

# Planners seek transit help for struggling

*Group looking for alternatives to help people who want jobs to be able to get to them.*

**BY BORYS KRAWCZENIUK**  
STAFF WRITER

LaTida Smith wanted to show what happens if someone looking for a job or trying to keep one struggles with transportation.

She handed out index cards, then led outside the 40 people gathered for a meeting of the Equitable Transit Planning Council inside the Greater Scranton

Chamber of Commerce. She lined them up next to each other.

The cards described individuals of varying ages and marital status, if they have kids, cars, jobs, fluency in English or live in safe, walkable neighborhoods or rural communities.

"If you do not have children, take two steps forward," said Smith, the president and chief

## About the group

The Equitable Transit Planning Council formed in February to study alternatives to help those struggling due to life circumstances. The Scranton Area Community Foundation and the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia teamed up to start the council.

executive officer of the Moses Taylor Foundation, "If you have children but your children can

transport themselves back and forth to school, take one step forward. If you're responsible for taking your kids to school every day, stay where you are."

People with physical disabilities stay put, people with no disabilities, two steps forward, she continued.

As Smith added questions and instructions, the single line broke up into multiple lines with some farther ahead than others.

Please see **TRANSIT**, Page A9



BORYS KRAWCZENIUK / STAFF PHOTO

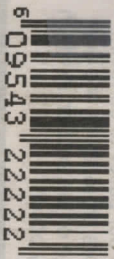
**Moses Taylor Foundation President and CEO LaTida Smith, left, leads an exercise outside the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce to demonstrate the difficulties people who can't afford to own a car face in getting to work.**

## Good morning

A few showers  
High: 80°  
Low: 62°  
Weather, B10



**Sunny side up**  
Businesses, cites cashing in on total solar eclipse crowds. C1



09543 22222 3

Copyright © 2017, The Times-Tribune

Subscriptions: 570.348.9190  
Classified ads: 570.348.9157  
Business: C1 Horoscope C3  
Classified: C4 Lottery A2  
Comics: C23 Obituaries B99  
Editorial: A12 Sports B1  
Health/Sci: B7 TV C5

Friday, July 28, 2017

## TRANSIT: Group seeks solutions

FROM PAGE A1

The people in the back lines wanted to work but fell behind because their life circumstances mean they couldn't afford a car, couldn't reach public transportation or struggle for other reasons to get to work. Just knowing English can make a difference, Smith pointed out.

Her lesson provided a stark visual for the council, which formed in February to study alternatives to help the people who fall behind. The Scranton Area Community Foundation and the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia teamed up to start the council.

The council's working groups are focused on developing a plan that highlights potential solutions in greater detail — shared-ride programs and access to bicycles, massaging existing public transportation to match needs, involving employers with employees who struggle to get to and from work and finding money to develop alternatives.

The council organized the first NEPA Equitable Transit Summit for Oct. 17 at the Hilton Scranton & Conference Center to hear experts discuss what is happening elsewhere.

The research working group met Thursday morning before the council meeting to interview a focus group of people facing obstacles to get to work.

"It's definitely highlighting

some of the opportunities and barriers we assumed at this point," said Teri Ooms, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development.

After her exercise, Smith asked how people in each line felt about their status.

"Great," a frontline man said, prompting laughter.

"Guilty," another front-

liner said.

"What about if you were in the back of the group or in the middle, how did that feel?" Smith asked.

"I wondered when I get to take a step," a woman in a back line said.

**Contact the writer:**

bkraczeniuk@timeshamrock.com; 570-348-9147; @BorysBlogTT on Twitter