

# INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

September 21, 2006

2 to 4 p.m.

Hiway Federal 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  
Bob W. Fischer, MN Department of Education  
Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities

### Members Absent

Randy Halvorson, Mn/DOT  
Bonnie Elsey, MN DEED  
Bob Johns, University of Minnesota

### Guests

Joel Ulland, MS Society  
Byron Laher, United Way  
Maynard Speece, United Way

### Others

John Kowalczyk, MN Department of Human Services  
Nadia Facey, MN Council on Disabilities  
Hal Freshley, MN Board on Aging  
Paul Bridges, MN DEED  
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.

### State Agency Coordination Surveys

**Phase 1:** Noel distributed state agency coordination survey results. The handout identified agency programs, contact person, division/unit and program funding. Page two of the handout was provided by Paul Bridges, DEED. Paul noted that his agency programs support people with jobs and job training issues.

**General Accounting Office (GAO) Report on Head Start:** Noel distributed a handout of the June 27, 2006, GAO report on Head Start: Progress and Challenges in Implementing Transportation Regulations. The GAO report contained a recommendation for executive action that the Head Start Program “systematically track transportation services provided by grantees so that the Bureau can determine changes in the availability of these services, especially any reduction in them.” Noel noted that currently each Head Start Program would have to be contacted because they do not track program/funding data at the federal level.

Toni noted that the agency program funding information gathered by this survey could be an element in the ICTC’s report to the Governor. In the past there was no resource that listed the funding human service agencies received and how it was spent. Toni asked Noel to bring the report to the next meeting for committee review.

### **Statewide Coordination Study**

Noel reported that the “Minnesota Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Coordination Study” is a state initiative undertaken by MnDOT in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council, to establish a planning framework to educate public transit and human service transportation stakeholders at the local level, improve coordination among all levels of providers and agencies, and improve the cost effectiveness of transportation dollars. Information gathered in the preparation of the study came from stakeholder surveys, workshops and interviews, and reviewing other state’s best practices. Sections of the plan, Greater Minnesota Action Plan, Metro Area Action Plan and Implementation Program along with the Introduction section, were sent to committee members on September 7, 2006, for review.

Toni noted that the plan recommends the development of a Mobility Manager position and she asked Noel to speak to this recommendation. Noel noted that the creation of a Mobility Manager would be a change from how

coordination was viewed before. The Mobility Manager could be a person or an organization that would have in-depth knowledge of all the passenger transportation options within a particular service area. The Mobility Manager would arrange transportation from a menu of services available in the area, capturing the best fit between service need and service provider. In areas where a full complement of providers does not exist, the Mobility Manager would work with local organizations to meet the need. At this time it has not been determined how this “position” would be paid or if it would be part of a transit organization. Noel stated that the Office of Transit is planning demonstration project(s) next year to see if the Mobility Manager concept is feasible. Results of the demonstration project(s) would be shared with the committee.

Toni asked meeting attendees if they were prepared to give the study their stamp of approval, and stated that the committee’s action could be noted in their Report to the Governor. A few meeting attendees didn’t feel comfortable approving a study on behalf of their agencies, a few have not read the study.

The committee did not want to endorse a specific model (no one solution fits all). They did encourage pilots and would like to see an estimated timeline on the tasks contained in the charts. A suggestion was made that a meeting be held to discuss the study and its recommendations in detail.

Perhaps the Coordination Study could dovetail with the 2010 Aging Proposal as a parallel activity.

### **Local Coordination Plan Update**

Noel gave an update on where the Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) were in the process of developing Local Transit Human Service Coordination Plan for their region. The plans will be posted on the Office of Transit’s website by the end of November. He also thanked the agencies that helped in this endeavor.

### **Legislation**

***Council on Disability:*** Joan Willshire introduced Joel Ulland, Co-Chairman, Minnesota Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Joel reported that the MS Society works closely with 50+ non-profit disabled advisory

organizations. He is working with the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities on a transportation proposal to provide persons with disabilities access to public transit services in all 87 counties for at least 14 hours every day by the year 2010. Seven counties currently have no public transit service (all 87 counties do have medicare vans). A 2006 Minnesota state law locks in the current Metro Mobility service area, but does not establish a state guide for minimum hours of service. He noted that limited hours of operations prevent persons with disabilities from attending evening functions or jobs.

***Twin Cities United Way:*** , The Twin Cities United Way works with 200 agencies in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area to provide rides to elderly and disabled persons. Byron Laher reported United Way funded Agencies spend over \$20 million annually on transportation. Rides are provided by taxis, bus and volunteer drivers/agency staff members using their personal vehicles.. He also that noted that a third of participating agencies like what they are doing, a third would like to drop transportation service, and the other third would like to get out of the business but they are concerned about their clients if they don't offer service.

The strategies United Way has identified to save money include; discounts on bus tokens, possible state legislation to exempt human service organizations from the state gas tax, piggyback on state purchasing plan, state legislation to exempt agencies that provide client trips from being rated as livery (taxi), and looking at existing technology to make their transportation system work more efficiently.

Byron noted that insurance liability is the biggest barrier to coordinated transportation. Insurance providers are telling volunteer drivers that their vehicles are considered delivery vehicles and that their volunteer activities are not covered under their liability reported on the Volunteer Car Program insurance. Also agencies that share a vehicle for transporting clients each need to carry insurance for the same trip.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination is October 24, 2006, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building.

A draft Report to the Governor outlining accomplishments during the past year will be distributed to the committee for review and comment. The report is due November 1, 2006.

### **Adjourn**

Toni thanked everyone for attending and participating in today's meeting.