

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

April 24, 2007

Mn/DOT Aeronautics Training Room

Meeting Notes

Members Present

Committee Chair - Tim Henkel, Mn/DOT

Toni Baker, Board on Aging

Bob W. Fischer, MN Department of Education

Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services

Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council

Bob Johns, CTS-University of Minnesota

Members Absent

Margaret Kelly, MN Department of Health

Bonnie Elsey, MN DEED

Others Present

Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council

Paul Bridges, MN DEED

Hal Freshley, Board on Aging

John Kowalczyk, Department of Human Services

Mark Schoenbaum, MN Department of Health

Donna Allan, Mn/DOT

Judy Ellison, Mn/DOT

Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT

Diane Contreras, Mn/DOT

Welcome, Introductions

Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself as the new Director of Mn/DOT's Planning, Modal and Data Management Division. Committee members introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

Working Group Report

Noel reported that the working group (Joan Willshire, Hal Freshley, John Kowalczyk, Bob Fischer and himself) met to discuss coordination obstacles identified in the Local Transit Human Service Coordination Plans and develop recommendations to address the following:

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

The primary obstacles were categorized as communication, insurance and billing/recordkeeping issues.

Communication Issues:

The working group discussed different methods of communication and identified the web as a good starting point for disseminating coordination information.

The group reviewed coordination websites developed by Idaho, Washington and Ohio, and CTS at the University of Minnesota. The group also reviewed the websites maintained by Minnesota state agencies. It was noted that most websites are agency specific, searches generate only agency specific information (no links), technical information is buried under multiple keystrokes and is scattered across multiple agencies. The group recommended that a website be developed that is designed for practitioners with links to agency information/agency sites, such as an information portal. Who will develop/maintain the site is open for further consideration.

Noel distributed a handout that outlined information that could be put on the website.

Joan spoke about the MN Council on Disabilities' project to link their website to the North Star website and create an information portal for persons with disabilities. They hope to have this completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Insurance Issues:

Noel noted that, because it couldn't be determined whether the issues around insurance are real or perceived, the group needs more information before developing a recommendation. There was a suggestion to invite transit agencies/providers to a meeting to talk about insurance issues. Transit organizations that successfully share vehicles would be included.

Noel has followed up on this issue with the Department of Commerce, and will invite a representative from DOC to a future meeting to discuss policies pertaining to insurance.

Billing/Recordkeeping

Hal Freshley noted that there are many different billing/recordkeeping software programs available. Technology is viewed as a tool to improve coordination.

Bob Fischer spoke about the Department of Education's Wide Area Transportation System that utilizes technology to assist in the transportation of students among schools in the metro area. This system coordinates rides for the schools and tracks the trip costs for billing purposes. A WATS representative could be invited to a future meeting.

Metro Area Coordination Plan

Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council, reported on their recently completed Twin Cities Metro Area Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Coordination Action Plan.

The plan ensures that transportation services are delivered efficiently and effectively to the elderly (65+), disabled, and low-income (150% poverty or below). It also establishes needs and strategies for federal funding programs and identifies areas for coordination. The plan identified the need to provide higher levels of transit service to suburban dial-a-ride programs especially on off-peak regular routes. There is also a need to provide adequate transit connections to human service sites, eliminate service fragmentation among private providers and provide sufficient connections between under/un-employed persons and entry-level jobs.

Cole also shared the Council's JARC/New Freedom solicitation schedule and process.

Noel reported that Minnesota is the only state in the Midwest that has all their local coordination plans completed.

Member Agency Reports on Transportation

Bob Johns, University of Minnesota, reported that CTS is a member of the project team putting together a research proposal for TCRP Project B-35: A Guide for Planning and Operating Flexible Public Transportation Services. For the purposes of this research, flexible public transportation services should

encompass a wide range of hybrid service types that are not fully demand-responsive or fixed-route services. Examples of these hybrid service types include flexible-route segments, route deviation, point deviation, zone routes, and demand-responsive connector service. The team will find out this summer if the proposal was successful.

Mark Schoenbuam, Department of Health, reported that the Department is working to keep people active in their communities and getting clients access to health care.

Joan Willshire, State Council on Disabilities, reported that the Council received a small grant to address the importance of emergency preparedness evacuation. Many communities and first responders lack basic information regarding the disability community. The Council is also starting to organize its Transportation Summit.

Toni Baker, Board on Aging, noted that emergency preparedness is also an issue for the elderly.

Bob Fischer, Department of Education, reported that they transport 850,000 students each school day.

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council, reported that the Council has begun the process of updating its master plan. They expect it to be adopted by January 2008.

John Kowalczyk, Department of Human Services, reported that as of last October they provided 75,000 trips a month in the metro area under their brokerage system.

Donna Allan, Department of Transportation, reported that the Department is in the process of updating its Statewide Transportation Plan. The Office of Transit is also updating its Greater Minnesota Transit Plan.

Tim Henkel, Department of Transportation, reported that FHWA has offered the Department the opportunity to compete for \$130M in funds to study congestion problems. Funding would be primarily used to study congestion on trunk highways in this region.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2007, at the Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building, from 2 to 4 p.m.