

Fayette County Transit Study

In 1995, Benetec Associates completed a Transit Study of Fayette County. This study¹ examined the current state of transit in the County, documented transit need, suggested various options for improvement and expansion, and developed an action plan. With respect to the future of Fayette County, the study stressed that transit can play an important role in improving the local quality of life by bridging the obstacles of rural life and an aging population in the County. Transit is a key to rebirth, economic recovery, and mobility.

Currently the County Transportation Program oversees a portion of the transit operation in Fayette County. The County acts as the overseer of the shared-ride system that primarily provides transportation for senior citizens and medical assistance needs. The program is partially reimbursed by lottery funds and the Department of Public Welfare. The program is operated in a public agency/private company partnership. Rides are provided by seven local carriers who charge fares based on service in seven different zones. The County sets schedules, assigns trips, determines eligibility, and secures grants for the program. Restrictions include scheduling of trips one day in advance and limiting trips to two per person per day.

The remaining transportation system in the County is a fixed route system. This system is provided by the private sector. Seven private operators service the County, which is considered high for the size of Fayette County. Service is concentrated in the City of Uniontown and elsewhere is limited to the Uniontown-Connellsville-Brownsville corridor. A lack of coordination between carriers, distribution of schedules, and lack of route mapping was indicated to be a hindrance.

The Transit Study indicated ridership was good in both the shared-ride and fixed route systems, however, both systems provide efficient service to a limited portion of the population. Lost opportunity results from the lack of information and communication as well as the lack of coordination between systems. Of several alternatives, the study recommended implementation of an enhanced County Transportation Program that would oversee both the shared-ride and fixed route systems. The recommendations included the County providing continuity in the Transit systems in areas of marketing, expansion, capital improvements, training, and coordination. The study indicated the existing structure of transportation in Fayette County together with the dearth of new funding sources for additional services limit the opportunities for major change. The best option for local service improvements under these circumstances is to concentrate on enhancing existing programs. The study indicated the County Transportation Program plays an important role in maintaining mobility and is poised for becoming a major component in any comprehensive plan to upgrade the quality of life in Fayette County.

¹ Fayette County Transit Study, Final Report and Action Plan (December 1995)