

# Public Transit Services on NH 120 Claremont - Lebanon

## Overview of Preferred Alternative



# Presentation Overview

- Study Goals
- Quick Review
  - Methodology and Approach
  - Key Findings
- Results of Public Input
- Preferred Alternative for NH 120 Transit Service
- Implementation and Funding
- Comments



# Study Goals

- Assess Feasibility of Public Transportation
  - Potential Markets
  - Need and Likely Demand
  - Costs
- Determine Service Requirements
  - Routing
  - Schedule
  - Operating Hours
- Develop Plan for Operations



# Study Methodology

- Existing Conditions and Market Analysis
  - Conducted Demographic Analysis
  - Reviewed Existing Plans
  - Studied Regional Development Patterns
  - Surveyed Corridor Employers and Employees
  - Interviewed Stakeholders
- Developed and Refined Transit Service Concepts
- Incorporated Public Input
- Crafted Plan for Preferred Alternative



# Transit Markets and Ridership

## Choice Riders

- Ability to own and operate private vehicle
- Transit succeeds by:
  - Offering comparable cost and convenience
  - Parking limitations (i.e. DHMC)

## Transit Dependent Riders

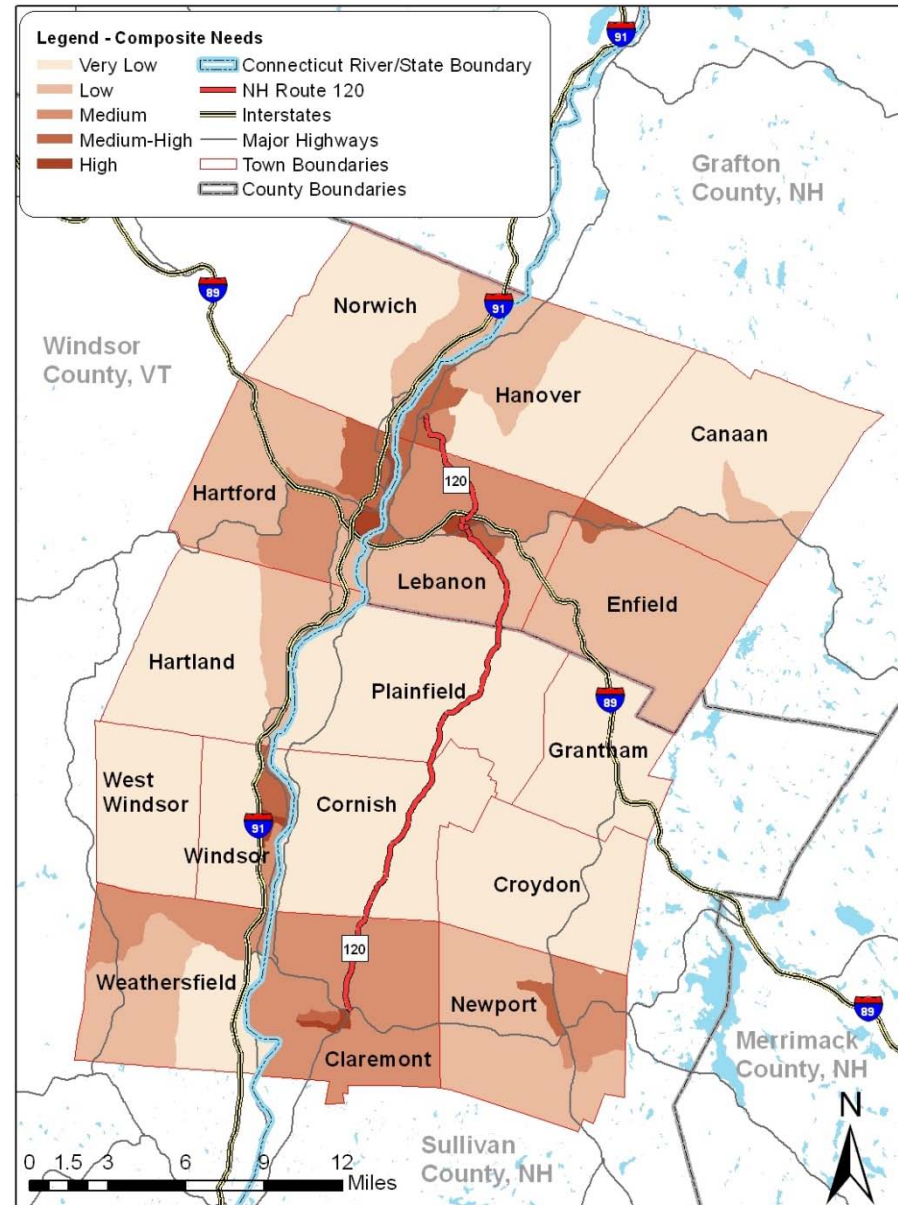
- Unable to regularly own or operate private vehicle
  - Older adults
  - Persons with disabilities
  - Persons with low income
  - Zero Vehicle Households



# Transit Dependent Populations

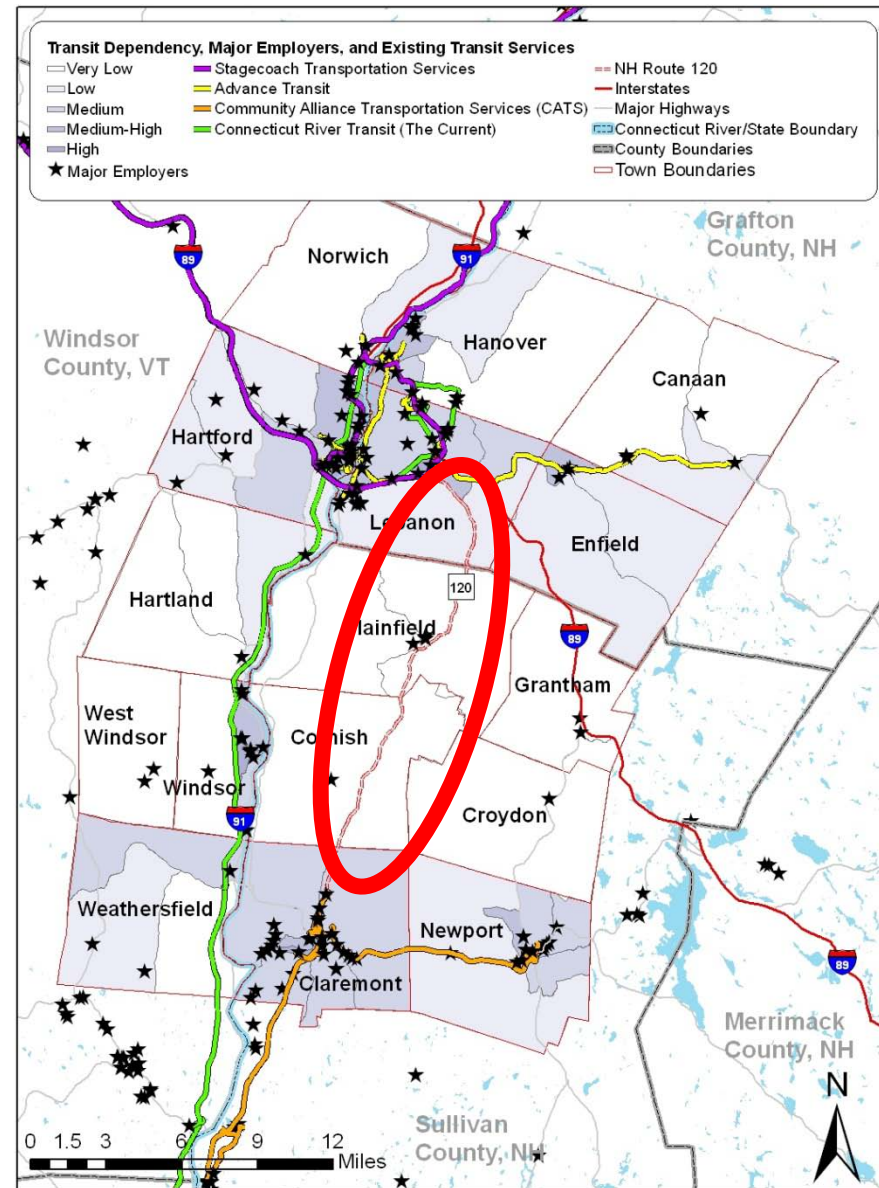
Combined index

- Age
- Income
- Ability Status



# Existing Service and Employers

- Transit Service at ends of NH 120
- Major employment and activity centers in these locations
- Missing link to connect these anchors



## Challenges

- Low density along corridor
  - Dispersed residential areas
  - Dispersed employers
- Different needs/schedules among potential ridership
  - Commuting
  - Medical
  - Shopping
  - Students

## Opportunities

- Strong corridor “anchors” in Claremont and Lebanon/Hanover
- Potential for different markets
  - Commuters
  - Midday trips
  - Students





# Transit Service Goals and Design Parameters

- Connect Claremont and Lebanon/Hanover
- Build on existing transit services (CATS and AT)
- Balance serving employment and transit dependent populations
- Service should be easy to use and understand



# NH 120 Service Options Considered

Consideration	Option
Service Design	Number of Stops Stop Locations
Service Origin	Downtown Claremont Park and Ride Lot
Route Terminus	Downtown Lebanon Etna Road DHMC – East Entrance DHMC – External Parking Lot
Operations	Number of Trips Trip Times



# Opportunities for Public Input

- Meetings
  - May 9 – Claremont and May 10 – Lebanon
  - Well-attended (25 – 30 people each night)
- Written Comments
  - Provided by more than 15 individuals
- Verbal Comments
  - UVLSRPC received several phone calls regarding the project



# Press Coverage

## EAGLE

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2011

CLAREMONT

### Route 120 bus gets favorable public input

Plan under consideration would run five daily trips

By BRIAN DUNHAM  
Staff Writer

Residents from Claremont and surrounding communities gave positive feedback yesterday on a proposed bus route along Route 120 between Claremont and Lebanon. Hosted by the Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, the final results of a feasibility study on the route were presented at a public input forum at the Sugar River Valley Technical Center.

According to consultant Bethany Whitaker, of Burlington-based Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates, the proposed route is a "missing link" in the region's public transportation network. Starting in Claremont, it would offer five trips daily — two in the morning, one in the middle of the day and two in the afternoon — for residents commuting both north and south for work, medical appointments, leisure or other reasons.

The first bus would leave the Moody Building in Claremont's Opera House Square at 6 a.m. Proposed stops include Valley Regional Hospital, River Valley Community College, the Cornish

General Store, Kimball Union Academy, downtown Lebanon, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Etna Road and Great Hollow Road. Each trip takes about 40 minutes, Whitaker said. After making the trip north, the bus would make a southbound trip hitting stops along the way.

"We really tried getting the balance of getting the bus to the right place at the right time," Whitaker said. "Our thinking was, we wanted the bus to be fast and direct. These times are indicative only, there's a little bit of wiggle room, based on how long the bus sits, and traffic."

Based on comments made at the forum yesterday, some adjustments may need to be made in order to get people to work on time, but most speakers favored the idea of the route.

James Akerman Sr., a registered nurse for Heritage Case Management, said medical patients throughout the region would take advantage of it.

"I'm speaking as an advocate for my clients without transportation to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center," he said, adding that several have

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### BUS FROM PAGE A1

disabilities and cannot drive. "Many find it difficult to navigate that route. I feel this would benefit my clients."

Claremont City Manager Guy Santagate said he welcomes the plan, but given the current budget constraints of the city, Claremont wouldn't be able to help financially.

"The idea of connecting Claremont and its neighbors is a great idea," Santagate said. "The real issue for us is funding... We couldn't pledge funds at this time."

The annual cost of running the proposed bus route is about \$180,000 per year, according to Whitaker, about half of which should be covered by federal money. A medium estimated number of passengers is 115 daily or 28,786 riders per year, according to the study. At a cost of \$72.50 for each trip the bus makes, that translates to an estimated \$6.30 per passenger, although the passengers wouldn't be required to pay that much, Whitaker said.

A representative from Hypertherm, a large area employer in Etna, said as many as 82 of their employees could take advantage of the bus service — although some adjusting of the bus schedule may be needed. Tom

Rucinski, Director of Human Resources, said the company would be interested in cost-sharing opportunities with other businesses to help pay for the route.

Brian Waterman, operations manager for The Current — a company which drives multiple buses up I-91 — had some concerns.

"We have four buses going up 91 every day," he said. "I think this might drive some of our ridership away. I think it might be a duplication of services."

According to the study, Claremont and Lebanon are strong anchors with populations which would take advantage of the proposed route, Whitaker said. It also connects Claremont and some surrounding communities to a larger public transportation infrastructure. The Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission will be hosting a second public forum tonight at 5 p.m. at the Lebanon Senior Center, 10 Campbell Street, Lebanon.

More information about the proposed route can be found at [www.sullivancountyrec.org](http://www.sullivancountyrec.org).

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## LOCAL & REGIONAL

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VALLEY NEWS — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011

### Valley Residents to Discuss Intercity Bus Proposal

By KATIE BETH RYAN  
Valley News Staff Writer

CLAREMONT — At two forums next month, commuters between Claremont and Lebanon will be able to voice their thoughts about a bus route proposed for Route 120.

The forums, on May 9 at the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center in Claremont and May 10 at the Lebanon Senior Center, will introduce the public to a feasibility study conducted over the past three months under the auspices of the Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

"It's not set in stone. We want to see what the public has to say about it and what they might recommend," Patricia Crocker, a transportation planner with the regional planning commission, said of the bus service.

Considering the well-known commuting patterns between Lebanon and Claremont, the fact that no bus route exists between the two cities is surprising, according to a consultant overseeing the study.

"When you look at some of the documents, it's glaring. These two pieces don't connect," said

Bethany Whitaker, a principal with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates. The firm was selected by the regional planning commission, which received a \$30,000 grant for the study from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, using Federal Transit Administration funds. An advisory committee of employers, residents and officials in both Claremont and Lebanon has also played a role in the study.

A key component has been an analysis of the demographics in Claremont and Lebanon, including the population that might be likely to use public transit, and a survey of employers in both cities.

The study also takes into account existing transportation options, such as The Current bus, which shuttles residents of southern Windsor and northern Windham counties to large employers in the Upper Valley, including Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

"We are not trying to be duplicative or redundant, but trying to work with those to the extent that we can," said Whitaker.

Many Claremont-area commuters hop on The Current bus when it stops at the Ascunty park and

ride lot off Interstate 91, but Crocker said that a proposed Claremont-Lebanon bus ideally would stop in downtown Claremont, where it could serve those riders who don't own cars and connect with other transit options in the area.

"At least based on the demographic information that we have, we think the route is viable in terms of ridership," she said.

A company such as Hypertherm, with a significant percentage of its work force traveling between Claremont and Lebanon each day, would be an obvious example of a firm whose employees may benefit from a bus running between the two cities.

"We hadn't had anything to offer them until now," said Stacey Chicchio, Hypertherm's project manager for corporate social responsibility. "There's hope we might have something to offer them. People are definitely looking at an opportunity to save commuting costs."

The forums begin at 5 p.m. Copies of the study will be available at the meeting.

Katie Beth Ryan can be reached at [kbryan@vnews.com](mailto:kbryan@vnews.com) or 603-727-3242.



# Public Input – Common Themes

- Need for Transit Service
  - Strong support from meeting attendees
    - Use for commuting
    - Open up employment opportunities
    - Lessen the impact of rising gas prices
    - Provide more affordable option for medical appointment transportation



# Public Input – Common Themes

- Schedule

- Some employers have fixed work start-times
- Desire to meet 8:00 am start time at DHMC
- Challenge of meeting arrival/departure times at both ends of the route with one vehicle
- Potential for two buses raised



# Public Input – Common Themes

- Route Alignment and Stops
  - Suggested stops
    - Alice Peck Day Hospital
    - Claremont Visitors Center
    - Within the campus of Valley Regional Hospital
  - Tradeoffs
    - Convenience of close stops v. speed and reliability



# Public Input – Common Themes

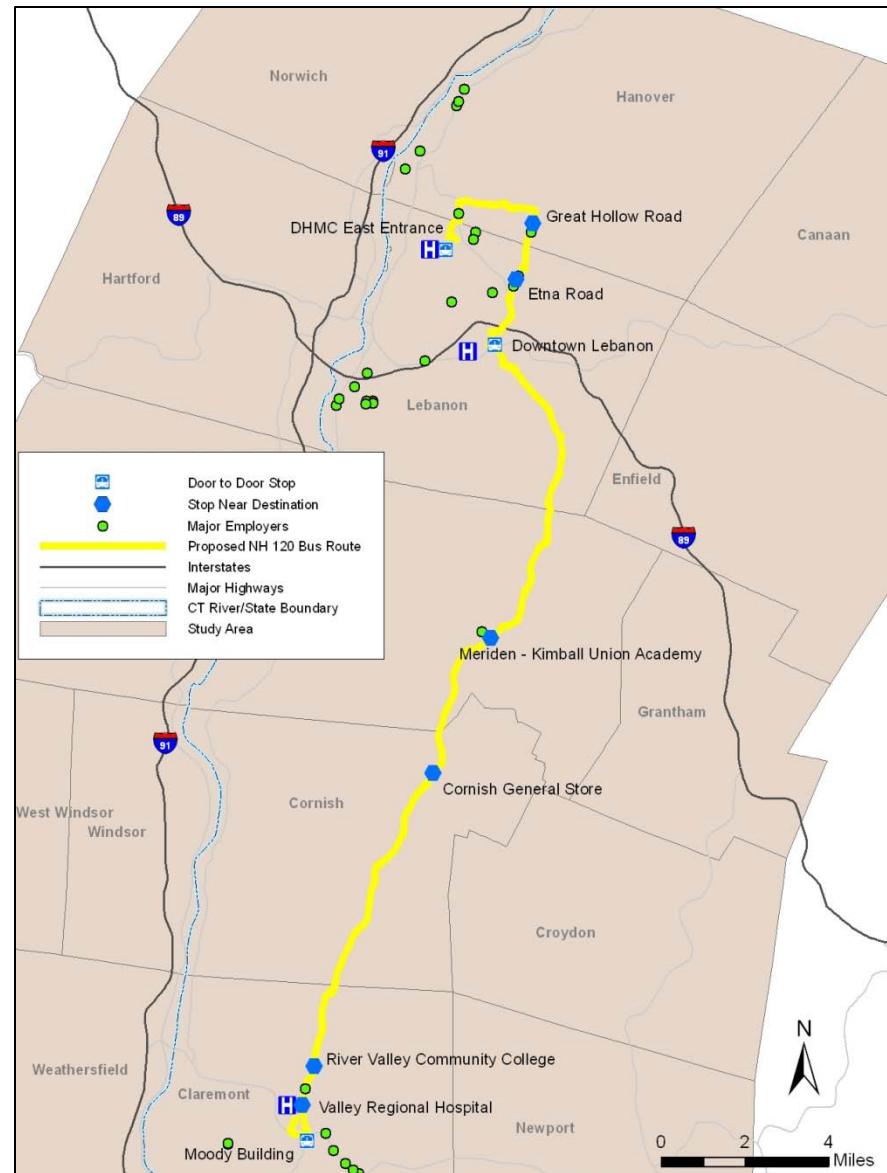
- Amenities
  - Bike racks
  - Comfortable seating
  - Wireless Internet
- Funding
  - Major financial constraints
  - Employers
    - Some willing to support now
    - Others waiting for implementation to evaluate their own ridership





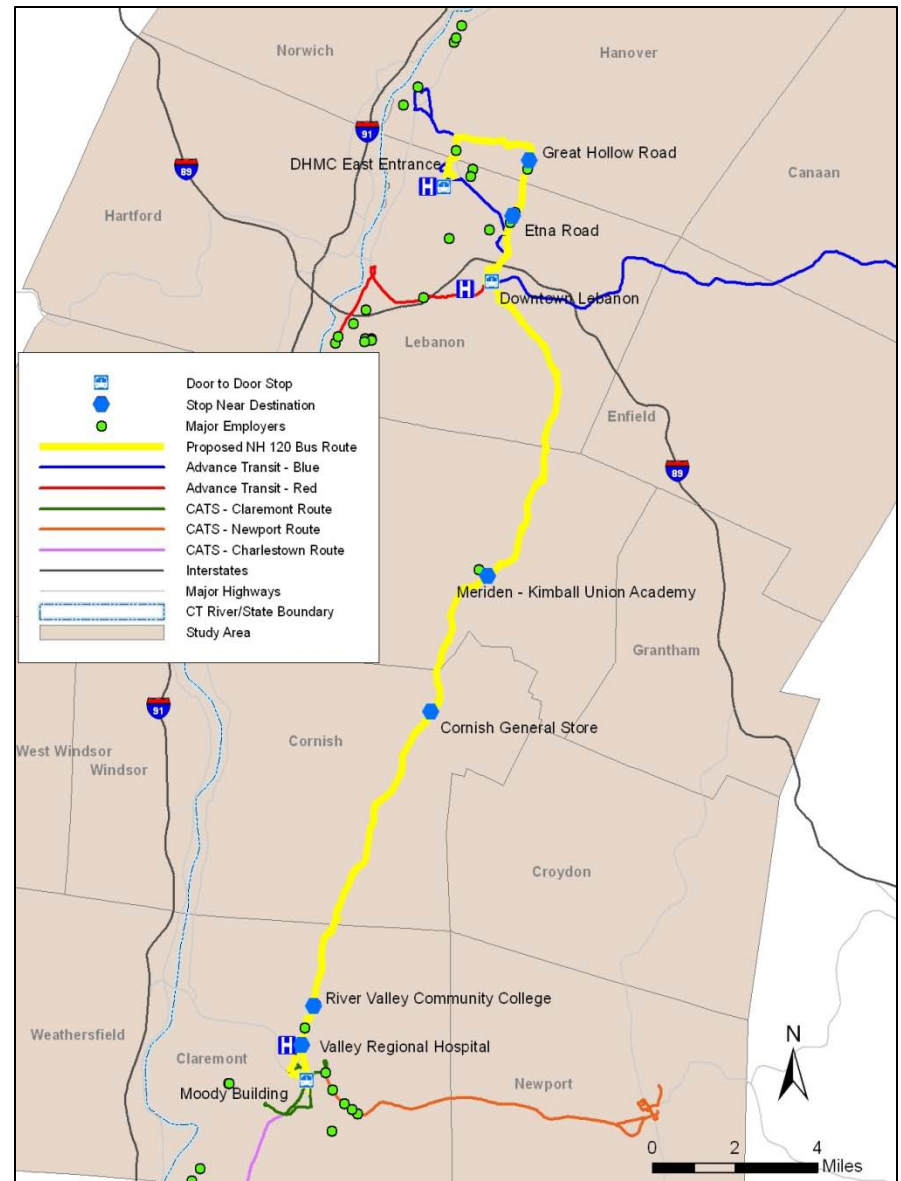
## Preferred Alternative

- Start in downtown Claremont
- Serve DHMC East Entrance and Etna Road
- Five trips per day
  - Two in morning peak
  - Two in afternoon peak
  - One mid-day trip



# Connections to Other Systems

- North: Advance Transit
  - Blue Line
  - Red Line
- South: CATS
  - Claremont Route
  - Newport Route
  - Charlestown Route



# Indicative Service Schedule

North	Trip	Moody Building	Downtown Lebanon	Etna Road	DHMC East Entrance	Moody Building	C t ice <sup>3</sup>
	Trip 1	5:45 AM	6:35 AM	6:41 AM	7:05 AM	8:25 AM	AM
	Trip 2	8:30 AM	9:20 AM	9:26 AM	9:50 AM	11:10 AM	AM
	Trip 3	11:15 AM	12:05 PM	–	12:20 PM	1:25 PM	PM
	Trip 4	2:00 PM	2:50 PM	2:56 PM	3:20 PM	4:40 PM	PM
	Trip 5	4:45 PM	5:35 PM	5:41 PM	6:05 PM	7:25 PM	PM



# Indicative Service Details

- Estimated Annual Cost - \$200,950
  - Assumptions:
    - Operates: 250 days per year
    - Hourly Cost: \$60
- Estimated Ridership - 115 per day
- Cost per Passenger Trip - \$6.98
  - Range of approximately \$4.90 to \$12.99 (depending upon ridership)
- Estimated Time for Roundtrip – 2 H 40 Min
- *Does not include capital costs*



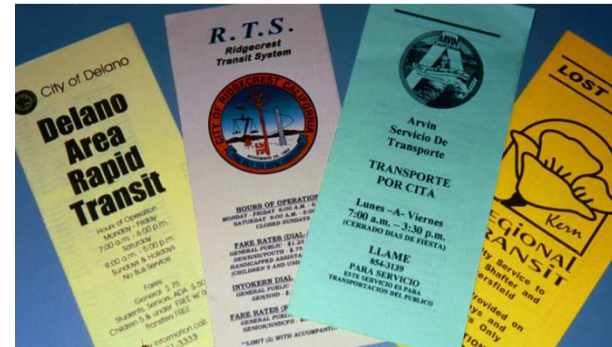
# Implementation - Transit Vehicle

- Cut-away Vehicle
  - Up to 30 passengers
  - \$60,000 - \$115,000
  - Average useful life: 5-7 years
- Heavy Duty, Mid-size vehicle
  - Up to 35 + standees
  - \$250,000
  - Average useful life: 12-15 years



# Implementation – Marketing & Information

- Purposes:
  - Create awareness of services
  - Teach passengers how to use services
- Traditional
  - Printed materials
  - Telephone dispatch
- New Technology
  - Online resources
  - Google Transit
  - Cell phone alerts
  - Bus stop signage with real-time updates



# Implementation – Potential Fare

- Other Services

- Advance Transit: Free
- CATS: \$2.00 (Small range of fares)
- CRT: \$3.00 (Recommended donation)
- Stagecoach: \$3.50



- Potentially \$3.00 one-way

- Consistent with other services
- Premium fare for CATS service
- Half-fare: \$1.50
- Could generate between \$40,000 and \$100,000



# Implementation – Additional Funding

- Assumptions
  - Cost of service annually: \$200,000
  - Fare revenue: \$60,000
- With fares, NH 120 service will need between \$100,000 and \$160,000 in additional funding
- Federal Formula: 50% of net operating deficit
$$\begin{aligned} \$200,000 - \$60,000 &= \$140,000 \\ \$140,000 \times 50\% &= \$70,000 \\ \$60,000 + \$70,000 &= \$130,000 \\ \$200,000 - \$130,000 &= \$70,000 \end{aligned}$$





# Implementation – Potential Funding Sources

- Potential Federal Grant Funds
  - Local Match Requirement
  - 50-80% of Operating Costs
  - Over longer term - Federal Funds up to 50%
  - Eligible funding sources
    - Rural and Small Urban Areas (Section 5311)
    - Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316)
  - Other funding sources
    - Elderly and Disabled Mobility Assistance (Section 5310)
    - New Freedom Program (Section 5317)



# Implementation – Potential Funding Sources

- Potential Match Sources
  - Other Federal funds (non-DOT)
  - Partnerships with private organizations
    - Institutions
    - Businesses
  - Taxes
    - Authority to use vehicle licensing fees for transportation projects
    - Operators generate funds by providing services for jurisdictions, organizations, or institutions



# Questions and Discussion

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