

Mifflin County
Planning and Development Department
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Mifflin County Public Transportation Study

Final Report

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MIFFLIN COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Mifflin County, Pennsylvania

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INTRODUCTION

Mifflin County is a rural county in south-central Pennsylvania, approximately 60 miles west of Harrisburg. According to the 2000 Census, the population base is 46,486 of which some 17% are 65 years of age or older, and approximately 14% are between the ages of 5-14. The population of the greater Lewistown area, which includes the Boroughs of Lewistown, Burnham and Juniata Terrace, and the Townships of Derry and Granville, is 23,795 or 51% of the County's population.

Historically, public transportation has played a role in the development of Mifflin County going back to the early 1900s in the form of streetcars, to a fully operational bus service from the 1930s until 1972 (Lewistown Transportation Company). Since the demise of this service, public transportation has been discussed by various parties for years, but concern has always been of the support level for such a system in a rural area. Currently, the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging coordinates the Call A Ride program, and serves as the County Coordinator for the Shared Ride programs sponsored by the Bureau of Public Transportation through PennDOT.

For the past two years an Ad Hoc group composed of Mifflin County residents and various County based organizations, has been meeting under the auspices of the Mifflin-Juniata United Way to address transportation obstacles in the region. This Committee was formed in part from the results of a White Paper developed by the United Way, as well as recommendations in the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan. This group was formed after many of the recipients of United Way funding expressed concern over their inability to effectively operate programs due to the lack of local transportation. Among the organizations represented in the group are: Mifflin County School District; Mifflin-Juniata Special Needs Center; Mifflin Juniata United Way; Greater Lewistown Corp.; Downtown Lewistown, Inc.; Juniata Valley Chamber of Commerce; Juniata Valley YMCA; Salvation Army; PennDOT; Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging, Inc.; Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; and J & D's, Inc. (Private PUC Carrier).

The need for a substantial increase in service has been magnified by local endeavors to rejuvenate the business district for the greater Lewistown area. Through these efforts, many positive changes have taken place in the downtown business district of Mifflin County. Among the actions taken to improve the business climate in Lewistown are the addition of a campus of South Hills School of Business and Technology (the main campus is located in State College, PA), the addition of a Pennsylvania State University distance learning center, and the placement of some of Lewistown Hospital's counseling facilities in downtown. These improvements have increased the numbers of persons passing through the Downtown Lewistown area on a daily basis. It is hoped that with this increase, additional retail and service business will follow to rejuvenate the area.

Support for the better public transportation services is substantiated in the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan. The Quality of Life Survey completed in 1998, sent to over 3,000 residents, revealed that 73.8 % of the respondents felt that public transportation was fair to poor.

Also, based on surveys sent in 1999 to various community agencies, those supporting the improvement of transit services included the Juniata Valley Area Job Center (CareerLink), the TIU Adult Education, and the United Way. The County also completed a survey of 2,000 residents of Mifflin County in 2001 that indicated strong support for a fixed bus route with scheduled stops at stores and other important locations in the County. This survey also indicated some 70% of the respondents were willing to pay for such services depending on the cost. From the background, the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners authorized that a Public Transportation Study take place with the assistance of PennDOT's 5301 Program.

The purposes of the Mifflin County Transportation Study are to identify any unmet public transportation needs within Mifflin County and to develop recommendations that present the best manner in which to meet these needs. This information will then be utilized to determine the feasibility of operating a new fixed route public transportation system in Mifflin County.

A preliminary service plan for the operation of a new transit service in the County is also presented in this study. The service plan indicates the fundamental requirements of the fixed route public transportation service, should the County desire to proceed with the implementation of such a service.

This feasibility study utilized data from the U.S. Census, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department, prior surveys conducted in Mifflin County regarding public transportation and data obtained via a community participation program.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Mifflin County is located in central Pennsylvania, northwest of Harrisburg, and is approximately halfway between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. As shown in Figure 1, Mifflin County consists of 16 municipalities (i.e., ten townships and six boroughs). The Juniata River flows through Lewistown, the county seat, as well as through much of the southeastern portion of the county. Mifflin County may also be described as being approximately located at the intersection of U.S. Route 22, U.S. Route 322 and U.S. Route 522.

Mifflin County is primarily rural in character; however, more urban development patterns are evident in and around the boroughs of Lewistown and Burnham. Between the years 1990 and 2000, Mifflin County's population increased slightly from 46,197 people in 1990 to 46,486 people in 2000. This is an overall increase of about 0.6 percent. It should be noted that in the prior 10-year period (1980 to 1990), the County population declined from 46,908 in 1980 to 46,197 in 1990.

The employment sector in Mifflin County is comprised of a diverse array of service and manufacturing jobs. Some of the largest employers in Mifflin County are in the educational and medical fields, and most major employers are located in and around Lewistown.

Presently, public transportation service in Mifflin County consists solely of a demand responsive shared-ride paratransit service operated for the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging by Call-A-Ride Services (i.e., CARS), a Lewistown-based transportation operator. This type of specialized public transportation system is geared to providing service primarily to senior citizens and requires that a reservation for travel be made 24 hours in advance. The CARS demand responsive shared-ride paratransit system generates approximately 7,500 annual trips.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the community characteristics of Mifflin County. The chapter identifies major travel generators and examines information on socioeconomic characteristics and regional travel activity for Mifflin County. This information will be used to assess the feasibility of providing a new fixed route public transportation system in Mifflin County.

Major Generators

The following section discusses seven types of major travel generators: major employers; industrial/business parks; shopping centers; government centers; hospitals; nursing/retirement homes; and high schools.

Specific sites within each of the seven travel generator types in Mifflin County were located. As shown in Figure 2, each of these generators was plotted on a map showing the street network throughout Mifflin County. The information presented in this section was obtained through a variety of sources, including the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department staff. It should be noted that the facilities in categories other than "Major

Figure 1
Mifflin County Municipalities

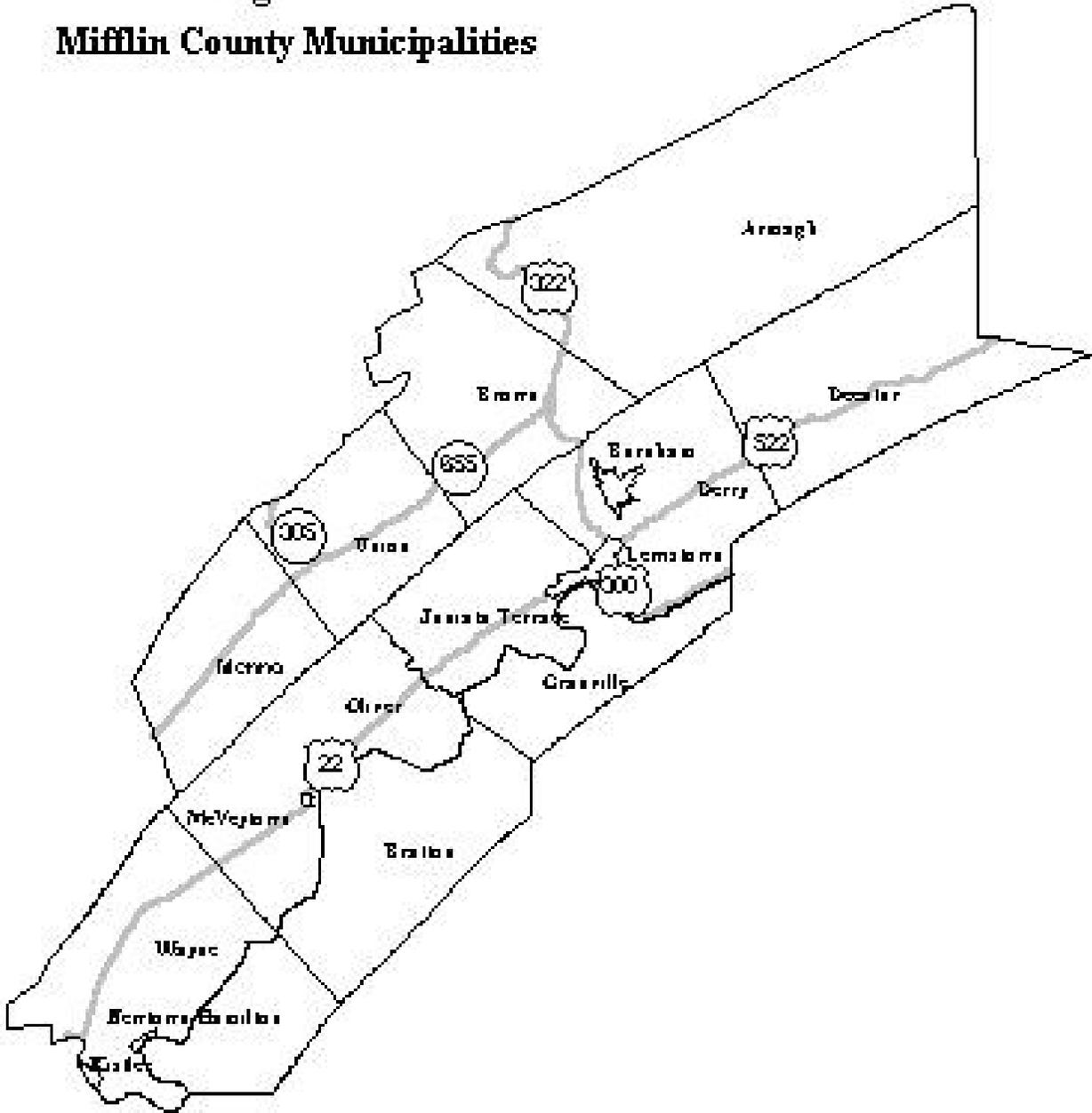
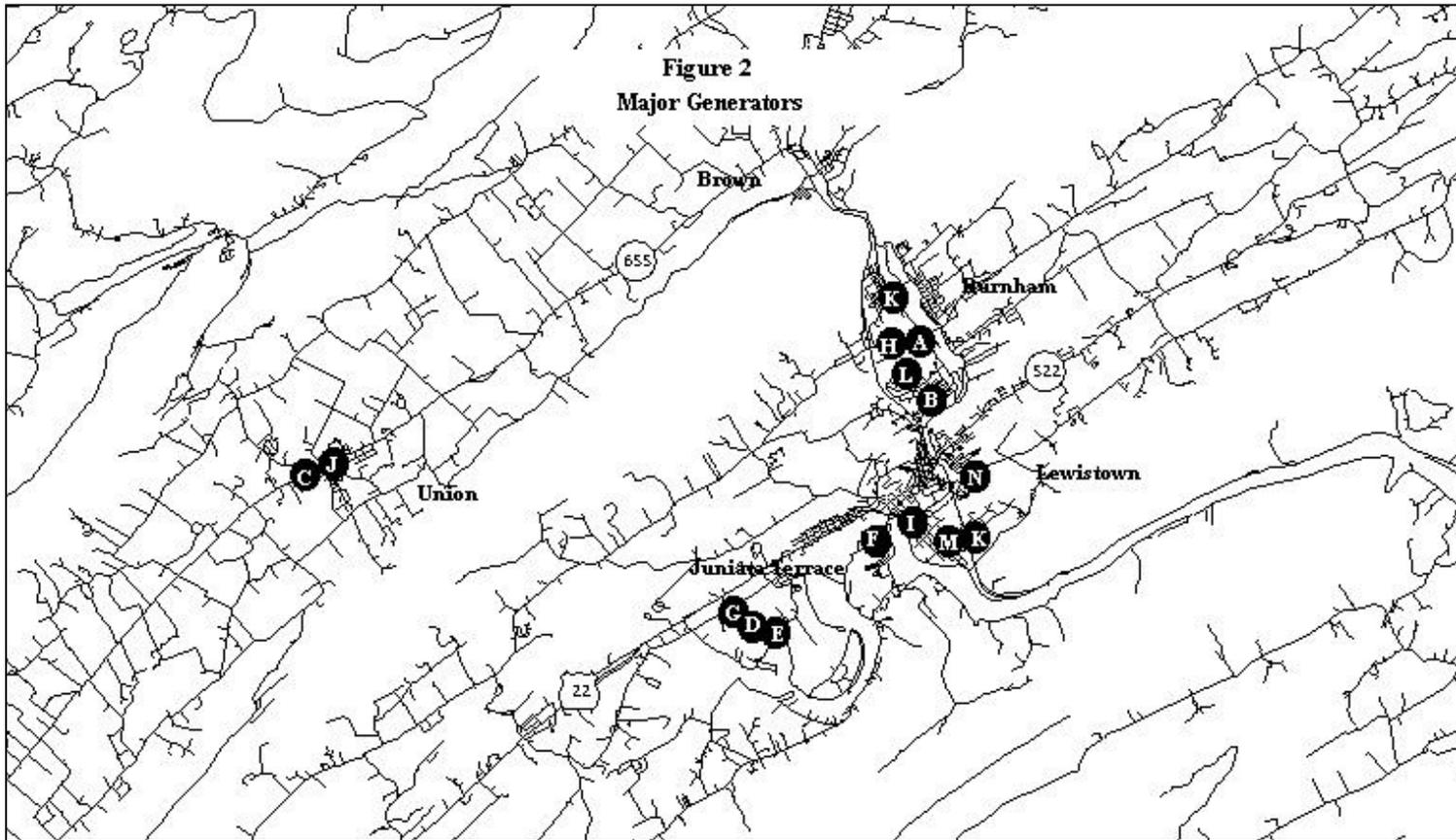


Figure 2
Major Generators



[ID Code]	Name	Location
A	Freedom Forge Corp Standard Steel	Burnham Borough
B	402653184.000000	Derry Township
C	New Holland North America	Union Township
D	Overhead Door Corporation	Granville Townsh
E	Mifflin County Industrial Park	Granville Townsh
F	Mifflin Plaza	Granville Townsh
G	Wal-Mart	Granville Townsh
H	K-Mart/Weis Market/J.C.Penney	Derry Township
I	Kish House	Lewistown Boroug
J	Valley View Haven	Union Township
K	Senior Centers	Derry Twp/Lewistown Borough
L	Indian Valley High School	Derry Township
M	Lewistown Area High School	Lewistown Borough
N	Geisinger Clinic	Lewistown Borough

Employers” are also typically employers of a large number of people as well as generators of travel. Examples of the seven travel generator types are detailed below.

- **Major Employers** - The single largest employer in Mifflin County is the Lewistown Hospital located in Derry Township followed by Freedom Forge Corporation’s Standard Steel, located in Burnham. The top five largest employers in Mifflin County are as follows:

TOP FIVE LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN MIFFLIN COUNTY

Rank	Employer	Location
1	Lewistown Hospital	Derry Township
2	Freedom Forge Corporation Standard Steel	Burnham Borough
3	Mifflin County School District	various locations
4	New Holland North America, Inc.	Union Township
5	Overhead Door Corporation	Granville Township

Source: Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation

The Lewistown Hospital will also appear in the “Hospitals” category. The Mifflin County School District has various locations; however, the high schools will appear in the “High Schools” category and are mapped in Figure 2. New Holland North America is located in the Belleville area of Union Township, while Overhead Door Corporation is located in the Mifflin County Industrial Park. The Mifflin County Industrial Park will also appear in the “Industrial/Business Parks” category and is mapped in Figure 2.

- **Industrial/Business Parks** - There are two major industrial/business parks in Mifflin County, both of which are located in Granville Township. The first - the Mifflin County Industrial Park - is located in the Colonial Hills area on Industrial Park Road. The second - Mifflin Plaza - is located in the Lewistown Junction area and is also the location of the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation (i.e., the MCIDC). Industrial parks or business parks generally contain a high concentration of employers and employees, which generate a large number of work trips and makes them a potential location for fixed route bus service. However, it should be cautioned that the availability of automobile parking at the parks and the variety of shift times can often discourage transit use to such employment sites.
- **Shopping Centers** - Major shopping locations are the Wal-Mart on 4th Street in the Forest Estates area of Granville Township and the K-Mart/Weis Markets/J.C.

Penney's shopping area on Freedom Avenue and Logan Boulevard in the Yeagertown area of Derry Township. Shopping centers attract both work trips as well as shopping trips, making them an important location for fixed route bus service.

- **Government Centers and Services** - Government centers and services attract both work and visitor trips, making them a location that should be served by fixed route bus service. Most government offices in Mifflin County are located in Lewistown, the county seat.
- **Healthcare Facilities** - The Lewistown Hospital is located in Derry Township. Public transportation is important for providing access to hospitals, particularly for senior citizens. In addition, such facilities also serve as major employment locations. Another recently opened healthcare facility is the Geisinger Clinic located in Derry Township.
- **Nursing/Retirement Homes and Senior Citizen Facilities** - The Kish House senior citizen high-rise is located in Lewistown Borough, while the Valley View Retirement Community located on West Main Street in Union Township. These two facilities have over 100 beds. There are four smaller facilities that have personal care/assisted living/nursing home facilities in Mifflin County - Meadowview Manor in Wayne Township, Malta Home for Aging in Granville Township, William Penn Nursing Home in Lewistown and Ohesson Manor in Derry Township. There are two active Senior Centers. One is located on Main Street South in Derry Township. The other is at the Area Agency on Aging complex in Lewistown. Senior citizen facilities contain a high concentration of seniors, a population that is heavily dependant on public transit and therefore should be considered important sites to serve with fixed route bus service.
- **High Schools** - These facilities are identified as important transit generators because students at these grade levels typically represent a transit dependent market. Two high schools are located in Mifflin County. Lewistown Area High School is located in Lewistown Borough, and Indian Valley High School is located in Derry Township.

Current Socioeconomic Characteristics

One of the major elements of any transit feasibility analysis is an examination of the socioeconomic factors that influence overall travel and the need for public transportation within the area to be served by the proposed fixed route transit system. These factors include characteristics about the area's population including population size, the density of the population in each municipality and the level of automobile ownership. The following section analyzes current conditions in Mifflin County for all of these factors. The data presented and discussed in this section was obtained from both the 1990 and 2000 United States Census as well as the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department.

Study Area Definition - The study area consists of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. As previously mentioned, Mifflin County is comprised of sixteen municipalities - ten townships and six boroughs. Lewistown Borough is the county seat. The study area is illustrated in Figure 1.

Population Size - The population of Mifflin County, according to the 2000 United States Census, was 46,486 people. The accompanying table indicates the population by municipality in 1980, 1990 and 2000. The percent change for each municipality is also tabulated.

MIFFLIN COUNTY POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Municipality	Population			Percent Change	
	1980	1990	2000	Total	Annual
Armagh Township	3,710	3,627	3,988	7.49%	0.37%
Bratton Township	1,426	1,427	1,259	-11.71%	-0.59%
Brown Township	3,003	3,320	3,852	28.27%	1.41%
Burnham Borough	2,457	2,197	2,144	-12.74%	-0.64%
Decatur Township	2,513	2,735	3,021	20.21%	1.01%
Derry Township	8,108	7,650	7,256	-10.51%	-0.53%
Granville Township	5,116	5,090	4,894	-4.34%	-0.22%
Juniata Terrace Borough	631	556	502	-20.44%	-1.02%
Kistler Borough	364	314	344	-5.49%	-0.27%
Lewistown Borough	9,830	9,341	8,998	-8.46%	-0.42%
McVeytown Borough	447	408	405	-9.40%	-0.47%
Menno Township	1,590	1,637	1,763	10.88%	0.54%
Newton Hamilton Borough	317	287	272	-14.20%	-0.71%
Oliver Township	1,774	1,822	2,060	16.12%	0.81%
Union Township	3,131	3,265	3,313	5.81%	0.29%
Wayne Township	2,491	2,521	2,414	-3.09%	-0.15%
Mifflin County	46,908	46,197	46,486	-0.90%	-0.04%

Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census

The largest municipality in terms of population size is Lewistown Borough, followed by neighboring Derry Township. In terms of percentage of the population, Brown Township saw the greatest growth (i.e., 28.27 percent) between 1980 and 2000. The municipality with the

greatest percentage decline in population (i.e., -20.44 percent) between 1980 and 2000 was Juniata Terrace Borough.

Population Density - A critical factor impacting the viability of public transportation service is the density of residential development. Fixed route public transit tends to attract more riders in denser areas for many reasons, including the fact that densely populated regions tend to include a diversity of income and age groups. Also, denser development patterns make residents much less dependent on automobiles to complete their daily tasks, and the less dependent a population is on automobiles, the more likely they are to use public transportation. As the accompanying table shows, Mifflin County contains 410.7 square miles of land area and has an overall population density of 113.9 persons per square mile.

MIFFLIN COUNTY 1999 POPULATION DENSITY

Municipality	Land Area (Square Miles)	Population Density (Persons/Square Mile)
Armagh Township	92.8	40.7
Bratton Township	32.8	41.2
Brown Township	33.2	112.2
Burnham Borough	1.1	2,018.8
Decatur Township	45.2	64.0
Derry Township	31.1	249.5
Granville Township	40.1	121.7
Juniata Terrace Borough	0.1	4,421.9
Kistler Borough	0.3	1,273.4
Lewistown Borough	2.0	4,575.6
McVeytown Borough	0.1	4,064.5
Menno Township	23.8	65.5
Newton Hamilton Borough	0.2	1,636.9
Oliver Township	34.6	59.8
Union Township	25.5	128.4
Wayne Township	47.9	53.8
Mifflin County	410.7	113.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1990 Census and 1999 Estimates

The most densely populated municipality is Lewistown Borough, with more than 4,500 people per square mile. The least densely populated municipality is Armagh Township, with only a little more than 40 people per square mile.

The population density of each municipality is also illustrated in Figure 3. As the figure shows, the most densely populated sections of Mifflin County are those areas in and around Lewistown, Burnham and Juniata Terrace. These areas are located in the central portion of Mifflin County and are generally located near U.S. Route 322.

While no single measure exists, it is generally recognized that densities in excess of 2,500 persons per square mile are necessary to make fixed route bus service viable. The sections of Mifflin County exceeding 2,500 persons per square mile are - once again - those areas near Lewistown, Burnham and Juniata Terrace. It should be noted that this area includes portions of Derry Township and Granville Township. McVeytown Borough also has a high density. However, it also has a small population of 405 people which is insufficient in size to warrant fixed route service.

Automobile Ownership - The percentage of households in each Mifflin County municipality with no automobile available for their use is illustrated in Figure 4. The highest percentage of “zero car households” occurs in Menno Township. More than 12 percent of the households in this municipality do not own an automobile. This is likely due to the fact that the concentrations of the Amish live in this area. Between six and 12 percent of the households in Armagh and Brown Townships do not own an automobile which is also a result of Amish concentrations. Finally, between three and six percent of the households in the areas in and around Lewistown, Burnham and Juniata Terrace - including Derry and Granville Townships - do not own an automobile. This area is the most “transit friendly” because all three socioeconomic indicators of the propensity to utilize public transportation (i.e., population, population density and automobile ownership) tend to exhibit strong results in this portion of Mifflin County.

Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the types of destinations and institutions that tend to generate travel demand as well as the various factors that affect the need and the propensity of an area population to use regularly scheduled fixed route public transportation services.

Figure 3
Population Density

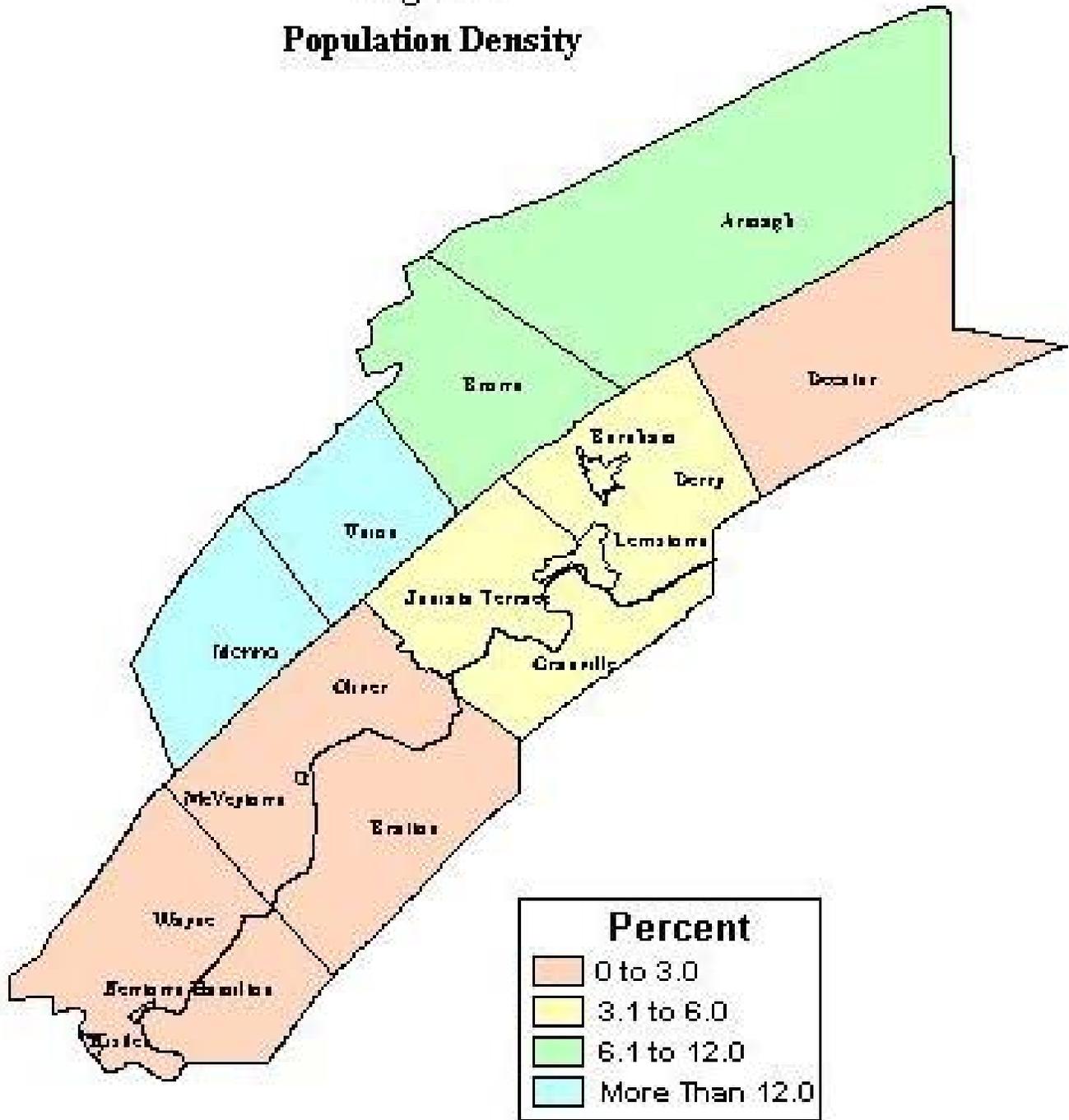
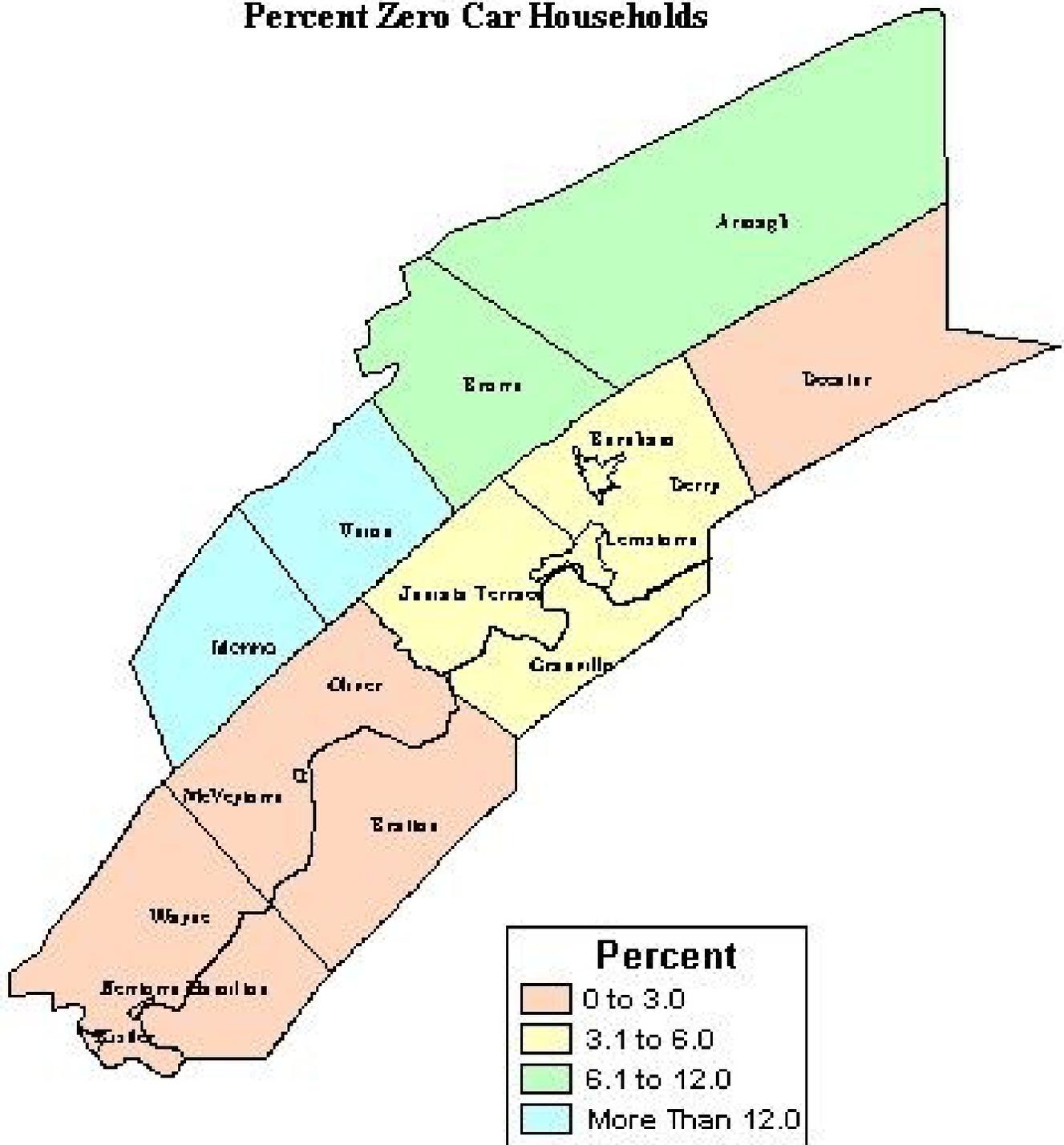


Figure 4
Percent Zero Car Households



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The study to determine the feasibility of introducing fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County includes an extensive community participation program designed to elicit input from members of the general public, potential users, community leaders and key policy decision makers. The community participation program included three separate components, which are listed below:

- Walk-In Meetings
- Solid Waste Disposal Survey (2001)
- Stakeholder Interviews

This chapter presents the findings from the community participation program for the Mifflin County Public Transportation Study. Summary tables are included in this section of the report and Figure 5 presents the questionnaire that was used as part of the walk-in meetings.

Walk-In Meetings

A “Walk-In Meeting” is a meeting where members of the general public have the opportunity to speak directly with members of the consultant team on a one-to-one basis and offer any ideas, suggestions, comments and opinions that they may have regarding the feasibility of operating a fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County. “Walk-In Meetings” were held on Tuesday, August 13th, 2002 at three locations in Mifflin County. In the morning, a walk-in session was held at the K-Mart located on Logan Boulevard in Derry Township. During the afternoon, a similar session was held at the Wal-Mart on U.S. Route 22 in Granville Township. The meeting at K-Mart was attended by 17 people, while the meeting at Wal-Mart was attended by 20 people. An additional lunchtime meeting was held at the Valley View Retirement Community on East Main Street in Belleville. This meeting was attended by approximately 100 people. Because of the specialized nature of this facility, the results for the Valley View Retirement Community will be presented separately from those gathered at the two shopping centers.

As is shown in Figure 5, a questionnaire was prepared and was made available at all three walk-in meetings for those who only wished to provide written comments. Six of these questionnaires were returned from the walk-in meetings at the two shopping centers, while 51 of these questionnaires were returned from the Valley View Retirement Community. Once again, the results from the Valley View Retirement Community will be presented separately due to the specialized nature of the facility. Finally, two letters were received by the consultant team from citizens of Mifflin County. Therefore, when the attendees at the meetings, the completed

FIGURE 5
MIFFLIN COUNTY WALK-IN MEETING QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you think having bus service available in Mifflin County is a good or bad idea?

- Good Idea Bad Idea No Opinion

If you think it's a good idea, where should the service be provided? (Check all that apply)

- Local service in Mifflin County - to which locations?

- Service outside Mifflin County - to where?

What trip purpose(s) do you think the service should meet? (Check all that apply)

- Shopping Work School Social/Recreation Medical/Dental
 Personal Business Other _____

Would you use local bus service in Mifflin County if it were available?

- Yes No Don't Know

If yes, what locations would you like to see served?

Would you agree to have your property taxes increased by a small amount to pay for the bus service?

- Yes No Don't Know

Any other comments on bus service in Mifflin County?

THANK YOU

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questionnaires and the letters are considered in total, a significant amount of public participation input was received from the residents of Mifflin County.

Responses from the public involvement program are grouped into five sections: 1) verbal comments from those that attended the walk-in meetings at the two shopping centers; 2) written responses to the questionnaire from the two shopping centers; 3) verbal comments from those that attended the walk-in meeting at the retirement center; 4) written responses to the questionnaire from the retirement center; and, 5) written comments from the letters. The results in each of the five groups are summarized in this section of the report.

Shopping Center Verbal Comments - As previously mentioned, 17 people attended the walk-in meeting at the K-Mart and 20 people attended the walk-in meeting at the Wal-Mart.

At the meeting at K-Mart, 16 people had positive comments about the concept of operating fixed route bus service in Mifflin County, while only one person felt that it would not be a good idea. The positive comments about operating fixed route bus service from the K-Mart meeting focused on several key themes. These were as follows:

- Fixed route bus service would allow people to take more “spur-of-the-moment” trips that do not require advance reservations, as CARS (the demand responsive service) does.
- Fixed route bus service would especially benefit Lewistown and its surrounding areas and might even help reduce some traffic congestion.
- Fixed route bus service would be helpful for senior citizens who are not as comfortable driving today as they once were; it would especially be useful for trips to medical appointments and for shopping.
- Fixed route bus service would be more affordable than taxicabs.

The negative comment was from a person who felt that fixed route transit service was not appropriate for a rural area such as Mifflin County. This person felt that a more appropriate and useful disposition of government resources would be to provide grants and subsidies to the local taxicab company so that they could expand their services.

One person felt that improvements to the public transportation system in Mifflin County would have to “hand-in-hand” with improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the area. This person commented that it was “treacherous” to cross the street at certain major intersections in Lewistown.

Finally, it is interesting to note that several people commented on the fact that Lewistown and its surrounding area used to have fixed route public transportation about 30 years ago. These people generally felt that this service should not have been “allowed to wither” at the time.

At the meeting at Wal-Mart, all 20 people had positive comments about the concept of operating fixed route bus service in Mifflin County. It should also be noted that the Store Manager at the Wal-Mart felt that fixed route public transportation service was a good idea and would allow more people to shop at the various shopping centers in the area. The positive comments about operating fixed route bus service from the Wal-Mart meeting focused on several key themes. These were as follows:

- Fixed route bus service would be beneficial for people with a limited income who cannot afford an automobile and for anyone who cannot drive for any reason.
- Fixed route bus service would be especially helpful during inclement weather, especially for senior citizens who feel less comfortable driving at those times.
- Fixed route bus service should focus on the Lewistown area and serve the medical facilities, shopping centers and industrial parks.

Overall, the people who attended the walk-in meeting at Wal-Mart were very supportive of the concept of providing fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County.

However, one person at Wal-Mart pointed out that the CARS service can sometimes be onerous for people with disabilities to use; this person claimed that people with cerebral palsy have been denied trips on the CARS system because the vehicle operators insisted that they were not allowed to transport motorized electric wheelchairs. Discussions with CARS staff indicated that the capacity of the van lift cannot safely accommodate some motorized wheelchairs.

Shopping Center Questionnaire Responses - As previously mentioned, six questionnaires were returned from those handed out at the two shopping centers. The written responses to the questionnaire were tabulated for each question. The results are as follows:

Availability of Bus Service - In terms of whether or not bus service should be made available in Mifflin County, the accompanying table demonstrates that the respondents were unanimous in thinking that it was a “good idea”. Of course, these results present the views of only a small segment of the residents of Mifflin County. However, this segment was united and outspoken in their opinion regarding the need for bus service.

AVAILABILITY OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Good Idea	6
Bad Idea	0
No Opinion	0
TOTAL	6

Location of Bus Service - The questionnaire respondents were asked where they would like bus service to take them, both within and outside of Mifflin County. As seen in the accompanying table, there were a number of different responses. All six respondents indicated that local service within Mifflin County should be provided, but only three respondents felt service to locations outside of Mifflin County should be provided. The respondents were asked to name locations where they thought service could be provided, and therefore multiple locations were listed. For this reason, the total number of times specific locations were mentioned can exceed the number of respondents.

The locations within Mifflin County which were specifically mentioned on the questionnaire were primarily shopping centers (i.e., Wal-Mart) and medical offices. Specific communities mentioned included Lewistown and Milroy. The locations outside of Mifflin County which were specifically mentioned as requiring regular bus service from Mifflin County included State College, Harrisburg, Cumberland County and Juniata County.

LOCATION OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Local service in Mifflin County	6
shopping centers	3
medical offices	2
Lewistown	1
Milroy	2
Service outside Mifflin County	3
State College	1
Harrisburg	1
Juniata and Cumberland Counties	1

Trip Purpose - As seen in the accompanying table, the major trip purpose for bus service use is “shopping” followed closely by both “work” and “social/recreational” reasons. The multiple responses (i.e., 26 responses from six people) are indicative that many of the people responded with multiple trip purposes.

TRIP PURPOSE

Response	Total
Shopping	6
Work	5
Social/Recreation	5
Medical/Dental	4
Personal Business	3
School	2
Other	1
TOTAL	26

Usage of Bus Service - As seen in the accompanying table, a somewhat guarded response was obtained with regard to the respondent's personal use of the bus service if it were provided. Half of the respondents (i.e., three out of six) said they would use the bus service if it were provided. Only one of the questionnaire respondents said they would not use it. However, two of the respondents said that they were not sure. One of these indicated that their use of the bus service would be dependent upon the vehicles' being wheelchair accessible.

The respondents were also asked what locations they would like to see served by the fixed route bus service. Responses included Mifflin, Juniata, Huntingdon and Centre Counties, as well as the McVeytown area.

USAGE OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Yes	3
No	1
Don't Know	2
TOTAL	6

Property Taxes - The next question asked the respondent if they were willing to see their property tax be raised by a small amount in order to help finance the bus system. As seen in the accompanying table, the majority of respondents (i.e., four out of six) said they were not willing to see their property taxes raised, even by a small amount. Only

one respondent was willing to see their property taxes raised, and one responded that they “don’t know” if their taxes should be raised.

RAISING OF PROPERTY TAXES TO FINANCE BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Yes	1
No	4
Don’t Know	1
TOTAL	6

Other Comments - The questionnaire respondents were also given the opportunity to “write in” any comment they wished regarding the possibility of bus service in Mifflin County. Two comments were received that addressed the issue of the use of motorized electric wheelchairs. The respondents claimed that although manual wheelchairs are allowed on the CARS service, the vehicle operators consistently do not allow passengers with motorized electric wheelchairs to use CARS. Again, discussions with CARS staff indicated that the capacity of the van lift cannot safely accommodate some motorized electric wheelchairs.

Finally, one other respondent commented that pedestrian and bicyclist safety and amenities in Mifflin County were lacking and that these needed to be improved because most people who would use the fixed route bus service would most likely walk to the bus stop.

Summary - The key findings from the questionnaires handed in at the shopping centers are that bus service in Mifflin County is thought to be a good idea, but that not too many people are willing to see their real estate property taxes raised in order to help finance the service. The primary use would be for shopping trips, followed by trips for work and for social and recreational uses.

Retirement Community Verbal Comments - As previously mentioned, about 100 people attended the walk-in meeting at the Valley View Retirement Community in Belleville. The general consensus at the meeting was that a fixed route public transportation system would be beneficial primarily to people who cannot drive (i.e., the “transit dependent”). However, it was recognized that - over time - many of the residents of Valley View would likely benefit from such a service, especially for trips to shopping centers and medical facilities.

Much of the meeting at the retirement community also focused on the “mechanics” of

utilizing a fixed route bus service. For example, people wanted to know what type of packages they could carry aboard, the approximate fare for the service, whether or not the service would be available to the general public and whether several stops would be made enroute to a major destination. When questions regarding where the bus service might run and how often it would operate were brought up, the member of the consultant team conducting the meeting explained that one of the purposes of the study was to try and determine those precise issues.

Finally, it should be noted that the administrative staff at the Valley View Retirement Community was very supportive of the concept of providing some type of fixed route public transportation service. They felt that an increasing number of their clients would utilize the bus service over time.

Retirement Community Questionnaire Responses - As was previously mentioned, 51 questionnaires were returned from those handed out at the meeting at the Valley View Retirement Community. Similar to the method utilized for the questionnaires handed out at both the K-Mart and Wal-Mart “walk-in” meetings, the written responses to the questionnaire were tabulated for each question. The results are as follows:

Availability of Bus Service - In terms of whether or not bus service should be made available in Mifflin County, the accompanying table demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the questionnaire respondents (i.e., 92 percent) thought that it was a “good idea”. The remainder had “no opinion” regarding bus service. It is interesting to note that no one felt it would be a “bad idea”. Of course, these results only present the views of the residents at the Valley View Retirement Community. However, they were united and outspoken in their opinion toward needing bus service.

AVAILABILITY OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Good Idea	47
Bad Idea	0
No Opinion	4
TOTAL	51

Location of Bus Service - The questionnaire respondents were also asked where they would like bus service to take them, both within and outside of Mifflin County. As seen in the accompanying table, there were a number of different responses, but one common “theme” did emerge: in the aggregate, more questionnaire respondents felt that fixed route transit service should operate within Mifflin County and defer from operating

service outside of Mifflin County. Almost all of the respondents (i.e., 98 percent) indicated that local service within Mifflin County should be provided, but only 13 respondents (i.e., 25 percent) felt service to locations outside of Mifflin County should be provided. The respondents were also asked to name locations where they thought service could be provided, and therefore multiple locations were listed. For this reason, the total number of times specific locations were mentioned can exceed the number of respondents.

Similar to the results from the questionnaires handed out at Wal-Mart and K-Mart, the specific locations within Mifflin County which were mentioned on the questionnaire as requiring service were primarily shopping centers (i.e., Wal-Mart), the Lewistown Hospital and medical offices. Specific communities mentioned included Lewistown as well as Burnham and Belleville.

The locations outside of Mifflin County which were specifically mentioned as requiring regular bus service from Mifflin County included State College, Selinsgrove, Middletown and the various county fairs. The Nittany Mall in State College was also mentioned several times.

LOCATION OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Local service in Mifflin County	50
Lewistown	20
Wal-Mart	14
Hospital/medical offices	12
K-Mart	11
Belleville	8
Burnham	8
shopping centers	6
Weis Market	4
J.C. Penney	3
Valley View	3
Bon Ton	2
Burnham Commons	2
Reedsville	1
nursing homes	1

LOCATION OF BUS SERVICE (Continued)

Response	Total
Service outside Mifflin County	13
State College	7
Selinsgrove	3
Nittany Mall	3
Middletown	1
county fairs	1

Trip Purpose - As seen in the accompanying table, the major trip purpose for bus service use is “shopping” followed closely by “medical/dental” reasons. The multiple responses (i.e., 148 responses from 51 people) are indicative that many of the people responded with multiple trip purposes. Interestingly, “work” was not nearly as highly rated as it typically is on these kinds of questionnaires. This is likely due to the fact that this set of questionnaires was from the Valley View Retirement Community.

TRIP PURPOSE

Response	Total
Shopping	47
Work	9
Social/Recreation	16
Medical/Dental	44
Personal Business	28
School	3
Other	1
TOTAL	148

Usage of Bus Service - As seen in the accompanying table, the results regarding the questionnaire respondents’ personal use of the bus service if it were to be provided is significantly less unanimous than the number of respondents who believe the service would be a “good idea”. Essentially, although the vast majority of respondents replied

that bus service would be a good idea, fewer of the respondents were certain that they would utilize the service if it were to be provided.

One-third of the respondents indicated that they were not sure they would use the bus service, and three respondents (i.e., six percent) were certain that they would not utilize it. The remainder of the respondents (i.e., 61 percent) said they would use the bus service if it were provided.

The respondents were also asked what locations they would like to see served by the fixed route bus service. Once again, the most common location mentioned were shopping centers (i.e., Wal-Mart and K-Mart) and medical offices. Specific communities mentioned included Lewistown, Belleville and the Valley View Retirement Community itself. Of these, Lewistown and its surrounding areas were mentioned most frequently.

USAGE OF BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Yes	31
No	3
Don't Know	17
TOTAL	51

Property Taxes - The next question asked the respondent if they were willing to see their property tax be increased by a small amount in order to help finance the bus system. As seen in the accompanying table, the response to this question was essentially evenly split between those responding “yes” (i.e., 32 percent), those responding “no” (i.e., 30 percent) and those that were not sure (i.e., 38 percent). It should be noted that not everyone who returned a questionnaire answered this question. It is also interesting to note that - when taken together - those who did not want their property taxes increased and those who were not sure if they should be increased comprise more than two-thirds of the questionnaire respondents.

RAISING OF PROPERTY TAXES TO FINANCE BUS SERVICE

Response	Total
Yes	15
No	14
Don't Know	18
TOTAL	47

Other Comments - The questionnaire respondents were also given the opportunity to “write in” any comment they wished regarding the possibility of operating fixed route transit service in Mifflin County.

Only a relatively small number of people wrote in any comments, and these were generally supportive of the effort to bring a regularly scheduled bus service to Mifflin County. It was felt that the service would be of great benefit to senior citizens and those who do not have access to an automobile or who do not drive, especially because of the schedule flexibility and cost constraints associated with the CARS service. Two people remarked that a useful fixed route bus service used to be provided in and around the Lewistown area several decades ago. However, two comments were also received which stated that a new transit service would not be worth any increase in property taxes.

Summary - Interestingly, the key findings from the questionnaires handed out at the Valley View Retirement Community essentially mimic those from the shopping center questionnaires. Although bus service in Mifflin County is thought to be a good idea, not too many people are willing to see their real estate property taxes raised in order to help finance the service. The primary use of the bus system for Valley View residents would be for shopping trips, followed by trips for medical/dental reasons.

Written Comments From Correspondence - As previously mentioned, two letters were received by the consultant team from citizens of Mifflin County. The first letter was from a resident of the Coleman House, in Lewistown. This person commented that regularly scheduled fixed route bus service was something that their community was very much in favor of. The writer indicated that all 46 of the residents of the Coleman House thought it would be a good idea and beneficial to the community, especially since more than half of the residents do not drive.

A second letter was received from a resident who lives in Lewistown in subsidized housing with his spouse. This person indicated that the CARS system is simply too expensive to utilize on a regular basis - especially for shopping trips - and that the local taxicab service can be both expensive and unreliable. They felt that a regularly scheduled fixed route bus service would be a great benefit to the people in the Lewistown area.

Summary - In the aggregate, the comments made at the “walk-in” public meetings, as well as the responses to the questionnaire which was distributed at these meetings, seem to indicate that there is certainly a great interest in providing a regularly scheduled fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County. The majority of people feel that service in and around the Lewistown area would be most appropriate, and that service to major shopping locations would also benefit a large number of people. However, when asked about an increase in property taxes to help finance the system, the questionnaire respondents seem somewhat less enthusiastic.

It should be noted that the members of the public who are inclined to participate in the “walk-in” meetings would likely find the topic interesting, and that many might already feel that a regularly scheduled fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County is necessary. For this reason, the subsequent section of this report will review a survey conducted recently which instead sampled the entire population of Mifflin County.

Solid Waste Disposal Survey

Mifflin County conducted a survey of county residents during October, 2001 in order to solicit their opinions regarding both the county’s solid waste disposal policy as well as the possibility of operating a new fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County. This section of the report will summarize the results of this survey as they pertain to public transportation. The survey results for Mifflin County will also be compared with the results of similar surveys conducted by the consultant during previous assignments in other communities throughout the United States.

Comparison of Survey Results with Other Communities - In Mifflin County - as well as in the other communities throughout the nation - several basic types of questions were asked of residents regarding the possibility of operating fixed route public transportation in their community. The first was whether or not they believed providing fixed route public transportation was a good idea. The second type of question asked whether or not they would use the bus service if it were available. Finally, the third type of question asked if they would be willing to pay for the fixed route bus service. All of the communities surveyed were asked if they would be willing to pay for the fixed route bus service; however, not every community was asked about transit being a “good idea” or if the survey respondent would use the bus service. Nonetheless, the results of the different surveys are informative.

The communities in which these surveys were previously conducted by the consultant vary in terms of size. In addition to Mifflin County, they are as follows:

COMMUNITIES SURVEYED

Community	Approximate Population
Mifflin County, Pennsylvania	47,000
Putnam County, West Virginia	43,000
Sartell, Minnesota	9,000
Saint Joseph, Minnesota	5,000

Source: Transit Plan Studies prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates

In each of these communities, there was no fixed route public transportation at the time the survey was conducted. Putnam County, West Virginia is located to the west of Charleston, a

larger community which already benefits from fixed route public transportation service. Many Putnam County residents worked in Charleston. In this regard, it is similar to Mifflin County in that many Mifflin County residents work in the neighboring county (i.e., Centre County, where State College and the Pennsylvania State University are located). Both Sartell, Minnesota and Saint Joseph, Minnesota are located outside of Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Once again, these communities are smaller than neighboring Saint Cloud, which already has a fixed route public transportation system.

The manner in which each community responded to the various types of questions will be reviewed in this section of the report. The responses are shown on a percentage basis, although the total number of valid survey responses is also indicated.

Is fixed route public transportation a “good idea”? - This question was asked in all of the communities except Mifflin County. The results were as follows:

IS FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION A “GOOD IDEA”?

Community	Total Survey Responses	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Unsure
Putnam County	301	87.0%	4.3%	8.7%
Sartell	104	79.0%	10.0%	11.0%
Saint Joseph	104	79.0%	4.0%	17.0%

Source: Transit Plan Studies prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates

The results clearly indicate that in all of the communities surveyed the majority of respondents feel that fixed route public transportation is a “good idea”. Only in Sartell did more than five percent of the respondents indicate that transit is a “bad idea”. In Saint Joseph, a relatively higher percentage of respondents indicated that they were “unsure” about the overall usefulness of a fixed route transit system for their community.

Would you utilize the bus service if it were made available? - This question was asked in all of the communities except Putnam County. The results were as follows:

WOULD YOU UTILIZE FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?

Community	Total Survey Responses	Yes	No	Maybe
Mifflin County	832	30.3%	10.8%	58.9%
Sartell	104	44.0%	44.0%	12.0%
Saint Joseph	104	54.0%	37.0%	9.0%

Source: Transit Plan Studies prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates

The results indicate that - in the aggregate - people are less certain that they would actually utilize the transit system themselves than they are that the system would be a “good idea” for the community to have. Interestingly, the highest percentage of “maybe” responses were in Mifflin County. This indicates that - depending upon the locations which the fixed route transportation system would serve - Mifflin County residents are relatively likely to be open to utilizing a bus system if it serves their trip needs. Responses from the Mifflin County survey also indicated that the willingness to utilize a new fixed route public transportation system would also depend upon the schedule and the fare.

There were only twelve write-in comments regarding the utilization of a new fixed route public transportation service in the Mifflin County survey; five were of a positive nature, four were of a negative nature, while three were neutral.

Would you pay for the fixed route bus service? - This question was asked in all of the communities. The results were as follows:

WOULD YOU PAY FOR FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?

Community	Total Survey Responses	Yes	No	Maybe
Mifflin County	832	27.0%	5.0%	66.0%
Putnam County	301	54.0%	34.0%	12.0%
Sartell	104	45.0%	43.0%	12.0%
Saint Joseph	104	51.0%	23.0%	26.0%

Source: Transit Plan Studies prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates

Once again, the results indicate that - in the aggregate - people are less certain that they would pay for a transit system than they are that the system would be a “good idea” for the community to have. Interestingly, the highest percentage of “maybe” responses were again in Mifflin County. This indicates that Mifflin County residents are relatively likely to be open to paying for the bus system if they feel the fare charged to utilize the transit system is reasonable.

There were only fourteen write-in comments regarding paying for a new fixed route public transportation service in the Mifflin County survey; only six were of a positive nature, while seven were of a negative nature and four were neutral.

Other Survey Comments - In the Mifflin County survey, space was also provided for survey respondents to comment in an open format on the possibility of providing a new fixed route public transportation system. Of the 162 “free form” comments that were provided, only 23 pertained to public transportation. Of these, 14 were of a positive nature, while only six were of a negative nature. Three were neutral comments.

Summary - Overall, the survey data indicate that Mifflin County residents were not as overtly enthusiastic about the possibility of operating a fixed route transportation system in their community as were residents in some of the other communities surveyed. However, Mifflin County residents do seem to be exceptionally willing to give public transportation a chance depending upon its cost and availability for their specific trip needs.

Stakeholder Interviews

The study team conducted an extensive community participation and outreach program as part of the overall study process. At the outset of the study, several outreach efforts were made to immediately incorporate local experience into the study efforts. Stakeholder interviews were conducted to include the knowledge and experience of key local persons and agencies that would be impacted by a new transit service. In addition to stakeholder interviews, numerous meetings have been held with local planning staff, as well as extensive rider and community input developed through the walk-in sessions and surveys. This strategy has allowed the study team to work in conjunction with the local community to develop an understanding of local issues from the outset of the project.

List of Stakeholders - The list of stakeholders which were interviewed was developed in conjunction with the staff of the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department. Stakeholder interviews are intended to educate the study team on local transportation and development issues that will affect both the feasibility of operating a new fixed route transit service as well as the overall planning process.

Stakeholders range from elected officials to municipal and county employees to representatives of various human service and non-profit agencies in the area. Employers were also interviewed in the process to gauge the need of workers in the area, and this constitutes an important part of the stakeholder review process. The stakeholders in Mifflin County were:

- Rob Postal - Director, Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation
- Jon Zimmerman - President, Downtown Lewistown, Incorporated
- Phyllis Palm - Assistant Administrator, Lewistown Hospital
- Bill Graffius - Director of Special Projects, Lewistown Hospital
- Charles E. Laub - Mifflin County Commissioner
- Susan M. McCartney - Mifflin County Commissioner
- Administrative Staff at Valley View Retirement Community
- Store Manager at Wal-Mart
- Transportation Committee of the United Way of Mifflin-Juniata, which includes representatives of these organizations:
 - ▶ Mifflin County School District
 - ▶ Mifflin County Planning and Development Department
 - ▶ Mifflin-Juniata Special Needs Center
 - ▶ Big Brothers Big Sisters
 - ▶ J & D Transportation Services
 - ▶ Mifflin County Mapping Department
 - ▶ Downtown Lewistown, Incorporated
 - ▶ JVACC
 - ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
 - ▶ SEDA-COG
 - ▶ Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging
 - ▶ Tuscarora Intermediate Unit/Juniata County
 - ▶ YMCA
 - ▶ Mifflin County Salvation Army

Stakeholder Interview Summary - Stakeholder interviews were conducted in Mifflin County on September 13th and 14th, 2002.

Stakeholders were candid in their discussions regarding both the existing shared ride public transportation service in the area as well as the possibilities for future fixed route service in Mifflin County. Topics discussed included service provision, funding, system effectiveness, rural issues, service coverage and possible long-term future transit needs. These informative sessions provided the study team with a variety of viewpoints on the local transportation situation that was invaluable in understanding local conditions.

Although not all stakeholders were “transit advocates” per se, each understood the important role that the existing demand responsive service operated by CARS plays in the local community, as well as the role which a possible future fixed route bus service would also play in the local community. Some viewed transit as a necessary service that is similar to a social service; available for the persons who need it and do not have access to or cannot use a personal automobile. It was understood that many residents of the area would benefit from a fixed route public transportation service for certain activities, depending on where and when the service operated. Some stakeholders indicated that fixed route transit service would be a “life-saver” for many local residents with no mobility alternatives. These viewpoints, while not always conducive to transit expansion efforts, do show that the local stakeholders understand that there

may be an appropriate role for transit service in the region.

Some specific comments made by several stakeholders are summarized in this section of the report:

- The Store Manager at the Wal-Mart felt that fixed route public transportation service was a good idea and would allow more people to shop at the various shopping centers in the area.
- The administrative staff at the Valley View Retirement Community was very supportive of the concept of providing some type of fixed route public transportation service. They felt that an increasing number of their clients would utilize the bus service over time.
- The representatives from the Lewistown Hospital felt that the bus route would most probably best serve both ambulatory patients and visitors to their facility, given the likely limitations on the proposed fixed route transit service's span of service (i.e., the hours of the day during which the bus route would operate). They felt that employees of the hospital would likely not rely on the bus service because they work in three different shifts, one of which begins at approximately 6:30AM or 7:30AM. They also felt that the fixed route service would greatly benefit the area's senior citizen population and that the Area Agency on Aging should be utilized to help "sell" the proposal.
- The County Commissioners which were interviewed indicated that they would like to "proceed to the next step" of the study so that they can assess and examine additional information regarding the possible impacts of providing a fixed route bus service. At the present time, they are not certain that there is either a significant need for a fixed route bus service or if there is sufficient funding to provide such a service.
- The President of Downtown Lewistown indicated that some type of "Transportation Center" or "hub" is needed in downtown Lewistown; this type of facility could not only be served by the proposed fixed route transit service but also by the intercity bus services that stop in Lewistown. This stakeholder also indicated that an eye-catching paint scheme should be applied to the bus utilized on the route so that it is distinctive; a uniquely designed vehicle (such as a "vintage trolleybus") would also provide the fixed route transit service with a marketing and "brand recognition" advantage. Finally, this stakeholder also indicated that the vehicle could also be utilized for special events and shuttle services in addition to the regularly scheduled fixed route bus service.
- The Director of the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation indicated that - should a new fixed route transit service prove successful - a future possibility for additional transit service in Mifflin County would involve new "Work Trip" transit routes which would provide service to major employment clusters at key shift-change times (e.g., at 7:00AM and at 3:00PM). These

locations may include:

- ▶ Mifflin County Industrial Park - 11 companies with about 2,200 employees
- ▶ Standard Steel Corporation - employs about 900 people
- ▶ Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation Plaza - 22 companies with about 500 employees
- ▶ Armagh Business Center - 4 companies with about 400 employees

Other information on transportation resources in Mifflin County were obtained from the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan completed in 2000. Current and future Amtrak services were identified from this report.

SERVICE PLAN

This section of the report documents the fixed route public transportation service proposals prepared as part of the Mifflin County Transportation Study. Estimates of the impacts of the proposed service plan in terms of several key operating statistics are also provided. An outline of the various service inputs and planning precepts utilized in the development of the service plan is also included as part of this section of the report.

Service Development Process

The service proposals described in the following section were prepared by giving consideration to a variety of service inputs. Also, a group of planning precepts guided the formulation of the proposals. These two components of service planning and development are discussed in this section. They are followed by the recommended service proposals for a new fixed route public transportation service in Mifflin County.

Service Inputs - Six major inputs were considered while preparing the fixed route service proposals. Each of these inputs is briefly described below.

- Community Characteristics - An analysis was performed to identify residential areas and major activity centers that warrant transit service as well as Census tracts and municipalities in Mifflin County with the greatest potential need for transit. Results indicate that - with limited exceptions - the area of Mifflin County most suited to fixed route public transportation is the area in and around the Borough of Lewistown.
- Stakeholder Interviews - Interviews were held with about one dozen policy makers, community leaders, representatives of community organizations, County Commissioners, members of the business community and various other decision makers throughout Mifflin County. From the interviews it was learned that there is a general perception that a fixed route transit service would certainly benefit specific segments of the population, but that the cost must be reasonably within the means of Mifflin County.
- Public Meetings - “Walk-in” public meetings were held at various locations in Mifflin County. At these meetings, citizens had an opportunity to provide input regarding the existing demand responsive paratransit service, any concerns they might have and ideas for fixed route transit service alternatives. People were also able to utilize questionnaires at these meetings and “write-in” any suggestions they might have. These meetings were held over one-to-two hour spans in a

walk-up format (i.e., people held a one-on-one discussion with a member of the consulting team).

- Survey - A survey of Mifflin County residents regarding various local issues (including public transportation) was previously conducted. The results of this survey were contrasted with those asking similar questions related to fixed route public transportation service in other similarly sized cities throughout the nation. Overall, the survey data indicate that Mifflin County residents were not as overtly enthusiastic about the possibility of operating a fixed route transportation system in their community as were residents in some of the other communities surveyed. However, Mifflin County residents do seem to be exceptionally willing to give public transportation a chance depending upon its cost and availability for their specific trip needs.
- Field Reconnaissance - Extensive observations were made throughout Mifflin County to gain a first-hand understanding of existing transit operating characteristics as well as the character of present and future development. During the course of these investigations, land use, key generators and other noteworthy items were recorded.
- Staff/Committee Input - Meetings were held with Mifflin County staff, the United Way's Transportation Committee and with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation staff where issues regarding the operation of a new fixed route public transportation service were reviewed. Based on input from these groups, a potential service plan has been developed for further discussion.

Planning Precepts - The following planning precepts, or service design principles, were employed to guide the development of the proposed fixed route public transportation service.

- Definition of "Feasibility" - A key finding in this report is that a proposed fixed route public transportation system in Mifflin County would, in fact, be technically feasible. However, the financial feasibility of such a service (i.e., the availability of sufficient funding) needs to be further explored. The technical feasibility of a fixed route service is predicated on the following:
 - ▶ The community participation process revealed that there is a need for some type of fixed route public transportation service; clearly, certain segments of the population would benefit from such a service.
 - ▶ The level of demand is likely sufficient to justify a small "starter bus route" for Mifflin County. However, it has yet to be determined whether

the overall level of demand and the need for such a service are significant enough to warrant the commitment of funds from Mifflin County.

- ▶ The level of population - and population density - in specific parts of Mifflin County appears to be high enough to justify the feasibility of a new fixed route public transportation service. While no single measure exists, it is generally recognized that densities in excess of 2,500 persons per square mile are necessary to make fixed route bus service viable. The sections of Mifflin County exceeding 2,500 persons per square mile are those areas near Lewistown, Burnham and Juniata Terrace. It should be noted that this area includes portions of Derry Township and Granville Township. While McVeytown also has a high density, it has a small population of about 405 people and is surrounded by low density areas.
 - ▶ Alternative sources of transportation are limited or unavailable.
- Operate Uniform Service Paths - As much as is both possible and practical, transit service on a new bus route should essentially follow the identical route alignment on all trips throughout the service day. Transit service extensions “on request” or on certain designated trips should be avoided whenever possible and appropriate. Such service changes can be annoying to the riders on the bus and can confuse the casual user.
 - Provide Uniform and Clockface Headways - Headways (times between buses at a stop location) on a new bus route should be uniform. Inconsistent headways will confuse users by creating uncertainty as to the arrival and departure times of buses. The result will be lower ridership. Maintaining “clockface” headways makes usage easier because users will easily remember when the buses will arrive and depart.
 - Application of Findings - The entire service development process has allowed the consultant team to learn certain key facts regarding Mifflin County and the possible provision of fixed route public transportation service. “What we learned” includes the following:
 - ▶ There does appear to be a certain level of need for a fixed route bus service.
 - ▶ The community characteristics seem to indicate that a sufficiently high population density exists within a small “corridor” in and around Lewistown that could support fixed route public transportation service (i.e., population densities are generally in excess of 2,500 persons per square mile).

- ▶ Discussions with both the general public as well as with several community leaders indicate that there is a general impression among residents of Mifflin County that the taxicab service in the area is not sufficient.
- ▶ Other Pennsylvania counties with similar population densities have fixed route public transportation service. For example, Carbon County provides fixed route transit service and the local share of the service for which Carbon County is responsible is approximately \$15,000 per year.

Fixed Route Public Transportation Service Proposals

This section presents a series of fixed route service proposals for Mifflin County. The route alignment, frequency of service and span of service proposed for each alternative are described. Any figures necessary to illustrate the proposed route alignments are also provided. Estimates of the impact of the proposed services regarding various key operating statistics are also provided. The proposals are defined on a route-by-route basis.

Service Levels - As seen below, an analysis was made of the current amount of service that is provided by other Pennsylvania Counties that operate fixed route bus service. The analysis includes information for Pennsylvania rural counties that provide fixed route service.

SERVICE LEVEL AND UTILIZATION PROJECTIONS

System	Population	Revenue Hours	Passengers	Revenue Hours/1,000 People	Passengers per 1,000 People	Passengers per Revenue Hour
Carbon County	59,996	3,196	12,097	53.3	201.6	3.79
Lebanon County	123,019	25,399	253,772	206.5	2,062.9	9.99
Indiana County	91,232	22,220	270,711	243.6	2,967.3	12.18
Bradford, Sullivan and Tioga Counties	112,863	13,587	67,816	120.4	600.9	4.21
AVERAGE	96,778	16,101	151,099	156.0	1,458.2	7.54

Source: Pennsylvania Operating Assistance Programs Statistical Report, Rural & Small Urban Programs, Fiscal Years 1999-2000 & 2000-2001

The data shows that the amount of service varies from about 53.3 to 243.6 revenue hours per 1,000 of population with the average at 156.0. In simple terms, this represents the amount of service that other Pennsylvania rural systems provides to its residents in one year as measured by the number of hours of service provided as related to its population. This information can then be used to project a level of service for Mifflin County and then also project ridership. For example, if we use the lowest level of service provided (i.e., Carbon County), 53.3 revenue hours

is multiplied by Mifflin County population defined in terms of 1,000 people or $53.3 \times 46.486 = 2,478$ revenue hours. This represents the low level of service need. It is the recommended starting point for the level of fixed route service that should be provided in Mifflin County.

The information also indicates that ridership can vary widely from system to system. Carbon County has the lowest passenger productivity at 3.79 passengers per revenue hour. The highest is Indiana County at 12.18 passengers per revenue hour while the average is 7.54.

As seen below, other interesting information from this source was the local financial commitment by the various counties for the services they provide:

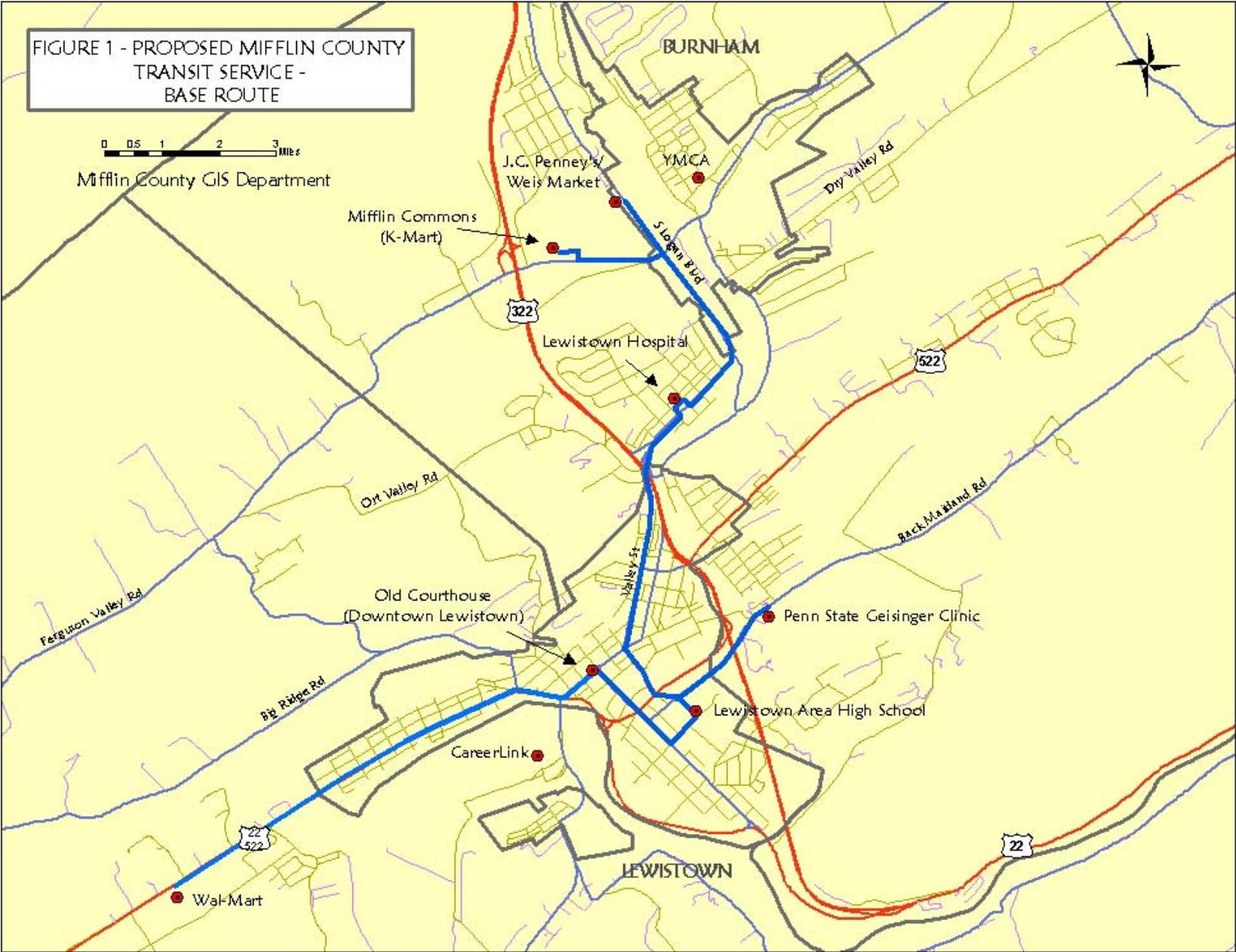
Carbon County	\$16,940
Lebanon County	\$50,279
Indiana County	\$28,487
Bradford, Sullivan & Tioga Counties	\$23,480

Base Route - The Base Route, which is illustrated in Figure 6, would operate between the Mifflin Commons shopping center (where K-Mart is located) and the Wal-Mart on U.S. Route 522 via downtown Lewistown. Other major generators served by this route would be J.C. Penney's, Weis Market, Lewistown Hospital, Indian Valley High School, Geisinger Clinic and the Lewistown Area High School. Service would only operate on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays for ten hours between 8:00AM and 6:00PM. However, on Fridays during November and December, two additional round trips will be operated after 6:00PM (i.e., service will operate until 10:00PM). It is assumed that on Wednesdays and Thursdays transit service would be provided along an extended route alignment which would also serve the Valley View Retirement Community in Belleville. The round trip mileage for the Base Route would be about 20.70 miles. Therefore, assuming a reasonable operating speed, service along this bus route would operate every two hours (i.e., every 120 minutes). The accompanying tables illustrate the proposed schedule for the Base Route:

BASE ROUTE TO WAL-MART

Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)	Weis Market	Lewistown Hospital	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Wal-Mart
8:00AM	8:05AM	8:20AM	8:45AM	8:56AM
10:00AM	10:05AM	10:20AM	10:45AM	10:56AM
12:00PM	12:05PM	12:20PM	12:45PM	12:56PM
2:00PM	2:05PM	2:20PM	2:45PM	2:56PM
4:00PM	4:05PM	4:20PM	4:45PM	4:56PM

Figure 6 – Base Route – Monday, Tuesday, and Friday



BASE ROUTE TO MIFFLIN COMMONS/WEIS MARKET

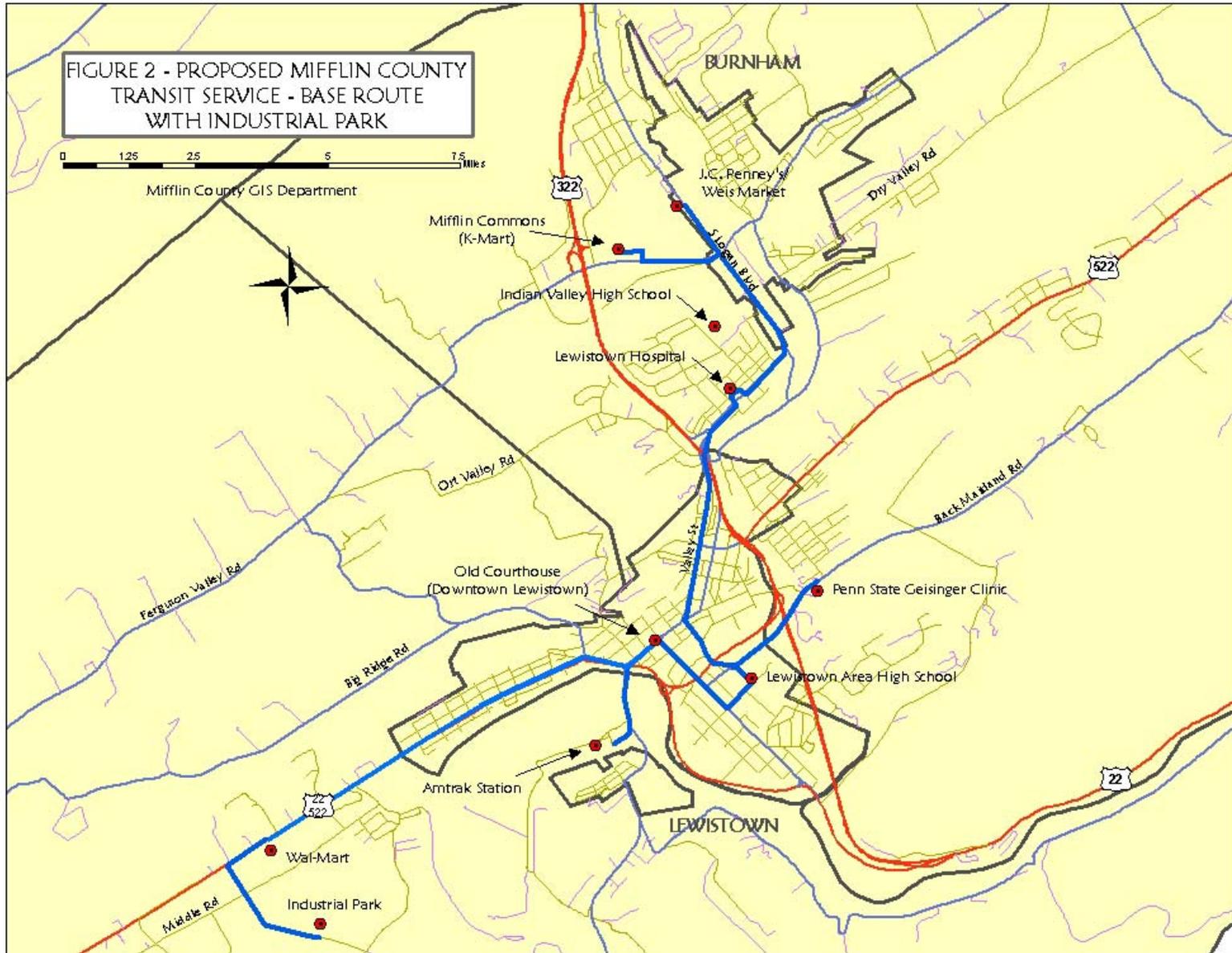
Wal-Mart	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Lewistown Hospital	Weis Market	Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)
9:00AM	9:11AM	9:36AM	9:51AM	9:57AM
11:00AM	11:11AM	11:36AM	11:51AM	11:57AM
1:00PM	1:11PM	1:36PM	1:51PM	1:57PM
3:00PM	3:11PM	3:36PM	3:51PM	3:57PM
5:00PM	5:11PM	5:36PM	5:51PM	5:57PM

The annual hours for Base Route would be 1,592 annual revenue hours, and the annual miles would be about 16,477 annual revenue miles.

Base Route with Industrial Parks - The Base Route with Industrial Parks, which is illustrated in Figure 7, is intended to illustrate an alternative route alignment for the Base Route. In this proposal, service is extended to the Industrial Park, the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation and to the Lewistown Amtrak Station. The Base Route with Industrial Parks would operate between the Mifflin Commons shopping center (where K-Mart is located) and the Industrial Park off of U.S. Route 522 on Industrial Park Road via downtown Lewistown. Other major generators served by this route would be J.C. Penney's, Weis Market, Lewistown Hospital, Indian Valley High School, Geisinger Clinic, Wal-Mart and the Lewistown Area High School. Similar to the Base Route proposal, the service on the Base Route with Industrial Parks would only operate on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Service would operate for 10.08 hours between 8:00AM and 6:05PM. However, on Fridays during November and December, two additional round trips will be operated after 6:05PM (i.e., service will operate until 10:35PM). As shall be seen in a subsequent proposal, it is assumed that on Tuesdays and Thursdays transit service would be provided along an extended route alignment which would also serve the Valley View Retirement Community in Belleville.

The round trip mileage for the Base Route with Industrial Parks would be about 24 miles. Therefore, assuming a reasonable operating speed, service along this bus route would operate every two hours and 15 minutes (i.e., every 135 minutes). The accompanying tables illustrate the proposed schedule for the Base Route with Industrial Parks:

Figure 7 – Industrial Parks – Monday, Tuesday, and Friday



BASE ROUTE WITH INDUSTRIAL PARKS - TO WAL-MART

Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)	Weis Market	Lewistown Hospital	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Wal-Mart	Industrial Park
8:00AM	8:05AM	8:20AM	8:45AM	9:00AM	9:05AM
10:15AM	10:20AM	10:35AM	11:00AM	11:15AM	11:20PM
12:30PM	12:35PM	12:50PM	1:15PM	1:30PM	1:35PM
2:45PM	2:50PM	3:05PM	3:30PM	3:45PM	3:50PM
5:00PM	5:05PM	5:20PM	5:45PM	6:00PM	6:05PM

BASE ROUTE WITH INDUSTRIAL PARKS - TO MIFFLIN COMMONS

Industrial Park	Wal-Mart	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Lewistown Hospital	Weis Market	Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)
9:08AM	9:13AM	9:28AM	9:53AM	10:08AM	10:13AM
11:23AM	11:28AM	11:43AM	12:08PM	12:23PM	12:28PM
1:38PM	1:43PM	1:58PM	2:23PM	2:38PM	2:43PM
3:53PM	3:58PM	4:13PM	4:38PM	4:53PM	4:58PM

The annual hours for Base Route with Industrial Parks would be 1,608 annual revenue hours, and the annual miles would be about 17,254 annual revenue miles.

Belleville Route - The Belleville Route, which is illustrated in Figure 8, would operate between Belleville and the Wal-Mart on U.S. Route 522 via the Valley View Retirement Community and downtown Lewistown. Other major generators served by this route would be the Mifflin Commons shopping center (where K-Mart is located), the YMCA on First Avenue in Burnham, J.C. Penney’s, Weis Market, Lewistown Hospital, Indian Valley High School, the new Geisinger Clinic and the Lewistown Area High School. Service would only operate on Wednesdays and Thursdays for nine hours between 8:00AM and 5:00PM. Wednesdays were selected for this service since it is Belleville Sale day that could attract residents to use public transit to attend the event. Further, the YMCA and two high schools were served by this route to provide opportunities for students to participate in after school activities at the YMCA. As was seen in the prior route description, it is assumed that on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays transit service would be provided along the shorter “Base Route” alignment. The round trip mileage for the Belleville Route would be about 47 miles. Therefore, assuming a reasonable operating speed, service along this bus route would operate every three hours (i.e., every 180 minutes). The accompanying tables illustrate the proposed schedule for the Belleville Route: uesdays and Fridays transit service would be provided along a shorter “Base Route” alignment.

BELLEVILLE ROUTE TO WAL-MART

Belleville/Valley View Community	Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)	Lewistown Hospital	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Wal-Mart
8:00AM	8:32AM	8:47AM	9:12AM	9:23AM
11:00AM	11:32AM	11:47AM	12:12PM	12:23PM
2:00PM	2:32PM	2:47PM	3:12PM	3:23PM

BELLEVILLE ROUTE TO BELLEVILLE/VALLEY VIEW

Wal-Mart	Downtown Lewistown (Old Courthouse)	Lewistown Hospital	Mifflin Commons (K-Mart)	Belleville/Valley View Community
9:30AM	9:41AM	10:04AM	10:19AM	10:51AM
12:30PM	12:41PM	1:04PM	1:19PM	1:51PM
3:30PM	3:41PM	4:04PM	4:19PM	4:51PM

The annual hours for Belleville Route would be 936 annual revenue hours and the annual miles would be about 14,421 annual revenue miles.

Recommended Service Plan

Discussions with Mifflin County Planning and Development Department staff, the United Way’s Transportation Committee and with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation staff were held regarding the fixed route public transportation service proposals so that the input of all of these various groups could be incorporated into the study. Based upon this input, a recommended service plan has been developed for the proposed Mifflin County fixed route transit service.

The recommended service plan consists of utilizing both the “Base Route” proposal and the “Belleville Route” proposal. As previously mentioned, the Base Route would operate on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays while the Belleville Route would operate on Wednesdays and Thursdays. As was described previously, the Base Route would operate two additional round trips on Fridays during the months of November and December, thus extending its span of service. There would be no fixed route public transportation service on weekends.

The recommended service plan would create a fixed route transit service with approximately 2,528 annual revenue hours and approximately 30,898 annual revenue miles.

Future Options for Mifflin County Transit Service

Discussions with the various study participants also yielded a set of public transportation service proposals which would not be implemented as part of the recommended service plan, but which the study participants felt warranted future consideration. These proposals are as follows:

- Student-Oriented services to and from the YMCA and other after-school programs for “latchkey” children
- Once-a-week service to and from shopping opportunities in the State College area
- “Work Trip” transit routes which would provide service to major employment clusters at key shift-change times (e.g., at 7:00AM and at 3:00PM); locations may include:
 - ▶ Mifflin County Industrial Park - 11 companies with about 2,200 employees
 - ▶ Standard Steel Corporation - employs about 900 people
 - ▶ Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation Plaza - 22 companies with about 500 employees
 - ▶ Armagh Business Center - 4 companies with about 400 employees
- Coordination with Amtrak service at the train station shown in Figure 7

Projected Impacts of the Recommended Service Plan

The impact of the recommended service plan on various key factors was estimated. In terms of cost, both “high cost” and “low cost” estimates were utilized. It was assumed that the low cost estimate for operating the proposed transit service would be approximately \$30.00 per hour, while the high cost estimate for operating the transit service would be about \$45.00 per hour. These are the range of costs for Pennsylvania rural fixed route operators. This places the projected cost range of the recommended service plan at approximately \$75,840 to \$113,760 per year.

Similarly, for passenger productivity both a “high ridership” and a “low ridership” estimate were utilized. It was assumed that a low ridership estimate would be approximately 4 passengers per hour (similar to that exhibited by the Carbon County system), while a high ridership estimate would be about 8 passengers per hour (similar to the average of the other PA rural systems reviewed in this report). This places the projected ridership range of the recommended service plan at approximately 10,112 to 20,224 passengers per year.

As can be seen, it is possible to assume a certain range of values for the projected impacts of the recommended service plan given these “high” and “low” estimates. Although it was

assumed that passenger revenue would be approximately \$1.00 per passenger in all cases, the projected range in terms of ridership also creates a possible range in terms of passenger revenue. Therefore, given the possible range in terms of cost and revenue impacts, the projected annual subsidy is also presented as a range of possible values. The projected subsidy range of the recommended service plan is therefore approximately \$55,616 to \$103,648 per year. The projected cost, revenue, ridership and subsidy values of the recommended service plan are summarized in the table below:

PROJECTED IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDED SERVICE PLAN

Statistic	Projected Value
Hours	2,528
Low Cost Estimate (at \$30.00 per hour)	\$75,840
High Cost Estimate (at \$45.00 per hour)	\$113,760
Low Ridership Estimate (at 4 passengers per hour)	10,112
High Ridership Estimate (at 8 passengers per hour)	20,224
Low Revenue Estimate (assumes \$1.00 fare charged)	\$10,112
High Revenue Estimate (assumes \$1.00 fare charged)	\$20,224
Projected Annual Subsidy Range	\$55,616 to \$103,648

It should be noted that the proposed new fixed route system in Mifflin County is not established to substitute for the shared ride system now in place and operated by CARS. That system would continue. Rather, the new fixed route system is aimed at providing the residents of Mifflin County with a new mobility option.

Implementation Plan

In order to implement the recommended service plan for the new Mifflin County fixed route transit service, several requirements need to be considered. It should be noted that approximately \$20,000 in additional funding should be budgeted for the actual implementation of the recommended service plan. The implementation plan’s requirements can be categorized into three groups: capital requirements, management/administration considerations and operating requirements. Each of these is more fully discussed below:

- **Capital Requirements** - Essentially, the capital requirements of the recommended service plan consist of the vehicles utilized for the new transit service and other passenger amenities. These are as follows:

- ▶ Vehicles - At least one vehicle must be acquired to provide service; arrangements must also be made for a “back-up” vehicle. Depending upon the operator selected to provide the service, it might be possible to use an existing vehicle which is currently being utilized by other transportation providers in Mifflin County. It should also be noted that a lease arrangement would likely be beneficial while the service is in its initial two-year demonstration phase. Finally, the vehicles utilized for the transit service should sport an eye-catching paint scheme so that they are distinctive; a uniquely designed vehicle (such as a “vintage trolleybus”) would also provide the fixed route transit service with a marketing and “brand recognition” advantage.

- ▶ Bus Stop Signs/Passenger Information Panels - Approximately 50 bus stop signs would need to be purchased for the new transit service. These should incorporate the system’s logo, a telephone information number and should clearly indicate that “no parking” is allowed in the bus stop. At major bus stops (e.g., at Wal-Mart) a passenger information panel would also be displayed. These panels would provide customers with a route map and a schedule for that particular location.

- **Management/Administration Considerations** - Although Mifflin County would always bear the ultimate responsibility for the oversight of the new fixed route transit service and would therefore always “sign-off” on policy decisions, the “day-to-day” management and administration of the transit service need not burden the County’s staff.
For example, the following tasks would ideally be accomplished by a contractor:
 - ▶ Preparation of grant applications for the various levels of government (i.e., federal, state, etc.)
 - ▶ Preparation of quarterly system performance reports and other required record-keeping
 - ▶ Compliance with the reporting requirements of various government agencies
 - ▶ Ensuring compliance with the vehicle maintenance requirements

Although the management and administration of the system should be contracted out, it should be kept in mind that a logical system administrator would be the existing operator of the demand responsive paratransit service (i.e., CARS). CARS already operates the shared ride service for Mifflin County as well as Medical Assistance and the methadone clinic service. Therefore, they already have an existing appreciation of the various state and federal requirements.

- **Operating Requirements** - The requirements necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the new fixed route transit service once it is implemented are as follows:
 - ▶ System Logo and “Identity” - The system should have a logo which is distinctive and easily recognized. The logo will always be used to identify the transit service and create a sense of “brand recognition” among the residents of Mifflin County.
 - ▶ Service Details - The Manager/Administrator for the service should develop a detailed service operating plan to fully define the service alignment. This should be accomplished using a similar sized vehicle that is planned for actual service. This final definition of the service must consider the following:
 - Turn-around locations at places such as Belleville, the YMCA, Geisinger Clinic and Wal-Mart;
 - Service alignment thorough shopping centers and Valley View Retirement Community;
 - Stop locations at major activity centers such as high schools, shopping centers, healthcare/medical facilities and downtown Lewistown;
 - Bus stop locations at other places along the route. Designated bus stop locations should be identified for all safe stopping locations along the route; and,
 - Verification of the overall running time of the fixed route and the major timepoints that are listed on the public schedule.
 - ▶ Timetable - A timetable for public use must be printed and should at least include a system map, the logo and the telephone information number. The timetable will only include the major timepoints along the route and not every stop location. Typically, timepoints are defined at major activity centers and are spaced about 10 to 15 minutes apart.
 - ▶ Operating Scheme - At some point in the near future, Mifflin County must determine who will operate the new transit system on a “day-to-day” basis (i.e., would the system be directly operated by Mifflin County or would the operation of the system be contracted out). It should be noted that the system operator may differ from the system manager/administrator, whose duties were previously described.

Once again, CARS (i.e., the existing operator of the demand responsive

paratransit service) may appear to be a logical choice for the system operator. However, CARS must both be willing to operate the service and must have the resources to do so. It should also be noted that CARS' cost structure may be high. For these reasons, Mifflin County may want to consider an outside private-sector vendor, such as J & D. This operator was utilized to provide the recently eliminated service between Mifflin County and State College.

- ▶ Arrangements for Vehicle Maintenance - No matter what operating scheme is chosen, arrangements for the regular maintenance of the vehicles must be made.
- ▶ Fare Policy and Revenue Handling Procedure - The new fixed route transit system will require that a fare policy and revenue handling procedure be determined prior to the implementation of service. It should be noted that the projected impacts of the recommended service plan discussed previously assumed an average fare of \$1.00 from each boarding passenger. Seniors citizens ride free in the non-peak periods. This free ride program is where the State refunds a system from the Lottery Program for the fare that the Seniors would normally pay. This requires that senior citizen ridership data be compiled and an application be made to PaDOT for the funds. Eventually, the system should offer frequent user discounts through passes and/or multi-ride tickets.
- ▶ Marketing/Outreach Plan - A new marketing and outreach plan must be developed so that the community is fully aware of the new service. Various media should be utilized. For example, the new timetable may be mailed out to residents of Mifflin County with their utility bills. Another alternative would be to distribute these timetables door-to-door within the service area of the proposed bus route. The initiation of the service should be a major media event with ribbon cutting or some other form of promotion. Also, during the first week of service, a reduced fare program should be offered at perhaps 25¢.

Available Funding Sources

There are various funding sources available for the new Mifflin County fixed route transit service. This section of the report describes the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Rural and Small Urban Assistance Program. It is from this program that funding for Mifflin County would be available.

- The "first step" is a two-year "**Demonstration Grant**" where 90 percent of the system deficit is funded by PennDOT. The local government must fund 10 percent of the system deficit during the two year term of the Demonstration Grant.

The demonstration grant funding is part of the Section 5311 funding (which may be utilized for operating, capital and/or technical expenses), some of which is set-aside for “new starts” and demonstrations.

- If - over the course of the two year trial period - the system then meets several productivity and financial performance criteria, it becomes a “Rural Project” under Section 5311 and qualifies for federal funding.

The criteria the transit systems must meet depend on the type of new transit system being operated. A system can fall into one of three categories: (1) a system based on serving a university; (2) a system which is based on an existing shared-ride service; or (3) a completely new system. Mifflin County would likely fall into one of the last two categories.

- ▶ Systems based on an existing shared-ride service must have a farebox recovery rate of about 50 percent and carry 8 to 10 passengers per hour.
 - ▶ A completely new transit system must have a farebox recovery rate of about 30 percent and also carry 8 to 10 passengers per hour.
 - ▶ The farebox recovery rates may include State Lottery funding.
- State Lottery funding depends on the number of senior citizens riding on the system during the off-peak hours. The State Lottery pays the transit operator the lower of the system’s base fare or the average fare for each senior citizen carried.

At the present time, additional funds are made available to the transit system because the State’s General Fund makes up the difference between the average and base fares for the senior citizen ridership.

- Once the system is approved for funding as a “Rural Project”, the federal discretionary funding may cover up to 50 percent of the system’s deficit. (Typically, the federal subsidy is somewhat less than a full 50 percent.) PennDOT will subsidize 40 percent of the system deficit for a rural system; most rural systems are considered “Class 4” systems by PennDOT. The remainder of the system deficit (i.e., 10 percent) must be subsidized by the local government.

Local Funding

The projected cost and revenue impacts of the recommended service plan indicate that the annual subsidy required to operate the new transit service may range between about \$56,000 and \$104,000. The “start-up” or implementation costs would add about \$20,000 during the first year of operation. Therefore, during the first year, the subsidy required would range from \$76,000 to about \$124,000. Based upon PennDOT’s practice of funding about 90 percent of the

system deficit for a two year period, a ten percent local share of the subsidy would be required. This local subsidy would amount to approximately \$7,600 to \$12,400 during the first year.

Next Steps

In order for the service to be implemented, there must be a commitment made by the County for funding the service, at least for the two year demonstration period. Without this commitment, there would be no matching funds from the federal and state governments.

While there is no timetable for when such a commitment must be made, the plan defined in this study will only be applicable for about up to three to five years. Thereafter, the feasibility of fixed route public transit service in Mifflin County may have to be revisited.

In the meantime, if the financial commitment is delayed, the shared ride operator (CARS) may wish to explore making any type service improvements it can to its services based on the results developed in this study.

Summary

This report has presented a Service Plan for a new Mifflin County public transportation system. The proposed new fixed route serves several locations including most major activity centers, provides direct service for many passengers and should help improve the region's overall mobility. The local share of the new fixed route transit system during its first year of operation would be approximately ten percent of the total system deficit, or about \$7,600 to \$12,400.