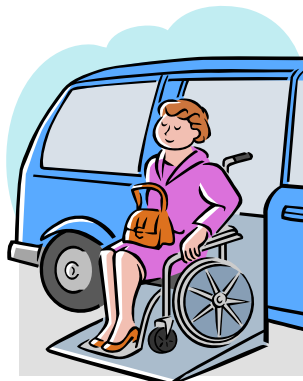
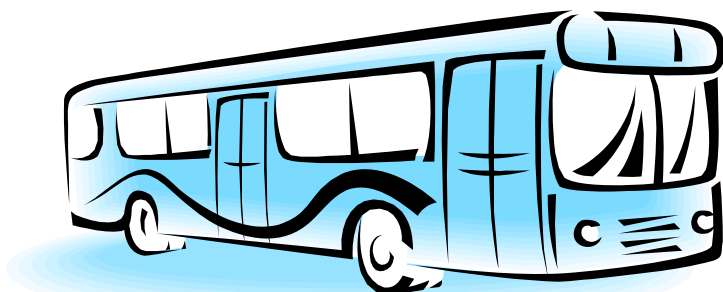




BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT - HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN



March 2007

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION TO COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS) has been designated by the Governor of New York as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), required by Federal transportation law for the Binghamton Urban Area. The BMTS region includes not only the urban core of Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott, but also suburban areas stretching from just west of the Town of Owego to Chenango Bridge, Conklin, and Kirkwood (*See Map 1*).

BMTS, together with the State, are responsible for the comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Binghamton Urban Area. The mission of BMTS is to direct the investment of public funds in the metropolitan transportation system to enhance the mobility of people and goods, to improve the safety of travel, and to have a positive impact on the quality of life in our communities.

BMTS plans for multiple modes of transportation, which comprise the transportation system. These modes include pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and public transportation.

Adopted into law during August 2005, federal legislation entitled, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) mandated that projects for certain Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs be selected from a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, hereafter referred to as the Coordinated Plan. The FTA programs the Coordinated Plan applies to are:

- Section 5310 – Elderly Individuals and Persons with Disabilities
- Section 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)
- Section 5317 – New Freedom

As the Binghamton Urban Area's MPO, BMTS has taken the lead in developing a Coordinated Plan. We have worked together with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Region 9, since the State is the Urban Area's designated recipient and administrator of FTA funds, as well as with public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers to respond to SAFETEA-LU requirements. The purpose of the Coordinated Plan is to facilitate improvements of transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes. The Coordinated Plan will provide a unified comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the needs of the target populations, lays out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services. Duplication of transportation services will also be minimized, thus the investment of applicable FTA program funds will be done in a cost-effective manner with optimal impact. The end result of the Coordinated Plan will be a framework for project creation that will utilize JARC or New Freedom program funds, and incorporate the application process for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities funding into a unified and consistent structure. Ongoing actions that will facilitate the execution of the Coordinated Plan will also be identified.

The Coordinated Plan is intended to be flexible, since the information in this plan may change over time as federal and state guidelines become clearer, and it is desired to be able to take advantage of any

potential opportunities that may become available to address identified gaps or redundancies in transportation services.

II. BACKGROUND OF COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

As noted above, with the passing of the SAFETEA-LU federal transportation legislation during 2005, the FTA announced transit program changes including the requirement to coordinate the human service transportation programs, Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 by creating a Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

Section 5310 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). Annually, NYSDOT provides BMTS with copies of each Section 5310 application they receive from agencies within the Binghamton Urban Area, along with an evaluation sheet. BMTS reviews and scores each application, then returns the evaluation sheet (*See Appendix 1*) to NYSDOT, who makes the final funding decisions.

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; vans; radios and communication equipment; vehicle shelters; wheelchair lifts and restraints; vehicle rehabilitation; manufacture, or overhaul; preventive maintenance, defined as all maintenance costs; extended warranties which do not exceed the industry standard; microcomputer hardware and software; initial component installation costs; vehicle procurement, testing, inspection and acceptance costs; lease of equipment when lease is more cost effective than purchase; acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease or other arrangement; the introduction of new technology, through innovative and improved products, into mass transportation; and transit related intelligent transportation systems (ITS).

Those eligible to receive Section 5310 funding include private nonprofit agencies, public bodies approved by the state to coordinate services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities, or public bodies which certify that no nonprofit corporations or associations are readily available in an area to provide the service.

The following organizations within the Binghamton Urban Area have applied for Section 5310 funding since 1997:

- Catholic Charities of Broome
- Broome-Tioga Chapter NYSARC
- SEPP Management Company

Funds that were awarded were used to purchase buses to provide a transportation service.

Section 5316 is a formula grant program, formerly a discretionary 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.

This is a formula program instead of a discretionary program as was the case in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Formula allocations are based on the number of low-income persons, with 20% of funds going to States for urbanized areas with a population between 50,000 and 200,000. The BMTS planning area encompasses an urbanized area within this group. The Federal/local share is 80/20 for capital projects which include mobility operations, and 50/50 for operating projects.

States and designated recipients must use a competitive selection process to award grantees. New York State procedures and guidance for this program have not been finalized at the time of the creation of this Coordinated Plan. The funds are apportioned to New York State for areas with a population under 200,000 and it is up to the Governor to “Designate” the recipients of those funds. It is likely that the program will work similarly to the Section 5307-Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program. The State will receive the Section 5316 funds, and apportion it to the urbanized areas with a population under 200,000 based on each area’s number of low-income persons. BMTS will then comply with the required competitive selection for funding projects by making sure all eligible applicants have the opportunity to apply for the funds, and then award grants with regard to priorities set out in the Coordinated Planning process.

The Broome County Department of Public Transportation (BCDOPT) has received JARC grants annually since 2000.

ALLOCATIONS TO BROOME COUNTY:

FISCAL YEAR	FEDERAL ALLOCATION
2000	\$200,000
2001	\$249,450
2002	\$500,000
2003	\$247,668
2004	\$247,668
2005	\$247,796

The grants have been used to provide the following:

- New & Enhanced Service for BC Transit & BC Lift
 - Extended PM & Saturday Service

- New Sunday Service
- New K-Commuter Route, serving the Broome Industrial Park

Transportation Service Center/Mobility Manager

- **Mobility Manager**: With the Mobility Manager's office located within the Workforce NY center, the general public and staff from other agencies have comparatively easy access to information about the local public transportation system. The Mobility Manager is also able to directly address or advise other Broome County Department of Public Transportation staff of any community concerns about the public transportation system.
- **Working Employed Parents Ride Cost-free (WERC)**: This program provides a free bus pass to applicants that meet three basic requirements: must be employed, must be a parent of child(ren) under age 18, and have a taxable earned income up to 200% of the federal poverty level. Non-custodial parents may also qualify.
- Transit Service Adjustments
- Redesign of Transit Schedule Pamphlets & Transit Map
- Website Development – Transit Route Locator

Marketing/Publicity

- Television and radio commercial that started airing during December 2003.
- Using printed signs placed in the ad panels on the sides of BC Transit buses to promote extended service, Free Pass Program (a.k.a. WERC), and new website (www.ridebcctransit.com).

SOURCE: *Binghamton Regional Job Access Plan-Service Evaluation, 2004*

The Section 5316-JARC federal fiscal year 2006 apportionment to New York State for urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 to 199,999 is \$513,343. The Broome Urbanized area allocation of that is up to \$136,972.

Section 5317 is a new 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 paratransit 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 not designated as key stations; supporting voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers; supporting volunteer driver and aide programs; 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.

A Designated Recipient may use up to 10 percent of the amount it receives under this section to administer, plan, and provide technical assistance. Funds will be allocated based on a formula that apportions 20 percent of the funds among the states in a ratio reflecting the number of individuals with disabilities in urbanized areas with a population between 50,000 and 200,000. As with JARC funds, the State is apportioned the Section 5317 funds, and in turn will designate Broome County as the Designated Recipient for funds based on each Urbanized area's number of persons with disabilities. BMTS will then comply with the required competitive selection for funding projects by making sure all eligible applicants have the opportunity to apply for the funds, and then award grants with regard to priorities set out in the Coordinated Planning process.

The Section 5317-New Freedoms federal fiscal year 2006 apportionment to New York State for urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 to 199,999 is \$314,318. The Broome Urbanized area has \$76,420.

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects selected for funding under the programs described above, must be derived from a locally-developed human service transportation coordinated plan, and that the plan be developed through a process that includes representative of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and participation by the public.

Goals & Objectives for Coordinated Plan

Initial goals for a coordinated transportation plan are as follows:

- To improve the delivery of transportation services for the target population consisting of persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes
- To generate efficiencies in operation that can lead to increased levels of service
- To encourage cooperation and coordination with a consistent means of project development and selection for allocation of the identified financial resources

These goals may be expanded as appropriate for the region, and will be developed in consultation with stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders/Outreach

To obtain input from transportation and human services providers, and the public, BMTS was able to take advantage of an existing Broome County Aging Futures Partnership Working Group, findings from past transportation and human services plans, and the creation of a Coordinated Plan Steering Committee.

Aging Futures Transportation Workgroup is one of several work groups created by the Aging Futures Partnership. This Partnership, created during 1998, is comprised of public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working cooperatively to address the elder population in Broome County. See www.gobroomecounty.com/agingfutures/index.php for more details about the Aging Futures Partnership. The Transportation Workgroup consists of multiple agencies representing transportation and human service providers, as well as agencies representing specific segments of the population as the elder population and groups of various physical disabilities. A list of workgroup participating agencies is shown below.

- American Cancer Society
- American Red Cross - Southern Tier Chapter
- Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (AVRE)
- BMTS
- Broome County CASA
- Broome County Council of Churches
- Broome County Department of Public Transportation
- Broome County Office for Aging (OFA)
- Deposit Foundation & Rural Housing Service
- Jewish Family Service
- Lourdes Hospital
- New York State Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo - Staff Person
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Region 9
- Rural Health Network of South Central New York (RHN)
- SEPP Management Company
- Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC)
- United Health Services - Senior Security

The charge of the Transportation Workgroup was to review the status of elements proposed in past Aging Futures Strategic Plan regarding transportation, learning about what other agencies are doing to enhance transportation services, research model transportation programs and tool kits that may be emulated locally, define Broome County's elder population's transportation needs, and develop recommendations and report to the Aging Futures Partnership in early 2007. *(See Appendix 2)*

Surveys were used to obtain input regarding transportation needs, gaps, and redundancies in the Urban Area from representatives of elder, low income, and disabled populations. BMTS surveyed agencies and organizations involved with the Aging Futures Transportation Workgroup, as well as others located in Broome and Tioga County. The Aging Futures Transportation Workgroup surveyed Broome County seniors regarding their transportation practices and needs. Also, the BCDOPT worked with BMTS to survey WERC Program participants to find out how well BC Transit fixed route services are meeting their transportation needs. *(See Appendix 3)*

Past plans and studies completed by BMTS, the Broome County Office for Aging, Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning, and the Aging Futures Partnership were used to provide information about transportation needs for the Coordinated Plan target populations. The plans and studies also provided strategies for meeting the identified transportation needs. *(See Coordinated Plan Information Sources & Appendix 4)*

The Coordinated Plan Steering Committee was an informal committee created by BMTS, meeting monthly to play an advisory role in the creation of the Coordinated Plan. The Committee is comprised of representatives from some of the agencies involved in the Aging Futures Transportation Workgroup, as well as representatives from other stakeholder agencies in Broome and Tioga Counties. A list of workgroup participating agencies is shown below.

- Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (AVRE)
- Broome County Department of Public Transportation
- Broome County Office for Aging (OFA)
- Broome County Department of Social Services
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Region 9
- Rural Health Network of South Central New York
- Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC)
- Tioga County Department of Social Services
- Tioga County Public Transit (Ride Tioga)

III. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

A required element of the Coordinated Plan is to identify the transportation needs of these target population groups: individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes. This was accomplished by making observations of the population groups that are evident from demographic analysis performed in recent local plans and studies.

The BMTS' long range transportation plan titled, *Transportation Tomorrow: 2030 – Placemaking for Prosperity* provides the following demographic baseline. It is important to note that a “scenario planning” approach was used to create the long range plan. This entails that the long range plan's recommendations for how to best invest federal transportation funds over the next twenty-five years were based on the intent to achieve the chosen scenario for the Binghamton Urban Area, which is to focus on revitalizing core communities (e.g. central business districts) rather than facilitating continued suburban

development. The chosen scenario also assumes a modest population growth of 10,000 for the Urban Area over the next twenty-five years.

The Binghamton metropolitan area has experienced two countervailing trends over the past two decades. Since the mid-1980s, the population has been slowly declining, as indicated below in US Census population figures for 1990 and 2000. Note that in order to provide a clear picture of the trend, the figures are for Broome County and the Town of Owego in Tioga County rather than the Binghamton urbanized area, since the urbanized area boundary changed.

	BROOME COUNTY	TOWN OF OWEGO	TOTAL
1990	212,160	21,279	233,439
2000	200,536	20,365	220,901
2004 (estimated)	197,696	20,180	217,876

At the same time, there has been continued suburban growth in both housing and commercial development. This has created what might be called a ‘hollowing of the core’. The City of Binghamton, for example, has seen its population decline from 53,008 in 1990 to 47,380 in 2000, while the Town of Vestal stayed essentially flat for the same period. Similarly, while Binghamton lost over 800 housing units during that decade, the suburban towns showed a slight growth. Shopping centers in the core communities, like the Binghamton Plaza, have lost most major tenants while new retail centers have been developed in the suburban towns. Taken together, these trends mean that the property tax base in the core municipalities is shrinking.

As might be expected, the population loss has also not been spread evenly across age cohorts. The table below shows that there has been significant population loss in the 20-34 age group, while the number of people over the age of 65 has increased. This makes it clear that new college graduates and those entering the workforce, as well as young mid-career families are leaving the area. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is very much related to the ability to find desirable employment.

BROOME COUNTY OWEGO TOWN	20-34 (n)	20-34 (%)	>65 (n)	>65 (%)
1990	58,111	24.9%	33,912	14.5%
2000	40,162	18.2%	35,493	16.1%

The percentage of elderly in the City of Binghamton is even higher, at 17.6%. So not only is the urban core losing population, it is getting older even faster than the overall region. The implication is that if these trends were to continue, there will be an ever greater demand for public services in the urban core communities, and a declining ability to finance those services.

The population of Greater Binghamton is aging, with more than 20% being over age of 60 in the 2000 Census. In addition, the age cohort over 75 is identified as the most rapidly growing. This trend will continue, and must be addressed in the Plan. Elderly people have special needs as drivers, as pedestrians, and as transit users. Providing a good quality of life in urban core neighborhoods means providing for these needs.

The following demographic baseline and population forecast information further demonstrates that the population of Greater Binghamton is aging. Over 16% of the population is over age 65. That proportion tends to be even higher in the urban core; In the City of Binghamton for example, 17.6% of the population is older than 65. In addition, the oldest population groups keep growing as people live longer. Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of people older than 75 grew from 6.4% to 8.3%. The current

trend is that nearly all senior citizens except the very old are licensed drivers, and the large majority continues to own a car and drive late into life. Nonetheless, the demand for public transportation among this demographic will grow over time. This will be affected by economics, if the relative cost of automobile ownership grows with respect to fixed incomes. In order to be responsive, public transit services must be responsive to the needs of this group.

We note these special issues and concerns of the elderly (*Source: Broome County Office for the Aging*)

- According to the 2000 Census, 18.7% of age 65+ households in Broome County do not have a vehicle available.
- A local survey found that 7.5% of vulnerable respondents are sometimes unable to get where they want to go, and 4% were often unable to get where they wanted to go because of lack of transportation options.
- The senior population is becoming increasingly diverse, which necessitates offering a variety of transportation options.
- The Administration on Aging states that “For people of all ages, adequate transportation is necessary for the fulfillment of the most basic needs. Housing, medical, financial and social services are useful only to the extent that transportation can make them accessible to those in need.”
- Transit demand among the elderly is expected to increase in the future (Transit Cooperative Research Program, 2003).

Local Trends

- Use of the Office for Aging paratransit service has grown steadily over the past few years.
- Several volunteer programs provide transportation for seniors. Some of these services have been so inundated with requests that at times they are unable to take on any new clients.
- The seniors who live in rural areas need more “on demand” transportation service.

Community Needs

- Seniors who are no longer physically, financially or mentally able to drive need transportation to remain independent. Seniors need access to services that provide meaningful activities and social interactions to reduce isolation and prevent loneliness.
- Seniors report needing longer hours of dial-a-ride services in both the urban and rural areas and they would like transportation to be available for emergency situations.
- Having staff or volunteers offer “travel training” to those who are unfamiliar with using fixed route buses may increase the confidence of elderly riders in using this service.
- Seniors residing in rural areas have expressed a need for expanded transportation services so that they can shop, get to appointments, and remain socially connected. These seniors are often underserved and need special assistance to connect to community services.
- Seniors have expressed a need for a more simple method to set up paratransit rides.

US Census figures indicate that the percentage of the population below the poverty level increased in Broome County by over 2%, and was nearly steady with an increase of only 0.1% in the Town of Owego. This represented an increase of 3,029 people below the poverty level in Broome County, while this number actually decreased by 34 in the Town of Owego.

Poverty Status (Income below poverty level)

	Broome County		Town of Owego	
	Num.	%	Num.	%
1990	21,530	10.5%	1,370	6.5%
2000	24,559	12.8%	1,336	6.6%

An additional measure of the Binghamton Urban Area’s low-income population is found in BMTS’ *Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis for the 2006 – 2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*. The data source that was used to provide the best profile of low-income population distribution in the Binghamton Urban Area was the 2000 Census data for Median Household Income. Low-income population concentrations were defined as block-groups with median household income levels of less than 70% of the Median Household Income. The median household income for the EJ Analysis study area is \$36,312 and the threshold (70% of the Median Household Income) is \$25,418.

Block-groups of low-income concentrations were located mainly in the business districts of Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott. Several areas outside the business districts where public housing developments are located were also identified as low-income concentrations. (See MAP 2)

BMTS conducted the *Regional Job Access Transportation Plan Evaluation (2004)* that indicates the enhanced and new services listed above in the Section 5316 (JARC) program description were successful in providing better access to jobs, as well as transportation for other purposes. The findings of the plan demonstrate that transit service is important to the working public representing a wide range of ages needing access to jobs. If fuel prices and the overall cost of car ownership continue their recent trend of rising more rapidly than wages, more low income workers will need to rely on public transit. While they may be seen as captive riders, they may also demand service that is more convenient and offers access to many destinations over a time period that matches available employment. This is also true for travel purposes other than employment.

The other group that can be included in the limited income category that relies substantially on public transportation is young people who are not yet licensed to drive, or if licensed are less likely to have a car available for their travel needs. The Binghamton City School District relies on BC Transit for transporting a portion of its high school students. Students at Binghamton University, especially those that live off-campus, also create substantial demand for transit service.

The US Census 2000 figures for the Binghamton Urban Area shown below indicate the number and percentage of people in each age grouping that are disabled.

Disabled Population

Broome County						
	5 to 20 Yrs.	%	21 to 64 Yrs.	%	65 Yrs. & over	%
2000	4,068	8.9%	19,298	17.6%	11,899	38.6%

Town of Owego						
	5 to 20 Yrs.	%	21 to 64 Yrs.	%	65 Yrs. & over	%
2000	461	9.7%	1,621	13.8%	687	26.5%

	TOTAL	OVERALL %
2000	38,034	18.6%

Disability rates are likely to increase especially due to the growth in the Binghamton Urban Area’s aging population. Therefore, the number of those dependent on transportation services other than the personally owned vehicle will also continue to increase.

The input BMTS received for this study has determined that, in general, the following features are important for transportation services: Low cost or free; Dependable; Maximum Service operating hours/Service frequency; Accessible; Clean & attractive; Comfortable & safe; and Easy to use.

IV. TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, SERVICE GAPS AND REDUNDANCIES

BMTS is working together with the Rural Health Network of South Central New York (RHN) to create an inventory of available transportation services in Broome and Tioga Counties, which aids in identifying gaps and redundancies in service. The most current inventory listing is available in [Appendix 5](#).

Identified Gaps in Transportation Services

The following are gaps regarding transportation services have been identified:

- BC Transit fixed route services during the late evening hours entail long waits at times to transfer between buses. There is no service from 12:30 – 5:30 AM. Additionally, earlier AM Sunday service appears to be in demand.
- BC Lift paratransit transportation services are currently at capacity and unable to sufficiently meet the demand for paratransit / curb-to-curb transportation. Improvements are also needed in the system to arrange for rides to make it more customer friendly, and to reduce the need to arrange rides two weeks ahead of time to have a better chance at getting one's desired trip times.
- BC Country, the rural paratransit / curb-to-curb service, operates Monday through Friday. Weekend service would be beneficial. The same reservation system improvements as BC Lift also apply to BC Country. Although, the service operates Monday through Friday, there is disparity in service availability for particular rural areas during that five day period. Additionally, BC Country service currently provides rides for residents from the rural areas of Broome County into the urban area. A more comprehensive and practical rural to urban and urban to rural service is desired.
- Tioga County Public Transit does not offer weekend service.
- Improve the link between Broome County & Tioga County Transit.
- Emergency or guaranteed return trip services are in demand to supplement existing public transportation services, especially for manufacturing jobs when mandatory overtime is required, thus changing their normal shift hours.
- Affordable door-to-door and door-through-door transportation services. Medi-vans offering this service are costly, and there are limited numbers of volunteer drivers offering this service.
- Due to capacity limitations of existing transportation services, travel for any purpose, on any day, at any time is restricted.
- Better accommodations in public transportation for those with disabilities and for seniors including: automated & audible bus stop announcements; lighting all bus stops; making sure all bus stops are accessible mainly by sidewalk with proper curb ramps and waiting area; better pedestrian facilities; safer bus transfer area; and Universal Design of buses and facilities to meet the access needs of the entire public, going beyond ADA requirements.
- Public transportation to Sayre and Syracuse for medical appointments.
- There is no one person or agency established to organize and disseminate comprehensive transportation service information, as well as answer the public's transportation service questions for the Binghamton Urban Area.

Identification of Redundant Transportation Services

The following are redundancies regarding transportation services have been identified:

- Much of the public is unaware of the services that are available, and where to get information on how to use the services. Multiple agencies do have listings of transportation services available on their respective websites, but the information quickly becomes outdated and not many know where to find the listings.
- BC Transit fixed route service and Off Campus College Transport (OCCT), the fixed route bus service for Binghamton University students, have routes that often overlap.
- Tioga County Public Transit (a.k.a. Ride Tioga) and Tioga Transport, under contract with Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), both provide transportation between Ithaca, and the Towns of Newark Valley, Berkshire, and Richford.

V. STRATEGIES ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION SERVICE GAPS

The research in the Coordinated Plan has shown that demands for transportation services will continue to increase for the elderly, low-income, and disabled population groups in the Binghamton Urban Area. To best address the identified gaps in transportation service, funding from Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs should be used to enhance transportation services for public, private and nonprofit establishments providing transportation services.

Multiple plans and studies have been developed in recent years that provide specific recommendations and strategies for public transportation improvements. These plans need to be taken into consideration when agencies create project proposals, as well as during the evaluation process for awarding program funds. A list of these recent plans and their respective strategies for improved transportation services is found in [Appendix 4](#).

VI. COORDINATION ACTIONS TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE REDUNDANCIES AND STRATEGIES TO EFFICIENTLY USE RESOURCES

Coordination between stakeholder agencies regarding public transit and human service transportation providers is essential to eliminate service redundancies, and to provide efficient and cost effective services.

The Rural Health Network of South Central NY (RHN) is taking the lead with assistance from BMTS in developing the transportation service inventory for Broome and Tioga Counties, which is intended to be a single point source for transportation information. More details about the inventory are below in the strategies section. It is desired that this source of information be as user-friendly as possible. The inventory will also be made as accessible as possible to the public by being a website based application, yet able to be produced in print form as well. Construction of the Binghamton Intermodal Transit Terminal in downtown Binghamton is expected in the next two years. This would be a natural location to have information available for all transportation services in the Greater Binghamton area

Opportunities may exist to utilize agency buses to meet transportation needs, especially those purchased with Section 5310 funds, during regular down times when they are not being used.

Tioga Public Transportation provides county-wide public transportation, as well as transportation into Tompkins County/Ithaca and Chemung County/Elmira under contract with Tioga County. Tioga Transit,

Inc. provides public transportation services under contract with Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) that supplies access to Ithaca for the Tioga County towns of Newark Valley, Berkshire, and Richford. The Tioga County Public Transit Advisory Council would be a forum to begin a cooperative effort to coordinate these services.

Continuing communication between transportation service stakeholders, and building partnerships or coalitions is important for coordination. The Aging Futures Partnership Transportation Workgroup and the Coordinated Plan Steering Committee provided forums for such organizations to correspond and cooperate. One or both of these groups should continue to meet at least quarterly to work together to address the needs for transportation service.

VII. PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

All the strategies mentioned above that are eligible for funding from Section 5310, 5316, or 5317 programs are considered priorities. This plan also notes other strategies that may not qualify for funding from these FTA programs, but they will be pursued with eligible transportation funding or alternative funding sources as opportunity arises to fill service gaps and improve service coordination.

VIII. FURTHER COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

The outreach mechanisms BMTS used for the Coordinated Plan produced ideas for further coordination activities. A summary is as follows:

- The Coordinated Plan Steering Committee will continue to meet on a quarterly basis, serving in an advisory role to facilitate implementation of Coordinated Plan strategies, as well as identify new gaps or redundancies in transportation services, and new opportunities for coordination.
- The cooperative effort between the RHN and BMTS to develop an internet based Transportation Inventory as the primary source of transportation service information for Broome and Tioga Counties will be an ongoing project due to the need to continually add and maintain accurate information. Publicizing this transportation information source will also be important for the inventory to be useful. Potential exists to expand on this project to provide assistance in guiding users to transportation services that would best serve their needs.
- Explore establishment of a dedicated funding source or alternative funding sources through public-private partnerships or foundations to pursue transportation coordination efforts.
- Research innovative programs that could be emulated in the Broome and Tioga Counties. Examples include various rideshare programs, and the Independent Transportation Network (ITN) developed initially developed in Portland, Maine.
- Use of technology including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other technology systems can be useful in coordinating transportation operations, scheduling rides, providing route and bus stop information, managing information, and improving quality of service for consumers. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) document titled, *“ITS Applications for Coordinating and Improving Human Services Transportation”* provides information and examples of ITS applications.

- BMTS will work with the Broome County Department of Public Transportation and Tioga County to perform continuing analysis of public transportation, fixed route and curb-to-curb paratransit service, to identify opportunities to increase efficiency and enhance service.
- Facilitate a culture (social norm) shift from dependency on private, personal vehicles to mass transit. Partnering with agencies to inform and educate all age groups about public transportation, especially fixed route transit services. This also entails educational efforts for transportation service providers to train operators and drivers to be sensitive to the needs of their customers/consumers, especially seniors and the disabled with special needs, and how to best meet those needs. This would result in a more positive impression of their services as being friendly, safe, and one the public would feel comfortable using.
This effort also includes coordinating with municipal officials, transportation officials, economic development officials, developers, and others to educate on the close relationship transportation decisions and land use decisions have. Higher density development and redevelopment of urban core areas with mixed uses (e.g. residences together with or close to amenities and services) is favorable for efficient public transit, as well as for walking or bicycling to destinations rather than depending on a personal motor vehicle.

The coordination activities above are in-line with those recommended in the Transportation Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) report 105, *“Strategies to Increase Coordination of Transportation Services for the Transportation Disadvantaged”*. The TCRP report also offered these lessons regarding adopting coordination strategies:

- “An incremental or phased approach to implementing coordinated services can increase the likelihood that the service will be successful;
- Communication among entities considering or engaged in coordination activities is vital;
- Time and effort will need to be devoted to developing trust among partners and addressing concerns about control; and
- The time spent in developing support, resources, and a framework for coordination will pay off in terms of future growth and stability for the effort. Benefits may not appear in the short term.”

COORDINATED PLAN INFORMATION SOURCES

1. Aging Futures Findings Report (2003)
2. Aging Futures Strategic Plan (2004)
3. BMTS – Broome County Rural Paratransit Analysis (2002)
4. BMTS – Regional Job Access Transportation Plan – Service Evaluation (2004)
5. BMTS – Environmental Justice Analysis: 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (2005)
6. BMTS – Transportation Tomorrow: 2030 – Placemaking for Prosperity (2005)
7. BCDOPT website – www.ridebctransit.com
8. Broome County Office for Aging – Plan for Services 2007-2008
9. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Publication – *ITS Applications for Coordinating and Improving Human Services Transportation-A Cross-Cutting Study-Improving Service for the Transportation Disadvantaged* (August 2006)
10. Federal Transit Administration website - <http://www.fta.dot.gov/>
11. Tioga County Public Transit (Ride Tioga) Website – <http://www.tiogacountyny.com/transportation.asp>
12. Tioga County Transit Services Study (2003)
13. Transportation Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) report 105 – “*Strategies to Increase Coordination of Transportation Services for the Transportation Disadvantaged*” (2004)
14. U.S. Census Bureau website - <http://factfinder.census.gov>