

Act 361 of 2004 Boilerplate Report
Section 714

Section 714 of enrolled House Bill 5528, Act 361 of 2004 states the following:

Sec. 714. (1) The department, in cooperation with local transit agencies, shall work to ensure that demand-response services are provided throughout Michigan. The department shall continue to work with local units of government to address the unmet transit needs in Michigan. (2) The department shall report by March 1, 2005 on its efforts to implement this section over the past 2 years.

The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) goal for transit service in Michigan is to work with the local units of government on developing and expanding service where there is local support and funding. Transit services in Michigan are planned, developed, implemented and operated at the local level and local support is essential. State funding and leadership are important, but local commitment is the critical first step needed to establish and maintain new transit services.

There are several different ways that MDOT works with local units of government to initiate or expand demand-response services.

- MDOT project managers are assigned to specific geographic areas of the state and are available to meet with local units of government to discuss options available to provide or expand demand-response services. Some examples of where MDOT guidance and assistance has helped local governments add, expand or consider new demand-response services within the past several years include:
 - **Clinton County** – A transit authority was recently formed to provide countywide demand-response services.
 - **Allegan County** – The county recently initiated countywide demand-response services.
 - **Benzie County** – The county is currently exploring options for initiating countywide demand-response services.
 - **Mason County** – There are currently demand-response services in Ludington and Scottville, but the county is now exploring options for initiating countywide demand-response services.
- Under the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF), MDOT has been able to provide grants to local agencies for regional coordination studies and demonstrations. These CTF grants have been used to study and demonstrate the effectiveness of new or expanded demand-response and fixed route services, specifically aimed at providing cross county transportation services. In many areas of the state, cross county coordination can be a key component of providing increased or enhanced demand-response service.

Recent CTF supported studies and demonstrations have included:

- **Sanilac County:** The County is currently looking at coordinating the transportation providers in the county to improve the efficiency of the service and make service improvements to meet the needs of their customers.
- **Livingston Essential Transportation Service (LETS):** LETS used CTF demonstration funding to expand their demand-response service to meet regional needs, specific daily medical trips into the Washtenaw County area.
- **The Mass Transportation Authority (MTA):** The MTA, which serves Flint and Genesee County, used CTF demonstration funding to provide new fixed route services (which are supported by demand-response services) that provide access to jobs outside Genesee County.
- **North East Regional Ride:** The Thunder Bay Transportation Corporation (TBTC) in Alpena County is completing its the third year of demonstration funding to provide regional demand-response transportation services in a three county region of Alcona, Alpena and Montmorency Counties.
- **Straits Regional Ride:** The Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners received MDOT demonstration funding to provide regional demand-response transportation services in a four county region, (Cheboygan, Emmet, Otsego and Presque Isle Counties).

In the regional efforts noted above, an MDOT staff was a member of and helped establish the Regional Local Advisory Council, which is composed of public and private transit providers in areas, social service agencies and, in the some cases, employment agencies. MDOT assisted the transit agencies in creating interlocal agreements and accessing state funds for the start-up/demonstration period.

- In Fiscal Year 2005, CTF funding to demonstrate and support new regional service is no longer available. In addition, staff resources available to assist local agencies have been reduced. However, to the degree possible, MDOT staff continues to work with local agencies to encourage them to consider new or expanded service that, if successful, would be eligible for state assistance under the local bus operating program at some point in the future. Currently, MDOT is working with the transit agencies in **Bay, Saginaw and Midland Counties** to better coordinate their existing services – both fixed route and demand-response - to provide additional transit options for residents needing to cross county lines.

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Michigan Department of Transportation
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