

1. INTRODUCTION

This five-year plan calls for easily implemented improvements within the context of the existing public transportation network. It encompasses both operating and limited capital improvements, and builds on current plans and proposals, forming the basis for a more comprehensive, longer-range 25-year plan.

The focus of this plan began with improving public transit. However, alleviating congestion on Cape Cod requires a multi-modal system-wide approach that addresses both intra- and inter-regional travel and considers public policy and institutional issues. Another critical component to planning the Cape's public transportation resources is consideration of its geographical and economic relationship to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The growth in travel to and from the Islands requires the implementation of effective strategies, which will result in the efficient management of public transportation resources both on and off the Cape, to move people more efficiently and result in less congestion.

As with any public transportation plan, challenges exist specific to the area or region, which must be addressed. For Cape Cod, its unique geography along with its historical and environmental conditions require that this plan address:

- Providing traveling choices to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding year round population;
- Facilitating connections between various travel modes;
- Supplying alternative services between Cape Cod and other regions, including the Islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket;
- Ensuring that any infrastructure investments are in keeping with the character of Cape Cod and the Islands, and are supported by a majority of the public; and,
- Meeting Health and Human Services mobility needs for access to employment, healthcare, social services, family support tasks, and education.

The plan focuses on meeting intra-regional and inter-regional travel requirements. It is vital to recognize that planning for Cape Cod and the Islands must be undertaken to include a larger regional context as shown in Figure 1.1, including Boston, New England and the New York City metropolitan area. This distinction is made to ensure that the mobility needs of Cape Cod and the Islands' year round residents are addressed while planning is conducted to help alleviate the increasing levels of congestion, as more people have discovered Cape Cod and the Islands as year-round retirement, and vacation destinations.

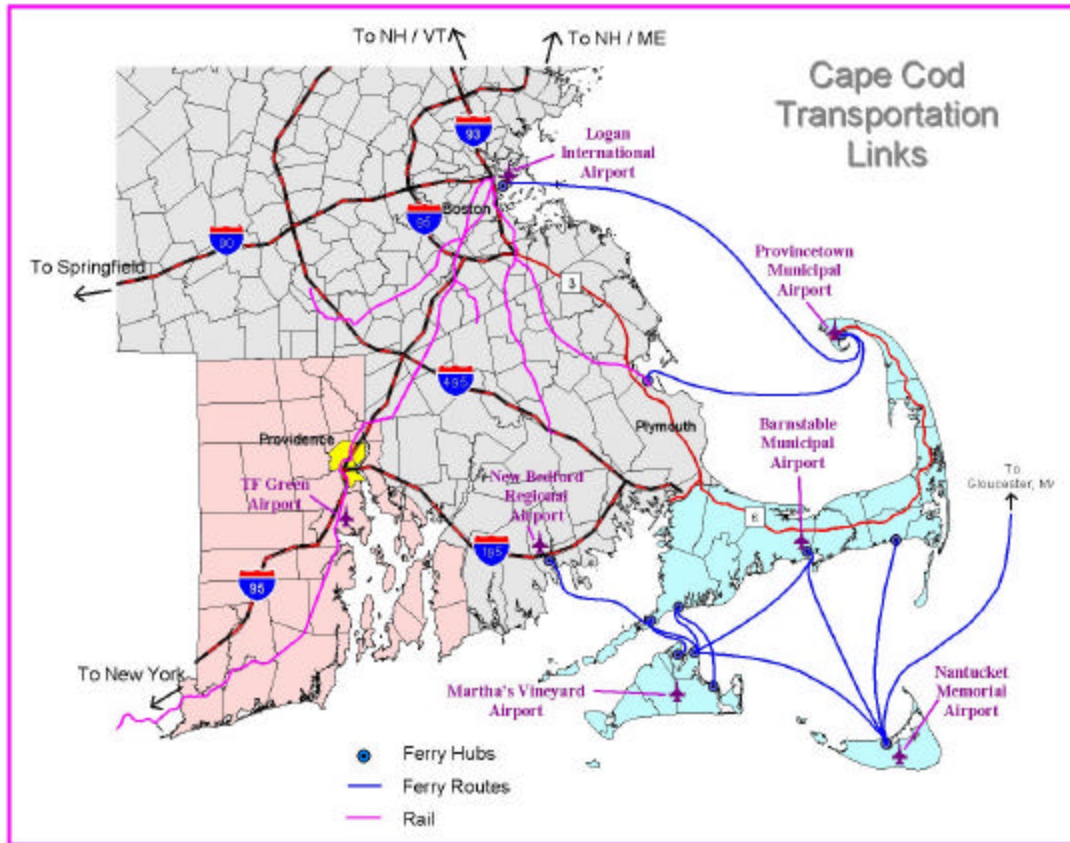


Figure 1.1 Cape Cod Regional Transportation Links

1.1 **BACKGROUND**

Momentum for this five-year plan began with the Cape Cod Transit Summit I, which was convened in February 2000. Sponsored by the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) and the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, the purpose of the Summit was to develop a community consensus on the future of public transportation on Cape Cod. More than 100 people attended, including Congressman William Delahunt, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction Secretary Kevin J. Sullivan, CCRTA Advisory Board Members, stakeholders, and the public.

Various views were expressed regarding public transportation needs and priorities for the Cape. There was consensus that improved public transportation services were needed both to mitigate seasonal traffic congestion, and to provide mobility options for the year-round population. However, there was wide ranging opinion on the characteristics and qualities of an ideal public transportation system for Cape Cod.

The Cape Cod Summit resulted in the formation of the Cape Cod Transit Task Force (Task Force) in October 2000 by Executive Office of Transportation and

Construction Secretary Kevin J. Sullivan. Soon after, the Task Force contracted with the U.S. Department of Transportation's John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center) to examine the region's public transportation system and prepare a plan that identified actions to be implemented incrementally during the five-year planning period. A second Transit Summit was convened in March 2001 to report on what progress had been made, and to solicit public input.

The Task Force is the main advisory committee for the 5-Year Cape Cod Public Transportation Plan being conducted by the Volpe Center. The Task Force consists of stakeholders representing federal, state, and local officials, social service providers, as well as public transportation providers for the Cape Cod region. Members of the Task Force are cited by name in the acknowledgements section.

1.2 PLAN FRAMEWORK

The sections of this Plan include:

- A description of existing socioeconomic conditions and trends,
- The current public transportation system,
- Recommendations for near- (1-2 years) and long-term (3-5 years) projects with cost estimates by mode,
- Marketing strategies,
- Possible funding sources, and
- Institutional options for ensuring effective management of Cape Cod's public transportation resources.

This plan is intended to be a routemap for improving public transportation services. It considers all modes other than automobile, using an identification of service issues and limitations as a basis for determining sets of remedies that are consistent with the Task Force's goals and objectives, as well as the values that have been historically important to Cape Cod residents. The consensus of the Task Force was to be realistic in public transportation planning, and to consider solutions with available funding and resources.

1.3 PLANNING EFFORTS AND SUCCESS TO DATE

The Volpe Center was instructed by the Task Force in October 2000 to produce "implementable" action items that would be presented at Transit Summit II (in March 2001) for implementation during the 2001 summer season, in addition to producing this Five-Year Public Transportation Plan. The Volpe Center presented the following recommendations at Transit Summit II:

- Implement schedule coordination of all public transportation modes;

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- Introduce Relax and Ride – a motorcoach from the Rt. 128 commuter rail parking lot to Woods Hole with a one-price ticket for bus, steamship, and the Martha’s Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA);
- Develop a targeted marketing campaign to increase awareness of CCRTA routes and services;
- Introduce Sunday CCRTA service on the SeaLine, Hyannis to Orleans, and Villager fixed routes, in part to facilitate ‘car-free’ Cape weekends, and reduce congestion levels;
- Discontinue the Falmouth-Mashpee Trolley, the Hyannis Area Trolleys, the Hyannis Park & Ride Shuttle, and the Dennis Trolley due to low ridership and high costs;
- Shift the early morning CCRTA Hyannis to Orleans bus to trip to a late afternoon trip;
- Add three daily round trips to the CCRTA SeaLine schedule, and
- Add two summer evening bus round trips from Hyannis to the Dennisport shopping area (via Patriot Square) along the Hyannis to Orleans route to substitute for the elimination of the evening Dennis Trolley services.

Thus far, the results have been encouraging. The following actions have been taken since Transit Summit II:

- Several schedule coordination meetings were held between transportation service providers, and they have agreed to a yearly schedule coordination summit before schedules are printed;
- The Relax and Ride service was initiated for 10 weekends commencing on July 4th weekend and ending Labor Day weekend. Although evaluation activities are currently being conducted, Massachusetts Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds have been earmarked for the summer 2002 season; and
- The under-performing trolley services were cancelled, and the operating funds from these services were used to fund the recommended route proposals and Sunday Service. These actions were approved and implemented by the CCRTA Advisory Board. This led to a summer 2001 CCRTA ridership increase of 25 percent over the same period in 2000. Ridership on the Hyannis to Orleans route was up 111 percent, the Provincetown/Truro Shuttle was up 48 percent, and the SeaLine bus route was up 26 percent. This dramatic increase in ridership is directly related to the Volpe Center early implementation recommendations, and other innovative measures undertaken by the CCRTA staff, including an extensive marketing campaign throughout the summer¹.

¹ CCRTA staff in conjunction with Chip Bishop Communications and Management coordinated the summer 2001 marketing efforts, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.