



Scope of Work

Introduction

In August of 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), reauthorizing the surface transportation act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (5310) must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding for fiscal 2007 (beginning 10/1/06) and beyond.

One of the SAFETEA-LU requirements is that projects from the programs listed above must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan is required to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services, human service providers and the general public.

The American Public Transit Association stresses the benefits of coordinating public transportation service with human services programs for vulnerable populations. “Existing public transportation systems have the expertise to serve clients of social service agencies in areas such as dispatching, route creation, and point-to-point services; and most significantly, the infrastructure to provide these services is already in place¹.” Coordination will also “enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources².”

The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization for the Springfield, Missouri Transportation Management Area. The purpose of the Transit Coordination Plan, to be completed by OTO staff, is to identify strategies and preferred alternatives for initiating or improving coordination between public, private, and nonprofit providers that receive public funding for transportation disadvantaged individuals, including older adults, people with disabilities, and human services agency clients within the Ozarks Transportation Organization region.

Requirements

The Federal Transit Administration has developed guidelines for human services transportation coordination plans. Statutory references to these requirements can be found in 49 U.S.C. Sections 5302, 5303, 5310, 5311, 5314, 5316, and 5317 as well as

¹ APTA Testimony before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the House Committee on Education and Workforce on Coordinating Transportation Services and Social Service Programs. May 19, 2003. http://www.apta.com/government_affairs/aptatest/testimony030520.cfm

² FTA Authorization Fact Sheet – Human Services Transportation Coordination



SAFETEA-LU Section 3046. FTA’s direction can also be found in the Federal Register Volume 71, Number 50, page 13456.

FTA has proposed that a coordination plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services while being developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and participation by the public. Specific required elements are not identified in SAFETEA-LU, however FTA has proposed the key elements which should be included:

- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes;
- An inventory of available services that identifies areas of redundant service and gaps in service;
- Strategies to address the identified gaps in service;
- Identification of coordination actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources; and,
- Prioritization of implementation strategies.

It is suggested that the United We Ride Framework for Action be utilized when developing the plan. It is also recommended that the accompanying Facilitator’s Guide be utilized. This guide provides assistance in directing a “coordinating council, interagency working group, local group of human services agencies, public and private transit providers and stakeholders through a transportation coordination assessment and a plan for action by offering detailed advice on how to choose an existing group or an ad hoc group³”.

Other recommendations include potential outreach strategies and guidance on the documentation of efforts utilized to solicit involvement.

Funding Programs

Below is a list of federal funding programs which require a decision-making process within the confines of a coordinated plan⁴.

Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

This program provides assistance to private non-profit groups “in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs.”

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

This grant program, originally authorized through TEA-21, is meant to “develop transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low income

³ Federal Register Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458

⁴ FTA Grant Programs http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants_financing_263.html



individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities.” In particular, emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services.

New Freedom

The purpose of the New Freedom program is to “encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Ozarks Transportation Organization

The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) MPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization that serves as a forum for cooperative transportation decision-making by state and local governments, and regional transportation and planning agencies. MPO’s are charged with maintaining and conducting a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” regional transportation planning and project programming process for the MPO’s study area. The study area is defined as the area projected to become urbanized within the next 20 years. Please see **Figure 2.A** for the study area boundary.

The MPO includes local elected and appointed officials from Christian and Greene Counties, and the cities of Battlefield, Nixa, Ozark, Republic, Springfield, Strafford and Willard. It also includes technical staffs from the Missouri Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Staff from local governments and area transportation agencies serve on the MPO’s Technical Committee (TC) which provides technical review, comments, and recommendations on draft MPO plans, programs, studies, and issues.

Scope

The Ozarks Transportation Organization’s Transit Coordination Plan will encompass portions of Christian and Greene Counties, as well as the jurisdictions of Battlefield, Nixa, Ozark, Republic, Springfield, Strafford, and Willard. This plan will include participation from City Utilities and their fixed route, dial-a-ride and paratransit services, the private and non-profit transportation providers, and local area human service providers. An invitation letter was sent out on July 26, 2006 to request participation from these groups. An advisory team of such local agencies will be established to guide the data collection and recommendations for the Transit Coordination Plan. The public will also be involved at key moments within the development and adoption process. The timing of such involvement will be determined in conjunction with the advisory team.



Process

1. Form Advisory Team
2. Guided Data Collection
3. Identification of Service Gaps and Service Problems (including coordination)
4. Goals and Objectives
5. Plan Development (including the testing of coordination software)
6. Implementation Schedule and Strategies (including ranking and competitive selection processes)
7. Implementation Agreement
8. Performance Measures

Task 1 – Advisory Team

An Advisory Team will be established to monitor and provide input to the project. The advisory team will be comprised of representatives from human service and public, private, and nonprofit transportation agencies. The advisory team will meet on a regular basis with OTO staff and will also be utilized during Task 2 – Guided Data Collection.

The first function of the advisory team will be to collectively develop a mission statement. This will reflect the team’s reason for working together.

Task 2 – Guided Data Collection

Demographic, economic and transportation data for the study area will be collected by OTO with assistance from the advisory team. All human services for the region will be identified as will all existing transportation services. By consulting the advisory team, a catalogue of common origins and destinations will also be developed.

Task 3 – Identification of Service Gaps and Problems

Combining the information from Task 2 with work by a local graduate student, a geographic information system will be deployed to determine service gaps and service problems. Key areas of overlap and disparity will be recognized and presented to the advisory team.

Task 4 – Goals and Objectives

Using the assessment of needs from Task 3, the advisory team and OTO staff will develop goals and objectives by which the Transit Coordination Plan will be guided. A process will also be developed to guide the prioritization of identified needs.



Task 5 – Plan Development

This work will create a five year plan to improve the coordination of existing transit services and human service operations. The plan will also include recommendations for meeting the goals and objectives, as well as possible funding sources for regional projects. The plan will serve as a framework for decisions as well as assist with benchmarking and performance monitoring.

Task 6 – Implementation Schedule and Strategies

This process will address the ranking of identified needs as well as the procedure for the competitive selection of projects. The overall goal of this document is to better guide the selection of transit projects in relation to their federal funding categories thus resulting in better coordinated systems and funding streams across the country.

Task 7 – Implementation Agreement

Area agencies and governments will be asked to agree to the recommendations of the coordination plan. Such an agreement will provide a basis on which future decisions relating to the plan are made.

Task 8 – Performance Measures

A series of performance measures will be put into place to aid the implementation and revision of this plan and its recommendations. These will be developed by the advisory team and OTO staff. Depending upon the factors required, various agencies will be responsible for the collection of data for such measures. OTO will carry the responsibility of determining that goals are being met and followed with annual reports.