

## **Transportation Summit Summary**

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, over 80 service providers, civic leaders and community members met at the Pellon Center in Machias to explore optimal ways to address transportation issues in Washington and Hancock Counties to improve physical, economic and social health.

The keynote speaker, Secretary of State, Mathew Dunlap, spoke of the historical changing needs and methods of transportation services in Maine.

Panelists Jo Cooper, Executive Director of Friends in Action, James Bradney, Health Planning Director for the Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition, Ramona Wade, an Organizer of the Community Access Resource Exchange (C.A.R.E.), and Linda Belfiore, Director of Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA), presented the strengths and challenges of volunteer driver programs.

Maine State Legislature Representative Katherine Cassidy, Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System Representative Donald Cooper, and Maine Department of Transportation Representative Susan Moreau spoke to issues surrounding strengthening our public transportation systems.

Sandi Duchesne of Greenlight Solutions and GROWashington-Aroostok, Michael Reisman, Executive Director of the Beth C. Wright Cancer Center, and Jon Archer an Organizer of Friends Assisting with Rides & Errands (F.A.R.E.) gave presentations about exploring creative solutions to transportation challenges.

Each panelist gave a short presentation that was followed by a question and answer period. The entire group then divided into smaller working groups to discuss opportunities for action, projects of interest, ways to foster collaboration, and specific next steps around the issues of increasing access to transportation. The groups reconvened as one, and shared a summary of their discussions.

## ***Ideas Generated by Break Out Groups***

### **Research**

- Systematic town-by-town planning that considers population needs and assets should be conducted. Planning at town and community levels is necessary, as one big solution will not work for all places.

### **Communications**

- A state wide marketing campaign about the small steps needed to get volunteer driver organizations active in each community would be helpful.
- Use software to facilitate ride sharing
- Volunteer Driver organizations could use software that would make it easy for volunteers to choose and sign up for rides (Island Connections on MDI utilizes such software).
- Use social media, such as Face Book, to connect different volunteer driver organizations.

### **Decentralizing Services**

- Bring radiation treatment to the Ellsworth Area, eliminating the need for cancer patients to travel great distances.

### **Supplying Transportation**

- Car dealerships could donate a vehicle for use, making the vehicle available at designated times, such as once a week.
- To address the concerns and reservations many people have about accepting a ride from a stranger, organizations can stress the training required to become a volunteer driver.
- The use of modified zip-cars would improve transportation options.
- Partnering with a business to purchase a high efficiency vehicle that would be used by the business to get employees to and from work, while a community organization would use the vehicle during the day to take clients to their appointments.
- Organizations/businesses could use incentives or disincentives to promote carpooling.
- Increasing water transportation options may be helpful. Boats are an efficient mode of transportation when operated slowly.
- Explore how tour boats and cruise ships could be used for day passengers traveling between cities.

### ***Responses Collected from the Post-Summit Survey***

Ten people indicated interest in joining the Downeast Acadia Transportation Team  
(The following responses taken from 14 surveys I have)

#### ***Questions***

- ***How can we bring people together to work on transportation access issues?***
- ***What would you like to do to improve transportation and/or access issues?***
- ***Would you like more information related to transportation or access?***

#### **Research**

- Is there a current needs assessment for Washington and Hancock Counties? It is important to identify the specific gaps in towns that are not being serviced, and plan for the future specifically for those towns.
- Bring community members who have transportation challenges to the table as active participants.
- Extend invitation to brokers and riders to participate.
- Hold public hearings.
- If different areas around the state held Transportation Summits we'd be able to learn what other regions in Maine are doing.
- Survey the local residents.
- Develop a county wide integrative and planning process that goes to each community and town to get their ideas on transit.
- Finding alternatives to getting children to programming

#### **Communications**

- Utilize 211 Maine. We have an information system set up, but it needs to be kept updated. A resource is only as good as the information we feed into it.
- Create an assets list of what the two counties have as transportation resources, and encourage the sharing of resources.
- Create a "ride warehouse" where people could call to learn about transportation options in their area.
- Community mapping of available resources
- What transportation options are available in Blue Hill, Deer Isle and Stonington?
- "I would like to be able to share in Lubec what these options are and how to access them."

#### **Supplying Transportation**

- Have more training for drivers and agencies on the need for transporting children.
- Increase pooling of resources and create a program that would help groups strengthen volunteer recruitment.
- An expansion and controlled F.A.R.E. idea could bridge gaps that exist.
- Low carbon emissions buses
- Vermont's "system"
- Boat transportation