

Fall 2008 Seminars to Provide Training on the Transportation Planning Process

By Dan Dalton and Ken Hosen, KFH Group, and Joe Rubino, J.M. Rubino Consulting

Previous editions of *Transportation Leader* included information on a grant awarded to TLPA from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to assist private for-hire vehicle operators in understanding and becoming involved in their local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and statewide planning processes and the opportunities for business that may follow. A key component of this technical assistance program is a training seminar that will equip private operators with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to more fully participate in these planning processes, understand the benefits of getting involved, and ultimately identify opportunities to tap into additional revenue opportunities and expand services. These one-day training seminars will be conducted this fall in Chicago, Denver, Las Vegas, Tampa, and Washington, D.C., with dates and locations to be finalized and announced in the near future.

The KFH Group and J.M. Rubino Consulting are thrilled to have been selected to develop and conduct these training seminars, recognizing the key role private transportation providers play in community transportation services and how your inclusion in the MPO, statewide, and local planning processes is critical to ensure the development of mobility options that are needed in your communities—and especially vital to older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. We appreciate this opportunity to provide more information on the upcoming trainings and, if we haven't previously met, introduce our companies and ourselves.

Private Sector Involvement in the Planning Process—Making the Connections

Though federal funding for transportation services calls for the involvement of private transportation providers, and a federal initiative stresses the importance of bringing all transportation stakeholders into the planning process, as you may have experienced in your communities often there is a disconnect between planning officials and your company. Why is this the case? Well, even for the most seasoned transportation professional, the planning processes can be convoluted and difficult to interpret, and therefore often outside the interest of the general public. The result is that often private transportation operators are not at the table during the planning process and therefore unable to form the partnerships with planning agencies, transit providers, human service agencies, and others that would allow you to connect with potential funding sources and expand transportation services and options in your community. At the same time, and despite providing mobility for large numbers of local residents—to work, to school, to business, and medical appointments, to the airport, and to many other locations—many private transportation providers may not enjoy the standing equal to the level of impact that their company

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has on their community, and some transportation planners may be unaware of the importance of these services in their area. These realities will be the basis for designing and delivering the training seminars.

While the involvement of private transportation operators in the planning processes has both humanistic and financial incentives, outreach to your companies is required through federal funding programs. For example, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), legislation that provides funding for highway and transit programs, includes new coordinated planning requirements for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute—JARC) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) Programs. Projects funded through these programs must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, and this coordinated plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of private transportation providers. So, while your involvement in the planning process is logical and important, it is also required that you be given the opportunity to participate.

Seminar Topics and Materials

The training seminar format and supporting materials will be practical, easy to understand, and most importantly easy to use back at your business and in your communities. The training will help you identify beneficial opportunities for involvement in your local and statewide planning processes, provide real world examples (both success stories as well as unsuccessful efforts), and offer the chance for you to share your experiences and to draw information from other participants. We realize the time constraints you face on a daily basis, so through the training we hope to provide you with an appropriate understanding and working knowledge of the planning processes and organizations so that you can ask the pertinent questions and make more informed decisions regarding the level of involvement that is most valuable to you.

We will also discuss business opportunities and potential services that involve new or stronger partnerships with transportation planners, human service agencies, and others in the community, and review the issues and requirements that may hinder effective involvement in the planning processes and discuss possible ways to overcome these potential



Coordinated planning requirements were presented by Dan Dalton of the KFH Group, Inc.

barriers. An important part of this discussion will be the role that you envision for your company in the planning processes, and how your involvement can be effective and consistent with where you want your company to be in the future. In addition, we'll discuss the situations where you may be able to inform local and statewide planning representatives regarding your interest in the process, let them know how your company and services fits with overall plans to improve transportation, and educate them on the transportation services and projects where delivery by private transportation operators is both effective and common sense.

Over the summer we will be developing the training materials, and presenting a draft to a TLPA technical working group to gain their input. While the agenda for the trainings will be finalized during this process, we anticipate covering the following key topics during the trainings:

- Advantages of private sector participation in transportation projects.
- SAFETEA-LU and the transportation programs available to the private sector

and with potential for private provider partnership with grant recipients.

- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans required by SAFETEA-LU for funding through the Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom Programs.
- Conveying your company's value to public entities, including MPO and other planning agencies.
- United We Ride, the federal initiative for developing coordinated human service delivery systems.
- Adapting your company to the different types of business opportunities that may become available through the planning process.

The seminars will include a reference manual that will include relevant MPO, statewide, and local planning information and resources. These materials will include federal requirements, potential roles for private transportation providers, what to watch for at the local level, and tips on getting in the planning process, and typical planning organizational structures at the local, regional, and state levels. Information in the manual will build upon the new section on the FTA Web site regarding private participation in the planning process. (<http://www.>

fta.dot.gov/planning/programs/planning_environment_7013.html). In addition, sections in the manual will include checklists with relevant activities to help you participate in the planning process in your community after the training. Throughout the series of seminars, we will seek your feedback so that we can make any needed modifications to the training and update the materials in the manual to respond to specific and consistent issues that arise during the trainings.

After the Seminars

We realize that some topics covered during the training seminars will be new to you. While the training manual will be a helpful resource, we will encourage you to contact us after the trainings to answer questions, discuss specific issues, or solicit advice on the transportation planning processes in your communities, regions, or states. In addition, through TLPA we will provide a quarterly update in the year following the training seminars on relevant transportation planning issues or changes.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming training seminars. In the meantime, feel free to contact us—

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The Training Team

The KFH Group and J.M. Rubino Consulting team that will be developing and delivering the TLPA training seminars bring varied and different abilities to conduct both informative and useful training sessions. They have a very detailed knowledge of the MPO, Statewide, and local planning processes, experience working with private transportation providers, and the skills to conduct effective training sessions, with both the broad and detailed knowledge and abilities that will be necessary for developing and delivering the training seminars. Here's information on their companies and on the trainers:

*KFH Group, Inc.
www.kfgroup.com*

The KFH Group provides transportation planning, management consulting, and policy analysis, with a major focus on providing assistance to local, state, and federal agencies and organizations to improve transportation services. Each of the firm's Principals have over 25 years experience in the transportation field, both in consulting and direct operation. This experience has involved work for clients at all levels of government, with a variety of companies, agencies, and organizations, and with transportation providers of all sizes. The KFH Group has extensive experience related to all aspects in the development and delivery of the training seminars that includes conducting a variety of training programs throughout the country, an extensive knowledge of federal funding programs, development of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans required by SAFETEA-LU, strong understanding of the MPO, Statewide, and local planning processes, and close work with the private sector.

Ken Hosen's background includes paratransit management and planning, human services transportation management and planning, development of RFPs for paratransit operation, project evaluation, technology research and procurement; and writing practical guidebooks for transit professionals. He has written and conducted training programs in over 20 states for almost 20 years and is a nationally recognized trainer. In addition he has also worked to coordinate human service and public transit for over 27 years. His work with private for hire operators is extensive as a former taxi driver in two cities includes driving a taxi in both New York and Boston, and working with many contracts using for hire operators.

Dan Dalton's background includes developing training curriculum, coordinating training events, conducting taxi service research, developing coordinated transportation plans, and administering federal funding programs. For Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA) he developed curriculum for training programs that included private transportation providers, coordinated and participated in national training events. Dan also represented ESPA at several TLPA conventions, provided input on several taxi-related resources, and coauthored Moving Forward Together: A Workbook for Initiating and Increasing Accessible Taxi Services in Your Community.

*J. M. Rubino Consulting
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J.M. Rubino Consulting has expertise in all modes of transport involving both the public and private sector. Having made presentations at a number of TLPA meetings, Joe Rubino is familiar to many TLPA members. His experience includes transportation brokering, call center operation, transportation marketing and sales programs, hospital and other medical outsourcing contracts, and driver recruitment, training, and retention programs, and he has authored orientation and training programs for drivers, dispatchers, routers, and customer service staff in both the taxicab and special needs transit industries. Joe is a member of the 1st Coast MPO in Jacksonville, Florida, and has a seat on his Long Range Transportation Plan Steering Committee.

The opinions and recommendations in this article are those of the authors, and not those of TLPA or its transportation company members.