

3 Overview and Methodology

To begin developing a list of stakeholders, the Missouri Department of Transportation provided its database of past transit grant recipients to the MRPC. From there, MRPC identified other interested persons, agencies and organizations, including senior citizen centers and nutrition sites, county developmentally disabled boards, Sheltered Workshops, special learning centers, senior citizen organizations, hospitals, independent living centers, nursing homes, local elected officials, transportation advisory committee members, veteran's service representatives, public transit providers, private transit providers, private industry council and others who were associated with transit, the elderly, persons with disabilities and low-income clients.

First Meeting

The first meeting—a needs identification workshop—was scheduled for July 27, 2007. A letter was mailed to 160 persons and agencies. A meeting notice flyer was created and mailed with the letter for posting. Meeting flyers were further distributed around the region. Display ads were placed in all the region's papers announcing the meeting and requesting participation. A press release announcing the July 27 meeting was issued to all media in the region on July 13 and posted on MRPC's website.

25 people attended the July 27 meeting. MRPC staff provided a Powerpoint presentation on the transit planning effort and had the group to identify and discuss needs. Those attending this meeting were put on an email list, which became the email focus group, to further enhance outreach efforts.

Needs Survey

To better understand human services and public transportation needs in the state, the Missouri Association of Councils of Governments—the state association of regional planning commission and committee of RPC staff members—developed three separate needs surveys for 1) transit providers, 2) non-provider social service agencies and 3) transportation users (either actual users or potential users.) MRPC mailed the appropriate surveys to the respective target audience and also posted the user survey on *Survey Monkey* and encouraged actual or potential transit users to complete a survey. The survey forms were also placed on MRPC website.

Approximately a dozen copies of the user survey were sent to each senior center/nutrition site. Site directors were asked to encourage their clients to complete the survey. A staff person with the Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging, who provides oversight for senior centers in the region, also encouraged site directors to ask clients to complete the survey.

Survey responses were as follows:

- 6 Providers responded
- 4 Non-providers responded
- 260 Actual/potential users responded.

(11 of those responses were on-line surveys.)

The needs identified in the focus group meeting on July 27 were combined with the needs identified through survey, and a complete list of needs was compiled. This list was distributed to the focus group via email to ensure its completeness. No additional needs were identified.

MRPC then attempted to have the email focus group to prioritize the needs, however, the effort was attempted during the holiday and little response was received. Staff decided to move ahead since the prioritization of needs was not critical to the planning process.

Second Meeting

The second stakeholder meeting was held on Dec. 21, 2007. All 160 previously identified stakeholders were contacted by mail; the email focus group was also contacted. A display advertisement was placed in all papers in the region. Eight people attended, including MRPC staff. The timing of the meeting effected attendance as some participants had already started their Christmas vacation.

At the meeting, the needs were reviewed once more to make sure it was complete. The group then developed strategies for addressing those needs. Those strategies were then distributed to the email focus group in early in January to give the group time to include other ideas. No additional strategies were added.

The list of 14 strategies was then turned into a survey where planning participants were asked to prioritize strategies as high, medium and low based on their importance to transit

planning in the Meramec Region. Those completing the strategies survey were limited to five high priorities, five medium priorities and four low priorities.

The strategies survey was distributed to all 160 stakeholders and emailed to the email focus group. Additionally, surveys were sent to each senior center/nutrition site and directors to be asked to encourage center users to complete the survey. CMAAA staff also contacted site directors and encouraged them to have clients to complete. Some 82 people completed the strategies survey.

Third Meeting

The results of the planning effort—in the form of a draft public transportation-transit coordinated plan—was unveiled at a stakeholders meeting on Feb. 13 at MRPC. The draft plan was presented to MRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee and the MRPC board on Feb. 14, both of whom approved the document for submission to the Missouri Department of Transportation.