



Challenges in Developing a New Transit Authority



Panel Participants

(Transit for Dummies)

- David Cole, Region 1 PDC Exe. Director
- David Hafley, AICP, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- John Tuggle, PE PS, FRMPO Executive Director



Telling the Story

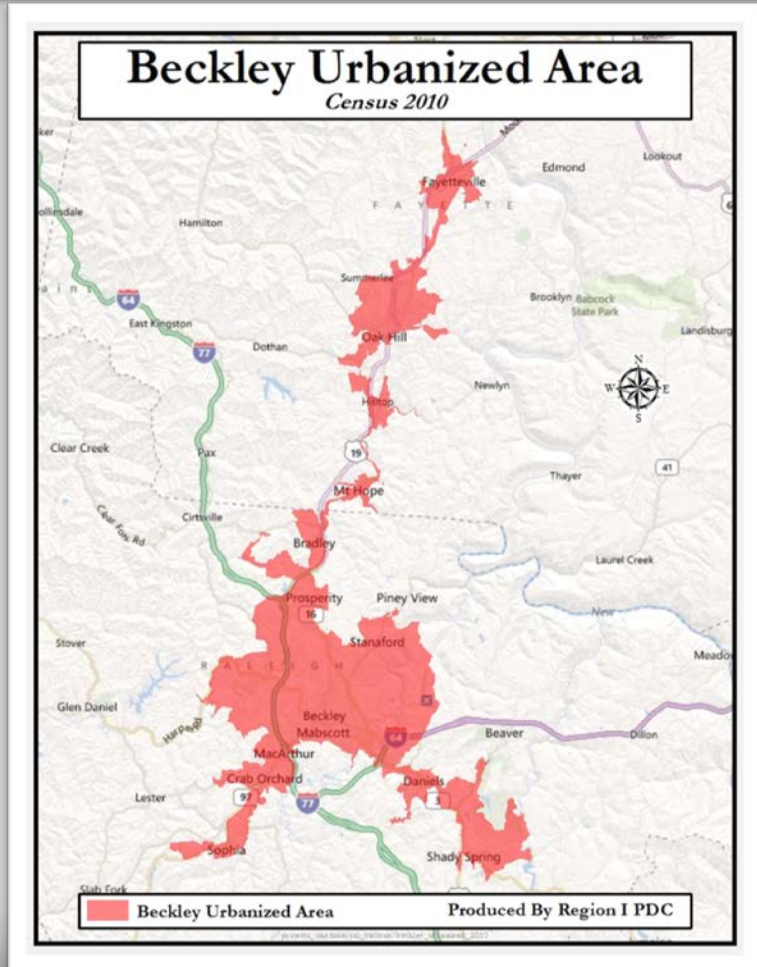
- The Urbanized Designation
- Creation of the Fayette/Raleigh MPO
- Where is Transit in the MPO Today?
- Reaching out to Stakeholders
- The Birth of the New River Transit Authority
- Navigating the System



Recognizing Growth

- 2010 Census Data results in new urbanized status for both Fayette & Raleigh Counties
- New urban area includes:

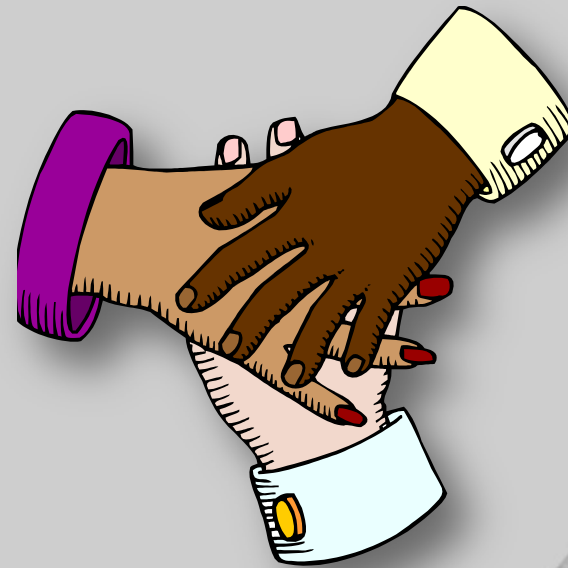
<u>Fayette</u>	<u>Raleigh</u>
Fayetteville	Beckley
Mount Hope	Mabscott
Oak Hill	Sophia



Building Blocks Establishing the MPO

- Step #1 - MPO Team

- Local Leadership
- WVDOT
- Local Transit
- Regions 1 & 4 PDC



- Step #2 – Collaborate

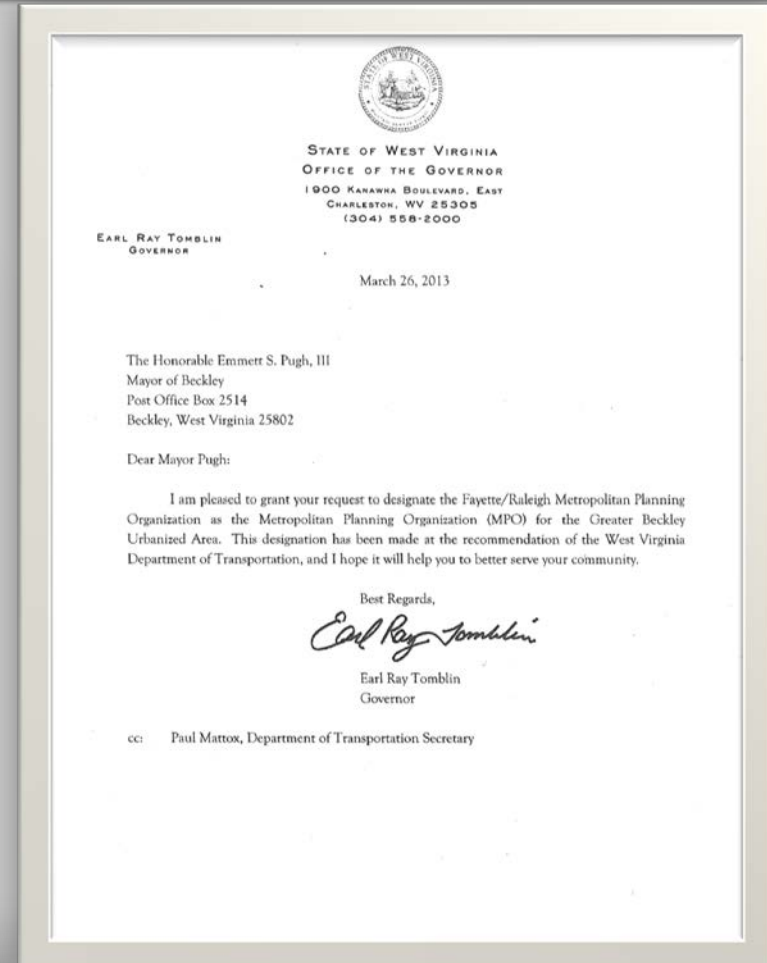
(i.e. win award for most meetings held in a single year)

Building Blocks Establishing the MPO



Continued

- Step #3 – Receive Designation





Where is Transit in the MPO Today?

- Current Services
- Gaps
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Paving the way for the NRTA



Existing Service Overview

Raleigh Co.



- **Dial-a-Ride**
 - Curb-to-curb service, by appointment only
 - Open to general public
 - \$2.50 each way
 - Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Existing Service Overview

Raleigh Co.

Continued

- Job Access Vans
 - 800 to 900 riders/month to work, school, training
 - Mon. thru Sat., 6 a.m. to midnight
 - \$2.50 each way, submit schedule in advance
 - Includes childcare dropoff/pickup for parents
- New Freedoms – for seniors and disabled
 - Same hours and fares as Job Access

 **Both federal grant programs end this year, but urban transit funds can be used for same purpose**

Existing Service Overview

Raleigh Co.

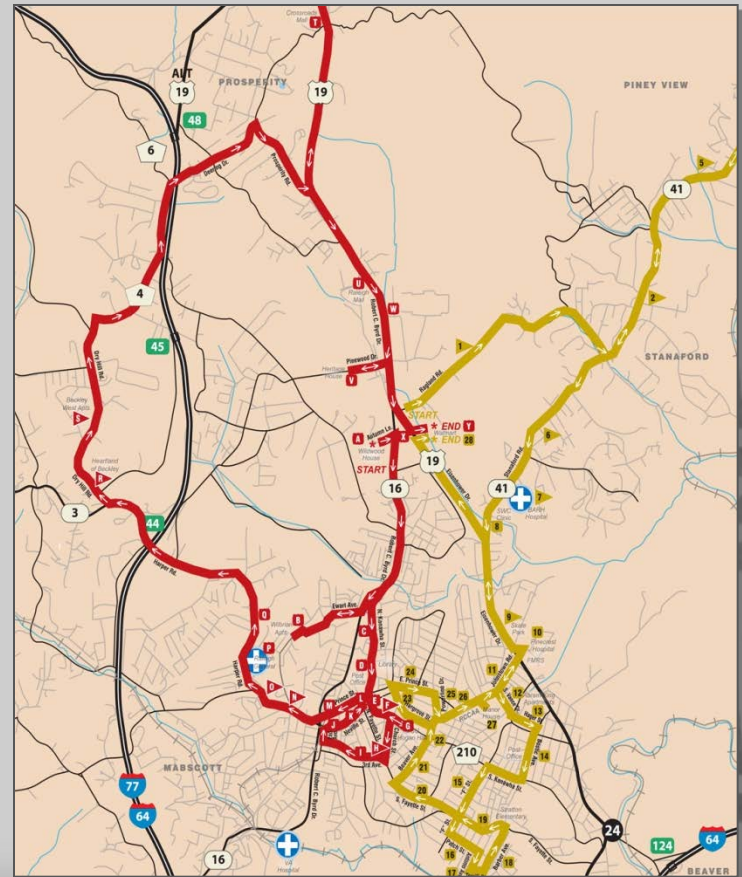
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Public Bus Routes

\$2.50 each way

\$2 for each additional stop

- Two city routes
 - M-F, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 - Transfer between routes at Walmart
 - Each stop served 4 times daily
 - Bus deviates up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from route, if request is made the previous day
- Two county routes
 - Tuesday/Thursday
 - Low ridership, except for first of each month



Funding Strategy

Raleigh Co.

Despite not having a public transit authority, Raleigh County has a very robust rural public transportation system.

- Housing public transportation in a CAP allows non-DOT Federal funds to be used as match.
- Non-DOT Federal match includes HUD, HHS, and VA.
- Additional funding from City of Beckley, Raleigh County, fares, and contract income.
- 2014 transportation budget is \$648,000

Existing Service Overview Fayette Co.

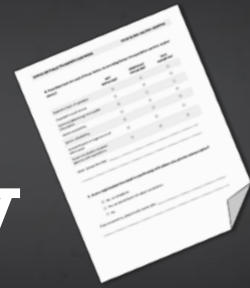
Public Bus Route

\$2 to 3.50 each way, depending on distance

- Runs south from Fayetteville, turning around at Crossroads Mall
- M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.
- All stops are “flag” stops
- Bus deviates up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from route, if request is made the previous day
- Two full runs daily



Stakeholder Survey

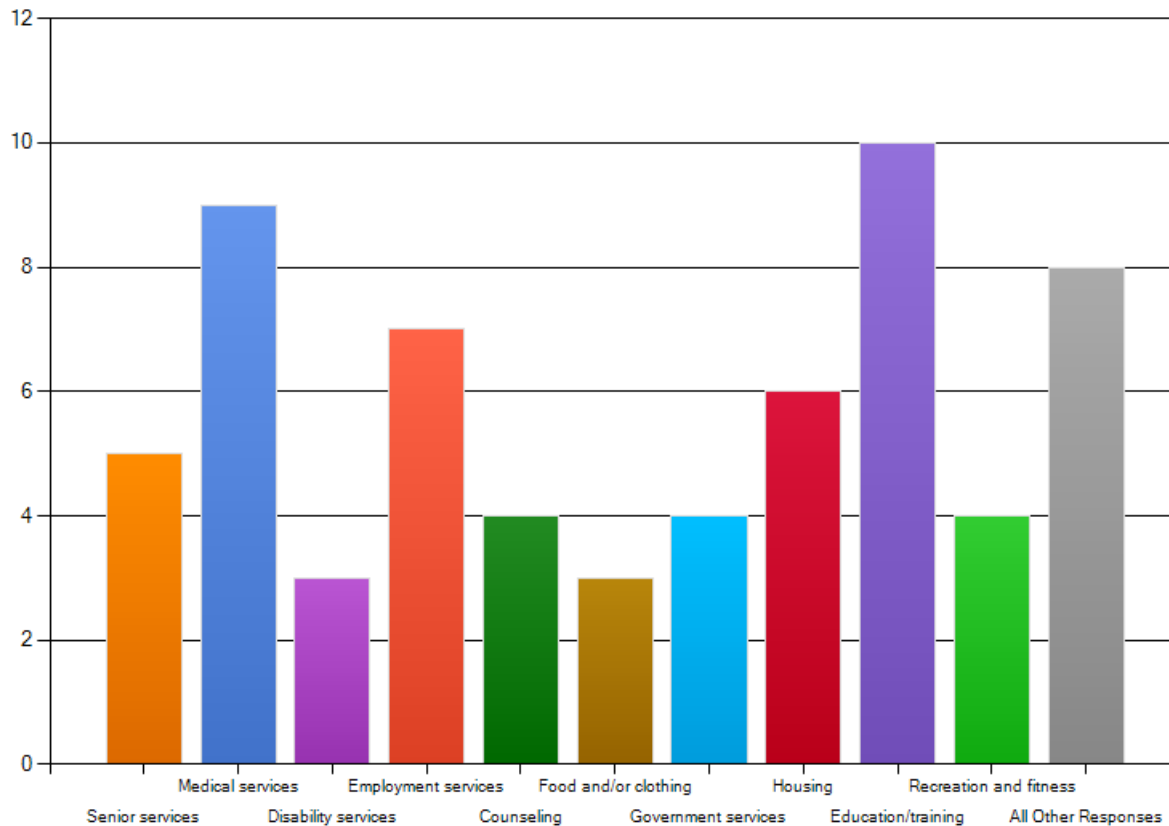


- Goal: get input from agencies whose clients are more likely to need transportation
- Distributed by Raleigh and Fayette County Chambers
- Offered mail, fax, on-line survey options
- Twist arms if necessary



Stakeholder Respondents (50)

What type of services does your organization provide?

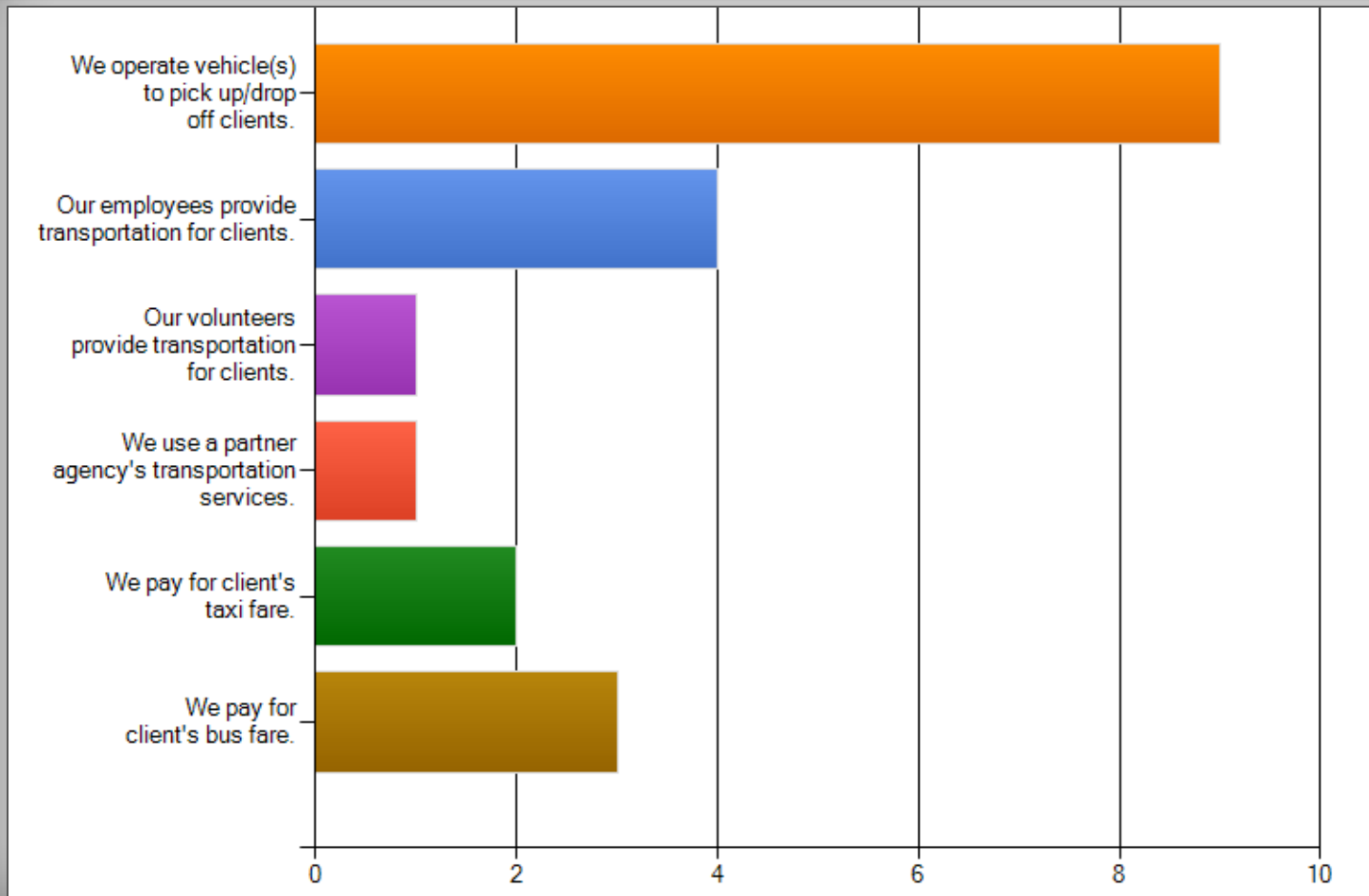


Others included: Domestic violence shelter, Financial/banking, Insurance, Home improvement store, Motel

Survey Results

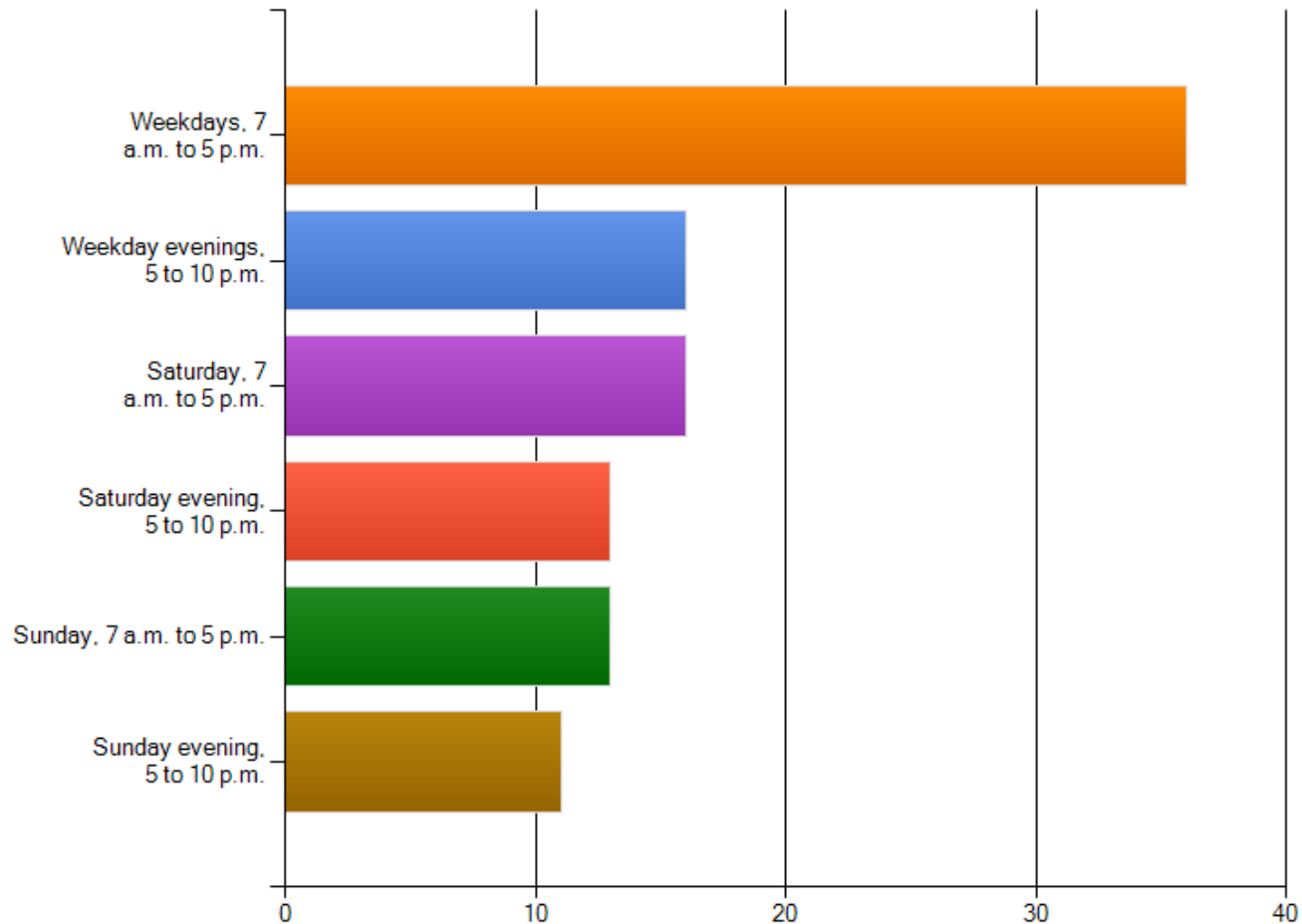


1 in 5 agencies provide clients with transportation

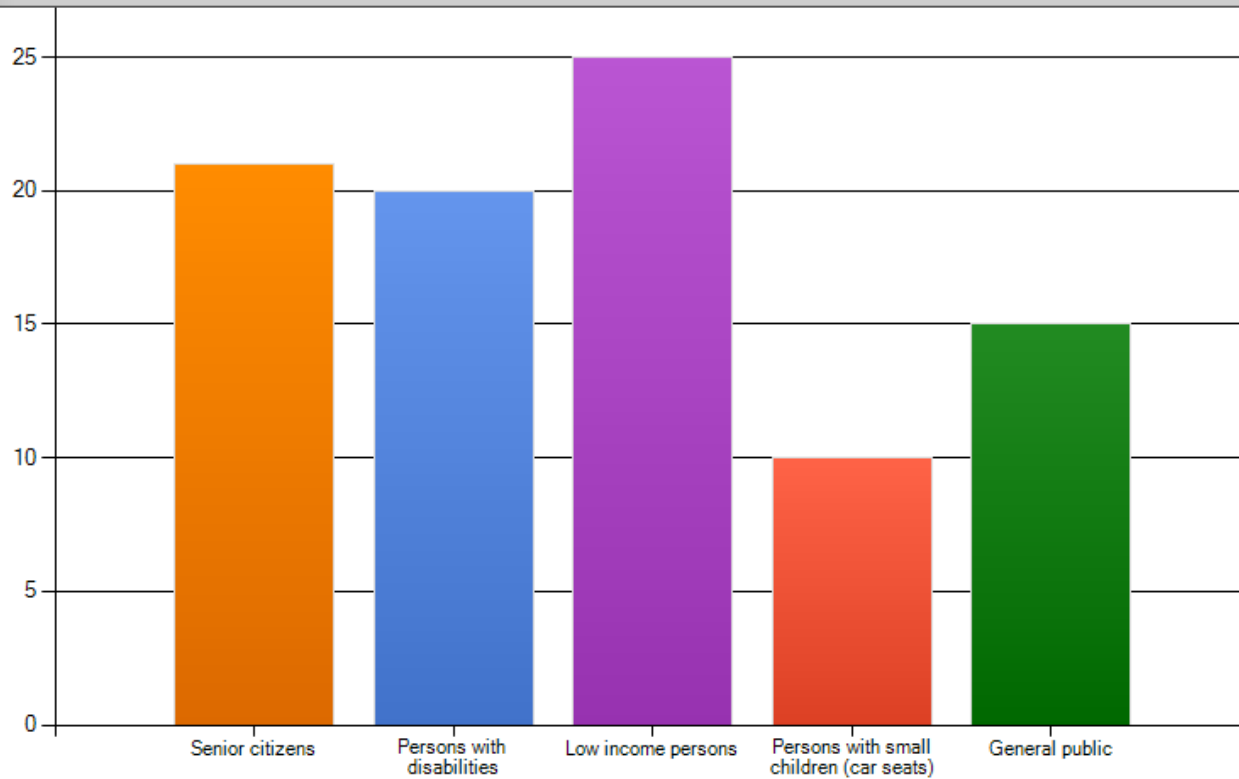


Evenings and Weekends are Important

When do your clients typically need to make trips? (Select all that apply.)



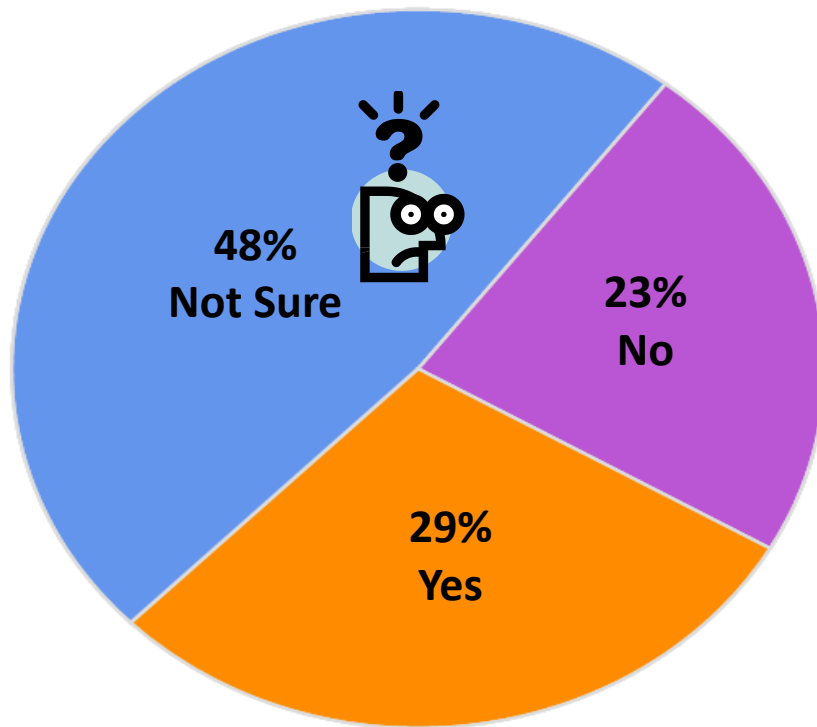
Which Groups Have Unmet Needs?



- “All of the above”
- Average working person, students

Understanding the Services

Is it possible for your clients to use existing public transit services such as RCCAA or Mountain Transit Authority?



Almost half weren't sure if existing public transit services would work for their clients.

What We Learned from the Survey

- General unfamiliarity with transit services
- Evening and weekend service is important – Saturday was seen as especially critical
- Expanding service area and maintaining low fares is a priority
- Better coordination and marketing between providers will produce a more efficient transit service

Transit Stakeholder Workshop (Dec. 13, 2013)

- Attendees

- Economic Development (Workforce WV, NRGRDA, Region 1 and 4 PDCs)
- Community (SALS)
- Local Governments (Oak Hill, Fayetteville)
- Press/Media
- Transit Providers (MTA, RCCAA)
- WV Division of Public Transit





What we learned from the Stakeholder Workshop

- Improved coordination with partner agencies such as WV Workforce Development and DHHR
- Success will require a change in culture:
 - Transit users are not just seniors and the disabled
 - Transit is not a low cost door to door service
 - The business community needs to view transit as part of their economic development strategy
- Expanding frequent service to rural areas is uneconomical
- Gaps in service frequency - a ridership dilemma
- 24-hour economy

Most Important Transit Improvements

Accessibility

Expanded service area

Affordability

More public information

Information Sharing

Convenience of Scheduling

Coordination among business, social, and economic organizations

MPO, a platform for enhanced communication and problem solving





Navigating the System

- Starting from Scratch
- Building Relationships
- Selling Transit
- Revenue Streams
- Combating Stereotypes
- Busless Transit Authority



Moving Forward



Transit Authority

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FTA Grant Application

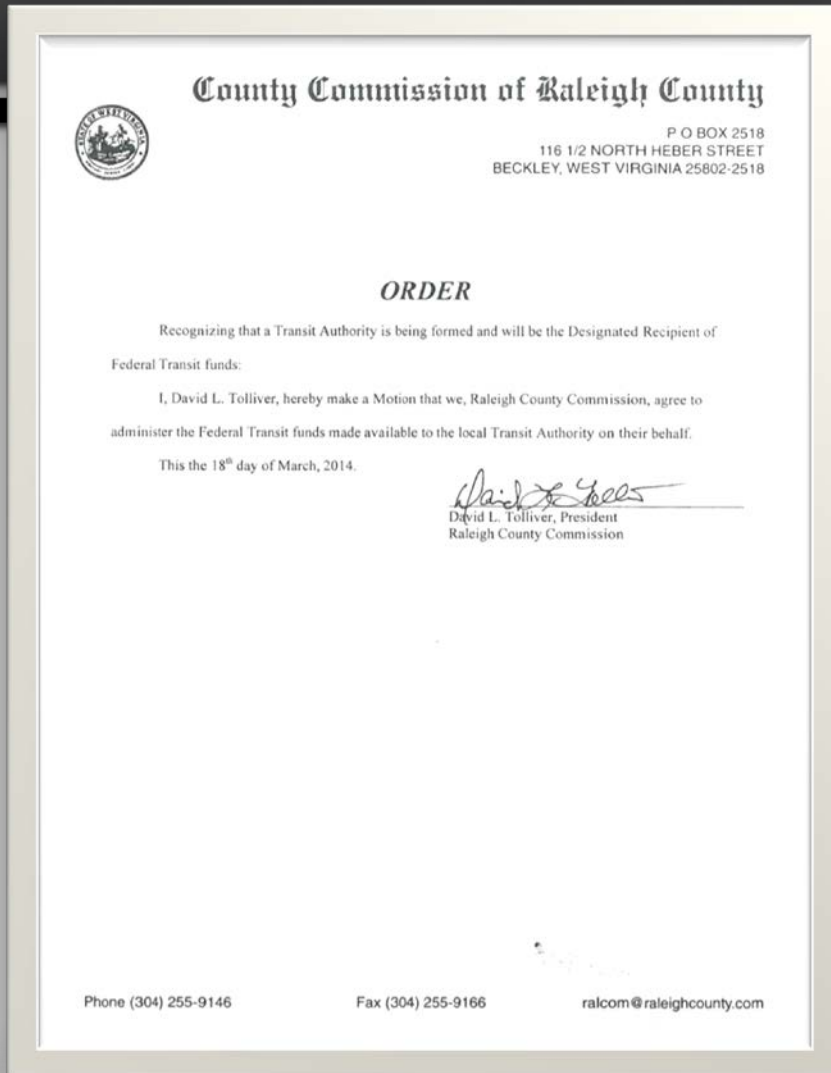
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Transit Provider

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**Keep the buses
running!**

Birth of the NRTA



- NRTA necessary to serve as 5307 recipient
- Ordinances passed by five municipalities & two county governments

Building the Authority

- Membership
 - Establish Leadership
 - Buy-in & Initial Assessments
- Management
 - Raleigh County steps up to the plate
- TIP
 - Programming Transit
- Policies and Procedures
 - Title VI
 - DBE
 - Procurement Process



Building Relationships

- A Force of One - County, Municipal and Regional Coordination
- WVDOT - A Key Mentor
- WVPTA – Essential Partners
- Consultant – Critical Advisor



Search for Local Treasure



- Levy (Are you crazy or just plain stupid?)



- Local Assessments
- Contract Services
- Leveraging Existing Agency Funds



Selling Transit



- Identifying benefits of transportation
 - Urban Advantage
- Educating Local Leaders
 - Why Transit?
- Educating stakeholders
 - Yes, you can ride!



Changing the Culture

- Public perception – Who can ride?
 - Senior citizens, ADA, socially deprived
- Shared resource
 - Not a personal cab
- Cost Misconception
 - “I can’t afford that!”
- Lack of transportation
 - Hinders local economic development
 - Barrier to employment
 - Road block to social development





A Smooth Transition

Threading into the Fabric of the Community

- Branding – Spread the Word
 - Media Blitz
 - Distribution of route info.
 - Building confidence



A Bus to Ride

- Securing a Transit Provider
 - Qualifications
 - Federal Match
- Sustaining Transit at Status Quo
 - Maintain Current Routes
- Planning for a Brighter Future

NRTA – Ready to roll!



Questions and Discussion

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Director

