

Technical Task Force Meeting
March 20, 2008

Attendees:

Michael Randolph, NJT Access Link
Donna Kovalevich, SCUCS/SenHan
Bob Koska, NJT, Local Program Manager
Andrew Levecchia, Camden County Improvement Authority
Winifred Miller, Camden County Board of Social Services
Terri Hirschhorn, NJ Department of Human Services
Eric Grugel, Delaware Valley Region Plan Commission
Ronda R. Urkowitz, Cross County Connections
Steve Fittante, VTC
Peter Bilton, VTC
Brian Staples, VTC
Leona Tanker, CC WIB
Donna Hardy Johnston, CC WIB

Donna Johnston opened the meeting. Leona Tanker welcomed everyone stating that it is the continued support of this task force that is moving this initiative to reality. The WIB and VTC appreciate the expertise they have invested in the project. Ronda Urkowitz shared copies of the Burlington Camden County map of public transportation services just published by Cross County Connections. They printed 50,000 copies and a call to Ronda will get you as many copies as you want.

Peter Bilton: purpose of today's meeting is to walk through the Systems Requirements with TTF; discussion of the next step: the System Design deliverable. Also, introduce data collection needs for evaluation.

Power Point presentation - Peter, Steve (see website)

- review goals
- review current conditions
- TMCC is about helping providers work together to provide better service
- System Requirements developed from results of the December Table Top and outreach Camden County residents and Human Service providers
- VTC is figuring out the how of the TMCC; the WIB is building the political support needed to get it done
- System is broken into 6 elements; 5 technical elements, 1 Faith Based Collaborative
 - One Call transportation center not necessarily universal; allows the TMCC to create an overlay of additional demand; not meant to supplant providers taking reservations and scheduling functions; idea of providers being on the same system, seeing the same screen and knowing what's available; demonstration grant in stage 2 looks at staff, maintenance and sustainability; TMCC would not be booking trips unless there is an agreement with the provider to do so, maybe in cases of subscription runs

this may work but is something that would need confirmation from the provider possibly with an automated call; multiple providers sharing the system the TMCC provides; providers makes the final decision based on time line, fit and policies already in place; software would allow providers who do things manually now would have access to technology through the TMCC

- Global Positioning System, Automatic Vehicle Locator are cornerstones from some of the other technology; allows dispatchers for multiple providers to see where vehicles are, to see the whole picture; move to mobile data computers reduce labor on trip and billing information as well as provide passenger miles data which is a difficult data to collect otherwise
- explanation of the TMCC matrix (see website); levels from 1 to 3 moves through successively greater system detail
- Seamless fare and billing: ability for providers to bill to agencies, view charge backs more precisely through use of a “smart card”; funding from different sources is finite; gate keeper function; seamless system for the client not for the provider – this is in practice in other places and it works; scheduling now controls the rides per funding; card would be loaded with amount of money available for each of the riders; this will have an impact on consumer satisfaction; big issue of building user expectations that we can’t meet by building a system that is easier to use; possibility of providers picking up extra revenue at no cost by filling empty seats at a reduced fare to an extra rider or two; reality is with the cost of gas it is not going to become cheaper to run transportation; some funders restrict providers from asking for a donation from the rider
- Customer Communications and Security: idea is to provide some level of communication at key sites; not necessarily true that people who qualify for human services benefits do not have access to technology - many have access to a computer and even more have cell phones; rider knowing when their ride, bus or otherwise, is coming provides some security; add Drive Cam to the list: this is a camera in the vehicle that is triggered when the vehicle is jolted or the driver pushes a panic button
- Faith Based Collaborative: identify extra vehicles who will participate at different levels; to address some of the latent demand
- Next step is to develop a detailed system design that gives more detail on the system from how many staff to MOU agreements as well as system alternatives, i.e. a “smart” card that has actually money amounts loaded on it that decreases with each use or a “smart” card that ids the riders and in a second function credits the riders account
- Evaluation: VTC team is working with a consultant hired by the DOT to help develop an evaluation plan which includes collecting baseline data now; a list of variables will be discussed at (probably) the next meeting to gather input
- Timeline: part of the tight timeline on this project is because the money is earmarked in SAFETEA-LU; required that there be a sustainability plan;

implementation plan will be phased over time and the phasing will be part of the table top on April 18th

Going around the table one more time to take the temperature of the room:

- most is useful and easy to use with some technology elements being more desirable others; we need to prioritize
- automatic plan on being at a higher level to account for the change in technology to be on the cutting edge
- cost of administration and maintenance as well as installing the system; backing up the system
- DOT is asking us to distinguish what is absolutely necessary to open the door
- Part of building a transit culture is the technology that makes travel easier
- Mentality of Human Service and mentality of transit have to be blended together
- Training needs to be a part of the plan – adjunct or otherwise – user training – which is part of the marketing of the TMCC;
- CCC has actually written a travel training program to be used as a package for end users
- Middlesex is putting out an RFP for development of a travel training program
- Travel training funds are available through Freedom; Bob will have more information in June
- Counties using technology are moving ahead in providing transportation services, while that are not using technology are slipping behind and losing ground to providers who use technology moving in