Northwest Louisiana Job Access – Extended Service Transportation Strategy Plan

July 7, 2005
Plan Purpose

- To define and quantify the job access-transportation needs of our citizens;

- To define and quantify the gaps in existing transportation services; and

- To offer a range of transportation options and strategies which increase access to employment opportunities for low-income residents and the general public.
Transportation Barriers

- There is often a mismatch between where people live and where job growth is taking place;

- Transit service hours are limited (there is not service between 7:30 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.);

- There is low automobile ownership among low-income residents, and

- Work trips frequently require several destinations such as shopping, child care and health care.
Scope of Work

- Task 1: Establish Collaborative Planning Process
- Task 2: Spatial Analysis of Target Populations, Employment Centers & Related Services
- Task 3: Assessment of Unmet Need for Additional Transportation Services
- Task 4: Identify Job Access Goals, Policies & Strategies
- Task 5: Performance Measures & Data Collection
- Task 6: Monitoring & Reporting
- Task 7: Prepare Regional Job Access-Extended Service Transportation Strategic Plan for the Shreveport-Bossier Region
Community Input

• Public transportation is serving fewer and fewer businesses as the city grows and hours of operation expand. This poses an economic hardship on Shreveport-Bossier citizens that are most in need of employment and on employers in need of a stable workforce.

• There was a significant similarity of themes between the Oversight Committee, employers, and the general community. The majority of people in the community that participated in the meetings and completed surveys are actively working. Yet, maintaining employment is a daily struggle for many of them. Their personal stories of the logistics, time and expense required to get to and from work are astounding.
Community Input

• The lack of available transportation caused 43% to lose a job at one time or another and 70% to be unable to accept a job offer.

• Even though only a few employers participated, those who did indicated that transportation is a key factor in their absenteeism and turnover rates. The economic impact from this could be significant, especially given an estimated training cost of $5,000 for each new employee.

• The challenge ahead will be to find those solutions and strategies which will cost-effectively increase employment opportunities for those “at-need” in the Shreveport-Bossier community.
Stakeholder Interviews

- SporTran
- Bossier Office of Community Services
- Bossier Parish Community College, Community Workforce Center
- United Way of Northwest Louisiana
- Goodwill Industries
- Louisiana Department of Labor, Shreveport Job Center
- Louisiana Department of Labor, Bossier Job Center
- LSU Health Sciences Center
- Willis Knighton Health System
- Louisiana Department of Social Services, Bossier Office of Family Support
- Louisiana Department of Social Services, Shreveport Office of Family Support
- LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research
Job Access Transportation Case Studies

Types of Allowable JARC Services:

- Those aimed at increasing the delivery of existing public transit services through increased hours of operation and/or expanding transit routes;

- Special services (shuttles, guaranteed ride home, weekend or late night demand-response services);

- Automobile loan and rehabilitation programs where recipients participate in ridesharing programs;

- Programs that promote use of transit vouchers and employer-provided transportation; and

- Marketing and advertising programs that increase awareness of transportation options.
Job Access Transportation Case Studies

- Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Erie & Niagara Counties NY
  - Using technology for mobility management

- The WAVE, York County MN
  - Wheels to Access Vocation & Education Program

- Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority, Hamilton County TN
  - Connecting people with Jobs in Hamilton County

- Charles County Public Transit, Charles County MD
  - VanGo Public Transit Evening & Route Expansion

- JUANT, Charlottesville & 2 Rural Counties, VA
  - Welfare-to-Work Transportation
Job Access Transportation Case Studies

- Anne Arundel YWCA, Anne Arundel MD
  - YWCA Transportation Training Program

- Lutheran Social Services of New England, Burlington VT
  - Good News Garage CommuteShare Program

- Collaborative Project of American Red Cross, San Diego Workforce Partnership, All Congregations Together & 14 Other Agencies, San Diego CA
  - Chollas View Work First Center

- Collaborative Project of JACOB, PACE, CATS, IL DHS & Will County Center for Concerned Citizens, Joliet IL
  - PACE Evening Bus Service Extension

- Jacksonville Transit Authority, Jacksonville FL
  - Expansion of Service & ChoiceRide
Commuter Choice Program

• IRS Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefits
  – Incentives for employees to choose public transit or vanpools to commute to work
  – Incentives to employers to offer employees the tax-free benefit

• Employees can receive up to $105/month or up to $1,260/year from their employer, tax-free

• Employers benefit through reduced FICA, federal unemployment taxes and federal income taxes

• Employers unable to cover the full cost of the transportation benefit may also offer the program as an employee-paid “pre-tax” benefit

• An employer may subsidize part of the $105/month benefit, with remaining portion paid from employee’s pre-tax income
Goals for Job Access Transportation

- Goal #1: Establish a central bureau for the dissemination of information and training.
- Goal #2: Maintain current information on all transportation providers.
- Goal #3: Identify new transportation service opportunities and options.
- Goal #4: Identify and cultivate new rider bases/groups.
- Goal #5: Promote existing incentives to using public transit.
- Goal #6: Maintain community input and review.
- Goal #7: Establish an annual review of any new programs or services.
Recommended Job Access Transportation Services

• **Recommendation #1: Expansion of Fixed Route Transit Services**
  - Night Owl Service
  - LiftLine Night Owl Service

• **Recommendation #2: Addition of Transportation Brokerage Services**
  - Transportation Brokerage Agency as Liason/Coordinator of Resources
  - Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service
  - Transit-Fare Reimbursement
  - Training and Education Programs
SporTran Night Owl Service

Service Plan

To start Night Owl Service on limited routes that connect the majority of the at-need neighborhoods to major employers that also operate during the evening and on weekends.
At Need Population: High Percentage of Workers with Non-Standard Work Shifts
(Leave Home to Work 12:00pm-4:59am)

Census Tracts for At Need Population with High Percentage of Workers with Non-Standard Work Shifts

Source: BHHS Architects based on U. S. 2000 Census data
SporTran Night Owl Service

• Key Employment Centers
  – The casino and riverfront entertainment districts of Shreveport and Bossier City.
  – The medical/hospital cluster of LSUHSC, Willis Knighton North, Christus Schumpert at St. Mary’s Place and Doctor’s Hospital.
  – The Youree Drive/Bert Kouns Industrial Drive retail and medical corridors.

• Hours of Operation
  – 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight), Monday through Saturday
  – Extension of regular Saturday service for Bossier Routes, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
SporTran Night Owl Service

- **Headways**
  - 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., 30 minutes
  - 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., 60 minutes
  - Bossier City Route(s), 60 minutes

- **Options**
  - Night Owl Service Option 1 (MHSM/BKI)
  - Night Owl Service Option 2 (SporTran)
Night Owl Service Option 2
Comparative Analysis
Night Owl Service Options

- Base of Operation
- Route Characteristics
- Level of Service
- Service to Major Employers
- Service to “At-Need” Population/Housing
- Service to Educational Institutions
- Convenience
- Connectivity
- Safety
- Capital Equipment Required
- Operating Costs
- Marketing
Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service

• Demand-Response, Door-to-Door Service

• Service open to those employed and in job training programs

• Overseen and coordinated by Transportation Brokerage Agency (NLCOG)

• A Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service should supplement, not compete with existing fixed-route transit services.

• Schedule
  – Targets hours after discontinuation of Night Owl Service in Central Shreveport zone
  – Targets peak periods for work arrivals and departures in other zones
  – Monday through Friday, unless data shows demand for Saturday and/or Sunday. Also depends on interest/cooperation of 24/7 employers in Shreveport-Bossier area to provide data and/or assistance in matching their employees to services.
Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service Zones

Radius Zones: 1 Mile - 5 Mile - 7 Mile - 10 Mile

Source: MNSM Architects & GM, Inc.
Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service

• Zone #1: 3 Mile Radius
  - Short Term: Weekday 12:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m. (5 hours/day)
  - Mid Term: Weekday 12:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m. (5 hours/day)
  - Long Term: Convert high demand areas to all night, fixed-route services

• Zone #2: 5 Mile Radius
  - Short Term: Weekday 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (3 hours/day)
  - Mid Term: Weekday 6:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. (6 hours/day)
  - Long Term: Add additional Night Owl Service to Zone 2
    Weekday 12:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m.
Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service

• Zone #3: 7 Mile Radius
  – Short Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (7 hours/day)
  – Mid Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (9 hours/day)
  – Long Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. (16 hours/day)

• Zone #4: 10 Mile Radius
  – Short Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (7 hours/day)
  – Mid Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (7 hours/day)
  – Long Term: Weekday 5:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (14 hours/day)
Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service

- **Cost Expected to be Comparable to Private Market**
  - Taxicabs: $3.25/1st mile/ $1.50/additional mile
  - Offices of Family Support: $16.00/trip
  - LiftLine: $19.36/trip

- **Funding Strategies (Transportation Brokerage Agency)**
  - Operating/Capital funding from local government agencies
  - JARC/TANF funds
  - Other grants
  - Pool existing funds spent on similar transportation services
  - Encourage employer participation in Commuter Choice Program
  - Develop discount or flat fee for frequent users (subscription service)
  - Develop varied fee structure based on trip length or crossing zone boundaries

MHS ARCHITECTS

NORTHWEST LOUISIANA JOB ACCESS – EXTENDED SERVICE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY PLAN
Conclusion

• Night Owl Service should be advanced immediately because it can most quickly fill the largest job access transportation gaps for the largest portion of the population. This service builds on:
  – Existing Services
  – Existing Management Structures
  – Existing Funding Sources

• It will take longer to implement Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service due to:
  – Complexity in Program Design
  – Level of Coordination Needed
  – Varied Funding Sources

• Reach agreement and designate a Transportation Brokerage Agency now.
  – Initiate public information and education programs
  – Promote employer fare programs
  – Bring together existing transportation providers to maximize services
  – Begin additional planning and coordination needed to implement Guaranteed Ride-to-Work Service