

## Implementation Strategies

The new LOOP system is anticipated to go into service by mid-May 2010; it is expected that Flex service would start up a minimum of eight weeks after LOOP (July or August). Throughout the next several months, the county and MPO will continue working closely with the towns and stakeholders to ensure a successful new mass transit system. In the past, LOOP has suffered from a lack of marketing. Recent organizational changes, however, signal major progress toward moving public transportation in Dutchess County into an active and well-known member of the community. LOOP was currently housed under the Planning Department but now has its own department, Dutchess County Mass Transit, with a transit administrator hired to directly operate and oversee LOOP and Flex. In addition, a First Transit general manager has been hired with expertise in business and marketing, which should improve the quality of print and web materials.

### Primary Goals

There are the five goals for the region. These goals are relevant both to the study area and the county overall. The key is to bridge the isolation that people living in the rural areas have felt, while continuing to build on the relationships and collaboration developed through this study. The goals are:

1. Create a safe and reliable public transportation system
2. Distribute information materials via print and Internet that are clear and easy to understand
3. Conduct marketing and outreach to attract ridership
4. Continue collaboration and coordination amongst agencies and stakeholders – work together to share information and resources
5. Explore additional options for improving mobility

### Strategies

The following section lists strategies for each goal. Many of the strategies fall under more than one goal. The agency likely responsible for each strategy is also listed. The roles of the county and the mobility manager will overlap somewhat, especially in the marketing area. Because the funding process for 5317 will take time, the mobility manager may not be hired until a while after Flex begins. The county, PDCTC, and independent operator should maintain communication so that all parties understand when Flex will actually start and when the 5317 application will be processed.

#### **Create a safe and reliable public transportation system**

**Bus Stops:** Many people in the focus groups said they did not know where the bus stopped. For all fixed time points, install at minimum a sign with the route name. (County)

**Bus Shelters:** At transfer points, where people may be waiting for another bus, install safe and sheltered waiting areas. (County)

**Partner with Others:** Contact business owners at fixed stops such as at Freshtown, Elvin's Market, and Hudson River Health Care to make sure it is okay for passengers to wait in front of their store or building, and whether passengers may wait inside during inclement weather. (County)

**Funding Opportunities:** Determine businesses at the time points would be interested in partnering to fund bus shelters. As the bus helps bring people to businesses, owners may be willing to pay for amenities. Other organizations, like towns, the Lion's Club, and other civic organizations, may be willing to help as well. (County, Mobility Manager)



**Six-Month Evaluation:** Flex is a very different type of service than what was previously in place. Although it takes years for a transit system to be fully integrated into a community, a six-month evaluation will show any major flaws in the system. (County, Mobility Manager and local organizations to assist)

Flex's performance could be evaluated based on characteristics such as:

- Passengers per revenue hour
- Passengers transferring to/from Route D or Route E
- Driver feedback
- Trips that cannot be accommodated – where people live and where they are going
- Level of subscription service – below 50 percent?
- Call center efficiency – number of hang-ups
- Deviation pick-ups versus time point pick-ups versus hail & rides

Should the county find that, due to the rural nature of the area, a substantial percentage of requested deviations cannot be accommodated, the route structure should be revisited and changed to option 2: point-deviated route. This route schedule has more time built in for deviations than the chosen alternative because the route is much shorter when the zones are divided rather than combined. If the county finds that most passengers are boarding at deviations rather than at the set time points, it becomes clear that not many customers live within walking distance of the route.

## Distribute information materials via print and web

Information materials have two main purposes: 1) to create awareness about services; and 2) to teach passengers how to use the services. Printed materials have long been the primary tool for transit systems to convey service and schedule information, typically supplemented by telephone-based dispatch services. More recently, transit systems have diversified their information systems to provide information via agency web pages. Once created, it is essential that information materials are updated regularly and are produced in a clear, clean manner.

In general, there are two categories for creating system awareness and distributing information:

1. General system information that are distributed on a widespread basis, typically involving such things as map and schedule brochures but also system infrastructure.
2. Targeted, trip-specific information that is available on-demand.

Ultimately, the goal is to provide as much good and useful information about the service as possible. Ideally, transit systems will use both approaches and draw upon techniques within each category.

**Print Materials:** Create a clear, easy-to-understand system map, route map, schedule, and rider guide. Adobe Illustrator and/or GIS software such as ArcGIS are the industry standard tools for producing transit maps. All materials should be produced in English and Spanish. Some principles to map creation are shown in Figure 39. (County)

**Figure 39: Best Practices in Map & Schedule Design**

|                 | Best Practices  | What to Avoid  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Font            | Font point size between 10 and 16<br>Sans serif font  | Print that is too small to be legible to readers with visual impairments |
| Colors          | Black and white is acceptable for systems that do not rely on color coding of routes. If color is used, number of colors is limited and not too busy.   |  |
| Printing        | Balance cost of printing (higher for color, lower for B&W) with higher level of distribution for less expensive materials.  | High cost printing that result in low level of distribution.             |
| Route Schedules | List time points for only key stops along the route. For linear routes, as few as three stops can be listed: two terminal points and a mid-point. (Riders interpolate arrivals at other time points.)   |  |
| Layout/Display  | Focus on clear information.<br>Similar content elements grouped together.   | Focus on graphics or aesthetic elements.                                 |
| Maps            | Route lines do not overlap.<br>Names of all streets on which the routes operate are visible and legible on the map.<br>Names of key adjoining streets are also legible.<br>Minor street names are provided when they do not otherwise interfere with overall map legibility.<br>On map, streets are white on a grey background. | Street names omitted. Maps difficult to use for non-locals.              |

Figure 40 and Figure 41 show some well-designed system maps. The Connecticut River Transit map uses numbers correlating stops with the schedule, making it easy to follow the route. The Hop schedule shows a clear street map of downtown, which makes it easy for passengers to find their bus stop.

Figure 40: Connecticut River Transit Schedule

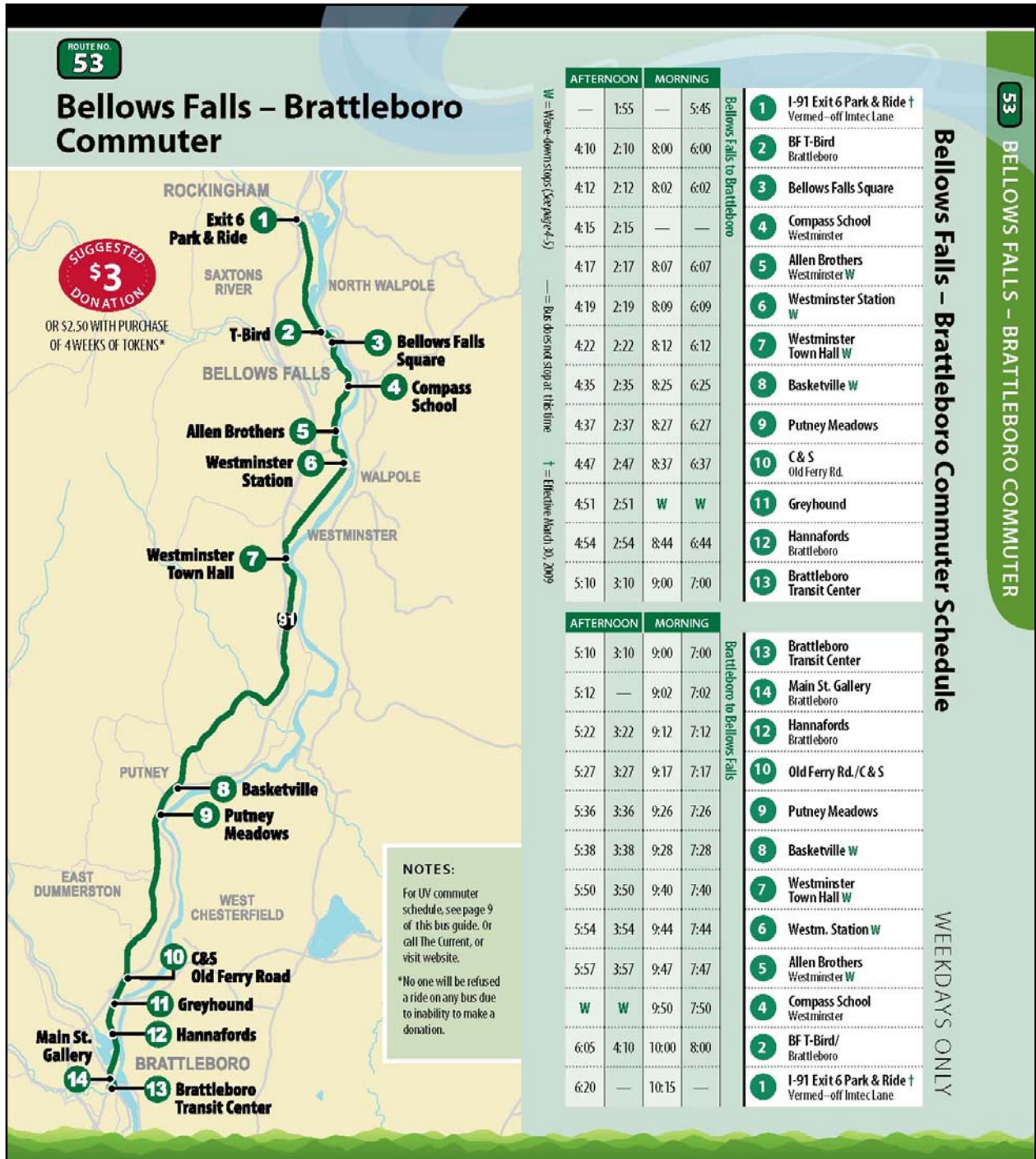
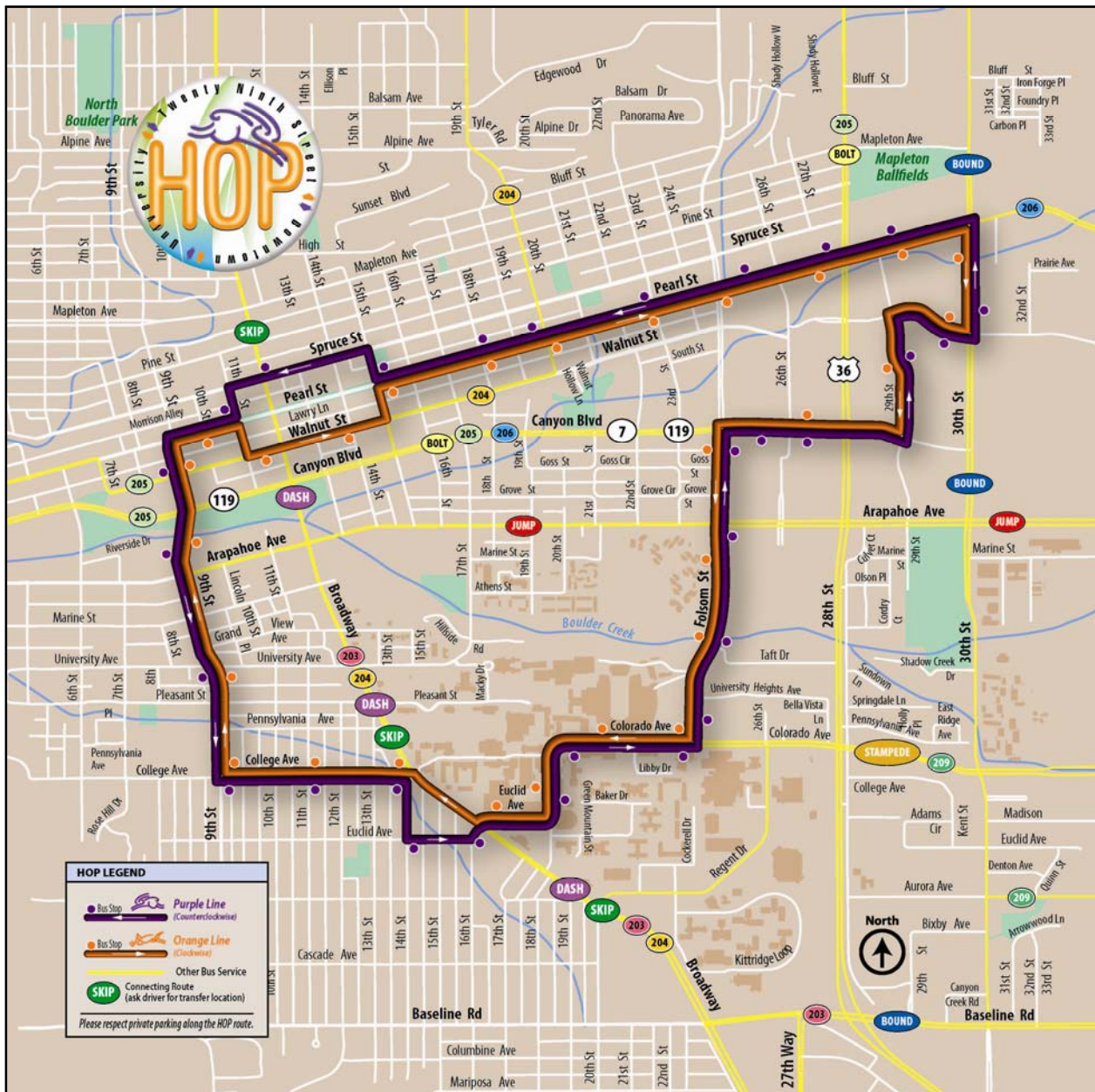


Figure 41: System map for “The Hop” in Boulder



**Targeted Marketing Materials:** Specific maps can be created for certain populations or certain trips. For instance, a “how to get to Poughkeepsie” map could be created, or a map just for a certain apartment complex. (Mobility Manager)

**Online Materials:** All print materials should be made available online as well. Currently the LOOP information is buried in a long and complicated URL:  
<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/MassTransit/PLLoopbus.htm>. If possible, changing the URL to a shorter, easier to remember address would be helpful. (County)

## Conduct marketing and outreach

**Route Branding:** There must be a careful distinction between LOOP and Flex. As Flex is a new type of service, there should be clear marketing themes surrounding it, such as “Flex – Go Local!” versus LOOP, which takes people to Poughkeepsie. (County, Mobility Manager to assist)

**Advertising:** Flex needs to be marketed as a service open to all – just call. Depending on the route structure selected, the deviations versus fixed areas may confuse people. Encourage people to call for a ride and the dispatcher will be getting a sense of how many people need the service and how far off-route they are, or if they are on-route. A sample ad is shown below.

**NEED A RIDE?**

**CALL 1-800-555-FLEX**

New County-sponsored public transportation  
is now serving residents of  
TOWN, TOWN, TOWN, TOWN.

Service runs every Thursday from  
TIME to TIME.

**SYSTEM MAP**

**FLEX ROUTE MAP**

**SCHEDULE**

[www.WEBSITE NAME.com](http://www.WEBSITE NAME.com)

The county should use the avenues identified as ways people get their information – on Channel 22, in the *Millerton News* and *La Voz*, and in town halls.

As the service progresses, consider positive marketing of those who do ride the bus – a rider of the month profile or a first-time rider interview posted on the web site. The county could create an “I Support Flex” campaign with well-known community members, posting a photo of them and some words about why they support public transportation. A complementary “I Depend on Flex” could highlight individual riders. These profiles could be posted on the web site or in local newspapers or newsletters. (County, Mobility Manager)

**Travel Training:** This is an important way to attract riders. People are hesitant to ride a bus for the first time, but once they get used to it they love the independence it brings. Hosting travel training at town halls, senior centers, the NECC, and with other organizations makes riding Flex and LOOP accessible to residents. (County, Mobility Manager, Towns, Local Organizations)

**Park & Ride to Poughkeepsie:** Promote the Eastern Dutchess Government Center as a park and ride for residents who are comfortable driving locally but not to Poughkeepsie. (County, Mobility Manager)

**Webinar:** The county will host a webinar where they will explain the new services and take live questions. The towns must promote this event to their constituents and make computers available at libraries, town halls, and friendship centers. (Towns, Local Organizations)

## **Interagency collaboration and coordination**

**Work with current providers:** Continue collaborating with Care Car and Friends of Seniors, as well as providers like the Office for the Aging and ARC. Potentially share resources or information on peoples' needs or trips that are currently unserved. (Mobility Manager)

**Sharon Hospital:** As a major destination, reach out to Sharon for potential funding of passenger amenities. (Mobility Manager)

**Subscription Services:** Up to 50 percent of the bus's 20 seats can be used for subscription services, meaning someone with a regularly scheduled weekly, biweekly, or monthly appointment can put in these scheduled requests. Specific requests were made by the Veterans clinic in Pine Plains and by the senior center in Wingdale for service on Thursday. Other agencies, like Eastern Dutchess Mental Health, Hudson River Health Care, and Dutchess Community Action Partnership, could potentially book trips. The local organizations need to contact the county for guidance, and the county must input these trips on the Flex schedule. (Local Organizations, County)

## **Explore mobility options**

The following strategies are some ways of improving mobility beyond county-sponsored public transportation.

**Hire a Mobility Manager:** This person would manage existing resources and explore future new transportation service in northeast Dutchess County. (Mobility Manager through Independent Operator)

**Taxi Voucher Program:** Work with local livery and taxi companies to create a program in which residents get a free or reduced fare taxi ride and the taxi company is reimbursed. (Mobility Manager)

**MetroPool and NuRide:** The Spanish-speaking population spoke of the need for transportation to work, and others in the study area may also have difficulty accessing employment. Explore car and vanpool options for eastern Dutchess County. (Mobility Manager)

**Metro North Commuter Train Connection:** If we can prove a need for people to get to the Metro-North stations for employment, a CTC route could be added. Explore the need for this type of service. (Mobility Manager)

## Phasing

Following is phasing plan for the strategies outlined above.

### **Short-Term (May through October 2010)**

#### County

- Finalize LOOP
- Conduct outreach to Beekman, Union Vale, & Pawling
- Comply with Federal Motor Carrier Regulations for service to Connecticut hospitals
- Finalize Flex schedule & route
- Create print and web materials
- Create advertising
- Install bus signs and shelters
- Begin service (tentatively in August – gives service a chance to practice and remove kinks as many people are on vacation)
- Coordinate with towns to host travel training

#### Independent Operator

- Obtain a 5317 application and write up a grant proposal. Work with the PDCTC to determine when the application will be due.

#### Towns, Task Force, Social Services, Health Agencies

- Advertise county webinar when date is finalized – make computers available in public locations
- Help distribute Flex and LOOP printed materials
- Announce service in town fliers and newsletters
- Help county conduct travel training in each town
- Work with social services clients to book subscription trips

### **Intermediate-Term (November 2010 through April 2011)**

#### County

- Conduct Flex six-month assessment (February if service starts in August)
- Modify schedules as needed
- Revise print and web materials
- Continue marketing efforts

#### Independent Operator

- Hire mobility manager

- Inventory resources, develop relationships with county officials, town leaders, Task Force, and constituents
- Work with county to assess Flex – talk to stakeholders, town leaders, and customers
- Work on volunteer programs and exploring mobility options per job description
- Develop relationships with state leaders and at places like CTAA and United We Ride

Towns, Task Force, Social Services, Health Agencies

- Gather input on Flex service – relay to county

## **Long-Term (May 2011 and beyond)**

Independent Operator

- Renewal of 5317 grant
- Begin service ideas for independent operator based upon Flex performance and any revisions made to its schedule and service
- Work with towns to determine unmet needs and willingness to fund service
- Begin process of applying for 5310
- Cost out funds available through 5311, 5316, and other programs

Towns, Task Force, Social Services, Health Agencies

- Work with independent operator to determine interdependent operator service

## Appendix A: Kickoff Meeting Notes

Following is a summary of our discussion during the kickoff meeting held December 10, 2009, at the Foundation for Community Health.

### Kickoff Meeting Notes

*Attendees:*

| Name                | E-Mail   | Phone        | Cell         |
|---------------------|--|--------------|--------------|
| Gertrude O'Sullivan | <a href="mailto:gertrude@fhealth.org">gertrude@fhealth.org</a>               | 860.364.5157 |              |
| Nancy Heaton        | <a href="mailto:nancy@fhealth.org">nancy@fhealth.org</a>                     | 860.364.5157 |              |
| Stephanie Denis     | <a href="mailto:sdenis@nelsonnygaard.com">sdenis@nelsonnygaard.com</a>       | 212.242.2490 | 917.573.1722 |
| Amy Pfeiffer        | <a href="mailto:apfeiffer@nelsonnygaard.com">apfeiffer@nelsonnygaard.com</a> | 212.242.2490 | 917.626.2322 |

#### *Background*

The old Dutchess County LOOP system had been in place for a long time without any type of evaluation. The Transit Development Plan states that the routes had not been studied closely since 1990. Because of this long period between studies, the routes did not serve the correct destinations.

The TDP produced in 2009 called for a much simpler version of the LOOP system to improve customer service. Yet while the TDP completed a thorough analysis of routes and operations, it did not go so far as to identify major trip generators and potential transit customers in the county's rural areas.

The TDP recommended a "Flex Service" for the northeast Dutchess area as well as the southeast (which contains Dover). The Flex service would serve each area two days per week within the zone (northeast, southeast, etc.) and would bring passengers traveling outside the zone (like to Poughkeepsie) to Millbrook, a transfer hub where people would board the fixed route LOOP.

Due to the county's lack of funding, it has not implemented this full LOOP and Flex service in 2010, as planned. Instead, it has cut all service in northeast Dutchess County as of the first quarter of 2009, leaving passengers with no other transit options. This cut of fixed route service means that complementary ADA paratransit has also been cut. ADA paratransit, required by federal law, stipulates that curb-to-curb service must be provided within three-quarters of a mile of fixed route service for eligible customers (older adults and persons with disabilities). The county's current plan is to institute the recommended LOOP and Flex in the second half of 2010. Thus the Nelson\Nygaard plan must get to the county in the first half of 2010.

#### *Study Purpose*

The community relies heavily on transit, and was very upset with the service cuts. In response, a coalition of around 15 people representing the general public, the towns, and other agencies formed the Eastern Dutchess Transportation Task Force.

The FCH is now looking for need-based transit planning effort. The system might be demand-response, similar to services provided in neighboring counties. The service would be used by both traditional transit-dependent populations (older adults, persons with disabilities, persons with low income) as well as the general population. The service would be used for various purposes,

from commuting to doctor visits to shopping. Thus far the county has expressed enthusiasm for FCH's efforts. Any information we can give them regarding the transit needs of northeast Dutchess and Dover will be useful. This includes trip generators, time of day service is needed, and type of service.

One major issue to discuss is the fact that Dutchess County will not drop off people across county lines. The Sharon Hospital is a major draw for people in Litchfield, Dutchess, and Columbia Counties. The hospital has no problem transporting people across county lines, but Dutchess County has balked.

In terms of study area characteristics, the villages of Millbrook and Millerton are the most densely populated. As people have moved north, these villages have become cute small-town villages that are trying to market themselves as having access to commuter rail and pull in more visitors and residents. They would want to focus on getting people to Metro-North stations. The towns of Amenia and Dover are quite poor, and have a lot of mobile home parks. These people would need travel to jobs, probably in Poughkeepsie, and services. Many households probably own one car, and require a second means of commuting.

## Next Steps

### Study Advisory Committee

Next we need to formulate the Study Advisory Committee. The members of this committee should probably include representatives from the county planning department and the department of mass transit, as well as a member from the Eastern Dutchess Transportation Task Force and a government department that works with transit-dependent populations. Following is an initial contact list. This also includes the general manager from First Transit, who works at the planning department, to get perspectives from the operations side.

| Agency                                     | Name               | Title                         | Phone             | E-Mail   |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Dutchess County Planning Department        | Kealy Salomon      | Deputy Commissioner           | 845.486.3609      | <a href="mailto:ksalomon@co.dutchess.ny.us">ksalomon@co.dutchess.ny.us</a> |
| Dutchess County Planning Department        | Mark Debald        | Senior Planner                | 845.486.3600      | <a href="mailto:mdebald@co.dutchess.ny.us">mdebald@co.dutchess.ny.us</a>   |
| Dutchess County Mass Transit               | Cynthia Ruiz       | Transit Administrator         | 845.473.0171 x103 | <a href="mailto:cruiz@co.dutchess.ny.us">cruiz@co.dutchess.ny.us</a>       |
| Dutchess County Mass Transit               | Scott Colburn      | First Transit General Manager | 845.473.0171      | <a href="mailto:loopbus@co.dutchess.ny.us">loopbus@co.dutchess.ny.us</a>   |
| NYS DOT Region 8                           | Jean Gunsch        | Senior Transportation Analyst | 845.431.7921      |  |
| NYS DOT Region 8                           | Rosemary Checca    | Transportation Analyst        | 845.431.7921      |  |
| Dutchess County Department of Aging        | John Beal?         |                               |                   |  |
| Eastern Dutchess Transportation Task Force | Katie Palmerhouse? |                               |                   |  |

Stephanie will send a sample SAC invitation letter, which Gertrude will send. Stephanie will follow-up with each member in January to discuss their issues and priorities.

## Stakeholder Interviews

In January, we will also need to organize stakeholder interviews and focus groups. We would divide the stakeholders into probably three groups, as shown below.

### Government

- Town of Amenia
- Town of Dover

- Town of Northeast
- Town of Pine Plains
- Town of Washington
- Village of Millerton
- Village of Millbrook
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

#### Non-profits & Service Providers

- Friends of Seniors
- Veterans Administration
- North East Community Center
- Dutchess County Mass Transit
- Poughkeepsie-Dutchess Transportation Council
- A transportation provider from Columbia County – either Community Healthcare or Department of Social Services
- A transportation provider from Litchfield County
- Sharon Hospital
- Hudson River Healthcare

#### Miscellaneous – Other

- Eastern Dutchess County Task Force members not included in the above categories
- Anyone else??

### **Focus Groups**

We will hold at least three focus groups. The potential markets we want to capture include:

- Spanish speaking population – hold a focus group after an ESL class
- The General Public – are there managers of the large mobile home parks? Hold at North East Community Center
- Older Adults – Use the Friends of Seniors to find participants? There are two Senior Friendship Centers in the study area – one in Millerton and one in Amenia., hold after an event

At each focus group, provide a meal – stipend not necessary.

How to reach groups, especially the general public? Use newspaper ad – Cory Allyn of the *Millerton News* is on the task force. Another publication is the *Millbrook Independent*. The main newspaper is the *Poughkeepsie Journal*. Post fliers at civic organizations, churches. NN will brainstorm some more ideas for outreach. We anticipate that the stakeholder interviews and focus groups will be held over a two-day period at the FCH. The stakeholder meetings will be held during the day. The general public and ESL focus groups would likely be in the evening. For seniors, maybe working with John Beale will yield a good event that will have high turnout where we can host a focus group afterwards.

## Appendix B: Focus Groups – Potential Customers

### **Focus Group #1: Millerton Nutrition Site, Feb. 17, 2010, 11:30 AM**

- Four participants
- One site leader (Brenda)
- Amy, Stephanie, Gertrude

#### Where do you travel?

- Husband has Alzheimer's – for them, this is their daily outing. Otherwise, they don't go anywhere.
- Church in Millbrook
- Doctors
  - o Amenia
  - o Dover Plains primary care
  - o Vassar: Cardiac testing
  - o Millbrook foot doctor
- Nutrition site
- Sharon Hospital
- Church in Pine Plains
- Poughkeepsie heart center, 4-5 times per year. The center is near Vassar.
- Shopping Malls – in Kingston, South Grove
- Shopping:
  - o Canaan Stop N Shop
  - o Hudson – Wal Mart, Lowe's
  - o Millerton – Grand Union

#### How do you travel?

- Currently 3 out of 4 can and do still drive
- Can drive to Poughkeepsie, to other counties – but feel more comfortable making local trips
- One person used the Care Car from the North East Community Center

#### Experience with LOOP?

- One person's daughter-in-law used the bus to go to Pawling school for work. Now that service has been cut, she has to rely on various people giving her a ride.
- The daughter-in-law said the old service was very good

#### How do you get information?

- Newspaper (Millerton News)
- Center for the Aging
- Churches
- North East Community Center
- One Internet user

#### Type of service that you need?

- Would the service be for non-seniors as well? Yes

- Driving local is not a problem – they would drive to a fixed point to go to farther off places they do not feel comfortable driving to farther-off places (like Poughkeepsie)

#### Other Notes

- Brenda, the nutrition site head, used to have a van that she used to take people to doctors, to go shopping – a 5-6 passenger van (not a mini bus) but the county took that van out of the budget
- Contact: Brenda Maillet, 518.789.3081, cell 914.414.0387

#### **Focus Group #2: Wingdale Senior Program, American Legion, Feb. 18, 11:30 AM**

- Just over 30 participants

#### Where do you travel?

- Doctors and Food
- Sharon, Putnam, Brewster, Patterson, Mount Kisco
- New Milford – YMCA, Wal Mart
- Hannaford in Pawling
- Patterson A&P
- Poughkeepsie – Adams (produce, farmer's market)
- Brewster – Endico
- Brewster – Stop N Shop
- Fishkill – shopping
- Putnam Hospital
- Pawling Physical Therapy
- Poughkeepsie Galleria
- Danbury Mall

#### How do you travel?

- One person used to use the Dover dial-a-ride and loved it. Used it twice a month to go shopping
- Someone had tried to use Friends of Seniors but they didn't have enough volunteers
- Many still drive, but know that circumstances will change eventually
- One participant said she is on the verge of not passing her eye exam – she will find out in November if she can pass. If she cannot, her license will be taken away.

#### Experience with LOOP?

- A few people had used
- Excellent service

#### How do you get information?

- Church – church bulletin
- Penny Saver
- Poughkeepsie Journal
- Hotline - need one number
- Post office
- Channel 22 cablevision

#### What type of service do you need?

- How are you supposed to get your packages home? It's far from a bus stop.

- Would be nice to have social trips. Some trips could be every week, like shopping.
- For doctors, can't really do fixed schedule because doctors are all over the place. For doctors you need to be picked up and dropped off.
- The service needs to be a combination of fixed route and curb to curb.

#### Other Notes

- Let's say there is a bus – how much is it going to cost?
- Many live in remote areas – how will they get to the bus?

#### **Focus Group #3: Amenia Nutrition Site, Presbyterian Church, Feb. 18, 12:45 PM**

- Three participants
- One site leader (Marion)
- Amy, Stephanie, Gertrude

#### Where do you travel?

- Millerton
- Amenia
- Wassaic
- Grocery
  - o Freshtown, Amenia
  - o Freshtown, Dover
  - o Grand Union, Millerton
  - o Hannaford, Pawling
- Doctors – Amenia, Dover, Wingdale, Pawling
- Hospitals – Sharon, St. Francis, Vassar
- New Milford – people in Amenia go there for the hospital as well as for the shopping – the drive is easier to get there than to other places.
- Torrington – Rite Stop, Aldis
- Senior program at the Presbyterian Church – the Office for the Aging runs programs there Mon-Thurs from 9 AM-1:30 PM.
  - o **(SD note: Office for Aging said Amenia program is tiny – only 4-5 people. But there were at least 10 people there when we arrived)**

#### How do you travel?

- Drive
- One person walks
- Many cannot afford a car
- One person had used the North East Community center before and thought the service was fine, but there are not enough drivers

#### Experience with LOOP?

- None – people were unaware that LOOP ran up and down Route 22

#### How do you get information?

- Word of mouth
- Town hall
- Channel 22 – there is one channel for Dover, one for Amenia
- Robin Hood FM radio from Sharon
- Station 103.3 from Lakeville

- Town of Amenia newsletter – published once per month (**NN received a copy**)

#### What type of service do you need?

- Amenia plans bus trips and they are totally packed. They go anywhere – to dinner theater, St. Patrick’s day party, etc. Trips are not cheap – they may be from \$50 to \$70 for the full day – so there are many affluent seniors who need to use the bus. For the Christmas Show, there were 72 people trying to get on the bus – had people driving others in their cars. The town pays for the bus, except for trips that involve gambling. It’s open to all, but 30 of the 55 seats on the bus must go to Amenia residents.
- People really need the curb to curb service because people live so far from the main road. At the Tally Ho, it’s a big trailer park, but people are willing to meet at one fixed point, like the clubhouse, or to at least walk down to the main road for pickup.

#### Other Notes

- Marion has a vehicle that is paid for by the Office for the Aging. The van is not low floor or handicap accessible – it’s very hard for a fit person to get in and up the steps.
- One day a week they take the van to pick people up and take them shopping. Depending on where the participants live, they go to the Freshtown in Dover or Amenia. Currently they are serving one person with the van – but use it always lower in winter. Typically users of this van are quite independent and don’t really need help getting their groceries into their home. Tuesday is good because it is a senior discount day at the grocery stores. In the past, the shopping van would be at capacity.
- There is a vital veteran’s clinic in Castle Point. The Pine Plains service is not as good (**note: because they do not have that many participants, so there is less service**). Getting to Castle Point is hard because there are vans but they only go up as far as the Taconic. There are very good programs at Castle Point and Beacon. If you need more medical attention than what they have, you have to go to Albany, which is a two-day trip – day 1 they take you to Castle Point, Day 2 they take you to Albany. There is also a satellite clinic in Poughkeepsie – but while bloodwork there takes 3 days, in Castle Point it takes 20 minutes.
- Unless you live right in the middle of downtown Amenia, or Millerton, or Dover Plains, nothing is easy to get to. Everyone else is rural and distances are long.
- Marion’s office delivers meals to the homebound – she will get them surveys
- The North East Community Center recently received \$18K for transportation from the United Way

#### **Focus Group #4: GED Class, Millerton Elementary, Feb. 18, 6:15 PM**

- 13 students
- Teacher, Anna
- Amy, Stephanie

#### Where do you travel? (work trips)

- To Columbia County (Chatham, Ghent, Hudson) for housekeeping
- To Sharon Hospital
- Millerton to Lakeville
- Millerton to Stanford
- To Millerton
- To Connecticut
- To Hudson

- To Pawling
- To Sharon

Where do you travel? (non-work trips)

- Poughkeepsie for services
- Walmart
- Wassaic train station
- St. Francis, Sharon Hospitals
- Hudson River Health Care

How do you travel?

- Drive, primarily
- Get a ride with someone else
- If someone loses a license or a car is broken, that strands people
- Some households have two workers but one vehicle

Experience with LOOP?

- Was a lifeline for many
- A drug bus – people use it to go to Poughkeepsie and bring back drugs or buy drugs there
- Dangerous – a stabbing on bus? Possibly just a rumor
- Not very attractive buses – especially the solid green ones
- The route to Poughkeepsie still runs – one person sends her kids to Poughkeepsie on it
- There was never any marketing of LOOP. No one knew the routes, the schedules, where the bus stopped. No marked stops.
- The routes were not direct. A simple trip might take 3 hours because the bus travels out so far.

How do you get information?

- Pretty much everyone uses the Internet
- Channel 22

Other Notes

- There are youth needing to get around as well who cannot drive yet.

## Appendix C: Focus Groups – Collaborators & Providers

### Collaborator Meeting, 2 PM, Feb 17, Foundation for Community Health

- Nelson Eddy Rivera, veterans association
- Bob Rizzo, Eastern Dutchess Mental Health
- Teri Ptasnick, Dover Recreation
- Lisa Cardinale, Department of Health

### Program Description

- Nelson Eddy runs a clinic in Pine Plains for veterans, on Route 199. 100% drive or are dropped off. There are also services at the Eastern Dutchess County Govt Building by appointment. We need the connection from Poughkeepsie east. Pine Plains meets two days per week. The Fishkill VA has a volunteer transportation service. There is a problem getting volunteer drivers. There are also Pine Plains group homes.
  - o Nelson will get to SD the location and number of people in the group homes.
- Bob runs two clinics with a total of 130 outpatients. Within each clinic, there are 25-30 people who have difficulty meeting appointments because of lack of transportation.
  - o Clinics meet 2 times per week from 9 AM-9 PM and 3 days per week 9 AM-5 PM
  - o Clients are seen at least once per month. Because clients typically see both a psychologist and a social worker, they need to get to the clinic twice per month.
  - o Medicaid clients receive transportation to appointments, but those not on Medicaid that do not have a car have to rely on friends or family
- There are two clinics:
  - o Dover Plains – this has the largest number of no-shows
  - o Millbrook – in the Eastern Dutchess Government Center
  - o The catchment area for each is quite large. Dover people come from Millerton, Pawling. The Millbrook site gets people from Pleasant Valley, Poughkeepsie
- Teri runs the Dover Recreation Department. There are currently two senior groups:
  - o Monday, 10 AM-2 :30 PM at the American Legion
  - o Thursday, 9:30 AM-2:30 PM at the American Legion
- There are many more who would come if they had transportation – she can think of 12 off the top of her head
- Volunteer recruitment is an issue
- Lisa works with AIDS patients. Her department had received federal funding since 1995, but just lost their status and \$1 million of funding as of March 1 of next year. So this is their last year of providing transportation.
- The department gives transportation via taxi to those who have no Medicaid or other alternative. In a year, serve 45 people – 1,300 rides. Trips are mostly from home to Poughkeepsie or Albany a couple times a year
  - o 6-7 of those 45 people are from Eastern Dutchess
- Tues/Wed/Thurs are the bigger days for transportation

### Discussion

- Need to look at a non-structured route. People live far away from the main road – need more of a dial a ride.

- Theresa at the Department of Health is setting up a new program with Medicaid, where you call one number and get transportation
- Importance of social trips – day to Poughkeepsie to shop at the Galleria
- Dover also runs youth programs – day at Poughkeepsie
- Connecticut Destinations: Sharon Hospital and New Milford Hospital
- Seniors need to get to the post office, doctor, grocery store
- At least from the VA side, because the program is federally funded, there are all kinds of restrictions and requirements on volunteer driving
- Sharing services: Pawling has a new program for seniors; Dover and Pawling are only 7 miles apart

#### Thoughts of LOOP proposed fixed route and Flex service

- Dover has a large population and no service in this plan
- Coming from the social service side, they would just book the entire day with their clients, knowing which day of week the service would be
- Potential for Millbrook maintenance facility? This would allow for more service since cuts out the hour dead head to/from LaGrange
- The Pine Plains VA is Tues/Thurs
- Teri, in the southeast zone
- People need to be allowed to cross zones – for example, get picked up in Dover and dropped off in Amenia

#### **Poughkeepsie Dutchess Transportation Council & First Transit General Manager, Thursday 2/18, 9:30 AM**

- Mark DeBald, MPO
- Michael Grattini, First Transit
- New service planned for mid-March – might be more like mid-April
- Operating hours for fixed route: 6 AM-12:35 AM
- Every 2 hours about
- Route E will have a 15 minute deviation at the end because there was interest showed in a senior living complex nearby the end of the route in Pawling
- Will Flex be timed with Route D? Could be
- Flex will cost \$85/hour to operate, \$2 fare
- Use Trapeze for dispatching
- Between implementation of fixed route and flex will be 8 weeks minimum
- Vehicles: what are you running for Flex? Not sure yet, the DAR used chevy vans.
- The thought is to use excess capacity on DAR for Flex
  - o Optimally, get rid of DAR altogether and just have Flex
- Operating to CT: maybe not a problem, need to check federal motor carrier safety administration
- Are there places to park in Millbrook for people who would take the bus to Poughkeepsie? Potentially at Front and Franklin, or at the Eastern Dutchess Government Center (county-owned)
- The county has been designated a Transportation Management Area
- County interested in pursuing making N E community center an operator

## Appendix D: Task Force Meeting #1

### Collaborator comments:

- Put street names on maps where possible
- Consider surveying at the DDSO; dozens of people go from Poughkeepsie to Wassaic each day
- One person thought that the travel surveys were a bit skewed, as people changed their travel patterns based on where there was transportation; basically saying that people that had used the bus system now changed their route.
- Consider surveying at Vassar Hospital to see where their employees come from.
- Consider surveying at Sharon Hospital to determine where their employees come from.
- Consider a CTC, or service connecting people to the commuter rail.
- Consider surveying at train station.
- Consider surveys at Post Office, CVS, and Irving Farms
- Consider posting a number on Channel 22 for people to call to get the survey.
- Important to know who owns vehicles in the area. NYSDOT through DMV has these records. Contact Bill Tobbeau (spelling) at 845-334-5590.
- Still a distinct need for transporting people in wheelchairs.
- Consider integrating ARC into the system

Talking about the days of the work for service and people agreed that weekends were not as important as those were times people were more likely to have help from their family.

- Places like the Lion's club used to have a volunteer driver's program, but they gave it up because of liability.
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P) – this is a program that provides insurance coverage to not-for-profits, like the Community Action Agency, so the issue of driver liability is not a problem.
- The issue of storing a van closer to residents using a local sub consultant rather than in Poughkeepsie was brought up. There were then compliance issues associated with maintaining a van here
- The new fixed route system would be able to deviate off the main path to pick up residents of Kings Apartments in Pawling. People would need to call to make appointments to be picked up.
- Cynthia Ruiz said she would work hard to make it possible for any service to CT.
- Consider how to combine the north and south zones, or a system to work together to perform the maximum coverage.
- Come up with a “Rules of the Ride” type guide to help people understand how to use the system or move between zones.
- Discussion of Fixed route, flex route, deviated flex route, and point deviated flex route.
- Talking about Ulster County; they have a subscription based point deviated flex service.
- Mention of the Bethlehem model.

- Spoke about Ithaca's volunteer Gad About program. They considered this a success, though the geographic coverage is smaller and denser, so the program is easier to run. They use 5310 vehicles.
- The county said if we used 5316/5317 money it would have to go through the county as they distribute these funds. So they would have to lead this effort.
- Question of whether or not Sharon Hospital could provide some transportation.
- Need to find out the real cost of providing the service, which Cynthia is working on.
- We talked about trying to establish the system, figuring out where people live and then figuring out the route and the service. Consider just paying the county for the service, buying an extra day per week for each district.
- National Transit Database funding

## Appendix E: Task Force Meeting #2

Foundation for Community Health  
April 6, 2010

### Attendees

| Name                | Organization             | Phone          | E-Mail                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Jennie Poidomani    | NECC                     | (518) 789-4259 | info@neccmillerton.org      |
| Jenny Hansell       | NECC                     | (518) 789-4259 | jenny@neccmillerton.org     |
| Ed Frederick        | Hudson River Health Care | (845) 505-8834 | efrederick@hrhcare.org      |
| Virginia Stern      | Town of Stanford         | (845) 868-1310 | VFS42@aol.com               |
| Wayne Euvrard       | Town of Amenia           | (845) 373-8860 | supervisor@ameniany.gov     |
| Cynthia Ruiz        | DCMT                     | 473-0171 x103  | cruiz@co.dutchess.ny.us     |
| Mark Debald         | DC Planning              | (845) 486-3614 | mdebald@co.dutchess.ny.us   |
| Susan Davidson      | Friends of Seniors       | (845) 485-1277 | friendsofseniors@juno.com   |
| David Sherman       | Town of North East       | (518) 789-3658 | ne.supervisor@taconic.net   |
| Cory Allyn          | Millerton News           | (518) 789-4401 | cory.allyn@gmail.com        |
| Gertrude O'Sullivan | FCH                      | (860) 567-0232 | gertrude@fchealth.org       |
| Stephanie Denis     | Nelson\Nygaard           | (212) 242-2136 | sdenis@nelsonnygaard.com    |
| Amy Pfeiffer        | Nelson\Nygaard           | (212) 242-2490 | apfeiffer@nelsonnygaard.com |

### Summary:

The group decided the best service would be a combination of Options 1 and 2; a flexible route with deviations. This would provide the best service to the most people. Service in Dover would terminate at the Metro-North station, as Wingdale residents would be served by the deviation at the end of Route E. Flex will provide the opportunity for one trip to Poughkeepsie on Route D.

The route schedule will be finalized after the LOOP service schedule is finalized to create a coordinated system with timed transfers from Flex to LOOP.

The new operator service will be part of a future plan. Actions will be made to acquire Federal funding to develop a mobility plan as a first step for an additional transportation operator. It was determined that developing a grant to gain operational funding or buses was premature at this stage. Once the new LOOP system and the additional service provided in this study are operational and evaluated, the role of an additional operator and routing can be determined.

Nelson\Nygaard will take all of the comments from this meeting and those received from members of the task force who could not attend to complete a final plan.

### General Comments and Concerns/Questions:

- All of the buses will be 20-passenger buses, with a wheelchair lift.

- The standard daily cost for a 20 passenger bus, with a wheelchair lift is \$82.50. (This includes administration, operation, dispatching, and maintenance).
- The LOOP service is Monday-Saturday.
- Passengers traveling from a Flex bus to a LOOP bus would pay twice. Students, senior citizens, and people under 12 pay half the regular fare.
- Drivers talk to each other during a given route, so they know if there are people on one bus that need to make a transfer to another bus and will wait for that connection.
- There will be new infrastructure associated with the LOOP service, such as bus shelters or designated waiting areas.
- Once the LOOP schedule is confirmed, the route will be driven to make sure this new system will work within the time schedule. There may have to be adjustments to the schedule, but LOOP will try to stay as close to the service plan as possible.

**Q:** How do we time medical services? These visits are hard to predict for timing?

**A:** Call ahead to the medical provider telling them you are taking public transportation to your appointment. They are usually very cooperative, scheduling you to meet your ride home.

**Q:** How will people new to the bus system, especially the elderly, understand how to make connections and use the service?

**A:** There will be a phone number to call to help people manage their trips. In addition, when the service is put in place, there will be LOOP ambassadors at stops to do travel planning and travel training. There will also be webinars regarding the new services and press releases in the newspapers.

**Q:** What was the original intent of the former LOOP routes?

**A:** The routes were created a long time ago and no one really knows where the ideas for the routes came from. This new plan will be reevaluated from time to time to make sure it is serving the population. It takes a full four years for a system to take shape and grow, but the county can/will make changes throughout that period.

**Q:** What is the break schedule for the drivers in terms of providing an additional service?

**A:** The drivers can operate revenue service for 6 hours per day. The driver must leave and return to the garage within 14 hours, though, so breaks can be built in during a driver shift. Breaks can be no more than one hour.

**Comment:** Providing shopping trips are important as they serve as social gathering points for Northern Dutchess County residents, especially seniors.

**Comment:** Subscription services can take up 50% of the seats in the bus. So if people have trips they attend each week, they can subscribe to always have a seat.

### **Notes in order of discussion topic**

#### **Option 1: Fixed Route, Combined NE/SE Zone**

**Q:** Did you drive the route to confirm timing and connections with LOOP connections?

**A:** No, but that would be done after the schedule for the LOOP service is finalized. The system relies first on establishing the LOOP schedule.

**Q:** Could this have a set stop at the train stations at Wassaic and Dover Plains?

**A:** Train stations are so remote, it is hard to make these connections. Wassaic is a possibility; Dover Plains is a half mile in from Route 22. Stopping at one train station could work, as people can then take the train to their desired station if necessary. If this is not a fixed point on the route you couldn't have a fixed pick-up, but you could be dropped off.

#### **Option 2: Point-Deviated Route, Separate Zones**

**Q:** What do we need to run this service through to the A&P in Putnam?

**A:** LOOP would need to acquire operating authority to run this through to Putnam.

**Q:** Could we connect this into the Dover Plains train stop?

**A:** In the survey this location was not indicated as a destination, but this could be considered.

Comment: People in Stanford have cars now and do drive, but have said in a few years this will not be possible. If we had a regular public transportation system they would learn to use it.

**Q:** Is there any mention of a car-pooling system?

**A:** There is a carpooling system. You can register on-line for it at NURIDE; they offer coupon incentives for people to use this system.

#### **Option 3: Demand-Response Service**

Comment: This should be described as a curb-to-curb service, not door-to-door.

Comment: Because of the low ridership potential, this seems like a wasteful use of what is potentially available.

Comment: Maybe just use Dial-A-Ride services instead, and other service in existence like Care Car and Friends of Seniors.

### **Discussion of Options 1-3:**

- Combine Options 1 & 2, using the fixed route service as a guide, and provide additional point-deviated services:
  - Less walking to a given stop (because of the added deviated services).
  - Better serves the rural area.
  - More opportunities to get to destinations.

Comment: (Option 2) By splitting the zones and deviating from the route, it seems that we could cover a greater area without adding time to the trip.

Comment: Knowing the amount of cross over between north and south destinations is the deciding factor between combining the zones or keeping them separate

Comment: The service needs to serve people that live off of Route 22.

**Q:** How many times do we need to provide service to Poughkeepsie per day? If we can limit it to one rather two we could provide greater service for the deviated routes.

**A:** Let's eliminate the trips to Poughkeepsie to one per service day and provide more deviated service.

**Q:** How do we deal with the fact that residents of Union Vale and Beekman were not a part of this process?

**A:** LOOP will hold meetings prior to implementation to get feedback about new services. The service plan for the additional day of service can be changed to serve this area if it is deemed necessary.

### ***Stop Locations:***

The group decided upon the following stop location.

- Stanfordville: Elvin's Market/Route 82
- Pine Plains: Veterans Clinic (not at the intersection)
- Pine Plains: Peck's Market
- Millerton: Post Office (lobby is open even when post office is closed midday)
- Sharon Hospital
- Amenia: Freshtown
- Amenia: Hudson River Health Care
- Dover Plains: Dutchess Community Action Partnership
- Dover Plains: Freshtown/CVS
- Dover Plains: Hudson Valley Mental Health/Probation Office
- Wingdale: American Legion/Library/Shopping Center
- Wingdale: Metro-North (use this as the turnaround)
- Service to Pawling and between Wingdale & Pawling will be handled by the Route E deviation, which occurs 4 times per day, every day on LOOP E

### ***Discussion of Potential New Operator***

#### **Option 1: Demand-Response**

No significant discussion in the group; just describing this option.

#### **Option 2: Town Service**

**Q:** Could there be flexibility in this service, so if the bus wasn't full they could people that had called ahead about availability and were on the way to the destination to be picked up?

**A:** Yes, this could be an option.

Comment: We shouldn't use a geographic specific service for this additional service. The natural demand is outside of geographic limits.

### **Option 3: Regional Destinations by Day**

**Q:** If we have everyone going to Sharon Hospital on one day won't overwhelm the doctor's schedule?

**A:** We could coordinate with the hospital so they would know one day each week is scheduled for that visits.

Comment: These regional trips could almost be monthly, in many cases, and could be used as a marketing tool for this new operator.

### ***Discussion of New Operators Options 1-3:***

Comment: Can we blend together the local and regional trips and make this more of a demand response service?

Comment: Should this service be limited to medical appointments as the other services are serving shopping and other destinations?

Comment: Amenia would support this type of new service.

Comment: The most successful additional service will be a demand-response service with special trips built in for marketing purposes. Because of the rural area, a combination of these services would provide the best options.

Comment: Maybe the additional service should be a combination, so two days a week in would be demand response; the other days could be for specific trips.

Comment: Make sure the new service does not undercut Flex. If someone had a choice between demand-response with the new operator or using the county's flex route, they will pick demand-response – someone would rather get picked up at their door than wait for the fixed route at a stop.

### ***Discussion of Funding Options***

**Q:** What is the county's willingness to take on Job Access/Reverse Commute projects?

**A:** Because there are 3 counties (Orange, Ulster and Dutchess) in the planning area applying for these funds, the counties basically backlog a couple years' worth of funding then put the money up for competitive bid. Because Orange County has an established JARC project in place, they tend to get much of this funding.

**Q:** How do these funding sources work?

**A:** Most of them are reimbursement based; so you have to have enough initial capital to provide the service and then submit invoices for reimbursement. So you need to have almost double the real cost to provide the service so you can have a running bank account to cover short term costs. Many recipients have a running bank loan.

**Comment:** No one has really gone for the New Freedom funding – that would be a great source of funds for this project that hasn't been competed over in the past.



5. Is there a certain day of the week you are mostly likely to travel or most likely to need transportation?  
 Yes  No

6. If yes, which day?  
 Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday

7. What statement best reflects your personal situation and experiences traveling in the region?  
 I never have problems getting around  I sometimes have problems getting around  
 I often have problems getting around  I always have problems getting around

8. Are there places you wish you could go, but cannot due to lack of transportation?  
 Yes  No

9. If yes, where would you like to go? (*Please list destinations by name and town*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU for your participation!**

Please mail us your completed survey. We have provided a pre-stamped and addressed envelope for you. We will be awarding two participants with a \$25 gift card to Freshtown. If you would like to enter the drawing, please provide your name and phone number or e-mail address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Drawing will be held on **MARCH 24**