

# 2019

## Sullivan County Regional Public Transit and Human Service Coordination Plan



Sullivan County Public and Human Services  
Transportation Coordination Plan 2019  
UVLSRPC  
2019-01-01

# *Sullivan County Public & Human Services*

## *Transportation Coordination Plan*

### **Prepared by:**

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission  
10 Water Street  
Lebanon, NH 03766

### **Prepared For:**

New Hampshire Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration  
Sullivan County Regional Coordination Council



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## ***Executive Summary***

Beginning in 2005 with the establishment of a federal mandate for public transit-human service coordination planning, a regional public transit-human service coordination plan has been required by federal transportation bills. Before transportation service providers may acquire funding under any Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program, a coordination plan must be completed. The most recent transportation funding and policy bill called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) continues this requirement.

The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) began the public transit-human services coordination planning process for Sullivan County in 2019. The purpose of the planning process is to provide an update to the strategies presented in the 2011 plan to assist state and local officials, human service agencies, transportation service providers, and other stakeholders in coordinating public transit and human service transportation efforts in the 15 communities of Sullivan County. Inherent in this process was the identification of transportation needs, potential coordination strategies, and projects to implement the identified coordination strategies. Key elements of the planning process included:

- Meetings with transportation providers to review past and present coordination efforts and assessing future needs and capacity;
- Conducting a survey of citizens, transportation providers, human service agencies and municipal service agencies of the region;
- Updating a demographic profile to identify the population and location of persons with specialized transportation needs including individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and individuals with limited income;
- Working closely with the Sullivan County Regional Coordination Council to hold public meetings to present the draft plan and receive public feedback.

The transportation needs and coordination strategies identified in the plan are primarily the result of geographic and economic conditions. Sullivan County is largely rural with few transportation services and little service overlap. While the three communities that constitute the population center of the region (Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown) are served by transit and human service transportation options, the remainder of the region is largely disconnected from this system. The plan identifies 11 of the 15 communities in Sullivan County as “underserved.” These areas rely on volunteer transportation; however, maintaining an adequate pool of volunteer drivers is a continuing challenge. Volunteer drivers are often older persons with limited incomes. Fuel and vehicle maintenance and insurance rates often act as a deterrent to volunteerism. Building on these concepts, the plan identifies several transportation needs and strategies to meet them:

- Enhancing Mobility for all Residents of Sullivan County;
- Increasing Coordination among Medical Centers, Human Service Agencies, and Transportation Providers;
- Reducing Federal and State Barriers to Coordination;
- Increasing Public Outreach;
- Expanding Existing Services;
- Implementing Technological Improvements to Improve Service Delivery;
- Evaluating and Enhancing Service Delivery Systems;
- Improving passenger amenities including bus stop shelters and access;
- Expanding the Volunteer Driver Program

The identified coordination strategies and projects result from economic circumstances. At the state level, funding for public transportation is limited in New Hampshire. Existing transportation services are funded by a combination of federal funds and private donations, and this system heightens concerns about financial sustainability. Making use of the limited available resources is a key theme, and the plan identifies a number of strategies for transportation service providers in Sullivan County to pool resources and coordinate efforts.

Many of the factors affecting the provision of transportation remain constant. However, the development of a Regional Coordination Council and implementation of a volunteer driver program (funded through the NHDOT with the support of Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 funding for services for elders and the disabled) has offered the first opportunity to address the needs of this population in the under-served areas within the region.

The New Hampshire State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation offered a framework for implementing coordination initiatives at the regional level along with Sullivan County Regional Coordinating Council (SCRCC) which plays an important part in shaping the plan and these entities will play pivotal roles in implementing the plan's recommendations. The existence of these organizations and the work accomplished between 2008 and 2019 offers a vastly improved environment of cooperation and coordination among transportation providers and those individuals and organizations that use these services and are a testament to the results envisioned by this planning process.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) instituted a new requirement that regions develop a Locally Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan to access funds from the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and Capital Grants for Transportation for the Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs. These programs were revised in 2012 with the passage of MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act.

With this legislation, the FTA 5316 and 5317 programs were both repealed and new projects designed to provide access to employment or reverse commute transportation as well as projects formerly funded under the FTA 5317 program were folded in the 5311 funding or became eligible under the Section 5310 program.

The FTA Section 5310 program has been continued under the “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation” (FAST) Act, a five year (FY 2016 – FY 2020) \$300 billion highway, transit, highway safety, and rail bill providing approximately \$225 billion in contract authority over that period.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a strategy to assist state and community agencies, transportation service providers, and stakeholders for coordinating public transit and human service transportation efforts in Sullivan County, New Hampshire (See Sullivan County Base Map in Appendix A). Specific goals for the plan include:

- Identifying unmet transportation needs;
- Identifying transportation service gaps (e.g. un-served and underserved areas) and overlaps and service redundancies);
- Completing an inventory of existing public transit and human service transportation providers;
- Identifying strategies to maximize the use of transportation resources through coordination;
- Enhancing mobility within and between communities;
- Increasing access to jobs, schools, medical centers, and other essential human services;
- Utilizing transportation investments and grant funding effectively;
- Increasing citizen awareness of public transit and human service transportation providers and programs.

## 2.0 EXISTING COORDINATION EFFORTS

### 2.1 Federal Coordination

Personal mobility is essential to the success of America's residents, communities, and economy. Transportation enables mobility by connecting individuals to jobs, healthcare and services, and opens the door to opportunity. Despite its significance, millions of Americans lack access to reliable transportation due to disability, income, or age. Inadequate transportation constrains the mobility of these individuals and prevents them from accessing jobs, medical care, healthy food, educational programs, social services, and other community activities.

The federal government recognizes the importance of personal mobility. Agencies across the government administer 80 programs to fund transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, and lower-income individuals. However, those transportation services can be costly and fragmented due to inconsistent program rules and a lack of interagency collaboration.

#### *Background*

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) is an interagency partnership established to coordinate the efforts of the federal agencies that fund transportation services for targeted populations. CCAM was established by [Executive Order in 2004](#). In December 2014, the GAO reviewed nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) services and issued [Report GAO-15-110](#) with the following recommendations for CCAM:

- Publish a strategic plan for nonemergency medical transportation services coordination
- Issue a cost-sharing policy
- Address the challenges associated with coordinating federal nonemergency medical transportation programs

In December 2015, the President signed the [Fixing America's Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#) that codified CCAM. FAST Act Section 3006(c) directs the CCAM to develop a strategic plan that:

- Outlines the roles and responsibilities of each CCAM federal agency
- Addresses outstanding recommendations previously made by the Council
- Addresses GAO recommendations concerning local coordination of transportation services
- Proposes changes to federal laws and regulations that will eliminate barriers to local transportation coordination

#### *Membership*

[CCAM member agencies](#) promote accessible, efficient, effective transportation options to serve the needs of seniors, people with disabilities, and those with low incomes. CCAM agencies represent more than 80 federal programs that support transportation services.

- [Department of Agriculture](#)
- [Department of Education](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)
- [Department of the Interior](#)
- [Department of Justice](#)
- [Department of Labor](#)



- [Department of Transportation](#)
- [Department of Veteran Affairs](#)
- [National Council on Disability](#)
- [Social Security Administration](#)

The newly released [CCAM inventory of federal programs](#) providing transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged is available in PDF and Excel. As of May 10, 2019, per the General Accounting Office (GAO) report, [Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Federal Coordination Efforts Could Be Further Strengthened](#), the [FTA's Charter Service Regulations \(49 CFR Part 604\)](#) - specifically [Appendix A - Federal Programs Providing Transportation Assistance](#) - and CCAM agency representatives, the current number of federal programs that may fund transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged is 122. The criteria for inclusion in this inventory are that transportation service for one or more CCAM target populations is an eligible program expense, but inclusion does not necessarily imply grantees are using funds for such purpose. The CCAM is working to further expand the inventory of federal programs that provide funding for human services transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and/or individuals of low income to include: program references, spending, recipients and beneficiaries, as well as eligible and/or required transportation activities.

### ***Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310***

This FTA Section 5310 (49 U.S.C. 5310) Program provides for enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each state's share of the population for these two groups.

Formula funds are apportioned to direct recipients; for rural and small urban areas, through the state Department of Transportation. In large urban areas, a designated recipient is chosen by the governor. Direct recipients have flexibility in how they select subrecipient projects for funding, but their decision process must be clearly noted in a state/program management plan. The selection process may be formula-based, competitive, or discretionary, and subrecipients can include state or local government authorities, private non-profits, and/or operators of public transportation.

The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. This program supports transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas.

## ***2.2 Statewide Coordination***

A Governor's Task Force on Community Transportation first studied and provided recommendations and policies to establish a coordinated, interconnected, and accessible statewide transportation system in New Hampshire beginning in 2006. The findings of this work are published in the Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services report completed by Nelson-Nygaard Consulting Services. The report recommended an "institutional and geographic framework" for coordinating services. This framework included the State Coordinating Council (SCC) to oversee coordination policies at the state level; Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) to implement coordination and to monitor providers at the regional level, and Regional Transportation Coordinators.



The 2006 plan was up-dated in 2017 in a report completed by RLS Associates [https://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/scc/documents/nh\\_final\\_20170131.pdf](https://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/scc/documents/nh_final_20170131.pdf). The structure remains similar in the new plan, but the RTC's envisioned in the earlier plan have been replaced by a "Lead Agency." Under the FTA 5310 Program, eligible applicants for Lead Agency can be private non-profit organizations, governmental authorities approved by the state to coordinate services for the seniors or individuals with disabilities, or governmental authorities that certify that no non-profit corporation or association is available in an area to provide service. The RCC shall formally approve a 5310 Lead Agency. The Department's preference is that regions consider selecting lead agencies that are providers of FTA-related transportation services that will begin coordinating and providing regionally-coordinated transportation services. The Lead Agency designated by the Sullivan County RCC is Sullivan County Transportation, a division of Southwestern Community Services which is the designated 5311 service provider in Region 4.

### ***State Coordinating Council (SCC)***

The State Coordinating Council is comprised of stakeholders from the public and private sector along with funding agencies acting as an advisory body. The Statewide Coordination Plan recommended that this council be charged with "setting coordination policies, assisting regional efforts as needed, and monitoring the results." The State Coordinating Council directly oversees the Regional Coordinating Councils and has the ability to approve or reject the Regional Coordinating Councils selection of their Regional Lead Agency. However, at the operational level, the State Coordinating Council does not have the power to execute contracts. Therefore, direct service funding does not flow through the State Coordinating Council.

### ***Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)***

The Regional Coordinating Council is comprised primarily of organizational members. The RCC includes regional representatives of funding agencies and service providers. The RCC works with providers to create local service designs, implement coordination policies, and provide feedback to the State Coordinating Council relative to state policies. The Regional Coordinating Councils provide advice and oversight of their respective Regional Transportation Coordinators. Each of the Regional Coordinating Councils has the following responsibilities under the Statewide Coordination Plan:

- Implementing coordination initiatives and policies in their region;
- Working with their regional transportation providers to provide community input into the local service design and coordination of inter-regional trips;
- Providing feedback to the State Coordinating Council on regional programs and services.

## Community Transportation Regions



### 2.3 Regional Transportation Coordination

A Regional Lead Agency may be a service provider, public entity, or private firm. Under the Statewide Coordination Plan, the purpose of the Regional Lead Agency is to “coordinate the service delivery of customers of sponsoring organizations to maximize the use of limited resources and combine trips sponsored by different organizations.” At the operational level, a Lead Agency may contract directly with state agencies and/or other groups purchasing transportation services.

*ServiceLink* “a network of ten community-based *ServiceLink* Resource Centers and forty satellite offices with the common purpose of providing information and supportive referrals about resources for older adults, adults living with disabilities, chronic illness, and their families and caregivers,” helps to coordinate a variety of services including transportation through referrals and information.

The *ServiceLink* system directs people to the existing human service or transportation resources that best meet their individual needs. A *ServiceLink* Resource Center for Sullivan County is located at 224 Elm Street Claremont, NH 03743. The chief objectives of the service are to reduce duplication and enhance coordination in the delivery of human services for this target population.

## ***Mobility Management***

*The State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (SCC) fosters the coordination of transportation services to get people where they need to go.*

*Coordination allows for more efficient use of resources and increasing mobility options for more of NH's residents. Community transportation includes services that address the transit needs of a community, including the general public as well as special populations such as seniors, people with disabilities, and people with low income.*

### **2.4 Local Coordination**

The Sullivan County RCC, in partnership with Southwestern Community Services and other organizations, has accomplished numerous objectives towards achieving improved coordination of transportation services as well as improved mobility for residents in some of the most rural parts of the region.

The Sullivan County RCC has participated in and/or helped to:

- Complete a feasibility study on bus service between downtown Claremont and Lebanon, NH linking all routes for commuters north and south along Rt. 120;
- Complete a feasibility study on bus services between New London, Grafton and Lebanon;
- Maintained a web site about the work of the Council and the importance of transportation to the quality of life in the region <http://www.sullivancountyrcc.org>;
- Publishing a transportation directory of services available in the region;
- Agreed upon standards of service and qualifications for volunteer drivers;
- Implement a flexible, county-wide volunteer driver program at SCT that serves the general public, clients of numerous county social service agencies, seniors, and individuals with disabilities using private autos and/or accessible vehicles as required.
- Participated in the development 2019 Short Range Transit Operations Plan for Sullivan County Transportation.

Regional and statewide coordination has steadily been improving since the implementation of the initial coordination plan in 2006. The coordination regions continue to work with available FTA funding through the NH DOT to implement coordination and enhance services for seniors and individuals with a disability with Section 5310 Purchase of Services funds.

In Sullivan County, the availability of FTA funds has greatly enhanced coordination of services and bolstered provision of services including the establishment of a county-wide volunteer driver program while establishing a framework for operating a fully coordinated system including the integration of Medicaid and Title IX transportation programs.

### **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS**

The Sullivan County Regional Coordination Council (SCRCC) convened in 2009, recognized by the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (SCC), has served as the Advisory Committee to provide input and guidance on the development of the plan during past decade. The SCRCC is a cooperative effort of local service providers, elected officials, state department representatives, funders, and community members. Members and participants in the work of the SCRCC include:

Citizen Member

Aare Ilves, Charlestown

City of Claremont

Nancy Merrill, Scott Osgood

Sullivan County Transportation/Southwestern Community Services

Beth Daniels, Teri Palmer, Keith Thibault

Sullivan County, New Hampshire

Derek Ferland, County Manager

Sullivan County Service Link/ADRC]

Cheryl B. Frey

Sullivan County Nutrition Services

Brenda Burns

Sullivan County Public Health Network

Hilary Schuler

Town of Charlestown

Liz Emerson

Town of Newport

Cody

Turning Points Network

Amanda Mace

University of NH Ext Sullivan County Economic Development

Penny Whitman

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

Patricia C. Crocker, Planner

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Fredrick Butler, NH Bureau of Rail and Transit

New Hampshire Bureau of Adult and Elderly Services

Mary Thomas

Minutes of Sullivan County Regional Coordination Council meetings and presentations may be found in Appendix B at the end of this report.

### ***Demographic Profile***

The UVLSRPC developed a demographic profile of Sullivan County to identify the population and location of persons with specialized transportation needs: individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and individuals with limited income. The demographic profile also identifies general population, income and employment trends, and automobile ownership rates for each town in Sullivan County. The demographic profile is presented in Section 4 of this report.

### ***Description of Existing Services***

A thorough inventory of existing transportation services was conducted. These transportation services may include public transit, carpool and vanpool services, paratransit services, and volunteer services. The description of existing transportation services is presented in Section 5 of this report.

### ***Transportation and Coordination Needs***

y assessing demographics, existing services, and coordination efforts, a needs evaluation was prepared for the County. These needs are focused on how to use existing services most effectively to meet the county's transportation needs. This includes an assessment of existing services, unmet needs and remaining obstacles to coordination. The needs assessment is presented in Section 6 of this report.

### ***Coordination Strategies***

Strategies are suggested to assist human service agencies and transportation providers address the existing needs and enhance the county's transportation and human service delivery system. The Coordination Strategies are presented in Section 7 of this report.

### ***Public Involvement and Comment***

The Regional Coordination Council provided input and comment on the plan throughout the process at public meetings on:

April - August 2019 – Work Plan and RCC Role in Plan Update

October 2019 – Public Survey

November 2019 – RCC Public Presentation of Draft Plan

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic beginning in March 2020, opportunities for public access, particularly among members of the community that are over age 60 and individuals with a disability has limited community outreach and comment. This plan is to be posted on the UVLSRPC Web page for information and additional public comments from July 1 through September 30, 2020.

## 4.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Sullivan County is located on the western border of the state. It borders Vermont to the west with a 36-mile stretch of the Connecticut River. Sullivan County contains 537.3 square miles of an area and 14.7 square miles of inland water area. Based on the 2010 Census population, the population density is 81.4 persons per square mile. Sullivan County includes one city, Claremont, and 14 towns. The County seat is Newport.

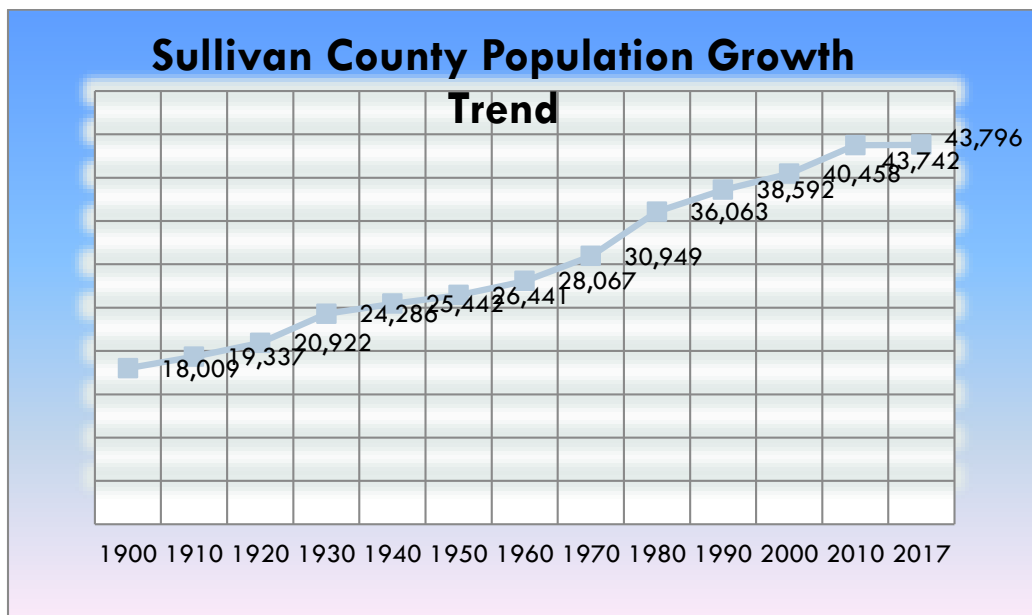
The demographic profile was developed to document important socio-economic characteristics of Sullivan County that impact the delivery and coordination of public transit and human service transportation. This demographic profile identifies the locations of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons within Sullivan County. The profile also documents the locations of key employers, which helps identify underserved areas and transportation service gaps within the county.

### 4.1 Study Area Overview

Sullivan County is moderately small in both square miles and population, and holds the fourth-lowest population density among the counties. The county has not experienced any dramatic increases or decreases in population seen by several other counties. Decennial population growth was above ten percent only three times in Sullivan County history: 1930, 1970, and 1980. Since 1950, the population has grown well below the statewide average rate. Over the last three decades Sullivan had the second-smallest population increases among the counties.

### 4.2 Population Trends

**Table 4.2(a) Population Change 1900 – 2017**



**TABLE 4.2 (b) Municipal Population Change**

<b>Population Change by Community in Sullivan County, NH 1970 to 2017</b>									
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017		Change	Percent Change 00-16
<b>NH State</b>	<b>737,681</b>	<b>920,610</b>	<b>1,109,252</b>	<b>1,235,786</b>	<b>1,316,740</b>	<b>1,342,612</b>		<b>106,826</b>	<b>8.64%</b>
<b>Sullivan</b>	<b>30,949</b>	<b>36,063</b>	<b>38,592</b>	<b>40,458</b>	<b>43,742</b>	<b>43,796</b>		<b>3,338</b>	<b>8.25%</b>
Acworth	459	590	776	836	891	898		62	7.42%
Charlestown	3,274	4,417	4,630	4,749	5,114	5,124		375	7.90%
Claremont	14,221	14,557	13,902	13,151	13,355	13,233		82	0.62%
Cornish	1,268	1,390	1,659	1,661	1,640	1,648		-13	-0.78%
Croydon	396	457	627	661	764	766		105	15.89%
Goshen	395	549	742	741	810	819		78	10.53%
Grantham	366	704	1,247	2,167	2,985	3,025		858	39.59%
Langdon	337	437	580	586	688	694		108	18.43%
Lempster	360	637	947	971	1,154	1,176		205	21.11%
Newport	5,899	6,229	6,110	6,269	6,507	6,471		202	3.22%
Plainfield	1,323	1,749	2,056	2,241	2,364	2,408		167	7.45%
Springfield	310	532	788	945	1,311	1,336		391	41.38%
Sunapee	1,384	2,312	2,559	3,055	3,365	3,460		405	13.26%
Unity	709	1,092	1,341	1,530	1,671	1,609		79	5.16%
Washington	248	411	628	895	1,123	1,129		234	26.15%
<i>Source: NHOSI Population Estimates of Cities and Towns, August 2018</i>									

### 4.3 Economic Trends

Demographic and socioeconomic statistics are essential to transit planning to understand the potential transit markets that exist in an area. Transit dependency is frequently related to level of income, age, vehicle availability, and disability status. Income is a key determinant in the type of transportation used to commute. People with lower incomes are often more likely to need public transportation options than those with higher incomes who can afford private transportation.

*Table 4.3 (a) County Income Estimates*

<b>Sullivan County Income Estimates</b>		
Per Capita Income		\$30,552
Median Family Income		\$69,256
Median Household Income		\$58,454
Median Earnings (FT Year-Round	Male	\$46,444
	Female	\$40,708
Individuals below poverty level		9.0%
<i>NHES Community Profile, Jan. 2018 - 2012-2016 5-Year Average, ACS</i>		



Table 4.3 (b) County Population by Gender and Age Group

Sullivan Population Estimates			
By Gender		Male	Female
Total		21,130	21,921
18 years and over		16,905	17,651
65 years and over		3,671	4,366
Median Age Years		44.7	46.6
By Age Group	Under Age 5		2,106
	Age 5- 19		7,325
	Age 20 - 34		6,791
	Age 35 - 54		11,734
	Age 55 - 64		7,148
	Age 65 +		8,037
	Median Age		45.8
NHES Community Profile, Jan. 2018 - 2012-2016 5-Year Average, ACS			

Table 4.3 (c) County Municipal Median Household Income

Sullivan County Municipal Median Household Income 2017			
	MHI 2017 Inflation Adjusted	MHI 2012 Inflation Adjusted	Change
NH State	\$ 71,305	\$ 63,277	\$ 8,028
Sullivan County	\$ 59,419	\$ 50,698	\$ 8,721
Acworth	\$ 57,125	\$ 47,969	\$ 9,156
Charlestown	\$ 50,297	\$ 48,750	\$ 1,547
Claremont	\$ 46,639	\$ 41,721	\$ 4,918
Cornish	\$ 77,667	\$ 67,813	\$ 9,854
Croydon	\$ 74,603	\$ 58,125	\$ 16,478
Goshen	\$ 60,417	\$ 48,664	\$ 11,753
Grantham	\$ 104,962	\$ 87,245	\$ 17,717
Langdon	\$ 82,778	\$ 67,292	\$ 15,486
Lempster	\$ 63,646	\$ 55,577	\$ 8,069
Newport	\$ 58,193	\$ 45,794	\$ 12,399
Plainfield	\$ 83,362	\$ 85,966	\$ (2,604)
Springfield	\$ 77,375	\$ 75,625	\$ 1,750
Sunapee	\$ 63,750	\$ 59,702	\$ 4,048
Unity	\$ 66,458	\$ 62,500	\$ 3,958
Washington	\$ 73,333	\$ 47,250	\$ 26,083
Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Est.			

The median household incomes have risen significantly since 2012; however, the gains are uneven. Three of the major municipalities in the county are still below the county average by an average \$19,595 below the New Hampshire state income of \$71,305. Notably this difference has widened significantly since the last iteration of this report when the gap was \$17,855.

#### 4.4 Senior Citizens

Based on the 2018 U.S. Census Quick Facts, 18.1% of New Hampshire citizens were over the age of 65. In Sullivan County, the proportion of senior citizens exceeds the state average with more than 21.5% of the population 65 years or older. As “baby boomers” are quickly reaching retirement, this number is projected to steadily increase over the next 15 years. The increase in senior citizens in Sullivan County will be the result of two key factors: 1.) the aging of Sullivan County’s population, and 2.) the in-migration of senior citizens to Sullivan County from other regions. Combined, those over the age of 60, classified as eligible for service by the FTA under the 5310 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program, will represent 29.6% of the county population. Senior populations are broadly distributed among the 15 communities of Sullivan County. The high population of senior citizens in the Town of Grantham is attributable to the success of the Eastman Community in offering an attractive retirement lifestyle and resort amenities.



The Sullivan County Nursing Home is a 156-bed skilled Nursing Facility in the Town of Unity.

The Town of Unity hosts Sullivan County Health Care, a 156-bed Skilled Nursing Facility accounting for more than half of its senior population. In the City of Claremont and Town of Newport, the high concentration of senior citizens is attributable to two factors. Claremont and Newport are the largest communities in Sullivan County, and as such, are the county’s two largest service centers. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Claremont and Newport attract aging citizens from throughout Sullivan County for their proximity to essential services, compact walkable village centers, and public transportation. Claremont and Newport are also home to the majority of assisted and independent subsidized living facilities in the County.

**TABLE 4.4 (a) Sullivan County Population by Age Group**

<b>Sullivan Population Gender – Age Group</b>			
<b>By Gender</b>		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,130</b>	<b>21,921</b>
<b>18 years and over</b>		<b>16,905</b>	<b>17,651</b>
<b>65 years and over</b>		<b>3,671</b>	<b>4,366</b>
<b>Median Age Years</b>		<b>44.7</b>	<b>46.6</b>
<b>By Age Group</b>	<b>Under Age 5</b>		<b>2,106</b>
	<b>Age 5- 19</b>		<b>7,325</b>
	<b>Age 20 - 34</b>		<b>6,791</b>
	<b>Age 35 - 54</b>		<b>11,734</b>
	<b>Age 55 - 64</b>		<b>7,148</b>
	<b>Age 65 +</b>		<b>8,037</b>
	<b>Median Age (yrs.)</b>		<b>45.8</b>
<i>NHES Community Profile, Jan. 2018 - 2012-2016 5-Year Average, ACS</i>			

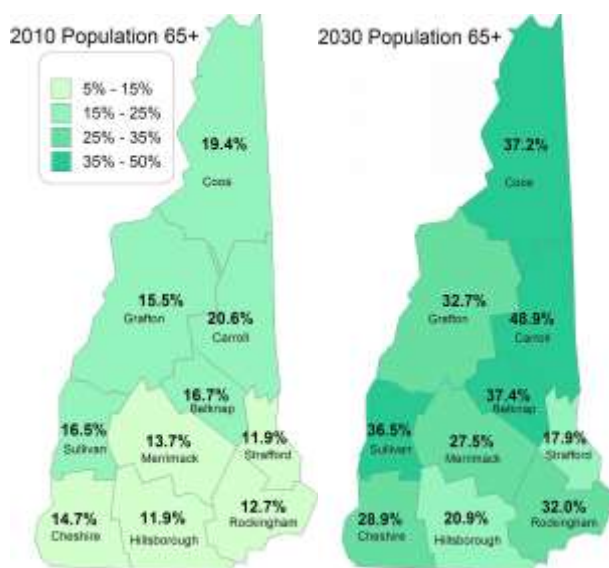
**TABLE 4.4 (b) Sullivan County Senior Population Census 2017**

<b>Sullivan County Senior Population ACS 2017 Estimates</b>					
	<b>2017 Population</b>	<b>Age 60 -64</b>	<b>% 60 to 64</b>	<b>Age 65 +</b>	<b>% Over 65</b>
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>1,342,796</b>	<b>287,358</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>243,046</b>	<b>18.1%</b>
<b>Sullivan County</b>	<b>43,796</b>	<b>3,547</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8,037</b>	<b>21.5%</b>
Acworth	898	44	5%	213	24%
Charlestown	5,124	352	7%	526	10%
Claremont	13,233	774	6%	2174	16%
Cornish	1,648	118	7%	203	12%
Croydon	766	48	6%	113	15%
Goshen	819	59	7%	133	16%
Grantham	3,025	199	7%	595	20%
Langdon	694	73	11%	81	12%
Lempster	1,176	37	3%	126	11%
Newport	6,471	208	3%	1,064	16%
Plainfield	2,408	164	7%	273	11%
Springfield	1,336	37	3%	100	7%
Sunapee	3,460	182	5%	686	20%
Unity	1,609	154	10%	316	20%
Washington	1,129	114	10%	281	25%

*US Census ACS 2017 and NHOSI Age Cohort Estimates 2017*

### Population of Seniors Current and Predicted by County

The population of seniors in Sullivan County is predicted to more than double between 2010 and 2030 according to a report by entitled *The Silver Tsunami – the Aging of New Hampshire* published in 2010 by the NH Center for Policy Studies. Figure 4.2 (c) displays data by NH County.



Source: NH Center for Policy Studies Report – *The Silver Tsunami*

## 4.5 Disabled Persons

The definition of a disability varies. In this plan, data presented is consistent with the U.S. Census definition of disability. It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual's disability must prevent them from independently being able to use the fixed route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities.

According to the 2017 ACS Estimates, 16.9 % of New Hampshire citizens aged 65 or older had one or more disabilities. In Sullivan County, the proportion of all citizens with disabilities is higher than the state average, with 19.3 % of the population having one or more disabilities.

The highest concentrations of disabled citizens in Sullivan County are in Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown. As these communities are the three largest in the county, they offer services to the disabled population that other communities in the County cannot. As mentioned above, the location of assisted living facilities in Sullivan County may also play a role in determining the concentration of disabled persons. Claremont, Newport, Sunapee, and Charlestown are the four communities in Sullivan County where assisted living facilities are located.

**TABLE 4.5 (a) Household Income, Poverty, Disability**

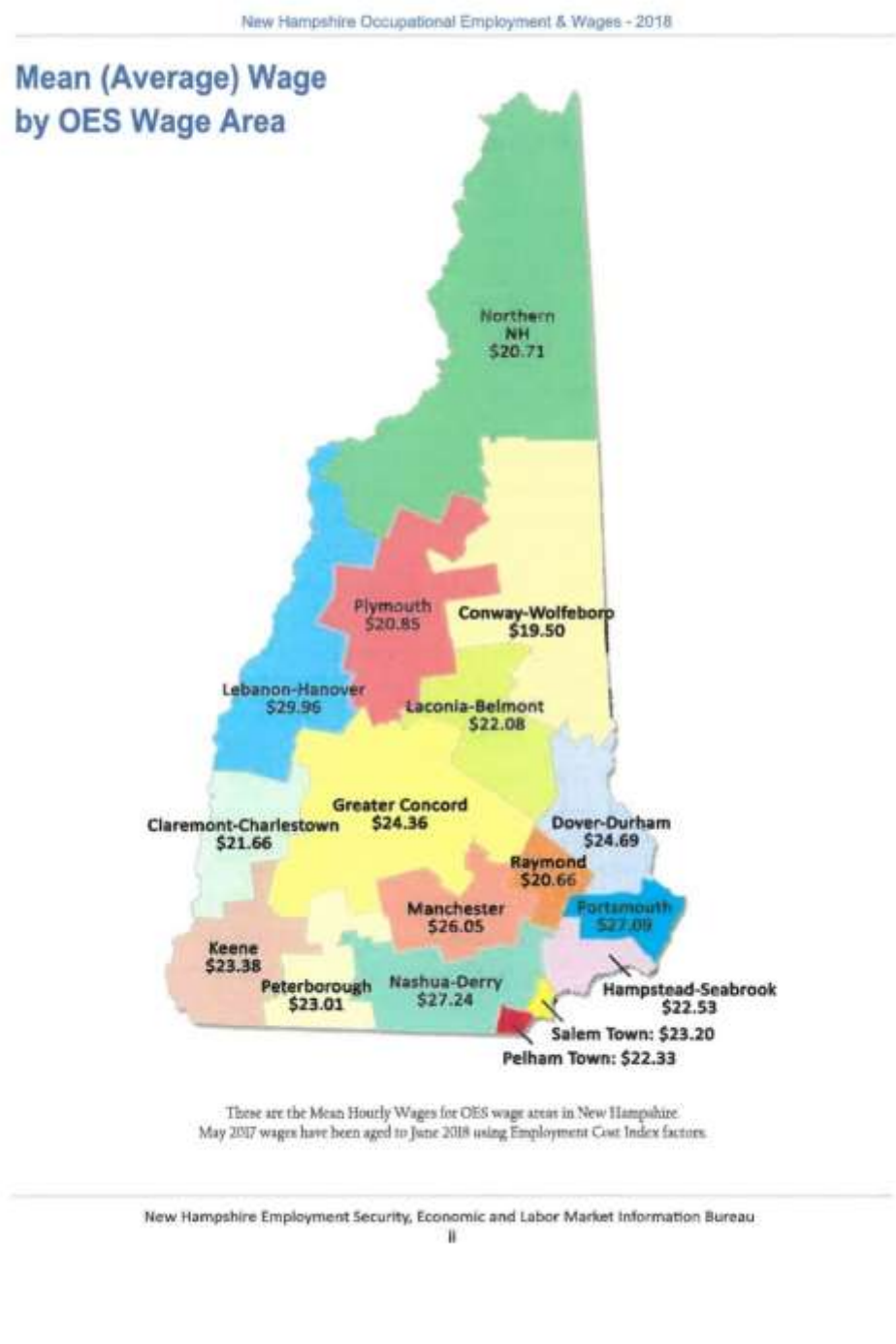
Area	Median Income (Household)		Persons in Poverty	Population	Disability	% Disability
<b>New Hampshire</b>	\$71,305		8.1%	1,314,875	165,149	12.6%
Grafton County	\$61,036		10.9%	88,326	12,355	14.0%
Sullivan County	\$59,419		9.4%	42,581	5,911	13.9%
Merrimack County	\$68,856		7.7%	144,508	19,891	13.8%
Claremont, NH	\$46,639		13.2%	13,351	1,682	12.3%
<b>USA</b>	<b>\$59,039</b>		<b>14.6%</b>	<b>316,087,641</b>	<b>39,792,082</b>	<b>12.6%</b>

Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Facts & Figures IOD/UCED University of NH 2019 Report on Disability in NH

## 4.6 Occupational Employment & Wages

The Claremont-Newport area was once well known for the production of textiles, machine tools, and a wide range of other manufactured products. Sullivan County has seen a long-term loss of manufacturing employment. The Sullivan County economy began to change in the late 1970's and mirrored the shift from manufacturing goods to service industries across the country. Both automation and globalization have been responsible for the trend in manufacturing employment losses that resulted in the closure or relocation of many industries and the growth of service providing industries.

Figure 4.6 (a) Mean Hourly Wage by Labor Market Area – May 2017

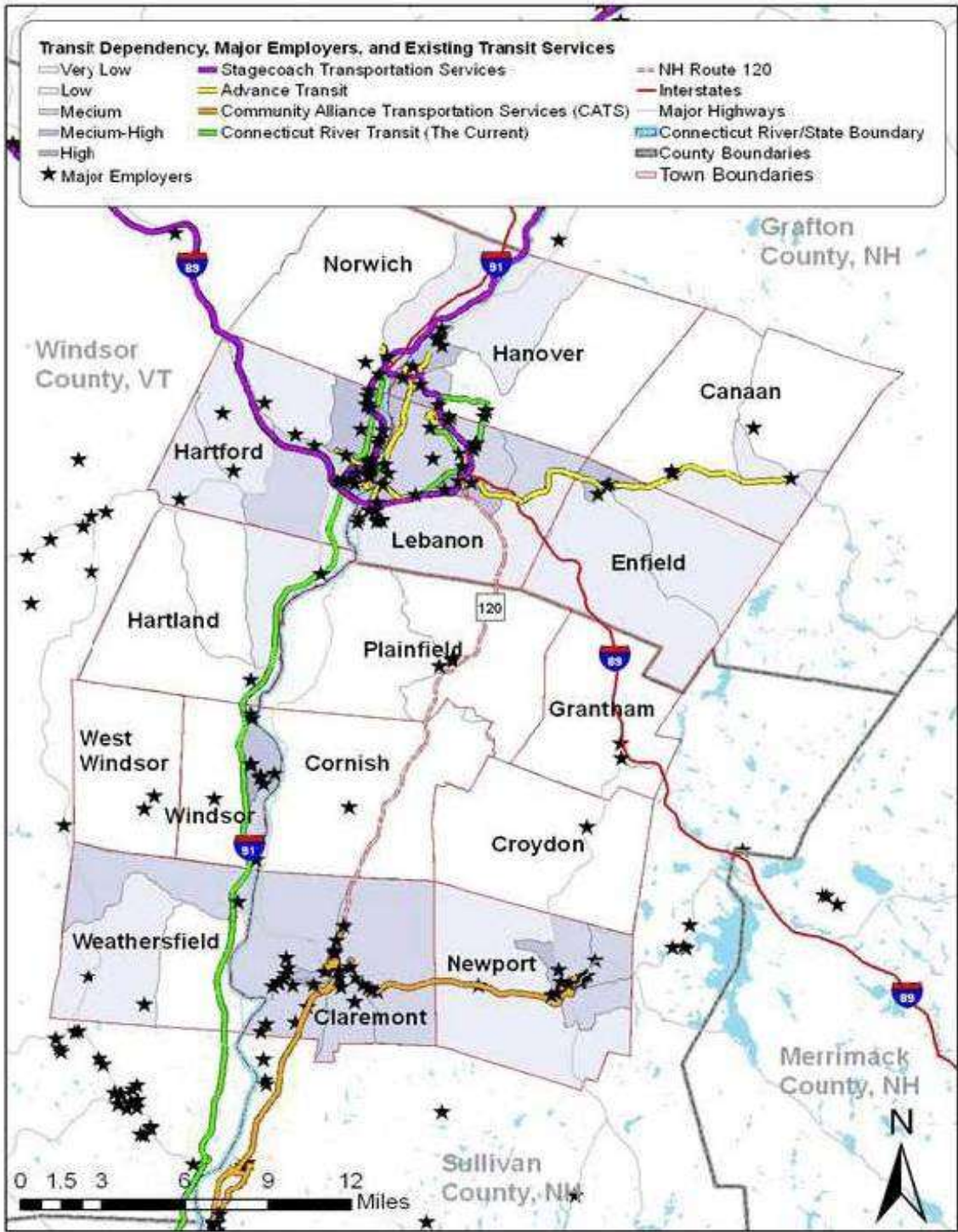


Source: NH Occupational Employment & Wages 2018, based on May 2017 OES Survey



**Figure 4.6 (d) Transit Dependency, Major Employers and Existing Transit Service**

Source: Nelson/Nygaard LLC \*Note: Sullivan County Transportation replaced CATs.



The U.S. Census Bureau uses income thresholds by family size and composition to determine if an individual is “impoverished.” If a family’s total income is less than that family’s defined threshold, then every individual in that family is considered impoverished. These thresholds do not vary geographically; however, they are adjusted annually for inflation. Table 4.4 (e) below shows the poverty status for each community in Sullivan County.

Table 4.4 (e) shows that poverty rates in Sullivan County are 2.6% above the state average. The highest concentrations of impoverished people are in Claremont, Newport, Lempster, Unity, and Washington. However, in terms of raw numbers, the three largest communities in the county: Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown also have the highest number of citizens with incomes below the state poverty level. It should be noted that there are a number of communities in the county with poverty levels below the state average. The two least impoverished communities in the county are Acworth and Langdon.

*Table 4.4 (e) Poverty Rates by Municipalities*

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Pop. Below Poverty</b>	<b>% Below Poverty</b>
United States	327,167,434	40,241,594	12.3%
New Hampshire	1,342,796	101,245	7.7%
Sullivan County	43,796	3,812	10.3%
Acworth	899	67	7.01%
Charlestown	5,124	656	13.12%
Claremont City	13,233	1,717	13.2%
Cornish	1,648	172	10.34%
Croydon	766	17	2.28%
Goshen	819	66	9.47%
Grantham	3,025	78	2.63%
Langdon	694	87	10.21%
Lempster	1,176	62	6.31%
Newport	6,471	512	8.22%
Plainfield	2,408	19	0.77%
Springfield	1,336	75	6.40%
Sunapee	3,460	148	4.37%
Unity	1,609	88	6.80%
Washington	1,129	48	4.69%
<i>Source: ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2012-2017,</i>			



## 4.7 Vehicle Availability

A common measure of transit dependence and demand is the number of vehicles available per household. Zero-vehicle households are considered to be entirely dependent upon alternate transportation sources. Additionally, one-vehicle households with two adults are also partially dependent on alternate modes of transportation. The average number of people per household in Sullivan County is 2.4. Claremont has the highest percentage of households without a car (10.3%) and with only one car (39.3%) where Charlestown has the lowest with (5.5%) and (26.5%) respectively.

Automobile ownership rates play an important role in determining public transit demand and in identifying unmet needs. Automobile ownership is generally considered a proxy variable for senior citizens, with some national estimates proposing that 65% of auto less households are households with elderly persons. Automobile ownership rates provide important insight in determining the concentrations of people without a reliable ride to work. Automobile ownership rates in Sullivan County are presented below.

*Table 4.7(a) Household Size by Vehicles Available*

Region	0-car household	1-car household
State of NH	5.1%	30.0%
Sullivan County	6.4%	18.0%
Claremont	11.7%	39.0%
Newport	8.9%	28.5%
<i>Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2013-2017</i>		

As Table 4.7(a) illustrates, Sullivan County has a higher percentage of households without automobiles than the state average. The two communities with the highest concentration of households without automobiles are Claremont and Newport. The City of Claremont has the largest number of households without automobiles. With limited alternatives to the automobile, auto ownership is a necessity in Sullivan County's rural communities.

## Demographic Profile Summary

- Since 2000, Sullivan County's population has grown at almost the same rate as the State at 8.25% and 8.64% respectively.
- The growth in Sullivan County is overwhelmingly occurring in rural communities, rather than larger cities and town centers. Sullivan County's largest community, the City of Claremont, has gained just 0.62 % of its population since 1970. The Town of Grantham has nearly doubled in size during the same period.
- The proportion of senior citizens in Sullivan County is higher than the state average, as nearly 16 % of the population is aged 65 years or older. The highest concentrations of senior citizens in Sullivan County are located in Grantham, Unity, Claremont, and Newport.
- The population of senior citizens in the county will double by 2030 and represent more than one-fourth of the residents.
- The proportion of citizens with disabilities in Sullivan County is slightly higher than the state average of 12.6% with 13.9% of the population having one or more disabilities. The highest concentrations of Sullivan County disabled citizens live in Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown.
- The Sullivan County economy can be characterized as one that is in transition. As in many areas of the U.S. manufacturing has undergone a change from manual labor into automation and high-tech. The number of manufacturing positions has declined as a result. Similarly, the retail and service sectors have become a larger share of the employment picture.
- The Sullivan County labor market area extends into neighboring Grafton County, NH and Windsor and Windham County in VT.
- The Median Household Income in Sullivan County, \$59,419.00 in 2017, is slightly above the national \$59,039.00 but well below the state at \$71,305.00.
- Poverty rates are 1.3% higher, at 9.4%, in Sullivan County than the state average 8.1%. The highest concentrations of person in poverty reside in Claremont, Newport, and Acworth.
- Sullivan County, at 6.4%, has a statistically significant higher rate of households without automobiles than the state average. The two communities with the highest concentration of households without automobiles are Claremont and Newport.

## 5.0 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING SERVICES



Sullivan County Transportation currently operates a variety of transit services across Sullivan County. Existing SCT services are described in this section as well as other regional transportation providers

### 5.1 Southwestern Community Services Transportation

In October of 2016, Southwestern Community Services (named Sullivan County Transportation) took over public transit services from Community Alliance Transportation Services. SCT has an annual operating budget for transportation of \$521,906 in fiscal year 2018.

SCT operates three deviated fixed routes. Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services using a fleet of cutaway vehicles and a volunteer driver program. Route Match scheduling/dispatching software. Service operates on non-holiday weekdays from approximately 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Route deviation is available within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of a route and to guarantee a pick-up, it must be requested by noon the business day before. Same-day deviation requests are accommodated as the schedule allows. Dial-a-Ride service is available in Claremont only. The Volunteer Driver Program operates throughout Sullivan County.

#### **The SCT FY 2018 Fare Structure:**

##### **Fares:**

\$1.50 – one-way within one town  
\$2.50 – one-way from town-to-town  
(\$0.50 – children age 6-12)

##### **Passes**

\$10.00 – 8 Ride Punch Pass  
\$25.00 – Monthly Unlimited In-town  
\$35.00 – Monthly Unlimited in-town  
and town-to-town.

Children under 5 ride fare free when accompanied by an adult.

The three deviated fixed routes serve the municipalities of Claremont, Charlestown and Newport. The Claremont route provides circulating services within the city while the other two routes provide connections from Charlestown and Newport to Claremont. All three routes serve Opera House Square, Hannaford, Market Basket and Walmart in Claremont.

*Table 5.1 (a) Route Characteristics*

Route Name	Hours of Service	Trips Daily	Towns Served
Newport Route	6:25 AM-4:45 PM	6	Newport, Claremont
Charlestown Route	7:15 AM-4:20 PM	3	Charlestown, Claremont
Claremont Route	8:00 AM-4:25 PM	8	Claremont
Claremont Dial-a-Ride	9:00 AM-10:30 AM 12:30 PM-2:30 PM	On-demand	Claremont

Private transportation options are limited within Sullivan County. Much of the additional transportation demands are met by volunteer drivers using their personal vehicles. Volunteers are an important component of the transportation system in Sullivan County. Volunteers throughout the county provide transportation via formalized services administered by Sullivan County Transportation. This is a preferred method of transportation for most, but it can be difficult to recruit volunteers to meet the growing demand. Those with the time and resources to volunteer are often retired, serve for a time and then cycle out due to their own changing ability to drive.

**TABLE 5.1 (b) SCT Service Usage Summary & Cost SFY 2018**

Route	Ridership	Revenue Hours	Revenue Miles	Operating Cost	Fare Revenue
Newport	4,452	2,234	31,579	\$144,602	\$5,510
Charlestown	2,585	841	15,769	\$110,267	\$2,918
Claremont	13,170	2,160	24,722	\$133,220	\$11,809
Claremont Dial-a-Ride	2,777	620	8,337	\$54,301	\$2,754
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,984</b>	<b>5,855</b>	<b>80,407</b>	<b>\$442,390</b>	<b>\$22,991</b>

As shown in Table 5.1 (b) below, Sullivan County Transportation is funded by a number of sources. The largest funder is the Federal Transit Administration through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Local contributions, fares, and charitable contributions are also sources of revenue. Other large contributors include Medicaid and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS). SCT utilizes RouteMatch™ software for scheduling and reporting.

**TABLE 5.1 (b)**

SCT Operating Revenue (Actual)	
Funding Source	State FY 2019
Medicaid	5,817.85
Medicaid IDN Revenue	7,260.00
BEAS	70,239.58
DOT - 5311	253,696.50
DOT – 5310 FF	26,086.00
UVLSRPC - 5310 POS	26,579.00
Town/Local Revenue	83,000.00
Bus Fare Revenue	21,053.81
UPass Revenue	-
United Way	2,000.00
Donations	16,572.42
NH Charitable Fund Donation	15,000
Advertising Revenue	392
Misc. Revenue	14,830.04
Interest Revenue	15.56
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$542,543.38</b>

## 5.2 Human Service & Other Transportation Providers

Table 5.2 Other Transportation Providers in Sullivan County

Provider	Service Area	Service Description	Fares
Charlestown Ambulance Service	Charlestown	Ambulance, Non-emergency medical trips	Vary depending on distance
CNC Cab Company Claremont	Claremont	Traditional taxi service, non-accessible.	\$5 one-way in town
Easter Seals	Statewide	Transportation for seniors and individuals with disability	Vary by destination
Granite State Independent Living	Statewide	Persons with disabilities in areas with no public transit	Fee-for service
Golden Cross Ambulance	Claremont	Ambulance, Non-emergency and emergency medical trips	Vary by destination
Claremont Best Taxi	Claremont	Traditional taxi service, non-accessible	\$2.5 per mile, \$6 min. Seniors 10% discount
Newport Senior Center	Newport	Individuals 60 +	\$1 donation
Veterans Administration	Statewide	For Veterans to VA facilities	Free

## 5.3 Volunteer Driver Services



A volunteer driver program serves individuals with a disability of all ages and seniors over age 60 throughout Sullivan County. Advance notice of 48-hours is requested to schedule rides, but last minute or urgent requests may be accommodated. Paratransit van services are available to those who cannot be accommodated in private autos. The service is provided through the FTA Section 5310 program. The most popular destinations are Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and Fresenius Medical Care, a dialysis center in Lebanon, NH.

## 5.4 Other Regional Transportation Providers

There are no intercity bus providers in Sullivan County. Greyhound provides services in Vermont along Route 4 and in Bellows Falls. Dartmouth Coach provides service in Hanover to Boston and New York City and service in Lebanon and New London to Boston. Outside of SCT, there are few other transportation services available. Of those that are available are program-specific or limited to a certain segment of the population. Table 5.3 outlines the alternative transportation services available in Sullivan County.

Connecticut River Transit, a Vermont 5311 rural transportation provider, operates a commuter route between Bellows Falls, Vermont and Lebanon, New Hampshire with stops along Interstate 91 at exits 8 and 9. Some New Hampshire residents utilize this service to commute to work in White River

Junction or Lebanon as evidenced by the number of vehicles with New Hampshire license plates in park-and-ride facilities along Interstate 91 in Vermont.

Private transportation options are limited within Sullivan County. Much of the additional transportation demands are met by volunteer drivers using their personal cars.

Volunteers are significant component of the transportation system in Sullivan County. Volunteers throughout the county provide transportation through services administered by Sullivan County Transportation.

Rail service is available at the Claremont Amtrak station located approximately two miles outside of town. The station is served by the Vermonter with one trip in each direction daily. The station is not on the fixed route or within the deviation zone for Sullivan County Transit.

### **Transportation Management Association**

The Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (UVTMA) is a coalition of transit, rideshare, planning commissions, employers, and municipalities that advocates for increases in alternative mode transportation including transit service and Park-and-Ride facilities. Their goals are to reduce the costs associated with employee parking, make commuting to work affordable, promote sustainability, and improve traffic and parking conditions. They work with individual employers to create commuting programs and benefits that meet the needs of the employees. Municipalities currently participating include Enfield, Hanover, Lebanon, NH and Hartford and Norwich, VT.

## **6.0 FUNDING SOURCES AND GRANT PROGRAMS**

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation receives funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) which are distributed to transportation providers statewide as part of a grant process. There are three sources of funding used in Sullivan County, including Section 5309, 5310, and 5311.

### **1. Section 5339- Capital Investment Program**

Section 5339- Capital Investment Program funding is administered by the Federal Transit Administration and provides funding for bus and rail transit projects, purchase of vehicles, and facility construction and upgrades. Program areas applicable to Sullivan County include:  
*Bus/Bus Facilities.*

#### *New Starts*

Funding under the New Starts program is used to finance the construction of new rail, bus rapid transit, and ferry systems, or extensions to existing systems.

### **2. Section 5311- Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program**

The Section 5311 Program provides funding for planning, capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, and nonprofit operators of public transportation in non-urbanized areas with populations less than 50,000. A regional public transit-human service coordination plan must be in place before providers may obtain funding under the Section 5311 or 5307 formula funds.

### **3. Section 5310- Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities**

The Section 5310 Program provides funding to public and nonprofit agencies for the purchase of services, accessible vehicles, and other equipment to serve elderly persons and persons with disabilities where existing transportation is unavailable or insufficient. The program has been consolidated with the Section 5317 New Freedoms Program which was designed to “encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.” MAP-21 requires that a regional public transit-human service coordination plan be in place before providers may obtain funding under the Section 5310 Program.

All Federal Transit Administration funding programs require a 20 percent capital match and a 50 percent operating match from non-DOT, state, or local sources.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) operates several transportation funding programs. Several of these programs have their own vehicles, but many of the services they provide are outsourced to other providers and volunteers. Divisions include:

### **1. Medicaid Administration – Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**

Beginning in January 2017, Coordinated Transportation Systems (CTS), a Connecticut-based not-for-profit transportation provider has been contracted to manage the NH Medicaid transportation services. The company has a centrally located dispatching facility and subcontracts with a variety of transportation providers around the state including the state’s public transit operations. Sullivan County Transportation is among those that collaborate with the statewide broker to provide Medicaid transportation.



**2. Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS)**

BEAS provides funding for transportation to all residents age 60 and older, individuals with disabilities, long-term healthcare residents, and adult Medicaid recipients. Trips are frequently to medical appointments and shopping. The two primary sources of funding for this program include Title III-B and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

**3. Bureau of Behavioral Health**

The bureau supports transportation service for individuals with mental illness who are in residential programs. It also provides funding for trips to medical appointments and transportation for children to various enrichment and clinical programs.

**4. Division for Children, Youth, and Families/Division for Juvenile Justice Services**

DCYF funds transportation services for children, youth, and families to medical, mental health, social services, court appointments, and visitation.

**5. Division of Family Assistance**

Families may receive reimbursements for mileage or bus passes of up to \$160 per month to participants in the NH Employment Program (NHEP). Reimbursements are provided through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and are only available for those who have work requirements and no other transportation options.

Agencies are supported by a host of resources. Many have strict funding requirements that limit human service agencies' flexibility to allocate resources to best meet the needs of their clients. For example, this may prohibit the use of funds unless the client is part of a certain population, e.g. elderly or disabled (client-based), or restricting the service to certain trips such as a medical appointment. Another common requirement is that service will only be provided if the client has no other means of transportation.

## **EXISTING SERVICE FINDINGS**

Maps and service schedules are located in **Appendix B**.

- The most prominent transportation service within Sullivan County is Sullivan County Transportation (SCT), which offers deviated route services within Claremont, Charlestown and Newport, Dial-a-Ride Service/ door-to-door paratransit services, and a county-wide volunteer driver service.
- Existing bus services are targeted where the greatest demands exist (Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown) and supplemented by volunteer driver services in the remainder of the county.
- Transportation services in the population centers of Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown are provided by several human service agencies and volunteers.
- Coordination among providers has improved through the Regional Coordination Council process, but additional opportunities for coordination continue to exist.
- Funding systems, billing, and contracting procedures are complex but have been managed well within the Southwestern Community Services organization.

## 7.0 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

### 7.1 *Enhanced Mobility for all Residents of Sullivan County*

SCT completed a short-range transportation plan in 2019. The recommendations below were the result of that study and extensive public input throughout the process. A summary of the process, findings and needs is contained in Appendix C.

1. Weekend Service Weekend service would be implemented on each of the three deviated fixed routes, with service approximately mirroring the proposed the service outlined in the short-term operating plan, except for service to locations closed on weekends. The Claremont Route would operate 6 trips per day between 8:15 AM and 5:15 PM. Service would be provided to all locations on the schedule except the senior center and River Valley Community College (RVCC). The Newport Route would operate five trips per day between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM. It would serve all stops in Claremont and in Newport but would not serve Ruger. The Charlestown Route would operate 4 trips daily with two in the morning and two in the afternoon. If timed transfers could not be made to connect to/from Washington Street, then the Charlestown Route would serve that area. No additional vehicles would be required.
2. Add scheduled service to the Amtrak Train Station.
3. Extend Dial-a-Ride to all of Sullivan County Dial-a-Ride service would be extended to all of Sullivan County that is not within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a deviated fixed bus route. Service would operate eight hours daily, on weekdays only. It is anticipated that two additional vehicles would be needed to operate this service.
4. Provide Trips Once a Week to Keene and Concord Trips would be provided once a week from Sullivan County to Keene and to Concord with a different community each week in Sullivan County going to Keene. The route would begin at 8 AM and arrive in Keene and Concord by 9:30 with departures at 12:30 to arrive back in Sullivan County by 2:00 PM.
5. Add an Evening Trip on the Charlestown Route Service would end an hour and fifteen minutes later than the existing Charlestown Route schedule, at approximately 5:30 pm. No additional vehicles would be required.
6. Extend Newport Service to Sunapee on select trips The Newport Route would be extended to Sunapee on three trips daily. This recommendation would need to be studied further to determine where the demand exists, how the trips would fit into the overall schedule, which trips would be extended, if it would be operated seasonally or year-round, and the impact to the overall system.

There are six mid-term alternatives for service that would expand operating hours and extend the service area.

1. Taxi subsidy for after hours and weekends Provide a taxi subsidy of up to five dollars to passengers wishing to take trips beyond SCT's operating hours. The trip would need to be scheduled in advance through SCT dispatch. SCT would pay up to \$5 of the cost of the taxi trip; the remainder would be paid by the passenger. Implementing this option would require forming a partnership with a local taxi company. As a contracted operator of SCT, the taxi company would be subject to the same federal

rules and regulations as SCT, including, but not limited to: safety, drug and alcohol, and ADA. The taxi company would also have to have an accessible vehicle.

2. Earlier service on the Claremont Route Service would begin an hour and a half earlier than the existing span of service, at approximately 7am.

3. Later service on the Claremont Route Service would end an hour and a half later than the existing span of service, at approximately 8pm.

4. The additional Newport trip would be in the evening, extending service to approximately 7:30 PM. It would serve all stops in Claremont and in Newport it would stop at Shaw's, Maple Manor, the Newport Health Center and any requested deviations within the deviation zone (3/4 mile of the route). 38 | Page Short Range Transit Operations Plan

5. Implement the Route 120 Bus Service. The Route 120 Bus Service should be implemented based on the recommended alternative in the NH 120 Claremont-Lebanon/Hanover Transit Plan with three trips daily (weekdays only). This new service would require an additional vehicle. The service would start with a 16-passenger cutaway vehicle and move to a 30 passenger mid-size vehicle as ridership increases over time. Add Study URL

6. Expand Claremont Dial-a-Ride In the proposed short-term operating plan there are 3.25 hours of Dial-a-Ride service, expanding it to 8 hours would add 4.75 hours daily. The Dial-a-Ride service would need its own vehicle and would no longer use the Charlestown vehicle when it is not in service.

## **7.2 Capital Needs**

There are 16 long-term capital recommendations, including work at eleven bus stops, four vehicles and a study to evaluate service expansion to Sunapee. Expanding service to Mount Sunapee/Lake Sunapee would require further study to determine the level of demand. During the outreach process, this area was mentioned several times as a candidate for service. Mount Sunapee is a major employer and destination in the winter as a ski resort and in the summer with a mountain bike park and several other outdoor activities. Four additional vehicles would be needed in the long-term phase: one to increase service on the Claremont Route mid-day to every 45 minutes, two vehicles to extend Dial-a-Ride to all of Sullivan County and one to provide weekly trips to Keene and Concord.

Sixteen passenger cut-away vehicles are the recommended vehicle type. Bus stop improvements are recommended at 11 locations and include concrete work, and installing signs. Table 7-16 provides an outline of the improvements by stop. All signs would be installed on freestanding breakaway poles. There are no proposed shelters or benches in this phase. Concrete work to make the stops ADA accessible would be needed at six stops; this includes expanding areas to create 8'x5' ADA landing pads and sidewalk work. These can be found in section 8.6.

### **7.3 Transit Links between Grantham and Lebanon and Newport and Claremont.**

The fastest growing community in Sullivan County and one of the fastest aging, the Town of Grantham, is not served by public transportation. The town's central location along Interstate 89 between the Lebanon and Claremont Labor Market Areas creates a potential opportunity for linking the transit systems of Grafton and Sullivan County. In fact, auxiliary infrastructure that would compliment a public transit service is already in place. A Park-and-Ride lot with capacity for over 50 vehicles is adjacent to Interstate 89 Exit 13, but currently is not served by public transit.



A park-and-ride facility in the Town of Grantham has capacity for over 50 vehicles, but is underutilized because of the lack of a transit connection.

### **7.4 Transit link to New London and Exit 12 Park & Ride via Grantham**

One of the area's primary medical facilities and employers is New London Hospital. The Town of New London is also one of the area's residential communities for individuals working in Claremont and Lebanon. The only existing transit service connecting the Upper Valley to this community is Dartmouth Coach. The schedule for this service limits its use as a commuter resource because it makes just one stop at the I-89, Exit 12 Park-and-Ride. Dartmouth Coach does not sell tickets at New London for their northbound run. If a commuter service were to be developed it would ideally be accessible at Exit 9, Exit 12, Exit 13, and DHMC in Lebanon and Dartmouth College in Hanover.



A feasibility study for this route was completed in April 2017. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the demand for commuter bus service along the Interstate 89 (I-89) corridor in New Hampshire connecting New London to Lebanon/Hanover and to develop alternatives for service. This is a heavily traveled road with no commuter transit services between these major destinations. The corridor has been identified in numerous documents, such as Short-Range Transportation Plans and Human Service Transportation Coordination Plans, as having a need for a transit connection. It has also been documented that the overall regional transportation network would be greatly improved if there was a transit connection. The study and associated documents are found on the UVLSRPC website I-89 Study page.

### **7.5 Enhance Existing Transit Services**

Ridership is growing on existing routes serving Claremont, Newport and Charlestown. The current schedules provide adequate, but not ideal access and are regarded as inconvenient by many potential riders because of the length of time between return trips. Shortening headways on services in Claremont, Charlestown, Newport and extension of services to the Sullivan County Complex will vastly improve service. Decreased wait times will make the service more convenient to use and have the potential to further increase ridership with more frequent operation.

Higher frequency services will require capital improvements that may include, but are not limited to, fleet expansion and increased vehicle spare ratios, a number of capital improvements to the Newport garage and facilities that include the addition of new maintenance equipment and building reconfiguration that will allow for routine in-house maintenance such as oil changes and cleaning along with the commensurate staffing.

Bus shelters are an immediate need at key stops for improved customer service and safety, as well as for any expanded service.

An updated Short-Range Transportation Plan for SCT has been completed and addresses the service enhancement objectives in great detail.

## **7.6 *Improve Access to Regional Medical Centers***

Central Sullivan County is fortunate to be proximate (approximately 25 miles) to a tertiary care medical facility- the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon and regional hospitals and clinics of New London Hospital, Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, Alice Peck Day Memorial in Lebanon, and the VA Hospital across the Connecticut River in White River Junction, Vermont. However, with no existing transit or shuttle-bus service linking Sullivan County, Grafton County and Merrimack County, those in need of transportation to medical appointments must rely on family or friends or on the SCS volunteer driver program. Improved access is needed between Sullivan County and the medical facilities in Merrimack County and Grafton County and adjacent Windsor County Vermont with non-commuter services. ADA accessible buses to provide regularly scheduled shuttle service and to complement the volunteer driver program would begin to meet these needs.

## **7.7 *Public Outreach and Improved Marketing of Services***

Increasing ridership and fostering the continued development of transportation alternatives in Sullivan County will require a substantial cultural shift. The public must be made aware of existing services in Sullivan County and view them as viable alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel. This is being achieved through public outreach and a rebranded service as Sullivan County Transportation.

SCT has played a vital role in serving those in the community that are transit dependent and this has led to a misconception that services may not be open to the general public. According to rider surveys, more than half of the riders are members of the general public. Rebranding the service as Sullivan County Transportation establishes it as a provider of general public transit services with a smart logo that will broaden its general public appeal to increase ridership. In addition, a fresh presentation of this service as essential for all community members will enhance the status of those for whom public transit service is a critical component of fully engaging in community life.

Sullivan County residents benefit from information about carpooling options available for travel to regional employment centers through increased public outreach efforts to educate citizens about the [New Hampshire Rideshare Program](#). This free carpooling program for New Hampshire, commuters facilitated by NH DOT. When commuters enroll in the program, they receive a "match list" of others who have similar commuting patterns.

## **7.8 Technology Improvements that Streamline Service and Reporting**

Sullivan County Transportation Services (SCT) utilizes a toll-free centralized number and added Routematch dispatching software that has enhanced efficiency, recordkeeping, and data maintenance. This has helped to mitigate existing service redundancies in the county and maximize the use of existing resources. Future service enhancements may require additional telephone lines.

RouteMatch Software is used for dispatching. The addition of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) systems could assist in optimizing route timing and scheduling. Additional operations and scheduling software modules to enhance reporting and accounting functions will be required in the future along with the continued annual licensing, updating, staff training, and maintenance of the products.

## **7.9 Support for Volunteer Transportation Services**

County-wide volunteer services are largely provided in Sullivan County by Southwestern Community Services' Sullivan County Transportation. Other organizations that provide volunteer service to their clientele include Lake Sunapee Region Visiting Nurses Association, St. Luke's Church (Charlestown area), NH Association of the Blind, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), West Central Behavioral Health, and Veteran's Administration.

Volunteers are an important component of the transportation system in Sullivan County. Volunteers throughout the county provide transportation via formalized services administered by Sullivan County Transportation, NH Association of the Blind, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). This is a time-honored New England tradition of helping neighbors, family, and friends with rides in personal vehicles. This is likely a preferred method of transportation for most, but it can be difficult to recruit volunteers sufficient to meet the demand. Those with the time and resources to volunteer are often retired, serve for a time and then cycle out due to their own changing ability to drive. Younger volunteer availability is influenced by income, which unless meeting their own needs, will restrict their ability to volunteer.

SCT is continually engaged in volunteer recruitment and has made efforts to recruit volunteers in each of the 15 towns in the county.

## **7.10 The Regional Coordinating Council**

The Sullivan County Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (SCRCC) plays a significant role in fostering coordination efforts. The Regional Coordinating Council should continue to advise providers on local service design, coordination policies, and provide feedback to the State Coordinating Council relative to policies and regional transportation needs. The Council should remain active in oversight, advisory, and advocacy role for improved access and mobility.



## **8.0 Potential Coordination Strategies**

The following strategies to improve and enhance mobility for residents of the region include:

### **8.1 Enhanced Mobility for all Residents of Sullivan County**

Educational programs and travel training may help new users navigate the transportation system and provide information to communities about the importance of the service to their residents. Part of this process should include recruitment of individuals to join the volunteer driver corps. Ongoing efforts to garner additional funding sources for the volunteer driver mileage reimbursement as well as overall support for program administration are vital to the program's continued success. Continuing to support volunteer transportation services is an essential part of the solution to the County's transportation needs.

### **8.2 Transit Links between the Cities of Claremont, Lebanon/West Lebanon**

8.2 (a) Transit service between Claremont and Lebanon along Route 120 has been a high priority of the region for more than a decade. A feasibility study was completed in 2011 and demonstrated a market for the service among employers and employees in both cities as well as overwhelming public interest in the service.

8.2 (b) Transit service between Claremont and West Lebanon along Route 12 A has also arisen as a need based on public comments. A Route 12 A service would provide a direct link to the commercial business and shopping centers as well as a connection to the regional airport.

#### **Project/Tasks:**

- Seek FTA or a combination funding sources to enable implementation of Route 120 service.
- Seek future commitments from employers and municipal governments to provide match funding necessary to implement optimal service.
- Develop a capital improvement plan and funding for additional vehicles, shelters, and facilities required to implement and maintain the necessary fleet enhancements for the Route 120 services.
- Seek FTA Section 5305(e) funds to conduct a feasibility study to determine the viability of a Route 12A service.

### **8.3 Transit link to New London and Exit 12 Park & Ride via Grantham**

A feasibility study has been conducted and documented both the need and likelihood for success of a service to serve the area's primary medical facilities and employers in New London and Lebanon. The Town of New London is also one of the area's residential communities for individuals working in Claremont and Lebanon. The only existing transit service connecting the Upper Valley to this community is Dartmouth Coach. The schedule for this service limits its use as a commuter resource because it makes just one stop at the I-89, Exit 12 Park-and-Ride. Dartmouth Coach does not sell tickets at New London for their northbound run. The DOT's Statewide Transit Study identified this route as 4<sup>th</sup> in line among its recommendations for funding.



### ***8.3 Enhance and Expand Existing Transit Services***

Ridership is growing on the routes servicing Claremont, Newport, and Charlestown. The current service schedules provide adequate, but not ideal access and are regarded as inconvenient by many potential riders because of the length of time between trips. Shortening headways on services in Claremont, Charlestown, Newport and extension of services to the Sullivan County Complex will greatly increase convenience and result in increased ridership with more frequent operation.

Higher frequency services will require capital improvements that may include, but are not limited to, fleet expansion and increased vehicle spare ratios, various capital improvements to the Claremont operation center and facilities that include the addition of new maintenance equipment and building reconfiguration that will allow for routine in-house maintenance such as oil changes and cleaning along with the commensurate staffing.

Some interest has also been expressed by citizens and county officials in a transit link between Newport and Lebanon and Newport and Concord via New London.

Extension of services to Lake Sunapee's recreational facilities is also a potential

#### **Project/Tasks:**

- Seek funding to provide more frequent service to improve convenience and encourage ridership expansion.
- Seek FTA funding for capital improvements including indoor vehicle storage and /or maintenance, fleet expansion, bus shelters at key locations on existing routes, appropriate spare ratios, shop equipment and facilities improvements, updating dispatching and management information software to continually improve required reporting, recordkeeping and efficiency.
- Seek FTA funding to keep dispatching and data management software up.
- Phase in the addition of Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) terminals in all vehicles to use real-time information to improve efficiency in trip dispatching and consumer information.
- See 5305 e Planning funds to explore feasibility of services from Newport and Sunapee's recreational facilities, Lake Sunapee in summer and Mt. Sunapee Ski Area in winter.

### ***8.5 Improved Access to Regional Medical Centers***

Central Sullivan County is fortunate to be in relatively close proximity (approximately 25 miles) to a tertiary care medical facility -- the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon. However, with no existing transit or shuttle-bus service linking Sullivan County, Grafton County, and Merrimack County those in need of transportation to medical appointments must rely on family or friends or on the SCS volunteer driver program. Improved, regular access is needed between Sullivan County and New London Hospital in Merrimack County and DHMC in Grafton County on non-commuter service schedules. ADA accessible vans to provide regular shuttle service supplemented by the volunteer driver program could begin to meet these needs.

#### **Project /Tasks**

- Use volunteer driver statistical reports from Sullivan County Transportation, track volume and frequency of demand for services to various medical facilities and need for accessible vehicle service.

- Consider addition of a regularly scheduled ADA accessible small bus to serve each of the centers on various days and times to and from key locations.
- Seek advice and assistance of the hospitals and clinics to cooperate in scheduling service hours and days.
- Add supplemental ADA bus for regional hospital shuttles and volunteer driver program and seek capital funding to implement services.
- Collaborate on a funding strategy with various stakeholders and constituencies that might benefit from this service, including Medicaid managed care organizations and hospitals/clinics.

## ***8.6 Expanded Public Outreach and Improve Marketing of Services***

Increasing ridership and fostering the continued development of transportation alternatives in Sullivan County will require a substantial cultural shift. This will require improved public awareness of existing services in Sullivan County as viable alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel. This will require significant public outreach. Implementation of the marketing campaign for transportation services and new routes beginning in FY 2021 in Sullivan County is needed to increase public awareness of services and improve the image of public transit.

### **Project/Tasks:**

- Produce a short video about the effectiveness and importance of Sullivan County Transportation volunteer and bus services and the concept of public transportation as an alternative to single occupant vehicle commuting.
- Update web services and schedules to reflect the new image.
- Present service in all communications as essential for all community members - the general public, choice riders as well as those dependent on public transportation.
- Promote carpooling options available for travel to regional employment centers through increased public outreach efforts to educate citizens about the [New Hampshire Rideshare Programs](#).

## ***8.7 Bus Shelters***

Current bus stops are largely flag stops along the major roads and several fail to meet ADA standards and specifications. Signs are needed at 17 bus stops and benches and shelters are needed to encourage use and improve safety for users of the service. Details of these improvements are outlined in the Sullivan County Short Range Transportation Plan. These should be implemented as soon as funding is available for these improvements. These improvements

## ***8.8 Continue Technology Improvements to Streamline Service and Reporting***

RouteMatch Software was launched in the spring of 2010. The addition of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) systems could assist in optimizing route timing and scheduling. Additional operations and scheduling software modules to enhance reporting and accounting functions will be required in the future along with the continued annual licensing, updating, staff training, and maintenance of the products.

### **Project/Tasks:**

- Incorporate routine information technology maintenance, updates, and upgrades into operating budgets to keep products current.

- Phase in the use of AVL and GPS technology to improve efficiency and respond to service requests using real-time vehicle location information.
- Seek funding to complete bus stop enhancements and safety upgrades.

## **8.9 Support for Volunteer Driver Programs**

Sullivan County is very fortunate to have a pool of dedicated volunteers that provide mobility to many residents in need. Continuing to support volunteer transportation services is an essential part of the solution to the County's transportation needs. HB 0767 was passed by the New Hampshire House Legislature in 2008. The law, provides some assurance that volunteer drivers will not be refused issue of a policy of automobile insurance, as defined in RSA 417-A, to an applicant solely because the applicant is a volunteer driver. An insurer may not impose a surcharge or otherwise increase the rate for a policy of automobile insurance solely on the basis that the named insured, a member of the insured's household, or a person who customarily operates the insured's vehicle is a volunteer driver. But this does not protect the volunteer entirely from rate increases and it does not prohibit an insurer from refusing to renew, imposing a surcharge, or otherwise raising the rate for a policy of automobile insurance based upon factors other than the volunteer status of the insured driver, nor provide any other protection for volunteers such as those generally found in Good Samaritan laws.

Developing incentives for volunteerism will also be important. There are a number of ways of providing incentives such as sponsoring a recognition dinner for volunteer drivers. These efforts help to let volunteer drivers know that their services are important and appreciated. Second, work cooperatively with local employers to develop programs that provide incentives for their employees to volunteer. Because many volunteer drivers in Southern Sullivan County are elderly citizens with limited incomes, a program that would reimburse those drivers for their vehicle mileage would be a key aspect of maintaining the existing pool of volunteers. Sullivan County Transportation currently reimburses volunteer drivers at the federal mileage rate (currently \$.58 cents per mile) through the FTA 5310 Purchase of Service Program for those age 60 or over and persons with a disability.

### **Projects/Tasks:**

- Human service transportation providers that depend on volunteer drivers should work to maintain funding resources and programs that reimburse drivers for their mileage expenses.
- Consider incentives to boost volunteerism, including volunteer recognition dinners and employer-based volunteering programs.
- Work with the SCC on volunteer driver program recruitment, training, and driver incentive programs.

## **8.10 Continue the Regional Coordinating Council**

The Sullivan County Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (SCRCC) is playing a significant role in fostering coordination efforts. SC-RCC plays an important role going forward as an advisor to providers on local service design and for providing feedback to the State Coordinating Council on policy formulation as well as identifying local needs for service.

### **Project/Tasks:**

- Involve the RCC in the planning process to implement the Sullivan County Coordinated Public Transit/ Human Services Transportation Plan.
- Continue RCC collaboration with human service agencies and transportation providers to facilitate meaningful coordination and build relationships.

- Participate in the State Coordinating Council and other statewide stakeholder groups working on public transportation infrastructure and policy development.
- Serve as a community resource for information and education about the importance of and need for community transportation services.

## ***Appendix A***

### *Sullivan County Transportation Service Map*

## ***Appendix B***

### *Short Range Transportation Plan Summary Document*





## Appendix C

### List and Location of Sullivan County Employers

#### Sullivan County Employers -2017 NH Community Profile

Largest	Community	Product/Service	Employees
Whelen Engineering	Charlestown	Emergency lights	1,100
Sturm Ruger & Co.	Newport	Firearms	1,085
Claremont School District	Claremont	Education	440
Valley Regional Hospital	Claremont	Health care services	251
Wal-Mart	Claremont	Retail store	217
Nation Field Representatives	Claremont	Mortgage services	161
CANAM Group	Claremont	Manufacturing	154
City of Claremont	Claremont	Municipal services	152
Red River Computer	Claremont	Information technology	120
Lake Sunapee Bank	Newport	Banking services	119
Fall Mountain Regional School District	Charlestown	Education	109
Claremont Savings Bank	Claremont	Banking services	105
NH Industries	Claremont	Manufacturing	103
LaValley Building Supply	Newport	Building components	97
Sunapee School District	Sunapee	Education	95
Design Standards, Inc.	Charlestown	Medical Instruments	93
Crown Point Cabinetry	Claremont	Custom Cabinetry	91
Student Conservation Association	Charlestown	Non-Profit Youth Conservation	84
Bomar, Inc	Charlestown	Marine Hardware	80
Town of Charlestown	Charlestown	Municipal services	75
Premier Precision	Newport	Machine parts	64
Carroll Concrete	Newport	Concrete products	61
Shaw's	Newport	Supermarket	61
Airgas, Inc.	Charlestown	Welding equip, industrial/medical gases	60
Town of Sunapee	Sunapee	Municipal services	58
GKN Aerospace	Charlestown	Aircraft engine parts	55
Newport Health Center	Newport	Healthcare	54
Sugar River Bank	Newport	Banking services	54
Latva Machine Co., Inc.	Newport	Precision machine parts	52
Eastman Community Association	Grantham	Housing, development	46

*Source: Sullivan County Community Profile, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security, January 2018*

## *Appendix D*

### *Survey Summary Results*





## ***Appendix E***