CAPE FEAR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Locally Coordinated

Public Transportation Plan

May 28, 2021

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

This Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan includes all required FTA elements (C 9070.1G pg. V-2): an assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit), an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors, strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current service and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve effectiveness in service delivery, and priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility.

Identification of Available Services

Wave Transit is the primary public transportation provider for older adults and people with disabilities in the Transportation Management Area (TMA). One other organization provides limited public transportation services: the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center (SRC). Private transportation providers in the TMA include Yellow Cab, Uber, Event Shuttle, and Ivory's. Some private providers either specialize in or offer wheelchair accessible transportation. Several nonprofit transportation providers offer service in the TMA. Brunswick Transit System (BTS), a 501(c) (3) non-profit community transportation system, coordinates general public and human service transportation services for all residents of Brunswick County. Pender Adult Services Transportation (PAS-TRAN) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit transportation provider operating in Pender County. Another nonprofit transportation provider is the Disabled American Veterans Wilmington Chapter 11 (DAV), which provides transportation to and from VA Medical Facilities.

Assessment of Transportation Needs

Methodology

This 2021 assessment of transportation needs is based on data gathered through public involvement activities in the form of a community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a town hall. Data was collected from 350 individuals via these methods from October 1, 2020 to February 12, 2021, a period of approximately four and a half months. Of the individuals engaged, 76% self-identified as members of the target populations. The rate of inclusion was even higher for the survey collection effort with 82% of respondents identifying as members of the target populations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all public involvement activities were conducted virtually to address safety concerns and comply with state mandated restrictions for public gatherings.

Findings

The graph below shows the prioritized themes of needs identified by comments across data collection methods. A total of 14 themes of need were identified through an analysis of comments collected by a community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a Town Hall. Themes of need were then ranked, per data collection method, and the ranked lists for all data collection methods were analyzed to determine and prioritize the identified need overall. Only themes prioritized by two or more data collection methods were included in the final prioritization. Ranked themes were used to determine priority, instead of the full list of needs, in order to weight each data collection method equally. Across all data collection methods, eight themes emerged as the top priorities. A ranked list of the eight themes is shown below. As four methods were utilized to collect data, a ranking of four indicates that the need was

prioritized by every method. A ranking of three indicates that the need was prioritized by three out of four methods. A ranking of two indicates that the need was prioritized by two out of four methods.

The 6 highest priority needs, prioritized by three out of four data collection methods as identified by comments and by survey findings, which support the inclusion of different service as a top priority, were: 1) Pedestrian and bus stop improvements, 2) Improvements in customer service), 3) Increased marketing and education on transportation services, 4) ADA improvements, 5) Increased service offerings, and 6) Different service offerings. Comments around the theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements included: sidewalks at bus stops, bus stop maintenance including landscaping, and bus stop lighting. Comments around the theme of improved customer service pertained directly to drivers and included: friendliness, improvement in the treatment of older adults and people with disabilities, increased education to customers with disabilities regarding their rights in the event both wheelchair (accessible) seating is occupied or a malfunction in ADA equipment is experienced, and increased consistency in adherence organizational policies across drivers. Comments around the theme of increased marketing and education on transportation services and programs included: education for driving cessation, advertisement on TV and radio, and targeted marketing to older adult residential communities and groups. Comments around the theme of ADA improvements included, additional audio announcements to aid those with visual impairments, more information for customers about ADA policies and procedures, improved compliance with ADA service animal laws, and free aid accompaniment on fixed route buses. Comments around the theme of increased service offerings included: service to Porters Neck, Castle Hayne, and Wrightsboro, service to rural neighborhoods, longer service hours, and more bus stops. Comments around the theme of different service offerings included: volunteer driver programs, alternate vehicle types, on-demand service, and specialized routes, such as for grocery shopping.

Prioritized Needs

Chart: Prioritized Needs

Y-axis: Engagement Method (0 to 4.5)

- Ped and Bus Stop Improvements: 4
- Improvements in Customer Service: 3
- Increased Marketing: 3
- ADA Improvements: 3
- Increased Service Offerings: 3
- Different Service Offerings: 2
- More Frequent Service: 2
- More Benches, Shelters: 2
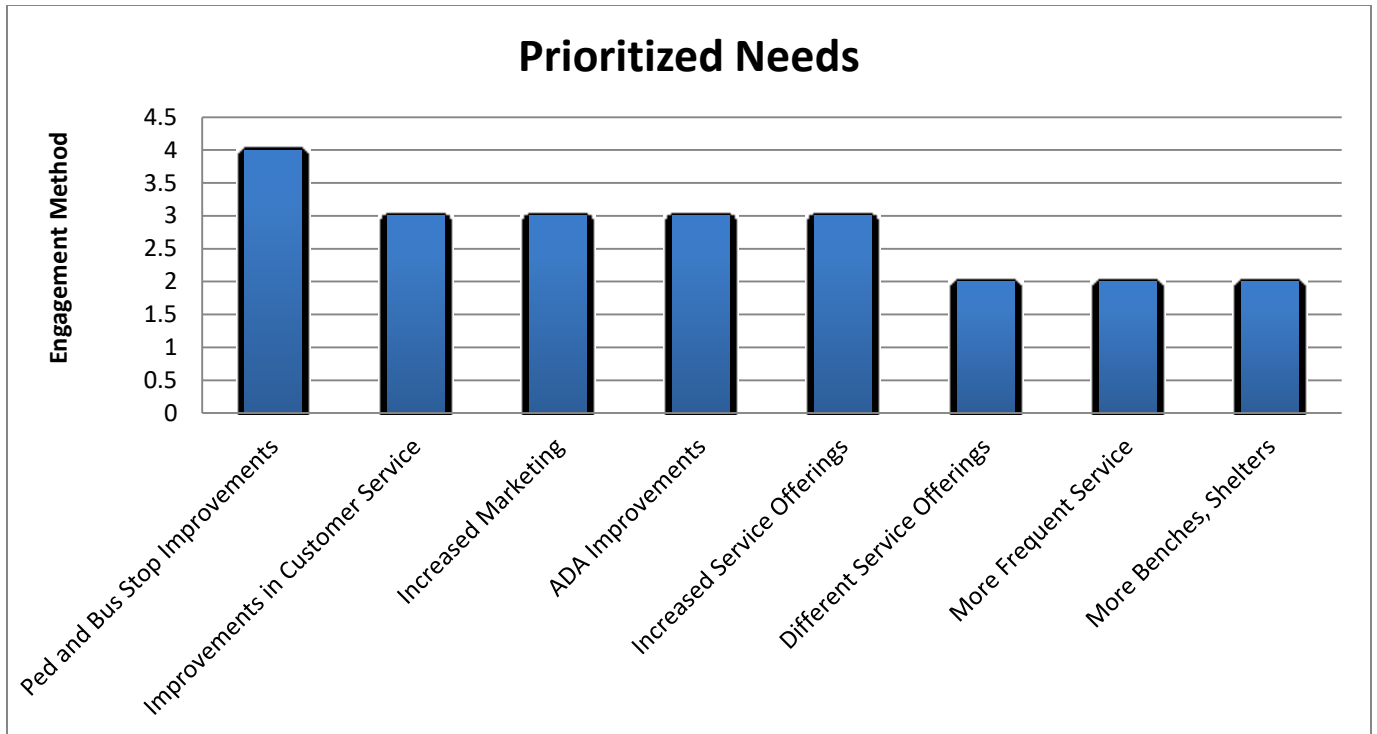
Strategies to Address Identified Need

The two strategies included in this plan, a mobility management program and a community grant, will address gaps between current service and needs, and work toward effectively meeting the highest priority needs identified by the 2021 LCP needs assessment: 1) Pedestrian and bus stop improvements, 2) Improvements in customer service), 3) Increased marketing and education on transportation services, 4) ADA improvements, 5) Increased service offerings, and 6) Different service offerings. Strategy 1, a mobility management program will address needs 1-4, and strategy 2, a community grant will address needs 5-6.

Implementation and Prioritization

Prior to their implementation, specific strategies and activities of the 5310 program will be further developed with feedback from the 5310 advisory group. Input will also be sought from the Wave Transit Board, WMPO staff, and the WMPO Board which includes members from all local governments in the TMA. NCDOT, local nonprofits, health and human service agencies, veterans groups, and other entities in the region which have an interest in transportation for older adults and people with disabilities, as well as the general public, will have an opportunity to provide input on strategies included in the 2021 LCP and the annual 5310 Program of Projects (POP). Prioritization among strategies or activities for funding and implementation will be based on time, resources, and feasibility. The criterion of time will be further defined to include the long-term sustainability of projects, and the period of oversight. The criterion of resources will look to internal capacity and the capacity of partner organizations. Finally, feasibility will include political, financial, and cultural considerations. An additional criterion may also be examined: impact. The potential impact of strategies and activities will be assessed based on the FTA program measures gaps in service filled and ridership.

Section 5310 Background and History

In 2008, a coordinated plan of local transit services was required on behalf of the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) in order for direct recipients, including public transportation agencies, to apply for funds from the Elderly and Disabled Individuals Transportation (FTA Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (FTA Section 5316) and New Freedom (FTA Section 5317) Programs. On October 1, 2012 new legislation, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), went into effect. Changes as a result of MAP-21 included a repeal of Section 5316 (JARC - Job Access and Reverse Commute) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs. New Freedom program elements were merged into an enhanced Section 5310 program which now serves as a single formula program to support mobility of older adults and persons with disabilities.

In 2012, following publication of the 2010 census, the Wilmington Urban Area was designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA) having exceeded the required 200,000 population threshold required for that designation. The TMA designation included an annual allocation for Section 5310 funding to support Elderly and Disabled Transportation in the TMA. The Section 5310 program provides formula funding to TMA's for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups, governmental agencies, and private providers of public transportation in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and persons with disabilities when public transportation services provided are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meet the need. Funds are apportioned to TMAs based on statutorily defined formulas.

On June 06, 2014, the FTA issued Circular 9070.1G to offer guidance and clarify the requirements for the administration of transit programs for older adults and persons with disabilities under Section 5310. Per FTA requirements, projects selected for funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, that was developed and approved through a process that included participation by people aged 65 and over, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public. A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, should identify available services, assess the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, provide strategies for meeting those needs, and prioritize services for funding and implementation. The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority-Wave Transit first developed a Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCP) in 2008, with subsequent updates in 2011 and 2016. This 2021 LCP serves as an update to the 2016 plan, and provides the required documentation to access Section 5310 federal transportation grants. The 2021 LCP will be due for update, per the FTA minimum, by 2025.

On June 27, 2014, North Carolina Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Tata designated the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority - Wave Transit as the designated recipient of Section 5310 Funding in the TMA, consistent with the provisions of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). As the Designated Recipient, Wave Transit will continue to serve as the lead agency in the development of the LCP for the region. Additionally, Wave, as the designated recipient, has the responsibility to receive and apportion Section 5310 funding,

including the filing of grant applications under the 5310 program, and ensuring that local applicants and project activities are eligible and compliant with federal requirements. In 2015 a 5310 Program Management Plan (PMP) was drafted and approved by the FTA. The primary purposes of the PMP are to serve as the basis for FTA management review of the program and to provide public information on the approved and compliant administrative processes to program administration. A regular update to the PMP is currently underway with approval expected in May of 2021. On December 4, 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed, reauthorizing surface transportation programs (including Section 5310) through Fiscal Year 2020. The FAST Act supersedes Map-21, with minimal change to Section 5310.

In 2016, Wave Transit formed a permanent 5310 advisory group to guide the management of Section 5310 funding, inclusive of the LCP planning process. The group consisted of representatives from the following: Wave Transit Board of Directors, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO), the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Board (WMPO Board), local governments, specialized transportation providers, human services agencies serving special needs clients, schools with special programs, veterans groups, as well as advocates for people with disabilities, community leaders, people age 65 and older, and people with disabilities. This group will facilitate the ongoing regional coordination of transportation services for people age 65 or over and people with disabilities, and provide guidance and feedback to Wave staff in order to administer the 5310 program most effectively, as well as serve as the steering committee for the LCP planning process.

Transportation Management Area (TMA)

In 2012 the Wilmington Urban Area (UZA) was designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The TMA is defined by the WMPO UZA boundary and encompasses portions of New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender Counties. A map of the TMA is provided in Figure 1. The data source is the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Transportation Planning Branch. American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-year estimates show the total population near the WMPO boundary to be 299,484. Using population percentages from 2019 ACS data for New Hanover County (which has a comparable rural and urban population mix to the greater TMA), the estimated population of persons 65 and over in the TMA is 17% or 51,151 and the population of persons with a disability, under age 65, in the TMA is 7% or 20,963. The total estimated population of persons age 65 or over and persons under age 65 with a disability in the TMA is 72,115.

Figure 2 shows the locations, within the TMA, of those 65 and older and households having one or more persons with a disability. Nine colors show the geographic concentrations of these groups with the lightest colors representing the lowest populations and the darkest areas representing the highest populations. The percent of population age 65 and older is shown in dark to light pink and the percent of households with one or more person with a disability is shown in medium to light blue. Where these populations overlap geographically, the map indicates this overlap in purple. This map was created by the WMPO in partnership with the

Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority. The data source is the 2019 American Community Survey which is produced by the US Census.

Figure 1. Urbanized Area Boundary (UZA)/Transportation Management Area (TMA)
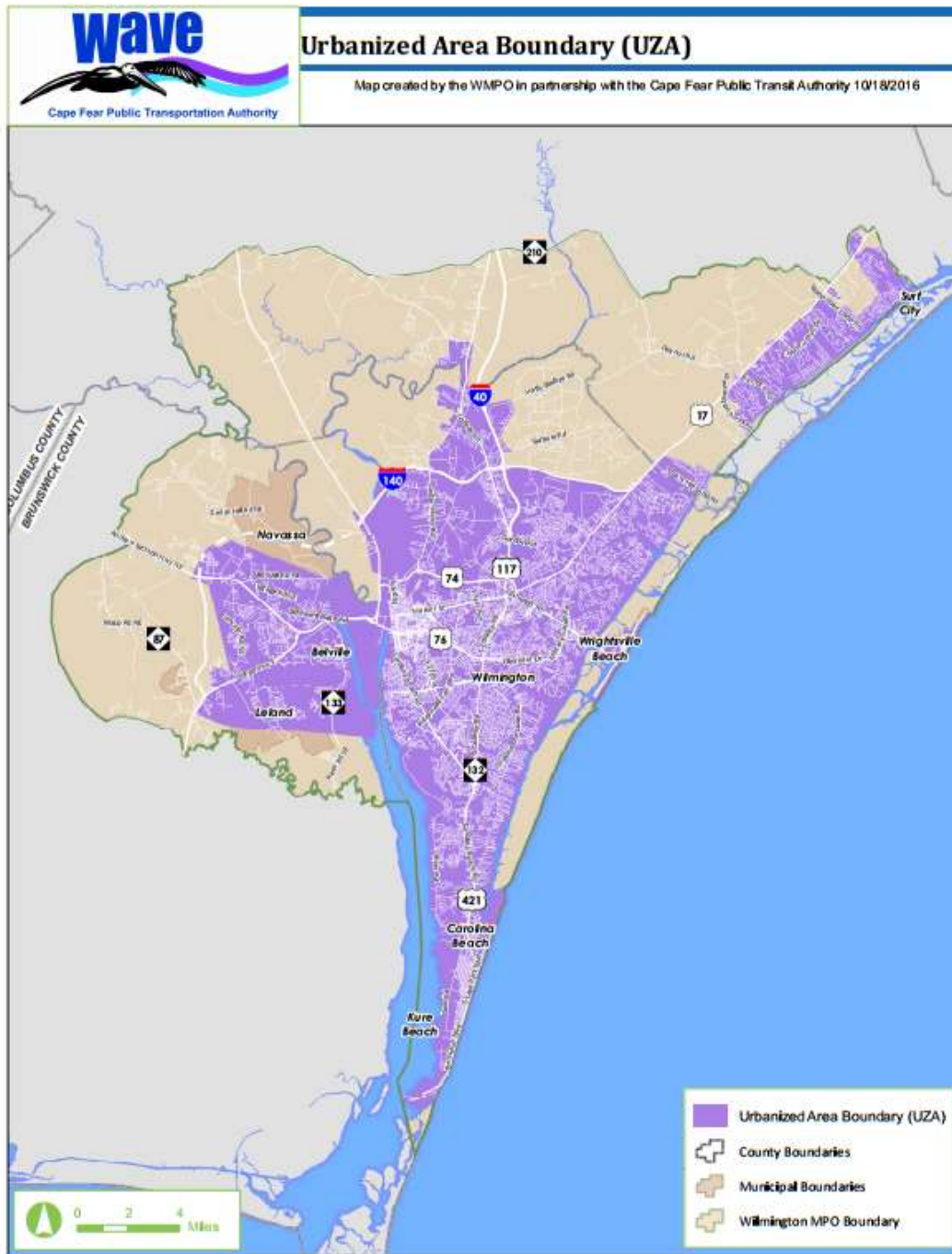
Figure 2. Percent Population 65+ and Percent Households with a Disability in UZA

Percent of Population 65 Years of Age or Over and Percent of Households Having One or More People with a Disability Per Census Block Group

*Map created by the WMPO in partnership with the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
** Source of Data: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B09020, B22010; generated by Trevor Stewart; using data.census.gov; https://data.census.gov/cedsci/; (27 Jan 2021).

Plan Approach

The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority- Wave Transit currently employs a planning process which was drafted to ensure full participation by the community in developing programs and plans that are both compliant with federal regulations and meet the diverse transportation needs of the community. The Section 5310 Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan planning process utilizes the same processes employed for other public transportation programs.

LCP development occurs in seven (7) steps and outlined below:

1.   Step 1 - Identify the Lead Agency

2.   Step 2 - Convene the Steering Committee

3.   Step 3 - Prepare for the Coordinated Planning Workshop(s)

4.   Step 4 - Conduct Coordinated Planning Workshop(s)

5.   Step 5 - Plan Update Methodology

6.   Step 6 - Adopt the Plan

7.   Step 7 - Update the Plan

Per FTA requirements (C 9070.1G pg. V-4), this plan has been developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public. Additionally, inclusive planning practices based on best practices from the Community Transportation Association -Transit Planning 4 All were utilized.

This plan meets all guidelines set forth by Wave Transit's established planning process. In lieu of a coordinated planning workshop, a survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a town hall collected input from seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public.

This LCP includes all required FTA elements (C 9070.1G pg. V-2) listed below. Each of these elements is further described in subsequent sections of this plan.

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit)

2. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors

3. Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current service and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve effectiveness in service delivery

4. Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility

Guidance and feedback on the 2021 LCP were sought from the Wave Transit Board of Directors, the WMPO, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), the WMPO Board, and the LCP

Steering Committee. Additionally, public comments, collected during a 30 day comment period, were considered in the completion of this planning document. Wave Transit has cooperatively worked with local organizations and agencies that are human service providers or those stakeholders with an interest in transit projects to develop a comprehensive local plan to address the primary transportation needs in the TMA. Wave Transit will continue to provide local organizations and agencies with all updates regarding this Local Coordinated Plan as it relates to specified FTA grants (5310).

Identification of Available Services

Federal law requires that an LCP include an assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit) in the TMA. Major transportation providers for older adults and people with disabilities in the TMA include public transportation providers, several nonprofits, as well as private companies- some offering ADA compliant transportation. A list of major transportation providers serving older adults and people with disabilities in the TMA is included as Appendix B.

Public Transportation Services

Wave Transit is the primary public transportation provider for older adults and people with disabilities in the TMA. Wave offers fixed-route public transportation, complementary Paratransit, Medicaid transportation, and vanpooling. One other organization in the TMA provides limited public transportation services: the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center (SRC). The SRC offers shared ride transportation for a monthly shopping trip, and medical transportation for seniors aged 60 or older living in New Hanover County who are not receiving Medicaid.

Private Transportation Services

Private transportation providers in the TMA include Yellow Cab, Uber, Event Shuttle, and Ivory's. Some private providers either specialize in, or offer, wheelchair accessible transportation.

Nonprofit Transportation Services

Several nonprofit transportation providers offer service in the TMA. Brunswick Transit System (BTS) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit community transportation system operating a fleet of 16 vehicles; including wheelchair (ADA) equipped vehicles to assist persons with special needs. BTS coordinates general public and human service transportation services for all residents of Brunswick County. Transport into New Hanover County is offered twice weekly. All trips are provided by reservation. Pender Adult Services Transportation (PAS-TRAN) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit transportation provider operating in Pender County. PAS-TRAN offers service in Pender County and connecting service to New Hanover and Duplin County. Trips are provided by reservation. All vehicles in the fleet are wheelchair (ADA) equipped. Another nonprofit transportation provider in the TMA is the Disabled American Veterans Wilmington Chapter 11 (DAV), which provides transportation to and from VA Medical Facilities.

Assessment of Transportation Needs

The second FTA required element of an LCP is an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This 2021 assessment of transportation needs is based on data gathered through public involvement activities in the form of a community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a town hall. Data was collected from 350 individuals via these methods from October 1, 2020 to February 12, 2021, a period of approximately four and a half months. Of the individuals engaged, 76% self-identified as members of the target populations. The rate of inclusion was even higher for the survey collection effort with 82% of respondents identifying as members of the target populations. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March, 2020, all public involvement activities were conducted virtually to address safety concerns and comply with state mandated restrictions for public gatherings. Additionally, the data collection process, originally scheduled to begin in May, 2020, was postponed until October, 2020 in hopes that the crisis would lessen and restrictions on gatherings and events would be lifted. However, safety concerns due to the ongoing pandemic and many restrictions remained in place in October, 2020, which affected data collection. Only one data collection mode was cancelled due to conditions from the pandemic. A 2020 on-board survey of Route 205 customers, to replicate the 2016 effort, was planned for inclusion in the 2021 LCP; however, a 50% reduction in ridership and the unavailability of student researchers due to restrictions from the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) led to the cancellation of this survey effort. An on-board survey of Route 205 customers is planned when conditions allow.

Community Survey

Methodology

The goals of the community survey were to understand and prioritize the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities. Survey takers were asked six (6) questions that included demographic information, travel choices, and the ranking of a list of needs using a Likert scale with the choices of: very important, somewhat important, not very important, and not important at all. Survey takers were also provided with an opportunity to give additional comments. The survey design was modeled on similar tools utilized by regional LCPs. Content was developed through consultation with the LCP steering committee, Wave staff, and Professor, and Gerontology Program Coordinator, at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), Anne P. Glass, Ph.D. The Community Survey is provided as Appendix C.

The survey was hosted by the web-based data collection service Survey Monkey. A link to the online survey was distributed via email to stakeholders and community partners, among the professional networks of LCP steering committee members, and through the disAbility Resource Center Newsletter. The link was also shared on Wave's Facebook and Twitter platforms, and posted on the Wave website. Flyers with a QR code linked to the survey were hung at Wave Transit stations and in all Wave Transit buses. Paper versions of the survey were

distributed to Wave Transit Dial-A-Ride customers and through a partnership with the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center, to participants in the Home Delivered Meal program and the Drive-Up meal program. The survey was promoted through media coverage of the town hall by StarNews Online, WWAY, and WECT. The survey period lasted approximately 4.5 months; opening on October 1, 2020 and closing on February 12, 2021. The majority of survey responses were collected through paper surveys.

A survey response rate goal was determined based on the University of Idaho Extension Publication: *Methods for Conducting an Educational Needs Assessment: Guidelines for Cooperative Extension System Professionals* by Paul F. McCawley. The Survey Response Rate Formula is shown in Figure 3. Target population size was estimated using 2019 American Community Survey data. Percentage estimates for persons with disabilities were based on New Hanover County (NHC) as the urban/rural population of NHC closely compares to the greater TMA. Figure 4. shows the target population estimate. Based on the estimated size of the target population in the TMA (72,115) and a desired 90% confidence level, a response rate goal of 424 was selected.

The 2021 survey response rate goal was adjusted due to three main factors because of the COVID-19 pandemic: the postponement of survey efforts to take place during a time of year with historically less successful response rates, the 40%-50% average reduction in ridership during the survey period, and the inability to conduct in-person outreach or community meetings for the purpose of survey distribution.

A revised target for survey responses is based on the three factors above. The loss of opportunity to collect responses during a more productive time of year (and not during a pandemic) is estimated at 10%. The loss of opportunity to collect survey responses from customers via on-board marketing is estimated at 5%. Finally, the loss of opportunity to collect survey responses via in-person outreach is estimated at 25%. The total loss of responses is estimated at 40%, for an adjusted 2021 survey response target rate of 169.

Figure 3. Survey Response Rate Formula

			Size of Target Population		
			10,000	50,000	100,000
Confidence Interval +/- 4%	Confidence Level	90%	408	422	**424**
		95%	566	593	597
		99%	939	1016	1026
Confidence Interval +/- 5%	Confidence Level	90%	265	271	272
		95%	370	381	383
		99%	622	655	659

Figure 4. Target Population Estimate*

Target Population	
Total TMA population	• 299,484
Population of persons 65 and over	• 51,151
Estimated population of persons with a disability, under age 65	• 20,963
Total estimated target population (persons 65 and over and persons with disabilities)	• 72,115

* Population percentages for the TMA based on NHC.

Findings

A total of 296 survey responses were collected: 191 paper survey responses and 105 online responses. Responses exceeded the adjusted 2021 survey response target rate of 169.

Additionally, the survey excelled at inclusion of the target population with 243 out of 296, or 82% of respondents self-identifying as members of the target populations.

Survey respondents ranked five (5) statements of need for older adults and people with disabilities by choosing if they were: very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all. The following list ranks the statements of need by the percentage of respondents that found the statement "very important." A sample survey and complete survey data are provided as Appendix C-D.

1. 93% - Q1 We need to make sure Wave Transit can continue to provide transportation services.
2. 85% - Q3 We need to make Wave Transit bus stops safer and more accessible through improvements such as better lighting, benches, and sidewalks.
3. 83% - Q5 We need more community education and advertising about available transportation services.
4. 80% - Q4 We need more transportation options that are affordable for low-income residents.
5. 66% - We need additional transportation options for people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, besides the Wave Transit bus and Dial-A-Ride (DART) services.

The ranking of survey question one: "We need to make sure Wave Transit can continue to provide transportation for people age 65 and over, and people with disabilities" by 93% of respondents as "very important" lends support to the continued funding of transportation that is utilized by the target populations such as fixed bus Route 205. When last surveyed in 2016, 48% of 205 survey respondents identified having a disability. Though only 10% of 205 survey respondents indicated they were age 65 or over, this figure is reflective of the NHC population of persons age 65 and over at 15%. Additionally, the majority of 205 survey respondents, 67%, indicated that do not have another mode of transportation. One can infer that should Route 205 no longer provide service, it would impact persons age 65 and over and greatly impact persons with disabilities. A 2020 on-board survey of Route 205 customers, to replicate a 2016 effort, was planned for inclusion in the 2021 LCP; however, a 50% reduction in ridership and the unavailability of student researchers due to restrictions from the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) led to the cancellation of this survey effort. An on-board survey of Route 205 customers is planned when conditions allow.

Survey respondents also provided comments about transportation needs for people with disabilities and older adults in the Wilmington Metro area. A complete list of the 58 relevant comments is provided as Appendix E. The full list of survey comments was analyzed to determine priority by identifying main themes and grouping like needs under those themes.

Only needs mentioned two or more times were included in the prioritization. The number of like needs per theme were counted to generate a ranked list (most to least mentioned) by main theme. Figure 5. shows this ranking. The theme of increased service offerings was the highest priority for comments collected through the survey. Comments around the theme of increased

service offerings included: service to Porters Neck, Castle Hayne, and Wrightsboro, service to rural neighborhoods, longer service hours, and more bus stops.

Figure 5. Survey Comments: Needs by Main Theme

Main Theme	Number of Mentions
Increased service offerings	11
More benches/shelters at bus stops	10
Increased marketing and education on transportation services	6
Different service offerings	6
Improvements in customer service	5
More efficient service	4
Pedestrian and bus stop improvements	4
ADA Improvements	3
Reduced cost	3

Focus Groups

Methodology

The goals of the focus groups were to understand and prioritize the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, and to discuss current programming which was implemented following the 2016 needs assessment included in the 2016 LCP. Four focus groups were held between October 27, 2020 and February 1, 2021 with a total of 36 participants from the following groups: 1) disAbility Resource Center peer support group, 2) the City of Wilmington/New Hanover County Cape Fear Disability Commission, 3) AARP, and 4) residents of Glover Plaza, a Wilmington Housing Authority owed residential community for people with disabilities and older adults. Three focus groups had 100% participation by the target populations and one focus group had 75% participation by the target populations. All focus groups were conducted virtually and moderated by Wave Transit staff. The GoToMeeting platform was used for three focus groups and the fourth focus group was conducted through phone interviews. A series of 12 questions, included as Appendix F., was utilized at each focus group to collect data on the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, and current programming. Assistance with transcription and preliminary analysis of focus group data was provided by Natalie Quinn, a student in the UNCW Master of Gerontology program.

Findings

A series of 12 questions, included as Appendix F., was utilized at each focus group to collect data on the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, and

current programming. A complete list of comments by focus group participants is provided as Appendix G. The full list of survey comments was analyzed to determine priority by identifying main themes and grouping like needs under those themes. Only needs mentioned two or more times were included in the prioritization. The number of like needs per theme were counted to generate a ranked list (most to least mentioned) by main theme. Figure 6. shows this ranking. The theme of improvements in customer service was the highest priority for comments collected through focus groups. Comments around the theme of improved customer service pertained directly to drivers and included: friendliness, improvement in the treatment of older adults and people with disabilities, increased education to customers with disabilities regarding their rights in the event both wheelchair (accessible) seating is occupied or a malfunction in ADA equipment is experienced, and increased consistency in adherence organizational policies across drivers.

Figure 6. Focus Groups: Needs by Main Theme

Main Theme	Number of Mentions
Improvements in customer service	8
ADA Improvements	4
Pedestrian and bus stop improvements	
Increased marketing and education on transportation services	3
Increased COVID safety on transportation	3
More frequent service	2
Increased service offerings	2
Offer cashless fare payment option	2

Stakeholder Interviews

Methodology

The goals of the stakeholder interviews were to collect input from subject matter experts in order to understand and prioritize the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities. Four stakeholder interviews were conducted between October 27, 2020 and February 1, 2021. The following individuals were interviewed: 1) Suzanne LaFollette-Black, AARP NC Coastal Associate State Director for Advocacy and Community Outreach, 2) Ricky Meeks, longtime Wave customer, transit advocate, and a member of the disability community, 3) Holly Pilson, Director, Area Agency on Aging of the Cape Fear Council of Governments, and 4) Cecelia Peers, Neighborhood Connections- Southern Region Manager, Trillium Health Resources. Suzanne LaFollette-Black and Holly Pilson were interviewed as representatives for the older adult community while Ricky Meeks and Cecelia Peers gave input as representatives of the disability community. All stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually. The GoToMeeting platform was used for three interviews, and the fourth interview was conducted by phone. All interviews were conducted by Wave Transit's Mobility Manager. A

series of questions, included as Appendix H., was utilized during each stakeholder interview to collect data from subject matter experts on the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities, and current programming.

Findings

The list of needs generated through stakeholder interviews was analyzed to determine priority by identifying main themes and grouping like needs under those themes. Only needs mentioned two (2) or more times were included in the prioritization. The number of like needs per theme were counted to generate a ranked list (most to least mentioned) by main theme. Figure 7. Illustrates this ranking. The theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements was the highest priority for comments collected through stakeholder interviews. Comments around the theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements included: sidewalks at bus stops, bus stop maintenance including landscaping, and bus stop lighting.

Figure 7. Stakeholder Interviews: Needs by Main Theme

Main Theme	Number of Mentions
Pedestrian and bus stop improvements	4
ADA Improvements	3
Increased service offerings	3
Improvements in Customer Service	3
More frequent service	2
More Benches/Shelters at Bus Stops	2

Town Hall

Methodology

A virtual Town Hall was held on January 14, 2021 from 12:00pm to 2:00pm on the GoToMeeting platform. Participants could join online or call in to participate in the meeting. The goal of the town hall was to offer the general public an opportunity to provide input on the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities.

The Town Hall format was modeled after successful regional LCP workshop practices and was facilitated by Wave Transit staff. The Town Hall agenda is provided as Appendix E. After a brief description of the purpose and proceedings of the Town Hall, and remarks by Wave Transit Executive Director and Dial-A-Ride Program Manager, the public input portion of the Town Hall began. Participants discussed the transportation needs of people age 65 and over and people with disabilities and generated a list of needs which is shown as Appendix H.

The Town Hall was promoted by local radio station WHQR, television stations WECT and WWAY, and in the StarNews newspaper (online). Additionally, Town Hall flyers were hung at Wave Transit stations and in all Wave Transit buses. Online promotion included Wave's Facebook and Twitter platforms, and website. The Town Hall was also promoted in email newsletters distributed by the disAbility Resource Center. Additionally, email invitations were sent to stakeholders, community partners, and to the professional networks of the LCP steering committee.

Fourteen (14) members of the public participated in the Town hall. Participants included people with disabilities, older adults, local government representatives, representatives of human service providers, Wave Transit customers, and the media.

Findings

The list of needs generated at the Town Hall was analyzed to determine priority by identifying main themes and grouping like needs under those themes. Only needs mentioned two (2) or more times were included in the prioritization. The number of like needs per theme were counted to generate a ranked list (most to least mentioned) by main theme. Figure 8. shows this ranking. The theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements was the highest priority for comments collected through the Town Hall. Comments around the theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements included: sidewalks at bus stops, bus stop maintenance including landscaping, and bus stop lighting.

Figure 8. Town Hall: Needs by Main Theme

Main Theme	Number of Mentions
Pedestrian and bus stop improvements	4
COVID related transportation	3
Technology training and improvements	3
Increase marketing and education on transportation services	3
Different service offerings	2

Identified Need

14 themes of need were identified through an analysis of comments collected by a community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a Town Hall. Themes of need were ranked, per data collection method, by the number of times the theme was mentioned (as shown in Figures 6-8). Ranked needs for all data collection methods were analyzed to determine and prioritize the identified need overall. Only themes mentioned by two or more methods were included in the prioritization. Ranked themes were used to determine priority, instead of the full list of needs, in order to weight each data collection method equally. Eight themes emerged

as the top priorities. A ranked list of the eight themes, from most to least mentioned, is shown in Figure 9. A visual representation of the prioritization is shown in Figure 10. As four methods were utilized to collect comments, four mentions indicate that the need was prioritized by every mode. Three mentions indicate that the need was prioritized by three out of four methods. Two mentions indicate that the need was prioritized by two out of four methods.

Figure 9. Ranked Needs for All Comments Across Data Collection Modes

Most Mentioned Across Modes	Mentions
Pedestrian and bus stop improvements	4
Improvements in Customer Service	3
Increased marketing and education on transportation services	3
ADA Improvements	3
Increased service offerings	3
Different service offerings	2
More frequent service	2
More benches/shelters at bus stops	2

Figure 10. Prioritized Needs for Comments across Data Collection Methods
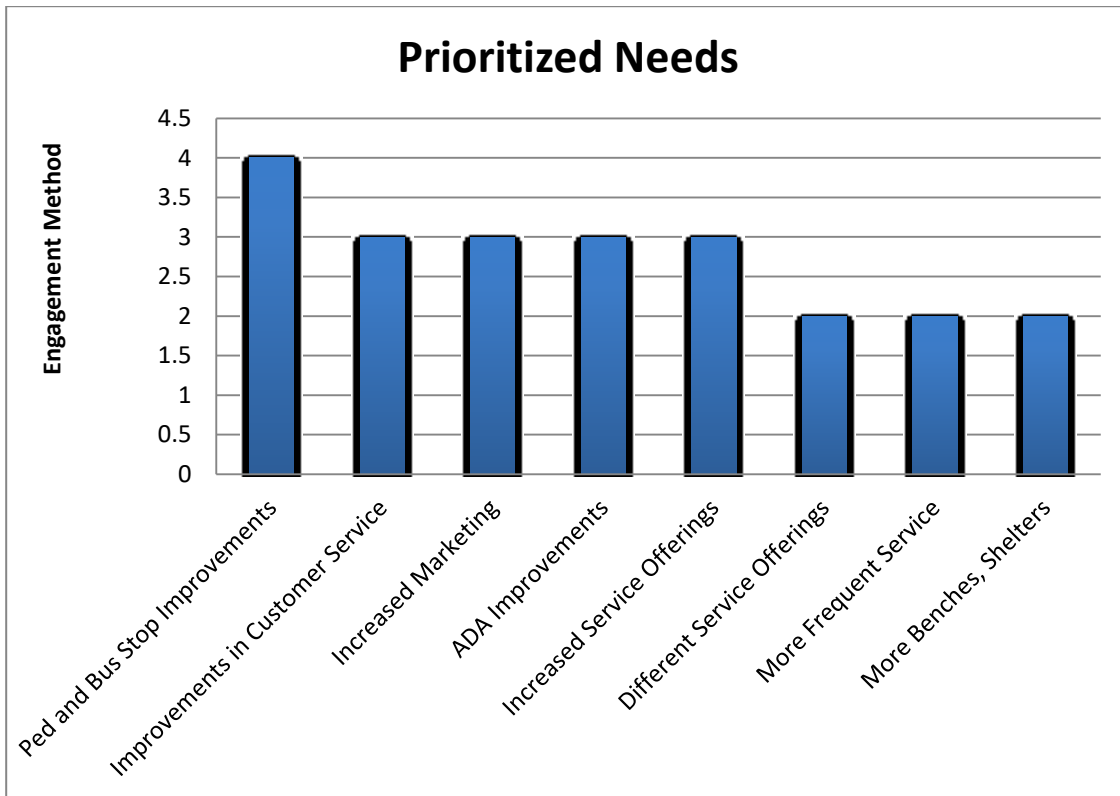
When the ranked needs from survey comments, focus group, stakeholder interview and Town Hall comments are compared with the survey data (summarized on pg. 13), findings overlap in four themes. This comparison is limited as the survey did not ask respondents to rank the themes in terms of, improvements in customer service, increased service offerings, more frequent service, or more benches/shelters at bus stops. The four overlapping themes are ranked below by priority across data collection methods and importance, as determined by survey respondents.

1. Pedestrian and bus stop improvements Increased marketing and education on transportation services

2. ADA improvements

3. Different service offerings

The theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements was the highest priority for comments collected through the community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and the Town Hall. Survey data show the themes of improved pedestrian and bus stop improvements, ADA improvements, and more benches/ shelters at bus stops the second highest priority, after continuing to provide service, with 85% of respondents finding the following statement very

important: We need to make Wave Transit bus stops safer and more accessible through improvements such as better lighting, benches, and sidewalks. Comments around the theme of pedestrian and bus stop improvements included: sidewalks at bus stops, bus stop maintenance including landscaping, and bus stop lighting. The theme of increased marketing and education on transportation services was the second highest priority for comments collected through the community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and the Town Hall. Survey data show the theme of increased marketing and education on transportation services as the third highest priority, out of five, with 83% of respondents finding the following statement very important: We need more community education and advertising about available transportation services. Comments around the theme of increased marketing and education on transportation services included education for driving cessation, advertisement on TV and radio, and targeted marketing to older adult residential communities and groups.

The theme of Americans with Disability Act (ADA) improvements was the second highest priority for comments collected through the community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and the Town Hall. Survey data show the themes of pedestrian and bus stop improvements, ADA improvements, and more benches/ shelters at bus stops the second highest priority, after continuing to provide service, with 85% of respondents finding the following statement very important: We need to make Wave Transit bus stops safer and more accessible through improvements such as better lighting, benches and sidewalks. Comments around the theme of ADA improvements included, additional audio announcements to aid those with visual impairments, more information for customers about ADA policies and procedures, improved compliance with ADA service animal laws, and free aid accompaniment on fixed route buses. The theme of different service offerings was the third highest priority for comments collected through the community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and the Town Hall. Survey data show the theme of provide different service as the fifth highest priority, out of five, with 66% of respondents finding the following statement very important: We need additional transportation options for people 65 and over and people with disabilities, besides Wave Transit and Dial-A-Ride (DART) services. Comments around the theme of different service offerings included volunteer driver programs, alternate vehicle types, on-demand service, and specialized routes, such as for grocery shopping.

Strategies, Prioritization and Implementation

The third FTA required element of a LCP is a discussion of strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current service and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve effectiveness in service delivery.

Strategies to Address Identified Need

As the designated recipient in the TMA of Section 5310 funds, Wave Transit will work collaboratively with the community and the WMPO to develop a 5310 program which meets the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities in the region. Additionally,

the 5310 Program Management Plan (PMP), vetted by the public and approved by the FTA in 2015, outlines the administration and scope of Wave's 5310 program. A regular update to the PMP is currently underway with approval expected in May of 2021.

The two strategies included in this plan, a mobility management program and a community grant, will address gaps between current service and needs, and work toward effectively meeting the highest priority needs identified by the 2021 LCP needs assessment. The highest priority needs identified are listed below. Strategy 1, a mobility management program will address needs 1-4, and strategy 2, a community grant will address needs 5-6. A discussion on how these strategies will meet the highest priority needs is provided in the following sections.

1. Pedestrian and bus stop improvements

2. Improvements in customer service

3. Increased marketing and education on transportation services

4. ADA improvements

5. Increased service offerings

6. Different service offerings

Strategy 1: Mobility Management Program

A mobility management program is the first of two strategies for the 5310 program in the TMA that will address gaps between current service and identified needs. The goals of the mobility management program are to remove barriers to existing transportation service, and improve mobility options for people age 65 and older and people with disabilities. The program will be managed by Wave staff and guided by the 5310 advisory group which includes local government and community leaders, as well as professionals in the fields of transportation and social service, people age 65 and older, and people with disabilities.

The following needs will be addressed by the mobility management program: 1) Pedestrian and bus stop improvements, 2) Improvements customer service), 3) Increased marketing and education on transportation services, 4) ADA improvements, through four programming areas: increased access to fixed route service, a travel training program, community engagement, and a customer service program. Each of these actions is further discussed in the following sections.

Increased Access to Fixed Route Service

The identified needs "Pedestrian and bus stop improvements" and "ADA improvements" will be addressed by the mobility management program through actions such as advocating for pedestrian infrastructure and crosswalks, assessing bus stops for ADA accessibility and lighting needs, and making ADA and other improvements where possible.

Travel Training Program

A Travel Training program meets the identified need "increased marketing and education on transportation services," by offering education, and the marketing of available transportation

services for people age 65 and over, and people with disabilities. The program will aim to teach any person interested in navigating the Wave Transit transportation system to Ride the Wave, as well as provide transportation resources and training for human service providers or other groups serving the target populations. There will be no cost to participate and training will be available for individuals and groups. Each training session will be customized to the needs of the individual or group. Travel training sessions could be held in-person or virtually. Some examples of training might be how to schedule accessible van services, read a route map, buy a ticket, transfer to another bus, use real-time bus tracking as well as plan and ride a bus route to a destination. A sample Travel Training program marketing brochure is included as Appendix L.

Community Engagement

This action meets the identified need: "increased marketing and education on transportation services," by offering outreach, education, a contact person, and the advertising of transportation services for people age 65 and over, and people with disabilities. The mobility management program will function as an information hub that links individuals to transportation resources, and engages with the community through in-person, virtual and social media outreach.

Customer Service Program

A customer service training program meets the identified need to "improvements in customer service" through actions such as staff customer service trainings, the creation of customer service training manuals for each department, and the ongoing facilitation of customer service best practices such as customer satisfaction surveys and other customer feedback opportunities. The mobility management program will be a partner on this effort with department managers and the Human Resources department. A training manual is currently underway with a launch of new training for employees to occur by July 2021.

Strategy 2: Community Grant

A community grant is the second of two strategies for the 5310 program in the TMA that will address gaps between current service and identified needs. The community grant strategy addresses the identified needs of "increased service offerings" and "different service offerings" by providing a funding opportunity that can extend current transportation service and/or fund new and alternate models of transportation. The community grant is managed by Wave staff, and project selection is guided by the 5310 advisory group which includes local government and community leaders, as well as professionals in the fields of social service, people age 65 and older, and people with disabilities.

Eligible entities for award of the community grant are local nonprofit, government, or private providers of public transportation serving older adults and people with disabilities. Projects selected for funding must be planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate, and must address a need identified in the LCP.

An annual Call for Projects is published by the Authority announcing Section 5310 funding availability. A 2021 Call for Projects and grant application is included as Appendix M. Projects are approved for funding by the Wave Transit Board of Directors and the WMPO Board. Community grants are suballocations of the Section 5310 formula grant. The PMP provides administrative and programmatic guidance for suballocation under the 5310 program. The provision of community grants aids in regional coordination and collaboration of resources as the utilization of local funding from nonprofit agencies, local government, and private transportation providers can be used as local matching funds for the 5310 program.

Implementation

The fourth and final FTA element of an LCP is a discussion of the implementation of strategies or activities, based on time, resources, and feasibility.

Prior to their implementation, specific strategies and activities of the 5310 program will be further developed with feedback from the 5310 advisory group. Input will also be sought from the Wave Transit Board, WMPO staff, and the WMPO Board which includes members from all local governments in the TMA. NCDOT, local nonprofits, health and human service agencies, veterans groups, and other entities in the region which have an interest in transportation for older adults and people with disabilities, as well as the general public, will have an opportunity to provide input on strategies included in the 2021 LCP and the annual 5310 Program of Projects (POP).

Prioritization for Funding and Implementation

Prioritization among strategies or activities for funding and implementation will be based on time, resources, and feasibility. The criterion of time will be further defined to include the long-

term sustainability of projects, and the period of oversight. The criterion of resources will look to internal capacity and the capacity of partner organizations. Finally, feasibility will include political, financial, and cultural considerations.

An additional criterion may also be examined: impact. The potential impact of strategies and activities will be assessed based on the FTA program measures below:

•   Gaps in Service Filled: Provision of transportation options that would not otherwise be available for seniors and individuals with disabilities, measured in numbers of seniors and individuals with disabilities afforded mobility they would not have without program support as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

•   Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Appendix A.

Guide to LCP Planning Process

Getting Started

Coordination of public/private transit and human service transportation is vital in prioritizing valuable resources and maximizing services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with low incomes.

A requirement of the Federal Transportation administration (FTA), the coordinated plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human service transportation providers as well as members of the public. This document provides a **five-step approach to aid in the** development of a locally developed coordinated plan.

Important: The planning process should be thoroughly documented from start to finish. Documenting the planning process will help to eliminate questions and confusion, be evidence of your coordination efforts and help in the creation of a written locally developed coordinated plan. Document all the activities, results and important decisions made throughout the planning process.

Step 1 – Identify the Lead Agency

Reference: Transportation Services Coordination Plan
The agency that will take the lead in the planning process could be any one of the following:

Regional planning organization (rural planning organization, metropolitan planning organization, council of government)
Local transit system(s)
Community or municipality in the region
Professional consulting firm

As the designated recipient of 5310 funds for the TMA, Wave Transit serves as the lead agency in the development of the LCP for the region.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Agency

Provide overall **guidance** and **structure** to the process
Provide a **process** for local coordinated plan adoption in consultation with participants
Provide **written documentation** of the results of local coordinated planning process -The Plan
Provide and **execute a strategy** for approval of The Plan.

Step 2 - Convene the Steering Committee

Assemble a **small** number of people to help organize a coordinated planning workshop. This committee, at a minimum, should consist of a representative from the following categories:

Transportation partners (local and regional)
Passengers
Advocacy groups
Human service providers
Private providers
Other interested groups

Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee
> Determine the date, time and location of the local planning workshop(s)
> Determine who the stakeholders are and send invitations
> Determine who will facilitate the meeting(s)
> Design the agenda and make logistical decisions
> Provide guidance in how to navigate tricky or contentious issues
> Assist on the day of the workshop
> Draft a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan and determine a process for adoption

Steering Committee Task #1 _____
Select a date and time to hold the workshop. Determine a suitable location and facility for the workshop.
Location considerations:
- Adequate parking
- On or near bus lines
- Whiteboard or overhead projector
- Can accommodate service animals
- Meets all ADA facility requirements

Important: You may need to hold more than one workshop depending on the size of the planning area and attendance at the first workshop, or use other strategies to gather input. Strong consideration should be given to holding at least one workshop in each county of a multiple-county area.

Steering Committee Task #2 _____
Determine local groups and individuals who should be invited to participate in the local coordinated planning workshop. See the suggested list in Appendix B.
> Decide the right person in each group to contact
> Determine who will make the contact
> Gather contact information and send invitations

Ask organizations to extend the invitation to participate in the local coordinated planning process to local interested or affected groups and persons. Many organizations will have a membership list or a list-serve that they use to get the information out.

Important: The invitation should be extended to a comprehensive, diverse population from all geographical areas of the planning area and should include retirees, workers, minorities, the aged, the disabled, those with limited English proficiency, and private transportation providers.

Ask invitees to RSVP to make planning for the workshop easier. After the RSVP deadline, assess responses or level of interest. If interest or participation in the **community planning** approach to public involvement seems "light" or "one-sided," consider a change of venue or date, or add other public involvement techniques to improve participation such as:
> Focus groups
> Survey(s) (i.e., *Framework for Action*)
> Detailed study analysis

Steering Committee Task #3 _____
Determine who will facilitate the workshop(s). Managing the meeting process and the flow of paper requires a facilitator and one or two assistants, none of whom is participating in the planning process. The facilitator will keep the group on track, guide the conversation, and not participate in the assessment. The facilitator can be a professional or a person from the community with experience guiding group work. Ask the community college, United Way, chamber of commerce, agricultural

extension office or local mediation center to refer you to professionals or persons in your area with this skill. Before the workshop, the facilitator should learn about transportation and coordination.
Steering Committee Task #4 _____
Determine whether the planning workshop will be one long meeting or two shorter meetings. In addition, the committee needs to decide how to collect data about existing services and resources. A sample agenda for a one-meeting process is included in Step 5. It will be helpful to distribute the sample agenda as a starting point. Once the agenda is set, the committee can decide how to set up the meeting space, make lists of supplies and assign responsibilities to committee members and staff.

Step 3 – Prepare for the Coordinated Planning Workshop
Reference: *The Framework for Action Facilitator's Guide*
http://www.unitedweride.gov/FFA-Communities.pdf
Suggested Resource Checklist:
> Flip charts (at least one for each table)
> Magic markers (at least two different colors)
> Peel-and-stick dots - two colors (five of each color for each participant)
> Masking tape
> Maps – showing the planning area
> Transit service area maps
> Fixed route schedules and maps
> RPO or MPO planning area maps
> GIS, statistical or census data
> Survey available transportation services (send to attendees in advance)
> Table tents with a number for each table
> Sufficient copies of the *Framework for Action* survey, if desired
> Extra pencils and some paper for notes (a couple of legal pads)
> Snacks at the workshop
> A strategy to incorporate late arrivers into the process
> Directions to workshop location posted on Web site
> Blank name tags

Note: If you are having more than one workshop, make sure you have adequate supplies for each.

Prepare a packet of information for each participant. Make table assignments prior to the beginning of the workshop to ensure that each table has representatives from a variety of areas to facilitate an exchange of ideas during the planning process.

The packet might include such statistical information for the service area as:
- Number and percentage of elderly
- Number and percentage of persons with disabilities
- Map location of elderly and/or low-income households
- Map location of large employers and/or business parks
- Map location of registered vehicles or households with zero vehicles
- Number and percentage of registered vehicles

- Number of households with zero or no vehicles
- Out-of-county travel patterns of workers to jobs
- Number and percentage of lost employment due to lack of transportation

Create a sign-in sheet for each meeting of the steering committee, the planning workshop(s) and any follow-up meetings. Attendance records should be included in the final coordinated plan.

		Complete Shaded Area Below			
Table Assignment	**Example Name**	**Signature**	**Organization**	**E-mail Address**	**Phone** (include area code)
2	Otis Olderman				
4	Ann Ableson				
1	Barbie Busman				
3	William Worker				
1	Rita P. Rider				
6	Steve Student				

Table title: Sample SIGN-IN SHEET

Important: Arrive at the workshop location at least 45 minutes prior to the published start time.
      Locate bathrooms
      Put up directions/signs, if needed
      Set up sign-in table and participant tables
Set up snacks

Step 4 - Conduct Local Coordinated Planning Workshop(s)

Sample Agenda for one-day workshop

Agenda Items		Approximate Time Allocation
Sign-In Registration	30	8:30 – 9:00
Pass out information packets and table assignments		
Welcome & Overview		9:00-9:45
Overview	2	
Purpose of Workshop	3	
Introduction of Participants	15	
Brief Overview of Federal Circulars	10	
Intended Outcome of the Coordinated Planning Workshop	5	
Establish Ground Rules for Workshop	5	
Describe the Coordinated Planning Process	5	
Coordination Planning		
Review/Create inventory of services	30	9:45-10:15
Break	15	10:15-10:30
Table discussion of transportation needs of the target population(s)	45	10:30-11:15
Report results of table discussion	30	11:15-11:45
Lunch Break [2]	75	11:45-1:00
Determine priority needs – Dot Exercise	30	1:00-1:30
Review Eligible Activities from Circulars	20	1:30-1:50
Create service strategies by priority	50	1:50-2:50
Wrap up and next steps	10	2:50-3:00

[1] Have each table to choose a scribe (note taker) and someone to report out for the group.
[2] Steering Committee should work over lunch break to consolidate duplicated reports and prepare a clean list of transportation needs that resulted from the table discussions.
[3] Participants should be given a total of 10 "peel and stick" dots (e.g., five red and five blue) to place beside their 10 top priorities, but should be asked to not place more than ___ stickers on any one item.

Ground Rules

TIME IS LIMITED – *(MUST LISTEN AND RESPECT OTHERS)*

EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE

AVOID SIDE CONVERSATIONS

ESTABLISHED OUTCOMES

NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS

EVERYONE IS EQUAL

FOCUSED COMMENTS

OPEN TO SUGGESTION

SHARE INFORMATION GAINED FROM TABLE SESSION

REACH CONCEPTUAL CONSENSUS *

MEMBERS WILL SUPPORT THE DECISION OF THE GROUP

Consensus – when everyone is "comfortable" with the decision
Participants should ask themselves:
Can I live with this position?
Am I comfortable with this course of action?
Can I support the choice?

Step 5 – Draft a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan

Projects competitively selected for New Freedom or JARC funding shall be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan ("coordinated plan"). The written record of the activities and decisions made at the planning workshop with the stakeholders is the basis of the coordinated plan. The length of the plan depends on the length of the planning process and the complexity of the results.

The coordinated plan will minimally include the following elements:

An assessment of **available services** that identifies current transportation providers (public, private and nonprofit).

An assessment of **transportation needs** for individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts and gaps in service.

Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery.

Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Dividing the plan into sections with numbered pages will make it much easier for applicants to fulfill this requirement.

An individual or a team of individuals selected by the lead agency in consultation with the Steering Committee should draft the coordinated plan after the planning process is completed. The Steering Committee under the guidance of the lead agency should review and approve the draft before it is made public.

Step 6 – Adopt the Plan

As a part of the local coordinated planning process, the lead agency in consultation with the steering committee and participants should determine the process of officially adopting the coordinated plan. The process of adopting the plan should include public involvement elements. The date the coordinated plan is adopted should be displayed prominently on the final draft of the plan.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Consideration should be given to including groups and organizations such as the following in the coordinated planning process, if present in the community:

Transportation Partners

- Area transportation planning agencies, including rural planning organizations, metropolitan planning organizations, councils of government, regional councils, associations of governments, local governments and NCDOT;
- Public transportation providers (including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit providers and agencies administering the projects funded under FTA urbanized and nonurbanized programs);
- Private transportation providers, including private transportation brokers, taxi operators, vanpool providers, school transportation operators and intercity bus operators;
- Nonprofit transportation providers;
- Past or current organizations funded under the Section 5310program
- Human service agencies funding, operating and/or providing access to transportation services.

Passengers and Advocates

- Existing and potential riders, including both general and targeted population passengers (individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes);
- Protection and advocacy organizations;
- Independent living centers; and
- Advocacy organizations working on behalf of targeted populations.

Human Service Partners

- Agencies that administer health, employment or other support programs for targeted populations. Examples of such agencies include, but are not limited to, departments of social/human services, employment one-stop services; vocational rehabilitation, Workforce Investment board, Medicaid, community action programs , agency on aging, developmental disability council, community services board;
- Nonprofit human service provider organizations that serve the targeted populations;
- Job training and placement agencies;
- Housing agencies;
- Health care facilities; and
- Mental health agencies.

Others

- Security and emergency management agencies;
- Tribes and tribal representatives;
- Economic development organizations;
- Faith-based and community-based organizations;
- Representatives of the business community (e.g., employers);
- Appropriate local or state officials and elected officials;
- School districts; and
- Policy analysts or experts.

Appendix B.

Major Transportation Providers for Older Adults and People with Disabilities in the TMA

Agency/ Organization	Public, Private, or Nonprofit	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Y/N	Phone
Wave Transit	Public	Y	910-202-2045, 910-202-2052
Senior Resource Center	Public-Government	Y	910-798-6413
Brunswick Transportation System (BTS)	Nonprofit	Y	910-253-7800
PAS-TRAN	Nonprofit	Y	910-259-9119
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	Nonprofit	Y	910-313-2190
Ivory's	Private	Y	910-264-9329, 910-262-3670
Event Shuttle	Private	Y	910-398-8333
Uber	Private	N	www.uber.com
Yellow Cab	Private	Y	910-762-3322

Appendix C

Community Survey (Pg. 1)

Transportation Needs for People with Disabilities and Older Adults

Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan Community Survey

Wave Transit is seeking public input for a Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCP) in order to: identify the transportation needs of people with disabilities and individuals age 65 and older in the Wilmington Metro Area; identify strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. The results of this survey, along with input collected through a virtual open house and focus groups, will be included in the 2021 LCP and will inform future transportation programing and funding decisions. For more information please call: (910) 202-2045 or email: vlacer@wavetransit.com.

1. Do you have a disability?

○ Yes

○ No

2. Are you age 65 or older?

○ Yes

○ No

3. How often do you **currently** use the Wave Transit bus system or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART)?

○ Every day   ○ Once or twice a month

○ Several days a week   ○ Less than monthly

○ Once a week   ○ I do not use the bus or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART)

○ Other (please specify)

_____

4. If your use of the Wave bus system or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) has changed due to COVID-19, how has it changed?

○ I have stopped riding completely   ○ I ride more now

○ I ride about half as much now   ○ My use of the bus or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) has not changed

○ I ride very rarely now

○ Other (please specify)

_____

1

Community Survey (pg. 2)

5. Please choose how important you find each statement of need for people with disabilities and individuals age 65 and older in our community:

	Very important	A little important	Not important
We need to make sure Wave Transit can continue to provide transportation services	○	○	○
We need additional transportation options besides Wave Transit bus and Dial-A-Ride (DART) services	○	○	○
We need to make Wave bus stops safer and more accessible through improvements such as better lighting, benches and sidewalks	○	○	○
We need more transportation options that are affordable for low-income residents	○	○	○
We need more community education and advertising about available transportation services	○	○	○

6. Please provide any additional comments below about transportation needs for people with disabilities and older adults in the Wilmington Metro area.
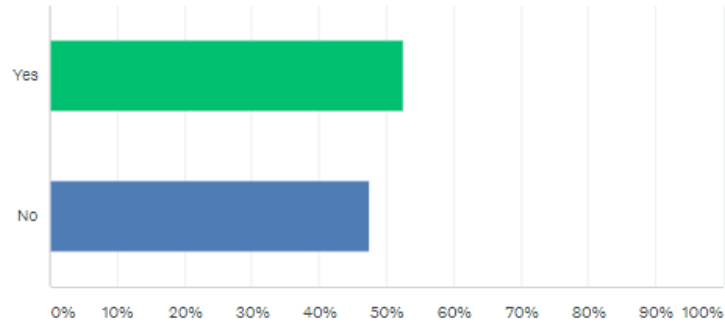
Thank you for your feedback!

2

Appendix D

Survey Data

Q1

Do you have a disability?

Answered: 289   Skipped: 7

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	52.60%	152
No	47.40%	137
TOTAL		289

Q2

Are you age 65 or older?

Answered: 292   Skipped: 4
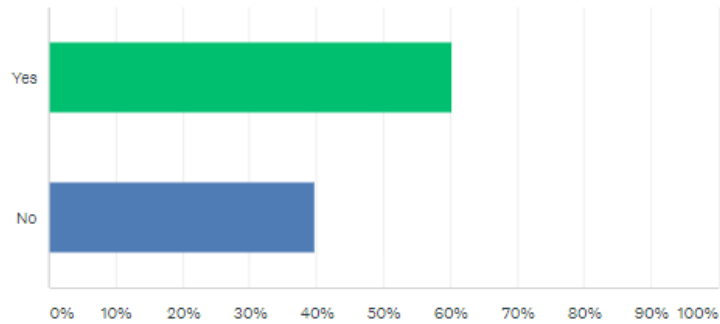
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.27%	176
No	39.73%	116
TOTAL		292

Q3

How often do you currently use the Wave Transit bus system or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART)?

Answered: 295   Skipped: 1
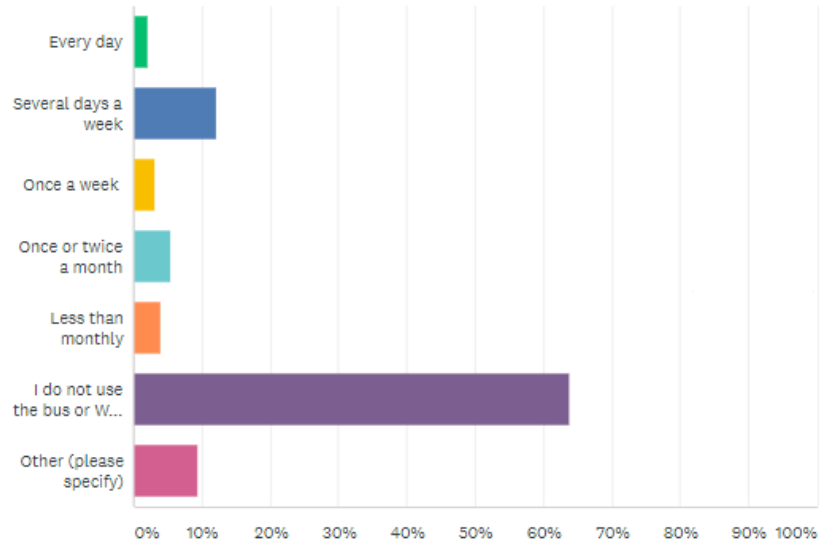
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▼ Every day		2.03%	6
▼ Several days a week		12.20%	36
▼ Once a week		3.05%	9
▼ Once or twice a month		5.42%	16
▼ Less than monthly		4.07%	12
▼ I do not use the bus or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART)		63.73%	188
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	9.49%	28
TOTAL			**295**

Q4

If your use of the Wave bus system or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) has changed due to COVID-19, how has it changed?

Answered: 191   Skipped: 105
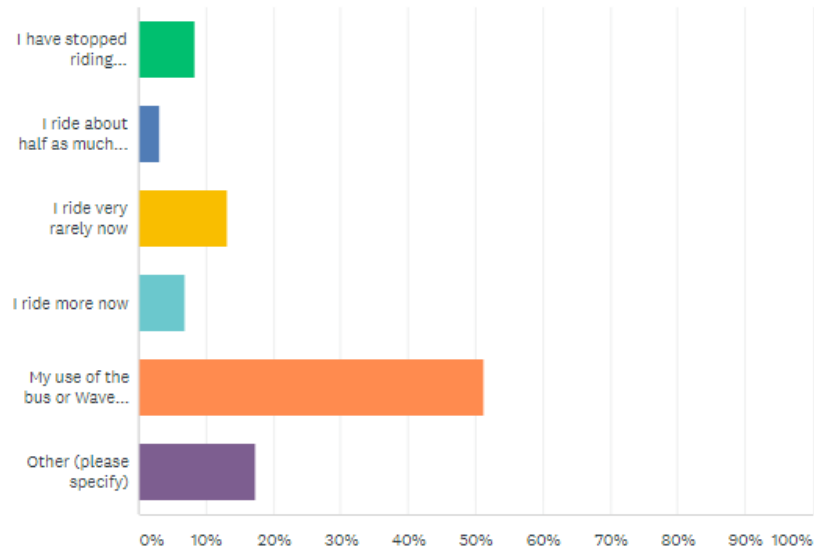
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
I have stopped riding completely		8.38%	16
I ride about half as much now		3.14%	6
I ride very rarely now		13.09%	25
I ride more now		6.81%	13
My use of the bus or Wave Paratransit van service, Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) has not changed		51.31%	98
Other (please specify)	Responses	17.28%	33
TOTAL			191

Q5

Please choose how important you find each statement of need for people with disabilities and individuals age 65 and older in our community:
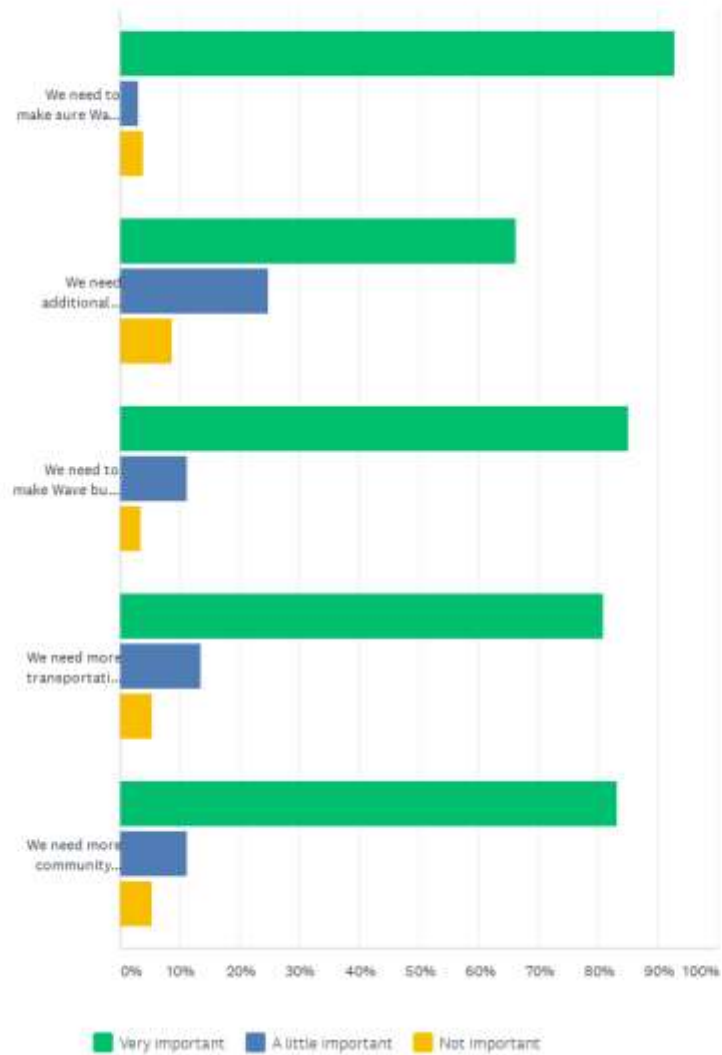
	VERY IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
We need to make sure Wave Transit can continue to provide transportation services	92.86% 260	3.21% 9	3.93% 11	280
We need additional transportation options besides Wave Transit bus and Dial-A-Ride (DART) services	66.29% 175	25.00% 66	8.71% 23	264
We need to make Wave bus stops safer and more accessible through improvements such as better lighting, benches and sidewalks	85.09% 234	11.27% 31	3.64% 10	275
We need more transportation options that are affordable for low-income residents	80.88% 220	13.60% 37	5.51% 15	272
We need more community education and advertising about available transportation services	83.21% 228	11.31% 31	5.47% 15	274

Appendix E

Survey Comments

	Survey Comments: All Needs Mentioned (Not Ranked)
1	Need more to Carolina Beach. To and from Wilmington and Monkey Junction
2	Get more routes to the outlying areas
3	We need more stops in Castle Hayne and Wrightsboro areas including park and ride
4	We need more cover top benches so people won't get wet when it rains
5	I feel Wave could advertise on TV- radio about transportation services for senior adults.
6	I think more stops in rural neighborhoods would be helpful. If you don't drive, you need now to get to the actual bus stop somehow. Not always possible or feasible.
7	Need lighting, benches, sidewalks, affordable low-income transportation
8	Stops should be safer - please. Take money out of park and rec for Wave.
9	Overhang and benches
10	It is important for people that do not drive or have a way to get around. I do not ride the bus but I know people who depend on it. At Castle Hayne stop they need a shelter. People have to stand in the rain!
11	The stops need shelters and benches. Mask given on transportation. Social distance seating.
12	A set bus route for older adults and people with disability. More high rate.

13	Wave does not come to White Oak Apts. If they did lots of people would use it (age over 55 live here). Please start coming to White Oak Apts.
14	Ability to get to areas on the outskirts of the city limit.
15	More available information on routes, stops, times
16	To be on time and better bus schedule
17	It would be nice to just have buses on call when needed since many people have cell phone. It would save the city a lot of money when buses do not always have to run all the time. But have drivers on standby when someone is waiting at the bus stop.
18	You need to come down on the price of your bus tickets and passes
19	Need to be able to ride on weekend
20	Sometimes we need the transportation driver to be more helpful with patient.
21	Bus drivers should wear nametags
22	Bus drivers should be more friendly. Buses should come more often. The bus should be free during the pandemic, people can't afford to ride.
23	I am visually impaired. For others with visual impairments announcements should be provided on the bus. Also more bus stops at local attractions.
24	Wish we could go back to every 30 minutes, hard to take refrigerated food home. Want to switch to pre-paid/reloadable card to scan/tap. Make sure fare boxes take dollar coins.
25	The routes are limited in frequency and distance - I hope more frequent buses can start soon and bring back the Brunswick Route, Carolina Beach, and one to Porter's Neck, please.
26	The last question about community education concerning transportation services is very much needed. I know that our church would love to pass out any materials about this! We have a foodbank and I know some might be able to use these services if they knew more about it.
27	More bus stops on side streets not just main lines.

28	I'm from Florida and when my mom was elderly, my dad in nursing care she had only one option for a convoluted transportation route to visit him. Because she was just across the city limit line she could not qualify for free rides. And, with only a meager Social Security income it was very difficult for her mentally, physically and financially. Unfortunately, as a single mom of three I was not in a position to provide much relief. Please make sure your program includes all eligible elders in New Hanover County. Provide near-by sheltered waiting areas and on-time schedules. Thank you
29	Wave has totally ignored Bus Stop placement in regards to new development in the area. You don't have bus stops on existing routes near new (large) apartment complexes for example. And why isn't Wave using Google Transit? So many people rely on their smartphones now; and don't get caught up in the distraction of creating your own app, use existing standards out there.
30	The cost of transportation for the elderly and disabled are ridiculously too high. A higher percentage of groups are living on government dollars, which we all know how little that equals monthly. The cost of paratransit should be at least cut in half and payable by an online account, cash or debit.
31	As stated above, routes that would include North 421 with parking available would potentially be helpful to rural communities not just to older people but commuters who work downtown. The intersections of 421 & 41 or 421 & 53 with parking available is our suggestion.
32	I believe crosswalks are very important and should be closer on busy street such as 16th and 17th Street.
33	Need better access to direct rides. I am currently in the hospital and I overheard the staff telling an elderly man in the room next to mine that there was no program that would give him a ride home so he had to take a bus. He was discharged at 6:30 pm and it was already getting dark. How is that even humane? Not everyone has a support system so you must step up and help- especially when it comes to the more vulnerable people of our society
34	There needs to be more stops added and all of the fixed routes need to be big buses.
35	Reduce the number of buses stop at one stop. Example is routes 101 and 108 run the same route. Instead, if Wave would run 101 to Pageant Station following it current route and then 108's back to Forden Station, Wave could remove route 108 altogether. This goes for other routes such as medical center and South 17th could merge to improve. Then the two proposed routes to be rid of 207 and 301, could remain and the system would be rid of two buses running.

36	It would be nice to have a service that makes weekly trips to the triangle area for older adults, and people with disabilities, who need to go out of town for healthcare. A lot of low income older adults need more access to transportation.
37	I live off River Road. There is NO public transport there at all. I would like to see a route that at least stops at the Del Webb property to give us elderly people a viable option for transport
38	The routes need to be more efficient. There are absolutely not enough shelters, benches, and lighting at most stops throughout the routes. Northern Brunswick County needs to be included again. MOST IMPORTANT - WAVE needs to participate in the land use decision making process to help communities understand how land development patterns impact transportation.
39	Many cities have small, jitney-type buses that are accessible to their residents and have more flexible routes than are currently provided. I say this from personal experience, because several years ago I tried to help new residents use the bus service, only to discover they would need 2 changes to get from their home near UNC-W to downtown. (They bought bikes, and, eventually, a car!)I recommend that WAVE consider this option, especially as the county continues to expand physically and the traffic is becoming onerous.
40	Post services and phone numbers online
41	More readable signs and lighting for visually impaired
42	DART is outstanding. There are glitches and sometimes a lack of availability, but the drivers and staff do their best. The system needs improvement so that reservations aren't lost even with confirmation and availability increased
43	We have many needs for residents on S. College Rd., especially The Preserve at Pine Valley. We have many seniors who cannot go to doctors' appointments due to transportation challenges. We also have senior residents with mental challenges who could use the bus to go to work, church and the doctor, if needed. The Preserve at Pine Valley would act as a mid-way point, between Long Leaf Mall and the next stop at S. College and 17 ext. There is ample room for a bus shelter and it is right on the Cross City Bike/Walking Trail. Our apt. manager would be open to discussing this with you.

44	I would say myself personally. I've stopped riding the wave van due covid -19. However there are many people who rely on this transportation everyday some only source for transportation. For daily needs, work Dr. Appt, grocery store etc. For people with disabilities and elderly rely on it as well thankful for assistance wave provide big thanks drivers all wave team. Yes implementing more benches for people(especially disable disabilities, elderly) can sit down have more lighting make safer in early morning & night available different areas in which needed too if possible ... Thank you wave .
45	Lack of sheltered bus stops is a major issue. Nobody should have to stand in the rain waiting for a bus. Some stops are sheltered, but the majority in lower-income areas are not.
46	Because older adults & people with disabilities have more difficulties getting to some bus stops, additional bus stops should be added to decrease walking distance to available bus stops.
47	Need to be able to get to the Miracle Field
48	Please consider future integrated mobility opportunities, options, and challenges for people with disabilities and over the age of 65.
49	We need shorter run times between stops. Also more covered stops to keep people out the rain.
50	Cheaper rates for para transit rides, extended hours.
51	The drivers should be a bit more aware of safety needs, especially for people with stability issues. On more than one occasion, I have--personally--been jolted into the seat, instead of given enough time to sit down. Everybody is different and I understand this. However, disabled and elderly people are not rag-dolls.
52	Buses or alternatives should run later in the evening, ideally 24/7 365 days of the year by hiring additional workers. Expand the bus line throughout the county. Bring back ability to get to other counties. Finally, eliminate bullying by bus drivers. Most are courteous, but I know of one driver who is openly hostile to riders. I've been mistreated. I've seen her be rude to people in wheelchairs because she had to help them and smelly homeless people. I'll be nice and not say who, but anyone who knows her, probably knows which driver I'm referring to.
53	Need more lighted stops and something announcement of the approaching bus for the visually impaired.

54	My adult son has a disability and he is unable to drive; he depends on alternate transportation options to maintain his job and to live independently. This is definitely a topic that the public needs more education and awareness and the our community members would benefit from other options.
55	I work with the special needs population and helping them access transportation in the Wilmington area. Access to places south of Monkey Junction and the Leland area can be life savers for those trying to gain employment in those areas. As of now I feel the cost for regular bus rides and DART Van rides is fair. Better access to workers at the station would be helpful as well.
56	Signals to stop traffic on busy street such as 16th and 17 so pedestrian can cross safely.
57	I find the hourly and loop route services difficult to work with. I would like to see benches and covered areas at the stops. I would like to see the shopping areas continue to be accessed. I think the bus we need to run till 9 pm Mon- Sat, to the airport on the weekend, and that the Leland/Brunswick route needs to be restarted and with the same as Wilmington hours. I do appreciate that the services is available in a city of this size (I have spent time in larger cities and used their public transportation). I think to work with the growth, the tourist aspect, and the college is also important to the city and the Wave system. I appreciate and give credit to the drivers & employees of the company and their customer service. I am a disabled 58 yr. old single female. One of the reasons I chose my house is because I am within a few blocks of a bus stop.
58	Make sure 65+ know that help is available

Appendix F.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and tell us how you would have gotten to the meeting today, if it was in-person.
2. How do you primarily get where you need to go? Car? Bus? Friends? Taxi? Uber/Lyft?
   a. Has your choice of transportation changed because of COVID?
   b. Do you use multiple methods?
      i. If yes, which ones and why do you choose one over the other?
   c. How do you get information about transportation options?
      i. Have you ever visited the Wave website?
         1. What did you think about the website? Were you able to get the information you needed?
      ii. Have you ever been on the Wave FB page or Twitter feed? If yes, what was your experience?
3. Have you ever participated in Travel Training through Wave? If yes, what was your experience?
4. Have you ever used the bus? If yes, what was your experience? If no, why not?
5. Have you ever used DART? If yes, what was your experience?
6. Have you ever not been able to get where you needed to go because you did not have transportation?
7. Are there places you don't go in the Wilmington area because you don't have reliable transportation to those locations?
8. Are there places you don't go in the Wilmington area because the cost of transportation is too high to get there?
   a. Does the cost of transportation fit into your budget?
9. What was your best transportation experience? Why was it the best?
10. What was your worst transportation experience? Why was it the worst?
11. What transportation options for people with disabilities/older adults are working well?
12. What changes are needed in our community to improve transportation for people with disabilities/older adults?

Appendix G.

Focus Groups: All Needs Mentioned (Not Ranked)

CFDC Focus Group Needs	dRC Focus Group Needs	AARP Focus Group Needs	Glover Plaza Focus Group Needs
Longer service hours	More/better information for customers about ADA policies and procedures	Getting more people to know about what wave offers	More bus stops at attractions
Consistency with polices across drivers (FR)	Drivers making sure customers with disabilities know their rights/options (if both wheelchair spots are full or the lift is broken)	Get more people out of cars that help with reducing the traffic congestion	More audio announcements for people with visual impairments
Better customer service from bus drivers (FR)	Better customer service from drivers for people with disabilities	Marketing the services	Wish we could go back to every 30 min, hard to take refrigerated food home.
Improve accessibility at bus stops for people using wheelchairs (sidewalks)	Cashless fare payment	Safety at the bus stops	Want to switch to prepaid, reloadable card to scan/tap
Limit passengers on FR to prevent COVID	Improving driver's treatment of older adults and people with disabilities	Lighting at bus stops	Make sure fare boxes accept dollar coins
Get air filters for FR buses to prevent COVID	Drivers improve compliance with ADA law (service dogs)	Safety from COVID on transportation	Drivers need to be friendlier
Improve FR bus schedule adherence	Drivers should be friendlier and have better attitudes toward customers	Personal safety on board vehicles	Buses should come more often
	Not requiring that people using a wheelchair or who have prosthetics show a 1/2 fare card or Medicare to get the	Marketing	Buses should be free during the pandemic

	discount		
	Stop drivers spraying air freshener on the bus	Better lighting at bus stops and streets	
		Service to Porters Neck	

Appendix H.

2021 LCP Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. What changes in transportation patterns have you seen/heard about due to COVID?
2. How is information on transportation options accessed by those you represent?
3. What public transportation services or programs are utilized by those you represent?
4. What other transportation options are used by those you represent?
5. What are you hearing about the cost of transportation for those you represent?
6. What are you hearing about the accessibility of transportation (ADA and feasibility/reliability of available transportation options) for those you represent?
7. What transportation programs/services are working well for those you represent?
8. What changes are needed in our community to improve transportation for people with disabilities/older adults?

Appendix I.

Stakeholder Interviews: All Needs Mentioned (Not Ranked)

Stakeholder Interview Needs
More benches and covered shelters at bus stops
Increase DART service area
Free aid accompaniment on FR
Keep 1/2 fare discount for people with disabilities
DART service for high-risk individuals during COVID
Sidewalks at bus stops for people who use wheelchairs and mobility aids
Increased frequency of FR buses
Arm-in-arm transportation service
Covered shelters and benches
Simplify DART form or provide assistance filling out DART form
Bus stops and bus information at senior living facilities
Bus stop lighting
Sidewalks at bus stops
Bus stop maintenance (cut overgrowth)
30 minute bus service
Longer service hours (could be just during holidays)
Wi-Fi on buses
Serve more areas
Add rails to benches (under shelters) to help people stand up
Address dangerous seat belts on smaller vehicles

Music/radio on the bus
Comment cards on buses
Board members please ride the bus (more leadership face time leadership with customers/greater attention by board members to customer experience)
Increased training for staff on customer service skills

Appendix J.

Town Hall Agenda

Wave Transit Virtual Town Hall Agenda

Transportation for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

January 14, 2021, 12:00pm to 2:00pm

I. **12:00pm to 12:05pm:** Introduction and Welcome –
Vanessa Lacer, Wave Transit Mobility Manager

II. **12:05pm to 12:10pm:** Opening Remarks - Marie Parker,
Wave Transit Executive Director

III. **12:10 to 12:15pm:** Remarks - Cliff Rode, Wave Transit Dial-
A-Ride Transportation (DART) Manager

IV. **12:15pm to 12:20pm:** Overview of input collection process
for today's Town Hall and future public input opportunities
– Vanessa Lacer, Wave Transit Mobility Manager

V. **12:20pm to 1:50pm:** Public input period

VI. **1:50pm to 2:00pm:** Wrap-up and conclusion

Appendix K.

Town Hall: All Needs Mentioned (Not Ranked)

Town Hall Needs
Service to Myrtle Grove area for elderly residents that need an alternative
Bus stops close together so those with mobility issues would not have to walk so far to catch a bus near the Preserve at Pine Valley
Pamphlets to advertise services at housing communities
Safety at bus stops
Covered bus stops
Education for driving cessation
Grocery store trips
Out of county trips (medical Duke and CH)
Independent transportation solution (volunteer drivers)
Connect home-bound folks with COVID vaccine
Flexible to help with new/upcoming COVID issues
Collaboration with NHC to address COVID issues re: transportation
Remove technology barriers for low income seniors
5310 funding used for medical appointments through NHC SRC
Education around tech/bus app - partner with NHC SRC
Safety of bus stops (pedestrian infrastructure for street crossing)
Need increased Marketing/Education on services
Volunteer driver program (free to participants)
Crosswalk at 16th and 17th St and Little John Circle near Glover Plaza
Technology training
Ped infrastructure

Appendix L.

Travel Training Brochure (Exterior)

Travel Training Brochure (Interior)

Our Travel Training Program Provides

One-on-One & Group Travel Training

For individuals or groups that want to learn how to ride or gain confidence using public transportation. Training sessions may include classroom instruction and time on the vehicle.

Participants can receive comprehensive, personalized instructions to reach various destinations within the Wave Transit system network or to become more familiar with the Wave Transit system.

Train-the-Trainer

For those who wish to provide in-house travel training to their group or organization. Training sessions may include classroom instruction and time on the vehicle.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for Travel Training?
Any individual or group that wishes to learn how to use the Wave Transit system is eligible for travel training.

How much does Travel Training cost?
Travel Training is provided free of charge.

Where can the individual or group learn to travel to?
Travel Trainers can teach the individual or group to travel anywhere in the Wave Transit service area. Some examples include medical offices, recreation facilities, shopping centers, schools, and workplaces.

What can I expect to gain from a travel training session?
Travel Training participants can expect to gain a greater familiarity and comfort with the Wave Transit system as well as skills specific to their mobility goals.

How do I request Travel Training?
To request Travel Training for yourself or your group, please visit **www.wavetransit.com** and click on the WaveConnect logo. If you cannot access our website or need assistance with the Travel Training form please contact Mobility Manager, Vanessa Lacer at **(910) 202-2045** or email **vlacer@wavetransit.com.**

Appendix M.

Community Grant Application

2021
Community Grant Application

FOR WAVE TRANSIT'S TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM (SECTION 5310)

Introduction

This application package is for the 2021 Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Community Grant Program (Section 5310). The following information is contained in the application package: information on funding availability, applicant and project eligibility, application timeline and project evaluation criteria. The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority (d.b.a. Wave Transit) was appointed the Designated Recipient by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), the Governor of North Carolina and the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization of the 5310 grant funding for the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area (UZA). As the Designated Recipient, Wave Transit is responsible for developing a 5310 Program Management Plan (PMP) and administering a call for projects announcing available funding for eligible sub recipients within the UZA. Interested applicants should review the 2016 Locally Coordinated Plan, 5310 Program Management Plan and this application to determine if they are eligible for funding.

Available Funding for Community Grants

The expected funding amount available for 2021 is approximately $70,000.

Applicant Eligibility

There are three types of applicant organizations eligible to be sub recipients of funds under the Community Grant Program Section 5310. Eligible applicants are as follows:

1) Private nonprofit organizations
   a. A nonprofit organization is a corporation or association determined by the United States Secretary of the Treasury to be an organization described by 26 U.S.C. §501(c) that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. §501(a) or one which has been determined under state law to be nonprofit and for which the designated state agency has received documentation certifying the status of the nonprofit organization. Nonprofit applicants must be recognized under Section501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and submit a copy of the certificate from the IRS.
   b. Private nonprofit applicants desiring to receive funds under Section 5310 must submit an attorney's certification declaring the agency's legal status and attach a copy of the charter and bylaws as listed with the North Carolina Secretary of State.
2) State or local governmental authorities
3) Private operators of public transportation

a. The definition of "public transportation" includes "… shared-ride surface transportation services …" Private taxi companies that provide shared-ride taxi service to the general public on a regular basis are operators of public transportation, and therefore eligible sub recipients. "Shared-ride" means two or more passengers in the same vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together.

Project Eligibility

Section 5310 funds are available for capital and nontraditional projects to support the provision of transportation services to meet the specific needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. All projects must be situated within the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area (UZA) (see Figure 1 on Page 7 for a map of the UZA), and all projects must meet a need identified by the 2016 Locally Coordinated Plan.

The lists of eligible activities are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. FTA encourages recipients to develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of elderly persons (as defined as 65 years of age or older) and persons with disabilities in their communities.

Both traditional capital and nontraditional capital and operating projects must be targeted toward meeting the specific needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. It is not sufficient that elderly persons and persons with disabilities are merely included (or assumed to be included) among the people who will benefit from the project. FTA encourages projects that are open to the public as a means of avoiding unnecessary segregation of services.

Eligible Capital Projects

Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for capital expenses to support public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate. Examples of capital projects which must be carried out by an eligible recipient or sub recipient, include, but are not limited to the list below. Any vehicles provided for the use of grantees will be owned and maintained by Wave Transit.

a. Rolling stock and related activities for Section 5310-funded vehicles
    1) Acquisition of expansion or replacement buses or vans, and related procurement, testing, inspection, and acceptance costs
    2) Vehicle rehabilitation; or overhaul
    3) Preventive maintenance
    4) Radios and communication equipment
    5) Vehicle wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices
b. Passenger facilities related to Section 5310-funded vehicles

       1) Purchase and installation of benches, shelters and other passenger amenities

c. Support facilities and equipment for Section 5310-funded vehicles

       1) Extended warranties that do not exceed industry standard

       2) Computer hardware and software

       3) Transit-related intelligent transportation systems (ITS)

       4) Dispatch systems

       5) Fare collection systems

d. Lease of equipment when lease is more cost effective than purchase. Note that when lease of equipment or facilities is treated as a capital expense, the recipient must establish criteria for determining cost effectiveness in accordance with FTA regulations, "Capital Leases," 49 CFR part 639 and OMB Circular A–94, which provides the necessary discount factors and formulas for applying the same.

e. Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement. This may include acquisition of ADA-complementary paratransit services when provided by an eligible recipient or sub recipient as defined in the 5310 Program Management Plan. Both capital and operating costs associated with contracted service are eligible capital expenses. User-side subsidies are considered one form of eligible arrangement. Funds may be requested for contracted services covering a time period of more than one year. The capital eligibility of acquisition of services as authorized in 49 U.S.C. 5310(b)(4) is limited to the Section 5310 program.

f. Support for mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management is an eligible capital cost. Mobility management techniques may enhance transportation access for populations beyond those served by one agency or organization within a community. For example, a nonprofit agency could receive Section 5310 funding to support the administrative costs of sharing services it provides to its own clientele with other elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities and coordinate usage of vehicles with other nonprofits, but not the operating costs of service. Mobility management is intended to build coordination among existing public transportation providers and other transportation service providers with the result of expanding the availability of service. Mobility management activities may include:

       1) The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and low-income individuals

       2) Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services

       3) The support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils

4) The operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies, and passengers

5) The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented transportation management organizations' and human service organizations' customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers

6) The development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs

7) Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of geographic information systems (GIS) mapping, global positioning system technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies, as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system, and single smart customer payment systems. (Acquisition of technology is also eligible as a standalone capital expense)

Eligible Nontraditional Projects

Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for nontraditional projects which are defined as those that:

1) Provide transportation services that exceed the requirements of the ADA

2) Improve access to fixed route services and decrease reliance by persons with disabilities on ADA complementary transit service

3) Provide alternatives to public transportation projects that assist persons age 65 and over and individuals with disabilities with transportation needs

Nontraditional projects may include capital or operating expenses. Any vehicles provided for the use of grantees will be owned and maintained by Wave.

Projects that Exceed the Requirements of the ADA

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of public transportation service that is beyond the ADA or former Section 5317 projects:

1) Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA

2) Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services

3) The incremental cost of providing same-day service

4) The incremental cost (if any) of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not on a case-by-case basis for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system

5) Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination

6) Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for wheelchairs under the ADA regulations, 49 CFR part38 (i.e., larger than 30" × 48" and/or weighing more than 600 pounds), and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with oversized wheelchairs. This would permit the acquisition of lifts with a larger capacity, as well as modifications to lifts with a 600-pound design load, and the acquisition of heavier duty vehicles for paratransit and/or demand-response service in order to accommodate lifts with a heavier design load

7) Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA

8) Feeder services. Accessible "feeder" service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail, and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA

Projects that Improve Access to Fixed-Route Service and Decrease Reliance by Persons with Disabilities on ADA-Complementary Paratransit Service

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of public transportation service that improves access to the fixed-route system:

1) Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. Improvements for accessibility at existing transportation facilities that are not designated as key stations established under 49 CFR 37.47, 37.51, or 37.53, and that are not required under 49 CFR 37.43 as part of an alteration or renovation to an existing station, so long as the projects are clearly intended to remove barriers that would otherwise have remained. Section 5310 funds are eligible to be used for accessibility enhancements that remove barriers to persons with disabilities so they may access greater portions of public transportation systems, such as fixed-route bus service, commuter rail, light rail, and rapid rail. This may include:

   a. Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, or other accessible features

   b. Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA

   c. Improving signage or wayfinding technology

    d. Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including ITS.

Projects that Provide Alternatives to Public Transportation that Assist Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of a service that provides an alternative to public transportation:

1) Purchasing vehicles to support accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and/or vanpooling programs. Section 5310 funds can be used to purchase and operate accessible vehicles for use in taxi, ride-sharing, and/or vanpool programs provided that the vehicle meets the same requirements for lifts, ramps, and securement systems specified in 49 CFR part 38, subpart B, at a minimum, and permits a passenger whose wheelchair can be accommodated pursuant to part 38 to remain in his/her personal mobility device inside the vehicle.

2) Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers. This activity is intended to support and supplement existing transportation services by expanding the number of providers available or the number of passengers receiving transportation services. Vouchers can be used as an administrative mechanism for payment of alternative transportation services to supplement available public transportation. The Section 5310program can provide vouchers to elderly persons and persons with disabilities to purchase rides, including: (a) mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program; (b) a taxi trip; or (c) trips provided by a human service agency. Providers of transportation can then submit the voucher for reimbursement to the recipient for payment based on predetermined rates or contractual arrangements. Transit passes or vouchers for use on existing fixed-route or ADA complementary paratransit service are not eligible. Vouchers are an operational expense which requires a 50/50 (federal/local) match.

3) Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs. Volunteer driver programs are eligible and include support for costs associated with the administration, management of driver recruitment, safety, background checks, scheduling, coordination with passengers, other related support functions, mileage reimbursement, and insurance associated with volunteer driver programs. The costs of enhancements to increase capacity of volunteer driver programs are also eligible. FTA encourages communities to offer consideration for utilizing all available funding resources as an integrated part of the design and delivery of any volunteer driver/aide program.

Map of Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area (UZA)

Potential applicants must propose services that are within the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
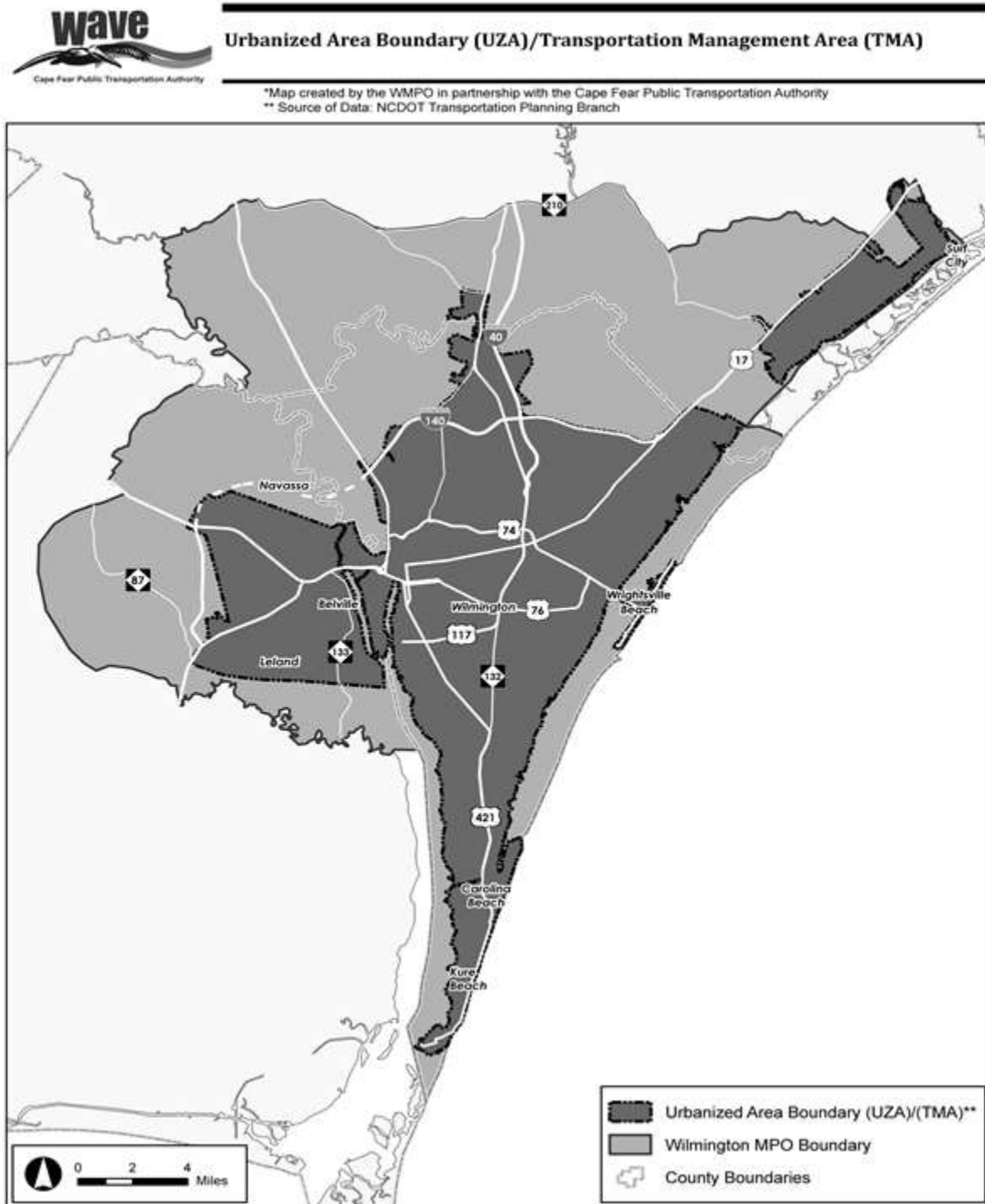
Application Process

Completed applications (Parts I-III of the 5310 Community Grant Application) should be submitted to the Wave Transit contact below. Mailed applications must be received at the address provided by the January 8, 2020 deadline. Mailed applications should be delivered in an electronic format on a CD or flash drive. Applications can be completed either as a Microsoft Word Document or a scanned PDF.

Application Submission

Applications emailed as an attachment are preferred.
Submit applications to the follow addresses:

By Email:
vlacer@wavetransit.com

By Post:
Attn: Vanessa Lacer, Mobility Manager
Wave Transit
1480 Castle Hayne Rd Wilmington, NC 28401

Application and Project Selection Schedule

The 5310 Call for Projects and project selection will adhere to the following schedule:

January 1, 2021: First day to submit application for 5310 funds
January 31, 2021: Last day to submit application for 5310 funds
March 2021: Applicants notified of selection
July 2021: Funding available

Project Evaluation and Selection

Upon verification that the project meets the minimum guidelines below, a Project Selection Committee comprised of Wave Transit personnel and the Wave Connect Advisory Committee will evaluate and score the projects, and make funding recommendations to the Wave Transit Board.

Minimum Project Guidelines

1) Does the project meet a need identified in the 2016 Locally Coordinated Plan?
2) Is the proposed project a non-duplicative service or program?
3) Are eligible matching funds identified and available?
4) Is the primary focus of the proposed service or program serving the target populations?
5) Does the project provide programming and/or services within the UZA?

Community Grant Program Application

Please complete Parts I-III of the Community Grant Program Application. Return the completed application to Wave Transit as noted in the Application Process section.

Part I – Funding Request

Applicant Information

Organization Name:

_____

Contact Person:

_____

Address:

_____

City, State, Zip:

_____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Project Description

Title:

_____

Brief Description:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Project Type: _____ Capital _____ Nontraditional

Service days/hours (if applicable):

_____

Estimated Cost per One-Way Trip (if applicable):

_____

Estimated Daily Riders per Weekday/Weekend (if applicable):

_____

Part II – Project Narrative

Please complete the Project Narrative questions below.

Expanded Project Description

Please use this space to expand on your project description beyond the brief description provided in Part I of the application if needed.

Project Need

1) *How is the proposed project consistent with eligible program activities and objectives of the funding program? Describe how the project meets a need identified by the* <u>Locally Coordinated Plan</u>*. Please provide the associated page number(s) in the* <u>Locally Coordinated Plan</u>

2) *Describe the impact of the program for the Wilmington Metropolitan Area's elderly and disabled population. Please provide the number of persons expected to be served, and the number of trips (or other units of service) expected to be provided.*

Project Planning and Implementation

1) *Describe how the proposed project might coordinate or link with other transportation providers or transportation stakeholders*

2) *Describe the project timeline and project lifespan.*

3) *When could your project begin upon receiving funding? Describe the process your organization would take to implement the project.*

Project Budget

1) *In addition to filling out the Proposed Project Budget, note any plans for continued investment and/or maintenance for the proposed project after the grant funds are spent.*

Program Effectiveness and Evaluation

1) *How does your organization plan to collect information to monitor quality control and customer satisfaction related to implementing the proposed project? Include in your description any measurable indicators you propose to use.*

2) *If your organization has previously been awarded Community Grant funding, what was the impact of that funding on your project and on your organization overall?*

Organizational Preparedness

1) *Describe how your proposed project aligns with the overarching mission of your organization.*

2) *Describe the staffing plan for this project. Who would be the primary staff person responsible for managing the grant? What other staff would be involved? Describe any relevant past experience these staff have in working on the type of project proposed.*

3) *Please note any experience your organization has as an existing grantee of 5310 funds, or similar fund administration, as well as experience with financial reporting such as quarterly reports, annual audits and/or other forms of financial reporting.*

4) *Describe any training, maintenance, inspections and/or service monitoring you plan to do focused on managing risk and providing safe services.*

Part III – Proposed Project Budget

Project Funding

Local matching funds are required for all application submittals. For projects requiring operating funds the required match is 50% from non-federal transportation funds. For capital projects the required match is 20% from non-federal transportation funds. Some potential capital match exceptions are noted in the FTA guidance and the Wave Transit 5310 Program Management Plan.

Total Project Budget $_____

Capital Federal Share $_____ %

Capital Local Match $_____ %

Operating Federal Share $_____ %

Operating Local Match $_____ %

Local Match Fund Source:

_____

Note: The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to provide local funds and provide appropriate documentation. Documentation may be in the form of a letter or other supporting documentation noting where funds will be drawn from.