American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA) – Transportation Taskforce

Problem Statement: Lack of Transportation Options in Sheboygan County

Lack of transportation creates barriers in the area's workforce development efforts. Many of our local area employers continue to struggle to find entry-level labor. One of the barriers brought forth has been lack of public transportation options. Many individuals or families that are considering entry-level opportunities cannot afford a vehicle, and this creates barriers to employment. Another issue in our community is getting entry-level labor from the eastern part of the County to the western part of the County (or vice versa) for similar reasons as mentioned with the no or one car family scenario.

Current mass transit options only exist in the metro areas (i.e. Sheboygan, Kohler, & Sheboygan Falls) and with funding constraints on public transit it is difficult to expand service whether it be for frequency and/or to other areas.

Charge: Recommend Strategies to Combat the Area's Public Transportation Barriers

Use of ARPA funds must be well thought through and a wise investment, and expanding public transit opportunities to help lift people up and build a stronger workforce is an eligible use. The Transportation Taskforce will meet at least monthly to assess needs and develop recommendations and implementation strategies and provide a written report to the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) Board of Directors, City of Sheboygan Common Council, Heads of Local Government, and Sheboygan County Board no later than January 2022. Sheboygan County will be a leader in the State in providing affordable public transportation options to area residents.

Taskforce Membership:

- **Chair - Derek Muench, Director of Transit & Parking, City of Sheboygan**
- Manufacturing Employer - Jodi Schoerner, CFO, Masters Gallery Foods
- Kohler Hospitality - Claudia Krepsky, HR Project Leader for College & Community Relations
- Sheboygan County - Aaron Brault, Planning Director
- Sheboygan County - Linda Spitzer, Aging Supervisor
- Sheboygan County - Traci Robinson, Aging & Disability Transportation Coordinator
- Sheboygan County - Todd Richter, Veterans Service Officer

Taskforce Membership (continued):

- Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) - Brian Doudna, Executive Director
- Lakeland University - Beth Borgen, President
- Lakeshore Technical College- Courtney Ebben, Career & Employment Services Manager
- Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission - Chris Garcia, Transportation Planner
- Village of Kohler - Brett Edgerle, Public Works Director
- Transit Commission - Heather Cleveland, Chairperson and Green Bicycle Co. CEO
- RCS Empowers - Angie Buechel, Human Services Operations Manager
- Local elected officials- County Board Supervisor Edward Procek
  - Town of Sheboygan Town Supervisor James Schwinn

February 14, 2022

County Administrator Adam Payne and Members of the Sheboygan County Board,

Please find enclosed the ARPA Transportation Taskforce Report.

The ARPA Transportation Taskforce was charged with meeting at least monthly to assess needs and develop recommendations and implementation strategies. Sheboygan County will be a leader in the State in providing affordable transportation options to area residents.

Lack of transportation options create barriers in the area's workforce development efforts. Many of our local area employers continue to struggle to find entry-level labor. One of the barriers brought forth has been lack of transportation options. Many families that are considering an entry-level type of opportunity can only afford one vehicle. A choice then has to be made as to whether both persons in a household can work, or will it be just one. Many times, the choice is the latter so the labor shortage is only exasperated. Another issue in our community, is getting entry-level labor from the eastern part of the County to the western part of the County (or vice versa) for similar reasons as mentioned with the one car family scenario.

Current mass transit options only exist in the metro area (i.e. Sheboygan, Kohler, & Sheboygan Falls) and with funding constraints on public transit it is difficult to expand service whether it be for frequency and/or to other areas.

The ARPA Transportation Taskforce is submitting several projects for your review and approval. These projects include:

- County-Wide Transportation Study - The study would help unite stakeholders, municipalities, and leaders and create a front for addressing the transportation issue including unifying businesses, creating partnerships and further coordination within existing partnerships. It would be the foundation for the second recommended project as well.

- On-Demand County-Wide Transit Service – This project will improve the quality of life for residents of Sheboygan County and will benefit employers and their employees, places of higher education and their students, medical facilities and their patients. The project would provide local county-wide accessible transportation options for all demographics often limited by disability, location, age and income.

- Community Driver Education Program – Further, the program would provide an educational and training avenue for potential employees to become certified drivers hopefully increasing the pool of available and qualified employees.

- Out-of-County Transportation - The project enables veterans and the disabled to receive important required medical services but often not available locally. This project would provide out-of-county transportation options for individuals who choose to live in Sheboygan but need the care from other communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Derek Muench
ARPA Transportation Chair

Cc: City of Sheboygan Common Council
        Heads of Local Government
        SCEDC Board of Directors

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) TASKFORCE REPORT

Taskforce Information	
Taskforce Name: Transportation	**Chair(s):** Derek Muench
Report Date: February 14, 2022	

Charge
Current mass transit options only exist in the metro area (i.e. Sheboygan, Kohler, & Sheboygan Falls). It is the taskforce's charge to recommend strategies and opportunities to expand transportation solutions to under-serviced communities, or communities without transportation options.

Summary of Recommendations (In priority order)
1. County-Wide Transportation Study   2. On-Demand County-Wide Transit Service   3. Community Driver Education Program   4. Out-of-County Transportation

Recommendation 1: County-Wide Transportation Study

Implementation Strategy:
- Conduct a county-wide transportation study to understand full needs/analysis to better understand critical factual data points including need for service, areas of importance, demographics, solutions, project costs and key stakeholders/partners.
- The study would help define the parameters and service objectives for the On-Demand Service Solution identified in Recommendation 2.
- The study would help unite stakeholders/municipalities/leaders and create a front for addressing the transportation issue including unifying businesses, creating partnerships and further coordination within existing partnerships.
- Study would focus on non-motorized and motorized solutions alike (current non-motorized options and opportunities are lacking creating a possible deficiency in the total transportation network).
- Study could help identify out-of-county transportation needs for current residents for medical-related trips.
- Study could help identify transportations needs/barriers for second and third shift employers and employees (workforce development).
- Evaluate inventory of available transportation providers and driver trainers and look at opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
- Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission is very experienced with transportation planning, coordination and studying. They would become an instrumental and valuable resource and partner with this project as they have experience in working with Sheboygan County officials through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Shoreline Metro staff in the development of two critical documents including the Transportation Development Program (TDP) and Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP).
- Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission would assemble a comprehensive document and report to be used in supporting current and future (and potential) transportation projects.
    - Such document would be critical for Shoreline Metro's potential involvement (and undertaking) of the On-Demand project identified in Recommendation 2 as Shoreline Metro is a City of Sheboygan department.
    - Such study would help bridge gaps between municipalities and help visualize not only the need but the justification for organizations like Shoreline Metro to participate and take the lead on implementing such projects.

Total Annual Operational Cost and/or one-time Capital Request: Capital project expense only estimated at $40,000.

Funding Breakdown ($40,000 ARPA):
- The project is estimated at $40,000 and the request is to use ARPA funds for this project.
- This project could also be funded through available state grant planning funds (5304) and may require an application (funding would cover 80% of the eligible costs of the project).
  - ARPA funds could be used to cover the local 20% match, or $8,000 for this project.
- This project is a one-time investment with an estimated 12 to 16-month completion timeline.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
$40,000 ARPA	N/A	N/A
Expense	Expense	Expense
County-Wide Study $40,000	N/A	N/A

ARPA Eligibility:
- This project is eligible under the revenue loss category as allowed by Sheboygan County and American Rescue Plan Act. The project also meets the initiative and encourages workforce development.

Community Impact:
- The study would help unite stakeholders/municipalities/leaders and create a front for addressing the transportation issue including unifying businesses, creating partnerships and further coordination within existing partnerships.
- The study would lead to the successful creation and implementation of a transportation solution such as the On-Demand project in Recommendation 1 and help to meet all the community impact objectives associated with that project.

Recommendation 2: On-Demand County-Wide Transit Service

Implementation Strategy:

- o Create a shared-ride taxi, demand response, or similar service model geared to meeting individual demand in real-time with shared resources.
  - o Shared resources include employees, vehicles, funding, partnerships and customer trips;
- o This project is scalable – meaning the project can be rolled out in a small area and grow into a larger area, hours of service can start limited and grow into a wider window, etc. Project allows for integration of specific characteristics (eligibility, fares, response times, etc.)
  - o This also means costs are dependent on scale and customer usage;
  - o This will also mean fare revenue is dependent on customer usage as well;
- o The design of such transportation system can be done quickly and easily (planning);
- o Research of such project would require a County-Wide Transportation study to fully understand customer need, service area, resources, etc.
- o Project also recommends hiring a central contact / project lead such as a Mobility Manager or Transportation Coordination;
  - ▪ Leadership position dedicated to coordination/mobility management of services; Act as a project lead (ownership).
  - ▪ Ongoing coordination/discussion of transportation;
  - ▪ Assess needs/wants and evaluate barriers;
  - ▪ Collect data on demand;
  - ▪ Regionalize transportation solutions;
  - ▪ Further coordination of services (Veterans, Volunteers, 85.21, public transit, accessible transportation);
- o Shoreline Metro currently has infrastructure and ability to take lead and provide service (but would require expansion of necessary resources including funding, staff, drivers, and vehicles).
  - o Transit Director has 14+ years' experience with public administration and public transportation including research and development with on-demand "microtransit" services.
  - o Shoreline Metro has a comprehensive dispatch and scheduling software system including mobile technologies for real-time and on-demand response transit programs.
  - o Shoreline Metro is eligible to receive federal and state funding through grants and currently partners with several municipal jurisdictions for transit services.
- o Additionally, Lakeland University and Lakeshore Technical College provide transportation solutions for students and have experience coordinating transportation for their customers through a third-party provider. These two institutions of higher learning can be great resources and partners in the creation and development of this project.
- o Ongoing or additional funding may be sourced from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants including 5307, 5339 or 5310 or State of Wisconsin (WisDOT) grants including 85.20, 85.21 or 5310.
- o Timetable for such project is estimated to take anywhere from 1-5 years depending on the scale of the project and the procurement of required resources as identified above.

- o A county-wide transportation study is critical to the research and development of this project (as well as the success and longevity of the project).
- o The success of this project can be measured in several ways including:
  - o Statistics – data will show such success measures such as Customers per Revenue Hour, Expense per Revenue Mile, Expense per Revenue Hour, and Trips by Geographic Area to name a few.
  - o Total Ridership – although not the best measurement, total ridership in the program, or ridership measured during specific times of the day or in geographic regions may be measurables that can help improve the project.
  - o Utilization – another way of measuring ridership but this would include frequency to and from geographic locations or zones and customers on board in relation to total vehicle capacity.
  - o Return-on-Investment (ROI) – project could use this factor to evaluate whether this program is efficient and effective as a private or public project. Customer acquisition costs or cost per customer are valuable ways to evaluate the ROI of the project (although for a service, ROI is a difficult measure to uphold and evaluate).

Total Annual Operational Cost and/or one-time Capital Request: $1,100,000 total operating expenses over three years including costs to operate program (wages, benefits, maintenance, insurance, etc.) and investments in human assets (additional staffing, Mobility Manager, etc.). An additional $850,000 would be required in capital investment for vehicles and light capital equipment.

Funding Breakdown ($1,950,000 ARPA):
- Initial project expenses to be funded by ARPA including the $350,000 operating expenses and $850,000 capital investment in year one.
- Future and ongoing funding can be solicited from federal and state grants, partnership with municipalities (local share match), university and colleges (service sponsors), including Sheboygan County and customer fares. This funding would provide sustainability for this project once ARPA funds are exhausted.
- ARPA funds (if awarded) could cover expenses in years 2 and 3 of the project depending on the scale of the project and usership/ridership. The amounts being requested assumes the project is unscaled and open to any and all customers in Sheboygan County for a 12 to 15-hour service window, 6-days a week.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
$825,000 ARPA	$450,000 ARPA	$550,000 ARPA
$350,000 ARPA		
Expense	Expense	Expense
$825,000 Vehicle Purchase	$350,000 Program Costs	$500,000 Program Costs
$250,000 Program Costs		

ARPA Eligibility:
- This project is eligible under the revenue loss category as allowed by Sheboygan County and American Rescue Plan Act. The project also meets the initiative and encourages workforce development.

Community Impact:
- The project will improve the quality of life for the residents of Sheboygan County and in particular the customers that use the service.
- The project will benefit employers (large and small) and their employees bridging the gap between employees and their employers providing an accessible, reliable and dependable transportation solution for any and all users (critical to workforce development).
- The project encourages and enhances transportation for students to universities and places of higher education including a cooperative education university (Lakeland) and a technical training college (LTC) that currently fund transportation for students, often without reliable transportation, to encourage further development and placement in the workforce.
- The project provides cost-friendly and affordable fares for low-income and fixed-income individuals eliminating a barrier to accessing employment, nutrition, medical assistance and food and shelter.
- Project implements and encourages the use of shared-ride transit services that have been proven to reduce emissions and pollution and increase the air quality and health for citizens.
- Addresses accessibility issues for the growing elderly population in Sheboygan County and encourages these individuals to age-in-place rather than become nursing home or assisted living bound.
- The project ensures residents have access to essential and premiere medical services often located in the urbanized area(s) in the county.
- The project encourages families to locate to Sheboygan County by offering a transportation network that doesn't limit locations to call home but rather connects communities of all sizes and areas regardless of location or population.
- Project provides local county-wide accessible transportation options to disabled or elderly individuals, veterans, youth and minorities often limited due to disability, location, age and income.

Recommendation 3: Community Driver Education Program

Implementation Strategy:
- o Project strives to create a Community Driver Education Program that includes CDL training for drivers (significant CDL driver shortage nationwide).
- o Identify and assess existing driver training programs and available certifications in Sheboygan County.
- o A steering committee consisting of key stakeholders such as public transit providers, school bus providers, trucking companies, municipal public works and other private sector businesses to identify need, requirements and create long-term strategies to meet current and future needs.
- o Implement such training program at a local higher learning institution such as LTC, Lakeland University or UWGB and create a universal curriculum that can assist across different sectors and job expectations (non-CDL versus CDL).
  - o May be a program implemented or partnered with at an out-of-county institution a well.
- o Promote, education and brand driver careers (in particular those requiring CDL license) to students in high school and alternative learning institutions.
- o Develop partnerships that could fund or sponsor tuition for potential employees able and willing to complete training for their licenses and certifications (CDL).

Total Annual Operational Cost and/or one-time Capital Request: This project potentially could be self-sustaining but initially, funding for start-up could range between $75,000 and $125,000 per year depending on several factors including lead agency, private versus public venture, hired versus contracted service and ultimate support and "buy-in" by stakeholders.

Funding Breakdown ($300,000 ARPA):
- The recommendation breaks down the annual operating and/or capital budget and is appropriate for accomplishing the identified objectives.
- In addition to the ARPA funding request, the recommendation identifies other forms of revenue.
- The recommendation addresses how the program or service will be financially sustained when ARPA funds are exhausted.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
$100,000 ARPA	**$100,000 ARPA**	**$100,000 ARPA**
Expense	Expense	Expense
$100,000 Program Costs	$100,000 Program Costs	$100,000 Program Costs

ARPA Eligibility:

- This project is eligible under the revenue loss category as allowed by Sheboygan County and American Rescue Plan Act. The project also meets the initiative and encourages workforce development.

Community Impact:

- The program would address a growing concern over eligible and certified CDL drivers. Further, the program would provide an educational and training avenue for potential employees to become certified drivers hopefully increasing the pool of available and qualified employees.
- The program is an educational opportunity for all demographics in career fields that pay exceptionally well ultimately increasing the quality of life for employees and their families.
- The program offers the opportunity to streamline training efforts being performed at many different businesses and organizations. In some cases, training is a substantial cost with limited resources. This program could provide the resources in a timely manner and at an affordable rate for businesses.

Recommendation 4: **Out-of-County Transportation Program**

Implementation Strategy:
- o The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Sheboygan County and the County Veterans Service Office will continue to partner to better meet the transportation needs of Sheboygan County veterans, aging population, and adults with disabilities. Transportation services provided will be prioritized to first meet the medical/mental health needs of participants Out of Sheboygan County; as well as providing transport to stores so participants can obtain food and essential household items. If drivers are available then this program may be able to provide transportation for participants to access educational opportunities/employment or social and recreational events.
- o The ADRC and Veteran Ride Program will introduce a dedicated accessible van, six (6) Long-term Employment (LTE) employees and a Transportation Coordinator.
- o Program would address the growing need for county residents including veterans and individuals with disabilities to get to out-of-county health care providers.

Total Annual Operational Cost and/or one-time Capital Request: The total 3-year cost of this project is estimated at $582,000. The annual expense is estimated at $194,000.

Funding Breakdown ($582,000 ARPA):
- Initial project expenses to be funded by ARPA
- Future and ongoing funding can be solicited from federal and state grants, partnerships within the community and private donations. This funding would provide sustainability for this project once ARPA funds are exhausted.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
$194,000 ARPA	**$194,000 ARPA**	**$194,000 ARPA**
Expense	Expense	Expense
$194,000 Program Costs	$194,000 Program Costs	$194,000 Program Costs

ARPA Eligibility:

- This project is eligible under the revenue loss category as allowed by Sheboygan County and American Rescue Plan Act. The project also meets the initiative and encourages workforce development.

Community Impact:

- The project will improve the quality of life for the residents of Sheboygan County and inparticular the customers that use the service.
- The project enables veterans and the disabled to receive important medical services they are required toreceive out of county.
- The project provides services to low-income and fixed-income individuals eliminating a barrier to accessing employment, nutrition, medical assistance and food and shelter.
- Project implements and encourages the use of shared-ride transit services that have been proven to reduce emissions and pollution and increase the air quality and health for citizens.
- Addresses accessibility issues for the growing elderly population in Sheboygan County andencourages these individuals to age-in-place rather than become nursing home or assistedliving bound.
- The project ensures residents have access to premiere medical services.
- The project encourages families to locate to Sheboygan County by offering a transportation network that doesn't limit locations to call home but rather connects communities of all sizes and areas regardless of location or population.
- Project provides local accessible transportation options to disabled or elderly individuals, veterans, and minorities often limited due to disability, location, age and income.