Community Transportation:
Alternative Transportation Provision in Low-Income
Neighborhoods in Southeast Atlanta

by

James W. Alexander, Jr.

B.A. in Urban Studies
Columbia University, 2000

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in City Planning

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2004

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Signature of Author: ________________________________

Department of Urban Studies and Planning
May 20, 2004

Certified by: ________________________________

Karl Seidman
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: ________________________________

Professor Dennis Frenchman
Chair, MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

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ABSTRACT

Regional transit agencies are ineffective at meeting many of the basic transportation needs of a clustered “Study Area” of low-income Atlanta neighborhoods. For transit dependant residents in the Study Area, getting to the grocery store or to suburban job centers, for example, is difficult or impossible.

This exploratory thesis approaches transportation access problems in these neighborhoods from a community-based perspective. In response to the ineffectiveness of regional transportation agencies, this thesis asks, “Can low-income neighborhoods create their own solutions to their unique transportation problems?” In order to answer this question, a community transportation planning process was conducted, three case studies were collected and analyzed, and potential solutions were forwarded.

In the end, these neighborhoods have the ability to alleviate many of their transportation problems through primarily organizing their existing assets. A proposed Community Transportation Organization (CTO), with accountability to local residents and expertise to implement transportation projects, could help organize these assets and produce needed services. The community transportation planning process and case studies uncovered that the CTO should organize the following services: a jitney service to the grocery store, neighborhood carpools to suburban job centers, and jitney supplements to troubled bus routes.

Thesis Supervisor: Karl Seidman
Title: Senior Lecturer in Economic Development, Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Thesis Reader: Kenneth E. Kruckemeyer
Title: Research Associate, Center for Transportation and Logistics
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Chapter One – Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Geographic Study Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Framing the Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35</th>
<th>Chapter Two – Needs Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Neighborhood Existing Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Spatial Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Study Area Transportation Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Transportation Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Transportation Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Focus Groups and Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>71</th>
<th>Chapter Three – Case Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Miami Jitneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Fulton Job Access Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Case Study Conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>103</th>
<th>Chapter Four – Proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Non-Work Circulator Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Carpool Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Supplement Existing Bus Routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Community Transportation Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>143</th>
<th>Chapter Five – Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Revisiting the Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Beyond the Study Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Next Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Areas for Further Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 149  | Bibliography                  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>154</th>
<th>Maps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>Map 1: Atlanta 10 County Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Map 2: Cities in the Atlanta 10 County Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>Map 3: Study Area Neighborhoods and Bus Routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Map 4: Proposed Jitney Route</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

“Ain’t no jobs round here. They all out somewhere else, and the bus don’t go out there.”

“Oh, it takes me about 40 minutes to get to the grocery store on a good day. I just pay one of those little men (taxi driver) $5 to take me back.”

These two quotes from residents in Englewood Manor, a public housing complex in Atlanta, GA, introduce two common and important problems for low-income residents in American cities. One of these problems is limited transportation access to job opportunities. Jobs are primarily located outside the center city. As of 1997, the suburbs were home to 57% of metropolitan employment in the U.S (HUD 2002). Without cars or adequate mass transit, these jobs are difficult to access. Unfortunately, only seven percent of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients own automobiles (Multisystems 2000). Additionally, mass transit often does not provide adequate coverage in job rich suburban areas. Nor does it provide adequate speed to suburban job centers.

The second major problem is that low-income residents without cars have limited access to needed services, such as grocery stores, affordable household items, child care, and job training. The existing transit system is oriented towards the downtown commute, although the majority of trips that people take are not related to work (Giuliano 2002). Traveling on the bus to Downtown during the weekday is simple for many workers, but traveling on the bus to go to church or the grocery store on Sunday is difficult given the configuration of routes and infrequent schedules on the weekends (Cohen 2004). Additionally, for low-income residents, the exodus of retail to suburbs and higher income
areas has exacerbated access to basic services, such affordable groceries and household items (Porter 1995).

These challenges are experienced by spatial concentrations of low-income neighborhoods, and the existing transportation system does not service these areas well (Bullard 2000). These neighborhoods have unique needs that transportation decision makers either overlook or have difficulty meeting. Travel behavior and needs vary from community to community, and transportation providers have not explored community-based efforts to fill transportation service gaps. Nonetheless, transportation provision is standardized in a way that neglects the unique needs of low-income neighborhoods.

In sum, the links between low-income neighborhoods and employment and services are weak. Public transportation in many cities is too geographically limited, too slow, too commute focused, and too standard in its service for communities to adequately serve many low-income neighborhoods.

This exploratory thesis approaches these problems by proposing community-based solutions that can be successful where regional transit agencies are ineffective. This thesis asks the following question: “How can low-income neighborhoods create solutions to their unique transportation problems where transit agencies have been ineffective?” My hypothesis is that low-income communities have the ability to solve some of their own transportation needs where traditional mass transit providers fail. Ultimately, to test this hypothesis, I forward a community-based transportation proposal and I test its feasibility.
GEOGRAPHIC STUDY AREA

In order to ground this thesis, I focus on a cluster of neighborhoods in southeast Atlanta that surround the federal penitentiary: Chosewood Park, Englewood Manor, McDonough Guice, Thomasville Heights, the Villages at Carver, Thomasville, Benteen, Villages at Carver, Lakewood, Lakewood Heights, and South Atlanta\(^1\). While this appears to be a large area, the neighborhoods themselves are quite small. The Study Area is spread over a total of 3.75 square miles and contains just over 4,100 households and approximately 16,500 people. These are African-American, low-income neighborhoods; 73% of the population is black and 84% of the population is beneath the poverty level. These incomes are some of the lowest in the region: the Study Area’s median household income is 47% of the region’s (Census 2000). For the purpose of this thesis, this collection of neighborhoods will be referred to as the Study Area.

Thomasville Heights, Englewood Manor, and the Villages at Carvers are Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) properties, and are somewhat distinct from the rest of the neighborhoods. These properties represent the largest and most dense population clusters in the study area: there are 350, over 200, and 145 units in Thomasville Heights, Englewood Manor, and the Villages at Carver respectively. Incomes in Thomasville Heights and Englewood Manor are lower, population is more concentrated, and car-ownership rates are lower. Additionally all of the AHA properties are entirely of multi-family housing typography. The Villages at Carver is a HOPE VI redevelopment and is less dense and more affluent that the other AHA properties. The other neighborhoods have

\(^1\) Block groups 55.021, 64.001, 67.001, 68.021, 69.001, 69.002, 69.003, 70.007, 71.001, 71.002.
different housing types (single-family with an occasional duplex), are less dense, and have slightly higher incomes. Car ownership rates for the Study Area are low. Only 59% of households own a car in the Study Area, while the Metropolitan Area\(^2\) and the City of Atlanta had 93% and 67% household car ownership rates respectively. In this thesis, I pay special attention to Thomasville Heights and Englewood Manor, given that these residents are the most transit dependant and their need to access resources is the most acute: car ownership rates in these complexes are estimated to be just below 50%.\(^3\)

**METHODOLOGY**

My research attempts to answer the question, “How can low-income neighborhoods create solutions to their unique transportation problems where transit agencies have been ineffective?” In order to answer this question, I intend to examine the problem, and then propose potential solutions. This process requires the use of a variety of data, including case studies, employment data, census data, transportation data, interviews with policymakers, and interviews and a focus group with Study Area residents. Table One lists the various research and proposal elements that are invested in this thesis.

**Problem Identification**

In order to assess the demographic, workforce, and transportation access conditions of the Study Area, I analyzed census and household based employment data. Census data helped uncover indicators of transportation access, such as car ownership,

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\(^2\) The Atlanta Metropolitan Area contains 20 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.

\(^3\) Average of estimates of public housing residents in Thomasville Heights and Englewood Manor. Collected during bus interviews in January 2004.
commute times, and form of transportation taken. Census data also helped develop a
general, quantitative image of the neighborhoods in terms of their economic and social
health. This creates a sketch of who is in the Study Area and how they use
transportation. Household based employment data identified the employment and skill
level of residents in the Study Area.

1990 Census Transportation Planning Package data, and Metropolitan Rapid
Transit Authority (MARTA) On-Board survey data indicated where study area residents
are traveling. These data provided a depiction of what areas in the region Study Area
residents travel to for their jobs and services. Geographic information Systems (GIS)
helped visualize transportation access to employment and key services in the region.

Three sets of interviews took place during this research. First, I conducted bus
stop interviews in front of Thomasville Heights and Englewood Manor during the
morning rush hour. These interviews provided information about the general
transportation access concerns of residents and their perceptions about where job
opportunities and key services were in the region. Second, a focus group shed further
light on residents’ perception of transportation access, the geographic location of regional
opportunities, and the marketability of community-based transportation services. Third,
interviews were conducted with the regional institutional stakeholders MARTA and the
Atlanta Regional Commission.

Case Studies

Additionally, three case studies examine how organizations and businesses
created their own transportation solutions when transit providers were unresponsive or
ineffective. Lessons learned from the case study will provide guidance for the proposals
in Chapter Four. The first case study will focus on jitneys in Miami, and how they are 
able to thrive in markets where transit agencies were reluctant to enter. This case study 
also explores the viability of the jitney as an alternative form of transit. The second case 
study examines the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA), 
which is an employer-based transportation development and advocacy organization near 
Emory University. This case study explores how a locally based transportation 
organization can advocate for the unique needs of their constituency and provide 
transportation services (vanpools, shuttles, etc). As an employer based service, the 
CCTMA serves as a mirror image of what a neighborhood-based organization and 
services look like. Finally, the third case will examine the Fulton County Job Access 
Program, which discontinued service after one year. The case explores the challenges of 
implementing a demand responsive job access program and examines the benefits and 
pitfalls of government partnerships in delivering service. Additionally, this program 
represents the only sizeable effort to provide alternative transit to low income residents in 
Atlanta. Ultimately, the case studies provide depictions of different strategies utilized to 
fill gaps in transit service, and they review alternative modes of transit that could be used 
initiated in the Study Area.

Proposal

This thesis not only focuses on research, but also forwards a proposal for how a 
community transportation organization providing advocacy and transit services could fill 
some transportation access needs for the Study Area. Specifically, a jitney shopping 
circulator, carpool routes to outlying suburbs, and jitney supplemented MARTA routes
are proposed for the Study Area. The feasibility, benefits, and drawbacks of these proposals are discussed in Chapter Four.

**Methodology Limitations**

This thesis espouses the importance of community planning processes in understanding local needs. Secondary data sources alone do not tell the whole story. More time should be devoted to holding focus groups and workshops about travel behavior and informal ways that residents fill transit service gaps.

Additionally, Census Transportation Planning Package data is almost 14 years old and provides a dated picture of travel patterns in the Atlanta area. On Board survey data is more up-to-date, but it has a smaller sample size with only 200 data points that are related to the Study Area. CTPP data will be released later this year for 2000, and travel behavior findings should be updated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Element</th>
<th>Why Necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census Research</td>
<td>Transportation access problem identification (quantitative), Neighborhood characterization through social and economic health indicators (quantitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Data and Key Services Mapping</td>
<td>Locate existing and potential employment and services destinations (quantitative), Neighborhood workforce characterization (quantitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Analysis Zone Data (1990), MARTA On-Board Survey</td>
<td>Map existing employment and service destinations (quantitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area bus stop interviews (16) and focus group (1)</td>
<td>Transportation access problem identification (qualitative), Locate existing and potential employment destinations (qualitative), Identify perceived transportation access problems, Neighborhood characterization (qualitative), Determine non-transportation related needs (qualitative).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation institutional analysis interviews with ARC and MARTA (2)</td>
<td>Political feasibility (qualitative), Transportation access problem identification (qualitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTA ridership data. Outlying county transit supply data.</td>
<td>Identify existing supply gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary feasibility analysis for jitney shopping circulator.</td>
<td>Logistical feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies (3)</td>
<td>Examine other entities that have created transportation solutions to their own transportation problems. Explore alternative methods of transit through case studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FRAMING THE ISSUE**

**Historical Context**

When viewed in a historical context, transportation has been the site of struggle for opportunity, equality, and access for the African-American community. By no means is transportation a trivial element in prosperity of African-American neighborhoods. In order to understand how transportation access is important to neighborhoods like the
Study Area, it is important to examine the recent history of transportation in the United States and its relation to African-American communities.

Transportation was on the forefront of the fight for equality in African-American communities. The Civil Rights Movement fought for equal treatment for African-Americans on public transportation. Public transit was an important political space for Blacks: both races used public transit, and the success of the system was dependant on the patronage of Black families. For this reason, public transit was an excellent staging ground for one of the first major protests during the Civil Rights Movement, the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In support of the boycott, the African-American community developed their own transportation alternatives. Boycott organizers established a 300 vehicle carpool. Residents would carpool with neighbors to a downtown transportation hub. At the transportation center, drivers waited to commute to various locations. Passengers going in a common direction would then fill a car and leave together. In efforts to break the will of the boycott, police ticketed drivers and arrested passengers that were waiting for rides. Police officers claimed that the cars were overcrowded, and that people waiting for a carpool were loitering. Thus, transportation was a very important element in African-American history in the South. It was simultaneously a site of gross inequality and an affirmation of community collective power (Burns 1997).

In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, many neighborhoods – particularly low-income and minority neighborhoods – were razed or divided by highway construction. Many of the residents in these neighborhoods did not own cars, and could not use the highway that was destroying their communities. The growing highway system primarily allowed wealthier residents to travel in and out of the city, and ultimately was one of the
infrastructure mechanisms that facilitated white and middle-class flight from center cities. Highways were part of the infrastructure that carried vital resources, such as jobs and tax base, out of reach of inner-city neighborhoods. In the 1970s, many low-income neighborhoods, such as Central Square in Cambridge, MA, successfully fought to stop highway construction through their neighborhoods. (Lupo et al 1971).

**Policy Context**

Transportation decision making is more decentralized and complex than it was in the 50s 60s and 70s. The Atlanta region contains an alphabet soup of organizations that provide and plan transportation services. It is important to ask whether transportation institutions are structurally able to meet the transportation needs of low-income neighborhoods, given the roles, goals, and constraints of the organizations. From the perspective of a Study Area resident, the transportation policy infrastructure should be able to respond in meaningful ways to questions such as, “How can I get to and from the grocery store that is one mile away without spending an hour on the bus and carrying heavy bags ¼ mile?” Alternately, they should be able to respond to questions such as, “Why is there less bus service planned in my neighborhood when peak buses are severely overcrowded?”

**Georgia Department of Transportation**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is the most influential transportation organization in the State. GDOT is essentially a department of roads and bridges, since it only allocates less than five percent of their total spending to mass transit (Bullard 2000). They are legally obligated, to spend state gas tax funds on roads, bridges construction and maintenance. The Atlanta region receives its share of federal and state
dollars according to State Bill 57, which states that GDOT must ensure that transportation expenditures are allocated evenly between congressional districts. The funds allotted to the Atlanta region represent an estimated $5.3 billion over the next three years. These funds move into a regional transportation planning process led by the Atlanta Regional Commission in which State funds can only be spent on roads and federal money can be spent on roads or transit. Thus, GDOT primarily builds roads, which does not address many of the transportation access problems of low-income neighborhoods.

**Atlanta Regional Commission**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the region’s metropolitan planning organization, which is responsible for the coordination of the region’s planning process. The product of the planning process is a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which prioritizes transportation projects for the federal government and the State to review and fund. ARC is charged to cooperate with GDOT, MARTA, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and the public to create a plan that will meet the region’s various transportation needs. This complicated regional transportation process determines the allocation of approximately $900 million each year. These are vast investments, and their location and type has the ability to shift the location of economic growth and prosperity in the region (ARC 2002).

ARC is charged with educating the public about the regional transportation planning process and soliciting public input and participation. Before 1998, ARC’s public participation process was admonished by the federal government and local activists. In 1998, several citizens groups led by environmental justice organizations filed a lawsuit against ARC. They claimed that several road projects should not be built
given low air quality in the Atlanta region and an inadequate public participation process. The federal government sided with the environmental groups. They instructed the ARC to remove grandfathered road projects and improve their outreach efforts in low-income and minority communities (Bullard 2002).

Since 1998, the ARC has made enormous efforts to ensure low-income and minority voices are represented in the regional planning process. The ARC created the Environmental Justice Coalition, whose sole purpose is to generate civic leadership, ensure the equitable distribution of burdens and benefits, and solicit participation from underrepresented communities. Additionally, ARC has tried to simplify the presentation of a very complicated planning process and respond to public comments and questions wherever possible. Finally, in the most recent Transportation Improvement Plan, 30% of regional transportation funds have been allocated to transit investments, which benefits low-income neighborhoods in the region (ARC 2002).

Nonetheless, in many ways, the ARC is structurally unable to respond to the needs of Atlanta residents in low-income neighborhoods. First, the governance of the ARC is decentralized to represent the organization’s regional constituency. The ARC board sets the policy direction for the TIP and is the decision maker regarding which projects should be prioritized given public comment, regional planning models, and financial constraints. The board is comprised of 39 members: ten are county commissioners from the ARC ten county region, 12 are mayors from around the region, one is an Atlanta city councilor, 1 is a Georgia Department of Community Affairs representative, and 15 citizens are appointed by elected officials. Only six out of the 21
elected officials are from either Fulton or Dekalb, the region’s inner-counties. The citizen members are evenly distributed between core areas and suburban areas.

Second, funds must be allocated evenly across all congressional districts. Consequently, central counties cannot be targeted for investment in order to slow sprawl and concentrate development. Inner-city neighborhoods, therefore, do not receive a transportation funding advantage because of their geographic centrality.

Third, many residents think and operate on a neighborhood scale. Whether to invest in another beltway or road maintenance on the Northside of Atlanta is inconsequential to many neighborhood residents who just want to get to the grocery store or sit down on the bus on the way home.

Fourth, at a regional level, it is difficult for the ARC to adequately engage low-income and minority residents in a planning process. In order to get people involved, particularly low-income and minority residents, it is important to connect with their everyday needs and experiences. This is more easily achieved at a local rather than a regional level.

Finally, the way that the regional planning process is established precludes neighborhood residents from collaborating and proposing a transit project. Each proposal must be sponsored by the ARC, GRTA, MARTA, or other government entities, and the applicants must be knowledgeable and connected enough to put together a technically proficient application. If neighborhood residents wanted to build affordable housing, they could provide good judgment and local knowledge to a CDC that would have the capacity to execute the project. There is no parallel organization for transportation. Due to the way that the ARC’s regional planning process works, it is very difficult for low-
income, neighborhood residents to initiate transportation projects. Thus, it is structurally
difficult for ARC to respond to the needs of low-income neighborhood residents due to
the organization’s regional orientation.

**Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority**

MARTA is the region’s largest transit provider. They are funded by a one cent
Fulton and Dekalb sales tax and federal funding for capital expenses and some operating
expenses. Outlying counties voted against the sales tax, which physically and financially
constrains the agency. When MARTA was initiated in 1971, all counties in the region
except Fulton and Dekalb strongly voted against providing a one cent sales tax to fund
MARTA. A common argument against a sales tax from outlying counties was that they
would be paying for a system that primarily urban counties would use. However, during
the debates, there was always an undertone of racial and class segregation, as a mass
transit system would provide low-income and minority residents access to suburban areas
and resources.\(^4\)

Additionally, MARTA is the only large transit agency in the United States that
receives no significant monetary support from the state (Brookings 2000). This is one of
the primary reasons why MARTA is facing a $54 million budget deficit (MARTA 2004).
Thus, MARTA is a financially and geographically constrained agency.

MARTA’s financial and geographic constraints prevent the agency from providing
sufficient quality of service to all communities. Another constraint is strong unions

\(^4\) "For three decades the MARTA acronym has been the subject of a racially charged joke: "You know
what MARTA really stands for, don't you? Moving Africans Rapidly Through Atlanta." Atlanta Journal
within MARTA, which limits the type and amount of transit that can be provided. The relation between union labor and transit service will be explored further in Chapter Two.

In terms of public process, MARTA holds public hearings when they wish to add or retract service. The MARTA board makes the ultimate decision, but public comments are taken into account beforehand. However, it appears that MARTA has similar public participation troubles as ARC. Johnny Dunning of MARTA’s strategic planning department asserted that low-income people rarely show up for public hearings. Instead, wealthier residents in neighborhoods attend primarily to curtail bus service. Thus, MARTA does have a public process although it has some flaws. Additionally, there is no process available for working with MARTA to start new routes or services. Neighborhood residents therefore, could react to service changes that MARTA proposes, but starting new services is generally inaccessible to the public without help from organizations that are connected to and knowledgeable about MARTA.

Finally, the regional nature of MARTA makes it difficult to respond to the unique needs of neighborhoods. The scale at which MARTA is required to provide service causes it to be more standardized and impersonal in its operation. There are a wealth of transportation provision options available to MARTA, such as carpooling, minibuses, and jitneys. However, MARTA typically offers only more or less of bus or rail service, which is a narrow and standardized way of providing public transit.

**Georgia Regional Transportation Authority**

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) was recently established in 1999 to provide some legislatively derived power to solve some of the region’s traffic

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and air pollution problems. GRTA has the authority to build transportation projects and remove state funding from road projects that would have an adverse regional impact. Unlike MARTA, GRTA is able to build projects anywhere within the Atlanta region without consent from county governments (GRTA 2001). GRTA has worked with Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton County to establish small transit systems. They are currently working with these counties and others to build a regional express bus network, which would connect outlying regions to MARTA.

However, in many ways, the transit systems are a commuting system for suburban residents and not for center city reverse commuters. Many of the express bus routes leave from park and ride lots that are not proximately located to employment clusters. Additionally, some of the express buses, such as Cobb Community Transit routes 100 and 101 only leave in the morning from suburban areas and in the evenings from Downtown, which precludes reverse-commuting (AJC 2004, CCT 2004).

However, contentious feelings continue to exist between themselves and outlying counties who voted against the sales tax and hemmed in MARTA. As GRTA and outlying counties plan commuter express routes that would hook into the MARTA system, MARTA has remained uncooperative. MARTA refuses to accept a reciprocal free transfer agreement between MARTA and outlying county express systems (Atlanta Journal and Constitution 2004).

Expanding transit into outlying counties is critical for low-income residents in the City of Atlanta. However, this expansion is not being conducted in a way that is optimal for low-income residents in the center city. This may be due to a couple of structural reasons. First, the board of GRTA is just as regionally oriented as the board of ARC.
Second, GRTA does not have a significant public process of its own. Instead, it uses the ARC’s regional process as a proxy, which does not adequately represent low-income neighborhoods.

**Policy Context Conclusion**

Thus, it is structurally difficult for existing transportation agencies to serve the needs of Atlanta’s low-income neighborhoods. Many of the agencies are financially constrained in terms of investing in transit. The DOT cannot spend gas tax funding on transit. MARTA is the only large transit agency in the country that does not receive state support. Also, outlying counties in the Atlanta area will not fund MARTA, leaving the agency financially and geographically constrained.

All of the agencies are too regionally focused to adequately serve low-income residents in local neighborhoods. ARC and GRTA’s decision making is suburban oriented, and its public process does not include much participation by low-income neighborhoods. MARTA has similar problems in generating participation from low-income residents in their public processes. Additionally MARTA is a semi-regional transit agency, and its system is standardized in a way that does not meet the unique needs of many neighborhoods.

Thus, there is an organizational and structural gap in service for low-income neighborhoods like the Study Area. There is not enough funding for transit. Additionally, they cannot participate on the neighborhood level in meaningful ways, nor are they able to use the process to initiate needed new services. Getting to and from the grocery store and having a seat on the way home from work are basic, important needs of
low-income neighborhoods. However, the way that the transportation provision is structured in Atlanta, these needs are only small blips on the regional radar screen.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This thesis is located between the transportation planning and community development fields of research. The two fields have a lot to learn from each other, although they rarely communicate in practice or scholarship. This thesis explores connections between these two fields that can improve low-income neighborhoods.

**Transportation Planning**

The current state and trends in transportation planning are important in understanding how planning research and practice approach issues that are central to transportation access for the poor, such as equity, participatory processes, and community transportation planning. In the end, transportation planning’s core competency is in modeling, logistics, and regional planning, but it brings an incomplete set of tools for addressing the transportation access needs of the poor. In the aggregate, it lacks an ability to plan on a local scale and empower local communities to participate and own transportation decisions. Incorporating elements found in the community development field may help fill these critical gaps.

Urban transportation planning is an analytical process by which transportation investments are made. Transportation planning is, at its best, a process that includes the following components:

“Establishing a vision of what a community wants to be and how the transportation system fits into this vision… Understanding the types of decisions that need to be made to achieve this vision… Assessing opportunities and limitations of the future in relationship to goals… Identifying the near- and long-term consequences to the community and to transportation system users of...
alternative choices designed to take advantage of these opportunities or respond to these limitations... Relating alternative decisions to these goals... Presenting this information to decisionmakers in an understandable and useful form... (and) Helping decisionmakers establish priorities and develop an investment program.” (Meyer et al 2001)

Three things stand out in the definition of transportation planning that are distinct from community development. First, transportation planning is not as geographically bounded as community development. Second, the end client is not necessarily the community. Third, there is no explicit mention of community involvement and ownership in the planning process.

In response to social and economic changes, such as highway revolts, urban population growth, sprawl, and congestion, the transportation planning field has consistently evolved since the 1950s. Then, planning revolved around increasing highway capacity to match burgeoning population and automobile growth. Since the 1950s, planning has focused on using the automobile along with a diverse toolbox of transportation alternatives to enhance household mobility. Planning is also shifting from solely valuing technical knowledge to also valuing community knowledge and participatory processes. Equity planning emerged as a response to environmental and transportation justice concerns. Consequently planning is moving from evaluating aggregate social welfare to examining the disaggregated impacts of transportation investments on distinct interest groups. Finally, transportation planning evolved from comprehensive, long-term planning, to more locally based planning that responds to the needs of neighborhoods. However, recently, urban sprawl has reprioritized regional and long-range planning – especially in newer sunbelt cities (Meyer et al 2001).
Transportation planning has come a long way since the 1950s, but it continues to produce inequitable effects on low-income and minority communities. The regional scale of planning often neglects local needs and defies the understanding of residents whose existence is in a neighborhood scale. Consequently, regional agencies struggle to effectively engage low-income and minority communities in regional transportation decision making (Pierre 2000). Additionally, transportation planning culture remains somewhat technocratic and unskilled at managing participatory processes. Thus, transportation planning research and practice has an incomplete approach to addressing access problems of the poor (Pierre 2000).

**Community Development**

Community development is: “collaborative, collective action taken by local people to enhance the long-term social, economic, and environmental conditions of their community. The primary goal of community development is to create a better overall quality of life for everyone in the community” (At Work 2004). The values imbedded in this definition are distinct from those within the definition of transportation planning. Community development prioritizes working with the community, community ownership, local needs, and quality of life for community residents. The field has, therefore, developed methods for local participation and ownership and is geographically grounded and working in neighborhoods.

The community development corporation (CDC) is the most ubiquitous type of community development organization in the United States. CDCs have primarily focused on building affordable housing and fostering economic development with community participation. Affordable housing is critical, because having a decent home is
psychologically important for residents and because affordable housing reduces housing costs, which are typically the largest household expenditure type. For community development corporations, economic development primarily entails local business development real estate development and workforce development. Throughout these efforts, local residents participate in the planning, operation, and implementation of programs.

However, CDCs do not focus on transportation as an essential component of healthy communities. Transportation initiatives would allow local residents to cast their nets in the wider geographic region, thereby enabling them to gather resources for their local community. Some researchers assert that this regional thinking and resource gathering is essential for the health of local communities. (Wiewel 1989). However, the importance of the local community is deeply ingrained in the value set of community development practitioners, and they are often too mired in the neighborhood to think regionally (Orfield 1997). In addition to allowing residents to gather income from the region, affordable transportation would generate important savings for low income communities. Transportation is the second largest expense for families next to housing: households spend more money on transportation than food (Bullard 2000). Community development therefore, has a lot to learn from transportation planning about transportation provision and thinking regionally about development.

**Spatial Mismatch**

Spatial mismatch theory is one place where the health of low-income neighborhoods intersects with transportation planning. Spatial mismatch asserts that spatial divides between inner city residents and suburban job growth damages inner-city
residents’ employment opportunities. There are academic debates about the validity of spatial mismatch, and policy and planning debates about what to do about it. This section summarizes the spatial mismatch debates, reviews policy approaches to spatial mismatch, and discusses how this thesis fits into these debates.

The idea of spatial mismatch, which was first posited by John Kain in 1968, asserts that inner-city African-Americans have fewer employment opportunities because of increasing distance between the location of residence of inner city Blacks and the location of suburban employment growth (Kain 1968). Essentially, low skilled job growth is in the suburbs, and inner city African-Americans have limited residential and transportation mobility to access these jobs.

Although the magnitude of the effect of spatial mismatch has been debated, the theory remains as a driving force of inner-city economic development policy (Blumberg et al 2003). Recently, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, placed additional emphasis on reducing welfare rolls and increasing the number of low-income residents in the workforce. As a result, spatial mismatch and transportation has been reprioritized as a potential barrier to employment for TANF recipients.

Critics of the spatial mismatch theory assert that race, educational attainment, skills, and social networks play larger roles in determining a person’s economic opportunity (Ihlandfelt et al 1998). Many argue that even if spatial barriers were eliminated, these other daunting challenges would remain. Ellwood, for example, argues that it is “race, not space” that has greater weight in determining the employment opportunities for inner city residents. (Ellwood 1986).
While the magnitude of impact of spatial mismatch is still debated, the theory has continued to be a salient force in poverty reduction and economic development strategies (Ihlandfelt et al 1998). From spatial mismatch, three strands of research and practice have developed to connect employment and inner-city residents, thereby mitigating the effects of spatial isolation. The first proposes to move affordable housing to the suburbs (Rosenbaum 1991, Downs 1973). The second proposes moving employment to the inner city (Porter 1995). The third proposes to transport low income residents to jobs and services in the suburbs (Hughes 1995). Some argue that the last strategy has the best short-term prospects of alleviating the spatial mismatch problem, as residential integration of the suburbs and inner-city business development appears to be a slow and arduous process. This thesis focuses on the final strategy to mitigate the effects of spatial mismatch through transporting inner-city residents to employment and resources (Hughes 1995).

**Grocery Gap**

A second place where community development and transportation planning connect is in the “grocery gap” theory. Ronald Cotterill coined the phrase “grocery gap,” to discuss the paucity of affordable, nutritious groceries in low-income neighborhoods (Cotterill 1995). Many retailers have left center cities and followed higher-income demographics in the suburbs. As a result, lower-income neighborhoods are left with less nutritious and more expensive groceries in their local communities. Additionally, African-Americans, regardless of income are required to travel farther for basic goods than whites of similar incomes (Helling et al 2003). Although there is some renewed interest in inner-city retail development, retail services continue to be focused outside of
inner city neighborhoods (Porter 1995). In order to bridge this gap, many low-income residents take taxis back from the grocery store. Bus schedules and routes are often not convenient for shopping trips, and walking from the bus stop to home can be arduous with heavy grocery bags. Paying for taxis for grocery trips is too costly for low income families. It can reduce a family’s household income by $400 per year (Gottlieb 1996).

**Prescriptive Transportation Approaches to Access Problems**

The two major policy tools for mobility are affordable automobility and expanded mass transit. In the end, despite a substantial amount of research on mobility in the 1960s and 70s and the recent refocus on these issues, there has been limited consensus and progress related to the proper policy tools and transportation modes for improving transportation access for the poor. Consequently, some researchers have sought alternatives in paratransit, which are forms of transportation that fall somewhere between the private automobile and the public bus.

**Automobility**

Affordable automobility, some argue, is the best option for increasing the mobility of the poor. Job seekers need to interview at several different locations in the metropolitan area. They need to trip chain, or make several trips in a single outing. They need to reach work during off-peak and weekend hours, when mass transit service is either closed or infrequent. They need to be able to recreate and visit friends and family in other parts of the city. These are all needs that the automobile can fill and the vast majority of mass transit systems in America cannot. Empirical studies show that owning an automobile increases the likelihood that a person will be able to find a job more so than proximity to mass transit (Ong et al 1998, Ong 2000). Lucas and Wilson find that
affordable automobile provision programs significantly increase the earnings of low-income residents. One author supports this argument and criticizes policymakers for proposing other transit alternatives.

“The shortest distance between a poor person and a job is along a line driven in a car... Too often policy makers... are willing to consign poor people to barely functional public systems from which higher-income citizens routinely withdraw. People who point to mass transit as the environmentally sound alternative to cars for the working poor would subject them to inconveniences they themselves would never tolerate” (Walter et al 1999).

Affordable automobility may have the best short-term prospects of improving mobility for low-income residents, but the solution has many troubling long-term consequences. Automobiles are expensive, depreciating assets. Low-income families typically are only able to buy older model cars. In 1998, a survey of rural TANF households found that the average vehicle was 16 years old and that 43% of the cars had a $100 - $500 trade-in value (Kaplan 1998). After initial capital costs, affordable automobiles often require expensive maintenance. Insurance costs are expensive—especially if the owner lives in a high crime area. Additionally, gas is costly. The Automobile Association of America estimates that the average cost of owning a relatively new sedan is $15 per day, which is a significant expense for a low income family. There are also environmental implications in encouraging car ownership. Low-income households will most likely purchase older, low cost vehicles, which pollute much more than newer vehicles. Cities such as Atlanta have air pollution problems. In the summer of 1999, there were 37 consecutive ozone alert days in Atlanta, and sources from public health officials to the local news suggested that people—especially those with asthma—stay inside and avoid athletic activities (Bullard 2000). Finally, driving is one of the most
dangerous things an individual can do. Over 40,000 individuals die in car crashes per year (Kay 1997). Public transit, on the other hand, is relatively safe. Thus, even considering the effects of automobile ownership on employment prospects, from a financial planning perspective, buying an automobile is a very risky investment (Cervero 2002).

Thus, it appears that automobiles are the best mobility options for low-income residents – primarily because of the inadequacy of existing mass transit systems. However, automobile ownership has other negative effects on the financial and physical health of low-income households. The drawbacks of automobility raises the question: “Is there any way to meet the transportation needs of low-income residents in modern cities without the automobile?”

Mass Transit

Many assert that mass transit is capable of meeting many modern needs. For many that cannot afford an automobile, mass transit is a necessity, regardless of its quality. Only 7% of TANF recipients own an automobile (Multisystems 2000). Transit, therefore, remains essential to the mobility of the poor. The majority of transit passengers in the United States are poor minorities (Giuliano 2002). African Americans rely on transit six times as much as whites and twice as much as other ethnic minorities (Pucher 2003). In terms of improving the economic lot of the poor, there is empirical evidence to suggest that access to mass transit increases the likelihood that working age people will be in the workforce (Sanchez 1999).

However, despite the necessity of mass transit, most agree that mass transit does not sufficiently meet the needs of low-income populations (Cervero 1997, Clifton 2003,
Rosenbloom 1968). Jobs and services are sprawling beyond the reach of many mass transit systems, which struggle to remain financially viable in low-density environments. High and rigid mass transit wages engender infrequent operation in large format buses that prevent penetration into suburban markets. Public authorities often do not have the political support to expand to wealthier areas of the metropolitan area. Bus and train routes which follow a hub and spoke pattern emanating from downtown are increasingly obsolete: the majority of commuting trips in American metropolitan areas are from suburb to suburb. The majority of all trips are no longer commuting trips, but smaller errands. These are trips which are clearly important to the mobility needs of residents, but are not served well by mass transit (Winston et al 1998). Thus, as people and metropolitan areas change, mass transit systems are not only underfunded, but also outdated.

Dissatisfaction with existing transportation options for low-income residents has prompted some research and policy on paratransit, or mobility options that exist on the spectrum between the private automobile and the public bus (Cervero 1997). Carpools, rideshares, taxis, jitneys, ADA paratransit, shuttle services, demand responsive bus transit, and small bus fixed route transit are a few examples. Paratransit acknowledges that communities have unique needs that require unique solutions that may exist outside of the private automobile, train, or bus.

Paratransit is a useful tool for community-based transportation services. The variety of modes available in paratransit allows a community transportation organization to select a mode of transit that is custom fit for the Study Area. This is ideal as opposed to forcing a bus system in neighborhoods where bus transit may be inappropriate.
Additionally, the low costs of many paratransit services may be within the price range of a community non-profit. Therefore, case studies and proposals in this thesis will focus on paratransit as a potential solution for the transit problems of the Study Area.

CONCLUSION

Thus, this research falls between transportation planning and community development research. The proposed community transportation organization attempts to incorporate useful elements from both fields of research. Thus, this thesis discusses how this community-based transportation can fill gaps in service where transportation agencies are not being responsive or effective. It will pay special attention to paratransit as a potential tool for increasing mobility in the Study Area. Chapter Two identifies needs in the Study Area that could be filled by a community transportation organization. Chapter three provides three case studies of entities that have attempted to fill transit service gaps with paratransit. Chapter four forwards a proposal for a community transportation organization and its agenda in the Study Area. Finally, Chapter Five provides a conclusion.
CHAPTER TWO: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Chapter two focuses on a transportation needs assessment of the Study Area. It will include a demographic analysis, a spatial mismatch analysis, a basic analysis of transportation demand and supply, and an analysis of bus stop interviews and a focus group. This research illuminates exhibited needs in the Study Area and service gaps that the regional transportation system does not fill. The chapter then identifies potential areas of intervention to improve transportation access for Study Area residents.

This research finds that the Study Area consists of low-income African American neighborhoods that are, in many ways, isolated from employment, social services, and shopping opportunities. The causes of this isolation are multi-faceted, and transportation is a critical component. MARTA meets some of the basic needs of the Study Area. However, this chapter concludes that MARTA, as a publicly funded, semi-regional mass transit agency, is a flawed institutional match for the daily transportation needs of Study Area residents. As a result, service gaps and possible areas of intervention emerge. Those areas of intervention include “soft services,” or non-physical services, and “hard services,” or infrastructural service, such as bus routes.

For this research, ten different neighborhoods, Chosewood Park, Englewood Manor, McDonough Guice, Thomasville Heights, Thomasville, Benteen, The Vilalges at Carver, Lakewood, Lakewood Heights, and South Atlanta, were selected as the Study Area. The neighborhoods were selected because they represent one of the most transit dependant areas in the metropolitan area. In all but one of the block groups selected, more than 25%
of households were without a car. An average of 41% of households did not own a car for the Study Area as a whole (Census 2000). Additionally, the area is served by bus transit and has no walking access to rail stations. Compared to the rest of the City of Atlanta, the Study Area is both transit dependant and underserved by public transportation.

**NEIGHBORHOOD EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**Study Area Description**

The neighborhoods in the Study Area surround the Federal Penitentiary on the Southeast side of Atlanta and are generally low-income, working class, black communities, but the neighborhoods are distinct in many ways. The northern neighborhoods, Chosewood Park and Woodland Hills, are just south of the gentrifying neighborhoods of Ormewood Park and Grant Park, and contain higher household incomes than the rest of the Study Area. Differences in neighborhood makeup are also determined by the location of large affordable housing developments. These affordable housing complexes are the densest population clusters as well as some of the lowest income pockets in the Study Area. Some of the public housing developments, such as Thomasville Heights, Englewood Manor, and Villages at Carver (HOPE VI) are considered neighborhoods unto themselves.
### Fig. 2: LARGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDY AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affordability Type</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomasville Heights Public Housing</td>
<td>Thomasville Heights</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Park Village Tax Credit</td>
<td>McDonough Guice</td>
<td>338</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa Monte Apartments Section 8</td>
<td>Thomasville Heights</td>
<td>396</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Park Apartments Tax Credit</td>
<td>Boulevard Heights</td>
<td>302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages at Carver HOPE VI</td>
<td>Villages at Carver</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Manor Public Housing</td>
<td>Englewood Manor</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL UNITS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,529</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of TOTAL STUDY AREA UNITS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>34%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Housing and Urban Development 2001

### Neighborhood Density

Density is a key element in shaping how transportation services are provided. Some researchers have attempted to establish density standards for different levels of transit service. The most commonly referenced study is by Pushkarev and Zupan. For large bus service, minimum required densities is 6,400 residents per residential acre, which would warrant hourly bus service (Pushkarev 1982). The Study Area contains 3,700 residents per square mile, which is above the 3,160 person per square mile densities for the City as a whole (Census 2000). Since approximately 1/2 of the land is zoned residential, the density approaches 7,400 people per residential square mile, which passes Pushkarev's requirement for hourly bus service (Atlanta Regional Information System 2002). According to Pushkarev, the Study Area does not meet the 12,000 people per residential square mile standard for "intermediate service," or service that comes approximately every half hour. Thus, in terms of Pushkarev's standards, the Study Area does not qualify for frequent bus service.

However, there are no useful absolute standards for minimum densities for transit service. Inputs such as car ownership rates, labor costs, profitability expectations, policy
goals, and definitions of success vary such that absolute standards are not particularly useful to establish. *Comparatively*, however, the Study Area contains an average number of people per square mile for the City of Atlanta, but receives less transit service. The Study Area’s density is on par with other intown residential neighborhoods, such as Candler Park, Inman Park, and Reynoldstown, which receive rail in addition to bus service. The Study Area, and Atlanta in general, has much lower densities than places like New York, San Francisco, and Boston where transit has traditionally thrived. Thus, comparatively, the Study Area receives similar densities to other Atlanta neighborhoods that receive better transit service. However, Atlanta is not New York, and transit service should likewise be of a different quality.

**Fig. 3: ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD DENSITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Density Range (People / Sq Mile) (in no particular order)</th>
<th>MARTA Rail?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poncey Highlands (ATL)</td>
<td>7,500 - 12,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynoldstown (ATL)</td>
<td>3,800 - 4,900</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inman Park (ATL)</td>
<td>4,000 - 4,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candler Park (ATL)</td>
<td>3,000 - 5,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area (ATL)</td>
<td>2,000 - 6,500</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine City</td>
<td>3,900 - 3,900</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2000

**Fig. 4: CITY DENSITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Average Density (people/sq mi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>23,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeport (Cambridge)</td>
<td>18,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area (ATL)</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Atlanta</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta MSA</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2000

Within the Study Area, certain areas are denser than others. There are dense multifamily nodes – particularly in and around the large affordable housing developments. The remaining housing is primarily comprised of single family housing.
complexes built in the 1940s and 1950s. In general, the block groups just to the north and east of the penitentiary appear to be denser than the block groups to the south and the west.

**Demographic Overview**

According to 2000 Census figures, the Study Area contains 13,900 residents, with roughly 75% of them being African-American. The remaining 25% are mainly White and Latino. The Study Area experienced a modest .6% annual population growth rate in the 1990s, and over 60% of this growth is due to an influx of Latinos into the Study Area. The area received 37% growth in the Latino population during the 1990’s, which primarily occurred in McDonough Guice and Woodland Hills. The median household income is $19,215, which represents 37% of the MSA median income and one of the lowest income areas in the Metropolitan Area. The Study Area contains a young population compared to the rest of the region. Thirty-nine percent of residents are under 17 years of age in the Study Area compared to 27% in the region. According to census data, male presence in the Study Area declines significantly after teenage years. Whereas men outnumber women by 3% in the 17 or below age group, women outnumber the men by 18% in the 18-34 age group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>Study Area % of MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>13,896</td>
<td>4,112,198</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>4,136</td>
<td>1,504,871</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Population Growth Rate</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Population Growth Rate</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Population</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Population</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>213%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Population</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>258%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>203%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 0-17</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>146%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-34</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35-64</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 +</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median HH Income</td>
<td>$19,215</td>
<td>$51,948</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Population below Poverty Line</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>512%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female / Male Ratio</td>
<td>110%</td>
<td>103%</td>
<td>107%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Over 25 without High School Degree</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female Headed Single Parent Families</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>322%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Census, there is a high proportion of households that receive public assistance in the Study Area, which is not only an indication of low-incomes and unemployment, but also an indication of increasing transportation needs to accommodate new welfare to work requirements. The Study Area contains a 46% unemployment rate.
Fifteen percent of households receive public assistance in the study area, while only 2% receive assistance in the metropolitan area. TANF recipients are required to attend job trainings, travel to various job interviews, and arrive at work on time: all tasks that require an efficient and flexible transportation system. If a recipient misses a few appointments. The Georgia Department of Human Resources will terminate public assistance. For single parents, these strict work requirements are in addition to the daily requirements, such as picking up children from day care. Thus, there is a significant constituency in the Study Area that exhibits transportation needs that are unique to requirements and constraints of the state administered TANF program.

Educational attainment can prepare stronger candidates in the workforce. Low educational attainment in the Study Area can be an indicator that residents are not adequately prepared for changing economies. Compared to the region, the Study Area exhibits low levels of educational attainment. Forty-five percent of residents over the age of 25 have not completed high school. Region-wide, only 15% of residents over the age of 25 have not finished high school. Additionally, only 5% of Study Area residents have completed a bachelor’s degree, while almost 1/3 have completed a bachelor’s region wide (US Census 2000). There is a dramatic gap, therefore, between the educational attainment of the Study Area and the region, which will disadvantage the Study Area in terms of its preparation for the workforce (US Census 2002).

Workforce experience can indicate the job training needs of residents and determine which industries the Study Area should for employment. In the Study Area, there are two workforces divided by gender. The most common occupations for women are
administrative support specialists (19%) and sales people (12%). Men primarily work in construction (33%) and transportation (14%). (Census 2000).

**SPATIAL MISMATCH**

Analysis included in this section concludes that the Study Area faces a spatial mismatch problem. There are few and declining jobs in the Study Area and local residents have been unsuccessful at capturing them. Jobs and job growth is increasingly in the counties outside of Fulton and Dekalb, where MARTA does not operate. These jobs are as likely to be entry level jobs as the jobs in the two inner counties. This creates a situation where economic opportunities for Study Area residents are basically cut in half, given that more than ½ of new jobs are locating in outer counties, almost 1/2 of total jobs are now in outlying counties, and almost 1/2 of entry level job openings are in outlying counties.

Employment opportunities in the Study Area are limited. There is no employment growth in census tracts that contain the Study Area. These census tracts form a larger area than the Study Area because employment data was not available at the block group level. Henceforth, this collection of census tracts will be referred to as the “Catchment Area.” During this same period, employment Catchment Area, employment declined 23% from 1990 to 2000, when employment grew 41% region-wide. The only sector that experienced significant growth was the government sector. Forecasts by ARC predict employment in the Catchement Area will remain stagnant over the next ten years (Atlanta Regional Commission 2001).

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1 Catchment Area includes 1990 census tracts: 55.02, 64.00, 67.00, 68.01, 68.02, 69.00, 70.00, 71.00. Census tract level, employment-based data from the Atlanta Regional Commission.
Jobs do exist in the Catchment Area, but local residents have not been able to capture them. There are 7,500 jobs in the Study Area, which represents a ratio of 1.3 people in the labor force per 1 job (ARC 2001). Over 53% of them are government jobs, with the largest employer being the Federal penitentiary. According to 1990 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) data, which is a special release of the census, only 212 (4%) of residents that work outside of home work inside the Catchment Area. Only 4% of residents working locally implies that Study Area residents are not able to take advantage of their local employment assets. In addition to a strategy to transport workers elsewhere in the region, community organizations should undertake a strategy to advertise and capture local employment.

Jobs and job growth have been decentralizing away from the center of the Metropolitan Area, and consequently, away from the Study Area. As of 2000, the
historical center of employment, the Central Business District, only represents 6% of regional employment.\(^2\) Jobs are increasingly found in the suburbs. Atlanta, and the two core counties, Fulton and Dekalb, declined in terms of share of regional employment. Forty-six percent of employment is located outside Fulton and Dekalb Counties, where MARTA does not operate. Between 1990 and 2000, almost 2/3 of new jobs in the metropolitan area located in 11 outlying counties. Particularly high growth areas include Alpharetta in North Fulton, Cobb County, Norcross in Gwinnett County, and Cherokee County. All of these areas are on the north side of the city, where most job growth is occurring. Thus, growth is primarily located in outlying counties, and almost ½ of total jobs are located in outlying counties (ARC 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990 Share of Region</th>
<th>2000 Share of Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBD</strong></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlanta</strong></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fulton and Dekalb</strong></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 Outlying Counties</strong></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13 County Region</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, overall job growth numbers do not provide much information about the quality of the jobs – particularly whether or not Study Area residents have the skills or education to qualify for them. Nor do they tell us about job openings, which is of greater concern to job seekers than job growth. In response to this problem, Michael Rich and Joseph Coughlin attempted to assess the quality of job openings in 1998. Rich et al monitored the classifieds for full-time openings for one month and called and distributed

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\(^2\) Regional employment data refers to the 13 county region.
surveys to approximately 3,000 employers. Seven-hundred-fifty employers responded regarding 3,200 positions (Rich et al 1998).

The study finds that economic opportunities for transit dependant Study Area residents are severely hampered, because just under half of entry level job opportunities are in outlying counties where there is limited mass transit. The service sector (56%) and the retail sector (20%) represent the largest share of total job offerings. Manufacturing only represented 7% of positions. Only 14% were entry level jobs, or jobs that only required a high school degree or less and related work experience of six months or less. Of those jobs, only 40% of them paid more than $15,000 per year (the poverty threshold for a family of four). Fifty-three percent of job openings were located in Fulton and Dekalb Counties, while 47% were located in outlying counties. Forty-six percent of entry level jobs and 48% of non-entry level jobs are accessible by transit, or are within a ¼ mile walk of MARTA. Thus, this study depicts an Atlanta region with severely restricted employment opportunities for low-income Study Area residents. Since MARTA only operates within Fulton and Dekalb, this implies that entry level jobs are as likely to be in Fulton and Dekalb as they are to be in outlying counties. Therefore, according to this study, almost half of entry level job openings were located in outlying counties (Rich et al 1998).

Thus, the Study Area faces a spatial mismatch problem. Local residents have been unable to capture local employment. Almost 50% of entry level job openings are in outlying counties. Sixty-four percent of job openings in the 1990s were in outlying counties. Unfortunately, MARTA does not access these outlying counties. Without
adequate transportation, transit dependant residents are literally disconnected from almost half of the region’s job opportunities.

**STUDY AREA TRANSPORTATION DEMAND**

**Car Ownership**

Auto ownership levels in the Study Area are much lower than those of the Metropolitan Area and the City as a whole – primarily because of the low incomes found in the Study Area. Forty one percent of households in the Study Area do not own an automobile. Thomasville Heights, South Atlanta, and Thomasville represent the areas with the lowest levels of household car ownership, with 35%, and 46% and 47% respectively. Woodland Hills contains higher levels of household car ownership than the rest of the Study Area, with 90% of households owning a car. The City and region have much higher levels of household car ownership. In fact, it is public perception that owning a car is necessary for survival in Atlanta, one of the most sprawling cities in the United States. Seven percent of households region-wide and 23% of households city-wide do not own an automobile. Other low-income neighborhoods in Atlanta, such as Pittsburgh just south of downtown and East Lake east of downtown have similarly low access to the automobile, but excellent access to MARTA rail stations. Thus, the Study Area contains low levels of household car ownership that are well below the city and the region and on par with other low-income neighborhoods in the City (Census 2000). The Study Area contains similar car ownership rates to a few other low-income neighborhoods in Atlanta, but unlike these neighborhoods, the Study Area lacks walking access to MARTA rail.
Mode Choice

Despite the low levels of household car ownership, only 22% of residents in the Study Area take public transit to work. This may be due to the fact that many of the households that cannot afford a car are not working and therefore are not commuting. Riders that do not take public transit most likely carpool. Thirty-one percent of residents carpool to work in the Study Area. Residents, in fact, use carpools more than transit to commute to work. For Study Area commuters, the propensity to commute with means other than the automobile (58%) is greater than the propensity to drive alone to work (43%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 8: COMMUTE MODE SPLIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Public Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Atlanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta MSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Census 2000

Time Leaving for Work

Contrary to most writing about the transportation needs of the poor, residents in the Study Area do not commute more during off-peak hours than residents in the Metropolitan Statistical Area overall. They do, however, travel earlier during the peak period in the morning. Long public transit travel times demand that many residents start their commute earlier in the morning than others. These time-consuming commutes most likely account for the difference in Study Area and metropolitan area departure times. These data do not assert that MARTA should change its service to provide more off peak service, but it does speak to the very real effects of long commute times on families in the
Study Area: waking up at 5:00 AM versus 7:30 AM to arrive at the same job at 9:00 AM dramatically decreases household leisure time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Leaving for Work</th>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>Atlanta MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 6:59 AM</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 - 8:29 AM</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 11:59 AM</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 3:59 PM</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 - 11:59 PM</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 4:59 AM</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commut e Destinations**

Census transportation planning package data (CTPP) is a special release of the census that tracks commuting trips from home to work. Metropolitan areas are divided up into census tract sized traffic analysis zones that represent potential origin and destination points. As of April 2004, the latest version of CTPP data is from the 1990 census. The 2000 census data is expected to be released in the next few months. Given the age of this data, it can provide only a dated picture of commuting patterns for Study Area residents. As limited transit systems open in the suburbs, 2000 data should show how well these systems are providing access to employment in outlying counties.

CTPP data indicate that workers from the Study Area take public transit primarily to work downtown. Midtown, the Buckhead area, and Decatur are also major destinations, with over 50 workers commuting by transit to these locations per day. These are all areas that are well served by both bus and rail and are inside the core MARTA counties, Fulton and Dekalb. More specifically, major destination locations, or destinations with over 20 commuters by transit are in the Five Points District of Downtown, Piedmont Hospital area in Buckhead, and the Emory Clifton Corridor Area. In addition to accessing areas
intown, Study Area residents have accessed areas that have significant levels of transit in Dekalb and Fulton Counties. Thus, Study Area transit commuters primarily work in Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead, but they also work in lesser quantities where there is a substantial amount of transit in Fulton and Dekalb Counties.

CTPP data reveal that drivers commute to areas that transit dependant residents do not have access to. In general, more locations in the metropolitan area are accessible for those who drive, as only Fulton and Dekalb County have significant transit systems. Clayton County, Cobb County, and Gwinnett County have initiated their own transit systems, but they do not connect well with MARTA in Fulton and Dekalb. Therefore, driving commuters travel to Clayton, Gwinnett, and Cobb Counties, where transit riders are rarely found. The Clayton County industrial district, the Fulton County industrial area, and the Gwinnett County industrial districts are accessed by those who commute by automobile, but not those who take transit. Thus, the existing transit system does not have the coverage to serve many job locations in outlying counties that residents with cars are able to access (CTPP 1990).

**Commute vs. Non-Work Trips**

Transportation planners have historically focused on the home to work trip. However, commuting only represents 20% of total trips nationwide and 59% of transit trips nationwide (Giuliano 2002). The average transportation experience nationwide is not that of the commute, but of other trip types, such as going to the grocery store, visiting friends, going to the hospital, and other non-work related activities. Additionally, these non-work trips have been growing as a share of total trips (Cohen 2004). Finally, people often go shopping during times when the bus schedule is infrequent; many
shoppers prefer to go shopping at night or on the weekends (Progressive Grocer 2000, Crain and Associates 1998). Non-work trips represent a significant opportunity for increased ridership, but they are not served well by commute focused transit systems.

Unfortunately, there is limited data available about the destinations of these trips. The only local source available is the On-Board Survey, which is an 8,000 household survey of travel patterns in the metropolitan area (Atlanta Regional Commission On-Board Survey 2002). The surveys were conducted in trains, buses, and stations, so all of participants are using mass transit. Three-hundred-eighty-one of the participants in this sample are traveling to an area in Southeast Atlanta that contains the Study Area. Additionally, the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS), collects detailed data about travel behavior, but on a national scale.

According to the On-Board Survey, Study Area residents use transit primarily to commute. Over half of the respondents, 61%, were traveling for work related purposes. Only, 39% of trips were coming from or going to a non-work location. The Study Area resembles the region in terms of residents’ trip purpose. Thus, Study Area residents primarily use transit to commute, while only 39% transit trips are for non-work purposes.

However, these results are noteworthy in a couple of ways. First, on a national scale, non-work trips represent 59% of all transit trips. Furthermore, 89% of transit trips by the poor are non-work related. Thus, according to the NPTS, non-work trips are the norm (Giuliano 2002). In the Study Area, only 39% of trips are to non-work related, which is significantly lower than the national figures. Second, when all trips are accounted for nationwide, including those by transit and the automobile, non-work trips represent 80% of total trips. When compared to the nationwide figure of 59% non-work
trips, it appears that those with automobiles have the ability to take more non-work trips (Giuliano 2002). The flexibility of the automobile allows for non-work trips, while the commuting focus of transit lines discourages such travel (Cohen 2004). Thus, compared to the nation, Southeast Atlanta transit riders are unusual in that they take a smaller percentage of non-work trips. This low percentage suggest that existing transit options may prevent Study Area residents from using transit for non-work travel. There may be, therefore, an opportunity provide increased service to non-work locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>% Non-Work Transit Trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Area Transit</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationwide (Not Poor)</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationwide (Poor)</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationwide (All)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**TRANSPORTATION SUPPLY**

The following section discusses transit supply in the Metropolitan Area and the Study Area in terms of coverage and travel time. Understanding transit supply is important in determining what transit gaps exist.

**Region-Wide Transit Supply**

In terms of coverage, mass transit in Atlanta is constrained to the two core counties of Fulton and Dekalb, although the Metropolitan Area consists of 20 counties. This is a critical problem because much of the region’s job growth occurs in the outlying counties of the region. As a result, MARTA has been unable to effectively operate throughout the region since the failure of the sales tax referendum in outlying counties.

However, since the late 1990s, Cobb, Clayton, and Gwinnett Counties have added bus systems. Unfortunately, they are small and do not connect well with MARTA,
making it very difficult for residents to commute from the center city to these counties. For example, riders that wish to travel from Atlanta to Cobb County must transfer buses and transit systems once they cross into Cobb County, which lengthens travel time for commuters. Additionally, similar to transit systems in Gwinnett and Clayton, Cobb Community Transit is smaller and covers less area than MARTA. Many job locations in these counties, therefore, are not covered by their transit systems. Thus, positive efforts have been made to expand the bus system in outlying counties. Nonetheless, the scale of their operation is nominal, and connections with MARTA are discontinuous.

The scale of their operation is too limited to provide significant access to Study Area residents. Thus, transit has been spatially and politically constrained such that inner city residents are cut off from much of the outlying areas of the Metropolitan Atlanta.

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority is in the planning stages of creating a more extensive transit system in outlying counties (GRTA 2003). As mentioned in the Policy Context section of the Introduction, this regional transit system is designed for suburbanites who commute into Atlanta. Many of the express routes only leave from suburban areas in the morning, which precludes center city residents from reverse commuting on express routes. Additionally, many of these routes arrive at park and ride lots in suburban residential clusters instead of suburban job centers that reverse commuters need to access.
Transit coverage in outlying counties is not very extensive, which precludes many Study Area residents from finding employment in job growth areas outside the City. Even where there is coverage, typically two transfers or more are required due to outlying county transit systems that are not well integrated into MARTA. These transfers make reverse commutes unreasonable for many center city residents. Drivers, on the other hand, are accessing more job rich parts of the region than transit riders. Thus, compared to those that drive, transit dependant residents in the Study Area are literally cut off from almost half of all employment opportunities in the metropolitan area.

**Study Area Transit Supply**

*MARTA*

In terms of transit coverage, there is a dense network of eight bus lines\(^3\) that pass through the Study Area, although rail transit is not within walking distance. Almost all households are within 1/3 mile of a bus line, which represents approximately an eight-minute walk. The eight bus routes found in the Study Area primarily travel Downtown, as shown in the map below. No routes travel laterally across interstate highway 75 to

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\(^3\) Bus routes that pass through the Study Area: 4, 48, 55, 49, 17, 90, 42, 31
southwest Atlanta, where many retail services are located on Metropolitan Parkway (formerly Stewart Avenue). Currently, route 48 travels up Moreland Avenue and continues to the Buckhead office district on the northside of the city. However, current service changes plan to discontinue piece of the route on the northside, which would cut off direct service to Buckhead. Essentially, if Study Area residents wish to travel somewhere other than Downtown, they are expected to first travel Downtown, then transfer to another train or bus route. This hub and spoke pattern of commuting is outdated, as only 6% of jobs in the region are located Downtown. Other employment nodes are becoming more important: 58% of total commutes in the region are destined for the suburbs (Federal Highway Administration 2003).

Thus, there is a thick network of MARTA routes in the Study Area that primarily travel directly downtown, and passengers are required to transfer one or several times to reach other destinations in the region. As jobs continue to suburbanize, MARTA’s hub and spoke pattern serves Study Area residents less well.

![Fig. 12: Federal Highway Administration 2000](image-url)
Informal Transit Supply

Study Area residents use informal transportation mechanisms where there are gaps in regulated transit service. Many Study Area residents carpool to compensate for the lack of available automobiles. The census indicates that Study Area residents are more likely to carpool to work than take transit. Study Area residents also carpool more than residents in the City of Atlanta or the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. According to residents in the focus group, people sometimes carpool with friends to go shopping. Although the extent of carpooling to stores is unknown, focus group participants suggested that carpooling to shopping is the exception to the rule. Many residents do not have friends that own cars and coordinating times for shopping, which is sometimes a spontaneous activity, is difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Public Transport</th>
<th>% Carpool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Atlanta</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta MSA</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, according to focus group participants, residents use illegal taxi services, which are simply referred to as “cars.” Illegal taxis linger outside local grocery stores and provide rides home to residents that have too many groceries to return on the bus. As shoppers exit the store, taxi drivers will yell ‘ride’ to offer their services. Apparently, many of the drivers are part-time workers that engage in illegal service to earn additional income. How many drive illegal taxis as their primary form of employment is unclear. These taxis charge $5 for a one way trip. Unlike many legal taxi services, these illegal taxis do not pick up passengers from home: their only point of
origin is the grocery store. Up to five illegal taxis will be working out of grocery stores during the weekend, and at least one can be found during grocery store business hours. Evidently, in some grocery stores, management will pay for a free ride home for customers that spend more than $100 on groceries. Whether there are formal or informal agreements between the grocery store and the illegal taxis is unclear.

Finally, on Sundays, many churches provide shuttle services. For all routes, MARTA reduces or eliminates service on Sundays, which makes it difficult to get to church using formal transit. The size and quality of shuttle vehicles vary. An informal observation of church vehicles in Study Area parking lots revealed that church vehicles varied from old minivans to new 20 passenger minibuses. It is possible that these services may drop passengers off at other destinations after church, such as the grocery store. Additional interviews with churches would need to be conducted to discover exactly how they provide service on Sundays.

**Commute Travel Time**

Although there is a dense network of bus routes available in the Study Area, travel times are very long compared to those who travel by other means. The median commute time for transit riders in the Study Area is more than one hour, while the median time for those who travel by other means is less than 30 minutes. Those that take transit region-wide have shorter travel times than Study Area transit riders. Thus, transit commuters in the Study Area travel twice as long as commuters with other means: they travel commute more than one hour to work on average. The accessibility problem for Study Area residents is not only one of transit coverage, but also one of long travel times.
When aggregated, the additional time that Study Area residents commute on transit is substantial. Compared to transit riders region-wide, transit commuters in the Study Area waste approximately five additional days a year in travel.\textsuperscript{4} Based on the difference in commute times between mass transit riders and users of other modes of travel in the Study Area, the average transit rider wastes approximately ten days a year in additional commute time.\textsuperscript{5} When this wasted time is aggregated for the Study Area as a whole, over 8,000 hours of time is spent in transit above what commuters using other modes spent.\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{Shopping Trips}

As discussed in the introduction, transportation access to grocery stores and affordable department stores is important for low income households. Access to quality grocery stores allows residents to purchase affordable, nutritious goods. Additionally, a department store allows residents to find household items at affordable prices.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & Median Public Transit (min) & Median Other Means (min) & Median Overall (min) \\
\hline
Study Area & >60 & <30 & 30-34 \\
Region & 45-60 & <30 & 25-29 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{4} Calculated by finding the difference between the average commute of transit riders in the Study Area and the average commute of transit riders region-wide. Then aggregated to the number of work days during the years

\textsuperscript{5} Calculated by finding the difference between the average commute of transit riders in the Study Area and the average commute of other modes of travel in the Study Area. Then aggregated to the number of work days during the years

\textsuperscript{6} Aggregated to the number of people that take transit in the Study Area.
The two closest grocery stores that are accessible by transit are Super Valu, Super Giant, and Kroger, which are just to the East of Woodland Hills on Moreland Ave. There is a Kroger on Metropolitan Avenue to the west of Interstate 75, but there are no lateral routes running in this direction. Additionally, there are small format grocery stores Downtown. The closest low cost department store, Target, will also be on Moreland Avenue in a new development slated to open in 2005. Travel time to these stores depends on how proximate households are to Route 48, which swirls around Thomasville and Thomasville Heights, and then shoots up Moreland Avenue.

Residents in Thomasville Heights are within walking distance of Route 48. If the bus arrives as scheduled, they can arrive at Kroger and Target in 7 and 17 minutes respectively. This calculation indicates that travel times to shopping on Moreland Avenue are reasonable if not short. However, all of the bus stop interviewees indicated that shopping on MARTA took a frustratingly long time. Thus, there is a difference between actual travel time and calculated travel time based on optimistic assumptions. This difference could be because the bus does not show up on time, residents’ schedules are not flexible enough to adhere to the schedule, or the trip is perceived to take a long time because of difficult grocery bags on the return trip. Or it could be all of the above.

Residents in Englewood Manor are not within walking distance of Route 48, and they are required to take a bus and then transfer to Route 48. Englewood Manor’s one way trip to Kroger and Target would take 34 minutes and 44 minutes respectively. The time required to transfer buses consumes more than half of the total travel time. All bus stop interviews in front of Englewood Manor similarly indicated that grocery shopping took a
long time. In fact, focus group residents stated that a grocery trip typically takes 45 minutes. In this case, actual time exceeds calculated time by 32%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 14: SHOPPING TRAVEL TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomasville Heights to Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Heights to Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomasville Heights to Kroger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Heights to Kroger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk miles to bus stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk time to bus stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Miles to Destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed to Destination (mph)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Time to Destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Time^8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Travel Time to destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mph to destination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, for those that do not live within walking distance of Moreland Avenue and Route 48, a one way shopping trip to Kroger takes over 30 minutes. This is approximately four miles per hour, which is only slightly faster than walking. Thus, even though grocers are nearby, trips to the grocery store on MARTA take a long time.


^8 Assumes transfer time is \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the Saturday headway. Assumes that Thomasville Heights residents can walk to the Route 48 bus stop and time their arrival perfectly with the bus. Travel times are probably longer in reality, given that buses do not run on schedule. Additionally, residents cannot always arrive at the bus stop at the scheduled time. The focus group interview support that travel times are longer than those calculated here.
Headways

Headways are important in determining travel time and travel experience for transit riders. Long headways are problematic when buses do not run consistent with their schedules. When this happens, a transit rider cannot predict when the next bus will arrive, and she ends up waiting longer than expected. On average, transfers also require that transit riders wait \( \frac{1}{2} \) the headway for the next vehicle. This lengthens travel times and often angers transit riders. Riders typically find the time riding for the bus more unpleasant and costly than waiting on the bus. The Central Transportation Planning Staff in Boston found that waiting for a vehicle was perceived to be between 1.5 and 1.8 times more onerous than in-vehicle time (CTPS 1997). Thus, long headways make transit a less attractive option for choice riders, and they make travel times longer for transit dependant riders.

Headways in the Study Area are comparable to MARTA headways system-wide, but they are mediocre in terms of overall standards for system performance. The average, peak period headway for all MARTA bus routes is 22 minutes, which is two minutes less that the average headway for Study Area bus routes. The 42 bus is the most frequent, which runs every eight minutes on the western edge of the Study Area next to the Villages at Carver. Average headways during the base, night, and Saturday periods are 39, 50, and 41 minutes respectively. These off-peak headways are also consistent with system-wide averages. These headways are more favorable than Pushkarev and Zupan’s density standards warrant (Pushkarev et al 1982). However, the Tranist Cooperative Research Program’s (TCRP) Quality of Service Manual rates peak headways in the Study Area as Level C quality of service. According to TCRP, this translates to “service that is
unattractive to choice riders.” Base, night, and weekend headways fall under the Level D category (TCRP 2003). Thus, MARTA is placed in the difficult position where people are turned away from the transit system because of long waits and travel times, but densities are not considered high enough by some standards to provide more frequent service.

**Capacity**

Six out of eight of the bus routes in the Study Area are overcrowded. The TCRP Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual suggests some standards for bus capacity. A load factor is the number of passengers divided by the number of available seats on the bus. When the load factor exceeds 1.5, the Quality of Service manual defines this situation as a “crush load.” This means that the bus is overcrowded and that additional capacity should be added to the route, as there are 1.5 times as many people as there are seats (TCRP 2003). Routes 4, 17, 42, 49, and 55 are all at crush loads during rush hour and require additional capacity. The average load capacity for all of the routes is 1.56.

**Proposed Service Changes**

Under mounting pressure of a $54 million budget deficit, MARTA recently announced a proposal to decrease bus service throughout the system by 15%. These proposed changes would impact all routes in the Study Area. One route would be eliminated, four routes have segments cut off at the north or south end of the line, two routes have longer headways during a peak period, one route would have reduced hours, one route have discontinued service on weekends, and one route have shorter headways.
during the midday (MARTA 2004). Thus, under MARTA’s current financial situation, levels of service in the Study Area are most likely going to deteriorate.

Transit Supply Conclusion

Thus, coverage of the region-wide system is not comprehensive enough to serve many of the growing employment centers in outlying counties. Additionally, although there is a dense transit network in the Study Area, travel times are twice as long as times by other modes. Bus headways throughout the system are long, and cannot capture choice riders. Given MARTA’s current financial situation, the difficulty of serving non-dense markets, and the outstripped capacity of buses, levels of service may worsen in the near future. Study Area residents operate and use informal transit as coping mechanisms for inadequate transit service. However, these services are not extensive enough to fill transit service gaps – especially since informal transit does not have the institutional support and organization to grow to its full potential.

TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY FOR THE TRANSIT DEPENDANT

Advocacy and organization is an important tool in communicating and working with transportation decision makers to improve transportation access. In several cases, organized residents have been able to initiate or stop transportation projects in the Atlanta region. Freedom Parkway in the 1970s and the Northern Arc in the early 2000s are two examples of how organized citizens can cease highway projects where they are unwanted. Employer-based districts have also been able to initiate transit projects through advocating to regional and federal decision makers. The Cumberland Community Improvement district and their bus rapid transit project in the Northside is
one example. Additionally, the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association has been able to advocate to MARTA for fare discounts.

There is limited advocacy for low-income, transit dependant residents, however. The Metro Atlanta Transportation Equity Coalition (MATEC) advocates on behalf of low-income residents region-wide. They have been very effective on the regional level. They have organized a bus riders union from several parts of the metropolitan area. They have filed lawsuits to stop grandfathered road projects when Atlanta was in an air quality road building moratorium in 1998. MATEC went to the State House to protest recently proposed bus service cuts.

However, bus service is cut consistently in small increments. Where these service changes have not been large enough to have a regional impact, MATEC has not been involved. For example, four out of eight bus routes in the Study Area experienced service cuts between June of 2002 and June of 2003. These service cuts did not elicit a MATEC response. Thus, there is excellent advocacy on the regional level, but there are many neighborhood scale service issues that cannot be addressed regionally.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

In order to test the data collected from various secondary sources, I conducted 16 bus stop interviews and one focus group in the Study Area. Six interviews were held in front of Thomasville Heights and ten were held in front of Englewood Manor during the morning rush hour. The interviews were of varying lengths, since the bus often arrived before questions were completed. Two-thirds of the participants were men, and all but one of the interviewees appeared to be over the age of 50. The bus stop interviews were conducted in January of 2004 to uncover transportation challenges and guide secondary
research. In order to follow up on these brief bus stop interviews and secondary research, a more in-depth focus group was conducted in Englewood Manor. The focus group was organized by the Atlanta Housing Authority, and seven Englewood Manor residents participated. All of them were relatively young women from the ages of 25 to 45, and all but one did not own an automobile. Although all of the data collected are not included here, there are some general conclusions that can be drawn from the interviews and the focus group.

**Unique Needs of Low Income Residents and Women**

**Bills**

Low income residents have unique travel needs. For example, since money is scarce, many households wait until the last minute to pay their bills. They then take the bus downtown to make the payment. Simply mailing it would delay the process by one or two days, and would place the household in jeopardy of having phone or electricity service cut off. They often take the bus downtown to pay bills because mailing it would delay the payment by one or two days. One resident stated, “if my phone is about to be cut off, I got to go Downtown to pay it.” Paying bills does not generate enough trips to induce MARTA to change its service, but it is an example of how low-income travel behavior is distinct.

**Public Assistance**

Public assistance recipients also exhibit unique travel behaviors. The majority of workforce development agencies and state welfare case workers are located downtown. Job training, meetings with case workers, and welfare check pickups, therefore, are all
downtown. TANF recipients in the focus group mentioned that they made several trips downtown during the year for welfare administration and maintenance purposes.

We did not discuss welfare-to-work jobs through workforce development agencies in depth. However, it appeared that several of the focus group participants had a variety of jobs in a variety of locations over the past few years. One resident mentioned a "short-lived" job in Cobb County she received through Atlanta Workforce Development. The duration of the trip was just over 1.5 hours. When asked if she was ever late to her job because of long travel times, several transfers, and unpredictability of service, she replied, "Oh, I stay late. And they come to expect after a while." Despite her best efforts, she lost the job. Although she did not say why, punctuality must have been a factor. The workforce development agency places residents at a variety of locations around the Metropolitan Area, and maintaining these jobs appears to be difficult for Study Area residents. It is unclear how much of this difficulty can be attributed to transportation, but it is certainly a factor.

**Food Stamps**

Additionally, food stamps arrive on the 5\(^{th}\) and the 15\(^{th}\) of each month. Consequently, many households go grocery shopping around this time. Most of this travel is directed to grocery stores that accept food stamps. While weekends were also mentioned as a peak travel time for shopping, the time just after the 5\(^{th}\) and the 15\(^{th}\) represents an additional peak during the month.

**Safety**

As in many inner-city, low-income neighborhoods, safety was a concern—especially for women at night. Although no specific questions were asked about safety,
two women mentioned safety during bus stop interviews. Focus group participants confirmed that this was a concern during transit travel. At night, waits for the bus are long for Study Area residents, which places riders in a vulnerable position in high crime areas. As a result, some choose to travel during the day and avoid traveling at night when possible.

**Resignation to Existing Transit Options**

During bus stop interviews, I asked all participants the simple question, “are you happy with MARTA service?” A few answered with a simple “yes” or “no”, but most were confused by the question. Those that were confused felt that their opinions of the transit system were inconsequential. One interviewee responded, “I got to be happy with it (MARTA). Got no other choice, do I?” For the interviewees, MARTA was the only transit option available, and most appreciated its existence. Few thought that it was their place to demand more from the transit system.

Only two of the nine focus group participants were aware of proposed bus service changes in the Study Area. None knew how to get involved in the process to stop the service changes. One resident said, “What am I gonna do about it!? You know they don’t listen to us poor black folk.” MARTA made a vast effort to solicit participation during the service change process through distributing flyers and holding public meetings in mid-April in English and Spanish. Nonetheless, the impacted population felt that their participation was fruitless.

**Informal Methods of Travel**

The vast majority of information collected about informal methods of travel was collected in focus groups and bus stop interviews. With the exception of carpool
commuting data, secondary sources are oblivious to informal methods of transportation. As mentioned in the Informal Transportation Supply section above, residents without cars catch a ride with car owners to the grocery store. Relationships with car owners, therefore are highly valued and nurtured in Englewood Manor. One resident declared, “Oh, you got to know someone with a car, it just makes things easier sometimes.” However, the vast majority of the time, a ride is not available and residents ride the bus to the grocery store. On the return trip, in order to avoid carrying grocery bags from the bus route to the front door, residents hire illegal taxis that linger in grocery store parking lots. When asked to describe the drivers, one resident stated, “These little men don’t have no job, no skills, just a car to make a little bit of money. I’ve noticed that some of them are veterans.” Residents sometimes used informal transit methods from the grocery store, but none took informal modes to work. This was surprising given the high rates of carpooling in the Study Area.

**Centrality of Downtown**

In the eyes of Study Area residents, Downtown is the most important location outside of the neighborhood for employment opportunity. When focus group participants were asked where they travel to most often, “Downtown” was the unanimous response. Additionally, when asked where they would look for employment if they were unemployed, everyone replied, “Downtown.” Five out of the eleven bus stop interviewees worked in or near Downtown. Only these Downtown commuters had less than an hour commute. Other commuters traveled to locations in Fulton and Dekalb counties, such as the Northlake area, Union City, and Emory.
Additionally, focus group participants travel to Downtown for entertainment shopping and social services. Residents use the Moreland corridor for household maintenance shopping. Focus group members shop for clothes and patronize restaurants Downtown. As mentioned above, many also travel to Downtown for job training and meetings with case workers.

Focus Group and Interviews Conclusion

- Interviews and focus groups uncover critical information about travel behavior and informal coping mechanisms that cannot be collected through secondary data analysis. Factors such as crime, informal transit supply, and rider demographics affect how and when people travel. One focus group and 20 interviews are not enough. Additional focus groups and interviews should be conducted in the Study Area to provide a fuller depiction of transportation supply and demand.

- Transit service should respond to demographics in the neighborhood. Services should accommodate additional demand directly after the 5th and the 15th of the month when food stamps arrive. Additionally, higher frequencies at night alleviate fears of crime. Additional service at night may even induce more travel from residents that remain at home because of crime concerns.

- Downtown remains an important destination for Study Area residents for employment, leisure shopping, and services. The quantity of transit service to Downtown and the lack of transit to other locations may contribute to the continued pertinence of Downtown. Unfortunately, in terms of employment, this indicates that Study Area residents may be seeking employment in the wrong locations.

- Study Area residents find alternatives to transit where MARTA is insufficient. Carpooling and illegal taxis are two examples of how residents cope.

- Study Area residents have resigned to the existing transit system and they do not know how to participate in ways that are meaningful to them. The civic engagement process for Atlanta’s transportation system appears to be well meaning, but ineffective.

CONCLUSION

From the framework of residents in the Study Area, transit in Atlanta leaves much to be desired. Study Area residents demand transit: the Area is comprised of a large
minority of transit dependant households. However, the supply provided is not sufficient. Transit commute times are extraordinarily long in comparison to those that have the means to commute by other modes. The service does not cover enough ground to be able to access job rich areas in outlying counties; while outlying counties have transit systems, they are not substantial enough to effectively reach jobs suburban jobs. Finally, MARTA is too focused on the Downtown commute, which represents a minority of trips and a decreasing travel pattern throughout the United States. Although Downtown continues to be a main destination for Study Area residents, its importance relative to the rest of the region is declining. Thus, from the perspective of transit dependant households in the Study Area, the regional transportations system leaves much to be desired.

Additionally, there are few outlets for Study Area residents to be able to improve their current situation. ARC and MARTA have not been able to provide a meaningful public participation process, and MATEC operates at a regional level and does not address transportation problems that are unique to the Study Area. Study Area residents have used informal transit as a coping mechanism for inadequate service. However, these transit methods have not thrived due to a lack of institutional support and organization.

In brief, there are four main transportation related problems in the Study Area that have been identified in this chapter.

- **Spatial Mismatch**
- **Long travel times and overcrowded buses**
- **Poorly served non-work trips – especially shopping trips**
✓ Lack of local advocacy and participation

**Opportunity Areas**

Transportation in the Study Area presents multiple, serious challenges. However, in identifying these challenges, areas of opportunity to solve these problems emerge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Area of Opportunity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Mismatch</td>
<td>Provide a low-cost transportation service to job centers in outlying counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long travel times and overcrowded buses</td>
<td>Increase frequency and capacity of existing MARTA routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly served non-work trips – especially</td>
<td>Create a transit service to Kroger and Target during shopping peak hours / MARTA’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping trips</td>
<td>off-peak hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of local advocacy</td>
<td>Initiate a community transit organization in the Study Area that can solicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participation, advocate for local residents, and bring additional benefits to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study Area.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE – CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores three case studies. Through these case studies, a few key concepts will hopefully be illuminated. First, the case studies should inform about strategies that other entities used to fill transportation service gaps. Second, the case studies should elicit areas where entities can serve their constituencies better than the local transit agency. Second, the case studies should inform about a few different modes of paratransit that can be used as an alternative to the single occupancy vehicle and the large-format bus. In the end, these case studies should elicit lessons learned for a potential intervention in the Study Area.

Chapter three includes three case studies, Miami jitneys, the Clifton Corridor Transit Management Association, and the Fulton County Job Access program. All three case studies are related to transportation services that are created to fill gaps in transit agency service. Additionally, all cases use paratransit as their mode of transit provision. However there are many differences between the cases. Each of the case study services are from different cities, use different forms of paratransit, and serve different constituencies. Thus, each case study has a different focus and different implications for the Study Area:

Miami Jitney: This case study examines grassroots transit entrepreneurship as a method of filling not only service gaps, but also taking advantage of market opportunities. It analyzes the jitney as an alternative form of transit and it examines the effects of government regulation on the success of the service. Additionally, Miami is a sunbelt city with lower densities than older northeastern cities, which will provide a better comparison than other places where jitneys operate, such as New York or San Juan.
The Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA): This case study looks at how local (as opposed to regional) transportation organizations can effectively advocate for transportation improvements. As an employer-based transportation organization, this case study serves as a mirror image of a resident-based organization that could be formed in the Study Area. It also introduces shuttles and vanpools as paratransit modes.

Fulton Job Access Program (FJAP): This case explores some of the challenges of designing a government job access program using inter-agency partnerships. This program is close to home for the Study Area. It operates in the same county and serves a population with similar demographics. It also examines the use of demand-responsive service.

MIAMI CASE STUDY

This case study will examine jitney service in Miami as a potential transportation solution for the Study Area. The case is broken into six sections: history, current service, demographic base, regulation, business performance, and lessons learned.¹

History

Before 1990

Miami jitneys initiated as privately provided service just after the turn-of-the-century as a way to serve low income areas that were outside of the reach of streetcar lines. In the 1930s and 40s, jitneys primarily served African American neighborhoods as a connection between minority neighborhoods, Downtown, and Miami beach. By 1980, three companies, Liberty City Jitney, King jitney, and Dade Jitney operated 28 routes that were licensed by the City. These routes provided inter-neighborhood service and also service to downtown for the African American neighborhoods of Overtown and Liberty City. Both sedans and small minibuses were used for this service. By 1988, there were

¹ Four main sources were used for this case study: Robert Cervero’s Paratransit in America (1997), Samuel Lau’s “Strategies for Improving Jitneys as a Public Transit Mode” (1997), and Urban Mobility Corporation’s “Miami Jitneys.” (1992)
a total of 11 licensed jitney companies running 20 routes with 90 sedans and minibuses. Jitney service, therefore, during the 1980s was relatively stable, as market entry was regulated by Dade County to prevent competition with the Miami Dade Transit Authority (MDTA).

**Jitneys Flourish**

A large influx of immigrants from the Caribbean along with a loophole in Florida State law spurred rapid, unregulated growth in the jitney industry from 1990 – 1992. Florida law stated that local governments could not regulate inter city transportation, which allowed jitney companies to enter the market under the guise of providing service between Dade County’s patchwork of small cities. This freed the jitney industry from the regulation of County government and initiated an open season for anyone that wanted to enter the jitney market. Additionally, the influx of Caribbean immigrants added to the supply and demand of jitney services. Jitneys operate extensively in Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, where many immigrants originated. Immigrants brought with them the expertise and the entrepreneurial spirit to run such services. Since many immigrants were accustomed to such transport in their home countries, they continued to patronize them in the United States without trepidation.

By 1992, there were 400 jitneys, which represents a 100% average annual increase between 1988 and 1992. Jitneys expanded the geography of their operation from the niches where jitneys were previously permitted to operate. These were low density, low-income, minority areas where MDTA did not provide service. During this open season, jitneys were able to actively compete with the MDTA for high ridership bus routes that were previously MDTA monopolies. Jitneys operated at an average of 13
minute headways during peak and base periods. On high ridership routes, jitneys ran at headways of less than two minutes. The Urban Mobility Corporation (UMC) reported that daily jitney weekday ridership in the Miami metropolitan area was between 43,000 and 49,000. This represented approximately ¼ of Metrobus’ ridership.

Jitney Enforcement and Regulation

However, transportation agency union membership, middle class and upper class citizens, and local governance quickly began to raise concerns about the jitney free-for-all that began in 1990. Union leadership perceived jitneys as a threat to union jobs, since jitneys were as stealing ridership and revenues from Metrobus. Unions saw jitneys as attempting to replace their good union jobs with low-paying jitney jobs. Middle class and upper class residents raised concerns about the general disorderliness of jitney service and the additional traffic generated by jitneys. Government and transit agency officials were concerned about the safety risk of unlicensed jitney operators and the damage that jitneys could do to the financial health of the MDTA. Backed by this patchwork of interests, local government pressured the state legislature in 1992 to close the legal loophole which allowed jitneys to operate inter-city service without local regulation. Subsequently, new laws were passed, 900 vehicles were impounded, and 1,200 citations were issued to reign-in jitney operators. After the crackdown, MDTA ridership increases were measured over a ten month period for routes that had heavy jitney competition and routes that had no jitney competition. Ridership on routes with heavy jitney competition increased by 27% and routes with routes without jitneys
increased by 10%. Jitneys, therefore, were having a negative impact of the MDTA’s ridership (Center for Urban Transportation Research 1994).

_Hurricane Andrew_

In September 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck, which disabled approximately 20,000 cars in Dade County. The MDTA received a $46 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide supplemental transportation in South Dade County to meet increased demand due to hurricane damage. The MDTA then hired four jitney companies, which hired 200 jitney operators. The MDTA helped jitney operators comply with local codes through connecting them with insurance and providing loans to upgrade their vehicles. Contracting out in such a fashion was a way of expanding the supply of labor and capital quickly and temporarily. Operators were paid at a rate of $21 per hour, which is over two times what jitney operators made without any type of government subsidy. Twelve routes were established to feed the Metrorail line. They operated at five to ten minute headways. Emergency needs shifted constantly, and the flexibility of the jitneys allowed them to reorient and deviate their routes and service focus on a daily basis.

In August, the hurricane emergency ended and FEMA ceased funding for transportation services. MDTA was pleased with jitney service in South Dade county and wanted to maintain a contract with operators, but without public subsidy. After having seen the good life, many operators were unwilling to go back to making just over minimum wage – especially outside their core markets of dense, low-income minority communities in North Dade County. Many withdrew their profits from the Hurricane
Andrew incident and invested in other opportunities – particularly construction - or found more lucrative work. Finally, the MDTA was able to contract out to Red Top Transportation to continue to serve South Dixie Highway in South Dade County, a route primarily patronized by farm workers and other non-English speaking populations. With a 25 cent transfer fee, the Red Top route is fully integrated with MDTA routes.

**Conclusion**

Since their initiation in the earlier part of the 20th century, jitneys have operated in areas where larger transportation providers did not provide service. Jitneys began as a way to provide service to North Miami residents that were outside of the streetcar lines. The bread and butter market for jitneys were less dense, low-income, minority areas where the MDTA did not operate. However, during the jitney’s proliferation in the early 1990s, jitneys showed some ability to operate in a broader market than low-income minority neighborhoods.

Jitney service operated in a cycle from no regulation to heavy regulation. When jitneys were not allowed to operate on more lucrative routes, there was unmet demand for greater frequency and capacity from travelers. Once, the legal loophole was discovered, jitneys were able to proliferate and meet this demand. However, they did so at very low costs and low profit margins, which engendered somewhat cutthroat competition. This angered city officials, MDTA officials and unions, and many middle class citizens, which applied pressure to close the loophole and regulate jitney service. This suggests that some regulation of the service is necessary to ensure quality of service standards keep jitney opponents at bay.
Current Service

*Operating Basics*

Currently, 18 companies have permits to run on 21 specified routes in Dade county. One company, Metro Jitney, has a contract with the MDTA to run service in South Dade County. With the addition of jitney services in South Dade County, routes and services resemble those offered just before the influx of unlicensed operators in the early 1990s. Miami Mini Bus is now the largest jitney operator with 59 vehicles. There are currently a total of 136 jitney vehicles in operation (Miller Consulting 2003) Jitney services primarily feed residents from Northern neighborhoods to Government Center in Downtown, which is a major rail transportation hub to other locations. While there is no data available for current ridership, if ridership is proportional to jitney operators, there are approximately 10,350 daily weekend jitney riders in Miami.

These routes primarily head downtown transit stations – particularly the government center station. Approximately 25% of trips are destined for places other than work or home. Shopping trips, medical trips, and other types of trips represent 20% of total trips. This is a low percentage of non-work trips compared to the national figure of 59% non-work transit trips nationwide (Giuliano 2002). Miami jitneys therefore, primarily feed commuters into downtown jobs and transit hubs.

Jitney vehicle seating capacity is less than 15, which is substantially less than the 40 seat buses of the MDTA. These smaller buses provide higher frequencies than larger buses: two smaller jitneys can often run at the same cost as one large bus. Additionally, they work well in areas with limited demand, such as low density areas in North Miami. In these areas, the capacity of the bus provides a better fit for the routes’ low ridership.
Who Rides Jitneys?

For the most part, jitney passengers are the working poor. More than ¾ of jitney passengers have annual household incomes that are less than, $20,000. Like many jitney drivers, many riders are immigrants. English is not the first language of more than 60% of jitney riders. Many of these riders are coming from places in the Caribbean where such services are quite normal.

Jitney Pilot Program

The MDTA is initiating a jitney pilot program along four routes in Dade County to examine the cost savings and service improvements of using jitney services. Most of these pilot routes are underperforming, low ridership routes. Miller Consulting estimates that the MDTA could cut costs by 40% by contracting out to jitney services. The MDTA would simply lease the vehicles for $1,000 per month and then lease them to jitney operators for $250 per month, leaving a net cost of $750 per month per vehicle. Any other operating costs and revenues are the responsibility of the jitney operator. Through contracting out, the MDTA only incurs the cost of paying for the vehicle, and the jitney service operates the rest. One jitney operator, Conchita Express, has offered to run a MDTA, 70-minute headway route with 10 minute headways (Miller Consulting 2003). This is a seven-fold improvement in frequency at the same time that the agency has reduced costs. Conchita never actually submitted a detailed feasibility proposal. They only asserted that they could run the route with no subsidy (Miller Consulting 2003). It is likely that at these headways, Conchita Express will operate at minimum wages and little to no profit margins (Miller Consulting Group 2003). It is possible that Conchita is too
optimistic about their ability to provide such a large quantity of service. Time will tell if they are able to deliver the promised frequencies.

**Qualitative Characteristics**

Qualitatively, Miami jitneys offer a different service than the MDTA. A journalistic comparison in 1991 by the Miami Herald provides some insight into popular perceptions about the qualities of these two services. According to the report, jitney drivers were friendlier and more flexible than MDTA drivers. Jitney drivers would stop anywhere the passenger wanted and would not require exact change to board the bus. One rider was quoted as saying, “the minibus was courteous and willing to work with passengers” (Miami Herald 1991). The MDTA, on the other hand, was perceived to be unfriendly, uncourteous, and unwilling to accept anything but the exact fare. Most jitney riders are immigrants (over half of the riders are non-english speakers), and the friendly familiarity of jitney operators allow the service to succeed in immigrant neighborhoods. Since many drivers are immigrants, it is likely that they speak the same languages as passengers, which makes the service even more user friendly for non-English speakers.

Cleanliness, comfort, price, and driving skill were lacking, however. Jitneys were typically unkempt, with tape often holding together seat upholstery. In order to provide an affordable, frequent service, jitney operators often cut corners in some of the aesthetic aspects of vehicle maintenance. Most jitneys were crowded and without air conditioning, which can prove to be a sweltering situation in Miami. Although the jitney fare was 25 cents less than the Metrobus fare, MDTA did not accept transfers from jitney operators. This essentially made jitneys a more expensive service than Metrobus for riders that intended to transfer to a MDTA bus or train. Finally, jitney operator driving was
considered to be aggressive during picking up and dropping off passengers, whereas the bus offered a smooth and predictable ride (Miami Herald 1991). Thus, while jitney service offers fast, friendly, and familiar service, the MDTA offers cleanliness, comfort, and driving predictability that many riders seek. Jitney services, therefore, appeal more to immigrant populations that are seeking a familiar service and travelers that prioritize speed over comfort. Additionally, if no transfer is required, jitneys are more affordable than Metrobus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Category</th>
<th>Jitney Rating</th>
<th>Jitney Description</th>
<th>Metrobus Rating</th>
<th>Metrobus Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Frequent during peak period. On time</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Less frequent. Often arrive early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Free of garbage. Seats visibly worn w/ taped up upholstery.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very clean. Trash and graffiti free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No AC. Can become crowded. Difficult to climb in and out.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Very large and comfortable. AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Drivers were courteous and friendly. Willing to stop anywhere or give change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drivers were unfriendly and uncourteous. Required exact change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fare was $.25 less than Metrobus. No transfers were an inconvenience</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Better deal because one can get a free transfer for $.25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average driving. Sluggish brakes. Passengers complain about aggressive driving practices for pick-up and drop off.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Smooth ride. Occasionally fast. One driver drove through a red light without incident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Due to the Miami jitney’s distinctive characteristics, they were able to create a distinctive market for their services. According to an Urban Mobility Corporation study in 1992, jitney’s were not simply “stealing” from the MDTA’s ridership, they were
attracting passengers that would otherwise choose transportation modes other than transit. Approximately 30% of jitney rider respondents indicated that even if the jitneys were not available, they would not take the Metrobus. Fifty percent of respondents said that they always choose to ride with jitneys, even when the Metrobus arrives first. Approximately 65% of jitney riders said they used the service because of its speed and frequency, and 21% said they used the service because it was less expensive.

**Demographic Conditions**

North Miami cities and census designated places where jitneys operate are generally wealthier and have higher car ownership levels than the Study Area, but they have greater densities and higher propensities for mass transit commutes. The median household income in North Miami is almost $30,000, which is approximately 30% greater than the incomes in the Study Area. Partly due to higher incomes, households in North Miami are more likely to own an automobile. Only 5% of households did not own a car in 2000, while 40% did not own a car in the Study Area. Densities are approximately 75% greater in North Miami than they are in the Study Area. Finally, 31% of commuters who do not work at home commute with public transit while only 22% use transit in the Study Area. Thus, there is heavier transit use in North Miami despite higher incomes and the availability of a car for the vast majority of households. In Miami, jitney services have been able to thrive in a denser, but less transit dependant environment (Census 2000).

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2 North Miami includes the following census places: Brownsville, Gladview, Golden Gables, Pinewood, West Little River, Westview, North Miami, and North Miami Beach
Regulatory Conditions

Jitney service is heavily regulated in Miami. Most services are required to apply for a license through Dade County Passenger Transportation Regulatory Division (PTRD), which demands that all vehicles maintain safety and insurance standards. Additionally, jitney companies receive licenses for certain routes, on which only 30% of it can be shared by an MDTA bus route. This effectively hinders competition with MDTA for the mass transit market and restricts jitneys to areas that are not served by the MDTA. Besides licensing, vehicle maintenance, and non-compete standards, operators must agree to carry no more than 15 passengers and operate for a designated number of hours in the day.

Operating Information

During the heat of the open season during the early 1990s, jitneys maximized passengers while keeping costs as low as possible. Free market entry allowed routes to become very competitive, with each additional jitney reducing profits to a very slim margin for each operator. Under this scenario, maximum service quantity is provided in terms of frequency, but operation costs are kept low, which means that the vehicle quality and wages suffer.

Along the five routes studied by the Urban Mobility Corporation in 1992, there were an estimated total of 10,505 jitney passengers per day. Each driver carried an
average of between 110 and 125 passengers. Daily ridership could range from 80 to 160 passengers depending on the day and the route. Given that there were 16.27 passengers per hour, and the fare was $1, the revenue per hour was $16.27.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 18: JITNEY REVENUE STATISTICS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Daily Vehicle Trips on Surveyed Routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Daily Ridership on Surveyed Routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Vehicle Trips Surveyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Passengers / Vehicle Trips Surveyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Hours on Surveyed Vehicle Trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Revenue - Hours/Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passengers / Revenue Hour</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UMC 1992. 31 vehicle trips surveyed.

Thus, in order for jitney drivers to earn a wage, jitneys needed to operate at costs less than $16.27 per hour. UMC estimated that monthly costs for capital, fuel, maintenance, insurance, and lease fees were between $1,625 – $1,725. Assuming a six day work week, daily costs range from $70 - $75. During an eight hour workday, hourly costs are approximately $9 per hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 19: JITNEY OPERATING COST STATS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Jitney operation provides modest pay, but it is an independent profession that provides job opportunities to hundreds of workers with limited employment opportunities. At hourly costs of $9 per hour and hourly revenues of $16 per hour, each jitney driver earned approximately $7 per hour. Thus, jitney drivers had an opportunity

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3 Revenue hour equals the number of hours that the jitney is actually in service.
to earn a wage, although a modest one: the minimum wage at the time was less than $5. Good days with more passengers means greater wages, and bad days often means a day without pay. Compared to a stable unionized bus driver wage of over $18 per hour, jitney drivers earn a low wage that fluctuates from day to day and week to week.

However, the jitney profession provides operators an independence that other professions do not have at a similar wage. Jitney operators essentially work when they want and how much they want, whereas MDTA bus drivers have strict work hours, pay scales, vacation days, and other rules. During the jitney’s heyday in the early 90s, approximately 400 operators were provided independent jobs that required minimal education or job skills. From an economic development standpoint, jitneys provided good jobs to many low-income residents with limited employment options.

**Lessons Learned – Miami Jitneys**

Thus there are several lessons learned from the Miami jitney case study that apply to potential solutions to transportation provision in the Atlanta Study Area.

- **Low costs and wages means more service:** Shorter trip times and headways can be provided to Study Area residents by keeping costs low. Jitneys can provide greater frequencies, because their low costs allow them to place more vehicles on the route.

- **Jitneys can create their own market niche rather than simply stealing from existing service:** Many residents appreciate the unique features of jitneys. The friendly, familiar service appeals to riders – especially immigrant and ethnic riders that associate with the driver and the type of service. The frequency of service is also very attractive for riders that value speed. Jitneys, therefore, could create ridership for MARTA as well as share it.

- **Jitneys have a competitive advantage over the transit agency in some neighborhoods:** Jitneys operate well in very low income, immigrant, and minority markets – especially where service has been insufficient. They also
operate well in less dense areas where vehicle capacity matches vehicle size. The Study Area, therefore, represents a strong market for jitneys.

- **Contracting out to jitneys can provide better, cheaper service:** Jitneys can provide service at much higher frequencies, and through collaboration with a transit agency, they can meet all governmental safety and insurance standards. This process can help the agency increase service and cut costs on routes where buses are underperforming, and it could help them supplement existing routes that require additional capacity. Jitneys, therefore could work with MARTA to supplement or replace their service where it is over or under performing. The transit union may be very resistant during this process.

- **Jitneys provide modest wages, but they also provide job opportunities for low skilled workers:** Many immigrants were able to find jobs as jitney drivers. Through a contract with the MDTA during hurricane Andrew, drivers were able to leverage their earnings to start their own businesses.

- **Jitneys are flexible and adapt quickly to market changes:** Jitneys are willing to work with passengers. They are occasionally willing to deviate from fixed routes. They also drop passengers off anywhere along the route. Additionally, they are able to quickly adapt to changing demand and route changes as shown by the Hurricane Andrew emergency crisis. Jitney operators move to routes where money can be made, so they quickly adapt their supply to meet changing demands. As job and service destinations change around the Study Area, jitneys would be able to adapt.

- **Regulation Equilibrium Is Necessary:** Too much regulation leaves unmet demand, but too little regulation cause the system to implode. Finding the right balance is essential.

**CLIFTON CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**
This case study examines how local (as opposed to regional) transportation organizations can effectively advocate for transportation improvements. It also introduces the shuttle and vanpool as paratransit modes. As an employer-based transportation organization, this case study serves as a mirror image of a resident-based organization that could be formed in the Study Area.

The Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA) is an organization comprised of major employers, including Emory University, that work together to provide alternatives to automobile commuting and congestion. CCTMA provides transportation advocacy, a shuttle service, and vanpools. Where transportation alternatives along this corridor were lacking in the early 1990s, CCTMA filled this gap in service through its own means. CCTMA meets the unique needs of the corridor in ways that MARTA cannot.

History

Transportation management associations (TMA) first arose in the early 1980s as a response to growing traffic and parking problems in employment clusters in primarily suburban areas. Employers worked collectively to form TMAs to administer programs and services that would help alleviate these problems. These TMAs are typically non-profit, contain board membership of large employers, and collect membership fees from employers to initiate and administer programs. Essentially, TMAs have represented the private sector’s response to the failure of mass transit agencies to adequately meet the needs of employment clusters in non-downtown locations. They are well funded, well

4 The primary source of information for this case study is an interview with Brian Shaw, the executive director of Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Authority.
organized, and politically connected. Consequently, they have often been successful at working with transit agencies to meet local needs. When transit agencies are ineffective or uncooperative, many TMAs have had the capacity to fund and operate their own interventions (Association for Commuter Transportation 2003).

The precursor to CCTMA was a transportation management program initiated out of Emory University in the early 1990s. As the University expanded, Emory experienced growing parking problems. Most employees lived away from campus because of expensive housing prices near the Emory campus. Many of these commuters drove, which caused congestion problems along the Clifton Corridor and increased pressure on the University to build additional parking. The University was reluctant to build more, since building structured parking on scarce land is expensive and has high opportunity costs. Consequently, the University began to explore other ways to manage their transportation problem. Emory hoped that by switching commuters from the automobile to transit, the growing need for parking could be alleviated. Emory began communication with MARTA for 8% reduced price fare cards. They also lobbied for increased transit connections between South Dekalb to the Emory campus. MARTA responded with express buses from the Kensington rail station to the Emory Campus. Additionally, MARTA coordinated its existing, fledgling shuttle services to appeal to commuters as well as students traveling around campus.

Other employers along the Clifton corridor, such as the Centers for Disease Control, the American Cancer Society, Wesley Woods, and Children’s Health Care, expressed interest in sharing in Emory’s transportation management programs, as parking for all employers was becoming increasingly stripped. Consequently, Emory, Clifton
Corridor employers, MARTA, Dekalb County Government, and the Atlanta Regional Commission worked to form a Transportation Management Association. The organizations, many of which were health sector non-profits, had a long history of informal cooperation, which made this collaboration easier. By 1998, the CCTMA was incorporated. All employer participants paid a base fee of $300 and $2 per employee. This amounts to a substantial funding source, as the Centers for Disease Control alone pays $11,200 annually in dues for its 5,600 employees.

CCTMA offered several services. Emory shuttle and MARTA discounted fare privileges were extended to the members of CCTMA. CCTMA initiated vanpools, or large CCTMA subsidized carpools. They also started a Guaranteed Ride Home Program, which promised five free rides home per year for employees who needed a taxi ride because of an emergency, late night at work, or other reasons. Finally, CCTMA operates a shuttle service from the Decatur MARTA station to the Clifton Corridor.

**Shuttle Service**

In 1999, CCTMA worked with the Atlanta Regional Commission to apply for federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding for an expanded shuttle service that connects the Decatur MARTA rail station to the Clifton Corridor. CMAQ is $6 billion federal program that is administered at the local level. CCTMA provided a $45,000, 20% local matching grant to expand the service. The total capital costs of the service were approximately $225,000. CCTMA negotiated with MARTA to place a bus stop bench at the Decatur MARTA station, which was the first private bus bay located at a MARTA station.
CCTMA operates a shuttle service that runs from the Decatur MARTA station to the Clifton Corridor. No fare is required for the shuttle, as costs are paid by CCTMA employer members. Even visitors can use the shuttle for free. During the AM and PM peak periods, the shuttle leaves every 30 minutes. It leaves approximately every hour during the base period. Daily weekday ridership for the shuttle is 316, or 7,000 riders per month. Monthly ridership has grown from 5,000 in 2001. CCTMA uses a third party contractor to operate the service. Approximately 20-seat minibuses are used for the operation. For each bus, CCTMA pays a yearly sum that amounts to approximately $32 per revenue hour. According to the CCTMA, this equals about $1.10 per passenger trip.

Initially, CCTMA worked with MARTA to explore if they could operate the Decatur to Clifton Corridor service. However, MARTA was doubtful about ridership and revenue generation on the route, and the CCTMA realized that it would be more effective to run the route themselves. Currently, CCTMA’s per passenger costs are 65 cents cheaper than MARTA’s. Lines of communication are still open with MARTA for them to provide the service, but the organization is too cumbersome in many ways to provide the service at a more affordable rate than a private contractor. MARTA very rarely runs minibus services. They would most likely run their large bus formats on the route, which would lower frequencies. Also, MARTA pays union wages, which drives up costs.

Another critical reason why CCTMA has been able to run the service more effectively than MARTA is because of the substantial participation of local employers and the strong local relationships that have been built through this participation process. This participation generates energy and ownership over the system, which builds ridership. For example, each employer has high ranking employees sitting on the board.
of the CCTMA, and each employer has a transportation coordinator that helps promote CCTMA services. MARTA, as a semi-regional operator does not have these strong local relationships, nor are they as engaged with local employers and other organizations. In reference to the service’s high ridership and low costs, Brian Shaw noted that, “the service would not be what it is today if MARTA was running it.”

**Vanpools & Guaranteed Ride Home**

CCTMA subsidizes and organizes a vanpool service, which is a large carpool that riders subscribe to. CCTMA won a grant from the Clean Air Campaign to promote vanpools and provide incentive subsidies. CCTMA is therefore able to subsidize each vanpool with approximately $1,000, which is essentially one free month of commuting, or a “try it before you buy it” incentive. Thus, the vanpool service is affordable to provide, since an organization only has to provide $1,000 of incentives per new vanpool formed. The rest of the costs are in the administration and advertising of the program. The monthly costs of leasing the van and fuel are typically between $60 and $100. This is cheaper than driving alone – especially when car maintenance costs are taken into account. CCTMA has formed vanpools which leave from Stockbridge, Morrow, Douglasville, Fayetteville, Ellenwood, Snellville, Kennesaw, Loganville, and Lithia Springs. Currently, a total of 132 commuters are using the vanpool program. This represents daily weekday ridership of 264, which is only 15% less than CCTMA shuttle ridership. Thus, vanpools generate significant ridership with very low costs.

The primary disadvantage of vanpools is inflexibility. In order for the vanpool to work, all participants must leave home and work at the same time. Participants, therefore, need standard, rigid work schedules. Vanpools, for example, cannot have
employers that expect them to stay late at work when a project is due the following day. Additionally, the inflexibility of a vanpool can leave a participant stranded at work in case of an emergency at home from work. The Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) attempts to compensate for this inflexibility in the vanpool program. GRH provides free taxi service up to five times a year for emergency situations. This is a small service, but it provides the psychological security that may be necessary to convince a drive to join a vanpool.

**Discount MARTA Passes**

The CCTMA was able to negotiate with MARTA for 8% discounted MARTA passes. MARTA’s volume discount program allows CCTMA to take advantage of the fare discount. CCTMA does not provide any subsidy for this program.

**Demographics**

CCTMA’s direct constituency is the employer members, which are primarily health related non-profits. The audience of CCTMA services, therefore, is more mixed in terms of income than the audience for potential services for the Study Area. Users are both high-income health professionals and low-income cleaners and security guards. Many of the workers using CCTMA services, are well-educated, upper, and middle class employees. All of the vanpool routes for example, originate from middle class suburbs, such as Stockbridge and Douglasville. Many low skilled workers also work in hospitals, offices, and health centers, so they are also able to benefit from CCTMA’s services. Although there is no income data available of shuttle riders, Brian Shaw notes that “everyone rides the shuttles.”
The shuttle route has very high employment densities at the destination point. In fact, Brian Shaw insists that any transit service needs the “built in transit principles that generate ridership, and density is one of them.” The Clifton Road corridor contains 18,148 employees per square mile, which is nine times the employment density of the Catchment Area, and 5 times denser than the residential population in the Study Area. Thus, in comparison to the study area, CCTMA has favorable densities for transit.

Lessons Learned – Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Authority

- **Local organizations work where MARTA cannot:** The CCTMA built strong relationships with local employers and established a process by which they could participate and feel a sense of ownership over the organization and its services. Employers, for example, help market and generate the consumption of CCTMA services. The CCTMA is structured to respond to the unique needs of the corridor, since local employers sit on the CCTMA board and drive the organization’s policy. MARTA is not locally focused enough to provide a similar service. Additionally, the CCTMA uses non-conventional, affordable methods of providing transportation along the Clifton Corridor: CCTMA utilizes minibuses and non-union drivers where MARTA cannot.

- **Private sector can be an effective partner in providing transit services:** The private sector also has incentives to improve transit service, such as alleviating parking costs, increasing employee satisfaction, and accessing employee markets that have trouble commuting to work. They also have considerable resources to bear if they are sufficiently engaged and interested. A transportation intervention in the Study Area could explore possibilities to partner with local retail establishments that wish to attract customers.

- **Transportation is more than hardware:** Organization and advocacy provide access to funding and special treatment by transit agencies. Pots of federal and local funding are available for transit programs and improvements, but it takes a knowledgeable and connected organization to find them. CCTMA has been able to access two different sources of federal funding through the Atlanta Regional Commission. This funding is not available to areas that do not have the expertise and organizational capacity to access them. Additionally, through advocacy, CCTMA has been able to receive special treatment from MARTA, such as reduced fares and a bus stop in the Decatur MARTA station. As a capable organization representing the collective will of several employers, CCTMA was able to effectively work with ARC and MARTA for preferential treatment.
FULTON JOB ACCESS PROGRAM

Introduction

This case explores some of the challenges of designing a government job access program using inter-agency partnerships. This program is close to home for the Study Area. It operates in the same county and serves a population with similar demographics. It also examines the use of demand-responsive service.

The Fulton Job Access Program (FJAB) was initiated in 2001 as a demand responsive service to connect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to employment, but it was cancelled in 2002 due to a lack of local support for the program. This case study explores the initiation of the program, the challenges of designing and sustaining such a program, and demand responsive service as a mode of paratransit.

Program Initiation

The South Fulton Job Access program was first generated out of the Atlanta Regional Commission’s (ARC) Job Access Transportation planning study. The ARC received a Job Access Reverse Commute grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to study job access needs for the Atlanta region’s low-income population. ARC generated recommendations for shuttle routes that could improve connections between low-income areas and jobs – particularly employment that is located in outlying counties.

5 Most of the information in this case study comes from interviews with the following people: Leigh Ann Trainer (Georgia Department of Human Resources), Carolyn White (ARC), and Liz Williams (Special Touch Transportation)

6 A demand response service is a mode of transit whereby the passenger schedules a pickup with a dispatcher who sends a vehicle. They are similar to shared ride taxis, but a demand response service typically has more seating capacity for bundled trips.
One shuttle recommendation was for an area in southeast Atlanta named Neighborhood Planning Unit Y, which is in Southeast Atlanta and encompasses the Study Area. With the plan, the ARC hoped to generate interest in applying for a Job Access Reverse Commute Grant from the FTA (ARC 2003).

ARC brought the project to the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency (AWDA). The parties changed two elements of the original plan: the service area was changed to include all of Fulton County, and the shuttle was modified to a demand-responsive service. All agreed to support the revised program and apply for Job Access Reverse Commute funding with the assistance of ARC. The Department of Labor and the Atlanta workforce Development Authority were charged to find job interviews for TANF recipients and refer the demand response service to those who had limited transportation access. The Georgia Department of Human Resources, which manages the TANF program, agreed to provide the 50% local match for the first year of $338,000. In 2000, the partnership received funding to execute the project, and the operation of it was contracted out to Special Touch Transportation, a local American Disabilities Act paratransit provider.

**Service Description**

FJAP was for welfare recipients who needed a ride from home to a MARTA station, or from home to an area of the region that public transit did not reach. The caseworker would contact FJAP if a recipient needed transportation assistance while hunting for a job. FJAP would then call the job seeker to schedule a time to pick up the resident from her home. If the job was accessible by public transportation, the van service would drop residents off at the nearest train station. If the job was not accessible,
the van service would transport them directly to the employment site. When public transportation was not available, the FJAP would take residents to job training. The service was available to residents until 90 days after a job was required - rationale being that workers would be able to purchase a car after 90 days at work. The service was free to passengers, even to the children of participants who needed to come along when child care was not available.

The service area was Fulton County, which includes the City of Atlanta, small cities to the north and south of Atlanta, and unincorporated Fulton County. In an effort to provide residents wider access to job opportunities, the service could transport residents from the service area to other counties in the metropolitan area. Although there were no records kept on trip destinations, Williams recalls that Jonesboro Road in South Fulton and Clayton Counties, Southwest Dekalb, Lithonia, and Alpharetta were common destinations for van service riders. These are all destinations that have limited MARTA access by rail or by bus, but have growing job opportunities in services (and manufacturing in Jonesboro). Common origins were Cascade Heights, Northwest Atlanta, College Park, Fairburn, and East Point. With the exception of College Park and East Point, these are origins with limited public transit coverage. Although East Point and College Park riders have excellent access to MARTA rail, one can infer that they were using the service to access job destinations that were inconvenient by MARTA. The Study Area was not mentioned as either a common destination or origin for this service. However, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the Study Area’s place in this program without sufficient origin and destination data.
Service Performance

Monthly ridership for the FJAP averaged 888 riders per month and ranged from 475 to 1,329 monthly riders. The program experienced its highest ridership in the summer of 2001 but experienced a drought the winter after September 11th. It is possible that the drought was a result of a hesitant job market after September 11th. After the Winter of 2002, ridership rose to its highest levels. There were several factors restricting ridership. First, there are approximately 9,400 TANF recipients. The fact that only TANF recipients were eligible for this program limited the audience for the service. Second, people were only referred to the service if the origin or destination had poor transit coverage. AWDA and the Department of Labor already negotiated for free MARTA passes for TANF job seekers, and many potential passengers were referred to MARTA instead of the van service if the origin and destination had decent transit coverage. Third, job seekers could only use the service for 90 days after a job was acquired. Thus, the service was not designed to build permanent ridership, but to transfer riders to other forms of transportation. Given these factors, and that ARC only expected 15% (1409) of TANF recipients to use the service for sporadic job interviews, an average monthly ridership of 888 appears to be substantial.
Demand responsive service is expensive. The national average for ADA demand responsive service is $19 per trip (Palmer et al 2001). Just Touch Transportation estimates that each trip cost between $10 and $20, indicating that Just Touch’s costs were not extraordinarily high compared to other ADA paratransit services. FJAP cost over $10 per passenger trip due to the difficulty of ridesharing or bundling passenger trips. Although by the end of the first year, Just Touch was beginning to work through how to bundle passenger trips. For the greater part of the year, the service carried one person per trip. Bundling trips is particularly difficult when passengers have extremely different pick-up and drop-off places and times. The Director of Just Touch asserted that costs could be cut to under $10 per hour through hiring part time drivers that would not have to sit idle during the base period. Additionally, new technologies in scheduling, routing, and tracking vehicles have been developed to increase trip bundling abilities. On a large scale, these technologies can reduce costs per passenger trip by making each trip as efficient as possible. Less than half of ADA paratransit services nationwide have incorporated such ridesharing technologies, however (Palmer et al 2001)

Service Termination

After the first year of operation, the service was terminated due to a lack of commitment for local match funding. The Department of Human Resources wanted to share the costs of the match funding with their partners in Department of Labor and AWDA, but they were unwilling to pay to continue the program. AWDA and DOL felt that ridership was insufficient and agencies blamed each other for the low numbers. Georgia Department of Human Resources blamed AWDA and DOL for not providing enough job placements and not sufficiently referring the service to TANF clients. The
program is certainly not in the collective memory of the organization. I spoke with two case workers that were with AWDA during the job access program and neither of them recalled the service. AWDC and the Department of Labor felt that their free MARTA pass program to TANF clients was good enough, and they were unwilling to pay over $100,000 for another transportation program. They asserted that ridership was too low to warrant it. Just Touch Transportation asserts that providing quality job access service requires a public commitment and investment that government agencies were not willing to provide. Additionally, they assert that the 90 day requirement is too short a period of time to acquire an automobile. They question the ability of riders to retain jobs without transport after the 90 day period. Thus, many of the parties in the collaboration were not optimistic about the commitment of other parties, were not on the same page about the value of the program, and were not positive about the efficacy of the program in getting people to jobs and keeping them there. As a result, the coalition fell apart.

**Lessons Learned – Fulton Job Access Program**

- **Partnerships with job placement agencies can supplement transportation programs:** Transportation can take unemployed residents to employment, but alone, it cannot get them jobs. The Job Access program included a partnership, although tenuous, with employment agencies that were able to connect residents to employment. A transportation intervention in the Study Area should keep in mind that transportation is only one part of the job access equation: relationships should be formed with employers directly or through job placement agencies.

- **Demand responsive service is expensive, but it provides door-to-door service to jobs region-wide:** At over $10 per passenger, demand responsive service is costly. By comparison, Miami jitney service, and CCTMA service run at $.62 and $1.10 per passenger respectively. However, demand responsive service provides access to a sprawling metropolitan area, where densities are low and origins and destinations are decentralized.

- **Narrowly defining the customer base can hurt ridership:** The program restricted service to TANF recipients, those who had limited MARTA coverage.
at the origin or destination point, and those who were looking for jobs. A transportation intervention in the Study Area should think more broadly about their customer base in order to create a more sustainable service.

- **Multi-agency partnerships are useful, but difficult to maintain:** All of the right people were at the table to create a successful job access partnership. As mentioned above, both transportation providers and job placement providers are necessary in a jobs access program. However, ultimately, agencies valued the program differently, and commitment to the program faltered.

**CASE STUDY CONCLUSIONS**

A few common themes emerge from the case studies. First, in many communities, local organizations can provide some services better than transit agencies. Transit agencies should have a regional focus, as it is important to create a comprehensive regional transit network. However regional agencies often allow local needs to fall through the cracks. Many communities require a unique approach for unique problems, and large regional agencies may not be nimble enough to devise individual solutions for individual communities. Second, in the case of Miami jitneys, lower transportation service costs can lead to more frequent service. These lower costs typically come in the form of wages that are lower than the $18 or more union bus driver wages, but the benefits are transferred to the consumers whose wait times are significantly reduced. Third, in the case of Miami Jitneys and CCTMA, excellent, locally focused service can create ridership. In Miami, jitneys were able to provide a distinctive service that had a dedicated ridership base. In the Clifton Corridor, CCTMA was able to generate ridership through organizing employers around it.

However, these three case studies evaluate very different programs and modes of paratransit that attempt to fill transit service gaps. There is no one solution to transportation access problems. As these case studies exemplify, people have taken
different approaches depending on the local context, the constituency served, and the nature of the problem.

In order to provide a more detailed comparison of the case studies, it is useful to pull lessons learned from each case study and apply them to the framework that was presented at the beginning of the chapter. These case studies sought to explore 1.) strategies to fill service gaps, 2.) areas where a local organization is more effective than a regional transportation agency, and 3.) the merits of different types of paratransit.
### Fig. 21: CASE STUDY COMPARISON AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDY AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas Where Organization Is More Effective Than a Regional Transit Agency</th>
<th>Paratransit Type</th>
<th>Paratransit Cost</th>
<th>Demog.</th>
<th>Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transit entrepreneurship. Operators coming from neighborhoods that they serve. Work with MDTA to supplement or replace routes.</td>
<td>Providing frequency in non-dense corridors. Low-income, minority areas - especially with a large immigrant population.</td>
<td>Jitney</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low-income. Large immigrant population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt partnership to deliver job access program.</td>
<td>Connecting transportation with employment.</td>
<td>Demand Response Shuttle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low-income. Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and advocate for local constituency around transportation issues. Operators should come from neighborhood. Should explore partnership with private sector</td>
<td>Providing frequency in less dense corridors. Low-income, minority area. Organizing to generate awareness and ridership. Responding to the unique needs of a local constituency. Partnership with private sector</td>
<td>Jitney, Carpool</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low income. Small immigrant population. Low-density</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study Area Needs:** limited local advocacy, Long travel times & overcrowded buses, shopping trips, spatial mismatch

**Study Area Proposal:** 1) Community transportation development and advocacy organization. 2) Jitney circulator to shopping possibly using private partnership w/ retailers. 3) Jitneys to supplement or supplant existing MARTA routes to improve frequency and/or capacity where needed. 4) Organized carpools to outlying county job centers.
Given the context of the Study Area and problems that were identified in Chapter Two, strategies that are appropriate for the Study Area have been pulled down from the case studies. Thus, lessons and strategies learned from case studies can be applied to problems in the Study Area. First, a transportation advocacy and development organization, such as the CCMTA, would be useful for the Study Area. Such an organization would help address the lack of local transportation advocacy and development in the Study Area. Second, jitneys similar to those found in Miami, would be appropriate for a couple of uses in the Study Area. Jitneys are an affordable, flexible way to provide rides to shopping that could deviate from the route to drop shopping bag burdened passengers at their houses. They are also an affordable way to supplement or replace MARTA routes to provide improved frequency and decrease travel times. Finally, organizing carpools provides miniature transit routes for those without a car and makes commuting more affordable for those with a car. These basic proposals will be carried forward into the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR – PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

Given identified needs in the community from Chapter Two and the lessons learned from case studies in Chapter Three, four proposals will be forwarded to improve transportation access for Study Area residents. First, a Community Transportation Organization (CTO) should be formed in the Study Area to fill transportation service, advocacy, and organizing gaps. Second, a local jitney circulator should be established by the CTO to transport residents to shopping opportunities. Third, the CTO should organize carpools to outlying counties, thereby creating mini transportation routes and social networks to job rich areas. Fourth, CTOs should propose to supplement MARTA routes with jitneys, thereby increasing service on existing routes or allowing MARTA to cut costs while not cutting service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation advocacy and organizing</td>
<td>Create Community Transportation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long commute times and overcrowded buses</td>
<td>Seek contract from MARTA to run jitneys along overcrowded underperforming MARTA routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor access for non-work destinations - especially shopping</td>
<td>Create jitney circulator route to key shopping destinations on Moreland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Mismatch</td>
<td>Create carpool routes to common work destinations in outlying counties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, a Community Transportation Organization (CTO) should be formed in the Study Area to fill service, advocacy, and organizing gaps. The CTO could provide
‘soft services,’” such as advocacy and “hard services,” such as new routes, that could improve transportation access for Study Area residents. This work, in many ways, is similar to what community development corporations do. CDCs identify needs that are not being filled by the public or private sector, and they have capacity to fill many of those. The proposed work of CTOs is a neglected element of community development that could be rolled into what some CDCs do. While CDCs have focused primarily on housing and secondarily on economic development, they have mostly overlooked transportation as a critical element in the health of communities.

**NON-WORK CIRCULATOR SERVICE**

**Service Concept**

In response to the gaps in service to shopping, one potential solution is a neighborhood jitney service, which transports residents from the Study Area to a local supermarket, dollar store, and mass merchandiser (i.e. Wal-Mart, Target). The jitney service would be flexible enough to drop residents off that are within ¼ mile of the established route, thereby preventing residents from walking home with cumbersome, purchased goods. Jitneys could provide high frequency service, thereby reducing inordinately long travel times. Additionally, stores could subsidize the route. In return the service could provide additional trips and revenues to participating shops. In general, jitneys would provide a frequent and convenient service that would increase Study Area residents’ access to shopping.

**Proposed Destinations**
Kroger and Super Valu are the two supermarkets that are closest to the Study Area. They are both located on Moreland Avenue, just to the east of the Woodland Hills neighborhood. Kroger is the largest supermarket chain in Atlanta. The store features quality product and fresh produce. Kroger pioneered to the community soon after 2001 and it was the first chain supermarket to locate in the community in over 30 years. The Super Valu is a discount grocery store with more affordable goods, but less variety and quality than Kroger. Approximately 50% of respondents during informal bus stop interviews commented that Super Valu was their preferred store, primarily because of the cheaper prices. About 10% went shopping near their workplace and then boarded the bus to go home.

A Target is proposed in Atlanta 2.3 miles north of the Study Area on Moreland Avenue. This Target will be the closest discount superstore to the Study area. The next closest supercenters are Target and Wal-Mart which are approximately six miles south in Clayton County. The Target on Moreland Ave will also feature several stores that are not available locally, such as a Lowes, Bed Bath and Beyond, and other large chain stores.

**Route Selection**

A route was selected to pass through the densest portions of the Study Area and provide coverage to almost all census blocks in the Study Area. The large multi-family complexes and areas in South Atlanta were particularly dense. A ¼ mile buffer around the proposed route, or the area that is within walking distance of the proposed route, intersects over 85% of blocks in the Study Area. The few blocks that are excluded are in the Boulevard Heights Thomasville, and Villages at Carver neighborhoods. The Villages at Carver were excluded, as it appears that most residents from this complex go shopping
Downtown. After circulating through the neighborhood to pick up passengers along the route, the service will spill onto Moreland Avenue and will run express to particular stores. Depending on which retailers are cooperative, this could include two dollar stores, three grocery stores, and the Target shopping center. On the return trip, the jitney is encouraged to deviate from the route to provide service from the store to the passengers’ homes. The Study Area is small enough such that service deviation would not remove the jitney far from the route. Additionally, smaller vehicles allow for the kind of neighborhood penetration and route deviation that MARTA cannot achieve given their large bus sizes with low tuning radii (Hemily et al 2002).

**Jitney Operational Model**

An elementary model was developed to understand the logistics of a jitney route. Once the route is determined, there are particular exogenous variables that are outside the immediate control of jitney service planners. Estimated shopping trips by transit dependant residents, estimated travel time to Target, and estimated vehicle operation costs are exogenous to the model. There are also endogenous variables that jitney managers have immediate control over. Hours of operation, desired headways, desired wages, and fares are endogenous to the model. There are also hybrid variables which fall somewhere in between exogenous and endogenous, such as the service’s percentage capture of shopping trips. These hybrid variables depend heavily on the endogenous quality of service provided and the exogenous demand for the service.

---

1 Source: Interview with Villages at Carver Resident Services Manager. The Villages at Carver is on the western edge of the Study Area, and traveling to the Moreland Avenue side is most likely more time consuming than taking a bus Downtown.
In reality, endogenous variables and exogenous variables are not discrete, since changing endogenous variables can, in time, change exogenous variables. For example, increasing service frequency can increase the number of trips that people take to the grocery store. However, for the purposes of system design and decision making, it is useful to think of factors in terms of those that are under the immediate control of the manager, and those that are not.
### TRIPS GENERATED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Households within 1/4 mile of route</td>
<td>3,753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>US Census 2000</td>
<td>Created buffer around route in Arc View. All blocks intersecting buffer area were included.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Average annual shopping trips per household</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AC Nielsen Study 2002</td>
<td>Grocery, mass merchandise, drug store, supermarket, dollar store, warehouse included.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A x B x 2</td>
<td>Total trips per year</td>
<td>760,413</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assumes 20% of shoppers shop with another adult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Weeks in a year</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>C / D</td>
<td>Total shopping trips per week</td>
<td>14,623</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>% Without auto</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>US Census 2000</td>
<td>Excludes block group largely left out of 1/4 mile buffer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>E x F</td>
<td>Total weekly shopping trips for the transit dependant</td>
<td>6,288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>% use jitney</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>There are few other shopping options available. Depends on service quality and execution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>G x H</td>
<td>Total weekly shopping trips on jitney service</td>
<td>2,201</td>
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### DRIVERS FOR HEADWAY

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Miles to Kmart</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Route Measurement in Arcview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Speed to Kmart (mph)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>15% faster than average bus speed of 14 mph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Minutes for Kmart round trip (converted to min.)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Desired headway (Minutes)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>R / S</td>
<td>Drivers needed</td>
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### HOURLY COSTS

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<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hourly costs (without wage)</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Desired wage</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>U + V</td>
<td>Total hourly costs</td>
<td>27</td>
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</table>

### REVENUE AND SUBSIDY NEEDED

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<th>ID</th>
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<th>Value2</th>
<th>Value3</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Passengers per hour per driver</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>One way fare</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passenger revenue per hour per driver</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W - Z</td>
<td>Subsidy needed per hour per driver</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Well below MARTA operating costs of $0.50 per hour (excluding bus driver wages).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endogenous Variables

Hours of Operation

Nationwide, Saturdays and Sundays are the biggest shopping days, since households are unencumbered by work and have the leisure time to shop (Progressive Grocer 2002). Supercenter shopping is even more weighted towards the weekends, since there are typically fewer of them in convenient locations. According to Progressive Grocer’s annual report of the Grocery Industry, 38% of shopping occurs on the weekends, even though weekends only represent 29% of days during the week. The focus group also confirmed that weekends were peak shopping days.

In terms of existing transportation supply, transit during the weekdays is scarce. On weekends, the 48 Moreland Avenue bus, which runs by local grocery stores and Target, arrives every 45 minutes. Additionally, the 4 McDonough Boulevard bus, which runs through the Study Area and feeds the Moreland Route, arrives every 40 minutes. For both of these routes, the weekend headways are twice as long as peak period headways on the weekdays. Thus, shopping demand is high on the weekends, but MARTA supply is low.

In terms of time of day, there is limited data available about when shopping trips are made. A case study of Numero Uno market in Los Angeles indicates that peak periods were from 4-9 PM on the weekdays and from 10AM-9PM on weekends. Jitney service should be limited to peak hours on Saturdays and Sundays, when demand is high and supply is limited. Further research on shopping behavior needs to be conducted in the Study Area to uncover when exactly peak shopping periods are. Hopefully, the quality of service will encourage transit dependant residents to focus their shopping trips.
during this period instead of shopping at other times during the weekend. Concentrated neighborhood trips during this peak period would allow the jitney service to arrive more frequently.

Thus, as a way of testing the market, the jitney could begin operation on Saturdays and Sundays, when there is high demand for shopping and low MARTA supply. Jitneys would operate for a concentrated period between 12:00 PM and 5:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. Hours of operation should be clearly advertised to the public to encourage riders to shop during these times. If the service performs well, jitney operation could expand to weekday hours between 4 and 9 PM. This period overlaps with MARTA’s PM rush hour, but it also runs into night hours after 7:30, when buses are infrequent. Jitneys could, therefore, supplement MARTA service when they are reluctant to operate at high frequencies.

**Headways**

A frequent service would allow passengers to wait for a jitney without having to worry about scheduling. A five to ten minute frequency provides headways that are $\frac{1}{2}$ shorter than MARTA’s 20 minute peak period bus headways, and shorter $\frac{1}{4}$ shorter than MARTA rail headways. As seen in Chapter Two, time waiting for the bus is more onerous than time on the bus. Additionally, shorter headways would prevent residents from waiting outside for substantial periods of time, which is a key benefit to residents who are concerned about security.

**Wages**

Drivers will be paid by the mile. Paying by the mile instead of by the passenger prevents drivers from scrambling for passengers, which some found to be offensive in
Miami. It also prevents bus bunching if drivers are compelled to slow down to pick up as many passengers as possible. Each driver will make $10.00 per hour, which is slightly higher than CCTMA shuttle operator wages.

**Fares**

Fares will be set at $1.25 per trip. One dollar and a quarter is 29% cheaper than MARTA and 75% cheaper than an illegal taxi. This fare seems reasonable given existing alternatives.

**Exogenous Variables**

**Shopping Trip Estimates**

Shopping trip estimates are based on consumer shopping trip data collected by ACNielsen in 2001 (ACNielsen 2002). ACNielsen uses a sample size of 61,500 households in 23 major US cities to study consumer patterns, including annual household trips to various types of stores. For this analysis, household shopping trips to grocery stores, mass merhandise stores, supercenters, drug stores, dollar stores, and warehouse stores are included. Drug stores, supercenters, and warehouse stores are not available on Moreland Avenue or anywhere near the Study Area. Those shopping trips are assumed to shift to available shopping opportunities in grocery stores, dollar stores, and mass merchandise stores on Moreland Ave. Convenience store trips are not included since they are scattered throughout the Study Area.

Household trips were converted to adult trips by assuming that one out of every four household shopping trips included another adult. The Food Marketing Institute found that Latinos shop with another adult at least ½ of the time (Food Marketing
A conservative assumption would be that 25% of shoppers shop with one other adult. Children will not be charged for the service.

Cost Estimates

Estimates were based on the midpoint of Miami jitney hourly costs and CCTMA shuttle hourly costs. According to the Urban Mobility Corporation, jitneys operated at approximately $9 per revenue hour in 1992 (UMC 1992). Adjusted for inflation, those costs would now be $12.10. CCTMA provides service at $22.50 per hour, excluding wages (CCTMA 2004). The midpoint of these two figures is $17.30. The circulator route, therefore, would provide a service that would fall somewhere between the Miami jitney and the CCTMA shuttle in terms of quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 24: Operating Cost Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami Jitney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Cost per Revenue Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Cost Per Revenue Hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Urban Mobility Corporation, CCTMA, MARTA

Travel Time

The distance to Target is approximately eight miles from the beginning of the route. It was assumed that the jitney would travel approximately 15% faster than the average MARTA bus speed of 14 miles per hour (National Transit Database 2002) for few reasons. First, jitneys have a speed advantage over large buses due to their superior acceleration characteristics (Lau 1997). Nationwide, jitneys are 29% faster than motorbuses (National Transit Database 2002). Second, on weekends, traffic is minimal,
which would allow jitneys to travel at speeds well above the average MARTA velocity figure, which incorporates weekday and rush hour speeds. Third, the jitney will make fewer stops than a transit bus, given that each bus will carry less than 20 passengers. Finally, although the service will drop passengers off at their homes, the driver can create the fastest route to drop off all passengers. This route would most likely be no more circuitous than the route already is.

**Service Capture**

During the initial startup phase, it is estimated that the service would capture approximately 20% of transit dependant shoppers in the Study Area that are within walking distance of the route. After the service matures, the service should capture 35% or more of shoppers who shop during days of jitney operation. In Miami in the early 1990s, jitneys represented approximately 20% of weekday ridership. Given the door to door convenience of the service on days when MARTA runs infrequently, it seems reasonable to apply an initial 20% capture and an eventual 35% capture.

**Model Results**

**Drivers and Van Capacity Needed**

Based on a round trip time of 60 minutes and a desired headway of 7.5 minutes, seven drivers are needed for the service. Twenty passenger vehicles with space in the back for bags, should provide enough capacity to accommodate demand. Jitneys would carry an average of 24 adult passengers per hour, or approximately 12 passengers per trip. Twenty passenger vans, therefore, will provide approximately 25% more capacity than average to accommodate busy periods, children, and shopping bags. Perhaps a few seats could be reserved for baggage unless the vehicle gets unusually crowded. As a result,
riders would not have to worry about maneuvering around the vehicle with their baggage as they would be required to on the bus. If additional capacity is needed due to increased demand, more vans can be added to the route. One of the vans will be ADA compliant, which will provide access to disabled riders without adding costs to each jitney vehicle. Transit Capital Assistance grants from the FTA should be requested to make more vehicles ADA accessible. All vehicles would carry a distinctive logo and distinguish the service from other vans along the route. Finally, jitneys should carry advertising, which could generate additional revenues for the service.

**Subsidy and Potential Revenue Sources**

The jitney circulator service would initially require subsidy from retailers along the Moreland corridor. Ultimately, the service could operate without subsidy, but low ridership should be expected for the first few months of operation. At the startup 20% capture, retailers would need to contribute a total of $700 per weekend. If two grocery stores, a dollar store, a mass merchandise store, and the East Atlanta Business Association are signed up, the weekly cost for each retailer would be $148. A study by the Center for Advanced Studies in Nutrition and Social Marketing in California estimated that supermarket shuttle services in low income areas could increase profits (Mohan et al 2002). Nonetheless, in order to approach retailers for subsidy, locally specific research should be conducted to demonstrate the impact of such a service on retail sales.

As ridership capture raises to 35%, the service should become financially self-sufficient. In fact, the service will begin to generate revenue for the CTO. Weekday routes, are less lucrative given lower expected ridership during these days. Service
capture would need to approach 50% in order for the service to break even. Perhaps after a few years of weekend service, the jitney service will have earned a strong enough reputation to capture 50% of weekday shoppers.

Capital costs are already included in the operating cost estimate of $17 per vehicle per hour. According to the Miami case study, capital and lease costs represent approximately 28% of total costs, or $2.5 per hour per vehicle. However, this represents the capital costs of a jitney service that are spread throughout the year. Hourly capital costs would be much higher if they were only incurred during Saturdays and Sundays. Purchasing vehicles, therefore is not financially feasible. In order to keep capital costs reasonable, vehicles should be leased from local churches that do not use their vehicles on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The service can afford to pay approximately $25 per vehicle for per day. Fifteen passenger vans typically rent for about $100 per day, so churches would need to provide the vehicles at a charitable, deep discount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 25: MARTA AND JITNEY TRAVEL TIME COMPARISON</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Table" /></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MARTA Thomasville Heights to Target</th>
<th>Jitney Englewood Heights to Target</th>
<th>MARTA Thomasville Heights to Target</th>
<th>Jitney Englewood Heights to Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk miles to bus stop</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk time to bus stop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus miles to Target</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed to Target (mph)</td>
<td>12.56</td>
<td>12.56</td>
<td>14.44</td>
<td>14.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Time to Target</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Transfer headway</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Travel Time to Target</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>
Potential Drawbacks

Complications with MARTA, and the makeshift nature of jitneys are potential drawback for the shopping service. MARTA may perceive the service as a replacement of their existing service on Saturday and Sunday instead of a supplement. Consequently, MARTA could reduce service on those days, thereby negating the effect of whatever service improvement the CTO initiates. On the other hand, if MARTA views the service as a competitor, they may attempt to block market entry of the service through legal and political pressure. Additionally, using jitneys keeps operating costs low, but there are tradeoffs in other areas. Jitneys do not pay union wages to drivers, nor are they all adequate in terms of ADA accessibility. Additionally, given low operating costs, jitneys are slightly more ramshackle than traditional bus service. Some passengers may think that the service is comparison to MARTA services. Thus, the service tradeoffs inherent in jitneys and strained relationships with MARTA are potential setbacks of the shopping circulator.

Jitney Circulator Conclusion

The jitney circulator service would be simple, familiar, affordable, and easy to use. During clearly advertised operating times, residents can have the security of walking out to the route and expecting to see a jitney within ten minutes without worrying about scheduling. Residents will also have the security of knowing that they will receive a ride home. The service is a dollar and a quarter, which is affordable for Study Area residents. Finally, drivers would be from the Study Area, which would provide a level of familiarity to the service.
CARPOOL SERVICE

Lessons Learned from Case Studies

Several lessons learned from the case studies can be applied to a carpool service for the Study Area. First, carpooling is an inexpensive, appropriate transportation provision method compared to motor buses, frequent shuttles or demand responsive service. Carpools can work where only a few people from a common place need to reach a common destination. The only cost is the loss of commuting flexibility for participants. Second, in the case of the CCTMA, organizations that are embedded in the community are effective at organizing carpools. The CCTMA was able to use its local networks and knowledge to promote the vanpool and encourage commuters to use it. Third, transportation alone cannot connect residents to jobs. Transportation can take residents to a job, but it cannot get them hired.

Carpool Service Concept

In order to ameliorate the problem of spatial mismatch, the CTO should promote and organize carpools. Study Area residents with cars can carpool to common destinations in outlying counties, thereby creating miniature routes to job centers. Transit dependant residents can then piggyback on these routes, providing fast access to outlying counties. Additionally, carpoolers can be encouraged to seek employment for unemployed, transit dependant residents in the Study Area. The local transportation organization could offer a referral fee for employment leads that could then be passed on to Study Area residents.
Such a program would have several advantages. First, carpools would provide access to outlying counties that Study Area residents with cars have access to, but Study Area residents without cars do not have access to. Second, carpools are low cost transportation interventions that use existing resources and networks to improve transportation access. Third, carpools can provide extra resources to low-income drivers who participate. Riders typically chip in a share of the costs of gas and maintenance, and there are carpooling cash incentives that drivers can take advantage of. Fourth, carpools represent existing connections and networks with job centers that unemployed residents can tap into. Fifth, carpooling is not alien to Study Area residents. Carpools are already used for commuting more often than public transit.

**Common Commute Destinations**

Local transportation organizations should particular commute destinations while establishing carpools. areas should meet a couple of criteria. Several Study Area residents should already be commuting to the destination via automobile. This increases the chances that enough commuters will agree to form a carpool. Additionally, the destination should be poorly served by mass transit, as there is sufficient transit access to areas, such as Downtown and Buckhead. Norcross in Gwinnett County, Marietta in Cobb County, and Morrow in Clayton County meet these criteria.

**Norcross, Gwinnett County**

The area just Northeast of Norcross in Gwinnett county meets this criteria. Norcross is Northeast of the Study Area and to the Northeast of DeKalb County. To reach Norcross by public transit, Study Area residents must take a bus to Five Points station, a train to the Doraville station, a bus to Beaver Ruin Road, and then another bus
to Norcross. The entire journey takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. A direct commute via carpool would only take 36 minutes. In 1990, there were 34 Study Area residents that drove alone to work to the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) to the Northeast of Norcross. According to the Reference USA database, there are 25 employers with over 100 employees in this TAZ. Many employers with low skill jobs are located in this TAZ, including two hotels, two grocery stores, a metal manufacturer and wholesaler, and a paint and coating manufacturer.

**Marietta, Cobb County**

Marietta is located in Cobb County to the Northwest of the Study area and the Northwest of Fulton County. In order to reach Marietta by public transit, Study Area residents must take a bus Downtown, then transfer to a train to the Arts Center station, then transfer to a bus to Marietta. The entire journey takes approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes if everything goes as scheduled. Residents would probably allow for more time, as commutes with so many transfers, modes, and systems often do not go as scheduled. A direct commute via carpool, on the other hand would only take 37 minutes. In 1990, there were 18 Study Area residents that drove to work to the Marietta TAZ. According to the Reference USA database, there are 55 employers with over 100 employees in this TAZ. The largest employer is Lockheed Aircraft, which maintains the largest aircraft factory in the United States. This employer, among many others with over 100 employees contain employment that low-skilled Study Area residents would qualify for. Plastic manufacturers, sanitation goods manufacturers, metal coating companies, elevator supplies and parts wholesalers, and other companies are located in the this TAZ. Many
of these businesses likely employ many low-skilled workers given their type of employment.

**Morrow, Clayton County**

Morrow is located in Clayton County to the South of the Study Area and Fulton County. Morrow is significantly closer to the Study Area, since it is located on the Southside of the metropolitan area. To reach Morrow by public transit, Study Area residents must take the bus Downtown, take the train south to the airport, and then take a Clayton County Transit bus line. The entire journey takes 1 hour and 20 minutes. A direct commute via carpool would take 23 minutes. In 1990, there were 24 Study Area residents that drove alone to work to two adjacent TAZs in Morrow. According to the Reference USA database, there are 12 employers with over 100 employees in this TAZ. There are many manufacturing jobs in Morrow along with many retail jobs in Southlake Mall. Some manufacturing jobs include fence manufacturing, food processing, and concrete manufacturing.

**Service Costs**

Carpool costs are low for the coordinating organization – primarily because existing assets and travel patterns are the essential elements of the service. Cars owned by Study Area residents are used for the service. Coordinating carpools simply entails organizing residents that already commuteto a common destination. Advertising and outreach, therefore, are the only significant costs of the program. From the perspective of drivers, the primary cost is schedule inflexibility. Drivers in carpools no longer have the luxury to leave from work when they want, nor can they leave earlier or later than
scheduled. Some transportation organizations attempt to compensate for this inflexibility by providing incentives, which are described in the section below.

**Driver Benefits**

During the Summer, drivers can almost cut commuting costs in half through using various carpool incentives. During other times of year, drivers can shave commuting costs by 25%. The Clean Air Campaign estimates that a 30-mile commute in a single-occupant vehicle costs $281 per month including gas, insurance, and maintenance (Clean Air Campaign 2004). Incentives entice single occupant drivers to reduce these costs through carpooling. In the Clean Air Campaign’s Cash for Commuters program, drivers who used to commute alone can receive up to $180 over a 90 day period in the summer. Additionally many transportation management associations have received funding from the Clean Air Campaign for the Supersize Carpool Reward program. Each month during the year, this program distributes $25 British Petroleum gas cards to drivers for each rider in the carpool. The maximum drivers can receive is $75 per month. These two programs provide incentives above whatever informal arrangement is established about sharing driving responsibilities and costs amongst the carpool. Thus, carpooling can make commuting more financially feasible for Study Area drivers – especially low income commuters that have trouble with the fuel and maintenance costs of owning a car.

**Transit Dependant Rider Benefits**

Transit dependant residents in the Study Area can latch themselves onto existing carpools for a regular commute or a one-way trip for job interviews. A well developed carpool network would create several carpool shuttles extending to various parts of the metropolitan area. Transit dependant residents seeking fast transportation could find
which carpools are available to which locations through the CTO. The cost of latching onto a carpool varies based on the informal arrangement between driver and riders. However, if there are more than 2 people in the carpool, a reasonable round-trip cost would be $3, which is the daily share of commuting costs (excluding incentives). This is 50 cents cheaper than a MARTA round-trip fare. In addition to being cheaper, carpools can be significantly faster than mass transit.

**Carpool Management**

The carpool service could be managed by the CTO. Advertising would be directed to places such as churches, grocery stores, and barber shops. Additionally, the jitney service could also function as a key source of advertising and dissemination of information. Throughout the marketing campaign, Marietta, Norcross, and Morrow should be ed as candidates for carpool routes. Information about residents who are interested in carpooling could be collected, and those with common destinations could be contacted to form a carpool. In many other communities, technologies have streamlined this process. CCTMA features a website where employees can subscribe electronically and go online to view how many people have signed up for carpools. Given that low-income communities do not use the internet as much as higher-income communities, informal networks may serve as the best method of advertising and collecting carpooling information.

**Job Connection**

The Atlanta Job Access case Study is instructive because it demonstrates that transportation alone cannot provide employment. Consequently, the carpooling program attempts to connect Study Area residents to employment through the informal networks.
that exist in each carpool. Carpools represent networks of workers that have inroads to employment opportunities in particular places in the metropolitan area. Carpoolers could proactively seek job opportunities at their place of employment. In return, the CTO could provide a referral fee for each job interview provided to a Study Area resident. The CTO could then advertise the job opportunity to transit dependant residents and connect applicants to the carpool for transportation and job interview advice. Such a system provides employment through existing channels. It also provides a support network of people that can provide advice and support about interviewing and working in outlying counties, which is unfamiliar territory for many inner-city African Americans. Thus, the proposed carpool system not only provides transportation for transit dependant residents in the Study Area, but also provides job opportunities.

**Familiar Transportation Solution**

Study Area residents already carpool. In fact, they are more likely to carpool than take public transit. In 2000, 32% of Study Area workers carpooled to work, while only 22% took transit. Study Area residents are also two times more likely to carpool than City of Atlanta and Atlanta MSA commuters. Limited transit and availability of automobiles has already made carpooling an attractive option for many Study Area families. The carpool program would simply streamline and expand what Study Area residents already do by connecting residents to each other and financial incentives.

### Fig. 26: COMMUTE MODE SPLIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Public Transport</th>
<th>% Carpool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Atlanta</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta MSA</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Census 2000.
However, since Study Area residents already carpool more than average, it is possible that those who are willing to carpool already are carpooling. A carpool advertising campaign may not create additional carpoolers in the Study Area. It is extremely difficult to estimate demand for the service. Fortunately, there are not large initial investments, such as vehicle acquisition costs, in organizing carpools. A CTO could test the market by advertising carpools and then responding accordingly to exhibited demand without sinking significant costs.

**Potential Drawbacks**

The potential impact of carpools is small and the spatial mismatch problem is vast. Carpooling routes can only hope to be formed for a few job rich areas in outlying counties, and only a few jobs per year will arise from such a program. The approach to spatial mismatch could be a more ambitious shuttle program to suburban areas. Such a service would require substantial investment, subsidy, and organization, whereas carpooling takes advantage of existing assets. If carpools to a particular area is especially popular, the CTO could consider initiating a shuttle service.

**Carpooling Summary**

Thus, through carpools, a CTO can take measured steps towards alleviating the spatial mismatch problem through using existing assets. It uses existing automobiles. It uses existing carpool incentives. It uses existing travel patterns and behavior. Additionally, it uses existing networks with suburban employers to locate jobs for Study Area residents. The CTO simply collects and channels these assets that are currently disorganized. This is the appropriate approach for a community response to the spatial mismatch problem as opposed to an expensive shuttle or demand response program.
Carpools can expand and contract with demand, and they can create a low cost method of establishing informal routes to jobs in outlying counties.

From the perspective of the commuter, carpooling makes the commute feasible for transit dependant riders and more affordable for drivers. It provides job opportunities for Study Area residents, and it provides an informal support network of people experiencing some of the same challenges in the workforce. Finally, it is a familiar transportation solution, as carpooling is already used by a significant percentage of Study Area commuters.

**SUPPLEMENT EXISTING BUS ROUTES**

**Case Study Lessons Learned**

In the Miami case study, the private provision of transit featured low transportation costs. The MDTA contracted out to jitneys to provide services at a cheaper price than the transit agency could provide it. Some jitney companies were able to provide more frequent service because of their low cost structure, which translated to faster travel times for the public. Thus, contracting out to jitneys is an affordable way to provide transit service.

**Service Concept**

MARTA should contract out to the CTO to supplement overcrowded routes or replace buses on underperforming routes. For overcrowded routes, MARTA could purchase services from the CTO to provide additional jitney capacity on needed routes. MARTA would then be able to add capacity to the route for cheaper than they could by themselves. Additionally, they may be more willing reluctant to increase capacity when
the marginal costs of adding service is lower. This increased capacity would shorten headways and alleviate overcrowding for Study Area residents.

For underperforming routes, or routes with few passengers per bus, jitneys could replace buses to provide the appropriate amount of capacity to match demand on the route. Typically MARTA decreases service on routes where buses are not satisfactorily full, which creates longer headways and travel times for residents that continue to ride that route. Instead, jitneys can replace a particular number of buses on the route, thereby decreasing costs, maintaining frequency, and providing more appropriate capacity for the given demand.

Thus, jitneys operated by a CTO could provide assistance on routes that would benefit both MARTA and transit riders. In order to provide a more detailed example of how this would work, Route 4 (overcrowded) and Route 90 (underutilized) will be examined in the following sections.

**Overcrowded Route: Route 4 McDonough Blvd**

Route 4 is critical for Study Area Downtown commuters. Route 4 has the 2nd highest weekday ridership of any of the bus lines passing through the Study Area. It passes through most Study Area neighborhoods in a Southeast to Northwest movement to Downtown. Thomasville, Thomasville Heights, McDonough Guice, Chosewood Park, Benteen, and South Atlanta all touch Route 4 and use it to go Downtown. Also, MARTA’s proposed service cuts of other downtown lines lean heavily on Route 4 for support. MARTA proposed to discontinue service on Route 90, which South Atlanta residents utilized. Headways are being lengthened eight minutes on Route 49, which some Chosewood Park and Englewood Manor residents use. Route 17’s operating hours
have been shortened, and Route 55’s service has been curtailed on Sundays. All of these routes, with the exception of Route 90, are overcrowded beyond the crush load threshold (MARTA 2004). Thus, Route 4 is a transit spine for the Study Area, and as MARTA cuts service on other Study Area Downtown routes, Route 4 will carry even more riders. The Route is overcrowded. The average peak load factor is 1.75, which means that for every four people with a seat, three are standing. Even during midday, peak loads are 1.6 (MARTA 2004). As transit riders from crowded and discontinued routes begin to shift to Route 4, buses will become even more cramped. This is unacceptable by several standards. TCRP defines a 1.5 load factor as a “crush load.” Chicago, which has significantly higher transit ridership, set the load factor standard at 1.5 (Chicago Transit Authority 2001). Raleigh, NC set its service standard at 1.2 (Capital Area Transit 2004). Overcrowded buses send a message to transit riders that they are not sufficiently valued as patrons. Choice riders have the ability to opt out, but transit dependant residents are forced to tolerate inadequate service. Given Route 4’s overcrowded conditions, MARTA should add capacity to Route 4 to relieve its overcrowded conditions.

However, from MARTA’s perspective, they may be reluctant to add service because they are only able to add service to routes in large chunks of operating expense, seating, and capital expense. An additional bus along a route requires adding almost $48 per hour in operating expenses (MARTA 2004). Almost 40% of this cost is the additional expense of paying a bus driver to run the route. Additionally, with large buses, MARTA can only add seating capacity in chunks of 40 or more. If needed, MARTA could not add smaller increments. Finally, MARTA often needs to commit additional capital costs to add a bus to the route, which the agency is often reluctant to do.
Consequently, MARTA is slow to add service, and they often wait until a route becomes severely overcrowded before additional service is added.

From MARTA’s perspective, contracting out to jitneys has several advantages. Contracting out to a jitney service would allow MARTA to employ trial and error to add capacity that is appropriate for the route. MARTA could add jitney service in small increments such that the capacity supplied is just right. This is primarily because jitney operating costs are 1/2 as expensive as transit agency large bus service, so adding a jitney vehicle is less of a commitment for the agency. Additionally, jitneys have smaller vehicle capacity, which would allow the agency to add service in smaller increments to meet demand as it arises. MARTA would also not have to commit itself to the additional capital costs of purchasing a replacement bus. If the agency wanted to scale back transit service, for example, they could do so without having sunk costs on an additional bus. Thus, contracting out to jitney services would make MARTA less reluctant to add service where needed. It is an affordable and flexible way to reduce overcrowded conditions and increase frequency.

**Underperforming Routes: Route 90 Jonesboro Road**

MARTA has proposed to discontinue service on Route 90, which travels through the Study Area to Downtown (MARTA 2004). MARTA perceives the service to be underperforming, particularly since its subsidy per passenger does not meet the agency’s internal standards. However, there are ways to cut costs without cutting service. Through contracting the service out and replacing the larger MARTA buses with jitneys, MARTA can significantly reduce costs while providing similar levels of service. This
strategy is particularly useful during MARTA’s tight financial times, since it allows them to cut costs without significantly impacting riders.

Route 90, in many ways, is underperforming compared to other Study Area routes. It has low ridership compared other Study Area bus routes. It carries only 687 daily passengers on the weekdays, which is approximately 1/3 of Route 4’s ridership. The route does not meet MARTA standards for subsidy per rider of $2.42 per passenger. Daily revenue for the service is $500, and the total service costs are $2,187, which leaves a significant subsidy gap.

However, the route could meet MARTA’s subsidy standards through cutting costs on the route. MARTA currently runs four large buses during the peak period at a rate of $48 per revenue hour per bus. Given that there are 44 total bus hours during the day and 687 riders, the subsidy per passenger is $2.46. If MARTA replaced all of these buses with jitneys, which have an operating cost of $27.30, the net subsidy drops to $1.04, which is well below MARTA’s “fail threshold” of $2.42. In fact, the route could add 34 more hours of service, which represents almost two extra jitneys on the route, without passing the “fail threshold.” MARTA could run five jitneys along the route for the same price that it could run three buses. Thus, jitney service could not only reduce costs, but it has the potential to increase frequency as well.
Fig. 27: JITNEY COST SAVINGS AND SERVICE INCREASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MARTA</th>
<th>Jitneys Operating Same Hours</th>
<th>Jitneys Operating Just below Fail Threshold</th>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Cost / Hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekday Daily Hours</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday Operating Costs</td>
<td>2187</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>2145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Passengers</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Cost per Passenger</td>
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<td>1.76</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Revenue per Passenger</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsidy Per Passenger</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2.39</td>
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</table>

Source: MARTA, Jitney Operating Cost Estimates by Author

Fig. 28: 5 Jitneys Cheaper Than 3 Large Buses

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<tr>
<th>Units</th>
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<th>Minibus</th>
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<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>384</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
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<td>432</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MARTA, Jitney operating cost estimates determined in neighborhood shopping jitney program.

Potential Drawbacks

Many of the drawbacks mentioned under the shopping circulator service apply for this proposal. MARTA may not be receptive to CTO proposals to replace public MARTA buses with private jitneys. Essentially, service improvements is a tradeoff for cutbacks in MARTA union wages. Fewer MARTA buses mean fewer MARTA employees, and the MARTA union may make it politically difficult for MARTA to contract out bus services to the CTO.
COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION

Lessons Learned from Case Studies

The CCTMA case study provides several insights about locally based transportation organizations that have inspired and informed the proposal for a local CTO. The ability to negotiate and cooperate with MARTA brought significant benefits to the Clifton Corridor. Those in the CCTMA were able to receive reduced price fares, and the shuttle was able to place a small bench and waiting area in the Decatur rail station. Additionally, an adept and knowledgeable organization can find and access flows of transportation funding at the regional level. These funds are unavailable to communities that have limited organizational capacity. Finally, strong local networks and local participation builds ridership and improves service. CCTMA is very responsive to the needs of its members, and employers have a sense of ownership over the organization. Consequently, employers have used CCTMA services and have strongly promoted the services within each employer organization. Therefore, employer based transportation organizations with capacity can bring significant benefits to constituents. They bring the ability to negotiate with transportation providers, the ability to solicit participation and generate energy around proposed services, and the ability to access public sources of transportation funding. Many lessons learned in this employer based service can be applied to resident based services in the Study Area.

Community Transportation Organization Concept

The CTO would be a Study Area focused non-profit that would be able to provide “soft services” and “hard services” to meet some of the transportation needs of Study
Area residents. First, the organization would be able to provide transportation education and organizing. It could inform local residents about the transportation decision making process, how it affects the community, and how residents can get involved. This process can provide resident leadership and voice when issues arise, such as proposed service cuts or fare hikes. Second, the organization can provide informed advocacy to MARTA and other transportation providers. This kind of advocacy could generate goodwill from MARTA and benefits, such as reduced fares and the disinclination to cut service. Local advocacy could also cheerlead for MARTA by pressuring state government to increase support for the financially beleaguered agency. Third, the organization could initiate “hard services,” or transportation interventions to fill service gaps. A community transportation organization would have enough local accountability to develop these services with the guidance and support of community residents. In addition to accountability, the organization would have the capacity to implement transportation projects and gather pots of regional, State, and City funding. Thus, the organization would provide both “soft services” and “hard services” that are needed in the Study Area.

A CTO and community development corporation share similar approaches and origins. Like a CTO, a CDC is often created because neighborhood needs are not being met by the market or by the government in way that reflects resident needs. Additionally, CDCs are non-profits that work in a geographically bounded area with some sense of accountability to the community. CDCs work to fulfill neighborhood needs primarily through housing and economic development. Transportation, however, has been overlooked by the community development community, although it is a critical element of healthy neighborhoods. Thus, not only are CTOs similar to CDCs in many ways, but
they also are a missing element in CDC programming that could create stronger neighborhoods. A CTO, therefore, could be rolled into a local CDC in the Study Area as an additional programming element.

**Initiation**

An extensive community planning and participation process should be initiated. Although bus stop interviews and a focus group have been conducted in the Study Area, more on-the-ground work should be completed to discover resident preferences and needs. This process would aid in refining the agenda of the CTO through collecting information from neighborhood residents. Additionally, the process would serve to educate citizens about the menu of potential solutions for their transportation problems and engage neighborhood residents in transportation issues.

**Study Area Support**

The public participation process should focus its efforts where leadership is likely to emerge on transportation issues for low-income families. There are several existing institutions inside these neighborhoods, including churches, neighborhood associations, housing authority tenant associations, housing authority management, a community development corporation, and illegal taxi drivers. Mapping these institutions within the neighborhood is important to understand from where support and opposition to CTO services may emerge.

The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) and tenant associations in Englewood Manor, Thomasville Heights, and Villages at Carver are the institutions that are most likely to engage with transportation access issues for the poor. The housing authority complexes have the highest concentrations of households without automobiles.
Additionally, transportation generates feelings of frustration and powerlessness for housing authority residents that do not appear to exist in other institutions. Southstar CDC also recognizes the importance of transportation access for low-income neighborhoods, although their focus has been on housing and economic development. Southstar’s focus area includes many neighborhoods that are in the Study Area, including Woodland Hills, McDonough Guice, Thomasville Heights, and Benteen. Neighborhoods in the western and southern portion of the Study Area are not included in the CDC’s geographic boundaries. The CTO could approach Southstar about incorporating the CTO as additional CDC programming, thereby reducing the CTO’s administrative costs and increasing its networks in the Study Area. AHA, tenant associations, and Southstar CDC would, therefore, be likely sources of leadership and support for transportation improvements in the Study Area.

Additionally, informal taxi drivers that already operate in the Study Area could oppose a shopping circulator service if it threatened their operations. They, therefore, should be recruited as drivers for the service. First, this would preclude opposition to the service through cooptation. Second, the shopping circulator would gain drivers that have experience in providing transportation services, know many passengers, and are acquainted with neighborhood streets. Through incorporating drivers into the shopping circulator service, the CTO avoids potential conflict and gains skilled drivers with strong local knowledge.

Not all neighborhood institutions would be wholeheartedly supportive of a CTO. There are neighborhood associations representing each of the non-public housing neighborhoods in the Study Area. These associations primarily include higher income
residents in the neighborhood working on beautification and safety issues. Many of these residents are new arrivals to the neighborhood. They focus primarily on beautification and safety issues, while some associations work to attract development for higher income households. The South Atlanta Civic League, for example, asserts that they intend to attract higher income residents with single family development such that transportation services for low-income residents will not be necessary in the future. Additionally, churches would have limited initial interest in CTO transportation services, as they do not directly connect residents to Sunday services.

While public housing complexes can be the leadership base for a CTO, additional support in the Study Area will be necessary for the success of CTO services. Not all transit dependant residents live in public housing authority complexes; churches could be useful in marketing CTO services to low-income residents who need transportation assistance. Additionally, neighborhood association members could ultimately be consumers of improved MARTA routes, even if they own an automobile. If frequencies and service quality are sufficiently improved, choice riders may find transit desirable. Finally, although churches may not be consumers of CTO services, they could indirectly be providers. Since, many local churches already operate shuttles on Sundays, church vehicles could be affordably leased for shopping circulator services on Saturdays and Sundays after church. Thus, one can expect Study Area leadership to primarily come from public housing authority complexes, Southstar, and illegal taxi drivers, but the support of other neighborhood institutions will also be instrumental in the success of the CTO.

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External Support

Support from institutions external to the Study Area will also be important to the success of the CTO. External institutions can provide the legal, political, and financial support that would make the CTO a viable organization. The State of Georgia, ARC, GRTA, MARTA, and the Federal Transit Administration are the largest external stakeholders. In the end, it appears that support would primarily come from the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.

*Atlanta Regional Commission and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority*

Since many federal transportation dollars flow through ARC, their support is important for financing a CTO. Fortunately, both ARC and GRTA have recently approached transit provision in the Atlanta region as more than just MARTA. ARC has helped to initiate and fund transportation management associations around the Atlanta area, such as the CCTMA and the Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association. Additionally, the GRTA has been involved in starting small transit systems
in outlying counties where MARTA is not authorized to operate. Thus, regional transportation providers and decision makers have been supporting and funding a more decentralized transit provision system.

Additionally, the ARC seeks leadership on transportation issues from disenfranchised groups. As an agency that distributes some federal transportation monies throughout the region, they are required to solicit input from affected parties and ensure that investments will not have a disparate impact on minority populations. This is an extremely challenging task—especially for a regional transportation organization, who may find it difficult to garner participation from disenfranchised populations. The ARC and the Environmental Justice Group can utilize a CTO, which may be more effective at creating civic engagement at the neighborhood level. A CTO, therefore, could help the ARC achieve its goals of public participation.

**State of Georgia**

The State of Georgia is important in acquiring funding and also the legal permission to operate jitney services; operating jitneys could be illegal without the State’s authorization. The State of Georgia could reap substantial benefits from a CTO. A CTO would connect residents to jobs, which would lessen the welfare burden for the state. Connecting residents to employment would also be a form of economic development for low income job seekers and employers looking for a deeper labor pool of low-skilled workers. Additionally, such a service hits a political sweet spot in that it represents a decentralization of government, which would satisfy the right. However, it is also a community development program, which would satisfy parts of the left. Thus, a CTO in the Study Area would be an economic opportunity for the State that would be politically
palatable along the political spectrum. Although one could expect the State to be
tightfisted with mass transit projects, they should be willing to provide legal authorization
for CTO services.

**MARTA**

Such an organization would have a complex, and often contradictory relationship
with MARTA. The CTO would work with MARTA for service improvements in the
Study Area. If MARTA as a public agency values better service for its customers
regardless of who delivers it, they should be willing to work with the CTO. Also, since
the CTO would not receive significant State monies, it could make strong and even
confrontational appeals for additional funding for MARTA. However, the CTO could
also be perceived as a threat to MARTA. Where MARTA is not willing to cooperate to
provide service improvements in the Study Area, the CTO could, and often should, be a
thorn in MARTA’s side. Also CTO hard services might compete with MARTA in many
ways. For example, CTO routes could eat into MARTA ridership and call into question
MARTA’s competence as a transportation provider. Finally, MARTA union bus
operators may view the CTO as a threat to union jobs and influence. Thus, such an
organization must play a very delicate role with MARTA as their supporter, critic, and
competitor. Likewise, MARTA may be supportive of the CTO is some arenas, but
unsupportive in others.

**Governance**

The governance of the CTO would operate much like that of a Community
Development Corporation and many transportation management organizations. An
executive director should both have an understanding of the community served and the
transportation institutional environment on the regional and state levels. One assistant would also be needed for administrative assistance. Once again, a CTO could share capacities with an existing community development corporation, thereby reducing some of the administrative costs of running an organization. The organization would also hire mechanics and drivers who would work on a part-time basis. The board of the non-profit organization would include a mix of community members, regional transportation providers, and jitney operators. The board should be heavily weighted with community residents to maximize the organization’s responsiveness to community needs.

**Funding**

Funding for the CTO and its services would come from a variety of sources. The jitney circulator service would receive revenue from fares and retail establishments in its initial years. Eventually, the service should be financially self-sufficient. The carpool program would operate with subsidy and incentives from the Clean Air Campaign and the Atlanta Regional Commission. CCTMA and other transportation management associations have been able to run programs with similar funding in Atlanta. Supplementing MARTA service would not require subsidy, as MARTA would pay the CTO enough to cover its costs and possibly earn a small profit. Proceeds from this service would help support salary and administrative costs in the CTO. Additional funding would need to come from an operating grant from a community development foundation, such as the Low Income Support Coalition or the Enterprise Foundation.

**Phasing of Services**

The carpool service and the shopping circulator service should be implemented first. These services do not require enormous capital investments, and they allow
management and drivers to get accustomed to running transportation services. After a few years, when the CTO has gained sufficient experience and neighborhood support, the CTO should approach MARTA about supplementing one of their existing routes. Supplementing MARTA routes has the possibility of being a strong revenue generator for the CTO, which could eventually remove the need for operating subsidy from community development foundations.
### JITNEY SHOPPING CIRCULATOR

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<tr>
<td>Subsidy (Retail Stores)</td>
<td>(38,503)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6,732</td>
<td>5,093</td>
<td>3,413</td>
<td>1,691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CARPOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool Incentive /2</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool Advertising /6</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>3,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy / Profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy (Clean Air Campaign, ARC)</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>3,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5 Jitneys Contracted to MARTA, 19 Hours a Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver Wage /3</td>
<td>346,750</td>
<td>355,419</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Op. and Capital</td>
<td>599,878</td>
<td>614,874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>946,628</td>
<td>970,293</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTA Contract Fee @ $31/hr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,074,925</td>
<td>1,101,798</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy / Profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy Needed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138,162</td>
<td>141,616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROGRAMS TOTAL PROFIT

|     | 0 | 6,732 | 5,093 | 141,575 | 143,307 |

### CTO Operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent /5</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>51,250</td>
<td>52,531</td>
<td>53,845</td>
<td>55,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary for 2 Employees</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>87,125</td>
<td>89,303</td>
<td>91,536</td>
<td>93,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,125</td>
<td>5,253</td>
<td>5,384</td>
<td>5,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,125</td>
<td>5,253</td>
<td>5,384</td>
<td>5,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>148,625</td>
<td>152,341</td>
<td>156,149</td>
<td>160,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTO Admin</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy / Profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy Needed (LISC, Enterprise Foundation)</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>141,893</td>
<td>147,248</td>
<td>14,574</td>
<td>16,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1/ 20% Capture in Year 1. 35% Capture in subsequent years
2/ 10 Carpools. Three people per car.
3/ 2.5% annual pay raises
4/ Revenues and expenses inflated by 2.5% per year
5/ 6.2K SF @ $8/SF. For office and garage.
6/ Advertising expenses decrease by 20% per year

Conclusion

These four proposals begin to alleviate transportation access problems in the Study Area. The neighborhood shopping circulator provides fast and convenient access to shopping, thereby addressing some non-work travel needs where MARTA does not. Carpoools alleviate spatial mismatch by connecting residents to dispersed job rich areas in outlying counties. Using jitneys on MARTA routes could reduce travel times and allow MARTA to scale back costs without reducing frequencies. Finally, a Community Transportation Organization could be the glue that organizes and develops these proposals in a way that is responsive to community needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation Access Problem</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Qualitative Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor non-work transit access. Inconvenient and long travel times for shopping</td>
<td>Neighborhood Circulator</td>
<td>Saves between 10 - 50 minutes in round-trip travel time depending on location in the Study Area. Creates a convenient way to shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Mismatch</td>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>Opens more areas in the region to transit dependent residents through reducing travel times. Connects some to jobs. Makes commuting more affordable for drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded buses. Low frequencies. MARTA reducing services, but slow to add them.</td>
<td>MARTA contracting out to jitneys in MARTA routes.</td>
<td>Reduce overcrowding through providing a flexible and affordable method to add service. Allows MARTA to cut costs without reducing service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In the end, regional transit agencies have been ineffective in the Study Area. They are financially and geographically constrained. They are also too regional in nature to meaningfully respond to the everyday transportation needs of Study Area residents, much less initiate new services with the participation of Study Area residents. Additionally, they are too inflexible to meet the unique needs of the Study Area. Their standard response to problems involves providing more or less bus service, when, in reality, there are a menu of transportation solutions available. Consequently transportation access in the Study Area is not improving as quickly as it should. Study Area residents still cannot get to work in less than an hour, access a job in Marietta in less than 1.5 hours, or go to the grocery store without having to pay for a $5 taxi or carry groceries from the bus stop.

Thus, there are daunting service gaps in the Study Area and structural gaps in regional transportation planning and provision. In general, this thesis asks, “What can low-income neighborhoods do to respond to these gaps?” Specifically, the research question posed at the beginning of this thesis asks, “Can low-income neighborhoods create solutions to their unique transportation problems where regional transit agencies have been ineffective?”

Where there are gaps in transit service, the Study Area has already begun to create their own solutions through informal means. These informal strategies are insufficient since they do not receive substantial institutional support. However, they could be
expanded and translated into services that could make a substantially positive impact on transportation access for the Study Area. Illegal taxi services can be upgraded into jitney services during the weekends using church vans. Informal carpooling can be expanded and provided incentives. And the concept of jitneys, which comes from other low-income communities around the world can be applied to supporting existing MARTA routes. A CTO could be the agent that organizes these “hard services” and provide “soft services” as well.

BEYOND THE STUDY AREA

Transportation is an essential component of viable, healthy, neighborhoods. It provides access to employment opportunities locally and throughout the region. It also provides access to shopping, social activities, and other basic services. Without transportation access, neighborhoods like those in the Study Area are literally cut off from the resources that are available locally and in the Metropolitan Area. Transportation is particularly essential for inner-city areas, as employment and basic services have been fleeing to distant, outlying areas in the region. This decentralization process is occurring quickly – especially in Sunbelt cities such as Atlanta. In order to remain viable, inner-city neighborhoods must have the ability to access these resources as they retreat from the center.

Nonetheless, community development has primarily focused on affordable housing and economic development and largely ignored transportation. Community development has provided implementation capacity to neighborhood needs and desires. Community development practitioners bring technical expertise, respect for local knowledge, and connections to external support and funding. These skills are desperately
needed in the transportation arena not only at the regional level, but also in low-income neighborhoods. In many neighborhoods, community developers are able to generate local leadership and respond to needs around housing and economic development issues in a way that connects to residents’ everyday lives. Additionally, residents can express preferences for affordable housing or economic development that can be translated into real projects. No similar process exists regarding transportation in low-income neighborhoods.

Additionally, transportation planning and provision has been too regional, too technocratic, and too inflexible to adequately address the transportation needs of many low-income communities. As evidenced in Atlanta, regional transportation planning is critical, because a truly regional transit network is important for low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. However, regional transportation planners and providers are structurally incapable of carrying out community transportation processes that can solve local and unique transportation problems in these neighborhoods.

Although community development has ignored transportation, and transportation planners are often ill-equipped for community planning processes, low-income communities have the ability to solve some of their unique transportation problems. Neighborhoods have existing, and often underutilized assets, such as church vans, illegal taxi drivers, jitneys, and carpoolers. Thus, they are already using many modes of paratransit as a flexible and affordable tools to fill transit gaps. They have the local knowledge to be able to accurately identify problems and generate solutions. This knowledge about travel patterns and transportation needs is, in many ways, more valuable than any transportation demand model or density threshold can provide. Under the
guidance of a CTO, these local assets can be organized, supported, and enhanced to fill transportation gaps.

Thus, although the transportation challenges for many low-income areas are daunting, neighborhoods have the ability to alleviate many of their transportation access problems. With a little support and organization, low-income neighborhoods can improve their connection to resources locally and region-wide.

**NEXT STEPS**

Next, someone should begin the process of initiating a CTO with the process outlined in Chapter Four. In summary, the person or organization starting the CTO should conduct a thorough community planning process to uncover more details about travel behavior, transportation needs, and informal transportation. In addition to the community, conversations should be initiated with MARTA, ARC, and GRTA, and local foundations to generate support and seed funding for the service.

**AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

**Informal Transit in Atlanta**

There are not many detailed studies of informal transit in low-income American communities. No one has done any research on informal transit in the Atlanta area. Such research would provide ideas for alternative methods of transit provision to Atlanta transit providers.

**Inner-Suburb Pockets**

The inner suburbs are increasingly receiving low-income residents in the Atlanta region and other metropolitan areas. Many of them are immigrants who land in the
suburbs to seek jobs instead of beginning in the center city. These pockets of low-income neighborhoods have even worse transit infrastructure than center city neighborhoods. Areas off of Memorial Drive in Dekalb County and Buford Highway in Dekalb and Gwinnett counties are examples.

**Retail Cooperation for Transit Services**

Retail tenants and developers could be partners in providing transit to low-income populations. However, a stronger business argument needs to be made to show how additional transit services affect retailers’ bottom lines.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Atlanta Regional Commission. Employment Data and Projections. 2001


Map 2: Cities in the Atlanta 10-County Region

Legend
- **Study Area**
- **All Atlanta Bus Routes**
- **Atlanta Rail Transit**
- **Counties**
- **Cities**

Distance Scale: 25 12.5 0 25 Miles
Map 3: Study Area Neighborhoods and Bus Routes