

JONES COUNTY, NC
COORDINATED PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Adopted March 3, 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 Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) Advisory Board with a facilitator. The DERPO facilitator and the Director of the CARTS worked together to plan a public meeting to discuss the transportation needs of the citizens of Jones County. It was decided that one workshop would be held on March 3, 2009 at 9:00 AM at the Jones County Senior Center in Trenton 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, Craven Area Rural Transit System Advisory Board members, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, and veterans. In all eight (8) participants attended the workshop. They included representatives of:

- Jones County Health Department Director
- Jones County Department of Social Services
- Craven Area Rural Transit System Director

- Jones County Senior Services Director
- Lenoir Community College
- Down East RPO
- Governor's Eastern Region Office Liaison
- County Building Inspector

Demographics

Background

Jones County is 473 square miles, 1 square mile of which is water. The County has a very low Census 2000 population density of 21 persons per square mile.

Healthcare in Jones County is limited to the Health Department, clinics, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and private providers. Citizens needing specialized treatment and hospitalization are referred outside the county.

Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services must be transported to clinics out of the county (Greenville or Morehead City) 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. Jones County is a Tier 1 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. Jones County's ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 8.19 (ranked 25th lowest out of 100 counties).

Census & Statistical Data

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

	Pop. 2007	65+ 2007	% 65+	Avg. age
Jones County	10,398	1,659	11.8%	42.32
Maysville	1,002			
Pollocksville	269			
Trenton	206			
Unincorporated	8,921			

Jones County	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
	10,253	2,707	26.4%	46.77

The Census 2000 information shows 4,061 households with 2.53 persons per household. The population of Jones County in 2000 was 64.7% white, 33.6% black and 1.7% other. The median household income in 2000 was \$30,626 and the per capita income in 2000 was \$15,916. The poverty rate in 2000 was 16.9% mirroring the elderly poverty rate which was 16.7%. Twelve percent (12.8%) of the population receive food stamps (NC DHHS 2006). Fifty-eight percent (58.9%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2000 Census.

A discussion of the transportation needs in Jones County would not be complete without statistical information on the disabled population. In the 2000 Census 29.4% of the population over the age of five reported disabilities. The following Census 2000 tables give details on that population:

Population 16 to 64 years	6413
With a disability	1909
Percent with a disability	29.8
Sensory	289
Physical	791
Mental	328
Self-care	187
Going outside the home	687
Employment disability	1273
Population 65 years and over	1489
With a disability	754
Percent with a disability	50.6
Sensory	304
Physical	585
Mental	278
Self-care	219
Going outside the home	392
Population 18 to 34 years	1835
With a disability	315
Population 21 to 64 years	5783
With a disability	1841
Percent employed	54.8
No disability	3942
Percent employed	73.8

According to Census 2000 there are 1,173 veterans age 18 and older in Jones County. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services need transportation to clinics in Morehead City and Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

The mean travel time to work is 30 minutes (Census) and of the 4,267 people who worked outside the home, 3,327 (80%) drove a vehicle alone, 740 (17.3%) carpooled, 10 rode a bus, 2 rode motorcycles, 49 walked and 60 reported other means of getting to work. Of those commuting to work, 1,175 (27.5%) traveled to jobs within the county and 3,079 (72.2%) had jobs outside the county.

Analysis

Because of Jones County's low ability to pay rating, it will be difficult for the county itself to meet the full range of transportation. Fortunately it is part of a regional system that includes Pamlico and Craven Counties.

Of the citizens in Jones County over the age of 5, 29.4% are disabled. In the population range of 16 to 64, 791 citizens have physical disabilities and 289 have sensory disabilities. Of those 65 and older 50.8% have some sort of disability, 585 have a physical disability and 304 have a sensory disability. Many of those citizens would need transportation assistance, especially as they age.

The poverty rate is 16.9% and the elderly poverty rate is 12.8%. Twelve percent (12.8%) of the population are on food stamps. This population is most in need of transportation.

The elderly (65+) represent 15.4% of the present county population and will grow to 26.4% in 2030 according to the NC Demographer. A growing elderly population means more need for transportation. The elderly also have a high

percentage of disabilities, increasing the need to these services for more than just medical-related transportation.

Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Transportation Services

Jones County Transportation

Public transportation services in Jones County are supplied by the Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS). CARTS also provides public transportation services to Craven County and Pamlico County. These three counties are contiguous.

Craven County Department of Transportation began system operation in July 1980, after a six month planning and start-up phase. Today, Craven County Department of Transportation is better known as: Craven Area Rural Transit System – C.A.R.T.S., which is a North Carolina Department of Transportation /Public Transportation Division (NCDOT/PTD) approved Regional System serving the residence of Pamlico, Jones and Craven Counties.

CARTS staff includes: Director, Transportation Coordinator, Administrative Support Assistant I, Administrative Support Assistant III, Dispatch, three (3) full time drivers and twenty-four (24) part time drivers. CARTS Transportation Advisory Board which includes representatives of the agencies that CARTS serves, meets four times a years.

CARTS began with a fleet of twenty-one 21 vans, one bus and three sedans. Ten of the vans were modified to accommodate elderly and mobility impaired riders and four of those have wheelchair lifts. Currently CARTS fleet consist of: six (6) Center Aisle Van, seven (7) Conversion Vans, eleven (11) Lift Equipped Vans, three (3) 22-ft LTV-no lift, two (2) 22-ft LTV with lift and three (3) Craven County donated sedans. There are a total of 32 revenue vehicles in the fleet.

CARTS operates Monday through Friday. CARTS follows the same holiday schedule as Craven County. Exception being Dialysis Routes which operate on holidays when the dialysis centers are open. Office is open from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. with an answering machine for after hour messages.

Route/run pick-up times begin as early as 5:00 a.m. Normal last drop off time is before 7:00 p.m. With New Bern/Craven County being the locations of most dialysis centers, doctor offices, hospital, training centers for clients with special needs, jobs and educational training, routes are designed to bring client into the New Bern area by 8:15 a.m. and return pick up starts around 2:30 p.m.

CARTS has routes/runs coming from: Craven County, Jones County, and areas in Pamlico County starting in: Vanceboro, Dover, and Harlowe that come into New Bern Monday through Friday. These routes include communities such as: Jasper, Cove City, Spring Garden, Bridgeton, James City, Havelock, Oriental, Lowlands, Comfort, Long Point, etc. Dialysis routes/runs are Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday, and Tuesday/Thursday. CARTS has two route/runs that take clients to the Senior Centers in New Bern, and one for each of the following Senior Centers: Vanceboro, Harlowe, Havelock and Jones County. Two routes/runs that picks-up/drop off clients in the New Bern area. Craven County route/run picks up clients and takes them to Craven Community College.

CARTS routes/runs from New Bern/Craven County area: to Pollocksville on Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon, to Vanceboro on Wednesday morning, to Greenville on Tuesday and Thursday, to Chapel Hill 1st and 3rd Wednesday, to Kinston 2nd and 4th Thursday, to Morehead 1st and 3rd Thursday, Havelock Loop on Tuesday and Thursday, Jones County Loop Thursdays and Fridays, other routes/runs as requested and driver/vehicle available.

CARTS has Demand Response route/runs that pick up every 20 minutes door to door within the New Bern area. Demand Response in the Vanceboro, Dover, Cove City, Bridgeton, James City area as drivers and schedule will allow. CARTS operates a RED and YELLOW LOOP that travel around the New Bern area stopping at 20 locations.

CARTS supplies client services to the following agencies:

1. Craven County Department of Social Services
2. Craven County Department of Social Services
3. Vocational Rehabilitation
4. Coastal Community Action
5. Monarch/CCE ARC
6. Monarch/CCE ARC JOBS
7. NC Division of the Blind
8. Religious Community Services
9. Craven/Craven/ Jones Counties ROAP Clients-Elderly Disabled, Rural General Public, Employment
10. Home Community Care Block Grant Clients
11. Various Nursing Homes

During FY 2007/2008 CARTS provided 96,332 trips which includes no show and attendants.

Federal and State funds are provided annually to the CARTS to offset local administrative and capital operating costs. The CARTS provides a "dial-a-ride" or "demand/response" type service to all residents of Jones County when there is space available. Human Service agency clients have priority over the general public passenger.

Through this agreement, Federal and State funds are provided annually to the County to offset local administrative and capital operating costs. The CARTS provides a "dial-a-ride" or "demand/response" type service to all residents of Jones County when there is space available. Human Service agency clients have priority over the general public passenger.

CARTS 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 CARTS van headed to that facility.

Other transportation services in the county

While Craven Area Rural Transit 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)
- EMS
- Churches (events, services)
- Assisted living facilities
- Private Taxi (A. Wilson)—transports DSS/Medicaid clients
- HD Case manager private vehicle
- Executive Medical Transport—Medicaid, specialized transport
- Cruell private transportation service
- Disabled Veterans representative—uses private vehicle
- Senior Service Center van

- 4H—Cooperative Extension

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. At this time few of these facilities exist making it dangerous for most to walk or bike.

The local TV channel 12 WCTI 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

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 in 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. . The survey was completed by those attending the workshop on March 3, 2009. A total of 4 responded to the survey for Pamlico County. While this is an inadequate number, here are the highlights of those responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 75% of those responding believe that there is not enough public transportation service available.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance for the need for extended service related to employment type trips
- 100% believed there is a need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas

- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 75% assigned a no or low importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips
- 50% assigned a no or low importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.
- 100% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 75% 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.
- 75% 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)
- 100% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 100% 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.
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 100% assigned a medium or low 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 Tuesday March 3, 2009 at the Jones County Senior Center in Trenton at 9:00 AM. The meeting was facilitated by a representative of the Eastern Carolina Council of Government's Down East Rural Transportation Planning Organization (DERPO). The facilitator worked directly with the group and wrote their ideas on a flip chart for all to see.

Identification of users of the transit system

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

- Medicaid clients
- Senior citizens
- Job seekers/workers
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Low income individuals
- Students (K-12)
- Disabled veterans
- Migrants
- College students
- Anyone without the use of a private vehicle or other means of transportation

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy)
- To/From work
- Congregate meals
- 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
- Events, recreation, mental stimulation and physical activity
- Nutrition (WIC appointments, congregate meals)
- After school activities

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- No nights, weekend or holiday services
- On any given day there could be an inadequate number of seats vis-à-vis those needing transportation
- No fixed routes in Jones County
- Simple trip can end up taking all day (inconvenient, time consuming)
- Demand/response service also needed especially for medically frail and frail elderly
- Confusing eligibility criteria
- Stigma of riding due to current ridership
- Lack of marketing of range of service available and eligibility
- 4H-camp transportation needed
- Lack of trust
- Advance planning needed to participate (younger generation expects instant gratification)
- Problem getting the word out in Jones County (multiple reasons for this)

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in population due to proximity to coast
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, loss of nest eggs, loss of retirement benefits)
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concern about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality 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
- Increase in cost of personal transportation (insurance, gas, maintenance)
- Continued breakdown of traditional family units
- Increase in chronic disease—necessitating more trips out of county for care (Jones County does not have a hospital)
- Disproportionate economic development.

Strategies to address the concerns and gaps

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

- A. Fixed routes—identifying key routes within the county and collection points that make sense vis-à-vis where people live that might use this service. Ridership would be slow to start and more subsidies would be needed to sustain

the fixed route system during this period, but eventually if riders began to trust that the system was reliable and that it would be continued, the system has the potential to be self-sustaining.

- B. Demand/Response system—continuing with the present system, but expand the parameters so that more citizens would use it.
- C. Increase marketing of availability of CARTS (library, internet, utility bills, etc.)
- D. Change name of CARTS as it could be misinterpreted as a service for Craven County only
- E. Engage partners in dialogue—be proactive in approaching new agency and department heads (Recreation, DSS, HD, VA, VR, CE, etc.)
- F. Currently CARTS is under the Craven County umbrella—extend that umbrella to Jones and Pamlico
- G. Examine reason why Jones County's DSS is not using CARTS
- H. No one in Jones County specifically promotes public transportation
- I. Consider using a volunteer in Jones County to promote CARTS
- J. Key agency and department staff are not from Jones County and do not live in the county therefore they don't always understand the issues regarding the use of the transportation system

K. Create ways for the youth to use the system and encourage them to do so

L. Nights, weekend and holiday service may be needed in the future.

Those participating agreed that these strategies may result in increased usage of the transit system now and in the future.

Prioritization of Needs

The workshop participants discussed existing services and desired services. They are detailed in the prior section. The participants strongly favored and recommended adoption of the strategies listed.

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 Jones, one possible answer might be a tax of some sort designated for public transportation. The Jones 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 Jones 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=h
b+148](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=h
b+148)

Long Range Transportation Plans

In January 2007 Craven Area Rural Transportation System completed a Community Transportation Improvement Plan. The information in this chapter was taken verbatim from this plan.

Purpose

The Purpose of this plan was:

- To evaluate community transportation systems' current approaches to management and operations;
- To evaluate the results of the current organizational direction;
- To identify organizational and operational strengths and to target opportunities for improvement on processes and results that affect all key stakeholders- including customers, employees, granting agencies and the public and;
- To assist the NCDOT Public Transportation Division in aligning and maximizing available resources (employee development/training, administrative, operating and capital funding) to facilitate each system's continuous improvement process.

Strengths, Opportunities and Recommendations for Improvement

Based on a review of the operational and management functions of CARTS, this section outlines the system's strengths and identifies opportunities for improvement in the near future. Overall, CARTS is a well-run, effective transportation system. Financial resources are limited, particularly for public transportation in rural areas, but CARTS has successfully created a regional system through the cooperation of three counties and various human service agencies that represent the primary purchasers of transportation. In the future, Craven County and CARTS should seek to build upon these strengths and

expand operations, but only as warranted by sufficient demand. Jones and Pamlico County governments are urged to play a greater role in providing financial and administrative support for the system.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

CARTS system policies and direction are provided through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which convenes at least twice each year or more often, as warranted. At present, feedback at the agency level is provided frequently by TAB members directly to CARTS staff, while CARTS' Transportation Director reports once or more each year to the TAB on system performance, finances, and operations statistics. No specific goals or performance targets are established by the TAB for CARTS, which leads to an environment more focused on maintaining the status quo than growing the system or striving for specific targets.

Every system requires long-term planning and assessment of future needs and opportunities. CARTS has been operating from year to year without a formal planning document since the last CTSP in 1994. It is recommended that the system engage in a five-year CTSP planning process within the next year. At a minimum, the TAB and CARTS management should revisit the process of developing and updating goals and objectives for the system.

A CTSP (or similar needs assessment) would address the effectiveness of operations and the system service levels at present, highlight unmet needs based on existing population, employment and development, as well as examine projected land use and demographic changes in the region to assess changes necessary in a five-year planning horizon to meet these needs. With a financial plan and service/budget projections, this plan would also provide for modifications and/or expansion of the PTMS.

Planning and Needs Assessment

- CARTS should conduct a Community Transportation Service Plan or similar needs assessment study within a year to re-establish a formal planning process for the system.
- CARTS management and the TAB should collectively set performance targets each year, based on previous years' experience and expectations of future growth relative to operating constraints.
- As part of needs assessment and general service planning, document the growing need for employment transportation, particularly for residents in Pamlico and Jones Counties dependent upon public transportation for access to quality jobs in the region.

Policy and Direction

- Policy and performance goals and objectives should be established to compliment the CARTS mission statement. General public ridership and the expansion of this market segment should be given greater priority.
- The composition of the CARTS TAB should be expanded to include a wider range of interests and inputs to compliment representation already present. Increased participation from planning and economic development functions.
- The CARTS TAB is currently required to meet at least twice each year. This minimum meeting frequency should be increased to quarterly, and regular meetings should be held to discuss mid-year progress in meeting goals and policy/operational challenges that may arise.
- As part of the needs assessment study recommended above, the role of Jones and Pamlico Counties should be evaluated, based on expectations of population and employment growth and corresponding service demand. Such a study should examine the need for and feasibility of an increased provision of resources from the two counties, commensurate with planned service expansion.

- CARTS staff and the TAB should work collectively to develop formal policy and procedures for all aspects of the system's management and operation.

Customer Service

The following recommendations are provided for CARTS customer service functions. As noted earlier, several efforts have been undertaken by CARTS to improve key areas of customer service and address some of these recommendations.

- Expand telephone system to multiple lines and allow for easier agency and client access to CARTS staff for reservations and administrative concerns. (In progress)
- Provide description of service and contact information on Pamlico County website.
- Improve clarity of Loop map and service on "Transit Route Scheduling Information" pamphlet.

Financial Management

- No recommendations are necessary in this functional area.

Human Resources

A persistent challenge for CARTS management is the hiring and maintenance of an adequately sized staff, in particular the full- and part-time drivers. Due to budgetary constraints, drivers' salaries are comparatively low. Furthermore, many drivers take the position as post-retirement employment. As a result, CARTS drivers tend to be older and less likely to work for the system for numerous years due either to medical conditions or a decision to stop work altogether. Attracting younger employees is difficult because wages, particularly the hourly wages for part-time drivers, are not competitive with other employment sectors, and the available labor pool is relatively small. Craven

County is expected to complete a study of pay scales throughout the county government structure, which may help CARTS address the issue of low driver wages and difficulty in hiring new employees.

CARTS benefits from the human resources assistance provided by Craven County, including help with hiring/firing drivers, suspensions, promotions, and grievances. Craven County staff time is not billed directly to CARTS, rather paid in-kind as a part of the local match for operations. This relationship is beneficial to CARTS in that specific assistance or resources provided by or requested of the county are handled as-needed as opposed to being subject to particular budgetary constraints.

As seen in the results of the confidential employee survey, salaries and benefits are the primary source of dissatisfaction among CARTS employees.

- Additional resources are required to provide more competitive salaries for full and part-time drivers, as well as attract new drivers for both existing shifts and potential system expansion. Higher salaries will allow for better attraction and retention of drivers, which in turn would lead to improved service quality.
- CARTS must ensure that sufficient administrative funds are devoted to employee development, per NCDOT guidance, to cover drivers' salaries for the time spent in employee training [whereby NCDOT PTD provides funding for specific training and development].
- In the event of staff shortages in the CARTS management office, temporary help should be hired to cover critical work tasks rather than burdening existing staff. This is considered an operational expense.

Operations Scheduling & Dispatching

Through an examination of CARTS' scheduling practices and a sample week of vehicle utilization, the system appears to be doing an efficient and effective job

of scheduling and assigning vehicles. On average, passenger productivities exceed three passengers per mile, although in some cases the driver pay to revenue service hour ratio is higher than the target of 1.25 or better. With the continued use of RouteMatch automated scheduling software, installed in 2006, this efficiency is expected to improve.

- Continue to monitor scheduling efficiency (pay to platform ratio, trips per hour, etc.) to ensure that automated scheduling provides continued improved performance.
- Use automated scheduling software (RouteMatch) in conjunction with outreach to neighboring transit systems to assess feasibility of coordination of out-of-county medical trips, as well as trips between county system service areas.
- Limit the advance reservation period to two weeks to minimize the number of daily trip cancellations. If cancellation rate remains high, consider financial penalties to customers or contracting agencies.

Equipment

CARTS operates a fleet of 32 vehicles, however only 9 of the vehicles (28%) are wheelchair-accessible. The system should strive to operate as many accessible vehicles as possible so as to provide maximum flexibility for vehicle and trip assignments as well as to limit the potential for trip denials due to the incapacity to transport a wheelchairbound customer (either agency or demand response).

The NCDOT guideline for fleet accessibility is to have 50% of vehicles wheelchair lift-equipped. During this report process, the most recent Public Transportation Management System (PTMS) inventory projection for CARTS listed five [revenue service] vehicles due for replacement in FY2007, four vehicles in FY2008, four in FY2009, and 16 vehicles in FY2010 and beyond. Scheduled vehicle replacement represents the appropriate opportunity to upgrade a fleet and, in this case, make a fleet more accessible to passengers with disabilities.

Of the vehicles scheduled for replacement between FY2007 and FY2009, only one conversion van replacement includes a wheelchair lift where the vehicle to be retired did not. Conversely, in FY2010 and beyond, numerous vehicles that currently do not have lifts are scheduled to be replaced with vehicles that do. Subsequently, NCDOT PTD and CARTS have updated the PTMS to increase the percentage of lift-equipped vehicles in the near term. Based on NCDOT prescribed vehicle replacements for FY2007-2008, CARTS will have the following fleet composition: 8 conversion vans, 6 center aisle vans, 11 lift-equipped vans, and 4 22-foot light transit vehicles (2 lift-equipped). This maintains the total transit vehicle fleet (excluding sedans) at 29, of which 13 vehicles (45%) are wheelchair-accessible. This would represent a net gain of four lift-equipped vehicles, including the replacement of vehicle #8 with a lift-equipped conversion van, within the next three years. This change does not represent an expansion of the fleet size. However, as total fleet seating capacity may decrease as a result of adding more wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles, CARTS should monitor closely its scheduling and passenger load factors through RouteMatch to determine if additional capacity is required at the time of each vehicle procurement process.

- Speed replacement schedule of non-lift-equipped vehicles to bring fleet to 50% compliance.
- Speed replacement of two-way radio replacement to meet NCDOT guideline of ten year life spans for such equipment.

Safety & Training

CARTS' vehicle accident and incident occurrences have declined in recent years. Continued focus on training materials for drivers and regular safety meetings, as well as specific re-training for drivers involved in accidents, should be a mainstay of the system's operations. CARTS should also take advantage of any training

programs offered by, or in conjunction with, other Craven County departments with relevant materials.

- Continue to provide regularly scheduled training and safety programs to drivers.

Maintenance

The current arrangement within Craven County of including CARTS maintenance functions in the Central Maintenance is an effective use and allocation of resources, allowing CARTS management to focus on day-to-day operations with a minimum of required oversight of vehicle and facility maintenance.

- No recommendations are necessary in this functional area

Marketing

Marketing of CARTS services is essential for the system's continued success and growth. While many trips are generated by recurring agency contracts, the general public component of the service represents an area of potential growth. Furthermore, CARTS may be able to reach residents who find themselves in need of transportation but may not have direct affiliation with an agency that already contracts with CARTS, or they may not know of the transportation possibilities available through various agencies.

North Carolina Department of Transportation requires community transportation systems to dedicate a minimum of 2% of their operating budgets to marketing. At present, CARTS does not meet this minimum requirement.

During this CTIP process, CARTS started two marketing campaigns with local pharmacies, printing the system name and contact information on prescription medicine bags. This is an excellent method of reaching a varied population, and should be continued in the future. Several other approaches to expanding the CARTS brand image and customer base can be pursued at low or minimal cost.

- Continue advertising campaigns with pharmacies. Offer first ride free with mention of advertisement to both track success of the campaign and provide an incentive for new customers.
- Improve visibility on local/government websites:
 - Pamlico County – Currently has no mention of CARTS
 - City of New Bern – No mention of CARTS
 - Craven County Convention & Visitors Bureau – no mention of CARTS
- Pursue increased exposure through inclusion of CARTS contact and service information in newsletters and communications provided by senior centers, educational institutions, neighborhood groups, etc.
- Increased funding is required from local sources for advertising and marketing to meet required 2% of administrative budget. Based on the FY2005 administrative expenses reported (\$228,875), CARTS should have a marketing budget of approximately \$4,580.

State and Federal Compliance

To better meet NCDOT guidelines for equipment and funding mechanisms, the following recommendations are offered:

- Update PTMS and vehicle replacement schedule to acquire more lift-equipped vehicles by FY2008 and bring the percentage of lift vehicles closer to 45-50% of the CARTS fleet.
- Expedite replacement of radios, as noted above in the Operations recommendations.
- Identify alternative funding sources for mental health or other trips that do not qualify for EDTAP or RGP funding. For example, Coastal County Enterprises trips funded with Neuse Center grant, RGP and EDTAP should replace RGP and EDTAP with funding from local sources such as Pamlico and Jones Counties, where appropriate.

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 Jones County. Jones 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 Jones County
- b. List of attendees
- c. Survey
- d. Analysis of survey responses (Survey Monkey report)
- e. Comments from survey