

APPENDIX B

CHAPTER 1:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PLANNING PROCESS

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), with assistance from Midstate Regional Planning Agency (MRPA) and Central CT Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), took the lead in developing the plan for the LOCHSTP planning area. The planning area consists of the following regions: CRCOG, CCRPA, and MRPA.

Since the adoption of the plan in June of 2007, CRCOG, working with MRPA and CCRPA, has worked to refine our understanding of the needs for human services transportation in the planning area and we have communicated with stakeholders regularly to learn of new approaches to providing transportation and changes in gaps and or needs.

Several meetings have been held to insure that stakeholders have a forum for providing input. In addition, we sought to utilize the human services transportation planning group in evaluating how other transit funds (other than New Freedom and Jobs Access) might be utilized in the region. The following summarizes the meetings held since the original plan adoption:

9/1/2007- Dial a Ride Coordination meeting: All dial a ride operators in the region were invited to discuss possibilities for coordination. Discussion items:

- Sedans are sometime more appropriate vehicles for transportation of some individuals. It provides a smoother ride.
- The dial a ride operators are very interested in how the establishment of Independent Transportation Networks (ITN) can supplement their service.
- Providing stipends to individuals for trips (that they can use to reimburse a neighbor, for example) has proven less costly in some locations (Mesa, AZ than dial a ride.)
- Transportation to work for the disabled who live outside of the ADA area is a very large problem.
- Current coordination efforts are limited. Some that existed in the past were dropped when funding did not continue.

10/16/2007- Dial a Ride Coordination meeting: Discussion of some opportunities for coordination – coordinating trips to large generators, coordinating training, did not advance. The group requested that the next meeting include local operations that provide some coordination – the Bristol Community Organization, the Red Cross, Hockanum Valley Community Council, Greater Hartford Transit District and Logisticare.

10/23/2007- Listening Session sponsored by Transit for Connecticut. This session, held at the North End (Hartford) Senior Center, gave us an opportunity to hear the public speak to transit needs. Important information learned about human services transportation needs include:

- The importance of available transportation as part of a continuum of care enabling the elderly to stay in their homes.
- Users of dial a ride spoke of the inconvenience of needing to schedule ahead, of circuitous routing.
- A disabled individual spoke of the need for inclusive public transportation that enables independence.

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- More evening and weekend service on public transportation is needed.
- Several individuals spoke of the need for public transportation in Enfield, particularly connecting Thompsonville to the mall and community college. This service would help with shopping, medical, employment, and school transportation for a population that is disabled, low income and/or elderly.

10/29/2007 - Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: discussion of new state transit funding and how it might be used to meet human services transportation needs. (the state funding was subsequently rescinded due to budget constraints.)

12/5/07 – DOT LOCHSTP meeting at SCRCOG: all planning regions met to discuss the plan update process.

2/5/08 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: further discussion of how additional state funding for transit could be spent in the region.

2/7/08 – Dial a Ride Coordination meeting: The attendees learned of several models for coordination for dial a ride service, some ideas for future examination: joint purchase of software, sharing of vehicles, coordination for driver training.

3/5/08 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: further discussion of how additional state funding for transit could be spent in the region.

5/5/08 – Meeting with disabled individual and agency representatives: This meeting, coordinated by the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, involved a discussion of possible options for providing an inclusive, sensible, affordable, equitable, available to everyone, public transportation system. We discussed the availability of dial a ride services in some places in the country for the general public.

5/15/08 - Connectability Conference: Connect-Ability is an effort of the CT Department of Social services Bureau of Rehabilitation services and has been working to focus attention upon the transportation needs of the disabled. At this meeting we learned about strategies for human services transportation in other parts of the state, including coordinated dial a ride and accessible taxis.

5/19/08 – Meeting at Walgreens Distribution Center: This meeting was designed to enable us to learn the transportation needs of disabled individuals who will work at the new distribution center, the timeframe when these new employees will need to get to work, and any special arrangements already being considered.

6/26/08 - Meeting with Lou Shulman of Norwalk Transit to discuss their model for dial a ride coordination.

6/30/08 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: further discussion of how additional state funding for transit could be spent in the region.

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8/4/08 – Meeting regarding transportation to Walgreens Distribution Center: Surveys of potential employees indicate a concentration of potential employees needing transportation to Walgreens who live in Enfield and Hartford. Subsequent to this meeting, CTTRANSIT extended bus service to Walgreen's to meet first shift transportation needs.

8/20/08 – DOT LOCHSTP meeting at DOT: all planning regions met to discuss the plan update process.

10/1/08 – CTTRANSIT Bus Users Forum: This was another opportunity for us to learn about transportation needs from the public. A need that came up at this meeting that we had not listed in our previous plan: the difficulty that disabled individuals have accessing buses in the winter – snow banks make bus stops impassable.

10/27/08 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: Attendees stressed the need for accommodating last minute trips (perhaps with accessible taxis). Even with an extended CTTRANSIT route to the Walgreen's facility, there is a large unmet need for transportation from Enfield to Walgreens. The group also suggested that a car sharing program (especially an accessible car owned by a disabled individual) could help to meet some of the needs of individuals with disabilities.

12/10/08 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: The group discussed what types of projects would be eligible for new Freedom funding and reviewed the draft project proposal request form. The group identified specific transportation needs: Route 5 corridor from Hartford to Enfield, and Hebron Avenue in Glastonbury.

12/15/2008: The Project Proposal form was sent out to all stakeholders and interested parties and was advertised on the CRCOG website on December 15.

1/27/09 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: The committee reviewed the requests for funding and heard a presentation by the town of Enfield on transportation needs in the Thompsonville section of town.

2/24/09 – Coordinated Planning Committee meeting: the committee reviewed the requests for funding and agreed to recommend all the proposals for funding.

3/3/2009 – Meeting with Dial a Ride Operators in the Farmington Valley to discuss their interest in a coordination study.

In all our work we sought to keep the process inclusive and transparent and we believe that the number of meetings we have held is a testament to those efforts.

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CHAPTER 2:

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

There has been little change in the transportation services available in the region since the 2007 plan was adopted. The same operators provide fixed route and dial a ride transportation services.

We have had some changes in the Jobs Access program as we continue to coordinate services provided with employment needs. Service to the Stew Leonard's store on the Berlin Turnpike has been added, allowing a number of individuals to obtain jobs there. Also, service has been added to a food warehouse (C&S Foods) in Suffield. Recently, the van that had been operated for a number of years by McDonalds in Avon was dropped by the employer. In addition, over the state fiscal year 2009 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) the CT Department of Social Services has reduced the funding they provide to the Jobs Access program and we have had to cut the frequency of some routes. In making any cuts, we have tried to avoid removing trips that would result in individuals being unable to hold a job. The cuts make transportation less convenient, but still possible. State budget cuts may require deeper cuts in the next 2 fiscal years.

Another notable change since the coordinated plan was adopted in 2007 has been the startup of an Independent Transportation network in north central CT. This organization, serving Enfield, Somers, Bloomfield, Windsor, East Windsor, South Windsor, Windsor Locks, East Granby and Granby, began making trips in October of 2008. They offer rides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Currently their service is available to seniors and those with visual impairments. They are fully committed to expanding the service to individuals with disabilities as the program moves forward. Already they provide transportation to the Walgreens facility for one individual with a visual impairment.

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CHAPTER 3

GAPS IN SERVICE

Our planning efforts since the adoption of the original plan did not uncover new gaps, but they helped us to identify the most pressing gaps.

These are listed below:

- Transportation to work for low income individuals and individuals with disabilities who live in areas with no transit service. This is an issue for individuals living in Enfield, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Southington, and Terryville.
- A very specific need is for transportation to the new Walgreen's Distribution Center for potential employees with disabilities. The Walgreens Distribution Center plans to hire a workforce that is 1/3 individuals with disabilities.
- Last minute, urgent trip needs for individuals with disabilities who cannot rely on taxis as others who do not have cars at their disposal can.

The Bureau of Rehabilitation services, working with Walgreen's and social service agencies seeking to place individuals in jobs at Walgreen's, identified what areas are most in need of employment transportation to the new distribution center. This analysis indicated particular need in Windsor Locks and Enfield, with lesser but still significant needs in East Granby, Suffield and Stafford.

We also assessed, enumerated, and prioritized transit service ideas through a series of meetings with the Coordinated Planning Committee. The meetings were held to develop a list of prioritized services to be considered for state funding (Service Initiative funding). This funding was eventually rescinded when state budget deficits became apparent, but this happened after we had developed a list of priorities for new service funding. The development of the list relied heavily upon the identification of gaps in the June 2007 Locally Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan and upon the input of the stakeholders in this planning process. The services proposed for this funding are listed below, with a note of the population expected to be served:

- CTTRANSIT Hartford: Silver Lane and Burnside Avenue Sunday service, serving low income individuals, particularly for access to retail jobs.
- CTTRANSIT Hartford: Silver Lane and Burnside Avenue night service, serving low income individuals, particularly for access to jobs.
- CTTRANSIT New Britain: New route, Plainville to Southington, along Route 10, serving low income individuals, providing access to jobs in this commercial corridor.
- CTTRANSIT Hartford: Saturday service to Middletown. Access to jobs and commercial areas, serving low income individuals.

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- CTTRANSIT Hartford: New service to Rentschler field commercial area and new Goodwin College campus, this will serve low income individuals providing access to jobs and training.
- CTTRANSIT Hartford: evening service on Hartford/New Britain route. This will serve low income individuals, for access to jobs.
- Enfield: Monday through Saturday deviated fixed route service within Enfield. This will serve the extensive needs identified during the planning process, including access to jobs, services, and retail for disabled individuals and low income individuals.
- Terryville: Deviated fixed route service linking Bristol and Plainville, Monday through Saturday. This will serve the needs of disabled and low income individuals seeking jobs.
- CTTRANSIT Hartford: add a night trip to service from downtown to the University of Hartford. This will serve employees of the University and students.
- CTTRANSIT Hartford: extend the Bradley Flyer to serve Walgreens Distribution Center, accommodating the staggered start times of the first shift. This will serve the needs of low income individuals and disabled individuals, since the distribution center is designed to employ a work force that is 1/3 individuals with disabilities.

When the funding for the service initiative program was rescinded, it became apparent that the need to provide service to Walgreen's was critical – training at the facility began in June of 2008 with hiring in full swing in the fall of 2008. CTTRANSIT Hartford extended a local route to provide service to meet the shift start and end times. This service is much more limited than what was proposed as part of the service initiative program, and it provides a less convenient ride, but it does serve the need. ADA certified disabled individuals living within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a transit route are able to access Walgreen's via paratransit.

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CHAPTER 4

IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIES

Over the course of the development of this plan the stakeholders and committee members discussed how the gaps in service could best be met. The strategies identified include:

- Purchase and operate accessible taxis
- Provide transit service in areas with concentration of low income and disabled individuals where none currently exists:
 - Enfield
 - Terryville
 - Southington, route 10 corridor
 - East Windsor
 - Glastonbury, Hebron Avenue corridor
 - Provide evening and weekend service on transit routes without this service
- Expand dial a ride offerings throughout the region

Request for Proposals and Recommended Projects

On December 15, 2008, the request for project proposals, as developed by ConnDOT was issued. The request was sent to the full list of stakeholders, representing over 130 organizations, including private for profit, non profit, social service agencies, local municipal departments, state agencies and transportation operators. The rfp was also listed on our CRCOG website. At the December 10th Planning Committee meeting, attendees were encouraged to submit projects that would meet the gaps identified, and make use of the identified strategies.

We received 4 proposals by the application deadline. We also solicited a proposal for a coordinated dial a ride program by working directly with Farmington Valley towns who had contacted CRCOG for advice on how they might provide their dial a ride services more efficiently. The project proposals were all for New Freedom funding, we did not receive any applications for new Jobs Access projects. With state cutbacks in expenditures for the Jobs Access program, we will be prioritizing cutbacks in this program over the next several months and will preserve the most critical services.

The five requests for projects are summarized in the table below. With the exception of the Farmington Valley project, these were all discussed at the Planning Committee meeting on February 24, 2009 and the committee endorsed the recommendations. The Farmington Valley project developed as a pilot project to illustrate the benefits of coordinating dial a ride services and potentially expanding availability through efficiencies gained.

We were disappointed to receive only one proposal that dealt with the very real needs for public transit in areas not currently served (as listed above.) The Enfield proposal will begin to address the needs in that town, although transit available to the general public will still be lacking. Our plan update clearly illustrates the need for more transit funding for service in areas currently unserved and the need to develop affordable transit strategies for these less dense areas.

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SUMMARY OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

Applicant	Description	Cost	Recommendation
ITN/North Central CT, Inc.	Continue developing a financially self-sustaining community based regional volunteer driver transportation system for the elderly and visually impaired in North Central Connecticut. This provides door to door and arm through arm service for frail seniors. It is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.	\$60,000 operating, \$30,000 each of 2 years	<p>This funding will match other funds that come into the agency (it will be overmatched). This ITN is currently very committed to meeting the needs of visually impaired individuals and plans to expand to other disabilities. They currently provide transportation for an individual to a job at Walgreens Distribution Center and they are reaching out in order to serve others at this location. The ITN serves all the towns that were identified as needing transportation service to the Walgreen’s facility.</p> <p>Recommendation: fund full request.</p>
GHTD	Purchase and operate two accessible taxi’s in the Capitol Region.	Total project cost is \$193,323.65 \$61,407.50 operating \$106,700 capital \$17,574.87 admin \$7,641.25 other	<p>The total request for New Freedom funding is \$139,751.62. This will be matched with \$53,572.03. This fulfills an important need. The operator plans to utilize the accessible vehicles for trips for individuals that need an accessible vehicle only, making the vehicles available for those who need them most. The operating subsidy is needed as an incentive to interest the private operator in providing the service. The GHTD as the grant recipient, will require the taxi company to provide detailed reporting on how the vehicles are utilized so that they will be able to put a reasonable limit on report time. The GHTD will also advertise the availability of the accessible taxis.</p> <p>Recommendation: fund full request.</p>

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Applicant	Description	Cost	Recommendation
Town of Enfield	Expand eligibility for town dial a ride services to include people with all disabilities, allowing any Enfield resident who qualifies for SSDI to become a member. Expand service by converting a parttime position to fulltime status.	\$66,379 operating \$33,189 each of 2 years	The town will provide the 50% match through program fees, New Freedom funding of \$33,189 is requested for each of 2 years. This request fulfills a very important gap identified in our planning effort – transportation for individuals with mental health or addiction issues, particularly in the Enfield area. Recommendation: fund full request.
Kennedy Center	Conduct 10 Public Transit 101 workshops throughout the North Central region.	\$20,000 operating	Total project cost is \$20,000, this project seeks \$10,000 of New Freedom Funding and \$10,000 of state match. This meets an identified gap. Recommendation: fund full request.
Farmington Valley Towns: submitted by Town of Simsbury on behalf of Avon, Canton, East Granby, Farmington, Granby, and Simsbury	Conduct a study of regionalizing dial a ride services in the Farmington Valley. Consulting services will be sought for this effort.	Total project cost is \$60000, request is for \$30,000	The Town of Simsbury will provide the 50% match through in kind staff services dedicated to the project. At a minimum, the towns expect that they will be able to jointly contract for a dial a ride contractor upon the conclusion of the study, but they hope the study will identify additional avenues for cooperation and coordination. Recommendation: fund full request.

TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Year 1
Year 2

\$306,130.62
\$242,941.62
\$ 63,189