

Guide to the Local Coordinated Planning Process

Getting Started

Coordination of public/private transit and human service transportation is vital in stretching transportation dollars and maximizing services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with low incomes.

Effective in 2008, the Federal Transit Administration is requiring a coordinated plan of local transit services in order to apply for funds from the Elderly and Disabled Individuals Transportation Program (FTA Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (FTA Section 5316) and New Freedom Program (FTA Section 5317).

The first step in coordination of services is the development of a locally coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan that identifies transportation needs, provides strategies for meeting local needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

A coordinated plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human service transportation providers as well as members of the public. This document provides a **five-step approach** that will provide guidance in the development of a locally developed coordinated plan.

Important: The planning process should be thoroughly documented from start to finish. Documenting the planning process will help to eliminate questions and confusion, be evidence of your coordination efforts and help in the creation of a written locally developed coordinated plan. Document all the activities, results and important decisions made throughout the planning process.

Step 1 – Identify the Lead Agency

Reference: Transportation Services Coordination Plan

The agency that will take the lead in the planning process could be any one of the following:

- Regional planning organization (rural planning organization, metropolitan planning organization, council of government)
- Local transit system(s)
- Community or municipality in the region
- Professional consulting firm

The Public Transportation Division supports efforts that result in regional coordination of planning activities and service delivery and, to that end, it is recommended that a rural planning organization or metropolitan planning organization, where willing and able, take the lead in the

coordinated planning effort or, at a minimum, work with a consulting firm or other qualified persons in carrying out these activities.

Note: Financial assistance is available through the Public Transportation Division to facilitate the effective and efficient development of an approved locally developed public transportation human services coordinated plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Agency

- Provide overall **guidance** and **structure** to the process
- Provide a **process** for local coordinated plan adoption in consultation with participants
- Provide **written documentation** of the results of local coordinated planning process -The Plan
- Provide and **execute a strategy** for approval of The Plan.

Step 2 - Convene the Steering Committee

Assemble a **small** number of people to help organize a coordinated planning workshop. This group will meet two or three times before the event. This committee, at a minimum, should consist of a representative from the following categories:

- Transportation partners (local and regional)
- Passengers
- Advocacy groups
- Human service providers
- Private providers
- Other interested groups

Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

- Determine the date, time and location of the local planning workshop(s)
- Determine who the stakeholders are and send invitations
- Determine who will facilitate the meeting(s)
- Design the agenda and make logistical decisions
- Provide guidance in how to navigate tricky or contentious issues
- Assist on the day of the workshop
- Draft a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan and determine a process for adoption

Steering Committee Task #1 _____

Select a date and time to hold the workshop. Determine a suitable location and facility for the workshop.

Location considerations:

- Adequate parking
- On or near bus lines
- Whiteboard or overhead projector
- Can accommodate service animals
- Meets all ADA facility requirements

Important: You may need to hold more than one workshop depending on the size of the planning area and attendance at the first workshop, or use other strategies to gather input. Strong consideration should be given to holding at least one workshop in each county of a multiple-county area.

Steering Committee Task #2

Determine local groups and individuals who should be invited to participate in the local coordinated planning workshop. See the suggested list in Appendix B.

- Decide the right person in each group to contact
- Determine who will make the contact
- Gather contact information and send invitations
- Ask organizations to extend the invitation to participate in the local coordinated planning process to local interested or affected groups and persons. Many organizations will have a membership list or a list-serve that they use to get the information out.

Important: The invitation should be extended to a comprehensive, diverse population from all geographical areas of the planning area and should include retirees, workers, minorities, the aged, the disabled, those with limited English proficiency, and private transportation providers.

Ask invitees to RSVP to make planning for the workshop easier. After the RSVP deadline, assess responses or level of interest. If interest or participation in the **community planning** approach to public involvement seems “light” or “one-sided,” consider a change of venue or date, or add other public involvement techniques to improve participation such as:

- Focus groups
- Survey(s) (i.e., *Framework for Action*)
- Detailed study analysis

Steering Committee Task #3

Determine who will facilitate the workshop(s). Managing the meeting process and the flow of paper requires a facilitator and one or two assistants, none of whom is participating in the planning process. The facilitator will keep the group on track, guide the conversation, and not participate in the assessment. The facilitator can be a professional or a person from the community with experience guiding group work. Ask the community college, United Way, chamber of commerce, agricultural extension office or local mediation center to refer you to professionals or persons in your area with this skill. Before the workshop, the facilitator should learn about transportation and coordination.

Steering Committee Task #4

Determine whether the planning workshop will be one long meeting or two shorter meetings. In addition, the committee needs to decide how to collect data about existing services and resources. A sample agenda for a one-meeting process is included in Step 5. It will be helpful to distribute the sample agenda as a starting point. Once the agenda is set, the committee can decide how to set up the meeting space, make lists of supplies and assign responsibilities to committee members and staff.

Step 3 – Prepare for the Coordinated Planning Workshop

Reference: *The Framework for Action Facilitator's Guide*

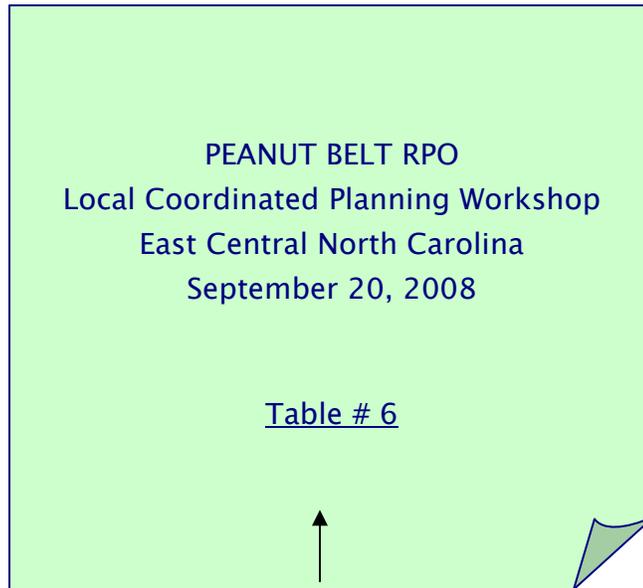
www.unitedwerride.gov/FFA-Communities.pdf

Suggested Resource Checklist:

- Flip charts (at least one for each table)
- Magic markers (at least two different colors)
- Peel-and-stick dots - two colors (five of each color for each participant)
- Masking tape
- Maps – showing the planning area
- Transit service area maps
- Fixed route schedules and maps
- RPO or MPO planning area maps
- GIS, statistical or census data
- Survey available transportation services (send to attendees in advance)
- Briefs of the New Freedom and JARC Federal Circulars (send to attendees in advance and have copies in packets)
- Table tents with a number for each table
- Sufficient copies of the *Framework for Action* survey, if desired
- Extra pencils and some paper for notes (a couple of legal pads)
- Snacks at the workshop
- A strategy to incorporate late arrivers into the process
- Directions to workshop location posted on Web site
- Blank name tags

Note: If you are having more than one workshop, make sure you have adequate supplies for each.

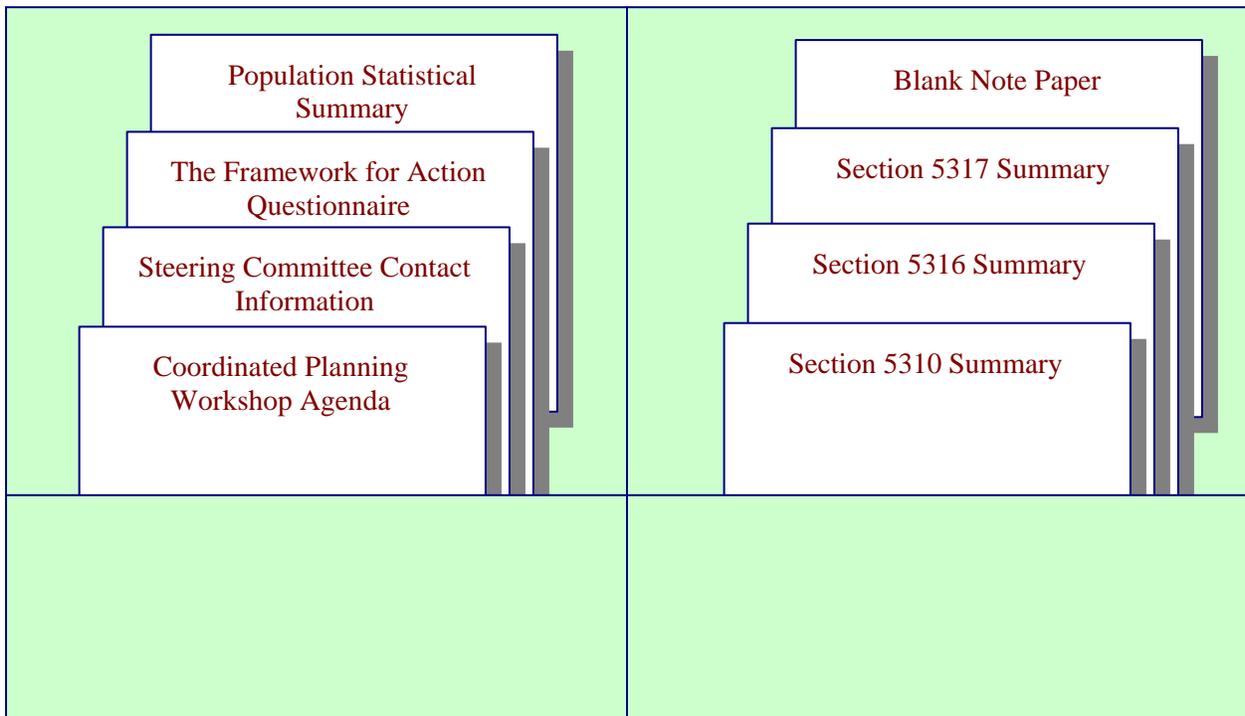
Prepare a packet of information for each participant. Make table assignments prior to the beginning of the workshop to ensure that each table has representatives from a variety of areas to facilitate an exchange of ideas during the planning process.



Place each participant's assigned table number on packet cover

Left Side of Folder

Right Side of Folder



The packet might include such statistical information for the service area as:

- Number and percentage of elderly
- Number and percentage of persons with disabilities

- Map location of elderly and/or low-income households
- Map location of large employers and/or business parks
- Map location of registered vehicles or households with zero vehicles
- Number and percentage of registered vehicles
- Number of households with zero or no vehicles
- Out-of-county travel patterns of workers to jobs
- Number and percentage of lost employment due to lack of transportation

Create a sign-in sheet for each meeting of the steering committee, the planning workshop(s) and any follow-up meetings. Attendance records should be included in the final coordinated plan.

Sample SIGN-IN SHEET					
		Complete Shaded Area Below			
Table Assignment	Example Name	Signature	Organization	E-mail Address	Phone (include area code)
2	Otis Olderman				
4	Ann Ableson				
1	Barbie Busman				
3	William Worker				
1	Rita P. Rider				
6	Steve Student				

Important: Arrive at the workshop location at least 45 minutes prior to the published start time.

- Locate bathrooms
- Put up directions/signs, if needed
- Set up sign-in table and participant tables
- Set up snacks

Step 4 - Conduct Local Coordinated Planning Workshop(s)

Sample Agenda for one-day workshop

Agenda Items		Approximate Time Allocation
Sign-In Registration	30	8:30 – 9:00
Pass out information packets and table assignments		
Welcome & Overview		9:00-9:45
Overview	2	
Purpose of Workshop	3	
Introduction of Participants	15	
Brief Overview of Federal Circulars	10	
Intended Outcome of the Coordinated Planning Workshop	5	
Establish Ground Rules for Workshop	5	
Describe the Coordinated Planning Process	5	
Coordination Planning		
Review/Create inventory of services	30	9:45-10:15
Break	15	10:15-10:30
Table discussion of transportation needs of the target population(s)	45	10:30-11:15
Report results of table discussion	30	11:15-11:45
Lunch Break ²	75	11:45-1:00
Determine priority needs – Dot Exercise	30	1:00-1:30
Review Eligible Activities from Circulars	20	1:30-1:50
Create service strategies by priority	50	1:50-2:50
Wrap up and next steps	10	2:50-3:00

¹ Have each table to choose a scribe (note taker) and someone to report out for the group.

² Steering Committee should work over lunch break to consolidate duplicated reports and prepare a clean list of transportation needs that resulted from the table discussions.

³ Participants should be given a total of 10 “peel and stick” dots (e.g., five red and five blue) to place beside their 10 top priorities, but should be asked to not place more than ___ stickers on any one item.

Ground Rules

- **TIME IS LIMITED – (*MUST LISTEN AND RESPECT OTHERS*)**
- **EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE**
- **AVOID SIDE CONVERSTATIONS**
- **ESTABLISHED OUTCOMES**
- **NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS**
- **EVERYONE IS EQUAL**
- **FOCUSED COMMENTS**
- **OPEN TO SUGGESTION**
- **SHARE INFORMATION GAINED FROM TABLE SESSION**
- **REACH CONCEPTUAL CONSENSUS ***
- **MEMBERS WILL SUPPORT THE DECISION OF THE GROUP**

Consensus – when everyone is “comfortable” with the decision

Participants should ask themselves:

Can I live with this position?
Am I comfortable with this course of action?
Can I support the choice?

Step 5 – Draft a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan

Projects competitively selected for New Freedom or JARC funding shall be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (“coordinated plan”). The written record of the activities and decisions made at the planning workshop with the stakeholders is the basis of the coordinated plan. The length of the plan depends on the length of the planning process and the complexity of the results.

The coordinated plan will minimally include the following elements:

- An assessment of **available services** that identifies current transportation providers (public, private and nonprofit).
- An assessment of **transportation needs** for individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts and gaps in service.
- **Strategies, activities and/or projects** to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery.
- **Priorities for implementation** based on resources (from multiple program sources), time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Applicants for New Freedom and JARC grants will have to document the plan from which each project is derived, including the lead agency, the date of adoption of the plan, or other identifying information. Dividing the plan into sections with numbered pages will make it much easier for applicants to fulfill this requirement.

An individual or a team of individuals selected by the lead agency in consultation with the Steering Committee should draft the coordinated plan after the planning process is completed. The Steering Committee under the guidance of the lead agency should review and approve the draft before it is made public.

Step 6 – Adopt the Plan

As a part of the local coordinated planning process, the lead agency in consultation with the steering committee and participants should determine the process of officially adopting the coordinated plan.

The process of adopting the plan should include public involvement elements. The date the coordinated plan is adopted should be displayed prominently on the final draft of the plan.

APPENDIX A

Proposed Timeline of Major Activities for Sections 5310, 5316 and Section 5317

Prior to Application Deadline

Transit System:

- Hold local coordinated plan activities
- Develop locally adopted coordinated plan

Call-For-Projects – (By December 31, 2008)

Transit System:

- Complete and submit application per instruction posted on the NCDOT Public Transportation Division Website

After Call- For-Projects – (January 1, 2009- June 30, 2009)

Competitive Selection Committee:

- Review applications and make funding recommendation
- Prepare board agenda items
- Place on board agenda
- Prepare agreements
- Execute agreements

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Consideration should be given to including groups and organizations such as the following in the coordinated planning process, if present in the community:

Transportation Partners

- Area transportation planning agencies, including rural planning organizations, metropolitan planning organizations, councils of government, regional councils, associations of governments, local governments and NCDOT;
- Public transportation providers (including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit providers and agencies administering the projects funded under FTA urbanized and nonurbanized programs);
- Private transportation providers, including private transportation brokers, taxi operators, vanpool providers, school transportation operators and intercity bus operators;
- Nonprofit transportation providers;
- Past or current organizations funded under the JARC, Section 5310, and/or New Freedom programs; and
- Human service agencies funding, operating and/or providing access to transportation services.

Passengers and Advocates

- Existing and potential riders, including both general and targeted population passengers (individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes);
- Protection and advocacy organizations;
- Independent living centers; and
- Advocacy organizations working on behalf of targeted populations.

Human Service Partners

- Agencies that administer health, employment or other support programs for targeted populations. Examples of such agencies include, but are not limited to, departments of social/human services, employment one-stop services; vocational rehabilitation, Workforce Investment board, Medicaid, community action programs , agency on aging, developmental disability council, community services board;
- Nonprofit human service provider organizations that serve the targeted populations;
- Job training and placement agencies;
- Housing agencies;

- Health care facilities; and
- Mental health agencies.

Others

- Security and emergency management agencies;
- Tribes and tribal representatives;
- Economic development organizations;
- Faith-based and community-based organizations;
- Representatives of the business community (e.g., employers);
- Appropriate local or state officials and elected officials;
- School districts; and
- Policy analysts or experts.

APPENDIX C

Links to Sample Coordinated Plans and Other Resources

COORDINATED PLANS

- [Statewide Executive Summary of the South Carolina Regional Human Services Transportation Coordination Plans](#)
- [Lower Savannah Regional Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan](#)
- [Waccamaw Regional Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan](#)
- [Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization](#)

RESOURCES

- [Rural Transit Assistance Program](#)
- [Transportation Services Coordination Plan](#)
- [A Framework for Action
Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System](#)
 - [A Self Assessment Tool for Communities](#)
 - [Facilitator's Guide](#)
- [Contact: Jo Ann Hutchinson, Coordination Ambassador for FTA Region 4
\[hutchinson@ctaa.org\]\(mailto:hutchinson@ctaa.org\)
Telephone: \(202\) 415 9699
Toll-free: \(800\) 891 0590, ext. 730](#)