

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING
MEETING SUMMARY
Friday, August 20, 2021**

Members Present

Ada Anderson	Douglas County
Anne Gross	Arapahoe County
Bob Davis	City and County of Broomfield
Bob Bocker	At Large Denver
Cary Johnson	Jefferson County
Cathy Noon	Arapahoe County
Connie Ward	Jefferson County
Dawn Perez	Adams County
Houston "Tex" Elam	At Large Arapahoe County
Jim Dale	DRCOG Board - Golden
Karie Erickson	Douglas County
Perla Gheiler	City and County of Denver
Phil Cernanec	At Large Arapahoe County
Wynne Shaw	DRCOG Board - Lone Tree

Guests Present

Debbi Haynie, Director Castle Rock Senior Center, Kristine Burrows, Jewish Family Services, Dr. Mark Levine, DRCOG Consultant, Allison Cutting

DRCOG Staff Present

Alejandra Lerma, Ombudsman, Ana Lilia Lahowetz, Case Manager, Cassie Scott, I&A Manager, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, AAA Division Director, Joel Sauerstrom, Community Resource Specialist, Kelsey Cable, Transportation Coordinator, Liv Bergman, Community Resource Specialist, Mindy Patton, AAA Division Assistant, Rachana Bhattarai, SHIP Counselor, Rich Mauro, Director Legislative Affairs, Travis Noon, Senior Program Specialist, Yacob Nayte, AHC Navigator

Cathy Noon Committee Chair – Called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Public Comment Period (Non-ACA Members)

There was no Public Comment.

Report of the Chair

- Cathy gave brief update on the Transportation Subcommittee.
 - The subcommittee has been meeting and doing a lot of work getting up to speed. Transportation has become even more critical during COVID, it is a little trickier now with staffing issues.
 - The subcommittee has been reviewing the RTD Accountability.
 - The subcommittee is also looking at what other partners are doing to see what is out there in the world.

Report of the AAA Director

- Jayla worked a case for someone that was going to be homeless. She said her involvement made her appreciate how hard DRCOG's AAA staff work.
 - She found out there is money and opportunity but there is no actual housing and was told there is a three to five year waiting list for monthly slots at mobile home parks.

Discussion

Jim Dale mentioned that Golden has established a new housing position. He also mentioned that those who live in mobile/manufactured homes must pay personal property taxes verses real estate taxes which is very costly for these individuals.

Phil Cernanec said there has been a little work going on in the legislature. There was a bill passed regarding a vendor fee tax that generates a fair amount of dollars but was diverted towards the reinsurance program. He said homelessness is not just a metro area issue it's a state issue but needs to be addressed at a regional level.

- Jayla, Brad Calvert and Rich Mauro are working with other stakeholders to develop a policy for housing. She has asked them to hear from AAA staff about some of the frontline issues
- Jayla also worked on a fraud abuse case with the Denver District Attorney. The person was a victim of crypto currency investment fraud which is a growing problem, according to the DAs office. There were 7,000 reported bogus cryptocurrency investment scams last year costing more than \$80 million. Carey Johnson affirmed that crooks will use things older adults are not familiar with such as bitcoin and gift cards. Karie Erickson added they are seeing a lot of caregiver fraud.
- Jayla mentioned that the AAAs still don't have a lot of information on when they will receive the next round of funding for ARPA or SB290. DRCOG is also expecting funds to help get older adults vaccinated.
- Jayla provided a general update about COVID and service delivery:
 - Providers are again seeing a lot of people staying home not going to meal sites or getting transportation services.
 - Meal sites must have a protocol for exposure in their sites to include how they will notify people. Providers are working on those protocols.
 - They are seeing more breakthrough cases, masks are back on in most services areas, people are asking if it is safe to go to the grocery store.
 - Transportation providers have reached out and are willing to do food deliveries again this helps them stay open

Discussion

Jim Dale asked if the governor's office vaccine outreach staff was touching base with the AAA. He also heard about \$100 gift certificates to Walmart and wondered if there was any collaborating that could be done there or with transporting people to places such as senior care facilities that could become vaccination sites.

Jayla said she heard about the hundred-dollar Walmart card. The AAA was thinking about partnering with King Soopers to use CARES money to offer a gift card, taking care of some nutrition needs as well as receiving a vaccine at King Soopers. She is reaching out to the state to see if that's something that they would approve. They want to know what messages work what messages don't work and reach out to non-English speaking populations.

Ana Lilia Lahowetz said gift cards is a good idea for the refugee population because it is harder for them due to food restrictions. When she has delivered gift cards in the past even though they were only \$20 or \$25, they could buy fresh vegetables.

Karie Erickson asked when the word would go out to providers to continue delivering food boxes. Travis said this has never been stopped and many providers are continuing to offer this service.

Cathy Noon would like to figure out how to get the vaccine to those that are home bound.

There was discussion about when the new census data becomes available could DRCOG's planners generate a map that will show pockets of the region to focus on need. One area of concern is the eastern plains.

Move to approve consent agenda

Items on the consent agenda included: Summary of the June 18, 2021, meeting.

- Bob Davis motioned to approve the minutes of the last meeting with the addition of adding Bob to the list of attendees. Tex Elam seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved with change.
- Agendas and summaries are posted on the DRCOG website located at <https://drcog.org/calendar> from there choose the month and date of the meeting, click on the event. Once clicked you will find the link to the meeting for that month.

Action Items

Election of ACA Officers

Cathy Noon asked the committee if they would like for her and Karie Erickson to continue for another year, or if anyone would like to step up and be the Chair and Vice Chair.

- Bob Davis made the motion for Cathy and Karie to serve for another year, Cathy Noon seconded the motion. The committee unanimously agreed for Cathy and Karie to serve another year as Chair and Vice Chair.

Informational Briefings

Update on Transportation Voucher and AAA Funded Transportation Programs

- Travis Noon provided a PowerPoint with an overview of the AAA transportation program at DRCOG. Some highlights were that DRCOG receives three funding streams to fund transportation services for older adults and individuals with disabilities:
 - Older Americans Act/State Funding for Senior Services (OAA/SFSS) approximately 30 million
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Denver-Aurora a little less than \$2 million per year
 - Human Services Transportation Improvement Program Set-Aside (HST-TIP Set-Aside) the tip is million dollars per year

- DRCOG has 10 providers that are funded through these funding sources. Slides seven through sixteen go over each provider and ride costs.
- Travis spoke about the service trends throughout the pandemic and provided these statistics on rides provided:
 - Total one-way trips provided: 46,784
 - July – December 2020: 15,414
 - January – June 2021: 31,370
 - Total COVID Related Services: 34,247
 - Total units provided: 81,031
 - Total Unduplicated Clients: 3,286
- Travis then spoke about each transportation providers receiving funds through DRCOG's voucher program:

HopSkipDrive

- Initially began providing rides to children
- Will provide assistance beyond curb
- During pandemic made food deliveries and assisted with vaccine transportation
- DRCOG staff schedule rides within a 20-mile radius
- Requires a 3-business day notice to schedule
- Rate is \$16.64 for scheduling a ride with \$2.08 per mile charge and \$18 flat fee for wait time exceeding 15 minutes
- Average ride cost \$31.23.
- Provided 12,570 trips, 231 vaccine trips, average 7.7 miles per trip with a 5% cancellation rate if less than 8 hours

Uber

- DRCOG started using in April 2021
- Clients are tied into DRCOG business account
- Each client is allocated a maximum of \$150/month for rides in DRCOG region, tips are not included, client must tip with their own funds
- Clients schedule rides themselves
- Limited to using Uber X or Uber X Pet
- Since April they have provided 203 trips, 25 clients currently enrolled.
- Average cost per unit is \$18.10 average trip is 7.5 miles and lasts 15 minutes.

RTD

- DRCOG offers free bus tickets for Access-A-Ride, discount local and regular local fair tickets
- Limit of 30 tickets per month
- Mailed to clients weekly by AAA staff

- Also distributed by Senior Support Services and Southwest Improvement Council providers as part of their grant
- Costs for Access-A-Ride: \$5.00, regular \$2.80 for age 60-64, discount \$1.40 for age 65+
- DRCOG reimburses Southwest Improvement Council \$1.40 per ticket and Senior Support Services \$57 for a monthly pass
- In 2020 DRCOG distributed 4,542 Access-A-Ride Tickets, 2,470 regular tickets, 4,690 discount tickets
- Reimbursed Senior Support Services for 2,400 tickets and 818 monthly passes and Southwest Improvement Council for 714 tickets
- In July, 50% of tickets mailed by AAA were for Access-A-Ride, 50% to 60+ clients
- The state consumer satisfaction survey results which are required by the state for the voucher program were completed in February 2021. Results were excellent with positive comments from clients.

Update on Transportation Subcommittee –

- Jayla began by providing a presentation outlining what has happened within the committee since February.
 - The purpose of establishing the subcommittee was to understand the growing need, explore new services, review new technology, expand funding partnerships.
 - DRCOG was successful in providing transportation services during the pandemic.
 - They helped providers with additional funds that allowed them to deliver meals which kept many providers from closing.
 - DRCOG made the transition from SRC and Via when SRC could no longer provide transportation services.
 - As indicated by Travis, their satisfaction survey ratings were high and results showed they are accomplishing the goal to provide more choice and independence to clients.
 - With the additional funds from the CARES Act they were able to increase transportation services.
- Current Challenges
 - Providers are finding it hard to find drivers and volunteers and are having catalytic converters stolen decreasing their fleets while they are being repaired.
 - Providers are still not able to provide service as they did pre-pandemic.
- Considerations for the future and ideas for next steps
 - There will be a challenge to provide transportation to an increasing 60+ population
 - More older adults will need assisted transportation as they age, and disabled adults are living longer
 - Will need more transportation options to address need
 - The region footprint will become larger, more funding and stable funding will be needed to accommodate this growth

- Coordinating services depending on where a client needs to go, possibly group transportation
- There was some discussion on autonomous vehicles and how there needs to be more study on the benefits and challenges it may present the older population.
- Some suggestions from Jayla
 - Need to understand current service challenges in underserved areas
 - Identify infrastructure needs
 - Make use of ARPA and SB290 funds
 - Identify potential partners for service expansion and infrastructure
 - Recommend funding projects to the ACA and DRCOG Board
 - In 3 to 5 years, develop a comprehensive mobility/transportation plan, a comprehensive list of infrastructure projects and an advocacy strategy

Discussion

Bob Brocker asked if anybody was looking at how to reduce demand. Possibly combining rides to do three things instead of one.

Cathy Noon said the Transportation Subcommittee was going to try to look deeper into coordinated transit plans to see how we can partner.

County Reports

Adams County – Dawn Perez

- Adams County is now conducting their meetings both live and virtual
- Saturday, October 16th, is the ACAN Conference at the Adams County Fairgrounds. The size will be reduced from previous events.

Arapahoe County – Cathy Noon

- Arapahoe County would like to go to live meetings in September if the senior center will let them.
- The Arapahoe County libraries in conjunction with the Centennial Senior Commission have a good activity schedule that people can sign up to be notified through the city's website of the available programs.

Douglas County - Wynn Shaw

- Wynne said that the Living and Eating Well group is having a potluck outdoors at the Lone Tree Golf Club.

Other Matters by Members

Bob Brocker mentioned Age-Wise Colorado and YouDefineWellness is having a webinar on September 16. There will be three panels, one focused on technologies to help the caregiver, second on self-care for the caregiver, and panel three on caregivers.

Next meeting – **September 17, 2021**

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.