



Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

# Public Transportation Plan

*Moving the Blueprint for Tomorrow Forward*



G R E S H A M  
S M I T H   A N D  
P A R T N E R S



McDonald Transit Associates, Inc.

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## **Meeting Participants**

Cliff Barnes – Habitat for Humanity  
Darrelyn J. Bender - President /CEO Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce  
Mary Brabner – City of Spanish Fort  
Joe Bullock – Engineering Development Services, LLC  
Jim Byrd – Safe Harbor Financial  
David Clark – Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa  
Randy Delchamps – Randy Delchamps Real Estate & Development Company  
Bob Higgins – Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance  
Jerry Keehn – BES, Inc.  
Thom Lott – Morgan Stanley  
Gregory Loughlin - Director of Business Development Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce  
Hugh McCoy – White-Spunner Construction, Inc.  
Gregg Mims – City of Fairhope  
Ray B. Moore, P.L.S. – Hutchinson, Moore & Rauch, LLC  
Joey Nunnally – Baldwin County Highway Department  
Walter Penry – Volunteer  
Taylor Rider – BRATS  
Mickie Russell – Dauphin Realty of Baldwin County  
Dan Stankoski, City of Fairhope Councilman  
Paige Thatcher – RE/MAX By the Bay  
Sally Wagner – Hartmann Blackmon & Kilgore

Baldwin County Public Transit Coalition

Baldwin County Blueprint for Tomorrow

## **Consulting Team**

John Stewart, P.E. – Gresham, Smith & Partners  
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John Bartosiewicz - McDonald Transit Associates, Inc.  
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## Executive Summary

Daphne, Fairhope and Spanish Fort lie on the Eastern Shore of the largest county in the State of Alabama. It is an area that is experiencing rising property values, low unemployment and continued growth in business and population. It is also an area contending with increased congestion and challenges in recruiting employees. It is an area looking for solutions.

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce initiated this Public Transportation Plan to provide a focused strategy for expanding the range of mobility options for citizens of the Eastern Shore and visitors. The Plan is the result of careful consideration of demographics, employment centers and commuting patterns. An extensive outreach process, including stakeholder interviews, surveys and public workshops, helped shape the vision for what public transportation should look like in the future.

### **The Plan: Crawl, Walk, Run**

There are a wide variety of approaches that recommended be taken in implementing public transportation service on the Eastern Shore. The plan ultimately selected represents the most prudent approach given existing levels of service and available resources.

The philosophy behind the implementation plan is "crawl, walk, run." The plan recognizes the need to build support for initiation of transit service. Activities in each stage build on the stage before. The plan takes advantage of existing resources initially and builds on their success in succeeding years. At each stage of the plan key decision variables are identified so decision makers can evaluate performance prior to committing to the next stage.

### **Getting the Plan Implemented**

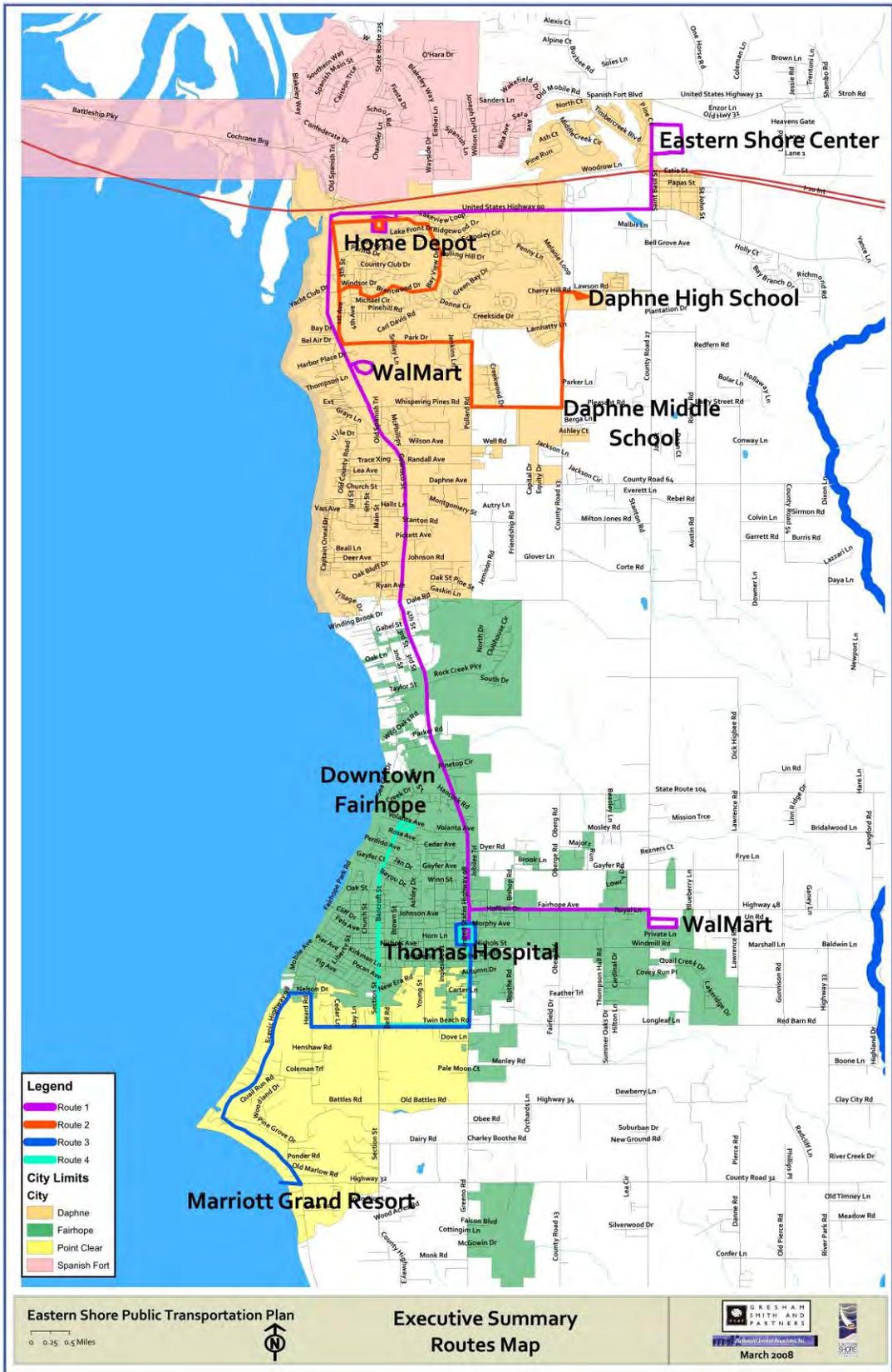
Putting the plan into action will require a strong commitment from local partners. Most significantly, this commitment will need to occur in the form of financial support. Federal sources will likely account for roughly half of the cost to purchase and maintain the system components, while passenger fares and State sources will account for a small share (ten to 20 percent combined). The remainder will need to come from local sources.

The required local financial commitment to initiate the plan has intentionally been set to a modest amount, but will progressively grow to more intensive stages as decision variables are met. The local financial commitment to implement the final stage is estimated at \$6.0 million.

There are a number of potential strategies for acquiring the necessary local funding, including sales taxes, lodging taxes, fuel taxes, property millage rates, impact fees, advertising and institutional agreements. The best local funding strategy should be determined as the result of collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders.

Service Strategy	Cost	Decision Variables
<b>Stage One: 'Crawl'</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire Transit Coordinator Establish CommuteSmart Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$0 start-up</li> <li>\$200,000 ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five employers active in ridesharing</li> <li>100 citizens in CommuteSmart database</li> <li>Local cooperative agreements</li> <li>Initial grant funds approved</li> </ul>
<b>Stage Two: 'Walk'</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate fixed route service</li> <li>6 AM to 8 PM</li> <li>60 minute frequency</li> <li>(30 minutes on Route 1 in peak)</li> <li>Limited service to Mobile</li> <li>Complimentary paratransit service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$2.5 million start-up</li> <li>\$2.6 million ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 10 employers promote service</li> <li>150 citizens in CommuteSmart database</li> <li>Annual patronage of 330,000 to 400,000 riders</li> </ul>
<b>Stage Three: 'Run'</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand fixed route service</li> <li>6 AM to 10 PM</li> <li>30 minute frequency</li> <li>Day long service to Mobile</li> <li>Complimentary paratransit service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$11.5 million start-up</li> <li>\$5.3 million ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued involvement by at least 15 employers</li> <li>200 citizens in CommuteSmart database</li> <li>At least 15 vanpools</li> <li>Annual patronage of 700,000 to 850,000 riders</li> </ul>

Local Financial Commitment	
<b>Stage One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$0 start-up</li> <li>\$40,000 ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Stage Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$0.5 million start-up</li> <li>\$1.2 million ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Stage Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$3.5 million start-up</li> <li>\$2.5 million ongoing</li> </ul>



## Background

### Project Understanding

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce sought professional services for assistance in the development of a proposed mass transit system plan for the three-city area (Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort, Alabama) and immediate unincorporated area known as the Eastern Shore.

The consultant team chosen was comprised of Gresham, Smith and Partners and McDonald Transit Associates Inc. The Eastern Shore Transportation Committee (ESTC) of the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Blueprint for Tomorrow oversaw the process and served as the Visionary Advisory Committee.

### Project Goals

At the initial meeting of the consultant team and the advisory committee, the project goal was clearly articulated. The goal of the study was to address the mass transit goals and objectives of the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay in order to protect and preserve the quality of life along the Eastern Shore. It included:

- A description of the study area and a review of any previous studies and examination existing routes.
- An examination of the existing transportation system, and identify current transit needs and future conditions based on interviews with stakeholders including, political, business, and civic leaders and others responsible for the area's transportation, and include needs identified through the public outreach effort.
- Identify travel patterns and congestion "hot spots", economic development and safety issues,
- A peer review and a summary of the purpose and need of the transit system based on a consensus of all stakeholders, as well as analysis of connection with existing routes to surrounding areas.

### Project Objectives

Objectives by definition should be focused on a result; objectives should be specific, they should be measurable and they should be attainable. The objectives of this work are to 1) Identify a public transit element that will be part of the fabric of the Eastern Shore transportation network; 2) Identify a public transit element that supports economic development; and 3) Identify a public transit element that has broad based stakeholder support.

## Current Demographics

Daphne, Fairhope and Spanish Fort lie at the eastern shore of Mobile Bay and within the largest county in the State of Alabama. It is an area that has recently experienced rising property values, low unemployment and continuing growth in business and population. It is also an area contending with increased congestion and challenges in recruiting employees. It is an area looking for solutions. An examination of the area demographics will help us understand some of the interactions. Understanding the demographics of the study area is important to understanding the area. The demographics for the resident population at the county and city level are the initial tabulation followed by an examination of employment patterns and the demographics of the vacation population. Countywide numbers have been updated since the 2000 Census; however, data elements at the City level have not been updated since the 2000 Census. When examining the resident population, we will see that among the three cities there is not great disparity.

### Baldwin County Population

Demographic review is best done in a tabular presentation. Basic building blocks of any demographic profile are age and income. Table 1: Baldwin County Population Characteristics give us a view of the entire population of Baldwin County in 2000 and again in 2005. The basic county data shows a population increase of 14.2%, a slight decrease in per capita family income and a marked increase of 27.7% in the Hispanic/Latino population.

**Table 1: Baldwin County Population Characteristics**

Baldwin Co. Demographics	2000	2005
Total Population	140,415	160,354
Male	49%	49.20%
Female	51%	50.80%
Median Age	39	40.2
< 5 year Old	6.10%	5.90%
18 to 65	75.60%	77.50%
>65	15.50%	15.80%
% White	87.10%	87.90%
% Black	10.30%	10.20%
% Hispanic /Latino	1.80%	2.30%
Average Household Size	2.94	2.89
Median Family Income	\$47,028	\$46,946
Per Capita Income	\$20,826	\$23,661
% in the Workforce	59.80%	62.50%

American Community Survey updates census figures. The last update was completed in 2005. The American Community Survey does not update at every geographic level and for Baldwin County the update is only completed at the county level. We can examine the changes at the county level and then examine the 2000 census data for the individual cities and make some very safe assumptions about the resident populations. We are primarily concerned with income levels, workforce status and age. When we do not see a dramatic change at the county level, there is no valid reason to assume or predict any dramatic change at the smaller geographic level.

### City of Daphne Population

As noted, the datasets for 2005 from the American Community Survey are not available at the city level but it is acceptable to use the county level percentages. The goal is an identification of trends in

population and income, not targeting individual household level data. We see that the City of Daphne comprises approximately 12% of the county population and has a median age of 37.5. The City of Daphne nearly mirrors the county demographics in all categories, diverging from the county demographics with a higher median family income, a smaller average household size and a larger percentage in the workforce. About 2.6% of families and 4.5% of individuals were below the poverty line.

**Table 2: City of Daphne Population Characteristics**

	Baldwin County	City of Daphne
<b>Demographics</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>
Total Population	140,415	16,581
Male	49%	48.70%
Female	51%	51.30%
Median Age	39	37.5
< 5 year Old	6.10%	6.50%
18 to 65	75.60%	74.40%
>65	15.50%	10.30%
% White	87.10%	85.30%
% Black	10.30%	12.40%
% Hispanic /Latino	1.80%	1.50%
Average Household Size	2.94	2.5
Median Family Income	\$47,028	\$61,563
Per Capita Income	\$20,826	\$25,597
% in the Workforce	59.80%	67.10%

### City of Fairhope Population

Fairhope demonstrates a climb in average family income, a sharp climb in persons over 65 years of age and a marked drop in the number of persons per household as compared to the whole of Baldwin County. The differences are magnified when looking at median age, per capita income, and percentage in the workforce. About 4.9% of families and 7.5% of individuals were below the poverty line. In general, in Fairhope we have an older and more affluent population with slightly fewer school aged children than either the countywide or the City of Daphne.

**Table 3: City of Fairhope Population Characteristics**

	Baldwin County	City of Fairhope
Demographics	2000	2000
Total Population	140,415	12,480
Male	49%	45.40%
Female	51%	54.60%
Median Age	39	44.5
< 5 year Old	6.10%	5.30%
18 to 65	75.60%	78.40%
>65	15.50%	23.70%
% White	87.10%	90.20%
% Black	10.30%	7.80%
% Hispanic /Latino	1.80%	1.00%
Average Household Size	2.94	2.27
Median Family Income	\$47,028	\$56,976
Per Capita Income	\$20,826	\$25,237
% in the Workforce	59.80%	53.20%

### City of Spanish Fort Population

The City of Spanish Fort demonstrates characteristics remarkably similar to Fairhope: smaller family size, high median family income and per capita income and a large portion of the population active in the workforce. Only about 2.7% of families and 2.8% of the individuals were below the poverty line.

**Table 4: City of Spanish Fort Population Characteristics**

	Baldwin County	City of Spanish Fort
Demographics	2000	2000
Total Population	140,415	5,423
Male	49%	47.60%
Female	51%	52.40%
Median Age	39	41.1
< 5 year Old	6.10%	5.80%
18 to 65	75.60%	73.80%
>65	15.50%	17.70%
% White	87.10%	93.60%
% Black	10.30%	4.40%
% Hispanic /Latino	1.80%	0.90%
Average Household Size	2.94	2.61
Median Family Income	\$47,028	\$67,844
Per Capita Income	\$20,826	\$27,081
% in the Workforce	59.80%	62.30%

## Observations

The demographics paint the picture of the City of Spanish Fort as having the more permanent population, with the largest average household size and the higher median family income. Daphne and Spanish Fort represent the upper spectrum of income when compared to the entire county. Population estimates released in March 2007 place Baldwin County's population at 169,162, a 4% increase in population countywide from the previous year. There is still a relatively low density of population when considering only the area residents, with Daphne the densest at 1,230 Persons/mi<sup>2</sup>. The City of Spanish Fort is the least dense at 844 Persons/mi<sup>2</sup>. Fairhope's density is in the area of 1,135 Persons/mi<sup>2</sup>, which is a somewhat denser environment but still not considered urban.

## Employment Patterns

### Daytime Population

The concept of the daytime population refers to the number of people, including workers, who are present in an area during normal business hours, in contrast to the resident population present during the evening and nighttime hours. Information on the expansion or contraction experienced by different communities between nighttime and daytime populations is important for many planning purposes, including those dealing with transportation.

**Table 5: Daytime Population**

City	Total resident population	Total workers working in the place	Total workers living in the place	Estimated daytime population	Workers who lived and worked in different places		Employment residence ratio
					Number	Percent	
	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) = (3)+(4)-(5)	(7)	(8) = (7)/(5)*100	(9) = (4)/(5)
Daphne city	16,581	5,779	8,248	14,112	6,278	76.1	0.70
Fairhope city	12,480	6,950	5,060	14,370	3,136	61.9	1.37
Spanish Fort city	5,423	1,539	2,509	4,453	2,041	81.4	0.61

Daytime population is meaningful in giving us a snapshot of the potential ridership market for work related transportation trips. For the Cities of Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort, we can see in Table 5: Daytime Population, the estimated daytime population actually decreases slightly in Daphne and Spanish Fort. This is because a majority of the working population in each city commutes elsewhere for employment each day.

### County to County Work Flow

The data in Table 5 indicate that a large share of workers leave their home city to reach their place of employment each day, but where are these commuters going? For insight into this question, we can examine the census county workflow information for a tabulation of the commuter origins. When looking at the information in Table 6, we see that the majority of the workers in Baldwin County (45,200 or 73 percent) come from within Baldwin County, so in targeting or prioritizing our transit investments the county is certainly the focus.

However, a significant share also commute to Mobile County (12,600, 20 percent); likewise, a significant amount of workers employed in Baldwin County come from Mobile County (3,400, seven percent). This indicates that there is market potential for commuter-oriented transit service across Mobile Bay; this market is currently served by Bayline.

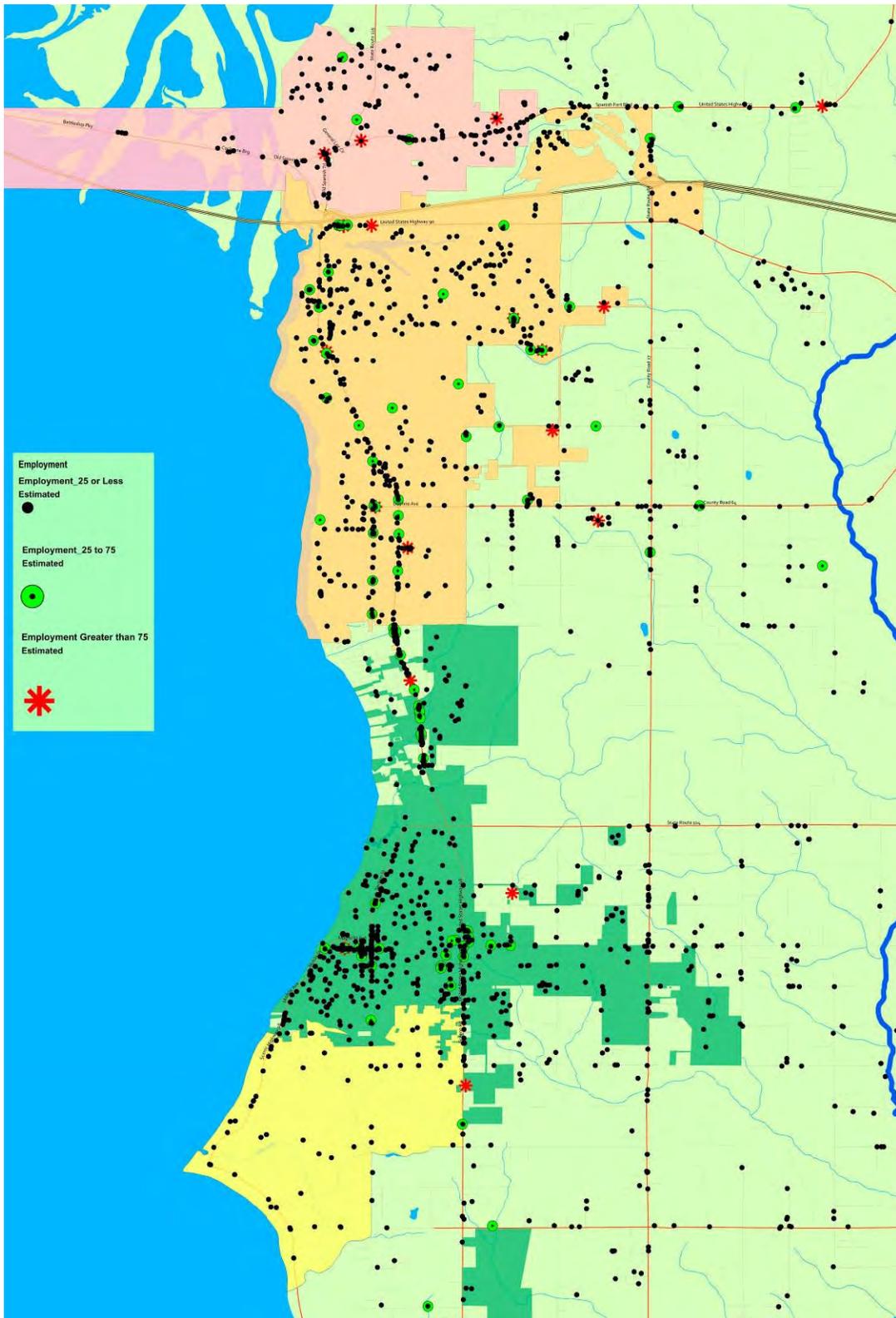
Table 6: County to County Work Flow

<b>Residence County to Workplace County Flows for Alabama Sorted by Residence State and County</b>			
<b>Residence State- County Name</b>	<b>Workplace State-County Name</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of All Workers</b>
Baldwin Co. AL	Baldwin Co. AL	45,208	73%
Baldwin Co. AL	Mobile Co. AL	12,615	20%
Baldwin Co. AL	Escambia Co. FL	1,695	3%
Baldwin Co. AL	Escambia Co. AL	527	1%
	<b><i>Commuting From</i></b>	<b><i>62,219</i></b>	
<b>Residence County to Workplace County Flows for Alabama Sorted by Workplace State and County</b>			
<b>Residence State- County Name</b>	<b>Workplace State-County Name</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of All Workers</b>
Baldwin Co. AL	Baldwin Co. AL	45,208	87%
Mobile Co. AL	Baldwin Co. AL	3,425	7%
Escambia Co. FL	Baldwin Co. AL	1,975	4%
Escambia Co. AL	Baldwin Co. AL	752	1%
	<b><i>Commuting To</i></b>	<b><i>52,198</i></b>	

### Major Employment Centers

In the process of identifying sources of major employment within the boundaries of the three cities, we acquired the longitudinal location data of major employers from the US Census Bureau. We see an expected concentration of employment along the major routes. Figure 1 shows the major employment centers in the Eastern Shore Area.

Figure 1: Major Employment Centers

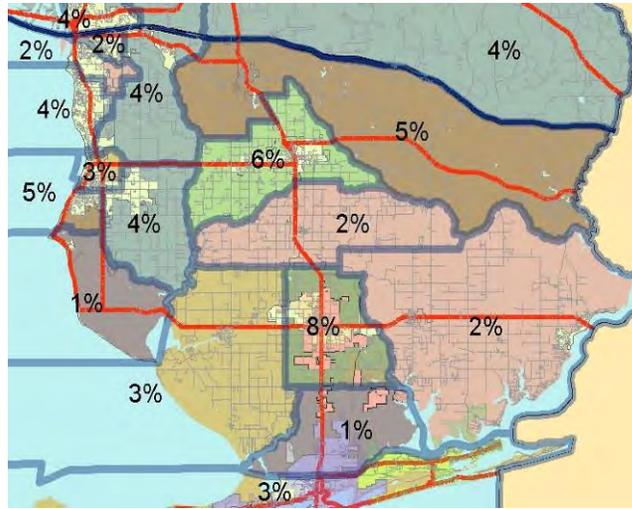


## Automobile Ownership

We have established the patterns of travel for Baldwin County and we have examined the basic demographics of age and income. We are cognizant of the employment concentrations along major state routes and we will examine the current traffic patterns along these routes.

The 2000 Census tabulated the following statistics for auto ownership. The City of Daphne has 4% of households with zero autos and Fairhope and Spanish Fort have 5% and 4% respectively. From this we can estimate that the greatest mobility challenges are within Fairhope and Daphne. Spanish Fort has less mobility problems.

**Figure 2: Zero Auto Ownership**



## Transportation System Characteristics

### Highway System

Routes under State jurisdiction have been widened and improved. Those under municipal jurisdictions have not kept pace with the demand for access. The major roadway system is important to provide access for vacationers and for commuting workers.

Figure 4 identifies principal roadways that serve the Eastern Shore of Baldwin County. The major roadway network in the study area is served by two north-south arterials – US 98 and SR 181/CR 27 – spaced between two and 2.5 miles apart. South of Fairhope, Alt US 98 provides an additional north-south route along the shore line of Mobile Bay.

Interstate 10 runs along the northern boundary of the study area. Three arterials provide east-west movement in the study area US 90 and CR 64 in Daphne and CR 104 in Fairhope, each spaced three to four miles apart.

Beyond this arterial framework, there is little connectivity among places in the study area. As a result, virtually all vehicles must use one of the north-south or east-west facilities described above at some point during their trip.

North-south movements are the most congested. In particular, the US 98 corridor currently exceeds capacity in some locations (see Table 7). Planned roadway improvements to address north-south vehicular flow include the widening of SR 181 from US 90 to US 98 and a new CR 13 alignment that extends from US 90 to US 98.

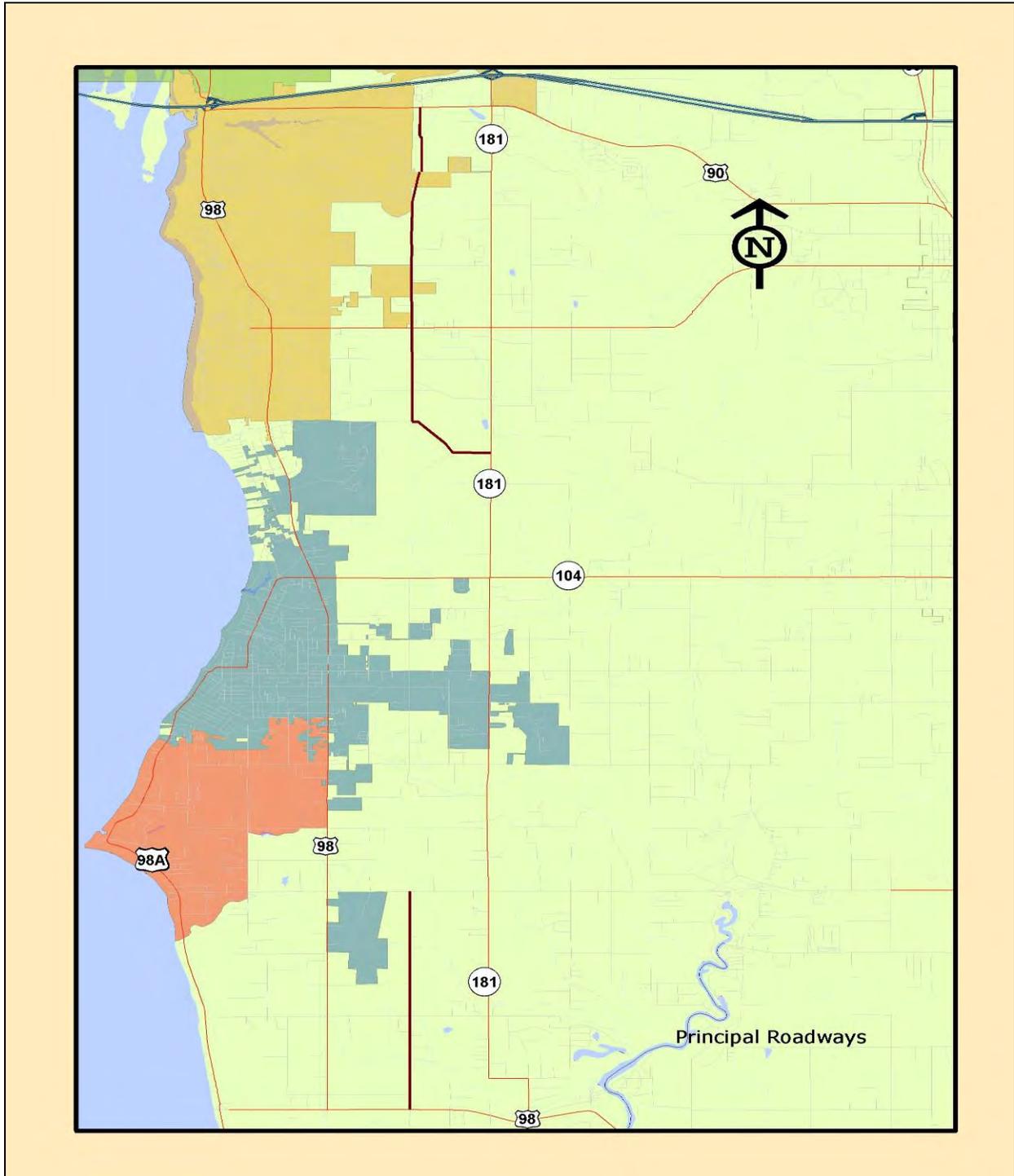
**Figure 3: Intersection of U.S. 98 at I-10**



**Table 7: Principal Roadways that Serve the Eastern Shore**

Road	Description	Type	Daily Volume	Capacity	Volume to Capacity Ratio
Interstate 10	Between US 98 and CR 181	Four lane interstate	47,700	68,000	0.70
US 98	North of I-10	Four lane arterial	30,100	33,900	0.89
	South of I-10	Four lane arterial	41,500	33,900	1.22
	North of CR 64	Four lane arterial	32,870	33,900	0.97
	South of CR 64	Four lane arterial	22,100	33,900	0.65
US 90	East of US 98	Four lane arterial	19,280	33,900	0.57
	West of CR 181	Two lane arterial	11,760	20,000	0.59
CR 181	South of US 90	Two lane collector	13,300	16,600	0.80

Figure 4: Principal Roadways



## **Transit System**

The current Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System (BRATS) provides a combination of services throughout the entire expanse of Baldwin County. Transit service combines general public demand response service with specially contracted service. The service is structured to meet the needs of the county by assigning transit vehicles by geographic area of the county. All routes convene at the BRATS office in Robertsdale at scheduled times during the day to transfer passengers to vehicles that serve other areas of the county.

BRATS provides weekday service year-round, with additional service in the summer peak season. Special event service is provided at various times during the year. Service on the weekend is limited to the contracted employment routes. The Eastern Shore Express was initiated in 2001 to serve Spanish Fort, Daphne and Fairhope. Buses leave Spanish Fort and Fairhope simultaneously three times a day - at 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The fare is \$3.00 for a roundtrip and 24-hour notice is required.

In addition to the regular BRATS service package, Bayline, a route linking the Eastern Shore to Mobile, is operated. Service operates several times in the morning and afternoon on weekdays only. There is no service in the middle of the day. There are two stops in downtown Mobile where BRATS passengers can access employers and businesses or transfer to WAVE buses for connections to other parts of Mobile. This is a very limited service that is designed to get employees from Mobile onto the Eastern Shore and vice versa.

The current system meets as many needs as possible within the constraints of the service type and budget and is organized in a way that enables it to be a fairly efficient service. BRATS, however, does not have the resources to meet all the needs of the community, including those of the summer and snowbird season visitors. The contracted employment routes are the strength of the system and allow service to be provided in a highly cost effective manner that simply cannot be provided by a fixed route service. It might be possible to convert some of these routes to vanpool operations and free up BRATS resources.

This Public Transportation Plan conservatively makes cost assumptions based on a ground-up, turnkey transit system. However, BRATS could be considered a possible partner in establishing an Eastern Shore transit system in a more cost effective way. There was a willingness to discuss this by County officials.

## **Pedestrian Facilities**

Pedestrian access is crucial for a proper public transportation system. Pedestrian access, while not completely inadequate, is also not sufficient for a comprehensive transit system. Our automobiles take us from our front door to our destination parking spots. The transit rider accomplishes this beginning and ending access by foot.

With the exception of a few locations on US 98, there are no sidewalks on major corridors in the study area. Further, there are no walking facilities for pedestrians between the road and adjacent land uses. The lack of pedestrian facilities on major transportation corridors can be considered a major impediment to riding transit in the study area.

## **Land Use**

Current land use patterns and trends within the Eastern Shore presents an additional challenge in providing public transportation. With the exception of downtown Fairhope, most places in the study area have developed to exclusively accommodate the automobile. This means separate, isolated land uses, buildings set back distant from the road and with vast amounts of parking. As found in many communities, the land use policies that have encouraged the disconnect between land use and the transportation network still exist.

The transportation network for the three cities is built around personal automobile travel. And personal automobile travel is the means of conveyance for 94% of the vacation population, the majority of the working population and most of the residents. There simply is not a viable option to

replace the single occupancy vehicle. This is one of the largest challenges to implement a successful fixed route transit system in the Eastern Shore.

## Stakeholder Input

An integral part of the study effort was an aggressive and proactive public input process. Efforts were made to reach out to a wide variety of audiences. These included:

- Elected and appointed officials
- Business leaders
- Community decision makers
- Individuals and organizations with a stake in the success of the community
- Residents in general

Interviews were held in person and via telephone with stakeholders, including various business, community, and social service agency representatives who have a direct stake in the success of transportation initiatives in the Eastern Shore cities of Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort. It also included elected and appointed officials charged with policy and financing decisions about any services that may be proposed. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 and a list of stakeholders that completed the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

The stakeholder input sessions were designed to glean the following information about transportation in the three cities:

- Attitudes, perceptions and awareness of public transit options currently available
- Specific gaps in the current transportation service
- What, if any, are the public transportation needs of the area
- Who would be the likely users of public transportation
- What barriers exist that would prohibit support of a public transit system

The majority, 63%, of the stakeholders interviewed stated that not all of the transportation needs are able to be met in the area by BRATS. The specific gaps included:

- Not enough capacity of the BRATS service to meet all needs
- Not enough routes offered
- Bayline connection to Mobile is not an option for seniors because of transfer limitations and requirements
- Service to Mobile and Pensacola airports

According to the stakeholders, BRATS has a good reputation and does a good job with the resources it has. Although it was clear that wait times can be a problem for BRATS patrons; BRATS is certainly seen as a great benefit to the community for those who need it.

The stakeholders, in general, see a need for public transportation primarily to respond to the population growth and as a mobility resource for seniors and lower-wage workers. Congestion and fuel prices were repeatedly referenced as reasons for improving public transportation. To a lesser degree, disabled residents, students, commuters, and the general public were cited as potential users of public transportation services. The environmental benefits of public transit, as well as the global issue of being “walkable” communities, were also raised by a few of the stakeholders.

Stakeholders responded with a long list of destinations that made sense to serve with public transit. Those included, specifically, the Grand Hotel, Mobile, Pensacola, Eastern Shore Center, Jubilee Center, Magnolia Trace Center, 5 Rivers Center, Weeks Bay, and, generally, medical complexes, retail,

downtown Fairhope, grocery stores, government services, large employers, and fast food employment.

Barriers to implementation of expanded public transit services include cost of services and funding, lack of ridership, negative community perception, potential inefficiency due to large area with low density, and lack of community interest. By far, the most often cited barrier was the cost and funding issue. The stakeholders overwhelmingly stated that the community currently would not support a local tax to fund public transit service. The interviews reinforced that potential benefits of expanded public transit services need to be clearly justified to both the community and the policy-makers in order to have support.

Six community input sessions were conducted for the information-gathering stage of this project. Two were held in each of the three cities with over 65 attendees total. The comments received at the meetings mirrored those of the stakeholders. The public meetings broadened to discussions concerning global transportation issues, such as building walkable communities, bicycle trails/amenities, building sidewalks, and status of road construction projects.

The concerns of major stakeholders in the study were assembled to understand the level of support among area leaders, employers, workers and residents. This was accomplished through several methods that combined interview, web based surveys, on-board questionnaires and the review of the results from previously administered surveys.

## **Summary**

The stakeholder and public input process brought to the forefront specific transportation needs of the community and the feasibility of expanding public transit services. With few exceptions, there is an obvious and growing need for public transportation for seniors and lower-wage workers, presumably persons without access to a vehicle or that cannot meet the rising cost of fuel.

The current transportation services provided by BRATS are seen as beneficial, but not sufficient to meet the needs of the communities. Support for expanded services is mixed. Although in concept, stakeholders agree that service is needed, specifically for certain groups of residents, they do not agree that local funding, either through a local tax or through the general funds of the cities, would be acceptable. This presents an obvious dilemma that needs to be resolved by community leaders before moving forward with any type of implementation strategy.

## **Developing the Options**

In considering the options available for transit service the consulting team reviewed the available demographic data, the survey responses and stakeholder interviews to determine the starting point for developing system options. A peer analysis was completed to determine information about services similar to those proposed here for Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort.

## **Peer Review**

A peer analysis was completed as part of this study to determine information about services that are similar to those proposed here for Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort. The peer review data provided good information on the average cost per hour, cost per passenger and farebox recovery that can be expected in service such as this. Please note that the peers were selected on a number of factors, with an emphasis on those agencies that report data annually to the National Transit Database administered by the Federal Transit Administration. This is important because it allows the proposed services to be compared on an "apples-to-apples" basis. All data reported to NTD is bound by specific definitions and parameters, making comparison extremely valuable.

The peers selected for this study included:

- Island Transit (Galveston, Texas)

- Sarasota County Area Transit (Florida)
- Collier Area Transit (Florida)
- VOTRAN (Volusia County, Florida)
- Coast Transit Authority (Mississippi)
- Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (Florida)

The size of these agencies varies widely; however, they were selected primarily because of the large tourist component in each of these systems. By focusing on indicators, such as cost per revenue hour, the team was able to equalize the data to make it valuable to this study.

Of particular interest in this study is the type of funding used by each of the peers. The following tables show information on the operations funding sources for each of the selected peer agencies. The funding sources vary widely between agencies. Each of the systems receives some level of federal funding, ranging from 1% for Collier to 46% for Coast Transit Authority and Pinellas. Five of the six systems receive a substantial amount of dedicated local funds, including both general funds and other dedicated fund sources. Two of the six agencies have local property taxes dedicated to funding transit, as well as two having a dedicated funding source from state gas tax receipts.

Each of the systems has a mix of funding sources, including federal, state and local. This mix allows the systems to capitalize on available federal and state assistance and minimize local contributions to the extent possible. However, those systems which do have dedicated, sustained local fund sources, such as a property tax, are able to more effectively plan service in the long term because of the relative fund stability. In addition, this type of dedicated source promotes a sense of ownership in the community. This allows the system to be successful both in operations, by having adequate funding, and public image, by promoting community ownership and pride.

## **Peer Funding**

These tables display the mix of funding sources for each of the peer review systems. These tables identify funding sources and the percentage contribution to total system expenses.

**Table 8: Summary of Funding Sources**

Agency	Directly Generated Funds			Federal Funds		State Funds		Local Funds		Total
	Fare Revenues	Other	Dedicated and Other	UAF	Other Federal	General Revenue	Dedicated and Other	General Revenue	Dedicated and Other	
Island Transit	\$229,813	\$285,762	\$0	\$914,321	\$374,080	\$333,712	\$0	\$639,880	\$0	\$2,777,568
Sarasota County	\$800,888	\$28,201	\$0	\$1,601,589	\$0	\$0	\$2,946,295	\$0	\$5,924,542	\$11,301,515
Collier Area Transit	\$655,196	\$0	\$0	\$125,700	\$96,004	\$0	\$1,370,533	\$0	\$2,036,942	\$4,284,375
VOTRAN	\$4,520,872	\$231,087	\$0	\$1,304,978	\$0	\$0	\$2,940,404	\$7,399,431	\$0	\$16,396,772
Coast Transit Authority	\$687,932	\$157,333	\$0	\$1,072,652	\$576,641	\$67,106	\$0	\$1,040,035	\$0	\$3,601,699
Pinellas Suncoast Transit	\$8,939,519	\$1,768,610	\$27,987,251	\$0	\$287,180	\$4,472,412	\$0	\$363,811	\$0	\$43,818,783

**Table 9: Summary of Funding Sources – Percent of Total Expenses**

Agency	Directly Generated Funds			Federal Funds		State Funds		Local Funds	
	Fare Revenues	Other	Dedicated and Other	UAF*	Other Federal	General Revenue	Dedicated and Other	General Revenue	Dedicated and Other
Island Transit	15%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	32%	0%	48%
Sarasota County Area Transit	28%	1%	0%	8%	0%	0%	18%	45%	0%
Collier Area Transit	20%	4%	64%	0%	1%	10%	0%	1%	0%
VOTRAN	7%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	26%	0%	52%
Coast Transit Authority	19%	4%	0%	30%	16%	2%	0%	29%	0%
Pinellas Suncoast Transit	8%	10%	0%	33%	13%	12%	0%	23%	0%

\*UAF: Urbanized Area Formula funds

**Table 10: Peer Review Federal Funds**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Urban FTA Capital - spent on Operations</b>	<b>Other USDOT Grant</b>	<b>Capital Program Funds</b>	<b>Other FTA Operating Assistance</b>	<b>Other Federal Funds</b>
Island Transit	X			X	
Sarasota County Area Transit	X		X		
Collier Area Transit	X				
VOTRAN	X	X			X
Coast Transit Authority	X				
Pinellas Suncoast Transit		X	X		X

**Table 11: Peer Review Dedicated State Taxes**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Income Tax</b>	<b>Sales Tax</b>	<b>Property Tax</b>	<b>Gas Tax</b>	<b>Other Tax</b>
Island Transit					
Sarasota County Area Transit				X	
Collier Area Transit					X
VOTRAN				X	
Coast Transit Authority					
Pinellas Suncoast Transit					

**Table 12: Peer Review Dedicated Local Taxes**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Income Tax</b>	<b>Sales Tax</b>	<b>Property Tax</b>	<b>Gas Tax</b>	<b>Other Tax</b>
Island Transit					
Sarasota County Area Transit			X		X
Collier Area Transit					
VOTRAN					
Coast Transit Authority					
Pinellas Suncoast Transit			X		

## Funding Strategies

The Team has approached the task of identifying revenues to support the proposed service with the assumption that the cities of Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort have limited funds to commit to the operating and capital costs of a new system. Therefore, the revenue model presented has been designed to maximize revenues from sources other than the participating cities, in order to limit the local share required.

Transit services, especially if they are to be adequately funded and safely and attractively operated, require substantial and consistent public financial support. In general, fares from transit services, especially in smaller cities and rural areas can only be counted on to generate a small percentage of a transit system's operating expense. For instance, the peer transit systems that were identified for comparison have a range of 9-22% of operating costs being recovered from fares. It typically takes a system up to three years to stabilize in terms of consistent ridership and fare revenue trends; hence, the new service would probably have a lower farebox recovery at the outset and then increase to a stable level over the next few years.

The remaining percentage, or in essence the required subsidy, is the highest per user for demand response services, such as BRATS, and is less per user for scheduled fixed route systems, but can be significant depending on the level of service operated. It should be noted, however, that reducing frequency of service to save costs can also reduce ridership, possibly below acceptable levels for continued operation. Importantly, operating expenses are recurring and tend to increase after a while. Most transit systems rely on some form of assistance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and/or from state governments to help with the cost of operating service. Because capital expenses are not as regular and are more tangible, the FTA, and states in general, are more generous with capital assistance than with support for operating costs. Nonetheless, there are ways to infuse transit system operating budgets with some support from the federal and state governments.

### Federal

Federal funds for public transit projects in Baldwin County are controlled by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The following summaries outline the various Federal programs available to the cities to fund the recommended transit system.

### Capital Assistance

#### FTA Discretionary Program (Section 5309)

The Bus and Bus-Related Facilities program provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses and related equipment and facilities. Federal transit funds are available to State or local governmental authorities as recipients and other public transportation providers as sub-recipients for up to 80 percent of the net project capital cost. There are no minimum or maximum funding limits for applications under this notice; however, FTA intends to fund as many meritorious projects as possible. FTA may allocate less than the total amount requested in the application.

FTA will give special consideration to applications that address priority areas that FTA has established for the FY 2007 discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities program. These priority areas include Fleet replacement needs that cannot be met with formula funds; fleet expansion that allows significant service increase and/or improvements and/or operating efficiencies; facility construction or renovation to support increased service or introduction of clean fuels; strategic investments in rural areas where formula funding is inadequate and the purchase of clean fuel vehicles or inter-modal terminal projects that include intercity bus providers.

Eligible capital projects include the acquisition of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers,

inter-modal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of replacement vehicle and passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs, accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers and shop and garage equipment.

Competition for these discretionary funds can be expected to be robust. FTA will receive many times more projects than it can fund. Success in acquiring these funds will be a partnership between a good project design and an aggressive education campaign aimed at FTA and policy leaders who can have influence.

#### FTA Section 5309 Capital Investment Grant Program

Project under this category of funds are known as Small Starts. Small Starts projects are defined as projects requesting under \$75 million in Section 5309 Capital Investment Grant funding with a total cost of less than \$250 million; both amounts are in year of expenditure dollars. FTA has scaled the planning and project development analysis to the size and complexity of the proposed projects. To this end, FTA has also defined a class of projects that are very simple, low-cost and demonstrably effective called Very Small Starts projects within the Small Starts Program. Very Small Starts will qualify for an even simpler and expedited evaluation and rating process.

In addition to the cost and funding limits specified above, a Small Starts project must either (a) meet the definition of a fixed guide way for at least 50 percent of the project length in the peak period, (b) be a new fixed guide way project, or (c) be new corridor-based bus project with all of the following minimum elements:

- Substantial transit stations,
- Traffic signal priority/pre-emption, to the extent, if any, that there are traffic signals on the corridor,
- Low-floor vehicles or level boarding,
- Branding of the proposed service, and
- 10 minute peak/15 minute off peak headways or better while operating at least 14 hours per weekday.

These elements have been identified because experience shows that they represent key features which contribute to transportation and economic development benefits. Further, research has shown that the service frequencies represent the maximum wait times for which passengers are likely to arrive randomly rather than having to consult schedules.

Very Small Starts projects are simple, low-risk projects that, based on their characteristics and the context in which they are proposed to operate, qualify for a highly simplified project evaluation and rating process. Small Starts projects that qualify as Very Small Starts are bus, rail, or ferry projects that possess the general elements described above, but which include other attributes which distinguish them from Small Starts. Very Small Starts must include the following features:

- Substantial transit stations,
- Traffic signal priority/pre-emption, to the extent, if any, that there are traffic signals on the corridor,
- Low-floor vehicles or level boarding,
- Branding of the proposed service,
- 10 minute peak/15 minute off peak headways or better while operating at least 14 hours per weekday (not required for commuter rail or ferries),
- Are in corridors with existing riders who will benefit from the proposed project that exceed 3,000 per average weekday, and

- Have a total capital cost less than \$50 million (including all project elements) and less than \$3 million per mile, exclusive of rolling stock.

If a project does not meet all of these criteria, it will be evaluated as a Small Starts project. All of this guidance is available on the FTA website at

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning\\_environment\\_222.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning_environment_222.html)

#### ALDOT and Flexible Federal Funds.

The SAFETEA-LU legislation contains provisions that provide flexible funding opportunities to state and local governments, allowing them the option of using some Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds for transit projects and vice versa. Funds can be transferred from FHWA to Sections 5307, 5310, 5311, 5313(b) and the Interstate Substitute Program to support transit projects.

The funds transferred from FHWA can be drawn from the following sources:

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) and National Highway System Funds (NHS), may be used for all projects eligible for funds under current FTA programs excluding operating assistance at an 80%/20% matching ratio and while these Highway funds are eligible for transit use, they are limited to the construction and improvements of fixed guide ways, the purchase of rolling stock (buses) and other transportation equipment, and any other project eligible under FTA's Section 5309 capital grant program.

#### Operating Assistance

##### FTA Section 5311 Rural and Small Urban Assistance.

The Eastern Shore area currently falls into this funding program category. This program (49 U.S.C. 5311) provides formula funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in areas of less than 50,000 populations. It is apportioned in proportion to each State's non-urbanized population. Funding may be used for capital, operating, State administration, and project administration expenses. Each state prepares an annual program of projects, which must provide for fair and equitable distribution of funds within the states, including Indian reservations, and must provide for maximum feasible coordination with transportation services assisted by other Federal sources. Projects to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, may be funded at 90 percent Federal match. The maximum FTA share for operating assistance is 50 percent of the net operating costs. Capital projects may be funded at 80 percent of the cost.

##### FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Formula Assistance.

These funds can be used at a 20% local match requirement for the cost of maintaining (but not operating) FTA-financed equipment. In other words, the cost of maintenance personnel and outsourced maintenance is recoverable at 80%. For purposes of the budget calculations, our team has estimated capital funds available based on our estimate of actual maintenance expenses. Depending on how the service operations are procured by the cities, additional revenues may be available from this source. If the cities competitively contract for service, FTA rules permit claiming a negotiated percentage of total expenses as a basis for reimbursement, which may be more than that outlined in the budget models. There are limited Section 5307 funds available and BRATS currently accesses those funds for its service in Lillian, but service in the Eastern Shore area would not be eligible for Section 5307 funding. This funding category will be available to the Eastern Shore area when population reaches 50,000 in a census.

#### FTA Section 5316 JARC Program Funds.

These funds may be used, if approved, to underwrite the cost of transit services designed to connect customers to employment sites. These funds require the preparation and approval of a JARC plan approved by ALDOT and SARPC. Job Access Reverse Commute Funds would be eligible for the services proposed in this report. This fund source is intended to be a temporary source of aid to get a project started and is only available for three years. After that time, the cities must identify an alternate funding strategy for the service.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program assists states and localities in developing new or expanded transportation services that connect welfare recipients and other low income persons to jobs and other employment related services. Job Access projects are targeted at developing new or expanded transportation services such as shuttles, vanpools, new bus routes, connector services to mass transit, and guaranteed ride home programs for welfare recipients and low income persons. Reverse Commute projects provide transportation services to suburban employment centers from urban, rural and other suburban locations for all populations.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program is intended to establish a coordinated regional approach to job access challenges. All projects funded under this program must be the result of a collaborative planning process that includes states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), transportation providers, agencies administering Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare to Work (WtW) funds, human services agencies, public housing, child care organizations, employers, states and affected communities and other stakeholders.

#### "Job Access" Challenges:

Must be a coordinated effort to meet the needs of the low income wage earners specifically and large coordination efforts such as this may take from three to twelve months, depending on the number of agencies and issues involved, to reach agreement on the service characteristics and other program initiatives, such as agency-funded transit passes for individuals.

#### "Reverse Commute" Challenges:

Coordination with human services agencies to determine level of need for operating service from Mobile and or Pensacola to the Eastern Shore will be difficult. Once levels of need are determined; a cost-benefit analysis must be done for operation during non-traditional service hours, which typically produce lower ridership levels.

#### FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Funds.

These funds are intended to provide funding for new public transportation services, and alternatives to public transportation services, for people with disabilities, beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The intent of this program is to encourage the consolidation of human service transportation services.

### Observations Federal Funding

The stakeholders reviewing this report know all too well that federal funds bring federal requirements. And each and every federal program has a set of program guidelines that must be followed. An element of this federal process was successfully navigated when The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission completed the "Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan: for the Alabama Counties of Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia", in October 2006. The document enables the BRATS system to pursue funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute program or the New Freedom Programs. Neither of these programs will fund the public transportation envisioned for the Eastern Shore.

The BRATS system is currently funded through FTA's Section 5311 program (Rural Transportation) and receives modest growth if and when there is an increase in this federal formula program. BRATS has also been successful in securing some Section 5307 funding for transportation services to Lillian and has been successful in obtaining a piece of the very small pot of funding available Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC).

## **State**

There is a current Alabama Attorney General opinion in circulation that interprets current Alabama state law as prohibiting the revenue from gasoline and motor fuels taxes from being expended on anything but roads and bridges. This means that the transfer of federal funding to a local area would require that the local jurisdiction provide the required matching fund.

## **Capital Assistance**

Almost any of the federal transportation funds made available to the State of Alabama can be used for capital acquisition of transit equipment or the construction of transit facilities. This funding would require a 20% local match. Therefore a project costing \$250,000 could be funded with \$200,000 in federal funds and \$50,000 in local funds.

## **Operating Assistance**

There is not any State of Alabama funding available for transit operating expenses.

## **Local**

The local funding option is the most probable solution for the Eastern Shore. The consulting team has identified the federal sources of funding and these are more suitable for the capital funding of the public transportation system. Those sources will be limited and difficult to access. The analysis of local sources is an order of magnitude examination for the existing government revenue sources and their ability to fund transit operations. It is very much a political decision as to which of the sources would be an acceptable and viable funding solution.

## **Locally Generated Revenues**

### **Operating Revenues**

As mentioned initially in this section, transit fares can only be counted on to generate a relatively small portion of the total operating budget. Fares are also subject to price elasticity in that attempts to maximize fare revenue as a portion of operating expense by raising rates can have a negative affect on total ridership and return. For the purposes of the budget estimates, fares have been set at \$1.00 each way for the general public. The model does assume some reduced fares are to be offered to qualifying senior citizens and people with disabilities, as this strategy is required under FTA grant programs. Of course, establishment of fare levels is a policy decision for the Cities. Many factors need to be considered in setting fare levels. These include not only revenue generation but incentives for ridership, promotion of local businesses, improved access, reduction in congestion, providing more relaxed travel for visitors and many others.

Advertising and other self-generated funds. Advertising inside and outside buses at bus stops and at shelters can generate some revenue. It is difficult to estimate the net return for the system of such a program in Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort. Often the success of advertising programs in other communities is dictated by the current cost of other forms of advertising locally, and the level of sales effort expended to get a program started. Special consideration should be given to the possibility of exterior advertising on the vehicles linking the service to the tourism industry as well. For purposes of the budget estimates we are assuming a small cash return for advertising as part of operating revenue.

## Institutional Fare Purchases

Direct fare arrangements with large employers and resorts. A promising but challenging source of revenue is the concept of prepaid fare arrangements. Many transit entities operating in communities with large employers can negotiate pre-paid or contractual arrangements to benefit their employees. In the case of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, this type of agreement can be arranged with the large resorts as well to benefit their guests.

In general, two basic types of agreements can be reached. First, a pre-paid arrangement based on either the number of employees at a certain cost per employee or guest. The second type of agreement is based on a per-ride cost. For this option, the system would need to record the number of either employees or guests for each agreement and bill the employer/resort on an agreed-upon basis at a per-ride cost.

Remarkably simple, these programs eliminate the barrier of a fare that can exist in trying a bus or tram system initially and can lead to steady ridership. They also offer Federal tax reduction advantages to employers and employees. The obvious benefits to the community include reduced congestion and parking problems, better air quality, and the additional benefit of making transportation more accessible to a broader range of people, including residents and tourists, not just those with ready access to automobiles.

Implementation of these types of fare arrangements will require a fairly intensive effort to market the concept. Our budget does not include any provisions for this type of arrangement; however, it can be a significant source of revenue, as well as community support, for the system. Our team's recommendation is to aggressively pursue this option as a means to attract ridership and build ownership of the system by area employers and resort facilities. This concept could follow the pursuit and development of the area wide carpool and vanpool program.

## Lodging Taxes

A related source of revenue could be municipally adopted surcharges on visitors. For example, the Cities could investigate the legality of instituting a modest bed tax. Such a tax could generate a significant income stream at a relatively low rate given the large number of visitor nights booked in the area. Lodging taxes are well used in the area. The State of Alabama collects a 2% lodging tax throughout Baldwin County. Revenue as reported by the Alabama Department of Revenue exceeded \$9,795,000 million in 2006 based on a 2% tax rate. The Cities of Daphne (4-5%) and Fairhope (4%) also collect a lodging tax that is administered by each of the cities. The 2007 lodging tax revenues reported received for Daphne and Fairhope were \$573,771 and \$420,023, respectively.

A county lodging fee of 1% could yield approximately \$4,800,000 per annum, and a 1% increase in each city would yield approximately \$1,800,000 per annum. Such a tax has the advantage of shifting the burden to visitors who will gain a lot from the new system and reducing the amount local residents have to tax themselves to get the service and would provide **\$6,600,000** for public transportation.

## Gasoline Taxes

Gasoline taxes are also collected at the local level throughout Alabama and are typically used for roadway improvements. In Baldwin County there is a tax of .05¢ per gallon, in Daphne it is .01¢, but there is no gasoline tax in either Fairhope or Spanish Fort.

## Property Taxes

An increase in property taxes could be the least popular of all proposals. Recent changes requiring an annual reappraisal of property values has raised awareness of this particular revenue source. The use of property taxes is a very efficient method of spreading the cost of providing transit services. The table below shows the relative tax revenues generated from 5.0

to 15.0 mils of property tax for the year 2007 in each city. The information is assembled from the Alabama Department of Revenue site and City budgets.

**Table 13: Property Tax Revenues**

	Daphne	Fairhope	Spanish Fort
Current Millage	15 mils	15 mils	5 mils
2007 Property Tax Revenue	\$4,428,080	\$4,723,184	\$353,618
1 mil	\$295,205	\$314,879	\$70,724

So an additional one mil of property tax levied would generate \$680,808 from the three cities as a revenue source to support transit.

### Sales Taxes

An increase in sales tax is usually the least opposed of all potential tax increases. There is the perception that it is "paid" by everyone, so no one user group is exempted or taxed higher. It is an incremental assessment and possibly less painful to watch it pass through one's hands on a daily basis. The table below shows the revenue generated from the sales tax in Daphne and the utility revenue in Fairhope.

**Table 14: Sales Tax Revenues**

	Daphne	Fairhope	Spanish Fort
Sales Tax	2.50%	0.00%	1.50%
Sales Tax in Police Jurisdiction	1.25%	0.00%	0.75%
FY 2007 Sales Tax Revenue	\$11,871,233 (1)	\$4,020,046 (2)	(3)

Notes:

(1) This includes sales and use tax

(2) Fairhope does not invoke a sales tax; however, they transfer a portion of the utility tax revenue to this category

(3) Sales tax revenue information was requested from Spanish Fort and was not received prior to publication of this report

### Impact Fees

Impact fees were allowed during the 2006 Alabama Legislative Session. The revenue from the funds may be expended on storm water, drainage, or flood control; roads and bridges; capital expenses for law enforcement, fire, EMS, park and recreation, and schools. The legislation prevents the city or counties from levying impact fees outside of this act and caps the fee at 1% of the value of completion. There must be a plan in place that demonstrates the maximum supportable impact fee.

### Other

Foundation and Philanthropic organization support is a possible but unreliable source of funding and would be better suited for pursuit by advocacy groups for specific client uses. Not identified specifically in our budgets, this type of support is sometimes used to supplement local contributions, especially on behalf of persons with limited or fixed income or people with disabilities. The cities could assist these groups in the preparation of required grants applications.

It is important to note that partnership with BRATS could potentially create some operational efficiencies that would offset some of the funding requirements associated with this Plan. However, any potential funding offset would be relatively minimal and a local commitment of funds would still be a necessity.

## Implementation Strategy

After synthesizing the data in the previous chapters, it is concluded that a transit system can be supported and is justified. The selected options that were described above are crafted into a recommended implementation plan. Each potential service is described in detail. The opportunities and challenges of each service are also presented. The recommended implementation plan is presented in stages. The timing of the stages depends on the success of previous implementation steps and local response to the service. The plan is supported by financial estimates.

### Service Alternatives

Several service alternatives are recommended for inclusion in the package for the Eastern Shore. There are described in detail below.

#### BRATS Service

The present public transportation system, Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System (BRATS), combines general public demand response service with specially contracted service. The service is structured to meet the needs of the county by splitting vehicles by geographic area of the county. All routes convene at the BRATS office in Robertsedale at scheduled times during the day to transfer passengers to vehicles that serve other areas of the county.

BRATS provides weekday service all year-round, with additional service in the peak season. Special event service is provided at various times during the year. Service on the weekend is limited to contracted employment routes.

The current system meets as many needs as possible within the constraints of the service type and budget and is organized in a way that enables it to be a fairly efficient service. BRATS, however, does not have the resources to be able to meet all the needs of the community, including those of the summer and snowbird season visitors. The contracted employment routes are the strength of the system and allow service to be provided in a highly cost effective manner that simply cannot be provided by a fixed route service.

In addition to the regular BRATS service package, a route linking the Eastern Shore to Mobile is operated. It is called Baylinc. Service operates several times in the morning and afternoon on weekdays only. There is no service in the middle of the day. There are two routes on the Eastern Shore serving the resort in Fairhope and the area around the Jubilee and Eastern Shore Center. One trip is provided in the morning and afternoon on each route. Fares range from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per trip depending on the origin. There are two stops in downtown Mobile where BRATS passengers can access employers and businesses or transfer to WAVE buses for connections to other parts of Mobile. This is a very limited service that is designed to get employees from Mobile onto the Eastern Shore.

BRATS currently operates service throughout Baldwin County and the Eastern Shore. It makes sense to continue to rely on BRATS services to build the service package for the Eastern Shore.

#### CommuteSmart

The Mobile region has an active rideshare program known as CommuteSmart. Residents of the Eastern Shore can participate in the existing program in Mobile. The CommuteSmart program began in Birmingham as a solution to growing traffic congestion. As an alternative to a single occupied vehicle, the program provides commuters with the tools for ridematching and starting carpools. The various services available help commuters lower their personal commuting expense, reduce the wear and tear on their personal vehicles, and lessen their level of stress traveling back and forth to work each day. In 2005, the City of Birmingham and the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) began looking at expanding the CommuteSmart program to the entire State of Alabama. Mobile was one of the first cities to join the program. CommuteSmart offers commuters free online ridematching,

carpool services and the Emergency Ride Home which provides up to three free rides per year via taxi or transportation service. The program can only be used for personal and family emergencies or unscheduled overtime. It is not intended for rides to work, scheduled appointments or planned overtime.

### **Fixed Route Bus Service**

There are four (4) fixed routes recommended for eventual implementation on the Eastern Shore. The timing of implementation and level of service are described in detail in the staging section that follows.

#### **Route 1: Hwy 98-Spanish Fort-Fairhope**

A map of this route is found in Figure 5. Route 1 provides a direct link between Daphne, Fairhope and Spanish Fort. The route would originate at the Eastern Shore Center in Spanish Fort, connecting to Daphne local service at the Jubilee Center on Hwy 90. Operating along Highway 98, it would serve key locations such as the Thomas Hospital and Walmart Supercenters in Daphne and Fairhope. Connections to the Fairhope route would be provided at the Thomas Hospital. Once demand is sufficient, the route would also go to downtown Mobile. It eventually would replace the Baylink. This is intended to be a high capacity trunk route that gives frequent access to major destinations and links all Eastern Shore services. As such, it should be operated with traditional transit coaches.

#### **Route 2: Daphne Local**

A map of this route is in Figure 6. The purpose of Route 2 is to provide local service in Daphne with convenient connections to the rest of the Eastern Shore. It serves Daphne Middle and High Schools with a positive connection to Route 1 at the Jubilee Center. At the western end of Route 2, it operates on a loop serving US 98 and the Lake Forest neighborhood via Bay View Drive and Ridegwood Drive. Given the neighborhood character of this route, it would be operated with small buses.

#### **Route 3: Fairhope East-West Resort**

A map of this route is in Figure 7. Route 3 is designed to link the resort area to the rest of the Eastern Shore via a connection at Thomas Hospital. The route originates at Thomas Hospital and serves the Marriott Grand Resort, Fairhope Municipal Pier and the commercial district around Thomas Hospital. Route 3 would use small buses and could also be considered for application of a trolley-themed vehicle.

#### **Route 4: Fairhope North-South Local**

A map of this route is in Figure 8. Route 4 originates at the Thomas Hospital where it connects with Routes 1 and 3 for convenient connections to all of the Eastern Shore. The route is designed to provide local access on a north – south axis for residents of Fairhope. It links residential neighborhoods with major activity centers in Fairhope. Downtown Fairhope, the college, Fairhope High School, Fairhope Middle School, Bicentennial Museum and Greer Foods are served. Route 4 also would utilize small buses. Given the character of Fairhope, a trolley themed vehicle may be appropriate.

**Figure 5: Route 1**

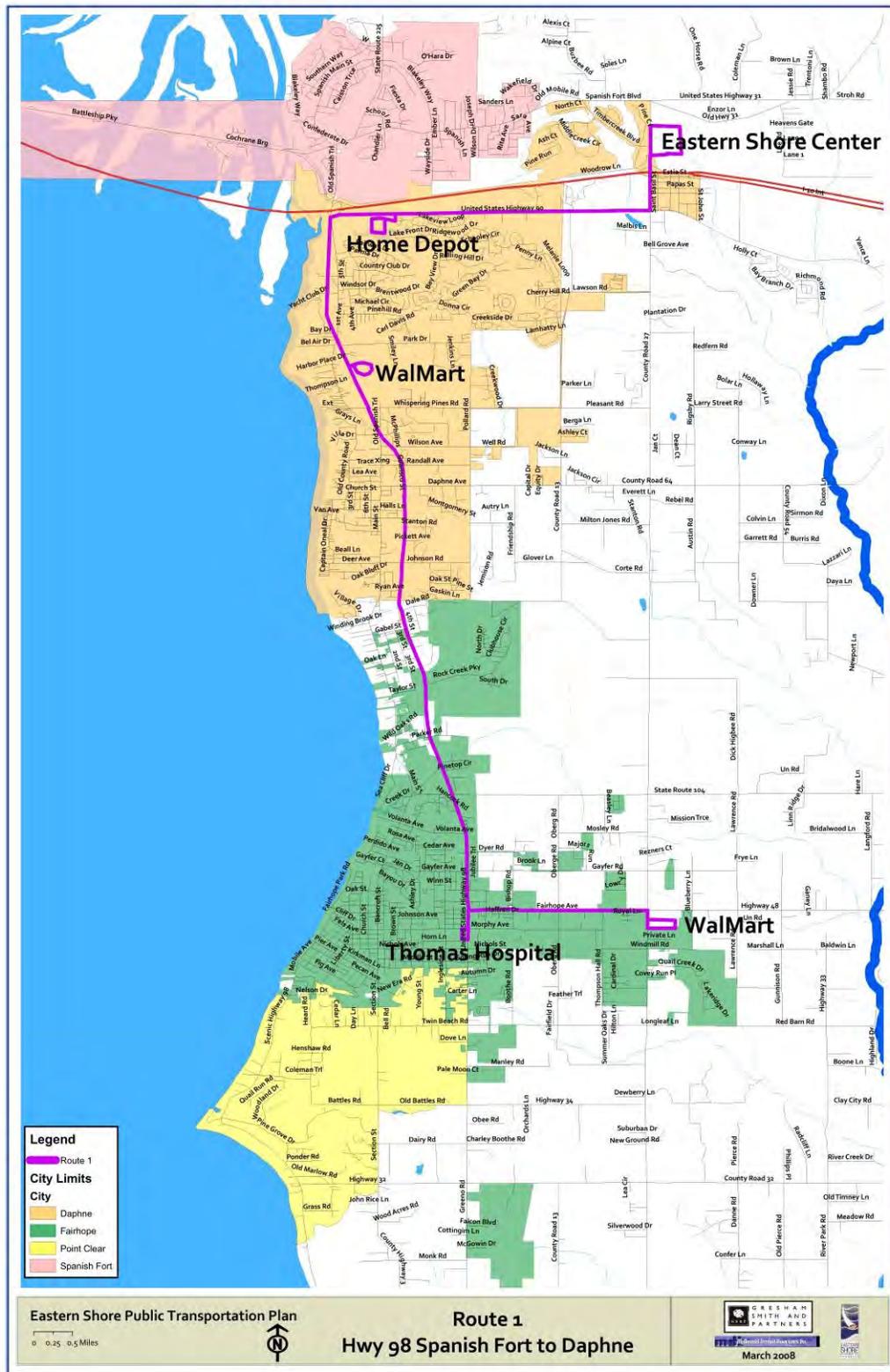


Figure 6: Route 2

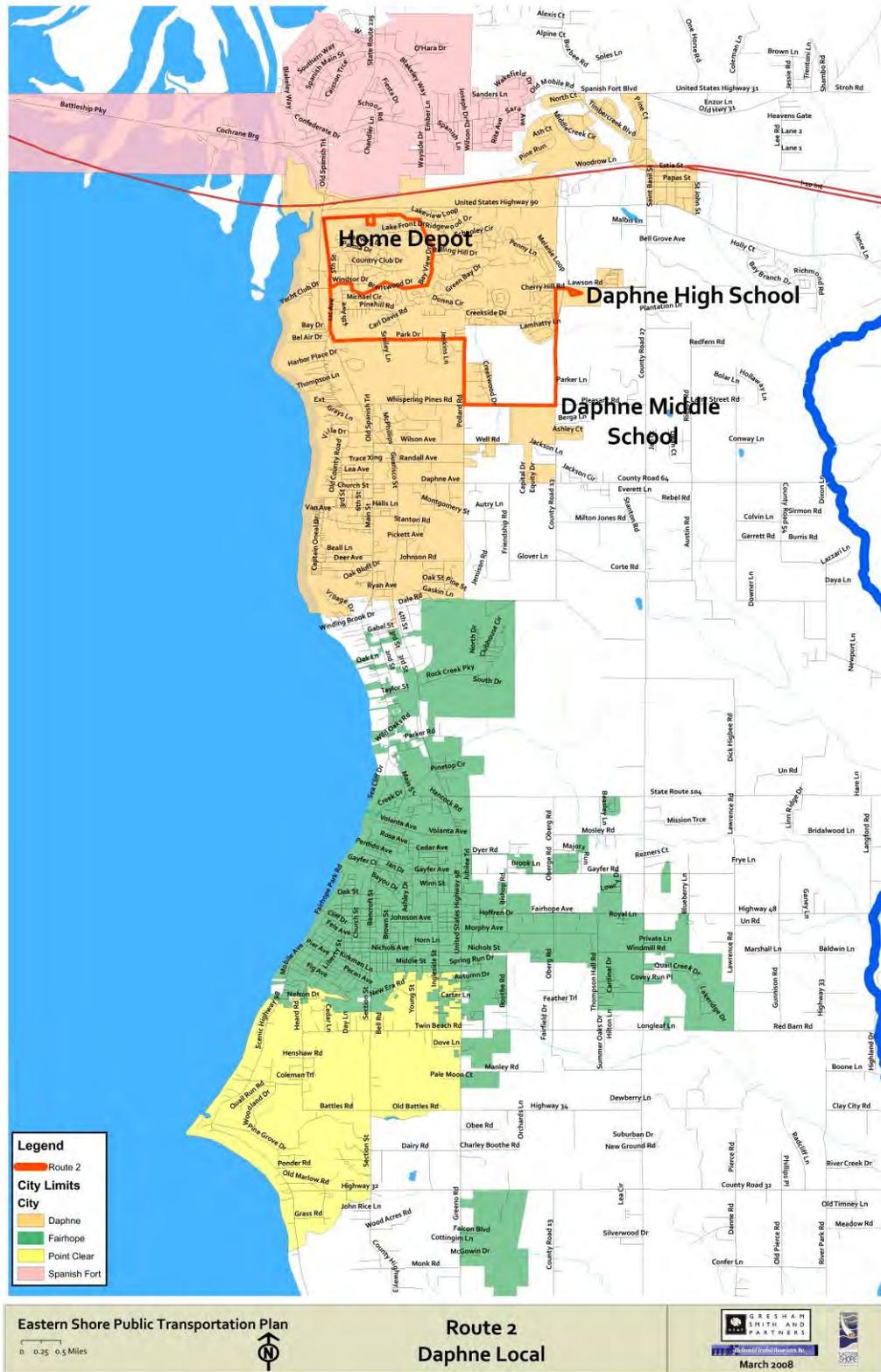


Figure 7: Route 3

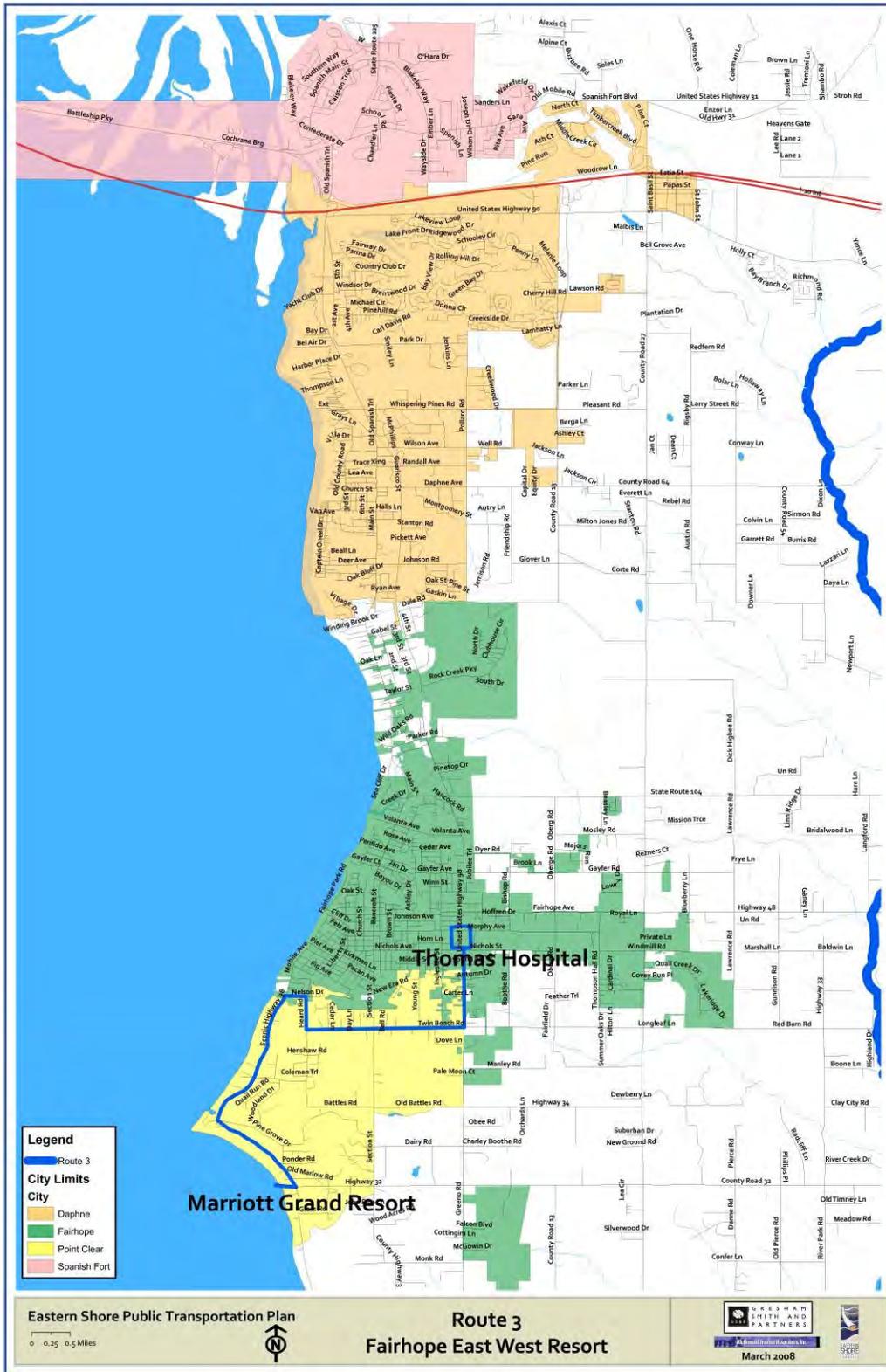
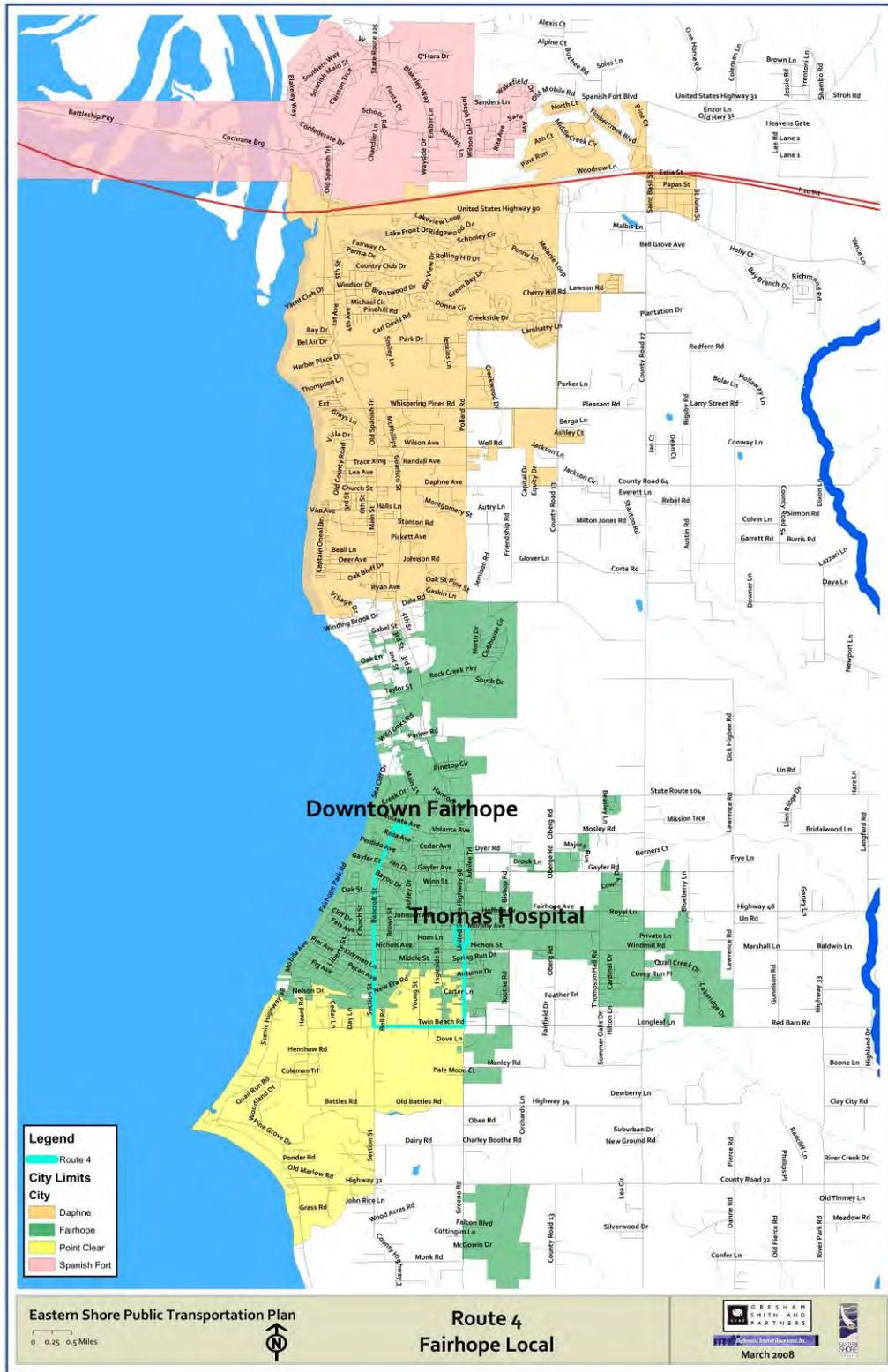


Figure 8: Route 4



## **Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Service**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires provision of complementary paratransit service for disabled citizens who can not use fixed route service. Once fixed route service is initiated on the Eastern Shore, ADA complementary paratransit service will have to be provided at the same service hours as the fixed route service. The paratransit service can be operated directly or contracted out to entities such as BRATS.

## **Recommended Implementation Plan**

There are a wide variety of approaches that could have been taken in implementing public transportation service on the Eastern Shore. The plan that is described below is a conservative approach.

The philosophy behind the implementation plan is "crawl, walk, run." The plan recognizes the need to build support for initiation of transit service. Activities in each stage build on the stage before. This is a prudent approach for beginning new service. The plan takes advantage of existing resources initially and builds on their success in succeeding years. At each stage of the plan key decision variables are identified so decision makers can evaluate performance prior to committing to the next stage. The plan is based on the following assumptions:

- Normal lead times for buying vehicles, building facilities and acquiring grant funds can be achieved.
- All vehicles used in the service are clean diesel powered meeting the 2010 emission standards.
- Route 1 would operate with standard size transit coaches. All other routes would operate with small buses or trolley themed vehicles.
- Costs are based on worst possible case and stated in current year (2008) dollars. The total cost is shown for each year without consideration of possible grants and fares. Funding sources are identified and estimated in the financial plan section that follows.
- Each stage has a set of "decision variables" or benchmarks to be achieved before proceeding to the next stage.
- "Decision variables" include estimates of patronage. The estimates are calculations based on anticipated hours of service multiplied by estimated passengers per hour. The passengers per hour ratios are based on field experience with annual increases for improved productivity and customer response.
- Complementary paratransit service is provided with one demand response, wheelchair lift equipped van covering the entire service area during the operating hours of the fixed route service, where applicable.

The costs to implement each stage of service are broken down into two distinct categories:

- Capital cost – this is the 'start-up', one-time cost to purchase vehicles and equipment necessary to provide the service. This includes buses, vans, bus stop shelters, signs and information displays, park-and-ride facilities, etc.
- Operating cost – these are the annual, ongoing costs to operate the service. This includes salaries and benefits, vehicle fuel and maintenance, marketing, etc.

Each of the stages is described discretely because the timing of proceeding through the stages is not yet determined. The descriptions and financial plan elements can be used to educate the public and policymakers about the scope of transit services with the assurance that decisions will be incremental based on performance and community acceptance.

## **Stage One**

Stage one is the "crawl" stage. Public transportation services will need an advocate on the Eastern Shore who will work to educate the public about existing services and help the providers boost

ridership. A Transit Coordinator will be hired and provided a modest budget. The Coordinator will use the budget to establish the CommuteSmart program on the Eastern Shore. This will include marketing, contact with employers and grass roots efforts to promote use of the ridesharing services. The Coordinator will work closely with all local governments, the County and BRATS to promote use of BRATS services on the Eastern Shore. Particular attention will be paid to BayLink. Marketing that service, working with employers to maximize its utility and getting CommuteSmart to extend the Emergency Ride Home program to Baylink users will be first priorities.

A key activity during this stage will be to educate the community and key decision makers about the need and plans for transit. Utilizing the results of the study and growing use of BRATS services, the Coordinator will work to create a groundswell of support to go to the next stage. The Coordinator also will develop the logistics for implementation of the next stage. These activities include but are not limited to: seeking grant funds to purchase vehicles and facilities, getting agreement on the operating model to be used in the future, establishing formal coordination agreements with BRATS and the WAVE and negotiating cooperative agreements with the local governments to fund operations.

### Cost

The table below describes the expected expenses for Stage One of the Implementation Plan. It only shows the costs for the actual activities that will be conducted during this stage. Costs for items that are needed to implement future stages are included as costs for that stage, even though work on them might begin in Stage One. It also should be noted that implementation of future stages may take longer than a twelve month period due to procurement lead times.

**Table 15: Stage One Costs**

<b>Ongoing (Operating) Cost</b>	
Item	Cost
Salaries, Benefits and Support	\$125,000
Marketing	\$ 50,000
Subsidy for Emergency Ride Home and BRATS	\$ 25,000
<b>Total ongoing cost</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Start-up (Capital) Cost</b>	
None	
<b>Total start-up cost</b>	<b>\$0</b>

### Decision Variables

Following are the decision variables that relate to the implementation plan for Stage One:

- Five (5) employers agree to actively promote ridesharing
- One hundred (100) citizens in CommuteSmart database
- Cities agree to local cooperative agreements
- Initial grant funds approved

### Stage Two

Stage Two is the “walk” stage. In this stage, the marketing and education efforts continue. The focus shifts from building support to planning and promoting the initiation of new services. Operating arrangements are made to actually provide the service. Agreements with BRATS, South Baldwin Transit and the WAVE are finalized to provide all needed connections and fare agreements. While

coordination with BRATS, South Baldwin Transit and the WAVE continue, the Eastern Shore Transit Service begins with the following service levels:

- Route 1 – Monday – Saturday: thirty (30) minute frequency except rush hours when sixty (60) minute frequency is maintained. Three (3) trips to and from Mobile in the morning and afternoon. Service from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Three (3) full size transit coaches and one (1) spare needed to maintain service.
- Route 2,3 and 4 – Monday-Saturday: sixty (60) minute frequency, 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Three (3) small buses or trolley themed vehicles needed to maintain service.
- One (1) additional small bus or trolley themed vehicle needed as spare for routes 2.3.and 4.
- Complementary paratransit service provided 6:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday through Saturday.

### Cost

The table below describes the expected expenses for implementation of Stage Two. The operating costs assume that the Eastern Shore public entity provides the vehicles and contracts out the actual operation of the service. The contractor would be expected to provide an operations and maintenance facility. Selecting this operating model for projection of costs is conservative. Should the decision be made to operate the service directly or contracted to BRATS, costs would be less.

**Table 16: Stage Two Costs**

<b>Ongoing (Operating) Cost</b>	
Item	Cost
Salaries, Benefits, Marketing and Support	\$300,000
Bus Service Operating Cost	\$1,940,400
ADA Paratransit Service	\$323,400
<b>Total ongoing cost</b>	<b>\$2,563,800</b>
<b>Start-up (Capital) Cost</b>	
4 Transit Buses	\$1,600,000
4 Small or Trolley Themed Buses	\$ 800,000
1 ADA Paratransit van	\$65,000
Bus Stop Shelters, Signs and Information Displays	\$ 50,000
<b>Total start-up cost</b>	<b>\$2,515,000</b>

### Decision Variables

Following are the decision variables that relate to Stage Two of the implementation plan:

- At least ten (10) employers agree to actively promote services
- One hundred fifty (150) citizens in CommuteSmart database
- Annual patronage of 330,000 riders

### Stage Three

Stage Three is the “run” stage. This stage would be reached only if the services provided in Stage Two had met all decision variables and were being well received and used by the community. Stage 3 assumes creation of a Regional Transit Organization that would be responsible for provision of service in all of Baldwin County. Services would be improved in response to their success. Permanent park and ride facilities would be constructed to respond to increases in demand. One in Fairhope and one in

Spanish Fort or Daphne is assumed. Both would be convenient to Highway 98 and I-10 to facilitate express service to Mobile. The service elements in Stage 3 would be as follows:

- Route 1 – Monday – Saturday: 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, thirty (30) minute frequency with hourly service to and from Mobile from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Three (3) additional full size transit coaches and one additional (1) spare needed to maintain service. Sunday service every sixty (60) minutes from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm.
- Route 2,3 and 4 – Monday-Saturday: thirty (30) minute frequency, 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. Three (3) additional small buses or trolley themed vehicles needed to maintain service. Sunday service every sixty (60) minutes from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm.
- One (1) additional small bus or trolley themed vehicle needed as spare for routes 2.3.and 4.
- Complementary paratransit service provided 6:00 am to 10:00 pm Monday through Saturday and 6:00 am to 8:00 pm Sunday.

### Cost

The table below describes the expected expense in Year Three of the Implementation Plan.

**Table 17: Stage Three Costs**

<b>Ongoing (Operating) Cost</b>	
Item	Cost
Regional Transit Authority Administration	\$500,000
Bus Service Operating Cost	\$4,411,680
ADA Paratransit Service	\$367,640
<b>Total ongoing cost</b>	<b>\$5,279,320</b>
<b>Start-up (Capital) Cost</b>	
4 Transit Coaches	\$1,600,000
4 Small or Trolley Themed Bus	\$ 800,000
Operating Base	\$ 4,000,000
Bus Stop Shelters, Signs and Information Displays	\$50,000
2 Park And Ride Facilities	\$ 5,000,000
<b>Total start-up cost</b>	<b>\$ 11,450,000</b>

### Decision Variables

Following are the decision variables that affect the implementation plan for Year Three:

- Continued active involvement by at least fifteen (15) employers
- At least two hundred (200) citizens in the CommuteSmart database
- Annual patronage of 750,000 riders

## Financial Plan

The financial plan that follows integrates all the service and funding source elements. It is based, of necessity, on a series of assumptions that can be summarized as follows:

- Costs are based on the details of each of the Stages.
- All expenses are shown in 2008 dollars.
- Fare revenue is calculated at 10% of operating expenses. This is a conservative assumption but realistic given the newness of the service. Actual fares to achieve the 10% recovery level would be set by the policy making body.
- Federal section 5307 funds (in the form of capital maintenance expenditures) and/or section 5311 funds (in the form of rural assistance until the authority exceeds 50,00 population) for operating expenses are assumed to cover 30% of operating expenses based on national averages.
- JARC funds are assumed to be available for 10% of the net operating cost of the services because of the expected patronage and support from employers.
- The system is expected to compete successfully for earmarked Federal funds (Section 5309) to provide 50% of the cost of vehicle and facility expenses.
- A small annual amount of funding in Stages 2 and 3 from miscellaneous State programs.
- The remaining balances come from the cities. No assumption is made about the source of these funds.

As described above, a current year cost for each Stage is presented because the timing of the implementation will be determined later by the cities. The details of the financial plan are shown on the following tables.

**Table 18: Ongoing and Start-up Costs**

<i>Ongoing (Operating) Cost</i>					
	<b>Stage 1</b>		<b>Stage 2</b>		<b>Stage 3</b>
Staff/Administration	\$175,000		\$300,000		\$500,000
Operating Expenses	\$0		\$2,263,800		\$4,779,320
Other Expense	\$25,000				
<b>Total Ongoing Costs</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>		<b>\$2,563,800</b>		<b>\$5,279,320</b>
<i>Start-up (Capital) Costs</i>					
Vehicles			\$2,465,000		\$2,400,000
Operating base					\$4,000,000
Bus Stop Amenities			\$50,000		\$ 50,000
Park and Ride Facilities					\$5,000,000
<b>Total Start-up (Capital) Cost</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$2,515,000</b>		<b>\$11,450,000</b>

**Table 19: Operating and Capital Revenues**

<i>Ongoing (Operating) Revenues</i>			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Fare Revenues		\$256,380	\$527,932
Federal Sect. 5307/5311		\$769,140	\$1,583,796
JARC		\$256,380	\$527,932
Other	\$160,000		
State		\$100,000	\$100,000
Local Funds	\$40,000	\$1,181,900	\$2,539,660
<b>Total ongoing (operating) revenues</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$2,563,800</b>	<b>\$5,279,320</b>
<i>Start-up (Capital) Revenues</i>			
Federal Sect. 5307/5311		\$2,012,000	\$1,960,000
Federal Sect. 5309			\$6,000,000
State Funds			
Local Funds		\$503,000	\$3,490,000
<b>Total start-up (capital) revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,515,000</b>	<b>\$11,450,000</b>

Another way to analyze the financial plan is to summarize the amount of local funding that would be necessary to implement the various stages. This can be summarized in the table below:

**Table 20: Local Funding Required**

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Ongoing	\$40,000	\$1,181,900	\$2,539,660
Start-up		\$503,000	\$3,490,000

Local policy makers must decide the sources of local funding. The financial plan assumes full utilization of funding sources that are traditionally available for transit projects in Alabama. The listing of potential funding sources, however, suggests other avenues for pursuit of local funding. Partnership with employers is just one such example. Any funds garnered from those or other sources would reduce the amount of local subsidy dollars that would have to be provided by the cities. It also may be possible to pursue funding from the State of Alabama. The State does not currently provide transit funding, but education of lawmakers in the future and the current atmosphere for environmental issues could change that position. In addition, there may be other state agencies that would fund specific transit projects. For example, the WAVE is receiving a grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (DECA) to subsidize the operating expenses of new services in the City of Pritchard. Specifically tailored requests to the State for assistance could help offset local costs.

# Appendix 1

Eastern Shore Public Transit Study Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire

Eastern Shore Public Transit Study

# Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire

1. Are:  All?  Most?  Some?  Few? of the transportation needs in Baldwin County being met today?
2. Describe what you see as the specific gaps in the transportation service provided in Baldwin County.
3. Is there a need for transit services in Baldwin County?  
 yes  no
4. If yes, why is there a need?
5. Who would be the likely users of public transportation services along the Eastern Shore? (Please rank by most likely)  

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior citizens	<input type="checkbox"/> Persons with disabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Commuters
<input type="checkbox"/> Working poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - describe
<input type="checkbox"/> General public	
6. What are the specific locations for which transit service should be provided to?
7. Do you see any barriers to implementation of expanded public transit services?  
 Yes (if so, what are they?)  No
8. Are there specific governmental bodies, elected officials or agency personnel who do not really support transit services and/or who may actively work against implementation of efforts to strengthen the transit services? Why do you think they oppose transit services? Do you agree with their opinion?
9. Since funding will be needed for transit service, do you think the community will support a local tax to fund the service?
10. Do you think that the need for fixed route public transit systems and paratransit services will increase or decrease in the future?
11. If we lived in a perfect world, what is your idea of a perfect transit system? How would you organize/ structure the system? What are the major sources of funding?
12. In order for this study to be successful, what must be included in the final product? What should be avoided?
13. One of the things we're interested in is how the current public transit system is currently perceived in the community. More specifically: first, how do you think the BRATS transit system is perceived by those who use it? Second, how do you think BRATS is perceived by citizens who observe it, but don't use it? And third, how do you perceive BRATS yourself from your vantage point of being a business/community leader?
14. Do you currently provide any transportation services for your guests or employees?

15. Do have a charge for this service? If yes, how much for whom?
16. Is employee parking a problem at your facility?
17. Have you observed if most of your employees drive themselves to work or do they carpool with fellow workers?
18. Would you be willing to contribute to your employees cost of transportation?

Please email Lindsay Smith with Gresham, Smith & Partners at [lindsay\\_smith@gspnet.com](mailto:lindsay_smith@gspnet.com) to set up a phone interview to answer this questionnaire or fill out the questionnaire and mail to:

Lindsay Smith  
Gresham, Smith & Partners  
3595 Grandview Parkway, Suite 300  
Birmingham, AL 35243

## Appendix 2

List of Stakeholders that Completed the Questionnaire

CITY	AFFILIATION	METHOD SURVEY COMPLETED
Daphne	City Council	Phone
Daphne	City Council	In Person
Daphne	City Council	In Person
Daphne	Mercy Medical	Mailed
Daphne	Terry Thompson Chevrolet	Emailed
Fairhope	City Council	Emailed
Fairhope	Ecumenical Ministries	Mailed
Fairhope	Faulkner State	In Person
Fairhope	First Gulf Bank	Mailed
Fairhope	BES Engineering	Mailed
Fairhope	USA BC Campus	In Person
Fairhope	Senior Center	In Person
Fairhope	Homestead Village	In Person
Point Clear	Marriott Grand Hotel	Phone
Spanish Fort	City Council	Mailed
Spanish Fort	City Council	Mailed

# Appendix 3

## Community Outreach Survey Results

## ESCC Outreach Survey

1. Please select a range of your household's gross income, the total of all income before taxes for everyone contributing to the household, this would normally be the husband and wife and not include the income of teen age children.

	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0 - \$25,000 	1.5%	1
\$25,000 – \$50,000 	18.2%	12
\$50,000 – \$75,000 	21.2%	14
\$75,000 – \$100,000 	21.2%	14
\$100,000 – \$150,000 	19.7%	13
\$150,000 – \$250,000 	12.1%	8
Greater than \$250,000 	6.1%	4
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>3</b>

2. Your Street Address is? (E.g. 124 Crescent Circle)

	Response Count
	64
	<b>answered question</b>
	<b>64</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>
	<b>5</b>

3. Your City is? (E.g. Daphne)

	Response Count
	68
	<b>answered question</b>
	<b>68</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>
	<b>1</b>

4. Your Zip code is? (E.g. 36526)		Response Count
		68
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>68</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1</b>

5. How many persons live at in your household?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
One 	16.9%	11
Two 	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>33</b>
Three 	12.3%	8
Four 	13.8%	9
Five 	3.1%	2
More 	3.1%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>65</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>4</b>

6. How many persons are licensed drivers?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
One 	17.2%	11
Two 	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>47</b>
Three 	6.3%	4
Four 	3.1%	2
More	0.0%	0
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>64</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>5</b>

**7. How many vehicles are registered for use by your household, (Please count only vehicles used for daily transportation, not RVs or collector automobiles)?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
One 	20.3%	13
Two 	51.6%	33
Three 	23.4%	15
Four 	4.7%	3
More	0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>		<b>64</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>

**8. Are you Employed?**

	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
Yes	<b>91.8% (56)</b>	68.9% (42)	4.9% (3)	1.6% (1)	61
No	38.1% (8)	<b>52.4% (11)</b>	19.0% (4)	14.3% (3)	21
<b>answered question</b>					<b>64</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>5</b>

**9. Do you ride to work alone?**

	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
Yes	<b>92.1% (58)</b>	69.8% (44)	4.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	63
No	33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)	<b>50.0% (3)</b>	6
<b>answered question</b>					<b>64</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>5</b>

10. How do you currently travel to work?					
	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
Private Auto	93.4% (57)	70.5% (43)	4.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	61
Bus	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2
Carpool	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
Other	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3
<b>answered question</b>					<b>63</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>6</b>

11. How long is the one way trip from home to were work?					
	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
0-5 Miles	84.6% (22)	65.4% (17)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	26
5-10 Miles	64.7% (11)	58.8% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17
10-15 Miles	85.7% (12)	21.4% (3)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	14
15-20 Miles	72.7% (8)	36.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	11
Greater than 20 Miles	43.8% (7)	68.8% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	16
<b>answered question</b>					<b>63</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>6</b>

**12. Your current place of employment is located at Street Address (E.g. 124 Crescent Circle)**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Driver 1 	98.3%	58
Driver 2 	69.5%	41
Driver 3 	6.8%	4
Driver 4 	3.4%	2
<b>answered question</b>		<b>59</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>10</b>

**13. Your current place of employment is in City? (E.g. Mobile)**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Driver 1 	93.7%	59
Driver 2 	71.4%	45
Driver 3 	4.8%	3
Driver 4 	1.6%	1
<b>answered question</b>		<b>63</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>6</b>

**14. Your current place of employment is in Zip Code? (E.g. 36633)**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Driver 1 	95.1%	58
Driver 2 	67.2%	41
Driver 3 	3.3%	2
Driver 4 	1.6%	1
<b>answered question</b>		<b>61</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

15. Do you run errands or personal trips at lunch?					
	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
Yes	81.4% (35)	53.5% (23)	2.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	43
No	58.3% (14)	45.8% (11)	4.2% (1)	4.2% (1)	24
Sometimes	70.0% (14)	65.0% (13)	5.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	20
<i>answered question</i>					<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>4</b>

16. Do you run errands or personal trips on your way home?					
	Driver 1	Driver 2	Driver 3	Driver 4	Response Count
Yes	90.0% (45)	66.0% (33)	4.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	50
No	80.0% (4)	40.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (1)	5
Sometimes	76.5% (13)	70.6% (12)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	17
<i>answered question</i>					<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>4</b>

17. In your opinion, how would you answer if you were asked to describe if the public transportation needs are being met in Baldwin County?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
All the needs are being met	0.0%	0
Most the needs are being met 	15.2%	10
<b>Some the needs are being met</b> 	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>33</b>
Few the needs are being met 	34.8%	23
<i>answered question</i>		<b>66</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>

**18. Describe what you see as gaps in the public transportation service provided in Baldwin County.**

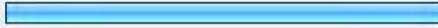
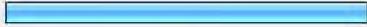
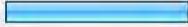
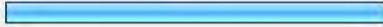
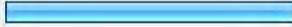
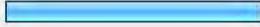
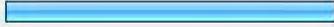
	Response Percent	Response Count
Access to transportation	85.7%	54
Scheduling conflicts	58.7%	37
Safety concerns	7.9%	5
Affordability	11.1%	7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>63</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>6</b>

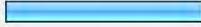
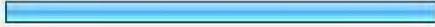
**19. Is there a need for more public transportation services in Baldwin County?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	89.1%	57
No	10.9%	7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>64</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>5</b>

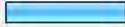
**20. Who would be the likely users of public transportation services among the Eastern Shore communities? Please check all that apply.**

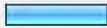
	Response Percent	Response Count
Senior citizens	88.4%	61
Persons with disabilities	79.7%	55
Students	53.6%	37
Commuters	53.6%	37
Working poor	78.3%	54
General public	47.8%	33
<i>answered question</i>		<b>69</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

21. What are the specific locations public transportation should serve?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Major Employers		79.1%	53
Tourist Attractions		65.7%	44
Home		32.8%	22
Downtown		68.7%	46
<b>Shopping Areas</b>		<b>88.1%</b>	59
Hospital		77.6%	52
Post Office		52.2%	35
Schools		46.3%	31
Grocery Store		73.1%	49
Government Services		59.7%	40
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>67</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>2</b>

22. Do you see any barriers to implementation of expanded public transit services?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Inability to walk to the bus stop		23.1%	15
Scheduling conflicts		46.2%	30
Access		43.1%	28
Cost		35.4%	23
<b>Public perception</b>		<b>78.5%</b>	51
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>65</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>4</b>

23. Do you think that the need for fixed route public transportation services will increase or decrease in the future?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Increase		94.0%	63
Decrease		6.0%	4
<i>answered question</i>			<b>67</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>2</b>

24. If we lived in a perfect world, what would you consider as important in perfect public transportation system?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
On time		21.7%	15
Clean		20.3%	14
Safe		21.7%	15
Looks nice		10.1%	7
All of the above		87.0%	60
<i>answered question</i>			<b>69</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>0</b>

25. What would be the major sources of funding for a public transportation system?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Property tax		21.2%	14
Increase fares for ride		47.0%	31
Impact fees		36.4%	24
Gasoline tax		40.9%	27
Sales Tax		18.2%	12
<i>answered question</i>			<b>66</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>3</b>

**26. What is the closest public transportation to your home?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1/4 mile	8.7%	6
1/2 mile	1.4%	1
1 miles	7.2%	5
2 miles	10.1%	7
I do not know	72.5%	50
<b>answered question</b>		<b>69</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>0</b>

**27. What do you consider most important when traveling on a daily basis? Check any that apply:**

	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Getting to my destination in less time</b>	59.1%	39
Not having to drive all over to find parking	47.0%	31
<b>Fuel and parking cost</b>	59.1%	39
Making my trip easier	31.8%	21
The ability to walk rather than drive	19.7%	13
The ability to take a bus rather than drive	28.8%	19
The ability to ride a bicycle rather than drive	18.2%	12
Traveling a shorter distance	18.2%	12
<b>answered question</b>		<b>66</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>

**28. To which activities would you like to be able to ride public transportation?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Work	50.0%	29
Entertainment	69.0%	40
Shopping	60.3%	35
Hospital	15.5%	9
Home	31.0%	18
<b>answered question</b>		<b>58</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>11</b>

**29. What would it take for you to use public transportation as a travel choice for your daily transportation needs? You may select more than one from the following lists. Check any that apply:**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Bus every 10 minutes	6.8%	4
Bus every 20 minutes	16.9%	10
Bus every 30 minutes	25.4%	15
Bus every 45 minutes	0.0%	0
<b>OR, the time between buses is important, but I could wait longer if I knew exactly when it was due to arrive. If there was a sign or kiosk to tell me when the next bus was due to arrive.</b>	64.4%	38
Other	18.6%	11
(please specify)		16
<b>answered question</b>		<b>59</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>10</b>

30. If public transportation met your requirements for on time performance what would you consider a fair cost per person for a one way trip? Choose only one of the following:

	Response Percent	Response Count
No charge	0.0%	0
\$ .50 	3.0%	2
<b>\$1.00</b> 	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>25</b>
\$1.50 	13.6%	9
\$2.00 	31.8%	21
No answer 	13.6%	9
<b>answered question</b>		<b>66</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>

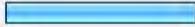
31. If public transportation met your requirements so far, what distance would you be willing to walk to get on the public transportation? Choose only one of the following:

	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>¼ mile or less</b> 	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>27</b>
¼ mile to ½ mile 	26.2%	17
½ mile to ¾ mile 	7.7%	5
¾ mile or more 	7.7%	5
Other 	4.6%	3
No answer 	12.3%	8
<b>answered question</b>		<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>4</b>

**32. Would you be willing to drive your car to a park and ride location to access public transportation or to share a ride to work? Choose only one of the following:**

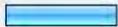
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	67.7%	44
No 	26.2%	17
No answer 	6.2%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>4</b>

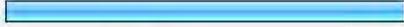
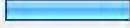
**33. Would easy access to public transportation affect your decision on where to live in Baldwin County?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	34.4%	22
No 	59.4%	38
No answer 	6.3%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>64</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>5</b>

**34. If the bus arrived frequently enough to meet your needs, would your trip have to be: choose only one of the following?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Bus must be faster than traveling by auto 	9.5%	6
Bus must be equal than traveling by auto 	61.9%	39
No answer 	28.6%	18
<i>answered question</i>		<b>63</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>6</b>

35. If the bus arrived frequently enough to meet your needs, would your trip have to be: choose only one of the following?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Bus must be quicker than traveling by auto 	20.0%	11
Bus could be slower than traveling by auto but no more than: 	80.0%	44
(insert time in minutes)		43
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>14</b>

36. Why would you not use public transportation?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Access 	48.4%	30
Convenience 	72.6%	45
Comfort 	22.6%	14
Feasibility 	35.5%	22
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>7</b>

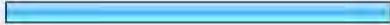
37. Would you use public transportation to mitigate traffic congestion and lower auto emissions?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	64.6%	42
No 	20.0%	13
No answer 	15.4%	10
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>4</b>

38. What would attract you to use public transportation?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Access 	63.9%	39
Convenience 	75.4%	46
Comfort 	27.9%	17
Price of Gasoline 	70.5%	43
<b>answered question</b>		<b>61</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

39. What price per gallon for gasoline would persuade you to use public transportation?	
	Response Count
	52
<b>answered question</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>17</b>

40. What price per gallon for gasoline would persuade you to carpool or vanpool?	
	Response Count
	50
<b>answered question</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>19</b>

**41. Would you walk or ride a bicycle to public transportation?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Walk 	69.8%	44
Bike 	4.8%	3
Neither 	25.4%	16
<i>answered question</i>		<b>63</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>6</b>

**42. If you would like to stay involved, we will place you our email list. Please put your email address here.**

	Response Count
	27
<i>answered question</i>	<b>27</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>42</b>

**43. General Comments:**

	Response Count
	24
<i>answered question</i>	<b>24</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>45</b>

# Appendix 4

Eastern Shore Public Transit Study Public Meeting Feedback Sheet

# Eastern Shore Public Transit Study

## FEEDBACK

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this meeting?

- E-mail
- Newspaper
- Word of mouth
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you attend the public meeting in December?      YES      NO

**What do you think?**

Which of the following best describes how you feel about the proposed transit options for the Eastern Shore? (select one):

- I liked what I saw; I wouldn't change a thing.
- I liked the options overall, but would make a few changes.
- I didn't like what I saw.
- I need more information to make a decision.

**Option A – Enhanced BRATS service – more demand response and Bayline service**

Please rate Option A:      (Liked it)      1      2      3      4      5      (Didn't like it)

What I liked: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I didn't like: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Option B – Enhanced BRATS service *plus* a carpool and vanpool program**

Please rate Option B:      (Liked it)      1      2      3      4      5      (Didn't like it)

What I liked: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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---

What I didn't like: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Option C – Enhanced BRATS service, carpool/vanpool *plus* new fixed route service**

Please rate Option C: (Liked it) 1 2 3 4 5 (Didn't like it)

What I liked: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I didn't like: \_\_\_\_\_

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Think we missed something? Have more to say? *Tell us here:*

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# Appendix 5

PowerPoint Presented to the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce  
Board of Directors on May 9, 2008

GRESHAM SMITH AND PARTNERS  
McDonald Transit Associates  
Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

## Eastern Shore Public Transit Study

Gresham Smith & Partners  
McDonald Transit Associates  
Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

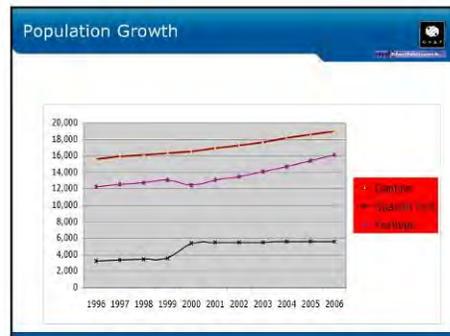
May 8, 2008

### Background

- Baldwin County is growing
- So is traffic!
- We can't build enough roads to keep pace

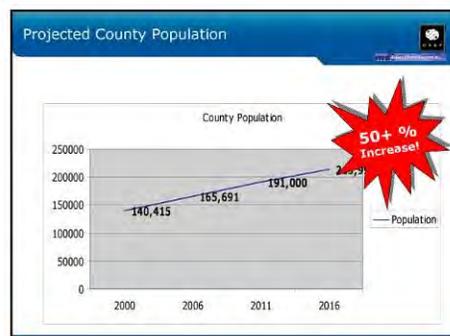
### Today's meeting

- Background/findings
- Proposed Public Transportation Plan
- Get your feedback



### Purpose of the Study

- Identify transportation needs
  - Residents
  - Employers
  - Visitors
  - Daphne, Fairhope, and Spanish Fort
- Develop mobility options



### Background

- Need safe, affordable transportation options
- Work
- Shopping
- Recreation
- Health care
- Tourism



### Stakeholder Interviews

- More service is needed
- All day/evening service
- There is a need for transit service because of:
  - Aging population
  - Cost of fuel
  - Congestion
  - Tourism
- Commuters – Mobile, Pensacola
- Must serve all major employers

### Identifying needs



### Bayline Rider Survey

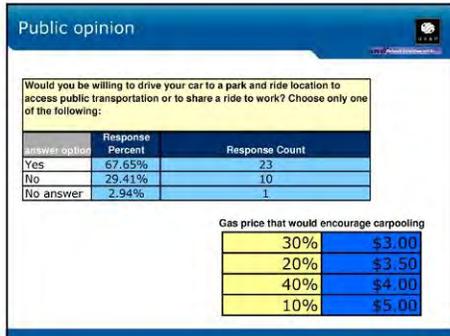
- January 2008
- Almost half use it every day
- Others – most days
- 100% use service to/from work
- Some comments on comfort of vehicles (more leg room, temperature)
- More trips, please!

### Public Meetings

- December 2007
- Support public transit
- Service would need to be all day
  - not just 8 to 5
- Safe sidewalk and bicycle connections
- Commuter service (Mobile, Pensacola)
- Must be reasonably priced

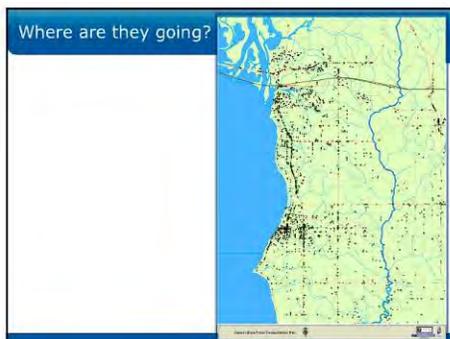
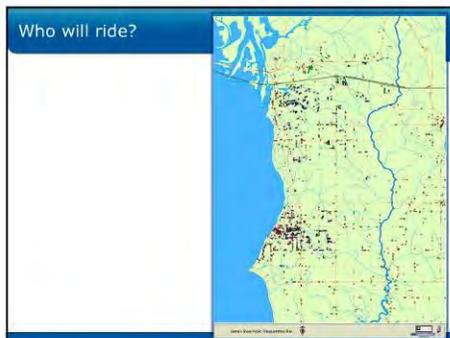
### Public opinion

What are the specific locations public transportation should serve?	
Answer Options	Response Count
Major Employers	27
Tourist Attractions	23
Home	12
Downtown	26
Shopping Areas	34
Hospital	27
Post Office	17
Schools	18
Grocery Store	28
Government Services	22



### Commuting patterns

From	To	# of Workers	% of Total
Baldwin County	Baldwin County	45,206	65%
	Mobile County	12,615	19%
	Escambia County, FL	1,895	3%
	Escambia County, AL	527	1%
Mobile County	Baldwin County	3,426	5%
Escambia County, FL	Baldwin County	1,975	3%
Escambia County, AL	Baldwin County	752	1%
<b>Total in these categories</b>		<b>66,197</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Stage One: 'Crawl'**

- Hire Transit Coordinator
- Establish CommuteSmart program
  - Actively market carpools, vanpools
  - Guaranteed Ride Home Program
  - Existing BRATS services > Baylinec



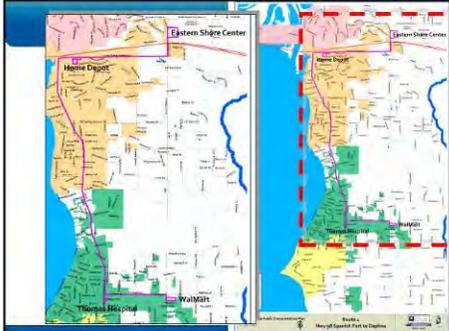
**ROUTE 1**

- 6:00 am to 8:00 pm
- Service every hour
- 30 minutes in rush hour
- Mon. through Sat.
- Timed transfers at Thomas Hospital



**Stage One: Decision Variables**

- Five employers active in ridesharing
- 100 employees in CommuteSmart database
- Local cooperative agreements
- Initial grant funds approved



**Stage Two: 'Walk'**

- Initiate fixed route service
- Complimentary paratransit




**ROUTE 2**

- Daphne Local
- 6:00 am to 8:00 pm
- Service every hour
- Mon. through Sat.
- Connect with Route 1
  - Hwy 98 Park and Ride



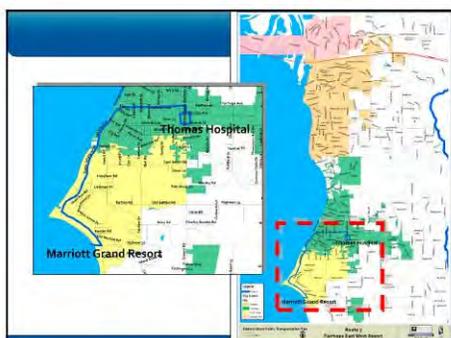
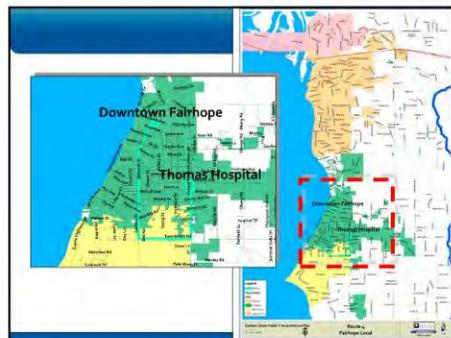


### ROUTE 4

- Fairhope – North South Local
- 6:00 am to 8:00 pm
- Service every hour
- Mon. through Sat.
- Connect at hospital
  - Route 1 and 3

### ROUTE 3

- Fairhope East West Resort
- 6:00 am to 8:00 pm
- Service every hour
- Mon. through Sat.
- Connect at hospital
  - Route 1 and 4



### Stage Two: Decision Variables

- Ten employers actively promote services
- 150 employees in CommuteSmart database
- Annual patronage of 330,000 riders

### Stage Three: 'Run'

- Full implementation of fixed route service
- 6 AM to 10 PM
- 30 minute service
- Day-long service to Mobile

### Total financial commitment

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Capital	\$0	\$2.5 million	\$11.5 million
Operating	\$200,000	\$2.6 million	\$5.3 million

### Stage Three: Decision Variables

- Continued involvement by 15 employers
- 200 employees in CommuteSmart database
- Annual patronage of 750,000

### Revenue Sources

- Federal grants
  - Approximately 50 percent
- Fares and State sources
  - 10 to 20 percent
- Balance *must* be funded locally!

Local Financial Commitment		
	Capital	Operating
Stage One	\$0	\$40,000
Stage Two	\$0.5 million	\$1.2 million
Stage Three	\$3.5 million	\$2.5 million

### Implementing the Plan

### Local revenue sources

- Property tax (\$680,000 per mil)
- Sales tax
- Fuel tax
- Lodging tax (\$6.6 million potential)
- Impact fees
- Institutional agreements

