

June 7, 2006

Dare County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 1000
Manteo, N.C. 27954

Dear Sirs:

Albemarle Regional Health Services received the Resolution from the Dare County Board of Commissioners concerning the possible merger of the Dare County Transportation System with Inter-County Public Transportation Authority. Since that time staff has performed research and the ARHS Executive Board held a lengthy discussion regarding the concept.

I will attempt to summarize a partial list of the points of discussion as follows:

- o Geography certainly works against us. Although Currituck and Dare are adjacent and contiguous to the Northern portion of our service area, we are not contiguous on the Southern boundary. This provides challenges for efficient routing, staffing and supervision. Actually it appears the Dare County Transit Program will need to be operated almost independently of ICPTA.
- o There are some economies of scale and benefits to centralized billing, routing and administration of a regional program.
- o Currently few incentives or benefits exist, in the Board's opinion, for regionalization from the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- o ICPTA is a rural transportation program as is Dare. Although both are rural, the different demographics of our areas cause concern for the recruitment and retention of staff. In addition the benefits packages of the two agencies are significantly different. The salary and benefits differential of the two areas pose challenges for the system on whole.
- o The ongoing transit study of the Dare County Outer Banks involving the use of trolleys during the tourist season is much similar to the Currituck County initiative, which is slightly ahead of the Dare County planning. Although there is merit to the thought of combining this effort, it appears that this combined effort holds the potential to be larger than the ICPTA infrastructure may be able to handle. Most certainly ICPTA management would be consumed with a project of this magnitude for at minimum six months of the year.

Having engaged in a thorough discussion of your resolution, the ARHS Executive Board feels that collaboration between the agencies and sharing of ideas in the planning and implementation of transportation in the region is good and should be ongoing. Unfortunately we are not able to identify strengths of a merger sufficient to justify any continuing efforts towards such a goal.

As we identify additional strengths in the future we are certainly interested in re-visiting this idea.

Sincerely,
Jerry L. Parks MPH
Health Director
Albemarle Regional Health Services