

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

January 27, 2009

Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building

Meeting Notes

Members Present

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services
Doug Benson, MN Department of Health
Mary Koep, MN Board on Aging

Members Absent

Robert Johns, Center for Transportation Studies
Kelly Wosika, MN Department of Education
Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities
Bonnie Eley, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development
Tim Henkel, MN Department of Transportation

Guests

Sarah Lenz, MN Department of Transportation
Michael Weidner, MN Paratransit Providers Association

Others

Bob Ries, MN Department of Human Services
Hal Freshley, MN Board on Aging
Kelly Schroeffer, MN State Council on Disabilities
Mike Schadauer, Mn/DOT
Judy Ellison, Mn/DOT
Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT
Diane Contreras, Mn/DOT

Welcome

Mike Schadauer welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Tim Henkel was unable to attend due to an unexpected issue.

United We Ride Demonstration Grant

Noel Shughart reported that at the December meeting he had mentioned there was an opportunity to apply for an FTA United We Ride mobility management grant to enhance transportation coordination capacity and capabilities of local or regional human service networks. These funds can be used to develop and implement programs that will address the individual customer transportation needs of persons and families with limited incomes, persons with disabilities, older adults and youth. The Committee recommended that Mn/DOT should apply for these funds.

Kelly Schroeffer reported that a subgroup of the ICTC met last month to discuss possible mobility management demonstration projects. They developed a list of functions that they would like to see in mobility management program/organization. These functions were then categorized in the following manner; essential functions that are provided directly/indirectly,

partnerships, communication capabilities with internal and external providers, indirect service delivery, flexibility of funding rates and advocacy involvement. Kelly also distributed a copy of an example of a letter the MN State Council on Disabilities put together showing their support for the grant application. Copies will be distributed to all ICTC members. Mary Koep recommended that accountability be added to the essential functions of the project, the Committee agreed.

Hal indicated that rather than selecting a specific project for the application, the subgroup recommended the application be an RFP process to select and implement a project. The deadline for submitting the application is February 12, 2009. There are organizations out there that have mobility management programs in place, but with an RFP, the committee would receive more customized and strategic proposals.

Noel noted that the committee's work plan includes investigating research opportunities. Even if we don't receive the grant, we gained experience in developing a project scope.

Commercial Motor Vehicles Report

Sarah Lenz, Office of Transit, reported that Office of Transit staff have met several times with the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations to discuss the confusion that transit providers have over the for hire status and Special Transportation Services (STS) certification. The meetings have allowed all participants to understand what the issues are and identified potential strategies for overcoming the barriers to transit coordination.

Sarah explained the basic definition of "for hire" as someone who receives compensation for their services, "not for hire" is someone who doesn't. This classification can be very confusing if you are using volunteers. Mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate is viewed as a cost reimbursement, however if you also pay for the driver's meal, it may be considered a "for hire" service.

A possible solution identified at the meetings may be for transit operators to become STS certified. Technical assistance would be necessary to help transit providers understand the paperwork requirements and expense involved in becoming STS certified. Sarah reported that Mn/DOT, through the RTAP program, provides free training to drivers who are recipients of FTA funded vehicles. Classes provided for new drivers are Passenger Assistance, Defensive Driving, and Maltreatment Awareness; and for existing drivers there is a Driver Refresher Course. Additional internal Mn/DOT meetings will be held to ensure full understanding of the regulations, followed by a series of meetings with the broader partnership of State Agencies and transit providers to determine the best course of action in resolving this coordination barrier.

Sarah also noted that there are added benefits if a transit provider becomes STS certified. Experience has shown that organizations with driver training requirements and safety related policies and procedures can lower their insurance rates.

Legislative Interest in ICTC Activities

Mike reported that Tim Henkel, Noel and himself visited with Senator Scott Dibble and Representative Paul Gardner last week to discuss coordination and the role of the ICTC. They offered to help with any legislation to further the committee's mission to improve the level of transportation coordination.

Bob Ries reported that DHS has been involved with discussions on rural transportation concerns with Representative Sarah Anderson. House File No. 200 would prohibit the use of a broker for medical transportation services; allowing county social workers to make level of need determinations. It would also rename special transportation services and modify medical transportation requirements.

Michael Weidner, MN Paratransit Providers Association, commented that House File No. 200 may be a result of ambulances responding to 911 emergency calls. Many of these calls are not critical and a less expensive form of transportation could be used.

Hal Freshley noted that the Board on Aging is following legislation that pertains to vulnerable persons living in their communities and care for elderly persons.

Mike Schadauer suggested that committee members e-mail proposed legislation that may impact this group to the full Committee.

Member Agency Reports on Transportation

Noel reported that the Minnesota head start association will meet with Office of Transit staff to discuss strategies to coordinate resources and to resolve some of their transportation challenges.

Doug Benson reported they are in the process of redoing their Rural Health Care Plan.

Hal reported the Board on Aging is concerned with proposed reduction in state funding.

Next Meeting Date

February 24, 2009
1 to 3 p.m.
Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building
840 Westminister Street, St. Paul