

Conclusions and Recommendations

Throughout the development process, many individuals and agencies were involved because they cared about the needs of the community and their fellow citizens. The response rate received from the public surveys highlights the caring nature of Licking Countians.

The final recommendations of the Coordinated Plan are the results of input from local, residents, public and private providers, and human service agencies.

The intent of the coordinated Plan is not to be prescriptive in nature, but to highlight areas that, with improvement or added attributes will provide better service to the target populations. The target populations are: elderly, disabled and low-to moderate income.

The following are recommendations of the Coordinated Plan for implementation to meet the transportation needs of human service clients and agencies in Licking County.

Extended Service

This recommendation falls into three broad categories:

- 1) Extension of hours to meet the needs of the human service clients. It is unlikely that providing 24 / 7 service is feasible, but additional hours of service Monday – Friday and limited coverage on weekends to meet both the discretionary and non-discretionary trips.
- 2) Expansion of the current coverage areas in the city of Newark and Heath to the city limits.
- 3) Service that more readily crosses jurisdictional boundaries to allow riders to reach their desired destinations.

Outreach and Education

Continued outreach and education to the current clients, future clients, general public, human service agencies. Focus needs to include populations that are currently not being reached, as well as others to spread the information.

Continued Coordination

The vehicle survey indicated a pool of vehicles available, yet 9% of the respondents had been denied a ride. This highlights the need for additional coordination to be utilized in conjunction with education of both clients and partnering agencies. Improved coordination will enhance overall operational performance.

Additionally, legislative and other barriers need to be alleviated to be able to provide improved coordination and eventual consolidation.

Costs

Costs are a significant concern on two fronts:

- 1) To the rider
- 2) To the local transportation providers

Any way to reduce costs of operation while still providing the same or better service should be considered and evaluated for implementation.

Many of the clients that need public transit services are in the low-to-moderate income range and transportation is a significant concern. When transportation becomes a barrier due to cost, it creates a cascading effect that crosses over to many aspects of their life.

With funds becoming ever tighter at all levels of government, cost becomes a significant issue in being able to provide needed services.

Different options were presented by agencies and more viable options certainly exist.

Customer Service

Based on the surveys from individuals and agencies, customer service is important. This can be considered a focus that crosses all other recommendations. While many respondents had favorable comments about the current systems, there was also a desire to have excellent customer service in the areas of punctuality, courtesy, reliability and cleanliness.

In order to meet these recommendations, it will require continued teamwork from all parties, funds to make needed improvements, enhancements, and changes. The use of creativity, technology and effort can make a true Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation System.