

Human Service Transportation Plan Region 5 Update



Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
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Executive Summary

This document will delve into Region 5 of the Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP). The purpose of HSTP, funded through federal legislation, managed by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and executed by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), is to manage the region's public transportation system in a way that is effective for the riders, achievable for the providers, and feasible for the planners. To conduct such a logistical feat, it is necessary to outline the region's demographics, existing service providers and stakeholders, goals for the future, and successes from the past, in this document.

This seven-county region in central Illinois contains a population of 453,499, both rural and urban areas, two fixed route bus providers, four rural public transit providers, and numerous human service agencies in the counties of Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, Stark, Fulton, and Knox. The key populations upon which HSTP focuses are seniors, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. This document shows the region-wide and urban area distributions of these groups, plus four other populations deemed transit-dependent or having transportation limitations: youth, zero-vehicle households, veterans, and minorities. This



Figure 1. HSTP involves transit providers and transit riders such as these (pictured in front of a CityLift vehicle)

document also shows a spatial analysis of the most affected areas by combining the distributions of transit-limited populations.

Understanding the areas to focus on, the next step is to create goals to better the transportation in HSTP Region 5. Engaging stakeholders and the public allowed the planning team to receive direct feedback about future transit initiatives. This way, transit providers, agencies, users, and the

community can dictate what real-world changes they would like to see. Through a series of surveys, interviews, and a community event, the planning team was able to gain feedback to put together goals. Sixteen objectives within eight goals outline the path forward when it comes to education, service expansion, infrastructure and multimodal options, and affordability for transit. These targets emerged directly from feedback received from the community.

This document also outlines past successes from the previous HSTP plan, produced in 2016. These are significant because they show how public transportation in region has evolved and what positive changes can be built upon to make the system even more effective. Throughout this process, TCRPC serves as the mobility management hub within HSTP Region 5, and any questions regarding regional public transit and connectively are welcomed moving forward.

Goals



Figure 2. Four categories of goals shown in the Action to Serve Gap section of this document

Photos from cover page:

Left: Individuals take part in the Peoria St. Patrick's Day Parade. Photo courtesy of Connie Schiele of the Central Illinois Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Top Middle: A rider uses a lift on a vehicle. Photo courtesy of Traci Dowell of MSW Projects.

Bottom Middle: A rider exits a vehicle, operated by Morton/Washington Taxi, as part of Washington's reduced fare senior ride program. Photo courtesy of Jim Bremner, Washington Township Supervisor.

Right: A rider uses a lift on a vehicle. Photo courtesy of Traci Dowell of MSW Projects.

Action to Serve Gap

To be able to track the region’s successes when it comes to human service transportation, it is crucial to set meaningful yet achievable goals. To do so, after receiving feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders and the public, TCRPC staff analyzed the data using qualitative coding, an iterative process to find the major themes. Through this practice, staff created the following list of goals and objectives entirely based on community and stakeholder feedback. TCRPC staff then presented

these goals to the HSTP committee before including them in this document.

The following goals in four categories: **Education, Service Expansion, Infrastructure and Multimodal Options**, and **Affordability**, reflect the transit needs and interests of the region:

Regional Human Service Goals

1. Education Goals

- Create awareness of public transportation and human service transportation options.
- Educate potential riders about how to use and navigate the transit system.

Objectives

- Create straightforward and easy-to-understand **instructions** for riders to learn about various transportation options within the region and how to navigate them.
- **Use technology to increase communication** with the public regarding general information, schedule changes, or buses running late.
- **Improve signage** and/or advertisements to increase awareness and knowledge of available services and navigations tips.
- Disperse information about different transportation **options**.

2. Service Expansion Goals

- Expand the geographical service area.
- Explore ways of expanding transit hours of operation where possible.

Objectives

- Provide **flexible hours** of operation to accommodate riders who wish to use public transit in the evening, early mornings, and weekends, where feasible.
- Obtain a more extensive fleet to **increase the number of vehicles** running simultaneously.
- Encourage communities and organizations to **contract with other agencies** to address and evaluate service needs in their jurisdictions.
- Encourage expansion of services to the **Grey Area** via funding opportunities.
- Research other **funding resources** that would assist services to the grey area.

3. Infrastructure and Multimodal Options Goals

- Improve infrastructure to make transportation more accessible.
- Improve the transit system to allow more multi-modal options.
- Increase connectivity within the transit system to improve regional travel.

Objectives

- Increase the number of **multimodal options** available for riders.
 - Explore ways to improve the overall **connectivity** of the transit system.
 - Improve the **infrastructure** within the transit system to make it accessible for all users.
 - Perform/fund **feasibility studies** to explore the possibility of bringing other forms of transit to the region.
 - Encourage providers to create **vehicle-sharing** agreements with other agencies.
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4. Affordability Goal

- Offer transit at an affordable cost to users.

Objectives

- **Explore programs** to increase the affordability for transit users.
- Create **more options** for riders to pay for transit.