

APPENDIX C: Detailed Telephone Interview Summaries

The summaries presented in this appendix reflect the statements and opinions of those individuals interviewed and not necessarily those of each agency as a whole or TRB and its contractors.

C-1: Missouri

C-2: Ohio

C-3: Pennsylvania

C-4: South Carolina

C-5: Virginia

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APPENDIX C-1: Missouri

Missouri Department of Transportation

Mr. Steve Billings, Administrator of Transit, MoDOT Transit Section

Interview Date: December 15, 2009

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) works with the public, transportation partners, state and federal legislators, and other state and local agencies to provide a safe and efficient transportation system to the people of Missouri. They are involved with informing MPOs and RPCs about the requirements of the Human Services Coordinated Plans and approving the Plans. MoDOT also prioritizes projects and administer federal funds for 5310, JARC and New Freedom grants. In addition, three areas in Missouri (St. Louis, Kansas City, and Springfield) have their own direct recipients, and in these locations the MPOs select and prioritize the projects using the Human Services Coordinated Plans.

Planning Process

The Missouri Department of Transportation considered hiring consultants to help inform local MPOs and RPCs about the requirements for the Plans, but since they were involved in the federal rule making process for the Human Services Coordinated Plans, they believed they had enough knowledge to educate local agencies directly. They applied for and received approximately \$25,000 in a United We Ride grant to inform MPOs and RPCs about the requirements for the Plans. MoDOT held six workshops in 2006 at various locations across the state, communicating Plan requirements and circulars and advertising the grant programs to local agencies.

MoDOT gave each RPC a flat amount (~\$21,000) for the preparation of their Coordinated Plans. This money came from FTA and FHWA Planning funds. Five of the seventeen agencies did not spend the entire amount of planning money, with an average of about \$5,000 unspent. The MPOs budgeted whatever they thought the planning process would cost, and the DOT had a working relationship with them to ensure the success of the planning process. As part of the coordination planning process, MoDOT implemented five milestones: Execute contract, First Meeting, Public Meeting, Draft Plan, and Adopted Plan. The DOT reimbursed actual expenses to RPCs and the MPOs after receipt of invoices or time-sheets. The final payment for the planning process of the Coordinated Plan was withheld until the DOT received a final approved plan.

MoDOT will hold more workshops in anticipation of the Plan updates in 2010 by utilizing the remainder of approximately \$21,000 United We Ride funds. Before the workshops are conducted, MoDOT plans to discuss lessons learned, cost implications and what funds the state has available at monthly MPO and RPC meetings.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

The state administers the 5310, New Freedom and JARC funds for rural areas in Missouri and urban areas with populations under 200,000. MoDOT receives the applications and does the prioritization and selection. In order to prioritize the projects, MoDOT has to be able to derive the projects from the Coordinated Plans and find a strategy in the Plan that shows how the project furthers the goals and objectives of the Plan. The projects don't have to be specifically listed in the Plan, but the applications should refer to the plan and what strategy it promotes.

5310 Prioritization:

The 5310 program is strictly for the purchase of vehicles, as long as an existing service is viable. Projects proposing to replace a vehicle that has reached the end of its useful life and is needed to keep service going, take precedence over a vehicle to expand service. MoDOT selects projects requesting replacement vehicles from the most mature, well known, and well patronized programs.

5316 Prioritization:

For the 5316 program, MoDOT looks at operating, capital and planning projects with a preference to continuing JARC funded services. MoDOT has a history of JARC funding under the discretionary funding program and has given preference to continuing existing viable projects. The dilemma they are facing now is that all small urbanized applications are for continuing existing service. They generally fund each application, but not for the whole amount, using incremental cuts and interactive discussion.

5317 Prioritization:

MoDOT is looking for any eligible projects under the 5317 program. During the last update, one proposal was cut because they weren't able to give the agency all the vehicles it wanted. The 5317 program is less about continuing existing service than finding eligible projects and getting some geographic distribution in the state. They fund all applications, but not always at the full amount.

Concerns

MoDOT is somewhat concerned that planning agencies may be slow to update plans and that there will be a gap between when the current plans expire and when new plans are adopted. However, the DOT is most concerned about reauthorization, and if FTA will give adopted plans a grace period, or if the plans will need to include any new requirements. MoDOT will communicate any updated technical guidance in the workshops in 2010.

In the past, MoDOT expressed concern about "Beyond ADA" requirements for Section 5317 grants, but the agency has noticed a positive response since the change in "Beyond ADA" requirements, especially in rural areas. The change opened up more activities that were eligible for the New Freedom program. MoDOT found that the exceeding ADA requirement applies well if you are operating fixed route in urban areas, but not in rural areas with only demand response service, like many of the areas in Missouri.

Recommendations

MoDOT recommends that FTA Section 5316 and 5317 be rolled into 5307 (large urban cities grant program) and 5311(rural and small areas grant program) as eligible activities in those programs. Most of the agencies that are using JARC money are public transit agencies, and including JARC and New Freedom funds as a subset of operating costs in 5307 and 5311 will make the grant programs more efficient.

Southeast Missouri Transportation Service, Inc., a non-governmental, non-profit general public passenger transportation service in Southeast Missouri

Mr. William Osborne, Executive Director

Interview Date: February 3, 2010

Southeast Missouri Transportation Service (SMTS) is a non-governmental, non-profit general public passenger transportation service in South Central and Southeast Missouri. The agency serves 21 counties in Missouri from Phelps in the northwest section to Pemiscot in the southwest. Their service area is 14,503 square miles with a population of nearly 440,000. The organization is governed by a board of directors and administered by a full time executive director. SMTS has been providing transportation services for 35 years and typically coordinates with government agencies, transit providers and non-profits, attends public meetings, reviews Coordination Plans, and prepares and submits grant applications.

They provide a variety of "curb-to-curb" passenger transportation services to all age groups, long distance medical service, and other special services including transportation to sheltered workshops, dialysis, and Women's Programs,

prisoner family transportation, among many others. They have approximately 120 vehicles in their fleet and provide more than 300,000 annual passenger trips.

Planning Process

SMTS works with over 50 governmental, transportation and other agencies in Missouri to coordinate transportation services. Five RPCs provide input, such as what services should be covered, identifying gaps in service, and developing Human Services Coordination Plans. SMTS works with local community agencies such as sheltered workshops and Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and bids on those agencies' transportation needs.

SMTS finds that bringing all groups together to agree on one plan is the most difficult part of the human services coordination process, but that this process is necessary to develop an effective plan. SMTS only reviews the Plans that the RPCs provide, which generally does not take more than 25 to 30 hours.

Program Management

SMTS has never had any New Freedom projects and has not had a JARC project since 2006. In 2006, the Workforce Investment Board was not able to continue to provide the local match for JARC projects and, therefore, lost their grant, causing SMTS to cease operating JARC transportation services. SMTS had to tell its customers that the services provided by previous JARC funding (thousands of trips) would no longer be provided, causing many people to lose their jobs.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The coordination process has allowed SMTS to promote their transportation services and the benefits of public transportation. They provided over 30,000 brochures and also have had receptions to thank supporters in their communities. The most successful service provided by SMTS is the operation of ten 5310-funded vehicles for sheltered workshops in the area. In the past the sheltered workshops provided their own transportation services, but they eventually found it more efficient to contract out transportation services and focus primarily on workplace training and education. The Workshops continue to work with SMTS after 15 years because of the quality of their services. They judge the success of their 5310-funded vehicle services based on the number of trips, cost per mile, cost per hour, and safety metrics. These Section 5310 grants have allowed SMTS to reach new populations and communities.

Coordination

SMTS coordinates with sheltered workshops, senior centers, the Workforce Investment Board, Workforce Development Organizations (responsible for training and employment for long-term out of work), members of Missouri Public Transit Association, and large and small agencies throughout the area. They attend the five RPC's public meetings and help to identify gaps in those service areas and review their Coordination Plans. In addition, the WIB is a local organization created to promote a higher standard of living by helping to create a skilled, diverse, motivated, and adaptable workforce through literacy training, career counseling, small business training, and targeted public funding. The WIB directly applies for any Human Services grants, including FTA grants, and requests bids from transportation providers like SMTS to provide needed services. SMTS has provided service for the WIB for many years, allowing the Board to focus mainly on training and employment.

Concerns

The most significant observation provided by SMTS is that FTA funds are only a small part of the overall Human Services transportation funds provided by the federal government. The FTA money and other federal human

services money designated for transportation are kept separate, although the money is eventually going toward the same projects.

When agencies apply for FTA funding for human services projects, they need to show how those projects fit into the Human Services Coordination Plan. When the same agencies apply for transportation grants within other federal human services funding sources, they do not have to show how those projects fit into the Plan. As a result, the Coordination Plan may be useful in identifying gaps in services and getting local agencies to work together to provide the best service possible for the target populations, but that more work needs to be done to coordinate federal funding from FTA and human services transportation projects with other federal agencies.

Meramec Regional Planning Commission a Rural Regional Planning Commission in South-Central Missouri
Ms. Bonnie Prigge, Assistant Director
Interview Date: January 13, 2010

Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) is a planning commission in the eight county Meramec Region of south-central Missouri, which includes Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington Counties. MRPC serves a population of approximately 185,000 and provides strategic and environmental planning to economic and community development organizations and provides assistance for financing, infrastructure and marketing. MRPC first met in 1968 and currently works to promote cleaner, healthier and safer communities, greater socio-economic and cultural wealth, and a stronger unified voice in the legislative process.

Planning Process

To develop the Human Services Coordination Plan to submit to MoDOT, the MRPC had coordination meetings with other governmental agencies, transit providers and non-profits to discuss priorities and needs in the region. The majority of the planning process consisted of a survey and public meetings to determine what transportation services were currently offered and where the gaps in service lie. The main priorities of the region are the continuation of services.

At the time the coordinated planning process began, the MRPC was developing a regional transportation plan that did not require the same level of detail as the Human Services Coordination Plan. The Coordination Plan was not considered redundant because the regional plan did not look at barriers or impediments to transit and ideas to resolve those issues. The Coordinated Plan went further to establish goals and objectives for human services transportation planning. MoDOT provided guidelines, information workshops, and a template for the Coordination Plan. In addition, all money used for the first coordinated planning process (~\$20k) was from MoDOT. The MRPC developed the formal Coordination Plan with in-house staff and published the plan on February 14, 2008.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

Any transit provider or non-profit that applies for a grant within the human services program needs to ensure that their project fits within the Coordination Plan. MoDOT has handled the grant applications exclusively, and MRPC has no role in prioritizing these grants. MRPC does perform a ranking program with other grants, i.e., enhancement and Safe Routes to School Grants, as part of an evaluation team that make recommendations by district, using the transportation advisory committee to recommend projects to the district and at the state level for statewide projects. MRPC would like to be involved with prioritization of the human services grants because of their success in highway and bridge and enhancement grants. They believe it would make sense to be involved with everything at a local/grassroots level to create a greater awareness for the need for transit and to open up more funding opportunities at the local level.

MRPC has been an applicant for human services grants before, and provides a complete report on their program to MoDOT, including how many riders used the services and how many jobs were accessed compared to projections. These reports are produced quarterly and annually.

The MRPC has used JARC funds to:

- Provide a taxi service to take people to work that was successful, in terms of finding demand, while the funding was available. When the funding expired, MRPC could not justify the high cost per trip of each ride, which was due to the lack of competition among bidding agencies that met federal qualifications.
- Develop a feasibility study for a shuttle to a military base that resulted in a private operator developing the service.

MRPC currently does not use New Freedom funding because the program is very new to them; they are working to understand the requirements.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The MRPC believes that the Plan created a greater awareness for the need for transit services and transit funding, but because the funding is so limited, and the focus is on continuation existing services, the projects do not reach many new populations or service areas.

The publicity of the public meetings created a greater awareness and showed that MRPC is the entity to contact if transit agencies have questions or ideas about transit. That awareness may have helped locals realize the potential of human services grants, or at least spur them to ask MRPC for more information.

Concerns

The MRPC is concerned with the sustainability of JARC and New Freedom funds because once these funds are expended, there is no funding to continue service. They are also concerned with the strict federal requirements for JARC grants. They often only have one contractor bid on a route, resulting in the price being unjustifiably high to continue service, such as the JARC funded taxi service described above.

Recommendations

Transit providers in the area requested that the MRPC stay more involved with the activities that resulted from the Human Services Coordination Plan. The MRPC believes it would be helpful to have an ongoing discussion with MoDOT about the plans in the time between the formal planning processes (every 4-5 years).

The MRPC also would see a benefit in being more involved in the ranking of projects selected for JARC and New Freedom funding. Currently this prioritization process is done at the state level, and the MRPC does not have a good handle on the outcomes of any selected projects. The MRPC does a ranking program with other types of grants in their region (i.e., enhancement and safe routes to school grants, highway and bridge grants) that is successful. They would like to create a greater awareness for the need for transit at the local level, and open up more funding opportunities at the local level by staying involved in the prioritization and outcomes of funded projects.

Mr. Goodcents Foundation, a Public Interest Group in the Kansas City Region; Mid-America Regional Council of Governments (Kansas City) Job Access- Specialized Transportation Committee, a nonprofit association of city and county governments and the metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state Kansas City region

Mr. Jim Courtney, Executive Director of Mr. Goodcents Foundation and Chairman of MARC Job Access-Specialized Transportation Committee

Interview Date: January 15, 2010

Mr. Goodcents is a non-profit corporation that provides community transportation and housing assistance to elderly and disabled populations, especially for senior mobility needs. Mr. Goodcents was formed in 2001, and received Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designation as a charity in 2004. It supports the counties of Johnson and Wyandotte in Kansas, and Platte and Clay in Missouri, and partners with Johnson County Transit, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Wyandotte County Unified Government, and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC).

The Mid-America Regional Council of Governments is a non-profit association of city and county governments and is the MPO for the bi-state Kansas City region, servicing nine counties and 120 cities. They develop regional plans for transportation, the environment and emergency response. MARC transportation programs look at the elderly, disabled, and low income needs.

Planning Process

The Mr. Goodcents Foundation has spent the last few years working on a Framework for Senior Mobility that identifies current services, gaps, and barriers to senior mobility to aid MARC with the development of the Human Services Coordinated Plan. They work with universities in the region and other non-profits to project future senior mobility needs. They work from a full mobility perspective of the user to determine barriers of transit service and also barriers for the users from the transit vehicle to their final destination, such as lack of elevators and ramps, which may prevent them from riding transit in the first place. The Framework is funded by non-profit community funding.

MARC is responsible for the development of the Coordinated Plan. In early 2007, MARC amended the Public Transportation Element of Transportation Outlook 2030 Update, the region's long-range transportation plan, to serve as the Coordinated Plan for the metro area. It serves as the foundation for the competitive selection processes for FTA funding for JARC (Section 5316) and New Freedoms (Section 5317) programs. It also guides the Transportation for Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) program. MARC manages the competitive selection process for JARC and New Freedom on behalf of KCATA, the region's designated recipient for FTA funds.

As part of the Coordinated Plan development, MARC conducted independent focus groups with seniors to determine service needs and gaps. This effort supplemented the work being done to develop the full regional transportation plan (Outlook 2040). The Coordinated Plans brought the human services and public transit stakeholders together to discuss the funding they have and how that funding is being allocated. MARC requires all project applicants to present their project and how it fits into the Coordinated Plan to the stakeholders in the region. They believe that the Coordinated Plans can be improved by educating local stakeholders about how the Coordinated Plan fits into the city, county, state and federal transportation plans.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

JARC and New Freedom projects are submitted to MARC for grant funding. JARC programs have been utilized for a long time in the region, and organizations never have problems qualifying for these grants. New Freedom grants are relatively new and some agencies did not qualify for the "beyond ADA" requirements in the past. New Freedom grants have allowed smaller agencies reporting to MARC to reach out to new clients in new areas. For traditional

agencies with existing services, it was more difficult for them because they were not able to meet all of the New Freedom requirements. Local match has thus far not been a problem in the region.

Any submitted projects must comply with the requirements of the Plan, fulfill the strategies of the Plan and regional needs, and must be timed appropriately to not tie up funding on projects that are not ready to begin. The metrics used to evaluate projects are limited to identifying who is being served and the numbers being served. One of the performance metrics they are struggling with is how to determine how many more people they have to serve in the region. Because they have such limited capacity and so much demand, projects are always successful in spite of themselves.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The Coordinated Plan developed some public private partnerships and brought governmental agencies and non-profit and for-profit agencies together to discuss how to best meet the needs of their residents. It has also developed a need for the Framework tool developed by the Mr. Goodcents Foundation. The Mr. Goodcents Foundation believes that planning is very important and the Human Services Coordinated Plan has forced some communities to think more about public transportation when developing their regional plans.

Concerns

Because they have such limited capacity and so much demand, the human services transportation services are always successful in spite of themselves. They don't have a coordination problem in the region, they have a capacity problem, and they need sustainable funding streams to meet the demands. One suggestion is to work with private organizations to form public private partnerships to generate sustainable funding streams.

Recommendations

Mr. Courtney would recommend connecting the strategic plans at the local, regional, and state levels to enhance consistency and to work more with private organizations to form public private partnerships. He would also recommend providing more money for operating programs.

APPENDIX C-2: Ohio

Ohio Department of Transportation

Mr. Joshua Gearhardt, Public Transportation Manager

Interview Date: December 15, 2009

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has individual employees that manage the 5310, JARC, and NF programs as a part of their overall jobs. ODOT feels strongly that anything that can be done to streamline the process on the federal level would be beneficial. Since JARC, NF, and 5310 serve relatively similar populations, they feel the differences in their requirements should be eliminated and that these three grant programs should be consolidated. They have recently combined some state forms for the grant programs, in anticipation of possible changes to the programs coming out of reauthorization. Prior to the Coordination Plan requirement, the state had the "Ohio Coordination Program" that lost state funding but has been able to continue with the use of funds from 5310 and supplemental funding from JARC and NF.

Licking County Area Transportation Study, a small urban MPO north of the City of Columbus, Ohio

Ms. Sandra R. Mapel, P.E., Technical Study Director

Interview Date: February 2, 2010

The Licking County Area Transportation Study (LCATS), a small urban MPO, was the lead agency for developing the *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Licking County, Ohio*. Licking County contains 19 municipalities and 25 townships, and is just north of the City of Columbus. The County covers a total area of 688 square miles and has a population of over 145,000.

LCATS was selected to lead the Coordinated Plan development process because it was viewed as a "neutral" broker that could lead the process that reflected the diversity of organizations and needs across the region. The two regional transit agencies, Earthworks Transit (which operates in the two cities within the county) and the Licking Area Transit Board (which covers all areas of Licking County not served by Earthworks Transit) worked closely with LCATS in the development of the Plan. The Licking County Transit Board and Earthworks Transit offer demand response service only; there is no fixed-route transit in the county. Both transit agencies have reduced fares for the elderly and disabled and all of their vehicles are ADA compliant. After LCATS was selected as the lead for Coordinated Plan development in its region, the Ohio Department of Transportation asked that all Coordinated Plans in the state be developed by MPOs.

Planning Process

Prior to the development of the Coordinated Plan, the region had an existing organization for coordination of human services transportation. The Licking Area Transit Board Coordinated Services Sub-Committee, which includes more than 30 regional human services agencies and non-profits, daycares and schools, nursing homes, municipalities and health care providers, meets regularly to discuss the provision of human services transportation in the region. Many of these organizations attended a June 2006 kick-off meeting for the Coordinated Plan development and remained involved in the Plan development process until completion.

LCATS built off of the efforts of the Coordinated Services Sub-Committee, using their network to aid in the gathering of information for the Coordinated Plan. Data collection for the development of the Plan was conducted primarily through two surveys, one for the general public and one for human services agencies. A core group of collaborators that formed out of the initial June 2006 meeting worked with LCATS to create and disseminate the surveys. The survey distributed to the general public included questions about transportation patterns and needs of Licking County residents. Surveys were mailed to a stratified random sample of over 3,000 registered voters and left at human services agencies and transportation provider offices for residents to take home and complete. Over 1,000 of these surveys were completed and returned to LCATS. The survey was also available online, where it received an additional 52 responses. Verbal intercept surveys were conducted at a library and grocery store in a low-income

area of the county where residents were more likely to need transportation services.

LCATS sent out an agency survey to every non-profit and human services agency they could locate in Licking County. The Coordinated Services Sub-Committee and the local United Way provided a mailing list of local non-profits that LCATS then supplemented by culling the phonebook for additional non-profits, even if these organizations did not provide transportation services, to create a mailing list for the agency survey. LCATS made sure that every organization that they knew provided transportation services returned a survey. Of the 165 agency surveys mailed, 33 were returned. The agency survey covered topics including the most common pick up and destination points for clients, hours of operations for transportation services and the characteristics of the vehicle types owned by each respondent. The one gap in the agency survey that LCATS recently identified is that it did not include nursing homes, many of which provide basic transportation services for their residents.

In April and May of 2007, LCATS presented the survey results to their Coordination Plan partners, in groups and individually, and at the Licking County Transit Board Coordinated Services Sub-Committee. An interactive charrette-style public meeting was held in June 2007 to give the Coordination Plan partners and the general public a chance to collectively review the survey findings and identify potential solutions. Meeting participants were able to vote anonymously and in real-time on the different options presented. Out of this meeting, the needs and service gaps as well as the framework for project prioritization for the Coordinated Plan was established.

LCATS invested a significant amount of staff time and monetary resources in the development of the Coordinated Plan. LCATS employs just three individuals and has only one individual assigned to work on transit issues. Given its staff constraints, the agency typically can take on only one or two large projects per year. It was fortunate that the Coordinated Plan requirement came into place a time when LCATS was not occupied with one of its large cyclical planning efforts, such as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan or its long-range plan update. LCATS would not have had the staff time to complete the Coordinated Plan had it occurred at the same time as any of its major cyclical projects. Nor would the MPO have been able to complete the Coordinated Plan had it occurred in a period where they had an unfilled staff position. While consultant assistance was offered by the Ohio Department of Transportation, it was offered at a time when LCATS had made significant progress on developing the Plan, so much so that it obviated the need for consultant assistance. LCATS paid for the costs of the public meetings and the costs of the surveys (providing the postage for 3,000 mailed surveys).

Program Management

Since the Licking County Area Coordinated Plan was published in September 2007, the region has not received any JARC or NF funding. This is principally because organizations and groups interested in applying for the grant funding have been unable to meet the local match requirements. Statewide, Ohio invests very little money in public transportation and it does not provide matching funds to local jurisdictions. The region had a single complete NF proposal, but they were unable to submit it to the Ohio Department of Transportation due to the lack of local matching funds. The proposal was to combine the scheduling and operations of transportation services for the Licking County Transit Board and at least three other organizations. The proposed project required multiple organizations and jurisdictions to agree on a framework for sharing funds from the coordinated system and overcome other significant concerns. Currently, these agencies have a referral system and a shared funding reserve through which to compensate an organization for a referred trip. However, there are many instances where multiple agencies send vehicles to transport clients going to and from the same locations at the same time. The un-submitted NF proposal, had it been selected for funding by the state, would have eliminated this overlap. Perhaps even worse for Licking County than the lack of JARC or NF funding, is that the Coordinated Plan has made it more difficult for the county to access 5310 funding. In Ohio, 5310 is basically used to purchase vehicles for non-profit human service transportation providers. Since the publication of the Coordination Plan, a single non-profit organization was able to get a new van but this was strictly a replacement vehicle. The Coordination Plan's inventory of vehicles revealed that many community non-profits have underutilized vehicles, while others have vehicles that are in constant demand. The Coordination Plan expects that organizations with underutilized vehicles will be able to share vehicles and avoid

the purchase of new vehicles, but this isn't always practical or possible. For example, in the Plan, the YMCA youth program is listed as having 15 large passenger vans vehicles used exclusively for its youth summer camp and not used during the school year. Yet, if Catholic Charities, which provides transportation to dialysis and other medical centers and is in constant need of more vehicles, wanted to use the YMCA's vans, they could not do so for reasons of insurance, the need to retain and pay for an additional driver for these vehicles, and the fact that the YMCA vans would not be available to use during the summer months. To those evaluating 5310 applications for Licking County, they only understand that the county has many underutilized vehicles and not the particular reasons as to why it may not be possible for organizations to share vehicle fleets.

Concerns

By having LCATS lead the Coordinated Plan process, the county benefited from being able to combine efforts and service areas of both local transit agencies, which has strengthened relationships among public agencies and non-profits providing human services transportation across Licking County. However, the value of the Coordinated Plan to Licking County beyond these improved relationships isn't clear. Much of what was learned through the data collection for the Coordinated Plan was not new information for LCATS or either of the county's transit agencies. The Coordinated Plan has not resulted in any new funds coming to the community, and has even hurt its ability to access 5310 funding. The Licking County Transit Board continues to remain very active in human services transportation coordination work.

LCATS is unsure about the cycle for updating the Coordinated Plan, but in the summer and fall of 2010 it is planning to do an overall transit needs analysis. Since the transit needs analysis will cover human services transportation in-depth, and the Coordinated Plan has otherwise proved unhelpful, an update to the Coordinated Plan may not be the best investment of LCATS staff time and resources.

Organizations in Licking County would like to utilize JARC and NF, but the 50-50 local-federal match has hindered their ability to do so. While LCATS understands the need for a local matching requirement, increasing the federal match to 80 or 90 percent would be what it would take for Licking County organizations to be able to provide a local match and access these grant programs, given that the state does not provide matches.

Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission, small urban MPO in Northwestern Ohio

Mr. Thomas Mazur, Executive Director

Interview Date: February 8, 2010

The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC), a small urban MPO, serves Allen

County, Ohio, an area that has a population of approximately 105,000 and covers the Cities of Lima and Delphus and a number of rural small towns. The public transportation provider in the county is the Allen County Regional Transit Authority (ACRTA), which provides fixed-route bus service as well as on-demand paratransit services. ACRTA has a representative on the LACRPC board, and the two organizations work closely together. There are 21 human services agencies and non-profits and nine for-profit transportation providers that provide additional human services transportation services in Allen County.

Planning Process

The development of the Allen County Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan was led by LACRPC. To provide financial support for the development of the plan, the MPO applied for and received a \$37,000 grant of federal funds via ODOT. The grant was put into the MPO's work plan and the plan was published in April 2008.

ODOT recommended that the MPOs follow an outline for the Coordinated Plan provided by the national United We Ride organization. LACRPC used the United We Ride Coordinated Plan outline as a starting point for the development of their Plan. A number of community partners including ACRTA, joined a Coordinated Plan advisory committee and provided ongoing input into the plan development process. Elected officials from jurisdictions throughout Allen County were also kept apprised of the Plan development and the findings of the various analyses of human services transportation services and service gaps done for the Plan.

At the start of the development of the Coordinated Plan, LACRPC conducted a survey of all agencies providing human services transportation and a survey of their clients and the general public. Through these surveys, the unfulfilled needs in the human services transportation system were identified. The agency Transportation Services Survey, which received 37 responses out of 71 surveys distributed, documented existing human service transportation services by day of week, by hour of the day and by population served.

The general public Transportation Needs Survey asked residents to identify what public transportation services they used, their top destinations using public transportation, weekly spending on transportation and to what days and times when public transportation services were needed but unavailable. The Transportation Needs Survey and the two major public meetings held during the planning process were advertised in the local newspapers, and on radio and television. Their radio and television ads were heard or viewed 585,000 times. The County Commissioners and other elected officials were involved in promoting the transportation needs survey to the general public. The survey was available on the LACRPC website, and 2,500 printed surveys were distributed to local human services agencies in packets of 50 copies each and at local government office, public libraries, neighborhood association meetings, and the office of various transportation agencies. The survey received a response rate of 25 percent, with a total of 633 surveys returned.

LACRPC worked with the ACRTA and both non-profit and for-profit providers of human services transportation to do a detailed level of service (LOS) analysis. This exercise involved compiling days/hours of service, types of service, service area, and other factors including costs. Agencies receiving 5310 funding provided information on annual trips, miles per vehicle, trips per day, passenger pickups per hour, vehicles past their useful life, and trip denials. Using this information, the MPO developed a matrix that demonstrated temporal and geographic gaps in services for the month of January 2008. This exercise revealed that there were some agencies that were hardly providing any trips during certain periods of the day, and that there were some rural communities that did not receive any service for a week's time. Using ADA and FTA manuals, LACRPC then followed a process using state demographic and other collected data to project the demand for human services transportation in Allen County through the year 2030.

Following the surveys and LOS analysis the Coordinated Plan's advisory committee and LACRPC worked together to develop goals, objectives and various strategies to meet identified unmet human service transportation needs. Throughout the process, progress on the Plan and the findings of the surveys and the LOS analysis were reviewed by focus groups, in two major public meetings, and a monthly review held individually by five of the MPO's committees. Individual comments were also collected. Through these analyses, LACRPC discovered that among non-profits providing services of a similar type (i.e. 5310 providers) coordination was high, but that it was not strong among non-profits doing different but related work.

The Coordinated Plan presents six different service alternatives for the future provision of human services transportation in Allen County, with each alternative based on different needs and current and future capacity constraints and demand. A hybrid of several of the alternatives was selected as the final preferred alternative, and out of this hybrid a table listing specific implementation steps and a timeline to complete them was produced.

Program Management

Following completion of the Coordinated Plan, LACRPC was able to address some of the selected strategies immediately. LACRPC used Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to purchase scheduling software, and they used Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to buy ACRTA additional vans for demand-responsive service. Based upon the Plan recommendations, LACRPC is also working hard to reduce friction and increase joint operations between human services non-profits and transportation providers. The County's Office on Aging now shares an office at an ACRTA transfer facility, which allowed these two crucial agencies to collaborate on a daily, operational basis. However, there are still "turf issues" within the local non-profit community, with many providers struggling to obtain the same funds and somewhat apprehensive of working with others that do not already share the same funding sources. More recently, LARPC also provided ACRTA with funds to establish a joint fueling station for human services transportation vehicles from the agency and external non-profit providers.

LACRPC assists local organizations with drafting JARC and NF applications. Allen County currently has two services funded through NF:

- A fixed-route service between the City of Delphus in Northwest Allen County and Lima
- A fixed route service between rural Spencerville in Southwest Allen County and Lima

The matching funds for these applications came from Department of Education Title 20 and Department of Energy funds.

An application for JARC was recently submitted that would provide funding for an increase in the hours of operation and additional capability for a demand response service and extend a fixed route ACRTA service. This application was submitted by ACRTA and two human services non-profits. The matching funds for this application also came from Department of Education Title 20 and Department of Energy funds, and potentially some Medicaid funding. It was more difficult to pull together the matching funds for this JARC application than it was for the NF applications.

Outside of the federal grant programs, LACRPC also received a coordination grant from ODOT. This grant will be used coordinate scheduling, dispatching, client loadings, and establishing eligibility criteria for clients in a coordinated system. It will also provide ACRTA with software that will perform consolidated billing functions.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

Prioritization and program selection happens at the state level, with LACRPC sending their recommendations to the state. Prior to SAFETEA-LU the MPO received 5310 funding directly, but now ODOT receives the original MPO allocation. LACRPC must regularly inventory and report all 5310 vehicles in Allen County, and ODOT makes a determination as to the value of their 5310 applications based on the vehicle inventory and the priorities established in the Coordinated Plan.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

From the perspective of LACRPC, while the creation of the Coordinated Plan was a time-consuming and involved process, it was a productive investment of their resources. In addition to the \$37,000 grant of federal fund received from ODOT, LACRPC spent \$48,000 in additional MPO funding on the development of the Plan, for a total Plan development cost of \$85,000. However, they have since used the plan to justify \$2 to \$2.5 million in capital

allocations. The MPO views its work on human services transportation coordination as “very important” and does not see any downside in its investment in the coordinated planning process.

LACRPC identified several key benefits of the coordinated planning process:

- It allowed the MPO to involve and educate their elected officials on human services transportation.
- The human services agencies and non-profits developed a better understanding of each other’s funding sources and limitations.
- The data collected in the plan has been critical in justifying the need for targeted investments, and in supporting their quest for additional human services transportation funding, even from sources beyond the FTA grant programs.

Concerns

LACRPC noted that while the planning process was not burdensome for their agency, they can see it being an issue in rural or other small urban MPOs with fewer staff members and resources. While the MPO views the Coordinated Plan as a productive and effective exercise, it did require significant resources.

The one aspect of the Coordinated Plan development process that LACRPC did not find useful was the required translation of their written materials into Spanish. Allen County does not have a population that would need to access their materials in Spanish, and they have few non-English speaking residents. LACRPC would have been glad to do the translation work had there been a real or expressed desire for it from community members. LACRPC worked closely with many individual groups requesting targeted outreach; for example they worked with a group of developmentally disabled adults, illiterate adults and seniors to help them understand the Coordinated Plan and provide input into it. By contrast, it was time consuming for LACRPC to even find someone in the area qualified to do the Spanish translation.

Coordination

Through the Coordinated Plan process many stakeholders became aware of the potential and existing opportunities for coordination. However, the many challenges of creating a low cost, safe and extensive human services transportation system for the county also became apparent through the process. While most of the non-profit human services transportation providers in Allen County desired to build a coordinated human services transportation system that had ACRTA at its backbone, they were surprised to learn that this was not possible due to the costs and regulatory constraints unique to transit agencies. ACRTA’s operating costs are much higher than private transportation providers due federal requirements such as employee drug testing, background checks and training, making it impossible for them to be a low-cost provider of human services transportation.

Allen County’s quest to provide a rational, cost effective coordinated human services transportation system also changed the way the human services transportation non-profits looked at their own operations. Each agency has their own client relationships, and they each feel that no one can provide the same level of service to their clients that they can. When the Plan’s analysis revealed that the for-profit (taxi) firms could provide more extensive, cost-effective service, it was disruptive to the planning process. However, the for-profit firms will not service every small, rural town in the county and will often refuse to service those in wheelchairs. Additionally, the overall quality and safety of the for-profit firms’ services is not comparable with the non-profit providers and ACRTA. There remains an ongoing dialogue among the involved organizations on how to best provide funding for the most extensive, highest quality and lowest cost coordinated system.

Recommendations

LACRPC provided several recommendations for changes in the grant programs:

- Address local match Issues. Making it easier to do federal to federal matches, allowing applicants to use farebox receipts as a match, and lessening the proportion of the match that is local are all ideas that would make it easier for grant applicants to find matching funds and access the grant programs. A local source that can provide a 50 percent match on grant applications does not exist in Allen County.
- Take a second look at some of the inconsistencies in dealing with charter services. Eliminating the charter clause would make the agency more comfortable; they find that many times non-fixed route services have characteristics bordering on charter services, when provision of a charter service was not the intent.

Delaware Area Transit Agency– a rural transit agency in Delaware County, Ohio, north of Columbus, Ohio
Mr. Denny Schooley, Executive Director
Interview date: February 22, 2010

Located 30 miles north of Columbus in Delaware County, Ohio, the Delaware County Area Transit Agency (DATA) is a small rural transit agency. DATA provides demand response and limited fixed route public transportation services. Delaware County is a high-growth rural area in transition, and the current transportation system in the jurisdiction is not well equipped to meet local demand for public transportation. Seniors, adults with disabilities and low-income individuals comprise the primary users of DATA's system, but DATA also serves other populations. DATA took the lead in developing the county's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.

Planning Process

There were no formal or informal initiatives to coordinate human services transportation provision in Delaware County prior to the beginning of the Coordinated Plan development process. Prior to the Coordinated Plan requirement, as well as currently, DATA is concerned about its inability to meet all the needs of its core customers: seniors, disabled, and low-income individuals. DATA is not able to operate at all the times or to provide transportation to all of the locations that its customers request, and due to these limitations the agency often has to refuse trips. DATA is also concerned about its inability to provide comfortable service to those that need transportation from intense medical treatments, such as dialysis and chemotherapy. The agency found that after receiving these types of treatments, individuals are often in pain and are better served by non-profit transportation providers that can provide direct door-to-door transportation service that DATA's on-demand transportation service is not able to offer.

To develop the Coordinated Plan, DATA formed a group known as the "Transportation Collaborative" consisting of the 10 key organizations in providing human services transportation, including DATA, local human services non-profits and agencies, and a local taxi firm to guide the development of the Plan, select local coordination projects and to evaluate projects after implementation. Many local non-profit human service providers were eager to join the collaborative, as they were also aware of the scope of the unmet human services transportation needs in Delaware County. Nevertheless, to date the local human services agencies have participated only nominally in the Transportation Collaborative, and DATA would like to induce greater participation among these agencies in the future.

The Transportation Collaborative used the United We Ride (UWR) outline and guidance in the development of their Coordinated Plan, and they found the UWR materials worked well for them. Although the ODOT provided funds to employ a consultant to take the lead with organizing the Plan development process and writing the Plan, DATA staff also contributed extensively to the development of the Plan. One member of DATA's staff spent a considerable

amount of time on the Plan during its development, and the agency's operations manager and executive director also spent large amounts of time and effort ensuring that the Plan was developed successfully.

Outreach to the general public during the Plan development process included a survey, which received a very low response rate, and a series of meetings with individual constituent groups and organizations, as well as the required public meetings. Participation at the meetings was consistent with other public meetings held by the agency in the past, with many of the usual participants attending. Few individuals or groups not previously involved with the provision or use of human services transportation in Delaware County attended the meetings.

Program Management

The Transportation Collaborative has had two programs recently funded through the grant programs: a mobility management program funded through NF and a journey to work taxi voucher program funded by JARC. The mobility management program will include the creation of coordinated call-center housed at DATA that will link individuals requesting transportation services with the most appropriate provider for the particular type of trip and service that fits their needs. The journey to work taxi voucher program will provide vouchers for low-income individuals to use the local taxi firm that is a member of the Transportation Collaborative for transportation to and from their place of employment.

Finding the matching funds for both of these programs was not an issue in Delaware County, as the local community is both able and willing to support human services transportation financially. The County Commissioners were able to ensure that DATA had the funding needed to meet the matching requirements for the grants. DATA anticipates that Delaware County would also be able to financially support future Coordination Plan updates without further state financial assistance; however, the ODOT funding to hire the consultant that aided with the development of the Plan was truly helpful to the agency.

There was a long waiting period after the grant applications were submitted, and as a result the grants were just awarded in January 2010. DATA is now in the process of beginning to plan for the implementation of both of these programs at once, but neither program is currently operating.

In Ohio, Section 5310 funding is primarily used to purchase new vehicles for human services transportation providers, and the Transportation Collaborative does not have any experience with 5310 to date.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

Program prioritization was conducted at the local level by the Transportation Collaborative. No explicit prioritization schema was developed in the coordination process; rather, the Transportation Collaborative collectively identified two top coordination priorities to address in the near-term: getting people to work and mobility management. Both of these priorities are reflected in the two grants that were applied for and awarded. The Transportation Collaborative will meet regularly in the future to evaluate the implementation of the new journey to work taxi voucher and mobility management programs.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

DATA strongly believes that the effort, time and funds used to create the Coordinated Plan and its JARC and NF grant applications were a worthwhile effort. The transit agency did learn a great deal from the collaboration with non-profit and for-profit transportation providers. While DATA serves the general public and responds to a myriad of transportation needs, the non-profit transportation providers were very focused on the needs of the particular customers intended to be served by JARC and NF grant programs and had a more in-depth understanding of the challenges and needs of these groups. Similarly, the non-profit transportation providers became familiar with the constraints and challenges that DATA must operate under due to federal regulations. With this enhanced

understanding of local transportation needs and constraints, DATA believes that the Coordinated Plan was able to produce “thoughtful solutions” to the meet unmet transportation needs among seniors, disabled, and low-income individuals in Delaware County.

Coordination

The Coordinated Plan requirements jump-started the effort to coordinate human services transportation in Delaware County; without the Coordinated Plan these efforts would not have been undertaken. However, now that the framework for coordination has been established, DATA and its partners in the Transportation Collaborative strongly believe that transportation coordination is essential and their efforts will continue regardless of future federal funding. Yet, even though they plan to continue regardless of the direction of the federal priorities, DATA believes JARC and NF funding is an important component in maintaining the momentum to accomplish the goals established in the Coordinated Plan.

Recommendations

While DATA's evaluation of the Coordinated Plan development process is very positive, they do desire that the federal grants focus a little more on meeting the specific needs of seniors. DATA would like to see something like NF expand to focus on the needs of seniors, particularly those that are not disabled but do not feel comfortable driving.

APPENDIX C-3: Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Ms. Eileen Ogan, Chief - Specialized Transportation, Bureau of Public Transportation

Interview date: January 7, 2010

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) works with the public, transportation partners, state and federal legislators, and other state and local agencies to provide a safe and efficient transportation system to the people of Pennsylvania. They are involved with informing MPOs and RPOs about the requirements of the Human Services Coordination Plans and approving the Plans. They also prioritize projects and administer federal funds for 5310, JARC and New Freedom grants.

Program Management

PennDOT collects all 5310 applications directly. They have a review committee made up of multiple departments of the state, and they review and rank projects based on this committee's input.

For 5316 and 5317, PennDOT puts applications out with guidance to the MPOs and RPOs and tells them to distribute the applications to interested parties and local transportation organizations. Every county in the state has human services transportation and, unlike other states, human services transportation is considered public transportation and is open to the public.

PennDOT provides the full local match for these programs, so local agencies do not need to find a local match. Since the state provides the local match, PennDOT is not interested in using the funds for operating projects. However, if the projects have the local money, PennDOT would be more willing to put these operating projects through, because it shows a commitment after JARC or NF funds are expended. Most of these agencies are not willing to put up local funding; they are only applying because the state is matching.

FTA questioned the eligibility of a few early projects, but no projects that have been promoted by PennDOT were rejected by FTA. PennDOT lapsed on some of the federal money (FY07 New Freedom) due to the newness of the program, lack of applications, and careful selection of projects. They never have had trouble allocating JARC or 5310 money because a lot of local shared ride providers apply for these funds.

JARC has provided a new funding stream for existing "Welfare to Work" programs, including route extensions and after-hours programs. Vanpool programs also have used JARC capital funding to continue their success.

PennDOT has historically supported "Welfare to Work" programs, and the Plans and JARC funding have provided a new funding stream for those programs. Many of the successful route extensions and service subsidies were rolled into JARC and continued, regularly becoming permanent parts of the operating business.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

PennDOT asks the MPOs and RPOs to transmit applications, collect them, and do a first level prioritization: 1 recommended for funding, 2 recommended with reservations, or 3 not recommended, based on state priorities and the goals of the local Coordination Plan. The highest priority at the state level goes to projects that were ranked locally as a 1 or 2. PennDOT also looks at projects ranked 3 to make sure they concur with that ranking.

The Coordinated Plans identify gaps in service. If a project can address a gap in service and explain how they can fill that gap and meet that need, it is ranked highest. PennDOT recognizes that JARC and NF money is not guaranteed and not stable, and as a result they are very reluctant to fund operating projects with these grant programs. They prioritize based on 1) capital needs, 2) vanpools that can become self sustainable, and 3)

information technology projects. Projects that are “shovel ready” and will not hold up funding are also given high priority.

PennDOT uses the federal performance measure reporting standards: how many one way trips, unduplicated individuals served, number of jobs accessed as a result of a project, and cost per passenger trip to help monitor the success of the 5310, 5316, and 5317 projects.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

Pennsylvania began human service transportation 30 years ago with a curb-to-curb program that was open to the public, with a reduced fare to senior citizens. It expanded to include medical assistance transportation and to provide persons with disabilities with a reduced fare. Because of that history, JARC and NF funds have allowed some additional funding, especially for capital equipment, for different projects; but it is not necessarily reaching new target populations. The plans have allowed MPOs and RPOs who traditionally were highway oriented to become more involved in the human services transportation planning process at the local level.

The Coordinated Plans have not significantly impacted the state’s planning process, but they have made local agencies more involved and more understanding of what is going on in their area. The Coordinated Plans helped as they have made both sides (state and local agencies) examine what is going on at the local level.

Concerns

- Possible new requirements in the upcoming reauthorization are a concern to PennDOT.
- Sustainability of project funding is also a major concern in Pennsylvania. Many agencies are reluctant to apply for funding and start a service that they are not sure will continue to receive funds.
- PennDOT also still has a difficult time getting MPOs and RPOs to buy into the process and include all modes of transportation into their priorities.
- Reviewing the plans is a grueling process because some plans are hundreds of pages and there is no template or page requirement standard.

Recommendations

PennDOT hopes that FTA will come out with standard performance measures beyond the generalized federal requirements for determining the success of New Freedom and JARC projects.

Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (, a private, non-profit community action agency in Lycoming and Clinton Counties Pennsylvania

Mr. Dan Merk, Economic & Business Development Director

Interview Date: February 1, 2010

The Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action, Inc., known as STEP (Success Through Engagement and Partnership), is a private, non-profit community action agency. STEP achieves its goals by engaging individuals, families, and communities in their own strategies for success and by creating partnerships with complementary groups and entities that also can assist these individuals, families, and communities. STEP focuses on the following areas:

- Child Development and Early Learning Services
- Housing Options
- Assistance with Maintaining Independence

- Workforce Development and Employment
- Community Collaboration

The goal of STEP Transportation is to provide safe, timely and reliable shared-ride transportation services to all residents and visitors of Lycoming and Clinton Counties. Transportation is provided for trips within Lycoming and Clinton Counties, with twice-a-day service to Geisinger Medical Center and as-needed service to The Eye Center in Allenwood. Through Medical Assistance, transportation is provided on an as-needed basis to medical appointments throughout Pennsylvania. Transportation across county lines is coordinated with neighboring transportation providers.

Planning Process

The MPO in the region (Lycoming County Planning Commission) submits the Coordinated Plan to the state. STEP operates the JARC and Welfare to Work transportation programs by working with River Valley Transportation Company and other neighboring transportation providers. They also represent those programs at the local Coordinated Services Transportation Committee. They help to put those components into the Human Services Coordination Plan for the region. STEP finds the most time consuming part of the planning process is putting the application together and having public meetings. They have tried to have the local transportation committee meet on all transportation programs at once to reduce the time spent in meetings.

Program Management

STEP manages JARC and New Freedom programs, as well as Welfare to Work and Shared Ride programs. They work with the River Valley Transportation Company to provide expanded bus service in the county under the JARC program, and have handicap accessible vehicles as part of their New Freedom programs.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

STEP has found that prioritizing grants based on where they anticipate employment growth has been very successful. All of the projects they have applied for have become self-sustaining after the grant money was expended.

STEP Transportation service is available to all residents of Lycoming and Clinton Counties through the coordinated efforts of STEP and the local taxi companies. Door-to-door service is provided via wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Transportation is provided throughout Lycoming and Clinton Counties, as well as to Geisinger Medical Center, The Surgical Center, Allenwood, and the Centre County Hospital in State College. Transportation is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year (holidays included). Fares for trips are reduced for seniors, persons with disabilities and eligible Medical Assistance recipients.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The Coordinated Plan provides an avenue to discuss needs and programs and saves time by having many people from different agencies in the same room at public meetings and throughout the planning process.

Coordination

STEP enjoys a good working relationship with the MPO, which really helps with the planning process and success of these grants. They also relate well to transportation providers and meet regularly with the MPO's transportation committee.

Concerns

Frequently the time and money required to prepare the grant applications is more than the grants will cover. Local match and grant sustainability are always issues for agencies in their area as well, particularly when there are budget issues at the state level.

Recommendations

STEP believes that the MPO does a good job with the planning process, but they would like to have more advanced notice about when the grants are due and have more money for administrative work needed to prepare applications.

Lycoming County Planning Commission, a Metropolitan Planning Organization in Lycoming County Pennsylvania

Mr. Mark Murawski, Transportation Planner

Interview Date: February 12, 2010

The Lycoming County Planning Commission (LCPC) has been concerned with the economic, social, and environmental future of Lycoming County since its formation by the County Commissioners in 1966. The Commission reviews, proposes, and recommends courses of action that will maintain and enhance the high quality of life in the county. Lycoming County is located in the north-central part of the state and has a population of 120,000. Its largest city is Williamsport.

The LCPC staff prepare the necessary background research and documentation for planning projects and programs being developed by the County Planning Commission and the County Commissioners, assist individual citizens and developers with various land use concerns, and provide planning assistance to municipalities and Chamber of Commerce upon request. The County Planning Commission is funded from the County General Fund, plus state and federal government grants, development processing fees, and municipal service contracts.

Planning Process

LCPC completed the Human Services Transportation Plan for Lycoming County in 2008 to evaluate funding requests under the human services grant programs. They have a local transit advisory committee that includes transit providers, social service agencies, and municipal officials that reviewed and approved the plan.

LCPC collected data to understand roles and needs, ensure that there was no duplication of services, determine whether existing services were maximizing effectiveness, and identify what the unmet needs were. They were able to do all of their planning in house and did not require the use of consultants. PennDOT guided the process and gave some parameters to work within, but also allowed for local flexibility. PennDOT gave LCPC money through FTA and Federal Highway Planning Funds, which are sufficient for the next update of the plan.

LCPC, like all MPOs in Pennsylvania, has a public participation plan and public involvement process. These were utilized to develop the Coordinated Plan, and made the planning process more efficient. LCPC generally does not have much participation from the general public, but the key people who provide support always participate in the process.

The initial development the plan cost around \$10,000. An additional \$60,000 was spent to look at medical transportation services, which was funded through a Federal Transportation Planning Grant in a three-county area. The Coordinated Plan will be amended to include that medical transportation services component.

Program Management

LCPC thought the planning process was something that needed to be done. Previous program management sometimes led to duplication of services. The largest program that has been funded as a result of the Plan is van replacements for their shared ride program, which is a significant benefit for the region.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

The Transit Advisory Committee helps the LCPC with the prioritization of grant applications. Any agency that applies for grant money that is not currently part of the coordinated system has to justify why they cannot utilize services that are currently within the coordinated system. Agencies that are within the coordinated system are ranked higher in the prioritization.

Other prioritization is based on specifics of the grant applications received in a given year. LCPC does not separate the pot of money by different purposes, such as capital, operating, or technology projects, but rather looks at the overall need and the best way to meet that need every year.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The Coordinated Plan made sure that every agency in the area was aware of the services that were available for transit. Before an organization can create a new vehicle fleet, they need to step back and see what is currently available or utilize the fixed route bus system better. The Coordinated Plan provides a good resource for this purpose.

With the Coordinated Plan LCPC was able to launch service to shifting employment centers in outlying communities that did not have access to fixed route transit. The planning process enhanced their ability to expand services in a timely way to meet a major need by providing a mandate, deadline and funding that gave attention to human services coordination in many communities.

LCPC is taking the Human Services Coordination Plan to another level to look at regional public transportation needs in a seven-county area, which encompasses two MPOs. Both agencies have Coordinated Plans, and those plans are used to improve regional connectivity to health care, employment, and social services centers. Public transit in Pennsylvania is fragmented and restricted to within county boundaries, and they are trying to erase those boundaries to improve the regional system. LCPC hired a consultant to do a comprehensive needs assessment for the seven-county area that looks at existing services, unmet needs, and a plan to meet those needs. Funding for this study is from an FTA planning grant through PennDOT. The Human Services Coordination plans are a good foundation to assess the viability of the regional approach and could be used in other states and regions of the country.

Concerns

LCPC does not generally follow-up on the success or impact of the new services because the degree of success is difficult to quantify. They do not want to spend a lot of time micro-managing transit agencies and providers to ensure that the grant money fulfilled its use. Efficient standardized performance measures would be helpful to ensure that grant money is put to good use, without spending an unreasonable time following up with the transit agencies and providers.

Town & Country Transit, a transit agency in Armstrong County Pennsylvania
Mr. Scott Kloes, General Manager
Interview Date: January 26, 2010

Town & Country Transit (TACT) in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, provides fixed route bus service to residents in the greater Kittanning and Ford City areas and shared ride service to the whole county. Eight municipalities are members of TACT including Applewold, East Franklin, Ford City, Ford Cliff, Kittanning, Manor, Manorville, and West Kittanning. These member municipalities govern TACT by serving on its Board of Directors and support it financially. Armstrong County is also TACT's partner. The county provides annual funding to the agency that helps them get additional money from the PennDOT, TACT's primary funding source. PennDOT funds TACT through grants and Pennsylvania Lottery funds.

Planning Process

TACT's primary role in developing the Human Services Coordination Plan is planning for transportation in their community; those plans are then incorporated into the Coordinated Plan. The agency also coordinates with government agencies, other transit providers and non-profits, attends public meetings, and prepares grant requests. TACT prepares all grant applications in-house and finds this the most time consuming aspect of the planning process. The agency found that understanding the needs of the community, especially the late night service to the hospital under the JARC grant, and understanding there was a need for a later pickup to gain consistent ridership increases was the most important outcome of the coordinated planning process.

Program Management

TACT utilizes FTA Section 5310 and 5316 grant funding. The agency does not have any New Freedom grants at this time. They saw an increase in ridership with their JARC program when they extended service hours on a route going to the hospital that fit the needs of hospital workers on later shifts.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

The agency uses ridership numbers and an annual customer satisfaction survey on their fixed route and shared ride services to evaluate the effectiveness of their services. Their Persons with Disability (PWD) program is very successful; ridership has grown exponentially beyond what the state had projected for the county. The service is self-sustainable: the state pays 85 percent and the riders pay the other 15 percent. The agency staff believes the Coordinated Plan contributed to that success.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The coordinated plans have allowed the agency to:

- Reach new populations and communities
- Provide new services that otherwise wouldn't have been provided
- Facilitate greater public participation in planning processes with new communities
- Improve the "effectiveness" of the human service transportation services provided
- Bring together other governmental agencies to foster mutual awareness that benefits all sides
- Increase ridership on fixed route and shared-ride service

Coordination

The coordination process has put TACT in contact with other government agencies and organizations in their community and fostered a mutual awareness of the benefits of transportation for the targeted groups. The main coordination activities take place at public meetings and advisory board meetings for the Coordinated Plans.

Concerns

The local match is their primary concern regarding the JARC grants; the agency does not currently have any New Freedom grants.

Recommendations

Their only recommendation would be to eliminate the local match requirement.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), a regional municipal authority that operates various forms of public transit in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Ms. Kathleen E. Zubrzycki, Manager, Grant Development, Finance and Planning

Mr. Steven D'Antonio, Manager, City Service Planning, Service Planning Department

Ms. Zoe Robertson, Project Analyst, Finance and Planning

Mr. Eugene Dixon, ADA Eligibility Project Manager, Customized Community Transportation

Ms. Cynthia Lister, Regulatory Coordinator, Customized Community Transportation

Interview Date: March 4, 2010

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is the nation's sixth-largest public transportation system and the largest system in Pennsylvania. The authority is an instrument of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, created by the State Legislature in 1964, and is a vital regional transit asset. SEPTA's service area, which encompasses approximately 2,202 square miles, includes the heavily populated Southeastern Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia. SEPTA's service also extends to Trenton and West Trenton, New Jersey and Newark, Delaware. The organization is responsible for operating:

- 117 Bus Routes
- 8 Trolley (light rail) Lines
- 3 Trackless Trolley Routes
- 2 Subway/Elevated (heavy rail) Lines
- 1 Interurban High-Speed Line (heavy rail)
- Shared Ride Service in the City of Philadelphia
- ADA Paratransit service throughout the five-county region
- Small bus circulator and shuttle services that connect fixed route operations to business, health and educational centers, as well as to park and ride facilities

The Southeastern Pennsylvania region has a population of 3.9 million and is the most populous region in Pennsylvania. The SEPTA system serves over one-half million customers daily and provides approximately 325 million (unlinked) passenger trips annually.

SEPTA has been involved with the FTA JARC Program since 1999. Until the enactment of SAFETEA-LU in 2005, SEPTA was the recipient of the JARC federal earmarks, and Senator Specter provided the region with generous funding for the program: in 2002, JARC earmarks totaled \$6.55 million. When SAFETEA-LU was enacted, the JARC federal funding became formula based, reducing SEPTA's allocation of JARC funding to \$1.5 million. Prior to the federal requirement for a Coordinated Human Services Plan, SEPTA had a JARC Plan to coordinate JARC services, similar to the Human Service Plan required under SAFETEA-LU. When the region started the Coordinated Plan,

they used the JARC Plan as a baseline and expanded it to include the issues impacting the disabled and elderly communities.

Planning Process

The MPO in the region, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is responsible for the development of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. DVRPC previously coordinated the JARC Plan before the federal human services coordinated planning requirement. SEPTA plays a key role in the development of the Coordinated Plan and works with other government agencies and non-profits at public meetings and workshops. During the workshops, DVRPC presents a thorough analysis of the service in the area, including maps of employment areas, low-income areas, etc., and overlays these maps with existing services to locate any gaps in service. The goals in the Plan are also developed during the workshops that lead up to public meetings. The goals are then finalized at public meetings and formal hearings.

SEPTA is happy with their role in the planning process and believes that the development of the Coordinated Plan should remain the responsibility of DVRPC because they have the expertise in the area and do a good job of bringing all parties together. DVRPC also represents parts of South Jersey, and the Coordinated Plan for the MPO includes a New Jersey component to it as well as the Pennsylvania component.

Much of the groundwork for the Human Services Plan was already in place with the JARC Plan. DVRPC updated the JARC Plan to include the additional elements for the elderly and disabled populations. DVRPC did a good job in streamlining the process to make it not too time consuming. SEPTA did not hire anyone specifically to focus on JARC and NF programs, but there are six people who work on JARC and NF on a day-to-day basis, with other resources at SEPTA contributing occasionally. SEPTA does not charge project administration to the grants, so they do not track exactly how much time is spent on planning or administration of each grant.

Since the JARC Plan was already in place when SAFETEA-LU was passed, there were already routes to address some JARC related needs. As a result, the Human Services Plan became redundant and involved retroactive planning. JARC funding also was reduced as part of SAFETEA-LU, and SEPTA was not considering any new projects, but just trying to hold on to successful JARC projects already in place. As a result, SEPTA does not see many opportunities for improvement in their planning process with the Human Services Coordinated Plan. They were coordinating for many years prior to the SAFETEA-LU requirement, and FTA used their JARC Plan as an example when developing the Human Services Coordinated Plan requirements.

Program Management

All of SEPTA's Human Services grant funded services are in Pennsylvania; New Jersey Human Services projects are coordinated through New Jersey Transit. SEPTA is the designated recipient of Pennsylvania JARC and NF funds for the region (PennDOT is responsible for the 5310 program) and prepares and submits all grant applications to FTA and PennDOT. SEPTA first submits their list of needs to the DVRPC Human Services Committee (made up of representatives from the five counties in the region, the disabled community, elderly community, and low income communities) which scores the projects and creates a list of recommended projects to submit to the DVRPC Board of Directors. DVRPC ranks all of the projects and draws a line to show where the funding ends; however, they include all of the projects below the line to show what projects could be funded if another source of funding comes available. The Board then approves the projects based on the known amount of federal and PennDOT funding. This list is then returned to SEPTA, which submits the official grant application to FTA and PennDOT. PennDOT provides the matching funds for the JARC and NF grants.

When JARC first started, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare provided the matching funds, but as public welfare funds started to dwindle, they decided transportation wasn't their core mission. As the commonwealth was developing their plan for dedicated funding sources for transit throughout Pennsylvania, providing a match for federal

grant programs was deemed to be one of the top priorities. The commonwealth created "Programs of Statewide Significance" to provide matching funds for federal public transportation grants. The language is not specific to JARC and NF, giving the commonwealth flexibility to make changes without having to change legislation and regulations. "Programs of Statewide Significance" funding comes from Pennsylvania's Transportation Trust Fund and is made up of lottery money, excise taxes, etc.

SEPTA also offers human service transportation under the PennDOT Shared Ride Program that provides operating funding for paratransit service for people age 65 and over and free fixed route transportation for people 65 and over. The NF money in Pennsylvania is only for capital investment, so as to not overlap with Shared Ride Program funding.

PennDOT has one consolidated application for transportation grants with separate sections for the Shared Ride funds and JARC and NF funds. JARC and NF projects have to relate back to the Coordinated Plan, but the Shared Ride projects are not required to refer to the Coordinated Plan.

SEPTA has many sub-recipients, including local transit agencies providing vans and fixed route bus services that connect to SEPTA service and corporate centers using small buses. SEPTA provides assistance to the sub-recipients to ensure they comply with all federal requirements. This assistance has become a burden considering the amount of funding available from the programs. Many small sub-recipients have no experience with bidding according to federal requirements, and SEPTA has to walk them through the process step by step to make sure they are doing everything properly.

If a sub-recipient is providing a small shuttle service, they need to bid that out, and the bidding process involves compliance with extensive federal procurement regulations – drug and alcohol testing, insurance requirements, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), etc. Providers who were accustomed to producing a 10 to 15 page RFP, now have to produce RFPs of 100 pages or more. These small agencies have to comply with federal process requirements as well, which includes things like appeals. While this is not necessarily bad, the procurement process needs to be fair and open. It is more paperwork and administrative detail than small agencies have been accustomed to, and the process requires significantly more supervision on the part of the designated recipient than in the past.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

DVRPC does all project prioritization and selection. SEPTA monitors their programs with a cost per passenger metric. They also report on jobs available, new jobs available, and new employment sites reached, but in terms of measuring one project against another, it always comes down to the cost per passenger. SEPTA also considers the human factor as well as cost. The scoring committee allows each county to give priority points to three projects in the region to boost them in the ranking to account for things not quantifiable but still of importance to the program.

SEPTA has to ensure that their sub-recipients comply with federal requirements and that their projects are meeting cost per passenger standards. Sometimes they go to the sub-recipients service area and have SEPTA employees ride the route and recommend changes. SEPTA asks that the sub-recipients fill out quarterly and annual reports that include state and federal requirements as part of the reports. SEPTA recently held a session with grantees and presented a streamlined reporting process beginning with the monthly invoices as a foundation for the quarterly and annual reports. Some unsuccessful projects were discontinued because they were not meeting the predictions of the planning efforts. SEPTA monitors the cost per passenger of all of its services and will work with the service provider if the cost per passenger increases greatly. If the service cannot be improved with reasonable adjustments, it is discontinued.

The most successful JARC projects are added service on existing routes (i.e., extensions of fixed routes, added hours on weekends or late night) to respond to the changing employment scene. The shuttles run by sub-recipients are relatively successful, but the management of them is difficult. All JARC projects are for operating funding only.

SEPTA's first JARC project started in September 1999. It is a short bus route from outside Philadelphia to the airport area. Prior to this route, people had to take two buses that did not have coordinated schedules to get to the airport, with a trip time of more than an hour. Now the bus trip takes about 20 minutes and runs seven days a week from 5:00 AM to midnight. The ridership grew almost immediately and is now steady at 550 trips per weekday and 350 trips per weekend day, with a low cost per passenger. This project was developed with the county, a revitalization task force, and the airport. The funding is sustainable and is matched with PennDOT money.

The most successful NF projects are travel instruction projects that provide training to individuals with disabilities and senior citizens on how to travel on fixed route mass transit independently. These are large classroom sessions where the students learn how to read schedules and purchase fares. They also provide vehicle practice outside of the classroom. These programs are geared to seniors who have not ridden transit in many years and disabled individuals who can use fixed route public transportation for many or all of their trips. These projects enhance ridership on fixed route services and reduce demand for paratransit service. One example of this is a local transportation management association with three years of funding that was just approved for two more years. They hold monthly mobility workshops to provide information on accessing transportation and eliminating roadblocks. They hold a minimum of two workshops per month for people with disabilities and one per month for senior citizens. There is a high demand for workshops; an average of 15 people attend the workshops for people with disabilities, and 50 people attend the workshops for seniors. These workshops help transition individuals from door-to-door service to fixed route service. The transportation management association saw a 15 percent increase in ridership on the local shuttle system in 2008. This program has a budget of \$18,000 for the year, but is highly effective in shifting demand to more cost effective transportation services.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

The Coordinated Plans allowed SEPTA's stakeholders to learn about the disabled community and enabled the region to provide new services, such as travel training. The process for the Coordinated Plan helped to confirm that the projects are an effective use of public funds, and it has helped SEPTA review and think about the administration of future projects.

Coordination

SEPTA already had a coordinated process for JARC funds before the federal requirement for the Coordinated Plan was in place. If there were more funding available, the Plans could have lead to more developments, but the funding for SEPTA was decreased with enactment of SAFETEA-LU. SEPTA has a very responsive outreach program for human services and general public outreach. They are in constant contact with their stakeholders through public meetings, workshops, field visits, formal public hearings, and bi-monthly SEPTA city and county planning meetings. This outreach was all happening prior to the Coordinated Plan, as part of the FTA and PennDOT requirements. No increased coordination was started as part of the Human Services Coordination Plan. In fact, SEPTA provided DVRPC with contacts for the Human Services Coordination Plans because SEPTA was already doing coordination with all of the appropriate groups.

Concerns

SEPTA's main concern is with their role as the designated JARC and NF grant recipient for the region. The administrative requirements for the designated recipient (grant application, coordinating with and monitoring sub-recipients, reviewing invoices, and reports to FTA and PennDOT) have become a large burden to the agency. This role has forced them to become a mini-DOT to all of their sub-recipients.

Human Services Programs have been expanded to include many different types of eligible projects, including some that SEPTA does not believe to be an appropriate use of federal transit funds. One example is a car loan program

eligible under JARC, providing money for individuals to purchase a car to get to work, which creates a large liability for SEPTA as the guarantor of a loan.

Recommendations

SEPTA would like DVRPC to be the designated recipient, but DVRPC has turned this opportunity down in the past. SEPTA would also like to eliminate sub-recipients and have all agencies apply for grants directly from FTA and PennDOT.

APPENDIX C-4: South Carolina
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Ms. Lavern Glover
Interview Date: February 5, 2010

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is the lead state agency for the coordination of requests for Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding from FTA. As opposed to other states, South Carolina has not provided funds to meet local match requirements since the mid-1990s, making the identification and sustainability of local matching funds a significant issue for human services transportation in the state.

Planning Process

South Carolina has a Consolidated State Plan, and MPOs and COGs work with the SCDOT Planning Office in developing local plans. Across the state, there are ten regional planning groups, all of which are COGs. In developing local plans, some of the COGs are well ahead of the others in identifying local funds and in submitting competitive proposals, making for variability in the distribution of Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding across the state. While SCDOT is working to mitigate this inequity, local circumstances (i.e., socio-economic factors, political choices, etc.) and the reliance on local funding make improved distribution challenging.

Stakeholders in South Carolina are very experienced with the JARC program, and the state has been consistently implementing such projects over the last decade. Regarding the Section 5317 (New Freedom) program, SCDOT says that the biggest issue remains identifying projects that are new in approach, when so many existing or previous projects lack funding.

Program Management

SCDOT provides both planning funds and technical assistance on the FTA grant application process with regional officers working with their local counterparts. There is a formal process for prioritization of human services transportation projects. The state carries out an independent review to ensure selection criteria and the Coordinated Plans agree, concentrating on assurance of the value, data, and sustainability of proposed services. SCDOT personnel also conduct site visits, both to provide assistance and to inspect proposed projects.

SCDOT recommends that a single program combining several of the existing programs would be more manageable for the state and for participating organizations.

A new development in South Carolina has been the interest of several private taxi companies in applying for Section 5316 and 5317 funding. None of the proposals have been approved yet; however, there are state funds that can be used for this purpose, and several applicants are likely to try again. One issue has been that for a New Freedom proposal to procure accessible vehicles, SCDOT could not verify that the vehicles would indeed be dedicated to human services transportation.

Coordination

SCDOT feels that the mandated planning requirements for 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding have given the state more leverage in working with human services transportation organizations. However, other federal programs provide funds for human services but do not require such a level of coordination, which adds to the burden on the state.

Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments – a rural Planning Organization in Central South Carolina
Mr. Orlando (O.J.) Papucci, Planner
Interview Date: February 17, 2010

The Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments (SLRCOG) is the Regional Transit Management Agency (RTMA) for Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter Counties in central South Carolina. The region includes the Cities of Sumter and Camden, and is also the home of Shaw Air Force Base.

Planning Process

Planning efforts for human services transportation in the region began prior to federal planning requirements and funding; indeed early efforts were used by the state as a model for development of such plans across South Carolina. State requirements were also crucial to this development, requiring a Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan to be submitted. Over the last six years, a regional council has coordinated public and private providers, helping to identify gaps in service and coordinate efforts. County inter-agency meetings and forums have succeeded in bringing together responsible parties and have allowed critical networking to take place. The state's assistance has been critical to the planning process; the consultants funded by the state have brought much expertise to the planning effort and in meeting federal requirements.

However, while planning for human service transportation has been going on in the region since before the federal requirements existed, the provision of human services transportation is new to the Santee-Lynches region, only receiving public attention once federal funds became available. Indeed, until recently segments of the region lacked any type of public transportation and automobile ownership was crucial to personal mobility. There is still a mild perception that human services transportation is not generally important.

SLRCOG feels that many human services agencies also do not see the benefits from being included in the planning process. While the planning process has improved coordination and allowed common needs and resources to be identified, simply having the funds available has made the most significant difference to human services transportation in the region. Applications for funds from human services organizations far exceed the money available. In addition, SLRCOG feels that there is a disconnect between the grant process and the Coordinated Plan; merely determining whether the plan contains a proposed project does little to ensure that planning is inclusive, realistic, or productive.

Program Management

To date, SLRCOG has only used Section 5310 funds, almost wholly for the purpose of supporting the operation of transportation services for senior and disabled customers in the region. The region hosts the only National Federation for the Blind chapter in the state that receives Section 5310 funding. Applications have been made previously for Section 5316 (JARC) funding, but have not been approved at the state level. A new JARC proposal, for vanpools, is in development. In addition, SLRCOG is working with the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging to prepare a grant application for Section 5317 (New Freedom) funding that would support a volunteer driver program for transportation provision. However, no capital, technology, or information projects have been pursued to date in the region.

SLRCOG would very much like to be able to implement projects that bring together the various programs, for instance in planning services that transport disabled customers to work. However, efforts at submitting combined applications (i.e., both Section 5310 and 5317 funding for a project) have not led to approval. In addition, the state application process has different timelines for submittal of applications for the various grants, preventing the submission of collaborative requests.

SLRCOG also would like to be able combine separate grant requests into a larger whole. If a request for proposals was put out for provision of human services transportation for all customers across the four-county region, the proposal would be more likely to be attractive to larger, professional transportation firms. Ideally, such a contract could lead to more integrated and coordinated services, reducing costs and improving service to customers, whether they are elderly, disabled, welfare-to-work, veterans, or even general, fare-paying riders. This would also benefit the human service agencies, for whom transportation coordination and the management of services are not competencies and which they find burdensome.

It would also be beneficial to have greater coordination at the federal level, not only between the FTA Regional Office and the central administration, but also across federal agencies. One issue is that the different timing of applications and funds being made available for different federal programs (both within FTA and between FTA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) means that human services agencies are unable to combine these funds to support transportation provision. Greater flexibility in allowing funds to be re-programmed at the state and local level would better serve the needs of human services agencies and their customers. Instead, to provide the local match required for transportation projects, the human services agencies must cut back expenditures on their other services until federal human services funds become available.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

As required by the state's application process, SLRCOG prioritizes its applications for human services transportation funding. Given the participation of county lawmakers and state legislators in the process and the level of effort required in determining and approving the prioritization at the local level, SLRCOG would prefer local ranking of projects to receive greater consideration at the state and federal level. The competition for funds and the occasional overruling of local efforts inhibits cooperation and is not received well by officials or agencies. Yet, given constrained funding and growing needs, the importance of coordination in order 'to do more with less' is accepted by stakeholders within the region.

As one of the more rural areas of the state, there are almost no transportation alternatives available for human services customers in the Santee-Lynches region. SLRCOG would like to see federal and state processes for distribution of funds that take into account the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, instead of population or jurisdiction being primary factors in distribution. Funds should be made available so that basic needs are met statewide. Meanwhile, local match considerations, even though blended with state dollars, continue to constrain applications for federal funds in the region.

Performance measurement is another area in which creative federal guidance would be useful. While SLRCOG collects basic service indicators (e.g., customers, miles, cost per passenger mile, etc.), these indicators show little of the benefits of the programs. Measures should instead be developed that focus on outcomes, particularly against baseline or benchmark data. This is particularly important for rural areas, where costs are likely to exceed those of urban areas, particularly on a per passenger basis. Measures that look at mobility management, sustainability, and other products of good human services transportation would be welcome.

In addition, the state requires providers to budget and report cost per passenger mile, but this budget is often a guess. Needs change, new customers apply and current customers dis-enroll, routes and schedules have to be restructured, while the price of fuel goes up and down. This makes tracking costs per passenger mile a significant burden; a straight-out flat fee per customer would simplify administration considerably without impacting transportation provision in any way.

Accordingly, performance measures that focus on outcomes and results, along with an application and program monitoring process tied to those measures, would be of real benefit. SLRCOG also is considering the issues of livability and the global community more strongly, in accordance with past and current federal initiatives. These issues have a direct impact on human services customers; a federal process for mobility funds that considered and

combined all of these areas would be invaluable. SLRCOG feels that the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and others need come together in enabling coordinated planning and funding in these fields. Collaboration and innovation at the local level should in turn be rewarded with demonstration grants that can enable new efforts without the need for matching from constrained local funds.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments – a rural Planning Organization in Lower Central South Carolina
Ms. Connie Slade, Assistant Executive Director
Interview Date: February 24, 2010

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG) is the Regional Transit Management Agency (RTMA) for Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties in central South Carolina. LSCOG also partners with the MPO for Augusta, Georgia on human services transportation projects.

Planning Process

The Lower Savannah region was an early leader in the development of coordinated planning for human services transportation in South Carolina. Coordinated planning was a key objective of state legislative discussions in the late 1990s, and LSCOG was contacted by human services agencies seeking to develop coordinated service. The COG moved quickly to take leadership in this new role, forming the RTMA and reaching out to transportation providers, social services agencies, health providers, and disabled citizens' groups in the region. When the coordinated planning requirements for FTA funds were introduced, LSCOG already had an established network of stakeholders and made only minor changes in its process to meet federal specifications. The planning requirements have not been any burden for LSCOG, while SCDOT considers LSCOG's planning system a model for the state.

When the federal requirements were first introduced, SCDOT did provide consulting services to regions across South Carolina to develop the formal plans. In successive years the planning process has been managed, and the Coordinated Plan written using internal resources.

LSCOG feels the Coordinated Plan process has been effective in reaching new populations. The overwhelming need, however, is for funds. For people who had no alternatives before the human services transportation funds, "it is a blessing." Overall, the funds and the planning process have brought new credibility to the work of LSCOG and of the need for human services transportation.

Program Management

LSCOG first made use of Section 5311 funds for human services transportation and then applied for Section 5310 funds. In the last three years, LSCOG also has applied for and received Section 5316 and 5317 funds. Federal funds are used primarily for the purpose of contracting the operation of transportation services for senior and disabled customers in the region from human services organizations. A variety of providers are funded in each county on a contract basis.

One of the key findings of early planning discussions was that the separate human services transportation providers often had underutilized capacity. Mobility Managers at LSCOG (divided among the counties) now coordinate service and customers to make efficient use of the transportation resources available to meet the significant demand for the services. Some Section 5316 funding is used for this purpose; other funds are obtained from Mobility Services for All Americans (MSAA) grants. In general, SCDOT will not accept applications for Section 5310 or 5317 funding to support the mobility management process. However, new scheduling software and Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) technology are now being implemented with some Section 5316 and 5317 funding that will assist the mobility management process.

LSCOG also has applications in process for Section 5316 and 5317 funding for a project that would provide companions for customers, assisting them throughout their trips to ensure they can access buildings and offices, schedule pick-up, and otherwise meet their needs. This project would use MSAA and Older Americans Act money as well.

Local match, particularly for Section 5316 projects, is very difficult to get from the counties, and services are being cut back. One urban connection just had Saturday service eliminated, leading to the loss of jobs by some customers. It would be useful if fares could be used to make up the local match.

The process of FTA grant approval and distribution by SCDOT is not always transparent to LSCOG. A recent instance was cited in which a two-county region with 100,000 inhabitants received only \$250,000, while a county of only 13,000 inhabitants received \$400,000 for comparable projects. Some applications that LSCOG considers to have been very strong were only funded at a one-third level. A more formal and transparent distributive process is in development by the state, most likely to be based on ridership. However LSCOG feels this will not take into account the different costs and needs of various areas, particularly the most rural counties. One such county with 28 percent unemployment just had an annual JARC grant cut from \$50,000 to \$30,000, and local officials are demanding justification.

LSCOG would like to have the process of application to award made speedier; the year it takes now creates uncertainty for the agency and for providers. LSCOG also observes that more flexibility in the distribution of federal funds at the state level would be useful; the state should be able to redirect funds when one project or another is unsuccessful. LSCOG noted one example in which it took another agency nine months to complete the purchase of a van, while LSCOG is often running out of money by March (with one remaining quarter in their fiscal year). Instead, funds that are not allocated in a reasonable timeframe should be redistributed to meet urgent needs: "you can't stop dialysis." A faster and more flexible funding process is therefore needed.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

As required by the state's application process, LSCOG prioritizes its applications for human services transportation funding. Each of the six counties has one official on the LSCOG Policy Committee which carries out this task. The Policy Committee receives presentations from human services agencies and takes staff input in prioritizing applications for FTA funding for human services transportation projects. Projects must be included in the Coordinated Plan.

A key emphasis for the region is ensuring that providers coordinate their service and provide transportation to any human services customers in their operating region. Customers not particular to a provider (i.e., customers who receive human services from another organization) pay a modest fare when being transported; these fares are used to help fund the service, offsetting requirements for federal funds. All customers must be pre-cleared; recipients of Medicare and Medicaid are automatically eligible (and are transported for free).

Applications for FTA funding by providers that do not open their services to other customers generally are not accepted or receive only the lowest priority. One application by an agency that operates 36 vehicles was rejected by LSCOG as no new services were to be offered and the service would not be open to other customers. In short, providers must coordinate with other organizations and with their county's mobility managers.

LSCOG collects basic data from the providers for the purpose of monitoring the programs, and with new scheduling and AVL technology, plans to improve upon and expand upon the data collected (i.e., wait times). However, most program monitoring takes place up front during the application process, when providers must provide budgets. It is not always easy to design these budgets, and costs are not transparent. LSCOG has a good sense of the costs of the market and negotiates with providers to obtain a realistic cost for the contracted services, though one provider recently turned down a contract due to the low level of funding.

LSCOG would like to see coordination and cooperation at the local level rewarded by the state. More importantly, all aspects of human services transportation need to be considered in making grants and monitoring performance. Distribution of funds should then be based on performance and needs. The state needs more guidance from FTA in making funds flexible and further enabling coordination, as currently the state appears to be overly restricted in what it can do with the funds. A process that gives the state more flexibility in meeting the intent of the human services transportation programs – and that also includes more guidance from FTA on what those intentions are and what priorities should be followed – would be more effective.

Central Midlands Council of Governments– a regional planning organization in Central South Carolina

Mr. Norman Whitaker, Executive Director

Mr. Reginald Simmons, Transportation Director

Interview Date: March 9, 2010

The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) is the regional planning organization for the Central Midlands region of South Carolina. The region includes four counties: Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, and Richland; and the Cities of Batesburg/Leesville, Cayce, Columbia, Forest Acres, Irmo, Lexington, Newberry, Springdale, West Columbia, and Winnsboro. CMCOG is also the designated MPO for the Transportation Management Area (TMA) that covers Columbia, the state's capital, and the surrounding region.

Planning Process

Coordination planning efforts for human services transportation in the region date to the inception of federal requirements for the Section 5316 and 5317 programs. CMCOG undertook an outreach program in 2006 and 2007, hosting a series of meetings to bring together stakeholders and begin the development of a Regional Human Service Coordination Plan. The SCDOT assistance was invaluable in these efforts, including the advice provided by consultants. A database developed by the University of South Carolina listing all human services agencies in the state was also very useful, providing the directory with which CMCOG began their outreach efforts for the Coordinated Plan development.

The availability of human services transportation funding has generated enthusiasm among providers and agencies. Previous efforts in the 1990s that encouraged voluntary coordination were not effective; however, the current federal requirements associated with funding are viewed as much more effective and as having brought forth much more effort on the part of all concerned. Stakeholders see the benefit of coordinated services, cognizant that there is always a shortage of resources as opposed to the growing needs. Improved, on-going coordination is seen as a real benefit of the coordinated planning process, bringing agencies and providers together and fostering relationships. At the same time, however, these stakeholders have some apprehension regarding the new federal requirements and how these might affect their operations. The human services organizations are protective of their clients and do not want to affect their current business. The coordinated planning requirements also are seen as somewhat redundant to what naturally takes place at a local level.

CMCOG's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has been in the forefront of efforts to improve human services in the area, including the use of federal funds from the Department of Health and Human Services and other sources. These efforts are being tied back into the transportation planning branch of the organization.

CMCOG is leading the development of a planning framework, entitled "Closing the Gaps," with the objective of developing a more comprehensive and socially integrated plan that will build on the initial Coordinated Plan results. Considerable outreach is being conducted to increase provider awareness of Section 5316 and 6317 funding availability. In addition, a scoping study is in progress to improve information on the resources and needs of human services customers in the region. It is anticipated that the study will bring benefits in future, enabling CMCOG to bridge the gap between needs and resources going forward.

Development of the Coordinated Plan has not yet been a concern, though the requirements are labor-intensive. It would be useful to see a more results-oriented approach to human services transportation funding that took into account the effort expended on planning. As the programs develop and grow, CMCOG considers it likely the administrative and management requirements will become more demanding, but currently the planning can be coordinated in-house with less than a full-time employee equivalent. As a direct recipient of FTA funds, CMCOG also believes this role will grow more demanding, but for the limited projects and funding received to date the administrative requirements have not been burdensome.

The regional Coordinated Plan is fully integrated with the MPO's Long Range Plan; both have common objectives of improving human services and meeting environmental and other livability objectives. Concerns over air quality, mobility, and similar issues are seen as worthy but also as challenging, given the sprawling nature of development in South Carolina.

Program Management

CMCOG receives human services transportation funding both from the state and directly from FTA in its dual roles as a regional planning organization and urban MPO. The organization has developed considerable experience with the application process for obtaining Section 5310 funds through the state, but is relatively new to the process for Section 5316 and Section 5317 funds through either channel. To date, they have received approximately \$100,000 from the state and directly from FTA for Section 5316 and 5317 projects.

In a typical year, CMCOG submits five or six grant requests to the state, of which three typically get funded. In the past year the three funded projects received \$45,000 of federal funds each, all for vehicle procurement. Projects not funded are returned by the state due to lack of program funds; priority does not appear to play a role in these decisions. Greater transparency and a better defined timeline from SCDOT in reviewing grant applications would be an improvement.

The two paths for Section 5316 and 5317 funding creates some confusion among providers, and the lack of a fixed schedule for the state-managed process only adds to this. CMCOG also has challenges in meeting the application timelines, particularly given the multiple layers of review and approval. A request from the Newberry Council on Aging for federal funds was switched at CMCOG's request from an application for urban funds (with CMCOG as the direct recipient) to a rural application to SCDOT.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

CMCOG has concentrated its efforts on capital projects, primarily funding the procurement of vehicles by human service transportation providers. The organization is currently restructuring its project prioritization process as part of the assessment of provider and customer needs. In the future, the results of this assessment will be used to establish a set of tiers for needs-based prioritization of human service transportation applications.

The emphasis to date has been on small projects with a one or two-year timeframe. CMCOG wants to maintain flexibility and has tended to steer clear of longer and larger projects that inhibit the ability to react to emergent needs. This short timeframe also benefits the providers in being able to come up with matching funds, as the sustainability of funds for longer projects is doubtful. Arranging for local matching funds is entirely the responsibility of the providers, who work with counties and other sources of funds to come up with the match.

CMCOG focuses on support of human services transportation providers, issuing letters of support and ensuring projects are included in the Coordinated Plan. Requests are prioritized by the COG's Board of Directors, but this seems to have little impact on state and federal approval. Applicants also have expressed concerns over the timeliness of the projects, as they need to quickly lock-in local funds once projects are approved, or, if they are

disapproved they want to urgently re-program the local funds to meet other needs. There is apprehension that needy projects can fall through the cracks while waiting for the grants to be approved.

Relatively little data is collected by CMCOG on human services transportation in the region. The focus on capital projects requires mostly up-front justification and budgeting rather than monitoring of ongoing performance and results. However, CMCOG is preparing a survey that will collect information from the providers on basic service provided and customer demand, and in the future CMCOG intends to make this part of an ongoing effort that will be incorporated into a mobility management role.

Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

The most successful project in the region is undertaken by the Newberry Council on Aging, which provides medical escort services to assist needs customers. The first application and recipient of Section 5317 funds, this project continues to be funded by SCDOT. Most other human services transportation in the region have been funded with Section 5310 funding (received through the state) to fund medical transportation and faith-based groups that provide transportation to meet a variety of needs.

One innovative project undertaken with directly received Section 5317 funding has been started by a private taxicab company, supplying transportation services to elderly and disabled customers in the urban area. This project raised liability concerns with officials, who are more used to dealing with government or non-profit providers. However there have been no problems to date and it is hoped that more private firms will apply for grants.

APPENDIX C-5: Virginia

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Mr. Neil Sherman, Specialized Transportation Program Manager

Interview Date: December 15, 2009

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides support to rural and small urban areas throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia in the development of Coordinated Plans. DRPT made consultant assistance available for the development of the Coordinated Plans for Virginia's small urban and rural areas. DRPT also facilitates the use of state funds to provide matching grants for JARC and NF for the rural and small urban areas for which it is the designated recipient. DRPT is not able to provide any matching funds to agencies in large urban areas for which it is not the designated recipient, but it does serve as an advisory resource to these organizations.

***RADAR*— a rural Non-Governmental Organization Human Services Transportation provider in Rural Southwestern Virginia**

Mr. Curtis Andrews, Executive Director

Interview Date: December 29, 2009

RADAR (not an acronym), is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 provider of human service transportation services in the Roanoke, Virginia area. RADAR provides contracted transportation services, both fixed route and on-demand, to local governments, human service agencies, and Valley Metro, the local transit agency in the Greater Roanoke Valley region. Their service area includes rural parts of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including the City and County of Roanoke, Alleghany County, Henry County, and the Cities of Clifton Forge, Covington, and Martinsville. RADAR began its services 33 years ago and currently works with 40-50 government and non-profit human services organizations. RADAR owns 60 vehicles, ranging from yellow school buses that provide transportation for Head Start students, college shuttles serving three local colleges, and paratransit vans, including those that are a part of the Valley Metro "STAR" paratransit service.

Planning Process

Prior to the beginning the Coordination Plan process, RADAR and other local human service transportation agencies had been involved a Virginia Tech-led Coordination Plan process. The university is only 30 miles from Roanoke, in the adjacent New River region. Virginia Tech's Transportation Institute's New River and Roanoke Valley Public Mobility Program inventoried human service transportation vehicles and programs in the two regions to aid in the creation of coordination program across the two regions. The study was funded by a statewide planning grant.

To develop the Human Services Coordination Plan to submit to DRPT and FTA, the Roanoke Valley region took the study and outreach processes created by Virginia Tech and modified it to fit the federal requirements. RADAR considers the Roanoke Valley fortunate in having a "head start" on the Coordinated Plan process with the Virginia Tech study. Their final Coordinated Plan, the "Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (PDC 5) Regional Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan" was submitted in June 2008. DRPT engaged the consulting firms Cambridge Systematics and KFH Group to prepare of the final report. DRPT staff and consultants engaged in the Coordinated Plan creation process, attending local stakeholder meetings and serving as a resource for local transportation providers, such as RADAR, transit agencies, and other local human service transportation providers throughout the Coordinated Plan process.

Program Management

The need for paratransit services has been growing dramatically in recent years. RADAR's ridership in its Roanoke City program experienced a 9.5 percent increase this fiscal year compared with the previous two fiscal years, and its Roanoke County program ridership increased 12 percent. RADAR is attempting to meet these needs to the best of the organization's ability despite funding gaps, while recognizing that services offered might not be sustainable from year to year.

Using New Freedom funding RADAR has been able to do the following:

- Collaborate with the local Council on Aging to craft an agreement with several local, private taxicab services to provide door-to-door on-demand services for the elderly and disabled. This is really a "pass through" agreement for RADAR, but it has provided a much higher-level of individualized service than would otherwise be possible through a fixed route or other traditional paratransit shuttle services.
- Provide a new fixed route service through Valley Metro to a new combined workforce development and state services center.
- Expand service in the Roanoke County "CORTANS" program, which provides non fixed-route service to the elderly and disabled.

Using JARC funding RADAR has been able to do the following:

- Create two demand-response transportation programs for the City and County of Roanoke.
- They are currently in negotiations with the City of Martinsville to add a third bus service for their workforce investment board. The board has been subsidizing their clients' fuel costs, spending \$300,000 annually to transport them to workforce development services. Adding a third bus would cost around \$60,000 annually.
- Augmenting CORTANS and Valley Metro "STAR" paratransit program funding.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

RADAR does believe that the creation of the Coordinated Plan was a time consuming process that adds some administrative burden; however, since the agencies involved in the region were already engaged in the Virginia Tech study, the burden did not amount to more than adding the additional public meetings and other requirements to modify the Virginia Tech study methodology to conform with the Coordinated Plan requirements. RADAR believes that the Coordinated Plan process has been useful in raising awareness of the availability of grant funding (JARC, NF and 5310) for transportation services among human service agencies in the Roanoke Valley region. Most of the human service agencies were unaware of the availability of NF and JARC funding until told, and DRPT sent letters explaining JARC and NF to those agencies using 5310 funding in their region to try and increase awareness of the programs. The Coordinated Plan process was also useful in engaging members of the public that had not attended public meetings required for other grant programs (like 5311), attracting human service agencies, paratransit clients, and the general public. The increased participation has resulted in a better understanding of the available grant funding, the importance and benefits of coordination, and the challenges facing human service transportation delivery in the region.

Concerns

RADAR has great concern about the viability of continuing JARC and NF funding, along with state and local government and non-profit funding that is used to meet required match funding. RADAR is currently considering

curtailing some of the services offered through 5310 due to lack of funding at the local level. The 50-50 match required for JARC has been an impediment to increasing RADAR's use of the grant programs. With severe budget gaps in local governments and the associated service cuts, it is hard for local governments to meet JARC's matching requirements. As a consequence, JARC has not been used as much as it might have been otherwise.

Coordination

RADAR believes that at this time it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the Coordination Plan. With the Coordination Plan in place for only 18 months and the fiscal crisis that has been faced by state and local governments and non-profit funding sources, it has been a challenge just to maintain current services. RADAR does collect various types of quantitative data to track their services delivered that can be used to measure the impact of services provided through JARC, NF, and 5310 in the future. This has been the first year that the region has been required to demonstrate progress on the plan to DRPT and solicit input on what they are proposing on their applications to DRPT. This year was also the first time that RADAR was audited by DRPT in a dozen years.

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission – a rural planning district commission in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Ms. Cathy Zielinski, Program Manager - Human Services Planning

Interview date: January 7, 2010

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) is a state chartered Planning District Commission (PDC) serving the Counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the Towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, The Plains, Warrenton, and Washington. While Culpeper and Fauquier Counties are a mix of exurban and rural characteristics, the transportation challenges faced by the region are largely similar to those of other rural areas. The only local transit provider, the 501(c)3 non-profit Virginia Regional Transit (VRT), provides limited bus service in Fauquier, Orange, and Culpeper Counties. VRT also offers limited on-demand transportation service in these jurisdictions. Public transportation is not available in much of the region.

As a PDC the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission is responsible for regional transportation coordination. Prior to the SAFETEA-LU mandated Coordinated Plan requirements for JARC and New Freedom funding, the commission was concerned with the lack of human service public transportation. In 2006, Aging Together, an umbrella organization of approximately 100 local human services nonprofits, and the RRRC produced a white paper documenting the lack of local human service transportation for their elderly and disabled citizens. However, it was not until the Coordinated Plan process began that RRRC, Aging Together, and other stakeholders were able to take action towards improving and coordinating the provision of human services transportation in their region.

Planning Process

The introduction of the Coordinated Plan requirements and New Freedom funding provided the incentive and the capacity for RRRC and its partners to expand human services transportation in the region. Without the New Freedom funding, it would not have been possible for RRRC to attract external organizations to participate in Coordinated Plan process, or to move forward with their desired introduction of new human services transportation services. The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan was developed by three groups:

- DRPT retained consultants Cambridge Systematics and KFH Group who aided in the development of the Coordinated Plan. The work of the consultants focused on gathering basic demographic information and other quantitative data for the plan. DRPT also held a workshop in Richmond on the Coordinated Plan requirements that RRRC found helpful.

- A comprehensive working group led by RRRC and included the Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board (which receives 5310 funding), VRT, the local Disability Services Boards, Aging Together, and the Rappahannock Area Agency on Aging, the area's largest paratransit provider, provided the local content for the plan.
- A local advisory group also was formed that included stakeholders such as the community college, the local United Way, the Social Services Director, and representatives of some workforce programs. The advisory group took the lead on facilitating discussions with individual human services nonprofits and other stakeholders on the Coordinated Plan contents and human services transportation needs in the region.

Overall, RRRC views the Coordination Plan requirements as having been a "big benefit" to their region. As a PDC the agency is required to do planning, but there is no state funding for them to deliver services, including human services transportation. RRRC must seek out funding for programs they want to deliver. The Coordination Plan requirements and the incentive that New Freedom funding provided made it possible for the agency to bring together a large group of stakeholders and begin to address the previously identified human services transportation needs in the region. From RRRC's perspective the Coordination Plan requirements and processes have been helpful, not burdensome. RRRC also believes that having received DRPT assistance with their first Coordination Plan and with the data collection currently in-place for their Mobility Management program, that they should have the capacity to maintain the Coordination Plan without further state assistance.

In the Coordinated Plan development process, RRRC and its partners spent a lot of time developing goals and an organizational infrastructure, and then they used these to define how they would prioritize strategies. By selecting strategies based on identified goals, it made it easier for RRRC to identify what steps need to be taken first to improve human services transportation in their region.

Program Management

One of the first priorities identified through the Coordinated Plan process was to put together a Mobility Management Plan and program. Using a New Freedom grant they received, RRRC and its partners launched a Mobility Management program in October 2008. The Mobility Management program funded two part-time positions. A part-time mobility specialist position placed with the Community Services Board works directly with connecting the elderly and disabled in need of transportation services with appropriate organizations that can serve their needs. The second part-time position is located at RRRC, and is focused on administering the Mobility Management program. The duties of the Mobility Management program administrator include applying for additional grants and collecting data on human services transportation needs and services available, including the number of people currently using human services transportation and the number of people with unmet needs. A major benefit of coordination and the Mobility Management Program is that RRRC can request data from other providers of human services transportation, including Virginia Regional Transit, and volunteer programs. The Mobility Management Program staff, the Community Services Board, and RRRC meet regularly to exchange information and integrate their efforts. No agency or organization in the region currently receives JARC funding.

RRRC received a second-year New Freedom Grant in October 2009, which will help finance a pilot bus route that will travel between Culpeper, Charlottesville, and the University of Virginia Hospital. A senior transportation program staffed entirely by volunteers will operate a feeder service for the bus route. The Community Service Board and Aging Together are currently building on their volunteer transportation program, a critical component of the region's human services transportation. RRRC and its partners also hope to create a call center with part of their second-year New Freedom funding.

Concerns

While RRRC's overall views on the Coordinated Plan are positive, they found two elements of the plan requirements time consuming and unhelpful: the publication requirement and associated public meetings and the documentation of need. The publication requirement and the associated public meetings were redundant with the outreach process already in place for the Coordinated Plan. RRRC has never had an individual citizen respond to a meeting advertisement in local media, and its public meeting participants consisted of representatives from organizations already participating in developing the Coordinated Plan that RRRC invited. The documentation of need also proved challenging for RRRC, and they received DRPT assistance with developing it. As the Rappahannock-Rapidan region has virtually no human transportation services available, it was difficult for them to demonstrate quantitatively the needs of the region. The human services transportation needs known to RRRC came mostly through anecdotal sources. The agency does not have the capacity to conduct the level of data collection required for the documentation of need.

RRRC is concerned about the sustainability its Mobility Management program, which is funded solely by their New Freedom grant. The state is currently providing the 50 percent local match required for New Freedom funding, but the state has not committed to providing that match again even for the next year. It is not possible for RRRC and its partners to meet the 50 percent required match locally. If the region loses New Freedom funding, it will not be possible to continue to offer the Mobility Management program.

Recommendations

RRRC suggestions for improving the Coordinated Plan process and the grant program funding included combining JARC and NF, adding more flexibility in how the grant can be spent, and eliminating the requirement for a formal documentation of need.

Hampton Roads Transit – an urban transit agency in Southeastern Virginia.

Ms. Sharon Foster, DBE Program Manager

Interview Date: January 29, 2010

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) is the designated recipient for 5310, JARC, and New Freedom funds and lead on the Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan for the Hampton Roads, Virginia region. The region covers thirteen jurisdictions, including the Cities of Hampton, Virginia Beach, Newport News, Norfolk, and Williamsburg. The *Hampton Roads Area Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan* was completed in April 2008, and developed in cooperation with Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), which staffs the local Hampton Roads MPO, and Williamsburg Area Transit (WAT), a smaller transit agency operating within the region.

Planning Process

The Coordinated Plan was developed by HRT in-house; a member of the agency's staff with expertise in ADA-compliance led the effort. No consultants were used at any point in the development of the plan. Mr. Neil Sherman, of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, provided ongoing assistance in coordinating the development of Hampton Road's Coordination Plan with state goals and possible sources of state funding.

The plan was developed with input from 60 community stakeholder organizations, including local community services boards, non-profit transportation providers, elderly and disabled services organizations, local planning departments, taxi companies, a local school system and other human services organizations. These organizations were invited to participate in a series of stakeholder meetings and an electronic survey designed to identify current resources and expressed needs.

Program Management

HRT is currently accepting applications for the fourth round of competitive grant funding guided by the Coordination Plan. The first three rounds of grant funding have produced several notable successes. Most of the projects HRT has approved for funding are improvements to existing services or infrastructure. Mobility Management programs, efforts that increase use of the existing transit system and vanpool/carpool programs are favored in the selection process.

JARC

- A local community services board was the recipient of funds to make infrastructure improvements to their bus stops, making them safer for customers in wheelchairs.
- The Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) developed a 24-hour on-demand service for low-income individuals to their places of employment. This service is provided free or for a very minimal fee, depending on the circumstances of the client. The service rapidly expanded in popularity, growing from 22 participants at inception to approximately 75 participants within the first year. Without this program the participants would be unable to access the same places of employment.

New Freedom

- A senior center received funds to purchase a GPS system for their ADA accessible vans that will allow them to track the locations of their vans and to coordinate client pickups more quickly.
- A taxicab voucher pilot program in the City of Virginia Beach provides vouchers to eligible participants to use a local taxi service. The program provides door-to-door transportation for those that are unable to reach public transportation. The taxicab company providing the services owns two ADA-accessible vans.
- The Peninsula Agency on Aging received funds to improve the transportation information section of their "No Wrong Door" website which provides information on a range of services offered to the elderly and disabled by local jurisdictions and the state.
- A new "travel training" program provides an orientation to using public transportation to those newly dependent upon it.

Prioritization/Program Monitoring

The Coordinated Plan is very explicit about what types of projects are eligible for funding and are likely to be competitive for selection, based on the grant program requirements as well as the region's goals for human services transportation provision. This has made it easier for organizations applying for New Freedom or JARC grant funding to understand what types of projects can be and are likely to be funded. Among the key strategies identified in the Plan were an emphasis on capital projects and infrastructure as opposed to operations, making use of existing services and volunteers, improvement of information and infrastructure resources (physical and technology), and encouraging stronger coordination among agencies and transportation providers through cooperative agreements for shared use of services. HRT and its partners are unsure of the sustainability of funding for the grant programs after the expiration of SAFETEA-LU. Accordingly, the types of projects they are funding predominately include technological, infrastructure, and other capital improvements with limited ongoing operating needs.

To date, no grant applicant has been denied JARC or New Freedom grant funding through the selection process. A few applications contained individual elements that were ineligible for funding, but once these elements were

eliminated the applications were accepted. All applications have been approved for full funding in their final form. The overall volume of grant applications has been steady but not overwhelming.

Success and Benefits of the Plan

While the Coordinated Plan process was a significant investment of staff time and resources, HRT views it as one with very positive outcomes for interagency collaboration and service provision. During the development of the Coordinated Plan HRT, WAT, and HRPDC developed a greater understanding of each other's needs, goals and competencies. HRT was able to mentor its smaller-neighbor WAT on human service transportation and the grant programs, and HRT also developed a better understanding of the regional context and other technical information from HRPDC. While these three agencies had collaborated on other regional transportation issues, the Coordinated Plan development process was the first time they had been brought together to work on human services transportation coordination.

The Coordinated Plan and its associated grant programs have had a significant impact not only on the agencies leading the process, but also on the individuals using the services funded by the grants and on use of the transit in the region overall. Programs funded through the Coordinated Plan process have had wider reaching effects than HRT initially anticipated. The NHRA program has grown faster than expected, providing a critical transportation link to individuals that otherwise may be left unemployed and impoverished. The Coordinated Plan process also established the link between NHRA and HRT that allowed them to fill an unmet transportation need which otherwise would have remained unknown to them. NHRA was able to educate HRT about the issue of transportation reliability among the low-income and unemployed, and together they were able to create a solution that has worked. Without the Coordinated Plan and JARC funding, it would have been very difficult for this to happen.

Hampton Roads Transit has experienced an increase in bus ridership and the agency's vanpool and carpool program usage in part because those who were formerly assisted in JARC programs have transitioned to fixed route transit services. HRT has found that as those participating in workforce development programs and served by JARC funded services become familiar with transit, they have easily transitioned to transit usage once their incomes have grown to the point where they are ineligible to receive further public assistance.

Concerns

HRT's two major concerns related to the grant programs are the sustainability of funding and the allocation of funding for New Freedom. HRT and many of the grant recipients are nervous about the sustainability of the grants in the upcoming surface transportation bill reauthorization, and HRT is actively exploring alternative funding sources for programs that are supported by JARC or New Freedom grants. HRT has experienced difficulties in allocating funding for New Freedom grants; the agency attributes this to the lack of awareness about New Freedom and they currently are working to educate potential applicants about the types of projects that can be funded through the grant program.

Recommendations

HRT offers just one recommendation to improve the administration of the grants. They feel that the review of the grant applications is an extremely time-consuming activity for agency staff. Having to review applications separately for JARC and New Freedom is an extra burden. Combining JARC and New Freedom into a single grant program would eliminate some administrative burden. However, due to the under use of New Freedom, it would be advisable to designate a percentage of the overall funding that would be for New Freedom projects.

APPENDIX C-6: Washington

Washington State Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division

Mr. Don Chartock, Rural and Coordinated Transportation Administrator

Interview date: December 16, 2009

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the lead state agency for the coordination of requests for Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding from FTA, working primarily with local and rural planning organizations.

Planning Process

Within Washington State, projects for Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding are identified at the local level. In the three major urban areas in Washington, the MPOs have their own solicitation processes, which have additional requirements beyond the state requirements. In addition, transit agencies apply directly to FTA.

However, other projects across the state are carried out by the MPOs and Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), and then submitted to WSDOT. Each planning organization identifies and prioritizes projects for funding in their submission to the state. WSDOT then carries out its own prioritization process, using a standard methodology to compare and rank projects. This separate and independent review process is designed to ensure objective review. Based on the final grade, a project can receive 100 percent or lesser funding, e.g., A = 100 percent, B = 90 percent, etc. Reviewers make considerable use of measures of effectiveness in considering applications for existing programs.

In addition, the state also receives applications from non-governmental groups directly. Local applicants normally working through the MPOs and RTPOs can also apply directly to the state. All make use of a consolidated grants process that combines both federal and state requirements.

Program Management

WSDOT provides both planning funds and technical assistance on the FTA grant application process with regional officers working with their local counterparts. This assistance is much more than simply completing the submission requirements; it also includes providing advice on public outreach, consultation, and performance measurement. WSDOT applies the process required for JARC applications to all grant submissions, and requires applicants to make use of it.

Washington State performs all matching at the state level for federal grants under the Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs. Funds for planning are distributed to RTPOs and to small urban MPOs (approximately \$10,000 annually each). A similar arrangement also is used for Section 5307 and 5309 funding. In addition, the state has integrated its project application process with that for federal funds for the 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding, and also for other federal funds (e.g., Section 5311). The state does all 5310 programming on a biennial basis.

Coordination

WSDOT feels that the planning requirements for 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding have been effective in encouraging improved coordination and provision of human services transportation. The availability of federal funding and the planning requirements have "brought together the right people in the room" for identification of needs and resources to meet special needs.

People For People – a rural Non-Governmental Organization Human Services Transportation provider in Central Washington State

Ms. Madelyn Carlson, Chief Executive Officer

Interview date: January 7, 2010

People For People is a non-profit human services agency that has provided transportation services for special needs citizens since 1982. Originally founded in Yakima County in Central Washington, *People For People* subsequently expanded to cover the four counties of Kittitas, Grant, Adams, and Lincoln. These counties are organized under a Regional Transportation Planning Organization named Quad-County, abbreviated as QUADCO. In addition to its work with Yakima County and QUADCO, *People For People* supplies services for the Yakima Nation Indian tribe. Besides fixed route transit service within the City of Yakima, there are no public transportation services in the region.

Planning Process

In obtaining Section 5310 and 5316 JARC funding, *People For People* works with two planning organizations: the Yakima MPO and the QUADCO RTPO. Outreach to target audiences is the most intensive part of the planning process. Public forums were found not to be productive; accordingly *People For People* focuses on obtaining public participation through joint programs that involve target audiences, such as adult health forums, family services organizations, senior citizen homes, and nutrition group meetings and sessions. In addition, *People For People* carries out many surveys, including an annual survey of customer needs, and analyzes hundreds of responses. *People For People* provides the leadership for the Special Needs Transportation Coalition for Grant, Lincoln, and Adams counties, which works with community service providers to address the special needs community's transportation needs to access services, employment opportunities, and daily activities.

Even before federal special needs transportation programs became available, *People For People* already worked with special needs groups in the region on transportation needs. The special needs transportation coalitions in each area prioritized needs, brought together resources, and set forth quality requirements to meet the needs of special needs citizens in rural and isolated areas. However, federal programs have brought in new participants and created a new and more inclusive dialogue, leading to improved identification of needs and resources. Participants in the dialogue include: veterans' groups, church groups, youth services, and pre-school/HeadStart schools. With everyone having a voice at the table, all providers can look at gaps in service and opportunities for growth to meet the emerging needs of the population.

Program Management

People For People has the internal resources and expertise to meet the federal planning requirements, and in fact sub-contracts its services to the Yakima Nation to assist them with their grant applications. For special needs transportation, the coalitions in Yakima County and in QUADCO meet quarterly and consider community needs on a dynamic basis. Internal staff perform the entire planning process, from the initial outreach and meetings through to the preparation and assembly of the Coordinated Plans and FTA grant requests. In short, the federal planning process is considered a beneficial tool that has increased local community cooperation and maximized the efficient use of resources.

Regarding finances, there are essentially no local funds available; matching for federal funds comes from state apportionments. Federal funds are therefore critical to continued operation of human services transportation.

People For People uses Section 5310 and 5316 funding, but has not applied for or made use of 5317 New Freedom funds. They have looked at the programs under 5317, but have reservations regarding the qualification requirements. In particular, the requirement that New Freedom services be new is an obstacle, as the primary goal of the special needs planning group is the maintenance of existing services.

The specific goals of *People For People* in human services transportation program planning and project prioritization process are:

- Preservation – maintain existing transportation services/resources
- Efficiencies – rationalize and optimize services for welfare and special needs customers

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

In Washington State, the local planning organizations rank projects (A, B, C, D, etc.) and submit them to the state, which then conducts a separate review and prioritization process before submitting consolidated requests to FTA. *People For People* observes that the state process and decisions are not always transparent and that the outcomes sometimes appear inconsistent. In addition, Washington State conducts its grant application planning on a two-year cycle. *People For People* suggests that this is too short a cycle for transportation projects, with implementation and initial customer use too unsure over that short a period, although the frequent process does allow for emergent needs to be added. One suggestion would be to separate the selection and funding process for existing versus new projects, with a four-year re-competition for existing projects being more appropriate. In addition, the winner-take-all nature of the grant process and awards leads to competition during the coordination process, as each organization struggles to ensure its projects are renewed. More sustained funding arrangements, with funds allocated to existing projects or by formulas, would be more equitable and could improve the sustainability of transportation projects.

Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

People For People has had several successful projects, including most recently their work with the Yakima Nation. *People For People* entered into a partnership with the Yakima Nation to provide administrative and transportation expertise, working with them to win FTA Native American grants. The Yakima Nation was recently awarded the largest four-year grant of that type in the United States, and together the Yakima Nation and *People For People* were the first new awardees to have wheels on the road following award.

Another successful project is a community connector for the City of Yakima and eight other towns that has provided access to health care and benefited low-income and shift workers. The community connector has made low-cost shopping opportunities more available to low-income users. In addition, in one case, cancer patients needed a regular service to the hospital but with flexible returns. This was made possible by having transportation services provided through a combination of fixed-route one-way and demand response on the return trip, replacing more expensive paratransit round-trips. Finally, *People For People* has had most of its projects become permanently established, improving in customer use and performance over time.

Puget Sound Regional Council – an urban Metropolitan Planning Organization in Washington State

Ms. Mary Pat Lawlor, Program Director

Interview date: January 13, 2010

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the MPO for the greater metropolitan area of Seattle, Tacoma, and other jurisdictions on or near the Puget Sound in the State of Washington. Participating jurisdictions and organizations include: King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, 72 cities within the region, four port districts, the region's transit agencies, the Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transportation Commission, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and the Suquamish Tribe.

Planning Process

In regard to the planning requirements for Section 5316 JARC and 5317 New Freedom funding, PSRC acknowledges that the commitment for human services transportation planning is time consuming, but comparable to most other political processes. Grant applications, matching funds coordination, and community outreach are cyclical

and can be managed with a rigorous schedule. Note that PSRC does not perform grant administration, but instead coordinates activities by recipients or sponsors that are funding directly by the state. PSRC manages the competitive process, coordinates the funding, and updates the Coordinated Plan.

As part of PSRC's governance process for the federal planning requirements, a special needs transportation committee meets bi-monthly, with representatives from transit providers, human services groups, and county participants. This committee reports to a transportation operators committee, which in turn reports to a policy board, while overall the PSRC executive committee has final say on the planning process.

Program Management

PSRC is a designated recipient for 5316 and 5317 funding (but not 5310 funding which Washington State distributes to operating agencies directly). Tasks performed by the MPO include the program management for 5316 and 5317 funding requests, the coordination of public comment, and working with the project sponsors/recipients, which are mostly non-profit groups. To identify special needs for transportation, PSRC has an adopted outreach plan, which is part of the organization's coordinated transit-human services transportation plan. A regional ranking process is used to score and prioritize projects for funding for submission to FTA.

PSRC works with three types of sponsors/recipients: 1) those that apply for funding through PSRC, 2) those that apply both to PSRC and directly to the state (i.e., partial grants from each), and 3) coordinated grant program recipients that apply directly to the state. The process was originally set up with consultants and the United We Ride process, but all PSRC work is now completed using internal staff resources, including development of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan.

In addition, PSRC considers its relationship with the state offices to be solid and the process of grant application smooth, even though requiring time for approval by the several committees and boards.

As FTA funding allows 10 percent for administrative expenses, originally PSRC received an appropriate portion of the funding from the direct recipients of FTA funds (though not for sub-recipients). However, now the sponsors typically get to keep the administrative percentage as well. PSRC notes that the reporting requirements for the administrative funds are onerous.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

The scoring process for selection of the projects is spelled out in a program management plan. There is an inherent bias in the selection process, with more points given to continuation of existing projects. Previously, prioritization was done internally, but in the newest cycle, county and regional representatives were included in the discussion, improving the transparency of the process. This inclusion and transparency in governance is a point of pride for PSRC.

Given the relative newness of the Section 5316 and 5317 programs, in the initial stage there were many proposals, and the initial identification, prioritization, and submittal preparation of projects proposals were something of a scramble. Now in the subsequent phases, the preparation process has been smoothed out and the success of the programs can be evaluated based on empirical information. In addition, PSRC now collects and integrates performance data (previously external), which enables PSRC to supply technical advice and expertise.

Finally, PSRC notes that the changing goals and requirements of the New Freedom program - which at first were quite broad, then became restrictive, and which have now been broadened again - have caused some confusion. Regarding the annual nature of program applications, project recipients like the one-year timeframe as it eases the management of their own cash flow and operations.

Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

PSRC has facilitated a number of successful projects, including a Mobility Management Plan for the three counties on the east side of the Sound. The North Sound 211 program centralizes all human services calls (not just transportation), with the information architecture improving mobility information and awareness. Another program is the Bus Buddy, which organizes a personal guide for training and education of seniors and others making use of transit for the first time. In addition, volunteer driving programs have reduced the demand on paratransit. Shuttles for health care services and for JARC recipients also have been successful.

Now under development, the Vision 2040 growth management plan will use current data, land use projections, and transportation and economic forecasts to identify likely future needs. Two specific goals are improving special needs transportation services and increasing mobility access, and other broader transportation and livability goals also will improve services for the customers of special needs services.

Coordination

The consensus at PSRC is that the planning requirements have led to increased integration of human services needs into transportation plans and programs, though the exact amount is hard to quantify. Outreach is much better under the current planning arrangements. Committee representatives from special needs groups are better able to identify needs and take into account social environments and equity issues. The development of plans and projects has become more transparent and visible to the public and special needs customers. PSRC notes that in the future, other special needs customers such as veterans and domestic violence groups need to be included as well.

In Washington, the state drives the process more than federal requirements. In the view of PSRC, there is a genuine determination to respond to customer needs rather than merely satisfy requirements from above.

Thurston Regional Planning Council – a small urban Metropolitan Planning Organization in Washington State

Ms. Karen Parkhurst, Senior Planner

Interview date: February 16, 2010

The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is the planning organization for the area of Thurston County in Western Washington State. TRPC is both a MPO and a RTPO, to address federal and state responsibilities, respectively. Participating jurisdictions include the County of Thurston and the Cities of Olympia (the state capital), Lacey, Tenino, Tumwater, Rainer, and Yelm, and the Town of Bucoda, as well as the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation.

Planning Process

Planning for human services transportation in the Thurston region began approximately ten years ago. However, the introduction of the federal JARC program, with its planning requirements and available funding, created a considerable incentive for governments, transportation providers, and human services organizations in the region to introduce more services in the region. In addition, a statewide mandate for human services transportation planning came into effect in addition to the federal Coordination Plan requirements. Now, the planning process has been fully adopted and all participants are experienced and able to meet the federal and state requirements.

The jurisdictions that are stakeholders of TRPC all fall within the County of Thurston. TRPC notes that this makes planning and coordination much easier than for multi-county jurisdictions. However, it also limits coordination to adjoining urban areas, with their major medical facilities and greater employment opportunities. TRPC has associate members on its board from adjoining planning organizations (including the Puget Sound Regional Council), but would

like to see more of an emphasis on planning that coordinates rural-urban access for human services customers who need long-distance transportation services to major cities.

Program Management

Thurston Regional Planning Council receives Section 5310 funding, but currently neither Section 5316 nor 5317 funding. Grant requests are submitted to the state, and WSDOT makes the determination of the most appropriate programs for proposed projects, prioritizing and completing the application process on the behalf of the regional organizations.

Thurston Regional Planning Council considers the assistance provided by WSDOT to be critical in having the ability to complete grant requests. Besides the local match provided by the state, WSDOT assistance is also important, and the grant request process – combined for federal and state grant requests – is well-thought out and effective.

TRPC notes that the federal process has become easier over the years. Original applications were heavily transit-focused, so creative programs involving training and education were difficult to submit and were rarely funded. This process has improved, but remains a challenge in terms of documentation required. TRPC notes that it does collect local matching funds for other FTA programs (e.g., Section 5311), usually from the Indian tribes. They much prefer this to be in cash, as tracking in-kind benefits to meet federal accounting rules is considered impossibly tough. Simplifying such requirements would benefit the agency.

Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

The primary use of FTA 5310 funding by Thurston Regional Planning Council is to fund a community connector service, providing services through the rural areas of the county to Olympia and the nearby twin cities of Centralia and Chehalis. The Thurston Regional Planning Council worked with a local non-profit and a government human services group to develop the Rural and Tribal Transportation Program (R/T) for residents of Rochester, Tenino, and Bucoda, Rainier, Yelm, and other rural portions of the county. R/T also provides connections to Intercity Transit (Olympia) and Twin Transit (Centralia and Chehalis).

An important external factor in the focus of TPRC's efforts was the restructuring of transit services in Thurston County due to a statewide financial restructuring of transportation funding. Intercity, the local transit agency, was restructured from a countywide operator into the operator for the City of Olympia, and has only slowly expanded service back out into the rural areas of the county. The demand for public transportation services has therefore been high and is a crucial factor in TRPC's focus on supporting operations with federal grant money. TRPC would like to fund a mobility management position and to provide more outreach and publicity, but requests have not been funded.

Prioritization and Program Monitoring

To measure performance, TRPC collects metrics on trips provided and costs per trip, and surveys customer satisfaction biennially.

Coordination

TRPC works with a wide range of groups in developing human services transportation plans, including senior services, Indian tribes, food banks, community services organizations, the United Way, and other forums and providers. In future, TPRC would like to expand coordination with veterans' services; this is of considerable importance as the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program brings a considerably larger military presence to the area at Fort Lewis and McCord Air Force Base. Other areas include disaster relief and recovery, particularly for persons without other transportation alternatives in the event of emergency.

For these reasons, TRPC considers the lack of integration of federal programs disappointing, with each “silo of funding” having different requirements. Programs such as Medicaid, activities by the Veterans Administration Affairs, and the provision of school transportation all have requirements that are multiple and complex. In addition, human services groups performing these services are reluctant to share information on the costs of transportation, making it hard to justify some of TPRC’s expenses. For example, in some instances human services case workers are driving vehicles instead of serving their clients in other ways; TRPC presumes this is inefficient, but cannot make the case that it can provide better, cheaper service without cost data. Finally, human services programs should allow transportation costs to be an allowable expense, but this is not often the case for federal programs.