



SUSSEX COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES



Transit Forum

In March 2004, the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) held a day-long forum at DelTech's campus in Georgetown. The purpose was to educate the public on the transit service issues DTC is facing in Sussex County.

Participants included:

- Local Citizens
- Land Use Officials
- Local Elected Officials
- University Staff
- Transit Professionals
- DelDOT Planners and Engineers
- Transportation Management Association Representatives
- Business Owners
- Developers
- Elderly Group Representatives
- Disabled Group Representatives

DTC intends to partner with these stakeholders to develop an action plan and create a pilot program to test ways of providing transit services more effectively in the County.



Sample Participant Responses

"Great start, seems like many people have an interest . . . question is, how can we corral the comments and concerns into a workable solution for transit options in Sussex County?"

"More routes. More stops. More time."

Transit Service Challenges

High percentages of low-paying jobs

- 27% < \$9 per hour
- 52% < \$11 per hour
- 91% < \$25 per hour

Growing Population

- 38% increase from 1990 to 2000 (fastest growing county in DE); trend is expected to continue.

Aging Population

- Majority of adult population projected to be of retirement age in 10 years.

Population is Scattered and Separated from the Workplace

- Sussex County is one of the largest geographic counties on the East Coast of the United States.
- Bulk of workforce can not afford to live where most of the jobs are located, the coastal resort community.
- Most workers live in the central to western portion of the county and need to travel 5-20 miles to employment centers.

Services are spread, as well

- Two hospitals are located on opposite outside ends of the County
- Major retail centers are located on the outer edges of the County: near Milford in the north, Seaford in the west and between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach in the East.
- Reasonable walking distances along major travel corridors: lack of appropriate pedestrian pathways to travel corridors and lack of sufficient population within walking distance of highway corridor for bus service

Transit Connectivity is Lacking

- Many residences are not located within reasonable walking distances of major travel corridors
- Appropriate pedestrian pathways to travel corridors are lacking
- Insufficient population within walking distance of highway corridor for bus service

How Do these Conditions Affect DTC Services?

Low wage service jobs and more elderly means more transit service demand with expectations of:

- Convenient routing
- Frequent scheduling, matched with start and quit times for employment, appointments and scheduled entertainment
- Operations all day or at most hours of the day
- Higher speed bus service to cover long travel distances

With a high percentage of elderly people using the services, more disabled patrons can be anticipated, increasing the demand for door-to-door paratransit service.

A high level of scheduled fixed-route service will be required along roads where access cannot be provided conveniently to those people who need the service.

Having buses meander into and out of residential communities along these roads will only make the situation worse by producing:

- Excessive travel times
- Patron dissatisfaction due to long travel times
- Equipment and cost inefficiencies

How Does DTC Intend to Respond to these Service Demands?

- Conduct a Test Corridor Project along a transit-friendly route, providing the appropriate type and level of transit service to see how potential users will respond.

To find out more about DTC's plan or to share your views, contact **David W. Dooley**, Service Planner with DART First State via E-mail dwoooley@mail.dot.state.de.us or telephone (302) 577-3278, ext. 3464.