**Missouri Transportation Taskforce**

**November 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**November 2, 2021 3pm**

**Agenda**

**Welcome and Introductions (Ed Thomas)**

Ed Thomas, Holly Reiff, Kenney Hutchison, Laura Miller, Laura Mueth, Lisa Buchanan, Marissa Peterson, Mike Foley, Thomas Epling, Mindy Ulstad, Dante Gliniecki, Jill Stedem.

**Missouri Transportation Funding (Ed Thomas)**

* Ed shared information on funding through MoDOT and other entities who receive funding for transportation. Discussed the need to see more accurate funding allocations and meet people’s needs.
  + In the state, there is a lot of money invested in transportation. We need to consider more effective ways to use this funding.
  + Work on email to send out once all budgets from Departments are known. Hope to have enough interest for meeting with legislators next year.
* Lisa Buchanan- Washington County implemented a new EMT program for non-emergency response. Would like to expand to other counties, like Franklin County. Curious about funding that might be available, even through local groups. Ed will check on this with his counterparts.

**Transportation Gaps Update (Group)**

* Jefferson/Franklin group struggling with transportation. Fixed route in place, but nothing other than OATS in Franklin County.
* Jill reported from OATS that they are struggling with driver shortage statewide. 150 openings across the state, so they have to cut back on routes. One issue is drivers for OATS have to have Class E or CDL license. Jeff CO Express buses and some in St. Louis area need a CDL. Drivers must pass a drug/alcohol test and have a health screening. Starting pay is $12.50 to $13.00 per hour. Most current drivers are part time, and many are over 60 years old and limited on number of hours they can work.
  + Ed inquired if OATS had looked at more attractive pay rates. Jill said they have, but it isn’t in the current budget.
* OATS didn’t pursue volunteer drivers due to federal requirements and amount of training.
* Kenny Hutchison from West Central Missouri Community Action reported on their volunteer driver program. They are always looking for drivers, but now 14 of them serve 5 counties. Also, they currently have funding to pay for rides.
  + Thomas Epling was at Nexis meeting and heard that HealthTran may provide rides for employment. Kenny said they haven’t started that program yet.
* Thomas Epling had a conversation with Christy Evers from MoDOT and thought she would be a great speaker for the group. Mindy confirmed that she will be on the agenda for December.
* Lisa Buchanan heard that companies were paying or assisting employees with transportation.
* Laura Miller reported that two employers working with the Sikeston Job Center were willing to help fund daycare for employees and possibly allocate funds for transportation as well. Moving away from memberships which been barriers to employment.
* Laura Miller also stated that SMTS had driver shortages and had to terminate northern routes.
* Mike Foley reported that MPTA initiated a public transportation gap study. They would check on public transit and fixed routes first. Missouri is 46th in the nation in transportation funding.
  + Public transit is experiencing driver shortages. Metro in St. Louis is looking at a large reduction in services, as they are down 160 drivers. FTA has a contract to create a transit resource center to help with the problem.
* MPTA will host a speaker series on the new center on November 18 and will have a link on its website. They will have one on January 26 with National Center on Mobility Management and coordination efforts in Missouri. Everyone is welcome to the calls.
* Ed mentioned that he has been talking to OATS about a joint effort for public education on transportation to include what is available, how transit systems work, etc. No statewide program that does this, left up to each entity to provide information and education.
* Jill from OATS explained that in SE Missouri they have several routes that wanted their own names on busses. This leads to confusion when trying to educate people. Also, senior centers and DD services don’t want populations mixed because they want to know specifics about the driver, who is riding, and what funds pay for them.
  + Ed referenced the project in Camden County and if they replicated that in other areas it would really help.

**Open Discussion**

* Ed inquired with the Governor’s office about transportation group and was referred to MoDOT. It will be interesting to hear from Christy next month to try to get conversations started.
* Christy Evers from MoDOT will present next month regarding MoDot funding and possible ways to combine funding.
* Alecia McGuire with Commute to Enterprise is interested in presenting to the group. She could be on the January agenda.
* Information on the Indiana Mobility Summit was shared. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/indiana-mobility-summit-tickets-186801156287>