

CABARRUS COUTNY
COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN



November 16, 2006 was an important date for Cabarrus County Transportation Services. On this day over 50 invited guests came together for a one day conference to discuss barriers to transportation. Attendees at the conference included representatives from, Department of Aging, Social Services, Health Alliance, Davita Dialysis, Employment Security Commission, Head Start, Hispanic Learning Center, Coltrane Life Center, and Cooperative Christian Ministry, Daymark Recovery Services, Rowan Cabarrus Community College including elected officials from the area. Invited speakers at the conference were Betsey Bailey NCPTA and Miriam Perry NCDOT-PTD.

The main focus for the conference was to allow feedback from all individuals in attendance on what they perceived as barriers to transportation. Since coming to Cabarrus County I had received comments from different groups that transportation was an important issue for their clients, however trying to seek out specific problems was at times hard to do.

CCTS felt that bringing all these groups and agencies together to discuss their concerns in a small group setting would be beneficial to all. At this point, I would say that the conference was a great success. In total we had ten small groups that worked with a team facilitator at each table to brain storm their topics and suggestions. The information that we collected has been reviewed by the management team and by a committee of CCTS Operators. This review was requested by the director, to offer staff an opportunity to see the concerns presented by those attending the conference.

During the review process it became apparent that some concerns were repeated by each group. The process began by breaking each suggestion into one of five areas, those being operations, funding, marketing, fixed route service, and regional. Several themes began to emerge, one of course being the questions of funding. Each group felt that current levels from State and Federal sources need to be increased to meet the growing demand.

Additional themes were lack of public awareness on how to use the current services and how to contact the correct agency that the customer may qualify for transportation. It was agreed that trying to navigate between all the various choices can be over whelming to some citizens and a better job needs to be done in directing them to correct places and information.

The subject of coordination between the CK Rider, CCTS and Charlotte Area Transit System was presented. This of course brings into focus the process of regional transportation and better management of the resources already in use. As the Cabarrus County region continues to see strong growth the demand for additional cooperation between governmental agencies will grow as well.

One special request was for longer service hours; it was pointed out that not all trips can fit into the window of time that our current operations allow. Employment decisions dealing with shift work, child care, health care and out reach into the Latino community all seek additional coverage in the early morning and late evening. Attendees to the conference stated that local elected officials need to work on breaking down barriers between set boundary lines and seek ways to cooperate on issues that affect the entire community.

Other messages included updating the current software package located at CCTS, reworking our brochures, emergency contact number, a better working relationship with the RPO, City and County planners in land use development, a lack of connection from rural areas and fixed route service and prepare an overview of transportation issues for elected officials.

The question now becomes how to begin the process of addressing the barriers presented at the conference. A number of steps are already in place, first each member of the management team at CCTS has been given a copy of the comments offered. We have met to discuss what measures we could take to tackle each item presented. We first began by breaking each issue into areas that we could change quickly and those that would require more time. Each team member is now working on specific ideas and suggestions that we use to change our modes of operation. Feedback received from the operators committee is being included, and several new suggestions are being put into motion.

CCTS has become very active in community based organizations and the business community to help inform those groups on the services being provided. We are in the process of creating a monthly pass to be used by our customers and looking into how we can increase the efficiency of our operation with a new software package.

CCTS continues to seek additional funding from Federal, State and grant programs to help increase services, and we work tirelessly to ensure that all data collected by us is

recorded and processed in the correct manner to allow us to track all of the services we provide. We will continue to work with the Regional Planning Organization (RPO) for Cabarrus County to offer input on public transportation needs in the community including meeting with the Chamber of Commerce to gauge the needs of the business community. The largest effort for CCTS will come in the area of marketing; it was apparent from a number of comments that the citizens of Cabarrus County lack a full understanding of the transportation options available to them. We will increase our efforts to market CCTS at public events, community meetings, business meetings, church groups, and use the local media to educate citizens on our organization.

We have been meeting this past year with counties around Cabarrus to discuss sharing trips and requesting a study from NCDOT-PTD on regionalization of our area. Efforts are now underway to meet quarterly with the Concord-Kannapolis Rider Bus System (CK Rider). These meeting will be held to discuss open lines of communication between CK Rider and CCTS; it will also be used to seek better utilization of their routes and CCTS possible feeder service from out lying areas of the county.

CCTS plans to continue the open dialog between our customers and the agencies that we work with, we realize that it is vital that we work together to meet the needs of this community. One area of focus shall be the underserved communities of Mount Pleasant, Midland, and Harrisburg. To date there is no line run service that can connect those citizens with shopping and leisure trips to larger towns in Cabarrus County. CCTS shall work toward seeking additional resources to bridge the gap with that area.

Update:

On June 24, 2008 and July 2, 2008 Cabarrus County Transportation Services held additional stakeholders meetings to discuss and update any changes needed in the coordinated plan. Several options were presented by to seek feedback on applying for JARC and New Freedom projects. During the course of the workshops again stakeholders where divided into focus groups and asked to identify specific transportation needs within the community and their agencies. The group worked jointly to identify needs and update the current plan; two projects were selected and recommended by the group for CCTS to apply for available funding.

Five Areas of Comments

1. operations
 2. funding
 3. marketing
 4. route service
 5. regional
- Public awareness of CCTS and public transportation in general. How to use the services.
 - Lack of funding for seniors and ROP.
 - Location of bus stops for CK Rider.
 - More bus shelters and public transportation to Mount Pleasant, Midland, and Harrisburg.
 - Client goes to hospital- not admitted and sent to crisis agency. How would they be transported?
 - Transit is only for poor and seniors.
 - Coordination between CK Rider and CCTS-CATS.
 - Requirements for additional funding to support more services.
 - Change bus route to include the greens of Concord.
 - Seeking additional services to wellness, prevention, and recreation.
 - No child care facility that provides transportation included in subsidy payment.
 - Educate public and elected officials to the need of public transportation.
 - Longer hours of service for all services.
 - Regional coordination including vanpooling.
 - Transportation for shopping for seniors.
 - Expanded hours for shift work and holidays.
 - Better coordination between planners for land use.

- Better out reach to Latino community.
- Provide overview of transportation issues and services for elected officials.
- Turf issues- city vs. county.
- Make brochures easier to read.
- Emergency number that allows clients to leave a message.
- Better working relationship with RPO, City, and County planners.
- Create mini express route that would service heavily traveled corridors.
- Consistently late return trips from RCCC.
- Need more flexible hours after 9:00pm and service on Sundays.
- Cost of service, disabled clients spend 30% of part-time income on transportation.
- Confusion as to who makes the rules on transportation is pick-up times, funding, and allocation.
- Funding does not meet demand for needed services.
- Question as to car seat usage for small children.
- Disconnect between transit providers-fares-schedules-transfer.
- Need to update routing software package.
- Non peak hour rate.
- Lack of transportation from rural areas to fixed routes.
- Provide seamless transition between different modes of transportation.
- Inter agency transit meeting monthly.
- Consolidation of CCTS and Rider into one regional system.

Transportation Summit

Invited - 94

Attending - 59

Not Attending - 21

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