

SENIOR SAFE MOBILITY IMPLEMENTATION CONSORTIUM MEETING REPORT

MEETING DESCRIPTION: Senior Safe Mobility Implementation Consortium	
DATE: December 14, 2005	LOCATION: Voorhees Transportation Center, New Brunswick, NJ
PARTICIPANTS: See attached list	
PREPARED BY: Rutgers – Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center	

OVERVIEW

This was the first meeting of the New Jersey Senior Safe Mobility Implementation Consortium (SSMIC). The Consortium is an initiative that grew out of the Safe Mobility at Any Age Policy Forum Series sponsored throughout 2004 by the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) and the New Jersey Foundation for Aging (NJFA). Its purpose is to foster communication between various agencies and organizations concerned with achieving safe senior mobility and to monitor and advance the recommendations set forth in the Safe Mobility at Any Age Policy Forum Series final report.

Consortium membership is composed of representatives from various government agencies, nonprofit and other organizations who have demonstrated commitment to addressing safe mobility as a critical policy issue facing New Jersey and one which has far-reaching policy implications related to public health, public safety, community development and personal autonomy across all age groups.

At this time, it is anticipated that the Consortium will meet twice a year with the goal of updating members of on-going initiatives related to senior safe mobility and to work together to ensure the advancement of the Safe Mobility at Any Age final report recommendations.

MEETING SUMMARY

Jon Carnegie, assistant director of the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, welcomed participants to the meeting. He introduced VTC's partner on its safe mobility initiatives, the New Jersey Foundation for Aging. Mr. Carnegie outlined the meeting agenda which included a review the Safe Mobility at Any Age Policy Forum recommendations; reports from participating agencies/organizations regarding past and on-going initiatives related to senior safe mobility; and time permitting, a discussion of priority next steps to advance the Safe Mobility at Any Age recommendations. Mr. Carnegie then invited all participants to introduce themselves.

Mr. Carnegie reminded the group that the Safe Mobility at Any Age Policy Forum Series was a joint venture between VTC and the NJFA, with financial support generously provided by a number of local foundations and State agencies. He then described briefly the research and outreach activities undertaken as part of the forum series and reviewed the sixteen key recommendations made in the forum series final report. Copies of Mr. Carnegie's presentation slides are attached to this report.

PARTICIPANT UPDATES

Mr. Carnegie requested that participants share with one another any past and/or on-going initiatives related to senior mobility conducted by the organization they represent. He initiated the discussion by reporting that VTC has undertaken the following relevant activities since issuing the final report:

- Get the word out activities – VTC has organized panels at various professional association meetings targeted to both professionals and members of the public to help disseminate the findings and recommendations of the Safe Mobility Policy Forum Series. These events included: NJFA annual conference held in June 2005; NJ Chapter of the American Planning Association's fall 2005 conference; and the NJ League of Municipalities meeting in November 2005. Upcoming events include the spring 2006 TransAction conference to be held in Atlantic City; the 2006 NJ Council on Special Transportation meeting; and the International Conference on Aging to be held in Florida in February 2006.
- Coordination with NJDOT – VTC has met several times with NJDOT staff regarding the New Jersey FIT initiative. At those meeting he stressed that senior mobility issues should both be a specific area of focus and should also permeate through all levels of project development work undertaken by the Department.
- Regional Travel Concierge Pilot Program – VTC has been awarded a grant from the Kessler Foundation to conduct planning work for a pilot regional travel concierge project for people with disabilities. He noted that many of the transportation challenges and barriers intended to be addressed in this project for people with disabilities also affect seniors. As such, the issues addressed in the project will inform any similar efforts to develop a concierge service targeted to the senior population.
- One-stop Transportation Web Portal – VTC has received funding from the NJDHS to create a one-stop transportation information web portal. During the course of the upcoming year, VTC will be working to determine the type of information that should be available through the portal, the most appropriate interfaces to employ and other relevant issues. While the project is oriented to people with disabilities, he noted that the information included will be available to all who seek to use community transportation.

- NJCAM – VTC is also an active participant of the NJ State Council on Access and Mobility, a group of state agency representatives working to ensure better coordination of human services transportation throughout the State.

Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA)

Sandra Brillhart reported that GMTMA was selected in April 2005 as one of four national demonstration projects for the Independent Transportation Network (ITNAmerica) program. Originally initiated in Maine, ITN is a program that seeks to provide senior citizens with transportation services via automobile 24 hours per day/seven days per week by utilizing a combination of paid and volunteer drivers. Those utilizing the service must pay for the service, but there are many ways to subsidize the costs if they are prohibitive for a given consumer. For example, consumers can earn trip “credits” if they or a family member opt to volunteer with the program.

Thus far, GMTMA has hired a project manager to create awareness of the program throughout the community and to initiate various year one planning activities. Currently, GMTMA is working to create a website listing transportation resources by municipality in Mercer County for senior citizens in the community. In addition, they are attempting to select the service area for the ITN pilot, with the eventual goal of offering service throughout Mercer County.

Ms. Brillhart noted that interest in and demand for the service definitely exists and reported the GMTMA goal to begin providing services in late summer/early fall 2006. She also offered that one of the more significant issues they are trying to address is insurance liability for volunteer drivers. Basically, volunteers must rely upon their own insurance for coverage. Ms. Brillhart added that there is no consistent statewide policy on insurance coverage for volunteer drivers.

NJ Department of Transportation

Andrew Swords reported that DOT is interested in the concierge service idea and would like to help implement such a program. He added that DOT is working to promote the importance of coordination and collaboration in the realm of transportation via DOT’s participation in the NJ Council on Access and Mobility (NJCAM) and DOT is also supportive of GMTMA’s ITN work efforts.

Patricia Ott reported that her division is working on completing the SAFETEA-LU comprehensive Strategic Highway Safety Plan requirement. Currently, work on this initiative is being conducted via task teams that focus on specific groups of drivers, such as older and younger drivers. The Safe Mobility final report findings were carefully reviewed by the division to ensure the latter’s efforts and recommendations mirrored those included in the final report. It is expected that the Strategic Highway Safety Plan will be completed in January 2006.

Ms. Ott also provided an update on the Senior Safety Pilot program, which has involved the identification of various intersections deemed problematic and the development of strategies to improve the safety at these designated locations. Ms. Ott reported that the three designated intersections include a location on Route 22; an intersection in Palisades Park; and an intersection in Asbury Park. The examination process for the first two locations involved safety impact interviews with groups of senior citizens. In addition, forums with various players were also convened to discuss the recommendations developed to alter the designated intersections. Examination of the Asbury Park intersection is expected to occur in Spring 2006. Ms. Ott noted her goal that the program continues to be funded following its conclusion as a pilot initiative.

NJ TRANSIT

Robert Koska, reported that NJ TRANSIT is working to promote the federal United We Ride (UWR) initiative via the NJCAM. As background, he explained that President Bush issued the executive order creating UWR in February 2004, with the goal of improving coordination among federal government agencies regarding the nation's over 60 transportation funding streams. The NJCAM was created to mirror the federal UWR initiative and is focusing on improving coordination related to transportation funding at the state level. Last year, New Jersey received a \$30,000 UWR grant to begin work efforts in creating awareness throughout the state for the initiative, which culminated with the New Jersey United We Ride week, held in early December 2005. Most recently, NJCAM submitted an application for a second UWR grant for \$75,000.

Mr. Koska emphasized that NJ TRANSIT via NJCAM is working to create awareness among various levels of government, especially counties, who receive federal and/or state transportation funding alerting them that they must begin developing/updating a coordinated transportation plan to meet federal requirements that will be issued in the near future. He opined that creation of the SSMIC is a positive step and similar to NJCAM's work, in that it will encourage the sharing of resources and reduce the replication of efforts/programs.

Mr. Koska concluded by reporting that NJ TRANSIT is working with the National Transit Institute (NTI) to offer counties and nonprofits who provide transportation to people with disabilities and senior citizens with technical assistance and training targeted to new vehicle drivers, program supervisors and others affiliated with such programs to help ensure their ability to deal with the growing expectations and related sophistications of the services these agencies provide to many New Jerseyans. The ultimate goal of the training efforts is to help these agencies achieve cost effective and efficient transportation service.

NJDHHS – Division of Aging

Dennis McGowan reported that among other efforts, the Division is working closely with NJDOT's Patricia Ott on the safe intersection initiative.

AAA – NJ Automobile Club

Pam Fischer and Pam Maiolo reported that AAA is in the process of implementing a national campaign, entitled Lifelong Safe Mobility, which is focused on helping seniors stay mobile for as long as safely possible. One element of the program includes dissemination of the AAA CD-ROM entitled Roadwise Review, which is a driver screening tool designed to give recipients the opportunity to test eight functional abilities shown to be the strongest predictors of crash risk among older drivers in the privacy of their home, senior center or other similar location. Currently, the CD-ROM is available for sale and has been made available to various organizations and groups working with the senior population. It was noted however that AAA wants to disseminate the CD-ROM to more senior centers throughout the state.

AAA is also promoting a program called CarFit, which is designed to help drivers better understand how the effects of aging change the way they fit in their vehicle, how their driving can be affected, and suggest ways to correct for the changes. Currently, the program is not being implemented in New Jersey, but Ms. Fischer indicated the goal is to offer the program in the state. In New Jersey, AAA is also supportive of extending the ITN pilot program to the TransOptions TMA service area which includes Morris County and surrounding areas. AAA is also supporting enforcement of New Jersey's vision testing law. Ms. Fischer reported that over eighty percent of AAA member respondents to the organization's biannual survey voiced support for enforcement of the law. Finally, she reported that she will be serving as co-chair to Governor Corzine's Transportation Advisory Committee and they plan to discuss senior mobility issues with the Committee.

New Jersey Association of Senior Center Directors

Lynn Thornton reported that the Association meets monthly. She also explained that most senior centers in the state are operated by the municipality in which they are located. Ms. Thornton reported that the Association hosted the presentation by Mr. Carnegie of the Safe Mobility final report at the November 2005 League of Municipalities meeting. She added that the Association is on the steering committee for ITN.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Kevin Murphy explained that DVRPC is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and noted that there are three MPO's serving New Jersey. DVRPC is a bi-state agency, as it serves regions in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The function of a MPO is primarily to coordinate a regional task force to determine how federal transportation funds should be spent in a given region.

Mr. Murphy explained that with regard to road safety, the federal goal via SAFETEA-LU is to decrease current roadway fatality statistics to one fatality to every one million vehicle miles traveled. To accomplish this goal, Mr. Murphy explained that DVRPC created four subcommittees designed to examine designated “emphasis” areas that involve safety for older and younger drivers. The subcommittees include: Education, Enforcement and Emergency Services. Mr. Murphy stressed that there exists many educational as well as engineering strategies that can be pursued to increase roadway safety among both older and younger driver populations. In terms of other initiatives, DVRPC also hosted a human factors workshop, which examined practical issues to address safety for older drivers.

State Occupational Therapists/Driving Rehabilitation Specialists

Beth Rolland, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, reported that she is on the committee of the National Association of Driving Rehabilitation Specialists and commented on the need for more professionals in this field. She explained that the Association is seeking to increase awareness for the work conducted by driving rehabilitation specialists among other medical professionals and support groups. Increased financial support is also needed.

Clare McLaughlin, Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation, and Jennifer Biro, JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, commented that driver rehabilitation specialists and physicians are beginning to work more closely with one another, which is a positive achievement. They also noted that the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is supportive of the driver rehabilitation specialist field; however, they voiced concern that Medicare and Medicaid does not cover the costs associated with driver rehabilitation therapy at this time.

NJ Motor Vehicle Commission

Don Borowski, Gina Sine and Kathy Higham reported on several initiatives. First, addressing the vision testing law is one of MVC’s planning priorities, but it was noted that various policy-related issues involving implementation of the law must first be addressed. It was also reported that there are several MVC medical review panels (e.g. cardiology), but the approval process for medical professionals appointed by the MVC Chief Administrator to serve on a given panel is extremely long and thus, MVC wants to alter the approval process.

MVC is also interested in changing the vision standard from 20/50 to 20/40. It is another MVC goal to modify the current license examination process to better accommodate and account for the limitations of older drivers.

In terms of the MVC medical review unit, Ms. Higham explained that the unit does refer drivers to driver rehabilitation centers when deemed appropriate. However, she acknowledged the problem that the assessment/revaluation conducted by the rehabilitation centers is not covered by insurance. Ms. Higham noted that MVC

makes an effort to stress the importance of the evaluation process to the medical community. In addition, she explained that the MVC mobile unit has recently begun to travel to senior centers statewide as part of the digital driver's license initiative and the MVC is considering referring any individuals encountered during this outreach effort with potential driver-related problems to the medical review unit.

Ms. Higham reported that in the future, MVC plans on utilizing their authority to limit certain drivers to only driving in daylight hours and/or on roadways with speed limits of 50 mph or less. Another possibility the MVC is examining involves having the medical review unit review and conduct follow-up with those who request and receive a vehicle handicapped placard.

With regard to research, Ms. Higham reported that an MVC-sponsored research project will begin in January 2006 with researchers from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, who will examine medical review best practices nationwide.

NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety

Violet Marrero reported that the Division is currently focusing its efforts on addressing senior citizen pedestrian issues. Much of their work is directed at the grassroots level and involve Division staff and local grantees performing outreach to local senior citizen centers to educate groups on senior roadway safety issues. They often provide groups they visit with valuable tools and aides, such as clothing reflectors.

Middlesex County Department of Planning

Anthony Gambilonghi reported that the County provides a number of services to benefit senior citizens and people with disabilities that include implementation of a shuttle route to the Brunswick Square Mall, as well as examining pedestrian safety at intersections along the Route 18 corridor. He noted that there is considerable public transportation available in the County but added that safe pedestrian movement is a concern. As such, the County prepared a problem statement for NJTPA to help improve pedestrian friendliness in the County. A component of the work completed involved conducting a survey via KMM of people traveling in the area. Finally, with the goal of increasing awareness for the County's various transportation services, they are working to update their County transit guide and map, making it bilingual.

AARP

Stanley Rothman reported that he is a volunteer with AARP's driver safety program, which strives to recruit volunteer drivers to help community organizations that provide transportation for senior citizens. He also notified the group of an initiative the Association has been working on during the previous six months, entitled Mobility Options. Mr. Rothman explained that AARP is committed to the practice of "Aging in Place", which is premised on the goal of helping seniors continue to reside where they choose. Elements of that assistance include helping

them drive safely as long as possible and assisting them in locating alternative transportation when driving is no longer a safe alternative. Mr. Rothman also reported on the work being conducted by the MIT Aging Lab that involves the study of how physical and mental changes affect one's driving abilities and overall mobility.

NJ Foundation for Aging

Michelle Raymond reported that the Foundation is pleased to be partnering with VTC to help advance the Safe Mobility final report recommendations. She noted that the Foundation has highlighted the final report and its recommendations via various means, including an article in the Foundation's publication, Renaissance. She added that the report and its recommendations will again be discussed at the Foundation's annual conference, scheduled for June 2006.

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)

Chris Hrones reported that NJTPA is the MPO covering the State's thirteen northern counties in New Jersey. In terms of recent safe mobility efforts, he explained that NJTPA enlisted the aid of consultants to help the Authority develop a regional safety program. A total of 200 high priority crash locations were determined and field visits were conducted to 22 of the locations to help spur localities to address the noted safety concerns, many of which involved safe mobility for senior citizens. Improvements at one location that focused specifically on senior mobility conditions occurred at an intersection on Mule Road in Toms River, New Jersey. The community is populated with many older drivers and several pedestrian issues were identified at the Mule Road intersection by NJTPA. Improvements made included separate left-turn signal phasing, dedicated pedestrian signal heads and more user-friendly pavement markings.

NJ Department of Human Services

Terri Hirschhorn reported that twelve divisions are under the umbrella of the DHS. She noted that transportation is always an obstacle for the populations served by DHS and other similar agencies. To address this reality, the need was identified to better collaborate and coordinate transportation funding on a state level, as is being attempted on the federal level. The NJCAM described earlier by Mr. Koska was thus created, and it has begun to provide a venue through which agencies can discuss with one another the various funding issues surrounding transportation in New Jersey. For example, NJCAM participants are attempting to address the issue of how services can be expanded through cooperative efforts and how county "border" issues related to transportation can be better resolved to benefit the public. Ms. Hirschhorn reported that the next step for NJCAM will involve inviting stakeholders from other sectors to join the effort.

DISCUSSION

Pippa Woods, VTC, asked Ms. Brillhart who the GMTMA project manager is for the ITN initiative. Ms. Brillhart responded that the manager is Samirah Abdul-Fattah.

Ms. Fischer commented that through her work with AAA she has learned that while many different organizations provide transportation services, the key issue to consider is often how those services are managed.

Mr. Swords opined that while the ITN model being implemented by GMTMA has many benefits, it must be noted that it does not serve all populations in need of transportation service. Mr. Swords comments were acknowledged as it was reported that ITN service is limited to those over 65 years of age and to those who are visually impaired, regardless of age.

Mr. Carnegie reported that SAFETEA-LU has made the hiring of mobility managers an allowable expense, which will be valuable to a multitude of initiatives.

Ms. Thornton suggested that perhaps AAA can make a presentation at one of the Association of Senior Center Directors' upcoming meetings, to help increase awareness and use of the Roadwise Review CD-ROM program.

Ms. Rolland commented that rehabilitation centers may be good locations from which AAA can promote their Roadwise Review initiative, as well as a potential CarFit program.

Mr. Rothman suggested that to improve communication and coordination among transportation providers, regional meetings should be convened with the providers and various social service agencies so they can discuss how to best meet the transportation needs of the senior citizen population. Mr. Carnegie acknowledged Mr. Rothman's comments and stated that it is one of SSMIC's goals to assist in increasing communication and partnering among those entities involved with senior transportation.

Mr. Rothman stressed that conducting standard vision testing on senior citizens is not going to address alone the numerous age-related driving concerns. For example, a standard vision test cannot assess how an individual processes information as a driver. He further suggested that to address volunteer driver insurance issues, perhaps New Jersey should consider pursuing legislation that would hold a volunteer driver harmless in the event of an accident/incident. Mr. Carnegie acknowledged that currently, the SSMIC does not have funding to support extensive activities. Thus, he asked participants for suggestions on what actions can realistically be taken by the SSMIC to help advance the Safe Mobility final report recommendations. Comments shared included the following:

The SSMIC should convene a minimum of twice yearly to facilitate communication among members.

The group agreed that several other entities should be invited to participate at future SSMIC meetings. These include but may not be limited to: New Jersey Council on Special Transportation (NJCOST); New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance (NJDOBI); and the NJ Medical Society. A participant noted that involving the last group in the discussions could be particularly helpful to meeting the goal of the state's certified driving rehabilitation specialists of increasing awareness among the medical community to the issues faced by senior drivers and the need for the services provided by rehabilitation specialists.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. Carnegie reported that an email listserve of SSMIC members will be developed in the upcoming months to facilitate communication efforts. In addition, SSMIC members will be emailed a mailing list with full contact information for their fellow participants. He also noted that the NJFA and VTC may conduct additional fundraising efforts on behalf of SSMIC and may ask participants to provide a letter of support for this effort. He concluded the meeting by thanking participants for attending and for their commitment to achieving the recommendations included in the Safe Mobility final report. He noted that today's proceedings will be posted on the VTC website upon completion and that the next SSMIC meeting will likely be convened in June 2006.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Jennifer Biro-Palasits	JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute
Sandra Brillhart	Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association
Don Borowski	NJ Motor Vehicle Commission
Jon Carnegie	Voorhees Transportation Center
Pam Fischer	AAA NJ Automobile Club
Anthony Gambilonghi	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Kathy Higham	NJ Motor Vehicle Commission – Driver Review
Terri Hirschhorn	NJ Department of Human Services
Christopher Hrones	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Robert Koska	NJ TRANSIT
Andrea Lubin	Voorhees Transportation Center
Pam Maiolo	AAA Mid-Atlantic
Violet Marrero	NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Dennis McGowan	NJ Department of Health & Senior Services – Div. Of Aging
Clare McLaughlin	Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation
Kevin Murphy	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Patricia Ott	NNDOT, Div. of Traffic Engineering & Safety
Michelle Raymond	NJ Foundation for Aging
Beth Rolland	Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation
Stanley Rothman	American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
Gina Sine	NJ Motor Vehicle Commission – Medical Unit
Andrew Swords	NJ Department of Transportation
Lynn Thornton	NJ Association of Senior Center Directors
Kim Van Pelt	NJ Foundation for Aging
Pippa Woods	Voorhees Transportation Center