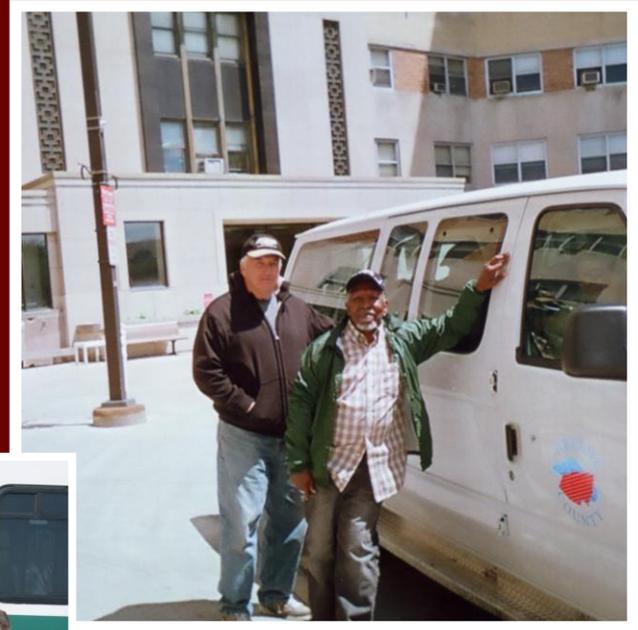


Greene County Transportation Needs Assessment



Prepared by Soule Consulting Services and the Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning, Greene County, New York.

Draft Final Plan, Comment Document, October 1, 2010

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Appendices Available Upon Request. Please contact Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning, Greene County, New York.

Thank You

Thank you to the members of the Transportation Advisory Committee who assisted in the development of this plan.

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1.0 Introduction

In cooperation with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), this Transportation Needs Assessment was commissioned by the Greene County Legislature to address growing concern about escalating costs of transportation as well as concern about public transit and human service agency client transportation services available to residents of Greene County. Changing demographics, ranging from new employment opportunities in the developing northern portion of the County, significant out migration of Greene County residents for employment, the growing need to travel to adjoining counties, aging of the population and increased numbers of persons with disabilities now living independently in the community, are all contributing to the need for more efficient public transportation services. Additionally, rising gasoline prices amidst stagnating economic conditions in the region are making it increasingly difficult to depend singularly on driving.

From the outset of this study, it has been clear that several key issues needed to be addressed. Improving coordination of transportation services operated or funded by human and social service agencies is a mandated requirement of the NYSDOT and

Federal Transit Administration (FTA). While past efforts by Greene County to coordinate public and human services client transportation services have been unsuccessful, this project offers a timely opportunity to reinvigorate the coordination process and expand service availability in the process. Moreover, the cost of operating public transportation is rising and current local funding levels appear insufficient to sustain the present level of service indefinitely into the future.

The purpose of this Plan is to identify ways to improve transportation services in Greene County and access to surrounding counties for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes. It will provide a framework for improved coordination between and among public transit providers and human service agencies. The overall goals of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan are to:

- Improve the delivery of transportation services for target population;
- Generate efficiencies in operation that can lead to economies of scale and enhanced levels of service;
- Encourage cooperation and coordination among transportation providers to minimize duplication of services; and
- Provide a framework for mobility management and the allocation of financial resources.

The Plan will guide decisions regarding the funding of specific projects that would receive funding through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), including Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), Section 5317 – New Freedom, and Section 5310 – Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities.

The Plan identifies priority projects that will address the transportation needs of the target population. Priority projects identified in the plan will be incorporated into the NYSDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which identifies all federally funded transportation projects that are being implemented. The Plan also identifies other initiatives that are underway or recommended to improve the coordination of public transit and human service transportation. The recommendations are intended to improve efficiency in the use of transportation resources in order to enhance access for clients, minimize duplication of service and provide more cost-effective service.

An objective assessment of both the services provided and financial mechanisms used to pay the local share costs of maintaining the system was necessary. Moreover, existing

routes and schedules have been in place for a number of years and an “operational tune-up” of the fixed route system is warranted.

1.1 The Need for a Coordinated Plan



In 2005 Congress passed the Federal transit legislation establishing a coordinated human services transportation planning process. SAFETEA-LU, *The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users*, requires that locally-developed coordinated public transit/human service plans be developed by local communities. SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation’s history.

SAFETEA-LU, in addition to its focus on safety, efficiency, and environmentally sound practices, targets programs for certain populations in order to improve mobility and transportation options; specifically two formula programs to address persons with low incomes and persons with disabilities. The provisions ensure that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple Federal programs. A coordinated plan for human services transportation enhances transportation access, minimizes duplication of Federal services, and encourages the most cost effective transportation possible. Many levels of coordination are possible, sharing rides, vehicles, and funding are the primary focus areas. However, other opportunities for coordination exist, sharing maintenance, training, purchasing, information technology, and intelligent transportation systems.

1.2 Executive Summary

The Greene County Legislature, with FTA and NYSDOT funding assistance, commissioned this Transportation Needs Assessment to address concerns about public and human service agency client transportation services available to the residents of Greene County. The study was undertaken by consultants selected and overseen by the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning. Understanding the close proximity of Columbia County to Greene County and the transportation needs of the residents of both the counties, the Greene County Legislature also commissioned this study in cooperation with Columbia County. The Rip Van Winkle Bridge is an important transportation asset and is used daily by the residents of both counties for work, shopping and medical services. Both counties simultaneously performed the development of individual Transportation Needs Assessments using the same consultant team. At numerous points throughout the study the respective Economic Development and Planning Departments met to discuss opportunities to coordinate service, and explore opportunities for consolidated services with the goal of reducing costs through efficiencies of scale.

The Greene County Transportation Needs Assessment was conducted in partnership with an Ad-Hoc Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Understanding what constituents need was a priority objective and the study included several public involvement initiatives to engage community and institutional leaders, as well as bus riders, agency clients, and other residents. Interviews were conducted with individuals, businesses, institutions and small groups of stakeholders representing agencies, interest groups and units of local government. Group and individual meetings of TAC members were held to focus on ways that public and human service agencies and Greene County Transit may better coordinate the services they provide.

Several human service agencies and governmental functions in Greene County currently offer some form of transportation assistance to their clients. Agency programs and services mostly target individuals and families with mobility issues related to developmental, mental and/or physical disabilities, aging, low income or lack of a personal automobile. Access to reliable and affordable personal transportation is a major issue for these groups, and in a predominantly rural County with limited public transit service, agencies have responded to client needs in various ways.

The transportation services currently provided within Greene County are operating in an uncoordinated fashion and demonstrate some serious functional and service gaps and unmet needs.

Various stakeholders articulated the need for the following services over the course of the study:

- Better information about existing transportation services, including Greene Transit, not-for-profit agency services, and affordable services offered by for-profit transportation providers.
- More accessible vehicles to transport people who are unable to use Greene Transit fixed route service and require a lift or ramp-equipped vehicle for personal travel, especially veterans and seniors.
- Service availability on weeknights and weekends, and for holidays and other special events and festivals.
- Access to major employers along the NYS Routes 9W, 385, 32, 23, 23A and 145 Corridors, as well as entry level retail and service employers spread out across the County, and also including tourist oriented businesses, such as, Hunter and Windham Mountains, Zoom Flume Waterpark, Thomas Cole House.
- Increased access to Columbia-Greene Community College and Columbia Memorial Hospital.
- Connections to regional employment destinations in Albany, Hudson and Kingston.

The study recommends that the County Legislature form a permanent Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to transition coordination efforts from the planning stage to implementation. This action should be taken as soon as possible to ensure continuity of study momentum and stakeholder participation. The mission of the TAC should include more direct oversight and coordination with the Greene Transit System, and development of administrative capacity within County government to carry forward the technical recommendations made in the study.

The study also recommends that the coordinated transportation plan should be utilized to reduce the unit cost of trips provided, decrease the number of vehicles directly operated by the County to provide transportation, and potentially purchase more 3rd party services from private transportation providers.

Further recommendations range from submittal of funding applications to NYSDOT for Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 program grants, to initiation of discussions with neighboring counties about regional connectivity of local public transportation services, to development of training and public information programs. Moving forward on these initiatives will require the implementation of a County-wide coordinated transportation system, requiring the support and participation of the County's several transportation providers, along with new staff capacity to administer the coordinated plan and work with the TAC.

The study identified and recommends important changes in both Greene Transit System and OFA routes and schedules to reduce duplication between the two systems. Over time it may be possible to achieve significant savings and generate additional State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA). This is envisioned through expanding the public transit system (Greene County Transit System) to provide commuter transportation services for the Greene County workforce and general public; utilizing an expanded Greene County Public Transit System to absorb ridership provided by Greene County Human Services providers; and examining the financial and administrative components necessary to operate a County-wide coordinated system.

Several recurring themes have been heard during the study process.

One is that a basic County-wide coordinated public transit system is critically needed for a growing segment of the population. The most pressing need identified in the Plan is to develop a coordinated system of transportation in Greene County. Coordination reduces costs and redundancies, and increases efficiencies in services and operations, and also provides the opportunity to provide additional services to the public. The several human services and public transit systems currently operating within Greene County are decentralized, meaning that each of the several transportation providers, both internal and external to Greene County, are independently operating their respective systems. There is little to no coordination of service with the County's public transportation system, Greene Transit.

A second theme is that the existing Greene Transit System does not provide a viable commuter service within the County, to downtown Albany, Hudson, or Kingston. In addition, the Catskill Shuttle, which serves an important niche, has service timing issues that need to be resolved. Moreover, the Greene Transit System does not cross the Rip Van Winkle Bridge for the public to: gain access to the Columbia Memorial Hospital, and of critical importance, does not address the commuter needs of the sizeable student

population, to access the Columbia Greene Community College. The transportation routes and services need to respond to the prevailing location of businesses in and around the industrial parks in the northern portion of the County, the prevailing location of commercial and retail facilities in and around the towns of the County, the major tourism destinations on the mountaintop, as well as major job centers in downtown Catskill.

Third, the Office of the Aging and the Greene Transit System both operate transportation systems primarily providing services to Greene County's senior population. Both systems are independently operated without coordination of routes. OFA does not charge a fee to ride the senior buses and the County is not accessing state revenue which could be reimbursable for mileage and ridership. The County is subsidizing the OFA transportation system without maximizing the revenue that could be received from the STOA 5310 program. Significant cost efficiencies can be realized by getting the OFA system NYSDOT approved and coordinating ridership and routes.

Fourth, the largest transportation expense to Greene County comes from the mandated services provided by the Greene County Department of Social Services. In 2009, Greene County contracted with MTM, a transportation broker which provides 24/7 dispatching services for Medicaid clients. This contract outsourced dispatching and billing effectively eliminated county DSS personnel formerly performing this function. In the implementation of a coordinated transportation system, MTM would need to add the Greene Transit System to the list of eligible transportation providers, effectively providing additional state and Federal transportation operating revenue to the Greene Transit System. The Greene Transit System would need to revise its routes and schedules to accommodate the DSS clientele that need to be transported to recurring locations throughout Greene and surrounding counties that can be accommodated through a fixed route system.

During the preparation of this Plan, the Greene County Department of Social Services, in partnership with five additional counties, submitted a forward thinking request for proposals to the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) for a "transportation manager demonstration project". The proposal was built upon the concept of forming a six county partnership to solicit one regional broker to handle Medicaid transportation services for the six counties thereby reducing costs to participating counties through efficiencies of scale. Greene County DSS was subsequently notified by the NYSDOH that the request to implement the Regional Managed Medicaid Transportation Services demonstration project was denied. In denying the demonstration project, NYSDOH

notified Greene County DSS that the Commissioner of Health intends to directly move forward with procurement of a transportation manager for counties located in the Hudson Valley. Citing legislation granting authority to the Commissioner of Health, NYSDOH intends to solicit procurement that will be modeled on the proposed demonstration project submitted by the six counties, including the scope of services, quality assurance indicators, and contractor performance criteria and qualifications.

Subsequent discussions with the NYSDOT regarding the NYSDOH Hudson Valley transportation manager proposal has clarified that the NYSDOH solicitation is a pilot project to test the process of regionalizing administrative functions for Social Services. Under this model they plan to utilize a regional Medicaid coordinator who would handle eligibility requirements, assign trips to the appropriate transportation providers, secure an authorization for the provider so the provider can bill Medicaid, and reimburse individuals for their personal vehicle or bus pass expenses. While the details and logistics are not yet available, the NYSDOH Medicaid coordinator would arrange for local transportation services through one or more authorized private, third party transportation providers to transport Medicaid clients in the local counties.

NYSDOH intends to have this state administered regional coordination plan running early next year. The startup date is undetermined and will be based upon the timeline established by the Department of Health once the proposal is released to the public. At this time the number of counties involved is eleven. The NYSDOT is currently in discussion with the NYSDOH regarding the impact of the NYSDOH proposal on local mobility management plans and cost sharing. This is still a process intent on spending tax payer dollars prudently and managing services efficiently.

In discussion with NYSDOT the NYSDOH Regional Medicaid Coordination Plan to Greene County will only be peripherally connected to the proposed Greene County Coordinated Mobility program (Columbia County also impacted), meaning it is undetermined at this time whether NYSDOH will participate in cost sharing arrangements pertaining to Greene or Columbia County DSS involvement as originally proposed in the local coordination plans. Whether the State Regional Medicaid Coordination Plan is implemented or the Greene DSS retains administration, it is important to the proposed Greene County Coordinated Mobility program, that the Greene County Transit System seek authorization from the designated Medicaid broker to be authorized as a transportation provider of Medicaid eligible ridership. This is an important source of revenue to the Greene Transit System and its ability to provide enhanced transportation services to meet the current and future needs of its target populations.

Also of timely importance to Greene County is the pending loss of revenue from the Community Solutions for Transportation (CST) program. The CST program is funded by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The CST program is a partnership between Greene County DSS and Greene County Community Action where DSS contracts with Community Action to provide eligible recipients with commuter transportation services. Recipients are chosen based on their work-related need for transportation and other specific program guidelines. Greene County DSS indicates that CST funding has been extended through June 2011. The money allows for service to TANF eligible, or 200% with children, which accounts for half of Community Actions funding for this program. With CST funding unsure beyond June 2011, Community Action has indicated that it would not be able to continue providing transportation beyond that point.

The CST transportation program is very successful and enables many people to leave the welfare rolls and secure jobs that would otherwise have been unobtainable, as well as assists people with maintaining or improving their current employment to remain independent of public assistance, or gain access to higher education to increase their earning potential.

Also of importance to the County is the vision for expanded economic vitality based on Greene County as a visitor destination which invites further consideration of mobility alternatives. This Plan offers a vision for public transportation in the County and its connections to the region, as well as more specific objectives, policies and design guidelines to help size and shape a transit system that is commensurate with local needs through a five year planning horizon.

Finally, local officials and taxpayers agree that a public transportation system must be affordable to local governments. Moreover, if the transit system is expanded, it must be sustainable over time within the combination of available federal, state, local subsidies and user fees.

1.3 Funding Programs

A locally developed, County-wide coordinated public transit/human transportation system for Greene County is contingent upon the County receiving funding for any of the following federal transit assistance programs:

Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program Section (5310):

Section 5310 is a formula grant program that makes funds available to meet the special transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. These funds are apportioned to the states annually by a formula that is based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each state. The program is administered in New York State by the New York Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Capital assistance is provided on an 80 percent Federal, 20 percent local matching basis. Examples of capital expenses include, but are not limited to buses and vans. In New York State, private nonprofit agencies are eligible to receive program funding, and must demonstrate that they coordinate services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

Jobs Access Reverse Commute JARC (5316):

Section 5316 JARC is a formula reimbursement program to provide funding for local governmental authorities and agencies, and non-profit entities that offer job access and reverse commute services to transport welfare recipients and low income individuals to and from jobs, training, and child care, and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Job Access grants may finance capital projects and operating costs of equipment, facilities, and associated, capital maintenance items related to providing access to jobs; promoting use of transit by workers with nontraditional work schedules; promoting use by appropriate agencies of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals; and promoting use of employer-provided transportation including the transit pass benefit program. For Reverse Commute grants, the following activities are eligible – operating costs, capital costs and other costs associated with reverse commute by bus, train, carpool, vans or other transit service. Eligible activities for JARC funding include late-night and weekend service, guaranteed ride home service, shuttle service; expanded fixed-route public transit routes; demand-responsive service; ridesharing and carpooling activities; transit related aspects of bicycling; local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides; marketing promotions for JARC activities; supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs; using Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and/or implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions; deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems; and establishing regional mobility managers or transportation brokerage activities. The Federal/local share is 80/20 for capital projects and mobility management, and 50/50 for operating projects.

Greene County Transit, as the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds for several FTA programs, is responsible for applying for and receiving JARC program funds. During the preparation of this Plan, the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning made application to the NYSDOT for JARC funding to develop business commuter routes (Transit Employment Access Program) within the County as part of the public Greene Transit System. Greene County had never previously applied for JARC funding.

New Freedom Program NF (Section 5317):

Section 5317 New Freedom is a new Federal transit formula grant program to encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Funds can be used for associated capital and operating costs to provide the new services. Examples of projects and activities that might be funded under the program include, but are not limited to: purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and vanpooling programs; providing para-transit services beyond minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route), including for routes that run seasonally; making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations; supporting voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers; and supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. The Federal share for the net project capital cost of a project may be up to 80 percent, and not more than 50 percent of the net operating cost of a project.

Effective October 1, 2006, both JARC and NF require a comprehensive planning and coordinated process. The planning and coordination of a comprehensive plan must be developed through an all-encompassing process involving representatives from the public, private and non-profit sector, along with human service agencies, clients, advocates and the general public.

A formal transportation needs assessment was not previously required by either the state or federal transportation funding agencies, even though historically both have encouraged the coordination of local public transportation. The 2005 federal transit legislation provides a significantly increased availability of funding for rural areas to address the special needs of their local public transportation. The increased funding and support, plus the chance to address the unmet special transportation needs, is the driving force behind the development of Greene County's Transportation Needs Assessment.

In addition to the requirements of the state and federal transportation funding agencies, Greene County desires to work toward a more energy efficient transportation system. Public transportation provides a more energy efficient transportation option, moving more people with a smaller expenditure of natural resources.

1.4 Required Elements of the Plan

The Plan is defined as a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, elderly individuals, and individuals with low incomes. The Plan was established to provide strategies for meeting the local and regional transportation needs in a prioritized approach for funding, reduction in service redundancies, effectively meeting currently unmet needs and new service implementation resulting in cost reductions and enhanced services.

The five required elements of a Coordinated Plan are:

- 1. Identification of the stakeholders and partners.*
- 2. Assessment of available services to include current public, private and non-profit providers.*
- 3. Assessment of transportation needs for the elderly, low-income and disabled individuals.*
- 4. A strategic plan and/or action plan to address the identified gaps between the existing services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve better service efficiency.*
- 5. A prioritized list for implementation of actions based on resources, time, and feasibility of identified action items.*

1.5 The Planning Process - Formation of Partnerships

Operating responsibilities of Greene County's rural public transportation system lie within the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning. The department formally administers Greene County's public transportation system, Greene Transit, and contracts with a third party transportation company for daily operation of the system. The Department is responsible for administering the public transit system, including advertising and marketing, securing operating and capital funding, along with submitting quarterly reports for STOA reimbursement, preparation of annual reports and

establishing contract development and awards for the transit operating service. The Department represents the initial contact within the County for public transportation and is the key stakeholder in the development of a County Coordinated Transportation Plan.

After initial meetings with the NYS Department of Transportation, the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning initiated the process for the Transportation Needs Assessment and the development of a coordination plan. An RFP was published, bids received, approved and a contract was awarded in May 2009. Following the completion of the contract award the Department initiated the process of bringing involved partners to the table to begin the coordination effort process.

The following summarizes the Time Frame of the planning coordination meetings held.

Aug 19, 2009: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Stakeholders meeting sponsored by Greene County. Fourteen representatives and stakeholders from Greene County, New York State DOT and Soule Consulting Services met to discuss the following topics:

- *Project Objectives*
- *Coordination of Service within Greene County, Columbia County and neighboring counties.*
- *Escalating Transportation Costs*
- *Program Funding*
- *Transportation “Needs” and Obstacles*
- *Operating Authority*
- *Stakeholders Partnerships, Focus Groups*
- *Data Analysis Request forms*

August 26, 2009: Individual meetings with TAC members, future partners and stakeholders started and continued throughout September, October and November. The Data Analysis Request Forms (Appendix “B”) were distributed, received, reviewed, and verified with each participant and all information documented. The following items and resources were included in the request as follows:

- Organization Information
- Organization, Contact Person, Title, Contact Information
- General Information
- Historical Review
- Fleet Data
 - Fleet count and type
 - Hours of service
 - Days of service
 - ADA accessible

- Service Area
- Ridership type
- Yearly count of ridership
- Yearly miles traveled
- Coordination efforts or rider sharing
- Major destinations
- Medical facility locations
- Funding sources
- Fares collected
- Yearly costs
- Organization History, Concerns, Limitations
- Additional transportation providers utilized

February 16, 2010: A meeting was held at the Greene County Economic Development Tourism and Planning Department - attending were Warren Hart, Ed Diamante, Dan Frank, Jim Hitchcock, Karen Deyo and Debbie Soule. A Power Point presentation was made and included an overall review of the project and discussion of the impact on County budgets from the potential creation of a mobility management system to coordinate County transportation programs. Some of the items discussed were as follows:

- Discussion on transportation coordination options and levels of commitment necessary to implement the study's recommendations.
- Possible savings generated with implementation of a mobility management system and coordination of County transportation functions.
- DSS Medicaid, Community Action, and Office for the Aging transportation programs.
- County budget reductions and increases for both expenses and income, and the need to access funding sources on a cost sharing basis.

It was defined that the purpose of this project and coordination plan is to identify the over and under serviced needs, possible solutions which will assist in the designing of the most cost effective, efficient service possible.

March 4, 2010: A meeting was held at the Greene County Economic Development Tourism and Planning Department inviting a number of the original TAC Stakeholders – attending were Warren Hart, Jack Van Loan, Kira Pospesel, Tom Yandean, Florence Ohle, Connie Bentley, Mike Labello and Debbie Soule. The meeting agenda included a power point presentation recapping the data analysis information, the ridership, miles, department resources, needs and yearly costs of operation were discussed. A cost analysis was reviewed which led to discussion regarding the coordination of services plan and implementation, and the affect on budgets.

April 23, 2010: The Greene County Economic Development Tourism and Planning Department organized a regional transportation meeting with New York State DOT, Warren Hart, Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning; Kenneth Flood, Columbia County Planning Department; and Debbie Soule to discuss a multi-County coordination effort. The agenda included discussion of NYS DOT's requirements, possible funding sources, proposed milestones and timetable outline.

April 30, 2010: A meeting was held at the Greene County Economic Development Tourism and Planning Department office to discuss the options and degree of coordination. Representatives attending the transportation meeting were Warren Hart, Karen Deyo, Jim Hitchcock and Debbie Soule. The agenda included discussion of Federal requirements, transportation coordination options, the need for a mobility manager to carry forward the technical recommendations made in the study, preliminary implementation recommendations.

June 14, 2010: A workshop meeting with the Government Operations Committee of the Greene County Legislature was held at the Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning office to discuss the preliminary results of the Transportation Needs Assessment, including opportunities and options for consolidated transportation and action items for implementation. Representatives attending the meeting were Warren Hart, Debbie Soule, Karen Deyo, Jimmy Hitchcock, Harry Lennon, William Lawrence.

July 7, 2010: A meeting of the Greene County Leadership was held on at the Greene County Economic Development Office to discuss the preliminary results of the Transportation Needs Assessment, including opportunities and options for consolidated transportation and action items for implementation. Representatives attending the meeting were Warren Hart, Debbie Soule, Wayne Speenburgh, Keith Valentine, Sean Frey, Karen Deyo, Jimmy Hitchcock.

September 1, 2010: Transportation Needs Assessment Draft Plan was distributed to the Greene County Leadership (Wayne Speenburgh, Keith Valentine, Sean Frey, Dan Frank); Greene County Legislature Committee Chairpersons Karen Deyo and Jimmy Hitchcock; and Department and Agency Heads (DSS, OFA, Veterans, Community Action) for review, edits and comments prior to release of public comment draft.



2.0 Greene County Background & Overview

Greene County is a rural County located in the Northern Catskills and upper Hudson River Valley, with its County seat of Catskill being about 30 miles south of Albany. It has rural routes which encompass the 19 towns and villages of the County. The mountaintop towns in the western portion of the County are sparsely populated in comparison to the river towns in the eastern portion of the County along the Hudson River. This geographic feature creates a unique

challenge for the development of public transportation.

As in most rural counties, a variety of public and private agencies and organizations provide transportation services to persons who are somehow disadvantaged in their ability to obtain transportation, such as persons with functional impairments or disabilities, older persons, those with low incomes, the young, others without access to private automobiles. Public transportation also needs to expand to accommodate the growing demands

and opportunities for workers and employers to save on travel costs. Rising costs of fuel and commuting can be a large motivator for people to consider public transportation.

The transportation providers receive funding from multiple sources, including Federal, state and local government programs, as well as charitable and nonprofit programs and fare box revenues. Funds from such programs are often accompanied by service objectives focused on specific clienteles and must adhere to program specific rules, including very detailed and varied operating and reporting requirements. The transportation services currently provided within Greene County are operating in an uncoordinated fashion and demonstrate some serious functional and service gaps and unmet needs.

Coordination is a resource management strategy capable of addressing such problems. Coordination strives to maximize the efficient use of resources, such as vehicles, personnel, and funding. It attempts to reduce service duplication, increase vehicle sharing, and improve service quality. Coordination can lower the unit cost of providing transit service, allowing communities either to apply the cost savings to increase the level of service (thereby improving the overall service effectiveness) or to simply reduce costs.

Coordinating public transit services with human service transportation can provide significant economic benefits. The coordinating transportation agencies, for profit and not-for-profit transportation agencies, the riders of the services, and local communities all can receive measurable benefits, including additional funding, more cost-effective operations, and increased mobility.

Greene County is no exception. There are several public and human services transportation agencies providing a diverse range of transit services.

The Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning is the operating authority for the public transit system in Greene County. The Department currently markets the Greene Transit System as the Rip Van Winkle Express and the operation is contracted out to First Student as the operator. The service is a fixed route, utilizing one bus, and while it is open to the public, the bus is largely used by senior citizens.

The Veterans Services Agency operates a van serving special needs of Greene County Veterans. The Office for the Aging (OFA) operates a bus serving the special needs of Greene County senior citizens. OFA uses Greene County employees to operate the vehicles.

The Greene County Health Department administers the Pre-School

Handicapped Children Program. The system is mandated by the State to serve the special needs of school children within the County. The system is contracted out to Coxsackie Transport as the third party operator. The Greene County Department of Social Services administers several mandated programs requiring transportation services and with considerable budgetary impact to the County. DSS contracts with a broker who utilizes several private transportation providers for Medicaid recipients which may include: medical, disabled and non-ambulatory needs. These services are provided by private operators, exclusively with cars, vans and ambulettes.

There are also non-profit and quasi-public agencies providing additional transportation services within Greene County, such as Community Action of Greene County, which operates several programs geared toward getting clients to places of employment. The Columbia ARC (COARC) and Ulster-Greene ARC operate a large fleet of small buses and vans, serving the needs of individuals

with functional impairments or disabilities.

All of these departments, agencies and not-for-profits receive funding from a variety of Federal, State and County sources.

2.1 Population

2.1.1 Distribution

A total of five villages and fourteen towns are located in the County. Within the County, there are three distinct regional areas: the Historic River Towns, the Valley Towns, and the Mountaintop Towns. The Towns of Athens, Catskill, Coxsackie, and New Baltimore comprise the Historic River Towns, while the Valley Towns are the Towns of Cairo, Durham, and Greenville. Towns located in the Mountaintop Region are Ashland, Halcott, Hunter, Jewett, Lexington, Prattsville, and Windham. The most heavily populated communities are the Town of Catskill (11,849 residents), Coxsackie (8,884), and Cairo (6,355).



GREENE COUNTY POPULATION

<u>HAMLET/TOWN</u>	<u>POPULATION COUNT</u>	<u>LOW INCOME POPULATION %</u>	<u>SENIOR POPULATION %</u>	<u>POPULATION DENSITY COUNT PER SQ MILE</u>
Ashland	752	15.8%	16.6%	29
*Athens	3991	8.7%	15.9%	152.5
Cairo	6355	10.4%	17.3%	106
*Catskill	11849	14.9%	17.9%	195.8
*Coxsackie	8884	12.9%	8.8%	240.8
Durham	2592	11.5%	17.5%	52.6
Greenville	3316	8.7%	18.2%	85.2
Halcott	193	20.8%	21.8%	8.4
*Hunter	2721	19.5%	16.2%	30.1
Jefferson Heights	1104	7.5%	39.8%	752.3
Jewett	970	12.0%	17.6%	19.3
Leeds	369	7.7%	18.7%	709.1
Lexington	830	12.9%	21.2%	10.4
New Baltimore	3417	7.2%	13.4%	82.2
Palenville	1120	7.4%	12.0%	337.2
Prattsville	665	11.5%	18.6%	33.9
Tannersville	448	18.5%	20.8%	402.4
Windham	1660	9.3%	19.3%	36.7

* Note: Village populations are represented within the larger town. Leeds and Jefferson Heights are hamlets located within the Town of Catskill

2.1.2 Trends

Greene County's population increased by approximately 2.2% between 2000 and 2007. During that same time, New York State's population increased by approximately 1.6%.

POPULATION Trends

YEAR (source)	GREENE COUNTY Population
1970 (Census)	33,136
1980 (Census)	40,861
1990 (Census)	44,739
2000 (Census)	48,195
2007 (ACS, estimate)	49,246

2.2 Target Populations in Greene County

The needs of three populations in Greene County are assessed in the plan: the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons of low income. Individuals in these three groups tend to have a greater need for public or private transportation services.

2.2.1 Elderly Populations

The 2000 Census identified the total population as 48,195 in Greene County. Of this number, approximately 7,470 persons, or 15.7%, were age 65 and older, the national average is 12.5%. Of the 7470 persons 65 and older, 38.4% are identified as disabled. (See appendix C for a map showing population density)

The Greene County Department of Aging 2010 Plan for Services notes the 60+ population is experiencing growth. As "baby boomers" (those born from 1946-1964) add to the ranks of senior citizens there will be a profound impact on the County. For example, while the total population is estimated to grow 7.6% by 2015, the 60 and over population will increase by 37%; and the population over the age of 85 will increase by 60%. By the year 2015 the senior population will grow to 26% of the total population in Greene County.

There are currently five area senior service centers identified as follows:

Senior Service Centers

Senior Service Centers	Services
Rivertown Senior Service Center 2nd and Warren Streets Athens, NY 12015 (518) 945-2700	Noon Time Dinner - Served Monday through Friday at about noon.
Washington Irving Senior Center 15 Academy Street Catskill, NY 12414 (518)943-3013 Office (518)943-5820 Dining Room	Noon time dinners served Monday-Friday at about 12 noon. Numerous health, recreational and educational events scheduled throughout the day.
Coxsackie Senior Service Center Knights of Columbus Hall Mansion Street Coxsackie, NY 12051 (518)731-8901	Noon Time Dinner - Served Monday through Friday at about Noon.
Acra Senior Service Center Acra Community Center Old Route 23B Acra, NY 12405 (518)622-9898	Noon Time Dinner - Served Monday through Friday at about noon.
Jewett Senior Service Center Jewett Municipal Building Route 23C Jewett, NY 12444 (518)263-4392	Noon Time Dinner - Served Monday through Friday at about noon.

Senior housing facilities that serve senior citizens and apartment complexes with large senior populations are identified as follows:

Senior Housing Facilities

Kaaterskill Manor	Catskill (v)
Rivertown Senior Apartments	Athens (v)
Orchard Estates	Catskill

Peppertree Apartments	Coxsackie (v)
Bethany Village Apartments	W. Coxsackie (v)
Autumn Grove Apartments	Catskill
Mountain View Apt	Hunter (v)
Fairground Estates	Cairo
Hemlock Nob	Tannersville (v)
Windham Willows	Windham

The larger facilities are located in the population centers of Catskill, Coxsackie and Athens. A few facilities are located in the valley and mountain areas, which tend to be smaller to meet local demand. Some of the subsidized housing also serves low income, handicapped individuals, based on the regulations of the agency overseeing the facilities.

2.2.2 Persons with Disabilities

The United States Census Bureau defines a disability as a significant limitation in sensory, physical, or mental functions, the ability to provide self-care, or the ability to function outside of one's home.

In the 2000 Census, 9,799 persons were reported in Greene County as disabled, defined as people at least five years old and who were part of the civilian non-institutionalized population. This is approximately 20% of the population and higher than the national average of 15%.

Persons with disabilities in Greene County span a broad range of physical and mental ability. Many of these individuals are capable, sometimes with guidance, of using a bus service.

Passengers with disabilities who are not able to ride a fixed route bus have access to the on-demand service to meet their transportation needs. Some of them may also need assistance from the curb to their door. Mobility limitations affect the amount of time it takes some passengers to get to the vehicle, and on and off the vehicle, affecting trip schedules. There are also time constraints on how long certain passengers can tolerate riding on a vehicle. Bus drivers will need continued training to help them understand and address the capabilities and limitations of passengers with disabilities.

2.2.3 Persons of Low Income

Low income is defined as income at or below 150% of the poverty line (as defined in Section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 USC 9902(2)) for a family of the size involved. The median income for a household in the County was \$36,493 in 2000, and the median income for a family was \$43,854. Males had a median income of \$35,598 versus \$25,346 for females. In 2000, the per capita income for the County was \$18,931. About 8.6% of families were below the poverty line, including 15.7% of those under age 18, 29.4% of female heads of household and 10.4% of those age 65 or over (Attachment "G" see map). This represents approximately 12.2% of the population, as compared to the state average of 13.7 % and national average of 13.2%.

According to the 2006-2008 numbers provided by the American Community Survey, the median household income was \$45,837 in 2008 dollars, and the median family income was \$54,103. Per capita income for 2008 was \$24,409.

The County has one family development designated as low-income: the Hop-A-Nose project in the Village of Catskill managed by the Catskill Housing Authority. Hop-A-Nose has 80 units. There are several mobile home parks of scale that would be likely nodes of low-income population that could be effectively serviced by public transportation, including sizable developments in the Towns of Catskill, Cairo and Durham.

In general, though, the low-income population is scattered and decentralized, making providing public transit for employment a challenge. (See Appendix D for a map showing low income population)

In 2010 there were 2,100 unemployed individuals in the civilian labor force of 24,400 persons. This is approximately 8.6 % unemployment as compared to January and February 2010 rates of 9.2%. The New York State March unemployment rate was 8.8% for the period, and the national average was 9.9%. Approximately one-third of the workforce leaves the County for employment each day, mostly for employment nodes in Albany, Kingston and Hudson.

As reported by the New York State Department of Labor, Greene County experienced an increase of 500 employed persons during the time period between June 2009 to June 2010, making Greene County the only rural County in the state to report an increase in employment during this period. The increase in employment is attributed to several large businesses opening during this period, such as Empire Merchants North, along with the relative stability of state and local government employment. Unlike many other New York counties, Greene County has not had a large number of closings of sizeable businesses. The largest business to close in the County this year was the Friar Tuck Resort, which

employed about 50 people.

2.3 Employment and Services

Greene County has approximately 15,000 jobs located within the County on any given day. Approximately one-third of the County's workforce commutes outside the County on any given workday, with the nodes of Albany, Kingston and Hudson being the prime destinations.

Within the County, the major business, employment and service centers are in Cairo, Coxsackie and Catskill, with the Route 9W corridor in Coxsackie and New Baltimore likely containing the highest concentration of employment in one location in the County, followed by the retail/commercial corridor along Route 9W in Catskill.

The tourism centers of Windham and Hunter also provide significant seasonal employment opportunities at Hunter and Windham Ski Mountains. Both ski mountains are aggressively working on ways to improve their off-season business, and create more of a "four-season" destination. Hunter Mountain opened the New York Zipline Adventure earlier this year, and Windham Mountain hosted the UCI World Cup mountain biking race in August.

Major occupations in the County include services, tourism, retail, construction, healthcare, education, and sales. In recent years, Greene County has become a preferred location for large distribution centers, with Save-A-Lot and Empire Merchants North locating in the industrial parks, joining United Stationers in this corridor.

Although there are a few small medical centers, the only major hospitals are in the surrounding counties of Columbia and Albany. While the County has received several inquiries regarding the potential construction of assisted living or lifecare-style communities, there has not been any recent addition to the portion of the employment needs for low income individuals, but is not open to the general public. Additionally, the nature of much of the employment in the County that is traditionally held by low-income persons, such as tourism and retail trade, make it more difficult to provide transportation services than for traditional "shift work" at a factory or service center with more regular hours. The flexibility of this kind of program is one of its major assets.

The same is true for major colleges and universities, for which the cities of Albany and Troy are the closest large nodes. The Columbia Greene Community College, located on the Greenport side of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, and Columbia Memorial Hospital, located in the City of Hudson, are three miles over the Rip Van Winkle Bridge.

The Greene County Community Action Program operates a van five days a week to bring workers without cars to jobs. This service appears to be successfully accommodating a small portion of the employment needs for low income individuals, but is not open to the general public.

The County of Greene Public Transit System operational times do not accommodate employment transportation needs. Major improvements to the system would be required in order to make it effective for employment purposes.

Large Employers in Greene County (4 tables total)

Table 1 Employers with more than 300 employees

300+ Employees	Location	Industry Sector
Coxsackie Correctional Facility	Coxsackie	Corrections
Empire Merchants North	Coxsackie	Distribution
Greene Correctional Facility	Coxsackie	Corrections
Greene County	Catskill	Service
Hunter Mountain	Hunter	Tourism
Wal-Mart	Catskill	Retail
Windham Mountain	Windham	Tourism

Table 2 Employers with 100-300 employees

100-300 Employees	Location	Industry Sector
Brockway-Smith Co.	Coxsackie	Industrial
Coxsackie Transport	Coxsackie	Service
Ducommun AeroStructures	Coxsackie	Industrial
Glasko Smith Kline	Durham	Industrial
GNH Lumber/Pioneer	Greenville/Coxsackie/Windham	Retail
Greene County Bancorp	Catskill	Service
Home Depot	Catskill	Retail
Kaaterskill Care Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation	Catskill	Service
Lehigh Northeast Cement	Catskill	Industrial
Lowe's	Catskill	Retail
Price Chopper	Catskill	Retail Grocery
Holcim	Catskill	Industrial
Serta/National Bedding	Coxsackie	Industrial
Sav-a-lot	Coxsackie	Distribution
United Stationers Supply	Coxsackie	Distribution
Ulster/Greene ARC	Catskill	Service
Zoom Flume Water Park	East Durham	Tourism

Table 3 Employers with 25-100 employees

25-100 Employees		
Amos Post Co/Kosco	Catskill	Retail/ Wholesaler
Bryant's Market Inc.	Greenville	Retail/ Wholesaler
Casing Inc.	Catskill	Industrial
Grand Union Corp.	Coxsackie/ Tannersville	Retail/ Wholesaler
Marriott Corp.	New Baltimore	Service
National Bank of Coxsackie	Coxsackie	Service
Peckham Materials Corp.	Athens	Industrial
Royal Metal Products	Greenville	Industrial
Slaters Great American	Cairo	Grocery Retail
US Paper Counters	Cairo	Industrial

Table 4 Employers with less than 25 employees

25 or Fewer Employees		
AIM Radiant Heating	Cairo	Industrial
American Trim	Durham	Industrial
Bilbee Controls	Cairo	Industrial
Garrison Fire & Rescue	Palenville	Industrial
Hinterland Design	Coxsackie	Service
Kaaterskill Associates	Cairo	Service
Northeast Treaters	Athens	Industrial
Siemag	Greenville	Industrial
Wolfgang B. Gourmet Foods	Catskill	Industrial



3.0 Assessment of Available Transportation Services

3.1 Identification of Service Providers

There is one public service transportation provider in the County. The Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning operates the County’s public transportation system. The Greene Transit System is designated with the operational authority in compliance with the New York State Department of Transportation. The Greene Transit System is marketed as the Rip Van Winkle Express and is operated pursuant to a yearly contract with First Student as a third party operator. The Rip Van Winkle Express provides five routes a week throughout the County, and a mid-day shopping shuttle in the Village of Catskill. The service provides transportation for the general fare-paying public.



Several County agencies also provide transportation for special populations. The Office for the Aging operates both a fixed daily route and an on-demand service providing rides for seniors for various purposes, including medical appointments, social events, meal sites, and shopping. The Veterans Service Agency provides transportation to the Veteran's Administration hospital in Albany. Both agencies provide services throughout the County.

Two agencies provide transportation for developmentally disabled individuals. The COARC (Columbia County ARC) and Ulster Greene ARC provide transportation for clients from residences throughout the County to designated work sites and ARC facilities in Greene, Columbia and Ulster Counties. Ulster-Greene ARC operates worksites in Catskill and Cairo. Participant transportation needs and locations are very similar and could be included in the coordinated plan effort.

The Community Action of Greene County program provides transportation to low-income individuals throughout the County, primarily in the valley, with limited service to the mountaintop areas. They operate one round trip route per day coordinated with employment locations and hours, and Department of Social Service hours of operation. The service provides rides for clients on a fixed route with deviations and on

demand services as needed.

Trailways has two fixed routes which come through the County going to New York City and Albany. Stops are limited to Hunter, Tannersville, Windham, Cairo, and Palenville transporting riders to Kingston and continuing to New York City; and Catskill to the Albany area.

Coxsackie Transport operates a number of services including school bus, preschool and Medicaid transportation. The regulations with school and preschool services limit the degree of coordination with the exception of return trip deadhead miles between pickups. The return trips could be added to the coordination plan to increase County transportation services and reduce redundancies and costs.

Various taxicab companies operate in the County and provide rides to fare-paying passengers in the valley and mountain communities. Numerous trips are outside of the County to neighboring Columbia County, and Hudson-area taxicabs cross the Hudson River into Greene County. Taxicab services are largely unregulated in the two counties.

Existing Transportation Providers

Provider:	Greene County Transit – Rip Van Winkle Express
Service Area:	Greene County
Funding Sources:	STOA, Federal 5311
Additional Funds:	Fares, County Funding and Funding from OFA
Types of Service:	Public, Senior Citizens, Disabled, Low Income
	1 Route per day/5 per week - Mid day Catskill Shuttle
Fares:	\$1, \$1.25, \$1.50 Location depending - \$1.00 Catskill shuttle
	\$1.00 regular, \$0.00 for Transfer to Catskill Shuttle 10:55am- 2:40pm
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, typically 9 am to 4:15 - 5 pm
Fleet Composition:	2 - 24/26 Pass(1 off road) - 2 New Buses Approved - ADA

Existing Transportation Providers, cont.

Provider:	Community Action Program - Greene County
Service Area:	Greene County (Primarily River and Valley Towns)
Funding Sources:	CST and County Funding
Additional Funds:	No Fares
Types of Service:	Work Related Transportation
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, typically 6 am to 6 pm
Fleet Composition:	3 Vans; 1 - 7 pass, 1 - 8 pass, 1 -14 Pass - Not ADA

Provider:	Greene County Veterans Service Agency
Service Area:	Greene County
Funding Sources:	Federal and County
Additional Funds:	Veterans Affairs/ Fund Raisers
Types of Service:	Van service within Greene County - Veteran's
	Administration hospital in Albany NO ADA
Days and Hours:	7am-5pm Mon, Wed, Friday
Fleet Composition:	2 10-passenger vans

Provider:	Greene County Office for the Aging
Service Area:	Greene County - hamlet bus services Valley Towns
Funding Sources:	Title III B of the Older American's Act
Additional Funds:	State Transportation Program administered by New York State
	Office for the Aging, County Funded
Types of Service:	Fixed Route with On-demand first come first served
	appointments for non Medicaid and shopping for anyone 60 and over
Days and Hours:	8:30am-5:00pm Mon thru Friday
Fleet Composition:	1- 18 pass bus 2 wheelchair stations

Existing Transportation Providers, cont.

Provider:	Coxsackie Transportation
Service Area:	Columbia, Greene, Albany Counties and additional areas
Funding Sources:	Medicaid, Private Operational Contracts, County funding
Additional Funds:	Fares and self funded - contract depending
Types of Service:	Various - school bus, open public, Medicaid, private
Days and Hours:	As needed Monday thru Sunday - 24 hours
Fleet Composition:	100 Plus vehicles - Buses, vans, cars, limo

Provider:	Ulster Greene County ARC
Service Area:	Ulster and Greene Counties
Funding Sources:	Medicaid, Federal 5310
Additional Funds:	Self funded
Types of Service:	Specialized transportation/Para transit for clients with disabilities to and from their homes to various ARC program locations in Greene, Northern Ulster and Columbia Counties, 8 fixed routes daily
Days and Hours:	Monday through Sunday, closed major holidays, typically 6am to 6pm
Fleet Composition:	5 buses, various capacities: 2-16/2 wheelchair, 2-20 pass, 1-12. 4 vans, 1-12 pass, 3-15 pass

Existing Transportation Providers, cont.

Provider:	Columbia County ARC – COARC
Service Area:	Columbia and Greene Counties
Funding Sources:	Medicaid, Federal 5310
Additional Funds:	Self funded
Types of Service:	Specialized transportation/para transit for clients with disabilities to and from their homes to various ARC program locations in Columbia and Greene Counties, approximately 10 fixed routes daily
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, closed major holidays, typically 5am to 5 pm
Fleet Composition:	Approx 100 various vehicles from 8 older wheelchair accessible buses 15 additional buses, 70 cars and vans

Provider:	Greene County Department Of Social Services
Service Area:	Greene, Columbia, Albany, surrounding Counties, limited out of state
Funding Sources:	Medicaid
Additional Funds:	County
Types of Service:	Contracted, approved transporters scheduled through MTM Medical transportation for approved recipients No fixed services, on demand repetitive in nature
Days and Hours:	Monday through Sunday - on call basis
Fleet Composition:	various - depending on providers

Existing Transportation Providers, cont.

Provider:	Greene County Dept. Of Public Health - Patient services
Service Area:	Greene County
Funding Sources:	Medicare
Additional Funds:	Self funded - third party - private pay
Types of Service:	Employee usage only - no riders - utilized for Health Care Related
	Home visiting nurses, meetings
	on demand as needed
Days and Hours:	365 days a year
Fleet Composition:	17 various Cars - Not open to the public

Provider:	Greene County Dept. Of Public Health - Preschool program
Service Area:	Greene County
Funding Sources:	New York State Educational Department, Medicaid
Additional Funds:	County funded
Types of Service:	3-5 year olds with disabilities pre-school program
	Contracted Bid
Days and Hours:	365 days a year
Fleet Composition:	various - depending on successful bidder

Existing Transportation Providers, cont.

Provider:	Trailways
Service Area:	Greene County and nationwide
Funding Sources:	NYS STOA, Passenger fares
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Paid Public Transportation
Days and Hours:	Daily fixed routes
Fleet Composition:	Unknown

Provider:	Taxi Services (4) and Private Operators
Service Area:	Greene County - 1 servicing Hunter
Funding Sources:	Passenger Fares
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Paid Public Transportation
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	Unknown

3.2 Identification of Unmet Needs

An assessment of the unmet needs of Senior Citizens, Low Income, Employee-based, and the Disabled was assembled from several sources including:

- Members of the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Committee
- Public and Private Transportation Providers
- Response from the Data Request forms
- First Student Director of Operations and Dispatcher
- On-site viewing and response to public request

- Administrators from Columbia Greene Community College, Coxsackie Transport, Friends of New Leaf Group participants and the Independent Living Resource Center .
- Joint Multi-County meetings held with Columbia and Greene Counties.
- County constituents
- General public ridership

The results of the assessment are summarized below.

Senior Citizens: Unmet needs of the elderly population in Greene County include:

- The need to educate:
 1. How to use the bus system.
 2. The need to familiarize seniors with schedules, routes, pick-up locations and destinations. The need for assistance with packages and/or groceries loading and unloading on the bus.
- The need for extended operational hours:
 1. For shopping and medical appointments.
 2. Extending hours for additional Catskill Shuttle (currently does not provide sufficient time for medical and other related appointments).
- The need for extended routes:

Many areas of the County are not adequately served, primarily the more sparsely populated areas of the Mountaintop and Valley Towns.

Low Income: Unmet needs of the lower income population in Greene County include:

- The need for reliable, affordable and convenient transportation to appointments and work.
- The need to match affordable housing with accessible transportation routes.
- The need for extended operational hours:
 1. For jobs which are the typical 9-5 or other regular shift work.
 2. For jobs which are not typical hours and require overtime or “swing shift” hours. Several of the newer manufacturing and distribution businesses in Coxsackie and New Baltimore have identified public transportation needs for split shift operations. Empire Merchants North typically works a four-day, 10 hour per day week, while

Sav-A-Lot has extra early hours on a regular work week.

3. For stores that are open later than 5 or 6 pm, or 24 hours
- The need for access to medical services, service and court ordered appointments that the County is currently paying to provide transportation for.
 - The need for convenient connecting services.
 - The need for transportation services to/from neighboring counties, especially Albany, Columbia and Ulster.
 - The need for access to continued education.
 - The need for extended hours and services area for the Catskill shuttle including a demand responsive addition.

Employee Job Based: - Unmet needs of the employee-based general public include:

- The need for transportation to seasonal jobs during the off hours of the day and weekends. Many of the tourist businesses operational hours operate outside the “normal” business hours of the day.
- The need to provide transportation for year round jobs with hours outside of the standard 9-5 time frame. Some employers offer second and third shifts or a quota based shift such as Serta. The “swing shift” is more likely to impact lower-income workers who could be the prime customers for an enhanced public transportation service.
- The need to work closely with employers to try to accommodate work schedules with bus schedules.
- The need to work closely in the future with employers to encourage employees to use public transportation for access to and from work.
- The need to consider a guaranteed ride home program.
- The need to consider major employers outside of the County’s boundary, and to work with other County’s to provide transportation services (primarily employees commuting back and forth from Columbia to Greene, and commuters to Albany), and create connections to CDTA and UCAT as part of an enhanced mobility network.
- The need to offer park-n-ride locations in the County, and have bus connections to Albany and Kingston available in those locations.
- The need to accommodate vehicles for wheelchairs, bikes, strollers, other mobility devices, and possibly ski and riding equipment for tourism based transportation services to Hunter and Windham.

Disabled: Unmet transportation needs of the disabled, include:

- The need to provide assistance to those with disabilities .

- The need for curbside, door to door pick up.
- The need to coordinate medical visits and Day Rehabilitation appointments with transportation schedules.
- The need to coordinate transportation services for the disabled.
- The need to ensure that all vehicles are ADA approved and outfitted (currently, several buses and vans providing transportation to the disabled do not accommodate ADA access)



4.0 Current Service Provider Recommendations

4.1 County Transit System - Rip Van Winkle Express

The Rip Van Winkle Express is operated by First Student on a year to year contract basis to provide public transportation throughout the County. The service is operated daily Monday through Friday, servicing different areas of the County each day. Currently the County has two buses – one operational and one out of service, in need of repairs as it is near the end of its useful life expectancy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, administered through the NYS 5311 capital program has approved the purchase of two additional buses, with no capital match required by

the County. The system is structured as a fixed route service in the outlying areas of the County with three route deviations up to one mile, and the mid-day Catskill shuttle. The fare for services is set at \$1.00, \$1.25 and \$1.50 depending on location of pickup. The hours of operation are 9:00am to 10:45am pick-ups and a return service at 2:45 to 4:00 or 5:00pm depending on the day of the week. Upon completion of the am route the bus immediately starts the Catskill shuttle service until 2:45pm when the return of the am route is performed. Although the service is

popular for shopping in Cairo, Catskill, and Coxsackie, it is not adequate for employment, educational or medical ridership. The system is servicing all areas of the County without area consistency. Total ridership is approx 1366 per year excluding the Catskill shuttle, of which 855, or 62% are senior citizens. This is another clear indicator of the service function effectiveness. Outlying service total ridership for 2009 split to day of the week identifying service areas are as follows:

Monday – 362 - Athens, Coxsackie, Cairo. Leeds via routes 9W, 385 and 23B.

Tuesday – 239 - Greenville, Durham, Cairo via routes 9W, 23B, 32, 81, and 145.

Wednesday – 292 - Hunter , Palenville, Tannersville– via routes 9W, 23A, and 32.

Thursday – 216 - Freehold, Greenville, Leeds, Cairo via routes 9W, 23B, and 32.

Friday – 257 - Windham, Prattsville, Acra via Routes 9W, 23, 296 and 23B.

From the above data on the outlying routes a low average ridership per day is evident, calculated to 7 on Monday, 6 on Wednesday, 5 on Tuesday and Friday and 4 on Thursday.

4.1.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan

Recommendations for Greene County Public Transit System:

A coordination plan offers a multitude of

options. Concepts should be analyzed regarding a combination service of fixed routes with an On Demand or Dial a Ride service which can be set up in different areas of the County for each day. Communication and coordination with multiple providers would be needed to assist in the success of the service. Community Action, OFA, and County departments such as Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Center for Behavioral Wellness, all have documented transportation needs which are partially funded by the County and need to be involved in the coordination effort.

Employment and business routes are needed. The transit system service areas and times need to be adjusted to accommodate the workforce. Starting early for arrivals for 7:00am and, 8:00am starts, and possibly 2nd and 3rd shift transportation. Creating third party contracts with employers to assist in funding services is another potential source of funding. Community Action is currently providing over 4,000 rides per year for employment purposes. Using the data collected, the suggested future daily business routes are as follows:

1. Catskill, Cairo, Durham, Greenville, Freehold, New Baltimore, Coxsackie, Athens, Catskill.
2. Employment/College Catskill, Hudson, CGCC, Hudson, Catskill, Coxsackie, Athens, Catskill.

This service can be supported with the

current CAP ridership, local, businesses, state and federal funding. Coordination of medical transportation is an additional option to the above routes. Multi-County coordination and operating authority would be needed. The service would be eligible for JARC funding. The application for JARC funding has been completed and submitted to the state, currently waiting consideration for approval.

Add a County Mobility Manager. This position can assist in all transportation coordination including all providers. The cost of the manager can be offset with transportation cost savings, provider funding and Federal funding through the JARC program. There is a match requirement to be provided by the County.

Partner with OFA to open the fixed/on demand service they are currently operating to the public. Since the ridership currently is 64% seniors, this would be an easy transition for the passengers. OFA and the County would need to adhere to state and federal regulations for the service to become open to the public and eligible to fully access funding sources. By partnering with OFA, operations will retain a 9:00am and 2:00pm service to the major ridership locations, and allow the development of the earlier business route.

Columbia Greene Community College has approximately 800 students who reside in Greene County each semester. The 2011

projected budget for the Community College also reflects a 10% increase in students. The business/college route will help the current students and possibly increase enrollment as reliable transportation services are realized.

Develop "feeder" routes throughout the County utilizing all stakeholders wanting to coordinate. Set a coordinated schedule where providers can connect and transfer passengers for longer distance needs such as Albany, Hudson or Kingston.

Coordinate with Columbia County for Albany services. Possibly develop a Mid-day Albany run to accommodate employees only working half days, medical appointments, and veteran services. Create a connecting pass payment system to be cost effective.

Transportation providers such as ARC and Cocksackie Transport all have deadhead miles. Buses and van deadheading can be utilized in the outlying areas as additional service options.

The fare structure should be adjusted for passengers ease. The current fare structure is confusing for new ridership. Create a universal fare with a discount for seniors and handicapped individuals. Possible daily, weekly, monthly, student or family passes can be developed.

The service should be advertised and promoted. Bus stop signage should be at all designated stops.

Schedules should be easy to read, including maps and identify additional stops such as the Veterans Services in Catskill. The schedule can be utilized to sell the marketable spaces to increase funding and awareness of local employers or shopping destinations.

Bus shelters and signs can be part of Federal funding requests with a 10% match.

New logos and branding would assist in the easy identification of which vehicles and transportation providers are participants in the coordination plan and open to public. Create public awareness to increase ridership and utilization of public transportation. A multi-County logo could be created for providers who are partnering and coordinating services open to the public for both Greene and Columbia Counties.

Try local participation for events – utilize the public transportation services to transport for local community events – find a partner so ridership would be free and funded by the event, local business or organizations.

Promote and market the new vehicles – change the perception of the public transportation service.

Keep the website maintained and updated with current transportation information. Link it to organizations, events, youth groups, businesses, Chamber of Commerce, and County

departments.

Go to meetings as a guest speaker – communicate what services are available, ask what needs you are still missing.

Partner with local Villages and Towns for residents of that community’s transportation needs; share in the funding of services.

Possibly organize a “Grand Re-opening” kick off the new buses, schedules, maps, and website.

Ridership data, route duplications and rising costs support the coordination effort. There are multiple options, some areas of coordination will flow easily as other areas will prove to be difficult at best. In the future the service should continue to change and develop with the growing needs of the County residents and economic development.

4.2 County Transit System - Catskill Shuttle

The Village of Catskill has approximately 4,392 people. Catskill has a large demand for transportation as it is the County seat, and has major shopping, employment and medical facilities. As tourism has a large impact on Greene County, Catskill is a focal point as it is a major intersect point for routes, 9W, 385, 23A, and 23, and between the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains. Catskill has three of the seven largest employers in the County – and is centrally located

to the remaining four employers, two in Coxsackie, one in Windham, and one in Hunter; all totaling approx. 1,800 employees or over 10% of the jobs located within Greene County.

The Catskill shuttle is a vital part of the Rip Van Winkle Public Transit system services in the County. The shuttle operates daily

Monday thru Friday with three trips per day and service hours from 10:55am thru 3:00pm. The hours of operation are not adequate for employment needs, County department services prior to 11:00 or
The shuttle schedule is as follows:

after 2:25, and medical appointments in the morning or requiring all day testing. With three shuttles per day this essentially only provides the possibility of one round trip service per day. The shuttle is responsible for approximately 41% of the ridership transporting 957 rides in 2009 out of the total rides transported for the transit system of 2325. The miles traveled allocated to this service is approximately 27% or 10,400 total for the year.

CATSKILL SHUTTLE

1	Greene Medical Arts Center Jefferson Heights	10:55	12:45	2:15
2	Home Depot Rt 23B	11:00	2:20	3:00
3	Greene County Office Bldg 411 Main St.	11:07	12:48	2:25
4	Catskill Senior Center Catskill, Thompson St.	11:09	12:49	2:26
5	Autumn Grove Apts. Embought Rd. (last stop on run)	11:11	12:55	2:45
6	Price Chopper Plaza Catskill, Rt. 9W	11:12	1:00	2:36
7	Catskill Commons Catskill, Rt. 9W	11:17	1:05	2:40

** Lunch break at 11:30 to 12:30

The major destination areas are Wal-mart and Price Chopper which are the same destination areas for OFA services operated daily Monday through Friday. The OFA service hours in the Catskill area are 10:30am to 1:00pm. Currently the cost of fare is \$1.00 for each time a passenger boards the shuttle. The service does not charge for ridership connecting to the shuttle from an outlying County route. With the service's hours and areas so closely mirrored between the Transit system and OFA, there are opportunities for transportation coordination.

4.2.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan

Recommendations for the Catskill Shuttle that should be examined for future coordination include allowing OFA and Public transit passengers to ride either service, providing connection service from the village to the outlying areas of the County, and adjusting service times to accommodate work force ridership. The coordination of the two providers can increase service areas and times, reduce service redundancies and create the opportunity for additional funding from Federal and State programs.

The Catskill shuttle could be operating from 7:00am thru 6:00pm, and possibly later if the demand develops for shopping, employment and social activities.

Lunch break is at the key time of day for ridership. Change the break, or utilize a different bus or service provider to transport for that hour.

The shuttle's area of service could be expanded from just the immediate Catskill area to include the transportation needs to and from both Coxsackie and Hudson.

The service can also develop an "On Demand" option which would require a 24 hour advance notice – this will accommodate individuals who are limited and cannot get to a designated pickup or drop off point.

Create a shuttle pass which will encourage ridership to stop and board at multiple locations. The pass could be at a discounted rate. Example \$2.50 for a day pass – this will enable riders to shop at Price Chopper – board, go to lunch – board, to Wal-mart – board, return home. Passengers will have flexibility, fare box will increase and funding will increase for ridership counts.

Coordinate with ARC and the workshop program in Catskill – buses drop-off and pick-up participants each day – utilize the buses when they are deadheading and coordinate workshop participants to the Shuttle service.

Operate the Catskill Shuttle longer hours – with coordination with OFA and other partners the bus could be back in Catskill to start the shuttle by approx. 9:00 am

and run until 4:00 or 5:00 pm.

By adding services for the Catskill shuttle each day it provides the option of more than just one round trip in the middle of the day for residents.

The expanded hours and areas of service will accommodate the employment, medical, education, County department service and senior citizens needs.

4.3 Office For The Aging

The Office for the Aging has a bus service which is operated on a demand response basis for senior citizens providing 8,500 rides per year. The bus is ADA accessible accommodating eighteen passengers and two wheelchair stations. The service is daily Monday thru Friday from approx. 8:00am to 1:00 or 2:00pm depending on the day. Operational areas of pickup include Leeds, Cairo, Freehold, Coxsackie, Athens and Catskill via routes 23, 145, 81, 32, 9W and 385. The OFA bus stays in Cairo all day on Fridays. The bus services seniors in these towns and returns to the Village of Catskill area frequenting Price Chopper, Wal-mart and Senior Housing locations. Unlike the Rip Van Winkle Shuttle, the OFA bus does not pick up, drop off or circulate within the Village of Catskill. The current cost to the County funding this service is \$26,900 plus an additional \$10,000, which is paid to Rip Van Winkle System for approved senior ridership. The Office for the Aging does not charge a fare for ridership.

4.3.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan Recommendations for Office for the Aging

This service primarily is used for shopping and senior snack and lunch sites. Seniors have additional needs for medical appointment and department services at the County building.

Coordination of adjusting the hours of services could accommodate some of the current unmet needs.

By coordinating ridership in the outlying areas with the Greene Transit system the current OFA bus can be utilized in other areas of the County such as Hunter and Windham one day a week.

Coordination of services could be beneficial to each operator and the residents of the County with service expansion and cost redundancies.

Another option would be for the OFA bus to become open to the public to accommodate the ridership of the current transit system routes both am and pm. The transit system can then change the hours of operation to an earlier start and later stop time to accommodate workforce, educational and medical ridership.

Opening the OFA bus to the public would create the accessibility of additional funding sources including fare box, and state and federal assistance, decreasing the costs to the County budget.

This coordination effort will require the OFA bus to become part of the Greene Transit System complying with State and Federal regulations though remaining operated by OFA.

In a coordinated plan the County can also access funding for additional vehicles to accommodate the services at a 10% match.

4.4 Veterans Service Agency

The Greene County Veterans Service Agency provides a demand response service to the VA hospital in Albany, NY and Veterans Services in Catskill operate three days per week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The service consists of 2 vans and is operated in a very personalized format. The total one way trips per year are 2238 – this equals approximate 8 one way trips per day of operation. The current operation, utilizing the vans, has a number of limitations: passenger capacity, ADA accessibility and passenger comfort. The Veterans Service Agency would like to continue the services currently provided enhancing it with the coordination effort to accommodate the growing needs of Greene County Veterans. Considering the increasing population of Veterans, as reported by the County Veterans Services, this service may need to be expanded to meet the future demands of the County Veterans.

4.4.1 Transportation Services

Coordination Plan Recommendations for Veterans Service Agency

The Veterans Service Agency could coordinate the ridership currently not being serviced because of passenger capacity limitations or ADA accessibility.

The majority of the trip requests are for Albany, this service capacity can be enhanced with the creation of the business commuter routes from Catskill to Albany. The suggested service could accommodate the trips for both am and pm needs.

The Veterans van can be utilized for additional services in a coordinated effort for a possible mid-day Albany route, or as a feeder service for the outlying areas of the County to accommodate additional veteran’s needs.

This would increase accessible transportation to the veterans and allow Veterans Services to devote their resources to Veterans with specialized needs. The transportation partners should negotiate a service which would create additional accessibility, efficiencies of service, and a reduction in both redundancies and cost.

In addition transportation partners should consider incorporation of the Veterans van into the public transportation service to provide for STOA funding.

4.5 Community Action

Ridership data indicates that Community Action Program provides approximately 4,200 rides per year strictly work related. This service is funded by multiple sources with the County being the largest supporter of \$43,222. Community Action has set routes that operate daily Monday thru Friday starting and ending with work related hours of approx. 6:30am thru 6:00pm. This service is not open to the public – it is strictly governed by program specific funding regulations. CAP program operates 3 vans and travels approx 35,000 miles per year.

4.5.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan Recommendations for Community Action

This service could be coordinated with the transit system or OFA as senior housing complexes are frequently combination housing for Seniors and Low income individuals.

4.6 ARC Transportation Providers

Ulster Greene ARC and COARC both operate in Greene County. Both ARC organizations have large diverse fleets with a range of vehicles consisting of 35 passenger buses to mini-vans and cars. The operators are ADA compliant and utilize wheelchair equipped vehicles daily. As in most counties the ARC operations encompass the majority of the County and very often travel the same routes as

the public transit system. Considering the redundancies of service areas and times and the fact that ARC fixed routes quite often include deadhead return miles, a coordination of services plan would be beneficial for the community and the providers. A County wide logo identifying and promoting the service as open to the public should be a future consideration. The ARC organizations provide specialized services for individuals with disabilities. State and federal regulations must be adhered to.

4.6.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan Recommendations for ARC Providers

The Ulster Greene ARC morning route begins approximately 7 am transporting clients to Catskill. An estimated 60% of the ridership is picked-up in Athens, Cairo, Catskill, Coxsackie, Durham, Greenville, and Leeds. The late afternoon route begins at approximately 5 pm and transports clients to their homes. ARC provides this service five days per week, except major holidays. The majority of the transportation provided is going to Catskill; an estimated 60% of the ridership is picked-up in Athens, Cairo, Catskill, Coxsackie, Durham, Greenville, and Leeds. The vehicles usually deadhead to and from Kingston.

COARC also begins the morning route at approximately 7 am transporting clients to Catskill. An estimated 75% of the ridership is picked-up in Athens, Cairo,

Catskill, and East Durham. The late afternoon route begins at approximately 5 pm and transports clients to their homes. COARC provides this service five days per week, except major holidays. Again the vehicles usually have deadhead miles to and from Hudson.

There is a coordination opportunity for both County Arc's considering the pickup and drop off locations as well as the routes and times traveled. Coordination could reduce the costs of services, and allow more clients to be serviced in other areas of the counties.

Corridor routes can be established from the respective towns for drop off to the ARC facilities. COARC could be utilized to service the unmet needs for employment, medical, Department of Social Services, and educational at CGCC. Ulster Greene ARC creates the possibility of a main corridor route to and from Kingston.

Opening the routes to the public would involve the vehicles becoming DOT inspected, and education of the drivers to data reporting and fare box collections. Benefits could include newer and safer bus for ARC to operate, as well as eligibility for 5310 funding for capital improvements and increased service for the public along the Catskill Kingston and Catskill Hudson corridors. STOA ridership and miles will likely increase as the bus operates five days per week, resulting in increased funding for providers through the County.

The coordination of Ulster Greene ARC and COARC participants is an important partner to public transportation. It will educate and give confidence to the program participants who are intimidated and afraid to use public transportation. Many times it proves to be a fresh start, a sense of pride and accomplishment, a resource tool for independent living. By coordination of services and participants it could boost the local economy by creating a comfort level and realization that public transit systems are accessible to everyone resulting in an increase in shopping, dining, and socializing.

4.7 Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services has oversight of the Medicaid program and must provide transportation for approved participants. Medicaid transportation is currently contracted to an outside broker, MTM. Utilization of the brokerage company relieves Social Services staff of daily management for Medicaid transportation. The broker has a list of approved providers and they distribute the transportation requests to the providers for services. Currently, the County Public Transit system is not transporting any Medicaid recipients as the public transit service routes are not in place to accommodate Medicaid ridership needs at this time.

An analysis of Medicaid transportation

data provided by MTM, based on the July 2009 monthly data, provides the following information: Of the 3,314 vehicle trips for the month, approximately 83 percent of the trips, 2,777 were ambulatory, meaning these clients are potentially eligible to be coordinated on the public transit system. The total miles by vehicle type reveal similar data, with over 46,000 out of 56,000 miles attributed to ambulatory service. The total cost by vehicle trip for the month also reflects similar data with \$129,000 out of \$176,000 also being ambulatory. Transportation provider costs for the month of July ranged from a high of \$3.08 per mile to a low of \$1.82, with a per mile average ambulatory cost of \$2.75 for Medicaid transportation.

Of the 1,760 total reservations for the month of July, the majority of pick-ups, 1,597 originated in Greene County; drop off locations were Greene County 818; Columbia County 536; Albany County 204; Ulster County 121; and several other counties with numbers less than 25.

The Medicaid transportation program could be coordinated with the Greene Transit System for approved ambulatory clients. The coordination effort would be a significant undertaking, requiring intra-agency partner agreements, training, approval from state and Federal agencies with a phased in plan.

4.7.1 Transportation Services

Coordination Plan Recommendations for Social Services

Coordination of Medicaid transportation with an expanded public transit system and other providers could increase STOA revenue for the Greene Transit System thereby contributing to a reduction of net transportation costs.

The Medicaid transportation coordination of ambulatory clients would also require an adjustment of routes and times by the Greene Transit System, and only after the Federal government approved a waiver to accommodate ridership in a manner that provides appropriate choice provisions.

Also of importance for the successful implementation of a coordinated public and human services transportation plan is a marketing plan that effectively conveys to the ridership any changes to the existing system.

4.8 Department of Public Health

The Department of Public Health administers the Preschool Children's program. This program ridership cannot be coordinated or co-mingled with the public in accordance to state and federal regulations. The current contracted provider is Coxsackie Transportation. The program is designed for children with specialized needs and has approximately 40 to 60 participants depending on the time of year. The program costs are reported as \$700,000

per year.

4.8.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan Recommendations for Public Health

There may be some opportunities to open the buses to the public after all participants are dropped off resulting in the reduction of deadhead miles. If some vehicles can be opened to the public it could increase accessible transportation in areas and times not currently serviced. This could provide for additional state and federal funding and income from fare box receipt.

4.9 Center for Behavioral Wellness

The Center for Behavioral Wellness, formerly the Department of Mental Health, transportation needs are for day and evening appointments and services Monday thru Friday. There are a small amount of Saturday and Sunday services on an emergency basis. The reported losses directly attributed to transportation inefficiencies are estimated at \$300,000 per year. Reliable

transportation for appointments within Greene County would reduce the losses. Participant service areas of the County are Catskill 463 or 35%, Cairo 244 or 18.5%, Coxsackie/Athens 209 or 15.8%, Greenville 131 or 9.9%, Hunter/Tannersville, Windham and Durham all between 5% and 7% and other miscellaneous outlying areas.

4.9.1 Transportation Services Coordination Plan Recommendations for Center for Behavioral Wellness:

Communicate with departments to familiarize them to the current services and familiarize the transportation service providers to the program needs. Adjust the routes, times and transportation services to accommodate the ridership, through a combination of fixed route, demand response. County wide transportation coordination could reduce the program losses and increase the success of the department services.



5.0 Cost Analysis of Transportation Services

This section discusses the financial implications associated with implementing the recommended coordinated transportation plan. The information provided is intended to guide decision making by the Greene County Legislature, Greene County Transit and the Transportation Advisory Committee with respect to the phasing of improvements, as funding opportunities permit. The ability to transition to a coordinated transportation plan is dependent on availability of financing. Several opportunities exist in this regard, including increased State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) payments based on increased revenue miles operated and passengers carried on the system, new contract revenues developed through the coordination process as proposed with the other County transportation providers, as well as added farebox revenues. More detailed financial planning and development of a detailed operating budget for Greene Transit would be an early action item for the TAC.

The coordination of services has the potential of increasing revenue to the system and decreasing overall expenses. The coordination effort should be designed to fully access funding sources while providing an effective transportation system accommodating the needs of the County residents. This financial analysis is based on data reported by the

County transportation providers operating in Greene County, including total yearly transportation cost, miles traveled, passenger counts, and funding supporting the services. The total cost includes all transportation operational expenses including labor, vehicles expense, gas/fuel, insurance, maintenance, etc.

With coordination, miles traveled will reduce for some transportation providers, as some or all of the existing ridership would be placed on the newly enhanced routes of the Greene Transit System. As more riders are placed on the Greene Transit System, costs will commensurately reduce as the cost per mile for operating the Greene Transit System is lower in most cases. It is important to understand that lowering the costs per mile by utilizing the Greene Transit System, may decrease the revenue from one agency, but in turn will have the net effect of increasing revenue to the Greene Transit System, as for the first time, STOA revenue will be captured on a per mile and per passenger basis.

In this effort the benefit of the cost reduction/increase will be realized by opening some services to the public which will access additional funding sources. For example, Community Action pays \$2.00 per mile, DSS pays an average of \$2.75 per mile for ambulatory services, OFA pays \$5.00 per mile, while the Greene Transit System operates at a cost of \$2.53 per mile.

As any financial analysis is prepared, it is important to understand that the analysis is based upon several variables providing a snapshot in time of an existing uncoordinated system of transportation. The financial analysis is intended to be illustrative only for the purposes of demonstrating how a coordinated system would still need to have each agency contribute its fair share of cost, and how the costs would potentially shift and be reallocated. The financial analysis is not intended to be an operational budget, rather to demonstrate cost efficiencies of a coordinated system. The cost savings presented as a result of this financial analysis are consistent with results from similar public transportation systems across the state which have already implemented a mobility management system. Also, an important variable presented in the analysis is the “percent of coordination rate” which will only be obtained to the degree of commitment to real coordination between the providers and that a 5 year plan will be necessary to obtain maximum results.

5.1 Expense Analysis

The costs for all service providers have been calculated from the reported data received on the total transportation costs and miles traveled to a total per mile cost. In the coordination effort current transportation provider costs are identified in the following chart.

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER COSTS AND FUNDING IDENTIFIED

PROVIDER	TOTAL EXPENSE	NON COUNTY FUNDING	COUNTY EXPENSE
Community Action Program	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 26,778.00	\$ 43,222.00
Greene County DSS	\$ 1,596,000.00	\$ 1,197,000.00	\$ 399,000.00
**additional vehicle expense	\$ 76,430.00		\$ 76,430.00
Greene County DOH	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 446,250.00	\$ 303,750.00
Greene County Dept of Aging	\$ 92,550.00	\$ 67,200.00	\$ 25,350.00
Veterans Service Agency	\$ 14,700.00	\$ 9,700.00	\$ 5,000.00
County Public Transit	\$ 79,133.00	\$ 69,133.00	\$ 10,000.00
TOTALS	\$ 2,678,813.00	\$ 1,816,061.00	\$ 862,752.00

The total transportation costs for each provider identified above is \$2,678,813.00. The portion directly funded by the County is \$862,752. The Greene County DSS amount of \$76,430 and DOH amount of \$303,750 are client specific services which cannot be coordinated to open public services. The cost to the County which could be opened to the public and directly affected with the initial coordination effort was reported as follows:

- \$459,204 including the following:
 - Community Action Program \$ 43,222
 - Medicaid Ambulatory \$370,602
 - OFA \$ 25,350
 - Greene Transit (Including STOA match) \$ 18,430

- The analysis assumptions include: coordination of the OFA bus services, coordination of ambulatory Medicaid ridership; coordination with CAP and the Greene Transit system for employment routes; coordination for additional ridership for the Veterans Services.

As reported by the Transportation Departments and Agencies:

- Community Action Program expenses are \$70,000. CST Grant funding is \$26,778. County funding is \$43,222. Transporting 4728 trips per year at an average of \$14.81 per trip.
- Greene County Department of Social Services Medicaid transportation total expense is \$1,596,000. Ambulatory ridership is approximately 80% of the budget. The majority of ridership directly eligible for coordination of human service clients to the public transit system is billed at a rate of \$3.08 per mile. The total average costs per mile for ambulatory ridership is \$2.75. Total trips per year is 18,163. Miles per year is 298,218. Coordination with public transit could significantly increase STOA revenue and lower the net costs.
- Ulster Greene ARC transportation costs for Greene County is \$55,879. There is no County funding to support this service, transporting approximately 4,160 trips per year and 211,000 miles.
- Greene County Department of Public Health costs for transportation is \$750,000 for the County administered Pre-School Handicapped Children's Program. The program is funded \$446,250 by the New York State Department of Education; \$303,750 is funded by the County. As these clients cannot be placed on the public Transit System, the five year plan would include coordination utilizing operators and vehicles traveling dead head miles. Multi-contract coordination, bulk purchases, shared facilities and human service operators could be a coordination option to reduce service redundancies and costs.
- Greene County Department of the Aging operates five days a week with a total cost of \$92,550. Multiple funding sources include Title IIIb, IIIc, CSE and New York Transportation funds totaling \$67,200 and the County funding is \$25,350. This could be coordinated with Greene Transit to expand open public services and access additional funding sources.
- Greene County Veterans Services is limited to three days per week with a reported cost of \$14,700. Veteran affairs and private donations fund \$9,700, and the County contribution is \$5,000. The coordination plan and service expansion could provide additional transportation services for veterans including access to ADA compliant vehicles and routes.
- Greene County Public Transit System is currently contracted with First Student as the service provider. The total cost per year is \$79,133 which is supported by state and federal program funding. The County contribution is \$10,000 (inter-department funding from OFA to Greene Transit) plus an additional estimated \$8,430 for STOA match funding.

The following table represents the coordination of the Community Action Program (CAP) with the Greene County Transit System for the commuter employment routes over a one year time period. Coordinating CAP with Greene Transit would provide additional STOA revenue.

CURRENT MILES	COST PER MILE	TOTAL EXPENSES	GREENE TRANSIT COST PER MILE	TOTAL GREENE TRANSIT COST	TOTAL COST REDUCTION
35,011.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 2.53	\$ 88,577.83	\$ -18,577.83

The following table represents the coordination of the Department of Social Services Medicaid transportation ridership, with the Greene County Transit System. The analysis is for a one year period and based upon coordinating only the DSS ambulatory ridership. Eighty percent (80%) of the DSS riders are ambulatory. Coordinating DSS with Greene Transit would provide additional STOA revenue.

CURRENT MILES	COST PER MILE	TOTAL EXPENSES	GREENE TRANSIT COST PER MILE	TOTAL GREENE TRANSIT COST	TOTAL COST REDUCTION
298,218.24	\$ 3.08	\$918,512.18	\$ 2.53	\$754,492.15	(164,020.03)

The following table represents the coordination of the Office for the Aging (OFA) transportation ridership comparison with the Greene County Transit System, also over a one year period.

CURRENT MILES	COST PER MILE	TOTAL EXPENSES	GREENE TRANSIT COST PER MILE	TOTAL GREENE TRANSIT COST	TOTAL COST REDUCTION
18,400.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 92,000.00	\$ 2.53	\$ 46,552.00	(45,448.00)

The following table represents possible cost reductions with the coordinated transportation system. Over time, as more of the ridership is coordinated, more savings can be realized as the ridership costs decrease. As noted, there are additional costs associated with personnel and as the STOA ridership revenue increases there is also an increase in mandated STOA match. The table illustrates that in the initial stages of coordination, the start-up phase, overall costs will increase until greater numbers of riders (percent coordination) are achieved. With a fifty percent coordinated ridership, the cost reductions to the County could be upwards of \$240,000 per year.

	10% COORDINATION TOTAL	20% COORDINATION TOTAL	30% COORDINATION TOTAL	40% COORDINATION TOTAL	50% COORDINATION TOTAL
CURRENT COST TO COUNTY BUDGET	(459,204.63)	(459,204.63)	(459,204.63)	(459,204.63)	(459,204.63)
EXPENSE INCREASE Includes MOBILITY MANAGER	\$156,278.71	\$248,557.42	\$340,836.14	\$443,114.85	\$525,393.56
EXPENSE DECREASE	(117,137.09)	(234,274.17)	(351,411.26)	(468,548.34)	(585,685.43)
COST SAVINGS	(19,089.02)	(38,178.04)	(57,267.06)	(76,356.08)	(95,445.10)
NET COST REDUCTION TO COUNTY BUDGET	(20,052.61)	\$23,894.79	\$67,842.18	\$111,789.58	\$155,736.97

Please note:

From the preceding information:

The "EXPENSE INCREASES" are based on the percentages of the "TOTAL TRANSIT COST" of \$889,629 and additional federal and state funding match expenses of \$41,164. An additional \$64,000 mobility manager cost (salary and benefits), as well as the local match for JARC funding (\$4,000) is included and will not vary with the percentages.

The "EXPENSE DECREASES" are a percentage of the actual reported total budget of operations for the current service provider. The expense decreases are based on the percentages of the "TOTAL EXPENSES" of \$1,260,337.78 and additional labor reportedly not included in the program transportation total expenses of \$90,858.75. The total expenses for the current service providers which have the potential for reductions are \$1,351,196.53.

The "COST SAVINGS" is the reduction realized by lowering the per mile rate from the current service provider to the coordinated public service provider rate.

5.2 Revenue Analysis

The Income for all service providers has been calculated from the reported data received on the total transportation funding sources, Federal, State, Greene County, program specific donations, fares and Greene County. In the coordination effort current transportation provider funding sources are identified in the previous table, "CURRENT TRANSPORTATION COST AND FUNDING IDENTIFIED".

The total funding identified for each provider above is \$2,678,813. The non-County funded portion is \$1,816,061. The non-County funding sources will remain the same, however, the allocation of revenue will change. For example, as the DSS riders are coordinated on Greene Transit, the costs per mile will decrease, so DSS reimbursement of revenue will decrease. At the same time, however, when the Greene Transit revenue source of STOA will increase. As with expense allocation, the current income funding which could be directly affected with the coordination efforts were reported as follows:

○ Community Action Program	\$ 26,778
○ Medicaid Ambulatory	\$1,197,000
○ OFA	\$ 67,200

The following table represents possible income increases with the coordinated transportation system. The potential of additional revenue can be realized as the coordination effort develops. Sources of additional revenue could be derived from additional STOA operating revenue, fare box revenue will increase as ridership grows and open public routes are developed. Fare share cost revenue can be determined in future contracts. Additional income could be obtained by securing third party contracts with major employers, advertising income for bus wraps or schedule advertising. DSS Medicaid coordination with public transit will not only reduce the County expenses, it will reallocate the Federal 50% and State 25% and the County 25% funding to the County budget for transportation. As noted, while there will be income increases as new revenue sources are tapped, income will decrease for DSS Medicaid reimbursement. The table illustrates that overall revenue will increase in the coordinated system.

	10% COORDINATION TOTAL	20% COORDINATION TOTAL	30% COORDINATION TOTAL	40% COORDINATION TOTAL	50% COORDINATION TOTAL
CURRENT COST TO COUNTY BUDGET	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)
INCOME INCREASE	\$31,328.16	\$60,156.33	\$88,984.49	\$117,812.66	\$146,640.82
INCOME DECREASE	(\$12,301.50)	(\$24,603.00)	(\$36,904.51)	(\$49,206.01)	(\$61,507.51)
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME	\$19,026.66	\$35,553.32	\$52,079.98	\$68,606.65	\$85,133.31

Please note:

Revenue Increases/Decreases are as follows:

INCREASES

- Additional STOA @ \$.69 per mile and \$.405 per passenger
- Additional Federal and State funding from ridership
- JARC funding estimated at \$40,000 for the Mobility Manager

DECREASES

- Reduction in Federal and State Medicaid ambulatory funding as the cost per trip reduces from the current per mile cost of \$3.08 to the Transit current cost of \$2.53

5.3 County Budget Overview

As the coordination effort is implemented the projected expense reductions and income increases will change as the transportation routes are initiated at start up, and over time as routes are adjusted to better accommodate the demand in services. The goal is to design a system that maximizes revenue and reduces costs, while balancing the transportation needs of the community. The coordination plan should be utilized and implemented to reduce service redundancies, expand existing services, reduce costs and fully access all funding sources.

As an example, Community Action Program participants may move or change employers

which will increase or decrease the amount of funding to support the services. The Federal and State Funding may change depending on the program approvals and funding allocations. The JARC funding for the Mobility Manager estimated at \$40,000 may be approved or denied, as this funding source is competitive, based on program needs and state approval. JARC route operational funding for employment services are also subject to the same approval process. Additional costs may be incurred with the purchasing of new vehicles, or utilizing the current vehicles operated by the County as open to the public services which will require all vehicles to become DOT inspected. The potential new cost to the County Budget is reported as follows:

	10% COORDINATION TOTAL	20% COORDINATION TOTAL	30% COORDINATION TOTAL	40% COORDINATION TOTAL	50% COORDINATION TOTAL
CURRENT COST TO COUNTY BUDGET	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)	(\$459,204.63)
TOTAL EXPENSE REDUCTION	(\$20,052.61)	\$23,894.79	\$67,842.18	\$111,789.58	\$155,736.97
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME	\$19,026.66	\$35,553.32	\$52,079.98	\$68,606.65	\$85,133.31
REALLOCATED COST TO COUNTY BUDGET	(\$460,230.57)	(\$399,756.52)	(\$339,282.46)	(\$278,808.41)	(\$218,334.35)
NET SAVINGS	(\$1,025.94)	\$59,448.11	\$119,922.17	\$180,396.22	\$240,870.28

6.0 Recommended Coordinated Plan

This chapter presents recommendations for improving public transportation services in Greene County. The Plan includes both local and regional service proposals that are intended to make transit service more useful and appealing to a wider range of Greene County residents and visitors than currently are served. This Plan identifies actions and strategies to better coordinate transportation services in Greene County. The Plan also identifies administrative options to better coordinate Greene County's transportation programs. Many benefits are expected from the Plan. Among them is the reduction of duplicative services and the creation of a more efficient and effective County-wide coordinated transportation program. Implementation will be an ongoing effort requiring short and long term phased in components, commitment from the Greene County Legislature and continued cooperation from agencies with transportation needs.

A locally driven, County-wide coordinated transportation plan is recommended. In order to be effective, the Plan requires three basic features:

- Implementation of a County-wide plan will require policy approval by the Greene County Legislature to put the Plan in motion.
- Structural changes to the Greene Transit System, along with public-private transportation agency agreements, and NYSDOT approval will be required to implement the Plan.
- A phased in five-year Plan, with short and long term recommendations, addressing: personnel, mobility management authority, procurement, third party agreements, fair share cost participation, Federal waiver and state approval, etc, with priority tasks will be required to implement the Plan.

6.1 Goals and Objectives

From the work documented in earlier chapters, a significant segment of the population of Greene County lacks reliable transportation needed to maintain an independent lifestyle. An increasing number of persons will require public transportation for access to employment, education and training opportunities, shopping, appointments and other basic destinations. Coordination and developing partnerships will ensure the future success of transportation systems. Transportation planners do not have a choice, they must start the coordination effort as they are facing Federal mandates, increased

demands for services, higher gas prices, insurance costs, wages and health benefits. Moreover, as the County ages, the senior population will double, baby boomers will be of transit riding age by 2015, and along with the senior population increase will come demands for disabled and Medicaid increases.

Additionally, key performance indicators and standards are suggested to measure the progress of system development over time. It is important to recognize that the vision for public transportation should assume a long term perspective that is both sufficiently generalized and flexible to allow the system to grow and evolve with community needs over a period of years. The vision should reflect both public expectations for a quality transit system that meets their needs, as well as a realistic sense of local funding capacity, organizational structure and management philosophy for the transit system.

Considering these priorities, a suggested vision statement for public transportation in Greene County is as follows:

Greene County aspires to build a modern, affordable and sustainable public transit system that supports the mobility needs of area residents and visitors, and contributes to a livable and healthy community both now and in the future.

Realistic *goals and objectives* are necessary policy making and management tools for the coordinated public transit system. Goals should provide administrative staff with general direction needed to refocus the transit system and move it forward consistent with community preferences and expectations. It should be understood that some goals may not be met for many years until development conditions in the service area and the transit system mature.

System objectives supply the structure for translating goals into action and for monitoring and evaluating system performance relative to locally defined expectations. Objectives typically are the intermediate targets that represent significant accomplishments toward more generalized goals. Ideally, they should be formulated by transit system management in consultation with community leaders or an oversight body, again reinforcing the recommendation to formally establish the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Particular objectives should be attainable generally within the time span of perhaps two to five years, and subsequently extended, revised or replaced as warranted by conditions. The NYSDOT also requires that the Plan be updated on a two year cycle requiring input from the TAC.

Performance measures provide the mechanisms needed to monitor and evaluate whether adopted objectives are being achieved. When possible, performance measures should include quantifiable indicators based on frequently reported operating statistics, such as total ridership, service hours and miles operated, capital and operating costs incurred, fare revenues collected, schedule reliability, system safety, or similar parameters. Three broad measures are critically important system-level evaluation tools that need to be instituted as part of the implementation plan:

- Total annual ridership and/or ridership per capita
- Passengers per revenue hour or service provided
- Percent of operating costs recovered from passenger fares

Service standards define specific levels of attainment desired or expected relative to each performance measure. Standards should provide realistic short-range targets for the transit system to achieve and, for a mature system, should be recalibrated annually to reflect changing circumstances in the service area, financial position and other factors. The process of monitoring and evaluating performance become essential management activities within an ongoing transit development process. All public transit systems receiving federal funding assistance typically are required to define and update their transit development plans every five years, or more frequently if necessary. Particularly for a public transit service in transition, system *design criteria* are a critical part of the process of identifying a preferred service alternative. Design criteria minimally should address three aspects of the system:

Service area coverage – the number and spacing of routes, percentage of service area residents within five minutes of a transit route, and distance between bus stops. Service span – the days and hours during which buses are in operation. Service Frequency – how often buses pass any given bus stop in the system.

Because design criteria have a major effect on transit system operating costs, a number of important trade-offs must be considered. For example, operating costs may be contained by limiting service coverage to the most densely populated areas of the County; or by limiting service span to weekdays only at first and deferring evening and weekend service until a later phase in transit system development; or by scheduling buses to operate less regularly at lower demand times of the day.

Ultimately, transit system development, monitoring and evaluation needs to be linked to community values, as reflected by the public input received during the study and a sense of how best to address the needs of local residents and businesses in an affordable manner.

6.2 Organizational Structure

Fully implementing the recommended coordinated transportation plan will require that Greene County assume a significantly reorganized role in actively managing the human service and public transit system. This function includes the implementation of a coordinated mobility management system as part of an enhanced Greene County Transit System. The Greene Transit System would undertake the lead coordination role and work directly with the human services agencies.

“Mobility management” is a relatively new and innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to customers, including older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with low income. Mobility Management focuses on meeting individual customer needs through a wide range of transportation options and service providers. The concept focuses on coordinating these services and providers in order to achieve a more efficient transportation service delivery system for public policy makers and taxpayers who underwrite the cost of service delivery. Generally, these strategies are implemented through the creation of staff positions known as Mobility Managers.

Mobility Managers serve as policy coordinators, operations service brokers, and customer travel navigators. They help communities develop transportation coordination plans, programs, and policies, and build local partnerships. Individuals or organizations that are hired to provide mobility management functions often require training and ongoing technical support.

6.2.1 Greene Transit System Authority and Staffing

Significant new administrative capacity within the Greene Transit System will be required to carry out operational management, route set-up and coordination, third party procurement, tracking ridership on Greene Transit to send back to each participating transportation provider, as well as contract monitoring activities necessary to implement the coordinated plan. Other management functions include establishing a direct working relationship with NYSDOT concerning system financing and grant-related

activities, including capital and operating grants. Additionally, data collection and reporting obligations must meet NYSDOT requirements and community expectations, and Greene County should anticipate ongoing participation in the state public transportation planning process. A full-time mid level Transportation Mobility Manager position will be required. There may be opportunities to combine or coordinate full or part time transportation staff currently existing in each of the respective transportation departments and agencies, which a more full and detailed assessment during the implementation and budgeting stages would define. A transportation mobility management system established with authority from the Greene County Legislature would enable the Greene Transit System to have direct oversight and control of transportation related activities and functions of the respective departments.

All requests from the respective departments would flow through the Mobility Manager for authorization, for example: bus purchases, bids, grant applications, routes, contracts, etc.

6.2.2 Greene County Transportation Committee (TAC)

A coordinated transportation management system requires full and active participation and interaction between the Greene County Public Transit System, the human service agencies directly providing their own transportation services, and the human service agencies that have specific clients they serve requiring transportation.

The formation of the Greene County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is recommended to oversee and encourage the coordination process among human service agencies and the public transit system. Given its large stake in funding transportation services, and the fact that the operating authority for public transportation already resides within the Greene County Transit System, the County Legislature should take early action to assemble a contingent of key Department heads and program directors to participate on the TAC. This group will form the nucleus of the TAC that ultimately should engage public, private, and not-for-profit entities that currently provide transportation services to individuals with disabilities, older adults, low income families and others without access to an automobile. TAC membership should include representation from the major direct service providers, purchasers of service, consumers and others interested in participating. At least initially, the following organizations should be represented:

Public Transportation System

- GC Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning (Greene Transit)

Direct County Department and Agency Transportation Providers

- GC Department for the Aging (Direct Transit Provider)
- GC Department of Social Services (Transit Broker)
- GC Veterans Services (Direct Transit Provider)
- GC Community Action Program (Direct Transit Provider)
- GC Public Health, Physically Handicapped Preschool (Direct Transit Provider)

Direct County Department and Agencies with Client Services Needs

- GC Center for Behavioral Wellness (Client Services Needs)

County Not-For-Profit Transportation Providers

- Ulster Greene ARC
- COARC

Greene County Legislative Appointments

GC Legislator, Government Operations Committee

GC Legislator, Highway Committee

For Profit Transportation Companies

- Cocksackie Transportation
- First Student
- Hunter Motor Coach
- Taxi Cab Company

Not-For-Profit Organizations and Citizen Representative

The TAC should meet frequently at the outset, and eventually on a quarterly basis to cover an agenda that systematically explores opportunities for coordination in the following areas:

Information & Referral – The needs assessment shows a lack of public awareness concerning any single source of information about available transportation services.

Passenger Reservations & Scheduling – Increasing service productivity (*i.e.*, passengers transported per revenue vehicle hour) depends on the ability to influence passenger reservation times and group passengers by origin, destination and travel time. The needs assessment identifies that to achieve an increase in service productivity requires human service agency clientele coordination on the Greene Transit System.

Vehicle Dispatching – Schedule reliability and vehicle response times for return trips typically improve when more vehicles are controlled by a common dispatcher. The needs assessment identifies that the most cost effective means of dispatching is through a combination of third party broker and transportation company.

Operator Recruitment, Training & Safety – Collaboration in these areas typically result in a better travel experience for customers, fewer accidents and incidents, lower vehicle liability insurance premiums, higher driver morale, and optimized utilization of volunteers.

Vehicle Fueling and Servicing – Cooperation among service providers can help control fuel costs, avoid fuel excise taxes, track expenditures and reduce driver time lost to daily refueling and servicing activities.

Vehicle Maintenance and Repair – Joint vehicle maintenance arrangements can help to reduce vehicle downtime, in-service vehicle breakdowns, and total expenditures on vehicle operations, while improving system safety and schedule reliability.

Fleet Replacement and Expansion – Collaborative decisions concerning the number and type of passenger vehicles to be purchased, vehicle specifications, local prioritization of Section 5310 grant applications, and sharing local match expenses can increase vehicle productivity while also reducing capital costs.

6.3 Priority Action Strategies

This section identifies the immediate next steps that should be taken toward implementation of the recommendations of the study. The purpose of this section is to provide enough information for the highest priority strategies so that agencies and organizations understand the respective opportunities and challenges and can hence make a more informed decision about pursuing implementation. Each of the priority strategies are described. Potential lead organizations that would be tasked with responsibility for implementation are identified. Any issues regarding implementation, including a range of implementation Time Frames, are also provided. For each strategy a lead agency or “champion” has been suggested to initiate action. The agencies listed are merely possible lead agencies and should in no way preclude other agencies or organizations from leading an effort to address this strategy.

The following chart summarizes actions and strategies to address unmet needs and represents a 5 year projected plan. Each action item is followed by a strategy and a time frame for completion. The chart will be updated periodically.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
High Priority Strategies					
Action Item 1	Finalize Transportation Needs Assessment	Provide a final report and presentation of findings; Formalize GC Legislative Policy Support of Coordination Plan, Mobility Management System, Transportation Advisory Committee.	Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning Support: County Administrator Chairpersons of Government Operations and Highway	Draft final report submitted to GC Legislature Fall 2010	The draft final report should be made available to the human service transportation agencies and the general public for comment.
Action Item 2	Submit Transportation Needs Assessment to NYSDOT	Provide the final report to the NYSDOT.	Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning	Fall 2010	Submission of the final report will conclude the grant project and establish the basis for submission of NYSDOT grant applications under 5310 (STOA), 5316 (JARC), 5317 (NF). Work with NYSDOT to request an increase in Greene County's 5310 STOA funds (bump) anticipating the newly designed routes and increased miles and passengers directly on Greene Transit.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 3	Meet with County Transportation Providers	Mobilize department heads and program directors with transportation functions regarding adoption of the coordinated transportation plan. There should be a basic mutual understanding in place between the public and human services transportation providers regarding policy, administration, mobility management authority, and timing of the components of the plan.	Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning Support: DSS, OFA, CAP, Veterans Public Health	3 -6 Months	Several meetings are envisioned to establish a detailed understanding of the coordinated system plan.
Action Item 4	Formalize the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)	Meet with and establish formal membership and advisory protocols of the Greene County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)	Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning Support: TAC Members	3 – 6 Months	A coordinated transportation management system requires full and active participation and interaction between the Greene County Public Transit System, the human service agencies directly providing their own transportation services, and the human service agencies that have specific clients they serve requiring transportation. One of the first tasks assigned to the TAC should be a more detailed assessment of fleet inventory and vehicle needs laying the foundation for capital assistance grant applications to support future action items to be phased in over time.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 5	Prepare and Submit Grant Application to NYSDOT (JARC)	<p>Access funds through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC Program) to improve access to transportation services for employment and employment related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals.</p> <p>With continued rates of high unemployment, there will be a continued need to link low income individuals with these employment centers. Adoption of this strategy in the plan will continue to afford public transit agencies with the flexibility to apply for JARC funding to create new reverse commute routes or expand existing routes to better meet commuter needs.</p>	<p>Lead: Greene Transit</p> <p>Support:</p> <p>Community Action</p> <p>DSS</p> <p>OFA</p>	Grant Application Submitted May 19, 2010	<p>Greene Transit submitted a grant application requesting \$71,000 for operating assistance and \$52,000 for mobility management assistance to establish a dedicated “public transportation employment access program” for the establishment of new business/commuter routes in Greene County through Greene Transit. The employment access program is an important economic development strategy. This program would be implemented in partnership with Community Action’s workforce program.</p> <p>Initial routes, others to be phased in over time: Commuter buses primarily along the Route 9W/385/23/32/145 Corridors, from Catskill to Athens to Coxsackie, and out to Cairo/Durham/Greenville servicing the major businesses and population centers. Initial route to also include buses from Catskill to Hudson in coordination with Columbia County Transit. Future routes to include commuter buses from Catskill to Albany, also in coordination with Columbia County Transit’s existing commuter service to Albany.</p> <p>Training needs to be scheduled and all drivers and transportation partners educated. Develop a "guaranteed ride home" program.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 6	Improve Coordination of Agency Services with a Mobility Management System	Implement a Mobility Management System to oversee the implementation of the coordinated plan. The Mobility Manager would have direct control and authority over certain transportation functions within Greene County and would work with private and not-for-profit transportation providers.	Lead: Greene Transit County Departments and Agencies Transit Agencies Not-for-Profit Organizations	6 – 12 Months	The key factor of a mobility management system is the ability to coordinate transportation across individual transportation providers. There needs to be a basic understanding that no one person or agency is responsible for addressing community-wide mobility issues. The fragmented nature of funding, and each program with its own eligibility criteria inhibits mobility among the target populations. Coordination of transportation systems is thus a process in which two or more organizations interact to jointly accomplish their transportation objectives. A mobility management system is required by the NYSDOT in order to access JARC 5316 funding.
Action Item 7	Recruit County Transportation Mobility Manager	Contingent upon personnel and budgetary approval, solicit and fill the position of Mobility Manager.	Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning (Greene Transit) Support: GC Human Resources GC Administrator	2011 Budget	A job description will need to be drafted. The position will be posted and advertised in conformance with Greene County Human Resources policies. To the extent that the job duties address reverse commute transportation needs, the position is eligible for competitive funding through JARC (5316).

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 8	Coordination with Columbia County	<p>Seek Operating Authority Agreements, initially with Columbia County followed by Ulster and Albany Counties.</p> <p>Seek opportunities to coordinate individual third party operating contracts between both counties:</p> <p>To coordinate the public transit routes across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge providing linkages to both systems.</p> <p>To coordinate a joint commuter route(s). Columbia already operates a morning and evening commuter bus to Albany.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>Columbia Transit</p> <p>Chief Elected Officials of each County</p>	1-2 years	Greene and Columbia transportation coordination opportunities would commence following adoption of the respective County Coordinated Transportation Plans, and a commitment to staffing and resources from the respective transit organizations.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 9	Work to implement a universal pass or swipe card system that will interconnect with other public transportation services	<p>Research the feasibility of a universal pass or swipe card system.</p> <p>Multi-County coordination with Columbia County.</p> <p>Discounted passes such as Family, Student, Weekly, or Monthly.</p> <p>Identify funding sources - can partner with major business for advertising spaces.</p> <p>Each of the County transit systems studied as part of this assessment, rely upon a system of tracking and monitoring the clients from human service agencies that use the public transit system. The fares and ridership billing needs are different for each agency.</p> <p>Clinton County uses colored tokens, Schoharie County uses cards and vouchers.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>Human Service Agency</p> <p>Department Heads</p>	6 months – 1 year	Need to implement a tracking system for inter agency payment and ridership counts for STOA reimbursements.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 10	Capital Equipment for Coordinated Agency/Program Services (Annual)	Upon completion of the vehicle fleet assessment, a list of buses and other capital equipment associated needs can be identified for submission to the NYSDOT corresponding to the annual NYSDOT grant cycle. All capital grant requests would be coordinated by the Mobility Manager.	<p>Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning (Greene Transit)</p> <p>Support:</p> <p>TAC</p> <p>Municipalities</p>	Annually	This longstanding Section 5311 FTA program provides the capital assistance to Greene County for buses on a matching formula basis. The number of buses purchased through this program would directly correlate to the establishment of the new routes initially recommended for the public transportation system coordinated plan. As the approval and procurement process typically takes a year or more, all third party contracts with transportation providers need to establish rates for service with and without buses purchased pursuant to this program.
Action Item 11	Capital Equipment for Coordinated Agency/Program Services (ARRA)	Greene County Transit was awarded \$150,000 through the Section 5311 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the purchase of 2 additional mid-sized buses to add to the fleet to accommodate the growth of the public transit system.	<p>Lead: Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning (Greene Transit)</p> <p>Support:</p> <p>County Departments and Agencies</p> <p>Transit Agencies</p>	End of Year	Following report formalization by the Greene County Legislature and the adoption of the transportation coordinated system plan, the procurement process can be finalized to add vehicles in furtherance of the newly designed system.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 12	Expanded Greene Transit Service and Route Coordination (Commuter Routes Identified in Item 5)	Following adoption of the coordinated transportation plan, this strategy is aimed at increasing the use of the Greene Transit fixed-route services by those human resources clients currently using para-transit service (DSS, OFA, CAP, Veterans) who could otherwise use accessible fixed-route transportation (primarily in county and Columbia County heavily used locations).	Lead: Greene Transit County Departments and Agencies Transit Agencies Not-for-Profit Organizations	Initial High Priority 6 Months – 1 Year Phased In Coordinated Routes 2-5 Years	<p>Expanded Greene Transit System routes through the coordinated mobility management system is the “key component” to implementation of the plan. There is a steep and very intensive start-up phase to structure a designated fixed route public transportation system that the human services agencies support and integrate services. Utilize a formal competitive selection process to solicit a contract operator capable of offering a specified level of commuter service at the lowest cost available. Initial High Priority Phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DSS instructs MTM or future Transit Broker to add Greene Transit as the fixed route public transit system. -Seek STOA eligibility for OFA, CAP and Veterans services ridership on Greene Transit. -OFA buses become part of Greene Transit and the fixed route versus para-transit routes are coordinated by both agencies. -Community Action becomes part of Greene Transit and the fixed route versus para-transit routes are coordinated by both agencies. -Routes reorganized for: buses to senior centers, apartment complexes, major population centers to meet target population needs for shopping, medical appointments, commuting, etc.; buses from Catskill to Hudson, for college, hospital, medical and day rehab facilities; extension of the Catskill shuttle hours as the hub of the coordinated service.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 13	<p>Expanded Greene Transit Service and Route Coordination</p> <p>(Contractual and Third Party Operations)</p>	<p>Following adoption of the coordinated transportation plan, a coordinated approach to contract and third party transportation services will be necessary to achieve the services efficiencies required by the plan. Greene Transit fixed-route services by those human resources customers currently using para-transit service (DSS, OFA, CAP, Veterans) who could use otherwise accessible fixed-route transportation.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>Human Service Agency Department Heads</p> <p>TAC</p>	<p>Initial High Priority 6 Months – 1 Year</p> <p>Phased In Coordinated Routes</p> <p>2-5 Years</p>	<p>The contractual requirements specified herein are required to implement the action item of the coordinated transportation plan identified in the previous action strategy.</p> <p>Initially, the Greene Transit System will need to develop a “bid package” for the newly designed coordinated fixed route and para-transit system reflecting the agreed upon integration of DSS, OFA, CAP, Veterans)</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Medium Priority Strategies					
Action Item 1	Improve upon and recognize the need for personal assistance to passengers with individual needs.	<p>Talk with the involved agencies, to develop a program to assist seniors and disabled individuals who may need assistance with riding the bus.</p> <p>Partner with local retailers and business such as Wal-mart/Price Chopper/ for an associate 1 day per week - this will increase visibility for the retailer and transportation system.</p> <p>Emphasize to bus drivers the need for individual assistance, educate and train through good public relations.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>TAC</p> <p>OFA</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Not-for-Profits</p>	2 - 3 years	<p>Introduce and coordinate projects at TAC meetings. Involve the local businesses, public groups and organizations. Advertise and utilize newspaper publicity articles.</p> <p>Design programs to train individuals to use public transit. Increasing use of public transit will increase mobility for individual and reduce reliance on higher cost transportation modes. Some travel training programs exist already – potential to build on these efforts.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 2	Improve reliability	<p>Create promotional campaigns with incentives to ride the bus.</p> <p>Publish schedules and brochures for a coordinated service including all partnerships. Train and emphasize reliability to all drivers - stop at each stop - never leave a stop early. Ensure a return ride to passengers.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>Human Service Agency Department Heads</p> <p>TAC</p>	1-2 years	<p>The County needs to develop advertising materials (flyers and schedules) and develop an advertising program for regular dissemination of materials. This is important to develop and maintain ridership. The transit network system maps, public timetables and websites should improve consumer awareness and understanding of the County-wide transit system.</p> <p>Improving the readability and comprehension of route and schedule brochures can improve the utilization of public transit services by the target populations.</p> <p>Public transit affords the most mobility to the target populations when located in proximity to target population origins/destinations of travel. Continue to create new services and/or expand existing services to provide service to new areas, expand service hours and/or expand options in area with limited service to meet employment transportation needs. Build on opportunities to coordinate existing services to maximize efficiency and ridesharing. The County currently has the transportation schedule with map on the County web page. Consider a weekend service for employment, medical, shopping, tourism and events.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 3	Improve the image of public transportation. Educate the public on how to use the public transportation system. Encourage non-riders to become riders.	<p>Sponsor a special free day for Seniors.</p> <p>Participate in community events to provide transportation.</p> <p>Visit local organizations as a guest speaker</p> <p>Have regular radio spots- Driver traffic reports</p> <p>Special events recognizing individuals or organizations.</p> <p>Partner with groups and organizations with up-coming events where parking is an issue and public transportation will increase the attendance of the event</p> <p>-Grand Re-opening Event at major shopping area</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>OFA</p> <p>TAC</p>	2-3 years	The County plans to purchase 2 additional buses - could display new bus at local shopping areas and County board meetings. Have "Grand Re-Opening Event" promoting new buses and expanded schedule.
Action Item 4	Accessibility Improvements	<p>Provide for bikes, strollers, walkers, grocery bags, etc.</p> <p>Research grant opportunities through 5311 capital grants to equip all vehicles with bike racks, stroller racks etc.</p>	<p>Greene Transit</p> <p>Human Service Agency Department Heads</p> <p>TAC</p>	2 – 5 years	<p>Improving bus stop accessibility and installing passenger amenities can make transit more accessible by persons with disabilities and older adults.</p> <p>Apply for capital funding for the accessories. The County has applied and received capital funding in the past for bus shelters - there is a required match.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 5	Coordination of Volunteer Driver/Escort Programs	Programs of similar nature exist in the case study counties; this strategy would formalize/ centralize program management.	Existing transit systems or departments of transportation County human service agencies Non-profit human service agencies Community organizations.	2-3 years	Opportunity for a low cost technique to address problematic trips (individuals in the target populations who do not meet program eligibility criteria, long distance trips, or inter-jurisdictional (inter-County) trips.
Action Item 6	Match transportation schedules with seasonal events and tourist-based employment.	Coordinate with seasonal business prior to season opening. Consider contractual agreements with local business to share costs for seasonal service. Seek JARC and other funding.	Greene Transit Human Service Agency Department Heads TAC	1-3 years	Initial discussions with area business's and CGCC for scheduling effectiveness. Develop a Greene/Columbia and Catskill/Hudson area partnership
Action Item 7	Open discussion between the transportation providers and educational systems	Student and educational transportation could be developed with an inter-County agreement servicing the CGCC. After School services can be designed to educate the students to the advantages of public transportation and familiarize them how to access the services.	Greene Transit Schools Community College TAC	1-3 years	Discussions with area school districts, PTO and CGCC for needs identification.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	Lead Agency/Support	Implementation Time Frame	COMMENTS
Action Item 8	Use signage and other advertising to identify existing bus stops and park-ride areas. Designate additional park-n-rides as needed.	<p>Work with the local businesses and the County to identify possible Park 'n Ride areas.</p> <p>Work with DOT for assistance with Funding and planning</p> <p>Work with CDTA and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission to coordinate commuter and park and ride locations.</p>	Greene Transit TAC	3-4 years	<p>-Approach businesses as partners - this can increase retail sales if parts of the parking lots are allocated as park n ride areas.</p> <p>-CDTA has commissioned a study to examine park and ride locations in surrounding counties.</p> <p>-There is a designated Park and Ride location at the NYS Thruway parking lot at Exit 21 in Catskill.</p> <p>- A second designated Park and Location is needed in proximity to the NYS Thruway Exit 21B in the Coxsackie/New Baltimore 9W Industrial and Business Corridor.</p>
Action Item 9	Improve and enhance equipment and energy efficiency in the transportation system.	<p>Investigate hybrid or alternative fuel buses</p> <p>Share resources and bulk purchases with other transportation providers</p> <p>Reduce service redundancy</p>	Greene Transit TAC	2-5 years	Introduce and research at future TAC meetings.

