

DECATUR URBANIZED AREA

HSTP

HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN



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Decatur Urbanized Area Human Services Transportation Plan

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1. PLAN SUMMARY

In 2005, the “transportation reauthorization bill,” was adopted by Congress. The act that was adopted was the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This replaced TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century). With the passage of SAFETEA-LU, it became necessary for grantees under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316), and New Freedom Initiative (Section 5317) grant programs to meet certain requirements in order to receive funding for Fiscal Year 2007 (beginning 07/01/07) and beyond.

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects from the programs listed above must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation services, human services providers and the general public.

The Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) will represent the foundation for ranking projects and recommending those which should receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) funding. The creation of the HSTP is intended to bring service providers, transportation funders, clients, customers, and the community to a realization of improved efficiency and equity of transportation throughout the metropolitan area and significantly reduce obstacles to citizens with special needs.

The HSTP covering the Decatur Metropolitan Planning Area contains three (3) objectives:

- ❖ To understand the dynamics and history on efforts to coordinate and/or consolidate special needs transportation within the MPA and to compile an accurate demographic profile of the population residing in the incorporated areas, and
- ❖ To look and study the issue of transportation from a regional perspective, analyze the existing transportation related resources, regional origins and destinations, existing services, needs, gaps, and what efforts may be currently taking place to coordinate and possibly improve transportation services.
- ❖ To begin to create a plan which will provide for the efficient and economical delivery of transportation services over the next decade, to study and model anticipated demand for various services, and arrive at a consensus as to the goals and objectives for persons with transportation challenges.

The specific references, general implementation process and coordination activities are outlined below. The more specific activities and planning strategies to be used by DUATS follow on Page 11.

References

The State and the MPO must follow all the requirements contained in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circulars providing *Program Guidance and Application Instructions* for the Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs. Consolidated excerpts and web site addresses for the circulars are listed below.

Recipient Designation: For *Section 5310* funds, the state designates an agency with the requisite legal, financial, and staffing capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program. The designated State agency is the recipient of all Section 5310 funds apportioned to the State, and applies to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for these funds on behalf of private non-profit agencies and eligible local governmental authorities within the State.

For *Section 5316 and 5317* funds, the state must designate a public entity to be the recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds.

- In urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000 and in non-urbanized areas, the State is the designated recipient. For these areas, the designated State agency is responsible for administering the JARC and New Freedom program.
- In urbanized areas over 200,000 in population, the recipient charged with administering the JARC Program must be officially designated through a process consistent with 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(a)(2):
an entity designated in accordance with the planning process under sections 5303, 5304, and 5306, by the chief executive officer of a State, responsible local officials, and publicly owned operators of public transportation, to receive and apportion amounts under section 5336 that are attributable to transportation management areas identified under Section 5303.

The Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) designated recipient provides and coordinates transportation services for the region and is familiar with FTA's program oversight requirements; therefore, it is appropriate for the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom programs to be the same as the designated recipient for Section 5307 funds. Alternatively, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), State, or another public agency may be a preferred choice based on local circumstances. The designation of recipient should be made by the State in consultation with responsible local officials and publicly owned operators of public transportation. The recipient for JARC funds will apply to FTA for these funds on behalf of sub-recipients within the recipient's area.

Apportionment: *Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled)* funds are apportioned among the States by a formula based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State.

Of the total *Section 5316 (JARC)* funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. JARC funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in each such area bears to the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in all such areas.

Of the total *Section 5317 (New Freedom)* funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. New Freedom funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas. .

Coordination Requirements: Projects selected for funding under *Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317* must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, participation by the public, and representatives addressing the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals. .

Planning Requirements: *Section 5310, 5316 and 5317* projects in urbanized areas must be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Projects outside urbanized areas must be included in, or be consistent with the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and must be included in the STIP.

Program of Projects: The program of projects (POP) for *Section 5310, 5316 and 5317* identifies the sub-recipients and projects for which the State or designated recipient is applying for financial assistance. The annual POP the State submits to FTA for approval must indicate the total number of sub-recipients; identify each sub-recipient and indicate whether they are governmental authorities, or private non-profit agencies. In addition, the POP must include a brief description of each project, which includes the counties served by the project. The POP must show, for each project, the total project cost and the Federal share. The total Federal funding level for the POP cannot exceed the total amount of Section 5310 funds available. The program of projects must be identical to, or consistent with, listings contained in the applicable TIP and STIP.

The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan: Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the *Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317* be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.” The experiences gained from the efforts of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), and specifically the United We Ride (UWR) Initiative provide a useful starting point for the development and implementation of the local public transit-human services transportation plan.

Development of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan:

- A. *Overview:* A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (“coordinated plan”) identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Local plans may be developed on a local, regional, or statewide level. The decision as to the boundaries of the local planning areas should be made in consultation with the State and the metropolitan planning agency, where applicable. The agency leading the planning process is decided locally and does not have to be the State. A coordinated plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage

by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan shall be developed through a process that includes representatives of public and private and non-profit transportation and human services transportation providers, and participation by members of the public. Members of the public should include representatives of the targeted population(s) including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified FTA programs, a coordinated plan should also incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

B. *Required Elements:* Projects shall be derived from a coordinated plan that minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Web Page Links:

Section 5310 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html

Section 5316 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

Section 5317 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

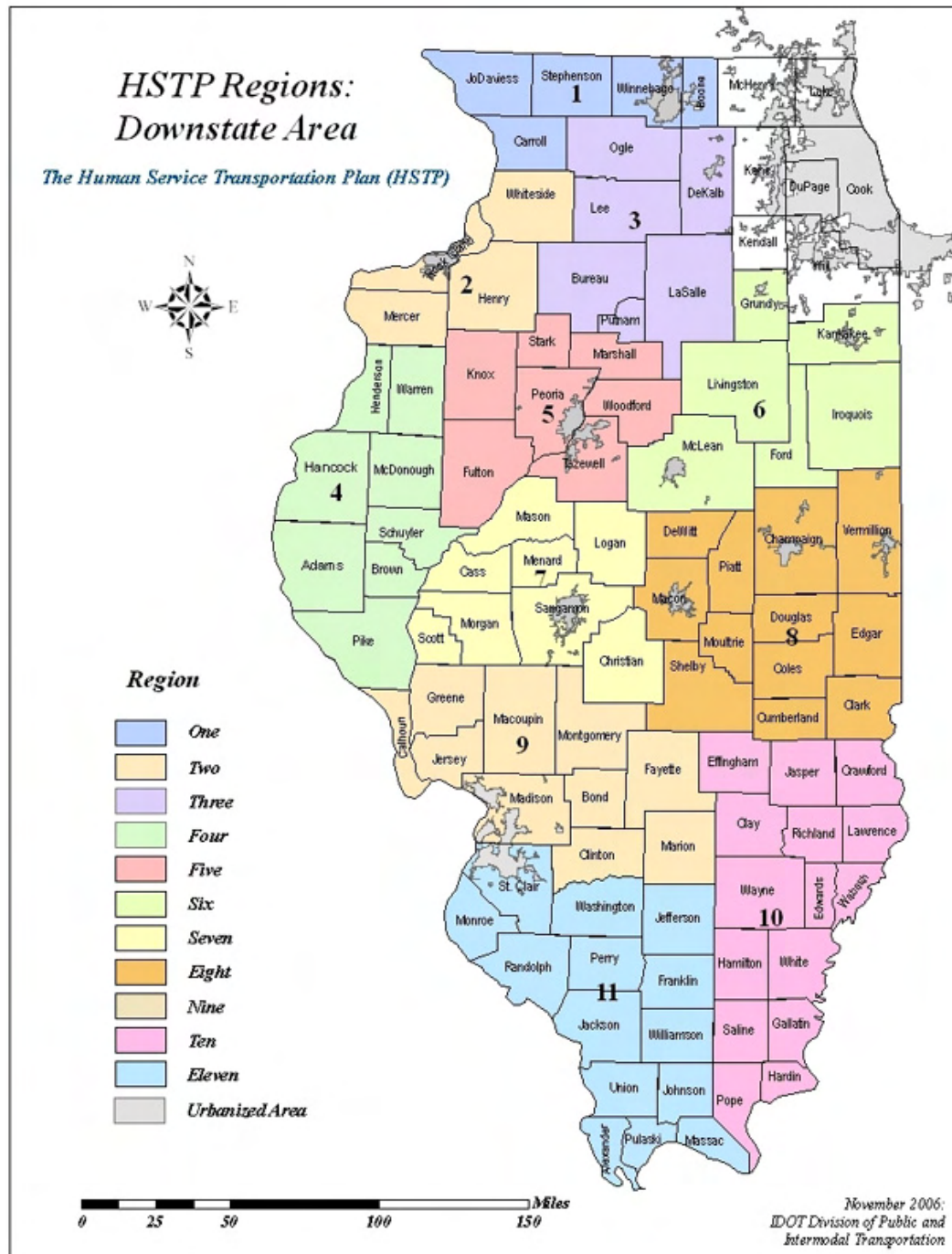
United We Ride - <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

Implementation

At the federal level, the United We Ride (UWR) initiative was established to break down the barriers between programs and set the stage for local partnerships that generate common sense solutions. The overall goal of this effort is to make it easier for the customer to access public and specialized transportation services by reducing transportation service duplication, increase efficient transportation service delivery, and expand transportation access for older Americans, persons with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes. The HSTP is the tool identified in SAFETEA-LU to accomplish this goal.

Locally, DUATS is responsible for ensuring that the new federal coordination requirements are met for the urbanized area. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for those parts of the state that are outside the urbanized jurisdictions. IDOT has begun to implement the HSTP to be in compliance with the new requirements, which went into effect in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007.

Because Illinois has no formal rural public transportation planning infrastructure, IDOT has created a framework for developing the plan and project submission process for public and human services transportation funding. Through a combination of research and public involvement sub-state regions, shown on following map, were established to facilitate the HSTP process. Each region is responsible for developing an HSTP to coordinate the delivery of services within its boundaries.



Coordination

Much of the developmental work within rural and small urban areas will be carried out by the Regional Coordinator working with the regional review committees to develop the non-urbanized portion of the regional HSTP. In our urbanized areas, DUATS staff will function as the regional coordinator and the organizer of the urbanized area review committee. A key challenge will be integrating the rural HSTP with the urbanized area HSTP in Macon County.

The primary role of DUATS is to facilitate the review committee meetings, solicit feedback on the plan and create and monitor projects for the urbanized portion of the region and to develop an urbanized area HSTP document. Another key responsibility will be to work with Regional Coordinator to integrate the HSTP activities of DUATS and the Regional Transportation Committee. IDOT will provide oversight for the program to ensure that procedural guidelines are being met.

Process

The HSTP development process must include stakeholders representing public, private and non-profit transportation service providers, human service providers, the public, representatives addressing the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals, planning organizations and/or county government representatives. In our urbanized area, DUATS staff is compiling and analyzing input and is organizing it into a plan that will be reviewed and adopted by the Policy Committee. The plan would analyze and address the following issues.

- Identify the public and specialized transportation goals of the community,
- Inventory of existing transportation services,
- Assess human services transportation needs,
- Analyze gaps in human services transportation service,
- Recommend short and long-term transportation strategies to address service gaps and improve coordination.

Once information on local needs and resources is compiled and organized the plan will go on to explore the following questions for the urbanized area.

- Where are we doing well?
- Where do we need to do better?
- What will it take to get to the next level of service provision?

An agreement on the needed improvements, strategies to implement those improvements and an action plan to accomplish the strategies will need to be developed. The action plan would include the following elements.

A set of steps,

- Identification of who is responsible for carrying out each step,
- Timeline for tasks,
- A strategy for communication within the group and to the public.

Projects

In order to be eligible for federal funding, projects identified through the HSTP process must be included in the state STIP, a Regional Program of Projects (RPOP) in rural and small urban areas and in the TIP in urbanized areas.

- Projects for the Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected using local criteria.
- All projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected regardless of who the designated recipient is.
- All projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be reviewed and approved by IDOT and/or the State Oversight Committee (SOC).

The SOC is composed of agencies involved in the planning and provision of transportation, human service and economic development services. Representatives of the agencies listed below serve on the SOC.

- IDOT
- Rural Technical Assistance Center (RTAC), part of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
- Illinois Department of Aging
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Lieutenant Governor's Office
- MPO representative (from the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission)
- Illinois Association of Regional Councils
- Illinois Public Transportation Association

In order to meet federal requirements, projects in urban areas under 200,000 population and rural areas that are requesting funds through Section 5316 (JARC) and 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected and prioritized at the local level and then submitted to the State Oversight Committee for final review and state wide prioritization.

Entities receiving FTA transportation funds in the past were typically not for profit organizations. Those funds were used primarily as a funding source to purchase and/or maintain vehicles intended to transport their own clients. Recently, due to SAFETEA-LU, the FTA is requiring coordination, cooperation and collaboration between DUATS, local transportation service providers, IDOT, FWHA, FTA and other State and Federal human service transportation programs.

As a result, funds such as Section 5310 are now intended to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with transportation challenges. FTA also now provides funding for transportation related services that are jointly planned, intended, and distributed to meet the special transportation needs in all areas - urbanized, small urban, and rural. The program specifically requires coordination, cooperation and collaboration with other local, State and Federal programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of these financial resources.

Funds may be allocated to local recipients such as a private nonprofit group, if public transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate; or a governmental authority that is approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities or certifies that there are no non-profit organizations readily available in the area to provide transportation services. Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for capital expenses which support the transportation services to the elderly and persons with disabilities.

DUATS' Approach to the Human Services Transportation Planning Process

1. Currently there are no entities which receive 5310, 5316 or 5317 funds in the Urbanized Area. This plan is intended to be introductory. DUATS will be the entity responsible for developing a more detailed Plan, monitor transportation needs, services provided and adequacy of delivery. As such DUATS would have the following duties if in the future such funds were to be received.
2. A formally appointed and establish HSTP Advisory Committee would be created to coordinate the public involvement process and evaluate the input received. Representatives of the public transportation provider(s), human service agencies, DUATS, users of the transportation services being considered and IDOT-DPIT will be included in the Advisory Committee. The specific names of the human service agencies and transit users which will be included on this proposed committee is pending further local discussion in cooperative and collaboration with within the urbanized area and Region 6.
3. Implement a broader, more detailed, proactive public involvement process to identify and catalogue existing services, determine unmet needs and identify potential strategies to meet those needs. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) as adopted by DUATS reflects the wishes and intent regarding a proactive approach to involving the public in all facets and in all stages of plan and project discussion and any subsequent funding.
4. Continue to create a consensus on those feasible strategies to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of human service transportation provided in the urbanized area.
5. Coordinate with the HSTP Regional Coordinator to ensure the urbanized area boundary does not create a barrier to the delivery of transportation services to the targeted populations living outside the urbanized area.
6. Refine the Action Plan that identifies the actions to be taken, the projects to be implemented and the persons/agencies responsible for making the specified activities happen.
7. Insert the projects proposed to receive federal funding into DUATS' TIP.
8. Forward those projects to IDOT for review and approval.
9. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies and projects.
10. Adjust strategies to address new and/or previously undetected needs.
11. Amend the TIP to reflect projects selected for funding.

2. PLANNING INTENT

The Decatur Area HSTP is intended to provide:

- ❖ a listing of existing public transportation and human services providers,
- ❖ a format of communication which will expand the cooperation between those transportation and human service providers;
- ❖ for the creation and/or enhancement of access to transportation for the elderly, the physically and/or mentally challenged, and for people who are low-income through the discovery and identification of unmet needs along with the strategies to address them;
- ❖ necessary and qualified information so that transportation and human service providers are able to identify opportunities to coordinate, cooperate and collaborate to allow for timely access, economies of scale and reductions in redundancy of transportation services.

3. BACKGROUND

An increasing number of people are unable to get to work, run errands, reach medical services or even do their shopping simply because they do not have access to transportation. Groups which could be considered transportation disadvantaged include disabled individuals who cannot operate vehicles or travel outside of the home on their own because of medical conditions or legal limitations; people who cannot afford their own automobile; and people who live in areas without access to public transportation.

To enable these individuals to travel for employment, medical, education, and other needs, state and federal grants are typically used to provide basic transportation services that assist elderly persons, persons with disabilities and/or low-income persons get to their destinations. In urbanized areas, regular public transportation service and supplemental paratransit service are often available to meet many of these needs. But, urban transit systems do not run through every area of the community. In rural and smaller urban areas transportation service normally does not exist. Most human service providers in those areas must find ways other than public transportation to assist their clients in reaching their destinations.

Numerous local programs supported by state and federal agencies provide separate transportation services, including services for the elderly, hospital access for low-income individuals, services for the physically and mentally disabled and transportation for job training or job access. In Illinois, there are numerous state and federal programs administered by a variety of different state agencies that provide funding to be used for public and human services transportation. The lack of coordination among these programs and providers has led to duplication of transportation and dispatching services and an inefficient use of needed transportation and human services funds.

Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, now requires that projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute or JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan (HSTP). The HSTP is intended to maximize the collective coverage of the targeted programs and needs to be developed through a process that includes

representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and the users of these services.

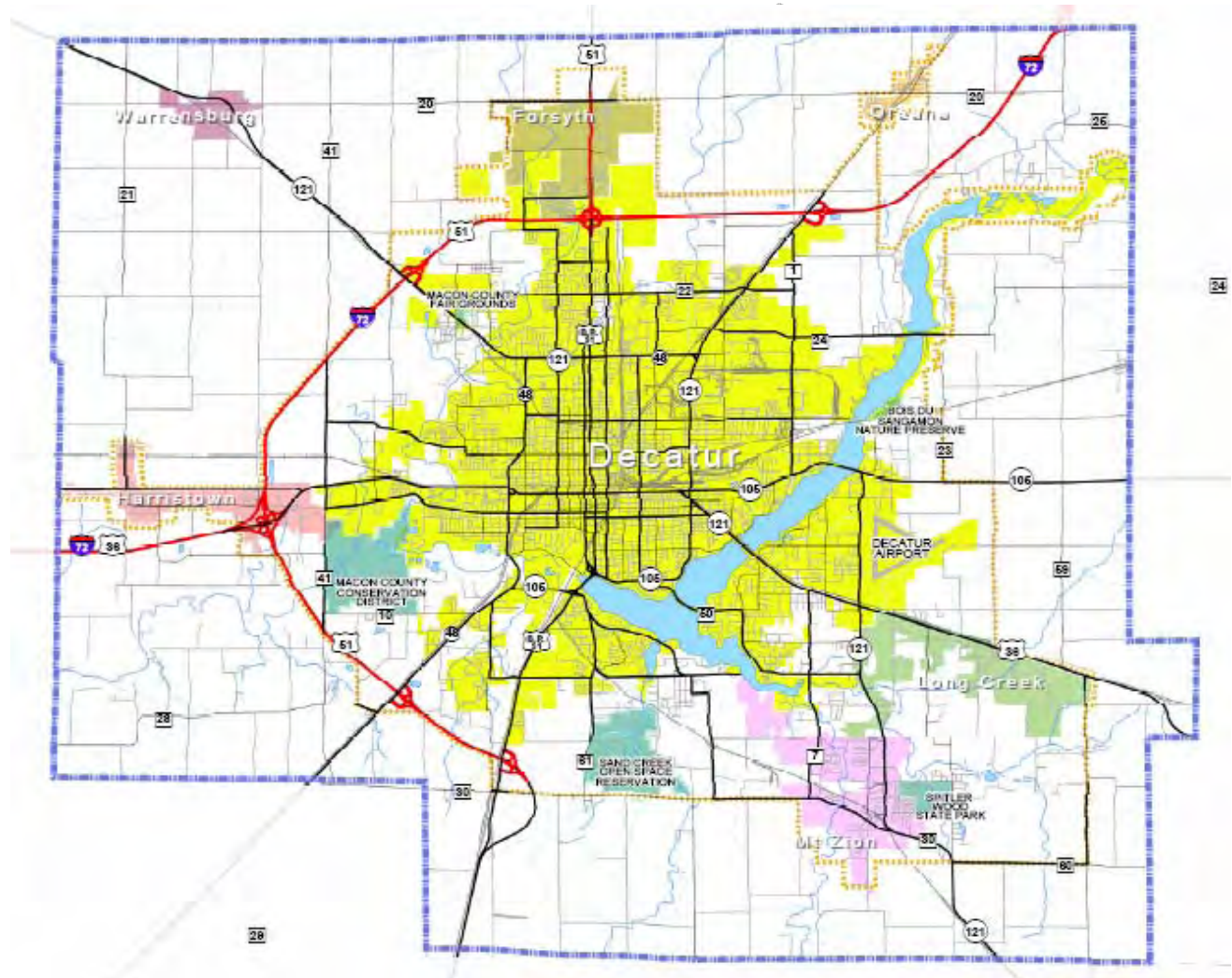
There are no known entities in Macon County that receive Section 5316 or 5317 funding at this time. There are a few entities which have in the past received FTA Section 16 b, 2, funding which is now Section 5310. However, DUATS has explored issues and conducted surveys which relate to the program objectives of these funding streams. In 2006, the Macon County Health Foundation, in cooperation with DUATS, surveyed service providers and clients concerning transportation needs and issues, somewhat focused on senior citizens. The results of that survey revealed that service providers were in need of additional resources for transporting clients to medical appointments (88%), to social service agencies (53%), to shopping venues (48%) and to work (38%). Although youth were generally less likely to need transit services, a need for services was still evident. Persons with disabilities most often were very much in need of assisted transportations and/or paratransit services. Typically, as the client's age increased the need for transportation service increased and closely correlated to those expressed by service providers.

Also in 2006, DUATS supported the efforts of Illinois State University and the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging which conducted research on the areas of the County having the highest poverty rates, lowest median income and the highest concentrations of elderly and physically challenged individuals. The information has proved useful in our study of rural to urban transit needs and obstacles. DUATS staff has talked extensively with adjacent and nearby counties and communities on their transportation operations. The meetings have proved invaluable. Information and suggestions have been the main goal and outcome to date. At this time, DUATS feels that affiliating with an existing transit system/operator would be a better option than creating a new entity. Further study and discussion is warranted on this topic.

More recently, DUATS and numerous service providers have become active in the regional planning effort for providing transportation to rural and non-metropolitan areas. As part of the regional efforts, in January, 2008, DUATS conducted another survey of service providers once again attempting to determine who provides services, to whom and to discover their service area within the County. The details of these efforts and the findings will be discussed later in this plan.

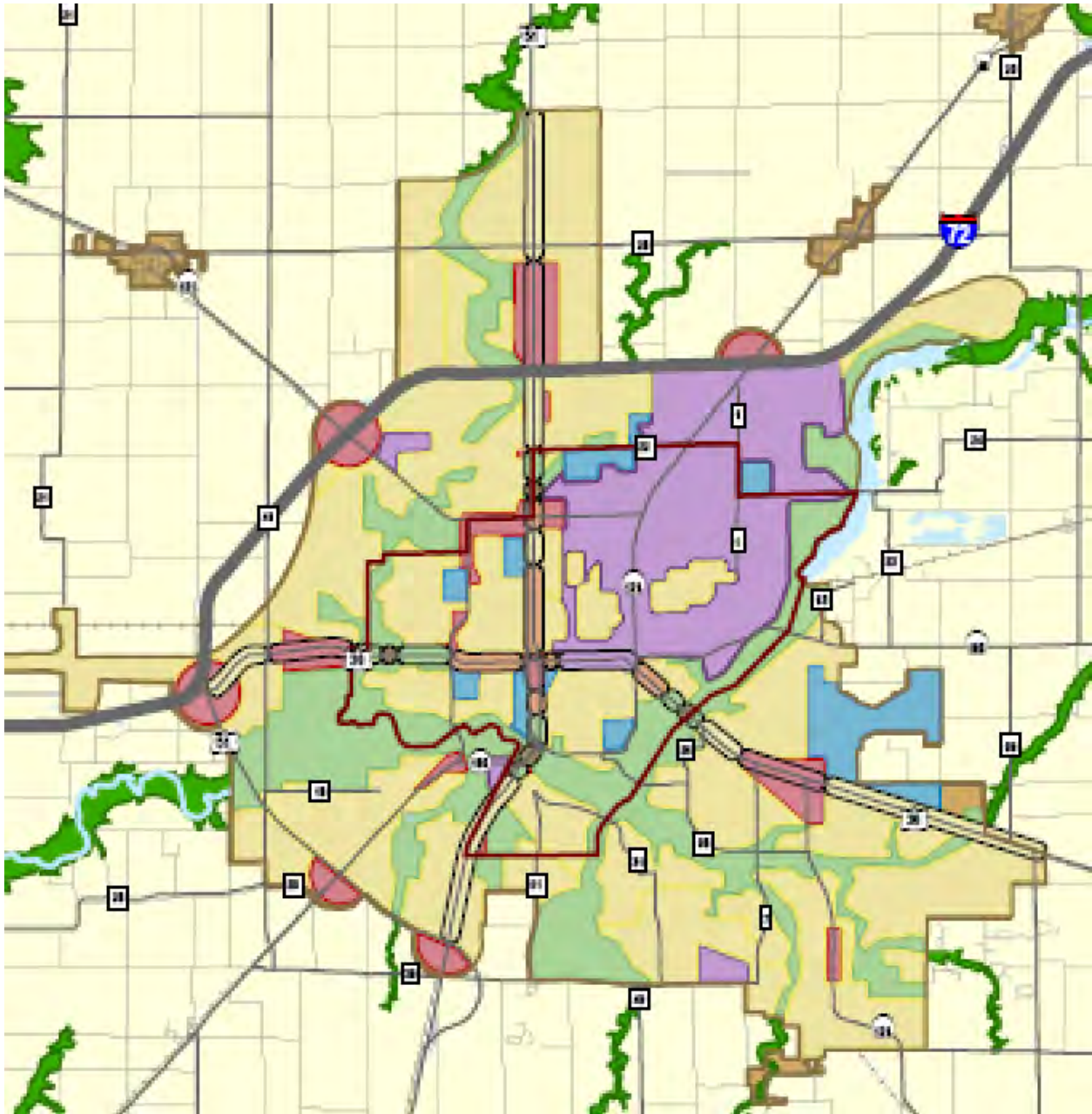
This Plan covers the Decatur Urbanized Area, which includes the municipalities of Decatur, Forsyth, Harristown, Long Creek, Mt. Zion and Oreana. The Urbanized Area along with the Metropolitan Planning Area are shown on Page 13.

**The Metropolitan Planning Area is comprised of the area within the blue dashed line.
The Decatur Urbanized Area is shown in yellow.**



Source: Decatur Urbanized Transportation Study, Decatur Pathways, 2004

Metropolitan Planning Area Showing the Corridors, Major Commercial Centers, Industrial Areas, Inner City Core, and Past Sequenced Development Patterns.



Source: Draft Decatur-Macon County Comprehensive Plan, 2008

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4. CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA

Macon County was formed in 1829 and is located in the center of Illinois. The County is approximately 170 miles southwest of Chicago and 116 miles northeast of St. Louis. It is located approximately 40 miles southwest of Champaign, Illinois and 35 miles east of Springfield, Illinois. The County has a total land area of 586 square miles and contains seventeen townships and twelve municipalities. The estimated 2005 population was 110,167. Decatur has an estimated 2007 population of 77,047.

Like many of our counterparts across the country, the County and its communities face a number of challenges, including globalization of the economy, an increasing dispersal of residential development, and the resulting disinvestment in portions of the older core neighborhoods in developed communities.

Macon County could be characterized as being mature and stable. Only modest population growth is forecast to occur within the next twenty years. This limited growth requires careful stewardship of our human, financial and physical resources in order to maintain a high quality of life and compete in the global economy.

According to statistics maintained by DUATS, the Decatur Urbanized Area covers about 103 square miles, consists of 101,600 people and has about 35,000 households. The Metropolitan Planning Area covers approximately 219 square miles in which live 105,420 persons consisting of roughly 45,000 households.

5. TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGED PERSONS

There are four reasons why people do not drive:

- (1) physical and/or mental challenges,
- (2) economic considerations,
- (3) legal issues, and
- (4) self-imposed circumstances.

Generally, the distribution of people who are most dependent on public transportation tend to be concentrated in the older urban core areas in Decatur. Those persons who will be the subject of focus in this study are the young people, elderly, households who are economically challenged, individuals with physical limitations, and households with no personal transportation.

Physical and mental challenges would include such limitations as disabilities brought on by age, loss of sight, paralysis, or developmental disabilities, to temporary disabilities such as bodily injury or head trauma. Economic considerations involve the unemployed/underemployed, bankruptcy and lack of enough available income to afford to buy or rent a reliable vehicle. Legal issues might involve persons generally under the age of 16 years, persons with suspended driver's licenses, and those convicted of DUI. Self-imposed circumstances simply refer to people who have chosen not to own or drive a vehicle for whatever reason(s).

The census provides no information about persons with physical/mental challenges, economic considerations and legal issues. Little is known of those who chose not to ride public transportation, but it is believed to be a very small number.

6. Area Statistics

Statistics for total population, disability status, poverty rate and households with no available vehicle in Macon County and those municipalities in the Urbanized Area are listed in the chart below. Please note the several footnotes that correspond to the respective columns.

CORPORATE ENTITY	TOTAL POPULATION (1)	DISABILITY STATUS (2)	POVERTY STATUS (3)	VEHICLE AVAILABILITY (4)
<i>Macon County</i>	107,405	20,859 19.4%	14,316 12.9%	3,795 7.5%
<i>Decatur</i>	73,176	16,081 21.5%	12,999 16.5%	3,573 9.6%
<i>Forsyth</i>	2,291	250 10.9%	45 1.9%	12 1.3%
<i>Harristown</i>	1,265	205 16.2%	66 5.0%	8 1.6%
<i>Long Creek</i>	1,283	154 12.0%	68 5.1%	15 3.1%
<i>Mt. Zion</i>	4,581	468 10.2%	239 5.0%	31 1.7%
<i>Oreana</i>	842	86 10.2%	25 2.8%	8 2.3%

- (1) Total Population, 5 years of age and older. 2006
- (2) Total 2000 Individuals with Disabilities, 5 years of age and older. 2000
- (3) Total Individuals Below the Poverty Level. 1999
- (4) Total Households with Zero Vehicles Available. 2000

Low-income individuals depend on public transit to a much greater extent than persons with a higher level of disposable income. The largest number and percentage of economically challenged persons lives in the City of Decatur. Its rate of 16.5% is greater than that of the County, the State and the nation. It is three times the rate of the municipalities in the Urbanized Area.

7. Low-Income Population

Municipalities	1990	2000	Change, '90-'00
Illinois	11.6%	10.4%	-10.4%
Macon County	12.4%	12.5%	0.7%
Decatur	15.3%	15.9%	3.6%
Argenta	4.7%	3.6%	-23.5%
Blue Mound	3.2%	4.2%	30.6%
Forsyth	4.2%	1.8%	-55.5%
Harristown	7.3%	4.9%	-32.2%
Long Creek	6.9%	5.0%	-27.5%
Macon	7.3%	5.6%	-22.7%
Maroa	5.9%	4.5%	-23.8%
Mount Zion	3.6%	4.9%	35.2%
Niantic	8.8%	7.9%	-10.8%
Oreana	2.0%	2.8%	39.6%
Warrensburg	6.6%	3.7%	-43.5%

Source: U. S. Census

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 (estimate)

8. Per Capita and Household Income

ENTITY	PER CAPITA INCOME	HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Macon County	\$ 20,067	\$ 37,859
Decatur	\$ 19,009	\$ 33,111
Forsyth	\$ 34,010	\$ 69,000
Harristown	\$ 18,689	\$ 42,946
Long Creek	\$ 23,141	\$ 56,083
Mt. Zion	\$ 22,784	\$ 54,936
Oreana	\$ 20,133	\$ 51,339

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The most economically challenged areas in Macon County are predominately the older, core neighborhoods in Decatur. These areas form somewhat of a ring around the City's downtown and are correspondingly in four quadrants, bisected by U.S. Route 51 and U.S. Route 36, running north/south and east/west respectively. These areas have the lowest per capita and household income, the lowest assessed values, and rents, and have a high number of persons without vehicles.

The remaining population in the County, overall, have access to one or more vehicles. Persons residing in the various municipalities are five to ten times more likely to own a vehicle. It is characteristic of the rural and exurban population to depend on personal vehicles for travel to the urban area for basic and necessary items such as food, fuel and personal services. Shopping opportunities in the smaller municipalities is many times limited to just one retailer, who typically carried the basic necessities, such as milk, bread, etc..

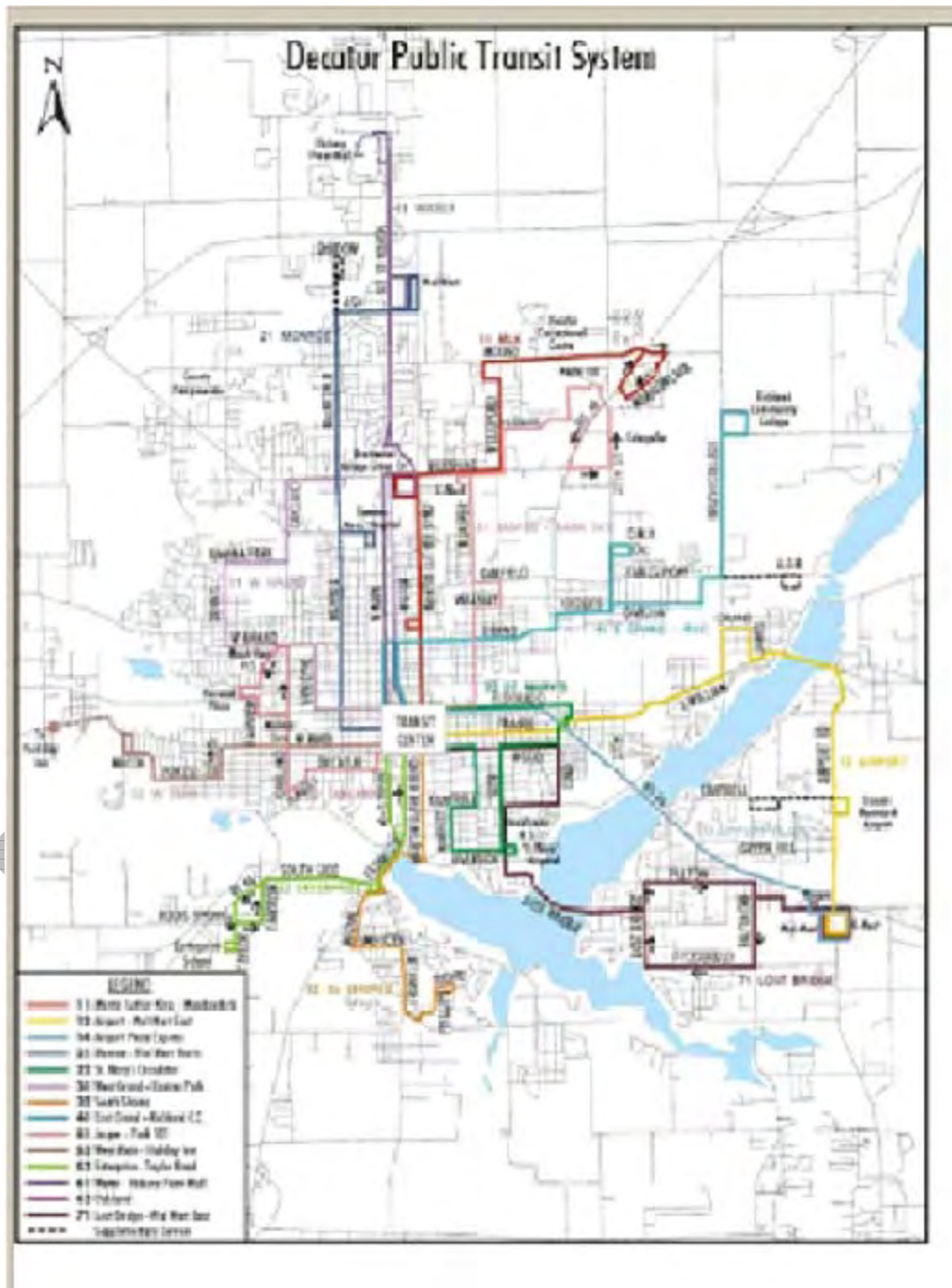
9. LIMITED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

The only provider of public transportation service in Macon County is the Decatur Public Transit System (DPTS). DPTS is a department of Decatur city government. As shown in the map which follows, public transit service, including regular, fixed route and para-transit service is restricted, with a few exceptions, to the Decatur corporate limits.

DPTS operates transit buses on 14 fixed routes throughout the service area. The buses make a total of 308 round trips per day. Trips per route vary from 45 maximum to 6 minimum on the longest route. Fares are \$0.75 for adults. Reduced fares are offered for children less than 5 years of age, youth aged 5 through 18 and those with high school ID's, seniors, disabled persons not eligible for para-transit service and Millikin students who ride the Millikin Trolley.

DPTS provides about 108 para-transit trips per day. This is approximately 3% of the total daily trips provided. Para-transit is available throughout the service area, which includes all of the City of Decatur plus those areas beyond the City that are within 0.75 miles of a regular bus route. This area includes parts of Harristown and Long Creek as well as most of Forsyth. Para-transit service is available to anyone, to any destination, provided they are an "eligible rider." Eligible riders must be certified by DPTS as having a disability which precludes their ability to ride a regular bus. The service does not assign priority to the trip either by destination or purpose. Fares are \$1.50. A personal care attendant may ride along at no additional charge. DPTS does not keep detailed destination or purpose of trip statistics.

Decatur Public Transit System – Fixed Route Service



Source: Decatur Public Transit System and Camiros

The 2006 Community Health Foundation survey exemplified the service void between what can be provided by DPTS and the needs of those individuals with transportation challenges. The survey showed that local service providers were unanimous in their knowledge of transportation gaps. Service providers included church sponsored programs, government entities and private agencies. 100% of those surveyed expressed the opinion that there were unmet transportation needs. 88% of the service providers said their clients needed transportation for medical services, 53% for social service agency visits, 47% for shopping and 38% for employment/work.

The survey also included individual responses from clients. 65% of clients indicated that they would use such a public transportation service often, defined as more than once per week. 35% said they would use the service occasionally. The purposes of their trips were 25% for medical, 13% for family reasons, 8% to visit social service agencies, 27% for shopping and 24% for work.

Respondents were also asked what type(s) of additional services they would like to see. 27% felt that additional fixed route service should be provided by DPTS with longer operating hours, 17% wanted more "on demand" city bus service. 28% wanted more economical taxis and/or shuttles, and 16% wanted more "special" needs transport.

The respondents were comprised of 14.5% youth (20 years or less), 10.9% rural residents, 33.2% seniors, 32.1% adult females and 9.3% adult males.

10. PLANNING HISTORY

The issue or interest in alternatives to public transportation, in addition to DPTS, has existed in the MPA for at least a decade. Smaller communities have expressed interest in receiving or being served by one or more transit providers. The majority of the interest expressed has been by those needing to visit doctors, get treatment or other medical reasons. The topic of creating a rural to urban system has been discussed. The discussion has expanded to include recreational. Most trips performed by transportation providers are for medical purposes followed by shopping. Many of these locations are in the Champaign-Urbana area, but clients are picked up out-of-urban areas for many of the transit providers. Map 8 shows the location of several hospitals and shopping centers in the Champaign-Urbana area.

In August 2007, a regional effort to study rural transportation was initiated. Macon County was placed in Region 8, along with DeWitt, Piatt, Champaign, Vermillion, Moultrie, Douglas, Edgar, Coles, Shelby, Cumberland and Clark counties. This regional effort was spearheaded by the hiring of a regional coordinator, based in the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. The Champaign-Urbana, Danville and Decatur areas are Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The remaining counties are considered rural. The regional coordinator will be responsible for crafting the regional plan, the MPO's will create the HSTP for their respective urbanized areas and the latter will be folded into the regional plan.

One of the first orders of business after the region organized, was to develop a survey which was mailed to all known agencies within the Region. The survey was designed and intended to

determine which entities and agencies provided what type of transportation services, to whom, at what cost and to begin to learn of the transportation challenges that these and other agencies were experiencing and/or recognized. The mailing list was assembled using a host of different resources and methods. The list included both local and more regional providers. Examples of those entities providing some form of transportation in some fashion to some population were child care centers, mental health facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies and youth programs

In the winter of 2007-2008, DUATS created a similar survey which was mailed to over 100 known or suspected transportation providers. Of the 113 surveys sent, 27 were returned. A second mailing was made in late January 2008, and again response was very low. A third attempt to contact those who did not respond to the previous requests was initiated on March 14th. A list of the agencies contacted is shown as Appendix 1. A copy of the survey is included as Appendix 2.

Although no officially appointed or designated HSTP or similar committee currently exists it is the intent of DUATS to form such a committee during the latter part of FY 2008. Since 2003, DUATS has participated in numerous meetings on the topic of rural and urban transportation. Over the past four (4) years a group of interested citizens and agencies, in conjunction with DUATS have discussed the issues involved with providing a means to address a lack of options for the transportation challenged in the County. The group has looked at creating a standalone transportation system and has discussed the option of joining Show Bus. At the time of the latter discussion, Macon County was not adjacent to the territory serviced by Show Bus. With the recent annexation of DeWitt County, that option is viable should it be shown to be the best option. The possible annexation to Piattran is also an option that did not exist a few years ago.

More recently, a meeting, hosted by DOVE/Homeward Bound, featured Gary DeLeo, Rural and Small Urban Programs, IDOT. Once again, the advantages and disadvantages of creating a separate transit agency versus annexing to an existing one were talked about in detail. Aside from the core group, attendance at these meetings has been less than robust. Most service providers seem content to stay where they are in terms of programming. Most seem not to see the need for cooperation, collaboration or coordination regarding transportation services.

11. CURRENT TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

The most recent community surveys (Phase 1 and 2) were returned by a variety of agencies in the urbanized area. These included public transportation, quasi-public agencies, private entities, public and private schools and private transportation providers. Following is a list of those who have responded. Each entry includes the name, a description of the services provided and the clientele involved.

- 1) Decatur Public Transit System (DPTS) is a service of Decatur City government. With a fleet of 27 medium duty coaches, 2 light duty vehicles and 5 converted, 15 passenger vans for those with physical disabilities, service is provided throughout the City of Decatur and beyond through special agreements. Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday. Operating hours on weekdays is

between 5:30 AM and 7:15 PM. On Saturday, the system operates from 6:30 AM till 7:15 PM. Para-transit services operate during the same times.

2) Decatur-Macon County Opportunities Corporation (DMCOC) is a multiple service, not for profit agency. DMCOC offers services to senior through their Senior Services division, provides care and coordination for students participating in Head Start, energy assistance, weatherization, provide housing information and referrals for the homeless, offers vocational classes, supplemental scholarships and emergency assistance. DMCOC contracts with Durham Transportation to provide transportation for Head Start students using DMCOC buses. They contract with taxis to get workers to and from their jobs when DPTS is not operating. They also provide assistance in transporting clients to the doctor, daycare, to get groceries and to meal sites. Buses typically run on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Door to door operations require 24 hour notice in most instances. Work related transportation operates between 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

3) Macon Resources, Inc., (MRI) is a multi-oriented, not for profit, public action service agency. Their clientele are those persons having developmental disabilities and striving to place those individuals in gainful employment. Transportation of clients is on a fixed route basis which runs throughout the County. MRI utilizes 13 minivans, 9 standard 15 passenger vans, a heavy duty coach and one super duty bus. Service is offered between 24 hours a day, seven days a week. MRI has a contractual agreement with DPTS for pass purchases.

4) Macon-Piatt County Special Education District provides transportation for public school age children who require special vocational instruction. Five (5) medium duty vans provide service Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM till 5:00 PM on days when school is in session. Service is provided among all 13 school districts in the County. Additional service includes transportation to grocery stores, limited entertainment and job sites.

5) DOVE/Homeward Bound is a not for profit agency providing intensive case management and associated social services to individuals and families who do not have permanent housing or are in transition. In combination with their own light duty van, they work with DPTS and taxis to provide transportation to homeless clients to work, school, doctor, etc. and other social service agencies.

6) Decatur Rehabilitation is a for profit entity which provides transportation services to seniors and the disabled who need to go to school, doctors and the hospital. It has a light duty van and utilizes Decatur Ambulance Services' Medi-van for additional trips.

7) Faith in Action and Catholic Charities provides transportation coordination with a network of volunteers and St. Mary's Lakeshore Connection who transport persons 55 years and older or those who are homebound to doctors, shopping, other social services, etc..

8) Hillside Bethel Tabernacle is a not for profit church operated transportation program which provides service to youth between their home and the church's pre-school. They have two medium duty vans at their disposal.

9) Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) is a governmental entity that provides residents of the housing authority with limited transportation between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Origins are DHA properties and destinations include entertainment and shopping.

12. GAPS AND NEED ASSESSMENT

GAPS

As mentioned previously, all but a few of the agencies surveyed in 2006 and 2008 reported serious gaps in attempting to satisfy the transportation needs of their clients. The primary needs as reported by both service providers (2006 & 2008 surveys) and clients (2006 survey only) are for transportation to and from doctors, hospital, pharmacies or other medically related facilities. The next most pressing need is for transportation for grocery and general shopping purposes. The third most requested need is for transportation to various social or recreational venues throughout the County.

Individuals and families in rural areas and those beyond walking distance from DPTS routes have fewer transportation opportunities simply because there are few or no options available. Restrictions and time limits can adversely affect individuals and families even though they live near to DPTS routes. The reasons for these gaps and the demonstrated needs for transportation improvements generally revolve around a set of circumstances, whether real or perceived. These include the following.

A. Lack of Access

Other than DPTS route schedules, there are no widespread, common points of contact to gain information on transportation options that might be available. In order to find information on the type(s) of service, hours of operation, eligibility requirements, cost, etc., numerous phone calls or contacts must be made with an oftentimes confusing, sometimes unfamiliar mix of social services and agencies.

B. Understanding the Systems

Even after an individual begins to comprehend the various transportation options, understanding how to effectively access one or more transportation options can be difficult and create confusion and uncertainty for a number of reasons.

- ❖ Transit systems and transportation providers charge for services and schedule differently.
- ❖ Attempting to use multiple transportation programs requires making multiple arrangements.
- ❖ Physical assistance getting on and off the vehicle is many times not available.
- ❖ Same day service is normally not available and advance planning may not always be available.

C. Little or No Service Available

As noted above, unless a person lives relatively near a DPTS route, or is able to schedule para-transit service, those living in the rural areas or the edge of Decatur have no public transportation

services available. Due to distances between potential riders and the large land area of Macon County, it is not normally economical to support service in rural or sparsely populated areas. For example, DPTS service is only authorized to provide service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a fixed route.

D. Affordability

The cost to schedule and ride is a deterrent for some customers, especially those who need to use various services frequently or consistently. All service providers charge riders some kind of fare. Service is normally restricted to an agencies clientele.

E. Availability

Both the 2006 survey conducted by the Macon County Health Foundation and the 2008 DUATS surveys indicate an almost universal belief that the needs for transportation services are not being met. The diversity of origins, destinations and hours and days of operation creates a need that is far and away more challenging than originally is thought.

F. Frequency and Reliability

How often service is available and how consistently the schedule is able to be maintained has a more marked affect on the economically challenges individuals and families than those who ride less often. Consistently, social service agencies expressed the need for expanded hours of DPTS or an alternative which would provide service for 2nd and 3rd shift workers. Those entities that do currently provide transportation services were generally applauded for being on time.

G. Restrictions

Of some issue to the respondents were the restrictions placed on who could and could not ride on a particular agencies fleet. Instances of frustration were expressed as in the case of a provider van passing in front of an individual's home and being unable to pick them up because they did not meet the eligibility requirements of that provider. For example, it seems ridiculous to over half the respondents that a provider of senior transportation could not stop and pick up a youth, even though both the senior and youth were going to the same or nearby destinations.

Needs Assessment

Responding agencies reported that the costs associated with operation of their fleet and service was becoming more and more difficult as funding sources shrink and costs increase. A few providers were concerned that their funding could keep up with rising expenses for their operations. Some of the reasons for their feelings are noted below.

A. Funding

Funding for public and agency transportation is being restricted to more urban areas like the Chicago and St. Louis metro counties in the eyes of some respondents. As the median age of Macon

County's population continues to grow, more and more seniors are needing and demanding more transportation options. The widening gap between available funding and rising expenses was the largest fear of most respondents.

B. Insurance

Closely tied to the whole issue of funding is the rising cost of insurance. A couple of agencies stated that they were concerned that insurance may not be available to them in the coming years, regardless of the price.

C. Lack of Qualified Staff Members

A number of agencies are struggling to maintain adequate staffing, particularly properly licensed and affective drivers. Most agencies, such as Catholic Charities, are experiencing a decreasing number of individuals willing to volunteer

D. Vehicles

Many agencies are hard pressed to maintain required or prudent maintenance schedules on their vehicles. The rising age of vehicles, the increasing mileage and the slower pace of replacement were additional concerns voiced.

E. Overlapping Services & Inefficiency of Systems

A majority of respondents were sympathetic to the idea of better cooperation and coordination of services. Yet, those respondents were concerned that that same cooperation and coordination would negatively affect their programs and transportation program. Most programs and the origination of funds are targeted to rather specific and focused populations travelling to and from specific destinations or for a narrow range of purposes. Overlapping and duplicative services are too often the result of this proprietary mindset. Overlapping services and system inefficiencies can be exemplified in the following examples.

- ❖ As noted previously, different vans from different agencies may be traveling in the same area, both with a common or nearby destination, but because of red tape and the strings attached to funding, are unable to provide service to individuals offer different services and thus do not pick up additional riders.
- ❖ Schools, the public transit system, and the Medicaid agencies operate their own training programs for drivers.
- ❖ Large providers maintain their vehicles with on-site personnel. This can have the affect of controlling and keeping their costs lower. Small providers are much more dependent on the private sector for maintenance.
- ❖ Large providers also maintain their own individual information and help desks which are trained to provide travel details to the public.
- ❖ Larger providers typically are able to access FHWA and other public funds to buy vehicles, equipment and maintain supplies.

13. THE FUTURE

Since 1990, the County has lost approximately 2% of its population. Although, the population loss has been principally in the unincorporated areas, municipalities in the southern part of the County and in Decatur, significant growth is being experienced in those municipalities located within the Urbanized Area. The municipalities surrounding Decatur have growth rates which range from 1.42% in Harristown to just under 50% in Forsyth. Decatur's 2007 population is estimated to be 77,047, which is a 10% loss.

By 2030, the County's population is expected to increase by approximately 3%. Although such a gain is modest, vehicle miles traveled and surface freight truck deliveries continue to increase rapidly. Decatur will remain the center of employment, services and retail shopping opportunities. This will continue the trend of increasing transportation demand by individuals and families needing medical attention, food, fuel and entertainment. These increases, coupled with the increase in the median age of County residents, demand for public transportation is going to increase beyond the present level.

It is projected that over the next 25 years, the population in Macon County will experience slight growth, most of which is anticipated to be within the Urbanized Area, outside the City of Decatur. With these basics in mind, DUATS believes that improving and increasing the accessibility, cost, availability and reliability of the transportation system for individuals and families who are physically and economically challenged can be accomplished by improving the efficiency and wise fiscal management of those physical and economic resources that are and will be available. To achieve these improvements within budget will require cooperation, coordination and collaboration from the public, quasi-public, charitable and private sectors. Following are sets of recommendations that are intended to meet the needs and address the obstacles.

❖ Provide a single source for transportation information by creating a comprehensive, user friendly directory that informs the public of the providers and services that are available in the Urbanized Area.

The advantages of compiling the information, simplifying the content, noting eligibility guidelines and distributing it widely would include:

- Improve access to available services
- Support and facilitate travel in the urban area
- Benefit clients, transportation providers and social service organizations
- Enhance customer mobility and convenience
- Increase ridership
- Provide more service options

The obstacles to implementation would include:

- Creation of the directory and keeping the information current,
- Need a principal entity to be responsible for the development of the directory
- Maintaining momentum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between agencies

Possible Funding Sources

- Section 5307 (Basic Urbanized Formula)

- Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled Individuals)
- Section 5316 (JARC)
- Section 5317 (New Freedom)

✧ Provide service(s) to areas not served by public transit utilizing some form of rural transit system that would allow individuals and families in rural and underserved areas to access DPTS .

The advantages of increasing and linking transit options would include:

- Allow and/or improve access to doctors, medical facilities, work, entertainment and shopping to transportation challenged individuals and families .
- Improve the quality of life through increased or enhanced access to the region.

The obstacles to implementation would include:

- Creation of a new transit system or being annexed to an existing system will be a challenge
- Coordinating routes among agencies may be difficult
- Maintaining momentum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between agencies

Possible Funding Sources

- Section 5307 (Basic Urbanized Formula)
- Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled Individuals)
- Section 5316 (JARC)
- Section 5317 (New Freedom)

✧ The existing transportation system must continue to be affordable while serving the needs of riders and the community at large.

The advantages should include:

- Increase ridership
- Consistent ridership
- Benefit clients and human service organizations
- Enhance customer accessibility, mobility and convenience

The principal obstacle would be that static or decreased revenues could jeopardize service.

Possible Funding Sources

- Section 5307 (Basic Urbanized Formula)
- Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled Individuals)
- Section 5316 (JARC)
- Section 5317 (New Freedom)
- Units of Local Government
- Employment and Training Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation Grants
- Community Services Block Grant Programs
- Community Health Consortium Grants
- Housing Authority
- Senior Services Programs

✧ Increasing and consolidating service levels and adding transportation options will allow greater mobility and flexibility when needing or required to take a trip.

The advantages would include:

- Increased efficiency for individuals and families and service providers
- Instituting a ride sharing program would increase options and flexibility
- Improved service delivery and customer satisfaction
- Increase efficiency of vehicle operations and maintenance
- Decreases the cost per trip and increases local capacity
- Increases work options for the unemployed/underemployed citizens
- Possibly would provide leverage for securing additional state and/or federal funding
- Efficiencies of scale and economics should allow an increase in available services
- Improves the quality of life for individuals, families and the community

The obstacles would likely include:

- Maintaining momentum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between agencies
- Rivalries between service providers regarding control and image might occur
- Requires project oversight, distribution/reimbursement formulas and delivery standards
- Potential negativity from existing operators about competition
- Requires inter-agency agreements for service, income and expenses
- Requires agencies to voluntarily give up some autonomy for the betterment of all
- Requires additional funding for increasing the hours and days of operations

Potential Funding Sources

- Section 5307 (Basic Urbanized Formula)
- Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled Individuals)
- Section 5316 (JARC)
- Section 5317 (New Freedom)
- Social Services Block Grants
- Area Employers, Financial and Other Institutions
- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities & Protections & Advocacy Systems
- Medicaid
- Community Health Services Grants
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant
- Workforce Development Grants

✧ Work to provide increased transportation options while reducing the restrictions and eligibility requirements through the consolidation of services and technological enhancements

The advantages would include:

- Increased efficiency for individuals and families and service providers
- Simplified record keeping, financing and service options
- Improved service delivery, increased ridership and customer satisfaction
- Increases work options for the unemployed/underemployed citizens
- Efficiencies of scale and economics should allow an increase in available services

- Improves the quality of life for individuals, families and the community

The obstacles would include:

- Introducing new technology would likely require additional initial funding
- Maintaining momentum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between agencies
- Rivalries between service providers might occur
- Demands policy directives and inter-agency agreements
- Requires project oversight, distribution/reimbursement formulas and delivery standards
- Potential negativity from existing operators about competition

Potential Funding Sources

- Public & Private Technology Grants
- Section 5307 (Basic Urbanized Formula)
- Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled Individuals)
- Section 5316 (JARC)
- Section 5317 (New Freedom)
- Social Services Grants
- Community Health Services Grant

14. IMMEDIATE GOALS

- Appoint and assemble a cross jurisdictional, multi-agency committee,
- Continue to explore the potential for cooperation, coordination and collaboration between existing transportation providers,

15. FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to actively investigate either the creation of a new public transit entity or annexation to an existing entity in order to serve the needs of the rural and underserved urbanized areas of the County with access to DPTS routes,
- Provide for single source scheduling under one agency,
- Increase the service area and the operating frequency as much as possible,
- Study the option of contractual agreements to increase efficiency and decrease the cost per trip.
- Seek ways to reduce “competition” by reducing or eliminating redundant activities
- Increase efficiencies through sharing administrative, fleet, maintenance and support resources,
- Standardize fiscal accountability and operational policies.