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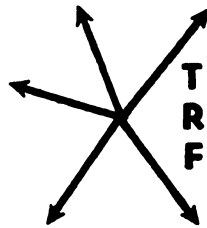
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TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH FORUM

Coordination Through Consolidation: The Barnstable County Experience

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ABSTRACT

BEFORE JUNE 1, 1979, two regionwide demand-response bus services were provided in Barnstable County (Cape Cod), Massachusetts. On that date, the two services were consolidated under the newly formed Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, creating a single fully-coordinated service.

This paper provides a case history of Barnstable County's coordination efforts, outlining how they developed and how they led to consolidation. It is significant that coordination was brought about solely through local actions. Included is a comparison of the costs of the services provided for the three months prior to and after consolidation. This indicates that cost savings of approximately 26% (more than \$35,000) were realized in the first three months of consolidation.

The paper concludes that consolidation under regional public bodies, such as the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, can be a workable and worthwhile objective if appropriate conditions exist. Such consolidations are likely to lead to significant reductions in the unit costs of services provided, allowing either more service to be provided or the same level of service to be provided with lower costs. In addition, consolidation under a regional transit authority can lead to a higher level of local control over operational, administrative and financial matters.

Recommendations are provided with the objective of aiding other areas with duplicative public transportation programs. Creation of regional transit authorities with bonding authority, mechanisms through which member jurisdictions can contribute to service costs, and ability to contract with a number of agencies and/or corporations for provision of services, is primary among these recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of and need for coordination of public transportation systems in rural areas has received much attention (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). It has become clear in many cases that the existence of separate, uncoordinated public transportation services in a given area is not the most efficient use of limited resources.

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Beyond the obvious losses in efficiency, productivity, and cost-effectiveness, such services often find themselves caught in institutional infighting that makes the achievement of many rational objectives difficult. Even efforts clearly in the best interest of all members of the transit community, such as long-range capital and service planning, identification of responsibilities, and consolidated outreach and marketing efforts may become virtually impossible.

For these reasons, various transit officials and human service professionals at different levels of government have come to recognize the desirability of coordination. This paper focuses on one area's successful efforts to achieve coordination through consolidation. The area is Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

The paper first provides a brief description of the County and a historical overview of public transportation services and planning efforts in the region. Next, we define the problem which existed in the County about 2 years ago, that is, the existence of two uncoordinated transit services with separate vehicles, dispatching operations, and clients. Following this, the paper focuses on the development of objectives and criteria, which are then used to evaluate alternative strategies to deal with the problem. The actions taken to implement the selected consolidation strategy are outlined and an evaluation of the expected benefits of the Barnstable County consolidation plan is also included. Finally, conclusions and recommendations based on the experience of Barnstable County officials in the implementation of the consolidation plan and their overall transportation development program are presented.

DESCRIPTION OF BARNSTABLE COUNTY

Barnstable county is the governmental boundary of Cape Cod, a peninsula which extends seaward for 80 miles from the southeastern Massachusetts coastline. Cape Cod has the shape of a crooked arm, containing 39.4 square miles of flat to gently rolling terrain. There are 15 towns in the county with a total population of approximately 130,000 (1975 Mass. Census). The average density is 321 persons per mile with the primary population areas concentrated in the Barnstable-Yarmouth and Falmouth-Bourne regions (See map on Figure 1).

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MAP OF BARNSTABLE COUNTY

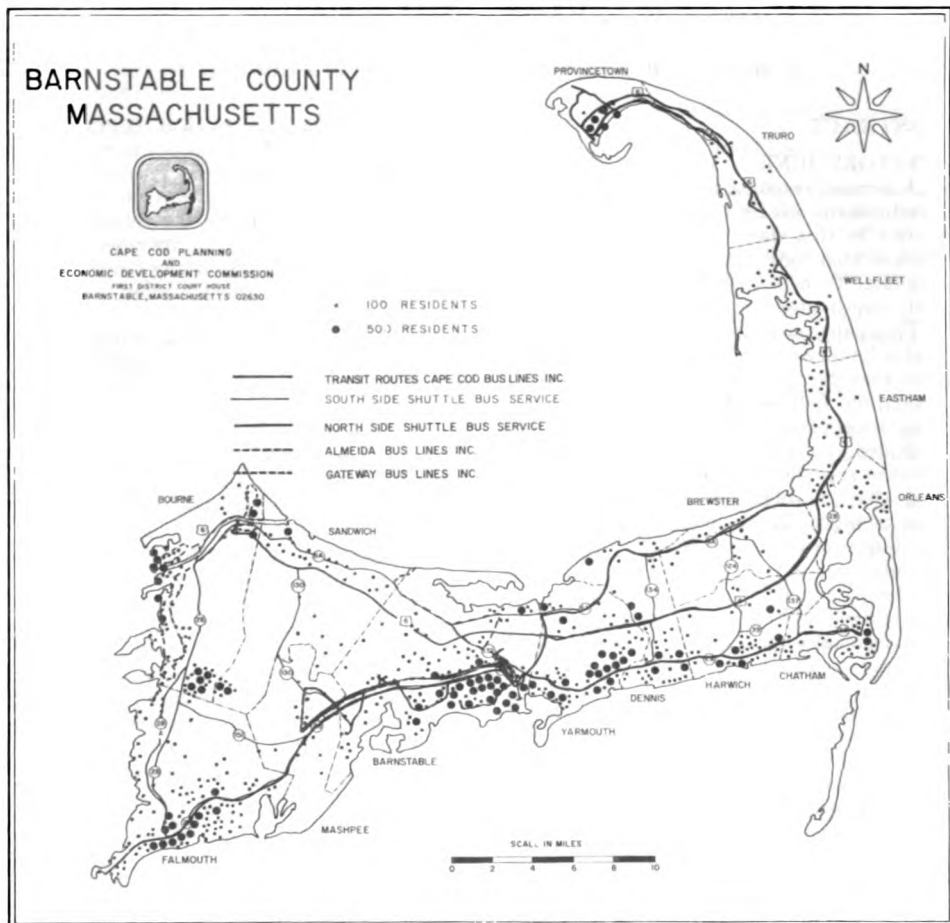


FIGURE 1

Cape Cod is noted for its mild winters and cool summers and these climatic conditions make Cape Cod a popular location for vacations and retirement. According to data from Cape Cod Planning and Economic Development Commission, the estimated seasonal population of Barnstable County is 450,000. The three-fold increase from the Cape's year-round population occurs due to the fact that Cape Cod is within one day's drive of one-third of the nation's population. Since World War II, tourism has been the main industry in the Cape Cod economy.

People 60 years of age or older constitute 26.5% of the total population of Barnstable County, almost twice as high as the average national percentage, according to a report by

the National Clearinghouse on Aging in 1974. The largest concentrations of this group occur from the town of Barnstable to Harwich, along the south side of the Cape, and across the Vineyard Sound side of Falmouth.

The permanent resident population of Cape Cod is also characterized by low income and chronically high levels of unemployment. The median family income is now \$9,242, or 15% below the state's average. It was reported by the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security that in February, 1976, unemployment totaled 18.4% of the population, over double the national average.

Cape Cod's major highway, Route 6, stretches along the backbone of the peninsula providing a limited access, four-lane road from the major

routes on the mainland to the town of South Dennis, two-thirds of the way along the Cape. Two state highways run parallel to Route 6: Route 28 (Commercial-Resort Zone) and Route 6A (Residential-Limited Commercial Zone). Both of these roads service the high density areas of the Cape and are fed by Route 6 through a connecting network of state and local roads. The focal points of transportation activity are the Hyannis, Falmouth and Orleans areas, the major employment and shopping centers in the county. Hyannis and Falmouth also maintain complete hospital facilities. Due to the elongated geography and decentralized community structure of the Cape, smaller shopping and employment districts also exist in the towns of Bourne, (location of county hospital and cancer clinic), Yarmouth, Dennis, Chatham and Provincetown.

The geographic limitations of the Cape Cod peninsula and the lack of public transportation have made it imperative for residents to have access to an automobile. Employment, shopping, medical, and other similar services are all dependent upon individual mobility, which, in Barnstable County has traditionally meant the use of an automobile. Existing fixed route carrier service in this rural area is inadequate to meet the mobility needs of the residents and is, at present, seasonally oriented towards the high in-migrant population of the months of June through August. As the year-round elderly and handicapped population group continues to grow, however, there is an increasing number who, because of age or disability, find the use of an automobile difficult or impossible.

In response to this need for public transportation, the Cape Cod Planning and Economic Development Commission (CCPEDC) under a Technical Studies Grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), prepared a 5 year Public Transportation Program for the 15 towns comprising Barnstable County. The program was submitted in June of 1976. Approval of the Public Transportation Program by UMTA in January of 1977 qualifies the Cape Cod (Barnstable County) region for eighty percent Federal funding toward the purchase or replacement of capital equipment identified in the five-year Transportation Development Plan (TDP).

PROBLEM DEFINITION

In 1977 two separate public transportation systems were in areawide operation in Barnstable County. Both were operated by the same organization: a non-profit corporation initially established by the region's area agency on aging to provide transportation services for its clients and programs.

One service was provided through contracts with the area agency on aging. The other

service was provided through a contract with the Barnstable County Commissioners, recipients of the FHWA Section 147 grant. The first service was open to the clients of the sponsoring agency and no fares were collected. The county-sponsored service was available to all, although priority was given to health-related trips being made by elderly or handicapped persons. Riders paid fees of \$10 for handicapped and elderly, \$14 for others for unlimited use of the service for fixed three-month periods. Elderly and handicapped persons could use the service for free if they limited their trips to those which were health-related.

The two services, although operated out of the same office, were completely separate, and maintained separate vehicles, clients, and operations. The two services had a total of twenty-three vehicles divided into two fleets. Each fleet was only moderately utilized, each service tried to cover an 80 mile long peninsula, and each system was responsible to a different funding agency.

The problem was defined as the lack of a workable organizational structure. Operationally, administratively, or financially, the long term continuation of the interorganizational system was unworkable. It was determined by county and town officials that the two paratransit services should be administered by a single organization.

DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA FOR STRATEGY SELECTION

A number of historical developments played important roles in the identification of objectives and criteria for selection of a strategy to correct the previously defined problem. Some of these developments are described below.

Political Climate

Cape Cod is known in Massachusetts as a stronghold of "Yankee Conservatism." "Home Rule" is much more than a slogan for Cape voters and politicians. From this political climate came public desire to retain local control of federal and state transportation funds coming into the region. This concept was advanced by many of the Cape's prominent political leaders, including the County Commissioners. The corporation appeared to view the County (and its administrative staff) as a mere conduit for Federal funds, rather than the local administrative body for a locally-controlled public transportation system.

The CCRTA

In 1973 an act had been approved by the Massachusetts State Legislature incorporating into the General Laws of the Commonwealth legislation creating the Cape Cod Regional

Transit Authority (CCRTA). This law, Chapter 161B, also created a number of other Transit Authorities, and provided means for creation of more.

Authorities created by or under Chapter 161B:

- Have "exclusive regulatory jurisdiction over the provision of public transportation services wholly within their boundaries."
- have state-backed bonding authority.
- have the capacity to enter into agreements with the state government which, in effect, enable them to tax their member towns.
- provide for a politically and financially strong and stable administrative structure, capable of insuring the provision of appropriate transportation service well into the future.

GENERATION OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

A number of possible strategies to coordinate services were recognized. Three survived preliminary screening, each of which is briefly described below.

Consolidation Under the Non-Profit Corporation

The private non-profit corporation would serve as operator, broker, and administrative body, bringing together demands for service from social service agencies (for their clients) and local government (for the general public) with a coordinated program of transportation services that the corporation would administer and operate.

Consolidation Under the County Government

The county government would serve as administrative body and broker, bringing together demands for service from social service agencies and the general public with a coordinated program of transportation services which it would administer and contract out to a private management firm (possibly the private non-profit corporation).

Consolidation Under the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority

The CCRTA would be established specifically to serve as an administrative body and broker (as described above for consolidation under the county).

STRATEGY SELECTION

Consolidation Under the CCRTA

Consolidation under the transit authority was chosen as the strategy most likely to achieve

the stated objectives. (The advantages of the Transit Authority were clear. It alone would have the requisite strength and endurance to bring about consolidation.)

- **Political Support**—The CCRTA would be governed by an Advisory Board composed of the chief-elected official, (or his/her designee), of each of Cape Cod's fifteen towns. Local control of federal and state transportation funds coming into the region, and accountability to the people of the area, would then be achieved.
- **Financial Strength and Stability**—The CCRTA would have the powers to levy taxes on its member towns, the ability to secure fifty percent subsidy of net costs from the state, and tax-free bonding authority. These powers would create a financially secure body to administer the region's transportation services. These advantages were later supplemented by the passage of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 which created the Section 18 Program in the fall of 1978.
- **Administrative Capacity**—The CCRTA would have an independent staff whose sole function would be to administer and coordinate the county's transportation services, and a policy body (composed of the member towns' chief-elected officials), established solely to deal with public transportation policy issues.

Consolidation Under the County Government

Consolidation under the county was chosen as the second most attractive alternative. The county had sufficient political and administrative strengths, but was determined not to be as well suited to oversee a program as specialized as public transportation.

Consolidation Under the Private Non-Profit Corporation

The private non-profit alternative proved to be the least attractive.

- **Political Support**—Many people in the Cape's political community believed that the private non-profit corporation was not capable of administering transportation services, finding it lacking (1) an arm's length relationship between administrators and managers (they were essentially one-and-the-same) and (2) a policy board which answers directly to the people of Cape Cod. These two negative factors were considered unac-

ceptable, since no market forces existed to regulate the activities of the organization.

- **Financial Strength and Stability**— Compared to the other strategies, the private non-profit was not fully equipped to finance transportation programs, and as a result, was frequently troubled by cash flow and budget overrun problems.
- **Administrative Capacity**—The structure of the corporation limited its administrative capacity. It was difficult to see how a body whose main task was the day-to-day operation of buses would function as effectively as a transportation broker and an administrative body.

When these recommendations were presented to the County Commissioners, area selectmen, other officials, the media, and the public, they were enthusiastically received. Although most felt that consolidation under the Transit Authority was a worthwhile objective, some warned of the immensity of the obstacles to be overcome.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN

It was clear that four groups would have to be brought together in order for consolidation to become a reality. These groups include the Town Selectmen, County Commissioners, Area Agency on Aging, and the Operator.

Selectmen

Each Cape town required a positive vote from its selectmen in order to become a member of the CCRTA. After the vote, representatives from each town would have to assemble formally for the CCRTA to be officially established.

In anticipation of this process, it was determined that contacts needed to be made with at least one selectman in each town, and that this group of selectmen should be informed on the coordination issue and the role of the CCRTA. In order to facilitate this, a transportation advisory group was to be formed composed of five selectmen who would advise the county commissioners regarding transportation service. This group could also lead the other Cape towns into establishment of the CCRTA and implementation of the consolidation strategy.

County Commissioners

The county commissioners also had to be informed about the advantages of the establishment of the CCRTA. Procurement of a written commitment to eventual transfer of their demand response service to the CCRTA was a primary objective.

Area Agency on Aging

Individuals from the area agency on aging needed to be made aware of the benefits they would receive both from the establishment of the CCRTA and from coordination of transportation services. A commitment from the agency to the stated goals and objectives had to be obtained. The financial strengths of the Authority mechanism were stressed, since the prevailing direct relationship between the agency and the operator had resulted in frequent cash flow and budget overrun problems.

Operator

A commitment from the operator to the goals and objectives of the coordination strategy was also sought. Again, the financial advantages of contracting through the CCRTA, as opposed to contracting with the area agency on aging, were considered to be strong selling points. Because of its bonding capabilities, the CCRTA would have the ability to make prompt payments for services provided, thus alleviating the operator's cash flow problems.

TIMETABLE

The Transit Authority was compelled to be established and functioning before the county's Section 147 Demonstration Grant expired in February, 1979. The formation of the Transportation Advisory Group was the first step towards meeting this deadline, and the starting point for all other steps. Establishment of the Authority was the next step, then commitments were obtained from the county to transfer its transportation service to the RTA, and from the area agency on aging to contract for transportation services through the RTA. After these commitments were obtained, the two programs were to be consolidated under CCRTA administration.

IMPLEMENTATION

CCRTA

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) met for the first time in October of 1977, and the CCRTA came into existence formally in February of 1978. A memorandum of understanding between the county commissioners and CCRTA was signed in July of 1978, establishing an advisory role for the RTA and committing both parties to the transfer of the county service to the RTA in 1978.

NEW OPERATOR

Due to a series of disagreements regarding the operational policies of the county general public service, the county commissioners and the non-profit corporation mutually agreed to cancel their contract. Bids were solicited for a new operator, and, on June 1, 1978, the vehicles and

employees were transferred to a large private bus company.

The change turned out to be a mixed blessing; on one hand, the services were suddenly completely separated, while the objective was to combine them—on the other hand, the new operator proved to be well equipped for the job.

The private bus company already had a large high-volume maintenance facility, and repair costs were lowered significantly. Bulk purchasing of tires, parts and petroleum products resulted in significant savings to the county. In addition, the new management showed a sensitivity to the demands of the market, and an understanding of the problems of scheduling and routing ten buses, that resulted in substantial increases in efficiency. The system's poorly-developed "Group Ride" program was the focus of a new marketing program. Through radio and newspaper advertising, and slide show presentations at elderly housing communities and councils on aging, many new group rides were set up, boosting vehicle productivity.

Contract With Area Agency on Aging

In November of 1978 two contracts were negotiated: one between the area agency on aging and the CCRTA, and another between the CCRTA and the private non-profit corporation. Both contracts took the form of standard operating agreements. The vehicles were leased to the RTA, which, in turn, leased them to the private non-profit corporation. The area agency on aging agreed to pay the RTA for provision of the service, and the RTA agreed to pay the private non-profit corporation. The agreement was to be effective only if the CCRTA Advisory Board authorized expenditure of funds for partial support of the service. A substantial objective had been achieved when the CCRTA began to administer both programs.

Section 18

Also in November President Carter signed the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978. Section 18 provided for federal subsidies to public transportation programs in rural and small urban areas at the rate of 50% for net operating costs and 80% for administrative and capital costs. Because the CCRTA was already eligible for 50% subsidies from the state for operating, administrative and capital costs, total subsidies now totalled 75% for operating costs and 90% for administrative and capital costs.

Passage of CCRTA Budget

At the CCRTA Advisory Board meeting of December 1, 1978, a budget was passed unanimously providing for continuation of the county transportation service by the CCRTA. Included in the budget were monies to supplement the contract fees from the area agency on aging. The

local share of the CCRTA's costs was scheduled to be apportioned to the member towns on a formula based on passenger miles (weighted 75%) and passenger trips (weighted 25%). Towns were to pay only for service received by their own residents.

New Consolidation Proposal

In January the private non-profit corporation submitted a proposal for "consolidation" of the service they were operating with the county system. (Although the new proposal called for the private non-profit operating both programs, they would still remain separate.) Through increased application of social service agency contracts and reductions in total staffing, the proposal estimated annual cost savings would amount to \$59,000 or 12%.

The proposal was not accepted. The CCRTA had already contracted with the private bus firm for provision of the services in question, and had no grounds for cancelling its contract. Furthermore, the proposal came amid difficulties between the RTA and the private non-profit corporation.

The most significant contribution of the proposal was that it resulted in a renewed interest in the final consolidation of the programs.

Transfer of County Program to CCRTA

On February 7, 1979, the Barnstable County Commissioners sold to the CCRTA all its ten buses and other equipment used for its program, for one dollar. Simultaneously, the operating agreement between the private firm that had been operating the service and the CCRTA became effective. The drivers, receptionists, dispatcher, and general manager automatically became employees of the private firm and the county's Transportation Administrator became the Administrator of the CCRTA.

School Bus Service

In the Spring an old problem came to light. A local bus operator filed a complaint with the CCRTA Advisory Board regarding the private non-profit corporation use of CCRTA vehicles to provide school bus service to area schools. This was against an RTA policy clearly stated more than one year before. It had been the intent of the CCRTA to avoid competing with the private companies that normally provided this service. As a result, these services were discontinued.

Budget Overruns

At the same time there was concern about the cost of the transportation services being provided by the private non-profit corporation. Because limits on costs were spelled out in the operating contracts, only budgeted amounts were being paid.

When subsequent monthly invoices were found to exceed contract costs by even larger amounts, the problem took on major proportions.

The non-profit organization claimed the additional cost had been beyond their control, and that, because the costs were expended on the contracted services, compensation was expected. The area agency on aging argued that the contract had specified the amounts to be paid, and that it simply did not have any extra funds. The RTA position was similar. The contributions to be made by the RTA were expressed in fixed dollar amounts to be paid on a fixed schedule and no provisions had been made for cost overruns. Because of the financial difficulties of the private non-profit transportation program, vehicles and staff would be transferred to the CCRTA's other operator, and the two services could be consolidated. It was hoped that the resulting cost savings would cover the private non-profit's cost overruns.

The consolidation concept was accepted by all parties, and on May 11, 1979, a memorandum of understanding was signed binding the private non-profit corporation and the CCRTA to the plan. The consolidation was to occur on June 1, 1979.

Section 13(c)

Because Section 18 funds were to be used to finance the consolidated service, it was determined that standard 13(c) provisions should be applied. A memorandum of understanding was drafted by the Transit Authority's counsel which specified how the transfer was to take place. Incorporated into this agreement were standard 13(c) provisions for non-unionized operations. The result of this was that one employee of the private non-profit corporation was designated a displaced employee and awarded a lump sum displacement allowance.

BENEFITS OF CONSOLIDATION

On June 4, 1979, the vehicles, drivers and staff of the private non-profit corporation were transferred to the RTA's private operator. The consolidation of services began the next day. The expected long-run benefits are described below and summarized in Table 1.

Total Program Cost

The long-term reduction in total operating cost is expected to amount to \$88,000 annually, or 18%.

Program Management—Before consolidation, three full-time persons were employed in management positions. Presently, one person manages the entire system. This is possible because much of the work done by the management of the private non-profit corporation was similar

work done by the RTA staff; e.g., operations programming, financial planning, capital replacement planning and grant management. Estimated annual savings—\$30,000.

Information Processing and Bookkeeping—Before consolidation, the equivalent of three full-time positions were required for the processing of information for statistical reports and social service agency invoicing. Through consolidation, the staffing necessary for this function has been reduced to the equivalent of two full-time positions. Consolidation also resulted in a fifty percent reduction in staff time required for bookkeeping. Estimated total annual savings—\$25,000.

Vehicle Maintenance and Repair—Before consolidation, the thirteen vehicles operated by the non-profit corporation were maintained at area service stations. At present, they are maintained at the private operator's maintenance garage. Cost savings due to lower labor charges and bulk purchasing of parts and petroleum products is expected to total \$23,400 annually.

Facilities and Utilities—Presently all technical functions are consolidated in the facilities of the private operator. Although the existing telephone services were expanded, only one toll-free (800) number is being used, and total telephone costs will be cut twenty to thirty percent. One radio communications system will be employed. Costs of heat and lights will be reduced approximately 50%. Total expected cost savings—\$9,600 annually.

Revenues

Although increases in revenues from fee-paying customers is expected to be modest, extension of reimbursement contracts to all vehicles is expected to increase funding from social service agencies by \$15,000 annually.

Subsidy Requirements

The combination of the operating cost reductions and funding increased described above is expected to reduce the annual subsidy requirement by \$73,000 or 21%. Savings to area taxpayers will be proportional.

Productivity

Increases in vehicle productivity were realized immediately after consolidation and expected to continue for the next several months. After that time, dispatching will be completely integrated. It is conservatively estimated that the elimination of redundant bus runs will

TABLE 1
EXPECTED BENEFITS OF CONSOLIDATION

	Before	After	Increase/ Decrease	Percentage Change
COSTS:				
Management			-30,000	
Information Processing			-25,000	
Maintenance & Repairs			-23,400	
Facilities & Utilities			- 9,600	
TOTAL	488,000	400,000	-88,000	-18%
REVENUES	135,000	150,000	+15,000	+11%
SUBSIDY REQUIREMENTS	353,000	250,000	-73,000	-21%
PRODUCTIVITY				
Trips	119,200 ¹	136,200 ²	+17,000	+14%
Passenger Miles ³	1,072,000 ¹	1,225,200 ²	+153,200	+14%
COST EFFECTIVENESS				
Cost/trip	4.09	2.94	-1.15	-28%
Net cost/trip	2.96	1.84	-1.12	-38%
Cost/passenger mile	.46	.33	- .13	-28%
Net cost/passenger mile	.33	.20	- .13	-39%

¹Five percent natural growth in productivity assumed.

²Based on expected 15 percent increase in productivity (over natural growth of 5 percent).

³Based on sample information for trip lengths. Actual passenger miles may be lower, and per mile costs higher, but this would not affect the percentages shown for change due to consolidation.

eventually result in a fourteen percent increase in vehicle productivity.

Cost Effectiveness

The combination of the productivity increases and cost reductions described above is expected to reduce the net cost per trip and net cost per passenger mile by 38 percent. More service will be provided while costs will be significantly lower.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many advantages to consolidation under a public authority with local representation and separation between administration and operations:

Organizational

- Administrators are accountable to the public;
- Results in local control of federal and state funds;
- Results in local control of operational policies;
- Provides a system of checks and balances (this is important because no market forces act as incentives for efficiency.);

- Provides for arbitration of interagency conflicts by locally-elected officials;
- Leads to cooperation between members of the transit community in working to realize common objectives.

Financial and Operational:

- Eliminates the need for resource-consuming efforts to coordinate the scheduling and dispatching of different public transportation services.
- Control of resources by locally-elected officials leads to more knowledgeable allocation of vehicles, capital, administrative staff resources, operating subsidies, etc., between public transportation programs.
- Accountability of operator to locally-elected officials leads to more efficient utilization of resources.
- The Transit Authority mechanism, with its taxing and bonding capabilities, provides the financial strength and stability essential to long range planning and execution of long-term projects.

- Reduces operating costs, increases productivity, revenue and cost effectiveness, allowing more service to be provided to public at a lower cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal:

- Require that all federal public transportation grants and reimbursements be channeled through existing transit authorities, whether they are administered by state agencies or awarded directly to transportation providers. This applies to all federal agencies dispensing such funds: DOT, HEW, etc. The only way that the programs supported by these funds can be coordinated is if they are administered by a single agency at the local level.

States:

- Legislatively create transit authorities similar to the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority. Chapter 161B of the Massachusetts General Laws would serve as excellent model legislation. State-backed bonding authority, taxation power and inability to directly operate services are essential elements.
- Administratively or legislatively mandate that all state-administered public transportation grants and reimbursements be channeled through existing transit authorities. This could be incorporated into new transit authority legislation.

Transit Authorities and Local Officials:

- Regional transit authorities in small urban and rural areas should view their own role as broadly as possible. Many become too involved in fixed route services to realize their own potential positive impact on more specialized services being offered by other organizations within their communities.
- Keep administrative and operational functions separate. Direct operation of services can make it difficult for an authority to gain credibility as a coordinator of funding and services. Even if an authority currently operates, it should seek or preserve the option of contracting some work out to private or private non-profit operators.
- When trying to market the concepts of coordination and consolidation, try to adhere to the less emotional issues, such as cost, productivity and cost effectiveness. Organizations caught in the my-own-bus syndrome may not be interested in such arguments, but organizations providing them with funding, particularly towns and county governments, will be.
- Build a strong base of support in the local political community. Consolidation under

a regional transit authority composed of chief-elected officials from member communities can be a popular issue.

We are fully aware of the sensitive nature of these recommendations. No agency or organization wants to have a new middleman put between them and their funding source, and few administrators would welcome the job of attempting to coordinate funds and programs that have always been controlled by separate organizations and funded by separate agencies. However, the long-run benefits of coordination and consolidation of redundant public transportation services are clear as to make such steps desirable and, in fact, necessary.

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