

EXCERPTS FROM FINAL LOCHSTP REPORT

GAPS IN SERVICE

Identified “Gaps”

The gaps have been grouped into categories: Low Income, Elderly and Disabled, special populations, and Other.

Low Income:

- Access:
 - To jobs (odd shifts by time of day and day of week, esp. weekends)
 - To training and interviews
 - To appointments (medical, treatment, state agencies)
 - To shopping centers and grocery stores
 - From homeless shelters
- Traveling with children, access to daycare
- Difficulty in paying fares
- Problems especially acute for those in neighborhoods with infrequent or no bus service

Elderly and Disabled

- Out of town medical (especially specialists)
- Weekend and after hours medical appointments – dial-a-ride services don’t cover this in many communities.
- Weekend service
- Early morning, late afternoon, evening service
- Multiple trips, ongoing need (dialysis, chemo, job)
- Personal business (funerals, volunteer work)
- Last minute requests
- Door to door or door through door service

Special Populations

Persons with Mental Health and/or Addiction Issues:

These needs were identified through direct conversations and meetings with both consumers and service providers.

- After hours discharge
- Family visits to facility
- Midday, weekend service
- Access to appointments, agencies
- Access to jobs, education (especially for those who live outside of the transit service area)
- Transportation is essential for health and recovery (access to leisure activities, hobbies)
- Access to veteran facilities in Newington and West Haven

Persons with Developmental Disabilities:

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- Many individuals live at home or in supported living arrangements, which do not include transportation
 - Transportation to jobs. A very specific and large need: the new Walgreen's distribution center in Windsor will open many jobs, but individuals will need transportation.
 - Transportation to day services
- Long, circuitous routes can be a problem for this population
- Growing need for accessible vans (where previously a standard van was suitable for a social service provider)

Adult Day Centers:

- Ability to serve individuals is limited by availability of transportation
- Daily reimbursement rate is intended to cover transportation and services

Frail elderly

- Need door to door or door through door service

Other Needs (these gaps may fall under more than one of the above groupings)

- Need for escort or aid for some travelers
 - However, this can be time consuming, makes a seat unavailable for a rider, and might raise liability issues. What would the requirements be for an aid or escort?
- Need to put bikes on buses. This improves accessibility for low-income individuals.
- Evening services are important to enable individuals to reach cultural events and meetings. Sometimes they can get to an event, but can't get back home.
- Inefficiencies between groups of services/providers recorded (e.g., inability to transfer between dial a ride services, lack of knowledge of other services)
- Fear of possible liability when services are coordinated.
- Difficulty in getting qualified drivers
- Restrictions on who can be served, and type of vehicle required, can limit providers' flexibility and ability to provide services.
- Medical related services – physical therapy, exercise class, might not be covered by town dial a ride.
- Getting to church on Sunday – this can be very difficult for the disabled since many fixed route services do not operate on Sunday.
- Lack of evening and weekend services to cultural and sporting events.
- The waiting time (pick up window) for dial a ride service and ADA service is too long.
- Passengers with mental health illnesses sometimes feel a stigma when riding public transportation. Especially if their illness manifests itself very visibly. Drivers need to be sensitized to this.
- Same day dial a ride service is needed for urgent trips.

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- Where transit service is infrequent, a transfer may expire before the bus to which the individual needs to transfer has arrived (can drivers be instructed to issue the transfer at the end of the trip? Or can the transfer time be extended?)
- Door to door services, especially for the frail elderly.
 - Some transit drivers don't know how to treat individuals with disabilities.
- For individuals with mental illness, there may be anxiety about using transit. Need to be familiar with the vehicle and how the system works.

Location-Specific Needs:

- Regular transit service to/from Southington and Plymouth
- Town of Meriden identified no service to/from Southington in the South Central COG LOCHSTP process.
- Jobs Access forums identified no service from New Britain/Plainville to/from Route 10 in Southington where many job opportunities exist.
- Requests for transit service from Terryville to/from Bristol for employment, shopping, and medical appointments.
- Transit service to Bristol for low-income populations – job related needs.
- Transit service to Enfield for low-income populations – job related needs.
- ADA: Sunday service to shopping center on Townline Road in Rocky Hill
- Transit service to Russell Road in Newington – many medical and recovery facilities are located here.
- More transit service on the Berlin Turnpike. Town social service departments sometimes send homeless individuals here for low cost motel rooms. Also for job related transportation.
- CTTransit service beyond West Farms to Target (for employment and shopping – West Hartford Social services will give Target gift cards to help those in need in the community.)
- Service from Enfield to Rockville hospital (dial a ride)
- Service from the Shoreline to medical appointments in Middletown
- Service to the new Walgreen's distribution center in Windsor (a large percentage of the employees will be disabled).
- Transit service to the Department of Labor in Enfield.
- The Thompsonville area of Enfield is home to many individuals (low-income and or disabled) who need transit service, especially to reach jobs in nearby suburban locations.
- Low-income individuals living in East Windsor have difficulty traveling to jobs, education opportunities.
- Retail establishments: Tri City Plaza (Vernon), Buckland, Kmart Plaza, and Manchester Parkade need regular service.