

Times-Tribune editorial

Dec. 8, 2009

# Transit regional by its nature

**A**merican society depends upon personal mobility — a standard that puts a great strain on vulnerable citizens who don't have their own means of getting around. That's why transportation is one of the most important government services.

All 67 county governments in Pennsylvania provide shared-ride services to help needy older and disabled residents attend to duties that require transportation — from grocery shopping to medical appointments.

The service is crucial but it's questionable whether it should be organized by county. Actual distances to destinations, rather than county borders, should define how the service is provided.

The state Department of Public Welfare wisely will consider whether to reorganize the service by regions, rather than counties.

Local agencies and the DPW know where the clients and their destinations are. Regional transportation agencies would be able to craft routes and schedules more in keeping with the reality on the ground than with county borders on a map.

Residents of rural areas in adjacent counties might be better served, for example, by a regional agency rather than two county agencies.

Creation of multicounty regional agencies also could result in less money going for administration and more going directly into the service.

Counties across the state already cooperate in the delivery of a variety of other services overseen by the state DPW. Transportation is a natural to be added to that list.

A public hearing on regional shared-ride services will be conducted today at 10 a.m. at the Radisson at Lackawanna Station hotel.