

## **Navigation and Transportation Work Group Existing Services and Discussions in Orange County**

### **Orange County Planning Department**

- **Orange Public Transportation (OPT)**
  - Originally provided by the Orange County Department on Aging, is now housed within the Planning Department.
  - Provides door-to-door transportation to older adults and people with disabilities (in addition to public routes).
  - Services:
    - Serves Orange County residents outside the Chapel Hill Transit service area. Will bring people from rural areas into Chapel Hill for medical appointments or to access the senior centers.
    - Transports people from the senior centers to essential services such as the grocery store. These trips are scheduled one day per week from each center.
    - Similar eligibility process to EZ Rider.
    - Requires reservation at least a day in advance.
    - Cost share and fee information available upon request.
  - Source: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/transportation/index.asp>

### **Chapel Hill Transit**

- **EZ Rider**
  - Door-to-door transportation for eligible individuals who cannot access other public transportation services due to physical or mental impairments.
  - Paratransit eligibility application requires doctor approval. Applications are approved or returned by Chapel Hill Transit within 21 days.
  - Services:
    - Serves Chapel Hill region
    - Subscription service available for regular needs
    - Must make reservation for use at least a day before needed. Can do so a week in advance.
    - Hours of operation:
      - Monday-Friday 5:30am – 11:56pm
      - Saturday 8:15am – 11:32pm
      - Sunday 10:38am – 11:32pm
  - Source: <http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.aspx?page=1550>

- Discussion of Merging OPT with Chapel Hill Transit
  - The Planning Department, Chapel Hill Transit, and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) (through consultant firm KFH Group which specializes in public transportation issues) are in the midst of a study examining the possibility of merging OPT and Chapel Hill Transit.
  - A steering committee is leading the investigation project, which is sponsored by NCDOT. The project is expected to last until early to mid-2012.
  - Source: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/occlerks/1012148a.pdf> and Mila Vega

### **Orange County Department on Aging**

- Aging Transitions Division: Friend-to-Friend Program
  - The Friend-to-Friend Program partners volunteers with homebound seniors in Orange County.
  - Volunteers are recruited through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and are age 55+ themselves.
  - One service that volunteers provide is transportation to medical appointments, the bank, the store, etc.
  - Since its beginning ten years ago approximately 25 people have volunteered with Friend-to-Friend. The program is currently on hold.
  - Source: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/aging/RSVPindex.asp> and Kathy Porter

### **Triangle Transit**

- T-Linx
  - A free door-to-door paratransit service for adults age 65+ with a TTA or CAT ID card. Individuals with disabilities can ride at half price with proof of eligibility.
  - Will transport within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from a fixed route. TTA serves Cary, Apex, Chapel Hill, Durham, Garner, Raleigh, RTP, and the airport.
  - Like EZ Rider and OPT, must apply to use service.
  - Hours of operation:
    - Monday-Friday 6:00am – 10:00pm
    - Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm
- Source: <http://www.resourcesforseniors.com/iris/rfs11813aa.html>

### **Orange County Emergency Services (EMS)**

- Older adults and others in the community rely on EMS for transportation in emergency medical situations, and sometimes for transportation to medical appointments when other options are not available or suitable.
- One trip in an ambulance costs \$500.
- EMS was involved in past MAPs and in 2007-8 worked with OPT to develop a plan for essential transportation during inclement weather.
- Source: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/emergency/index.asp>

- Johnston Ambulance Service
  - Offers non-emergency service for a fee and accepts Medicaid.
  - Sources:
    - 2010 Community Resource Guide:  
<http://www.co.orange.nc.us/aging/documents/ATCommunityResourceGuide2010.pdf>
    - <http://www.jas-online.org/home.html>

### **Village Projects**

- Orange County is home to at least two village communities, Falconbridge Village and Meadowmont, both of which follow the Beacon Hill model that focuses on aging in place.
- Transportation for shopping and appointments is a component of these villages, as is a discounted taxi.
- Sources:
  - [http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-06-2010/north\\_carolina\\_tries\\_village\\_concept.html](http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-06-2010/north_carolina_tries_village_concept.html)
  - <http://www.vtvnetwork.org>
  - <http://www.beaconhillvillage.org>

### **Durham County Transit Tax**

- This is an example of an initiative happening in another county nearby.
- This month, voters passed a public transportation ½ cent sales tax that will be put back into the service. Jim Wise reports in the News & Observer that the tax should raise \$17.3 million each year. Orange County is considering placing a similar option on an upcoming ballot.
- Sources:
  - <http://www.newsobserver.com/2011/11/09/1629786/early-results-favor-sales-taxes.html>
  - [http://heraldsun.com/view/full\\_story\\_news\\_durham/16356228/article-Transit-tax-opposition-centered-in-outlying-areas-?instance=main\\_article](http://heraldsun.com/view/full_story_news_durham/16356228/article-Transit-tax-opposition-centered-in-outlying-areas-?instance=main_article)