Building Relationships Between Aging Services and Transit for Access

By Pat Weaver

Services like health care, meals, mental health services, or benefits assistance are only valuable when consumers are able to get to them. Without access, the services might as well not exist. The question is, how can we best help people in rural and urban communities connect with those services?

At a recent presentation at the National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference in Denver, Michelle Rogers and Courtney Hoskins from the Denver Regional Office of the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL) presented some good examples of coordination and collaboration that help keep seniors moving in their communities. They also shared information on some of the resources of their programs (Rogers & Hoskins, 2015). This article will provide an overview of Rogers and Hoskin’s perspective on building successful relationships between aging services and transportation, highlight some of the initiatives sponsored by ACL to provide better access to services, and share a few of the resources available to help support those efforts in Kansas.

Town Hall Meeting Explores Issues in Rural Transportation

By Pat Weaver

What does “no wrong door” mean for transit agencies? Generally, we think of the term in relation to the ways customers gain access to transit information—either through technology or marketing materials, or both. There’s a new application of the term relevant to transit agencies: no wrong door for agencies in accessing rural transit information and technical assistance.

While information and resources for smaller transit agencies used to be very limited, that is no longer the case. In fact, the number of national centers serving rural public and human service transportation agencies is growing, and it may seem difficult to figure out who to call. The good news is, it doesn’t matter which program you call first; the partnership among the programs is strong, and one committed to making sure you get the information you need.

Town hall meeting explores needs and partnerships

At the recent National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference

Continued on page 3
The impact of the ACA on transportation

Providing access to health care and employment transportation are linked—Investigating linkages and NEMT and employment transportation discussion because, more than in urban areas, employment transportation discussion included several questions and talk turning quickly to medical transportation—A health care stream can best be involved in providing services was also a major topic of discussion, with talk turning quickly to Medicaid brokerages and their impact on services. Several representatives from Oregon described the system under which they are now operating—the Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs). This is the new way the Oregon Health Plan is administered—including for individuals covered by Medicare. Many in the audience were interested in how the CCOs operate, with representatives from other states describing the various brokerages being operated in their states. The discussion then turned to the potential role the national centers in attendance might take on educating transit providers about options and how they can best be involved in providing medical transportation. A health care access summit, or other similar strategy, was suggested as a possibility.

**Resources to get through the door**

There are many more resources for transit agencies than these three centers,
What is ACL?
First, let's identify ACL—the Administration on Community Living. You might be familiar with the Administration on Aging (AoA) or the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD). In 2012, then-US Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius established a new HHS operating division, ACL, as an umbrella to AoA, ADD, and the Office on Disability (OD). The single agency is charged with developing policies and improving support for seniors and people with disabilities.

ACL serves the state programs through 10 regional support centers. Kansas is in Region 7, which shares an office with Region 5 in Chicago. The role of the regional support centers is to serve as the direct representative to the aging services network in each region, working with the State Unit on Aging and providing information, grants, program management and technical support, including administration of the Older Americans Act.

Transportation and the Older American’s Act
Across the nation, the Administration on Aging and the Aging Services Network provides comprehensive services to older adults or links them to services such as health care and other social services in the community, including transportation. The Older Americans Act is targeted for services to persons 60 and over, to individuals in greatest economic and social need, particularly low-income minorities and individuals in rural communities. Under the Older Americans Act, there are two titles that include transportation as an eligible service: Title III(b) Community Support Services, and Title VI Grants for Native Americans. According to Rogers and Hoskins, 28 million rides are provided throughout the country with Older Americans Act funding.

ACL and “No Wrong Door”
In October 2015, ACL announced another round of “No Wrong Door” System Grants, intended to streamline access to services and support. More than $15 million was awarded to 13 states to initiate or continue existing efforts. The goal is to help people make informed decisions about all the available services, with multiple state and community agencies coordinating to ensure that regardless of which agency an individual contacts, they can access information about the available services.

Kansas State Plan on Aging
While Kansas is not one of the states awarded one of the No Wrong Door grants, there are efforts identified within the 2014-2017 Kansas State Plan on Aging, developed by the Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), that recognize the transportation needs of older Kansans, and encourage coordination (State of Kansas, 2013, p. 12).

The plan commits the agency to coordinate public services funded under the Title III(b) (community support services) and VI program (tribal services) to assist older individuals in obtaining transportation services to access those services. The State Plan also requires area plans developed by the Area Agencies on Aging to provide assurance that an adequate proportion of the amount of funds allotted to the planning and service area is expended for the delivery of several categories of services, including transportation.

Opportunities for public transportation-human service coordination in Kansas
As Kansas implements the regional coordination plan with the formation of new regions or realignment of old regions initiated by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the time is right to re-examine how human service transportation and public transportation services can work together. The regional organizations include both Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 and 5310-funded agencies, which encompass both program-based and public transportation. However, there are even more potential stakeholders in your region, whether they are providers of transportation or serve clientele who need transportation, and may be encouraged to work in partnership with your region.

In summary
Transit agencies around the country likely are experiencing many of the same challenges that you are. There is no need to reinvent the wheel to solve problems and really “no wrong door” to figure out who you need to call. With the help of your State RTAP program, many of the national resources are available to you with the click of a button, or a phone call. Take some time today to visit the websites of the national centers to see what’s available. You’ll be amazed at what’s out there.

continued on next page
Building relationships with senior services Continued from page 3

Both the Aging State Plan and the Area Agency on Aging area plans recognize the need for transportation and, in some cases, provide funding for transportation services in their respective areas. Encourage those agencies, and others, to attend work groups to identify strategies in your community to create more comprehensive, affordable transportation services in your communities. Rogers and Hoskins also recommend that transit agencies work to be at the table as Area Plans on Aging are developed and, where applicable, meet with tribal elder program leaders as part of Title VI planning.

Mobility managers and coordination
KDOT has stated that the new regional mobility managers being hired in each region will have the responsibility “for working within the service area to identify gaps and help to close those gaps by facilitating inter-organizational agreements and relationships, such as between transportation providers, major employment and medical providers, and cities or counties; identifying additional resources; or bringing additional transportation partners together. Mobility managers might work at a community, county, or regional level to help improve transportation services.” (KDOT Office of Public Transportation, 2014, pg. I-19). Mobility managers, working along with your Regional Coordination Board and Advisory Committee have a great opportunity to develop strategies to expand cooperation between public transportation and other partners in your communities. continued on next page

Technical Assistance Resources for Aging and Transportation Services

There are several resources out there to assist local agencies and communities. Here are some examples:

Community Innovations for Aging in Place (CIAIP) Technical Assistance Center. The CIAIP initiative is intended to assist communities in their efforts to enable older adults to age in place in their homes and communities. Innovative approaches developed under CIAIP are based on needs assessments that identify community strengths and gaps in supporting aging in place and should represent a collaboration of all interested community stakeholders. The TA Center supports CIAIP grantees in their efforts, and the grantees are the primary audience; however, the public is invited to use the website and contact CIAIP for more information. Contact: info@ciaip.org. Website: www.ciaip.org

National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders. The goals of this project are to assess the current status of Native Elders in Alaska; develop an understanding of the cultural values that drive expectations and perceived need for care; document “best, promising and emerging practices” that are in current use; solicit recommendations for community responses to elder abuse, exploitation and violence that are appropriate to Alaska Native cultures; and provide education to medical providers. Primary audiences include Alaska Native Elders organizations working with this population, Tribal Councils, and Title VI programs in the State of Alaska. Contact: afgp1@uaa.alaska.edu, (907) 786-4329, fax (907) 786-4440. Website: https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/elders/

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Recently funded, NADTC promotes the availability and accessibility of transportation options that serve the needs of people with disabilities, seniors and caregivers with a focus on effectively leveraging MAP-21 Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities formula grants and other transit investments. The NADTC builds upon 25 years of investment in accessible transportation training and technical assistance that improves mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the country by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding community transportation mobility options. The Center website and other services are currently under development and are expected to launch at the beginning of 2016. For more information, contact Carol Wright, cwright@easterseals.com.

Kansas Aging and Disability Resource Center. The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is a source of information and assistance in planning for future long-term service and support needs. The ADRC is targeted directly to consumers, providing older adults and persons with disabilities with information to identify services and supports. Staff at the ADRC provide information and assistance to help people access private or publicly-funded service programs. The ADRC has a statewide call center operated by staff trained in community resource information. The call center provides resource information for community services (in-home services, transportation, home delivered meals, etc.). Call center staff can link individuals to a local options counselor or to appropriate services and supports (examples: PACE or KanCare providers, home health agencies, etc.). The call center number is (855) 200-2372.

For more information about transportation provisions of the Older Americans Act, contact the Kansas Department of Disability and Aging Services, or Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, the Kansas representative for the ACL Regional Support Center (email amy.wiatr-rodriguez@acl.hhs.gov or call (312) 938-9858).
For more information in Kansas

If you are unsure about whom to contact for more information about the Regional Transit Districts, you can find the updated Coordinated Transit District (Regional Transit) contact list on the KDOT website at http://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/bureaus/burTransPlan/pubtrans/word/CTD%20Contact%20List%202015%20region.doc. If you would like more information from Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, particularly for area contact information, the KDADS Aging & Disability Resource Guide is very helpful.

In summary

Rogers and Hoskins said it best in their presentation: partner, partner, partner. Be aware of the aging services network and make sure they are aware of you. Look for opportunities to streamline referral processes, populate information and referral databases, and do cross training. They recommend being at the table as Area Plans on Aging are developed, and arranging face-to-face meetings with tribal elder program leaders, where applicable. Finally, include the ACL Regional Liaison in the discussions. They are there to assist.

References


MANAGEMENT

How to Respond to Requests for Reasonable Modification to Your Policies? Use Common Sense

By Anne Lowder

The American with Disability Act’s Reasonable Modification Rule, a revision to 49 CFR 27 and 37, became effective July 13, 2015. Now is a good time to take a pause and review your policies, practices and procedures to ensure that your transit programs, benefits and services do not discriminate against persons with disabilities under this new rule. This article will provide examples to clarify what is reasonable modification (and what is not). In most cases, you may only need to tweak some of your policies to allow for reasonable exceptions to provide better accommodation.

The purpose behind the new Reasonable Modification Rule

According to the Federal Register authored by U.S. DOT under Section I, Purpose of the Regulatory Action, courts had identified unintended gaps in policies, practices and procedures under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that were limiting program accessibility. Although reasonable modification has been part of the ADA for a long time, the July 2015 ruling helps agencies understand that there are still circumstances that limit people with disabilities from using public transportation. Reasonable modification enables a transit agency to make modifications to its policies to ensure that people with disabilities have access to its transportation services. The Reasonable Modification Final Rule also requires agencies have a designated individual as a Reasonable Modification Coordinator. The Reasonable Modification Rule can be found in the Department of Transportation Document Citation 80 FR 13253, page 13253-13263, at https://federalregister.gov/a/2015-05646.

continued on next page
Reasonable modification  Continued from page 5

Applying the Rule

The Reasonable Modification Rule applies to fixed-route, demand-response and complementary paratransit. ADA 49 CFR 38.129(a) Origin-to-Destination Service Guidelines (2005) can help your transit agency write policy and develop a process for educating your operators and customers. Reasonable modification comes into play when a person with a disability has a request for modification so that they can fully use the services you provide.

What is considered “unreasonable?”

If the customer’s request for reasonable modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, service, or activity, you would not be required to do make the modification. The question to ask yourself is: “What is our agency’s major activity?” The answer is basic public transportation. Reasonable modification does not require anything extravagant, like buying a new vehicle to accommodate someone’s needs, but to make adjustments to the services you already provide, when needed. The Reasonable Modification Rule requires transit agencies to develop a process (plan) and complaint process prior to implementation date.

Requires designation of a Reasonable Modification Coordinator.

Encourages determinations of reasonable modifications during eligibility process.

Presumes most reasonable modification requests will be made in advance at eligibility or through reservations process.

Does not require individuals to make reasonable modification requests in writing, in advance of use or use the term “reasonable modification.”

Does require transit agencies to document any reason to deny modification request.

Requires that real time reasonable modification requests be evaluated and accommodated if deemed appropriate by vehicle operators. Transit agencies can require the operator to contact a supervisor prior to granting or denying a request as long as the operator has two way communication.

The rule only allows denial of a reasonable modification request for the following three reasons:

—Modification would be a fundamental alteration of the service provided;
—Granting the modification would expose the requestor or the operator or other riders to a “Direct Threat;”
—The modification is not necessary for the individual to actually use the service.

If a modification is denied, the operator has a responsibility to provide an alternative “work around,” if feasible to ensure accessibility.

Requires public notification of the plan and the contact information for the Reasonable Modification Coordinator.

—Phone number, email, physical address;
—Such information must be available in printed materials and on website;
—Materials should describe process for requesting reasonable modifications and process for filing a complaint;
—Requires prompt response to requests or complaints.

• USDOT has provided Appendix E to provide illustrative examples of both appropriate and unacceptable “reasonable modifications.”


Examples of reasonable modification

Helping with fare. A customer with a visual impairment needs help putting the fare in the fare box. Your agency has a policy that operators will not handle the fare. A reasonable modification to your policy is that your operator will assist this customer.

Allowing food and drink on a vehicle. Your agency is transporting a person who is diabetic. You have a “no food or drink” policy posted on your vehicles. A reasonable modification to that policy is to allow the person with diabetes to eat or drink as needed to address his or her physical needs.

Helping passengers through snow and ice. A person in a mobility device needs help to get to the vehicle due to snow and ice at the pickup location.
Your policy is that bus operators do not leave their vehicles to assist passengers. A deviation from your policy to allow helping the person in the mobility device maneuver through the snow and ice to board would be a reasonable modification. 

**Adjusting stops near construction projects.** When scheduling a trip, a passenger with a mobility device may request that the bus operator slightly adjust the designated boarding location to allow boarding in an accessible location due to construction. Is this a reasonable modification? The answer is yes.

**Helping passengers carry packages.** Let’s say your agency has a policy that limits the number of bags on the bus to five bags. Operators are not required to help passengers carry their packages, but a person with five bags but is having trouble making it up the ramp. A reasonable modification would be for the operator to provide assistance to board, helping to get the packages on the vehicle.

**Example of a not-so-reasonable request for modification**

You have a passenger with chronic pain, and riding your paratransit buses aggravates the pain. She requests, under reasonable modification, that you provide a luxury vehicle with a much more comfortable and smooth ride. Do you need to provide this service? No. Your agency only has the paratransit vehicles in service. She is not asking for a common-sense, minor modification to policy.

**Policy and process requirements for reasonable modification**

A sample policy statement to communicate your agency’s position on providing reasonable modification was provided at the 2015 National RTAP conference by Donna Smith, Easter Seals Project Action Director of Training:

“We provide reasonable modification of policy and practice upon request to ensure that our transportation services are accessible to people with disabilities.”

Along with a policy, it is important for your agency to have a process in place for employees and customers to request and handle modifications. The Reasonable Modification Rule requires that 1) the process be written and made available to the public, 2) the modification request process be accessible (for instance if it is on your website only in .pdf format, it is not accessible to individuals using readers), and 3) the process provide for situations when making an advance request is not feasible. In the latter case, operators need to be allowed to make a determination about what is reasonable, at the time.

Your policy might say that a request for reasonable modification must be made in advance via email, phone, website or in writing. If so, it’s a good idea to state your agency will contact the requestor for further information, because some people who request modifications are not clear enough in their phone messages or emails and need to be contacted for further clarification. In the process of obtaining clarification, avoid asking directly about a person’s disability, but do ask about the functional ability to take the trip without modification, said Smith.

Your agency policy should state that you will respond to a request in a certain number of days. The federal regulation does not specify a time frame for that, so Smith suggested using other time frames found in federal transit regulations (such as 21 days for paratransit approvals) as a guide to determine your agency’s response to a reasonable modification request. The final step in your policy is to say that a written decision will be sent by your agency to the requestor.

**Judgement calls**

What about your operators making decisions en route? Example: a person with a visual impairment asks for a special stop to be called out. Should your driver do it? The answer is yes, call out the stop.

Will you have inconsistency among operators? Sure—there will always be discrepancies when operators are making decisions on the fly. Ongoing dialogue with your operators will help.

Continued on next page

**Sources**


Planning new transit service or expanding existing service is most successful when agencies solicit broad-based input from stakeholders that can be included in the planning process; among them, local employers. Local employers can significantly impact the ridership of a transit system, so it’s important to include them in community survey efforts. This article will describe a few best practices for creating and implementing an employer survey to help determine the location of new transit service. A recent employer survey in Junction City to determine feasibility for fixed-route service will be provided as a case study.

How can employer surveys improve your planning?

Using employer surveys helps identify not only the commuting and travel habits of employees, but the potential support by the company in transit. Gathering data from employers can be efficient in determining employee travel needs, because generally a human resource manager is aware of employee travel modes and shift schedules. Additionally, an HR manager would understand the impact of absenteeism and tardiness resulting from unreliable transportation or the lack of personal transportation.

One survey completed by a company can yield information about travel needs of many or all of their employees. Survey results can help you in defining schedules, stops, and future transportation partnership opportunities. Strong endorsement from local employers can help you gain support for the development or expansion of transit services when seeking approval from your local elected officials. The survey process can also help educate employers about transit availability while you assess both the employee’s and the employer’s needs.

In sum

ADA’s Reasonable Modification Rule helps persons with disabilities have full access to transportation from origin to destination. Providing reasonable modification is usually a matter of tweaking policies, practices and procedures, not buying new equipment or fundamentally changing your services. Reasonable modification is mostly just common sense!
For examples of employer surveys, visit the following links:

- https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=XHisy7BpsVLzb%2f57qCH7ew%3d%3d
- http://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/pdf/files/SampleEmployerSurvey-JC.pdf

Good survey design produces good data

When designing a survey, write it in a way that will encourage respondents to read every word, help them easily understand the questions, and motivate them to finish. To accomplish this, try following these guiding principles:

- Write each question in a way that minimizes the need to re-read portions in order to understand how to respond.
- Place instructions exactly where the information is needed and not at the beginning of the questionnaire.
- Place items with the same response categories into an item-in-a-series format, but do it carefully.
  The following question has an item-in-a-series format:
  Do you consider the following issues to be severe, moderate or not a problem?
  —insufficient bus stop shelters
  —no benches at the stops
  —limited weekend and evening hours.

  When you have several questions with the same choices for responses, it can reduce redundancy and reduce space by putting them into an item-in-a-series format that has the same introduction and format. However, by grouping questions together you are creating a comparative framework that leads respondents to think of the questions as a unit. Sometimes this is useful, but if you are wanting the respondents to think of the questions independently from each other, avoid this type of formatting. Instead, ask one question at a time.

- Minimize the use of matrices for the same reason as being careful about using the item-in-a-series format. A matrix is a grid, usually used to ask multiple questions in the same format. Familiar uses are when asking about the satisfaction level for several services, with the top row progressing from “very satisfied” to “very unsatisfied,” and with columns on the left listing services such as “routes,” “bus stop placement,” and “pick up times.”

- Use bolder print for questions and lighter print for answer choices.

- Optional or occasionally-needed instructions should be separated from the question statement by font or the use of parentheses. For example, using a font variation such as italics is an easy way of separating instructions from a question. Which shopping centers do you feel should have bus stops? Choose all that apply. Or you could use parentheses, to set the instructions apart from the question: Which shopping centers do you feel should have bus stops? (Choose all that apply).

- List answer categories vertically instead of horizontally. This has been shown to receive the most positive feedback from participants and provides a more natural way of scanning responses, as many computer mice have a wheel allowing the user to easily scroll vertically.

- Use shorter phrases to prevent words from being skipped by the respondents. (Dillman, et. al., 2009)

How to reach your audience

Communication choices have broadened over time, and mixed-mode surveys have become common. Mixed-mode surveys are those distributed by a variety of methods, most commonly online, in person, or over the phone.

Knowing your community of local employers is essential when choosing which survey methods to use. Also, identifying and targeting your largest employers for responses will help you capture the most employee data with fewer surveys.

In a recent effort to solicit input from employers in Junction City, Ks., the Kansas University Transportation Center used web-based and phone-administered surveys to learn more about the commuter and employer-related transportation needs in Junction City.

Online. Web-based surveys have become common and easy to administer, allowing you to easily create, edit and analyze survey results. The employer survey distributed in Junction City was created on the website Survey Monkey™ and was emailed as a hyperlink to local businesses. Clicking on the link automatically redirected employers to the survey web page. Look to partner with local organizations like the Chamber of Commerce that might have an email list of local employers to which they could forward your survey.

In person. Some people still prefer face-to-face interactions, while others may not have time to meet with you. This method may be the most time-intensive process, so having an idea of how much time you have to allocate to the survey process is useful. It is important that when administering the survey in person you refrain from rewording questions so that the answers you collect are comparable to ones you collect via other methods. This method also allows the survey administrators to observe
Practical Road Safety Assessments Provide Path to Safety for Bicyclists, Pedestrians and Transit Riders

By Pat Weaver

"Sharing the road" takes on new meaning when expanding the application of a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) process beyond safe travel of automobiles on our roadways. Understanding the interaction between cars, bikes, walkers and transit riders on the roadway was brought to life in recent initiatives forwarded by USDOT Secretary Foxx for Safer People, Safer Streets.

This US Department of Transportation (DOT) initiative’s goal is to reduce the growing number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities through a comprehensive approach that addresses infrastructure safety, education, vehicle safety, and data collection. Each of the states is involved, including Kansas and Missouri. As part of Secretary Foxx’s initiative, road safety assessments (RSAs) focusing on pedestrian, bicyclist and transit user’s safety were conducted by DOT field offices in every state and the US territories; to date, 52 so far. The purpose of these RSAs was to identify ways to improve safety across all modes.

I was privileged to serve on two teams in our area, and had the chance to observe firsthand how to incorporate bike-ped-transit elements into a road safety assessment process.

At first glance it might appear that RSAs focusing on all the modes might not apply to counties and smaller communities. And as a transit manager, you might think that neither bicycle nor pedestrian issues are all that relevant to your operations. However, even in rural communities transit riders are almost always pedestrians first—and the ability to get to your bus safely is of critical importance—whether they're traveling to a bus stop on a fixed route system or just getting from their front door to your bus at the curb. There are many lessons learned that apply to all communities and transit systems, regardless of size.

This article provides a recap of the road safety assessments conducted in Kansas and Missouri—one in Lawrence, Ks., and the second in Kansas City, Mo. I'll share some of the results, how these lessons might be applied to smaller communities, and some of the resources available to champion similar efforts in your community.

USDOT leads the way

Emphasis on inclusion of bicycle, pedestrian and transit elements in the transportation network has steadily increased. The most recent example is that of the Safer People, Safer Streets initiative which began in 2014 as a way to recognize and address the rising numbers of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities related to collisions with motor vehicles. The goal of the initiative is to protect people on foot and bicycle by fostering a safe environment with good multimodal integration so that even more Americans will feel comfortable enough to take advantage of walking and biking.

As part Safer People, Safer Streets, several administrations within USDOT were directed to help identify at least one site in each state as a target for a Road Safety Assessment focusing on bicyclists, pedestrians and transit

Resources on Road Safety Assessment

- Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit, City Of Lawrence, Kansas, 19th Street from Iowa to Barker Practical Road Safety Assessment. March 26, 2015.
KDHE Rural Grants to Support Healthy Community Design

Six rural counties are moving forward with projects to improve walking and biking in their communities, thanks to a grant administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The grant program supports objectives developed in the Healthy Kansans 2020 Framework (State of Kansas, 2014).

Strategies for the counties participating in 2015-2016 (Cowley, Dickinson, Edwards, Franklin, Mitchell and Thomas) include developing bicycle/pedestrian advisory committees, creating Complete Streets policies, conducting walk audits to improve pedestrian safety, developing Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plans, developing a message for local elected officials, and more. The KU Transportation Center will be involved in assisting these communities with outreach and technical services as they move forward over the next few months.

As your community moves forward with establishing pedestrian/bicycle advisory committees, consider becoming involved to provide input on access to transit services. As a transit agency, you can address issues on your own property, your agency probably lacks the authority to address similar issues on property not owned by your agency. A crucial step in providing pedestrian safety and access is to build partnerships with the other organizations and government agencies—including those responsible for road design and traffic safety (Federal Highway Administration, 2008).

For more information on communities participating in these healthy community initiatives, contact Jennifer Church at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at (785) 296-6801.

Whether in urban or rural environments, transit riders are almost always pedestrians first, and getting to your transit vehicle safely is of critical importance to them.

As a transit manager alone, you have very little ability to influence where sidewalks are placed or improved. However, as part of a community team, you can help target those areas in which sidewalks or other improvements would most improve mobility in your community.

Beyond the different representatives in your city or county, it can be important to include representatives across jurisdictional boundaries: city, county, regional, Tribal, State, and Federal, depending on the type of assessment being conducted. Resources may be available beyond your own agency or local government that can help make improvements a reality.

Multimodal RSAs in Kansas and Missouri: The results

The observations documented for each of the targeted PRSAs in Kansas and Missouri provided suggestions, not mandates, for changes that could be made. The overall goal was to identify a variety of measures that could be taken, as resources are available, to make improvements to enhance the safety of the respective corridors.

In Lawrence, the PRSA examined a 2.5 mile segment of 19th Street, along the south side of the University of Kansas, which, at the time, was part of a studied corridor for a proposed transit transfer center. In Kansas City, the site was a 2-mile segment of Prospect Avenue along a proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) alignment, as well as near several elementary schools with active or proposed Safe Routes to Schools projects.

Three teams were formed at each site for bicycling, walking, and transit use, to

Continued on next page
collect data on conflicts, discontinuous segments, accessibility, and user comfort.

Each team assigned to a mode used that method of travel (walked, biked, or rode the bus) while completing a checklist at intervals along each corridor. Suggestions were developed in each of the final reports, organized as low-cost, medium-cost and high-cost. For example, low cost suggestions were the addition of shared lane markings, upgrading crosswalk markings, and establishing a bike boulevard along a path parallel to the study area. Examples of moderate-cost solutions include adding pedestrian-actuated signals and adding sidewalks to complete disconnected segments. Higher-cost alternatives generally were for lane reconstruction to add bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities.

While these two PRSAs were conducted in more-urban areas with fixed route transit, the lessons learned can certainly apply in smaller communities. There was evidence, even in these urban areas, of transit riders being forced out into the street to get to the bus stop, or standing in a field to wait for a bus with no shelter, regardless of the weather. Having others experience these conditions (other than the riders) is pretty powerful in recognizing the extent of the challenges.

**What’s next?**

The 52 RSAs completed around the country are being compiled in a final report, according to Edwin Rodriguez, transportation management specialist for the FTA Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation (Complete Trip, 2015). In addition to the final report, work is just beginning on a Bicycle-Pedestrian Safety Guidebook, being developed by FTA’s Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation. Completion is anticipated for Fall 2016, said Rodriquez.

**RSA resources for rural and small communities in Kansas**

Are you interested in learning more about implementing an RSA in your community to address improvements for transit, walking and biking as part of the transportation network? If so, there are many informational and technical assistance resources available to help you. One place to start is the USDOT’s Safer People, Safer Streets: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative (https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/ped-bike-safety/safer-people-safer-streets-pedestrian-and-bicycle-safety).

Within the state, Kansas LTAP provides RSA technical assistance to implement an RSA in rural and small communities. Just call Mehrdad Givechi at (785) 864-2593 to request assistance or email mgivechi@ku.edu.

See the list on page 10 of this article for links to even more resources.

**Conclusion**

The multimodal RSAs championed by USDOT provided a unique opportunity for representatives of various disciplines and organizations to work together who may not have had thought to consult with one another. The 52 sites for which RSAs were conducted provided a unique perspective on traffic safety, considering walking, bicycling and riding the bus on our roadways. In addition to the multimodal approach, these RSAs also brought together representatives of organizations all concerned with traffic safety in some form, but who rarely work together.

As FTA’s Mark Bechtel said, “The Regional NHSTA Office is located in the same building as ours, but until the RSA I didn’t know anyone in that office. After the RSA, I now recognize them in the hallway and will be more likely to think of ways to collaborate in the future.”

---

**References**


---

*A sidewalk gap exists at this bus stop, forcing a pedestrian out alongside the street.*

PHOTO VIA M. BECHTEL, FTA
Have you ever wished for more opportunities to train yourself and your staff, but struggled with the funding or time to make it happen? If so, using the National RTAP eLearning portal is your ticket to a user-friendly, training program to help meet your needs.

A key benefit of the eLearning portal is that it allows users to go at their own pace, acting as supplemental filler between in-person trainings. The eLearning portal is a free, and employees can use it to take self-guided courses. Transit managers have the ability to monitor employee progress as they use eLearning and assign courses to specific personnel.

How it works
The National RTAP eLearning portal creates a flexible learning environment that lowers the costs of training. Online training through the eLearning portal can enhance the quality of current training programs by offering interactive, accessible, self-guided content to combine with instructor-led training, or to use as refresher training, said Neil Rodriguez, project manager with National RTAP. Whereas instructor-led training can offer your agency real-life examples, individual attention from an instructor, and the opportunity for local cross-agency networking and learning together, the eLearning portal can help build or reinforce the base knowledge of your employees.

Courses offered
Courses available on the portal include the following that have been converted to an online format:

- Top Shops: Emergency Management in Vehicle Maintenance Facilities
- 2 the Point Training: A catalog of training cards that can be printed and kept on hand for quick refresher lessons
- Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers
- Problem Passengers, Challenging Situations
- Title VI Program Requirements for FTA Grantees

National RTAP plans to add more courses to the portal over time. Rodriguez said the ability to track and analyze training activity and usage will be helpful in guiding the development of future training products.

The ongoing effort to update the courses offered online will be led by the National RTAP Review Board. They plan to convert existing hard copy training workbooks and DVD courses to an online format.

Currently National RTAP is converting a web-based substance abuse awareness training program required for all safety-sensitive employees into a format that can be uploaded into the eLearning portal. “Our technology team is currently analyzing the scope and we expect it should be available in a couple months if everything works out,” Rodriguez said.

How do I get started using the portal?
It’s fast and easy to get your agency signed up and started with the National RTAP eLearning. A step-by-step guide is provided on the home page of the National RTAP website; look for the Team Admin Getting Started Guide. The guide provides detailed instructions with screenshots to walk you through the entire process, from creating a login to accessing training reports.

Transit managers need to first register their agency or organization and submit an agency request form. You should receive your account information and access code within two days via email, and from there you can begin adding employees and assigning courses.

References
Employer surveys  

where there may be misunderstandings or vague wording within the survey that could be affecting the results.

Via phone. Sometimes email messages with a survey link might not make it to the right person, or the employers you are trying to reach might not check their emails regularly. Whatever the case, phone calls may be necessary when trying to secure answers from local employers. It is important that, just like in person, you refrain from rewording survey questions when you administer them over the phone so you keep answers collected by the different modes of survey consistent.

When reaching out to Junction City employers by phone, the callers were given a script to ensure consistency in asking questions from survey to survey.

Phone surveys can be more challenging than the other methods because the employer will not have the survey in front of him or her for reference. Keep this in mind and be careful about writing long questions, having a long list of options for answers, having matrices, or questions that rely on a visual prompt.

Survey response rates

Keep in mind when creating and distributing your survey that the larger the sample of respondents the better, as it will reduce sample errors and increase the credibility of the survey results. Setting goals for a sample size and response rate can help you measure your progress through the survey process.

A 2002 report from the National Center for Transit Research (NCTR) lists several simple guidelines that can be used to increase response rates, minimize bias, and reduce sampling error. Here are a few tips you might find helpful:

- Use trained and effective surveyors
- Communicate ahead of time with flyers
- Alert customers and transit agency staff that the survey is coming
- Make participation voluntary, anonymous, and confidential
- Produce a professional-looking questionnaire and be professional in every step of the survey process
- Promise to communicate feedback on survey findings with customers in newsletter, meetings, etc.
- Make the questionnaire simple and user-friendly
- Provide concise and clear directions about how to complete and return the completed questionnaire
- Inform customers about the what, why, who, and how of the survey effort.

Conclusion

Plan your employer survey in advance to greatly increase the efficiency and quality of data collected. Knowing how you plan to distribute the survey will influence how you write the survey, as well knowing your audience and their preferred communication methods. Set goals for response rate and sample size, using the listed guidelines as aids. Once you’ve finished collecting data from your survey, you can conduct a number of analyses to help determine the need for new transit service to serve employees and employers in your area.
Transit Resources

CONFERENCES

February 1-3, 2016
Southwest Transit Association 2016 Conference. Mesa, AZ

May 15-18, 2016
APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference, Charlotte, NC
http://www.apta.com/mc/bus/Pages/default.aspx

May 22-27, 2016
Community Transportation Association EXPO 2016, Portland, OR

August 14-16, 2016
2016 Transit Midwest Conference, Kansas City, MO
(Regional Association Meeting of Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa)
Mark your calendar – more to come

RESOURCES

http://nationalrtap.org/marketingtoolkit/How-To-Guide-for-Marketing-Transit


http://training.ctaa.org/


http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/Flyer_BikesandTransit_MAP21_FINAL.pdf or check here and order below.

ORDER FORM

Some of the resources we advertise are available in hard copy for readers who do not have internet access. These resources have a checkbox in the listing. Check the item(s) you would like to receive and fill out the form below. Fax to (785) 864-3199.

Name _____________________________________________________________ Title _________________________________________________

Agency ___________________________________________________________ Phone _______________________________________________

Street Address _____________________________________________________ E-mail address ________________________________________

City __________________________    State ___________________________ Zip+4 __________________
The Kansas TransReporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC). The newsletter is free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service.

The Kansas TransReporter is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The purposes of the RTAP program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

January 2016, Volume 29, Number 1. Copyright © Kansas University Transportation Center. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in the Kansas TransReporter requires written permission of the editor at LHarris@ku.edu.

### Calendar

**2016 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING:**

- **Maintaining and Troubleshooting Your Braun Lifts: Braun Ability Training Program**
  - February 24 — Garden City
  - February 25 — Salina

- **Vehicle Delivery and Pre-trip inspections by Halsey King**
  - March 8 — Manhattan
  - March 9 — Salina
  - March 10 — Garden City
  - March 11 — Hays

- **Techniques for Driving Defensively**
  - March 16 — Garden City
  - March 17 — Dodge City
  - April 6 — Oakley
  - April 7 — Mayetta
  - April 13 — Pittsburg
  - April 14 — Leavenworth
  - May 4 — Winfield
  - May 5 — Emporia
  - May 18 — Olathe
  - May 19 — Topeka
  - June 8 — Liberal
  - June 9 — Great Bend
  - June 15 — Russell
  - June 16 — Augusta
  - June 22 — Salina
  - June 23 — Ottawa

- **Passenger Assistance for Rural Transit Operators**
  - July 6 — Winfield
  - July 14 — Leavenworth
  - July 27 — Pittsburg
  - August 3 — Garden City

**Responding to Emergencies in Rural Transit**

- July 7 — Emporia
- July 13 — Salina
- July 28 — Hays
- August 4 — Dodge City

**Host a hands-on workshop at your location:**
- Advanced Mobility Device Securement
- Evacuation Techniques for Rural Transit Passengers

Contact Anne Lowder at 785-864-1469 or alowder@ku.edu to schedule either of these workshops in your area for 2016.

**To register for a Kansas RTAP workshop, go to [http://www.ksrtap.org](http://www.ksrtap.org). Click on "Register to attend." Questions? Contact Kristin Kelly at (785) 864-2594 or kbkelly@ku.edu.**