



# SENIOR COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

---

MEETING DATE MARCH 8, 2016

ITEM NUMBER: **7a**

**SUBJECT:** BUS RESERVATION – PROGRESS REPORT

**DATE:** MARCH 1, 2016

**FROM:** PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES/SENIOR SERVICES

**PRESENTATION BY:** YVETTE AGUILAR, SENIOR CENTER PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Yvette Aguilar @ 714-327-7540  
[yvette.aguilar@costamesaca.gov](mailto:yvette.aguilar@costamesaca.gov)

---

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Senior Commission receive and file report, and direct staff to reevaluate the Senior Mobility Program (SMP) on an annual basis.

## BACKGROUND

At the May 2015 Senior Commission meeting, staff were directed to perform a comprehensive bus study to analyze various aspects of the Senior Mobility Program (SMP). The analysis included:

1. Meeting with representatives from Western Transit (contracted bus driver provider);
2. Review of route of an “average” day compared to the route residents had requested;
3. Surveying riders and requesting feedback;
4. Staff ride along to understand the route and observe the interactions;
5. Daily report monitoring.

At the July 2015 Senior Commission meeting, staff reported the results of the bus study to the commissioners:

1. Western Transit representatives were agreeable to the bus study and participated by providing staff with the driver’s daily logs;
2. The route taken by the driver on an “average” day was found to be the shortest and most efficient, barring unforeseen circumstances (construction, accidents, unusual traffic, etc.).
3. A total of 35 surveys were received from patrons of the SMP. The results (Attachment 1) suggested that at least 77% of riders used the service at least once per week. A total of 97% of those surveyed shared they were treated with respect and courtesy by the driver, and were happy with the program.
4. Staff observed that the driver took routes to ensure efficiency. Staff also reported that the driver extended courtesy reminders to seniors as they exited the bus.

The Senior Commission directed staff to further review the reservation system for efficiency and to bring back a report at the September 2015 meeting.

At the September 2015 Senior Commission meeting, staff recommended that the SMP driver needed to be involved in the reservation process for planning and efficiency; however staff would work closely with the driver to assure compliance with the reservation system established. Furthermore, the following reservation system should be implemented:

- Staff will accept calls for next-day reservations for the Senior Mobility Program (SMP) between the hours of 7:30-8:15 a.m. the day before service is needed.
- Staff will schedule pick-up times for the bus leaving at approximately 8:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. from home, and return drop off times at 12:30 and 2 p.m. from the senior center to home, with the assistance of the driver to ensure an efficient route is established.
- The driver establishes the route based on the reservations made and documents the information on the reservation log. The reservation log allows staff to keep record of calls received after each bus is filled. The log also takes into account the number of customers staff were able to accommodate compared to customers who may not be accommodated for services for various reasons.

Staff also recommended that the driver would schedule other reservations during the daytime routes if time and space permit. These reservations would be noted on the daily logs. In addition, staff would communicate these processes by:

1. Outlining the new process in the October 2015 Chronicle newsletter and the Costa Mesa Recreation Guide.
2. Establishing a hotline for seniors to call with questions and/or concerns specific to the Senior Mobility Program. Staff would maintain records and date for each call received in efforts to improve the system. The hotline is checked daily. To date, only three calls have been received on the hotline. Two calls were to schedule a ride, and the other call was a hang-up.

It was stated at the September 2015 Senior Commission meeting that all recommendations and concerns about the SMP need to be brought to the attention of City staff or vetted through the hotline in order to compile accurate data. The hotline is completely anonymous.

At the September 2015 Senior Commission meeting, various seniors and their families spoke about their concerns to change the current reservation system and designating specific pick-up times.

The public shared their satisfaction with the SMP, as well as with the driver, and complimented staff's reporting efforts. At the same meeting, members of the public shared the following concerns:

- Difficulty remembering to call in the center the day before transportation is needed.
- Calling in on a Friday for a Monday reservation.
- Not having transportation in the late afternoon for programs if bus times were specific.
- Having a driver, other than the current driver, who wasn't as caring and helpful.
- Changing the reservation process for seniors who have become accustomed to the services and procedures that have been provided for a number of years.
- Difficulty understanding why members of the commission want to change the system when there was a 97% satisfaction rating on surveys disseminated summer 2015.
- The bus study/review was causing an additional burden on the driver, who was already doing an "excellent job."
- One senior, who is legally blind, expressed concern over the level of service currently provided and noted that they were afraid that another driver may not offer the same level of service since the current driver goes above and beyond job specifications.

Commissioner concerns expressed were:

- The difficulty of making reservations with the current system.
- Turning away new riders to accommodate seniors who have regularly used the transportation system.
- Priority rides needed to be to those individuals wishing to attend the senior center.
- Concerns about the transportation system were being addressed with commissioners and not staff; therefore accurate documentation of concerns was not occurring.
- Information was not reliable, since it was being recorded by the driver and not the staff.

The Commission approved maintaining the current schedule for a three-month period, during which time staff would collect data for the January 2016 Senior Commission meeting. Staff were directed to present a bus reservation system progress report at the January 2016 meeting.

Additionally, staff published specific procedures for the reservation process for the SMP in the Recreation Guide, distributed to all households in Costa Mesa, and in each issue of "The Chronicle" since October 2015.

A staff member has consistently accompanied the bus driver daily in accepting all calls for service since October 1, 2015. Staff have documented all calls for service with the current SMP driver which includes the following information:

- Caller's name;
- Pick-up address;
- Destination; and,
- Return time

In addition, staff make note of patrons who cannot be accommodated on the day or time requested and documents the alternate date/time offered to the caller.

In summary, between October 1, 2015 and February 26, 2016, the driver was able to accommodate more than 97.2% of all transportation requests. While most patrons made reservations prior to the day of service, only seven (7) trips needed to be rescheduled at an alternate time other than the time requested. Of the seven (7) calls, five (5) of these calls/trips were all scheduled by the same person. Another person was turned away for service because of a mechanical issue with the bus lift that has since been addressed. The other caller needed a specific pick-up and drop off time for a personal errand, at a time which the driver would be in route to taking a large group from the senior center to their home.

There were only four instances in which there was a "no show" during this evaluation period out of 1,339 trips provided which is equivalent to less than 1%.

The current reservation has proved that it works. The Senior Commission had expressed concern that new riders were being turned away. We have no data which supports this concern. Riders who were not accommodated for their first choice were accommodated with alternate ride times. The majority of these alternate accommodations were for rides to appointments and not service to and from the center.

## ANALYSIS

During the January 2016 Senior Commission meeting, staff were directed to continue an analysis of the current reservation system and research the costs to provide the SMP with City employed bus drivers and personnel. Specifically, the following information was requested:

- Number of trips to the Senior Center each day.
- Number of trips to places other than the Senior Center each day.
- Number of calls received in the morning for same day reservations.
- Number of seniors who made arrangements directly with the driver (prescheduled trips).
- Number of seniors who did not call and made arrangements directly with the driver for same day service.

The data was collected over the course of January 14, 2016-February 26, 2016. A summary of the data has been provided (Attachment 1). In addition, a daily breakdown of the same information is provided (Attachment 2).

The data compiled has consistently proven since the bus study began in May 2015 that the current reservation system works for seniors in Costa Mesa. As of February 26, 2016, no concerns have been received by staff in person, writing, or via the hotline.

The Orange County Transportation Authority provides funds for the administration of the SMP through Measure M2, and is projected to provide approximately \$86,000 by the end of the fiscal year, with the expectation that the City will match 20% of these funds for the grand total of \$103,200 per fiscal year.

Under the current contract, Western Transit carries insurance for the buses in addition to the City's insurance, and ensures that drivers are properly trained and have the appropriate licenses to drive the vehicles.

Since October 2015, the City has allocated 237.5 part-time hours and 50 full-time hours to monitor the daily phone reservations and analyze call logs, equivalent to \$6,025, excluding benefits.

The Senior Commission also directed staff to provide a breakdown of salaries and benefits if the City were to discontinue services with Western Transit and bring the operations in-house. Staff have determined that in order to provide the same level of service, a full-time and part-time driver, and a full-time office specialist would need to be hired to provide the same level of service.

The table below shows the cost if the City provided these services in-house.

<b>Services Provided by City Staff</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Annual Costs</b>
Bus Driver (full-time) – Base Salary and Benefits	\$59,000.00
Bus Driver (full-time) – Overtime	\$8,190.00
**Bus Driver (part-time) – Base Salary and Benefits	\$24,100
Office Specialist (full-time) – Base Salary and Benefits	\$67,600
<b>*Sub-Total Staffing Costs*</b>	<b>\$158,890</b>
Training/Certifications	\$500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$159,390</b>

*\*Does not include long term pension costs or any overtime*

The staffing costs to the City, alone, are \$158,890 annually without factoring in the long-term pension liability. Adding the cost of the training and certifications needed for the drivers would increase the total annual cost to the City to \$159,390.

The table below shows the cost of the contracted services that the City currently pays.

<b>Contracted Services</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Annual Costs</b>
Western Transit Staffing Costs	\$85,649
Training	\$351
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$86,000</b>

The City currently pays approximately \$86,000 for the contracted bus services. Thus, the difference in the cost to the City to bring those services in-house is approximately \$73,390 annually, which does not include the increased pension liability costs.

Based upon the high satisfaction rate of the services currently provided and the significant increase in cost for the City to bring these services in-house, staff recommend that the Senior Commission leave the bus services for seniors as is and receive and file this report and continue to evaluate the program annually.

#### **LEGAL REVIEW**

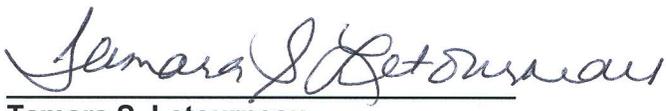
No legal review is required for this item.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommend that the Senior Commission receive and file report, and direct staff to reevaluate the Senior Mobility Program (SMP) on an annual basis.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Yvette E. Aguilar**  
Senior Center Program Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Travis M. Karlen**  
Recreation Manager

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Tamara S. Letourneau**  
Assistant Chief Executive Officer

## Summary of Data by Week

Week	No. of Rides*	No. of Riders**	No. of trips to/from Senior Center	No. of trips to/from other/errands	No. of calls received morning of	No. of pre-scheduled trips***	No. of cancellations	No. of add-ons	No. of "No Shows"****	No of callers turned away
1/14/-1/15	60	24	44	16	8	29	0	4	0	0
1/18-1/22	99	51	79	20	21	60	1	4	0	0
1/25-1/29	131	71	113	18	25	47	3	7	0	0
2/1-2/5	133	72	108	25	19	58	6	8	0	0
2/8-2/12	138	76	118	24	31	56	5	8	0	1
2/15-2/19	111	54	89	22	20	43	4	1	0	1
2/22-2/26	146	77	118	28	30	58	10	4	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

\*Includes rides to and from the Senior Center and other errands.

\*\*Riders are unduplicated.

\*\*\*Riders already on the driver's log before day of - duplicated.

\*\*\*\*From previously scheduled rides

## Data by Day - 2016

Week	No. of Rides*	No. of Riders**	No. of trips to/from Senior Center	No. of trips to/from other/errands	No. of calls received morning of	No. of pre-scheduled trips***	No. of cancellations	No. of add-ons	No. of "No Shows"****	No of callers turned away
Thursday January 14	34	17	32	2	8	17	0	2	0	0
Friday January 15	26	7	12	14	0	12	0	2	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Monday, January 18 (HOLIDAY)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuesday, January 19	23	11	18	5	4	11	0	0	0	0
Wednesday, January 20	25	14	23	2	8	14	0	0	0	0
Thursday, January 21	23	12	23	0	7	22	0	1	0	0
Friday, January 22	28	14	15	13	2	13	1	3	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Data by Day - 2016

Week	No. of Rides*	No. of Riders**	No. of trips to/from Senior Center	No. of trips to/from other/errands	No. of calls received morning of	No. of pre-scheduled trips***	No. of cancellations	No. of add-ons	No. of "No Shows"****	No of callers turned away
Monday, January 25	27	14	27	0	7	12	1	2	0	0
Tuesday, January 26	21	11	17	4	4	9	0	1	0	0
Wednesday, January 27	25	13	25	0	6	6	0	0	0	0
Thursday, January 28	29	17	29	0	4	13	1	3	0	0
Friday, January 29	29	16	15	14	4	7	1	1	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Monday, February 1	23	13	23	0	5	12	3	3	0	0
Tuesday, February 2	26	14	22	4	5	12	1	2	0	0
Wednesday, February 3	25	14	22	3	6	10	1	1	0	0
Thursday, February 4	19	11	19	0	1	9	0	1	00	
Friday, February 5	40	20	22	18	2	15	1	1	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Data by Day - 2016

Week	No. of Rides*	No. of Riders**	No. of trips to/from Senior Center	No. of trips to/from other/errands	No. of calls received morning of	No. of pre-scheduled trips***	No. of cancellations	No. of add-ons	No. of "No Shows"****	No of callers turned away
Monday, February 8	30	16	30	0	8	12	1	2	0	0
Tuesday, February 9	20	16	20	4	6	11	0	3	0	0
Wednesday, February 10	25	13	25	0	8	11	1	2	0	0
Thursday, February 11	28	15	26	2	8	14	3	0	0	1
Friday, February 12	35	16	17	18	1	8	0	1	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Monday, February 15 (HOLIDAY)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Tuesday, February 16	25	13	23	2	4	11	1	0	0	0
Wednesday, February 17	32	16	32	0	10	13	0	0	0	0
Thursday, February 18	26	11	24	2	4	12	2	1	0	0
Friday, February 19	28	14	10	18	2	7	1	0	0	1
<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

## Data by Day - 2016

Week	No. of Rides*	No. of Riders**	No. of trips to/from Senior Center	No. of trips to/from other/errands	No. of calls received morning of	No. of pre-scheduled trips***	No. of cancellations	No. of add-ons	No. of "No Shows"****	No of callers turned away
<b>Monday, February 22</b>	28	18	28	0	7	12	5	0	0	0
<b>Tuesday, February 23</b>	32	18	26	6	8	12	1	3	0	0
<b>Wednesday, February 24</b>	23	12	21	2	6	13	1	1	0	0
<b>Thursday, February 25</b>	32	16	30	2	6	14	2	0	0	0
<b>Friday, February 26</b>	31	13	13	18	3	7	1	0	0	0
<b>Weekly Total</b>	146	77	118	28	30	58	10	4	0	0