



SECTION 9

**ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES
TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE
DELIVERY OF SENIOR
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN
CUYAHOGA COUNTY**

ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE DELIVERY OF SENIOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

ALTERNATIVE 1: CONSOLIDATE THE PROVISION OF SENIOR PARATRANSIT SERVICES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF A SINGLE, COUNTYWIDE ORGANIZATION

Description

This alternative would consolidate the management and operational responsibilities for senior paratransit under the auspices of a single entity. Under this proposed management alternative, a senior paratransit organization would be either established as a new entity, or an existing entity would be designated and charged with responsibility for consolidating senior paratransit services. Under this operation, possible entities that could serve as the management entity:

- ◆ Any existing local government;
- ◆ Any existing nonprofit organization;
- ◆ A newly formed paratransit authority; or
- ◆ A newly formed private, nonprofit organization.

This alternative targets all publicly operated senior services and those nonprofit organizations that may be funded through WRAAA for participation. Other organizations outside this defined scope would also be permitted to participate.

While paratransit would be the primary service mode, the organization would be authorized to operate other types of services, such as community circulators, to address needs. If the entity is not the GCRTA, the organization would be expected to closely coordinate with the GCRTA prior to service implementation.

Consolidation of service delivery is a commonly employed management strategy that can produce many benefits and achieve many of the objectives established by the Senior Transportation Working Group.

In this scenario, existing service providers would turn vehicles over to the newly designated/created organization under a nominal lease arrangement. Thereafter, future vehicle acquisition/replacement would be the responsibility of the consolidated management entity. This organization would assume responsibility for all call-taking, reservations, scheduling, management, and operational functions for paratransit service delivery.

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Alternative 1: Consolidate the Provision of Senior Paratransit Services Under the Auspices of a Single, Countywide Organization

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If a new organization is established, the Board of County Commissioners would appoint a Board of Directors, representing the participating entities (e.g., a representative from each planning region) that would be familiar with senior transportation issues who would provide policy oversight for the new organization. If an existing entity served in this capacity, then a policy advisory board would be established that would provide policy governance over the entity's operation of senior transportation services.

Consolidation typically means that all existing providers of transportation are integrated into a single operating entity. All entities that previously provided transportation would purchase this service from the designated lead agency. Formal contracts would be developed between existing providers and the consolidated service provider.

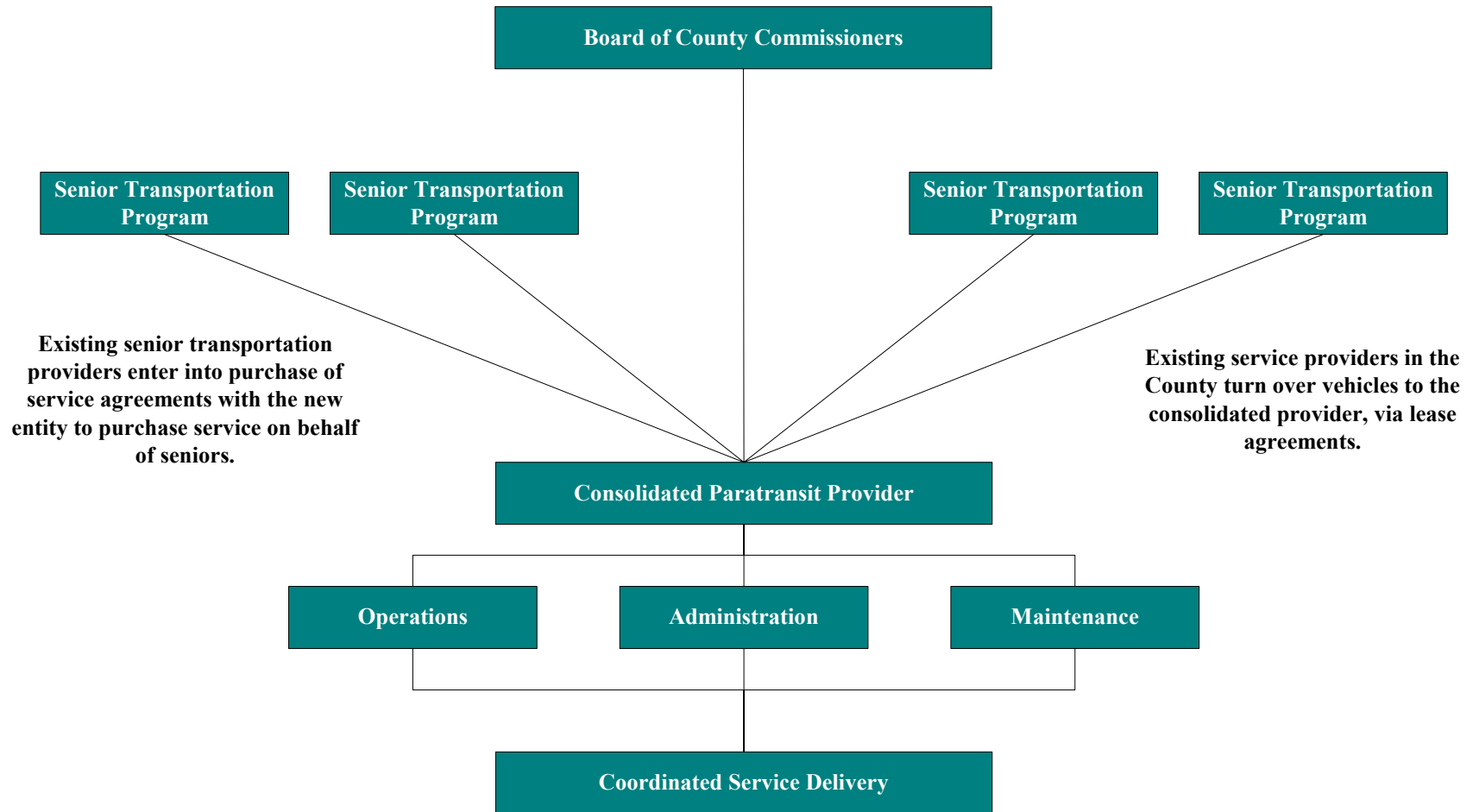
This organizational alternative is schematically depicted in Exhibit 9.1.

There are some powerful public policy arguments to support such an approach to senior paratransit service provision

- ◆ Vehicle utilization has been shown to increase in a coordinated setting, meaning that expensive capital resources (rolling stock) are used more effectively. By placing all vehicles in a centralized motor pool type arrangement in a consolidated system, it is likely that fewer vehicles will be required to deliver the same scope of services and that open blocks of time can be scheduled for other uses for any individual vehicle. The Phase II report found that many vehicles are under-utilized in the existing network of senior providers.
- ◆ Placing responsibilities for passenger transportation in the hands of a single-purpose, provider organization often results in a higher quality of service. Individuals with transportation management and operations skills, rather than human service professionals, assume control over day-to-day operations. This additional expertise often results in better staff training programs (i.e., staff is familiar with industry standards and course offerings), more sophisticated scheduling, more formalized vehicle maintenance programs (resulting in better service reliability), etc.
- ◆ A single entity will be able to institute common service policies ensuring that seniors in all parts of the county are entitled to the same level of service (or policy prescribed minimum service levels).
- ◆ A single entity can market and advertise a single point of contact for seniors to obtain transportation service (or information about other transportation services).

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Exhibit 9.1
Alternative 1: Consolidate the Provision of Senior Paratransit Services Under the Auspices of a Single, Countywide Organization



Source: RLS and Associates, November 2002.

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- ◆ The complexity of the scheduling and reservations process dictate that automation be utilized. The hardware and software necessary to process and schedule the volume of trips under consideration in Cuyahoga County is costly. By having a single source responsible for scheduling and dispatching, these costs can be expended at a single installation, rather than replicating the investment at multiple locations/providers.

Participation in this management alternative could be voluntary, or could be “mandated” by local governing boards and funding sources. Three potential scenarios exist:

- ◆ Participation Option A: Participation is mandated by state legislation. Various funding sources, as a matter of policy, would agree to finance only those organizations that participated in the implementation program. For example, Section 5310 funds would only be allocated to the management entity (if nonprofit, however, other arrangements are possible). Aging funds (Title III-B used for transportation) would only be used to purchase service from the consolidated program.
- ◆ Participation Option B: Participation in this alternative would be voluntary. But funding agencies would adopt policies that would promote participation through priority ranking, allocation of discretionary funding, etc.
- ◆ Participation Option C: In this scenario, there would be no incentives for participation, no special treatment in the competition for grant funds, and no penalties if the provider entity opted not to participate. Participation would be based solely on the merits of the plan.

Generally, this organizational alternative is not implemented using Participation Option C.

Because of the diverse geography of Cuyahoga County, vehicles would be stationed at various locations throughout the County to minimize deadheading from a centralized garage facility. This would require the new entity to formalize relationships with several local governments for secure overnight storage locations.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur.

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Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 1

Short-term actions will consist of several key tasks.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners. This action would include designation and/or establishment of the entity that would be the management entity.
- ◆ Communication, education, and policy development with project stakeholders – The first element would be educate, inform, and develop consensus for the action among providers and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Organization – If a new entity is established to perform this function, then short-term actions would include creation of the organization, development of staffing and organization plans, recruitment and hiring of personnel.
- ◆ Initial development of policies and procedure – Using this plan as a basis, the new entity would establish written policies and procedures on services, passenger assistance, reservation policies, etc.
- ◆ Stakeholder/Provider Buy-In – Once organized, specific participation levels would be established. This would include (under a voluntary program) the identification of specific providers who will participate in the program, the scope of services necessary to be delivered under contract to ensure a maintenance of effort (*e.g.*, the same service level or better), potential vehicles to be turned over the new entity, and statistical data and reporting needs.
- ◆ Execution of purchase of service and vehicle lease agreements – The last phase of activities in short-range actions would be for the entity to execute service agreements with participating jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations.

Intermediate-Range Actions Under Alternative 1

This phase includes actual start-up of operations. Proposed implementation under this alternative will be done in phases, based on geography. It is proposed that a three to five year timeframe be established for the new entity to assume services throughout the County. Incremental approaches are necessary to permit the entity to develop the necessary resources to deliver quality service. Such actions include transfer of/or building client data records (including information on residential location, emergency contact information, special needs, etc), planning subscription tours, hiring and

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training of additional staff, producing consumer information, educating consumers on the new service delivery model, and vehicle transfer actions.

In addition to the incremental addition of new organizations being served by the consolidated senior paratransit provider, other intermediate actions consist of infrastructure development, most notably development of a long-range capital improvements program.

Finally, the new entity will institute “travel planning” services during this stage. In this service concept, the reservations center will have access to computer software tools that enable schedulers and reservationists to display information on other transit modes. The reservationist can then recommend the most appropriate, most convenient, or least cost public transportation option.

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 1

Under this Alternative, the new entity and GCRTA would evaluate ADA paratransit service delivery coordination strategies with senior paratransit services. By the fifth year of implementation, the new entity would be firmly established as service provider. It would be appropriate to examine a further consolidation of these two services under the auspices of the new senior paratransit agency. This scenario would emulate the ADA paratransit/human service agency paratransit consolidation embodied by the “best practice” case study of Access Services, Inc. in Los Angeles, CA.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 1

Existing services for senior adults is insufficient to meet demand, delivered on a geographically fragmented basis limited cross-county travel opportunities, by a network of small providers, all engaged in different hours and days of service, with some agencies limiting trip purposes. This alternative will address many of the service variation issues cited by the Senior Transportation Working Group.

- ◆ Improved management and productivity of vehicle resources.
- ◆ Increased levels of service by institution of standardized days and hours of service throughout the County.
- ◆ No agency prescribed limits on trip purposes.
- ◆ Administrative costs for a single large entity will be less than the combined administrative/overhead costs of some 50 different senior paratransit operators.

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- ◆ A single entity will facilitate mobility of seniors across different jurisdictions.
- ◆ A single entity, providing countywide coverage, is better suited to understand other transportation options available to seniors.
- ◆ Advance reservation requirements would uniformly be provided on a next-day basis, thereby reducing the current one-week notice required by many existing providers.
- ◆ Uniform driver training procedures would be employed, ensuring that all drivers were trained in Passenger Assistance Techniques and other special needs of the older driver.
- ◆ A consolidated procurement function administered by the management entity would permit adoption of uniform vehicle specifications that acquisitions of rolling stock specifically designed for user by the elderly.
- ◆ A single management entity will be able to better coordinate services with GCRTA than 50 or more small service providers.

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Assessment of Benefits from Implementation of Alternative 1

This alternative establishes a countywide paratransit provider whose primary mission will be to address the needs of seniors who cannot otherwise utilize GCRTA's accessible transportation services. This system will effectively address public transit needs of the priority market segment identified by the Senior Transportation Working Group – the frail elderly.

This alternative, due to its centralized management, countywide service area, combined scheduling and dispatch center, and centralized fleet management, will work to substantially improve the utilization of existing rolling stock among the existing network of providers *without* any increases in the number of vehicles devoted to senior transportation. With the provision of 297,417 annual trips, and 172 vehicles in the fleet, existing public and nonprofit organizations average only 6.65 passengers per day per vehicle (based on 260 annual weekday service days).

This alternative would effectively implement the “one-stop shopping” concept sought by the Senior Transportation Working Group. In the intermediate term phases of implementation, travel planning software would be implemented so that with a single call to the reservations center, a customer could learn of all transit options available, including fixed routes, circulators, and paratransit.

This alternative would institute a uniform driver training program. This would ensure that all paratransit system drivers received training on passenger assistance techniques, sensitivity training, and other training appropriate to special needs passengers.

The new entity would have sufficient vehicle resources to address all trip purposes; no trip purpose restrictions would be imposed. Additionally, trips would not be constrained by service area restrictions.

As a larger organization, the new entity would reach the size thresholds necessary to support a cost/benefits analysis to acquire automated scheduling hardware and software, enhancing the efficiency of the scheduling function.

Under this alternative, the newly established entity would be responsible for developing and financing a comprehensive long-range capital replacement program. Many of the existing providers, having benefited from the County's one-time capital funding, have no means to replace these vehicles at the end of their useful life. Unless the County again provides funding, a substantial loss in existing services may occur.

Complementary Services

The service model assumed under this alternative is "direct operation." Under this alternative, the agency with designated responsibility for paratransit consolidation would directly operate vehicles.

There are two complementary service delivery alternatives. In the first alternative, the new entity could contract for services. In the second alternative, the organization could adopt a mixed use service delivery model, employing both direct service operation and contract for service methods. This is the current model employed by GCRTA for ADA paratransit services.

Additionally, while primarily focused on paratransit, the organization would be empowered to provide other non-traditional forms of public transportation (in close coordination with GCRTA) to address senior public transportation needs.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this alternative. These elements are defined as follows:

- ◆ If a new organization is deemed most appropriate (in lieu of designating an existing organization), there may be a public perception of creation of a new layer of unnecessary administrative bureaucracy in implementing this alternative. In some respects, GCRTA is already tasked the mission described in this alternative.

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- ◆ If a mandatory participation scenario is not developed, turf issues, issues of local control and custody of vehicles, and other parochial concerns may totally undermine program initiation.
- ◆ Many existing providers do not see a countywide solution to paratransit problems to be effective. Experience with GCRTA's paratransit service (although no longer designed to primarily serve elderly needs) has created a negative impression on the part of many providers. These providers may be unwilling to support a countywide service design, even if another entity is named or established to provide the service.
- ◆ Most existing providers do not practice full cost accounting in the management of their paratransit programs. Administrative overhead, city provided fuel and maintenance services, and other costs are not reflected in the organization's transportation costs. As a result, these entities will be unable to make a sound and fair management assessment of the comparative costs of direct operation versus the costs of purchasing service from a newly established consolidated senior paratransit provider.
- ◆ This alternative may require the longest start-up time among all the options presented. Indeed, it is projected that at least two years of short-term pre-implementation activity will be required before any service is offered.

ALTERNATIVE 2: ESTABLISH A BROKERAGE/MOBILITY MANAGER FOR SENIOR ADULT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Description

This alternative would establish a transportation brokerage for senior adult transportation. In this organizational model, the broker would not operate transportation services. Rather, the broker maintains comprehensive information, in computerized databases, of all existing transportation services. All requests for service and information would be directed to this one, single point of contact. The broker would operate a centralized call-taking center, on a countywide basis, to receive all requests for service. The broker would then match consumer trip needs and geographical characteristics of the trip with the most appropriate provider.

This concept, however, reflects more than just centralized dispatch functions. Under the "mobility manager" concept, the organization would be responsible

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for identification of individual passenger needs and creating service delivery mechanisms that address those needs.

This alternative embraces a service reality that often, a single transportation provider cannot meet the diverse range of services required of the senior population. Additionally, since this alternative does not entail any existing entity to “give up” direct service provision, implementation may sometimes be easier.

A schematic of this model is provided in Exhibit 9.2.

While the broker/mobility manager may be an existing organization, most communities that have implemented this alternative find that it is best to create a new organization or designate an independent organization that is not directly engaged as a transportation service provider to service as the broker. This ensures that there is no bias in the assignment of trips to their own organization.

The broker/mobility manager would serve as the “one-stop” destination for all information about transportation options and for booking transportation for senior adults.

The service would be operated on a countywide basis. One single, toll-free number would be established to link all residents to the broker/mobility manager. The broker/mobility manager would replace the call-taking and reservation function now found at all existing providers. While creation of a single call-taking and reservation function theoretically would be more cost-effective than 50 or more independent agencies handling this function, introduction of new technology resources to improve the performance of these functions will not necessarily create costs savings.

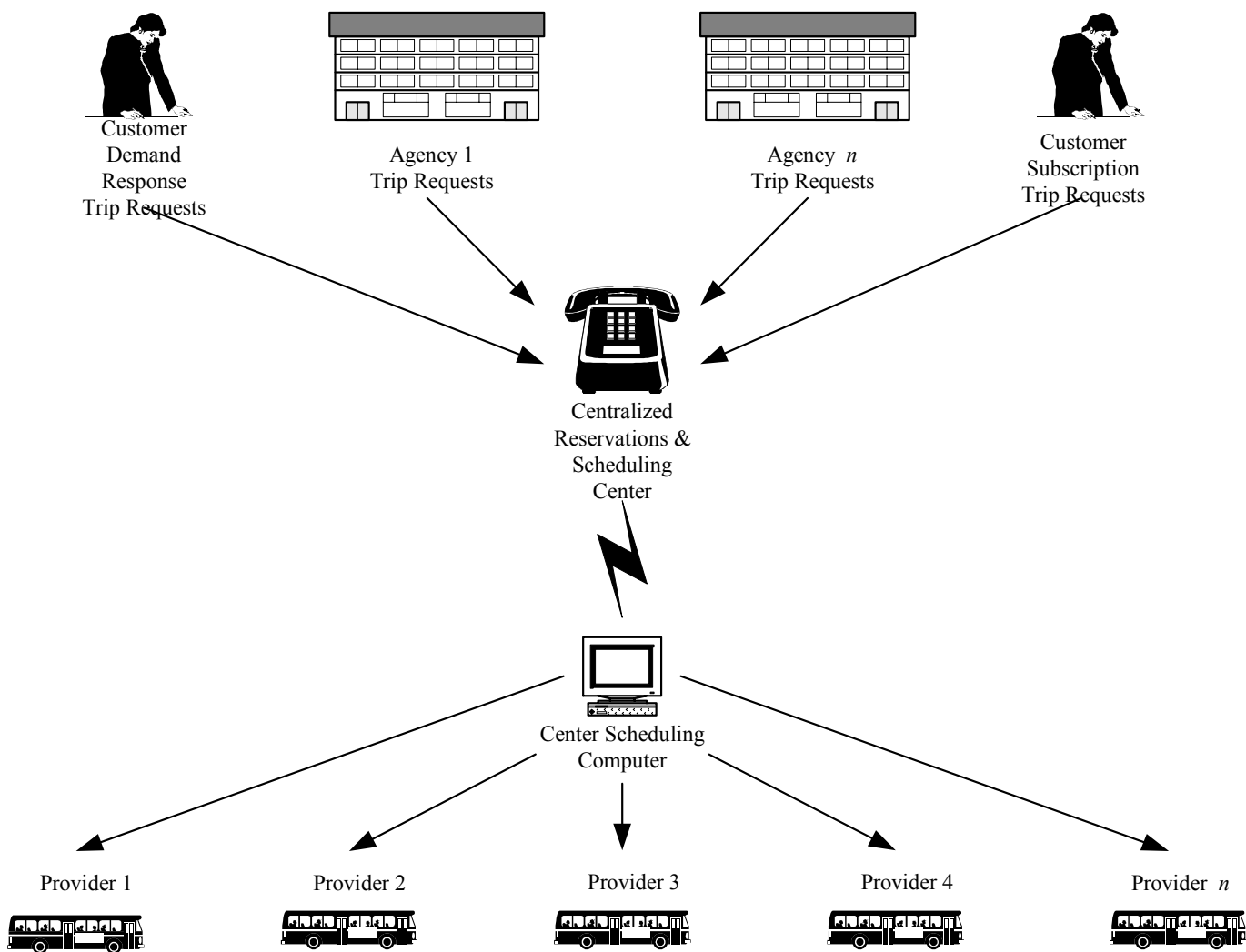
Under this alternative, GCRTA would still maintain call-taking, reservations, and scheduling functions for ADA paratransit. However, the broker/mobility manager, for consumer convenience, would be able to accept trip reservations on behalf of the GCRTA for paratransit. At a designated time during the service day, the broker manager would forward trip requests to GCRTA for scheduling.

An integral component of this service concept is the client tracking function. Responsibility for payment of trips, particularly when a client of Agency A is transported by Provider B, becomes a critical data collection and processing function. The broker mobility manager establishes client files for all existing clients/passengers of existing providers. When trips are booked on behalf of these organizations, a billing code is assigned reflecting the client and the

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Exhibit 9.2
Generic Schematic of a the Brokerage/Mobility Management Alternative



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

provider. If the customer is not a client of a particular organization or does not benefit from participation under a specific human service agency program, the customer is typically classified as “non-sponsored.” Responsibility for payment of non-sponsored trips would be that of the project sponsor, typically local government.

The broker/mobility manager is responsible for tracking and tabulating all units of service. When a provider performs a transport of a non-sponsored individual or has been deemed the most appropriate provider for another organization’s customer, the provider gets paid, typically on a per-trip basis, for the delivery of that trip. The broker is responsible for all passenger accounting and trip billing functions among participants.

Any existing provider would participate in the program. This includes the existing network of public and nonprofit senior providers, private for profit operators, and any other service provider that wished to participate in the program.

The services of the broker/mobility manager are paid by the project sponsor, typically through a fee for service basis. A per-trip surcharge is the most common form of payment, although lump-sum agreements between the broker and the project sponsor are also typical.

Brokerage and mobility management concepts are frequently used in several of Florida’s major cities/counties where seniors account for the major market share of consumers of the service.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur.

Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 2

Short-term actions will consist of several key tasks.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners. This action would include designation and/or creation of the entity that would serve as the broker/mobility manager.
- ◆ Organization – If a new entity is established to perform this function, then short-term actions would include creation of the organization,

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- development of staffing and organization plans, recruitment and hiring of personnel.
- ◆ Acquisition of mobility management software and telephony hardware – This alternative is heavily dependent upon technology to succeed. The procurement timeline for acquisition, including specification development, procurement, and installation/testing, may span almost two years.
 - ◆ Development of Provider Relationships – In the short-term implementation period, the broker/mobility manager must collect and establish databases on all provider services. Additionally, information on clients and customers must be established in order to perform the tracking and billing functions.
 - ◆ Consumer education – the broker/mobility manager and the providers must work cooperatively to communicate the new information center as number to call when seeking transit services.

Intermediate-Range Actions Under Alternative 2

This phase includes actual start-up of brokerage and mobility management functions.

During this period, the mobility manager would be responsible for identifying potential new services that are required to meet senior mobility needs. These services would be reported to the project sponsor on a periodic basis. Responsibility of researching, planning, and implementation of new services would be the responsibility of existing authorities (*e.g.*, the MPO (NOACA), GCRTA, or other appropriate parties).

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 2

All actions necessary to implement this alternative can be undertaken during the one- to five-year time frame specified for short and intermediate actions.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 2

This alternative's advantages include:

- ◆ This alternative institutes the “one stop” point of contact concept for seniors in that both information and trip-booking functions can be accomplished with a single phone call.

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- ◆ The mobility manager may be able to provide seniors with two or more transportation options in response to a trip request, thereby providing some consumer choice.
- ◆ The broker/mobility manager serves primarily as an administrative business entity and, therefore, is not duplicative of any existing service provider.
- ◆ This alternative institutes formalizes the call-taking and reservation functions countywide. At present, some existing senior transportation providers have no capabilities in this regard (customers call drivers directly on cell phones).
- ◆ The broker/mobility manager, through the monitoring of trip requests can readily identify potential travel patterns and requirements for new services, thereby making the existing transportation planning process more responsive to senior's needs.
- ◆ No existing provider is required to “give up” service under this alternative, thereby avoiding service comparability or turf issues.

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Complementary Services

Under this alternative, two separate call centers would be maintained – one for the broker/mobility manager and one by GCRTA for its complementary paratransit services. This alternative was structured in this manner as the GCRTA must adhere to some performance standards in the hours and days of operation of its reservations center that are not applicable to senior transportation.

This alternative does coordinate functions between the two entities by including the concept that ADA trips can be made by the broker/mobility manager then forwarded to GCRTA at a designated time each day for scheduling and service delivery.

One complementary service option associated with this alternative, however, would be the integration of brokerage/mobility management functions with the GCRTA's existing call-taking and scheduling functions. This alternative would avoid some duplication of effort. While GCRTA requires traditional paratransit scheduling and dispatching software, many vendors in this market offer a suite of products, including an integrated mobility management module. Implementation of this alternative would enable one IT support center for both scheduling and mobility management technology centers.

A second complementary service that could be established by the brokerage/mobility manager would be direct operation of services. The best practice embodied by the Ride Connection in Portland, OR embraces this concept. While begun as a direct service that evolved to a brokerage/mobility manager concept, the organization has found that direct operation or use of volunteers fills the gaps left in the existing service network. An analysis of the existing scope of services in Cuyahoga County reveals that gaps exist. This alternative would work to close those gaps.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this alternative. These elements are defined as follows:

- ◆ This alternative provides no service capability to expand the quantity of services to seniors, a major objective of the Senior Transportation Working Group.
- ◆ This alternative does not necessarily improve the quality of service provided to seniors. Programs that do not have a quality assurance program, minimum hours of service, lack a formal driver training program, experience capacity constraints, or impose trip purpose restrictions would still be in operation under this alternative.
- ◆ The establishment of a broker/mobility manager requires a substantial capital investment for the requisite telephone and computing resources necessary to perform these functions.
- ◆ While automated scheduling and dispatching software has been in the field for more than a decade, mobility management software is far newer, less tested, with a smaller user base. The performance and functionality of the software are not completely known.
- ◆ Unlike Florida, there is no source of funding for “non-sponsored” users of paratransit services.

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**ALTERNATIVE 3: ESTABLISH A PUBLIC TRANSIT/NONPROFIT AGENCY
SERVICE COLLABORATIVE**

Description

This alternative is modeled after the best practice example of the Ride Connection in Portland, OR. The alternative has been re-designed somewhat to better meet the needs of Cuyahoga County. This alternative is similar to Alternative 2 but more directly addresses the combination of brokerage and direct operation of services.

Under this alternative, the existing public transportation provider, key leaders in the aging network, other advocates of senior mobility, and existing transportation providers would establish a new nonprofit corporation to directly operate and broker transportation services. The organization would depend on GCRTA for many support services in the initial development of the service. It is envisioned that GCRTA would provide business “incubator” services on behalf of the new organization.

The purpose of the new organization would be to:

- ◆ Provide some services that are not currently provided by existing paratransit services (*e.g.*, cross-county trips).
- ◆ Act as an information and referral center.
- ◆ Act as an interface between existing senior providers and GCRTA
- ◆ Act as a technical consultant to existing service providers on transportation service issues such as:
 - Model driver training program
 - Risk management strategies
 - Passenger assistance policies and training
 - Vehicle preventive maintenance program development
 - Capital planning/vehicle replacement planning
- ◆ Establish a volunteer program to directly provide trips that cannot be accommodated on existing service or that cannot be accommodated in a cost effective fashion on traditional public transportation services.

Over time, the purpose of the new nonprofit organization would be to become a centralized call-taking/brokerage/mobility management center. These actions would occur during the three- to five-year planning horizon (intermediate) actions.

Included in the intermediate to long-range action plan would be the oversight of a quality assurance program for all providers who participate in the program as a transportation provider.

The role of the GCRTA in the establishment of this organization would be:

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- ◆ Provide technical assistance
- ◆ Provide interim administrative housing until the organization establishes its own administrative facility
- ◆ Provide capital assistance

The role of the new organization in support of GCRTA would be to:

- ◆ Provide input on the design and implementation of senior friendly services
 - Additional community circulators
 - Vehicle design
 - Community outreach
- ◆ Serve as a distribution outlet for system materials, promotions, etc. of interest to senior consumers
- ◆ Serve as a referral source for seniors who are not deemed eligible for complementary paratransit
- ◆ Act as a service alternative for non-ADA paratransit services that cannot be accommodated on existing services

Governance of the new organization would be through an appointed board of directors.

The organizational relationship between parties is schematically depicted in Exhibit 9.3 and Exhibit 9.4.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur.

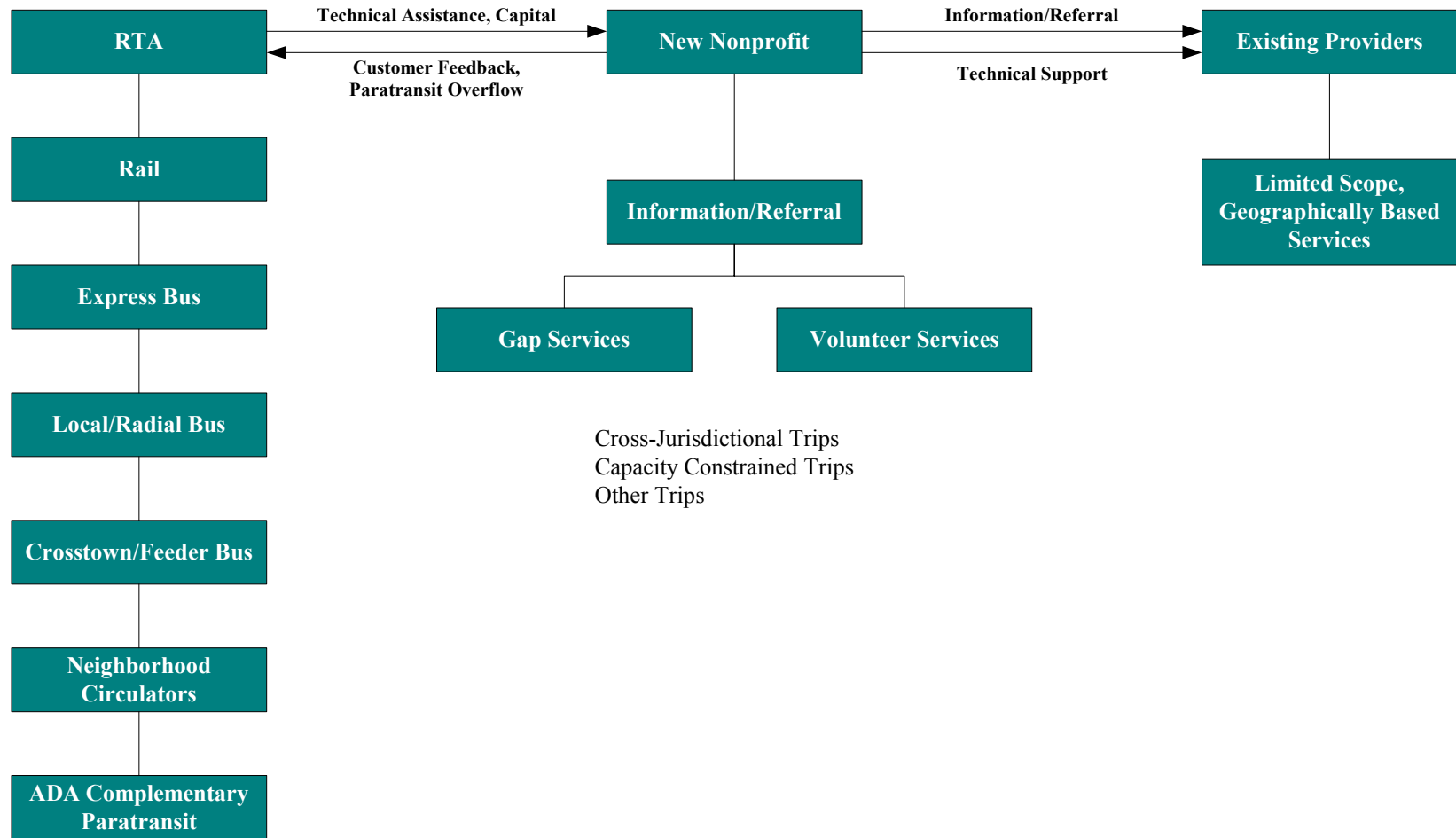
Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 3

As noted earlier, this alternative involves initial start-up on a small scale with the alternative evolving into a brokerage/mobility manager (incorporating elements of Alternative 2).

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ◆ Organization – Incorporation of the new organization, establishment of organizational by-laws and operating policies and procedures would be developed.

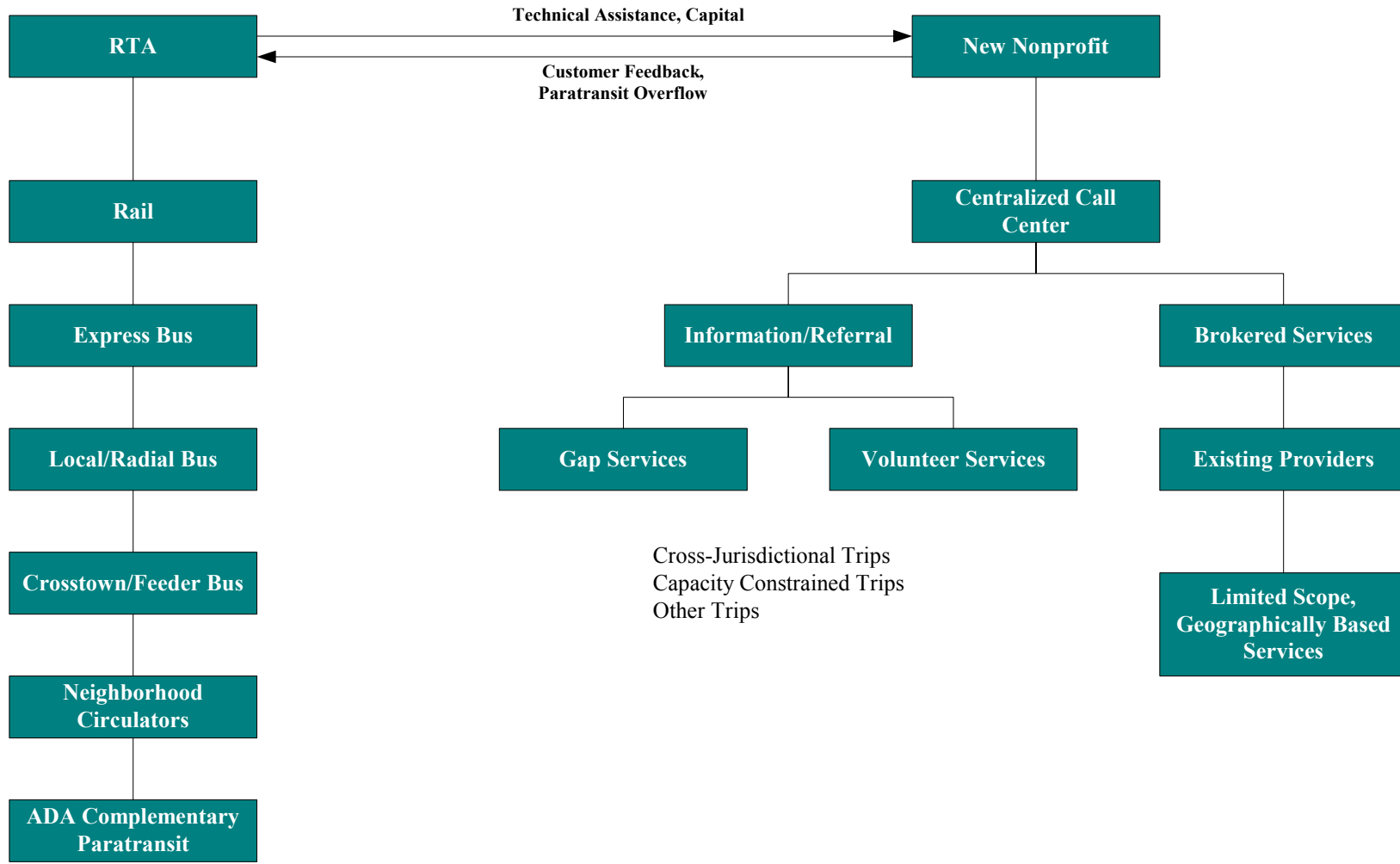
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Exhibit 9.3
Alternative 3: Establish a Public Transit/Nonprofit Agency Transportation Collaborative - Phase I



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

Exhibit 9.4
Alternative 3: Establish a Public Transit/Nonprofit Agency Transportation Collaborative - Phase II



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

- ◆ Staffing and Personnel – The board of directors would be responsible for hiring an executive director, who in turn would be responsible for recruitment and hiring of staff.
- ◆ Acquisition of Vehicles – Surplus GCRTA vehicles or new acquisition of rolling stock would be undertaken to initiate a limited scope of transportation services in the County.
- ◆ Establish Volunteer Program – This organization would employ an active volunteer program to deliver some trips that were neither practical or efficient to perform on traditional public transit or paratransit services.

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Intermediate-Range Actions Under Alternative 3

This phase would include the development on in-house capability to serve as a broker of transportation services in the County.

During this phase, the acquisition of the necessary computer hardware and software would be undertaken. The new nonprofit organization would initiate centralized call-taking functions during the later phases of the intermediate range implementation period (Years 4-5).

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 3

Long-range actions will include the gradual or incremental implementation of a provider quality assurance program. Under this program, the goal of the new nonprofit organization will be to increase the quality of senior transportation services by providing uniformity in service delivery, enhancing the quality of drivers and vehicles (through training and maintenance programs), and by development of a countywide special needs capital improvements plan.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 3

The benefits and advantages of this alternative are:

- ◆ This alternative institutes, in the intermediate-term implementation step and beyond, the “one stop” point of contact concept for seniors in that both information and trip-booking functions can be accomplished with a single phone call.

- ◆ The new nonprofit organization expands the quantity of transportation by serving, in the short-term, as a provider of last resort for those trips that cannot be accommodated under traditional public transit modes or through the network of existing senior transportation providers.
- ◆ The new nonprofit organization will only complement, not replace, existing services.
- ◆ In subsequent phases of implementation, the new nonprofit organization will implement steps to improve the quality of existing services through development of a senior provide quality assurance program.
- ◆ The use of volunteers to augment the provision of traditional public transit and paratransit services has shown to be a cost effective method of service provision in other areas of the United States.
- ◆ No existing provider is required to “give up” service under this alternative, thereby avoiding service comparability or turf issues.

**Alternative 3:
Establish a Public
Transit/Nonprofit
Agency Service
Collaborative**

Complementary Services

The alternative would again emulate one feature of the Ride Connection best practice wherein the GCRTA would utilize the new nonprofit service as a service provider for trips that could not be accommodated on the existing ADA paratransit network of in-house and contracted services provision. It is envisioned that the potential costs of trips on the nonprofit organization would be competitive with, or possibly lower than, the rates paid by the GCRTA to private, for-profit vendors.

Similarly, the new nonprofit organization could provide additional capacity to existing senior services provided by local government and various nonprofit organizations. These organizations are highly constrained by lack of vehicle resources necessary to expand services; the ability to utilize the services of the new nonprofit organization would possibly forego the need for local governments to expand existing fleets.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this alternative. These elements are defined as follows:

**ORGANIZATIONAL
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EXPAND THE
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SENIOR
TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES**

- ◆ This alternative provides only some modest expansion to the existing network of senior transportation services, thereby expanding the quantity of transportation available to seniors. As this alternative does not involve control over vehicle scheduling of existing providers, continued patterns of low utilization will continue.
- ◆ This alternative will not impact the quality of service provided to seniors until at least Year 5-6 of program implementation.
- ◆ The alternative does not establish any specific parameters for the level of coordination for the call-taking, reservations, and scheduling functions. In the intermediate term implementation steps, the new nonprofit organization will acquire mobility management software, possibly duplicating service that could be provided by GCRTA.
- ◆ While automated scheduling and dispatching software has been in the field for more than a decade, mobility management software is far newer, less tested, with a smaller user base. The performance and functionality of the software are not completely known.

ALTERNATIVE 4: ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT REGIONAL PARATRANSIT COLLABORATIVES THROUGHOUT CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Description

This alternative takes a Cuyahoga County “best practice” and implements the system throughout the County. This alternative proposes to take the TC³ system design and establish at least at least one (1) TC³ organization in each of the County’s eight planning regions.

In this model, existing operators of senior transportation agree to turn over their vehicles to a newly created nonprofit organization that would serve a multi-jurisdictional service area. The new nonprofit agency would provide turn-key services in the management, administration, operations, and maintenance of senior transportation previously provided on a smaller scale by the respective providers.

Each new organization would be governed by a board of directors who represent the respective communities of interest that participate in the system, similar to the board composition of the TC³ organization.

The newly established entity could be an entirely new nonprofit organization or a spin-off of an existing provider organization. For example, if an existing jurisdiction or nonprofit agency already had a substantial transportation

**Alternative 3:
Establish a Public
Transit/Nonprofit
Agency Service
Collaborative**

**Alternative 4:
Establish
Independent
Regional
Paratransit
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Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

program in place and was willing to serve in the capacity of the lead organization for transportation coordination in the region, then project stakeholders in that region would work with that organization spin-off the existing service to a new nonprofit organization. This action is typically necessary (rather than just have the other jurisdictions contract with a lead jurisdiction or organization) to:

- ◆ Ensure that other project participants have an active role in the development of operating policies and procedures and on-going governance of the system.
- ◆ Limit the liability of the parent entity that was selected as the lead operator. Under this alternative, the risk exposure is expanded substantially to include other service areas and a greater user base. Most local governments are leery of extending publicly operated services to populations outside their jurisdiction, even on a fee basis. For most multipurpose nonprofit organizations, the proposed scope of services would likely extend well beyond the organization's charter and mission. Thus, a new organization is often best.

The concept of each user paying a one-time \$5.00 registration fee would be retained, but on an elective basis. Newly established TC³-like nonprofits may elect not to impose such a fee on users.

The newly established nonprofit organizations would be responsible for all call-taking, scheduling, reservation, and trip delivery functions. Due to the fact that service was not countywide. Demands for automation would be less in this environment. If one of the organizations elected to pursue automated scheduling and dispatching, it would be free to do so.

Other organizational and operating characteristics of this alternative would be similar to that of TC³.

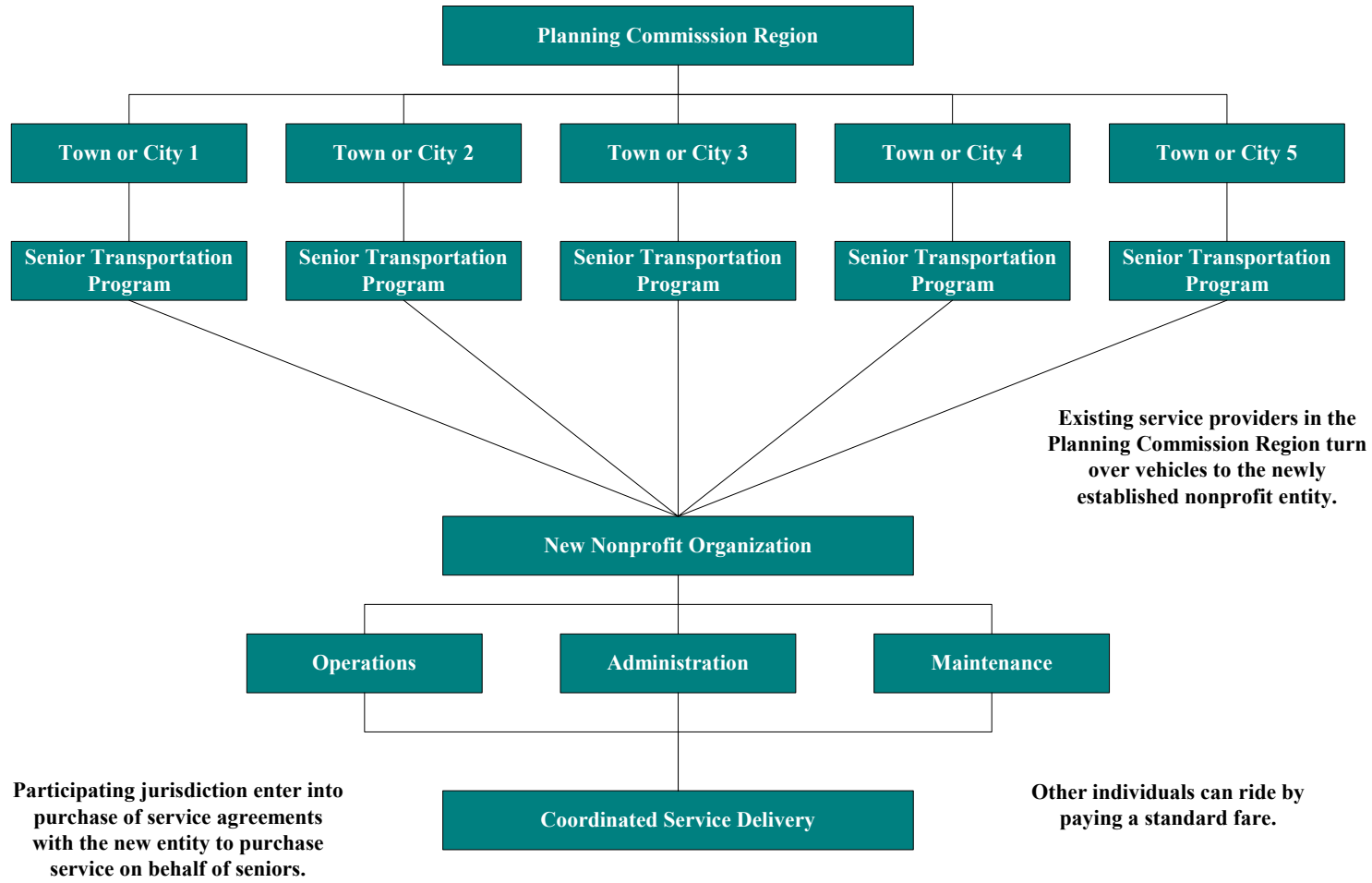
A key feature of this organizational alternative is the fact that the selection of an operator or the development of a new entity would be primarily placed in local hands. Self-determination will assist in the buy-in or sense of "ownership" in the system that is essential to coordinated projects like TC³.

A critical question associated with this alternative is whether establishment of a coordinated transportation operator of senior services in each region should be a voluntary action or mandated action. Various funding sources could establish grant policies that would necessitate establishment of such transportation collaboratives.

A schematic depiction of this alternative is contained in Exhibit 9.5.

**Alternative 4:
Establish
Independent
Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

Exhibit 9.5
Alternative 4: Establish Paratransit Collaboratives Throughout Cuyahoga County



Model is replicated in seven (8) Planning Commission Regions (West Shore, Heights, South West, South Central, Cleveland, Cuyahoga, Chagrin Southwest, and Hillcrest)

Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur.

Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 4

Short term actions under this alternative will include planning and organizational tasks.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ◆ Organization of Local Planning Committees – A planning committee would be created in each of the seven planning commission regions that would evaluate options for implementing the TC³ concept in their region. Issues of participation and governance would be developed, based on a planning template to be created by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC), WRAAA, and the County Department of Adult and Senior Services. Development of local service policies would be a key element of each planning committee.
- ◆ At the conclusion of each regional planning process, a new organization would be incorporated.

Intermediate-Term Actions Under Alternative 4

In Years 3 – 5 of implementation, each newly established coordinated senior transportation provider would begin operation.²

Each organization would hire and train staff, obtain facilities, develop customer education materials, and work cooperatively with existing organizations that service the older populations in their respective regions on use of the new coordinated system instead of the previous provider.

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 4

All actions necessary to implement this alternative can be undertaken during the one- to five-year time frame specified for short and intermediate actions.

² In some areas, the planning and organization process may not take longer than a single year. In those areas, implementation can be earlier.

**Alternative 4:
Establish
Independent
Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 4

This alternative's advantages include:

- ◆ Coordinated use of system resources will result in more effective utilization of existing rolling stock, thereby increasing the quantity of transportation without additional capital investment.
- ◆ The smaller scale of this alternative may work to mitigate fears of loss of operational control over transportation operations.
- ◆ This model has already been successfully implemented in the Heights Planning Commission region.
- ◆ This alternative may be one of the easiest to implement, as the service area is limited to a regional, rather than countywide basis. It may be easier to obtain consensus on coordination service issues at such a scale.
- ◆ Service can be initiated with existing vehicle fleets and resources. Capital acquisition to expand the fleet can occur at later dates.
- ◆ The scale of operation at the regional level may not require expensive hardware and software investments in order to effectively schedule paratransit services. Manual or semi-automatic approaches may be working at considerably less expense.
- ◆ The board of directors of each newly created coordinated service provider would be configured to ensure on-going policy oversight and local control over the transportation system.

**Alternative 4:
Establish
Independent
Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

Complementary Services

There are several opportunities for the newly establish agencies to work cooperatively to ensure connections between systems at designated transfer points, thereby enabling cross-region travel on paratransit for non-ADA eligible individuals.

GCRTA's ability to communicate services and schedules to a single coordinated provider (versus multiple providers within a region) will enhance the entity's ability to promote use of GCRTA services when appropriate.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

- ◆ Enhancements in the quality of service delivered by the newly created nonprofit corporation are not a certainty. As each regional planning committee will be responsible for their own service policies.
- ◆ As each newly established coordinated entity will be independent, there will be a certain amount of duplication of effort as each organization will have its own board of directors, executive director, etc.
- ◆ There is no guarantee that existing programs that fear loss of control if a countywide program were implemented would feel differently under a regionally organized program, thus jeopardizing participation.
- ◆ TC³'s success, in some measure, has been through the organization's financial support by various private foundations. It is unclear whether other programs would be as successful in garnering this revenue.

ALTERNATIVE 5: ESTABLISH INTEGRATED REGIONAL PARATRANSIT COLLABORATIVES THROUGHOUT CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Description

This alternative is identical to Alternative 4, except that some integration of certain centralized functions common to all eight regional coordination organizations would occur.

This alternative reduces duplication of effort that would occur in Alternative 4 with no linkages between any of the eight coordination entities.

The other major component of this alternative is that that the centralized management functions would also include elements designed to work to commons service standards that would represent service minimums for all eight systems. This action would work to ensure that that the service quality issues cited by the Senior Transportation Working group were in place for all of the County's seniors.

The central functions would include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- ◆ Establishment of minimum service standards, such as levels of passenger assistance policies, uniform no-show and cancellation policies, etc.
- ◆ Development of standard driver qualifications and training procedures.

**Alternative 4:
Establish
Independent
Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

**Alternative 5:
Establish
Integrated Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

- ◆ Centralized procurement of non-routine items
- ◆ Vehicle replacement planning
- ◆ Grants writing and fund raising
- ◆ Policy and communication
- ◆ Coordination with GCRTA
- ◆ Development of uniform vehicle specifications

The organizational relationship between the entity performing the centralized service functions and the otherwise independent nonprofit service providers is a critical one. There are two options in this regard:

First, a unit of county government could perform this function. Procurement functions may be problematic; however a procedure wherein a term quantity contract was negotiated or bid by the county that would permit the nonprofit services providers to order from that contract may eliminate potential conflict of interest concerns.

The second option would be to have the centralized organization be another nonprofit organization that would serve as the headquarters for “affiliated” service provider organizations.

A schematic of this organizational alternative is presented in Exhibit 9.6.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

The implementation timetable for this alternative is almost identical to Alternative 4. The implementation timeline, however, would be pushed back approximately one-year as the centralized functions must be developed first under this alternative.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 5

The benefits and advantages of this organizational alternative are identical to Alternative 4, with the following added benefit:

- ◆ Duplication of certain administrative functions would not occur, as each regional nonprofit organization would agree to permit the central organization perform services on their behalf.
- ◆ Quality variations between regional programs will be minimized with adoption of minimum service standards in some areas of operations.

**Alternative 5:
Establish
Integrated Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

Exhibit 9.6
Alternative 5: Establish Paratransit Collaboratives Throughout Cuyahoga County with Centralized Functions



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

The barriers and obstacles to implementation of this alternative are the same as Alternative 4 with the added concerns that:

- ◆ The relationship between the central entity and the affiliated nonprofit service providers must clearly define issues associated with adherence to policies and procedures.
- ◆ This alternative does dilute the amount of local control over service policies in the region.

**ALTERNATIVE 6: ESTABLISH A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION OF
PARATRANSIT PROVIDERS IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY**

Description

This alternative represents a minimum level of effort to improve the quality and quantity of transportation providers in Cuyahoga County. If consensus cannot be reached on any other management alternative or hybrid/combination of alternatives, then existing service providers should be encouraged to form a voluntary association of service delivery providers that would work with the stated purpose to improve the quality of existing services through information sharing, joint training, group procurement activities, etc.

Participation in such a program would be voluntary and there would be no impact on eligibility for grants, etc. if an organization did not participate in this alternative.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

All actions under this alternative would be implemented in one to two years. There are no intermediate or long-term actions under this alternative.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 4

This alternative's advantages include:

**Alternative 5:
Establish
Integrated Regional
Paratransit
Collaboratives
Throughout
Cuyahoga County**

**Alternative 6:
Establish a
Voluntary
Association of
Paratransit
Providers in
Cuyahoga County**

- ◆ Transportation technology sharing may improve an individual organization's ability to deliver transportation services.
- ◆ Conduct of joint procurement activities may benefit some nonprofit organizations that can purchase from bulk contracts.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

This alternative does not address any of the community standard issues identified in Phase I of this study.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Based on a preliminary review of Alternatives 1 – 6 at a meeting of the Senior Transportation Working Group on December 4, 2002, two additional alternatives were been developed. These two (2) alternatives are hybrids of previously developed alternatives, combining features deemed most capable of meeting project objectives by the Working Group.

In each alternative:

- ◆ there is a new nonprofit group established to manage senior paratransit services;
- ◆ the regional service delivery strategy (at the County planning region level) described in Alternatives 4 and 5 is embraced; and
- ◆ a centralized call-taking and trip reservation process is incorporated.

Additionally, under both new options, the concepts of service brokerage and volunteer transportation services have been dropped.

With respect to service delivery, these two options both envision that coordination of paratransit services at the county planning region level will be provided by an *existing* entity. If no existing entity is capable of providing such service, a new nonprofit, like TC³, could be established. In a previously developed alternative, the creation of a “new” TC³ was envisioned at all regions.

There are critical differences, however, in the two new management alternatives. In Alternative 7, it is envisioned that the new nonprofit organization will be closely aligned with GCRTA. The business incubation concepts of Alternative 4 are fully incorporated in this alternative. The short-

**Alternative 6:
Establish a
Voluntary
Association of
Paratransit
Providers in
Cuyahoga County**

term, intermediate-term, and long-term service delivery model will be organized at the county planning region level.

In Alternative 8, the new nonprofit organization will be developed independent of GCRTA. While services will be initiated at the county planning region level, under Alternative 8, the ultimate goal will be to consolidate the eight (8) regional services in the later years of implementation, establishing a single (or no more than three operators).

ALTERNATIVE 7: ESTABLISH A NONPROFIT AGENCY TO MANAGE AND COORDINATE REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY COLLABORATIVES

Description

This alternative is a combination of Alternatives 1, 3 5. This alternative incorporates the Alternative 1 concept of central management of paratransit services, the Alternative 3 concept of close coordination with GCRTA, and adopts the regional service concept of Alternative 5.

Under this alternative, the existing public transportation provider, key leaders in the aging network, other advocates of senior mobility, and existing transportation providers would establish a new nonprofit corporation to directly manage transportation services. The organization would depend on GCRTA for many support services in the initial development of the service. It is envision that GCRTA would provide business “incubator” services on behalf of the new organization.

The role of the GCRTA in the establishment of this organization would be:

- ◆ Provide technical assistance
- ◆ Provide interim administrative offices until the organization establishes its own administrative facility
- ◆ Provide capital assistance
- ◆ Provide the resources for the new organization to implement centralized call-taking and trip reservations

The role of the new organization in support of GCRTA would be to:

- ◆ Provide input on the design and implementation of senior friendly services
 - Additional community circulators
 - Vehicle design
 - Community outreach

**ORGANIZATIONAL
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IMPROVE AND
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SERVICES**

**Other
Organizational
Alternatives**

**Alternative 7:
Establish a Public
Transit Nonprofit
Agency to Manage
and Coordinate
Service Delivery
Collaboratives**

- ◆ Serve as a distribution outlet for system materials, promotions, etc. of interest to senior consumers
- ◆ Serve as a referral source for seniors who are not deemed eligible for complementary paratransit

Governance of new nonprofit organization would be the responsibility of an appointed board of directors. It is recommended that an 11-member board be established. One representative would be appointed by the participating jurisdictions and organizations in each of the planning regions. The County Board of Commissioners would be responsible for three (3) appointments.

This alternative is depicted in Exhibit 9.7.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur.

Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 7

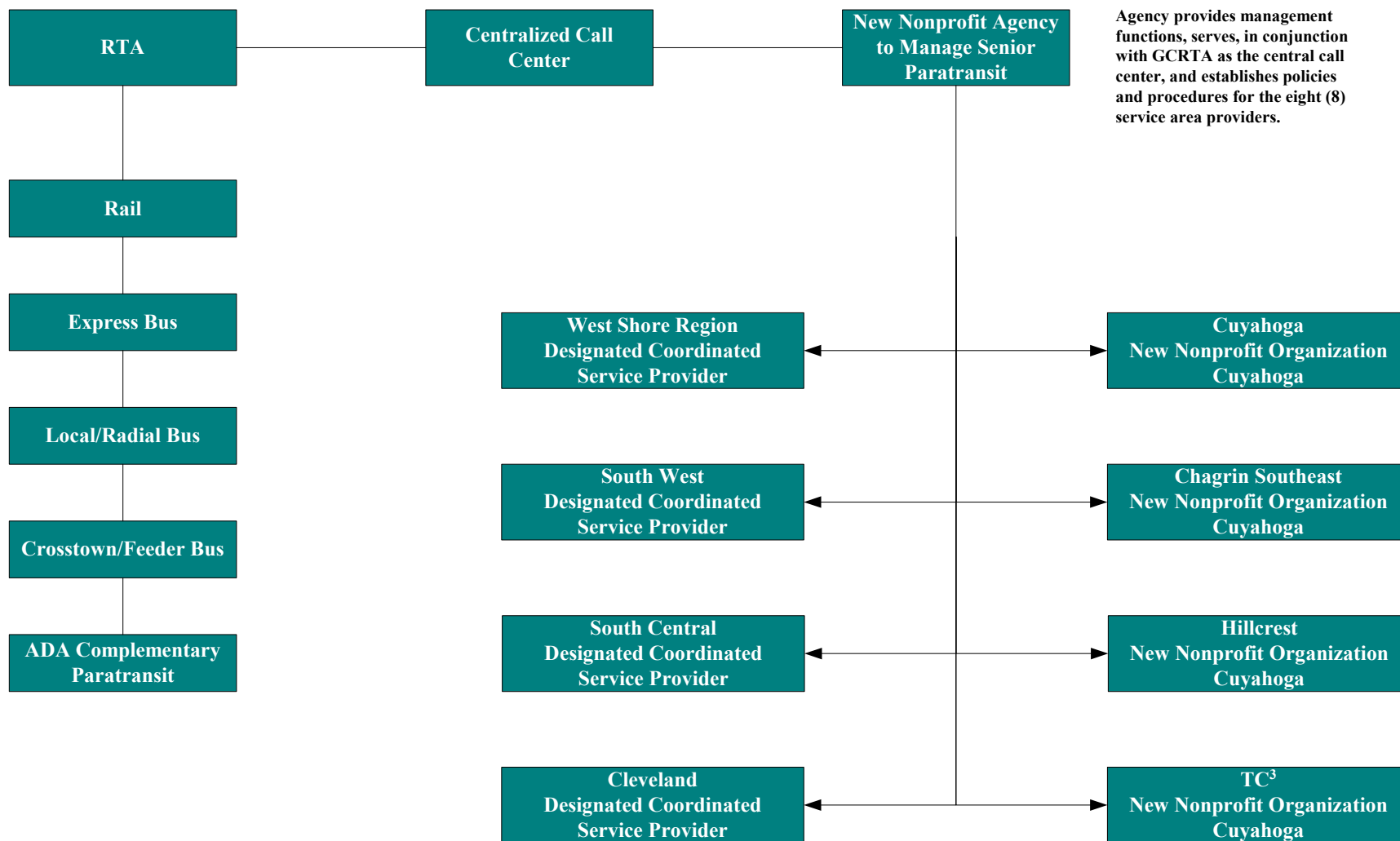
Short-term actions are designed to get the new entity organized and begin the process of establishing operators in the respective planning regions.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ◆ Organization of the New Nonprofit Organization – The Senior Transportation Working Group will take the lead in establishing the new nonprofit organization.
- ◆ Organization of Local Planning Committees – A planning committee would be created in each of the eight planning commission regions.
- ◆ A planning process will occur to designate a service provider in each county planning region.

**Alternative 7:
Establish a Public
Transit Nonprofit
Agency to Manage
and Coordinate
Service Delivery
Collaboratives**

Exhibit 9.7

Alternative 7: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives



- ◆ An implementation template will be developed to assist each region in transitioning to coordinated service delivery.
- ◆ TC³ will assist in the development of a peer-to-peer network to facilitate services coordination in other regions.

Intermediate-Term Actions Under Alternative 7

In Years 3 – 5 of implementation, each newly designated regional provider would begin operation.

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 7

It is anticipated that all actions necessary to implement this alternative can be undertaken in the short to intermediate range.

This alternative gives rise, however, to several possible long-range alternatives. It would be sound policy to evaluate the merger of GCRTA's call center with the new nonprofit entity. These functions could be spun off to the new nonprofit or be consolidated under the auspices of GCRTA. Potential coordination of ADA paratransit with senior paratransit services should be also be examined.

Assessment of Benefits from Implementation of Alternative 7

This alternative establishes a network of paratransit providers that will provide a uniform level of service, appropriate to the jurisdictional service area (population and population density) whose primary mission will be to address the needs of seniors who cannot otherwise utilize GCRTA's accessible transportation services. This system will effectively address transit needs of the priority market segment identified by the Senior Transportation Working Group – the frail elderly.

Like Alternative 1, this scenario, due to its centralized management, countywide service area, combined scheduling and dispatch center, and centralized fleet management, will work to substantially improve the utilization of existing rolling stock among a network of eight (8) service providers.

This alternative would effectively implement the “one-stop shopping” concept sought by the Senior Transportation Working Group. The nonprofit organization would also work closely with GCRTA to adopt appropriate trip planning methods for seniors that include not only the paratransit services

**Alternative 7:
Establish a Public
Transit Nonprofit
Agency to Manage
and Coordinate
Service Delivery
Collaboratives**

provided under the new entity, but all other public transportation resources of the GCRTA.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 7

The benefits and advantages of this alternative are:

- ◆ Because GCRTA is playing a critical role in developing the new organization, the complementary nature of the new services rendered would be considered an expansion, rather than a duplication, of GCRTA's mission.
- ◆ This alternative institutes, in the intermediate-term implementation step and beyond, the "one stop" point of contact concept for seniors in that both information and trip-booking functions can be accomplished with a single phone call.
- ◆ Duplication of certain administrative functions would not occur, as each regional nonprofit organization would agree to permit the central organization to perform services on their behalf.
- ◆ Quality variations between regional programs will be minimized with adoption of minimum service standards in some areas of operations.

Complementary Services

Central to this alternative is the reliance on GCRTA and integration of the centralized call-taking and trip reservation functions among the new organization and the GCRTA. Under this alternative, the new organization would piggy-back on GCRTA's planned acquisition of new generation paratransit scheduling software. Similarly, GCRTA would incorporate capacity considerations of the new entity in developing procurement/software specifications.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this alternative. These elements are defined as follows:

**Alternative 7:
Establish a Public
Transit Nonprofit
Agency to Manage
and Coordinate
Service Delivery
Collaboratives**

**ORGANIZATIONAL
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SERVICES**

- ◆ If a mandatory participation scenario is not developed, turf issues (issues of local control and custody of vehicles) and other parochial concerns may yet undermine program initiation (even if the scale of the alternative is at the county planning regional level).
- ◆ Most existing providers do not practice full cost accounting in the management of their paratransit programs. Administrative overhead, city provided fuel and maintenance services, and other costs are not reflected in the organization's transportation costs. As a result, these entities will be unable to make a sound and fair management assessment of the comparative costs of direct operation versus the costs of purchasing service from a newly established consolidated senior paratransit provider within their respective planning region.

**Alternative 7:
Establish a Public
Transit Nonprofit
Agency to Manage
and Coordinate
Service Delivery
Collaboratives**

ALTERNATIVE 8: ESTABLISH A NONPROFIT AGENCY TO MANAGE AND COORDINATE REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY COLLABORATIVES WITH PLANS FOR LONG-RANGE SERVICE CONSOLIDATION

Description

This alternative combines the concept of Alternative 1 (centralized administration) with the regional service delivery collaborative concept of Alternative 5. This options differs from Alternative 5 in that establishment of regional collaboratives is a short-range strategy only; ultimately, service will be coordinated throughout the county by the end of the 10-year planning horizon encompassed by this study. While this alternative envisions consolidation under the auspices of a single entity (per Alternative 1), this alternative does not necessarily dictate consolidation. Subsequent planning may recommend that additional providers will provide the most sense from a service efficiency standpoint (e.g., one provider for Cleveland, one provider for the eastern suburbs, and one provider for the western suburbs).

This alternative, like Alternative 1, targets all publicly operated senior services and those nonprofit organizations that may be funded through WRAAA for participation. Other organizations outside this defined scope would also be permitted to participate.

While paratransit would be the primary service mode, the organization would be authorized to operate other types of services, such as community circulators, to address needs. The organization would be expected to closely coordinate with the GCRTA in service implementation. As GCRTA moves to expand its network of neighborhood circulators, it is expected that it will contract out the operation of these expanded services. The new organization could be a competitive bidder on such services. Neighborhood circulators

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could work to diminish the demand for more costly (on a cost per trip basis) paratransit services.

This organization would assume responsibility for most transit management functions, including:

- ◆ Policy development
- ◆ Service planning, including short- and long-range development plans and vehicle replacement plans
- ◆ Marketing and public relations
- ◆ Financial management and accounting
- ◆ Procurement
- ◆ Personal policies

Responsibilities for operations would rest primarily with the eight (8) regional paratransit collaboratives, in accordance with policies and procedures established by the new, nonprofit agency. Centralized operational functions would include:

- ◆ Central call center
- ◆ Trip scheduling
- ◆ Information/referral

Paratransit operations, however, would be organized at the regional level. It is proposed that the eight (8) regional planning regions used by the Planning Commission be employed. In each region, participating local governments and nonprofit organizations would choose the service provider responsible for paratransit services in the region. These organizations would have responsibility for some components of paratransit operations, including:

- ◆ Assigning vehicles and drivers
- ◆ Monitoring daily operations
- ◆ Handling emergencies
- ◆ Vehicle maintenance

While the operator at the regional level would be selected through a consensus decision-making process, primary control of the system will rest with the new nonprofit organization to ensure adequate management oversight of paratransit operations.

Governance of new nonprofit organization would be the responsibility of an appointed board of directors. It is recommended that an 11-member board be established. One representative would be appointed by the participating jurisdictions and organizations in each of the planning regions. The County Board of Commissioners would be responsible for three (3) appointments. This organizational alternative is depicted in Exhibits 9.8 and 9.9.

**Alternative 8:
Establish a
Nonprofit Agency
to Manage and
Coordinate
Regional Service
Delivery
Collaboratives with
Plans for Long-
Range Service
Consolidation**

Exhibit 9.8
Alternative 8: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives
With Plans for Long-Range Consolidation – Phase I

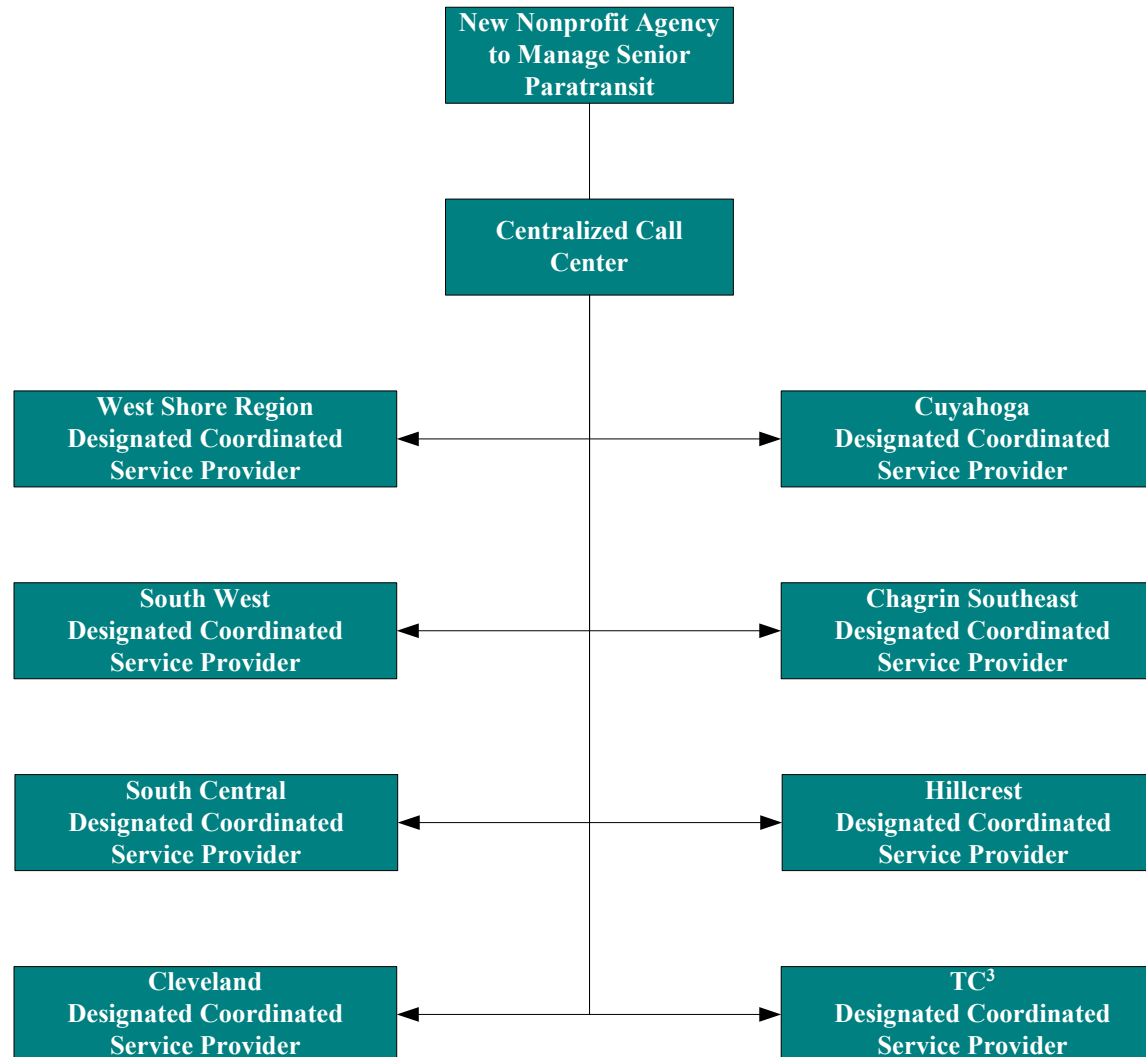
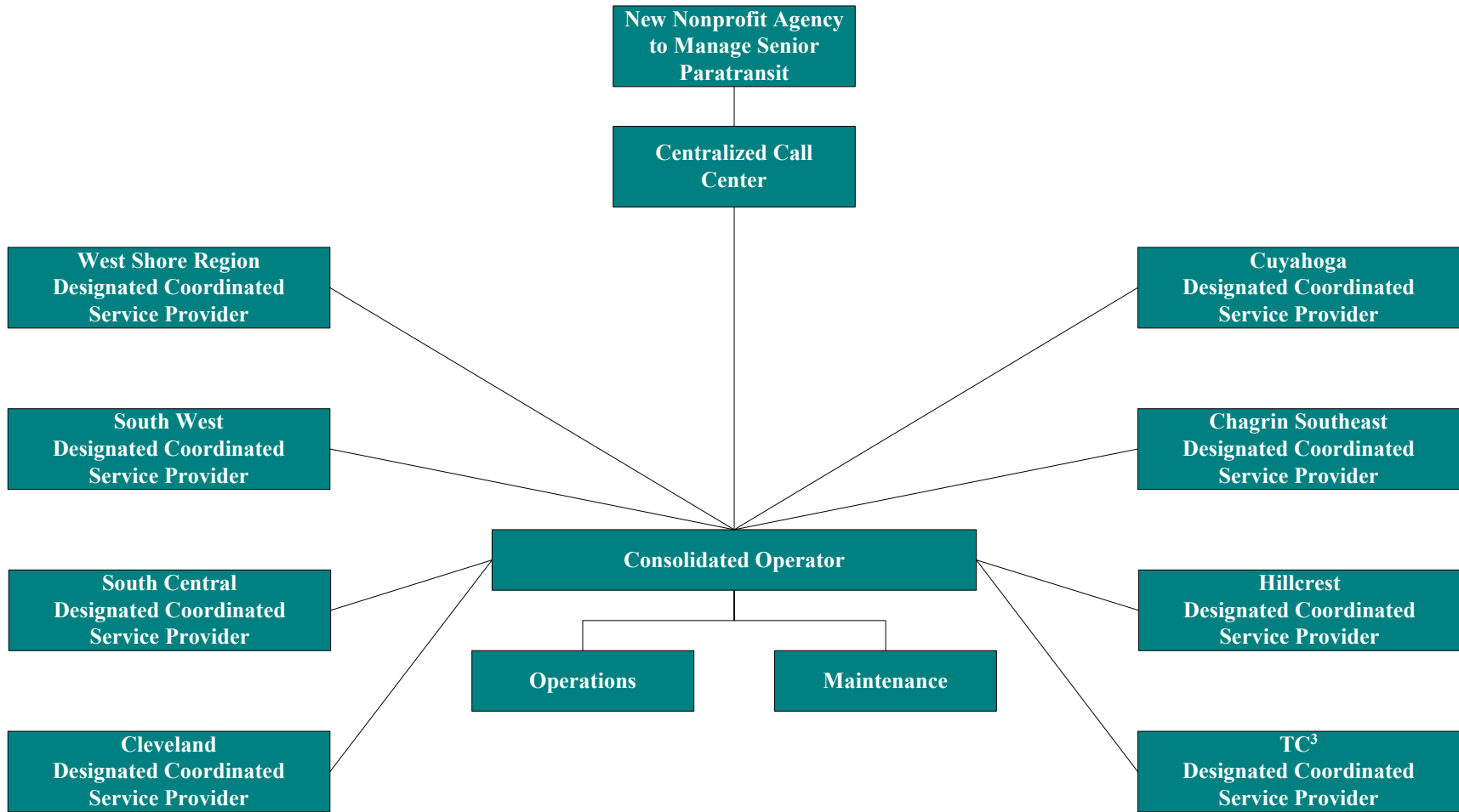


Exhibit 9.9
Alternative 8: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives
With Plans for Long-Range Consolidation – Phase II



Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

Under this alternative, clearly defined implementation stages will occur. The regional service delivery strategy

Short-Term Actions Under Alternative 8

Short-term actions are designed to get the new entity organized and begin the process of establishing operators in the respective planning regions.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ◆ Organization of the New Nonprofit Organization – The Senior Transportation Working Group will take the lead in establishing the new nonprofit organization.
- ◆ Organization of Local Planning Committees – A planning committee would be created in each of the eight planning commission regions.
- ◆ A coordinated service provider will be named in each region.

One of the key elements in the scope of short-range elements would be the development of specifications and acquisition of scheduling software and hardware. This process will take approximately 12 – 18 months to go develop specifications, conduct the procurement, award the bid, purchase and install the software, test the software, and conduct staff training.

Intermediate-Term Actions Under Alternative 8

In Years 3 – 5 of implementation, each newly designated regional provider would begin operation.³

It is anticipated that each named regional provider would already be a paratransit provider so service could be initiated with a minimum of effort traditionally associated with a new service start-up. During this period, the new nonprofit organization would also begin to plan for the merger of services among the regions, where feasible.

³ In some areas, the planning and organization process may not take longer than a single year. In those areas, implementation can be earlier.

**Alternative 8:
Establish a
Nonprofit Agency
to Manage and
Coordinate
Regional Service
Delivery
Collaboratives with
Plans for Long-
Range Service
Consolidation**

Long-Range Actions Under Alternative 8

During this final stage of implementation, the new nonprofit organization would work to consolidate services among the regions. This does not necessarily mean one, single provider. Analysis conducted in the Intermediate Phase would determine whether some of the outlying suburban regions would be best served by a single provider or a second provider in the network.

Benefits/Advantages of Alternative 8

This alternative combines the advantages of Alternative 1 and Alternative 5.

- ◆ Improved management and productivity of vehicle resources through central management.
- ◆ Increased levels of service by institution of standardized⁴ days and hours of service throughout the County.
- ◆ Administrative costs for a single large entity will be less than the combined administrative/overhead costs of some 8 different senior paratransit operators.
- ◆ A single entity, managing countywide coverage, is better suited to understand other transportation options available to seniors.
- ◆ Advance reservation requirements would uniformly be provided on a next-day basis, thereby reducing the current one-week notice required by many existing providers.
- ◆ Uniform driver training procedures would be employed, ensuring that all drivers were trained in Passenger Assistance Techniques and other special needs of the older driver.
- ◆ A consolidated procurement function administered by the management entity would permit adoption of uniform vehicle specifications that acquisitions of rolling stock specifically designed for user by the elderly.
- ◆ A single management entity will be able to better coordinate services with GCRTA than 50 or more small service providers.
- ◆ The scale of this alternative (from an operations perspective) may work to mitigate fears of loss of operational control over transportation services.
- ◆ This alternative may be one of the easiest to implement, as the service area is limited to a regional, rather than countywide basis. It may be easier to obtain consensus on coordination service issues at such a scale.

⁴ Standardization of service criteria (e.g., days and hours of service, trip purposes, etc.) may be adjusted to reflect population and population density.

**Alternative 8:
Establish a
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- ◆ Service can be initiated with existing vehicle fleets and resources. Capital acquisition to expand the fleet can occur at later dates.

Assessment of Benefits from Implementation of Alternative 8

This alternative is similar with respect to benefits as Alternative 7 – consolidated management will ensure uniform service policies while centralized call-taking and trip booking will result in increased utilization of equipment.

Another key element of this alternative would be the execution of planning activities to ensure that a four-year vehicle replacement and capital acquisition schedule is developed and approved for each region in the County.

Complementary Services

The potential to develop complementary services under this alternative are identical to that described under Alternative 5. There are opportunities for the newly established nonprofit organization to work cooperatively to ensure connections between the eight (8) systems at designated transfer points, thereby enabling cross-region travel on paratransit for non-ADA eligible individuals during the short-term and intermediate implementation stages.

GCRTA's ability to communicate services and schedules to a single coordinated provider (versus multiple providers within a region) will enhance the entity's ability to promote use of GCRTA services when appropriate.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Alternative

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this alternative. These elements are defined as follows:

- ◆ There may be a public perception that this alternative creates a new layer of unnecessary administrative bureaucracy in the establishment of the new nonprofit organization. GCRTA is perceived by some of the public as already tasked with the mission described in this alternative.
- ◆ If a mandatory participation scenario is not developed, turf issues, issues of local control and custody of vehicles, and other parochial concerns may yet undermine program initiation.

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- ◆ Most existing providers do not practice full cost accounting in the management of their paratransit programs. Administrative overhead, city provided fuel and maintenance services, and other costs are not reflected in the organization's transportation costs. As a result, these entities will be unable to make a sound and fair management assessment of the comparative costs of direct operation versus the costs of purchasing service from a newly established consolidated senior paratransit provider within their respective planning region.
- ◆ The relationship between the central entity and the affiliated nonprofit service providers must clearly define issues associated with adherence to policies and procedures.

EVALUATION CHARTS

To facilitate committee review of the alternatives, charts have been prepared listing the 11 evaluation criteria and the consultant's third party evaluation, on a scale of 1 – 10, to indicate the relative strength of each alternative.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE DELIVERY OF SENIOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Alternative 8: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives with Plans for Long- Range Service Consolidation

Exhibit 9.10

Evaluation of Alternative 1: Consolidate the Provision of Senior Paratransit Services Under the Auspices of a Single, Countywide Organization

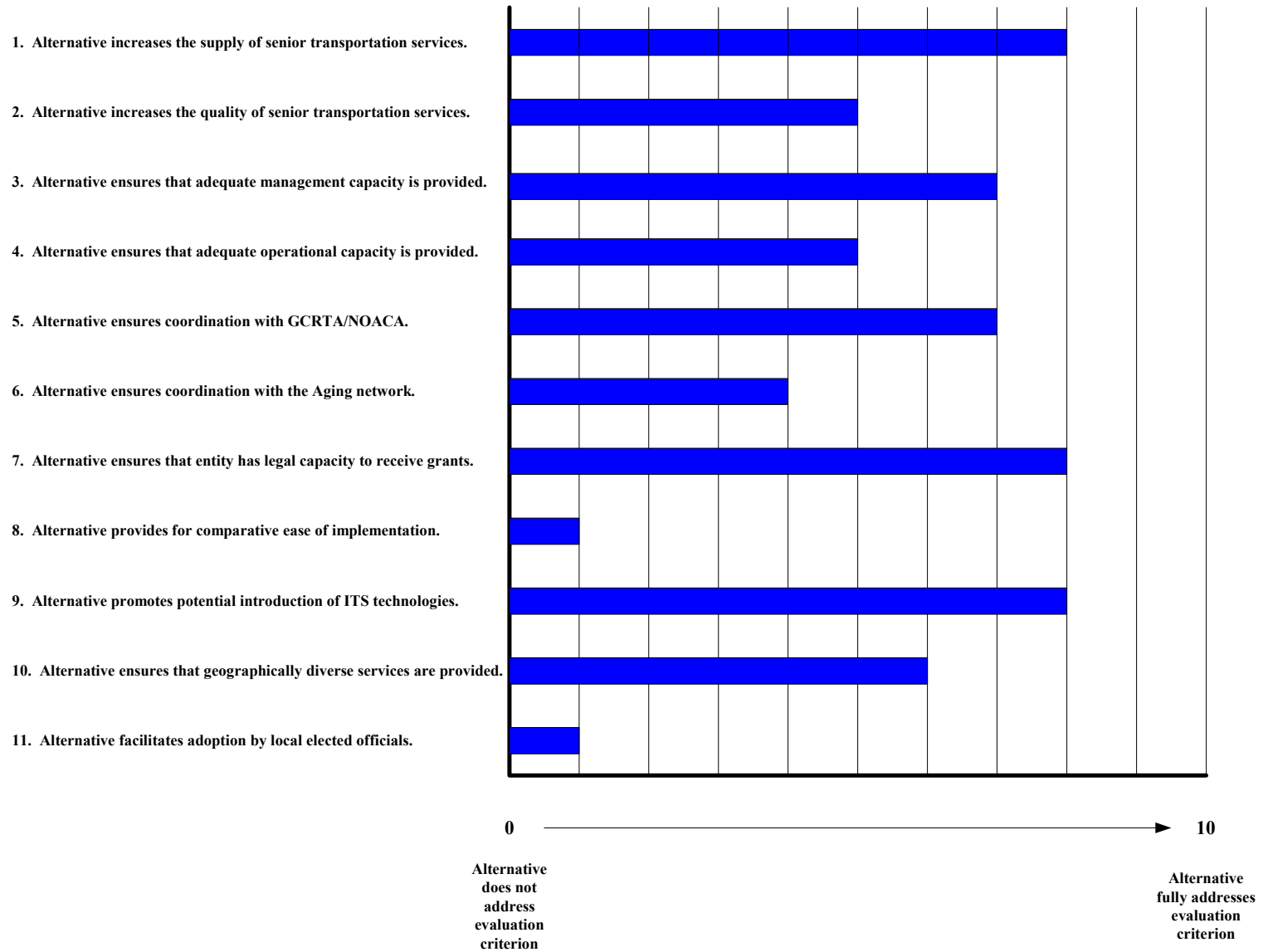


Exhibit 9.11

Evaluation of Alternative 2: Establish a Brokerage/Mobility Manager for Senior Adult Public Transportation

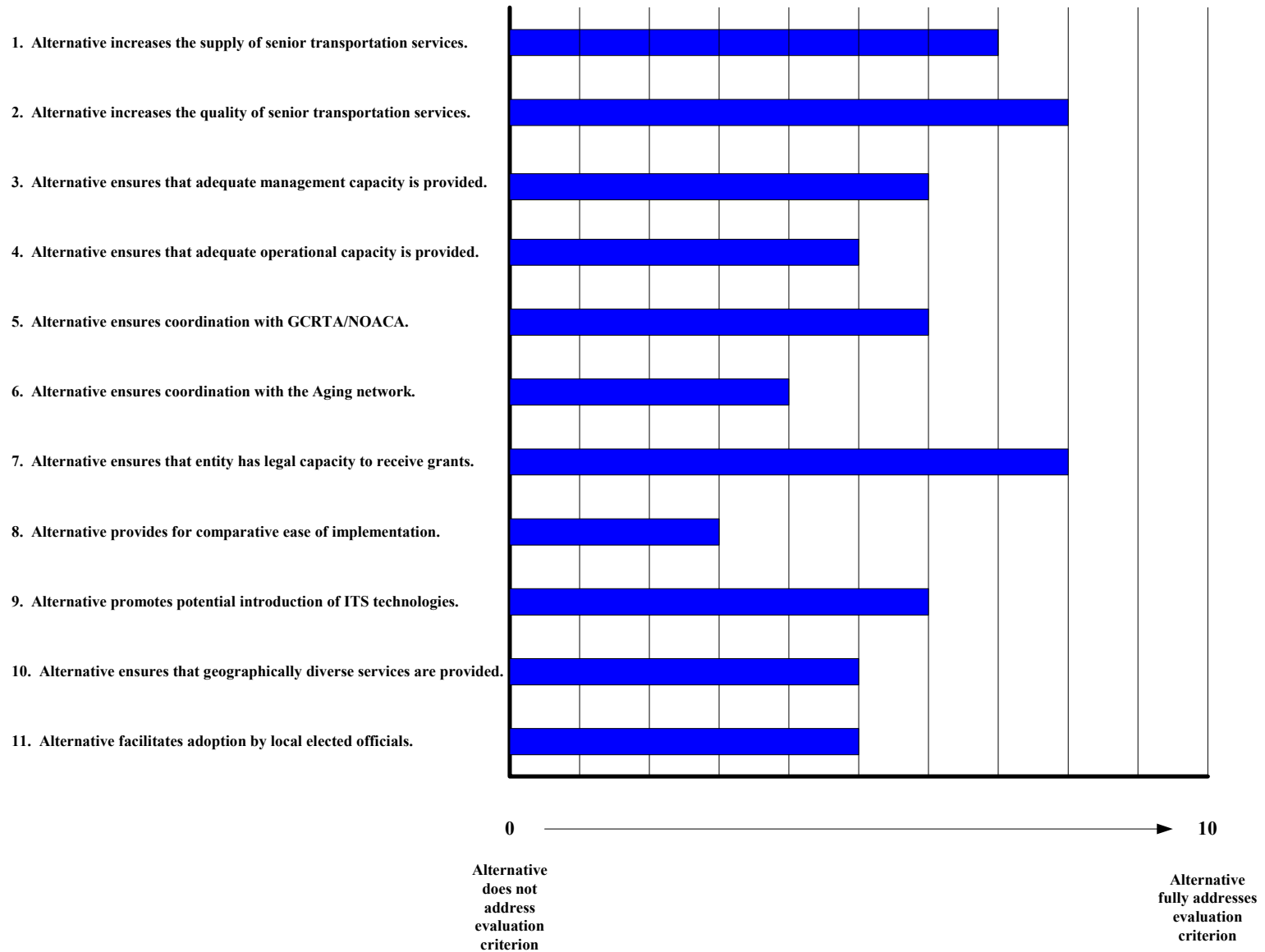


Exhibit 9.12
Evaluation of Alternative 3: Establish a Public Transit/Nonprofit Agency Service Collaborative

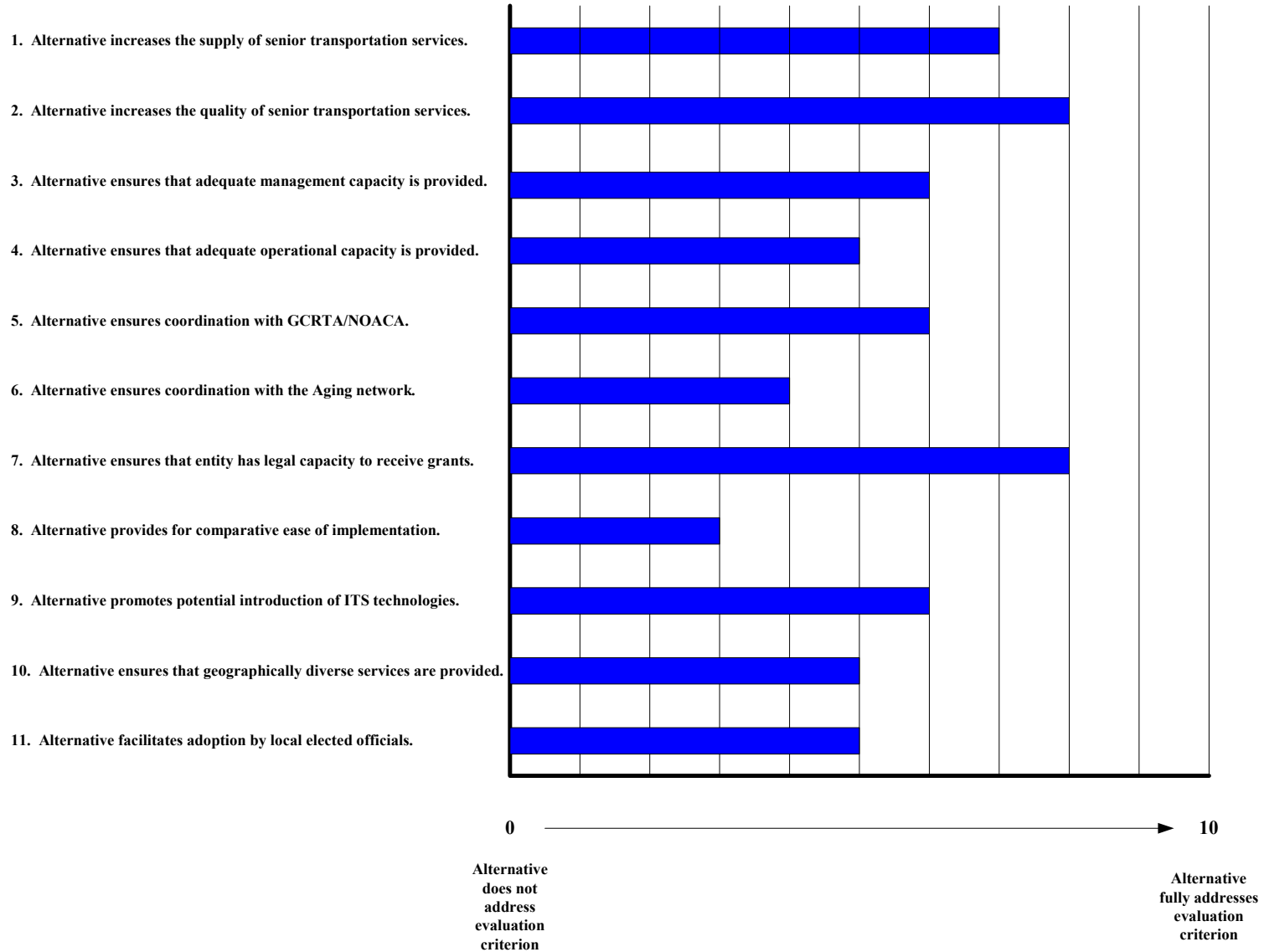


Exhibit 9.13

Evaluation of Alternative 4: Establish Independent Regional Paratransit Collaboratives Throughout Cuyahoga County

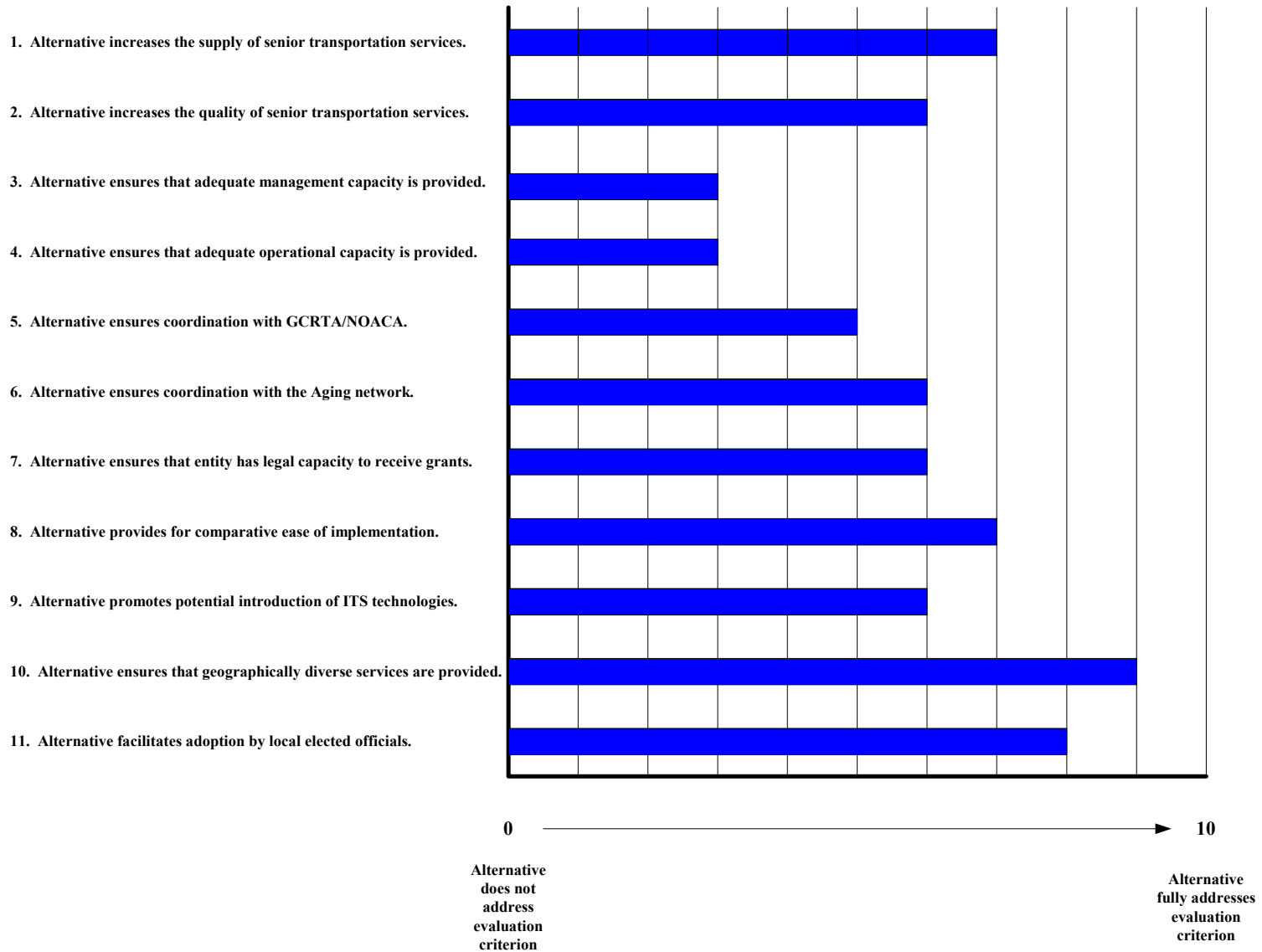


Exhibit 9.14

Evaluation of Alternative 5: Establish Integrated Regional Paratransit Collaboratives Throughout Cuyahoga County

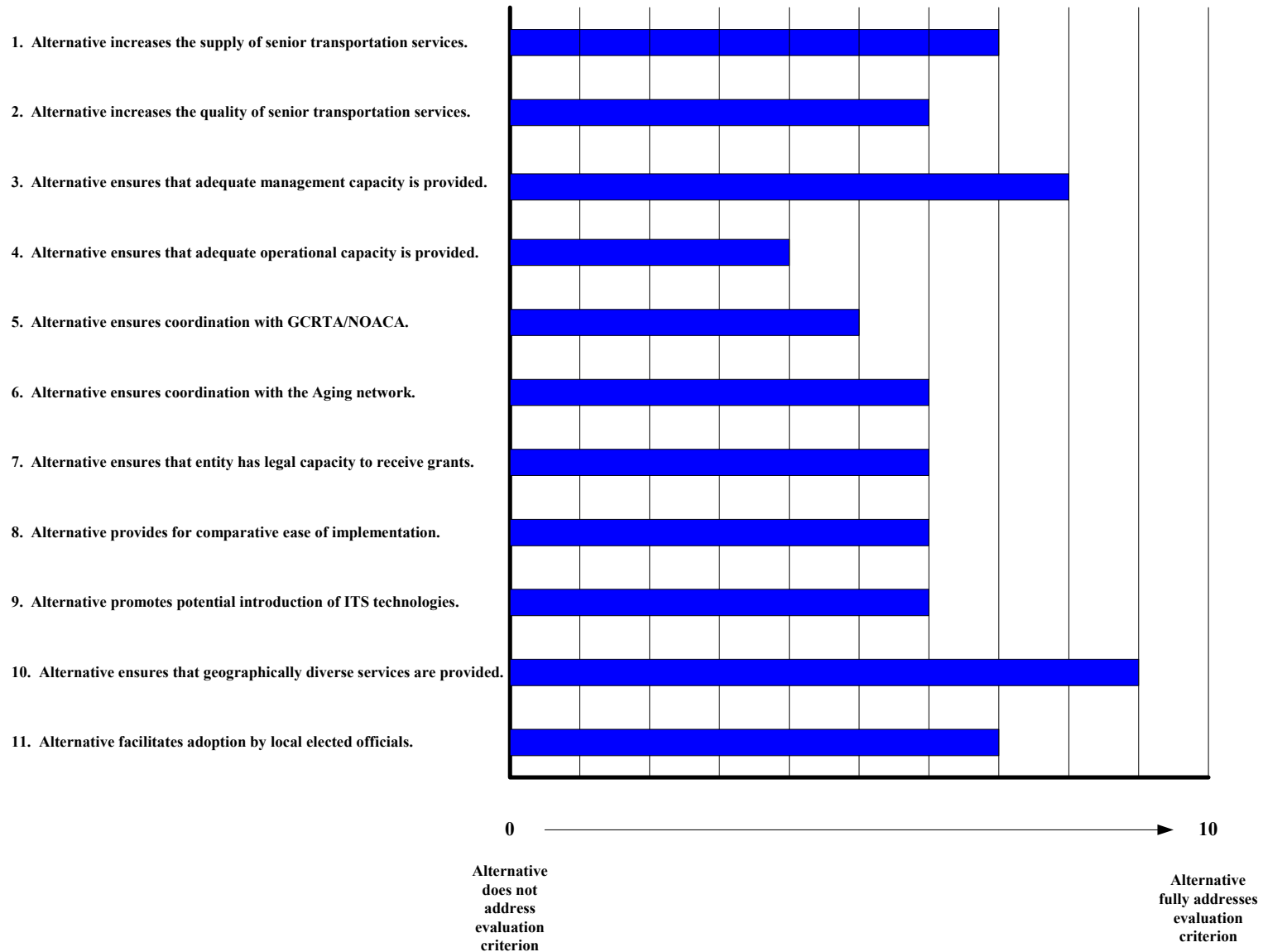


Exhibit 9.15

Evaluation of Alternative 6: Establish a Voluntary Association of Paratransit Providers in Cuyahoga County

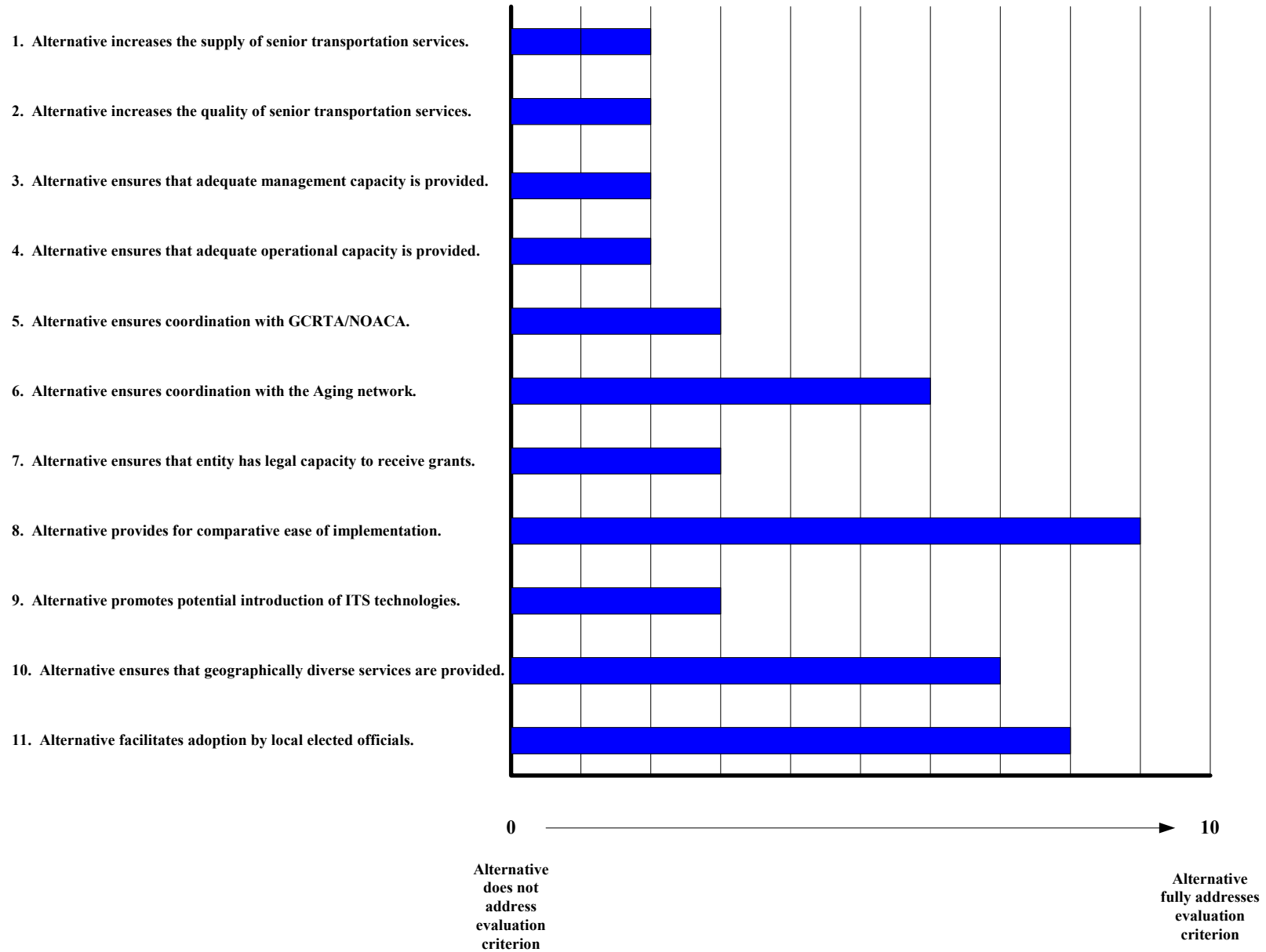


Exhibit 9.16
Evaluation of Alternative 7: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives

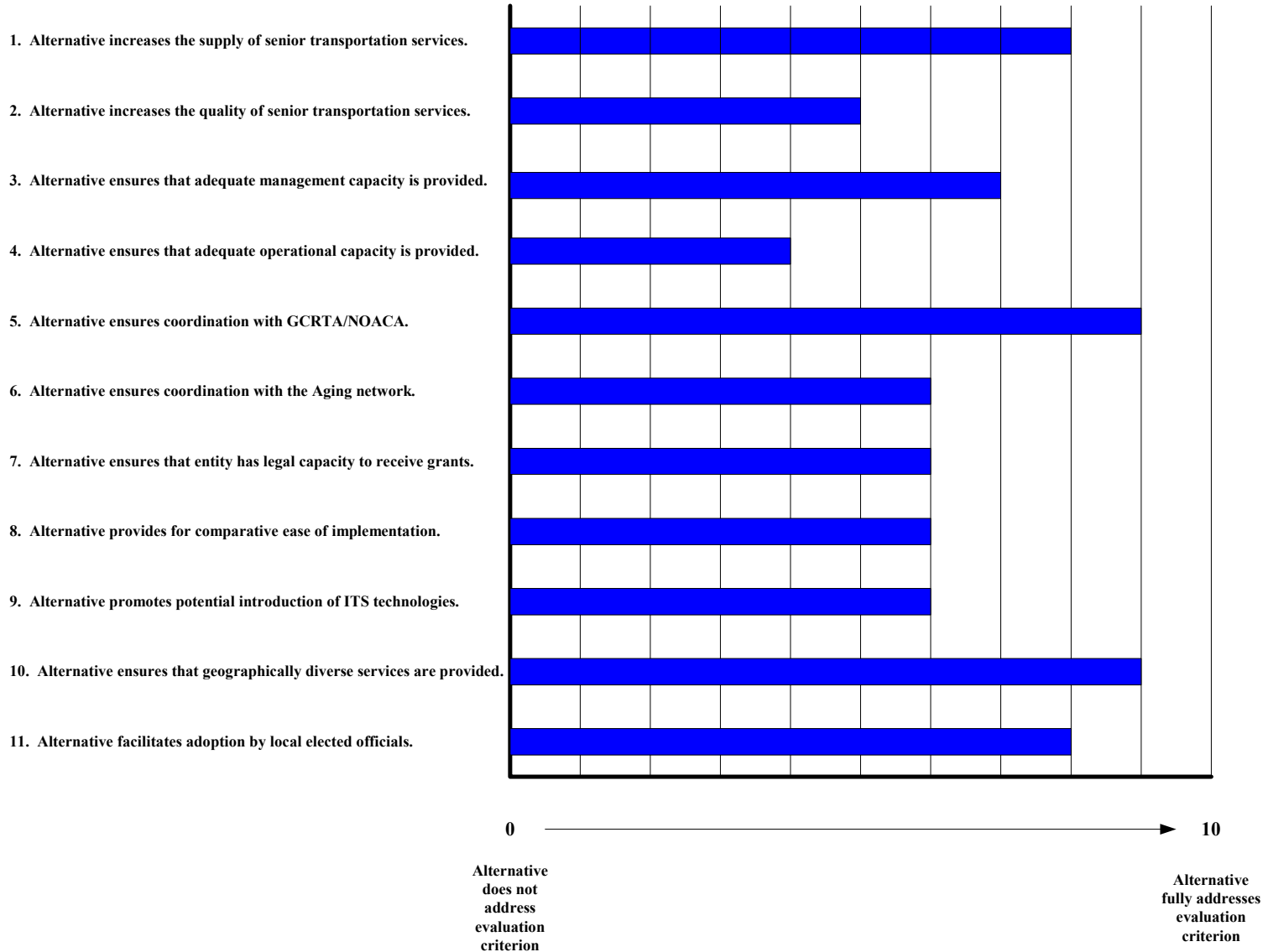
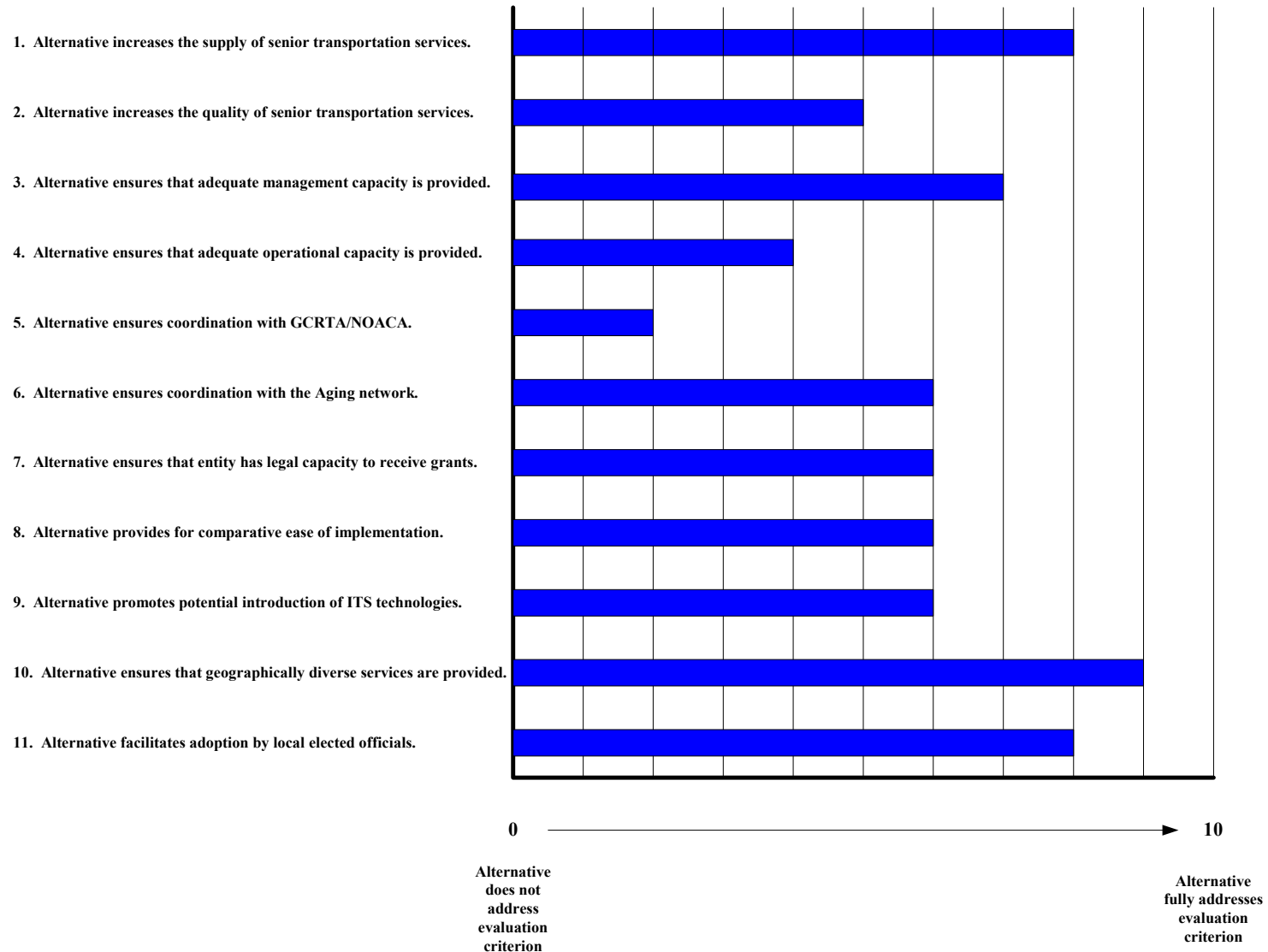


Exhibit 9.17

Evaluation of Alternative 8: Establish a Nonprofit Agency to Manage and Coordinate Regional Service Delivery Collaboratives with Plans for Long Range Service Consolidation





SECTION 10
DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTED
ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL TO
IMPROVE SENIOR
TRANSPORTATION IN CUYAHOGA
COUNTY

DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVE TO IMPROVE SENIOR TRANSPORTATION IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Based on a preliminary review of Alternatives 1 – 6 at a meeting of the Senior Transportation Working Group on December 4, 2002, two additional alternatives were developed. These two (2) alternatives are hybrids of previously developed alternatives, combining features deemed most capable of meeting project objectives by the Working Group. On December 9, 2002, additional debate on the organizational alternatives was undertaken, resulting in the selection of a single model for implementation.

In the selected organizational model, a new private nonprofit organization will be established (hereinafter called the “Senior Transportation Organization” (STO)) to develop, implement, and manage a network of service providers, organized around regional service zones (hereinafter called “Community Transportation Areas” (CTA)). In the following sections, an expanded description of the organizational model is provided.

**The Selected
Alternative:
Establish a
Nonprofit Agency
to Manage and
Coordinate
Regional Service
Delivery**

THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE: ESTABLISH A NONPROFIT AGENCY TO MANAGE AND COORDINATE REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY COLLABORATIVES

Concept

The selected management alternative incorporates the concepts of central management of paratransit services, close coordination with GCRTA, and a regional service delivery model.

In this scenario, the existing public transportation provider, key leaders in the aging network, other advocates of senior mobility, and existing transportation providers would establish a new nonprofit corporation (STO) to directly manage senior transportation services. The STO would depend on GCRTA for many support services in its initial development. It is envisioned that GCRTA would provide business “incubator” services on behalf of the STO.

The role of the GCRTA in the establishment of this organization would be:

- ◆ Provide technical assistance
- ◆ Provide interim administrative offices until the organization establishes its own administrative facility
- ◆ Provide capital assistance
- ◆ Provide the resources for the new organization to implement centralized call-taking and trip reservations

The role of the STO in support of GCRTA would be to:

- ◆ Provide input on the design and implementation of senior friendly services
 - Additional community circulators
 - Vehicle design
 - Community outreach
- ◆ Serve as a distribution outlet for system materials, promotions, etc. of interest to senior consumers who may not currently be GCRTA riders
- ◆ Serve as a referral source for seniors who are not deemed eligible for complementary paratransit

A general schematic depiction of the selected alternative is contained in Exhibit 10.1 (refer to later discussion in this Chapter regarding the establishment of service regions).

Creation of the STO

Following completion of the Strategic Plan, steps should be taken to organize and charter the STO. This step should be preceded, however, with an opportunity to gain public and agency input into the plan through a series of public forums held in each of the designated service areas.

Recommended Public Participation Process

Project sponsors should conduct a series of public forums in each of the designated service areas to present the plan, seek additional input on implementation, and to provide an opportunity to seek public comment on the document.

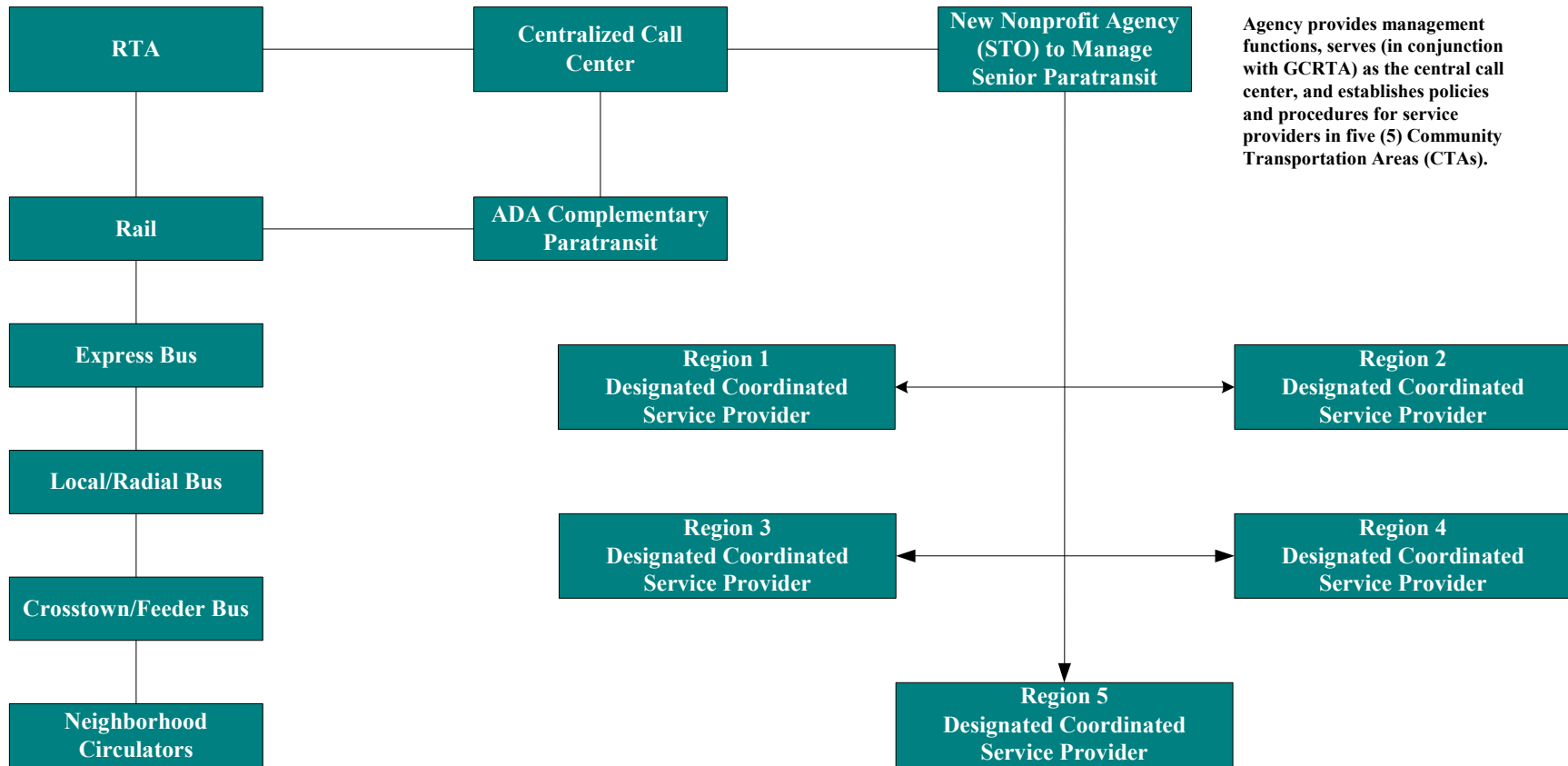
The public participation process is designed to educate and inform both existing transportation service providers and consumers of senior transportation services on the short, intermediate, and long-range recommendations contained in the Strategic Plan.

The public forums would be held over a two-month period following completion of the Strategic Plan.

Responsibility for organization and conduct of the forums would be assigned to the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC). This action is a logical assignment based on the designation of lead responsibility for management of the planning process given to this organization.

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Exhibit 10.1
Schematic of the Selected Management and Organizational Structure of a New Nonprofit Organization
(referred to as the Senior Transportation Organization (STO))
to Improve Transportation to Seniors in Cuyahoga County



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., March 2003.

Lead Responsibility in Incorporating the STO

Following the public forums and execution of the memorandum of understanding, several key parties should take lead responsibility for creating the new nonprofit organization. In this scenario, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) would take lead responsibility for getting the new organization organized and chartered.

These responsibilities would include:

- ◆ Developing articles of incorporation;
- ◆ Developing organization by-laws; and
- ◆ Filing the necessary papers and fees with the State of Ohio.

Material necessary to develop the respective documents can be extracted from the Strategic Plan and generated from prior experience in the formation of community nonprofit organizations in Cuyahoga County.

Mission of the New Organization

While the organizational structure adopted by the Senior Transportation Working Group is based primarily on the need to coordinate, manage, and operate existing paratransit services, the organization's mission will be more broadly stated in order to address the range of transit mobility needs of Cuyahoga County's senior citizens. The primary mission of the STO will be to:

- ◆ Manage a network of coordinated service providers dedicated to providing senior paratransit services
- ◆ Act as an advocate for senior mobility
- ◆ Serve as the focal point for information about transit and paratransit resources in Cuyahoga County
- ◆ Serve as the agent for coordination in and among the designated Community Transportation Areas
- ◆ Serve as the central point for paratransit reservations throughout the County
- ◆ Act as a liaison to GCRTA providing planning assistance on system design and implementation to facilitate use by older adults

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- ◆ Coordinate grant funding and capital needs planning to ensure systematic and needs appropriate vehicle acquisition and replacement
- ◆ Implement uniform driver qualifications and training with special focus on working with the needs of older adults.

In order to successfully carry out this mission, this Strategic Plan is recommending nothing less than a wholesale change in the manner in which senior transportation services are delivered in Cuyahoga County.

A recent transportation research project focused on changes in the delivery of passenger transportation services in the United States in the 21st century. Emulating business models adopted in the private sector (particularly the freight industry), it was suggested that there are six dimensions of fundamental changes necessary to effect a new paradigm in the passenger transportation field: mission shift, customer focus, collaboration, integration, information technology, and organization structure. Exhibit 10.2 defines how the chosen alternative will work to establish a new paradigm for the provision of senior transportation services.

Governance – Policy and Oversight

Governance of STO would be the responsibility of an appointed board of directors. It was originally recommended that an 11-member board be established. However, after significant discussion among the Senior Transportation Working Group, specific organizations and constituencies were identified that required representation on the board. As a result, general agreement was reached on establishing a 21-member board. The Working Group did not, however, adopt final recommendations on who should be represented on the board. This task was left to the implementation phase.

The board of directors would meet monthly (or more often, as needed) during the initial 36 months of operation. Thereafter, the board may elect to meet less frequently, but no less often than once per quarter.

On-Going Input from Stakeholders

One common element of any successful effort to coordinate transportation services is the opportunity for participants and stakeholders to have a meaningful opportunity to have input on service and policy decisions. This input will be required in the initial stages of planning regional services

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Exhibit 10.2

Dimensions of Change Resulting in a New Paradigm for the Provision of Senior Transit Services in Cuyahoga County

Dimension*	Previous Scope	Proposed Scope
1. Mission Shift	Individual operators of owned assets providing capacity to limited geographic area.	Mobility manager utilizing the assets of multiple providers over a broad region.
2. Customer Focus	Limited senior markets with provider imposed trip restrictions.	Expanded market with customer driven trips and destinations served.
3. Collaboration	Limited, voluntary collaboration.	Formal collaboration throughout the County and across various modes of transit service.
4. Integration	No integration.	Formal integration of facilities, equipment, and systems across all systems with responsibility for mobility.
5. Information Technology	Little or no use of information technologies.	Full scale introduction of state-of-the-art customer information and scheduling technologies across multiple organizations.
6. Organization Structure	Fragmented organizational structure based on jurisdictional boundaries.	Top down organizational structure to support new strategic mission.

Source: Dimensions of change modeled after Stanley, Robert G., "Support for Fundamental Change in Public Transportation," *Research Results Digest*, Transit Cooperative Research Program, Number 55, sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration, December 2002.

(setting operational boundaries, determining inter-regional travel destinations, and providing uniform client/passenger data to the STO) as well as on an on-going basis in trouble-shooting service delivery problems and quality of service issues.

This proposal would establish regional service advisory councils that would meet on a quarterly basis and develop formal recommendations for consideration by the board of directors of the new nonprofit corporation.

Organization Structure

The proposed organizational structure is designed to reflect the mission of the organization. Management will consist of an Executive Director, supported by an Administrative Assistant. Management will be responsible for communication with the board and the public, day-to-day management of the organization, interagency relations, GCRTA relations, ensuring objectives are met, and long-range planning, including capital planning (with possible third party assistance).

It is imperative that the board of the STO establish strong qualifications for the position of the Executive Director. This hiring decision will be the single, most important step made in the implementation process. Successful coordination efforts elsewhere in the United States have shown that a strong, experienced manager or executive director is one of the primary determinants of project success.

At a minimum, qualifications for this position should include: B.A. or B.S. degree from an accredited college or university (Masters preferred), 10 or more years in a management position administering transit and paratransit programs, progressive human resource experience, excellent public speaking skills, and five or more years experience in administration of Federal grants. The candidate must be familiar with Federal grant and cost principles. Experience with human service agency programs is desired.

Three departments are proposed: customer service, operations, and fiscal services.

The Customer Service department would be responsible for customer relations, maintenance of the customer database, fielding requests for transit information, call taking, and reservations.

The Fiscal Services department would maintain the financial accounts for the organization, monitor the budget, produce management reports for both internal and external use, review invoices from the designated service

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providers, and work cooperatively with GCRTA staff in maintenance of the organization's accounts.

The Operations department will primarily oversee the regional service providers. A Director of Service Quality will have primary responsibility for contract administration and oversight of these service providers. Additionally, this department will be responsible for overseeing implementation and on-going management of a uniform driver training program, and ensuring that service providers are adhering to a minimum standardized paratransit vehicle maintenance program.

Exhibit 10.3 provides a schematic of this organization structure.

Business Incubation Services to be Provided by GCRTA

The recommended management and organizational alternative embraces the concept a public/private partnership with the GCRTA. As proposed, GCRTA will provide business incubation services in several key management functions, including:

- ◆ Accounting and finance
- ◆ Personnel and labor relations
- ◆ Marketing and public relations
- ◆ Purchasing and procurement.

First and foremost, GCRTA would provide administrative office space during the initial two years of operation. This tenancy may be continued by mutual agreement among the parties. This proposal assumes that GCRTA has sufficient space to fulfill this need.

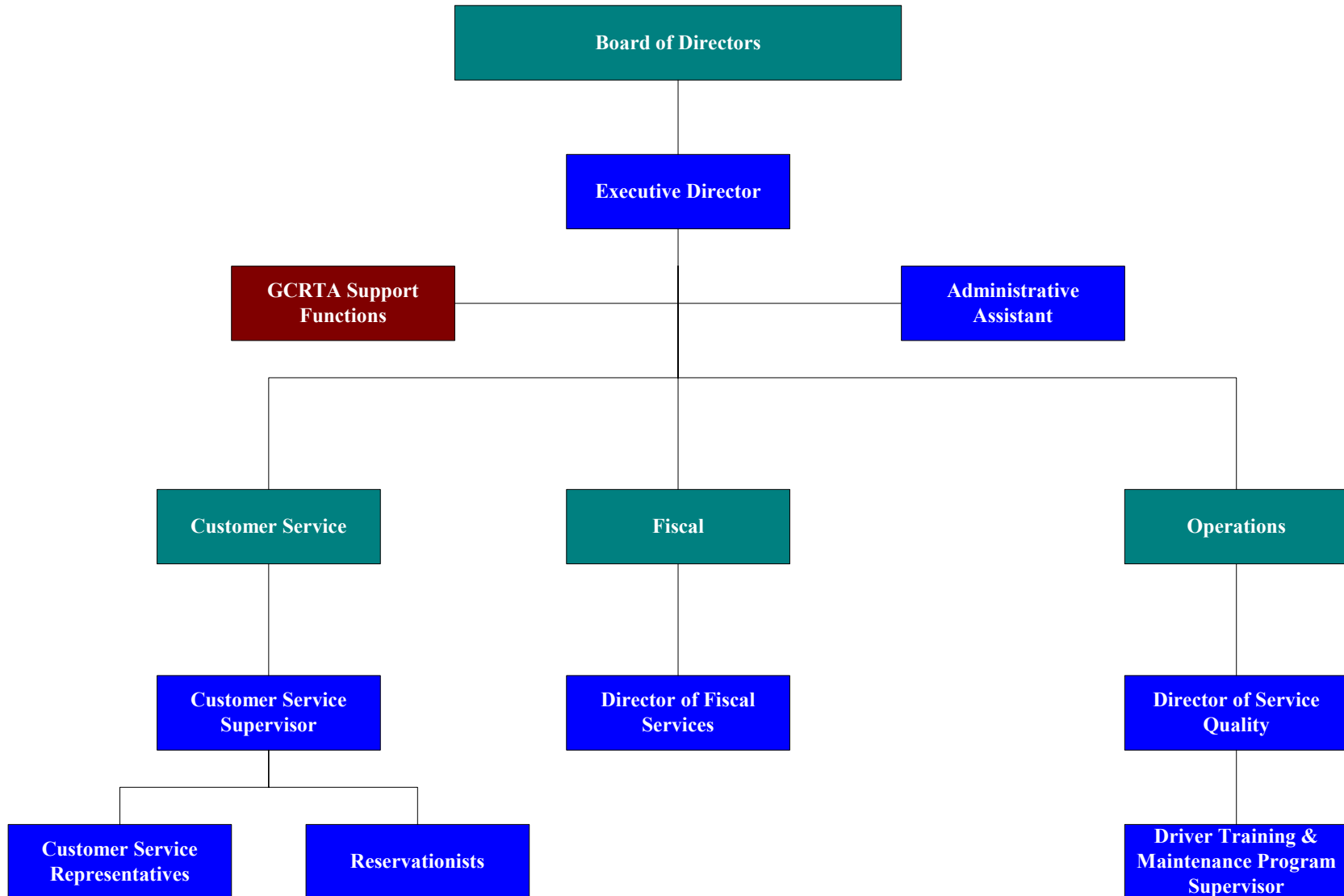
Accounting and Finance

The general functions of a transit organization with respect to accounting and finance include: developing and implementing financial management procedures, developing of organization and grant budgets, monitoring of expense and revenues, maintenance of the organization accounts, processing payroll, and conducting audits.

Under this proposal, the STO will develop its own budget, monitor and control the budget through a monthly reporting process (based on GCRTA generated reports), and maintain its own banking accounts.

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Exhibit 10.3
Proposed Organizational Structure – Senior Transportation Organization (STO)



GCRTA will provide direct services and technical assistance in this area as well. Initially, the STO will operate in accordance with GCRTA financial management procedures. This task will involve both training and direct oversight of the Director of Fiscal Affairs during the initial start-up period.

It is also proposed that all payroll functions be processed through GCRTA. While individuals would not be employees of the GCRTA, it should be possible to set up the payroll system to account for employees of the STO separate from GCRTA's regular payroll.

Finally, it is proposed that the STO "piggy-back" on audit services procured by GCRTA. The independent auditor would conduct a separate audit of the nonprofit organization (the audit standards will be different), but the scope of the audit will be included in GCRTA's request for professional services. The STO will be responsible for paying for its share of audit costs.

Personnel and Human Resources

The human resource function typically includes the following elements: preparation and adoption of written personnel policies; preparing staffing plans; recruitment, hiring, and training of staff; periodic review of compensation scales; and systematic employee evaluation and review.

Staff of the STO will be responsible for most of these functions, however, as a small entity, the need to "re-invent the wheel" should be minimized through use of existing GCRTA policies, modified to fit the needs of the new organization.

Purchasing and Procurement

This is a critical function that must be carried out in accordance with Federal, state, and local standards. Elements of this critical management functions include: developing and adopting written code of conduct for employees/board members engaged in purchasing activities; preparing written purchasing policies; instituting proper management controls to ensure that all purchases are necessary; developing purchasing specifications; conducting cost and price analyses of all procurement actions; and documenting the written history of each procurement.

In this function, it is proposed that the STO fully rely on GCRTA staff and procedures to carry out the procurement function, with the exception of "micro" purchases, or purchases involving a very small or limited amount of funds. The board of directors will set the purchase threshold for micro purchases.

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Marketing and Public Relations

This function includes the conduct of research; design and implementation of a marketing program; maintenance of public relations within the community; conduct of public service projects; and evaluation.

In this area, it is anticipated that the new nonprofit will directly perform these functions or contract with private companies to conduct necessary studies. The role of GCRTA will be to provide technical assistance in the form, frequency, and nature of such research.

Exhibit 10.4 summarizes the business incubation services proposed to be provided by GCRTA.

Operational Components

The operational components of the STO will revolve around the specific mission statement embodied in the organization's charter.

Serve as the Focal Point for Information About Transit and Paratransit Resources in Cuyahoga County

One of the primary missions of the STO is to serve as a "one-stop shopping" point for information on transit, paratransit, and other transportation resources.

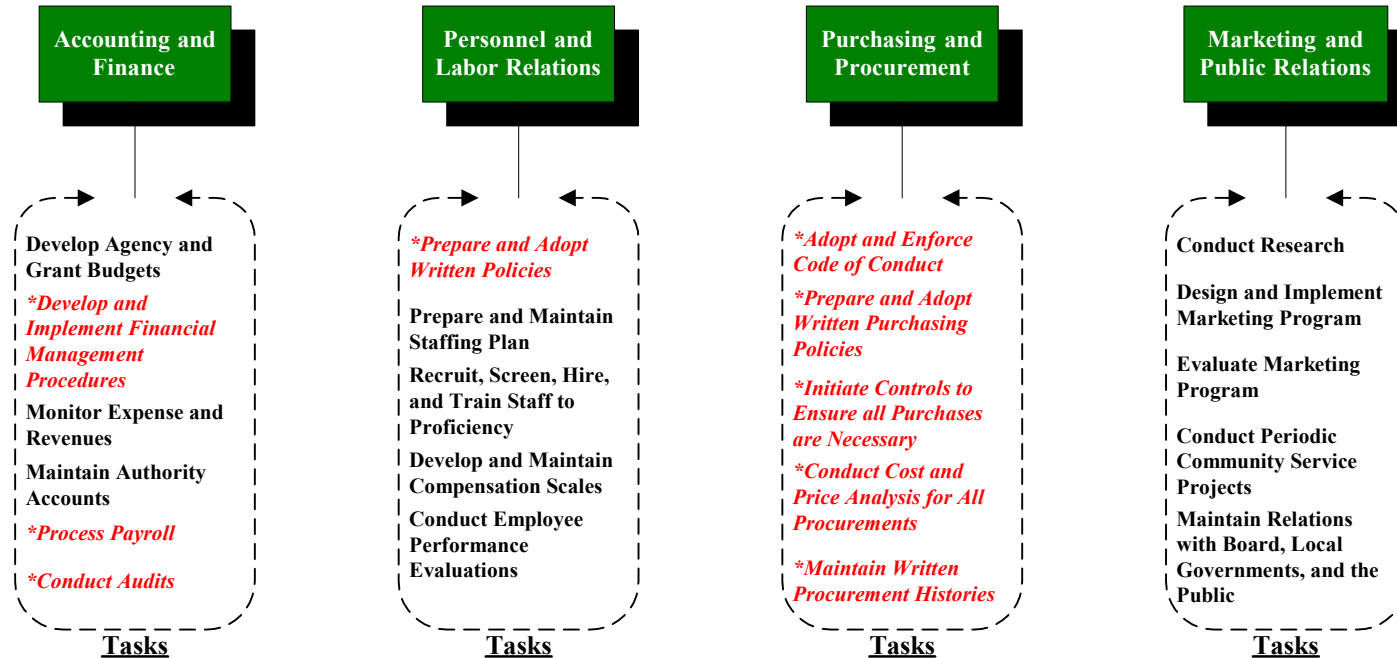
The STO will maintain a resource database on all known senior transportation providers, regardless of mode of service. The agency would perform an information and referral function, where seniors could call and find out information regarding any transit service in the community.

This type of customer service function can be accomplished when the entity has specialized software designed for the customer information/trip planning function. This type of software is now a commonly incorporated feature or module in the suite of software products in a scheduling software procurement.

Incoming calls to the customer information center will result in a representative providing information on transit resources, informing the customer about existing GCRTA services appropriate to the trip, referring the customer to the GCRTA regarding ADA registration, or referring the customer to the senior trip reservation center to obtain paratransit services from one of service providers in each Community Transportation Area.

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**Exhibit 10.4
Business Incubation Services to be Provided by GCRTA**



Management functions Marked by *italics* and * will be provided by GCRTA.

Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., November 2002.

Manage a Network of Coordinated Service Providers Dedicated to Providing Senior Paratransit Services

Service delivery will be organized on a regional model based on designated service delivery zones developed by the Senior Transportation Working Group. The original design concept embraced eight (8) service zones based on Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) designated Community Transportation Areas. The Senior Transportation Working Group, however, sought fewer zones based on factors more closely related to senior transportation. During the period January – March 2003, a series of alternative configurations were prepared and presented to the Working Group. These configurations were based on:

- ◆ Geographic concentrations of elderly;
- ◆ Population density of the elderly;
- ◆ Existing service areas of senior transportation providers; and
- ◆ Existing or planned coordination initiatives.

The final adopted Community Transportation Areas (CTAs) are graphically shown in Exhibit 10.5.

A designated senior transportation service provider (or “designated service provider” (DSP)) will be named in each CTA. It is envisioned that existing providers of transportation will be the likely designee(s) in each CTA (although this is not required). The naming of the DSP in each CTA can be accomplished through one of two methods.

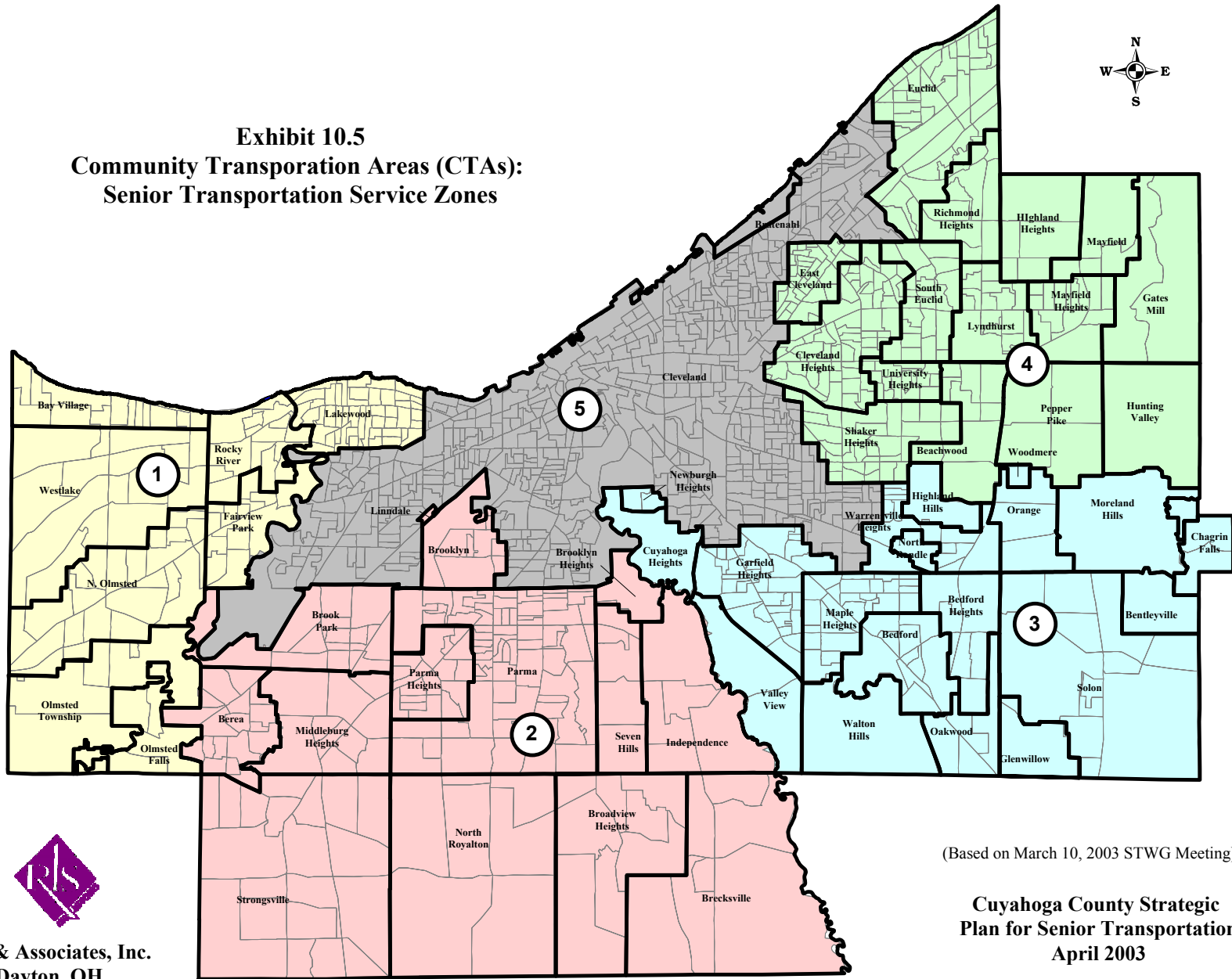
- ◆ Method 1 – Competitive Procurement: In this method, the STO would competitively seek proposals from existing transportation providers to provide service throughout the CTA.
- ◆ Method 2 – Community Designation: In this method, a regional planning committee would be established in each CTA to evaluate existing providers, interest in serving as the provider, and assess provider qualifications. The group would recommend a DSP to the board of the new nonprofit corporation.

It should be noted that the City of Cleveland has expressed interest in designating the GCRTA as its provider, thereby foregoing the methods described above.

Regardless of the method of selection, the DSP would enter into formal contract agreement with the STO. The agreement would specify all matters regarding the terms of service, how trips orders will be communicated, the level and standard of service to be provided, and terms of payment.

**The Selected
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**Exhibit 10.5
Community Transportation Areas (CTAs):
Senior Transportation Service Zones**



(Based on March 10, 2003 STWG Meeting)

**Cuyahoga County Strategic
Plan for Senior Transportation
April 2003**



**RLS & Associates, Inc.
Dayton, OH**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE
SELECTED
ORGANIZATIONAL
MODEL TO IMPROVE
SENIOR
TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES IN
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In this service delivery model, each regional provider would be responsible for delivery of senior transportation services primarily within the CTA. The borders, however, are not necessarily fixed. If a trip destination was just beyond the CTA border, the provider would traverse into the next region or CTA to deliver the trip without the need for the passenger to transfer between providers.

Inter-regional trips would represent a special trip. The STO will organize inter-regional trips to facilitate senior travel across these regional boundaries. To the extent possible, these trips should be coordinated with GCRTA's ADA trips for efficiency purposes.

Serve as the Central Point for Paratransit Reservations Throughout Cuyahoga County

The STO will serve as a central reservations center for senior paratransit services in Cuyahoga County, consolidating the functions not provided individually by each DSP. This function will be carried out in concert with GCRTA.

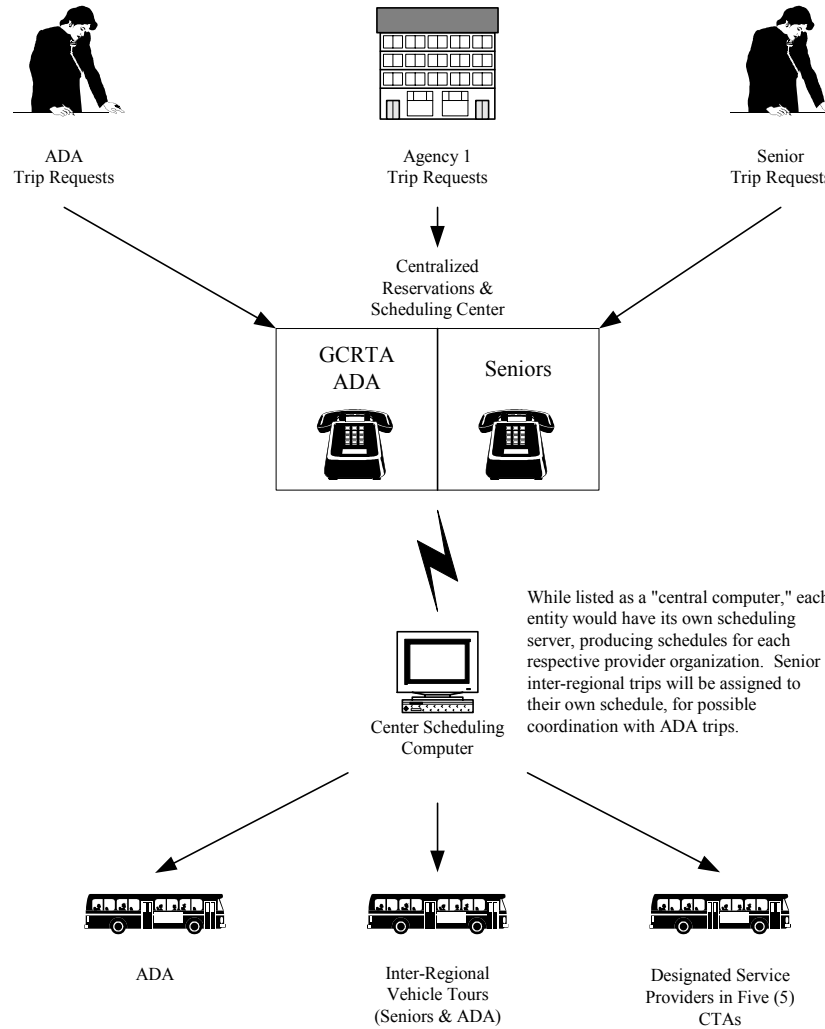
The centralized reservation center would house both the existing ADA reservation and scheduling personnel, along with the new senior transportation customer information specialists, reservationists, and schedulers. No assessment of the paratransit operations center is available regarding potential space availability to house proposed new personnel. However, GCRTA has indicated that it is moving its paratransit operations to a renovated transit facility. As part of the facility planning process, the Authority is incorporating the STO's space needs in the architectural program. This implementation action would coincide with the GCRTA's procurement of new scheduling system software.

In the proposed structure, both entities would utilize the new software. It is envisioned that client records would be in a single database with a special flag variable to distinguish between ADA and senior clients. During the scheduling process, the software would batch trip orders for each segment separately, prior to performing the scheduling function. The senior trips would further be grouped into zones (CTAs) for purposes of scheduling. At the conclusion of the process, driver manifest for each scheduled vehicle in each of the CTAs would be transmitted electronically to each of the DSPs. This process is schematically depicted in Exhibit 10.7.

Inter-regional trips would be treated as a separate category of trips for scheduling purposes. To the extent possible, senior trips would be integrated with ADA trips that had similar trip origins, destinations, and travel times.

**The Selected
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Establish a Public
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Exhibit 10.6
Schematic of a Centralized Reservations Center: GCRTA/STO



Source: RLS & Associates, Inc., January 2003.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE
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MODEL TO IMPROVE
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This is the most cost effective way of delivering such paratransit trips and use of ridesharing (scheduling both seniors and ADA passengers on the same vehicle tour) can result in substantial trip cost reductions (expressed in terms of costs per passenger trip). In order to perform this coordination, schedulers will either need to batch run ADA trips twice or manually schedule senior trips on the ADA runs.

Senior trips that cannot be scheduled on similar ADA vehicle tours will be scheduled on specific senior inter-regional runs or be provided by a specific contractor to handle such trips.

Serve as the Agent for Coordination In and Among the Five Community Transportation Areas

One of the most notable improvements that can be implemented under this Strategic Plan is the increase in daily trips provided, as measured by daily vehicle utilization, through centralized fleet management and scheduling in each of the five CTAs.

In order to achieve this objective, it will be necessary to follow a two-step strategy to obtain the participation of existing public and nonprofit organizations that currently provide service in each CTA.

The first step in the strategy will be to promote voluntary participation in the program by promoting the following benefits in senior mobility and program management:

- ◆ Ability of existing clients to travel throughout the CTA, not just within a single municipality;
- ◆ Ability to travel without regard to trip purpose;
- ◆ Ability to travel to other CTAs within the County without diminishing level of local service;
- ◆ Enhanced quality of service due to higher driver training standards;
- ◆ Centralized vehicle acquisition and replacement;
- ◆ Enhance competitiveness for discretionary capital grants, lessening dependency on local funds for vehicle replacement; and
- ◆ Reduction in program management staff necessary for operation of a transportation program due to participation in a regional coordination program

The second step is for the various funding agencies, such as Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging and NOACO to adopt policies with respect to funding priorities that will encourage participation. It is recommended that the agencies that administer programs, such as the Title III-B or Section 5310, would adopt application evaluation policies that would provide additional

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merit or points for those applicants that participate in the program and coordinate senior transportation service delivery with the designated service provider within their CTA. Any new or additional funds made available for transportation over current funding levels would be granted only to those entities that participate in the program. This policy would only apply to senior paratransit services. Other forms types of senior mobility, such as volunteer reimbursements and payments for other forms of transit (other than paratransit), would still be an eligible use of Title III-B funds for all existing recipients.

Act as an Advocate for Senior Mobility

The STO will also act as an advocate for funding and mobility services for seniors in Cuyahoga County. This advocacy will, by necessity, will be directed towards Federal, state, and local agencies to promote additional funding for senior transportation services.

In addition to advocating for enhanced funding, the new organization will also be involved in many community development activities, promoting the concept that senior friendly design principles be incorporated into new developments, road enhancements, and rehabilitated pedestrian facilities.

Act as a Liaison to GCRTA Providing Planning Assistance on System Design and Implementation to Facilitate Use by Older Adults

This function is designed to increase the accessibility, use, ease, comfort, and safety of existing and planned GCRTA services for older adults. It is anticipated that the new organization can assist GCRTA planners in: planning the enhancement of existing bus stops to accommodate older adult, citing new bus stops along routes that can be used by seniors; and serving as a voice for the senior community in the location and promotion of new transit services.

Additionally, the STO can serve as a potential resource for GCRTA in communicating with the public regarding service changes.

Coordinate Grant Funding and Capital Needs Planning to Ensure Systematic and Needs Appropriate Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement

The inventory of existing providers, augmented with face-to-face interviews conducted with selected agencies, revealed that virtually no existing provider of senior transportation services had any short- or long-range plans for capital improvements to their vehicle fleets.

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Given that many of these providers relied on a one-time infusion of capital from the Board of County Commissioners, the issue of how these existing providers were going to fund capital replacement has arisen as a critical element in the continued viability of some of these programs. Given the current economic climate, many local governments may be unwilling or unable to undertake a locally funded capital replacement for senior transportation vehicles. This may mean that some providers are forced to use older equipment beyond their projected useful life or be forced to reduce services.

One function of the STO will be to develop and annually update a comprehensive vehicle replacement and acquisition plan. The management of the STO would be responsible for:

- ◆ Systematically collecting vehicle utilization data for all vehicles in the fleets of the eight service providers;
- ◆ Developing useful life guidelines for the various types of paratransit vehicles in use, consistent with ODOT guidelines;
- ◆ Projecting four-year vehicle utilization based on historical vehicle use data;
- ◆ Estimating the projected end of useful life for all vehicles;
- ◆ Determining an appropriate vehicle replacement date for each vehicle;
- ◆ Developing cost estimates for all capital improvement actions;
- ◆ Programming the replacement into the appropriate fiscal year, taking into account possible grant funding cycles and procurement/vehicle manufacture cycles; and
- ◆ Developing a projected revenue source(s) for each item in the program.

Implement Uniform Driver Qualifications and Training with Special Focus on Working with the Needs of Older Adults.

Improvements to the quality of driver recruitment and training were seen as an important element to improving the quality of paratransit services provided to seniors. There are a number of established training programs that can be used by the STO. Management should evaluate these programs and select a program for adoption and implementation in Cuyahoga County.

Short-Term, Intermediate-Term, and Long-Range Actions

It is proposed that the Strategic Plan be implemented in stages, as follows.

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Short-Term Actions

Short-term actions are designed to get the new entity organized and begin the process of establishing operators in the respective CTAs.

- ◆ Approval – The first action would be adoption and approval of the program and plan by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ◆ Organization of the STO – The Senior Transportation Working Group will take the lead in establishing the organization.
- ◆ Organization of Local Planning Committees – A planning committee would be created in each of the CTAs (if a competitive method of selecting the provider is not used).
- ◆ Conduct of Local Planning – A planning process will occur to designate a service provider in each CTA.
- ◆ Development of Model Procedures – An implementation template will be developed to assist each CTA in transitioning to coordinated service delivery.
- ◆ Provision of Peer Assistance – TC³ will assist in the development of a peer-to-peer network to facilitate services coordination in other CTAs.
- ◆ Determine Participating Entities – All organizations that agree to participate based on the planning process will provide data on passengers, trips, and vehicles to the new organization.
- ◆ Develop Capital Inventory – All rolling stock to be used in service provision will be compiled in a comprehensive asset management system.

Intermediate-Term Actions

In Years 3 – 5 of implementation, each newly designated service provider would begin operation.

Long-Range Actions

It is anticipated that all actions necessary to implement this plan can be undertaken in the short to intermediate range.

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Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan gives rise, however, to several possible long-range alternatives. It would be sound policy to evaluate the merger of GCRTA's call center with the STO. These functions could be spun off to the new nonprofit or be consolidated under the auspices of GCRTA or simply become part of the Authority. Potential coordination of ADA paratransit with senior paratransit services should also be examined. In this scenario, GCRTA would actually merge its paratransit operations into the scope of responsibilities of the STO.

Assessment of Benefits from Implementation

The proposed action establishes a network of paratransit providers that will provide a uniform level of service, appropriate to the jurisdictional service area (population and population density), whose primary mission will be to address the needs of seniors who cannot otherwise utilize GCRTA's accessible transportation services. This system will effectively address transit needs of the priority market segment identified by the Senior Transportation Working Group – the frail elderly.

Due to its centralized management, countywide service area, combined scheduling and dispatch center, and centralized fleet management, this plan will work to substantially improve the utilization of existing rolling stock among a network of designated service providers. These improvements will expand the quantity of paratransit services available to seniors without need for increased acquisition of rolling stock.

This plan would effectively implement the "one-stop shopping" concept sought by the Senior Transportation Working Group. The STO would also work closely with GCRTA to adopt appropriate trip planning methods for seniors that include not only the paratransit services provided under the new entity, but all other public transportation resources of the GCRTA.

Benefits/Advantages

The benefits and advantages of this plan:

- ◆ Because GCRTA is playing a critical role in developing the STO, the complementary nature of the new services rendered would be considered an expansion, rather than a duplication, of GCRTA's mission.

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- ◆ This plan institutes, in the intermediate-term implementation step and beyond, the “one stop” point of contact concept for seniors in that both information and trip-booking functions can be accomplished with a single phone call.
- ◆ Duplication of certain administrative functions would not occur, as each designated service provider would agree to permit the central organization to perform services on their behalf.
- ◆ Quality variations between designated service providers will be minimized with adoption of minimum service standards in some areas of operations.
- ◆ The plan forges a unique relationship between a public transit and the aging network, consistent with a recently signed memorandum of understanding between the Federal Transit Administration and the Administration on Aging.

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Complementary Services

Central to this plan is the reliance on GCRTA and integration of the centralized call-taking and trip reservation functions among the new organization and the GCRTA. Under this plan, the new organization would piggy-back on GCRTA’s planned acquisition of new generation paratransit scheduling software. Similarly, GCRTA would incorporate capacity considerations of the new entity in developing procurement/software specifications.

Barriers and Obstacles to this Plan

There are many barriers, disadvantages, and obstacles to the implementation of this plan. These elements are defined as follows:

- ◆ If a mandatory participation scenario is not developed, turf issues (issues of local control and custody of vehicles) and other parochial concerns may undermine program initiation.
- ◆ Most existing providers do not practice full cost accounting in the management of their paratransit programs. Administrative overhead, city provided fuel and maintenance services, and other costs are not reflected in the organization’s transportation costs. As a result, these entities will be unable to make a sound and fair management

assessment of the comparative costs of direct operation versus the costs of purchasing service from a newly established DSP within their CTA.

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