

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **PARATRANSIT:**

Kane County currently lacks a comprehensive public transportation and the need for special transit services are unmet. Transportation is essential for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals to access medical care, grocery shopping, and other community resources. There are approximately 40 different paratransit programs currently providing service within Kane county, and there is still a significant unmet travel need which will increase substantially during the next 20 years, and because there is interest in coordination of these programs, this council was set up to accommodate this unmet service need.

### **2003:**

- The Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council (KCPCCC) was officially formed on October 14, 2003,
- The Council 30+ members represent organizations, such as human service agencies, advocacy groups, townships, and municipalities.
- Council efforts are focused on finding solutions to resolve:
  - 1) Inconsistencies between County and municipal borders and the travel needs of residents,
  - 2) Imbalances between service hours and ridership demand,
  - 3) Lack of paratransit services, and
  - 4) Gaps between the available transit and paratransit services and the awareness of these services by residents.
- The Council aims to address the unmet travel needs among seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals residing in Kane County.
- At the same time that demand for service is increasing, resources to meet these needs have been dwindling.
- PACE has received only minimal funding increases since the start of the program, averaging less than 2% annually, despite the growing demand for public transit service throughout the area. The current Dial-a-Ride system does not have the capacity to meet the demand for increased service hours, boundaries and trips as such improvements are cost-prohibitive.
- Social service agencies providing paratransit services report similar issues. Given the current and projected growth in Kane County, combined with the ever rising cost of gasoline, the need to find alternate solutions to enhance paratransit services is critical.

### **2004:**

- The Paratransit Council collected and analyzed input on service needs including current services and how such services could be strengthened.
- Information was gathered by means of surveys, focus group discussions, and directly from seniors and persons with disabilities currently using public and paratransit services.
- There are currently six Dial-a-Ride programs operating in Kane County in 2004 reflect that 85,861 trips were provided to seniors and people with disabilities
- Potential service enhancements and options have been explored, with particular attention to the work of our neighbors to the east in their development of the *Ride DuPage* program.

### **2005:**

- May 2005: HB 4745: DISABLED-TRANSPORTATION:
  - Amends the Township Code that any township committee on the disabled may, subject to the approval of the township board, enter into service agreements to provide needed or required transportation services.
  - Also amends the Illinois Highway Code. Provides that a road district may use money in its district road fund to pay for the costs of transportation programs and mass transit programs for senior citizens and disabled persons (now, senior citizens only). Effective immediately.
- August 2005:
  - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act, a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted in and provides guaranteed funding for Federal surface transportation programs through FY 2009.
  - SAFETEA-LU requires the establishment of a locally-developed, coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan (HSTP) in order for the northeastern Illinois region to access three specific funding programs;  
Section 5310 Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities,

Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC),  
Section 5317 New Freedom.

- Kane County Paratransit Council has identified two projects that will contribute to enhanced transportation options for the citizens of Kane County:
  - 1) *Ride in Kane*, a centralized dispatch center providing integrated and automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions.

Ride in Kane Vision:  
Meet the mobility growing needs of the disabled, senior and low-income populations (address isolation issues, getting to work, shopping, and access medical care –simple daily tasks often taken for granted)  
Utilize the unique opportunity for many agencies to come together  
Pool resources and  
Create a system that goes above and beyond what any of us could accomplish individually  
Transfer federal transportation funding to this program  
24/7 transportation available  
Won't limit area, but per mile fare after first 10 miles will limit people
  - 2) Pace Route 529 Randall Road service expansion from the Kane County Judicial Center north to Algonquin.
- KCPCC is collaborating with Pace in preparing JARC and NFI grant proposals for the two projects listed above.
- Pace was successful in implementing Ride DuPage, a nationally recognized pilot program for centralized dispatch and taxi subsidized programs, and the south leg of Randall Road Route 529 service.
- KCPCC is surveying key stakeholders and potential project partners to ensure all countywide needs and resources are accurately reflected in the project scope and funding proposals. Even if data is not available, the Council is interested in learning more about each organization's current transportation services/situation.
- House Bill 1663 passed the House with resounding support!
  - Improves paratransit service coordination
  - Captures additional federal funding: mandates that RTA work with IDPA to secure reimbursement from Medicaid for eligible trips provided by Pace.
  - Maintains current service levels: mandates that levels of paratransit service for residents of city or suburbs will not be reduced as a result of this regionalization of operations. All service that exists now will be maintained. ADA paratransit service is required by the federal government to match the regular fixed route system.
  - Improves efficiency and resource allocation: coordination of paratransit operations will improve the regional transportation system by coordinating ADA paratransit services under a single operator. This consolidation will simplify service to the customer and improve financial productivity.
  - For the first time, the RTA Act will mandate a financial productivity measure for ADA service.

2006:

KCPCC submits applications for the FY 2006 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Initiative (NFI) programs, administered by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

March 2006: Efforts were made to get to the Governor and the legislature to go the extra mile and secure the \$2.7 million in state matching funds.

June 2006:

The funding sought from the State for \$2.7 million was not secured. However, the Council's recent efforts to partner with the Getting to Work campaign, led by Work, Welfare, and Families, did raise awareness.

Council will continue to refine its proposal for upcoming funding opportunities.

The legislation that would enable townships to utilize their funds for public transit did not move forward. Utilizing Kane County Impact Fee monies for paratransit: this was not a resource available for paratransit. However, the Impact Fee program is currently being updated and proposed revisions include an emphasis on projects creating connectivity and walkability, which would aid the implementation of transit.

September 2006:

KCPCC will continue discussions about possible JARC and NFI proposals, it was determined that the original service survey was too detailed. A new survey was provided by Pace for members to use with potential partners:

October 2006: Getting to Work in Illinois - just became easier in Kane County:

- Job Access and Reverse Commute funding is being sought through the Regional Transportation Authorities RFP process. Low-wage workers will have an easier time getting to work in Kane County
- Because of expansion of retail and light manufacturing sectors away from the city center to the Randall Road Corridor, Pace Suburban Bus will submit a proposal for JARC to create at least 20 new miles of service along Randall Road, which will operate throughout the week.
- This new service will connect with over 40% of all jobs on the corridor and 30% of employers.

The "Ride in Kane" (Dispatch Center/Taxi Subsidy Initiatives)" proposal was submitted by the Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council (KCPCC) and Pace Suburban Bus, with unprecedented financial commitment from various municipalities, townships, social service agencies, and others to meet the 20% local match requirements.

November 1, 2006 twenty-six (26) proposals were received; RTA and CATS recommended seven projects for the 2006 program.

December 15, 2006 the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Board meeting.

Kane County Receives \$2.4 Million for Paratransit Call Center The KCPCC's "Ride-in-Kane" centralized dispatch center is part of the FY06 recommended projects Kane County's grant proposal

\$1,600,000 of New Freedom Initiative (NFI) and

\$772,000 of Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)

Funding will provide integrated and automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions

The Kane call center is expected to be in service by July 1, 2007.

February 2007:

Choosing vendors to order 200 vehicles

April 2007:

\$10,000 secured from Kane County for brochures to explain Ride in Kane

June 2007:

KCPCC in the process of registering new taxi drivers

All Phase I sponsors/stakeholders have agreed on a uniform fee structure

Waiting for FTA approval before any money can be spent

New target date of service is August 6, 2007

July 2007:

Phase II Sponsors/stakeholders meeting

**SUMMARY:**

Transportation has become a basic need in our community, particularly for seniors as they increasingly become physically and fiscally unable to drive, individuals with disabilities who can't drive, and people with low income who cannot afford a car. Current demand for paratransit services exceeds capacity and available resources. This problem will only grow as Kane County grows.

After 3 years of hard work, the favorable receipt of the Ride-in-Kane application is reflective of the collective hard work of many agencies and organizations, particularly, Pace's guidance through the proposal development process. KCPCC will continue to secure funding and coordinate services to include the entire county.

Paratransit needs long term solutions. Long term funding continues to be a challenge. Much time and effort is spent on securing grants that only last for 1 year. Paratransit concerns must be continually communicated to elected officials.

**ADDENDUM:**

**5310 Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program**

- Provides formula funding to States for capital projects to assist in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- The State (or State-designated agency) administers the section 5310 program. The State's responsibilities include: notifying eligible local entities of funding availability; developing project selection criteria; determining applicant eligibility; selecting projects for funding; and ensuring that all sub recipients comply with Federal requirements. Eligible nonprofit organizations or public bodies must apply directly to the designated State agency for assistance under this program.
- FTA invites comment regarding technical assistance or training that would be helpful to grantees in implementing the Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program. Additionally, FTA seeks comment on strategies and measures that could be employed to evaluate the successes of this program.
- Authorized Amounts

Fiscal Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
Funds Authorized	\$ 112,000,000	\$ 117,000,000	\$ 127,000,000	\$ 133,500,000

- Basis for Formula Apportionment: Funds are allocated according to a formula based on the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each state using Census 2000 data.
- Requirements and Eligible Expenses: Funds are available to support the capital costs of transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities. Uniquely under this program, eligible capital costs include the acquisition of service. Capital assistance is provided on an 80 percent Federal, 20 percent local matching basis except that SAFETEA-LU allows states eligible for the sliding scale match under FHWA programs to use that match ratio for section 5310 capital projects. Funds provided under other Federal programs (other than those of the Department of Transportation, with the exception of the Federal Lands Highway Program established by section 204 of Title 23 U.S.C.) may be used as match for capital funds provided under section 5310. Revenue from service contracts may also be used as local match.
- Those eligible to receive section 5310 funding include private nonprofit agencies, public bodies approved by the state to coordinate services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities, or public bodies which certify to the Governor that no nonprofit corporations or associations are readily available in an area to provide the service.
- States may use up to ten percent of their annual apportionment to administer, plan, and provide technical assistance for a funded project. Beginning in FY 2006, no local share is required for these program administrative funds. FTA previously administratively allowed States to use ten percent of the capital funds for administration at the capital matching share, but SAFETEA-LU specifically allows ten percent for administration.
- The section 5310 program was previously subject to the requirements of section 5309 to the extent the Secretary determined appropriate. SAFETEA-LU changed the applicable requirements to 5307, to the extent the Secretary determines appropriate. FTA is not applying any new requirements to the section 5310 program as a result of this technical change.
- Planning and Consultation: Beginning in FY 2007, the State recipient must certify that: the projects selected were derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan; and, the plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public. Projects in the locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan must be integrated into and consistent with the metropolitan and state planning processes. Finally, each grant recipient must certify that allocations of the grant to sub recipients are distributed on a fair and equitable basis.
- The planning requirement is also a requirement in two additional programs. The Job Access Reverse Commute program (in FY 2006) and the New Freedom program (in FY 2007) will also be required to have a coordinated human service plan. It is anticipated that most areas will develop one consolidated plan for all the programs, which may include separate elements and other human service transportation programs. FTA seeks comment on the specific aspects of the collaborative planning process (for example, participants, elements, measures, etc.). FTA also seeks comment on the relationship between the public transit-human services plans and other planning processes.
- Program guidance is found in FTA C 9070.1E, dated October 1, 1998. FTA is in the process of updating this circular to incorporate changes resulting from language in SAFETEA-LU.

- Period of Availability: There is no statutory period of availability for section 5310. Given the relatively simple nature of the state administered program with many sub recipients receiving small capital grants, FTA previously allowed only one year of availability. Given the new common planning requirement with JARC and New Freedom, beginning with FY 2006 funding, FTA is extending the period of availability for section 5310 to three years, which includes the year funds are apportioned plus two additional years, consistent with the other two programs.

### **JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC)**

The purpose of the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program is to provide funding for local programs that offer job access and reverse commute services to provide transportation for low income individuals who may live in the city core, rural or other suburban locations and work or wish to work in suburban locations. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Late-night and weekend service;
  - Guaranteed ride home service;
  - Shuttle service;
  - Expanding fixed-route mass transit routes;
  - Demand-responsive van service;
  - Ridesharing and carpooling activities;
  - Bicycling;
  - Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides; and
- Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
- Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules;
  - Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals
  - Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles, ridesharing, carpooling; or
  - Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Communities are further encouraged to:

- Establish regional mobility managers or transportation brokerage activities;
- Apply Geographic Information System (GIS) tools;
- Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), including customer trip Information technology;
- Integrate automated regional public transit and human service transportation Information, scheduling and dispatch functions; and
- Deploy vehicle position-monitoring systems.

### **NEW FREEDOMS INITIATIVE (NFI)**

The purpose of the New Freedoms Initiative (NFI) is to encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that are either new and/or go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride sharing, and vanpooling programs; including staff training, administration, and maintenance.
- Administering voucher and transit pass programs for transportation services offered by transit and human services providers;
- Administering volunteer driver and aide programs to support the management of driver recruitment, safety, background checks, scheduling, coordination with consumers, and other related support functions;
- Supporting mobility management among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing coordinated transportation services;
- Training for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities. This includes travel instruction and travel training services; and,
- Corridor services transportation access for populations beyond those served by one agency or organization within a community. For example, a non-profit agency receiving funding through New Freedom could not limit the services it provides to its own clientele; it would coordinate usage of vehicles with other non-profits. These services are intended to build coordination with other existing providers and service options.

The following are considered **eligible mobility management activities**:

- The development of coordinated plans;
- The support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
- The maintenance and operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers;