

# Stanly County Local Coordinated Plan

**ADOPTED** by: The Stanly County Board of Commissioners – January 3, 2011

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# I: INTRODUCTION

## A. Federal Regulatory Background

For more than twenty years, the federal and state governments have been working to better coordinate their funded human service transportation activities. In 1985, during an oversight hearing on Rural Transportation, Congress heard testimony prompted by concerns of the lack of federal coordination between programs, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Aiming to better coordinate activities, the Secretaries of HHS and DOT signed an agreement establishing the Joint DOT/HHS Coordinating Council on Human Service Transportation (CCHST) in 1986. Since the CCHST's creation, concentrated efforts have been made to identify barriers in coordinating transportation. At that time, the agencies identified sixty-four factors that transportation and human service representatives believed were barriers to transportation coordination, which included uncertainty regarding federal responsibilities for transportation, fragmented accounting and reporting procedures, uncertainty in using resources for recipients other than program constituents, and prohibition against charging fares under the Older Americans Act.

To further support coordination, Congress included several provisions in its 1998 passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA -21), Public Law (PL) 105-178. Most notable was the provision to require Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), predecessor program to today's JARC program, projects to be part of a coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process.

On February 24, 2004, President George W. Bush released an Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination to improve the human service transportation coordination of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with lower incomes. The Executive Order established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), representing 11 Federal departments. CCAM was created to:

- promote interagency cooperation
- establish appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services
- facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources
- encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available
- formulate and implement administrative policy and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels

There are currently 62 Federal programs run by these Federal departments that provide some kind of transportation service for seniors, people with disabilities, or individuals with lower incomes. These funds result in a myriad of services that are not coordinated or managed efficiently at the State or local level.

In May 2005, the CCAM issued a report to the President with recommendations for breaking down federal barriers to transportation for all transportation-disadvantaged populations. The report detailed action plans for each of the eleven federal agencies who comprise the CCAM. As a result CCAM launched United We Ride (UWR) [www.unitedweride.gov](http://www.unitedweride.gov), a national initiative to implement the requirement of the Executive Order.

While it has been a long process, the federal government has worked to strengthen its coordination requirements for human service transportation activities. On August 10, 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) PL 109-059 was signed into law. SAFETEA-LU established a federal mandate for public transportation and human service coordination planning. In Fiscal Year 2007, SAFETEA-LU required that a human service transportation coordination plan be in place before transportation service providers could acquire funding from three Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316), and the New Freedom (Section 5317) Programs.

In 2006, the CCAM issued two policy statements that took important steps to bring federal programs together to help people with disabilities, older adults, and lower income families get the transportation they needed for their day-to-day mobility. The CCAM policy statements focus on two key areas: (1) coordinated human service transportation planning and (2) vehicle sharing. These policies support communities and organizations receiving federal funding to plan transportation services together and to share resources. The policies were included as part of the recommendations in a 2005 report to the White House on Human Service Transportation Coordination. Each department on the CCAM was charged with taking action to implement these policies.

SAFETEA-LU's requirement of a coordinated plan and United We Ride's goals and objectives are in accord; to afford elderly citizens, persons with disabilities and low income populations greater access to transportation services, to reduce duplication of services and to gain greater efficiencies in the distribution of human transportation services. Encompassed in the coordinated plan must be an assessment of available services, an assessment of clearly defined needs and strategies to address deficiencies for target populations. All projects funded via the aforementioned programs must meet the needs identified in the coordinated plan. Utilizing the Framework for Action, an assessment of Stanly County was conducted through a Public Transportation-Human Services Workshop. The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by the FTA. The Framework was used to identify areas of success and highlight the actions needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation in the area.

## **B. Federal Funding Programs**

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310), JARC (5316), and New Freedom (5317) programs be derived from a locally developed coordinated transportation plan and that the plan be developed through a process that includes representation from the public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers and the general public. In April of 2008, the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Public Transportation Division was designated by the Governor to administer both the small urban and non-urbanized area apportionment of funds to North Carolina. NCDOT will only award project funding under the programs that are selected following a call for projects, or application solicitation. The applications are reviewed by a Project Selection Committee consisting of representatives from the Human Service Transportation Council, with support from the staff of Public Transportation Division and the Department of Health and Human Services. The selection committee utilizes pre-determined project evaluation criteria to score each application. Those with the highest scores receive project funding which is awarded for a two year period.

A brief description of the programs and examples of eligible projects for each follows.

### **Job Access Reverse Commute (Section 5316) +**

The JARC program existed under the previous transportation legislation, known as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). SAFETEA-LU has changed the funding from an earmark to a formula program based on the number of low-income individuals in the urbanized area. JARC was created to help address the transportation needs of unemployed and underemployed persons trying to access jobs. Public transit primarily serves people entering the central city area; however entry-level jobs were being created in the suburbs. Previously funded JARC projects that are able to document successful implementation will be eligible for funding. New projects must relate to the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income clients to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Public transit late-night and weekend service
- Public transit guaranteed ride home program
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training
- Car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles
- Promotion of public transit for non-traditional work schedules
- Voucher programs targeted to persons entering the workforce or on welfare

### **New Freedom (Section 5317)**

The New Freedom Program is the newest program under SAFETEA-LU with a purpose to expand transportation services for the elderly and persons with disabilities beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). New Freedom projects must be new service, defined as not in service as of August 10, 2005. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Expansion of Para transit service beyond the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile required by ADA
- Expansion of current hours of operation for Para transit services that are beyond those provided on fixed route services
- Same day ADA service
- Door-through-door service-provision of escorts
- Purchasing vehicles for new accessible taxi, ride sharing and/or vanpool programs
- Expenses related to new voucher programs offered by human service providers
- New volunteer driver and aide programs
- Operational planning for the purchase of intelligent transportation technologies

## **Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310)**

This program existed under the previous transportation legislation. The 5310 program provides funds for capital costs associated with providing services to older adults and people with disabilities; generally accessible vehicles are purchased for non-profit organizations. Additional requirements under SAFETEA-LU include the provision that projects funded under this program must be included in a locally-developed human service transportation coordination plan. North Carolina is one of seven states authorized to use up to one-third of the annual statewide allocation for operating costs.

- Purchase of service (POS): the acquisition of transportation service under a purchase of service contract with a public transportation provider
- Vehicles
- Mobility managers and related activities
- Radio and communication equipment
- Vehicle shelters
- Wheelchair lifts and restraints
- Computer hardware and software

## **II. Plan Approach**

Projects funded through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316 - JARC) and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs require the development of a local, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (CPT-HSTP), which should incorporate private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the general public.

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

- North Carolina Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division
- Stanly County Umbrella Service Agency (SCUSA Transportation)
- Rocky River Rural Planning Organization

## Human Service Transportation Coordination Committee

The Human Service Transportation Coordination Committee was gathered together to guide and assist in the development of the Local Coordinated Health and Human Services Plan, to initiate discussions about coordination opportunities and develop strategies and actions based on the public involvement feedback. The stakeholder group represented a broad array of interests, including elected officials, city/town/county managers, appointed transportation advisory boards, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, hospitals, EMS and advocates for persons with disabilities. There were twenty-three participants in the stakeholders' workshop on February 27, 2009. This workshop consisted of representatives from the following organizations that participated in the identification or prioritization of coordinated transportation needs:

Regional Coordinated Area Transportation System	Employment Security Commission
Cabarrus County Transit Service	Stanly Regional Medical Center
Stanly County Umbrella Service Agency (SCUSA Transportation)	Stanly County Emergency Services
Town of Badin	City of Locust
Monarch Inc.	Stanly County Health Department
Town of New London	Stanly County Social Services
Town of Norwood	Albemarle Dept. of Public Housing
YMCA	City of Albemarle Council
Department of Social Services	NCDOT
Stanly County Chamber of Commerce	

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

## Demographics

Stanly County has approximately 59,110 residents, according to the American Community Survey. This population total has been increasing, but, in recent years has slowed because of the sluggish economy. Stanly County residents live in a variety of environments: low density rural areas, burgeoning suburban “bedroom communities” and small size historic cities. The transportation needs of these residents likewise vary.

The below chart and maps further illustrate the demographics of this region:

Stanly County	
Total population	59,110*
65 Years and over	8,842*
65 years and older with disability	3,648
Workers	27,488
Work in state of residence	27,278
Worked in county of residence	18,742
Worked outside county of residence	8,536
Worked outside state of residence	210
Commuting	
Under 30 minute commute	17,805
Under 60 minute commute	6,450
60 to 89 minutes	1,843
90 or more minutes	743

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

\*2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

## **III: Assessment of Available Services**

### **Inventory of Existing Services**

The coordinated planning process requires a thorough inventory of existing transportation services. An assessment was conducted of existing transportation services in Stanly County - public, private and human service. The inventory of services and providers follows:

#### **Public Transportation Providers**

Stanly County Umbrella Services Agency (SCUSA) operates a single county public transportation/human system, receiving US Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Non-urbanized Area Formula Program funds. The purpose of the Section 5311 program is to serve the general public needs of individuals who reside in non-urban areas. However, recipients of the funds coordinate the provision of human service transportation to prevent duplication of service and to utilize limited financial resources. SCUSA operating as a department of county government is the designated lead transportation agency approved by the Stanly County Board of Commissioners to provide human service client transportation on a contractual basis and general public transportation. Stanly County Transportation also administers, on behalf of the county, state operating assistance (ROAP) allocated to each county by NCDOT to serve the transportation needs of the elderly, disabled persons, employment transportation for low-income persons, and the general public. In FY09, SCUSA provided a total of 63,848 passenger trips.

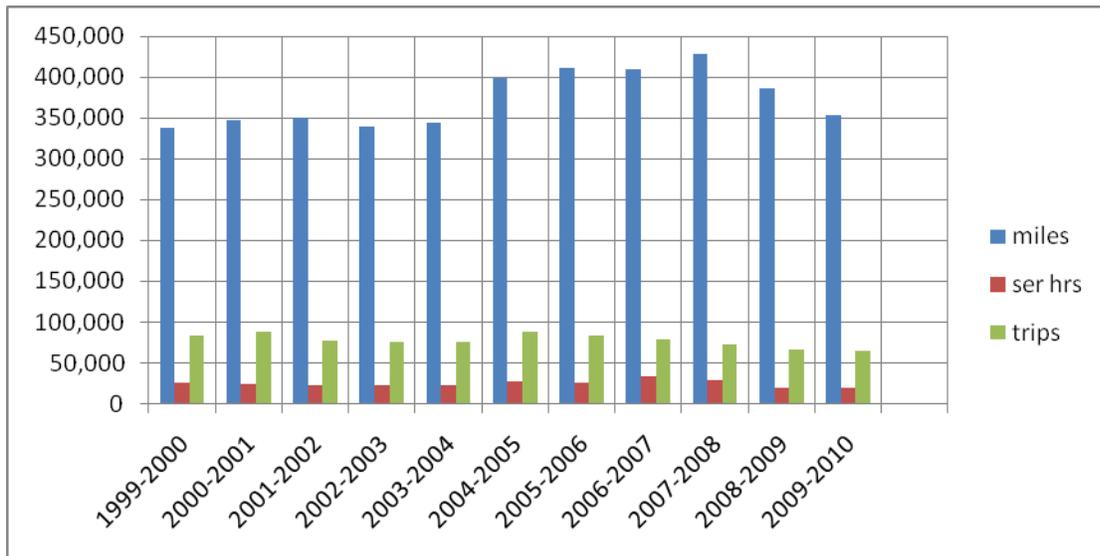
An overview of currently available services includes:

- 1) Local services are provided Monday through Friday for trips to local agencies, medical appointments, community college, individual shopping trips, nutrition sites (through Senior Services), employment sites, personal business, etc. These services are provided utilizing vans and light transit vehicles.
  
- 2) Out of county trips are primarily for medical purposes funded through Medicaid or the ROAP program. Passengers not eligible for either funding source may ride by paying a public fare. Areas of service include Mecklenburg County, Cabarrus County, Rowan County, Iredell County, Union County, Durham County, Orange County, Buncombe County, Moore County and Montgomery County. Other areas are considered upon request.

3) Community Service - Stanly County Transit began service on July 1, 1986 with 9 vehicles providing 29,000+ passenger trips and covering 72,000+ miles providing transportation to citizens receiving services from Stanly County human service agencies. Today, not only does Stanly County Transportation provide services to the human service agencies, but also provides transportation to those that do not qualify for any services. In 2000, Rural General Public (RGP) was introduced to Stanly County which has allowed Stanly County Transportation to grow exponentially. At the end of FY 09-10 general public ridership was 17.8% of the total ridership. This was the highest category of passengers served.

**Stanly County Historical Operating Statistics**

**HISTORICAL STATISTICAL DATA**  
1999-2010



**Private Providers**

The one private provider currently in Stanly County is B&G Taxi.

**Non-profit Providers**

Currently there are no non-profit transportation providers in Stanly County.

## Public Involvement

A major focus of developing a coordinated transportation plan is public input, more specifically stakeholder involvement. The primary objective of this plan is to encourage public transportation coordination and, thus, provide a network of diverse stakeholders who will have a common interest in human service transportation. This process gives an opportunity to collaborate on how to best provide transportation services to the targeted populations identified in the three programs noted above.

Stakeholder outreach and participation were key components in the development of the plan. Guidance issued by FTA and the NCDOT specifically requires participation and recommends that it is inclusive, representing a broad spectrum of groups and organizations involved in human service transportation.

## Service Gaps and Needs

The Coordinated Plan is focused on identifying the most significant unmet transportation needs or service gaps faced by transportation-disadvantaged individuals. These unmet needs were substantiated by facilitating the *United We Ride: A Framework for Action initiative during the stakeholder meeting*. Participants conducted an assessment of current public transportation providers, including private and nonprofit providers, and identified public transportation needs. Participants identified areas where service is needed to meet the needs of people with limited income, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

The following is a summary of needs, gaps, and barriers identified through the stakeholder workshop breakout groups. Note that some comments are duplicative, but reflects input from each of the several breakout groups.

- More available transportation service for medically fragile
- Increased weekend and evening transportation for work, hospital discharge, medical, pharmacy, errands, church and social activities
- Increase in coverage area i.e. Badin and Norwood
- Implement a fixed route service
- Increased marketing to providers and general public service
- Establish Park and Ride locations
- Decrease customer wait times
- Establish commuter service on route 49 and 24/27 to and from Charlotte for work purposes
- Increase out of county trips to Chapel Hill, Winston etc.
- Connector service from school system to recreation facilities/after school programs and summer programs
- Establish regional vanpool system – Stanly, Cabarrus, Union & Montgomery County
- Implement a Regional express service
- Increase flexibility of service hours
- Overall service expansion
- Sidewalk improvements

## Workshop Results

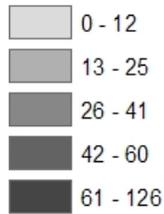
The following prioritized transportation needs were identified:

1. Establish a regional vanpool system with park & ride locations to serve Stanly, Cabarrus, Union and Montgomery Counties
2. Connector service from School System to Recreation facilities/afterschool and summer programs
3. Weekend and later service for social, work, medical and recreational trips
4. Increase in Marketing to provide expanded general public trips
5. Overall increase in service area and hours of service
6. Regional Express service
7. Increase in out of county service to Chapel Hill, Winston etc.
8. Coordination and communication between businesses and service providers
9. Commuter service on Route 49 and 24/27 between Stanly and Charlotte for work purposes
10. Increase available transportation for medically fragile

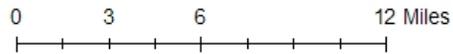
# Stanly County, NC 2000: Households without Cars by Block Group



## Household without Cars

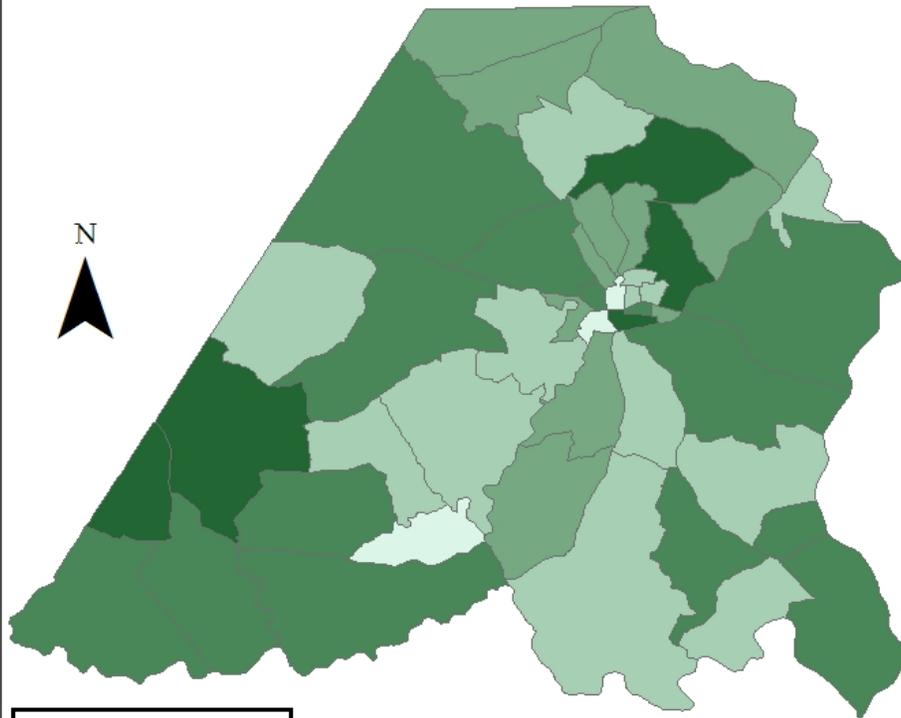


Source: US Census s3 files



Produced by the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization  
10/11/10

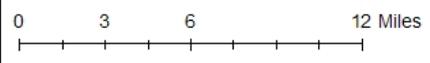
# Stanly County, NC 2000: Total Population with Disabilities by Block Group



## Total Population: Disabilities

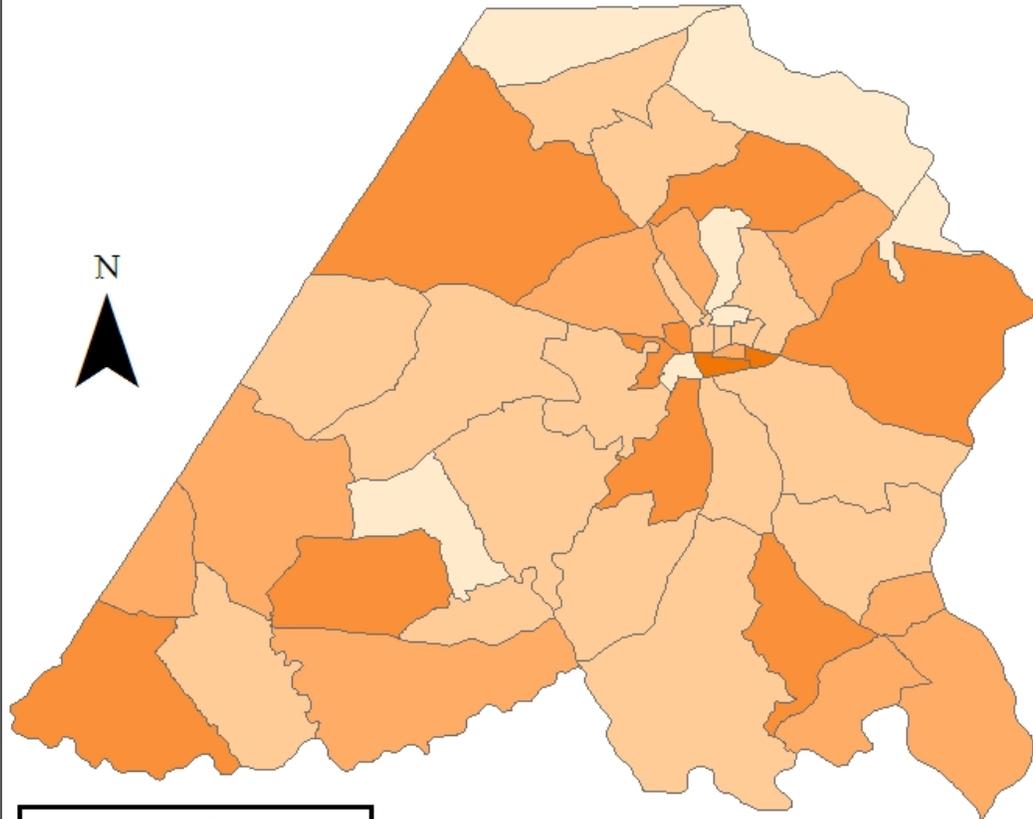
155 - 192
193 - 372
373 - 439
440 - 672
673 - 875

Source: US Census s83 file

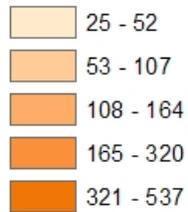


Produced by the Rocky River Rual Planning Organization  
10/11/10

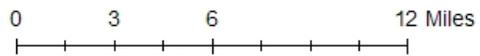
# Stanly County, NC 2000: Total Population Below the Poverty Level by Block Group



## Total Population Below the Poverty Level



Source: US Census s3 files



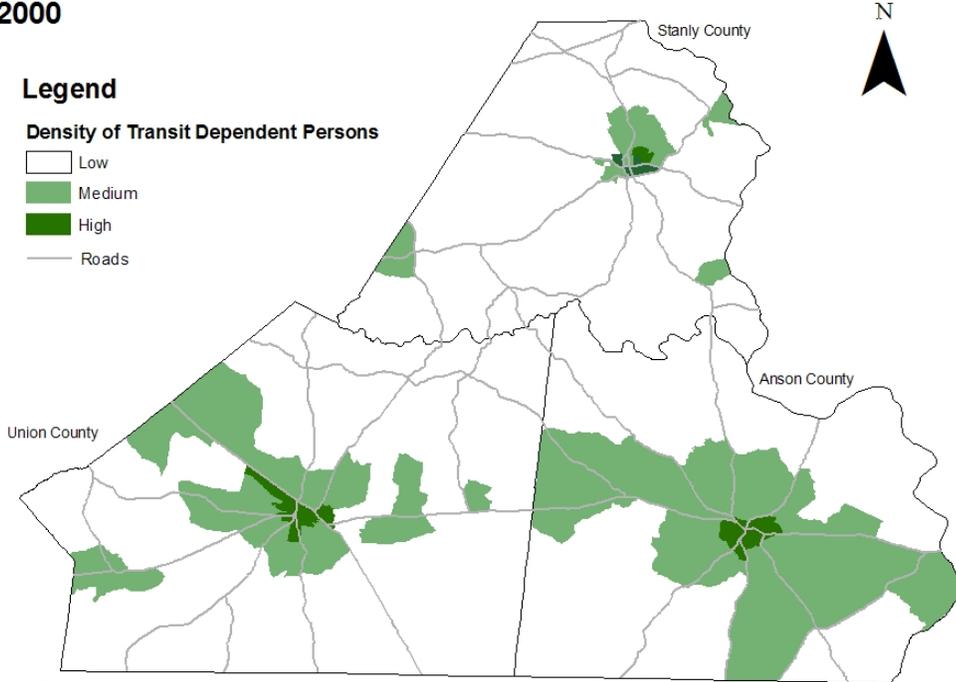
Produced by the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization  
10/11/10

# Concentration of Transit Dependent Persons: Union, Stanly and Anson Counties 2000

## Legend

### Density of Transit Dependent Persons

-  Low
-  Medium
-  High
-  Roads



Source: US Census sf3  
Produced by Rocky River RPO 10/12/10

0 5 10 20 Miles

\*\*\*\*\*

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – Needs meeting

Survey list of needs:

Increase service for veterans (in and out of county)

Need to add educational trips to #3

Mileage reimbursements to Workforce Investment Act Adult Services Program (in and out of county)

Transportation for clients being voluntarily admitted to treatment facility.

Some others stated longer hours of service and extended service hours – currently on the list.

Others survey stated what agencies are currently doing but did not provide anything in the needs list.