

PIONEER VALLEY COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN



2011 Solicitation for JARC and New Freedom Project Funds

Adopted March 1, 2008

Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation is one of the basic needs of life that allows people to access services that they need or desire, as well as employment locations, recreation areas and healthcare facilities. While the primary mode of transportation for most residents in the Pioneer Valley is the automobile, there is a significant population in the Urban Core Communities that is unable to transport themselves by automobile due to age, disability, or economic circumstances. The majority of these individuals rely on transportation services provided by private transportation providers (e.g. taxi companies and Peter Pan Bus Lines), the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) or human service transportation providers. With the costs of providing these services ever rising, increasing the coordination among the various transportation providers in the Pioneer Valley will provide more efficient and interconnected transportation services.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), the staff to the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (PVMPO), has prepared this document, the *Pioneer Valley Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*. This plan provides an overview of the existing transportation services available in Hampden and Hampshire Counties of the Pioneer Valley, gaps and deficiencies in their services, the demographics, and the recommended strategies of the planning process to address those gaps and deficiencies. This Plan is required by Federal Law, namely the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) for transportation providers who wish to utilize funding from three federal funding sources: Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled) program funds, Section 5316 (Job Access Reverse Commute [JARC]) program funds, and Section 5317 (New Freedom) program funds.

The greatest challenge in providing reliable and needed public and human service transportation services is the lack of operating funding. Without sufficient funding sources for operations, unmet transportation needs cannot be adequately addressed. While the funding sources of the Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs provide 80 percent towards capital expenses, operating expenses are only funded at 50 percent. State funding typically provides a match to these funds, but state funding has been maxed out for the last decade in this area. Because of this, many transportation providers are forced to reduce or eliminate service in an effort to stay within budget and serve a large service area.

Duplication of services was limited among the various providers analyzed. Because each of the providers transported a specific population and were typically separated by geographic distances, duplication was found to not be as much of a concern as the gaps in service.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Transportation is a vital link in the network of life. Most Americans rely on some form of transportation to take them to work, school, shopping facilities, health care facilities or recreation activities at least once a day. The primary mode of transportation in America is the automobile and Pioneer Valley is no exception. Yet, there are many people living in the region who rely upon other modes of transportation due to physical or mental disabilities, age, or economics that prevent them from owning or having access to an automobile.

These individuals have limited choices for transportation services to assist them with their mobility and access needs. Because of these needs, many human service agencies provide transportation services to clients based on physical or mental disabilities, however because of the number of agencies involved, services are sometimes duplicated while other transportation needs are not met at all. In June 2003, the General Accountability Office (GAO) released its study entitled Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist. That study states that sixty-two (62) federal programs funded transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. The federal agencies that funded these programs were the Department of Health and Human Services (23 programs), the Department of Labor (15 programs), the Department of Education (8 programs), the Department of Transportation (6 programs), and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Veterans Affairs and the Interior administering the remaining ten programs. The study also identified that federal, state and local spending on transportation services for disadvantaged populations is estimated to be in the billions of dollars, however it is difficult to say exactly how much, as transportation spending is not separated from other programs within each agency. Of the 62 federal programs identified, 27 of them were significantly involved in providing transportation services, while the remainder were either minimally involved or the amounts expended on transportation were unknown. Because of the interconnection between transportation services, employment, and daily activities, partnerships make sense as a way to maximize limited funding pools.

What is the Coordination Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan?

The Coordination Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) is a guiding document that focuses on the coordination of transportation services for the populations of older adults, persons with limited incomes, and persons with disabilities in an effort to provide improved access to jobs, shopping, health care and recreational activities. Transportation services supported by public funding sources have typically been two types: (1) public transit systems that are open to all persons and (2) services that focus on individuals with specialized needs that cannot access the general public transit system, which typically include elderly persons, people with limited incomes and people with disabilities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), public transit operators that provide fixed route service on a regular basis have been required to extend service to people with disabilities by both improving accessibility to the fixed route system and by providing comparable service using a curb-to-curb mode for people unable to use the fixed route system due to a disability.

SAFETEA-LU History and Requirements

Pursuant to SAFETEA-LU, the Coordinated Plan is designed to provide guidance in allocating

funding using the Sections 5310 (Elderly and Disabled Individuals), 5316 (Job Access-Reverse Commute), and 5317 (New Freedom) programs to address gaps and duplication of transportation services. Presidential Executive Order 13330, issued in February 2004 on the Coordination of Human Service Programs, created an interdepartmental Federal Council on Access and Mobility to undertake collective and individual departmental actions to reduce duplication among federally-funded human service transportation services, increase the efficient delivery of such services and expand transportation access for older individuals, persons with disabilities, persons with low-income, children and other disadvantaged populations within communities.

As a first principle to achieve these goals, federally-assisted grantees involved in providing and funding human service transportation need to plan collaboratively to more comprehensively address the needs of the populations served by various Federal programs. In their report to the President on the Human Service Transportation Coordination, members of the Federal Council on Access and Mobility recommended that “in order to effectively promote the development and delivery of coordinated transportation services, the Administration (should) seek mechanisms (statutory, regulatory, or administrative) to require participation in a community transportation planning process for human service transportation programs.” The President signed SAFETEA-LU into law consistent with this recommendation to establish a coordinated human services transportation planning process. SAFETEA-LU created a requirement that a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human service planning process and an initial plan be developed by 2007 as a condition of receiving funding for Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs directed at meeting the needs of older individuals, persons with disabilities and low-income persons. Coordinated Plans must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation providers; public, private and non-profit human service providers; and participation by the public at large. Complete plans, including coordination with the full range of existing human service transportation providers, are required by Federal Fiscal Year 2008.

PVPC’s Role

The PVPC, was named by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works (EOTPW) as the designated recipient of Section 5316 and Section 5317 funds for the Pioneer Valley Region and is the organization responsible for developing and implementing the Coordinated Plan within the region and using a competitive process to select and prioritize projects. EOTPW remains the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds; however PVPC staff and EOTPW staff work together to see that Section 5310 funding is spent in accordance with the Coordinated Plan.

Plan Development Process

The Pioneer Valley Coordinated Plan has been developed as an offshoot of the Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Plan which was recently completed and approved. The planning process used to develop the 2007 update to the Regional Transportation Plan involved extensive outreach to a wide ranging constituency and identified many of the issues and challenges which are included in the Coordinated Plan. In addition, PVPC staff has hosted and attended a number of stakeholder meetings on transportation.

The Coordinated Plan's Planning Process will remain an ongoing effort where PVPC will seek the active participation of public, private and nonprofit transportation providers, human services providers and the public at large in the planning process.

The goals of the Coordinated Plan are to:

- Improve the quality and availability of transportation service to persons who need them the most and have no other transportation options
- Promote inter-agency cooperation to provide needed transportation services in the most cost-effective way using existing resources when possible.

SECTION 2 – REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Pioneer Valley Region is located in the midwestern section of Massachusetts. Encompassing the fourth largest metropolitan area in New England, the region covers 1,179 square miles. The Pioneer Valley is bisected by the Connecticut River and is bounded on the north by Franklin County, on the south by the State of Connecticut, on the east by Quabbin Reservoir and Worcester County and on the west by Berkshire County.

The Pioneer Valley Region, which is comprised of the 43 cities and towns within the Hampden and Hampshire county areas, is home to more than 608,000 people. Hampden County, the most populous of the four western counties of Massachusetts, is approximately 635 square miles. Hampden County is made up of 23 communities including the Springfield-Chicopee-Holyoke urbanized area. Hampshire County is situated in the middle of Western Massachusetts and includes an area of 544 square miles. The third largest city in Massachusetts, Springfield is the region's cultural and economic center. Springfield is home to several of the region's largest employers, including Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, Baystate Medical Center, Mercy Hospital Incorporated, Solutia, Smith & Wesson Company, and Verizon.

Target Populations

Seniors, people with disabilities, low incomes and the unemployed populations were the primary target groups to be examined for this plan. Understanding the distribution of these different population groups not only assists in improved coordination of transit services but also enhances efficient resource allocation. In identifying the target populations for the Coordinated Plan, PVPC borrowed the methodology used in the Region Transportation Plan to Identifying Minority and Low Income Populations for Environmental Justice and Title VI of Civil Right Act of 1964. This methodology involves developing demographic profiles of the Pioneer Valley Region that located socio-economic groups, including low-income and minority populations as covered by the Executive Order on Environmental Justice and Title VI Provisions. The methodology looks at the percentages of the targeted population in each census block group compared with the percentages of the targeted population in the region as a whole. Where the percentages of the

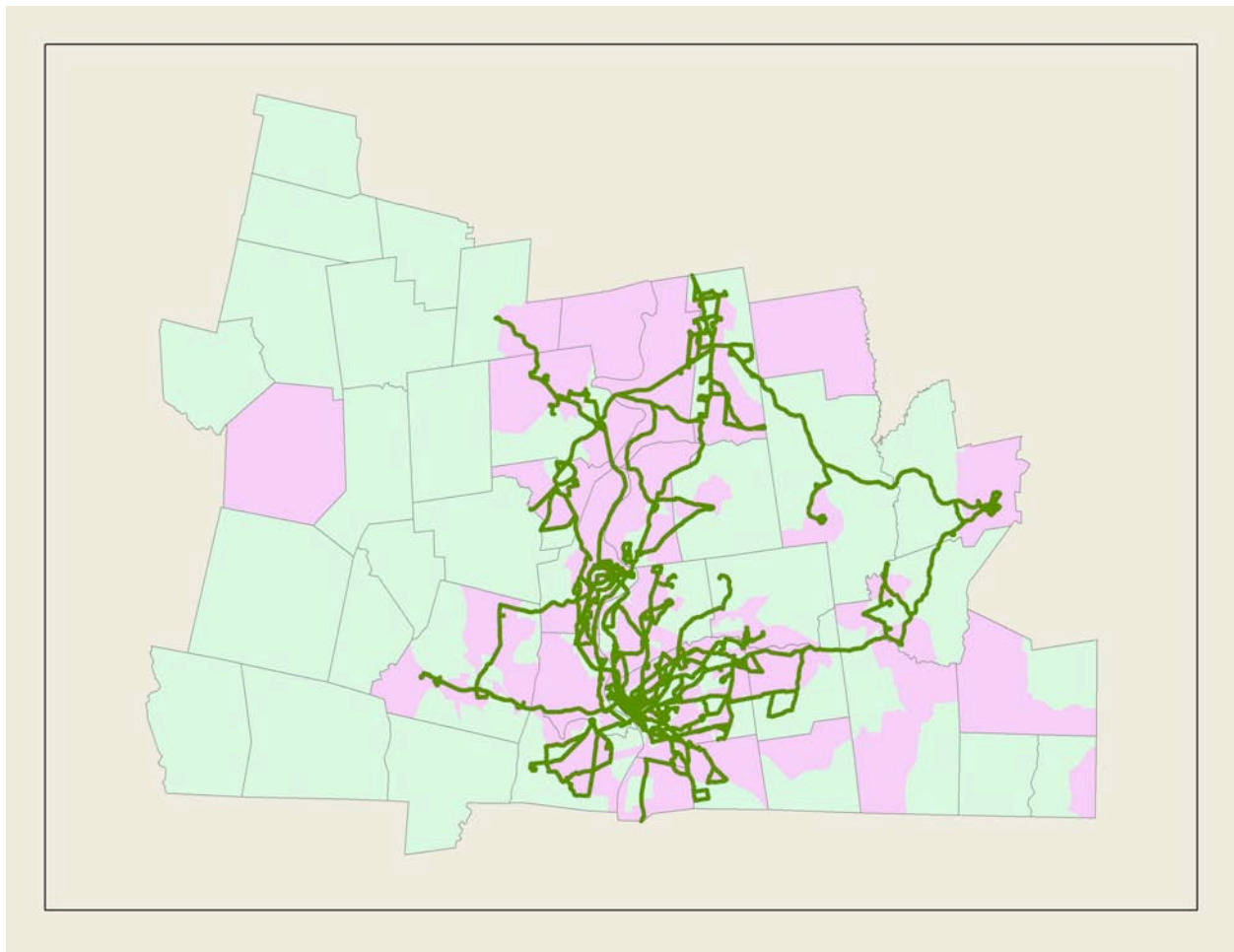
targeted population in a particular block group are higher than the percentage in the region as whole that block group considered to be a targeted block group. The coordinated plan uses this analysis for each of the target populations.

Identification of Senior Populations

Based on 2000 U.S. Census data, 84,578 seniors (aged 65 and over) live within the region, and 24,964 of these seniors are over 80 years old. The region's total population is 608,479. PVPC looked at the distribution of seniors as whole, anyone 65 and older, as well as the over 80 subset, this population is referred to as the Senior+. Through surveys of PVTA paratransit passenger's PVPC identified seniors that are over 80 as more likely to need and use paratransit and other transportation services.

Senior block group = any block group in which the number of seniors (over 65) is higher than that of the region as a whole (14%).

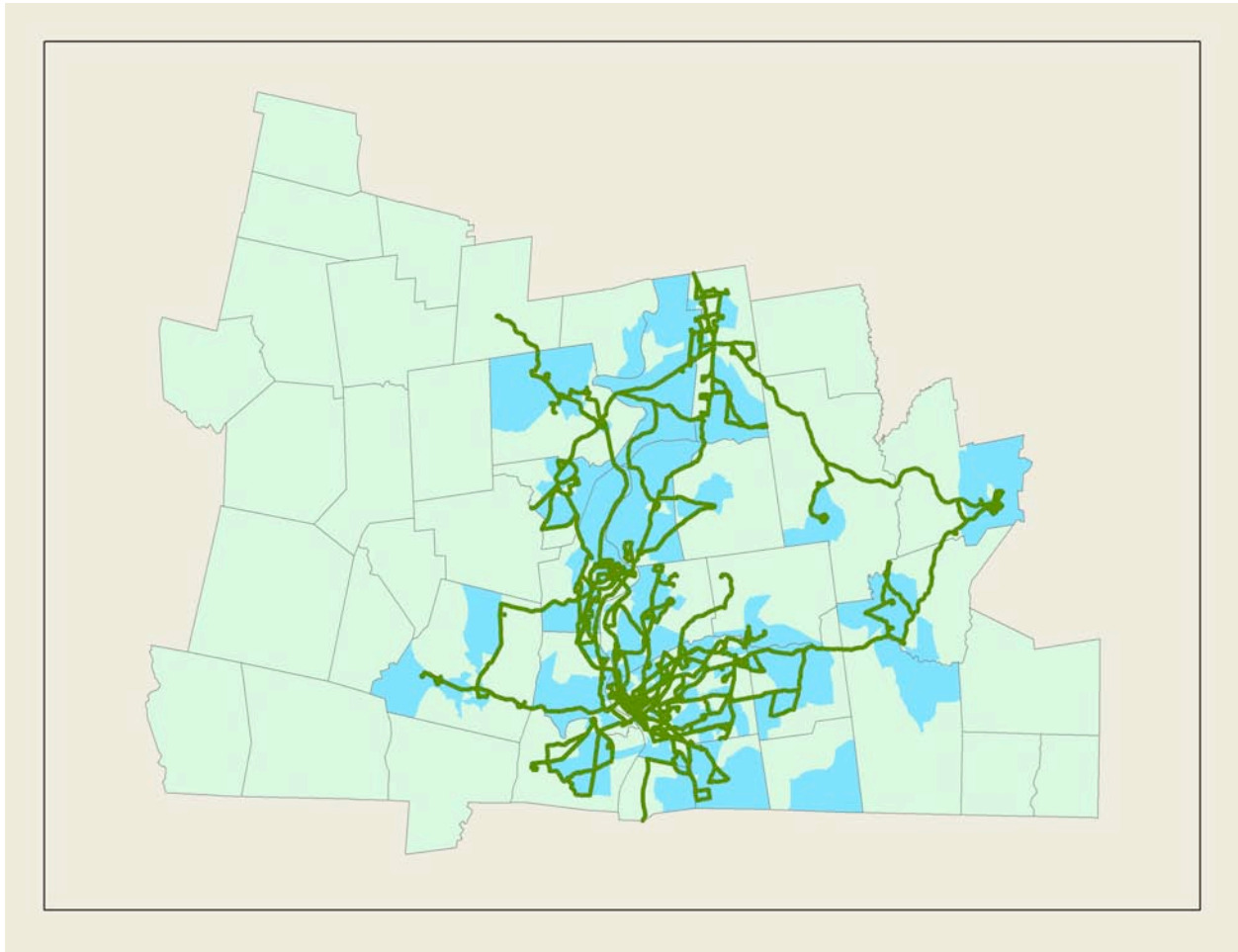
Figure 1 - 2000 Census Block Groups with a higher number of Seniors than the Regional Average (14%)



The definition is inclusive of 57,492 people living in 231 block groups and represents 68% of the senior population. The 231 included block groups comprise 48% of the region's total block groups.

Senior + block group = any block group in which the number of seniors+ (over 80) is higher than that of the region as a whole (4%).

Figure 2 2000 Census Block Groups with a higher number of Senior+ (80+) than the region as a whole (4%)



The definition is inclusive of 16,400 people living in 187 block groups and represents 66% of the Senior+. The 187 included block groups comprise 39% of the region's total block groups.

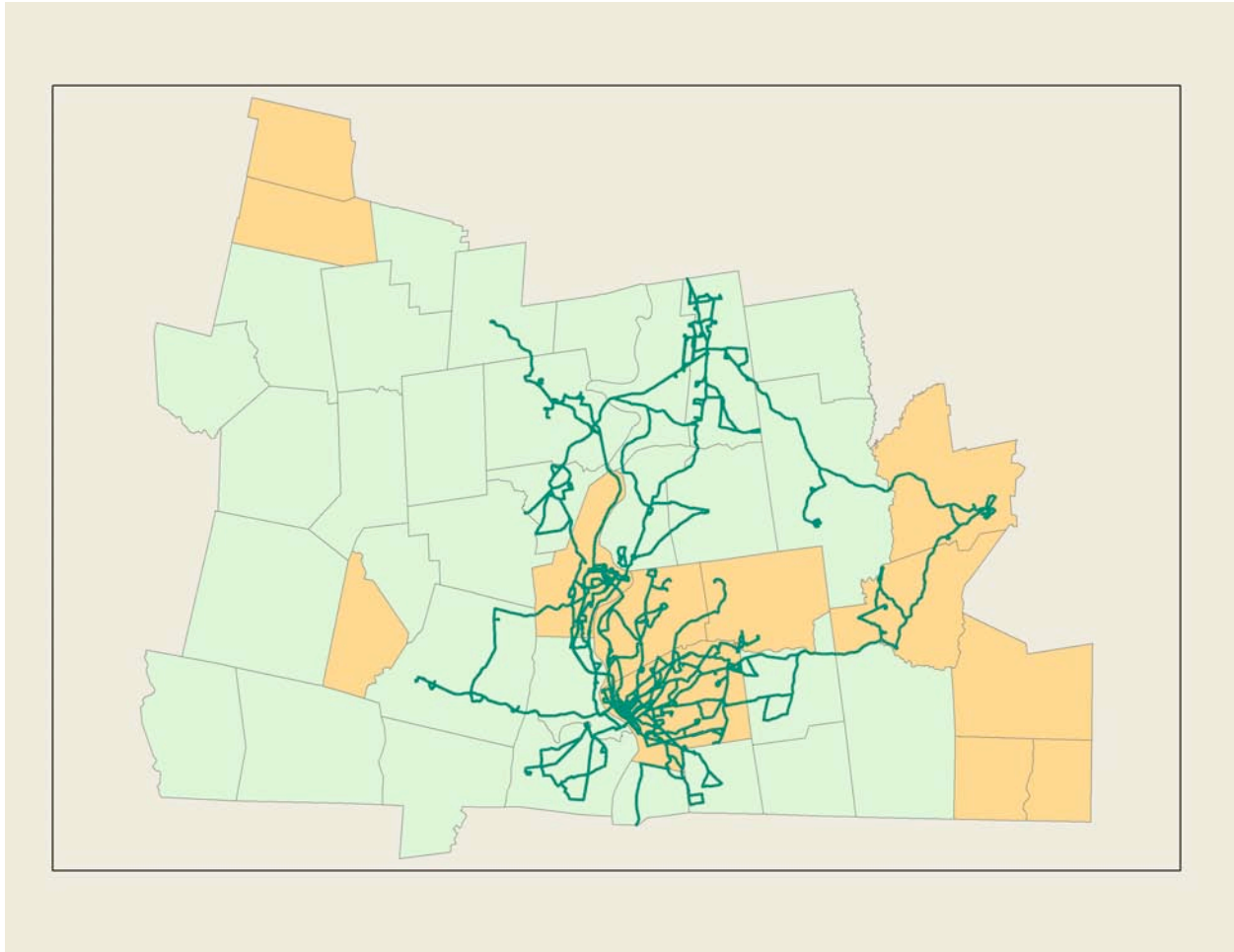
Identification of Unemployed Populations

Using 2006 annual data on unemployment, the Pioneer Valley has a workforce of 312,969 individuals of which 17,460 are unemployed. For this element of the analysis recent unemployment rates that are reported by community as the information is available and more current than 2000 census data were thought to be more useful in this analysis than the 2000

census data.

Targeted Community = any community in which the unemployment rate is higher than that of the region as a whole (5.6%).

Figure 3 Unemployment Target Communities which have a higher unemployment rate than the regional average (5.6%)



The definition is inclusive of 9876 people living in 7 of 43 communities and represents 57% of the unemployed population.

Identification of Low Income Populations

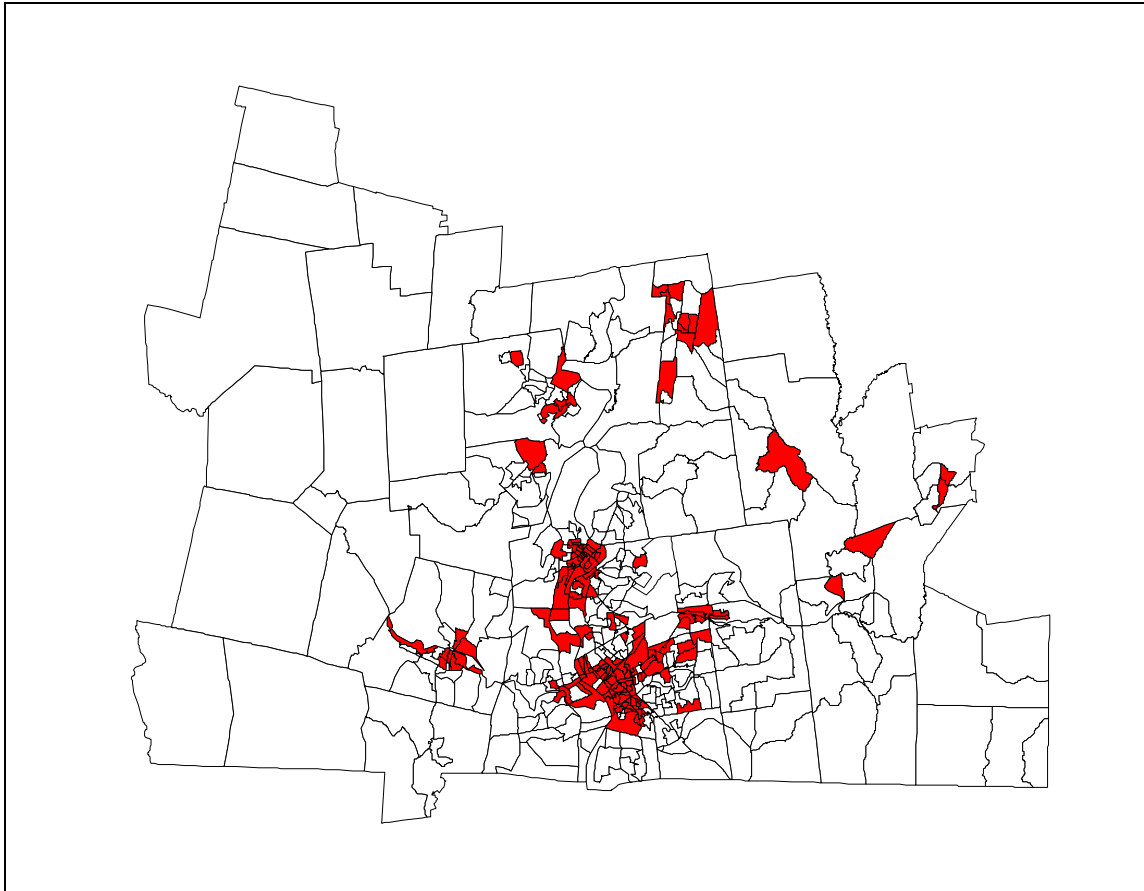
In defining "low income" target populations, PVPC examined different thresholds used by similar MPOs. While the term "minority" is clearly defined under the US Census, the term "Low income" is not defined. The definition of "low income" for the purpose is referenced through official federal definitions as "poverty."

Low-Income Definitions

Household Size	Federal Poverty Level
1 person	\$8,500
2 persons	\$10,800
3 persons	\$13,290
4 persons	\$17,000
5 persons	\$20,000

Low-income block group = any block group in which the poverty rate (percent of persons living below the Federal poverty line) is higher than that of the region as a whole (13.5%).

Figure 4 2000 Census Block Groups with a Poverty Rate Above that of the Region (13.5%)



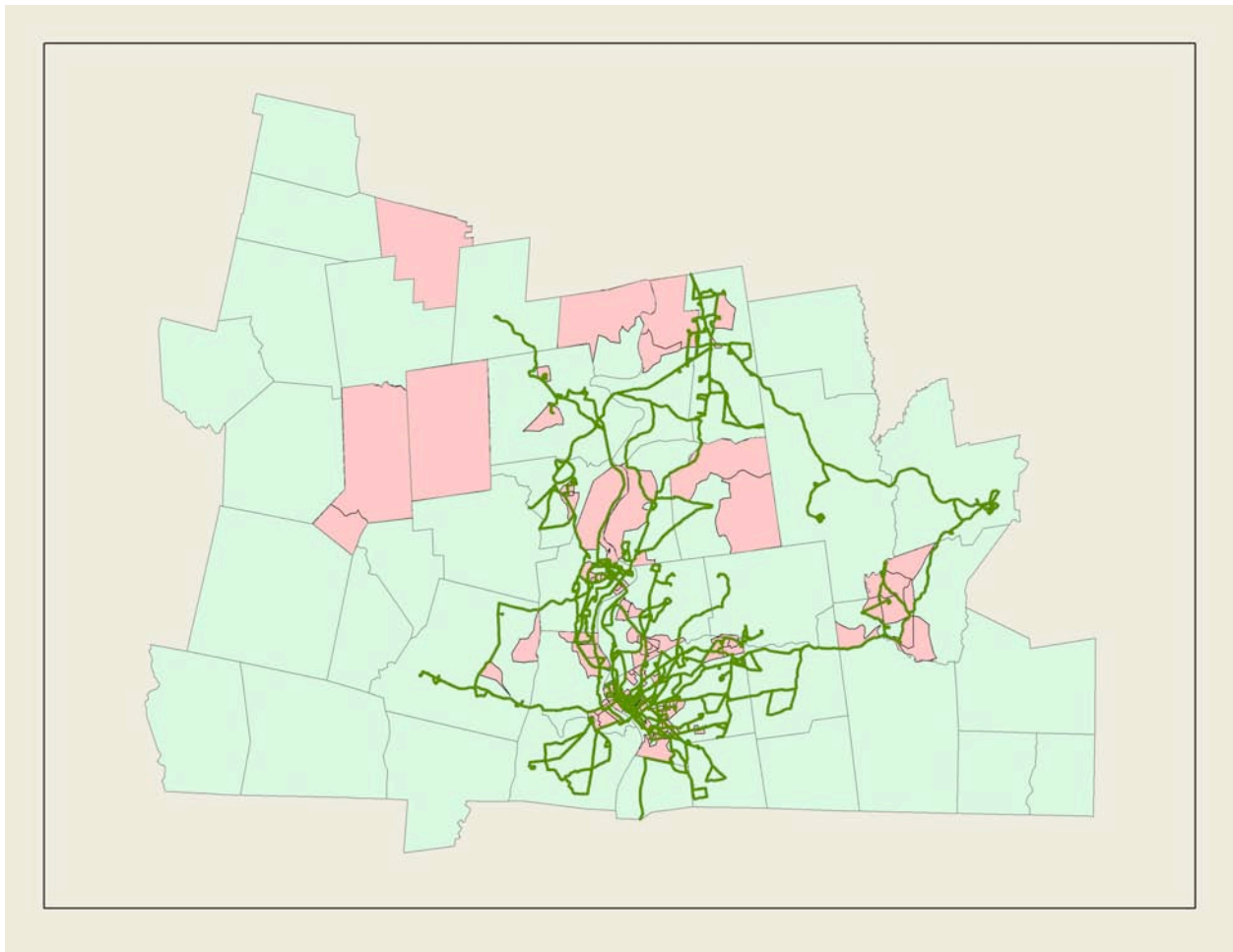
The definition is inclusive of 57,217 people living in 162 block groups and represents 73.7% of the low-income population. The 162 included block groups comprise 36% of the region's total (450). The geography of the low-income population includes the larger urban centers as well as smaller neighborhoods in Westfield and Ware.

Identification of Persons with Disabilities Populations

In defining “Persons with Disabilities “target populations, PVPC examined thresholds used by similar MPOs. While the census collects data on a number of different disability conditions PVPC for this analysis has chosen the census definition of employed persons with a disability between ages 16-64. This definition is believed to be inclusive of people needing transportation services.

Persons with Disabilities block group = any block group in which the number of Persons with Disabilities is higher than that of the region as a whole (7%).

Figure 5 2000 Census Block Groups with the number of Persons with Disabilities higher than that of the Region (7%)



The definition is inclusive of 34198 people living in 188 block groups and represents 70.1% of the Persons with Disabilities population

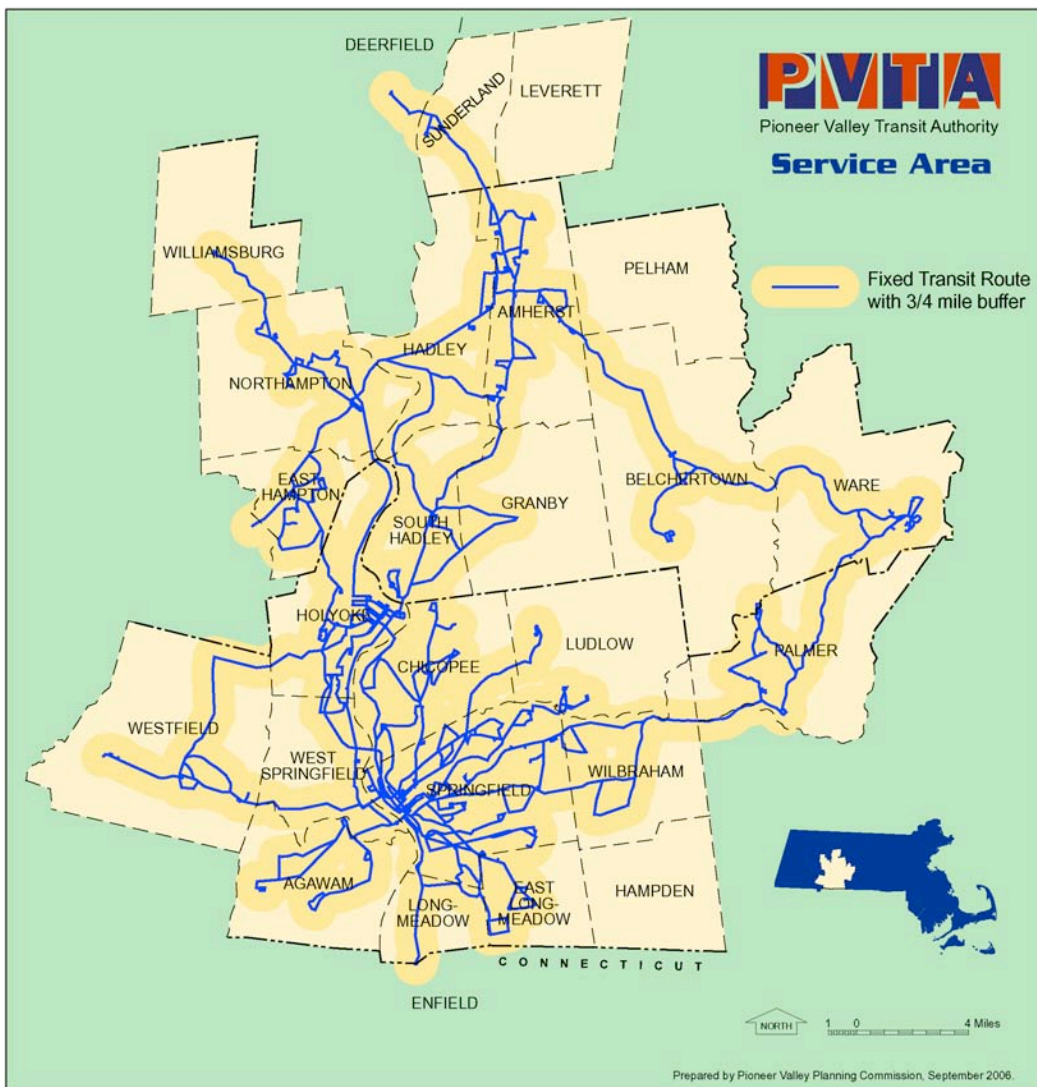
Target populations in all groups are primarily concentrated in the Urban Core areas of Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke as well as in the Five College area of Northampton and Amherst. These are the areas where the majority of the population of the Pioneer Valley is

located and where much of the transportation and other services are located as well. Outside of the Urban and Suburban core, target populations can be found in the some of the Western Hill towns and the communities on the eastern edge of the region.

SECTION 3 – AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND ANALYSIS OF GAPS AND NEEDS

Transportation System

The Pioneer Valley is home to an extensive transit system that offers many different modes of public transportation. Intra-county and Intercity buses, paratransit, ridesharing and park and ride services are all vital pieces of the puzzle that make up the transit system. What follows is a summary of these intermodal services.



Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)

Fixed Route

PVTA is the regional transit authority for the Pioneer Valley. PVTA was created on August 20, 1974 with the purpose of rebuilding and expanding the region's transit fleet and services. The communities that compose PVTA's service area can be divided into three basic regions: the northern region, the southern region and the eastern region. The northern region is predominantly suburban and is composed of the communities of Amherst, Easthampton, Hadley, Leverett, Northampton, Pelham, Sunderland, and Williamsburg. The southern region may be divided into an urban core, composed of Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke, and a suburban area composed of Agawam, East Longmeadow, Granby, Hampden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, South Hadley, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wilbraham. The eastern region is composed of the towns of Ware, Palmer, and Belchertown.

The capital and service improvements implemented since PVTA's creation have resulted in major ridership increases over the years – peaking at nearly 13 million passengers in 1985. In the years 1990 to 2001 overall ridership increased by 3.2%. However, since 2002 PVTA has endured some budgetary hardships that have resulted in service cuts and a fare increase. PVTA has endeavored to maintain a minimum level of service throughout the Pioneer Valley. With limited exceptions if a service modification was necessary, service was reduced – not eliminated. As Table 3-11 illustrates ridership has declined almost 23% since 2002. This trend may be reversing; numbers for fiscal year 2006 are encouraging, showing a modest increase in ridership.

Table 3-11 - PVTA Fixed Route Ridership

Fiscal Year	Passenger Trips	% Change
1992	11,150,728	--
1993	10,920,872	-2.06%
1994	11,058,756	1.26%
1995	11,060,508	0.02%
1996	11,266,796	1.87%
1997	11,564,052	2.64%
1998	11,771,729	1.80%
1999	11,569,772	-1.72%
2000	11,575,486	0.05%
2001	11,705,973	1.13%
2002	11,154,252	-4.71%
2003	10,427,793	-6.51%
2004	9,221,309	-11.57%
2005	9,071,913	-1.62%
2006	9,108,550	0.40%

Source: PVTA Annual Reports

Under Massachusetts law, transit authorities may not directly operate transit service. Thus, transit authorities contract with outside operators. PVTA currently has contracts with First

Transit Corp., University of Massachusetts Transit Service, and Hulmes Transportation Services, Inc. to provide fixed route service. UMASS Transit Service provides service to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the surrounding Five College area. First Transit provides service to the remainder of the communities in the Pioneer Valley with the exception of Belchertown, Easthampton, Palmer and Ware which are served by Hulmes Transportation.

Hampden and Leverett are the only towns in the Pioneer Valley transit district not currently serviced by the PVTA's fixed route transit system.

The PVTA operates a fleet of 195 buses. Service operated by Springfield Area Transit Company (SATCO) and Valley Area Transit Company (VATCO) utilize 155 buses (both full size and mini). Service operated by UMASS Transit utilizes 40 full size buses. The entire bus fleet has an average age of approximately 10 years. All of the buses operated in the PVTA system are wheel chair lift equipped.

PVTA's 40-route network of fixed routes and 4 community shuttles provide comprehensive service in the regions major urban centers, as well as outlying suburban areas.

PVTA Para Transit Service

In addition to its regular fixed route service, the PVTA provides door-to-door accessible van service to the 22 member communities located in Hampden and Hampshire County and two member communities in Franklin County. This service is generally available in a wider area than that which is served by the fixed route transit system available to the general public.

There are two programs operated under the Para transit service umbrella: ADA complementary Para transit service and Dial-a-Ride service.

ADA complementary paratransit

PVTA provides van service to passengers who are unable to access the bus system due to a disability. This form of transportation is comparable to regular bus service in the Pioneer Valley. Passengers must complete PVTA's ADA application to be eligible for ADA van service. Once certified, passengers receive service according to the following requirements:

- Trips can be scheduled the day before the trip is needed
- Service is provided on the same days and during the same hours as regular bus service in the area.
- In order for a trip to be ADA eligible it must fall within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of existing bus service.

Dial-A-Ride Service

PVTA also provides van service to individuals over the age of 60 throughout the 24 communities. The service is operated on a space available basis and operates Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

Fares for the Dial-a-Ride and ADA programs are \$2.00 each way. Table 3-12 shows the Para-Transit ridership from 1992 to 2004.

Table 3-12 - PVRTA Annual Para Transit Ridership

Fiscal Year	Annual Ridership	% Change
1992	295,614	--
1993	325,032	9.95%
1994	270,077	-16.91%
1995	282,013	4.42%
1996	322,324	14.29%
1997	308,171	-4.39%
1998	345,575	12.14%
1999	371,658	7.55%
2000	416,078	11.95%
2001	462,683	11.20%
2002	527,698	14.05%
2003	548,363	3.92%
2004	407,430	-25.70%

Source: PVRTA annual reports

Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA)

A number of communities in the Pioneer Valley are members of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). The FRTA was established in 1978 and covers the largest and most rural service area of all the Regional Transit Authorities, ranging from Vermont and New Hampshire border to Connecticut. Many of the FRTA communities have very small spread out populations that are particularly challenging to service with public transportation. Plainfield, Cummington, Goshen, Worthington, Chesterfield, Middlefield, Chester, Huntington, Blanford, Russell, Southwick, Montgomery Southampton and Westhampton are members of FRTA in the Pioneer Valley.

Many different operators, including many senior centers, provide demand responsive service under contract with the FRTA to seniors and persons with disabilities in the member communities. FRTA provides two fixed routes that operate into the Pioneer Valley: the Valley Route between Greenfield and Northampton which travels via Route 5 and a Greenfield/Montague to UMass Route. These Routes operate only Monday through Friday and the UMass service is limited to one trip down in the morning and one back in the afternoon.

Mobility Assistance Program (MAP)

A number of Senior Centers and other Human Service Agencies in the Pioneer Valley provide transportation services to their clients. The scale and scope of the services varies between each agency but they all provide a vital transportation service that often fills in gaps in the larger

transportation system. Many of these programs receive capital funding assistance, primarily assistance in the purchasing of vehicles, from the Mobility Assistance Program administered by the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works.

Gaps and Needs in the Pioneer Valley

The greatest challenge in providing reliable and needed public and human service transportation services is the lack of sufficient operating funding. Without new and continuing funding sources for operations, unmet transportation needs cannot be adequately addressed. While the funding sources of the Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs provide 80 percent towards capital expenses, operating expenses are only funded at 50 percent. State funding typically provides a match to these funds, but state funding has been overextended out for the last decade in this area. In addition State Contract Assistance, which provides the largest share of operating support for PVTA has increased at 1% or less over the past five years while costs have increased at a much higher rate. Because of this, many transportation providers are forced to reduce or eliminate service in an effort to stay within budget and serve a large service area.

To assess the gaps and needs for public and human service transportation in Pioneer Valley PVPC relies on stakeholder meetings on transportation and established working relationship with the regions transportation providers. It is certain that additional needs and gaps in the system will be identified and included in this plan through updates and amendments. The plan is not intended to be all inclusive.

Seek to increase the number of riders using transit to commute to work and school.

As living and employment patterns have changed over the past 20 years, transit systems have had difficulty reacting to the evolving needs of their passengers. The PVTA and other transportation providers will need to introduce innovative new services that complement existing service and provide competitive travel options across the service area.

In addition PVTA and other Transit Providers should seek out the opportunity to increase the use of fixed route and paratransit service by the targeted communities in the Coordinated Plan through outreach. One method for this outreach is to increase travel training for passengers who are using transit services for the first time.

Maintain and expand night and weekend service

PVTA has been successful so far in maintaining Sunday and late night service which was added in 1999 and 2000 as a result of Welfare to Work efforts. Maintaining these services should be a regional priority as it provides vital transportation for people going to work and school.

Increased Cross-Town Service

Opportunities exist in Holyoke and Springfield to improve transit service by better matching the needs to get to and from jobs, education and childcare with the services provided. PVTA has considered extending the hours of service on the primary routes servicing these communities and seeks to convert to community routes to provide more responsive service as a FlexVan route.

FlexVan service uses smaller transit vehicles that are able to provide more responsive and customer focused service to passengers.

Limited Stop Express and Commuter Routes

To open employment and educational opportunities to all residents throughout the region, PVTA sees a need to add a number of limited stop express and commuter routes. These services, when combined with the existing routes will provide for travel times that are competitive with cars. They will further provide new services to support PVTA's Transit Centers and ongoing regional development projects. This service has already been successfully implemented along Summer Avenue in the City of Springfield, and is currently being studied for the Route 9 corridor between Northampton and Amherst.

Northern Service Area

To further open employment and educational opportunities between the Urban Core and the academic institutions in the Five College area, PVTA has considered a direct connection between UMass in Amherst and Holyoke. In Northampton, the redevelopment of the former state hospital site and increasing development along King Street provides an opportunity to connect the vibrant retail areas of this community using a community route.

Intercity Bus Services

Intercity bus service to and from the Pioneer Valley is quite extensive. Companies like Peter Pan provide bus services to cities throughout New England and beyond. Peter Pan offers service between the Pioneer Valley and Boston every day. As congestion increases and poses more of a problem for intercity travelers, it is in the best interest of the region to promote these services as a viable alternative to the automobile.

Prioritization of Needs and Projects

The prioritization of Needs and Projects for the initial Coordinated Plan reflects the prioritization included in the Regional Transportation Plan.

High Priorities

Focus Area & Likely Funding Source(s)

- Improve existing transit coverage with higher speed service: JARC
- Maintain and improve the coverage of Night and Weekend Service: JARC
- Promote the use of Fixed Route transit by seniors and people with disabilities through new and enhanced services: JARC; New Freedom
- Improve travel training of existing and potential transit passengers; New Freedom

Medium Priorities

Focus Area Likely Funding Source(s)

- Maintain and enhance connections between the Pioneer Valley and Surrounding Regions: JARC; New Freedom

- Provide additional paratransit service in rural areas: E&D; New Freedom
- Provide and maintain intercity bus service connecting the region with other areas: JARC; New Freedom; Other
- Improve marketing and outreach using multiple sources (Internet, newspaper, etc.) E&D; JARC; New Freedom

Low Priorities

Focus Area Likely Funding Source(s)

- Expanded transportation service from rural communities to urban centers, JARC, New Freedom
- medical facilities E&D; New Freedom
- Improve outreach efforts at medical facilities E&D; JARC; New Freedom

Using these priorities as a guide, staff developed project screening and evaluation criteria to be used as part of the competitive bid process for selecting projects that meet the priorities outlined above. Because PVPC is the designated recipient of Section 5316 and 5317 funding, projects will be selected by PVPC staff for those funding categories. EOTPW is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds and will select projects using those program funds.

SECTION 4 – FUNDING SOURCES

Elderly & Disabled Funding (Section 5310)

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975, prior to the inception of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. At that time grants were given to private non-profit organizations to serve elderly/disabled persons where public transportation services were lacking. The goal of the program was to improve mobility for elderly and disabled individuals, not just in the Central Massachusetts region but throughout the nation.

Section 5310 funds are apportioned by a formula based on the number of elderly and disabled according to the latest available U.S. census data to each state. The chief executive officer of each State designates an agency with the requisite legal, financial and staffing capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds. In Massachusetts, the Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works is the official Section 5310 designee. EOTPW distributes funds based on a competitive process to sub-recipients, which can include private non-profit organizations, public bodies that certify no non-profit corporations or associations are available to provide service in the area, and public bodies approved by the State to coordinate services for the elderly and disabled such as a public transit provider (e.g. Regional Transit Authority). The Federal share of eligible capital costs may not exceed 80% of the net cost of the activity and revenue generated from service contracts etc. can provide the 20% match. Ten percent (10%) of the State’s total fiscal year apportionment may be used to fund program administration costs at 100% Federal share.

What is allowed with Section 5310 Funding?

- CAPITAL EXPENSES to support the provision of transportation services to meet the needs of elderly and disabled persons. (buses, vans, communication equipment)
- The lease of equipment when a lease is more cost effective than to purchase.

- Contract for transportation services, which in this case capital and operating costs associated with contracted service are eligible capital expenses.
- Technology- new technologies
- Transit related ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems)-mobility management and coordination programs
- Public bodies approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly/disabled individuals such as a public transit provider.

What is not allowed with Section 5310 Funding?

- Operating Expenses - except when contracting for transportation services.

Job Access Reverse Commute Funds (Section 5316)

The Section 5316 program was created as a allocated program under SAFETEA-LU to help 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.

Prior to being an allocated program, JARC was designed as a discretionary program under the previous federal transportation bill, TEA-21. JARC funding is divided into two categories: Job Access and Reverse Commute. Job Access funds are designed to serve eligible low-income individuals whose family income is at or below the poverty level with transportation projects to urban, suburban, or rural areas to and from jobs, job-training and education programs. Reverse Commute funds are designed to provide transportation from urban, rural and other suburban locations to jobs in suburban locations. Projects using JARC funding require a 50% local match for operations and a 20% local match for capital projects from other non-US DOT funding. Sources of federal matching funds include grants including Health and Human Service funds, Department of Labor funds, Department of Education funds, state funds, or private funds.

What is allowed with Section 5316 Funding?

- Grants can be used for vehicle purchases, facility construction, and operations
- Promoting transit vouchers for welfare recipients and low-income individuals purchased by appropriate agencies
- Promoting employer-provided transportation and targeted marketing and advertising to increase awareness among welfare recipients and low-income communities of transportation options
- Adding late night and weekend services for workers with nontraditional schedules
- Providing a guaranteed ride home service
- Starting a shuttle service
- Extending or rerouting bus services to go further into low-income neighborhoods or suburban areas with employment opportunities
- Providing an “on-call” van service, and sponsoring ridesharing and carpooling activities
- Expanding existing bus, van or train routes, and subsidizing the purchase or lease of a van or bus for shuttles to and from the suburban worksites for private employers, public agencies, or nonprofit organizations

What is not allowed with Section 5316 Funding?

- Funds cannot supplant existing sources of funding. Grants will not cover the expenses of purchasing transit passes, construction of childcare centers and employment support facilities at transit hubs.

New Freedom Funds (Section 5317)

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to expand the transportation mobility options available to persons with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. New Freedom funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas. The number of disabled individuals in an area is determined according to the latest available U.S. census data for individuals with disabilities over the age of five.

New Freedom funds may be used to finance capital and operating expenses. The Federal share of eligible capital costs may not exceed 80% of the net capital costs of the program. The Federal share of the eligible operating costs may not exceed 50% of the net operating costs of the activity. Recipients may use up to 10% of their apportionment to support program administrative costs including administration, planning, and technical assistance, which may be funded at 100% Federal share. The local share of eligible capital costs shall be no less than 20% of the net cost of the activity, and the local share for eligible operating costs shall be no less than 50% of the net operating costs. All of the local share must be provided from sources other than Federal DOT funds. Some examples of sources of local match which may be used for any or all of the local share include: State or local appropriations; other non-DOT Federal funds; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; revenue from human service contracts; toll revenue credits; and net income generated from advertising and concessions. Non-cash share such as donations, volunteer services, and in-kind contributions is eligible to be counted toward the local match. The value of any non-cash share shall be documented and supported, represent a cost which would otherwise be eligible under the program, and be included in the net project costs in the project budget. Up to 10 percent of funds may be used for planning, administration and technical assistance, with program administration costs funded at 100 percent Federal share.

What is allowed with Section 5317 Funding?

- Enhancing public transportation services beyond minimum requirements of the ADA including expanding hours and level of service
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations
- Establishing feeder services
- Establishing travel training programs
- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing, and/or vanpooling programs

- Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers
- Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation

What is not allowed with Section 5317 Funding?

- A recipient carrying out a program of operating assistance under this section may not limit the level or extent of use of the Government grant for the payment of operating expenses

Other Funding Programs

Other federal and state funding programs are used to fund transportation service for various types of programs. As identified by the GAO study, a number of federal agencies provide transportation funding at various levels for various populations. Many of these programs could be used as matching funds to the three programs listed above. State contract assistance is also provided to each regional transit authority in the Commonwealth and can also be used as a match to the programs above. Other sources may include non-profit funds, community assessments, special taxes, and/or private funds.

SECTION 5 – COORDINATION WITH CONNECTICUT

The Springfield Urbanized Area includes a number of census blocks and communities in the state of Connecticut. Federal transit formula funds such as 5307 Urbanized area, New Freedom and JARC funds allocated to the Springfield Urbanized Area include a portion of Connecticut. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority has a long standing agreement with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) where Connecticut receives 9% of 5307 Urbanized Area Funds from the Springfield Area. PVPC has proposed a similar agreement with ConnDOT for the JARC and New Freedom funds. Connecticut would be responsible for planning and other requirements associated with these funds. This agreement between PVPC and ConnDOT would be reconsidered after the 2010 Census.

Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
ConnDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
Coordinated Plan Section 5310	Coordination Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Elderly & Disabled Funding
EOTPW	Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works
FRTA	Franklin Regional Transit Authority
GAO	Government Accountability Office
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
JARC	Job Access Reverse Commute Funds (Section 5316)
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
New Freedom	New Freedom Funds (Section 5317)
PVMPO	Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
PVPC	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
PVTA	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SATCO	Springfield Area Transit Company
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
VATCO	Valley Area Transit Company