

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Agenda

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

DATE: Wednesday, November 1, 2006

TIME: 2:00 - 4:00

LOCATION: McHenry County Division of Transportation
Large Conference Room

Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Donna Schaefer
Chairperson
McHenry Township

Lyn Orphal
McHenry Co. Board

Anna May Miller
McHenry Co. Board

Tina Hill
McHenry Co. Board

Sue Low
City of McHenry

Jay Nolan
City of Harvard

Brian Sager
City of Woodstock

Paulette G. Pelletier
Village of Fox River Grove

Tamara Valentine-Garza
Richmond Township

Jack Freund
Grafton Township

Robert Miller
Algonquin Township

Don Kopsell
Nunda Township

Jack Nichols
McHenry Co. PADS

Daniel Byars
Centegra Health System

Karen Patel
McHenry Co. EDC

Patrick Wilmot
Pace Suburban Bus

Donald Kopec
(CATS) Chicago Area
Transportation Study

Shamus Misek
U. of Illinois, Chicago

Joseph DiJohn
U. of Illinois, Chicago

1. Call to Order

2. Public Participation

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

4. Coordination with Pace

- Information needs
- Pace may or may not study the restructuring of services in McHenry County in 2008. The restructuring of the three bus routes in the County is critical to the implementation of the immediate phase of the Transit Plan
- Pace funding

5. Next steps identified by TranSystems

- Identify all agencies interested in being part of the initial Coordinated Demand Response System (CDRS) pilot. In the Transit Plan, McHenry PADS, McHenry Twp., NISRA, Pioneer Center, Pace, Thresholds, Village of Richmond were identified. In the last few months, Lake in the Hills, Algonquin Twp., and Grafton Twp. have expressed interest.
- Collect detailed vehicle utilization, ridership, and cost data from groups interested in potentially being part of the CDRS pilot. This will involve us providing them with a fairly detailed survey that we will walk through with them on the phone. Providing the survey in advance allows people to know what types of information to be thinking about and assembling.
- Synthesize the data from potential participants and ask Pace to tell us how this service would be able to integrate into the existing Pace services, what would be needed in terms

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of additional vehicles, and what would be the costs of this service.

- When that information is forthcoming from Pace, a specific assessment of the impacts to each of the potential participants will be developed. This should then allow each potentially interested municipality/township/agency to make a determination of their continued interest.
- The funding for additional capital and operations needs to be identified as early as possible.

6. Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Initiative Funding Application

- A draft application has been prepared and included in this meeting packet. This application is due November 1. The Regional Transportation Authority is preparing a Human Services plan this year to guide future funding priorities. If our application is included as part of the Human Services plan, we may be in a better position to secure continued funding.

7. Next Steps

- TranSystems will work with the agencies interested in being part of the initial CDRS pilot to detail vehicle utilization, ridership, and cost data.
- A specific assessment of the impacts to each of the potential participants will be developed and shared.
- A working group of Taxi Voucher interested agencies will meet with Taxi providers to discuss a taxi voucher program.

8. Next Meetings

- *Tentative date:* December 6, 2007 CDRS working group
- *Tentative date:* January 10, 2007 Taxi Voucher working group
- *Tentative date:* January 17, 2007 Fourth Implementation Task Force Meeting

9. Adjournment

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE MCHENRY COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN MINUTES

Wednesday, November 01, 2006

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

McHenry County Division of Transportation
Main Conference Room

Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Donna Schaefer
Chairman
McHenry Township

Lyn Orphal
McHenry Co. Board

Anna May Miller
McHenry Co. Board

Tina Hill
McHenry Co. Board

Sue Low
City of McHenry

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(CATS) Chicago Area
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Shamus Misek
U. of Illinois, Chicago

Joseph DiJohn
U. of Illinois, Chicago

Members in Attendance

Lyn Orphal, Anna May Miller, Tina Hill, Tamara Valentine-Garza, John Rossi, Robert Miller, Don Kopsell, Jack Nichols, Patrick Wilmot, Shamus Misek, Joseph DiJohn

Members Not In Attendance

Chairman Donna Schaefer, Sue Low, Jay Nolan, Brian Sager, Paulette Pelletier, Daniel Byars, Donald Kopec

Other Attendees

John Labaj, Deputy County Administrator, Administration; Jeffrey Young, Assistant County Engineer, Division of Transportation; Jason Osborn, Transportation/Planning and Program Coordinator, Division of Transportation; Holly Ostdick, Planning Liaison, McHenry County Council of Mayors; Claire Bozic, Director of Plan Implementation, CATS/CMAP; Lynn Otte, Project Manager, TranSystems Corporation; Larry Deeter, Planner, TranSystems Corporation; Jack Freund, Grafton Township Highway Commissioner; Debbie DeGraw, Marketing & Development Director, PADS; David Snell, Planner, Pace; Shannon Andrews, Assistant Administrator, Village of Lake in the Hills; Jack Slaughter, Department Specialist, Centegra Health System; Randy Comstock, Division Manager, Pace; Donna Adamson, Receptionist, Division of Transportation

Call to Order

Jason Osborn facilitated and called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Public Participation

None

Approval of June 15, 2006 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Tina Hill and seconded by Lyn Orphal, the June 15, 2006 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

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A. Coordination with Pace



Patrick Wilmot: We received a request for information from the County and TranSystems Corporation. We provided ridership information and other statistics. To date, all data requests from Pace have been fulfilled. Pace is committed to participating and is willing to coordinate. Pace and County staff have discussed and taken measures to make certain any and all future data needs will be addressed.

Mayor Shepley: Pace is not in denial. Everybody recognizes how important Pace is to the overall transit plan and the transit planning process. However, there are infinite demands and finite resources, and until Springfield reacts to this problem, there is nothing that can be done. Pace is probably the leanest, most efficient public transit agency in the U.S. McHenry County is already a donor county. There are some municipalities that receive no transit service and the people are still paying taxes. I am acutely aware of what needs to be done. What's most important for Pace, the Townships, and the County is to make it work so our demand service can cross municipal boundaries.

Shannon Andrews: Lake in the Hills (LITH) had a program that was custom made with Pace. LITH was able to dictate the service area. Through a further study, it was discovered that LITH seniors were also using Dial-A-Ride services. LITH is looking at alternatives because expenses have nearly doubled with Pace. Some billing discrepancies were also found. The Village is not considering stopping the program but is looking for the best collaborative way to minimize costs and improve service.

Mayor Shepley: Every community that wants transit services to go beyond their boundaries can. However, without a comprehensive regional plan, it will not work. There are only a certain amount of Dial-A-Ride busses available for Crystal Lake passenger usage. One frequent complaint is that people have to wait more than thirty minutes. It is not similar to calling a cab.

Crystal Lake is on a sharing agreement with Pace because we were one of the original communities involved with Pace. We pay a percentage of the overall costs of having Pace provide service. Crystal Lake pays Pace approximately 25% - 30%. Lake In The Hills are the poster-children for Pace because they pay 100%. LITH is a late-comer to the

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Pace program arriving within the last 3 – 4 years. It would be a political nightmare for any municipality that tries to turn this service off. If this service were eliminated, those people who use this service would be prisoners in their homes. The people who use Pace need it badly. This really has to be a comprehensive regional plan because of the service related issues. Service will be more efficient.

Randy Comstock: Lake In The Hills came to us 8 years ago. We are a cash poor agency, and we are getting to the point where we are using capital dollars for operating costs. Running the busses can become a very expensive project. Mayor Shepley was accurate with his explanation on running the busses. We operate over 70 projects with many of them traveling outside their regions. Many of the people that use our service use it for medical reasons especially for seniors or disabled. Once the busses go out, oftentimes they come back empty. This is a significant issue.

Patrick Wilmot: We have scheduled restructuring initiatives throughout the region. Lake and McHenry will be studied together, but we are taking them in order. Our next study is Northwest Cook and Elgin. Lake and McHenry are to follow. One issue is that we may not be able to get to Lake and McHenry till 2008 or later. Another issue is funding. RTA is trying to obtain more reliable funding where the RTA will be able to maintain current levels of service and even expand on what it has. If we don't obtain funding through the State, we may have to par down service and raise fares.

Jason Osborn: There are a few service change recommendations in the Transit Plan which have been shared with Pace.

Patrick Wilmot: Because we have not received any additional funding to improve service, we just have been re-arranging what currently exists. Many of our routes have not changed in 20 or 30 years. It is more a function of updating to address the current demand. We will also develop plans for future expansion, but that will be farther down the line.

Jeff Young: With restructuring, will Pace services be restructuring to acclimate to a Metra change in schedule or existing lines?

Patrick Wilmot: We went through that when Metra changed the UP

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West line. The difference with our service here is that it is centered on McHenry Counties social services, like the Pioneer Center. Service grew in order to get to these places. We want to balance the needs for the people to get to these social services and also getting to the Metra station. We must be careful to balance these needs.

B. Next steps identified by TranSystems

Jason Osborn: Donna Schaefer prompted the call for this meeting because there has been a slight shift to where the Coordinated Demand Response Service (CDRS) might start.

Lynn Otte: The session today is to address the CDRS recommendations from the McHenry County Transit Plan and being able to get them accomplished. The idea is to take the little pieces of service and knit them together to create synergy of using these resources to be able to provide additional services.

Coming from the Transit Plan there were a number of parties who had expressed an interest in being part of the CDRS pilot. They were McHenry County PADS, McHenry Township, NISRA, Pioneer Center, Pace, Thresholds and the Village of Richmond. Through Donna, we understand that recently Algonquin Township, Grafton Township, and Lake In The Hills have had more interest.

There is no reason that anyone cannot be apart of this. We need to determine exactly what the impact is to anyone who is interested in participating. We are going to ask for people to stick around afterwards, if you belong to an entity that might be interested in exploring the possibilities further.

It makes sense intuitively, but it is difficult to find that win-win opportunity. To find that win-win it takes a lot of data. It is time to start the pilot!

What's needed is the following:

- 1) Information about current services
- 2) When you are providing services
- 3) When your vehicles are in use
- 4) Very detailed data

This is the information that we need to provide to Pace and then ask them how it integrates into their system and what is its cost. Because

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most of it is already coordinated with Pace, there is much to build on.

Once we find out from Pace what is the exact cost, we can present to each entity or agency the impact to their operation. They will then be better equipped to determine whether they want to participate.

We hope that over the next 6 weeks we can obtain all this information and present this to Pace and learn what the impacts are for you.

Anna May Miller: Would we be able to improve the level of service we provide and keep a lid on the cost, or until that time that the entity wants to provide their transportation program and contribute to the CDRS in some other way?

Lynn Otte: Such as buying trips from the CDRS?

The presumption when we did the Transit Plan was that we could purchase trips through the Pace system that would be cost effective.

Tina Hill: Could one possibility can be that an entity participates in the CDRS but keeps its own transportation with its own employees?

Lynn Otte: There is no sense making people do something that is not advantageous for them. What are needed are logical types of service to coordinate. They just need someone to sponsor them. It is just a matter of matching needs with providers.

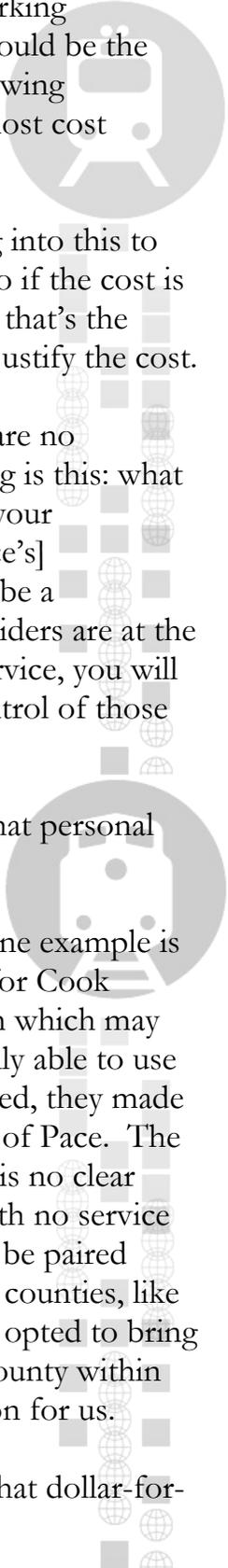
Once we find the set of agencies or communities that we can find some benefit for participation, then questions can be better addressed. Jason and I discussed that maybe there is enough of a core that it could happen without Pace. It's a matter of finding what will best serve the entities, and who are willing to try this experiment.

Robert Miller: Could it work backwards? As in, Pace funds our transit services?

Jeff Young: We could become our own transit district.

Lynn Otte: The reason we are willing to build into the Pace system is because there are a lot of elements that are already coordinated.

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Patrick Wilmot: The objective is to reduce costs. If working backwards appears to be most cost effective, then that should be the way to proceed. The entire coordination issue is like throwing everything into one big pot and trying to operate in the most cost effective way.

Tina Hill: Looking at it philosophically, nobody is going into this to make a profit. It's to bring service to our constituents. So if the cost is a little higher because we are bringing them more service, that's the balance of philosophically doing it. You must be able to justify the cost.

Mayor Shepley: Bob makes a really good point. There are no possibilities that are off the table. What you are describing is this: what if Pace would contract with Algonquin Township to run your [Algonquin Township's] bus service to discharge our [Pace's] obligations to provide the bus transit service. Could that be a possibility? I think so. One advantage if the service providers are at the township level, and if there were complaints about the service, you will have a more direct response because you are in direct control of those service providers.

Robert Miller: That's correct. You don't want to lose that personal touch. That's our hallmark.

Mayor Shepley: However, that's not always the case. One example is when Pace took over the para-transit or demand service for Cook County. What we are looking at is a more focused system which may increase the demand tenfold because people will be actually able to use it. Another point, when the RTA Act was originally framed, they made a mistake. The County has that right to vote and opt out of Pace. The problem is that you don't get the tax dollars back. There is no clear allocation between Metra and Pace. So we will end up with no service and less money. Maybe our definition of region needs to be paired down. What our legislature needs to be doing is allowing counties, like ours, to receive a dollar-for-dollar return if our tax payers opted to bring the service local. As long as we continue to be a donor county within the Pace system, then that option would be the best option for us.

Tina Hill: Do we have our representatives working on that dollar-for-dollar return?

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Mayor Shepley: Right now our representatives are fighting for Pace's very existence. What has saved Pace is that people need Pace's service.

C. Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Initiative (NFI) Funding Application

Jason Osborn: After conversations with RTA representatives who administer this funding, staff learned Pace would need to be the lead on the application. Staff has been working with Lorraine Snorden, the manager of Planning Services, who drafted an application to submit today to the RTA for this type of funding (handout distributed).

The narrative in the handout explains some of the capital and equipment needed to have a centralized call center. Next year, as part of the Human Services plan, staff will work to have the CDRS included as part of the framework for the Regional Human Services transportation plan. This will make it easier in subsequent years to apply for temporary operational funding.

The funding source would be recommended through the Work Program Committee of Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and then to the Policy Committee. This should happen within the next couple months. Should Pace then be selected for funding, this would be made available early summer or late spring. There is a local share of \$21,000.

Claire Bozic: JARC is 50% for operating, but capital is 80% – 20%.

Patrick Wilmot: There is a lot of competition for the funding, but working together with the County we have a good application for funding.

Joe DiJohn: Has the County or any of the Partners here given letters of support for this application?

Jason Osborn: Pace is working with this body, the implementation task force.

Claire Bozic: It's always helpful to show support from the local area.

Joe DiJohn: I think it couldn't hurt if the County drafted a letter of

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support. I will draft a letter of support on behalf of the University.

Jason Osborn: They are going to compile them within a week. That's within our timeline.

Jeff Young: We can probably draft a letter and provide it to everyone here. It then can be placed on your letterhead and modified as necessary.

D. Next Steps

Jason Osborn: Lynn and Larry from TranSystems will be available after this meeting.

Regarding Taxi Voucher, as soon as we know who's participating in the CDRS, we will move the discussion to that area.

E. Next Meetings – Tentative dates

December 6, 2006 – CDRS working group

January 10, 2007 – Taxi Voucher working group

January 17, 2007 - Fourth Implementation Task Force Meeting

F. Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.