

# MISCC Transportation Working Group - Report to the General Committee

Thank you – First off we would like to recognize Ron Epstein for his efforts over the past year. Our contribution to the report could not have been made without his leadership and guidance. Big shoes to fill.

I would like to report on the Transportation Committee's efforts. We just held a meeting on March 10th. This was a phone conference and was very well attended. Our attendance is becoming more consistent. We are grateful to staff from your agencies who take the time to attend and the community members who give of their time to participate.

I would like to briefly touch on the three major recommendations of workgroup:

1. The call for a “czar” from each agency I think has begun to take hold. We thank Commissioner Ritter and Ron Epstein for their efforts in encouraging participation. Good things will happen from the conversation. I have attached a list of the people identified by the agencies. It will help us get the word out and make sure we are reaching the right people. Two examples if I may: One is a grant funding opportunity that comes from the United We Ride Federal Initiative. We got rapid and strong support from the appropriate agencies around this table in putting in a grant for mobility management funding in Western New York. The Center for Transportation Excellence in Buffalo is waiting to hear if they were awarded the funds. Another is a Federal Register Notice for a policy change from Federal Transit on the definition of “over and above ADA” and how it affects the New Freedom Funding. These two topics show the importance in being able to tap agencies around the state and keep them informed and be informed by their point of view in responding to these issues. The contact is critical.
2. The taxi legislation is still making its way through the legislative process and we are hopeful that it will offer an option to improve mobility all around the state. The Federal New Freedom funding has not brought about the influx of vehicles that was hoped, partly because of the issues of shared ride taxis, and we expect that this legislation will help New Yorkers without putting undue burden on the transportation providers.
3. Our third topic is Mobility management systems: defined as short-range planning by working with agencies or consumers. These opportunities are starting to develop all around the State. The availability of FTA funding at 80% reimbursement is making it possible and the coordinated planning efforts all around the state are an excellent start to leverage local information to reach target populations with improved mobility. NYSDOT will be letting an RFP to look at the barriers and opportunities, particularly in rural area of the state, to implementing these informational and training tools. The workgroup is currently reviewing the proposal and we hope to bring the results back to this committee. One key task of the study is to identify how each State agency shares transportation information and how can we weave a system together, supported by the new 511 and existing 211 systems, to improve the flow of information about appropriate transportation services.

The committee is working on the rest of the list and has had a lively and extended conversation on what is next to tackle for the committee.

1. One of the major points that continue to be talked about is consistent and regular training of public transportation workers in addressing the special needs of individuals with disabilities. The committee will be working to understand the ways that we can ensure that a consistent and effective training program is available and will work to understand the financial or human resource barriers that prohibit accountability in this effort.
2. Another topic is pedestrian amenities. Consistent and universally accepted design standards are crucial to increasing mobility for all residents of the State, regardless of disabilities. Concepts like “Complete

Streets” and universal design need to get into the local planning experience so that new development does not isolate individuals from participating in activities in a safe manner. Both this topic and sensitivity training were part of our longer term recommendations and the committee fully realizes the importance and magnitude of these efforts.

3. One of the other major topics is how we can continue to improve on the availability of cost efficient public transit paratransit services that increase independence but do it with dignity and in a coordinated fashion that allows for service efficiencies across the State.
4. The committee has put together the annual meeting schedule and will be posting it on the MISCC web site. The committee talked about assembling resources on coordinated transportation and we will continue those conversations with OMRDD. The NYSDOT website currently has the new 2009 Section 5310 program’s announcement on the web with a downloadable application and a schedule for workshops. We also have the current Locally Developed Human Service and Public Transportation Coordinated Plans from the urban areas and the rural counties. These documents lay out the current transportation resources available and some of the priorities that communities are trying to tackle to improve mobility. These documents are required to access the Section 5310 program funds as well as the Job Access and New Freedom funds. Please take the time to review them for your community.
5. So we will be busy and we look forward to a productive year making in-roads on improving mobility for individuals with disabilities and welcome comments and suggestions.

Thank you.

**Attachment A – Transportation Czars**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Transportation contact</b>
Department of Transportation	Thomas Vaughan
Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities	Gerald Passamonte
Office for the Aging	Michael Paris
Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities	Greg Jones
Office of Mental Health	Tony Trahan
State Education Department (VESID)	Michael Peluso
Division of Housing and Community Renewal	Lisa Irizarry
Office of Children and Family Services	Joseph Nye
Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services	Henry Gonzalez
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council	Nicholas Rose
Department of Health	Terrence Cullen