

**Human Services Transportation Plan Steering Committee
Tuesday, October 17, 2023 – 12:00 PM**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)
Suite 401, 456 Fulton St., Peoria, IL 61602

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, & Roll Call

Reema Abi-Akar called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

RURAL AREA SUBCOMMITTEE				
Name	Organization	Representing	Present	Absent
Shelly Entrekin*	FCRC/FCRT	Fulton	~X	
Barb Long*				X
Doug Manock*	Fulton County Board	Fulton		X
Audra Miles*	Fulton County PCOM		X	
Joe Coffin	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	
Dr. ShamRA Robinson	GPMTD - CityLink	Peoria	X	
Traci Dowell	MSW Projects	Stark	~X	
J. Thomas Howes	Stark County Board	Stark		X
Vivian Hagaman	Tazewell County Board	Tazewell		X
Max Schnieder	Tazewell County Board	Tazewell		X
Tyler Rogers	ADDWC	Woodford		X
Troy Maxwell	We Care	Woodford		X
URBAN AREA SUBCOMMITTEE				
Dawn Harper	EPIC	Agency	X	
Jodi Scott	Advocates for Access	CIL	X	
Angel Marinich	TransDev (CityLift/CountyLink)	Provider	~X	
Kylie Rathmann	Express Employment Professionals	Agency	X	
Chris Mitchell	Paratransit User	User	X	
Connie Schiele	Paratransit User	User	~X	
Jim Bremner	Washington Township	Partner	X	
Greg Cassidy	TCRC	Agency	X	

* = Shared seat

** = Proxy Vote

~ = Present via phone or internet

Also in attendance:

Reema Abi-Akar, TCRPC
Jared Arthur, Snyder Village
Heather Bouchez, Best Buddies
Dawn Cook, Tazewell PCOM
Gabriel Guevara, TCRPC

Dawn Hand, Stone-Hayes CIL
Melissa Ohrwall, IDOT
Jessica Ortega, IVCIL
Renee Razo, CIAOA
Jodie Vanderheydt, SEAPCO

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of minutes:

a. February 7, 2023 minutes

b. August 8, 2023 minutes (no quorum)

Greg Cassidy moved to approve the February 7, 2023 minutes and the August 8, 2023 minutes. Mary Patton seconded the motion. There were no comments, and the minutes were approved.

4. Approve Bylaw Changes

Greg moved to approve bylaw changes. Jodi Scott seconded the motion. No additional comments were made, and the bylaw changes were approved.

5. Provider and Agency Updates

KCCDD

Joe Coffin at KCCDD reported that his organization is fully staffed and received approval to dispose of four old IDOT vehicles.

City of Galesburg

Kraig Boynton expressed optimism in having the fixed-route app operating soon. He added that there were previously some minor complications with the app, but he is hopeful that it will run properly. Kraig also reported that Galesburg has been working with IDOT's Jeff Waxman to obtain a used Super Duty vehicle in an effort to support their fixed-route system. Galesburg disposed of two old units. Lastly, Galesburg is close to having a new transit shop foreman, and they are looking forward to the new CVPs being announced.

Snyder Village

Jared Arthur gave no report.

Tazewell County Resource Centers (TCRC)

Greg Cassidy reported that TCRC is not fully staffed and is still actively recruiting drivers. He also reported that people are beginning to occupy the new building they have purchased in downtown Pekin.

Fulton County PCOM

Audra Miles gave no report.

Best Buddies

Heather Bouchez gave no report.

AARP

Mary Patton reported that AARP is fighting an Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) request by Ameren that asks for additional rate increases. She directed members to contact the ICC in Springfield and advocate against the request. Ameren is asking for first right of refusal, which means that instead of the ICC determining what the plans are, Ameren can determine how much to spend and how much to charge.

Express Employment Professionals

Kylie Rathmann reported that her organization is still seeking alternative affordable solutions for bringing people to and from job opportunities, especially second and third shift. Lack of transportation has presented an issue in getting qualified candidates to work. In response to Greg Cassidy's report on lack of drivers, Kylie mentioned that she does have drivers available and offered to communicate more offline.

Advocates for Access

Jodi Scott reported that, on October 4th, Access Living from Chicago visited the Advocates for Access. Some critical topics of the meeting: Chicago paratransit not deploying ramps for individuals who are traveling with shopping carts; transportation to and from non-emergency medical appointments; effects of marijuana legalization on the recruitment of (federally funded transportation system) drivers, who are required to pass a drug test.

EP!C

Dawn Harper reported that EP!C is not fully staffed and is currently actively looking to recruit drivers. Dawn's main issue, due to staff shortages, is securing transportation to smaller cities, like Morton. Harper shared that EP!C now has three individuals from Washington, which is a big plus. Dawn also expressed appreciation for Angel Marinich, who took on some of EP!C's routes.

Washington Township

Jim Bremner reported a lower ridership in October compared to September. He suggested that the 30% drop in ridership between this time can be attributed to a five-week September and a four-week October. He said that there are stated plans to look at rider logs to see if anyone has been missed and ensure that they are fine. Jim also reported that additional riders, those

of whom are high school students, applications were in the process of being filled. They are working with the Agency on Aging, transporting patients on dialysis. He mentioned Fondulac Park District's event, Tazfest, which assisted seniors 65+ to scout available services in the Tri-County area. During Tazfest, there were many questions about routes that travel through Tazewell communities. He connected with Amy Gayle from a new organization called Hearts for Change. Amy agreed to push, through online avenues, marketing, and advertisements for Washington paratransit.

Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD)

Dr. ShamRA Robinson reported that she attended the APTA Conference, where she connected and spoke with Enterprise about vanpools. ShamRA also spoke with other vendors about fare collection, micro transit, and software for paratransit that will be used for upgrades to GPMTD's system. Reported that GPMTD plans to have National Transit Database reporting turned in by October 31st.

She disclosed GPMTD's ongoing bus route audit with leadership and staff. She also alerted the committee to a fixed-route operator graduation for four additional operators; she expects to be fully staffed as it pertains to operators. ShamRA announced the hiring of a new Complaint Analyst, Sharice Little, whose primary function will be looking into fixed-route complaints. Note: Sharice will also take ADA complaints on fixed routes.

Agency on Aging

Renee Razo reported that there is a new Executive Director, Tessa Mahoney, who began working at the agency on September 1st.

Paratransit User

Chris Mitchell expressed appreciation for all members and services, particularly CityLink. She applauded their commitment to implement new routes and hire two new dispatchers and new drivers.

Paratransit User

Connie Schiele also communicated her appreciation, singling out Angel Marinich for her dedication to ensuring individuals with disabilities have quick, efficient travel.

TransDev (CityLift/CountyLink)

Angel Marinich reported that, due to the driver shortage, her team has been taking on a number of additional duties, such as driving, dispatching, etc. Angel reported that conditions are improving, and more applicants are trickling in. Hiring events have proved to be slightly effective; Angel mentioned that 4-5 individuals made it all the way through to the training process. She announced that TransDev hired two additional dispatchers to accommodate for the staff shortage.

Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living (IVCIL)

Jessica Ortega gave no report.

Tazewell County PCOM

Dawn Cook gave no report.

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

Melissa Ohrwall reported that IDOT is still waiting for the finalization of vendor contracts. She also announced that the vehicle award announcements will be held next month (November).

IVCIL

Dawn Hand gave no report.

MSW Projects

Traci Dowell reported that, in response to having a shortage of three drivers, two drivers are in the hiring process, which leaves one vacancy to be filled. Traci discussed the difficulties of finding qualified applicants, especially because there were too few applicants. She reported experiencing some difficulty offering service to different places because one of the medical facilities closed. Traci also reported data that listed grocery shopping as the primary reason for needing transportation in Stark County, a spot usually held by accessing some type of medical service.

Marshall County Board

David Lueders gave no report.

Fulton County Rural Transit (FCRT)

Shelly Entrekin congratulated Reema on her recent award. *Well deserved round of applause from the audience.* No further updates from Shelly Entrekin.

6. HSTP Coordinator Report

Reema reported that Tri-County is preparing an Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Gabriel detailed the purposes and goals of the Active Transportation Plan, as well as announcing the ATP open house details. He announced that, independent from Tri-County's ATP, the Illinois Department of Transportation is also in the process of working on its own ATP.

Reema shared an update on conferences and meetings: 1) CVP – IDOT is working through the bid process, but there has been some progress; 2) IDOT is conducting a Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Study, with a focus on reliability and availability; 3) Reema shared the *Aging in a Changing Region* presentation that was given at the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference by the Metropolitan Mayors

Caucus in Chicago. The partnership provides support for municipalities interested in better supporting aging communities; 4) Reema mentioned that HSTP appointments are in the process of being finalized; 5) Any 5310 Reviews that took place several months ago are in the process of being updated; 6) Lastly, Reema reflected on her trip to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon, where there were many accessible trails, tactile maps (Reema loves looking for things), and accessible taxis with ramps.

7. Other

- An HSTP member asked Jim Bremner about Washington's disability transportation radius. Jim responded with the transportation process, fare amount, service times, and radius.
- Chris Mitchell asked if she would be able to connect to Washington Township services, since she is qualified to ride CityLift? ShamRA answered that currently there is only an exclusive program for Washington residents, but hopefully in the future something like that can be implemented.
- Angel clarified that the rate is \$2 for all in Washington, and to leave Washington, the purpose of your travel must be either employment or medical.
- Jared voiced some confusion on these topics: 1) Is there a way to approach the ramped taxi service idea (mentioned in HSTP Coordinator Report) with IDOT in hopes to secure funding or investment for it? Kylie Rathmann informed Jared that, unless a critical need is present, there is usually no taxi investment that supports the ramped taxi services; taxi services must fund that initiative alone, which includes buying special vehicles to accommodate wheelchairs and other disability support devices. 2) Concerns about the broadness of HSTP's role in supporting seniors with assisted living, and inquired about the possible role that other entities can play, like assisted living, in orchestrating some type of travel for seniors. Reema responded by explaining that supporting seniors and transportation service go hand-in-hand due to those individuals needing access to a variety of transportation options that pick up and drop off wherever needed. 3) Jared also voiced confusion about the difference between fixed-route services and disability services, and where/in what way they operate. Kraig Boynton explained the difference between the fixed-route service and paratransit services and elaborated on the types of programs offered in Galesburg, such as medical transportation, in coordination with the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.