

1 Plan Purpose and Requirements

The federal transportation program reauthorization, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users and known as SAFETEA-LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310, Job-Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and the New Freedom programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan;” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-public transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.”

A coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Local plans may be developed on a local, regional or statewide level. The decision as to the boundaries of the local planning areas should be made in consultation with the state and the metropolitan planning organization, where applicable. The agency leading the planning process is decided locally and does not have to be the state.

The Missouri Department of Transportation decided to contract with regional planning commissions and councils of governments to develop public transit-human services plans based on regional planning commission boundaries. MoDOT has a long history of working with regional planning commissions that dates to the mid-1990s. Regional planning commissions—also known as regional planning organizations—have developed transportation advisory committees and have been coordinating transportation planning at the local level.

As outlined by federal legislation, a public transit-human ser-

vices coordinated plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan shall be developed through a process that includes representatives of public and private and non-profit transportation and human services transportation providers, and participation by members of the public. Members of the public should include representatives of the targeted populations, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) programs, a coordinated plan should also incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

By federal legislation, a coordinated plan must at a minimum include the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit).
2. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service
3. Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
4. Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified. Projects selected for funding must be derived this plan.