

2013

Excellence in Regional Transportation AWARDS



A PROGRAM AFFILIATE OF NADO


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SERVING AMERICA'S RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROFESSIONALS

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2013

Excellence in Regional Transportation AWARDS



This year marks the seventh year that regional transportation-related programs and projects are being recognized for their innovation and impact on communities throughout the nation. In 2013, 16 projects from organizations in 8 states are being recognized through the Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards program for their innovative and excellent approaches to regional transportation planning and program implementation.

This year's winning projects help meet their regions' needs through various program areas, including: bicycle and pedestrian planning, air quality, equity, project implementation, public involvement, safety, and transit. Contact information for each award-winning organization is also provided.

The Excellence in Regional Transportation Award is a program of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation and its program affiliate RPO America. RPO America serves as the network for the nation's rural and small metropolitan transportation planners and other professionals.

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Air Quality

Educating the general public, government officials, and the private sector on current air quality issues important to the Unifour region and engaging them to reduce their emissions to maintain compliance with federal air quality standards, the Unifour Air Quality Committee (UAQC) provided by the **Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG)** have organized and run the *Annual Air Quality Conference* every Spring since 2007. UAQC consists of stakeholders from the private and public sectors dedicated to improving the air quality in the Unifour area. A primary sponsor of the conference is the Unifour Air Quality Oversight Committee (UAQOC), which was formed to make policy and financial decisions for regional air quality activities.

The *Annual Air Quality Conference* is the only one of its kind in North Carolina. It is held at the Lenoir-Rhyne University campus located in the City of Hickory and regularly attracts near to 100 attendees; representing local municipalities, local industries, public health organizations, public education agencies, environmental advocacy groups, state and federal agency staff and other public groups, and private citizens.

With encouraging positive feedback from attendees, the conference is anticipated to continue. Funding has already been secured to support the conference annually through 2014. Funding for the UAQC/UAQOC activities when necessary is provided by the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO), the Unifour Rural Planning Organization (URPO), and occasional assessments of the 28 local governments in the region (based on population). In addition, the Reese Institute for the Conservation of Natural Resources sponsored lunch, with some financial support from other business and industrial partners. The most significant cost of organizing the conference is agency staff time. Total costs for conference materials are estimated to be \$2,500. Other key ongoing conference partners are the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Division of Air Quality and supporters such as Duke Energy, Shurtape Technologies, and the County Chambers of Commerce.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG)

Tony Gallegos, Natural Resources Administrator; tony.gallegos@wpcog.org

H. DeWitt Blackwell, Jr., Executive Director; dee.blackwell@wpcog.org

Hickory, NC; (828) 322-9191

Website: www.wpcog.org

Project website: reese.lr.edu/air

Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning

To increase economic impact and tourism as well as bicycle ridership and connectivity in Sumter County, Georgia, the **River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC)**, along with its partners, planned and developed a bicycle event called *Prison to Peanuts Adventure* that would use close to 60 percent of their newly designated bicycle route. The event's name draws upon the National Parks that the route connects: Andersonville National Historic Site (prison) and the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (peanut capital of Georgia).

The new route is a result of a transportation study conducted in 2009 to designate over 40 miles of potential State Bicycle Routes in Sumter County. In 2011, this bicycle route was approved by Georgia Department of Transportation and the route became an official State Bicycle Route, with "Share the Road" signs and "Bicycle Route" directional arrows.

On Saturday, April 28, 2012, all 110 bicyclists from around Georgia, as well as Florida and Tennessee, and ranging from age 10 to 72, participated in a bicycle and road safety briefing before cycling off at their own pace. Thanks to cooperative collaboration amongst the three cities (Andersonville, Americus and Plains) and partners along route, the event had Support and Gear (SAG) vehicles with first aid, bicycle spares and tools, as well as water and snacks. Participants also received a special welcome from Mayor Barry Blount when they stopped in Downtown Americus followed by a tour of the Jimmy Carter National Site and a Jazz concert courtesy of Downtown Plains.

The RVRC was able to execute the event at the low cost of \$650 due to the commitment and support from local and national partners, including the



PRISON TO PEANUTS
PARK-TO-PARK BICYCLE ADVENTURE

Andersonville National Historic Site & Museum → Americus → Jimmy Carter National Historic Site

SATURDAY, APRIL 28TH, 2012

REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS: 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
RIDE BEGINS AT 9:00 AM (Depart from Andersonville)

For event itinerary and a route map, find us on Facebook or please visit www.activevalley.org

TO REGISTER, PLEASE CONTACT:
Kayra Velez (River Valley Regional Commission)
706.256.2914 OR kvelez@rivervalleyrc.org
Please provide name, contact information, and t-shirt size.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:   



Images courtesy of RVRC

Georgia DOT, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, Andersonville National Historic Site, and POW Museum.

This is the RVRC's second award for bicycle planning. The organization was recognized last year for their *More Pedal-Less Metal: Urban Bicycling Initiative* which brought exposure to the *Georgia Safe Routes to School Program* for the 16 county region. Due to their continued success, all event partners have joined forces again in 2013 to bring the second annual Prison to Peanuts event scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 28, 2013.

River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC)
Columbus, GA; (706) 256-2910

Julio Portillo, Planner; jportillo@rivervalleyrc.org

Patti Cullen, Executive Director; pcullen@rivervalleyrc.org

Website: www.therivervalleyrc.org

Project website: www.activevalley.org/prisontopeanuts.htm

The *North Carolina Lakes District plan*, by the **Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments** (Kerr-Tar COG), encompasses five counties in north central North Carolina. The focus of the plan is to link the region's myriad lakes, riparian corridors, and recreation areas; reinforcing and enhancing the region's existing character, consisting of compact traditional town centers surrounded by scattered forests, farms, lakes, and rivers. In addition, the plan addresses and realizes solutions for its pressing core issues of mobility, economic development, environmental, and human health by connecting bicycle facilities, greenways, blue ways, and vehicular scenic byways.

Plan development is coordinated by Kerr Tar Regional Council of Governments' planning and transportation planning staff, with contributions of in-kind assistance from local communities including the Granville County Transportation Planner, county and municipal planning staffs, and local GIS planners.

Kerr-Tar COG was able to obtain a budget of \$250,000 from funding sources such as Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments, Kerr-Tar Rural Planning Organization, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (in-kind), North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (in-kind).

The planning process began in August 2011. The process incorporated input from an active group of stakeholders and partners including the NCDOT rail, bike, and pedestrian divisions; local, county, and regional environmental groups together with the Tar-Pam River Basin Association and Roanoke River Basin Association; Southside Virginia planning organizations and the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Tourism, Marketing, and Cultural and Historic Resources, and numerous Kerr-Tar region local, municipal and county departments.

Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments (Kerr-Tar COG)
Michael Ciriello, Planning Director; mciriello@kerrtarcog.org
Diane Cox, Interim Executive Director; dcox@kerrtarcog.org
Henderson, NC; (252) 436-2040
Website: www.kerrtarcog.org
Project website: www.nclakesdistrict.com

From February 2011 through October 2012, the **Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG)** commissioned the *Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* in order to provide a strong foundation for the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in South Carolina's Lower Savannah regional transportation network. The plan identifies the process and technical input, describes existing facilities, looks at potential demand for bicycle and pedestrian use, identifies and recommends corridors and routes for pedestrian implementation.

It incorporates model design guidelines and development regulations as well as demonstrates how they can be incorporated into the existing network and transportation system. The plan also provides



Images courtesy of LSCOG



regional and local goals for improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, policies, and programs.

Since the plan was completed, several action items have been implemented. The recommended Design Guidelines were adopted by the Lower Savannah Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Policy Committee (Lower Savannah Board of Directors), ensuring the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in all future projects programmed through the Lower Savannah rural transportation program. Two recommended shoulder paving projects including more than 10 miles of roadway have been programmed into the Lower Savannah Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Additionally, the City of Barnwell's strategy is being implemented through the formation of a new Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee. This committee is forming new partnerships throughout Barnwell County. In Aiken County, Lower Savannah staff served on the Aiken County Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee and continues efforts in Aiken County by serving on the Greater Aiken Integrative Trails (GAIT) Committee.

Project partners include Alta Planning alongside the City of Barnwell and the City of Orangeburg. The cost of the plan was \$350,000, paid for with Lower Savannah Guide-Share funding. In South Carolina, Guide-Share funds are from the state rural transportation program, consisting of 80 percent FHWA funding and 20 percent State funding.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG)

Jennifer Tinsley, Planning and Development Administrator; jtinsley@lscog.org

Connie Shade, Executive Director; cshade@lscog.org

Aiken, SC; (803) 649-7981

Website: www.lscog.org

Rural western North Carolina is a land of extremes, where multimillion dollar estates are often located within a stone's throw away from substandard, low-income housing. Existing Census data is not fine-grained enough to capture these wealth inequality extremes. In order to portray these hidden disparities, the **Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (IPDC)** created the *Pockets of Rural Poverty* study. The study is a simple mapping exercise that better illustrates and communicates locally known information. While working with the Grant Service Department on income qualified housing rehabilitation, IPDC discovered a treasure trove of spatially determined housing and income data. They began mapping years of built-up data to help illustrate these locally known but hard to quantify issues.

Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (IPDC)

Josh King, Former Regional Planner; josh@landofsky.org

Jim Edwards, Executive Director; jedwards@regionc.org

Rutherfordton, NC; (828) 287-2281

Website: www.regionc.org

Project Implementation

“The best policy decisions are driven by good data and consensus building.” This is why the **French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO)**, housed and staffed by the **Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC)**, implemented *From Cradle to Construction – Project Tracking*, to ensure a consensus-based decision-making process throughout the development of their regional sustainability plan.

The project analyzed transportation projects called for in a number of overlapping plans using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). By tracking a project from inception to construction, the FBRMPO was able to identify projects that did not follow a consensus-building process from start to finish. The MPO is now beginning a review of all projects against the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) 2009 Complete Streets Policy and amending plans to include projects that missed a step in the process.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC)

Paul Black, MPO Director; paul@landofsky.org

Danna Stansbury, Interim Executive Director; danna@landofsky.org

Asheville, NC: (828) 251-7445

Website: www.landofsky.org

In November 2011, the **Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG)** began working with the Allendale Office of Aging after it fell into a deep financial crisis. To keep the Office of Aging from closing its doors and halting important public and specialized transit services such as the Allendale Scooter, a national model of coordinated public transportation for rural counties, LSCOG incorporated the *Resuscitation of Transit (and Senior) Services in Allendale, SC*.

Allendale County, one of the nation's top ten poorest counties, rose to meet the most basic needs of its local citizens and called on LSCOG, which houses the Area Agency on Aging and a transportation resource center for the region. Within 24 hours, LSCOG staff arrived in Allendale and stayed for several months. They identified the problems, analyzed causes, and developed a two-part plan with specific recommendations. Within nine months, the agency was getting back on its feet and could foresee a path forward by covering its financial obligations in a timely manner. Transit services started to run more efficiently than ever, service and safety improved, and the agency is no longer losing money.

Although work is ongoing, the agency has had a complete turnaround as an organization and its services are stronger and more credible than ever. LSCOG now maintains minimal involvement from a managerial perspective.

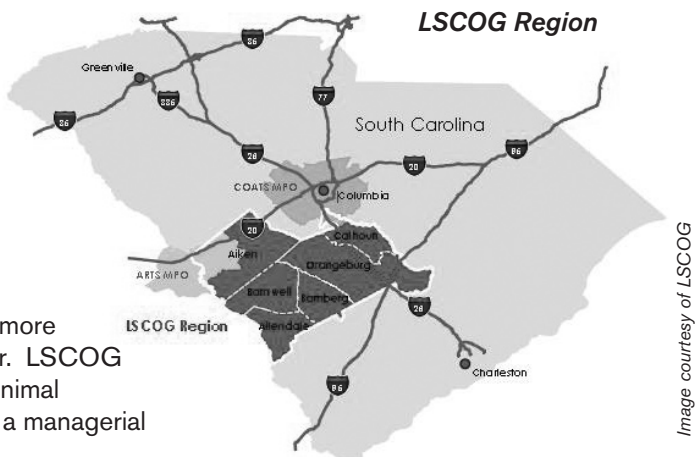


Image courtesy of LSCOG

The Office of Aging has an annual budget of approximately \$500,000 with funding from LSCOG for purchasing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 service, FTA Section 5311 funds from the Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority (RTA), and contracts for Medicaid non-emergency transportation through Logisticare, the state's broker for those services.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG)
 Lynnda Bassham, Director of Human Services; lbassham@lscog.org
 Connie Shade, Executive Director; cshade@lscog.org
 Aiken, SC; (803) 649-7981
 Website: www.lscog.org

In response to a mandated planning process put forth by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) in late 2006, the **Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG)**, along with Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority (d.b.a. Palmetto Breeze), developed the plan *Regional Mobility Management in the Lowcountry – From Cooperation to Consolidation*.

The plan was prepared and completed in 2007 by a consultant and anchored by a committee of representatives of regional human services agencies. Members were skeptical, but as they learned more about the potential benefits of coordination and consolidation, some became very enthusiastic. LCOG applied for and received Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5316 and 5317 funding to begin its implementation, which included the hiring of a Mobility Manager. From 2009 to the present, the two



Images courtesy of LCOG

organizations have been implementing the plan, with the Mobility Manager responsible for operations and outreach.

Results include Palmetto Breeze providing transportation services for the clients of a growing group of human services agencies, and SCDOT continues to provide funding. In late 2011, the initiative received support and recognition from two outside sources: the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), which provided consultants to prepare a coordination and consolidation implementation plan (completed in late 2012), and the FTA announced first, a Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative capital grant, and then, a planning grant, to improve transportation services for veterans and military families. To date their budget is \$300,000 provided by funding sources such as the FTA (via SCDOT), Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, CTAA, and area human services agencies that contract services.

Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG)

Ginnie Kozak, Planning Director; gkozak@lowcountrycog.org

Chris Bickley, Executive Director; cbickley@lowcountrycog.org

Yemassee, SC; (843) 726-5536

Website: www.lowcountrycog.org

Public Involvement

Engage North Central Pennsylvania implemented by the **North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (NCPRPDC)** allows area residents the opportunity to share ideas online to help make North Central Pennsylvania an even better place to live, work, and do business. On this website, users can submit ideas, comment on ideas, and vote on ideas submitted by local and regional officials or other community participants. Community leaders then review ideas, provide direct feedback, and ultimately implement the most popular ideas. The project leader was responsible for site content and active public participation.

To date, there has been an increase in overall public engagement through idea submission and staff interaction. In one month, 94 citizens in this rural region registered for the website. The initial question base focused on big ideas for future economic development in the region, transportation budgeting, economic policies, and workforce and manufacturing. The project is running from January 2013 to June 2014 and cost less than \$10,000 for the year. Funding was provided by the NCPRPDC, North Central RPO, Workforce Investment Board, and Pennsylvania Wilds.

North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission
(NCPRPDC)

Amy Kessler, Director of Community Development & Regional Planning;
amy@ncentral.com

Eric Bridges, Executive Director; ebridges@ncentral.com

Ridgway, PA; (814) 773-3162

Website: www.ncentral.com

Project website: www.engagenorthcentralpa.com

In the context of developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the **Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)** began *Transportation Surveys: Attitudinal Changes and Trends in Chittenden County, VT, 2000 – 2012*, public opinion surveys to gauge the public's thoughts on current transportation system performance and their priorities for future transportation investment and improvement.

The transportation surveys were conducted in three 6-year intervals over a 12-year span (from 2000 to 2006 to 2012) and found the following trends:

- The number of people who feel that gas taxes should only be invested in highways has decreased from 34 percent in 2006 to 25 percent in 2012



- > Fewer people feel that congestion is getting worse, as the percentage has decreased from 90 percent in 2000 to 72 percent in 2012
- > In 2012, 64 percent of people felt that Internet use is leading to fewer auto trips, whereas in 2000 only 37 percent agreed
- > 23 percent of survey respondents work for employers that allow them to work from home; however, according to the 2010 American Community Survey, only 5 percent of respondents said they actually work from home

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)
Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner; pkeating@ccrpcvt.org
Charlie Baker, Executive Director; cbaker@ccrpcvt.org
Michele Boomhower, Assistant Director, mboomhower@ccrpcvt.org
Winooski, VT; (802) 846-4490
Website: www.ccrpcvt.org

The **Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC)** and **Piedmont Triad Rural Planning Organization (PTRPO)** in conjunction with the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center have developed a *Rural Comprehensive Speed Management Plan* in order to combat the emergent trend of increasing road incidents in Randolph County, North Carolina. In a recent five-year period, there have been 110 fatal crashes and 169 crashes causing disabling injuries that occurred on Randolph County roads. A total of over 15,000 reported crashes led to an estimated \$800,000,000 in monetary costs, not to mention the pain and suffering from the loss of loved ones amongst families and the local community.



Image courtesy of PTRPO

Without additional concerted effort, area stakeholders expect these trends to continue. On average, more than 17 percent of Randolph's crashes were indicated to involve speeding over the limit or too fast for conditions. Inappropriate speeds, and a mismatch between speeds, area context, and infrastructure also affects the ability of children, elderly and others to be able to walk or bike to school, work and other destinations, and to lead healthy,

RANDOLPH COUNTY ROAD SAFETY REPORT

From 2006-2010, there were approximately 15,500 motor vehicle crashes in Randolph County where the crash severity was identified.

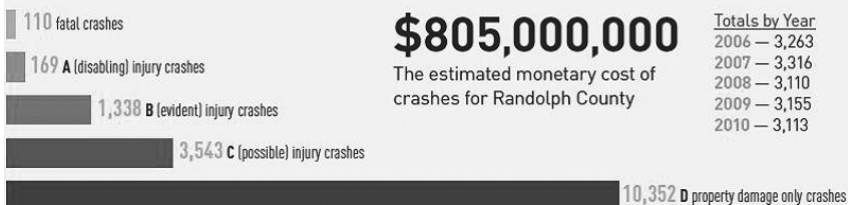


Image courtesy of PTRPO

AGE GROUPS IN CRASHES FROM 2006-2010

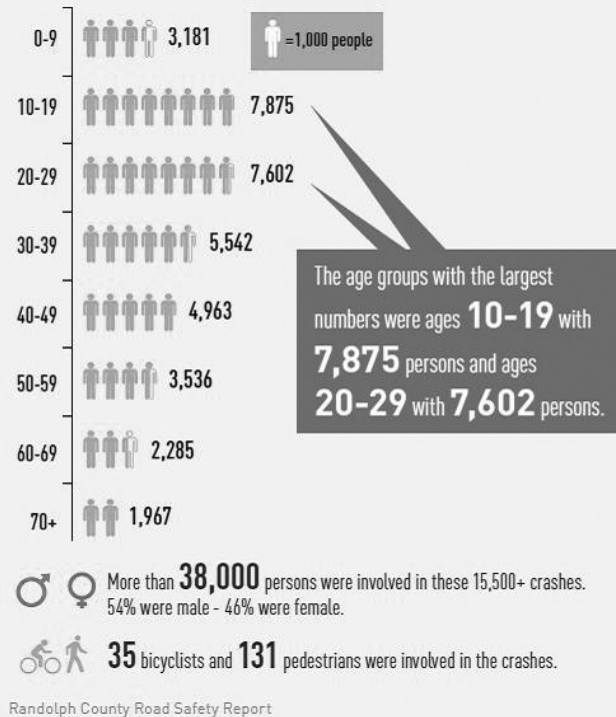


Image courtesy of PTRPO

active lives.

PTRPO has used different approaches to address barriers and opportunities when implementing a speed management action plan. Approaches includes identifying and treating problem corridors in a systematic way, proactively identifying areas to reduce the likelihood of future speeding incidents, and coordinate countermeasures in planning, engineering and design, enforcement, education, and publicity.

Piedmont Triad Regional Council
 Jesse Day, Regional Planner II; jday@ptrc.org
 Matthew Dolge, Executive Director; mdolge@ptrc.org
 Greensboro, NC; (336) 294-4950
 Website: www.ptrc.org

To establish, expand, and improve lasting transit services and standards in the 16-county River Valley region of Georgia, the **River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC)** implemented the *Mobility Management Program*, known locally as the Pataula Transit System. The program has been recognized by Georgia Trend Magazine since it began in December 2012.

By coordinating FTA 5311 public transportation services, the program achieved operation using the same vehicles as the Department of Human Services (DHS). Aside from the cost efficiencies, which are created by concentrating more passengers on one vehicle, coordinating transportation in this fashion also reduces the funds that local governments must contribute. When the two programs utilize the same vehicle, public transportation funds are often available to provide up to 90 percent of the cost of purchasing the vehicles, whereas a stand-alone DHS program would likely require the local government to pay 100 percent. Likewise, public transportation requires the local government to pay 50 percent of most operating costs, but by coupling the program with DHS, the latter program's funds can be counted as match. This significantly lowers the local cost further, by possibly 10 percent.

Such methods allow the region to improve current services, cut costs to passengers by re-investing new savings, and expand services. Overall, the program ensures that critical transit needs are met, along with promoting a cleaner environment through ride sharing, and enhancing accessibility to resources throughout the region. Such as healthcare centers, locations that promote economic development and well being, such as technical colleges, job training, and job interviews. The Mobility Manager notes that there was no better time to establish and expand coordinated transit in the River Valley region due to the generation of Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax funds, which allow the region and local governments to utilize a portion of their discretionary funds to serve as their required local matching funds, enabling a county to serve their entire jurisdiction with coordinated joint transit services. The annual program budget is approximately \$131,250. Partners involved with the program are the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transit Authority (Quitman, Randolph and Stewart Counties), DHS, River Valley Area Agency on Aging, and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC)

Tina Rust, GIS Planner; trust@rivervalleyrc.org

**Jarrod McCarthy, Community Developer/Mobility Manager;
jmccarthy@rivervalleyrc.org**

Patti Cullen, Executive Director; pcullen@rivervalleyrc.org

Columbus, GA; (706) 256-2910

Website: www.rivervalleyrc.org

In December 2012, the Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) Mobility Manager of the **Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC)** established *Regional Mobility Management*, a mobility council to develop an understanding of the current local RHST provision of service, and identify methods to increase current coordination among regional RHST agencies, in order to increase the cost-effectiveness of RHST delivery while maintaining or improving existing levels of service. In this effort the TRRC assigned the mobility manager, supported the regional mobility council, and coordinated information sharing between the various transit and governmental entities within the region.

The TRRC Mobility Manager has created a mobility council that brings public and private entities to the table to discuss transit coordination, optimization, and information sharing. The mobility manager helps to increase the awareness of transit in the region, and seeks to build successful partnerships to help people find alternative means of transportation in their community. The mobility manager guides the council on transit issues, helps create more local champions for transit, and serves as the transit representative in various transportation committees within the Three Rivers Region.

The mobility council is ongoing, and its budget is \$131,250, which is provided by Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Partners include the TRRC, GDOT, and Georgia Department of Human Services.

Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC)

Robert Hiett, Governmental Services Director; rhiett@threeriversrc.com

Lanier Boatwright, Executive Director; lboatwright@threeriversrc.com

Griffin, GA; (678) 692-0510

Website: www.threeriversrc.com

Project website: www.facebook.com/#!/trrcmobility

Since 1994, the **Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA)** has been promoting *Vanpooling Services* in its nine county region. Vanpooling is a group of 7 – 15 commuters that share a ride to work in a passenger van. The group meets at a central location, and the driving is done by one or more of the commuters. Initially, vanpool services were provided by KIPDA through a contract with a third-party provider. However, the service was inflexible and fees were high, which

made vanpooling a hard sell, even though the region has large employers, deeming the service a perfect transportation supplement. KIPDA felt there would be greater potential for vanpooling if the program was restructured and therefore, began looking at other vanpool programs across the United States to see what made them successful. In collaboration with a consulting firm, KIPDA developed a strategic plan that outlined a new vanpool program that would be low-cost, increase access to jobs, and meet program goals of reducing the number of vehicles on the road to lessen fuel consumption and improve air quality.

In August 2001, the new vanpool program was formed which partnered KIPDA's rideshare program, Ticket to Ride (TTR), and Transit Authority of River City (TARC), the local transit agency. TTR would manage the administrative functions of the vanpool program, and TARC would handle vehicle fleet management, including maintenance and insurance. In the first year of operation, four vans were purchased as a conservative attempt to begin an in-house program. The program started slowly, but once the vanpools hit the road, commuters realized how much they were saving on fuel costs and the wear and tear on their personal vehicles. As of May 2012, the fleet consisted of 102 vehicles; 80 vanpools are operating, 10 vehicles are back-ups for maintenance and repair, and 12 vehicles, one of which is handicap accessible, are ready for placement.

KIPDA is the lead agency for the TTR vanpool program; this includes securing funding, marketing, scheduling, customer service, billing and coordination of vehicle maintenance and repairs. It has become a successful business model. It provides six full-time staff positions and has a 94 percent customer satisfaction rating. Regions similar in size to KIPDA's are taking note. Approximately 80 percent of TTR's budget is federally funded with Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U) funds, through the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). For FY2012, TTR's total budget was \$881,024; KYTC contributed \$754,024 and INDOT contributed \$127,000. The monthly vanpool fares collected are used to fund the required 20 percent match. The estimated monthly fares collected for FY2012 totaled over \$700,000, four times the required 20 percent match.

Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA)
Kelly Tyra, Alternative Transportation Coordinator; kelly.tyra@ky.gov
Jack Couch, Executive Director; jack.couch@ky.gov
Louisville, KY; (502) 266-6084
Website: www.kipda.org
Project website: www.tickettoride.org

By enhancing existing transportation options and developing new ones, the **Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC)** assisted people in rural communities in Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Waldo Counties, thereby increasing access to the greater-Bangor metropolitan hub center. The project *Linking the Rural Regions of Four Counties in Maine to Enhance Transportation Opportunities and Improve Quality of Life* had two phases. The first involved information gathering using three methods; a random population survey, outreach to community groups, and a series of focus groups. The second phase included an analysis of the findings, as well as developing a series of recommendations and an implementation plan.

EMDC developed the application that funded, staffed, and coordinated this two-year project, lasting from March 2011 to March 2013. Their work was informed by an Advisory Group composed of leaders from the four counties in EMDC's catchment area. Based upon project outcomes, the principal recommendation was to create a rural Transportation Management Association (TMA), named *Getting There: A Guide to Rides in Eastern Maine*. The TMA will help rural residents of Eastern Maine respond to rising oil prices while improving mobility for those with limited ability or desire to drive by themselves.

The TMA will assume responsibility for education, promotion, and outreach for carpooling and ridesharing in Eastern Maine. A website launched in April 2013 provides comprehensive information and resources to assist residents in creating their own transportation solutions. In an effort to reduce unnecessary travel and to reduce transportation costs, the TMA works with municipalities, employers, and businesses to encourage localized and/or remote-access approaches to employment, service delivery, and shopping. EMDC is actively working on the sustainability plan to move the recommendations from the planning to reality. Their TMA is seen as a viable solution for other rural settings where logistics and funds are limited.

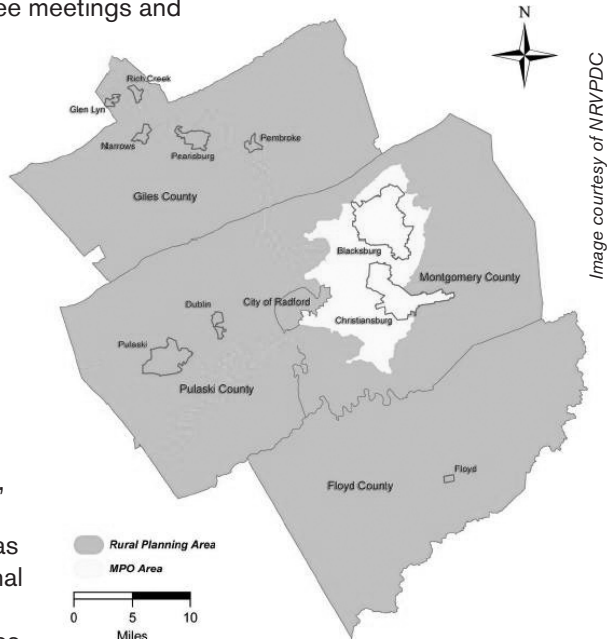
Although funding has ended, the Advisory Group is continuing to meet to implement recommendations. The project budget of \$770,988 was provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Tiger II planning grant, and supplementing this award was in-kind and a small cash match from Advisory Group members. Partners include the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System, and an Advisory Group composed of private and public leaders from the four counties in EMDC's catchment area.

Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC)
Vicki Rusbult, Director of the Center for Community Capital; vrusbult@emdc.org
Michael Aube, Executive Director; maube@emdc.org
Bangor, ME; (207) 942-6389
Website: www.emdc.org
Project website: www.emdc.org/index.php?id=36&sub_id=166

With the increasing interest in public transportation in the New River Valley, the **New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPCD)**, partnering with the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), conducted the *Regional Transportation Organization Study*, to identify opportunities for the creation of new services, to establish partnerships and increase funding competitiveness for the benefit of each community in the region.

Through the partnership between the PDC and MPO, they created a Regional Transit Organization Stakeholder Group. The group's first task was to examine three common transit organizational models in Virginia, the potential advantages of each model, and the potential benefits for existing partners. From committee meetings and stakeholder interviews, common challenges were identified amongst the existing transit services. Furthermore, each of the region's stakeholders expressed their level of comfort with each organizational model.

Based on the feedback provided by the Stakeholder Committee and individual interviews, a Regional Transit Coordinating Council was established. The Regional Transit Coordinating Council meets three times each year and is the first step



NRVPCD RPO & MPO Area

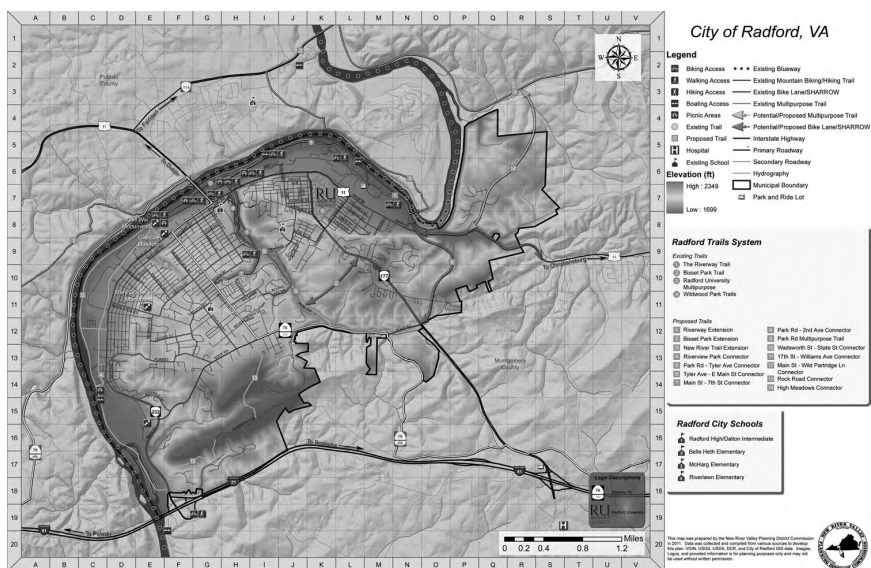


Image courtesy of NRVPMC

towards creating more dialog across the region. The group consists of existing transit operators, elected officials, and funding contributors. Major topics of discussion include information strategies to improve transit's visibility, use of technology, marketing without technology, service areas, ridership, and coordinating overlapping stops to improve transit users' experience.

The study is ongoing and began in August 2011, and the regular meetings have been instrumental in improving communication and coordination among the partners. The total project cost is \$20,000 provided by the PDC and MPO, including an annual \$3,500 for RTCC staffing and materials. Project partners include Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area MPO, New River Valley PDC, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Christiansburg, Town of Blacksburg, Blacksburg Transit, Pulaski Area Transit, and Community Transit and the Smart Way (Valley Metro).

New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPMC)
Elijah Sharp, Regional Planner II; esharp@nrvpdc.org
Kevin Byrd, Executive Director; kbyrd@nrvpdc.org
Radford, VA; (540) 639-9313
Website: www.nrvpdc.org
Project website: www.nrvpdc.org/rtcc.html

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NADO
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

400 N. Capitol St., NW, Suite 390
 Washington, DC 20001
 202.624.7806 • info@nado.org
www.NADO.org • www.RuralTransportation.org