Building a Tribal Transit Program

Community Transportation Association of America
In conjunction with the
United States Department of Agriculture
and the
Federal Transit Administration

2008
Leadership

- A key person with the time, energy, support, and knowledge to advance transit service in the community.
- The key person encourages and facilitates involvement by as many partners as possible.
- The key person also facilitates dialogue and negotiation among partners.
Education

• Education = Marketing transit services to potential partners and elected officials.
• Many potential partners are not transit users, planners or managers.
• Key person’s mission is educate potential partners on the process, mechanism, advantages, costs and savings of transit planning and coordination.
• Coordination may be a new concept for many partners.
Education

- Leader should have as much supporting information as possible.
- Guidelines/mandates from Federal and state governments.
- Examples from other communities.
- Models from within the community.
- Types of service and coordination, e.g., shared dispatching, brokerage, consolidation.
Five Steps to Transit Service

• Propose that service be developed
• Find/select a leader who will carry forward
• Determine the needs of the community
• Develop a consensus of what to do
• Seek the funding and begin implementation
A Change is Required

• The ways we have done things in the Past will not necessarily benefit us in the Future

  250 Million vehicles  vs.  500 Million vehicles

• If we do not alter what we do and plan for the future, we will only get more of the same

  We all are getting older together, our needs increase

• What is the definition of Insanity?
How Change is Made

• Identifying who will be benefited
• Understanding how transportation and quality of life are related
• Deciding that something must change
• Making changes that are consistent with community values
How Change is Made

• Generate support from tribal council, Indian Health Services, Elder Programs

• Establish an advisory committee

• Evaluate the need within the tribe

• Know potential funding sources
  – Government, non-government, businesses
Why Change is Made

• Are Community Health Representatives (CHR) doing too much transportation?

• Does casino or tribal enterprises have trouble keeping employees due to transportation problems?

• Are tribal members able to access major stores on a regular basis (i.e. Wal-Mart?)

• Are tribal members able to make and keep medical appointments?

• Are tribal members able to get to tribal HQ to handle business?

• Are students walking long distances after school activities?
Managing the Resources

- After the plan is made, resources must be applied
- Funding for Capital and Operating costs must be acquired
- Finding that Equilibrium - (you can’t operate at a loss and stay in operation for too long)
- Building up by layers, step by step.
- Keeping current with new developments
Making Change Happen

• Use council or tribal legislators to help with data collection
  – Who needs transportation
  – When do they need it and how often
  – Where do they live, and
  – Where do they need to go
Coordination Opportunities

• Shared maintenance program with GSA Vehicles
• Sharing vehicles with boys & girls club, Headstart, CHR, Elders
• Does the tribe have land or office space or other facilities to use as a “soft match?”
Who is the Transportation for...

- Tribal Members only
- Open to the public
- Tribal (free)/Public (fare)
- Accessible for persons with disabilities
Who will run the Transportation

- Branch of Tribal Government
- Branch of Tribal Transportation Department
- Branch of the Elders
- Contracted to a private provider
  - As with School bus operator
  - As with Medicaid operator
Design for Today
Plan for Tomorrow

• Don’t try to start big
• Meet immediate needs
• Phase in services as resources are available
Keeping Things Going

• Capital investment – initial and ongoing

• Maintenance is Crucial

• Appropriate vehicle selection (weather)

• Facility considerations

• Software – keep it simple
Communication and Marketing

• Keep the council and leadership involved
• Get public feedback
  – Public meetings
  – A booth at POW-WOW with survey
  – Latch on to other public events or meetings
  – Local radio programs
Funding Sources

• Federal Government: FTA, USDA
• State Government: DOT
• City, County Government
• Tribal Industries
• Employers who need workers
• Corporate Foundations
Funding Sources

• Federal Government: FTA, USDA
  – The Association can accept Short Term Tribal TA at any time
  – Long Term TA solicitation in Dec. – only 3 competitively selected nationally
  – Coordinate Our TA with the FTA when possible
Funding Sources

• Federal Government: FTA, USDA
  
  FTA 5311 Tribal
  FTA 5310 (persons with disabilities)
  Match w/ IRR money
  No Match 5311 Rural
Funding Sources

- College student – admission fee add-on
- Casino Revenues
- Gas Tax/ Cigarette Tax
- Other regional businesses who need employees
Funding Sources

• State Government: DOT
Funding Sources

• City, County Government

Don’t overlook the opportunities to coordinate services among tribal and non-tribal areas
Funding Sources

- Tribal Industries
- Employers who need workers

Your own enterprises can sometimes support transit in order to make people available for the jobs that exist.
Funding Sources

• Corporate Foundations

Usually are willing to provide Capital funding only.

Operating funding requires an ongoing commitment

They have more requests than they can ever meet
Some Tribal Projects

• White Earth Tribe – a long term project in Year 1, marketing effort, a new Short Term Technical Assistance effort under discussion

• Mille Lacs Tribe – a Short Term Technical Assistance effort has been committed
Some Tribal Projects

- Seneca Nation, NY – 2007 Short Term Technical Assistance provided in developing RFP and identifying qualified bidders for FTA funded planning effort
- Oglala Sioux, Pineridge, SD – 5 years ago, worked on service design and facility
- Fort Belknap, MT – Service design
Some Tribal Projects

• Northern Cheyenne, Lame Deer, MT – Service Design
• Stillagaumish, WA – Coordinated service design
• Navajo – Transit facility