

WATS Coordinating Committee Members
Lycoming County Board of Commissioners
Lycoming-Sullivan Boroughs Association
SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority
Mayor, City of Williamsport
River Valley Transit
Williamsport City Council
Williamsport Regional Airport
PennDOT Engineering District 3-0
Lycoming County Association of Township Officials
PennDOT Center for Program Development & Management



WATS Technical Committee Members
Lycoming County Planning & Community Development
PennDOT Engineering District 3-0
City of Williamsport
River Valley Transit
Williamsport Regional Airport
Lycoming County Planning Commission
PennDOT Center for Program Development & Management

The WATS MPO is staffed by the Lycoming County
Department of Planning & Community Development
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WILLIAMSPORT AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

August 20, 2020 Transit Advisory Committee Teleconference Public Meeting: Held at various locations via teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER (WATS Transit Advisory Committee Teleconference Public Meeting)

Sal Vitko called the meeting to order at 2:02 P.M.

MINUTES

November 7, 2019 Transit Advisory Committee Public Meeting

Sal Vitko asked if there were any issues or questions on the **November 7, 2019** meeting minutes. Scott Williams explained the background on the Transit Advisory Committee meeting minutes and that the Transit Committee typically does not hold a vote to “approve” the minutes. Rather, the request is more to ensure the meeting minutes were a fair and accurate representation of what occurred at the meeting. Committee members shared no changes or concerns with the November 7, 2019 meeting minutes and the meeting minutes stand.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

AGENDA ITEMS

Introductions / Meeting Purpose

Sal Vitko asked all members to state their names and organizations who attended the meeting. Sal Vitko gave a brief overview of the Transit Advisory Committee’s purpose and the partnership with River Valley Transit (RVT) and STEP, Inc.

RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT SERVICE UPDATE

RVT Management Team Update

Todd Wright gave an update on River Valley Transit (RVT) services. Todd Wright informed the Committee of the following RVT staffing and administration changes; Adam Winder is the new RVT General Manager, and Chris Cooley is the new RVT Assistant Manager.

RVT Regular Services Update

Todd stated that RVT continues to operate more than 20 fixed routes in Lycoming County and the surrounding areas. In April 2020, RVT updated the www.ridervt.com website and added a

trip-planning tool to the website. Passengers can plan trips and see the location of their bus from the app. RVT is in the process of finalizing the *My Ride* option via text message, and the instructions and phone number for *My Ride* will be placed on signage at all RVT stops.

Todd informed the committee that RVT is planning to become involved with the statewide Fixed Route Intelligent Transportation System (FRITS) project in 2021. FRITS will provide some additional enhancements (flexible payment options, monitoring vehicle conditions, etc.). Additionally, RVT is on schedule to replace five (5) of the service vehicles from diesel to compressed natural gas (CNG). This update will make RVT an almost one-hundred percent CNG fleet. Additionally, this update will have a direct impact on cost savings for RVT allowing them to save on diesel fuel costs.

RVT Clinton County Update

Todd stated that RVT is working with Lock Haven University to provide some enhanced services for the University and downtown Lock Haven.

COVID-19 Service Impacts

Todd Wright explained that in an effort to combat COVID-19, all RVT buses are cleaned twice a day, all drivers wear masks, and passengers are expected to wear masks while they ride. Additionally, RVT drivers have disposable masks that they can provide to passengers. Todd gave an update on RVT ridership stating that, ridership numbers decreased by approximately 70% between March – April 2020. However, RVT is seeing an increase in ridership, but they are still approximately 40% down from normal ridership.

STEP, INC. SERVICE UPDATE

Update on STEP, Inc. Transportation Services

Dan Merk gave an update on STEP, Inc. transportation services. Dan stated that STEP, Inc. is back to approximately 60-70% of monthly operations; earlier in the 2020, STEP, Inc. was operating at approximately 47% of operations. Dan stated that the state had placed mandates during March – April 2020 for STEP, Inc. to only take certain medical appointments, and that mandate affected STEP, Inc. operations. Dan stated that during June and July 2020 STEP, Inc. saw a 23% increase in trips. Dan informed the committee that in an effort to combat COVID-19, the STEP, Inc. vehicles are being sanitized daily, vehicle drivers wear masks, and drivers have masks to give to riders if needed.

Dan stated that ridership from HOPE Enterprises and residents at senior centers is still low, but that overall STEP, Inc. is seeing a return in ridership that is closer to normal.

Committee member input on potential STEP, Inc. Services

Dan asked the committee members if they were aware of any segment(s) of the population that is in need of transportation services that STEP, Inc. offers. Dan stated that STEP, Inc. has determined some areas of limited service and are working to address those issues. Dan stated that STEP, Inc. has coordinated with Center for Independent Living to review the STEP, Inc. website upgrades and provide feedback on ease of use, accessibility, etc. Dan stated that a number of the changes STEP, Inc. are making are to better serve individuals with disabilities within the community.

Dan informed the committee that STEP, Inc. has grown some of their services to healthcare providers. STEP, Inc. continues to work with Rabbit Transit's "For Ride" program through Geisinger Medical Center (beyond the normal trips STEP, Inc.). STEP, Inc. is also providing services for UPMC to assist individuals who require mobility services such as individuals being discharged from UPMC and returning home.

Sal Vitko asked the committee if the WATS MPO should place the STEP, Inc. On-line Reservation instructions and a link to the STEP, Inc. reservation form out on the MPO website. Scott Williams stated that it might be better to have a separate webpage for the Transit Advisory Committee and place those resources on the Transit Advisory webpage. Sal Vitko stated that he would work with Lycoming County IS to create the Transit Advisory Committee webpage.

Dan Merk stated that he was happy to answer any questions from anyone on the Transit Advisory Committee regarding the STEP, Inc. updates. Mark Murawski asked if there were any changes relating to services with Billtown Cab Company. Dan informed the committee that Billtown Cab Company is no longer in existence.

Dan stated that a company out of Pittsburgh, PA called Pittsburgh Air Ride is planning to provide taxicab services locally. Dan stated that STEP, Inc. has taken over a number of services that Billtown Cab had provided such as the Employee Transportation Program. Regarding the ADA programs, Dan stated that the program is running smoothly.

Mark asked a follow-up question regarding the need or usefulness of a cooperative taxicab company to assist in providing services. Dan stated that during the "off hours" (evening hours, Sunday hours, etc.) a taxi company would assist in providing service during those hours. Dan stated that an issue a taxi company may face in the area is private providers such as Uber and Lyft.

Mark suggested that if RVT and STEP, Inc. found value in coordinating with Pittsburgh Air Ride that WATS MPO could potentially provide outreach to the company and act as a facilitator to resolve unmet transportation issues that all three companies could assist in solving.

STEP, Inc. On-line Application and Website Development

Dan Merk informed the committee of the STEP, Inc. on-line reservation option. Dan stated that when a rider calls into STEP, Inc. the rider receives a link to the STEP, Inc. website. At the STEP, Inc. website, the rider can place their on-line reservation and a STEP, Inc. staff member responds to the rider as soon as physically possible, via phone or email to confirm the trip.

Dan was clear that the on-line reservation *does not confirm* the trip, but is used by STEP, Inc. staff to contact the rider and book the trip. There has been some positive feedback from customers using the on-line reservation option. Dan stated that by September 2020 STEP, Inc. is hopeful that they will have on-line forms available for customers to utilize to schedule trips. The new additions for the STEP, Inc. website will allow customers to fill-out forms, upload forms, and use electronic signatures.

Dan stated that STEP, Inc. is still operating using the IBR software, where customers receive a call the night prior to the trip to confirm the trip. On the day of the trip, customers receive a phone call informing them that the van is on the way.

Community Health Choices

Dan stated that STEP, Inc. has operated a few trips through CTS, who is the broker for UPMC's Community Health Choices program. Dan informed the committee that another broker, Medical Transportation Management (MTM) required that STEP, Inc. apply for a Public Utility Commission (PUC) certificate. During that process, another transit provider objected to STEP, Inc. receiving the PUC certificate. There is a hearing the week of August 24, 2020 with the PUC to review the certificate request. Dan stated that STEP, Inc. is hopeful to resolve the certificate issues at the PUC meeting and resume transportation services MTM and Ameri-Health.

CONSUMER COMMENTS

There were no consumer comments.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE

Sal Vitko suggested meeting dates in late November or early December 2020 for the next Transit Advisory Committee meeting. Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday in late November, Scott Williams suggested the Committee look at the first two weeks in December. Scott Williams confirmed with Dan Merk that STEP, Inc. is, at a minimum, required to hold two (2) meetings per year. All Transit Advisory Committee members agreed to schedule the next Committee meeting during the first two-weeks in December 2020.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public comment, Sal Vitko adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully, Submitted,
Scott Williams
WATS Secretary