

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON TRANSIT COORDINATION

July 28, 2009

Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building

Meeting Notes

Members Present

Tim Henkel, Committee Chair
Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities
Kelly Wosika, MN Department of Education
Mary Koep, MN Board on Aging
Doug Benson, MN Department of Health
Tony Kellen, MN Public Transit Association

Members Absent

James Pearson, MN Department of Commerce
Michael Pugliese, MN Department of Veteran Affairs
Representative Paul Gardner, MN House of Representatives
Senator D. Scott Dibble, MN State Senate
Bonnie Elsey, MN DEED
Robert Johns, University of Minnesota
Brian Osberg, MN Department of Human Services
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council

Guests

Ronda Allis, Region 9 RDC
Bev Herfindahl, Mn/DOT Office of Transit

State Agency Staff

Bob Ries, MN Department of Human Services
Paul Bridges, MN DEED
Hal Freshley, MN Board on Aging
Deb Schauffert, MN Department of Human Services
Gina Baas, University of Minnesota
Tom Gottfried, Mn/DOT Office of Transit
Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT Office of Transit
Diane Contreras, Mn/DOT Office of Transit

Public Attendees

Michael Weidner, Paratransit Providers Association

Welcome

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

ICTC Workplan Review and Update

Hal Freshley, MN Board on Aging, reported that the ICTC State Agency Guidelines Workplan, which addresses five key issue areas, was developed as a result of major barriers and challenges to coordination that were identified by transportation providers in the Local Transit Human Service Coordination Plans. These key issue areas are;

Vehicle/Client Sharing, Cost Sharing/Purchasing, Communication/Coordinated Planning, Report and Evaluation, and Research/ Demonstration Projects.

Hal reviewed each issue, the action items identified to resolve these obstacles, and the work that has taken place by the committee on each issue. Hal encouraged members to review the workplan closely before the next meeting so that the committee can develop a process to prioritize these key issues or to identify areas that need to be improved. It may even be decided that some of these issues could be dropped.

Noel Shughart commented that even though S.F. No. 1336, Minnesota Council on Transportation Access, was vetoed by the Governor, this committee may want to consider adding some of the 20 recommendations identified by this proposed legislation into the committee's workplan. A copy of the Council on Access proposed action items was provided to meeting attendees.

Transit Route Coordination and Billing System Integration Report (Issue: Reporting/Evaluation)

Ronda Allis, Region 9 Development Commission, reported that her agency has completed the Transit Route Coordination and Billing System Integration Project. The project was a multi-purpose approach designed to integrate research of coordinated billing methods, coordinated transportation efforts, and software designed to accommodate both. The research included in the project was guided by the vision that any rider can utilize any public transit service at any location across the state with uniform ease, regardless of how their ride would be funded. The information submitted in this report was gathered over an 8-month span and includes the details of the work completed, project parameters, approach, project timeline and budget.

This project incorporated a three-phase approach to completion:

Phase 1 - Research Billing Systems, Software and Transit Coordination. In this phase they contacted several routing and billing software vendors to gather information about the strengths and limitations of each brand. In their research they looked at a case study in North Carolina, and by using their model they were able to compile a matrix of software fields. This matrix provides a quick visual of the features available on the top shelf versions of each of the products available by the various software companies.

Phase 2 – Solicit feedback from transportation providers, state and county agencies, software developers, and funding entities about the utilities needed in coordinated billing and transit route software, and researching a multi-county coordination prototype. In this phase they developed an on-line survey, which was sent to roughly 800 transportation entities, to learn how billing is conducted by each provider, their receptiveness to software billing, specifically what information would each entity need to utilize the software effectively, and how can coordinated transportation and billing be achieved.

Phase 3 – Develop final recommendations report. This phase involved compiling and pulling all the data together for this report. It involved pulling reports from many projects, both coordinated and individual, and compiling and presenting the data in a clear and concise manner.

Ronda was not able to provide a copy of the report to the committee members, but noted that soon the report will be available on their website if any one would like to view it. Their web address is www.rndc.org.

Volunteer Drive Insurance – Umbrella Liability

Bev Herfindahl, District 8 Transit Project Manager for the Office of Transit, spoke of the volunteer driver insurance issues of one of her systems, Prairie Five Rides, which is a private non-profit agency, is experiencing. The system is concerned that the level of insurance needed for their volunteer drivers is not high enough so they have purchased additional insurance.

Meeting members spoke of the critical need for volunteer drivers and how many transit providers/agencies depend on their service. Not only is insurance an issue for volunteer drivers, but the age and medical condition can determine how long a volunteer or even a bus driver should drive. Another issue that was discussed was STS for-hire regulations and no-load and loaded trip rates.

Human Service Insurance Status Report (Issue: Client/Vehicle Sharing)

Noel reported that a few months ago a meeting was held with the metro 5310/Human Service providers to discuss a joint purchase type insurance arrangement for their vehicles. Noel noted that there are around 120 5310 providers with many vehicles. To further this project along, a video conference meeting had been scheduled, but was cancelled because they learned of a new entity, HSI Trust, was going to get into the business of insuring vehicles.

In an effort to study this issue further and to develop recommendations, Noel asked the members for their approval to go forward with a Section 5310 Insurance Feasibility Study. The Office of Transit, through a planning grant, would cover 80% of the cost but another agency or agencies would have to pay the other 20%. Hal Freshley motion that Noel go forward with the study and Joan Willshire seconded, motion carried.

Member Agency Reports on Transportation

Gina Baas, University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Research, reported that from September 1 through June 30, the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination website, coordinatemntransit.org, received 15,625 visits, an average of 52 visits a day. Gina also reported that CTS received a grant from the Blandin Foundation to conduct an Itasca County Area Transportation Study.

Tony Kellen, MN Public Transit Association, reported that their annual meeting will be held September 21-23, 2009, in Duluth.

Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disabilities, reported that their agency will be hosting Transportation Dialogue meetings around the state beginning the first week in November.

Kelly Wosika, MN Department of Education, reported that their agency is working to determine what would be a fair reimbursement rate for Human Service providers to charge for transporting students to medical appointments.

Tom Gottfried, Mn/DOT Office of Transit, reported that 68 vehicles will be purchased with the money Mn/DOT received from the stimulus package. Some of the vehicles will be hybrids and all ADA compliant. All the vehicles should be in service by October 1.

Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT Office of Transit, reported that he still has not heard if the committee's United We Ride Demonstration Grant they applied for has been selected.

Next Meeting Date

August 25, 2009
Hiway Federal Credit Union Administration Building
840 Westminister Street
St. Paul, MN