

Michiana Area Council of Governments

Public Transit – Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan

DRAFT COPY



2010 UPDATE

Michiana Area Council of Governments
227 W. Jefferson Blvd, Room 1120
South Bend, IN 46601
P: 574-287-1829
F: 574-287-1840
www.macog.com - macogdir@macog.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted on August 10, 2005. This federal law requires that transit projects funded under particular Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan must be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.” The specific transit programs associated with this plan are: the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310), the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program (Section (5316), and the New Freedom Program (Section 5314).

The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) undertook this planning effort in 2007 for its 4-county region, which includes Elkhart, St. Joseph, Marshall, and Kosciusko counties. Several planning components were developed to gather regional transit statistical data; identify human services agencies, public and private transit providers; identify stakeholders in each county to participate in county meetings; administer an agency survey, to update a regional fleet inventory, and finally to develop the coordinated plan.

Specifically, the Coordinated Plan is required to include the following:

1. An assessment of current transit providers in the four-county area, including public, private, and non-profit providers.
2. An assessment of transit needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons with low incomes.
3. Strategies, projects and/or activities to address identified gaps between current services and opportunities to improve service efficiency.
4. A prioritization process for selection of projects to implement specific strategies or activities for funding under Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom.

As shown in item 2 above, the transit needs for three specific population segments are to be assessed: elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Particular attention was paid to job access, existing transit service to medical sites, schools, public agencies and other related travel needs for these individuals. The regional fleet inventory also was updated to identify agencies with wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Section 1. Service Changes Implemented since the 2007 Coordinated Plan was adopted.

Public Transportation

South Bend Public Transportation Corporation - Transpo

In 2010 the bus fare increased from 75 cents to \$1.00 for a one-way trip. Persons age 65+, disabled persons, and Medicare cardholders ride for half-fare. Up to two children under age 5 ride free with a fare-paying passenger. A 31-day pass is also available for purchase. 2008 unlinked ridership was 2,792,624 fixed route trips and 38,920 paratransit trips, for a total of 2,831,544 passenger trips. (Source: 2008 National Transit Data).

The South Bend Public Transportation Corporation also operates paratransit service in South Bend and Mishawaka known as Transpo Access. It is available to ADA-eligible persons who are unable to use regular bus service. In 2010 the fare was increased from \$1.50 to \$2.00 each way. Service is available from 6:00 am until 9:00 pm on weekdays, and from 7:30 am through 5:30 pm on Saturdays. During 2008, 38,920 paratransit trips were taken.

Another South Bend Public Transportation Corp. service is The Trolley, which operates in downtown South Bend. It is oriented to the central business district and the East Bank district that include restaurants, retail stores, and Memorial Hospital of South Bend. Transpo riders can transfer to The Trolley for free. Other riders pay 25 cents. It operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Transpo has used Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds to operate late night/early morning work trips to the Blackthorn Industrial Park, which is located on the northwest side of South Bend. In addition to the industrial park, this route also serves Logan Industries, the South Bend Community School Corporation bus garage, and an Ameritech facility. These work-oriented trips originate at the South Street Station to accommodate travel to 2nd and 3rd shift jobs and run as an express route until reaching the Bendix/Lathrop intersection in South Bend. Trip times for this service have changed to offer two am trips and two pm trips, instead of three. The morning trips leave South Street Station at 7:20 am and at 8:20 am. The afternoon trips leave at 2:20 pm and 3:20 pm. This service is available on weekdays only.

The Transpo schedules and timetables are available online at www.sbtranspo.com.

The Interurban Trolley – Fixed Route Service: Elkhart/Goshen

In September 2009 the Bittersweet/Mishawaka route was introduced which connects to the South Bend Transpo Rt.9 bus at Martin's on Bittersweet. This route connection expands transit travel between the Elkhart/Goshen area and the South Bend/Mishawaka area with access to the South Bend Regional Airport and the South Shore train service to Northwest Indiana and Chicago, as well as colleges and universities, retail areas, and other popular transit locations. **This new transit route filled a service gap between Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties that was identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan.**

The North Pointe route was revised to extend transit service to the Osolo Road area and extended transit service to C.R.4. This route revision now serves two major apartment complexes and a large manufactured home development on Osolo Rd. It also incorporated the move of several retail stores to the C.R. 4/St. Rd. 19 area. **This filled the transit gap identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan for bus service on Osolo Road to serve Board Walk, Maple Lane, and Prairie Creek residential areas.**

Another expansion route is planned for implementation in 2010 to provide an East/West route in Elkhart that will service Middlebury Industrial Park, the Ivy Tech Community College campus, and a northwest portion of Elkhart. This will bring the fixed route system to five interlinking routes.

Including the East/West route, nine trolley buses will operate on the five-route system. The service spans from 4:55 am to 7:55 pm on weekdays and from 5:40 am to 7:40 pm on Saturdays.

The base fare is \$1.00 per one-way trip and transfers between the routes are free. Seniors aged 65+ and Medicare card holders can ride for half-fare during non-peak hours. The Interurban Trolley fleet is 100% lift equipped. 2008 fixed route ridership was 200,729 unlinked trips and 151,182 demand response trips, for a total of 351,911 passenger trips. (Source: 2008 National Transit Data).

The following areas have been added to the Interurban Trolley service area.

Medical Facilities	Industrial/Major Employers	Schools	Social Services
Heart City Health Clinic	Middlebury Industrial Park	Elkhart Memorial High School	Oaklawn/Elkhart
Elkhart Clinic		Westside Middle School	Work One
OSMC		Woodland Elementary	ADEC
Goshen VA Clinic		IUSB – Elkhart	Faith Mission
		Ivy Tech - Elkhart	

Heart City Rider / Goshen Transit Service

Demand-response paratransit service is operated in Elkhart and Goshen through a user-side subsidy program and a service contract with local taxi companies. Demand response trips are scheduled in “real time,” no prior reservation is needed. Service is curb to curb.

A service improvement implemented in 2010 is an automated computerized dispatching system that uses onboard mobile data recorders to capture the ridership statistics for each trip. Service operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, including holidays. The vehicle fleet is comprised of 2 hybrid vehicles and 15 low-floor minivans equipped with ramps for wheelchair accessibility. These vehicles were equipped with mobile data terminals in 2010 that provide passenger trip data to the automated computerized dispatching program. This dispatching system allows for advance scheduling of requested trips for more efficient service delivery.

The rider fare is based on trip mileage: \$3.70 is the first mile cost, and \$1.80 for each additional mile. Ambulatory rider trips are subsidized at half fare, up to a \$3.00 subsidy. Persons using wheelchairs are charged \$7.00 for the first 3 miles, and \$1.80 for each additional mile. These trips are subsidized up to \$9.60. Intercity trips between Elkhart and Goshen are subsidized up to \$6.00 for ambulatory riders and up to \$12.60 for persons using wheelchairs. ADA-eligible riders pay \$2.00 per trip if the origin and destination of the trip is within the ADA corridors (3/4 mile on either side of the fixed bus routes). 151,182 demand response trips were taken in 2008.

Information on these Elkhart and Goshen transit services are available online at www.macog.com and www.interurbanrolley.com

Marshall and Kosciusko Counties

These rural counties are served by demand-response public transit systems. Marshall County Council on Aging operates public demand response service through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) rural transit program.

In Kosciusko County the Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) operates public demand response service under the Cardinal Center, a community service center in Warsaw, and funded by the INDOT rural program. Specific route and service information for each transit provider is shown below.

Marshall County Council on Aging (COA)

Marshall County COA transit service operates on weekdays from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The service area is the municipal boundaries of Plymouth and the fare is \$2.00 per trip, with a \$1.00 charge for each additional stop. **Countywide service is offered at \$5.00 per one-way trip (up to 30 miles) and \$10.00 per one-way trips**

that are 31 or more miles, which fills a transit gap identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan. Operating in door-to-door demand-response mode, Rock City Rider services all social services, industrial areas, medical facilities, retail and commercial areas, and residential areas in Plymouth and the county. The service operates with five ADA accessible vehicles. 13,382 passenger trips were taken in 2008. (Source: INDOT 2008 Public Transit Annual Report).

Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS)

KABS operates a demand-response service countywide from 5:30 am to 6:00 pm. on weekdays. No weekend or holiday service is operated. The change from serving a municipal area to countywide service fills a transit gap identified in the 2007 Coordinated Plan.

Base fare is \$1.00 for trips up to 10 miles, \$2.00 for trips from 11-25 miles, and \$3.00 for trips 26 or more miles, with 24-hour notice. There is an additional fee of \$4.50 for same day service, and an additional fee is charged for service outside of Kosciusko County.

KABS has a guaranteed on-time service policy. If the vehicle arrives late, the ride is given free. A 10-ride pass or tokens are available. KABS accepts subscription rides, which schedules a “standing” reservation. The service operates with 11 ADA accessible vehicles. 2008 ridership was 58,666 passenger trips. (Source: INDOT 2008 Public Transit Annual Report). KABS services all social services, industrial areas, medical facilities, retail and commercial areas, and residential areas in the County.

Section 2: Planned Transit Improvements

The following transit improvements are planned in St. Joseph County.

- Transpo is constructing a new operating and administrative facility in South Bend. The current facility is located on Northside Boulevard and is over 100 years old. The new facility is being built in the Studebaker Corridor, South Bend, at the site of the former Studebaker Stamping Plant off Sample Street which is a former brownfield site. This \$14 million facility will be built to accommodate larger buses and will incorporate U.S. Green Building Council's green building LEED certification processes. Transpo began construction in 2009.

The following transit improvements are planned in Elkhart County.

- Another Interurban Trolley service expansion is planned for Elkhart to provide transit access to the Middlebury Industrial Park and the Elkhart Ivy Tech State College campus, and to the northwest side of Elkhart that is not currently served by fixed-route transit. This route is anticipated to be implemented in 2010.

Section 3: Needs, Gaps and Duplication

This section summarizes the issues and needs discussed at the Stakeholder meetings that are **still unmet**.

Elkhart County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- Bus service does not operate to accommodate 3rd shift industrial sites or late night retail areas.
- Nappanee low-income, elderly and disabled persons need transportation to medical appointments in Elkhart

Other Issues:

- More bus shelters should be placed to enable wheelchair users to get out of inclement weather. (Disability Resource Network request). Additional bus shelters have been installed at Eisenhower/Lincolnway in Goshen and will be installed at the Goshen Public Library in 2010. Other shelter placements in Elkhart are planned for Carriage House, the Council on Aging and the downtown transfer site.
- New Elkhart County jail is located near CR7 & CR 26, outside the urban area and the fixed route service area.

St. Joseph County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- Need transit for 2nd/3rd job shifts – weekdays & weekends
- No Sunday or holiday service available
- Need public transit later in the evening
- Need Door-to-Door service between YWCA and IUSB (South Bend)
- Need transit between Indian Village and South Bend
- No transit alternative for senior apartments in Lakeville

Other Issues:

- Need sidewalks in many areas

- Personal safety on public transit
- Some agencies have border restrictions – cannot service in neighboring county
- Employers should provide employee transit
- SB Community Schools should provide Student IDs so students can have free rides

Marshall County

Transit Service Gaps:

- Department of Child Services clients need travel to court hearings counseling, Drug & Alcohol classes and probation appointments; some of their trips can be met with Medicaid trips

Other Issues:

- Participants agreed that individual agency's trip volume (riders per trip) could increase if services were coordinated
- It was also stated that Plymouth residents do not understand that there is public transit service available. In addition, the local agencies do not necessarily understand the scope of each other's services.

Kosciusko County:

Transit Service Gaps:

- No dedicated public transit service in the outlying areas, specifically Syracuse and Milford. Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) now operates county-wide service with a 24-hour notice.

Other Issues:

- Kosciusko County residents travel to South Bend or Ft. Wayne for airport service. There is no public transit alternative for these trips.

Section 4: Strategies, Priorities & Project Lists

Priority 1 Provide access to jobs in Elkhart and South Bend Urban Areas via public transit

Achieved 9/21/09 with introduction of the Bittersweet/Mishawaka” Interurban Trolley route that connects with Transpo Route. 9 – Northside/Mishawaka, at the Martin’s Plaza on Bittersweet Rd., Mishawaka.

*Strategy 1.1 Implement public transit services between the Elkhart/Goshen and South Bend Urban Areas - **achieved***

Activities Finalize and implement recommendations from transit study under development by MACOG - **achieved**

Priority 2 Provide transit services during late-night hours, on Sundays and holidays

Strategy 2.1 Increase awareness of private and public transit providers offering these services

Activities Implement coordination/referral programs to other transit providers during non-peak hours

Activities Increase marketing of current demand response transit services in Elkhart/Goshen Urbanized Area

Activities Develop 24 hour, 7-day per week subsidized public demand response transit services in South Bend Urbanized Area

Priority 3 Improve overall funding for public and private transit providers

Strategy 3.1 Develop and expand resources for local funding

Activities Implement innovative local financing tools to leverage federal and state funding

Priority 4 Reduce dependency on tokens/cash for fare payment of public transit services

Strategy 4.1 Research current ITS technologies and standards used in the United States

Activities Implement fare collection systems using current ITS technologies and standards

Priority 5 Provide large residential/apartment communities access to public transit

Strategy 5.1 Identify underserved residential areas and employment centers

Activities Utilize GIS resources and local knowledge to identify underserved areas

Priority 6 Develop public transit services to small towns and rural communities in the region

Strategy 6.1 Increase awareness of existing transit service providers

Activities Develop marketing programs targeted at employers and residents to promote existing public transit services

Strategy 6.2 Consider new countywide public transit services where none currently exist in small towns and rural communities

Achieved in Kosciusko County (KABS) and Marshall County (Marshall County COA) with the introduction of countywide service.

Activities Conduct feasibility study and implement any findings to provide these services

Priority 7 Provide accessible locations for passengers to wait for vehicles

Strategy 7.1 Designate safe, secure, accessible locations for passengers to wait

Activities Provide accessible sidewalks/multiuse paths for designated transit stops

Activities Consider Transit Oriented Design and land use coordination to improve passenger waiting areas

Priority 8 Provide public transit riders a safe and secure environment while riding and/or waiting for a vehicle

Strategy 8.1 Increase passenger safety and security while waiting for transit services

Activities Install accessible transit shelters at safe and secure designated locations

Strategy 8.2 Increase passenger safety on transit vehicles

Activities Implement security precautions such as CCTV, enhanced lighting, and the Transit Watch program

Priority 9 Work with employers or groups of employees to provide ridesharing / carpooling / vanpooling transit services

Strategy 9.1 Identify potentials employer based transit programs in the region

Activities Promote vanpool programs to employers or groups of employees

Priority 10 Work with school corporations to reduce redundant vehicle trips using existing transit services rather than school buses

Strategy 10.1 Identify urban neighborhoods where transit and school buses coincide

Activities Develop strategy to reduce school bus trips while providing a safe, secure accessible alternative for students

Priority 11 Coordinate public and/or private paratransit providers who operate door-to-door access to medical facilities

Strategy 11.1 Promote public and private transit providers who offer paratransit service

Activities Market existing public and/or private transit providers to medical offices to increase use of public/private transit

Activities Coordinate trips between agencies to reduce paratransit costs associated with Medicaid funding

Priority 12 Develop public and/or private transportation services that provide access to social service facilities

Strategy 12.1 Promote public and private transit providers who offer general transit services

Activities Market existing public and/or private transportation services that provide access to social service facilities

Activities Promote transit services for individuals who are unable to drive.

Priority 13 Decrease overall spending on transportation costs through cooperation and coordination of public, private and non-profit providers

Strategy 13.1 Increase riders per trip for various transit providers through coordination of trips

Activities Encourage public and private transit providers and human service providers to share capacity and trips through coordination

Activities Encourage annual stakeholder meetings to discuss regional coordination strategies

(Continued next page)

Strategy 13.2 Identify social service facilities that are not served by transit

Activities Utilize GIS and other resources to identify clustered social service facilities

Activities Implement new transit routes or other services to meet identified needs

Priority 14 Provide public or private transit access to urban centers inside and outside of the region

Strategy 14.1 Develop transit programs to provide transit services to urban centers inside the region

Activities Conduct and implement any findings of a feasibility study to provide transit services from small towns and rural communities to urban center within the region

Strategy 14.2 Provide public or private transit services to Indianapolis and Fort Wayne

Activities Complete a study to determine feasibility of transit service to urban center outside the region

Public Comment and Response Form
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Date of Comment:

Name of Person:

Contact Information:

Comment:

Response: