

CARTERET COUNTY, NC

**COORDINATED PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Adopted March 25, 2009

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Federal Regulatory Background

For more than twenty years, the federal and state governments have been working to better coordinate human service transportation activities it funds.

In 1985, during an oversight hearing on Rural Transportation, Congress heard testimony prompted by concerns of the lack of federal coordination between programs, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Aiming to better coordinate activities, the Secretaries of HHS and DOT signed an agreement establishing the Joint DOT/HHS Coordinating Council on Human Service Transportation (CCHST) in 1986. Since the CCHST's creation, the CCHST has concentrated efforts to identify barriers to coordinated transportation. At one time, the agencies identified sixty-four factors that transportation and human service representatives believed were barriers to transportation coordination. Barriers included uncertainty regarding federal responsibilities for transportation, fragmented accounting and reporting procedures, uncertainty in using resources for recipients other than program constituents, and prohibition against charging fares under the Older Americans Act.

To further support coordination, Congress included several provisions in its 1998 passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA –21), Public Law (PL) 105-178. Most notable was the provision to require Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), predecessor program to today's JARC program, projects to be part of a coordinated public transit–human services transportation planning process.

In February 2004, President George W. Bush released an Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination to improve assistance to those who are transportation disadvantaged. The Executive Order aims to implement coordination of transportation services to operate in the most cost effective and time efficient manner possible.

Within the February 2004 Executive Order, the President established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).

The functions of the CCAM are to:

- Promote interagency cooperation
- Establish appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services
- Facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources
- Encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available
- Formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels

CCAM includes leadership from eleven federal departments:

- DOT
- HHS
- Labor
- Education
- Housing and Urban Affairs
- Agriculture
- Justice

- Interior
- Veterans Administration
- Social Security Administration
- National Council on Disabilities

In May 2005, the CCAM issued a report to the President with recommendations for breaking down federal barriers to transportation for all transportation-disadvantaged populations. The report detailed action plans for each of the eleven federal agencies who comprise the CCAM. Additionally, in 2005 the CCAM launched the United We Ride website, www.unitedweride.gov.

While it has been a long process, the federal government is working to strengthen its coordination requirements for human service transportation activities. In August 2005, Congress included coordination provisions in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), PL 109-059. SAFETEA-LU specifically added a coordination requirement to the newly created Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310), Job Access Reverse Commute Program (5316), and New Freedoms Program (5317). FTA requires projects funded through the Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 Programs be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP).

A CPT-HSTP identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A CPT-HSTP uses all available resources to supply transportation services efficiently and without redundancy in trips. Development of the CPT-HSTP must have the input and cooperation of transit agencies, social service agencies, community agencies, and the public.

In 2006, the CCAM issued two policy statements that take important steps to bring federal programs together to help people with disabilities, older adults, and lower income families get the transportation they need for their day-to-day mobility.

The CCAM policy statements focus on two key areas: (1) coordinated human service transportation planning and (2) vehicle sharing. These policies support communities and organizations receiving federal funding to plan transportation services together and to share resources. The policies were included as part of the recommendations in a 2005 report to the White House on Human Service Transportation Coordination. Each department on the CCAM will be taking actions to implement these policies.

Plan Approach

Projects funded through the Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316 - JARC) and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs require the development of a local, coordinated public transit-human services plan (CPT-HSTP), which should incorporate private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the general public.

The Down East Rural Transportation Organization (DERPO) provided the Carteret County Area Transportation System (CCATS) Advisory Board with a co-facilitator. The DERPO facilitator, the CCATS contracted Facilitator, and the Director of CCATS worked together to plan a public meeting to discuss the transportation needs of the citizens of Carteret County. It was decided that one workshop would be held on March 4, 2009 at 9:00 AM in Morehead City to give all stakeholders in the community who had an interest in transportation an opportunity to identify the needs and gaps in the current transportation service and to provide input into the Local Coordinated Plan.

Those participating in the workshop represented a broad array of interests including elected officials, county management staff, Carteret County Area Transportation System Advisory Board members, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, and veterans. In all forty-seven participants attended the workshop. They included representatives of:

- Carteret County Health Department
- Carteret County Economic Development

- Carteret County Area Transportation System
- Coastal Community Action
- Down East RPO
- Carteret County DSS
- Senior programs
- NC DOT
- Carteret Community College
- Services for the Blind
- Carteret County
- Residents/interested citizens
- Tourism Development Administration
- Carteret General Hospital
- Town of Pine Knoll Shores
- Crystal Coast Tourism
- NC Aquarium
- Town of Emerald Isle
- Carteret County EMS
- Media
- Healthy Carolinians
- Onslow Carteret Behavioral Health Systems
- Assisted Living Facility
- Town of Morehead City
- Eastern Carolina Council
- NC Employment Security Commission
- Carteret County Senior Services

Demographics

Background

The following information describes the county:

Carteret County is 1,341 square miles, 821 square miles (62%) of which is water. The County has a Census 2000 population density of 114 persons per square mile. There are eleven incorporated municipalities. Beaufort is the county seat.

There are three (3) military facilities in Carteret County, US Coast Guard Stations in Atlantic Beach and Emerald Isle, plus the USMC Auxilliary landing field at Bogue plus Carteret County is in close proximity to both Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point (Havelock, Craven County) and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune (Jacksonville, Onslow County).

Carteret General Hospital primarily serves the citizens of Carteret. Citizens needing certain specialized treatment and procedures are referred outside the county. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services may use the clinic in Morehead City or may be transported to clinics out of the county (Greenville) or to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

North Carolina law calls for the 40 most distressed counties to become Tier 1 counties, the middle 40 counties to be designated as Tier 2 and the 20 most prosperous counties to become Tier 3 counties. The rankings are based on an assessment of each county's unemployment rate, median household income, population growth and assessed property value per capita. In addition, any county with a population of less than 12,000 or a county with a population of fewer than 50,000 residents with 19 percent or more of those people living

below the federal poverty level automatically are designated as one of the 40 most distressed counties. Carteret County is a Tier 3 county.

Another factor that comes into play when discussing county transportation services is the ability to pay rating (ATP). The ATP rating is based on a scoring range from 0 to 100 where 0 is considered to be a municipality or county having the least capacity for financially contributing to a project. Conversely, a 100 means a unit of local government has the greatest capacity for making a monetary commitment. Municipalities will be compared with other municipalities and counties with other counties.

There are three factors used to calculate an ATP score:

1. Population
2. Per capita income
3. Tax valuation

Population, per capita income and tax valuation are each scored on a 0 to 100 basis for each potential applicant. Using population as an example, the town or city having the largest population would receive a score of 100. A town with a population half way between the smallest and the largest populations would receive 50 points. Per capita income and tax valuation are scored in the same manner. The scoring results from these three areas are averages to arrive at a final ATP score. Carteret County's ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 21.47 (ranked 76 out of 100—has a higher ability to pay).

Census & Statistical Data

This data was taken from the NC State Demographer's website.

	Pop. 2007	65+ 2007	% 65+	Avg. age
Carteret County	59,383	14,145	21%	46.31

(The NC State Demographers information does not include an estimated 153,708 seasonal residents for 2010, these being individuals who own property and spend time in Carteret County throughout the year on regular and irregular bases. The Demographers information also does not include the approximately 2,000,000 tourists and visitors that come to the Crystal Coast annually.)

Atlantic Beach	1,781
Beaufort	3,771
Bogue	590
Cape Carteret	1,214
Cedar Point	817
Emerald Isle	3,488
Indian Beach	95
Morehead City	7,691
Newport	3,349
Peletier	487
Pine Knoll Shores	1,524
Unincorporated	34,576

Carteret County	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
	71,852	23,193	33%	52.67

The Census 2000 information shows 25,204 households with 2.31 persons per household. The population of Carteret County in 2000 was 90.3% white, 7.3% black and 2.4% other. The median household income in 2007 was \$47,064 and the per capita income in 1999 was \$21,260. The poverty rate in 2000 was 10.7%. The elderly poverty rate was 9.4%. Six percent (6.3%) of the population receive food stamps (NC DHHS 2006). Sixty-two percent (62.1%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2000 Census.

A discussion of the transportation needs in Carteret County would not be complete without statistical information on the disabled population. In the 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year estimates 22% of the population age five and older reported disabilities. Of the working age 40,229 population (ages 16-64) 7,085 had one or more disability (18%) and of the 10,645 individuals age 65 and older, 4,583 (43%) have disabilities.

According to the American Community Survey there are 7,787 veterans age 18 and older. This represents 16% of the population in that age group. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services may use the VA clinic in Morehead City or may need transportation to the clinic in Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

According to the FY08 Economic Impact Statement issued by MCAS Cherry Point, there are 453 active duty military, 1,293 retired military, 1,743 civilians that work on the base, 2,243 retired civilians, and 4,517 family members residing in Carteret County.

According to the American Community Survey's 3-year estimates 2005-2007: The mean travel time to work is 23.0 minutes and of the 27,214 people age 16 and older who worked, 21,266 (79%) drove a vehicle alone, 4,197 (16%) carpooled, 17 rode a bus, 31 biked, 423 walked, 39 took a taxi, and 297 reported some other means of getting to work. Of those commuting to work, 20,317 traveled to jobs within the county and 6,499 had jobs outside the county. A study of the details of the various tables related to transportation would provide even greater detail. It is recommended that this information be examined.

Analysis

It is estimated that almost one-third (33%) of the population will be age 65 and older by 2030. Older people have more needs and disabilities. Many get to the

point where they no longer drive and need assistance getting their basic and healthcare transportation needs met.

There are many changes that have the potential to impact the need for more public transit. These might include, but are not limited to: an increase in poverty, an increase in the number of working poor, an increase in gas prices, a need to improve air quality and reduce vehicle emissions, and an increase in the cost of operating and maintaining a vehicle.

Another factor that must be taken into account for Carteret County is the influx of seasonal seashore visitors. The traffic can swell dramatically at peak season (summer). Some beach access sites do not have adequate parking. A fixed route bus service to handle the tourists during peak season may help alleviate the traffic situation.

Given the number of active duty military and civilians employed on the base, a park and ride system serving MCAS Cherry Point might be feasible for Carteret County to meet this need.

Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Transportation Services

Carteret County Transportation

CCATS participates in the RouteMatch program through the Eastern Carolina Council. RouteMatch enables transportation providers in surrounding counties to secure a county resident a seat on a van traveling to a distant place such as Duke or Durham. For example, if they had a person needing transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, they could secure this individual a seat on a CCATS van and be transferred in Craven County to a van headed to that facility.

Other transportation services in the county

While Carteret County Area Transportation System provides the bulk of public transportation in the county, there are agencies and others that also provide limited transportation. Here is a list of those providers:

- School busses (K-12) – Students Only
- Van Pools – employees of certain companies only
- Disabled American Veterans – one van stationed in Jacksonville
- Aquarium
- Carteret Community College – uses CCATS
- EMS – Emergency Medical Transportation only
- Private ambulances transport non-ambulatory individuals
- Churches (events, services) – congregation members only
- Day Care/Head Start – Pre-school Children only
- Child Development
- Assisted living facilities/nursing homes/group homes – Residents only

- Taxi service - four providers
- Limo service (luxury and to airports)
- Parks and Recreation – employees only
- Private school busses
- Water Taxis – non-existent
- Boys & Girls club – members only
- Courtesy vans (auto dealerships/hotels) – non existent
- Non-emergency transport
- Military

What is noteworthy is that these services are “stove piped” in that the funding streams dictate the uses of the vehicles and transportation services provided. If one were able to just throw all the transportation money used in the county for other than private vehicle transportation into a pot, one would probably have adequate funding to provide a first rate transportation system.

While not necessarily mass transit, one cannot have a discussion about transportation without mentioning walking and biking. Providing user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county would encourage the use of these facilities.

The local TV channel 7 WITN has a ride share page. For no charge you can register to provide or seek a ride. Those not wishing to register can put in a zip code and ride share notices posted pop up. On March 2, 2009 for the 28562 (New Bern) zip code there were two notices posted for ride shares.

General Program Information

CCATS

The Carteret County Area Transportation System is a county wide service providing Accessible Public Transportation for all citizens and guests of Carteret County and Non-Emergency Medical transportation for clients of Carteret County Social Service Agencies, citizens and guests of Carteret County.

Currently CCATS has a fleet of 17 vehicles. Of those 13 are lift-equipped raised roof vans, three are low roof vans and one is a sedan.

CCATS operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. NO Saturday, Sunday or Holiday Service at this time; Special Event transportation is by prior arrangement only.

To Schedule a trip: CALL 2521-240-1043 at least 24 hours prior to your trip and remember to allow for up to an hour between your requested pick-up time and any appointment that you may have. CCATS is a shared ride system and you may not be the only person on the van. CCATS will try to accommodate your pick-up time request as near as possible – if the actual pick-up time will be more than 30 minutes earlier or later than your request, CCATS will give you the option to reschedule or accept the time.

CCATS can no longer accept will-call returns for other than initial doctor visits or in-office treatment procedures, and not after 4:00PM.

To Cancel a Trip: call 252-240-1043 at least 2 hours prior to the vehicle starting toward the pick-up location. CCATS asks riders not to schedule trips if there is a high probability that the trip will be cancelled – Other riders may not be served when a trip is scheduled then cancelled. CCATS defines a no-show as a late cancellation of the trip by the rider; e.g. If the van has arrived at the pick-up location and the rider decides NOT to use the Service or the rider calls after the van has traveled more than ½half the distance to the pick-up location, these will be considered NO-Show rides. The sponsoring agency will be charged for a one way fare and the ridership privileges of the rider may be suspended.

Funding

FTA Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 Programs require that projects be derived from a locally-developed CPT-HSTP. This chapter discusses the specific goals, who can apply, examples of eligible projects, potential funding, and the Designated Recipient (DR).

Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

Section 5310

This program (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides formula funding to States for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of population for these groups of people.

Funds are obligated based on the annual program of projects included in a statewide grant application. The State agency ensures that local applicants and project activities are eligible and in compliance with Federal requirements, that

private not-for-profit transportation providers have an opportunity to participate as feasible, and that the program provides for as much coordination of Federally assisted transportation services, assisted by other Federal sources. Once FTA approves the application, funds are available for state administration of its program and for allocation to individual subrecipients within the state.

Job Access and Reverse Commute Section 5316

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Many new entry-level jobs are located in suburban areas, and low-income individuals have difficulty accessing these jobs from their inner city, urban, or rural neighborhoods. In addition, many entry level-jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment related-trips are complex and involve multiple destinations including reaching childcare facilities or other services.

The JARC program funds transportation projects designed to help low-income individuals access to employment and related activities where existing transit is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient. The JARC program also funds reverse commute transit services available to the general public.

New Freedom Section 5317

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program

seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

Nonurbanized areas: \$748,286 for operating and capital projects

Small Urban areas: \$557,493 for operating and capital projects

ELIGIBLE COST/ACTIVITIES:

Eligible activities for the New Freedom grants include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and vanpooling program; including staff training, administration, and maintenance.

- Providing para-transit services beyond minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route), including routes that run seasonally.

- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations.

- Supporting the administration of voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers.

- Supporting mobility management and coordination efforts among public transportation providers and other human service agencies that

provide transportation. These activities are considered capital costs and are defined as short-range planning and management projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers.

COST SHARING REQUIREMENTS

New Freedom funds may be used to finance capital and operating expenses. The Federal share of eligible *capital* costs may not exceed **80 percent (80%)** of the net cost of the activity. Subject to the availability of funds, NCDOT shall provide one half (10%) of the required 20 percent (20%) nonfederal match for capital costs. The Federal share of the eligible *operating* costs may not exceed **50 percent (50%)** of the net operating costs of the activity.

As with all FTA formula program grants administered by NCDOT, all of the local match must be provided from sources other than federal DOT funds. Some examples of possible local match sources include local or State appropriations; other non-DOT federal funds; private donations; revenue from human services contracts and net income generated from advertising. Income from contracts to provide human service transportation may be used either to reduce the net project cost (treated as revenue) or to provide local match from New Freedom operating assistance.

Examples of types of programs that are potential sources of local match include: employment training, aging, community services, vocational rehabilitation services, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). To be eligible for local match for New Freedom funds, these funds must be used for activities included in the total net project costs.

Any eligible applicant might apply for these funds.

Needs Assessment

A transportation survey was conducted between February 10, 2009 and March 6, 2009. The survey was posted online at Survey Monkey and hard copies were completed and collected at the workshop for those who did not do it online. Hard copies were later entered into Survey Monkey by the Eastern Carolina Council of Government staff. The link to the survey was provided with the public notice that was email to pertinent groups within the county. A blanket notice went out via email from the Eastern Carolina Council of Government on their grant writers listserv. Many nonprofit and governmental agencies in the region receive message via this listserv. The notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to 350 on this listserv. Additionally the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments has a Weekly Bulletin. The meeting notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to over 250 on this listserv. The full Survey Monkey report is included in the attachment section. CCATS helped to distribute the link to the survey. The survey was completed by many who attended the workshop on March 4th. A total of 132 responded to the survey for Carteret County. Here are the highlights of the responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 62.1% believed that there is not enough public transportation service available
- 87% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 82.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 54% assigned a high importance for the need for extended service related to employment type trips
- 59.7% believed there is a need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas

- 82.4% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 79% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips
- 80.3% assigned a low or medium importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.
- 76.2% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 65.1% assigned a high importance to the need for education on available services, programs and eligibility requirements.
- 70.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the issue of communication issues (language barriers, non-existent web site or difficult to find/use, inconsistent information provided)
- 67.7% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 73.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 89.9% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, transportation providers, and other community leaders.
- 92% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.
- 85.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 73.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the fact that the agency staffing is too small to handle the number and complexity of issues that arise.

A workshop was held on Friday March 4, 2009 at the Crystal Coast Convention Center in Morehead City at 9:00 AM. The meeting was facilitated by Mike Noel. The attendees primarily worked in groups and the ideas generated were captured on flip charts.

Identification of users of the transit system

The group began by identifying the current users of transit services in Carteret County. These included:

- Medicaid clients – approximately 20% of riders
- Senior citizens – approximately 18% of riders
- Job seekers/workers – less than 1% of Riders
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients – less than 1% of riders
- Low income individuals – less than 20% of riders
- Students (K-12) -)% of riders
- Disabled/handicapped – approximately 10% of riders
- Park & ride (Cherry Point) – 0% of Riders
- Migrants – 0% of Riders
- Veterans – less than 1% of Riders
- Community College Students (curriculum and continuing education) – Less than 5% of Riders
- Others without vehicles, without working vehicles or without other forms of transportation – Less than 5% of Riders

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy) – Approximately 20% of Riders

- To/From work – less than 5% of Riders
- Nutrition (e.g. to/from congregate meal sites, WIC appointments) – less than 1% of Riders
- Tourism – 0% of Riders
- Shopping (food, health/beauty, general merchandise) – less than 5% of Riders
- Errands & personal care – less than 1% of Riders
- Professional services – less than 5% of Riders
- Social (church, events, cultural, gathering) – 0% of Riders
- School (K-12, community college, college/university, continuing education, enrichment) – less than 5% of Riders
- Visiting (hospital, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.) – less than 5% of Riders
- Volunteering – Less than 5% of Riders
- Recreation, mental stimulation and physical activity – less than 15% of Riders
- Other training – approximately 25% of Riders to Sheltered Workshop

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- Carteret is 1,341 square miles of which 821 square miles or 62% is water. This means that there are many bridges increasing travel distances. It also has large rural areas and small communities that are remote from population centers
- No nights, weekend or holiday services
- Schedule of appointments vis-à-vis availability of transportation (riders do not like to wait and some frail elderly can't wait large amounts of time)
- On any given day there could be an inadequate number of seats vis-à-vis those needing transportation

- Those agencies with vehicles for transportation as a rule do not share or coordinate rides with other agencies
- Lack of an adequate supply of user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county (they do exist in some areas)
- Existing transit vehicles cannot transport a bike
- Active Duty Personnel and civilians working onboard MCAS Cherry Point need transportation on and off base and might participate in park & ride.
- Stigma of riding CCATS—CCATS vehicles are institutional looking
- Regardless of marketing efforts, few fully realize the capabilities of CCATS and fewer take advantage of the service that might be well served by the system.
- Tourists/visitors need an easy way to access the beach, festivals and cultural sites without the issue of finding a parking place
- Visitors using the local airport and local marinas need land transportation.

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in population (eastern NC is a retiree destination)
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of elderly without support systems in place
- Increase in transit dependency
- Disparity in wealth (wealthy on coast, poor and working poor inland)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, unemployment, underemployment, loss of health insurance benefits, loss of nest eggs, loss of retirement benefits)
- Increase in military population (active duty and retirees)

- Decrease in housing values
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concern about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality/emission requirements affecting vehicles
- Operational costs continue to rise as ability of passengers to pay continues to decline due to the economy
- Funding streams that continue to decline and that require increased sustainability proof
- Size of county and number of waterways
- Continued increase in tourism to beach area
- Lack of parking at beach
- Increase in number of festivals and events
- Increase in number of Hispanics.

Strategies to address the concerns and gaps

A number of strategies were discussed to address the concerns and gaps in transportation services in Carteret County now and in the future. These include:

1. Share-a-Ride (0 points)
2. Waterway Transit Service—water taxi (1 point)
3. Bus buddy (2 points)
4. Regional/Transfer Centers (3 points)
5. Transit tax/license fee (4 points)
6. Park & Ride—workers, visitors, beach access (9 points)
7. Mobility manager (centralized—simplified method) (10 points)
8. Image/stigma attached to public transportation (13 points)
9. Sidewalks/bike paths (15 points)
10. Outposting vehicles (16 points)
11. Current cost to ride too high (32 points)

- 12. Marketing/advertising (33 points)
- 13. Night/weekend/holiday services (36 points)
- 14. Fixed routes (45 points)

Those present at the meeting agreed to these strategies.

Prioritization of Needs

The workshop participants discussed existing services and desired services. They are detailed in the prior section. The three highest scoring issues were (in order of importance):

1. Need fixed routes
2. Lack of night/weekend/holiday services
3. Lack of marketing/advertising
4. Current cost to ride too high

Participants also discussed funding issues. A concern is that funding streams come and go and sustainability is an issue after the grant has ended. In a county like Carteret, one possible answer might be a tax of some sort designated for public transportation. The Carteret County Commissioners would need to be committed to this effort and it would take a lot of public education (put a face on the problem—don't just offer facts) to achieve this objective. Legislation might also be required to permit Carteret County to even consider this action.

On February 11, 2009 bills were introduced titled the Congestion Relief/ Intermodal Transport Fund. The legislation would allow North Carolina counties to authorize, by resolution, a referendum to be placed on the ballot asking voters to authorize a ½¢ or ¼¢ sales tax. The proceeds from the tax would exclusively

benefit public transportation in the county. In addition, counties could, by resolution, levy a \$7.00 per registered vehicle registration tax with the proceeds exclusively benefiting public transportation. Should a county choose not to impose the \$7.00 registration tax, cities within the county could impose the tax within their jurisdictional boundaries. Even if they do not have plans to utilize this legislation, it will offer them the tools necessary should they desire to use this option in the future. Below is a link to the bills:

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=s151>

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=hb+148>

Long Range Transportation Plans

Transportation 2030 Plan

The goals set for the Transportation 2030 Plan LRTP includes considerations toward low-income, elderly and disabled as shown below:

- Increase Safety for all modes of transportation
- Ensure that the transportation plan benefits, and is equitable towards, elderly, disabled, low-income populations
- Preserve or improve environmental and community conditions
- Implement policies that improve system quality and capacity
- Improve public involvement
- Develop a regional travel demand model for current and future planning
- Develop strategies to improve rural connections
- Create a coordinated transportation improvement program and set of priorities that is fiscally constrained
- Address the lack of user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county.

Primary Policy Objectives

The Long Range Planning Process is an opportunity to assess the best available transportation data for the county and region, and to identify policy direction for local transportation decision-making. The plan itself will not be able reverse the course of longstanding political, societal and behavioral forces that shape the transportation system and the rural environment. This plan does, however, attempt to guide shifts in policy direction that will result in a more sustainable and effective transportation system for the long-term. The major policy issues and recommendations for 2009-2030 are detailed below.

Address Funding Gaps for Public Transportation

Travel demand modeling analysis shows that highways and arterial streets will become increasingly congested over the next 25 years. The modeling analysis also shows that investments in public transportation can have an impact on reducing congestion in certain parts of the region. The potential for increases in the use of public transportation and carpooling, in comparison with levels of today, are encouraging.

Based on the scale of analysis, the benefits of public transportation use seem small in comparison with overall levels of vehicle travel. While the model is not able to project that public transportation investments will achieve significant region-wide reductions in vehicle miles traveled at this time, the analysis presents a number of opportunities for significant benefits along corridors in the more urbanized areas. These corridors and sub-areas should be studied and considered for increased levels of investment in public transportation service.

In order for transit to be a competitive choice as a mode of travel, investments in public transportation service should be increased. Currently, public transportation providers are facing potential **shortfalls in operating funds**.

Federal and State formulas that allocate transportation funds play a major role in determining the level of public transportation service that local governments are able to offer. The long-term fiscal future for public transportation contains many unknowns. In addition, the dynamics of service areas and local needs are always changing. And so, by its nature, planning for public transportation often focuses on short- and mid-range objectives for improvements. This creates a difficulty in meeting the requirements of the long-range planning process to analyze highway planning and transit planning on equal footing.

Observations

- Mobility Management will increase potential for riders.
- Park-&-ride impact is significant; create feeder systems.
- Collection of survey data has proven:
 - Why do/don't people ride?
 - Challenges to seniors and persons with disabilities
- Connecting services and extended services are crucial

Operational and Planning Objectives

- Expand service frequency
- Extend service hours
- Institute both formal and informal Park & Ride locations
- Institute more flexible service delivery
- Expand express and out of county services to the most promising markets
- Expand local and neighborhood routes in areas with sufficient density
- Study specific corridors for traffic operations improvements
- Expand fleet as well as camera devices on all units
- Connect to other transit services
- Consider how school system buses might be more fully utilized

Policy Objectives

- Increase funding from state and federal sources
- Address deficiency in transit operating funds
- Provide services to the greatest possible number of households within the service area, with emphasis on providing service to those not possessing automobiles, blind and other partially impaired people, the elderly, and others who are transit dependent.

- Use transit service provision to reinforce growth policies and support smart growth development
- Expand access to outlying recreational facilities in the area
- Involve other local transportation resources in expanding access to transportation services
- Expand marketing program

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) identifies new services and routes as well as identifies shortage of funding and coordination of services.

In addition to the specific projects identified below, all existing transit routes are considered as “needing improvement.” Such improvements include expansion of service hours, increased service frequency and improved coverage area. In many cases this may involve route realignment or similar changes which are beyond the scope of the CTP.

Safety and Security...home and community environments are safe and support self-sufficiency for older adults and caregivers.

- Health and Wellness...the health care system maximizes wellness and health potential and meets the diverse and unique needs of older adults.
- Financial Well-being ...resources, services and opportunities support and enhance the financial well-being of older adults and caregivers.
- Social Engagement...life enrichment opportunities engage older adults with people, places and programs.
- Living Environments...the living environments (built and natural) support and enhance the functioning of older adults.

- Service and Support Coordination...a collaborative network of formal and informal services and supports is coordinated to meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.

Goals and recommendations in the Aging Plan include transportation needs and priorities for older adults in Carteret County. Carteret County has requested those needs to be included in the plan in order to identify and increase awareness about older adult transportation needs, as well as leverage funding for transportation providers, agencies, and other entities to begin addressing these needs in the future.

Attachments

- a. Map of Carteret County
- b. List of attendees
- c. Survey
- d. Analysis of survey responses (Survey Monkey report)