

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

August 17, 2006

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hiway Credit Union Administration Building

Meeting Notes

Members Present

Meeting Leader--Toni Baker, MN Board on Aging

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council

Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services

Lynda Boudreau, MN Department of Health

Robert Johns, University of Minnesota

Bob W. Fischer, MN Department of Education

Members Absent

Randy Halvorson, Mn/DOT

Bonnie Elsey, MN DEED

Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities

Others

John Kowalczyk, MN Department of Human Services

Dave Christianson, Metro Transit

Nadia Facey, MN Council on Disabilities

Hal Freshley, MN Board on Aging

Paul Bridges, MN DEED

Donna Allan, Director, Office of Transit

Noel Shughart, Office of Transit

Judy Ellison, Office of Transit

Diane Contreras, Office of Transit

Welcome, Introductions

Toni Baker welcomed the group and asked that they introduce themselves and the organization they represent.

Noted changes to the June 15, 2006, minutes: John Kowalczyk's report under Member Agency Reports on Transportation should read "in February the Department of Human Services prepared a RFP to bid out their MNET program to a broker."

Hennepin County-Metro Transit Coordination Pilot Projects

Dave Christianson, from Metro Transit, gave a presentation on the proposed initiatives of the Hennepin County Human Services Coordination Project. He noted that managers from seven major departments of the Hennepin County Human Services Division have met with Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council to discuss how transit providers could better transport human services clients. Human services clients include low income, disadvantaged, disabled and elderly persons who need service trips to medical appointments, job training, etc. Service trips, to, from and between facilities, are either provided or reimbursed by the various human service divisions at a cost of almost \$10 million per year.

These discussions identified four approaches the group feels would meet their mutual goals and improve the transportation situation in Hennepin County:

1. Human Service Bus Pass Program. This approach includes use of tokens, resurrection of Job Seekers, and design of a stored value pass and the use of smart cards. The agencies would like to have a reusable card that can be loaded as needed with various controlled dollar amounts and can be tracked and monitored at the local level.
2. Human Services Shuttle. The County wanted to consider the design of a dedicated shuttle. Metro Transit would operate the shuttle, which would be open to the public for fares and to clients for coupons/tokens. The shuttle would run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., from downtown centers to selected suburban sites. The basic limited-stop service could speed up both client and staff transportation between centers, keep neighborhood providers on local, short trips and out of downtown, and give service center coordinators the ability to demand their most mobile clients use the service.
3. Public Transit Center Utilization. To support approach No. 2, nine Metro Transit facilities and three Opt-Out transit centers, which are enclosed, heated, and sometimes manned, have been identified to enhance network of transfer points for the dedicated shuttle. These access points and transfer sites would be designated and promoted as transfer sites to and from the regular routes and connecting communities.
4. Informational Services. The County would like to establish informational services, such as transit information boards to internet-enabled kiosks, to promote the use of public transit services by their clients. They could be established at key transit centers as well as at the nine identified County facilities that serve human service clients.

Cost savings to the County may be used to fund much if not all of the initiatives. Federal funds, including JARC, New Freedom and formula funds, could possibly be used for both planning the initiatives and funding some of the operations.

After completion of his presentation, David received many positive comments about the proposed program and answered questions.

David noted that this will be his last meeting as a participant of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination. He has resigned from Metro Transit to take a position in the private sector.

State Agency Coordination Surveys

Noel reported that Joan Willshire, John Kowalczyk, Hal Freshley, Lynda Boudreau and he met regarding the survey and what should be accomplished with the information collected. Noel distributed a chart (Phase 1 Results) that identified agency coordination programs, the agency responsible for the programs, the contact person, the division/unit they work in and the amount of funds spent on the program.

The working group looked at what additional information is needed and the purpose for collecting the information. Noel distributed a copy of the Phase 2 Outline survey the working group developed: how are the funds administered, what can the funds be used for, who can apply, unmet needs and incentives.

Hal and Lynda mentioned that they would like to see Human Service agencies thinking about and raising their awareness of coordination possibilities. These surveys will help the working group/committee learn the source of funds for these programs, how much is spent on the programs and who is served. Once all this information is received, a report will be completed. The report would show what is spent statewide on transportation and what coordination activities are going on at the regional/local level. Information from this report could be used for the report to the Governor that is due in November.

Local Coordination Plan Update

Noel reported that this spring the Mn/DOT Office of Transit, in cooperation with DHS Office of Aging Services, contracted with the Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) to help develop a Local Transit Human Service Coordination Plan, which is required before certain FTA funds could be

accessed (JARC, New Freedom and 5310). The Plans will include an inventory of available transportation options/providers; provide a list of unmet needs in the area; and identify strategies to help meet the unmet needs. Plans must be completed by November.

Member Agency Reports on Transportation

Nadia Facey, MN Council on Disabilities, asked committee members to send their comments on the Options Too – Preliminary Report for Public Comment to Emily Zylla.

The deadline for receiving comments is August 18, 2006.

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council, distributed a copy of the council's Software Coordination Pilot Project. The pilot project proposes to allow small transportation providers to use their Trapeze scheduling and dispatching system. The American Red Cross was the first provider to be connected to Trapeze via the Internet.

Donna Allan, Mn/DOT Office of Transit, noted that the Office of Transit is in the process of finalizing the Transportation Coordination Study and will send out relevant chapters to the Committee before the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled meeting of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination is Thursday, September 21, 2006, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building.