

DUPLIN COUNTY, NC

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

Adopted March 5, 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 East Carolina Rural Transportation Organization (ECRPO) provided the Duplin County Transportation (DCTD) Advisory Board with a facilitator. The ECRPO facilitator and the Director of the DCTD worked together to plan a public meeting to discuss the transportation needs of the citizens of Duplin County. It was decided that one workshop would be held on March 5, 2009 at 10:00 AM in Kenansville 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, Duplin County Transportation Advisory Board members, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, county Health Department, media, community college, economic development commission and veterans. In all eighteen participants attended the workshop. They included representatives of:

- Duplin County Health Department
- Duplin County Economic Development

- Duplin County Transportation
- Duplin County DSS
- Senior programs
- NC DOT
- James Sprunt Community College
- Duplin County EMS
- Media
- Town of Teachey
- Town of Warsaw
- Eastern Carolina Council

Demographics

Background

The following information describes the county:

Duplin County is 819 square miles, 1 square mile of which is water. The County has a Census 2000 population density of 60 persons per square mile. There are twelve incorporated municipalities, three of which are partly in another county. Kenansville is the county seat.

There are no military facilities located in Duplin County however both Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune (Jacksonville, Onslow County) and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (Goldsboro, Wayne County) are nearby.

Duplin General Hospital primarily serves the citizens of Duplin. Citizens needing certain specialized treatment and procedures are referred outside the county. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services must 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. Duplin County is a Tier 2 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. Duplin County's ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 9.96 (ranked 34 out of 100—has a lower ability to pay).

Census & Statistical Data

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

	Pop. 2007	65+ 2007	% 65+	Avg. age
Duplin County	49,063	6,616	14%	35.17
Beulaville	1,067			
Calypso	410			

Faison (part)	744
Greenevers	560
Harrells (part)	18
Kenansville	1,149
Magnolia	932
Mount Olive (part)	30
Rose Hill	1,330
Teachey	245
Wallace (part)	3,326
Warsaw	3,051
Unincorporated	36,201

Duplin County	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
	68,153	10,717	16%	36.25

The 2005-2007 American Community Survey information shows 17,638 households with 2.94 persons per household. The population of Duplin County in 2007 was 72.1% white, 26.5% black and 1.4% other. The median household income in 2007 was \$35,040 and the per capita income in 1999 was \$14,499. The poverty rate in 2000 was 19.4%. The elderly poverty rate was 22.7%. Ten percent (10.3%) of the population receive food stamps (NC DHHS 2006). Sixty-one percent (61%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2000 Census.

A discussion of the transportation needs in Duplin County would not be complete without statistical information on the disabled population. In the 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year estimates 21.6% of the population age five and older reported disabilities. Of the 33,414 working age population (ages 16-64) 6,308 had one or more disability (18.9%) and of the 6,426 individuals age 65

and older, 3,565 (55.5%) have disabilities.

According to the American Community Survey there are 3,593 veterans age 18 and older. This represents 10% of the population in that age group. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services may need transportation to the VA clinic in Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

According to the American Community Survey's 3-year estimates 2005-2007: The mean travel time to work is 25.1 minutes and of the 23,408 people age 16 and older who worked, 71.8% drove a vehicle alone, 22.1% carpooled, 0.3% rode a bus, 0% biked, 2.2% walked, and 1.1% reported some other means of getting to work. Of those commuting to work, 68.3% traveled to jobs within the county and 31% 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

Duplin is a "younger" county. There is only a projected 2% increase in the population ages 65 and older between 2007 and 2030. If the demographic change and more people retire to Duplin County, more services might be required. 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.

Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Transportation Services

Duplin County Transportation

The Duplin County Transportation Department is a rural transportation system with a fleet of 14 vehicles and 19 full and part time drivers. This department is one of several county agencies that provide a much-needed service to all citizens of Duplin County. Through the leadership and guidance from the Duplin County Manager's office, the Duplin United Transit Board and the North Carolina Public Transportation Division of Raleigh, NC, this department provides varying degrees of transit services to the Human Service Agencies of Duplin County.

The type of transit services offered is based on "Demand Response, Dial-A-Ride and Subscriptions". This department transport individuals to educational opportunities so that they may further their education at James Sprunt Community College or one of the satellite systems they have in place. They also transport individuals to their place of work all across Duplin County. Any citizen of Duplin County who wishes to use the service to go to work or school should call the transportation office to get assigned to a specific route that would be most efficient for both transportation and the client. This department also transports individuals under the Smart Start Program so that the parent can go to work or to school and the child can go to the daycare facility of their choice. Transporting the elderly to the different nutrition sites geographically located all around the county to include the adult daycare facilities is another service of this department.

The transportation department's services are also used to transport mentally challenged persons to various workshops as well as Medicaid recipients to meet their medical needs as requested by the Duplin County Departments of Mental

Health and Social Services. These transportation services allow citizens to meet their transportation needs that they may not have access to without our services. Duplin County has a dialysis facility in both Kenansville and Warsaw. The Duplin County Transportation Department transports the majority of these individuals to and from both sites.

The transportation department has established a policy of transporting individuals to county medical facilities on a scheduled basis during the month. Individuals may call the office for more detailed information concerning the county medical services.

If any individuals are in need of transportation services, they may call the office to schedule a ride or call the sponsoring county agency to confirm eligibility to receive the service of the Duplin County Transportation Department. All transportation requests must be submitted 48 hours in advance in order to be scheduled for pick-up on the date of your appointment.

DCTD 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 DCTD van and be transferred to an Onslow County van headed to that facility.

Other transportation services in the county

While Duplin County Transportation 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)
- Cardinal Coach (charter)

- Disabled American Veterans
- James Sprunt Community College
- EMS
- Private ambulances transport non-ambulatory individuals
- Churches (events, services)
- Day Care/Head Start
- Assisted living facilities/nursing homes/group homes
- Taxi service
- Limo service (luxury and to airports)
- Private school busses
- Courtesy vans (auto dealerships/hotels/airport)
- Non-emergency transport
- Critical care truck
- Migrant farm worker vans
- Police/Sheriff
- Life Flight

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

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. DCTD helped to distribute the link to the survey. The survey was completed by many who attended the workshop on March 5th. A total of 12 responded to the survey for Duplin County. Here are the highlights of the responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 91.7% assigned a high or medium importance to the belief that there is not enough public transportation service available
- 87% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 83.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended service hours
- 83.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 83.4% assigned a high or medium 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
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas
- 91.6% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips
- 50% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.
- 83.3% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 90.9% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase/improve door-to-door service for the elderly and disabled.
- 75% assigned a high importance to the need for education on available services, programs and eligibility requirements.
- 91.7% 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)
- 63.7% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 81.8% 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.
- 66.6% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.

- 83.4% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 81.9% 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 Thursday March 5, 2009 at the Agricultural Center in Kenansville at 10:00 AM. The meeting was facilitated by staff from the ECRPO. The attendees generated ideas which were captured on flip charts.

Identification of users of the transit system

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

- Medicaid clients
- Senior citizens
- Job seekers/workers
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Low income individuals
- Students (K-12)
- Disabled/handicapped
- Mental health clients
- Veterans
- Community College Students (curriculum and continuing education)
- Others without vehicles, without working vehicles or without other forms of transportation

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy)
- To/From work
- Nutrition (e.g. to/from congregate meal sites, WIC appointments)
- Shopping (food, health/beauty, general merchandise)
- Errands & personal care
- Professional services
- Social (church, events, cultural, gathering)
- School (K-12, community college, college/university, continuing education, enrichment)
- Visiting (hospital, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.)
- Volunteering
- Recreation, leisure, mental stimulation and physical activity
- Other training

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- Duplin County DSS uses Duplin County Transportation to transport patient within and outside of Duplin County
- No night, weekend or holiday service
- Public perception/stigma
- Lack of information on funding
- Size of county, road access and terrain
- Cost to ride
- Advance notice of 48 hours required to ride
- Language barrier (Hispanics/Latinos)
- Number of seats vs. need
- Rail passenger service needed to Raleigh and Chapel Hill
- Bike paths and pedestrian walkways needed in county and municipalities
- Pre-schoolers need transportation

- Travel training (travel buddy system) needed to calm fears of new riders
- Trust (that vehicle will be there on time as scheduled)
- Look of vehicles
- Lack of support of commission and local governments to provide service at level needed
- Lack of park and ride opportunities
- Need to increase number of ADA compliant vehicles

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- General increase in population
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of elderly retirees without support systems in place
- Expectation of entitlement
- 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)
- 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
- Decrease in available public services
- Regionalization
- Public perception

- Instant gratification—want needs met NOW
- Catastrophes requiring evacuation
- 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 Duplin County now and in the future. These include:

1. Share-a-Ride (0 vote)
2. Reverse van pooling (1 vote)
3. Identification of de-conflicted funding sources (4 votes)
4. Fixed routes (4 votes)
5. Transporting pre-schoolers (5 votes)
6. Medical transport of those ineligible individuals (in and out of county) (5 votes)
7. Outreach to unincorporated population concentrations (8 votes)
8. Increase demand/response capacity (9 votes)
9. Decrease length of time of runs (9 votes)
10. Networking/coordinating among agencies/departments/businesses (10 votes)
11. Serve veterans (11 votes)
12. Partner with others—regionalization (11 votes)
13. Use of advanced technologies to improve services (12 votes)
14. Provide night, weekend and holiday service (12 votes)
15. Educate the public (awareness, reduce false perceptions) (13 votes)
16. Automated central information point on all forms of transportation in area (14 votes)
17. Decrease amount of time needed to pre-arrange a ride (14 votes)
18. Improve access to Broadband internet service to all areas of county (15 votes)

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 for broadband internet service throughout the county
2. Decrease the amount of time needed to pre-arrange a ride on the system
3. Develop an automated centralized transportation information system to provide information on all types of transportation available in the area.

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 Duplin, one possible answer might be a tax of some sort designated for public transportation. The Duplin 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 Duplin 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 Duplin County. Duplin 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 Duplin County
- b. List of attendees
- c. Survey
- d. Analysis of survey responses (Survey Monkey report)
- e. Comments on survey