



CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), on behalf of North Country Transit (NCT), contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to provide Technical Assistance for implementing a new public transit program in the Carroll County area. The plan focuses on transit needs within Carroll



County and how to effectively provide transit services to meet those needs. This report presents a summary of existing conditions related to transit services and estimates transit demand for the study area. Information in this report includes a description of the communities and a review of the existing transportation providers within the study area.

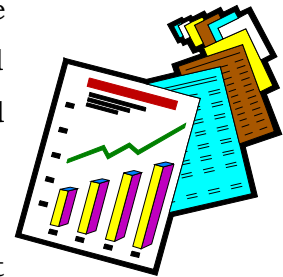
Carroll County is a year-round tourist destination providing access to various ski areas such as Attitash Bear Peak, Black Mountain, Cranmore Mountain, King Pinea and Wild Cat Mountain, the White Mountain region in northern Carroll County, and the Lakes region in the southern Carroll County area. Currently, there is no general public transportation service in the Carroll County area. The available services are limited taxi services, specialized transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities, volunteer agencies that provide transportation for non-emergency medical services and other services, private shuttle service, and an intercity route that provides access to Boston and other areas outside Carroll County. The report focuses on transportation for local residents, specifically the general public, elderly and disabled, and tourists that come to Carroll County. For some area residents, the need for a public transportation service is of high concern as it will enable residents to travel from home to work, shopping, health care facilities, and other necessary services. For many residents, a public transportation system will link them directly with the community.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze and recommend strategies for Carroll County which will affect the delivery of public transportation services over the next five years. This final report describes the existing conditions in the region related to public transit services, discusses service and other alternatives for meeting public transportation needs into the future, identifies the locally-preferred set of alternatives, and presents an implementation plan for the new service.

REPORT CONTENTS

Chapter II presents the vision, goals and objectives for the proposed transit service in Carroll County. These goals and objectives were developed based on stakeholder meetings and the strategic planning workshop held in November 2006.



Chapter III presents input from the public involvement process. This included open houses/public meetings, a survey/comment sheet, and presentations to the Advisory Committee.

Chapter IV presents the existing community conditions and economics. The chapter focuses on identifying the density of various market segments including general public, elderly (60 years and above), persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and zero-vehicle households in Carroll County. Information gathered from this chapter is essential in estimating potential transit demand for developing a transit system that will effectively serve the population in the Carroll County area.

Chapter V presents an overview of the existing transportation providers that operate within Carroll County. Chapter VI presents the transit needs assessment for Carroll County.

Chapter VII presents the “peer communities” analysis that the LSC team conducted to determine the type of service and costs of other communities which are

operating public transit services. An understanding of transit services in other communities helps to develop an appropriate service plan.

Chapter VIII summarizes the different types of transit services that could be implemented. This information was used in the determination and analysis of the transit service alternatives.

Chapter IX offers service alternatives for transit demand throughout the area. The alternatives range from commuter route service, to flex-route service, to demand-response service; and regional service to Portland or Manchester for medical-related trips. Each alternative is evaluated in terms of its anticipated costs, ridership, and performance.

Chapter X reviews the types of transit vehicles that could be purchased for the new Carroll County Transit System. The type, size, cost, seating capacity, and general description of the different types of vehicles are discussed.

Chapter XI reviews the types of organizational structures that could be used to oversee the transit service.

Finally, Chapter XII presents the comprehensive Carroll County Transit Implementation Plan. This chapter outlines the preferred operations plan, organizational plan, financial plan, marketing program, and an implementation time line.

STUDY APPROACH

As in many regions, Carroll County is taking a closer look at providing public transit services and is seeking to find the most effective means of providing those services. Currently, public transportation is provided by North Country Transit in the adjoining Coos County and other private transportation providers within Carroll County detailed later in this document. A key element in the plan has been to clearly evaluate the unmet transportation needs of local residents and businesses in Carroll County. The



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current effort focuses on the feasibility of providing public transit services to meet the community's needs. One important step toward providing an integrated community-wide transportation system is involving key players such as North Country Transit, human service agencies, private transportation providers, New Hampshire Department of Transportation, (NHDOT), and Carroll County residents. Individuals from each key stakeholder agency served as members of the Advisory Committee for this planning process. The following general planning approach has been used by LSC during this process.



Project Team

An initial “kick-off meeting” was held in Tamworth on February 6, 2007. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders of Carroll County, CTAA staff, NHDOT, NCT, officials from the community, and representatives of human service agencies and other local agencies within the study area which have transportation concerns for the community. This project team met to discuss existing transit issues, the project goals and priorities, existing data resources, deliverables, and meeting dates. The team also discussed local stakeholders who would be critical in completing the transit study for the area.

A second Advisory Committee meeting was held in March 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Technical Memorandum #1 and provide feedback and comments to the LSC team.

Additional meetings were held in June and August to review the Technical Memoranda. At each step, feedback from the Committee was used to guide development of the plan.

Stakeholder Meetings

The group of local stakeholders identified by the project team included the following organizations within the Carroll County study area:



- North Country Transit
- Tri-County Community Action Program
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
- New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services
- Carroll County Senior Centers
- Carroll County RSVP and Caregivers
- White Mountain Community Health Center
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation
- Carroll County Representatives
- White Mountain Transit Authority

These groups represent organizations that provide transportation services and those that may have a specific transportation need. As part of the process to identify local transportation issues, these stakeholders were contacted to provide input for the transit study.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

Throughout the planning process, public involvement is key to the success of the transit plan for the community. At critical points during the process, public meetings were announced and held where citizen participation was openly welcomed and appreciated.

The first set of public open houses were held on March 27 and 28, 2007. The open houses offered members of the community an opportunity to provide public input

regarding transportation issues that should be addressed as part of the transit plan. Community residents were asked to comment on the existing needs and future transit services in Carroll County. The public was given the opportunity to state which services and other alternatives they think were necessary to address the identified issues and meet the established goals.

The second set of public open houses were held on August 1 and 2, 2007 to present the various transit alternatives and get feedback on what transit alternatives would work, and any changes participants would like to see in the preferred transit service alternative.

The final set of public open houses were held October 10 and 11, 2007 to present the study results.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES

During the February “kick-off meeting,” the LSC team briefed the Advisory Committee on the study process to be undertaken over the nine-month period. Key stakeholders involved with public transit services were identified. Major issues and concerns regarding public transportation were discussed. Following are summaries of the major issues:

- Need for transportation services within Carroll County for the general public, elderly, and low-income persons.
- The economic impact of persons in need of transportation leaving the area for areas that offer public transportation.
- Mobility of the elderly and disabled to medical appointments, work, and shopping.
- Access to work, medical, and shopping locations for the general public and low-income population due to the lack of private vehicles.
- Medical trips must be addressed both as local trips within Carroll County and trips out of the county.
- Transportation services for in-county medical trips might relieve the burden on volunteers who would then be able to concentrate on out-of-county medical trips.
- The needs of Wolfeboro, Tuftonboro, and Moultonborough should be considered as they have populations similar to Conway and North Conway.
- Connections to intercity buses should be served.

- Implementation of the transit service in the short term and maintenance of the transit service over the long term.

Some of the major issues discussed during the strategic planning workshop held in Tamworth in November 2006 are as follows:

- Lack of public transportation services.
- Need for transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and dialysis and cancer patients.
- Need for specialized door-to-door transportation that is wheelchair accessible.
- Changing demographics of communities like Moultonborough where wealthier residents are moving into the area, pushing out low-income residents.
- Need for volunteer drivers and difficulty in retaining volunteers.
- Need for transit service along Routes 16, 25, and 28.
- Need for transit to help alleviate congestion.
- Need for youth transportation for after-school activities.
- Need for coordination of transportation services.
- Need for public education and outreach in the use of public transit services.
- Public transportation helps provide social interaction.
- Lack of funding for nonprofit organizations.
- Need for fixed-route services to accommodate work trips.
- Need for prioritizing public transportation needs.