

MISSOURI TRANSPORTATION
SUMMIT REPORT

OPENING NEW DOORS

**Creating a more affordable,
efficient, and coordinated
transportation system in
Missouri**

AUGUST 30, 2019

Executive Summary

The state of Missouri has 35 public transit agencies serving every county of the state, complemented by hundreds of private transportation providers. Whether by choice or circumstance, these transportation providers are the key to mobility for Missourians who lack access to a personal vehicle for their transportation needs. Despite this statewide coverage and these agencies being responsible for 58.6 million trips in FY2018, numerous gaps in Missouri's transportation network exist. These gaps particularly impact transportation disadvantaged populations such as individuals with disabilities, older adults, and lower income persons who experience higher costs, fewer options, and less flexibility as a result.

Data shows that these barriers to mobility lead to worse health outcomes and economic opportunity for communities across the state of Missouri. In an attempt to better understand these barriers and to identify solutions to improve access to affordable transportation options around the state, the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council convened the first annual Missouri Transportation Summit on August 1st, 2019 in Columbia. Attendees represented industries and geographies as diverse as the state itself. Despite coming from different sectors, all echoed similar concerns about the current condition of Missouri's mobility network and the barriers these shortcomings cause for people when attempting to access healthcare, employment, and social opportunities. The concerns shared by Summit attendees reflected four key themes:

Cost

For both the user and provider of transportation services

Efficiency

Of different funding sources for different target populations resulting in duplicative service

Availability

Of affordable options in their community

Flexibility

Stemming from limited days and hours of operation

Executive Summary

While much of the six-hour summit focused on identifying and sharing challenges Missourians experience when attempting to access transportation in their community, there were many moments of optimism and celebration as people in attendance shared ideas and opportunities to improve the coordination and accessibility of transportation for all Missourians.

Several attendees shared innovative approaches already underway in their own communities. These initiatives offer inspiration for other communities in Missouri seeking to address transportation gaps. One example includes a coalition of churches in St. Joseph collaborating to help those with no transportation get to and from their medical appointments. Another example is the creation of the Tri-County public transit system in the Lake of the Ozarks, spearheaded by the local SB40 board. Finally, committed citizens were able to form a public-private partnership to improve paratransit availability in Mid-Missouri. These examples make clear that Missourians are eager and able to lead the change necessary to improve transportation and mobility access across the state, despite regulatory and cost-allocation hurdles.

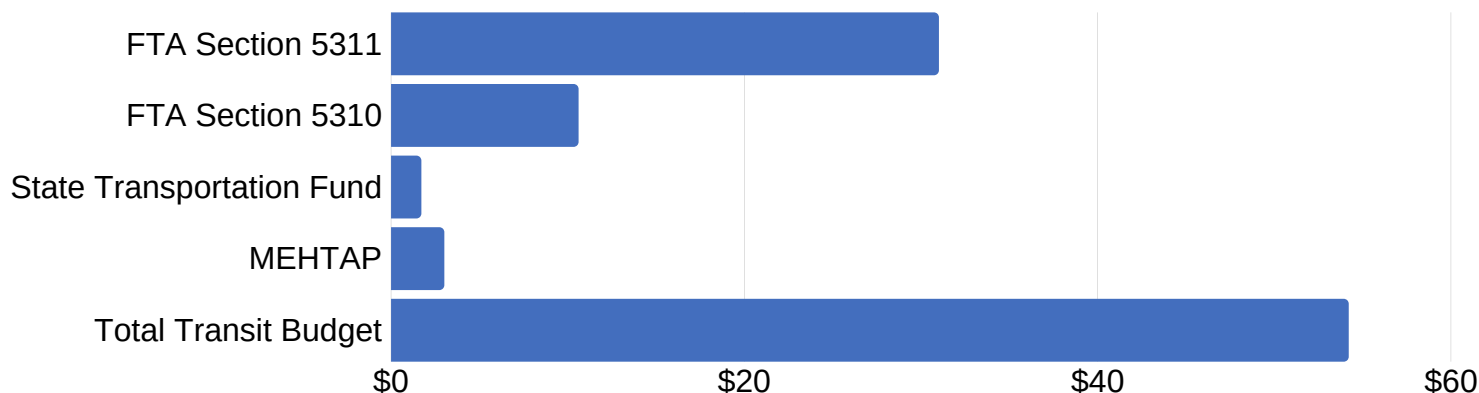
Understanding and learning more about the barriers and opportunities shared by attendees at the Missouri Transportation Summit will be crucial as the Statewide Transportation Task Force begins its work. By better connecting Missourians to the opportunities and services necessary for a high standard of living, transportation can empower every person that calls Missouri home to live happy, healthy, and productive lives.

Summit Snapshot

MoDOT

To set the stage, the Summit began with a brief overview of the current transit funding and ridership landscape in Missouri. MoDOT's Administrator of Transit, Joni Roeseler, broke down the various federal and state transit programs the state oversees. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs administered by MoDOT include the Rural Transit Capital and Operating Grants (FTA Section 5311) and the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA Section 5310) program. State support for transit comes in the form of the State Transportation Fund and the Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP). These programs make up the Transit Section's \$54.2 million portion of MoDOT's \$2.3 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2020.

MoDOT Transit Funding in FY2020 (in millions)



IowaDOT

Following MoDOT's presentation, Jeremy Johnson-Miller with the IowaDOT shared his state's approach to coordinating transportation. In addition to having mobility managers housed within public transit agencies around the state, Jeremy went into detail about Iowa's Transportation Coordination Council (ITCC) and the ways it assists in improving access and mobility for Iowans. Comprised of various state agencies, non-profits, and regional planning organizations, the mission of the ITCC is aligned with three goals from the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM):

- 1. Improve access to community through transportation*
- 2. Enhance cost-effectiveness of coordinated transportation*
- 3. Strengthen interagency partnerships & collaboration with state, local, and industry groups*

Some of the initiatives to come out of the ITCC include:

- Partnerships with the Iowa Department of Public Health to create the Iowa Walking College to help improve walkability around the state.
- Partnering with the American Cancer Society and the Iowa Cancer Consortium to provide monetary assistance to patients traveling to and from cancer treatment appointments while also facilitating more communication between the transit and healthcare sectors through community meetings.
- The creation of Iowa Rideshare to address congestion issues along the I-380 corridor in Eastern Iowa during a major construction project.

National Center for Mobility Management

A large portion of the Summit centered around discussions and small-group activities related to identifying and addressing community transportation barriers facilitated by Judy Shanley and Jerom Theunissen with the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM). Working through the Exploration & Implementation Guide for Reducing Transportation Barriers to Improve Access to Inclusive Community as a launching point, attendees worked together to understand the current transportation services available in their communities as well as the gaps and barriers that still exist.

Following this assessment activity, attendees proceeded to brainstorm and problem-solve potential strategies to address the barriers or challenges identified by each group utilizing the CREATER Implementation Model:

- 1.Care: Understanding and defining the issue– garnering support for the challenge**
- 2.Relate: Focus is on building relationships– ensuring that the right people are at the table. Establishing respectful and inclusive participation and communication.**
- 3.Examine: Unwrapping the challenge– identifying root causes. Defining the problem using data, using cases and experiences, profiles, etc.**
- 4.Acquire: Collect resources (people, materials, money, etc.) that can be used to address the challenge with sustainability in mind.**
- 5.Try: Put the solution or strategy in place in a small way. Pilot or test the solution.**
- 6.Extend: Use what you learned to extend or increase the scope of the solution.**
- 7.Renew: Continuously evaluate the solution or strategy. Make adjustments and change things as necessary. Consider new solutions.**

These activities were meant to start a conversation about transportation issues and opportunities and they facilitated the sharing of both common challenges communities face when accessing transportation around the state as well as potential opportunities to address some of these existing gaps. Additionally, the activities lead to the sharing of innovations around mobility and transportation already underway in communities across the state.

EITAS/Tri-County Transit

Lunch featured conversations with Jake Jacobs of EITAS in the Kansas City area and Ed Thomas with Camden County Developmental Disability Resources (CCDDR) in the Lake of the Ozarks area as the two shared some of the innovations happening around transportation in their respective communities. Jake Jacobs explained how his organization has been able to save money and better serve their clients by developing partnerships with regional public transit agencies and investing resources strategically. For example, EITAS works with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) to provide bus passes for clients residing in more urban portions of the county closer to Kansas City where more robust public transit options already exist. Doing so allows the agency to channel more resources into providing fixed-route and on-demand service in more rural areas of Eastern Jackson County where public transportation options are more limited.

Ed Thomas shared the story of how a survey assessing the transportation needs of CCDDR clients evolved into the formation of a community-wide public transit system serving residents of Camden, Miller, and Morgan Counties in the Lake of the Ozarks area. The survey data showed that it was not just CCDDR clients that struggled to find transportation to access employment opportunities and other necessary services but that the broader community as a whole experienced similar barriers. These findings lead to the creation of the Lake of the Ozarks Transportation Council (LOTC) to bring 20+ area social service agencies, local governments, and healthcare providers together to jointly address transportation challenges in the Lake Area. The work of the LOTC resulted in the launch of Tri-County Transit in partnership with OATS to provide regular deviated fixed-route service to CCDDR clients and the general public. This service helped CCDDR better serve the transportation needs of its clients while also bringing a new public transportation option to communities in the Lake of the Ozarks area.

MO Rides

The Summit concluded with a brief discussion about data collected by MO Rides documenting and highlighting the gaps in transportation services around Missouri. Since expanding its transportation referral service to serve every county of the state in 2016, MO Rides has received nearly 4,000 calls for transportation assistance from 102 of Missouri's 114 counties, or nearly 90%.

While MO Rides has helped coordinate over 1,700 rides in that same time period, significant barriers exist in helping connect every Missourian in need of transportation to a provider that can meet their needs. Cost continues to be a large barrier to accessing transportation across the state and the need is especially great in St. Charles County, where nearly 1 in 4 calls for transportation assistance originate. The data MO Rides has collected over the past four years reflects the same themes surrounding barriers and challenges that attendees shared at the Summit.

Key Themes

RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES IN MISSOURI

Attendees at the Missouri Transportation Summit represented industries and geographies as diverse as the state itself. Despite coming from different sectors, all echoed similar concerns about the current condition of Missouri's mobility network and shared similar frustrations with the barriers these shortcomings cause for people when attempting to access healthcare, employment, and social opportunities. The concerns shared by Summit attendees reflected four key themes:

Cost

For both the user and provider of transportation services

Efficiency

Of different funding sources for different target populations resulting in duplicative service

Availability

Of affordable options in their community

Flexibility

Stemming from limited days and hours of operation

Understanding and learning more about the challenges and opportunities shared by Summit attendees will be crucial as the Statewide Transportation Task Force begins its work to create a plan to improve the availability, affordability, and coordination of transportation in Missouri.

CHALLENGE

Many in attendance cited cost as a major challenge when trying to access transportation in their community, especially when it comes to transportation for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

COST

FOR BOTH THE USER TO RIDE AND
THE PROVIDER TO OPERATE

OPPORTUNITY

Following surveys and conversations with Camden County Developmental Disability Resources (CCDDR) clients and the broader Lake of the Ozarks community, leadership at CCDDR found that they could more effectively and affordably serve the transportation needs of both their clients and the community as a whole by investing resources into the creation of a public transportation system for the Lake of the Ozarks area.

The Lake of the Ozarks Transportation Council (LOTTC) was formed to do just that. With the help of CCDDR and over 20 public and private agencies and organizations, the LOTTC was able to successfully bring Tri-County Transit to residents of the Lake of the Ozarks Area. The Tri-County Transit model is one that can be replicated in other regions of the state and should be examined in greater detail.

CHALLENGE

As a result of different funding streams to serve differing populations, guests in attendance at the Transportation Summit expressed frustration due to the duplication of existing services in their communities.

EFFICIENCY

**OF SEPARATE SERVICES FROM
DIFFERENT FUNDING SOURCES FOR
DIFFERENT TARGET POPULATIONS**

OPPORTUNITY

Rather than directly provide transportation to all their clients in Jackson County, EITAS focuses its resources on providing greater service for individuals with disabilities in the more rural sections of Eastern Jackson County where public options are more limited.

By leveraging its limited resources to serve the areas of greatest need and building relationships with partners such as the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) to provide bus passes in areas where service already exists, EITAS is able to more efficiently transport more than 400 people every day.

CHALLENGE

Guests in attendance shared concerns about the challenge in finding affordable transportation options in their community to meet their mobility needs. Even if transportation providers were present, cost was cited as a large barrier preventing them from utilizing transportation to access services and opportunities.

OPPORTUNITY

Recognizing an unmet need for affordable transportation to and from medical appointments in the St. Joseph Area, 25 churches came together to form Faith in Action to serve individuals who lacked the ability to access transportation due to not having Medicaid and/or owning or being able to use a personal vehicle.

AVAILABILITY

OF AFFORDABLE OPTIONS IN THE
COMMUNITY

CHALLENGE

Guests in attendance mentioned frustrations with the schedule constraints of existing services across geographies. In rural areas attendees cited difficulties in using services such as OATS to meet their needs due to the extremely limited operating schedules in some counties and communities. In urban areas, guests focused primarily on the limited availability of paratransit services on evenings and weekends as a barrier for individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling lives and get around the community. Additionally, guests cited the focus of many existing services on serving solely medical and employment needs while neglecting the social opportunities many want and need to live happy lives.

OPPORTUNITY

To help close gaps in paratransit service in Columbia during the evenings and on Sundays, the Columbia Disabilities Commission was able to partner with the City of Columbia and local taxi agencies to provide 24/7 access to wheelchair accessible vehicles.

This partnership allows Columbia to increase the availability and operating hours of paratransit throughout the city without requiring Go COMO to shoulder all the costs of expanding service, buying new vehicles, or employing bus drivers.

Participating taxi companies receive \$1,000 a year in order to incentivize the reporting of rider data with city leaders. Since launching in November 2018, approximately 300 rides a month are occurring on wheelchair accessible cabs as part of the program.

FLEXIBILITY

WITH LIMITED DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICES

Moving Forward

Strategies to consider as the Statewide Transportation Task Force develops an action plan to improve the availability, affordability, and coordination of transportation in Missouri include the following:

- Exploring more examples of public-private partnerships that expand access and limit the cost of providing transportation service in Missouri and neighboring states
- Aligning the goals of the Statewide Transportation Task Force with those of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) at the federal level.
- Facilitating regular communication between the Governor's office and state agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Department of Health & Senior Services surrounding transportation coordination.
- Articulate the return on investment of transportation coordination by translating anecdotal stories regarding transportation challenges around the state into quantifiable data that captures costs, ridership, and the health, economic, and social outcomes via environmental scans, Census data, and surveys.
- Partner with national technical assistance organizations such as the National Center for Mobility Management to assist with building the capacity for transportation coordination in Missouri.
- Leveraging and integrating non-FTA (Federal Transit Administration) funding sources such as:
 - County-level SB40 funds for services for individuals with disabilities to more efficiently and effectively serve the transportation needs of both individuals with disabilities, as well as the broader community.
 - The 123 federal programs that can provide funding for transportation.
- Taking a holistic approach to designing and implementing multi-modal transportation networks, including "complete streets" policies that consider people with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists in addition to traditional transportation services.

Thank you to the organizations and representatives from the following agencies that made the Missouri Transportation Summit possible:



A special acknowledgement to speakers and presenters at the Missouri Transportation Summit:

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Ed Thomas
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