

# **Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan**

**EAST TENNESSEE HUMAN RESOURCE AGENCY, INC.**

**Prepared by the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency in cooperation with the Division of Multi Modal Transportation, Tennessee Department of Transportation; and the Federal Transit Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation**

## **Introduction**

SAFETEA-LU, the Federal Transit Law, initiated a formal ongoing coordinated planning process to be undertaken prior to the selection of funding recipients for Federal Transit Funds under 5310, for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and for New Freedom Programs. Projects chosen for funding are to be chosen based on the locally developed plan for a coordinated system of public transportation and human services transportation. The Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) is to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the public.

Past efforts in developing some initiatives for United We Ride and Job Access may provide a starting place but the new Coordinated effort is seen as an ongoing way to provide a more comprehensive system for meeting the needs of the population for access to services and daily living needs. The Federal guidance states that the Coordinated Plan should identify the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. Over time, the Coordinated Plan should serve as a document that spells out the needs for transit in the area encompassed by the Coordinated Plan, establish priorities and serve as a guide for implementation of new resources.

The Coordinated Plan should include four elements:

- 1) An assessment of available services and service providers including public, private and non-profit;
- 2) An assessment of transportation needs for the targeted population;
- 3) Implementation actions to address identified gaps and improve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- 4) Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility.

The priorities of the Coordinated Plan must be chosen through an open project selection process that allows all providers to propose services. The selection of projects must be selected based on the priorities of the Coordinated Plan and within the context of the purpose of the program and the ability of the proposer of the service to meet all Federal and State requirements.

A summary of Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom and Section 5310 follows:

### **Job Access and Reverse Commute**

The goal of JARC is to improve access to transportation to employment and employment related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals and to transport residents of urban areas and non-urban areas to suburban areas. Low income is defined as at or below 150 percent of the poverty line for a family. Programs that serve individuals with reverse commute i.e., from an urban area to an industrial park in a suburban area are not required to meet the income guidelines. JARC funds may be utilized for many activities including demand response van services, shuttle services, expansion of fixed route, late night and weekend service and certain capital projects.

Additional information regarding JARC may be found at [www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants\\_financing\\_263.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants_financing_263.html).

## New Freedom

The goal of the New Freedom Program is to provide additional mobility tools to overcome barriers for persons with disabilities. Mobility means that people with disabilities will have transportation services that will allow them to be employed and participate in day-to-day activities. Lack of adequate transportation for people with disabilities is a primary barrier to joining the workforce. New Freedom programs are aimed at transportation services that reduce barriers and expand mobility options beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Programs funded under New Freedom must be used for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services or alternative services designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Additional information regarding the New Freedom Program may be found at [www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants\\_financing\\_263.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants_financing_263.html).

## Section 5310 Program

The goal of the Section 5310 Program is to improve the mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disability throughout the country. The program provides funding opportunities to non-profit organizations and or to governmental authority approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. Section 5310 Program funds may be utilized for capital expenses including buses, vans, wheel chair lifts and restraints, the introduction of new technology, and supporting new mobility management and coordination programs. Additional information regarding the Section 5310 Program may be found at [www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants\\_financing\\_263.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants_financing_263.html).

## **Process for Development of the Coordinated Plan**

For planning to be successful it must include input from all interested parties (stakeholders) to insure that all needs are identified, all solutions are presented, and that priorities for implementation or use of resources is based on an efficient, timely and feasible solution. In this first year of developing the Coordinated Plan, ETHRA undertook two strategies to solicit input from the general public, community organizations, business, other transportation providers etc. First, a survey was mailed to approximately 350 groups in the community who were identified as stakeholders. Attachment I is a list of groups sent surveys. In addition, approximately 375 additional survey were distributed through the ETHRA staff to individuals who utilize ETHRA transportation and services. An ad was placed in the paper and information regarding four public hearings was provided with the surveys. See Attachment II. See Attachment III for public hearing sites. See Attachment IV for copies of Surveys.

## **Service Area and Demographics**

The Service area covered by this Coordinated Plan is the 16 counties of East Tennessee. The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization and the Lakeway Area Metropolitan

Transportation Planning Organization are also part of this region. The population of the region is projected at 1,121,103 for 2008, an 8.9% increase over 2000. Data indicates that:

14 of the 16 counties have a population with a higher rate of disabilities than the State or Nation;

11 of the 16 counties have a population with a higher number of individuals with incomes below the poverty level than the State or Nation; and

12 of the 16 counties have a percentage less than the State or Nation of individuals 25 or older that were high school graduates. See Attachment IV.

In summary, although the region is growing, many obstacles including poverty, employment and education remain a problem. The rural nature of the service area is a major obstacle to recruitment of industry and the ability of county governments to fund educational opportunities. Transport from some areas within the service area to Knoxville for specialized services may require a two hour drive. For the poor, elderly, and the disabled, transportation is a major need. The rising price of fuel will demand that coordination and planning for the transportation system to meet the needs of the citizens.

### **Assessment of Available Services**

As noted earlier, ETHRA provided a survey and held public hearings throughout the Region to solicit input from various Stakeholders. Planning is an ongoing process but ETHRA attempted to include a large cross-section of persons and groups who have a long-term interest in the development of a coordinated system of transportation. Rising gas costs and the growing elderly population require coordination and innovative ways to insure that all transportation needs are met. The Coordinated Plan will over time emerge as a plan for the future including continued identification of needs and forward thinking solutions. Stakeholders were identified as agencies who provide health, mental health, social services and transportation in the region with an emphasis on groups who serve the aging and disabled populations as well as the general public. Agencies who receive Federal and or State funds for transportation, private transportation providers and non-profit agencies were included.

Stakeholders identifies were:

All Members of the North Rural Transportation Planning Organization  
All Members of the South Rural Transportation Planning Organization  
Knoxville Regional Transportation Organization  
ETHRA Board of Directors (Includes County and City Mayors and designated Human Services Representatives)  
Directors, Regional Health Department and each County Health Department  
Directors, Department of Human Services, Regional and County Offices  
Senior Centers  
Offices on Aging  
Community Action Agencies  
Community Mental Health Centers

Dialysis Clinics  
Nursing Homes  
United Way  
Peninsula  
Goodwill Industries  
Lakeshore Mental Health Institute  
Chamber of Commerce  
REACHS  
Adult Community Training  
East Tennessee Technology Access Center  
Alzheimer's Association  
Kidney Foundation  
TN Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation  
The Henry Center  
Hope, Inc.  
Scott Appalachian Industries  
Ability  
Faith Christian  
M&M  
WIA – Career Centers  
Douglas Cooperative, Inc.  
Association of Retarded Citizens  
Child and Family Tennessee  
Emory Valley Center  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Mid South Chapter  
Camelot Care Center  
Mental Health Association of East Tennessee  
Cherokee Health Systems  
AmeriChoice  
BlueCross  
PHP  
Magellan  
Cariten

### **Assessment of Needs**

The following is a summary of top needs identified in the Service Area.

Regional focused coordinated approach to transportation services  
Weekend transportation  
Night Transportation  
Holiday Transportation  
Senior citizens special transportation needs (shopping, social activities, senior centers, etc)  
Transport for veterans  
Ability to make spontaneous trips/more flexibility on scheduling (dates)  
Transportation for latino population  
Increased availability /accessibility (pick-up and delivery times)  
Increased awareness (education and marketing)  
Transportation to work and education  
Vehicles that have greater accessibility

## **Strategies and or Activities to Address Needs**

Provide additional transportation  
Provide for Senior needs through development of routes and days for activities  
Obtain more accessible vans  
Continue to plan and coordinate transportation services

## **Priorities for Implementation**

The responses to the survey and input from public meeting were utilized to establish priorities.

### Priorities

#### High

Increased availability/ accessibility  
Senior citizens special transportation

#### Medium

Weekend, holiday, and night transportation  
Ability to make spontaneous trips/more flexibility in scheduling  
Increased awareness of service  
Transportation to work and education  
More accessible vehicles

#### Low

Transportation for latino population  
Transportation for veterans

## **Implementation of Priorities**

Priorities will be implemented through the utilization of 5310 funds, Job Access and Reverse Commute funds, and New Freedom funds. In addition, private fund raising efforts by public and private organization will be required for matching. In addition, if fuel prices continue to rise, all sources will required to continue the maintenance and growth of transportation services in the Service Area.

## **ATTACHMENT I**

### **SURVEY LIST**

All Members of the North Rural Transportation Planning Organization  
All Member of the South Rural Transportation Planning Organization  
Knoxville Regional Transportation Organization  
ETHRA Board of Directors (Includes County and City Mayors and designated Human Services Representatives)  
Directors, Regional Health Department and each County Health Department  
Directors, Department of Human Services, Regional and County Offices  
Senior Centers  
Offices on Aging  
Community Action Agencies  
Community Mental Health Centers  
Dialysis Clinics  
Nursing Homes  
United Way  
Peninsula  
Goodwill Industries  
Lakeshore Mental Health Institute  
Chamber of Commerce  
REACHS  
Adult Community Training  
East Tennessee Technology Access Center  
Alzheimer's Association  
Kidney Foundation  
TN Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation  
The Henry Center  
Hope, Inc.  
Scott Appalachian Industries  
Ability  
WIA – Career Centers  
Douglas Cooperative, Inc.  
Association of Retarded Citizens  
Child and Family Tennessee  
Emory Valley Center  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Mid South Chapter  
Camelot Care Center  
Mental Health Association of East Tennessee  
Cherokee Health Systems