

# McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

## Agenda

### McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

**DATE:** May 11, 2009

**TIME:** 11:00 - 12:00

**LOCATION:** McHenry County Administration Building  
Conference Room C

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1. Call to Order
2. Public Participation
3. Presentation of Draft Grant Program Criteria and Scoring
4. Criteria and Scoring Discussion
5. Grant Program Accountability
6. Grant Program Timeline
7. Next Steps
8. Next Meetings
9. Adjournment

# McHenry County Transit Plan Implementation Task Force

## Transit Grant Program Proposal

### MINUTES

Monday, May 11, 2009

11:00 a.m. to noon

McHenry County Administration Building  
Conference Room C

#### Attendees

*McHenry County Board:* Ken Koehler, Anna May Miller

*McHenry County DOT:* Joe Korpalski, Jason Osborn, Sarah Lutz

*TranSystems:* Lynn Otte

*Dorr Township:* Bob Pierce, Barry Lamb

*Algonquin Township:* Bob Miller

*City of Crystal Lake:* Brad Mitchell

*City of Woodstock:* Roscoe Stelford

*Nunda Township:* Don Kopsell

*Thresholds:* Julie Gibson

*NISRA:* Jim Wiseman

*Pioneer Center:* Jeff Kurth, Jason Clark, Jeff Carlson, Tom Riley

*SEDOM:* Jeannine Bolton, Margaret Bock

*Centegra Health System:* Daniel Byars

*Citizen-at-Large:* Paulette Pelletier

*University of Illinois at Chicago:* Joe DiJohn

*Pace:* Mary Donner

Anna May Miller opened the meeting at 11:01 a.m. with introductions of Board Chairman Ken Koehler and the Division of Transportation staff.


No public comment was brought forward.

Mr. Osborn from County DOT provided a brief introduction to the transit plan. He discussed the coordination that was begun and reiterated the plan's three goals:

1. Overcome existing mobility barriers
2. Connect to the regional transit network
3. Improve options for accessing jobs (within and outside the county).

Mr. Osborn mentioned that the current proposal's goal is to "reboot" the transit plan's implementation with the help of the RTA (*Regional Transportation Authority State Sales Tax*) funding source. Another goal of the current proposal is to keep it simple to start out and revise it over time to address any issues that arise.

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Mr. Osborn then quickly walked through the proposal. It was developed from input from staff at the RTA and was designed to be relatively simple. It places the county in a new role. The funds will be distributed based on criteria as described in the proposal. The program will award \$300,000 to \$500,000 total. The exact details have not been determined on how the funds will be administered or whether it is necessary for applicants to renew funds every year for multi-year programs.

Mr. Osborn continued by describing the program's two goals. The first is to increase the amount of data to enhance future transit decision-making processes. The second and key focus is to encourage coordination or expansion of transit service consistent with the transit plan's goals. While the program is not finalized, eligible applicants include anyone providing transportation services and paratransit services in particular.

Ms. Miller added that the meeting is the first of several meetings to get input and help determine what we want from this program and who should be included.

Mr. Byars from Centegra asked if the program related to townships expanding services and also for hospitals whose services supplement township services. Ms. Miller responded that that is one possibility.



Ms. Gibson from Thresholds brought up her circumstances, where they provide transportation from facility to home when a mental health patient is discharged from service. She also noted that the transportation services they provide are unfunded from federal medical insurance.

Mr. DiJohn from UIC added that to foster coordination among services, it would be best to open the program to everyone providing transportation.

Mr. Osborn added that the people in attendance have the opportunity to shape the process and to suggest changes to the scoring of applications to help the program prioritize based on what is important to transportation providers.

Ms. Miller asked if there were any limitations from the County's standpoint. Mr. Osborn replied that there will be few initial limits with this new program and that it might have to change over time depending on what works. He added that in the current draft quantity of service gets points but type of service is not covered.

Ms. Donner from Pace pointed out that many paratransit programs are an extension of general assistance and are a quality of life issue. They may only carry fifteen people, but these fifteen people ride every day. If there are too many providers, it may be confusing for users or difficult to notify potential users of available services. She also urged

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clarification on who would be served: seniors, disabled persons, the general population? Is the program intended to start small and then expand?

Ms. Miller asked Ms. Donner if community members must live in an area with Pace fixed-route service to use Pace's dial-a-ride services. Ms. Donner responded that those services are only for communities with contracts (those with fixed-route services). Ms. Miller pointed out that a town could apply for funds to expand service.

Mr. Osborn added that the County is trying this open-ended approach so that no one will be left out of the opportunity to apply for funds. Mr. DiJohn added that it's helpful to have an open process and that this program is an opportunity to find out more about the County's needs.

Mr. Osborn provided some further information on where the process will go from here. First, it's possible that the County, Pace, and TranSystems will work together to evaluate the program. Applications will be considered first to see if the financials make sense – would the project be feasible with funds requested? If good ideas don't rank well the system can be modified. After the first round of applications is provided, if nothing needs to be adjusted, we can move ahead with the program.

Mr. Osborn asked the group what assistance might be necessary as applicants put their applications together. Another meeting will be scheduled to meet and discuss applications as a group. This will leave opportunity to change the methodology as necessary, but will get applications moving right away. Proposals can take a couple of months, but let's agree to work by phone and e-mail for intermediate questions.


Ms. Miller pointed out that at the very least organizations can apply for funding to increase data collection. Chairman Koehler added that the County encourages agencies to improve data records with this grant.

Mr. Osborn added that the two forms at the back of the packet (log of rides and rider registration form) are the type of data being sought and get to the issue of accountability in using funds.

Ms. Miller added that the next meeting will be for in-between applications; assistance will be available at by phone and e-mail prior to that meeting and at the meeting to enable applicants to put together successful applications.

Chairman Koehler added that data collection is the entry point to the system – the minimum way to receive funding. The grant money awarded to agencies could vary based


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on the number of applications received. Chairman Koehler then asked to have the pilot program as proposed last year to be discussed.

Mr. Osborn described the Woodstock, McHenry, Pioneer Center, McHenry Township and possibly Dorr Township pilot program for coordination. Last year, this group of agencies was working to coordinate operations using mobile data terminals to be installed in all the vehicles and Trapeze call and dispatch software. The County is still looking and advocating for a larger level of coordination with central dispatch. The County has a vision of where might we be in ten years. Successful programs may lead to natural coordination of services, leading to more funding and more growth. More advanced programs are important, but we don't want to lose the opportunity to leverage the work of volunteers important to smaller programs. We also want successes with Pace, to improve dial-a-ride, and to improve special services. If an agency is working with Pace already, get Pace involved in your application.

Chairman Koehler added that the goal is not to subsidize Pace. The County wants the program to succeed, but at the very least we need to try. It's possible to leverage these sales tax dollars to get a pilot program going and to help others with good programs. If the pilot fails, at least we tried to see if it would work for the county. Chairman Koehler pointed out that it's not required that the County use the RTA sales tax funds for transportation – public safety is also allowed by legislation. The County has decided that it would like to spend this money on transportation.



Ms. Gibson from Thresholds thinks it's a good idea to have the group look at proposals together. They have only 60 members and specific sub-services. Mr. Osborn stated that the County would like to hear suggestions for the point scoring system. Ms. Gibson added that they have some legal requirements for transporting people from other agencies. Mr. Osborn suggested that additional tiers or natural groupings might arise through this process to enhance coordination.

Mr. Osborn proposed that a meeting in one month would give agencies enough time to coordinate proposals. There was general agreement from attendees and no concerns were voiced about that timeline.

Ms. Donner from Pace asked about the specificity of the registration form included in the packet. Mr. Osborn replied that not every agency might need such a detailed form, but having detailed information about service users is very helpful for long-term data needs.

By consensus, the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 11, with follow-ups to be conducted by e-mail. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.