

About the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee

In February 2008 the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee of the *Power of We Consortium* began meeting to try and better define area transportation needs and where there are gaps in the regional transportation systems by collecting, mapping and analyzing data from service providers and clients, as well as area employers. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TRCRPC) provided leadership for the Ad Hoc Committee, with Jon Coleman serving as the Chairperson, Paul Hamilton as technical staff, and TCRPC also provided clerical support for the meetings.

In 2009 the members of the Ad Hoc Committee developed and distributed a provider survey to human service agencies and a client survey to the clients of many of the agencies. The TCRPC analyzed the results of the two surveys and with the assistance of the Ad Hoc committee members developed a report on the findings.

In addition, the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee put together a series of recommendations for consideration by the *Power of We Consortium* members, community groups, and other interested individuals.

Recommendations

I. Continuous improvement of the process for creating and implementing coordinated transportation plans
Promote regional coordination.

- A. Evaluate current cross-boundary policies to identify and promote opportunities for enhanced regional coordination.
- B. Continue and improve outreach practices for engaging local agencies in the regional coordinated human services transportation planning process which includes education about how to add projects and priorities to be considered in the planning process.
- C. Enhance meaningful consumer, public and agency participation in the coordinated human services transportation planning process.
- D. Maintain work groups tasked with tackling transportation-related issues.
- E. Promote use of technology and Intelligent Transportation Systems to expand solutions for streamlining and coordinating rides, trips, vehicles and drivers.

II. There are existing policy barriers that limit access to transportation services.
Address gaps in transportation services.

- A. Re-evaluate existing transportation policies to eliminate barriers that limit access to transportation for health services and employment.
- B. Review and respond to need for access to employment across county lines and townships and rework cost structure so that people who live, vote and pay taxes in one county/township are able to access transport to a neighboring county/township for employment.

- C. Local federally funded agencies should actively promote the idea in their own organizations that they expand options to allow their federal funds to match federal transportation funds and to expand eligible areas and sources for federal transit operating funds.
- D. Encourage pooling resources or vehicle coordination and sharing (and shared use policies) across social service agency organizational boundaries. Local agencies should develop specific policies and guidance on cost sharing and encourage their federal funding partners to do the same.
- E. Agencies should evaluate, create and encourage incentives for addressing gaps in transportation services, especially for veterans, persons with disabilities, older adults, individuals living in rural areas, job seekers and/or persons with low income and small children.

III. *Mobility management strategies are underutilized.*

Support a broad range of services, including volunteer driver programs, taxi services, and travel training.

- A. Create a Mobility Broker position that would be the central point of contact for consumers who need information and services and the providers who operate the services.
- B. Create an expanded travel training program between social service agencies, volunteers, health care providers, similar common destinations and public transportation providers.
- C. Create a position that is focused on joint marketing campaigns between the three transit systems to educate possible users, and focus on transit system use.
- D. Consider supporting use of taxi and other alternative services to address local transportation gaps in communities. Other alternatives might include contracted services, Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) or Associations (TMAs), use of carpools, vanpools and the statewide vanpool program, a regional car-sharing program, biking and walking, and/or employer or developer provided transportation services, which may be appropriate conditions for some types of local planned development approvals. Use of Park/Walk/Bike and Ride and employer provided (or other types) of shuttle services may also be suitable alternatives for some trip needs. For some clients and some trip needs, actually providing a vehicle may be the only solution. The community needs a creative solution to how this might be facilitated.
- E. The Power of We Consortium, transit agencies and social service agencies should also work with faith based and other community resources to enhance voluntary driver and similar volunteer provided services where appropriate.

IV. *There are missed opportunities to bridge gaps between transportation and other community services.*

Seek opportunities and funding for coordination and funding of services.

- A. Intergovernmental initiatives that support and promote greater mobility and independence¹ should be explored, most notably those associated with the Livable-Sustainable Communities Initiative.
 - B. Transit agencies, social service agencies, employers and the Power of We Consortium should evaluate staff and financial resources that social service agencies are using to provide transportation for clients to see if some of those resources could be re-purposed to fund a regional mobility broker, while allowing some of those resources to be returned to direct client services. If some of those resources could be used to buy, provide or contract for services from professional transportation providers, or to create a regional broker, then perhaps a larger portion of those resources could be redirected to client services.
 - C. Some needs identified by the task force may not be suitable or cost effective for public transit trips. However, some are. A professional mobility broker, or client transportation specialist could help sort those differences out, which need to be reviewed on a case by case basis. Transit agencies, social service agencies, employers and the Power of We Consortium should continue to explore creative solutions. Social service organizations should become knowledgeable about transportation funding issues and should advocate for fully funding public transportation services by the state legislature, local governments and voters. Additional services will almost always require additional operating funds to permit service expansion.
 - D. Local Ready-Ride millages, or other types of overlay services, could perhaps be effective ways to expand services for specific targeted needs, locations or geographic areas.
 - E. Encourage development of pedestrian accessible environments and complete streets which are age friendly and transit ready to enhance access to transportation services. Incentives should be developed to encourage these improvements in new developments and redevelopment areas and in all new construction or improvement projects.
 - F. Encourage employers and service providers to better coordinate work shift change times to coincide with existing transit services. Where possible, flexible and altered work hours and altered work schedules should be permitted to better accommodate transit travel and hours.
 - G. Encourage development of accessible pedestrian environments.
- V. ***Specific recommendations and examples of increased transportation services based on survey feedback and additional information provided by participating agencies.***
- A Promote access to thousands of manufacturing jobs for low-income residents in Ingham County and Lansing (especially South Lansing) by extending bus routes two miles west on Grand River (Clinton County) and two miles West on Mt. Hope (Eaton County). Better integration of and/or more knowledge and use of existing coordinated services transfer options, or some of the alternative service options (above) might also provide interim or cost efficient solutions.

¹ .The U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have developed a new partnership to build livable and sustainable communities to help American families gain better access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs.

- B. Increase access to employment opportunities by extending bus service hours (Sunday service and up to 11:00 p.m. evenings) to hotel clusters and shopping centers with restaurants (Eastwood, Edgewood and Lansing Mall). Other service alternatives (above) might also provide interim or cost efficient solutions.
- C. Provide community education on how to schedule a Clinton Transit or Eaton County bus and work with Clinton Transit and EATRAN to make sure that scheduling is available to English Language Learners, which is consistent with the priority given to developing joint marketing and community education programs and related recommendations in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.
- D. Address the main reasons people do not use buses: cost, available hours/days, no service to destination, too slow, too many transfers and bad weather.
- E. Address greatest unmet needs in transportation according to agencies: access to west side (Eaton/Clinton counties), cost, schedule (days and hours), rural access, difficulty in arranging rides, more Spectran and better coordinated routes.

Feedback Regarding Recommendations

I. Continuous improvement of the process for creating and implementing coordinated transportation plans. Promote regional coordination.

PWC Member Input:

1) Action steps most catalytic to improving our regional transportation system:

- Negotiate lower cab rates, especially to out-county areas.

2) How PWC can impact systems change to improve our regional transportation system:

- Informing population of tri-county region about today's presentation.
- Facilitate community engagement regarding main transportation carriers

3) What your organization or coalition of organizations can do to move toward action:

- Disseminating information to help organizations, consumers, and members become informed about pending bills, possible action steps (e.g. informing clients).

Great Start Collaborative Comments from GSC meeting on 9/8/2010:

- Comment that Faith-based organizations' vans are not used during the week, and school buses are not used on weekends.

**II. There are existing policy barriers that limit access to transportation services.
Address gaps in transportation services.**

PWC Member Input:

- 1) *Action steps most catalytic to improving our regional transportation system:*
 - Support for Letter B (above)
 - Access to bus passes
 - Discount bus passes from employers
 - Earned bus passes – community service, sponsors- corporate
- 2) *How PWC can impact systems change to improve our regional transportation system:*
 - Power of We Consortium to go to CATA.
 - For profit bus – Dean transport contractual
 - Advertising, subsidizing
 - Taxi vans, entrepreneurs
- 3) *What your organization or coalition of organizations can do to move toward action:*
 - PWC Broker

Ingham ISD Early On Family Committee Input:

- Citing II C/D: How many people work within the county they pay taxes in, and would they use transportation?

III. Mobility management strategies are underutilized.

Support a broad range of services, including volunteer driver programs, taxi services, and travel training.

PWC Member Input:

- 1) *Action steps most catalytic to improving our regional transportation system:*
 - Use “mobility broker” as a central transportation coordinator who would be charged with providing transportation training and ride services, including alternative transit services for the community. This position would promote transit services, work with agencies and faith based organizations to enhance volunteer drivers and ride sharing programs and educate agency staff and the public about public transit opportunities.
- 2) *How PWC can impact systems change to improve our regional transportation system:*
 - PWC can help disseminate information on services. PWC can be a clearinghouse for programs and needs.
 - PWC could be a leader to develop partnerships among members with the eventual goal of having a central transportation coordinator.
- 3) *What your organization or coalition of organizations can do to move toward action:*
 - PWC members should work together to create a central transportation coordinator.

Great Start Collaborative Comments from GSC meeting on 9/8/2010:

- *Set top priority Item A – Mobility Broker. Pool money and resources to enable position. Mobility Broker should also be a trainer to train public and agencies about services available.*
- *Lowest Priority was Item C – to create separate position from Clean Commute program*
- *Rated PWC member input # 3 as a “must” and added consider collaborating regionally to offset costs.*

IV. There are missed opportunities to bridge gaps between transportation and other community services.

Seek opportunities and funding for coordination and funding of services.

PWC Member Input:

1) Action steps most catalytic to improving our regional transportation system:

- *Encourage employers and service providers – need to educate employers and unions to show how it would be a win for everyone.*
- *Use of a transportation broker – easier to implement on case-by-case basis, similar to 211 service*

2) How PWC can impact systems change to improve our regional transportation system:

- *Funding, but also education/awareness for employers*
- *Negotiate and advocate.*

3) What your organization or coalition of organizations can do to move toward action:

- *It’s already being examined at local service agencies.*
- *CRCF can help with funding opportunities to match/maximize grant dollars.*
- *Advocate for pre-tax bus pass option*

Great Start Collaborative Comments from GSC meeting on 9/8/10:

- *Suggest corporations get a tax credit for supporting transportation, eg., corporate van*
- *Seek employer support for extended bus hours and routes*
- *Question: How realistic is it to encourage employers to coordinate work shifts with transit services?*
- *Agree with PWC Member Input # 3 to encourage match for grant dollars*
- *How can the transportation programs become more flexible and adjust to changing transportation needs?*

Ingham ISD Early On Family Committee Input:

- *Citing IV. B: Would there be a gap in the interim – plan for the interim. How long?*
- *Citing IV.F: * (Star)*

- *Citing PWC Member Input # 3, bullet # 3: * (Star)*

V. Specific recommendations and examples of increased transportation services based on survey feedback and additional information provided by participating agencies.

PWC Member Input:

- 1) *Action steps most catalytic to improving our regional transportation system:*
 - Support for D. (above). Increase public knowledge of schedules by having them available in more businesses, places, etc.
 - Support for A (above); especially in South Lansing.
 - We want to see more continuity among the three counties and cooperation for cross-county transit
- 2) *How PWC can impact systems change to improve our regional transportation system:*
 - Encourage people to go to meetings (local advisory council) to talk about transportation problems with seniors and people with disabilities, 1st Wed. of every other month.
 - Advocacy role by speaking with TCRPC, etc., and unifying the voice
 - Keep this issue a piece on the agenda.
 - Encourage employers to let employees know what transportation options are available to them.
- 3) *What your organization or coalition of organizations can do to move toward action:*
 - Encourage employers to let employees know what transportation options are available to them
 - The survey data is interesting and should be more broadly disseminated.
 - Clinton and Eaton Counties have their own collaborative bodies, and PWC is supposed to be tri-county, so could do more to reach out to those because there seems to be an emphasis within PWC Ingham.
 - Our organizations can encourage conversations that raise awareness on the issues surrounding transportation
 - Consider innovation we might be able to do that we haven't done already?
Example: pooling budgets for the greater good

Great Start Collaborative Comments from GSC meeting on 9/8/10

- *Set top priority Item A – Access to manufacturing jobs for low-income residents.*

Ingham ISD Early On Family Committee Input:

- *Citing V. A: * (Star)*