
Executive Summary

The Final Report of the Clinton County Transportation Needs Assessment is the result of an effort by Clinton County and the Clinton County Economic Collaborative (CCEC) to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current transportation system. The project included assessing the feasibility of coordinating services for more efficient and effective delivery of service, minimizing costs, and examining issues between counties, states, and countries. It also identified gaps and overlaps in service, as well as solutions for improving services. The outcome of the study is a countywide Coordinated Human Service – Transit Plan.

Clinton County is a predominantly rural county in northeast New York State. It is bordered on the north by the province of Quebec; on the east by Chittenden County, Vermont; to the south by Essex County; and to the west by Franklin County. The county is made up of just over 1,000 square miles, half of which is contained within Adirondack Park. Estimated county population in 2009 was 81,800, up close to two percent from 79,900 in the year 2000. The City of Plattsburgh is the largest city within the county and the county seat, with an estimated population of 19,200.

Detailed demographic data was assembled at both the county and block group levels, including overall population as well as the population in four specific groups that tend to be the most transit dependent: older adults, low income households, zero vehicle households, and persons with disabilities. In general, high concentrations of each demographic indicator of transit need, follow the general population density pattern within the county: Densest in the City and Town of Plattsburgh, radiating out along major corridors, and in Rouses Point.

At a finer level of detail, 20 block groups within the City or Town of Plattsburgh were identified as having very high or high transit need. About one half of the county is considered to have moderate transit need, because of a concentration of one or more of the populations that usually require transit service.

Clinton County Public Transit (CCPT) is the provider of fixed route public transportation and ADA complementary paratransit services in Clinton County. In addition to CCPT's public transit services, there are various human service agencies and private companies operating in and around Clinton County that provide transportation services to certain segments of the population, though almost half of those agencies provide service only to their program clientele. Days and hours of service, especially for those who clients would like to accept shift work and infrequency of service, particularly for those served by CCPT rural routes, were cited by study participants as major gaps in Clinton County's transit inventory.

The study makes various recommendations intended to address gaps in service, economize delivery of service (partially through coordination), minimize CCPT's operating costs, and increase program sustainability. Those recommendations include:

- Create a one-call, one-click center, funded through a consortium of participating agencies and organized via CTAA technical assistance. The development of a one-call, one-click center would create an organizational structure for community information. In its basic form, the center can provide information and referral services to customers regarding transit options. Part of the purpose of the center would be to educate the public, local businesses, and local government officials about transit, in general. Specifically, to provide travel training services, instructing the public on how to get from point A to point B by transit or paratransit. Other initial responsibilities would be to develop an inventory of all modes of transportation and to develop training and public education programs. As the one-call, one-click center evolves, it could potentially provide shared trip reservation, scheduling, and dispatching services as well.

-
- Create a south city hub, perhaps funded through a public-private partnership with businesses in the south city area. There are currently hubs at Government Center and the Champlain Mall on Route 3, but there is no corresponding hub for service in the southern part of the county.
 - Update marketing and branding strategies to include the installation of new bus stop signs and information displays at route hubs. Also work with local hotel and motels to get information about public transit on the hotel/motel website. Various fixed route schedule and route name changes are proposed, to make the current CCPT system more accessible to those unfamiliar with public transit (and also to increase system efficiency).
 - Add bike racks to all CCPT buses (CCPT has begun to require future vehicle purchases have bike racks included in the vehicle specifications)
 - CCPT should look to coordinate efforts to provide service with SUNY
 - Create greater transit connections between Clinton County and Franklin County, New York and Chittenden County, Vermont. The North County Express provides service to and from Franklin County, but service is limited to one run in the morning and one in the afternoon. CCPT provides connections to the Grand Isle Ferry service that transports passengers across Lake Champlain, but there is no corresponding transit service at the ferry terminal on the Vermont side. This is especially important for medical staff traveling between Plattsburgh and Burlington, Vermont.