

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

Agenda

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

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

Jay Nolan
City of Harvard

Brian Sager
City of Woodstock

Paulette G. Pelletier
Village of Fox River Grove

Tamara Valentine-Garza
Richmond Township

John Rossi
Grafton Township

Robert Miller
Algonquin Township

Don Kopsell
Nunda Township

Jack Nichols
McHenry Co. PADS

Daniel Byars
Centegra Health System

Chris Manheim
McHenry Co. EDC

Chris Rose
Pace Suburban Bus

Donald Kopec
(CATS) Chicago Area
Transportation Study

Shamus Misk
Resident of Bull Valley

Joseph DiJohn
U. of Illinois, Chicago

DATE: April 10, 2008

TIME: 2:00 - 3:30

LOCATION: McHenry County Division of Transportation
Large Conference Room

1. Call to Order

2. Public Participation

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (June 4, 2007)

4. Update of the Pilot Coordinated Demand Response Service Group

- Staff will give an update of the Pilot Coordinated Demand Response Service (the Pilot) participant activities. On December 5, 2007 and February 19, 2008, the participants met to discuss service design options, possible implementation options. On March 26, 2008, the participants were presented staff implementation options for review.

5. Funding Applications

- Staff will give an update on how the McHenry County Senior Services Grant will be used to fund the Pilot.

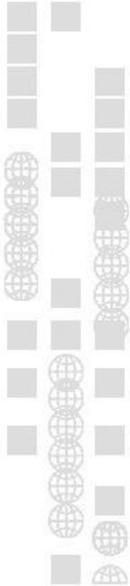
6. Paratransit Council

- Staff will give an update on the memorandum of understanding used to form a McHenry County Paratransit Council to oversee the Pilot.

7. Taxi Voucher Program

- TranSystems will make a presentation on the steps to be taken to implement a taxi voucher program.

McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force



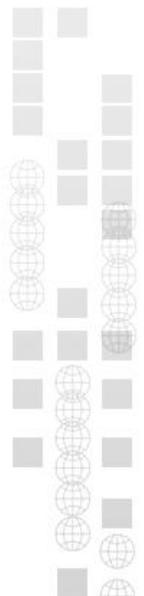
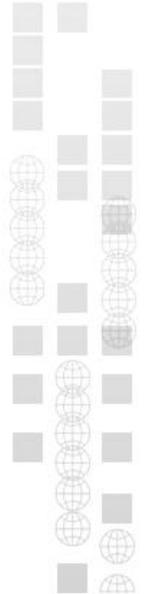
8. Van Pools

- A presentation will be by Pace bus made regarding their rideshare initiatives and discuss possibilities in McHenry County.

9. Next Steps

10. Next Meetings

11. Adjournment



IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE
MCHENRY COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN
MINUTES

Thursday, April 10, 2008

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

McHenry County Division of Transportation
Main Conference Room

Members in Attendance

County Board Chairman Koehler, Tina Hill, Tamara Valentine-Garza, Daniel Byars, Robert Miller, Paulette Pelletier, Chris Manheim, Donna Schaefer, Anna May Miller, Paulette Pelletier, Jeff Kurth, Christine Rose, Russell Pietrowiak (for Donald Kopec), Shamus Misek and Bob Pierce

Members Not In Attendance

Lyn Orphal, Sue Low, Jay Nolan, Brian Sager, John Rossi, Don Kopsell and Joseph DiJohn

Other Attendees

John Labaj, Deputy County Administrator; Peter Austin, County Administrator; Joseph Korpalski, Director of Transportation/County Engineer, Jeff Young, Assistant County Engineer; Jason Osborn, Principal Transportation Planner, Division of Transportation; Wally Dittrich, Design Manager, Division of Transportation; Lorraine Snorden, Planning Manager, Pace Suburban Bus; Barbara Ladner, Business Development Manager, Pace Suburban Bus; Mary Robb, Business Development Representative, Pace Suburban Bus; Kris Skogsbakken, Business Development, Pace Suburban Bus; Larry Deeter, Transit Planner, TranSystems Corporation; Barry Lamb, Trustee, Dorr Township; Brad Mitchell, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Crystal Lake; John Lipinski, Public Relations Officer, Self Advocacy Council; Robert Helfand, Coordinator, Thresholds; Christopher Schauer, Motivational Speaker; Donna Adamson, Receptionist, Division of Transportation

Call to Order

County Board Chairman Koehler called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Chairman Koehler stated that he will lead the McHenry County Implementation Task Force for the next few sessions. Chairman Koehler thanked Ms. Schaefer for all her efforts.

Public Participation

John Lipinski, Public Relations Officer, Self Advocacy Council of Northern Illinois. Mr. Lipinski has an issue with the Crystal Lake Dial-A-Ride system stating that Crystal Lake Dial-A-Ride will not travel into unincorporated areas of Crystal Lake. Being disabled makes it very difficult for him to utilize this service further stating that it takes away some of his independence.

Chairman Koehler empathized with Mr. Lipinski stating that this is the reason this Task Force has been implemented to try to come up with solutions for issues such as these. Chairman Koehler thanked Mr. Lipinski for his comments.

Approval of the June 4, 2007 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Hill and seconded by Ms. Schaefer, the June 4, 2007, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

A vote was taken with all members present voting “aye”; motion carried.

Update of the Pilot Coordinated Demand Response Service Group

Mr. Osborn updated the Task Force as to the steps leading up where we are today on the Pilot Coordinated Demand Response Service Group. Mr. Osborn stated that in June, 2007, the Task Force was debating the parameters of what the pilot program would be and discussed the application of the Senior Services Grant. MCDOT made a presentation to the Commission and was awarded \$180,000.00. This money was to offset operational costs for implementation. The Implementation Task Force (ITF) created a pilot program which is anticipated to be operational in August, 2008. The parameters of the pilot program geographically would include Dorr and McHenry Townships, the Cities of Woodstock and McHenry and the operations at the Pioneer Center. The hours of operation would be from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Trips may originate or end anywhere within this location. When examining the operational cost of this system, it was identified that there could be potential increases. The extent of the cost was considered and questioned whether they were reasonable. To date the ITF has the \$180,000.00 from the Senior Grant and it was determined that this is sufficient for a start up. But the pilot program will be undergoing reviews after 3 months, 6 months, 9 months and after one year. This review will identify where we need to make changes and begin discussions as to how we will go about these changes.

Ms. Miller asked whether age limits were identified.

Ms. Schaefer responded no, that it was up to the individual entities.

Funding Applications and the Paratransit Council

Mr. Osborn stated that next is to have the individual agencies participating in the pilot program sign a Memorandum of Understanding to be part of the Paratransit Council. The role of the Paratransit Council is to hammer out the remaining details of cost sharing such as service parameters. The Paratransit Council would also be responsible for reviewing quarterly the status of the pilot program and determine if any changes need to be made.

Mr. Miller stated that Algonquin, Nunda, Grafton and Richmond Townships had some questions on moving forward as a group and were reluctant to sign a Memorandum of Understanding until their questions were answered. Mr. Miller stated that the Townships were promised answers in thirty (30) days but to date, their questions have still not been answered. Mr. Miller expressed his disappointment after learning that the ITF had met prior to April 10, 2008 and that Algonquin Township was not represented.

Mr. Osborn stated that Mr. Miller had questions as to the operational costs related to involvement in the pilot program further stating that those are the questions that cannot be answered directly.

Mr. Miller stated, “We didn’t opt out.” Mr. Miller requested that this be reflected in today’s meeting minutes further stating, “If we are not included, that’s because you threw us out.”

Chairman Koehler's response to Mr. Miller was that Algonquin Township was not included in the pilot program that will start out this first year. The reason could be lack of communication. Chairman Koehler further stated that the goal of this pilot program is to be successful so it will eventually allow other groups to become a part of this in the near future. Chairman Koehler stated that it wasn't until Friday that it was decided to implement this pilot program and go out there with a lot of unknowns. If there are shortfalls, it will be decided how to fund those shortfalls while working through the project. There could be a \$250,000.00 shortfall if certain factors happen. Chairman Koehler further stated that some of the questions cannot be answered today.

Mr. Miller requested that it be noted. Mr. Miller said, "We didn't say because we didn't get the answers we wouldn't proceed as team players. We did ask for those answers and we understand you still don't have those, but we never opted out. So there is, at least a part of me, and I can't speak for the other Townships, but if we chose to be a part of this, or didn't choose to be a part of this, it was never our choice. I do feel a little betrayed in the whole mission that we set out to do, as being a team, being a network, that we were included, and then sort of pushed out. We are going to be watching this. We certainly don't want anyone to think that we are not team players. We were just, sort of shoved out when we did have those questions and we are going to be obviously enthusiastically hoping that your project is a success."

Chairman Koehler stated that he respects Mr. Miller's position. Chairman Koehler said, "Rightfully so, it should be noted for the record that that is the case so there is no misunderstanding because we want you to be a part of this project as it becomes a good project."

Ms. Hill stated that somehow Mr. Miller and she did not connect on this. Ms. Hill further stated to Mr. Miller that when he applied for Senior Grant Funds and Mr. Miller knew that the ITF was applying for Senior Grant Funds, Ms. Hill made the assumption that Algonquin Township wanted some of those dollars. Maybe that's how the miscommunication occurred. Ms. Hill stated that she thought Mr. Miller did not want to be part of the pilot project when Algonquin Township applied for Senior Grant Funds.

Mr. Miller responded that because there was so much in doubt, we didn't know if there was going to be a Senior Project. So this has come together of recent events.

Chairman Koehler concurred further stating that on Friday, Pace and McHenry County came together on the framework they could live with based on the parameters of the pilot project that Mr. Osborn has outlined.

Mr. Miller stated that he and Mr. Kopsell were at the meeting where we made the motion to ask the County to ask for these funds. Mr. Miller stated that we thought it would be irresponsible if Algonquin and Nunda Township didn't apply for those funds in case this pilot program fell flat.

Mr. Pierce questioned why they weren't informed of the meeting on Friday.

Chairman Koehler responded that the meeting on Friday was strictly between the hierarchy of Pace and the County. The County already knew your participation and buy-in to the project and we knew there

were no more dollars. The discussion on Friday came down to dollars and cents and where might be the shortfall. The County also had to decide if it could live with the parameters of the program.

Chairman Koehler continued that when it comes to the operation of the project, you will be involved. The level of the meeting on Friday was to determine if this could be funded and would work between the County and Pace. The County was not trying to have participation; it was a matter of making a decision to move this project forward. Chairman Koehler thanked Mr. Pierce for his comment.

Ms. Miller questioned Ms. Schaefer if McHenry Township is going to continue its own Senior Transportation Program aside from the Coordinated Pilot Program.

Ms. Schaefer stated that McHenry Township would continue their program because they provide door-to-door service. McHenry Township will continue to have its staff but reduced and dispatch will be handled by Pace because a centralized dispatch is the whole basis of a Consolidated Demand Response Program.

Ms. Miller stated that the County received buy-in from the various entities and the County knows what they are willing to commit. They are part of the pilot program by telling you they are going to give you \$25,000.00. Every one of these entities was given an opportunity to cap their financial involvement and the County will address the possible shortfall.

Chairman Koehler stated that if Mr. Pierce runs out of his \$25,000.00, his program ceases for Dorr Township. That's the choice that they made. If things are working well, maybe they have some additional money they could put into the program. This would be a nice problem to have; this is very experimental in nature.

Ms. Miller furthered her questioning that every other entity was allowed to participate by capping their expenses at a certain amount and will that amount be made public? Will everybody be given the option of participating and will they have the same buy-in ability?

Chairman Koehler directed the Task Force to Mr. Osborn's handout indicating that these are just estimates.

Ms. Schaefer stated that this is going to take a leap of faith on the part of these participants and she hopes it not off a big cliff. McHenry Township's program will be transitional as well as Algonquin's and Richmond's. We are going to be the guinea pigs on this and if you would like to be guinea pigs, join in. However, you will have to give up dispatch.

Chairman Koehler stated that this is the reason for the pilot. The pilot will help us get through that fear factor and have an understanding that it's going to work.

Ms. Schaefer stated that everyone has been invited. These are the entities that have stepped forward. This makes geographic sense; we had willing partners to do this.

Chairman Koehler stated the County will learn a great deal about the program in six (6) months. Central dispatch will be done out of Grayslake. That may change.

Ms. Miller stated that public transportation is needed by as many 19 year olds as 55 year olds. We need to be moving to be able to provide public transportation but it has been an interesting evolution.

Chairman Koehler stated that all the grant money is going into the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) which is going to make this project work. This is our opportunity to give it an attempt. Maybe it's good for some entities to wait a year. Chairman Koehler stated that he will take just a much responsibility if this program fails. We are not the norm when it comes to public transportation. But you have to give it a try.

Ms. Miller stated that Algonquin Township has a facility that has been providing for the seniors at no cost rides.

Chairman Koehler stated that the only thing that was provided by the Governor to be free were buses on fixed routes if they meet the age criteria. This will be confusing to seniors.

Mr. Pierce said that we can start out small at \$25,000.00, then we can always do a budget revision or we can use taxi vouchers.

Chairman Koehler stated to Mr. Pierce that \$25,000.00 was mentioned by Mr. Osborn.

Chairman Koehler stated that again this will be a leap of faith for everybody. Chairman Koehler stated to Ms. Miller that he wants Algonquin Township to be a part of this program next year.

Taxi Voucher Program

Mr. Osborn stated that the Implementation Task Force was created to implement two key aspects of the County's transit plan namely the Coordinated Demand Response Service (CDRS) and the pilot program and to implement a Taxi Voucher Program. Mr. Deeter from TranSystems gave a PowerPoint overview on the mechanism of the Subsidized Taxi Program.

Mr. Deeter stated that Pioneer Center, McHenry Township and Thresholds expressed a strong interest in this program. Other entities had expressed a possibility of participating. Mr. Deeter stated that most agencies that provide Coordinated Demand Response will probably also want to be in the Taxi Voucher Program but not everyone that provides taxi will want to be in the Coordinated Demand Response. Mr. Deeter stated that the next steps would be to form a Task Force and identify who is going to lead the project, determine the schedule, survey the taxies and figure out the regulation issues.

Chairman Koehler stated that Kane County will be a good example because there are so many similarities between the two Counties. The only difference is Kane County has two large cities, Aurora and Elgin but their rural nature is very similar to McHenry County.

Mr. Pietrowiak stated that Kane County's taxi system is part of their overall menu of services that they offer. It's not like you have two systems. The vehicle that goes out to the customer is based on what type of trip it is. It's economies of scale based on what's the most cost effective system. Other Counties to contact would be DeKalb, Lake and Kendall Counties.

Chairman Koehler stated that it's good to know that Kane merged the two types of functions because in the long run that's probably where we might be headed.

Ms. Hill asked whether the taxi companies opt into this dispatch.

Ms. Snorden stated that she thought the customer would have to go to the taxi operator to get the trip. It would not be a part of the Dial-A-Ride service. That would be a separate number.

Mr. Pietrowiak stated that as he understands that in Kane County all the calls go to one place. They route it out. The Dispatch department arranges the trip and they send the appropriate vehicle. The customer only makes one call.

Mr. Deeter stated that there is a high level of flexibility when constructing this Taxi Voucher Program.

Mr. Pietrowiak stated that the voucher system is typically done just to control costs. You contain costs when you print vouchers. You print just so many that you want to distribute. It's just like the \$25,000.00 commitment. It's the same concept. When that money runs out, you are done providing trips. If you want to print more, or you want to do a supplement to your budget, then you give more trips.

Mr. Pierce stated that currently the County will only be able to provide trips in McHenry and Woodstock. However, most of the requests that he receives are requests to go to the Crystal Lake train station.

Mr. Pietrowiak stated that he has experienced this with every County in this region. He has been in on the groundwork with all of them and everybody does things a little differently. However he would caution McHenry County against this silo approach that appears to be developing. The best system over the long term is one that eliminates geographic barriers along with curbside barriers.

Mr. Deeter stated that the taxi system is countywide. Mr. Deeter further stated that the taxi system is to fill in the gaps that are left.

Chairman Koehler stated that this system can help Mr. Lipinski. Chairman Koehler thanked Mr. Deeter for his presentation and said we will continue to look at this and monitor Kane County

Van Pools

Mr. Osborn stated that Ms. Ladner and Mr. Skogsbakken from Pace will introduce a new tool that Pace has, which is located on the Internet, called the Pace Ride Share Program. This website became effective March 1, 2008. Mr. Skogsbakken stated that Pace took over the regional Ride Share responsibilities from CATS when they merged and became CMAP. Their overall goal as the nation's second largest vanpool program in the country, is to merge carpooling and vanpooling into one ridesharing concept. Pace Ride Share Program can be found at pacerideshare.com. Mr. Skogsbakken stated that their brochures should be ready next week and proceeded to give a brief overview of the site.

Mr. Skogsbakken stated that this is critical timing for carpool and vanpool sharing. People are spending a larger portion of their disposable income on getting to work. Pace's Vanpool Program started in 1991 and they now have over 670 vans on the road in the six (6) County region. Approximately 300 are commuter vans. As an incentive to the drivers, they do not pay a fare and they get to use the van for 300 personal

miles per month outside of the work commute. The riders pay a low monthly fare of approximately \$100.00 per person per month. The Pace Ride Share Program is subsidized with some federal money for the purchase of the vehicles. The operating costs are self-sufficient and Pace recoups 100% of the operating costs. Mr. Skogsbakken stated that it is in everyone's interest to take advantage of this program. Mr. Skogsbakken further stated that Pace is starting a pilot program on Guaranteed Ride Home where Pace will reimburse people for their taxi ride home if their carpool driver cannot show. Pace does not have full regional implementation of this as of yet. Possibly later this year Pace will implement this into the site.

Mr. Skogsbakken stated that the Pace Ride Share Program is primarily for work commutes. That's the market that they are targeting. However one of the plans for the future is an event module. Also, Pace will be incorporating their park and ride locations as well as their vanpool routes into the site within the next 2-3 weeks. People will not only be able to match to other carpoolers but to a Pace vanpool with an empty seat.

Ms. Hill asked what kind of safety tips shall I tell my 15 year-old daughter. There is an element of danger.

Ms. Ladner stated this if for people to get to and from work. People who are going to carpool do take a risk, but you also do not have a commitment. You will communicate with each other and you can agree to meet some place.

Mr. Skogsbakken added that you can elect to match with only co-workers. That would be an added level of security before you branch out. In addition, Pace can designate your Human Resources Administrator to be able to see the participation of your company's employees. For the Vanpool Program, only the origin or destination point has to be within our six (6) County area. So there are vans that can come from Wisconsin. The program is a little weighted to be a little bit less expensive for longer trips because of the overhead for the vehicle. For the Vanpool Program, employees have to undergo a physical that is regulated by the Department of Transportation that includes a drug screen. In addition, they have to take a one day safety and orientation class at Pace. All of the Pace drivers are verified.

The Vanpool Program charges a monthly fare which is based off 21 work days a month. If the fare is not utilized, the fare is not discounted. If the driver is ill, Pace has training for up to four (4) back-up drivers. For the Vanpool Program you can also use transit vouchers to pay for the monthly fee with the Commuters Choice Benefits Program. However the Employer has to participate with the program; it's not on an individual basis.

Ms. Ladner stated that not only will Pace have hard copy brochures but it will be on a PDF file that Mr. Osborn can e-mail to you. Pace is trying to keep this a very green program.

Chairman Koehler stated that for McHenry County this program has some real immediate possibilities. Chairman Koehler thanked Mr. Skogsbakken and Ms. Ladner for a very informative presentation.

NEXT STEPS

Ms. Hill had questions of the Paratransit Council, specifically, the Paratransit Council is separate from the Implementation Task Force so they will have different duties. How soon will it be set up? Who will be the players?

Mr. Osborn responded that those participating in the pilot program will sign the Memorandum of Understanding. Secondly, we will need to meet. The County would have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding as well.

Chairman Koehler stated that the Memorandum of Understanding will get signed.

Mr. Osborn again turned to his handout, under Project Description there are issues related to contract amendments needed with the municipals and Pioneer Center. There is the installation of the MDT's that needs to be coordinated as well as training and education. Also marketing efforts need to be discussed. Those will be the roles of the Paratransit Council initially. Mr. Osborn estimates a timeline of June 11, 2008. An August start would be the latest.

Chairman Koehler stated that it really depends on the municipalities. We need to offer the opportunity to the municipalities by having another presentation to see if there is any interest. The municipalities are a primary component and without them he doesn't feel this will work.

Ms. Schaefer stated that she feels the bigger consumer of this will be the social service agencies and non-profit agencies.

Mr. Manheim stated that his knowledge comes from working with the Kane County program and that many of the manufacturers were very interested, particularly in the Taxi Program because many of the workers need to be at work by 6:00 a.m.

Ms. Schaefer stated in the original study, employers were involved and we received a lukewarm response. However, gasoline was not as expensive. Times have change where there might be renewed interest.

Mr. Manheim stated that he feels this would be important particularly with the Retailers whose employees must leave after 10:00 p.m. and are on competitive wages.

Mr. Pierce asked about the legal status of the participants.

Mr. Deeter responded that the entity would be responsible to register their riders.

Mr. Osborn asked, that in conclusion, when do you want to see what is going on in the process as a whole? The obvious date would be the set up of the pilot program or do you want to meet before that date to discuss other developments with the Taxi Voucher Program?

Ms. Schaefer stated that that's why there was such a long period of time before we met because we had nothing to say. Ms. Schaefer stated that we didn't have a definitive answer from Pace and we didn't know what the specific parameters would be.

Ms. Valentine-Garza stated that just so there isn't the confusion like last year. There was a tremendous amount of misunderstanding. It would be beneficial to the Committee that we meet so that we are all on the same page and we know what all agencies are doing.

Ms. Hill stated that what Ms. Valentine-Garza is talking about is the Senior Grant Funding. If you are going to be asking for more money for Senior Grant Funding for the County Transit, as a Committee this should be discussed and whether the Committee is willing to reapply for next year's funding.

Next Meeting Date & Location

Mr. Pietrowiak said that in Kane County they met every other month before implementation took place. Now that the system is running, they meet quarterly. DuPage County meets monthly. They have issues with ridership, marketing, how to register clients, funding, etc.

Ms. Hill stated that Mr. Osborn will have this answered at the Paratransit Council.

Ms. Valentine-Garza stated that the Paratransit Council will not have all the transit stakeholders and it's imperative that the transit stakeholders understand what is going on. Also, we don't want to give the impression that we are not working together.

Chairman Koehler agreed and stated that's what caused the confusion. We will look at a date in early June.

Ms. Snorden responded to the question about a press release regarding the pilot program and said that Pace will work with the Paratransit Council and see the approach they would like to take.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Hill, and seconded by Ms. Miller, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.