

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Agenda

McHenry County Transit Plan
Implementation Task Force

DATE: May 23, 2012

TIME: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: McHenry County Administration Building, Conference Room A
667 Ware Road, Woodstock, IL 60098

1. **Call to Order** – Jason Osborn (MCDOT)

2. **Public Participation/Open Comment Period**

3. **Transit Grant Program**

- MCRide update – Jason Osborn (MCDOT)
- Algonquin Township Road District – Anna May Miller
- City of Marengo – Josh Blakemore
- Faith in Action – Sarah J. Ponitz
- Veterans Assistance Commission – Mike Iwanicki

4. **Transit Planning Activities**

- McHenry County Transit Plan update – Jason Osborn (MCDOT)

5. **Funding Program Updates**

- McHenry County JARC/NF project status – Jason Osborn
- McHenry County Transit Grant Discussion – Jason Osborn

6. **Other Business**

- Discussion on transportation vouchers. The ITF will be asked about the use of Pace 10 Ride cards for MCRide or the use of a new media type – Jason Osborn (MCDOT)

7. **Next ITF Meeting**

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 25, 2012, 2:00 p.m.

8. **Adjournment**

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Minutes

McHenry County Transit Plan
Implementation Task Force

DATE: May 23rd, 2012

TIME: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: McHenry County Administration Building, Conference Room A
667 Ware Road, Woodstock, IL 60098

Attendees

City of Woodstock: Roscoe Stelford

City of Crystal Lake: Brad Mitchell

McHenry Township: Terry Wagner

Faith in Action of McHenry County: Sarah Ponitz, Thomas Aquilina

Greenwood Township: Barbara Klasen

Algonquin Township Highway Department: Anna May Miller

Richmond Township Road District: David Bockelmann, Heather Enders

McHenry County Staff: Jason Osborn, Chalen Daigle, Jeff Young

McHenry County Board: Ersel Shuster, Diane Eversten

Metra: Rick Mack

Pace: Mary Donner, Dan Dembinski

Woodstock Trans. Comm.: Andrew Celentano

Pioneer Center: Tom Riley

Transitional Living Services for Veterans: Alan Belcher

The meeting started at 2:00.

Mr. Osborn provided an update regarding MCRide. The average inter-community trip distance is down from 11 miles to approximately 8 miles while the total number of trips has increased from about 900 each month to 2,000 each month. It will take a few more months to establish a new normal level of service. At this time, it appears that many more people are taking advantage of MCRide to travel between the communities. Many more people are using MCRide to make “one-seat” trips that otherwise would have required them to transfer to or from the fixed routes, municipal dial-a-rides, and Metra.

Ms. Ponitz and Mr. Aquilina provided an update for Faith in Action of McHenry County. Funding from the County, its ridership is surging and the senior population is blooming.

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Mr. Osborn provided an update on the McHenry County Transit Plan. A draft service design plan is being developed at this time.

Mr. Osborn provided a funding programs update. Information provided by Pace indicates that more trips are eligible for JARC and New Freedom funding than previously estimated. This is good as it means more of this funding can be utilized earlier.

The Fiscal Year 2013 County Transit Program will be on the June 19th County Board meeting. This program includes \$43,000 for Faith in Action, \$13,000 for the Algonquin Township Road District, and \$5,000 for the Veteran Affairs Commission.

The Fiscal Year 2013 Senior Grant applications are due in late July. The County is going to submit for \$100,000 to fund trips for seniors on MCRide and the McHenry Township Senior Express being coordinated with MCRide. MCRide provides service to seniors in Dorr, Greenwood, and McHenry Townships and the cities of Crystal Lake, McHenry, and Woodstock.

Mr. Osborn then initiated a conversation about vouchers. The ITF concurred that a new media type would be necessary to create as current 10 ride cards issued by Pace will not meet the need to issue round trip vouchers. MCDOT staff will provide an update at the next ITF meeting based on this direction.

The meeting concluded at 3:15 with a reminder of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 25, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. at the usual meeting site of the McHenry County Administration Building in Woodstock.



McHenry County

Division of Transportation

Joseph R. Korpalski, Jr., P.E.
Director of Transportation/County Engineer

MEMORANDUM

TO: Implementation Task Force

FROM: Jason Osborn, AICP – Principal Transportation Planner

DATE: 5/21/2012

SUBJECT: McHenry County Transit Grant Funding Memorandum

This memorandum has been written to review the use of Senior Grants and Transit Grants for transit operations in the County. Grant applications for the McHenry County Senior Services Grant Commission will be due at the end of July. As such, the McHenry County Division of Transportation needs direction at this time on how to move forward. Additionally, this is the last fiscal year of the three year Transit Grant program; and, the County needs to make a decision if it wishes to continue this program.

Intent of Transit Grant Program and Results

In 2005, the County Board adopted a Transit Plan for the County including recommendations to create a body dedicated to the implementation of the plan. In 2006, the County Board appointed members to the Implementation Task Force (ITF). After two years of ITF meetings, the County submitted for a Senior Services Commission Grant to coordinate transit services for seniors. To promote greater coordination, a transit grant was created through the efforts of County Administration and the ITF. Its aim is to study, coordinate, and expand transit operations in a manner widely accepted by the stakeholders. In 2009, a call for projects was undertaken. Agencies were eligible for funding if the proposal was to coordinate, expand, or simply keep track of their operations in a manner consistent with the three goals of the plan. Eight applications were received and six were funded. By the end of 2012, approximately \$1.2 million will be spent on the MCRide program; and, \$190,000 will have been spent on the other programs (See Table 1).

Table 1: History of Transit Grant Funding

	2010	2011	2012 Estimated	Total
MCRide (2010-2011 Pilot Program)	\$211,530	\$330,274	\$660,000	\$1,201,804
Marengo/Union	\$3,276	\$10,211	\$7,000	\$20,487
Faith in Action	\$29,268	\$37,999	\$43,000	\$110,267
Algonquin Twp. Road District	\$9,300	\$9,342	\$13,000	\$31,642
Veteran's Affairs Commission	\$5,038	\$3,640	\$5,000	\$13,678
N. IL. Special Recreational Assoc.	\$7,434	\$0	\$0	\$7,434
	\$265,846	\$391,466	\$731,000	\$1,388,312

Six programs were funded in 2010. A seventh program proposed by Centegra and the Pioneer Center was withdrawn after the two agencies were not able to resolve insurance and other operational issues. The Northern Illinois Special Recreational Association did not seek additional funding for data collection after the first year. The Association said their operations fluctuate with events; as such, they did not feel the data being collected was helpful in identifying areas for future coordination.

Overall, the Transit Grant program has successfully led to the creation of the MCRide service, helped leverage over \$800,000 in federal transit funding into the County, and has provided great financial assistance to worthwhile programs. The data collection effort has provided a new understanding of the scale of these services but has proven to be cumbersome and redundant over time. Additionally, as the County was awarded RTA funding to update the Transit Plan as part of the long range transportation plan, the need for additional data is low.

MCRide has been helpful to many seniors as the program now allows for one-seat travel, or travel without transfers, between these areas. It requires IGAs between the County and Pace, Crystal Lake, McHenry, Woodstock, Dorr Township, Greenwood Township, and the Regional Transportation Authority.

In County fiscal years 2010 and 2011, the County cut checks out of the RTA Sales Tax fund each quarter to four different agencies participating in the County's Pilot Program (now MCRide). MCDOT then submitted for reimbursement of funds from the Senior Grant accounts into the RTA Sales Tax account (See Table 2).

Table 2: Use of Senior Grant Monies for the Pilot Program/MCRide

	2010	2011	2012 Est.
Crystal Lake	\$7,859	\$14,882	\$14,400
McHenry	\$13,296	\$28,359	\$10,944
Woodstock	\$6,080	\$9,061	\$7,200
McHenry Township	\$30,000	\$22,701	\$23,000
County	\$20,853	\$26,713	\$24,456
TOTAL	\$78,089	\$101,715	\$80,000

May 21, 2012

Page 3 of 4

Other Considerations

It is important to note that each unit of service provided represents the ability of a McHenry County resident to live their lives. For example, the volunteer driver program administered by Faith in Action of McHenry County provides on average 1,200 free trips for seniors each month. It now relies heavily on the Transit Grant Program. To provide greater insight into the value of these efforts, a letter from the Executive Director of FIAMC is included here.

Letter from Sarah Ponitz, Executive Director of FIAMC

From: Sarah Ponitz [mailto:sarah@fiamchenrycounty.org]

Sent: Friday, April 20, 2012 9:40 AM

To: Jason Osborn

Cc: tmaquilina@comcast.net

Subject: Faith in Action

The Faith in Action of McHenry County ('FIAMC') program serves all seniors, age 60 and over, who live in McHenry County or Sun City Huntley. Our mission is to help seniors maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life by remaining in their own homes or the home of a loved one for as long and as safely as possible. Volunteers help us achieve our mission by providing numerous services, including transportation, *all at absolutely no charge to the senior*. We have no income limitations. It is important to note that although income is not part of the criteria used to ascertain need, the income of 59% of our senior clients is less than \$30,000 a year and 37% earn less than \$20,000. In addition, 14% reported that they have a disability.

In our last fiscal year, volunteers drove more than 216,000 miles, and dedicated more than 25,000 volunteer hours to assist nearly 800 local seniors. Our services saved seniors and their families over \$560,000.

Next to health, transportation is the most important challenge for seniors who choose to remain in their homes. As a result, more than 60% of our service requests are for transportation. We transport all over the McHenry County and we are the *only program* to offer transportation to life-sustaining as well as life-enriching appointments. All transports are made by volunteers in their own vehicles and while some request mileage reimbursement, many prefer to write-off their volunteer mileage. We also provide door-to-door service and volunteers pride themselves on being prompt.

In FIAMC's 14 year history, the organization has grown into an efficient and vital system that builds strong partnerships between the seniors of McHenry County and those who wish to serve them. Volunteers often form a strong bond with the seniors they serve which in turn makes the senior more comfortable as it is not a "stranger" that is providing the transportation. In addition, annually, FIAMC conducts telephone evaluations of our services. Responses inform us that 85% of our seniors are "extremely satisfied" with our services and that they are less lonely. 76% responded that FIAMC helped them maintain their independence and reduced stress and anxiety in their lives.

Our care receivers are grateful for and appreciative of our program services as well. Letters of thanks are received weekly and include notes such as this one from Nancy S. of Crystal Lake: "Words alone cannot express my heartfelt thanks for all that the Faith in Action volunteers do for me. The transportation needs provided for my doctor appointments and the classes at McHenry County College have made my life fuller and less stressful. I am forever grateful for everything you do."

May 21, 2012

Page 4 of 4

We need to retain the high quality of service for which we are known. However, we also recognize the need to expand into new endeavors where there is clear need, such as the outlying areas of McHenry County.

Looking forward, there is serious concern about the alarming rate in which the senior population continues to grow both nationally and in our community. Starting in 2011, 10,000 baby boomers a day will turn 65. According to a research report in the Journal of the American Society on Aging, "The only age group that will grow substantially over the next several decades will be those older than 60, resulting in a population with a much larger number and a greater percentage of older people than we have ever had." The prediction for McHenry County's population over the age of 60 is more than 91,463 people by 2025, up from 35,645 in 2005.

As our county residents continue to age, demand for our services will inevitably increase as illustrated by a 34% increase in services from last year alone. Strategically, we are positioning ourselves accordingly.

Our commitment is unwavering in the process of reducing social isolation, enhancing the quality of life and preserving the dignity of seniors living in McHenry County. We are grateful to our faithful and generous volunteers and donors who support our efforts.

However, transportation services would not be possible without the funding we receive from the DOT grant. The bottom line is without this source of funding, we will not be able to continue to serve area seniors despite an increasing demand for our services.

I sincerely hope that you will not prevent volunteer-based programs such as Faith in Action from applying for DOT funds so that organizations such as ours will not be forced to close our doors in the face of area seniors.

Sarah J. Ponitz, B.S., J.D.
Executive Director
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Preserving the Independence of McHenry County Seniors