

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Job Access Reverse Commute Regional Transportation Plan

for the counties of
Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette,
Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and
Westmoreland

The SPC Region

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a 10 county region. SPC reviews the total transportation needs of the region, for all modes of travel. Today, it faces an array of complex issues that call for increased regional cooperation, including clean air initiatives, airport system planning, assistance to transit agencies, transportation information services, intermodal freight requests, high-technology "Intelligent Transportation Systems," and accommodating pedestrian and bicycle travel. In addition to Transportation Planning, SPC takes a major role in Land Use, Economic Development, and Population and Employment Forecasts.

Many agencies and organizations within the southwestern Pennsylvania area were already coordinating planning efforts before the Job Access and Reverse Commute program was authorized in the federal transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). After the program was authorized, the region began focusing on the needs of the lower income communities to develop and implement services assisting in gaining access to jobs.

In the spring/summer of 1997 the southwestern Pennsylvania region began to address transportation issues concerning job access and workforce development issues. Local stakeholders affected by the new welfare reform legislation met to discuss ramifications of this legislation and the role transportation could play in assisting people gain access to jobs and related support services. The diverse demographics of the

region's counties facilitated the development of a number of collaborative efforts that focused on these issues.

Of Southwestern Pennsylvania's nine counties, Allegheny County is unique due to its size, dense population, large urban community and the large system of "services" available to county residents. The remaining eight counties are more rural and joined forces on a number of initiatives to respond to needs more efficiently and cost-effectively. As a result, cross-county collaborations were formed.

In March of 1997, the Pittsburgh Foundation (a private community foundation) in partnership with the Allegheny County Public Assistance Office, convened a 'stakeholders' meeting comprised of representatives from the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to discuss welfare reform legislation. Specifically this group was called together to identify issues/barriers. Lack of transportation was quickly sighted as one of the major barriers to the successful implementation of the new legislation. A transportation task force was formed, consisting of 25 agencies and organizations. For the first time Allegheny county had a cohesive and collaborative approach toward developing solutions that would enable low-income residents greater access to good job opportunities and supportive services and a realistic opportunity to obtain a better quality of life for themselves and their families. The Transportation Task Force meets quarterly to discuss issues, brainstorm solutions and hear about the progress of programs and strategies that have been implemented. In addition, an Executive Committee was formed in 1999. This committee includes the public and private organizations that have taken a leadership role in this collaborative effort from the very beginning. The Executive Committee meets monthly with a commitment to bridging the gaps. Inclusive, is bridging the gaps between counties and facilitating a regional approach to this planning process. The regional table allows us discussion to foster a better understanding of the common barriers affecting low-income residents living in urban and rural environments. It will allow development of strategies that cross county lines. And through this collaboration bring the necessary resources to the region that will allow the effective implementation and evaluation of solutions.

Meanwhile, partnerships were being formed to bridge the transportation gaps existing in the surrounding counties. Washington County Department of Human Services arranged the forum in which organizations from the area could discuss strategies to address welfare to work issues. The partnership includes approximately 50 to 75 members from the Greene, Washington and Westmoreland County. In July of 1999, the partnership decided to form Regional Welfare to Work Transportation Advisory Board. The Advisory Board consists of nineteen

members all of whom play a key role in the operation of regional activities affecting the project. Due to the urban and rural make up of these three counties, it has been obvious from the start that a collaborative approach makes sense from a resource standpoint. Resources include service, funding and employment.

Beaver County Transit Authority and Beaver County human service providers initiated early on two forums which agencies and organizations could join together to discuss these issues relative to Beaver County residents. The Human Service Council meets quarterly with a goal to broaden the knowledge base of human service providers about Beaver county Transit Authority and its services. The council is making recommendations for evaluating and improving the para-transit system as well as improvements in customer service satisfaction for both agencies and riders. The Welfare to Work Advisory Committee, which also meets quarterly, provides the forum from which members share information, brainstorm solutions and identify potential resources to support transportation initiatives and the goals of Welfare Reform.

Indiana County has developed a planning group to focus on access issues for low-income residents that includes the Indiana County Human Services Council, the county Commissioners, a number of municipalities, the Public Assistance Office, the Chamber of Commerce and local employers. This process has resulted in the application for Job Access funding to support Indiana County Transit Authority expansion of late night and weekend services.

The initiatives of the above agencies will address the specific mobility needs of low-income residents and persons with disabilities. Many improvements have been made to the paratransit services within southwestern Pennsylvania to begin to address these needs. The demand/need is higher than the funding available. The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program has allowed these agencies to develop projects that will provide low-income residents and persons with disabilities with needed transportation to work.

In addition, the work of the above groups identified a number of regional job access initiatives. Sub-committees developed and began to focus on project specifics such as defining activities, outlining cost, evaluating existing resources and identifying the additional support needed to bring these projects to reality. In general, this region has worked very well crossing county lines when a specific initiative required agency collaboration. However, it was not until January 2000 that was formally convened the Regional Job Access Reverse Commute Work Group. In hindsight, this worked to the region's benefit since each county had

developed the inter-county relationships necessary to make these new programs work. With those ties strong, each local area is better able to join forces and look at solutions that have a more significant regional impact. On a county and regional level, strong connections have been made with workforce development, county assistance, job training, childcare, transportation, public housing and support services. There is a strong regional commitment to develop real projects that will demonstrate long term self-sustaining strategies that will cost efficiently address the difficult transportation issues brought to light with welfare reform legislation. The Work Group meets on an as needed basis. During the planning process, stakeholders met on a monthly basis.

Defining Job Access Needs

Through SPC's Regional Access to Jobs Work Group, barriers and gaps have begun to be identified in many of the counties in the SPC Region. More and more jobs are being created in the suburbs and the neighboring counties as businesses move out of the central business districts.

Western Pennsylvania is unique due to the topography of the region. Employment Centers are being built in non populated areas with no means of public transportation, often times on isolated hilltops, without the input of transit operators and therefore, with no regards to the standards required by mass transit vehicles, i.e. pavements not thick enough to support the weight of the vehicle.

It has been identified that a means for determining the needs of the businesses must be developed to assist transportation providers with a Process or Toolbox. Local TMA's and mobility managers are an important piece that can provide transit planners with essential data to make important route decisions.

Over the past twenty years, the Mon Valley has encountered a decline in population and a severe increase in the number of unemployed residents which is mainly due to the closing of several area steel mills and coal mines, which were the main source of employment in the area. Seventeen of the twenty-one communities in the Mon Valley have been classified as economically distressed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Improved and increased access to jobs is of vital importance to this area. A strong connection with areas offering employment opportunities is key to revitalizing the Mon Valley and sustaining the way of life for its residents.

Thousands of jobs tied to these closings were affected, resulting in a significant increase in unemployment, poverty, and other significant social and health problems in these communities which in some cases are geographically isolated due to narrow, windy streets which cannot be accessed by typical transit vehicles.

Current data is as follows:

- Population in the Mon Valley is approximately 130,000
- Enrollment at California University is approximately 6,000 per year
 - Ridership on Authority Routes is approximately 425,000 per year (295,000 are Commuter Route A riders)

Gaps in Washington County include lack of accessible bus service for those individuals commuting to and from rural areas to work. Individuals working second and third shifts are often unable to access mass transit because of limited routes and hours of service. Moreover, many of the private taxi services are not available to provide service during the late evening hours or weekend hours. Transportation is neither available nor affordable for the general public; therefore, clients without automobiles have limited transportation resources throughout this three-county region of Washington, Westmoreland and Greene.

Cranberry Township, Butler County is unique that it sits in the southwestern corner of Butler County and the northwestern corner of Allegheny County also bordering Beaver County. Cranberry is a rapidly growing higher income community with less than 1% unemployment. Due the unemployment figures, it is very difficult for employers to fill their entry level to mid level jobs and experience high turnover due to the competing nature of the competitors in the area.

Cranberry Township lacks pedestrian friendly amenities, such as sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

About Project Sponsors and Partners

Allegheny County – ACTA, BCTA, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Access, PDP, Pittsburgh Foundation, Port Authority of Allegheny County, SPC, TRWIB, Travelers Aid, WCTA, Work Link/Heritage Health.

SPC and Port Authority (along with other local stakeholders) participated in the Pittsburgh Foundation's "stakeholders" meeting, held in March 1997, to discuss the role transportation could play in the successful

implementation of welfare reform legislation. The first meeting enlightened many and quickly resulted in this group forming the Transportation Task Force. The members of the Transportation Task Force became the leaders in Allegheny County facilitating discussions between organizations committed to the development of strategies that focus on workforce development, community development and economic development. The stakeholders have been extremely proactive and have taken a lead role in this region relative to transportation initiatives that pertain to job access, reverse commute, welfare to work and other similar programs.

Since March 1997, the communication between agencies has been enhanced and many service adjustments have been made to provide better access to employment and job training opportunities, childcare and support services. The stakeholders have been committed to these efforts from the beginning and the Port Authority has made service adjustment to over fifty routes to accommodate specific needs of communities, residents and employers. In addition, major service expansion occurred in the southwestern and eastern portions of the county through the introduction of new small transit vehicle service (mini-buses).

In the southwestern part of the county, specifically in the airport corridor, two new shuttle routes were introduced and major service expansion occurred on mainline services. This expansion addressed the growing to provide service to this rapidly developing area of the region. Expanded mainline service connects the two largest urban employment markets, the City of Pittsburgh and Oakland with the Pittsburgh International Airport and the rapidly growing suburban development surrounding the airport corridor communities to this growing suburban market and to other transit services.

In the eastern part of the county, specifically the Monroeville area, a new system of five mini-bus routes were introduced to connect the surrounding communities to this dens employment community. This system is also designed as a feeder service and all shuttles connect to mainline services to provide access to many other parts of the county.

The use of GIS technology was sited early on in the collaborative process as a critical tool to be used for gaps analysis as well as an information tool for clients and caseworkers. Understanding where opportunities exist and how to access them most efficiently is a difficult task. Staff from several organizations (SPC, Port Authority, the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Foundation) sat down at the table to develop the requirements of the GIS project. Using the GIS layers from

SPC and Port Authority schedules, Pitt developed the model Take the Bus.

Port Authority, Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) and Westmoreland County Transit Authority (WCTA) have agreed to accept each other's transfers to further facilitate cross county movement. This occurs in two distinct areas of the region where cross county access is becoming critical to accessing employment opportunities developing in these areas.

The Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA) is a non-profit membership-based transportation management association (TMA), which serves Pittsburgh's airport corridor, west of downtown. ACTA is making a real difference in the Airport Corridor by improving employee retention, reducing absenteeism and late arrivals on the job, saving money with valuable Commuter Choice and EZ Gold tax benefits, and increasing employee productivity. ACTA focuses on a few simple goals of increasing access and mobility in the Airport Corridor while promoting the use of alternative transportation. ACTA has been very successful with assisting local businesses with their hiring needs by holding transportation fairs and was a catalyst in bringing transit into many communities located in the airport corridor.

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania has been successful in securing JARC funds to implement the Ways to Work program. Ways to Work's mission is to support and strengthen families by providing low interest loans to qualified families to encourage employment. The program does this by providing loans to assist families in handling the cost of automobile purchase and repair. The program has served residents of Allegheny, Westmoreland, Washington and Greene counties and in its current expansion plans to serve Butler and Beaver counties.

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) TMA was established in 1999 to facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods, improve air quality through compliance with Clean Air Act Amendments and encourage private sector participation in reducing traffic congestion. In the PDP efforts, it was discovered that many companies in the downtown Pittsburgh golden triangle did not have a way to communicate transportation issues. Early conversations with businesses led to a number of Port Authority route changes to accommodate better access to jobs and hiring needs.

Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) was established under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for the purpose of overseeing and coordinating employment and training strategies in

Pittsburgh and Allegheny County,. Cranberry Job Access Reverse Commute project is a joint effort with the Port Authority of Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink system (through Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh).

Travelers Aid is a non-profit United Way Agency that has been providing a variety of transportation services in Western Pennsylvania since 1921. Traditionally, services were provided to return runaways, assist abused women and children relocate to places of safety, assist victimized or stranded travelers and elderly wanderers return home. In 1998, Travelers Aid began the Mobile Moms Program to provide transportation for low-income women to access their prenatal care at ten local medical facilities. In 2000, Travelers Aid began working with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services for the provision of local public transportation for medical assistance recipients. Recently, Travelers Aid has contracted to provide an assistance program for the SPOC and WtW programs.

Heritage Health Foundation, Inc. (HHFI) coordinates, facilitates, and supports innovative “grass roots” partnerships with local and regional organizations, businesses, elected officials, and residents to effectively address a wide range of community needs. These include childcare, youth, transportation, workforce development, health care, housing and community development. HHFI was initially funded through the JARC program to implement the WorkLink project serving 11 low-income communities in eastern and southeastern Allegheny County. They span the Monongahela River and are located in the area known as the Mon Valley. This project removes transportation barriers to jobs and related service for residents of the above communities.

Beaver County – BCTA, DART, , Port Authority, ACTA, SPC.

Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) has provided the vehicles for subscription bus service to employers in Cranberry and Hopewell Township for start and quit times that are not served by regular fixed route service. This service is subsidized by participating employers through the agreement with BCTA that operating costs not covered through farebox revenue will be made up by the employers.

In addition, BCTA through their Transit Development Plan used feedback from customers to restructure their entire system to better meet the needs of their low-income communities and provide better access to employment opportunities and other support services such as CareerLink, job training and child care. BCTA also participates in a cross-county transfer program with Port Authority of Allegheny County.

Butler County – BCTJMTA, BART, SPC

Butler County has participated from the early stages in efforts to access employment opportunities in the southwestern portion of the county. An increase in Saturday service to major retail centers is underway.

BTCJMTA was awarded JARC funds for the expansion of services from BTCJMTA's central service area to the implemented comprehensive transit plan for Cranberry Township, which may include the purchase of additional transit vehicles.

Westmoreland County – WCTA, FACT, MMVTA, Wash. Co. Transp. Auth., SPC

Westmoreland County Transit Authority has made changes to a number of routes to provide better service levels to meet employment start and quit times. WCTA also participates in cross-county transfer program with Port Authority of Allegheny County as well with the Washington County Coordinated shared Ride Program.

Fayette County – FACT, MMVTA, WCTA, Wash. Co. Transp. Auth.

Fayette County, until recently (June 2002), was not officially in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Planning commission service area, however, it is a participant in regional job access initiatives. Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation (FACT) began providing service to the Sony Plant in New Stanton from Uniontown on a subscription basis. FACT (through their stakeholders) have identified the need for transit services during non-traditional hours, weekends, and holidays. A review of the current Welfare to Work program in Fayette County reveals that 47% of the trips they are providing occur during non-traditional hours. The Fayette County Plan for use of JARC funding will connect TANF recipients living in Connellsville, Uniontown and Brownsville, the three major cities in Fayette County to employment opportunities located in more remote areas of the county, as well as in neighboring counties. More specifically, these destinations include but are not limited to Industrial/Technology parks located in New Stanton (Westmoreland County) and resorts located in the mountains of Fayette County. Fayette County will be streamlined into SPC's job access process in the next funding cycle.

Washington County – Wash. Co. Transp. Auth., FACT, MMVTA, GG&C, WCTA, Greene County, SPC

Mass transit providers in Washington County consist of Mid-Mon Valley Transportation Authority (MMVTA) and GG&C for the City of Washington, however, MMVTA located in Charleroi, Washington County, is a municipal authority chartered in 1985 for the purpose of stabilizing existing public transportation services and meeting other transportation needs of the citizens within the Middle Monongahela River Valley (Mid Mon Valley) region. The Authority's service area is classified as the Monessen Urbanized Area (population under 200,000). Currently the Authority offers two commuter bus routes (California to Charleroi and Charleroi to Pittsburgh), and six local routes which travel throughout the 21 communities which make up the Authority. Paratransit service dubbed "UPLIFT" is also available in the local service area. MMVTA has expanded service to the Speers Industrial Park to provide improved accessibility. Both transit agencies participate in Washington County's shared ride coordinated program for welfare to work clients.

The Washington County Transportation Authority operates a coordinated demand-response transportation system for Washington County. They manage the Shared Ride Program, Medical Assistance Transportation Program, Welfare to Work Transportation Program and the Rural Transportation Program for Persons with Disabilities. The Washington County Transportation Authority was created in April, 2001 to take over and manage the operations previously run by Intellitrans for the last 20 years.

Indiana County – ICTA

The Indiana County Transit Authority designed their first JARC project to acquire an accessible van to provide the service and to operate the service after the van was acquired. The ICTA has worked in partnership with the Indiana County Department of Human Services to provide a method for eligible newly employed persons, moving off of public assistance, to get to and return from jobs that are largely off normal business hours.

Their second project expands the program as they face increased demand for transportation to and from work and child care facilities during night and weekend hours and to areas not served by fixed route transportation.

The Job Access Program

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Regional Plan is an on-going effort and changes in costs, issues and available funding affect how projects are prioritized and identified in the plan.

2001/2002 Job Access Grant Application Project Descriptions

The following projects were submitted as part as the Regional Job Access Reverse Commute Plan for FFY 2001/2002. They are listed in priority order as determined by previous funding years and the Regional Access to Work Group.

Mon Valley Employment and Transportation Project

Continuation of the Mon Valley area still remains a top priority for the region. Initial funding was providing through the first year of JARC funding for start up of the WorkLink project. Detail of the program is described below:

WorkLink is a regular fixed-route job access van shuttle serving geographically isolated low-income communities, connecting residents to public transit routes to reach jobs job training, childcare, and other support services. Since its inception WorkLink has registered over 733 individuals and provided over 48,977rides through January 2002.

WorkLink is a free van transportation service that began operating on February 5, 2001. It currently serves two areas – East Pittsburgh/Braddock and Clairton. It is a vital part of a regional job access initiative – the Mon Valley Community Transportation and Employment project (CTEP) – serving many communities in the Mon Valley. WorkLink van feed into Port Authority bus routes, including the 59A and other bus routes as part of this overall project. As such, this initiative:

- Provides public housing residents, welfare recipients, and other low income individuals in isolated areas with van access to public transportation that was previously difficult to access.
- Transports these individuals from the vans through the newly available bus connections to major centers of employment, job training, childcare, and other essential activities and supportive services.

The goal of the project is to provide the necessary and feasible transportation services to enable those served to significantly increase their employment, job retention, and participation in activities related to improving the quality of their lives.

Continuation funding is being requested by the Port Authority for Routes 59A and 50B. 59A was a new route started in conjunction with the WorkLink project. It provides inter-community direct connections from targeted communities to surrounding job growth areas, education and training centers, childcare and other critical support service.

50B was an existing intercommunity route that connects with the Clairton WorkLink van service. Rapidly growing ridership and data collection on WorkLink supports restructuring the route and expanding the hours of service.

Allegheny, Butler and Beaver County Regional Job Access Project

This is a continuation project to provide transportation into Cranberry Township. This is a long-term project to connect people in the Pittsburgh region to jobs in the Thorn Hill Industrial Park and nearby Cranberry Township, a major employment center, by developing a regional approach to solving transportation issues that address job access and workforce development. In addition, because Cranberry and Thorn Hill overlap three counties, the project collaborates with both Butler and Beaver Counties' Transit Authorities to enhance access to jobs for residents throughout the tri-county region. A key component to this project was the hiring of a Mobility Specialist to engage the employers in the area to contribute to sustaining services once value is demonstrated.

Another key piece to this project is the introduction of a circulating shuttle to the employment sites. TRWIB intends to introduce an employer shuttle that will link work sites with mainline transit service. Routes will be initially determined by employer sponsorship.

Continuation of funding for Port Authority's routes 11/13K is being requested. The routes connect downtown Pittsburgh with the Cranberry/Thorn Hill area. Special emphasis is placed on connecting surrounding low-income communities with this service.

Allegheny County

City of Pittsburgh, late Night Employment Project

This project focuses the large number of employment opportunities offered through the banking industry. The city is headquarters for three major banking institutions, healthcare industry and collectively hundreds of employment opportunities. In addition, the hotel industry, entertainment industry and janitorial industry offer additional late night employment opportunity. Though a large number of the employment opportunities exist in the downtown area, there are many on the periphery of the city in areas like Station Square, Oakland, North Side and South Side. These are urban communities with a very diverse job market. Unfortunately it is often necessary to travel into the city and transfer to another bus to get to the periphery locations. During off peak and non-traditional hours service connections are difficult at best. There are a number of issues that make solutions difficult to get to, however, committee members are working with these employers to ascertain a better understanding of the need as well as better understanding our low-income communities and the unique barriers that limit their ability to access and retain employment during these hours.

Continuation of the following projects all focus on better access to jobs. Many issues continue to plague the low-income resident struggling to obtain a better quality of life. These issues have a resounding affect on the success of our efforts in building connections. i.e. I can now get to the job but where will my children go from 11 pm – 7 am and who will get my older children off to school. Each of the following projects requires a strong connection between workforce development, transportation and human service agencies.

Late night routes, non-traditional employment opportunities and other routes that address employment opportunities include routes 54C, 16B, 86B, 81B, 71B, 51C, 61C, 91A, 35A and 28K.

Travelers Aid is seeking funding for a three-year access to jobs project that will provide public transportation assistance for welfare to work clients, the unemployed as well as the underemployed populations. Travelers Aid will network with sponsoring agencies that have direct contact with these populations and, as a matter of course, provide counseling, employment, training and advancement support. Non-JARC funding has been secured to provide those agencies with public transit passes for distribution to qualified populations. In addition to providing supportive services for those populations, Travelers Aid will gather data relevant to retention rates, job success rates, etc. Transportation assistance will be provided for Employment searches and interview, training programs, and employment commuting.

Prior to developing a Job Access plan specific to downtown workers, the needs of these employees must first be understood. The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's (PDP) TMA is seeking funds to assist with the bridging the gaps between downtown employment and transit needs by developing, administering and distributing an Employee Transportation Needs Assessment Survey. They will analyze and evaluate the respondent data and make service oriented recommendations to local and regional transportation agencies based on the compiled survey results.

The second part of the PDP's request is to secure funding to market the campaign "Commuting Made Easy" to promote the value of using alternative modes of transportation, especially for the non-traditional work schedules.

Further investigation of GIS/CIS technology and the Take the Bus project will make this program Internet based. The program foundation is a countywide street and address database, upon which the public transit system routes and all stops have been geo-coded and overlaid onto the street map. Key to this project is the development of long-term relationships between organizations and a defined process for keeping program information valid and current.

The Zion project, a number of community and faith-based organizations, have begun working together in six specific low-income communities to identify barriers to successful employment during off-peak and non-traditional work hours. Transportation has been cited as a major barrier. Public transit is limited, indirect or non-existent during off hours and often walking in the community and/or employment areas is unsafe. It is especially difficult when you add children and childcare into the equation. However, there is an opportunity to better utilize community and faith-based organizations. As trusted entities within the community they can assist residents in removing barriers to employment opportunities. Many of these organizations own vans that could be utilized during off-hours. This creates an opportunity to work with the community to assist with coordination of local van services that may better solve the childcare issues or develop a communication strategy to engage employers and tap into residents living within their community or close proximity.

Washington County, Greene County, Westmoreland County

The Washington County Transportation Program (WCTP) is a continuation project that also receives funding from the Welfare to Work

program. This Access to Jobs project offers clients service from their home to work, which includes scheduled stops at local day care centers in route to work or home. Clients can schedule trips 24 hours, seven days a week while day care services are available late evenings and weekends. Fixed route is preferred when possible; however, van and taxi services are available within the coordinated system. All trip requests are coordinated with other transportation programs when possible.

The project serves Washington, Westmoreland and Greene Counties. Clients must reside in this three county area to qualify for this program; however, not all of the counties have adequate employment opportunities within their boundaries. Therefore, transportation will be provided across county lines in order to afford clients the ability to obtain employment.

Westmoreland County is also looking at provided vanpool services to better access areas where transit would not be efficient to operate in Westmoreland and well as neighboring counties, i.e. Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Somerset County who has job opportunities available.

Airport Corridor Service

The Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA) is a continuation project combining transportation and job access issues. ACTA will continue to hold job fairs tied to a transportation component, such as Port Authority and Beaver County Transit Authority.

Subscription van services will be available to employers who cannot be adequately served by public transit, typically the afternoon or evening shifts.

With the opening of the new retail center, ACTA will hire a Mobility Manager to work with job seekers on finding airport corridor jobs and finding a way to work. The Mobility Manager will focus on employment barriers for job seekers and work with the applicants to find solutions that identify job opportunities and keep the employee working.

Lastly, because the shared-ride (transit, car and vanpool) transportation system in the corridor is still being developed, it cannot meet the needs of all job seekers. In addition, ACTA has found that for new job seekers who are looking for a job, interviewing, seeing daycare, and so forth,

sometimes a car is the best mode of transportation. For this reason, ACTA proposes purchasing two used vehicles for the temporary use of job seekers for any job-related purpose, but especially focusing on job readiness or pre-employment tasks that are not routine.

The Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) received JARC funding for Cranberry service, but has taken steps to redirect those funds to the Airport Corridor. Their proposal is to use those funds as a continuation of a welfare to work project that had to be re-evaluated due to an inadequate budget and not enough service frequency. This project also allows for the purchase of three vehicles to provide more frequent service.

In 2003, The MMVTA intends to offer an alternative commuter bus route from the Mon Valley into Pittsburgh, starting in California, PA to the newly opened Mon-Fayette Expressway (Rt. 43), to the Port Authority's Park & Ride Lot in Large, PA. The Mon Valley X-PRESS, as it has been dubbed, would provide a needed link to accessing jobs and would be a welcomed and long-awaited addition to the bus routes currently offered by the Authority. The most frequent complaint by commuters is the time it takes to travel to Pittsburgh and then transfer onto a Port Authority bus to travel to the suburbs, and one of the most frequent requests the Authority receives is to provide service to the Century III Mall in West Mifflin. The utilization of the Mon-Fayette Expressway would resolve both of these issues for the Authority. The Expressway bus route would offer a quick commute to the Pittsburgh suburbs and drop off minutes from the Century III Mall with a quick and easy transfer onto a Port Authority bus at the Large Park & Ride Lot.

Also in 2003, The Butler Township City Joint Municipal Transit Authority intends to replace or enhance the circulator route (TRWIB circulator proposal funded in 2002) and is requesting JARC funds to establish a fixed route circulator system in the Cranberry Township area and the other communities in the southwestern corner of Butler County. Additional linkages would be made between Cranberry and services currently operating within the City and Township of Butler.

Summary

Due to the nature of the electronic grant submittal process and the need to fully understand the needs of this region, each project letter of intent is available, if further information is needed to explain the brief summary that was submitted in this plan or the grant application. The

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Job Access Reverse Commute plan was developed by the coordinating agencies participating (see attached mailing list) in the Access to Jobs Work Group. The Regional Job Access Plan is consistent with SPC's adopted Long Range Transportation and Development Plan.