



Task 6.12

TOOLS OF THE TRADE 2024: HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS & SARATOGA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION TASKFORCE SUMMIT

Meeting Summary

Date: June 20, 2024

Start – End Time: 9:30AM- 3:00PM

Location: Clifton Park Elks Lodge, 695 Mac Elroy Rd,
Ballston Lake NY 12019

Facilitator: Carrie Ward

Attendance

| Name | Title | Representing |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Belinda Kucharski | Financial Advisor | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Andy Gilpin | Executive Director | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Fern Hurley | Associate Executive Director | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Bonnie Nelson | Family Development Manager | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Bob O'Connell | Community Volunteer | CAPTAIN CHS Board of Directors |
| Ken Clements | Volunteer | CAPTAIN |
| Susan Pierino | | CAPTAIN |
| Becca Anthony | Youth Development Program Manager | CAPTAIN |
| Jessica Valcik | Housing&Emrgency Services | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Mouda Al Zaydan | AmeriCorps VISTA | CAPTAIN CHS |
| Kathy McNeice | Chief Innovation Officer | CAPTAIN |
| Kathy Chapman | Member | CAPTAIN |
| Michael Moore | Member | CAPTAIN |
| Tara Booth | Mental Health Counselor | SUNY ADK |
| Megan Conroy | Community Wellness Advocate | CDPHP |
| Jill Sharp | Nurse | St. Peter's Health Partners |
| Tom Richardson | Supervisor | City of Mechanicville |
| Andy Lebwohl | Director | NYS Center for the Master Plan for Aging |
| Melissa Gray | Asst. Director | NADTC |

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|-----------------------|---|---|
| Carrie Woerner | Assemblymember | NY State Assembly |
| Kim Sherdan-Dugmore | Asst. | Carrie Woerner |
| Audrey Burneson | Regional Local Project Liaisons | NYS DOT Region 1 |
| Matthew DeSimone | Transportation Analyst | NYSDOT Region 1 |
| Shriya Matta | AmeriCorps VISTA | Saratoga Community Health Center |
| Judy Dahoda-Taylor | Deputy Director | Saratoga County Dept. of Aging & Youth Services |
| Rachael Rejiester | Advocate | Saratoga Senior Center |
| Sonja Jensen | Mobility Manager | St Lawrence County |
| Dawna Miczek | Outreach Coordinator | St. Clements Outreach |
| Matilda Larson | Planner | St. Lawrence County Planning |
| Rena Ryan | County Transit Manager | The Arc Jefferson-St. Lawrence |
| Sandra Misiewicz | Executive Director | Transportation Council |
| Carrie Ward | Senior Transportation Planner | Transportation Council |
| Rima Shamieh | Transportation Planner | Transportation Council |
| Kathi Quiles | Admin Assistant | Transportation Council |
| Maggie Fronk | Chief Executive Officer | Wellspring |
| Deborah Dugan | Admin Aide | BSCSD |
| Sarah Seymour | | CDTA |
| Lindsey Bradt | Mobility Manager | CDTA |
| Victoria Furfaro | Program Director | RISE |
| Jennifer Dunn | Director of Transportation | Saratoga Bridges |
| Diane Conroy LaCivita | Executive Director | Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. |
| Kari Cushing | Executive Director | Franklin Community Center |
| Megan Quillinan | Executive Director | Mechanicville Area Community Services Center |
| Brian Monaco | Director of Employment & Transportation services | Center for Disability Services Inc. |
| Adam Leach | Program Director | Catholic Charities |
| Angelina Searles | Director | Town of Colonie Senior Resources Department |
| Carol Ripley | Director of Administrative Operations and Human Resources | Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. |
| Aaron Kim | MD | Saratoga Comm. Health Center |
| Abbas Hassan | MD | Saratoga Comm. Health Center |
| Brigitte Hamel | Assist. Director-Grants Manager | Saratoga Senior Center |
| Brittany Shufelt | | Unlimited Potential |
| Nicole Leggieri | Network Growth Consultant | Healthy Alliance |
| Cam Cardinale | Director of Community Relations | Southern Adirondack Independent Living |
| Nilda Gonzales | Outreach Specialist | ILCHV |

Agenda:

Tools of the Trade

I. Welcome, Sandra Misiewicz, Capital Region Transportation Council

Sandy gave welcome remarks to the attendees.

II. Let's Talk About Transportation Equity in Your Community, National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC), Melissa Gray, Assistant Director of Transportation

NADTC serves older adults, the disabled, caregivers, and their communities. It is a partnership of US Aging and Easter Seals and serves as a 5310 Technical Assistance Center.

Data shows that transportation is a major social driver, that many people are transportation insecure, and that they skip or delay medical care due to a lack of transportation.

Strategic Goals of the NADTC:

1. Promote the essential role of accessible public transportation
2. Increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of coordinated human services and public transportation
3. Ensure that planning of transportation services is inclusive, "Nothing about us without us"
4. Highlight promising practices
5. Focus efforts on the coordination of transportation services

Current work is built around the following issues, identified through surveying:

1. Not everyone has the same understanding of DEI in transportation
2. There is no single go-to for resources
 - a. [Every Ride Counts Campaign](#) provides free materials for local or small, rural programs. Pilot projects have shown positive results from using campaign materials, so we know the campaign can help increase awareness of programs.
3. Fewer people living in rural areas or small towns say their transportation alternatives are sufficient
4. 5310 and state funding are the most common funding sources of direct transportation providers
 - a. There are several other funding sources available, such as Mobility for All. See [NADTC presentation](#) slide #13 and NADTC resource guide, "[Federal Funding for Transportation Programs Serving Older Adults and People with Disabilities](#)" for more information.
 - b. There are more funding opportunities available for implementation than for planning at the federal level but the NADTC provides funding for planning
 - c. When applying for funds, loop in your local Department of Health and/or Planning staff to assist with grant writing and administration

- d. Regarding 5310 funds, at least 55% must go towards traditional capital projects. Service providers in our region have been successful using a portion of their 5310 funds for operations. The challenge is on-going operating technological expenses, like cellphone accounts.

[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Action Steps in 2024:](#)

1. Technical Assistance at all levels, including locally
2. Education and awareness
3. Coordinate and collaborate to build partnerships

NADTC provides a rural transportation planning grant for rural and tribal pilot projects to develop strategies to increase availability of accessible and equitable transportation services. Other resources for rural transportation include the following:

- [GAO report on Rural Transit Coordination](#)
- [Barriers to Aging in Place in Rural Communities: Perspectives from State Offices of Rural Health, Policy Brief](#)

See the [NADTC presentation slides](#) for links to additional resources and to join the NADTC mailing list.

III. New York State Master Plan for Aging, Andy Lebwohl, Director of the Center for the Master Plan for Aging

New York State is the first state to develop a Plan for Aging that focuses on public health and was the first Age-Friendly state in the nation. By 2030, 25% of NYS population will be 60+ years old (4.6 million people).

The Master Plan for Aging will identify strategies across government, private, non-profit sectors and coordinate NYS policies and programs. The plan is slated for adoption in 2025. Eight sub-committees have been used during plan development, one of which includes transportation as a major topic area. Extensive outreach was important because of the annual state budget negotiations.

The plan focuses on enabling fulfilling lives, good health, aging in place as long as possible, and prevention. Transportation is crucial to these goals. The many components of the plan have to work together, including housing, caregiving, healthcare, workforce challenges, meaningful choice, Medicare and Medicaid.

The Plan's components pertaining to transportation include:

- A need for a single-source portal for NYS transportation resources
- Volunteer driver shortage
- Transportation affordability

- Consolidating rural providers
- Ensuring ADA compliance of services/infrastructure

You can share input through Town Hall and Listening Sessions. Check the MPA website for events, www.ny.gov/mpa , or email MPATownHall@health.ny.gov.

IV. St. Lawrence County Transit Integration, Sonja Jensen, Mobility Manager and Matilda Larson, St. Lawrence County Planning Office; Rena Ryan, Transportation Manager, The Arc Jefferson – St. Lawrence

St. Lawrence County is the largest in the state. Other characteristics: borders Canada, rural, low-income, 5 population centers, 5 colleges, high median age, and a large Amish community.

The County's relationship with the ARC began around 2007 when it created the County Transportation Coordinator position. The Transportation Coordinator identified the ARC as a partner that can support transportation in remote locations. The ARC ran the Senior Bus Program and from there the program grew to 16 routes in all 5 population centers, good ridership, and support from 3 of the 5 colleges which have a universal access contract. Partners are currently conducting a route analysis and a feasibility study on micro-transit, rebranding, and acquiring low-/no-emission vehicles. One problem that the ARC is encountering is that their existing facilities are not big enough to support the growing transit program.

Ridership increased a lot after the mobility management program started in 2017. The program provides travel training, which helps all kinds of people get comfortable with taking the bus.

The First Mile, Last Mile Program began in 2018 as a complimentary volunteer-provided service to connect people to a transit stop. The service is open to the public and rides must be scheduled at least two days in advance. Usage of the program provides good data for improving the public transit routes. During COVID, 2/3 of program use was to distribute meals to seniors. Since then it has been a struggle to get seniors to use transit again and to go back to congregate meal sites. The program now has a dedicated phone line.

The Rides to Recovery Program is a new partnership with a recovery center to help people in recovery from substance abuse meet their recovery goals. The program many types of transportation resources like bus tokens, gas cards to trusted relatives/friends, and new shoes or umbrella so a person can walk safely. Rides to Recovery now screens requests so only trips with no other option are filled directly. Before they started screening there was an explosion of requests that was unsustainable. Ridership is now continuing to grow.

Saratoga County Transportation Taskforce Summit

I. Introduction, Andy Gilpin, CAPTAIN Community Human Services

Andy welcomed attendees to the Taskforce meeting and introduced Carrie Woerner.

II. Keynote: Carrie Woerner, NYS State Assembly

Our region used to have an extensive rail network that was dismantled when we built the Northway. Today, there has been a generational shift away from cars. Young people don't want them and older people can't drive. The further you travel, the less reliable your transportation is. We need transportation for the shift workers of major employers.

Let's figure out how to reconnect rail lines, such as routes between Ft. Edward, Saratoga, Mechanicville, Troy, and Rensselaer, before they are removed or converted to recreational trails. Converting back to using historic rail lines all starts with a plan. We need an integrated plan that should address peoples' mobility challenges. The Saratoga-to-Albany commuter light rail study indicated that it was not feasible. For more information, see the [Assessment of Capital Region North/South Corridors to Improve Access to Emerging Employment Centers](#).

III. Saratoga County Transportation and Community Coach, Mouda Al Zaydan, AmeriCorps VISTA at CAPTAIN Cares, and Shriya Matta, AmeriCorps VISTA at Saratoga Community Health Center

Saratoga County is the second healthiest in the state, but there are significant economic, health, education, and quality of life gaps between demographic groups. Thrive Together provides programs to improve the lives of residents by addressing structural and social determinants of health, and seeks to connect efforts to build capacity within the community.

The Saratoga County Transportation Taskforce was created to address health equity and a persistent gap in transportation access. It seeks to increase partnerships, grow and sustain transit, increase access, and improve transportation opportunities.

Taskforce Priorities:

- North: Increase transportation options to link communities in the northern part of the county with Saratoga Springs, Glens Falls, Wilton.
- East-West: A public transit connection between Ballston Spa and Malta along Route 67.
- North- South: Establish a fixed-line transit route the length of the county along Route 9.

Taskforce Progress and On-going Work:

- Regular meetings; established mission statement, vision and slogan
- Exit 16 Commuter Benefit Program in development with Tech Valley Shuttle
- Northern Subgroup is established

- Conducted outreach to local officials

IV. In Motion: The Plan to 2050, Sandra Misiewicz, Executive Director, Transportation Council

The Capital Region Transportation Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization that allocates federal transportation money and puts together projects and plans for the Capital Region. The Transportation Council is a collaboration of local officials that set regional policy. Council processes require input from everyone.

In Motion is the region's metropolitan transportation plan, and is currently in development. In order to get support at the federal, and sometimes state level, a project needs to be included in the In Motion plan. So far, the plan development process has produced:

- Regional Trends report and Story Map
- Public outreach efforts
- 7 draft goals

Surveys are one method to gather feedback on ideas that need to be included in the plan. We want and need to hear your ideas. Visit the website for project updates and feedback opportunities like the latest survey: <https://www.inmotionplan.org/>.

Regarding light rail: it has been studied 3-4 times in the past 20+ years. Our existing land use pattern can't support it. If we want light rail, now is the time to think about land use, which will require involvement of local governments. We should also consider how we can provide affordable housing and improve transportation because people find that housing costs increase near areas with improved transportation options.

V. CDTA Presentation and FLEX services, Sarah Seymour, CDTA

CDTA provides an array of services throughout the region, in multiple modes:

- Navigator app provides an integrated interface for contactless payments, bus routes, real-time bus tracking, and more
- STAR buses provide paratransit services, operating within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the fixed route system and at the same times as fixed routes
- CDPHP Cycle! bikeshare is in its 8th season. The network has over 600 bicycles and e-bikes at over 100 locations throughout the region.
- DRIVE is an all-electric carshare service starting at just \$5/hr
- Flex On-Demand offers curb to curb service within two dedicated service areas. Flex rides can be requested over the phone or through the Flex mobile app.

VI. Q & A Panel Discussion about FLEX On-Demand with Supervisor Tom Richardson from Mechanicville, and Lindsey Bradt and Megan Quillinan from CDTA

Q: Why and How did Flex Come to Mechanicville?

A: It started at the Transportation Council's table. Talk to your representatives at the Transportation Council and at the State Assembly. We made a strong case for the service and got a lot of data from businesses using a survey. You need one person to be a champion, don't have multiple people trying to talk to CDTA and the Transportation Council. The grassroots effort was very important in building the service area boundary and service timing for Mechanicville. Don't try to get Flex for the entire town or community; start with only a limited area.

The service has remained free since it started 2 years ago.

Q: What are the most frequented destinations/common trip purpose?

A: The most common destinations are Wal-Mart, grocery stores, the library, and medical facilities. Also of note are that school absences have declined since Flex started, and CAPTAIN has seen frequent Flex users.

VII. Closing Remarks, Kathi McNeice, CAPTAIN CHS

Kathy provided closing remarks to the attendees.