

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan

For the Greater Nashua and Milford Region



December 20, 2006
Adopted October, 2008
Update Adopted January 20, 2016

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. OVERVIEW OF PLAN

In August 2005, the President signed the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) to reauthorize Federal transportation programs that contained provisions to establish a coordinated human services transportation planning process. SAFETEA-LU requires that a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human service planning process and an initial plan be developed by 2007 as a condition of receiving funding for programs directed at meeting the needs of older individuals, persons with disabilities and low-income persons. The plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation providers and public, private and non-profit human service providers and participation by the public. Complete plans, including coordination with the full range of existing human service transportation providers, are required by Fiscal Year 2008.

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission began a human service transportation planning process in May 2006. The purpose of this process was to develop a coordinated vision for human service oriented transportation services and to develop a prioritized list of projects for the region. The first Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan was originally developed in 2006. Subsequent federal transportation legislation called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) (June 2012) continued the requirement of locally coordinated transportation plans as did SAFETEA-LU, and led to an update of the plan.

The original plan was largely based upon the results of a study completed by Nelson-Nygaard, which called for a comprehensive state-wide coordination effort of transit and human service organizations. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, this vision never came to fruition so this 2015 update to the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan aims to outline goals and recommendations focused on coordination at much more local level than Nelson-Nygaard identified and was outlined in the first two versions of this plan. The 2015 update focuses on Community Transportation and is defined as *“all transportation resources in a community that are available to help meet community mobility needs. These include both public and private services, such as shuttles for seniors, vans that churches or community organizations own and operate, and other services”* – Mass.gov 12/2015.

This completed plan should be viewed as a constantly evolving document that will be updated at least every four years, as required under federal regulations. As regional goals change and projects are implemented or accomplished, old items will be removed and new items will be added to the project list. In addition, as specific projects are developed in the region the plan will be amended to include such projects.

The human service transportation planning process involved development of a stakeholder group consisting of Transportation Providers, Social Service Agencies and community members. The stakeholders provided input via direct mail surveys and a series of transportation luncheons. The surveys helped identify existing services, service areas, client information, transportation provider needs and client needs.

To effectively analyze the need for human service transportation needs the LCTP utilized the 2010 census data and identified several criteria that are good indicators of human service transit needs in the region. These criteria include youth population, elderly population, disability status, median household income, poverty status, and automobile availability. The results of this analysis are displayed at the regional and community level to demonstrate the need for human service oriented transportation across the region.

As a result of this analysis and the input from the stakeholder group, a summary of existing human service transportation services and needs is provided in the plan. These needs focus on funding and increased service across the region. The stakeholders also provided input on what is working well in the region. Nashua Transit System provides very successful daytime fixed route and demand response services, and deviated fixed route evening service within the City of Nashua and demand response service in Hudson and Merrimack. In addition the establishment of the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) has filled a long standing void in transportation service for seniors and people with disabilities to six communities in the western part of our region.

The LCTP process used a broad range of sources to ensure the human service transportation needs identified in the plan address the needs of the region. First we reevaluated the existing needs that had been identified in the 2008 update, in addition we used input obtained from our extensive outreach effort of the regional plan, data from local planning documents as well as input from the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). This plan represents a comprehensive approach to begin the development of cost effective coordinated services that are efficient, safe and seamless to the customer. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission is committed to working with its human service partners as we endeavor to expand the human service oriented transportation network in the region.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE LOCALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In spite of the fact that bus service exists in Nashua and some village and town centers in the region have characteristics that encourage walking and bicycling, a significant portion of the Nashua region remains accessible only by car. This poses a significant barrier for those who do not own a vehicle or do not have access to reliable transportation and makes it difficult to access activities of daily living, including employment, health care, shopping and recreation.

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) conducted this update of the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP) with the purpose of developing a comprehensive strategy to assist stakeholders like the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS), transportation providers, transportation coordinators, and other community agencies to help affected residents meet their transportation needs.

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with thirteen member communities including: Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Mason, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham and Wilton. As an MPO, NRPC is responsible for transportation planning efforts and plan development for a variety of transportation issues throughout the region. One of which is the development of a Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan.

The study area for this plan includes the towns in the NRPC planning region. The goals for this plan include:

- Updating and maintaining an inventory of transportation providers (public, private, and human services);
- Identifying the unmet transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with lower incomes;
- Identifying gaps in available services (unserved or underserved populations and/or areas);
- Identifying strategies to meet the identified needs and to maximize the use of limited transportation resources through coordination;
- Prioritizing transportation services for funding and implementation;
- Recommending funding sources that can be used for various transportation projects;
- Enhancing mobility between communities;
- Increasing access to jobs, schools, medical centers, and other essential human services;
- Increasing citizen awareness of public transit and human service transportation providers and programs.

As defined by FTA's 5310 Circular C 9070.1F, "A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan ("coordinated plan") identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for

meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.”

In order for transportation providers in the NRPC area to be able to continue accessing some types of FTA funds, NRPC is required to update the LCTP every 4 years.

The 2006 LCTP for the Nashua region was developed in response to federal transportation legislation called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that was signed into law in August, 2005. SAFETEA-LU required that a locally developed Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan be in place in order for transportation providers to receive funding through the Federal Transit Administration for the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310), the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC - Section 5316), and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317).

Subsequent (June, 2012) federal transportation legislation called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) continued the requirement of SAFETEA-LU. The FTA Circular states that: Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and New Freedom programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.”

The current transportation bill, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (2015), elevates coordinated transportation to a serious policy initiative at the federal level. As more information is released on this bill the plan will be updated accordingly.

B. COMMUNITY INPUT

One of the key requirements in plan development is community input and direct input from social service agencies and transportation providers in the region. Staff built upon extensive input that was obtained during the development of the Nashua Regional Comprehensive Plan (2012-2014). NRPC followed a vigorous public involvement process where the following input was received: 820 residents submitted written comments; 679 residents were engaged at outreach events; and 308 individuals attended workshops/meetings. In addition approximately 20 community representatives and local transportation providers attended three Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) meetings in 2015 to discuss the local transportation needs facing their community or agency. These representatives currently work with individuals with disabilities, seniors, older adults and low income populations throughout the region. Nashua Transit System (NTS) and Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) provide transportation services in the region and were significant contributors to this effort.

III. REGIONAL AND TOWN PROFILE

A. INTRODUCTION

In addition to the need for fixed route transit serving the general population of the Nashua region, the need to provide services for the elderly, disabled, impoverished, and youth populations is paramount. It is becoming increasingly evident that the human service transit needs of the region extend beyond the city limits of Nashua. The growth in the elderly and disabled population of the 13 towns of the region indicates that new areas needing transit service exist outside Nashua. The focus of this chapter is to summarize United States Census 2010 demographic data and assess the areas of greatest human service transit need. This information will provide essential data for formulating proposed future transit services.

This section summarizes several criteria determined to be the good indicators of human service transit needs in the region. These criteria include youth population, elderly population, disability status, median household income, poverty status and automobile availability. High concentrations of youth, elderly and disabled populations are good indicators of human service transit needs because a high percentage of these populations do not drive private automobiles and in many cases are transit dependent. Low median household incomes are often directly linked to automobile availability. Automobile ownership is extremely expensive and for many low income and poverty status individuals, private vehicle costs are prohibitive and force them to be transit dependent.

B. 2010 CENSUS DATA

United States Census data is collected once every decade with the most recent collection year in 2010. Data is presented at both the census tract level and town level. In more rural locations one census tract may cover more than one town, which is the case with census tract 34 covering both Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon. In comparison one community may be comprised of numerous census tracts such as Nashua which is comprised of 17 tracts. Table 1 (page 6) lists census data by tract and Table 2 (page 28) lists census data by town.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA BY CENSUS TRACT

| TRACT Identification | Tract Location | % Below Poverty | % of Households with no vehicle | % Disabled | Household Income | Per Capita Income | % Population ages 15-19 | % Population 75+ |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 101 | Nashua | 1.7 | 1.2 | 9.1 | \$91,237 | \$40,975 | 6.2 | 5.9 |
| 102 | Nashua | 6.7 | 1.9 | 7.3 | \$69,834 | \$38,427 | 7.0 | 3.1 |
| 103.01 | Nashua | 0.7 | 1.3 | 7.6 | \$85,119 | \$42,009 | 6.0 | 5.9 |
| 103.02 | Nashua | 2.6 | 5.0 | 8.2 | \$74,265 | \$34,284 | 5.8 | 8.5 |
| 104 | Nashua | 3.7 | 6.3 | 8.5 | \$84,643 | \$38,467 | 6.6 | 6.1 |
| 105 | Nashua | 29.2 | 13.8 | 25.7 | \$35,354 | \$20,676 | 7.0 | 3.0 |
| 106 | Nashua | 27.2 | 23.8 | 18.3 | \$27,019 | \$20,252 | 6.8 | 6.2 |

| TRACT Identification | Tract Location | % Below Poverty | % of Households with no vehicle | % Disabled | Household Income | Per Capita Income | % Population ages 15-19 | % Population 75+ |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 107 | Nashua | 30.5 | 36.7 | 25.9 | \$21,948 | \$23,112 | 4.5 | 16.7 |
| 108 | Nashua | 29.3 | 23.7 | 20.5 | \$30,143 | \$19,462 | 7.1 | 4.4 |
| 109 | Nashua | 9.8 | 5.8 | 10.1 | \$61,646 | \$27,937 | 7.5 | 8.7 |
| 110 | Nashua | 7.1 | 2.8 | 9.9 | \$84,825 | \$33,196 | 9.9 | 7.0 |
| 111.01 | Nashua | 6.3 | 2.8 | 8.6 | \$57,520 | \$32,028 | 4.0 | 2.3 |
| 111.02 | Nashua | 6.6 | 8.4 | 11.9 | \$61,275 | \$35,451 | 2.3 | 6.0 |
| 112 | Nashua | 2.4 | 4.8 | 7.2 | \$114,425 | \$48,637 | 7.0 | 8.5 |
| 113 | Nashua | 3.4 | 1.8 | 9.1 | \$105,833 | \$35,237 | 6.5 | 8.8 |
| 114.01 | Nashua | 1.8 | 8.7 | 12.2 | \$87,292 | \$37,753 | 6.3 | 6.7 |
| 114.02 | Nashua | 3.5 | 0.9 | 8.7 | \$78,509 | \$31,943 | 6.4 | 2.5 |
| 115 | Nashua | 2.2 | 6.9 | 15.1 | \$55,538 | \$30,837 | 5.1 | 8.9 |
| 121 | Hudson | 1.0 | 1.2 | 8.3 | \$92,415 | \$37,964 | 7.6 | 3.6 |
| 122 | Hudson | 7.0 | 2.3 | 13.4 | \$63,623 | \$29,134 | 6.5 | 5.5 |
| 123 | Hudson | 4.1 | 1.2 | 8.0 | \$92,629 | \$35,987 | 7.5 | 4.4 |
| 131 | Litchfield | 4.8 | 1.1 | 7.6 | \$108,466 | \$37,412 | 8.2 | 2.6 |
| 141 | Merrimack | 7.7 | 5.3 | 11.1 | \$57,051 | \$35,877 | 4.9 | 6.3 |
| 142.01 | Merrimack | 2.3 | 0.7 | 6.9 | \$105,951 | \$39,433 | 8.5 | 2.3 |
| 142.02 | Merrimack | 1.0 | 0.0 | 9.5 | \$93,007 | \$39,738 | 6.8 | 3.1 |
| 143 | Merrimack | 1.5 | 3.5 | 7.7 | \$119,922 | \$43,395 | 7.8 | 3.1 |
| 151 | Amherst | 2.1 | 0.0 | 5.9 | \$125,379 | \$53,282 | 8.2 | 4.0 |
| 152 | Amherst | 4.9 | 1.8 | 8.4 | \$101,068 | \$45,193 | 7.5 | 4.0 |
| 161 | Milford | 4.7 | 1.6 | 8.6 | \$71,625 | \$33,532 | 6.4 | 4.6 |
| 162.01 | Milford | 8.5 | 6.2 | 12.0 | \$51,502 | \$31,437 | 6.7 | 6.8 |
| 162.02 | Milford | 3.2 | 2.7 | 6.8 | \$91,338 | \$34,334 | 7.8 | 3.0 |
| 171 | Hollis | 1.2 | 3.3 | 8.7 | \$102,159 | \$49,657 | 8.2 | 5.1 |
| 180 | Brookline | 2.9 | 1.2 | 5.7 | \$102,785 | \$37,653 | 8.2 | 2.1 |
| 185.02 | Mason | 10.9 | 1.8 | 4.9 | \$88,750 | \$35,928 | 5.6 | 2.7 |
| 190 | Wilton | 7.1 | 5.1 | 11.0 | \$68,693 | \$36,840 | 6.1 | 5.2 |
| 195.01 | Lyndeborough | 4.9 | 0.7 | 5.8 | \$85,457 | \$35,637 | 6.5 | 3.5 |
| 195.02 | Mont Vernon | 4.2 | 0.5 | 5.2 | \$93,828 | \$37,148 | 8.8 | 4.3 |
| 2001 | Pelham | 3.3 | 1.8 | 5.9 | \$96,442 | \$39,422 | 7.8 | 4.2 |
| 2002 | Pelham | 2.3 | 1.1 | 6.5 | \$101,873 | \$39,339 | 7.1 | 4.3 |
| 2003 | Pelham | 5.2 | 4.2 | 9.0 | \$93,145 | \$33,934 | 6.2 | 4.2 |

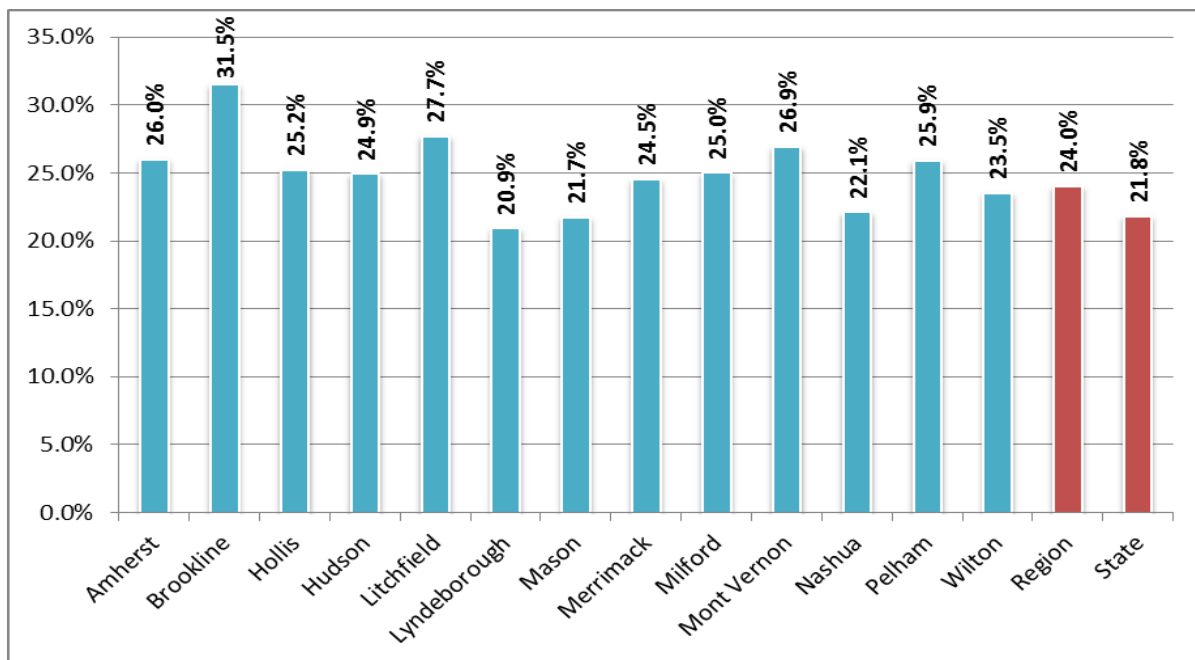
Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2012 American Community Survey

Youth Population

The youth population (citizens under the age of 18) of New Hampshire comprised 21.8% of the total state population, while the NRPC Region was slightly higher than the state with a rate of 24.0%. Figure’s 1 and 2 represents the percentage of the total population under the age of 18. The highest percentage of youth, at rates above equal to or 25% occurred in a number of areas throughout the region, including census tracts in Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Litchfield, Milford, Mont Vernon, and Pelham. Areas with higher percentages of youth correlate with a high concentration of relatively new housing units. Families with children have been attracted to these areas and therefore increased the youth population.

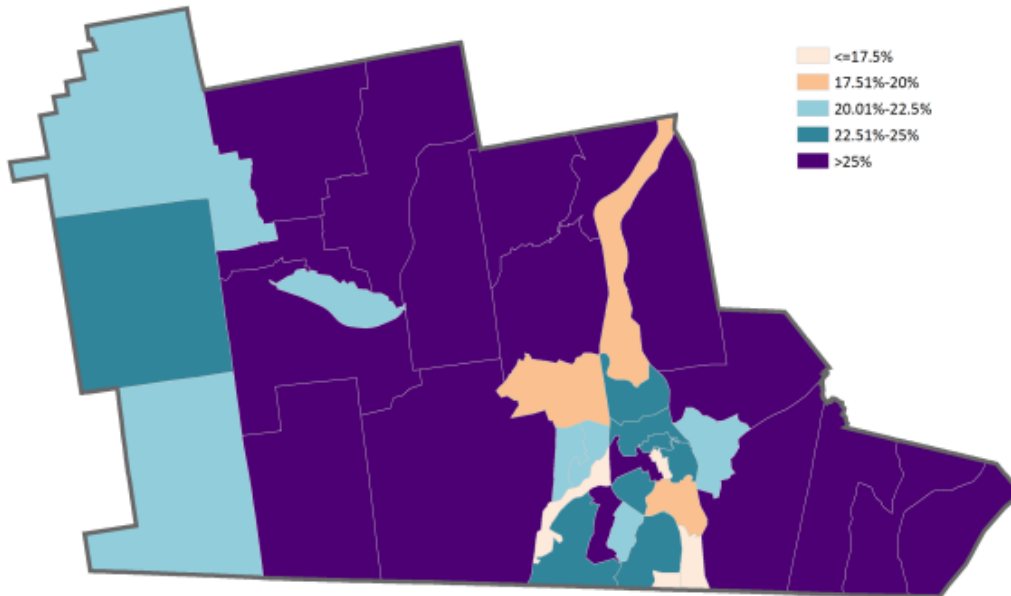
The region’s juvenile population is relatively evenly distributed and is most concentrated in suburban communities.

FIGURE 1: YOUTH (Under age 18) AS A PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

FIGURE 2: MAP OF POPULATION UNDER AGE 18, NASHUA REGION

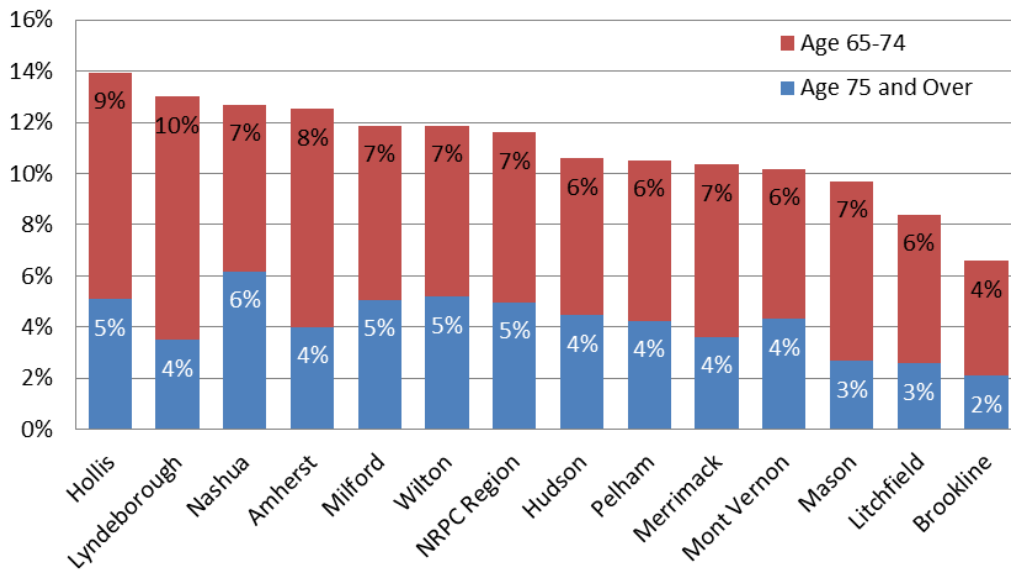


Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2008-2012)

Elderly Population

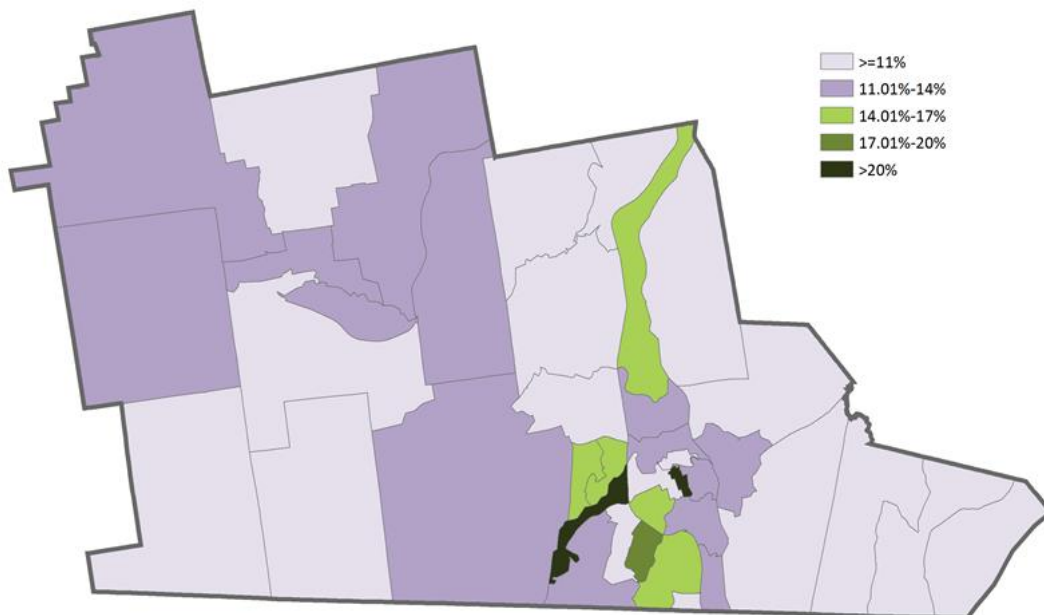
The elderly population of New Hampshire comprises 15.9% of the total state population, while the region is below the state rate with 12% of the population over age 65. Figure 3 represents the percentage of the total population ages 65 and above of each town in the region. Figure 4 represents the percentage of the total population ages 65 and above by census tract. Census tracts within Hudson, Lyndeborough, Milford, Nashua, and along the Merrimack River had the highest percentages of elderly as a percentage of the total population. The elderly population in these block groups exceeded 11% of the total population and in a few locations in Nashua accounted for up to 28% of the total population. High rates of 11% - 20% also occurred throughout Nashua, and in census tracts located in downtown Milford and along the Merrimack River in Merrimack. This is likely due to the type of housing developments located in these areas, which greatly increased the overall percentage of the elderly population.

FIGURE 3: SENIORS (65+) AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

FIGURE 4: MAP OF POPULATION AGE 65 AND OVER, NASHUA REGION



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Eastern Merrimack and several Nashua neighborhoods house the largest concentrations of seniors in the region.

Disabled Status

According to The American Community Survey (ACS) as of 2008, respondents who report any one of the following six disability types are considered to have a disability.

- Hearing difficulty: Deaf or having serious difficulty hearing (DEAR).
- Vision difficulty: Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses (DEYE).
- Cognitive difficulty: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions (DREM).
- Ambulatory difficulty: Having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs (DPHY).
- Self-care difficulty: Having difficulty bathing or dressing (DDRS).
- Independent living difficulty: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping (DOUT).

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) also provides a definition of disability:

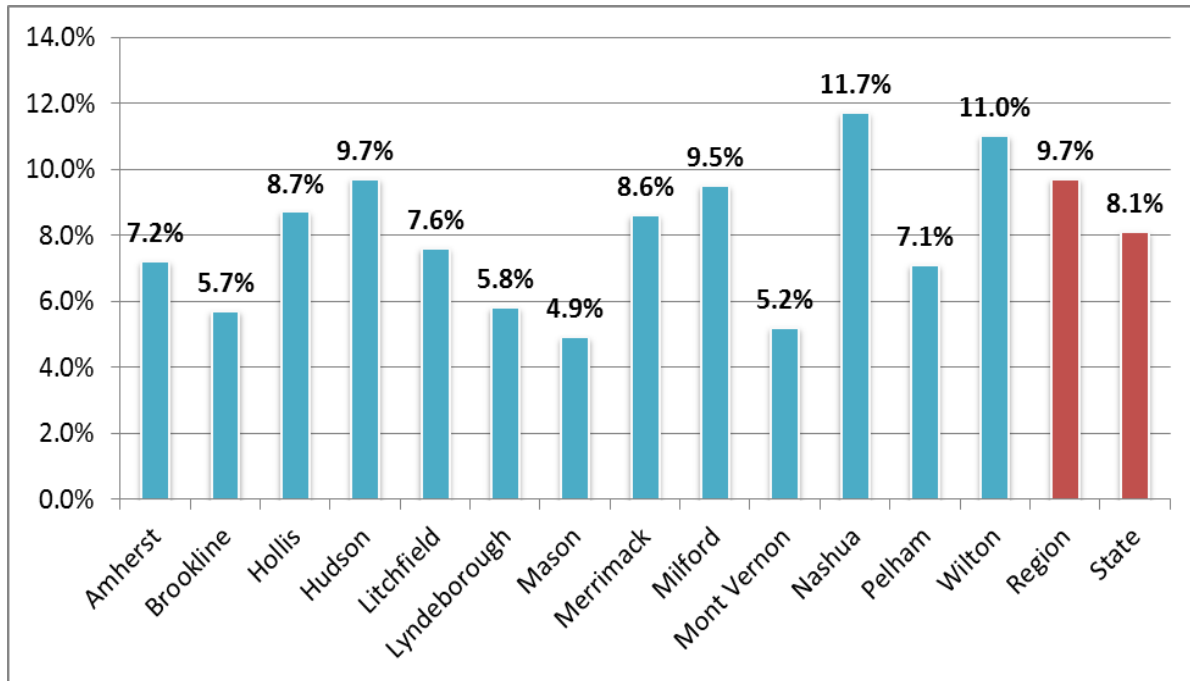
- Limitations in functional activities - seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, using stairs, grasping, lifting and carrying
- Activities of daily living (ADLs) - difficulty getting around inside the home, getting in/out of a bed/chair, bathing, dressing, eating, and toileting
- Instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) - difficulty going out, managing money, preparing meals, doing housework, taking prescriptions, and using the phone
- Use of assistive aids such as wheelchairs, crutches, canes, or walkers
- Presence of conditions related to mental functioning
- Difficulty working at a job or business
- Disability status of children including developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and difficulty with schoolwork.

The Census Bureau now collects data on disability primarily through the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Census.gov states that "generally, the SIPP estimates of disability prevalence are broader and encompass a greater number of activities on which disability status is assessed. The ACS has a more narrow definition but is capable of producing estimates for states, counties, and metropolitan areas. Because the ACS has replaced the decennial long-form as the source for small area statistics, there is no disability data in the 2010 Census."

Table 1 (page 8) identifies the number of disabled persons as a percentage of the total population, at the census tract level. Figure 5 illustrates that at the state level, 8.1% of the total population was considered disabled, while the region was slightly above that at 9.7%. At the town level (Figure 5), Hudson, Merrimack, Milford, Nashua, and Wilton had the highest percentage of disabled persons with rates of 9.7% and above, while the lowest rates were found in Brookline, Lyndeborough, and Mason at 5.8% and less.

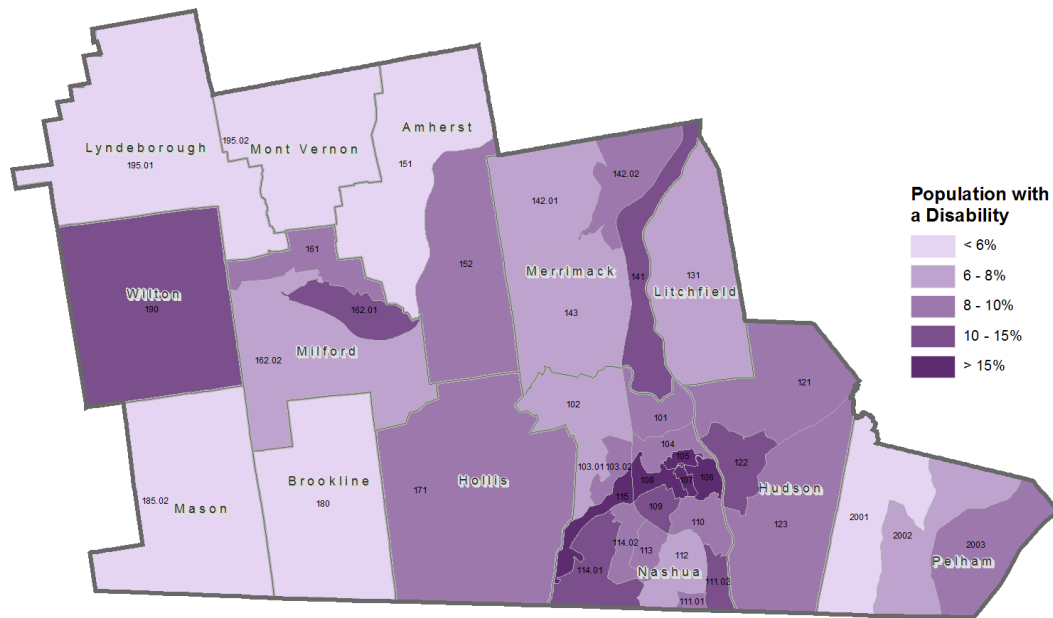
Figure 6 illustrates the census tracts with the highest concentrations of disabled individuals, located in downtown Milford, along the Merrimack River in Merrimack, downtown Hudson and throughout Nashua, Pelham and Wilton.

FIGURE 5: POPULATION WITH A DISABILITY AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION



Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 6: POPULATION WITH A DISABILITY BY CENSUS TRACT



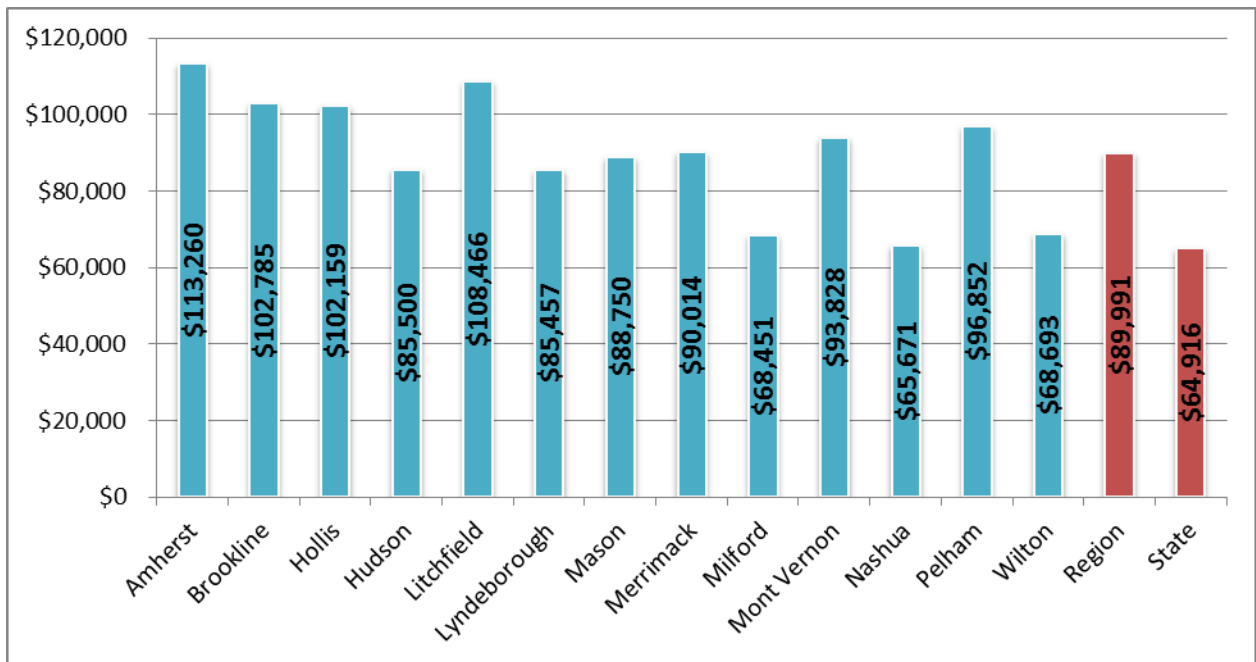
Income

The following definition of income is from the glossary section of the United States Census Bureau American Fact Finder;

“Total income” is the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from own nonfarm or farm business, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other sources of income received regularly such as Veterans’ (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony’ (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

According to the United States Census 2010 information, the median income has an equal number of incomes above and below the median figure. Source: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

FIGURE 7: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data

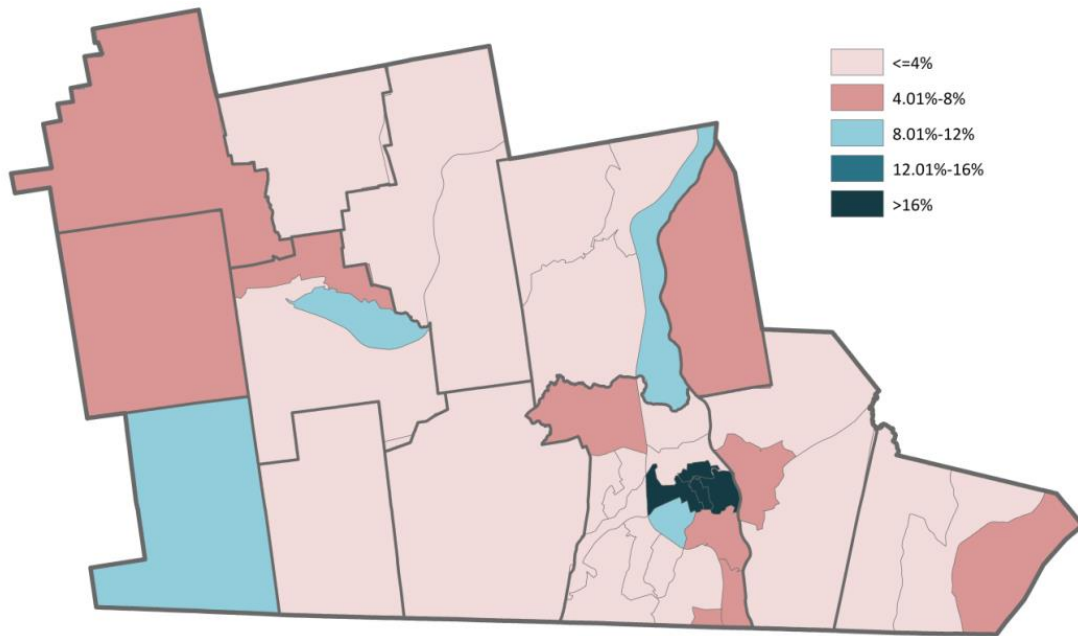
Poverty

Poverty status is determined by the United States Census Bureau as follows:

“... The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family or unrelated individual is classified as being "below the poverty level".”

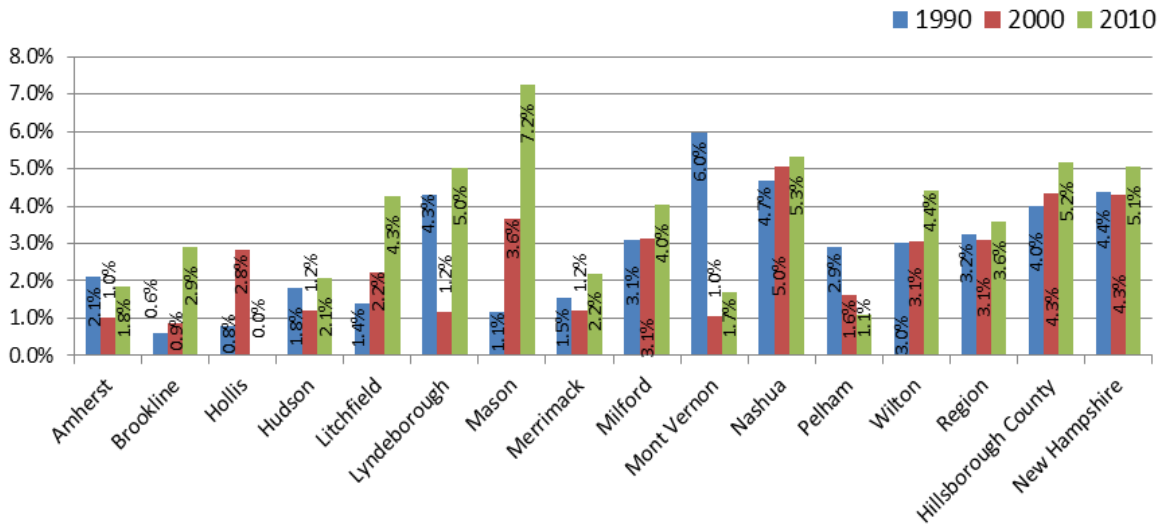
Table 2 indicates that 8.7 percent of the overall state population is in a state of poverty, while only 6.1% of the region is in a state of poverty.

FIGURE 8: MAP OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL



Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

FIGURE 9: PERCENT OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

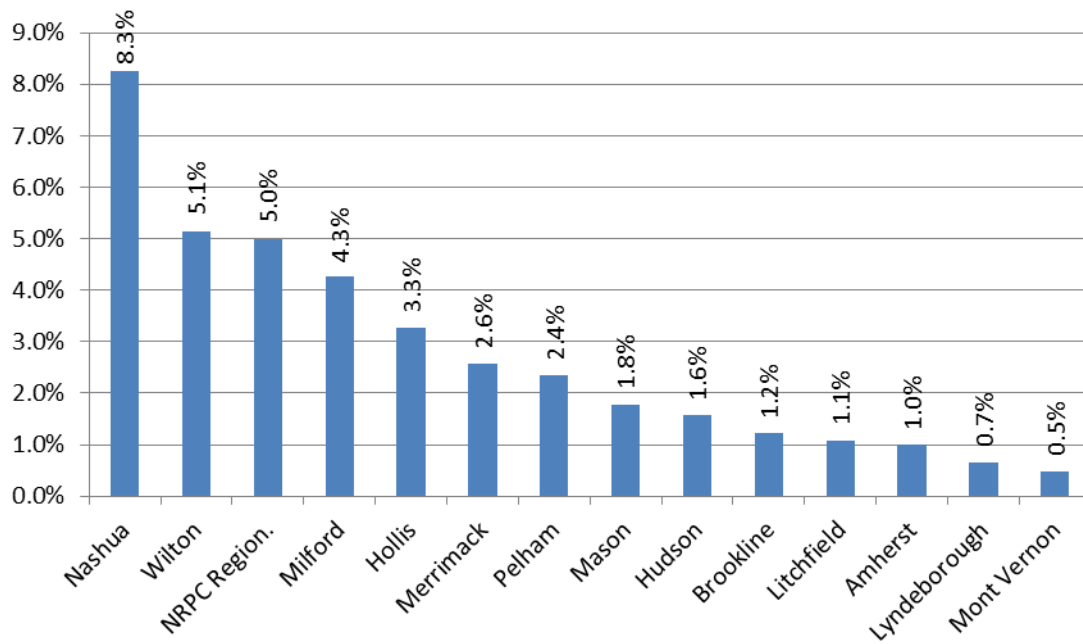


Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Automobiles

According to an on-board transit survey (May 2002) of Nashua Transit System, lack of vehicle availability was the number one reason people used Citybus in Nashua. Table 1 and 2, and Figure 10 show the percentage of households with no vehicles available, based on 2010 US Census data. Milford, Wilton, and Nashua had the highest percentages of households with no vehicles available at 4.3%, 5.1% 8.3% respectively; however tracts in downtown Nashua had much higher rates of 16%-39%. Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon had the lowest percentages of households without vehicles.

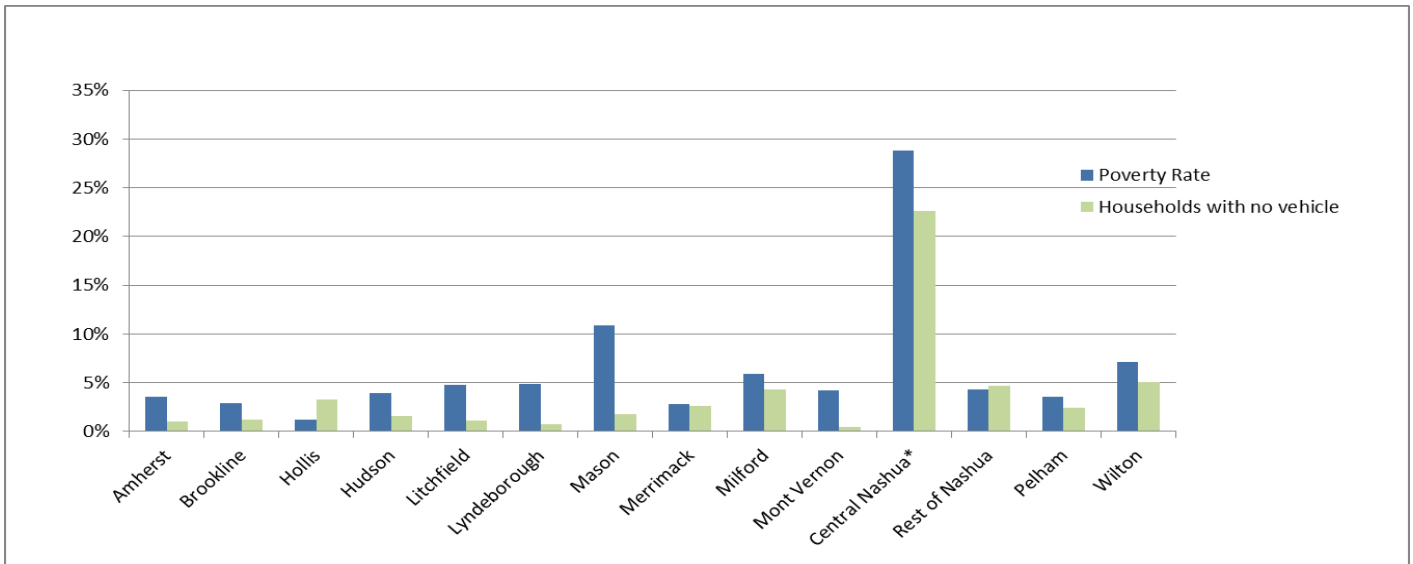
FIGURE 10: PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ACCESS TO A CAR



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012

Figure 11 shows poverty rates and shares of households without access to a vehicle are highest in Nashua.

FIGURE 11: POVERTY RATE AND VEHICLE AVAILABILITY, NASHUA REGION



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2008-2012)

* Central Nashua includes Census Tracts 105, 106, 107, and 108. With a population of 17,628, it makes up approximately 20 percent of Nashua’s population.

TABLE 2: TOWNWIDE 2010 CENSUS DATA

| | 2010 Population | Households | Population age 65 and Over | % | Population Under age 18 | % | Disabled | % | Median HH Income | Per Capita Income | Poverty | % | No Vehicles per Household | % |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|------|----------|------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------|------|------------------------------------|-----|
| Amherst | 11,201 | 4,031 | 650 | 5.8 | 2,917 | 26.0 | 805 | 7.2 | \$113,260 | \$49,086 | 400 | 3.6 | 40 | 1.0 |
| Brookline | 4,991 | 1,643 | 130 | 2.6 | 1,572 | 31.5 | 282 | 5.7 | \$102,785 | \$37,653 | 146 | 2.9 | 20 | 1.2 |
| Hollis | 7,684 | 2,746 | 108 | 1.4 | 1,933 | 25.2 | 669 | 8.7 | \$102,159 | \$49,657 | 92 | 1.2 | 90 | 3.3 |
| Hudson | 24,467 | 8,736 | 1,908 | 7.8 | 6,095 | 24.9 | 2,362 | 9.7 | \$85,500 | \$34,615 | 946 | 3.9 | 137 | 1.6 |
| Litchfield | 8,271 | 2,667 | 273 | 3.3 | 2,295 | 27.7 | 629 | 7.6 | \$108,466 | \$37,412 | 396 | 4.8 | 29 | 1.1 |
| Lyndeborough | 1,683 | 605 | 123 | 7.3 | 351 | 20.9 | 86 | 5.8 | \$85,457 | \$35,637 | 73 | 4.9 | 4 | 0.7 |
| Mason | 1,382 | 506 | 37 | 2.7 | 300 | 21.7 | 67 | 4.9 | \$88,750 | \$35,928 | 150 | 10.9 | 9 | 1.8 |
| Merrimack | 25,494 | 9,763 | 1,147 | 4.5 | 6,257 | 24.5 | 2,187 | 8.6 | \$90,014 | \$40,093 | 711 | 2.8 | 251 | 2.6 |
| Milford | 15,115 | 6,015 | 1,013 | 6.7 | 3,776 | 25.0 | 1,417 | 9.5 | \$68,451 | \$32,855 | 879 | 5.9 | 256 | 4.3 |
| Mont Vernon | 2,409 | 818 | 111 | 4.6 | 648 | 26.9 | 123 | 5.2 | \$93,828 | \$37,148 | 102 | 4.2 | 4 | 0.5 |
| Nashua | 86,494 | 35,209 | 5,882 | 6.8 | 19,131 | 22.1 | 10,105 | 11.7 | \$65,671 | \$33,352 | 7,927 | 9.3 | 2,910 | 8.3 |
| Pelham | 12,897 | 4,228 | 516 | 4.0 | 3,341 | 25.9 | 915 | 7.1 | \$96,852 | \$37,594 | 459 | 3.6 | 101 | 2.4 |
| Wilton | 3,677 | 1,439 | 213 | 5.8 | 864 | 23.5 | 404 | 11.0 | \$68,693 | \$36,840 | 262 | 7.1 | 74 | 5.1 |
| Region | 205,765 | 78,406 | 12,111 | 5.9 | 49,480 | 24.0 | 20,051 | 9.7 | \$89,991 | \$38,298 | 12,543 | 6.1 | 3,925 | 1.9 |
| State | 1,316,466 | 616,537 | 88,203 | 6.7 | 287,234 | 21.8 | 106,634 | 8.1 | \$64,916 | \$33,134 | 114,533 | 8.7 | 26,716 | 5.2 |

Sources: 2010 U.S. Census & 2012 American Community Survey

C. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Nashua Transit System (NTS)

NTS is a fixed route, public transportation system that serves the city of Nashua. Three types of transit are offered, which consist of fixed route, evening deviated fixed route and demand response. The daytime fixed route service that runs seven routes, the evening fixed route service that runs three routes, and demand response offers services to the disabled and senior population that runs the same routes as Citybus as well as a few additional service areas. All NTS buses and trolleys are equipped with bike racks.

Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC)

SVTC provides demand-response transportation called Souhegan Valley Rides. The vehicles, drivers and call center services are subcontracted from the Nashua Transit System. The 14 person buses are wheelchair accessible and operate Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 6:00pm including travel time to and from Nashua. This service is available to residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon and Wilton. Rides are provided within the six towns and to and from Nashua.

Boston Express

Boston Express is a charter bus service that provides the following transportation:

- Manchester < > Logan Airport
- Manchester < > South Station
- Londonderry < > Logan Airport
- Londonderry < > South Station
- Salem < > Logan Airport
- Salem < > South Station
- **Nashua < > Logan Airport**
- **Nashua < > South Station**
- Tyngsboro < > Logan Airport
- Tyngsboro < > South Station

Manchester Transit Authority (MTA)

MTA provides a fixed route local bus system that travels through Manchester and provides connections to Nashua and Concord for commuters. Buses operate from 5:30am to 7:30pm Monday through Friday and 9:30am to 6:00pm on Saturdays. All buses are wheelchair-accessible.

D. COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Amherst

Amherst has one of the second highest percentages of youth population (under the age of 18) in the region, comprising 26% of the total population, while the elderly comprised 5.8% of the total population. This is below both the region and state figures for the elderly population of 5.9% and 6.7% respectively. Amherst also has a low percentage of residents in poverty (3.6%). The Town does have a high automobile availability and high median incomes.

General public transit needs in Amherst are not significant enough to warrant fixed route service. This is primarily due to the fact that land uses in the Town exist at relatively low density. Human service transit needs that exist in the Town on the basis of the demographic analysis are primarily senior citizens needing regular transit service to access Milford and Nashua for personal needs and medical trips.

Brookline

Its proximity to employment opportunities within the region and the state of Massachusetts as well as its school system has attracted families. Poverty rates and lack of vehicle availability are very low in the town. The elderly population comprised 2.6% of the population, well below the state rate of 6.7%. The youth population comprised 31.5% of the population which is the highest of any town in the region and higher than the state rate of 21.8%. The disabled population rate is low at 5.7% of the population and below the region and state rates of 9.7% and 8.1%. The Town is not developed at sufficient density to support fixed route transit services at this point in time.

Brookline's transit needs are similar to Amherst's, where the town is not developed at sufficient density to support fixed route services. The transit needs that exist in the Town on the basis of the demographic analysis are primarily senior citizens and people with disabilities needing regular transit service to access Nashua for personal needs and medical trips and potentially after school transportation options for youth.

Hollis

Hollis has the smallest percentage of elderly (ages 65+) at 1.4% of the population. Hollis also has a high percentage of youth at 25.2% of the population and the lowest percentage of residents in poverty at 1.2%. There is a moderate rate of automobile availability, with 3.3% of households without a vehicle and a high rate of people with disabilities. Residents also have an extremely high median income and contribute to a relatively low general transit need town wide. The southeastern portion of the Town between NH 130 and NH 111 has the highest transit need. Again, the primary transit need in Hollis is for regular service to Nashua to allow elderly residents to make trips for personal or medical purposes.

Hudson

Hudson's downtown is located just on the other side of the Merrimack River from downtown Nashua, and is relatively dense compared with the region. Hudson has the highest percentage of people 65 and older comprising of 7.8% of the population. Portions of tract 122, including the downtown area, are home to a high concentration of elderly and disabled persons with median incomes of less than \$50,000, with a high percentage experiencing poverty and a large

percentage of households with zero or one vehicle available. These factors in Hudson necessitate a high level of transit service. Fixed route service to Hudson is among the most regular requests to NTS from the public and indicates a strong existing need.

Litchfield

Litchfield has a moderate percentage of elderly residents and a high rate of youth at 27.7%. Litchfield has a moderate rate of residents with disabilities, moderate overall poverty rates, a relatively high median income, and a low rate of households without automobiles at 1.1%.

The transportation needs of Litchfield are unique due to the geography and land development patterns of the Town. The lack of crossings of the Merrimack River combined with the rural nature of the Town requires the population to travel often and longer distances to meet their basic needs. Given the low population density, extending transit service to Litchfield is not planned at this time.

Mason

Mason is located in the southwest corner of the region and has the smallest population of the 13 towns. Mason has the highest population below poverty level at 10.9%. This is higher than the region's percentage of population below poverty level of 6.1% and the state's percentage of 8.7%. Mason also has the second least amount of population ages under 18 in the region (21.7%) which is below the regional and state percentage as well.

Mont Vernon

Mont Vernon is located in the northwestern corner of the region. The town has the second highest population percentage of people under 18, making up 26.9% of the town population. This is slightly higher than the region's percentage for this age group of 24% and higher than the state's percentage of 21.8%. Mont Vernon also has the least amount of households that do not have access to a car at only 0.5% of the population. This is lower than the region and state's percentages.

Lyndeborough

Lyndeborough is also located in the northwestern corner of the region and borders Mont Vernon. Lyndeborough has one of the highest percentages of elderly in the region and one of the lowest percentages of youth in the region. However, Lyndeborough has a relatively low percentage of people with disabilities at 5.8% and the second lowest percentage of households without access to a vehicle at 0.7%. There is a moderate amount of residents in a state of poverty and the median household income of \$85,457 for Lyndeborough is below the regional average at \$89,991. However this is above the state average of \$64,916.

Merrimack

The eastern most portion of Merrimack on either side of Daniel Webster Highway, bounded on the east by the Merrimack River, is home to a population with transit need. This area contains a significant number of apartments and has a higher density than the region. The area has a high percentage of youth and a low percentage of elderly residents. There is also a low rate of residents in poverty and a high rate of residents with disabilities. Median household incomes fall about in the middle of other areas in the region. Merrimack's proximity to downtown

Nashua and direct access along Concord Street and US 3 make this an ideal location for future fixed route transit service as well as expanded human service transportation services.

Milford

Milford has a relatively large population and serves as a sub-regional center for the western part of the region with a diverse population facing a variety of transit needs. The area surrounding the Oval (tract 29) has a high concentration of apartments and rental properties and has a correspondingly high disabled population and persons in poverty status. Median household income is very low with a median household average of \$68,451 and 4.3% of households who do not have vehicle availability. Transit needs also exist to a lesser degree west of the Oval.

Establishing a full day fixed route service would assist this community in best meeting the needs of households with limited incomes, limited vehicle availability and the disabled population.

Nashua

Nashua is the urban core of the region and home to the largest and most diverse population within central southern New Hampshire. As with most urban areas, some portions of the city have a higher concentration of low income, elderly and disabled residents and thus a greater need for public transit and human services transit, such as in the urban core found in the downtown. Overall, Nashua has the highest amount of residents in the region that are disabled at 11.7% and the highest percentage of households without access to a car at 8.3%. This could be because the Nashua Transit System provides fixed route public transportation and paratransit services.

Some portions of the City have a much higher need for public transit services, such as the urban core found in the downtown. The highest need is located in a rectangular area straddling the north and south side of NH 111 and the east and west sides of Main Street. Other areas ranking high for transit needs include the southeast corner of the City, along Amherst Street east of the F.E. Everett Turnpike, and areas along NH 130 and NH 111. Citybus currently operates fixed route service in close proximity to these areas. Most recently the City was awarded Job Access Reverse Commute funds to develop service that connected all existing routes to the Boston Express Service at Exit 6. This new service effectively provides all NTS routes with a connection to Boston. In addition Route 9 provides service to Daniel Webster College and the Nashua North High School.

Pelham

Pelham is located in the southeast corner of the region and borders Massachusetts. The town has a higher percentage (25.9%) of youth than the region (24.0%) and a lower percentage of elderly residents than the regional averages. The percentage of disabled persons is lower than the regional average, median household incomes are relatively high, poverty is low, and vehicle availability is fairly high. Pelham does not presently show significant signs of transit need.

Wilton

Downtown Wilton shows a need for human service transit services. Wilton has a moderate percentage of elderly and the second highest percentage of disabled residents at 11.0%. Median

incomes are low, and 5.1% of households do not have vehicle availability. Public transit needs exist in Wilton, however the significant distance and time to travel to Nashua may limit ridership and cost effectiveness on a fixed route. Therefore human service oriented transit service may be a more effective way to mobilize the elderly and disabled population in Wilton.

IV. TAKING STOCK OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

This chapter provides a summary of the existing services in the region. In 2006 this information was initially compiled through an extensive input process of over 60 local social service agencies and transit providers. This 2015 update has been enhanced with public input gathered during the development of the Regional Plan, Regional Coordinating Council meetings, and content from a number of local planning documents. NRPC followed a vigorous public involvement process during the update of the Nashua Regional Comprehensive Plan (2012-2014). The information from that public involvement process is being used to support the current coordinated plan update process. During the process 820 residents submitted written comments, 679 residents were engaged at outreach events, and 308 individuals attended workshops/meetings. In addition approximately 20 community representatives and local transportation providers attended three Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) meetings in 2015 to discuss the local transportation needs facing their community or agency. These representatives currently work with individuals with disabilities, seniors, older adults and low income populations.

Nashua Transit System provides the vast majority of trips in the region; however, their fixed route service is only available in Nashua with limited demand response service in Hudson and Merrimack. A number of smaller services also provide a vital link in the regional transportation system, providing trips to adult day programs, the youth population, and residents of various facilities. However the regional transportation network does not cover all the needs in the region.

In 2003 the Nashua Regional Planning Commission developed a Transit Plan for the Nashua Region. As part of the planning process, a detailed analysis was conducted and specific recommendations were identified to meet the greatest transportation needs in the region. This chapter provides a detailed summary of existing needs, what is done well, what could be done better, issues, and highlights of regional plans.

A. EXISTING NEEDS

1. Destinations

- The most common need expressed by agency representatives is the need to transport their clients to medical services, childcare, work and shopping activities, education sites, and community services.
- There is a need to increase the range and frequency of service of the public transportation network in the region. More specifically, there is a need for transportation to and from destinations outside the City of Nashua, from community to community and inter-community options.
- Additionally, there is a need for increased transportation connections between rural towns in the region.
- Transportation also needs to be made available for longer hours during the day; service needs to begin earlier in the day and continue later into the evening.

2. Funding

- Additional sources of funding need to be identified. Most funding for public transportation is from federal sources and therefore state and local funding needs to be increased.
- There also needs to be more flexibility in the allowable uses of the available funding.
- Agencies can't always afford the cost of programs that they would like to provide.

3. Interagency Coordination

- Even though there is coordination in some cases between agencies, there is a need for increased and better coordination.

4. Other Existing Needs

- There needs to be more access, in general, to modes of alternative transportation (something other than private vehicles).
- Children need transportation to destinations such as the YMCA as well as other destinations.
- Local medical facilities have a need to provide transportation for discharged patients that cannot drive due to medical treatments.
- There is a need for more volunteer drivers to fill existing gaps.

B. WHAT DO WE DO WELL?

- Human services providers do a good job tailoring their services to client needs.
- There is good "pooling" of services which has created a good social services network.
- The Nashua demand response system provides excellent service to its clients.
- The Nashua Transit System (NTS) communicates well with its clients.
- There is tremendous volunteer support, however it is not well documented.

C. WHAT COULD WE DO BETTER?

- Regional communications should be improved.
- Transportation services beyond the City of Nashua need to be increased. The need is for transportation to medical services, employment, shopping and social services.
- Improve transportation between rural communities. Not all individuals in need of transportation services need to go to Nashua.
- Prevent donor exhaustion with non-profits.

D. ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- Litchfield is physically isolated from the rest of the region.
- Social isolation is an issue amongst populations who do not have access to transportation. Social exclusion is an issue that could be addressed in the region.
- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

- Poor snow maintenance along sidewalks and at transit stops.
- Absence of transit service outside of Nashua.
- The region is too automobile-dominant, transit coverage is not offered in municipalities outside of Nashua, pedestrian and bicycle facilities are inadequate and poorly connected, and that transit connections to the Boston area and surrounding cities are not well developed.

E. TRANSIT PLAN FOR THE NASHUA REGION

NRPC completed the Transit Plan for the Nashua Region in 2003. This planning process identified transit needs for Nashua and the surrounding region through an on-board ridership survey and a detailed demographic analysis. Following are three lists. The first list includes goals to expand transit service in the region, the second list identifies transit needs on a town by town basis and the third list identifies proposed service improvements. NRPC is currently working with NTS to develop a 10 year Strategic Plan for the transit agency. This planning effort will identify additional service expansions that NTS would like to offer as well as the corresponding capital and operating funding required to make these service expansions a reality.

1. In the development of the Transit Plan for the Nashua Region, the following transit system **goals** were identified:
 - Expand service hours.
 - Increase frequency of service.
 - Improve the efficiency, security and rider amenity of the transit vehicles by implementing on-board passenger information systems, automatic vehicle location/mobile data systems, on-board security systems and “clean diesel” engine technology.
 - Provide passenger information at bus stops.
 - Provide shelters at the highest use bus stops.
 - Build a permanent headquarters/garage for the transit system.
 - Shift ambulatory riders from paratransit to fixed route service.
 - Develop on-going funding sources for the JARC service between Westside Plaza in Nashua and the Milford Oval.
 - Expand the transit service outside of Nashua based on the increasingly regionalized federal funding streams.
2. The Regional Transit Plan identifies areas of the region that have the highest potential transit **needs** based on the presence of demographic characteristics that are good indicators of transit need. Seven criteria were determined to be the best indicators of transit need in the region. These criteria were population density, youth population, elderly population, disabled status, median household income, poverty status and automobile availability. High concentrations of youth, elderly and disabled populations are good indicators of transit need because a high percentage of these populations do not drive private automobiles and in many cases are transit dependent. Low median household incomes are often directly linked to automobile availability. Automobile ownership is extremely expensive, and for many low income and poverty status individuals, private vehicle costs are

prohibitive, and force them to be transit dependent. The following list identifies specific towns within the NRPC region and their corresponding transit needs.

- **Expansion within Nashua** – Nashua remains the area of the region with the highest concentration of transit need. Most of the areas of the region with the highest potential levels of transit need are in the downtown area of Nashua. As a result, expansion of service by extending service hours and by increasing service frequency would seem the highest priorities for better meeting transit needs.
 - **Hudson** – Hudson seems to have the second highest overall level of transit need. In addition, due to the proximity of the highest transit need areas in Hudson with the highest transit need areas in Nashua, it may also be the easiest community to which to extend transit service.
 - **Milford** – Although Milford is rather remote from the highest transit need areas in Nashua, it also has a high level of transit need.
 - **Merrimack** – Merrimack has an area of concentrated transit need in the northern section of the town along US 3.
 - **Amherst and Wilton** – These communities have some level of transit need, but clearly not to the extent of the foregoing. Nonetheless, both these towns depend on Milford to some extent as a sub-regional center for shopping and services. Connection of these communities to Milford with a low level of service should be considered.
 - **Hollis and Brookline** – These communities have a relatively low need for transit services compared with other areas in the region. But from the data it appears likely that a small resident population of elderly individuals could benefit from regularly scheduled service from both towns to Nashua and back to provide access to shopping and medical services.
3. Proposed **service improvements** for the region include the following items:
- Decrease headways on City of Nashua routes.
 - Extend morning and evening service hours on City of Nashua routes.
 - Establish a Daniel Webster Highway Circulator in southern Nashua’s retail area.
 - Provide limited fixed route service to Daniel Webster College and Nashua North High School.
 - Provide fixed route and demand response service between Nashua and Milford.
 - Establish a shared deviated fixed route service between Amherst, Milford and Wilton.
 - Establish a shared deviated fixed route service between Brookline, Hollis and Nashua.

-
- Provide fixed route and demand response service between Merrimack and Nashua.
 - Provide fixed route and demand response service between Hudson and Nashua.
 - Enhance passenger amenities through additional bus shelters, updated bus stop signs with schedule information and lighting, and an on-board voice announcement system.
 - Improve system security through the installation of video security cameras.
 - Develop a Transportation Demand Management/Vanpooling plan for the region.
 - Enhance Intelligent Transportation System technologies through traffic signal priority, transit vehicle tracking and electronic fare boxes.
 - Improve connections outside the region with access to Boston, Derry-Salem, Keene, Lowell, and Manchester.
 - Continue to develop the extension of the commuter rail from Lowell to Nashua.
 - Begin the development process for extending commuter rail from Nashua to Manchester.
 - Analyze the benefits and impacts of the regionalization of the existing transit system.
 - Develop a plan for addressing potential funding changes due to anticipated United States Census 2010 findings.

F. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Establishment of Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative providing service to six communities in the western part of the region.
- NTS established and expanded evening service.
- NTS decreased headways on some routes.
- Established a permanent headquarters/garage for the NTS fleet.
- NTS has purchased some CNG buses and currently have an RFP for a fleet replacement to all CNG powered buses.
- Shifted some ambulatory riders from demand response to fixed route service.

G. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM LOCAL PLANS

1. Regional Plan

- 28% share of households in the region live within 1/2mile of town center or downtown
- 43% share of residents live near a transit stop
- Nashua is the only community in the area with regular transit service
- 5% share of households in the NRPC region do not have access to a car

- The population is graying; there is a significant increase in those 65 and older. Currently 12% of the population falls in the 65 and older demographic. This statistic will more than double by 2040 based on current trends and reach 25%. Therefore, it is very likely that there will be an increased need for transportation and affordable services for seniors.
- Outside of Nashua, choice is largely limited to the private automobile.
- As prices increase for car ownership and preferences change, alternative travel options are going to be vital in attracting new residents to the Region.

2. Nashua Community Health Assessment (CHA)

- There is a significant lack of public transportation from surrounding towns to doctor's appointments for all residents; not just the elderly and people with disabilities.
- People are commonly requesting a resource to help them identify community resources, as they do not know what is available to them.
- Rural areas have a lower accessibility to employment than more urban areas.

3. SHARE Needs Assessment

- There are three primary service providers who provide transportation for those unable to drive themselves to medical appointments: Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative ('Blue Bus'), FISH Volunteer Rides, and SNHS Rural Transportation Program.
- 44% of households in tract 162.01 in Milford have access to one or no car. This may suggest that these households are constrained by the functionality of a single car, which restricts access to employment and economic security for some household members.

4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Nashua Region prioritizes transportation projects for region, including transit.

http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/8014/2186/6223/Transportation_Plan_Final_Adopted_121714.pdf

- Support for expanding bus/rail service between cities, improving senior and special needs transit services, improving the availability of bike lanes and expanding public transportation.
- 62% of Nashua Region residents support expansion of rail and bus service between major cities; 52% support improving bike paths and 43% support improving public transportation.
- Enhanced transportation connections can significantly reduce congestion by providing transportation users alternatives during periods of peak travel or during traffic.

-
- Currently, approximately 58 percent of residents in the Nashua Region do not enjoy access to fixed-route transit service because transit service does not extend beyond the Nashua city boundaries. The three most promising candidates for extended transit service in the region include the towns of Hudson, Merrimack and Milford, as they are the largest outlying population and employment centers in the region.
 - The “Nashua Tree Streets Neighborhood: Analysis and Overview” completed by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and the City of Nashua in 2012 offered several strategies to enhance the character and infrastructure of one of Nashua’s most cohesive and lowest income neighborhoods. The plan recommended more transit shelters, more frequent bus service, increasing lighting and police patrols along the Heritage Rail Trail, sidewalk upgrades, and consideration of an overnight parking permit system. Some of those recommendations have already been implemented.
 - The sole project in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan relating to improved connections between the region and surrounding cities is straightforward: To establish passenger rail service from the region to Manchester and Boston.

The vast majority of transportation trips are provided by Nashua Transit System (NTS). NTS provides fixed route and accompanying ADA demand response service within the City of Nashua. Limited demand response service is also provided to the Towns of Hudson and Merrimack. A number of other smaller services are available in some of the surrounding towns. Overall, agencies and transportation providers felt that many areas of Nashua were currently well served and most agencies were able to meet a large portion of their clients needs. However, additional services are needed to meet the transportation needs of the region, especially outside of Nashua.

A variety of people are in need of greater transportation services. People are in need of transportation services to access medical appointments, childcare facilities, employment sites, adult day programs, shopping destinations and social service agencies. Many people are transit dependent such as the youth, elderly, and disabled populations. It is very difficult for transit dependent people to reach social service agencies in Nashua when they live in outlying communities. Some agencies also noted that trying to provide people with reliable vehicles was very difficult. Older vehicles were more affordable; however they tend to have costly repairs and are less reliable. In addition some agencies raised concerns about the difficulty in finding and providing adequate transportation to adult day program clients. Service needs to be expanded within the surrounding communities with connections between these towns and Nashua.

The Transit Plan for the Nashua Region identified a number of areas with high transit needs. These areas included: downtown Nashua, NH 101 A and Exit 1 in Nashua, NH 3 along the Merrimack River in Merrimack, downtown Hudson, along NH 101 A and downtown in Milford, and downtown Wilton. Expanding transportation services beyond Nashua would be a step towards meeting these needs. This plan also developed a detailed list of recommended transportation services for the region.

Social service agencies throughout the region may benefit from coordinating transportation services to provide a higher level of service at a lower cost to more clients. The Federal government and the State of New Hampshire are supporting these efforts to combat the increasing costs of providing transportation services. As the existing population continues to age, there will be an increased demand to provide trips to medical, shopping, and adult programs destinations throughout the region. Transportation users and providers will need to collaborate and find ways to serve more clients at lower costs.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This planning process was conducted to ensure that input was received from a wide range of sources. A number of themes were common to all these sources. It is clear that some needs are being met, but service needs to be expanded to fully meet the needs of the region. Public transit is readily available in the denser areas of Nashua. In addition a strong need for transportation services exists throughout the greater region as well, with connections between some of the outlying communities and beyond.

Research and outreach revealed that people from all demographic groups are in need of greater transportation services. In general, the youth, elderly and disabled populations have a higher percentage of transit dependency than the general population. Throughout the region, people need greater access to medical appointments; this is especially true for the elderly and disabled populations, as well as access to employment sites, child care facilities, adult day programs, shopping destinations, social service agencies and for general errands.

Fortunately, grassroots efforts and the community transit approach have been working well in this area. One agency in particular that demonstrates an impressive success story is the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). The mission of the SVTC is to:

“...guide, promote, develop funding sources, and govern a transportation system that provides affordable, wheelchair accessible rides to non-emergency medical appointments and to fulfill fundamental needs such as grocery shopping and essential personal appointments. This transportation service shall be provided to any person in need residing in any of the communities participating in the funding of the transportation system.” – Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative

Based on initial work started in 2005 by the Granite State Organizing project (GSOP), the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service was founded in 2008 by the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). GSOP was instrumental in identifying the desire and need among area residents for affordable, wheelchair accessible non-emergency medical transportation. To address this need, GSOP brought together a wide variety of Souhegan Valley community members and leaders. After raising awareness and funds under GSOP's guidance, this group evolved into the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). Community representatives to SVTC are appointed and supported by their Boards of Selectmen. SVTC board members represent their hometowns and together oversee the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service. All participating communities are guaranteed representation on the SVTC Board of Directors and a voice in guiding the evolution of this regional transportation service. SVTC's grassroots efforts represent proactive planning to provide community transit services that meet a current need and that help their hometowns establish the groundwork to meet future needs. As of December 31, 2015, Souhegan Valley Rides had provided 20,194 rides to area residents.

The following is a list of recommendations to improve the existing transportation system in the greater Nashua and Milford region

A. AMENDED PROJECT LIST (DECEMBER 2015)

NRPC has amended the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan to include a prioritized list of projects. The reason for this action is to comply with revised FTA guidance that requires projects funded through the 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities) program be derived from a locally coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Nashua

- Increase headways to reduce wait times between fixed route transit runs.
- Increase the frequency of existing transportation services.
- Increase transportation services for the elderly and disabled, including access to adult day programs.
- Increase the frequency of existing transportation services.

Region

- Increase the range and frequency of service of the public transportation network in the region. More specifically, there is a need for transportation to and from destinations outside the City of Nashua, from community to community and inter-community options.
- Continue to grow the existing SVTC service in Amherst, Wilton, Milford, Mont Vernon Hollis and Brookline with service to Nashua.
- Establish demand response service to Merrimack along Daniel Webster Highway:
- Establish demand response, deviated fixed route, or fixed route service to Milford, Hollis/Brookline and Hudson.
- Increase service to meet the specific needs of the youth population.
- Increase service to meet the specific needs of the elderly and disabled populations, including access to adult day programs.
- Increase overall transportation services throughout the region.
- Increased access to medical appointments.
- Provide expanded home to home service (frail clients and those who need a little extra assistance) and access to adult day service programs.
- Address opportunities for coordination between providers.
- Provide direct connections between towns outside of Nashua.
- Identify transportation needs of various target populations.
- Increase coordination with 211, to determine the volume of calls and requested information.

Beyond the Region

- Service beyond the existing 13 member region with destinations to Manchester, Lowell and Boston.
- Provide direct connections between towns outside of Nashua.
- Assist transit riders with improved access to both local and distant destinations through the development of an intermodal transportation network including demand management measures, access to park and ride lots, bike racks on busses and connections to future commuter rail stations.

- Expand bus and rail service between cities.

Education and Outreach

- Provide Mobility Management services to help create a full range of well-synchronized mobility services throughout the region
- Educate towns on the need for public transportation services and funding options. Education should include outreach to all members of the communities in the NRPC region including elected officials, town board members, potential clients, and the general public.
- Identify funding sources and coordinate funding opportunities amongst agencies if possible.
- Establish a “Passenger Amenities and Safety” program that will continually work to ensure clean and well maintained busses and bus stops while developing additional amenities such as bus shelters, updated signs at bus stops, schedule information and state of the art lighting. This program will also work to provide continuous passenger and facility safety and security.
- Provide continuous education to existing and potential riders using marketing and public outreach regarding benefits of using public transportation.
- Pursue a statewide volunteer driver insurance policy, similar to what is implemented in Vermont.
- Evaluate the use of Medicaid transportation and who is using it to determine what could be done better.

VI. FUNDING SOURCES

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) administers funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and distributes it to transportation providers throughout the state. These funding sources are listed in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: NHDOT - FTA FUNDING SOURCES

| FTA Program | Purpose of Program | Eligible Recipients | Eligible Activities | Match Ratio |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| 5307: Urbanized Area Formula Grants | Makes Federal resources available to urbanized areas (>50,000 pop.) for transit capital, operating and planning | Funding is available to designated recipients that must public bodies. | Planning, engineering, evaluation, capital investments, etc. Operating assistance not available in urbanized areas > 200,000. | Vehicle related equipment for complying with ADA-or Clean Air Act or bicycle-related: 90% Federal*, Other capital equipment: 80% Federal and 20% Local match. |
| 5310: Capital: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities* | This program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. | Private non-profit organizations or a State or local governmental authority that is a designated coordinated service provider. | Accessible vehicles and other capital equipment (e.g. radio systems). | ADA-accessible vehicles: 85% Federal*, 7.5% State & 7.5% Local match. Other capital equipment: 80% Federal and 20% Local match. |

| FTA Program | Purpose of Program | Eligible Recipients | Eligible Activities | Match Ratio |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 5310 Purchase of Service (POS) | Federal funds to support coordinated transportation services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. | Funds have been allocated by RCC region and distributed to a single lead agency or designated regional transportation coordinator in each region. | To maintain and expand regional transportation services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Operating Costs. | Funds are considered capital funds and require a 20% non-federal match. Properly documented in-kind match is permitted consistent with Federal guidelines. Operating costs require a 50% match. |
| 5310 Formula Funds | RCC distributed Formula Funding for enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities | Funds specifically made available to the nine NH Regional Coordinating Councils to support coordinated transportation services in their regions. | Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for capital expenses to support the provision of transportation services to meet the special needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Operating costs are eligible. *See excerpt from the FTA 5310 Circular (C9070.1F) for a list of some of the eligible activities. | 5310 Formula Funds are eligible for capital projects (requiring a 20% non-federal match) and operating expenses (requiring a 50% non-federal match). Properly documented in-kind match is permitted consistent with Federal guidelines and accompanying NHDOT guidance. Operating costs require a 50/50 match. |

| FTA Program | Purpose of Program | Eligible Recipients | Eligible Activities | Match Ratio |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| 5311 Rural (Non-urbanized) Transit | This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance. The 5316 JARC program was consolidated into 5311 Rural under MAP-21. | State or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation systems in rural areas with populations less than 50,000. | Planning, capital, operating, job access and reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation services. | Federal share is 80% for capital projects and 50% for operating assistance. |
| 5305 Statewide Planning and Research Program | This program's purpose is to fund planning and technical studies of public transportation systems. | Operators of public transportation systems and Regional Planning Commissions | Planning and technical studies of public transportation systems. These may include feasibility studies for projected system expansions or new transit systems. | 20% local matching funds |
| 5339 Bus and Facilities Capital* | Provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. Replaces the 5309 program. | Public agencies or private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability, or low income. | Capital projects to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. | Federal share is 80% with a required 20% local match.* |