

APPENDIX B

**MEETING MINUTES FROM
07/31/2008
REGIONAL MEETING**

**2008 Locally Developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Meeting
for
Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties
Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library
201 Neshonoc Court
West Salem, WI 54669
07/31/08
Meeting Minutes**

Welcome & Introductions

Approximately 50 participants were welcomed to the meeting and each participant introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their agencies purpose or interest.

Overview of SAFETEA-LU and the purpose of the planning meeting:

Peter Fletcher gave an overview of SAFETEA-LU highlighting the following points as to why the meeting is being conducted:

- On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).
- SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009
- Future funding requests for the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and 5310 programs must be consistent with a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan”.
- The plan update must be developed through a process which includes representatives from public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers, as well participation from the public.
- WisDOT has designated the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to coordinate the update process for each county or region.

As a result of the meeting and preparation of a regional coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan Counties and agencies will meet the requirements of SAFETEA-LU and projects will be eligible for federal funding provided they are consistent with the strategies identified in the regional plan.

Demographics

Peter Fletcher then gave an overview of regional demographics and characteristics of the population. Information was distributed on poverty rates, income levels, number of disabled persons, population projections of age 65+, and commuting patterns of the regions workforce.

Service Gaps and Needs

Peter Fletcher, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Transportation Planner, asked meeting attendees for input on any transportation gaps in the region. He said that one gap is the lack of awareness by the general public and employers of the transportation needs for low income individuals. He said most of these individuals need transportation every day and cannot rely on fixed route transportation services. He said there is a better awareness of the transportation needs for the elderly and disabled populations but because of the rural setting of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon counties it's a challenge to get services to these population groups.

Steve Johnson of La Crosse County said another gap is the homeless population. He said this is a growing population group that lacks access to transportation services. He said this population group is very unique to serve and there is a definite drop off of service to this group.

Another gap mentioned was that individuals on SSI are not able to work and are also ineligible to get loans to purchase vehicles for their transportation needs.

Noreen Kuroski said there is a lack of appropriate reimbursement for transportation to individuals on Medical Assistance. She reiterated the problem of the homeless and low income individuals that lack transportation and have no money or funds to use for a taxi or bus etc. to get to a job interview to gain employment. She said there is not a good system for dealing with those individuals. She said we have to have a plan to give those people a leg up.

The fact was brought up that many counties have an aging population requiring more transportation services to meet their medical needs and along with that is a huge hit to county budgets because of rising fuel costs etc. Taxi's and other forms of transportation are out of reach for many residents due to the cost.

Cecil Adams said that literacy is also a problem for some populations that need transportation services. Scott Omernick said Children and Family Services also provide transportation services to families and foster families while working to get those families back together.

It was also mentioned that there is a need for more wheel chair spaces on mini-buses. The working poor making just enough to get by but not enough to get any type of aid is also a problem. Nancy Schmidt said there needs to be a more coordinated effort informing people about transportation services available. Ms. Kuroski concurred that we need to educate the citizenry about transportation services available. She said there are situations where individuals are taking higher priced forms of transportation when the La Crosse MTU would be more affordable. She said we have to address the needs of those trying to get out of poverty. She said we need to develop more ways to work together. She said the current mileage rate of 58.5¢ per mile is killing county budgets. Ms. Kuroski said she also realizes none of this will be easy.

Anna Cardella said there are also many spacial mismatches. She said fixed transit runs on bankers hours when many people need transportation to and from work during regular shift hours scheduled by employers and there is no service available.

Plan Preparation

Meeting participants then were divided into various groups for two break out sessions to develop "Action Plan" strategies, action steps, identify roadblocks, and establish timelines and responsibilities. Once completed discussion on how the plan would be finalized and sent to participants for final input.

Meeting adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.