HUDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

RE:

SENIOR CITIZENS AND DISABLED RESIDENTS TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT FOR 2025	:	TRANSCRIPT OF: PROCEEDINGS

O P E N S E S S I O N
Hudson County
Hank Gallo Center
One Nunda Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey
Thursday, September 26, 2024
10:00 a.m.

B E F O R E:
JAMES OSTASZEWSKI, Coordinator
MILAGROS SOLIS, NJ Transit Program Coordinator

FROM HUDSON COUNTY TRANSCEND:
ALEJANDRO PAREDES
JEFF MICELE
WILLIAM RYAN
STEPHEN MARTINEZ
PATRICK JORDAN

Reported by: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

MR. OSTASZEWSKI: Good morning, everyone. My name is Jimmy Ostaszewski. I am the Coordinator of Hudson County Transit and Transportation. We welcome you here today for a public hearing for the acceptance, application for acceptance of SCDRTAP funding from New Jersey Transit, the State of New Jersey.

I'd like to have everybody just introduce themselves. We can start going around the table.

MS. SOLIS: Millie Solis, Grants Administrator for New Jersey Transit.

MR. JORDAN: Patrick Jordan.

MR. MARTINEZ: Stephen Martinez, Director of Scheduling.

MR. RYAN: William Ryan, also from TRANSCEND.

MR. MICELE: Jeff Micele, Driver.

MR. PAREDES: Alex from Hayden Independence and Progress.

MR. OSTASZEWSKI: We're here today for two basic reasons. One is to explain the budget for TRANSCEND, where our funding sources come from. Two is to go over some of the goals that we have set for the year 2025. So first, I'd like to discuss our funding.

The SCDRTAP funding, which is for Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents, the Transportation Assistance Program is for transportation for seniors and disabled here in Hudson County. That funding this year that we will receive, which is based off casino revenue, which is a percentage given to the State of New Jersey and divided among the counties in New Jersey. That funding will total $2,054,388. That is a slight increase from approximately $1.8 million that we received the year before.

Other sources of funding that we have come from the Veterans Department. That is for $15,000, and that remains the same from the previous year. For Title III, an approximate amount that we will have for the year 2025, will be $260,000. We also anticipate 5310 Funding, which could be approximately about $150,000, if we were basing it on previous years. Sometimes that could go up, sometimes it could go down a little. We also have funding remaining from the Coronavirus Act and that is $300,000. We add that all up and it comes to approximately $2,700,000.

The budget for TRANSCEND, for administration, operating is normally around $4.8 million for the year, and once again, that could go

up based on salary increases and what the benefits do cost. So the remaining amount of that money comes from Hudson County, County Commissioners, and the County Exec's Office. Hudson County is still one of the few counties here in New Jersey that does not charge any fares for the people that use the system. According to the County Exec and Commissioners, that has been told to me that will continue for as long as they're in office. So that is good to hear for all of our residents that use the service.

The next part that I have to discuss is we need to always set some goals for TRANSCEND for the upcoming year. So we did set three goals. One was to increase, or actually to update our vehicle inventory. So we have recently put out a bid for four new vehicles, eight seats with two wheelchairs accessible. We anticipate that bid to probably take a month or so. By the time we get it, we'll initiate the process starting in 2025, and hopefully have those vehicles in 2025. That is $440,000 cost that the County has put in themselves for those vehicles. So that is our main goal, number one.

Number two, we talk about increasing ridership each year. So our goal normally is to say

we'd like to increase ridership by a conservative five percent. So for the year 2023, we did approximately 85,000 trips. For 2024, we are on schedule to increase that number. So that number should go up by a couple percent, but probably around 88,000, 90,000 trips. So we do anticipate that, once again, increasing in 2025.

Our third goal will be receiving additional funding. So the County has a grant writer now whose job is to basically look for grants that could possibly help to give us additional funding for transportation of the seniors and disabled. So we have been in communication with them. They know what we're looking for, and hopefully, they can find a few extra dollars to help TRANSCEND.

We will be starting a coordinated transportation plan update, which actually we'll initiate today. We're hoping this plan, when done, will give us the ability, one, possibly more funding, possibly to add additional trips, and to close some of the gaps in areas that we are short for, perhaps some shortcomings, such as in the mornings, later at night, and on weekends. But to provide those kind of services, we will need to come

up with additional vehicles, drivers, and funding, and if we can make that happen, it would be a beautiful start to the year of 2025.

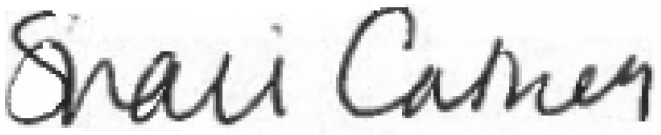
At this point, I would like to open up the floor for any comments that anybody would like to add?

That is it. That ends our public hearing today. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon the proceeding is then concluded at 10:11 a.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR, License No. 30XI00234700, and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein are from the notes taken by me of a PUBLIC HEARING of the HUDSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, held on Thursday, September 26, 2024, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.



SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR
A NOTARY PUBLIC of the
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