

MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting: 10/21/20 **Re:** Grey Area Community Workshop (6 PM)

Location: Virtual **Issue** 10/28/2020
Date:

Submitted By: Katy Shackelford

In Attendance:

Katy Shackelford – LG	Jim Bremner
Michael Grovak - LG	Sharon Amdall
Sharif Ullah - LG	John Amdall
Eric Miller – TCPRC	Christy Mitchell
Hannah Martin – TCPRC	Casey Peterson
Andy Dwyer - GPTMD	Kelly Martin
Reema Abi-Akar – TCPRC	Michael Weiser
Grace Hartman - LG	Emily Munday

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Poll Number 1: What is the single most important mobility challenge in the Grey Area?

- Finding rides for older adults
- Having more transportation options
- Providing a dependable level of service where there is none

Poll Number 2: What is the most important issue this study should address?

1. Lack of Available Transportation for elderly and disabled (57%)
2. Inadequate hours of operation (0%)
3. Unreliable Service (0%)
4. High Operating Costs (0%)
5. Limited service area (29%)
6. Poor access to work and social services (14%)

Poll Number 3: How should we address these challenges?

1. Extend operation days/hours (13%)

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2. Provide real-time travel information (13%)
3. Improve coordination among providers (38%)
4. Provide more payment options (0%)
5. Increase more information about existing services (38%)

Questions Asked:

Sharon/John: To what extent does the longer-term transportation plan incorporate autonomous transportation?

Hannah: We do have a dedicated smart mobility strategy and support the development of shared mobility programs. There are several relevant chapters in the plan. In the mobility chapter, there are a couple of action items included to encourage new mobility programs.

Comments Made:

Jim Bremner: It was good to see the issues uncovered so far in the existing report as service exists today. In Washington we have three different providers and which one you can use depends on where you live. The public has a hard time knowing who to contact to figure it out. We are trying to provide more information with newspapers and brochures and creating a map to help spread that information. It is hard for the general public to figure out who to call for a ride. Getting to Peoria for a doctor is hard because it is not local. CityLift will take you to Peoria but have to use WeCARE to get to Washington for a doctor's appointment. Half the battle is an education hurdle to somehow inform the public of available services.

Eric Miller: It is an education issue for sure among the users, but we as the professionals have to make it usable. This is a challenge because it is a lot of stuff to get a handle on. Earlier we talked about public official awareness. Jim was able to respond to a call and help his constituent because he was aware. Making all the elected officials aware that this problem will only get worse as people age is also a piece of the solution.

Casey Peterson: I am the director of rural outreach and development for the Greater Peoria EDC but previously worked for McLean county regional planning. I am curious to learn how I can better connect our rural communities with public transportation options.

Katy: That is also what we are hoping to learn more about.

Katy: A couple things we discussed earlier today included the challenge of how to pay for solutions proposed for the Grey Area. That is the next step in the project. JARC and New Freedom have helped in the past but have since expired.

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Hannah: The region received money for 5 or so years. Those funds were distributed for better job access and improved mobility for seniors and those with disabilities. Those funds ran out at the federal level in 2018.

Andrew: We have found that we have a bus travel from Elmwood to Glasford into Bartonville then to Peoria. It makes more sense to provide those rides together. An intergovernmental agreement was made. That has made the money go farther by infusing and combining revenue streams. It is cost effective and is a way to dispense the taxpayer dollar in the most sensible manner. In Tazewell there are no agreements in place other than Pekin.

Katy: The Grey Area will only expand as the population spreads out and becomes less dense.

Katy: Michael, how does Covid-19 effect transit demand in the future?

Michael: We can begin to see some trends emerging. Safety and security in transit and transportation is very important. Systems are having to add a lot of features to keep vehicles operating while making a safe and germ free environment. One of the things going forward is for people to understand Covid-19 will continue to have repercussions after it passes. Biological security will continue to be an issue. It heightens the kind of questions people will be asking. Transit Agencies are stepping up around the country in response.

Katy: With Covid-19, the ability of the system to stretch to capacity has reached its limits.

Andy: We are working to put like travelers at like times to help maximize our availability. A 14-passenger vehicle can transport 3-4 at this point. We have stretched out our routes for certain services to lengthen out times.

Christy: A lot of people do not know how or who to ask for help. For example, I do not know if all the providers know you must have certain specifications on your wheelchair to use certain routes. At one time I think there was 1-person CityLift could not transport because of the size of their chair. That is a piece of the issue many people do not talk about.

The above constitutes our understanding of the meeting. If you believe there are omissions, additions, or corrections, please send your written comments within seven working days to Lochmueller Group.

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