

OTSEGO COUNTY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN



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Planning Department

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Need for a Coordinated Plan

On August 10, 2005, Congress passed federal transit legislation establishing a coordinated human services transportation planning process. *The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users*, (known as the “SAFETEA-LU”) requires that locally-developed coordinated public transit/human service plans be developed by local communities. SAFETEA-LU, represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation’s history.

SAFETEA-LU, in addition to its focus on safety, efficiency and environmental sound practices, targets programs for certain populations in order to improve mobility and transportation options; specifically two formula programs to address persons with low incomes and persons with disabilities. Subsequently, a locally developed, coordinated public transit/human service plan for Otsego County is contingent upon the County receiving funding for any of the following federal transit assistance programs:

Section 5310, Special Needs of Elderly & Individuals with Disabilities
Section 5316(g), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)
Section 5317(f), New Freedom Program (NF)

Effective October 1, 2006 (Federal Financial Year 2007), both JARC and NF require a comprehensive planning and coordinated process. The planning and coordination of a comprehensive plan must be developed through an all-encompassing process involving representatives from the public, private and non-profit sector, along with human service agencies, clients, advocates and the general public.

Previously, no formal coordinated plan was required by either the state or federal transportation funding agencies, even though, historically both have encouraged the coordination of local public transportation. The 2005 federal transit legislation provides a significantly increased availability of funding for rural areas to address the special needs of their local public transportation. The increased funding and support, plus the chance to address the unmet special transportation needs, is the driving force behind the development of Otsego County’s Coordinated Transportation Plan.

In addition to the requirements of the state and federal transportation funding agencies, Otsego County desires to work toward a more energy efficient transportation. Public transportation provides a more energy efficient transportation option, moving more people with a smaller expenditure of natural resources.

1.2 Definition of the Plan

The Plan is defined as a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, elderly individuals, and individuals with low incomes. The Plan provides strategies for meeting those local and regional needs in a prioritized approach for funding and service implementation.

1.3 Required Elements of the Plan

The five required elements of a Coordinated Plan are:

1. Identification of the stakeholders involved
2. Assessment of available services including current public, private and non-profit providers.
3. Assessment of transportation needs for the elderly, low- income and disabled individuals.
4. A strategic plan and/or action plan to address the identified gaps between the existing services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve better service efficiency.
5. A prioritized list for implementation of actions based on resources, time, and feasibility of identified action items.

1.4 The Planning Process-Formation of Partnerships

Operating responsibilities of Otsego County's rural public transportation system lie within the authority of the County Planning Department (CPD), under the direction of Terry Bliss. The planning department formally administers Otsego County's public transportation system through an awarded 5 year contract with Birnie Bus Company of Rome, NY. The planning department is responsible for securing operating and capital funding, along with submitting quarterly reports for STOA reimbursement, preparation of annual reports and establishing contract awards for the operating service. The department represents the initial contact within the county for public transportation and is the key player in the development of a County Transportation Coordinated Plan.

On May 16, 2007, representatives from the Planning Department attended a roundtable discussion sponsored by the NYS Department of Transportation with Mike Labello, Jennifer Thorne and Stephanie Mielnik. The agenda included, " *The Benefits of Marketing and "Coordination"*. Following the meeting, the planning department initiated the process of bringing all involved parties to the table to begin the planning process. The following brief outline is the timeframe of the planning coordination meetings.

Oct. 23, 2007: Transportation Brain Storming Session sponsored by Schoharie County. Fifteen representatives from Delaware, Greene, Otsego, and Schoharie County met to discuss the following topics:

- Publicity tactics
- Coordination within own county and neighboring counties.
- Cost
- Operating Authority
- Future meetings
- NYS Roundtable meetings.

March 9, 2008: CPD organized a regional transportation meeting in Cooperstown. Invitations were extended to Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Otsego, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties. Jennifer Thorne from the NYS DOT was also in attendance. A total of 17 representatives were present. The committee plans to meet at least four times a year. This was the second regional round table sponsored by local counties to discuss the regional coordinated plan. Topics discussed included:

- Discussion of the new FTA Coordinated Transportation planning requirements.
- Brief reviews of our respective transportation systems, concerns and accomplishments.
- Discussion of inter county coordination as necessary
- Discussion of the inclusion of trolleys as public transportation system.

March 13, 2008: Request made to Intergovernmental Affairs Committee by Terry Bliss, Director of County Planning, for approval to proceed with the process of establishing a County Transportation Advisory Committee.

April 4, 2008: Appointments to the Otsego County Transportation Advisory Committee by James Powers, Chairman of the County Board of Representatives, included the following:

Terry Bliss, County Planning	Catherine Rothenberger, Co. Rep.
Joyce Boyd, County Dept. of Social Services	Frances Wright, Office of Aging
Susan Dalesandro, Co. Community Services	Tex Seamon, Co. Veterans Agency
Dan Maskin, Opportunities for Otsego	Mary O'Connor, Family Services
Kathie Greenblatt, Catholic Charities	Joseph Judd, ARC Otsego
Carolyn Lewis, Co. Econ. Develop.	Rob Robinson, County Chamber
Jack Snyder, Oneonta Public Transit	Lynne Mebust, (V)Cooperstown
Kurt Terrell, Bassett Healthcare	Larry Hiltz, Oneonta Bus Lines
Al Rubin, A&D Taxi	Stacey Michael, Citizens Rep.

April 14, 2008: Appointments to the Otsego County Transportation Advisory Committee by James Powers, Chairman of the County Board of Representatives, included the following:

Terry Inkawhich, Birnie Bus

Patricia Kennedy, Springbrook

- April 30, 2008: The CPD organized and invited various representatives from the county to participate in the first Transportation Advisory Committee meeting. The agenda included discussion of NYS DOT's requirements and a proposed milestone and timetable outline. An inventory sheet was distributed to participating members in order to identify services and resources of each agency.
- Nov. 18, 2008: Regional transportation meeting sponsored by Montgomery County, Doug Greene, Planning Director.
- Nov. 20, 2008: Transportation meeting sponsored by Otsego County to discuss unmet amendments to Otsego County's transportation system. Individuals included: Terry Bliss, Otsego County; Terry Inkawhich, and Marty Seaman, Birnie Bus; John Reel, NYS DOT; Kurt Terrell, Bassett Hospital; Lynn Meebust and Neil Weiller, Village of Cooperstown; Joe Judd, ARC. Topics of discussion included:
- Installation of bus shelters at the Meadows Office Bld. and the county office building on Chestnut St. in the Village of Cooperstown.
 - Coordination of Route #5 with ARC
 - Recent service modifications
 - Possible expanded service
 - Development of park and rides
 - Coordination of Veterans services with Schoharie Co.
 - Oneonta to Edmeston route
 - Request for transportation route to Ommegang Brewery.
 - Development of park-n-ride
 - Coordinated Transportation Plan

2.0 County Overview

Otsego County is situated in the Leatherstocking Region of central New York. It is bounded by Schoharie, Delaware, Chenango, Madison, Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison Counties. According to the 2000 census, nearly 30% of the county's 61,676 residents live in the Oneonta area (city and town). Approximately 13% of the county's residents live in rural villages (Cherry Valley, Cooperstown, Milford, Richfield Springs, Morris, Laurens, Gilbertsville, Unadilla, and Otego). The remaining population is distributed throughout the rural towns and hamlets. The population density in Otsego County is 62 persons/mi², compared to the New York state-wide average of 402 persons/mi².

The county is a center of tourism in the Leatherstocking Region. The Baseball Hall of Fame, Soccer Hall of Fame, Farmer's Museum, Femimore Art Museum and Otsego Lake are major attractions. Approximately 500,000 people visit Otsego County each year. Two major regional hospitals serve the county, Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital and A.O. Fox Hospital, providing 180 and 258 acute care beds, respectively. Otsego County is

home to two 4-year academic institutions, SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College and a 2-year Business College, the Utica School of Commerce, with total current college enrollment at 7,215.

2.1 Population

2.1.1 Distribution

County settlement patterns reflect historic transportation routes. Most major population centers are located along the historic Susquehanna River, the Delaware & Hudson Railroad lines (I-88), and the Cherry Valley Turnpike (US Rt 20) corridors (See map sheet 2). The largest municipality, with respect to population, is the City of Oneonta, a historic railroad town. Other notable railroad communities include Unadilla, Otego, Schenevus and Worcester. The second largest community is the Village of Cooperstown, which is the county seat. Noteworthy communities located along the historic Cherry Valley Turnpike include Richfield Springs, Springfield Center and Cherry Valley. Significant outlying rural communities include Gilbertsville, Morris and Laurens.

2000 Census Population Counts

Burlington	1,085	Oneonta (<i>Town</i>)	4,994
Butternuts	1,792	Oneonta (<i>City</i>)	13,292
Cherry Valley	1,266	Otego	3,183
Decatur	410	Otego	3,904
Edmeston	1,824	Pittsfield	1,295
Exeter	954	Plainfield	986
Hartwick	2,203	Richfield	2,423
Laurens	2,402	Roseboom	684
Maryland	1,920	Springfield	1,350
Middlefield	2,249	Unadilla	4,548
Milford	2,938	Westford	784
Morris	1,867	Worcester	2,207
New Lisbon	1,116		
		Total	61,676

Note: Village populations represented within the larger town.

2.1.2 Trends

It is estimated that Otsego County's population increased by approximately 1.4% between 2000 and 2006. During that same time, New York State's population increased by approximately 1.6%.

Year (source)	Otsego County Population
1980 (Census)	59,075
1990 (Census)	60,517
2000 (Census)	61,676
2006 (ACS, estimate)	62,561

2.2 Target Populations in Otsego County

The needs of three populations in Otsego County are assessed in the plan: the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons of low income. Individuals in these three groups tend to have a greater need for public or private transportation services.

2.2.1 Elderly Populations

In 2006, Otsego County had an estimated population of 62,561. Of this number, approximately 9,559 persons, or 15.3 percent, were age 65 and older (see map sheet 3). This compared to the national average of 12.5%.

Currently in Otsego County, there are 11 housing facilities (subsidized apartments, family homes, and adult care facilities) that serve senior citizens (see map sheet 4). The facilities are generally located in the population centers of Oneonta and Cooperstown, but a handful is located in the rural villages and towns. Some of the subsidized housing also serves handicapped individuals.

Elderly passengers may experience limitations that affect their use of transit services. Although perhaps physically capable of riding a bus, their general frailty and feelings of vulnerability may prevent them from doing so. If elderly passengers have recently stopped driving due to declining abilities, they will be lacking in transit experience. Their fear of the unknown and reluctance to try something new can be overcome through positive transit experiences. Travel training for new passengers can teach them what they need to know about the transit system. This knowledge will give them the freedom to get around, while providing a feeling of comfort and security, leading to an overall positive experience.

2.2.2 Persons with Disabilities

The United States Census Bureau defines a disability as a significant limitation in sensory, physical, or mental functions, the ability to provide self-care, or the ability to function outside of one's home. In the 2000 Census, 10,995 persons in Otsego County (see map sheet 4) reported a disability (among people at least five years old, who were part of the civilian non-institutionalized population). This is approximately 18% of that population and higher than the national average of 15%. The likelihood of having a disability varied by age, ranging from approximately 9% to 34% to 69% for people aged 5 to 15 years old, 16 to 64 years old, and 65 yrs old and older, respectively .

Persons with disabilities in Otsego County span a broad range of physical and mental ability. Many of these individuals are capable, sometimes with guidance, of using a bus service. Passengers with disabilities who are not able to ride a fixed route bus have access to the on-demand service to meet their transportation needs. Some of them may also need assistance from the curb to their door. Limitations with mobility affect the amount of time it takes some passengers to get to the vehicle, and on and off the vehicle, affecting trip schedules. There are also time constraints on how long certain passengers can tolerate

riding on a vehicle. Bus drivers need and receive continued training to help them understand and address the capabilities and limitations of passengers with disabilities.

2.2.3 Persons of Low Income

Low income is defined as income at or below 150% of the poverty line (as defined in Section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 USC 9902(2) for a family of the size involved. In 2000, approximately 8,546 persons in Otsego County were living in poverty (see map sheet 3). This is approximately 15% of the population, as compared to the national average of 12%. Approximately 17% of related children under 18 years old were below the poverty level, compared with about 8% of people aged 65 years and over. Of all families, approximately 9% had incomes below the poverty level. An estimated 51% of families with a female householder and no husband present were below the poverty level.

In 2000 in Otsego County, there were 4,061 unemployed individuals in the civilian labor force of 31,662 persons. This is approximately 13 % unemployment, as compared to the national average of 6%. An estimated 368 persons took public transportation to work. This is approximately 1.3% of the employed, civilian work force. (The source for the above population figures was the United States Census Bureau, 2000.)

The individuals struggling with low incomes in Otsego County face many challenges. They may be separated from good jobs due to lack of reliable transportation, or transportation at the times they need it, which may be different from what is currently available. There is also the challenge of affording the transportation which is available. A low income can force many people to make decisions between purchasing food, medicine, clothing, shelter, or transportation.

2.3 Employment and Services

The business and tourism centers of Oneonta and Cooperstown provide the majority of employment opportunities in the county (See map sheet 5). Predominate occupations in the county include healthcare, education, social services, construction and retail and sales. Two major local hospitals and two large universities, together, offer 5000 area jobs. Several companies offer manufacturing jobs in the Oneonta area. Tourism is a major industry in the county with many jobs offered on a seasonal basis.

The largest employers in the county are as follows:

Employer	Type of Business	No. of Employees	Location
Bassett Healthcare	Not-For-Profit acute care teaching hospital	2,808*	Cooperstown/Oneonta
New York Central Mutual Fire Insurance Company	Property/casualty Insurance	1,000*	Edmeston
SUNY College at Oneonta	Public four-year college	1181	Oneonta
A.O. Fox Hospital	Not-For-Profit community hospital	1000	Oneonta
County of Otsego	County Government	850	Cooperstown/Oneonta

Wal-Mart	Retail Business	470	Oneonta
Hartwick College	Private four year college	356	Oneonta
Wilber National Bank	Deposit and loan services	279	Branches County-wide
Corning, Inc	Plastic laboratory products	210	Oneonta
Mold-A-Matic (MAMCO)	Injection molded components	125	Oneonta
Astrocom Electronics	Electronics communications devices	96	Colliersville
Burt Rigid Box, Inc.	Manufacturer of set-up boxes	65	Oneonta
Medical Coaches	Mobile health and military units	70	Oneonta
Custom Electronics, Inc.	electronic capacitors and modules	72	Oneonta

* - signifies additional locations outside of Otsego County

County social service department provide services at county offices in Cooperstown and Oneonta. The Office for the Aging, Public Health Nursing, Social Services, Mental Health and Chemical Dependency have offices located at the Meadows office complex. Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Office for the Aging have additional offices located in downtown Oneonta at 242 Main Street. The Meadows office complex is located three miles south of Cooperstown. Otsego Express and Oneonta Public Transportation provide public services to the facility.

Not for profit organizations, such as Catholic Charities, Planned Parenthood, Opportunities for Otsego, Otsego Rural Housing, etc, provide support services in the county, primarily in Cooperstown or Oneonta. Medical services are offered at the two local hospitals, with locations Cooperstown and Oneonta, as well as satellite offices.

Day care is provided by several licensed NYS providers. Head Start programs, run by Opportunities for Otsego, are offered at 11 locations throughout the county. Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs are offered in the Cooperstown and Oneonta school districts. Some area schools also offer prekindergarten programs and Creating Rural Opportunities Programs (CROP). Other private preschools are available at various locations, such as Saint Mary’s School, Oneonta, Brookwood School, Cooperstown, and Little Lambs, Cherry Valley.

3.0 Assessment of Available Transportation Services

3.1 Identification of Service Providers

There are two public service providers in the county (see map sheet 1). Otsego Express is run by the county. The county’s contracted operator is Birnie Bus. Otsego Express provides 13 routes throughout the county. Otsego Express provides service for the general fare-paying public and for clients of the county Department of Social Services Medicaid program.

Oneonta Public Transit (OPT) is run by the City of Oneonta. OPT operates six routes within the city, one route to Cooperstown and Otego. OPT provides service for the general fare-paying public.

Several county agencies provide some forms of transportation for special populations. The Office for the Aging provides on-demand rides for Seniors for various purposes. The Veterans Service agency provides transportation to the Veteran’s Administration hospital in Albany. The Manor, the county operated nursing home, provides shuttle service for residents to the local hospital for medical appointments.

Three agencies provide transportation for developmentally disabled individuals. The ARC Otsego provides transportation for clients from residences throughout the county to the ARC facility in Oneonta. Springbrook NY and Pathfinder Village provide transportation for residents to recreational, respite and other activities.

Opportunities for Otsego (OFO) is a community action organization that provides transportation to low income individuals, primarily in the Oneonta area. OFO provides rides for clients on an as needed basis and operates the buses that provide transportation for children participating in the various Head Start programs throughout the county.

The Village of Cooperstown operates a trolley service in the village to bring tourists into the heart of the village from satellite parking lots to alleviate congestion and the shortage of parking. Two large employers in Cooperstown, Bassett Hospital and the Otesaga Hotel, operate shuttles for employees who park in remote lots because of the same shortage of parking within the village.

Various taxicab companies operate in the county and provide ride to fare-paying passengers in areas typically limited to the City of Oneonta and the Village of Cooperstown. Trips outside of these service areas result in expensive fares.

General information on each of the transportation service providers in the county is as follows:

Provider:	Otsego Express (OE) – Otsego County
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	STOA, Medicaid, Federal 5311
Additional Funds:	fares, schedule advertising
Types of Service:	Public, Senior Citizens, Medicaid, 13 routes
Fares:	\$1 regular, \$0.50 seniors, \$2 route deviation, \$1 senior deviation, \$3 dial-a-ride, \$30 monthly pass, \$0.50 transfers
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, typically 6 am to 6 pm
Fleet Composition:	12 37seated/26 standing Gilligs, 3 16/2wheelchair stations Coach and Equipment cutaways

Provider:	Oneonta Public Transit (OPT) – City of Oneonta
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	STOA, 5311, 5309, federal earmarks (2xs in the past)
Additional Funds:	fares, exterior advertising
Types of Service:	Public

Fares:	\$0.65 Regular/Senior, \$0.35 Student, \$0.15 transfers, \$1.30 Cooperstown, \$1 Otego, \$1.30 paratransit, \$40 monthly pass
Days and Hours:	Monday through Saturday, typically 6 am to 6 pm
Fleet Composition:	

Provider:	Otsego County Veterans Service Agency
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	
Additional Funds:	
Types of Service:	Van service from Cooperstown/Oneonta to Veteran's Administration hospital in Albany
Days and Hours:	2 days per week,
Fleet Composition:	2 14-passenger vans

Provider:	Otsego County Office for the Aging
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	Title III B of the Older American's Act
Additional Funds:	State Transportation Program administered by New York State Office for the Aging, self funded
Types of Service:	On-demand transportation first come first serve for medical appointments for non Medicaid and shopping for any one 60 and over
Days and Hours:	As needed during office hours
Fleet Composition:	1 passenger car

Provider:	Otsego County Manor
Service Area:	Village of Cooperstown
Funding Sources:	Self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Shuttle service for clients
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	One shuttle van

Provider:	Otsego County ARC
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	Medicaid, Federal 5310
Additional Funds:	Self funded
Types of Service:	Specialized transportation/paratransit for clients with disabilities to and from their homes to various ARC program locations in the county and the City of Oneonta, approximately 8 fixed routes
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, closed major holidays, typically 6 am to 6 pm
Fleet Composition:	8 buses, various capacities: 20-, 14-, 16-, 24-, two 32-, and two 10-passenger buses,

Provider:	Springbrook New York
Service Area:	Southern Otsego County
Funding Sources:	Self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Residential, respite, and recreational transportation for clients
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	Passenger cars

Provider:	Pathfinder Village
Service Area:	Northwestern Otsego County
Funding Sources:	Self-funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Residential, respite, recreational, and employment transportation for clients
Days and Hours:	As needed, typically weekdays
Fleet Composition:	Passenger cars

Provider:	Opportunities for Otsego
Service Area:	Otsego County
Funding Sources:	Various grants, donations, self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Head Start bus service, ride service for clients
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	8 school buses, various capacities: from 12- to 30-passenger buses, 10 passenger cars

Provider:	Cooperstown Trolley – Village of Cooperstown
Service Area:	Village of Cooperstown
Funding Sources:	Self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Paid trolley service from satellite parking lots to Main t
Fare:	\$3
Days and Hours:	7 days per week, May 1 st to Columbus Day
Fleet Composition:	3 trolleys – not winterized

Provider:	Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital
Service Area:	Village of Cooperstown
Funding Sources:	Self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Shuttle service from satellite parking lots to hospital for employees, service to off-site training center and offices also provided
Days and Hours:	Monday through Friday, closed major holidays, 20 hrs per day
Fleet Composition:	3 Shuttle vans

Provider:	Otesaga Hotel
Service Area:	Village of Cooperstown
Funding Sources:	Self funded
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Shuttle service for employees from satellite parking and dormitories
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	Shuttle van

Provider:	Taxicab Services, 3 companies
Service Area:	2 companies servicing the City of Oneonta, 1 servicing Cooperstown
Funding Sources:	Passenger fares
Additional Funds:	N/A
Types of Service:	Paid public transportation
Days and Hours:	As needed
Fleet Composition:	unknown

3.2 Identification of Unmet Needs

The identified needs assessment comes from several sources included but not limited to:

- Members of the Coordinated Transportation Committee
- Response sheet for public input
- Otsego Express Drivers (Birnie Bus)
- On-site viewing and response to public request
- Distributed Survey to agencies that rely on the public transportation system
- Administrators from OPT, Otsego Express, Bassett etc.
- Joint regional meeting held between Otsego, Schoharie, Montgomery, Delaware County.
- County constituents
- General public ridership

The following is a list of the identified transportation needs of generalized segments of the population: Elderly, Low Income, Employee-Job based, Disabled.

Elderly: There is a need to educate the elderly population in Otsego County to use the public transit system and feel confident and safe that this is an option. Riding a public bus is not something many of the county's elderly residents have ever been exposed to, with the exception of those who grew up in a larger city. Many elderly live in the rural parts of the county and rely on their ability to drive themselves for appointments and services. When an elderly person's ability to drive is diminished, then the difficulty of transportation is exasperated. Many elderly will rely on neighboring individuals or family

to transport them to and from needed services and many are too proud to rely on others yet refuse to relocate closer to their needs. The following unmet needs of the elderly population in Otsego County include but are not limited to:

- The need to educate the elderly on the use of the bus system
- The need to familiarize using the bus system and its routes.
- The need to reassure and encourage the use of a bus system for the first time.
- The need for assistance with packages and/or groceries.
- The need to understand special needs of the elderly; walkers or wheelchair on public transportation system is feasible.
- The need to understand buses are safe.
- The need for curbside assistance.

Low Income: The major county service providers - DSS, Office of the Aging, Public Health Nursing, DMV etc. - are located at the county seat in Cooperstown, NY. The county seat, though centrally located is not necessarily the most convenient location for the lower income individuals in the county causing many individuals to seek transportation to and from scheduled meetings. Although public transportation does reach the two county offices near Cooperstown, the need still exists to reach out to those individuals living in the outer perimeter where access to transportation poses a challenge. The following unmet needs of the lower income population in Otsego County include but are not limited to:

- The need for reliable, affordable and convenient transportation to appointments and work.
- The need to increase transportation routes to remote areas.
- The need to match affordable housing stock with accessible transportation routes.
- The need for extended operational hours to outer areas of the county for jobs that are not the typical 9-5 hours and stores that are open later than 5 or 6 pm.
- The need for access to county services at an affordable cost.
- The need for access to medical services, service and court ordered appointments.
- The need to provide transportation that coordinates with work schedules.
- The need for convenient transfers from OPT to Otsego Express
- The need for a regular OPT stop at the Meadows, rather than on-demand

Employee Job Based – General Public: Otsego County, historically is an agricultural-based community with the City of Oneonta being the largest population center in the county. The county has two large medical facilities - Fox Hospital in Oneonta and Bassett hospital in Cooperstown. Tourism is a seasonal aspect of the county, especially in the Cooperstown area bringing many opportunities for all population segments of the county including jobs for students during the summer, rental opportunities for property owners, service oriented jobs for lower income level families and temporary jobs for the summer. The major employers in the County include, both hospitals, Hartwick and Oneonta State College, NYS Central Mutual Insurance in Edmeston NY, Springbrook in the Town of Milford and the County itself. There is a daily migration of individuals to and from these major employers. The opportunity for many high school students to seek summer jobs is

impacted by the ability to get to work. The cost of gas, cost of owning one or more vehicles, being unlicensed, or simply the lack of parking facilities is also a factor for those to seek alternative transportation means. The following unmet needs of the employee-based general public, include but are not limited to the following:

- The need for transportation to seasonal jobs during the off hours of the day and weekends. Many of the tourist businesses operate past 5 pm.
- The need to provide transportation for year round jobs with hours outside of
- of the standard 9-5 time frame. Some employers offer second and third shifts, such as the Otsego Manor.
- The need to work closely with employers to try to accommodate work schedules with bus schedules when possible.
- The need to work with employers to encourage employees to use public transportation for access to and from work.
- The need to consider major employers outside of the County's boundary, and to work with other county's to provide transportation services and/or connectors to other transportation systems.
- The need to offer park-n-ride locations in the county.
- The need to accommodate for bikes, strollers, etc. for summer recreational purposes.
- The need to accommodate the ridership of students in after school activities who may not have a ride home after practice.

Disabled: Otsego County recognizes the need to supply public transportation to those individuals unable to drive themselves. The following unmet transportation needs of the disabled, include, but are not limited to the following:

- The need to provide assistance to those with disabilities riding the public transportation system in order to prevent delays in the system.
- The need to address the curbside, door to door pick up.
- The need to address safety concerns of the disabled and others.
- The need to coordinate medical visits with transportation schedules.
- The need to utilize other transportation services for the disabled and to communicate openly to prevent duplication of services.

4.0 Action Items

The following action items are based on the un-met needs of the population segments and their commonality. Prioritization is based on the financial and feasible approach to accomplishing the action items listed. Implementation of each action is subject to a prioritized approach.

Item #1: Improve the image of public transportation, by educating the public on how to use the public transportation system and to encourage non-riders to

become riders. Provide individualized special events focusing on certain population groups.

- Item #2: Improve on publicizing public transportation and create a more visual presence in the county through use of various media.
- Item #3: Improve upon and recognize the need for personal assistance to passengers with individual needs.
- Item #4: Improve upon and emphasize the safety of riding a bus to the general public
- Item #5: Concentrate on applying for funding through 5311, 5310, JARC and New Freedoms program in order to minimize expenses to the customer and open other opportunities to the transportation system.
- Item #6: Consider increasing operational hours of transportation outside of the M-F 9-5 hours.
- Item #7: Work to implement a universal pass system that will interconnect with other public transportation services in the county.
- Item #8: Encourage the transportation advisory committee to continue to meet and discuss future improvements and participants to the system.
- Item #9: Provide for the accommodation of accessory items - bikes, strollers, walkers, grocery bags, etc.
- Item #10: Improve upon the hours of operation of the transportation system especially in the Oneonta area and the access to the Southside area where the major shopping center of the county exists.
- Item #11: Work to keep the cost of public transportation minimal to those individuals who are seeking assistance from county government and whose only means of transportation to and from the service organization may be by the county public transportation.
- Item #12: Improve upon matching the transportation schedule with seasonal, tourist-based employment to allow greater access to the low income and student-based population seeking work during the summer in the Cooperstown area.
- Item #13: Open discussion between the County and the local school systems to discuss the need to accommodate students in after school activities that may need a ride home after practice.

Item #14 Designate and identify through signage areas of park-n-rides for individuals seeking to access the public transportation route.

Item #15 Improve and enhance energy efficiency in the transportation system.

5.0 Strategies

The following chart represents a 5 year projected plan. The unmet needs are grouped into common action items. Each action item is followed by a strategy and a time frame by which it is anticipated to be completed. The chart will be periodically updated at the end of each year to show progress and unanticipated changes to the plan.

**Otsego County Coordinated Transportation Plan
Action- Strategy-Priority Plan
Five Year Projection**

Action	Description	Strategy	Priority	Time-Frame	Status Report and Monitoring
AI-1	Work toward improving the image of public transportation to encourage non-riders to become riders and to provide individualized special events focusing on certain population groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor special free days for Seniors. • Participate in community events to provide transportation. • Visit local organizations as a guest speaker • Sponsor a TV commercial on a local station. • Have regular radio spots • Special events recognizing individuals or organizations. 	1	1-2 yrs.	The County currently pays for radio spots through the year and displayed their new bus at a county board meeting.
AI-2	Improve on publicizing public transportation and create a more visual presence in the county through use of various media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an interactive web site. • Invest in advertising with the local media. • Have recorded statement from riders as a TV or radio blurb. • Create promotional campaigns with incentives to riding the bus. • Revision dates on bus schedules. 	2	1-2 yrs.	The County currently has the transportation schedule with map on the county web page.
AI-3	Improve upon and recognize the need for personal assistance to passengers with individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with the involved agencies, to develop a program to have on-board assistants, or a bus monitor who would help individuals with their needs. • Consider a “big-brother” campaign where a regular rider is dedicated as a mentor to new riders. • Emphasis to bus drivers the need for individual assistance and to educate and train through good public relations. • Look at the potential of using a second transportation source for curb side pickup to a central focal point, having the cost for the curb side pick up slightly higher than a normal ride. 	3	2-3 yrs.	Subject to be introduced at coordinated transportation meetings

Action	Description	Strategy	Priority	Time-Frame	Status Report and Monitoring
AI-4	Improve upon and emphasize the safety of riding a bus to the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create commercials and or adds to bring stress safety with public transportation. 	1	1 yr.	The County currently budgets advertising money for flyers and radio spots.
AI-5	Concentrate on applying for funding through 5311, 5310, JARC and New Freedoms program in order to minimize expenses to the customer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring new potential partners into the program. • Establish a list of underwriters to support the transportation system both financially and systematically. 	1	1-3 yrs.	The county joined forces with ARC in 08 to increase days of service on route #5.
AI-6	Increase operational days and hours to allow for access to work on the weekends and after 6 pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how to increase hours and days of operation through continual dialogue with all involved parties including the businesses associated with the summer season. 	2	2-3 yrs.	Recently the County responded to a need to provide transportation to a trailer park adjacent and less than 1 mile from Wal-Mart.
AI-7	Work to implement a universal pass system that will interconnect with other public transportation services in the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the feasibility of a universal pass system with OPT and Otsego Express 	3	2-5 yrs.	Has been a subject of discussion at coordination meetings, funding source to be identified
AI-8	Encourage the transportation advisory committee to continue to meet on a regular schedule to discuss continual and future opportunities for consolidation and potential new participants to the transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on a quarterly basis with the regional and local transportation committee with a common goal of providing public transportation in an economic feasible approach. • Seek out new underwriters for broader basis of operation. 	1	1 yr.	The current committees are meeting on a regular basis and are committed to working together for the benefit of all
AI-9	Provide for the accommodation of accessory items, bikes, strollers, walkers, groceries bags etc. for improved access and comfort to the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research grant opportunities through 5311 capital grants to equip. all vehicles with bike racks, stroller rocks etc. 	2	1-2 yrs.	The County has purchased 12 new buses and additional items, in the last two years through 5311 capital money.

Action	Description	Strategy	Priority	Time-Frame	Status Report and Monitoring
AI-10	Improve upon the hours of operation of the transportation system especially in the Oneonta area and the access to the Southside area where the major shopping center of the county exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closer with OPT in Oneonta to expand the Southside connection to expanded hours and days of operation. 	1	1-2-yrs.	Representatives from OPT are part of the local transportation committee.
AI-11	Work to minimize the cost of public transportation for individuals seeking county assistance and the need to rely on public transportation for access to scheduled appointments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for funding 5310, JARC, New Freedoms etc. whatever is available for the county's needs. 	1	1 yr.	Introduce the subject at future coordination meetings
AI-12	Improve upon matching the transportation schedule with seasonal, tourist based employment to allow greater access to the low income and student based population seeking work during the summer in the focused tourist areas of the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement discussion with seasonal business prior to season opening to address their needs to your services. Possibly work out a contract agreement for transportation with local business to possibly share the additional cost for seasonal service. Seek and apply for any funding, JARC to be able to access as appropriate. 	2	2-3 yrs.	Initial discussion with the Otesaga Hotel, explore the Cooperstown Hub concept
AI-13	The need to accommodate students in after school activities that may need a ride home after practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve representatives from the school district including BOCES to work out the possibility of supplying transportation after school hours. 	3	2-3 yrs	Introduce the subject at future coordination meetings
AI-14	Designate and identify through signage areas of park-n-rides for individuals seeking to access the public transportation route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Otsego Express and OPT to identify areas where a park-n-ride would benefit the transportation route. Work with DOT to find available funding for such a project. Involve the County Attorney 	1	1-2 yrs.	Introduce the subject at future coordination meetings
AI-15	Improve and enhance energy efficiency in the transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate hybrid or alternative fuel buses Educate the public on advantages of walking/biking to work/shopping Develop greenways or pedestrian trails (Proposed routes: Rt 28 South of Cooperstown, Rt 7 Colliersville to Unadilla, Parallel to the Susquehanna). 	3	2-3 yrs.	Introduce the subject at future coordination meetings

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Otsego Express Route 5 / ARC

Otsego Express provides public transportation along the NYS Route 7 corridor in the towns of Maryland, Oneonta, and Worcester to the City of Oneonta. Popular destinations are Price Chopper, the Clinton Plaza, the Southside Mall and Wal-Mart. Historically, Route 5 has had service two days per week from approximately 7 am to 6 pm.

ARC operates a bus in the same corridor to transport clients from the respective towns to the ARC facility in the City of Oneonta. The ARC bus departs from the Town of Hartwick, and travels through the towns of Middlefield and Westford, before picking up the clients in Schenevus, Worcester, and East Worcester. The morning route begins approximately 7 am transporting clients to the City of Oneonta. The late afternoon route begins at approximately 5 pm and transports clients to their homes. ARC provides this service five days per week, except major holidays.

In response to requests by riders on route for additional days of service, Otsego Express approached ARC about coordinating transportation service. Birnie Bus, contractual operator for Otsego Express, and ARC coordinated their transportation routes and proposed public service, to be provided by ARC, five days per week in the Route 5 corridor.

ARC would open their bus to the general public. In exchange, Birnie Bus would train the ARC drivers in data and fare box collection and provide DOT inspection for the ARC bus that would provide the service. Birnie Bus would also provide mid-day Otsego Express service in the corridor. Benefits would include a newer and safer bus for ARC to operate, as well eligibility for 5310 funding for capital improvements and increased service for the public along Route 5. STOA ridership and miles will likely increase as the bus operates five days per week, resulting increased funding for Otsego Express.

On November 21, 2008, this coordinated transportation service opened its doors to the general public.

6.2 Otsego Express / Veterans Service Agency / Schoharie County

The Otsego County Veterans Service Agency provides a demand response shuttle service with route deviation to the VA hospital in Albany, NY three days per week. The Schoharie County Veterans Service Agency also provides transportation to the VA hospital five days per week. Both services follow the same route through Schoharie, Schenectady and Albany counties.

The Veteran's Service Agency would like to find an operator who can provide the transportation to veterans so that they can devote their resources to other services. Otsego Express, Birnie Bus, and Schoharie County transportation are negotiating the

details of a service that will provide transportation to Otsego County veterans to Cobleskill, where the veterans will transfer to the Schoharie County Veteran's bus.

The current proposal is for Otsego Express to provide a fixed route from Richfield Springs to Oneonta five days per week. The Otsego Express bus would rendezvous with the Schoharie County veteran's bus in Cobleskill at 7:30 am where Otsego County riders would transfer. The bus providing service in the late afternoon would run in reverse, picking up riders in Cobleskill at 4:30 pm.

Once in Cobleskill Otsego Express will return to Richfield via Roseboom or Cherry Valley and Cooperstown with hopes that this service will provide both commuter and Medicaid trips to Cooperstown and Bassett.

In addition to this plan, discussion is currently underway in Otsego County to utilize the Veterans Van for the public transportation service with the possibility of addressing an identified un-met need of service in the Cherry Valley area. The inclusion of the Veterans van into the public transportation fleet for Otsego County will open the availability of funding to a service that is currently fully funded by the county.

6.3 Cooperstown Hub

The Village of Cooperstown is a small village of approximately 2000 people within 1.6 square miles. Approximately 400,000 tourists visit the village annually. It is the county seat. The village is the home of the county's largest employer, Bassett Hospital, with approximately 2800 employees. Bassett is estimated to draw over one-million employee-patient trips per year to Cooperstown.

In response to this influx of vehicles, coupled with a shortage of parking, the Village of Cooperstown established three perimeter parking lots and the trolley system. Bassett Hospital provides transportation service for their employees from satellite parking lots and their training center in the center of the village. Both Otsego Express and Oneonta Public Transit have buses that travel into the village and stop at the hospital and the County Annex building. The Otsego Manor, the county run nursing home, provides shuttle service to the hospital for appointments. The Otesaga Hotel also provides shuttle service from trolley lots to the hotel for employees.

With so many transportation service providers traversing the streets, there are opportunities for transportation coordination. Representatives from Bassett Hospital, Otsego Express, Birnie Bus, the Otsego Manor, and the Village of Cooperstown trolley committee have met to begin to examine opportunities to coordinate. Concepts that will be examined will include allowing Bassett employees to ride the trolley, allowing the public to ride Bassett shuttles, and providing connection service from the village to the Meadows Office Complex to eliminate OPT's and Otsego Express' trips.

6.4 Otsego Express Route 9

Ridership data indicates that Otsego Express' Route 9 may not be sustainable with the existing funding sources available. Otsego Express' operator, Birnie Bus, is examining the potential for coordination with a local nursing home.

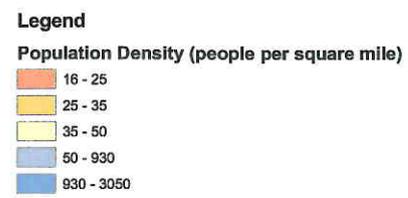
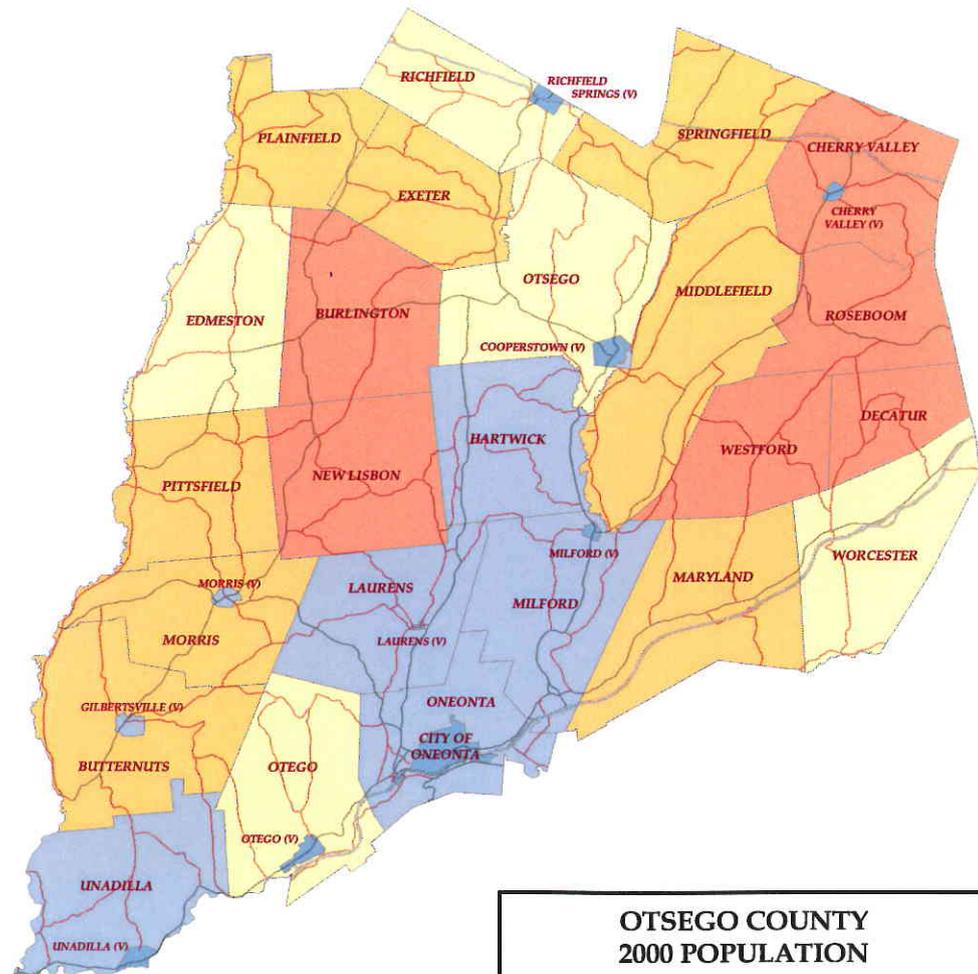
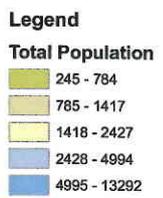
6.5 Messina's Trailer Park

In response to requests by social service agencies in the county, Otsego Express explored the possibility of providing bus service to the Messina's trailer park in the city of Oneonta. The park is just outside of the boundary of the Oneonta Public Transit service. Otsego Express was able to add on-demand service to the trailer park on Route 5, which provides transportation into the city's downtown and limits the need for residents to walk on NYS Highway 23 to the nearest bus service.

6.6 Additional Service Routes

Otsego Express considers all requests for additional service. Current requests being considered include additional runs in the service provided to the Cherry Valley area that would be more timely with respect to employment opportunities with Cooperstown employers and a new route from Oneonta to Edmeston for employees.

Consideration of requests for additional service routes typically involves assessment of existing transportation data collected by Otsego Express to support the request for service, meetings with stakeholders and riders, and examination of funding sources to determine if the route is sustainable. Often additional service routes require coordination with an "underwriter" to provide some funding beyond Otsego Express' sources or to reduce the incremental cost of adding additional service.

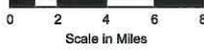


**OTSEGO COUNTY
2000 POPULATION**

OTSEGO COUNTY NEW YORK

Prepared by:
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Planning Department**
197 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY
13326

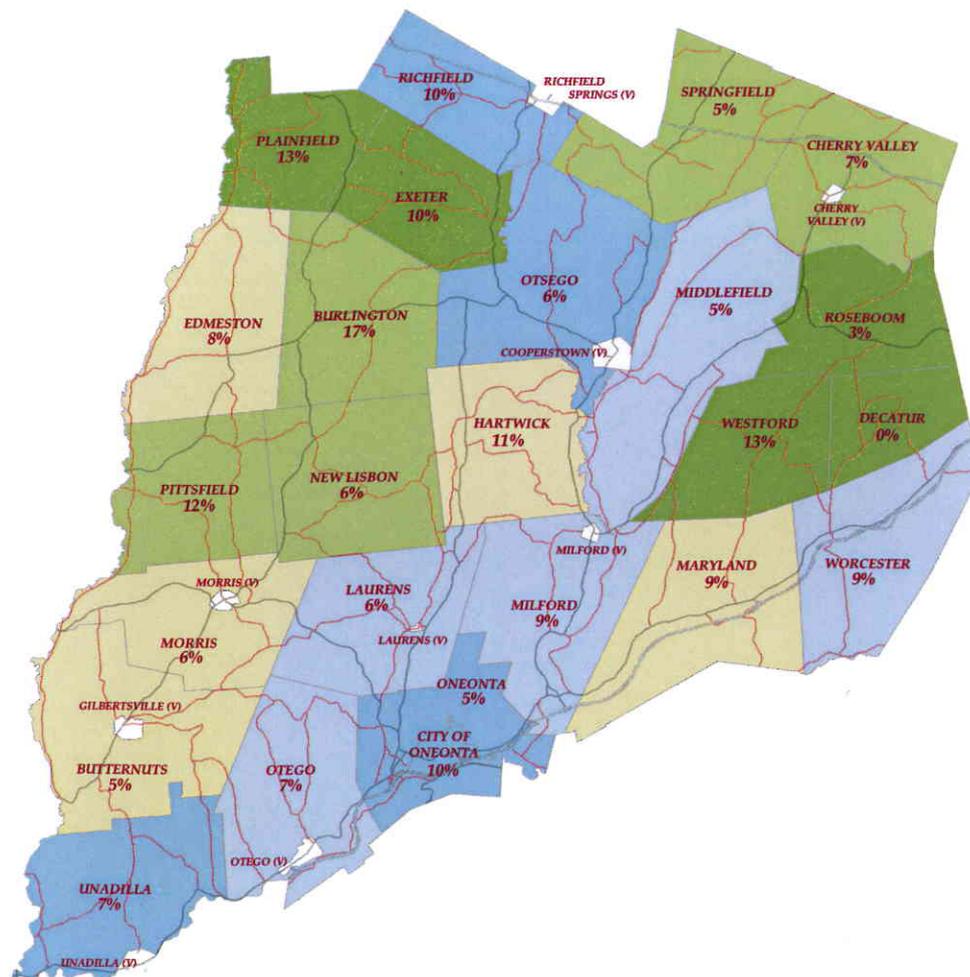
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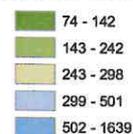
Scale in Miles

SHEET 2 OF 5

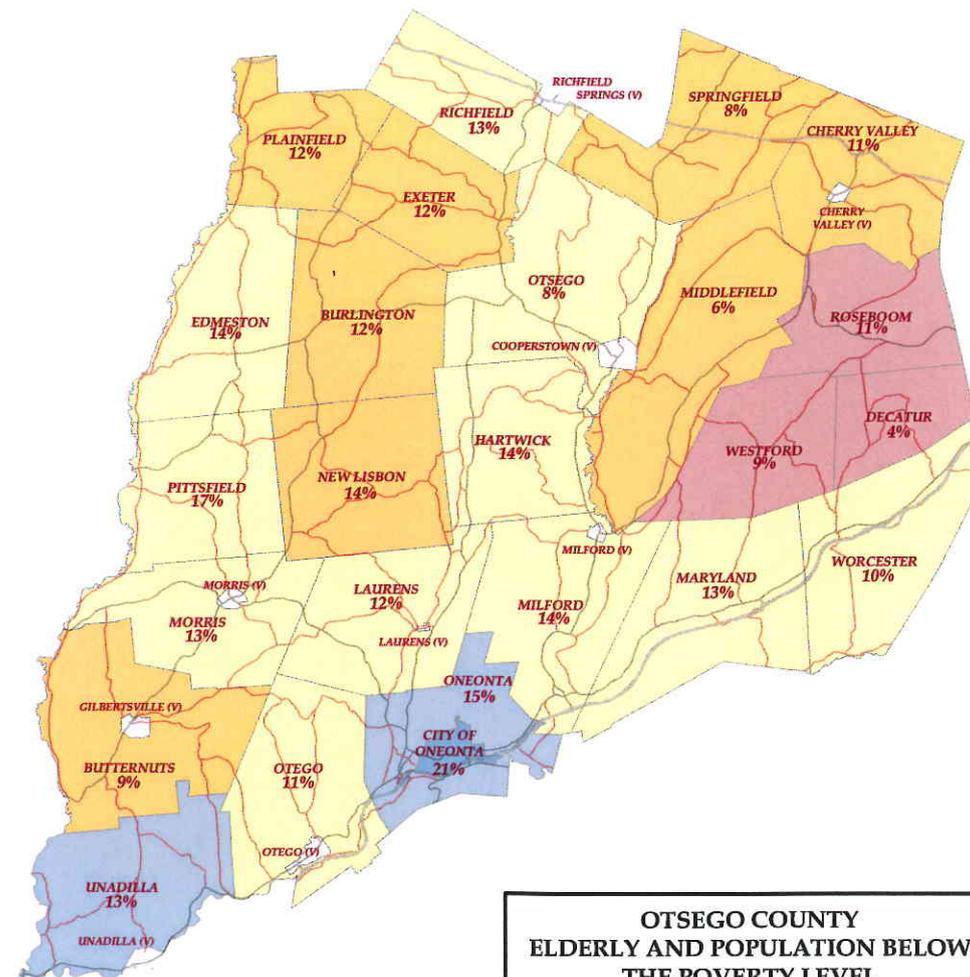
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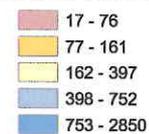
POPULATION OVER 65 YRS OLD



Note: Percentage of seniors below the poverty level as shown. Village population represented in town populations.



POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL



Note: Percentage of total population below the poverty level as shown. Village population represented in town populations.

**OTSEGO COUNTY
ELDERLY AND POPULATION BELOW
THE POVERTY LEVEL**



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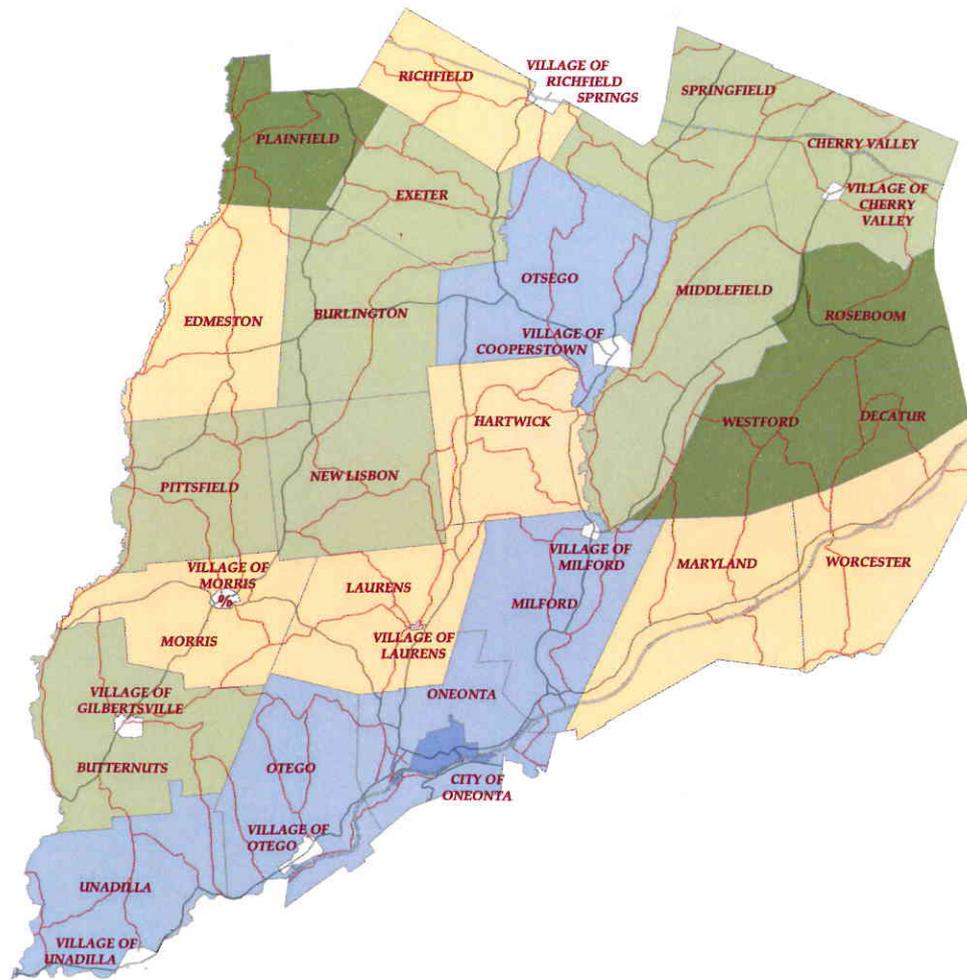
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Scale in Miles

SHEET 3 OF 5

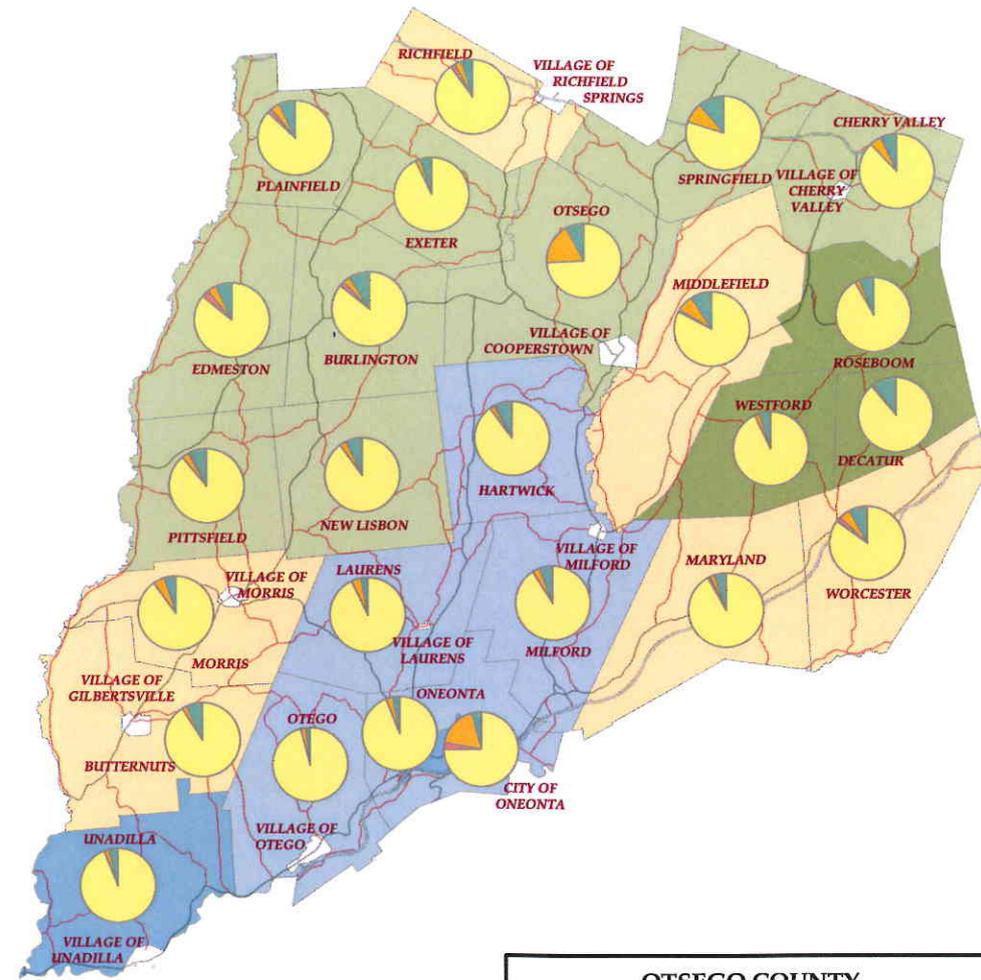
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POPULATION REPORTING A DISABILITY

- 170 - 275
- 276 - 599
- 600 - 971
- 972 - 1820
- 1821 - 3166

Note: Village population represented in town populations.



TRAVEL TO WORK

Persons Who Work Outside the Municipality of Residence

- 119 - 319
- 320 - 537
- 538 - 729
- 730 - 1221
- 1222 - 1666

Mode of Travel to Work

- Motor vehicle
- Public Transportation
- Walk/Bike
- Other
- Work at Home

Note: Village population represented in town populations.

**OTSEGO COUNTY
DISABLED POPULATION
AND TRAVEL TO WORK**

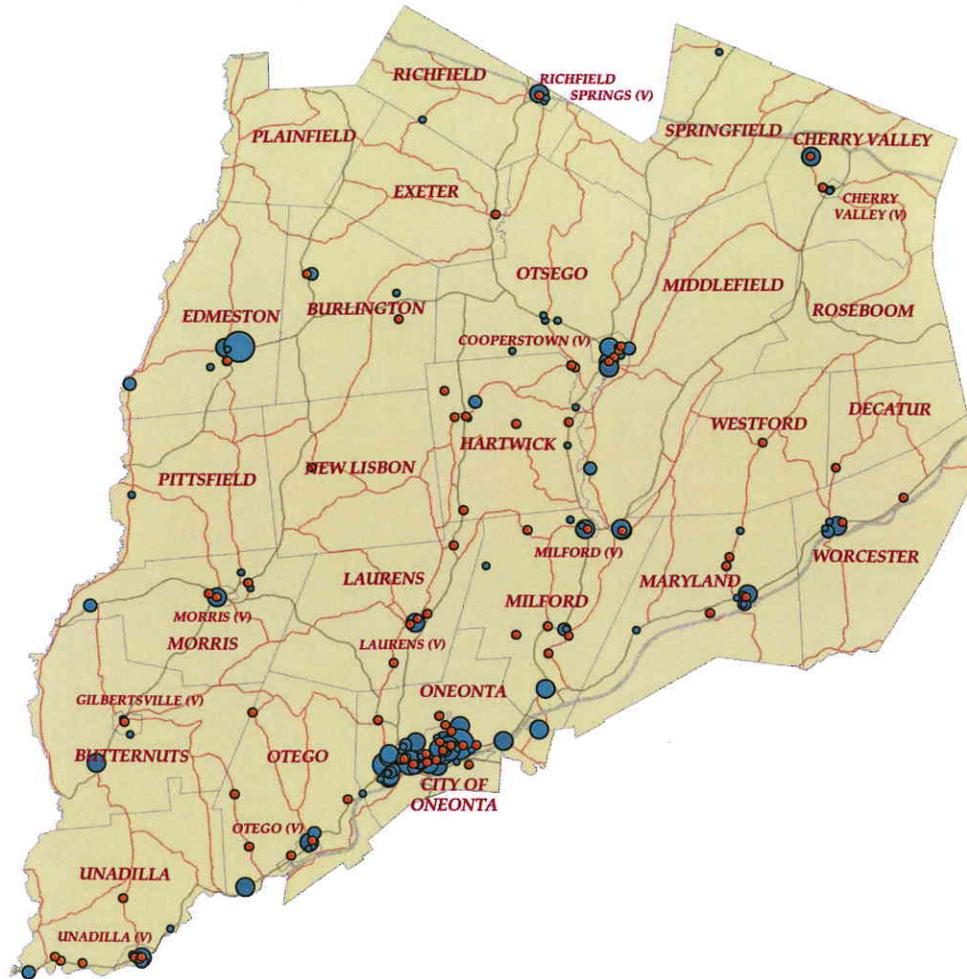
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Date: December 18, 2008

Scale in Miles

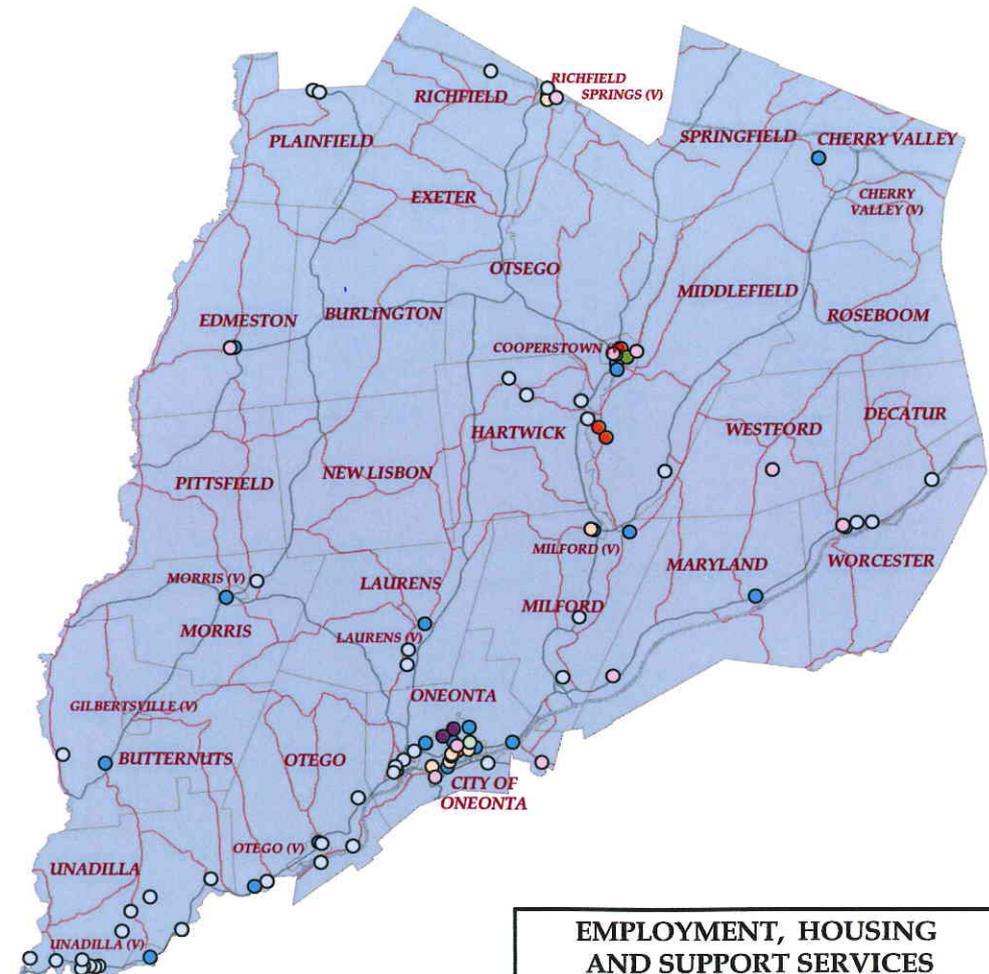
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EMPLOYERS AND DAY CARE

- Licensed Daycare Providers
- Major Employers**
- 0 - 16 employees
- 17 - 50 employees
- 51 - 150 employees
- 151 - 270 employees
- 271 - 853 employees



HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Apartments, Subsidized
- Apartments, Not Subsidized
- Adult Care Facilities
- Trailer Parks
- Colleges
- County Offices
- Hospitals
- Schools

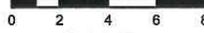
EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

OTSEGO COUNTY NEW YORK



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Otsego County Planning Department
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13326

Date: December 18, 2008



Scale in Miles

SHEET 5 OF 5

Prepared By:	R. Mycekoff	Date:	December 18, 2008
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