



CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC), on behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and Sullivan County, contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to complete a Coordination Implementation and Marketing Plan. The plan specifically focuses on public transportation coordination issues for Sullivan County. The plan examines the transit needs, alternatives, coordination of transit services, and transit programs for the communities within Sullivan County.



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to analyze and recommend strategies for the existing transportation providers to implement coordination strategies and service plans which will affect the delivery of public transit services in Sullivan County. This included development of a short-range transit plan for Community Alliance Transportation Services (CATS). This document presents the recommendations for coordination of transportation services throughout Sullivan County for the Community Mobility Project (CMP). A separate document was prepared for the CATS short-range transit plan. This report provides specific recommendations for CMP to implement coordinated transportation services.

STUDY APPROACH

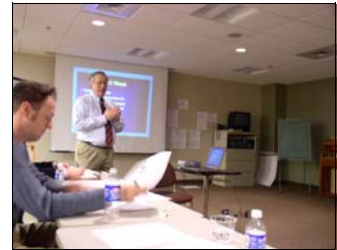
As in many regions, Sullivan County is taking a closer look at public transit services and is seeking to find the most effective means of providing those services. A key element in the plan was to clearly evaluate the unmet transportation needs of local residents and businesses with a specific focus on those who are transit dependent and those who meet eligibility requirements of the Americans with

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Disabilities Act. One important step toward providing an integrated community-wide transportation system is involving key players such as the NHDOT, CATS, Sullivan County Community Mobility Project, Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC), Regional Transportation Coordinators (RTC), human service agencies, and residents. Individuals from each key stakeholder agency were contacted to participate as members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for this planning process. The LSC Project Team worked with the CMP throughout the process to facilitate the study.

Project Team

An initial kick-off meeting was held on November 27, 2007. LSC and the CMP met to discuss the project goals, priorities, and a time line for completion of the final study. This project team also discussed the local stakeholders who would be critical in completing the transit study for the area.



Additional meetings were held at key points throughout the planning process. Meetings with the CMP were held in January, March, June, and July of 2008 to present interim reports and receive feedback.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

Public open houses were held in January to provide members of the community an opportunity to provide public input regarding transportation issues which should be addressed as part of the plan. Community residents were asked to comment on the existing and future transit services within Sullivan County. The public was given the opportunity to state which transit services and other alternatives they thought are necessary to address the identified issues and meet the established goals.

Meetings of the CMP were announced to the public so that community residents could comment on any aspects of the study as the interim reports were presented.

REPORT CONTENTS

Previous planning efforts are reviewed in Chapter II. These include the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The existing transportation resources in Sullivan County are described in Chapter III. There are many resources in Sullivan County ranging from CATS to volunteers working under the auspices of the Red Cross.

Chapter IV provides the transit demand analysis for Sullivan County. This information is also included in the CATS Short-Range Transit Operations Plan. Transit service options, described in Chapter V, are based on the analysis of existing services, the transit demand analysis, and transportation resources. These options form the basis for recommendations provided in Chapter VIII.

Chapter VI describes various coordination strategies considered for Sullivan County. These strategies range from communication and cooperation to consolidation of services.

Community input is described in Chapter VII. Two outreach efforts were conducted by the CMP—contacts with employers in Sullivan County and a survey of Charlestown residents. The results are described in this chapter.

Chapter VIII presents the recommended coordinated transportation services to be implemented in Sullivan County. Chapter IX provides the implementation plan to be followed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section reviews the background information that led to the current planning process, starting with an overview of the legal reasons, followed by a description of the steps and processes that have occurred in the past two years.

In August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. SAFETEA-LU established a federal mandate for public transit/human service coordination planning.

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Starting in fiscal year 2007, SAFETEA-LU requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before transportation service providers may acquire funding under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC - Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs. The FTA's Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) defines coordination as *"a process by which two or more organizations interact to jointly accomplish their transportation objectives"* (2004). These organizations may include public, private, and not-for-profit transportation services, human services providers, and other entities that represent citizens who have special transportation service needs. Citizens with specialized transportation needs are an important focus of the coordination planning process, as the FTA has provided guidance that coordination plans should *"identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services."*

This new regulation led to the development of the Coordination Public Transit Services Transportation Plan. The purpose of this plan was to create a list of comprehensive strategies to assist agencies, transportation service providers, and stakeholders in coordinating public transit and human service transportation efforts in Sullivan County. The specific goals for the plan include:

- Identifying unmet transportation needs.
- Identifying transportation service gaps (i.e., unserved and underserved areas) and overlaps (i.e., service redundancies).
- Completing an inventory of existing public transit and human service transportation providers.
- Identifying strategies to maximize the use of limited transportation resources through coordination.
- Enhancing mobility within and between communities.
- Increasing access to jobs, schools, medical centers, and other essential human services.
- Utilizing transportation investments and grant funding more efficiently.
- Increasing citizen awareness of public transit and human service transportation providers and programs.

Description of the Coordination Process to Date

The Sullivan County Community Mobility Project (CMP) assumed the role of project Advisory Committee to provide input and guidance throughout the development of the first coordination planning effort. The CMP is a cooperative effort of 29 local service providers, elected officials, state department representatives, funding participants, and community members. The planning effort included the following elements:

- Demographic profile
- Description of existing services
- Transportation and coordination needs
- Coordination strategies

The Governor’s Task Force on Community Transportation has set the direction for all coordination efforts across New Hampshire. The task force studied and provided recommendations and policies to establish a coordinated, interconnected, and accessible statewide transportation system in New Hampshire. The recommendations from this task force were used as the basis for the development of coordination strategies in Sullivan County, and were used in the implementation plan developed as part of this effort. The findings of the task force’s work are published in the *Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services report (Statewide Coordination Plan)* completed by Nelson-Nygaard Consulting Services. The *Statewide Coordination Plan* recommends an “institutional and geographic framework” for coordinating services. This framework includes a Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC) to oversee coordination policies at the state level, ten Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) to implement coordination and monitor providers at the regional level, and ten regional brokers called Regional Transportation Coordinators (RTC).

The SCC will be comprised of major funding agencies and other stakeholders acting primarily as an advisory body. However, the SCC can have some policy and approval powers. The Statewide Coordination Plan recommended that SCC be charged with “setting coordination policies, assisting regional efforts as needed, and monitoring the results.” The SCC will directly oversee the RCC and will have

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the ability to approve or reject the RCC's selection of the RTC. At the operational level, however, the SCC will not have the power to execute contracts. Therefore, no funding will flow through the SCC.

The RCC will be comprised primarily of organizational members and can include regional representatives of funding agencies and service providers. The RCC will work with the providers to create local service designs, implement coordination policies, and provide feedback to the SCC relative to policies. The RCC will provide direct oversight of the respective RTC. Each of the ten RCCs will have the following responsibilities, according to the *Statewide Coordination Plan*:

- Implementing coordination initiatives and policies in the respective region.
- Selecting, guiding, and monitoring the RTC.
- Working with the RTC to develop the "local service design," including determining how service is delivered and how interregional trips are coordinated.
- Providing feedback to the SCC on coordination policies.
- Nominating or replacing the RTC.

The RTC will essentially act as a regional transportation "broker" and can be a service provider, public entity, or private firm. According to the *Statewide Coordination Plan*, the purpose of the RTC is to "coordinate the service delivery of customers of sponsoring organizations so as to maximize the use of scarce resources and combine rideshareable trips sponsored by different organizations." At the operational level, the RTC will contract directly with state agencies and/or other groups purchasing transportation services. The RTC will have the following responsibilities, according to the *Statewide Coordination Plan*:

- Developing and/or maintaining a database of customers in the region that have been deemed eligible for service by each sponsoring organization.
- Processing service requests from registered customers, according to the policies of the applicable sponsoring organization.
- Scheduling trips via appropriate transportation service providers.
- Monitoring the performance of transportation providers to ensure that the service quality and cost efficiency goals of each sponsoring organization are met.
- Performing customer service functions, responding to information requests, "same-day issues," and complaints.

- Preparing and submitting reports and invoices as required by each sponsoring organization.

According to the *Statewide Coordination Plan*, a Sullivan County RCC was proposed. However, it is recognized that Sullivan County's connections with southern Grafton County and northern Cheshire County will allow some flexibility in the final area determination.

Also, a coordination program is currently in place at the statewide level. ServiceLink "is a network of ten community-based ServiceLink Resource Centers and forty satellite offices with the common purpose of providing information and supportive referrals about resources for older adults, adults living with disabilities, chronic illness, and their families and caregivers." On a case-by-case basis, the ServiceLink system directs people to the existing human service or transportation resources that best meet their individual needs. There is a ServiceLink Resource Center for Sullivan County on Pleasant Street in the City of Claremont, with satellite offices in the Town of Newport and at the Claremont Senior Center. The chief objectives of the service are to reduce duplication and enhance coordination in the delivery of human services.