

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008

5:00 PM Carnegie Town Hall

Introduction – Debra Gaikowski welcomed those in attendance and introduced URS Corporation as a consultant working with the City and SECOG to prepare the coordinated public transit-human services plan.

Presentation by Consultant – Bill Troe used a PowerPoint presentation as part of the meeting (the presentation will be placed on the city website) to provide information on:

- Background on what is the coordinated plan and its purpose.
- The plan development process.
- How people can gather information and provide comments about the plan.

Key points of the presentation are listed below:

- The coordinated plan focus is on the following constituent groups: Older adults, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities.
- The purpose of the plan preparation is to identify a program for addressing unmet transportation needs of the listed constituent groups. Included in the program will be a prioritized listing of recommendations for changes to current services that provide more cost-effective coverage.
- Included in the plan preparation are the City of Sioux Falls, South Eastern Council of Governments, human services agencies that provide transportation services to their customers, and human services agencies that do not directly provide transportation but are agencies focusing on assisting persons in one or more of the constituent groups.
- Completion of the plan is a requirement of the larger metropolitan long-range planning process.
- Eligibility to access certain federal transit funding requires that a coordinated plan be in place.
- Ideas of what “coordination” might include were covered. Three categories are Cooperation; Joint Use Agreements; Consolidation.
- Benefits of Coordination – Improved cost-effectiveness that can translate into either more service or a reduced cost and same service. The transportation services savings could be put into expansion of other human services.

- A review of local transportation providers that have been contacted was reviewed. A listing of the providers was requested and it was asked whether additional input on providers would be allowed. If people know of a provider that was not listed, please let the study team know through an email or phone call. The listing provided includes Sioux Falls Transit, private transportation companies, human services agencies, and residential properties.
- A listing of ways residents/stakeholders could become involved was provided. Options are meetings, website with information and email.

Discussion of Unmet Needs – Approximately an hour of the meeting was dedicated to talking with the audience about their perceptions of unmet needs for transit services for the constituent groups. The discussion included user concerns regarding local paratransit service. As paratransit will be reviewed as one provider that could be a part of the solution, the comments were recorded. The comment listing below separates issues/concerns regarding current paratransit service from the larger topic discussion of unmet transportation needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents.

Constituent Groups' Unmet Needs

1. Transportation for other than basic existence: There is the need to consider other than just basic subsistence (work/medical) transportation in the region. A reasonable quality of life requires access to entertainment. The City sponsors many free entertainment opportunities, but if you cannot get to them (evenings or weekends) without taking an expensive cab or other form, one cannot enjoy them and you feel disenfranchised. Establishing a life is more than basic existence.
2. Sunday service (in addition Project CAR) is needed. It costs \$40 to go to church and the equipment that churches have is limited.
3. School functions – there is very limited service that would allow some children to participate in afterschool activities (sports/dance/library access/other). The daily needs of school children should be considered. Needs include evening service, after-school non-school bus route travel, and summer.
4. Service to areas outside the city. To medical facilities outside the city (but nearby), rural populations have very limited access to transportation and people living in small communities that surround Sioux Falls and need to travel to/from Sioux Falls for services.
5. After work hours emergency services.

6. Costs of transportation services are prohibitive to some eligible users.
7. Include employers in the discussion – They receive a benefit from employment base, but are not invited into the process. Benefits they could see are more consistent employment, need for smaller parking lots, and being able to advertise a secure door-to-door trip.
8. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) uses a shared insurance pool to provide lower cost insurance across the state. These types of cost savings measures should be considered in the assessment.
9. There are four clinics that are not serviced – one of which is located at 69th and Minnesota.
10. Tea and Crooks day services are lacking.

Paratransit / Fixed Route Concerns

1. What is the guideline for the distance people should need to walk to get to transit?
2. There is no bus that goes to the airport.
3. Parts of the city do not have coverage by fixed route or paratransit. The entire city should be covered.
4. Some businesses do not allow transit buses on their properties which limits the feasibility for transit dependent that cannot walk/travel distances to use the businesses.
5. Persons with visual impairments have a difficult time using fixed route in that buses now stop only at signed locations. The signs are mounted so high that you cannot reach them even if they were imprinted in Braille. A person with a visual impairment must memorize the route stops (this is very difficult, especially if a stop or route changes).
6. Visual displays of announcements are needed inside vehicles. Persons with hearing impairments miss the driver announcements.
7. Consistency of on-time performance should be improved.

Wrap-Up - Additional public informational meetings will be held as alternatives are being evaluated and as recommendations are being prepared. Notices will be provided.