



1. Call to Order

Ms. Sicks called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

2. Attendance

Committee Members and Others In Attendance: (All attendees were virtual.)

Darla Heath (Faith in Action)

Sheila Greuel (East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging)

Betsy Kurtenbach (Homes of Hope)

Erik Zdansky (Marcfirst)

Tyanna Powell (McLean County Health Department)

Laura Dick (SHOW BUS)

Jennifer Sicks (MCRPC)

3. Public Comment

Ms. Sicks advised that there has been no request for public comment.

Discussion of 2023 Region 6 and MPO Plan Goals

4. Program History and Status

Ms. Sicks outlined the information needed for the plan update. The plan will include a brief overview of urban area comments and how they tie in with the rural services, but the focus of the plan is on rural needs and services. Ms. Sicks requested that each participant should draft a history of their program, and of interagency contacts with rural Region 6 participants. A summary of how secure agencies feel at this point, with respect to issues such as timely access to funding, or other issues of concern.

The Transportation Advisory Committee and Region 6 Joint Committee members are also asked to formulate potential goals, which will vary for each participant. We will identify commonalities and focus on the most frequently mentioned concerns and needs.

5. Plan Update Timetable for the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)

It would be helpful if there are existing resources on websites or other materials, regarding history, policies and practices, interagency communications. Ms. Sicks requested this information be provided by Feb 10, 2023. In addition, she requested the results of any agency surveys conducted in recent years. The goals will zero in on the priorities in rural areas.

Mr. Zdansky inquired as to how to proceed if no records are available. He is able to provide current knowledge, but not necessarily documentation.

Ms. Sicks noted that the plan should include a general review of any agency's transportation programs, it's current status and specific concerns. MCRPC will also be collecting demographic data, comparing census data from 2010 and 2020, and a county by county analysis.



Ms. Greuel noted the ECIAAA relies on public transportation services, but the agency services are focused on mental and social health.

Mr. Zdansky asked if there is a specific format or wording, and if this needs to focus only on the transportation aspect or a broader history. Ms. Sicks noted that she will work with the participants to draft material for the plan, but that it's important to reflect participants' emphasis and goals.

6. Outreach to Ridership Regarding Goals

Ms. Sicks requested that any recent ridership survey data be forwarded to her for review for data relevant to the plan

7. IDOT HSTP Program Status Report

Ms. Sicks noted that there are no updates on IDOT program progress.

8. Urban Area Provider Program Status

a. Connect Transit (CT)

Connect Transit did not have a representative present.

b. Marcfirst

Mr. Zdansky noted that Marcfirst's IDOT Annual Certification document was submitted on December 16, 2022. There were 175 Individuals served in State FY 2022. There were 1,540 one-way trips provided in SFY 2022. There are 10 IDOT vehicles in the Marcfirst fleet.

Most of the Marcfirst activity has moved to the Jacobssen Dr. location, which is just south of Shepard Park in north Normal.

Marcfirst just submitted a capital grant application for \$235,000, to fund improvements to their facility. This is a Rebuild Human Services Capital Investment grant. Marcfirst will use grant funds to make community day services space more functional to improve quality of services. Marcfirst is in the process of getting accreditation for the Council on Quality & Leadership.

Mr. Zdansky will forward some additional materials.

c. Faith in Action (FiA)

Ms. Heath advised that in 2022, Faith in Action provided 10,600 rides to 383 care receivers, requiring travel totaling 79,000 miles. There was a point where there were more service requests than volunteers to provide services, so the intake of new care receivers was temporarily set aside to concentrate on volunteer recruitment. Faith in Action is restarting the process for new care receivers as volunteer recruitment increased. In December 2022, 116 volunteers provided 697 rides to 131, traveling just over 6000 miles. The transportation program is 71% of Faith in Action's program activities.

Ms. Heath noted that there continues to be difficulties in finding volunteers, but the situation is improving. There are still COVID impacts on volunteering. Faith in Action continues to look for ways to increase recruitment.



d. Homes of Hope (HOH)

Ms. Kurtenbach advised that Homes of Hope is still looking for two residents, to reach their capacity of 24 residents; it is expected that the new residents will be brought on board in mid-to-late February. In 2022, they provided around 20,000 trips; noting the residents are very busy people with active social lives.

e. McLean County Health Department

Ms. Powell noted that a survey is being done on bus stops for the Community Health Improvement Plan; they have received some response, but would like to receive greater response. There are concerns about the location and safety of bus stops.

Ms. Powell noted that she very recently was slotted into the TAC, but she will be consulting with others regarding questions arising from TAC discussions.

9. Disability/Aging/Rural Transportation Issues

a. LIFE-CIL

Ms. Sicks advised that LIFE-CIL was unable to attend.

b. East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging

Ms. Greuel noted that ECIAAA is continuing its work on alleviating special isolation, and thanked Ms. Heath for the assistance of Faith in Action in supporting that work. ECIAAA also continues to pursue the development and support of dementia-friendly places.

With regard to the impacts of the COVID pandemic, Ms. Greuel related a university class experience in which students seemed reluctant to engage in discussion; she was told that this was common post-pandemic phenomenon, resulting from heightened concern about sharing information about individual experiences.

Ms. Greuel noted that the transportation is always about trips to and from medical appointments, and avoiding long waits for trips once appointments are over. She noted that many people needing transportation to medical appointments are health-compromised and frail, and that waiting to return home following an appointment can be distressing and tiring for them. Ms. Greuel and the Reducing Social Isolation Committee met with David Braun and Jacob Smith presented on the microtransit proposal, which was a very encouraging.

c. SHOW BUS

Ms. Dick advised that one driver has returned to SHOW BUS; there is another driver in training, and yet another considering if she would like to join SHOW BUS.

The difficulty of getting parts for the vehicles is a critical issue. SHOW BUS is continuing to stock up, depending on availability and funding. IDOT has not been timely in reimbursement. SHOW BUS has an internal shop, but external shops are increasingly backed up in taking and completing new work. This is a concern for repairs needed on core and critical vehicle systems, including those that can take vehicles out of service. SHOW BUS has an aging fleet, a shortage of parts, and delays in getting work done. Ms. Dick notes that this is probably worse for social service agencies.



Although Ms. Dick had hoped the catalytic converter theft problem had faded, she recently heard comments from another agency, in which a recently stolen vehicle had been recovered, had a replacement catalytic converter installed, only to have the new component stolen from a secured area within a weekend. SHOW BUS has to rely on the Chenoa Police Department, is having drivers take buses home, and exploring additional security measures.

SHOW BUS continues to harvest buses from agencies that have had to shut down. It is also difficult to find CDL drivers.

Ms. Dick just got a request from IDOT to support low-no emission vehicles, but noted that these vehicles may not meet rural needs. Ms. Dick noted that in rural areas the range limits are a concern, as is access to repair technicians qualified to work on these vehicles.

Ms. Dick noted that there has been work in Region 8 regarding the managed care organizations, especially with respect to the use of services like Uber and Lyft. Ms. Sicks noted concerns about ride services that are not accessible, and where there are concerns about the reliability of the drivers.

10. Next Meeting – February 8, 2022

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:58. p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer A. Sicks".

Jennifer Sicks

Senior Transportation Planner

McLean County Regional Planning Commission