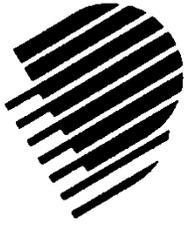


Danbury On-Demand Transportation Study





**Connecticut
Council on Developmental Disabilities**

Danbury On-Demand Transportation Study

July 2011

The preparation of this report was financed through funds from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District. This document is disseminated in the interest of information exchange. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the State of Connecticut. This report does not constitute a specification or regulation.

Prepared for the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities by



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INTRODUCTION

Study Purpose

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities (CTCDD) has identified a serious gap for accessible, affordable same day on demand transportation to allow for persons with disabilities to attend civic functions, entertainment venues, family visitation and recreational activities. It is suggested that this is particularly acute after normal daytime working hours.

CTCDD approached the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HARTransit) to conduct a planning study to identify the extent of this deficiency in the City of Danbury, and to develop a potential service design to address it.

According to Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) regulatory officials, a same day on-demand accessible service would fall under state livery or taxi regulations. That permitting process has a public hearing requirement, at which existing providers are very likely to challenge the application as unfair competition.

The process of expansion of taxi fleets and new providers can be lengthy and costly. Still, there has to be a real need shown through testimony by witnesses impacted by lack of service.

The goal of this report is to determine the demand for same-day service for Danbury, and what service design would be appropriate to address this need.

Methodology

HARTransit and CTCDD established an advisory committee of stakeholders to provide input into the study. This group included representatives from Ability Beyond Disability, The Western Connecticut Agency on Human Rights (WeCAHR), The Danbury Commission on Persons with disAbilities, The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), and ConnDOT.

The group provided input into the formulation of a survey instrument to gage the need for same day on-demand transportation to recreation or civic functions.

Mailing lists for the survey were obtained from the SweetHART (demand-response) database for Danbury, Ability Beyond Disability consumer lists and ConnDOT's Disabled Transit ID card recipients in Danbury.

Survey instruments were mailed the week of January 31, 2011. Additional surveys were completed with the aid of WeCAHR and the Danbury office of the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Service (BRS).

Other sections of the report were created via a review of literature and interviews with those knowledgeable with the programs described.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section provides an overview of the current public transportation options available in the City of Danbury.

More details on the structure of major services; i.e., those provided by HARTransit, Peter Pan Bus, Connecticut Limo and MTA Metro-North Railroad are provided in the appendix.

Danbury Area Taxi Services

ConnDOT's Division of Motor Transport Services regulates taxi companies in Connecticut. There are two private taxi services that operate within Danbury operated with standard passenger cars. The cabs are not accessible.

The cab companies are each authorized to operate 7 vehicles respectively. Taxi services are accessed by phone calls to the company headquarters and cabs are dispatched on demand.

| Taxi Company | Location | Service area | Fares | Service Span |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| A Cab Co. | Danbury | Origin or destination in Danbury | \$3.25 per pick up, then \$2.25 per mile | 24 hours, 7 days per week. |
| Maffei's Taxi Service | Danbury | Origin or destination in Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, Newtown, Redding and Ridgefield. | \$3.25 per pick up, then \$2.25 per mile | 24 hours, 7 days per week. |

City of Danbury Department Elderly Services

The City of Danbury Department of Elderly Services operates an accessible van for the transport of seniors and disabled persons, primarily to provide access to programs and activities at Elmwood Hall. The service is provided Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The van is funded through the federal section 5310 program.

Access to the service is scheduled in advance through the Elmwood Hall Senior Center and no fares are charged.

Kennedy Center Travel Training Program

The Kennedy Center, a non-profit human service organization based in Trumbull, trains persons with disabilities and seniors to safely use the local bus and rail services in Connecticut.

Since 1991, the Kennedy Center has successfully travel trained more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities to use local buses and rail.

The program can be conducted in a group setting or one to one. A qualified mobility instructor travels with the trainee to desired locations at a predetermined time. The instructor will stay with trainees teaching techniques for safe travel until the individual is ready to travel on their own.

Funding for the service is through ConnDOT, and is provided at no cost beyond the purchase of transit fares.

Peter Pan Bus Lines

Intercity bus service is provided between New York City, Danbury and Hartford by Peter Pan Bus Lines. The company provides 7 daily trips Monday-Thursday, and Saturday from Hartford to Danbury, and 8 on Fridays and Sundays. Between Danbury and Hartford, 7 daily trips are provided Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an extra bus Friday and Sunday.

Between New York City and Danbury, eight trips are provided in each direction Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an extra bus on Friday and Sunday.

Connecticut Limo

Connecticut Limo stops at the Danbury Maron Hotel on Lake Avenue seven times per day and provides service to Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports according to a scheduled timetable. The company has multiple stops in Connecticut and New York where passenger's board for travel to the airports, but no service is provided between pick up locations.

MTA Metro-North Railroad

Weekdays, a total of 11 train trips per day operate from Danbury to Grand Central Terminal (GCT). Three peak period trips per weekday are through trains to GCT. All other trips require transfers to mainline trains in South Norwalk.

In the opposite direction, 11 trips per weekday originate at GCT with arrivals at Danbury Station. Three trips in the opposite direction are through trains requiring no transfer in South Norwalk.

HARTransit Bus Services

HARTransit is the provider of the majority of the public transportation service in the City of Danbury.

There are two basic services provided by HARTransit. **Fixed route services** are those with a published timetable and route that stops at specific locations. There are 13 HARTransit routes which provide service to residents of the City of Danbury.

The second type of service is called **SweetHART**. SweetHART is a demand response service with a variable route that requires advance reservations. Seniors 60 or older and persons with disabilities are eligible for this service.

INNOVATIVE ON-DEMAND SERVICE IN CONNECTICUT

GNHTD Accessible Taxi Program

In 2008, Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) submitted a request for federal New Freedom Funds to ConnDOT to provide a pilot wheelchair accessible taxi program. The New Freedoms Program, established under former President George W. Bush, provides funding for transportation improvements for persons with disabilities that go beyond those currently offered or provide greater access than typical American's With Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services.

Metro Taxi of New Haven, a partner with GNHTD in the accessible taxi program, purchased a single accessible taxi in late 2009 with its own funds, and became the first operator of an accessible taxi in the state. The vehicle can carry two common wheelchairs and 3 ambulatory passengers.

The GNHTD proposal requested funds to purchase two accessible taxis. The grants were approved and the taxis became operational in 2010.

The vehicles are operated by Metro Taxi. ConnDOT holds title to the vehicles as first lien holder until the useful life of the vehicles expires (4-7 years or 100 thousand miles) after which they will be held by the Greater New Haven Transit District.

ConnDOT provides an incentive for those that are interested in acquiring accessible vehicles; cab companies that do so are able to short circuit the regulatory process. The State waives fees and exempts the addition of accessible vehicles to existing operator's fleet from the hearing process. The accessible cabs can also be used in traditional cab service when not required for persons with disabilities.

Reservations for the taxis may be made 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Advanced reservations may be made at any time up to one hour in advance of the pickup time. Metro Taxi policy requires that wheelchairs are secured to the inside of the accessible vehicle and that the driver may refuse service to a passenger that refuses to allow having his or her wheelchair secured. Drivers are required to assist persons with disabilities with the use of securement systems where necessary on request.

Metro Taxi and Yellow Cab of Hartford are pursuing a large expansion of this program with a grant from the Department of Energy. The companies intend to purchase 140 wheelchair accessible taxis, employing a recently introduced universal access vehicle, the MV-1, which has the capacity to transport up to 2 wheelchairs or up to 6 passengers without mobility impairments. The MV-1 is a purpose built van-sized accessible vehicle, as opposed to a modified minivan.

The vehicles selected would be compressed natural gas fueled MV-1's. It is proposed that the territories in which these vehicles would be available would be greatly expanded as compared to the existing service areas of the two cab companies.



Metro Taxi accessible cab (2010 CPTC annual report)

Hearings on the proposed expansion were held in late February 2011 by ConnDOT. As of late spring, no decisions have been made to grant or deny the expansion.

Voucher program

According to the Kennedy Center of Trumbull, persons with disabilities live in households of less than \$15,000 annual income at rates almost three times higher than the general population. Recognizing the cost component of a typical cab fare and the reduced incomes of persons with disabilities, a voucher program was also developed.

Eligibility

The voucher program is administered by the GNHTD for persons with a qualifying disability under the ADA. According to the GNHTD policy, the following definition of disability is used for eligibility purposes:

. . . an individual with a disability is any person who has a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The term "major life activity" may include seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for one's self learning, speaking or working.

The term "physical or mental impairment" may include, but is not limited to, conditions such as a visual or hearing impairment, mobility impairment, HIV infection, developmental disability, in recovery from addiction (cannot be sole disability), or a psychiatric disability.



The MV- 1, built by Indiana-based American General.

GNHTD will conduct a physical assessment of those in the program to determine their eligibility. Eligibility of participants will be reviewed triennially.

Purchase and use of vouchers

The vouchers are set up as debit cards that can be presented to the taxi operators as payment. The program will provide for half the cost of the taxi trip. As a standard policy, an individual

may accumulate up to \$100 worth of credit on their taxi voucher card, which will cost them \$50. There is flexibility on the upper limit for those that need transportation for work trips.

As of June 2011, 30 vouchers had been sold. \$36,000 of funding has been allocated to run this initial program round in the New Haven area.

Purchase of the vouchers is through the GNHTD. To discourage abuse of the vouchers, taxi drivers are required to request the presentation of a GNHTD paratransit ID card when they are accepted. Tips are not included in the voucher program.

Attendants accompanying a person presenting the voucher may ride for free with an individual that requires assistance.

A similar program is due to begin by the fall of 2011 through the Greater Hartford Transit District, partnering with Yellow Cab of Hartford. These vehicles will differ from the New Haven program in that they will be side entry for those requiring use of a ramp for boarding.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

A few paratransit services operated by public transit authorities provide limited same day service, typically with higher fares and with restrictions, such as non-emergency medical appointments. On demand-same day transportation is largely met nationwide through accessible taxi programs.

Congress originally commissioned **Easter Seals Project ACTION** in 1988 as a research and demonstration project to improve access to public transportation for people with disabilities. With the passage of the ADA two years later, the program's goals expanded to help transportation operators implement the law's transportation provisions.

Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, Easter Seals Project ACTION promotes cooperation between the transportation industry and the disability community to increase mobility for people with disabilities under the ADA and beyond.

Serving Customers with Disabilities is Smart Business!

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projectaction@easterseals.com

Easter Seals Project ACTION is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration.
Revised January 2010

Easter Seals Project ACTION

Rights & Responsibilities of Drivers & Customers

The law protects both customers with disabilities and taxicab drivers, and each group has its own sets of rights and responsibilities. While these standards ensure safe and fair treatment for customers and drivers, they are also a formula for good service!

Drivers must:

- Provide transportation to any person with a disability.
- Offer assistance to passengers if requested (not to include actual lifting).
- Serve customers with disabilities traveling alone and only use the assistance of family members, companions, or medical/public safety personnel if the customer requests or agrees to help from such persons.
- Give the same reservation services to customers with disabilities as are available to other customers.
- Not charge customers with disabilities extra fees for necessary assistance. For example, drivers must charge the same amount to stow a wheelchair or other aid device in the trunk as they would charge for a piece of luggage.
- Not deny service to a customer with a disability solely because the disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience the driver.

Customers with disabilities must:

- Know whether or not they can use a typical taxicab/van. Not all taxicabs can accommodate oversized mobility aids.
- Be able to transfer from their mobility aid to the passenger compartment of the taxi without the driver's help.
- Tell drivers if they need help and explain what help they need.
- Control their service animals at all times.
- Know their destination.
- Pay their fare.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Shows the Way

The ADA is a civil rights law that guarantees people with disabilities an equal opportunity to take part in our society. Access to transportation services is key to full community participation.

The law protects both customers with disabilities and taxicab drivers.

Taxicab Operator's Pocket

Today, 54 million people in live with disabilities. These p families, classes, meetings, other activities that keep the To help them get where the need transportation, inclu Think about it: 54,000,000

Easter Seals Project ACTION

Project ACTION offers documents free of charge relevant to accessible on demand transportation, all available on-line. Of particular relevance is *Moving Forward Together, A Handbook for Initiating and Increasing Accessible Taxi Services in Your Community (2005)*, a 78-page document which provides step by step guidance to community leaders interested in

operating accessible taxi services. Sections include public policy considerations, successful partnerships, incentives and training.

The Taxi Operator's Pocket Guide (2010) is available as a download and also as a laminated card. It is intended to be carried by a taxi operator as a reference tool and reminder on effective and appropriate methods of communicating with and assisting persons with disabilities.

The organization hosts an extensive website and provides distance training, conferences and an online newsletter.

The Long Beach, California, "Dial-a-Lift" program uses taxis for its ADA paratransit. Long Beach Transit owns the lift-equipped vans which are leased to Long Beach Yellow Cab. The agency uses this relationship to comply with ADA paratransit requirements. The cab company also uses the vehicles for paying customers with mobility disabilities that are not part of the ADA paratransit program.

Accessible vehicles have increased maintenance costs over sedans. Accessible taxi trips tend to be shorter and require more time for wheelchair securement and boarding and alighting of passengers. Recognizing these facts, the transit authority provides a minimum fare guarantee of \$10 for each accessible trip arranged through its contract with the cab company. Accessible pick-ups not part of the contract receive a \$15 subsidy to the driver.

Washington, DC, unveiled its accessible taxi program in January 2010. The service, dubbed **RoIIDC** is funded through \$1 million Federal New Freedoms grant, the DC taxicab administration provided the local match of \$200,000, and two local taxi companies supplied additional resources.

The two cab companies, Yellow Cab and Royal Cab, purchased 20 accessible vehicles and supplied specially trained drivers for the vehicles. The program is coordinated by the National Capitol Region Transportation Planning Board

There are no special eligibility requirements to use the service, which is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The program carried 49 trips in March 2010 and 349 trips in March 2011. There are no special rates for this service, but drivers that accept passengers in mobility devices receive an additional \$2 per trip.

The City of San Francisco has a large accessible taxi fleet through Luxor Cab. The cab company performs paratransit services for Caltrans, the regional provider of transit services. The cab fleet size is such that the cab company has ample time to provide trips outside of the ADA paratransit service.

The City issues paratransit coupon books to persons with disabilities with a face value of \$30, for which the individual pays \$3. Consumers may purchase up to \$300 per month in coupons. The taxi company submits the vouchers to the city for reimbursement. The cab company then pays its independent contractors.

There are 1400 cabs in San Francisco, 7.1% of which are accessible.

Boise, Idaho funds a subsidized taxi scrip program for eligible residents. To participate in the program, individuals must be at least 15 years of age, a resident of the city of Boise and have a permanent disability which inhibits the ability to drive a vehicle.

The program is administered by Senior Solutions, a non-profit agency. Participants are provided up \$90 of taxi scrip for a cost of \$42. The scrip is supplied in booklets of \$15 increments provided at \$7 each.

Riders call a participating taxi company and use the scrip as cash. They are required to present their ID card when taking trips.

A similar program is operated by the City of **Cambridge, MA**. Taxi coupons are issued by the City Council on Aging and Commission on Persons with Disabilities. Coupons are issued in books of 10, with each worth \$2.25. A maximum of two coupons can be used on each taxi trip.

Participants must be seniors age 60 or older, or have a disability to be eligible for the program. The agencies accept a variety of documents for proof of age or disability including those issued by the MBTA (Boston area transit system).

There are eight accessible taxis available for service in the city of Cambridge, with priority given to seniors and persons with disabilities.

SURVEY OF DANBURY RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of a passenger survey conducted in January and February 2011. A combined mailing list of 633 Danbury residents with disabilities was developed. An additional 11 surveys were completed with the assistance of the state Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and WeCAHR staff. In total, 224 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 34.8%.

The results of the survey were broken down into 13 questions and summarized as a whole. A large portion (36%) of the respondents said they use SweetHART service to meet their transportation needs, with the rest of the respondents stating the use of HARTransit's fixed route services and other transportation options available to them.

Other notable survey responses indicated residents desire to have more frequent fixed route service and SweetHART scheduling times. According to respondents, transportation to medical facilities and to see friends and family were some of the toughest categories to get rides for.

Survey Instrument

The survey was developed as a one page two sided questionnaire consisting of a series of write in responses and multiple choice questions. The survey asked a wide range of questions, such as what intersections are near the patron's homes, what time they are having issues getting transit service, which destinations are hardest to reach. In total, survey takers were asked 15 questions concerning their transit needs and experiences.

To increase response rates, surveys were mailed out with a letter from the Danbury Commission on Persons with disAbilities, signed by the chair of the Commission and the Vice-chair of the CTCDD. A pre-addressed stamped envelope was included with the survey mailing.

A small number of surveys were completed in-person with the aid of staff at WeCAHR and the Danbury office of the State BRS. A Spanish language version of the survey was developed by WeCAHR to aid in the completion of these surveys.

Copies of the survey instrument and cover letter are included in the appendix.

Sample Group

The sample group list was assembled by HARTransit staff using Danbury SweetHART riders, a list of Danbury consumers provided by Ability Beyond Disability, and a list of Danbury residents that received state-issued half fare transit ID cards from CT TRANSIT.

Lists from all three groups were cross-referenced to eliminate duplicate addresses.

Results

Passenger Mobility

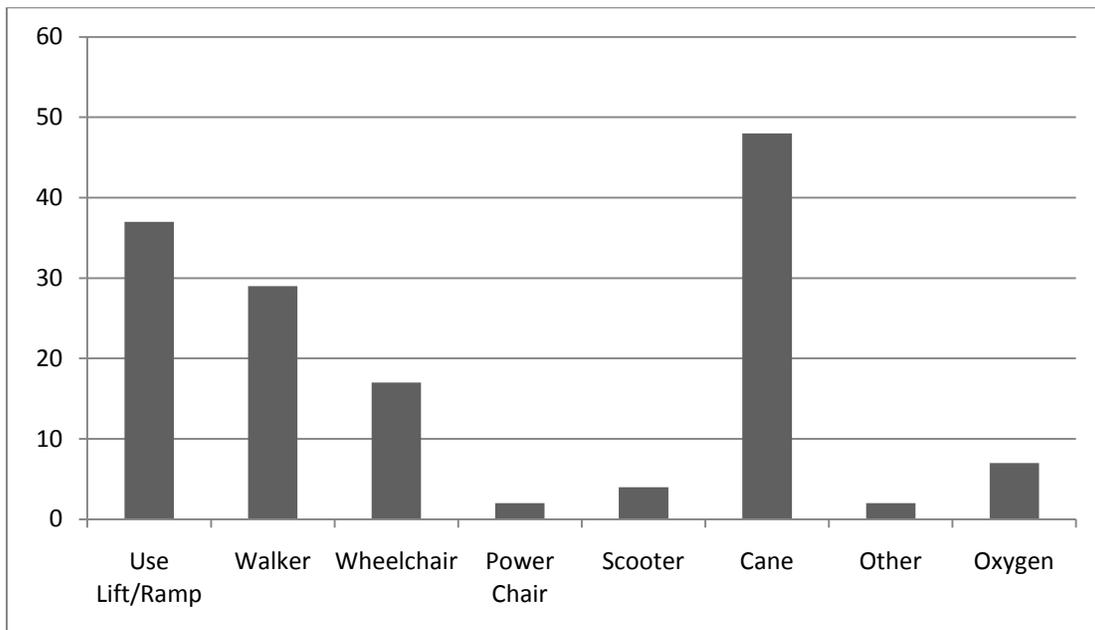
Surveys indicated that 17% of respondents require a lift or ramp to access transportation services.

Among those that require mobility devices, 21% use a cane, and 13% use a walker. 8% of respondents use a manual wheelchair and 1% to 2% uses a power chair, scooter, or an alternate mobility device to get around.

Oxygen canisters are used by 3% of respondents.

Mobility Device and Oxygen Usage

| | Number of Respondents | Percent of Responses |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Use Lift/Ramp (Q2) | 37 | 17% |
| Mobility Device (Q3) | | |
| Walker | 29 | 13% |
| Wheel Chair | 17 | 8% |
| Power Chair | 2 | 1% |
| Scooter | 4 | 2% |
| Cane | 48 | 21% |
| Other | 2 | 1% |
| Oxygen (Q4) | 7 | 3% |



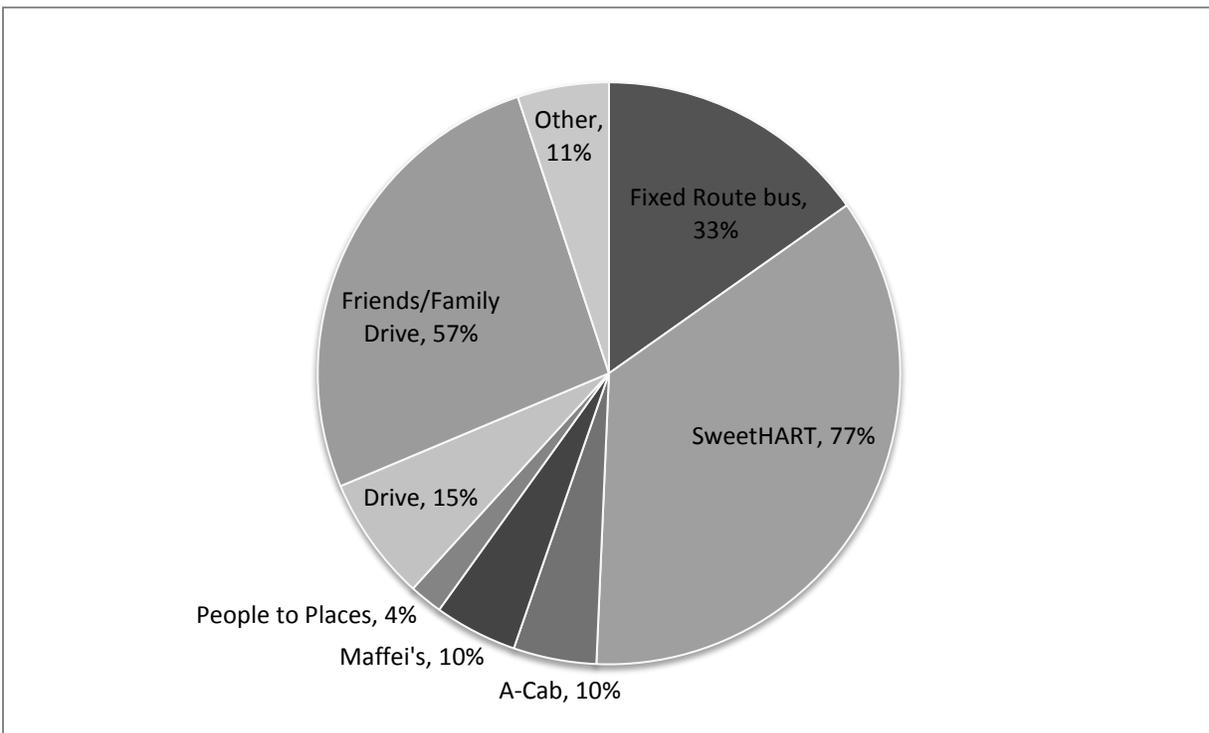
Transportation Used

Question number 5 asked survey respondents which form of transportation they used. Respondents were asked to select from a list of providers, such as HARTransit, taxis, drive oneself, get rides from friends and family, People to Places, or another form of transportation not mentioned. Note that respondents could check off more than one transportation option.

According to the responses, SweetHART was the most (77%) common transportation method used. Following SweetHART service, the next most used forms of transportation were rides from friends and family (57%) and HARTransit fixed route service (32%). 20% of respondents used one of the two taxi companies servicing the Danbury area and 15% chose to drive. 4% of survey takers used People to Places and 11% used another form of transportation.

Type of transportation used

| Transport Used (Q5) | responses | Percent of responses |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| HARTransit Fixed Route Bus | 72 | 32% |
| SweetHART Bus | 172 | 77% |
| A-Cab Co. | 22 | 10% |
| Maffei's Taxi | 22 | 10% |
| People to Places | 8 | 4% |
| Drive | 33 | 15% |
| Friends/Family Drive | 127 | 57% |
| Other | 25 | 11% |

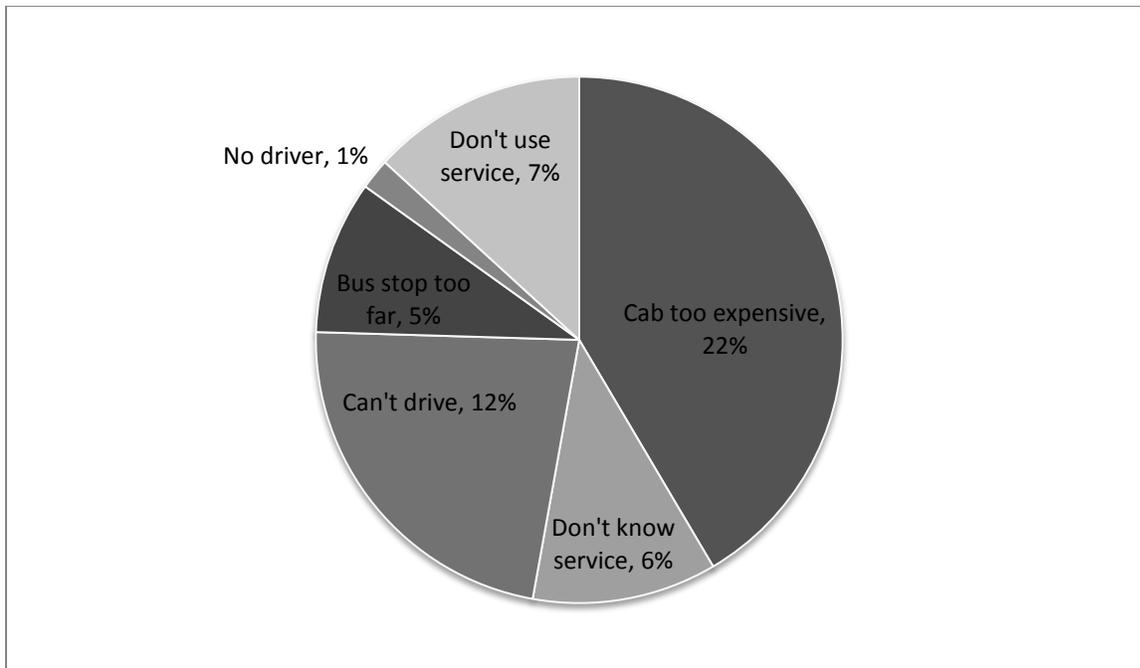


Transportation Options Not Used

The survey asked passengers to explain why they did not use certain services. The responses varied from cabs costing too much (22%) to not having a driver's license or the ability to drive (12%). Other responses included bus stops being too far to use (5%), not having a driver (1%), not knowing the services mentioned on the survey (6%), or just an unwillingness to use services listed (7%).

Why not using options listed

| Why Not Using (Q6) | Responses |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Cab Too Expensive | 22% |
| Don't Know Service | 6% |
| No D. License/Can't Drive | 12% |
| Bus Stop too far | 5% |
| No Driver | 1% |
| Don't Use Service | 7% |



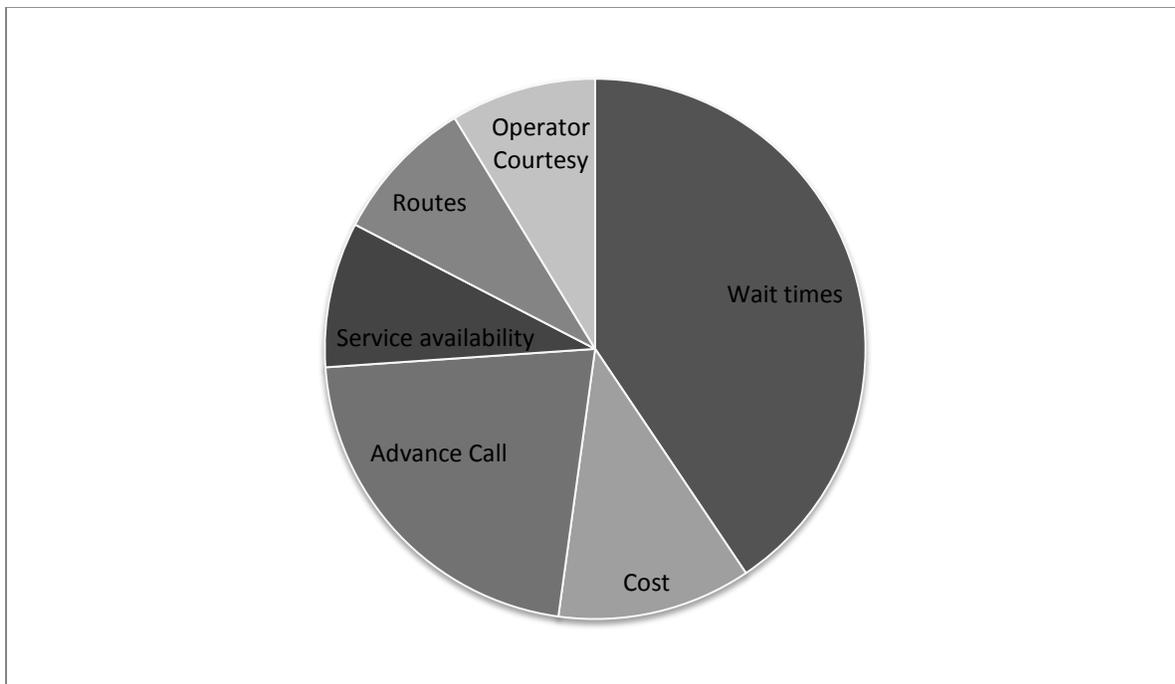
What Don't You Like About Your Transportation Service

Question 7 asked survey respondents what they do not like about the transportation services they use. The biggest complaint coming from survey takers was that wait times were too long (13%). The need to call in advance to schedule a pickup to use SweetHART and other demand response services was another item listed as something not desirable (7%).

Service availability and hours were also mentioned as something not liked. The cost of the services listed was problematic for 4% of respondents. Bus stop locations, service routes and destinations, and operator lack of courtesy received 3% of responses respectively.

What Don't You Like about the Service you Use?

| What Don't You Like About Service (Q7) | Number of responses | Percent of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wait Times | 28 | 13% |
| Cost | 8 | 4% |
| Must Call in Advance | 15 | 7% |
| Service Availability/Hours | 11 | 5% |
| Service Route/Destinations | 6 | 3% |
| Access to Bus Stops | 6 | 3% |
| Operator Courtesy | 6 | 3% |



Willingness to Pay

In order to determine willingness to pay for transportation services, participants were asked to supply a hypothetical per trip fee. Answers ranged from wanting to pay nothing for transportation, to a few that were willing to pay as much as \$10.

Of those that responded, almost 14% indicated they were willing to pay nothing up to 75 cents for transportation services, 39% said they were willing to pay \$1 to \$1.50, and 17% said they were willing to pay \$2 to \$2.50 for transportation services. 16% would be willing to pay \$3, and 7% of respondents indicated a willingness to pay \$4 per trip. One percent of participants would pay \$6 or \$10.

Willingness to Pay for Transportation

| Willingness to Pay (Q8) | Number of responses | Responses as a percent |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| \$0-1 | 20 | 14% |
| \$1-2 | 54 | 39% |
| \$2-3 | 23 | 17% |
| \$3 | 22 | 16% |
| \$4 | 9 | 7% |
| \$5 | 8 | 6% |
| \$6 | 1 | 1% |
| \$10 | 2 | 1% |

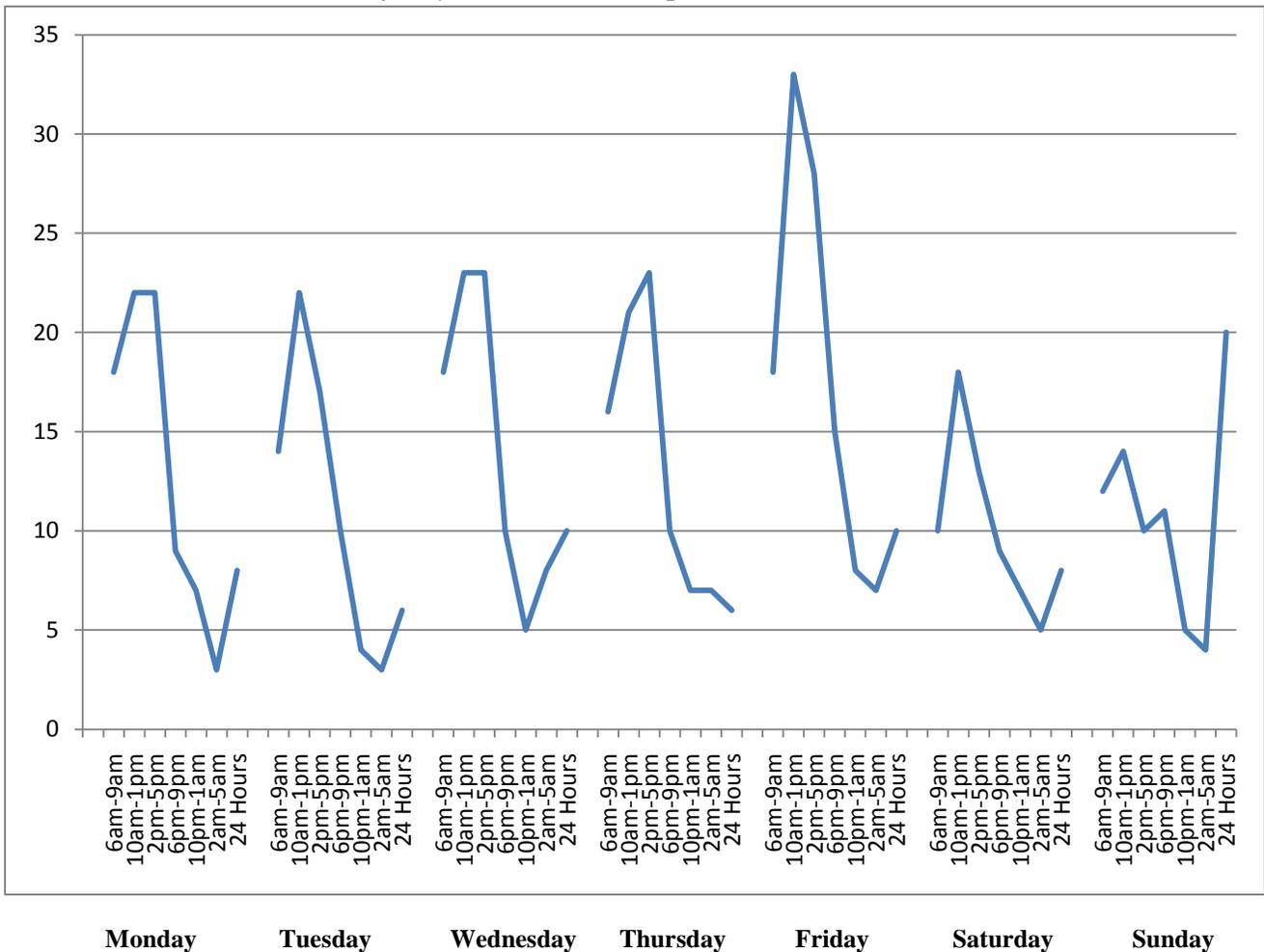
Day and Time of Week Transportation is an Issue

Question 9 asked survey takers what times of day, and day of the week they have issues with transportation. Respondents were given the option of choosing the day of the week in which they have problems and time ranging from 6 a.m.-9 a.m., 10 a.m.-1 p.m., 2 p.m.-5 p.m., 6 p.m.-9 p.m., 10 p.m.-1 a.m., and then 2 a.m.-5 a.m.

Based on survey respondents, the days and times of the week transportation is primarily an issue peaks around the hours of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Sunday. The next time period transportation is an issue is Monday through Friday between the hours of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Sundays showed a spike of demand for 24 hour service, which was relatively low Monday through Saturday. This may be related to the lower availability of programs such as SweetHART on Sundays and a general desire for more service this day.

Time of Day and Week Transportation is a Problem



Location Hardest to Get to

Question 10 asked survey takers which locations were the hardest for them to get to. While responses to this question were low, HARTransit did receive some feedback.

According to the responses received, the Hospital was the destination hardest to get to (56%). After the Hospital, Danbury Fair Mall was the second most mentioned (33%) as a difficult place to reach.

Type of Destination Hardest to Get Transportation to

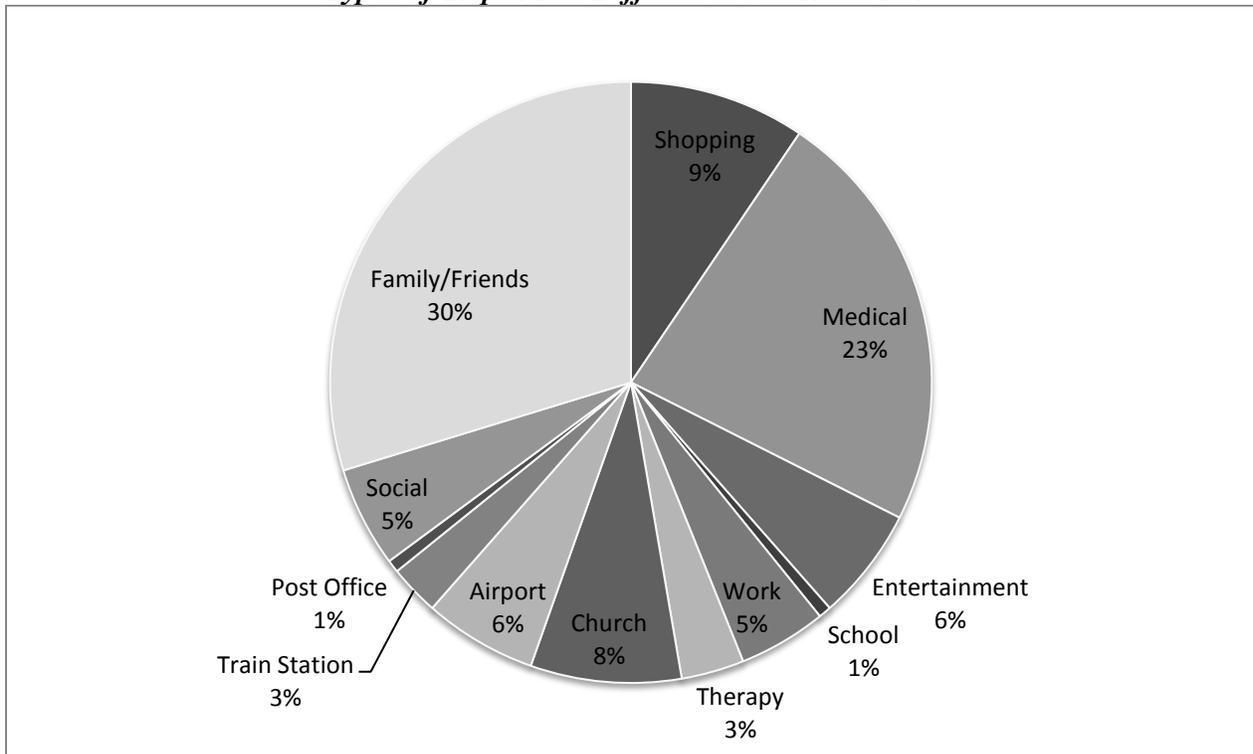
Question 11 asked survey takers which kind of destinations were the hardest to get to. This question differs from question ten in that it asked patrons which category of destinations are the hardest for them to get transportation to, rather than which specific location or establishment.

Of those who responded, 30% claimed that trips to see friends and family were hardest to accomplish. When combined with the related categories of entertainment and social purposes, the three categories account for 41% of the trips most difficult to make.

After seeing friends and family, the next hardest trip purpose to meet was for medical services (23%). Shopping was next most difficult at 9% of respondents.

The remainder of the categories chosen were a problem for less than 6% of respondents respectively. School and travel to the Post Office (1% each) were seen as the least problematic.

Types of Trips Most Difficult to Get Rides For



What is difficult about these trips?

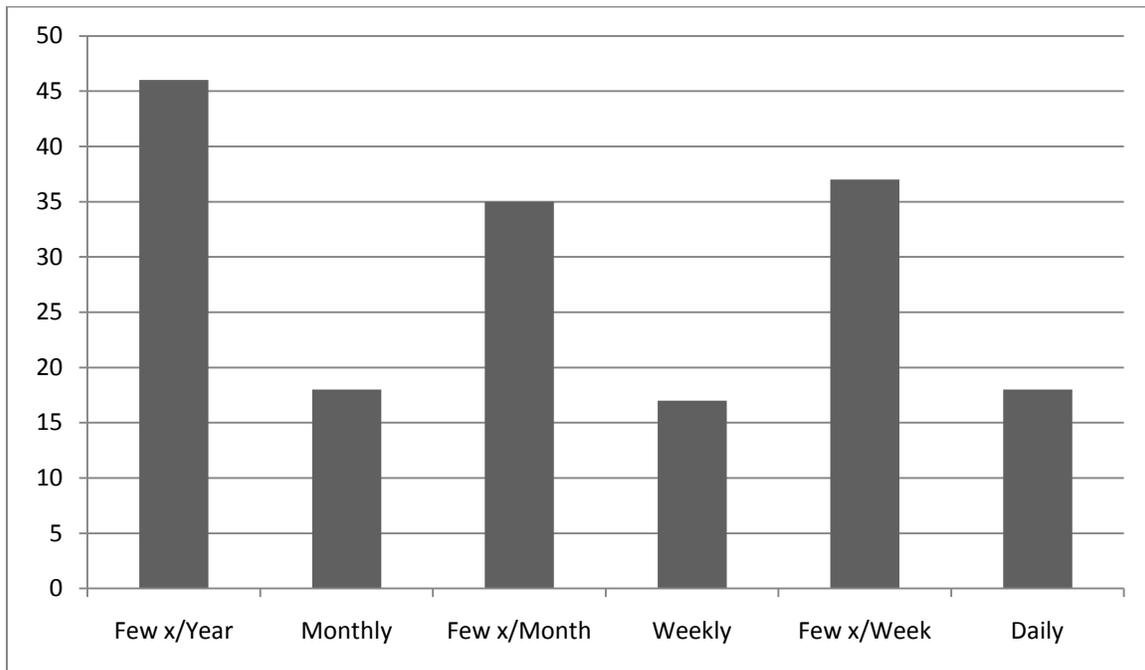
Question 12 asked respondents what was difficult about setting up these more problematic trip purposes. More than half of those that responded indicated that scheduling (54%) was their biggest difficulty, followed by hours of availability (28%), and wait times (18%).

How often are Trips a Problem?

Question 13 asked survey participants to elaborate on the frequency with which they had problems with their most difficult trips.

How Often are Trips a Problem?

| How often are trips a problem (Q13) | Number of responses |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Few x/Year | 46 |
| Monthly | 18 |
| Few x/Month | 35 |
| Weekly | 17 |
| Few x/Week | 37 |
| Daily | 18 |



The pattern may be an indication that those trips that are more irregular are more difficult to make. Virtually the same number of responses occurred for trips made monthly, weekly and daily. The greatest frequency of difficulty occurs with trips made a few times a year (46 responses) and a few times per week (37 responses).

Passenger Comments

Question 14 asked respondents to add any additional comments that they might have; most of these were related to the provision of HARTransit services.

One of the issues most commented on was that HARTransit needs to provide both more SweetHART and HARTransit fixed route bus services. More service was defined as reaching locations not currently in the HARTransit service area.

Those that commented would like more service hours and frequency.

Specifically with regard to SweetHART, respondents did not like having to schedule days or a week ahead to access the service. Those that responded noted that they do not always know in advance when they might need to travel. Other comments indicated a desire for same day request service.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The basic purpose of this study was to determine to what extent persons with disabilities need same day on-demand transportation in the Danbury area. It was suggested that the primary use of these services would be for purposes such as entertainment or family and friends visitation, particularly after hours.

- **Existing Coverage**

There are a variety of transportation services available to persons with disabilities in the Danbury area. Local bus services, paratransit/dial-a-ride and rail services are all fully accessible.

Intercity bus services suggest advanced notification for those wanting an accessible vehicle. Two cab companies provide service, though vehicles are not accessible.

- **Use of existing transportation options by Persons with Disabilities**

Based on the survey responses, residents of Danbury that are disabled rely heavily on public transit services to meet their mobility needs. A significant group of residents that are disabled rely on their own support systems, either depending on family and friends or driving themselves.

Taxi services are not heavily used by persons with disabilities, with only 10% of survey respondents using either Maffei's or A-Cab. Cost of cab rides was the most important factor identified as a barrier to transportation. A few respondents experienced difficulty accessing taxi cabs late at night.

Survey results showed that 17% of disabled residents require a lift or ramp to board a vehicle.

- **Difficulties with existing services**

The two most significant negative aspects to their mobility options identified by survey participants were wait times and the need to schedule trips in advance.

Based on the survey, residents with disabilities have the hardest time traveling between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Fridays during the midday period are particularly difficult. In general, difficulties accessing transportation on Sundays are seen throughout the day.

While service after hours is a gap in the availability of transportation services, with HARTransit services reduced on a typical weekday by 6 p.m. and ceasing altogether around 10:30 p.m., there does not appear to be significant demand after 9 p.m.

Visits to friends and family were identified by survey respondents as the most difficult trips to make. Scheduling was seen to be the greatest reason why these trips were hard to accomplish. Survey data suggests that trips that are sporadic are more difficult than those that are regularly scheduled.

Recommended Service Enhancements

According to ConnDOT, same day on-demand transportation service is defined as taxi service. The best and most cost-effective way to address the concerns of the Council is therefore by enhancement of existing privately operated taxi services. As previously described, this is typically the approach in Connecticut and the nation to meet this need.

Several service enhancements are recommended as described below. Potential funding sources include the federal New Freedoms program or Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities funds. Sources of non-federal match will need to be identified for these programs, such as municipal, corporate or foundation sources.

A last recommendation is provided as a potential policy for the Council on Disabilities to support. While not directly service related, it would enhance opportunities for persons with disabilities to access entertainment and other community resources.

1. Taxi Voucher Program

The two cab services in the region have 14 vehicles between them, but are not utilized by most survey respondents. Taxi service by definition provides the flexibility of service on demand, with no need for reservations and the ability to make trips at any time of the day.

Survey results indicated the majority of respondents would be willing to pay from \$1 to \$3 per trip for transportation. The average trip length for riders of Danbury SweetHART is 4.13 miles. Based on the current rates for taxi service in Danbury, the cost of this trip by cab would amount to \$12.54. A voucher program to partially defray the cost of cab rides is recommended.

A variety of models for eligibility for voucher programs are available, examples of which are included in this report. Some programs use ADA paratransit eligibility as the criteria, the model currently used by transit districts in the Hartford and New Haven areas. Other voucher programs have broader definitions that allow for less profoundly disabled individuals to access these programs.

Creation of a new eligibility determination process is not recommended. It is suggested that the same criteria used for half fare eligibility on public transit in Danbury be used for this

program. Riders of the HARTransit bus system are eligible for half fare as persons with a disability by presenting a SweetHART ID Card, a Medicare ID card or a state issued half fare transit ID card.

Structure:

A lead agency such as HARTransit or the Danbury Commission on Persons with disAbilities should administer the program. This organization would be responsible for eligibility determination, voucher distribution, monitoring and interface with cab companies.

A coupon or voucher program should be established in coordination with the two local taxi providers. A potential structure might include \$5 coupons that could be issued in booklets. The resident would be able to use up to two coupons per trip (tips would not be included). The final structure of any program will depend on negotiations with the local taxi providers.

2. Taxi Driver Training Program

Connecticut's recent initiatives to introduce accessible taxis into several taxi fleets around the state, as well as programs to subsidize fares on these vehicles for seniors and people with disabilities, has the potential to greatly increase community accessibility and quality of life for Connecticut residents who are elderly and/or living with disabilities.

One component that seems to have been left out of the planning for these new services is disability awareness and sensitivity training for the drivers who will be operating these new vehicles.

While the vehicles themselves and voucher programs will increase community accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities in a literal and financial sense, it is often the human element of a vehicle operator's knowledge and ability to assist a passenger that makes community access for this population possible. Offering sensitivity and passenger assistance training to accessible taxi drivers will add a critical element to these services that will greatly enhance the effectiveness of these new services to seniors and people with disabilities.

Structure

The Kennedy Center, Inc. has provided "Sensitivity, Passenger Assistance, Customer Service, and Operator Responsibilities under the ADA" training to public transit operators for over 15 years. Any or all of these training modules could easily be modified to address the unique challenges and responsibilities of taxi operators while also giving them the knowledge and skills to provide excellent service to their passengers that is compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As an incentive for cab operators, it is proposed that fees for the course be subsidized. An additional incentive could include partial or full payment of the license renewal of cab operators who attend training sessions.

3. Accessible Taxi Cabs

There are multiple examples of successful accessible taxi programs worldwide, several of which are described earlier in this report. Connecticut has one program off the ground in the New Haven area with a second due to begin by autumn 2011.

Because the cab companies in the Danbury area are significantly smaller than in the New Haven and Hartford areas, some modification of the program as established in those areas may be required.

Structure

In the Connecticut programs, ConnDOT holds title to the vehicles as first lien holder until the useful life of the vehicles expires (4-7 years or 100 thousand miles) after which they will be held by the local transit district.

In recognition of the extra time required and increased maintenance costs for an accessible vehicle, it is proposed that the drivers of such vehicles be provided a per-trip payment of \$2-\$5 for each trip that requires use of a the ramp.

Assurances that the accessible vehicles are provided 24/7 must be made.

4. Enhanced SweetHART Service

Survey results show a spike in demand for transportation Fridays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. There was a general indication of unmet demand on Sunday, but not for any particular time period.

While SweetHART does not meet the definition of same-day on demand transportation service, greater provision of SweetHART service will provide improved accessibility for persons with disabilities in the City.

HARTransit operates a full schedule of ADA and dial-a-ride service on Fridays in Danbury for its dial-a-ride service. On Sundays only a single bus is operated for ADA paratransit eligible passengers.

Structure

Provide additional SweetHART dial-a-ride service during the midday peak on Friday. Add new SweetHART dial-a-ride service beyond the ADA corridor on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

5. Development of Connected Infrastructure

It is recommended that the Council support the development of “complete streets” policies statewide, as recently developed in the City of New Haven.

The basic need for on demand transportation for persons with disabilities is in a large part a result of the decentralized nature of development in Connecticut. Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities connecting to bus stop locations, attractions and amenities are often lacking. The locations of housing, entertainment, medical services and shopping are separated by long distances. New developments are established with transportation and access as an afterthought.

Survey results showed the majority of respondents do not use mobility devices. These individuals and all those in the community would benefit from a more thoughtful urban planning process and a more walkable environment.

The centralization of accessible housing, retail and entertainment venues should be encouraged.

Infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks would also allow persons with disabilities the availability to reach local needs such as supermarkets or nearby entertainment venues without the need to access services such as taxis or SweetHART. Costs to the consumer would be reduced. Improved pedestrian access in turn would afford greater ability to safely walk to fixed route transit and rail and the greater access that those services provide.

APPENDIX I – MAJOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

HARTransit Urban Fixed Route and Trolley Routes

The majority of HARTransit's bus services are provided to the municipalities of Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford through the urban fixed route program. This urban fixed route service is primarily radial in nature with seven routes extending outward from the central business district of Danbury.

Much of HARTransit's urban fixed route service is operated within the City of Danbury. Buses are scheduled to serve traffic generators such as major employers, shopping centers, medical centers, schools, the Central Business District and elderly and low income housing areas.

Most major arterials in the City of Danbury are served, including Main Street, North Street, Padanaram Road, White Street, Federal Road, Newtown Road, South Street, Park Avenue, Lake Avenue, Route 7 and Mill Plain Road.



HARTransit low floor bus with ramp deployed.

Over the past ten years, ridership held steady on the urban fixed route program, averaging over 2400 trips per weekday and 1270 trips per Saturday. The bulk of HARTransit riders use urban fixed route buses.

The urban fixed route bus system operates in a timed-transfer “pulse” mode with all routes meeting at the main HARTransit bus station, or Pulse Point, in downtown Danbury at regular intervals throughout each day. This routing structure allows passengers to easily transfer from one route to another at the same place without long waits. Routes are interlined or paired together to allow a moderate proportion of passengers to travel from one route to another without physically transferring between buses.

Bus frequencies of 60 minutes are provided on all routes Monday through Saturday with 30 minute frequencies provided during the morning and afternoon peak periods (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday.

Departure times from the Pulse Point are scheduled on the hour throughout the day and additionally on the half hour during peak periods. The span of service is 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Saturday span of service is 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. No urban fixed service is provided evenings, Sundays or on major holidays.

The CityCenter Trolley is a specialized seasonal downtown shuttle service provided to the Main Street area Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. The service is free of charge and operates July 1 to October 30.

The urban fixed route program averages 2400 passengers per weekday and 1200 per Saturday.

HARTransit LOOP Routes

HARTransit operates its LOOP routes in Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury and New Milford. The LOOPS are designed to complement the urban fixed route system by providing service to major employment and low income housing after the close of the service day.

Three coordinated routes comprise a scaled down version of the urban fixed route system, with hourly headways and a timed transfer at the HARTransit Pulse Point.

The routes are coordinated through the regional (Danbury, Waterbury and Torrington) JobLinks jobs access program. However, there are no special eligibility requirements and service is open to the general public.

LOOP services are provided in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield and New Milford on weeknights from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Saturdays 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. and Sundays and holidays (New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and day after Thanksgiving) from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Together, the LOOP routes average 200 trips per weeknight, 240 trips per Saturday night, 450 trips per holiday and 560 passengers per Sunday.

HARTransit Danbury-Brewster Shuttle

The Danbury-Brewster Shuttle provides bus service between park and ride lots in Connecticut and the MTA Metro-North Railroad's Harlem Line station at Brewster, NY. The shuttle is designed to meeting morning southbound departures and afternoon and evening northbound arrivals to and from Grand Central Terminal.

The shuttle meets nine morning train departures to New York City between 5:55 a.m. and 8:31 a.m. and 14 arrivals between 4:00 and 9:10 p.m. 4 morning arrivals and 5 evening train departures allow for reverse commute trips. Midday, when the shuttle does not operate, the 3 Mill Plain urban fixed route bus provides hourly service between the HARTransit Pulse Point and Brewster Station.

Buses serve park and ride lots off I-84 Exits 2, 1 and 7 and travel locally down Route 6 to the Village of Brewster. Flag stops are permitted between the New York State line and the train station. Several trips provide connections to the HARTransit Pulse Point and the Danbury Fair Mall. Passengers wishing to transfer to the PART (Putnam County Rapid Transit) bus system may do so in Brewster by presenting a HARTransit or PART pass or transfer.

Between 2000 and 2009, ridership on the Danbury-Brewster Shuttle service grew by 248% to over 82,000 trips per year, or over 300 passenger trips per day.

Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 Link

The Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 Link provides service to employment along the Route 7 corridor and the downtowns of Danbury and Norwalk. Buses originate and terminate at the HARTransit and WHEELS (Norwalk Transit District) pulse points. Locations served include Cartus, Branchville Station, Wilton Center, Redding, Merritt Seven and 10/20 Westport Road.

The LINK provides hourly peak period service Monday-Friday between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. HARTransit and WHEELS administer the service jointly, each operating 50% of the service.

Passengers may transfer between the WHEELS or HARTransit systems at either terminal or to and from connecting Coastal Link or CT TRANSIT buses in Norwalk. Intersystem transfers are free.

Total 7 LINK ridership averages 230 trips per day with approximately 58% of the riders carried on the HARTransit-operated portion of the service.

Fare Structure for HARTransit Fixed Routes

Cash Fares

Fixed route services have three fare categories: full fare (or adult) passengers pay \$1.25, students (1st - 12th grade) pay \$0.90 and seniors age 60 or older and persons with disabilities pay \$0.60. Children under age six ride free.

Fare Payment Policy

Passengers are required to pay a cash fare, or to present a valid pass or transfer to ride. To qualify for a disabled fare, passengers must present a valid Medicare ID card, state-issued transit ID card or SweetHART ID card when boarding.

Pre-Paid Tickets and Passes

HARTransit offers multi-ride pass options which provide the convenience of fare prepayment and cost savings for the passenger.

Bye-passes, 10 ride punch passes, provide an eight to 12 percent discount off of cash payments depending on fare class. They are the most popular pre-paid fare option. Drivers punch a ride off each pass as it is presented. Approximately 290 Bye Passes, accounting for 2,900 trips, are sold each month.

A monthly unlimited ride pass, known as a Fast Pass, is available for those who travel frequently. A passenger traveling 40 times in a month using a Fast Pass will begin to save relative to the cash fare. About 100 Fast Passes, accounting for 4,000 trips, are sold each month.

Individual ride tickets are sold to non-profit agencies to provide transportation to their clientele. No discounts are given for the purchase of these tickets.

HARTransit will be moving to an electronic fare collection structure by the fall of 2011.

Other Valid Fare Media

HARTransit honors MTA Metro-North Railroad UniTickets, a bus/rail pass which offers a coordinated fare option to passengers transferring between buses and trains. UniTickets are sold by Metro-North for weekly or monthly travel and are accepted on all fixed route services. Approximately 58% of shuttle riders purchase UniTickets.

HARTransit has an agreement in force with Putnam County that allows passengers to transfer to a bus from either system in the village of Brewster with a pass or transfer.

HARTransit transfers are accepted on WHEELS buses in Norwalk, and WHEELS transfers are accepted in Danbury. Users of the 7 Link service may board using any valid HARTransit or Norwalk Transit District fare media. Free transfers between HARTransit buses and Coastal LINK or CT TRANSIT buses may also be made in Norwalk.

TransitChek is accepted as payment for discount fare media. TransitChek is a federally approved tax-deductible program that allows employers to provide vouchers to cover the cost of commuting to work by public transit.

Vehicles

Transit coaches are used on urban fixed routes, Route 7 LINK and some Danbury-Brewster Shuttle runs. Light duty body-on-chassis buses are used on LOOP and shuttle routes. Trolley vehicles are used exclusively on the trolley route.

All vehicles are equipped with modern features and amenities. These include wheelchair lifts or ramps, climate control, tinted windows, camera systems and two-way radios. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology is slated for installation on all vehicles by fall 2011.

Transit coaches have kneeling features, electronic registering fareboxes, bike racks and electronic destination signs. Newer vehicles are low floor, which enhances accessibility for those with mobility impairments.

DANBURY SWEETHART BUS

HARTransit provides demand response bus service to seniors aged 60 or older and persons with disabilities of any age through its SweetHART system. Door-to-door service is provided by SweetHART whereby passengers are picked up, usually at their homes, and taken to their destinations. Drivers will assist passengers from the door of their pick-up point to the door of their destination on request.

All SweetHART vehicles are wheelchair-accessible. Drivers assist riders onto lifts and secure mobility devices as necessary.

There are two components to SweetHART, each with differing eligibility requirements. The programs are integrated operationally to the extent possible. Passengers must fill out a certification form to qualify for the service. HARTransit will recognize eligibility determinations for paratransit services made by other transit systems with appropriate documentation.

SweetHART dial-a-ride service is provided for seniors age 60 or older, or persons with any mobility disability. The majority of trips on SweetHART, approximately 90%, are made through the dial-a-ride component.

ADA eligible SweetHART service (ADA complementary paratransit service) is state-funded to comply with federal regulations. The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) mandated that persons with disabilities unable to use fixed route buses be provided "complementary paratransit" service for their trips, assuming they meet the ADA-eligible definition.



Lowering the lift on a SweetHART bus.

For a trip to be considered ADA SweetHART eligible, both the origin and destination must be within 3/4 mile of a fixed route and the individual must be unable to use fixed route service due to a physical or cognitive impairment.

Other factors can make a trip ADA-eligible, i.e., if a wheelchair lift cannot be safely deployed at a stop, if a common wheelchair cannot be accommodated by the fixed route bus wheelchair lift, or if the interaction of the person's disability and architectural or environmental barriers prevents him or her from traveling to or from a bus stop.

ADA-eligible trips take priority on SweetHART over all other trips. The service is available where urban fixed route and LOOP services operate in Danbury.

Application Process

To use SweetHART, passengers must first complete an eligibility application. Applications are reviewed by HARTRANSIT staff. There are two application forms used.

A short form for seniors requests basic contact information and a documentation of age i.e., drivers license.

A long form application is used for disabled applicants. The long form asks a series of questions to help HARTRANSIT determine the nature of the applicant's mobility disability, and whether or not they have a qualifying disability for ADA SweetHART service. This form also includes a sign off section for the name and contact information for a professional familiar with the nature of the applicants disability, should questions arise.

Applications are typically processed within a week; prospective passengers may book rides as soon as they are processed.

Trip reservations

The service is operated on a reservation basis whereby pickup requests must be phoned in by the passenger to the SweetHART scheduler. Most trips are reserved at least 24 hours in advance.

There are limited provisions for same day rides. Return trips for scheduled medical appointments may be left unscheduled. These Will-Call trips can be made by calling to the dispatch office, at which point the next available bus is dispatched. Same day trips can be requested for any purpose if there is an opening in the schedule. There are only 2 same day trips per rider per month allowed. These trips require a higher \$3 fare each way and should be called in before 1:00 p.m.

Availability

In Danbury, six vehicles are provided Monday- through Friday, between 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with five vehicles in maximum service. The time of greatest demand is between 10:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

A seventh bus provides will call service for medical appointments when it is most needed based on current demand, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

ADA SweetHART operates during the same service span as the HARTransit fixed route system. ADA eligible Danbury residents can access paratransit service weeknights, on Saturdays or on Sundays.

Intertown service is provided between Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford for ADA-eligible passengers as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SweetHART Fare Structure

A single one-way intratown trip on the SweetHART dial-a-ride service is 60 cents. Fares are an additional 15 cents for trips to another municipality.

All ADA-eligible trips are \$1.25, the same as the fixed route base fare (the state requires that ADA fares be at least equivalent to the fixed route base fare; most systems in Connecticut charge

double the fixed route fare). Transfers to other buses are free. Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) for persons who are disabled and need assistance may ride free. Companions who are not PCAs pay the same fare as the passenger they accompany. Exact change is required for all fares. Passengers may make two same day trip requests per month, based on availability. Fares for same day trips are \$3.

SweetHART provides one prepayment option, a ten-ride punch pass. Like the fixed route punch-pass, this pass is called a "Bye-Pass". Local passes can be purchased for \$5.50, Intertown passes are \$7, and ADA passes are \$11. Approximately 320 SweetHART Bye-Passes are sold per month.

Vehicles

HARTransit operates twenty-two 2006 and 2007 model year Star-trans Body on Chassis buses in SweetHART service. These buses are purchased with a range of seating plans to accommodate eight to 14 ambulatory passengers. The eight seat buses have three wheelchair positions; all other configurations allow for two wheelchairs. The different configurations are deployed based on operational needs.

All buses are equipped with sliding tinted windows, ADA compliant wheelchair lifts and securement systems, climate control, security cameras and AVL tracking systems.

The SweetHART fleet is scheduled for replacement beginning in 2012.

PETER PAN BUS LINES

Intercity bus service is provided between New York City, Danbury and Hartford by Peter Pan Bus Lines. Peter Pan Bus Lines is the largest privately owned intercity bus company in the nation. The company operates 400 buses which serve more than 100 cities in the northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. Peter Pan and Greyhound have a joint venture called BOLT Bus that provides a highly discounted bus service. BOLT Buses travel between New York City and Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Baltimore.

Peter Pan operates large, over the road coach buses. The vehicles, typical for those used in long distance bus service, are equipped with high backed seats and amenities including television, Wi-Fi, and lavatories.

The company provides seven daily trips Monday-Thursday, and Saturday from Hartford to Danbury, with an extra bus on Fridays and Sundays. From Danbury to Hartford, seven daily trips are provided Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an eighth on Friday and Sunday.

Between New York City and Danbury, eight trips are provided in each direction Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an extra bus on Friday and Sunday.

Other stops made on the Hartford to New York line allow trips between Danbury, Southbury, Waterbury, and Farmington. A stop in Newtown on Church Hill Road off Exit 10 of I-84 was discontinued many years ago but is proposed for reinstatement as part of regional transportation plans.

This line also provides part-time service between Danbury, Manchester, Willimantic, Danielson, and Providence, Rhode Island. Connections to other intercity services are possible through any other carrier serving the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City, the South Station Bus terminal in Boston, or Union Station in Hartford.

Peter Pan Fare Structure

Peter Pan riders pay a distance-based fare structure depending on origin and destination. Fares between Danbury and New York City are \$20 one way, \$37 per round trip. Fares between Danbury and Waterbury are \$13 one way, \$25 round trip. Discount books of 10 or 20 tickets are available for commuters. Other fare savings programs are established for students, children, military personnel and seniors.

Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities

Peter Pan requests that persons in need of lift equipped buses provide 48 hours notice to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided. This advance notice comports with federal requirements for privately operated intercity bus services. If this notice cannot be provided, Peter Pan will provide alternative boarding assistance if a lift-equipped bus is not available.

Peter Pan staff will assist persons with disabilities at rest stops. Again, they request advance notice if assistance is required.

Use of oxygen canisters and service animals are permitted on the company's buses.

CONNECTICUT LIMO

Connecticut Limo is a private, for-profit carrier providing scheduled intercity bus service between 18 major cities in the southwestern quarter of Connecticut and southern New York to airports in the New York Metropolitan Area. Most stops are located at hotels or existing transit terminals.

Connecticut Limo stops at the Danbury Maron hotel on Lake Avenue seven times per day and provides service to Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports according to a scheduled timetable. With the exception of service to Bradley Airport (not available from the Housatonic Region), all service provided by Connecticut Limousine is interstate.

The company has multiple stops in Connecticut and New York where passengers board for travel to the airports, but no service is provided between pick up locations.

Connecticut Limo Fare Structure

Regular one way fares to JFK or LaGuardia from Danbury are \$79, round trip fares are \$154.

Connecticut Limo provides a host of promotional round trip fares for its passengers. Companions ride at 50% of the cost of the regular fare when accompanied by a full fare paying passenger. Children under 14 ride free when accompanied by an adult (limit of 2 children; children 2 and under ride free even if one way trip). Other discounts apply to seniors age 65 or older, students and online reservations.

Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities

The regularly scheduled shuttles are not accessible to persons with disabilities. The company does, however offer a door-to-door service with lift equipped vans from Danbury to any of the major airports in the New York Metropolitan Area.

NEW HAVEN LINE RAIL SERVICES

Danbury is served by the Danbury branch of the New Haven Line, which runs along coastal Connecticut between Grand Central Terminal in New York and Union Station in New Haven, Connecticut.

ConnDOT provides the subsidy for passenger rail service, which is operated by MTA Metro-North Railroad. ConnDOT owns all rolling stock and infrastructure used in the Branch Line service.

The Danbury Branch Line is a single-tracked spur of the New Haven Line that runs for 24.2 miles between South Norwalk and Danbury. In the Housatonic Valley, there are stations located in Ridgefield, West Redding, Bethel and Danbury. An additional station stop is planned in Georgetown near the Wilton, CT line as part of the redevelopment of the former Gilbert and Bennett wire mill. The service carries approximately 1200 boardings per day.

The future of the Branch Line and the Route 7 Corridor has been the subject of some 14 studies by the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO), the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and the Southwestern Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) since 1987. ConnDOT is currently engaged in the second phase of a federally funded study that will provide recommendations for improvements and possible re-electrification of the line.

Weekdays, a total of 11 trips per day operate from Danbury to Grand Central Terminal (GCT). Three peak period trips per weekday are through trains to GCT. All other trips require transfers to mainline trains in South Norwalk. In the opposite direction, 11 trips per weekday originate at GCT with arrivals at Danbury Station. Three trips in the opposite direction are through trains requiring no transfer in South Norwalk.

Service is oriented to a southbound commute with a.m. peak departures from Danbury between 5:34 a.m. and 7:57 p.m. and evening peak arrivals between 6:18 p.m. and 8:59 p.m. Reverse commutes are problematic as the first northbound train arrives in Danbury after 10:00 a.m. On weekends and holidays, six trips are provided in each direction between South Norwalk and Danbury. All trains require transfers in South Norwalk for those that wish to travel to points west or to GCT. The Danbury train station is located off Patriot Drive in Downtown Danbury, opposite the Patriot Garage. The station and rail service is fully accessible to persons with disabilities.



MTA Metro-North Railroad Station on Patriot Drive, Danbury.

Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities

The Danbury Station was completed in the 1990's and is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Railcars have designated areas for persons in wheelchairs.

Reduced-Fare Program.

Individuals with qualifying disabilities may travel on the Metro-North Railroad for half fare. Reduced-fare benefits are available for all single-ticket purchases at all times except during certain morning peak periods (MNR trains arriving at Grand Central Terminal between 5 and 10 a.m. weekdays or departing GCT between 5:30 and 9 a.m. weekdays). There is no reduced-fare program for multiple-trip commutation tickets.

To qualify for reduced fare, a passenger must present one of the following forms of identification:

- Reduced-Fare MetroCard
- Paratransit card (Access-A-Ride, Able-Ride, or Suffolk County Accessible Transportation-SCAT)
- MTA Reduced-Fare ID card (issued prior to 1995)
- Medicare Card (Medicaid Card not valid for reduced fare)

Riders may purchase a reduced-fare ticket at ticket windows or on the train (higher on-board fares do not apply to reduced-fare customers). All accessible and many recently renovated stations with ticket offices have wheelchair-accessible counters. Reduced-fare tickets are also available in advance using WebTicket for MNR. All Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) are accessible.

Personal Care Attendants are eligible to ride the commuter railroads free when accompanying a passenger with a disability. Where required, the PCA must carry identification that shows that he or she is employed by an agency that provides services to people with disabilities.

Service Animals

Customers with disabilities are permitted to bring their service animals into all MTA transit facilities. The animals must be securely leashed for the safety of all customers.

APPENDIX II

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART), in concert with the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, is conducting a transportation needs survey in the city of Danbury. By completing the following survey, you will help us improve transportation options for persons with disabilities. **Your input is important** -please respond by February 18, 2011 to HART, 62 Federal Road, Danbury, CT 06810

1) What is the nearest intersection to your home? (Street names) _____

2) Do you need an accessible vehicle with a lift or ramp? YES NO

3) Do you use a mobility device? YES NO

If yes, what kind? Please circle those that apply.

Manual chair Power chair Scooter Walker Cane Other: _____

4) Do you use portable oxygen cylinders? YES NO

5) What transportation services do you use? Please circle all that apply.

HART Public bus SweetHART bus A-Cab Co. Maffei's Taxi People to Places

Drive myself Friends or family drive me Other (please describe): _____

6) Have you tried the options you did not circle in question 5? Why are you not using them? _____

7) What don't you like about the transportation services you circled? Please describe: _____

8) What would you be willing to pay per trip for an accessible same day ride? \$ _____
(Please turn over to answer the rest of the survey.)

9) What days and times of the week are you having the most trouble with transportation? Please check all that apply:

| | 6 a.m. - 9a.m. | 10 a.m.- 1p.m. | 2 p.m. - 5p.m. | 6p.m. - 9p.m. | 10p.m.- 1a.m. | 2a.m.- 5a.m. |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Monday | | | | | | |
| Tuesday | | | | | | |
| Wednesday | | | | | | |
| Thursday | | | | | | |
| Friday | | | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | | | |
| Sunday | | | | | | |

10) What one destination is hardest to get transportation to for you? Please provide an address.

11) Which type of trip is hardest to get rides for? Please circle one.

Shopping Medical Entertainment School Work Therapy Religious Services
Airport Train Station Social Visiting family or friends Other (describe) _____

12) What specifically is difficult about these trips?

13) How often are these trips a problem? Please circle one.

Daily A few times a week Weekly A few times a month Monthly A few times a year

14) Please provide any additional comments you might have: _____

15) If you'd like more information, please provide your name and address: _____

Questionario de transportacion inapropiada para personas discapacitada

El Sistema de Transito Publico de HART en conjunción con El Concilio de Personas Discapacitada, esta conduciendo una evaluacion de el modo de transportacion para personas discapacitadas que viven en la area de Danbury. Favor de completar el questionario. Su coperacion ayudara combiar el systema de transportacion por uno mas efectivo.

El formulario se envia a Febrero 18, 2011 a HART, 62 Federal Road, Danbury, CT 06810

1) Cuales son las calles y cruce mas cerca de su casa? Incluya el Nombre

2) Necesita usted un vehiculo accessible con un aparato que sirva como un ascensor or ra.m.pa?

Si _____ No _____

3) Usa usted un aparato de movilidad? Si _____ No _____

Que tipo de aparato? Subraye por favor

Sillon de reuda manuar sillón de ruedas eléctrico escúter paseante baton Otro:

4) Usa usted un tanque de oxígeno con cilindros portátiles? Si _____ No _____

5) Cuales servicios de transportacion usa usted? Subraye por favor.

HART Transportacion Publica-autobus Autobus SweetHART A-Cab Co. Maffei's Taxi
People to Places Yo Manejo mi carro Mi familia o a.m.istades me transportan en su coche

Otro:

6) He tratado usted las opciones que no subrayo? Porque no? _____

7) Cuales son los aspectos no conveniente para usted? Que no le gusta?

8) Que esta usted dispuesto a gastar para un viaje accessible de un mismo paseo? \$ _____

9) Cuales son los días de la semana y la hora que usted tiene problemas con la transportacion?

| | 6 a.m. - 9a.m. | 10 a.m.- 1p.m. | 2 p.m. - 5p.m. | 6p.m. - 9p.m. | 10p.m.- 1a.m. | 2a.m.- 5a.m. |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| El lunes | | | | | | |
| El martes | | | | | | |
| El miércoles | | | | | | |
| El jueves | | | | | | |
| El viernes | | | | | | |
| El sabado | | | | | | |
| El domingo | | | | | | |

10) Cuales destinos son los mas dificiles de obtener transportacion? Favor de incluir la dirección or nombre de la(s) calle(s):

11) Cuales son los tipo de viaje/destinos mas dificiles de obtener transportacion? Subraye

Ir de compras Medico Entretenimiento Escuela Trabajo Therapia Servicios
religiosos Aeropuerto Estacion de tren Eventos sociales

Otros:

12) Cuales son los aspectos mas dificiles de estos viajes?

13) Con que frecuencia ocurren estos problemas de transportacion?

Diario Varias veces en la semana Semanal Varios dias del mes Una ve al mes

Varias veces durante el ano

14) Comentarios Adicional/ Para mas informacion, por favor proporcione su nombre y dirección.



Danbury Commission on Persons With disAbilities

155 Deer Hill Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810

John M. Gentile, Chair
(203) 796-8010



Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities

Dear City Resident:

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) are conducting a study to improve transportation options for persons with disabilities to promote inclusion in community life. The study is being done in cooperation with The City of Danbury Commission on Persons with Disabilities, Ability Beyond Disability, Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) and Western Connecticut Association for Human Rights (WeCAHR).

The enclosed survey is an important tool for us to understand the current unmet transportation needs of persons with disabilities. Please complete and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by February 18, 2011.

Thank you in advance for your participation. For more information, Contact the HART office at (203) 744-4070.

Sincerely,

John Gentile, Chairman
City of Danbury
Commission on Persons with Disabilities

Frank M. Reed, Vice Chairman
State of Connecticut
Council on Developmental Disabilities