

HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM



COBB COUNTY | UPDATE 2040
**COMPREHENSIVE
TRANSPORTATION
PLAN**

CONTENTS

List of Figures	1
List of Tables	2
1 Introduction	1
2 HST Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment.....	2
2.1 Review of Previous HST-Related Reports and Studies.....	2
2.2 HST Demographic Profile and Travel Characteristics.....	5
2.3 Cobb County Existing HST Providers and Funding Sources.....	12
2.3.1 Cobb County.....	12
2.3.2 Department of Community Health	20
2.3.3 Private Transportation Providers	20
2.4 HST Stakeholder Outreach.....	21
2.5 HST SWOT Analysis: Successes and Needs Identification	26
3 Recommendations	30
3.1 SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30
3.2 Mid-Term Recommendations	33
3.3 Long-Term Recommendations.....	34
4 Appendix	36
4.1 Presentation to Cobb County Collaborative, August 2013	36
4.2 Summary of Interviews Conducted.....	46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cobb County Senior Destinations and Services	7
Figure 2: Low Income Household Densities.....	9
Figure 3: Movements of Low Income CCT Riders	10
Figure 4: Movements of CCT Riders without Access to a Vehicle.....	11
Figure 5: Work Location of Low Income Cobb Residents	12
Figure 6: Qualification Process for Cobb County Services	14
Figure 7: CCT Paratransit Application Process	14
Figure 8: Cobb Freedom Voucher Program Grant Funding	17
Figure 9: DCH Funding Process	20
Figure 10: Display Map from Cobb Community Collaborative Meeting.....	23
Figure 11: Cobb Community Collaborative Responses.....	24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Cobb County Disability Population Estimate.....	6
Table 2: CCT Contracted Costs	15
Table 3: Private Providers Participating in Cobb Freedom Voucher Program.....	18

1 INTRODUCTION

Human services transportation (HST) refers to mobility services that provide transportation for disadvantaged populations such as persons with disabilities, persons with low income, and senior citizens. In many cases, these individuals are dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social outings, and other life-sustaining activities. HST services can be provided by public transit agencies, human services agencies, private for-profit operators, and/or private non-profit agencies.

HST is an important service which strives to meet the unique needs of populations that are not always met by fixed route public transportation. A specific HST plan is important to Cobb County, especially the citizens that currently make use of HST services. Cobb County has made an effort to provide transportation options for HST populations through previous county-specific, HST studies, including the *Cobb Community Transit Service and Marketing Study* and the *Senior Adult Transportation Study*. With this HST document as part of the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Update 2040, Cobb County has clearly identified and presents recommendations to improve services, coordination, and effectiveness for populations with the greatest need.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of existing plans and HST services available in Cobb County, identify HST needs countywide, and present recommendations for improved services and operations.

2 HST EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This chapter describes previously conducted HST reports and studies that are relevant to Cobb County, provides an overview of HST demographics and travel patterns, describes current funding sources for HST, assesses these conditions, and identifies HST needs within Cobb County.

2.1 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS HST-RELATED REPORTS AND STUDIES

There are multiple studies concerning HST that have been completed at the state, regional, and local levels that include Cobb County. The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) have all conducted studies that include various goals, recommendations, and performance measures for HST across the state and region. Cobb County has prepared studies that focus on transit marketing and transportation for seniors.

Provided next are key findings and recommendations from various HST-related studies as they specifically apply to Cobb County. This plan has built upon the recommendations of state and regional studies in order to meet the needs of HST populations and be in line with state and regional goals for HST.

Human Services Transportation: A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta, ARC 2013

This was an update to the original HST coordinated plan adopted in 2010 by ARC. Since the adoption of this plan, HST needs were incorporated into the regional long-range transportation plan, *PLAN 2040*. The purpose of this update was to ensure that the findings from the 2010 HST plan were reflective of the guiding principles established in *PLAN 2040*. The goals of this HST plan were as follows:

- To improve accessibility and mobility for the transportation disadvantaged
- To improve customer services for HST users and providers
- To improve cost effectiveness
- To improve coordination

These goal areas are applicable to Cobb County as they encourage county-wide coordinated HST transportation system, as well as regional coordination, linking the entire Atlanta Region. This plan also:

- Provided an overview of the regional demographic profile;
- Assessed HST needs of the region;
- Examined the overarching goals and objectives from *PLAN 2040*;
- Inventoried HST existing services;
- Examined HST best practices;
- Identified coordination barriers and solutions;
- Provided implementation recommendations.

The three primary demographics served by HST are persons with disabilities, senior adults, and persons with low income. This study found that 9% of the Atlanta region's population is disabled, 9% are senior adults, and 24% live below 150% of the poverty line. All of these populations have specific needs for transportation throughout the region that must be addressed.

ARC realized that the key to regional coordination is establishing an equitable approach to the coordination of regional HST transportation service delivery that maximizes mobility by minimizing duplication of services. ARC identified barriers to this coordination. For example, one issue preventing coordination is lack of fiscal incentive for agencies to coordinate.

To address the goals, needs, and identified barriers, ARC developed a short-term action plan, which included 12 recommendations for the region. The objective of the short-term action plan is to focus on small improvements that can be implemented quickly, while also focusing on improving the system in the long-term. The recommendations most applicable to Cobb County HST services are as follows:

- *Assist in building local coordination frameworks to encourage micro-level success stories.* Implementing a specific HST plan in Cobb County can be a success story and set an example for how local agencies and counties within the region can work to create coordination within their own jurisdictions.
- *Begin regional data collection efforts specifically targeting HST demographic groups.* These data collected for Cobb County can be used to track performance of the Cobb County HST program in future years.
- *Encourage local mobility management programs and monitor their success for possible adaptation at the regional level.* Implementation of an efficient and effective HST plan in Cobb County can be used as an example for regional implementation. Proactive HST planning in Cobb County would further the efforts of regional mobility coordination.
- *Monitor state and federal legislative initiatives related to HST and ensure that local and regional programs adapt accordingly to reflect new policy guidance and are positioned to take advantage of potential funding opportunities.* Coordination of service delivery continues to be a requirement in all three core FTA grant programs as authorized by MAP-21: Section 5307, 5310 and 5311. Cobb County will be positioned to leverage federal funding opportunities to improve HST.

2013 Reporting Year and 2012 Reporting Year: Coordinating Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) in Georgia Final Report. Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), Governor's Development Council (GDC), and the Georgia Coordinating Council for Rural and Human Services Transportation, August 2012.

These reports were completed to update the Georgia Governor on Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) in Georgia as mandated by state legislation. These reports respond to nine legislative tasks that analyze the following: existing RHST conditions, benefits of transportation coordination, program analysis, funding streams, interaction with public transportation, an assessment of privatization, and recommendations for the state.

The 2012 report recommended specific tasks for the state and regions to improve coordination and cost-efficiency in RHST. While the 2012 report focused on recommendations at the state level, there are important items that can be applied to improving the HST program within Cobb County. The mission statement for the statewide RHST is to *"Identify the means to increase cost-effectiveness while maintaining or improving level of service."* Similar to the ARC study, this report found that the populations that require HST are continuing to grow and becoming a larger percentage of the total

population. To address the growing demand for HST, the council made three recommendations. These recommendations and how they can be applied to Cobb County follow:

1. *Pursue resource bundling to streamline delivery and increase cost-effectiveness while maintaining provider competition.* Resource bundling is defined as “directing some or most funding sources to a coordinating entity at the state, regional, or local level.” Under this, one of the specific options listed is local resource bundling which can be applied in Cobb County. This includes having one entity handle all of the incoming funds from various state and federal agencies and distribute it within the county.
2. *Improve data reporting and analysis to better manage system.* This includes creating a uniform way of reporting HST data. These data in Cobb County could be used to calculate and better understand performance and identify process efficiency improvements.
3. *Establish a state mobility manager.* Cobb County is ahead of the curve and has had mobility manager position for multiple years, since it was recommended in the *Senior Adult Transportation Study* in 2006.

The 2012 report recommended 13 performance measures. However, after the 2013 update there were fewer performance measures recommended due to the cost and difficulty of recording and processing the necessary data. These preferred performance measures include:

- Total annual trips
- Cost per passenger trip
- Cost per vehicle mile
- Trips per vehicle mile
- Trip purpose
- Fixed route utilization

Of these five, only two had available data on an aggregated state level. By reducing and prioritizing performance measures that are recommended, the GDC seeks to encourage more agencies to collect the data so they can be analyzed on a non-aggregated level and used to gauge county RHST service delivery performance.

Cobb Community Transit Service and Marketing Study. December 2011

This report, completed in 2011, identified CCT service enhancements and recommendations to improve cost-effectiveness. This report identifies areas where existing operations can improve efficiency and ways to increase revenue and ridership. Based on these improvement areas, the study provided a 10-year plan to guide service.

The main recommendations regarding CCT paratransit in this study are as follows:

- Upgrade the RouteMatch software to the vendor’s latest version and obtain the services of RouteMatch for on-site training of personnel.
- Conduct an evaluation of the Dispatcher and Scheduler job positions, determining the skills and proficiencies required for each position.
- Acquire advanced technology (AVL and MDT) for the entire paratransit fleet. Implement technology and train staff to ensure maximum benefits are realized.

- Postpone any planned vehicle acquisitions until completing a thorough evaluation of the conditions of the existing fleets (both CCT and CSS).

One of the main gaps in service is the age of the software and the manual system that was used to record and plan paratransit trips. The scheduling was manually done instead of automated software, which could better estimate travel time and distance as well as optimize trip batching. The addition of automatic vehicle locators is also an important recommendation. Finally, the report stated that a new paratransit facility was under development (completed in 2013) to house both the CCT paratransit and Cobb Senior Service (CSS) enabling better coordination of service delivery. Additionally, all vehicles for both of these agencies share a parking lot behind the paratransit building.

Cobb County prepared a Transit Planning Study and a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in 2008. Neither specifically addressed HST needs and coordination.

Senior Adult Transportation Study, Cobb County, 2006

The purpose of this study was to document existing transportation resources for seniors residing in Cobb County. The study outlines existing conditions, a needs assessment, and final recommendations for a comprehensive mobility plan.

This study recommended three tiers of steps to make Cobb County ‘Senior-Friendly’ within ten years. These three tiers of recommendations were divided into three categories:

1. Short-term: establish organizational infrastructure
2. Intermediate: increase coordination efforts
3. Long-range: maximum coordination and ‘senior-friendly’ county

Since this study, Cobb County has implemented a number of the short-term recommendations, including the hiring of a mobility coordinator and assistant as well as the creation of a Mobility Coordinating Council. Additionally, Cobb County has applied for and received 5310 funding, JARC funds, and New Freedom grants after the report recommended these funding sources. Using these funds, CCT has been able to implement more transportation training programs for the disabled. Cobb County has also created a resource manual providing an overview of all of the available transportation options within the county. However, the manual is now out of date and should be updated.

2.2 HST DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

This section describes the disabled, elderly, and low-income populations within Cobb County, and highlights their travel characteristics.

For the HST populations broken down by U.S. Census block groups, there are multiple data sources used to display the most accurate spatial data for each HST population group. These are described in each subsection that follows.

The travel characteristics presented are taken from the ARC Regional Onboard Travel Survey conducted from 2009 to 2010. This survey was conducted on board MARTA trains as well as buses operated by MARTA, CCT, GRTA, Cherokee Area transit, and Gwinnett County Transit. The 1,794 responses collected

aboard CCT buses provide insight into travel within Cobb County’s system. The data also include the following for participants who chose to answer:

- Age of the participant
- Household income of the participant
- Whether or not the participant had access to a car for the same trip

Overall, 93.6% of the trips were either within Cobb County, between Cobb and Fulton, or between Cobb and DeKalb. It is important to understand the movements both within and outside of Cobb County using transit recognizing transfers and the need to travel outside of the county boundaries. The survey did not ask whether the participant was disabled, and no surveys were conducted onboard paratransit vehicles.

Disability

For disability characteristics, the 2011 one-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates are used. The ACS is a survey that takes a random sample and estimates the total number of disabled persons based on the survey responses within the county. The most recent Census data for disability are taken from the 2000 U.S. Census, because in 2010 the U.S. Census stopped surveying about disability. Thus, the ACS data were used to get a more up-to-date estimate of the county profile for disabled persons. The aggregated disability data from the ACS for Cobb County is summarized in the following table.

Table 1: Cobb County Disability Population Estimate

Subject	Total Estimate	Estimate Percent of Cobb County 2011 Population
Persons with a Disability	56,657 ± 4,690	8.2% ± 0.7 %
Persons 65+ with a Disability	17,900 ± 2,045	2.6% ± 0.3%

Because the data are aggregated totals for the county, it could not be mapped to identify parts of the county with higher densities of disabled persons. Additionally, as mentioned the ARC Regional On-Board Survey did not ask participants about disability status. Therefore, no information on travel characteristics is available.

Age

The spatial distribution of Cobb County citizens who are 65 years of age or older was taken from the 2010 U.S. Census. These data were available by Census tract and can be seen in Figure 1. Each Census tract has a different area and many of the larger tracts have higher numbers of persons 65 or older. To normalize the map based on area, the densities of persons aged 65 or older per square mile was used. This displays the density of elderly citizens in each census tract as well as key destinations for seniors, including senior centers, health centers, and dialysis centers within the county. Senior Centers that are highlighted in yellow are centers where CSS provides subscription paratransit services for those who request and are eligible for it.

Cobb County Senior Destinations and Services

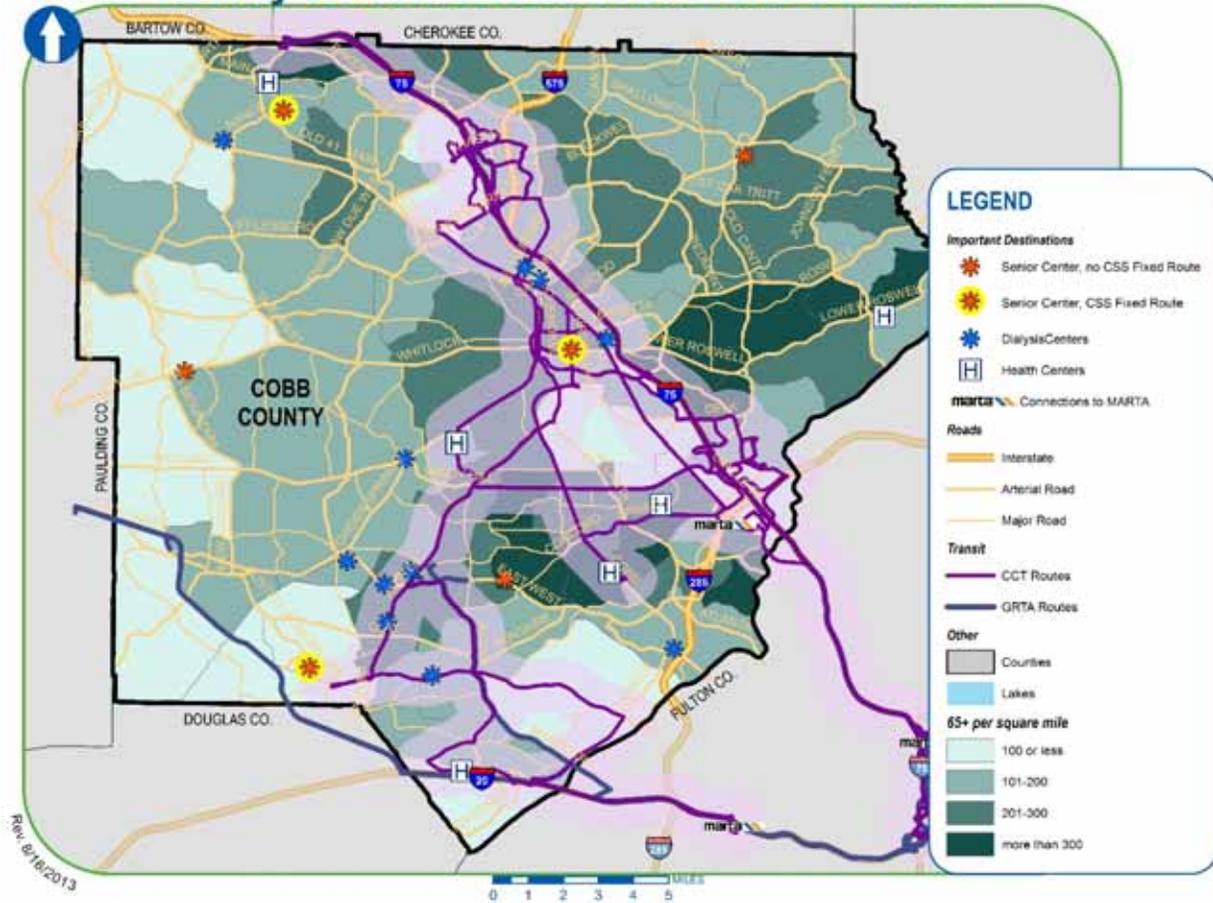


Figure 1: Cobb County Senior Destinations and Services

Figure 1 summarizes the density of persons aged 65 and older within Cobb County. In the 2006 *Senior Adult Transportation Study*, 6.95% of the Cobb County population was at least 65 years old. According to the 2010 data, 8.2% of the population is now 65 or older. This reflects a national trend of people living longer and subsequently a larger number of people who may have mobility issues and require HST services. Additionally, more people are electing to remain in their suburban homes as they age past 65, leaving them with limited travel options when they are no longer able to drive their own vehicle.

Based on Figure 1, the northwest sections of Cobb is the densest area of citizens over 65 that do not have access to CCT's paratransit service, CCT fixed route service, or the subscription routes serving areas nearby the Marietta, Austell, and North Cobb Neighborhood Centers. Other trips must be made with CSS demand response services or a private provider.

One initiative geared towards aging in the Atlanta region is ARC's Lifelong Community Initiatives. These initiatives promote communities that appeal to a wide array of ages and provide opportunities for both the young and old to have access to the community without having to drive. Many communities throughout the region have won federal funding through ARC to improve walkability and community access. Two of these communities are in Cobb County. Kennesaw, through support from ARC and AARP, assessed Cherokee Street to evaluate pedestrian conditions and identify safety needs and

improvements to make the corridor would be more walkable for all ages. However, the majority of the corridor examined with this initiative in Kennesaw is not accessible by CCT. Mableton, an unincorporated neighborhood in Cobb County, received a three-year federal grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging to improve the whole community to be a place where residents of all ages could be healthy and have a high quality of life. Parts of Mableton are accessible by both the fixed route and paratransit service offered by CCT, connecting this community for all ages to the rest of the county and the Atlanta Metro Area.

Low Income

While the U.S. 2010 Census did collect income, these data are not available at a disaggregated level for the county. Income is often withheld so that in small areas specific households with reported incomes cannot be identified. To show a distribution of low income households across the county, the ACS 2010 five-year estimates were used. These data are collected by the ACS over five years and estimated for the county by Census tracts. Figure 2 presents the density of low income households in Cobb County. Households were classified as low income if the annual income was \$25,000 or less. This threshold includes the poverty limit for families of four or fewer persons. It should be noted that mandated complementary paratransit service (3/4 mile of fixed route services) is not included in this map because qualification for CCT paratransit service is based solely on disability. Additionally, the Freedom Voucher program is only eligible for persons who have filled out necessary paperwork and are deemed eligible for complementary paratransit by CCT.

Low Income Household Densities

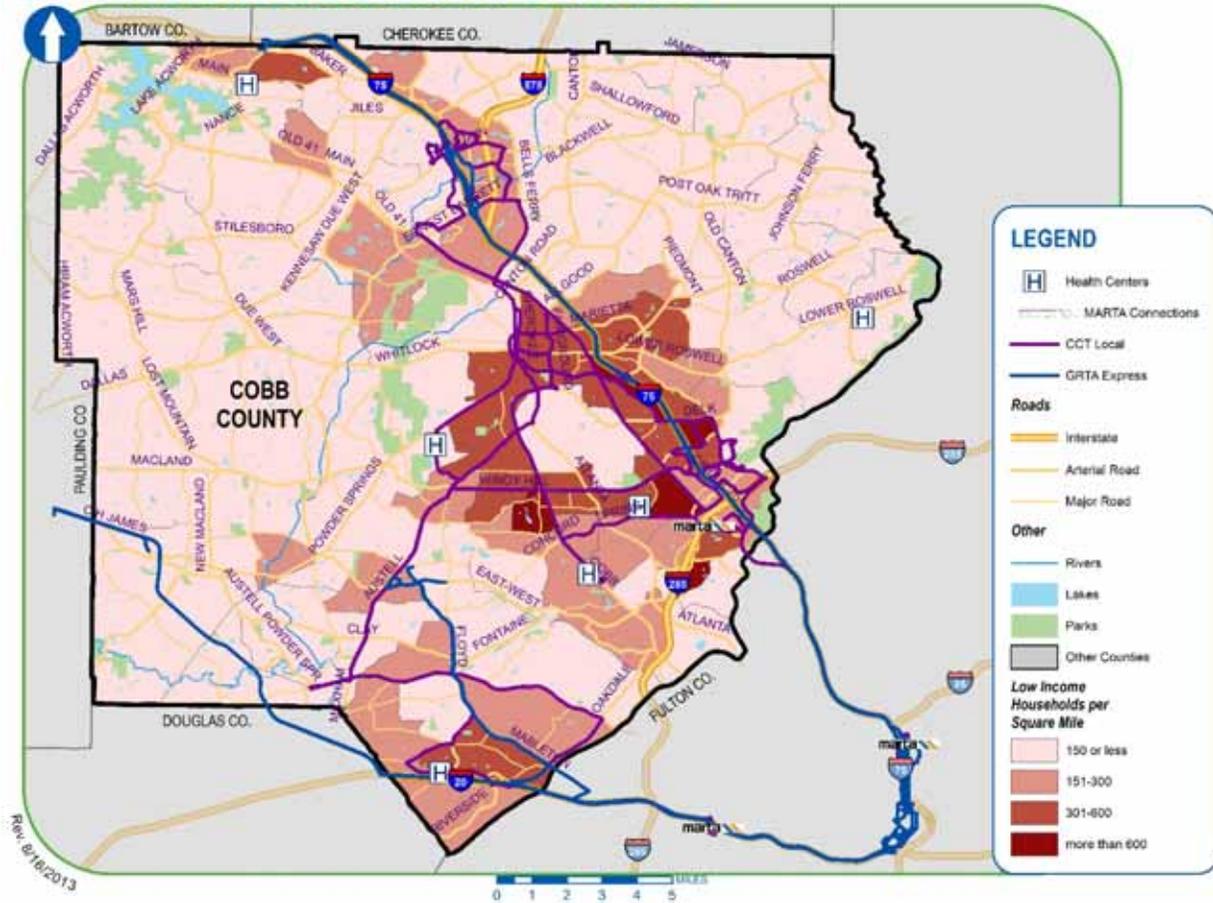


Figure 2: Low Income Household Densities

The census tracts that have the highest density of low income households are served by fixed route transit. CCT fixed route also provides access to four health centers within Cobb County as well as three connection points to MARTA, providing linkage to Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

Figure 3 shows the travel characteristics of the CCT riders categorized as living in low income households within Cobb County as well as connecting to Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Of the 1,794 participants on CCT from the ARC Regional On-Board Survey, 728 reported annual household income below \$20,000. This was 41.5% of the total CCT responses and indicates that low income residents are a large part of the CCT ridership despite making up about 6% of the total Cobb County population. The threshold in Figure 3 is different than in Figure 2 because responses for the ACS and ARC Regional On-Board Survey were classified differently in each. The low income population (who are not also elderly and/or disabled) within Cobb County has no current access to any demand response transit through CCT or CSS. The majority of low income fixed route transit trips are within the county and very few trips are to counties where there is no connecting transit service.

Movements of Low Income CCT Riders

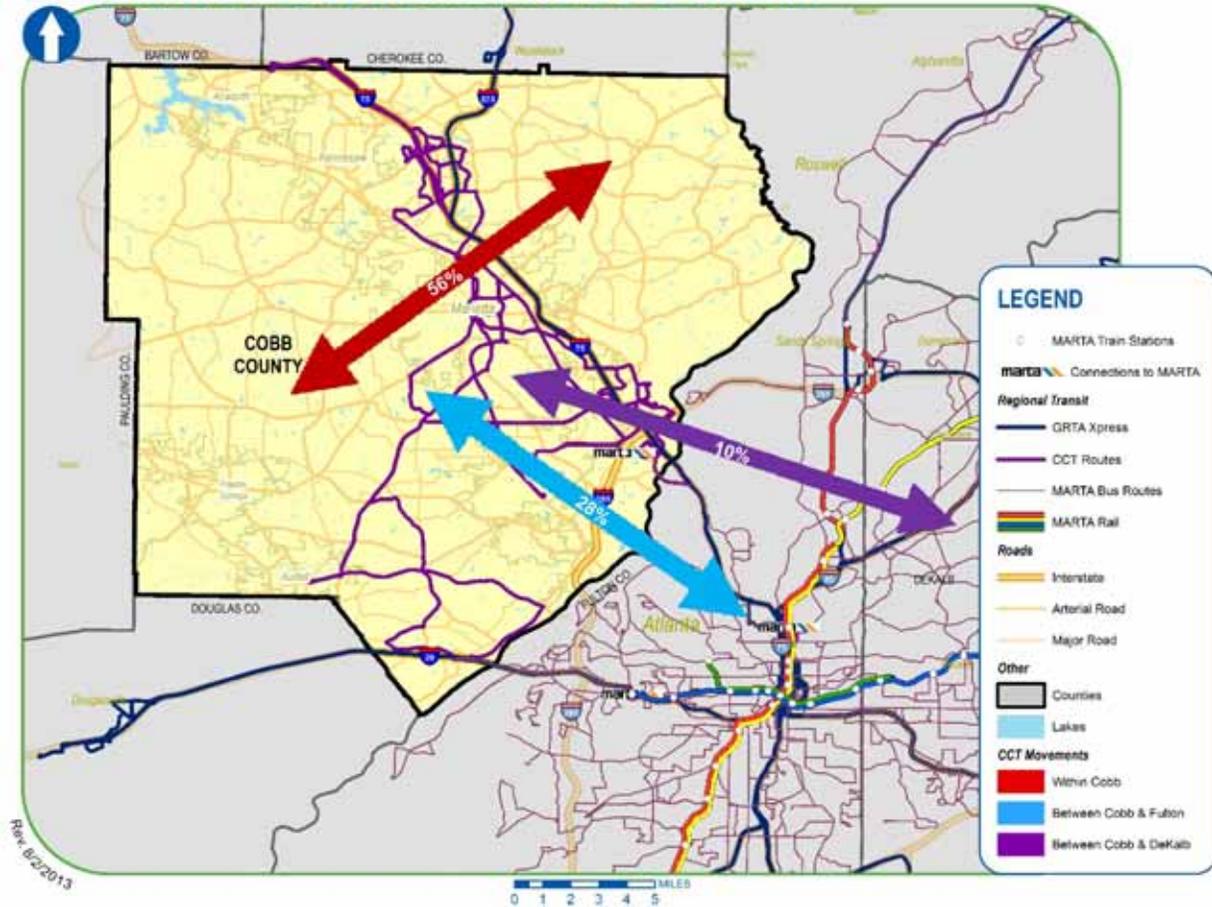


Figure 3: Movements of Low Income CCT Riders

The regional survey also asked participants both the number of vehicles in their household and whether or not there was a vehicle available for this particular trip. This is an important distinction because sometimes even if a household has multiple vehicles, they are not always available. This could be due to more drivers in a household than vehicles, or if someone is too young to drive themselves. Only 915 participants answered whether they had access to a vehicle or not for the particular trip they were on when surveyed. Of these 915, 53% did not have access to a vehicle. Of those who did not have access to a vehicle, 39% also responded that their income was less than \$20,000 per year. Similar to the movements of participants who live in a low income household, there were very few trips to counties that did not have connecting transit service, as seen in Figure 4.

Movements of CCT Riders without Access to a Vehicle

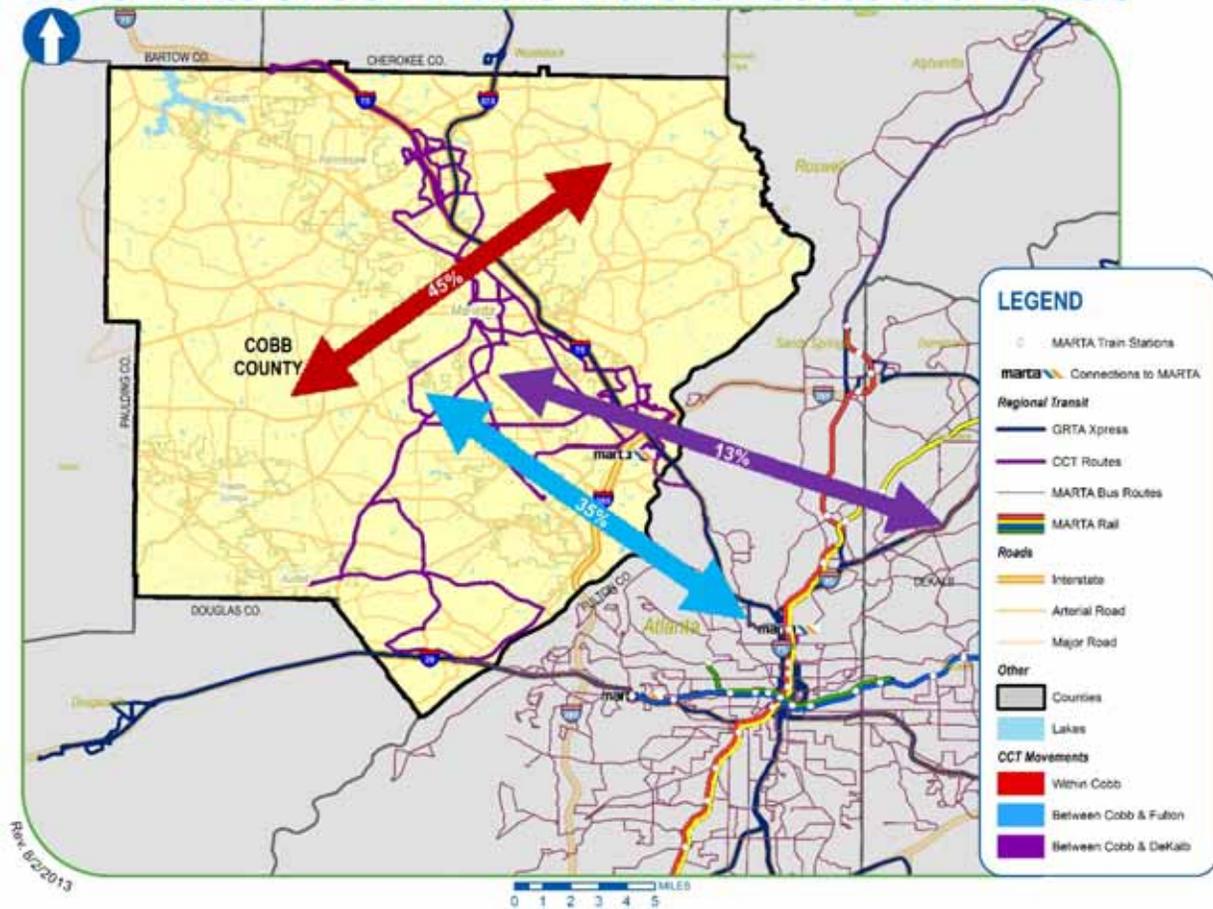


Figure 4: Movements of CCT Riders without Access to a Vehicle

Additionally, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data were considered to analyze the movements of low income Cobb residents. Currently, 37,614 low income, Cobb residents leave the County for work. Figure 5 shows where low income, Cobb residents work within the region. The jobs that are located outside of Cobb County are clearly clustered around areas with transit access. Cobb residents without access to a vehicle are limited in the areas where they can look for and access jobs.

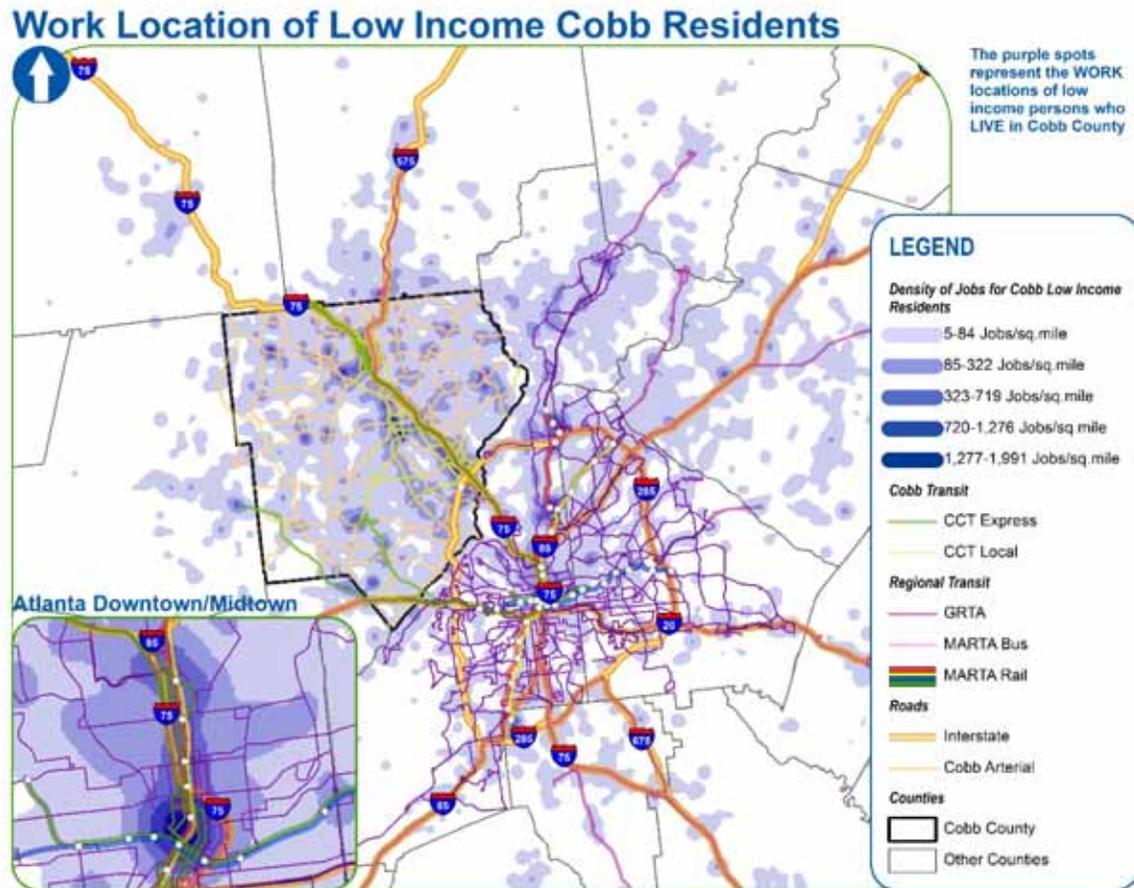


Figure 5: Work Location of Low Income Cobb Residents

2.3 COBB COUNTY EXISTING HST PROVIDERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Cobb County is a diverse county which currently provides transportation assistance to HST populations in multiple ways. In Cobb County during 2013 the past year, county, state, federal, and private entities invested over \$6.7 million to provide more than 160,000 paratransit trips. In addition to paratransit, over \$50,000 was provided to supply human services populations with passes to ride fixed route transit. This section outlines the transportation that is available to the disabled, elderly, and low income populations provided by both the county and other providers.

2.3.1 Cobb County

Services Provided

Cobb County provides paratransit through two county agencies: Cobb Community Transit (CCT) and Cobb Senior Services (CSS). The county also provides subsidies for eligible residents through the Cobb Senior Freedom voucher program and the Mobility Voucher Program. A person's age and disability status determine which services he/she is eligible for.

CCT provides fixed route bus service Monday through Saturday with some service that is only available during peak periods Monday through Friday. These buses are wheelchair accessible and stop only at indicated stops. CCT also operates two GRTA *Xpress* commuter bus routes during peak hours Monday through Friday which are not wheelchair accessible.

CCT also provides curb-to-curb complementary paratransit transportation within a ¼ mile buffer of CCT fixed transit routes. This service operates during the same hours as the fixed route buses and rides must be scheduled in advance by the customer. Potential CCT paratransit customers must apply to be eligible for the service. These guidelines are based on the requirements from the American's with Disability Act (ADA) and having a disability certified by a doctor. Once a customer is accepted, they may schedule an unlimited number of trips at a cost of four dollars per trip. Paratransit trips can transfer for free to paratransit vehicles run by MARTA throughout Fulton and DeKalb Counties. In Cobb County, as of 2013, there were 3,775 persons certified to ride paratransit with 122 active subscription riders. CCT subscription riders have regular trips scheduled in advance.

CSS provides both subscription service to designated Senior Centers and paratransit service throughout the county for citizens aged 60 years or older. CSS provides four morning and four afternoon subscription routes to and from three Neighborhood Centers (Marietta, Austell, and North Cobb) at predetermined times. These routes are considered fixed or subscription service because they operate at a scheduled time and terminate at a specific neighborhood center. These fixed routes are different from those of CCT because they change according to the needs of seniors in close proximity to the neighborhoods centers. Each week, eligible seniors select which days they wish to attend the neighborhood centers and they are scheduled for a pick-up time. In this way, the predetermined route provides door-to-door service. To qualify for transportation provided by CSS, customers must fill out an application indicating that they are at least 60 years of age. They are not required to go through the same ADA certification process that CCT requires for paratransit riders. The transportation service is provided at a cost of one dollar per ride for customers (with a fully allocated cost of \$18.65 for CSS to operate).

Finally, if CCT or CSS cannot provide the service for those who qualify, they can participate in the Cobb Freedom Voucher Program, which includes two programs. These voucher programs are for residents who are paratransit certified but reside outside the service area. Vouchers are used for private transportation services such as doctor appointments, daycare, shopping, etc. The Cobb Senior Freedom Voucher Program is for qualified residents who are 65 and over. Riders receive an allotment of \$1,900 or \$900 per year based on condition. Mobility Voucher Program is for qualifying residents who are 18-59. Riders on the Mobility Voucher Program receive an allotment of \$2,400 a year. Riders can purchase a book of \$100 worth of vouchers with a 10% co-pay.

Additionally, the Flex Route (Flex) is a new on-demand, curbside bus service open to all passengers. Flex has the advantages of a fixed bus route with the convenience of curb side pickup at indicated, scheduled stops and offers the ease of door-to-door service with a reservation. Flex also offers the flexibility of a walk up service from a designated bus stop. Flex services three zones in the South Cobb area that includes Austell and Powder Springs.

To determine which service a Cobb resident is eligible for, the following process is used:

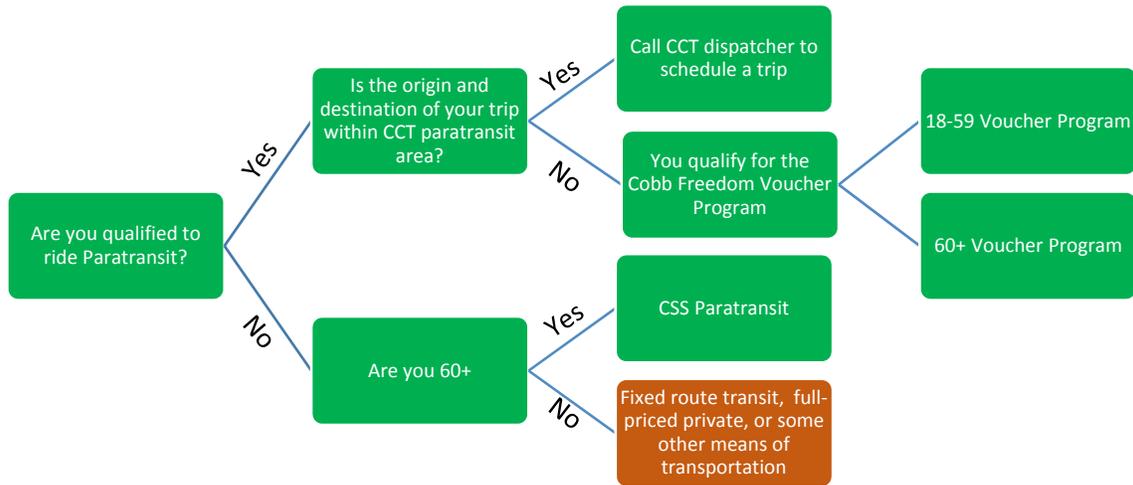


Figure 6: Qualification Process for Cobb County Services

Paratransit qualification is based on ADA requirements. Using these requirements, not all disabilities allow for paratransit certification. This certification is based on whether or not a person can functionally ride fixed route transit or not. In Cobb County, if certified residents are in need of transportation services within the county, the certified resident can take CCT paratransit if the origin and destination are within the coverage area; or the certified resident can receive vouchers to purchase discounted paratransit from a private provider to other areas. The following figure shows the paratransit rider qualification process:

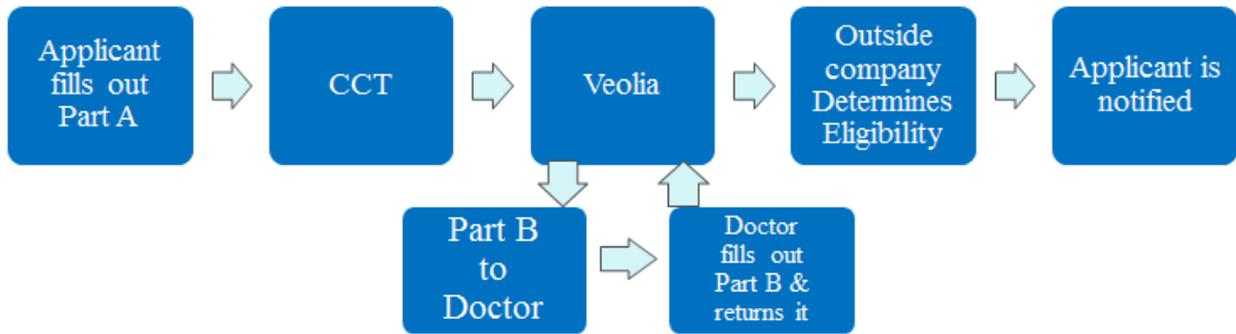


Figure 7: CCT Paratransit Application Process

The certification is based on the responses from the potential paratransit client and a doctor who states whether or not the potential client can functionally access and ride transit. This process is included in CCT’s contract with Transdev (previously named Veolia), which outsources the service to another company.

For residents that are 60 years of age or older but are not paratransit certified, paratransit is provided by CSS to senior centers and around the county for medical, shopping, and social purposes. This is important for seniors who do not have access to a vehicle or are too far to walk to fixed route transit. Cobb County does not provide any paratransit for residents solely based on income. The only instance where income affects eligibility or fares is if a senior cannot afford to pay the \$1 fare for CSS paratransit. They are allowed to ride for free or whatever they can afford to pay. No discounted fares for CCT fixed route transit or paratransit based on income are offered.

Maintenance, Operations, and Funding Sources

CCT outsources all transit and paratransit operations to Transdev. As of December 2014, operations are in the second of a five-year contract. This contract covers the vehicle maintenance, transit and paratransit operations, and paratransit certification process. CCT paratransit has 30 vehicles that are owned by Cobb County. They were all procured in 2007, 2008, or 2009 and have a capacity of 12 seats plus two wheelchair spaces. Transdev maintains the vehicles as part of the contract. The contract requires CCT to pay a monthly fixed rate, rate per paratransit trip, and rate per revenue hour of fixed route services. All of these costs increase over the five years of the contract and can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: CCT Contracted Costs

Year	1 (2013)	2 (2014)	3 (2015)	4 (2016)	5 (2017)
Fixed Monthly Rate	\$ 282,400.00	\$ 293,689.00	\$ 305,739.00	\$ 318,490.00	\$ 332,029.00
Rate per service hour of fixed routes	\$ 45.70	\$ 47.29	\$ 48.70	\$ 50.10	\$ 51.23
Rate per paratransit trip	\$ 32.43	\$ 33.58	\$ 33.46	\$ 35.64	\$ 36.52

Transdev currently uses Trapeze, a software product used to schedule paratransit trips and collect passenger data in the vehicles. In January, 2012 CCT switched from RouteMatch to Trapeze and noticed a significant increase in passenger load, indicating a more optimal routing system than in the past. In the vehicles, electronic logs are maintained for each trip, including passenger identification and the location and time of the pickup and drop-off. As a public agency, CCT has to report annually to the National Transit Database four of the six performance measures recommended by the GDC in the statewide RHST. These data are automatically calculated electronically on board. For CCT in fiscal year 2012 performance reporting were as follows:

- Total trips FY 2012: 60,673
- Cost per passenger trip: \$32.43
- Cost per vehicle revenue mile: \$4.01
- Trips per vehicle revenue mile: 0.12
- Fare: \$4

These numbers are indicative of paratransit, with a high cost per passenger trip and a low ratio of trips per vehicle revenue mile. The two performance measures recommended by the state that CCT does not collect are trip purpose and fixed route utilization. FTA no longer allows public paratransit operators to ask riders for their trip purpose due to privacy concerns. The intent is for paratransit to provide a service comparable to fixed route service. Since fixed route riders are not required to submit trip purpose information, the same applies to paratransit riders.

CSS provides two types of door-to-door transportation for seniors; subscription services to Senior Centers, and individual trips. These are typically scheduled two to three weeks in advance and are limited to two unlinked trips per week. The CSS staff schedules the trips and, if necessary, prioritizes them. Medical appointments and subscription to Senior Centers are given preference so that these customers can reach their medical appointments or receive a hot meal each day at the various senior and neighborhoods centers. Other trips are allowed, but sometimes cannot be accommodated due to capacity constraints and scheduling trips that are of a higher priority. The CSS demand-responsive service is primarily to serve seniors who live in remote parts of the county and provides service to the senior centers that are not accessible by CCT.

- Total trips FY 2012: ~52,000
- Cost per passenger trip: \$18.65
- Fare \$1

One of the reasons that the cost per passenger trip is so much lower for CSS than it is for CCT is because of the average load. While CSS did not provide any numbers, they stated that the subscription routes around the Senior Centers are almost always full and that these subscription trips are operating at capacity. Having more passengers in a vehicle while it is travelling significantly reduces the cost per passenger trip. CCT does not have subscription areas that are always full to affect their average load.

Previously, CSS used ServTracker, a software that tracks all of the requested trips. However, the routes taken by the paratransit vehicles were determined by hand and not automated. In 2013, CSS purchased GeoTabs and Garmins so that the routing of the vehicles could be optimized and sent to drivers in the vehicles automatically. Together, these will provide real-time locations of paratransit vehicles and allow route to stay optimized, even if there are last minute changes sent to the vehicles.

The average age of CSS's 33 vehicles is 11 years. The most recent vehicle purchase occurred in 2012 with funds provided by a Cobb County Community Development Block Grant funds from the Federal Housing and Urban Development Grant. These vehicles are maintained by Cobb County Fleet Management. Each vehicle is inspected every 7,500 miles or once per year, whichever comes first. This averages three to four vehicles in the shop during a month's period. Through August, 2013, \$75,083.16 had been spent during 2013. This rate of spending equals approximately \$112,625 to spend over the course of the year. The majority of this money is spent in house for labor and inspections. Occasionally, the vehicles are sent to private vendors when a specific job is needed.

Cobb Mobility Programs

As previously mentioned, Cobb residents who qualify for paratransit but need to travel outside of the area covered by CCT are qualified to purchase vouchers. These vouchers are provided by two different New Freedom Grants (5317 federal funding). The first grant was won in 2009 and as of August, 2013

was in its fourth year. The original amount of the grant was for \$1,055,700 and was available for any paratransit-certified residents who were at least 60 years old. This grant has no date by which the money must be spent and after three years, only \$27,350 of the original grant had been spent as of August 2013. The second grant was won for Freedom Vouchers for Cobb residents who were paratransit-certified, ages 18-59, and lived in the areas that lost paratransit service due to CCT service cuts in 2011 that eliminated fixed routes 65 and 70. The amount awarded for this grant was \$893,000 of which, \$353,372 had been spent as of August 2013. This is a much quicker rate than the voucher program for seniors, as can be seen in the following figure. For both grants, qualified clients can purchase \$100 of vouchers for \$10 to use for rides with any of the 11 specified private providers (see Table 4).

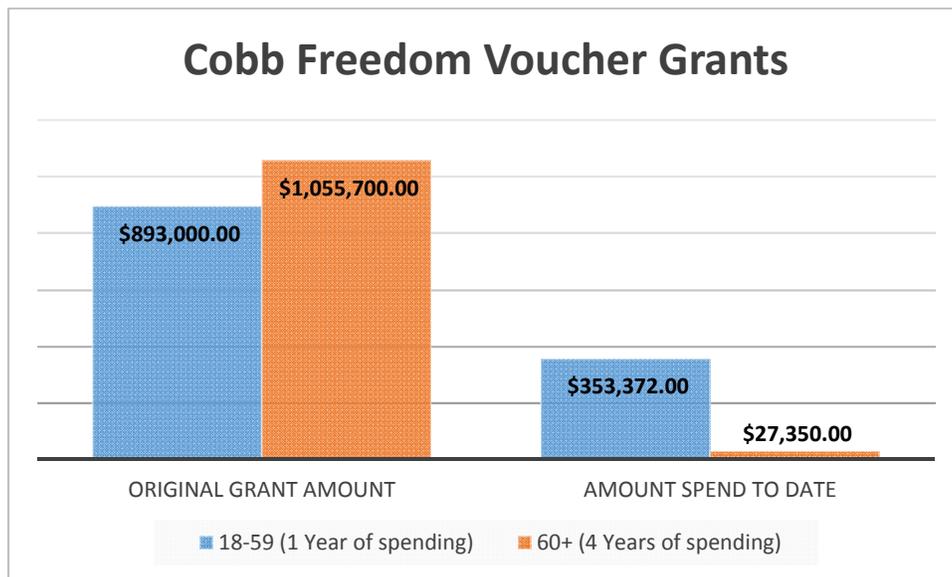


Figure 8: Cobb Freedom Voucher Program Grant Funding*
(*As of August, 2013)

Previously, the vouchers for seniors were processed through the CSS office and the vouchers for residents aged 18-59 were processed through CCT’s assistant mobility manager.

One of the funding changes in the current transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) is the change to the New Freedom Grants (5317 federal funding). MAP-21 reduces the amount of transportation programs throughout the country. Federal 5310 funds can be used to provide transportation to the elderly and disabled. In Georgia, the Department of Human Services is the recipient of these funds and spends them providing transportation to these populations. The New Freedom Vouchers were provided by grants from 5317 funding, which provides funds for Americans with disabilities to allow them access to work and improve their quality of life. In the Atlanta Region, ARC was the recipient of these funds and distributed them. With changes in MAP-21, the 5317 funds were rolled into the 5310 program, meaning that Cobb County must apply for these grants through DHS instead of ARC when the current grants run out.

There are 11 private providers who accept the Cobb Freedom Vouchers and Mobility Vouchers, as listed in Table 4. Each provider calculates trip prices differently, as listed in Table 4. To schedule a trip, clients must contact a provider of their choice and can pay with a combination of cash and/or Cobb Freedom Vouchers.

Table 3: Private Providers Participating in Cobb Freedom Voucher Program

Private Provider	Contact Information	Cost	Counties Served	Contact Person
Bivins Transportation	770-575-2650	Per hour \$30 (including wait) Over 10 miles – add \$0.50/mile	Cobb	Bertha Bivins
Busy Senior	770-423-1504	Up to 10 miles \$27; 10 to 28 miles \$40 Over 28 miles \$55; Wait time \$5	Cobb	Mary Thompson
Caring Man In A Van	678-683-0162	Up to 5/10/15 miles: One-Way \$40/50/60; Roundtrip \$50/60/70 Wheelchair one-way \$70/80/90; Roundtrip \$85/90/100	Cobb; Bartow; Cherokee; Floyd; Fulton; Paulding	Cale Collins
Cobb Co Community Services Board	678-217-1512	One-Way (up to 12 miles) - \$13 Over 12 miles – add \$1/mile Per hour (wait time) - \$15	Cobb; Douglas	Kellie Bollman
Destiny Transportation	770-560-2432	Up to 10 miles - \$30 Wheelchair up to 10 miles - \$65 11+ miles - \$1.50/mile	Cobb	Edmond Campbell Jr
N’ovative Transportation	770-897-4219	Flat rate \$15 + \$1.75/mile Wheelchair \$35 each way + \$2.00/mile Wait time - \$20/hr	Cobb; Paulding	Kisha Edwards
Present Help Services	678-914-6088	Per mile - \$1.80 / \$40 minimum Wheelchair per mile - \$2 / \$50 minimum Wheelchair load fee - \$25 each way Wait time - \$15/hr Escort - \$15	Cobb; Clayton; DeKalb; Douglas; Fulton	Kimberly Perry-Hall
Sacred Heart Transportation	678-561-0495	Per mile - \$1.75 \$35 minimum Wheelchair per mile - \$2 \$45 minimum Wait time - \$4 per 15 mins; Escort - \$4.50/each way	Cobb; Bartow; Clayton; Coweta; DeKalb; Douglas; Fayette; Fulton; Haralson; Heard; Henry; Meriwether; Paulding; Rockdale; Spalding; Troup	Marie Prosper
Senior Helpers	770-442-2154	Per hour \$18 + \$0.75/mile (minimum 4 hours)	Cobb; Cherokee; Forsyth; Fulton;	Pam Hodgson

Private Provider	Contact Information	Cost	Counties Served	Contact Person
		One hour only - \$35 + \$0.75/mile	Gwinnett	
Speedy Wiz Transport	770-928-4550	Up to 5 miles - \$10; over 5 miles - \$2/mile Wait time - \$0.30/minute	Cobb; Cherokee	Theresa Badgett
Total Care Transportation	678-379-9589	Up to 5 mi - \$15; 6 to 10 mi - \$18; 11 to 15 mi - \$20 over 15 mi - \$2.50/mile Wait time - \$5 per 15 mins	Cobb; Bartow; Cherokee; Clayton; DeKalb; Douglas; Fayette; Fulton; Henry; Paulding	Malika Humphries

In addition to providing transportation, Cobb County runs multiple training programs to teach disabled and elderly citizens how to use transit and what their transportation options are in the county. There are multiple programs aimed at different groups. “Get on the Bus, Gus” is a program that teaches senior citizens how to schedule and take a transit trip that includes paratransit and fixed route transit and transfers.

The county mobility assistant also works with Cobb County School District to prepare disabled students for graduation. This program teaches them about their transportation options so that they can be as independent as possible.

2.3.1.1 Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has many divisions that serve different Georgia populations. DHS provides subsidized transportation through federal 5310 funds for qualifying clients of various divisions, including the Division of Aging Services (DAS), the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and the NEW Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). Eligible clients of these divisions qualify for transportation provided by DHS.

To provide coordinated transportation for these clients in Georgia, the state is broken into twelve (12) regions. In each region, DHS contracts with paratransit providers to provide transportation for their clients. In these areas, DHS is required to attempt to contract with public transit agencies, if there is one, in addition to private providers that provide service beyond the reach of public transit agencies.

In Cobb County, DHS contracts with CCT and the Cobb-Douglas Community Services Board (CSB). The Cobb-Douglas CSB is a public agency that provides mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services. Cobb-Douglas CSB has approximately 100 vehicles. They provide paratransit for their clients and DHS clients through the aforementioned contract. In 2013, DHS provided \$52,199 to Cobb-Douglas CSB for 2,812 paratransit trips (averaging \$18.56 cost per trip). In order to be as efficient as possible, DHS also provides funds for various agencies to purchase fixed-route transit passes for clients who are not paratransit certified. In 2013, DHS paid \$48,959 for 24,685 transit passes in Cobb County. These fixed route passes were provided to Cobb Senior Services, Cobb CSB, and another human services agency, Right in the Community.

2.3.2 Department of Community Health

The Department of Community Health (DCH) oversees the federal Medicaid Program for the State of Georgia. Medicaid provides funding for many health-related purposes, including non-emergency medical transportation trips. In the last year, \$3,156,475.91 was spent in Cobb County for approximately 90,000 non-emergency medical trips for Medicaid clients. This money is distributed based on the number of eligible clients in a county during a month. In Cobb County, the rate is \$4.31 per eligible client per month. Over the last year, Cobb County has had an average of 61,030 eligible clients. Medicaid clients include low income families with children, pregnant women, and seniors as well as disabled citizens.

To coordinate these trips as much as possible, DCH has broken the state into five regions and has a broker in each region. Cobb County is in the North Region where Southeastrans serves as the transportation broker. When a Medicaid client calls with transportation needs, Southeastrans first checks if there is a public transit fixed route for the client to take. If there is not one, it schedules a trip for the client with a contracted transportation provider. There are many providers in the region that serve Medicaid, including the Cobb-Douglas CSB. If there is a transit agency, Southeastrans attempts to contract with that agency. Currently, Southeastrans does not contract with CCT.

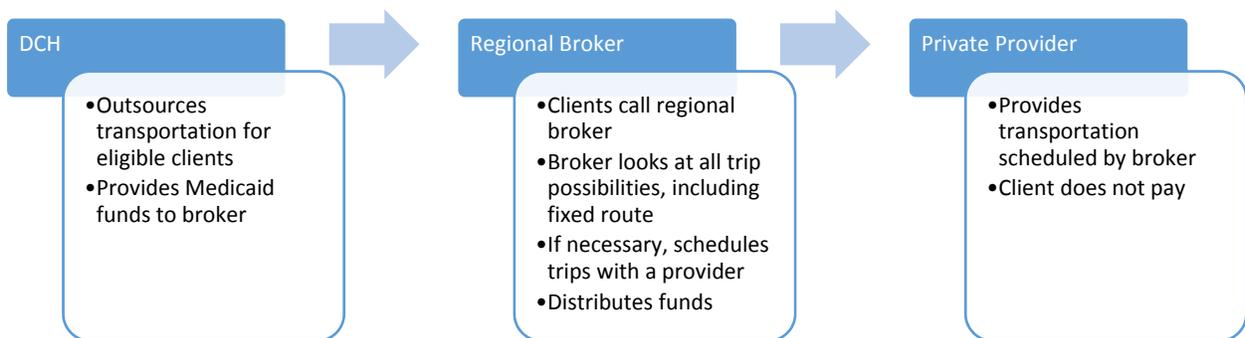


Figure 9: DCH Funding Process

2.3.3 Private Transportation Providers

There are numerous private paratransit providers in Cobb County. Some serve only the county and some serve a large region of Georgia. These private transportation providers provide full price paratransit service and either accept the Freedom Vouchers, serve DHS clients, serve Medicaid clients, or serve any combination of those. They accept trips scheduled by individuals as well as any contract they may have.

These private providers range greatly in size. Many of them declined to share trip statistics, but the ones that did ranged from one to 100 vehicles. The number of trips they provided in Cobb ranged from ten up to the thousands during the year 2013. While the largest one interviewed, Cobb-Douglas CSB, was able to provide trip statistics and funding sources, the smaller private companies reported that they do not keep records of their trips or would not share them. Some do not record how many trips they have provided in the last year, and some do not calculate an average operating cost, they simply set prices high enough to cover all costs. Data for private paratransit providers was the most difficult to obtain because in some cases there are no records and in others they are unwilling to share.

2.4 HST STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

An HST plan is not a 'one size fits all' situation. HST solutions depend on the community which they serve and must respond to the unique needs of the populations within that community. To understand the needs of the HST populations, as well as, stay in accordance with regional goals and projects, it was important to consult as many stakeholders as possible.

Within Cobb County, there are numerous types of stakeholders, including public and private transportation providers, organizations that provide the funds for transportation, agencies that direct federal and state funding, and finally the HST populations themselves.

The following agencies were contacted for the existing conditions and needs assessment of Cobb County HST.

- Cobb Community Transit (CCT)
- CCT Mobility Coordinating Council
- Cobb Senior Services (CSS)
- Atlanta Region Area Agency on Aging, as part of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and Governor's Development Council (GRTA/GDC)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Cobb County Fleet Management
- Regional Department of Human Services Office (DHS)
- Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH)
- Cobb Community Collaborative (CCC)
- Kennesaw State University (KSU)

The consultant team reached out to all of these stakeholders through phone conversations, in-person interviews, and presentations to understand the role they play in Cobb County HST and if they have any outstanding needs.

The consultant visited with CCT and CSS multiple times in person. These interviews provided an overview of the paratransit operations performed by the county. CSS expressed that they are currently operating at capacity to provide paratransit to residents that are elderly but not paratransit-certified.

Phone conversations with ARC and GRTA/GDC expressed the desire for both regional and statewide coordination for paratransit. While trips are coordinated within individual organizations, there are many private providers that offer overlapping service with each other as well as public transit agencies. ARC has created a regional one-click/one-call center to connect HST populations with transportation all around the region, whether they are individuals or sponsored by DHS or DCH/Medicaid. Cobb County has been selected as a beta tester participant. This one-click/one-call center connects HST populations with rides and service providers for which they are eligible, but does not coordinate rides between providers. Coordination between providers is an action that must be taken by individual providers that would require cost- and resource-sharing to reduce miles traveled for HST vehicles in the region.

Phone conversations with MARTA, the Cobb County Fleet Management, DHS, and DCH provided descriptions of costs, trips provided, and various processes that include paratransit. A paratransit transfer is free from CCT paratransit to MARTA. The Cobb County Fleet Management was able to provide maintenance costs and discuss the maintenance process. DHS and DCH representatives

provided annual costs and trips supported in Cobb County as well as descriptions of the process used to schedule and coordinate trips within each organization.

A phone conversation with the disabled student support services at Kennesaw State University revealed a gap in CCT coverage for KSU students. She stated that even though the majority of the campus is included in the CCT paratransit area, CCT paratransit trips to the KSU campus drops all riders off at the Student Center, regardless of their final destination. While many of these students have their own scooters and are somewhat mobile on their own, it takes them a significant amount of time to cross campus to their final destination.

One of the major outreach efforts was with the Cobb Community Collaborative (CCC). The CCC is an organization that supports non-profit organizations in Cobb County. They provide resources for applying for grants, fundraising, outreach and more. The CCC is a membership of non-profit organizations, local governments, businesses, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, professional organizations, associations, and citizens who share ideas, expertise, and resources to meet the needs of Cobb County. The Collaborative holds general meetings to discuss upcoming events and host speakers. For the meeting on 8/21/2013, the consultant was invited to present.

The presentation provided an overview of the whole Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan and how the HST element would fit in with that plan. The presentation also covered the findings to date of the existing transportation services available to HST populations, an overview of HST spatial distributions, and an interactive part to understand how these organizations function with regards to transportation and what their needs are.

The first interactive part of the presentation was a large map survey of Cobb County. Members of the various organizations were asked to indicate their location with blue stickers, locations their clients frequent with yellow stickers, and places that are difficult for their clients to access with red stickers. Figure 10 shows a picture of the map with the stickers and Figure 11 shows these results as mapped through ArcGIS.

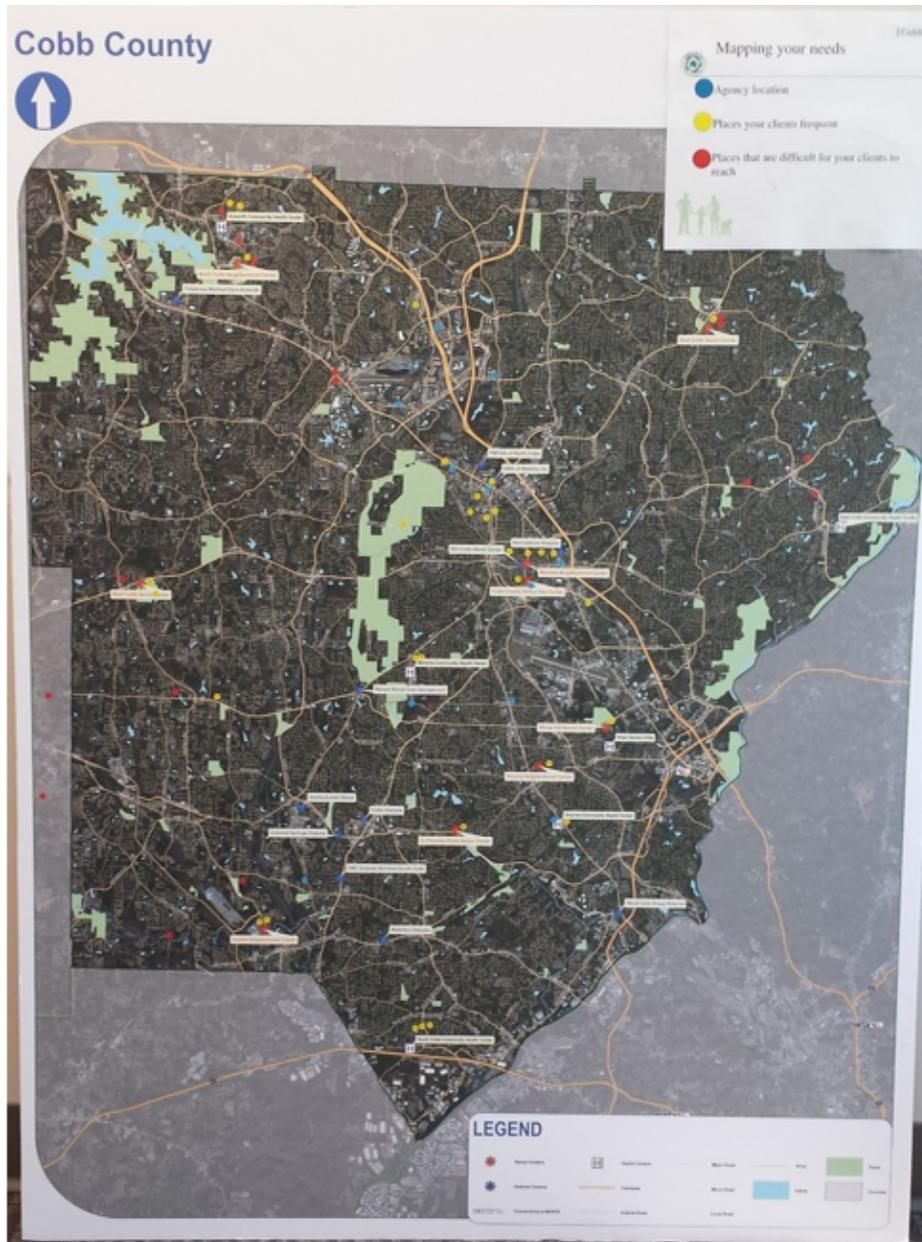


Figure 10: Display Map from Cobb Community Collaborative Meeting

Eight organizations participated in the mapping survey, some with multiple locations in Cobb County. The majority of the non-profit organizations that participated were located in areas with access to transit or paratransit. Only one was located just outside of the paratransit access area.

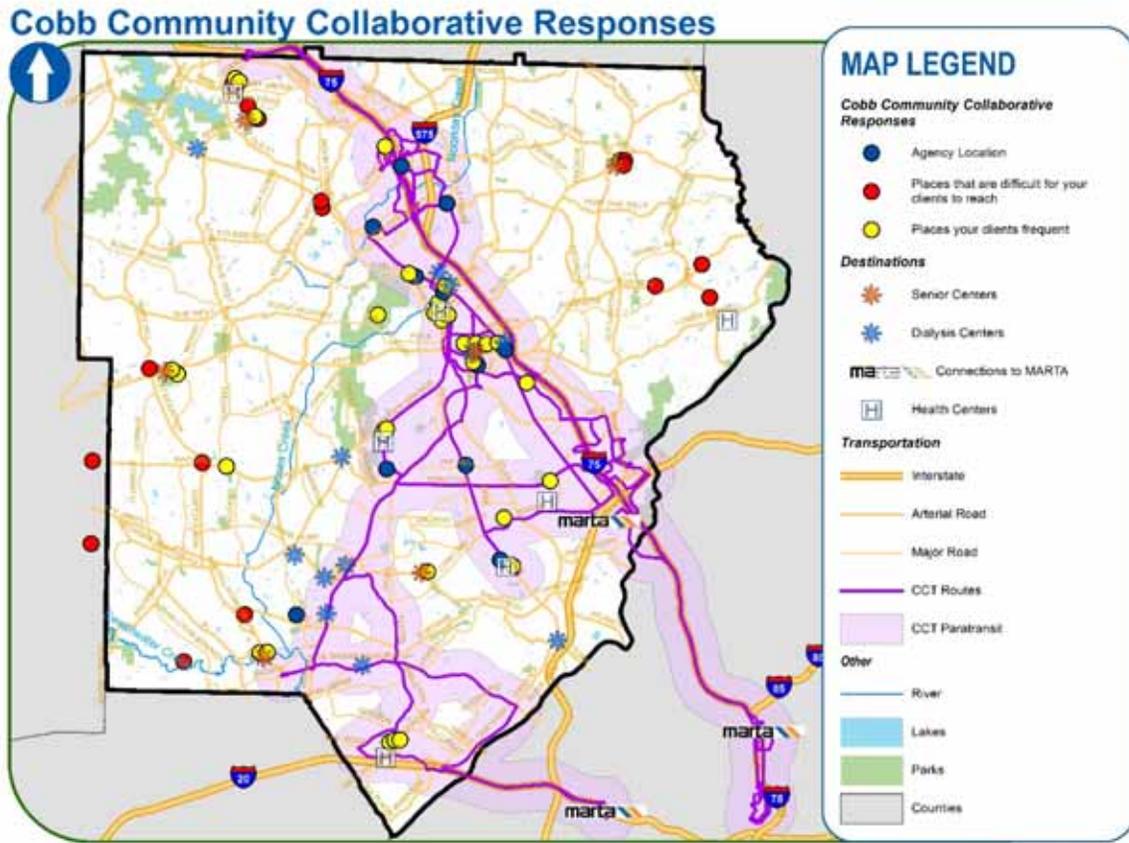


Figure 11: Cobb Community Collaborative Responses

When placing stickers on the map, many representatives indicated that the general areas in East Cobb and West Cobb were difficult to access simply because there is no transit in those areas. Those areas include destinations clients need to reach, such as medical facilities and senior centers. These areas are also home to many of the clients. This makes it difficult for clients to simply get from their homes to essential places, such as a grocery store or medical appointment. While there are a handful of red dots in those areas, many more representatives stated that it was the general area and did not put a sticker on a specific location. Others mentioned that it was difficult to reach neighboring counties that were not Fulton, which some indicated with red dots in Paulding County.

The second interactive part was at the end of the presentation. Five questions were posed to the audience using live polling. Each organization (31 participants) had a clicker and could respond to the questions. Answers would pop up in real-time so that we could see what their priorities and transportation needs are.

The first question posed was “What population do you mainly serve?” While many organizations serve multiple HST populations, they were asked to indicate which population most of their clients fall into. Of the group, the majority primarily serves the low income population, for which there are no specific mobility programs run by Cobb County.

Participants were then asked “Before today, were you aware of the CCT mobility programs described?” to which 68% of them responded “No”. This was an important question because the responses revealed how little these organizations know about opportunities to transport their clients. Cobb County has multiple mobility programs in place, however many of these organizations did not know about them and have therefore unable to make use of them. This indicates a need to make this information more easily accessible.

To better understand how these organizations provide transportation, participants were asked “How do you connect your clients with transportation?” The most popular response to this question was that they do not connect clients with transportation at all. Fifteen percent provide clients with CCT passes and 24% connect them with CCT or CHS to obtain transportation.

Only 18% of the organizations provide transportation with their own vehicles, this amounted to six organizations. The next question was “Does your organization coordinate with other Collaborative organizations for transportation”, to which an overwhelming majority said “No”. However, it is important to note that only six organizations actually provide transportation. These six were the only organization that could have answered “Yes” to this question, but only two responded that they coordinate for transportation.

This meeting with the Cobb Community Collaborative was important for two reasons. First, it allowed the consultant to understand the transportation needs of agencies serving HST populations and their clients. Second, it informed them of the mobility programs within Cobb County. Based on the interactive questions asked, these organizations and their clients knew little about the mobility programs in the county and highlighted the need for this information to be easily accessible and in one place.

All of the input gathered from the stakeholder interviews was used in the following section to analyze the successes and needs for HST in Cobb County.

2.5 HST SWOT ANALYSIS: SUCCESSES AND NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

With regards to HST in Cobb County, there are many types of successes and needs. These can be operational, organizational, financial, or jurisdictional. This Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis identifies the different success and needs that are both internal and external for Cobb County HST.

	Successes	Needs
Internal	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two paratransit programs for residents in different parts of the county, CCT and CSS • Freedom voucher program to provide subsidies for private vendor transportation • Large amounts of funds remaining for Freedom Voucher Program • Free paratransit transfer between MARTA and CCT at Cumberland Travel Training to teach the elderly and disabled how to use fixed route transit • CCT and CSS paratransit both optimize routes • New building and shared parking lots 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent mobility manager • Lack of advertisement and awareness of services • Cost per trip, difference between CCT and CSS • Lack of coverage in east and west Cobb • No ride coordination or sharing between CCT and CSS vehicles • No coordination with DCH/Medicaid and DHS • No county program for low income Cobb residents • Limited Kennesaw State paratransit operations for Students • CCT service gaps in East and West Cobb
External	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beta tester for one-click call center program being developed by ARC • Explore performance measures for voucher vendors • Non-profits are interested in knowing better about HST services • \$3 million of Medicaid paratransit annually contracted to private vendors • Regional trip integration with routing software (i.e. CCT, MARTA) • Explore coordination with Cobb-Douglass Community Services Board • Flexbus expansion if successful 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to new freedom funds • Not enough public knowledge about Vouchers • Private pushback against coordination • Private pushback against reporting performance measures

Strengths (Internal Successes)

While a goal of this document is to identify needs, it is also important to identify success so that it is clear where Cobb County is succeeding in providing HST services. These successes are the foundation upon which needs and improvements will be built to improve the overall program. In Cobb County, there are many successes.

Within Cobb County, there are three programs that provide paratransit, CCT, CSS, and the Cobb Freedom Voucher Program. Combined, these provide access throughout the county for the elderly and disabled as well as connect them to MARTA and surrounding counties through private providers. Additionally, these funds are being spent at a slow rate, showing that they will be able to provide subsidies for a few years to come. CCT also allows free transfers with MARTA for paratransit customers, which is important because it connects Cobb to Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

One of the major gaps identified by GRTA/GDC is that there are many who are taking paratransit trips when they are in fact able to take fixed route transit. In Cobb County, the assistant mobility manager is providing travel training to the elderly and disabled to show them how to use fixed route transit and feel comfortable using it. Across the country, this has been shown to reduce dependence on paratransit in some areas and is important for transportation to operate efficiently.

One of the most efficient things that a paratransit company can do is optimize their routes. CCT has done this using Trapeze and they have seen a significant increase in the average load, and thus a reduction in the average cost per trip. Similarly, CSS has recently purchased technology to be able to optimize routes as well. This will allow both agencies to travel the least amount of miles while still providing the same amount of service, saving time and money.

The CCT Transdev paratransit operations and CSS transportation are both located in the same building and share a parking lot for vehicles. This allows the two to be close in proximity as well as share building and parking lot resources.

Opportunities (External Successes)

There are a number of opportunities for Cobb County to improve HST services for connecting with the region. CCT is currently a beta-tester for the one-click/one-call system technology, which has had a soft launch, but will fully launch in the first quarter of 2015. Preparing for this would help Cobb County set an example for the region and even the country for how to make HST user-friendly and fully coordinated.

A lack of performance measure data for private HST service providers prevents Cobb County from understanding how private HST service is performing throughout the county. Some private providers within the county have been accepted into the Cobb Freedom Voucher Program. To qualify for this, providers must meet insurance and liability criteria. Beyond this, no data are collected for these providers. This presents an opportunity for Cobb County to work with these providers and add performance measurements and data reporting requirements to these contracts. By utilizing relationships with these private providers, Cobb County could get a better understanding of the services being provided with their funds.

In addition to private transportation providers, some non-profit agencies provide services to HST populations, but do not themselves provide transportation. These agencies often work to connect their clients with eligible transportation services, but reported that they had no knowledge of all of the CCT and CSS services that are provided. All of the required information is online, but it is not all in one place. The meeting with the CCC revealed that the CCC and affiliated agencies are interested in this information and are open to working with the county to provide up-to-date information about HST services in and around the county for their clients and all eligible HST residents.

Over \$6 million was spent in the last year on HST trips in Cobb County and \$3 million of it was from Medicaid to a broker to private providers. Opportunities exist for Cobb County to work with DCH/Medicaid and be able to put that money towards their services and serve all HST populations as well as the clients of DCH/Medicaid.

In 2013, Transdev initiated use of Trapeze to plan routes. MARTA also uses Trapeze to plan schedules and routes, which provides an opportunity for enhanced coordination beyond transferring paratransit trips.

One of the largest providers of paratransit trips is the Cobb-Douglas CSB. This is a public agency that receives federal DHS and DCH/Medicaid funding to provide transportation for clients of each department and they also accept the Freedom Vouchers. A coordinated relationship between them and CCT/CSS has the potential to save costs for all parties.

Finally, Cobb County has approved three Flexbus service areas in southwest Cobb County, with the pilot providing service between Austell and Cumberland Mall. The Flexbus will provide service to fixed stops and will deviate from the fixed route when a passenger has made a reservation in advance, providing shared rides and traditional public transportation services. This is an innovative way to provide HST services when needed and fixed route services. If successful, could be an example for Cobb to expand on as well as other counties and transit agencies to imitate.

Weaknesses (Internal Needs)

There are some very distinct needs identified within Cobb County for HST services as pointed out during stakeholder interviews.

Over the past few years there have been multiple mobility managers. While Cobb County filled this position in 2014, the inconsistency in leadership needs to be addressed so that there is clear guidance in mobility for the county moving forward. Sustaining a long-term mobility manager will improve the stability of the mobility program and for moving the program forward and guiding the Mobility Coordinating Council.

The information about available transportation throughout the county is spread across various pages on the Cobb DOT website, incomplete, and not up-to-date. In Cobb County, there is a need to adequately inform eligible riders and potentially eligible riders of all available transit options in one, easily accessible location. The current pdf available on the “mobility management” webpage has not been updated since 2010. Continuous management of public information on mobility options will be important for Cobb to address both in the immediate future and the long term.

There are many trips provided to HST populations within Cobb County by CCT, CSS, Cobb-Douglas CSB, and private providers. With so many vehicles, drivers and funding coming from the county, state, and federal levels, coordination between all parties would allow there to be more service and allow that service to be more efficient. In Cobb County, there is a need for coordination between all paratransit providers. Finally, the County provides programs for the disabled and the elderly. There are various non-profit organizations as well as DHS and DCH/Medicaid that provide transportation services to the low income population; however, there is no resource to locate this information on the county website.

Many of the attendees of the Cobb Community Collaborative August 21, 2014 meeting expressed how difficult transportation is because of a lack of CCT coverage in East and West Cobb. The other service gap was expressed by Kennesaw State University where they provide service to one entrance of the Student Center regardless of their final destination. Recommendations in Chapter 3 will address these gaps and how CCT can address them either by itself or through coordination with other agencies.

Overall, there are multiple options for the elderly and disabled populations in Cobb County. By addressing the information gaps and lack of a consistent Mobility Manager, Cobb County can move forward and better serve these populations with transportation options that provide a higher quality of life. Section 3 describes specific recommendations for Cobb County that will improve HST service while still being fiscally responsible.

Threats (External Needs)

Threats to Cobb County HST Services are largely financial, with changes to available grants and funding opportunities, such as federal changes to the New Freedom Grants. Additionally, pushback by various providers against coordination and reporting performance measures can affect regional coordination. These changes and attitudes can seem threatening because they have the potential to change how HST services are provided in the future. However, by working towards county transportation and coordination and setting up measurable performance objectives, Cobb County can lead as an example of improved HST within the Atlanta Region.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Human services transportation (HST) is mobility services that provide transportation for disadvantaged populations such as persons with disabilities, persons with lower incomes, and senior citizens. These services can be provided by public transit agencies, human services agencies, private for-profit operators, and/or private non-profit agencies.

As discussed earlier in this document, there are multiple transportation options for various HST populations in Cobb County. The short-term recommendations are focused on improving the quality, accuracy, and accessibility of the information about these services, while the long-term recommendations focus on improving the efficiency of the operations. Together, these recommendations will allow Cobb County HST populations to be more informed of their options and allow Cobb County to operate their CCT and CSS services more efficiently.

3.1 SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

A Consistent Mobility Manager

A new Mobility Manager position was recommended in the *Cobb County Senior Adult Transportation Study* performed in 2007. Since then, there have been multiple mobility managers. The position has been vacant for months. It was filled in October 2014. The new hire is working to update the programs and keep things consistent.

Online Transportation Options Database

HST populations in Cobb County currently have many options for transportation. However, the service and eligibility information for all of these mobility options is spread across multiple agencies and internet webpages, and are not necessarily up-to-date. Currently, the information is spread between the CCT, CSS, and mobility management webpages. The most comprehensive source for HST services is a pdf document that was most recently updated in August, 2010. There will be an updated version for 2015.

The information available in this transportation directory is extensive and detailed, but important provider information in the directory has changed, such as providers that accept the Cobb Freedom Vouchers. The resource directory provides information for all public transportation including fixed routes, paratransit, taxi services, and private providers; however by being out of date, it is unreliable. This directory targets the disabled and elderly populations, but makes no reference to the transportation options available to low income populations through the Department of Human Services (DHS) or the Department of Community Health (DCH) for various trip purposes.

A new, active webpage titled “Transportation Resource Directory” would provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information about transportation services available within Cobb County. By creating an active webpage, Cobb County can consolidate the mobility information into one online location that can be easily updated as information changes and can be easily maintained. This format will also be easier to view from multiple devices.

To make the directory webpage more comprehensive, the following information should be included:

- Provider information for public and private providers within Cobb County (contact, cost, scheduling, and eligibility)
- CCT application materials
- Instructions for transferring to/from MARTA
- Cobb Freedom Voucher Program Information, including instructions, cost, and eligibility
- Information on mobility classes
- Contact Information for the Cobb Mobility Management office

A webpage dedicated to mobility options that is continuously managed and updated will make it easier for HST populations in Cobb County to access the information they need to make transportation decisions, understand eligibility, and compare costs for various trips. Success of this webpage will require continuous monitoring for information updates, and ensuring that the webpage is accessible from all devices.

Consider Coordination with Southeastrans to Provide Medicaid Paratransit Services

Southeastrans is the Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) broker for the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) North Region, which includes Cobb County. Medicaid clients request trips through Southeastrans who then assigns the trips to local providers, both public and private. To reduce costs to DCH and Medicaid, a Georgia HST state initiative is to utilize public transit agencies' complementary ADA paratransit services where available to provide paratransit services. To work support this goal, Southeastrans is interested in negotiating with public transit agencies for a standard rate to bill for Medicaid paratransit trips provided. Currently, in Murray County, Southeastrans has agreed to pay the public fare for all Medicaid trips. However, a Southeastrans representative stated they are open to negotiating a slightly higher rate to be able to utilize public transit agency paratransit services. The current CCT adult, one-way fare is \$4.00; however upon negotiations with Southeastrans, this could be as high as \$6.00 or \$8.00 per Medicaid trip provided. While this amount would not cover the entire cost of the trip, it would bring in more than the standard public fare. Additionally, Southeastrans pays \$2.50 for companions that ride with Medicaid clients, something for which CCT currently does not charge.

Southeastrans has an efficient system in place to assign trips that would result in minimal work for CCT to accept trip assignments. Southeastrans' software allows them to export trip requests to CCT in a format that is compatible with RouteMatch three days in advance, at which time CCT can decide to accept or decline various trips. Southeastrans has developed an in-house mobile application for iPads to track trips, which they would provide to CCT and automatically submit invoices to Southeastrans bi-weekly.

Based on the ease of integrating the Medicaid trips with RouteMatch and the potential to receive higher rates, it is recommended that CCT enter into discussions with Southeastrans and consider providing these trips. Medicaid trips have the potential to bring in higher revenues with minimal manpower required to enter the trips in to the RouteMatch system and provide proof of trip completion. These trips would only be in the CCT service area and have the potential to increase the average load while also having the ability to charge higher fares.

Remain Up to date on Regional and Statewide HST Coordination Efforts

There are two major HST plans with the potential to affect Cobb County, one programmed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and a statewide initiative by the Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA). By remaining up to date and informed about regional and statewide efforts to improve HST coordination, CCT can prepare for future roll out of these initiatives and set examples for other transit agencies in providing efficient and coordinated services to HST populations.

One-Click Website: ARC is currently working through a soft launch of the One-click website to test functionality and address any remaining issues. They anticipate a full launch of the website in the first quarter of 2015 with training for users for the months that follow. This one website will be able to connect HST populations with all of their transportation options.

CCT is one of the pilot/testing sites working with ARC, and all CCT and CSS services are included in the One-Click website, should the client be eligible for these services. Once the site is launched, anyone who needs a ride will be able to input their origin, destination, age, and understand eligibility for various programs and services by answering questions about mobility.

CCT is already one of the beta testing sites for this webpage, and it is recommended that CCT keep up with necessary One-Click training and information that ARC will be distributing as the website is fully launched in early 2015. While the current phase of the project will only plan trips for HST populations, it is envisioned that in the future, trips can be scheduled online from One-Click. For any requirements, CCT will have to remain up to date on One-Click developments.

Finally, it will be important for Cobb County to encourage private transportation providers to participate in the One-Click website, especially those who accept the Cobb Freedom Vouchers. This way, voucher clients will be able to find these providers through the One-Click trip planning website. Providers need to work with the Atlanta Area Agency on Aging to register and be included in regional databases and the One-Click website.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation (HST) Plan is a regional initiative of ARC's Regional Transit Committee. The 2014-2016 approved work program for this committee includes a major update to the Coordinate HST Plan which was first completed in 2007, with updates in 2010 and 2013. This next major update, to be completed by 2016, will include and coordinate findings from other regional projects such as the Regional Multi-Modal Public Transit Automated Fare Collection Study, One-Click Project, and One-Click Implementation Plan. The software results and implementation recommendations of the One Call-One Click project will be included in the major update to the Regional Coordinated HST Plan. The results of the Regional Multi-Modal Public Transit Automated Fare Collection Study will include recommendations on transfer fares, which could potentially impact the current free transfer between CCT paratransit services and both MARTA paratransit and rail services, will also be included.

Coordinating Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) in Georgia, 2013 RHST Report is an initiative by the Governor's Development Council to identify areas to improve statewide coordination and RHST services. GRTA has developed an annual report since 2011 documenting statewide findings of HST services, both urban and rural. A new initiative this year is the coordination of DHS software and RouteMatch. Currently, GRTA is working with the DHS and RouteMatch to integrate the DHS software program TRIP\$ into RouteMatch. This would allow for automatic scheduling of trips within the

jurisdiction of each transit agency that provides ADA complimentary paratransit service. This program is has been tested in Coweta and is currently being implemented in Regions 1,4, and 8 with plans to roll out the software further in the state in 2015. Finally, Statewide roll out would be the next step after Region 4 and would include Cobb County (Region 3). While there is no specific timeline set for statewide roll out, there are a few small action items CCT can accomplish to anticipate this automation. To prepare for this, CCT should contact DHS and RouteMatch to ensure that their version of RouteMatch is capable of being integrated with the TRIP\$ program that DHS has developed. If it is not compatible, this will give CCT enough time to make necessary software upgrades. Similarly, GDOT is working with the DCH NET Broker system to implement similar integration with RouteMatch. This would allow all trips scheduled by DHS and DCH to be efficiently scheduled without manually taking the information from one system to another. Additionally, CCT could request the number of trips currently served in Cobb County by DHS to understand the potential number of trip request they would receive to prepare for the increase. By anticipating these plans and actions, CCT could lead the way in this integration of Medicaid trips and RouteMatch if it pursues an agreement with Southeastrans as recommended above.

3.2 MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Partner with County Agencies and Organizations

The short-term recommendations included working with Southeastrans to capture rides for a higher contracted rate for Medicaid clients. In addition to this, it is recommended that Cobb County seek out other partnerships with agencies and organizations within the county where demand responsive vehicles can be contracted out at a higher rate and have high ridership. The following are potential partners.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Similar to Medicaid clients, DHS clients require transportation services. This could include contracting with the DHS to provide rides for their eligible clients. In Cobb County, DHS currently contracts with the Cobb Douglass Community Services Board. Cobb County could also be a designated provider for DHS clients at a negotiated rate higher than the rates for complementary paratransit and senior services. This would be another source of riders paying a higher fare to help offset costs incurred by the system.

Local Human Services Agencies

There are multiple agencies and not-for-profit organizations in Cobb County which have clients in need of transportation for medical trips, access to employment, and errands. One example is the Cobb Community Collaborative. This is an organization that brings together organizations that provide services to various HST populations in the county. Some of these organizations work to find and provide trips for their clients who may not be eligible for the ADA paratransit or senior transportation service. This includes low income clients who need access to work or daycare for their children. Cobb County could work with them to provide curb to curb service for clients of these organizations at a rate agreed upon between Cobb County and the organization. This can either be a set trip taken on a determined basis or providing curb to curb service at a higher rate for clients of the organization who do not meet ADA or senior eligibility.

One example of success is in Baldwin County, AL, where the transit agency is contracted to provide curb to curb services for the local mental health agency. These are six daily routes that the paratransit

vehicles follow, picking up passengers who have no other access to the county mental health center. This service is paid for by the mental health agency at a rate agreed upon between the transit agency, Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System (BRATS), and the mental health center. This provides routes which have high ridership and the transit agency is guaranteed a certain amount of income based on the routes provided.

Schools within Cobb County (Public or Private)

Another opportunity for Cobb County to provide more service at a higher rate than the ADA paratransit and senior rates is to work with the local schools to provide some service for students who stay late at school for after-school programs or sports practice, attend private schools without bus service, or for disabled students who do not live and attend school within the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile buffer of fixed route transit.

BRATS, in Alabama, has also partnered with private schools in Baldwin County to provide set routes according to the school's needs and home locations of students. Another example is the Dodge Area Rapid Transit System in Ford Dodge, Iowa. Here, the transit system provides all of the school bus routes in the area and reduces operational and administration costs by using the same dispatchers, scheduling software, and vehicles during certain times of the day. These are just examples of how other transit agencies are maximizing usage of their vehicles and operations. By working with public and private schools in Cobb County, the county could identify areas that are underserved for transit and come to an agreement to fill those needs, whether it is disabled students who live away from the ADA paratransit service area, or low income students who have no mobility options. Working with the school for a contracted rate would benefit the students who have limited access and provide another income source for the transit agency.

3.3 LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are in line with the regional and statewide call for increased coordination between agencies and private companies providing transportation to the elderly, disabled, and low income populations in both urban and rural areas. While some of these are drastic changes for Cobb County, they will not only improve operations and make the website easier for clients to use, but also make Cobb County a leader in HST coordination for both the region and the state.

Combine CCT and CSS Services into One Contract for a Private Provider

Currently, the CCT complementary paratransit is included in the transit operation contract that CCT has with Transdev Transportation and the senior transportation service is provided by the Cobb County Senior Services (CSS). By combining these services into one contract, Cobb County can save money and provide a more efficient operation, with comingling of the paratransit and senior clients. This can be included as part of the contract for fixed route services, or can be a separate demand responsive contract for services within Cobb County.

Complementary paratransit provides service to those who are ADA eligible to origins and destinations within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the CCT fixed routes. CSS provides transportation to seniors throughout the county and provides daily pre-fixed trips to senior centers. There are two senior centers and four health centers within the paratransit $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area, indicating that there is significant potential for overlap, if there are both paratransit and non-disabled seniors who require trips within these areas. Under the current

system, if an ADA-eligible client and a senior client need to go to the same health center, they need to schedule their trips with different county services (CCT or CSS) and take trips on separate vehicles, even if their origins and destinations are in similar areas of the county. By combining these operations, only one vehicle would be necessary.

Clients would have to be certified by the county to ride this service and depending whether they are certified as disabled according to the ADA requirements or can provide proof being 60 years of age or older. Depending on their eligibility, they would either be permitted to schedule rides within the ¾ mile complementary paratransit area for the disabled or throughout the county for seniors. Based on the requested destinations, the trips would be scheduled by whichever scheduling software used by the contracted provider to provide service to both of these populations.

Consolidating these two services under one contract includes multiple potential savings. It eliminates the overlap of service with two separate vehicles and saves on the separate costs for separate scheduling and routing software licenses, separate technology for automatic vehicle location (AVL) devices, and reduces the number of dispatch centers from two to one.

An example of the potential cost savings is the Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors (DARTS) in Dakota County, Minnesota. Here, they combine complementary ADA paratransit trips surrounding the local fixed route service with service for seniors. In 2001 when they combined the two services, DARTS estimated their annual savings to be \$195,000. They reduced the average cost per trip from \$20.50 to \$17.00¹. Consolidation of these two services provides multiple opportunities for cost savings and would require fewer vehicles to provide the same amount of trips, due to reduction in overlapping services. Another example is the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) in Attleboro, MA, which has multiple contracts with providers in different counties, but each provider combines seniors and ADA paratransit clients when trips are requested in similar areas.

Combining these two services in this contract would still include the existing trips taken to the senior centers on weekdays. Currently, CSS makes multiple trips to senior centers in the mornings and afternoons, providing curb to curb service for those who reserve a spot on the vehicle. These trips are important to provide daily access to senior centers and tend to operate at capacity. Provision of this service would be included in the contract and would contribute to the efficient use of vehicles by operating full or nearly full trips.

Combining these services would be a significant change, as they are currently completely separate; one being operated by Cobb County and one included in the CCT contract. However, it would allow the county to reduce overall costs, reduce the cost per trip, increase the average load of paratransit and senior curb to curb vehicles, and improve efficiency. In turn, these savings could be used to extend service hours, provide some service on weekends, or simply be returned to the county.

¹ National Research Council. TCRP Report 91: Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2003.

By creating a more user-friendly interactive webpage and combining the operations for ADA paratransit services and senior services, Cobb County will be able to improve efficiency and improve quality of information available to clients. Working with other agencies and organizations to identify other partnerships will truly make the demand response service in Cobb County an example of how to provide multiple services in a coordinated manner. By working towards implementing these recommendations, Cobb County will stand out as a regional and statewide example of how to efficiently provide curb to curb services for ADA complementary paratransit, senior services, and HST populations through countywide partnerships.

4 APPENDIX

4.1 PRESENTATION TO COBB COUNTY COLLABORATIVE, AUGUST 2013

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PAGE FOR APPENDIX

Ashlei Sebastian – Cobb Community Transit Communications Coordinator

1. What role do you play in Cobb County?

I am the Mobility Coordinator for Cobb County Transit. I manage the county voucher program as well as travel training programs to teach the elderly and disabled about their transportation options within the county.

Voucher program: Citizens who qualify for CCT paratransit but do not live within the ¼ mile buffer around the CCT fixed routes are eligible to participate in the Cobb County Voucher Program. With this program, these citizens can purchase rides to and from various destinations including health visits as well as personal trips. There are two separate voucher programs, one for those aged 60 and over and one for those aged 18-59. For both of these programs, participants can purchase booklets of vouchers worth \$100 for only \$10. The participants then use these vouchers to pay for trips that they schedule themselves through one of the voucher-approved companies. The vouchers are then redeemed by the private companies by Cobb County.

Training Programs: Cobb County runs multiple training programs to teach disabled and elderly citizens how to use transit and what their transportation options are in the county. There are multiple programs aimed at different groups. "Get on the Bus, Gus" is a program that teaches senior citizens how to schedule and take a transit trip that includes both paratransit as well as fixed route transit. I work with Cobb County Schools to prepare disabled students for graduating and transitioning. I teach them about their transportation options so that they can be as independent as possible.

2. Who do you serve (elderly, disabled, students, low income, etc.)?

Elderly, disabled, disabled students

a. What are their needs?

Understanding their transportation options and how to fill out required applications, paperwork, and schedule trips.

3. How does the cash flow work?

5310 funding contributes to many functions, including the CCT paratransit system. The voucher programs are paid for through JARC and New Freedom Grants.

4. Do you coordinate with Cobb County Mobility Council?

I am a new hire but I plan on joining in the future.

5. Do you schedule any trips? If not who does?

No, I do not schedule any trips. Anyone can schedule a trip with any of the vendors in the county and if they are using vouchers, the company must be voucher approved.

a. Any coordination in the trip scheduling?

None. Each company schedules their own trips when customers call.

6. What are the needs of your agency?

To better inform the county of all of the transportation options and work towards a more coordinated approach. The county also needs funding plans and ways to improve efficiency as ARC and New Freedom grants run out.

7. What would you like to see in an ideal HST plan?

- Comprehensive website
- Coordinated volunteer program throughout the county
- Somehow include church/organization buses that sit during the week

8. Any future meetings to attend:

Every two months –ARC meetings

9. Others to contact and information:

- Jan Covington, Regional DHS, 706-802-5389
- Center for Family Resources-Transportation, 770-428-2601
- Jeannine Redden, Cobb Senior Services, 770-528-5382
- Leigh Freeman, Cobb Community Collaborative, 770-514-7212
- Nobis Center, 770-427-9000
- Kellie Bolman, Cobb Douglass, 678-217-1512
- Kashmira Patel , MARTA, 404-848-4216