GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATED COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PREPARED FOR THE GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

AND

TRANSPORTATION LINCOLN COUNTY GASTON COUNTY ACCESS GASTONIA TRANSIT TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION OF CLEVELAND COUNTY IREDELL COUNTY AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have both made a commitment to tying eligibility for various Federal transit funds and programs to approved coordinated comprehensive transit plans created by local transit agencies. In the summer of 2008 the four transit providers in the Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization (LNRPO) jointly committed to participating in developing a plan. The LNRPO and participating transportation providers committed to conducting the planning process consistent with NCDOT and FTA guidance. The LNRPO existed to assist member governments in Cleveland, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties, as well as the northwest portion of Gaston counties with meeting their transportation and transportation planning needs. Cleveland, Gaston, and Lincoln counties merged with the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in 2013, which was renamed the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (G-C-L MPO). This plan therefore now includes all of Gaston County, including fixed routes services provided through Gaston Transit.

A second reason for conducting this planning process was the dramatic rise in fuel prices, as well as congestion and commute times for area workers. Public transportation, in addition to car and van pooling, is increasingly viewed as an alternative to driving alone. The dramatic rise in ridership for the area's express bus routes is an example of this new demand. The area public transportation providers have struggled with trying to provide commuter-oriented services while continuing to serve their traditional transit-dependent populations.

The planning process identified opportunities for efficiencies through coordination, as well as improved marketing to increase utilization of existing services. This was especially apparent in car and van pooling, as well as the development of park and ride lots throughout the Study Area. It also identified logical linkages with existing transit services to help create a truly regional system.

The previous recommendations for new services include both commuter and traditional demand-response services. The US 321 corridor between Gastonia and Hickory was seen as appropriate for fixed-route service, particularly to the Lincoln County Industrial Park. This recommendation was addressed in 2010 with the initiation of the North-South Mountaineer, a daily route that travels between Boone and Charlotte, with stops in Hickory, Lincolnton and Gastonia. The US 74 Corridor between Shelby and Gastonia should carry fixed-route bus service as an extension of Gastonia and Charlotte Area Transit System fixed-route services. Cleveland County also needs expanded service to meet the needs of residents requiring dialysis, and other medical and human services.

This plan makes reasonable recommendations for new services to meet the identified needs of a variety of populations. When implemented, it will provide a

range of options to help residents and workers in the Study Area travel for their daily needs.

I. FEDERAL REGULATORY BACKGROUND

For more than twenty years, the federal government has been working to better coordinate human service transportation activities it funds.

In 1985, during an oversight hearing on Rural Transportation, Congress heard testimony prompted by concerns of the lack of federal coordination between programs, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Aiming to better coordinate activities, the Secretaries of HHS and DOT signed an agreement establishing the Joint DOT/HHS Coordinating Council on Human Service Transportation (CCHST) in 1986. Since the CCHST's creation, the CCHST has concentrated efforts to identify barriers to coordinated transportation. At one time, the agencies identified sixty-four factors that transportation and human service representatives believed were barriers to transportation coordination. Barriers included uncertainty regarding federal responsibilities for transportation, fragmented accounting and reporting procedures, uncertainty in using resources for recipients other than program constituents, and prohibition against charging fares under the Older Americans Act.

To further support coordination, Congress included several provisions in its 1998 passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA –21), Public Law (PL) 105-178. Most notable was the provision to require Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), predecessor program to FTA 5316 JARC program, projects to be part of a coordinated public transit–human services transportation planning process. Under the recent surface transportation program reauthorization, called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21, eligible JARC activities will be consolidated with Section 5307-Urbanized Area Formula Grants and Section 5311-Rural Area Formula Grants, starting with FY14-15 funds. This consolidation provides additional flexibility within the 5307 and 5311 programs.

The recent Section 5317 (New Freedom) program was also consolidated within as a part of the MAP-21 authorization. The eligible activities for New Freedom projects are now eligible under the continuing Section 5310 program, which exists to provide enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities. This change will also take effect with FY 14-15 funds.

In February 2004, President George W. Bush released an Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination to improve assistance to those who are transportation disadvantaged. The Executive Order aims to implement coordination of transportation services to operate in the most cost effective and time efficient manner possible.

Within the February 2004 Executive Order, the President established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).

The functions of the CCAM are to:

- Promote interagency cooperation
- Establish appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services
- Facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources
- Encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available
- Formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels

CCAM includes leadership from eleven federal departments:

- DOT
- HHS
- Labor
- Education
- Housing and Urban Affairs
- Agriculture
- Justice
- Interior
- Veterans Administration
- Social Security Administration
- National Council on Disabilities

In May 2005, the CCAM issued a report to the President with recommendations for breaking down federal barriers to transportation for all transportation-disadvantaged populations. The report detailed action plans for each of the eleven federal agencies who comprise the CCAM. Additionally, in 2005 the CCAM launched the United We Ride website, www.unitedweride.gov.

While it has been a long process, the federal government is working to strengthen its coordination requirements for human service transportation activities. In August 2005, Congress included coordination provisions in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), PL 109-059. SAFETEALU specifically added a coordination requirement to the newly created Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310), Job Access Reverse Commute Program (Section 5316), and New Freedoms Program (Section 5317). FTA requires projects funded through the Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP). The new MAP-21 program no longer includes Section 5316 and Section 5317 as stand-alone programs, but their activities are included in the continuing Section 5310 and Section 5311 programs, which are both used by G-C-L MPO Community Transportation Systems.

A CPT-HSTP identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A CPT-HSTP uses all available resources to supply transportation services efficiently and without redundancy in trips. Development of the CPT-HSTP must have the input and cooperation of transit agencies, social service agencies, community agencies, and the public.

In 2006, the CCAM issued two policy statements that take important steps to bring federal programs together to help people with disabilities, older adults, and lower income families get the transportation they need for their day-to-day mobility.

The CCAM policy statements focus on two key areas: (1) coordinated human service transportation planning and (2) vehicle sharing. These policies support communities and organizations receiving federal funding to plan transportation services together and to share resources. The policies were included as part of the recommendations in a 2005 report to the White House on Human Service Transportation Coordination. Each department on the CCAM will be taking actions to implement these policies.

II. PLAN APPROACH

The LN RPO and the community transportation providers from the four member counties, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, and Iredell, met in early 2012 to begin the update process for the existing 2008 plan. The motivating factors for the initial process partially pragmatic- there were record fuel prices in the summer of 2008, but also a new requirement for a CPT-HSTP in order to become eligible to respond to the NCDOT call for projects for prior year New Starts and JARC funds. No transit provider could apply for these funds unless they had completed a comprehensive assessment of their needs.

G-C-L MPO staff met with area transit leaders several times in early and mid-2012 to review data on performance metrics, public input, and general plan outputs. The group developed a web-based survey, as well as a paper survey, to distribute to transit riders and human service agency leaders. These surveys were distributed in May 2012. LNRPO staff then coordinated with the area transit agencies to establish public input meetings to all the public to review existing and recommended transit services. In July 2013 MPO staff met with Gaston Transit staff to include them in the plan development, based on guidance from the NCDOT, and due to consolidation of the MPO and RPO.

The Study Area (Figure 1) is shown below, and is now includes all of Gaston County. The G-C-L MPO currently covers the entirety of Cleveland, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties. Iredell County is retained in this plan, although it is now a member of the Charlotte Region Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO). Southern Iredell County will be a part of any future plan recommendations made by CRTPO, while northern Iredell County will be a part of any plan recommendations made by the Unifour RPO.

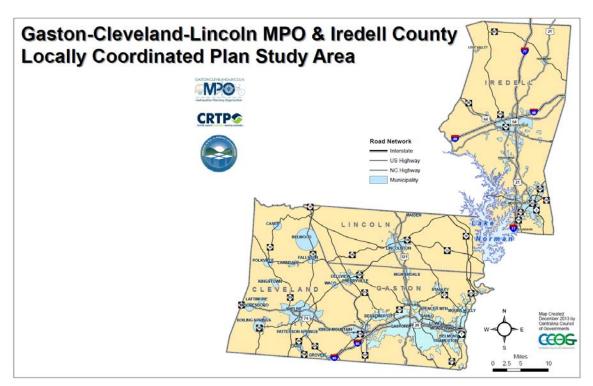


Figure 1: Study Area

III. DEMOGRAPHICS

The study area for the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO includes Cleveland, Lincoln, and Gaston counties, as well as Iredell County. Together, this area includes approximately 540,000 residents. This population total has been increasing, and is expected to total approximately three-quarters of a million residents by 2040. The G-C-L MPO population lives in a variety of environments: low-density rural areas, burgeoning suburban "bedroom communities", and established small and medium sized-cities.

The transportation needs of these residents likewise vary. There is a significant amount of inter-county travel by the residents and employees within the G-C-L MPO Study Area, which underscores the need to regularly develop and update a plan for the four counties.

| | Lincoln | Iredell | Gaston | Cleveland |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| | County | County | County | County |
| Total Population | 78,265 | 159,437 | 206,086 | 98,078 |
| Persons over 65 | 10,361 | 20,445 | 27,294 | 14,677 |
| Persons in Poverty | 10,295 | 19,015 | 33,210 | 19,948 |
| Persons with Disability (18 or older) | 10,753 | 18,021 | 30,131 | 14,450 |
| Workers Unemployed | 3,794 | 6,810 | 11,641 | 5,478 |
| Number of Workers | 38,623 | 78,640 | 102,178 | 46,117 |
| Households without Vehicles | 1,031 | 2,551 | 4,716 | 2,755 |

Figure 2: Base Demographics

Source: 2006-2010 and 2008-2011 American Community Survey 3-year estimates and 2010 census

The area public transportation agencies primarily serve the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those without transportation options to meet their needs. For all four counties the number of elderly, persons with a disability, and persons living in poverty has increased over the last decade.

Growth is expected to continue in the region, despite the current downturn in new housing starts. The projected growth in the G-C-L MPO is expected primarily in southern Iredell County, eastern Gaston County, and eastern Lincoln County. Northwest Gaston County and Cleveland County are expected to continue growing at a low rate for the foreseeable future.

Those residents requesting transit services, left residing in the rural portions of the study area are the most difficult to serve because of the dispersed housing and

distant destinations. This is demonstrated in the tables below, which show the commuting patterns for the four-county area.

| | County Where Residents Work | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|
| County Residents | Cleveland | Gaston | Iredell | Lincoln | Mecklenburg | Catawba |
| Cleveland | 25,925 | 6,125 | 186 | 1,580 | 2,2,80 | 380 |
| Gaston | 3,235 | 53,445 | 185 | 2,740 | 27,395 | 590 |
| Iredell | 131 | 230 | 51,535 | 280 | 10,535 | 2,000 |
| Lincoln | 485 | 3,515 | 805 | 14,680 | 8,235 | 4,430 |

Figure 3: Commuter Flows

Source: 2006-08 American Community Survey

The above table shows that there is a significant amount of cross county commuting in the G-C-L MPO Study Area. Over one-quarter of all jobs in the Study Area are performed by workers traveling from another county. This total has increased from 2000, and is expected to continue to rise due continue changes in employment centers, as well as high growth in eastern Lincoln County and southern Iredell County.

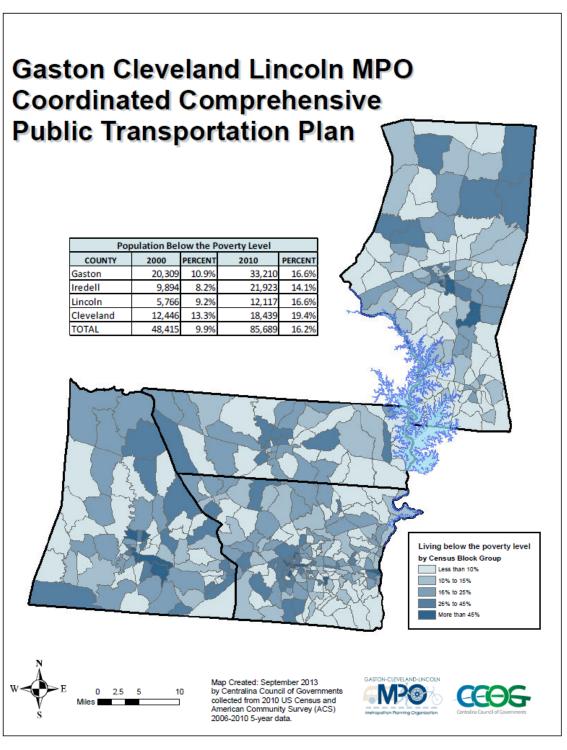


Figure 4: Poverty Levels in Study Area

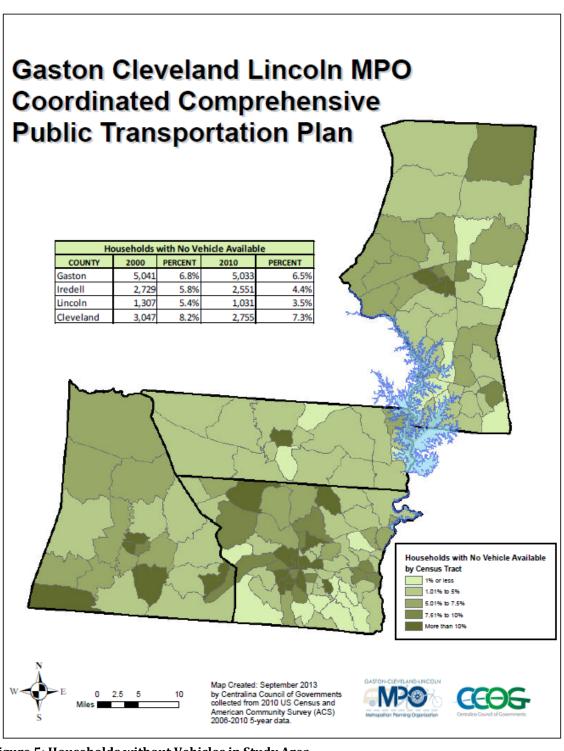


Figure 5: Households without Vehicles in Study Area

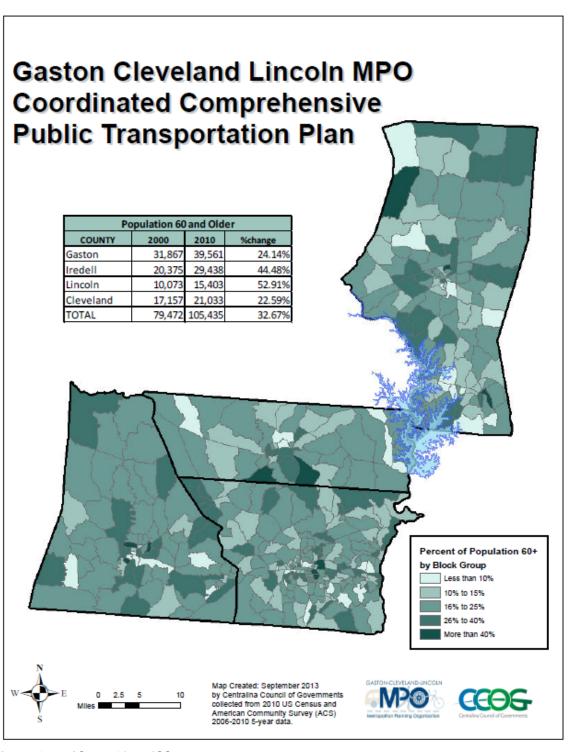


Figure 6: Residents 60 or Older

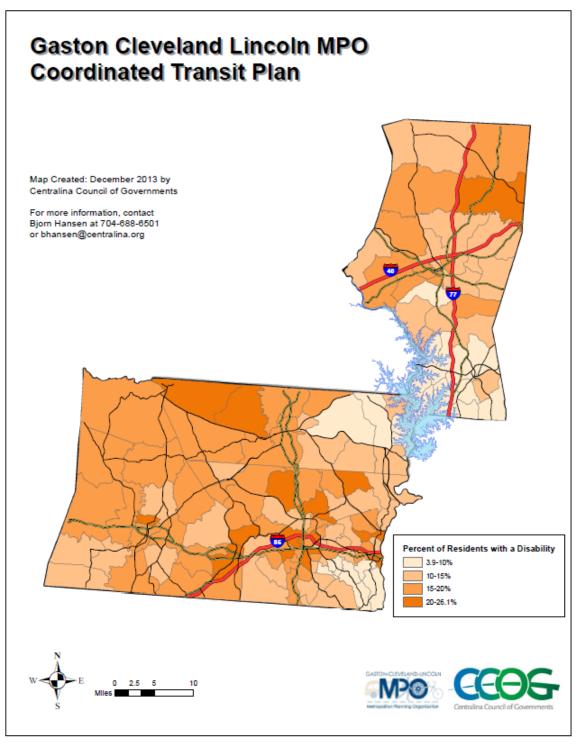


Figure 7: Residents with Disabilities

IV. INVENTORY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO Study Area is served by a variety of public transit systems. These services range from demand response "dial-a-ride" service to van pools, fixed-route scheduled service, daily inter-city rail service, and inter-city bus service. The G-C-L MPO Study Area was previously served by two express bus routes from Eastern Lincoln and Southern Iredell counties into uptown Charlotte. There is a proposal to implement commuter rail from southern Iredell County into uptown Charlotte, although this is currently in the evaluation stage with the Charlotte-Area Transit System and the Norfolk-Southern Railroad.

A. Community Transportation Systems

The three Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO counties and Iredell County each have their own community transportation system. These systems typically serve a transit-dependant population and their medical needs. These services are open to the public, and do carry "general population" riders, as well as operate circulator routes in Shelby, Lincolnton, and Statesville. These circulator routes carry a small fraction of the overall ridership. Each of the systems do make outreach and coordinate with employment centers to provide services, but like other Community Transportation Systems they do not carry a significant number of commuters. Between 2008 and 2011 the total number of trips provided per day by the four systems increased from 1,545 to 1,830 trips per day, for an overall increase of 20 percent.

| System | Number of Vehicles | Average Trips Served per Day (2011) | Days of Service | Hours of Service | Cost per Trip |
|--|-----------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Transportation Lincoln County | 17 | 275 | Monday- Friday | 5 AM- 6 PM | \$1.00 |
| Gaston County ACCESS | 29 | 650 | Monday- Friday | 4 AM- 7PM | \$1.00 |
| Transportation Administration of Cleveland County | 26 | 405 | Monday- Friday | 6 AM- 6 PM | \$1.25 |
| Iredell County Area Transit System | 28 | 500 | Monday- Friday | 5 AM- 7:30 PM | \$1.00 |

Figure 8: Existing Community Transportation Service Characteristics Table

B. Commuter-Oriented Transit Services

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) previously operated two express bus routes into the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO Study Area: one to east Lincoln County, and one to Mooresville. Lincoln County and Mooresville helped pay for the

operating costs of the two routes, although CATS paid for all capital and administrative costs associated with the routes. These were peak-hour services, operated Monday- Friday. These routes were successful in attracting commuters out of their vehicles and into buses but these services were discontinued in 2010 and 2011, respectively, by the governing boards for the two communities. The services were terminated due to a continuing concern over the low farebox recovery ratio for the services.

CATS still operates an express route service into Gastonia. Gaston Urban Area MPO staff surveyed riders in June 2013 to collect information about rider demographics, destinations, and motivation for using transit.

| Route | 2010 Average Daily Ridership | Years Service Operated | Location of Stops | Scheduled Service |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Lincoln County Express | 150 | 2004- 2010 | NC 16 and NC 73 | AM and PM peak-hour service |
| Mooresville Express | 120-170 | 2001- 2010 | Intersection of Brawley School Road and Williamson Road | AM and PM peak-hour service |
| Gastonia Express | 200-260 | 2001- current | Bradley Transit Center and Abbey Plaza (Belmont) | AM and PM peak-hour service |

Figure 9: Express Bus Statistics Table

C. Van Pools

CATS operates a van pool program for those persons commuting to Mecklenburg County. There are currently 17 van pools operated by CATS originating in the G-C-L MPO Study Area, which is a decline from 23 van pools operating in 2008. These services are funded by CATS and the actual riders. There is no financial support from the G-C-L MPO governments. The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) operates one van pool that operates between Iredell County and Forsyth County, and one between Iredell County and Davie County. There are currently no other formal van pool programs operating in the study area.

D. Fixed-Route Services

Gastonia Transit is the fixed-route transit system for the City of Gastonia. Gastonia Transit provides nearly 300,000 miles and 21,000 hours of service to carry nearly 300,000 trips per day. Fixed-route service on eight separate routes is available 5:30 AM-6:30 PM Monday-Friday, and 8:00 AM-6:00 PM on Saturdays. Complementary ADA para-transit service is available at the same times as fixed-route services. A map of the service routes is on the next page.

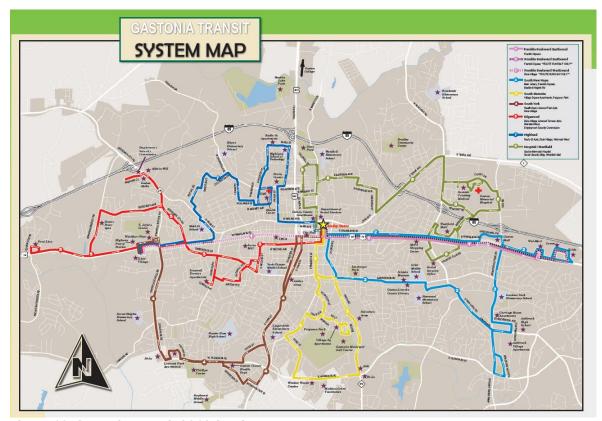


Figure 10: Gastonia Transit 2013 Service Routes

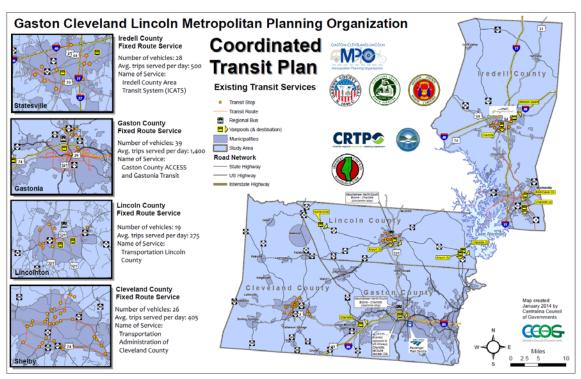


Figure 11: Current Transit Services

E. Inter-City Service

In 2010 the NCDOT contracted with CoachAmerica to provide inter-city bus service between Charlotte and Boone. This route is called the N-S Mountaineer. Ridership has steadily increased since inception. Ridership for FY 10-11 averaged 300 passengers per month. Ridership for FY 11-12 nearly doubled to approximately 600 passengers per month. The majority of trips originate or terminate in Charlotte, but there is some utilization of the stop in Lincolnton. This service operates seven days a week, with two round trips made each day.

Amtrak also operates one daily route through Gastonia. This route allows passengers to travel to the Northeast, as well as southwest towards New Orleans. Greyhound Bus Lines also operates two routes per day through Statesville, with a north-south line connecting to Charlotte along I-77, and an east-west route connecting to the Triad and Asheville along I-40.

V. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

FTA Sections 5310 and 5311 (and previously 5316 and 5317) programs require that projects be derived from a locally developed CPT-HSTP. This chapter discusses the specific goals, who can apply, examples of eligible projects, potential funding, and the Designated Recipient (DR) through these programs.

For each program, FTA will publish the annual apportionment in the Federal Register following the enactment of the annual DOT appropriations act. Funds are available during the FY of apportionment plus two additional years. For example, funds apportioned in FY 2006 are available until the end of FY 2008 (September 30, 2008).

FTA will add any unobligated funds remaining at the end of the period of availability to the next year's program apportionment and will reapportion the funds among all the states.

A. Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307)

The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes Federal resources available to urbanized areas and to the NCDOT for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more that is designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, which includes Charlotte and Gastonia. This funding program has historically not been available to the community transportation systems in the RPO by virtue of their "rural" status. Based on the 2010 census, significant portions of Iredell County, and lesser portions of Cleveland and Lincoln Counties, are now part of the Charlotte and Gastonia urbanized areas, respectively. This means Section 5307 funds now flow to the designated recipients in the area based on population, population density, and fixed-route transit services in these other counties.

Eligible Recipients

Funding is made available to designated recipients that must be public bodies with the legal authority to receive and dispense Federal funds. Governors, responsible local officials and publicly owned operators of transit services are to designate a recipient to apply for, receive, and dispense funds for transportation management areas pursuant to 49USCA5307(a)(2). Generally, a transportation management area is an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or over. This applies to the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) for the urbanized areas in Iredell and Lincoln Counties, although Transportation Lincoln County would not be eligible to receive 5307 funding until it registers with the National Transit Database and reports on deviated fixed route services in the eastern portion of the county. The Governor or Governor's designee is the designated recipient for urbanized areas between 50,000 and 200,000. This applies to the Gastonia Transit System for the urbanized areas in

Cleveland County. The TACC would also need to coordinate with Gastonia and the NTD to determine available funding for the Kings Mountain portion of the county.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include planning, engineering design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement of buses, overhaul of buses, rebuilding of buses, crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. All preventive maintenance and some Americans with Disabilities Act complementary para-transit service costs are considered capital costs. The community transportation systems in the affected counties could then request services be provided in their areas, or provide services themselves and receive funding directly, based on their urbanized area population. The specific funding levels and service provision will require discussions between Iredell County, Lincoln County, and the City of Charlotte.

For urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000, operating assistance is an eligible expense. In these areas, at least one percent of the funding apportioned to each area must be used for transit enhancement activities such as historic preservation, landscaping, public art, pedestrian access, bicycle access, and enhanced access for persons with disabilities. This additional flexibility will help Cleveland County and Gaston County in providing additional services based on these funds, to be determined through discussions with the City of Gastonia.

For urbanized areas with 200,000 in population and over, funds are apportioned and flow directly to a designated recipient selected locally to apply for and receive Federal funds. For urbanized areas under 200,000 in population, the funds are apportioned to the Governor of each state for distribution. A few areas under 200,000 in population have been designated as transportation management areas and receive apportionments directly from the FTA.

Allocation of Funding

Funding is apportioned on the basis of legislative formulas. For areas of 50,000 to 199,999 in population, the formula is based on population and population density. For areas with populations of 200,000 and more, the formula is based on a combination of bus revenue vehicle miles, bus passenger miles, fixed guideway revenue vehicle miles, and fixed guideway route miles as well as population and population density.

Match

The Federal share is not to exceed 80 percent of the net project cost, The Federal share may be 90 percent for the cost of vehicle-related equipment attributable to compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and the Clean Air Act. The

Federal share may also be 90 percent for projects or portions of projects related to bicycles. The Federal share may not exceed 50 percent of the net project cost of operating assistance.

B. Elderly Individuals & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program. In cases where public transit was inadequate or inappropriate, the program awarded grants to private non-profit organizations to serve the transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. FTA (then the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) apportioned the funds among the States by formula for distribution to local agencies, a practice made a statutory requirement by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). In the early years of the program, many of the sub-recipient non-profit agencies used the vehicles primarily for transportation of their own clients. Funding for the Section 16(b)(2) program, as it was then known, ranged between \$20–35 million annually until the passage of ISTEA, when it increased to the \$50–60 million range. ISTEA also introduced the eligibility of public agencies under limited circumstances to facilitate and encourage the coordination of human service transportation. Increasingly, FTA guidance encouraged and required coordination of the program with other Federal human service transportation programs. In lieu of purchasing vehicles, acquisition of service in order to promote use of private sector providers and coordination with other human service agencies and public transit providers was made an eligible expense under ISTEA. Other provisions of ISTEA introduced the ability to transfer flexible funds to the program from certain highway programs and the flexibility to transfer funds from the Section 5310 program to the rural and urban formula programs.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) enacted in 1998, reauthorized the Section 5310 program. TEA–21 increased the funding levels for the Section 5310 program but made no significant program changes. In 2005, Congress enacted SAFETEA–LU. SAFETEA–LU introduced the requirement that projects funded with 5310 funds be derived from a locally developed, coordinate public transit-human services transportation plan; removed the flexibility that funds can be transferred to Section 5311 for Section 5311 program purposes during the fiscal year apportioned, if funds were not needed for Section 5310 program purposes; introduced a seven State pilot program that allows selected States to use up to one-third of the funds apportioned to them for operating assistance; and allowed transfers to Section 5307 or 5311, but only to fund projects selected for Section 5310 program purposes.

Program Overview: This program (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides formula funding to States for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of population for these groups of people.

Funds are obligated based on the annual program of projects included in a statewide grant application. The State agency ensures that local applicants and project activities are eligible and in compliance with Federal requirements, that private not-for-profit transportation providers have an opportunity to participate as feasible, and that the program provides for coordination of Federally assisted transportation services assisted by other Federal sources. Once FTA approves the application, funds are available for state administration of its program and for allocation to individual sub-recipients within the state.

Eligible Recipients: States are direct recipients. Eligible sub-recipients are private non-profit organizations, governmental authorities where no non-profit organizations are available to provide service and governmental authorities approve to coordinate services.

Eligible Activities: Capital expenses that support transportation to meet the special needs of older adults and persons with disabilities.

Statutory References: 49 U.S.C. 5310

Funding Availability: Section 5310 funds are available to the States during the Fiscal Year of apportionment plus two additional years (total of three years).

Allocation of Funding: Section 5310 funds are apportioned among the States by a formula which is based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State according to the latest available U.S. census data.

Match: The Federal share of eligible capital costs may not exceed 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. The 10 percent that is eligible to fund program administrative costs including administration, planning, and technical assistance may be funded at 100 percent Federal share. The local share of eligible capital costs shall be no less than 20 percent of the net cost of the activity.

Other Program Highlights: Title 49 U.S.C. 5310, as amended by SAFETEA-LU and MAP-21, requires a recipient of Section 5310 funds to certify that projects selected are derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5310 authorizes the formula assistance program for the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. FTA refers to this formula program as "the Section 5310 program." FTA, on behalf of the Secretary of Transportation, apportions the funds appropriated annually to the States based on an administrative formula that considers the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each State. These funds are subject to annual appropriations.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5310(a)(1) authorizes funding for public transportation capital projects planned, designed and carried out to meet the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5310(a)(2) provides that a State may allocate the funds apportioned to it to:

a. a private non-profit organization, if public transportation service provided by State and local governmental authorities under Section 5310(a)(1) is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate; or

b. a governmental authority that:

- (1) is approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities; or
- (2) certifies that there are not any non-profit organizations readily available in the area to provide the special services.

C. Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas (5311)

The Formula Grants For Other than Urbanized Areas is a rural program that is formula based and provides funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas, with population of less than 50,000. The goal of the program is to provide the following services to communities with population less than 50,000:

- Enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation.
- Assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in non-urbanized areas.
- Encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all transportation funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services.
- Assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation.
- Provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation.

The Rural Transit Assistance Program and the Tribal Transit Program are funded as a takedown from the Section 5311 program.

Eligible Recipients: Section 3013 (s) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), amend eligible recipients to include a State or Indian tribe that receives a Federal transit program grant directly from the Federal Government. A sub-recipient of the program includes a State or local governmental authority, a nonprofit organization, or an operator of public transportation or intercity bus service that receives federal transit program grant funds indirectly through a recipient.

Eligible Activities: An eligible recipient may use the funding for capital, operating, and administrative expenses for public transportation projects that meet the needs of rural communities. Examples of eligible activities include: capital projects; operating costs of equipment and facilities for use in public transportation; and the acquisition of public transportation services, including service agreements with

private providers of public transportation services.

The state must use 15 percent of its annual apportionment to support intercity bus service, unless the Governor certifies, after consultation with affected intercity bus providers that the needs of the state are adequately met.

Statutory Reference: 49 U.SC. 5311

Funding Availability: Funds are available the year appropriated plus two years (total of three years).

Allocation of Funding: FTA apportions Section 5311 funds to the States by a statutory formula using the latest available U.S. decennial census data. Eighty percent of the statutory formula is based on the non-urbanized population of the States. Twenty percent of the formula is based on land area. No State may receive more than 5 percent of the amount apportioned for land area. In addition, FTA adds amounts apportioned based on non-urbanized population according to the growing States formula factors of 49 U.S.C. 5340 to the amounts apportioned to the States under the Section 5311 program.

Match: The Federal share of eligible capital and project administrative expenses may not exceed 80 percent of the net cost of the project. For operating, the Federal share may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating cost of the project. For projects that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, they may be funded at 90 percent Federal match.

D. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (Section 5316)- This program was rescinded under MAP-21 and consolidated with Section 5311 program starting in FY2014.

The goal of the 5316 Program is to improve access to transportation services to employment and employment-related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Toward this goal, the FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation needs of eligible low-income individuals, and of reverse commuters regardless of income. The program requires coordination of federally assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of federal resources.

Examples of Projects

Funds from the 5316 program are available for capital, planning, and operating expenses that support the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment and to support reverse commute projects.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home service
- Shuttle service
- Expanding fixed-route public transit routes
- Demand-responsive van service
- Ridesharing and carpooling activities
- Transit-related aspects of bicycling (such as adding bicycle racks to vehicles to support individuals who bicycle a portion of their commute or providing bicycle storage at transit stations)
- Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides
- Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
 - o Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules
 - o Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare
 - o recipients and other low-income individuals
 - o Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles,
 - o ridesharing, carpooling
 - Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
 - o Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs
 - o Acquiring GIS tools
 - o Implementing ITS, including customer trip information technology
- Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation
- information, scheduling, and dispatch functions
- Deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool van routes or service from urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban work places
- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace
- Facilitating the provision of public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation.
- Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals

- Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
- o Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
- o Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers
- o Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations and Human Service
- o Organizations customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
- Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs; and
- Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of GIS mapping, GPS, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a standalone capital expense).

Who Can Apply: There are three categories of eligible sub recipients:

- o Private non-profit organizations
- o State or local governmental authority
- o Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services

How to Apply: Eligible applicants will be able to apply for funds from the NCDOT in response to an announced call for applications for such funds. The projects selected must be derived from a CPT-HSTP.

E. New Freedom Formula Grant Program (Section 5317)- This program was rescinded under MAP-21 and consolidated with the Section 5311 program.

The goal of the New Freedom Formula Grant Program is to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. Only 60 percent of persons with disabilities (between the ages of 16 and 64) are employed, according to the 2000 Census. The New Freedom program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the ADA. The ADA includes access to certain transportation services as a right. The New Freedom program is not intended to fund such services.

Examples of Projects- Section 5317 Program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services beyond those required by the ADA and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.

For the purpose of the New Freedom Program, "new" service is any service or activity that was not operational on August 10, 2005, and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). In other words, if not for the New Freedom Program, these projects would not have consideration for funding and proposed service enhancements would not be available for individuals with disabilities.

F. New Public Transportation Services beyond the ADA

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.

- Enhancing paratransit beyond minimum requirements of the ADA. ADA
 complementary paratransit services can be eligible under New Freedom in
 several ways as long as the services provided meet the definition of "new:"
 - Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA
 - Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services
 - o Incremental cost of providing same-day service
 - o Incremental cost of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not as a reasonable modification for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system
 - o Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination
 - o Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for common wheelchairs under the ADA and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs
 - Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA
- New "feeder" service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail, and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. This may include:

- Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
- Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA
- o Improving signage, or wayfinding technology
- o Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including ITS
- o Travel training

The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom Program:

- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, and/or vanpooling programs
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers
- Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs. Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals
 - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
 - o Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
 - o Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers
 - Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations and Human Service Organizations, customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
 - Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs
 - Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of GIS mapping, GPS Technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems.

VI. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RPO staff developed an on-line and paper-based public input survey to solicit input. These forms were distributed on to riders of four area systems. The on-line survey was developed primarily for TAB members and the general public. Both survey instruments were distributed in Cleveland, Iredell, and Lincoln counties in March and April of 2012. The survey instruments were distributed in Gaston County in October and November of 2013. A total of 20 Iredell, 55 Lincoln County transit system users, and 101 Gaston ACCESS and Gastonia Transit users completed the paper form, while 16 residents of Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties completed the on-line survey. Copies of the paper survey and on-line survey results are located in the Appendix.

The users of the systems were generally satisfied with the services, with several hand-written notes stating how they rely on the service to meet their transportation needs. The service-related improvement recommendations included:

- 1. Not enough public transportation services available
- 2. Extended service hours are needed
- 3. Extended weekend and night services are needed
- 4. Additional services for employment trips are needed
- 5. Additional services are needed to meet underserved areas
- 6. Additional services are needed to serve older and/or disabled adults

The suggested education, marketing and customer service improvements included:

- 1. Additional public education efforts on available services, programs, and eligibility
- 2. More advertising is needed to publicize services
- 3. More participation by Transit Advisory Board and local elected officials

Representatives of human service agencies were specifically queried in the on-line survey about the needs of their clients (Questions 9 and 10). They responded that additional on-demand transportation for non-medical purposes (such as for cultural or recreational trips) was a common need for both intra and inter-county trips.

A series of facilitated workshops were held to identify perceived needs, gaps, and barriers in the existing systems and to comment on the 2008 plan recommendations. Four workshops were held in the RPO:

- September 6, 2012 in Statesville
- September 12, 2012 in Lincolnton
- September 23, 2012 in Shelby
- October 23, 2012 in Gastonia

The four meetings for this process were attended by a total of 18 private citizens, Transit Advisory Board members, elected officials, and local planning and transit staff. The workshops were designed to present the 2008 plan recommendations,

current demographic information and existing service in the four-county area. Attendees were encouraged to provide input on what service recommendations from the 2008 plan should remain, be modified, or be deleted. The input is shown below, organized by topic. The comments included deleting a previously-recommended scheduled service from Boiling Springs to Shelby and to consider transit corridors along Brawley School Road, NC 150, NC 3 and US 21 in southern Iredell County. The attendees were supportive of the previous recommendations for the RPO area. The RPO, NCDOT and the participating transit agencies on then reviewed the responses in November and December 2012, and later in December 2013 to analyze the comments and prioritize the improvements that should be made. The 2013 meeting was necessary to review the results of Gaston ACCESS and Gastonia Transit survey results, which were gathered between October and November 2013. These prioritizations are shown in Section VII: Prioritization of Needs.

It is important to note that some of the perceived needs, gaps, or barriers that were identified may not be consistent across the entire RPO area.

The following is a summary of needs, gaps, and barriers identified through workshops and public comment and reflects the 2008 plan recommendations with modifications from the 2012 process.

A. Infrastructure Issues

- a) Need for park and ride locations to serve car pools, van pools, and scheduled bus service
- b) Need for additional transit vehicles for Cleveland, Iredell, Lincoln and Gaston public transportation systems

B. Coordination and Communication Issues

- a) Information and coordination services, including communication of available services and service eligibility
- b) Coordination among agencies and providers Awareness of available services, notably www.sharetheridenc.org and van pool programs, by employers and commuters

D. Fixed Route & Demand Response Service Issues

- a) Coordinating community transit service stops with express bus and van pool routes
- b) Expand service capacity (expanded hours and weekend service) for all four current transit service providers to meet medical, and human service needs, as well as for non-medical purposes such as recreation and shopping. These services would be focused on the needs of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and veterans, who are the primary system users.

E. Services primarily for workers

- a) Need for outreach to employers and workers regarding available services
- b) Provide outreach for www.sharetheridenc.org
- c) Increase rural van pool programs available to workers and employers

F. Other Issues

- a) Need for stable, dedicated local funding streams to allow for better planning by service providers
- b) Increase general awareness and advocacy for existing programs and services

VII. CLASSIFICATION OF NEEDS

The participants in the G-C-L MPO Coordinated Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan understand that there is a very limited set of funding programs available to support implementation of the recommendations of this plan. The area transit providers have evaluated the strategies listed by the public and themselves and identified those which offer the most benefit to the public. The recommendations have been broken down according to those found in Section VI. Needs Assessment. A map of the recommendations is provided on the following page.

It is important to note that many of these issues can be addressed concurrently. Coordination and Communication Issues will likely not require significant funds to resolve- just the commitment to address. The establishment of new services will require prioritization on the part of the applying and implementing agency. Many of the identified needs do not complete with other services in the county, and so they were not prioritized.

A. Infrastructure Issues

Need: Additional transit vehicles, particularly in Cleveland, Lincoln and Gaston Counties, to provide additional service and reduce demand of existing fleet

Strategy: Apply for FTA Section 5310 and 5311 funds to help pay for additional vehicles.

Strategy: Dedicate local revenue stream for transit services in order to allow for more reliable planning and service provision.

Need: Dedicated public lots for car pools, van pools, and scheduled bus service to pick up and drop off passengers.

Strategy: Incorporate recommendations from Plan into local subdivision and development regulations to require or recommend provision as a part of site plan.

Strategy: Apply for CMAQ (where available) grants to fund purchase and development of public parking lots.

Strategy: Work with NCDOT where excess public land is made available to develop public parking lots.

Need: Up-to-date multimodal facilities.

Strategy: Apply for 5307, CMAQ, and TIGER grant funds to construct the Gastonia Multimodal Transportation Center.

B. Coordination and Communication Issues

Need: Regularly communicate with area agencies to share best practices and other information.

Strategy: Participate in regular transit agency meetings, to be held through Centralina Mobility Management Agency.

Need: Authority and predetermined agreements to coordinate client transfers at county lines and client delivery across county lines.

Strategy: Develop Memoranda of Understanding between county transit providers to allow for transfers and for appropriate billing for transporting clients across county lines, ideally leading towards an integrated scheduling software program.

Need: Single source for identifying services and eligibility for the entire Study Area

Strategy: Support Mobility Management Agency for Gaston, Lincoln, and Iredell Counties, which will provide a "one call-one click resource" to readily identify routes and services to provide transportation for client, regardless of client location or provider used.

C. Other than Transit-based Services

Need: Increased awareness of existing van pool operations

Strategy: Place links to CATS and PART van pool programs on municipal web sites.

Strategy: Educate chambers of commerce, workforce development organizations, and employers about eligibility and process for existing area van pool programs.

Need: Increase van pools opportunities for workers and residents in the Study Area

Strategy: Apply for CMAQ (where eligible), 5310, and 5311 funds to help pay for operating new van pool routes as identified in Figure 12; through public, private, and non-profit providers.

Strategy: Educate employers, workforce development agencies, and chambers of commerce of availability of van pool programs.

Need: Awareness of existing ride-matching web sites

Strategy: Place links to www.sharetheridenc.org on municipal, economic development, chamber of commerce, workforce development, and other relevant web sites.

Need: Increased capacity for non-medical trips, such as recreational and shopping

Strategy: Support proposed Mobility Management Agency to develop volunteer transportation program for Gaston, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties.

D. Fixed Route & Demand Response Service Issues

Need: Better integrate demand-response, local and express bus routes

Strategy: Establish drop off and pick up times for local and demand-response services that allow for seamless transfer between bus routes

Need: More frequent and extended service to human service providers, commuters, and the general public.

Strategy: Apply for Section 5307, 5310 and 5311 funds to provide for additional local service in all four counties

Strategy: Dedicate local revenue stream for transit services in order to allow for more reliable planning and service provision.

Need: Increased availability of service along major corridors in the study area.

Strategy: Support continued daily scheduled service between Gastonia, Lincolnton, and Hickory, as a part of a larger service between Boone and Charlotte.

Strategy: Apply for 5310 and 5311 funds to help pay for a new deviated route between Shelby and the northern communities in Cleveland County.

Strategy: Apply for 5310 and 5311 funds to support a deviated route between Lincolnton and Eastern Lincoln County.

Strategy: Apply for 5310 and 5311 funds to help pay for a new deviated route between Shelby, Kings Mountain and Gastonia.

Strategy: Apply for 5307 funds from CATS to help pay for new deviated routes between Statesville, Mooresville, and northern Mecklenburg County.

Strategy: Apply for 5310 and 5311 funds to increase frequency of service between Gastonia and the Gaston College campus in Dallas.

Strategy: Apply for 5307 funds to add another bus to Gastonia Transit's fleet that will reduce headways on existing routes and extend fixed-route service to an area of identified demand along S. Union Road and to facilities that offer job training and other skill development services.

Strategy: Apply for 5307 funds to provide an urban circulator shuttle bus in Downtown Gastonia that will provide frequent service between social services and other destinations.

E. Expanded Hours of Service

Need: Increased availability of service in urban areas for evenings and weekends.

Strategy: Increase coordination between Gastonia Transit and Gaston ACCESS to consider providing circulator service from Bradley Station for riders using last routes of day.

Strategy: Apply for 5310 and 5311 funds to help pay for additional fixed-route service on weekends.

Strategy: Apply for 5307 and 5310 funds to help pay for additional hours of service on existing days and to add Sunday service.

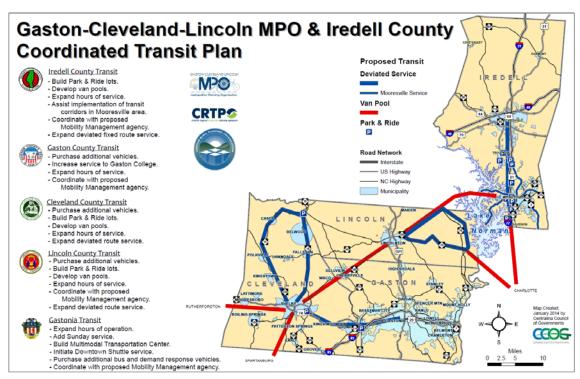


Figure 12: Transit Recomendations

VIII. COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS

Recommendations for transit services are contained in a variety of transportation, land use, and economic development plans for the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO area. The following is a list of recommendations, by geography, for the transit needs of the area.

A. Cleveland County

a) Cleveland County, in coordination with the municipalities within the county, adopted a Comprehensive Transportation Plan in 2011. This plan referenced recommendations from the 2008 LNRPO Plan.

B. Iredell County

- a) The 2008 Iredell County Comprehensive Transportation Plan references the Iredell County Area Transportation System, but no specific recommendations are provided, save for those already identified by ICATS. These improvements include increasing the size of the fleet, utilizing technology to increase performance and efficiency, and participation in regional communication activities.
- b) The Iredell County 2030 Land Use Plan identifies several corridors leading to Mooresville as appropriate to encourage complementary land uses to support such service.
- c) The 2007 Troutman Comprehensive Transportation Plan included recommendations for three park and ride lots:
 - a. Perth Road and Autumn Leaf Road
 - b. US 21 and Ostwalt Amity Road and,
 - c. Eastway Drive and Winecroff Street
- d) The 2007 Mooresville Comprehensive Transportation Plan included recommendations for significant express and local bus service and park; park and ride lots; as well as for commuter rail service to Mecklenburg County. These recommendations are shown in the map on the following page.
- e) The 1997 Statesville Thoroughfare Plan did not include any recommendations for transit provisions. The NCDOT-Transportation Planning Branch is in the beginning phases of updating this Plan and has referenced the recommendations of the 2008 GCL MPO Plan.

C. Lincoln County

a) The 2006 Lincoln County Comprehensive Transportation Plan makes recommendations for express bus service from Lincolnton to Charlotte, as well as a park and ride location at NC 16 and NC 73. This park and ride has since been implemented as a part of a Wal-Mart shopping center.

D. Rural Gaston County

Cherryville, Kings Mountain, and Gaston County are currently developing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the portions of the county not included in the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the eastern part of the county. This plan

will include recommendations from the 2008 Plan, although due delays to its update schedule may reference the recommendations from this plan.

IX. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The needs identification step of this planning process made clear that there are many people and organizations willing, able and eager to be involved in creating a better coordinated public transportation-human service transportation system in the counties of the G-C-L MPO. The G-C-L MPO area is fortunate to have such strong commuting patterns, as well as employment and population growth, which allow the area transit providers to plan and provide effective services to meet the needs of a variety of populations in the Study Area.

The prioritized listing of identified needs, gaps and barriers in section VII includes the top ten items, but by far, the top issue at the workshops was expanding the days, hours and reach of the existing systems as development and employment move beyond the traditional borders of the systems of the G-C-L MPO. The desire for Sunday service, both for work and for socialization was frequently expressed as a part of the desire for expanded service.

The next most important need to the participants in the workshops as well as to people who commented outside of the workshops was for information about public transportation services. Other needs, gaps or barriers identified by people who were unaware of existing services that filled those needs further reinforced the need for information. Several who took the time to participate in this process made clear that there are gaps in the current systems of communication with people who have low vision.

The path to a truly coordinated system that fits the needs of most residents will be long, and possibly difficult, but it is an important goal. The diversity of the development patterns and the character of the communities included in the G-C-L MPO area are great, but the development of this plan is an important first step. Implementation will show the coordination, effectiveness, and need for comprehensive and coordinated public transportation services in the area.

X. PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation annually issues a call for projects through its Targeted Transit Assistance Program (TTAP) program for Federal Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 funds. Starting in 2013 this program will consolidate the 5316 and 5317 funds into 5310 and 5311 funds, consistent with MAP-21.

The NCDOT will award grants for expansion of service based on evaluating applications received through the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) program. The G-C-L MPO staff will apprise area transit providers of any upcoming application deadlines, as well as assist with grant applications. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will continue to coordinate their STI ranking process with local transit agencies as they develop and utilize a project selection process to award grants.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1



NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR LAKE NORMAN RPO

Serving Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties

In order to assess the transportation issues that need to be addressed in our community - a list of transportation needs have been assembled into the following survey. Please mark all those that apply to your experience.

Please return the survey to the Lake Norman RPO at 525 N. Tryon, 12th Floor, Charlotte, NC 28202 by October 30, 2012. Learn more about the RPO by going to www.lakenormanrpo.org or by calling Bjorn Hansen at 704-688-5501

You can also email surveys or comments to bhansen@centralina.org.

WHAT COUNTY DO YOU LIVE IN? CIRCLE ONE

| Cleveland | Gaston | Iredell | Lincoln |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Prioritize each surve | y question in accorda | nce to level of importa | ance using the following rankings: |

4- High Importance 2- Low Importance 3- Medium Importance 1- No Importance

SERVICE RELATED (include specific needs/gaps below for "high importance" categories)

| | Not enough public transportation services are available | |
|----------|---|--|
| Г | Extended service hours are needed | |
| | Extended weekend and night services are needed | |
| | Additional services for employment type trips are needed | |
| Г | Additional services are needed to meet underserved areas | |
| | More coordination of services are needed to provide out of county trips | |
| | Improve comfort and amenities on vehicles | |
| | Reduce trip length and time | |
| | Additional services are needed to provide shopping and recreational trips | |
| \Box | Additional services are needed to serve older and/or disabled adults | |
| ${}^{-}$ | Too much advanced planning is required to access transportation | |

EDUCATION, MARKETING & CUSTOMER SERVICE (include specific needs/gaps below)

| Additional public education efforts are needed on available services, programs & eligibility | |
|--|--|
| More information and materials need to be available on-line | |
| More information and materials need to be available in other languages | |
| More advertising is needed to publicize services | |
| More participation is needed by the Transportation Advisory Board | |
| More support is needed from local elected officials | |
| Service Providers need to be more "consumer friendly" | |
| More options are needed to make reservations | |
| Agency staffing levels should be adequate to provide the services needed in community | |

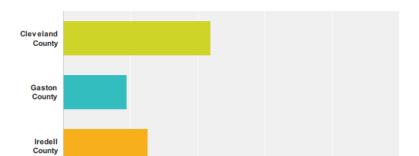
| SPECIFIC UNMET NEEDS OR GAPS: | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| OTHER COMMENTS: | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Appendix 2

Lincoln County

Lake Norman RPO Coordinated Community Transportation Plan

Q1 Where do you live (select one)? Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

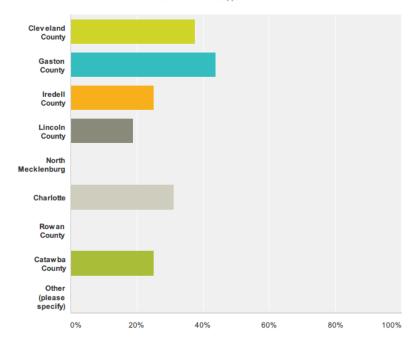


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|------------------|-----------|----|
| Cleveland County | 43.75% | 7 |
| Gaston County | 18.75% | 3 |
| Iredell County | 25% | 4 |
| Lincoln County | 12.50% | 2 |
| Total | | 16 |

20%

Q2 Where do you travel, or would like to travel, using public transportation for essential purposes (work, school, shopping, medical appointments, other regularly-scheduled appointments you have to attend) at least once a week or more? (mark all that apply)

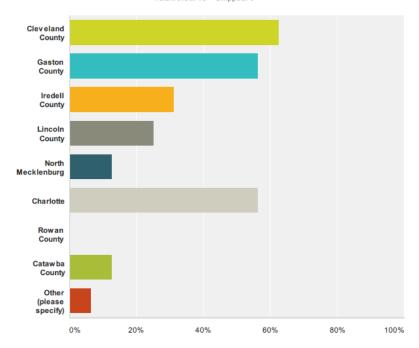




| Answer Choices | Responses |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Cleveland County | 37.50% 6 |
| Gaston County | 43.75% 7 |
| Iredell County | 25% 4 |
| Lincoln County | 18.75% 3 |
| North Mecklenburg | 0% |
| Charlotte | 31.25% 5 |
| Rowan County | 0% |
| Catawba County | 25% 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 0% |
| Total Respondents: 16 | |

Q3 Where do you travel for any purpose including work, school, medical appointments, recreational, cultural, shopping, or other purposes at least once a month? (mark all that apply)

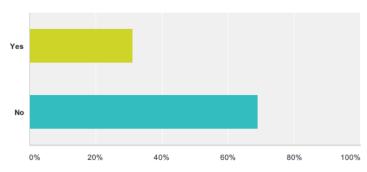




| Answer Choices | Responses |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Cleveland County | 62.50% 10 |
| Gaston County | 56.25% 9 |
| Iredell County | 31.25% 5 |
| Lincoln County | 25% 4 |
| North Mecklenburg | 12.50% |
| Charlotte | 56.25% 9 |
| Rowan County | 0% |
| Catawba County | 12.50% |
| Other (please specify) | 6.25% |
| Total Respondents: 16 | |

Q4 Do you currently use public transit at least once a month?

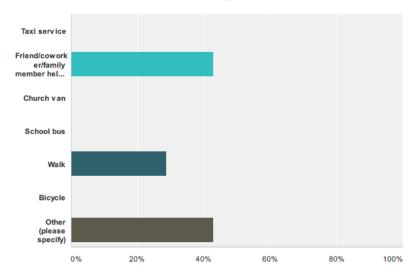




| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 31.25 % 5 |
| No | 68.75 % 11 |
| Total | 16 |

Q5 If you answered No, to the previous question, do you use one of the following alternatives to driving on a regular basis (mark all that apply)?

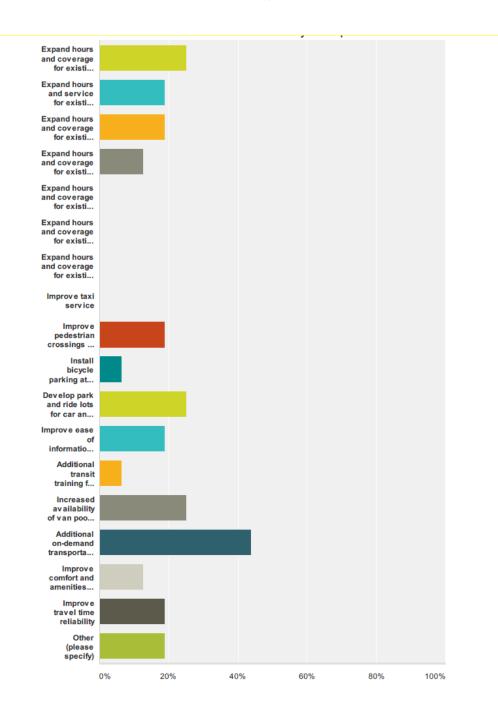
Answered: 7 Skipped: 9



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|---|
| Taxi service | 0% | 0 |
| Friend/coworker/family member helps take me to my appointments | 42.86% | 3 |
| Church van | 0% | 0 |
| School bus | 0% | 0 |
| Walk | 28.57% | 2 |
| Bicycle | 0% | 0 |
| Other (please specify) | 42.86% | 3 |
| Total Respondents: 7 | | |

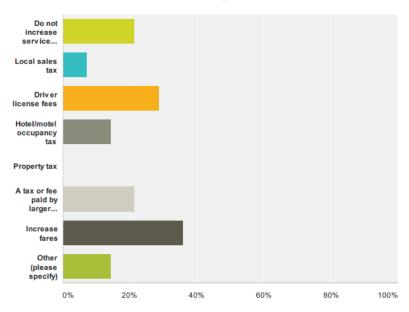
Q6 Pick the three most important public transportation-related transportation improvements for your county:

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Q8 While a variety of federal and state grants are available to fund transit service, often there is a need for a local match, especially for operating costs. Fares typically do not cover more than 1/3 of operating expenses even for the most successful transit systems in the U.S. What do you think are reasonable sources for the local governments to consider funding improvements in transit service (mark all that apply)?

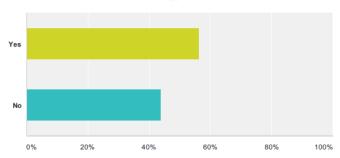




| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|---|
| Do not increase service levels or funding | 21.43% | 3 |
| Local sales tax | 7.14% | 1 |
| Driver license fees | 28.57% | 4 |
| Hotel/motel occupancy tax | 14.29% | 2 |
| Property tax | 0% | 0 |
| A tax or fee paid by larger employers in the region | 21.43% | 3 |
| Increase fares | 35.71% | 5 |
| Other (please specify) | 14.29% | 2 |

Q9 Do you work with Human Services Transportation needs clients as part of your job?

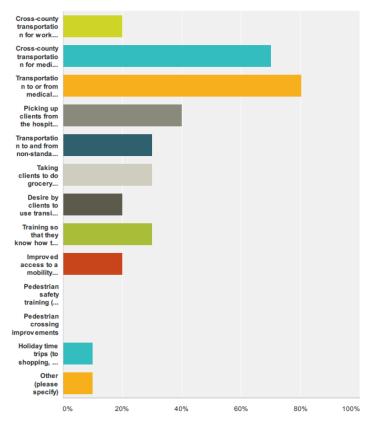




| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 56.25% | 9 |
| No | 43.75% | 7 |
| Total | | 16 |

Q10 If you answered Yes, to the previous question, pick three primary areas the you see as a need for clients served by your agency:

Answered: 10 Skipped: 6



Appendix 3



Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization Coordinated Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan Public Input Meeting Statesville, NC September 6, 2012

| NAME | REPRESENTING |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Elinortite | Iredell Co Planing |
| DON BARTELL | Statesville Phoning |
| DON BARTELL | HOORESVILLE-SOTRESELL CHAMBER |
| Ben St. Keleath | ICATS |
| Casti Kurtleh | City of Stokerille |
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Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization Coordinated Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan

Public Input Meeting Lincolnton, NC September 12, 2012

| NAME | REPRESENTING |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Andrew C Bryant | Lincoln County |
| Bjørn Harren | LINGH COUNTY LNRPD Staff |
| Bjorn Haven Rankombs | 11-4-1 (2-1-1) |
| Marti Hours | Lincoln County Sensor Sources Lincoln County Crowset Pleasont Gove UMCs |
| Floyd Foster Jim Sanders | Lincoln County |
| Jim Sanders | Crouset Measont Grove MMLs |
| MIKE MANIS | CEDC |
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Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization Coordinated Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan Public Input Meeting September 26, 2012

| NAME | REPRESENTING |
|----------------|---------------------------|
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| Stedanie Svi | & TACC |
| Bob DAVIS | TACC |
| Byin Hasen | Posse ofized |
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Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization Coordinated Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan Public Input Meeting Gastonia, NC October 23, 2012

| NAME | REPRESENTING |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hank Mahan | Croston MPO LNRAD-SEAT |
| Byon Harsen | LNRPO-STAFF |
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