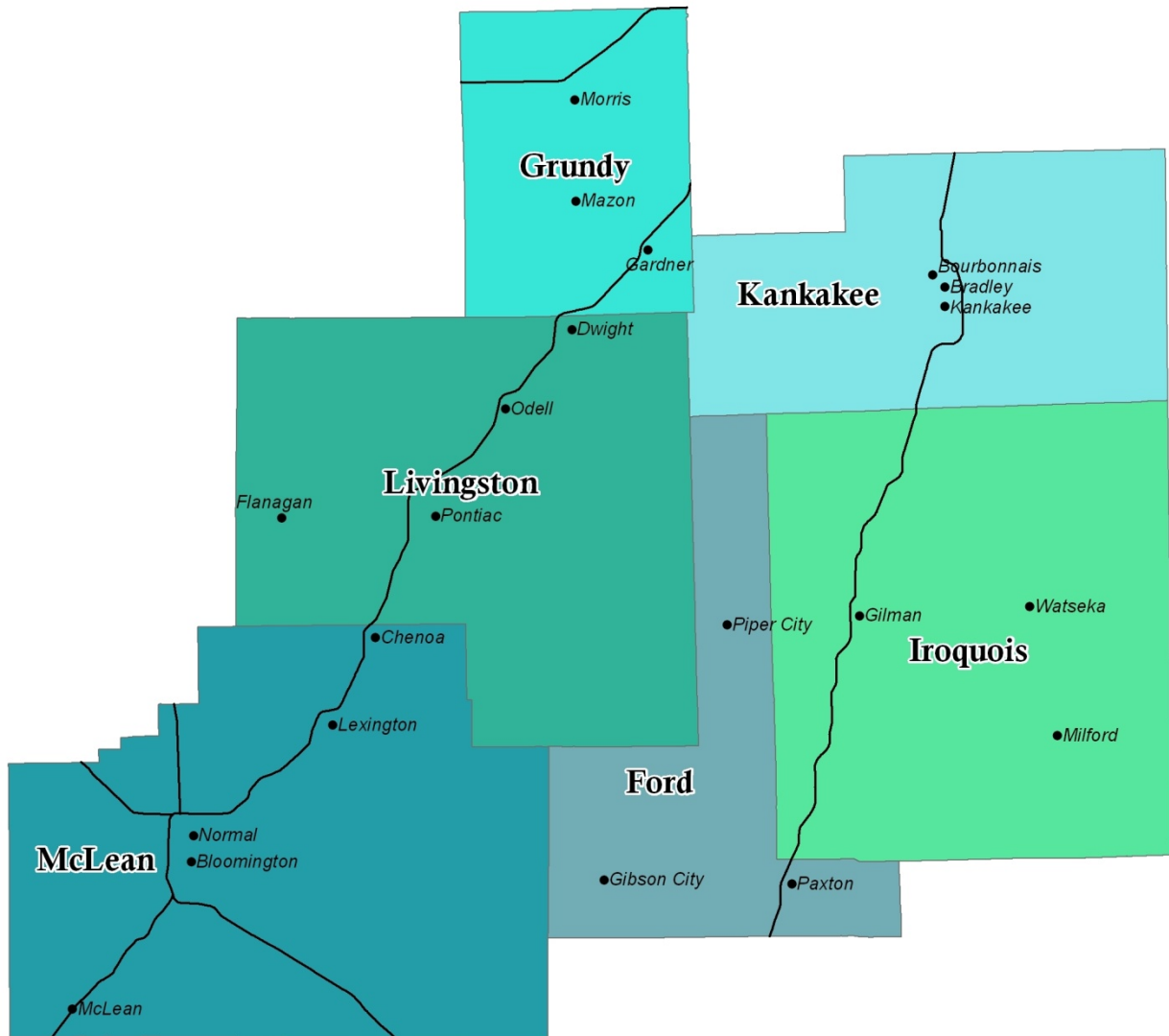


Human Services Transportation Plan Illinois Region 6

Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee,
Livingston & McLean Counties



Adopted June 23, 2008
Plan Update March 2010

Human Services Transportation Plan

Illinois Region 6

for

Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee,
Livingston & McLean Counties

Developed by the
Policy and Technical Committees

for

Illinois HSTP Region 6

Prepared by the
McLean County Regional Planning Commission
Regional Coordinators for Region 6

Adopted June 23, 2008
Plan Update March 2010

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Introduction

In recent decades, Federal transportation policy has been crafted to address specific investments intended to improve the nation's transportation infrastructure, but also to support and implement a broad set of policy goals. These include the management of transportation systems to increase safety and security, to address the environmental impact of the transportation system by increasing fuel efficiency, improving air quality and reducing congestion, and to generate economic growth by improving access to developing areas. These policy initiatives also emphasized the need to expand access to all elements of the transportation system, for all Americans. This continuing priority includes older people, persons with disabilities, and persons with income challenges. Federal transportation law thus acts in concert with legislation such as the Civil Rights Act, the Older Americans Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, and successors and expansions of these landmarks in civil rights legislation. Recent revisions in Federal law established a new type of plan to allow priorities to be set at the local and regional level – the Human Services Transportation Plan.

The 2010 update of the plan, while it incorporates structural changes in the Committees which oversee the Human Services Transportation process, and revision of the regional goals, is intended to extend but not supersede the earlier work of the Region 6 Committees and the original plan adopted in 2008. This update relies on data gathered for and statistical assessments contained within the 2008 plan, which is hereby incorporated by reference. The Region 6 plan adopted in June 2008 is archived and may be viewed on the website of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission at www.mcplan.org.

The Legislative Framework

In the past twenty years, transportation policy initiatives have been promulgated through the enactment of a series of transportation laws which defined and managed the use of Federal transportation investment, and also established policy and practice for transportation planning and management. Building on the changes in the nation's transportation network from the dawn of the interstate system through its effective completion, and evolving from the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Federal transportation policy reemphasized the importance of state, regional and local priorities in maintaining and expanded well-planned transportation systems.

More robust responsibility for setting investment and policy priorities was conferred on states and urban areas, which became a renewed locus of planning and decision-making. These changes allowed for greater oversight by entities called "metropolitan planning organizations," or MPOs, which had been created in the 1960s for urban areas with populations of at least 50,000 people. Support for this mechanism for local and regional planning continued in successive reauthorizations of the Federal transportation bill, including the most recent, the 2005 Safe, Efficient, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users, also known as SAFETEA-LU. Responsibility for transportation planning and policy implementation in rural areas beyond

the jurisdiction of the metropolitan planning organizations generally remained with state-level agencies, such as the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Federal transportation laws address multiple modes of transportation, and include provisions for the management of highways and roads, inland waterways, air travel, passenger and freight rail and mass transit. The last category, transit, is managed by the Federal Transit Administration. While transit service is often regarded as an urban issue, numerous rural transit systems and programs are in place across the country, providing essential access to employment and services for rural residents.

The enactment of SAFETEA-LU in August 2005 introduced a new element into transit planning, the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). Previous iterations of Federal law had mandated the development of transportation plans for transit services in urban areas through the metropolitan planning organizations, but SAFETEA-LU required greater attention to and specific planning policies for transportation and transit services directed at programs funded under three Federal programs aimed at particular portions of users. In requiring the HSTP, Congress sought to improve the scope and cost-effectiveness of certain categories of public transit through the coordination of programs within local areas and across regions. In both urban areas (those served by metropolitan planning organizations) and rural areas, these plans are intended to provide improved coordination in transit services directed towards senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and persons who rely on public transit to access employment. Further discussion of the implementation of this requirement by the Illinois Department of Transportation is found below in the section on Regional Organization.

The Region

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) engaged in a lengthy process to create rural transit regions in response to the new requirements set forth in SAFETEA-LU. In the summer of 2007, the regions were defined and regional coordinators were assigned to manage the process of developing the Human Services Transportation Plan for each region. Region 6 was defined to consist of six counties in the northeastern portion of central Illinois, including Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee, Livingston and McLean counties.

Region 6 is interconnected by a number of regional and local roadways, including Interstates 55 and 57. In addition, substantial road and street networks link rural sections of the six counties to urban areas, which include Morris, Kankakee - Bourbonnais, Watseka, Dwight, Pontiac and Bloomington – Normal. Although these communities are important regional employment and service centers, the areas outside the urban centers also provide employment, social and commercial centers and other amenities. Ideally, the quality of life in smaller communities and rural areas can be enhanced by access to needed resources in urban areas.

Regional Organization

In late Summer 2007, the Illinois Department of Transportation established the Policy Committee for Region 6 to oversee the coordination of rural transit. This committee and its associated Technical Committee convene to facilitate transit service funding and coordination. The Policy Committee is comprised of one representative from each County Board (see box, right), and the Technical Committee is now comprised of two representatives from each of the six County Transportation Organizations. Additional discussion regarding these entities follows below. Technical committee members are generally connected to transit service providers, social service agencies and other entities interested in rural transportation.

Initially, and during the development of the original plan and organization of the regional committees, Region 6 shared a coordinator with Region 8, under the auspices of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. From December of 2008 through June of 2009, coordination for Region 6 was managed by the transportation planners for the Kankakee County Regional Planning Commission and the McLean County Regional Planning Commission. As of July 2009, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission entered into a contract with the Illinois Department of Transportation to continue coordination for Region 6.

Applications for Federal funding for such programs were once made directly to IDOT's Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation, but under the regional structure created by IDOT, such requests for funding must now be approved by the regional technical and

Policy Committee

Randy Berger
Ford County

Richard Joyce
Grundy County

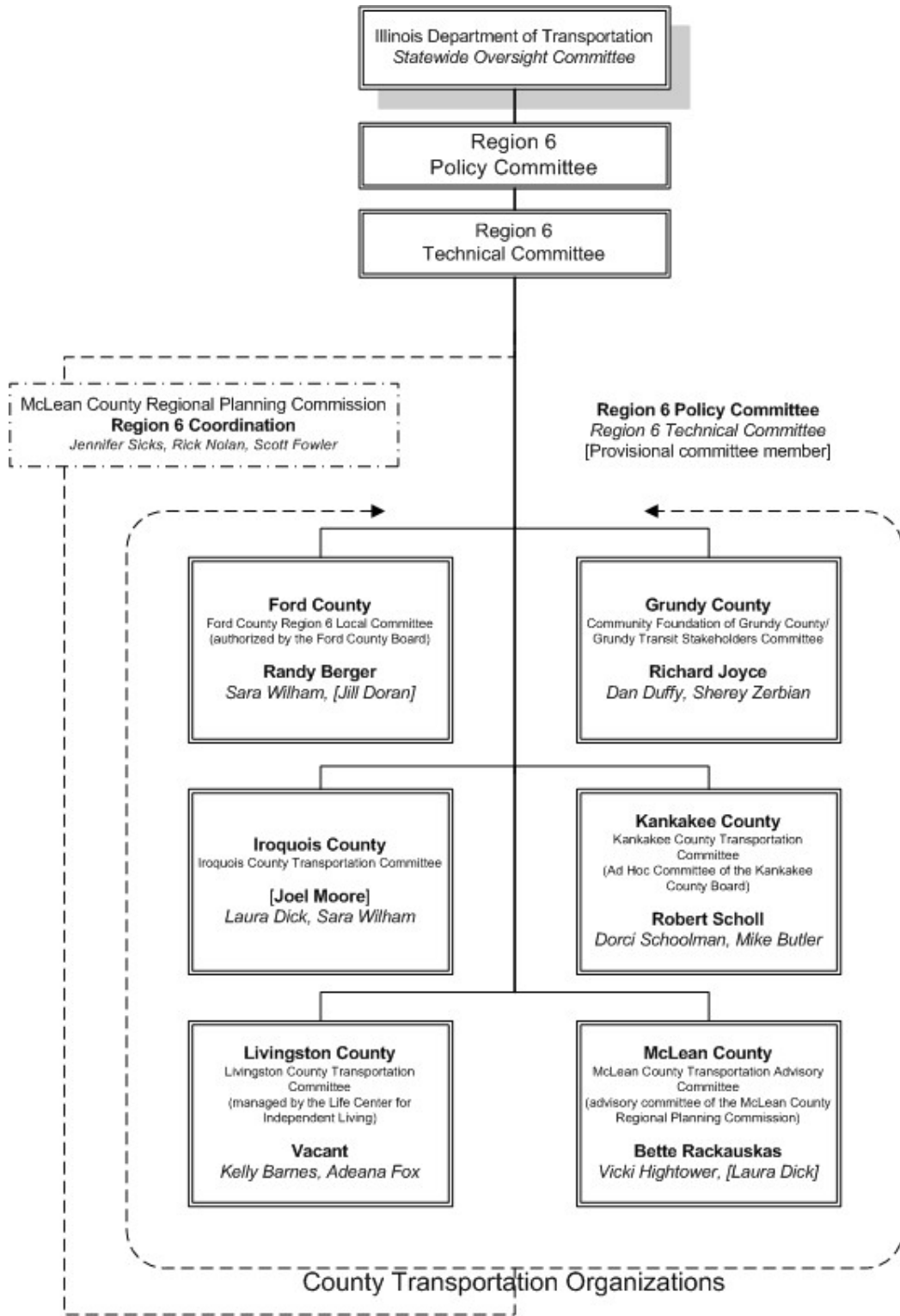
Joel Moore
Iroquois County

Robert Scholl
Kankakee County

Vacant
Livingston County

Bette Rackauskas
McLean County
(Chair)

policy committees, and forwarded to the state for final review. In this process, the Technical Committee advises the Policy Committee, which is the decision-making body for Region 6, and the final voice regarding the implementation of the Region 6 HSTP.



It is important to note that participation on the Region 6 Committees by the member counties and by applicants for funding is required for an agency or other entity within the counties to qualify for funding through the Federal programs administered under the HSTP. In its consideration of funding requests, IDOT consistently cites committee participation as a threshold requirement for successful applications for funding.

Since the Region 6 Committees' inception, the membership has discussed ways to improve the structure of the regional coordination effort, noting that many agencies providing services worthy of support do not have sufficient staff or financial resources to permit regular attendance at regional committee meetings. The participation requirement, as initially interpreted, in some instances either shut out under-resourced programs most in need of additional help, or demanded an unsustainable level of time and resources to attend regional meetings. To address these issues the Committees, noting the success of county-wide transportation organizations, advisory councils or similar entities in several of the member counties, began evaluating these county transportation organizations (CTOs) as a better venue for continuing regional coordination.

Ultimately, the Policy and Technical Committees concluded that the CTOs should be given direct authorization to conduct transit coordination through actions of the relevant County Boards or metropolitan planning organizations. Adoption of a resolution to this effect by the County Boards provides a foundation for the activities of the CTOs, and creates a stronger link between County governments and the work of the Region 6 Committees. The authorization process is ongoing with several of the County Boards.

Thus, the Regional Committees have developed a new structure for regional transit service coordination, which relies on these county transportation organizations (CTOs) to evaluate needs and resources, to conduct public outreach, and to assess priorities in implementing transit initiatives. Each CTO provides two representatives to the Regional Technical Committee, who are responsible for conveying the concerns and issues under review in their county to the regional group. A chart illustrating these relationships is below. The Policy Committee continues its original structure, with one representative from each of the member counties. Most of the Policy Committee representatives are currently serving elected members of their respective County Boards, providing a direct link to the policy-making government bodies of the counties. Often, Policy Committee members are also involved in the activities of their county's CTO, creating greater communication and interaction between the Policy and Technical committees.

Flexibility is an important aspect of the restructuring of the Technical Committee. As noted above, each of the County Transportation Organizations has been asked to select two representatives to serve on the Technical Committee, as well as to designate alternative representation should the need arise. Although the continuity of regular representation is helpful in guiding policy and plan implementation, the new Technical Committee structure provides that alternative or proxy representatives come to the Committee on behalf of their respective County Transportation Organization, rather than as representatives of individual agencies or service providers.

During the current state fiscal year, the Region 6 Committees have devoted considerable time and effort to revising the regional plan, to reflect more focused goals and objectives for rural transit services. This plan update also serves as a formal statement of the role of the county transportation committees in achieving the plan goals, and implementing the recommendations in the plan. The CTOs already play a vital role in coordinating public transit services for their citizens, a role which the Region 6 Committees expect to advance through this revised plan.

Programs Managed through the HSTP Process

The Region 6 Policy and Technical Committees continue to exercise their function of reviewing applications for funding under the Federal programs designated for oversight under the HSTP process mandated in SAFETEA-LU. Funding applications approved at the regional level are forwarded to IDOT's s Statewide Oversight Committee for final disposition.

Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program. In cases where public transit was inadequate or inappropriate, the program awarded grants to private non-profit organizations to serve the transportation needs of elderly individuals¹ and individuals with disabilities². FTA (then the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, UMTA) apportioned the funds among the States by formula for distribution to local agencies, a practice made a statutory requirement by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). In the early years of the program, many non-profit agencies used the vehicles primarily for transportation of their own clients. Funding for the Section 16(b)(2) program, as it was then known, ranged between \$20-35 million annually until the passage of ISTEA in 1992, when it increased to the \$50-60 million range.

ISTEA also introduced the eligibility of public agencies under limited circumstances to facilitate and encourage the coordination of human service transportation. Increasingly, FTA guidance has encouraged or required coordination of the program with other Federal human service transportation programs.

In lieu of purchasing vehicles, acquisition of service in order to promote use of private sector providers and coordination with other human service agencies and public transit providers was made an eligible expense under ISTEA. Other provisions of ISTEA introduced the ability to transfer flexible funds to the program from certain highway programs and the

¹ Elderly Individual includes, at a minimum, all persons 65 years of age or older. Grantees may use a definition that extends eligibility for service to younger (e.g., 62 and older, 60 and over) persons. FTA C 9070.1F

² Individual with a disability means an individual who, because of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including an individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capability), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, public transportation service or a public transportation facility. 49 U.S.C 5302(a)(5).

flexibility to transfer funds from the Section 5310 program to the rural and urban formula programs.

The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities throughout the country. Toward this goal, FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs in all areas - urbanized, small urban, and rural. The program requires coordination with other federally assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of Federal resources.

Federal grant money can be designated to a local recipient in the form of a private non-profit organization, if public transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate; or a governmental authority that is approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities or certifies that there are no non-profit organizations readily available in the area to provide public transportation services.

Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for capital expenses as defined in Section 5302(a)(1) to support the provision of transportation services to meet the needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities.

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316)

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to serve welfare recipients and low-income families, helping individuals successfully transition from welfare to work and reach needed employment support services such as childcare and job training activities. JARC was established as part of TEA-21, passed in 1998, to address the transportation challenges faced by people seeking to get and keep jobs.

With the passage of SAFETEA-LU, JARC funding is allocated by a formula to States for areas with populations below 200,000 persons, and to designated recipients for areas with populations of 200,000 persons and above. The formula is based on the number of eligible assistance recipients in urbanized and rural areas. The formula-based program is intended to provide an equitable funding distribution to States and communities as well as stable and reliable funding in order to implement locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans. FTA continues to provide maximum flexibility to communities in designing plans and projects to meet the transportation needs of low-income individuals and welfare recipients.

The goal of the JARC program is to improve access to transportation services to employment and employment related activities for eligible recipients and low-income individuals³ throughout the country. Toward this goal, FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation

³ Refers to an individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line (as that term is defined in Section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C 9902(2)), including any revision required by that section) for a family of the size involved.

needs of eligible low-income individuals in all areas - urbanized, small urban, and rural. The program requires coordination of Federal assistance programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of Federal resources.

In non urbanized areas or small urban areas under 200,000 in population, the designated recipient is the State agency designated by the chief executive officer of a State to receive and apportion amounts under JARC that are attributable to the State for small urbanized and non urbanized areas. A grant recipient may be a local government authority, non-profit organization, or operator of public transportation services that receives a grant under JARC indirectly through a recipient. Funds are available for capital, planning, and operating expenses that support the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment.

New Freedom Program (Section 5317)

The New Freedom Program is a new program authorized in SAFETEA-LU to support new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act⁴ (ADA) of 1990.

Individuals who are transportation disadvantaged face different challenges in accessing services depending on whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban areas. The geographic dispersion of transportation disadvantaged populations also creates challenges for human service programs hoping to deliver transportation for their passengers.

The President has included funds for the New Freedom program in the annual budget request to Congress since FY 2003; however, it was not until the enactment of SAFETEA-LU that funding was authorized by Congress. Funding was first appropriated for the transportation provision in FY 2006. The New Freedom program is intended to fill the gaps between human service and public transportation services previously available and to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce and full participation in the community.

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60% of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to expand the transportation mobility options available to individuals with disabilities beyond the requirements of ADA.

In non-urbanized areas or small urban areas under 200,000 in population, the designated recipient is the State agency designated by the chief executive officer of a State to receive

⁴ American with Disabilities Act (ADA): Public Law 336 of the 101st Congress, enacted July 16, 1990 (42 U.S.C 12101 et seq.). The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in employment, State, and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.

and apportion amounts under New Freedom that are attributable to the State for small urbanized and non-urbanized areas. A grant recipient may be a local governmental authority, non-profit organization, or operator of public transportation services that receives a grant under the New Freedom program indirectly through a recipient.

New Freedom program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new transportation services beyond those required by the ADA designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.

Demographic Characteristics in Region 6

The Region 6 Human Services Transportation process is grounded in local, grassroots assessment of community needs and benefits, but also requires that these factors be considered at a regional scale. Implicit in the process is the core principle that greater levels of transportation service availability and efficiency can be attained through regional cooperation and pooling resources. To plan for this kind of coordinated effort requires that we understand the demand in its regional context. This section of the plan considers the demand for service implicit in representation in the rural population of people who are eligible to receive transportation services under the relevant Federal program, whether through age, disability status, or economic status. For some, the need to access public transportation may also result from “transit dependency” due to lack of access to other means of transportation.

In order to understand the regional demand for services provided under the three Federal programs managed through the HSTP process, it is important to assess the demographic characteristics of the region. In developing the initial plan for Region 6, the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission examined demographic data from Census 2000, focusing on the demographic characteristics of the population of rural portions of the region. As of this writing, Census 2010 is underway, but relevant data regarding transportation and demographics from the new Census will not be available for some time. In the meantime, this plan must continue to rely on the broad descriptions derived from the earlier Census data.

Defining Transit Dependence:

Limitations on Driving

PHYSICAL

including permanent disabilities due to age, visual limitations, paralysis, or developmental disabilities, to temporary disabilities such as illnesses or injury

FINANCIAL

lacking means to purchase or rent a personal vehicle, or to insure or maintain a vehicle

LEGAL

ineligible due to age or restriction resulting from prior violation of the law

SELF-IMPOSED

other factors mitigating against vehicle use or ownership (full or partial) determined by the individual and not required by external regulation; may include preferences based on social, practical or philosophical considerations not reflected in other categories

It should also be noted that the data discussed below is based on definitions of rural and urban populations created through selection of Census block groups, which may exclude from the rural population residents of block groups located at the edge of urban areas in Kankakee and McLean counties. The analysis below also assumes that counties that do not include an urban center with a population greater than 50,000 people are entirely rural. Consequently, the total population of persons living in rural areas is higher than calculated and reported in Census 2000. To preserve continuity with the original plan, these assumptions have been retained.

More recent data is available through the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the Census Bureau, from surveying conducted in the period from 2006 through 2008; unfortunately, the ACS does not include data on Ford County. In addition, the American Community Survey data is based on population sampling. Census 2010 data on travel and commuting will be based on future iterations of the American Community Survey. However, data on total population and urban and rural population share from the Census itself, and based on 100% sampling, will be published and available for the next update of this plan.

As noted in the previous version of the plan, the process of developing and evaluating transit plans requires careful analysis of the transportation needs of various segments of the population and the potential ridership of transit services. In the original plan development process, Champaign County staff used Census data to identify geographic concentrations of population groups who are intended beneficiaries of the Federal programs managed through the HSTP process. These groups include:

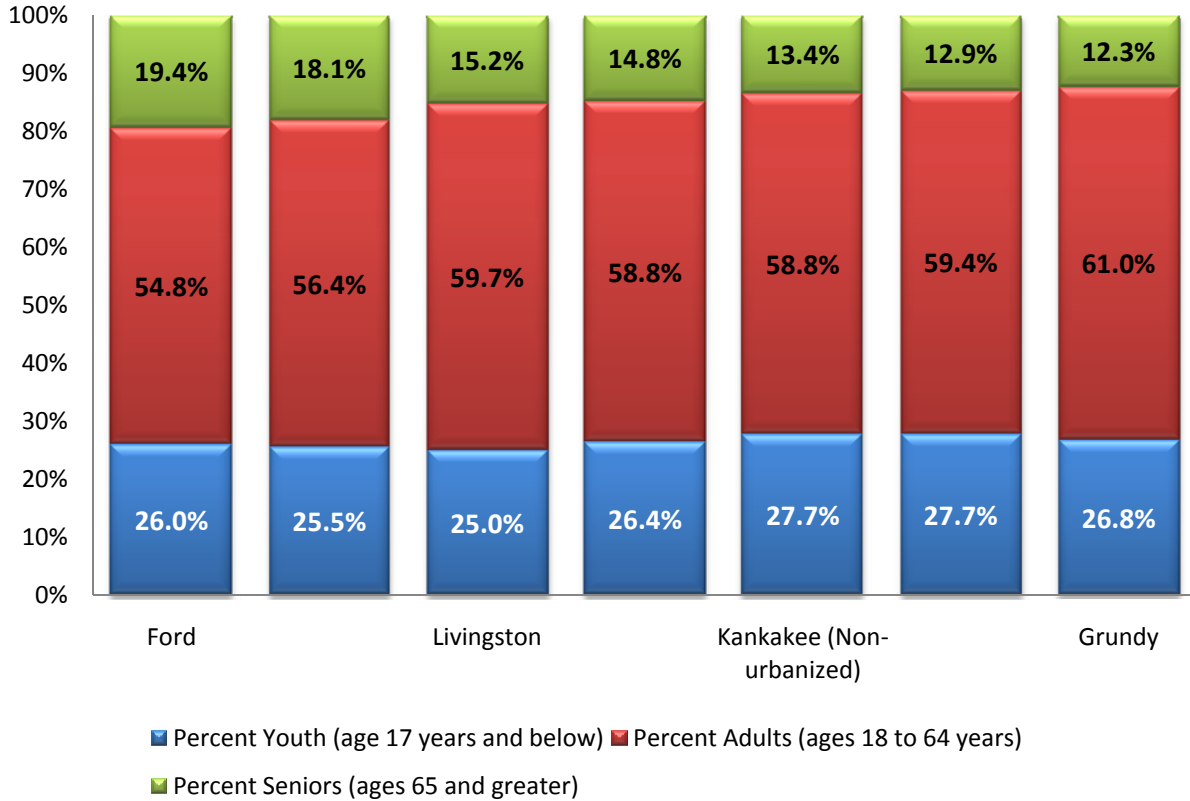
- Elderly persons and persons with disabilities (Sections 5310 and 5317)
- Persons with income and employment challenges (Section 5316)

As noted in the original plan produced by Champaign County Regional Planning, transit demand analysis is defined as the basic determination of demand for public transportation in a given area. Multiple factors can impact demand, not all of which can be reliably forecast. Transit analysts have developed several methods of estimation, attempting to improve the information base upon which decisions are made. This plan relies upon census data for the year 2000 to identify concentrations of the population groups of interest, which include persons usually defined as “transit dependent”. The Region 6 Policy and Technical Committees also rely on the expertise of participating agencies in identifying and analyzing locations where the need for transportation services is evident and documented. This specialized knowledge, and additional information derived from other data sources, will be incorporated in future plan updates as available and appropriate.

Population by Age

As illustrated in the center data column in Chart 1, in Census 2000 the Region 6 rural population consisted of 26.4% of persons 17 year or younger, 58.8% of persons aged 18 through 64, and 14.8% of persons aged 65 and older. Chart 1 also illustrates the higher percentage of older residents found in the more rural counties in the region.

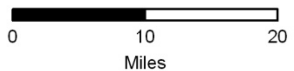
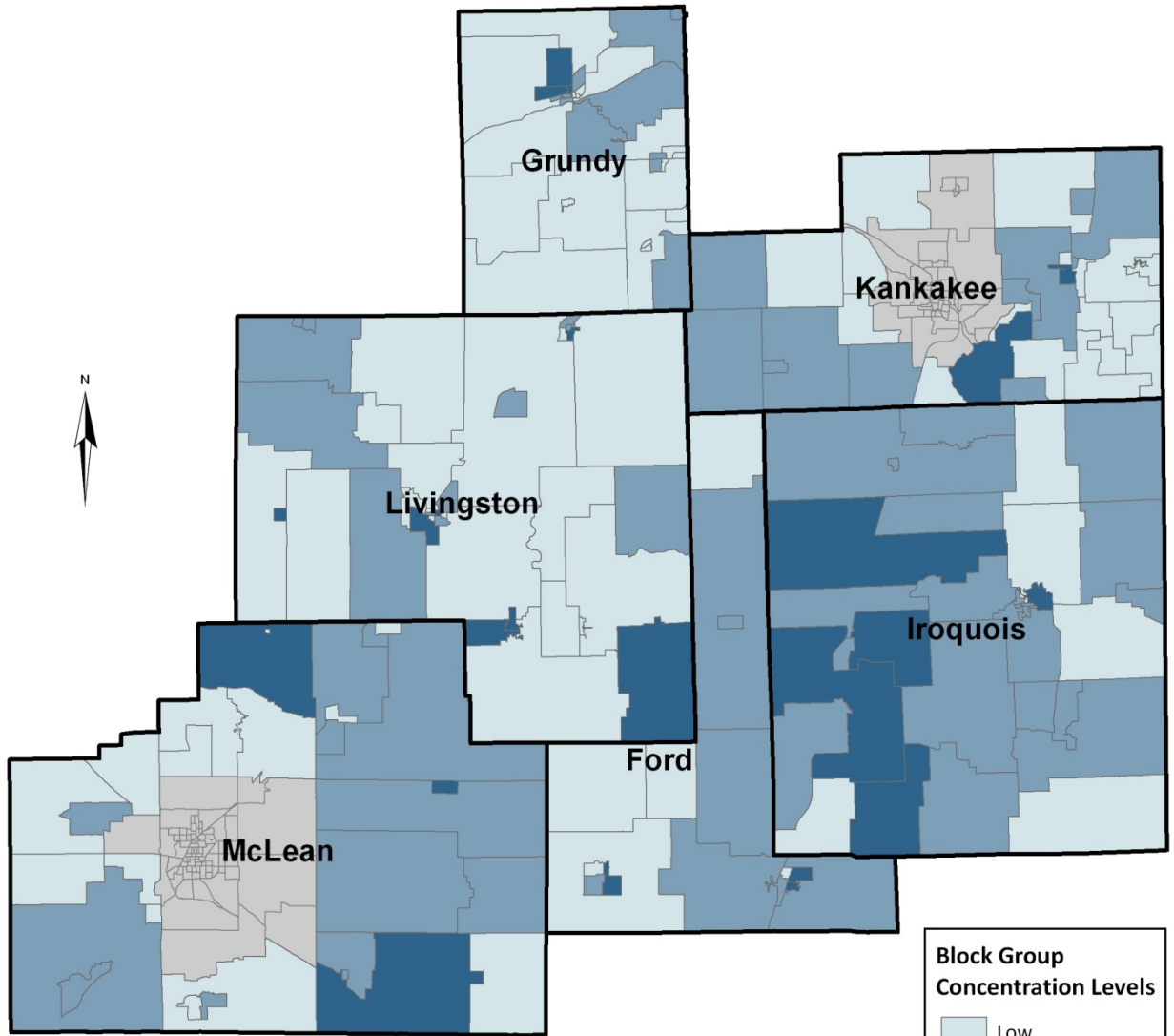
Chart 1
Distribution of Population by Age Group
 By County and Region, Census 2000



The evidence regarding Region 6 is consistent with state and national demographic norms, in which rural areas are likely to have higher percentages of older residents. In Census 2000, predominantly rural counties in Region 6 have a noticeably older population, even as contrasted to the rural portions of more urbanized counties. This demographic pattern, combined with the nationwide trend towards an overall aging of the population, indicates the importance of sustaining and improving transportation programs directed towards the particular needs of older residents.

Map 1 on the following page illustrates the concentration of elderly persons by block group within Region 6, and as a function of the total rural population of Region 6.

Populations 65 and Over in Region Six Rural Areas



Concentration Levels are based on the total number of elderly individuals per block group as a percentage of total population in Region 6.

Block Group Concentration Levels

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Urbanized Area
- County Boundary

Data Source: Census 2000 Summary File 3, P1

Population of Persons with Disabilities

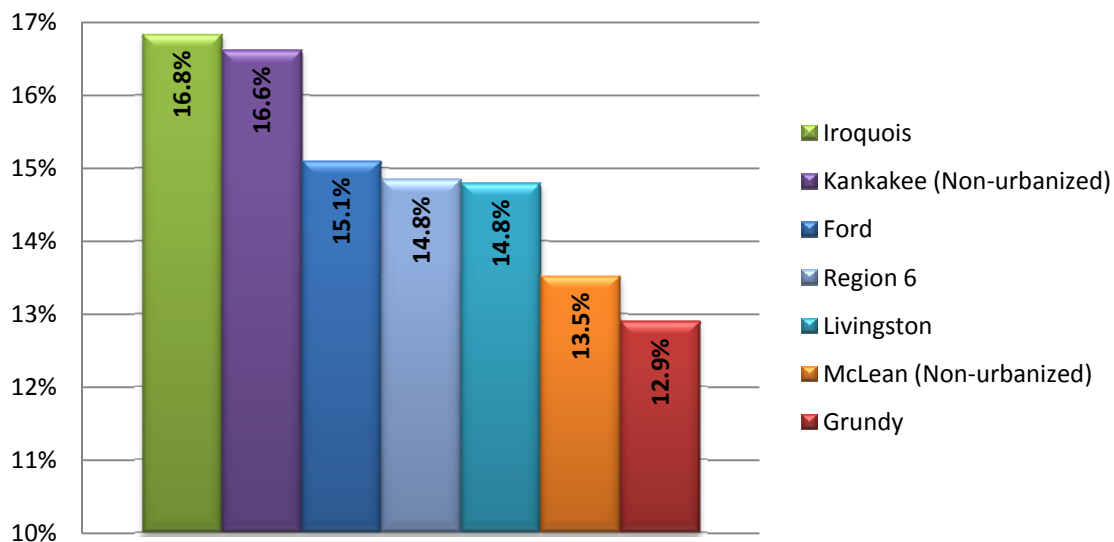
Census 2000 provides some guidance on the population share of persons with one or more disabilities. This data is derived from answers to two questions on the long-form version of the Census questionnaire. For the purpose of the analysis in the Region 6 plan, persons were classified as having a disability if any of the following three conditions were true:

- the respondent was 5 years old or over and had a sensory, physical, mental or self-care disability;
- the respondent was 16 years old or over and had a going outside the home disability; or
- the respondent was 16 to 64 years old and had an employment disability.

It is important to note that the use of the Census data to derive information on the rural population of persons with disabilities may produce results at odds with locally-derived information. This is the consequence of extrapolating from Census data which is based on questions that can produce a range of responses; specifically, the conditions noted above and used to define the population of persons with disabilities may generate overlapping results. Over time, the Policy and Technical Committees expect to rely on data developed at the County level to inform future assessments of demand.

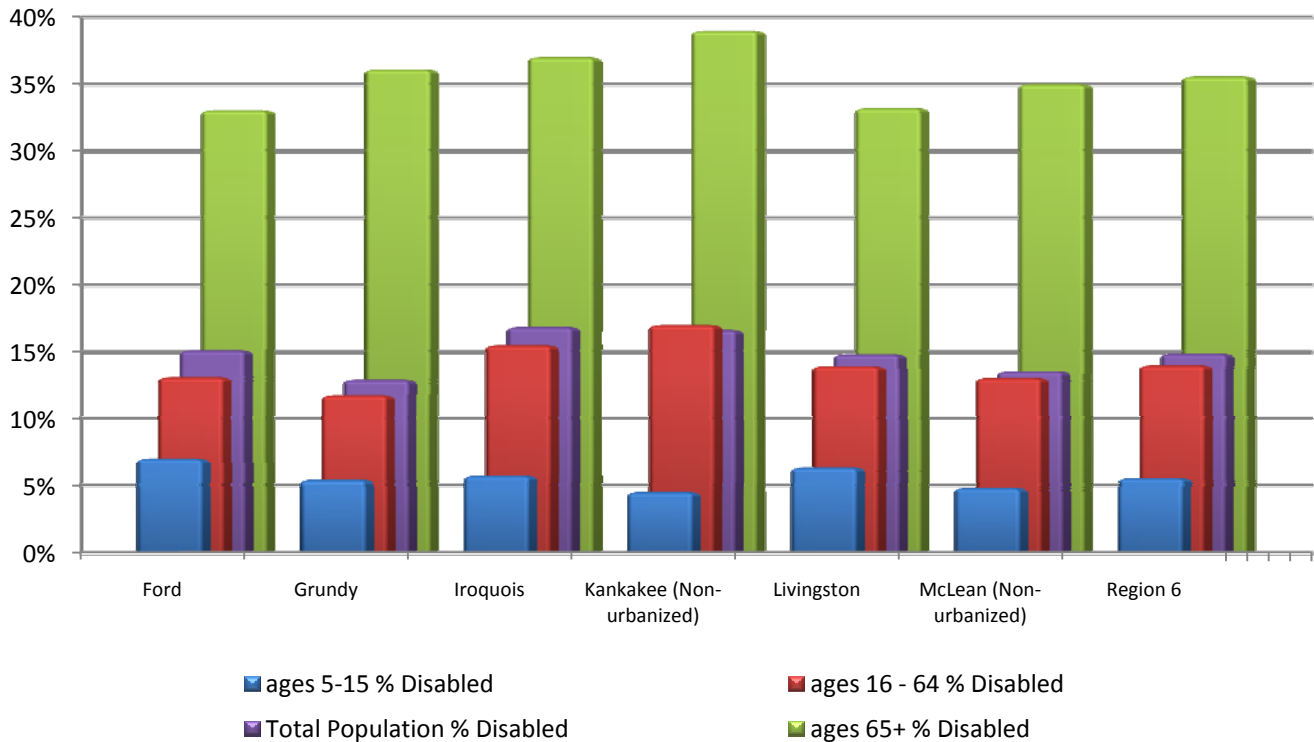
As illustrated in Chart 2, persons with disabilities represent between thirteen to seventeen percent of the population of the rural portions of counties in Region 6, with a regional average slightly below fifteen percent. Although the data suggests that persons with disabilities represent a larger percentage of the population in more rural counties, this finding is to some extent a statistical consequence of removing population data for urbanized areas from the analysis. However, the need to address the transportation needs of rural residents with disabilities is unmistakable.

Chart 2
Persons with Disabilities in Rural Areas
(as percentage of population)



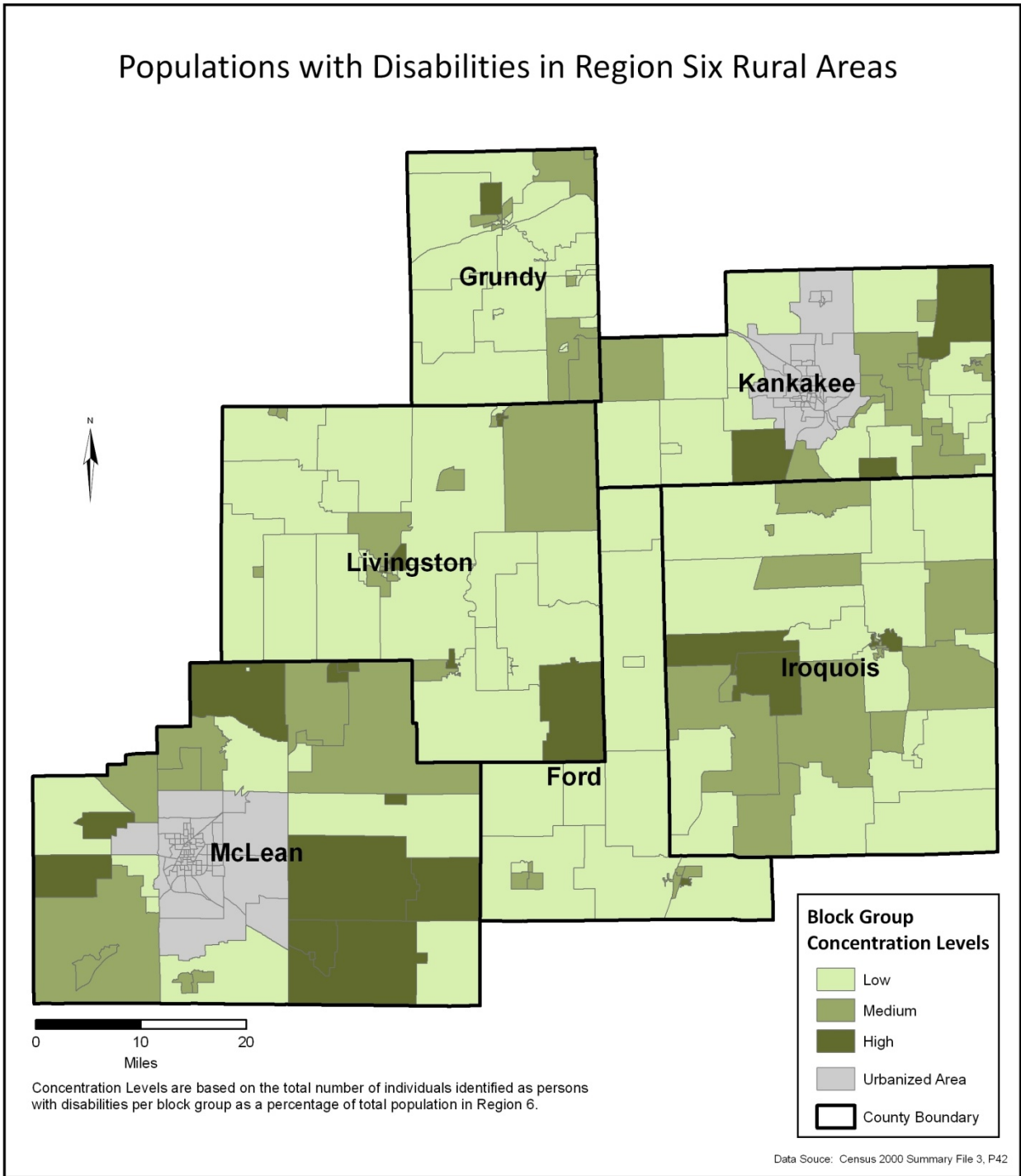
An examination of the Census data regarding the population notes that the incidence of disability rises dramatically in the population aged 65 and older. As illustrated in Chart 3, Almost thirty-six percent of the area’s senior population has at least one disability. This demonstrates the urgency of supporting programs that not only address the mobility needs of older residents, but that do so with adequate provisions to provide transportation that meets whatever additional support they may require.

Chart 3
Incidence of Disability
 by age and location, Census 2000



Map 2 illustrates the geographic distribution of statistical concentrations of persons with disabilities in Region 6, as a percentage of the total rural population.

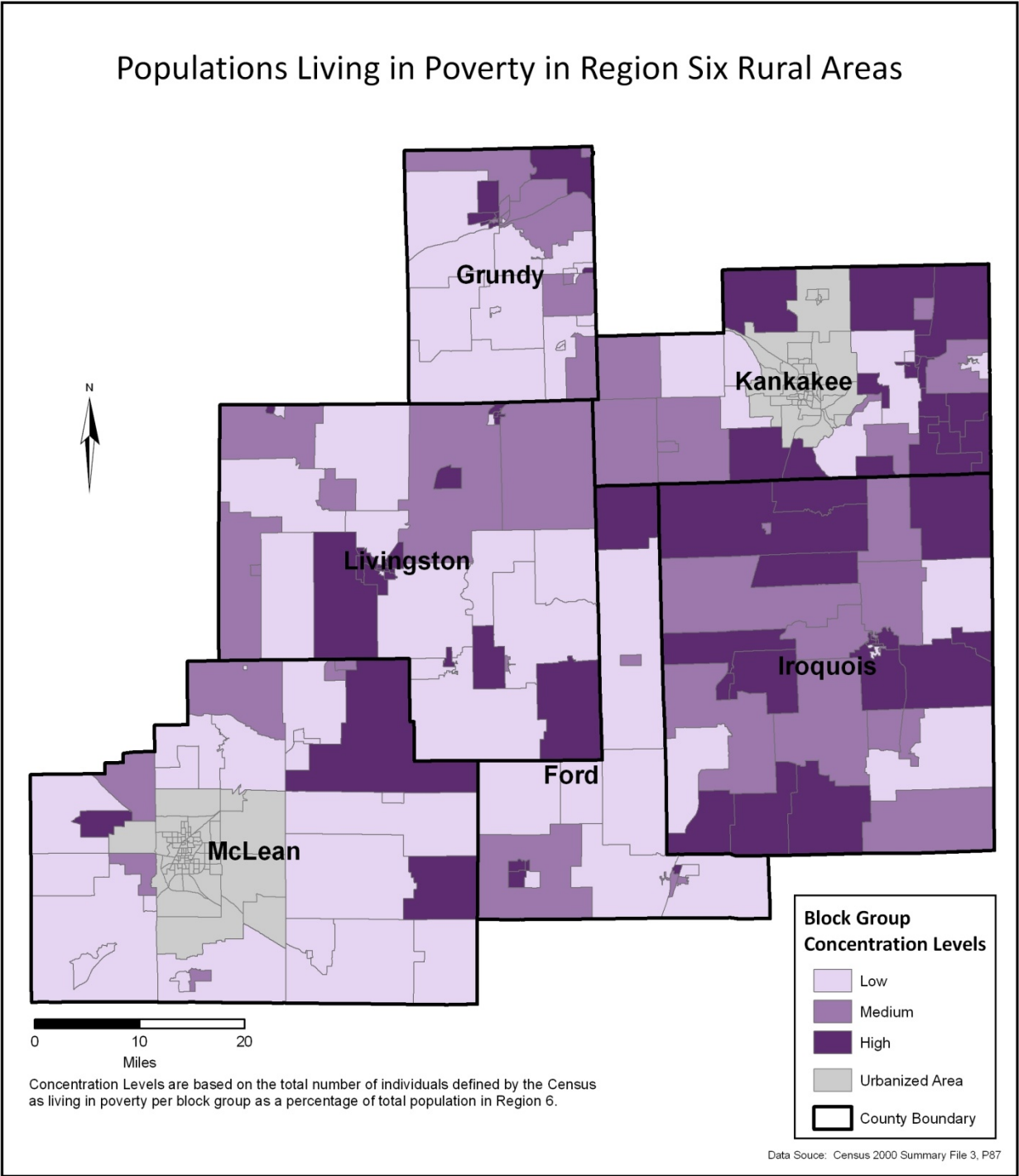
Populations with Disabilities in Region Six Rural Areas



Population Living Below Poverty Level

As of Census 2000, nearly seven percent of the population in Region 6 is living below the poverty level. Among young people aged 18 or below, the incidence of poverty was higher, at nearly nine percent average in Region 6. However, higher incidence of poverty among young people was found in Iroquois, Kankakee and Livingston counties. Grundy and McLean counties had the lowest percentages of residents living in poverty among the six counties. Concentrations of population defined as living in poverty are shown in Map 3.

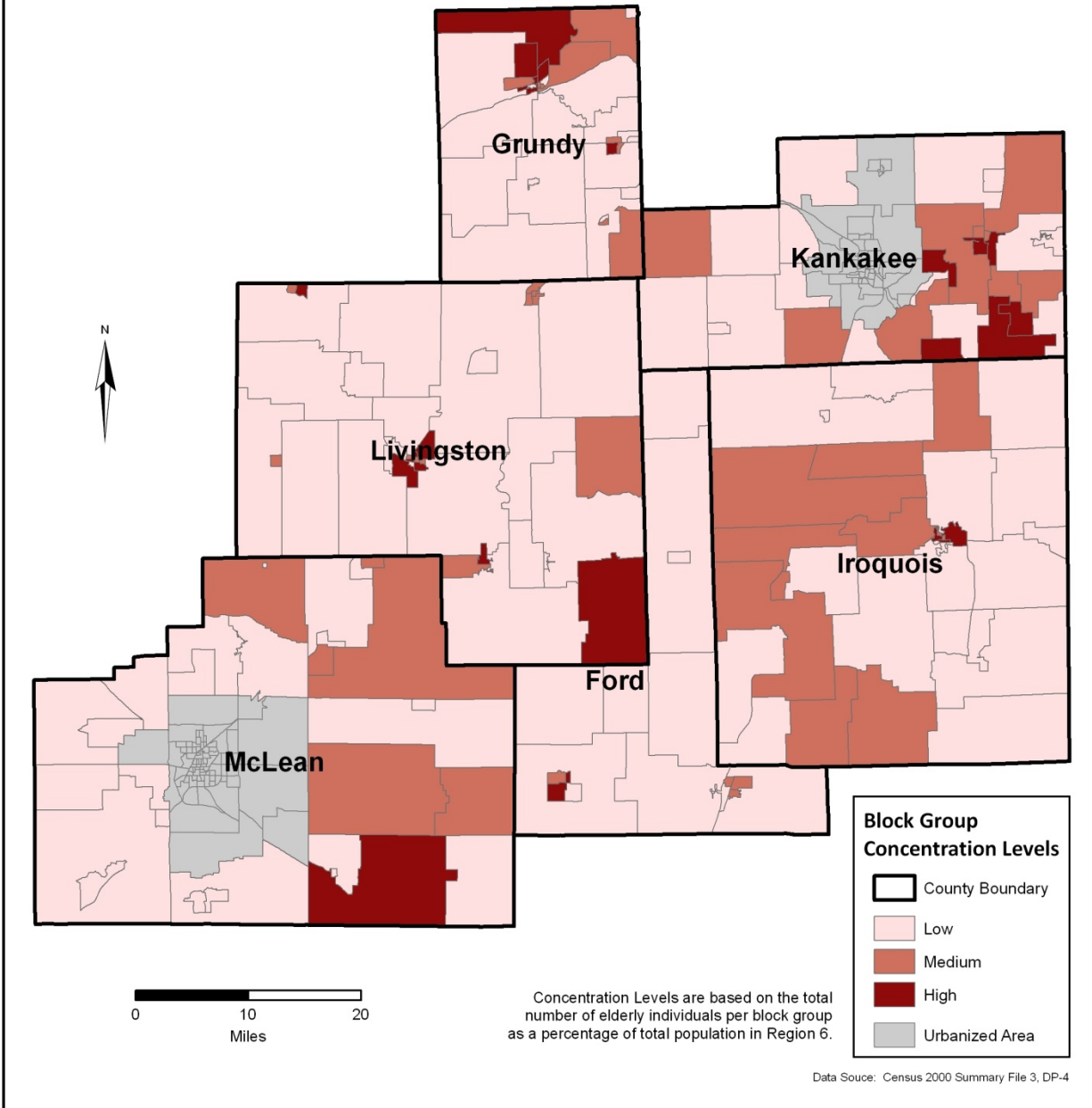
Data on the incidence of poverty based on Census 2000 no longer provides significant analytical resources, given the considerable changes in economic conditions in the nation and the state. In addition to the impact of the recession and prolonged employment downturn which resulted from it, the budgetary consequences for Illinois have a magnifying effect on poverty. Agencies and organizations which provides service to people living in poverty have themselves experienced extraordinary challenges in maintaining programs and services, at a time when their efforts are in increasing demand.



Zero-Vehicle Households

The Census indicates that approximately 4.8% of the households in Region 6 did not have a vehicle in 2000, as a percentage of the region’s non-urbanized population. Map 4 graphically illustrates the concentration of households with zero vehicles within Region 6, as a percentage of the total rural population.

Geographic Concentration of Households with Zero Vehicles in Region Six Rural Areas



To the extent that households with access to a vehicle are located in remote portions of the regions rural areas, residents in those households may represent concentrations of high transit dependency.

Coordination and Implementation

Since their inception, the Region 6 Committees have sought to engage involvement and participation from a broad range of entities which serve the people intended to benefit from the Federal programs discussed above. These include but are not limited to social service agencies at the state, regional county and local levels, advocacy groups, transportation service providers, and institutions active in areas with critical interest in rural issues, such as health care providers, faith-based groups and economic development boards. Many agencies and institutions have participated throughout the process, while others have joined the discussion as the impact of rural transportation services and the role of the HSTP process became more widely understood. Often new participants have joined the regional coordination effort as a result of the work done by the County Transportation Organizations. Regional partners in the HSTP coordination process are identified below.

Agency Participants

LIFE Center for Independent Living

LIFE-CIL in Pontiac serves the community in promoting self-determination and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. The agency addresses local concerns and priorities, and engages in advocacy for its constituency, and peer support, information and referral, and independent living skills training for clients. LIFE-CIL provides information on specific client needs, aids in identifying unmet needs in the community, and provides a conduit for information about transportation options to its constituents. The Pontiac LIFE-CIL office has also provided a meeting space for the Region 6 Committees since the inception of the HSTP process.

East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging

The ECI Area Agency on Aging serves a 16-county area, including Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, and Vermilion counties, of which four are located in Region 6.

Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

The Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging serves DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties, of which two are located in Region 6.

Options Center for Independent Living

Options Center for Independent Living (Options CIL) is a not-for-profit, community-based organization that assists persons with disabilities in living independently. The organization's services include information and referral, advocacy, independent living skills training, peer support, education and awareness about disabilities, personal assistance programs, sign language interpreter referrals, equipment loans, support groups, TTY

distribution and volunteer opportunities. Options CIL also offers blind services, children's and youth advocacy and mentoring services, and community reintegration services.

Other participating agencies and organizations are identified below, as partners in service contracts with SHOWBUS.

Service Providers

A number of service providers operate in Region 6, some which provide public transit service, and others who serve limited populations, agency or institutional clients or schools.

Public Transportation

SHOW BUS

SHOW BUS is a nonprofit transportation agency serving the general public in DeWitt, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, and rural Kankakee and McLean Counties. SHOW BUS operates its own transportation program. A demand/response door-to-door service is provided weekdays from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. Reservations made 24 hours in advance are preferred. A deviated fixed route has recently been approved for the Pontiac area. Dependent upon demand, service will extend to destinations beyond the six county area. The fare for transportation services depends upon the county the customer is located, their destination (in county/out of county), and the type of customer funding assistance. This can range from \$2 to \$15 round trip for demand/response routes. Donations the same as fare are accepted from the elderly or persons with disabilities.

Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System

The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (B-NPTS) operates 19 peak hour, fixed route buses and up to 5 demand responsive buses concurrently during its normal operating day from approximately 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. Additionally, during the Illinois State University (ISU) school year, B-NPTS operates evening fixed route service utilizing up to 4 buses until 1:00 am serving the greater ISU campus area as well as a demand responsive service utilizing up to 3 additional buses. B-NPTS service area includes the cities of Bloomington and Normal, which have a combined urbanized population of 112,415 (2000 census) covering a service area of approximately 37 square miles.

City of Morris

The City of Morris provides transportation on a fixed route within the city. The service is curb-to-curb on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 am to 1:45 pm. Passengers are allowed to travel with their own personal care attendants and real-time reservations are taken. A trip cost \$0.25 and there are no discounts or donations.

Grundy County

Grundy County operates a demand response service using one light duty bus. The curb-to-curb service is provided weekdays from 7:00 am to 4:00pm. Reservations are required at least 24 hours before travel, but will accommodate same day reservations if space is

available. On average they provide 1,700 trips in one year. The fare is \$3.00 per trip and there are no discounts for the elderly or disabled. Donations are accepted.

River Valley Metro Mass Transit

The River Valley Metro Mass Transit (Metro) service area includes Aroma Park, Bradley, Bourbonnais, Manteno, the City of Kankakee, a small portion of Kankakee County and a commuter bus to the University Park Metra station. Metro also provides ADA Paratransit Service (Metro Plus) to the fixed route areas. The area has a combined population of 63,686 and covers an area of 21 square miles. Metro served 363,953 passengers in 2006 reflecting a 54.3% increase over the 2005 ridership of 235,807.

Human Services Transportation

Developmental Services Center

The Developmental Services Center (DSC) is a nonprofit social service agency that focuses on job placements and other social services for its disabled clients in Champaign and Ford Counties. In addition, DSC operates its own transportation program utilizing agency owned vehicles driven by staff as well as personal vehicles of staff and volunteers. A fixed route curb-to-curb service is provided weekdays from 7:00 am to 4:30 pm by a reservation through admissions. DSC charges no fare and does not accept donations.

Duane Dean Behavioral Health Center

Duane Dean Behavioral Health Center (Duane Dean) is a nonprofit social service agency that focuses on counseling and treatment for substance abuse as well as diagnosis and evaluation serving Kankakee County. They provide a curb-to-curb fixed route service to their clients, without reservations, from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm through use of staff driving agency owned vehicles and personal vehicles. Duane Dean also utilizes pre-purchased passes for transit. No fare is charged and no donations are accepted.

Futures Unlimited, Inc.

Futures Unlimited, Inc. (Futures) is a nonprofit social service agency serving clients in Livingston County. Futures operates a curb-to-curb fixed route and demand response transportation program utilizing agency and staff vehicles from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on weekdays. No reservations are required and fare is determined based on the program the client is enrolled in as well as the location.

Gibson City Area Telecare Services, Inc.

Gibson City Area Telecare Services, Inc. (Telecare) provides transportation for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities in Champaign and Ford Counties. A curb-to-curb demand/response service utilizing agency vehicles driven by staff and volunteers operates weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Reservations should be made one or two days in advance and passengers are allowed to travel with their own personal care attendants. Telecare does charge a fare for its services and no discounts are provided. Donations are accepted with the suggested amount being \$3 for trips within the city.

Good Shepherd Manor

Good Shepherd Manor is a residential facility for 127 men with developmental disabilities in Momence. The Manor offers academic and vocational stimulation to prevent regression and to develop skills. A Work Center provides clients access to appropriate jobs in a workshop setting for local industry.

Morris Hospital

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers offers a free transportation service for individuals from Morris and the surrounding communities to the Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers campus, or to area physician offices. This service makes healthcare accessible to patients who may be unable to drive or have limited mobility. Vehicles are equipped to accommodate physically challenged individuals, and trained volunteer drivers and assistants are available. Since its inception in 1998, patient transportation has been provided to more than 48,000 patients, with approximately 500 patients per month served.

Mosaic in Pontiac

Mosaic is a faith based organization focused on social services and provides residential facilities in Livingston County. A demand/response service to clients through agency vehicles is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Passengers are assisted either door-to-door or door-through-door and Mosaic provides personal care attendants. Drivers are also able to assist passengers with an unlimited number of packages. No fare is charged and no donations are accepted.

Veterans' Assistance Commission of Grundy County

The Veterans' Assistance Commission of Grundy County provides a range of services to veterans in Grundy County, including transportation services. Of special interest are transportation services providing access to Veterans' Administration medical facilities.

Volunteer Services of Iroquois County

Volunteer Services of Iroquois County is a nonprofit social service agency. Transportation for person 60 years old and over is provided by a deviated route with curb-to-curb service weekdays from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Drivers are permitted to help passengers with a limited number of packages and passengers may travel with their own personal care attendants. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance. No fare is charged, but donations are accepted. Suggested donation is \$8.

Student Transportation

East Central Illinois Community Action Agency

East Central Illinois Community Action Agency (ECICAA) is a nonprofit social service agency focused on education and social services for Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties. ECICAA operates transportation for Head Start on a fixed route schedule established at the beginning of the school year. Service is door-to-door and no fare is charged.

Illinois Central School Bus

Illinois Central School Bus is a for-profit school bus company serving a wide area of north-central Illinois and Gary, Indiana. Transportation in Region 6 is provided by contractual shuttle in Dwight, IL. This is a fixed route with curb-to-curb service.

Implementation

The efforts of the Region 6 Committees to date have resulted in many instances of successful coordination, some involving cooperation between participating agencies, and others creating enhanced transportation options throughout the region. Of particular note are the partnerships and cooperative efforts put in place to provide or improve services threatened by the impact of the recent recession of public and private agencies and advocacy groups. This pattern of coordination is expected to continue, as future economic challenges in the state and region create additional fiscal pressures.

Illustrating the success is the widening role of SHOW BUS in the region. Serving all the counties in the Region but Grundy County, SHOW BUS is the principal rural provider in the region, and a focus of considerable coordination and cooperation. In dealing with agency closures and program interruptions, the Illinois Department of Transportation itself has often turned to SHOW BUS to help in alleviating service gaps. In all counties served, SHOW BUS bills Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Department of Children and Family Services and Department of Human Services as requested by clients. All insurance billings are accepted in all counties.

In addition, SHOW BUS has entered into service contracts with county and regional partners as listed below, with special circumstances noted:

Ford County:

Community Resource and Counseling Center (service contract being reinstated)
ECIAAA

Iroquois County:

ARC of Iroquois County
Iroquois Mental Health Center (punch cards)
Options

Kankakee County:

Good Shepherd
Kankakee County Public Health Department
Options
Thresholds (service and vehicle contracts)

Livingston County:

Boys and Girls Club
City of Pontiac
ECIAAA

Futures (suspended due to budget cuts-may be reinstated)
Meadows Mennonite (vehicle contract)
United Way of Pontiac

McLean County:
ECIAAA
United Way of McLean County

DeWitt County (in HSTP Region 8)
DeWitt County Human Resource Center (service and vehicle contracts)
East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA)

In November 2009, the Region 6 HSTP Committees were honored to be presented the 2009 Advancing Community Access Award, by the Life Center for Independent Living representing DeWitt, Ford, Livingston and McLean counties. The award recognizes the work of the Committees in advancing accessible transportation options for people with disabilities living in rural communities. Installation of the award certificate is shown below.



Policy Committee Chair Bette Rackauskas and Technical Committee Chair Laura Dick



The Region 6 Policy and Technical Committees, March 22, 2010

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Planning and Purpose

Areas of Special Focus

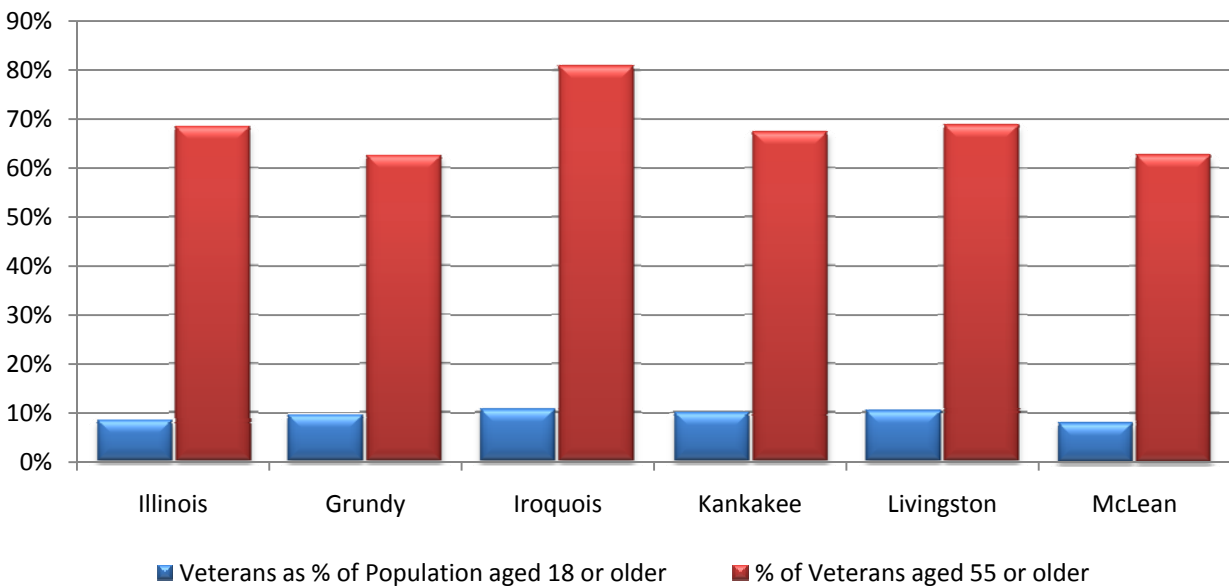
In addition to the service gaps and issues defined in the 2008 Region 6 plan, and in the course of its work in 2009 and 2010, the Region 6 Committees have identified areas of concern requiring further investigation and planning.

Veterans' Services

Transportation issues confronting area veterans became a central area of concern for the Region 6 Committees thanks to the participation and education on the challenges provided by the Grundy County Veterans Assistance Commission. The Committees have concluded that ongoing and concentrated attention should be given to the transportation needs of veterans in the region, particularly with respect to ensuring access to medical services and other benefits through the Veterans Administration.

In Region 6, veterans comprise between eight and eleven percent of the adult population. Many counties in the region have a higher percentage of veterans than the statewide average. Notably, a substantial percentage of the veterans living in Region 6 are fifty-five years of age or older, as illustrated in Chart 4, and are thus more likely to have need of the services provided under HSTP programs. This group of older veterans represents as many as 20,000 individuals through the region. The Committees have emphasized their ongoing commitment to providing proper and adequate transportation services to veterans,

Chart 4
Veterans in Region 6
American Community Survey, 2006 - 2008, Table S2101
Data not available for Ford County



particularly in connection with facilitating access to the benefits due them through the Veterans Administration and other agencies. Toward this end, the Region 6 Committees will seek continued and expanded partnerships with Veterans' Assistance Commissions, veterans' advocacy groups, and the Veterans Administration.

Statewide Compliance with Accessibility Standards

The LIFE Center for Independent Living has focused the attention of the Committees on issues arising under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Illinois Accessibility Code, which in some circumstances mandates stricter standards than those promulgated under ADA. LIFE-CIL staff has been invaluable in soliciting aid from state agencies, including the office of the Attorney General, to guide decision-making regarding accessibility issues in Region 6. This guidance also applies to the activities of the Region 6 Committees, such as the conduct of meetings, hearings and presentations, provision of qualified interpreters and assistive devices, and the use of accessibility standards in communications. Implementation of and compliance with these standards is an ongoing and vital aspect of the Region 6 HSTP Committees.

LIFE-CIL has proposed that issues arising regarding provider and agency compliance be considered at the state level, and the Region 6 Committees anticipate further discussion with state agencies on methods to achieve statewide awareness and compliance.

Integration with Urban Area Plans

As coordination of transportation services advances in Region 6, the Committees are committed to establishing strong communication between the rural HSTP and the plans developed for the urban areas within the region, Kankakee and Bloomington – Normal. Many service providers and social service agencies participating in the Region 6 coordination process are also active in the urban centers in the region. In order to provide the best possible results in coordinated service, it is vital that the relationship between rural and urban systems and users be understood, and reflected in regional and urban plans.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies

The Region 6 HSTP committees are dedicated to realizing the directive emerging out of SAFETEA-LU, that coordinated planning for rural transportation should be a grassroots efforts, grounded in the knowledge and experience of local agencies, providers and the public. In Region 6, the activities in support of implementing the regional plan begin at the local level, through the efforts of the County Transportation Organizations (CTOs) designated by each County as the participating body in the regional committees. Although the CTOs vary in structure and management, they are all committed to providing local involvement and input in transportation issues for transit riders, and the general public. The purpose of formulating goals and objectives is to determine what direction planning efforts should take, independent of timeframe and individual projects.

- ❖ A goal is defined as a purpose or condition that will be brought about by implementing the Human Services Transportation Plan
- ❖ Objectives are contributing elements of goals that help organize the implementation of the plan into measurable and manageable parts.
- ❖ Strategies are suggested activities to meet objectives and in turn achieve goals.

Beginning with the first iteration of the plan in 2008, the Committees engaged in extensive discussions of appropriate goals for rural transit in Region 6, both for transit providers and for clients of social service and government agencies whose constituencies rely on public transportation services and agency-based transportation services. Throughout 2009, the Committees reexamined the goals and evaluated areas of successful implementation, and areas needing further planning and implementation effort. This assessment is reflected in the goals, objectives and strategies which follow.

Goal 1: Establish and maintain regional connections between public transportation, human service agencies, and the general public.

Objective 1: Support and expand the activities of county-based transportation organizations.

Strategies:

- Develop (or support existing) county transportation organizations.
- Provide resources for county-based public involvement through the regional HSTP process.

Objective 2: Continue coordination of Region 6

Strategies:

- Regional information resources, including web-based
- Staff for coordination
- Develop a universally accessible email listserv that includes interested agencies and individuals.

Objective 3: Increase awareness and ridership of transportation services.

Strategies:

- Make transportation information available through community resources.
- Ensure that information is accessible by meeting standards set forth in the Illinois Accessibility Code, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all other relevant statutes and regulations.
- Ensure that information is distributed utilizing technologies available to enhance communication for everyone.
- Increase communication between agencies and the general public through regional channels.
- Encourage agencies to maintain a transportation referral file with referrals available through multiple communication means.
- Encourage agencies with websites to include links to other transportation and service providers.
- Develop a regional directory providing information on transportation services.

Objective 4: Continually promote and market transportation options.

Strategies:

- Use regional committee resources and staff to inform the public
- Utilize media sources to keep the public informed of current transportation resources, projects, and coordination.
- Post notices at locations where potential riders congregate.
- Promote transportation services at special events.
- Develop new and innovative marketing strategies.

Goal 2: Improve transportation services.

Objective 1: Provide accessible service to all individuals with disabilities, regardless of equipment used or location.

Strategies:

- Increase the number of accessible vehicles.
- Advocate for vehicles that exceed the minimum requirements set by ADA.
- Advocate the need of accessible routes that meet the Illinois Accessibility Code.

Objective 2: Make potential riders comfortable utilizing transit.

Strategies:

- Provide training programs on how to use various transportation systems.
- Offer buddy programs for new riders.
- Develop personalized service plans as appropriate.

Objective 3: Open access to existing fleet.

Strategies:

- Facilitate vehicle sharing agreements.
- Advocate for expedited reassignment of unused vehicles.

Objective 4: Identify existing and potential Medicaid providers.

Strategies:

- Research the need for Medicaid transportation within the region.
- Advocate the need for speedy reimbursement for such services.

Objective 5: Minimize maintenance time.

Strategies:

- Explore sharing of regular maintenance functions.
- Encourage use and resource support of/for Regional Maintenance Center(s).
- Maintain a safe and reliable fleet of vehicles.

Goal 3: Expand transportation services.

Objective 1: Extend service in underserved areas and to underserved populations.

Strategies:

- Expand service area for pick-ups and/or drop-offs.
- Add destinations.
- Monitor transit use levels, allowing for trail service.

Objective 2: Expand days and hours of service.

Strategies:

- Evaluate area needs, using the County Transportation Organizations.
- Create partnerships with employers and community agencies.
- Monitor transit use levels.

Objective 3: Provide service to locations outside of region

Strategies:

- Coordinate routes and schedules of agencies within the region to locations outside of the region.
- Designate specific days and times for trips to major areas located outside of the region.
- Coordinate with other HSTP Regions.

Goal 4: Increase funding for transportation and decrease costs.

Objective 1: Identify money expended on transportation.

Strategies:

- Encourage agencies to report funding amounts and sources.
- Monitor use of programs funded under the HSTP.

Objective 2: Increase available revenue resources.

Strategies:

- Identify and promote additional funding sources.
- Explore private funding options and/or company sponsored routes.
- Educate potential financial partners about the need for adequate funding.
- Support legislation that adequately funds coordinated transportation.

Objective 3: Decrease costs of providing transportation.

Strategies:

- Investigate methods and feasibility of cost reduction approaches.
- Explore legal constraints of sharing resources.
- Develop joint asset and commodities acquisition arrangements.
- Facilitate vehicle sharing agreements as possible.
- Provide a purchase of service option.
- Encourage use of appropriate equipment for various routes.

Objective 4: Obtain insurance that allows for transportation of additional interest groups.

Strategies:

- Research group insurance options.
- Standardize policies.
- Develop joint operational procedures.

Objective 5: Combine agency scheduling functions.

Strategies:

- Coordinate routes among agencies.
- Facilitate shared transfer points.
- Research software options that may be able to be utilized by multiple providers.

Goal 5: Increase the number of drivers and level of passenger assistance.

Objective 1: Recruit and retain paid drivers.

Strategies:

- Develop customer appreciation systems to recognize good drivers.
- Research funding streams that allow for payment of a competitive wage.
- Provide management support for drivers to remove problem riders.

Objective 2: Enhance volunteer driver programs.

Strategies:

- Work closely with organization boards to identify potential volunteer drivers.
- Support volunteer programs to provide additional transportation availability, where consistent with safety and security of passengers and volunteers.

Objective 3: Coordinate group training sessions.

Strategies:

- Encourage use of resources provided by the Rural Transit Assistance Center.
- Support universal driver trainings.

Objective 4: Provide a proper level of assistance to passengers.

Strategies:

- Educate dispatchers and drivers on proper response to various needs.

- Develop policies and procedures to appropriately respond to rider needs.
- Explore use of escorts provided by the transportation provider.

Progress in Plan Implementation

The Region 6 Committees will undertake an annual review of the implementation of the plan. From the review, the regional coordinator will issue a report on the status of implementation of the plan goals, incorporating recommendations from the Region 6 Committees regarding further steps for implementation, or revision of the plan at intervals within a three-year update cycle. Implementation status information will also be obtained from participating agencies and service providers, pursuant to reporting requirements established in grant and funding programs. The status reports, as approved by the Policy Committee, will be incorporated as appendices to the plan.

Revision to the plan required by the anticipated reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU will also be considered by the Region 6 Committees, subject to guidance by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.

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