

Southern Grafton County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan

FINAL DRAFT

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. SAFETEA-LU established a federal mandate for public transit-human service coordination planning and requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before transportation service providers may acquire funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317) Programs.

The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) began the public transit-human services coordination planning process for southern Grafton County in February 2007. The purpose of the planning process was to create a comprehensive strategy to assist state and local officials, human service agencies, transportation service providers, and other stakeholders in coordinating public transit and human service transportation efforts in the 16 communities of southern Grafton County. Inherent in this process was the identification of transportation needs, potential coordination strategies, and projects to implement the identified coordination strategies. Key elements of the planning process included:

- Facilitating a series of two workshops for transportation service providers
- Conducting a survey of providers and human service agencies
- Organizing targeted meetings with transportation service providers and human service agencies
- Completing the Federal Transit Administration's "Framework for Action"
- Developing a demographic profile to identify the population and location of persons with specialized transportation needs including individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and individuals with limited income
- Holding a series of three public meetings to present the plan and receive public feedback

The transportation needs and coordination strategies identified in the plan are primarily the result of geographic and economic conditions. Southern Grafton County is largely rural with few transportation services and little service overlap. While the four communities that constitute the population center of the region (Lebanon, Hanover, Enfield, and Canaan) are well-served by transit and human service transportation options, the remainder of the region is largely disconnected from this system. The plan identifies 11 of the 16 communities in southern Grafton County as "underserved." These areas rely heavily on volunteer transportation; however, maintaining an adequate pool of volunteer drivers has been challenging. Volunteer drivers are often older persons with limited incomes, and have been deterred by the rising cost of fuel and the threat of insurance rate increases. Building on these concepts, the plan identifies seven transportation needs:

- Mobility for all Residents of Grafton County
- Increased Cooperation between Medical Centers and Transportation Providers

- Elimination of Insurance Restrictions on Volunteer Drivers
- Elimination of Federal and State Barriers to Coordination
- Increasing Public Outreach
- Expansion of Existing Services
- Technology to Improve Service Delivery

The identified coordination strategies and projects are also primarily the result of economic circumstances. At the state level, funding for public transportation is meager in New Hampshire. Existing transportation services are funded by a combination of federal monies and private donations, and this system has led to concerns about financial sustainability. Making use of the limited available resources is a key theme, and the plan identifies a number of ways that transportation service providers in southern Grafton County may pool resources and coordinate efforts, including:

- Form a Regional Coordinating Council
- Consider Technological Improvements to Improve Service Delivery
- Develop a Centralized Dispatch Center
- Reevaluate and Enhance Existing Service Delivery Systems
- Consider Joint Procurement of Equipment, Maintenance, Fuel, and Personnel
- Coordinate Public Outreach and Marketing Efforts
- Overcome Barriers to Volunteerism

The New Hampshire “Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services Plan” outlines a framework for implementing coordination initiatives at the regional level, including the formation of a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) and appointment of a Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC). These entities will play pivotal roles in implementing the recommendations detailed in this plan. It is imperative upon the adoption of this plan, that an active and committed Regional Coordinating Council be established to implement the initiatives outlined herein and foster a continuing spirit of cooperation amongst transportation service providers in southern Grafton County.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. SAFETEA-LU established a federal mandate for public transit-human service coordination planning. Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, SAFETEA-LU requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before transportation service providers may acquire funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317) Programs.

The Federal Transit Administration's Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) defines coordination as "*a process by which two or more organizations interact to jointly accomplish their transportation objectives*" (2004). These organizations may include public, private, and not-for-profit transportation services, human services providers, and other entities that represent citizens who have special transportation service needs. Citizens with specialized transportation needs are an important focus of the coordination planning process, as the Federal Transit Administration has provided guidance that coordination plans should "*identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services*".

The purpose of this plan is to create a comprehensive strategy to assist state and community agencies, transportation service providers, and stakeholders for coordinating public transit and human service transportation efforts in southern Grafton County, New Hampshire. Specific goals for the plan include:

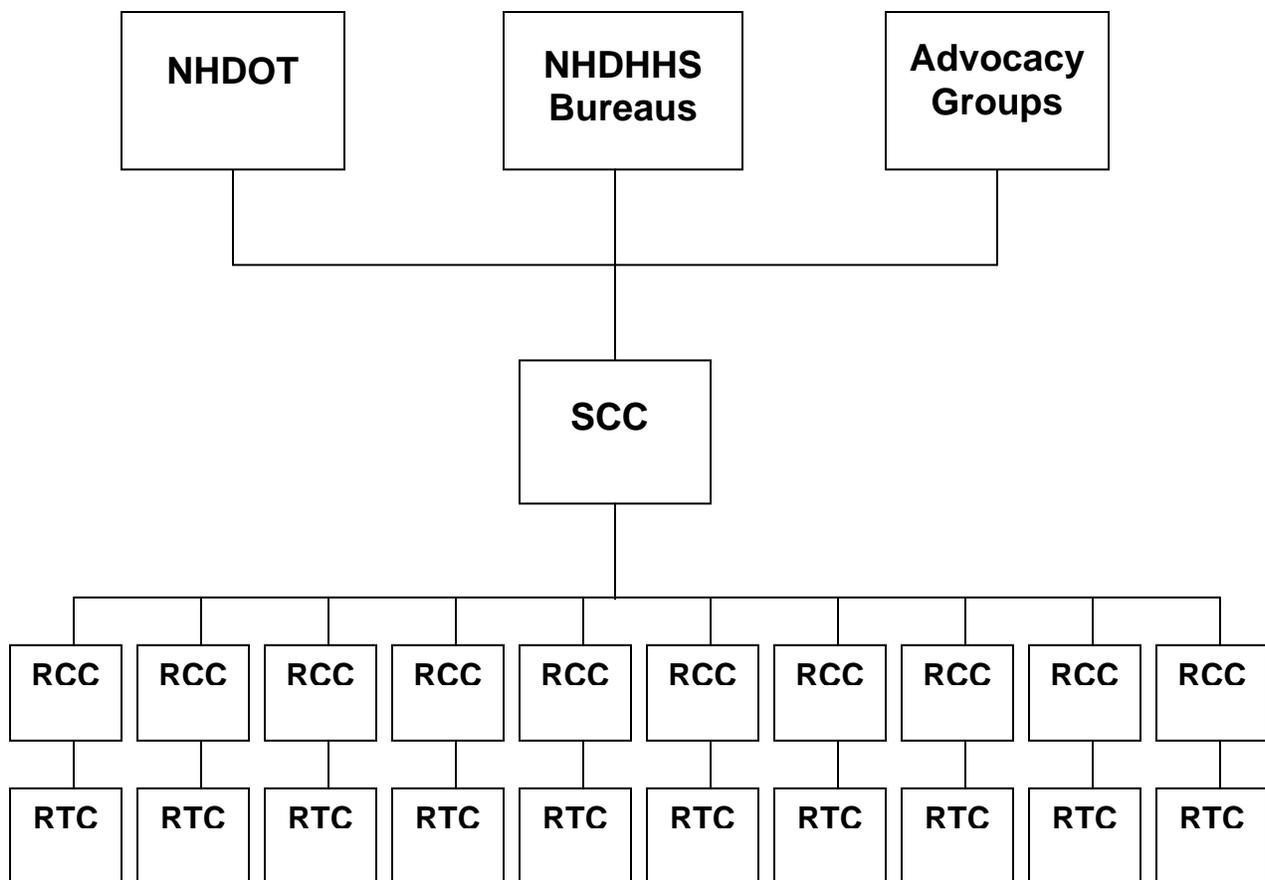
- Identifying unmet transportation needs
- Identifying transportation service gaps (e.g. un-served and underserved areas) and overlaps (e.g. service redundancies)
- Completing an inventory of existing public transit and human service transportation providers
- Identifying strategies to maximize the use of limited transportation resources through coordination
- Enhancing mobility within and between communities
- Increasing access to jobs, schools, medical centers, and other essential human services
- Utilizing transportation investments and grant funding more efficiently
- Increasing citizen awareness of public transit and human service transportation providers and programs

3.0 EXISTING COORDINATION EFFORTS

3.1 Statewide Coordination Plan

The Governor’s Task Force on Community Transportation has studied and provided recommendations and policies to establish a coordinated, interconnected, and accessible statewide transportation system in New Hampshire. The findings of this work are published in the Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services report completed by Nelson-Nygaard Consulting Services. The report recommends an “institutional and geographic framework” for coordinating services. This framework would include a Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC) to oversee coordination policies at the state level, ten Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) to implement coordination and to monitor providers at the regional level, and ten “regional brokers” called Regional Transportation Coordinators (RTC). Figure 3.1 presents the oversight structure proposed under the Statewide Coordination Plan.

FIGURE 3.1- Oversight Structure of Statewide Coordination Plan



Source: Governor’s Taskforce on Community Transportation, *Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services*, October 2006. Prepared by Nelson-Nygaard Consulting Associates.

Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC)

The Statewide Coordinating Council would be comprised of major funding agencies and other stakeholders acting primarily as an advisory body. However, the SCC could have some policy and approval powers. The Statewide Coordination Plan recommended that this council be charged with “setting coordination policies, assisting regional efforts as needed, and monitoring the results.” The Statewide Coordinating Council will directly oversee the 10 Regional Coordinating Councils, and would have the ability to approve or reject the Regional Coordinating Councils selection of their Regional Transportation Coordinator. However, at the operational level, the Statewide Coordinating Council would not have the power to execute contracts. Thus, no funding will flow through the Statewide Coordinating Council.

Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)

The Regional Coordinating Council would be comprised primarily of organizational members. The RCC could include regional representatives of funding agencies and service providers. This entity would work with providers to create local service designs, implement coordination policies, and provide feedback to the Statewide Coordinating Council relative to policies. The Regional Coordinating Councils will provide direct oversight of their respective Regional Transportation Coordinators. Each of the ten Regional Coordinating Councils will have the following responsibilities under the Statewide Coordination Plan:

- Implementing coordination initiatives and policies in their region;
- Selecting, guiding, and monitoring their Regional Transportation Coordinator;
- Working with their Regional Transportation Coordinator to develop the “local service design”, including determining how service is delivered and how inter-regional trips are coordinated;
- Providing feedback to the Statewide Coordinating Council on coordination policies that are working or not working well in their region;
- Nominating, or replacing Regional Transportation Coordinators

Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC)

The Regional Transportation Coordinator would essentially act as a regional transportation “broker”, and could be a service provider, public entity, or private firm. Under the Statewide Coordination Plan, the purpose of the Regional Transportation Coordinator is to “coordinate the service delivery of customers of sponsoring organizations so as to maximize the use of scarce resources and combine rideshareable trips sponsored by different organizations.” At the operational level, Regional Transportation Coordinators will contract directly with state agencies and/or other groups purchasing transportation services. The Regional Transportation Coordinator will have the following responsibilities under the Statewide Coordination Plan:

- Developing and/or maintaining a database of customers in the region that have been deemed eligible for service by each sponsoring organization;
- Processing service requests from registered customers, according to the policies of the applicable sponsoring organization;
- Scheduling trips via appropriate transportation service providers;
- Monitoring the performance of transportation providers to ensure that the service quality and cost efficiency goals of each sponsoring organization are met;
- Performing customer service functions, responding to information requests, “same-day issues”, and complaints;
- Preparing and submitting reports and invoices per the requirements of each sponsoring organization.

Under the Statewide Coordination Plan, a Regional Coordinating Council is proposed that would encompass all of Grafton County. However, it is recognized that northern Grafton County’s connection with Coos County will allow some flexibility in the final area determination. The entire southern Grafton County study area would be included in this Grafton County region.

Also, at the statewide level, a coordination program is currently in place. *ServiceLink* “is a network of ten community-based *ServiceLink* Resource Centers and forty satellite offices with the common purpose of providing information and supportive referrals about resources for older adults, adults living with disabilities, chronic illness, and their families and caregivers.” On a case-by-case basis, The *ServiceLink* system directs people to the existing human service or transportation resources that best meet their individual needs. There is a *ServiceLink* Resource Center in southern Grafton County, located at the Center for Elder Services in Lebanon, NH. The chief objectives of the service are to reduce duplication and enhance coordination in the delivery of human services.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

Provider Workshops/Public Meetings

A series of two workshops and three public meetings were held for public transit and human service transportation providers in Southern Grafton County.

Workshop #1 (February 22, 2007- Lebanon, NH)

A workshop was held for transportation and human service providers in order to review the purpose and scope of the plan. A preliminary review of an inventory of existing human service providers was completed in effort to ensure the full scope of stakeholders was included. An assessment of the level of existing coordination efforts was also completed.

Workshop #2- (April 19, 2007- Lebanon, NH)

The goal of the second workshop was to discuss results from the Federal Transit Administration's coordination self assessment tool, a "Framework for Action". This evaluation of the maturity of coordination within the region, together with a profile of demographics was provided to the stakeholder to provide the necessary background for a preliminary review of potential coordination strategies. The group also discussed the statewide coordination plan and its implications to the region's approach to continued cooperation.

Public Meeting #1- (October 23, 2007- Bristol, NH)

A Public Meeting was held at the Bristol Senior Center in Bristol, NH on October 23, 2007. UVLSRPC staff presented the findings and recommendations of the draft Southern Grafton County Public Transit Human Services Coordination Plan and solicited feedback and comments from participants.

Public Meeting #2- (October 24, 2007- Orford, NH)

A Public Meeting was held at the Orford Town Offices in Orford, NH on October 24, 2007. UVLSRPC staff presented the findings and recommendations of the draft Southern Grafton County Public Transit Human Services Coordination Plan and solicited feedback and comments from participants.

Public Hearing- (March 20, 2008- Canaan, NH)

The Public Hearing was a facilitated discussion of the draft Southern Grafton County Human Service-Public transit Coordination Plan. Following this meeting and subsequent amendments, the final plan was finalized and submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Demographic Profile

As part of the planning process, the UVLSRPC developed a demographic profile of southern Grafton County to identify the population and location of persons with specialized transportation needs: individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and individuals with limited income. The demographic profile also identifies general population and employment trends, and automobile ownership rates for each town in southern Grafton County. The demographic profile is presented in Section 4 of this report.

Framework for Action

The Federal Transit Administration's "Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System" assessment tool was administered to a group of stakeholders including local representatives, transportation service providers, and

human service agencies. The purpose of the Framework for Action is to “help groups in states and communities assess their progress toward transportation coordination” by developing a shared understanding of coordination and defining challenges to overall mobility. In the Southern Grafton County coordination planning process, the Framework for Action assessment tool was used as a first step in identifying transportation needs and potential coordination strategies. The results of the Framework for Action Assessment are presented in Section 5 of this report.

Provider Survey/Targeted Meetings

A “Survey of Transportation Services and Interest in Transportation Coordination” was distributed to human service agencies and transportation service providers to develop baseline information about existing transportation services and needs in Southern Grafton County. In addition, targeted meetings were held with Southern Grafton County’s two largest not-for-profit transportation providers (Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council) and largest for-profit transportation service provider (People Movers, Inc.).

Description of Existing Services

An important step in the public transit-human services coordination planning process is conducting a thorough inventory of existing transportation services. These transportation services may include public transit, carpool and vanpool services, paratransit services, and volunteer services. The inventory of existing transportation services is presented in Section 6 of this report.

Transportation and Coordination Needs

By assessing demographics, existing services, and coordination efforts, a needs evaluation was prepared for southern Grafton County. These needs are focused on how to use existing services most efficiently to meet transportation needs. This includes an assessment of existing services, unmet needs, service duplications and obstacles to coordination. The transportation needs assessment is presented in Section 7 of this report.

Coordination Strategies

A number of strategies were created to assist human service agencies and transportation providers address the existing needs and enhance southern Grafton County’s transportation and human service delivery system. Priorities were assigned to these strategies to help focus implementation efforts. The Coordination Strategies are presented in Section 8 of this report.

Participating Organizations

The following organizations participated in the development of the Southern Grafton County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan:

Advance Transit, Inc.
City of Lebanon, NH
Dartmouth Child Care Project
Grafton County Senior Citizens Council
Lakes Region Planning Commission
Listen Community Services
New Hampshire Association for the Blind
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
Pathways of the River Valley
People Movers, Inc.
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Transport Central
Upper Valley Haven
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
Upper Valley Substance Abuse
Upper Valley United Way
West Central Behavioral Health

5.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

5.1 Study Area Overview

Grafton County is located in western New Hampshire, along the Connecticut River and adjacent to the New Hampshire/Vermont border. The 1,747 square mile county is home to 38 towns, one city, and one unincorporated area. The largest community in Grafton County is the City of Lebanon, which had an estimated population of 13,421 in 2005.

This plan includes 16 communities in southern Grafton County (See Map 1). The remaining Grafton County communities have already participated in a public transit-human services coordination planning process via the recent completion of the “Regional Coordinated Transit Plan for the North Country Council Planning Region”, which covered 23 communities in central and northern Grafton County. The 16 communities covered under the southern Grafton County coordination planning effort include:

Town of Alexandria	Town of Hanover
Town of Ashland	Town of Hebron
Town of Bridgewater	Town of Holderness
Town of Bristol	City of Lebanon
Town of Canaan	Town of Lyme
Town of Dorchester	Town of Orange
Town of Enfield	Town of Orford
Town of Grafton	Town of Piermont

The following demographic profile was developed to document important socio-economic characteristics regarding southern Grafton County that impact the delivery and coordination of public transit and human service transportation. Specifically, this demographic profile documents the locations of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons within southern Grafton County. The profile also documents the locations of key employers, which helps in identifying underserved areas and transportation service gaps within the county. This assessment will help determine potential coordination strategies.

5.2 Population Trends

Since 1990, the population of Grafton County has grown nearly 16 percent to an estimated population of 86,923 residents in 2005. Table 5.2 (A) below shows key population growth trends for Grafton County and communities within southern Grafton County.

TABLE 5.2 (A):

Population Change by Community in Southern Grafton County- 1990 to 2005			
Area	1990 Population	2005 Population (Estimate)	% Change 1990 to 2005
New Hampshire	1,109,117	1,315,000	18.6%
Grafton County	74,929	86,923	16.0%
Alexandria	1,190	1,472	23.7%
Ashland	1,915	2,030	6.0%
Bridgewater	796	1,029	29.3%
Bristol	2,537	3,185	25.5%
Canaan	3,045	3,518	15.5%
Dorchester	392	382	-2.6%
Enfield	3,979	4,857	22.1%
Grafton	923	1,203	30.3%
Hanover	9,212	11,037	19.8%
Hebron	386	539	39.6%
Holderness	1,694	2,029	19.8%
Lebanon	12,183	13,421	10.2%
Lyme	1,496	1,724	15.2%
Orange	237	311	31.2%
Orford	1,008	1,177	16.8%
Piermont	624	725	16.2%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2005 NHOEP Estimates

Table 5.2 (A) shows that both rural and urban areas of southern Grafton County have experienced significant growth over the past 15 years. The largest community in southern Grafton County, the City of Lebanon, has grown more than 10 percent since 1990, adding approximately 1,300 new residents. Similarly, the second largest

community in southern Grafton County, the Town of Hanover, grew nearly 20 percent, adding nearly 2,000 residents over the same period. Many rural communities in southern Grafton County have grown 20 percent or more since 1990, and the towns of Grafton, Hebron, and Orange have all grown 30 percent or more during the same period. Only the Town of Dorchester has lost population since 1990, losing nearly 3% of its residents. Table 5.2 (B) shows population projections for each community in southern Grafton County.

TABLE 5.2 (B):

Population Projections by Community in Southern Grafton County-2010 to 2030							
	Estimate	Projection					% Change 2005-2030
Area	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	
New Hampshire	1,315,000	1,365,140	1,420,000	1,470,010	1,520,310	1,565,040	19.0
Grafton County	86,923	88,860	92,440	95,110	97,740	100,630	15.8
Alexandria	1,472	1,510	1,590	1,640	1,700	1,760	19.6
Ashland	2,030	2,080	2,170	2,240	2,300	2,370	16.7
Bridgewater	1,029	1,060	1,110	1,150	1,190	1,240	20.5
Bristol	3,185	3,270	3,410	3,530	3,650	3,780	18.7
Canaan	3,518	3,600	3,710	3,800	3,890	3,990	13.4
Dorchester	382	390	410	420	430	450	17.8
Enfield	4,857	4,980	5,240	5,420	5,600	5,800	19.4
Grafton	1,203	1,230	1,300	1,340	1,390	1,440	19.7
Hanover	11,037	11,320	11,810	12,250	12,640	13,070	18.4
Hebron	539	550	570	590	610	620	15.0
Holderness	2,029	2,080	2,180	2,250	2,310	2,390	17.8
Lebanon	13,421	13,530	13,710	13,860	14,010	14,180	5.7
Lyme	1,724	1,770	1,860	1,920	1,980	2,050	18.9
Orange	311	320	340	350	360	380	22.2
Orford	1,177	1,210	1,260	1,300	1,330	1,370	16.4
Piermont	725	740	780	810	840	870	20.0

Source: NHOEP Municipal Population Projections, January 2007

As Table 5.2 (B) shows, 13 of the 16 communities in southern Grafton County are projected to grow at rates higher than the county average over the next 25 years. Most communities within southern Grafton County are projected to grow at rates comparable to the State of New Hampshire average. However, the largest community in southern Grafton County, the City of Lebanon, is projected to grow only 5.7% over the next 25 years- a rate significantly lower than the State and County average. Overall, the projections indicate significant, continued growth in rural communities in southern Grafton County.

5.3 Senior Citizens

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 11.9 percent of New Hampshire citizens were 65 years of age or older. In Grafton County, the proportion of senior citizens is slightly higher as 13.4 percent of the population is 65 years or older. Table 5.3 (A) below shows the distribution of senior citizens in southern Grafton County communities.

TABLE 5.3 (A)

Senior Citizens in Southern Grafton County				
Area	Total Population (2000)	Population 16-64 Years of Age (2000)	Population 65 Years of Age or Over (2000)	% of Total Population 65 Years of Age or Over (2000)
New Hampshire	1,235,550	807,076	147,970	12.0%
Grafton County	81,740	55,020	10,973	13.4%
Alexandria	1,329	905	139	10.5%
Ashland	1,955	1,286	265	13.6%
Bridgewater	974	640	184	18.9%
Bristol	3,033	1,937	438	14.4%
Canaan	3,319	2,223	323	9.7%
Dorchester	353	231	42	11.9%
Enfield	4,618	3,210	500	10.8%
Grafton	1,138	753	123	10.8%
Hanover	10,850	7,961	1,009	9.3%
Hebron	459	315	130	28.3%
Holderness	1,930	1,278	252	13.1%
Lebanon	12,568	8,301	1,672	13.3%
Lyme	1,679	1,033	242	14.4%
Orange	299	211	31	10.4%
Orford	1,091	734	148	13.6%
Piermont	709	458	87	12.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

As Table 5.3 (A) shows, the proportion of senior citizens in Grafton County is slightly higher than the state average. In southern Grafton County, the Town of Hebron has the highest concentration of senior citizens, with 28.3% of the population being 65 years of age or older. This rate is more than twice the state average. In general, rural communities in southern Grafton County have senior citizen populations consistent with or slightly lower than the state average. The Town of Hanover has the lowest concentration of senior citizens. This may be the result of the large number of college-age students in the town. Even though the concentration of seniors in Hanover is the lowest in the study area, the town has a population of over 1,000 people 65 years of age or older. Table 5.3 (B) shows population projections by age in Grafton County to the year 2030.

TABLE 5.3 (B)

Population Projections by Age in Grafton County- 2010 to 2030							
	U.S. Census	Projection Year					% Change
Age Group	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000-2030
00-04	4,215	3,957	4,143	4,147	3,983	3,825	-9.3
05-09	4,839	4,092	4,225	4,418	4,485	4,378	-9.5
10-14	5,533	4,518	4,158	4,287	4,547	4,697	-15.1
15-19	7,181	6,672	6,371	6,040	6,219	6,540	-8.9
20-24	7,175	7,881	7,297	6,968	6,670	6,935	-3.3
25-29	4,670	5,561	5,669	5,050	4,769	4,523	-3.1
30-34	5,022	5,177	5,930	6,038	5,438	5,211	3.8
35-39	5,781	4,529	4,782	5,471	5,662	5,195	-10.1
40-44	6,593	4,245	4,200	4,431	5,151	5,432	-17.6
45-49	6,434	5,563	4,459	4,405	4,715	5,574	-13.4
50-54	5,677	7,511	6,084	4,871	4,878	5,305	-6.6
55-59	4,300	7,969	8,202	6,634	5,384	5,481	27.5
60-64	3,350	7,128	8,555	8,789	7,211	5,954	77.7
65-69	2,961	4,967	7,286	8,738	9,111	7,596	156.5
70-74	2,740	3,224	4,622	6,772	8,258	8,778	220.4
75-79	2,313	2,419	2,862	4,093	6,101	7,596	228.4
80-84	1,576	1,802	1,805	2,132	3,106	4,741	200.8
85+	1,383	1,657	1,780	1,820	2,091	2,898	109.5
Total	81,743	88,872	92,430	95,104	97,779	100,659	23.1

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; NHOEP Population Projections for State and Counties, November 2006.

Note: Shaded areas represent post-war “baby boom” population.

As shown in Table 5.3 (B), the population of persons 70 to 85 years of age in Grafton County is projected to more than double over the next 25 years due the aging of the post war “baby boom” generation. The aging of the “baby boom” generation will have a considerable impact on human service transportation providers in Grafton County. The overall demand for transportation services will increase significantly, as will demand for services in rural areas of the county that are currently un-served or underserved (see Section 8.1 below).

5.4 Disabled Persons

The definition of disability can vary significantly. For this project, data presented are consistent with the 2000 U.S. Census definition of disability. Disability status was determined based on answers to census long-form questions 16 and 17. Item 16 was a two-part question that asked about the existence of the following long-lasting conditions:

- (a) blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment, (sensory disability) and
- (b) a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying (physical disability).

Item 17 was a four-part question that asked if the individual had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult to perform certain activities. The four activity categories were:

- (a) learning, remembering, or concentrating (mental disability);
- (b) dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home (self-care disability);
- (c) going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor’s office (going outside the home disability); and
- (d) working at a job or business (employment disability).

It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual’s disability must prevent him or her from independently being able to use the fixed route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities. Table 5.4 shows the distribution of disabled persons in southern Grafton County.

TABLE 5.4

Disabled Persons in Southern Grafton County			
Area	Total Population of Disabled Persons (2000)	Population of Disabled Persons over Age 65 (2000)	% of Total Population with a Disability
New Hampshire	193,893	53,610	16.9%
Grafton County	12,335	3,876	16.1%
Alexandria	326	53	25.9%
Ashland	367	131	20.2%
Bridgewater	150	57	15.9%
Bristol	550	214	19.3%
Canaan	428	138	13.8%
Dorchester	89	25	26.3%
Enfield	683	201	15.8%
Grafton	167	59	15.7%
Hanover	761	220	7.6%
Hebron	178	45	37.2%
Holderness	226	79	12.3%
Lebanon	1,822	623	15.7%
Lyme	219	84	13.9%
Orange	53	10	18.8%
Orford	134	46	13.3%
Piermont	139	38	21.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

As Table 5.4 shows, 16.9 percent of New Hampshire citizens aged 65 or older had one or more disabilities according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In Grafton County, the

proportion of citizens with disabilities is slightly lower than the state average, with 16.1 percent of the population having one or more disabilities. The Town of Hanover has the lowest concentration of disabled citizens in southern Grafton County, with disabled citizens comprising 7.9 percent of Hanover’s population, a rate less than half of the state and county averages. The City of Lebanon is home to over 1,800 disabled citizens, comprising 15.7% of the city’s overall population. Rural towns of southern Grafton County have higher percentages of citizens with disabilities, with the towns of Alexandria, Ashland, Dorchester, Hebron, and Piermont all having concentrations over 20 percent. The Town of Hebron has the highest concentration of disabled citizens at 37.2 percent, a rate more than twice the state and county averages.

5.5 Employment and Income

Linking southern Grafton County’s coordinated transportation system to the region’s major employment centers will be crucial to its ultimate success. The first step in this process is identifying the region’s largest employers and their locations. The 10 largest employers in southern Grafton County are shown in Table 5.5 (A) below.

TABLE 5.5 (A)

Major Employers in Southern Grafton County, NH				
Employer	Product/Service	# of Employees	City/Town	AT Service Area
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center/Hitchcock Clinic	Health Care	7,900	Lebanon	Yes
Dartmouth College	Education	3,200	Hanover	Yes
Freudenberg-NOK	Automotive Seals	1,000	Hebron	No
Timken	Ball and Roller Bearings	732	Lebanon	Yes
Teletlas	GIS Mapping	644	Lebanon	Yes
Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital	Health Care	472	Lebanon	Yes
Hypertherm	Plasma Arch Cutting	400	Hanover	No
Lebanon School District	Education	374	Lebanon	Yes
Thermal Dynamics	Plasma Cutting Torches	290	Lebanon	No
Dartmouth Printing Company	Printing	242	Hanover	Yes

Sources: UVLSRPC, 2006 NH ELMB Community Profiles

As Table 5.5 (A) shows, nine of the 10 largest employers in Southern Grafton County are located in the Lebanon-Hanover employment center. The economy of southern Grafton County is anchored by Health Care and Education industries in the Lebanon-Hanover employment center. With approximately 7,900 employees, the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center is now the second largest employer in the State of New Hampshire. The economy of southern Grafton County might be characterized as “stable”, with health care and education anchors that are resistant to recession and economic downturns.

Eight of the 10 largest employers in southern Grafton County are served directly or indirectly by Advance Transit. In general, Advance Transit provides exceptional service to many of southern Grafton County’s largest employers. Table 5.5 (B) shows the poverty status of individuals in southern Grafton County.

TABLE 5.5 (B)

Poverty Status of Individuals in Southern Grafton County			
Area	Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined (2000)	Population Living Below Federal Poverty Level (2000)	% of Population
New Hampshire	1,199,322	78,530	6.5%
Grafton County	75,374	6,462	8.6%
Alexandria	1,308	82	6.3%
Ashland	1,936	197	10.2%
Bridgewater	970	67	6.9%
Bristol	3,021	209	6.9%
Canaan	3,319	199	6.0%
Dorchester	364	41	11.3%
Enfield	4,611	231	5.0%
Grafton	1,129	89	7.9%
Hanover	6,988	633	9.1%
Hebron	497	14	2.8%
Holderness	1,910	94	4.9%
Lebanon	12,339	1,089	8.8%
Lyme	1,664	70	4.2%
Orange	303	20	6.6%
Orford	1,089	60	5.5%
Piermont	695	34	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census

As Table 5.5 (B) shows, the Grafton County poverty rate is more than 2 percent higher than the state average. However, 12 of the 16 communities in southern Grafton County have poverty rates lower than the county average. The towns of Hebron, Holderness, Lyme, and Piermont have the lowest poverty rates in southern Grafton County. Within the four towns, impoverished citizens constitute less than 5% of the total population. The largest communities in southern Grafton County, Lebanon and Hanover have poverty rates higher than the state and county averages. Again, within Hanover, this may be the result of the large population of college-age students in the town who cannot work full-time due to their school-related workload. The highest poverty rates in southern Grafton County are found in the towns of Ashland and Dorchester. The two communities each have poverty rates greater than 10 percent.

5.6 *Autoless Households*

Automobile ownership rates also play an important role in determining public transit demand and in identifying unmet needs. Automobile ownership is generally considered a proxy variable for senior citizens, with some national estimates proposing that 65% of autoless households are elderly households. However, automobile ownership rates can also provide important insight in determining where there are concentrations of people without a reliable transportation to work. Automobile ownership rates in southern Grafton County are presented in Table 5.6 below.

TABLE 5.6

Autoless Households in Southern Grafton County			
Area	Total Households (2000)	Households Without Automobiles (2000)	% of Households
New Hampshire	474,606	27,360	5.8%
Grafton County	31,598	2,062	6.5%
Alexandria	504	10	2.0%
Ashland	853	70	8.2%
Bridgewater	412	14	3.4%
Bristol	1,221	80	6.6%
Canaan	1,279	62	4.8%
Dorchester	133	2	1.5%
Enfield	1,975	103	5.2%
Grafton	450	8	1.8%
Hanover	2,832	187	6.6%
Hebron	219	4	1.8%
Holderness	768	19	2.5%
Lebanon	5,500	582	10.6%
Lyme	679	14	2.1%
Orange	116	0	0%
Orford	467	33	7.1%
Piermont	298	11	3.7%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

As Table 5.6 shows, Grafton County as a whole has a slightly higher rate of autoless households than the State of New Hampshire average. The two largest communities, Lebanon and Hanover, have the largest number of households without automobiles. This is likely due to three reasons: 1) Lebanon and Hanover are the most urban areas in southern Grafton County, and are served by Advance Transit’s free-fare bus service. 2) Lebanon and Hanover are home to the majority of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in southern Grafton County, and these facilities often provide transportation for residents. 3) Lebanon and Hanover are home to a large concentration of college students, many of whom cannot afford or do not desire an automobile while studying full-time. In other, more rural, areas of southern Grafton County, including Alexandria,

Dorchester, Grafton, Hebron, and Orange, automobile ownership rates are relatively high with less than 2 percent of households being without a vehicle.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FINDINGS

Key findings related to general population trends in southern Grafton County

- Since 1990, the population in Grafton County has been growing at a rate lower than the state average.
- In general, rural communities in southern Grafton County are growing at higher rates than urban communities.
- The towns of Grafton, Hebron, and Orange have grown 30% or more since 1990.
- Only the Town of Dorchester has lost population since 1990.
- The largest community in southern Grafton County, the City of Lebanon, is growing at a rate significantly lower than the state and county averages.

Key findings related to the senior citizen population in southern Grafton County

- In Grafton County, the proportion of senior citizens is slightly higher than the state average.
- In general, rural communities in southern Grafton County have senior citizen populations consistent with or slightly lower than the state and county averages.
- The Town of Hebron has a concentration of senior citizens more than twice the state and county averages. Nearly 30 percent of Hebron's population is 65 years of age or older.
- The Town of Hanover has the lowest concentration of senior citizens. Presumably, this is because the town has a large population of college-age students. Although the concentration of seniors in Hanover is the lowest in the study area, the town has a population of over 1,000 people over the age of 65.
- The population of persons 70 to 85 years of age in Grafton County is projected to more than double over the next 25 years due to the aging of the post war "baby boom" generation.

Key findings related to the population of disabled persons in southern Grafton County

- In Grafton County, the proportion of citizens with disabilities is slightly lower than the state average.
- The Town of Hanover has a concentration of persons with disabilities less than half the state and county averages. Again, this may be the result of the large population of college-age students in the town.
- Disabled persons comprise 20% or more of the total population of the Towns of Alexandria, Ashland, Dorchester, Hebron, and Piermont.

Key findings related to major employers in southern Grafton County

- Nine of the 10 largest employers in southern Grafton County are located in the Lebanon-Hanover employment center.
- Eight of the 10 largest employers in southern Grafton County are served directly or indirectly by Advance Transit. In general, Advance Transit provides exceptional service to many of southern Grafton County's largest employers.
- The economy of southern Grafton County is anchored by health care and education services in the Lebanon-Hanover employment center.

Key findings related to poverty in southern Grafton County

- In Grafton County, the poverty rate is higher than the state average.
- The largest communities in southern Grafton County, Lebanon and Hanover, have poverty rates higher than the state and county averages. This may be the result of the large population of college-age students in the town who cannot work full-time due to their school-related workload.
- The towns of Hebron, Holderness, Lyme, and Piermont have the lowest poverty rates in southern Grafton County. In the four towns, impoverished citizens constitute less than 5% of the population.
- The highest poverty rates are found in the towns of Ashland and Dorchester. The two communities each have poverty rates greater than 10 percent.

Key findings related to autoless households in southern Grafton County

- In Grafton County, the proportion of households without automobiles is higher than the state average.
- The two largest communities in southern Grafton County, Lebanon and Hanover, have the largest number of households without automobiles.
- In rural areas of southern Grafton County, including Alexandria, Dorchester, Grafton, Hebron, and Orange, automobile ownership rates are relatively high with less than 2 percent of households being without a vehicle.

6.0 FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As a start to the southern Grafton County coordination planning process, the Federal Transit Administration's "Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System" assessment tool was administered to a group of stakeholders including local representatives, transportation service providers, and human service agencies. The assessment tool seeks to determine existing coordination efforts in five key areas:

- Section 1: Making Things Happen by Working Together
- Section 2: Taking Stock of Community Needs and Moving Forward
- Section 3: Putting Customers First

- Section 4: Adapting Funding for Greater Mobility
- Section 5: Moving People Efficiently

For each of the five sections, there are a series of diagnostic questions that assess existing progress toward transportation coordination. Each question is assessed one of four progress ratings that best describes the existing coordination efforts in that specific area. The progress ratings are: “Needs to Begin”, “Needs Substantial Action”, “Needs Some Action”, and “Done Well”. The results of the Framework for Action assessment in southern Grafton County are presented in the following five subsections.

6.1 Section 1: Making Things Happen by Working Together

Question 1: Have leaders and organizations defined the need for change and articulated a new vision for the delivery of coordinated transportation services?

Responses:

Much of southern Grafton County is rural, and served by only one transportation service provider (the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council). With no other providers serving towns like Dorchester and Piermont, how is it possible to coordinate? In more urban areas of the county, there have been initial discussions between providers (namely Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council) about potential coordination. However, the lack of resources seems to be prohibitive in implementing effective coordination strategies.

Progress Rating: 🚧 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 2: Is a governing framework in place that brings together providers, agencies, and consumers? Are there clear guidelines that all embrace?

Responses:

In many cases, there are stipulations attached to grant funding that seem to preclude coordination between providers. The Governor’s Taskforce for Community Transportation has developed a Statewide Coordination Plan. However, very little has been done locally. There is no governing framework in place at the local or regional level.

Progress Rating: 🚧 **Needs to Begin**

Question 3: Does the governing framework cover the entire community and maintain strong relationships with neighboring communities and state agencies?

Responses:

This question is not applicable to southern Grafton County because a governing framework is not yet in place at the local or regional level. However, this coordination

planning process will likely establish a starting point for developing a governing framework.

Progress Rating: 🗝️ **Needs to Begin**

Question 4: Is there sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, and other community leaders?

Responses:

Coordinated transportation planning may not even be on the “radar screens” of officials at the local level. At the state level there has been much discussion, and a Statewide Coordination Plan has been developed, but no concrete steps have been taken for implementation.

Progress Rating: 🧠 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 5: Is there positive momentum? Is there growing interest in and commitment to coordinate human service trips and maximize resources?

Responses:

Drivers are the 1st line human service providers, and there is certainly some intra-organizational momentum for maximizing resources. However, funding has too many “purse strings” attached to allow for effective inter-organizational coordination.

Progress Rating: 🧠 **Needs Substantial Action**

Overall Section 1 Progress Rating:
🧠 **NEEDS SUBSTANTIAL ACTION**

6.2 Section 2: Taking Stock of Community Needs and Moving Forward

Question 6: Is there an inventory of community transportation resources and programs that fund transportation services?

Responses:

The Grafton County United Way has developed a fairly comprehensive list of service providers. Larger transportation service providers, like Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, are aware of available funding programs; however, smaller service providers may not be. The State has little documentation about funding at the local level. There is little information about providers who receive Medicaid funding. Refining an inventory of transportation resources and funding programs is certainly needed.

Progress Rating: 🧑🏻‍🦯 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 7: Is there a process for identifying duplication of services, underused assets, and service gaps?

Responses:

Informally, there is a process for identifying duplicate services and service gaps. The ServiceLink program has also been helpful in identifying service gaps. One of the critical service gaps is related to long-distance medical trips. However, there is no formal process currently in place.

Progress Rating: 🧑🏻‍🦯 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 8: Are the specific transportation needs of various target populations well documented?

Responses:

Advance Transit's recent ADA Complimentary Paratransit Plan documents the transportation needs of senior citizens and citizens with disabilities in their service area. In 2003, the Upper Valley United Way conducted a Community Needs Study. The United Way's study indicated that transportation was one of 11 key human service issues facing the Upper Valley. Future transportation needs assessments should be coordinated and available through one source. In many cases, transportation needs assessments have been limited to the Upper Valley's "core communities". In other, more rural areas of the county, there is little information.

Progress Rating: ↻ **Needs Some Action**

Question 9: Has the use of technology in the transportation system been assessed to determine whether investment in transportation technology may improve services and/or reduce costs?

Responses:

There is some potential for incorporating technology, and some informal discussions have already taken place between providers. However, the use of additional technology is funding dependent. Current funding levels preclude significant investments in technology. The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council is currently installing a wide-area network. There are a number of areas where additional technology could be incorporated. Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Location systems should be considered. When considering investments in technology, careful consideration needs to be given to whether these technologies will provide an adequate return on the investment, i.e. will the investment pay for itself.

Progress Rating: ↻ **Needs Some Action**

Question 10: Are transportation line items included in the annual budgets for all human service programs that provide transportation services?

Responses:

Yes, transportation service providers in southern Grafton County are already including transportation line items in their budgets.

Progress Rating:  **Done Well**

Question 11: Have transportation users and other stakeholders participated in the community transportation assessment process?

Responses:

The Upper Valley United Way is currently updating its 2003 Community Needs Study, and it will be published in 2008. In the past, participation has been very good, and there is certainly interest among users. There was also good public participation in the development of Advance Transit's ADA Paratransit plan.

Progress Rating:  **Done Well**

Question 12: Is there a strategic plan with a clear mission and goals? Are the assessment results used to develop a set of realistic actions that improve coordination?

Responses:

The Statewide Coordination Plan lays out clear goals and objectives; however, at the local level, little has been done. This public transit-human services coordination planning process will lay out a clear mission and goals specific to conditions in southern Grafton County.

Progress Rating:  **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 13: Are clear data systematically gathered on core performance issues such as cost per delivered trip, ridership, and on-time performance? Are the data systematically analyzed to determine how costs can be lowered and performance improved?

Responses:

The two largest providers in southern Grafton County, Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, are already doing this.

Progress Rating:  **Done Well**

Question 14: Is the plan for human service coordination linked to and supported by other plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, State

Transportation Improvement Plan, human service program plans, and other state and local plans?

Responses:

The public transit-human services coordination planning process has only recently started in southern Grafton County. Given that the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission is developing the coordination plan, it is likely that the plan would be linked both to the Regional Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

Progress Rating: 🧑🏻‍🦺 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 15: Are data being collected on the benefits of coordination? Are the results communicated strategically?

Responses:

Much information about the benefits of coordination has been collected at the statewide level. The recently completed “Operational Impact Study of Advance Transit Fixed-Route Bus Network” also provided information on the benefits of coordination within Advance Transit’s service area. However, Advance Transit’s service area covers only a portion of southern Grafton County. Information about the benefits of coordination pertaining to smaller human service providers and rural areas of southern Grafton County has not yet been collected or communicated.

Progress Rating: ↻ **Needs Some Action**

Overall Section 2 Progress Rating:

↻ **NEEDS SOME ACTION**

6.3 Section 3: Putting Customers First

Question 16: Does the transportation system have an array of user-friendly and accessible information sources?

Responses:

The ServiceLink program provides an important resource for information about transportation services available to senior citizens and disabled citizens. Some providers, like Advance Transit, have a website with information about their service, routes, and schedules. However, a clearinghouse for local transportation options does not yet exist.

Progress Rating: 🧑🏻‍🦺 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 17: Are travel training and consumer education programs available on an ongoing basis?

Responses:

Some human service providers in the Upper Valley, including UDS, Kendal, and the Upper Valley Haven, train people to live independently. There is a lot of potential for travel training programs in the Upper Valley. School children and young adults should also be involved with travel training programs.

Progress Rating: 🧑🏫 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 18: Is there a seamless payment system that supports user-friendly services and promotes customer of the most cost effective service?

Responses:

Currently, no fees are charged for any public transportation service in the Upper Valley. Advance Transit, the region's transit provider, offers a free-fare service. However, donations are requested and welcomed.

Progress Rating: **Not Applicable**

Question 19: Are customer ideas and concerns gathered at each step of the coordination process? Is customer satisfaction data collected regularly?

Responses:

Both Advance Transit and Grafton County Senior Citizens Council collect customer satisfaction information.

Progress Rating: 🎉 **Done Well**

Question 20: Are marketing and communications programs used to build awareness and encourage greater use of the services?

Responses:

The region's largest provider, Advance Transit, has a significant marketing program. Advance Transit is currently in the process of updating a brochure detailing its services, and is working toward having schedule information located at all bus stops. The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council also has a significant public outreach program.

Progress Rating: ↻ **Needs Some Action**

Overall Section 3 Progress Rating:

↻ **NEEDS SOME ACTION**

6.4 Section 4: Adapting Funding For Greater Mobility

Question 21: Is there a strategy for systematic tracking of financial data across programs?

Responses:

Individual agencies do a fine job of tracking financial data across their own programs. But, no inter-agency strategy for tracking financial data exists.

Progress Rating: 🧑‍🔧 **Needs Substantial Action**

Question 22: Is there an automated billing system in place that supports the seamless payment system and other contracting mechanisms?

Responses:

This question is not applicable to southern Grafton County because no service providers currently charge fees for services.

Progress Rating: **Not Applicable**

Overall Section 4 Progress Rating:

🧑‍🔧 **NEEDS SUBSTANTIAL ACTION**

6.5 Section 5: Moving People Efficiently

Question 23: Has an arrangement among diverse transportation providers been created to offer flexible services that are seamless to customers?

Responses:

Currently, no such arrangement is in place between providers in Grafton County.

Progress Rating: 🗝️ **Needs to Begin**

Question 24: Are support services coordinated to lower costs and ease management burdens?

Responses:

Support services are not currently coordinated between agencies.

Progress Rating: 🗝️ **Needs to Begin**

Question 25: Is there a centralized dispatch system to handle requests for transportation services from agencies and individuals?

Responses:

A centralized dispatch system would have many benefits. However, funding seems to preclude this becoming a reality.

Progress Rating:  **Needs to Begin**

Question 26: Have facilities been located to promote safe, seamless, and cost-effective transportation services?

Responses:

Most providers in southern Grafton County do this very well. There are still some problematic locations in terms of safety, like Quail Hollow apartments. However, these instances are often the result of poor site design, not the provider.

Progress Rating:  **Done Well**

Overall Section 5 Progress Rating:

 **NEEDS SUBSTANTIAL ACTION**

7.0 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING SERVICES

7.1 Advance Transit

Advance Transit (AT) is a private nonprofit organization that provides transit services to the four New Hampshire Communities and two Vermont communities in the Upper Valley. AT operates a fleet of 25 diesel buses and three 9-passenger vans. Table 7.1 provides details of Advance Transit’s existing transportation fleet. Four services are provided by AT: fixed route bus, rideshare matching services, shuttle buses, and ADA complementary paratransit services.

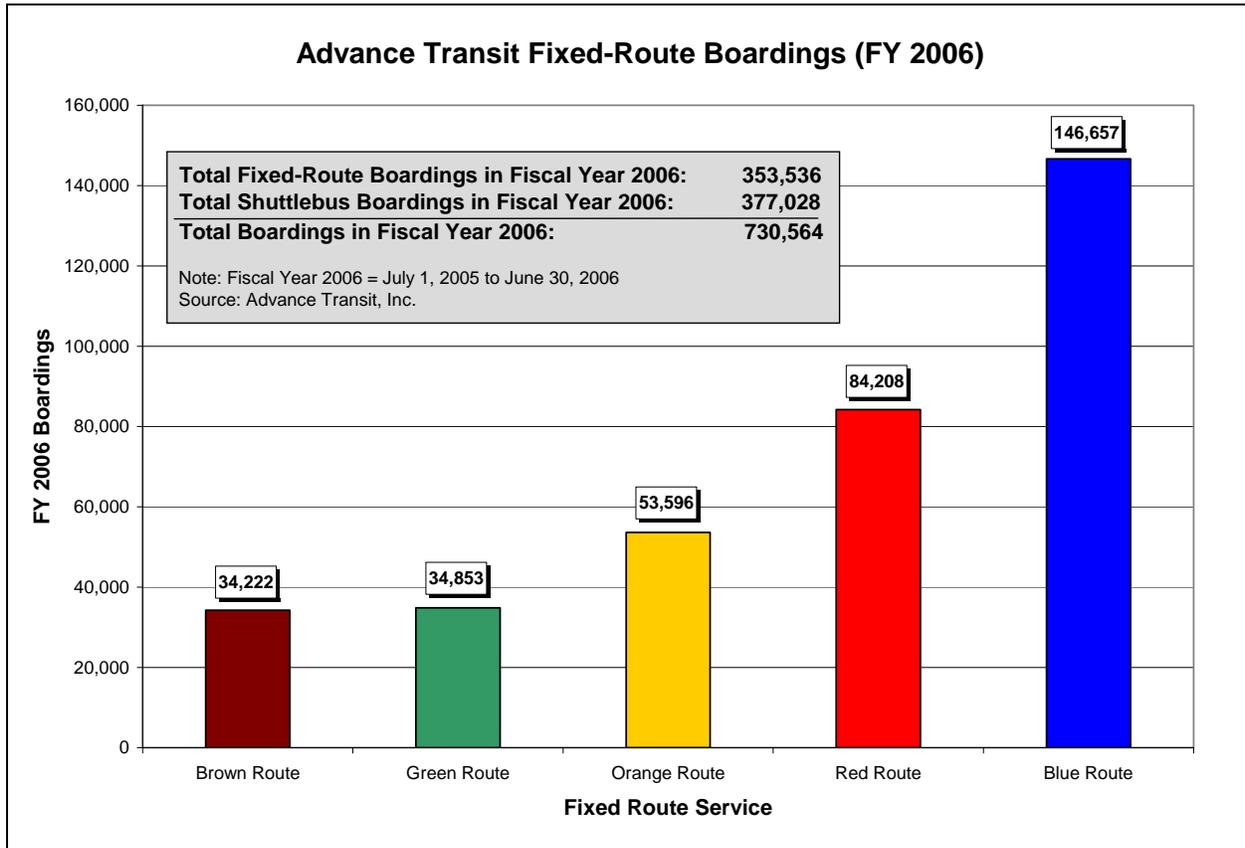
TABLE 7.1

Advance Transit Transportation Fleet			
Year	Vehicle	Quantity	# of Passengers
1996	Ford Eldorado Aerolite	1	9
1997	Bluebird CS	1	34
1998	International Aero Bus	1	27
2000	International 3400 Bus	6	27
2000	Ford E450 Phoenix Bus	1	27
2001	International 3400 bus	7	27
2004	Gillig Low Floor Bus	8	35
2006	ADA Accessible Small Bus	3	9 or Under

Source: Advance Transit

AT operates five fixed routes, Monday through Friday, according to a published schedule. Service on all five fixed routes commences between 6 AM and 7 AM and ceases between 6 PM and 7 PM. There are three critical transfer points that provide structure for the fixed route system: Downtown Lebanon, West Lebanon, and Hanover. Advance Transit’s route network is shown on Map 2. Advance Transit’s fixed-route ridership numbers for the most recent reporting year (FY 2006) are shown in Figure 7.1 below.

FIGURE 7.1



Source: Advance Transit

As shown on Map 7-1, Advance Transit serves the populations of Lebanon, Hanover, Enfield, Canaan, New Hampshire; and Hartford and Norwich Vermont. In 2002, a free-fare was established along the entire Advance Transit’s network. The free-fare service resulted from additional financial contributions from a unique coalition of public and private funding sources, including the City of Lebanon, Town of Hanover, Dartmouth College, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Since the introduction of the free-fare service, ridership has increased dramatically. In FY 2001, before the introduction of free-fare service, Advance Transit had approximately 174,000 total boardings across its transit network. In FY 2007, Advance Transit is projected to have approximately 400,000 boardings.

In addition to its fixed-route services, Advance Transit operates a carpool and ride matching service, via the Upper Valley Rideshare Program. Upper Valley Rideshare maintains a database of commuters throughout approximately 170 Vermont and New Hampshire towns who are interested in carpooling. When commuters enroll in the program, they receive a "match list" of others who have similar commuting patterns. Members may then contact each other directly to set up a carpool or can coordinate with each other via an on-line "rideboard". The Upper Valley Rideshare Program currently has nearly 1,400 registered clients, with approximately half of those clients

commuting to Lebanon from points throughout central Vermont, and Grafton and Sullivan County, New Hampshire.

Advance Transit also provides shuttle services for Dartmouth College, Downtown Hanover, and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. The Dartmouth/Downtown shuttle operates between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, and serves key locations on the Dartmouth College Campus and in downtown Hanover, including the Dartmouth Bookstore, Tuck School, and Hanover Park. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center shuttle serves two large parking facilities on the Medical Center Campus: Lot 9 and Lot 20. The Lot 9 shuttle offers continuous service every 5 minutes between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM. The Lot 20 shuttle offers continuous service every 5 minutes between 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM.



Passengers Board an Advance Transit Bus along the Blue Route in Enfield.

In 2007, Advance Transit began offering a complementary paratransit service as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The program is called *ACCESS AT*, and offers curb-to-curb service to persons with disabilities that prevent them from using Advance Transit's fixed-route service. To determine eligibility for the service, Advance Transit uses the criteria set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act to determine a person's functional ability to use fixed-route bus service. To be deemed eligible for the program, one must complete an application, in-person interview, and possibly, a functional assessment. The *ACCESS AT* service is provided to any area within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of any of Advance Transit's fixed service routes, except a segment of the Blue Route. The Blue Route east of the Lebanon downtown is not included in the *ACCESS AT* program because it is a commuter transit service. The downtown Hanover shuttle has been expanded to provide deviated service to any person within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the route.

7.2 Grafton County Senior Citizens Council

The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council (GCSCC) is an organization that works throughout Grafton County to ensure that senior citizens "receive services that help them remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible". In 2006, the Council provided services to over 6,600 people, nearly half of Grafton County residents over 60 years of age. The GCSCC manages 8 program centers throughout the county, and four program centers in Southern Grafton County: Upper Valley (Lebanon), Mascoma (Canaan), Orford, and Bristol. However, some Southern Grafton County residents may receive services from GCSCC's Haverhill or Plymouth program centers.

The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council provides door-to-door transportation to medical appointments, shopping centers, senior centers, and other human services. In 2006, the GCSCC provided 44,797 rides to 834 passengers. In many rural communities in southern Grafton County, the GCSCC is the only available transportation service. Thus, GCSCC services have become a vital link between rural communities in southern Grafton County and the service centers of Lebanon and Hanover. Because GCSCC is the only service provider for southern Grafton County's rural communities, they have experienced demand not only from senior citizens, but low-income and autoless households throughout Grafton County and northern Sullivan County as well. In response, GCSCC has adapted its service to provide trips to anyone in need to the extent that resources allow. However, their ability to provide additional services is severely limited by available financial resources.



The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council maintains a fleet of 10 “mini-buses” for transportation throughout Grafton County.

GCSCC maintains a fleet of 10 wheelchair-equipped “mini-buses”. In 2006, the GCSCC fleet logged nearly 193,000 miles in total. The GCSCC has been fortunate recently to receive funding for new vehicles to maintain their fleet; however, it is projected that 3 of their 10 vehicles need to be replaced within the next two years. In addition to their fleet of 10 buses, the GCSCC also relies on a network of approximately 60 volunteer drivers (See section 7.5 below).

7.3 Human Service Providers

Beyond the services provided by Advance Transit and GCSCC, there are limited transportation options available to Grafton County residents. This is common for a rural area. Most social service agencies do not provide transportation, instead focusing on a wide range of other primary services including health care, family safety, protective housing, and education/training programs. Human service providers have cited that the most prominent transportation limitations among clients are financial, disability and age related. These constraints prevent many clients from using the fixed-route bus system.

Aside from Advance Transit and to some degree GCSCC, many transportation services in Grafton County operate to meet the needs of specific client groups such as religious congregations, assisted living facilities, and developmentally disabled individuals. Examples of these providers include:

- **Veterans Administration-** Provides veterans with transportation to VA hospitals for medical needs
- **Pathways of the River Valley-** Provides local transportation to people with developmental disabilities and brain injuries
- **Kendal at Hanover-** A private assisted living facility that provides local transportation to residents

This has resulted in a complex system where different providers are frequently needed to service specific needs. For example, the Veterans Administration could provide a veteran transportation to one of the administrations hospitals for medical needs; however, the same person would need to seek other means of transportation for shopping and recreational trips. Most providers serve a group of clients where needs have been most apparent.

The *ServiceLink* system has provided people with a means of navigating through this relatively complex network of human service transportation providers by directing people to the existing human service or transportation resources that best meets their individual needs. There is a *ServiceLink* Resource Center in southern Grafton County, located at the Center for Elder Services in Lebanon, NH.

7.4 Funding Sources and Grant Programs

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation receives funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) which are distributed to transportation providers statewide as part of a grant process. There are three sources of funding used in Grafton County, including Section 5309, 5310, and 5311.

1. Section 5309- Capital Investment Program

Section 5309- Capital Investment Program funding is administered by the Federal Transit Administration and provides funding for bus and rail transit projects, purchase of vehicles, and facility construction and upgrades. Program areas applicable to Grafton County include:

Bus/Bus Facilities

Funding under the Bus/Bus facilities program can be used for capital projects such as replacement or expansion of buses or bus facilities.

New Starts

Funding under the New Starts program is used to finance the construction of new rail, bus rapid transit, and ferry systems, or extensions to existing systems.

2. Section 5310- Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities

The Section 5310 Program provides funding to public and nonprofit agencies for the purchase of accessible vehicles and other equipment to serve elderly

persons and persons with disabilities where existing transportation is unavailable or insufficient. SAFETEA-LU requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before providers may obtain funding under the Section 5310 Program.

3. Section 5311- Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program

The Section 5311 Program provides funding for planning, capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, and nonprofit operators of public transportation in non-urbanized areas with populations less than 50,000.

Other Federal Transit Administration funding programs with potential applicability to Grafton County include:

4. Section 5316- Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

The Section 5316 Program provides funding “to develop transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low income individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services.” (FTA, 2006). JARC grants are available to local governments and nonprofit transportation service providers. SAFETEA-LU requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before providers may obtain funding under the Section 5316 JARC Program.

5. Section 5317- New Freedom Program

The Section 5317 Program provides funding 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.” (FTA, 2006) SAFETEA-LU requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before providers may obtain funding under the Section 5317 New Freedom Program.

All Federal Transit Administration funding programs require a local match ranging from 20 to 50 percent.

One of the most notable funding sources for human service providers is the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS operates several transportation funding programs. While many of these programs have their own vehicles, many of the services they provide are in the form of outsourcing trips to other providers and the utilization of volunteers. Divisions include:

1. Medicaid Administration

Provides funds for two types of transportation services that are not reimbursed or purchased through DHHS Medicaid client services, these include: 1) Adult Medical Day Care (ADMC), and 2) Non-emergency Medical

Transportation trips that are made by Medicaid recipients who require wheelchair-accessible vehicles (NEMT/WC).

2. Medicaid Client Services

Provides funding for non-emergency medical transportation provided to ambulatory Medicaid recipients and family members by reimbursing volunteer drivers and family members for driving Medicaid clients. Also provides funding for demand response and other public and private transportation services to a limited extent.

3. Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services

Provides funding for transportation to all residents 60 years old and older, people with physical disabilities, long-term healthcare residents, and adult Medicaid recipients. Trips are frequently to medical appointments and shopping. The two primary sources of funding for this program include Title III-B and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

4. Bureau of Behavioral Health

Provides funding for transportation service for individuals with mental illness who are in residential programs. Also provides funding for trips to doctor appointments and transportation for children to various programs.

5. Division for Children, Youth and Families/Division for Juvenile Justice Services

Provides funding for transportation services for children, youth and families to medical, mental health, social services, court appointments and visitation.

6. Division of Family Assistance

Provides reimbursements of up to \$130 per month to participants in the NH Employment Program (NHEP). Reimbursements are provided through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

Agencies are supported by a host of resources, many of which are programs that have rigid funding requirements, and don't allow human service agencies flexibility to allocate resources to best meet the needs of their clients. This could mean prohibiting the use of funds unless the client is part of a certain population, e.g. elderly or disabled (client-based), or restricting the service to certain trips such as a medical appointment. Another common requirement is that service will only be provided if the client has no other means of transportation. One of the problems with such a system is that funding requirements, billing and contracting procedures are complex. Funding is limited, and due to many of the restrictions, intergovernmental and public/private partnerships are difficult due to the lack of flexibility with funding sources. This has resulted in a fragmented system of many independent providers using the limited resources inefficiently.

It is difficult to disaggregate the funds used for human service transportation by each of these agencies, as funding is frequently bundled with the provision of other human services. A summary comparison of local and statewide transportation programs and services may be found on the following page. This table contains excerpts from the Statewide Coordination of Community Services Plan summary of services. One of the challenges with the existing funding system is that many trips provided by human service providers are not fully reimbursable. This is because overhead costs cannot be included in the cost of a trip.

TABLE 7.4

Trip and Cost Statistics for Key Transportation Providers and Funding Agencies												
				Funding Sources								
Agency/Organization		Estimated	Annual	Cost per	BEAS	FTA	FTA	FTA	FTA	Medicaid	Local	Other
		Annual Trips	Expenditures	Trip	Title III	5307	5309	5310	5311		Funds*	
Advance Transit*		273,609	\$1,400,000	\$5.12			X		X		X	Private Donations
Easter Seals STS	Student Trips	200,000	\$3,455,723	\$9.87	X			X		X		School Districts
	Non-Student Trips	150,000										
Grafton County Senior Citizens Council (FY 2006)		44,797	\$464,453	\$10.37	X			X			X	Private Donations
Department of Health and Human Services - Funding Agencies												
Behavioral Health		unknown	\$1,753,300	----	<i>Federal Mental Health Block Grants, State of New Hampshire General Funds</i>							
Children, Youth, and Families		unknown	\$1,160,227	----	<i>State, Federal, County and General Funds</i>							
Elderly & Adult Services	Title III-B	244,084	\$1,405,757	\$5.76	<i>Title III, State of New Hampshire</i>							
	RSVP Services	34,043 mi	\$130,022	\$3.82/mi								
Family Assistance		unknown	unknown	----	<i>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</i>							
Medicaid Administration	ADMC	40,932	\$3,067,610	\$10.00	<i>Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation</i>							
	NEMT/WC	73,465		\$25/trip + \$2.25/mi								
Medicaid Client Services	Total	unknown	\$687,307	----								
	Driver Reimbursements	106,560	\$591,983	\$5.56								

Note: Table is an excerpt from the Statewide Coordination of Community Services Plan. * Data from the Operational Impact Study of Advance Transit Fixed-Route Bus Network.

7.5 *Private buses, taxis and volunteers*

People Movers, Inc.

People Movers, Inc. (formerly Big Yellow Taxi) is the largest for-profit transportation service provider serving Grafton and Sullivan County, New Hampshire, and Orange and Windsor County, Vermont. People Movers, Inc. provides four types of transportation service: 1) Paratransit service via wheelchair equipped lift vans; 2) Taxi service; 3) Livery service; and 4) School-related transportation service.

People Movers, Inc. (PMI) is a certified Vermont Medicaid transportation provider, and provides patient transportation services in Orange and Windsor County, Vermont. PMI provides paratransit services via wheelchair-equipped lift vans (Paratransit, in this case, is defined as, “any non-emergency medically-related transportation that does not require an attendant”). For Medicaid clients, PMI operates under the Vermont Coordinated Service Delivery System, with Stagecoach Transportation Services, Inc. (see Section 6.7 below) acting as the Regional Transportation Coordinator. In addition to their paratransit, taxi, and livery service, People Movers, Inc. provides school-related transportation services to a number of communities in the State of Vermont with certified school bus drivers and vehicles.

In total, People Movers, Inc. operates a fleet of 21 vehicles, and serves approximately 500 people per day. In 2006, the PMI fleet logged approximately 900,000 miles. PMI vehicles operate 24 hours per day, with approximately 20 percent of their business coming at night when public transportation providers do not provide services.

Volunteer Drivers

Volunteers are an important component of the transportation system in Grafton County. Hundreds of volunteers throughout the county provide transportation via formalized services administered by the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, NH Association of the Blind, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). This is a time-honored New England tradition of helping neighbors, family and friends with rides in personal vehicles. This is likely a preferred way of transportation for most, but it is often difficult to recruit enough volunteers to meet the large demand. Those with the time and resources to volunteer are often retired, and are in many instances become too old to drive themselves. Younger volunteer availability is influenced by income, which unless meeting their own needs, will restrict their ability to volunteer. Insurance companies are also having an effect on the pool of volunteers, as more insurers have raised concerns about liability. Some insurance companies have taken precautions by raising rates or rejecting coverage for volunteer drivers. Specific trips, such as visits to a hospital can also be challenging for a volunteer due to the significant time commitment needed to provide the service. Furthermore, some clients require special equipment, including car seats, wheelchair lifts, and other special arrangements that make volunteer service practically impossible.

In June 2007, the New Hampshire Legislature adopted a bill addressing the insurance liability barrier, and was signed into law by New Hampshire Governor John Lynch in August 2007. This bill is based upon successfully enacted legislation in Maine, which prohibits insurance companies from raising rates, canceling insurance, or rejecting coverage solely based upon the insured being a volunteer driver. This is a key step in preserving the spirit of volunteerism in Grafton County. However, it is important to note that although volunteers are an important part of the overall transportation system, they cannot be relied upon to alleviate heavy or complex travel demands in the County.

7.6 Service providers outside Grafton County

Many peripheral Grafton County towns have strong ties to communities outside the County and vice versa. A strong social and economic connection with Sullivan and Merrimack counties provides an overlap of services and necessitates coordination among providers.

Kearsarge Area Council on Aging

The Kearsarge Area Council on Aging (KACOA), based in New London, operates a group of over 200 volunteers providing rides to seniors throughout Merrimack County; however, the council also covers the Sullivan County towns of Sunapee, Grantham, and Springfield for hospital trips to the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. The KACOA seeks to improve general mobility to seniors by providing trips not only for medical appointments, but “also such diverse places as church, the beauty parlor, and grocery store”. In 2005, the KACOA provided seniors a total of 60,000 miles of trips to necessary appointments. During the Sullivan and Merrimack/Belknap Coordination planning processes, the KACOA indicated that the random scheduling of medical appointments often precludes transportation coordination, especially in relation to medical trips to DHMC.

Likewise, the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council provides transportation service to the Town of Plainfield in Sullivan County. There are also several providers in Sullivan County that serve client trips to the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. These providers include the NH West Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the NH Association of the Blind, and Sunapee Cove Assisted Living. For more information about transportation providers in Sullivan County, consult the Sullivan County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan prepared by UVLSRPC (April 2007).

7.7 Other Transportation Providers

In addition to Advance Transit there are a small number of transit providers in Vermont that indirectly affect public transit-human service coordination in New Hampshire. It is important to consider these transportation providers as part of the southern Grafton County coordination planning process.

Stagecoach Transportation Services

Stagecoach Transportation Services is a private non-profit transportation service provider based in Randolph, Vermont. Stagecoach has two transit routes that serve New Hampshire destinations: The 89er and the River Route. The 89er runs along Interstate-89 between Randolph, Vermont and Hanover, New Hampshire. Stagecoach operates two buses from Randolph to Hanover in the morning and two buses from Hanover to Randolph in the evening. The 89er serves three large employment destinations: the Veterans Administration Hospital (Vermont), Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, and Dartmouth College. Connections with Advance Transit's service are provided at all three locations.

The River Route runs along Interstate-91 from Wells River to White River Junction (VT), with stops in Downtown Hanover and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Stagecoach operates three buses from Wells River to White River Junction in the morning and three buses from White River Junction to Wells River in the evening. The River Route provides connections to Advance Transit's service at its stop on Main Street in Hanover.

The State of Vermont has established a brokerage system for transportation coordination similar to the system currently being proposed in New Hampshire. In addition to the transportation services Stagecoach provides, they also serve as the Regional Broker for much of Orange and Windsor County, Vermont. Under the Vermont system, Stagecoach serves many of the same functions as the "Regional Transportation Coordinator" would under the proposed New Hampshire system.

Connecticut River Transit

Connecticut River Transit (CRT) is the designated transit provider for southern Windsor and Windham County, Vermont. CRT operates a very popular commuter bus route, the "Upper Valley Route", from Bellows Falls, Vermont to Lebanon and Hanover, New Hampshire. CRT operates four buses from Bellows Falls to Lebanon in the Morning and four buses from Lebanon to Bellows Falls in the evening. The Upper Valley Route serves five employment destinations in New Hampshire, including Dartmouth College, the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and Centerra Park. Like Advance Transit's service, CRT's service is free-fare. A donation of \$2.00 per ride is encouraged, but not required. Connecticut River Transit's service between southern Windsor County and the Upper Valley is very popular, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that all four daily buses are routinely filled to capacity.

8.0 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

8.1 *Mobility for all Residents of Grafton County*

A transportation system that provides mobility to all residents of Grafton County will be crucial moving forward. Currently, services are concentrated in the Lebanon-Hanover population center of the county. However, 11 communities in southern Grafton County can be classified as underserved by existing transportation services (see Map 3). These communities include:

Town of Dorchester	Town of Bridgewater
Town of Orange	Town of Holderness
Town of Piermont	Town of Hebron
Town of Grafton	Town of Lyme
Town of Alexandria	Town of Orford
Town of Ashland	

Although the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council serves all of the towns listed above, many of the above listed towns (including Grafton, Hebron, Holderness, Orange, Piermont, and Orford) are served in a limited capacity or through volunteer transportation. A fledgling group, called Transport Central, is seeking to develop new transportation services between the Town of Bristol and the Town of Plymouth. This service could potentially include the communities of Bridgewater, Alexandria, Ashland, and Hebron. The group is currently exploring the demand and potential funding sources for such a service.

It is important to note that providing mobility to all Grafton County residents also includes providing mobility during evenings and weekends. In their Upper Valley Community Needs Assessment (2003), the Upper Valley United Way identified “transportation for non-traditional shifts and weekend employees” as a basic community need. Through surveys of both human service providers and households throughout the bi-state region, the United Way found that increasing numbers of workers in the Upper Valley are working 2nd and 3rd shifts, and are in need of transportation to and from key employment centers.

8.2 *Increased Cooperation between Medical Centers and Transportation Providers*

The location of large hospitals in the Upper Valley, including the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (Lebanon) and the Veterans Administration Hospital (White River Junction) has resulted in a large demand for health care-related trips from points throughout the states of Vermont and New Hampshire. However, the “random” scheduling of medical appointments often precludes transportation coordination. During the development of this plan, providers shared a number of anecdotes illustrating this point.

One anecdote was related to transportation to dialysis treatments. In Central Vermont, residents in need of dialysis often need to travel to the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon. In one Vermont town (approximately 50 miles from DHMC), there are four residents who need routine dialysis treatments. However, DHMC medical staff typically schedules the patients' treatments on four separate days. As a result, four individual trips (50 miles each way) need to be made to bring the patients to their dialysis appointments. If there were better cooperation between medical centers and transportation providers, the four patients' dialysis treatments would be scheduled on the same day and they would need only one trip.

8.3 Elimination of Insurance Restrictions on Volunteer Drivers

In Southern Grafton County, the lack of transportation services in rural communities is a reality that, barring a large influx of new funding, is not likely to change in the near future. Providing mobility to people *throughout* Southern Grafton County will require a continued spirit of volunteerism among residents. Southern Grafton County has a significant pool of dedicated citizens who volunteer their time and vehicles to transport people in need to medical appointments throughout the Upper Valley. However, insurance companies are impacting the pool of volunteers by raising concerns about liability. Many insurance companies are taking precautions by raising rates or rejecting coverage to volunteer drivers. To maintain this important volunteer resource, insurance restrictions on volunteer drivers should be eliminated.

8.4 Elimination of Federal and State Barriers to Coordination

In February 2004, President Bush signed Executive Order #13330, which began the process of eliminating inter-agency Federal barriers to coordination. However, many barriers to coordination still exist. Federal grant funding is often distributed with "strings attached", which prevent the flexible use of vehicles or other transportation-related resources. To effectively implement any coordination strategies, these governmental restrictions need to be eliminated. Executive Order #13330 can be found in Appendix B of this report.

8.5 Public Outreach

Increasing ridership and service efficiency of will require considerable public education and outreach. First, the public must be aware of existing services in Grafton County and view them as viable alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel. Next, to use the existing services to their potential it will require users to understand the existing systems that are available and to realize the most effective ways to us the services to meet their needs. A coordinated marketing campaign for transportation services in Grafton County is needed to eliminate confusion and increase public awareness of services. Travel training is an effective measure to help users become efficient in utilizing the existing services.

8.6 Expansion of Existing Services

Although a primary need is to continue existing services, many transportation service providers noted that their existing services are at capacity or approaching capacity. Although, expansions of existing services are largely dependent on increased funding at the state and local levels, it is important to document the need for additional services as part of the coordination planning process.

Advance Transit Indicated The Need For:

1. Later service on weekdays and the development of a weekend service, specifically service on Saturdays.
2. A second bus serving the “Red Route”.
3. Additional peak-hour commuter services, especially service along the U.S. Route 4 Corridor from Canaan to Lebanon.
4. The establishment of a commuter service between the newly developed Park-and-Ride facility at Exit 13 in Grantham to Lebanon-Hanover.
5. Additional shuttle services on the “Brown Route” and “Orange Route”.
6. Evening/second –shift services.

Grafton County Senior Citizens Council Indicated the Need For:

1. Maintaining existing services between the Mascoma Senior Center in Canaan and the Upper Valley Senior Center in Lebanon. This route is a crucial link to services in Lebanon for seniors in Canaan, Dorchester, Grafton, and other communities in the Baker River Valley. Specifically, this would begin with the procurement of a replacement bus to serve the existing demand.
2. Replacement buses in all GCSCC locations on a rotating basis, approximately every five to six years.

8.7 Technology to Improve Service Delivery

Technology can address many coordination needs in southern Grafton County. First, the centralized dispatch center mentioned above could be equipped with *RouteMatch* or a similar software package. Such software would not only assist with route planning and coordination between transportation service providers, but would also streamline the reporting process. Second, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) systems could assist in optimizing route timing and scheduling. Third, improved mobility devices (e.g. wheelchair lifts, etc.) could be installed on additional vehicles, thus, expanding the capability and flexibility of transportation service vehicles. Although these improvements are highly dependent on funding, technology could significantly enhance coordination efforts between service providers in southern Grafton County.

9.0 POTENTIAL COORDINATION STRATEGIES

9.1 *Form a Regional Coordinating Council*

Under the New Hampshire “Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services Plan”, a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) would be formed. This Council would include regional representatives of funding agencies and service providers, and would work with providers to create local service designs, implement coordination policies, and provide feedback to the Statewide Coordinating Council relative to policies.

Upon formation of the Regional Coordinating Council, members should consider who may fill the role of Regional Transportation Coordinator. Because the Statewide Coordination Plan designates Grafton County as a Coordination Council Region, it is recommended that the position of Regional Transportation Coordinator be held jointly by Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council.

Projects/Tasks:

- Form Grafton County Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), consider which agencies and transportation providers should participate on the RCC.
- Work to jointly designate Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council for the position of Southern Grafton County Regional Transportation Coordinator.

9.2 *Consider Technological Improvements to Improve Service Delivery*

Develop a capital improvement program for the procurement of coordination and transit technologies. Technology can help provide better service by improving operations and reducing costs. Recently, the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council began developing a Wide Area Network (WAN) to link their 8 program centers. The Wide Area Network and other technological applications have many uses in transportation coordination, including assisting in scheduling, managing vehicle fleets, and traveler information. Larger transportation providers should consider making investments in three technologies as a starting point:

- a. Geographic Information Systems (GIS): monitor vehicle location, itinerary planning and customer information
- b. Global Positioning Systems (GPS)/Automatic Vehicle Location Systems: assist drivers with navigation
- c. Scheduling, Reporting and Dispatch Software: automate day-to-day activities and reports

These technologies have many benefits but are expensive to procure and setup. However, these tools can complement coordination efforts among dispatchers, drivers, and passengers by enhancing services and reducing costs. Specifics should be considered with the help of information technology professionals.

Technology can also assist in developing a uniform reporting system among human service agencies and transportation providers in effort to track services and more efficiently report to funders. The lack of uniform reporting makes it difficult to understand existing services and to properly plan strategies for improving service. For instance, not all agencies provide a line item in their budget for transportation. This makes it difficult to understand the cost of transportation services. Also, if uniform reporting information is gathered electronically, substantial cost savings could be realized. Larger providers such as Advance Transit and Grafton County Senior Citizens Council should consider using software packages such as RouteMatch to automate reporting in addition to scheduling and dispatching. However, purchases of new technologies should be coordinated with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to ensure compatibility with existing funding agency systems and requirements.

Projects/Tasks:

- Advance Transit and Grafton County Senior Citizens Council should consider the procurement of technologies such as GIS, GPS/Automatic Vehicle Location Systems, and Scheduling/Reporting/Dispatch software to enhance coordination and services.

9.3 Develop a Centralized Dispatch Center

During the coordination planning process, transportation service providers in Southern Grafton County unanimously stressed the importance of developing a centralized dispatch center. Establishing of a central dispatch center for Southern Grafton County could be done in two ways. 1) A central dispatch could be developed and facilitated by an existing agency such as Advance Transit to utilize their existing infrastructure and position as the largest transit provider. This service would provide economies of scale by providing one central location for the procurement of all transportation services. 2) A web-based Southern Grafton County dispatch center could act as a satellite facility to a statewide dispatch center. This approach would have two key advantages. First, it would save overhead costs and resources, and potentially make data collection and reporting efforts more efficient. Second, the oversight of a statewide dispatch center would ensure that all satellite dispatch centers around the state would operate using the same software and protocol.

Projects/Tasks:

- Advance Transit, the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, and other public and private transportation providers should investigate developing a central dispatch center for Southern Grafton County as a component of the statewide coordination initiative.

9.4 Reevaluate and Enhance Existing Service Delivery Systems

As time and resources allow, investigate and implement new services to address service needs. Improved connections are needed between the Lebanon-Hanover employment center and the new Park-and-Ride facility at I-89 Exit 13 in Grantham.

Additionally, services are needed in other un-served and underserved communities in rural areas of the county (see Section 7.1 above). Transportation providers, including Advance Transit, should strive to provide weekend and evening services and improve commuter transportation services along crucial travel corridors in Southern Grafton County such as the U.S. Route 4 corridor between Lebanon and Canaan.

It is recognized that the existing transportation services in southern Grafton County will form the basis of the fully coordinated system, and that maintaining these existing services is essential. It is also recognized that the needs for service enhancements will change over time. The projects listed below detail the service enhancement needs at the time of publication of this document. Transportation service providers should work cooperatively with the Regional Coordinating Council to periodically reevaluate the region's transportation services and identify necessary improvements to those services.

Projects/Tasks:

- The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council should seek funding to procure additional and/or replacement buses to serve increasing demands, such as the transportation needs between the Upper Valley Senior Center (Lebanon) and Mascoma Senior Center (Canaan).
- The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council should seek funding to procure replacement buses in all GCSCC locations on a rotating basis, approximately every five to six years.
- Advance Transit should seek funding to procure a second bus serving the “Red Route”, an important transit link to services along NH Route 12A in Lebanon.
- Advance Transit should seek funding to provide additional peak-hour commuter services, especially service along the U.S. Route 4 Corridor from Canaan to Lebanon.
- Advance Transit should seek funding for additional shuttle services on the “Brown Route” and “Orange Route”.
- The establishment of a commuter service between the newly developed Park-and-Ride facility at Exit 13 in Grantham to the Lebanon-Hanover employment center.
- The Regional Coordinating Council should encourage the continued development of Transport Central, a new organization seeking to provide transportation between the towns of Bristol and Plymouth.

9.5 Consider Joint Procurement of Equipment, Maintenance, Fuel, and Personnel

During the coordination planning process, there was widespread support for joint purchasing initiatives. In Southern Grafton County joint procurement would be most feasible for vehicles, fuel, and maintenance, insurance, and/or personnel.

With the continually rising cost of fuel, a joint fuel purchasing initiative holds much promise, but presents a number of challenges. Some Southern Grafton County transportation providers already use NHDOT fueling facilities (including the District II garage in Enfield), which does provide tax savings. Many providers noted that because

of the relatively large geographical area of Southern Grafton County, more than one fueling station would be needed. Thus, if a centralized fueling initiative were to be developed under the coordinated system, NHDOT garages with fueling stations (located throughout Southern Grafton County) would be the logical choice to act as fueling centers.

Southern Grafton County transportation providers also agreed that a joint maintenance program would also hold promise for cost savings. According to the Transit Cooperative Research Program (2004), maintenance typically comprises approximately 8 percent of the total cost of providing a transportation service. Only one provider in Southern Grafton County, Advance Transit, indicated that they perform their own vehicle maintenance. A joint maintenance program would eliminate duplication or underutilization of tools, equipment, and maintenance personnel. In a coordinated system, the Southern Grafton County Regional Transportation Coordinator could have responsibility for administering a joint maintenance program.

Lastly, there is potential for joint procurement of personnel. The joint procurement of personnel would likely be an initiative of Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, the two largest transportation providers in Southern Grafton County. One concept would be to cooperatively hire a staff person to provide passenger assistance and mobility training beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for both organizations. Potentially, this funding could come from the Section 5317 New Freedoms program, which provides funding for capital or operating expenses for transportation services beyond ADA requirements.

It is recognized that, over time, other initiatives for the joint procurement of equipment, maintenance, insurance, fuel, and personnel may arise. The Regional Coordinating Council should investigate and encourage such initiatives as they are essential to the ultimate development of a fully coordinated transportation system in southern Grafton County.

Projects/Tasks:

- Consider working with NHDOT to would allow state garages throughout southern Grafton County to act as central fueling locations for public transit and human service transportation providers.
- The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council and other transportation providers in Southern Grafton County should consider developing agreements with Advance Transit for centralized vehicle maintenance. Because Advance Transit has maintenance tools, equipment, personnel, and expertise in-house, providers may be able to maximize existing resources by using Advance Transit’s maintenance facility and personnel on an “at cost” basis.
- Advance Transit and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council should investigate the potential for cooperatively hiring a staff person to provide passenger assistance and mobility training beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for both organizations. Funding for this initiative could be sought under the Section 5317 New Freedoms program.

9.6 *Coordinate Public Outreach and Marketing Efforts*

Continuing to increase ridership and develop transportation alternatives in southern Grafton County will require a coordinated public outreach effort. First, the public must be aware of the existing transportation services in southern Grafton County and view them as viable alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel. This will require a coordinated marketing campaign for transportation services in southern Grafton County to eliminate confusion and increase public awareness of services. A primary product of this marketing campaign may be a print directory of existing services that not only educates the public about existing services, but also demonstrates the benefits of transit to the larger community. Building support from the larger community helps protect and maintain current levels of services and funding.

Using a professional for marketing services can be expensive. However, in the meantime, there are things that can be done by individual agencies or the soon-to-be-formed Regional Coordinating Council. These include consistent advertising and press releases to retirement communities, churches, stores, gas stations, schools, parents, and doctor's offices, and town halls. Community Access Television is also an effective means of communication that is essentially free.

Marketing and outreach efforts should not be limited to existing transit and transportation services, but ridesharing programs as well. Specifically, there should be an increased public outreach effort to educate citizens about the Upper Valley Rideshare program. Upper Valley Rideshare is a free carpooling program for Vermont and New Hampshire commuters facilitated by Advance Transit. Upper Valley Rideshare maintains a database of commuters throughout 125 Vermont and New Hampshire towns (including all 15 Sullivan County communities) who are interested in carpooling. When commuters enroll in the program, they receive a "match list" of others who have similar commuting patterns. Members may then contact each other directly to set up a carpool or can coordinate with each other via an on-line "rideboard".

Many people living outside of Southern Grafton County may not be fully aware of the services that Upper Valley Rideshare program provides. For instance, there is a growing travel demand between the Lebanon and Claremont employment centers that is not yet served by transit. The Upper Valley Rideshare program can serve an important role in increasing ridesharing between the two communities. However, many Sullivan County residents are simply not aware of the services that Upper Valley Rideshare provides.

Projects/Tasks:

- Public transit and human service transportation providers in Southern Grafton County should pursue low-cost marketing efforts such as advertising, press releases, and use of Community Access Television.
- Increase awareness of the Upper Valley Rideshare Program to areas outside of Southern Grafton County, including Sullivan and Merrimack County.

- Public transit and human service transportation providers in Southern Grafton County should cooperatively develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

9.7 *Overcome Barriers to Volunteerism*

Southern Grafton County is very fortunate to have a pool of dedicated volunteers that provide mobility to many residents in need. Continuing to support volunteer transportation services is an essential part of the solution to the County's transportation needs. The establishment of "Good Samaritan" protection laws as proposed by Representative Beverly Rodeschin in HB 0767 will be helpful in eliminating insurance and liability barriers for volunteers. During the development of the Southern Grafton County Public Transit Human Services Coordination Plan, HB 0767 was passed by the New Hampshire House Legislature, and signed by Governor John Lynch. The law took effect on January 1, 2008. The full text of the legislation can be found below:

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Seven

AN ACT relative to insurance for volunteer drivers.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 New Section; Rate Regulation, Motor Vehicle Insurance; Volunteer Drivers. Amend RSA 412 by inserting after section 17 the following new section:

412:17-a Volunteer Drivers. An insurer may not refuse to issue a policy of automobile insurance, as defined in RSA 417-A, to an applicant solely because the applicant is a volunteer driver. An insurer may not impose a surcharge or otherwise increase the rate for a policy of automobile insurance solely on the basis that the named insured, a member of the insured's household, or a person who customarily operates the insured's vehicle is a volunteer driver. For purposes of this section, "volunteer driver" means a person who provides services, including transporting individuals or goods, without compensation above expenses to a charitable organization as defined in RSA 7:21. This section does not prohibit an insurer from refusing to renew, imposing a surcharge, or otherwise raising the rate for a policy of automobile insurance based upon factors other than the volunteer status of the insured driver.

2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2008.

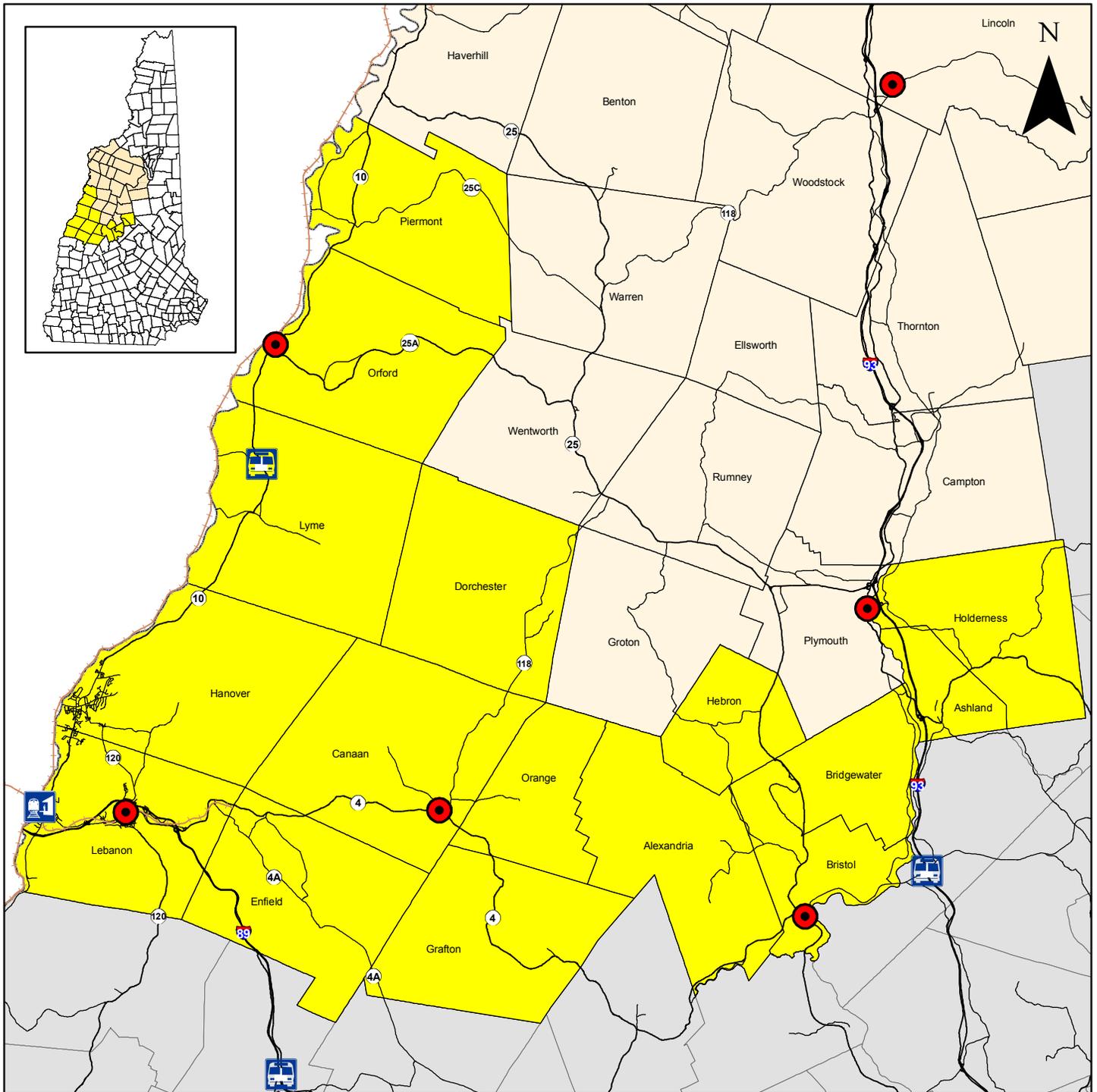
Developing incentives for volunteerism will also be important. There are a number of ways of providing incentives. First, consider sponsoring a recognition dinner for volunteer drivers. These efforts help to let volunteer drivers know that their services are important and appreciated. Second, work cooperatively with local employers to develop programs that provide incentives for their employees to volunteer. Third, develop a program that reimburses volunteer drivers for their mileage expenses. Because many volunteer drivers in Southern Grafton County are elderly citizens with limited incomes, a

program that would reimburse those drivers for their vehicle mileage would be a key aspect of maintaining the existing pool of volunteers. The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council currently reimburses volunteer drivers at 5/6 of the federal mileage rate (approximately 40 cents per mile). Although costly, this program has allowed the GCSCC to maintain its existing pool of volunteer drivers in the face of rising gasoline costs. Currently, in neighboring Sullivan and Cheshire Counties, the American Red Cross reimburses their volunteer drivers 14 cents per mile, which may not be sufficient to cover the out-of-pocket cost of fuel.

Projects/Tasks:

- Human service transportation providers depending on volunteer drivers should work to maintain programs that reimburse drivers for their mileage expenses.
- Consider incentives to boost volunteerism, including volunteer recognition dinners and employer-based volunteering programs.

APPENDIX A- Project Maps



Southern Grafton County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan Map 1: Plan Coverage Area

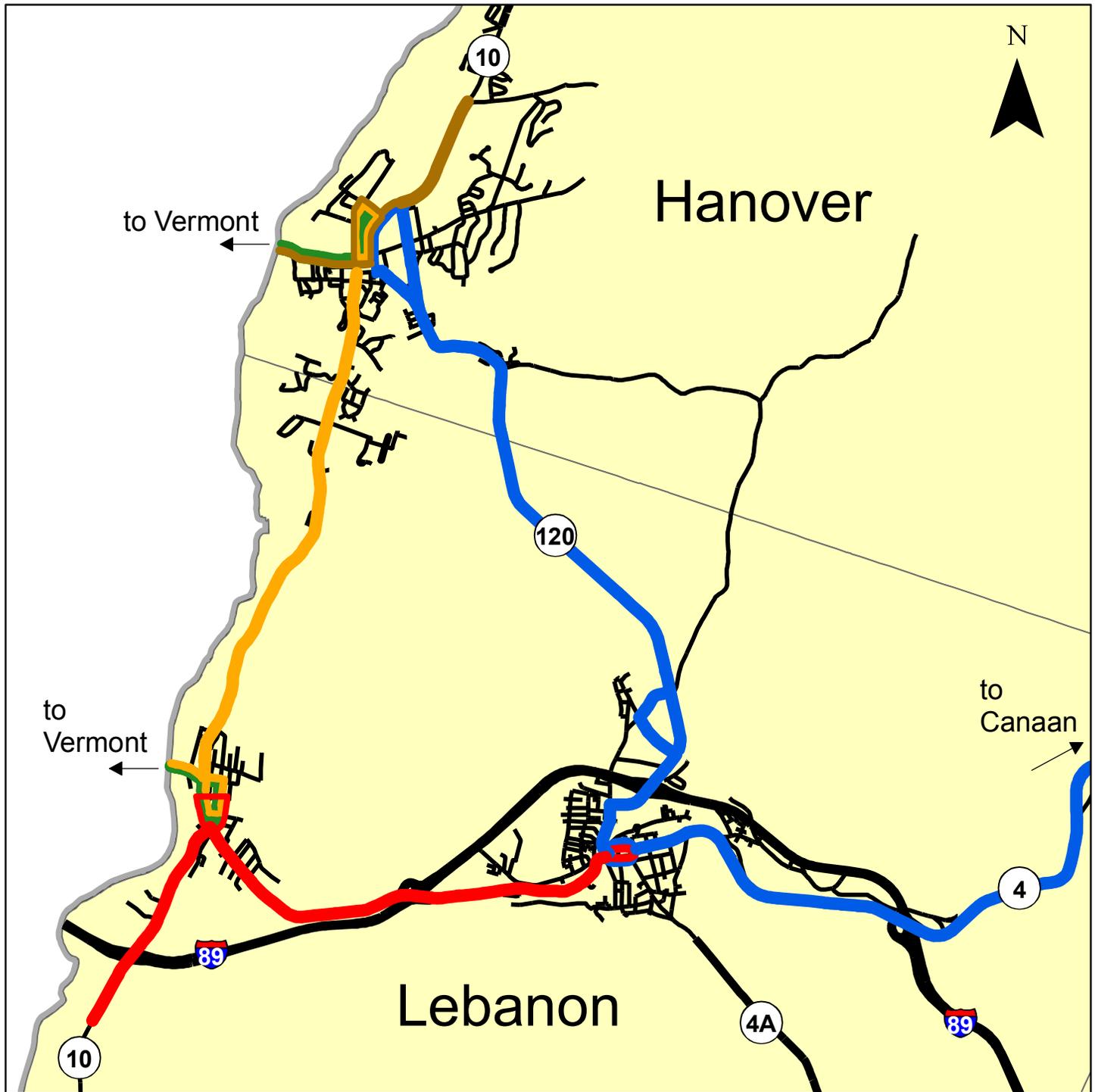
0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles 1:350,000
1 inch equals 5.5 miles



Map created by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, February 2007. Base map features from USGS 1:24,000 scale digital line graphs, UNH Complex Systems Research Center. Road data from the NH Department of Transportation. Railstop and park and ride locations digitized by UVLSRPC.

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Plan Coverage Area | | Primary Highways |
| | Remaining Grafton County Towns | | Secondary Highways |
| | GCSCC Program Centers | | Railroad |
| | New England Central RR Stops | | |
| | Park and Ride Facilities | | |



**Southern Grafton County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan
Map 2: Advance Transit Routes in New Hampshire**

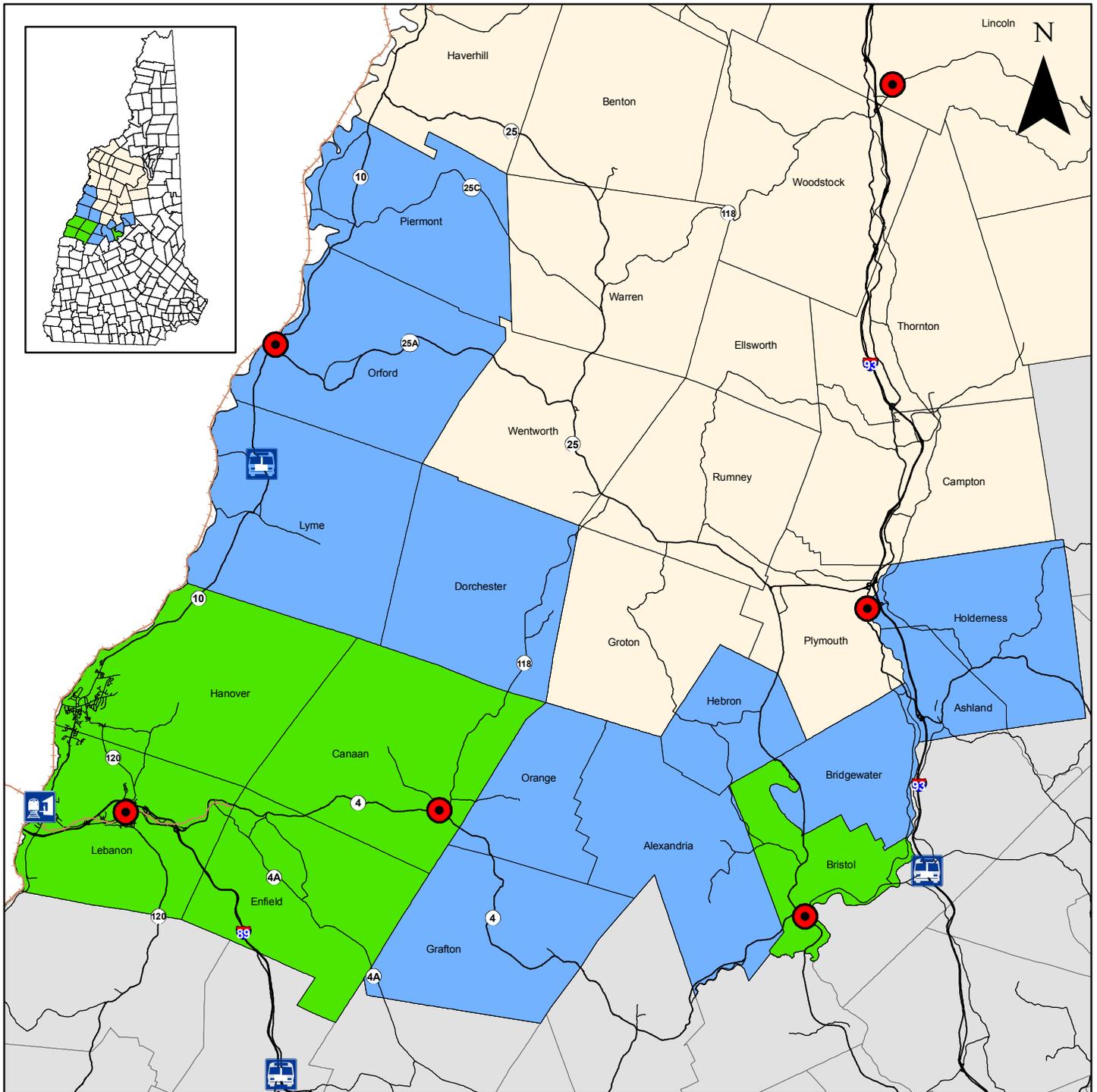
0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles 1:64,000
1 inch equals 1 miles



Map created by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, September 2007. Base map features from USGS 1:24,000 scale digital line graphs, UNH Complex Systems Research Center. Road data from the NH Department of Transportation. Advance Transit bus routes digitized by UVLSRPC.

Legend

- █ Blue Route
- █ Green Route
- █ Brown Route
- █ Orange Route
- █ Red Route
- Primary Highways
- Secondary Highways



Southern Grafton County Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan Map 3: Underserved Communities


Miles
1:350,000
 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 1 inch equals 5.5 miles

Legend

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|  | Underserved Communities |  | New England Central RR Stops |
|  | Well Served Communities |  | Park and Ride Facilities |
|  | Other Grafton County Towns |  | Railroad |
|  | GCSCC Program Centers |  | Primary Highways |
| | |  | Secondary Highways |

Map created by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, February 2007. Base map features from USGS 1:24,000 scale digital line graphs, UNH Complex Systems Research Center. Road data from the NH Department of Transportation. Railstop and park and ride locations digitized by UVLSRPC.



APPENDIX B- Executive Order #13330



Federal Register

**Thursday,
February 26, 2004**

Part VI

The President

**Executive Order 13330—Human Service
Transportation Coordination**

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Executive Order 13330 of February 24, 2004****The President****Human Service Transportation Coordination**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to enhance access to transportation to improve mobility, employment opportunities, and access to community services for persons who are transportation-disadvantaged, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. This order is issued consistent with the following findings and principles:

(a) A strong America depends on citizens who are productive and who actively participate in the life of their communities.

(b) Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, medical and health care, education, and other community services and amenities. The importance of this role is underscored by the variety of transportation programs that have been created in conjunction with health and human service programs, and by the significant Federal investment in accessible public transportation systems throughout the Nation.

(c) These transportation resources, however, are often difficult for citizens to understand and access, and are more costly than necessary due to inconsistent and unnecessary Federal and State program rules and restrictions.

(d) A broad range of Federal program funding allows for the purchase or provision of transportation services and resources for persons who are transportation-disadvantaged. Yet, in too many communities, these services and resources are fragmented, unused, or altogether unavailable.

(e) Federally assisted community transportation services should be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible to those who rely on them for their lives and livelihoods. For persons with mobility limitations related to advanced age, persons with disabilities, and persons struggling for self-sufficiency, transportation within and between our communities should be as available and affordable as possible.

(f) The development, implementation, and maintenance of responsive, comprehensive, coordinated community transportation systems is essential for persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, and older adults who rely on such transportation to fully participate in their communities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. (a) As used in this order, the term “agency” means an executive department or agency of the Federal Government.

(b) For the purposes of this order, persons who are transportation-disadvantaged are persons who qualify for Federally conducted or Federally assisted transportation-related programs or services due to disability, income, or advanced age.

Sec. 3. Establishment of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. (a) There is hereby established, within the Department of Transportation for administrative purposes, the “Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility” (“Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council” or “Council”). The membership of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall consist of:

- (i) the Secretaries of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and the Interior, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Social Security; and

(ii) such other Federal officials as the Chairperson of the Council may designate.

(b) The Secretary of Transportation, or the Secretary's designee, shall serve as the Chairperson of the Council. The Chairperson shall convene and preside at meetings of the Council, determine its agenda, direct its work, and, as appropriate to particular subject matters, establish and direct subgroups of the Council, which shall consist exclusively of the Council's members.

(c) A member of the Council may designate any person who is part of the member's agency and who is an officer appointed by the President or a full-time employee serving in a position with pay equal to or greater than the minimum rate payable for GS-15 of the General Schedule to perform functions of the Council or its subgroups on the member's behalf.

Sec. 4. *Functions of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council.* The Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall:

(a) promote interagency cooperation and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of Federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services;

(b) facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources;

(c) encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available;

(d) formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels; and

(e) develop and implement a method for monitoring progress on achieving the goals of this order.

Sec. 5. *Report.* In performing its functions, the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall present to me a report not later than 1 calendar year from the date of this order. The report shall:

(a) Identify those Federal, State, Tribal and local laws, regulations, procedures, and actions that have proven to be most useful and appropriate in coordinating transportation services for the targeted populations;

(b) Identify substantive and procedural requirements of transportation-related Federal laws and regulations that are duplicative or restrict the laws' and regulations' most efficient operation;

(c) Describe the results achieved, on an agency and program basis, in: (i) simplifying access to transportation services for persons with disabilities, persons with low income, and older adults; (ii) providing the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources; and (iii) reducing duplication to make funds available for more services to more such persons;

(d) Provide recommendations to simplify and coordinate applicable substantive, procedural, and administrative requirements; and

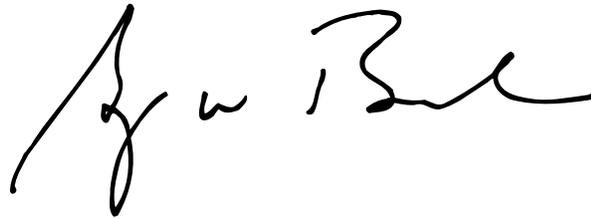
(e) Provide any other recommendations that would, in the judgment of the Council, advance the principles set forth in section 1 of this order.

Sec. 6. *General.* (a) Agencies shall assist the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council and provide information to the Council consistent with applicable law as may be necessary to carry out its functions. To the extent permitted by law, and as permitted by available agency resources, the Department of Transportation shall provide funding and administrative support for the Council.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any

right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. W. Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a distinct "W" and "B".

THE WHITE HOUSE,
February 24, 2004.

[FR Doc. 04-4451
Filed 2-25-04; 11:57 am]
Billing code 3195-01-P