



**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES  
MINUTES  
Thursday, January 16, 2020  
5:30 PM**

*ART PICK CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL,  
3900 MAIN STREET, RIVERSIDE, 92522  
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 951-826-5427*

---

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*“The mission of the Commission on Disabilities is to promote greater awareness of, respect for, and the total participation of individuals with disabilities into all aspects of life.”*

State law restricts the Commission on Disabilities from taking action on an item unless it has been included on an agenda and posted at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting or unless the matter falls within one of the narrow exceptions. Consequently, any item not listed on this agenda will normally have to be delayed until the item can be made part of a posted agenda.

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ABSENT: Antonia Quezada (unexcused).

Also in attendance was Deputy General Services Director Shari Call, temporarily filling in for recently retired Analyst Monique Gordon.

1. **Public Comment Period** - This is the portion of the meeting specifically set aside to invite your comments regarding any matter within the Commission’s jurisdiction. Individual audience participation is limited to 3 minutes.

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Presentation from Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, Special Transportation Division about updated Transportation Services for seniors and residents with disabilities. the Riverside County Office on Aging about the network of services and support provided to a rapidly aging population.

Ron Profeta, Special Transportation Manager for the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, provided information on the City of Riverside’s Special Transportation Program, which works under an agreement with the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) to operate

a Paratransit Service within the Riverside city limits. The customers are persons with disabilities and seniors over the age of 60. Rides are available for \$3 each on-way trip, or \$2 one way for medical visits. Services are provided Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Services are not provided on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

In fiscal year 2019, Special Transit transported 140,000 passengers traveling approximately 648,000 miles within Riverside city limits. This is a reservation-based ride service, which unlike fixed route bus service, provides clients with rides from their homes to their requested destination, anywhere within Riverside city limits. For rides outside of Riverside city limits, clients are referred to RTA. Rides may be reserved up to 7 days in advance by calling the Special Transit office at (951) 687-8080.

Special Transit is working towards implementing an electronic fare collection system to allow clients to make reservations and pay their fares electronically through a smartphone app or computer web portal. The City's senior centers have computer labs, which will offer training to help seniors learn to use this electronic system. The benefits include allowing caregivers and family members to reserve rides and/or load funds electronically into the clients ride account. The target date for implementation is June 2020.

Also in the works is a rebranding campaign. Special Transit clients do not care for being labeled "special," because of their regular transportation needs. The new name for this service will be Riverside Connect. Efforts are underway to wrap all 35 buses with the new design, revise the website and market the services more widely under the Riverside Connect name.

Other projects will include updating camera surveillance systems to help ensure the safety of clients, and within a few years implementing a mobility on demand type system, similar to Uber or Lyft. A fare increase is also being considered and will be brought back to the Commission on Disabilities for input.

Commissioner Lewis asked whether the proposed fare increase will increase costs for medical fares. Mr. Profeta explained that the ride service is funded entirely through the State of California/Gas Tax funds, and there is an obligation to recover 10% of operational costs through fares revenue. That obligation will have to be considered when proposing new rates.

Commissioner Coon stated that not all seniors have smartphones and suggested a brochure with detailed instructions on how to use a smartphone or computer to navigate the transit service would be helpful. Mr. Profeta agreed it was a good suggestion and reiterated that the senior centers would offer training sessions on how to use the system. Clients will still be able to call to reserve rides and pay with cash, if they prefer.

Commissioner Frick inquired about recently purchased transit vans. Mr. Profeta confirmed that the new NorCal Transit vans are smaller, with capacity for 9 passengers, full slide and shift wheelchair lift, and have a smaller overall profile for tighter spaces around the city. The full size "mini buses" carry 16 passengers. Commissioner Frick asked whether the buses are typically filled to capacity, and Mr. Profeta confirmed that is generally the case. Mornings and late afternoons are typically filled with workshops clientele.

Chair Alexander asked about ridership qualification criteria. Mr. Profeta explained that Special Transit will accept a doctor's note, or clients can be ADA certified by RTA. Clients can sign up in person at the Special Transit office or via phone or email. Chair Alexander asked if statistics on ridership by persons with disabilities are available. Mr. Profeta stated that this information is collected and will be provided to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lopez asked how the proposed fare increase will be tested. Mr. Profeta reiterated that fares are based on recovering 10% of operating costs, and that fares are the same amount whether traveling a short distance or long distance, within Riverside city limits.

3. Presentation from the Riverside Transit Agency about transportation options for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Stephanie Sirls, Operations Manager for Riverside Transit Agency, and Lisa Almilli, Mobility Manager for Riverside Transit Agency, provided an overview of rider services. Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) covers a 2,500 square mile service area with 18 cities and four County Districts. The services provide encompass both fixed route and Dial-A-Ride. In FY 2019, there were 8,697,649 boarding, consisting of local fixed route at 90.8%, Commuter Link at 4.6%, and Dial-A-Ride at 4.6%.

RTA provides two types of Dial-A-Ride services. Local Dial-A-Ride is for seniors (65+) and disabled individuals, for rides within a single city only, and no application is required. ADA Dial-A-Ride Services are for persons with disabilities, encompasses the entire service area, and requires an application and healthcare professional verification. Reservations can be made 1 – 3 days in advance. RTA supplements the City's Special Transit program by providing services outside of the City of Riverside's operating hours.

In addition to the two types of Dial-A-Ride services, RTA provides specialized programs such as Lifeline Service, which extends ride boundaries by an additional two miles for lifesaving services, and Buddy Fare, which allows groups of seniors or persons with disabilities to share a ride to the same destination.

The fixed route service fares offer reduced rates for veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities, and active military ride for free. RTA issues ID cards for veterans, ADA, disabled and seniors, which are also accepted by the City's Special Transit. Day passes are available, as are 30 day passes.

The Freedom to Go program provides Travel Training for seniors and persons with disabilities enabling them to learn how to use the fixed route system. This is a less costly travel option than Dial-A-Ride. Travel Training is available for groups of seniors, and on an individual basis for veterans and disabled individuals. Nearly 80 senior group trainings have been conducted throughout the County, primarily at senior living facilities or community centers where seniors gather. Specialized training for veterans and their spouses is offered in both group settings and on an individualized basis, depending on the needs. Individual Travel Training for people with disabilities is highly intensive, whereby participants can practice taking the same route to

their place of work, or another destination, in a safe setting until they are completely comfortable. The goal is to increase independence and self-confidence.

Commissioner Lewis asked whether college students can ride for free. Ms. Almilli confirmed that university students can present their university-issued school ID in order to ride for free. Furthermore, IDs issued by the Riverside Community College District allow students to ride for free on either the fixed route or Commuter Link routes.

Commissioner Coon asked whether RTA offers Travel Training for Workshop participants Ms. Almilli confirmed that RTA does.

Chair Alexander inquired about ridership statistics for persons with disabilities. Ms. Almilli stated that RTA will be happy to provide that information. He also asked about partnerships with local school districts for transitional youth. Ms. Almilli confirmed that RTA does collaborate with the school districts and other groups to provide Travel Training for youths 18 – 22.

4. Presentation from the Mayor's Social Work Internship Program to create awareness about how hands-on social work, collaboration with local universities, faith organization, the City of Riverside's Office of Homeless Solutions and the local nonprofit Homeless Shelter can work together to alleviate barriers to housing, health and social services

Dr. Mandy Smith, LYNC Program Coordinator for the Love Your Neighbor Collaborative (LYNC) provided information on this nonprofit program to assist individuals, groups and families. LYNC began with Mayor Rusty Bailey's 2015 initiative to end veteran homelessness through the "Love Your Neighbor" campaign. Mayor Bailey challenged faith organizations, nonprofits and businesses to come together to assist veterans with housing efforts. In 2016, a LYNC Steering Committee was formed and in 2018, the City Council agreed to fund the pilot year of LYNC.

Through Path of Life housing the LYNC program, the City of Riverside and the three universities placed 15 social work interns in 7 churches in the cities of Riverside and Corona under the supervision of 10 preceptors (church leaders) and one MSW Field Instructor. In Spring 2019, Path of Life with the assistance of the City of Riverside, received a three-year grant through Los Angeles based UniHealth. At present, there are 16 churches in this collaborative, organized into three "hubs" encompassing the areas of Downtown, Magnolia Center, and Jackson/La Sierra. The LYNC social work interns are placed at these churches 12 to 20 hours per week to perform outreach services, providing case management to homeless and near homeless for those on the street and within congregations. LYNC interns interact with neighbors during church food and clothing distributions, hot meals, free church health and dental offerings, utility assistance, shower times, congregational events and community events. They also provide assistance during shelter intake times, family shelter homework times, Saturday street outreach, Path of Life ridealongs to the river bottom, and assist with providing presentations. The interns earn required social work hours to achieve their degree and license, while learning how to engage with individuals, groups and the community.

LYNC is currently in the first year of the three-year grant and is creating a future plan for funding with building partnerships.

Commissioner Krick inquired about the annual Point in Time homeless count. Dr. Smith did not know the exact date but indicated she would be happy to provide that information. Commissioner Lewis asked about the church “hubs” and how they interact. Dr. Smith explained that interns are full-time students and their schedules may not coincide with the times homeless outreach services are offered by the congregations. The “hubs” facilitate collaboration between interns to work together as teams. Commissioner Lewis asked whether the Parks and Recreation Department are included in this program. Dr. Smith stated that they can provide training to other City departments on how to interact with homeless individuals, such as conflict resolution and suicide prevention. She reiterated that the program is in its first year and still evolving.

Chair Alexander requested that LYNC present again at a future Commission on Disabilities meeting to discuss how the Commission can assist with forming collaborations.

## DISCUSSION CALENDAR

*This portion of the Commission on Disabilities Agenda is for all matters where staff and public participation is anticipated. Individual audience participation is limited to 3 minutes.*

### 5. Minutes for the meeting of July 18, 2019

M/S Lopez/Nelson and unanimous to accept the minutes as presented.

AYES – 7 (Alexander, Lewis, Krick, Davis, Nelson, Aleman, Foust, Perkins); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – (Coon); ABSENT – 1 (Quezada).

## COMMUNICATIONS

### 6. Brief reports on conferences, seminars, meetings attended by Commission on Disabilities Members.

- a. Commissioner Lewis reported that she attended the play “Nellie’s Story” dealing with domestic violence and that it was very successful, and a wonderful opportunity for a young performer with a disability. She noted that a meeting was going to take place with Parks and Recreation staff to discuss opportunities to involve young persons with disabilities and asked that Parks and Recreation staff be invited to a future meeting to present on this topic, combined with a presentation on employment and disabled youth. She also expressed that Lisa Dryan would like to present to the Commission on the topic of volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Chair Alexander also attended “Nellie’s Story” and noted it was a wonderful experience.

- b. Commissioner Krick noted that the City of Riverside offers subsidized bus passes. This program is administered by the Public Works Department.

- c. Commissioner Lewis requested that the COD brochure be worked on by a subcommittee. Commissioner Nelson agreed to take the lead.

Items for Future Consideration:

- a. Parks, Recreation and Community Services presentation about employment and disabled youth in recreation.
- b. Update of employment PSA.
- c. Update of brochures.
- d. Make COD members available to provide presentations for other groups.
- e. Going before Council to let them know what is happening with the COD – Quarterly
- f. Agenda item to discuss how the COD can be more public.
- g. Invite Lisa Dryen to present on volunteering with disabilities.
- h. Invite Casey Jackson from Path of Life as follow up to LYNC presentation.
- i. Invite Erin Stream to present on ARC

ADJOURNMENT: 7:05 pm

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Thursday, March 19, Mayor's Ceremonial Room, 5:30 pm.