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Final ELA Project Update – 5.17.19

Throughout this past year, my project morphed from what I originally intended when I started, but I think that it is for the better. Because of some of the struggles of getting agencies to work with Town and Country Transit to provide community sessions, I had to focus on some of the broader changes we were making in our organization. Ultimately, the bottom line is the same – we needed to change our image in our community. The first part of my project, I created new display posters, a checklist to make sure we had all promotional items and brochures, and standard speaking points so the message was more consistent to all passengers. The biggest takeaway for me is being better prepared for upcoming changes.

I wouldn't say that we have completely changed our image in the community, but the changes we have made have been noticed. We have received compliments on our new logo and passengers enjoy the new hand schedules with maps more than what we had previously. We had surveys completed almost two years ago, and the results opened our eyes to some changes our passengers would like to see. Some were not a possibility (ie – service additions), but others like making the schedule easier to read / understand, plus the additional of QR codes, was something we heard a fair amount.

At first, I thought I could focus more on cultivating relationships in the community. I was truly hoping to make more connections in the community and to work more with agencies to create a partnership and understanding, but it will take some time. I just need to stay persistent. However, I wouldn't say that we did not create some partnerships in this time. The biggest connection we have made this year was with the new printing and graphics company. They helped us refresh our logo and through them, we participated in our town's Light Up Night, which is a kick-off to the holiday season. People enjoyed seeing the bus go by (and the candy we tossed), but it was a good way for people to associate people with the agency (plus it was tons of fun!)

Last July, we made the biggest change to our fixed-route system that it has seen in the past twenty years. Along with working on the community outreach, I was taking some of those concepts and partially applying them to our changes. I say partially because we were already most of the way through the implementation before I really started to work on my project. We were happy with the results and preparedness those simple checklists provided, so my General Manager said that we needed to put those into place with any service changes we would do in the future.

Part of the way through the year, as our shared-ride numbers were continued to decrease, and we needed to take some action to try to reverse the trends. This July, we are making the biggest changes to our shared-ride service hours in the past twenty years. We are taking the lessons learned and have created a checklist with all the tasks that need completed, who is assigned to them and the date the task needs to be completed. We have also added a calendar, so we are visually able to see the deadlines to keep us on track better. These small steps I took almost a year ago, are helping us be more efficient and prepared for our bigger changes. It is also nice to use our new logo and standardized fonts to make everything look cleaner and more cohesive.

After this year, our community now associates our new logo with a cleaner look with an easier to read schedule. We have also increased our efficiency goal to provide better service and hope with the upcoming changes, we are able to achieve that and continue to decrease our shared-ride deficit. The biggest takeaway from this project is the organization processes we've developed that are helps during change to keep our focus on our goals and deadlines.