

Executive Summary



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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 in developing a new public transportation system in Carroll County. The project focuses on the transit needs within Carroll County for local residents, especially the low-income population, elderly, disabled, and tourists that come to Carroll County, and how to effectively provide transit services to meet those needs.



North Country Transit and several other agencies within Carroll County have recognized the need for public transportation in Carroll County. Currently, there is no general public transportation service in the county. However, there is limited transportation provided by taxi services, specialized transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities, volunteer agencies that provide transportation for non-emergency medical services, private shuttle services, and an intercity private provider. For many residents, a public transportation system will link them directly with the community. A key issue in the Technical Assistance project was to identify the existing available resources and additional resources that may be needed to provide public transit service.

STUDY AREA

Carroll County is located in the northeast area of New Hampshire near the Maine border. It is the second least populous county in the State of New Hampshire with 47,439 persons (2005 estimates). The county seat—the Town of Ossipee—lies in the southeast portion of the county and is adjacent to the Pine River State Forest, which lies approximately 50 miles northeast of New Hampshire’s capital, Concord. Other communities in Carroll County include Albany, Bartlett, Brookfield,

Chatham, Conway, Eaton, Effingham, Freedom, Jackson, Madison, Moultonborough, Sanbornville, Sandwich, Tamworth, Tuftonboro, Wakefield, and Wolfeboro. Prominent topographic features of Carroll County include the White Mountain National Forest to the north and the Lakes Region to the south. The overall population density of Carroll County is approximately 48 persons per square mile.

TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Chapter VI of the Final Report provides a transportation needs assessment for Carroll County. The transportation needs for the county are significant, especially based on the high elderly population and rural geographic character.

In order to estimate the transportation needs for Carroll County, it is important to have an approach that considers the local demographics, economics, and service characteristics. Chapter VI describes the development of a transit demand model for the study area. The transit demand estimates were based upon the 2000 US Census data and population estimates for 2006 and 2030 as presented in Chapter IV of the Final Report. These data were used for the 2006 transit demand estimates and 2030 projected transit demand using the *Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Project A-3: Rural Transit Demand Estimation Techniques*.

The TCRP analysis procedure considers transit demand in two major categories: “*program demand*,” which is generated by transit ridership to and from specific social service programs; and “*non-program demand*” generated by the other mobility needs of the elderly, disabled, and general public (including youth). Examples of non-program trips may include shopping, employment, and medical trips.

As presented in Chapter VI of the Final Report, the model indicates that if a high level of public transit were available in Carroll County, approximately 101,000 annual trips (non-program trips) would be provided. This should not be construed to indicate the actual ridership which might occur on any particular service. Actual ridership is a function of the level of service that is provided and includes

such factors as frequency of service, schedules, fares, travel times, and specific routes.

When combining the program and non-program estimates based upon the TCRP methodology, the total existing transit need for Carroll County is approximately 277,000 annual trips.

At this time, few non-program trips are provided, but some of the 176,000 program trips are likely being met by human service agencies and volunteer groups. However, the exact number of trips provided is unknown.

The result shows that there is a large unmet need for transit trips.

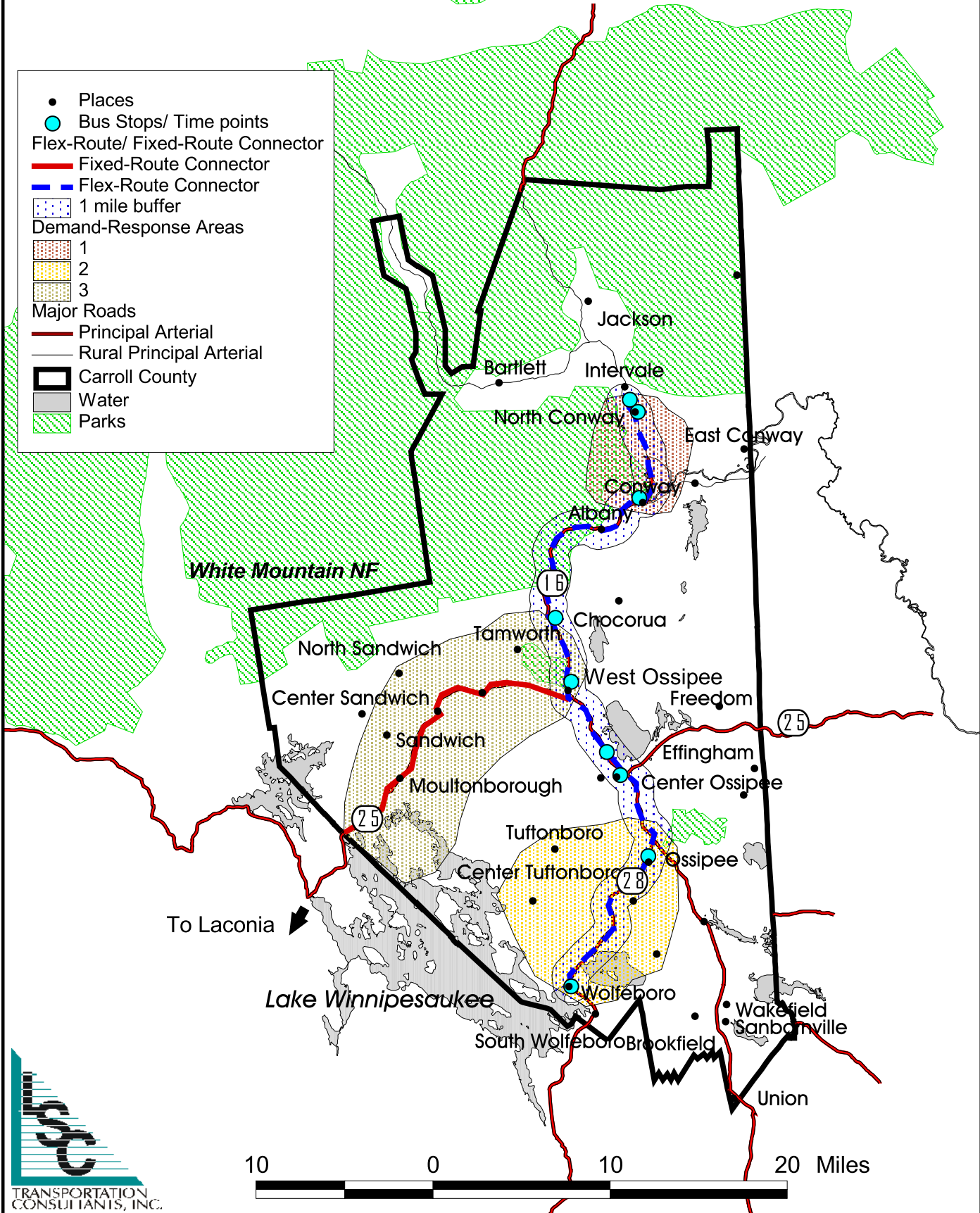
RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Chapter XII of the Final Report presents the details of the preferred transit service plan including the hours of service, route schedules, operational costs, capital needs, and capital costs. The preferred transit service alternative would be developed in three phases, each serving different areas.

The preferred transit service alternative is based on various transit service elements. Phase 1, as shown in Figure ES-1, would include an all-day flex-route connector between Wolfeboro and North Conway. The service would be provided using two buses running in opposite directions. Transfer between northbound and southbound buses can be done in the West Ossipee area. The buses would travel on a designated route according to a published schedule, but the schedule would include additional time to allow the buses to deviate to serve passengers that live within one mile of the route.

Figure ES-1
Preferred Service Plan - Start Up System

- Places
- Bus Stops/ Time points
- Flex-Route/ Fixed-Route Connector
- Fixed-Route Connector
- Flex-Route Connector
- 1 mile buffer
- Demand-Response Areas
- 1
- 2
- 3
- Major Roads
- Principal Arterial
- Rural Principal Arterial
- Carroll County
- Water
- Parks



There are also three in-town demand-response service (dial-a-ride) areas that would operate from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Conway-North Conway, Moultonborough-Tamworth, and Ossipee-Wolfeboro areas to meet the transportation needs of local residents. Additionally, a fixed-route connector would operate between West Ossipee and Laconia all day. The preferred service plan will also have two future phases. Phase 2 would include weekend service, demand-response service covering the towns of Madison, Freedom, and Effingham, and another demand-response service for Wakefield. The weekend service is estimated to have the same service hours as the weekday service. Phase 3 would include service to Dover and Portsmouth. Table ES-1 provides the cost estimate for each of these phases.

**Table ES-1
Carroll County Transit Service Plan**

Service Component	Hours	Number of Vehicles	Annual Operating Cost	Vehicle Capital Cost**
Flex-Route Connector (<i>Wolfeboro-North Conway</i>)	M-F, 6a to 6:15p	2	\$178,000	\$170,000
Demand-Response Area 1 (<i>Conway and North Conway area</i>)	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
Demand-Response Area 2 (<i>Wolfeboro and Ossipee area</i>)	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
Demand-Response Area 3 (<i>Moultonborough and Tamworth area</i>)	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
Fixed-Route Connector (<i>West Ossipee to Laconia</i>)	M-F, 6a to 6:30p	1	\$97,000	\$85,000
		1		\$85,000 *
Total Service Cost		7	\$473,000	\$595,000
Future Phase 2: Weekend Service	Sat-Sun, varies	7	\$194,000	\$510,000
<i>Madison, Freedom, and Effingham</i>	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
<i>Wakefield Service</i>	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
Future Phase 3: Service to Dover and Portsmouth	M-F, 8a to 5p	1	\$66,000	\$85,000
<p><i>Note: These operating costs are based on 2006 dollar values.</i></p> <p><i>Note: These costs are based on service operated by North Country Transit.</i></p> <p><i>Note*: One additional spare vehicle would be required</i></p> <p><i>Note**: Bus cost based upon \$85,000</i></p>				
<p>Source: LSC, 2007.</p>				

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Chapter XII of the Final Report lists the activities that need to be completed in order to implement the preferred transit service alternative, which would be developed in three phases. Phase 1 (years 2009 through 2010) has an estimated annual operational cost of \$473,000. Phase 1 costs include route-deviation, fixed-route, and demand-response services. Phase 2 (years 2011 through 2012) increases the estimated annual operational cost to \$700,689 with inflation. Phase 2 costs include weekend service and expanded demand-response service areas. Phase 3 (years 2017 through 2018) increases the estimated annual operational cost to \$1,000,000 with inflation. Phase 3 costs include the increased expense of regional service to Dover and Portsmouth. The plan also details the proposed fare structure, which is based on a zone system.

An organization plan is presented for the Carroll County Transit Program. Based on the Advisory Committee meetings, it was decided that North Country Transit (NCT) should operate the new service in Carroll County. North Country Transit is part of Tri-CAP, a nonprofit agency, and currently provides service in Coos County and Northern Grafton County. This agency is very familiar with the New Hampshire area, is a Federal Transit Administration recipient, and has the functional capabilities to operate service in Carroll County. Public transportation services provided under North Country Transit will function under the Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (Tri-CAP). NCT already has an established director and administrative support. However, additional drivers, dispatchers, and mechanics will be required to support the new Carroll County Transit Program.

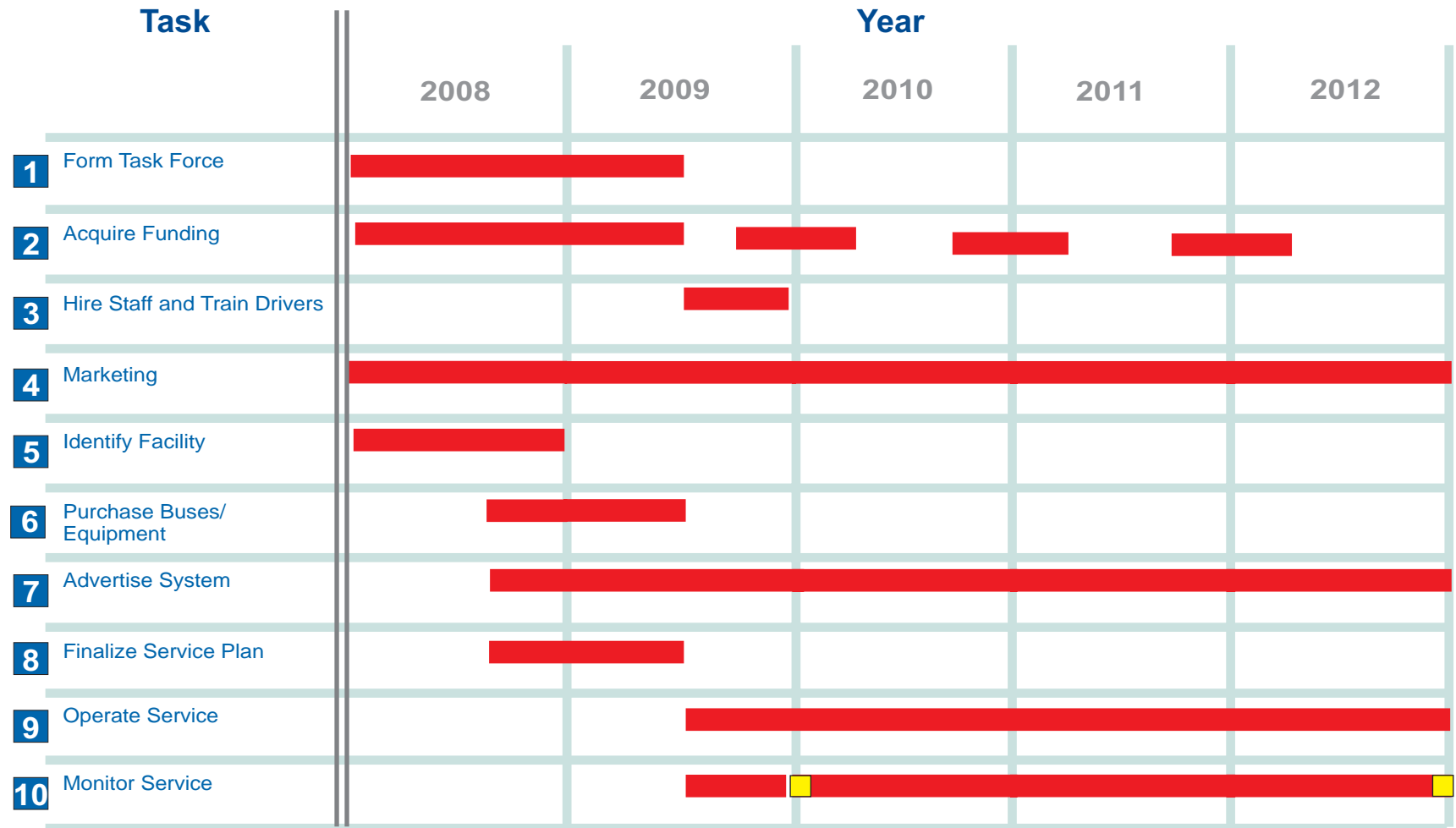
There are existing volunteer drivers through the Carroll County RSVP and Caregiver programs that will be a valuable resource to the newly formed transit program. These programs could supplement transportation to the new transit service areas by providing service for out-of-county medical appointments. Volunteers can thus effectively stretch the resources of the Carroll County Transit Program beyond what it might otherwise cover. They can also play key roles in public relations, fundraising, public education, and other outreach programs.

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Coordination and consolidation of services allow local entities to provide additional and enhanced services to the community using the existing resources. Other coordination opportunities presented include the White Mountain Transit Authority, a private provider, that currently provides transportation services mainly aimed toward tourists and getting workers to and from jobs. White Mountain Transit Authority and Carroll County Transit could coordinate services in the North Conway area. The newly formed transit program in Carroll County could contract services with the White Mountain Transit Authority to operate general public transit services in the North Conway area. White Mountain Transit Authority is interested in this cooperative effort, knowing that this study would serve as a guide for public transportation options.

The implementation timeline is designed to implement the preferred transit service alternative over the next five to six years. This timeframe allows for forming an implementation task force, acquiring funding, hiring staff and training drivers, marketing, identifying the facility, purchasing buses/equipment, and advertising the system. LSC's recommended timeline for implementation of the preferred transit service alternative is presented in Figure ES-2. Recommendations are also provided for marketing the service and performance monitoring.

Figure ES-2 Carroll County Transit Implementation Timeline



LEGEND

- Feed Back
- Planning Phase/ Implementation Phase