

CRAVEN AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM (CARTS)

Serving Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

June 17, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Federal Regulatory Background.....	3
II.	Funding.....	6
III.	General Program Information.....	13
IV.	Plan Approach.....	16
V.	Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Transportation Services.....	18
VI.	Craven County.....	21
	a. Demographics.....	22
	b. Needs Assessment.....	26
VII.	Jones County.....	31
	a. Demographics.....	32
	b. Needs Assessment.....	36
VIII.	Pamlico County.....	42
	a. Demographics.....	43
	b. Needs Assessment.....	47
IX.	Prioritization of Needs.....	52
X.	Long Range Transportation Plans.....	59
XI.	Attachments.....	70
	a. Maps of Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties	
	b. Copy of Needs/Strategies composite worksheet	

Federal Regulatory Background

For more than twenty years, the federal and state governments have been working to better coordinate human service transportation activities it funds.

In 1985, during an oversight hearing on Rural Transportation, Congress heard testimony prompted by concerns of the lack of federal coordination between programs, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

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

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

In February 2004, President George W. Bush released an Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination to improve assistance to those who are transportation disadvantaged. The Executive Order aims to implement coordination of transportation services to operate in the most cost effective and time efficient manner possible.

Within the February 2004 Executive Order, the President established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).

The functions of the CCAM are to:

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

CCAM includes leadership from eleven federal departments:

- DOT
- HHS
- Labor
- Education
- Housing and Urban Affairs
- Agriculture
- Justice
- Interior
- Veterans Administration
- Social Security Administration
- National Council on Disabilities

In May 2005, the CCAM issued a report to the President with recommendations for breaking down federal barriers to transportation for all transportation-disadvantaged populations. The report detailed action plans for each of the eleven federal agencies who comprise the CCAM. Additionally, in 2005 the CCAM launched the United We Ride website, www.unitedweride.gov.

While it has been a long process, the federal government is working to strengthen its coordination requirements for human service transportation activities. In August 2005, Congress included coordination provisions in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), PL 109-059. SAFETEA-LU specifically added a coordination requirement to the newly created Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310), Job Access Reverse Commute Program (5316), and New Freedoms Program (5317). FTA requires projects funded through the

Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 Programs be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP).

A CPT-HSTP identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A CPT-HSTP uses all available resources to supply transportation services efficiently and without redundancy in trips. Development of the CPT-HSTP must have the input and cooperation of transit agencies, social service agencies, community agencies, and the public.

In 2006, the CCAM issued two policy statements that take important steps to bring federal programs together to help people with disabilities, older adults, and lower income families get the transportation they need for their day-to-day mobility.

The CCAM policy statements focus on two key areas: (1) coordinated human service transportation planning and (2) vehicle sharing. These policies support communities and organizations receiving federal funding to plan transportation services together and to share resources. The policies were included as part of the recommendations in a 2005 report to the White House on Human Service Transportation Coordination. Each department on the CCAM will be taking actions to implement these policies.

FUNDING

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) stipulated that starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three SAFETEA-LU programs — the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) “must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation Plan.” SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) described the plan as a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”

The following section on MAP-21 was extracted from Partnership for Mobility Management website:

<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=3180>

“MAP-21 stands for Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act. Under MAP-21, mobility management is considered a capital expense, eligible for 80 percent federal funding. The definition of mobility management is unchanged from current transportation law, SAFETEA-LU provisions. Mobility management continues to be an eligible capital expense in every Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant program other than Section 5309.”

“Coordination with human services will remain a requirement for FTA grantees across the range of all non-rail FTA programs. Coordination with human services continues to be a requirement of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning, and coordination of service delivery continues to be a requirement in all three core FTA grant programs as authorized by MAP-21: Section 5307, 5310 and 5311.”

JARC and New Freedom

“Significant changes in MAP-21 include the end of both JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute) and New Freedom as distinct programs. Both survive as eligible activities. JARC-type projects will be eligible activities under the rural (Section 5311) and urban (Section 5307) funding provisions. New Freedom-type

projects will be allowable under Section 5310 regarding seniors and people with disabilities.”

“JARC activities are given a new definition in MAP-21: 'Job access and reverse commute project' means a transportation project to finance planning, capital, and operating costs that support the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment, including transportation projects that facilitate the provision of public transportation services from urbanized areas and rural areas to suburban employment locations." (The old definition under SAFETEA-LU was slightly different, with specific language about vouchers and transit passes.) Vanpool vehicles are now included as permissible expenses.”

Rural, Small Urban and Other Urban Areas

“In general, there are no significant changes to the eligible uses of FTA funds for capital or operating assistance in either the rural (Section 5311) or urban (Section 5307) grant programs. One new feature under MAP-21 affects grantees in urban areas over 200,000 in population. For those areas with above 200,000 in population, FTA funding for operating expenses will be determined according to a sliding scale -- with 75 and 100 buses as benchmarks. The more buses, the smaller the percentage of FTA funds that may be used for operating expenses. For the most part, areas designated as above 200,000 in population with more than 100 buses will not be eligible to use Section 5307 funds toward operating expenses.”

Expansion of 5310 Program

“Section 5310 will include more eligible activities to enhance mobility for seniors and people with disabilities. These activities are (1) former New Freedom activities -- improvements that exceed the requirements of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA); (2) public transportation projects to improve access to fixed-route transit; (3) public transit projects expressly designed for seniors and people with disabilities, where transit is insufficient, inappropriate or unavailable; and (4) alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and people with disabilities. "Public transportation projects to improve [seniors' and disabled persons'] access to fixed-route transit" is a newly eligible use of Section 5310 funds.”

“Whether urban or rural, 55 percent of Section 5310 funds will need to be spent on capital projects that address transportation needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. As was the case under SAFETEA-LU, all Section 5310 projects must be derived from locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans.”

“Section 5310 funds will be apportioned as follows. Sixty percent of funds are apportioned to urbanized areas over 200,000 population; 20 percent of funds are apportioned to states for their urbanized areas of less than 200,000 population, and 20 percent of are apportioned to states for their rural areas.”

Federal, state and local government are partners in funding public transportation activities, with each contributing a portion of the costs. Relative funding proportions can vary from program to program. The federal-state-local partnership, along with farebox revenue, represents a funding patchwork for public transportation.

States vary greatly in their funding of public transportation. North Carolina's state funding comes primarily from motor fuel taxes and highway use taxes.

NCDOT's Public Transportation Division annually administers more than \$100 million in state and federal funds that are awarded to transportation systems in urban and rural areas throughout the state through a variety of grant programs listed below.

Technology Grant (Community Transportation Systems)

The North Carolina Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division (PTD) encourages North Carolina's Community Transportation Systems to employ advanced technologies to foster increased efficiencies in the State by providing grants for qualifying transportation systems. Technologies that may be eligible for this grant include:

- Advanced Scheduling Software
- Maintenance Software
- Mobile Data Computers/Automatic Vehicle Locators (MDC/AVL)
- Integrated Voice Response Systems (IVR)

First, the Community Transit System must be identified as eligible for the technology in the Technology Implementation Plan. Next, the business practices and policies of the transit system must be reviewed and adapted where necessary.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM, a combination of federal and state funds, provides the majority of funding for North Carolina's rural transportation systems. The CTP application incorporates the following three programs into a single packet:

Eligible Recipients:

State and local governments, nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups) and public transit operators in nonurbanized areas.

1. Nonurbanized Area Formula Program (FTA Section 5311)

Funding Source: Federal

Purposes: Funds capital, operating and administrative purposes. Maximum federal participation of 80% for administrative and capital costs. NCDOT matches 5% state funds for administrative costs and 10% for capital costs. Small urban fixed route systems and regional community transportation systems are eligible to apply for up to 50% of the net operating costs associated with general public routes.

Eligible Recipients: State and local governments, nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups) and public transit operators in nonurbanized areas are eligible subrecipients.

2. Rural Capital Program (Composed of three programs that have been consolidated)

Purposes: Provides up to 90% federal and/or state participation. Funds are for the purchase of vehicles, communications equipment and related capital equipment; the purchase or upgrade of computer equipment, file servers, software, printers, telephone systems, mobile data terminals, automatic vehicle locators and other technologies; and the purchase or renovation of facilities for administrative and/or operating use. Funds cover up to 90% of feasibility plan preparation, land acquisitions, design and construction costs.

Funding Source: Federal and State

Eligible Recipients: Community transportation system grantees including local governments and nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups) in nonurbanized areas and in urbanized area counties where there is not a consolidated urban/rural transportation system.

3. Human Service Transportation Management Program

Funding Source: State

Purposes: Funds the administrative costs associated with the transportation of consolidated human service transportation systems and systems operating in urbanized area counties where a consolidated countywide transit system does not exist. Provides up to 85% of eligible costs.

Eligible Recipients: Consolidated human service and community transportation systems operating in urbanized area counties where a consolidated countywide transit system does not exist. Grantees include local governments and nonprofit organizations.

ELDERLY AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (FTA SECTION 5310)

Funding Source: Federal

Purposes: Funds capital projects. Most funds are used to purchase vehicles, but acquisition of transportation services under contract, lease or other arrangements and state program administration are also eligible expenses. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, NCDOT transferred funds annually to the Section 5311 program. North Carolina can use up to one-third of funds through 2009 for operating costs to serve elderly and disabled in regional systems.

Eligible Recipients: State and local governments, nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups) and public transit operators in nonurbanized areas.

REGIONAL AND INTERCITY PROGRAM

Funding Source: State and Federal

Purposes: Funds intercity bus service in underserved areas of North Carolina that connect to the national intercity network. Also provides state funds for Travelers' Aid programs that assist homeless, stranded or indigent travelers with their intercity transportation needs through the purchase of bus tickets. Provides up to 50% of net operating costs. Section 5311(f) funds used to support portion of NCDOT share.

Eligible Recipients: Community transportation systems; other public, private nonprofit and private for-profit transportation providers; public transportation authorities; intercity bus providers; local public bodies including counties and municipalities; Indian tribes and regional or local planning organizations.

RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ROAP) (Composed of three separate funding sources, allowing for one application.)

Eligible Recipients: County governments

1. Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP)

Funding Source: State

Purposes: Provides operating assistance for the transportation of the state's elderly and disabled citizens. Funds up to 100% of cost of service.

Eligible Recipients: County governments.

2. Rural General Public Program

Funding Source: State

Purposes: Funds community transportation systems that serve the general public in the state's rural area. Provides up to 90% of cost of service.

Eligible Recipients: County governments

3. Employment Transportation Assistance Program

Funding Source: State

Purposes: Funds transportation service to employment for low-income individuals. Also supports the N.C. Rural Vanpool Program. Provides up to 100% of cost of service.

Eligible Recipients: County governments

RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RTAP) (FTA SECTION 5311 (B)(2))

Funding Source: Federal

Purposes: Funds training, technical assistance, research and related support activities. Maximum of 100% federal participation.

Eligible Recipients: NCDOT is the grant recipient; however, funds can be contracted or passed through to other entities.

JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) PROGRAM (FTA Section 5316)

JARC will be combined with 5311 with Map-21 for FY 2015.

NEW FREEDOM PROGRAM (FTA Section 5317)

New Freedom will be combined with 5310 in Map-21 for FY 2015

1. Apprenticeship and Intern Programs

Funding Source: State

Purposes: Funds the work experience for selected recent graduates and graduate students in public transportation. Apprentices, who are recent graduates, work full time for a 12-month period. Interns, who are graduate students, work approximately 12 weeks full time during the summer between their two years of graduate school and approximately 10 hours a week during the fall and spring semesters of their second year. Funds up to 90% of eligible costs.

Eligible Recipients: All state transit systems are eligible to receive reimbursement of project costs for salary, benefits and travel within specified guidelines.

General Program Information

Funding

FTA Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 Programs require that projects be derived from a locally-developed CPT-HSTP. This chapter discusses the specific goals, who can apply, examples of eligible projects, potential funding, and the Designated Recipient (DR).

Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Section 5310

This program (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides formula funding to States for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of population for these groups of people.

Funds are obligated based on the annual program of projects included in a statewide grant application. The State agency ensures that local applicants and project activities are eligible and in compliance with Federal requirements, that private not-for-profit transportation providers have an opportunity to participate as feasible, and that the program provides for as much coordination of Federally assisted transportation services, assisted by other Federal sources. Once FTA approves the application, funds are available for state administration of its program and for allocation to individual subrecipients within the state.

Job Access and Reverse Commute Section 5316

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Many new entry-level jobs are located in suburban areas, and low-income individuals have difficulty accessing these jobs from their inner city, urban, or rural neighborhoods. In addition, many entry level-jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment related-trips are complex and involve multiple destinations including reaching childcare facilities or other services.

The JARC program funds transportation projects designed to help low-income individuals access to employment and related activities where existing transit is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient. The JARC program also funds reverse commute transit services available to the general public.

New Freedom Section 5317

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

ELIGIBLE COST/ACTIVITIES:

Eligible activities for the New Freedom grants include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and vanpooling program; including staff training, administration, and maintenance.
- Providing para-transit services beyond minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route), including routes that run seasonally.
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations.
- Supporting the administration of voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers.
- Supporting mobility management and coordination efforts among public transportation providers and other human service agencies that provide transportation. These activities are considered capital costs and are defined as short-range planning and management projects for

improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers.

COST SHARING REQUIREMENTS

New Freedom funds may be used to finance capital and operating expenses. The Federal share of eligible *capital* costs may not exceed **80 percent (80%)** of the net cost of the activity. Subject to the availability of funds, NCDOT shall provide one half (10%) of the required 20 percent (20%) nonfederal match for capital costs. The Federal share of the eligible *operating* costs may not exceed **50 percent (50%)** of the net operating costs of the activity.

As with all FTA formula program grants administered by NCDOT, all of the local match must be provided from sources other than federal DOT funds. Some examples of possible local match sources include local or State appropriations; other non-DOT federal funds; private donations; revenue from human services contracts and net income generated from advertising. Income from contracts to provide human service transportation may be used either to reduce the net project cost (treated as revenue) or to provide local match from New Freedom operating assistance.

Examples of types of programs that are potential sources of local match include: employment training, aging, community services, vocational rehabilitation services, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). To be eligible for local match for New Freedom funds, these funds must be used for activities included in the total net project costs.

Any eligible applicant might apply for these funds.

Plan Approach

Projects funded through the Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316 - JARC) and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs require the development of a local, coordinated public transit-human services plan (CPT-HSTP), which should incorporate private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the general public.

The Down East Rural Transportation Organization (DERPO) provided the Craven Area Transit System (CARTS) with a facilitator to conduct the required update to the Local Coordinated Plan. The facilitator and the Director of the CARTS worked together to plan a public meeting to discuss the transportation needs of the citizens of Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties. It was decided that one workshop would be held on May 30, 2013 at 9:00 AM in the Clarks community (Craven County) to give all stakeholders who had an interest in transportation an opportunity to identify the needs and gaps in the current transportation service and to provide input into the update of the Local Coordinated Plan.

Those participating in the workshop represented a broad array of interests including county management staff, Craven Area Rural Transit System staff, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, and citizens. In all 26 participants attended the workshop. They included representatives of:

- Interfaith Refugee Ministry
- Coastal Community Action, Inc.
- NC DOT/PTD
- CARTS staff
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Craven Area Rural Transit System Director
- Craven County Department of Social Services
- Craven County citizen
- East Carolina Behavioral Health
- Pamlico County
- City of New Bern Police Department
- Jones County Manager

- Jones County Finance Director
- Jones County Department of Social Services
- Pamlico County Department of Social Services
- Craven County
- Promise Place
- New Bern Dialysis
- Pamlico Community College

Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Transportation Services

Craven County Transportation

Craven Area Rural Transit System is the public transportation provider for Craven, Jones, and Pamlico counties. Located in New Bern, North Carolina, the office is centrally located to all three counties. The mission of CARTS is "to provide transportation services, within its capabilities, to the general public with special emphasis on the provision of such services to the elderly and/or handicapped residents of Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties."

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

CARTS staff includes: The Director, Transportation Coordinator, Administrative Support Assistant III, Administrative Support Assistant II, Dispatcher, Office Assistant, two (2) full time drivers and twenty-six (26) part time drivers. The CARTS Transportation Advisory Board includes representatives of the agencies that CARTS serves and meets quarterly. Federal and State funds are provided annually to CARTS to offset local administrative and capital operating costs. The CARTS provides "demand/response" type service to all residents of Craven County when there is space available. Human Service agency clients have priority over the general public passenger.

CARTS operates Monday through Friday with a total of 32 revenue vehicles and follows the a similar holiday schedule as Craven County. The exception being providing service to dialysis centers that are open on days typically designated holidays such as Memorial day.

Normal weekday service begins as early as 5:00 a.m. with the typical last drop off time prior to 7:00 p.m. The City of New Bern is the location of most local dialysis centers, doctor offices, training centers for clients with special needs, jobs and educational training. As a result many routes are designed to bring clients into the New Bern area by 8:15 a.m. and begin trips in New Bern around

2:30 to return passengers to the outlying areas. In addition, CARTS provides service to Pollocksville twice a week, the Vanceboro medical center each Wednesday and Greenville every Tuesday and Thursday. Service for medical appointments is also provided to Chapel Hill each 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, Kinston the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, and Morehead City each 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. CARTS also operates demand response service within the New Bern area during normal business hours. Demand response service is also available in the Vanceboro, Dover, Cove City, Bridgeton, James City areas as scheduling and driver availability allows. Also included in the CARTS service are the RED and YELLOW LOOP routes which operate as fixed deviated routes that travel around the New Bern area stopping at over 20 designated locations. During FY 2012 CARTS provided a total of 108,026 passenger trips.

In addition to providing public transportation, CARTS contracts with area agencies to provide transportation. Some of the agencies include:

1. Craven, Jones, and Pamlico County Departments of Social Services
2. Vocational Rehabilitation
3. Coastal Community Action
4. Monarch/CCE ARC
5. NC Division of the Blind
6. Various Nursing Homes and other private businesses

Other transportation services in the county

While Craven Area Rural Transit System provides the bulk of public transportation in the county, there are agencies and others that also provide limited transportation. Listed below are several of those providers:

- Craven County Social Services (use county van and vouchers for family or friends to transport)
- School busses (K-12)
- Private ambulances transport non-ambulatory individuals (i.e., JAS—Johnson Ambulance Service)
- Specialized transport (private)
- Churches (events, services)
- Day Care/Head Start
- Assisted living facilities/nursing homes/group homes/Howell's
- Migrant farm worker transportation
- Taxi service

- Limo service (luxury and to airports)
- Courtesy vans (auto dealerships, hotels)
- Disabled American Veterans van service
- YMCA
- Trolley for tourists to see local attractions (private)
- New Bern Parks and Recreation
- Private school busses (e.g., Parrott Academy)

What is noteworthy is that these services are “stove piped” in that the funding streams dictate the uses of the vehicles and transportation services provided. If one were able to just throw all the transportation money used in the county for other than private vehicle transportation into a pot, one would probably have adequate funding to provide a first rate transportation system.

While not necessarily mass transit, one cannot have a discussion about transportation without mentioning walking and biking. Providing user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county would encourage the use of these facilities. At this time few of these facilities exist making it dangerous for most to walk or bike.

IV. Craven County

Demographics

Background

The following information describes the county:

Craven County is 774 square miles, 66 square miles (8.6%) of which is water. The County has a Census 2010 population of 103,908 and a population density of 134 persons per square mile. There are eight incorporated municipalities of which two are cities with populations of greater than 20,000 (New Bern and Havelock). New Bern is the county seat and has recently been designated a Metropolitan Planning Organization.

There is one military facility in Craven County, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point located in Havelock. This facility has 9,419 active military service members assigned to the air station according to the FY12 Economic Impact Statement. There is no organized transportation system onboard the facility.

It is also noteworthy that New Bern is a designated refugee community particularly for those fleeing from Burma. These refugees would be users of a transit system. Their primary languages are Burmese and Karen.

Craven Regional Medical Center serves the citizens of Craven and surrounding counties. Citizens needing certain specialized treatment and procedures are referred outside the county. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services must be transported to clinics out of the county (Greenville or Morehead City) or to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

North Carolina law calls for the 40 most distressed counties to become Tier 1 counties, the middle 40 counties to be designated as Tier 2 and the 20 most prosperous counties to become Tier 3 counties. The rankings are based on an assessment of each county's unemployment rate, median household income, population growth and assessed property value per capita. In addition, any county with a population of less than 12,000 or a county with a population of fewer than 50,000 residents with 19 percent or more of those people living below the federal poverty level automatically are designated as one of the 40 most distressed counties. Craven County is a Tier 3 county.

Another factor that comes into play when discussing county transportation services is the ability to pay rating (ATP). The ATP rating is based on a scoring range from 0 to 100 where 0 is considered to be a municipality or county having the least capacity for financially contributing to a project. Conversely, a 100 means a unit of local government has the greatest capacity for making a monetary commitment. Municipalities will be compared with other municipalities and counties with other counties.

There are three factors used to calculate an ATP score:

1. Population
2. Per capita income
3. Tax valuation

Population, per capita income and tax valuation are each scored on a 0 to 100 basis for each potential applicant. Using population as an example, the town or city having the largest population would receive a score of 100. A town with a population half way between the smallest and the largest populations would receive 50 points. Per capita income and tax valuation are scored in the same manner. The scoring results from these three areas are averages to arrive at a final ATP score. Craven County’s ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 22.32 (ranked 80 out of 100—has a higher ability to pay).

Census & Statistical Data

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

	Pop. 2011	65+ 2012	% 65+	Avg. age
Craven County	104,965	16,781	16%	36.05
Bridgeton	463			
Cove City	400			
Dover	402			
Havelock	21,022			
New Bern	30,048			
River Bend	3,144			
Trent Woods	4,188			
Vanceboro	1,018			
Unincorporated	44,280			

Craven County	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
	108,704	19,638	18%	33.21

The Census 2010 information shows 40,299 households with 2.45 persons per household. The population of Craven County in 2010 was 70% white, 22.2% black and 7.6% other. The median household income in 2010 was \$46,251 and the per capita income in 2010 was \$25,067. The poverty rate in 2010 was 16.2%. The elderly poverty rate was 10.2%. Sixty-two percent (61.9%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2010 Census.

A discussion of the transportation needs in Craven County would not be complete without statistical information on the disabled population. In the 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates 16.5% of the population over the age of five reported disabilities. Of the working age 57,682 population (18-64) 8,941 had one or more disability (15.5%) and of the 15,791 individuals age 65 and older, 6,255 (39.6%) have disabilities.

According to the American Community Survey there are 12,853 veterans age 18 and older. This represents 18% of the population in that age group. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services need transportation to clinics in Morehead City and Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

According to the American Community Survey's 3-year estimates 2007-2011: The mean travel time to work is 20.1 minutes (2010 Census) and of the 43,824 people who worked outside the home, 33,452 (76.3%) drove a vehicle alone, 6,162 (14.1%) carpooled, 42 used public transportation, 1,382 walked, and 997 reported some other means of getting to work. Of those commuting to work, 36,856 traveled to jobs within the county and 6,343 had jobs outside the county. A study of the details of the various tables related to transportation would provide even greater detail. It is recommended that this information be examined.

Analysis

It is projected that 18% of the population of Craven County will be age 65 and older by 2030. Older people have more needs and disabilities. Many get to the point where they no longer drive and need assistance getting their basic and healthcare transportation needs met.

There are many changes that have the potential to impact the need for more public transit. These might include, but are not limited to: an increase in poverty, an increase in the number of working poor, an increase in gas prices, a need to improve air quality and reduce vehicle emissions, and an increase in the cost of operating and maintaining a vehicle.

Needs Assessment

A transportation survey was conducted between February 10, 2009 and March 6, 2009. The survey was posted online at Survey Monkey and hard copies were completed and collected at the workshop for those who did not do it online. Hard copies were later entered into Survey Monkey by the Eastern Carolina Council of Government staff. The link to the survey was provided with the public notice that was email to pertinent groups within the county. A blanket notice went out via email from the Eastern Carolina Council of Government on their grant writers listserv. Many nonprofit and governmental agencies in the region receive message via this listserv. The notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to 350 on this listserv. Additionally the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments has a Weekly Bulletin. The meeting notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to over 250 on this listserv. The survey was completed by those attending the workshop on February 27, 2009. A total of 37 responded to the survey for Craven County.

In the 2013 update of this Local Coordinating Plan, it was determined that information collected via this survey was still valid and is incorporated in this update. Here are the highlights of those responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 97.3% of those responding believe that there is not enough public transportation service available.
- 97.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 94.8% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 84.2% assigned a high or medium importance for the need for extended service related to employment type trips
- 100% believed there is a need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas
- 67.5% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 84.2% assigned a no or low importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips

- 65.8% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.
- 80.6% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 86.8% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase/improve door-to-door service for the elderly and disabled.
- 97.3% assigned a high importance to the need for education on available services, programs and eligibility requirements.
- 80% assigned a high or medium importance to the issue of communication issues (language barriers, non-existent web site or difficult to find/use, inconsistent information provided)
- 89.5% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 91.6% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 97.1% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, transportation providers, and other community leaders.
- 91.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.
- 83.3% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 85.3% assigned a medium or low importance to the fact that the agency staffing is too small to handle the number and complexity of issues that arise.

A workshop was held on Friday February 27, 2009 at the Mount Olive College classroom on Trent Road in New Bern at 9:00 AM. The meeting was facilitated by a representative of the Eastern Carolina Council of Government's Down East Rural Transportation Planning Organization (DERPO). The facilitator worked directly with the group and wrote their ideas on a flip chart for all to see.

Identification of users of the transit system

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

- Medicaid clients

- Senior citizens
- Job seekers/workers
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Low income individuals
- Students (K-12)
- Disabled/handicapped
- Park & ride (Cherry Point)
- Migrants
- Veterans
- Refugees
- Community College Students (curriculum and continuing education)
- Others without vehicles, without working vehicles or without other forms of transportation

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy)
- To/From work
- Nutrition (e.g. to/from congregate meal sites, WIC appointments)
- Tourism
- Shopping (food, health/beauty, general merchandise)
- Errands & personal care
- Professional services
- Social (church, events, cultural, gathering)
- School (K-12, community college, college/university, continuing education, enrichment)
- Visiting (hospital, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.)
- Volunteering
- Recreation, mental stimulation and physical activity
- Other training

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- Craven is a large county that still has large tracks of rural areas between municipalities
- No nights, weekend or holiday services

- Schedule of appointments vis-à-vis availability of transportation (riders do not like to wait and some frail elderly can't wait large amounts of time)
- On any given day there could be an inadequate number of seats vis-à-vis those needing transportation
- Those agencies with vehicles for transportation as a rule do not share or coordinate rides with other agencies
- Lack of user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county (they do exist in some areas)
- Existing transit vehicles cannot transport a bike
- While New Bern has two fixed routes, Havelock does not
- No organized park & ride system except for Cherry Point
- Personnel onboard MCAS Cherry Point need transportation on and off base (problems getting on the base after the events of 911)
- Stigma of riding CARTS—CARTS vehicles are institutional looking
- Regardless of marketing efforts, few fully realize the capabilities of CARTS and fewer take advantage of the service who might be well served by the system.

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in population (eastern NC is a retiree destination)
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, loss of nest eggs, loss of retirement benefits)
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concern about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality requirements affecting vehicles
- Operational costs continue to rise as ability of passengers to pay continues to decline due to the economy
- Funding streams that continue to decline and that require increased sustainability proof.

Strategies to address the concerns and gaps

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

- A. More fixed routes—identifying key routes within the three counties and collection points that make sense vis-à-vis where people live that might use this service. Ridership would be slow to start and more subsidies would be needed to sustain the fixed route system during this period, but eventually if riders began to trust that the system was reliable and that it would be continued, the system has the potential to be self-sustaining. One or more fixed routes should be considered for Havelock and MCAS Cherry Point.
- B. Work with companies employing large number of people (including temporary help agencies) to form a public/private partnership to create either park & rides or door-to-door service.
- C. Get help to create a marketing plan, marketing materials, and a marketing campaign to educate the public regarding this service. Give the system a unique name and consider painting the vans to decrease the stigma that this service is only for low-income, the elderly and the disabled.
- D. Continue the demand/response service for those needing it.
- E. Meet with MCAS Cherry Point key people to discuss how service on the base might be provided without having to disembark riders already on the van.
- F. Youth need transportation home from after school activities, to/from events, to/from movies, to/from recreation centers, to/from other place where youth gather. Youth also need transportation on weekends and evenings.
- G. Include the recreation centers as stops on the fixed routes for New Bern.
- H. Consider forming focus groups to explore these options further.

V. Jones County

Demographics

Background

Jones County is 473 square miles, 1 square mile of which is water. The County has a very low Census 2010 population of 10,153 and a population density of 21 persons per square mile.

Healthcare in Jones County is limited to the Health Department, clinics, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and private providers. Citizens needing specialized treatment and hospitalization are referred outside the county. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services must be transported to clinics out of the county (Greenville or Morehead City) or to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

North Carolina law calls for the 40 most distressed counties to become Tier 1 counties, the middle 40 counties to be designated as Tier 2 and the 20 most prosperous counties to become Tier 3 counties. The rankings are based on an assessment of each county's unemployment rate, median household income, population growth and assessed property value per capita. In addition, any county with a population of less than 12,000 or a county with a population of fewer than 50,000 residents with 19 percent or more of those people living below the federal poverty level automatically are designated as one of the 40 most distressed counties. Jones County is a Tier 1 county.

Another factor that comes into play when discussing county transportation services is the ability to pay rating (ATP). The ATP rating is based on a scoring range from 0 to 100 where 0 is considered to be a municipality or county having the least capacity for financially contributing to a project. Conversely, a 100 means a unit of local government has the greatest capacity for making a monetary commitment. Municipalities will be compared with other municipalities and counties with other counties.

There are three factors used to calculate an ATP score:

1. Population
2. Per capita income

3. Tax valuation

Population, per capita income and tax valuation are each scored on a 0 to 100 basis for each potential applicant. Using population as an example, the town or city having the largest population would receive a score of 100. A town with a population half way between the smallest and the largest populations would receive 50 points. Per capita income and tax valuation are scored in the same manner. The scoring results from these three areas are averages to arrive at a final ATP score. Jones County's ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 8.19 (ranked 25th lowest out of 100 counties).

Census & Statistical Data

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

	Pop. 2011	65+ 2012	% 65+	Avg. age
Jones County	10,153	2,015	20%	43.66
Maysville	1,019			
Pollocksville	311			
Trenton	287			
Unincorporated	8,536			

Jones County	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
	11,024	2,702	25%	43.46

The Census 2010 information shows 4,074 households with 2.44 persons per household. The population of Jones County in 2010 was 63% white, 32.4% black and 4.6% other. The median household income in 2010 was \$40,687 and the per capita income in 2010 was \$21,099. The poverty rate in 2010 was 14.9% and the elderly poverty rate was 10.6%. Sixteen percent (16.2%) of the population receive food stamps. Fifty-eight percent (58.2%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2010 Census.

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

Population 16 to 64 years	

With a disability	3555
Sensory	289
Physical	791
Mental	328
Self-care	187
Going outside the home	687
Employment disability	1273
Population 65 years and over	
With a disability	1778
Sensory	304
Physical	585
Mental	278
Self-care	219
Going outside the home	392

According to Census 2010 there are 1,002 veterans age 18 and older in Jones County. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services need transportation to clinics in Morehead City and Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

The mean travel time to work is 27 minutes (Census) and of the 4,198 people who worked outside the home, 3,103 (73.9%) drove a vehicle alone, 710 (16.9%) carpooled, 126 took public transportation, 115 walked and 97 reported other means of getting to work. Of those commuting to work, 1,377 (32.8%) traveled to jobs within the county and 2,776 (66.1%) had jobs outside the county.

Analysis

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

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

The poverty rate is 14.9% and the elderly poverty rate is 10.6%. Sixteen percent (16.8%) of the population are on food stamps. This population is most in need of transportation.

The elderly (65+) represent 20% of the present county population and will grow to 25% in 2030 according to the NC Demographer. A growing elderly population means more need for transportation. The elderly also have a high percentage of disabilities, increasing the need to these services for more than just medical-related transportation.

Needs Assessment

A transportation survey was conducted between February 10, 2009 and March 6, 2009. The survey was posted online at Survey Monkey and hard copies were completed and collected at the workshop for those who did not do it online. Hard copies were later entered into Survey Monkey by the Eastern Carolina Council of Government staff. The link to the survey was provided with the public notice that was email to pertinent groups within the county. A blanket notice went out via email from the Eastern Carolina Council of Government on their grant writers listserv. Many nonprofit and governmental agencies in the region receive message via this listserv. The notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to 350 on this listserv. Additionally the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments has a Weekly Bulletin. The meeting notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to over 250 on this listserv.

While this survey was completed by those attending the workshop on March 3, 2009, this information is still considered valuable and is incorporated in this 2013 update. A total of 4 responded to the survey for Jones County. While this is an inadequate number, here are the highlights of those responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 75% of those responding believe that there is not enough public transportation service available.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance for the need for extended service related to employment type trips
- 100% believed there is a need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 75% assigned a no or low importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips
- 50% assigned a no or low importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.

- 100% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase/improve door-to-door service for the elderly and disabled.
- 75% assigned a high importance to the need for education on available services, programs and eligibility requirements.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the issue of communication issues (language barriers, non-existent web site or difficult to find/use, inconsistent information provided)
- 100% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, transportation providers, and other community leaders.
- 100% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.
- 75% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 100% assigned a medium or low importance to the fact that the agency staffing is too small to handle the number and complexity of issues that arise.

A workshop was held on Tuesday March 3, 2009 at the Jones County Senior Center in Trenton at 9:00 AM. The meeting was facilitated by a representative of the Eastern Carolina Council of Government's Down East Rural Transportation Planning Organization (DERPO). The facilitator worked directly with the group and wrote their ideas on a flip chart for all to see.

Identification of users of the transit system

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

- Medicaid clients
- Senior citizens
- Job seekers/workers
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients

- Low income individuals
- Students (K-12)
- Disabled veterans
- Migrants
- College students
- Anyone without the use of a private vehicle or other means of transportation

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy)
- To/From work
- Congregate meals
- Shopping (food, health/beauty, general merchandise)
- Errands & personal care
- Professional services
- Social (church, events, cultural, gathering)
- School (K-12, community college, college/university, continuing education, enrichment)
- Visiting (hospital, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.)
- Volunteering
- Events, recreation, mental stimulation and physical activity
- Nutrition (WIC appointments, congregate meals)
- After school activities

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- No nights, weekend or holiday services
- On any given day there could be an inadequate number of seats vis-à-vis those needing transportation
- No fixed routes in Jones County
- Simple trip can end up taking all day (inconvenient, time consuming)
- Demand/response service also needed especially for medically frail and frail elderly
- Confusing eligibility criteria
- Stigma of riding due to current ridership

- Lack of marketing of range of service available and eligibility
- 4H-camp transportation needed
- Lack of trust
- Advance planning needed to participate (younger generation expects instant gratification)
- Problem getting the word out in Jones County (multiple reasons for this)

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in population due to proximity to coast
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, loss of nest eggs, loss of retirement benefits)
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concern about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality requirements affecting vehicles
- Operational costs continue to rise as ability of passengers to pay continues to decline due to the economy
- Funding streams that continue to decline and that require increased sustainability proof
- Increase in cost of personal transportation (insurance, gas, maintenance)
- Continued breakdown of traditional family units
- Increase in chronic disease—necessitating more trips out of county for care (Jones County does not have a hospital)
- Disproportionate economic development.

Strategies to address the concerns and gaps

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

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

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

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

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

VI. Pamlico County

Demographics

Background

The following information was taken from Pamlico County's website and describes the county:

Pamlico County is 566 square miles, 229 square miles or 40.49% of which is water. The County has a very low Census 2010 population of 13,144 with a population density of 23 persons per square mile. Pamlico County has nine municipalities the largest of which is Oriental with a population of 905. The county seat is Bayboro.

Healthcare in Pamlico County is limited to the Health Department, clinics, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and private providers. Citizens needing specialized treatment and hospitalization are referred outside the county. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services must be transported to clinics out of the county (Greenville or Morehead City) or to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

North Carolina law calls for the 40 most distressed counties to become Tier 1 counties, the middle 40 counties to be designated as Tier 2 and the 20 most prosperous counties to become Tier 3 counties. The rankings are based on an assessment of each county's unemployment rate, median household income, population growth and assessed property value per capita. In addition, any county with a population of less than 12,000 or a county with a population of fewer than 50,000 residents with 19 percent or more of those people living below the federal poverty level automatically are designated as one of the 40 most distressed counties. Pamlico County is a Tier 2 county.

Another factor that comes into play when discussing county transportation services is the ability to pay rating (ATP). The ATP rating is based on a scoring range from 0 to 100 where 0 is considered to be a municipality or county having the least capacity for financially contributing to a project. Conversely, a 100 means a unit of local government has the greatest capacity for making a

monetary commitment. Municipalities will be compared with other municipalities and counties with other counties.

There are three factors used to calculate an ATP score:

1. Population
2. Per capita income
3. Tax valuation

Population, per capita income and tax valuation are each scored on a 0 to 100 basis for each potential applicant. Using population as an example, the town or city having the largest population would receive a score of 100. A town with a population half way between the smallest and the largest populations would receive 50 points. Per capita income and tax valuation are scored in the same manner. The scoring results from these three areas are averages to arrive at a final ATP score. Pamlico County's ATP rating for 2007-2008 is 11.75 (ranked 47th out of 100 counties).

Census & Statistical Data

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

	Pop. 2011	65+ 2012	% 65+	Avg. age
Pamlico County	13,214	3,128	24%	49.18
Alliance	774			
Arapahoe	562			
Bayboro	1,262			
Grantsboro	695			
Mesic	220			
Minnesott Beach	449			
Oriental	905			
Stonewall	282			
Vandemere	254			
Unincorporated	7,811			
	Pop. 2030	65+ 2030	% 65+	Avg. Age
Pamlico County	13,951	4,520	32%	49.96

The American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011) information shows 5,279 households with 2.36 persons per household. The population of Pamlico County in 2010 was 76.3% white, 20% black and 3.7% other. The median household income in 2010 was \$52,762 and the per capita income in 2010 was \$27,915. The poverty rate in 2010 was 12.2% while the elderly poverty rate was 9.2%. Nine percent (9.5%) of the population receive food stamps (NC DHHS 2006). Fifty-one percent (51.2%) of the working age population were employed at the time of the 2010 Census.

A discussion of the transportation needs in Pamlico County would not be complete without statistical information on the disabled population. In the 2000 Census (most recent data available) 25% of the population over the age of five reported disabilities. The following Census 2000 tables give details on that population:

Population 16 to 64 years	
With a disability	3015
Sensory	244
Physical	738
Mental	369
Self-care	178
Going outside the home	488
Employment disability	998
Population 65 years and over	
With a disability	2222
Sensory	418
Physical	777
Mental	325
Self-care	259
Going outside the home	443

According to American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011) there are 1,527 veterans age 18 or older in Pamlico County. Veterans eligible for Veterans Administration services need transportation to clinics in Morehead City and Greenville as well as transportation to the VA hospital in Durham, NC.

According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011) the mean travel time to work is 24.5 minutes and of the 5,085 people who worked outside the home, 3,969 (78.1%) drove a vehicle alone, 802 (15.8%) carpooled, 15 took public transportation, 95 walked and 93 had other means of getting to work.

Analysis

Because of Pamlico County's low ability to pay rating, it will be difficult for the county itself, if nothing changes, to meet the full range of transportation needs were it to have support a transportation system alone. Presently Pamlico, Jones and Craven Counties are served by one public transit provider—CARTS.

Of the citizens in Pamlico County over the age of 5, 25% are disabled. In the population range of 16 to 64, 738 citizens have physical disabilities and 244 have sensory disabilities. Of those 65 and older 44.7% have some sort of disability, 777 have a physical disability and 418 have a sensory disability. Many of those citizens would need transportation assistance, especially as they age.

The county poverty rate is 12.2% and the elderly poverty rate is 9.2%. Nine percent (9.5%) of the population are on food stamps. This population is most in need of transportation.

The elderly (65+) represent 20% of the present county population and will grow to 25% in 2030 according to the NC Demographer. A growing elderly population means more need for transportation. The elderly also have a high percentage of disabilities, increasing the need to these services for more than just medical-related transportation.

Needs Assessment

A transportation survey was conducted between February 10, 2009 and March 6, 2009. The survey was posted online at Survey Monkey and hard copies were completed and collected at the workshop for those who did not do it online. Hard copies were later entered into Survey Monkey by the Eastern Carolina Council of Government staff. The link to the survey was provided with the public notice that was email to pertinent groups within the county. A blanket notice went out via email from the Eastern Carolina Council of Government on their grant writers listserv. Many nonprofit and governmental agencies in the region receive message via this listserv. The notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to 350 on this listserv. Additionally the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments has a Weekly Bulletin. The meeting notice and Survey Monkey link was sent to over 250 on this listserv.

While this survey was completed by those attending the workshop on February 23, 2009 this information is still considered valuable and is incorporated in this 2013 update. A total of 26 responded to the survey for Pamlico County. Here are the highlights of those responses (see attachment section for the full report):

- 100% of those responding believe that there is not enough public transportation service available.
- 96.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for extended hours of service
- 86.9% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for weekend and night service
- 88.4% assigned a high or medium importance for the need for extended service related to employment type trips
- 88.5% believed there is a need to increase service to fill the gaps in underserved areas
- 88.5% assigned a high or medium importance to coordinate between transportation providers to provide cross county trips
- 76.9% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for public transportation service to focus specifically on providing employment trips
- 61.5% assigned a no or low importance to the need for a public transportation service to focus specifically on providing shopping and recreation trips.

- 80.7% felt that there was too much advance planning needed in order to get transportation (high and medium importance).
- 88% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase/improve door-to-door service for the elderly and disabled.
- 88.5% assigned a high importance to the need for education on available services, programs and eligibility requirements.
- 80% assigned a high or medium importance to the issue of communication issues (language barriers, non-existent web site or difficult to find/use, inconsistent information provided)
- 95.9% assigned a high importance to the need for advertising of the service.
- 80.8% assigned a high or medium importance to the need to increase participation on the Transportation Advisory Board.
- 96.2% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, transportation providers, and other community leaders.
- 76% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for service providers to become more consumer-friendly.
- 66% assigned a high or medium importance to the need for users to have the option to make reservations for service after business hours.
- 68% assigned a high or medium importance to the fact that the agency staffing is too small to handle the number and complexity of issues that arise.

A workshop was held on Monday February 23, 2009 at the Pamlico County Annex in Bayboro at 2:00 PM. The meeting was facilitated by a representative of the Eastern Carolina Council of Government's Down East Rural Transportation Planning Organization (DERPO). The facilitator worked directly with the group and wrote their ideas on a flip chart for all to see.

Identification of users of the transit system

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

- Medicaid clients
- Senior citizens
- Job seekers
- Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Low income individuals

- Students (K-12)

Potential users of transit system

Additional potential users of a transit system would include:

- Workers
- Community College Students (curriculum and continuing education)
- Others without private vehicles or other means of transportation

Reasons for using transit system

Reasons for needing transportation include:

- Health appointments (medical, dental, physical therapy, other therapy)
- To/From work
- Congregate meals
- Shopping (food, health/beauty, general merchandise)
- Errands & personal care
- Professional services
- Social (church, events, cultural, gathering)
- School (K-12, community college, college/university, continuing education, enrichment)
- Visiting (hospital, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.)
- Volunteering
- Recreation, mental stimulation and physical activity

Gaps in present services

Gaps or issues with current system include:

- No nights, weekend or holiday services
- No fixed route service
- Youth need to be transported to/from after-school activities, events, and recreational destination on weekends, and evenings
- On any given day there could be an inadequate number of seats vis-à-vis those needing transportation
- Some veterans needing transport can't get where they need to go due to limitations in the system
- Those agencies with vehicles for transportation as a rule do not share or coordinate rides with other agencies
- Lack of user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county (they do exist in some areas)
- Existing transit vehicles cannot transport a bike

- Stigma of riding CARTS—CARTS vehicles are institutional looking
- Regardless of marketing efforts, few fully realize the capabilities of CARTS and fewer take advantage of the service who might be well served by the system.

Societal Changes potentially impacting transit services in the future

These changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in number of veterans due to world conflicts
- Increase in population
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, loss of nest eggs, loss of retirement benefits)
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concern about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality requirements affecting vehicles
- Operational costs continue to rise as ability of passengers to pay continues to decline due to the economy
- Funding streams that continue to decline and that require increased sustainability proof

Strategies to address the concerns and gaps

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

A. Fixed routes—identifying key routes within the county and collection points that make sense vis-à-vis where people live that might use this service. Ridership would be slow to start and more subsidies would be needed to sustain the fixed route system during this period, but eventually if riders began to trust that the system was reliable and that it would be continued, the system has the potential to be self-sustaining.

B. Demand/Response system—continuing with the present system, but expand the parameters so that more citizens would use it. At present certain groups of riders are given preference and seats are only available to others on a very limited basis. More vans might be needed to accommodate the increased ridership.

C. Combination of Fixed Route and Demand/Response—combining features of the two systems, this new system would have small vehicles picking up outlying passengers and bringing them to a collection point where the fixed route vehicle would take them to their destination. Passengers with special needs would still be transported via demand/response vehicles.

The workshop participants strongly favor and recommend adoption of the demand/response strategy due to the geography of the county.

Prioritization of Needs

At the May 30, 2013 LCP update workshop, participants discussed existing services and desired services. The following are recommendations that were expressed by those in attendance. Note that some recommendations fit in multiple subject area and are repeated.

The following comments/ideas/suggestions were offered at this meeting:

Routes

- Ability to cross county lines to pick up students. Closer for these students to go to PCC than CCC.
- More routes
- Potential pickups in each community.
- Better descriptions of routes
- Fixed routes in Pamlico County
- Increase services to fill gaps
- More fixed routes during evenings and weekends to help those employed
- Services to medical facilities
- Express services—one day a week to take persons directly to doctor appointments and appointments to skill building groups and meetings—skill building group would cover cost of rider via vouchers
- Add more fixed routes in Pamlico County—were available in the past but riders had difficulty getting to pick-up points—unable or unwilling to walk the distance
- Customer service: on-time service—riders arrive 1-2 hours earlier than their appointments times and have very long wait times.
- Services to employment centers—evenings and weekends
- Some express routes to certain employment centers (e.g., Cherry Point, Moen)
- Services county-wide
- Door-to-door—evenings and weekends
- Park and ride—coordinate between counties—meet at county line?
- Make rates simple and easy to understand—to recruit new riders
- Better interconnectivity: between counties and municipalities (communities)
- Transportation to Head Start Centers

- Parents and children to day pre-school (1 center in Pamlico; 2 centers in Craven)
- Parents and children to parent meetings in evenings
- Evening rides to: parent meetings, conference with teachers, to/from evening classes, cultural events and community events (last pick up time 9 or 9:30 PM)
- Church events—evening and weekend events
- Harlowe riders need service to/from DSS, Health Dept, Medical Appointments (expand service)
- More options—several days during the week
- Inter-county services—New Bern residents to Kinston
- Fixed routes to ESL classes at community college/literacy council
- Employment: van pool, weekends, nights, express service, bigger vans: Hatteras, Moen, Bosch, Weyerhaeuser, DSS, hotels (cleaning staff)
- Shopping Centers: fixed routes evenings and weekend service, door-to-door
- Fixed routes to: recreation centers, parks, RCS, grocery stores, clothing, food, banks, pharmacies, Salvation Army—weekends, evenings, weekdays
- Fixed and door-to-door routes for dual language learners to and from community college, literacy council, library to take English as a second language—day and evening classes
- Fixed routes to/from Head Start Centers—trailer parks—apartment complexes
- Expand services to Kinston, community clinic for low income families. Sliding scale fees based on income. Services for medical and dental appointments.
- Pamlico—farmworkers need transportation to outreach clinic
- Transportation to schools for registration
- Transportation to NC P-K Mall registration for NC P-K and Head Start program
- Loop—need a stop at Piggly Wiggly
- Need a sidewalk at the stop at Westwood Arms
- Need buses in town—weekends and evenings

Riders

- Carrying youth to productive events inside and outside the county.
- Customer services flexibility with scheduling
- Youth Saturday transportation to New Bern—YMCA connection
- More fixed routes during evenings and weekends to help those employed
- Individuals not on Medicaid: evening and weekend services, vouchers & transit passes

- Some express routes to certain employment centers (e.g., Cherry Point, Moen)
- Parents and children to day pre-school (1 center in Pamlico; 2 centers in Craven)
- Parents and children to parent meetings in evenings
- Evening rides to: parent meetings, conference with teachers, to/from evening classes, cultural events and community events (last pick up time 9 or 9:30 PM)
- Harlowe riders need service to/from DSS, Health Dept, Medical Appointments (expand service)
- Fixed routes to ESL classes at community college/literacy council
- Employment: van pool, weekends, nights, express service, bigger vans: Hatteras, Moen, Bosch, Weyerhaeuser, DSS, hotels (cleaning staff)
- Fixed and door-to-door routes for dual language learners to and from community college, literacy council, library to take English as a second language—day and evening classes
- Elderly riders—non-Medicaid, not in wheelchair—need a car for transport—not enough availability—DSS social workers have to provide transportation at last minute because scheduled trip falls through the day before the appointment (appointment can't be rescheduled in a timely fashion, not enough notice that the driver isn't available)

Hours/Days

- Flexible hours—less notice to CARTS to book a trip
- Increase services to fill gaps
- More fixed routes during evenings and weekends to help those employed
- More weekend and night services needed
- Individuals not on Medicaid: evening and weekend services, vouchers & transit passes
- Services to employment centers—evenings and weekends
- Door-to-door—evenings and weekends
- Evening rides to: parent meetings, conference with teachers, to/from evening classes, cultural events and community events (last pick up time 9 or 9:30 PM)
- Church events—evening and weekend events
- More options—several days during the week
- Shopping Centers: fixed routes evenings and weekend service, door-to-door

- Fixed routes to: recreation centers, parks, RCS, grocery stores, clothing, food, banks, pharmacies, Salvation Army—weekends, evenings, weekdays
- Fixed and door-to-door routes for dual language learners to and from community college, literacy council, library to take English as a second language—day and evening classes
- Need buses in town—weekends and evenings
- Unmet need—Saturday dialysis route 1st and 2nd shift—also for PORT clients

Amenities

- Stops with amenities—evening stops will need lighting—need benches—sheltered areas—sell advertisement space to generate revenue and help pay for stop
- Stops where there is a restroom, lighting, benches, covers (weather protection), bus shelters at senior centers, rec centers, schools, etc.
- Serve target population: school express service, teens/youth

Passes/Vouchers/Fees

- Passes to ride.
- Lower fares for school students
- More vouchers or passes—have clients purchase tickets in advance to avoid having cash on the CARTS van
- Individuals not on Medicaid: evening and weekend services, vouchers & transit passes
- Fees for services may vary. The more passengers on the van, the cheaper the ride will be.
- Low fares—reduction if you buy a 30-day pass
- Inter-county pass
- Expand services to Kinston, community clinic for low income families. Sliding scale fees based on income. Services for medical and dental appointments.

Marketing

- Marking of fixed routes—like a bus stop. Makes it easier for rider to determine location of stop as well as driver. Signage and information.
- Educate citizens and make general public aware of services and fees.
- Change logo
- Decrease stigma of riding
- Advertise as “green” transportation—less pollution
- Increase visibility

- Education/information on loop and other CARTS information—provide it on public access TV channel on a regular basis
- Larger print for route schedules
- Shrink wrap advertising for vans would improve look and possibly reduce institutional look of vehicles
- Use of social media for marketing

Other

- Language barriers (possible fluent services)
- Reporting bad drivers
- Explanation of hours: weekends & evenings
- Decrease language barriers—brochures/information in several languages available to target populations (Spanish, Burmese, Karen)
- Language barriers to set-up ride appointments (Burmese and Hispanic clients)
- Burmese and Spanish speaking appointment assistance
- Bigger vehicles to expand services to larger groups
- Keep a log of requested services not provided at this moment to help identify community needs
- Grants to help with intercounty expenses for services
- Impaired—monitors to help them get in/out of the bus
- If client isn't finished with an appointment and driver is ready to leave and go home, DSS is called to make other arrangements. DSS is charged for a "no show" for the pick-up and DSS has to pay for a taxi.
- Grocery store transportation—rolling carts for groceries—how can someone get on/off the van without damaging groceries? Can lift vans be used? Can CARTS be used to run errands.
- Loop—not able to learn the stops or understand how to use it (visually impaired)
- Less notice for demand response would be helpful
- Consider conducting a survey regarding increasing prices of loop ride to cover more stops, more routes
- Contact Lori Brault with Services to the Blind to schedule a time to talk with her support group of visually impaired individuals to discuss service needs
- Elderly riders—non-Medicaid, not in wheelchair—need a car for transport—not enough availability—DSS social workers have to provide transportation at last minute because scheduled trip falls through the day before the appointment (appointment can't be rescheduled in a timely fashion, not enough notice that the driver isn't available)

- Need more door-to-door assistance for the elderly—physically impaired
- Cameras on vehicles are needed for safety and documenting incidents

When asked to identify the top recommendations, the following were offered:

- Expansion of hours to evenings and weekends
- Inter-county connectivity
- Increased visibility (marketing)
- Shelters for fixed routes (support with advertisements)
- Express routes for medical and work-related trips (including evenings & weekends)
- Educate public about fares
- Fixed routes needed in Pamlico and Jones counties
- Lower fares
- Be more user friendly

During the workshop the participants worked in four groups and used a matrix of needs/strategies to identify what they felt were the best strategies to meet the identified needs. Here are the top strategies that received votes from three or four of the groups:

- Fixed routes—to address service gaps, stops with amenities, services to shopping, travel training
- Evening Service—to address service gaps, services to individuals not on Medicaid, bus system—fixed routes, county-wide services, services to medical facilities/educational facilities/employment centers/shopping
- Weekend Service—to address service gaps, bus system—fixed routes, county-wide services, services to medical facilities/ employment centers/shopping
- Increased visibility—to address service gaps
- Van pools—to serve employment centers
- Park & Ride—to serve educational facilities

Participants also discussed funding issues. A concern is that funding streams come and go and sustainability is an issue after the grant has ended. In a county like Craven, one possible answer might be a tax of some sort designated for public transportation. The Craven County Commissioners would need to be committed to this effort and it would take a lot of public education (put a face on the problem—don't just offer facts) to achieve this objective. Legislation might also be required to permit Craven County to even consider this action.

On February 11, 2009 bills were introduced titled the Congestion Relief/ Intermodal Transport Fund. The legislation would allow North Carolina counties to authorize, by resolution, a referendum to be placed on the ballot asking voters to authorize a ½¢ or ¼¢ sales tax. The proceeds from the tax would exclusively benefit public transportation in the county. In addition, counties could, by resolution, levy a \$7.00 per registered vehicle registration tax with the proceeds exclusively benefiting public transportation. Should a county choose not to impose the \$7.00 registration tax, cities within the county could impose the tax within their jurisdictional boundaries. Even if they do not have plans to utilize this legislation, it will offer them the tools necessary should they desire to use this option in the future. Below is a link to the bills:

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=s151>

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=hb+148>

Long Range Transportation Plans

In January 2007 Craven Area Rural Transportation System completed a Community Transportation Improvement Plan. Because this information is still relevant, it has been left in this 2013 update. The information in this chapter was taken verbatim from this plan.

Purpose

The Purpose of this plan was:

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

Strengths, Opportunities and Recommendations for Improvement

Based on a review of the operational and management functions of CARTS, this section outlines the system's strengths and identifies opportunities for improvement in the near future. Overall, CARTS is a well-run, effective transportation system. Financial resources are limited, particularly for public transportation in rural areas, but CARTS has successfully created a regional system through the cooperation of three counties and various human service agencies that represent the primary purchasers of transportation. In the future, Craven County and CARTS should seek to build upon these strengths and expand operations, but only as warranted by sufficient demand. Jones and Pamlico County governments are urged to play a greater role in providing financial and administrative support for the system.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

CARTS system policies and direction are provided through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which convenes at least twice each year or more often, as warranted. At present, feedback at the agency level is provided frequently by

TAB members directly to CARTS staff, while CARTS' Transportation Director reports once or more each year to the TAB on system performance, finances, and operations statistics. No specific goals or performance targets are established by the TAB for CARTS, which leads to an environment more focused on maintaining the status quo than growing the system or striving for specific targets.

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

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

Planning and Needs Assessment

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

Policy and Direction

- Policy and performance goals and objectives should be established to compliment the CARTS mission statement. General public ridership and the expansion of this market segment should be given greater priority.

- The composition of the CARTS TAB should be expanded to include a wider range of interests and inputs to compliment representation already present. Increased participation from planning and economic development functions.
- The CARTS TAB is currently required to meet at least twice each year. This minimum meeting frequency should be increased to quarterly, and regular meetings should be held to discuss mid-year progress in meeting goals and policy/operational challenges that may arise.
- As part of the needs assessment study recommended above, the role of Jones and Pamlico Counties should be evaluated, based on expectations of population and employment growth and corresponding service demand. Such a study should examine the need for and feasibility of an increased provision of resources from the two counties, commensurate with planned service expansion.
- CARTS staff and the TAB should work collectively to develop formal policy and procedures for all aspects of the system's management and operation.

Customer Service

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

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

Financial Management

No recommendations are necessary in this functional area.

Human Resources

A persistent challenge for CARTS management is the hiring and maintenance of an adequately sized staff, in particular the full- and part-time drivers. Due to budgetary constraints, drivers' salaries are comparatively low. Furthermore, many drivers take the position as post-retirement employment. As a result,

CARTS drivers tend to be older and less likely to work for the system for numerous years due either to medical conditions or a decision to stop work altogether. Attracting younger employees is difficult because wages, particularly the hourly wages for part-time drivers, are not competitive with other employment sectors, and the available labor pool is relatively small. Craven County is expected to complete a study on pay scales throughout the county government structure, which may help CARTS address the issue of low driver wages and difficulty in hiring new employees.

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

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

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

Operations Scheduling & Dispatching

Through an examination of CARTS' scheduling practices and a sample week of vehicle utilization, the system appears to be doing an efficient and effective job of scheduling and assigning vehicles. On average, passenger productivities exceed three passengers per mile, although in some cases the driver pay to revenue service hour ratio is higher than the target of 1.25 or better. With the

continued use of RouteMatch automated scheduling software, installed in 2006, this efficiency is expected to improve.

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

Equipment

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

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

Of the vehicles scheduled for replacement between FY2007 and FY2009, only one conversion van replacement includes a wheelchair lift where the vehicle to be retired did not. Conversely, in FY2010 and beyond, numerous vehicles that currently do not have lifts are scheduled to be replaced with vehicles that do. Subsequently, NCDOT PTD and CARTS have updated the PTMS to increase the percentage of lift-equipped vehicles in the near term. Based on NCDOT prescribed vehicle replacements for FY2007-2008, CARTS will have the following fleet composition: 8 conversion vans, 6 center aisle vans, 11 lift-equipped vans, and 4 22-foot light transit vehicles (2 lift-equipped). This maintains the total transit vehicle fleet (excluding sedans) at 29, of which 13 vehicles (45%) are wheelchair-accessible. This would represent a net gain of four lift-equipped

vehicles, including the replacement of vehicle #8 with a lift-equipped conversion van, within the next three years. This change does not represent an expansion of the fleet size. However, as total fleet seating capacity may decrease as a result of adding more wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles, CARTS should monitor closely its scheduling and passenger load factors through RouteMatch to determine if additional capacity is required at the time of each vehicle procurement process.

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

Safety & Training

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

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

Maintenance

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

- No recommendations are necessary in this functional area

Marketing

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

North Carolina Department of Transportation requires community transportation

systems to dedicate a minimum of 2% of their operating budgets to marketing. At present, CARTS does not meet this minimum requirement.

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

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

State and Federal Compliance

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

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

Transportation 2030 Plan

The goals set for the Transportation 2030 Plan LRTP includes considerations toward low-income, elderly and disabled as shown below:

- Increase Safety for all modes of transportation
- Ensure that the transportation plan benefits, and is equitable towards, elderly, disabled, low-income populations
- Preserve or improve environmental and community conditions
- Implement policies that improve system quality and capacity
- Improve public involvement
- Develop a regional travel demand model for current and future planning
- Develop strategies to improve rural connections
- Create a coordinated transportation improvement program and set of priorities that is fiscally constrained
- Address the lack of user-friendly sidewalks, walking trails, proper bike lanes, and/or multi-purpose lanes throughout the county.

Primary Policy Objectives

The Long Range Planning Process is an opportunity to assess the best available transportation data for the county and region, and to identify policy direction for local transportation decision-making. The plan itself will not be able reverse the course of longstanding political, societal and behavioral forces that shape the transportation system and the rural environment. This plan does, however, attempt to guide shifts in policy direction that will result in a more sustainable and effective transportation system for the long-term. The major policy issues and recommendations for 2009-2030 are detailed below.

Address Funding Gaps for Public Transportation

Travel demand modeling analysis shows that highways and arterial streets will become increasingly congested over the next 25 years. The modeling analysis also shows that investments in public transportation can have an impact on reducing congestion in certain parts of the region. The potential for increases in the use of public transportation and carpooling, in comparison with levels of today, are encouraging.

Based on the scale of analysis, the benefits of public transportation use seem small in comparison with overall levels of vehicle travel. While the model is not

able to project that public transportation investments will achieve significant region-wide reductions in vehicle miles traveled at this time, the analysis presents a number of opportunities for significant benefits along corridors in the more urbanized areas. These corridors and sub-areas should be studied and considered for increased levels of investment in public transportation service.

In order for transit to be a competitive choice as a mode of travel, investments in public transportation service should be increased. Currently, public transportation providers are facing potential **shortfalls in operating funds**.

Federal and State formulas that allocate transportation funds play a major role in determining the level of public transportation service that local governments are able to offer. The long-term fiscal future for public transportation contains many unknowns. In addition, the dynamics of service areas and local needs are always changing. And so, by its nature, planning for public transportation often focuses on short- and mid-range objectives for improvements. This creates a difficulty in meeting the requirements of the long-range planning process to analyze highway planning and transit planning on equal footing.

Observations

- Mobility Management will increase potential for riders.
- Park-&-ride impact is significant; create feeder systems.
- Collection of survey data has proven:
 - Why do/don't people ride?
 - Challenges to seniors and persons with disabilities
- Connecting services and extended services are crucial

Operational and Planning Objectives

- Expand service frequency
- Extend service hours
- Institute both formal and informal Park & Ride locations
- Institute more flexible service delivery
- Expand express and out of county services to the most promising markets
- Expand local and neighborhood routes in areas with sufficient density
- Study specific corridors for traffic operations improvements
- Expand fleet as well as camera devices on all units
- Connect to other transit services

- Consider how school system buses might be more fully utilized

Policy Objectives

- Increase funding from state and federal sources
- Address deficiency in transit operating funds
- Provide services to the greatest possible number of households within the service area, with emphasis on providing service to those not possessing automobiles, blind and other partially impaired people, the elderly, and others who are transit dependent.
- Use transit service provision to reinforce growth policies and support smart growth development
- Expand access to outlying recreational facilities in the area
- Involve other local transportation resources in expanding access to transportation services
- Expand marketing program

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) identifies new services and routes as well as identifies shortage of funding and coordination of services.

In addition to the specific projects identified below, all existing transit routes are considered as “needing improvement.” Such improvements include expansion of service hours, increased service frequency and improved coverage area. In many cases this may involve route realignment or similar changes which are beyond the scope of the CTP.

Safety and Security...home and community environments are safe and support self-sufficiency for older adults and caregivers.

- Health and Wellness...the health care system maximizes wellness and health potential and meets the diverse and unique needs of older adults.
- Financial Well-being ...resources, services and opportunities support and enhance the financial well-being of older adults and caregivers.
- Social Engagement...life enrichment opportunities engage older adults with people, places and programs.
- Living Environments...the living environments (built and natural) support and enhance the functioning of older adults.

- Service and Support Coordination...a collaborative network of formal and informal services and supports is coordinated to meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.

Goals and recommendations in the Aging Plan include transportation needs and priorities for older adults in Craven County. Craven County has requested those needs to be included in the plan in order to identify and increase awareness about older adult transportation needs, as well as leverage funding for transportation providers, agencies, and other entities to begin addressing these needs in the future.

Attachments

- a. Maps of Craven, Jones & Pamlico Counties
- b. Matrix of Needs/Strategies