

**Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA)  
Rural Planning Organization (RPO)  
Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services  
Transportation Plan**

Submitted to:

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Prepared by:

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

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## **1. Introduction**

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) is one of seven sub-state regional agencies designated as a Local Development District by the state and federal governments to enhance economic and community development activities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Alliance carries out its mission within a seven-county region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The region is composed of Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne counties; has a total population of 975,000 (2000 Census) and covers 4,400 square miles. The Alliance was organized in 1964 by the private sector that saw the need for a regional approach to economic and community development issues within the region. NEPA is now a public/private sector partnership with representation from government and non-government private sector organizations.

NEPA serves as the coordinating agency for rural transportation planning in the five rural counties within our region that includes Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne counties. Designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for these counties, NEPA is contracted to engage in various transportation planning and programming activities including the administration of the RPO's Transportation Improvement Program. As required by the agreement with the PennDOT, NEPA convenes the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee, who assists and advises NEPA with assessing and evaluating the transportation needs and priorities in the rural region.

The NPRTPO Committee is comprised of 14 voting members which includes one primary representative from each county, transportation professionals from PennDOT District 4-0, District 5-0 and the Central Office, a representative from NEPA and five at-large members, each appointed from the five rural counties of carbon, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne. The NPRTPO Committee is guided by Operational Procedures, which were adopted in August 2002. A copy of the NPRTPO Committee Roster is located in Appendix A.

NPRTPO Committee members are faced with various decisions and tasks which include, analyzing alternatives for various transportation projects in the region; assuring safety concerns are addressed when the roadways and corridors are expanded or re-designed; evaluating and recommending Transportation Enhancement projects (trails, transportation museums, streetscape pedestrian/bicycle facilities projects, etc.); evaluating and recommending Hometown Street/Safe Route to School projects and prioritizing highway and bridge projects.

## **2. NEPA RPO Highlights and Demographics**

The NEPA RPO region includes 151 municipalities, total land area of approximately 3,043 square miles and according to the 2000 U.S. Census a regional population of

441,849. Based on the 2000 Census, three of the five RPO counties (Monroe [44.9%], Pike [65.6%] and Wayne [19.5%]) have the highest population growth rates in Commonwealth.

**NEPA RPO Characteristics**

<b>County Name</b>	<b>Number of Municipalities</b>	<b>Total Area (Square Miles)</b>	<b>Total Population (2000 Census)</b>
Carbon County	23	381	58,802
Monroe County	20	611	138,687
Pike County	13	547	46,302
Schuylkill County	67	778	150,336
Wayne County	28	729	47,722
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>3,046</b>	<b>441,849</b>

The NEPA RPO includes several vital transportation corridors that service the Mid-Atlantic and New England states. The major east-west highway corridors within the region include I-80, I-84 US 6. The north-south corridors include I-81, I-380, I-476, US 209, PA 309, and PA 61. Additionally, the region includes a section of Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-476).

There are three primary public transit services in the RPO region, which include the Schuylkill Transportation System (STS), the Monroe County Transportation Authority (MCTA) and the Carbon County Community Transit (CCCT). They all provide fixed route and paratransit services within the region.

There are five rural public use airports in NEPA RPO region. The East Stroudsburg-Pocono Airport and the Pocono Mountains Municipal Airport are both located in Monroe County. The Schuylkill County/Joe Zerbey Airport is located in Schuylkill County. The Cherry Ridge Airport is located in Wayne County. Jake Arner Memorial Airport is located in Carbon County. Additionally, local elected officials and business leaders have proposed the development of cargo airport that would span the border of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the NEPA RPO.

Rail infrastructure is prevalent in the region, especially for rail freight. Norfolk Southern is the major rail line serving the Northeastern rural area of Pennsylvania. The Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad is a regional railroad that is serving the area. In addition, there are several shortline railroads located in the area including the Delaware-Lackawanna, Chestnut Hill Ridge Railway Company, C & S Railroad Corp., and the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railroad. Additionally, the region is home to three railroads offering tourism excursions including the National Park Service which operates the Steamtown USA National Historic Site, the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway and the Stourbridge Railroad Company which operates the Stourbridge Line Rail Excursions.

The restoration of passenger rail service between Scranton and New York City (via a connection in Hoboken, New Jersey) has been under evaluation for several years. The renewal of this service has been studied and discussed by elected officials, business

leaders and transportation professionals over the past thirty years and is gaining significant momentum. In 2007, New Jersey Transit has completed and submitted an Environmental Assessment of the project to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The project is expected to be rated during the upcoming year.

### **3. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Overview**

Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs authorized under SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) are required to be derived from a locally developed, regionally coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

The purpose of the locally developed, regionally coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Coordination Plan is to create a comprehensive plan to help state and local community leaders, organizations and agencies involved in human service transportation and public transit services to cooperate and coordinate programs and develop action plans for the delivery of services. In communities who practice coordination and cooperation, the results have been improved services, lower costs and improved access, which benefits the customer. The key elements of the plan must include:

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

An equally important goal is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in human service transportation to convene and collaborate on how best to provide transportation services for these targeted populations. Specifically, stakeholders are called upon to identify service gaps and/or barriers, strategize on solutions most appropriate to meet these needs based on local circumstances, and prioritize these needs for inclusion in the plan.

### **4. Transit Program Descriptions**

**The Job Access / Reverse Commute (JARC - Section 5316)** - The JARC program includes two distinct components. The goal of the “job access” component is to improve

access to transportation services to employment and employment-related activities (training, child care, etc.) for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals. The goal of the “reverse commute” component is to transport residents of urbanized and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.

Federal funds for the program are allocated by formula to States for areas with populations below 200,000 persons, and to designated recipients for areas with populations of 200,000 persons and above. The formula is based on the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in urbanized and rural areas. 60 percent of these Federal funds will go to areas with population over 200,000. Federal JARC funds come with local matching requirements. For eligible capital and planning projects, the Federal share of costs may not exceed 80% of the net cost of the activity, with a local share of no less than 20%. For eligible operating projects, the Federal share of costs may not exceed 50% of the net cost of the activity, with a local share of no less than 50%. Up to 10% of the apportionment may be used to support program administrative costs, and these funds require no local match. Sources of local matching funds include the following:

- State or local appropriations;
- Other non-DOT Federal funds (TANF, Medicaid, employment training programs, Rehabilitation Services, and Administration on Aging), so long as these are directly used for activities included in the total net project costs of the JARC grant.
- Dedicated tax revenues;
- Private donations;
- Revenue from human service contracts;
- Toll revenue credits;
- Net income generated from advertising and concessions; and
- Non-cash sources such as donations, volunteered services, and in-kind contributions so long as the value of each is documented and represents a cost that would otherwise be eligible for funding under the program.

Over the life of SAFETEA-LU, total JARC program funding nationally is as follows:

- \$138,000,000 (FFY 2006)
- \$144,000,000 (FFY 2007)
- \$156,000,000 (FFY 2008)
- \$164,500,000 (FFY 2009)

The actual allocation for each state comes from FTA after the budget is passed for a particular year.

Awarded funds are available to a grantee during the fiscal year of apportionment, plus two additional years. Therefore, it is critically important that prospective JARC projects be ready for implementation within three years of the initial proposal, as any unused JARC funds are added to the following year's apportionment and reapportioned among all areas.

Target Populations - Each of the two distinct components of the JARC program has a defined target population. “Job access” projects are those designed to serve individuals whose family income is at or below 150% of the poverty level for a family of the size involved, and/or individuals who have received public assistance at any time during the 3-year period before the date on which a local transportation provider applies for a grant under the JARC program. “Reverse commute” projects should be targeted at those individuals who live in urbanized and non-urbanized areas who are employed or seeking employment in suburban areas.

Eligible Activities - JARC program funds are available for capital, operating and planning expenses for activities consistent with the program goals, including, but not limited to:

- Late-night and weekend service to transport eligible individuals with non-traditional work schedules;
- Guaranteed ride home services;
- Shuttle services;
- Expanding fixed public transit routes;
- Demand-responsive van services;
- Ridesharing and carpooling activities;
- Transit-related aspects of bicycling, including adding bike racks to vehicles or providing storage at stations;
- Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides;
- Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
  - Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules;
  - Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals;
  - Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles, ridesharing, and/or carpooling; and
  - Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs;
- Applying geographic information systems (GIS) tools;
- Implementing intelligent transportation systems (ITS), including customer trip information technology;
- Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling, and dispatch functions;
- Establishing regional mobility managers or transportation brokerage activities, including:
  - The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services by eligible individuals;
  - Support for short term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services;
  - Support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
  - Operation of transportation brokerages;
  - Provision of coordination services;

- Development and operation of one-stop transportation call centers to coordinate traveler information; and
- Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation systems technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems.

**New Freedom Program - Section 5317** - The stated goal of the New Freedom program is to provide additional transportation options to help Americans with disabilities overcome existing barriers to full integration with the workforce and participation in society. Dating back to the time period preceding passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), lack of adequate transportation has long been identified as the primary barrier between persons with disabilities and stable employment. The New Freedom program is intended to support fully accessible mobility options beyond those prescribed by the ADA.

Federal funds for the program are allocated by formula to States for areas with populations below 200,000 persons, and to designated recipients for areas with populations of 200,000 persons and above. The formula is based on the number of individuals with disabilities in urbanized and rural areas. 60 percent of these Federal funds will go to areas with population over 200,000. The federal/local share of this program is 80/20 for capital expenses, 50/50 for operating expenses, and 100% federal of up to 10% of the apportionment available for planning, administration, and technical assistance. Sources of local matching funds include the following:

- State or local appropriations;
- Other non-DOT Federal funds (TANF, Medicaid, employment training programs, Rehabilitation Services, and Administration on Aging), so long as these are directly used for activities included in the total net project costs of the New Freedom grant
- Dedicated tax revenues;
- Private donations;
- Revenue from human service contracts;
- Toll revenue credits;
- Net income generated from advertising and concessions; and
- Non-cash sources such as donations, volunteered services, and in-kind contributions so long as the value of each is documented and represents a cost that would otherwise be eligible for funding under the program.

Over the life of SAFETEA-LU, total New Freedom program funding nationally is as follows:

- \$78,000,000 (FFY 2006)
- \$81,000,000 (FFY 2007)
- \$87,500,000 (FFY 2008)
- \$92,500,000 (FFY 2009)

The actual allocation for each state comes from FTA after the budget is passed for a particular year.

Awarded funds are available to a grantee during the fiscal year of apportionment, plus two additional years. Therefore, it is critically important that prospective New Freedom projects be ready for implementation within three years of the initial proposal, as any unused New Freedom funds are added to the following year's apportionment and reapportioned among all areas.

*Target Populations* - New Freedom projects are designed to assist individuals with disabilities in accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services (training, child care, etc.). An “individual with a disability” is defined in 49 USC § 5302(a)(5) as an individual who, because of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including an individual who is a wheelchair user has semi-ambulatory capability), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, public transportation service or a public transportation facility.

*Eligible Activities* - New Freedom program funds are available for capital, operating and planning expenses for activities consistent with the program goals, including, but not limited to:

- Enhancing the delivery of paratransit service beyond the provisions of the ADA through:
  - Expansion of the paratransit service area beyond the ¾-mile corridor around fixed routes prescribed by the ADA;
  - Expansion of paratransit service hours beyond fixed route service hours;
  - Provision of “same-day” paratransit service;
  - Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their origin and/or destination.
- Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for “common wheelchairs” under the ADA, and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with oversized wheelchairs;
- Installation of additional mobility aid securement locations in transit vehicles beyond what is required by the ADA;
- Implementing new “feeder” service (transit service that provides access) to commuter bus and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA;
- Making the accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as “key stations” under the ADA, including:
  - Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including the construction of curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, or other accessible features;
  - Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements that are not otherwise required under the ADA to a non-key station;
  - Improving signage, or wayfinding technology; and
  - Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities.

- Designing and implementing new travel training and instruction programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and use of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities;
- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, 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 including:
  - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services;
  - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services;
  - Support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
  - Operation of transportation brokerages;
  - Provision of coordination services;
  - Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers;
  - Operational planning for the acquisition of ITS.

**Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program** - The stated goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. A Section 5310 project is one designed to meet these special transportation needs.

Section 5310 funds are apportioned among the States by a formula which based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State according to the latest available U.S. Census data. The annual apportionment for each State is published in the Federal Register following the enactment of the annual Department of Transportation (DOT) appropriations act.

Federal Section 5310 funds come with local matching requirements. For eligible capital projects, the Federal share of costs may not exceed 80% of the net cost of the activity, with a local share of no less than 20%. Up to 10% of the apportionment may be used to support program administrative costs, and these funds require no local match. Sources of local matching funds include the following:

- State or local appropriations;
- Other non-DOT Federal funds (TANF, Medicaid, employment training programs, Rehabilitation Services, and Administration on Aging), so long as these are directly used for activities included in the total net project costs of the Section 5310 grant
- Dedicated tax revenues;
- Private donations;
- Revenue from human service contracts;

- Toll revenue credits;
- Net income generated from advertising and concessions;
- Non-cash sources such as donations, volunteered services, and in-kind contributions so long as the value of each is documented and represents a cost that would otherwise be eligible for funding under the program.

Over the life of SAFETEA-LU, total Section 5310 program funding nationally is as follows:

- \$112,000,000 (FFY 2006)
- \$117,000,000 (FFY 2007)
- \$127,000,000 (FFY 2008)
- \$133,500,000 (FFY 2009)

The actual allocation for each state comes from FTA after the budget is passed for a particular year.

Awarded funds are available to a grantee during the fiscal year of apportionment, plus two additional years. Therefore, it is critically important that prospective Section 5310 projects be ready for implementation within three years of the initial proposal, as any unused Section 5310 funds are added to the following year's apportionment and reapportioned among all States.

*Target Populations* - As alluded to in the preceding paragraph, the Section 5310 program has two distinct target populations – elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. Elderly individuals are those age 65 and older. As with the New Freedom program, an individual with a disability” is defined in 49 USC § 5302(a)(5) as an individual who, because illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including an individual who is a wheelchair user has semi-ambulatory capability), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, public transportation service or a public transportation facility.

*Eligible Activities* - Section 5310 program funds are available for capital expenses for activities consistent with the program goals, including, but not limited to:

- Purchases of additional equipment, including:
  - Buses
  - Vans;
  - Radios and communication equipment;
  - Vehicle shelters;
  - Wheelchair lifts and restraints;
  - Computer hardware and software; and
  - Extended warranties that do not exceed the industry standard;
- Vehicle rehabilitation, manufacture, or overhaul;
- Preventive maintenance, as defined in the National Transit Database (NTD);
- Initial component installation costs;

- Vehicle procurement, testing, inspection, and acceptance costs; Lease of equipment, when leasing is more cost-effective than purchase (relative cost effectiveness must be determined by PennDOT);
- Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement, again subject to an eligibility determination by PennDOT;
- Introduction of new technology, through innovative and improved products, into transit service delivery;
- Implementing ITS;
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation; including:
  - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services;
  - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services;
  - Support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
  - Operation of transportation brokerages;
  - Provision of coordination services;
  - Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers; and
  - Operational planning for the acquisition of ITS.

## **5. Regulatory Compliance & RPO Operation Procedures**

This plan has been completed in accordance with the regulatory requirements set forth within the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU, which was signed into law by President Bush on August 10, 2005, authorized funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Federal Fiscal Year 2009.

The plan development process was aided by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Proposed Circular FTA C 9070.1F entitled *Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance and Application Instructions*.

The NPRTPO Committee is guided by Operational Procedures, which were adopted in August 2002. Furthermore, NEPA has developed a Public Involvement Plan to address the Title VI requirements Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42U.S.C. 2000d) as amended by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-209). The Public Involvement Plan assists NEPA in gathering feedback and input from citizens, organizations, and businesses in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

## **6. Plan Development, Methodology & Public Participation Process**

In the winter of 2007 the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO), or the NEPA RPO, formed a transit subcommittee to assist in

the development of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. NEPA requested nominations and suggestions from the NPRTPO Committee and publicly advertised Business Meetings on February 20, 2007 and March 23, 2007. Based on this outreach, NEPA sent an invitation letter to appropriate stakeholders requesting their participation in the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee. The invitation letter included a copy of the six (6) 5310 applications from transit and human service agencies in the NEPA RPO region. A copy of a sample invitation letter is located in Appendix B. Invited participants were requested to attend the inaugural meeting of the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee on May 21, 2007 at the NEPA offices in Pittston, Pennsylvania. A copy of the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Agenda is located in Appendix C.

The NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee is comprised of thirteen (13) individuals including five county planners, three representatives from transit providers and five representatives from human service providers. Six (6) of the thirteen (13) Transit Subcommittee members also have seats on the NPRTPO Committee. NEPA and the NPRTPO Committee will continue to identify appropriate transportation and human service provider stakeholders and local citizens to better diversify membership the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee. A copy of the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Roster can be found in Appendix D.

The Transit Subcommittee was formed to:

1. Review, evaluate and prioritize 5310 Projects submitted during the current (2007) round;
2. Provide an update on current, planned and proposed transportation services;
3. Assess current services and critical gaps in services; and,
4. Provide recommendations and strategies to better address service requirements, expansion and future service needs.

The NPRPTO Transit Subcommittee Meeting agenda included an overview of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan development Section 5310 application evaluations and discussions on transit funding, current transportation services and service gaps. All of the Section 5310 applicants provided a brief summary of their funding request, including the amount of their funding request and the proposed usage of the funds. Furthermore, the committee discussed various criteria that could be used to develop an evaluation form for the ranking of 2007 program year applications. Finally, each of the transit and humans services provider representatives were asked to provide a brief overview of the public involvement process that their organizations have established to address the special population and transit user needs.

## **7. Review, Evaluation and Prioritization of Section 5310 Applications**

Based on the presentation and discussions at the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Meeting on May 21, 2007, an evaluation form was created to evaluate the 5310 applications. A copy of the evaluation form can be found in Appendix E.

The evaluation form and criteria were distributed to the NPRPTO Transit Subcommittee members as an attachment to a memo with instructions for reviewing and scoring of each of the applications. Upon return of the score sheets from the subcommittee members, NEPA tallied the scores in a summary sheet and sorted the list of projects scoring highest to lowest. The summary sheet was provided to the NPRPTO Committee for review and consideration of adoption at the June 25, 2007 Special Business Meeting. At the June 25<sup>th</sup> RPO Committee Business meeting, a motion was made and seconded to accept the NPRPTO Transit Subcommittee's ranking of the Section 5310 applications, and passed unanimously (10 Yes, 0 No). A copy of the score summary sheet can be found in Appendix F.

## **8. Local Inventory of Transportation Services**

### **a. Public Transportation Services**

*Monroe County Transit Authority (www.gomcta.com)* - The Monroe County Transit Authority was formed in 1979 and is headquartered in Scotrun, Pennsylvania. MCTA employs over 80 individuals (50 full-time and 30 part-time) and currently has four fixed routes in its service area. MCTA's fixed route and shared ride services reach 100% of Monroe County (611 square miles) and the shared ride service provides frequent trips to medical centers and hospitals in Eastern Pennsylvania.

**MCTA Ridership Totals 2001-2006**

Fiscal Year	Fixed Route	Shared Ride	Total
FY2005/2006	201,086	57,164	258,250
FY2004/2005	159,487	58,156	217,643
FY2003/2004	153,350	60,485	213,835
FY2002/2003	148,907	59,985	208,892
FY2001/2002	155,614	51,303	206,917

**MCTA Annual Budget Totals 2001-2006**

Fiscal Year	Fixed Route	Shared Ride	Total
FY2005/2006	\$2,455,944	\$1,381,172	\$3,837,116
FY2004/2005	\$2,829,168	\$1,376,657	\$4,205,825
FY2003/2004	\$2,467,024	\$1,450,231	\$3,917,255
FY2002/2003	\$2,070,982	\$1,343,871	\$3,414,853
FY2001/2002	\$1,644,577	\$1,263,639	\$2,908,216

Note: Fiscal year 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 are estimated due to fluctuations in the Medical Assistance Program, which is programmed within the Shared Ride Program and Martz Bus Servicing Contracts.

**MCTA Fleet Summary**

Revenue Vehicles (Fixed Route)	Shared Ride Vehicles	Non-Revenue Vehicles
15	30	7

MCTA is a member of the Pocono Healthy Community Alliance which is a community-planning organization with a focus on health and human services. The Pocono Healthy Community Alliance has approximately 300 members and also convenes a transportation subcommittee which includes about 20 members. MCTA utilizes this network to effectively gauge and monitor the transportation needs of human service providers and the public.

Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) ([www.go-sts.com](http://www.go-sts.com)) - The Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) is recognized by the Schuylkill County Commissioners as the provider of public transportation to the residents of Schuylkill County. STS began providing transit services in January 1982 as a county government based operation managed by the Redco Group, with STS being a division of the group.

STS currently employs approximately 60 individuals, 50 full-time and 10-part-time. STS operates ten main line fixed routes, along with seven feeder routes into the Pottsville area. Although STS bus routes do not cover 100% of the county, shared ride services are available upon request to all municipalities and townships within the borders of Schuylkill County.

STS's current fleet consists of fourteen vehicles dedicated to the fixed route system and twenty nine smaller vehicles ranging from ten to sixteen passengers in its shared ride fleet. All forty three vehicles in both the fixed route and shared ride systems are handicapped accessible. STS also services the County Head Start Program with eight school buses specific for this program. Also included in the STS fleet are six support vehicles.

All vehicles are stored and serviced at the STS Compound Headquarters located in the STS Clair Industrial Park, St Clair, PA. This building also houses all of the STS administrative staff and it is the only transit facility in the County.

The STS Transportation Advisory Committee consist of approximately 50 organizations and individuals whose operations or welfare are dependent on decisions made by STS in relation to transit planning. There are several physically challenged individuals on the committee and organizations that are supportive of and dependent upon there required services.

**STS Ridership Totals 2001-2006**

Fiscal Year	Fixed Route	Shared Ride	Total
FY2005/2006	252,404	133,815	386,219
FY2004/2005	255,248	138,306	393,554
FY2003/2004	270,182	136,300	406,482
FY2002/2003	279,901	132,819	412,720
FY2001/2002	366,419	138,685	505,104

**STS Annual Budget Totals 2001-2006**

Fiscal Year	Fixed Route	Shared Ride	Total
FY2005/2006	\$1,586,767	\$1,755,065	\$3,341,832
FY2004/2005	\$1,542,208	\$1,819,477	\$3,361,685
FY2003/2004	\$1,484,645	\$1,602,768	\$3,087,413
FY2002/2003	\$1,491,213	\$1,281,271	\$2,772,484
FY2001/2002	\$1,472,739	\$1,279,116	\$2,751,855

Carbon County Community Transit ([www.carboncounty.com/transport](http://www.carboncounty.com/transport)) - Carbon County Community Transit (CCCT) offers public transportation including fixed route and door-to-door service in Carbon County and to several points outside of the county. CCCT's service is sponsored by Carbon County in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's State Lottery Program, Rural Transportation Division and the Federal Transit Administration.

Carbon County has retained the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), based in Allentown, to manage the Carbon County Community Transit System. LANTA's sub-contractor, Easton Coach, with an office in Nesquehoning, oversees day-to-day operations.

CCCT operates the Lynx, a fixed-route service, from Monday through Friday, between Nesquehoning and the Lehigh Valley Mall in the Allentown, Lehigh County area. On Wednesdays, there is service in the Panther Valley area that connects to the main Lynx route. Fares are \$1.50 per one-way trip for those who board and travel within Carbon County, and \$2.50 for those traveling from Carbon County to the Shopping Malls in the Lehigh County. Seniors ride free and the disabled ride for half-fare.

Average ridership is 900 trips per month. Approximately 500 people are served which consists of 95% seniors 65+ who ride free.

The following is a summary of the Fixed Route Service:

Total hours annually: 1,680  
 Total annual cost: \$81,000  
 Farebox recovery: 28%

CCCT also offers a shared ride program which is a door-to-door taxi type service where people 'share the ride.' Service is primarily focused on Carbon County but there is some access to locales just outside the County such as daycare centers and dialysis clinics. There is some access to the Lehigh Valley but this is generally limited to a one-day per week operation.

Passengers must apply in advance for eligibility determination. Trips are arranged by reservation in advance (up to two weeks) and passengers must obtain tickets in order to ride. Fare structure: \$2.40 service in county; \$3.60 service just outside of county; \$4.80

service out of county. CCCT averages 250 trips per day and 4,611 per month on the system.

The following is a summary of the Shared Ride Service:

Total trips FY 2004 = 55,332 FY2005–06,  
Total hours FY 2004 = 26,502  
Total Cost FY 2004 = \$1,007,644  
Per trip cost: \$16.00 local; \$24.00 just outside; \$36.00 out of county

Annually:      47,039 trips @ \$16.00  
                     7,041 trips @ \$24.00  
                     1,252 trips @ \$36.00

Average fare system-wide: \$ 17.47

Trip cost analysis:  
Hour cost per contract: \$39.50  
Productivity @ 2.4 passengers per trip = Breakeven figure.

### **b. Private Transportation Services**

The region is served by a variety of private transportation businesses who provide bus, taxi and limousine services. It is also important to note that many of these businesses provide daily round trip commuter service from the region to New York City. Service providers include:

1. Martz Trailways (Bus Service) ([www.martztrailways.com](http://www.martztrailways.com))
2. Greyhound Bus Lines ([www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)) (Nationally)
3. AJ&L Tours (Bus Service) ([www.mahcon.com/aj/index.html](http://www.mahcon.com/aj/index.html)) (Poconos)
4. Coach USA ([www.coachusa.com](http://www.coachusa.com)) (Poconos)
5. Blue Saki Potaro, Inc. (Poconos)
6. Road Runner Taxi Inc. (Poconos)
7. WGM Transportation Inc. (Poconos)
8. Pocono Cab Company (Poconos)
9. Time Saver Taxi Inc. (Poconos)
10. MGN & N Transportation (Poconos)
11. J and J Tours (Poconos)
12. Maple City Transit (Honesdale)

### **c. Nonprofit Transportation Services**

There are several nonprofit human service providers that offer paratransit services to clients and employees in the region. Some of these service providers include:

1. Avenues (Service Region: Schuylkill, Carbon, Northumberland)

2. Human Resource Center, Inc. (Service Region: Wayne, Pike, Lackawanna, Monroe, Carbon, Susquehanna)
3. Carbon Training Center, Inc. (Service Region: Carbon)
4. Pike County Area Agency on Aging (Service Region: Pike)
5. Wayne County Area Agency on Aging (Service Region: Wayne)
6. VIABL (Visual Impairment and Blindness Services) (Service Region: Monroe)
7. Marian Community Hospital (Service Region: Lackawanna, Wayne)

## **9. Needs Assessment – Critical Gaps in Service**

Service gaps and transportation needs in NEPA’s RPO region have been identified by transportation professionals, transit providers, stakeholders, elected officials and citizens through a variety of venues including:

1. NEPA RPO Business Meetings and Public Hearings
2. State Transportation Commission Hearings
3. NEPA RPO Transit Subcommittee Kick-Off Meeting
4. Transit Providers and Human Service Agency Advisory Committees, more specifically:
  - a. STS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
  - b. MCTA Pocono Healthier Community Alliance Transportation Committee
  - c. CCCT – Interagency Council
  - d. Pike County Transportation Advisory Board
  - e. Wayne County Human Services Transportation Committee

Additionally, NEPA maintains a call/email log to efficiently list and respond to all transportation inquires from citizens, businesses, elected officials, community leaders and local governments.

Transportation gaps in service generally fall into the following categories:

1. Un-served or underserved areas
2. Lack of availability and accessibility
3. Lack of awareness of available services, and
4. Affordability

The NEPA RPO has fixed route service that covers approximately 40% of the region. Additionally, two of the five counties (Pike and Monroe) in the NEPA RPO have the fastest growing population rates in the Commonwealth.

## **10. Strategies & Recommendations**

In collaboration with the NPRTPO Committee and the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee, NEPA has developed the following strategies and recommendations to better meet the transit needs in the region.

1. NEPA will be shortly initiating a SAFETEA-LU compliant Long Range Plan to better plan for the integration of highway and bridge infrastructure and transit service needs of the region. This plan will include a transit component to fully assess the transit need for the region and to foster partnerships and collaborations amongst transit and human service providers identified in this document.
2. NEPA will convene at a minimum two NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee meetings per year to discuss transit services and gaps, funding, growth and partnerships and opportunities for collaboration.
3. NEPA will utilize the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee to form partnerships between public transit and human service providers to meet the needs of the community. These partnerships could include contracted paratransit services, vehicle maintenance agreements, resource and asset sharing (drivers and vehicles) shared marketing opportunities and regional connectivity.

**Appendices**

Appendix A  
NPRTPO Committee Roster

Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee Roster

Representatives & Alternates - Updated November 1, 2006

Sal.	F. Name	L. Name	Title	Organization Name	Representation/Voting Assignment	Term	Term Length	Assignment Request Date	Assignment Appointment Date (Board Meeting)
Mr.	Edward	Coar	Director	Wayne County Planning Commission	County Representative	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	John	Zielinski	Assistant Director	Wayne County Planning Commission	Alternate	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	John	Woodling	Director	Monroe County Planning Commission	County Representative	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/21/2005
Mr.	Matt	Neeb	Planner	Monroe County Planning Commission	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2005	9/21/2005
Hon.	Harry	Forbes	Commissioner	Pike County	County Representative	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	Richard	Caridi	Commissioner	Pike County	Alternate	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	Steve	Simchak	Programs Coordinator	Carbon County Planning & Development	County Representative	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	Fred	Ostfat	Director	Carbon County Planning & Development	Alternate	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/8/2005
Mr.	Charles	Ross	Director	Schuylkill County Planning Commission	County Representative	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/28/2005
Mr.	John	Guers	Community Planner	Schuylkill County Planning Commission	Alternate	10/1/05 to 9/30/07	2 years	9/1/2005	9/28/2005
Mr.	William	Douglass	Executive Director	Upper Delaware Council, Inc	County Rep.-At Large	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Craig	Rickard	Senior Planner	Wayne County Planning Commission	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Mark	Scarbinsky	Director	Schuylkill County Economic Devel. Off.	County Rep.-At Large	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Gary	Bender	Director	Schuylkill County Grants Office	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Joseph	Sebelin	Executive Director	Pocono County Workforce WIA	County Rep.-At Large	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Ms.	Eloise	Ahner	Assistant Chief Clerk	Carbon County	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Ms.	Margaret	Howarth	Executive Director	Monroe County Transportation Auth.	County Rep.-At Large	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	James	Decker	Roadmaster	Stroud Township	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Michael	Mrozinski	Planner	Pike County Community Planning	County Rep.-At Large	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Ms.	Sally	Corrigan	Director	Pike County Community Planning	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	9/1/2006	10/1/2006
Mr.	Peter	Wulforth	Community Dev. Educator	Pike County Cooperative Extension	NEPA RFO Rep.	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	NA	NA
Mr.	Annetta	DeYoung	Executive Director	Wayne County Chamber of Commerce	Alternate	10/1/06 to 9/30/07	1 year	NA	NA
Ms.	Amanda	Leindecker	Planning & Programming	PennDOT District 5-0	District Representative	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ms.	Marie	Bishop	Planning & Programming	PennDOT District 4-0	District Representative	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mr.	Hugh	McGowan	Planning & Programming	PennDOT Central Office	Central Office Rep.	NA	NA	NA	NA

Appendix B  
NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Sample Invitation Letter

## SAMPLE LETTER

May 16, 2007

RE: Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan & Section 5310 Application  
Evaluation and Review

Dear Community Leader:

Thank you your willingness to serve as a member of the newly formed Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee. This committee will serve as a subcommittee to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee. Our first meeting is scheduled for, Monday, May 21, 2007 at 9:00 AM at the NEPA offices at 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) serves as the coordinating agency for rural transportation planning in the rural region that includes Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne counties. Designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) as the RPO for these counties, NEPA is contracted to engage in various transportation planning and programming activities including the administration of the RPO's Transportation Improvement Program. As a result of the agreement with the PennDOT, NEPA convenes the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee, who assists and advises NEPA with assessing and evaluating the transportation needs and priorities in the region.

The NPRTPO Committee is comprised of 14 voting members which includes one primary representative from each county, transportation professionals from PennDOT District 4-0, District 5-0 and the Central Office, a representative from NEPA and five at-large members, each appointed from the five rural counties of carbon, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne.

The Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee or NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee will be tasked with assisting in the development of a Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and the evaluation and review of Section 5310 funding applications for the five-county Rural Planning Organization (RPO) region.

The following enclosures are included in this meeting packet:

- ❖ NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Meeting Agenda;
- ❖ NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee Roster;
- ❖ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [Docket no. FTA-2006-24037] – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute, and New Freedom Programs; Final Circulars
- ❖ Section 5310 Applications (2007); and,

## SAMPLE LETTER

In order to comply with the new federal requirements identified in the federal transportation bill entitled Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), we are requesting that each of the committee representatives review the six Section 5310 Applications. During next week's meeting, we will have a brief discussion on each of the applications and rank the projects in order of priority and need. The prioritized ranking will then be distributed to the NPRTPO Committee for comments and endorsement.

Please contact Paula Terpak with you intentions to attend the inaugural NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee meeting at (570) 655-5581. ext. 231. Light refreshments will be served.

If you have any questions related to NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee or the evaluation and scoring of the Section 5310 Applications, please contact Kurt Bauman at (570) 655-5581, ext. 237 or via email at [kbauman@nepa-alliance.org](mailto:kbauman@nepa-alliance.org). We look forward to seeing you next week.

Sincerely,

Alan. S. Baranski, AICP  
Vice President, Community & Government Services Division  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

Enclosures

Appendix C  
NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee, May 21, 2007 Meeting Agenda



**NPRTPO TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA**

**Location:**

NEPA Alliance  
1151 Oak Street  
Pittston, PA 18640

**Date & Time:**

May 21, 2007 – 9:00 AM

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Welcome & Opening Introductions**

**Call the Meeting to Order**

- 1) NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee**
  - a) NPRTPO Committee Overview
  - b) Formation of the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee
  
- 2) Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**
  - a) Overview
  - b) Open Discussion
  
- 3) Section 5310 Application Evaluation and Review**
  - a) Program Overview
  - b) Application review, discussion and ranking
  - c) Schedule
  - d) Meeting follow-up actions
  
- 4) Adjournment**

Appendix D  
NPRTPPO Transit Subcommittee Roster

# Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

## Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee

#	Name	Title	Organization Name	Address	Work Phone	Fax	Co.	Email
1	Mr. Dennis Zahora	VP Public Transportation Services	Schuylkill Transportation System (STS)	PO Box 67, St. Clair, PA 17970-0067	570-429-2805	570-429-1078	SC	DZahora@redcogrp.com
2	Mr. Mark Hoover	CEO	Human Resources Center, Inc.	294 Bethel School Road Honesdale, PA 18431	570-253-3782	570-253-1041	WA	mark.hoover@hrcinc.org
3	Mr. Denis Meyers	Assistant Executive Director	LANTA	1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103	610-432-3562	610-435-6774	CA	lanta@erols.com
4	Mr. Steve Peterson	Executive Director	Carbon Training Center, Inc.	Rose & Hazle Streets, Beaver Meadows, PA 18216	570-454-3754	570-454-3610	CA	ctc11@pfd.net
	Ms. Debbie Klotunowich	Transportation Supervisor	Avenues	2 Park St, Agricultural Park Pottsville, PA 17901	570-628-5316	570-622-9271	SC	dklotunowich@avenuesofpa.org
6	Ms. Peggy Howarth*	Executive Director	Monroe County Transit Authority (MCTA)	PO Box 339, Scotrun, PA 18335	570-839-6282	570-839-8205	MO	phowarth@gomcta.com
7	Ms. Robin S. LoDolce	Executive Director	Pike County Area Agency on Aging	150 Pike County Boulevard Hawley, PA 18428	570-775-5550		PI	rlodolce@pikepa.org
8	Ms. Julie Doyle	Administrative Officer	Wayne County Area Agency on Aging	323 10th Street, Honesdale, PA 18431	570-253-4262		WA	jdoyle@co.wayne.pa.us
9	Mr. Edward Coar*	Director	Wayne County Planning Commission	925 Court St., Honesdale, PA 18431	570-253-5970	570-253-5432	WA	ecoar@co.wayne.pa.us
10	Mr. John Woodling*	Director	Monroe County Planning Commission	Administrative Center, 1 Quaker Plaza Room 106, Stroudsburg, PA 18360	570-517-3150	570-420-3564	MO	jwoodling@co.monroe.pa.us
11	Mr. Charles Ross*	Director	Schuylkill County Planning Commission	Schuylkill County Courthouse, 401 N Second St, Pottsville, PA 17901-2528	570-628-1418	570-628-1005	SC	cross@co.schuylkill.pa.us
12	Mr. Steve Simchak*	Programs Coordinator	Carbon County Office Planning & Development	Courthouse Annex, PO Box 210, Jim Thorpe, PA 18229-0210	570-325-3671	570-325-3303	CA	ccopad@pfd.net
13	Mr. Michael Mrozinski*	Senior Planner	Pike County Community Planning	556 Rt 402 Suite 2, Hawley, PA 18428	570-226-6293	570-226-8222	PI	mmrozinski@pikepa.org

\*NPRTPO Committee Members

Appendix E  
Section 5310 Ranking Criteria

**NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee**  
**Section 5310 Application Ranking Form**

**Project Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**County:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewed By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Applicant Evaluation: (10 Total Possible Points)**

A.) Is the applicant providing assistance to minority communities? (5 points)      yes  no

B.) Is the applicant the primary transit service provider in the county? (5 points)      yes  no

**II. Funding Impact: (100 Total Possible Points: (1=low significance/poor; 10=high significance/good)  
\*circle one\***

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1.) | Impact of funds on continuation of applicant services                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2.) | The accuracy and completeness of the application                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3.) | Justification of request to fulfill applicant's mission                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4.) | Demonstration of improvement to quality of life/service                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5.) | Applicant's financial and operational ability to sustain the transportation service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Section II Total Points (Multiply by 2):

**Total Score (Section I & II)**

**III. Comments:**

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Appendix F  
Section 5310 Project Ranking

**NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee - 5310 Application Score Sheet Summary - June 2007**

<b>Applicant/Organization</b>	<b>Primary Service Area</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Avenues of Pennsylvania	SC	81	6 <sup>th</sup>
Carbon County Community Transportation	CA	91	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Human Resources Center, Inc.	WA	80	7 <sup>th</sup>
Monroe County Transit Authority	MO	97	1 <sup>st</sup>
Pike County Area Agency on Aging	PI	85	5 <sup>th</sup>
Schuylkill Transit System	SC	93	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Wayne County Area Agency on Aging	WA	88	4 <sup>th</sup>



Appendix G  
NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee, May 21, 2007 Meeting Minutes

# NPRTPO TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

## Meeting Location:

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance  
1151 Oak Street  
Pittston, Pennsylvania, 18640

## Date & Time:

May 21, 2007 – 9:00 a.m.

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### Attendees:

Edward Coar  
Juliann Doyle  
Peggy Howarth  
Denis Meyers  
Michael Mrozinski  
Matt Neeb  
Steve Peterson  
Kathy Rademaker  
Charles Ross  
Stephen Simchak  
Dennis Zahora

### Organization:

Wayne County Department of Planning  
Wayne County Human Services  
Monroe County Transit Authority  
Carbon County Community Transit  
Pike County Planning Commission  
Monroe County Planning Commission  
Carbon Training Center  
Human Resources Center  
Schuylkill County Planning Commission  
Carbon County Office of Planning and Development  
Schuylkill Transportation System

Kurt Bauman                      NEPA Alliance  
Paula Terpak                      NEPA Alliance

### Meeting Minutes

Mr. Bauman called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and asked each person to introduce themselves.

#### **1) NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee**

a) NPRTPO Committee Overview - Mr. Bauman stated that NEPA works with each of the five county planning agencies to prioritize highway, bridge and projects within Carbon, Monroe, Pike Schuylkill and Wayne counties. Mr. Bauman stated that new federal guidelines under SAFETEA-LU, dictate that the transit funding process be more inclusive, similar to the highway and bridge funding process. Mr. Bauman stated NEPA is forming this committee in accordance with these federal guidelines, which were included for reference in the meeting packet. Mr. Bauman reported that the internal guidance will be changing next year; however the process will assist in the formulation of transportation and transit planning in NEPA's five county region.

b) Formation of the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee - Mr. Bauman stated the RPO committee is comprised of 14 individuals, with representatives from PennDOT, County Planning Departments, as well as at-large representatives appointed by the County Commissioners. He stated Pennsylvania is broken down into 15 MPOs, 7 RPOs and one independent county for transportation planning purposes.

## **2) Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

### **a) Overview**

Mr. Bauman stated procedural guidelines need to be established, i.e. how often the subcommittee will meet, etc. paying attention to any specific requirements outlined in the federal guidelines. Two areas this subcommittee is tasked with this year are 1) the evaluation and ranking of 5310 applications and 2) creation of a coordinated transit plan for the NEPA RPO region. Mr. Bauman stated NEPA received guidance in late January and information is due May 31, 2007. Mr. Bauman stated each agency will be asked to provide an inventory of vehicles and NEPA will develop a database of our five county region detailing the assets of transit and human service agencies. In addition, NEPA will identify which agencies are conducting transit needs assessments and if they have transit committees. Mr. Bauman stated this information will be a starting point as NEPA moves forward with the development a full fledged plan. Mr. Bauman noted that NEPA will be engaging in a long range 20 year transportation plan which will include all transportation modes.

### **b) Open Discussion**

Ms. Doyle said Wayne County Human Services has never applied for 5310 funds, having only applied through the state for capital equipment under Act 26 and is uncertain of this process. Mr. Bauman stated this is a new procedural requirement resulting from the latest federal guidelines established through SAFETEA-LU. He stated that previously, PennDOT Central office ranked transit projects, but now they are required to consider input from the local level regarding project prioritization. Therefore, the formation of this subcommittee will help the NEPA RPO guide transit project funding.

The committee explained to Ms. Doyle that when her agency previously applied for Act 26 funding, that these programs overlap and PennDOT may have reclassified their request and submitted it under the 5310 process. Mr. Zahora stated PennDOT has a pot of money and will review and reclassify requests if appropriate to determine where they best fit. Ms. Howarth stated PennDOT is trying to streamline the process and put both Act 26 and 5310 together, which was done last year for the first time.

Mr. Bauman said there is a statewide funding crisis regarding highway and bridge projects and there is no dedicated funding source for transit. He stated this guidance is meant to streamline resources and develop partnerships to better utilize limited resources. He stated last year, one of the 5310 applications from our region was not funded, which may happen more often in the future. He stated this subcommittee may also be able to assist with the coordination between transit providers and human services providers.

## **3) Section 5310 Application Evaluation and Review**

### **a) Program Overview**

Mr. Bauman asked each of the applicants to better help us understand what they are applying for in their specific county or transit agency. Following, members will complete the spreadsheet, rank the applications and discuss the process. In addition, the subcommittee needs to discuss the Transportation Plan itself and what each agency is doing from a needs assessment perspective and how we can build that into the process. Mr. Bauman stated that as NEPA starts the long range transportation plan, information will be gathered from existing transit committees and task force groups. Future initiatives could include a joint needs assessment or development of a survey to gauge transit use.

### **b) Application review, discussion and ranking**

1. Schuylkill Transportation System (STS)--Mr. Zahora stated STS requested \$413,070 for 6 accessible, 14 (12 and 2 Wheelchair) passenger transit vehicles. STS has a local match of \$13,470 from Schuylkill

County. The STS fleet has 29 vans and they try to replace 5 to 6 vehicles every year. He stated the requested vehicles will be used by their shared ride program which serves mostly seniors and persons with disabilities. STS also works with a number of agencies to provide transportation for medical assistance programs. STS carries approximately 130,000 people per year, 11,000 per month. STS is not expanding their fleet, just maintaining the services. Fares are 15% of the cost for the shared ride program for seniors. For the fixed route service STS tries to find federal money or other funding programs to replace the fixed route vehicles. STS has school buses listed in the vehicle inventory which are used for child development programs and the shared ride program. The life of most vehicles is listed as 5 years or 150,000 miles, 200,000 miles for diesel vehicles.

2. Monroe County Transit Authority (MCTA)--Ms. Howarth reported the federal request is \$211,522 for shared ride services (MCTA has both fixed route and shared ride service). She stated individuals using this service are 50% seniors, 45% have medical issues, and 5% are persons with disabilities. MCTA transports 60,000 per year, 5,000 trips per month. MCTA transports non-disabled seniors, physically disabled seniors, mentally disabled seniors and physically disabled non-seniors. MCTA will replace 2 fleet vehicles and will not be expanding their existing fleet. MCTA's local match for this request is \$84,210. Ms. Howarth stated that MCTA maintains the fleet's older vehicles so they can expand offerings and assist human service agencies. MCTA has introduced one new fare structure this year, the south loop and the north loop. She stated the south loop operates 2 days a week, south of I-80 into Allentown/Bethlehem area and the north loop operates 2 days a week, out I-81 to points north, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. She stated seniors and persons with disabilities pay a 15% co-pay and MCTA coordinates with the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging and they offer regular service to the Veterans Hospital in Allentown and Wilkes-Barre. She stated MCTA's zone fares for the north and south loop are \$30.00 with a co-pay of \$3.40. MCTA has 50 buses, for fixed route and shared ride and completes 15 to 18 runs a day, with an average trip length of 15 miles.

3. Carbon County Community Transportation (CCCT)--Mr. Meyers stated CCCT put in a capital request of \$180,000 for 3 shared ride vehicles. Mr. Meyers said there is no local capital sharing involved. The shared ride program serves the same people as MCTA and STS programs. CCCT has shared ride service five days a week. These are all replacement vehicles, CCCT is not expanding its fleet. CCCT transport 60,000 a year, 5,000 passengers per month. Fares are 15% of the trip cost, \$2.40 per trip. He stated that twice a week CCCT goes for medical trips to the Lehigh Valley. The CCCT is managed by the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA). LANTA manages it on behalf of the county and all services are sub-contracts with the county. He stated that when LANTA took over the service 10 years ago, there was no fixed route service and no capital vehicles involved. LANTA has reinstated fixed route and recently purchased transit software for CCCT.

4. Ms. Rademaker stated that the Human Resource Center, Wayne County applied through 5310 for a replacement wheelchair accessible van and the application is not here. Mr. Bauman stated that PennDOT Central office provided NEPA with the list of 5310 applications for the RPO region and that their application was not included. Mr. Bauman stated he will email the application to the group for review. Ms. Rademaker stated they are applying for a 6 passenger + 2 wheelchair accessible van for one of their group homes for individuals to get back and forth to work and to medical appointments. The Human Resource Center services six counties and the van will be utilized in Wayne County. The agency is requesting 80% of the cost of the vehicle with a 20% local match.

5. Avenue--Mr. Bauman stated no one from Avenues was available to make a presentation at today's meeting.

6. Pike County Area Agency on Aging--Mr. Mrozinski stated no one from the Pike County AAA was able to attend today so he will present the application on their behalf. Currently Pike County is working on a plan for transportation regarding medical transports as well as the possibility of a future fixed route bus service. Currently the Pike County AAA is responsible for this program. Mr. Mrozinski stated there is a need to provide better maintenance to keep the vehicles functioning properly and one of the projects identified is to build a structure to secure them from the weather, provide some in-house maintenance and provide a central location for the vehicles (currently the vehicles are housed at two separate locations). Mr. Mrozinski stated that Pike County has experienced significant growth and the Agency on Aging has been hit hard with trying to handle transportation requests, close to 30,000 per year. The application request is for \$265,000 in federal funding with a \$50,000 local match for a building, communication equipment and one bus.

Mr. Zahora stated that PennDOT in the past had vehicles as the first priority. He asked if that is what we will be looking at today, prioritizing vehicles, then if there are funds available, do we move down through the rest of the priorities. Mr. Bauman stated that PennDOT has not provided any guidance on that issue and noted that Central Office still will make the final determination on the applications.

Mr. Zahora asked if vehicles are something the committee should prioritize to receive higher consideration for funding, as vehicles provide the service. Ms. Howarth stated she agrees with Mr. Zahora. Mr. Bauman asked that if in the past, had PennDOT considered structures and equipment secondary. Mr. Zahora said vehicles received first consideration followed by maintenance. Mr. Bauman asked what about new vehicles and expansion, would that be lower priority? Ms. Howarth said that would depend on the justification of the expansion. Mr. Meyers said there is fleet replacement capital and there is operating related capital costs for radios, scheduling software, etc. Those are key elements to keep an operation efficient. The third category is maintenance, which would include buildings and other types of maintenance. Mr. Meyers said he believes a stronger emphasis should be put on operating efficiencies versus other categories.

Mr. Mrozinski asked if the other transit systems are parking their vehicles outside or do they have a structure. Mr. Meyers and Ms. Howarth stated they park their vehicles outside. Mr. Zahora said some of their fixed route vehicles are inside, but all shared ride vehicles are outside. Ms. Doyle said they rent a space that fits all of the vehicles.

Mr. Mrozinski asked other providers if their vehicle maintenance is completed in-house or at local garages? Ms. Howarth said MCTA has a maintenance facility on-site. Mr. Meyers said they had talked about joining with the county for a joint maintenance facility that would use some transit and county dollars, but those talks are still continuing. Mr. Zahora said STS does in-house maintenance and they also provide maintenance and fueling on county vehicles and maintenance on some human service agency vehicles. If a vehicle needs a transmission rebuilt or an engine, that would be sent to a local garage. Mr. Meyer said that is another point of coordination, to have a central maintenance facility that takes care of the public vehicles. Mr. Zahora stated that Avenues fuels at STS, but they have their own maintenance person. Ms. Howarth said this year MCTA is performing inspections on their nonprofit agency vehicles and the Recycling Center is fueling their vehicles at MCTA. Mr. Mrozinski stated that would be the next step for Pike County, to get mechanics on site for general maintenance, inspections, oil changes, etc.

6. Wayne County Area Agency on Aging--Ms. Doyle stated the application is requesting \$222,660. She stated they provide curb to curb shared ride service and are the only transportation service of their kind in the county. She stated they transport non-disabled seniors, physically disabled seniors, mentally disabled seniors, physically disabled non-seniors and mentally disabled non-seniors. The fare is a 15% rate for seniors and they provide over 47,000 trips, 3,000 per month. Their request is to replace two vehicles, the two mini vans to be replaced have over 145,000 miles. She stated they serve a large wheelchair population which is growing every year. Mr. Bauman asked what the difference is between door to door and curb to curb service. Ms. Doyle said they do not help people out of their houses, they are picked up at the curb of the road and drivers are only responsible for getting people on or off the vehicles. STS and MCTA stated they provide curb to curb services. CCCT and Pike County AAA stated they provide door to door service. Ms. Doyle said they will have the same capacity with fewer vehicles best suited for their passengers' needs, based on survey results.

Ms. Howarth stated MCTA is the medical assistance transportation coordinator. Mr. Meyers said they are the medical assistance transportation coordinator in Carbon. STS is not the coordinator, but they provide service for them. Mr. Bauman asked in the ranking criteria, if the applicant is a medical service provider or has provided matching funds, should that increase the applicant's ranking? He stated the RPO Committee consistently ranked TE projects higher that had specific criteria in those applications that better reflected what was in the application. Mr. Bauman said he would like to suggest possible match or other coordination efforts to make it easier to rank the projects. Mr. Bauman stated he will ask the full RPO Committee to look at the review process and ranking process and to provide any comments.

Mr. Bauman stated NEPA would like to establish scoring criteria based on PennDOT's model and email it to the group in order to score applications. He stated PennDOT's current scoring application doesn't merge well with the application, especially Item 1, which attempts to determine the project coordination and integration with existing services. Mr. Bauman asked if a match is required on a 5310 application? Mr. Zahora said that the 5310 requires a 20% match, however Act 26 funding is typically used as the match if no local funding is available. Mr. Meyers said Item 1, is not easy to quantify based on the application, as there is not enough information in the application to determine if coordination took place. Mr. Meyers said that items 2, 3, and 4 are easier to determine and thus score. Ms. Howarth agreed that Item 1 of the PennDOT score sheet was ambiguous because it was not clearly defined.

Mr. Peterson said the Carbon Training Center is a sheltered workshop in Carbon and a major issue is that they can't use the public transit services. They have to provide their own service for their clients and transport about 40 people per year with a cost of approximately \$80,000 out of \$1m budget. He stated they would prefer to buy into a county wide transportation system and limit their transportation down to the unique situations. Mr. Meyers stated that PennDOT doesn't see that as an appropriate public obligation, which Mr. Peterson stated forces them to then compete for the same transit funding. Mr. Peterson said they would be interested in using the money they are spending now and contract for services instead of providing their own fleet. Ms. Howarth said that is part of the coordination issue, the attempt to coordinate locally, albeit unsuccessful to date in this case. Mr. Meyer stated that PennDOT does not see Mr. Peterson's organization as providing a public transportation service. Mr. Meyers asked if the Center has been successful in obtaining 5310 funding in the past. Mr. Peterson stated that the Center has applied and received funding, but they didn't apply this year because last year they weren't funded.

Mr. Bauman asked if anything else should be added to the criteria. Ms. Howarth stated that match is important. MCTA tries to demonstrate that they are coming to the table with funds to offset the project costs, so it looks more favorable to the reviewer. Mr. Zahora wondered if match should carry so much weight this time, because it wasn't set up as an important criteria before hand.

Mr. Bauman asked how the LANTA process is developing. Mr. Meyers said LANTA set up a special effort which follows the federal guidelines. He stated public meetings were held to determine what the gaps were in the public transit system and methods to fill those gaps are being developed and the Lehigh Valley has received \$350,000 a year for 4 years to accomplish this goal. The MPO has in the past used a technical planning process to review the 5310 applications and they are weaving that process into the human services process. Mr. Bauman asked if they gathered more information than what was in the applications. Mr. Meyers said they went by the application, but did have a phone conversation with each of the applicants.

Mr. Mrozinski wanted to know what happens to the old vehicles, do they go to auction or can they be used as a match? Mr. Meyers said that when they have finished with a vehicle, it practically has no value. He stated that typically they keep it in the fleet as a spare vehicle or will turn it over to the county. He stated that any resources obtained would have to be put back into the capital fund.

Mr. Bauman said the scoring criteria for these applications will be developed and forwarded to committee members. Mr. Mrozinski stated if PennDOT does not have a prioritization factor, he requests everyone look at the applications equally. Mr. Mrozinski said the group seems to be prioritizing applications based upon replacement vehicles first, then equipment, new vehicles, maintenance and finally facilities. Mr. Bauman stated it is his understanding that as a group, we need to set our own priorities.

Mr. Bauman said for the initial Coordinated Transit Plan it would be important to see what each group has done from a strategic plan and needs assessment perspective and with what type of committees each group is involved.

Ms. Howarth stated MCTA has a Transportation Committee which is coordinated through the Pocono Healthy Community Alliance. Ms. Howarth noted she chairs the Transportation Committee which meets to discuss a variety of issues, including the Workers Express Program, Persons with Disabilities Program, their transportation system and how to expand services. She stated they have an internal Action Committee and a local advisory network for Persons with Disabilities and an Ad Hoc Committee to formulate a strategic plan. MCTA is in the second month of a six month study with a consulting firm to develop a transportation development program to review services and determine how to integrate fixed routes and shared ride services to a broader scope.

Mr. Meyers said CCCT is involved with the Interagency Council which includes 40 different social agencies and twice a year transportation is on their agenda. He stated most of their recent activities have focused on the Persons with Disabilities Program which provides for subsidized transit for people with disabilities on the shared ride systems. He stated the need for an assessment has been discussed, but the Council is not interested. Mr. Meyers stated a needs assessment is the most difficult and expensive piece of consultant work. In terms of strategic planning, Carbon County is a smaller county and the transportation system is really not designed to be a mass transit system.

Mr. Mrozinski stated the Pike County Area Agency on Aging sits on the Pike County Transportation Advisory Board and their existing fleet, issues and needs are discussed. They also have a consultant conducting a needs assessment for Pike County. A survey of riders is being conducted to find out what their needs are and what type of services they are requesting. A county wide survey of residents is also being conducted to determine public needs, not just for medical and shared ride but also for fixed routes. The consultant will be working on a strategic plan for the fleet and the future of public transportation in Pike County and should be completed in the fall. Mr. Mrozinski noted there are no hospitals in Pike County so they transport people to New York, Allentown, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Philadelphia, and New Jersey.

Ms. Doyle stated the Wayne County Human Services Transportation has a 12 member Transportation Committee which meets quarterly. Quarterly quality assurance surveys are completed and their needs assessment is completed through the Area Agency on Aging as part of their five year plan. She stated they have 20 vehicles and conduct shared ride and curb to curb service.

Ms. Rademaker of the Human Resource Center, Wayne County stated the Center has a building in Pike County and attends their transportation meetings to discuss problems with maintenance on the vehicles, etc. Ms. Rademaker stated the Center has about 30 vehicles including cars and buses and almost 100% of their clientele uses them to travel to the Resource Centers.

Mr. Peterson said the Carbon Training Center doesn't have a transportation committee, but does sit on the Interagency Council.

Mr. Zahora said the STS has a Transportation Committee which meets quarterly. This committee is made up of nursing homes, office of senior services and disability groups. He stated they review all their programs and share with the group ridership numbers, feedback, etc. A strategic plan was completed a couple of years ago that looked at their fixed routes. Service changes were made in November 2005 and they continue to address service needs as new situations arise.

Mr. Bauman thanked everyone for coming and noted there was great dialogue at the meeting. Mr. Bauman stated he would contact PennDOT for additional direction. Mr. Bauman stated the initial guidance document in late January said "each RPO and MPO may determine the methodology it uses to evaluate and rank applications", so it's up to this subcommittee to develop the criteria and utilize it for the applications.

c) Schedule

d) Meeting follow-up actions

#### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the NPRTPO Transit Subcommittee meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

**Section 5310/JARC/New Freedom  
Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan  
FFY 2007 Certification**

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, as the designated Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) for a five-county region has formally adopted by August 16, 2007 a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (coordinated plan) from which projects selected for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 funding under the Section 5310 Program, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, and New Freedom Program shall be derived.

The following Pennsylvania counties are within the boundaries of the coordinated plan: Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne.

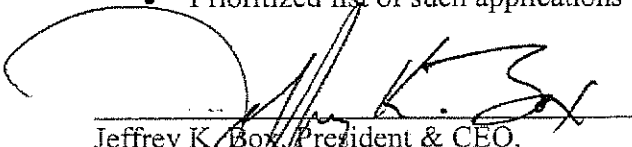
The TPO convenes the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee, which has established a public transit-human services transportation coordinating Subcommittee which includes the participation of representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers and members of the public (e.g. individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes). Although participation by every group listed is not required, the TPO has documented its good faith efforts to solicit involvement.

The NPRTPO Committee's public transit-human services transportation coordinating Subcommittee has reviewed all Section 5310, JARC and New Freedom Program applications for funding from within the boundaries of the coordinated plan and provided an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes.

Through its comprehensive review, the NPRTPO Committee's public transit-human services transportation coordinating Subcommittee has identified strategies and/or activities to address identified services gaps and set relative priorities for implementation by determining the priority order of all Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom Program applications for funding from within the boundaries of the coordinated plan.

The TPO has developed and adopted a coordinated plan (attached) that includes at a minimum the following elements:

- List of the groups that were represented by participants of the public transit-human services transportation coordinating Subcommittee;
- Documentation of the NPRTPO Committee's good faith efforts to solicit involvement in the public transit-human services transportation coordinating Subcommittee;
- The NPRTPO Committee's identification of strategies and/or activities to address identified service gaps and set relative priorities for implementation through its determination of the priority order of applications for Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom funding within its jurisdiction;
- Prioritized list of such applications

  
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Jeffrey K. Boy, President & CEO,  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

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August 16, 2007

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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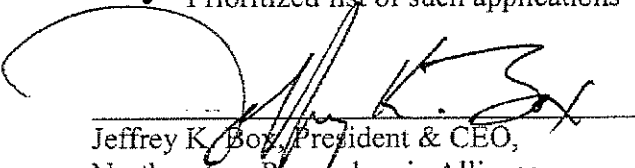
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Jeffrey K. Boy, President & CEO,  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

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August 16, 2007

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Date