

Michiana Area Council of Governments

Public Transit – Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan



2011 UPDATE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted on August 10, 2005. This federal law requires that transit projects funded under particular Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan must be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.” The specific transit programs associated with this plan are: the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310), the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program (Section (5316), and the New Freedom Program (Section 5314).

The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) undertook this planning effort in 2007 for its 4-county region, which includes Elkhart, St. Joseph, Marshall, and Kosciusko counties. Several planning components were developed to gather regional transit statistical data; identify human services agencies, public and private transit providers; identify stakeholders in each county to participate in county meetings; administer an agency survey, to update a regional fleet inventory, and finally to develop the coordinated plan.

Specifically, the Coordinated Plan is required to include the following:

1. An assessment of current transit providers in the four-county area, including public, private, and non-profit providers.
2. An assessment of transit needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons with low incomes.
3. Strategies, projects and/or activities to address identified gaps between current services and opportunities to improve service efficiency.
4. A prioritization process for selection of projects to implement specific strategies or activities for funding under Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom.

As shown in item 2 above, the transit needs for three specific population segments are to be assessed: elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Particular attention was paid to job access, existing transit service to medical sites, schools, public agencies and other related travel needs for these individuals. The regional fleet inventory also was updated to identify agencies with wheelchair accessible vehicles.

This stakeholder process will be undertaken again in 2012 to update the assessments, strategies and priorities in the four county area.

Section 1. Service Changes Implemented since the 2007 Coordinated Plan was adopted.

Public Transportation

South Bend Public Transportation Corporation - Transpo

In 2010 the bus fare increased from 75 cents to \$1.00 for a one-way trip. Persons age 65+, disabled persons, and Medicare cardholders ride for half-fare. Up to two children under age 5 ride free with a fare-paying passenger. A 31-day pass is also available for purchase. 2009 unlinked ridership was 2,470,120 fixed route trips and 44,931 paratransit trips, for a total of 2,515,051 passenger trips. (Source: 2009 National Transit Data).

The South Bend Public Transportation Corporation also operates paratransit service in South Bend and Mishawaka known as Transpo Access. It is available to ADA-eligible persons who are unable to use regular bus service. In 2010 the fare was increased from \$1.50 to \$2.00 each way. Service is available from 6:00 am until 9:00 pm on weekdays, and from 7:30 am through 5:30 pm on Saturdays. During 2009, 44,931 paratransit trips were taken. Transpo added 3 paratransit vehicle and paratransit scheduling software to the ADA service.

Another South Bend Public Transportation Corp. service is "The Trolley," which operates in downtown South Bend. It is oriented to the central business district and the East Bank district that include restaurants, retail stores, and Memorial Hospital of South Bend. Transpo riders can transfer to The Trolley for free. Other riders pay 25 cents. It operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm.

In 2010 Transpo and the Niles Dial-A Ride coordinated to provide a transfer point at Auten Road and State Road 933 that operates on weekdays. This connection is identified as a transit gap by the Stakeholders in the 2007 meetings. It has been mentioned by calls to MACOG for transit information. This does provided a transit link that improves public transit services in the MACOG Region.

Transpo also conducted a Comprehensive Operations Analysis of its bus service in December 2010 and is continuing this study in 2011. Public information on this study is available on the Transpo website at www.sbtranspo.com under "Transpo News." Public meetings were held on June 28 and 29, 2011, and the public comment period runs through July 15, 2011.

The Transpo schedules and timetables are available online at www.sbtranspo.com.

The Interurban Trolley – Fixed Route Service: Elkhart/Goshen

In September 2009 the Bittersweet/Mishawaka route was introduced which connects to the South Bend Transpo Rt.9 bus at Martin’s on Bittersweet. This route connection expands transit travel between the Elkhart/Goshen area and the South Bend/Mishawaka area with access to the South Bend Regional Airport and the South Shore train service to Northwest Indiana and Chicago, as well as colleges and universities, retail areas, and other popular transit locations. This new transit route filled a service gap between Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties that was identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan.

In February 2010 the North Pointe route was revised to extend transit service to the Osolo Road area and extended transit service to C.R.4. This route revision now serves two major apartment complexes and a large manufactured home development on Osolo Rd. It also incorporated the move of several retail stores to the C.R. 4/St. Rd. 19 area. This filled the transit gap identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan for bus service on Osolo Road to serve Board Walk, Maple Lane, and Prairie Creek residential areas. At the same time the Bittersweet/Mishawaka route was improved to serve the Elkhart General Hospital on both inbound and outbound trips.

In August 2010, the Elkhart East/West route was introduced as the 5th route in the fixed route transit system. This new route services Middlebury Industrial Park, the Ivy Tech Community College campus, and the southeast portion of Elkhart as well as the northwest portion of Elkhart. .

Including the East/West route, nine trolley buses operate on the five-route system. The service spans from 5:00 am to 7:55 pm on weekdays and from 5:40 am to 7:40 pm on Saturdays.

The base fare is \$1.00 per one-way trip and transfers between the routes are free. Seniors aged 65+ and Medicare card holders can ride for half-fare during non-peak hours. The Interurban Trolley fleet is 100% lift equipped. 2010 fixed route ridership was 200,729 unlinked trips and 151,182 demand response trips, for a total of 351,911 passenger trips. (Source: 2008 National Transit Data).

The following areas have been added to the Interurban Trolley service area.

Medical Facilities	Industrial/Major Employers	Schools	Social Services
Heart City Health Clinic	Middlebury Industrial Park	Elkhart Memorial High School	Oaklawn/Elkhart
Elkhart Clinic		Westside Middle School	Work One
OSMC		Woodland Elementary	ADEC

Medical Facilities	Industrial/Major Employers	Schools	Social Services
Goshen VA Clinic		IUSB – Elkhart	Faith Mission
		Ivy Tech - Elkhart	

Heart City Rider / Goshen Transit Service

Demand-response paratransit service is operated in Elkhart and Goshen through a user-side subsidy program and a service contract with local taxi companies. Demand response trips are scheduled in “real time,” no prior reservation is needed. Service is curb to curb.

A service improvement implemented in 2010 was an automated computerized dispatching system that uses onboard mobile data recorders to capture the ridership statistics for each trip. Service operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, including holidays. This service span accommodates all work shifts, including 2nd and 3rd shifts and Sunday service.

The vehicle fleet is comprised of 2 hybrid vehicles and 15 low-floor minivans equipped with ramps for wheelchair accessibility. These vehicles were equipped with mobile data terminals in 2010 that provide passenger trip data to the automated computerized dispatching program. This dispatching system allows for advance scheduling of requested trips for more efficient service delivery.

The rider fare is based on trip mileage: \$3.70 is the first mile cost, and \$1.80 for each additional mile. Ambulatory rider trips are subsidized at half fare, up to a \$3.00 subsidy. Persons using wheelchairs are charged \$7.00 for the first 3 miles, and \$1.80 for each additional mile. These trips are subsidized up to \$9.60. Intercity trips between Elkhart and Goshen are subsidized up to \$6.00 for ambulatory riders and up to \$12.60 for persons using wheelchairs. ADA-eligible riders pay \$2.00 per trip if the origin and destination of the trip is within the ADA corridors (3/4 mile on either side of the fixed bus routes). 65,046 demand response trips were taken in 2010. 16,149 of these trips were taken by ADA riders.

Information on these Elkhart and Goshen transit services are available online at www.macog.com and www.interurbanrolley.com

Elkhart County

Elkhart Council on Aging provides transportation service to persons over the age of sixty. 7,727 trips were taken in 2010. Also occurring in 2010 was a move of their operating facility to downtown Elkhart.

Trips are available in the city and the county. During 2010 service was expanded to include Saturdays and Sundays, but was discontinued due to funding limitations. Clients have been served for free or by donation in the past, but due to changes in funding and increased demand The COA is making a change the fare policy. As of July 1, 2011 current clients will travel at no charge for medical, nutritional, and business trips, as well as trips to the Division of Family Resources and to Social Security, and to visit spouses or other significant persons who reside in nursing or assisted living facilities. New clients will be asked for a \$5.00 trip donation for medical or nutritional trips. Other trips will be based on sliding scale according to income.

Marshall and Kosciusko Counties

These rural counties are served by demand-response public transit systems. Marshall County Council on Aging operates public demand response service through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) rural transit program.

In Kosciusko County the Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) operates public demand response service under the Cardinal Services, Inc., a community service center in Warsaw, and funded by the INDOT rural program. Specific route and service information for each transit provider is shown below.

Marshall County Council on Aging

Marshall County Council on Aging transit service operates on weekdays from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm or by appointment. The service area is the entire county. The fare is \$2.00 per pick up and first stop, with a \$1.00 charge for each additional stop; a \$5.00 fee per one-way trip is charged for trips up to 30 miles; and a \$10.00 per one-way fee is charged for trips that are 31 or more miles. This extended service fills a transit gap identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan. Operating in door-to-door demand-response mode, Marshall County Public Transit services all social services, industrial areas, medical facilities, retail and commercial areas, and residential areas in Plymouth and the county. The service operates with seven ADA accessible vehicles. 10,337 passenger trips were taken in 2009. (Source: INDOT 2009 Public Transit Annual Report).

In 2009 and continuing in 2010 Marshall County Council on Aging has provided services thorough "New Freedom" funding. This operated route-type transit service offered to "JESSIS" Special Ed and Marshal-Starke Development Center Work Experience clients. These individuals use expanded public service to reach

employment, volunteer services, and life skill training in the Marshal County area. The goal of both these programs is for independence and quality of life, and the expanded transportation is a pivotal element.

Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS)

KABS operates demand-response service from 5:30 am to 8:00 pm. on weekdays. Beginning February 2010 KABS began providing transportation on weekday holidays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, except of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. No weekend service is operated. .

Base fare is \$1.00 for up to 10 miles, \$2.00 for trips form 11-25 miles, and \$3.00 for trips over 26 miles. KABS has twelve accessible vehicles in its fleet, with a peak hour requirement of nine vehicles. KABS also provides Medicaid transportation anywhere in the State of Indiana for eligible passengers and special transportation can be set up for groups, organizations or businesses.

KABS has a guaranteed on-time service policy. If the vehicle arrives late, the ride is given free. A 10-ride pass or tokens are available. KABS accepts subscription rides, which schedules a "standing" reservation. 2010 ridership was 60,944 passenger trips. KABS services all social services, industrial areas, medical facilities, retail and commercial areas, and residential areas in the County. KABS is working with a consultant during 2011 to review their public transit service.

Section 2: Planned Transit Improvements

The following transit improvements have occurred or are planned in St. Joseph County.

- On November 8, 2010 Transpo moved into a new operating and maintenance facility in South Bend, located in the Studebaker Corridor, South Bend, at the site of the former Studebaker Stamping Plant off Lafayette Street which is a former brownfield site. This \$18.5 million facility was built to accommodate larger buses and has achieved the U.S. Green Building Council's green building LEED Platinum certification.
- During 2010-2011 Transpo is conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis, a system-wide study that began in December 2010. Public information on this study is available on the Transpo website at www.sbtranspo.com under "Transpo News." Public meetings were held on June 28 and 29, 2011, and the public comment period runs through July 15, 2011. A public hearing will take place at the July 18, 2011 Transpo Board meeting.

The following transit improvements are planned in Elkhart County.

- MACOG is considering building a transit terminal in downtown Elkhart that could provide off street boarding and passenger amenities such as indoor shelter, a beverage/snack shop, and internet access. Multi uses such as a day care center are also under consideration. The Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities and Liability Initiative Program is under review as funding for this project. A similar terminal may be planned for Goshen.

The following transit improvements are planned in Kosciusko County.

- KABS has contracted RLS Associates for feasibility study in 2011. This study will review the current service level and funding sources as well as consideration of potential service improvements in the Warsaw area.

Section 3: Needs, Gaps and Duplication

This section summarizes the issues and needs discussed at the Stakeholder meetings that are still unmet.

Elkhart County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- Bus service does not operate to accommodate 3rd shift industrial sites or late night retail areas.
- Nappanee low-income, elderly and disabled persons need transportation to medical appointments in Elkhart

Other Issues:

- More bus shelters should be placed to enable wheelchair users to get out of inclement weather. (Disability Resource Network request). Additional bus shelters were installed at Eisenhower/Lincolnway in Goshen and at the Goshen Public Library and the downtown Elkhart transit site in 2010.
- New Elkhart County jail is located near CR7 & CR 26, outside the urban area and the fixed route service area.

St. Joseph County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- Need transit for 2nd/3rd job shifts – weekdays & weekends

Transpo currently operates from 5:05 am to 10:00 pm on weekdays. Management has reviewed the need for additional service to accommodate late shift workers and stated it would be cost prohibitive for Transpo to increase service hours at this time.

- No Sunday or holiday service available

Transpo reported that in past years it has had infrequent requests for service on Sundays and Holiday, and stated it does not have additional revenue resources to accommodate service hours on Sunday or on major holidays.

- Need public transit later in the evening

Transpo stated ridership has declined steadily in the evening hours and that staff continues to monitor the number of requests and need for service during specified hours.

- Need Door-to-Door service between YWCA and IUSB (South Bend)

Transpo operates service to the YMCA on Route 8 and to IUSB on Route 9 on 30 minute headways, and states the specific shuttle between these two facilities would be cost prohibitive.

- Need transit between Indian Village and South Bend

Transpo stated it services a portion of this area on Routes 7 and 5; however most of the Indian village community is outside the Transpo service area.

- No transit alternative for senior apartments in Lakeville

Lakeville is outside the Transpo service area.

Other Issues:

- Need sidewalks in many areas

The City of South Bend and the City of Mishawaka have improved sidewalks in conjunction with street and intersection improvements and bike/pedestrian path projects.

- Personal safety on public transit
- Some agencies have border restrictions – cannot service in neighboring county
- Employers should provide employee transit
- SB Community Schools should provide Student IDs so students can have free rides

Marshall County

Transit Service Gaps:

- Department of Child Services clients need travel to court hearings counseling, Drug & Alcohol classes and probation appointments; some of their trips can be met with Medicaid trips

Other Issues:

- Participants agreed that individual agency's trip volume (riders per trip) could increase if services were coordinated
- It was also stated that Plymouth residents do not understand that there is public transit service available. In addition, the local agencies do not necessarily understand the scope of each other's services.

Kosciusko County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- No dedicated public transit service in the outlying areas, specifically Syracuse and Milford.

KABS operates countywide public transit service and is also studying its service area in 2011.

Other Issues:

- Kosciusko County residents travel to South Bend or Ft. Wayne for airport service. There is no public transit alternative for these trips.

Section 4: Strategies, Priorities & Project Lists

Priority 1 Provide access to jobs in Elkhart and South Bend Urban Areas via public transit

Achieved on 9/21/09 with introduction of the " Bittersweet/Mishawaka" Interurban Trolley route that connects with Transpo Route 9 – Northside/Mishawaka, at the Martin's Plaza on Bittersweet Rd., Mishawaka.

In 2010 Transpo and the Niles Dial-A Ride coordinated to provide a transfer point at Auten Road and State Road 933 that operates on weekdays. This provides transit link that improves public transit services in the MACOG Region.

*Strategy 1.1 Implement public transit services between the Elkhart/Goshen and South Bend Urban Areas - **achieved***

Activities Finalize and implement recommendations from transit study under development by MACOG - **achieved**

Priority 2 Provide transit services during late-night hours, on Sundays and holidays

Strategy 2.1 Increase awareness of private and public transit providers offering these services

Activities Implement coordination/referral programs to other transit providers during non-peak hours

Activities Increase marketing of current demand response transit services in Elkhart/Goshen Urbanized Area

Activities Develop 24 hour, 7-day per week subsidized public demand response transit services in South Bend Urbanized Area

Priority 3 Improve overall funding for public and private transit providers

Strategy 3.1 Develop and expand resources for local funding

Activities Implement innovative local financing tools to leverage federal and state funding

Priority 4 Reduce dependency on tokens/cash for fare payment of public transit services

Strategy 4.1 Research current ITS technologies and standards used in the United States

Activities Implement fare collection systems using current ITS technologies and standards

Priority 5 Provide large residential/apartment communities access to public transit

Strategy 5.1 Identify underserved residential areas and employment centers

Activities Utilize GIS resources and local knowledge to identify underserved areas

Priority 6 Develop public transit services to small towns and rural communities in the region

Strategy 6.1 Increase awareness of existing transit service providers

Activities Develop marketing programs targeted at employers and residents to promote existing public transit services

Strategy 6.2 Consider new countywide public transit services where none currently exist in small towns and rural communities

Activities Conduct feasibility study and implement any findings to provide these services

Priority 7 Provide accessible locations for passengers to wait for vehicles

Strategy 7.1 Designate safe, secure, accessible locations for passengers to wait

Activities Provide accessible sidewalks/multiuse paths for designated transit stops

Activities Consider Transit Oriented Design and land use coordination to improve passenger waiting areas

Priority 8 Provide public transit riders a safe and secure environment while riding and/or waiting for a vehicle

Strategy 8.1 Increase passenger safety and security while waiting for transit services

Activities Install accessible transit shelters at safe and secure designated locations

Strategy 8.2 Increase passenger safety on transit vehicles

Activities Implement security precautions such as CCTV, enhanced lighting, and the Transit Watch program

Priority 9 Work with employers or groups of employees to provide ridesharing / carpooling / vanpooling transit services

Strategy 9.1 Identify potentials employer based transit programs in the region

Activities Promote vanpool programs to employers or groups of employees

Priority 10 Work with school corporations to reduce redundant vehicle trips using existing transit services rather than school buses

Strategy 10.1 Identify urban neighborhoods where transit and school buses coincide

Activities Develop strategy to reduce school bus trips while providing a safe, secure accessible alternative for students

Priority 11 Coordinate public and/or private paratransit providers who operate door-to-door access to medical facilities

Strategy 11.1 Promote public and private transit providers who offer paratransit service

Activities Market existing public and/or private transit providers to medical offices to increase use of public/private transit

Activities Coordinate trips between agencies to reduce paratransit costs associated with Medicaid funding

Priority 12 Develop public and/or private transportation services that provide access to social service facilities

Strategy 12.1 Promote public and private transit providers who offer general transit services

Activities Market existing public and/or private transportation services that provide access to social service facilities

Activities Promote transit services for individuals who are unable to drive.

Priority 13 Decrease overall spending on transportation costs through cooperation and coordination of public, private and non-profit providers

Strategy 13.1 Increase riders per trip for various transit providers through coordination of trips

Activities Encourage public and private transit providers and human service providers to share capacity and trips through coordination

Activities Encourage annual stakeholder meetings to discuss regional coordination strategies

Strategy 13.2 Identify social service facilities that are not served by transit

Activities Utilize GIS and other resources to identify clustered social service facilities

Activities Implement new transit routes or other services to meet identified needs

Priority 14 Provide public or private transit access to urban centers inside and outside of the region

Strategy 14.1 Develop transit programs to provide transit services to urban centers inside the region

Activities Conduct and implement any findings of a feasibility study to provide transit services from small towns and rural communities to urban center within the region

Strategy 14.2 Provide public or private transit services to Indianapolis and Fort Wayne

Activities Complete a study to determine feasibility of transit service to urban center outside the region

**Public Comments to the
Draft Copy of the 2011 Updated
Public Transit-Human Service Coordinated Transportation Plan
(To be added as received)**

No comments were received.