

Minutes
Age Friendly Louisville (AFL) Workgroup – Mobility & Accessibility (M&A)
April 14, 2021

The AFC Workgroup – Mobility & Accessibility met on April 14, 2021, 2:00 PM, via Zoom virtual meeting due to the Covid19 virus epidemic. Following is a summary of the formal action taken during the meeting (a more detailed summary follows below):

- **We reviewed minutes of our March 10, 2021, Zoom meeting.**
- **Larry Sloan presented a power point reviewing the new developments in technology to improve the efficiency of paratransit. A copy of the power point is attached to these minutes.**

Facilitator Larry Sloan promptly called the meeting to order at 2:02pm. The following people attended the meeting:

- Larry Sloan, Co-Facilitator
- Avery Crews, AFL Leadership Coordinator
- David Algood, Center for Accessible Living
- Stephanie Brian, TARC3 Evaluator
- Allison Woosley, Metro Government Office of Aging and Disabled Citizens
- Kelly Scott, Affordable Housing Community, Presbyterian Homes
- Darrell Aniton, TAAC, Chair

Technology improvements to coordinate shared rides, lower wait times while making a paratransit pickup, reservation, and driver training for non-paratransit services to allow for more flexibility in picking up disabled persons.

Workgroup meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.

TAAC's next virtual meeting will be at 1:00 PM, Tuesday, May 11, 2021

KIPDA Aging & Disability Council Meeting, 10:00 AM Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Next AFL M&A meeting: Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 2:00PM (Zoom)

Minutes submitted by Larry Sloan, Facilitator, April 21, 2021.

M&A ACTION PLAN UPDATE

GOAL 1: Work with RMC to ensure that TARC is affordable, and maps are accessible and understandable to everyone.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	PARTNERS	DEADLINE	METRICS/UPDATE
Have workgroup members on RMC, TAAC to advocate for Goal 1.	1. Our members attend RMC to advocate for Goal 1 and participate in TARC's Comprehensive Operational Analysis. <u>NOTE: RMC HAS NOT MET SINCE FALL OF 2019</u> TARC is considering reactivating RMC.	Potentially Louisville Office for Aging/Disabled Citizens (OADC), AARP, KIPDA	2019	Sarah Teeters, OADC, is currently a member of our workgroup. David Algood is a member of RMC
	2. Have members on TAAC	OADC, AARP, KIPDA	2019	Larry Sloan is a council member of TAAC Sarah Teeters, OADC, attends TAAC meetings.
	3. Collaborate on TARC strategic planning (Comprehensive Operational Analysis).	M&A Work Group, Age Friendly Leadership	2020	On May 12, 2021, Aida Copic will present the long term planning for TARC.

GOAL 2: Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and signal crossing times/options to ensure everyone can access their communities safely.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	PARTNERS	DEADLINE	METRICS/UPDATE
Work with the MPO (Metro Planning Org) to ensure that Age Friendly improvement of sidewalks, crosswalks and signal crossing times and options are included in the MTP (Metro Transportation Plan).	1. Have one member of our group attend mobility and access meetings to communicate to the group his/her findings and strategized on implementing our Goals.	M&A Work Group Potentially Louisville Office for Aging/Disabled Citizens (OADC), AARP, KIPDA, Institute for Optimal Aging	2019	Sarah Teeters, OADC, is currently a member of our workgroup.
	2. Advocate for funding for age-friendly activities and projects, to include city funding allocation, grants, and donation.	M&A Work Group Age-Friendly Leadership	2021	Metric: Amount of funds allocated to age-related projects/efforts.

NEW GOAL 3: Publicize the new DOT Strategic Long Range Plan for Accessible Transportation

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	DEADLINE	METRICS/UPDATE
Work with aligned organizations who are stakeholders on lobbying for important improvements in accessible transportation	1. Have group members who belong to stakeholder organizations become advocates for getting feedback sent to the DOT.	Associations for the Blind, Deaf, Disabled physically or cognitively.	December 31, 2021	
	2. Put on our website information for giving feedback to DOT on this plan.		ASAP April, 2021	

PARATRANSIT AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

- AGE FRIENDLY LOUISVILLE
- MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY WORKGROUP
- RECAP OF ARTICLE IN AUTO FUTURES MAGAZINE
- RECAP OF ARTICLE IN SWECO
- RECAP OF ARTICLE IN DDS
- ALL ARE ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

- **MOBILITY PROVIDES A HELPING HAND – HOW TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVING THE FUTURE OF PARATRANSIT.**
- **The same kinds of technology that made Uber a household word are transforming paratransit to offer safe modes of transportation for people with disabilities. Auto Futures talks with industry innovators, researchers and activists to discover the future of paratransit.**
- **Paratransit in the U.S. is mandated by the American Disabilities Act. It requires public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to provide ‘complementary paratransit’ service to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route because of a disability. The rules are very complicated and allow for long wait times. For people with disabilities, travelling between transit agencies can be gruelling.**
- **Usually, with paratransit, the rider has to book a ride in advance and can be on the phone for twenty minutes. If the trip is between agencies there may have to be a three-party conference call to connect them and make a route, says Valerie Lefler, Executive Director, Feonix Mobility Rising.**

- **“We assist transit agencies with technology integration. Usually in public transportation and the mobility space paratransit gets left on the side,” says Lefler who is creating a software agnostic system to work with different agencies in the Detroit area.**
- **She says it cuts down the intake and cancellation time incredibly. The riders can book and cancel rides through an app that was tested by Menlo Innovation for compatibility with screen readers for users who are blind. The system can show Google data so that the transit agencies can visualise the data.**

- **Long booking wait times can be very stressful for people with disabilities who have children. In a case where someone's child had a fever and a broken appendage, the person using the agency had to wait two days to take the child with a fever to the doctor, says Lefler.**
- **So, why don't people with disabilities use Uber or Lyft rideshare for transportation? "Rideshare is wonderful for some people but it's not everywhere. It's usually only in highly populated urban areas, not rural areas. They don't have the level of support needed," says Lefler, "I hope that paratransit becomes more like on-demand mobility for all people."**

- **Lyfts in Mobility for Seniors**
- **John Doan, founder of Mobility 4 All, was concerned when his mother was getting older and his brother with a disability needed rides. He drove for Lyft for a while to see how it worked then created the Mobility 4 All service in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis–Saint Paul) Minnesota that provides rides for seniors.**
- **“Mobility 4 All is a platform to match seniors with fully-vetted care drivers who are independent contractors,” says Doan. The drivers receive background checks and are paid per ride with a mileage bonus.**

- “I look at rideshare as the go-to-bar crowd while our company is the go-to-church crowd. Uber and Lyft are curb-to-curb and we are door-to-door. We do a ride service mainly servicing people who are over 65 years old and service that is a flat rate and there is no surge pricing,” says Doan.
- Doan says the drivers are assigned to senior living communities and get to know their riders. The drivers use an app while the riders call for ride requests.
- Recently, Mobility 4 All partnered with Lyft for supplemental paratransit service. They will provide the drivers for passengers in wheelchairs for augmented optional on-demand services.

- **Alternative Mobility Options**
- **Some transit agencies have partnered with Uber or Lyft to provide subsidized paratransit rides however there is no consensus of cost savings or viability.**
- **“There will always be a need for paratransit. However, the cost of paratransit is very expensive and not sustainable for transit agencies who are currently trying to find alternative mobility options. Transit agencies are partnering with other modes, other transportation providers and Transportation Network Companies (TNC) to provide rides for people with disabilities and older adults,” says Jordana Maisel, Director, Research Activities, University at Buffalo’s (UB) Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA).**

- **Maisel is interviewing transit agencies and paratransit riders to gauge their reactions to the different services. There are different solutions all over the country depending on the community.**
- **“There is no one easy solution for every agency because there is a shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles. There is no consistency on what transit agencies need,” says Maisel.**
- **Spare Tech Helps Co-Mingle Transport**
- **Technology is providing hope on the road to improved paratransit. Spare is a mobility platform that enables communities to create integrated mobility services and ride-hailing with on-demand responses, says Josh Andrews, co-founder and COO of Spare, who notes that TNCs have changed the way people look at transportation**

- **“To make the best mobility available to everyone, Spare has created an all-transportation ecosystem technology platform,” says Andrews.**
- **Often paratransit and cities have extra vehicles that are not being used all the time. There are spare seats that could be used in these vehicles. Spare creates efficiency with software to enable mobility to better predict rides and planning for the cities. Spare helps paratransit services to offer more efficient on-demand services and micro-transit.**
- **Spare expanded into paratransit in the U.S. and is helping in other parts of the world to co-mingle micro-transit, last-mile and paratransit.**

- **Spare technology also opens alternative opportunities for the transit agencies says, Andrews. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Spare was able to repurpose vehicles where they were most needed. On the Spanish island of Mallorca, Spare provided the necessary platform for the transportation of essential workers to get to hospitals.**
- **Another Spare example is in the city of Oslo, Norway, a service for elderly riders called Pink Busses from Aldersvennlig Transport. The service created a community of people who were enjoying their bus rides. In Dallas, Spare is integrating paratransit with all the other services available and meets the agency's goals of five to ten-minute windows.**
- **“We enable transit agencies to go from analogue to digital and do the shift with an API providing better service, reviews and productivity,” says Andrews.**

- **“Everyone in the blind community in Lincoln is amazed and grateful for VANLINK because it’s very reliable,” says Cervenka, “Riders book rides through an app and vans arrive very quickly. It’s easy to use and it makes sense to use it.”**
- **Cervenka says using rideshare services such as Uber or Lyft are more expensive and are in passenger vehicles. When travelling with a child, blind parents must carry a child seat with them and install the child seat in the passenger vehicle.**
- **“Paratransit is probably the most important audience for autonomous vehicles.” -- Valerie Lefler, Executive Director, Feonix Mobility Rising.**

- **When Lefler heard of Cervenka’s flex ride solution and how it helped with the pain points for people with disabilities to drop children off at childcare, she said, “We have to count our blessings and be grateful for some of the innovation that is happening in the middle of the Covid-turmoil. It’s pushing us as transit agency leaders to know the box is gone. The crisis revealed the true mission of mass transit is public service.”**
- **“In the future, we would like an effective way to get on-demand reasonably-priced transportation that would enable people with disabilities to make a stop for either childcare, schools or to pick up a prescription,” says Cervenka.**

- **“I see the future of paratransit as happening as a combination of mobility-as-service and self-driving cars. Paratransit is probably the most important audience for autonomous vehicles. Tech companies need to do their due diligence with technology with universal design upfront instead of retrofitting the vehicles as an afterthought and think about paratransit at the front end,” says Doan**

- Highlights of article in Urban Insight 2018 – The future of accessible public transport in urban areas.
- “IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WE EXPECT THE CONCEPTS OF SHARED MOBILITY, MOBILITY AS A SERVICE, AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES TO CONSIDERABLY DISRUPT THE TRANSPORT SECTOR, WHILE ALSO HAVING THE POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO MOBILITY FOR ALL IN MODERN URBAN AREAS.”

- **SHARED MOBILITY AND MOBILITY AS A SERVICE** Shared mobility refers to the shared use of a vehicle, bicycle, or other mode of transportation. It is a transportation strategy that allows users to access transportation services on an as-needed basis. Shared mobility includes a variety of transportation modes such as car-sharing, bike-sharing, peer-to-peer ride-sharing, on-demand ride services, and micro-transit. To varying degrees, these can supplement fixed-route bus and rail services. While the first sharing solutions took place between defined sharing partners, through peer-to-peer platforms, we are now heading towards shared mobility on a new level, partly aided by the use of digital technology.

- “MOBILITY-AS-A-SERVICE (MAAS) INTEGRATES SERVICES FROM SEVERAL MOBILITY PROVIDERS INTO ONE SINGLE SERVICE.” MaaS is typically packaged as an app or other digital platform and provides services from public and private mobility providers. Users can pay for a trip using a mobility solution that fits their needs at a specific time and that takes them more or less seamlessly all the way to their desired destinations.
- Shared mobility has existed for many years. While traditional public transport can be viewed as a form of shared mobility, nowadays the term generally refers to the sharing of private vehicles. These forms of shared mobility are well established in society. Carpools, for example, take multiple travelers in cars owned by one provider, and digital platforms are used to hire privately owned cars (or hire out your own car). Although carpooling has existed for over 50 years, it is only in recent years that shared mobility has seen considerable growth.

- This is primarily due to the increased digitalization of society. Location data gathered by smartphones and other devices are key to sharing mobility solutions effectively – for example, to easily find an available vehicle in a nearby area. The increasing use of technology in everyday life has made us comfortable using apps and other digital platforms to share vehicles effectively. People have also become increasingly used to paying for services by phone. This reduces barriers to accessing shared mobility solutions on the go. Together, these societal changes create a situation that paves the way for further development of mobility sharing solutions.

- From DDS Wireless Multi Modal Transportation and the Future of Paratransit.
- Who Relies on Paratransit?
- Paratransit transportation services are for people with disabilities and other mobility conditions that prohibit them from using public transit services. They are often provided on-demand as a supplement to fixed-route bus and rail systems by public transit agencies. Eligible paratransit riders, as defined by The U.S. Department of Transportation's ADA regulations, fall under three categories:

- 1. People who can't travel on the bus or train, even if it's physically accessible, because of a disability. This includes people with cognitive challenges and visual impairments.
- 2. People who need an accessible bus or train. This includes people in wheelchairs or with other physical challenges who can use accessible vehicles, but who want to travel on a route where a vehicle is not accessible.
- 3. People who have a specific disability-related condition. This includes people who may not be able to board or disembark available transit options, or those who can only travel to their transit options during certain times of year (for example, an elderly person who cannot walk to their bus stop when the conditions are icy).

- How are Paratransit Operations Regulated?
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is a law that prohibits discrimination based on disability.
- In the U.S., public transit agencies are required to provide transportation services that meet
- ADA guidelines. Under the ADA, people with disabilities must be able to:
 - • Receive reasonable access to fixed-route transportation
 - • Receive accommodation for wheelchairs, service animals and/or attendants
 - • Receive the same standard of service from person to person

- There are several current obstacles in implementing adequate paratransit service. Government regulation requires that paratransit drivers receive sufficient training, which makes it difficult to outsource vehicles to drivers working for transportation network companies who don't have similar training.
- According to John Matthews, VP of Customer Service at DDS:
- “The idea of using taxis and non-traditional
- services has been around for years—the issue
- holding us back is legislative. It has to do
- with requirements for the operator of any
- vehicle providing paratransit service.”

- Compliance Setbacks
- Unlike paratransit drivers, Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers don't undergo the
- same levels of training or thorough background checks. This oversight by the Federal Transportation
- Administration (FTA) will have to change if paratransit unions take agencies to task.
- Another striking problem with government compliance is the issue of wait times. Although the law stipulates that paratransit service must not vary in quality from person to person, in reality this is very difficult to provide on a consistent basis. For instance, someone in a wheelchair may have to wait 25 minutes for a ride, whereas another rider with a cognitive disability might be able to use a
- TNC and only have to wait five minutes. The FTA would consider this a disparity in service, and dictate that these wait times need to be on par.

- Rather than demand that transit operators provide comparable service to all riders regardless
- of their disability, we need to look at all available transit methods and provide the best service based
- on the specific context.
- An International Need
- Research and testing conducted across Europe supports a multi-modal transportation movement.
- The International Transport Forum (ITF) modelled a full-scale implementation of shared mobility systems in the Lisbon metropolitan area. The results included lowered carbon emissions, 55% fewer total vehicle miles in peak traffic (compared to 2011) and 95% less need for parking space.

- As the transportation marketplace matures, legislature and policy will have to support interoperability and ensure that government regulation is helping, not undermining, these business models. The Transport Systems Catapult, the UK's technology and innovation center for Intelligent Mobility, published a report outlining a number of barriers currently prohibiting the success of these structures, such as policies for data sharing between transit operators.