

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sheila Gombita
Washington County Transportation Authority
724-229-2502

Washington County Agencies Launch Transit Study

Washington, PA, January 24, 2007 – How do we coordinate a transit system to efficiently meet the needs of the citizens of Washington County?

The Washington County Transit Study aims to answer that question. The study which began in December 2006 will evaluate current public transportation services, identify unmet public transportation needs, and develop feasible solutions. The goal is to provide efficient, quality transportation services that contribute to the human, social, and economic vitality of Washington County and the surrounding area. The study is being sponsored by City of Washington/GG&C Bus Company; Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority; and, Washington County Transportation Authority (Washington Rides) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC); and, Washington County Planning. It will be completed by October 2007.

“Those of us who live in Washington County know that our community is one of the best places to live,” Sheila Gombita, Executive Director for the Washington County Transportation Authority said. “Efficient transit service will increase mobility for people that have limited automobile access, such as the elderly, young, persons with disabilities, and our low income residents. Transit can help direct growth and support community development that promotes walking, bicycling and mixed land uses by reducing reliance on automobiles.”

Public input is important to the study and the public is encouraged to keep up-to-date on study progress and provide their comments through the project website at www.spcregion.org/wcts. Newsletters will be distributed and public meetings will be scheduled at strategic locations throughout the County in mid-summer. “This is a great opportunity for County residents to have a voice in the way transportation service is provided in Washington County,” said Valerie Kissell, Executive Director, Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority.

This study will develop feasible strategies to achieve greater efficiencies in providing transit services including possible coordination among county and regional transit providers. It will update routes and levels of service to reflect current travel needs and transit user expectations and develop strategies to address unmet needs for transit services, including underserved groups and locations. It will work hand-in-hand with the Washington County Comprehensive Plan to develop transit strategies for areas targeted for investment and assist in identifying model ordinances for transit in relation to major destinations such as office and industrial parks, colleges and universities, and entertainment venues, like the Meadows.

The transit study is being guided by a technical advisory committee which includes the study sponsoring and cooperating agencies. A stakeholders committee including state and federal public officials, representatives from business community, educational institutions, local municipalities, social

service agencies and County government is meeting quarterly throughout the study to provide input. Gannett Fleming, Inc., a Green Tree-based firm, is leading the study's consultant team.

The study which will be completed by October 2007 will result in a set of recommendations for implementing an efficient transit service program for Washington County.

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