

11. CONSIDERATION OF TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 2010, we partnered with the City of Franklin and Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia to obtain a federal grant to study the feasibility of a rural public transportation system. The idea was to explore opportunities to possibly expand the I-Ride Transit System which is operated by Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSEVA) and began service in March 2008. Their fleet is wheelchair accessible and travels 3 fixed routes with multiple stops along the way in Courtland, Franklin, and Smithfield. Residents are able to board and ride the buses for just \$1. In addition to limited funding from the local governments, I-Ride is supported with state and federal funding, and funding from Franklin-Southampton Charities, Franklin-Southampton Area United Way, the Western Tidewater Task Force on Aging, the Obici Foundation, and fares collected from the riders.

The year-long study resulted in preparation of a Transit Development Plan that was reviewed and vetted by the Planning Commission earlier this year. In short, they did not vote to recommend approval of the plan - rather, they have simply recommended acceptance of the report with further consideration to be given during the Comprehensive Plan update later this year, which will allow the plan to be further evaluated by interested citizens.

The following are attached for your reference:

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We have copies of the full plan (or just the executive summary) if any Board members would like a copy.

MOTION REQUIRED:

If the Board is so inclined, a motion is required to accept the report and refer it back to the Planning Commission for further consideration during the Comprehensive Plan update process later this year."

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Johnson, County Administrator ,;21 _
FROM: Beth Lewis, AICP, Community Development Director ~
DATE: April 4, 2012
RE: Southampton Franklin Transit Development Plan

At their March 8, 2012 meeting, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Supervisors accept the Transit Development Plan as prepared for Southampton County on behalf of Senior Services of South Eastern Virginia (SSSEVA). The Plan was prepared with grant funding awarded from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit.

The Plan preparation was the culmination of a year's work that included a number of task force and public meetings (task force contact list attached). The Planning Commission held a discussion of the Plan at their January meeting, a public hearing at their February meeting, and a final discussion and vote at their March meeting (all minutes attached).

In their final discussion, the Planning Commission said the Plan needs to part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan that will take place over the next year. The Commission wants to make sure the community at large has a chance to read, understand, and comment on the Plan, hence their recommendation of acceptance of the Plan rather than adoption. The Commission's concerns were whether the County residents have a need for an expanded transit service, and concerns about the potential costs involved.

SSSEVA has been granted \$6,350 a year for a number of years from the Board of Supervisors to help offset the costs of providing transportation on a limited basis. The Plan provides for level funding for the next two (2) years. The Planning Commission has concerns that the adoption of this Plan will require a greater outlay of funds after those two years to implement the Plan with no way to opt-out of increases in costs or services provided.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission members
FROM: Beth Lewis, AICP, Community Development Director
DATE: January 31, 2012
RE: Transit Development Plan

In 2010, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSSEVA) requested that Southampton County seek a grant to study the feasibility of an enhanced public transportation system in the County. SSSEVA provides a number of services throughout the area, the most visible in the County being the I-Ride service. The County sought and was awarded the grant through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). DRPT contracted with Rhodeside & Harwell to create a transit development plan for the County. The plan studied current public transit opportunities in the County and the City of Franklin.

A number of public meetings were held, involving members of the community who represented people who may now or might in the future *have* a need for public transportation. The list of invitees is attached. This plan is the result of the public input from the task force and the expertise of the consultants.

Strengths

- As the population ages, the need for public transportation grows. The 2010 Census reveals that 10% of the County population is 70 years of age or older, and transportation or the lack thereof has the potential to be a major area of concern for an aged population.
- Low income residents are also typically users of public transportation, and the recent ACS indicates 15% of the County population has incomes below the *poverty* level. Transportation is oftentimes an area of concern among the low wealth segment of the population.
- Page 22 of the plan indicates that *over* the past three years (2009, 2010, and 2011), 1,222 trips in the County have been provided by the fixed-route service provided by 1-Ride.
- In 2011, 425 rides were provided by the demand-responsive service, with the most frequent pick-up sites being the Stevens Woods apartments, the Glyndon Street area, and the School Board office.
- The Western Tidewater Free Clinic shuttle averaged 10 riders per month from both Franklin and Southampton County, while the Horizon Medical Shuttle provided rides to 10 riders in its first eight (8) months of operation. These riders may not *have* had other transportation should these services not have been available.
- The change to the Courtland service, from a fixed route to a demand responsive route, is a change that by the study can be accomplished with the current vehicles and save money.
- The plan on the whole indicates that riders in the County are using the services provided by the limited public transportation available, and these users may have difficulty making the trips provided without transportation.
- Public transportation is an important element of making a community livable for all its residents. It makes it possible for people to age in their current homes if public transportation is available when they can no longer drive. Public transportation has the potential to be a part of a Countywide transportation system that relies less on private vehicles and the attendant cost. Public transportation provides for the greater good of the community.

Weaknesses

- When the County was asked to prepare the grant application, this study was to be the first of three, with this study determining feasibility. The second study was to research and determine routing, and the final study was to determine capital costs and funding opportunities. This one study seems to be the only study that will be undertaken, however. While information concerning feasibility, routing, and funding all seem to be provided, there perhaps might be more information needed to more fully flesh out these issues prior to a commitment of funds from the County.
- The plan calls for the change to be made to the County service in the short run. More significant changes are suggested to follow after two years. There are no benchmarks to be met prior to moving from Phase 1 to Phase 2 other than time. It may be a more prudent thought to make the Phase 1 changes, study the outcome produced by those changes, and then decide what next steps to take.
- A marketing plan is not included with this study. Current ridership may not seem to indicate the need for an increase in County funding required to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2. A marketing plan with clear activities and expected outcomes may be needed.
- Before an enhanced program, as in Phase 2 recommendations, is advanced, a visible need may be required. It is anticipated that an aging and low wealth community may create users of public transportation, but it is not clear that Southampton County residents would actually use this service. It's not known which potential users have unmet needs that a public transportation service might fulfill. It's not clear that merely rerouting the current vehicles is the best way to serve current and future users. New types of services may be a more prudent way to serve the County population (taxi-type services, cooperative agreements with organizations such as churches who may have passenger vans that are idle much of the time, work with the local school boards that have vehicles that may be available to carry students for the community recreation shuttles outlined on page 54).

**Senior Services of
Southeastern Virginia**

~
THE CENTER FOR AGING

MEMORANDUM

To: Southampton County Planning Commission Members

From: Cynthia S. ~reede, Director of Tra~si~ & Wellness ~ ~ **LO'**
Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Date: March 5, 2012

Re: Transportation Development Plan

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia is requesting the Southampton County Planning Commission to recommend to the County Board of Supervisors that the Southampton-Franklin Transportation Development Plan (TOP) be included in the County Comprehensive Plan.

Senior Services has provided transportation for seniors in Southampton and Franklin for seniors for 38 years; and for the general population through I-Ride services for 4 years.

The Transportation Development Plan (TOP) was financed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation as a study of Southampton and Franklin as contiguous and complementary jurisdictions. The historic relationship of business and employment as well as the shared business development area along Armory Drive were considered in the planning.

The TOP was prepared by two collaborating land use and transit planning organizations, Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. and Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning. Local stakeholders including citizens, County and City planning staff, private foundations, church leaders and human service agency participated in developing the TOP.

The TDP is a six year plan. It contains recommendations for this small urban and rural community that has the volume of riders needed for a system; and the need for public transit to give residents to education, improve mobility for seniors and those with disabilities as well as transport individuals and families to work, medical appointments and shopping.

The plan details a combination of regular routes, demand response and carefully timed transit options that allow free movement from the county zones to the shared tax zone on Armory Drive, to medical offices, places of employment, restaurants and other businesses. Increased independence and economic opportunity through increased mobility is the backbone of the Transportation Development Plan.

The Planning Commission has reviewed the TOP at its meetings on January 12, 2012 and February 9, 2012. At the February meeting, the motion to recommend the TOP to the

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County Board of Supervisors for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan was tabled, pending additional information from Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia.

Specifically, the Commissioners asked what the County would be obligating itself to if it adopted the TOP.

We have researched this question and present the following information as options:

1. Option One: The Null Option

One or both localities can reject the recommendation and not adopt them for inclusion in the comprehensive plan. Public transit is limited to current levels or less if existing funds diminish.

2. Option Two: One locality includes the TDP in the Comprehensive Plan

Resulting Action:

The locality would include the TOP in its Comprehensive Plan. The other locality would lose the benefit of additional federal and state funding to support public transportation.

See Option Three Resulting Action:

3. Option Three: Southampton and Franklin include the TDP in their Comprehensive Plans

Resulting Action:

- One or both localities establish **A Transportation Management Authority** made up of representatives from one or both localities to meet federal funding guidelines and allow for the application for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311 rural transit funding, FTA 5316 Jobs Access and Reverse Commute funds and/or New Freedom (FTA Section 5317) funds.
- The locality(ies) then has one to five years in which to further evaluate the transit viability, generate **local match funding*** and further define constituent support for public transit (riders by necessity, riders by choice, private foundation funding available, etc.).
- Both localities would decide through a budget process to move forward or not with application for funding.
- The Transportation Management Authority makes application through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for federal and state public transportation funds.

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- The Transportation Management Authority selects the entity to operate the public transit service per the TOP plan.

- **Local Match funding:**

FT A Section 5311 Rural Public Transit funds provide 50% of the operating costs for rural public transportation. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides 15% of the operating costs for rural public transportation. The local Transportation Management Authority is required to provide 35% of the operating costs for rural public transportation. The local funds may come from several sources.

Local match funding may come from:

- Localities
- Foundations
- Other Federal funds
- Individual Rider Fares
- Human Service Agency Contract funding
- Business Sponsor funding

The specific amount of local matching funds required will depend upon the extent of the service that the Transportation Management Authority decides is needed in their locality.

It should be noted that Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia currently uses federal funds to support I-Ride. These funds can be used as local match. Senior Services remains committed to continue to use these funds which can be used as part of the local match.

References:

- " VDRPT, Section 5311 State Management Plan for Public Transportation in Non-urbanized Areas;
- Southampton & Franklin Transit Development Plan Summary and Southampton & Franklin Transit Development Plan.

Planning Commission minutes

January 2012

Chairman Drake said the next item which was under New Business was the Transit Development Plan presentation - Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia. He called on Secretary Beth Lewis.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated that a couple of years ago the county sought and was awarded a grant of \$70,000.00 from the State Department of Rail and Public Transit to study the possibility of an expanded public transit service in Southampton County. We were requested to seek that grant from our senior services. We sought it. We got the grant. It took a while for the state to get the consultants moving, but now here's the grant. There are representatives from Senior Services here. There have been a number of public hearings, but they will present to you the information that was found by this study. This is one of the things you will have a public hearing on next month. What this will be is expected acceptance of resolution by the county. That is the end goal, that this be accepted by resolution by the county. Since the county's comprehensive plan with be under-going an update in the next year or so information from this plan may be added to the comprehensive plan. This plan if adopted may be appended as an extra chapter to the comprehensive plan, but that is the purpose - to make a transit plan that will as the years go by offer expanded public transit services to the citizens of Southampton County.

Mr. John Skervin, the chief executive officer of senior services in Southeastern Virginia spoke. He introduced Cindy Creede, who is the director of transit and wellness who oversees all of the transit operations throughout the region. They also have with them tonight, William Wade who is the long term capacity planner. He thanked Southampton County for supporting senior services for the forty years they had been in existence. They are the area agency on aging. Mr. John Skervin gave the following presentation: (not included)

After the presentation, Cindy Creede gave a few brief statements concerning the needs and benefits of the Transit Development Plan.

Chairman Drake stated he was totally confused. Talk about throwing some information out at you. He asked Secretary Beth Lewis weren't we having a hearing on this next month.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated yes we would be having a public hearing on this next month. You got this information tonight so you would have some time to think about it, digest it, ask questions, and think of questions before next month. This is an enlarged service that Southampton County hasn't been a part of in the past.

Chairman Drake said we haven't, but we have a need for it, is that correct.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated that the study shows there is a need for it and there are citizens that John and his group have found a need for it. As you know when there is a plan there are some things that it says you are going to do and it says maybe you are going to do them in one or two years. It can get pushed back and pushed back. If we don't start somewhere, then John (if he takes his vitamins) will be standing here twenty years from now asking the Planning Commission the same question. This is just a place to start if this Board and the Board of Supervisors think this is a needed service.

Chairman Drake said he was going to ask one question because he didn't want to carry this meeting on too long tonight. He asked wasn't there going to be a charge to the county for this service, correct. You keep talking about funding, partnerships, and the federal government, and state government, but there is going to be a cost to the county government, correct.

Mr. John Skervin stated yes there is. The county government is already and has for the past three years provided about \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 per year to senior services to support I-Ride. It has gone down as the county has cut its budget over the last three years. The county, as do

the other jurisdictions, provides for senior services to match the federal dollars for the things they do like meals on wheels and care. Southampton County and Isle of Wight both provided additional funding to support the I-Ride services. They also provide I-Ride services in the Smithfield and Isle of Wight County.

Chairman Drake stated the I-Ride Services is a particular time, on a particular day, to a particular destination. He asked if he was saying that correctly.

Mr. John Skervin stated yes.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said well no.

Chairman Drake asked Mrs. Cindy Creede if she wanted to comment.

Chairman Drake said there is something about a rural town, with the square mileage we have, and his neighbor needs to go to the doctor, and somebody else needs to go a different day. He asked if they are you going to come out on all these particular times and take them.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said your day is going to be on Monday. You are going to ride the bus to Franklin. Then you are going to hook up with the Franklin bus. Then you can go anywhere that bus goes. But you are going to make an appointment for yours.

Chairman Drake said supposed dialysis comes on Thursday.

Mrs. Cindy Creede stated that you might be eligible for paratransit because that would be part of the process which is another service.

Chairman Drake stated so that is another service.

Mrs. Cindy Creede stated yes, but it has to be a part of the public transit service because the law says you can't offer things with federal funds that people with different disabilities can't use. What she is trying to say is that if \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 is already being applied to another funding source as a match and we can only carry folks who are seniors and only other folks if there are seniors riding the bus and you took that same \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 and we know that Camp Foundation, the Southampton charities, United Way folks are real excited about transit because they want to get folks to medical appointments, to work, and they want children to have advantages so they are learning in school so all those things if you look at it are going to be empowered and enabled because you take that \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 and then you get these other transit funds with it and senior services still has money for the seniors so you will be able to have more money to work with in terms of transit.

Chairman Drake asked if the more you get for transit the more the county is going to have to upfront as well to be a matching type arrangement.

Mrs. Cindy Creede read that budget page again. She stated it doesn't have to. These are targets. If this level of service is wanted, then it probably, because of the consultants expertise, will cost about this much so the county should apply for this many federal dollars and the responsibility because of the funding match would be the smaller amount. In this room we all know that the county is not going to have that total amount of money to match, but the Camp Foundation, the Obici Foundation, Southampton Charities have money that they could put into it and they would be interested in supporting the *effort*. She can't promise us that it is going to happen. We would want that promise before you go to the feds saying you were going to have that match. You wouldn't want to ask for money that you weren't going to have the match for.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated that it would be wise to have the cash on hand to make the match.

Chairman Drake asked if the Federal and State funding grant was guaranteed.

Mr. John Skervin said if the entity is set up for 5311 rural public transit authority party. When he says party he is saying entity. He is saying the 5311 entity. In a typical year they do somewhere around 50,000 rides. If there is a dialysis patient they will work with that patient to figure out how to get them back and forth when they need to be there for an appointment. All drivers are drug tested. They do a background check on them. They have a professional operation which they have built over time. They know that transportation is one of the biggest needs that seniors have. If you have a bus going down the road and you have an empty seat, if there is someone who wants to ride they ought to be able to ride. That is why you need to figure out how to get the money so that you can make that service available to everybody. That is part of the reason they are taking this approach to it. As a provider of the service, they want to be as good a sport as they can. They have helped make the service more efficient and cost effective. Different days they go to different parts of the county to take as many seniors to the different senior centers as they can.

Commissioner Edwards asked Mr. John Skervin if at the public hearing next month was he going to be prepared to tell them exactly what the county's costs are.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said they could say what the costs are going to be based on the study. She said maybe she was speaking out of turn, but she didn't think she could say that the Obici Foundation was going to pay a third of it

Mr. John Skervin said yes they can do the costs projections. They can define what the service would be and project the costs based on the services they want. Depending how much money you want to spend depends on how much service you are going to get. The current level of county support of say \$6,000.00 this will bring down this much more money and with that based on this plan we have before us this is your return on the service.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said there is some travel training outreach. They have social workers that go into homes. They are going to need to know how to get the transportation.

Commissioner Edwards said to get back to the question. He wanted to know how this was going to be done. We don't have a county credit card. We have a limited amount of funds. He stated he thought it would help the situation if they knew exactly where they stand.

Mr. John Skervin said he thought they could give a very definite statement about the dollars and cents that senior services are already investing in transportation in Southampton County and in Franklin.

Commissioner Mann stated so right now we aren't getting any federal or state funding.

Mr. John Skervin said you are not getting federal transit administration funding or public transportation. Senior services get federal dollars that will allow the use for transportation for senior citizens. He asked if Commissioner Mann understood was he was saying.

Commissioner Mann stated he thought so. He understood that right now you are limited to supplying transportation to senior citizens with the federal money that you are getting. What you are trying to do is open up the door so pretty much anybody can ride it if they need to. He asked if you are in a case where somebody is on disability do they kind of go under the class of senior citizens.

Mr. John Skervin said no not exactly. If a person has a disability, if they qualify under federal transit administrative guidelines for ADA as a person who has a disability and if they live within 3/4's of a mile of a fixed route then yes the public transit provider is obligated to provide them a ride. If they live outside of that mile and a half corridor then the public transit provider is not obligated. This is why senior services do not have that restriction. This is why they are trying to get other organizations and community assets involved in helping provide transportation to people who live outside that ADA corridor.

Commissioner Mann said he guessed his question is that with the funds they have got at the present time they are limited to hauling seniors; but in some cases there are people who might be in their late fifties who do not particular have a physical disability who require special equipment but they are on disability. Just because a person is 59 and on disability does not qualify them to ride; they are still not able to ride if they are not a senior.

Mr. John Skervin said that is accurate. That is why others with visions have supported I-Ride so that those folks can ride.

Commissioner Mann stated that Mr. John Skervin mentioned that the cost is \$1.00 a ride. He asked if they pay a dollar to get to Franklin, do they have to pay a dollar to get home. He wanted to know if they had to pay a dollar to get on every time. He asked if it was round trip or not.

Mr. John Skervin said that every time you got on you had to pay a \$1.00 it is not a round trip thing.

Commissioner Mann stated it is still cheap. He asked if the only people they would collect from would be somebody that is not a senior.

Mr. John Skervin said no sir; they also collect from the seniors.

Commissioner Mann asked if the way it was set up right now the seniors do not pay a dollar.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said no the seniors pay \$1.00 right now also.

Mr. John Skervin says everybody pays a dollar.

Commissioner Mann said that is cheap riding.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said she would invite you to ride on the bus. She said they will take you on the bus.

Commissioner Harrell said she wants your dollar.

Commissioner Mann said I guess so. Commissioner Mann asked if they had ever had a time when a senior rode a bus and got left somewhere.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said nope.

Commissioner Mann said he knew most of the time they are going to a certain center, but he knows they are going to Wal-Mart and different places.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said actually if somebody has some limitations for example if they have early dementia or a cognitive disorder they are allowed to take a companion with them and they don't have to pay.

Mr. John Skervin says they have actually been trying to work with the girl scouts to be companions or care givers to seniors.

Commissioner Tennessee asked with the rising costs of fuel had they ever been in situations where they felt they would not be able to operate the whole year.

Mr. John Skervin says that Southampton County allows them to buy fuel from the county. The county doesn't pay federal gas tax so it is a savings for them to buy fuel from the county. They also don't pay the state sales tax because they are an area agency on aging. With the rising costs of fuel, when they budget a certain amount per gallon and then they know they are going to get .17 cents back on that around the region except for here - here they get .70 cents back. They watch it like a hawk while they are operating. When it got to \$4.00 a gallon for fuel it was pretty ugly, but the previous part of the year had been \$3.00 and up to \$3.50 so when they

averaged it out they came out okay. If they watch fuel go up as it has these last couple of weeks because of the ethanol; what they have is the reserve of budget that they haven't spent yet because of the lower fuel cost through the first 90 days of the year. The key is if the municipalities will sell fuel to those entities that are allowed to buy fuel which is controlled by state law and counties are allowed to sell fuel to area agencies then it works out for everybody.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any other brief questions. He said he could tell this was going to roll on and on. He could tell it was going to take a long time to digest.

Commissioner Mann said he had one more. He said Mr. John Skervins had mentioned about the 3511. It was a 65/35. The 65 is the federal and state contribution and the 35 is the local contribution. If you break the 35 down to the Camp Foundation and whatever contributions that would just bring down the responsibility of the public tax money.

Mrs. Cindy Creede said that was right. The payment from those sources would have to be iron clad.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any other questions.

Chairman Drake asked Secretary Beth Lewis what they needed to do at this point.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated that she would ask for this to be a public hearing next month.

Commissioner Edwards made a motion that the Transit Development Plan be presented as a public hearing at the February 2012 meeting.

Commissioner Tennessee seconded the motion with it being carried unanimously.

Chairman Drake said before they take a vote he wanted to make a comment. He said he wanted to know the cost next month and he also wanted to see a sincere need. He said he was sorry. He was a community person. He stated he didn't know if they came to Newsoms or not. He said he hadn't seen the vehicles. He said they had to convince him there was a sincere need before he went forward with this. He said if there is a need; he is all for it. He said he knew a lot of elderly people. He had elderly people in his family. He has neighbors that are elderly; and they get rides to and fro wherever they need to go. He said you have to show him that need. He has got to see that.

Commissioner Edwards said he had one more question for Chairman Drake. He asked how the word was going to get out to the public. He wanted to know how the public was going to know about it so they could come out to the public hearing.

Secretary Beth Lewis stated this would be a link on the county's website. Copies of this plan will be available in the County Administrator's office and in their office, and they can put one in the library as well.

Commissioner Edwards stated that was not very satisfactory. That is a very limited exposure to the public. He just wanted to throw that out.

Mrs. Cindy Creede asked what would be his recommendation.

Commissioner Edwards stated he didn't know that what he was asking. He said obviously there are not many people in the public that would get this and take a look at it. If it is not advertised in the paper somewhere people aren't going to know it and be able to look it up.

Mr. John Skervins said he would volunteer that Senior Services be happy to write a press release. They also have several churches that are centers for aging affiliates so they would be able to get the word out. There is also the Western Tidewater Task Force on Aging which covers Franklin, Southampton, and Suffolk. The person who presently chairs that is one of their

employees who reaches out to all the aging service providers in the region and also to their Board of Directors. They would ask their advisory council to get the word out.

Chairman Drake said they had a motion on the floor and a second. He asked if they were ready to vote.

The motion to hold a public hearing on the Transit Development Plan at the February 2012 meeting carried unanimously.

Chairman Drake asked Secretary Beth Lewis to announce the public hearing for the next meeting.

Chairman Drake thanked Mr. John Skervins and Mrs. Cindy Creede for coming tonight and giving their presentation.

February 2012 Public Hearing

Chairman Drake stated that we had three public hearings tonight. He stated we would move right into those. He stated the first public hearing tonight will be the proposed Transit Development Plan. He asked Mrs. Beth Lewis to elaborate on this item.

Mrs. Beth Lewis stated this is the Transit Development Plan that you saw last month. She stated she hoped they brought back the copies of the plan that were sent out to them last month as we did not duplicate copies again. This month you also have a staff summary that goes with it. We have representatives from senior services here.

Mr. John Skervin, Chief Executive Officer of Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia spoke. He thanked the commission for allowing this public hearing to go forward on I-Ride. He gave the following presentation (not included)

Mr. John Skervin thanked the commission for the time and effort they were putting into thinking about this.

Chairman Drake thanked Mr. John Skervin.

Chairman Drake opened the public hearing for anyone who wanted to speak about this issue. When you come up to the podium please state your name and address and share your thoughts with us.

Ms. Teresa Long, Family Services and Transportation Coordinator for the Children's Center spoke. The Children's Center is a non-profit organization based in Franklin. They have five sites. They are an early development and head start program. They also do community based child care. Their goal is to nurture and educate children. They are fortunate to have the capacity to service almost three hundred children. Unfortunately, they are not able to work to their full capacity all because their children need a ride. They have seven buses but they cannot meet the growing demand. They have a waiting list of hundreds but they can't serve them because even though they have the capacity at the center our children need a ride. It is a shame in this United States of America that children cannot receive therapy such as they provide at their center as well as educational therapies, vision screens, dental screens. It is a shame that they can't receive those services because they need a ride. They work with the families because they are an early head start facility. They work with the child as well as nourishing and educating the family. It is a shame that they can't meet that need because they need a ride. They provide parent training. They assist the parents in getting to medical appointments or whatever they need that will benefit the family. They have done a good job, but they could do a much better job if they had a ride. She stated that what we are talking about ladies and gentlemen tonight is working together as a community for the benefit of all of our people. It is really heartbreaking that we have fathers who would be good fathers and participate with their children at our center, fathers who want to work; but are not able to work just because they need a ride. We have mothers who are sick and even

though we try to provide transportation sometimes they can't meet their needs. It would be a shame for a mother to die all because she needs a ride. She urged each of you to support this initiative. It is important to our community. It will allow our children to prosper if they can get a ride. It will allow our parents to prosper if they can get a ride. We as a non-profit organization work very, very hard to meet the needs of our community to be much more effective, to do a better job in training our children, and helping the parents that care for those children if they can just get a ride. She stated that you are in a great position tonight because you have the opportunity to be a champion. She said by that she means simply supporting this initiative and helping them to assure that all of the people in our community have the same opportunity that many of us have been blessed with. Be a champion and help our people get a ride.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone had any questions for this lady.

Commissioner Mann stated that Ms. Long said they have the capacity to serve 300 children. He asked her how many they were serving now.

Ms. Long said she could not give him an exact number because it fluctuates. She would say they probably serve close to 200.

Commissioner Mann asked Ms. Long if they were able to get 300 children there would they have the funding to serve all 300.

Ms. Long stated yes they would have the funding. They just couldn't get them all there. She stated that one thing she left out was that she sees this as a great opportunity for all the service organizations in our community because not only would this initiate help to provide transportation, but they are trying to come together as organizations to support this initiative. She stated they are really a pretty small operation, but if we could band together all the community organizations, for example we all need gas, we all need vehicle repairs, if we could work together perhaps we could collaborate on some contracts to help make this an even more fiscally frugal operation.

Chairman Drake said he had one question if she would come back to the podium. He stated he knew she was representing many, many households. He stated he was just curious. He stated you have possibly three hundred students coming to the school for child care. He asked if she was representing about 150 families. He wanted to know if that was a fair assessment.

Ms. Long said yes a few more than that.

Chairman Drake asked how many out of those 150 families do not have an automobile or driver's license. He asked if she would say none or partial. He was just wondering why there is a lack of transportation to and from.

Ms. Long said she would say approximately 85% of their clientele have no vehicle.

Commissioner Chesson said your agency that you work with has vehicles and basically your transportation system and you are standing promoting additional funding through I-Ride. Does I-Ride now support and fund any transportation for any of the families you support right now.

Ms. Long stated she believes so. She can't say specifically yes because she doesn't know the mode of transportation the families are using. She knows they are seeking every type of public transportation they can.

A lady in the audience stated that she carried her son to the center through I-Ride.

Ms. Long asked the lady did she say she carried her son to the center through I-Ride.

The lady responded yes mam, I do.

Ms. Long stated there are cases where she wishes they could provide more transportation, but they have only seven active buses. The areas that they serve, Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Franklin,

Southampton County, the area is so large that they just can't feasibly serve everybody because with early head start they deal with children from six weeks old to age three so they can only have a certain number of infant seats on the bus. How old the bus is determines what kind of seats and the passenger capacity. Then they also have guidelines that say no child should be on a bus longer than an hour.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any other questions for Ms. Long. He asked if anyone else wanted to speak.

Mr. William Copeland spoke. He stated he was here for one reason and one reason only. He said this program was a God-send. He stated he lived in Franklin and moved to Courtland. He said when he lived in Franklin he dealt with Parkers Drug Store. He stated when Parkers Drug Store went out of business they moved the drug store to Farm Fresh. He stated he can go to Farm Fresh and get his medication; he can test his blood pressure, make a few item numbers, play a few lottery numbers, and meet old friends so he was here to say it means the world to him. He hopes the I-Ride will continue.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone had any questions for Mr. William Copeland.

Mr. Darnell Shaw stated he was one of the I-Ride drivers around Southampton County. He stated he was also a retired DC police official. He stated this is a God-send for this community. A lot of planning was put in so we could have this bus in the community. He asked that we please support it. The I-Ride does a good service for this community. He stated he has 400 to 500 riders per month.

Commissioner Mann asked where Mr. Darnell Shaw lived.

Mr. Darnell Shaw stated he lived in Southampton County in Sedley. He stated he had lived here about seventeen years. He said don't ask how he got here. He said he was a part of this community and he was proud of it and what they had done and accomplished so far. He asked that they please give them your support.

Commissioner Mann asked with the children riding the bus, if the bus was responsible for having a baby seat or rider seat or do they sometimes bring it.

Mr. Darnell Shaw stated that what they do is use a seatbelt. He said he asked the parents to use the inside seats for the children and strap them in so they are protected. He stated that this is their fifth year in operation without incident. He stated it is a very effective system.

Commissioner Mann said so you have been driving for them for five years.

Mr. Darnell Shaw said he was going into his fifth year now. He stated he enjoyed it very much because it is a people person.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone else had any questions for Mr. Darnell Shaw.

Ms. Regina Myrick spoke. She stated that she was an I-Ride driver as well. She stated she has been with the program since day one. She said she had seen a lot. She had seen people that say this bus is a blessing. She has seen people that are looking for jobs and they have been looking for jobs for months. She stated she had been able to see them go out day to day until they find that job. They use the bus to get back and forth to work. She has served several mothers that have used the bus to take their children to the Children's Center. They will catch it in the morning and drop them off and catch it again in the evening and go back and get them. She had several seniors to say that if they didn't have the bus they didn't know what they would do. She had several riders that use the bus to go to the hospital, to go to physical therapy, even dialysis because not everybody qualifies for Medicaid transportation. She stated it is a good thing and she is proud of it. She said she guess she could say it's our baby. She has watched it grow

since day one and it would be a shame to lose it. Expansion would be good, but it would be a sad thing to lose it.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone had any questions for Ms. Myrick.

Chairman Drake asked Ms. Myrick what was the capacity of her bus.

Ms. Myrick said twelve and a wheelchair.

Chairman Drake asked if she normally had a good group to go each day.

Ms. Myrick stated that it varies from day to day. People tend to ride more at a certain time of the month. She said there are slow days and then you have days when it is almost too many. She stated that as far as mothers that have children that ride; they have them in proper car seats. The other children are secured in seatbelts as well.

Chairman Drake asked if they ever have an instance where you couldn't pick up all your riders and another bus had to come in to pick up the remainder.

Ms. Myrick stated yes during the summer when it is busy. There are groups going to the workforce, and boys and girls clubs during the summer. She said sometimes during the summer she had groups wanting to go over to the pool or the library and she would contact her supervisor about it and they had accommodated them.

Chairman Drake said he was going to ask her one more question. He wanted to know if she had ever left anybody behind.

Ms. Myrick said only if they are not out at the scheduled time.

Chairman Drake said he would get left sometimes. He thanked Ms. Myrick and said she was quite honest.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone else wished to speak.

Ms. Deborah Brown spoke. She stated she was an I-Ride rider. She said she used I-Ride to go back and forth to work every day. She stated in the morning they picked her up and dropped her off at work and then carry her home. She asked that they please keep I-Ride going. She stated that without I-Ride she would have to walk to work. She also uses it for shopping. To her I-Ride is a God-send. Mothers, single mothers, fathers, single fathers go back and forth for their shopping needs.

Commissioner Harrell asked her if she rode every day.

Ms. Deborah Brown said yes every day Monday through Friday. She said she had to stop working on Saturdays because it doesn't run on Saturdays.

Commissioner Harrell said he thought they were told last month that they could only ride four times a month.

Ms. Cindy Creede asked if she could answer the question.

Commission Harrell said you may.

Ms. Cindy Creede said that four times a month is their demand response service for people that are seniors and need medical transportation when they are going outside of the regular area. It is all called I-Ride. What Ms. Deborah Brown is talking about is the regular circulator.

Ms. Deborah Brown said yes the bus that comes every day on the regular route.

Ms. Cindy Creede said she was sorry that she didn't mean to confuse them last month.

Commissioner Mann asked Ms. Deborah Brown where she lived and worked.

Ms. Deborah Brown stated that she lives in Franklin and she also works in Franklin.

Chairman Drake asked Ms. Deborah Brown wasn't she picked up at her house.

Ms. Deborah Brown said yes sir. She also stated that if the bus wasn't coming directly to her house she would look at the schedule and walk there to catch the bus. She stated that it is still a God-send.

Chairman Drake thanked Ms. Deborah Brown.

Ms. Leasha Ford addressed the Board. She stated that she was an I-Ride rider. She is the one that drops her child off at the Children's Center. In the beginning she used to get her girl friend to carry her and her son, but then her girlfriend got a job. When you call people to do things for you, you never know when they are coming. One thing she knows for sure the I-Ride is coming past her house even though she has to leave her door and walk to the road they are there before time. She stated that Ms. Regina and Mr. Shaw are wonderful drivers and she loves them dearly. Without I-Ride her child wouldn't be getting to school, she wouldn't be looking for a job; she wouldn't make her doctor's appointments or anything. She said she wish they would consider having the bus run on Saturday because she would use it more. She said she does appreciate it.

Commissioner Harrell asked Ms. Ford how much it costs her a day to ride the I-Ride.

Ms. Leasha Ford said \$2.00 a day because she takes her child to school and brings him back home.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any other questions for Ms. Ford.

Mr. John Skervin said he would like to add that one of the revenue sources is the fare box. When he tracks the rides and the dollars and they are very, very close because when you subtract the kids you know why you are not 100%.

Chairman Drake asked Mr. John Skervin if he would come to the podium. He asked if this particular service was offered in Suffolk and Isle of Wight.

Mr. John Skervin said it is offered in Isle of Wight, not in Suffolk. He started in Isle of Wight and that is why they call it I-Ride. When the flood came and they ran a little circulator route just as a trial to the armory to get help and a few people used it. Then because of the take-off in Smithfield, they decided to try it here. It is doing very well. It was slow starting off in the county, but it is turning over 5100 rides in the city annually. He looked the year over again this afternoon and he looked at Isle of Wight and he has seen in all three areas which include Franklin, Southampton, and Isle of Wight the same situation where the first quarter of FY12 is higher than FY11.

Chairman Drake said he had answered his question.

Commissioner Randall asked Mr. John Skervin if he worked directly with Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. when they did the study.

Mr. John Skervin said he did to some extent, but Cindy was the point person.

Commissioner Randall said he had some questions for Cindy then. Commission Randall said he read through the study and he said he thought it was heavy on feasibility and routing and kind of light on capital cost and funding. He asked if that would be a safe assumption.

Ms. Cindy Creede said it was a small system if you mean the volume of dollars that we are talking about.

Commissioner Randall said it didn't go into specific detail of the capital cost and funding. It didn't break it down like a usual study would.

Ms. Cindy Creede asked if he was looking at the executive summary.

Commissioner Randall said yes.

Ms. Cindy Creede stated that she had this big one that she would be happy to share it with him. She said the funding was fairly simple. They talked about changing from a 20/80 match that is only capital funded now with essentially ATF funds that come through Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit to a 5311 which is a 1090 funding.

Commissioner Randall said his specific question is whether you are sure the 2012 and 2013 cost are a hard cost for \$6,350 as a contribution from our locality.

Ms. Cindy Creede stated yes sir.

Commissioner Randall asked if she was certain of that.

Ms. Cindy Creede said yes sir.

Commissioner Randall said the study kind of glances over some of these things. There are no hard determinations from the study as you would normally see from a feasibility study. There were no conclusions that were placed from that study that he saw.

Ms. Cindy Creede said she would get him the big book.

Commissioner Randall said that would be good if she could do that because some of the hard costs are not specifically laid out.

Ms. Cindy Creede said it was all a formula.

Commissioner Randall said that is what he would like to see laid out.

Ms. Cindy Creede said the local funds bring the federal funds and the way they make that a bigger amount is by adding in what they are currently using for providence of the senior riders. They are older American Act Funds. There are some federal, but they are outside of the FTA Funding Screen so they are allowed to match those. She stated that they probably don't sound as erudite as they should, but this is new to them too. The funding pieces are expert information. You have got to know where to look and how to match it that's why the funding study was important.

Mr. John Skervin stated they would be happy to show the pro formula that they used to fill those costs. The capital costs are only focusing on the vehicle not focusing on the rent. All the indirect administration costs come out of their corporate office so all of that is accounted for in the pro-formula but they are not adding any buildings, any bus drivers, or anything like that so your capital is really only the rolling stock, if that makes any sense.

Commissioner Randall stated that it did make sense.

Ms. Cindy Creede said if this program is recommended for approval and moves forward with the two localities as it is a combined system that was studied from a feasibility point of view it gives you different efficiencies if you have a little bit larger system. There may be an opportunity for some additional funding for what she would like to see would be a bus shelter and an office. It might logically be in the enterprise zone or in a business park. She stated she had visited several of the facilities that have been built by the same funding mechanism in other areas such as Fishersville, VA, and Percyville, VA. Three or four million dollars of federal funds would build a right nice building.

Commissioner Randall asked if 2014 would be a point for evaluation that since they would have the 6,350 contributed by Southampton try to evaluate how it is working, have some more data, and then re-evaluate those issues.

Ms. Cindy Creede said yes sir.

Mr. John Skervin stated that would also allow for the improvements put in during FY12. These guys are doing the planting of the roots right here. Mr. Curtis Coleman lives in Franklin who is the transportation supervisor. He said they would have those improvements done and operational using the consultant's model they are supposed to be able to gain as many as 3,000 more rides. They are also supposed to be expanding to earlier and later hours by one hour each way so that people going to those earlier shift jobs or go to school earlier can ride the buses to school. She stated she would be happy to get any information they wanted to make this clearer.

Chairman Drake stated he had one more question before she left the podium. He said you are asking for \$6,350 for this year and next year. He said he knew they were talking about 3,000 more possible riders. He wanted to know how they expect to do that with no more costs incurred.

Mr. John Skervin said they slice and dice this. He said that this goes to the detail of the plan itself. He said right now it takes them an hour and twenty minutes to run a loop in Franklin. That is because they are going into parking complexes, then when they get to the destination they are riding through the parking lots and shopping centers. What we are hoping is that they have fewer incursions and more defined stopping points at the destinations which reduces your amount of head weight time per rider from 1 hour 20 minutes down to 50 minutes. That means you get more loops and riders. With the respect to the run from Franklin to Courtland, right now it runs whether it is empty or not which is a real waste. So the idea is to have it be a demand response shuttle so that you can call by 10:00 AM on a Tuesday or Thursday and if you call by 10:00 AM on that day you will get there.

Ms. Cindy Creede stated or you could call the day before.

Mr. John Skervin said the point is with the savings from not running that empty van, and then you plan additional routes that you run on other days to get more people in and out so it is a combination of a variety of things. Then again as he was looking at the map he doesn't know where his clusters of riders are. What they do know is that word of mouth is how they get more riders. They are seeing people and giving them the brochure and then they may ride the bus. Part of it is the rider education that comes over a period of time.

Commissioner Edwards asked if this \$6,350 is based on what they are doing now.

Mr. John Skervin said that was accurate.

Commission Edwards said well then we have no idea what it is going to be a year from now.

Mr. John Skervin said what we are saying as we looked at the funding for this as we are preparing our FY2013 budget which is due October 1; they are looking at the American Act Funds, General Assembly Funds, Funds they are receiving through the foundation. What they can say with these recommendations where they can use what they have more wisely they will not ask for more money until they see the effect of it. That \$6,350 is only a smaller portion of what it costs to run the operation. Senior services is putting those dollars in from the older American Act Funds that we get as the area agency and the state funding. We also get from the Franklin/Southampton charities, the Franklin/Southampton United Way. They had just awarded them \$2,500.00 towards I-Ride. You can probably put all this together and then if the money is available from 5311 Federal World Transit we can do this in a way that allows us to get .65 cents for every dollar they spend that's a pretty darn good return. So it is just a common sense thing.

Commissioner Edwards said so as things expand the county's obligation for this .35 cent per dollar is going to expand also.

Mr. John Skervin said only if the county decided to. The thing with public transportation is that the county has control over how much they want to spend. The county could say they are only going to spend so much on public transportation. If we are all in this together and you have your non-profits out there all combining efforts then that .35 cents doesn't all come from the county or city. There are areas up in Charlottesville like the Jefferson area, Eastern Shore where this happens where you have all the services pitch in to come up with these dollars.

Commissioner Edwards said so what you are saying that as this thing expands with what you are planning on doing the county is not going to have to pay any more money.

Mr. John Skervin said he can't guarantee that.

Commissioner Edwards said well that was his question.

Mr. John Stervin said when we get to 2014 and we are doing the evaluation then the question is going to be what do the citizens in the county need and how does that fit in with all the services the county needs and how does transportation fit into that. There are a lot of competing demands as commissioners and the board of supervisors so he couldn't say they were going to need \$6,350 for the rest of the century. He stated that in the next few years businesses were going to be coming into the county that people were going to need to get to.

Chairman Drake said if you get a job at one of these businesses aren't you going to be making money where you can furnish your own transportation. He stated that he had to drive back and forth to his work.

Mr. John Skervin said yes if you get a job.

Chairman Drake said that was his argument if you get a job why aren't you going to use your own funding to get back and forth to work instead of using the tax-payers money. Tax-payers money is not only local. He stated that he paid state and federal taxes just like everybody in this room does. So it is still tax-payers money. He stated his other question was how many people riding these buses had vehicles and driver's license that could provide their own transportation. He said he needed to know that figure as well. He said if you have people that have vehicles in their yard they could use and they are using the I-Ride bus they may prevent someone else who doesn't have transportation like some of these people who have spoken tonight and told me they don't have transportation. Somebody who has vehicles in the yard and they are taking a subsidized transportation mode it is very economically price for a buck because you can't beat it. That is tax-payers money. Is that really what we are intending to do here. So he needed to see a list of those names as to how many people don't have a car in the yard, people that don't have transportation, that aren't able to drive.

Mr. John Skervin said that is a fair question. He thought what they needed to do was have a survey on the bus because he can't give you those figures. The other thing he would say though is what they have found is that the riders are low income and the idea of getting an affordable ride to work or wherever you need to go means that your limited income is conserved for other things that are essential. So public transportation is to get people where they need to go so they have their resources to use for other things.

Chairman Drake said he was going to say one more thing and then he wasn't going to say anything else. He stated that everybody is pushed to the limit. We pay enough taxes and nobody has enough income to get everything they want; but the person who has a vehicle sitting in their yard ought to sell that and use I-Ride totally. They ought to expand their service to seven days a week and take those vehicles off the highway. That is his argument.

Ms. Cindy Creede said she would love to have the I-Ride running seven days a week; but they didn't know if they had the ridership to operate seven days a week. They would have to survey their people.

Chairman Drake asked if anyone else had any questions or comments.

Chairman Drake asked Mr. John Stervin to come back to the podium someone else had a question for him.

Commissioner Mann said he thought they touched on fuel at the last meeting. We keep hearing that fuel is going up and it is going to affect everybody's budget. Some truckers are doing a fuel surcharge. He asked Mr. John Stervin how they were planning on handling that because you mentioned about running the bus from Franklin to Courtland even if nobody is sitting on it. If \$6,000 and some hundred dollars is approved and then people are riding on a road by a bus with no passengers and they see it constantly see it running up and down the road that is not looking good.

Mr. John Skervin said nothing makes him crazier than seeing an empty bus.

Commissioner Mann said so how are you going to handle that.

Mr. John Skervin said the first question was how do we prepare for rising gasoline prices. He stated that when they budget they budget for \$3.50 a gallon. They as an area agency on aging have the state sales tax rebated to them which is .17 y., cents. This morning on Washington Street it was \$3.48 at the WaWa where he buys gas. So he knows that he is just pennies away from budget. What happens is that when gas fluctuates or stays below \$3.50 that is pennies that they are saving on every gallon on that line item for when it goes up. Southampton County sells I-Ride fuel for the buses that saves them not only the .17 y., cents, but also the federal tax. When they purchase at the pump at Norfolk they only get the .17 y., cents back per gallon. He stated the county is paying in the high twos now so they are saving a fair amount on each gallon. When the county starts paying \$3.50 then they will be at budget. If he has to shift one line item into another to cover the fuel cost at some point that is what he is going to have to do.

Commissioner Mann asked so the fuel they run is without paying federal and state tax.

Mr. John Skervin said because the county is gracious enough to sell the fuel to them it runs without paying federal taxes.

Commissioner Mann asked who determines the amount of the fare box. He asked if it was regulated by regulations.

Mr. John Skervin said they do.

Commissioner Mann said so your hands aren't tied to if fuel goes ridiculous high and you have to raise the fare box.

Mr. John Skervin said yes, but the last thing he wanted to do was to go in somebody's pocket if he can avoid it.

Commissioner Mann said he can understand that but that option stands there. He stated he was sure they would try to go to nonprofit organizations to try to cover it. He stated with these Medicaid services some people qualify for rides to the doctor's offices.

Mr. John Skervin said yes sir.

Commissioner Mann asked if there was any correlation between the I-Ride and the Medicaid payments.

Mr. John Skervin said at this point they are in discussions with the Medicaid transportation broker to become a certified Medicaid carrier at which point they could get reimbursed for the ride for the passenger who has the Medicaid if it is a certified ride. That is the idea you want to have different people riding who have different ways of paying for it.

Commissioner Mann said so then you are pulling funds from the Medicaid program.

Mr. John Skervin stated that would be correct.

Commissioner Mann stated he knew they had mentioned this before, but he wanted to know if you have children riding whether it is a six month old or a three year old are they required to ride in a car seat.

Mr. John Skervin said he did not know the answer to that.

Ms. Cindy Creede said no; but if they are going to a child care center as a provider they would have to make different arrangements. She stated on their buses they have to have the kids properly restrained.

Commissioner Mann said so that is with the head start bus. He stated the other thing is to try to get these kids to the head start program. There is some bus funding with the Children's Center. He asked is there any correlation there to help fund the I-Ride.

Mr. John Skervin said they had some discussions with the Children's Center, but there is nothing firm at this point. He said they are looking at that possibility. The Children's Center has also bid on the regular head start program. The federal government put that out for bid some months ago. The Children's Center has put in a proposal. They are talking with the Children's Center about collaborating the Senior Center and the Children's Center and then they would cooperate on transportation as well. Then you have the issue of the safety of the children and regulations with strangers riding with little kids. They have not talked about those details at all.

Commissioner Parker said basically what we are looking at is the \$6,350.00 through 2012 and 2013.

Then in 2014 if it is expanded or whatever then you will have to come back to the Board for additional funding. He asked if that was right.

Mr. John Skervin said what the plan is for us to work together to plan out the future so that in that second phase it would mean that the county and city would have to look at what they are applying for and how much so the 2014 number will be based on what the service looked like for 2014. So that's why he didn't put anything beyond next year.

Commissioner Edwards asked if the county would automatically be obligated for that.

Mr. John Skervin said that is a county decision whether or not it becomes a public transit entity and if it does it is the county's decision on how much they want to spend. He emphasized it is a county decision.

Commissioner Edwards stated his other question is if you expand beyond the \$6,350.00 the county is still obligated for 35% of that is it not.

Mr. John Skervin said this \$6,350.00 would be eligible to receive 65% additional to it. He asked if that made sense.

Commissioner Edwards said no, it really didn't to him.

Mr. John Skervin stated he was sorry.

Commissioner Mann said it was like matching funds.

Mr. John Skervin said exactly. If you put up .35 cents he will give you .65 cents. That is as simple as it gets. If the county puts up a \$1.00, then the federal government puts up .50 cents, and the state government puts up .15 cents; then you now have \$1.65 for public transportation. The question about who puts up the local dollars. That is a combination. Senior services is going to put up way more than \$6,350.00 and with that we will be able to get .65 cents with every one of the dollars they put up which they are not getting now. So that is pretty good. We can use that to expand the transportation services.

Commissioner Edwards said what he is saying is that if something happens and your expenses go up, say gas goes to \$6.00 per gallon we are not locked into \$6,350.00 the county could be subject to more.

Mr. John Skervin said it could be. If Virginia Beach says we need another bus route to HRT, HRT says here is how much it is going to cost you for that additional bus route, if you don't put up the dollars we won't do the bus route. Southampton County would be in exactly the same position. If you want to expand the routes, say for example we want a route to Sedley, then you ask the question how much is it going to cost and where are we going to find the .35 cents. The idea is we are all working together looking for the .35 cents. Some of it might come from the county, but some of it is likely to come from other sources as well.

Commissioner Harrell said so the county is not obligated to pay anything.

Mr. John Skervin said that is right. You could say you don't want public transportation here.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any more questions for John.

Commissioner Mann said but you have got to have some county money to start the ball rolling or conceivably you could get the whole 35% from other sources and still have the public transportation. He asked if the federal and state regulations require the local government to participate.

Mr. John Skervin responded good question. He said yes. Senior services can't just go out and become a public transportation carrier. There has got to be a municipality.

Commissioner Mann asked if the federal and state regulations require the local government to participate at a certain percentage of the .35 cents.

Mr. John Skervin said he didn't know.

Ms. Cindy Creede said it has to be local money. It doesn't necessarily have to be government money.

Commissioner Edwards said so it does not have to be county tax payer's money.

Mr. John Skervin said no.

Commissioner Edwards said that was good.

Mr. John Skervin said to the question does the county have to have a minimum buy in he didn't actually know. He said they have some experts at this and they would be happy to put these questions to them. This is exactly the conversation we need to have.

Commissioner Mann stated that he knew sometimes when you participate with federal and state funding especially the federal funding there are so many strings attached that all of a sudden you are getting sucked down the drain.

Mr. John Skervin said exactly and that was not their intention.

Commissioner Mann said he knew, but that fine print all of a sudden changes the surface.

Commissioner Chesson said he may have missed some of the fine print, but the county has been contributing for how many years. He asked would you say three years, five years.

Mr. John Skervin said maybe as many as four years.

Commissioner Chesson asked if they were contributing \$6,350.00 in the past.

Mr. John Skervin said they had contributed \$7,000.00 in the past and it has gone down and the county has changed its budget. So now it is down to \$6,350.00

Commissioner Chesson said so basically the cost of this study was funded externally and this study is presented basically to try to maintain the funding that the county has been providing.

Mr. John Skervin said no sir. We are not just in it for the money.

Commissioner Chesson said but you are trying to justify your services and he understood that.

Mr. John Skervin said honestly when they started this I-Ride thing it was because people said they needed transportation. So he said okay why not do a loop ride thing. He got to thinking why don't we let everybody ride because if there was an empty seat why waste it. Then the state aging people said you can't have people that aren't senior citizens unless you have somebody else to pay for them. So they went to Isle of Wight County and they said they would give us \$23,000.00 to set this up in Smithfield and by God it worked. So he said let's try it in Franklin and it worked. Then we said well we will go out to Southampton and they have started. They asked all the jurisdictions for funding and all the jurisdictions fund them to help them with their matching and now their special transportation ideas like this one. Southampton stepped up and has been a great partner with this. He stated they kind of grew this thing themselves so they decided now let's get the experts in here and find out how to do it right. That's where they are tonight trying to figure out how to make it more efficient and have a pathway for the future.

Commissioner Mann said so if we got back to senior services you were getting all of your .35 percent of money from senior services you would be back in the predicament of only senior citizens could ride.

Mr. John Skervin said yeah. When he saw that number go to 60% he was thinking he had to go back and do his arithmetic because he doesn't want the state to come down and defile the senior citizens dollars that they have. The funds are coming down in such tight little silos that you can't use them together which is another issue but that is a policy issue at the state level and to some extent the federal level. But figuring out how they can use the funds collectively is the real issue of this whole picture.

Commissioner Mann said that what he was referring to the fine print. It sneaks up behind you.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any other questions.

Commissioner Parker asked if Mr. John Skervin could tell them about Isle of Wight County and how they got started. He wanted to know if that had expanded since they started.

Mr. John Skervin said actually their jurisdiction is funded through tomorrow and he had just looked at the numbers this afternoon. Last year they did 3,984 rides in Smithfield and the county provided them with \$22,000.00 in funding. Again that doesn't get any leverage at all. That doesn't get any of the federal money like we are talking about here. The Chamber of Commerce had a kick off and they said they were going to stop at every other block. They did a survey to see where people wanted to go and they came up with a route to go through Smithfield to the public housing sites to get people to Farm Fresh, Food Lion and all that. They spent about six months talking to people, set up a route, and it took off. It has grown from about 3,300 the first

year to 3,500 the second year, to 3,900 almost 4,000 the third year. So they are proposing that they are going to do 4,000 rides this year as anticipated. What really helped them with that was the Chamber of Commerce kick-off. They had originally said they were going to stop at every other block and then they had businesses competing so they decided to stop at every block. That kind of business community really helped them out. When they have like a super Saturday where they need rides for a Saturday they do that. In other words they are there on special occasions or events.

Commissioner Edwards asked what the city of Franklin was giving them this year.

Mr. John Skervin said right now the City of Franklin was giving them \$4,411 a year.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any more questions. He thought they needed to *move* along.

Commissioner Mann said he had one. He said we keep talking about Wal-Mart and Farm Fresh. He said he knew that was an area where they could hit a number of stores. He wanted to know if those stores are participating in funding I-Ride or can you actually ask those stores.

Mr. John Skervin said good question - no and yes.

Commissioner Mann said what he is looking at is that we are taking tax dollars to support that locality and yet your bus comes to Courtland and we have stores in Courtland too that need to be supported so you don't want to single out certain businesses where you stop at every block. So when you said no and yes to the question can you ask for funding.

Mr. John Skervin said yes because they are a 5013C nonprofit so they are certainly able to take donations and are tax exempt. Have we asked the businesses - he said no not in an official way.

Commissioner Mann said that is away that Wal-Mart could give back to the locality; or Farm Fresh, or whoever.

Mr. John Skervin said yes it would. He thanked the Board for their time.

Chairman Drake asked if there were any more question.

Commissioner Tennessee asked if this service could be paid for through proffers.

Mrs. Beth Lewis said that proffers pay for capital improvements for physical things. Perhaps if there was a bus facility built because there was a need because of increased population yes, but not for operational funding.

Commissioner Mann said some of these dollars are going to the investment of the bus.

Mrs. Beth Lewis said yes some the dollars are going to the investment of the bus and if they are buses that are used to *serve* a larger population not just more people that already *live* here, but new residents, then yes. A proportionate part of the capital improvements could be included in the proffer figure.

Commissioner Mann said he was glad Commissioner Tennessee asked that question because that was on his mind as well as he doesn't know that he is quite satisfied with the formula of the proffers because when they were informed of this idea they were looking at the Courtland sewage system. He said anyway that was a whole different subject so he wasn't going into that right now.

Chairman Drake said for Commissioner Mann to just hold that thought. He stated they needed to continue on with the public hearing. He said if anyone else wanted to speak to come on up to the podium.