



BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

BINGHAMTON REGIONAL JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN *SERVICE EVALUATION*



August 2004

BINGHAMTON REGIONAL JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN SERVICE EVALUATION

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, as the metropolitan planning organization for the region, included in its 2003-2004 Unified Planning Work Program a project to evaluate the progress made on implementing the recommendations of the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan, which was completed during April 2000.

The Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan's purpose was to assess the needs of people in the region transitioning from public assistance to the workforce. Findings from the Plan were used by the Broome County Department of Public Transportation (BCDOPT) to apply for grants from the New York State Community Solutions through Transportation (CST) Program, and the Federal Transit Administration Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program. This evaluation will indicate the progress made on implementing the recommendations of the Job Access Transportation Plan, determine the effectiveness of the new and enhanced services, identify obstacles toward meeting the goals of the Job Access Transportation Plan, and discuss possible transit service changes to better meet ridership needs.

I. BACKGROUND OF JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FINDINGS OF THE BINGHAMTON REGIONAL JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Due to mismatches between the transportation needs of welfare recipients and low-income individuals, and the public transportation services that are available, barriers are created that inhibit these people finding and retaining employment. The Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan identified these barriers as the following public transportation service gaps:

- ♦ Absence of weekday evening/night bus service
- ♦ Limited Saturday bus service (Broome)
- ♦ Absence of Saturday bus service (Tioga)
- ♦ Absence of Sunday bus service
- ♦ Limited service connections between Broome and Tioga Counties
- ♦ Inability of rural paratransit service to meet work travel needs

PROPOSALS FROM THE BINGHAMTON REGIONAL JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE SERVICE GAPS

The following is an excerpt from the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan, listing the proposed transit service changes that address the transportation service gaps.

PROPOSAL #1. Extend B.C. Transit/B.C. Lift Hours of Service on Weekdays

1. The goal of this project is to address the most significant gap between service and need. As of April 2000, only five B.C. Transit routes ran after 7:00PM on weekdays. Because of the hub and spoke route pattern, the five routes that run late into the evening provide only limited service. For example, an individual could take a late bus from the Oakdale Mall to B.C. Junction in downtown Binghamton, but if they live on the Conklin Avenue or Robinson Street line they cannot get home. As such, access to job shifts with late evening dismissal, or to night shift work is severely constrained.

By running buses until approximately 12:30AM, evening- and night-shift job opportunities would become available to welfare recipients and low-income individuals who must rely on transit for work trip transportation. While it may not be feasible to operate the entire B.C. Transit system that late at night, it is necessary to select routes that serve the major employment opportunities as well as the primary residential locations of the target population. As such, it is proposed to operate the following routes until 12:30AM on weeknights:

- ♦ #5 Vestal Ave
- ♦ #7 Clinton St
- ♦ #8 Front St
- ♦ #12 Conklin Ave
- ♦ #15 Leroy/SUNY
- ♦ #28 Robinson St
- ♦ #35 Main St
- ♦ #40 Chenango St

This proposal would necessarily be accompanied by an extension of operating hours of the B.C. Lift paratransit service as required by ADA.

2. The cost of this project is based on the figure of \$50/service hour provided by Broome County Department of Public Transportation. That cost includes personal services for drivers, supervisors, and garage maintenance crew; equipment and supplies; and complementary ADA paratransit. The project would require approximately an additional 29 service hours per night. This equates to 7,540 hours/year, at a cost of approximately \$377,000. It is estimated that the service would generate additional farebox revenue of \$78,000 per year, for a net deficit of \$299,000.
3. Because the project is simply an extension of the service hours of B.C. Transit, it by definition maximizes the use of existing transportation services and is coordinated with the existing transportation network. No additional capital costs would be incurred.
4. This strategy does not rely on any employer-assisted or provided transportation services. When implemented, the Department of Public Transportation would notify both the Department of Social Services and the area employers of the availability of the service. This would permit them to alter their job placement strategies to include those jobs that were previously unavailable to people required to rely on public transportation.

PROPOSAL #2. Enhance B.C. Transit/B.C. Lift Weekend Service

1. The goal of this project is similar to that of Proposal #1. Weekend service will also improve the access to jobs for transit dependent individuals. Based on the employer survey in the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan, it is a lower priority than extended night service, in that access to jobs on weekends is less critical. The benefited number of individuals from the target population is likely to be fewer than those benefited by late night service.

The project would extend B.C. Transit service on Saturday and initiate limited B.C. Transit service on Sunday. The proposed Saturday service would apply to the core group of routes identified above. These routes would operate until approximately midnight. There would be no change to the frequency of service from that which current operates on Saturday.

It is proposed that Sunday service be initiated with limited operation. While there have been requests over the years from the general user population to provide bus service on Sundays, it is difficult to forecast what the actual demand may be. Beginning with limited service, coupled with appropriate

marketing, will help gauge the ultimate demand. In the context of work trip transportation, it is anticipated that this service will have less of an impact than Saturday service. The proposed service would cover a limited route structure and utilize the 60/120 minute headway that currently characterizes Saturday service. Route interlining would be designed to minimize the number of drivers required.

2. The cost of the service is calculated in the same manner as described above. The Saturday service would require the addition of 22 service hours, which translates to additional 1144 hours per year. This service would cost \$57,200 per year to operate. It is forecasted to generate \$10,400 in farebox revenue, for a net deficit of \$46,800.

Sunday service, per the initial limited service proposal, would require 29 service hours at an annual cost of \$75,400. Farebox revenue is based on 2000 riders per day, with the assumption that half would use monthly passes and thereby generate no new revenue. The result is annual revenue of \$26,000, and a net deficit of \$49,400.

3. The same discussion as in Proposal #1 applies.
4. The same discussion as in Proposal #1 applies.

PROPOSAL #3. Create a Transportation Service Center / Transportation Broker

1. While this proposal does not in itself create additional transportation service, it does meet an important need. There is agreement that transportation can be a barrier to people entering or remaining in the workforce not because the service does not exist, but because the individual does not know about the service or understand how it operates. While welfare recipients receive information as part of the job placement process, low-income individuals who are not Social Services clients may not. The creation of a Transportation Service Center has the goal of aiding job placement and retention by providing direct assistance in matching transportation needs with available services.

In discussions with the Broome County Department of Social Services and the Broome County Office of Employment and Training, it was determined that the most appropriate location for such a service would be in the Self Sufficiency Center. This would provide immediate access to both DSS clients and OET clients enrolled in job training and placement programs. It is envisioned that the Transportation Service Center would operate with a single full-time employee. This individual would have access to a full database of transportation services. Clients who are identified as not having access to a car would be referred to the Center. Their transportation needs would be reviewed. This would include not only getting to and from the proposed job, but also other related transportation needs, like getting children to or from child care, that would be necessary to maintaining employment. Human service agencies would also be provided the opportunity to refer clients to the TSC for help with transportation problems. The Center employee would also accumulate data on unmet transportation needs, which could be used to identify possible new service.

2. The initial cost of establishing the Transportation Service Center includes not only personal service expense, but also equipment purchase. Fully burdened salary cost is estimated at \$48,000. Purchase of office furniture and computer equipment is estimated at \$7,000.
3. Because this proposal does not create new transportation service, the question of utilizing existing service providers is moot. It is worth noting, however, that this service would be instituted within the existing DSS/OET job placement structure, and would not create a new agency.

4. It is not envisioned that the Transportation Service Center would involve any employer assistance.

PROPOSAL #4: Improve public transportation service across the Broome-Tioga County border.

1. The goal of this project is to address the gap identified above in which residents of one county cannot reasonably access employment sites in the other county. The Town of Owego, in Tioga County, is included in the Binghamton metropolitan area, as defined by the BMTS metropolitan area boundary. As previously discussed, Broome and Tioga Counties each operate their own public transportation services. As a result, the ability of each transit system to pick up and discharge passengers in the other county must be sanctioned through an intermunicipal agreement. But as far as employment opportunities are concerned, the county boundary is an artificial one.

The current intermunicipal agreement, which permits Tioga County Public Transit to pick up and discharge passengers on Washington Avenue in Endicott is inadequate to provide for meeting work trip needs for target population residents. The intent of this proposal is to develop a coordinated service delivery strategy, which would allow people to more easily travel from one county to the other. This is not yet defined, but could involve B.C. Transit traveling into the Town of Owego, with a limited number of stops at employment sites; more stops for Tioga County Public Transit in Broome County; or simply more frequent service by Tioga to the current Endicott transfer site, with coordinated schedules.

2. Cost will be defined as service parameters are more clearly developed.
3. Again, the intent is to make the existing public transit service in both Broome and Tioga Counties more robust, rather than creating something new to fill the gap. It is always more efficient to build upon existing service, with its capital and operational base, than to create new service. Any bus route network expansion would be designed to fit easily within current operations.
4. The potential for employer participation would be explored. There may be opportunities, particularly if the employers in the Town of Owego have difficulty attracting workforce, since the population base is in the Broome County portion of the metropolitan area. The most efficient use of employer resources would be the subsidizing of employee transit fares.

PROPOSAL #5. Enhanced Rural Paratransit Service.

1. There is a significant deficiency in transportation service available to the rural poor. While paratransit service exists in both Broome and Tioga Counties, its operational design makes it very difficult to use it for work travel, given that most employment opportunities are in the urban area. The goal of this proposal is to enhance the operations of B.C. Country and Tioga County Public Transit paratransit to better serve the work trip needs of the rural poor.

The project proposal is currently undefined. The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study has in its 2000-2001 Unified Planning Work Program an FTA funded task to evaluate Broome County's rural paratransit service. The work trip component will be an important part of that task.

PRIORITY OF PROJECTS

The project proposals are listed in priority order as determined by the planning process. The priority is based on the extent to which the proposed service addresses the primary goal of providing a public transit alternative for welfare recipients and low-income individuals to travel to work. Based on the work of the

Welfare Reform Coalition and the BMTS Welfare to Work Transportation Needs Assessment, the conclusion is that extending B.C. Transit operating hours later on weeknights will have the largest impact, followed by enhancement of weekend service.

It should be noted that because the highest priority projects are simply extensions of the existing fixed-route bus service, they automatically include comparable extension of the service hours of the B.C. Lift (ADA complementary paratransit service). This results in the same new opportunities for work trip travel for individuals with disabilities.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSALS

FUNDING

The following funding sources were used to implement recommendations from the Regional Job Access Transportation Plan.

Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC):

The purpose of this grant program (TEA-21, Section 3037, authorized through FY 2003) is to develop transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low income individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services. Grants may finance capital projects and operating costs of equipment, facilities, and associated capital maintenance items related to providing access to jobs; promote use of transit by workers with nontraditional work schedules; promote use by appropriate agencies of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals; and promote use of employer-provided transportation including the transit pass benefit program.

Funds are allocated on a discretionary basis as follows: 60 percent to areas over 200,000 population; 20 percent to areas of under 200,000 population; and 20 percent to nonurbanized areas. The Federal/local share is 50/50.

ALLOCATIONS TO BROOME COUNTY:

FISCAL YEAR	FEDERAL ALLOCATION
2000	\$200,000
2001	\$249,450
2002	\$500,000
2003	\$247,668
2004	\$99,126
\$52,696 – Available Allocation	

(Note: Available allocation is based on program funding level authorized by the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2004, Part II, Public Law 108-224.)

Community Solutions for Transportation (CST):

The CST Program is funded under the New York State Department of Labor’s Welfare-To-Work Division TANF program. It is designed to meet the work-related transportation needs of individuals and families in Broome County who are financially responsible for minor children and have income less than 200% of the poverty level.

The objective of this program is to help participants with the transition to work and/or help them to retain their employment, by addressing transportation barriers.

A September 25, 2001 letter from the NYS Dept. of Labor announced that the CST application jointly submitted by the Broome County Department of Social Services and the Broome County Department of Public Transportation was approved up to the maximum allocation of \$678,000. The awarded CST funds are being used as the required match for JARC funds, as well as for the 200% Pass Program (a.k.a. WERC Program), and to partially fund the Transportation Broker position, which are explained in more detail in the “Transportation Broker (Proposal 3)” section that follows.

Other Funding:

Fare revenues, and New York State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) funds are used to cover the balance of the costs for the new and enhanced transit services. Broome County Government funds are not used for the new and enhanced services.

STOA funds are provided by the New York State Department of Transportation to public transit operators according to a payment formula. For January-March 2004, the formula is -- \$0.405 per passenger, \$0.69 per vehicle revenue mile.

The fare revenues refer to the funds collected from riders of the fixed route transit services (BC Transit) and BC Lift, paratransit service for the urban area. (See *Appendix 1* for detailed fare information for BC Transit and BC Lift)

ENHANCED TRANSIT SERVICE (Proposals 1 & 2)

EXTENDED HOURS AND NEW SUNDAY SERVICE:

To better accommodate transportation needs of those working second and third shifts, including retail employment with late evening closing times, and to break down employment barriers for employable welfare recipients, the Broome County Department of Public Transportation (BCDOPT) extended service for its fixed route (BC Transit) and urban area paratransit (BC Lift) systems. Both have been extended Monday through Saturday, and new Sunday service has been created. BCDOPT administrators found that the current fixed route system provides ample service to much of Broome County’s urban population during regular hours, and decided to extend service on 12 of 17 fixed routes. The enhanced service was initiated May 13th of 2002. The extended service was designed to target low-income riders who compose the largest percentage of ridership.

Below is a detailed list of the bus routes with enhanced service:

Route	Extended Weeknight Hours	Extended Saturday Hours	New Sunday Service	NOTES
3 Park Ave.	NONE	NONE	11:50 AM – 4:15 PM	This route has 42 stops connecting to Binghamton General Hospital and multiple residential dwellings not previously served on Sunday. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
5 Vestal Ave.	11:00 PM – 12:20 AM	8:20 – 10:20 PM	10:20 AM – 5:45 PM	This route has 61 stops in a commercial district not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sundays. Employers reached are AIG (American Insurance Group), NCI (Nation Wide Credit Inc.) and Binghamton University. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.

7 Clinton St.	6:50 – 11:30 PM	7:15 – 9:15 PM	10:40 AM – 6:00 PM	This route has 60 stops connecting employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sunday. This route links the downtown commercial business district with residential neighborhoods and small businesses. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
8 Front St.	6:55 – 10:20 PM	7:20 – 9:20 PM	10:20 AM – 5:20 PM	This route has 36 stops connecting employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sunday. This route reaches many small businesses, retail centers and residential dwellings. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
12 Conklin Ave.	7:20 PM – 12:15 AM	7:20 – 10:35 PM	10:03 AM – 5:50 PM	This route has 59 stops connecting low-income housing developments such as Saratoga Heights and Saratoga Terrance to employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sunday. Major employers include Giant Market and Crowley Foods. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
15 Leroy St.	6:50 – 11:40 PM	7:20 – 10:00 PM	10:45 AM – 6:15 PM	This route has 68 stops connecting employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday and Sunday. This route links residential neighborhoods with Binghamton University and Town Square Mall. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
17 Ely Park	7:00 PM – 12:05 AM	7:30 – 10:40 PM	10:50 AM – 5:20 PM	This route has 34 additional stops connecting employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sunday. This route reaches such employers as BOCES (vocational training center) and the Broome Development Center. This route also reaches the Ely Park Apartments which is a public subsidized housing development.
28 Robinson St.	8:00 PM – 12:15 AM	7:50 – 10:20 PM	10:20 AM – 5:38 PM	This route has 48 stops connecting a low-income public housing development and employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday and Sunday. Major employers include Giant Market, and Broome Psychiatric Center. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
35 Binghamton –Endicott	7:15 PM – 12:00 AM	6:20 – 11:00 PM	10:20 AM – 7:10 PM	This route has 168 additional stops connecting numerous employers during times not previously served on weeknights, Saturday or Sunday. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
40 Chenango St.	6:20 – 10:50 PM	NONE	10:45 AM – 6:15 PM	There are 80 stops connecting employers and reaching low-income housing developments not previously served on weeknights and Sunday. This route also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
47 Vestal – Endicott	6:15 – 7:15 PM	NONE	NONE	There are 78 stops connecting employers not previously served on weeknights. This route reaches Walmart, Binghamton University and many small businesses, and shopping plazas.

Shoppers Special	7:20 – 10:20 PM	NONE	10:20 AM – 6:15 PM	There are 7 stops connecting employers not previously served on weeknights and Sunday. This route also allows flag stops along the Vestal Parkway, and Susquehanna Street, which is also a connection to employers. This route links regional shopping centers together. It also reaches the BC Junction, allowing passengers to transfer to other buses.
BC Lift	Until 1:00 AM	Until 11:15 PM	11:00 AM – 6:30 PM	<i>Note: The BC Lift is a reservation system thus not containing fixed stops to gather specific employment statistics.</i>

- **Extended Service Adjustments:**

Since the initiation of extended hours and Sunday service, only one adjustment to the new service has been made. Service was added to the **15 Leroy St.** route during November 2003 to provide better service by matching shift times to Walmart, Willow Point Nursing Home, Synergy Solutions, and the Press & Sun Bulletin. The bus now arrives at Walmart in the Town Square Mall at 11:30 PM to accommodate their second shift workers.

CREATION OF NEW FIXED ROUTE:

BCDOPT created one new fixed route service during regular service hours called the “**K-Commuter**”. Beginning service in September of 2002, the K-Commuter connects Binghamton’s urban core with employers in Kirkwood, and at the Broome Corporate Park in Conklin. Major employers accessible along this route are Dick’s Sporting Goods, Kirby Vacuum, Southern Tier Plastics, Triple Cities Metal Finishing, Frito Lay, Felchar Manufacturing Corp as well as several restaurants, and 24 hour gas and food markets. Service runs hourly, Monday through Friday from 7:20 AM – 2:15 PM.

Contextually, the K-Commuter route restores similar service that was discontinued several years ago, known as the M-Commuter. There is still one M-Commuter run available from 3:30 – 4:00 PM on weekdays, which is counted as regular service. Although the K-Commuter route does not run during extended evening and Saturday hours, or on Sunday, it is classified as new, additional service with the primary purpose of getting people to and from work.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CENTER / TRANSPORTATION BROKER (Proposal 3)

During June of 2002, the BCDOPT hired a Transportation Broker. This is a full-time position, with the salary being fully funded in equal portions from the CST and JARC grants. The broker’s office is located in the Broome Employment & Training Center at 171 Front St. in Binghamton.

The transportation broker serves as an information clearinghouse about local public transportation providers, and advises agency clientele of various transportation options. Each client is provided with a travel plan to meet their transportation needs, and is kept informed of changes to routes and schedules. If a location is inaccessible via BC Transit, the broker will research other transportation options. It is intended to have this position serve as a one-stop transportation information resource.

Additionally, the broker assists the BCDOPT in developing a vision and plan for developing the most efficient public transportation system possible to meet the area’s transportation needs.

The following is a list of specific projects the broker administers or is involved in:

WERC Program: The broker administrates a new program created by the BCDOPT, called **Working Employed Parents Ride Cost-free (WERC)**. This program provides a free bus pass to applicants that

meet three basic requirements: must be employed, must be a parent of child(ren) under age 18, and have a taxable earned income up to 200% of the federal poverty level. Non-custodial parents may also qualify. Student WERC Passes are provided for any full time students who are employed, typically to youth that are enrolled in High School. There have been rare circumstances where an adult is going full time to B.C.C. for instance and employed part time, and receives a Student WERC Pass.

The WERC program is funded by the CST program.

The broker determines eligibility for those individuals seeking a WERC bus pass. In addition, any questions, issues, and concerns a person may have about public transportation are resolved. This includes teaching people to read the bus schedules, developing individualized transportation plans, and showing first time riders how to use B.C. Transit buses.

The broker promotes the WERC program through meetings and contacts with various public, not-for-profits, and private organizations in Broome County who serve and/or employ low-income individuals to inform them of the availability of public transportation, and learning more about transportation needs of each organization.

The broker is also surveying passengers to identify those who meet the criteria for the WERC Program, but are not participating yet. Once such an individual is identified, he or she will be offered the ability to take advantage of the program. According to the BCDOPT's October – December 2003 JARC Quarterly Report, about 32% of the targeted population is participating in the WERC program. The surveys are also used to assess the results of meeting the employment needs of the area workers.

Information about the WERC Program is available on the BCDOPT website at <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/transit/TransitFreePass.php>. (Also see *Appendix 2*)

Transit Service Adjustments: Using information from interviews with employers and transit riders, the broker identifies and recommends adjustments to certain routes to provide better access to employers and residences. The broker also assists the transit supervisor in the route bidding process to incorporate any new route changes to the system.

Redesign Transit Schedule Pamphlets: The broker is working to redesign the transit schedule pamphlets for each route in a manner that will make them easier to read and understand. Changes include a new cover to make the pamphlet more recognizable for its purpose, revised maps to identify landmarks, time-points, and side streets where most bus stops are located, as well as displaying the route schedule in a more logical and informative manner. The broker requests clients to review proposed changes, and considers their suggestions. It is anticipated that the new transit route schedules should be completed during late 2004.

Redesign BC Transit Map: The broker is working with BMTS to redesign the system map to more clearly display BC Transit service to riders and major employers.

Transit Ambassador Program: This program, initiated in the Quarter – July through September 2003, provides personalized instruction by the broker or volunteers to passengers who are unfamiliar with using BC Transit.

BCDOPT Website Development:

The BCDOPT is working with the Broome County Department of Information Technology to develop a new website (www.ridebcctransit.com) that will provide extensive BCDOPT service information in a user-friendly manner. In an effort to develop a highly effective website, the broker and other BCDOPT staff continue to review other public transportation websites to see services they are offering, and to test the ease in finding information.

Plans for the website include providing comprehensive information on the services the BCDOPT offers, including: new easy to read bus schedules, information about the WERC free pass program, the

Geographic Information System (GIS) tool (described below), and the ability to download information such as applications to use BCDOPT's paratransit service.

Keeping the website up-to-date, and efficient will be an ongoing task. The current updated website is now available at www.ridebctransit.com or through the Broome County website at <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/transit/>.

Transit Route Locator Geographic Information System (GIS) Application: The broker is also working with the Broome County GIS Administrator in the development of the Transit Route Locator. The Transit Route Locator is an online GIS map that enables riders to locate any one of BC Transit's 942 bus stops along the fixed route system and determine accessibility to a variety of destinations such as schools and places of employment. The Broome County Office of Employment and Training – Day Care Unit has also been involved, by supplying information to enable plotting of day care facility locations and area employers.

This Application can also be used by the BCDOPT for planning routes by identifying areas where additional service could be offered, and for administering paratransit services. It also enables dispatchers and BC Junction attendants to more easily access and provide information requested via the telephone.

The Transit Route Locator is now available to the public on the BCDOPT website. The website is also linked to the Broome Employment Center where jobs are posted. Links to other websites will be investigated.

BCDOPT plans to market this system to Binghamton University, Broome Community College, and public & private employment agencies. It is anticipated that this system will reduce usage of paper schedules and help computer users readily find information about the transit system.

MARKETING/PUBLICITY

The BCDOPT began to promote new and extended services in August 2002 for the fixed route and paratransit service. This includes the development and distribution of printed informational flyers, conducting community meetings, ads in the Press & Sun-Bulletin, and the creation of a new website that includes the Transit Route Locator tool that was discussed above. The flyers are used to promote the new and extended service BC Transit offers, as well as to advise those with internet access how to find schedules and bus information via BC Transit's website. The BCDOPT also continues to assess availability of schedule holder locations to identify ways to become more user friendly to the public. As noted above, the broker continues to meet with employers, and surveys transit riders to inform them of the enhanced transit services and the W.E.R.C. Program.

Additionally, BCDOPT hired an advertising agency to develop advertising media to publicize new and extended service. Below is a list of advertising campaigns that were done through this agency:

- Produced a television and radio commercial that started airing during December 2003, which advertised the extended transit services and Free Pass Program (a.k.a. WERC).
- Advertising the extended service, Free Pass Program (a.k.a. WERC), and new website (www.ridebctransit.com) using printed signs placed in the ad panels on the sides of BC Transit buses. (See *Appendix 3*) Smaller signs are also located inside the buses.

Marketing activities are evaluated by the BCDOPT through ridership statistics on the fixed route and paratransit system during the times of new and extended service

GUARANTEED EMERGENCY RIDE HOME PROGRAM

In June of 2002, the BCDOPT began developing a Guaranteed Emergency Ride Home Program to provide free transportation to qualified individuals so they may travel to their home in emergency situations. This effort has not progressed, due mainly to logistic difficulties in relation to the County's procurement process and associated bidding requirements.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ACROSS THE BROOME-TIOGA COUNTY BORDER (Proposal 4)

Tioga County Public Transit, now also known as "RIDE TIOGA", is a service funded by the federal and state transportation funds under the guidance of the NYS Department of Transportation Passenger Transportation Division. The bus service is privately operated by a division of First Transit, Inc. under contract to Tioga County.

Coordinated service between BC Transit and Tioga County Public Transit began on December 1, 1998, prior to the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan. An intermunicipal agreement permits Tioga County Public Transit to pick up and discharge passengers on Washington Avenue in Endicott. Riders can transfer to the BC Transit system (#35, Main Street) on Washington Avenue. The Owego-Broome County route runs five times each day, Monday through Friday. The runs originate at Front St. & Park St. in Owego at 6:20 AM, 7:55 AM, 12:00 PM, 1:25 PM, and 4:30 PM. Arrival at Washington Avenue is at 6:52 AM, 8:27 AM, 12:32 PM, 1:57 PM, and 5:02 PM respectively. The Tioga bus also serves the Broome-Tioga Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) and Broome Community College (BCC) on 7:55 AM and 1:25 PM runs. (*See the Appendix 4 for detailed route information.*)

The fare for the Owego to Broome route is \$2.00 each way, or an Unlimited Monthly Ride Pass is available for \$60.00.

Tioga County contracted with Abrams – Cherwony & Associates to perform the *Tioga County Transit Services Study*, which was completed during May 2003. The objective of the Study was to develop a comprehensive and coordinated public transportation plan and program that addresses both current fixed route and demand responsive services for the next five years. The Study recommended that the Owego-Broome route be realigned to connect Owego with the Town Square Mall in Broome County on a more consistent and regular basis. The Town Square Mall is a popular shopping destination, and having the connection there would eliminate the need for a Tioga County Transit rider to make a transfer at Washington Avenue. Reducing transfers is a critical element of making the service easier and more convenient to use. Similar to current practice, five round trips would be maintained Monday through Friday, with two round trips continuing on to Broome ARC/BCC. However, on the way back to Tioga County via the Town Square Mall, the Broome ARC/BCC trips will serve BC Junction in downtown Binghamton. This facility is the major transfer center for the BC Transit system. (*See Appendix 5 for the Route Proposal Map*)

The proposed modifications are not particularly related to job access. The change in the transfer location provides improved access to Broome County destinations, but further investigation is needed to best address job access from Tioga to Broome County. Additionally, the system change does not accommodate individuals seeking employment in Tioga County. However, improvement of the Broome-Tioga integration was a lower priority recommendation in the Regional Job Access Transportation Plan.

ENHANCED RURAL PARATRANSIT SERVICE (Proposal 5)

The *Broome County Rural Paratransit Analysis* was completed during September 2002. It took a look at the BCOPT rural paratransit system known as BC Country, examined unmet transportation needs of rural residents, and identified and evaluated improvement or modification options available to Broome County. Because B.C. Country was originally established on a primarily human services model, its operational design cannot accommodate most rural residents seeking employment in the urban area. One of the objectives of the study was to determine if travel to jobs could be provided.

The following service improvement options were identified:

Operations

- Increase the number of peak demand response vehicles operating in BC Country service
- Establish demand response zones throughout the County
- Create rural fixed routes during times of peak demand, with feeder service to those routes provided by demand response zones
- Begin all BC Country service at 6 am
- Schedule trips and utilize vehicles during the midday to a greater extent
- Create two driver shifts per day for each vehicle
- Increase the number of rural to rural trips provided to Senior Community Centers
- Establish a discounted taxi program to serve trip requests that cannot be accommodated by BC Country vehicles
- Raise base fare to \$4.00 and elderly/disabled fare to \$2.00
- Institute discounted pricing for rural-to-rural trips
- Coordinate with Deposit Foundation in service provision between the Triple Cities and the far eastern part of the County
- Establish an institutional fare arrangement between BC Country and ARC, as well as any other providers that utilize BC Country for regularly scheduled subscription trips
- Coordinate with DSS to provide more efficient Medicaid Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)

Organizational and Management Improvements

- Establish clear guidelines and assumptions for calculating BC Country expenses
- Create a Paratransit Service Manager position to manage all BCOPT paratransit services
- Institute a real-time scheduling system
- Install a telephone registering system to determine telecommunications infrastructure needs
- Create a policies and procedures manual for intake, scheduling and dispatching
- Hire additional dispatching/reservation staff and add a pre-recorded BC Country Information Line in order to decrease response time for all reservations
- Designate one full-time position for the task of dispatching drivers and call intake assistance, as needed
- Charge Public Transportation Analyst with providing planning assistance to Paratransit Service Manager and managing computer and information systems
- Increase marketing and outreach to selected human service agencies and major employers

Three alternatives for implementing BC Country service improvements were recommended: (*See Appendix 6 for details of alternatives*)

Alternative A focuses on options that provide improved efficiency and effectiveness without dramatically changing the way that BC Country operates or requiring a great deal of additional resources.

The following elements of this alternative have potential to improve job access. Beginning the BC Country service at 6 AM, would enable people to use the service for commuting to jobs that have shifts starting before the original 9 AM service starting time. Establishing a discounted taxi program would also serve job commuters when BC Country buses are full, or if a person's job shift begins or ends when BC Country is not operating. Other operational and management proposals in this alternative have the purpose of making the BC Country service more efficient, cost effective, and user friendly, however, they would likely have minimal direct impact on improving job access.

Alternative B goes beyond Alternative A by providing significantly more service utilizing additional vehicles in order to address some of the unmet transit need in rural Broome County. This alternative would bring in extra

resources to ensure that more program participants and general public users could be provided with trips under an expanded paratransit zone system. Alternative B also maintains many of the smaller scale options from Alternative A including the 6 AM starting time for BC Country service, and the establishment of a discounted taxi program. Additionally, this alternative proposes adding two vehicles to the peak BC Country service, and establishing demand response zones throughout the County. These additional changes would enable more people to reserve rides during peak ridership times, of which would likely include time periods commuters would use the service to access their jobs. This alternative also proposes to increase marketing and outreach to selected human service agencies and employers, which would inform them and their employees of this transportation option for commuting to their job.

Alternative C charts a somewhat different course for BC Country than Alternative B in the area of operations. It approaches the inability of BC Country to currently meet demand throughout the County by providing fixed route service in the more remote areas of the County and relying on demand response feeder service to provide connections. In other respects it is similar to Alternative B, proposing an increased number of service zones, a range of smaller scale improvements and a similar management structure.

This alternative also proposes the 6 AM starting time for BC Country service, and the establishment of a discounted taxi program, as well as adding two vehicles to the peak BC Country service, and increasing marketing and outreach to selected human service agencies and employers. The creation of rural fixed routes during times of peak demand, with feeder service to those routes provided by demand response zones would alleviate ridership capacity constraints during peak times. The rural fixed routes and their respective time schedules could also be designed to meet job access needs.

None of the alternatives of the Rural Paratransit Study have been implemented at this time.

III. EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTED TRANSIT SERVICES

RIDERSHIP OF ENHANCED TRANSIT SERVICES

BC Transit ridership is counted as passengers boarding the bus. Fareboxes track regular fare and token riders, while the bus drivers press designated buttons to track riders who receive discounted fares or use various types of passes. The following categories of BC transit riders are tracked:

Fares: Regular (includes tokens), Elderly/Handicapped, Wheelchair Fare, Transfer, and Wheelchair Transfer

Passes: Free Regular, Student, Binghamton High School, Off Campus College (Binghamton University), Elderly/Disabled, Dept. of Social Services Daily, TANF, Wheelchair, and 200%.

Passes allow unlimited rides and need to be renewed monthly, except for the Binghamton University pass, which must be renewed each semester.

Ridership Data Limitations

BCDOPT uses electronic registering fareboxes on all B.C. Transit buses to collect ridership data. Due to manipulation limitations on BC Transit and BC Lift ridership data, the ridership analysis of extended and new public transportation service is not available by route for each quarterly interval. Ridership data manipulation proved to be a time consuming process to group ridership numbers by route, date, and time of day. BC Transit software to analyze data from the farebox provides only a few basic reports. One often needs to create original customized reports to obtain meaningful and useful data, which involves extensive querying, grouping, and manipulation of the raw ridership data.

Additionally, to separate extended weekday and Saturday service ridership numbers from new Sunday service ridership numbers, Sunday ridership numbers generated from farebox data were subtracted from total enhanced transit services numbers from quarterly JARC reports. In several instances, resulting data for extended evening and Saturday service showed negative ridership, indicating inaccuracy in ridership data. Such instances are denoted in the ridership tables for Extended Evening and Saturday service in *Appendix 8* where a question mark (?) is in a cell. A contributing factor to the problem could likely be the frequent breakdown of the bus fareboxes, necessitating bus drivers to manually track ridership.

BC Transit – Quarterly Ridership (Not including enhanced and new service)

The table below lists BC Transit quarterly ridership levels during regular hours of service. Quarterly ridership of the enhanced and new services will be compared to these figures to see if similar trends exist.

BC TRANSIT TOTAL QUARTERLY RIDERSHIP (Regular Service Hour ONLY)						
(May 2002 –December 2003)						
* Quarter does not include April.						
May –June 2002*	July – Sept. 2002	Oct. – Dec. 2002	Jan. – Mar. 2003	Apr. – June 2003	July – Sept. 2003	Oct. – Dec. 2003
326,070	523,549	587,543	578,166	548,363	516,907	585,231

BC Transit – New Sunday Service:

The chart below displays the quarterly ridership levels for the new Sunday Service (*See Appendix 7 for more detailed information*)

Sunday Service Quarterly Ridership Totals

*NOTE: No service on Easter Sunday (4/20/03)

	Quarterly Total By Route (May - Jun 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (July - Sep 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (Oct - Dec 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (Jan - Mar 2003)*	Quarterly Total By Route (Apr - Jun 2003)	Quarterly Total By Route (Jul - Sep 2003)	Quarterly Total By Route (Oct - Dec 2003)
Route 3 - Park Ave.	N/A	N/A	N/A	141	148	179	181
Route 7 - Clinton St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	208	268	409	476
Route 8 - Front St./BCC	N/A	N/A	N/A	393	300	338	293
Route 12 - Conklin Ave./Broome Corp. Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	734	613	661	670
Route 15 - Leroy/SUNY	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,407	1,256	2,024	2,047
Route 17 - Ely Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	497	595	524	520
Route 28 - Robinson St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	945	984	1,013	1,397
Route 35 - Endicott/Binghamton	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,104	5,255	6,026	5,332
Route 40 - Chenango St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	443	438	722	719
Route 47 - Vestal/Endicott	N/A	N/A	N/A	84	N/A	N/A	8
Shoppers' Special	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,659	1,964	3,036	4,317
West Corners Shuttle	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9
Total	5,357	11,644	13,576	12,615	12,688	14,932	15,969

Overall Sunday ridership has increased considerably since the initiation of the new service. The trend of increasing ridership is evident for Routes 7, 15, 28, 40, and the Shoppers Special. An apparent leveling-off of ridership is seen for Routes 3, 8, 12, 17, and 35. Inconsistent Sunday service for Route 47 and the West Corners Shuttle does not permit for a determination of a ridership trend. The proportion of ridership among the routes appears typical to that of normal weekday hours of service.

When compared to BC Transit quarterly ridership for regular service hours during the same time period, total quarterly ridership levels follow a similar trend.

BC Transit - Extended Services Hours on weekdays and Saturday

The chart below displays the quarterly ridership levels for the extended services hours on weekdays and Saturday. (See *Appendix 8* for more detailed information)

Extended Weekday & Saturday Service Quarterly Ridership Totals

	Quarterly Total By Route (May - Jun 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (Jul - Sep 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (Oct - Dec 2002)	Quarterly Total By Route (Jan - Mar 2003)	Quarterly Total By Route (Apr - Jun 2003)	Quarterly Total By Route (Jul - Sep 2003)	Quarterly Total By Route (Oct - Dec 2003)
Route 5 - Vestal Ave.	N/A	N/A	N/A	659	739	2,557	N/A
Route 7 - Clinton St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,079	3,167	2,716	3,210
Route 8 - Front St./BCC	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,265	1,217	1,422	849
Route 12 - Conklin Ave./Broome Corp. Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,182	3,125	4,307	3,842
Route 15 - Leroy/SUNY	N/A	N/A	N/A	261	107	3,351	1,854
Route 17 - Ely Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	859	536	190	637
Route 28 - Robinson St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,692	1,556	460	1,155
Route 35 - Endicott/Binghamton	N/A	N/A	N/A	234	170	3	1
Route 40 - Chenango St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,909	1,972	2,533	1,837
Route 47 - Vestal/Endicott	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,840	1,488	1,737	2,300
Endwell Shuttle	N/A	N/A	N/A	60	81	20	150
Shoppers' Special	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,490	1,866	1,416	1,473
West Corners Shuttle	N/A	N/A	N/A	79	85	127	217
K Commuter	N/A	N/A	N/A	599	2,267	1,503	1,568
Total	8,680	23,729	16,422	17,208	18,376	22,342	19,093

Overall extended weekday and Saturday ridership has increased since the initiation of the new service. The trends of the individual routes are more difficult to discern. Routes 5 and 15 had significant ridership increases for the Jul. - Sep. 2003 quarter, however Route 15 ridership dropped again in the Oct. - Dec. quarter, while ridership figures for Route 5 were not available. Routes 7, 8, 12, and 40 followed a similar trend, with less of a ridership increase in the Jul. - Sep. 2003 quarter. Routes 17, 28, and the Endwell Shuttle ridership dipped significantly in the Jul. - Sep. 2003 quarter, but increases significantly in the following quarter. The Shoppers Special and K Commuter routes show a trend of initially increasing ridership that levels-off in the last two quarters. It is noted that although the K-Commuter route does not run during extended evening and Saturday hours, or on Sunday, the total ridership is counted as JARC program ridership since it is new, additional service with the primary purpose of getting people to and from work. The West Corners Shuttle shows a trend of increasing ridership. Finally, although the Route 35 typically has more ridership than other routes, the data above indicates very low and declining ridership. This is explained by the fact that this route already had later evening service on weekdays, and only one additional roundtrip was created as a result of grant funding. This trip was made at 10:20 PM from BC Junction, arrives at the Glendale facility at 11:15 PM, and returns to BC Junction at 12:00 AM. The ability to identify ridership trends

among the routes is complicated by the lack of route level ridership data for May – Dec. 2002. Also, limitations in the ability to manipulate ridership data, and frequent farebox breakdowns have possibly compromised route level ridership numbers.

When compared to BC Transit quarterly ridership for regular service hours during the same time period, total quarterly ridership levels for BC Transit enhanced services for weekdays and Saturdays indicates a similar trend except for a greater initial rate of ridership increase between the first and second quarters of enhanced service before having a decrease between the last two quarters of 2002, and then gradually increasing and similarly leveling off during 2003.

BC Lift – Quarterly Ridership (Not including enhanced and new service)

The table below lists BC Lift quarterly ridership levels during regular hours of service. Quarterly ridership of the enhanced and new services will be compared to these figures to see if similar trends exist.

BC LIFT TOTAL QUARTERLY RIDERSHIP (Regular Service Hour ONLY) (May 2002 –December 2003) * Quarter does not include April.						
May –June 2002*	July – Sept. 2002	Oct. – Dec. 2002	Jan. – Mar. 2003	Apr. – June 2003	July – Sept. 2003	Oct. – Dec. 2003
10,712	15,731	16,210	16,638	17,936	17,896	18,210

BC Lift – New Sunday Service and Extended Services Hours on weekdays and Saturday

The chart below displays the quarterly ridership levels for the extended services hours on weekdays and Saturday, as well as for new Sunday service. (See *Appendix 9* for more detailed information)

BC Lift JARC Ridership (May 13, 2002 - December 31, 2003)

<u>2002</u>	Monthly Totals	
	May	14
	June	18
	July	13
	August	9
	September	20
	October	12
	November	23
	December	29

<u>2003</u>	Monthly Totals	
	January	40
	February	43
	March	43
	April	35
	May	42
	June	36
	July	30
	August	36
	September	31
	October	35
	November	40
	December	42

BC Lift Quarterly JARC Ridership Totals

<u>(May – June 2002)</u>	<u>(July - September 2002)</u>	<u>(October - December 2002)</u>	<u>(January - March 2003)</u>	<u>(April - June 2003)</u>	<u>(July - September 2003)</u>	<u>(October - December 2003)</u>
32	42	64	126	113	97	117

BC Lift ridership for the extended services hours on weekdays and Saturday, as well as for new Sunday service has increased considerably since the initiation of the enhance service. It appears, however, that the ridership has leveled-off during 2003.

When compared to BC Lift quarterly ridership for regular service hours during the same time period, total quarterly ridership levels for BC Lift enhanced services indicates a lower initial rate of ridership increase for the first three quarters of enhanced service before having a rapid increase between the last quarter of 2002 and the first quarter of 2003, and then similarly leveling off for the remainder of 2003.

EMPLOYERS AND JOBS REACHED

BCDOPT quarterly JARC reports use data from the New York State Department of Labor Research and Statistics to produce the following data on the number of employers and jobs reached as a result of extended hours and new Sunday public transit service. The data represents accessibility to worksites and jobs, and thus, the potential for use of transit service for job commuting. It does not represent actual ridership of the transit routes.

Route	Number of Employers Reached During Extended Service Times	Total Number of Jobs Reached During Extended Service Times	Number of <u>Entry-Level</u> Jobs Reached During Extended Service Times	Comments
3 Park Ave.	13	197	102	
5 Vestal Ave.	17	1148	904	
7 Clinton St.	22	404	273	
8 Front St.	49	1312	1067	
12 Conklin Ave.	26	267	192	
15 Leroy St.	39	1380	1043	Originally, reached a total of 1273 jobs of which 936 were entry-level jobs during extended service times. After service was added to this route during November 2003, 107 more jobs, all entry-level jobs, have been reached, bringing the total to 1380 jobs, of which 1043 entry-level jobs, being reached.
17 Ely Park	3	374	300	
28 Robinson St.	19	382	296	
35 Binghamton -Endicott	131	3476	2824	
40 Chenango St.	19	287	249	
47 Vestal - Endicott	67	1647	1272	
Shoppers Special	46	601	527	
TOTAL	451	11,475	9,049	

Note: All of the above routes are for BC Transit's fixed route system. The BC Lift (paratransit service) is a reservation system thus not containing routes to gather specific employment statistics.

The data shows that the enhanced public transit services are accomplishing an objective of the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan to provide improved access to jobs.

ACCESS TO TRANSIT SERVICE

BCDOPT quarterly JARC reports provide the following information about access to transit service as a result of extended hours and new Sunday service.

Number of New Transportation Service Stops Within ¼ Mile of or Directly Reaching Child Care Facilities, Training and other Employment Support Services

There was a demand to extend hours of service, Monday through Saturday and to offer Sunday service for welfare recipients and low-income individuals working second and third shift jobs. With this in mind, there are no childcare or other training facilities that are open during these later hours or on Sunday.

Source: Broome County Department of Social Services Day Care Unit.

Number of New Stops Within ¼ Mile of or Directly Reaching Residences of Welfare Recipients or Low-income Persons

3 Park Ave reaches 71 welfare or low-income residences during new Sunday service.

5 Vestal Ave reaches 116 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service.

7 Clinton St reaches 144 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service.

8 Front St reaches 50 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service.

12 Conklin Ave reaches 227 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight Saturday service and new Sunday service.

15 Leroy St reaches 172 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service.

17 Ely Park reaches 89 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service

28 Robinson reaches 184 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight, Saturday and new Sunday service.

35 Endicott reaches 455 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight and Saturday service and new Sunday service.

40 Chenango St reaches 127 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight and new Sunday service.

47 Vestal Endicott reaches 49 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight service.

Shoppers' Special reaches 18 welfare or low-income residences during extended weeknight and new Sunday service.

Note: All routes listed are for BC Transit's fixed route system. The BC Lift (paratransit service) is a reservation system thus not containing routes to gather specific residential statistics.

Source: Broome County Department of Social Services, Temporary Assistance Unit.

The data shows that the enhanced public transit services are accomplishing an objective of the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan to provide improved access to transit services.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CENTER / TRANSPORTATION BROKER

The Transportation Broker provides services, as described in Section II of this document, to approximately 500 clients each month. The primary task of the broker is the administration of the WERC Program, which is also described in Section II.

WERC Program: The number of free bus passes provided has increased considerably since the initiation of the program.

200% PASS PROGRAM - Broome County Dept. of Public Transportation

Working Employed Parents Ride Cost-free (WERC)

* NOTE: Passes are good for one month. An eligible recipient can receive a new pass each month.

MONTH	Regular Pass	Student Pass	QUARTERLY TOTAL PASSES	Regular Pass Cost (\$35)	Student Pass Cost (\$22)	MONTHLY TOTAL COST	QUARTERLY TOTAL COST
Jul-02	10		48	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$350.00	\$1,680.00
Aug-02	12			\$420.00	\$0.00	\$420.00	
Sep-02	26			\$910.00	\$0.00	\$910.00	
Oct-02	39		95	\$1,365.00	\$0.00	\$1,365.00	\$3,312.00
Nov-02	26			\$910.00	\$0.00	\$910.00	
Dec-02	29	1		\$1,015.00	\$22.00	\$1,037.00	
Jan-03	43	1	181	\$1,505.00	\$22.00	\$1,527.00	\$5,958.00
Feb-03	58	7		\$2,030.00	\$154.00	\$2,184.00	
Mar-03	51	21		\$1,785.00	\$462.00	\$2,247.00	
Apr-03	66	15	311	\$2,310.00	\$330.00	\$2,640.00	\$9,949.00
May-03	70	22		\$2,450.00	\$484.00	\$2,934.00	
Jun-03	103	35		\$3,605.00	\$770.00	\$4,375.00	
Jul-03	120	29	595	\$4,200.00	\$638.00	\$4,838.00	\$19,135.00
Aug-03	174	29		\$6,090.00	\$638.00	\$6,728.00	
Sep-03	171	72		\$5,985.00	\$1,584.00	\$7,569.00	
Oct-03	182	81	870	\$6,370.00	\$1,782.00	\$8,152.00	\$27,356.00
Nov-03	224	81		\$7,840.00	\$1,782.00	\$9,622.00	
Dec-03	226	76		\$7,910.00	\$1,672.00	\$9,582.00	
Jan-04	289	100	1146	\$10,115.00	\$2,200.00	\$12,315.00	\$36,301.00
Feb-04	277	96		\$9,695.00	\$2,112.00	\$11,807.00	
Mar-04	287	97		\$10,045.00	\$2,134.00	\$12,179.00	

The increases in WERC Program participation can be attributed to the broker meeting with and notifying employers of the program, as well as surveying existing transit riders to see if they qualify. The various methods the Program was marketed have also been effective in attracting participants.

The following are quotes from WERC program participants that demonstrate the substantial benefits they are able to realize by receiving a free monthly transit pass:

- “Money spent on transportation can now be spent on other necessities. I would rather use transit than spend money on buying a car. I’m able to use transit to commute, run errands, and to access recreational destinations.”
- “My finances go farther. I’m able to use transit to commute, do errands, and more.”

- “The transit service allows me to work more hours, and be more flexible with the times I work. Transit connections make travel flexible and convenient.”
- "For me as a Home Health Aide Provider, riding the bus was expensive. The bus pass helps a whole lot. I ride the bus six times a day."
- "I'm very grateful for B.C. Transit and its convenience for me to get to work."

MARKETING

Marketing efforts have had a significant impact on ridership during extended hours and Sunday service, as well as contributing to a dramatic increase in participants in the WERC Program. These impacts were most distinguished during the period when television and radio ads that were run, beginning in December 2003.

COST OF ENHANCED AND NEW SERVICE

Total costs for enhanced and new BC Transit and BC Lift service totaled \$797,541.33. Subtracting the fare revenue of \$69,398.00 for the same service results in a **net cost of \$728,143.33**. Below is a summary of expenditures for extended evening and Saturday, and new Sunday service. (See **Appendix 10** for more detailed information.)

**EXPENDITURES FOR EXTENDED EVENING & SATURDAY HOURS,
NEW SUNDAY SERVICE, TRANSPORTATION BROKER, AND
W.E.R.C. PROGRAM
(May 2002 - December 2003)**

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Grant	\$226,530.00
Community Solutions for Transportation (CST) Grant	\$301,015.00
New York State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA)	\$269,996.33
Broome County Funds	\$0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES =	\$797,541.33
minus	
Fare Revenue	\$69,398.00
NET COST =	\$728,143.33

The projected annual costs of the implemented services from the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan are shown in the table below.

PROJECTED COST FOR IMPLEMENTED SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

SERVICE RECOMMENDATION	ANNUAL COST	ANNUAL EST. FARE REVENUE	ANNUAL NET COST
Extended BC Transit/BC Lift Weekday Service	\$377,000.00	\$78,000.00	\$299,000.00
Enhanced BC Transit/BC Lift Weekend Service	\$57,200.00	\$10,400.00	\$46,800.00
Transportation Broker	\$55,000.00	N/A	\$55,000.00
W.E.R.C. Program (<i>Actual 2003 Annual Cost</i>)	\$98,699.00	N/A	\$98,699.00
TOTAL ANNUAL NET COST =			\$499,499.00

In order to compare the projected costs of the implemented proposals with the actual cost information for a seventeen month time period, the average monthly net projected cost was calculated, multiplied by five, and added onto the projected annual net cost.

AVERAGE MONTHLY NET COST =	\$41,624.92	multiplied by 5 =	\$208,124.58
TOTAL ANNUAL NET COST	\$499,499.00		
plus AVERAGE MONTHLY NET COST x 5	\$208,124.58		
EST. 17 MONTH PROJECTED COST =	\$707,623.58		

The actual cost of the implemented recommendations is estimated to be \$20,519.75 more than the projected cost.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ACROSS THE BROOME-TIOGA COUNTY BORDER

Ridership (See Appendix 11 for details)

Broome-Tioga Connection 2001 - 2003 Ridership

	2001 Monthly Ridership	2001 Quarterly Ridership	2002 Monthly Ridership	2002 Quarterly Ridership	2003 Monthly Ridership	2003 Quarterly Ridership
January	122	423	193	654	173	574
February	131		244		214	
March	170		217		187	
April	167	544	192	503	187	634
May	191		188		195	
June	186		123		252	
July	218	564	137	439	235	643
August	207		139		197	
September	139		163		211	
October	201	541	212	476	136	389
November	175		136		112	
December	165		128		141	
TOTAL	2072		2072		2240	

The data table above indicates stable ridership between 2001 and 2003, with a minor increase in 2003. However, the ridership per month is relatively low.

According to Tioga County Public Transit officials, the Owego-Broome Route serves mostly Broome ARC clients, and some BCC students that do not transfer to BC Transit. There is also a small, but consistent ridership using the route to commute to the Owego Lockheed Martin facility. BCDOPT's Transportation Broker stated that little demand is apparent to use the transit connection to travel from Broome County to Owego.

Complexity of the service is an issue. The current Owego-Broome route requires a transfer to the BC Transit system to access destinations other than Washington Ave. in Endicott, and two transfers if one needs to use another BC Transit route not available at Washington Street. The necessity of one or two

transfers likely inhibits potential riders from choosing this transit service for commuting, shopping, medical appointments, and other utilitarian purposes.

As noted in Section II of this report, Tioga County contracted for a Tioga Public Transit Services Study, which was completed during May 2003. The Study provided a recommendation for modifying the Owego-Broome Route, which the Tioga County Public Transit Advisory Council has been evaluating. Subsequently, Tioga County Public Transit has produced a draft proposal for changes to the route based on the Study's recommendation.

The draft proposal calls for the 6:20 AM run, that serves Endicott only, to remain the same except for a minute or two variation for some of the bus stop times. Similarly, the 7:55 AM and 1:25 PM routes that serve BCC and Broome ARC are proposed to stay the same. New runs at 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 3:30 PM are proposed, and will serve the Town Square Mall only. The 12:00 and 4:30 PM runs are proposed to continue serving Endicott as well as add service to the Town Square Mall. (*See Appendix 12 for the Draft Proposal*)

Tioga County Public Transit officials are currently negotiating with the BCDOPT to implement the proposed changes. Any changes to the Broome-Tioga transit connection, will require modification of the intermunicipal agreement and legislative approval by both Tioga and Broome County.

IV. BROOME COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANS FOR MORE CHANGES TO SERVICES

The BCDOPT is planning to undertake the following during 2004 to further enhance outreach to potential transit users about transit programs and services, as well as to enhance services to better meet the transportation needs of the current ridership for job access. The funding source will be primarily from the CST and JARC programs. The latest CST budget proposal lays out the plan for the service changes. Additionally, the Broome County Department of Social Services will begin to charge BCDOPT rent for the Transportation Broker's office space amounting to about \$303 monthly. (*See Appendix 13 for CST Budget not including the rent adjustment.*)

1. **Continue Advertising**- Advertising has helped BC Transit to increase ridership during its' extended service, and to enlist many individuals into the WERC Program for a free bus pass. Therefore, BCDOPT plans to invest in more advertising using television, signs on and inside BC Transit buses, posters in transit shelters, billboards, and posters at grocery stores, low incoming housing developments, etc.
2. **Expand Rural Transportation**- Individuals who depend on public transportation from the rural areas to the urban areas for employment opportunities have limited choices. The following two projects will allow BC Country to expand its services and to meet this demand for transportation.
 - Begin BC Country runs by 6:00 AM in order to accommodate individuals who need to get to work by 8:00 AM. Currently runs begin at 8:00 AM and will not return to town until 10:00 AM.
 - Create a new run in order to accommodate the current demand of ridership, and targeting commuters for employment. This project depends on receiving new buses, which are expected to be delivered during August 2004.
3. **Change Fixed Routes** - Add and extend service hours to the following routes in order to accommodate major businesses in Broome County.
 - Monday-Friday add 6 hours for commuter runs

- Monday-Friday extend 6 hours for fix route service (#40-Chenango St. and #8-Front St.)
- Sunday-Add 8 hours for fixed route service (#15-Leroy St. and #5-Vestal Ave.)

4. **Create Mobility Manager Position** – Create position called Mobility Manager, an upgrade in position for the Transportation Broker, who will coordinate all aspects of transportation services for the Welfare to Work Grant. This will be a supervisory position and will report directly to the Transportation Analyst.
5. **Keep a Program Assistant Position** – Keep the current a position of Program Assistant/Transportation Broker who will handle the clerical work for the Mobility Manager under the Welfare to Work Grant. This is not a supervisory position and will report directly to the Mobility Manager. The position will begin in July of 2004.

V. OBSTACLES AND DEFICIENCIES HINDERING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL JOB ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROPOSALS

The following list of obstacles and deficiencies hindering full implementation of the Job Access Transportation Plan was derived from interviews with BCDOPT and Tioga County Public Transportation staff. Current or recommended actions to address the situations are provided.

- **Accessibility to Meaningful BCDOPT Ridership Data:** During the research phase of this Service Evaluation Report, it became apparent that deriving needed and meaningful ridership data was not easily accomplished. This subject is addressed in more detail at the beginning of Section III of this document.
ACTION: BCDOPT and BMTS are working with the Broome County Information Technology Department (Broome IT) to provide BMTS staff access to ridership data via the County network. Once the data connection is made, BMTS staff will be able to assist BCDOPT staff in ridership analysis. Broome IT will also address the need to be able to manipulate data in a more efficient manner by investigating their ability to develop programs to extract needed information, or by advising on software to purchase that would accomplish the task.
- **Farebox Accuracy:** BCDOPT has indicated that electronic fareboxes currently installed on the BC Transit buses are unreliable and frequently breakdown. When fareboxes do not operate properly, bus drivers are forced to manually count riders and classify them into various ridership categories. It is believed that farebox failure and human error in counting likely results in errors, and possibly undercounting of ridership.
ACTION: The farebox company, which is dealing with bankruptcy procedures, has agreed to send replacement parts to fix them, but repairs do not last for long. BCDOPT believes that it will ultimately need to replace the existing fare boxes with new and dependable ones from another vendor.
- **Lack of staff and time** for the BCDOPT to take a detailed and comprehensive look at its service is a problem.
ACTION: Once a link to ridership data is established along with the ability to manipulate it, BMTS will be more actively involved with assisting BCDOPT, particularly in the area of ridership analysis. A more comprehensive evaluation of BC Transit route performance will provide a better base of information in the effort to have each route perform most efficiently. Additionally, creating the Mobility Manager position, with a Program Assistant as support staff, will allow for further expansion of the WERC Program, and more efficient progress to be made of the other transit improvement projects they are working on.

- Difficult to Adjust BC Transit Routes: BC Transit runs on a pulse system, where most routes meet at a common location, BC Junction, before dispersing out on their respective runs. This necessitates the routes to run on a tight schedule to be able to be back at BC Junction on-time, and enable passengers to transfer to other buses. Any variation in one route must take into account the ability to maintain the pulse system. A relatively larger service area to cover due to job and residence locations being more dispersed than compact further complicates the issue.

ACTION: BCDOPT and BMTS need to use recent research and work together to further research where bus riders live and where their jobs and other destinations are located. Using this information with findings from transit route ridership analysis of the routes, poorer performing transit routes should be altered.
- Waiting Times During Extended Services: A growing number of clients use buses during the extended service times; however, they comment that they cannot make their connections at the B.C. Junction. A person that was working with the Transportation Broker through the Community Work Experience Program evaluated the routes, and found that passengers sometimes have to wait beyond 15 minutes, and up to 45 minutes, for their next bus. (*See Appendix 14*).

The waiting times are created because there are fewer buses running during the extended service times, with some route deviation from the normal service, which does not allow for all the buses to meet at once at the BC Junction. BCDOPT is cautious about committing to the cost for more buses and drivers during extended service hours using grant money, and being faced with eliminating the service if the County will not add funding when the grant money is no longer available

ACTION: Adjustments need to be made to the extended service routes to enable connections to other buses no longer that 15 minutes. Need to work with County Legislature to gain increased support for and willingness to fund transit services.
- Sunday Service: A growing number of passengers also indicate that they are not able to fully resolve their employment needs on Sunday because the buses do not run early or late enough.

ACTION: Extension of Sunday service hours to meet these should be pursued.
- Local Investment in BCDOPT: Recent budget-driven proposals to reduce transit services in certain routes resulted in a significant response by constituents, and the service reductions were not implemented. Recognizing the importance of public transportation services to the County residents, and the benefit it provides by giving residents the ability to live independent lives, as well as find and maintain employment, the County Legislature needs to consider increasing funding to support and further enhance transit services. This is especially true since JARC and CST funding is intended for expansion of services, not for sustaining new transit services in subsequent years.

ACTION: Provide information to the County Legislature indicating the beneficial impacts transit service has on the County, and the potential for further benefits and cost savings in other County programs and initiatives from enhanced transit services.
- Spending of Grant Funds: Spending down of available JARC and CST grant funds for enhanced transportation services, focused on job access, is years behind schedule. One reason for this is the County processes that have to be taken to make changes to services, and procure services is time consuming, and delays implementation of enhanced services. Also, as was previously mentioned, the BCDOPT is cautious about adding more services that will not be able to be supported by County funds when grant funding is no longer available.

ACTION: The BCDOPT, in cooperation with BMTS, needs to continue to evaluate regular and enhanced transit services, determine which services are most successful, as well as where there is a demand for more service. Such actions will produce the necessary information to guide further enhancement of transit services. Successful service enhancements will produce increased

ridership and revenue miles that will increase STOA formula funding for the BCDOPT, thus reducing the amount of funding required by the County to sustain service.

- Better Broome-Tioga Connection: As mentioned in previous sections, the current Broome-Tioga connection at Washington Ave. in Endicott is inadequate at providing work trip needs, as well as transportation for other needs such as health care, shopping, recreation, and social activities.

ACTION: Tioga County Public Transit and BCDOPT need to continue working on a new intermunicipal agreement for the proposal to provide a better integration of public transit service. Integration decisions should address job access to work sites in Tioga County as well as sites in Broome County. Furthermore, the addition of Saturday and Sunday service on the Tioga County Transit System needs to be researched and pursued.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis in this System Evaluation report indicates that the implementation of proposals #1 and 2 from the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan have been effective in addressing the following service gaps:

- Absence of weekday evening/night bus service
- Limited Saturday bus service (Broome)
- Absence of Sunday bus service

Data indicates that ridership is increasing for the new Sunday, and enhanced weekday and Saturday services since their inception.

Implementation of proposal #3, Transportation Service Center / Transportation Broker, has been effective in accomplishing its objective of aiding job placement and retention by providing direct assistance in matching transportation needs of individuals and employers with available services. The W.E.R.C. Program has been particularly successful with the total quarterly bus passes given out increasing from 49 (July – August 2002) to 1146 (January – March 2004). It is assumed that those receiving the W.E.R.C. passes are using BC Transit to access their jobs, as well as to meet their other transportation needs. About 32% of the target population is signed-up for this program, but with upcoming marketing efforts and continued outreach to the target population and employers, increases in W.E.R.C. program participation are expected. The broker has also been able to work with other Broome County departments to enhance the BCDOPT website, providing new tools and more information to the public to enable and encourage more transit ridership for employment and other purposes.

It is important to continue and enhance these services and promotional efforts. Ongoing analysis, in cooperation with BMTS, is also vital to assess performance of services, and to identify service adjustments that are warranted.

The other service gaps identified in the Binghamton Regional Job Access Transportation Plan are in the process of implementation, and will contribute to improved job access. Tioga County Public Transit needs to follow through with negotiations with BCDOPT to create a new intermunicipal agreement that will improve integration with the Tioga transit service and make it more effective in meeting the needs for work travel by residents of both counties seeking employment across the county boundary.

BCDOPT is also planning improvements to its rural paratransit service (BC Country) for 2004, by starting runs earlier at 6:00 AM, and by creating a new run to meet current demand of ridership, targeting job commuters. The changes will enhance the ability for BC Country to meet work travel needs.

Finally, the obstacles and deficiencies noted at the end of the previous section must be addressed. By implementing the suggested actions or similar actions, BCDOPT, Tioga County Public Transit, and BMTS will be able to work together to continually provide the most efficient access to jobs via public transportation, with Broome and Tioga Counties realizing many associated benefits.

INFORMATION SOURCES

1. BMTS Regional Job Access Transportation Plan
2. BCDOPT Quarterly JARC Reports
3. BCDOPT Quarterly CST Reports
4. BCDOPT Website – www.ridebcstransit.com
5. BC Transit and BC Lift Ridership Data
6. Broome County Rural Paratransit Analysis
7. Federal Transit Administration Website - <http://www.fta.dot.gov/>
8. Ride Tioga Website – <http://www.tiogacountyny.com/transportation.asp>
9. Tioga County Public Transit Ridership Data
10. Tioga County Transit Services Study
11. Tioga County Public Transportation Advisory Committee - DSS
12. Personal Interviews: BCDOPT and Tioga County Public Transit