

# INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

February 27, 2007

2 to 4 p.m.

HFCU Administration Building

## **Members Present**

***Meeting Leader*** – Bob Johns, U of M, CTS

Toni Baker, MN Board on Aging

Bob W. Fischer, MN Department of Education

Margaret Kelly, MN Department of Health

Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services

## **Members Absent**

Tim Henkel, Mn/DOT, Program Management Division Director

Bonnie Eley, MN DEED

Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council

## **Guests**

Tom Gossett, MN Department of Human Services

Sarah Lenz, Mn/DOT, Office of Transit

## **Others Present**

Terri Ricci, MN State Council on Disabilities

Richard Caligiuri, MN DEED

Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT

Judith Ellison, Mn/DOT

Diane Contreras, Mn/DOT

## **Welcome, Introductions**

Bob Johns welcomed the group and asked that they introduce themselves and the agency they represent. Bob reported that Tim Henkel, the new Director of Mn/DOT's Program Management Division, and Donna Allan are not present because they are involved in a budget presentation to the legislature. Tim is expected to attend the March meeting.

Noel gave a brief history of the committee and its mission. He noted that the group has heard presentations from member and local agencies on their coordination efforts and that coordination information has also been

gathered through surveys, for example, how much each state agency spends on transportation.

Noel reported that the Mn/DOT Office of Transit has copies of the recently completed Local Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plans. These plans include information on available transportation options/providers, unmet needs and identify strategies to help meet the unmet needs.

Bob reported that CTS has been working with Hennepin County to study the mobility challenges of the elderly. The first component of the study measured existing travel behavior patterns of the elderly, and the next, determining unmet needs and wants of the groups. This provided a baseline of information to proceed with subsequent planning and decision making. Information for the study was gathered through surveys sent to approximately 8,000 residents of Hennepin County aged 60 to 90 years old. The survey also gauged their attitudes about traveling; specifically questioning their difficulty of reaching desired destinations.

### **United We Ride – One Vision: One Call**

Noel reported that United We Ride serves as an interagency initiative working to promote the goal of coordinated human service transportation. United We Ride accomplishes this goal by partnering across all levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors. One focus is to carry out an action plan that includes taking steps, such as reducing duplicate laws and programs affecting human service transportation.

The goal of the One Vision: One Call campaign is to make life easier for riders by helping those who schedule rides to build a more streamlined, unified transportation system. The program's strength is that it simplifies the conversation about how to better coordinate human service transportation. One Call shifts focus on the service benefits to the riders

Only having to dial one number makes life easier for the rider. One concept of the One Call vision is the creation of a wallet-sized card with one phone number to call for a ride. No matter where a rider goes, the process to arrange for a ride would be the same. The card might also display route information or be a pre-paid "smart card." Offering riders one number to call and ride cards means doing more to unify transportation services in a community.

This new campaign can be accomplished through three different models of coordination: have a human service agency lead the coordination work (such as overseeing vehicle operations and maintenance), hire an outside “Transportation Broker” to coordinate the effort, or for a public agency (such as a transit authority) to take the lead.

### **Local Coordination Plan Barriers**

Noel reported that Local Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plans not only included an inventory of available transportation options/providers, a list of unmet needs and strategies to help meet the unmet needs, but identified barriers for coordination. The most frequently reported barriers identified in these plans were:

- a. Agencies can’t share vehicles because of insurance issues;
- b. Need more money to provide service on evenings and weekends;
- c. Reporting requirements;
- d. Limited knowledge of services provided by local agencies;
- e. Lack of communication between agencies;
- f. Having no other agency to coordinate with; and
- g. Unwillingness to coordinate.

Noel noted that similar coordination barriers were identified in the Minnesota Public Transit – Human Service Coordination Study completed last year.

### **Strategies for Addressing Plan Barriers**

Noel asked the group which of the above barriers they would like to address as a committee. Noel suggested that the committee look at insurance and resource barriers first. The committee could do a survey asking agencies what insurance barriers they are encountering. Terri Ricci reported that she participated in the Mn/DOT 5310 selection process and remarked that not all organizations are having problems procuring insurance for the purpose of vehicle sharing. She felt that if the committee explored this issue, they could prepare a step by step process for agencies to use for preparing vehicle sharing agreements

Margaret Kelly suggested that the committee work on d. and e. because they would be easy to accomplish. Toni Baker commented that the lack of communication between agencies makes it difficult to coordinate.

Noel suggested that the committee's working group convene again to work through these issues. The working group can develop a structure that the committee can use to begin addressing the barriers.

### **Web Based Consumer Assistance**

***MinnesotaHelp.Info*** – Tom Gossett, from the Department of Human Services, reported that this site is an online directory of services designed to help people in Minnesota identify resources such as human services, information and referral, financial assistance, and other forms of aid and assistance within Minnesota. It is especially rich in resource information for seniors and their caregivers; people with disabilities and their caregivers; parents and families; and low income people.

Tom noted that the web site contains features that help customers find the right services at the right time, and that searching for the information has been made easier. Search results lists are easier to understand and can be sorted, saved, e-mailed, and converted to pdf files. Search results can also be sent anywhere and to anyone who needs them.

Tom noted that service providers are required to update their information in the database once a year. They also have the ability to read and respond to email from the public; and can see how many people saved their program on their Program List.

***Arrive MN*** – Sarah Lenz, from the Mn/DOT Office of Transit, reported that Arrive MN will be a commuter website that provides travel information in Minnesota. Persons accessing the site can learn how to get to a destination by any mode of transportation; such as planes, trains, cars, buses, carpool, vans, bicycles and boats. However, the site is only as good as the information submitted by transportation providers. The website will be maintained by Mn/DOT and tips on sites we should link to are welcomed.

Toni commented that that these programs are great, but many customers who would use these programs don't have a computer. It is important that transit provider/human service professionals be taught how to use these programs to help their customers.

### **Member Agency Reports on Transportation**

Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services, reported that DHS is working to correct the issues that institutions brought forth to the Legislature regarding the MNET program.

Terri Ricci, MN Council on Disabilities, reported that they are having a Town Hall Meeting on April 2 to discuss transportation issues for persons with disabilities.

Bob Johns, U of M CTS, reported that CTS continues to look for research opportunities.

Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT Office of Transit, reported that there are two new public transportation systems, Ottertail County and Staples (in Todd County).

### **Agenda Item for Next Meeting**

ICTC Web Site

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date for the Interagency Committee of Transportation Coordination is March 27, 2007, at the Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building from 2 to 4 p.m.