
Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Wyoming County

Wyoming County
Board of Supervisors



Rochester–Genesee
Regional Transportation
Authority



Draft: April 8, 2003

Steering Committee

The following served on the Steering Committee that guided the preparation of this Strategic Plan:

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Introduction

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation in Wyoming County was developed to address public transportation needs throughout Wyoming County. The Plan establishes public transportation goals and sets forth proposed initiatives and specific recommended actions to be undertaken to achieve the goals.

Goals for Public Transportation

The following general public transportation goals have been established for this Strategic Plan:

- A. Provide transportation services to meet the needs of people who do not have access to automobiles, senior citizens who do not drive and persons with disabilities who are unable to drive.
- B. Improve transportation access to employment opportunities.
- C. Improve access to medical services, both within and outside Wyoming County
- D. Improve access to public transportation among human service agency clients and consumers.
- E. Improve coordination among public, agency and private transportation services in order to use transportation resources more effectively and efficiently.
- F. Increase public awareness and use of WYTS services.

Summary of Proposed Initiatives

The following six initiatives have been formulated to achieve the overall goals of the Strategic Plan:

1. Maintain information on WYTS routes and schedules on the R-GRTA / WYTS Internet website.
2. Explore ways to better link WYTS service with transportation service providers in neighboring counties and to improve existing linkages.
3. Expand marketing and publicity to increase public awareness of WYTS transportation services and increase ridership.
4. Explore ways to provide various types of enhanced WYTS services to the general public.
5. Explore ways to expand transportation services to agency clients and customers.
6. Work to improve transportation services for medical appointments within and outside Wyoming County.

Recommended actions for implementing the above initiatives are identified and described later in this Strategic Plan.

Steering Committee

(continued)

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Need for Public Transportation

Although WYTS is a public transportation system available to all Wyoming County residents, its primary customer base includes senior citizens who are unable to drive or prefer not to drive, persons with disabilities that prevent them from driving and persons who cannot afford to purchase and maintain a motor vehicle.

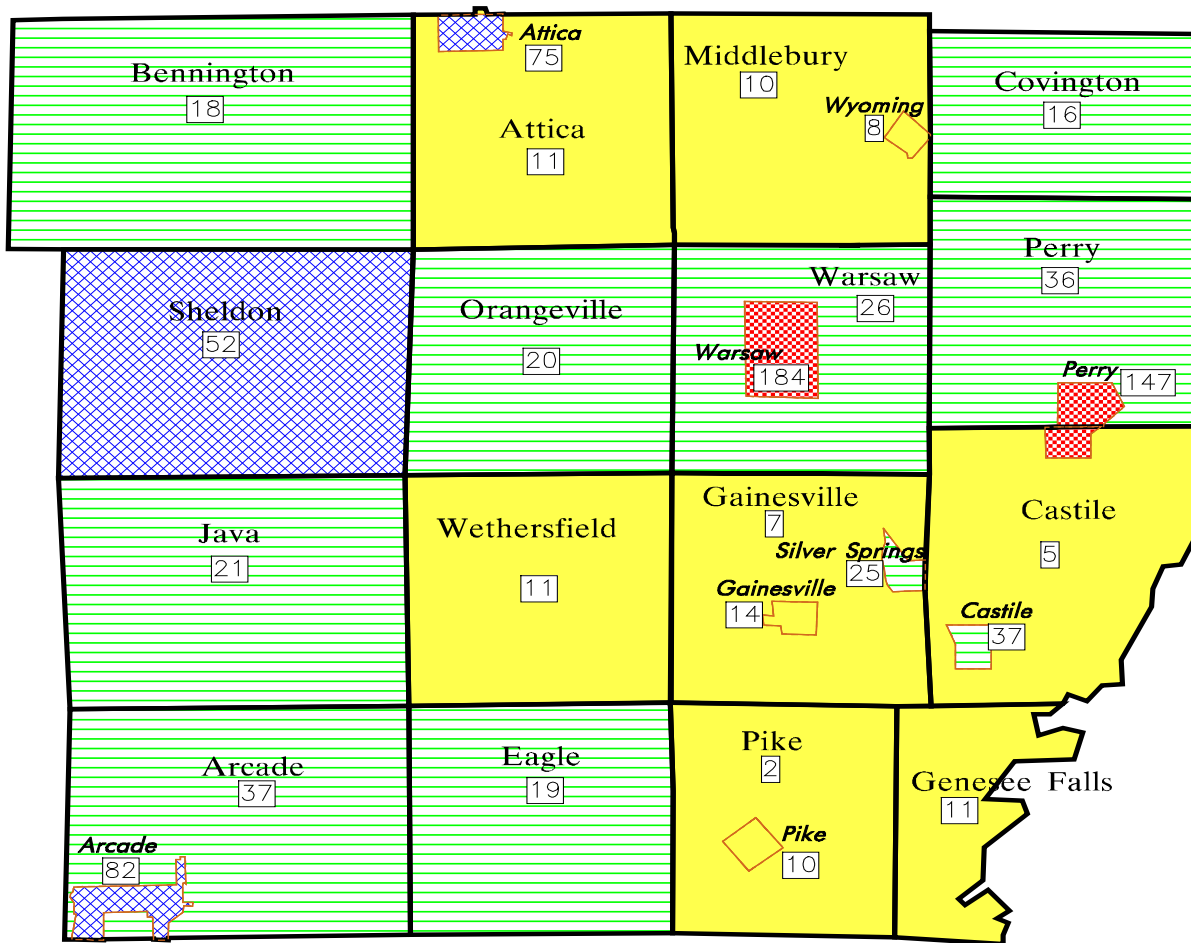
The following 2000 Census statistics provide an indication of the extent of the need for public

transportation in Wyoming County:

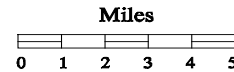
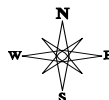
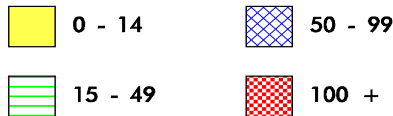
Approximately 884 households or 5.9% of the households in Wyoming County do not have access to a motor vehicle. Concentrations of such households are found in the Villages of Warsaw, Perry, Arcade and Attica and the Town of Sheldon. (See map below for more detailed information.)

A total of 3,332 Wyoming County households or 22.4% are headed by a person age 65 or older.

Households with No Vehicles Available Wyoming County - 2000 Census



Households with No Vehicles Available



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NOVEHIC

 Stuart I. Brown Associates, Inc.

Research Methodology

The Strategic Plan was formulated based on research conducted between May and October 2002 which included public involvement. The following research methods were used to collect information:

Rider Surveys—WYTS riders were surveyed using a written questionnaire.

Agency Surveys—Agencies that provide transportation for their clients, and agencies and community leaders with an interest in public transportation were surveyed using a written questionnaire. Many were also personally interviewed to obtain more in depth, detailed information.

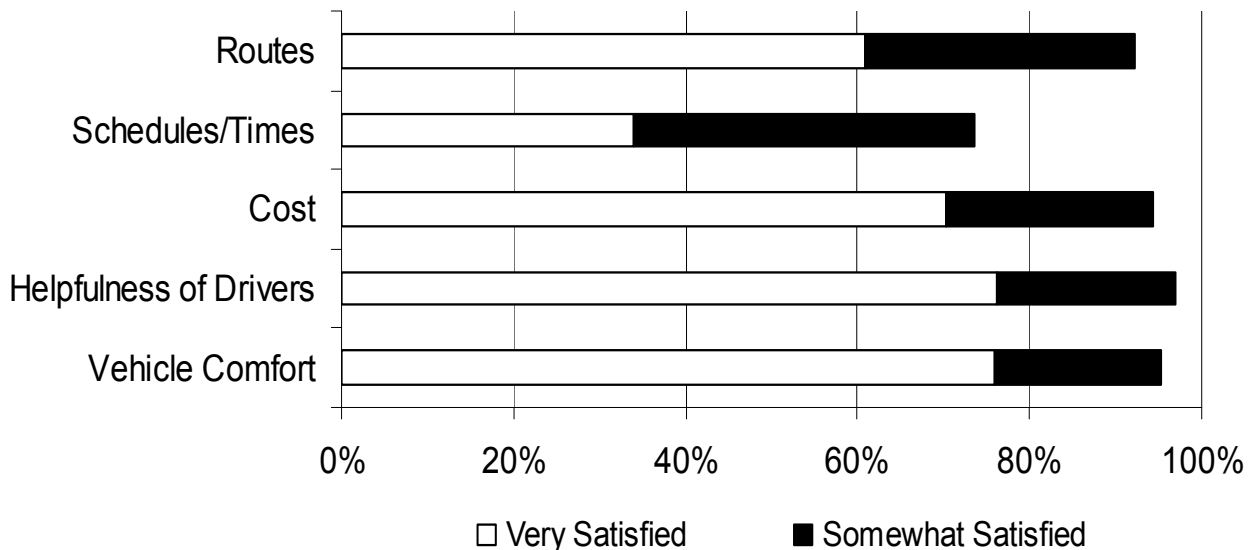
Public Forums—Two public forums were held to provide the general public with opportunities to provide input into the planning process. Both forums were held on September 19, 2002; one in the Village of Arcade, the other in the Village of Warsaw.

Employer Surveys—Businesses employing 100 or more persons were surveyed to determine what difficulties, if any, the businesses were experiencing in recruiting or retaining employees due to transportation problems. The surveys were also used to identify which businesses might be receptive to working with WYTS to arrange for customized employee commuter services.

Rider Satisfaction

The questionnaire used to survey WYTS riders contained a series of questions which asked riders how satisfied they were with WYTS bus service. Riders were asked to identify their level of satisfaction with bus routes, bus schedules and the times buses are available, the cost of bus fares, the helpfulness and courteousness of drivers, and the comfort and cleanliness of the buses. As the following chart illustrates, WYTS riders expressed a high degree of satisfaction.

WYTS Rider Satisfaction



EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

WYTS Transportation Services

The Wyoming Transit Service (WYTS), a subsidiary of the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (R-GRTA), provides the following public transportation services in Wyoming County.

Demand-Responsive (Dial-a-Ride) Service is provided weekdays within the Villages of Arcade, Warsaw and Perry.

Route-Deviation Service is provided weekdays along three routes configured as loops which originate and terminate in the Village of Warsaw. The routes vary somewhat from day to day depending on who is riding, where they reside and their destinations.

- The **green loop** serves eastern Wyoming County and passes through the Villages of Wyoming, Perry, Castile and Silver Springs.
- The **blue loop** serves northwestern Wyoming County and passes through the Hamlets of Varysburg, Cowlesville, Bennington Center, and Village of Attica.
- The **purple loop** serves southern and southwestern Wyoming County and passes through the Villages of Pike, Arcade and Gainesville and the Hamlets of Bliss, Strykersville and North Java.

Specialized WYTS Services

Suburban Adult Services, Inc. (SASI) Shuttle —WYTS transports SASI clients who reside in Wyoming County to and from SASI's sheltered workshop in southern Erie County.

Commuter Shuttle—WYTS provides commuter service to Gainesville area residents employed at the Prestolite plant in Arcade.

Senior Meal Site Shuttle—WYTS transports senior citizens to and from Office for the Aging congregate meal sites in the Villages of Wyoming, Attica, Warsaw, Arcade, Perry and the Hamlet of Bennington Center.

Transportation Provided by Other Agencies / Organizations

Governmental and Not-for-Profit Transportation Services: Several human service agencies provide some direct transportation services for their respective clients whose transportation needs cannot be met by WYTS bus service. The agencies include: Department of Social Services, Stepping Stones Continuing Day Treatment Program, Livingston-Wyoming ARC, the Mental Health Clinic and the Genesee Region Independent Living Center. Most of the direct transportation provided is for medical purposes.

Volunteer Services:

Peer Wheels consists of a group of mental health clients who have volunteered to drive other mental health clients to counseling sessions and to mental health support activities sponsored by Peers Helping Peers. The agency provides the vans and Peer Wheels supplies the drivers.

Office for the Aging Volunteers—The Office for the Aging maintains a list of volunteers who will drive senior citizens to medical appointments outside Wyoming County. Seniors needing transportation must make arrangements for rides directly with the volunteer drivers.

American Cancer Society (ACS)—ACS coordinates a group of volunteer drivers who provide cancer patients with transportation for cancer treatments.

Private-Transportation Companies:

Four private, for-profit companies provide transportation services in Wyoming County. These include: Attica Bus Service, Laidlaw Transit Service, McDonald Bus Service and Henry Hill, Inc. Nearly all the transportation services these companies provide is student transportation provided under contract with local school districts.

Proposed Initiatives and Recommended Actions

Initiative 1: Maintain information on WYTS routes and schedules on the R-GRTA/WYTS Internet website.

Background

The Internet provides a very efficient and inexpensive means for disseminating information about bus schedules and routes. Information can be accessed 24 hours per day from any computer with an Internet connection.

As personal computer (PC) ownership and use becomes more prevalent, more and more Wyoming County residents will be able to conveniently access the information on the R-GRTA/WYTS website. The website can also serve as a useful tool for human service agencies when assisting clients with their transportation needs.

Many Wyoming County residents who own PC's or who have access to PC's may not be aware that R-GRTA / WYTS maintains a website with bus schedule and route information on it.

Recommended Actions

- A. Continue to provide detailed bus route and schedule information on the R-GRTA /WYTS website and update information as necessary.
- B. Increase public awareness of the accessibility of route and schedule information on the website through periodic public promotional and awareness programs.

Initiative 2: Explore ways to better link WYTS service with transportation services in neighboring counties and to improve existing linkages.

Background

Public transportation is provided in three of the counties that adjoin Wyoming County: Erie, Genesee and Livingston Counties. As some Wyoming County residents may need or desire to travel to destinations in adjoining counties, linkages could be established between WYTS and the public transportation systems in the adjoining counties to enable inter-county travel.

As both the Batavia Bus Service (BBS) which serves Genesee County and the Livingston Area Transportation Service (LATS) which serves Livingston County are subsidiaries of R-GRTA, the establish-

ment of linkages could easily be worked out and coordinated in-house between the regional bus systems. LATS also operates a shuttle service between the Village of Geneseo and City of Rochester. This LATS shuttle provides the potential for even more extensive inter-county travel through linkages between WYTS and LATS.

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) operates bus routes between the City of Buffalo and three Erie County communities close to the western boundary of Wyoming County. Possible linkages between WYTS and NFTA are certainly worth exploring.

Recommended Actions

- A. Consider establishing a link with the LATS shuttle service that operates between the Village of Geneseo and Monroe County.
- B. Explore the feasibility of establishing a link with the NFTA bus service in Erie County.

- C. Establish a coordination procedure between WYTS and BBS so Wyoming County residents can arrange for rides on the BBS bus to Batavia. Develop a similar coordination procedure between WYTS and LATS for Wyoming County residents to arrange for rides on LATS buses.

Initiative 3: Expand marketing and publicity to increase public awareness of WYTS transportation service and to increase ridership.

Background

Some, if not many, Wyoming County residents have the misconception that WYTS bus service is not available to the general public. This misconception was identified during the discussions at the public forums. Apparent common misconceptions are: WYTS service is provided only for the elderly and/or human service agency clients; and WYTS bus service is for medical appointments only. If such misconceptions were dispelled, it is anticipated that WYTS buses would have even greater numbers of riders.

Research also revealed that there may be significant numbers of Wyoming County residents who have little, if any, knowledge of WYTS bus routes and bus schedules. Many Wyoming County residents also may have no experience riding public transit and may be apprehensive about attempting to use WYTS bus service. Increased public knowledge and awareness of WYTS services could be expected to further increase ridership.

Recommended Actions

- A. Develop marketing materials to make the public aware that WYTS service is available to all Wyoming County residents, not just senior citizens and agency clients.
- B. Develop and periodically undertake marketing campaigns that target specific populations within the general population, e.g., senior citizens and youth.
- C. Periodically publish the WYTS bus schedule in local community newspapers and the Batavia Daily News.
- D. Periodically sponsor "How to ride the bus" workshops for people who have no prior experience riding WYTS buses.

Initiative 4: Explore ways to provide various types of enhanced WYTS services to the general public.

Background

The questionnaires used to survey WYTS riders, transportation providers and human services agencies asked respondents to identify enhancements they would like to see made to WYTS service. The suggestion most frequently cited was to extend the hours of WYTS bus service to include evenings and weekends.

Other suggestions for enhancing WYTS service included: the provision of a shopping shuttle, an expansion of bus routes, and the provision of commuter services for traveling to and from job sites.

Recommended Actions

- A. Explore providing shopping shuttle service between the Village of Arcade and Warsaw.
- B. Explore the feasibility of establishing commuter service for Wyoming County Community Hospital em-

ployees.

- C. Explore with select large employers the feasibility of establishing specialized commuter services for their employees.
- D. Explore establishing a shuttle service with fixed stops along Main Street in the Village of Warsaw using the loop buses between loop runs.
- E. Consider extending WYTS hours of operation into the early evening hours.
- F. Evaluate the need and feasibility of providing dial-a-ride service in the Village of Attica.
- G. Periodically evaluate WYTS bus routes to determine if any changes are needed.

Initiative 5: Explore ways to expand transportation services to agency clients and customers.

Background

WYTS currently has arrangements with several human service agencies to provide transportation for their clients. One agency with which WYTS has no such arrangement is the Livingston-Wyoming ARC.

ARC currently uses its own staff and vehicles to transport its clients who reside in Wyoming County to the agency's sheltered workshops located in Mount Morris and East Avon in Livingston County.

ARC is currently evaluating whether or not it is cost effective to continue to provide this transportation directly. ARC has expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of contracting with WYTS for such transportation services.

Recommended Action

Explore with Livingston-Wyoming ARC the feasibility of providing contractual transportation services for ARC sheltered-workshop clients who reside in Wyoming County.

Initiative 6: Work to improve transportation services for medical appointments within and outside Wyoming County.

Background

Currently, WYTS provides much of the in-County medical transportation for Medicare-eligible persons. Several agencies also use their own staff and vehicles to transport their clients to medical appointments both within and outside Wyoming County. Groups of volunteer drivers also assist in providing transportation to destinations both within and outside Wyoming County.

The use of public transportation to travel to medical appointments in Wyoming County can sometimes be challenging. Bus schedules may not correlate well with the times of medical appointments. Sometimes health care providers are not conveniently located in relation to where their patients reside.

Although, Wyoming County Community Hospital (WCCH) and several other health care facilities are located in the County, some medical conditions can only be treated by medical specialists or at tertiary health care facilities not found in Wyoming County. Travel to greater Buffalo or Rochester is often necessary for such specialized treatment.

Many Wyoming County residents who reside near adjoining counties may have physicians not affiliated with WCCH, but with hospitals outside Wyoming County. Even if the type of medical treatment is available in Wyoming County, these residents must still travel outside the County. For example, many Arcade residents have physicians affiliated with the Bertrand-Chaffee Hospital which is in the Village of Springville (Erie County). Many Attica residents have physicians

affiliated with the United Memorial Medical Center located in the City of Batavia (Genesee County).

Some residents must travel outside Wyoming County due to a lack of health insurance or money to pay for medical services. For example, there are no dentists in Wyoming County who accept Medicare payments. Dentists who accept Medicare can only be found in the greater Buffalo and Rochester areas. Veterans who rely on the U.S. Veterans Administration medical services must travel to Batavia, Buffalo or Canandaigua where VA medical facilities are located.

Providing transportation to medical appointments outside Wyoming County is especially problematic. Transporting people in groups for medical appointments is nearly impossible due to the logistical problems presented by different destinations, different appointment times, and different appointment durations. Such transportation nearly always has to be provided on a one-to-one basis.

Recommended Action

- A. Support the use of volunteer drivers, as needed, to fill gaps in service. Encourage persons with automobiles to volunteer as drivers and periodically hold public recognition ceremonies to thank volunteer drivers for their generosity.
- B. Explore establishing a linkage with the LATS medical shuttle that travels from Dansville and the Lakeville park-and-ride lot to medical facilities in Monroe County.
- C. Explore providing medical shuttle ser-

vice between the Villages of Arcade and Springville.

D. Work with physicians at the Perry Medical Clinic to coordinate appointments to coincide with the WYTS bus schedule for their patients who rely

on WYTS transportation.

E. Explore the feasibility of providing medical shuttle service to destinations outside Wyoming County for persons who have recurring medical

Summary of Recommended Actions

Recommended Action	Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Potential Cost
1. Maintain information about WYTS bus routes and schedules on the R-GRTA/WYTS website.			
A. Maintain bus schedules on website	WYTS	On going	Within existing budget
B. Advertise and promote website	WYTS	On going	Included in 3.B. & 3.C.
2. Explore ways to better link WYTS service with transportation services in neighboring counties and improve existing linkages			
A. Consider linkage with LATS Rochester shuttle service	WYTS	1 year	To be determined based on demand for service
B. Explore linkages with NFTA in Erie County	WYTS	3-5 years	Nominal
C. Coordinate linkage between WYTS and BBS	WYTS	1-2 years	No additional costs
3. Expand marketing and publicity to increase public awareness of WYTS transportation services and increase ridership.			
A. Develop marketing materials	WYTS	1 year	\$3,000-\$5,000
B. Undertake periodic marketing campaigns	WYTS	On going	\$6,000-\$12,000 per year
C. Periodically publish bus schedules in newspapers	WYTS	On going	\$6,000-\$12,000 per year
D. Periodically sponsor "How to ride the bus" workshops	WYTS	On going	No additional cost
4. Explore ways to provide various types of enhanced WYTS service to the general public.			
A. Explore providing shopping shuttle service between Arcade and Warsaw	WYTS	1-3 years	To be determined based on demand for service
B. Explore providing commuter service for Wyoming County Community Hospital	WYTS	Immediately	Contract fees would cover additional costs
C. Explore feasibility of working with large employers to provide commuter service for their employees.	WYTS	1-3 years	Contract fees would cover additional costs
D. Consider providing a shopping shuttle on Main St. in Warsaw	WYTS	1-3 years	To be determined based on demand for service
E. Consider providing evening bus service	WYTS	3-5 years	To be determined based on demand for service
F. Evaluate the need and feasibility of providing dial-a-ride service in the Village of Attica.	WYTS	2-4 years	To be determined based on demand for service
G. Periodically evaluate WYTS fixed routes to determine if any changes are needed.	WYTS and R-GRTA	5-year intervals	No additional cost

Summary of Recommended Actions

(continued)

5. Explore ways to expand transportation services to agency clients and customers.			
A. Explore providing transportation service to ARC	WYTS	Immediately	Contract fees would cover additional costs
6. Work to improve transportation services for medical appointments within and outside Wyoming County.			
A. Support and encourage volunteer drivers to fill transportation gaps	Board of Supervisors	On going	No additional cost
B. Explore establishing linkages with LATS medical shuttle	WYTS	1-3 years	To be determined based on demand for service
C. Explore providing a medical shuttle between Arcade and Springville	WYTS	3-5 years	To be determined based on demand for service
D. Work with physicians at Perry Medical Center to schedule appointments that correspond to bus schedule	WYTS	1-3 years	No additional cost
E. Explore establishing a medical shuttle for patients who have fixed, recurring medical appointments	WYTS	3-5 years	To be determined based on demand for service

Cost Implications of New WYTS Services

WYTS has very limited ability to provide new services without additional revenue to offset the additional expense. WYTS may occasionally be able to provide evening service or a Saturday shopping shuttle without new sources of revenue. To offer such new services on a more extensive basis is an entirely different matter.

The ability of WYTS to provide new public services is largely dependent on its ability to generate sufficient offsetting revenues. Most of the new services identified for consideration in this Strategic Plan would be expensive to provide. The following examples illustrate the magnitude of the expense involved.

- The annual cost to provide evening service on weekdays using the WYTS dial-a-ride and loop buses would be more than \$226,000. This would represent a 30% budget increase.
- The annual cost to provide Saturday bus service weekly would be more than \$90,000.
- The annual cost to provide dial-a-ride service weekdays in the Village of Attica would be approximately \$56,000.

The greatest potential for WYTS to be able to provide enhanced or new services to the general public is by expanding the transportation services

WYTS provides to human service agency clients. Such transportation is paid for by either the human service agency or by a third-party payer. Commuter transportation services underwritten by a large employer or group of employers also offers potential. Such new service while meeting the needs of agency clients or employees of participating businesses, can at the same time be used to provide enhanced services to the general public. The WYTS loop service represents an actual example of how this works.

The WYTS loop routes were originally configured to provide transportation for Stepping Stones Continuing Day Treatment program clients. A third-party payer underwrites the cost of the service yet the service is also used by the general public to travel around Wyoming County.

Two promising opportunities for WYTS to expand its contractual services have been identified. One is the potential to provide transportation service to Livingston-Wyoming ARC clients which is described under Initiative 5 in this Strategic Plan. The other is the potential to provide transportation services to employees of Wyoming County Community Hospital (WCCH). WCCH has been awarded a grant to recruit and retain employees. WCCH intends to use a portion of the grant to provide transportation for its employees and is exploring the possibility of contracting