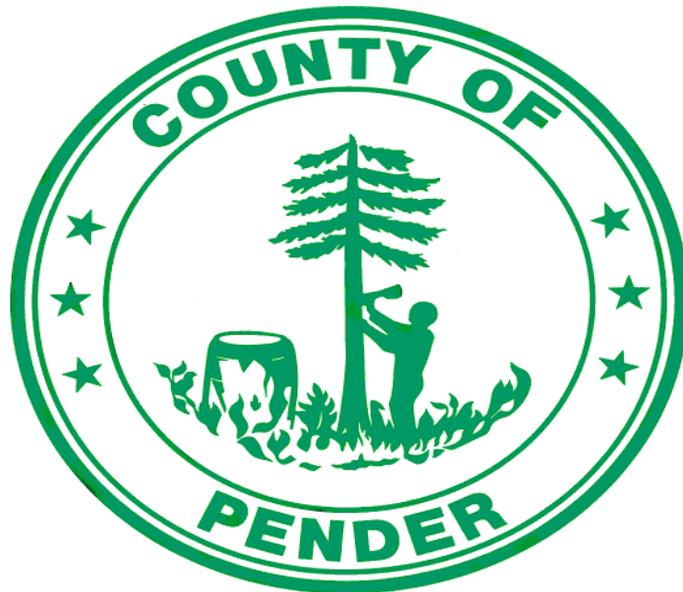


***PENDER COUNTY***  
***LOCAL COORDINATED***  
***HUMAN SERVICES***  
***TRANSPORTATION PLAN***

*Prepared with the assistance of the  
Cape Fear Area Rural Transportation Planning Organization  
Wilmington, North Carolina*



## **I. Introduction**

On Thursday, February 5, 2009 the Cape Fear Area Rural Planning Organization (RPO) in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Public Transportation Division (PTD) held a Transportation Community Involvement Planning forum at the Heritage Place in Burgaw. Approximately fifty people representing human service agencies, the business community, the medical community, the community college, local government, and citizens/consumers were invited to the meeting. In addition, notice of the meeting ran in the local newspapers.

In addition, surveys were mailed to all the invitees along with the invitations. Twelve people completed and returned them. Their responses generally coincided with responses gathered at the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Twenty-two (22) people attended the meeting. They provided a good representation of the target groups. The meeting lasted about 2 hours. At the conclusion of the meeting, some of the meeting attendees were asked to participate in a follow-up meeting to review the results of the meeting and assist with planning for available grants.

This plan:

- Discusses the planning meeting in some detail;
- Identifies and prioritizes gaps or barriers to service; and
- Identifies strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps

## **II. February 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Meeting**

*Introduction:* Mr. Don Eggert, Director of the Cape Fear Area Rural Planning Organization opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and asked each attendee to identify themselves and their interest in transportation.

**Overview:** Mr. Eggert was also the meeting’s facilitator. He introduced Ms. Tori Smith, with NCDOT’s Public Transportation Division (PTD), who then discussed the overall concept of the Local Coordinated Plan.

**Assessment of available resources:** Following the overview Ms. Smith provided information relating to the Community Involvement Planning process, the SAFETEA-LU grants available (JARC, New Freedoms, and Elderly/Disabled), and an assessment of available transportation resources.

**Assessment of transportation needs of the target population:** The facilitator, Mr. Eggert, then asked the group to brainstorm issues related to transportation needs in the county. Specifically, the following question was posed to the group:

**“What are the barriers to providing adequate  
Transportation in Pender County?”**

He gave each attendee an index card and asked them to list the various issues or concerns that came to mind. He then asked each attendee to give one of their concerns. The issues were then listed on poster paper and put on the wall. Following that, each attendee was given stars and asked to vote for those issues they thought were “most critical”

### **III. Gaps or Barriers to Service**

The following were the issues identified in the process

#### ***A. MOST CRITICAL NEEDS OR ISSUES***

The followed issues or needs were identified by the group at the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting as most critical of all the needs identified at the meeting:

- Need for more vans & better transportation in general -The need for more vans to provide more routes as well as additional runs on existing routes was identified as a critical need. Additional vans would shorten waiting times between vans as well as provide resources to run more routes to parts of the county that are underserved. The Hampstead- Topsail Beach area was identified as a part of the county where the need is most critical. Also, the availability of the service during non-traditional hours and weekends was identified as a part of this issue.
- Transportation to out of county employment-Transportation to out of county employment in New Hanover County and to a lesser degree in Duplin County was identified as a critical need.
- Saturday Service-The need for Saturday transportation service-especially for dialysis patients-was identified as a critical need. There is no public transportation available for those that may need to take care of basic needs such as grocery shopping or getting prescriptions at the drug store.
- Vouchers for Transportation- Funding for those passengers who do not qualify for Medicaid was identified as a critical need. Riders who “fall through the cracks” are very often not able to afford the transportation service offered by the county’s public transportation service.

## ***B. OTHER NEEDS OR ISSUES***

- Need increased marketing-An increase in marketing is needed to let the public know of the availability of existing services? Often the public (and some resource agencies) are not aware of transportation services in the county.
- Transportation for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift work-Transportation to/from employment for non-traditional work hours is very limited to non-existent.
- Language Barriers-Were identified as a barrier to the use of public transportation by some potential customers

- Out-of-county specialized medical transportation-Transportation to such places as Greenville, Chapel Hill/Durham and Fayetteville was mentioned as a need. Included in this need was transportation to/from VA facilities in the state.
- Transportation for job-seekers-Many unemployed persons are also transportation disadvantaged, i.e. they lack a way to get to/from job interviews, the Employment Security Commission, etc. Existing services don't meet those needs.
- Transportation to food pantries-Was identified as a need
- Transportation for Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) students- The need for transportation of students to/from CFCC's New Hanover County campuses was identified as a need.

**Conclusion:** There was group census that there is a need for more vans and routes in general, transportation to/from out of county employment as well as for those seeking employment, some type of Saturday service and vouchers for transportation

#### **IV. Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps**

1. Explore the Potential for Saturday Service - Implementation priority: High
  - Determine the sustainability of such a service over the long term
  - Establish targeted areas for dialysis-related transportation to maximize efficiencies
  - Eliminate county lines as a barrier to providing the service by establishing reciprocity agreements between Pender and adjacent transit services.
2. Establish Out-of County Transportation- Implementation priority: High

- Collaborate with the Employment Security Commission & to establish some type of employer subsidized transportation to out-of-county employment centers (mainly in New Hanover County)
3. Increase Marketing of Existing the Public Transportation Services Implementation priority: High
- Create a brochure to promote the existing public transportation services
  - Hold a “County Transportation Resources Summit” to promote the available opportunities for transporting clients/customers/patients and the general public. Invitees would primarily be various human resources, medical and educational entities.
  - Pender Transportation holds two “Free Ride” days a month to promote their service.
4. Establish a flexible voucher system with use of a private provider. Implementation priority: High
- Private providers are seen as having more administrative and resource flexibility and would be more likely to implement such an initiative.

# APPENDIX

- **County Map**
- **Invitation letter**
- **February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda**
- **Mailing labels of invitees**
- **Attendee “sign in” sheet**
- **News Release**
- **News Article**