



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the study?

The region's many transit service providers have defined service areas that are often limited to running in just one county, while commuters often require cross-county travel. The purpose of the study is to identify strategies to overcome the current limitations to transit agencies working together and particular long and short term projects that can address the changing commuter needs of the region.

What are some of the barriers to transit agencies working together?

Technical issues include joint fare collection systems, specifications for joint purchase of vehicles or components, and schedule and route issues.

Administrative and operational disconnects generally concern two issues: money and turf. Money issues are generally which agency benefits from, and which agency pays for, the service improvements. Turf issues include agencies' fears that they may lose ridership, funds or control over operations.

How have these barriers been overcome elsewhere?

Other transit agencies have employed Memorandums of Understanding, Joint Powers resolutions, and purchase-of-services contracts to enable them to work together. Depending on the underlying enabling legislation, an agency may have to request additional legislation to realize an effective cooperative plan.

Why is the study being conducted now?

As population and jobs in the region have gotten more dispersed, many commuters cross county lines to get between home and work. While easy to do in a car, transit riders must often change buses, making for a longer, more stressful commute. Providing better, more convenient service saves time and money for all involved.

What are some of the benefits that may result from more integrated public transit?

There are many potential benefits to transit coordination. With the increased interest in "green" lifestyles, the role of transit in the region has been highlighted. Ridership may increase as transit service becomes more convenient. Greater transit access for residents of South Central Pennsylvania will lead to increased mobility options for the region. Additionally, increased transit use could reduce congestion and improve air quality. The end result is an enhanced quality of life for all who live and work in the region.

Who is directly involved with the study?

BARTA Executive Director/CEO, Dennis D. Louwerse and Beth J. Nidam, Senior Transportation Planner for YCPC are co-chairs of the joint study committee which will oversee the study's progress. Commuter Services of Pennsylvania is managing the study.

Members of the joint study committee include staff from the following transit authorities: Adams County Transit Authority (ACTA); Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority (BARTA); Lebanon Transit Authority (a.k.a. COLT); Red Rose Transit Authority (RRTA, Lancaster); York County Transportation Authority (rabbitransit); and Capital Area Transit (CAT, Cumberland-Dauphin-Harrisburg). Planning partners from the MPOs/RPOs also serve on the joint study commission. They include the Lancaster, Lebanon, Reading Area and York Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); Tri-County Planning Commission (Harrisburg MPO-Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry counties) and the Adams and Franklin Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs).

Parsons Brinckerhoff is the leading consultant team for this effort, which also includes Michael Baker Jr. and GeographIT.

How can members of the public get involved?

There are several ways the public will be involved. Existing transit riders on selected routes will be surveyed on their issues and concerns about their ride.

A website, www.PaCommuterServices.com/RTCS will also be developed and study material will be posted as it is completed. In addition, a Speakers' Bureau will be formed. Those interested in scheduling a speaker for their neighborhood, civic, or business event should contact Commuter Services of PA, who will arrange for a speaker (1-866-579-RIDE). Public meetings will be scheduled throughout the area as well.

What will the final product be?

The end report will articulate what bus service can and should be in the future, to serve the people, businesses, industries, and institutions of South Central PA. It will include an implementation matrix with activity, responsible party, and targeted dates. A demonstration corridor that provides a suitable venue for implementing one of the service recommendations will be identified as an early action item.

When will the study be completed?

May 2011

How much does the study cost and who is paying for it?

A total of \$300,000 was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) which includes a local match from the nine participating counties: Berks, Lancaster, Lebanon, Dauphin, Perry, Cumberland, York, Adams and Franklin.