

Map 19. NRTA Shuttle System Map

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

5.1. NRTA SERVICE

5.1.1. Introduction

A principle objective in establishing the Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA) was to alleviate downtown traffic congestion and create parking opportunities in the downtown core district. Shortly after the NRTA began service in 1995, and proved successful as an alternative mode of transportation, it became apparent that the NRTA's

role would be an island-wide transportation system. Since 1995, service has been expanded to meet the community's demand and to fill gaps in the service.

The NRTA's first operating season consisted of a 100-day operating schedule during the peak season (June 8 through September 15). Four buses operated on two five mile routes linked four satellite parking areas, a number of high density residential neighborhoods, numerous high-volume commercial uses and several public uses to Nantucket's historic downtown core district.

In the years since operations began, the NRTA has subsequently expanded the number of operating days, and has added service to serve Madaket, Sconset, Surfside Beach, and Jetties Beach and in 2003 service between downtown and Nantucket Memorial Airport was provided (initially funded by the Nantucket Airport Commission). In 2002 a reduction of \$250,000 in state contract assistance forced cuts in service, resulting in a drop in ridership totals (this is illustrated in Table 27). State contract assistance remained level funded for regional transit authorities until RTA fiscal year 2004 (state fiscal year 2005). From RTA FY04 through RTA FY06 the NRTA's state contract assistance has only increased by \$16,190.

5.1.2. Shuttle Fares

In 2002, in addition to reducing service, fares were also increased. The fares were doubled from \$.50 to \$1.00 and \$1.00 to \$2.00. The fare is \$1.00 on the Mid Island Loop, Miacomet Loop and \$1.00 each way on the Jetties Beach Route. The fare is \$2.00 each way on the Madaket Route, Sconset Routes, Surfside Beach Route and Airport Route.

The NRTA offers several pass options:

Short term passes are available and may be purchased aboard all buses:

1-day pass is \$7; 3-day pass is \$12; 7-day pass is \$20

Season passes are available at the NRTA's Administrative Office:

30-day pass \$50; season pass \$80, Commuter pass (employer purchased) \$70, Nantucket student pass \$40; other students, college students pass \$70; and senior or disabled pass \$40.

5.1.3. Shuttle Routes

Mid-Island Loop (3.3 miles) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, York Street, Atlantic Avenue, Surfside Road, Surfside Drive, Hooper Farm Road, Sparks Avenue, Orange Street, Dave Street, Pleasant Street, Dover Street, Union Street to the downtown shuttle hub on Salem Street. This route maintains a 30 minute headway during the shoulder season and a 15-minute headway during the peak season. The Mid-Island Loop operates from mid-May through Columbus Day, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Miacomet Loop (6.9 miles) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Orange Street, Old South Road, Fairgrounds Road, Surfside Road, Bartlett Road, Raceway Drive, Somerset Lane, Hummock Pond Road, Milk Street Extension, Prospect Street, West York Lane,

Dover Street, Union Street to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This loop maintains a 30-minute headway during the shoulder season and a 20-minute headway during the season. The Miacomet Loop operates mid-May through Columbus Day, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Madaket Route (13.7 miles round trip) serves North Water Street, Cliff Road, North Liberty Street, West Chester Street, New Lane Madaket Road and returns to the downtown shuttle hub on Broad Street. This route maintains a 60-minute headway during the shoulder season and a 30-minute headway during peak season. The Madaket Route operates end of May through mid September, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Sconset via Polpis Road (21.2 miles round trip) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Union Street, Orange Street, Milestone Road, Polpis Road, Sankaty Road, Coffin Street, West Sankaty Avenue, School Street to the Sconset shuttle hub on Main Street and returns on the same route to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This route maintains one hour and twenty minute headway from July 1st through Labor Day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sconset via Old South Road Route (16.8 miles round trip) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Union Street, Orange Street, Old South Road, Nobadeer Farm Road, Milestone Road to the Sconset shuttle hub on Main Street and returns the same route to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This route maintains a 60-minute headway. The Sconset via Old South Road Route operates mid-May through Columbus Day, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Sconset via Milestone Road Route (16 miles round trip) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Union Street, Orange Street, Milestone Road to the Sconset shuttle hub on Main Street and returns the same route to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This route maintains a 60-minute headway. The Sconset via Milestone Road Route operates mid June through mid September, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Surfside Beach Route (6.3 miles round trip) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Union Street, Orange Street, Old South Road, Fairgrounds Road, Surfside Road to the shuttle stop at Surfside Beach and returns the same route to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This route maintains a 40-minute headway. The Surfside Beach Route operates mid June through Labor Day, daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Jetties Beach Route (1.9 miles round trip) serves North Water Street, Easton Street, North Beach Street (South Beach Street return trip), Bathing Beach Road, to the shuttle stop at Jetties Beach and returns the same route to the downtown hub on Broad Street). This route maintains a 30-minute headway. The Jetties Beach Route operates mid June through Labor Day, daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Airport Route (3.2 miles) serves Washington Street, Francis Street, Union Street, Orange Street, Old South Road, Macy Lane to the shuttle stop at Nantucket Memorial Airport and returns along the same route to the downtown shuttle hub on Washington Street. This route maintains a 20 minute headway. The Airport Route operates from the end of June to Labor Day, daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

5.1.4. Ridership Statistics

Table 27. NRTA Fixed Route Passengers, 1995 to 2005

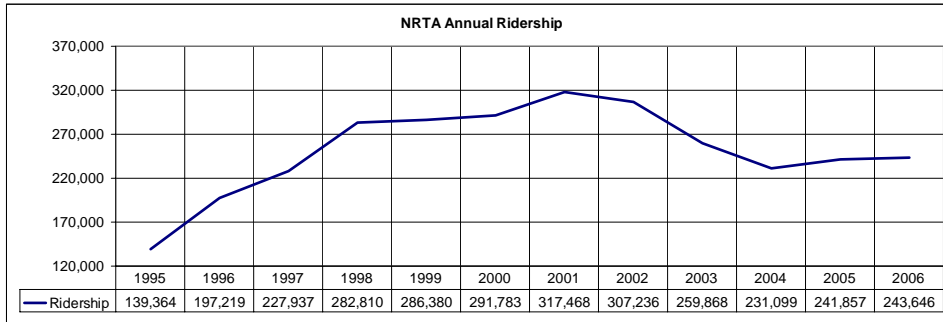


Table 27 shows the passengers carried on the NRTA fixed route shuttle from 1995 to 2006. It can be seen that there was a significant increase from 1995 to 1998 due to added routes to the system. However, as mentioned earlier, there were significant cuts in funding and service in 2002, which resulted in a 23% drop in ridership from 2001 to 2006.

Table 28. Average Daily Ridership on NRTA, 1995 to 2005

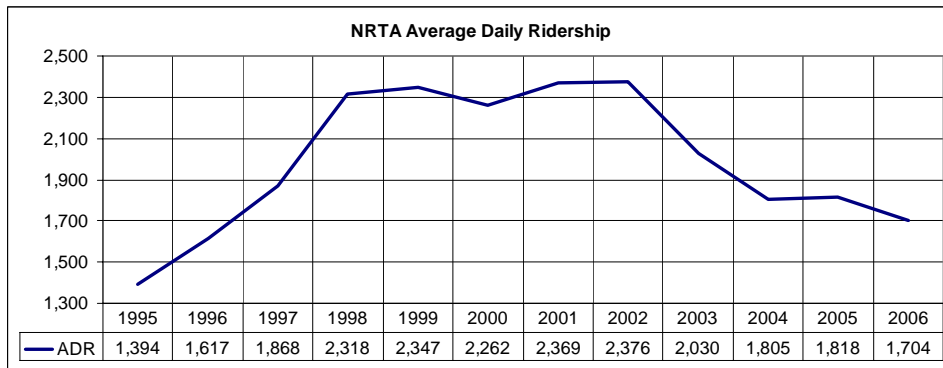


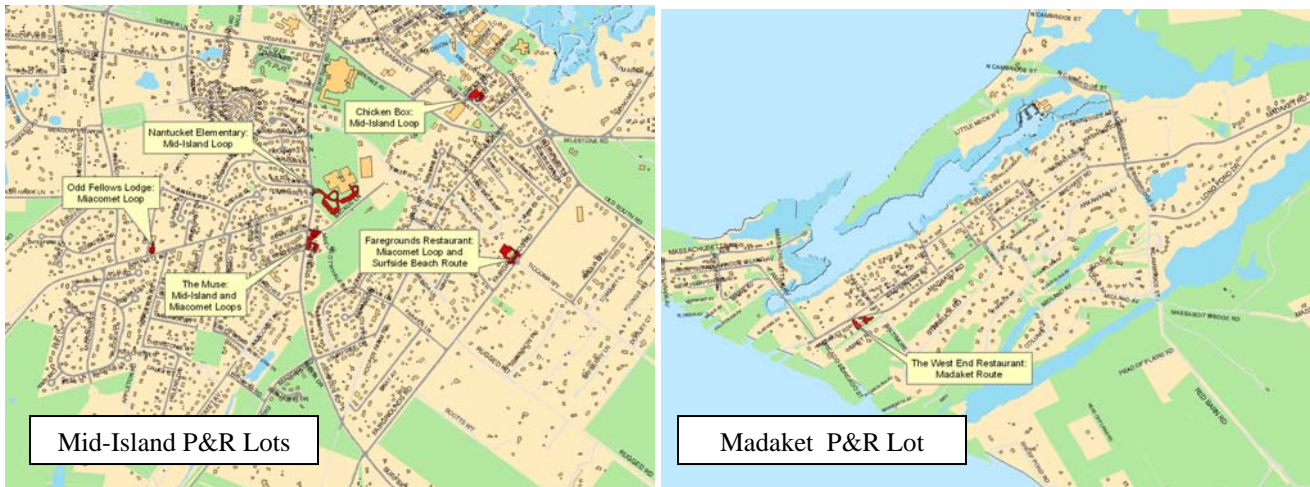
Table 28 shows the average number of passengers carried by the NRTA each day, or average daily ridership (ADR). Although there was a significant increase in ADR from 1995 to 2002, the effects of the 2002 budget reduction is apparent through the reversal in the ADR trend in the subsequent years.

5.1.5. Intermodal Linkages

The NRTA has set up a variety of intermodal strategies to integrate the shuttle service with vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The most recent addition to the NRTA’s fixed route service links Nantucket Memorial Airport. These efforts are intended to simplify the transition in utilizing other modes of transportation in accessing the shuttle.

For Commuters using the Automobile:

Commuter Park ‘n’ Ride Lots: Six established businesses allow the NRTA to utilize existing parking lots as park ‘n’ ride lots. There is no charge to park, and lots are located at the following locations:



Map 20. NRTA Commuter Lot Locations

Park-n-Ride Lot	Service Routes
Faregrounds Restaurant	Miacomet Loop
The Muse	Miacomet Loop, Mid-Island Loop
The Chicken Box	Mid Island Loop, Miacomet Loop, Sconset Routes, Airport Route
The West End	Madaket Route
Nantucket Elementary School	Mid Island Loop
Odd Fellows Lodge	Miacomet Loop

For Bicyclists:



Bike Racks on the Shuttle: All shuttles are equipped with bike racks that accommodate two (2) bikes.

Bike Racks at Shuttle Stops:

Sixteen (16) of the 183 shuttle stops have bike racks to allow residents and commuters to access the shuttle more conveniently by biking from home to the nearest shuttle stop. These racks also allow shuttle users to lock their bikes to the racks for added security.

Table 29. Total Bicycles Carried on NRTA Shuttle, 1997 to 2002

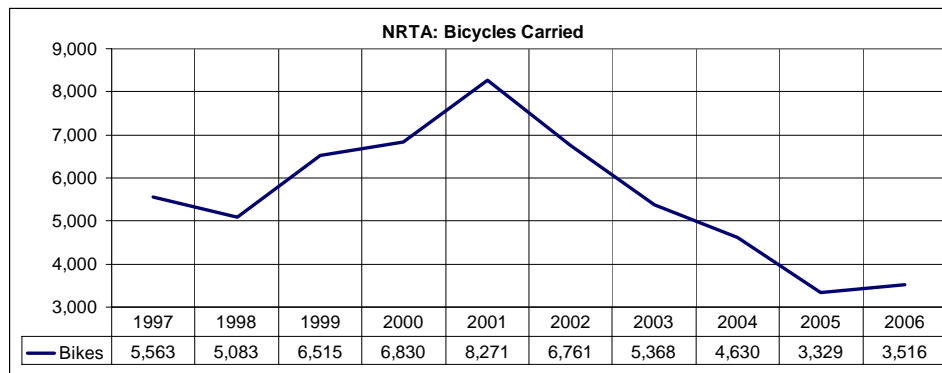


Table 29 shows the number of bicycles carried from 1997 to 2006. The data shows that there was a 25% increase in the number of bikes carried in 2002 from the number carried in 1997. The number of bikes carried peaked in 2001, with over 8,000 bikes carried. Again, the funding and service cuts experienced in 2002 resulted in a drop in the number of bicycles carried on the shuttle.



5.1.6. Advance Reservation Van Service – “Your Island Ride”

The NRTA provides advanced reservation door-to-door van service for the elderly 60 years of age and older and persons with disabilities. This service is provided Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the NRTA must accommodate individuals with physical, mental, visual, and hearing impairments on fixed-route buses, as well as on the paratransit (Your Island Ride and complementary paratransit services) vehicles that operate a special door-to-door service. Also, per ADA regulations, the NRTA follows a certification and eligibility process for the clients. The NRTA operates two vans purchased through the Federal Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) 5310. MAP vehicles are obtained through a competitive bidding process administered by the Executive office of Transportation (EOT). EOT procures the vehicles. At the time the NRTA was awarded the vans (2001 and 2003) only gas vehicles were available. The vans have a capacity for 9 passengers with no wheelchairs. The vans can accommodate up to 3 wheelchairs.

Table 30. Ridership by User Type (NRTA)

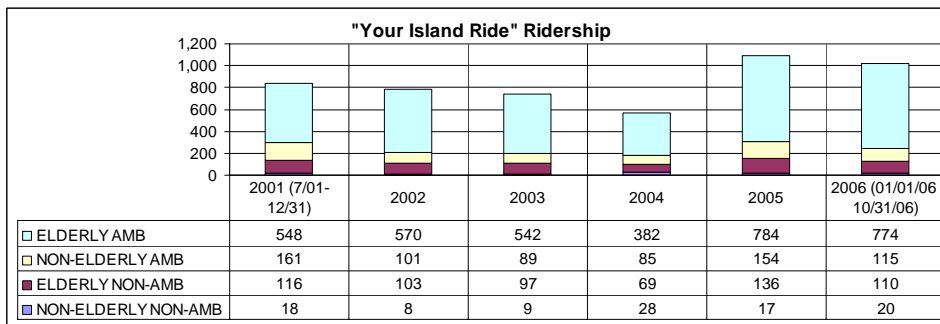
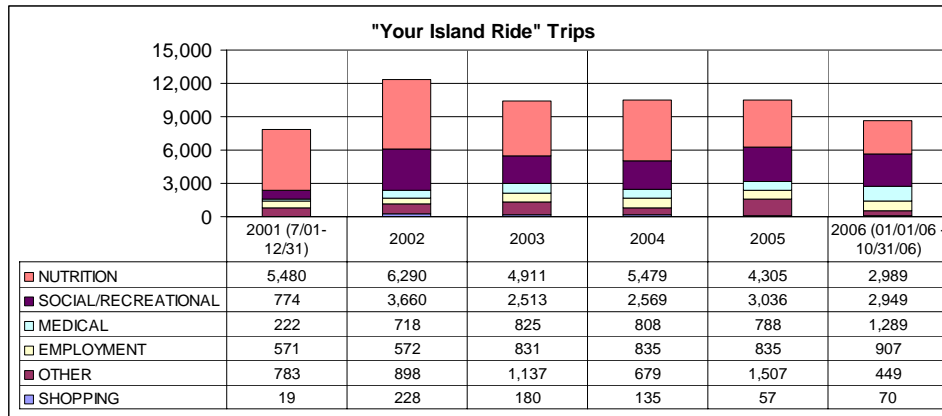


Table 31. Ridership by Trip Type (NRTA)



Tables 30 and 31 above show the ridership of the “Your Island Ride” service. The following defines the type of users of this service:

- Elderly Ambulatory – 60 years of age or older and are have no mobility issues.
- Non-elderly ambulatory – less than 60 years of age have no mobility issues, but other disability (i.e. mental)
- Elderly non-ambulatory – 60 years of age or older that require the use of a mobility device
- Non elderly ambulatory – less than 60 years of age that require the use of a mobility device

5.1.7. Paratransit Service

The NRTA provides complementary paratransit services to the disabled who can not use fixed-route services during the period the NRTA operates its seasonal fixed route service (operation start and end dates vary each year). The NRTA averages two (2) paratransit trips annually.

5.1.8. Intelligent Transportation System

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are applications of advanced technology in the field of transportation, with the goals of increasing operational efficiency and capacity, improving safety, reducing environmental costs and enhancing personal mobility. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), has undertaken the development of a Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture for Southeastern Massachusetts. The NRTA has utilized ITS on its fixed route vehicles, Automated Stop Announcement System, Automated Vehicle Locator System, and Automated Passenger Counting System. The NRTA will consider future ITS projects that are applicable and will enhance NRTA services.

5.1.8.1. Electronic Validating Fareboxes

In 2002 all NRTA transit vehicles were equipped with Electronic Validating Fareboxes. This equipment enabled the NRTA to better serve and track its riders. Short-term passes (1-day, 3-day, and 7-day) are able to be purchased aboard all buses making it more

convenient to visitors. Season passes, purchased at the NRTA Administrative office, are simply swiped through the farebox by the passholder. Fares are validated to ensure the correct amount of money is collected. Change cards are now issued for future rides, a card is issued from the farebox to the passenger for the amount of money paid into the farebox over the cost of the regular fare.

5.1.8.2. Automated Voice Announcement System (AVAS) – Talking Bus

AVAS was installed on all NRTA fixed route transit vehicles in May 2006. Stops are automatically announced at established GPS trigger points, providing effective communications with on board passengers as well as identifying the bus route for passengers waiting to board a bus at a bus stop location. This not only meets requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but has been a tremendous benefit to the system for visitors that are unfamiliar with the island by enabling them to identify the stop they need to reach their location.

1.1.8.3 Automated Vehicle Location (AVL)

AVL was installed on all NRTA transit vehicles in July 2006. AVL will enable the NRTA to track the vehicles real time location, performance, and schedule adherence. Access to vehicles real time location will be made available to the public through the NRTA's website. In the future, when made available, the NRTA plans to add the component that will enable a recreation of historical incidents.

1.1.8.4 Automatic Passenger Counting System (APCS)

Automatic passenger counting system will be installed in May 2007. Sensors at the door are tied into the NRTA's electronic farebox system for more accurate passenger counting and will identify which stops riders utilize – in May 2007.

5.1.9. Ridership Incentive Programs

The NRTA continues its efforts to provide Ridership Incentive Programs (RIP) that encourage ridership.

5.1.9.1. Commuter Solution Program

This program began in 1997 through a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) grant and has continued since then. This program enables employers to purchase passes for their employees at a discounted rate (\$10 off the cost of a season pass) and is one of the pass options made available to fixed route riders. Since its inception, participation has increased each year in the number of businesses that participate and the number of passes sold.

5.1.9.2. Emergency Ride Home Program

The NRTA offers MassRIDES Emergency Ride Home (ERH) Program that is available to any employer and employee who commutes to work by transit, walking, bicycling or carpooling at least twice a week and enrolls in the program. This program promises employees who regularly use travel options that MassRIDES will pay for the ride home

if they experience a qualified emergency (A qualified personal illness/emergency, unexpected family illness/emergency, and unscheduled overtime at supervisor's request.). The ERH program provides that extra reassurance people need in order to choose an alternative to driving alone, and it's an added benefit for those who already use an alternate mode.

5.1.9.3. Public Transportation & Walking Map to Historic Sites and Museums on Nantucket

Several island organizations that operate historic sites and museums on Nantucket have teamed up with the NRTA to promote their properties to visitors by way of the Shuttle. The *Public Transportation and Walking Map to Historic Sites and Museums on Nantucket* brochure includes a map locating the island's historic sites and museums and provides shuttle routes and stops and walking times from site to site.

5.1.9.4. Ride to Read

This program began in 2000 and has successfully continued since. The Nantucket Elementary School, Nantucket Public Library, Friends of Nantucket Public Schools, and the NRTA established this program to provide elementary school children the opportunity and convenience to continue reading throughout the summer. The children can catch the Shuttle to the library, read, check out books, receive two vouchers for "free" rides on the shuttle home and back to the library. Friends of Nantucket Public Schools then pays the fare for the number of vouchers collected by NRTA drivers.

5.1.9.5. Do the Ride Thing

Another long standing program provided by the NRTA, Visitor Services and the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission. This is a week-long event to entice new riders and keep faithful riders. Riders that use the Shuttle, walk, or ride a bike, instead of taking a car, can enter to win great prizes donated by local businesses. Vouchers are collected through the "Do the Ride Thing" event week, a drawing is held at the end of the week to "give away" the prizes. It is the intent that in early/mid-June that people will try the Shuttle and alternative modes and continue to use the Shuttle throughout the summer.

5.1.9.6. Pass Options

The NRTA provides several pass options to both seasonal shuttle users and visitors.

5.2. 5310 COORDINATED PLAN

Program for Requested Funding: NRTA Your Island Ride

OVERVIEW

As provided for in the March 15, 2006 Federal Register (Volume 71, Number 50), the U.S. Department of Transportation has authorized funding levels and implementation of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA – LU). This includes funding, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Mobility Assistance Program.

BACKGROUND

The Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA) is the public transit agency that provides public transportation in Nantucket. The NRTA provides year round advanced reservation van service for elders and persons with disabilities called Your Island Ride. The NRTA began providing these services to the community in July 2001. The NRTA was established as a Regional Transit Authority and began providing fixed route and complementary paratransit services in 1995. Historically this transportation had been provided by Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc. when there was no public transportation agency in Nantucket. Vehicles (vans) and other related equipment (i.e. radios) utilized to support and provide this service are acquired through the Executive Office of Transportation 5310 Federal funding program.

Although the NRTA's fixed route service operates seasonally, Your Island Ride operates on a year round basis, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The NRTA utilizes two vans to provide these services and has two additional vans, radio system and computer system all received through the 5310 program. The NRTA's client base is 249 people that have been certified and determined eligible to utilize the service. The NRTA provides between 10,000 and 11,000 trips annually, with nearly 40% of the trips being provided are to the congregate lunch provided by Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc., approximately 30% of the trips are to social or recreational activities with the remaining 30% to medical appoints, shopping and other trip destinations.

The NRTA contracts, publicly bid per all procurement requirements, with a private operator. The NRTA has a contract to provide transportation services with the Department of Mental Retardation and is reimbursed for those services on a bi-annual basis based on mileage.

The NRTA is the only public transportation provider on the island. The only private transportation providers are taxi's and private tour operators. There is only one taxi that is lift equipped. There are no non-profit transportation providers on the island.

This service is vital to those elders and persons with disabilities that depend on, use it and value its importance in maintaining mobility and a quality of life standard.

UNMET SERVICE NEEDS

The unmet service needs for the NRTA's Your Island Ride van service are evening service hours and service on weekends.

The NRTA, like public transportation providers nationwide, is concerned of having the ability to meet the transportation needs of the growing elderly population, particularly the "baby boomers". We know the number of users will increase dramatically and struggle with finding the resources to meet their transportation needs.

OUTREACH / STAKEHOLDERS

In July 2001, as required through the 5310 program, the NRTA established a Consumer Advisory Committee. Requirements for committee members include elderly, disabled, and general public representatives. The Consumer Advisory Committee meets quarterly. The NRTA has had a difficult time recruiting representatives from these populations but has successfully met the requirements with representatives from agencies or organizations that represent elders and persons with disabilities:

Elderly Representatives: 3 members

Disabled Representative*: 1 member

General Public Representative: 1 member

*disabled representative serves on the Town's Commission on Disability

The NRTA is responsible for scheduling, attending, and recording the meetings.

As Nantucket is a small community, the NRTA is fortunate to have a close relationship with organizations and individuals that work with elders and persons with disabilities. The NRTA consistently and constantly works with various agencies and directors that deal with elders and persons with disabilities: Council on Aging, Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc., Adult Community Day Center, Nantucket Cottage Hospital, elderly housing – Landmark House and Academy Hill Apartments to name a few.

The following groups and organizations that advocate for or provide services to elders and persons with disabilities were presented with the Nantucket Regional Transportation Plan, of which the coordinated plan has been incorporated, and were able to provide comments to the transportation needs of elders and persons with disabilities which covers the coordinated plan for 5310 funding.

Commission on Disability: “longer hours of operation and weekend service.”

Council on Aging Board: no comments were provided relative to transportation for elders and persons with disabilities.

Consumer Advisory Committee: no comments were provided.

The following reports were reviewed and comments relative to the transportation needs of elders and persons with disabilities which covers the coordinated plan for 5310 funding:

“Focus Discussion & Listening Sessions” Final Report for the Nantucket Council on Aging, 2005/2006 – “providing van service on evenings and weekends” and “liaisons to assist seniors in completing paperwork to access van service”.

“Town of Nantucket Health and Human Services Needs Assessment Study – Nantucket Community Survey - 2006

FUNDING REQUEST

The NRTA has programmed into the TIP the replacement of vans, two (2) vans in 2009 and two (2) vans in 2010. The estimated cost at this time is \$50,000 per van.

5.3. PRIVATELY OPERATED TOUR BUSES

Barrett's Tours, Gail's Tours, Inc., Historic Nantucket Tours, Betty's Tours and All Point Tours operate historic site-seeing tours of Nantucket. Also, a few of the resort hotels operate private vans for their guests.

5.4. TAXI CABS

Taxis play an important role in Nantucket's transportation network. The taxis are a means of transportation to destinations outside of the central business district. Many visitors to the island do not bring a car and taxis provide an important door-to-door transportation service, complementing NRTA fixed-route service.

5.5. INNER CITY BUS SERVICE

There is no inner city bus service operating in Nantucket.

5.6. COMMUTER RAIL

There is no commuter rail service operating in Nantucket.

5.7. AMTRAK RAIL

There is no AMTRAK passenger rail operating in Nantucket.

5.8. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

5.8.1. Improve and expand the Nantucket Regional Transit Authority incorporating the needs of the elderly, the disabled, school children, summer visitors, and the year-round community.

- 5.8.1.1. Continue to consider the feasibility of expanding the shuttle system to provide year-round service.
- 5.8.1.2. Continue to consider increased frequency of shuttle service to add ridership capacity and induce greater participation in the shuttle program.
- 5.8.1.3. Consider outlying shuttle centers and consolidate bus arrivals downtown to reduce their on-street impact.
- 5.8.1.4. Upgrade heavily utilized shuttle stops to add shelter and illumination as appropriate, in keeping with the HDC's design requirements and neighborhood and countryside character.
- 5.8.1.5. Expand the hours of operation for the NRTA's "beach buses" so that they also serve as general bus routes.
- 5.8.1.6. Seek alternative funding sources for improvements and expansions.

5.8.2. Continue efforts to educate residents and visitors of the shuttle system through strategic marketing.

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- 5.8.2.1. Continue to encourage downtown restaurants to persuade potential patrons, at the time reservations are made, to use taxis or the NRTA shuttle system.
 - 5.8.2.2. Encourage employers to purchase shuttle passes for their employees.
 - 5.8.2.3. Promote the use of NRTA Park and Ride lots (existing commercial parking lots) for downtown access as an alternative for island residents and visitors who reside beyond walking distance to existing shuttle routes-and as an alternative to use of the Washington Street parking lot, which is over-utilized.

5.8.3. Increase the efficiency and level of service of the island's taxi services.

- 5.8.3.1. Encourage taxi owners to establish and utilize co-op central dispatching to enhance the efficiency of taxi service; and encourage the start-up of private dispatching businesses or co-ops.
- 5.8.3.2. Encourage enhanced and coordinated taxi service at and to the airport, Steamboat Wharf, and Straight Wharf to provide adequate service at times of arrival and departure.
- 5.8.3.3. Encourage the taxi industry to provide more bike racks on taxis to promote intermodal connections.
- 5.8.3.4. Improve taxi service during off-peak periods to better serve the year-round population and to offer at least a minimum level of service to meet demand.

5.8.4. Encourage the use of vans or jitneys.

- 5.8.4.1. Encourage the lodging establishments to provide or expand the use of vans whenever a parking waiver is granted by the Planning Board.

5.9. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The following recommendations are to encourage better utilization of existing NRTA service and help reduce auto-dependency on Nantucket:

1. Provide service to the Tom Nevers area.
2. Provide service along Hummock Pond Road to Cisco Beach.
3. Expand dates and hours of operation.
4. Provide additional satellite automobile and bicycle parking facilities at major road intersections with major shuttle routes to encourage park and ride potential.
5. Find permanent supplemental funding to finance improvements.
6. Create paid Downtown Parking System, with partial proceeds to NRTA.