

Transit Action Group (TAG) Agenda
Tuesday September 12th, 2017 11am-1pm
ECIA
7600 Commerce Park
Dubuque, IA 52002

Meeting Minutes

Present: Bill Stumpf, Debra Christiansen, Jennifer Meyer, Debbie Devenuta, Ron Axtell, Ashley Robins, Kara Huss, Dan Fox, Stacey Elliott, Danielle Peterson, Jessica Bleile, Jodi Johnson, Michelle Huseman, Greg Orwoll, Alicia Fleege, Margee Woywood, Jeremy Johnson, Lori McKinley, & Tricia Wagner

TAG membership list passed around for revision. If you want to add someone let Tricia know and she will contact them.

Guest Speaker: Dylan Michels & Marla Quinn from ECIA presented update on the Smarter Travel Project. Two people in the meeting participated in the study in the past. Study was done to gauge ridership and different routes, used to update the Jewel bus routes. Study started in 2012 as Smart Travel Study using Blackberry phones and a downloaded app to track where they were going, what routes were important, and from that study they were able to create two pilot bus routes. In 2015 changed to Smarter Travel Project with a more in-depth tracking app downloaded to smart phones which tracked where they were going, their speed of travel, and when they arrived at their destination. Also had volunteers fill out travel diary to compare the data for accuracy, and additional information including why they were going to their destination and modes of travel. Able to gauge where and why people were going to destinations, more meaningful data and used to tweak the original pilot routes from the 2012 study. Goal was to conserve money, resources, and determine best bus routes. Volunteers tracked by app for 7 days and recorded 3 consecutive days of trips in diary. Volunteers received \$50 Hy-Vee gift for participating. Also provided track phones to anyone who didn't have a smart phone. Over 900 volunteers with over 500 completing the travel study. Dual ridership increase of 39% and some pilot routes adjusted specifically the Express and Night Rider routes. Data still being analyzed. Showed maps of main locations people go to; downtown, Warren Plaza, Kennedy Mall, Asbury Square. Have determined more routes need for west end. Sending out Survey Monkey to volunteers for information to help improve the study for other cities of similar size that may want to implement this study. Received 2017 Excellence in Regional Transportation award from NATO and published in TRB article in January 2017. Suggestion was made to include more disabled people who aren't at the typical public areas where volunteers were recruited. Will recommend reaching out to places that serve those people in future studies.

Next project is the Streets Project consisting of next generation traffic control, synchronizing traffic lights and improving travel in the Dubuque area. Will use some of Smarter Travel data to assist in this study. Tricia will keep TAG committee updated on status of Streets Project and other studies to allow for participation.

Jule update: Jodi provided update on services. Many changes implemented August 14th. They expanded their service hours to 9:15 p.m. M-Th, and 2:40 a.m. on Night Rider F/Sat. Cut some service to lower ridership route (Key West), but increased services for more people in the evening to get to places like after school activities, work, and games at night, etc. Mini bus still goes to Key West and the fixed route riders can call a day in advance. Handed out new brochures with updated bus routes, and can also pick them up at Intermoto.

Medicaid option: if a customer receiving Medicaid has 2 doctor appointments a month, they can get a free monthly bus pass by calling their MCO who will notify the Jule. The pass is then issued to the customer at the Intermoto. Jodi handed out chart showing the process. 100's of customers use this a month.

MyRide: go to cityofdubque.org or enter MyRide. Add starting and ending location and destination. Tells rider bus that is quickest to get there, provides pick up and drop off times.

Google Maps: all bus stops are loaded, click on the bus for your stop to find all of the routes available and the times. Accurate and real time.

Rides have increased 39%.

Minibus service (door to door) for disabled and elderly, same hours as fixed route. Both Minibus and Fixed Route are getting riders right up to 9:15, very busy.

Handed out information on how to use MyRide, contact information and bus schedules.

RTA update: Lori provided information on the new program called Delaware County Connections. RTA has expanded services in Delaware County with a Rides to Wellness grant. Expanding services during mid-day and into late afternoon until 7:00 p.m. Riders can call RTA dispatch and they will walk them through the process. Program runs July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. After compiling the data, we hope to replicate that program in other counties; Maquoketa, Jackson and even rural Dubuque. The more riders we get the better for the grant. Please spread the word!

Recently approved to provide inter-state transportation; can now travel across state lines. Going places like Madison, Galena and those type of areas. Service should be available in next couple of months. Tricia will keep TAG group updated. Decision to offer the service was based off of calls received to go to these areas, and a survey. Consumers may have a doctor appointment in Madison or even Rochester, MN. Many times RTA is their only option so we just want to be able to offer the service when it's requested.

Integrated Settings Rule: integrating consumers into the community. Example, instead of RTA taking 8 people from their group home to an Agency for work, we would be taking those 8 people to 8 different places to work. Pushed back to 2022, but Iowa isn't using the extra time and rule will still take effect in March 2019. Challenge for transit is the shift to a model of one on one transportation; don't have schedules a month out and not always the same. Need to get a plan in place.

- Imagine the Possibilities: Deb explained that as for employment they are trying to get the consumers out working in the community and using RTA throughout the day to get them there and back. Haven't made a lot of changes in terms of starting at a different point, but conversations have started. Day program hasn't made any changes yet. Lori and Tricia are willing to come to the next meeting, just keep us posted.
- ARC: Alicia explained that they use ARC as the hub port, so all consumers come to ARC and then go to their place of employment. A lot of them only have 1, 2 or 3 hour work shifts so they've been using the Jule and the fixed bus route which is convenient. They have an issue though with long waits. Bill has same issue with his son in the mornings as he gets to work too early and has to wait 45 minutes for the building to open. Also can only book out one day, so it's all day to day. Sometimes that doesn't work so ARC has to get the consumer to work themselves. Winter is coming and there is a concern with consumers waiting outside. One solution has been to try to find jobs for them now along the fixed route.
- Finding jobs: Difficult especially in rural areas. Alicia said minimum wage is the big hurdle now. Used to have enclaves but being hurt by minimum wage. A lot of these type of jobs are only hiring for 3 hour spans, not fulltime. The colleges are very responsive, especially UD. Bill suggested APSE (Assoc for People in Supported Employment) as a good resource and they have a conference coming up week of 9/18, also ICIE (Iowa Coalition of Integration & Employment) is still available. Think outside the box, look at the jobs nobody else wants to do. Other good options are hotel circuit, hospitals and nursing facilities. Even social services departments

who don't have enough people to go around a greet people and gives the consumer that interactive piece. Childcare is another option, and construction. Assessments are very helpful, can show the employer just how well the consumer can produce and can land jobs for them. Job Development is now big on consumer choice, finding out what they are interested in. Most of pullback comes from the families who don't want to see their child fail. Overcome by educating the parents/guardians/caregivers; explain that we are the ones limiting them, and actually taking them to it to see for themselves.

- Big expo on October 12 with HR Committee, ARC has a time slot and has invited the RTA to attend. Try to develop a plan including a natural support system.
- Hills & Dales: have their own bus for Day Program so do their own pickups for the most part. Use their Community Center as the hub. They are also contracted with Voc Rehab so are starting to get more into the supported employment. Taking notes today to help everyone's' cause!
 - Alicia from ARC talked about the jobs at UD. Some are cleaning/dishwashing and breaking down boxes, but consumers are also interacting with customers; taking plates, running cash register every now and then, and working their way up in that way.
 - Seasonal employment is common. Example was Yard Arm, and Brian who hires consumers, treats them no differently and encourages natural support. Use Brian and those like him to talk to others and spread the word!
- Jeremy Johnson, IA DOT: Said we are ahead of the game! Other areas are still struggling with how to connect transit and people. He hasn't heard any of the successes. Will be reaching out to Alicia at ARC and take those examples and figure how to use statewide.
- Rural Areas: Find your natural support, find who you know. Find your Brians! Also check with bowling allies, Dairy Queen, Happy Joe's, Onward Center, pharmacies. It's also about finding the transit to get those people with disabilities (the same as those without disabilities) in small rural communities to the larger communities where the jobs are.
- Travel training (Learn to Ride) will be a big help to people with disabilities to allow them be able to use the fixed route, who don't now. The training is not offered very often. Tricia will be looking online at some modules and get us up and running with that. Tricia will be the local expert and train those in the TAG who would be

interested in being the expert for their respective agency. Train the trainer model.
Create bus buddies!

RTA Think Tank: Lori's vision is to develop a 3-5 year plan for the RTA. Lori went through the PTP and survey results she sent out to TAG for this meeting, to determine 6 priorities:

1. Capital Replacement
2. Mobility Coordinator/Outreach
3. Technology
4. Services
5. Partnerships
6. Oversight

Today we only focused on Technology and the Mobility Coordinator/Outreach. Email Tricia if you think of another priority that we need to add to the list!

There was a suggestion to partner with car dealers in rural areas, asking for a donated van and get volunteer drivers in those areas to sign up for specific times. They would be on call and go to the dealership, get the van and make their pickups and then take the van back. Hits on capital replacement, services and partnerships! Great ideas!

Divided up into 4 groups of 4. Each group looked at the topics from a different perspective than normally do. There was a Driver group, Agency group, Management (RTA) group, Rider/Consumer group. Ideas were discussed.

Technology:

- RTA is always looking for money and ways to be more efficient, so it was suggested to use Google docs for tracking riders so agencies could update cancellations each morning rather than emailing or calling.
- Update RTA's website, make it more direct & user friendly:
 - Add FAQ's for general public, how do I get a ride?
 - Information for TAG
 - Create a "Like & Share" for social media, show general public not just for elderly & disabled
 - TV & Wifi for longer trips (charging for the devices) and information available on the bus for the RTA website so they can look it up while on the bus
 - Provide drivers with information to give out to people (include phone & website)
 - Making sure air/heat and things working properly on the busses

- Notification System – ride arrivals, rather than so much communication by phone making it more automated/use technology to keep track of passengers going to multiple locations
- Textability
- Via social media, encourage people to follow that type of process to get something free in the community. So many rides, receive free services or items, i.e. access to TH Online, laptop, etc.
- Branding - use social media to promote to college community
 - Sharing stories about their rides on the bus making it fun and comfortable, not just for elderly & disabled
 - Dubuque trivia – partner with Chamber (like Cash Cab show), make it fun!
- Grants for technology through community foundation to get funding to help with costs
- Swipe card for riders so they can go online and reload it with money, or buy a new one. Also consumers have asked for this rather than wavers.

Mobility Coordinator:

- Have knowledge of other agencies so can share information between agencies
- Facilitate conversations between the consumers and agencies, tour the facilities and get to know/understand how they operate and the people
- City expos for marketing – shared responsibilities with other agencies, share each other’s information, the more collaboration the more funding opportunities
- Travel training
- Communication with drivers, review different situations and what to do
- Flyers – drivers hand out to riders
- Surveys on the bus, find out what’s needed in the community
- Get students in the school districts (in the counties) to ride more to bring in different generations riding the bus, again pointing to more than for just elderly and disabled – different perspectives
 - Colleges students as well
 - Cost – depending on location
- Build relationships with agencies and go step further and become connection base for agencies and community as far as employment opportunities. Get to know everyone!
 - Tricia will need interns!☺
- Knowing who your customers are
- Marketing: communication and education
- Invite families ride or agencies ride so can better understand the life of the ride

- Bus Buddy - oversight on bus to make sure riders have on seatbelt, carry on conversations, etc. Get dollar off bus pass if general public, staff or offer to consumer as employment opportunity.
 - TAG could become bus buddies and help identify/spot something to be concerned about on the bus
- Relationships – drivers & riders relationship is important, bus buddy relationship is important too. Mobility Coordinator and the agencies, visibility, open communication and that relationship is important.
- Marketing, knowing who audience is and relaying information accordingly
- If asking MC a question, make sure message is understood, make it easy to do so and receive follow up in timely fashion
- Marketing, work with other organizations to find things to provide riders something to do while wait.
 - Peosta employees; give them a discounted membership to Peosta Community Center so can work out/walk so time isn't just wasted, something to fill the gap.

Next meeting: will cover two more of the priority topics at next meeting. Decided to have monthly meetings for now with TAG Committee to keep the momentum going. Tricia will send out list of meetings for 3rd Tuesday of each month and copy of minutes.

Form subcommittees from that at later time.

Lori will also put together action items/plan and pass out at next meeting.