

Minutes of the

ILLINOIS REGION 2 TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Serving Henry, Mercer, rural Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 – 2:00 p.m.
Bi-State Regional Commission, Room 302
Rock Island, IL 61201

Committee Members Present

Morgan Lewis	Western County Public Transportation
Shelly Richardson (virtual)	Statewide Independent Living Council
Melissa Shouse	Project NOW
Alan Silas	MetroLINK
Kim Walker	Abilities Plus / Henry County Public Transportation

Others Present

Sarah Bambas	Bi-State Regional Commission
Bryan Schmid	Bi-State Regional Commission
Zach Sutton	Bi-State Regional Commission
Oakley Thompson	Bi-State Regional Commission

1. Welcome and Introductions. Mr. Schmid welcomed those in attendance and requested introductions.
2. Approval of the September 16, 2025 Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes. The minutes were included in the agenda packet to review. Ms. Walker motioned to approve the minutes, and Ms. Lewis seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
3. Presentation on Initiatives and Transportation Goals of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois. Shelly Richardson of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois attended the meeting virtually. She gave the committee an update on initiatives that the Center is working on. Ms. Richardson mentioned the 22 centers for independent living in the state. She detailed how SILC is addressing the critical independent living issues of housing and employment through the means of transportation. Ms. Richardson noted how important transportation services are to helping those in need live independently. She then mentioned the shortcomings of non-emergency medical transportation and how employment can be difficult to maintain when work hours don't line up with transit hours. There is a need for more transportation services aimed at assisting those striving to live independently, especially since so many individuals are transitioning out of 14C sheltered workshops and into the workforce. Ms. Richardson then called for the committee to try and gather rider stories for the governor's office through the transportation complaint form available on the SILC website. Ms. Lewis from Western County Public Transportation then began a discussion on non-emergency medical transport by pointing out the lack of perceived responsibility from healthcare providers who see no need to intervene on behalf of patients even when those patients consistently miss appointments due to a lack of transportation, sometimes with catastrophic consequences. Ms. Richardson mentioned how rideshare services, such as Uber or Lyft offer little help with the problem of transporting patients to medical appointments.

4. Update and Input on the Transit Development Plan Update. Ms. Bambas and Mr. Sutton discussed the Transit Development Plan (TDP) update and addressed how Bi-State is intending to send out surveys to existing riders. Committee members remarked that the only reliable way to gather feedback from riders is to place an employee on buses/vans with the specific intent of gathering reviews. Mr. Thompson informed the group that he will be requesting committee members to communicate the name of any specialized transportation services and their contact information by sending an email to othompson@bistateonline.org. Ms. Lewis then pointed out how important it is to coordinate with Medicaid/Medicare case workers when trying to fulfill non-emergency medical transportation needs. Ms. Lewis talked about how hundreds of thousands of dollars in matching funds from Medicaid and Medicare are important for her organization's ability to transport rural patients to and from their appointments. Despite Western County Public Transportation's fully automated algorithm designed to facilitate ride-sharing, the isolation of individual patients sometimes causes another issue due to the lack of transportation services available for said individuals, since there is a shortage of drivers, and only on rare occasions can a driver spend their entire day on transporting one patient. Ms. Lewis detailed the shifting landscape of medical providers in areas to the south of the Bi-State Region, such as those in proximity to Fresenius (kidney) medical care centers like the one near Galesburg, IL. There was also a brief discussion about the potential impacts of imposing free fares for transit riders. It was discussed that this could cause issues for rural transit providers and their ability to secure contracts with other agencies to provide transportation.
5. Discussion on Future Meeting Dates. Mr. Schmid shared that Ms. Bambas would be taking over staffing responsibilities of the Region 2 TAC in the new year. The current meeting dates, however, conflict with another standing meeting for Ms. Bambas. The committee agreed to shift their meeting time to the third Thursday of each quarter, which falls in March, June, September, and December.
6. Other business. Mr. Schmid shared an email from Melissa Ohrwall that detailed the importance of undercoat and roof covering to prevent water damage that shortens the lifespan of public transit vehicles. The next round of the Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) program is expected to open in early 2026. Ms. Lewis announced that dates had been determined for the annual RTAC conference (3/3 – 3/5) and noted there will be a special training on meeting ADA requirements. She also mentioned the RTAC conference is a great opportunity for networking. The committee then welcomed Ms. Shouse, who recently started her position as transportation program director for ProjectNOW operating RICO Public Transportation.
7. Public comments. There were no public comments.
8. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.