ONE MPO’s QUEST to Coordinate Human Services Transportation on a Regional Scale

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Session Overview

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Human Services Transportation (HST)
- Coordinated Transportation Plan (CTP)
- Planner-to-Planner Q&A
Inception of MPOs

- 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act
  - Established Highway Trust Fund
  - Interstate Highway System
- Alignments left to the States
  - Concerns about damaging communities
  - Led to “Freeway Revolts”
- Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962
  - To receive federal funds, urbanized areas have to plan (3C)
What do MPOs do today?

- Coordinate all federal transportation funding within a region
  - Highways (FHWA)
  - Transit (FTA)
  - Airport (FAA)
- Establish regional priorities
- Lead a public planning and participation process

Challenge: MPOs are mostly highway-focused
What about people who don’t drive?

- Two distinct groups:
  - People who choose not to drive (Choice Riders)
  - People who are unable to drive (Captive Riders)
    - Elderly
    - Disabled
    - Low-income

- Getting ‘captive riders’ to life-line services
  - Medical appointments
  - Social services
  - Grocery stores
  - Employment

This is Human Services Transportation (HST)
Who provides HST?

- Public Transportation
  - Fixed route
  - Shared-ride
- Volunteer/Non-Profit
  - Community groups
  - Human service agencies
- Institutional
  - Healthcare facilities
  - Retirement homes
- Private
  - Taxi/Uber/Lyft
  - Intercity/Jitney

60+ providers in SW PA (that we know of)
Who pays for HST?

- FTA
  - Sections 5307, 5310, 5311
- PennDOT
  - Lottery Program
  - Persons with Disabilities (PwD)
  - Fixed Route Operation/Capital
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
  - MATP
- Department of Aging
  - County Area Agency on Aging

Also hospitals, churches, employers, community groups, sheltered workshops, etc.
Coordinating Transportation

- Federal planning mandate
  ...federally assisted grantees that have significant involvement in providing resources and engage in transportation delivery should participate in a local coordinated human services transportation planning process...

- Tied to three FTA funding programs
- Condition for receiving project funding
- Projects derived from the Plan
Rationale for Coordination

- Improve transportation services delivery to meet human service client needs
- Maximize service efficiency and control the rate of cost growth
- Enhance the impact of all human services provided to our region’s residents
Coordinated Transportation Plan (CTP)

- Responsibility of the MPO
- Planning Process
  - Assess and document transportation needs
  - Inventory available services across region
  - Identify strategies to address gaps
  - Document coordination actions for more efficient resource utilization
  - Establish competitive project selection process
- SPC and the SW PA CTP
MAP-21 and the CTP

- In 2012, MAP-21 repealed two of the three funding programs tied to the planning mandate
- Access to jobs/services remains an issue
- Planning mandate still exists

So, now what?
Latest Plan Development Effort

- Formed a highly-skilled project team
  - Consultants
  - Steering Committee
  - SPC technical staff
- Significantly stepped up public outreach
  - County-by-county, 200+ human service agency representatives
  - Stakeholder group meetings (The Alliance)
  - Phone interviews with 54 HST users
Major Plan Components

- Defined “Coordinated Transportation”
- Identified top 5 transportation barriers
- Put forth strategies for improving access
Coordinated Transportation

Defined by The Alliance as...

*an integrated network of transportation services that, through successful collaboration and resource sharing, provides affordable, reliable, and accessible mobility for all*
Transportation Barriers

- Public Funding
- Availability & Accessibility
- Cost & Affordability
- Program Policies & Regulations
- Education & Information
What to Tackle First

**PROGRAM POLICIES & REGULATIONS**

**STRATEGY**

Broker a conversation between regulators, providers, and consumers to reduce barriers caused by program policies and regulations.

- Secure buy-in from SPC commissioners
- Invite lawmakers & advocates to join The Alliance
- Present CTP to PA County Commissioners Assoc
- Attend SW PA County Commissioners meetings
- Utilize public testimony options at public meetings
- Conduct webinars re: CTP

**STRATEGY**

Develop a coordinated regional voice to advocate for a common-sense approach to human services transportation (HST).

- Create an advocacy campaign
- Coordinate and facilitate idea-sharing forums around the issue of transportation access (Alliance meetings)
Challenges to MPO’s Quest

- Transportation providers, human service agencies, government program administrators, and people in need

- What is the real issue here?
  - Transportation
  - Communication
  - Education

You decide!
Role of SPC in Implementation

- Difference between a “planning process” and a “plan”.
- What does “implementation” actually mean in this planning context?
- Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships – the concept of a “big table”.
Let’s talk...

PLANNER-TO-PLANNER Q & A