



MCHENRY COUNTY
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC)
MINUTES • NOVEMBER 18, 2015

Public Meeting

Conference Room C

2:00 PM

667 Ware Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098

I. CALL TO ORDER

Blake Hobson, PTAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

A. Roll Call

Regional Transportation Authority Director: Blake Hobson
City of Crystal Lake: Brad Mitchell
City of Woodstock: Jeff Van Landuyt
Greenwood Township: Barbara Klasen
Pace Suburban Bus: Mary Donner
Metra: Rick Mack
Senior Services Associates: Valerie Usalis and Anna Lightcap
Pioneer Center: Tom Riley
Lake County Center for Independent Living: Jenny Farley
Illinois Bureau of Blind Services: Susan Dalton
McHenry County Division of Transportation: Scott Hennings, Kirsten Mellem, Jeff Young
McHenry County Council of Mayors: Janell Jensen
Continuum of Care to End Homelessness: Ronald Ecklund
Public: Donna Copeland-Hill, Agency on Aging; Donna Fischer, Centegra Home Health

B. Introductions

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) - Public Meeting - Sep 9, 2015 2:00 PM

Motion to approve minutes by Blake Hobson. Seconded by Rick Mack. No discussion. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

RESULT: ACCEPTED BY VOICE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Donner of Pace Suburban Bus recently attended a Workforce Network meeting regarding training opportunities at MCC and the issue of students not having access to a ride home was brought to her attention again. Since MCRide does not operate after 7pm, it restricts many students from attending classes or needed workforce training. She said she would bring this concern before the PTAC committee again since it is a chronic issue.

IV. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES - NONE

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. MCRide Program Update

i. Ridership Report

(1) Pace online reporting system has been restored and an updated ridership report was presented for January - October 2015. There is an increase in the percentage of disabled riders using the service from 46% in August to 52% in October. This has reduced the percentage of general public riders from 32% to 26% in August and October, respectively. This can be attributed to the new policy of riders able to call seven days in advance if they are classified as disabled or senior; general public riders can only call 24 hours in advance to schedule rides.

(2) The Cost Per Trip, Monthly Trips, and Fare Box Recovery report show that our cost per trip and fare box recovery are leveling off after some time of adjustment due to the increased service area in March. The August 2015 total cost per trip is \$17.79. The total County DOT and Senior Grant cost per trip is \$3.60. The total County, Cities, and Townships cost per trip is \$5.20.

(3) The third report is of the cost per trip of the fixed-route buses in McHenry County in comparison to the MCRide service. The 806 and 807 bus routes both cost more per trip to operate than the MCRide program. The reason for this report is to show that fixed routes are not necessarily more efficient due to geography and land use patterns unique to McHenry County.

ii. 2016 IGAs

The County Transportation Committee decided not to increase the fares for 2016 nor expand service hours. The 2016 IGA was approved by the County Board with the same policies as in 2015. Slowly the IGAs from cities and townships are being approved and submitted to the MCDOT.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Does the existing MCRide service meet your clients' needs?

- The program is a great compliment to the McHenry Township and Senior Services programs.
- It is a great resource for senior clients, however it does not provide service County-wide. There is demand for rides from seniors in Hebron.
- The service area needs are not met for people after 7pm. The major needs are for after hours and Sundays.
- All communities requested a stop along the new Route 550, showing a desire to have public transportation.
- Access for Richmond residents to get to Johnsburg.
- The townships work for seniors and disabled individuals, but no access for people in need of the general public.
- Access to farecards for agencies to purchase and distribute to people in need is an excellent program.
- Woodstock and Crystal Lake are happy with the service and have not heard any complaints.
- Expanded service hours and Sunday service, options for public transit 7 days a week.
- Outreach to potential riders has been helpful. Need to survey current and non-riders to determine need.
- Youth programs in Woodstock have no access to return transportation.

A. Taxi Discussion

Pace Taxi Presentation Update: On November 12, 2015 at the McHenry County Administration Building, Pace held an informational meeting on how to become a transportation provider for MCRide. Over 140 taxi companies from McHenry, Lake, and Suburban Cook counties were invited to attend. Four taxi companies attended and were all interested in joining the program after hearing the requirements to be a transportation provider with Pace. The next step is to advise the Transportation Committee on how to incorporate taxis into the MCRide service. Clarification of the taxi program: riders will not see a difference in the service, it will have the same phone number, fare structure, and policies as today. The call taker will do all the work in selecting the low cost provider based on the riders needs. And a rider will be dispatched a mini-bus or taxi based on these needs.

The discussion included question posed to the voting members: Are clients willing to use taxis?

There was a 50/50 split, some of the concerns included: wheelchair accessible vehicles, not being able to use federal funding for supplemental taxi services, and the potential for a reduction in the quality of the ride due to multiple service providers. Recommendations from the committee included: the County should use taxis to expand the service hours until 10pm, offer service on Sundays, and make sure to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles available at all times.

B. Uber and MCRide Discussion

The County Board has challenged the MCDOT to consider a ridesourcing company, like Uber, to provide low cost trips via taxi. Ridesourcing is the outsourcing of rides to private commercial drivers that do not share a destination with the passenger, for example companies like: Lyft, Uber, and Sidecar. Pace has stated that they will not engage with ridesourcing companies. Therefore, the County will need to contract directly with such a company. Some issues arise: federal dollars cannot be used to subsidize these rides since they do not meet the guidelines of the Section 5310 funding received by the County. Riders must be able to operate a smartphone to book trips. And finally who will be eligible for free trips in this program. The current Uber model does not provide for a public-private partnership similar to the Pace-Taxi model discussed earlier. Therefore, a different solution must be explored. A possible solution is Uber for Business, which is currently offered by Uber for private businesses to set up a corporate credit card account to give employees free rides to and from work. These employees are registered by the company and their rides are charged to the account. In this option, businesses and schools are able to contract directly with Uber to provide free transportation to their employees/students to meet the needs of third shift workers and late night classes attended by students. The additional step would be for the County to create a grant program, where a portion of the ride is reimbursed/subsidized for the business/school. Some questions were presented and the PTAC voting members were polled:

(1) Can your clients use a smartphone to schedule a trip? No - 4; Yes - 5; Abstain - 2

(2) Should we subsidize Uber trips? No - 1 ; Needs - 2; Means - 8

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

Tentative: January 13, 2016 at McHenry County Administration Building

It was proposed that the 2016 PTAC meetings will continue to be held the second Wednesday of odd months at 2:00pm at the McHenry County Administration Building. An official schedule will be adopted at the January 2016 meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned ay 3:19pm by Blake Hobson. Seconded by Mary Donner. There was no discussion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.