

Task Force for Seniors and People with Disabilities

Meeting Date: October 5, 2004

Meeting Location: CATS

Call to Order: 9:40 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Heather Tabbert	Kane County
Kimberly Robb	RTA
B. Rancher-McGruder	Chicago Department of Transportation
Norman Johnson	IDOT
Christine Montgomery	CTA
Terry Levin	CTA
Alice Segal	Anixter Center
Rocky Donahue	Pace
Mary Beth Clark	Pace
Gordon Smith	IDOT
Beth McCluskey	NCCOM

Others In Attendance:

Linda Bruggeman	Victor C. Neuman
Marcos Herrera	Victor C. Newman
Martha Swaney	Governor's Office
Marcia Halbert	Mather Lifeways
Madelyn Iris	Council for Jewish Elderly
Samuel Harrell	ATC
Kelley Talbot	Rep. Kathy Ryg's Office
Beth Anderson	Clearbrook
Lynn O'Shea	AID
Janice Prunier-King	Caring Assistance
Rob Borchert	AID
Mary Keating	DuPage County
Cindy Curtis	Day One Network
Gina Richter	Advocates Network
Lois Hinkle	Advocates Network
Lee Tyo	Aspire
Larry Bury	NWMC
Dan Haligas	
Tom Groeninger	Pace
Shamus Misek	UIC
Karin Allen	UIC

Joe DiJohn
Sally Richards
Helen Kauffman
Janet Boryk
Jim Hutson
Dia Cirillo

UIC
Business and Career Services

Work Welfare and Families
Lamb's Farm
Work Welfare and Families

Introductions: The Task Force and members of the audience introduced themselves. Task Force Chairman Kerwin Terry said he appreciated the turnout and that the task force realizes the need for coordination of services. He said the FTA has developed a model action plan to obtain community input and that the task force has been seeking ways to coordinate services. While nothing is set in stone, some ideas are floating around and some programs are already in place, he said, adding that funding is an issue. "Even though it's difficult, there's no reason we shouldn't work together," he said. There are different levels of transit, and they're not all working with other levels. "We're going in various directions with no interconnection between links, and that's what we need to fix," he said.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the May and August meetings were unanimously approved as submitted, with the following corrections: the months in the two meeting approval items were incorrect and will be changed.

New Business:

Human Services Transportation Funding

Joe DiJohn of the University of Illinois gave a PowerPoint presentation describing his transportation funding database. He said the database was funded with grants from the Illinois Department of Human Services and Job Access and Reverse Commute to coordinate and track transportation funding. The database can be used to identify and eliminate duplication, identify funding gaps and barriers to coordination, provide more efficient use of limited resources, and coordinate eligibility requirements. The program is now static and contained on CDs, he said, but ideally it should be web-based and interactive. The program would be used by agencies, grantees and service providers. It would show where service exists, what the requirements for service are, etc. The database is statewide, but could be used regionally as well. The Illinois Departments of Human Services and Transportation have received CDs containing the database. There is no other centralized source for this information.

Regional Updates

Claire Bozic stated that the Lake County coordinating committee created a user survey in English and Spanish. Heather Tabbert stated that Kane County has created a transportation resource guide, which it has posted to its Website. Marcia Halbert of

Mather Lifeways provided information about a transportation initiative on the northwest side of Chicago. According to Ms. Halbert, at this time, an effort is being made to determine what services are available, coordinate service providers, conduct community forums and obtain feedback from users, decision makers and transportation providers. Mr. Terry stated that Evanston Transportation Futures is involved in assisting Pace and CTA in determining service needs and identifying gaps in services. Lynn O'Shea summarized the recent meeting of Kane County social services agencies that explored issues of importance to senior citizens and people with disabilities. According to Ms. O'Shea, affordable housing, transportation, jobs and respite care were the major topics explored. She added that Senator Steve Rauschenberger said he didn't feel that the state had done enough with regard to serving individuals with disabilities. She also stated that Representative Patricia Reid Lindner supported the idea of a separate transportation service board for seniors and disabled people. Mary Keating provided a progress report on Ride DuPage. Ms. Keating said that the project was a partnership between DuPage County and Pace whose objective is to coordinate service within DuPage County. She said the partnership, which currently has 8 funding sources, provides 200 daily trips. She added that the next steps for the partnership were to add more partners and taxi providers.

Paratransit Service/Coordination Board Concept

Ms. Bozic explained the MPO process, informing those present that the Transportation Task Force for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities could identify regional issues and make recommendations to the Work Program Committee, which would forward them on to the Policy Committee. Gordon Smith said that since the Regional Transportation Task Force was contemplating restructuring the RTA, the time is ripe for promoting change by talking with legislators and other key decision makers. Ms. Keating stated it needs to be made clear that the transportation issues that affect senior citizens and disabled citizens are an important part of the larger public transportation agenda for the region. Mr. Terry responded that rules need to be addressed at the federal level first, and that when TEA-21 is finally approved it will generate more money for services which will need to be coordinated. Mr. Pietrowiak stated that new legislation will require—rather than encourage—coordination. Mr. Smith suggested that the RTP process be considered as a strategy for addressing some of the concerns expressed during the discussion of the paratransit service/coordination board concept. Some specific comments regarding the concept are as follows:

RTA: (Robb) Voiced concerns about a “segregated system” in the concept for discussion. Assembling funding resources together would be great and a lot of work would be needed. Also, she was concerned that Medicaid Passes would create additional certification load for staff. They've heard of other cities letting people ride for free and causing many people to apply for paratransit so they can ride free. This drives up the number of applications and we should be careful of that.

Pace: (Groeninger) He has worked on coordinated systems for over 20 years and says it has to come from the grass roots level – it won't work from the top down. The

structure already exists to have coordination happen, but money is the problem. The system should be built within the existing framework starting with the local community. There are no reasons boundaries can't be crossed right now. Township funded services are controlled by townships and everyone wants to protect their own money. The only incentive Naperville & Lisle had to cross boundaries is they desired it and their citizens said they wanted to go to other communities. It has happened that way around the state. Another issue is how do you bring human services in the mix of public transportation and how do you quantify how much is being spent right now. A social service agency uses a social worker or janitor to drive, but they don't count that. They say they spend 50k, but in reality they spend 200k, when they count these expenditures.

Pace (Donahue) (Current Service) It's easy to have a meeting and say the system doesn't work, but people who are on the bus think the service works. The person who has good service in the township doesn't want to use resources to make it work for other people. Those that have service think it works, they're fine with the way its working. If 10 people are on the bus, those 10 people say the service works. Paratransit service costs are higher than fixed route, so Pace would like people to use fixed route. (Medicaid Passes) Rockford allowed seniors and disabled to ride free and a non-disabled person brought suit because of unfairness. We have to be careful of litigation. (Concept for Discussion) This concept lacks planning coordination. Pace is planning from its own perspective, and CTA is planning from its own perspective? Who is doing the region's transportation plan, and how does a human services transportation plan fit?

Pace (Clark) Everyone here like would like to have more service. The reality is that funding is not available. Human service agencies are cutting transportation from their budgets. We'd like to see the concept focus more on funding. Give the service boards the resources to provide the service.

CTA (Montgomery) About Medicaid passes in Miami how could they switch from paratransit to fixed route? Weren't they correctly certified? Response was that Medicaid was providing the paratransit service and they were switching from that system.

Ride DuPage (Keating): Concerns about a "segregated system." Funding coordination (funding board) would be a good way to find funding and channel it into the service boards. Service coordination she had some concerns about. None of the human services agency she works with now wants to be in the transportation business. Serving these people is the responsibility of the transportation service boards.

Joe DiJohn: The current suburban paratransit systems were installed because RTA law required that a certain amount of money raised in a county be spent in the county. Pace implemented paratransit because it best met the market demands. It was set up on the basis of townships and municipalities, who provided local match and they got to control the price, fare, eligibility and geographic boundaries. This was really based on the supply side. Now the system has been grandfathered in because entities still

provide the local match. We need to look at the demand side and where service is needed. The service boards agree that it should be county wide, but its not set up that way right now, and nobody wants to give up control.

Work, Welfare and Families: (Cerillo) state has applied for United We Ride Grant. We should get our house in order at the state level and that will help coordination. Some places require counties to produce coordinated plans.

Association for Individual Development (O'Shea) AID is the largest paratransit provider in Kane county. They're a social service agency and not a transportation agency. If they can provide better transportation and coordination by collaborating with service boards, then that's fine. Service boards should provide the service. Barriers to coordination are 1) no incentive to coordinate, 2) service areas are different. 3) rules are different (eligibility, fees all vary). Pace is working with us, but it's not just Pace. All the different entities need an incentive to collaborate. There needs to be an incentive for providers to look at those options. Coordination by a group over larger geographic areas is important.

Lighthouse (Polman) Be careful about funding being dedicated to transportation, so that it doesn't replace current funding and you end up with the same total.

Chair (Terry) Some of the rules we deal with that seem to be a barrier to coordination are about to be dealt with at the federal level. A lot of money is eventually coming down the pipeline when the transportation bill is reauthorized.

Lake County has 3 social service agencies leading the charge for coordination. As an agency, a key issue we found was deadhead time from the bus or van leaving its point of origin back and forth to the garage. It made what seemed like an opportunity become cost prohibitive. We were ready to hand off service to Pace, but the four deadhead times made it too cost prohibitive.

Pace: (Donahue) Logistics can be a problem; how do we outsource vehicles? Lake County has Waukegan garage and serves a locations down to Lake-Cook Road. Outstationing vehicles and managing staff start and end locations is complicated.

CATS (Pietrowiak) Look at CTA and Pace paratransit funding trends. If costs and demand continue to change at the same rate, the service will be unsustainable. Ride DuPage, is 24/7 service, most of Pace is not like this. Pace is mostly work trip/peak hour oriented. This concept for discussion tries to capture nonwork trips and put them in the mix. Ride DuPage has tried to do this. The main reason the service board concept was presented was because of RTA's ADA requirements, and the coordination of RTA provided service with (currently) non-RTA service. Keep in mind the new transportation bill will most likely have requirements for senior/disabled projects to be a part of a coordinated plan to receive funds. In the past it was just encouraged.

IDOT (Smith) The Task Force should take advantage of the regional transportation planning (RTP) process. The RTP provides a way to make policy recommendations and present solutions for these problems. The RTP is a strategic document, and should be used for impacting coordination on a regional basis.

Other Business

Mr. Terry suggested that the funding issue be added the agenda for the next task force meeting.

Next Meeting

The next task force meeting will be held on November 16, 2004.