

TPC MEETING OVERVIEW

On June 19, 2018, the first meeting of the Transportation Planning Council was held from noon to 1:30pm at the CAA Administration Building, conference room. It was well attended with 25 persons present representing 22 agencies or organizations and one person representing the disabled riding public population.

Deborah Hill, the current Mobility Manager for Columbiana County, spoke about what the Mobility Manager position is and what issues the Mobility Manager addresses. Brochures describing services provided in general; services specifically for disabled persons; services specifically for seniors, and one about the free travel training program were offered and are readily available to anyone by calling the Mobility Management office at 330-870-4345. Also discussed were driver training classes to be offered – both DRIVE training (for transporting elderly, disabled and wheelchair clients) and defensive driving. The certified courses would be offered at no cost through the Mobility Management office to any drivers for the transportation providers in the county and would include drivers for private providers like a residential home, apartment complex for seniors, etc.. Ms. Hill introduced the Columbiana County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CTP for short) and reviewed the section of the plan which summarizes the 2018 list of prioritized unmet mobility needs in Columbiana County as identified previously. The plan in its entirety can be found at the following web address www.caaofcc.org/mobility-management. The CTP (Coordinated Transportation Plan) is the document that guides activity, money and time with regard to unmet transportation needs and gaps in service within the county. It outlines an agreed upon, ranked list of gaps in service and sets goals and strategies for filling those gaps. Special attention is placed on making certain that the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including the disabled, low-income, seniors and veterans are kept in the forefront and that all transportation issues addressed are inclusive of those needs.

Olivia Hook (Statewide Mobility Coordinator, ODOT Office of Transit, Columbus) and Sean Sammon (Transit Planner, OMEGA, Cambridge) spoke about the Mobility Management program in Ohio and about how regional data and regional planning are the focus of ODOT transportation plans. Because coordination and regionalization are the direction that transportation planning is taking from a state perspective, the mobility manager provides a critical voice in making sure Columbiana County's rural and county-specific concerns are heard at the state level and included in the ODOT expanded regional viewpoints. A mobility manager also serves as a liaison for information and instruction from ODOT toward the county plans and an advocate for the riding public of the county in all transportation issues and venues. There are currently 25 Mobility Managers in the State of Ohio covering 52 of the 88 counties.

The Transportation Planning Council (TPC) has as its main purpose the task of helping to define the gaps in service and helping to outline goals and strategies for inclusion and resolution of those gaps and needs in the CTP for 2019 and beyond. It is important that viewpoints and experiences from a wide range of human service providers, transportation providers, economic and civic leadership, county employers, other stakeholders and especially representatives from the disabled, senior, low income and veteran communities be voiced and included in the oversight and implementation of the CTP.

To that end, the group identified a top 10 list of unmet transportation needs. These included, not ranked by priority,

1. Getting persons to and from work, M-F and weekends
2. Providing transportation past 6pm, evening trips in general
3. Providing group trips (Charter trips), renting a bus for a day or event
4. Providing an assistance program for those that need help while on the bus
5. Reducing the costs of transportation other than CARTS
6. Providing a way to schedule rides without requiring such advanced notice – currently very hard when you have to schedule too far in advance
7. The lack of ability to cross county and state lines
8. The lack of taxi service in Columbiana and East Palestine
9. Providing expanded hours and days of service
10. Coordinate services and information

After some discussion all agreed the most critical current transportation issue is getting persons to and from work opportunities, which includes early morning and late night hours as well as weekends. It was felt that at least 6 of the top 10 identified gaps were present in the rides to work transportation issue. Several possibilities for some resolution were mentioned including getting a better understanding of Siffrin (its availabilities, capabilities, and willingness to provide service in our county), the possibility of fixed route CARTS services, and a program similar to Columbiana's Clipper Day Tripper program.

The next planned meeting is Tuesday September 18, 2018, location to be determined. At that meeting there will be an update of progress made, a time for any participants to make brief announcements, and another planning session on next steps to be taken to improve the ride to and from work situation in the county and address other gaps. More details will follow.

Any questions, comments, criticisms or suggestions about the first meeting or subsequent ones are welcomed at deb.hill@caaofcc.org or 330-870-4345

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT: The Columbiana County Emergency Management Agency would like to encourage everyone to sign up for WENS (Wireless Emergency Alerts) and you may do so at https://entry.inspironlogistics.com/columbiana_oh/wens.cfm This service provides emergency and/ or severe weather alerts via text, voice or email and is provided free of charge by Columbiana County EMA and 9-1-1. Additional information available at support@wensnetwork.com or 866-998-9367.