



# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

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The Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO), on behalf of PanTran, contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to prepare a Title VI Environmental Justice Study and a five-year Transit Plan for PanTran. The plan specifically focuses on public transportation issues in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties, West Virginia and an analysis of the environmental justice issues in the existing PanTran service area.



### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze and recommend transit route structures and services that will allow PanTran to meet the Title VI Environmental Justice requirements. This Final Report describes the existing public transit services in the study area (Berkeley and Jefferson Counties), discusses the transit services and other alternatives for meeting the existing and future transportation needs, and identifies the locally preferred set of transit services that will allow PanTran to meet the Title VI requirements.

### REPORT CONTENTS

Chapter II provides a summary of the community demographics and economics. The survey results are provided in Chapter III. Chapter IV presents an analysis of the existing routes in terms of performance levels, boardings, and alightings. Chapter V updates the transit demand model that LSC developed for PanTran in 2005 for the existing and future populations in the PanTran service area, and includes a fixed-route model. Chapter VI presents the transit service alternatives. The transit service benefits are provided in Chapter VII. Chapter VIII details the strategic implementation plan. Chapter IX presents the strategic financial plan.



## **STUDY APPROACH**

As in many regions, PanTran is re-examining its public transit services and is seeking to find the most effective means of providing those services, not only for the general public, but also for those individuals that may be unserved (including low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking individuals who are protected under Title VI). A key element in the plan is the evaluation of the unmet needs of the local residents and the three demographic groups identified above. This analysis was conducted following the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Title VI criteria lists for both small and large urban areas. The current effort focuses on the feasibility of providing public transit services in order to meet the community's needs and provide links to employment areas outside the existing service area for the three identified demographic groups.

### **Project Team**

One important step toward providing an integrated regionwide transportation system is involving key players such as the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), PanTran, HEPMPO, City of Martinsburg, Berkeley County, Jefferson County, human service agencies, school districts, and Eastern Panhandle Region residents. An initial "kick-off" meeting was held in Martinsburg on December 11, 2007. The meeting was attended by PanTran, HEPMPO, and other agencies. This project team discussed the project overview, data collection, major transit issues, public involvement process, schedules, Title VI criteria, and time line for completion of the final study. The project team also discussed the local stakeholders who would be critical in completing the transit study.

A second meeting was held on February 14, 2008. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Technical Memorandum #1 and the possible transit service alternatives. The third meeting was held on March 20, 2008. At this meeting, the TAC reviewed the transit service alternatives and the preliminary recommendations. The TAC agreed that the recommended transit service LSC developed should be the preferred transit service plan. At the April 24, 2008 meeting the TAC reviewed the preferred transit service and implementation plan.

## Opportunities for Public Involvement

Throughout the planning process, public involvement is key to the success of the community's transit plan. At critical points during the process, public meetings were announced and held where citizen participation was openly welcome and appreciated. The open houses offered community members an opportunity to provide public input regarding the transportation issues that were addressed as part of this transit study. Community residents were asked to comment on the existing and future transit services in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.

Public open houses were conducted in February, March, and April 2008. The first set of open houses was scheduled for February 13, 2008. Due to poor weather conditions, the meeting in Martinsburg was poorly attended and the meeting in Charles Town was cancelled. There were more opportunities for public input in this process at the April and June 2008 meetings. As an element of the public involvement process, LSC also conducted an onboard survey in December 2007 to gather input on the needs of the current transit users. The information from this survey was used to develop the preferred transit service plan.

## MAJOR ISSUES

The following major issues and concerns regarding public transportation were identified through the onboard survey, open house, and TAC meetings. These major issues and concerns, along with the goals and objectives, were the basis for the transit service alternatives.

- Improve transit service within the existing service areas of Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.
- Develop public education tools and methods to allow PanTran to serve non-English-speaking individuals with the same level of service as English-speaking individuals.
- Develop a process to record, track, and evaluate Title VI complaints and issues that are brought up by the public within the service area.
- Link minority and low-income populations to activity centers.
- Improve transit service to the major employment centers (such as the major shopping centers) in the service area.
- Improve the overall image of PanTran.
- Improve access for the community youth involved in after-school activities.

## Introduction

- Improve the condition of and access to transit shelters and benches.
- Evaluate the need for paratransit services outside the three-quarter-mile route deviation area.
- Improve the service and linkage of non-emergency medical transit trips.
- Review the effectiveness and efficiencies of the existing route service to improve connectivity and route operations.
- Evaluate the level of local funding to cover capital and operating costs.

## TRANSIT VISION

The following section details the goals and objectives developed in the 2005 Pan-Tran Transit Enhancement Plan. The vision for PanTran transit service consists of a mission statement, a set of five action goals, and objectives for each goal. The mission statement, goals, and objectives typically form a hierarchical structure with the mission statement being the most general. Goals support the achievement of the mission, and objectives support the goals.

### Mission Statement

The Mission Statement establishes the overall direction of an agency and enumerates the most generalized set of actions to be achieved by that agency. The mission statement for PanTran is as follows:

#### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of PanTran is to provide quality, safe, dependable, and courteous transit service to all residents and visitors of the Eastern Panhandle Region.*

### Goals and Objectives

Based on meetings with PanTran staff and the public, LSC formulated goals and objectives for the transportation system serving the cities of Martinsburg, Charles Town, Hedgesville, Harpers Ferry, Ranson, Inwood, and Shepherdstown and the Eastern Panhandle Region. For planning purposes, a goal is defined as a purpose or need that should be attained in order to address a transportation issue. An

objective is a specific method or activity that is designed to achieve an identified goal. The goals and objectives were reviewed by the PanTran Board and staff, and changes made where appropriate.

**Goal #1: Maintain the existing ridership base while attracting new riders**

**Objective 1.a:** Continue to serve the Martinsburg Mall, VA Center, human services agencies, and medical centers in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.

**Objective 1.b:** Improve transit service to the following locations: high schools in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties; local recreational areas and parks; Berkeley County Judicial Center; nursing homes; and low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking population areas.

**Objective 1.c:** Work with the business community to develop transit shuttle services in downtown Martinsburg, Charles Town, and Harpers Ferry.

**Objective 1.d:** Maintain the existing level of ridership by continuing to serve the elderly, disabled, low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking individuals in the service area as well as those that cannot drive and/or cannot afford a vehicle.

**Objective 1.e:** Develop transit service to the MARC Train through additional service hours in the morning and evening in order to link with arrival and departure times at the Martinsburg, Duffields, and Harpers Ferry stations.

**Objective 1.f:** Work with Eastern Panhandle Region cities and counties and the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) to develop a series of park-and-ride lots throughout Berkeley and Jefferson Counties. Initiate commuter service from the park-and-ride lots to urban areas and the MARC Train stations at Martinsburg, West Virginia; Duffields, West Virginia; Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; and Brunswick, Maryland.

**Objective 1.g:** Develop commuter service to major employment and activity centers within the Eastern Panhandle Region and to Hagerstown, Maryland; Frederick, Maryland; Winchester, Virginia; and Leesburg, Virginia.

Goal #2: Continue to provide for the economic sustainability of the transit system

**Objective 2.a:** Develop a cost allocation system to determine the proportionate share of local funding to be contributed by each local government.

**Objective 2.b:** Establish a capital and vehicle replacement fund and allocate local contributions on an annual basis to this savings account. The account should be sufficient to provide the local matching funds required to obtain federal grants for vehicle replacements and new capital facilities.

**Objective 2.c:** Develop a more effective method of collecting and accounting for bus fares in all fleet vehicles.

**Objective 2.d:** Pursue FTA Section 5307 and 5309 funding and state funding for transit service operations in urbanized areas.

**Objective 2.e:** Seek out and apply for grants that may be available for capital or operating support.

**Objective 2.f:** Develop contract services with human service providers.

Goal #3: PanTran will provide high quality, customer-oriented service

**Objective 3.a:** Distribute a rider survey once a year in order to obtain input from system users on the adequacy of PanTran's services and any unmet needs.

**Objective 3.b:** Fixed routes in the urban areas should operate on a 30-minute headway during peak hours and on a 60-minute headway during off-peak hours.

**Objective 3.c:** Fixed routes in the rural areas should operate on a 90-minute headway.

**Objective 3.d:** Fixed routes should be no longer than 45 minutes in travel time from the route's beginning location to the route's last outbound stop.

**Objective 3.e:** Fixed and commuter routes should operate with 95 percent never early and no later than five minutes behind the scheduled arrival time at each stop along the route.

**Objective 3.f:** Paratransit service should operate within 15 minutes (plus or minus) of the scheduled arrival time.

**Objective 3.g:** All fixed and commuter routes should operate on the most direct route between locations of the stops and the final destination.

**Objective 3.h:** Paratransit service should be provided within 1.5 miles of all fixed routes.

**Objective 3.i:** Transit service should operate seven days a week in areas with the greatest transit needs.

**Objective 3.j:** Provide annual training for all PanTran employees.

**Objective 3.k:** Establish operating policies and prepare a policy manual, which should include recording and tracking of Title VI complaints.

**Objective 3.l:** Improve schedules to be more customer-friendly. Route maps and schedules should be easy to understand by transit users. Schedules should be available in English, Spanish, and Braille formats.

**Objective 3.m:** Low-income and minority service areas must be served as often as the general population areas.

**Goal #4: PanTran will provide efficient, effective, and safe services**

**Objective 4.a:** Route-deviation service should operate at an average productivity of seven passengers per service-hour. Individual routes should maintain a productivity of at least five passengers per service-hour. Routes that do not meet the minimum standards should be reviewed annually for service changes.

**Objective 4.b:** Paratransit service should have an average productivity of three passengers per hour.

**Objective 4.c:** Commuter routes should maintain a minimum productivity of 15 passengers per service-hour.

**Objective 4.d:** PanTran should provide service to at least 85 percent of the population in the areas with greatest transit needs.

**Objective 4.e:** PanTran should operate with fewer than 2.5 preventable accidents per 100,000 vehicle-miles.

**Objective 4.f:** PanTran should coordinate service with other transportation providers to meet the regional transportation needs.

**Objective 4.g:** PanTran should meet 40 percent of the model demand within the service area.

**Goal #5: Promote the services provided by PanTran**

**Objective 5.a:** Use every opportunity to promote the transit service including, but not limited to, the following ideas:

- Display the telephone number for rides prominently on fleet vehicles.
- Provide information on the PanTran website.
- List PanTran in the regional telephone directory.
- Post flyers with the telephone number for rides and the hours of operation at various locations in the service area, including train stations and motels.
- Place regular public service announcements with the newspaper, radio, and television.
- Offer reduced fares to attract ridership during slower times of the day, week, or year.
- Run periodic special promotions such as summer passes for children or holiday season fares for shoppers.

**Objective 5.b:** Develop a public education program on the benefits of transit services and the need to maintain and improve the overall transportation system in the Eastern Panhandle Region.