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A Typology of Senior Transportation Services in Westchester County



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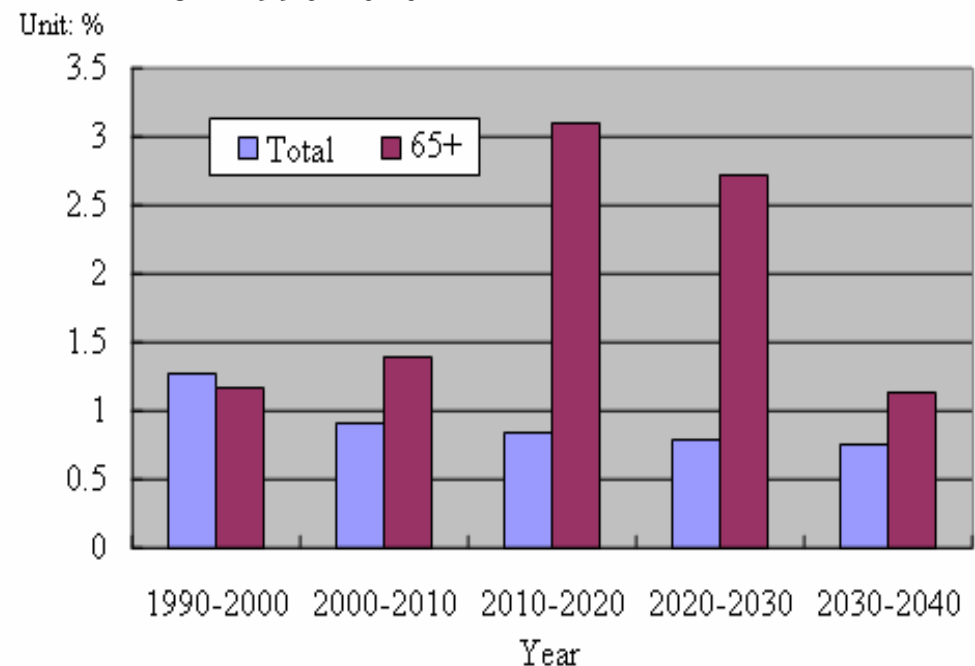
Introduction

Society is Aging

- National Trend
 - 2000: one in eight Americans is 65+
 - By 2030: one in five

- Seniors are driving more than years ago
 - Increasing reliance on automobile and higher license rates
 - Seniors drive 67% of the total trips by themselves (85+ : over 50%)

Figure 1. Annual Growth Rates of National General Population and Senior Population From 1990-2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004

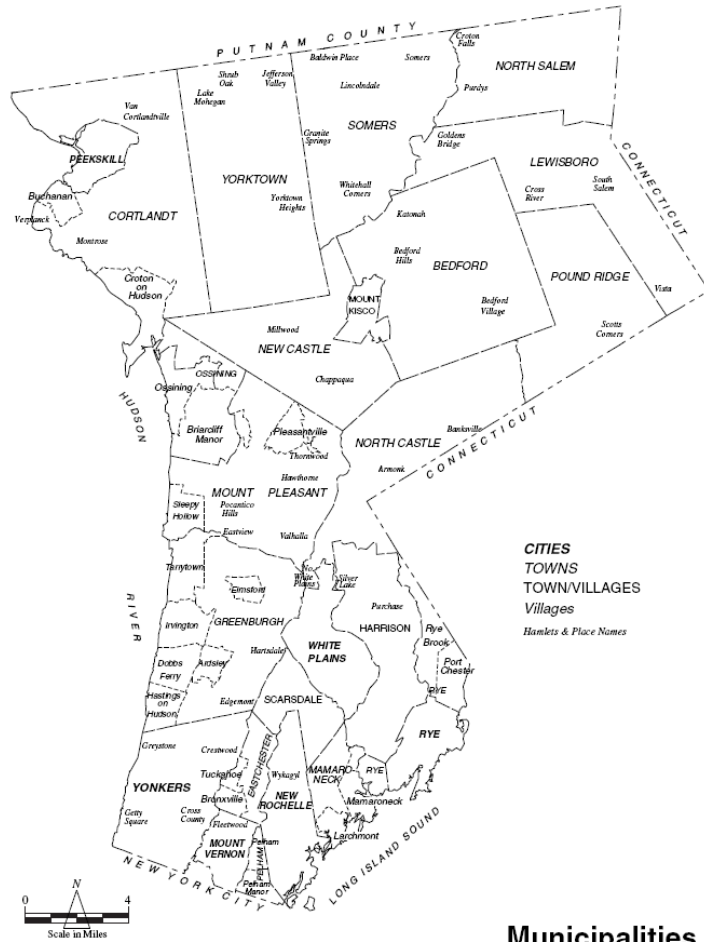
Introduction

- Key travel options for seniors who do not drive
 - Reliance on friends and family
 - *Fixed route public transit*
 - *Paratransit*
 - *Community transportation service*

Objectives

- Big Picture
- Area of Study – Westchester County
- Objectives
 - Identify all the services available for senior population within Westchester County,
 - Select and describe the essential supply characteristics of these services,
 - Identify limitations of existing services, and
 - Identify innovative senior transportation programs and possible directions for future efforts.

Profile of Westchester County



- Population Structure
 - Total population is 923,459 (census 2000)
 - 129,300 are seniors, 14%
 - 35,587 are 80+, 28% of senior group
- six cities, 15 towns and 22 villages
- South and north county

Senior Transportation Programs Identification

- Fixed route public transit
 - Bee-Line reduced fare program
- Paratransit
 - Bee-line paratransit
- Community transportation service
 - Transportation to and from senior centers/nutrition sites
 - Shopping bus
 - Medical Van
 - Taxi subsidy programs
 - Volunteer programs

Essential Supply Characteristics

- Objective
 - What, where and to whom do the services provide
- Administration
 - Agencies, funding, personnel
- Capacity
 - Mode, trip freq., #vehicles/drivers, ridership
- Accessibility
 - User costs, operating hours, procedures, reservation
- Adaptability
 - Special requirement are adapted?

Research Method

- Interviews with operators of senior transportation program via phone or in person
 - People from County DOT, Office of Disabled, Department of Senior Program and Services, and local offices/departments from 35 municipalities among all the 43 municipalities.
 - More than 50 interviews were conducted
- Descriptive data analysis

Bee-Line Bus Reduced Fare Program

Administration			Capacity			
Admin. /operators	Funding sources	Personnel	Travel mode	Avg. # of veh. per route (off peak)	Avg. off peak headway (min)	Avg. daily system-wide ridership
County DOT	FTA	Operators, drivers, info. referral, and workers.	Bus	Weekday:3 Saturday:1 Sunday:1	Weekday:33 Saturday:50 Sunday:65	Weekday:3391 Saturday:1694 Sunday: 720 (seniors)
Objective			Accessibility			
Target population	Service area	Trip purpose	User costs	Typical operating hours	Procedures	Reservation
65+, disabled and Medicare Holders	All over the County	Any	85¢ (+ 10¢ for transfer)	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Show ID on bus and pay fare	Unnecessary
Adaptability						
Pick-Up Location	Round trip?	Escorts / assistance available	Aides acceptance	Wheelchair accessible	Destination fixed/Private	
Bus stops	One way only	Assistance on board available from the driver	W/ fare	44% now; 100% by 2008	Private	

Bee-Line Paratransit

Administration			Capacity			
Admin. /operators	Funding sources	Personnel	Travel mode	Number of vehicles	Trip frequency	Avg. daily ridership
County DOT, Office for the Disabled	Federal and state funds. \$54M / yr.	Operators, drivers, info. referral, and workers.	Seven-passenger van	About 50.	NA	Weekday: 600-800 trips Weekends: 200-300
Objective			Accessibility			
Target population	Service area	Trip purposes	User costs	Operating hrs	Procedures	Reservation
Functionally unable to use regular transit.	All over the county	Any	\$3.00 one way	6am-7pm Sat: 8am-7pm	Certification and set up interview. Reservations req'd.	Same day, and 1-4 days
Adaptability						
Pick-Up location	Round trip?	Escorts / Assistance Available	Aides acceptance	Wheelchair accessible	Destination fixed/Private	
Curb-to-curb	Yes	Limited assistance from drivers on board.	Yes	Yes	Private	

Community Transportation Programs

- ❑ Supplemental programs of public transit
- ❑ The forms are various from municipalities
- ❑ Each municipality has its own community transportation programs
- ❑ The supply characteristics are similar for the same type of services

Five Typical Forms of Programs	No. of programs	No. of municipalities covered	% of municipalities covered
To/from senior centers, nutrition sites	23	27	77%
Shopping bus	25	28	80%
Medical van	20	22	63%
Taxi Subsidy Programs	9	10	29%
Volunteer Programs	5	6	17%



Figure 2. Medical van with lifts



Figure 3. Senior Bus

Community Transportation Program – Transportation to/from senior centers/nutrition sites

□ Objective

- Local seniors
- Purpose: congregate meals and/or recreational activities

□ Administration

- Local Office of aging, department of recreation and senior centers

□ Capacity

- Mode: Bus and/or van
- Average Daily Ridership: city: 30-50, town: 10-20, village: 5-10

Community Transportation Program – Transportation to/from senior centers/nutrition sites

□ Accessibility

- User costs: Free - \$3 per round trip
- Core hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Procedures and reservation

□ Adaptability

- Door-to-door (61%) and curb to curb (39%)
- Less than 10% with escorts
- 87% are wheelchair accessible

Other Types of Community Programs

- ❑ Shopping Bus
 - Daily or weekly group trips to designated grocery stores or supermarkets
- ❑ Medical Van
 - Daily or weekly trips to Dr.'s appointments, and hospitals upon individual requests
 - Free-\$6 per round trip
 - Longer reservation time
- ❑ Taxi Subsidy Programs
 - Half price discounted or \$1-2 dollars off
 - Limited to local destinations
 - Hours may be limited to the non-peak hours
- ❑ Volunteer Programs
 - Drivers are local volunteers
 - No destination limitations
 - Operated by non-government organizations
 - Free of charge

Countywide Ridership Comparison

- Bee-line bus
 - Systemwide: 1,000,000 one-way trips per year (seniors)
 - 3300+ each weekday, 1600+ on Saturdays and 700+ on Sundays
- Bee-line paratransit
 - 200,000 one-way trips per year
 - 600-800 daily trips per weekday and 200-300 on weekends
 - 6,000 registered users and 57% are seniors
- Community program
 - 500-600 customers per month are transported to senior centers/nutrition sites
 - 550-700 individuals per month are provided with shopping, medical and other types of trips

Pros and Cons

- Bee-Line bus
 - Largest capacity
 - Affordable user costs and cheap operating costs
 - No reservation needed

 - Long waiting time at bus stops is difficult for many seniors, esp. in bad weather
 - Infrequent and limited services on weekends
 - Bus do not always stop at seniors' desired destination
 - Bus stops maybe difficult to walk to

Pros and Cons

- Bee-Line paratransit
 - Customized and flexible
 - Travel all over the county
 - Shorter travel time

 - Rigorous eligibility requirements
 - Application process is time-consuming and complicated
 - Long waiting time between segments of a whole trip
 - Expensive to operate

Pros and Cons

- Community programs
 - Targeted to specific social needs
 - Familiarity between each other

 - Limited to local destinations
 - Destinations are pre-determined
 - Hard to allocate the resources efficiently
 - Volunteer programs have insurance problems

Future Improvement

□ Bee-line Bus

- County DOT initiated focus group meetings, in order to understand senior riders' specific transportation needs
- All local buses would be equipped with wheelchair accessible lifts by the end of this year and BxM4c by the end of 2008
- Purchase of low-floor buses
- Education and training for senior riders
- Adjust stops or routes to better serve seniors' travel patterns

Future Improvement

□ Bee-Line Paratransit

- Simplify the application process (TCRP Synthesis 30: ADA Paratransit Eligibility Certification Practices)
- More efficient scheduling in order to shorten riders' waiting time
- Trying to adapt senior riders' specific requirement
 - Less expensive price or free for seniors who could not afford
 - Allow vehicles to enter private property

Future Improvement

- Community based programs
 - Increase coordination of neighboring municipalities so that more seniors and longer distance trips could be served
 - More efficient scheduling
 - Better marketing and education

Innovative Programs

- Livable communities
 - Increase availability of affordable senior housing near mixed-use village centers

Innovative Programs

- ITN America (Portland, Maine)
 - Non-profit transportation network service
 - Seniors are provided with cars and drivers
 - Drivers are paid with cars owned by ITN or volunteers with their own cars
 - Riders pay \$8 per trip
 - Challenge is to match the operating costs

Innovative Programs

- Car-sharing program
 - Seniors with cars and younger people without cars. Younger people drive for seniors.
 - Senior who is able to drive take seniors nearby who are not able to drive if they regularly visit the same place, e.g., senior centers/recreation event sites

Innovative Programs

□ Insurance Reform

- Policies are needed to facilitate insurance for car-sharing and volunteer programs



Thanks!