



2020

Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards

Florida

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Hillsborough MPO
Resilient Tampa Bay

Sean Sullivan
Executive Director
www.tbrpc.org

Project Website:

<http://www.planhillsborough.org/resilient-tampa-bay-transportation>

Project Description:

Hillsborough MPO led a three-county effort to review the impact of extreme weather on regional transportation. The project was a federally funded pilot, and two surface transportation assets were analyzed in each county. This project assessed the potential climate vulnerability and risks on transportation networks due to storm surge, flooding, and sea level rise; screened and prioritized critical transportation facilities; identified adaptation strategies and candidate projects; compared potential economic impact and adaptation costs, and provided recommendations for inclusion of resiliency strategies in the decision-making process of transportation planning.

Hillsborough MPO's leadership throughout this study includes regional collaboration, identification of high-risk transportation assets, adaptation strategies, development of a best practice toolbox and commitment to regional transportation resilience. This project exemplifies transportation planning leadership throughout the Tampa Bay Region.

Notable Aspects:

- This resilient transportation project includes numerous partners including: Federal Highway Administration, FDOT District 7, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties Metropolitan Planning Organizations, TBRPC and Cambridge Systematics.
- The project is one of 11 pilot projects on extreme weather resilience funding by FHWA.
- The project is an indication of the success of the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition (TBRRC) which convened 29 governments and over 90 business partners embark on efforts to make the region more resilient. Earlier in 2020, the TBRRC brought together 350 people at a "Leadership Summit" to discuss the need for resiliency and to hear how other regions of the country have adopted resilient strategies.

Georgia
Coastal Regional Commission
Transportation Responding to Regional Needs

Donald Masisak
Transportation Director
<http://crc.ga.gov>

Executive Director
Allen Burns

Project Description:

The Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) operates a 10-county regional transportation program in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the general public (Section 5311) ridership, the Georgia Department of Human Services, and the Department of Aging Services to transport participants to the numerous senior centers throughout the region. A pilot program was initiated within a targeted community to provide transportation services for seniors to have access for medical trips while these individuals were placed on a waiting list pending available capacity to be enrolled in the program. A flex-type route was established on alternate days to accommodate the individual yet not compromise the schedules developed by the Call Center function. A second targeted group emanating from the Aging Services Department were trips associated with a new "Quality of Life" parameter. This initiative went beyond access to medical services and included all aspects that could enhance the overall quality of life for individuals. Whether it was access to grocery shopping, a doctor's visit, church services, or visiting relatives elsewhere in the region this component was designed to provide the qualifying elderly population access to their transportation needs on a regular basis. Finally, the transit program and their unselfish drivers made the vehicles available during Hurricane Dorian to evacuate 287 qualifying residents from harm's way in September 2019.

Notable Aspects:

- Going outside the box to be more responsive for additional individuals has been the defined accomplishments thus far. To identify and put into service programs or assistance that serves more than the originally defined population base is always a satisfying accomplishment.
- A secondary benefit for any rural transit program is identifying alternate sources of revenues that supplement the financial obligations of operating a transportation program. The two added services for the Aging Department created an increased base of operating revenue and the Georgia Emergency Management (GEMA) component also provides additional revenues for a transportation reserve account.
- The number of trips provided for individuals who previously did not have reliable access to rural transit as a result of the project. 287 persons were provided transportation during Hurricane Dorian, an average of eight to ten residents within subsidized housing complexes scheduled rides for medical appointments or grocery shopping and the additional "Quality of Life" trips targeted for seniors average about 12 trips per week.

Georgia
River Valley Regional Commission
Reynolds Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Jill Hohnecker
Regional Community and Bicycle-Pedestrian Planner
Rivervalleyrc.org

Executive Director:
Jim Livingston

Project Description:

The City of Reynolds' Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan represents the efforts of local agencies, statewide advocacy groups, citizens of Reynolds and Taylor County, and the RVRC Bicycle and Planning Staff. The plan strives to improve the experience of bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city, while also addressing issues such as education and awareness, encouragement programs, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City of Reynolds Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides direction to the residents and local government in promoting non-motorized methods of transportation. The plan provides guidelines to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on the needs and desires of residents of Reynolds, as well as providing design guidelines, engineering, and non-infrastructure recommendations to the city.

The City of Reynolds Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was completed in August 2019. In July 2019, the Reynolds City Council passed a Complete Streets Policy. The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) that was formed throughout the planning process continues to meet and has created a formal organization, Reynolds Ramblers, that helps advocate for bicycling and walking as well as plan events in the community. RVRC Staff has also partnered with Reynolds Ramblers to complete additional items addressed in the Plan.

Notable Aspects:

- The City of Reynolds is actively seeking ways to increase the quality of life for all residents as well as attract tourists and visitors to Reynolds. This plan was a grassroots effort where community members and the mayor came together wanting to implement more bicycle routes and infrastructure to help improve their community.
- The city worked with the River Valley Regional Commission as they have completed these plans for other communities knowing that this outside knowledge would help them create and implement a well-researched and constructed plan.
- Throughout the planning process, there was commitment from the community and a focus on how they can leave their community better for their children. The grassroots planning process from this small community will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Georgia
River Valley Regional Commission
Connecting Americus

Jill Hohnerker
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Executive Director:
Jim Livingston

Project Website:
www.activevalley.org

Project Description:

In July of 2019, a group of passionate citizens convened to discuss the possibility of creating bicycle paths around the small community of Americus, Georgia. The City of Americus, it was discovered that the city had just over \$900,000 in Special Option Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds for cycling infrastructure. Americus had been having discussions for nearly 10 years on how to implement changes and have created multiple planning documents, including the Americus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Americus/Sumter Comprehensive Plan, and the Sumter County Long Range Transportation Plan.

Based on community feedback, the Connecting Americus team created potential projects that would best connect the places that were identified. The group then took this list to the Americus City Council asking for approval to spend money bringing in Alta Planning+Design out of Atlanta. Alta conducted a deep dive charrette in December 2019. The charrette brought together community members, city and county officials, and cycling advocates to discuss the future of cycling infrastructure in Americus and Sumter County.

In February 2020, the Connecting Americus team received the final report from Alta and presented to the Americus City Council asking for their approval to move forward to create a cycling network throughout Americus. This effort is ongoing and hopefully construction will begin shortly on a network connecting neighborhoods, schools, churches, recreation centers, grocery stores, and other highly utilized places throughout the community.

Notable Aspects:

- The planning efforts that have happened since June 2019 have been impressive and involved individuals from every facet of the community. It has utilized current and past planning documents to create a path to move forward and help improve the community.
- The Connecting Americus project has been a community project that has been the culmination of multiple plans being acted upon. When Connecting Americus took off in July 2019, it reenergized the community and brought members from civic groups, schools, churches, and public and private organizations from around the city together to begin working again on making Americus more cycling and walking friendly.

Georgia
River Valley Regional Commission
DHS Transit Emergency Service Gap

Jarrod McCarthy
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www.rivervalleyrc.org

Executive Director:
Jim Livingston

Project Description:

When the Department of Human Service (DHS) transit subcontractor exited from the busiest portion of the region, the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) worked with two entities to quickly fill the transit service gap. This preserved senior residents' much needed access to senior centers, where they receive meals and a range of important services. The services also depend on access to the clients to meet required goals. Employment-supporting transit and access to dialysis were also sustained.

DHS allowed for a somewhat streamlined process so that new transit providers could be in place quickly. Allowing the two centers in Muscogee and Harris counties to stay open. The regional commission awarded both of these facilities to a single subcontractor, New Horizons. Remaining smaller transit services in Muscogee County were packaged together and awarded to Transporcare. While awarding transit services may seem commonplace and even beneficial to the new subcontractors, there were challenges beyond the need for a quick startup that scared away other potential candidates. Despite having transportation experience, New Horizon's fleet was built to serve individuals that attend its own human services. Expanding the scope of services to include passengers beyond its own clientele greatly stretched the fleet and staff. Since New Horizons planned to only serve the senior centers temporarily. They worked diligently to fulfill the need for many months. New Horizons championed the cause for an extended period until a permanent solution could be secured.

Transporcare undertook the programs that collectively had great fluctuations in the need for transit. Moreover, the employment-oriented clients served by them often had last minute changes to their work schedules resulting in a large number of no-shows. Yet, Transporcare endured these hardships to provide the needed transit. When funding became available for dialysis transportation, Transporcare also began providing these trips on short notice. Serving dialysis is likewise particularly challenging because the amount of time a client's session takes can vary from one visit to another.

Notable Aspects:

- Through RVC's contractor and coordinator role, the overall impact is that the services at the senior centers were preserved along with their funding and transit funding, which can be cut in future years if not used. Seniors retained access to these programs, meals, and dialysis. Job access and the associated transit funds were also protected.
- It is important for recruiting large employers that the region be able to show that it has a mobile workforce with a reliable means of reaching work each day. This goes beyond just the mentioned counties above. We tout the ability to utilize a regional labor force from surrounding

counties as well. Those counties also benefit from their residents being employed (via taxes and disposable income spent locally) while also having transit that allows those residents to remain in those rural counties instead of having to move to Muscogee County to be closer to work.

- In working with Innovative Senior Solutions to expand them into DHS transit, the RVRC helped a minority-owned and operated award-winning business increase and diversify their revenue. The accomplishments, the unique strategies, the exceptional partners, the regional impact; the easily replicated nature of our efforts; the long-term viability of the solidified programs and partnerships, and the creative funding methods.

Kentucky

Barren River Area Development District

Glasgow Transit Rider Experience Improvements

Tyler Graham

Regional Transportation Planner

<https://www.bradd.org/>

Executive Director:

Eric Sexton

Project Website:

http://www.cityofglasgow.org/city_departments/public_works/transit_division.php

Project Description:

In 2019, the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD)'s Regional Transportation program assisted the City of Glasgow, Kentucky, in transit modernization activities that helped to bring riders an experience on par with those in major American cities. After the City of Glasgow's transit department was approached about implementing General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) for thousands of dollars – a challenge for small, rural communities like Glasgow, With assistance from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)'s training and resources, BRADD staff developed, implemented, and launched full GTFS support for the City's transit system. Thanks to BRADD's efforts, Glasgow residents can now use apps like Google Maps to get transit directions and learn more about their city's transit system alongside directions for driving and walking.

Glasgow became the first city in the entire 10-county BRADD area to utilize the technology. BRADD staff went even further by creating a brand-new transit system map for Glasgow. The previous transit map was unclear, being largely black-and-white, partially outdated, not having stops labeled, and lacking crucial information for riders and potential riders. BRADD's in-house work to improve the transit experience for riders served as a zero-cost, high-impact initiative that had an immediate impact on the transit system.

This work may not be unique for rapid transit systems in America's largest cities, but it is a revelation for a system serving a Kentucky community of less than 15,000 people. Rural public transportation is often underfunded, underdeveloped, and underappreciated – but by bringing it to the same standards

of excellence as our major cities, BRADD helped to provide the City of Glasgow's public transportation with a much-needed boost.

Notable Aspects:

- While monetary and/or numerical impacts are difficult to measure in a project like this, the impacts of BRADD's work on the rider experience for the City of Glasgow are immediate. One monetary impact that could be measured is the amount of money that BRADD staff's hard work saved the City of Glasgow. The creation of a GTFS dataset and the design of a brand-new system map could have easily cost the City thousands or tens of thousands of dollars – a cost that could have been far too steep for a small city like Glasgow.
- Thanks to BRADD's efforts, the City of Glasgow potentially saved thousands of dollars of costs and performed transformative rider experience improvements that could have otherwise never been done.

Missouri

Boonslick Regional Planning Commission

Buckle Up Phone Down, Statewide Challenge in Missouri

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<http://boonslick.org/>

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Project Website:

<https://www2.modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown/>

Project Description:

Cellphone-related crashes in Missouri have increased by 35 percent since 2014, with nearly 2,600 crashes in 2017. Drivers are 23 times more likely to be in a crash when they are texting and driving. In 2017, 64 percent of Missouri's traffic crash fatalities involved an unbelted driver or passenger. Missouri does not have a primary seat belt law. Law enforcement can only ticket motorists if stopped for another infraction.

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) safety division was tasked to decrease the number of deaths on the state's roadways. It was clear that something needed to be done to draw attention to and combat these problems. Buckle Up Phone Down (BUPD) addresses both problems with one program. What makes BUPD innovative is the challenge aspect. Drivers and businesses can take the BUPD challenge by going to the website (www.modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown) and pledging to always buckle up and put the phone down while driving. Businesses can also accept the BUPD challenge and upload a logo to be featured on the website. Those businesses that require seatbelt use in all company vehicles and also ban all talking, texting and phone use while driving, are given

“Gold Standard” status. All “Gold Standard” businesses are featured prominently on the homepage of the website. A “Partners” page on the site features all the businesses who have accepted the challenge. The site also features a video gallery with public service announcements, testimonials and student-made videos, all supporting the BUPD challenge. The challenge is promoted in a number of ways including frequent social media posts, cards, infographics, videos, window clings and staffed events. As of April 15, 2020, 518 businesses and 12,646 individuals have accepted the BUPD challenge.

Buckle Up Phone Down is a partnership between the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, but its success due to the dedication of the team members throughout the state whose talents are utilized in the creation of the materials (logos, infographics, videos, etc). Brainstorming keeps ideas for reaching the public fresh and innovative. Boonslick RPC and its member jurisdictions are part of that statewide support.

Notable Aspects:

- By introducing a challenge element and encouraging photo submissions, the BUPD challenge creates a dialogue and active participation with individuals. Those who actively participate in the challenge are more likely to buckle up and put the phone down and encourage others to do the same, thus saving lives.
- By reducing distracted driving, crashes will be avoided, reducing the cost of emergency response vehicle cleanups and road repair and saving MoDOT stakeholders valuable time in traffic delays and reroutes.
- Other intended benefits of the BUPD challenge include an increase in seatbelt usage and decrease in distracted driving due to cellphone use, resulting in lives saved, safer driving habits and safer roads.

Since its inception, BUPD has received several awards, including:

- National Award: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) TransComm Award - "Issues/Crisis Management Communication, Public Involvement Approach: Without Consultant"- 2018
- Mid-Mo Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) - "Campaign of Excellence Award" - 2018
- Missouri Department of Transportation's Innovation's Challenge - "Director's Award for Safety" – 2019
- The Governor’s Award for Quality and Productivity – Innovation Category – 2020



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