



Board Report

File #: 2016-0864, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 34.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 17, 2016

SUBJECT: VETERANS TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY LIVING INITIATIVE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE this report on the **Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative**.

ISSUE

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) received a \$2 million Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) grant from the Federal Transit Administration to improve access to transportation services for veterans. The grant requirements have been completed and staff is presenting the results of the effort.

DISCUSSION

There are approximately 400,000 veterans who reside in Los Angeles County and it is estimated that this population will grow by 12,000 each year. For many veterans access to transportation continues to be a barrier affecting their quality of life. In light of this population and the barriers they face, Metro, working in partnership with the Los Angeles Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE) and Access Services (Access) applied for and received a \$2 million VTCLI grant to develop one-call/one-click transportation resources directly targeted to the veteran community.

This partnership, in addition to collaborating with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), resulted in the implementation of the following VTCLI projects:

- VetsGo511.com, a veteran-branded one-click web site for traveler information and community resources
- Automation of Access Services application and eligibility trip scheduling
- Automation of DAV ride scheduling for VA patients

VETSGO511

Metro and LA SAFE teamed up to expand the Southern California 511 traveler information system by developing and implementing VetsGo511.com, a one-stop source for veterans to obtain information on transportation and resources for work, education, healthcare and other vital services.

VetsGo511.com was built based on the core function to enhance connection - connection to the resources veterans need, then connecting them to the resources identified by planning their trip and providing transportation options. VetsGo511.com also piloted new and innovative enhancements that were not currently in use within the 511 program, including:

- **Multi-Modal Services:** The VetsGo511 map is interactive with multi-modal map layers including traffic, bus, rail and bike. Layers also exist for incidents, road work, Park & Ride locations, VA facilities, WorkSource locations and more. The trip planner is also multi-modal, providing directions for driving, transit, biking and walking.
- **Personalization:** VetsGo511 website provides personalization whereby users create a profile to indicate their site preferences. This enables users to define what information the website provides, save addresses and identify their branch of service. VetsGo511 also integrated with ID.me (previously TroopID), an online system that automatically verifies veteran status in order to determine eligibility for veteran fare discounts.
- **Gamification:** VetsGo511 piloted a strategy to “gamify” user activity and interaction in order to improve user engagement and retention.

The site hosted 27,232 sessions over the 18-month duration of the project and average monthly usage has increased throughout the project. VetsGo511’s average page per session utilization is 8.08 with an average duration of 8.36 minutes versus the industry standard average of 2 pages and a duration of 2-3 minutes. The pages per session and average duration means that users are more engaged with the website and its services.

ACCESS SERVICES AUTOMATED SCHEDULER

According to a 2015 study, conducted by the University of Southern California, approximately 40% of veterans need services for disabilities and 38.8% of veterans need transportation to services. Partnering with Access offered an opportunity to break down one of the barriers that restricts access to care for Los Angeles County veterans. An initial appointment-an Eligibility Appointment-is required by Access for all potential users of paratransit transportation services. Metro partnered with Access to improve their eligibility appointment scheduling process. The VTCLI project successfully implemented the automatic generation of a Rider ID number, which is needed to schedule appointments. This automated the existing process. The project was initially meant to serve as a pilot; however, due to overwhelming success, Access decided to include scheduling automation as a requirement in their new solicitation and will soon be offering automated solutions for all of their riders.

DAV AUTOMATED SCHEDULER

Metro collaborated with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a veterans’ advocacy group that, among other services, provides free transportation services for VA patients to and from their VA healthcare appointments. Prior to the collaboration, DAV Transportation Coordinators relied on a paper-based process to schedule rides over the phone with veterans. Through the VTCLI project, Metro was able to build an online scheduling platform to automate ride scheduling. This automated system was deployed in support of the following VA locations:

- West Los Angeles VA
- Long Beach VA
- Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center
- Loma Linda VA

DAV has stated that this system is a success and has plans to expand the system nationwide as well as developing mobile apps to better serve their community.

NEXT STEPS

All projects have been successfully transitioned to their parent programs or organizations:

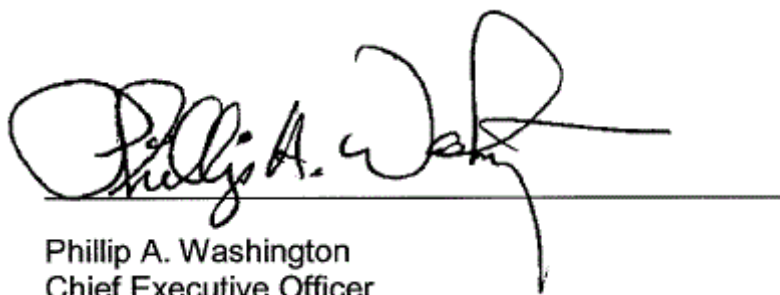
- Access Services has accepted the Scheduler and is building out the rest of the automated system with their new contractors.
- The DAV has accepted their Scheduler and Routing System and will be expanding the program throughout the state and eventually nationwide.
- VetsGo511 has been transitioned under the Go511 program and remains in Operations & Maintenance mode.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - VTCLI Close-Out Summary

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