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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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This chapter presents the recommendations for changes to public transit service within Pitt County. It begins with a summary of the issues and trends identified in the previous chapters, provides a series of overall guidelines for any changes, and describes specific recommendations to implement the guidelines.

### CHALLENGES

#### Challenge 1: Increasing Population and Employment

The Greenville and Pitt County area has demonstrated a healthy growth in previous years, as noted in Chapter 3. Total population for Greenville, the smaller cities, the unincorporated portions, and all of Pitt County, have shown a steady population growth between 1980 and 2000. Greenville's population increased 69 percent during this period, for an average annual growth rate of 2.7 percent. Pitt County as a whole grew 48 percent, a 2.0 percent growth rate. The portion of Pitt County outside of Greenville is also facing increasing population pressures. Of the 44,000 additional residents in Pitt County between 1980 and 2000, 43 percent, or 19,000 were outside of Greenville.

Assuming these growth trends hold, by 2010 Greenville's population will have grown by 18,000 persons, and the portion of Pitt County outside of Greenville will have grown by 12,000 persons.

Employment records are not available back to 1980, but between 1990 and 2000, the county's employment grew at a similar annual rate of 1.9 percent. If these trends hold, by 2010 another 13,500 jobs will be in the county.

#### Challenge 2: Increasing Enrollment and Patient Visits

East Carolina University has shown similar healthy trends. ECU enrollment increased 42 percent between 1980 and 2000, or an annual rate of 1.8 percent. By 2010, ECU Planning and Institutional Research is projecting a further 39 percent increase in faculty/staff/students, as reported in ECU's recently conducted parking study<sup>1</sup>. This rate of growth is nearly double the annual rate of growth from 1980 to 2000 and will add 8,580 faculty, staff, and students. ECU is planning for maintaining 30 percent of the students as residents on campus. The traffic implications of this allocation is that more and more students will not be within walking distance of their classes, thereby requiring more parking spaces and an expansion of transit service.

PCMH has had the most dramatic increases of all parties. Between 1980 and 2000, patient volume increased 459 percent, an annual rate of 9 percent, with outpatient visits increasing 2.5 times as fast as inpatient visits. This disproportional increase has significant traffic and parking implications for the hospital. By 2010, if these trends continue, total patient visits could increase by 400,000 annually.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecu.edu/parking/PSubReport.htm>

### **Challenge 3: Maintaining Air Quality**

While this growth is a demonstration of a healthy economy, it does bring with it increasing concern over quality of life issues. More population, employment, enrollment, and patient visits entail increasing levels of traffic. Along with the traffic increases comes a growing concern for air quality. While Greenville has not yet been found in violation of Federal air quality standards, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency has proposed two tighter standards for smog and soot. Under these new standards, Pitt County has exceeded the ozone (smog) standard in four of the past seven years, as shown in Chapter 3. So far, Pitt County has not violated the tougher standard for soot (or particulate matter), but only limited data are available.

Should Pitt County fail to meet the air quality standards, it runs the risk of losing all Federal transportation dollars. This is an extreme step that the Federal government would only take after other measures have failed; Pitt County would initially face increasingly restrictive standards and oversight.

### **Challenge 4: Providing and Paying for Additional Parking**

Increasing traffic levels also have parking impacts on ECU. According to the parking study, an additional 2,576 spaces are needed on the main campus in the next 10 years – a 32 percent increase. The Brody School of Medicine needs an additional 1,568 spaces in the same time period for an increase of 109 percent. The sizable jump for the west campus is due to the relocation of the School of Allied Health and Nursing. At approximately 100-120 spaces per acre for surface parking, these 4,144 additional spaces will require 34.5-41.5 acres of land. ECU has recently constructed a 1000-space gravel lot on Dickenson, which is reserved for Freshman in partial fulfillment of the additional parking requirement.

According to the International Parking Institute (IPI), surface parking lots cost an average of \$1,500 to \$3,000 per space. ECU's consultant estimated the cost to be \$2,000 per space. At this amount, ECU is facing costs of \$5.2 million for the additional parking at the main campus and \$3.1 million at the Brody School, for a total of \$8.3 million over the next 10 years. Besides the cost of the new spaces, additional transit service will be required since the new spaces will be further from the campus buildings. The parking consultants estimated this cost to be approximately \$140,000 annually beginning in Fall 2003, plus the expense of buying two additional buses, which was estimated at \$400,000 total. Total additional parking related expenses would be \$9.8 million through 2010, not including the costs of inflation or bond servicing.

The parking consultants also examined the potential for constructing two parking decks instead of additional surface parking for the main campus. Decks would allow parking to be provided in closer proximity to buildings, and would eliminate the additional transit expenses. Decks, however, are much more expensive to construct. IPI estimates these costs to range from \$4,500 to \$15,000 per space. ECU's parking consultant estimated the cost to be \$12,600 per space, reflecting the higher architectural standards in place at the university. The consultants estimated 1,800 deck spaces would provide a net addition of 1,500 spaces since some surface spaces would be lost. With this assumption, construction costs would be for 1,800 deck spaces and 2,644

surface spaces since the total demand is unchanged. Deck costs would be \$22.7 million and surface costs would be \$5.3 million, for a total expense of \$28 million. Additionally, the decks have operating costs for staffing and maintenance, which was estimated at \$250,000 annually beginning in Fall 2003, rising to \$450,000 in Fall 2006 when the second deck opens. Total additional costs through 2010 are estimated to be \$30.3 million, not including the cost of inflation or bond servicing.

A parking demand study was not available for PCMH, but similar pressures are faced by the hospital. Using the 9.0 percent compounded annual growth rates for patient visits given in Chapter 3 and assuming these growth rates apply to parking needs, for every 1000 parking spaces currently provided, an additional 1,365 spaces will be needed by 2010. In other words, PCMH must more than double the number of parking spaces in just a 10-year period.

Assuming 4,600 current spaces, this growth rate would require an additional 6,300 spaces. At \$2,000 per space, PCMH would have \$12.6 million in parking costs and would require 52.3-62.8 acres.

The above analysis assumes commuting habits remain unchanged from current practices. Considerable construction costs could be saved, and the land requirement reduced if more people switched to alternate travel modes. On the other hand, if auto trip making increased, additional costs could be incurred.

### **Challenge 5: Providing General Public Transit Service in Keeping with Population**

The increasing population presents a challenge to GREAT to continue to provide an equivalent level of transit service as the population increases. As described in Chapter 5, Greenville is not providing the same level of service per capita as similarly sized cities in North Carolina. To provide the equivalent level of service in 2000, Greenville would need to provide 10,375 additional hours per year, a 79.1 percent increase. At GREAT's 2000 cost per hour for bus service of \$45.99, the additional service's total cost would be \$477,000 annually. By 2010, to keep up with population growth and provide the average level of service per capita, Greenville would need to spend \$800,000 more than 2000 levels in current dollars.

Pitt County outside of Greenville does not have general public service readily available, although they can ride on a space available basis. Pitt County remains one of only seven counties in North Carolina without general public service. At a compounded annual growth rate of 1.5 percent, this portion of the county will see 12,000 additional residents without transit service by 2010.

Besides the general population increase, an additional unserved population is ECU students who are not within walking distance of the ECU or GREAT routes. While these students can use the remote parking lots at the university, it is not as convenient as having bus service to their location. Of the 5,690 students living off campus in Fall 2002, 45 percent, or 2,102, were not within walking distance of bus service. Assuming this number grows proportionally with the campus growth, by 2010 another 630 students will be outside walking distance of transit service.

## **Challenge 6: Improving Service Coordination**

Transit service in the area is provided by four separate organizations, each of which is designed for serving its own constituency, but none of whom is responsible for overall transit needs. Any coordination that occurs, whether in services, fares, marketing, or facilities, is a by-product of operations. As a result, a seamless transit system is not available to residents since each service is designed for its unique constituency. While this approach results in good service to the majority of the constituents, certain groups are not well served, principally:

- General public riders outside Greenville;
- Off-campus ECU students beyond walking distance of ECU Transit and GREAT; and
- Pitt County Memorial Hospital employees/patients without automobiles.

A major objective of any change is to improve transit service availability for these groups by coordinating the operations of all providers and allowing greater general public access.

### **GUIDELINES**

To address these challenges, the Steering Committee and consulting staff developed several guidelines regarding the provision of transit services and the organizational structure required to support those services. Specific recommendations to implement these guidelines follow in the next section.

#### **Guideline 1: General Public Service Should be Available to All Residents of the County**

Growth in Pitt County has not been confined to the city of Greenville. During the public input sessions, several groups requested service, and the Census analysis indicated the areas around Winterville, Ayden, and Simpson have the greatest potential needs. Additionally, 45 percent of the off-campus ECU students live beyond the area covered by ECU Transit and GREAT.

Pitt County is one of only seven counties in the state without general public transit services. Funds are available from both Federal and State sources to help pay for the increased service since fares cannot be set high enough to recover the full costs of the service.

Under this guideline, some type of transit service should be available to all residents. Most counties provide demand-response service similar to the current PATS service. In more developed areas, additional fixed-route service, such as provide by GREAT may be warranted.

#### **Guideline 2: The Level of General Public Service Should be Increased**

Greenville should offer the same level of general public service as the average level for smaller cities in North Carolina. For the small urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 that offer transit service, Greenville provides the lowest level of bus service hours per capita. The ECU Transit service does not factor into this examination since its services are not available to the general public, and the peer cities (excluding Chapel Hill/Carrboro) do not have university services provided.

During the next 10 years, the hours of bus service within Greenville should increase to match the peer group average of North Carolina cities, and should continue to increase in line with population growth. This increase could be accomplished by the City expanding the service it provides, or by allowing the general public to ride on the ECU transit routes.

**Guideline 3: Separate, Exclusive Transit Services Should Not be Provided to Areas of General Interest**

Competing services to areas of general interest should be avoided. Where more than one operator provides service to these locations, productivity suffers. Of particular concern are the services provided to medical and shopping locations. A single, unified service open to the general public should be provided. Where ECU service duplicates city or county services to locations of general interest, and where the city or county has capacity to absorb ECU riders, a separate ECU-only service should not be provided.

**Guideline 4: Separate, Exclusive Services (Shuttles) Can be Provided for Internal Locations or Where Sufficient Demand Exists**

Both ECU and PCMH have services that are designed exclusively for internal travel needs. Routes that operate internal to the campuses or routes that are highly used from remote locations to the campuses can continue to be provided by each group. ECU's parking shuttle operations and the routes connecting from off-campus apartments to the campus can continue to be an internally operated service. These routes do not serve locations of "general interest" and the general public services do not have sufficient capacity to absorb existing patronage.

PCMH's parking lot shuttles also fall under this guideline. They are located entirely within the hospital campus and serve an exclusive market.

This guideline does not prohibit either service from being operated by the public provider. If an analysis shows the public provider could operate the service more efficiently, or a higher quality of service could be provided for the same cost, the hospital and university may in the future decide to contract with the public provider for the service.

**Guideline 5: Service Connections Should be Provided Among the Systems**

Even though PCMH and ECU may continue to operate separate systems, connections between their services and the general public services should be provided. PCMH's shuttles should provide the local distribution function for travel within their campus, and riders from ECU and GREAT's routes should be able to transfer to the PCMH shuttles. Similarly, ECU's and GREAT's routes should connect to permit faculty, staff, and students to use GREAT routes to reach the campus and the ECU Transit routes to reach their building. This recommendation does not entail that ECU should open its routes to general public service.

**Guideline 6: High Quality Transit Service Should be Provided**

A high quality service is paramount to attracting new riders and keeping current riders. Vehicles should be replaced at the end of their useful life and replacement vehicles should be high quality. A vehicle procurement plan should be developed for all providers to ensure a regularly budgeted program is in place to retire vehicles at the end of their useful life. Besides high-quality vehicles, passenger amenities should be provided, especially at major transfer locations. These amenities can include benches, shelters, and potentially more elaborate transit centers.

Frequent service should be provided on all routes to attract the choice rider, subject to budgetary limits. Most small cities provide service at least every 30 minutes during peak times and every 60 minutes during off-peak times. A 30-minute frequency provides some options to riders for their trip time, and is a greater incentive for people to leave their cars at home.

**Guideline 7: An Integrated, Attractive Fare System Should be Established**

In order to attract general public riders to PATS, a consistent fare should be established, and should be set at a level appropriate for the type of service provided. General public riders will not use the service as long as the fare varies from day to day, depending upon the number of other passengers on board, and they cannot pay for the full cost of providing the trip.

A fare structure should be adopted that reduces the barriers to using transit while maintaining the financial solvency of the services. This guideline includes the elimination of a separate fare to transfer between PATS and GREAT and between the GREAT routes, and the adoption of a UPass program with major employers and ECU, such as described in Chapter 5.

To maintain the financial solvency of the transit system, general public fares should be raised to the same level as the average small city in North Carolina.

**Guideline 8: The Organizational Structure Should Reinforce the Service Provided**

A new organizational structure is desirable for transit services in the region. With the growth in population, employment, enrollment, and medical visits, the geographic barriers within the county should be dropped. This recommendation affects the general public services within the region, not the exclusive services offered by ECU and PCMH.

The form of the organization that permits the greatest focus on transit needs and eliminates turf issues among organizations is the creation of a new, separate transit authority. This transit authority would assume responsibility for the transit services now provided by GREAT and PATS and would be responsible for implementing the additional recommendations.

**Guideline 9: The Funding and Staffing Levels Should be Sufficient to Meet the Needs**

A dedicated funding source for transit is essential for providing the high quality service and expanded transit service desired by residents. The new transit authority should have the ability to establish this dedicated funding source.

Additional staffing will be required to implement the changes and establish a high-quality service. The current staffing levels at the County and City are inadequate for this role, and new positions are required to provide general management, planning, scheduling, dispatching, and street supervision.

#### **Guideline 10: Federal and State Funding Sources Should be Fully Used**

GREAT does not use the full amount of Federal funds appropriated to Greenville on a formula basis. From 1998 to 2000, the Federal Section 5307 Program appropriated \$1.5 million to Greenville, of which Greenville used 42 percent, or \$600,000. A remaining \$800,000 was not used due to the level of service being provided and the amount of available local match. This amounts to approximately \$280,000 annually that could support additional transit services.

PATS does not use State funds available to support the provision of general public services. These RGP (rural general public) funds are estimated by NCDOT to total \$25,000 to \$45,000 annually. The actual allocation will be dependant upon the productivity of the service in comparison with all RGP recipients.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations presented below provide more details on the implementation of the general guidelines of the previous section. A two-phased implementation is recommended. Phase I focuses on expanding and enhancing the level of general public service available throughout the region and improving the service and fare coordination among the providers. Phase II focuses on the creation of a new transit authority and the creation of a sound financing source for its responsibilities.

#### **Phase I – Short-Term**

Phase I covers the initial two years of the recommendations. These recommendations can all be implemented within 24 months of adoption, provided all parties work in harmony. The recommendations for ECU changes should coincide with the start of the ECU Fall Semester.

#### **Recommendation 1: Create a Transit Working Group**

The Steering Committee for this study has provided a forum for the discussion of transit issues within Pitt County, and has provided the opportunity for all groups to stay informed. The function of this group should continue after the completion of this study. A transit working group should be established composed of members of GREAT, PATS, ECU, and PCMH. Additional parties may be invited to join. Meetings should be at least bi-monthly to discuss items of mutual interest. This group will have the responsibility of carrying the remaining recommendations forward to implementation.

**Recommendation 2: Open the PATS Service to the General Public**

PATS should begin allowing the general public to use its services as soon as practical. Based upon experience at other North Carolina counties that have undergone a similar change, ridership could increase by 5 percent, which would result in an annual ridership increase of 3,400 riders, or approximately 13 additional riders per day. As a result, mileage is projected to increase by 5 percent. This mileage increase would increase costs by approximately \$30,000.

Much of the increase in costs could be offset by the fares charged to the riders and the additional NCDOT funds that are available for rural general public services. Conceivably, these two sources could pay for all of the additional costs.

**Recommendation 3: Convert the ECU Red and Blue Routes to General Public Services**

Two ECU routes serve areas of interest to the general public – the Red and Blue routes. The Red route provides a connection between the ECU main campus and the PCMH campus. Total daily ridership in Spring 2001 was 42 riders. Specific trip counts were not available, but the peak riders per trip was estimated to be three riders/trip. The Blue route connects the ECU main campus to multiple shopping destinations. Total daily ridership in Spring 2001 was 72 riders, with an estimated 14 riders per trip.

[As this final report was being prepared, ECU modified the Red route to serve the new Freshman Parking Lot on Dickenson. This change will significantly increase ridership on the Red route, potentially to the point where a separate Freshman Shuttle route will be required. Additionally, the Red route is slated for further changes with the relocation of the School of Allied Health and Nursing to the PCMH campus. Neither of these changes affects the underlying situation that PCMH is a destination of general interest, but the changes will affect the level of service that will be required.]

These routes should be converted to general public services. Two options were evaluated for this conversion – having ECU operate the service but allow the general public to ride for a fare, or having GREAT take over the services and allow ECU students to ride for no additional fare. In discussions with both ECU and Greenville officials, the conclusion was reached that GREAT operation was preferred. ECU student drivers did not want to be responsible for carrying the general public; the ECU drivers do not meet all of the safety training requirements of the Federal Transit Administration; and ECU buses do not have fareboxes.

Determining the specific routings for these services was beyond the scope of this study, but for local consideration, two potential routes were developed in a separate white paper to determine if the concept was feasible. These new routes are recommended for “express” operation, providing few local stops en route. Both routes would serve the ECU transfer point at Mendenhall, and the GREAT transfer point downtown. Both routes would offer service every 30 minutes, and the span of service would be the longer span offered by either ECU or GREAT. This results in more frequent service for the area served by ECU Blue, and since ECU operates this route on Sunday, Greenville gains its first Sunday bus route. The area served by ECU Red would have a longer span of service since GREAT’s routes operate earlier and later than the current Red route.



ECU currently provides approximately 2,800 hours of service annually on the Red and Blue, and this would increase to 4,100 additional hours of general public service annually. This increase in service is approximately 40 percent of the increase in service hours needed to bring Greenville in line with its peer group.

The cost of the expanded service is estimated to be \$191,000 annually reflecting additional hours of service, and the higher cost per hour for GREAT than ECU, due to the use of full-time drivers with benefits and not part time student labor. FTA formula funds would be available to pay for half the expense, or approximately \$95,000. ECU should contribute its cost of operating the Red and Blue route to the GREAT operation of these services. This contribution does not represent any increase in current transit expenses for ECU since it is already incurring these expenses. These costs are estimated to be \$71,000 annually. The remaining \$25,000 in additional expenses could be paid for by a combination of NCDOT and local funds. Private funds can be solicited for the operating costs of the Blue route from the businesses being served by the route. Specific amounts of funding from each source will be subject to negotiations among the parties.

#### **Recommendation 4: ECU and PCMH Continue Operating Their Exclusive Shuttle Services**

The current PCMH parking lot shuttles should continue to be operated by PCMH since it serves exclusively the PCMH population. These routes should continue, however, to be open to anyone traveling within the campus, including riders transferring from ECU (if the Red route is not converted to general public) or GREAT services. Convenient transfer locations should be established for these connections, with a location near the Brody School being the most important. The Rear Route should be modified to connect with the ECU and GREAT routes.

ECU provided service should be limited to areas of unique interest to the university, and in the short-term, where the demand exceeds the capacity of the general public service. This criterion covers all ECU routes except the Red and Blue discussed above. The remaining routes are all internal to the campus, or have ridership levels that exceed the available capacity on nearby GREAT routes. In the longer term, as additional public service is provided, the off-campus services should be considered for conversion to general public services.

Demands for new services should first be evaluated to determine if the GREAT routes can provide the service. New apartment complexes periodically request the provision of new ECU service, but this provision may not be in the best interest of the broader community. Since ECU routes are available only to members of the ECU community, the general public does not benefit from new services. Unless the new apartment is reserved exclusively for ECU-related persons, an exclusive service would not benefit all. Any expansion of the ECU service should be limited to locations where general public service cannot be provided, and where the location is exclusively composed of ECU-related residents or activities.

#### **Recommendation 5: Develop a Vehicle Procurement Plan**

GREAT and PATS should replace vehicles past their useful life. A vehicle procurement plan should be developed to spread out vehicle purchases, thereby lessening the need to incur large

expenses in one year. Staggered vehicle purchases also eliminate the situation where the entire fleet is gradually diminishing in quality, thereby causing the quality of service to suffer.

Based upon the current age of the fleet, GREAT should purchase three 12-year buses in 2003 and an additional three in 2004. GREAT was more aggressive than this recommendation and replaced four vehicles in June 2003. As a result, only two additional vehicles are needed in 2004. PATS should purchase seven vans in each year as a recurring practice, but 10 vans per year for the next two years.

### **Recommendation 6: Revise the Fare Structure**

The opening of PATS service to the general public requires the establishment of a regular fare for general public riders. PATS should establish the general public fare at an initial level of \$5.00 per one-way trip. This high fare is recommended as a way to control the potential demand and additional expenses of the service. To generate some interest, however, an introductory fare of \$2.00 per trip should be offered during the first month. After six months of operation, the fare should be reevaluated and reduced if there have been no capacity problems. Any reductions, however, should not reduce the fare below \$2.00 per ride. This fare level reflects the premium door-to-door service offered by PATS. Tickets must be purchased in advance to avoid having to add fareboxes to the vans; ticket outlets should be at all governmental facilities.

Along with the set PATS fare, GREAT's fare structure should be overhauled. The separate transfer charge should be eliminated, since riders view this as a penalty, and it discourages transit use. Fares should be increased to base fare of \$0.75. This base fare is more in line with the fares charged in peer cities, and the higher fare reflects the increased level of service offered and the inflation that has occurred since the last fare increase. Discounted monthly passes should be offered at at least a 10 percent discount. These fare changes could raise an additional \$10,500 annually. [In July 2003, GREAT increased their fares to \$0.75 for the base fare, \$0.35 for the elderly and disabled, and left the transfer charge at \$0.10.]

A UPass program is recommended for GREAT and ECU. At the \$0.75 base fare, the annual UPass cost could be set at \$5.00 per head for students/faculty/staff, or approximately \$114,000 annually. The actual cost to ECU (and the internal ECU funds used for the UPass) will need to be negotiated among the parties. The fare level can be reexamined after one year's experience and adjusted up or down based upon actual usage by the ECU Community.

### **Recommendation 7: Maximize the Use of Federal and State Transit Funds**

As noted in the previous recommendations, Federal and State monies are available to help pay for the additional expenses of the added general public service. These monies should be aggressively sought to maximize the return to the community. Any increase in Federal funds will require additional matching funds at the state or local level.

**Recommendation 8: Create a New Public Transit Authority Under Existing Legislation**

PATS and GREAT should merge organizations as a transit authority. This authority can be created under existing legislation – Article 25 of Section 160A of the NC Statutes. This authority should be established similar to the Pitt County Airport Authority, and be an interlocal agency between Pitt County and Greenville. This authority would have responsibility for the operation of all “general interest” transit services in the county, but would not be responsible for the exclusive internal shuttle services offered by PCMH and ECU.

Under the current legislation, since the authority has no ability to raise its own funds, Pitt County, the City of Greenville, and others would have to fund it. The General Funds could be used, as is the current practice, or some other source could be established. One potential source is for Greenville to exercise its authority to levy up to a \$5.00 per vehicle fee to support public transit, under Section 20-97 of the NC Statutes. At an estimated 45,000 vehicles in Greenville, \$230,000 could be raised annually through this assessment. Further analysis would be required to determine the most appropriate financing strategy.

**Phase II – Long-Term**

Phase II covers the period more than two years beyond the adoption of the recommendations. How long it will take to implement the changes depends upon the length of time required to reach agreement on the individual points. The creation of a new transit organization can begin during Phase I, but it is anticipated that the time required to fully implement the changes will take more than two years. Therefore, this recommendation is shown as occurring in Phase II. If agreement can be reached sooner, the new organization can be implemented in a shorter time.

**Recommendation 9: Review Authority Enabling Legislation**

The structure and powers of the authority should be reviewed to determine if future legislation changes are required to improve operations and funding. Having new legislation passed will require a multi-year strategy before the Legislature is likely to create new authorizing legislation. Rather than wait for the “ideal” legislation, the recommendation is to create the authority under the existing legislation and lobby for any need modification for future years.

One area that needs special attention is the ability of the authority to establish its own dedicated source of transit funding. A long-term dedicated source of funding will allow the transit authority to invest with confidence in additional services and capital facilities. It also opens the potential for borrowing funds backed by the future receipts from the funding.

**Recommendation 10: Expand Authority Membership**

While Recommendation 8 concentrates on the merger of GREAT and PATS service into a new authority, the ultimate authority should include membership of ECU and PCMH. A single authority with responsibility for all transit services provides for the greatest coordination of services and eliminates jurisdictional boundary concerns.

**Recommendation 11: Continue Service Expansion**

As noted in Challenge 5, Greenville is below its peer city average in the annual bus hours of service provided. Recommendation 2 added approximately 40 percent of the hours needed to bring Greenville up to the peer average. During Phase II, service should continue to be expanded to bring Greenville up to the average service levels. Specific areas for service expansion were beyond the scope of this study, but could include increasing the frequency or span of service on existing routes where ridership is strongest, or establishing new routes to other areas of the city, such as unserved concentrations of ECU students. Additional service can include routes to Winterville, Ayden or Simpson.

**Recommendation 12: Continue Capital Enhancement Program**

As noted in Recommendation 5, a vehicle procurement plan needs to be established to provide for regular replacement of the buses and vans used to provide service. This procurement schedule should continue to be followed in Phase II so that the fleet is regularly being refreshed.

Additionally, the new transit authority should work with ECU and PCMH to identify locations for potential transit centers. These centers would offer a central location where the individual services could connect. Specific locations have not been identified, but the general areas under consideration are the Mendenhall Student Center, downtown Greenville, and the Brody School of Medicine. Transit centers should include an area where connections can be made sheltered from the weather, benches, windbreaks, vending machines and other amenities should be provided. Potentially they could include restrooms, either limited for the drivers' use only, or open to the general public. Federal and State funds are available to offset a portion of the expenses.

With the relocation of the School of Allied Health and Nursing to the PCMH campus, and the continuing expansion plans of PCMH, planning work for a transit center at the medical campus should begin in the short-term. Such advance planning will ensure adequate bus access and egress locations, and will provide a suitable "footprint" for the ultimate needs of the transit center. Pedestrian paths can also be established now, with building entrances located to provide convenient access for transit patrons.

This development work is already underway with plans for an intermodal transportation center in downtown Greenville. Specific locations have not been identified, but potentially include an area near 10<sup>th</sup> Street and the CSX rail line. ECU continues to expand its campus westward, and the potential exists to reinstitute rail service to Greenville. An intermodal facility in this location has the potential to connect GREAT, ECU Transit, rail and even intercity bus services in one location.