

***BRUNSWICK COUNTY
LOCAL COORDINATED
HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN***



*Prepared with the assistance of the
Cape Fear Area Rural Transportation Planning Organization
Wilmington, North Carolina*

Brunswick County Community Involvement Plan

I. Introduction

On Wednesday, January 28, 2009 the Cape Fear Area Rural Planning Organization (RPO) in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Division (PTD) held a transportation Community Involvement Planning forum at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation headquarters in Supply. Approximately thirty-one people representing human service agencies, the business community, the medical community, the community college, local government, and citizens/consumers were invited to the meeting. In addition, notice of the meeting ran in the local newspapers.

In addition, surveys were mailed to all the invitees along with the invitations. _____ People completed and returned them. Their responses generally coincided with responses gathered at the February 5th meeting.

Thirteen (13) people attended the January 28th meeting. They provided a good representation of the target groups. The meeting lasted about 2 hours. At the conclusion of the meeting, some of the meeting attendees were asked to participate in a follow-up meeting to review the results of the meeting and assist with planning for available grants

This plan:

- Addresses the planning meeting in some detail;
- Identifies and prioritizes gaps or barriers to service; and
- Identifies strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps

II. January 28th Planning Meeting

Introduction: Mr. Don Eggert, Director of the Cape Fear Area Rural planning Organization opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and allowed each person present to identify themselves and their interest in transportation.

Overview: Mr. Eggert was also the meeting’s facilitator. He introduced Ms. Tori Smith, with NCDOT’s Public Transportation Division (PTD), who then discussed the overall concept of the Local Coordinated Plan.

Assessment of available resources: Following the overview, Ms .Smith provided information relating to the SAFETEA-LU grants available (JARC, New Freedoms, and Elderly/Disabled), and an assessment of available transportation resources.

Assessment of transportation needs of the target population: The facilitator, Mr. Eggert, then asked the group to brainstorm issues related to transportation needs in the county. Specifically, the following question was posed to the group:

**“What are our barriers to providing adequate?
transportation in Brunswick County?”**

He gave each attendee an index card and asked them to list the various issues or concerns that came to mind. He then began the process by asking meeting attendees to give one of their concerns. The issues were the listed on poster paper and put on the wall. Following that, each attendee was given stars and asked to vote for those issues they thought were “most critical”

III. Gaps or Barriers to Service

A. MOST CRITICAL NEEDS OR ISSUES

The following issues or needs were identified by the group at the January 28th meeting as most critical of all the needs identified at the meeting:

- Saturday Service-The need for “Affordable” Saturday fixed-route other than public transportation service was identified as a critical need. There is no public transportation available for those that may need to take care of basic needs such as grocery shopping, prescriptions at the drug store, the food pantry or other destinations.
- Out-of-county medical transportation during “non-traditional times” -Transportation to out -of- county (including Wilmington) was mentioned as a need during times that are not traditionally available (weekends, holidays for example). In addition, overnight or short-notice transportation is some times identified as a need.
- Attendant for special needs passengers- The need for an attendant on the van to assist passengers with special needs (e.g. physically challenged) was identified.

B. OTHER NEEDS OR ISSUES

Other needs or issues identified by the group, but not identified as critical were:

- Unpredictability of bus schedule
- The need for work-related transportation- This need was identified particularly as it relates to transporting workers from the rural areas north of US 17 to employment on or near the beaches.
- Need for transportation on short notice-Often situations arise where transportation is needed on very short notice and the existing system is not able to respond.

- Need increased marketing-An increase in marketing is needed to let the public know of the availability of existing services? Often the public (and some resource agencies) are not aware of transportation services in the county
- The size of the county-Brunswick is one of the largest counties in North Carolina in terms of square miles. This created challenges to providing time sensitive public transportation due to the length of many of the routes.
- Long Distance Transportation- The need for public transportation beyond the county was identified. This included such destinations as Raleigh, Charleston, SC, Charlotte, etc.
- Out-of-county specialized medical transportation-Transportation to such places as Greenville, Chapel Hill/Durham, Winston-Salem and Fayetteville was mentioned as a need.
- Vouchers for Transportation- Funding for those passengers who do not qualify for Medicaid was identified as a need. Riders who “fall through the cracks” are very often not able to afford the transportation offered by the county’s public transportation service.

Conclusion: There was group census that there is a need for some type of Saturday service and vouchers for transportation, out-of-county transportation during non-traditional times, and attendants for special needs passengers.

IV. Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps

1. Explore the Potential for Saturday Service - Implementation priority: High
 - Determine the sustainability of such a service over the long term
 - Consider a fixed- route service
 - Consider either a public or private vendor

- Establish targeted areas for dialysis-related transportation to maximize efficiencies
 - Eliminate county lines as a barrier to providing the service by establishing reciprocity agreements between Pender and adjacent transit services.
2. Increase Marketing of Existing the Public Transportation Services
Implementation priority: High
- Create a brochure to promote the existing public transportation services
 - Hold a “County Transportation Resources Summit” to promote the available opportunities for transporting clients/customers/patients and the general public. Invitees would primarily be various human resources, medical and educational entities.
 - Pender Transportation holds two “Free Ride” days a month to promote their service.
3. Establish a flexible voucher system for senior aged passengers Implementation priority: High
- Private providers are seen as having more administrative and resource flexibility and would be more likely to implement such an initiative.
4. Explore the feasibility of a central hub for transportation-Implementation priority-Medium
- Identify options for centralized “bus station” in the central part of the county (i.e. in the Supply area)
5. Explore the potential for a centralized medical transportation coordination management system- Implementation priority-High

- Identify possible cost savings and efficiencies realized by consolidating medical transportation “less than one roof” to eliminate duplication of effort and missed opportunities for ridesharing.
6. Establish an “attendant rider” program for county vans - Implementation priority-
Medium
- Identify resources to have an attendant on all vans to help physically challenged passengers, dispense medicine, assist with boarding/getting off vans

APPENDIX

- **County Map**
- **Invitation letter**
- **January 28th meeting agenda**
- **Mailing labels of invitees**
- **Attendee “sign in” sheet**
- **News Release**
- **News Article**