

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transit Planning Services

RURAL AND HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION STUDY - PHASE I POTENTIAL PROJECTS

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PREPARED FOR

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) initiated the Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) Plan 2.0 as an update to the Interim Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan completed in 2007. The overall goal is to plan for an enhanced rural and human services transportation delivery model for the State of Georgia, which will increase coordination among RHST providers for purposes of expanding capacity (i.e., more services for consumers) and improving system efficiency and cost-effectiveness. GDOT is working cooperatively with DHS and DCH along with Georgia’s 12 Regional Commissions to produce this plan update.

The goals of Georgia’s Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 are as follows:

- To assess coordinated RHST within Georgia;
- To identify ways to improve transportation coordination for persons with special mobility needs;
- To learn from best practices and model programs from around the country;
- To develop and evaluate regional HST model alternatives; and
- To identify pilot projects to test coordination strategies.

1.2 Purpose

This RHST Potential Projects Technical Memorandum details potential state, regional and local approaches to implement improvements to RHST delivery at the state level and by region. The project list was developed through work with state agencies and regional commissions, including two rounds of workshops in each region, as well as from existing plans, provider and stakeholder discussions and meetings with senior management of each regional commission. These projects build upon the documentation included in Technical Memoranda One through Three (TM1-TM3) of the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0* to implement projects that address overall findings. These technical memos include a *Needs Assessment* detailing the various RHST issues and needs across the state, an *Alternatives Analysis* which analyzes the various strategies that can be used to improve RHST delivery, and an *Implementation Plan*, which recommends a path to implementing specific coordinated solutions.

Chapter 2 STATEWIDE PROJECTS

There are a number of proposed projects at the state level that will help with the overall RHST coordination. As the *Needs Assessment* indicates, the state has three core agencies that oversee and manage human services transportation statewide: GDOT, DHS, and DCH. All three agencies manage the funding and annual reporting of RHST services. For more information on these agencies and their existing role in RHST, please refer to Chapter 1 in *the Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

2.1. Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Create State Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** – Create a state-level coordinating committee to manage and oversee the State Mobility Manager. The HB 277 RHST Advisory Subcommittee indicated that the following entities should have a voting role:
 - Department of Human Services (General)
 - Division of Aging
 - Division of Family and Children Services
 - Department of Transportation
 - Department of Community Health
 - Department of Community Affairs
 - Department of Behavior Health and Developmental Disabilities
 - Department of Labor
 - Department of Education
 - Department of Economic Development
 - Governor’s Office
 - Veterans Affairs
 - Rural System Representative
 - Consumer Representative
 - Regional Commission Representative
 - Business Community Representative

In addition, the five (5) agencies / entities noted below will also be invited to participate, as resources to the SCC, but will not be voting members.

- Federal Transit Administration
 - Georgia Transit Association
 - Georgia Hospital Association
 - Private Philanthropic / Advocacy Organization
 - Educational Agencies / Organization
- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager at the state-level as the administrative staff for the TCC. The Mobility Manager will serve to plan, implement, manage, and evaluate RHST programs and other TCC initiatives.
 - **Establish One Phone Number for Accessing Information / Trip Planning** – There is a need to create or expand a state-wide calling number to access information and request trips regarding RHST for each region in the State. GRTA has expressed interest in expanding the current 511 system to include RHST information.
 - **Adopt a Model for Cost Allocation / Cost Sharing** – There is a need to establish a common cost allocation methodology across all programs to allow for easier trip and vehicle sharing. Service providers will be able to consider all costs to determine a unit rates to ensure that sponsoring organizations are paying only for transportation of their clients, while allow for more efficient trips through co-mingling.

- **Develop a Uniform Set of Operating, Reporting, Policies and Procedure** - The Mobility Manager will be tasked with assessing the policies and practices of the three state agencies (GDOT, DHS, and DCH) to identify common themes to streamline these policies and procedures. This activity will eliminate duplicative and conflicting policies and practices while also reducing administrative costs on the state and regional levels.
- **Provide Technical Assistance to Regions** – There is a need to coordinate a network of Mobility Managers to streamline common practices and efforts. The State Mobility Manager will help facilitate this effort by providing training and ongoing technical support.
- **Educational Campaign for Regional County and Municipal Sponsors** – Initiate and manage an Awareness Campaign of RHST coordination at the state and regional levels. It is intended to provide education to prospective local sponsors to understand the benefits of financially supporting coordinated RHST services.

2.2. Proposed Project #2 – Department of Human Services 5310 Services Projects

2.2.1 Section 5310 Program, Elderly and Disabled Transportation – Purchase of Service:

- **DHS 5310 Program Goal** - Provide assistance in meeting the transportation needs of elderly and disabled persons where public transportation services are unavailable, insufficient or inappropriate. Specifically, the program goal is to provide assistance for the purchase of passenger trips for the transportation of elderly and disabled persons by private, nonprofit organizations or public bodies in urbanized, small urban and rural areas.

2.2.2. DHS Coordinated Transportation System:

- **Coordinated System** – DHS has developed an internal Coordinated Transportation System to increase efficiency of transportation efforts / resources. The use of Section 5310 funds to further the coordinated efforts is a high priority objective. Where applicable, and in the best interests of the client population served, Section 5310 funds are used for purchase of service agreements.
- **Coordination with other State Agencies** - The DHS Coordinated Transportation System is administered by the Transportation Services Section within the Office of Facilities and Support Services. The system is designed to provide services to DHS and other eligible clients and citizens, and, therefore, is a human service transportation system. The system provides services to the DHS Division of Aging, Division of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF]) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) clients. The system also serves clients from the Department of Labor’s Vocational Rehabilitative Services.
- **System Operation** - The state is divided into twelve regions. A Regional Transportation Office (RTO) is staffed in of each of the state’s regions. The RTO is the focal point within each region, and is responsible for transportation provider monitoring and compliance. Three Field Operations Coordinators (FOCs) oversee the RTOs. Each FOC is responsible for one of three districts. Each district contains four of the twelve regions.
- **Service Provision** - The coordinated system operates through a series of purchase of service contracts within each region. Providers are a mix of governmental entities, for-profits, and private non-profits. In many regions a lead provider is the prime contractor. A prime contractor, such as a Regional Commission (RC), provides overall contract management in coordination with the RTO and subcontracts with additional entities to provide the transportation services.
- **Section 5310 Program Assistance** – DHS’ application process incorporates the following criteria for the evaluation and selection of providers:
 - Application completeness;
 - Coordination with local governments, public agencies, or the private sector;

- Adequate illustration of the use and need and for the requested funds; and
- Fiscal and Managerial Capability.

Successful applicants will then be subject to the regular DHS provider application process.

- **Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC)** - The purpose of the committee is to establish policies and procedures within each region. In addition, the RTCC is responsible for contractor oversight and approval of new contacts and contractors each year. The RTCC is made of regional division and human service provider representation. All RTCC members have a vested interest in the system and are either provided services by the system or play an active role in the system.

2.3. DHS RHST Proposed Projects

2.3.1. Expansion of Transportation Services:

- **Project Goal** - The services provided by this project would provide transportation related services to the elderly, disabled and low-income target groups while working with local public, private, and human service transportation providers to coordinate services. The benefits of the project will be to provide transportation to those Aging and Disabled community members that currently do not have access to transportation funding. These individuals will be able to more readily access their communities, live more independent and self-reliant lives, and obtain medical resources that they normally would not be able to obtain.
- **Voucher- Project CSRA Voucher and More** - Project CSRA Voucher and More will expand transportation services to elderly and disabled individuals through the implementation of vouchers and available transportation on DHS' coordinated transportation system. DHS plans to expand this effort, initiated in the Central Savannah Region, to other regions. The goal is to utilize transportation resources to provide transportation for medical appointments and to additional vital services that improve the quality of life of elderly and disabled individuals. This project seeks to remove transportation barriers due to the non-availability of transportation. Vouchers will be used to reimburse qualified drivers who transport elderly and disabled clients under the project guidelines.
- **DHS Expansion of Transportation Services** - DHS, Office of Facilities and Support Services (OFSS), Transportation Services Section (TSS), Regional Transportation Offices (RTO) developed local public-human service coordination plans to identify gaps and expand the current transportation resources to meet the needs of elderly, disabled, and low-income consumers with no transportation resources in the rural communities. Funding for these projects will give those members of the community that currently do not have access to or funding for transportation a resource to help them live more independent and self-sufficient lives.
- **Technology Support Portion of Project (TRIP\$)** - DHS seeks to increase efficiencies in the Coordination Transportation System through automation of ordering trips, routing, tracking trips, billing, and trip verification and reporting. This will be achieved by implementing TRIP\$, a web-based trip ordering and client registration system, which could later be merged with similar system(s), if rolled out by other agencies in the future.
- **Mobility Manager (2011) Project** - The DHS Mobility Manager will be the focal point for technology related issues within the Coordinated System and will administer grants. The Mobility Manager will direct and oversee the development and implementation of TRIP\$ and insure that any interfaces with systems developed by other agencies will meet the needs of transportation providers, human service providers and DHS staff. This position will also work closely with Regional Commissions with Mobility Managers.
- **Stakeholders, Communication and Outreach** - The projects were planned through each region's RTCC. The RTCC and DHS Regional Transportation Office GDOT, participating Human Service Programs, and Transportation Providers primary goal for these projects are to increase availability and access to transportation for elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals to community activities, medical appointments, and other life sustaining services. A secondary goal would be continued coordination at the

local level to increase the cost-effectiveness of service delivery while also meeting the requirements of safe, accessible and quality service. All of the partners involved in this project work diligently to insure that the needed transportation is provided to the target groups in the least repetitive and most cost-effective way possible.

Chapter 3 REGIONAL PROJECTS

Noted below is a list of RHST projects for each of the Regional Commission areas. There are similar proposed projects noted for each of the Regions. Input gathered during the Regional Roundtables clearly indicated that although each Region may have similar proposed projects noted, their proposed project implementation approach will likely differ based upon a specific region's characteristics, level of coordination and interests.

3.1. Region #1 – Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC)

As the *Needs Assessment* notes, the NWGRC does not currently participate in a coordinated DHS service or with rural transportation. However, local agencies within the NWGRC have strong RHST support, with 13 of the 15 counties directly providing some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. However, both programs have difficulty servicing every county due to travel distances and a lack of providers. For more information on existing transportation options in the NWGRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST projects that regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the NWGRC.

3.1.1. Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager - Study the potential for NWGRC acting as the Region's Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager**– Place a Mobility Manager within the NWGRC. The NWGRC and its transit agencies have expressed *interest* in the NWGRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like to further explore the benefits and challenges for the NWGRC and the Region's individual transit agencies and human services providers before committing to a mobility manager project. The NWGRC is proposing to implement a RHST Mobility Manager as a part of the Transportation Investment Act (Regional TIA) referendum in 2012.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** –There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could fall after the establishment of a mobility manager or could be completed independently.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)**. Create a working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and other key stakeholders within the Region to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC may also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.1.2 Proposed Project #2 – RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the NWGRC

- **Improve tie-in with City of Rome Transit** – Review how to improve ties with the transit services offered by the City of Rome which currently operates in a limited geographic area for limited trip types. This will, for

example, help improve the current demand for Paratransit service outside the required $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA service area surrounding the fixed route system.

- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between various regional RHST. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, review the potential to expand the RC’s role in implementing transportation services.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinating trip schedules and service deliveries. Look at coordinating services with similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid).
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region – either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service may be needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor, senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day behavioral day programs.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. For example, from both a cost and county funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on a long-distance trip.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **DHS / GDOT Coordination** – Review the opportunity to coordinate DHS Coordinated Transportation System and the 5311 programs in the Region. In other regions, coordinated regional efforts have provided greater flexibility in the area by allowing services to cross county lines for trips within the service area.
- **Training** – Review the opportunity for expanded training opportunities including driver education, administration, and funding. . It was determined during the stakeholder meetings that there is currently a need for PASS trainers in which grant application training would be helpful.

3.1.3 Proposed Project #3 – Additional RHST Studies

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **MPO versus RC Boundaries** - - Review how to deal with Regional boundary barriers – both Paulding County and southeastern Bartow County fall within the Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. Thus, ongoing coordination must occur with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the lead for Human Services Transportation Planning within Atlanta’s 18-County MPO area.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, are often an issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance as well as their associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This could be an opportunity, but vehicle sharing may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. For example, some agencies require vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or require special features such as wheelchair lifts. Therefore, these competing needs may be an issue.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date – the DHS system is one example of this.

3.1.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity**– Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Currently, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing.

- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues in order to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance - vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is commonly a great burden on already limited budgets. Further, a new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance could also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.1.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them, i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets. The NWGRC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation from providers to offer more information that could potentially drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and cannot afford to further exceed service capacity.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve communication between providers and clients. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** - Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.1.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a large portion of their budget. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. This concern was voiced during stakeholder outreach in that riders found it difficult to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.
- **Smart Card** – Review and develop an implementation plan to implement Smart Card technologies. Advanced technologies have already been piloted in the region. In Rome, DHS funded a swipe card pilot project where the swipe cards were used to record trip data. The cards were preloaded with client names, trips available, etc. This pilot clearly showed the benefits of using swipe cards to keep and record customer data. There were some issues with ease of use, which can be dealt with using a proximity approach. Rome transit has received additional funding for a Smart Card pilot that they will be implementing in the fall of 2011. Further, from this pilot project, there is strong interest to test similar technologies at other NWGRC transit agencies. To determine the benefits of using a Smart Card approach to allow public transportation riders to conveniently pay for a trip and collect trip data more

efficiently and accurately. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership. From the perspective of the state and region, the Swipe Card Pilot program was good first step to understanding the technology benefits.

3.1.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** –Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge across the state due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - NWGRC has submitted a project under the regional Transportation Investment Act (TIA). The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, it will be necessary to identify a champion and develop a leadership push for the transit share. It is also important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The NWGRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Chattooga County – Construct and Operate a transit station;
 - Paulding County – Provide GRTA Regional Van Pool and X-Press Regional Service; and
 - City of Rome – Enhance transit operations.

3.2 Region #2 – Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC)

As the Needs Assessment notes, the GMRC does not currently participate in a coordinated DHS service or rural transportation. However, local agencies within the GMRC have good RHST support, with 10 of the 13 counties providing some level of regional public transportation. DCH Medicaid transportation is offered region-wide. DHS services are only offered in Dawson, Hall and Hart Counties due to funding limitations and lack of qualified transit providers in the area. Further, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is separate from the GMRC. Banks County operates a 5311 system that is contracted with DFCS and provides services for DFCS consumers. For more information on the GMRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improve coordination within the GMRC.

3.2.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement a Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the GMRC. The GMRC and its transit agencies have expressed *interest* in the GMRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, further studies have been requested to explore the benefits and challenges for the GMRC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – On of the first duties of the Mobility Manager will be to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP).
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)**. Create working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional

Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.

- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.2.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines is often an issue due to service area restrictions, time, distance and associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This service improvement could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. For example, some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and/or need special features such as wheelchair lifts. **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle. This improvement has seen some success to date – the DHS system is one example of this. Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful.

3.2.3 Proposed Project #3 – Study How Best to Use RHST coordination to improve RHST service within the GMRC

- **Improve tie-in with the Hall County Red Rabbit Transit** – The Red Rabbit system is both a small urban and rural transit system, but operates within a limited geographic area and provides limited trip types. Complimentary ADA Paratransit service cannot keep up with the demand for its services. In Hall County, there is further demand for Paratransit service outside the required ¼ mile ADA service area surrounding the fixed route system.
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the benefits of expanding current service. Similar issues exist both in the Region and with the few counties that offer public transit. Currently throughout the region, there is either no service is offered or current service is used at key times by seniors, going to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments) for qualifying customers at certain times of the day. Additionally, weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. These critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review methods to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and county funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on a long-distance trip.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Training** - Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations. Many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers, and several felt that grant application training would be helpful in the Region. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.2.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. In some cases, counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing due to insurance and title structure.
- **Fleet Quality** - Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. Vehicle maintenance has become difficult to maintain due to increasing maintenance costs and the additional burden on already limited budgets. Therefore, a new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the Region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.2.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – This directory will allow RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them. The GMRC currently has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** - Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.2.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** - Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. To date, technology has been beneficial to the regional DHS coordinated system. There are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a large financial burden. There are also associated costs for support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.
- **Vehicle Cost / Maintenance Tracking** - A Department of Administrative Services internet based vehicle management system for DHS vehicles, called MAXIMO was implemented in 2007. The system facilitated the reporting process of vehicle cost and maintenance information and provided useful input to overall system operations. MAXIMO has since been replaced by ARI Insights. DHS / DBHDD vehicle operators are required to enter state title vehicle information into this system.
- **Smart Card** - In Gainesville, DHS funded a swipe card pilot project where the swipe cards were used to record trip data. The cards were preloaded with client names, trips available, etc. This pilot clearly

showed the benefits of using swipe cards to keep and record customer data. There were some issues with ease of use, which can be corrected with a proximity approach. From this pilot project, there is interest to test similar technologies at other GMRC transit agencies. A pilot project will allow transit systems to determine the benefits of using a Smart Card approach to allow public transportation riders to conveniently pay for a trip and collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership. From the perspective of the state and region, the DHS Swipe Card Pilot program was good first step to understanding the technology benefits.

- **AVL Technology** – Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.

3.2.7 Proposed Project #7 – Improved Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** - RHST funding is a challenge across the state due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** - Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - GMRC has submitted five transit projects under the regional Transportation Investment Act (TIA). The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The GMRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Region-wide – Implement a Regional Mobility Manager;
 - Forsyth County – Provide GRTA Commuter Vanpool and Regional X-Press Bus Service;
 - Habersham County – Implement transit service in Habersham County;
 - Hall County – Provide a local match for Paratransit operations in Hall County; and
 - Rabun County – Implement transit service in Rabun County.

3.3. Region #3 – Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) currently participates in planning transportation services within the region, but is not involved in the operation of transportation services due to the existence of multiple designated entities with the authority to operate HST and urban 5307 services. There are numerous HST providers for both DCH and DHS within the Metropolitan Atlanta region, as well as Paratransit services associated with the MARTA, Gwinnett and Cobb transit systems. Given that Atlanta is an urban area, rural transit only exists in Cherokee and Henry Counties. For more information on ARC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the ARC.

3.3.1 Proposed Project #1 – Implementation of the ARC HST Plan Projects

- **Transit and HST Working Group** - Develop an internal cross-division working group to represent all internal interests and facilitate a unified plan to move toward a mobility management approach.
- **Transit / HST Joint Opportunities** - Identify short- and long-term opportunities for implementation based on a review of the ARC 2010 HST Coordination Plan and previous planning activities.
- **Regional Action Plan** - Develop a regionally-based action plan with assigned roles and responsibilities for a designated mobility manager to implement.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional HST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.
- **Create an HST / Transit TMCC or Mobility Manager Pilot Program** - A pilot program could be established to accomplish some small-scale successes for either a TMCC approach or to implement a Mobility Manager for part of the Region. Either approach could then be expanded to address larger issues. This will drive toward incremental solutions that will benefit large-scale issues that cannot be addressed all at once.
- **ARC 2010 HST Coordination Plan** – The HST Plan includes short- and long-term goals and strategies surrounding the delivery of transportation services within the Atlanta region. These include:
 - Building partnerships;
 - Launching pilots / creating successful models;
 - Highlighting and duplicating successful models in the region;
 - Creating policy and building plans that lead to mobility; and
 - Consider legislative mandates for HST cross-agency coordination at the State level.

3.3.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional Transit and HST Projects

- **Review of Various Transit and HST Providers** - A review of the internal relationships between aging, transportation planning, and workforce development could be beneficial for the Region. State-level support through mandates, technical assistance, and financial resources could help make service coordination a reality for these organizations.
- **Review and Develop a Unified Trip Cost Approach** – Study how to create a unified trip costing approach. Trip costs that vary based upon trip type and client eligibility (i.e., trip may be eligible for two different funding sources) creates some duplication in the system and inefficiencies in trip delivery.
- **Coordinate Paratransit and HST** – Develop a study to determine how to better coordinate HST and Paratransit services. In general, Paratransit systems are facing increasing demands and currently do not have the capacity to provide service in many areas of the region. Also, despite the number of providers in the region, there are some areas that do not have access to any public or private HST providers. Users of existing services within the region comment that services could be more convenient and flexible.
- **Directory of Services** – Create a single directory of available HST, Transit and Paratransit providers and services. More information should be provided to customers so that they are aware of programs and services that they may be eligible to participate in within the region. More effective communication and customer service are keys to eliminating these information gaps. A centralized call and / or information center that are readily accessible to customers would be a step forward. The services provided by the Centralized Call Center should include not only basic trip and operation information but also trip planning and scheduling assistance and other customer care.
- **Technology needs** – Enhanced technology would facilitate the ability to better plan trips. Transit agencies would also benefit from technology in the areas of data collection, reporting, and trip coordination. The MARTA Breeze Card system has been helpful in fare collection process; however, a system-wide, regional Breeze Card system, or similar, would facilitate further regional coordination.

- **TMCC** – Work with region providers to implement the TMCC. Key to this effort finding a champion to operate the TMCC (Traveler Management Control Center). The TMCC could assist the Region with a call center, scheduling, dispatching and reporting needs. The ARC has studied the TMCC approach, but still needs to identify a TMCC Champion to move forward.
- **Funding needs** – Limited funding is a key issue that impacts every aspect of the existing system. The desire for an affordable transportation system is constantly cited by the end user. System operators would like to manage existing service delivery in the most cost-effective manner possible in order to stretch limited funding sources further as demand increases.
- **Service Delivery Coordination needs** –
 - a) Local level coordination between recipients of various federal and state funding sources occurs independently by each county. The need of coordination among providers to service cross-county trips and mixed-program trips could eliminate potential service redundancy and increase the efficiency of the entire regional system.
 - b) Cross-regional trips are difficult to coordinate for specialized services with eligibility requirements. Customers often need to make different reservations and use a combination of various services / systems and also need to meet all eligibility requirements.
- **Public Private Model Development** – Due to the federal and state funding limitations, a public-private model could be beneficial to HST delivery in the region.
- **HST Education and Coordination Effort** – Begin a grassroots initiative to educate state and local area leaders on human service transportation needs and issues to:
 - a) Ensure that transportation policies and future projects proposed in the region include HST priorities such as pedestrian access to transit, shared resources and innovative transportation alternatives such as transportation vouchers;
 - b) Lower costs through shared routes and trip scheduling software licenses for governments and non-profit agencies; and
 - c) Provide greater emphasis on integrating and providing support to private providers and community service organizations to address gaps and unmet transportation needs.

3.3.3 Proposed Project #3 – Improved Funding

- **Voucher Programs** – ARC Area Agency on Aging has initiated a number of successful voucher programs. New funding sources for these programs are viewed as important to enhancing the Voucher Program success.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - ARC has submitted ten transit projects under the regional Transportation Investment Act (TIA). The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. ARC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Implement a streetcar system along the proposed Atlanta Beltline;
 - Implement a transit system along the Clifton Corridor;
 - Implement I-85 North light rail transit service;
 - Implement Phase II of the Cobb Transit line, Cumberland to Town Center;
 - Implement bus transit service in Clayton County;
 - Expand Cobb Community Transit bus system;
 - Expand GRTA X-Press Commuter Bus system; and
 - Expand MARTA operations with:
 - Transit line from Arts Center station to Cumberland Mall,
 - Extension of MARTA North rail line to SR 140, and

- Rail line rehabilitations.

3.4. Region #4 –Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC)

The TRRC operates a coordinated 5311 / DHS transportation system for 8 of its 10 member counties. About one-half of these trips are mental health related client trips and the next largest share is aging client trips. TRRC operates a coordinated regional public transportation service in a five-county area including Spalding, Butts, Pike, Lamar and Upson Counties. DCH and DHS provides HST services to all ten counties in the region, working with the 5311 providers in the area as well as private providers for the Division of Aging, Family and Children Services, and Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases. As the Needs Assessment notes, the TRRC does not currently participate in a coordinated DHS service or with rural transportation. For more information on the TRRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the TRRC.

3.4.1 Proposed Project #1 –Hire a Mobility Manager to Implement a Series of Coordination Improvements

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the TRRC. TRRC is taking responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. The TRRC is proposing to implement a RHST Mobility Manager as a part of the TIA referendum in 2012.
- **JARC MM Funding** – The TRRC and its transit agency members have applied for 5316 JARC funding to implement a Mobility Manager that would coordinate regional transportation services to the entire Region.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager’s first duties.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create a working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the TRRC to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Technical Assistance** – Obtain technical assistance to prioritize and quantify actions for advancing coordination of existing services. This will allow the TRRC to define opportunities for coordinated support services and create a RMAP.

3.4.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **MPO versus RC Boundaries** – There is a need to decide how best to deal with regional boundary barriers. In addition, Coweta County and a portion of Spalding County fall within the Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area; therefore, ongoing coordination must occur with the Atlanta Regional Commission, who is the lead for Human Services Transportation Planning within the Atlanta 18-County MPO area. This is especially true for the 5307 funding which is available to both counties. As of now, these counties are not using 5307 funds and the Atlanta Regional Commission is banking this funding on the counties’ behalf for future use.
- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.

- **Combining various RHST Clients** – The combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date (the DHS system is one example of this). Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment, the system has been very successful.
- **Regional 5311 Coverage** – Work with all TRRC county and city members to maintain and establish 5311 service throughout the Region. Currently two of the 10 counties do not provide a 5311 system. However, by the end of 2011, nine out of ten counties in the Regional will have coordinated 5311 and DHS systems.

3.4.3 Proposed Project #3 – Study How Best to Use RHST coordination to improve RHST service within the TRRC

- **Expand Weekend and Daily Service** – Additionally, weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. While private providers are available, they are expensive.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Trip Eligibility** – One significant gap in the TRRC is restricted eligibility for transit services. Many systems can only serve the elderly and disabled for limited trip purposes (i.e., to and from medical appointments or to and from meals). These restrictions make it difficult for the general public to use public transit in a non-emergency condition. The systems currently lack the capacity to accommodate general ridership in that there is simply not space to serve those who do not fit in the human service transit category, but who may be willing to pay to use the transit service.
- **Strategies to Gain Coordination Support** – TRRC noted that some legacy DHS programs are not supportive of trip coordination. This position creates a potentially precarious balance for coordination efforts and the ability to provide a sufficient volume of trips to make it worthwhile for third party operators. TRRC would like to see a state-level initiative to encourage and authorize coordination at the state and regional levels.
- **Service limitations** – Some gaps in service area exist due to trip distance. Service hours are also restricted due to limited funding resources. There is a need to expand the service area and service hours to meet the critical needs of residents, especially for medical trips.
- **Training** – Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations. Many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.
- **Single Reporting, Rules and Funding Approach** – Study the benefits to establish cross-agency consistency. GDOT, DCH and DHS each have their own funding, reporting and rules, although they are quite similar. A single approach to funding would reduce TRRC staff time required to deal with the multiple reporting issues.

3.4.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would benefit the region, given the resource demands of aging equipment.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. Further, the system is constrained due to outdated vehicles with many miles, and there is some concern of passenger safety. However, DHS cannot afford new vehicles but must continue providing the current level of service.

- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinated RHST fleet maintenance. Vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.
- **Vehicle Procurement** – There have been changes to the vehicle procurement program with 5311. Procurement will now go through Department of Administrative Services. Using DOAS has added cost to the vehicle procurement process to cover their administrative fees. This will impact local and private sector participation as DOAS will typically seek to buy in bulk. It could potentially make operations and maintenance more challenging since local vendors may have increased maintenance costs due to the loss of the vehicle sale. The TRRC would prefer that GDOT order vehicles directly or let the RC handle their own procurement.

3.4.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – There is a need to more effectively advertise information about available transportation services in the region.

3.4.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** – The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability.
- **Vehicle Cost / Maintenance** – A Department of Administrative Services internet based vehicle management system for DHS vehicles, called MAXIMO was implemented in 2007. The system facilitated the reporting process of vehicle cost and maintenance information and provided useful input to overall system operations. MAXIMO has since been replaced by ARI Insights. DHS / DBHDD vehicle operators are required to enter state title vehicle information into this system.
- **Smart Card** – A Smart Card pilot would allow public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. Such a program could help to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. Other Smart Card Pilot programs (i.e., Rome, GA) have been successful. The swipe card system could be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients have had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.4.7 Proposed Project #7 – Improved Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Funding limitations** – TRRC had to cut core operating hours (4 hours in each operation day) to cover its operating expenses due to increased fuel prices. Transportation services are coordinated well at the local

level but there are certain restrictions that need to be lifted for better coordination at the regional and state levels.

- **Regional TIA Funding** – TRRC has submitted four transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The TRRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Region-wide - Implement a Regional Mobility Manager;
 - Coweta County – Expand GRTA Commuter Vanpool and X-Press Bus Services;
 - Spalding County – Implement commuter rail from Atlanta to Griffin; and
 - Troup County – Expand transit service.
- **Purchase of Service Overmatch** - In addition, the region would like the ability to retain more of the fares they collect for the services they provide, in order to reinvest those fare proceeds into the people and equipment providing those services. The region believes that GDOT is misreading Federal rules by not allowing the region to retain additional fares under the “overmatch” provision. The region also asks for state-supported operating assistance, as well as assistance from GDOT in encouraging those counties without Section 5311 transit programs to begin them.

3.5. Region #5 –Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC)

The NEGRC currently participates in a coordinated DHS system through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). As the Needs Assessment notes, the NEGRC currently participate in a coordinated DHS service or with rural transportation. However, local agencies within the NEGRC have moderate RHST support, with 5 of the 12 counties providing some regional public transportation along with the City of Social Circle. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. For more information on NEGRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the NWGRC.

3.5.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the NEGRC. The NEGRC and its transit agencies have expressed **interest** in the NEGRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like further explore the benefits and challenges for the NEGRC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers. The NEGRC is proposing to implement a RHST Mobility Manager as a part of the TIA referendum in 2012.
- **JARC Mobility Manager Funding** – The NEGRC assisted its transit agency members in applying for 5316 JARC funding to implement a Mobility Manager that would coordinate regional transportation services to the entire Region.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** –There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager’s first duties.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the NEGRC to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be

implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.

- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.5.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs. NEGRC systems note that volunteers are a valuable resource, but it was pointed out that volunteer drivers often have preferences in terms of hours worked and types of trips they serve. Working with these preferences can be a challenge for organizations and agencies. However, enlisting the help of volunteer drivers can be a significant addition to the resources available in rural parts of the region.
- **MPO versus RC Boundaries** – Review how to manage regional boundary barriers:
 - a. Athens-Clarke County and part of Oconee County falls within the MACORTS MPO boundary. Thus, ongoing coordination must occur with MACORTS, the human services transportation planning lead.
 - b. Also, part of Newton County falls within the Atlanta MPO area. Thus, ongoing coordination must occur with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the lead for human services transportation planning within Atlanta's 18-County MPO area.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, are often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance as well as associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date (the DHS system is one example). Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved with the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful.

3.5.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the NEGRC

- **Athens Tie-in** – Tie in with the Athens fixed-route and Paratransit services. Presently there are very few providers that tie into the Athens fixed-route service; despite that there are unmet needs for service from groups living in urban area without the eligibility for Paratransit. The OneAthens transportation group stressed the need for this service, recognizing that employment opportunities within the Northeast Georgia region are severely limited, and many residents do seek employment in Atlanta, but need an inexpensive way to travel there. This tie-in would also address the demand for Paratransit service outside the required $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA service area surrounding the fixed route system.
- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various regional RHST. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, how to expand the RC's current limited role in implementing transportation services.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends, e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid. However, currently, the Medicaid trips are handled separately by Southeast Trans and scheduling is typically

independent by provider. To this end, if clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a longer period of time.

- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region – either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. While private providers are available, they are expensive.
 - c. Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on a long-distance trip. However, participants in outlying counties stressed the importance of having services, such as doctors and grocery stores, in their counties, so that people would not have to travel such a great distance to address essential needs.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service. A regional fare or eligibility program had a good level of support among stakeholders. They stressed the importance of having an equitable fare system, with costs divided up among counties according to important criteria, such as county density, demand, urban versus rural, and wear-and-tear. For standard eligibility, people were generally supportive, but did have some concern about legal issues regarding eligibility, particularly the requirements associated with federal funding.
- **Training** – Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations, as many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.5.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Currently, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance - The vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.5.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets). There is currently a lack of information about services in the region for potential and current riders, and improving the information provided to the public could significantly increase ridership and cost-effectiveness. The NEGRC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region.

Also, due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.

- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.5.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a huge burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.
- **Smart Card** - A Smart Card pilot would allow public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. Such a program could help to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. Other Smart Card Pilot programs (i.e., Rome, GA) have been successful. The swipe card system could be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients have had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.5.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** –Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - NEGRC has submitted three transit projects under the regional Transportation Investment Act (TIA). The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The NEGRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Region-wide - Implement a Regional Mobility Manager;
 - Clarke County – Expand transit operations to evenings and weekends; Implement GRTA Commuter Vanpool Service; and
 - Newton – Expand GRTA X-Press Regional Bus Service.

3.6. Region #6 –Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC)

The MGRC currently serves as the prime contractor for the Region’s Coordinated DHS system. Eight of the 11 counties in the region provide some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. Given their current role, MGRC is well positioned to participate as many of its third -party contractors hold contracts for both DHS and DOT 5311 services in the same counties. For more information on MGRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the MGRC.

3.6.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the MGRC. The MGRC and its transit agencies have expressed **interest** in the MGRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like to further explore the benefits and challenges for the MGRC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **JARC Mobility Manager Funding** – The MGRC assisted its transit agency members to apply for 5316 JARC funding to implement a mobility manager that would coordinate regional transportation services to the entire Region.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager’s first duties.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.6.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, is often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance and associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. While this could be an opportunity, it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle. This has seen some success to date (the DHS system is one example of this). Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the integrated DHS system

began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful.

3.6.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the MGRC

- **Improve tie-in with Macon-Bibb Transit** – Review how to improve ties with the transit services offered by Macon-Bibb County which currently operate within the City of Macon and limited geographic areas within Bibb County. There is a large demand for Urban Paratransit services in the Macon-Bibb County Area. Currently the service in the area already reaches beyond the required ADA service area buffer of 3/4 miles from the fixed-route system. The agency evaluates services and routes regularly and adjusts as the demand dictates.
- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various Regional rural and human services transportation. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, how to expand the RC's current role in implementing transportation services.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid, for certain trip types). Currently, the Medicaid trips are handled separately by Southeast Trans. For example, currently, scheduling is typically handled independently by provider. If clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a long period of time.
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region – either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. Private providers are available but are expensive.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and county funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on a long-distance trip.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Specialized Transportation Provider** – Explore the concept of facilitating the creation of a regional specialized transportation provider. This provider would focus on the delivery of transportation services for persons that need stretched and other specialized assistance. The specialized transportation provider would only serve specialized transportation needs (door-to-door, stretcher, CPR, etc.) for a higher rate of reimbursement. A regional contract for this type of service might allow third party operators to focus on general public and less specialized program trips.
- **Create Unified 5311 Transit System** – Prepare a study to explore creating a unified transit system for Putnam, Morgan, Jasper, and Green Counties.
- **Commuter Service in the Macon-Bibb Area** – Prepare a study to explore coordinating commuter services between Macon and Warner Robins, an urbanized area not currently served by public transit. The Warner Robins MPO is looking into beginning a feasibility study of this project, but this study has not been started.
- **Training** – Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations, as many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.6.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. Vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.6.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services. This will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets). The MGRC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation to provide more information that would drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and are afraid of further exceeding service capacity.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.6.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a financial burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.
- **AVL Technology** – Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information AVL technology could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.
- **Smart Card** - A Smart Card pilot would allow public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. Such a program could help to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. Other Smart Card

Pilot programs (i.e., Rome, GA) have been successful. The swipe card system could be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients have had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.6.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge across the state due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia. There is a growing gap between existing service and growing demand. Region 6 DHS Transportation Office determined in 2007, that the coordinated transportation system served 49.4 percent of the consumers needing service and 39.5 percent of their trip needs were met, illustrating that more than half of the needs in the region are not addressed with current services. More detail on these figures can be found in the Needs Assessment Report.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - MGRC has submitted three transit projects under the regional TIA to be voted by referendum in 2012. The MGRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Baldwin County – Purchase additional fleet vehicles;
 - Putnam County – Implement a regional bus facility; and
 - City of Macon – Expand and enhance transit operations and facilities.

3.7. Region #7 – Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission (CSRA-RC)

The CSRA-RC only coordinates DHS human services transportation within the region. Currently, local agencies within the CSRA-RC have medium RHST support, with 12 of the 13 counties providing some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. Stakeholders in the CSRA region see opportunities with the potential to mix trip types and clients if some of the perceived boundaries created by funding types can be removed. For more information on CSRA-RC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the CSRA-RC.

3.7.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the CSRA-RC. The CSRA-RC and its transit agencies have expressed interest in the CSRA-RC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like to further explore the benefits and challenges for the CSRA-RC and the Region's individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager's first duties.

- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.7.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs. Lincoln County Senior Citizens uses volunteer drivers to supplement its driver availability. The region reports that areas with Section 5311 funds utilize volunteer drivers, paid by the Section 5311 funding, to bridge gaps in service. This practice requires high levels of commitment from the volunteers, which so far, LCSC has been able to achieve.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, are often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance as well as associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. For example, some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle. This has seen some success to date – the DHS system is one example. Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful. However, it was reported that some AAA agencies in the region strongly oppose providers combining types of trips per rider or combining riders.

3.7.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the CSRA RC

- **Improve tie-in with Augusta Richmond County Transit** – Review how to improve ties with the transit services offered by the Augusta Richmond County which currently operates within the City of Augusta and in limited geographic areas within Richmond County. There is demand for Paratransit service outside the required $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA service area surrounding the fixed-route system.
- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various regional rural and human services transportation. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, how to expand the RC's current role in implementing transportation services needs further studying. The fact that the RC HST coordination is limited to DHS trips indicates the need for additional HST coordination across the region. Also, the Veterans Administration (VA) trips are not coordinated with existing services. There are VA facilities in Augusta and Dublin as well as clinics and many vets need transportation to these locations.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid, for certain trip types). Currently the Medicaid trips are handled separately by Southeast Trans. For example, currently,

scheduling is typically handled independently by providers. Therefore, in some cases, if clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a long period of time.

- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region – either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. Private providers are available but are expensive.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on long-distance trips.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Training** - Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations, as many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.7.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. While some counties have extra vehicles, they are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. Vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.7.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets). The CSRA-RC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation to provide more information that would drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and are afraid of further exceeding service capacity.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.7.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a financial burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute emergency condition.
- **AVL Technology** – Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.
- **Smart Card** – A Smart Card pilot would allow public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. Such a program could help to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. Other Smart Card Pilot programs, (i.e., Rome, GA) were successful. The swipe card system could be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients have had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.7.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** –Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the state.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations. For example, providers in this region are expected to accept reimbursements based on the various rates and payment schedules established by each agency, which means that the same trip is worth a different fee depending on which agency is responsible for payment.
- **Regional TIA Funding** – CSRA-RC has submitted three transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The CSRA-RC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Burke County – Implement a rural transportation system;
 - City of Augusta – Enhance transit operations; and
 - City of Columbia – Implement a Park-and-Ride Facility near I-20.

3.8. Region #8 – River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC)

The RVRC currently participates in a coordinated DHS system in about one-half of the counties in the region. The RVRC have low RHST Support, with four counties (and the Cities of Vienna and Unadilla) of the 16 counties providing some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. However, the RVRC is involved in the development of a four-county coordinated 5311 general public rural transportation system. Stakeholders in the River Valley region see opportunities with the potential to mix trip types and clients if some of the perceived boundaries created by funding types can be removed. For more information on RVRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the RVRC

3.8.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the RVRC. The RVRC and its transit agencies have expressed *interest* in the RVRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like to further explore the benefits and challenges for the RVRC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **JARC MM Funding** – The RVRC and its transit agency members have applied for 5316 JARC funding to implement a Mobility Manager that would coordinate regional transportation services to the entire Region.
- **Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager’s first duties.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create a working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.
- **Training** – RVRC staff also acknowledged being new to the management of transportation services. They expressed an interest in receiving RHST training, especially training that would be relevant and practical to their circumstances; this may be a peer-to-peer program.

3.8.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **MPO versus RC Boundaries** – Review how to deal with regional boundary barriers (Harris County fall within the Columbus-Phenix City MPO area). Thus, ongoing coordination must occur with the Columbus Regional Commission, the lead for Human Services Transportation Planning.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, are often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance as well as associated costs.

- **State Boundaries** – The many agencies that fund RHST, such as GDOT, DCH, DHS, DOL and the Department of BHDD and Regional Commission, all have multiple and inconsistent geographic boundaries.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles, this could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date (the DHS system is one example). Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved with the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful.

3.8.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the RVRC

- **Improve tie-in with City of Columbus Transit** – Review how to improve ties with the transit services offered by the City of Columbus which currently operate in limited geographic areas for limited trip types. The rural counties see a role for METRA Transit (Columbus) in leading both rural and urban connections and developing regional public transportation services. At the same time, they acknowledge that Columbus faces different challenges. Coordination with the Columbus – Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) presents a major challenge for the coordination of transportation across the River Valley region, because the MPO boundary crosses the state border into Alabama. Additionally, there is a gap between the coverage areas of urban and rural services, in which the urban services are restricted from serving rural areas. Lastly, the fixed-route bus system in Columbus appears to be a challenge for rural riders who have difficulties understanding the schedules. Finally, there is demand for Paratransit service outside the required ¼ mile ADA service area surrounding the fixed route system.
- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various regional rural and human services transportation. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, how to expand the RC's current role in implementing transportation services needs to be researched.
- **Coordination with DCH** – Currently, SWGRC holds the DCH NET contract that includes the RVRC. This may be a future discussion issue as the RVRC ramps up its overall coordination efforts.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid, for certain trip types). Currently the Medicaid trips are handled separately handled separately by Southeast Trans. For example, currently, scheduling is typically independent by provider. If clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a certain period of time.
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region where either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. Private providers are available but are expensive.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and county funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on long-distance trips.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Joint Transit Service** – The RVRC is working with Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties to develop a joint rural 5311 system. The RVRC is currently addressing issues related to the start up of the coordinated

5311 operation. The RVRC has expressed the need for technical assistance to help facilitate the remaining start-up process.

- **Training** – Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations, as many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.8.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. The vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.8.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets). The RVRC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation to provide more information that would drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and are afraid of further exceeding service capacity.
- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.8.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a huge burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead

of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.

- **Smart Card** – A Smart Card pilot would allow public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. Such a program could help to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. Other Smart Card Pilot programs, (i.e., Rome, GA) were successful. The swipe card system could be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients have had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.8.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge across the state due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the state. Section 5311 funding is not available for all the counties in the region, and transit needs are not spread evenly across the region, as many counties report high numbers of households in poverty while others have pockets of affluence.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types create restrictions contribute to a lack of the flexibility necessary to deliver RHST services. For example, limitations on the use of urban vs. rural public transit funds limit how RHST can coordinate with urban service. Other funding constraints, like the use of vehicles purchased with 5311 funds, may not be available to transport DCH and DHS clients due to public demand. These limitations keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** - RVRC has submitted three transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The RVRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Lower Chattahoochee – Implement a multi-county transit system;
 - Crisp and Dooly Counties – Enhance transit system; and
 - Muscogee County – Expand and enhance intercity express bus service.

3.9. Region #9 – Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC)

The Heart of Georgia-Altamaha Regional Commission currently serves as the prime contractor for the DHS Coordinated System in the region. HOGARC also has several counties with 5311 rural transit programs. The RVRC have strong RHST Support, with nine of the 17 counties providing some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. Participants also described great communication between stakeholders, which allows for the quick resolution of day-to-day issues, and larger, more policy-oriented topics that may be discussed at the stakeholders' quarterly meetings. For more information on HOGARC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the HOGARC.

3.9.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the HOGARC. The HOGARC and its transit agencies have expressed *interest* in the HOGARC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like further study to explore the benefits and challenges for the HOGARC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **Update the Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to update the existing Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). This could be one of the Mobility Manager’s first duties.
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create a working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RHST RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RHST RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.9.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs. The stakeholders in the region indicated that volunteer drivers could significantly augment the amount of transportation services provided in the region, but raise serious questions of liability, should the vehicle, particularly the driver’s personal vehicle, be involved in an accident. Removing this stumbling block, by purchasing blanket insurance, could be a way of implementing such a program that could work well and help resources stretch further in the HOGA region.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, are often an issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance and associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date – the DHS system is one example of this. Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment, the system has been very successful.

3.9.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the HOGARC

- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various regional rural and human services transportation. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, it should be reviewed how to expand the RC’s current limited role in implementing transportation services.

- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid, for certain trip types). Currently, the Medicaid trips are handled separately by Southeast Trans. For example, scheduling is typically independent by provider. If clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a long period of time.
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region where either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. Private providers are available but are expensive. For example, Telfair County recently lost its hospital, and now people must go to other areas for medical attention, but may not have access to the transportation they need in order to get there.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and county funding basis, it is inefficient to carry a small number of customers on long-distance trips.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Build on Success** – Telfair County turned over the operations of its service to the HOGARC and that has been an improvement. The management of the 5310 program by the Regional Commission has been a successful change. One of the other successes mentioned by the group is the provision of transportation at a reasonable cost to the public and doing a good job of responding to needs.
- **Training** - Training is another area of opportunity for improvement for operations, as many stakeholders noted the need for PASS trainers and several felt that grant application training would be helpful. Increased opportunities for training, in all forms, from educating drivers to aiding administrative staff, would help to improve coordination.

3.9.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. The vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.9.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets). The HOGARC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation to provide more information that would drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and are afraid of further exceeding service capacity.

- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.9.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a financial burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute emergency condition.
- **AVL Technology** - Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.
- **Smart Card** – Review and develop an implementation plan to implement Smart Card technologies. Advanced technologies have been piloted in other locations, for example, the City of Rome’s pilot allowed public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. This program helped to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. The Smart Card Pilot program was successful. The swipe card system will be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership. Several participants said that the use of Smart Cards for fare cards by riders whose cost of a trip is covered by one of many funding sources could aid in the reconciliation of shared usage and costs of services. This technology would have to be improved, as QTI indicated that such technology had not worked for them. TRIPS, an online client registration system, is a program the region is interested in utilizing, but which is not yet available. The limitations of technology in rural areas were also discussed in terms of routing; as such software may not take into account local or country roads that could make service delivery more efficient.

3.9.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge across the state due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.

- **Regional TIA Funding** - HOGARC has submitted two transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The HOGARC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Dodge County – Expand and enhance transit operations; and
 - Montgomery County – Expand and enhance transit operations.

3.10. Region #10 – Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC)

The SWGRC currently operates a fully coordinated RHST system that can serve as a model for other regions across the state. SWGRC offers DHS, DCH, and 5311 services for the region. The SWGRC have strong RHST Support, with 14 of 14 counties providing some regional public transportation. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. For more information on SWRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the SWGRC.

3.10.1 Proposed Project #1 – Additional RHST Study

- **Unified Policy and Procedures Manual** – The SWGRC strongly supports the development of a unified manual of policies and procedures for DOT, DHS, and DCH RHST services.
- **Update the Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of updating and providing technical assistance for the SWGRC regional Directory of RHST Services. This document will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them (i.e. locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets).
- **Additional RHST Service for the General Public** – Study cost / benefits of providing additional public transit service. This study would help the SWGRC Region understand where to focus its next RHST efforts. There are many potential riders who do not qualify for transportation assistance who would benefit from access to transit or transportation support for affordable, general, non-emergency trips. Public transit is provided on the basis of available seats, on a “first-come, first-serve” basis. Public riders fill in the available remaining seats around DHS and Medicaid riders with standing reservations, and so it can be difficult to place public riders during peak hours of service. Often, public riders are asked to schedule their rides during non-peak hours, and in some rare cases providers are simply unable to provide them service.
- **State Level Coordination** – The SWGRC is interested in developing streamlined reporting and invoicing requirements at the state program level.
- **Create a Regional Transportation Plan** –There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP). The SWGRC is interested in learning more about the scope of transportation needs in their area. Although the SWGRC does a sufficient job with record keeping, they are still unaware of the extent of other trips (e.g., VA trips) provided in the region. In order to implement a fully coordinated transportation system, the region understands the need for a clear inventory of all trips by type.

3.10.2 Proposed Project #2 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. The vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.10.3 Proposed Project #3 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of expanding the NET Centralized Call Center to the 5311 and DHS service. Currently the SWGRC has a DCH call center. This effort would assist the RC in developing a fully functional call center for all of its RHST services.
- **Trip Scheduling** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling for 5311 and DHS trips. Currently, SWGRC relies on its five providers to handle 5311 and DHS trip scheduling.
- **Smart Card** – Review and develop an implementation plan to implement Smart Card technologies. Advanced technologies have been piloted in other regions. In Rome, GA, a Smart Card pilot allowed public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. This program helped to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. The limitations of technology in rural areas were also discussed in terms of routing; as such software may not take into account local or country roads that could make service delivery more efficient.
- **AVL Technology** – Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.

3.10.4 Proposed Project #4 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Purchase of Service Overmatch Penalties** – Study the impacts of POS Overmatch penalties. The region would like the ability to retain more of the fares they collect for the services they provide, in order to reinvest those fare proceeds into the people and equipment providing those services. As a result, there is potential that on some trips a provider may collect more than 45 percent of the operating costs through POS contracts, thus a trip may be “over matched” (i.e., a provider earns more than the 45 percent of matching funds required). Under the current rules, however, GDOT counts revenues over 45 percent of the operating costs as farebox and reduces the 5311 contribution accordingly. For example, if a single trip costs \$100, \$10 should be from the farebox. The 5311 Agency and GDOT would then each pay \$45. However, if the operator carries several passengers and receives contract revenue worth \$60, GDOT will only pay \$30, or

half of the operating costs, net of farebox and revenue over 45 percent of costs. Several of the transportation providers in the region believe that the federal government provides for “over match” funds (i.e. allows providers to keep over match revenues and use them to fund capital costs), but that GDOT does not recognize this practice. If permitted, the region would be able to keep funds it raises beyond the minimum for which it is responsible, allowing local governments the ability to draw in more income to reserve for later use or capital improvements.

- **Minimal Farebox Requirement** – Study the impact of eliminating the minimal farebox requirement. As part of the 5311 program, GDOT requires local entities to collect 10 percent of operating costs through the farebox. Farebox revenues may be actual passenger fares or contributions from local entities. The 5311 program then pays up to 45 percent of the operating costs net of the farebox revenues. The remaining 45 percent of operating costs is typically provided by DHS programs, other POS contracts, or in some cases, local revenues. Eliminating the farebox requirement would allow SWGRC additional flexibility in how it accounts for its RHST service.
- **Efficient Processing of Reimbursement Requests** – Review the benefits to RC’s by allowing more timely GDOT and DHS reimbursement payments. Currently, subrecipients collect and verify all line item expenditures incurred and submitted for reimbursement for transit services. The information must then be transferred into the standard GDOT reimbursement form for submission. GDOT also requires all back up documentation to justify expenditures for each line item. Hard copies of the reimbursement request with original signatures must be mailed to GDOT in order to start processing of the reimbursement. This information is then sent to the PTC in the respective GDOT districts for review and approval for payment. If any line item expenses are questioned or any backup documentation is missing, the entire reimbursement request is returned (via hard mail) to the subrecipient and the process starts over again. Submission of reimbursement reports are already 30 to 45 days after the service has been provided. It is not uncommon to be waiting on reimbursement three months or more after the fact. Electronic submission and processing of reimbursement requests would expedite the process by allowing reimbursement requests to be submitted with an electronic signature. Original signed documents can be kept on file for audit purposes.
- **Change GDOT contracts to Lump Sum** – Study the potential to change the current GDOT uses line item expenditures approach. Stakeholders feel that operating from a line item budget is challenging in that budgets are “projections”. There is no way to know exactly how much is needed per line item to operate a program. As a result, if funds need to be shifted from one line item to another, a revised budget has to be submitted to GDOT outlining the request for the change in line item amounts and why. This has to be approved by GDOT and the change in the line item amount done by GDOT. Subrecipient budgets are locked down so no line items can be changed by anyone but GDOT. This is cumbersome and time consuming. A more efficient way to do this and save time for GDOT and the subrecipients would be to give subrecipients a “contract amount” not to exceed \$X, and allow us to allocate funds where needed
- **Provide Additional Operating Funding** – Study potential options for additional operating funds. The region feels it needs more operations funding. GDOT contributed in excess of \$1.3 million for operations in 2009, a level of funding expected to continue in 2010. There is a sense, however, that GDOT funding emphasizes capital expenditures over operations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** – SWGRC has submitted one transit project under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted in 2012. The SWGRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Thomas County – Implement a transit complex.

3.11. Region #11 – Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC)

The SGRC currently participates in a coordinated DHS system. Stakeholders in the Southern Georgia region see opportunities with the potential to mix trip types and clients if some of the perceived boundaries created by funding types can be removed. The SGRC have good RHST support, with nine of the 15 counties providing some regional public transportation. Nine counties in the region, Atkinson, Ben Hill, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Irwin, and Lanier, do not offer rural transit services. DCH and DHS human services transportation is offered region-wide. For more information on SGRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the SGRC.

3.11.1 Proposed Project #1 – Mobility Manager

- **Implement Mobility Manager** – Place a Mobility Manager within the SGRC. The SGRC and its transit agencies have expressed *interest* in the SGRC taking on the responsibility as the lead agency to coordinate regional transportation services. However, they would like further study to explore the benefits and challenges for the SGRC and the Region’s individual transit agencies and human services providers.
- **Update / Create a Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP).
- **Establishment of a RHST Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)** – Create a working group of 5311 and 5310 providers and counties, the AAA, DHS, DCH and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for the Regional Commission to support existing services and facilitate coordination of transportation services. The primary function of the RCC is to provide a forum for the direction for which projects, ideas, issues and opportunities could be implemented on a more permanent basis. The RCC can also coordinate activities to improve the transportation options available in the region.
- **Create a Champion** – In order to sustain successful coordination, a regional champion must be identified. The Mobility Manager, working with the RCC members and regional leaders would be in a good position to assist the Region in identifying a regional RHST champion while acting as the central point of contact for transportation service delivery.

3.11.2 Proposed Project #2 – Additional RHST Study

- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, is often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance and associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles, this could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date (the DHS system is one example). Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved when the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment, the system has been very successful. SGRC stakeholders noted comments from some agencies expressing concern about mixing certain types of clients on vehicles.

3.11.3 Proposed Project #3 –RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the SGRC

- **Improved Coordination** – Review the benefits of improving coordination between the various Regional rural and human services transportation. The concept of coordinated service delivery beyond the DHS system has not been explored in great detail. Further, it should be researched how to expand the RC’s current role in implementing transportation services.
- **Scheduling and Service** – Review the benefits and approaches for coordinated trip scheduling and service deliveries. Services serve similar trip ends (e.g. 5311 public transportation, DHS, and Medicaid, for certain trip types). Currently the Medicaid trips are handled separately by SWGRC and Logisticare. For example, currently, scheduling is typically independent by provider. If clients get off a rural transit system at a fixed-route stop, they may have to wait for a bus for a long period of time.
- **Expanded RHST Service** – Review the expansion of RHST service within the Region.
 - a. Similar issues exist in many counties in the region where either no service is offered or current service is limited to senior centers and other designated trip types (i.e. medical appointments, for qualifying customers at certain times of the day).
 - b. The expansion of weekend and expanded hours of service are needed in some areas to provide users with transportation options outside of limited weekday hours. Critical trip types include trips to the doctor as well as senior centers, dialysis, hospitals, as well as shopping during the day from senior center and behavioral day programs. While private providers are available, they are expensive.
- **Interconnecting Service** – Review how best to develop interconnecting service within the Region. From both a cost and funding basis, it inefficient to carry a small number of customers on long-distance trips.
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Valdosta Fixed Route System** – The MPO has studied the need for a fixed-route urban system in Valdosta. The need is clear, however funding remains an issue. It is still not certain how local matching funds may be procured for capital and operating costs.
- **RHST Service to Educational Institutions** – Study how to provide RHST service to local educational institutions. There is an opportunity to connect residents with jobs and higher learning, but transit and transportation services are not fulfilling this need currently. Service hours are not sufficient to allow for most work shifts, and education trips are not allowed by human services contracts.

3.11.4 Proposed Project #4 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Capacity** – Review methods to improve the number of available vehicles to serve all trips. Further, vehicle fleet size is decreasing while the population and demand for service is increasing. The availability of vehicles is even more limited in current economic situation. Some counties have extra vehicles, but are not comfortable sharing vehicles due to insurance and title structure as well as varying service needs.
- **Fleet Quality** – Review fleet quality issues to replace older vehicles and resources which have not been replaced in a timely fashion. This will help resolve the issue of old and unreliable vehicles.
- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance - Vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.

3.11.5 Proposed Project #5 – Improve RHST Information Availability

- **Create a Regional Directory of Services** – Review the benefits of developing a regional Directory of Services, this will assist RHST customers to quickly and easily determine what RHST options are available to them, i.e.

locations, radio, word of mouth, as well as agency outlets. The SGRC has a website that could serve as a central information source on available transit services within the region. However, there is some hesitation to provide more information that would drive additional demand, as some agencies are already struggling to meet demand and are afraid of further exceeding service capacity.

- **Eliminate Information Gaps** – Review the current information gaps and develop a plan to improve. There is a need to more effectively disseminate information about available transportation services in the region. Due to changing demographics in the region, there is also a language gap between drivers and customers that impacts the ability for systems to understand the needs of their consumer base.
- **Improve Service Marketing** – Current services in the area are not marketed well to potential customers. Although there is demand, some services have been discontinued due to low ridership because consumers are not aware of the services or how they can be utilized.

3.11.6 Proposed Project #6 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system. New, upgraded software that would allow for real-time response to rider's needs would allow the existing agencies in the region to improve their service. These agencies and providers currently require a day or more advance notice for transportation.
- **Trip Scheduling** - Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a financial burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems.
- **Smart Card** – Review and develop an implementation plan to implement Smart Card technologies. Advanced technologies have been piloted in other regions. In Rome, GA, a Smart Card pilot allowed public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. This program helped to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. The Smart Card Pilot program was successful. The swipe card system will be upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.
- **AVL Technology** - Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology which will provide exact vehicle location information could be helpful, although there were some concerns about it being utilized properly. Other views expressed concerned about the cost for small providers.

3.11.7 Proposed Project #7 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Source** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** – SGRC has submitted nine transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The SGRC is working with the

various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:

- Bacon County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Berrien County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Brooks County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Cook County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Pierce County – Create a Centralized Call Center; Implement an AVL System;
- Tift County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Turner County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
- Ware County – Expand and enhance transit operations; and
- City of Valdosta – Implement an urbanized transit system.

3.12. Region #12 – Coastal Regional Commission (CRC)

The CRC currently operates a coordinated system for 5311 and DHS service and operates as a mobility manager. The SGRC have strong RHST support, with all 10 counties providing regional RHST public transportation services. DCH also offers HST services region wide. Key to the CRC's success is the creation of a regional committee of representatives from state agencies, transit agencies human services transportation providers, private and non-profit organizations, and local government representatives exists to discuss transportation needs, issues, and opportunities. For more information on CRC, please refer to the case studies in the *Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

Noted below are the potential RHST Projects that the regional stakeholders have identified as necessary to improving coordination within the CRC.

3.12.1 Proposed Project #1 – Additional RHST Study

- **Update the Regional Transportation Plan** – There is a need to create a Regional Transportation Development Plan (RTDP) and create Regional Mobility Action Plan (RMAP).
- **Volunteers** – Review the benefits of expanding the role of faith based and volunteer programs.
- **County Boundaries** – Review the benefits of removing county jurisdictional barriers within the Region. Service areas, most specifically, service across county lines, is often issue due to service area restrictions, time, and distance and associated costs.
- **Sharing Vehicles** – Review the benefits of sharing vehicles. This could be an opportunity, but it may complicate coordination efforts since agencies provide different types of services. Some agencies need vehicles on demand to meet the unique needs of its customers during the day and / or need special features such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Combining various RHST Clients** – Review the potential methods that will allow the combination of clients from different programs on a single vehicle has seen some success to date – the DHS system is one example of this. Many of the stakeholders in the region were involved with the DHS system began and were concerned about moving to a coordinated system, but after some adjustment the system has been very successful.
- **Service Gaps** – Currently, there is no public transit available in the urbanized area of Glynn County. The county has developed the Brunswick-Glynn Transit Implementation Plan to begin transit services in the Brunswick-Glynn area. The Implementation Plan has recommended three fixed-route services and complementary ADA Paratransit services within the urban area. The county and associated MPO is coordinating with Coastal Regional Commission to satisfy the public transportation needs of the area. However, funding is a major issue to a system start-up.

3.12.2 Proposed Project #2 - RHST Coordination Study to Improve RHST Service within the CRC

- **Improve tie-in with Chatham Area Transit Service** – Review how to improve ties with the transit services offered by Chatham County. In Chatham County, the CAT system provides ADA service operates 3/10 miles from the fixed routes, which services less population than required. The Tel-A-Ride system services the remaining area to meet the ¼ mile requirement. Thus, service is not available in all areas of the County
- **Negotiated Rates** – Review how negotiated rates could improve both service and customer service.
- **Driver Requirements** – Standardization of operator (driver) requirements is desirable. CRC is interested in changes to allow entities to directly operate services and hold a DCH contract.
- **Technical Assistance** – assist the CRC with technical assistance to:
 - a. Transition to a direct operator; and
 - b. Develop a commuter choice ridesharing program.
- **RHST Service to Educational Institutions** – Study how to provide RHST service to local educational institutions. There is an opportunity to connect residents with jobs and higher learning, but transit and transportation services are not fulfilling this need currently. Service hours are not sufficient to allow for most work shifts, and education trips are not allowed by human services contracts.

3.12.3 Proposed Project #3 – Improve Fleet Capacity, Quality and Maintenance

- **Fleet Maintenance** – Review how best to provide coordinate RHST fleet maintenance. The vehicle maintenance has become difficult due to increasing maintenance costs and is a great burden on already limited budgets. A new approach to fleet procurement and maintenance would also benefit the region given the resource demands of aging equipment.
- **Vehicle Procurement** - There have been changes to the vehicle procurement program with 5311. It will now go through DOAS. This could potentially make operations and maintenance more challenging since the service might not be provided by local vendors. This could hurt coordination efforts. The TRRC would prefer that GDOT order vehicles directly or let the RC handle their own procurement.

3.12.4 Proposed Project #4 – Study Improvements Provided by Technology

- **Centralized Call Center** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing a Centralized Call Center. Many service providers support the concept of a Centralized Call Center. A Centralized Call Center can provide better customer service and make the public aware of the resources available. A centralized information source can provide the most up-to-date information to users of the system.
- **Trip Scheduling** – Review the cost / benefit of establishing centralized scheduling. The State is engaged in obtaining scheduling software through a separate effort. CRC would like to have a single point of contact for all GDOT programs at the regional level, similar to DHS. The use of technology to support coordination efforts could facilitate advanced trip planning and / or mid-trip changes that increase efficiency. It also promotes accountability. However, there are potential concerns in that the cost of technology for small agencies may be a huge burden. There are also associated needs in support of the implementation and maintenance of technology as well as training on new systems. Additionally, most of the transit systems require riders to call 24 to 48 hours ahead of the trip, which adds difficulties for riders to utilize the services. Some agencies mentioned in the workshop that riders found it hard to plan a trip ahead of time. The requirement to call in advance also restricts the use of transit service in a last-minute medical condition.
- **Smart Card** – Review and develop an implementation plan to implement Smart Card technologies. Advanced technologies have been piloted in other regions. In Rome, GA, a Smart Card pilot allowed public transportation riders to swipe a credit card to pay for the trip cost. This program helped to collect trip data more efficiently and accurately. The Smart Card Pilot program was successful. The swipe card system will be

upgraded to a new proximity card system, in order to resolve the issue caused by the difficulty some clients had with swiping the card. The Smart Card provides the ability to identify trip type, which is an efficient way to track fares and ridership.

3.12.5 Proposed Project #5 – Additional RHST Funding

- **Find Additional Funding Sources** – Review additional funding options. RHST funding is a challenge due to the constraints on local budgets and lack of operational funding from the State of Georgia.
- **Remove Existing Funding Constraints** – Review the benefits of removing existing funding constraints. Stakeholders in the area feel that bureaucratic rules associated with funding types (i.e. urban vs. rural public transit funds) and other funding constraints keep the system from growing and create coordination deficiencies in existing organizations since some funds cannot be comingled. Generally speaking, service quality suffers because of these limitations.
- **Purchase of Service Overmatch Penalties** – Study the impacts of Purchase of Service Overmatch penalties. In addition, the region would like the ability to retain more of the fares they collect for the services they provide, in order to reinvest those fare proceeds into the people and equipment providing those services. As a result, there is potential that on some trips a provider may collect more than 45 percent of the operating costs through POS contracts, thus a trip may be “over matched” (i.e. a provider earns more than the 45 percent of matching funds required).
- **Minimal Farebox Requirement** - Study the impact of eliminating the minimal farebox requirement. As part of the 5311 program, GDOT requires local entities to collect 10 percent of operating costs through the “farebox”. Farebox revenues may be actual passenger fares or contributions from local entities. The 5311 program then pays up to 45 percent of the operating costs net of the farebox revenues. The remaining 45 percent of operating costs is typically provided by DHS programs, other POS contracts, or in some cases, local revenues. Eliminating the “farebox” requirement would allow CRC additional flexibility in how it accounts for its RHST service.
- **Efficient Processing of Reimbursement Requests** – Review the benefits to RC’s by allowing more timely GDOT and DHS reimbursement payments.
- **Change GDOT contracts to Lump Sum** – Study changing the current GDOT uses line item expenditures approach, developed at prior to the current operating year when there are still a number of unknowns to providing RHST service.
- **Provide Additional Operating Funding** – Study potential options for additional operating funds. The region feels it needs more operations funding. GDOT contributed in excess of \$1.3 million for operations in 2009, a level of funding expected to continue in 2010. There is a sense, however, that GDOT funding emphasizes capital expenditures over operations.
- **Regional TIA Funding** – CGRC has submitted nine transit projects under the regional TIA. The TIA funding can be used for mobility manager position, operations, service expansion, new technology, vehicles, etc. In order to secure the TIA funding, will be important to educate local citizens about the importance of the transit program in order for a referendum to be voted through in 2012. The CGRC is working with the various transit agencies to discuss and determine support for the TIA submission. The regional projects currently included in the unconstrained regional roundtable list are:
 - Chatham County – Enhance regional transit information technologies; Implement Park-and-Ride facilities;
 - Long County – Expand and enhance transit operations;
 - Liberty County – Expand and enhance transit operations; and
 - Chatham Area Transit (CAT) – Implement regional express and bus services; Implement transit facilities.