

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

May 22, 2007

Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building

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

Guests

Gina Baas, CTS-University of Minnesota

Jeanette Aguirre, Western Community Transit

Others Present

John Kowalczyk, Department of Human Services

Rolf Hage, Department of Human Services-Aging

Terri Ricci, MN State Council on Disabilities

Donna Allan, Mn/DOT, Office of Transit

Judy Ellison, Mn/DOT, Office of Transit

Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT, Office of Transit

Diane Contreras, Mn/DOT, Office of Transit

Welcome, Introductions

Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves and the organization they represent.

Coordination Website Implementation

Gina Baas, from the Center for Transportation Studies, presented a proposal to develop and maintain a Minnesota Transit Coordination Web Site for stakeholders and providers. She noted that communications need to exist at two levels. One level is that providers and users need information at the operational level (how to best operate their fleet and how to find the services they need). The second level is between the various stakeholders that have a role in making policy.

The proposed Minnesota Transit Coordination Web Site will build on and expand the transit coordination information already available on the Community Transportation Web Site. The three objectives of the site are: 1) serve as an information resource for community transit and human service practitioners by providing access to key information and innovations on community transit-related topics; 2) provide a mechanism for the ICTC to share information about its activities and initiatives; and 3) to coordinate interagency communication efforts on community transit-related topics. The web site will have a page specifically devoted to transit coordination issues and information on the Minnesota Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Study that was issued in March, 2006.

The audience for the web site will be stakeholders, practitioners, state agencies, and individuals who work with coordination who are looking for ways to connect with others and learn. The site could be a good place to learn what others are doing and integrate activities. Persons/agencies could also use this web site to share best practices and to interact with each other.

Gina noted that the development of the web site will take approximately six months at a cost of \$22,200. Since the committee has no budget, member agencies were asked if their budgets could help fund a coordination web site. Donna Allan noted that the Office of Transit will keep an eye out for grants that may become available from the FTA for coordination efforts. Gerri Sutton also noted that the Metropolitan Council could help finance this project.

Technology in Action: Western Community Transit

Jeanette Aguirre, Transit Director for Western Community Transit, gave a presentation on their system's Volunteer Driver Program and Public Transit Bus Services. Jeanette reported that Western Community Action serves 3,500 square miles in the counties of Lincoln, Lyon, Cottonwood, Jackson and Redwood. They first began service in 1980 with two vehicles serving mostly elderly and disabled persons.

Their system relies on a variety of resources; volunteer drivers, rider companions, and lift accessible buses. Flexibility in scheduling is very important and expectations vary among passengers and transit staff. Tools used for successful coordination are dispatch software and multiple dispatch centers who share the same resources. A dispatch center can schedule 450 to 500 requests per day. She noted that with the Novus Trapeze scheduling software, they are able to retrieve data and request invoicing with other counties.

Liability and ADA mandates impact the successful coordination of sharing resources. Because of HIPPA, not all clients can be transported in the same vehicle. Not all transit operators are trained the same, safety policies vary between system, and message and information being communicated between systems vary.

Jeanette also spoke about the payment structure between agencies and service providers. She noted that her organization bills 45 funding sources for 75 different programs. Coordination between agencies keep costs down and provides better service for customers.

Commerce Department Update

Noel reported that Judy and he recently met with Tom Baker and Tom Hayden, Market Assurance Division, Department of Commerce, to discuss insurance issues in Minnesota. They learned that it is not uncommon for an insurance underwriter to say that agencies cannot share vehicles, and was provided with some potential solutions to this problem. Noel is hopeful that Tom Baker will be able to participate in the June meeting to discuss and provide information on this issue with the group.

Member Agency Reports on Transportation

Bob Fischer, Department of Education, reported that the Legislature approved their budget but with no additional funding.

Bob Johns, University of Minnesota, reported that the University has been asked to be more involved with the Metropolitan Council's "Transitways" plan to serve heavily traveled corridors in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The plan is intended to improve mobility, build transit ridership and slow the growth in traffic congestion in the Central Corridor.

Brian Osberg, Department of Human Service, reported that the Legislature dropped the MNET Brokerage Program for medical trips from the Department's funding bill.

Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities, reported that they received a small grant from DEED to organize an Employee Area Transportation Forum. The forum will be a half day event and will be held in November.

John Kowalczyk, Department of Human Services, reported that the Legislature did not adopt a proposal to raise the client mileage rate.

Rolf Hage, Department of Human Services-Aging Division, reported that they are involved with Mn/DOT's JARC/New Freedom application process.

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council, reported that the Met Council is continuing their efforts to allow non-profit organizations to use their Trapeze Program.

Donna Allan, Mn/DOT Office of Transit, reported that the office is getting ready to review the JARC/New Freedom grant applications.

Next Meeting Date

Tim thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and announced that the next meeting date for the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination is:

June 26, 2007

2 to 4 p.m.

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