

Jackson and Vinton Counties Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

2015-2016

**Grantee
Vinton County Board of Commissioners**

**Lead Agency:
Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc.**

**Plan supported by:
Jackson County Board of Commissioner's
Community Stakeholders
Customers**

**Plan prepared by:
JVCAI Mobility Management & the MM Coordination Council**



Formally Adopted by the Mobility Management Coordination Council May 21, 2015

The content of this report reflects the views of those who participated in the Jackson and Vinton Counties Coordinated Transportation Plan project. The report includes the best available data and information obtained during the project time period. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views and policies of the participating agencies and organizations and/or the Ohio Department of Transportation.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) requires a coordinated transportation plan to support applications for 5310 (vehicle) funding. The goals of the plan are to:

- ✓ Reduce unnecessary duplication in service
- ✓ Make better use of existing resources (all resources, not just vehicles)
- ✓ Expand services in order to fill identified gaps or need

Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc. (JVCAI) is the designated lead agency responsible for transportation coordination. In September and October of 2007, JVCAI facilitated the development of a five-year coordinated transportation plan with input and expertise from over 19 transportation providers and human service organizations in the two counties. Planning participants stated that increased transportation coordination could provide important benefits to county residents, such as more independence for the elderly, improved access to medical visits, more people able to work, better access to and involvement in the community and saving lives.

In 2015 JVCAI once again facilitated and updated the existing transportation plan by obtaining valuable input from over 15 transportation providers and human service organizations, key stakeholders and customers. While new information is included, some of the information from the previous coordinated plan remains current and valid and we opted to utilize it in this plan. Update process began in October of 2014 and was completed in May of 2015.

Transportation Information

Opinions and information were gathered to help support the planning process through interviews, surveys and community meetings with transportation providers and key human service providers in the counties. Key findings show that the current transportation system:

- ✓ Serves the Elderly, Persons with a disability and low-income persons

- ✓ Has an estimated 108 vehicles, and of these:
 - Each averages approximately 30,000 miles per vehicle annually
 - Over 2,000,000 miles were traveled in 2014

Data gathered on the transportation provided (actual trips and trip requests) also showed that:

- ✓ Over 7,000 unduplicated customers utilizes the services with over 200,000 one-way trips being made annually, averaging 20 miles per trip
- ✓ Eighty-Four percent (84%) of the reasons clients need transportation services is health-related: trips to the doctor, hospital, health agency or for prescriptions
- ✓ Providers turn down a total of 72 trip requests each month, or 864 requests annually

Challenges

The counties have numerous challenges in providing transportation services including:

- ✓ Maintaining vehicles and rising expenses for fuel and older vehicles
- ✓ Long distances/long hours for clients to be transported.
- ✓ Hiring/retaining drivers
- ✓ Scheduling/coordinating
- ✓ Roads not plowed in winter, road conditions and driveway conditions
- ✓ Some people are unaware of services or are embarrassed to use services
- ✓ Many providers with different eligibility requirements, no central resource center

Transportation Gaps

Based on the planning process, six gaps were identified as priorities for action in Jackson and Vinton Counties over the next five years. For each gap, planning participants also developed short-term and long-term strategies, which can be found under *Identifying strategies to address Gaps* later in the plan. (pg.14)

GAP A: Replacement of current vehicles that are aging and have high miles in order to maintain the current fleet and provide the current level of transportation services in the counties

Gap B – Non- typical Transportation, i.e. employment, shopping, banking, recreation, social services, Medicaid spend down for the elderly, persons with a disability and low-income persons.

Gap C – Lack of clear and sufficient communication 1) for people who are in need of the services and 2) regarding eligibility for services among both professionals and clients

Gap D – Continue Coordination Efforts- MM

Gap E – Expand Public Outreach-MM

Gap F – Lack of unified system for coordinated scheduling/tracking for the service areas

Background and Purpose

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) requires a coordinated transportation plan to support applications for 5310 (vehicle) funding. The goals of the plan are to:

- ✓ Reduce unnecessary duplication in service
- ✓ Make better use of existing resources (all resources, not just vehicles)
- ✓ Expand services in order to fill identified gaps or need

Funding for 5310 vehicles can be used for:

- ✓ Modified minivans
- ✓ Light transit vehicles (small busses)
- ✓ Converted vans

A coordinated plan is a unified comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that:

- ✓ Increases support for coordinated transportation planning across counties
- ✓ Identifies transportation needs with emphasis on the elderly, low-income and people with disabilities
- ✓ Provides strategies for meeting the local needs
- ✓ Prioritizes transportation strategies for funding and implementation

ODOT has identified criteria for successful coordination which Jackson and Vinton counties have addressed through this planning process:

- ✓ From the beginning involve all significant stakeholders on a significant level
- ✓ Clearly identify the transportation needs and concerns of all stakeholders
- ✓ Focus on improved data collection and reporting so that all parties understand the full cost and service implications of their transportation decisions and the benefits of coordination
- ✓ Focus on the benefits that should be achieved, such as --- expanded service, lower unit costs and better service quality

As the designated lead agency receiving funding for transportation coordination, Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc. (JVCAI) has the responsibility of bringing together county transportation providers and other stakeholders to facilitate the development of the plan. The plan will affect Jackson and Vinton counties transportation opportunities and funding for the next five years.

The Importance of Planning Participation and Coordination

One or more representatives from 18 transportation providers and human service agencies from Jackson and Vinton Counties participated in the development of this *updated* coordinated plan through the following ways:

- ✓ Completing a comprehensive survey related to current services, gaps and potential strategies to inform the planning process
- ✓ Being interviewed by the Mobility Manager to provide their perspectives on needs, issues and strategies
- ✓ Attending facilitated planning meetings to finalize the updates to the plan and for formal adoption of the plan

Most of these agencies/Customers participated in surveys and interviews led by the Jackson-Vinton CAI Mobility Manager.

In addition to interviews and surveys most of these agencies came together on February 26, 2015 to review the data and information collected and update the transportation plan. The providers and stakeholders began a dialogue about working together on transportation needs and services. The agencies participating in the planning process include the following:

- AHOY Transportation: Aretha Hoy –10/16/14 (Interview) 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Board of DD of Jackson County: Nick Elliott_10/15/14 (Interview) 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Jackson County Commissioners: Paul Haller 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Vinton County Board of DD/Vinton Industries, Inc.: Andrew Riley(mtg), Johnna Owings(interview)
- Jackson County Job and Family Services: Teri McGraw & Tammy Osborne-Smith 11/5/14 (Interview) Teri McGraw & Marty Wallace 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Jackson Senior Citizens/Board on Aging: Lissa Warrens 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Jackson Transportation: Wayne Lester- Phone interview, Survey
- Jackson Vinton Community Action Agency Inc.: Rick Johnson & Sharon Current (Transportation) 10/21/14 (interview), Rick Johnson, Susan Stevens, Rita Silvey 2/26/15 (meeting)
- JVCAI Head Start -Molly Seimetz, Kim Yates – 9/23/14 (Interview), Survey
- Tri-County Mental Health: Jean Goodman –Survey, 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Veterans, Jackson County: Jennifer –Phone Interview 2/10/15
- Veterans, Vinton County: Don Shockey – 2/9/15 Interview, 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Vinton County Commissioners: Interview
- Vinton County Job and Family Services: Rick Reynolds, Donna Sanders, Rick Moore (Interview, Survey) 2/26/15(Meeting)
- Vinton Senior Citizens/Board on Aging: Rhoda Toon Price –Interview, survey, 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- Jackson County Customer w/ disability: 2/26/15 (Meeting)
- SOAR-Dayhab Center w/transportation: 3/13/15 (Interview)
- Jackson County Customer-Senior Representation-2/19/15 (Interview)

Participating planning agencies were asked to notify their clients of the planning meetings and invite them to attend.

The purpose of the planning process (interviews, a survey, community meetings and communications between and after meetings) was to update the existing coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for Jackson and Vinton counties that:

- Increases support for coordinated transportation planning within Vinton and Jackson counties
- Identifies the transportation needs of the counties with emphasis on individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes
- Provides strategies for meeting those local needs including no and low-cost strategies
- Prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation
- Determines how existing 5310 vehicles or new 5310 vehicles help the counties meet their transportation gaps

On February 26, 2015, planning participants identified what it could mean to Jackson and Vinton Counties if the community could better meet the transportation needs of their most vulnerable residents. The results show the importance of these coordination efforts. Planning participants said these efforts could result in:

- More independence for the elderly
- Better medical care and access to doctor visits
- More people could work
- Higher standard of living
- More people concerned about/able to address their needs
- Better access to and involvement in the community
- Would help children of the elderly meeting their parents' needs
- Help the younger generation, show them how to work together
- Help some residents regain their trust in services
- Save lives (people could get to dialysis and other services)
- Monitor services needed and being provided
- Providing current resources and asset list
- Utilizing shared data to fulfill grant application process

Brief Description of Jackson and Vinton Counties

Both Jackson and Vinton Counties are rural southeastern Ohio counties that possess both the assets of rural communities, such as valuing family and relationships, beautiful scenery and local farming, and the challenges related to rural life, such as poverty, travel distances, no public transportation system, limited employment opportunities and isolation. Provided below is a set of indicators reviewed for the planning process.

Indicator*	Jackson County	Vinton County	Ohio
Land area	420.3 sq. miles	414.1 sq. miles	40,952.6 sq. miles
2014-2015 estimated population	33,225	13,435	11,549,120
Average annual rate of population change 2010- 2015 (estimated)	-0.01%	+0.04%	+0.01
Projected 2020 population	33,630	13,620	11,574,870
Projected % change in population from 2014 to 2020	+0.01%	+0.01%	+0.018%
Population under age 17 (as a % of total population)	8,473 (26%)	3,469 (27.1%)	2,885,141 (25.4%)
Population aged 65 and over (as a % of total population)	4,454 (13.6%)	1,563 (12.2%)	1,508,095 (13.3%)
Individuals living below poverty in 1999 (as a % of population)	5,286 (16.5%)	2,529 (20%)	1,170,698 (10.6%)
*Median travel time to work	28.3 min.	37.0 min.	22.9 min.
*% of workers that work outside the county	32.5%	59.7%	Not applicable
**2015 unemployment rate	8.8%	8.1%	6.1%
Persons with disabilities (as a % of total population over 5 years)	7,561 (25.1%)	2,864 (24.3%)	1,909, 489 (18.3%)

Note: All 2010-2014 census data unless otherwise specified

Sources: Ohio County Profiles (Ohio Department of Development) and U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder/Quick Facts

*Jackson County lost two major employers within the last 4 years and Vinton County lost two lumberyard companies in the past year.** Quickfacts-Feb. 2015

Overview of the Current Transportation Services

To inform the planning process, information was collected in order to:

- ✓ Identify the transportation services in Jackson and Vinton counties
- ✓ Understand the current transportation service environment
- ✓ Identify the counties' transportation "gaps" and possible ways to fill them

Transportation information was collected by conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews with Jackson and Vinton counties' transportation providers, selected human service providers and other key stakeholders. *(The interview questions are in Appendix F.)*

Fifteen (15) interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted 30 – 60 minutes each. *(The participant list is included in this document under **The Importance of Planning Participation and Coordination**)*

In addition to interviews, transportation providers were asked to complete a Transportation Survey and Vehicle Inventory. Ten (10) Surveys and Inventories were completed and returned. *(The survey and inventory instruments are in the Appendix A & B.)*

Over 215 public surveys were distributed to the elderly, low-income and persons with a disability in October of 2014 and 122 were returned. *(Appendix D)*

The results of the interviews and surveys were compiled, and the planning participants reviewed and finalized the key results at the February 26th meeting. Provided below is a summary of key findings.

✓ **Number of Transportation Providers**

There are approximately 14 transportation providers in Jackson and Vinton counties. Providers include both for-profit and non-profit organizations, those providing only transportation services to their clients and those contracting with other human service agencies to transport their clients.

(An inventory of transportation providers serving Jackson and Vinton counties is in Appendix C & E.)

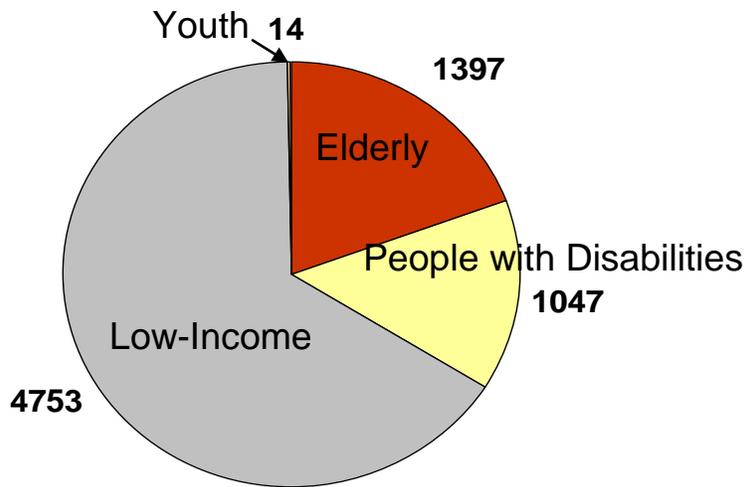
✓ **Primary Clients Currently Being Served**

- Seniors (60+) for medical appointments
- Medicaid recipients for medical appointments
- People with physical and mental disabilities for medical appointments and special services

- Youth development program participants
- Job and education program participants
- Persons getting WIC and Medicaid redeterminations
- Seniors receiving meals at senior sites and “meals on wheels”
- Low income persons, elderly and persons with a disability for shopping/social services

✓ **Populations Being Served**

- The number of individuals served on an annual basis is approximately 7,197*
- The number served represents 16% of the total population**
- Low-income adults are the most served (66%)



*The number of individuals served was estimated by some providers, because providers typically track by the trip and not individuals due to funding requirements.

**Percentage is based on 45,000 population-two counties

Populations Under-Served

- People just above the poverty level who are not eligible for services (including the working poor and unemployed)
- Youth (especially teenagers who need jobs)
- Young adults who want to go to college/work-ages 16-24
- People without transportation to the grocery store, recreation, visit family, etc.
- People unaware of services
- Retirees (many have incomes that don't qualify them for assistance or those who shouldn't or don't feel comfortable driving)
- Veterans
- BDD and all developmentally disabled populations that choose to work
- Those who work outside normal business hours (8am – 5pm)

- Families of the elderly needing help with elder care/transportation
- Clients needing out-of-state transportation (some providers can't cross state lines)
- Short-term disabled populations

Origination/Destinations

- The primary trip origination is a client's home
- The major destinations are:
 - Columbus
 - Jackson
 - McArthur
 - Gallipolis
 - Chillicothe
 - Cincinnati* Circleville*
 - Portsmouth* Athens*
 - Parkersburg, WVA Ashland, KY
 - Schools/Sr. Center/Training/Adult daycare
- PASSPORT clients are traveling to West Virginia & Kentucky (Ashland, KY and Parkersburg) and Marietta
- *Destinations that have grown include Portsmouth, Waverly, Logan, *Athens and Cincinnati* – Columbus is not the only resource for certain types of medical care. Cleveland Clinic has just recently become a medical destination approved by NET providers.

Reasons for Transportation Need

- At least 84% of the reasons clients need transportation services is health-related, other reasons are: shopping, employment, job training and social services.

Vehicles in Service

- 108 vehicles are used to transport clients
- 36 (33%) have lifts and/or ramps
- Total vehicle capacity: 548 riders
- 91 drivers, 47 full-time

Vehicle Plans

- Five (5) providers said they were planning on replacing at least one vehicle in the next two years
- The source of funds for the new vehicles are:
 - Agency/Company funds
 - 5310

- In the next 2 – 5 years providers plan to replace 6 vehicles with 5310 funds

Trips/Miles

For the year 2014 providers:

- Traveled nearly two million miles
- Made approx. 200,000 one-way trips
- Each vehicle (on average): per year
 - Traveled 30,000- 50,000 miles
 - Traveled 20- 35 miles per one-way trip
 - Operated over 232 days

Transportation Requests

- About one-half of the providers said they don't turn down any requests
- The other providers reported that they have to turn down a total of 72 requests each month or 480 requests annually
- Providers refer their clients to:
 - Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc.
 - Vinton Senior Center
 - Veterans
 - AHOY Transportation
 - Jackson Senior Center
 - Jackson Transportation
 - Boards of DD
 - S.O.A.R
 - SCOJFS
 - JCJFS
- Three said they receive about 14 referrals each month from other transportation services

Challenges of Providing Transportation

- Not being able to serve everyone in need
- Maintaining vehicles
- Long distance between locations
- Hiring/retaining drivers
- Expenses – maintenance for older vehicles
- Demanding/difficult and confused clients, customers change their minds, use other rides, think they scheduled when they didn't
- Scheduling/coordinating
- Roads not plowed in winter, road conditions and driveway conditions
- Limited communication, cell phone coverage, older phones

- Some people are unaware of services or are embarrassed to use services

Overlaps in Transportation Service

- Most don't think there are overlaps
- Two said some overlaps may exist, but admitted it was very little:
 - Two vans from the same company show up at the same time
 - Same person may schedule with two providers
 - Providers may travel down the same road

Transportation Funding

- For about one-half of providers, their transportation budget is less than 25% of their total budget
- Major funding sources are:
 - Ohio Job and Family Services
 - Title 3-B (Older Americans Act)
 - Passport 7 and 8
 - Non-Emergency Transportation (NET)
 - Ohio Department of Mental Health
 - Ohio Department of Transportation
 - General Fund (Levy)
 - Ohio Department of Aging
 - Medicaid Waivers
- Funding for transportation from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) & American Cancer Society is no longer available but they continue to seek transportation partnerships

Gaps in the Current Transportation System

Using the data collected to inform the planning process and the dialogue among planning participants on February 26, 2015 several gaps were identified in the current Jackson and Vinton counties transportation systems.

Transportation Gaps/Needs

- 1) People just above poverty level, the “working poor,” don't qualify for transportation services for medical, non-medical and work-related transportation
- 2) Job-related transportation is not available—job interviews, training, transportation to/from work –JARC funding ends 12/31/15
- 3) Aging/high mileage vehicles needing replacement
- 4) Coordination of resources and assets
- 5) Confusing eligibility for services – for both professionals and residents
- 6) Funds don't keep up with rising transportation costs
- 7) People aren't aware of current transportation services/limited advertising

- 8) Little to no transportation services in the evenings and weekends (primarily 8am – 5pm) and 24/7 transportation is available on a limited basis
- 9) Quality of life services for all ages such as meals out, shopping, etc.
- 10) Non-medical but necessary transportation such as grocery store, see case worker, etc.
- 11) Determining community ridership and vehicle inventory through coordination
- 12) More services for veterans
- 13) Obtaining software to assist in the coordinated services, ride share, referrals, trips and customer base
- 14) Resource monies for private companies to provide transportation
- 15) No services for those looking for help and determining their eligibility
- 16) Youth need transportation for summer jobs, after school jobs/activities, higher education
- 17) Young adults, ages 16-24 need employment/job training transportation
- 18) Website specific to Mobility Management focusing on transportation options and services in the two-county service area.

Identifying Strategies to Address Gaps

Based on all the information collected and discussed in the planning process, the following six gaps were identified as priorities for action in Jackson and Vinton Counties over the next five years.

GAP A: Replacement of current vehicles that are aging and have high miles in order to maintain the current fleet and provide the current level of transportation services in the counties

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1 – 2 years - identify other funding sources for vehicles, including 5310 funding match sources and other sources besides 5310 funding

Longer-term Strategies

- ✓ 3 – 5 years - conduct a periodic assessment of the fleet status regarding replacement needs and explore joint grant applications and other financial opportunities for vehicles
Performance Measure: Documented purchase and receipt of vehicles, updated inventories & awarded grants.

Gap B – Non- typical Transportation, i.e. employment, shopping, banking, recreation, social services, Medicaid spend down for the elderly, persons with a disability and low-income persons.

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1 – 3 years - explore public/private partnerships, grant opportunities as well as entrepreneurial and small business incubation to help support transportation services. A focus

on WIOA customers ages 16-24 through the Ohio Department of JFS for employment related activities.

Longer-Term Strategies:

- ✓ Explain to the agencies the importance of pooled services & pooled funding
- ✓ Seek public transportation opportunities supported by pooled funding that would include a sliding fee scale

Performance Measure: Track awarded grant funding, community support, fund raiser results, donations received, and foundation awards.

Gap C – Lack of clear and sufficient communication 1) for people who are in need of the services and 2) regarding eligibility for services among both professionals and clients

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1 – 3 years - create a web site that clearly defines resources and assets with links to transportation programs that clarifies eligibility for providers, agencies and residents with access to the web. Have one central number for information, assets and referrals for targeted population to gain access to transportation services

Longer-term Strategies:

- ✓ 3-5 years – create a website that potential customers could utilize an interactive program that would permit them to search for service areas and service providers with a click and seek option.

Performance Measure: Published and updated website, One call, one click center for community transportation resources developed and utilized.

Gap D – Continue Coordination Efforts- MM

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1-2 years – Obtain current MOU’s for shared coordination activities with Coordinated partners, MM lead Coordination Council meetings at a minimum quarterly (keeping minutes and agendas on file), conduct ride-alongs with the service providers, provide travel training & DRIVE or PAT. Conduct surveys and interviews with the public. Place the Plan on the Mobility Management website and link it to other websites.

Longer-term Strategies:

- ✓ 2-5 years – Continue using the Coordinated Plan as a living tool and update regularly.

Performance Measure: Signed MOU’s, Minutes & agendas from Coordination Council Mtgs., Interview results, Ride-alongs documented, Documented proof of Training activities and a current and updated plan with formal adoption date.

Gap E – Expand Public Outreach-MM

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1-3 years – Utilize the Coordination Council members to plan public awareness events, develop community brochures. Conduct surveys and interviews with the public to ascertain public perspective. MM will seek committee seats with local organizations; attend commissioners meetings and regional planning meetings.

Longer-term Strategies:

- ✓ 1-5 years - Put up signage in offices with phone number(s) of transportation providers
- ✓ Have one central number for information and/or access to transportation services
- ✓ Pool funds together to market an outreach effort in the community about service options

Performance Measure: Meetings attended documented, flyers/brochures distribution results, survey results, marketing efforts documented and the website current and updated.

Gap F – Lack of unified system for coordinated scheduling/tracking for the service areas

Short-Term Strategies:

- ✓ 1-2 years – Seek and review software options, computer systems and shared data capabilities with the service providers. Explore joint grant applications and other financial opportunities for shared purchasing of software.

Longer-term Strategies:

- ✓ Apply for 5310 capital funding for an 80/20 purchasing opportunity
- ✓ Develop MOU's with coordination partners for sharing/utilizing the software that would provide efficient and current reporting/scheduling/tracking data of coordinated partnerships services

Performance Measure: Purchase software through shared grant funding and provider cost share assistance.

Other identified Strategies (for potential future use but currently not identified as priority strategies)

- Advocate through ODOT and the federal government for more tax monies allocated for transportation funding
- Enhance the current MM Coordination Council by expanding the group and meeting regularly
- Through the Coordination Council, create and maintain a combined web page for both professionals and consumers that have Internet access that lists all providers and clarifies eligibility, the site would have links to key agencies and provider web sites

Strategies to Assure Plan Implementation

On February 26, 2015, the group identified several strategies they could employ to assure that the Jackson and Vinton Counties Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan becomes a “living” plan that is fully implemented to improve services. Strategies included:

- A minimum of quarterly MM Coordination Council meetings
- Attending local meetings and events, such as Rotary Clubs and other groups, to share information about the plan, gaps and strategies --- enlisting assistance as appropriate
- Communicating about the plan through newspaper stories
- Giving the plan out to many agencies and employers
- Hosting a public forum for county residents to learn about the plan and services
- Develop subcommittees to work on elements of the plan
- Have a “Jackson-Vinton Counties Transportation Resources” booth or table at job fairs

Establish an ongoing meeting day for the MM Coordination Council to make scheduling easier (such as the last Tuesday of the meeting month)