

NYSAMPO
Transit Working Group
Thursday, December 1, 2011

MINUTES

Participating:

A/GFTC - Kate Mance
BMTS - Scott Reigle, Jennifer Yonkoski
CDTC - Deb Stacey, Ann Benware
ECTC - Jim Arey [Chair]
GTC - Robert Torzynski
HOCTS - Harry Miller, Barb Hauck
PDCTC - Mark Debold
NYS DOT - Marty Neveu, Gennadiy Kosoy

☒ Introduction

Arey: Interest in reactivating Transit Working Group grew out desire to share information on Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan updates. That is the basis for this meeting. There is no presumption that this must be a long term working group; that will be based on member interest.

☒ Coordinated Plan discussion

Torzynski: GTC updated plan in September 2011 (link and Executive Summary were forwarded). Prepared by a consultant, Nelson/Nygaard. Held five public meetings, good participation, interest in mobility. Update built on existing plan, not a lot of project specificity to allow flexibility.

Arey: FTA feedback was that they wanted specific detail.

Torzynski: Do have projects identified, but did not try to identify providers for these projects to avoid overlooking someone in 9 county coverage. No issues/comments from NYSDOT during draft.

Stacey: CDTC update adopted in Sept. Did not get into specifics; identified progress from 2007 Plan. Major leaps in coordination. Continue to use quarterly Coordinated Transportation Committee meetings to entertain proposals. Partnered with United Way 211, conducting survey of agencies in Capital District. Will share results at January Committee meeting. Amend plan if necessary based on input.

Arey: Use of 211 interesting. Proposed doing that for ECTC region three counties as data source to replace anecdotal information on needs

Miller: HOCTS has efforts with Oneida County Planning Dept to update I&R (information and referral) directory. Difficult to get a single online directory. Trying to partner with 211

Debold: PDCTC plan adopted in 2008; was not cognizant of update cycle requirement. Look at next year, link to LRTP update. Notes that MAP-21 (US Senate reauthorization bill) has no Coordinated Plan requirement, but thinks this is still a good process that MPOs should maintain.

Stacey: One of the reasons CDTC did a simple update was the consideration that requirements may change with new Federal authorization.

Mance: A/GFTC working on update right now. Reaffirmation of existing 2008 plan. Outreach letter going to all agencies, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, wrap up by April. Add implementation effort in next year's UPWP.

Reigle: BMTS has not done update yet, scheduled for 2012. Do not expect a major rewrite. Will evaluate progress; effort to get decision makers onboard by identifying potential cost savings associated with recommendations. Excited about mobility management effort with Rural Health Network; have

foundation grant money, and pursuing NF and JARC funds. Using AmeriCorps staff, housed with United Way 211 program.

Hauck: HOCTS update in progress. Also not a rewrite, but adding information. Completed human service agency survey to support coordination. Reviewing strategies and new needs.

Arey: What has been role of Coordinated Transportation Committees in Plan update?

Hauck: Mailing to them to ask for input on items to update; help with survey.

Stacey: Committee meets quarterly, reviewed Draft Plan; instrumental in survey design to make it manageable; committee is well attended, active. Example: two agencies in Schenectady County, two in Albany County got to know each other, submitted joint project application.

Debald: Input from committee, follow up to get better information than is offered on surveys. Approach is that every committee meeting is part of plan update, facilitates project identification. Example of private operator participation identifying need.

Kosoy: How do you identify and communicate with target population for plan?.

Arey: Held a transit summit including agencies and public/clients. More than 100 people, including a number of transportation users.

Torzynski: Agencies on steering committee asked to reach out clients. Notes that individuals may need help from providers to get to meetings.

Arey: Mobility manager set up a Riders Advisory Council, meets near transit center.

Debald: PDCTC finds it is a challenge to get agencies to talk with each other

Torzynski: In a multi-county region, distances and crossing county boundaries is a huge issue for consumers. Need to try to make sure that all county agencies are involved to get value for stakeholders.

Arey: At ECTC mobility managers for 3 counties work on regional as well as in-county issues.

☒ JARC, New Freedom, §5310

Project solicitation

Debald: Joint solicitation with Ulster, Orange; mostly same projects each round. Did get a new project to support a mobility manager. Unique region in that there are 3 MPOs in 1 UZA. OCTC does own Plan. Pool JARC money to make more attractive. Non-profits don't realize FTA requirements will be burdensome.

Stacey: CDTA is FTA designated recipient. Prior to Coordinated Plan, CDTA was the recipients for JARC. Has mobility managers in 3 of 4 counties; plan says that should continue. Mobility managers helped with public outreach/education on CDTA route restructuring.

CDTC puts out notices for New Freedom, a subcommittee evaluates project proposals. There have been innovative ideas. Saratoga Springs gets its own allocation, but has not been good at developing/funding projects. Committee decided to use that money for an accessible taxi program, with CDTA as contract manager. CDTA buys accessible taxis, leases to taxi operator; operator must prioritize passengers with disabilities, advertise program, report back to CDTA on use. Two on road, money to buy 8 more, evaluating available vehicles

Arey: Hearing it had been difficult to get New Freedom projects

Mance: A/GFTC has no New Freedom projects. They had one JARC project, but transit agency walked away because of admin requirements.

Arey: Who put money in NYSDOT pool to avoid lapse?

Mance: don't know.

Hauck: HOCTS did that. But this year CENTRO applied/awarded for AVL traveler info; bundled four years of New Freedom allocations.

Stacey: Gave back one year of Saratoga Springs money, then kept for taxi program.

Stacey: Schenectady County agencies sharing scheduling software. City of Watevliet funded fixed route service to connect to CDTA. Albany County and Schenectady County agencies purchased vehicle radio

equipment for interoperability so they can respond to each other's emergency needs: \$178K plus match for radios/tower space.

Torzynski: RGRTA is FTA designated recipient in metropolitan area, NYSDOT in rural areas. For rural, GTC posts notice of grant opportunity on their website. In urban area, GTC took lead, working with RGRTA. Agrees that paperwork scares people away. Funded all projects including four RGRTA JARC routes; enhanced restraints in new buses; Braille printer; New Freedom funded mobility management program by agencies: Give-a-Lift program to train volunteers (24) to provide transportation.

Reigle: BMTS used NYSDOT joint solicitation, better coordinated with potential applicants. In past, JARC to BC Transit for late night and weekend service; WERC (Working Employed Parents Ride Cost free), mobility manager (has limited time for coordinating non-transit trips). Rural Health Network did not want to take away funding from existing services. It will be funded through rural New Freedom and JARC.

Miller: Is there any success in getting §5310 operators to coordinate better?

Torzynski: When agencies ask for support letter for application, note inclusion in Coordinated Plan. When §5310 solicitation coming up, direct them to attend NYSDOT workshop. They can see who else is out there, and they are more likely to get funded if participating in coordinated efforts.

Stacey: A few of §5310 applicants were not involved in Coordinated Plan. Now they are required to attend quarterly Committee meetings to support application.

Arey: ECTC had no §5310 sponsors until this year, one van. Mentioned participation in coordinated plan.

Miller: Are mobility managers coordinating with §5310 operators? If someone needs a ride, can they work through mobility manager to get a ride on a §5310 vehicle?

Arey: Working through 211 will provide better information. Funding 211 for specific function of directly connecting callers to providers; logging unmet needs.

☒ Future of Transit WG

There was general agreement that the Transit Working Group should continue, on a schedule to be determined by needs and events like reauthorization. Agreed that an effort should be made to involve FTA.

Potential topics: suggested by members:

- Involvement in 511NY program
- Transit data collection
- Transit security
- Transit development plans
- Addressing transit service reductions
- How do MPOs get involved in transit operations changes
 - Stacey: When C DTA went through major route restructuring, included CDTC staff in public meetings. Consider having transit agency presentations on conference calls
 - Miller: Regularly attend CENTRO Board meetings, keep up on what is going on. SMTC attends too
- Accessibility of bus stops/shelters.
- Triennial review

Kosoy: There can also be value in discussing what did not work and why.

It was agreed to meet in three months, early February.