have covered. We also can use it for COVID related needs. Like our barriers in the vehicles or cleaning supplies and PPE. We received our CARES reimbursement from AAA that also helped pay for those barriers.

5310 Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities- Operating Grant: Operating expenses of trips for those 65 or older and the disabled. Right now, we have expended approximately 40% of the grant.

Combined Capital Grant- For FY21, we have a couple of different options on what we can order for replacement vehicles. We are eligible to retire one of our raised roof wheel chair vans this year. Normally that would mean we would replace it with the exact same thing. However, there is no current NCDOT contract for those vehicles. They are in the process of taking bids.

There is a smaller/mini-van type wheel chair van on the state contract which we could buy as a replacement. It is similar to the size of the transit connect vehicles. It would hold a total possibly two passengers if we were social distancing or up to five without social distancing. Pros would be that it is smaller and could help us with the terrain of the county.... There is some more paperwork involved since it is not a DOT contract (just state). It is unclear if we could upgrade its replacement back to a raised roof high-top van in the future.The other option is to wait until the contract for the raised roof van gets

renewed, but that will entail additional paperwork because we won't receive the vehicle in time to use FY21 funds. We would have to get an extension from the state.

Medicaid Managed Care NEMT Agreements: We have two brokers that want to contract with us for the Medicaid transformation- Logisticare and One Call. They have been through various versions of their agreements and Providers manuals trying to find terms that work for their clients, the state, and the transportation providers. They pay in buckets.... more difficult to determine profit/loss.

It is an ongoing process I am working with the county on.... Their form of billing is something completely new to our agency.

VTCLI Veteran's Grant- Our Scheduling and Reporting software is supposed to be able to "talk "to the new Medicaid brokers billing software.

5311 Community Transportation Program (CTP) – Admin: Reimbursements for Admin expenses. ----
NO NEW UPDATES-----

Tom from NCWorks gave us an update that while they are maintaining the usual employment assistance, they are serving by appointment only. They are still doing outreach through their website and their Facebook; most people want the in-person assistance instead of virtual but he would be more than happy to promote transit with what was available to him.

Robin said that she has had the best results working through WKRK, advertising through this outlet would be good given the demographics we are trying to reach, it is the perfect platform since many of our seniors use it for information and entertainment. Robin suggested speaking to Tim Radford about the possibility of doing talk segment/show to promote the services we provide to the residents since he is very good to work with on interests of public service.

Robin also suggested speaking to Alan with the Truett Association.

Jennifer stated that we have had a good relationship with Murphy First Baptist in the past and plan to follow up with them and others. Also, transportation should be included in the second round of COVID vaccines.

Robin said that she is also encouraging everyone to take the Covid vaccine as it becomes available to them.

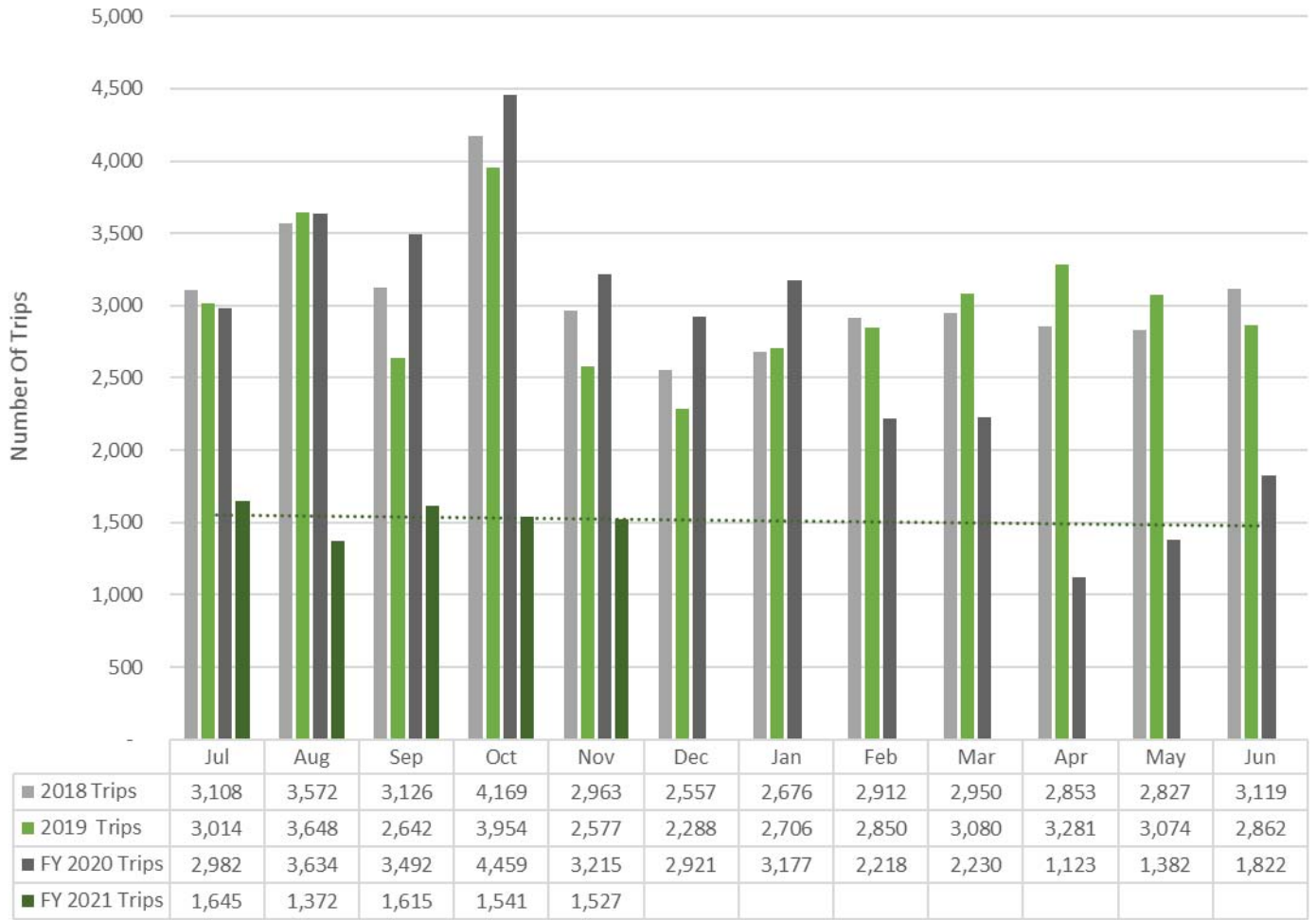
Dennis said that IOI is rocking along, still not cleared to have everyone back but they are hopeful that with the vaccine that they will be able to get more people in. Currently group homes are prohibited to attend but the state is working on things and hopefully the vaccine will allow them a safe return to work.

Robin issued a thank you to everyone for everything that was being done during the Covid pandemic.

Dennis, Maria and Jennifer, added thanks for everyone who was on the frontlines keeping everything moving as much as possible during this trying time.

Tentative TAB meeting dates for FY21: 3/31/2021 and 6/30/2021

Comparison of Trips by Year



2018 Trips
 2019 Trips
 FY 2020 Trips
 FY 2021 Trips
 Linear (FY 2021 Trips)