

COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION PLAN
FOR THE NANTUCKET REGION
2015

Approved March 2, 2015

Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission
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Summary

Federal transportation law requires the development of a Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation plan. This plan is intended to identify needs and gaps in human services transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Nantucket County. The plan will be used to direct Federal Transit Administration funds allocated by MAP-21, specifically *5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities*. All federal section 5310 funding must be consistent and in keeping with the findings, goals, and objectives outlined in this plan.

Human service transportation in Nantucket County is available community wide and accommodates seniors 60 years of age and older and all types of disabilities. Compared with the rest of Massachusetts, there is about an average portion of the population who are seniors living in Nantucket County (12.5% locally versus 14.1% statewide) and there are slightly less than average portion of the population with disabilities (8.3% locally versus 11.3% statewide). Since there are individuals who are senior, disabled, or both in the region, improvements will have substantial benefits for those who currently or will use these services.

To identify needs, information from the American Community Survey, Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA), Cape and Islands Regional Coordinating Council, and public comments from a 2012 public outreach campaign by the NRTA were used. Since the NRTA is the only provider of human service transportation, coordination and planning involved in allocating these funds involve consultation between the NRTA and NP&EDC staff, NRTA Advisory Board, and local committees with a mission of identifying and advocating for the needs of the elderly and disabled, such as the Council on Aging, Council for Human Services, Commission on Disabilities, and Elder Services.

The identified needs are listed below and align with the goals established in this plan:

- Weekend demand response service
- Evening demand response service
- Replacement of demand response vehicles
- Sidewalks linking fixed route stops to origins/destinations
- Bus shelters at fixed route stops

The application process for Section 5310 funds is facilitated and distributed by Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Applicants for the funds are identified as sub-recipients and should reference the goals identified in this plan when applying for funds.

Introduction

The purpose of the region’s Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation (CHST) Plan is to identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those with lower incomes, and to identify and prioritize strategies for meeting those needs. The primary reason for this goal is to promote transportation equity among those who may otherwise be transportation disadvantaged. This purpose also supports managing resources efficiently and effectively, and fostering cooperation among agencies and organizations. Seniors and individuals with disabilities often rely on transportation services to perform daily tasks such as medical appointments, jobs, and shopping. The services include year round demand response van service and seasonal fixed route public transportation.

The CHST plan is not intended to be prescriptive; instead it will identify needs in service to seniors and individuals with disabilities and establish goals for which funding requests must comply. The plan is mandated and supported by the associated funding program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) that is established in the federal transportation legislation known as MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century).

Population

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Nantucket is located 25 miles off the south shore of Cape Cod in Nantucket Sound. The main island of Nantucket is approximately 45.9 square miles, and is 14 miles long and varies in width from 3 to 6 miles. The appeal of the island as a year-round residence is evident in the Island’s increasing population figures. As illustrated in Figure 1, the island’s year-round population increased dramatically during the past few decades. According to the US Census figures, there were 5,087 residents in 1980, and by 2010 this figure had grown to 10,172. Although this level of growth has slowed between 2000 and 2010, the population is still projected to increase in the coming decades.

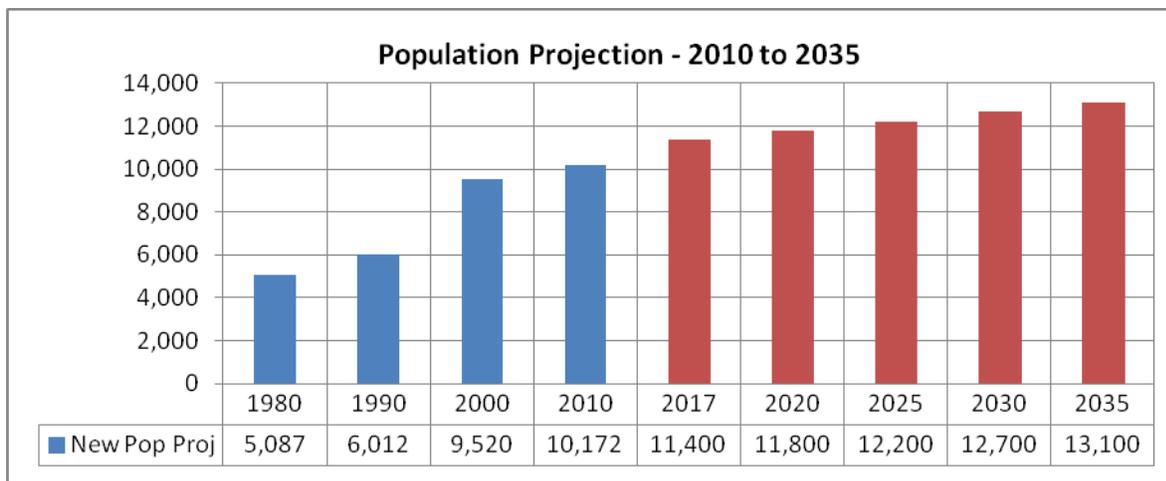


Figure 1. Total Population (US Census)

SENIOR DEMOGRAPHIC

In Nantucket County, seniors (65+) make up 12.5% of the regional population, which has increased steadily since 1990 (see Figure 2). Although many older people live independently, assisted and independent living facilities are available. Transportation and affordability can be a burden for seniors, but is an important need that allows them to participate in community events and activities, get to medical appointments, lunch programs, shopping, and other activities outside their homes.

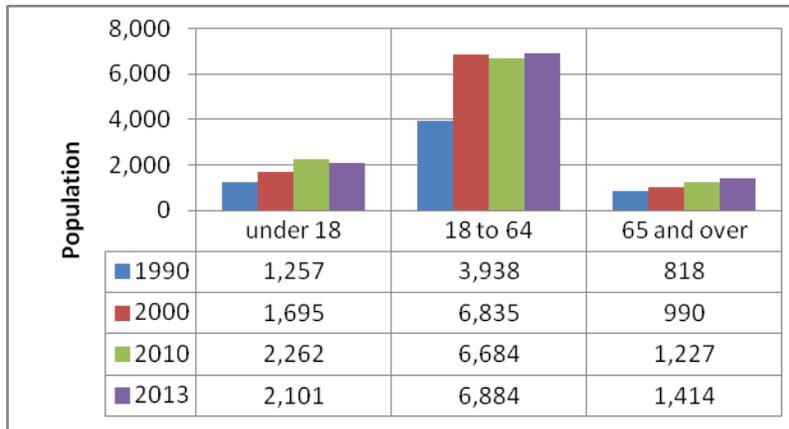


Figure 2. Age Distribution (US Census)

DISBALED DEMOGRAPHIC

The disabled population in Nantucket is made up of all ages. K-12 schools in Nantucket have disability educational programs and supplementary disability transportation services. According to the American Community Survey, the disabled population in Nantucket is 8.3%, which is slightly less than proportional with the statewide disabled population (11.3%). This still shows that there is a demand for transportation services. People with disabilities often rely on public transportation to go about necessary and regular tasks. Expanding human service transportation will allow individuals with disabilities to overcome burdens of limited mobility.

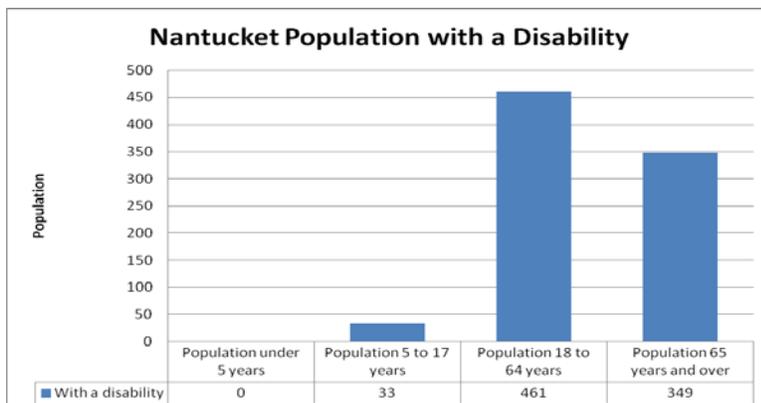


Figure 3. Population with a disability

Ridership and Vehicle Inventory

RIDERSHIP TRENDS

Ridership data for services provided to elders and individuals with disabilities was provided by the NRTA. Table 1 below shows the total riders in 2013 and 2014 for demand response, human services transportation, and fixed route services.

	CY 2013 Total Ridership	CY 2014 Total Ridership	CY 2013- 2014 difference by percent
Demand Response	7,698	6,494	-15.6%
Human Service Transportation	458	546	19.2%
Fixed Route	278,426	289,019	3.8%
Total	286,582	296,059	7.4%

Table 1. NRTA Ridership

The demand response service is an advance reservation door to door van service that is provided year round, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Human service transportation is brokered through the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority and is provided by the NRTA through its demand response service and includes DDS (Department of Developmental Services) transportation and PT1 medical transportation to transport eligible MassHealth members to medical appointments (often requires a doctor's prescription).

All NRTA fixed route vehicles are lift equipped and are in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Ridership on the NRTA's fixed route services comprises many different segments of Nantucket's population including seniors and individuals with disabilities.

FLEET INVENTORY

The NRTA has 18 fixed route vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts and four (4) Ford EcoVans that are utilized to provide its elderly and disabled demand response service. With emphasis being placed on State of Good Repair at the Federal and State levels the NRTA has identified a replacement plan for its vehicles through the 5310/MAP program. The NRTA is a sub-recipient of these funds through MassDOT and the competitive grants process.

Below is a description of the NRTA's fleet of vehicles:

Table 2. Fixed Route Vehicles

Bus #	Year	Make	Model	Capacity	Age (years)
1	2008	Eldorado	Escort RE	29	7
2	2007	Eldorado	Escort	29	8
3	2010	IC	HC CB	25	5
4	2007	Eldorado	Escort	29	8
5	2012	IC	HC CB	25	3
6	2013	IC	HC	25	2
7	2011	IC	HC CB	25	4
8	2013	IC	HC	25	2
9	2006	Eldorado	Escort RE	29	9
10	2006	Eldorado	Escort RE	29	9
11	2011	IC	HC CB	25	4
12	2011	IC	HC CB	25	4
13	2013	IC	HC TC	25	2
14	2011	IC	HC CB	25	4
15	2013	IC	HC TC	25	2
16	2013	IC	HC TC	25	2
17	2013	IC	HC TC	25	2
18	2011	IC	HC CB	25	4

Table 3. Demand Response Vehicles

Model Year	Make	Model	Capacity	Age (years)	Mileage	Anticipated Replacement
2003	Ford	EcoVan	9	12	85,517	FY14*
2003	Ford	EcoVan	9	12	88,514	FY14*
2009	Ford	EcoVan	9	6	37,719	FY15
2009	Ford	EcoVan	9	6	52,155	FY15

*The NRTA submitted and was awarded two van replacements that will replace the 2003 Ford EcoVans.

Stakeholder Coordination

REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES

In 2012, Massachusetts Executive Order 530: Community, Social Service, and Paratransit Transportation Commission, formed Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC). The councils were formed to address service gaps locally. The purpose of this body is to facilitate coordination between existing and proposed transportation services. NRTA is a member of the Cape and Islands RCC.

The goal is to have state, regional and local agencies work together to build an efficient, cost effective approach to transportation for human service programs and consumers that eliminated duplication of effort and services while better addressing unmet need.

ANNUAL PROGRAM OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

All funding for services provided by the NRTA are reviewed and approved by the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission (NP&EDC) and appear in the NP&EDC's annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). This process ensures coordination among the agencies and ensures that funding for services aligns with regional transportation goals.

OTHER OUTREACH AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

The NRTA and NP&EDC staff meets with a variety of other transportation stakeholders as part of on-going planning and program development. In development of this plan, the local stakeholders that were consulted include:

- Council on Aging
- Council for Human Services
- Commission on Disabilities
- Elder Services

Assessment of Needs

To assess the needs for this plan, a consumer survey administered by the Cape and Islands RCC was evaluated and public comments from an NRTA's public outreach campaign were also evaluated. A summary of the survey and public comments received are summarized below:

CAPE COD AND ISLANDS RCC CONSUMER SURVEY

A selection of consumer survey questions, specific to Nantucket, that were beneficial to identifying the needs are presented below. It is important to note that for all questions presented below, organizations could select multiple answers.

Question 1: Residential Status

Year-Round	88.57%
Seasonal	11.43%
Just Visiting	0%

Question 2: How old are you?

Below 18	0%
19-30	2.86%
31-50	37.14%
51-60	20%

61-70	11.43%
71-80	11.43%
80+	17.14%

Question 5: Do you have a medical condition or disability, permanent or temporary that prevents from using public transportation services?

No	62.86%
Permanently Disabled	31.43%
Temporary Disabled	5.71%

Question 9: Barriers that impede your ability to access public transportation.

Lack of Sidewalks	42.86%
Lack of Curb Cuts	14.29%
Poor Roads Grading	0%
Snow or Debris on Sidewalks	14.29%
No Bus Shelter	35.71%
No Crosswalk	14.29%
No Signal Crossings	7.14%
Traffic	28.57%
Heat/Humidity	28.57%

Question 15: Do you own a car?

Yes	33.33%
No	66.67%

Question 16: What transportation options do you typically use?

Drive your own car	33.33%
Driven by family or friend	39.39%
Share rides	9.09%
Nantucket Transit	60.61%
Nantucket Your Island Ride (demand response service)	36.36%
Taxi	33.33%
Council on Aging Services	3.03%
Biking	18.18%
Walking	33.33%
Transportation from an organization	6.06%

Question 17: Do you have difficulty paying for transportation services?

Yes	25%
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No	75%
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Question 18: What are your transportation challenges?

Services are not affordable	10.34%
Lack of night service	34.48%
Lack of weekend service	34.48%
Few or no services available	17.24%
I do not know about available services	13.79%
Lack of wheelchair accessible services	6.9%
Loss of drivers license	6.9%
I do not know how to use public transportation	17.24%
Particular locations are difficult to access with public transit	24.14%
Flexibility of transit services	31.03%

Question 19: To which destinations do you most often need transportation services?

Grocery Store	45.16%
Salon	16.13%
Medical Visit	45.16%
Hospital	35.48%
Day Programs	29.03%
Restaurant	16.13%
Retail	12.90%
Work	45.16%
Entertainment	29.03%
Social Services/Public Assistance	19.35%
Government Services	16.13%

Question 22: Do you ride the local Transit Authority bus system?

Yes	77.14%
No	22.86%

Question 26: Do you think your area has adequate transportation services?

Yes	48.48%
No	36.36%
Not Sure	15.15%

Feedback through consultation with the transportation stakeholder committees by the Nantucket Regional Transit Authority was also used to identify unmet needs. Below is a list of comments received.

- Sunday service for church
- More flexibility
- Weekend service
- Extend hours of operation into the evenings
- Provide additional vans
- More service hours

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT NEEDS IDENTIFIED

The following list summarizes the needs that were identified in assessment:

- Weekend demand response service
- Evening demand response service
- Replacement of demand response vehicles
- Sidewalks linking fixed route stops to origins/destinations
- Bus shelters at fixed route stops

Plan Goals and Objective

The purpose of this plan is the identification of coordinated actions to identify unmet needs in service and establish strategies for more efficient utilization of resources. The followings goals and objectives identify goals for projects related to the assessment of needs. These goals and objectives will provide criteria for the selection of projects using 5310 funds.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE SERVICE TO ADDRESS BARRIERS AND UNMET NEEDS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED COMMUNITIES

Objectives:

- Provide weekend and evening service
- Improve demand response scheduling

GOAL 2: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Objectives:

- Provide safe access on and off vehicles
- Provide ADA compliance sidewalks directly on and to bus routes
- Provide crosswalks as bus stop locations, as necessary
- Provide bus shelters
- Remove snow and other debris from sidewalks

GOAL 3: PROVIDE CAPITAL EQUIPMENT AT OR ABOVE STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

Objectives:

- Provide and maintain vehicles at or above state of good repair
- Acquire modern vehicles and technical applications
- Acquire modern accessible service equipment

Conclusion

Access to affordable, reliable, safe and timely transportation is an essential component of Federal, State, Regional and Local programs providing employment, medical care and an array of other services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Expanding these services is essential to accommodation in the described populations. Based on outreach efforts, the identified transportation needs of the elderly and disabled populations are:

- Weekend demand response service
- Evening demand response service
- Replacement of demand response vehicles
- Sidewalks linking fixed route stops to origins/destinations
- Bus shelters at fixed route stops

Applicants for Section 5310 are encouraged to align requests with goals identified in this plan and follow all requirements put forth by the designated recipient, MassDOT, before and after applying. Funds may be used for capital or operating costs. The progress of transportation services will allow them to go about regular tasks, such as visiting the doctor, shopping, attending church services and attending social events, which otherwise they could not do.