



**Regional Transportation Study**  
**Regional Transportation Planning Coalition**  
**January 19, 2012**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Members present:**

Fernando de Aragon- Executive Director, ITCTC  
Dan Dineen - Director of Planning, Cortland County,  
Alice Eccleston- Assistant General Manager, TCAT  
Harriet Haynes – Planner, Seneca County  
David Leib- Associate Director of Transportation, Cornell  
Jenna Lenhardt- Global Initiatives Coordinator, TC3  
Tom Mank – Data Analyst, ITCTC  
Dwight Mengel – Chief Transportation Planner, Tompkins County DSS  
Linette Mowers – Assistant Director for General Services, SUNY Cortland  
Walter Poland – Vice President, TC3  
Larry Roberts – Program Director, Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC)  
Amber Simmons - Mobility Manager, ARC of Schuyler  
Joe Turcotte- General Manager, TCAT  
Shawn Yetter – Social Services Commissioner, Tioga County

**Consultants present:**

Marlene Connor, Project Manager, Wendel  
Cyd Averill, Arch Street Communications  
Fred Frank, Wendel  
Jim McLaughlin, Wendel

The meeting started with introductions. Marlene Connor briefed the Coalition on the stakeholder interviews that she and Jim McLaughlin conducted during the week of January 16-20. They met with Tompkins County DSS, TCAT, Tompkins County Coordinated Planning Group, Chemung County Coordinated Planning Group, Chemung County Transit, Schuyler County Coordinated Planning Group, Cortland County Planning, and TC3. Team member Jack Reilly met with representatives from Cornell, Ithaca College and SUNY Cortland. The information gathering is an essential first step. They will return in a few weeks to conduct additional interviews with stakeholders not contacted in this initial effort.

Marlene noted that in the last few months, projects have been either planned or initiated by counties or agencies in the study area that have attributes that should be complementary with the work of the RTS but need to be incorporated into the study. For example, in Tompkins County, there is an Independent Transportation Network (ITN) pilot project being launched. Schuyler County has received a FTA Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant. IT projects for TCAT and Cortland County are moving forward and Cortland County has received a CTAA grant to conduct an evaluation of transportation in that county. The consultant team indicated that one of the RTS goals will be to incorporate all potential project plans and to share those plans with the Client Committee and the Coalition to ensure that these diverse projects are considered in the mobility planning process.

### **Presentation of RTS Work Plan**

The presentation provided an overview of the Wendel team and its collaborative approach to the work plan. Marlene emphasized that the Coalition, and the Client Committee, are at the center of transportation planning approach that includes input from counties, educational institutions, transit providers, human service agencies and planning departments.

The vision statement that was contained in the RFP to guide development of the study was reinforced:

*“Develop a Regional Mobility Strategy building on the range of community mobility services and programs currently offered in order to better connect communities and destinations, broaden mobility options, provide cost effective solutions and improve the quality of life for the region’s residents, workers, students and visitors.”*

As well as the RTS goals:

- *Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing mobility services across all modes of transportation*
- *Develop and market real mobility choices to the public*
- *Enable coordination among counties to provide the best possible cost effective transportation programs for the Study Area.*

The spectrum of transportation programs, services and strategies currently offered in the region include public transit, paratransit, carshare, vanpools, taxi, ridesharing, IT and traveler information, park & rides, and support services. Enhanced coordination and integration of these services, where possible, will be a major objective of the study.

### **Approach**

The consultant team’s approach includes creating a communication framework with stakeholders to gain an understanding of the study area and services currently being offered. This will be followed by analysis of existing services and identification of issues in order to incorporate gaps and needs and communicate alternatives for recommended strategies. This planning work will be supported by input from the Client Committee, stakeholders and the public in order to generate a phased, implementable plan that encompasses concepts and processes such as Livability/Sustainability, Complete Streets/Complete Trip, Intelligent Transportation System and Local Coordination Plans.

The team seeks to develop a process for sharing information, in order to help identify creative solutions and build on past experiences in activities such as New Paradigms, United We Ride, etc. to shape this regional

mobility plan. The goal will be to establish an excellent regional network distinguished by modes and services interacting seamlessly, incorporating good communication and marketing of alternatives, collaboration among partnering agencies, and integration of these elements into the communities being served.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability of that network will be enhanced through maintaining the lines of communication, collaborating on ideas for service and communication enhancements, adding more partners and interested parties, coordinating on specific projects and proposals, and developing the process to create a coordinated program.

### **Work Plan**

The intention is to generate a plan that will have a phased implementation, quickly initiating improvements such as improved communication and preliminary service coordination that will set the stage for service enhancements that require a longer planning timeframe.

The Wendel team will continue the familiarization process and begin collecting and analyzing data. Marlene stressed that maintaining good communication with, and seeking consensus from, the Client Committee, and the Coalition, will be essential. These groups will be the forum for discussion on how to frame the regional plan from multiple agencies, modes, and customer perspectives.

Referencing the timeline, Marlene noted that the study is planned to take 12 months, with the Phase 1 familiarization process ending approximately at the end of February and that she and other team members will be returning to the area to complete their interview process with Cayuga, Tioga and Seneca counties as well as other agencies and stakeholders.

This concluded the presentation and the meeting was opened for discussion.

### **Questions and Discussion**

#### **Project Communication**

The group discussed the difficulty in reaching all study area counties, particularly Cayuga County, which has not responded recently to invitations. Marlene indicated she will reach out to her contact at Centro, the transit agency serving Cayuga County. It was noted that some areas of Cayuga identify more strongly with Syracuse than with Ithaca, which may influence their participation.

It was also noted that the Coalition has met three or four times in the last three years and currently communicates almost primarily by email and the workings of the Client Committee members. Those present agreed that email could work as the primary communication tactic during the study, but that message and purpose is important in all communications. The group felt that electronic meeting notifications and study updates would be useful in maintaining dialogue among all interested parties.

#### **Stakeholder Outreach**

Consideration will be given to those without reliable web access, many of whom are in rural portions of the study area. The group agreed that the success of the study can be enhanced by champions who will carry the message to a wider audience. The Coalition members were encouraged to suggest additional stakeholder names to ensure the broadest possible audience for our communications. The group discussed other outreach opportunities such as round table discussions to identify needs. Additional stakeholder groups might include the ?? Comprehensive Planning committee, Catholic Charities, Medical Centers, etc. The Client Committee is tasked with moving the process forward.

### **Website/Webpage**

The group discussed the possibility of having a webpage or website where the study information could reside, providing an information center and connecting people through the study. The RTS page on the ITCTC website is one option, but does not provide the potential for interactivity. Dwight suggested creating a weebly.com site, which would allow for more stakeholder feedback. Wendel may also be able to create a page that resides on their site. The consultant team will explore these possibilities and report back to the Client Committee.

### **Media Relations**

Fernando mentioned that the area media should be kept informed. Newspaper articles are another vehicle for communicating about the study, but again, need to have something to offer or communicate something we are looking to achieve as a result of contacting the media. LinkedIn discussion groups may be another possibility for stakeholder involvement.

### **Jurisdictional/Regulatory Issues**

Marlene asked whether there are any regulatory or jurisdictional impediments to implementing regional mobility plan. The group does not believe there are any local limitations. Outcomes for the study could include joint municipal or regional agreements. It was noted that certain classes of services??, funded by the state have been deregulated, which may allow for additional transportation options.

### **Next Steps**

Marlene noted that the consultant team planned to meet with the Client Committee at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 20, to more thoroughly brief them on the activities to date.

Members of the consultant team will return in approximately two weeks to meet with additional stakeholders. Every effort will be made to coordinate these meetings with existing agency, organization or committee meetings.

The consultants will explore options for creating an online communication portal (website or webpage).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.