

APR 28 2006

# Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Orleans County

Prepared for the

**Orleans County  
Building Rural Capacity  
Transportation Task Force**

by



*Stuart I. Brown Associates, Inc.*

*Planning and Management Consultants*

**September 2002**

## Introduction

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Orleans County was prepared by the "Building Rural Capacity" Transportation Task Force, which includes representatives of public and private human service agencies and transportation providers within Orleans County. A list of Task Force members is shown in the table on the following page.

In Fall 2001, the Task Force retained Stuart I. Brown Associates to prepare a Strategic Plan. An Inventory and Assessment Report, published separately, contains information about existing transportation services, unmet needs, and successful transportation programs in other rural areas.

The Strategic Plan includes:

- A "Mission Statement" that declares the purpose of the Strategic Plan.
- A statement of "Goals"
- A list of "Recommended Actions"
- A "Time Frame for Implementation"
- Background information to provide the "Basis for the Recommended Actions"
- An "Evaluation of Institutional Options"
- A summary of five "Alternative Service Plans for Public Transportation," including service components and sample budgets for operations as well as start-up.
- A summary of the "Potential Involvement of Human Service Providers" in implementing the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan presents the overall objectives and the basic framework of a public transportation system that would be effective in Orleans County. The specific service alternatives that are presented could be carried out either by a private operator under a public transportation service sponsored by Orleans County, by the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (R-GRTA), or a combination of the two. The first step in implementing the Plan is for the Orleans County Legislature to determine that there is a need for public transportation to serve residents of Orleans County, and then to select the most appropriate institutional arrangement.

## Mission Statement

Establish a coordinated public transportation system that meets the needs of Orleans County residents.

## Goals

1. Improve access to employment for people who do not drive or do not have access to a car.
2. Make affordable transportation available to persons with disabilities, and others who cannot drive or do not have access to a car, for daily activities such as employment, shopping, medical and agency appointments, and recreation.
3. Make public transportation services available during high-demand periods, including evenings and weekends.
4. Improve the cost-effectiveness and availability of out-of-County medical transportation.
5. Increase support for and participation in a coordinated public transportation system among human service agencies and organizations.
6. Create a system of transportation services that can be sustained, both financially and operationally.

## Potential Time Frame for Implementation

September - October 2002	Orleans County Legislature initiates discussion with RGRTA regarding providing public transportation service in cooperation with CATS
November 2003	Orleans County Legislature passes a resolution to join R-GRTA, and recommends two possible commissioners to represent Orleans County.
December 2003	Governor appoints commissioner
January - April 2003	R-GRTA works with Orleans County to develop a service plan and budget
April - June 2003	NYS DOT works with R-GRTA to provide capital and operating funds
July - September 2003	R-GRTA hires local staff and acquires vehicles
October 2003	Service begins in Orleans County

## Basis for Recommended Actions

CATS currently provides transportation to clients and consumers of the following human service agencies and organizations:

Department of Social Services	In-county medical transportation for Medicaid recipients; demand-responsive service for participants in the Domestic Violence program
Office for the Aging:	Albion Nutrition Site Service; Demand responsive service to shopping and medical appointments
Mental Health:	Transportation to Day Treatment programs and clinic appointments
Arc of Orleans County	Transportation to workshops and treatment facilities
Job Development	Demand responsive service to job training sites

### Current and Potential Customer Base

In rural areas, people who depend on public transportation are generally unable to drive or do not have access to a car. These include seniors, disabled, youth and economically disadvantaged persons.

The geographic distribution of households with no vehicle available is shown on the map on the following page. This map demonstrates that the greatest demand for services is within the Villages of Albion and Medina.

A survey conducted in Fall 2000 identified the most common trip purposes, origins and destinations among clients and consumers of human service agencies. The most common trip purpose was medical appointments (39%), including counseling and physical therapy. Other purposes are grocery shopping (15%), work (11%), general shopping (9%), social visits (8%), recreation and entertainment (7%), religious services (3%), and education (3%).

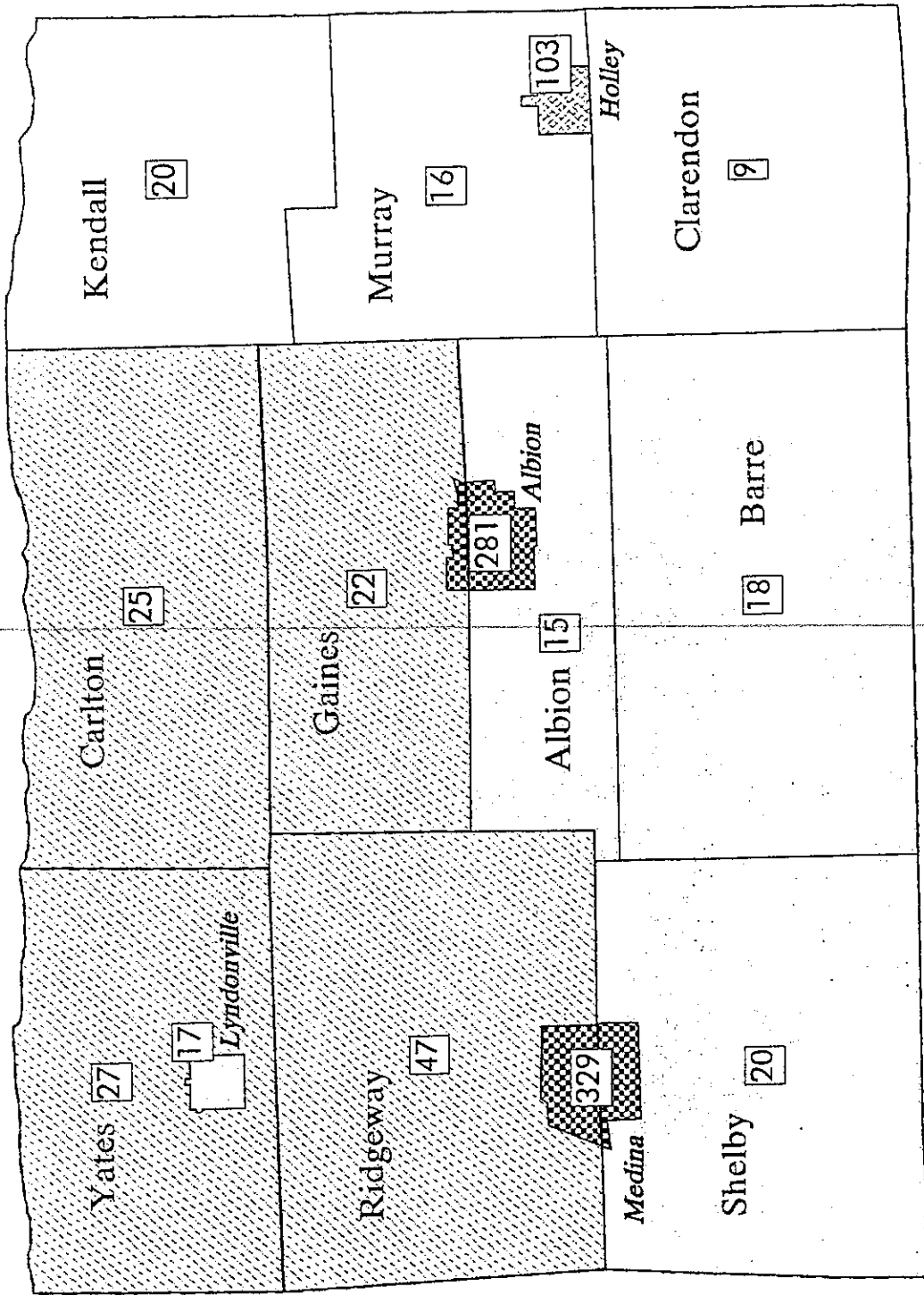
The survey determined that 20% of trips were entirely within Albion, 7% entirely within Medina, 11% from Albion to unspecified destination, and 10% from Medina to unspecified destinations, 6% from Medina to Albion, 4% from Albion to Brockport, 4% from Albion to Rochester, 4% from Albion to Medina.

### Unmet Needs

Although existing transportation services are extensive, these services are customized for agency clients and consumers. In discussions with representatives of human service agencies, a survey of major employers, and a survey of students at Genesee Community College, the following unmet needs were identified.

- Seniors have a continuing need for affordable transportation to medical appointments in Rochester and Buffalo, as well as to activities such as appointments, shopping, visiting, and volunteer work. Transportation provided by CATS under contract with Office for the Aging is limited; it is not available evenings and weekends and does not provide transportation for social visits or volunteer work.

# Households without Access to Vehicles Orleans County



Number of Households with No Vehicles Available

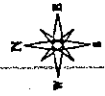
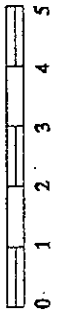
0-20

21-49

50-150

>200

Miles



SOURCE: 2000 Census Profiles

NOV-00  
08/13/03

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## Evaluation of Institutional Options

	Join RGRTA	Contract with Private Operator (commercial or not-for-profit)	Cooperative Arrangement Between RGRTA and CATS
County Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal staff involvement.</li> <li>Appointed commissioner would act as liaison to County staff and Board of Supervisors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County staff would be assigned to oversee contractor and report to NYS DOT.</li> <li>Oversight would require 20% to 50% of one County employee's time. (\$15-25,000)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for R-GRTA</li> </ul>
County financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required match to STOA to be determined by NYS DOT. Other area Counties affiliated with RGRTA contribute between \$20,000 and \$50,000 annually.</li> <li>Additional ¼ of 1% of the mortgage tax (approximately \$85,000/year) would go to RGRTA and indirectly support the service.</li> <li>RGRTA would maintain service levels according to annual budget, even if revenues are less than expected.</li> <li>RGRTA would pay all start-up costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match for STOA required.</li> <li>Operator may be able to pay County match. An RFP would be required to determine need for County subsidy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for R-GRTA</li> </ul>
Local control/oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RGRTA operates independently, with input from local commissioner and elected officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight by County staff needed to influence service changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for R-GRTA</li> <li>County representatives may need to monitor the continued effectiveness of cooperative arrangements</li> </ul>

## Alternative Service Plans for Public Transportation

The study evaluated alternative service designs for a public transportation system, as well as alternative institutional arrangements. The following service components are recommended:

- Fixed route service along the Route 31 corridor, with service to Brockport (including early morning and late afternoon connections with the RTS Park & Ride).
- Fixed route service from Albion to Batavia, with service to Genesee Community College.
- Saturday shopping shuttle (in-county grocery stores and pharmacies only).
- Integration of OFA Nutrition site service to Albion (4 days per week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday). These flexible routes would be customized for OFA clients, but would be open to the public by advance reservation.
- Demand responsive service in and around Albion and Medina.
- Demand-responsive and shuttle service Countywide.
- Demand responsive service weekday evenings (Monday-Thursday).
- A medical shuttle service to Rochester area hospitals.

In addition, the transportation provider should provide shuttle service to special events, such as the Orleans County 4-H Fair, local festivals, and other events. These shuttles may be run as a community service by the transportation provider at cost.

The feasibility of integrating these services into a public transportation system operated by a single entity was explored in detail. As part of the process of preparing the Strategic Plan, detailed descriptions of alternative service plans, including sample schedules of vehicle usage and sample budgets, were prepared.

Tables that summarize the costs, revenues and potential ridership for each service component are included at the end of this section. The costs and revenues were estimated based on a County-sponsored service operated by a private transportation provider. State and Federal programs (STOA and Section 5311) would provide operating assistance as well as deficit reduction. The amount of operating assistance is computed based on the number of miles traveled and the number of passengers carried. State and Federal assistance in purchasing buses that is proposed in the sample budgets may not be available in a single year, as the nine-County region is allotted a certain amount that must be shared among all public transportation systems in each County.

If R-GRTA were to provide public transportation in Orleans County, the costs to operate each of the alternative service plans would be similar. However, revenues from State and Federal programs would be calculated differently. As a State authority, R-GRTA receives operating assistance and capital funds for its subsidiaries under a different formula than County-



### Comparison of Alternative Service Plans

Alternative	Brockport Service	Batavia Service	Vehicles/ Drivers	Demand Responsive/Collector Service				Medical Shuttle	Integration of OFA Nutrition Site Service	Annual Operating	Start-up	Cost to County (based on independent operator model; cost for R-GRTA model TBD)
				Medina Area	Albion Area	County-wide	Evening Service					
1	5 routes per day; Trips to Brockport at 7:15, 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 3:15 and 6:00 p.m.	3 round trips per day; Arrives in Batavia at 8:15 a.m. and 1:30 and 6:00 p.m.	7 vehicles 6 full-time and one part-time drivers	5 days/week	5 days/week	5 days/week	4 eves/week	4 days/week	29,106	45,100		
2	5 routes per day; Trips to Brockport at 7:15, 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 3:15 and 6:00 p.m.	3 round trips per day; Arrives in Batavia at 8:15 a.m. and 1:30 and 6:00 p.m.	6 vehicles 6 full-time drivers	5 days/week	5 days/week	5 days/week	4 eves/week	None	36,258	40,600		
3	3 routes per day; Trips to Brockport at 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.	3 round trips per day; Arrives in Batavia at 8:15 a.m. and 1:30 and 6:00 p.m.	5 vehicles 5 full time and one part-time drivers	5 days/week	5 days/week	5 days/week	4 eves/week	None	35,971	39,500		
4	3 routes per day; Trips to Brockport at 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.	3 round trips per day; Arrives in Batavia at 8:15 a.m. and 1:30 and 6:00 p.m.	5 vehicles; 5 full time drivers	5 days/week	5 days/week	5 days/week	None	None	22,908	34,700		
5	3 routes per day; Trips to Brockport at 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.	None	5 vehicles; 4 full time and one part-time drivers	5 days/week	5 days/week	5 days/week	None	None	48,632	34,700		

Potential Start up Costs

Description	Alt #1	Alt #2	Alt #3	Alt #4	Alt #5
<b>Expenses</b>					
16-passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	144,000	144,000	96,000	48,000	48,000
24 passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000
8-passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	111,000	74,000	111,000	111,000	111,000
	323,000	286,000	275,000	227,000	227,000
Radio system	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Office setup	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>335,000</b>	<b>298,000</b>	<b>287,000</b>	<b>239,000</b>	<b>239,000</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
Section 5311 assistance: (90% of vehicle cost)	297,900	257,400	247,500	204,300	204,300
<b>County contribution (10% of vehicles and radio plus office setup):</b>	<b>45,100</b>	<b>40,600</b>	<b>39,500</b>	<b>34,700</b>	<b>34,700</b>

Estimated Vehicle Cost:

16-passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	48,000
24 passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	68,000
8-passenger bus w/ 2 wheelchair slots	37,000

## Potential Involvement of Human Service Agencies

Several Orleans County agencies currently contract with CATS for transportation services, and/or operate their own vehicles to transport clients to medical appointments and other destinations. These include various programs within the Department of Social Services, Mental Health office, and the Office for the Aging.

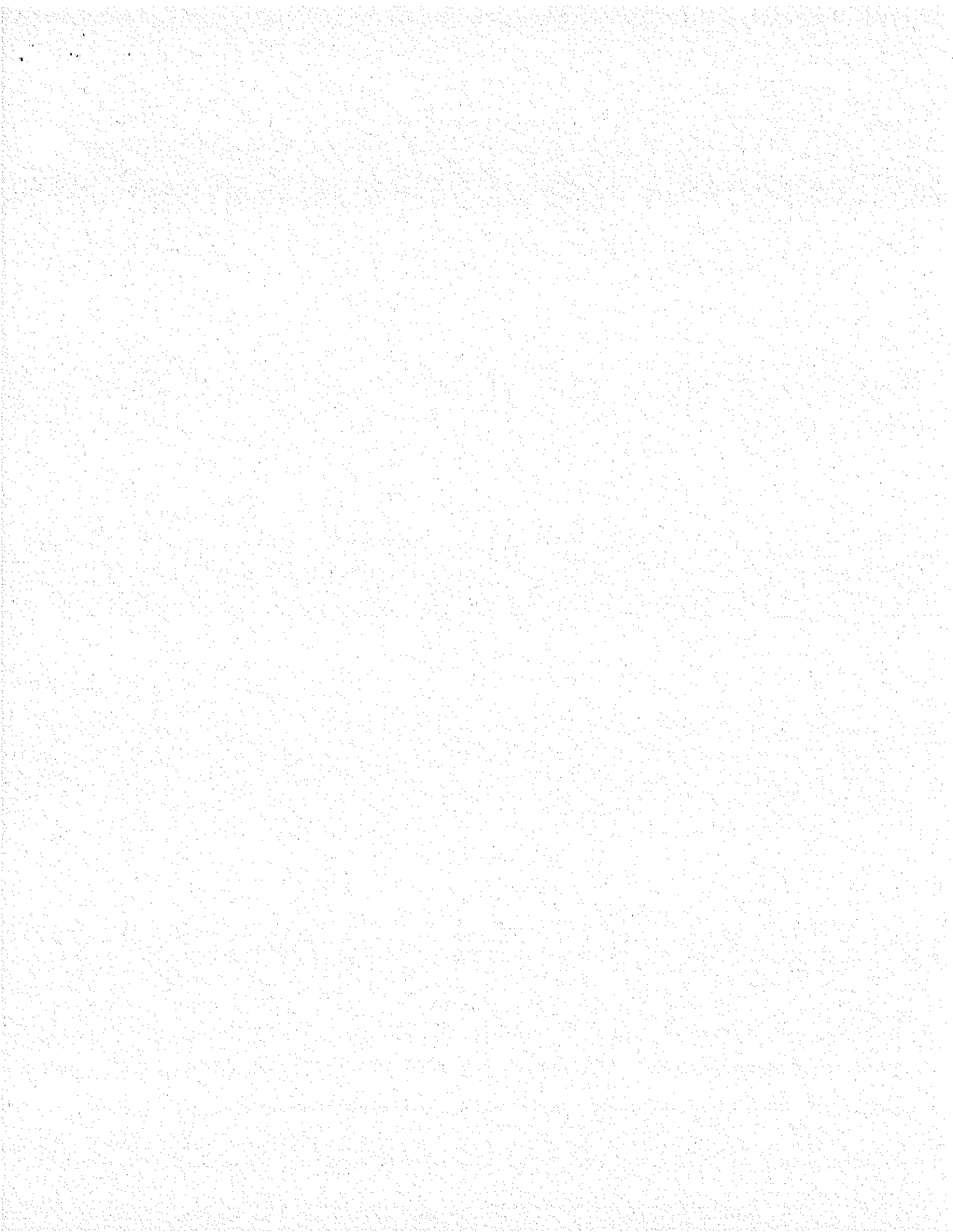
During the course of the study, representatives of these agencies discussed how their current transportation would fit into a new public transportation system. All of the agencies indicated that a public transportation system that includes both fixed routes and demand responsive service would increase the overall mobility of their clients. This would lead to increased opportunities for employment, improved health and general well-being, and a better quality of life in the community.

In addition, several existing services could be incorporated into a public system. For example:

- 1) DSS medical transportation for destinations within the County and Brockport could be offered to a public transportation provider on the same basis as it is currently operated by CATS. The transportation provider would be obligated to provide all necessary rides, by any appropriate means. For example, transportation within the Villages of Albion or Medina would be provided by demand responsive service. Transportation from the Villages of Albion, Medina or Holley to Brockport could be provided by the fixed route service, supplemented by route deviation and demand responsive service within the Villages of Medina and Albion. Many of the trips could be absorbed into a broader public transportation service, resulting in total cost to DSS of approximately \$113,000 (75% of the current amount.)
- 2) Transportation to the Nutrition site in Albion for OFA clients, currently provided by CATS under contract with OFA, could be folded into the public transportation system as a flexible route, customized for OFA clients who reserve rides in advance. As the route would be open to the public, the transportation provider could pick up other riders who have destinations in Albion at approximately the same time. OFA estimates the value of this service at approximately \$5,000 per year, although the exact amount would need to be determined.

However, several existing services may be difficult to transfer to a public system. The following narrative summarizes the issues associated with agency transportation.

- 1) Transportation provided to OFA clients by CATS is door-through-door. Drivers frequently help passengers carry groceries into their homes. A public provider may not be able to provide such a service.
- 2) Transportation provided by Mental Health drivers to evening group therapy sessions requires confidentiality. Riding a public bus to the counseling center may violate clients' confidentiality.



Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Orleans County

# Inventory and Assessment of Transportation Services

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Prepared for the  
Orleans County Building Rural Capacity Task Force  
by



*Stuart I. Brown Associates, Inc.*

*Planning and Management Consultants*

September 2002

# Inventory and Assessment of Transportation Services

Orleans County, New York

September 2002

The Inventory and Assessment of Transportation Services has been prepared in conjunction with the development of a Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Orleans County. This report contains information about existing transportation services, unmet needs, and successful transportation programs in other rural areas. The Strategic Plan, published separately, presents a plan of action to respond to the needs identified in this report.

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## Describe Existing Transportation Services

Existing transportation services in Orleans County primarily serve consumers, clients and customers of human service agencies. Most of these services are provided by for-profit or not-for-profit organizations on a contract basis or through other arrangements. A for-profit taxi company based in Medina provides service to individuals. Several agencies operate vehicles that are used to transport their own consumers, clients and customers to agency programs and other necessary services. CATS provides public service to individuals on a pay-per-ride basis. The following narrative identifies the transportation providers that are active in Orleans County, as well as those agencies and organizations that provide transportation.

### Transportation Providers

A small number of for-profit and not-for-profit companies and organizations provide transportation services to agencies and individuals in Orleans County. These include:

- CATS, a not-for-profit subsidiary of Orleans County Community Action
- Rides Unlimited, a not-for-profit subsidiary of Opportunities Unlimited of Niagara County
- Ridge Road Express, a bus and transportation company that specializes in school bus transportation
- Callara's Taxi Service, a taxi company based in Medina.

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September 2002

Rides Unlimited of Niagara County

Rides Unlimited is a not-for-profit subsidiary of Opportunities Unlimited (an Arc affiliate serving primarily Niagara County.) The organization serves people with developmental disabilities and physical disabilities in Orleans, Niagara, Erie and Monroe Counties. Rides Unlimited operates a fleet of 12 vans and 3 cars. It provides transportation services on a contract basis to several organizations, including the Rainbow Arc pre-school program. Transportation services are provided for a fixed fee of \$28.00 per hour.

Ridge Road Express

Ridge Road Express is a for-profit transportation service based in Lockport that provides transportation services for school systems, human service organizations, and others. The company provides school bus service to the Albion School District. It operates a maintenance facility in cooperation with CATS.

Orleans County Agencies that Provide Transportation

- Orleans County Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Orleans County Office for the Aging
- Orleans County Mental Health

Department of Social Services - Out-of-County Medical

The Orleans County Department of Social Services operates a fleet of two 6-person mini-vans to transport Medicaid recipients to out-of-County medical appointments. (CATS provides transportation to appointments within Orleans County and in Brockport.) DSS provides approximately 1,172 one-way trips per year under this program.<sup>1</sup>

As vehicles were purchased specifically for Medicaid transportation, they can only be used for this purpose.

Office for the Aging

The Orleans County Office for the Aging contracts with CATS to provide transportation to seniors to medical appointments, shopping, and to the Nutrition Site in Albion.

Orleans County Mental Health

The Orleans County Department of Mental Health provides transportation for its own clients to group therapy sessions in the evenings. Case workers also provide transportation to clients, especially to those with the most severe disabilities. Most medical transportation is provided by CATS, under contract with the Department of Social Services, for clients who receive Medicaid (nearly all of the clients served.)

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<sup>1</sup> Extrapolated based on 391 roundtrips reported between January 1 and August 31, 2001.

Living Opportunities of DePaul

Living Opportunities of DePaul provides services, including transportation, to adult Orleans County residents with a mental illness. Rides are scheduled as needed. The fleet consists of one vehicle serving Orleans County. The vehicle is funded by the NYS Office of Mental Health

Approximately 500 one-way trips are provided annually to a customer base of 30-40 persons.

Genesee Council for Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (GCASA)

The Council provides services to persons with chemical dependency, including some with mental illnesses. The Council has an office in Albion. The Council occasionally provides transportation, and it shares a van with another location. In 2000, the Council transported 6 persons, and provided 12 one-way trips.

Orchard Manor nursing home

Orchard Manor Nursing Home, located in Medina, transports nursing home residents to medical and treatment appointments in Orleans, Niagara, Erie, Genesee, and Monroe Counties. This service is included in residents' payment for daily room and board. The fleet consists of one car and one van.

G/O-ACE Employment Services

Genesee/ Orleans ACE Employment Services assists persons with mental illnesses and other disabilities in obtaining employment. The organization provides transportation to and from agency-related activities, such as workshops and training, to appointments with other agencies, to pick up and return applications for jobs, and to job interviews. Rides to and from work are only provided on an emergency basis. The organization's fleet consists of one 8-passenger van. Service is curb-to-curb. Passengers must be customer of organization.

Rural Opportunities, Inc.

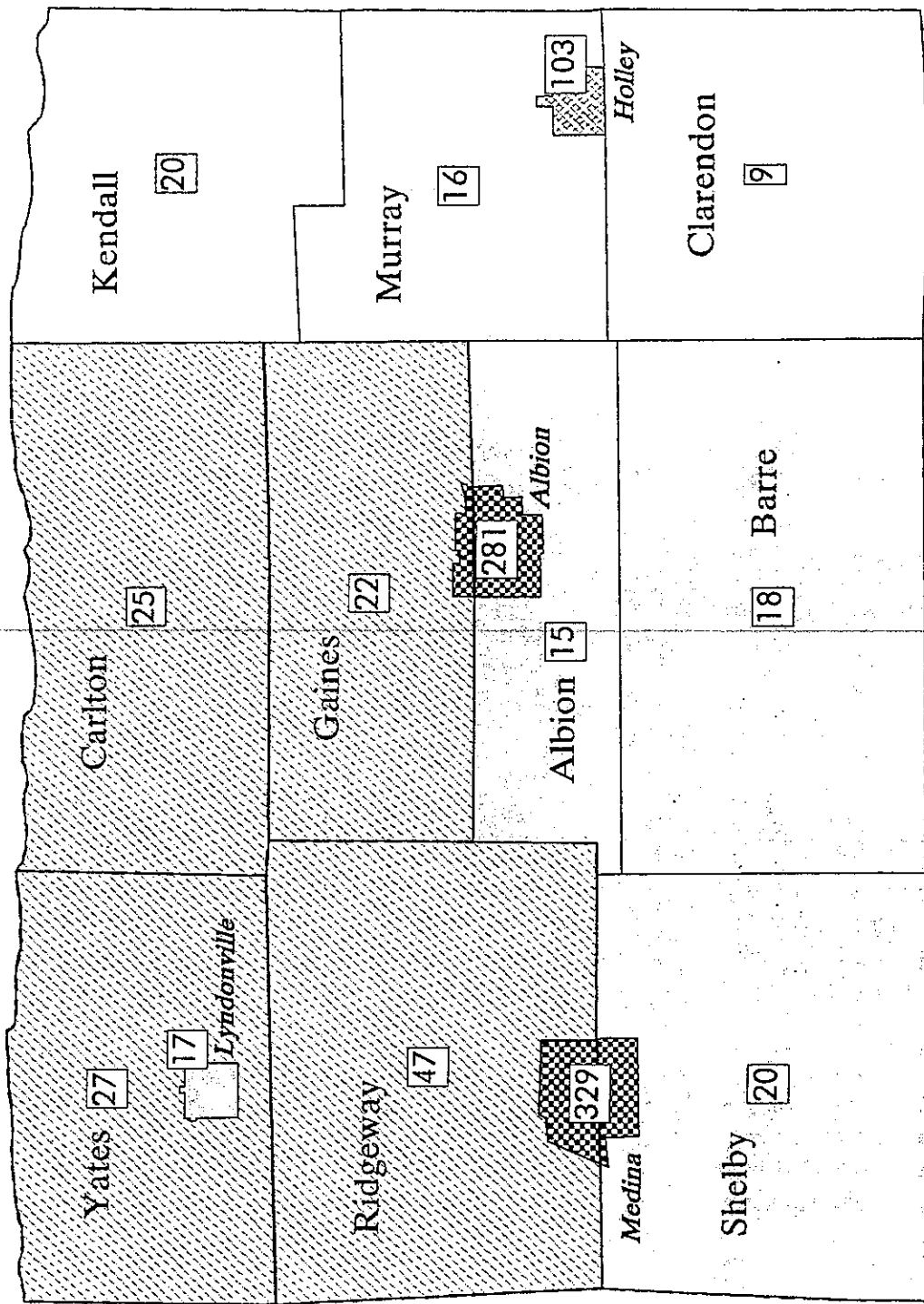
Rural Opportunities provides services to migrant and seasonal farm workers in Orleans County and surrounding counties. Rural Opportunities provides transportation to clients enrolled in its training and employment services only. Rides are provided to job interviews that the agency has set up, or to events at the agency, but not for other purposes. The fleet consists of 2 mini-vans. The organization provides approximately 43 one-way trips annually.

Iroquois Job Corps

The Iroquois Job Corps transports its own students to programs. Its fleet consists of 11 vehicles: 6 vans, 2 buses, and 1 car. The vehicles are funded through Federal GSA, operating funds are obtained through contracts with the U.S. Department of Labor. Iroquois Job Corps provides approximately 2,500 one-way rides to its students on an annual basis.

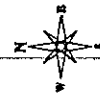
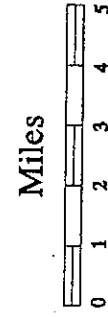


# Households without Access to Vehicles Orleans County



Number of Households with No Vehicles Available

- 0-20
- 21-49
- 50-150
- >200



SOURCE: 2000 Census Profiles

## Current and Potential Destinations

Major destinations include medical facilities, grocery stores, agency offices and program sites, employment locations, and day care sites. Most of the major destinations within Orleans County are located in the Villages of Albion and Medina.

### Fall 2000 Survey

20% of trips were entirely within Albion, 7% entirely within Medina, 11% from Albion to unspecified destinations, 10% from Medina to unspecified destinations, 6% from Medina to Albion, 4% from Albion to Brockport, 4% from Albion to Rochester, and 4% from Albion to Medina.

### Agency Services

Office for the Aging Nutrition Sites: Albion and Medina (4x/ week), Lyndonville (3x/ week), Kendall (1x/week)

### Orleans County Offices-- Albion

14016 Route 31 West: Office for the Aging, Department of Social Services, Housing Assistance

14014 Route 31 West: Mental Health Services, Health

13996 Route 31 West: Veterans

454 West Avenue: Job Development

### Employment Destinations

#### In-County:

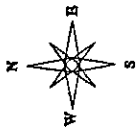
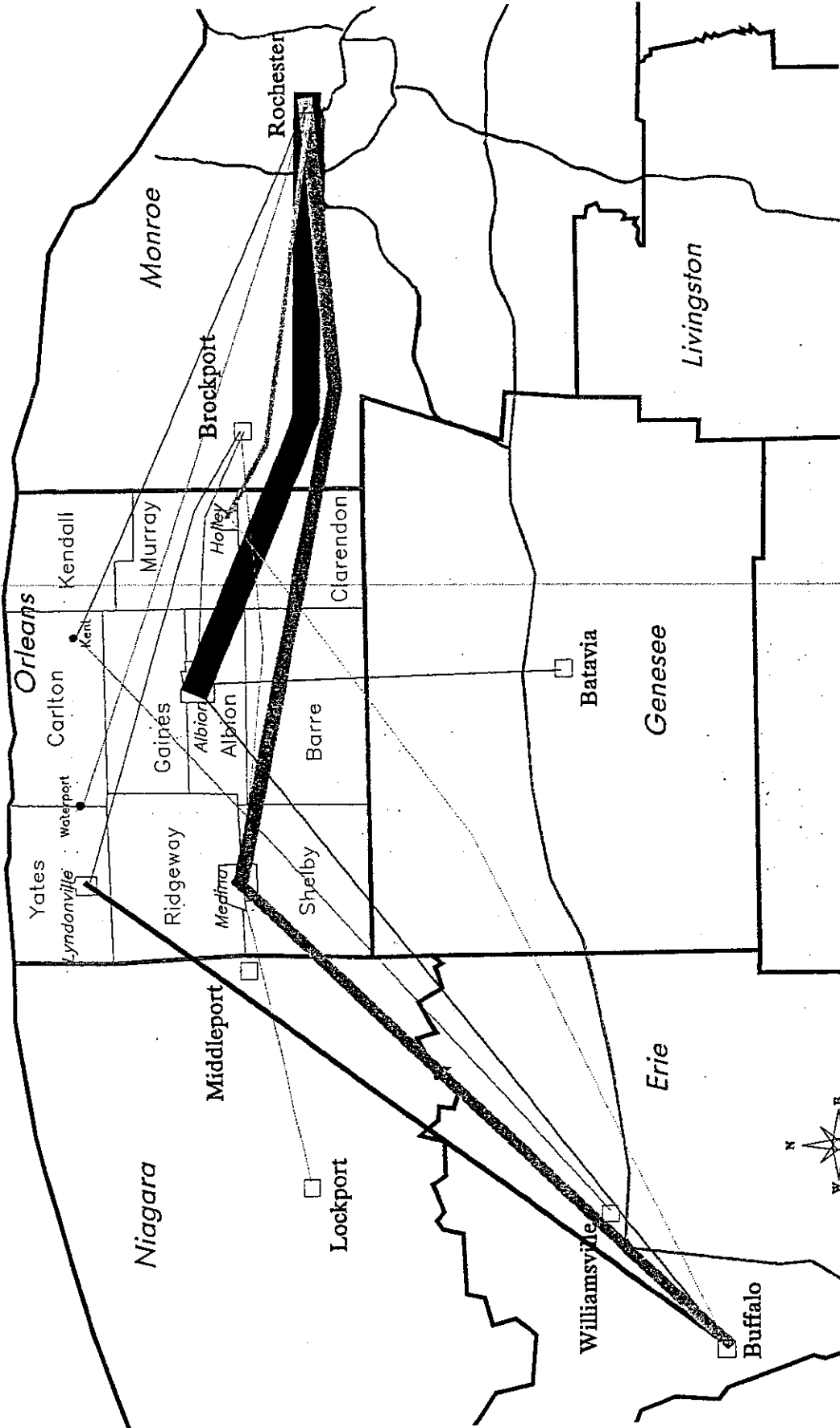
- Washington Mutual (formerly Dime Banking), Albion
- Atwater Foods and Nakano, Lyndonville
- Medina: several industrial employers, Medina Memorial Hospital, Oak Orchard Manor, County Nursing Home
- Schools
- Nursing Homes

#### Out-of-County

- Brockport (Hospital and Nursing Home, College, industrial and retail businesses);
- Rochester;
- Buffalo and its suburbs;
- Lockport;
- Batavia

# Out-of-County Medical Trips - DSS

Orleans County Strategic Plan For Public Transportation



SECTION 11/20/81

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The Arc of Orleans County contracts with CATS to provide much of its daily transportation needs. CATS provides approximately 21,297 rides per year to Arc consumers. At an annual cost of \$74,537, the cost per trip is approximately \$3.50. In addition, Arc operates its own fleet of vehicles.

The Office for the Aging also contracts with CATS for transportation to seniors. The cost per year is approximately \$30,000. With an estimated 3,288 rides per year, the average cost per trip is approximately \$9.12. Funds for transportation services are provided from: the Federal Older Americans Act, Title IIIB; State Community Services for the Elderly; and County funds.

Other agencies, as described in Part 1, provide transportation to their own clients, consumers and customers using their own small fleets of vehicles.

Other significant transportation expenses include:

- Rainbow Arc preschool: Funds through the Orleans County Health Department; service provided through a contract with Rides Unlimited.
- School transportation: Each school district provides transportation to students, either using their own fleet of buses or through a contract with a provider, such as Ridge Road Express.

## Existing and projected need for transportation

Representatives from human service agencies identified the following needs for transportation services:

- Seniors have a continuing need for affordable transportation to medical appointments in Rochester and Buffalo, as well as to social activities such as visiting, and volunteer work.
- Lower income workers often need transportation to day care centers and employment.
- Most Orleans County employers find that lack of reliable transportation is a "minor" factor in attracting and retaining employees. However, certain large employers may be interested in working with a transportation provider to create a customized transportation system. The employers who find that transportation is a serious obstacle to attracting and retaining employees operate three shifts per day. Employers may subsidize a transportation system, if it were demonstrated that the system would attract needed workers.
- Persons with disabilities need transportation for all of their activities, including shopping, employment, medical and agency appointments, and social activities. The cost needs to be affordable, as most of these people have limited incomes. The current CATS zone rate of \$2.50 is too high for many people who need transportation. A fare of approximately \$1.00 would be reasonable.
- Passengers should be expected to pay for at least a portion of the cost for transportation. Several agencies have experienced problems with "no shows." When a ride is arranged, it must be paid for whether or not the passenger takes it.
- Youth need transportation to jobs as well as to other destinations. Youth typically require transportation in the late afternoon and evening.
- Bus service from Medina and Albion to Genesee Community College in Batavia is likely to attract up to 6,400 passenger-trips per year based on 32 weeks of service per year.
- Continued coordination among human service agencies and transportation providers is essential to ensure that transportation is provided in the most efficient and effective manner. Possible.

## Next Steps

The information in this report will be used to prepare a Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Orleans County. The Strategic Plan, published separately, will present a plan of action for meeting the needs for transportation services among Orleans County residents.