

Transit for South Shore seniors in slow motion

By Kathryn Reed

A van in front of the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center rarely leaves the premise. However, that doesn't mean seniors don't have any place to go.

"I don't care who owns it and I don't care who provides it, they just need the service," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The city and El Dorado County officials are trying to resolve who owns the van and therefore who is responsible for it. A certified driver and liability insurance are other issues to be addressed.

The van seats eight, has room for one wheelchair and meets Americans with Disability Act requirements.

Tahoe Transportation District officials are also in on the discussions because they would like to use it for specialized transportation services for seniors and disabled on the South Shore much like what the pilot program on the North Shore is doing.



South Shore seniors have a van, but limited use.

Photo/LTN

“Tahoe Transportation District is in the process of making a formal request for the vehicle,” Tara Styer, TTD mobility manager, said at the March 9 Lake Tahoe Collaborative meeting. She said the vehicle is being used two hours a week now, but that is not nearly enough.

Mobility management is the latest buzz phrase in the transportation world. It’s about concentrating on the individual needs of riders. In this case, the population is primarily seniors and disabled. Others would be able to use the vehicle if there is space.

“The unmet needs are out-of-area transportation,” Styer said.

In particular, getting people to specialized medical appointments. And with the expansion of Medi-Cal, there are few local dentists who will see those patients.

Veterans in the area in 2014 lost their transportation to the hospital in Reno.

Styer envisions each week the van being used for local trips. Then out-of-town trips to Reno, Placerville, Roseville, Sacramento, Carson City, and North Shore-Truckee would be scheduled.

Grants have been applied for to help pay for the vehicle. Passengers would pay a limited amount.

Tahoe Senior Plaza has a vehicle it shares with Kelly Ridge residents. However, off the hill trips are not frequent, according to Styer. The other option for people is the on demand service provided by TTD, but at \$3 one-way it can be cost-prohibitive. These are reasons why other alternatives are being investigated.