



Jacksonville & Onslow County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



Jacksonville Transit, Onslow United Transit System, and Jacksonville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Prepared by The Louis Berger Group, Inc., in coordination with the Jacksonville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.



Jacksonville Urban Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization

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1. Executive Summary

Public transportation is oftentimes an overlooked component to providing comprehensive social service programs. While there is almost universal recognition of the need to provide basic healthcare, education and social support, individuals with these needs are oftentimes unable to provide for their own transportation due to a disability, lack of financial resources or other circumstances. Beyond the need to identify strategies to coordinate transportation services within a region, there is a growing awareness of the necessity for municipalities and social service agencies to seek more innovative approaches to providing transportation services to individuals with these needs as budgets tighten and transportation costs increase.

Recognizing these needs, the federal government has established special funding programs aimed at providing coordinated services to individuals and populations that may have transportation requirements that do not conform to traditional public transportation services. To be eligible for these funding sources, the Federal Transit Administration and North Carolina Department of Transportation require regions to undertake a coordinated planning process.

In the *Jacksonville and Onslow County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan* (Coordinated Plan), the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County provide the basis for continuing coordination of community transportation services between Jacksonville Transit, Onslow United Transit System (OUTS), and social service agencies within the region. At this time, the combined services of the city's bus routes and OUTS' demand response constitute a county-wide public transportation system that is structured primarily for the provision of human services transportation. There are opportunities identified in the Coordinated Plan to expand this role.



More than 30 citizens, agencies and municipal representatives attended the February 25, 2009 Coordinated Plan workshop for Onslow County and Jacksonville.

Through the leadership of the Jacksonville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (JUMPO), a Coordinated Plan workshop was conducted in Jacksonville on February 25, 2009 for the purposes of gathering input from local stakeholders and transportation service providers on both the Coordinated Plan and the Jacksonville & Onslow County Transit Master Plan. Thirty-seven representatives from local municipalities, service agencies, youth councils and emergency service providers attended the day-long workshop.

The workshop attendees identified a regional vision for coordinated human service transportation and public transportation:

“Jacksonville Transit and Onslow United Transit System will grow the region’s public transportation services by creating public buy-in; changing mindsets about transit; and conducting long-range planning, while giving citizens the tools to succeed in life; providing them with mobility options and choices; and offering transit services to everyone.”

Workshop attendees determined that this vision would be accomplished through the following goals: 1) Provide Adequate Infrastructure; 2) Maximize Financial Resources; 3) Expand Access and Increase Services; 4) Increase Coordination; 5) Plan for the Future; and 6) Educate the General Public as well as Stakeholders.

The results of the workshop are geared toward identifying potential programs and projects that can be funded through three federal human service transportation programs. These are:



Workshop participants identified several programs and services that can assist Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville in establishing a more coordinated system of public transportation services through various federal funding sources.

- ❑ **Section 5310 Funding: Elderly and Persons with Disabilities**, which is intended for the purchase of vehicles and related capital equipment as well as operating costs to meet the special needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- ❑ **Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)**, which is intended for projects targeted at developing employment and employment-related transportation services for welfare recipients and/or low income persons.
- ❑ **Section 5317: New Freedom**, which is intended for capital and operating costs of new public transportation services targeted toward people with disabilities or public transportation alternatives that go beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

The projects and programs identified through the workshop have been reviewed by the project’s team of transportation professionals with input from the project’s Steering Committee. From this, seven priorities for utilizing human service transportation funding have been identified. The priorities are divided into two categories for purposes of identifying implementable initiatives that can be undertaken by the service agencies at the organizational and operational levels. They are:

Organization and Marketing Program Priorities

- # 1: Establish a One-Stop Shop and Mobility Management Program
- # 2: Conduct a Marketing Analysis and Outreach Program
- # 3: Establish Incentive Programs

Capital and Operations Program Priorities

- #1: Develop Service from Downtown Jacksonville to Richlands
- #2: Pursue Reverse Commute Services to Camp Lejeune
- #3: Designate Park-n-Ride Lots
- #4: Expand Geography of Existing Routes
- #5: Create Express Routes/Vanpools for Onslow County communities

Once the Coordinated Plan is adopted, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit will be eligible to pursue funding through the human service transportation programs to address these priorities. Before applying for and implementing programs through those funding sources, there are several efforts that should be undertaken to prepare the region to fully utilize these resources.

Quantify transit data: Participants in the workshop noted that an important exercise would be to quantify what would happen if OUTS and Jacksonville Transit did not exist and relay this message to local elected officials and other community stakeholders. The purpose of collecting this data would also be to measure performance and to report to federal and state agencies as well as local officials and stakeholders on the accomplishments of the region's transit services.

Refine human service transportation program recommendations: JUMPO should work with the OUTS Board, the OUTS Transportation Advisory Board and Jacksonville Transit officials to refine the recommendations for utilization of human service transportation program funding. JUMPO should also work through the NCDOT Public Transportation Division to ascertain application procedures and potential funding levels to determine which priorities result in grant applications.

Let the Regional Transit Master Plan continue to inform the process: Many of the operations and capital program priorities for human service transportation program funding may be refined through the development of the Regional Transit Master Plan. Potential outcomes of the Master Plan may include recommendations for deviated fixed routes, expansion of service hours through agreement with local taxi companies, and methods by which OUTS and Jacksonville Transit can coordinate services. The Coordinated Plan is anticipated to be incorporated as part of the Master Plan.

2. Introduction

Public transportation is a critical, but often overlooked, component to comprehensive social service programs. While there is almost universal recognition of the need to provide basic healthcare, education and social support, individuals who require these types of services are oftentimes unable to provide for their own transportation due to a disability, lack of financial resources or other circumstances. There is also growing awareness of the necessity for municipalities and social service agencies to seek more innovative approaches to providing transportation services to individuals with these mobility needs as budgets tighten and transportation costs increase.

The Jacksonville and Onslow County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) provides the basis for continuing coordination of services between Jacksonville Transit, Onslow United Transit System (OUTS) and social service agencies within the region. The combination of the city's bus routes and OUTS' demand response service constitute a county-wide public transportation system that is structured primarily for the provision of human services transportation. There are opportunities identified in the Coordinated Plan to expand this role.

Community transportation providers such as OUTS are typically geared toward human services due to their role in providing point-to-point transportation for all residents who are in need of this service. Their funding is derived from a combination of state and federal transportation programs, social service agencies providing for the cost of the fully allocated cost, and fare-paying individuals.

The City of Jacksonville bus system was re-organized in 2007 from a single-route city loop to a two-route urban bus operation with three weekend express routes to and from area military operations. The city services provide for some commuter services, however, the current route structure is not organized to service key commuter origins and destinations.

With the Jacksonville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (JUMPO) as the lead agency, the Coordinated Plan was developed to satisfy requirements of the Federal Transit Administration and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Upon adoption of the Coordinated Plan by JUMPO and NCDOT, the region is eligible to apply for funding from the federal human services transportation programs: Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Individuals Transportation Program; Section 5319 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program; and Section 5317 New Freedom Program.

The purpose of the Coordinated Plan is to identify human transportation services within a geographic area by assessing available services and determining potential overlaps; identifying transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults and



Onslow United Transit System (OUTS) has historically provided human service transportation to low income residents and persons with disabilities. Through utilization of funding sources such as JARC, OUTS may be positioned to provide services to commuters in the region.

individuals with low incomes; developing strategies, activities and projects to address service gaps; and prioritizing projects, policies and programs for implementation. For purposes of developing the Coordinated Plan and the Regional Transit Master Plan, JUMPO identified a project steering committee consisting of representatives from local service agencies, government and social service agencies. The committee was tasked with reviewing and providing input to the plan approach, workshop format, and preliminary Coordinated Plan recommendations. Upon its adoption, the Coordinated Plan will be incorporated as a key component of the Regional Transit Master Plan for Jacksonville and Onslow County.



With the Coordinated Plan Jacksonville Transit may be able to utilize federal coordinated transportation program funding to upgrade facilities to provide more accessible bus stops and amenities.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in 2005, changed the manner in which certain federal transit programs were administered. Funding within the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) and the New Freedom Program had previously been allocated on a discretionary basis, meaning that the Federal Transit Administration was able to distribute funding to entities which

showcased a need for these funding programs. With the passage of SAFETEA-LU these programs were altered to be allocated on a formula basis, meaning that urban and rural areas across the nation were now eligible for some portion of this funding upon completion of their Coordinated Plan. A required component of the Coordinated Plan is that it be developed locally and include input from representatives of private, public and not-for-profit human services and transportation providers as well as the

general public.

A Coordinated Plan workshop was conducted in Jacksonville on February 25, 2009 for purposes of gathering input from local stakeholders and transportation service providers on the Coordinated Plan and the Jacksonville & Onslow United Transit System, Inc. Transit Master Plan. Thirty-seven community members, including representatives from local municipalities, transit service providers, social service agencies, youth councils and emergency service providers attended the day-long workshop.

The results of the workshop, as well as additional data-gathering and background research, are included in this document to satisfy requirements for a Coordinated Plan. The Plan includes the following sections:

- ❑ [Public Transportation Services in Jacksonville and Onslow County](#), which is an inventory of existing human services transportation provided by public, private and not-for-profit entities;
- ❑ [Methodology](#), describing major inputs to the plan and how it was developed;
- ❑ [A Vision for Coordinated Transportation Services](#), outlining the vision and goals established by participants in the workshop;
- ❑ [Self-Assessment](#) of transportation in the region, as provided in a questionnaire distributed by NCDOT
- ❑ [Transportation Needs](#), as identified and prioritized at the workshop;

- ❑ [Human Services Transportation Funding Programs](#), as summarized by the Federal Transit Administration;
- ❑ [Strategies, Activities, Projects & Priorities for Implementation](#) that should be considered for funding by the human services transportation funding programs as well as other local and federal funding sources;
- ❑ [Recommendations & Next Steps](#), which are intended to provide further direction to municipal agencies regarding coordination of human services transportation, and identifying additional funding sources and strategies; and
- ❑ [An Appendix](#), which includes other relevant data and materials related to the Coordinated Plan.

3. Public Transportation in Jacksonville & Onslow County

Onslow County and the Jacksonville region are served primarily by two public transportation service providers: Jacksonville Transit and Onslow United Transit System (OUTS). The founding of OUTS in the 1970s has created a culture of coordination among those responsible for providing some type of human service transportation in the region. The long-standing relationships between OUTS and these agencies, combined with the emergence of the Jacksonville Transit services in the 2000s, have worked to strengthen these ties and provide the citizens of Onslow County with cost-effective services.

A table of local service providers was compiled during the course of the research and workshop activities associated with the Coordinated Plan and depicted in Figure 1. Due to the history of coordination, the region is fortunate to have a public and human service transportation system that is relatively streamlined when compared to other services in North Carolina and across the United States. It is not uncommon to find cities and regions with dozens of individual agencies providing bus, van, shuttle and taxi services to individuals that could be coordinated through a central information clearinghouse or service provider.

The only services being provided by entities other than Jacksonville Transit and OUTS consist of local social service agencies that assist clients to travel via taxicabs or transport them using their own vehicles. During the workshop, these service providers noted that they make every attempt to work through the existing OUTS and Jacksonville Transit services before pursuing other transportation options.

Figure 1: Public & Human Service Transportation Providers in Jacksonville & Onslow County

Service Providers	Service Type
Jacksonville Transit	City bus services on two daytime routes and three weekend/express routes within the City limits.
Onslow United Transit System (OUTS)	Point-to-point van services and paratransit within Onslow County.
Pre-Trial Resource Center	Taxi rides and money to clients for fares.
Vocational Rehabilitation	Reimbursement of mileage to clients; taxi service; and matching clients with OUTS & Jacksonville Transit.
Division of Social Services	Taxi and use of county vehicles for clients; some referrals to OUTS and Jacksonville Transit. Previously had rental car and mileage reimbursement.

Jacksonville Transit

The Jacksonville Transit system is administered by the City of Jacksonville and operated by contract through MV Transportation. The current weekday and weekend services provide two routes serving downtown, north Jacksonville, the Western Boulevard corridor and residential areas near Camp Lejeune. Jacksonville Transit also operates weekend express services to and from Camp Lejeune, New River Air Station and Camp Johnson.

The existing services were organized in 2007 to replace The Loop, which was a single clockwise loop, operated by OUTS, serving areas of north Jacksonville. The Loop route began in 2001 and provided services Monday through Saturday as well as Friday and Saturday night services from military installations to the Jacksonville Mall and Walmart shopping center on Western Boulevard.

Increased population along with continued growth in military operations at Camp Lejeune necessitated a re-thinking of The Loop route in favor of a more conventional urban bus system. The result was the current structure, which is being examined for potential expansion as part of the 2009 Regional Transit Master Plan.



Jacksonville Transit has recently purchased larger buses to serve a growing ridership base that has grown since service inception on the new routes in 2007.

During its first full year of operation (calendar year 2008), Jacksonville Transit saw steady increases in ridership on a month-to-month basis. Part of this success can be attributed to the initial re-structuring of services that allowed for more areas of the city to be served by the new route structure. The spike in gas prices during the summer of 2008 also helped introduce new riders to the system.

Jacksonville Transit provided more than 45,000 passenger trips in 2008, and saw an increase of 71% in total monthly riders from January to December of that year. The express routes increased from 1,600 trips in January to more than 3,600 trips in December, a 260% increase.

The services are funded through a combination of:

Operating:

- Farebox Revenue;
- Section 5307;
- State Matching Assistance Program (SMAP); and
- Local Funding.

Capital & Planning:

- Section 5307 (Federal);
- Section 5307 (State); and
- Local Funding.

Onslow United Transit System, Inc. (OUTS)

OUTS is a nonprofit public transit system that assists human service agencies in providing public transportation to the residents of Onslow County and provides a Rural General Public transportation program. OUTS was incorporated in 1979 and operates under G.S. 55A, *North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act*, and USC 501©3, *Internal Revenue Code – exemption from tax on corporations*.

OUTS provides transportation services for more than 20 of the region’s social service agencies or providers. In fiscal year 2008 OUTS served more than 60,000 trips and averaged 300-400 trips per day during peak week. That year, OUTS’s fleet of 16 vans traveled more than 500,000 miles. The agency has an annual operating budget of \$1.054 million (FY 2009) with revenues originating from a variety of sources:

- ❑ North Carolina Rural Operating Assistance Program, which includes:
 - Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program;
 - Employment Transportation Assistance Program; and
 - Rural General Public Transportation Program.
- ❑ Reimbursement of fully allocated cost for trips through various social service agencies; and
- ❑ Customer fares.



OUTS was founded in 1979 and uses customized large and small vans for their services.

From 1979 to 1999 OUTS operated as a human service transportation provider. In 1999, the Board of Directors implemented a plan so that OUTS would become a Community Transportation Provider with the inception of hiring a director of transportation and applying for Rural General Public Funds.

Onslow County’s first Transportation Development Plan (TDP) was completed in 1979 as part of the initial round of TDPs resulting from the Governor’s Executive Order which created

this planning process in an attempt to increase coordination of transportation resources. The Plan created the OUTS Board, which today serves as a policy board for the agency.

In the original 1979 plan, transportation services provided by human service agencies in the County were inventoried, and a survey was conducted to determine agency interest in coordinated services. The resulting service design recommended the creation of a private non-profit consolidated transportation provider agency to operate services under agreements with the various agencies. This step was implemented in 1979 with incorporation of OUTS.

OUTS services were initially contracted to a local cab company before out-sourcing operations to a private company in 1982. Today, the day-to-day operations of OUTS are managed through its transportation director and carried out through the agency’s staff.

In 2001 Onslow United Transit System, Inc., the City of Jacksonville and North Carolina Department of Transportation partnered in a demonstration project to show the need for public transportation in the City of Jacksonville. The result was The Loop service as profiled under the Jacksonville Transit section.¹

¹ *OUTS History*. Provided by Carol Long, OUTS Director of Transportation. March 2009.

4. Methodology

The development of a Coordinated Plan that not only addresses requirements of the Federal Transit Administration and NCDOT but also provides clear guidance to local service providers and a resource for local elected officials entailed gathering relevant local data and input prior to the workshop, conducting the workshop with key local stakeholders, and evaluating the outcomes of the workshop within the organizational framework of existing service providers. Therefore, organizing the Coordinated Plan required a combination of data analysis, professional input, public and stakeholder involvement, and oversight by JUMPO, Jacksonville Transit and OUTS staff.



More than 75 individuals were invited to attend the February 25, 2009 workshop. Elected officials for municipalities within Onslow County, the County Commissioners and the Chairperson of adjacent County Boards were also invited to the workshop.

Workshop Preparation

As a pre-cursor to conducting the February 25 workshop, staff from the consultant team, JUMPO, the City and OUTS researched and gathered the information contained in Figure 2 and performed pre-workshop outreach to the following stakeholders:

- Carolina Trailways, operating as Greyhound Lines;
- City of Jacksonville planning and city management staff;
- Federal Transit Administration Division 4 staff;
- Jacksonville and Onslow County Transit Master Plan Committee;
- JUMPO staff;
- Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Community Plans and Liaison Office;
- NCDOT Public Transportation Division staff;
- NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch staff;
- NCDOT Division 3 staff;
- New River Air Station, planning staff;
- Onslow County planning staff;
- OUTS staff;
- OUTS Board; and
- OUTS Transportation Advisory Board.

Figure 2: Research Conducted for the Coordinated Plan Workshop

Source	Data / Information	Use
City of Jacksonville	Bus route maps; ridership data; financial data; and workshop	Mapping; workshop preparation; and ridership

	contacts.	origin analysis.
JUMPO	Base data; transit-related planning information; funding information; and workshop contacts.	Mapping; workshop preparation; and post-workshop analysis.
NC Demographer	Municipal population estimates, as updated from 2000 US Census.	Mapping and workshop preparation.
Onslow United Transit System	Ridership data; funding sources; service types; and workshop contacts	Mapping; workshop preparation; and ridership origin analysis
US Census, 2000	Various data, including city and county block group information for: persons over 60; persons with a disability; persons with no vehicle access; and persons below poverty level.	Mapping; workshop preparation; and block group level analysis for potential service to groups and population clusters.

Additionally, invitations were sent to 78 individuals within the community who were identified to have an interest in attending the workshop and providing input to the Coordinated Plan. Within Onslow County, invitations were also distributed to the elected boards of municipalities within the County, including Holly Ridge, Jacksonville, North Topsail Beach, Richlands, Swansboro, and Surf City. The Chairperson of the County Commission for each of the counties bordering Onslow County was also invited. These included Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Jones, and Pender Counties. Representatives of the Down East Rural Planning Organization were also sent an invitation. Each invitee was given a copy of the community self-assessment questionnaire to either bring to the workshop or mail to JUMPO’s offices.

Conducting the Workshop

The February 25, 2009 Coordinated Plan workshop was hosted by the City of Jacksonville and Onslow United Transit System, Inc. at the Jacksonville Youth Center. To fulfill the requirements for a Coordinated Plan, as established by FTA and NCDOT, the workshop was organized to strategically address key components of the Plan. The workshop agenda included:

- ❑ **Introduction** to the Transit Plan and Coordinated Human Services Plan process;
- ❑ **Visioning exercise** to define a vision and goals for transit services and identification of methods to coordinate transit services in the region;
- ❑ **Discussion of self-assessment tools** to address and evaluate the questionnaire provided by NCDOT;
- ❑ **Mapping exercise & focus group session** to define residential, work and activity areas in need of coordinated and expanded services, including a ranking exercise;
- ❑ **Wrap-up discussion** to define potential uses of human transportation program funding, including specific programs and projects.

Post-Workshop Analysis

The outcomes of the February 25 workshop as well as the results of prior outreach efforts were organized by the project consultant and JUMPO staff for purposes of developing the Jacksonville & Onslow County Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan.



Public input on the Coordinated Plan and overall Onslow County and Jacksonville Transit Master Plan was gathered during the Going Green festival in Downtown Jacksonville on March 21, 2009.

On March 13, the draft results of the Coordinated Plan workshop were presented to the Jacksonville and Onslow County Transit Plan Steering Committee to gather additional input on the outcomes of the workshop, review the consolidated results of the community self-assessment questionnaire, and assess potential projects to utilize human transportation program funding.

Further, staff from Jacksonville Transit, OUTS, JUMPO and the consultant team conducted public outreach for the Coordinated Plan and

Regional Transit Master Plan at the March 21 Downtown Going Green festival in Jacksonville. The festival included various booths related to green practices throughout the region, including Sturgeon City, Progress

Energy's electric vehicle, Jacksonville Youth Council, emergency service agencies, local civic clubs and food vendors.

Jacksonville Transit and OUTS provided a bus and van for festival attendees to experience and ask questions about how to ride. The service agencies also conducted demonstrations of the wheelchair lifts and answered several questions from the general public about the planning efforts and transit services. City and county maps with the results of the February 25 workshop were on display for review and comment by the general public. Attendees were also asked to complete a survey for the Regional Transit Master Plan.

5. A Vision for Coordinated Transportation Services

Establishing a vision for public transportation services in Onslow County and Jacksonville was the first group exercise conducted at the February 25 Coordinated Plan workshop. Through preliminary work with the Steering Committee, it was determined that a vision established through the Coordinated Plan process would also suffice as a vision for public transportation services in the region, being that fulfilling the vision for a fully coordinated public transportation system would also fulfill the purpose of developing a system with a regional focus.

The purposes of the Coordinated Plan vision are: to provide for a more focused discussion on public transportation topics; serve as a check and balance for ideas generated during the workshop and planning process; and guide potential projects.

The regional vision for coordinated human service transportation and public transportation is:

“Jacksonville Transit and Onslow United Transit System will grow the region’s public transportation services by creating public buy-in; changing mindsets about transit; and conducting long-range planning, while giving citizens the tools to succeed in life; providing them with mobility options and choices; and offering transit services to everyone.”

Establishing the Vision

The vision was established through a focused conversation method by which each workshop attendee was asked to write his or her answer to a focus question. Those answers were then discussed in groups of two, and then the top two priorities of each attendee were presented to the workshop facilitator for discussion. Once each participant had contributed her or his top priorities, the responses were organized into common threads then given a title. Finally, attendees were asked to prioritize the specific ideas under the common threads. Once these were prioritized, the group discussed the meaning of these threads and what, if accomplished, their ideas would do for transportation in the region. The result of this discussion helped formulate the previously stated vision.



Workshop participants identified several thoughts and ideas for coordinating transit services in the region. These ideas were used for develop a vision and goals for the Coordinated Plan.

In order to establish a vision and goals to guide the planning process, the group was asked to answer the following focus question:

What should the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County do to develop a regional public transportation system? Things that will...

- *Coordinate services;*
- *Provide efficient travel;*
- *Serve employment and population centers;*
- *Reduce congestion;*
- *Address the needs of all populations;*
- *Provide economical transportation; and*
- *Ensure access to all.*

After taking a few minutes to write down their answers to this question, participants were asked to pair up and discuss their responses. Participants were then asked to identify their top two priorities to present to the group. The results of this exercise produced the following bulleted list of items:

- Coordinated fare system;
- More service to county residents;
- County routes leading into Jacksonville to a central location;
- City and County work together;
- Better cooperation between government entities;
- Convenient pick up and drop off locations;
- Park & ride to and from Lejeune;
- Post the bus time schedule;
- Install bus shelters with easy-to-read schedules;
- Larger fees for longer routes;
- Funding;
- Multi-modal efficient routes;
- Planning (e.g. stop building on Western Blvd);
- Better coordination countywide;
- Urban growth planning;
- Jointly apply for more funding;
- Easily accessible to everyone;
- Affordable transportation services;
- Longer hours for military;
- Longer hours after 6pm;
- Marketing;
- Bringing stakeholders together;
- One-call Center;
- Buses for city travel;
- Buy-in from local merchants;
- Park & Ride set routes where possible;
- More rural transportation;
- Merge OUTS with Jacksonville Transit (merge city/county service);
- Cross-reference destinations with populations;
- Better timing for doctors' appointments for elderly (to avoid early morning or late night bus rides);
- Develop a fundamental marketing program;
- Cost-effectiveness;
- Varied schedule and access to County area; and
- Coordinated pick-up and drop-off.

Participants were then asked to select the next two priorities; the following ideas were added:

- Green technology;
- Encourage carpooling among drivers;
- Work to change citizen perceptions about public transportation;
- Marketing;
- Obtain key stakeholder support for regional approach;
- Better cooperation among municipalities and county;
- Interconnectivity between communities;
- Increase frequency of stops and routes to reduce waits and time spent on buses;
- Coordinate transit services across county lines;
- Implement advanced transit technology to enhance scheduling and efficiency;
- Identify key destinations;
- Green marketing/planning (promote transit environmentally-friendly transportation);
- Special needs – all categories;
- Countywide education;
- Vouchers for low and mid-income families;
- Broker rides with different providers; and
- Automated Vehicle Location technology.



Identifying Goals that Build the Vision

The workshop facilitator then worked with participants to sort the results of the above exercise into six distinct categories, which would comprise the goals of the vision. Participants were then asked to vote on their top overall priorities within these categories. The results of this prioritization exercise are captured below with the number of dots assigned to each by workshop participants noted in parentheses.

The ideas provided by workshop participants were organized by common theme and then prioritized by attendees through a dot exercise.

GOAL #1 – Provide Adequate Infrastructure

- Park & Ride sites (22);
- Bus shelters with easy-to-read schedules (6);
- Build pull-out lanes for bus stops (5);
- Convenient pick-up/drop-off locations (3);
- Consolidated Park & Ride for Lejeune (1);
- Green technology (1); and
- Encourage carpooling among drivers (0).

GOAL #2 – Maximize Financial Resources

- Cost-effective financial resources and affordable services (17);
- Vouchers for low/no-income population (8);
- Coordinated fare system (7);
- Affordable transportation services (6);
- More funding streams (3); and
- Larger fees for longer routes (0).

GOAL #3 – Expand Access and Increase Services

- More rural transportation (9);
- Coordinated drop-off areas so rural residents can use city buses (9);
- Buses for city travel; mini-buses for outlying areas (7);
- Provide transportation for disabled persons not on Medicaid and seniors (6);
- Coordinate transit services across county lines (4);
- More service for County residents (4);
- Easily accessible to everyone (4);
- Longer hours after 6pm and for military (4);
- City transit more accessible for seniors and disabled residents (3);
- Cross-reference destinations (work, etc) with populations (2);
- Transportation options (2);
- Identify key destinations (2);
- Interconnectivity between communities (2);
- Provide more bus stops (2);
- More buses are needed in order to increase frequency of stops to decrease time it takes to get around the City (2);
- Varied schedule and access to rural areas (1);
- Set routes where possible (0); and
- Multi-modal efficient routes that are easily accessible to all citizens (0).

GOAL #4 – Increase Coordination

- Better cooperation between governing entities (15);
- One-Call Center (11);
- Obtain key stakeholder support for regional approach (3);
- Jointly apply for more grant funds (3);
- Post bus time schedule (1);
- Merge OUTS with Jacksonville Transit (1);
- Broker rides with different providers (0);
- Better cooperation among municipalities and county (0); and
- City and County work together (0).

GOAL #5 – Plan for the Future

- Implement advanced transit technology to enhance scheduling/efficiency (13);
- Better urban growth planning (8);
- Bring all of the stakeholders together (5);
- Stop building on Western Blvd (3);
- Green Technology (2); and
- Automated Vehicle Location technology (0).

GOAL #6 - Educate the Public and Stakeholders

- County-wide education (16);
- Work to change citizens' perceptions about public transportation (9);
- Better doctor's appointment times for elderly (2);
- Develop a fundamental marketing program (1); and
- Obtain buy-in from local merchants (1).

Participants were then asked to formulate visions for the Plan by brainstorming longer-range, overarching themes that summarize these goals. The group discussed the following elements of a vision statement: create public buy-in; change mindsets; long-range planning; give people tools to succeed in life; provide mobility options and choices; offer transportation to everyone. The facilitator then organized these in to the vision statement.

6. Community Self-Assessment

The NCDOT Public Transportation Division provided JUMPO with *A Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System*² and its questionnaire to be completed by workshop attendees with the results to be incorporated into the Coordinated Plan. The questionnaire, and more specifically the results provided by workshop attendees, were one of the focal points of the February 25 workshop and helped identify several action items to be undertaken by local service agencies to satisfy the need for coordinated transportation services.



The FTA Self-Assessment Questionnaire was a key component of the Coordinated Plan workshop. Participants tallied their results on large-format questions and then discussed key topics they identified as a priority.

The questionnaire contained five focus areas (26 total questions) to gauge participants' opinions on the topic of developing a coordinated transportation system. These include the following sections (with total number of questions in parentheses):

1. Making Things Happen by Working Together (5);
2. Taking Stock of Community Needs and Moving Forward (10);
3. Putting Customers First (5);
4. Adapting Funding for Greater Mobility (2); and
5. Moving People Efficiently (4).

Note: The full questionnaire is provided in the Coordinated Plan Appendix.

To efficiently address the self-assessment during the workshop, participants were asked to indicate their survey responses on the large printed survey sheets at the front of the room. Then, participants were given five dots and asked to vote on the sections/questions of the survey that were most important or considered to be major issues for local agencies. This exercise revealed that many of the local agencies are experiencing the same issues and/or have similar concerns about the future of transit services for their clients. These common concerns were discussed as a group and action items were identified from this conversation. The notes from this discussion are captured below and organized by questions given priority by the workshop participants.

Section 1: Making Things Happen by Working Together

Top Priority: Question 2 - Is a governing framework in place that brings together providers, agencies, and consumers? Are there clear guidelines that embrace all?

The group's thoughts on this topic were:

² United States Department of Transportation. *Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Human Service Transportation System*. Federal Transit Administration. Washington, DC.

- ❑ Need to educate elected officials about how transportation is linked to quality of life for residents;
- ❑ Increased taxes as a funding mechanism is a concern and elected leaders don't want to raise taxes;
- ❑ Educating general public on importance of transportation for need-based users is key;
- ❑ Elected officials need to understand that transportation is a social service that needs funding;
- ❑ OUTF needs to present concise data and hard facts to educate elected officials on local and regional transportation needs;
- ❑ Need to survey/sample populations outside about social service delivery;
- ❑ Quantify lack of service due to transit or cost inefficiencies due to current set up (e.g. women's shelter uses taxi vouchers due to lack of transit service, but those funds could be used elsewhere by the nonprofit for core services);
- ❑ There may be data collection needs due to lack of communication among agencies or the fact that if a community member doesn't call and isn't served, that is a non-documented need;
- ❑ A regional survey was conducted previously and may need to be conducted again as a "needs assessment" for a larger user base;
- ❑ Idea presented to encourage "choice" ridership (through marketing, promotion of environmentally-friendly transportation, etc) that helps generate revenue and support for services that also help low-income and non-choice riders and residents;
- ❑ Many residents are from out-of-town, a lot from larger cities, and many have public transportation needs and would be willing to ride transit if it were more readily available; and
- ❑ A recent Community Health Assessment identified transportation as the most important local health issue.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Complete a public survey process and data collection for summary report to present to City Councils and County Commissioners. This could focus on the question "What if Jacksonville Transit and OUTF did not exist?";
- Community agencies, OUTF and Jacksonville Transit should work together to quantify local transit data; and
- Identify a funding source to collect the local data.

Second Priority: Question 5 – Is there a growing interest and commitment to coordinating human service transportation trips and maximizing resources?

The group's thoughts on this topic were:

- ❑ Focus on multiple options to fill different needs of different user groups (e.g. vans, buses, carpools, etc);
- ❑ Multiple agencies might collaborate to fill similar needs, but can only serve their own clients;
- ❑ Need one-call service for transportation needs of all human service agencies and individuals – so someone can talk through trip planning options with a resource agent;

- ❑ Several agencies provide funding for client transportation services (money to catch the bus, taxi vouchers, etc), while others actually own vans/cars;
 - Pre-Trial Resource Center – POV, probation officers take clients to destinations; sometimes give money to catch bus or taxi;
 - Vocational Rehabilitation – issues ticket for Jacksonville Transit, reimburses personal vehicle mileage costs, provides taxi vouchers;
 - Women’s Center – has in-house van for transportation, clients also given taxi vouchers;
 - DSS – provide Medicaid transportation and for Workfirst Family Assistance program; use OUTS and JT, as well as taxis, sometimes rent cars and reimburse mileage, but not as much anymore; runs out of money sometimes;
 - DSS Adult Services – county vehicles, OUTS and taxi vouchers;
- ❑ Maximize resources across the board;
- ❑ Marketing and PSAs needed to inform the public of Jacksonville Transit bus routes, schedules, etc and “how to ride”;
- ❑ Need senior-friendly bus stops and bus stops that are family and disability-friendly;
- ❑ Consider deviated fixed route service; and
- ❑ Recommendation to serve Meadow Oaks senior community internally, as well as the Senior Center and other assisted living communities (e.g. front door service?)

ACTION ITEMS:

- Educate public and agencies on transit options;
- Explore deviated fix route options to serve more populations;
- Designated coordinated drop-off/pick-up in outlying communities; and
- Re-consider stop locations and treatments when close to agencies and services

Section 2: Taking Stock of Community Needs and Moving Forward

Top Priority: Question 7 - Is there a process for identifying duplication of services, underused assets and service gaps?

The group’s thoughts on this topic were:

- ❑ OUTS and taxis arrive at same location, serving community/clients from different agencies, resulting in duplication of services and inefficiencies;
- ❑ Maybe there is a digitized, automated trip request system that can be utilized to reduce duplication (look at car-share programs for reservations database ideas);
- ❑ Figure out a way to provide automated cancellation for transportation services; need to set cancellation policies and educate agencies/clients of consequences (e.g. Stanley County – clients call day before; no calls are considered automatic cancellation); and
- ❑ Provide common carpool matching type of service for human service agencies to reduce duplication and share transportation costs.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Coordinate a common origin/destination system through web-based services;
- Organize a one-stop shop for regional transit information; and
- Develop an automated phone call system to riders to minimize cancellations

Second Priority: Question 8 – Are the specific transportation needs of various target populations well documented?

The group determined that their thoughts and ideas were captured in Section 1, Question 2.

Section 3: Putting Customers First

Top Priority: Question 20 – Are marketing and communications programs used to build awareness and encourage greater use of the services?

The group's thoughts on this topic were:

- Residents need to know how to use Jacksonville Transit system, who is eligible to ride, etc;
- Public service announcements could be used to inform residents of available transit systems and difference between OUTS and Jacksonville Transit services;
- Distribute flyers to agencies that could go out to clients about available transportation services;
- Agency leaders and elected officials need to ride the service; and
- Other options for information distribution: Water/utility bills, base orientation packets, TV ads (channel 12 and not just G10), etc

ACTION ITEMS:

- Conduct a coordinated marketing campaign for OUTS and Jacksonville Transit to establish a regional identity and identify marketing needs;
- Conduct focus groups for the Regional Transit Master Plan;
- Develop incentive programs to encourage citizens to try the system and learn how it works; and
- Create and publicize transit passes instead of riders having to pay on a per-ride basis.

Section 4: Adapting Funding for Greater Mobility

Top Priority: Question 22 – Is there an automated billing system in place that supports the seamless payment system and other contracting mechanisms?

- Privacy is an issue; names/id numbers, etc kept confidential when reports are produced;
- Currently, OUTS has a client database – each new client added to database (whether individual or served by human service agency); each month, database report sent to agencies summarizing clients served and costs associated with those trips;
- OUTS tracks ridership information that is used for grant reporting purposes;
- OUTS sells 10-ticket booklets;
- Future transfer fare or monthly passes that allow for OUTS and Jacksonville Transit use;
- Jacksonville Transit is interested in issuing farecards in the future;
- Possibility to evolve in to pre-tax ticket purchase programs through major employers;
- OUTS hopes to have fareboxes at some point; and
- Utilize the Department of Defense program reimbursement of transit fares for base personnel.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Install fareboxes on OOTS vans, which will help with confidentiality and privacy issues; and
- Utilize technology to advance data collection, fare efficiencies, etc.

Section 5: Moving People Efficiently

Top Priority: Question 26 – Have facilities been located to promote safe, seamless, and cost-effective transportation systems?

- Develop a one-stop shop for information on all regional services;
- Pursue a consolidated transit facility that is accessible to all people with public restrooms, ADA compliance and vehicles serviced on-site (e.g. multi-service center with offices, maintenance, customer service, etc);
- Need ADA compliance of transit facilities (e.g. curb cuts and sidewalk/pad at bus stops);
- Need transfer points for Jacksonville Transit and OOTS services;
- Need bus stops with shelters and other amenities; and
- Possible need to have regional transit authority that covers city/county transportation needs (potential problem – OOTS is a nonprofit organization and not County operated; Jacksonville Transit is operated by the City.)

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop one-stop shop for regional transit information;
- Examine potential for a consolidated facility for OOTS and Jacksonville Transit; and
- Install shelters and amenities at heavily-utilized bus stops.

7. Identifying Transportation Needs

Identifying specific coordinated public transportation needs within a community is an exercise that evaluates different experiences and inputs of individuals that collectively form the recommendations for agencies to pursue with human service transportation program funding. This input is an amalgamation of public and social service agency input, service provider input and transportation professionals' input.

After defining a vision for transit services and assessing the current framework in Jacksonville and Onslow County, the workshop participants were then organized into five groups for purposes of identifying specific transportation needs within the community. These identified needs were to fit within the goals identified previously and to work toward those priorities and action items identified during the self-assessment discussion.

The workshop participants were presented with population characteristics maps to help them identify potential service populations within Jacksonville and Onslow County. These maps represented clusters of different population groups within the County, such as:

- Population clusters, with transit-supportive densities highlighted (Figure 3);
- Persons over 60 years of age (Figure 4);
- Persons with a disability (Figure 5);
- Persons with no vehicle access (Figure 6); and
- Persons below the poverty level (Figure 7).

Six subgroups were formed and each was given a map and markers, and asked to identify local residential areas, major employment centers, where group members live/work, prevalent local traffic patterns and potential new transit routes. One subgroup was tasked with evaluating the entire Onslow County area, including municipalities outside of Jacksonville and neighboring counties. The other five subgroups focused on the City of Jacksonville. After the mapping exercise, each subgroup was asked to report back to the group at large.

The results of the transportation needs exercise are shown in Figure 8.

Once each group presented their results, they were asked to identify themes that were common among the subgroups; potential design or planning items that could arise in the implementation of the services identified by the groups; and other issues or concerns voiced by the participants. From the consolidated map of needs and the associated lists of themes, design/planning items, and issues, the workshop facilitators, agency representatives and the project Steering Committee generated the recommendations identified in Chapter 10 of the Coordinated Plan.

Figure 3: Population Clusters and Density in Onslow County

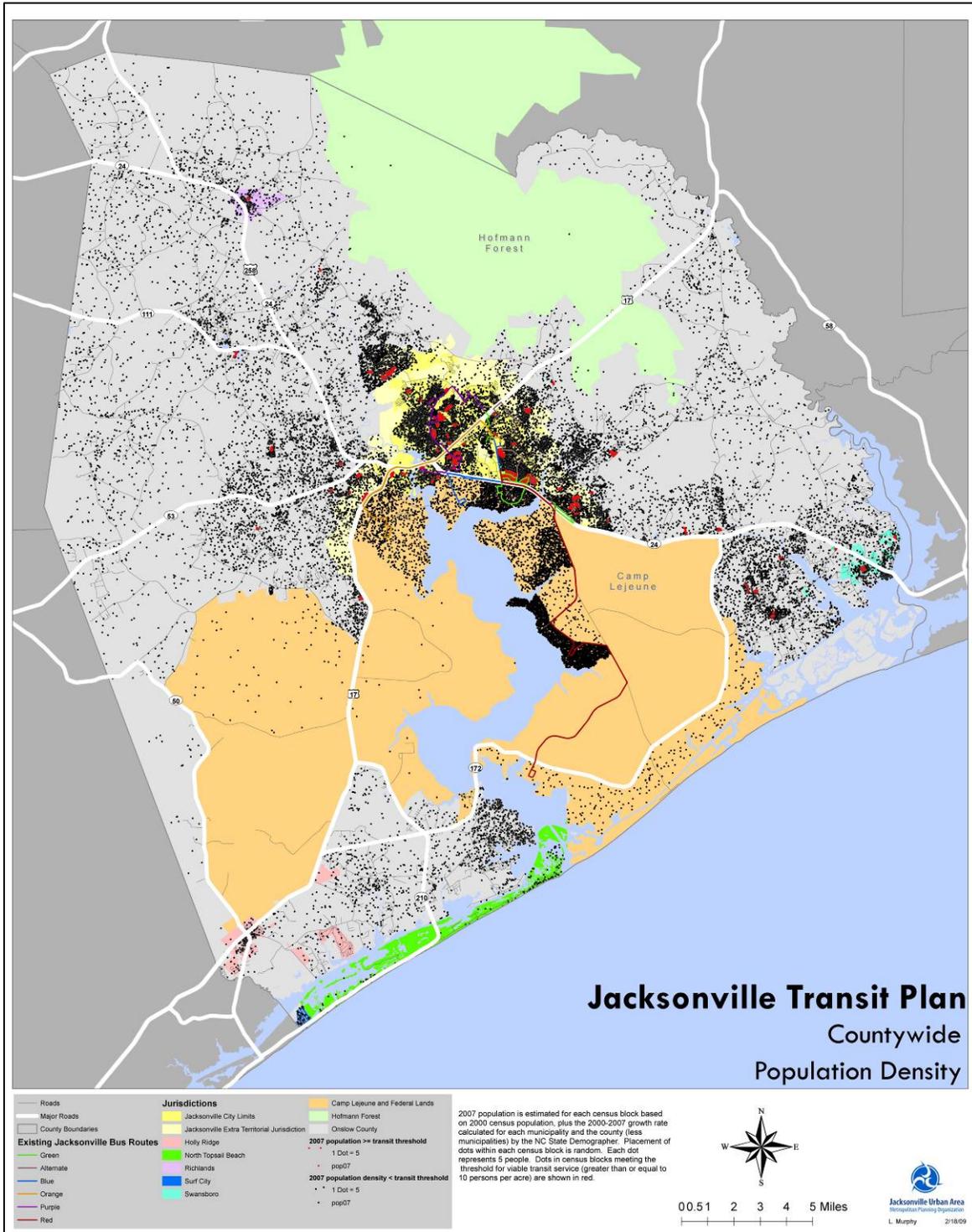


Figure 4: Persons Over 60 Year of Age in Onslow County

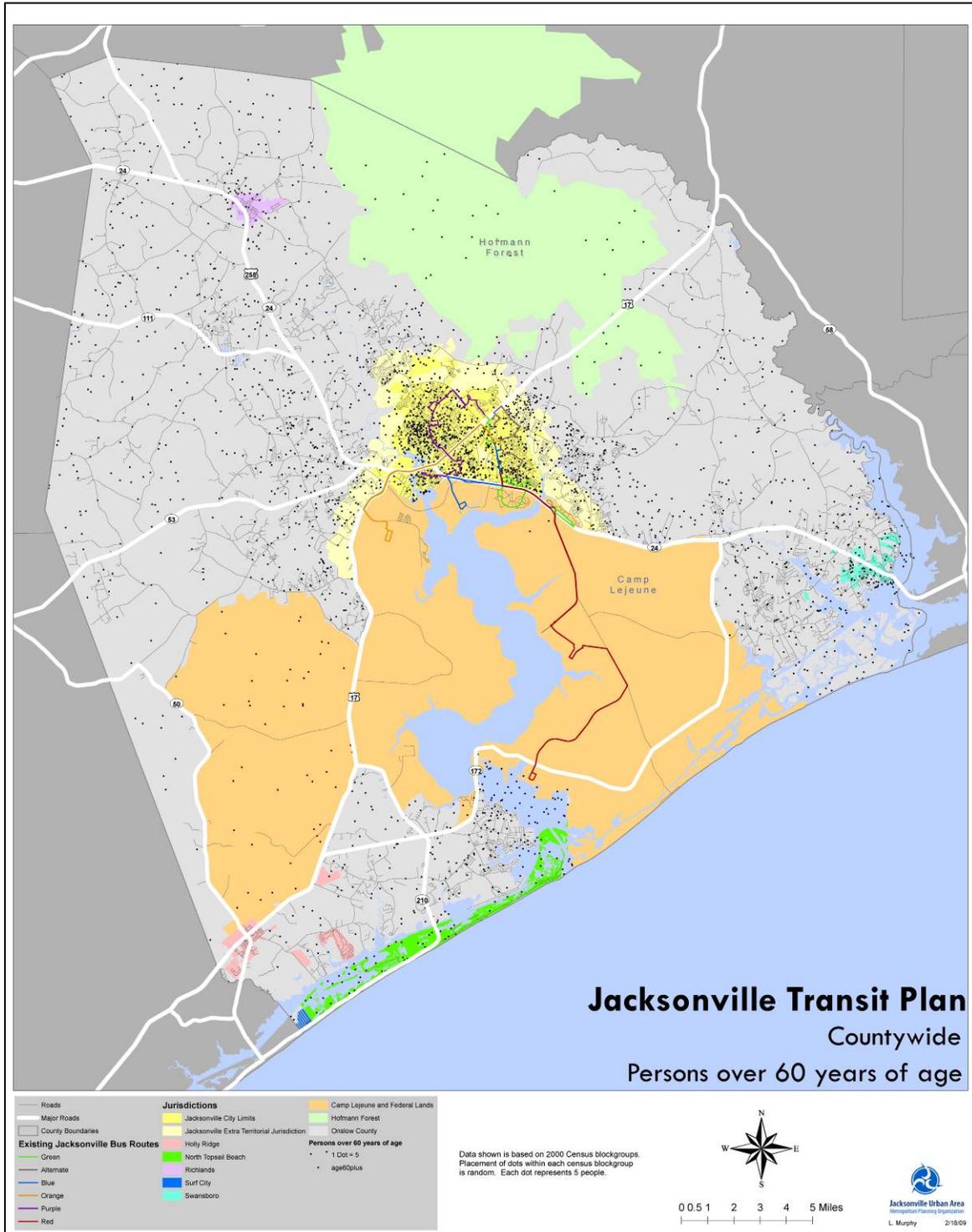


Figure 5: Persons with a Disability in Onslow County

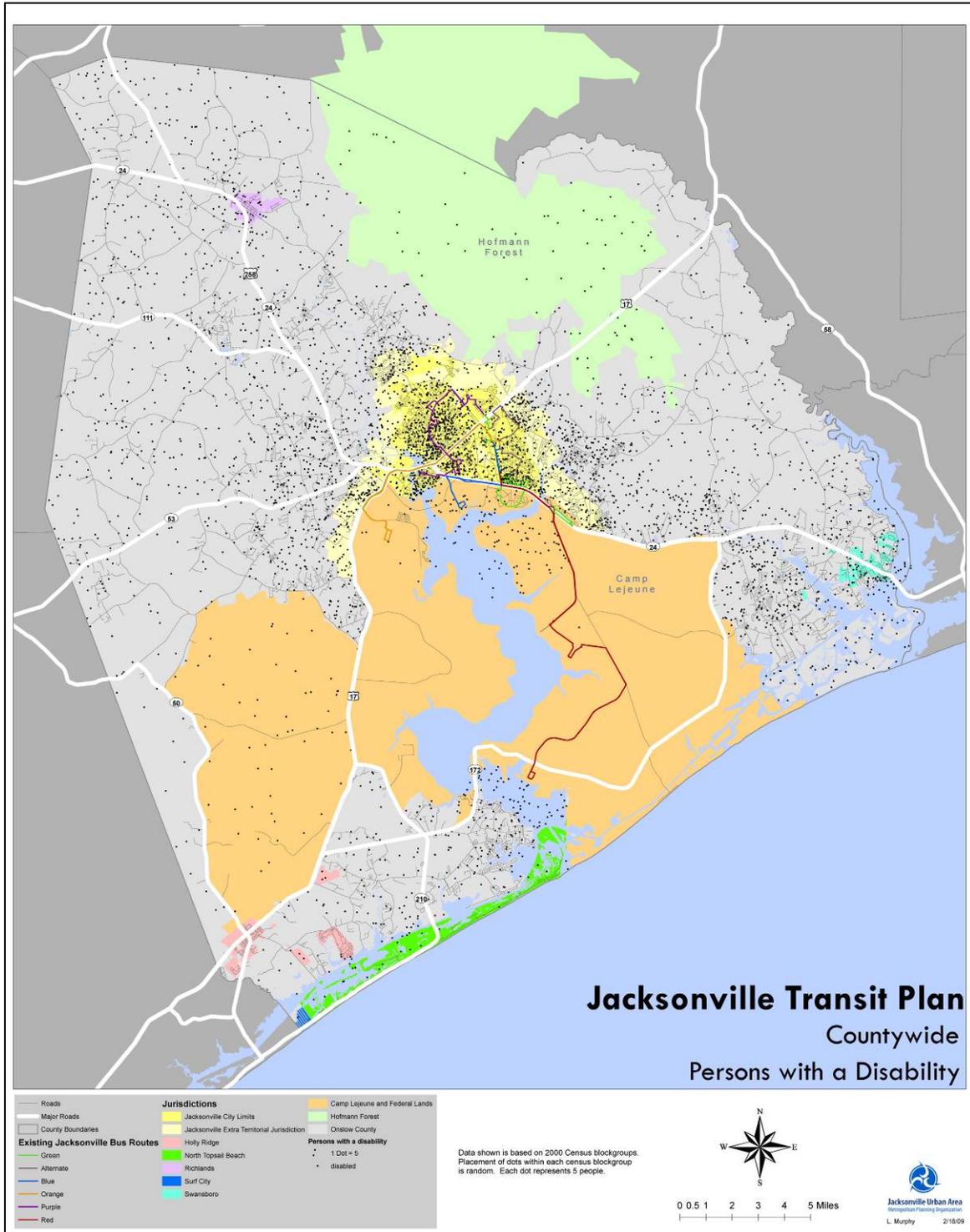


Figure 6: Persons with No Vehicle Access in Onslow County

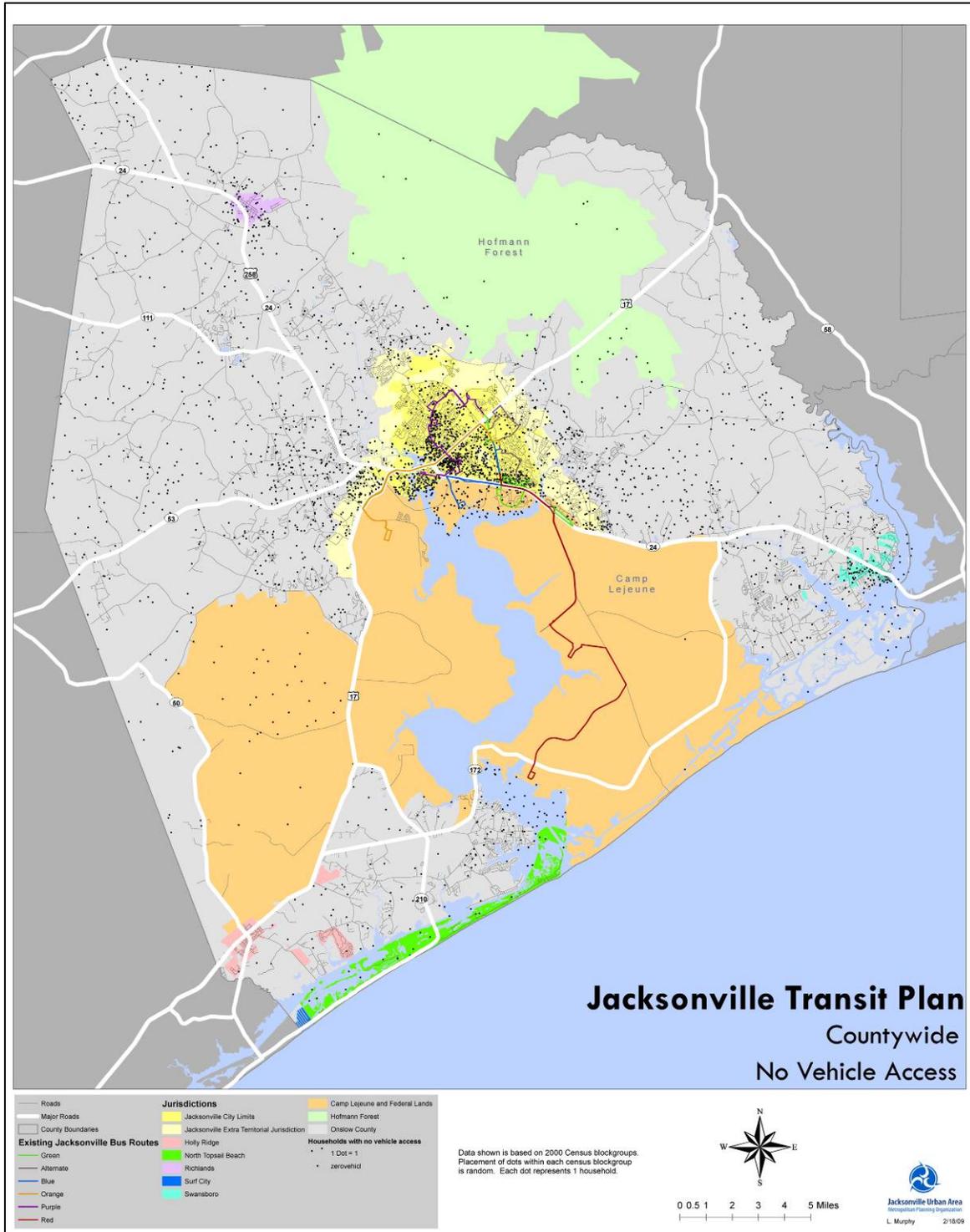
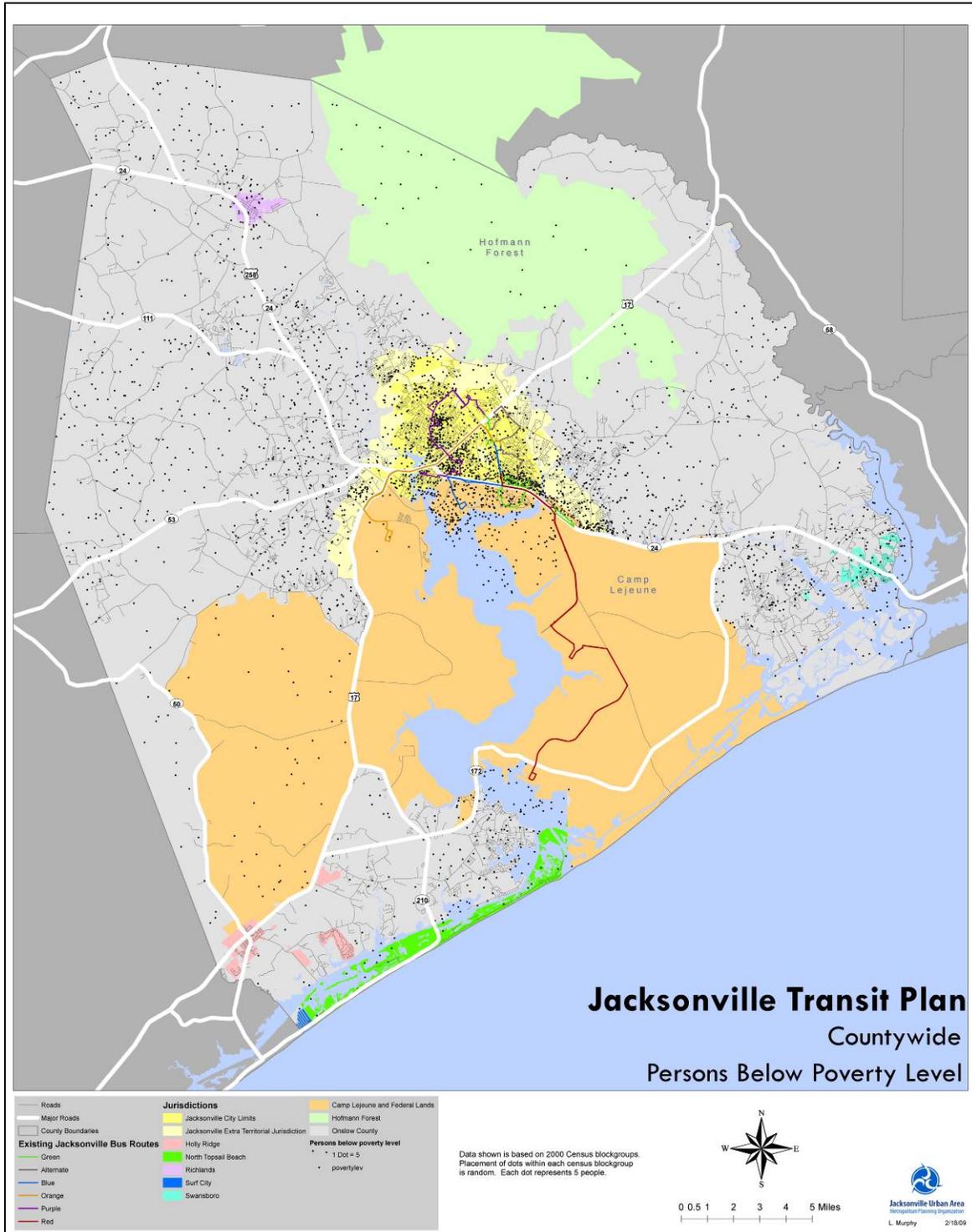


Figure 7: Persons Living Below the Poverty Level in Onslow County



Common recommendations that were identified by the six different subgroups included (in order of priority):

- Expansion of transit service geography to include all areas of Jacksonville and outlying communities;
- A need for more funding to expand services and provide amenities;
- Coordination between all involved entities;
- More services to the military bases throughout the week;
- Service along the Western Blvd corridor;
- Realization that financial constraints exist;
- Long-distance medical trips (e.g. to New Bern, Triangle area, Greenville, and Wilmington) should be provided; and
- Increased services to high schools.

Based on these common themes, the participants identified potential design and planning-related items that should be addressed, including (in priority order):

- Improve frequency of bus service;
- Develop marketing & public education tools;
- Identify park-n-ride lot locations;
- Conduct better land use and corridor planning to support public transportation;
- Identify route and stop locations on-base;
- Construct bus shelters;
- Improve sites near bus stops and bus routes (bus stops, benches/shelters, pull-out lanes, sidewalk maintenance, etc);
- Explore the possibility of a deviated fixed route system;
- Keep and increase routes on main thoroughfares;
- Be sensitive to specific population needs;
- Provide and promote special holiday runs on-base;
- Install information kiosks at places such as downtown, the Jacksonville Mall, Coastal Carolina Community College and military bases;
- Develop a consistent, but adaptable transit system; and
- Provide for ADA-compliant facilities at stops.

Additionally, the workshop participants identified other issues that should be addressed to provide for the public transportation system as established throughout the workshop:

Capital

- There are safety issues at numerous intersections (e.g. crosswalks, sidewalk access, curb cuts) that need to be addressed to provide access to transit services;
- Add and repair sidewalks and provide pedestrian access to bus stops;
- Maintenance is a need/concern that should be kept in mind;
- Need to maintain a multi-modal interface of bicycle/pedestrian transportation with transit services; and

- Many didn't realize downtown had parking issue, but City/County employees are not always guaranteed parking at respective buildings, which are major employment centers.

Operations & Routing

- Costs – where does the region get the money to achieve the transit system as envisioned? The region needs to prepare to absorb some losses prior to success;
- Organize transit schedules for peak and off peak services (e.g. peak = fixed routes, off-peak = deviated fixed route);
- There is a fear of route failure that will lead to areas having no service;
- Mapping needs to be up-to-date;
- There are opportunities to contract with taxis for off-peak service;
- Everyone is interesting in a cost-effective approach;
- There needs to be a central source for suppliers/vendors to OUTFS and Jacksonville Transit;
- Need to promote carpooling and other options, such as www.sharetheridenc.org and exploration of potential vanpool services.

Governance

- Many agencies have overlapping issues and there is a strong need for government agency coordination; and
- The agencies need to implement their plans.

Growth & Economic Factors

- More personnel are needed;
- System expansion will be costly and require new vehicles;
- Traffic congestion due to growth rate is surprising to many;
- Transit system expansion should be promoted as a workforce development issue for Jacksonville; and
- Service to working poor and middle-income rural residents (who aren't eligible for DSS, Medicaid or other services) is limited but a growing need as economy slumps

Special Needs for Military Populations

- The military population has different transit needs than the general population;
- Agencies and employers should provide incentives to increase ridership and introduce new residents/Marines to the system;
- Service men and women don't understand when the services operate and where bus stops are located;
- The bus should expand services for Marines to other social spots;
- Transportation is a leading quality of life concern for single marines & sailors; and
- Military base recreation centers are huge on-base facilities where marines congregate (easy place to stop buses and to advertise transit information)

8. Human Service Transportation Funding Programs

As noted in the Introduction, there are three human service transportation funding programs available through the federal government which are distributed by NCDOT. These programs require the adoption of a Coordinated Plan to make a region eligible for funding.

At this time, it is unknown what is the exact amount available to the Onslow / Jacksonville region through these programs and the region may have to compete with other regions of the state for funding. JUMPO will be working with the NCDOT's Public Transit Division following adoption of the Coordinated Plan to identify potential funding levels and should lead the application effort for these funds on behalf of Jacksonville Transit and OUTS.

The funding summaries listed below were developed by NCDOT.

Section 5310 Funding: Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

Elderly and Persons with Disabilities program funding is intended for the purchase of vehicles and related capital equipment as well as operating costs to meet the special needs of elderly person and persons with disabilities. It is available to:

- Private non-profit organizations;
- Governmental authorities that certify to the chief executive officer of a State that no non-profit corporations or associations are readily available in an area to provide the service; and
- Governmental authorities approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities.

The following activities have been identified as eligible for Elderly and Persons with Disabilities funding, but are not specifically limited to these uses.

- Administration of programs;
- Computer hardware and software;
- Mobility management centers and related activities;
- Radio and communication equipment;
- Vehicles shelters;
- Driver salaries and wages;
- Extended warranties which do not exceed the industry standard;
- Fuel;
- Initial component installation costs;
- Introduction of new technology, through innovative and improved products, into public transportation;
- Lease of equipment when a lease is more cost effective than purchasing the equipment;
- Vehicles;
- Vehicle insurance;
- Vehicle maintenance;
- Preventive maintenance, as defined in the National Transit Database (NTD);
- Purchase of Service (the acquisition of transportation service);
- Transit-related intelligent transportation systems (ITS);
- Wheelchair lifts and restraints; and

- ❑ 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; and
- ❑ Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, Global Positioning System technology, 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 stand alone capital expense).

Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

Job Access and Reverse Commute program funding is intended for projects targeted at developing employment and employment-related transportation services for welfare recipients and/or low income persons. Reverse commute projects can provide transportation services to suburban or rural employment locations for all populations. It is available to:

- ❑ Private non-profit organizations;
- ❑ State or local governmental authorities; and
- ❑ Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

The following activities have been identified as eligible for Job Access and Reverse Commute program funding, but are not specifically limited to these uses:

- ❑ Demand-responsive van service;
- ❑ Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles or carpooling;
- ❑ Late-night and weekend service;
- ❑ Expanding fixed-route public transportation routes;
- ❑ Guaranteed ride home services;
- ❑ Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the use of transit by workers with non-traditional schedules;

- Ridesharing and carpooling activities;
- Shuttle service;
- Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the IRS Code;
- Supporting expenses related to voucher programs that supplement existing transportation services such as ride vouchers for low-income individuals;
- Implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems including customer trip information technology or integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions;
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, carpool, and/or van routes from urbanized 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; and
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing public transportation to build coordination with the result of expanding availability of service.

Section 5317: New Freedom

New Freedom program funding is intended for capital and operating costs of new public transportation services targeted toward people with disabilities or public transportation alternatives that go beyond ADA requirements. It is available to:

- Private non-profit organizations;
- State or local governmental authority; and
- Operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transit.

The following activities have been identified as eligible for New Freedom program funding, but are not specifically limited to these uses:

- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations;
- Providing para-transit services beyond the minimum $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of a fixed route, including routes that run seasonally;
- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ridesharing, and vanpooling programs including staff training, administration, and maintenance;
- Supporting the administration of voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers; and
- Supporting mobility management and coordination efforts among public transportation providers and other human service agencies that provide transportation.

9. Strategies, Activities, Projects & Priorities for Implementation

The results of the workshop and subsequent work have identified common themes that provide direction for Jacksonville Transit and OUTS to pursue funding through the human service transportation programs. The organization of these initiatives is divided into two separate efforts: 1) Organization and Marketing Program Priorities; and 2) Capital and Operations Program Priorities.

While the initiatives listed in this section are in priority order, it is important to understand that available resources, both at the funding program and agency level, will ultimately dictate the order and manner in which these initiatives are implemented. The priority order of these initiatives is intended to represent both the priorities as identified through the public workshop and a strategic approach to creating a more established collection of transit services to provide mobility to various sectors of the population of Onslow County. There is a strong likelihood that each of these initiatives will require supplemental funding or staff commitments from resources other than human service transportation programs.

Based on analysis of the human service transportation program, these priorities are eligible for full or partial funding through Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute, or New Freedom.



Each workshop group presented their ideas for new service areas, modifications to existing services and ways to fully coordinate transportation services in the region. The results of the group mapping exercise were used to specifically identify Coordinated Plan recommendations.

Organization and Marketing Program Priorities

Priorities one through three have common ties but may not be able to be funded or accomplished through a single effort or action. They are also based on existing programs and the ability of JUMPO, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit to pursue these tasks with existing personnel.

1: Establish a One-Stop Shop and Mobility Management Program

To enhance work already being conducted by OUTS, Jacksonville Transit and OUTS can pursue the formal establishment of a mobility management and coordination program for transit services in the region. The functions of this program would consist of:

- An information clearinghouse for local transit services;
- Creation of a mobility management and coordination program through a formal agreement between OUTS, Jacksonville Transit, the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County;
- Utilization of the already established 938-RIDE number for transit-related calls;

- Training for staff members as well as the addition of software and technology to determine best route and service for individuals needing a ride;
- Establishing an online ridematching service, possibly through www.sharetheridenc.org;
- Designing a common web site portal for Jacksonville Transit and OUTS information;
- Branding and marketing of the one-stop shop phone number and website, possibly as part of Priority 2: Conduct a Marketing & Outreach Study;
- Managing incentive programs and guaranteed ride home programs through the one-stop shop;
- Potentially distribution and sales of passes for both services; and
- Ability to transfer calls to appropriate OUTS, Jacksonville Transit or MV operations management.



OUTS is already providing information to the public through their existing 938-RIDE line and should work with Jacksonville Transit to expand and enhance these services through utilizing funding available for coordinated transportation services.

The one-stop shop concept would likely require a commitment to staffing and continued development of the clearinghouse and mobility management program beyond the funding reach of human service programs, but future funding could be pursued through other state or federal programs.

2: Conduct a Marketing Analysis and Outreach Program

There were several references during the Coordinated Plan workshop on the need to educate the public and elected officials on the existence and benefits of the region's transit system. Beyond this need, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit staff have expressed a desire to "brand" the region's transit services as one transportation resource. While the establishment of the one-stop shop is a first step toward achieving this goal, a more robust marketing and outreach effort is necessary to fully achieve the vision as established through the workshop.

The goal of a consolidated branding effort would, in combination with the one-stop shop, allow OUTS and Jacksonville Transit to appear to the public as one operation even as they continue to function as separate operations. A marketing analysis and outreach program would likely consist of:

- Identification of target markets for both ridership and information dissemination;

- Utilizing existing transit data to design outreach materials for local elected officials, social service agencies and employers to showcase the value of transit to the region;
- Establishing a common brand or theme for the region's services;
- Designing a common website to access OUTFS and Jacksonville Transit information;
- Developing public service announcements for broadcast on local public access television stations;
- Determining the best approaches to market the services;
- Identifying specialized methods to reach military personnel and base employees;
- Developing outreach programs to market services and incentive programs to area employers; and
- Designing a common look for transit media, such as press releases, fare cards, advertising and vehicle wraps.

3: Establish Incentive Programs

While the marketing and outreach efforts will identify the type of programs needed to incentivize transit, the establishment of those programs will likely require a separate effort. With the employment base of Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville provided primarily by the military, the capacity to incentivize transit ridership rests with both the abilities of the transit agencies to manage programs and the willingness of the military installations to allow increased services on-base and pursue incentive programs available through the federal government for military and federal employees.

The first step could be to establish a Guaranteed or Emergency Ride Home Program through which registered riders of the region's transit services would be able to utilize the services of a taxi in the event that an emergency requires them to go home or to the doctor during the course of their work day. There is typically some trepidation by service agencies in the establishment of such a program due to fears of abuse. In reality, these can be low cost programs that provide piece of mind to regular riders. Program abuse can be minimized through the institution of several policies, including: requiring riders to register with the service agencies; limiting the dollar amount available to each person during the calendar year; and potentially requiring request for reimbursement of taxi fares through the service agencies.

Other incentive programs include:

- First ride free programs;
- Reduced rates for monthly passes;
- Establishing incentive programs administered by area employers; or
- An annual event, such as a "Strive Not to Drive" week or "May in Motion" campaign.

Capital and Operations Program Priorities

While specific service options are more difficult to identify at this stage and within a Coordinated Plan, there were several service options identified during the workshop that OUTFS and Jacksonville Transit may pursue through the human service transportation

programs. These priorities may require formal agreements or additional input from partners and stakeholders, such as Camp Lejeune and other municipalities, to fully implement.

#1: Develop Service from Downtown to Richlands

The potential exists for OUTS and Jacksonville Transit to coordinate services on select corridors within the region that include destinations along a common corridor within the city limits and in the unincorporated areas. One such potential route serves the western sections of the City and areas of the County along US Highway 258.

Currently, this area is served only by OUTS demand response services, however, there is increasing demand for fixed route services in this area due to growth in number of residences and the recent completion of the new shopping center on Yopp Road, which contains a Wal-Mart and Lowe's and is slated for more commercial uses. The existing Senior Center & County Complex along US Highway 258 near the intersection with the Northwest Corridor is one of the most popular origin and destination points for OUTS patrons. The complex is also planned to become more of an employment center for Onslow County employees that are being relocated from offices currently in downtown Jacksonville. The combination of these factors, along with the potential for acquiring Job Access & Reverse Commute Funding, have warranted a more detailed examination of service options within the US Highway 258 corridor. Additionally, there may be options for future routes in this area to serve the Jacksonville airport and the Town of Richlands.

Funding is and will likely continue to be an issue for such a route. Even though there is strong potential for JARC funding for such a service, the continued use of JARC as the funding source is tenuous due to the application cycle through NCDOT. The willingness of Onslow County to contribute to the continued operation of the route would also be a factor, as the county has pledged \$7,500 to OUTS for services in FY 2009/2010.

Service Potential. As noted, locations within the US Highway 258 corridor are already popular destinations for existing OUTS riders and citizens of Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville. There are several service options that could be considered for this corridor and each option would be a showcase of the potential for more coordinated services between Jacksonville Transit and OUTS. These options have been outlined in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Service Options for US Highway 258 Corridor

Service Option	Pros / Cons
<p>A. Consolidated Express Route: Through agreement between JT and OUTS, the route would run from downtown Jacksonville and serve the Wal-Mart, Senior Center/County Complex and potentially the airport through a “one seat” service to be provided by either JT or OUTS vehicles without requiring a transfer or local stops.</p> <p>Express route service times would likely be hourly during AM and PM peak periods and potentially a lunchtime run, depending on needs and demand at the County Complex. Airport runs could coincide with common flight arrival/departure times.</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides the most convenient ride for non-stop riders who begin their trip downtown and end at the County Complex. ▪ Begins to reinforce concept that OUTS-JT are a coordinated service. ▪ Easiest route for potential riders to interpret and understand. ▪ Does not require agreement with Wal-Mart to place transfer point on-site if it cannot be done on Yopp Road. ▪ Does not require “pulsing” of OUTS and JT services for transfer or common fare media. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires agreement between OUTS/JT. ▪ Could complicate existing JT operating agreement with MV. Require regular funding through JARC or other agreed-upon Federal source to avoid transfer of existing funds from one operating agency to the other.
<p>B: JT Local / OUTS Express Jacksonville Transit adds a leg to existing “A” route to begin/terminate at the Wal-Mart complex, which could be potentially accomplished at the beginning of its deadhead run from the bus garage.</p> <p>In response to demand in the corridor and at the Senior Center / County Complex, OUTS begins a new express route between the Wal-Mart and the complex or Richlands (could vary by time of day to run AM and PM peak services to/from Richlands and provide midday service between Wal-Mart and County Complex).</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not require JT to provide services beyond city limits. ▪ Expands JT services to an un-served area of the City. ▪ Provides avenue for OUTS to examine potential for express routes in high volume corridor and to popular destinations. ▪ Test for coordination of service between JT/OUTS that can be replicated in other areas (Piney Green, Gum Branch, etc.) <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires transfer to different service, which could be deterrent for choice riders. ▪ May require on-site agreement for services within the Wal-Mart complex if transfer cannot be made on Yopp Road. ▪ Service times for JT could deter County workers if there are additional stops between downtown and Wal-Mart.
<p>C: JT Local / OUTS Demand Response Jacksonville Transit adds a leg to existing “A” route to begin/terminate at the Wal-Mart complex, which could be potentially accomplished at the beginning of its deadhead run from the bus garage.</p> <p>OUTS continues to operate demand response services in the corridor through potential subscription of riders to transfer at Wal-Mart or use point-to-point services.</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not require JT to provide services beyond city limits. ▪ Does not require changes to existing OUTS services. ▪ Expands JT services to an un-served area of the City. ▪ Test for coordination of service between JT/OUTS that can be replicated in other areas (Piney Green, Gum Branch, etc.) <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demand response not as conducive to commuter rides. ▪ Does not provide incubator for future JT/OUTS services. ▪ Requires a transfer to a different service, which could be deterrent for choice riders. ▪ May require on-site agreement for services within the Wal-Mart complex if transfer cannot be made on Yopp Road. ▪ Service times for JT could deter County workers if there are additional stops between downtown and Wal-Mart.

Service Option	Pros / Cons
<p>D: OUTS Deviated Fixed Route / Express</p> <p>Through agreement between JT and OUTS, OUTS provides a combination of express and deviated fixed route services to the western sectors of the City and northwestern areas of the County.</p> <p>Similar to option A, the route runs express between downtown and the County Complex and/or Richlands and serves as a deviated fixed route service to residential areas along the US Highway 258 corridor and areas of western Jacksonville.</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Could evolve from Option A over time depending on success and demand from residential or commercial areas not adjacent to the route.</i> ▪ <i>Provides the most convenient ride for non-stop riders who begin their trip downtown and end at the County Complex.</i> ▪ <i>Begins to reinforce concept that OUTS and JT are one coordinated service regarding of vehicle type, particularly as it relates to potential County contribution.</i> <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Difficult to implement as the first service type in the region.</i> ▪ <i>Deviated fixed route could deter commuters who are uncomfortable with less predictable travel times.</i> ▪ <i>Requires agreement between OUTS/JT.</i> ▪ <i>Could complicate existing JT agreement with MV.</i> ▪ <i>Require regular funding through JARC or other agreed-upon Federal source to avoid transfer of existing funds from one operating agency to the other.</i>

#2: Pursue Reverse Commute Services to Camp Lejeune

Jacksonville Transit and OUTS both currently serve the base in a limited capacity. As troop levels have increased, the congestion at the gate along NC 24 has become increasingly congested to the point that local residents have reported 90-minute delays in commuting less than five miles to work at Camp Lejeune. Due to its location on the southern fringes of the City of Jacksonville, commute routes to Camp Lejeune are similar to reverse commute patterns seen in larger cities where major employers are located in neighboring suburbs or suburban office parks.

Through Executive Order 13150³, signed by President Clinton in April 2000, federal programs exist to help subsidize transit fares for riders that could be used in combination with JARC funding to establish these services. The monthly benefit available to military and federal employees was recently increased to \$230/month through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (aka “Stimulus Bill”). While city bus services to Camp Lejeune would not require \$230 per month per rider to operate, it is conceivable that OUTS could service the base with commute routes that would necessitate higher fares from areas such as Richlands, Sneads Ferry, Swansboro, Holly Ridge and other parts of Onslow County.

It is anticipated that the Regional Transit Master Plan will also explore the potential to provide these services.

³ US General Services Administration. *Executive Order 13150: Federal Workforce Transportation*. April 2000. http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=16569&contentType=GSA_BASIC&noc=T

#3: Designate Park-n-Ride Lots

Several of the discussions during the Coordinated Plan workshop included the idea of establishing park-n-ride lots in both Jacksonville and outlying communities in Onslow County. Through lease agreements with entities such as shopping centers, churches and municipal complexes, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit could pursue the designation of park-n-ride spaces within existing parking lots of already developed properties.

Typically, such lease agreements consist of a modest payment negotiated with the land owner and designation of five to 10 parking spaces on the fringe of the development that are accessible to van and bus services. Carpoolers may also use these designated parking spaces.

It can also be advantageous to work with entities such as NCDOT to identify publicly-owned parcels, perhaps remnants from previous road projects that could be cleared and paved with asphalt or gravel to provide for park-n-ride lots. Several unofficial park-n-ride lots of this type exist around the State. The City or County could also pursue acquisition or transfer of ownership of such lots if there was determined to be a long-term need for such a facility at a specific location.

#4: Expand Geography of Existing Routes

The Regional Transit Master Plan will identify areas of the City and County that are candidates for expansion of services, both through existing routes and establishment of new routes or service areas. Funding may be obtained through these via the human service transportation programs, particularly if some areas indicate a need for specialized services such as paratransit instead of a fixed route service.

These may include outlying areas of the City or corridors with both incorporated and unincorporated areas that may not be fully serviced by Jacksonville Transit due to current funding and service policies that limit services to areas within the corporate limits. It could also include expansion of Jacksonville Transit services to areas on the fringe of the City where OUTS has a concentration of riders.

#5: Create Express Routes/Vanpools for Onslow County communities

There was strong interest from representatives of other communities within Onslow County to establish express services or vanpools to Jacksonville and the military installations. Communities such as Richlands, Swansboro, North Topsail Beach, Holly Ridge and Sneads Ferry may not have the critical mass of riders with common origin and destination points to justify fixed route services, however an express point-to-point bus or vanpool may serve their commute needs. Workshop attendees noted several travel routes along existing corridors that may also connect more than one community with such a service.

10. Recommendations and Next Steps

Once the Coordinated Plan is adopted, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit will be eligible to pursue funding through the human service transportation programs. In order to prepare for applying for and implementing programs through those funding sources, there are several efforts that should be undertaken to prepare the region to fully utilize these resources.

The service agencies, municipalities and workshop attendees recognized the importance of several ancillary efforts that should be pursued or are already underway to fully recognize the vision and goals established through the Coordinated Plan. After adoption of the Coordinated Plan, JUMPO, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit should continue to work to enhance and coordinate public transit services throughout the region. This can be accomplished through numerous endeavors, many of which have already been defined through the course of developing the Coordinated Plan.

Quantify transit data: It was noted during the workshop that an important exercise would be to quantify what would happen if OUTS and Jacksonville Transit did not exist and relay this message to local elected officials and other community stakeholders. While detailed data can be difficult to collect, OUTS and Jacksonville Transit already have at their disposal several key datasets that can help quantify and justify the benefits of having these services.

Jacksonville Transit is currently exempt from reporting to the Federal Transit Administration's National Transit Database (NTD) for presentation to public and elected officials, however much of the data require by NTD for other agencies is available for reporting. This information should include measures such as passenger trips, passenger miles, revenue miles and boarding/alighting data.

OUTS, as a partner through the Down East RPO's RouteMatch software, has several datasets that can help quantify the value of their services. The consultant team is currently working on mapping origin and destination data for OUTS trips to identify service trends as part of the Regional Transit Master Plan. Other information such as passenger trips and revenue miles is already available from OUTS.

Refine human service transportation program recommendations: JUMPO should work with the OUTS Board, the OUTS Transportation Advisory Board and Jacksonville Transit officials to refine the recommendations for utilization of human service transportation program funding. JUMPO should also work through the NCDOT Public Transportation Division to determine application procedures and potential funding levels to determine which priorities results in grant applications. This should include, at minimum, the following actions:

- Determine specific levels of funding available to the region and method by which NCDOT intends to disburse funds;
- Develop cost estimates for programs and projects;
- Identify operational and capital needs for each program and project; and
- Integrate the Coordinated Plan into the Long Range Planning process.

Allow the Regional Transit Master Plan to continue to inform the process: Many of the operations and capital program priorities for human service transportation program funding may be refined through the development of the Regional Transit Master Plan. Potential outcomes of the Master Plan may include recommendations for deviated fixed routes, expansion of service hours through agreement with local taxi companies and methods by which OUTS and Jacksonville Transit can coordinate services. The Coordinated Plan is anticipated to be incorporated as part of the Master Plan.

11. Appendix

NOTE: The appendix will be finalized after the plan has been reviewed by the service agencies and transit plan steering committee:

At this time, the Appendix will include:

- Framework for Action / Self-Assessment Questionnaire
- Funding Program fact sheets distributed at the workshop
- Guide to the Local Coordinated Planning Process
- Other maps
- Workshop invitees
- Workshop attendees, full list;
- List of OUTS Board members;
- List of OUTS Transportation Advisory Board;
- List of Jacksonville & Onslow County Transit Master Plan Committee