

**Human Services Transportation Plan Steering Committee/
HSTP Rural Subcommittee/HSTP Urban Subcommittee (in lieu of
Lack of Quorum)**

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 – 12:00 PM

EPIC Board Room, 1913 W. Townline Rd., Peoria, IL 61615

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, & Roll Call

Reema Abi-Akar called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

RURAL AREA SUBCOMMITTEE				
Name	Organization	Representing	Present	Absent
Shelly Entrekin*	FCRT/FCRC	Fulton	~X	
Barb Long*				X
Audra Miles	Fulton County PCOM	Fulton	~X	
Joe Coffin	Thrive Community Services (KCCDD)	Knox		X
Kraig Boynton	City of Galesburg	Knox	X	
Hannah Fuchs	Marshall-Stark PCOM	Marshall		X
David Lueders	Marshall County Board	Marshall	X	
Mary Patton	AARP	Peoria		X
Allison Borland	SEAPCO	Peoria		X
Traci Dowell	MSW Projects	Stark	~X	
Sunny Pearson	Age Central (CIAOA)	Stark	X	
Meghan Brake	TMCSEA	Tazewell	X	
Alisha Dault	Pekin Park District	Tazewell	X	
Tyler Rogers	ADDWC	Woodford	X	
Alexandra Maxwell	We Care	Woodford	X	
URBAN AREA SUBCOMMITTEE				
Dawn Harper	EPIC	Agency	X	
Jodi Scott	Advocates for Access	CIL	X	
Brad Siltman	Greater Peoria Mass Transit District	Provider		X
Kylie Rathmann	Labor Max Staffing	Partner	X	
Chris Mitchell*	Paratransit Users	User		X
Connie Schiele*				X
Jewel Ward	Washington Township	Partner		X
Greg Cassidy	TCRC	Agency		X

* = Shared seat

** = Proxy Vote

~ = Present via phone or Internet

Also in attendance:

Reema Abi-Akar, Lori Reynolds, Bano Moosavi, Thomas Schnelle – Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)
Christine Adams – Snyder Village

Attending virtually:

Doug Dawson and Julie Byers – presenters - Rural LISC
Sabrina Bedenko – Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living (IVCIL)
Laura Dick and Henry Dick – SHOW BUS
Brittany Burton – WeDriveU

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. February 3, 2026 minutes
- b. June 2, 2026 minutes
Tabled due to lack of quorum

4. Rural Cellular Coverage presentation by Rural LISC

Doug Dawson stated that he conducted this study for the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC). In every county in the United States, the rural areas have worse cell coverage than the cities. Factors that affect coverage are power restrictions and frequencies that are used. The FCC limits the power of towers because they do not want the signal from one tower to interfere or overlap with the next tower. Cellular signal is strongest right by the tower, but each mile traveled away from the tower, it is greatly decreased.

Urban areas have great coverage because they supplement the large towers with smaller towers in between. Low frequencies travel the farthest and penetrate obstructions easier. Mid-range spectrum travels shorter distances and has passable home penetration, whereas a higher spectrum travels shorter distances with poorer penetration.

Reema asked who pays for the cell towers. Doug replied that it is the cell company's choice where the towers go, and they pay for the towers themselves. Then, the companies sell the towers to other companies to operate them; then, the cell companies rent them. Rural areas do not have good coverage because there are fewer people, and it is not worth it to the cell companies to invest the money for the necessary electronics where there are few customers.

Reema asked if any of the service providers in the room have riders that have trouble getting through to request rides. Woodford County seems to

have spotty coverage, which corresponds with the maps that Doug shared.

Kylie asked how residents call for emergency services with poor cell coverage. Doug replied that with upcoming changes, people will soon be able to make a 9-1-1 call to a satellite. That is how people who get lost in parks will be able to call for safety.

Reema asked which counties were included in this study. Doug replied that it was Woodford, Tazewell, Peoria, Mason and Logan, and you can get a copy of the report from GPEDC (Reema has also sent this to the group).

Reema asked where we can see the coverage maps. Doug stated that the FCC has the data, but they are mapped differently. He gave the maps to GPEDC.

Kylie asked if the coverage maps seen on cell phone commercials are factual, and Doug replied that they are not.

Reema stated that transit and cell coverage are deeply connected because if you cannot get a call through to request a ride, you are unable to reach your destination.

5. HSTP Document Update

Reema stated that every few years, the HSTP document is updated as requested by IDOT. She gave a brief presentation of the demographic maps portion of the document that has been updated and stated that Logan County is now added to the maps. Different population types were shown on several maps to determine where there is the highest need. Maps are shown that represent population of people with disabilities, seniors, people living in poverty, minorities, veterans, and youth, which are the demographics that are most in need of transit assistance.

Reema shared surveys for agency staff to fill out so TCRPC can use that information to complete other parts of the survey and determine what gaps exist where. There is also a community survey for riders and non-riders to describe what their transportation needs are. The surveys are available online and on paper, and she will email them to the group as well. Reema also stated that staff are considering doing ride-alongs for different transit providers. Feedback from these surveys will be used to make recommendations in the plan document.

Reema stated that staff has also been doing a Bus Stop Accessibility Plan with surveys focused on CityLink, the fixed-route service for the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area. The results from that will also be included in the HSTP document. Reema asked that attendees please return the agency

surveys to her by August 26. The deadline for the Community Survey may be about a month out, but she will let you know for sure.

6. Provider and Agency Updates

Fulton County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM)

Audra Miles had nothing to report.

WeDriveU

Brittany Burton had nothing to report.

SHOW BUS Public Transportation

Laura Dick reported that they are new to this HSTP group and are happy to be included. She is sure there will be more community partners from her area soon.

IVCIL

Sabrina Bedenko had nothing to report.

Fulton County Rural Transit/Fulton County Rehabilitation Center (FCRC/FCRT)

Shelly Entrekin had nothing to report.

MSW Projects

Traci Dowell reported that they are at capacity for drivers, they are still waiting to dispose of a van, and they're excited to see the new CVP grant released.

Tazewell-Mason Counties Special Education

Megan Brake had nothing to report.

Labor Max Staffing

Kylie Rathmann reported that she can help if anyone is hiring for drivers or special positions in transit. She passed out information about her services.

ADDWC

Tyler Rogers had nothing to report.

Advocates for Access

Jodi Scott had nothing to report.

City of Galesburg

Kraig Boynton stated that the City and County approved agreement for county-wide transportation.

EPIC

Dawn Harper stated that they have been doing travel training, and they have a new building for job training and a behavioral health clinic.

Tazewell County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM)

Dawn Cook had nothing to report.

Snyder Village

Christina Adams had nothing to report.

We Care

Alex Maxwell stated that they now have a bus to Pekin and Tremont.

Pekin Park District

Alisha Dault stated that someone has contacted them that wants to buy them a bus for senior trips, special recreation trips, or trips to Special Olympics, and asked for suggestions for where she should look. Some responses she received were Indiana, Jeff Waxman at IDOT, Midwest Transit, and Southern Bus & Mobility.

Central Illinois Agency on Aging (now Age Central)

Sunny Pearson stated that she has nothing new transportation-related, other than now, all of their transportation has been outsourced to We Care.

7. HSTP Coordinator Report

Reema stated that the Illinois Public Transit Association (IPTA) and the American Public Transit Association (APTA) conferences are in Chicago on October 5-7. The APTA EXPO is free. Because these conferences would coincide with the next regularly scheduled HSTP meeting, the October meeting is moved to the following week.

Reema reported that she visited the HSTP Coordinator in Macomb and Logan County personnel in Lincoln, both in July. She stated that TCRPC will be updating the HSTP bylaws so Logan County can vote on this committee.

Finally, Reema noted that the Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) webinar was yesterday. The application takes some work, and anyone who has access to the IDOT BlackCat grant website can find the webinar recording and the application on BlackCat.

8. Other

- a. Kylie asked if we have a vote coming up. Reema stated she is hoping to vote on bylaws at the December meeting. Kylie stated that she was hoping 5310 funding would be approved for the intersection and Main and

Mariners Way in East Peoria because she has staff that ride the bus and have to cross there. Reema stated that it has been approved, and the project is in the works.

b. Next meeting: Tuesday, October 13, 2026

9. Adjourn

Reema adjourned the meeting at 1:08 p.m.