

**Coordinated Public Transportation
And Human Services
Transportation Plan**

**Adopted
March 20, 2009**

**Land-of-Sky
Rural Planning Organization**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Federal Regulatory Background

II. Plan Approach

III. Demographics

IV. Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Service

V. General Program Information

a. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (5316)

b. New Freedom Program (5317)

c. Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)

VI. Needs Assessment

VII. Prioritization of Needs

VIII. Needs Assessment in the Long Range Horizon

IX. Strategies and Priorities for Implementation

X. Update Interval

Appendix A. Map of Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization

I. Federal Regulatory Background

For more than twenty years, the federal government has 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, and 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.

II. Plan Approach

Projects funded through the 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 transportation plan (CPT-HSTP), which should incorporate private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the general public.

Completing the planning process required the participation of many organizations and agencies and the creation of a planning team. The following organizations comprised the planning team:

- Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization
- North Carolina Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division
- Haywood County Public Transit
- Madison County Transportation
- Mountain Mobility (Buncombe County Transportation)
- Transylvania County Transportation

The planning process was conducted in consultation with NCDOT Public Transportation Division, the Federal Transit Administration, and Community Transportation Association of America.

Because one county in the RPO, Haywood County, had recently taken the initiative of creating its own LCP at the county level, including all the steps and public involvement required for this plan, in August 2008, it was determined that their recently adopted plan could serve as their input to the RPO-wide plan instead of asking their steering committee, staff and citizens to go through a redundant process just a few months later in order to accommodate the rest of the RPO.

The planning team met with transit directors and key stakeholders in each of the four counties beginning in early December and used these meetings to plan the public workshops and the format of the process. In the workshops, the stakeholders and the public identified needs and gaps in the current public transportation service areas. Ideas were also presented to improve the overall efficiencies of the systems. The results of the workshops are the foundation for the CP-HST which will guide the application and project selection process.

The following stakeholders participated in the public meetings:

- Buncombe County Council on Aging

- Extended Care Physicians
- North Carolina Department of Correction – Division of Community Corrections
- VA Hospital
- Western Alliance
- Mountain Mobility
- Haywood Regional Medical Center
- Haywood County Health Dept
- Haywood County CAP
- Haywood Community Connections
- Haywood County AARP
- Haywood County Commissioner
- Haywood County Department of Social Services
- Haywood County Planning
- Haywood Public Transit
- Haywood Vocational Opportunities, Inc.
- Haywood/Jackson Volunteer Center
- Town of Waynesville
- Haywood Community College
- Vocational Rehabilitation, Haywood County
- Haywood Christian Ministries
- Madison County Transportation Board
- Madison County Medicaid Transportation
- Madison County In Home Services
- Madison County Senior Center
- Madison County Transportation Authority Program
- Madison County Manager
- Transylvania County Vocational Rehab
- Transylvania Joblink/ESC
- Transylvania Christian Ministry
- Western Carolina Community Action
- Local Faith Based Community

- Local Citizens

III. Demographics

	median age 2008/2030*	over age 65(2008)*	persons in poverty**	persons disabled***	houses no vehicles****
Buncombe+	40.08/42.29	34,936 (15.2%)	22,920 (11.4%)	24,145 (20.0%)	6,608 (7.7%)
Haywood+	44.33/46.74	11,576 (20.2%)	6,112 (11.5%)	6,788 (22.0%)	1,520 (6.6%)
Madison	41.43/44.99	3,410 (16.5%)	2,880 (15.4%)	2,223 (19.9%)	628 (7.9%)
Transylvania	47.63/52.66	7,471 (24.0%)	2,708 (9.5%)	3,111 (19.4%)	721 (5.9%)

*Estimates from Office of State Budget and Management,
http://www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures/socioeconomic_data/population_estimates/county_projections.shtm

**Persons in poverty, Census 2000

***Persons age 21-64 with disability, Census 2000

****Occupied units with no vehicles available, Census 2000

+County-wide numbers, not limited to areas within the RPO boundary

IV. Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Service

Buncombe County - Mountain Mobility Services

Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, was established in 1989 and currently provides transportation services to clients of human service agencies, departments of local governments, and general public transportation services for persons residing outside of the City of Asheville. Mountain Mobility is administered and operated through the Transportation Division of Buncombe County Planning and Development. An advisory board to Buncombe County staff and the Board of Commissioners are actively involved in the planning and operation of the system. Current service contracts include: Buncombe County Departments of Aging Services, Child Care Services, and Social Services; Asheville Transit Services; Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College; Community Care Partners Adult Day Services; Council on Aging; N.C. Division of Services for the Blind; and N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as other organizations including several nursing homes and adult care facilities.

Mountain Mobility provides transportation services utilizing a fleet of 40 vehicles. About 500 passenger trips are provided throughout Buncombe County on a typical weekday (over 600 trips are usually scheduled on most weekdays). Service is available Monday-Saturday, 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Accommodations are made for ADA services

as needed. The system primarily offers demand-response and subscription services. Shopping (grocery and retail) and multipurpose (e.g., banking, personal business) trips are offered during non-peak hours (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) on specific days via community service routes established for each geographical area of the County. Mountain Mobility currently operates two deviated fixed (Trailblazer) routes that serve the Black Mountain and Swannanoa communities in east Buncombe County and the Enka-Candler community in west Buncombe County, and a third route is planned for the North Buncombe area

Mountain Mobility requires reservations be made by 3 p.m. the day before transportation is needed for most services. Mountain Mobility only provides transportation services within Buncombe County. The fleet consists of:

- 1 6-Passenger Mini Van
- 6 14-Passenger Conversion Vans (no lifts)
- 27 9-Passenger Lift-Equipped Vans
- 5 25-Foot Light Transit Vehicles With Lifts

Haywood County Services

Haywood Public Transit is the coordinated public transportation service in Haywood County. It was established in 1989 through the consolidation of several county agencies' client transportation systems. Mountain Projects, Inc.; a community based non-profit organization founded in 1965 as a Community Action Agency. Mountain Projects has a Board of Directors with 18 members representing three distinct groups: representatives of low income target area communities, representatives from other organizations that provide services to the community, and elected officials representing Haywood and Jackson Counties and the towns and municipalities in both counties.

Haywood Public Transit provides transportation for human service agencies, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the general public of Haywood County. It offers subscription service, paratransit service, and a limited demand response service between 6:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. Requests for service must be made at least one business day in advance. Limited demand response service within the Haywood County area is available between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. with at least two hours notice. Limited service is available to Asheville and Sylva.

Haywood Public Transit has 17 vehicles, and forty-one percent of the fleet is dedicated to the deviated fixed routes, and ten vehicles - fifty-eight percent of the fleet – is dedicated to demand response service.

The fleet consists of:

- One 22' LTV with lift and two wheelchair stations
- Two 25' LTV with lift and two wheelchair stations each
- One alternative bus for Head Start students with one wheelchair station
- Eight lift vans, each with two wheelchair stations

- Three 12-passenger conversion vans without lifts
- One 12-passenger standard van
- One 7-passenger mini van

Madison County Services

Madison County Transit (MCTA) is the coordinated public transportation service for Madison County. Madison County (Jewel of the Blue Ridge) is located in the Western Mountains of North Carolina. It was formed in 1851 from Buncombe and Yancey counties. It was named for President James Madison. Madison County Transportation Authority provides transportation services from the populated areas to the remote areas of the County. A round trip from the remote areas can tally up to one hundred forty miles round trip. MCTA provides trips to Haywood, Yancey, Buncombe and the towns of Newport and Greenville, Tennessee. The County is comprised of three main towns; Mars Hill, Marshall and Hot Springs.

Madison County Transportation Authority has a Transportation Advisory Board that consists of representatives of elected county officials, local agencies, along with community and business representatives. It meets on the second Thursday of every month at 10:00 am at the new Madison County Transportation Facility at 387 Long Branch Road in Marshall. The new facility was completed and occupied in August, 2007. Madison County Transportation Authority is a demand response transportation service. It provides services for general and medical trips not only within Madison County but to the surrounding counties. It provides transportation to all the nutrition centers within Madison County. Madison County has a large number of passengers over the age of sixty, people with disabilities, plus financial and mobility constraints; thus their ability to utilize a transportation service is vital to their well-being.

Madison County Transportation Authority requires a 24-hour advance reservation for local trips and a two-day (or more) advance notice for out-of-county trips. Madison County currently provides transportation services utilizing a fleet of 11 vehicles. Services are provided from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm Monday thru Friday. The closing time is optional due the ending time of the medical appointments of the passengers.

The fleet consists of:

- 3 – 8 passenger lift vans with 2 wheelchair stations
- 8-14 passenger standard vans.

Transylvania County Services

Transylvania County Transportation (TRANSPORT) is the coordinated public transportation service in Transylvania County. Transylvania County is located in the Western Mountains of North Carolina and is bordered to the south by the State of South

Carolina, the west by Jackson County, and the east by Henderson County. TRANSPORT provides transportation services from the populated areas to the most remote mountainous portions of the County. In addition, TRANSPORT provides out-of-county medical trips to Hendersonville and Asheville. The County has two towns; Brevard and Rosman. TRANSPORT has a Transportation Advisory Board consisting primarily of representatives of the County and other affected agencies. The Advisory Board also includes community and business representatives.

Transylvania County Transportation provides subscription and demand-response transportation services to major human service agencies in Transylvania County and surrounding areas, as well as to the general public residing within the county. Transylvania County has a large number of persons with disabilities, mobility and financial constraints; thus, the ability to connect with essential service is critical.

TRANSPORT requires a 24-hour advance reservation for local trips. TRANSPORT currently provides transportation services utilizing a fleet of 8 vehicles; services are provided Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

The fleet consists of:

- 4- 14 passenger conversion vans without lifts
- 1 - 9 passenger lift van with 2 wheelchair stations
- 3 - 12 passenger lift vans, each with 2 wheelchair stations

V. General Program Information

FTA Sections 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) for the three programs.

For each program, FTA will publish the annual apportionment in the Federal Register following the enactment of the annual DOT appropriations act. Funds are available during the FY of apportionment plus two additional years. For example, funds apportioned in FY 2006 are available until the end of FY 2008 (September 30, 2008). FTA will add any un-obligated funds remaining at the end of the period of availability to the next year's program apportionment and will reapportion the funds among all the states.

a. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (5316)

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program has had a dramatic impact on the lives of thousands of welfare recipients and low-income families, helping individuals successfully transition from welfare to work and reach needed employment support services such as childcare and job training activities. JARC was established as part of

TEA–21 to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to get and keep jobs. With many new entry-level jobs located in suburban areas, low-income and/or welfare recipients have found it difficult to access these jobs from their inner city, urban and rural neighborhoods on a daily basis. Further, many entry-level jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services in many communities are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment-related trips are complex for low-income persons, often involving multiple destinations, including reaching childcare facilities and other services as part of the work trip.

Section 3037 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) required that JARC project selection be made through a national competition based on statutorily specified criteria. FTA conducted competitions and selected projects for funding appropriated in FY 1999–2002. However, beginning in FY 2000, Congress also began designating specific projects and recipients to receive JARC funding in the conference reports accompanying the annual appropriations acts, and directed FTA to honor those designations with statutory language specifying that “notwithstanding any other provision of law, projects and activities designated [in the conference reports] shall be eligible for funding.” Each year, more projects were Congressionally designated until finally all JARC project funding was allocated to Congressionally designated projects and recipients. Although SAFETEA–LU repealed Section 3037 of TEA–21 and substituted the new provisions of 49 U.S.C. 5316, those projects designated by Congress under Section 3037 and not yet obligated remain available to the project for obligation under the terms and conditions of Section 3037.

With the passage of SAFETEA–LU, JARC funding is allocated by formula to States for areas with populations below 200,000 persons, and to designated recipients for areas with populations of 200,000 persons and above. The formula is based on the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in urbanized and rural areas. SAFETEA-LU authorized a total of \$727 million for JARC grants from Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009.

The formula-based program is intended to provide an equitable funding distribution to States and communities as well as stable and reliable funding in order to implement locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans. FTA continues to provide maximum flexibility to communities in designing plans and projects to meet the transportation needs of low-income people and welfare recipients.

Examples of Projects

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home service
- Shuttle service

- Expanding fixed-route public transit routes
- Demand-responsive van service
- Ridesharing and carpooling activities
- Transit-related aspects of bicycling (such as adding bicycle racks to vehicles to support individuals who bicycle a portion of their commute or providing bicycle storage at transit stations)
- Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides
- Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
 - Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules
 - Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals
- Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles, ridesharing, carpooling
- Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs
- Acquiring GIS tools
- Implementing ITS, including customer trip information technology
- Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling, and dispatch functions
- Deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool van routes or service from urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban work places
- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace
- Facilitating the provision of public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals
 - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
 - Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
 - Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers
 - Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations and Human Service Organizations customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as

- coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
- Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs
 - Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of GIS mapping, GPS, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a standalone capital expense)

b. New Freedom Program (5317)

The New Freedom Program is a new program authorized in Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) to support new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq.). This program is codified at 49 U.S.C. 5317.

The New Freedom Program grew out of the New Freedom Initiative introduced by the Bush Administration under Executive Order 13217, “Community-Based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities,” on June 18, 2001. The Order states: “The United States is committed to community-based alternatives for individuals with disabilities and recognizes that such services advance the best interests of the United States” and calls upon the Federal government to assist States and localities to swiftly implement the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. L.C.*

Executive Order 13217 directed six Federal agencies, including the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development and the Social Security Administration to “evaluate the policies, programs, statutes and regulations of their respective agencies to determine whether any should be revised or modified to improve the availability of community-based services for qualified individuals with disabilities.” The Departments of Transportation and Veterans Affairs, the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management, though not named in the Executive Order, also joined in the implementation effort. Together, these agencies formed the Interagency Council on Community Living under the leadership of the DHHS.

Individuals who are transportation-disadvantaged face different challenges in accessing services depending on whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban areas. The geographic dispersion of transportation-disadvantaged populations also creates challenges for human service programs hoping to deliver transportation for their passengers.

Over the years, in response to these challenges, Federal, State and local governments, and community-based organizations created specialized programs to meet particular transportation needs. At the Federal level alone, there are at least 62 separate programs, administered by eight Federal departments, and even more agencies, that provide special transportation services to individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. Most of these are human service programs that fund limited transportation services to provide eligible participants with access to particular services, such as job training, health care, senior centers, or rehabilitation programs.

President Bush included funds for the New Freedom Program in the annual budget request to Congress since FY 2003; however, it was not until the enactment of SAFETEA-LU that funding was authorized by Congress. Funding was first appropriated for the transportation provision in Fiscal Year 2006. The New Freedom Program is intended to fill the gaps between human service and public transportation services previously available and to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce and full participation in the community.

Examples of Projects

Funds from the 5317 program are available for new services that are not required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which may include service, equipment or facility enhancements that exceed the minimum ADA obligations.

- Paratransit service area beyond 3/4 mile
- Paratransit hours beyond fixed-route hours
- Cost to change from next-day to same-day
- Cost to change from curb-to-curb to door-to-door for all riders
- Escorts or door-through-door service
- Vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids larger and heavier than “common” wheelchairs.
- Additional wheelchair securement locations on buses
- New “feeder” service to commuter stations
 - Accessibility improvements to stations that are not key stations: Accessible path, elevator, ramp or detectable warnings, signage or wayfinding technology
 - Travel training
 - Public transportation alternatives: Accessible taxi, ridesharing, vanpool, voucher, volunteer driver and aide programs, mobility management and coordination programs

Mobility Management Activities may include:

- Travel training
- Consists of short-range planning and management activities for improving coordination
- Excludes operating public transportation services

- Is a capital expense (80/20)
- Short-term management activities
- Coordination bodies and councils
- Transportation brokerages
- Travel training and trip planning/navigators
- One-stop transportation call centers
- Planning for ITS

c. Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program. In cases where public transit was inadequate or inappropriate, the program awarded grants to private non-profit organizations to serve the transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. FTA (then the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA)) apportioned the funds among the States by formula for distribution to local agencies, a practice made a statutory requirement by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). In the early years of the program, many of the subrecipient non-profit agencies used the vehicles primarily for transportation of their own clients. Funding for the Section 16(b)(2) program, as it was then known, ranged between \$20–35 million annually until the passage of ISTEA, when it increased to the \$50–60 million range. ISTEA also introduced the eligibility of public agencies under limited circumstances to facilitate and encourage the coordination of human service transportation. Increasingly, FTA guidance encouraged and required coordination of the program with other Federal human service transportation programs. In lieu of purchasing vehicles, acquisition of service in order to promote use of private sector providers and coordination with other human service agencies and public transit providers was made an eligible expense under ISTEA. Other provisions of ISTEA introduced the ability to transfer flexible funds to the program from certain highway programs and the flexibility to transfer funds from the Section 5310 program to the rural and urban formula programs.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) enacted in 1998, reauthorized the Section 5310 program. TEA–21 increased the funding levels for the Section 5310 program but made no significant program changes. In 2005, Congress enacted SAFETEA–LU. SAFETEA–LU introduced the requirement that projects funded with 5310 funds be derived from a locally developed, coordinate public transit-human services transportation plan; removed the flexibility that funds can be transferred to Section 5311 for Section 5311 program purposes during the fiscal year apportioned, if funds were not needed for Section 5310 program purposes; introduced a seven State pilot program that allows selected States to use up to one-third of the funds apportioned to them for operating assistance; and allowed transfers to Section 5307 or 5311, but only to fund projects selected for Section 5310 program purposes.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5310 authorizes the formula assistance program for the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. FTA refers to this formula program as “the Section 5310 program.” FTA, on behalf of the Secretary of Transportation,

apportions the funds appropriated annually to the States based on an administrative formula that considers the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each State. These funds are subject to annual appropriations.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5310(a)(1) authorizes funding for public transportation capital projects planned, designed and carried out to meet the special needs of elderly individuals and

Examples of Projects

Funds from the 5310 program are available for capital projects such as primarily funds for vehicles & equipment. Under section 5310, “capital” also includes the purchase of service and mobility management.

VI. Needs Assessment

A facilitated public workshop process was utilized in collecting perceived needs, gaps and barriers in the current public transportation systems in each of the four counties in the Land-of-Sky RPO. Participants in the workshop were divided into random groups to foster the cross pollination of ideas between different agencies and populations. The groups then spent time identifying the gaps, needs and barriers. One person from each of the groups reported out to the facilitator who displayed the items on large post-it notes. An opportunity was provided to all of the participants to ask questions for clarification of the items listed. Participants were then asked to vote on the relative importance of the identified priorities through “dot voting.” Each participant had five stickers to allocate to priorities in any combination they chose. All participants were accommodated who had difficulty with any portions of the planning process.

The stated perceived needs, gaps and barriers were similar throughout the region. The following is a summary identified through the public workshops and other comments received throughout the planning process.

Infrastructure Issues

- Need for more vehicles, particularly lift-equipped vans
- Need for park and rides and/or feeder routes to connect rural areas to fixed route transit in the Asheville area
- Improved pedestrian infrastructure around bus stops

Information and Communication Issues

- Travel training
- Mobility coordination
- Increased publicity about available services
- GIS/GPS locational software

- Communication/coordination between neighboring counties to facilitate transfer from one system to another for out of county trips

Route and Response Issues

- Extended hours of service
- Extended workforce transportation
- Door thru door services
- More flexibility/service for social and discretionary trips as well as “necessities”
- More service to industrial areas tied to factory shifts
- More intercounty trips, particularly into Asheville from outlying counties for employment and health care

Other Issues

- Cost of service
- Special needs attendants
- Extend services to veterans, the mentally ill, and other special needs populations
- Assistance to community volunteers: both financial and organizational support for volunteers providing transportation to the needy and transportation of senior and/or low income volunteers to their volunteer service locations

VII. Prioritization of Needs

Needs were then prioritized by attendees of the public workshops using the dot-vote method. All attendees who had special needs were accommodated for in all processes. Participants were given five dots to choose which issues they felt were the most important to them. They were given the option to place all of the dots on one issue, or spread the dots between numbers of issues. The list below identifies the top issues for each of the four counties where the workshops took place. Ties are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Buncombe County

Top Priorities

1. Expand Service into more rural areas/provide feeder routes to Asheville Transit
2. Mobility Coordinator/ Travel Trainer
3. Door Through door service
- 4.* Additional Hours (evening & Sunday)
- 4.* Routes to industrial areas tied to factory shifts
- 4.* Travel attendant to assist w/ through the door service
- 4.* Better coordination with other providers (w/in Buncombe and other counties)
- 4.* Establish South Buncombe Trailblazer
- 4.* Provide trips for social, cultural, and volunteering purposes

- 4.* Extra Vans/ routes for routes that are full
- 4.* Identify populations of Latino or non English speaking communities to ensure they have access to jobs, healthcare, etc.
- 4.* Subsidized taxi / transit vouchers
- 4.* Subsidies to agencies / non-profits to reimburse volunteer drivers

Other Priorities

- Language / training to better serve hearing impaired & non-native English speakers
- Transportation for disabled adults to get to their adult day programs
- Transportation for seniors accessing meal sites & other centers & at other times of day
- More lift vans, including lift-equipped mini vans
- More bus stops near Black Mountain
- Vans to lease out to van pools
- Support employers to contract with private providers for work vans
- Medical routes to VA hospital
- Public relations / outreach to needy

Haywood County

1. Extend service hours to include early mornings, nights, weekends and holidays.
2. Information about available services and eligibility
3. Improve the infrastructure around and pathways to and from bus stops, including pedestrian street crossing facilities
4. Travel between counties
5. Travel training and coordination
6. Make paratransit available during all the times fixed route service is available
7. Inability to afford fares
8. Bus stop placement, including location of stops in relation to destinations, and distance between stops
- 9.* Immediate transportation for illness that does not require an ambulance
- 9.* Frequency of service
- 9.* Expand allowed trip purposes for disabled and elderly users, including non medical trips, daily trips to therapy, trips to social, cultural, or educational activities, and shopping trips.

Madison County

1. Expansion vans
2. Route to tie together Hot Springs, Marshall, Mars Hill
3. More Lift-equipped vans
4. Routes for daily cancer treatment
5. GPS/Communication
6. Planning grant to identify work commuting patterns

7. Lifts for larger chairs (equipment updates)
8. Van from Mars Hill Park & Ride to meet Asheville Transit
9. Connector from Spring Creek to Hot Springs
10. Attendants for visually impaired
11. Route to Mountain Recovery (addiction treatment located in Asheville)

Transylvania County

1. More flexible senior transportation (social/recreational)
2. More vehicles for increased service options
3. Subsidized Vouchers for disabled workers (supplement social security)
4. Increased Private Provider Service
5. Psychiatric Patient transportation to the "Clubhouse"
6. Young workers' transportation
7. Door through door service (tied with #7)
8. After Hours Service
9. Support Neighborhood transport (tied w/ #8)
10. Service to Connestee/ Cedar Mountain
11. Inter-County trips to Fletcher/ other employment locations (possibly including park & ride locations)

VIII. Needs Assessment in the Long Range Horizon

Transportation plans in the Land-of-Sky RPO region have all been recently updated or are in the update process. The rural portions of Buncombe and Haywood County are covered in the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, adopted in January, 2008. Transylvania County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan was adopted in May, 2007. Madison County is just beginning the CTP process with NCDOT and should have a completed plan by the end of 2010. NCDOT's planning has evolved from simple bridge and highway thoroughfare plans to Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP). Previously, thoroughfare plans identified the existing and proposed highway network needed to handle existing and future year traffic. The CTP is a multi-modal plan that identifies the entire existing and future transportation system and includes highways, public transportation, rail, and bicycle facilities needed to serve the anticipated travel demand. The CTP is more environmentally and community friendly. It strengthens the connections between and area's transportation plan, adopted local land development plan, and community vision.

IX. Strategies and Priorities for Implementation

While some of the counties within the Land-of-Sky RPO are prepared to move ahead with potential JARC and New Freedom projects, others do not foresee an ability to expand their current levels of service in the near future due to financial constraints including the requirement for local match when applying for these federal funding sources. The priorities established in this plan may be implemented as local economic conditions allow, on a county by county basis. The planning process has also been

helpful to transit agencies in identifying priorities and preferences of the local community so that they may be able to make small, low cost modifications to current service in order to satisfy specific needs that they were made aware of through the community workshops. All systems are committed to the perpetual improvement of service to the elderly, disabled, low income workers, and other groups of people with exceptional transportation needs and will continue to pursue opportunities to meet the needs and goals identified in this plan and identify new or changing needs as they arise, within the constraints of their budgets.

X. Update Interval

The Land-of-Sky RPO CPT-HSTP is scheduled to be updated every four years. The next update will begin November of 2012.

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Appendix A. Map of Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization

