

# **Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan**

## **Final Report**

**Fiscal Year 2000-2001**



**Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council**



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## **Final Report**

**Fiscal Year 2000-2001**

### **SMTC Unified Planning Work Program Task 2D**

Financial Assistance for the preparation of this document was provided, in part, by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations and the New York State Department of Transportation. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is solely responsible for its content.

This plan was compiled by Bergmann Associates in conjunction with a multi-agency study advisory committee for the SMTC.

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## **Executive Summary**

### Introduction

This Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan report presents the results of a study of the mobility needs of people moving from welfare to work and other low-income persons in Onondaga County, New York. It serves as a comprehensive county-wide plan for addressing gaps in transportation and is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant program. This study marks the beginning of the development of a county-wide program to serve the many varied transportation needs of low income persons.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) recently completed a comprehensive strategic plan for restructuring its public transportation services in Onondaga County. The Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP) included the compilation and analysis of information on CNYRTA's existing fixed route and paratransit services, transportation services provided by other organizations, and the mobility needs of groups such as commuters, human service agency clients, seniors, persons with disabilities, and welfare recipients. While ReMAP resulted in a series of transit related recommendations, a more thorough examination of mobility needs specific to welfare recipients and low income people in Onondaga County was needed, resulting in this study.

The objective of this study was to build on ReMAP and specifically identify and address the unmet transportation needs of those moving from welfare to work and other low income workers. The unmet needs were identified through a process of comparing the distribution of the workers in need of services to the potential job sites and existing transportation services. The existing system of public, private, non-profit, and human service transportation service providers was reviewed to assess how well the needs of the identified populations are being met. Gaps in these services were identified and transportation service templates were developed to address varying deficiencies. This study had the following general tasks:

- Define the study's goals and objectives
- Develop and implement a public involvement plan
- Identify the distribution of workers
- Identify employment centers
- Identify existing transportation services
- Identify transportation service gaps
- Identify and prioritize projects
- Assess the role of the regional mobility manager
- Prepare the Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan

## Public Involvement

The general goals of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) developed for this study were to create public awareness about the study, publicize the participation opportunities, and involve the public in the planning process. Principal efforts included two advisory groups, a public meeting, informational flyers, press releases, and distribution of meeting notices, agendas and minutes. Three meetings were held with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) during the course of the study. The SAC members included key persons from area agencies that deal with transportation and job access issues. The SAC was actively involved in providing direction on the work tasks and informational resources, as well as review and comment on study products. A much larger group of stakeholders were kept apprised of the study progress, notified of all meetings and encouraged to provide information and comment regarding the study. In addition, key employers and other stakeholders were contacted individually to provide information and input to the study. One public meeting was held.

A set of community goals for welfare-to-work transportation services was developed in collaboration with the SAC, the stakeholder group, and the public. These goals were used for project evaluation criteria and should be used as measures to monitor projects over time.

## Identify Gaps in Transportation Services

Gaps in transportation services were identified where welfare and low-income residents live, next areas of concentrated employment were identified. Finally, the level of transportation services currently available to connect low-income residents to the jobs was assessed.

The geographic distribution of welfare recipients and low-income persons was identified by mapping the density of resident locations and concentrations of high unemployment and low income in the County. The locations of childcare facilities were also mapped. The geographic distribution of jobs was identified by mapping the density of employment. The existing public fixed-route transit services operated by Centro were mapped and assigned operating hours and service frequency by route segment. Information contained in the ReMAP study on other private, non-profit, and human-service agency transportation services was reviewed.

Using this information, eleven clusters of employment concentrations were identified that appeared to have gaps in transportation services. This list was screened to six primary areas and reviewed in more detail.

- 1) CARRIER CIRCLE AREA (THOMPSON-NORTHERN-MOLLOY-FLY)

- 2) HENRY CLAY BOULEVARD AND MORGAN ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA
- 3) ERIE BLVD TO BRIDGE STREET/NYS ROUTE 290/MANLIUS CENTER ROAD
- 4) TAFT ROAD
- 5) CICERO/ROUTE 11/SOUTH BAY ROAD/ROUTE 31
- 6) FARRELL ROAD /STILES ROAD

A telephone survey of over 1,000 employers in these six areas was conducted. Information was collected on employee transportation needs, number of employees earning less than \$10 per hour, employment shift times, and other relevant comments.

In addition to the list of employment clusters that was identified by geography, a need for transportation services for home health care aids was also identified. This additional service gap was determined to meet the employment service gap screening criteria by which the six employment clusters were evaluated. Home health care aids not owning vehicles often have a difficult time traveling between multiple client visits in a timely fashion via existing public transit services.

#### Recommended Job Access and Reverse Commute Service Templates

A number of varying service types were developed to address the transportation service gaps identified. The recommendations made represent “service templates” to be applied to varying transportation needs. While specific recommendations are made, new services are likely to vary somewhat from those described in this report.

Service template recommendations were not made for the Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road Industrial Area or Taft Road corridor primarily due to lack of employer-expressed need.

The following is a summary of the recommendations.

##### *Carrier Circle Service*

This service consists of a fixed route shuttle service distributing and collecting workers between a proposed Carrier Circle Transit Center and employment sites along Thompson Road, Molloy Road, and Northern Boulevard. This route would operate during the key hours of employer shift changes in this area. The Transit Center would be located just to the north of Carrier Circle providing a terminal for access to the concentration of hotels and restaurants nearby. Existing mainline transit service between downtown Syracuse and the Carrier Circle area would be enhanced. During the daytime hours outside of the key hours of shift changes, contract taxis and vans would provide service between the area’s employers and the Transit Center. During the overnight hours, contract taxis and vans would provide

service directly between the area's employers and the workers' homes. The route and scheduling of this service could be flexible to quickly address changing needs.

#### *Home Health Aids Service*

This service consists of two components. The first component is the coordination of service locations and bus service to higher density service locations. The Mobility Management Center could have an important role in the coordination of home health aid visits. The second component is the establishment of a home health agency car cooperative. The Mobility Management Center could have an important role in the coordination of home health aid visits. A car-sharing cooperative made up of home health care agencies could hire a management company to operate a facility and vehicle fleet for use by home health care aids. Aids not owning their own vehicles could take the existing fixed route bus system or other service between their homes and the car-sharing cooperative facility.

#### *Erie Boulevard Service*

This service would consist of deleting existing Centro fixed bus service (#10L) on Erie Boulevard between Bridge Street and Shoppingtown Mall. Further analysis of the impact a change to Centro Route 10L will have on riders traveling between Erie Boulevard and Shoppingtown Mall will need to be conducted. However, Centro's new Suburban East service in place since September, 2000, yields some flexibility as it duplicates the 10L service in this area. The new routing would be north from Erie Boulevard on Bridge Street to East Syracuse, then east on Manlius Center Road through the Town of Dewitt to a terminus in the vicinity of Fremont Road, just inside the Town of Manlius. Hours of service on the new/modified route would extend into the evening to accommodate the retail and restaurant businesses in this corridor. During the overnight hours, contract taxi and van service would provide service on a subscription basis directly between the corridor's employers and the workers' homes.

#### *Cicero/Route 11/South Bay Road/Route 31 Service*

This service would provide an extension of an existing Centro fixed bus route (#11) to provide new transit access to several manufacturing employers as well as expanded evening service hours to the retail and restaurant businesses in the area.

#### *Farrell Road/Stiles Road*

This service would provide new transit access to several major employers not currently accessible by transit. This service recommendation is to re-route the existing Centro Baldwinsville bus route (#6) in the vicinity of the New York State Thruway and extend its hours of service. The impact of additional running time for passengers bound to jobs in downtown Syracuse must be carefully considered before implementing this recommendation.

### Areas for Further Study

Three areas identified that warrant additional study include:

- Childcare Transportation
- Rural Services
- Carousel Mall Expansion

The two primary barriers that face low-income working families when seeking and retaining employment are childcare and transportation. Issues include a lack of reliable transportation, long commute times, and multiple stops for childcare and employment using public transportation. This issue was identified many times through the public involvement process as a serious issue that needs to be addressed. However, there are several important barriers to the provision of childcare transportation; most importantly the fact that many of the state and federal transportation grants prohibit utilizing funds for childcare transportation.

There were individuals identified in rural areas of the county that may benefit from assistance with transportation to work. They are likely to be isolated individuals or small groups of individuals that may have very different employment destinations, shift times, work days, etc. These trips can be very difficult to serve with traditional transit services. These individuals may benefit from the Wheels For Work program, car or van pools, or other specialized contract services where no other options are available. Additional investigation is needed into the transportation problems of these individuals.

A proposed expansion of the Carousel Mall is expected to nearly quadruple its size and may generate 2,500 additional jobs at the mall and possibly thousands more at employers supporting the mall or profiting from its existence. Plans for the Carousel Mall expansion were preliminary at the time of publication of this report. However, it was decided to make explicit mention of this development due to the enormous impact this proposal will have on the Syracuse area. In terms of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan, the Carousel Mall area will be a much larger employment destination for welfare-to-work persons. It is expected that Centro transit services may be modified as a result of an expanded Carousel Mall, and these changes would need to be accounted for in the overall provision of welfare-to-work transportation services.

### Service Priorities

The transportation service recommendations were prioritized using the community goals developed by the Study Advisory Committee with the following results.

- 1) Home Health Aids
- 2) Carrier Circle Service
- 3) Erie Boulevard Service
- 4) Farrell Road/Stiles Road Service
- 5) Cicero/Route 11/South Bay Road/Route 31 Service

### Implementation Issues

- As is typical throughout the United States, the percentage of trips taken via transit in Onondaga County is relatively small. According to the 1990 Census, 4% of the residents of Onondaga County (including residents of the City of Syracuse) traveled to work via transit. Given this small transit mode share, ridership expectations for the new services must be given careful consideration before any new services are implemented.
- It is recommended that the GIS resources assembled for this project be maintained and utilized as a tool for continued planning and service updates. Longer term, this resource could be further developed into an Internet application accessible to social service and job placement caseworkers and eventually the welfare recipients themselves. This application would allow one to locate a welfare recipient's home location and potential work location. Application tools would allow the most efficient transportation services to be identified for work, training, and childcare trips.
- Marketing and promotion of the new job access transportation services will be important for ridership development, as will obtaining stable financing from multiple sources.
- The primary role of a Mobility Manager typically is to administer the transportation programs of participating agencies through purchase-of-service contracts with public and/or private vendors. Vendor contracting and insurance concerns will need to be addressed. The Mobility Management Center should facilitate the coordination of services between human service agencies and agencies providing transportation services. The Mobility Management Center could also provide client and trip eligibility processing, management of the subscription process, trip scheduling, and dispatch.



*February, 2001*

### Mobility Manager

Centro recently created a Mobility Management Center to coordinate and implement transportation services for participating human service agencies in Onondaga County. Several FTA JARC and New York State Department of Labor Community Solutions through Transportation (CST) grant projects are being implemented by Centro. These include new Suburban East Loop and Suburban West Loop fixed transit route services, the New York State Wheels for Work program, and a grant recently received for the coordination of Home Health Aid client visits.



## **I. STUDY OVERVIEW, PROCESS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **A. Introduction**

This study was undertaken by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Onondaga County and a portion of Oswego County, to examine the mobility needs of people moving from welfare to work and other low income people. It is necessary to ensure a comprehensive county-wide plan for addressing the gaps in transportation and is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant program. State and federal funds are currently available to implement new transportation services in Onondaga County. This plan will provide direction to the use of those funds.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) recently completed a comprehensive strategic plan for restructuring its public transportation services in Onondaga County. The Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP) included the compilation and analysis of information on CNYRTA's existing fixed route and paratransit services, transportation services provided by other organizations in the county, and the mobility needs of groups such as commuters, human service agency clients, seniors, persons with disabilities, and welfare recipients. Copies of key related sections are included in Appendix A. While ReMAP resulted in a series of transit related recommendations, a more thorough examination of mobility needs specific to welfare recipients and low income people in Onondaga County was needed, resulting in this study.

The objective of this study was to build on ReMAP and specifically identify and address the unmet transportation needs of those moving from welfare to work and other low income workers. The unmet needs were identified through a process of comparing the distribution of the workers or potential workers in need of services, to the potential job sites and existing transportation services. The existing system of public, private, non-profit, and human service transportation service providers was reviewed to assess how well the needs of the identified populations are being met. Gaps, or deficiencies, in these services were identified and a plan of improvements developed to address them. This study had the following general tasks:

- Define the study's goals and objectives
- Develop and implement a public involvement plan
- Identify the distribution of workers
- Identify employment centers
- Identify existing transportation services
- Identify transportation service gaps
- Identify and prioritize projects

- Assess the role of the regional mobility manager
- Prepare the Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan

Section 1.C. outlines the study goals and objectives more specifically.

## **B. Problem Statement**

The following problem statement (in italics) was developed in cooperation with the Study Advisory Committee.

*Insufficient services exist in Onondaga County to meet the transportation needs of people moving from welfare to work, and other low income people seeking employment. New transportation services are required to support their ability to get and keep jobs.*

*Changes in the Nation's welfare system to temporary assistance led to a greater more urgent need to provide employment opportunities for welfare recipients. Key to moving from welfare to work and maintaining a job is reliable transportation to and from work and other support services, such as job training, medical care and childcare. However, many of these individuals do not have regular access to a private vehicle and/or are not served by the existing system of public, private, non-profit, and human service transportation providers.*

*One factor leading to transportation deficiencies is the movement to/growth of jobs in the suburbs and away from the city, the primary residence of those needing employment. Not only is the distance farther between home and work, but suburbs are more difficult to serve with traditional public transit because development is spread out, rather than clustered.*

Onondaga County, like many areas across the nation, is experiencing a shift in where people live and work. The population has remained relatively stable, however, it has been moving away from the City of Syracuse and the inner ring suburbs to the outer suburbs (such as Clay, Salina, and Onondaga). The City population decreased about 25% from 1960 to 1990, from 216,000 to 164,000, while the County population increased 11% during the same time from 423,000 to 469,000.

Job growth has also occurred in the suburbs (particularly Clay, DeWitt and Cicero), although the City remains an important employment center. The percent of Onondaga County employment outside of the City of Syracuse went up from 47% in 1980 to 56% in 1990.

Due to these demographic shifts, travel patterns have changed. There has been a large increase in travel to the suburbs, and within and between the suburbs. The following patterns were identified by the ReMAP study:

- Less than half of the workers who live outside Syracuse commute to the city
- One third of workers living in Syracuse reverse commute to suburban municipalities
- Many workers living in the suburbs commute to other suburban towns

The largest share of work trips in the County are destined to the City of Syracuse, however, travel to and within the suburbs is becoming the predominant work travel pattern.

There are currently over 4,000 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients in Onondaga County. Of these, about 80% live in Syracuse. They live in all neighborhoods with somewhat higher concentrations in the western and northern parts of the city, and the inner suburbs of Liverpool, Solway, and North Syracuse. Section 2.A., presents a map showing the residential concentrations of TANF recipients.

ReMAP found that Centro provides very good route coverage geographically to areas with high concentrations of welfare recipients and employment. Only approximately 5% of county welfare recipients live beyond  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of a Centro bus route, and 3% live beyond  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. These recipients are scattered throughout the County as well, with the greatest suburban concentrations in Cicero, Lysander, and Clay.

However, even if basic route coverage is provided, the service duration and frequency, and directness may not meet the needs of employees and/or employers. Many potential jobs are outside the typical weekday 9 AM to 5 PM workday when existing service is much more limited. When considering these limitations the effective coverage of Centro is notably diminished. Further detail on these issues was analyzed as part of this study and is presented in Section 2.

### **C. Study Goals and Objectives**

The following goals and objectives for this study were developed cooperatively with the SMTC and the Study Advisory Committee. They meet local needs for the study and also meet the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program (outlined in Federal Register, March 10, 2000, Volume 65, Number 48).

- 1) Engage in a collaborative transportation/human services planning process to develop the plan.

- a. Develop a public involvement plan
  - b. Conduct a cooperative / broad-based planning process with the Study Advisory Committee
  - c. Participants share information for analysis
  - d. Conduct stakeholder / public involvement through newsletters and meetings
- 2) Consult with the community being served and organizations addressing the interests of such individuals
  - a. Develop a public involvement plan
  - b. Include broad-based representation on the Study Advisory Committee and at the public meetings
- 3) Develop a comprehensive regional approach to providing transportation services, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
  - a. Data shall be collected and projects developed, as needed, for Onondaga County.
- 4) Identify the transportation gaps in existing services
  - a. Identify the geographic distributions of welfare recipients and low income people in the region.
  - b. Identify the geographic distributions of employment centers and employment-related activities in the region.
  - c. Identify existing public, private, non-profit and human service transportation services in the region.
  - d. Identify transportation gaps between the people (a) and employment (b) that are not currently served by transportation services (c).
- 5) Identify new or expanded transportation services to address the transportation gaps. Each project shall identify:
  - a. The goals of the project,
  - b. The cost of the project,
  - c. How the project will maximize use of existing transportation services, and integrate or coordinate the existing network,
  - d. Employer provided or assisted transportation service strategies.
- 6) Prioritize projects for funding and implementation based on local need.
- 7) Assess the role a regional mobility manager to serve the changing needs of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program.

## **D. Collaborative Planning Process**

This report summarizes the work done as a result of a collaborative planning process that included a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) made up of regional transportation and human service agencies representatives. A key to the successful implementation of job access transportation services is a collaborative effort between these agencies. This broad-based participation of a range of organizations and agencies provides a full range of data, resources and experience to the process. The study participants who work with the people who need service, and who provide transportation services, have crucial insights into the complex challenge of moving people from welfare to work and providing services to the low income people who need it. Bringing these individuals, agencies and organizations together through the conduct of this plan is the beginning of a long-term collaborative effort to provide job access transportation services. This process will help develop a shared county-wide commitment to and responsibility for addressing the challenges, building support for the services, and translating this planning effort into real transportation services.

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed for this study. The text is included in full in Appendix B. The general goals of the PIP were to create public awareness about the study, publicize the participation opportunities, and involve the public in the planning process. Principal efforts included two advisory groups, a public meeting, informational flyers, press releases, and distribution of meeting notices, agendas and minutes. The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) consisted of representatives from a broad-base of agencies and organizations, including the following:

- CNY Works, Inc.
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- City of Syracuse
- Onondaga County Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Post Employment Services, Employers' Advisory Board
- Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA)
- Childcare Council of Onondaga County
- Syracuse/Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)

Three meetings were held with the SAC during the course of the study. SAC members were actively involved in providing direction on the work tasks and informational resources, as well as review and comment on study products. A much larger group of stakeholders were kept apprised of the study progress, notified of all meetings and encouraged to provide information and comment regarding the study.

A list of SAC and a list of the stakeholders are included in Appendix B.

One public meeting was held which included SAC members, members of the stakeholder group, and the general public. Copies of all meeting agendas and summaries are included in Appendix B.

In addition, key employers and other stakeholders were contacted individually to provide information and input to the study.

## **E. Community Goals for Transportation Services**

The following goals were developed in collaboration with the Study Advisory Committee, the stakeholder group, and the public. They are the basis for project evaluation criteria and for performance measures to monitor projects over time.

1. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for those moving from welfare to work.
2. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for low income workers.
3. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for the TANF recipients who are employed (to help them stay employed and get better jobs).
4. Expand job opportunities for those moving from welfare to work and low income workers by providing access to a larger geographic area.
5. Develop services that are financially feasible.
6. Develop services that have the flexibility to meet employer/employee needs (e.g., non-standard shift times, schedule changes, overtime).
7. Develop services that are reliable (e.g., consistent and on time).
8. Develop services that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
9. Meet the needs of employees and their families by connecting existing and new transportation services to other human service needs, whenever feasible (e.g., day care, medical, training).
10. Maintain flexibility in services to meet changing needs of workers and employers.
11. Provide flexibility by making available a back-up transportation plan (e.g., guaranteed ride to work and home).
12. Provide transportation services to employment sites in a variety of areas throughout the county, as feasible.

13. Provide transportation services that are compatible with other plans.
14. Provide a system of services that meet the needs of individual municipalities and the county as a whole and can be supported by local politicians.

## **F. Regional Mobility Action Plan**

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority completed a comprehensive strategic plan for restructuring its public transportation services in Onondaga County in order to respond to changing demographics and travel needs. The Regional Mobility Action Plan, completed in 1999, included the compilation and analysis of information on CNYRTA's existing fixed route and paratransit services, transportation services provided by other organizations in the county, and the mobility needs of groups such as commuters, human service agency clients, seniors, persons with disabilities, and welfare recipients. Traditional and innovative service alternatives were developed and evaluated, transportation coordination opportunities were examined and recommendations made, and financing strategies were addressed. Throughout the study broad-based community consensus was sought through a comprehensive public participation program.

The following ReMAP strategies constitute the overall restructuring framework:

- Provide Different Services in the Urban, Suburban and Rural Areas Designed to Meet Each Area's Specific Needs
- Collaborate with Private and Non-Profit Organizations to Enhance Effectiveness of the Transportation Network
- Introduce Services Targeted to Particular Markets (including inner city reverse commuters and small groups of workers to specific employment centers)
- Establish Transit Hubs at Key Locations Throughout the Region
- Develop Local Circulation and Feeder Services Around Hubs
- Strengthen Fixed Route Services Along Major Corridors Between Hubs

ReMAP data was used in this study to the maximum extent possible. Additional results of the study are referenced in several locations in this report. Appendix A includes copies of key pages from the ReMAP study.



## G. Existing Transportation Services

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) was created in 1970 to strengthen and improve public transportation for all residents. The transportation district served by CNYRTA consists of the counties of Onondaga, Cayuga and Oswego. Operating subsidiary corporations include:

- CNY Centro, Inc.
- Centro of Cayuga
- Centro of Oswego
- Call-A-Bus Paratransit Services
- Centro Parking
- ITC, Inc.
- COORTRANS

Approximately 35% of the Authority's operating costs are supported by revenues received from passengers. Federal, State and local operating assistance make up the difference.

**Table 1: CNYRTA Service Profile**

Service Area:	Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego Counties
Population of Service Area:	657,715
Fleet Size:	207
Employees:	534 *includes part-time
Annual Miles:	5,747,125
Annual Hours:	445,633
Annual Passengers:	13,316,428
Daily Passengers:	41,060
Daily Trips:	Approx. 4,000

CNYRTA service features include:

- Local, handicap accessible service
- Shopper services to area groceries for elderly and disabled
- Paratransit Services for elderly, disabled and rural residents, which meet current ADA requirements
- Inter-city services between the cities of Auburn, Skaneateles, Marcellus, Oswego, Fulton, Mexico and Syracuse
- Parking
- The Connections Carpool Program
- Carrier Dome Events Services and other special events services
- Syracuse University and SUNY/Oswego Shuttle Services

CNY Centro, Inc., commonly known as Centro, an operating subsidiary corporation of CNYRTA, serves the following areas:



- Syracuse/Onondaga County
- Oswego County
- Tully / Lafayette Express
- Cayuga County
- Park and Ride Services
- Shopping Malls
- Two New ReMAP Routes

### **Existing Job Access and Reverse Commute Programs**

Two new routes were initiated as a result of the ReMAP study and state and federal Job Access and Reverse Commute grants. The Suburban East Loop provides residents living in Minoa, Fremont, Manlius and DeWitt with rush hour service to and from Northeast Medical Center and Shoppingtown Mall. The goal is to serve employment, shopping and activity centers while providing convenient transfers to bus lines serving downtown Syracuse and other locations. The route includes service to Edgerton Estates, Medical Center East, North East Medical Center, Wegmans Plaza in DeWitt, Shoppingtown Mall, and the Springfield Garden Apartments.

The Suburban West Loop provides weekday rush hour service between Milton Avenue, Knowell Road, Hinsdale Road in the Town of Camillus and Camillus Mall, West Genesee High School, and Fairmount Fair Shopping Center, with connections to the Express Downtown Service.

The State TANF grant and Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute grants previously awarded to Onondaga County are being utilized to implement these new services. Copies of the maps and schedules for these routes are included in Appendix A. Figures presenting all Centro fixed routes are included in Section 2.C.

A **Mobility Management Center (MMC)**, as recommended in the ReMAP Study, was recently initiated by CNYRTA. The MMC is working to consolidate human service agency transit programs under a common management system to share resources and services, reduce costs, and to expand and enhance the specialized transportation services available to the community. The primary role of a MMC is typically to administer the transportation programs of participating agencies through purchase-of-service contracts with public and/or private vendors. There are many other potential roles to provide efficient and greater service for low-income families, as outlined in Section V of this report.

A Mobility Manager was recently hired to coordinate implementation of the MMC which is housed within CNYRTA's CoorTrans office. Additional staff resources have also been dedicated by CNYRTA to develop the MMC. A request for proposals was sent out requesting price quotes for contract services. However, there are several important contracting and liability issues that must be worked through.

A contract has been established with Blue Chip Transportation and transportation services have begun through the JobsPlus! Program. The MMC will provide individual trip planning services, transportation case management, and has a goal of providing transportation within 24 to 48 hours of a request. The MMC an important start to addressing the important and complicated employment transportation needs of the community. The State TANF grant and Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute grants previously awarded to Onondaga County are being utilized to implement the MMC.

The New York State *Wheels For Work* program provides eligible low income families and individuals on public assistance with vehicles and related support services to help them find and retain employment. It provides assistance to purchase, repair, finance and/or insure personal vehicles necessary to obtain/maintain employment or to participate in other work activities. A grant was obtained and the program is being administered through JobsPlus!

A New York State Department of Labor Community Solutions through Transportation (CST) grant was recently received for the coordination of Home Health Aid client visits and to continue support for MMC activities initiated through the TANF and JARC grants.

### **Demand-Responsive Transportation Services**

The CNYRTA ReMAP study (1998) included a survey of demand-responsive transportation services. The following is a summary of the findings. The potential for coordinating services was reviewed, primarily in terms of transporting for Medicaid and those with developmental needs. ReMAP did not review coordination possibilities specifically for access to employment.

Most survey respondents provide transportation service only for their own clients or individuals attending programs offered by the agency. Major client groups include seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals with developmental disabilities or mental retardation, and Medicaid recipients. Transportation services are available primarily on weekdays, during typical business hours. Very few services are available in the early morning, in the evening, at night, or on weekends. Typical vehicle utilization includes many vehicles with downtimes in the early morning (before 7 or 8 AM) and evenings (after 5 or 6 PM) or on weekends. Vehicles operated by ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens), Developmental Services Organization (DSO), and Catholic Charities are not all in use during the mid-day hours.

The following eight (8) organizations were identified in the survey to operate transportation services using their own vehicles and staff. Collectively, these organizations operate approximately 226 vehicles serving 436,000 one-way trips per year.

- The American Cancer Society
- ARC
- Catholic Charities
- DSO
- Centro
- PEACE
- St. Camillus
- Salvation Army

The survey identified the following nine (9) organizations that purchase transportation service from other providers.

- ARC
- DSO
- Consolidated Industries of Syracuse
- Enable
- Home Aids of CNY
- Liberty Resources
- Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth
- Onondaga County Department of Social Services
- TBI
- Salvation Army

The survey identified the following seven (7) organizations that are willing to consider purchasing some or all of the transportation services needed by their clients from other providers.

- The American Cancer Society
- ARC
- DSO
- Centro
- Home Aids of CNY
- DSS
- St. Camillus

The following five (5) agencies responding to the survey indicated they would be interested in providing transportation services to other organizations.

- ARC
- Catholic Charities
- Centro
- St. Camillus
- Salvation Army

The survey identified thirty-nine (39) private vendors that provide demand-responsive transportation services to agencies in Onondaga County. Organizations that may have a financial incentive to participate in a coordinated transportation system, due to their levels of ridership and reported unit or total costs of transportation service, include: Centro, DSS, ARC, and DSO. DSO and DSS both indicated a willingness to make greater use of Centro's bus system for client transportation. Most of the transportation services are operated during weekday hours, and only two routinely operated on weekends and evenings.

The survey identified two (2) providers that operate only within limits of the City of Syracuse: the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities. Three (3) were identified that operate in the multi-county area: Centro, the American Cancer Society, and the Leukemia Society. All remaining respondents operate within Onondaga County.

Several transportation providers were identified that already coordinate their services. Centro's Coor-Trans program serves the following:

- Department of Social Services non-emergency medical trips for Medicaid recipients
- Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth for seniors in rural and suburban areas
- NYS Office of Aging in northern communities
- MetraHealth Health Maintenance Organization
- Syracuse University on-campus shuttle for disabled students
- PEACE – rural transit service for seniors and persons with disabilities

Catholic Charities coordinates with the Syracuse Community Health Center and the Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth for seniors in the north county area.

The Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth coordinates services with the following:

- Catholic Charities for the north county area
- Northeast Community Center for the north city area
- NCNY United Methodist Church for the Onondaga Nation
- Salvation Army in the south city area
- Call-A-Bus/Coor-Trans

The following potential purchasers of transportation services were identified in the survey:

- DSS and DSO exploring hiring Centro to broker trips
- ARC would consider purchasing service from other vendors
- American Cancer Society would consider purchasing transportation services

- Home Aides of CNY interested in purchasing services

The following potential providers of transportation services were identified in the survey:

- ARC
- St. Camillus Health and Rehabilitation
- Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth

The following perceived barriers to coordination were identified in the survey:

- Impact on the business of small, private vendors
- Serving rural clients
- Vehicle insurance concerns
- Loss of control of service design and operation
- Reluctance to pool funds or vehicles
- Turf issues

Categories of strategies for coordination identified in the survey include:

- Shifting trips onto Centro's fixed route system
- Filling vehicles by grouping trips
- Developing more efficient routings of "subscription" riders, possibly by combining programs both within and between agencies
- Procuring joint contracts with private operators or other public providers, administered by a lead agency, an interagency consortium, or a broker
- Purchase by interested agencies of maintenance services from Centro
- Eliminating duplicative administrative effort by centralizing functions such as reservations, procurement of vendors, driver supervision, and billing and record-keeping

## **H. Federal and State Assistance Programs**

The following is a summary of federal and state assistance programs and laws. Some establish the regulations and guidelines required to obtain grants to provide transportation services. Others are referred to in this study and this section provides some background information. Additional references are provided in Appendix C.

### **FEDERAL**

Three federal laws were passed that encourage collaboration between transportation agencies and human service agencies that provide employment placement and training. They are as follows:

1. The **Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21)** was passed in 1998. It increased funding for public transportation, provided funding for community partnerships to build upon existing public transit services to provide low income people with access to work (known as the Job Access and Reverse Commute program).
2. The **Workforce Investment Act of 1998** consolidated the former Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and other federal job training programs into three state-managed block grants. The law replaces Private Industry Councils with Workforce Investment Boards to oversee employment and training activities in a centralized location. The Workforce Investment Board provides one central point for obtaining information on job training and placement, as well as transportation and other support services.
3. The **Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1996**, known as welfare reform or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), sets a 60-month limit on public assistance (5-year lifetime limit) and mandates employment.

## **NEW YORK STATE**

### ***NYS Welfare Reform***

The objectives of state welfare reform have been twofold: to change welfare to a system of temporary support while recipients secure employment, child support or other forms of self-sufficiency, and to provide social services districts with the flexibility and incentives needed to effectively administer a work-oriented welfare system.

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) was created as part of the State's Welfare Reform Law of 1997. OTDA is responsible for providing policy, technical and systems support to the State's 58 social services districts. OTDA provides economic assistance to aged and disabled persons who are unable to work, and transitional support to public assistance recipients while they are working toward self-sufficiency.

### ***Family Assistance***

Formerly known as the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC), Family Assistance (FA) provides cash assistance to eligible families that include a minor child living with a parent (including families where both parents are in the household) or a caretaker relative. It is operated under the federal TANF guidelines. Under FA, eligible adults are limited to receiving benefits for a total of 60 months in their lifetime. Once this limit is reached, households are ineligible to receive further FA benefits. The months need not be consecutive, but each

individual month in which TANF-funded benefits are received is included in the lifetime count. The counting of this 60-month limit began in December 1996. Parents and other adult relatives who can work must be working or involved in work-like activities. Parents are also responsible for cooperating with the local department of social services in locating any absent parent.

The federal TANF Block Grant offers flexibility to provide services to individuals and families beyond traditional welfare programs. For certain programs, New York is using TANF funds to expand services available to eligible individuals and families with gross income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, including non-custodial parents. NYS TANF programs that could assist with access to jobs with eligibility up to 200% of poverty include:

- Family Loan Program (FLP) that makes small, low interest loans to parents with income below 200% of the federal poverty level to help meet unexpected expenses that could interfere with their ability to remain employed or continue educational pursuits.
- Wheels for Work that provides assistance to purchase, repair, finance and/or insure personal vehicles necessary to obtain/maintain employment or to participate in other work activities.
- Community Solutions for Transportation (CST) that allocates money to local districts to provide transportation services for certain TANF eligible people so they can get to and from work or other work activities.
- Health Care Worker Training and Recruitment provides funding for job training, wage subsidies and other services to obtain and retain workers for employment in the health care field.

### ***Safety Net Assistance***

The state and locally funded Safety Net Assistance Program (SN) replaced the former Home Relief program. Safety Net provides assistance to individuals and families who are ineligible for Family Assistance or other federal public assistance programs. Safety Net Assistance is for:

- single adults
- childless couples
- children living apart from any adult relative
- families of persons abusing drugs or alcohol
- families of persons refusing drug/alcohol screening, assessment or treatment
- persons who have exceeded the 60-month limit on assistance
- aliens who are eligible for public assistance, but who are not eligible for federal reimbursement Individuals can receive Safety Net Assistance in cash for a maximum of two years in a lifetime. After that, if eligibility continues, it will be provided in non-cash form.

Unless prevented from doing so by a physical or mental disability, Safety Net recipients must engage in work activities to receive assistance.

### ***Food Stamps***

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food Stamp Program issues monthly benefits redeemable at authorized retail food stores. Eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, assets and other factors. To help with the transition to self-sufficiency, food stamps can be continued for families leaving temporary assistance to move into the workplace. The food stamp income eligibility limits enable families earning up to 130% of the poverty level to qualify for the program, and there is no time limit for receipt of benefits for families with children.



## II. TRANSPORTATION GAPS IN EXISTING SERVICES

Conducting technical analysis is important to understanding the dimensions of employment access needs and addressing those needs effectively. Delineating the markets for job access services requires identifying the locations of areas with a sizeable group of residents needing employment and matching these to transit routes and to locations that can be expected to provide employment opportunities. Data from several key resources were utilized to conduct the analysis in this study, including:

- The SMTC
- ReMAP Study
- Onondaga County DSS
- CENTRO

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was utilized to organize, map, analyze and present the data. The results of that analysis, the input received through the coordinated planning process, and results of the ReMAP study are summarized in this section.

The following is a summary of the job access and reverse commute needs identified by the ReMAP study:

- More frequently scheduled Centro bus service during peak agency program hours of 8:00-9:30 AM and 3:00-5:00 PM
- More accessible transportation to and from outlying areas, particularly East Syracuse, Baldwinsville, and Tully
- Lower bus fares to and from the suburbs
- Transportation that can be utilized by individuals working during non-traditional hours
- Less expensive individualized transportation throughout the day, especially for participants in supported employment programs and others that are not covered by Medicaid.
- Transportation that can be used by inner city residents to access suburban jobs with such employers as the Marriott at Carrier Circle and the Wal-Mart in Camillus; not only are these jobs located in the suburbs, but they often require work in the late evenings and early mornings, when bus service is not available.
- Public transportation in the southern part of Onondaga County.
- Available, affordable transportation services that can be used for trips to social or recreational activities, or for other non-program-specific purposes, especially outside of Centro's fixed route and paratransit service areas.
- Services that include agency clients and make them part of the mainstream life of their communities, rather than isolate them on the basis of their specific disability.

- Some consumers have physical, behavioral or cognitive difficulties that make it problematic for them to be on a vehicle for extended periods of time.
- Not all vehicles are equipped with air conditioning.
- Late night, door-to-door service is needed, as well as more service on Sundays and holidays.
- Service is lacking in the Baldwinsville/Northwest area.
- A large percentage of elderly residents reside in City North and Eastwood, and many more are than four blocks from a fixed-route bus line.
- Transportation service from low income neighborhoods to entry-level jobs during non-traditional working hours, including night shifts.
- Rural transportation is also needed.
- Most unmet needs arise in the outlying areas of Onondaga County, particularly in Cicero, Clay, Bridgeport, Minoa, Brewerton, Baldwinsville, Tully, Fabius, Elbridge, and Jordan.

The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) and Stakeholders, as part of this study, identified the following as needs or employment centers lacking public transportation.

- State Fairgrounds
- Hancock Airport
- Killian Manufacturing Corp. located on Burnett Avenue by Midler and Teal – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Shifts
- Carrier Circle / Marriott
- Burnett / Erie Boulevard
- East Malloy Road – PPConversions, PPI across street
- UPS on Thompson Rd.
- Rescue Mission – Warehouses on Henry Clay Boulevard
- Shoppingtown Mall
- Phillips Broadband
- Women's Centers including Vera House, Chadwick Center, St. Lucy's Church
- Carrier – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shifts
- Employees in Liverpool and East Syracuse
- Anaren Microwave hiring 300 – E. Syracuse Fly Road
- Brickhouse – Men and Womens
- Salvation Army
- Hospitality Industry 8-9 PM
- Retail service until 9:30-10:00 – restaurant types of jobs
- Another central bus location / transit hub in Dewitt
- Shoppingtown – Erie Blvd bus needed
- West Court Street
- GE Industrial Park
- Coordinate shifts among businesses
- Livery services / taxis

- Informal network among employees – carpooling – pay them
- Model after Madison County – 2<sup>nd</sup> shift bus route developed with employers – Route 20 – Cazenovia – Irwin Davis is key contact
- Call-a-Bus delays are extreme
- Dunbar, SW Community Center
- Federal Building
- Boys and Girls Clubs

## A. Geographic Distribution of Welfare Recipients and Low Income People

An early step in this study was to identify where welfare recipients and low-income people who need new transportation services live. General concentrations were identified, not specific homes of individuals. Onondaga County Department of Social Services provided recent address-only files of the residents of TANF recipients (4,086), Safety Net recipients (1,258), and Food Stamp recipients (8,796). The address files were geocoded utilizing GIS (with the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) street address files) and concentrations were identified and mapped. The Food Stamp recipients were utilized as a proxy measure for the low-income population, including those not receiving TANF.

Figures 1 and 2 present the geographic distribution of welfare recipients and low-income people in Onondaga County. This map was created in GIS by creating a surface model of the density of address locations of welfare recipients. This technique reveals the concentrations more clearly than would a simple dot map where, depending on viewing scale, individual dots would not be discernable.

Concentrations of welfare recipients were observed in the following areas:

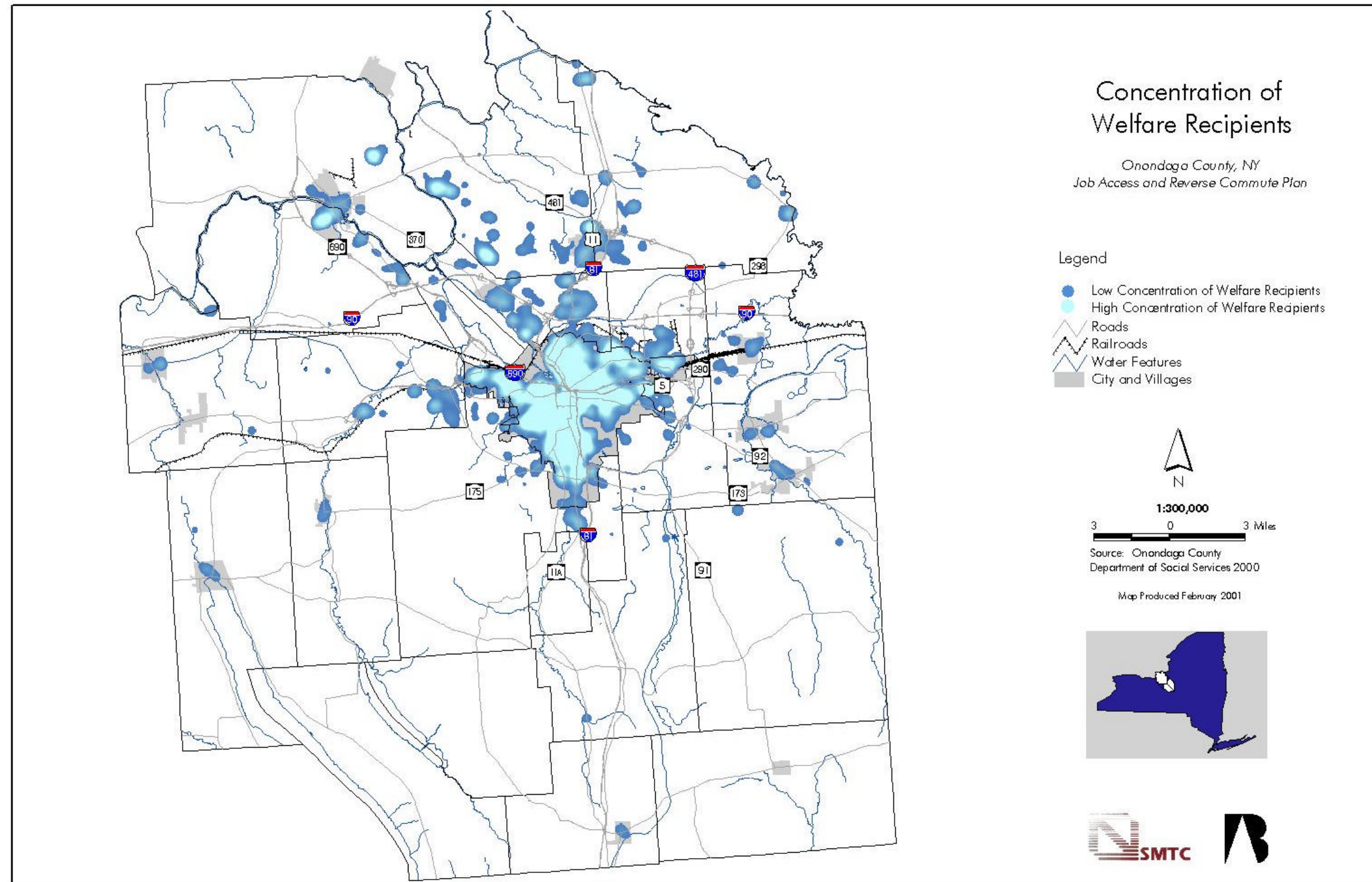
- Throughout the City of Syracuse
- Village of Liverpool, Mattydale area
- Southeast quadrant of the Town of Salina
- Village of North Syracuse in the Town of Cicero
- Fairmount area of the Town of Camillus
- Village of Baldwinsville in the Towns of Lysander and VanBuren
- Nedrow area of the Town of Onondaga
- Village of East Syracuse in the Town of Dewitt
- Locations of apartment complexes in other suburban locations

In addition, available US Census data was reviewed to identify concentrations of high unemployment and low income in the county. This data can be observed in Figures 3 and 4. These areas coincide generally with the concentrations of welfare recipients. Figure 3 shows the areas with the combined aspects of low income and high unemployment. Figure 4 shows those areas where average income is at or below the poverty line and those where the average income is two times the poverty

line. These two income levels are key thresholds for program funding eligibility (see Section H).

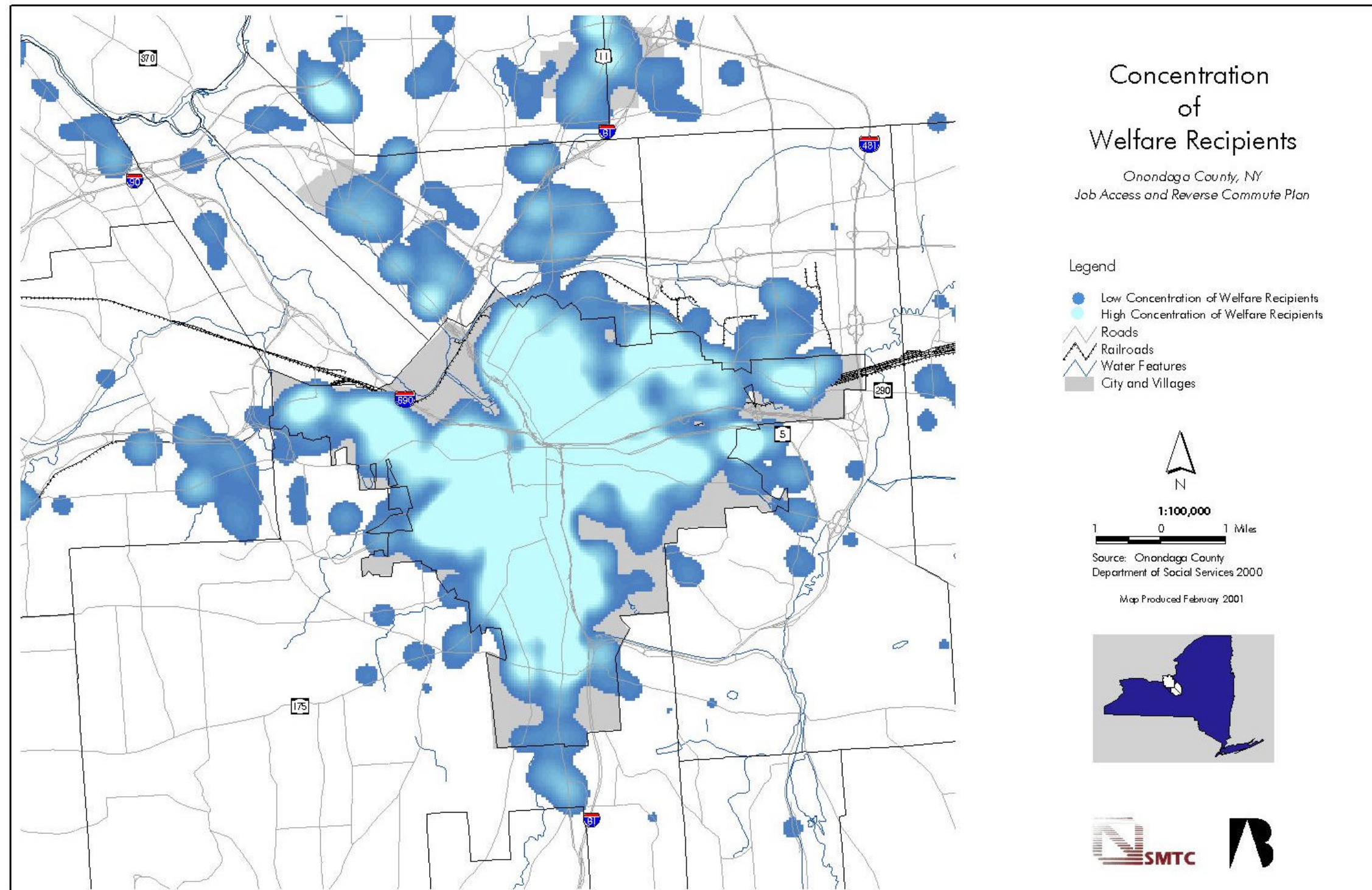
The Childcare Council of Onondaga County provided the locations of childcare centers in the County. The address file of childcare centers was address matched, geo-coded, and mapped utilizing GIS (see Figure 5). Licensed day care centers are more prevalent on the south side of the City than they are in the north. Outside the City, childcare centers were located generally throughout the residential areas of the County. However, it was noticed that there were not many childcare centers in the Town of Geddes or in the Fayetteville area. This information can be used to identify potential connections with trips to/from employment sites.

**Figure 1: Concentration of Welfare Recipients – Onondaga County**

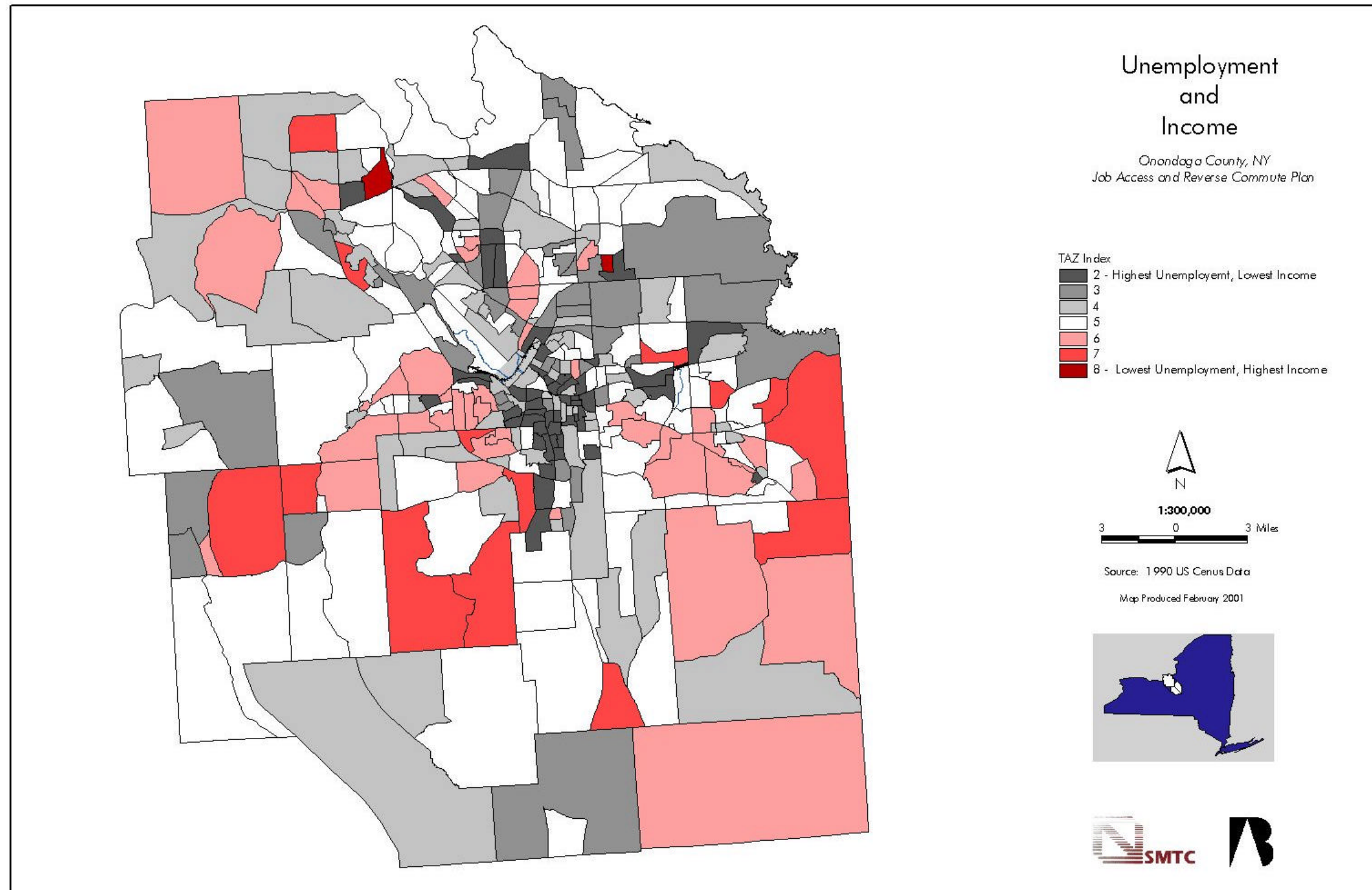




**Figure 2: Concentration of Welfare Recipients – Core Area**

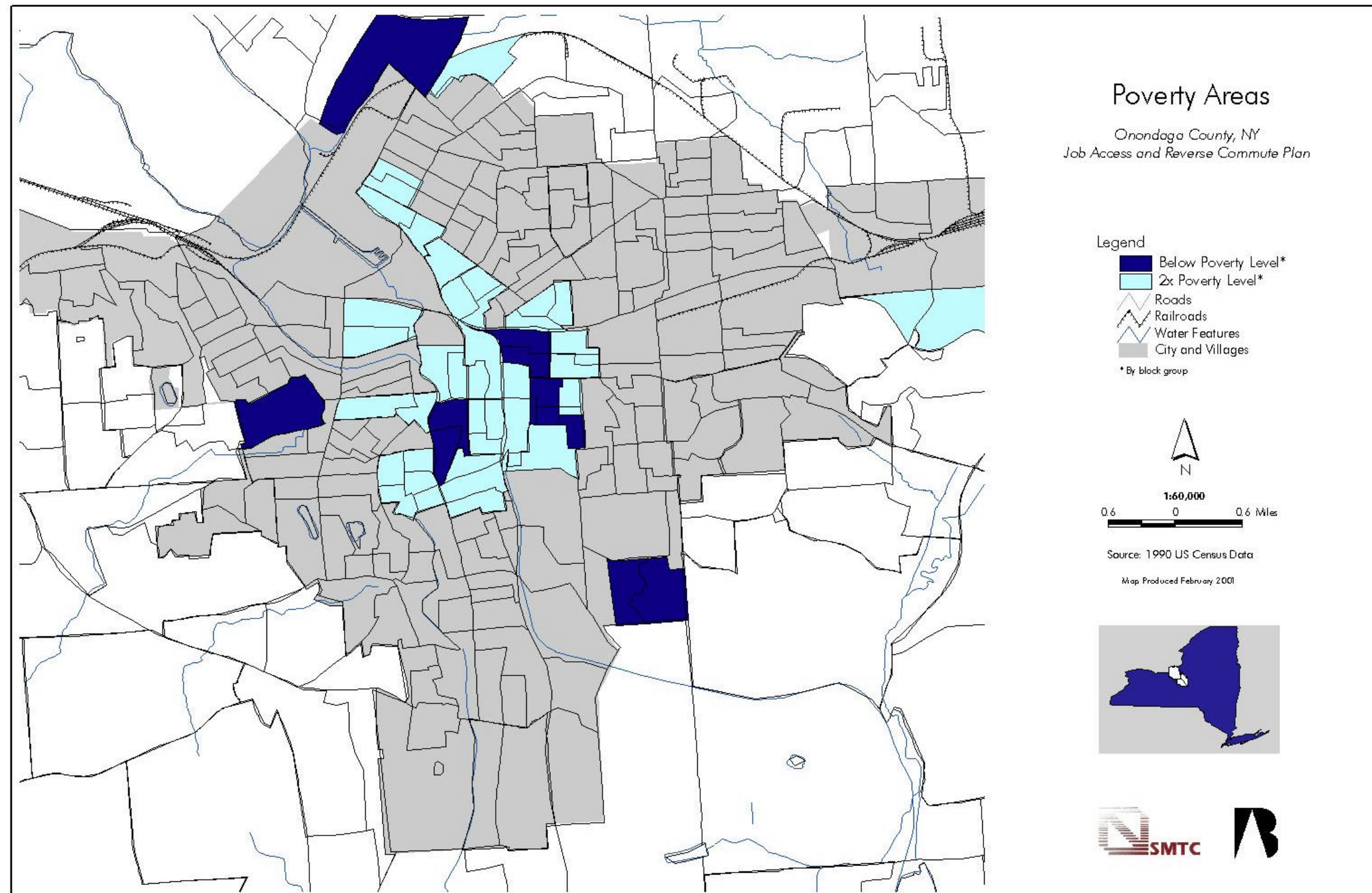


**Figure 3: Areas of High Unemployment and Low Income**



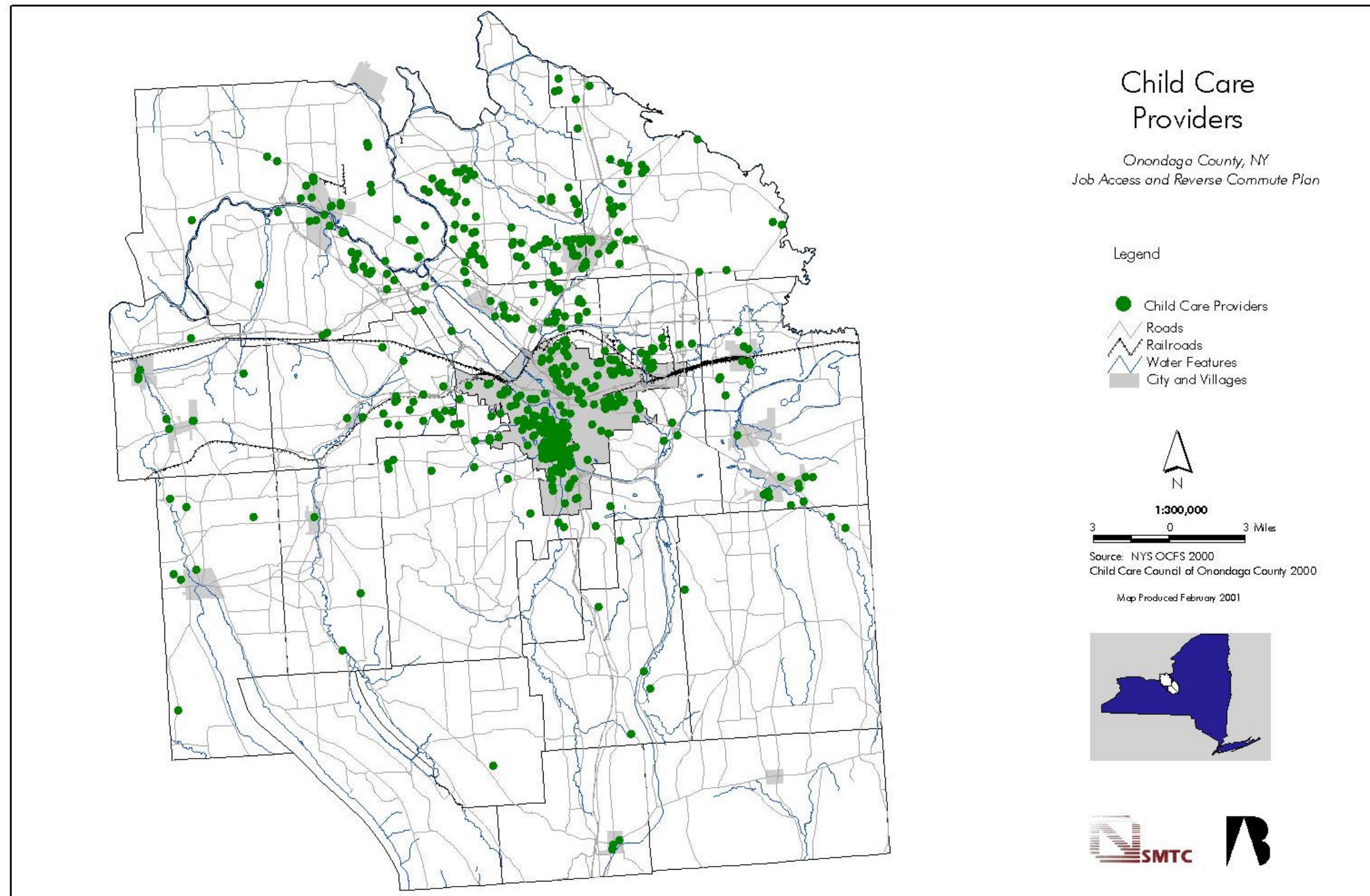


**Figure 4: Average Income Within Poverty Level and 200% Poverty Level**





**Figure 5: Childcare Providers**



## **B. Geographic Distribution of Employment Centers**

Another early step was to identify the location of potential jobs. The American Business Institute (ABI) index file (1998) was provided by the New York State Department of Transportation, Passenger Transit Division for use in this analysis. The database contains 4,317 employers representing 231,570 employees. Onondaga County DSS provided their Jobs Plus! file that contained information about 630 employers where clients had been placed in jobs. Centro provided information about 17 employers that contacted Centro requesting service for their employees. This information was mapped and concentrations were identified. Figures 6 and 7 present the employer concentrations in Onondaga County.

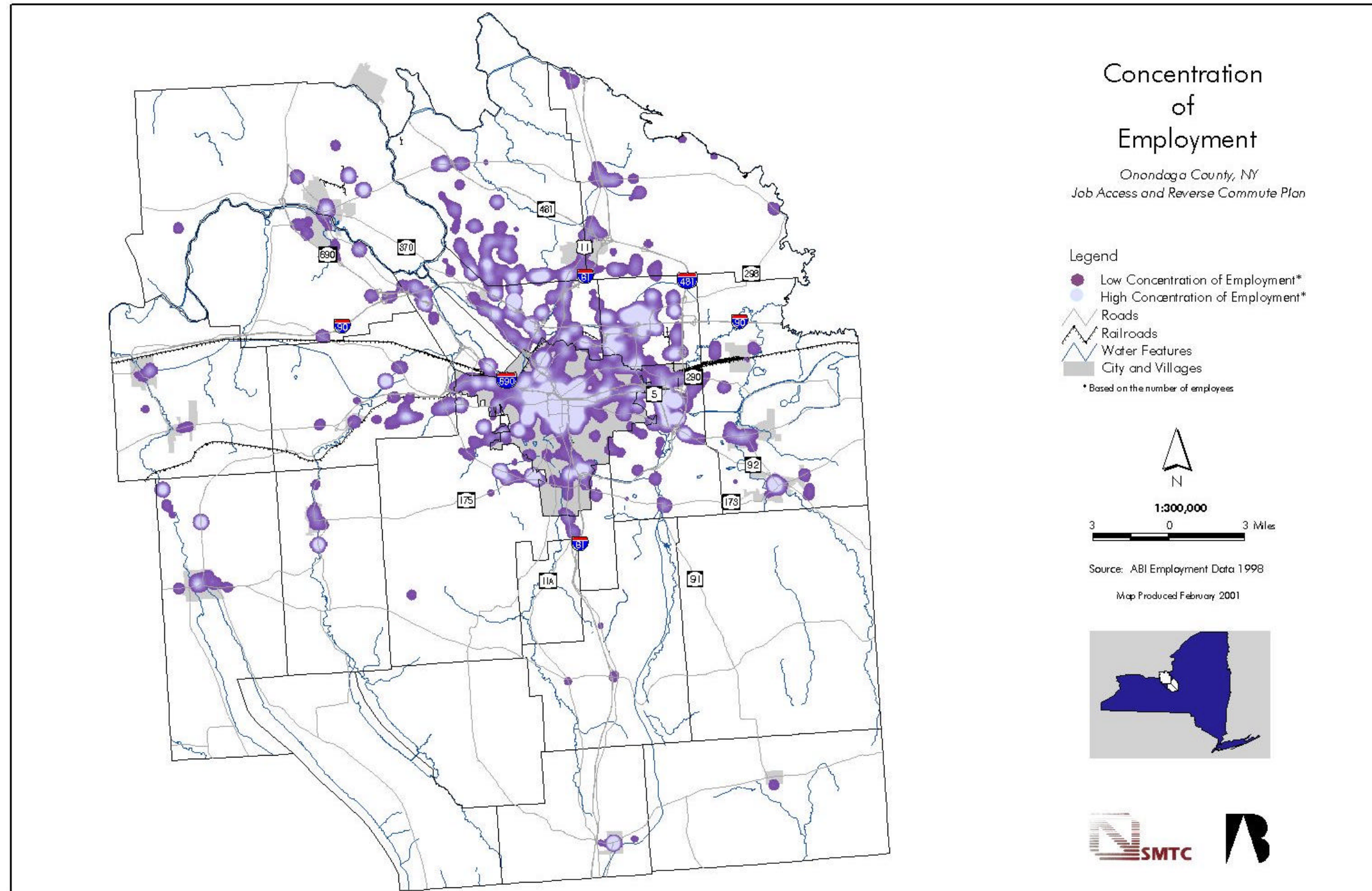
This map was created in GIS by creating a surface model of the density of address locations of employers. The employment surface model was weighted by the number of employers. This technique reveals the concentration of potential employment, not simply the density of employer locations.

Concentrations of potential employment were observed in the following areas:

- Downtown Syracuse
- Shoppingtown/Widewaters area, Village of East Syracuse, and Carrier Circle/Thompson Road/Molloy Road/Northern Boulevard area in the Town of Dewitt
- Seneca Turnpike area in the City of Syracuse and Town of Onondaga
- Village of Solvay in the Town of Geddes
- Fairmount area in the Town of Camillus
- Farrell Road area in the Town of VanBuren
- Baldwinsville area in the Towns of VanBuren and Lysander
- Village of Liverpool and southeast quadrant of Town of Salina
- Route 11 corridor in Towns of Salina and Cicero
- Taft Road corridor in the Towns of Clay and Cicero
- Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road corridor in the Town of Clay

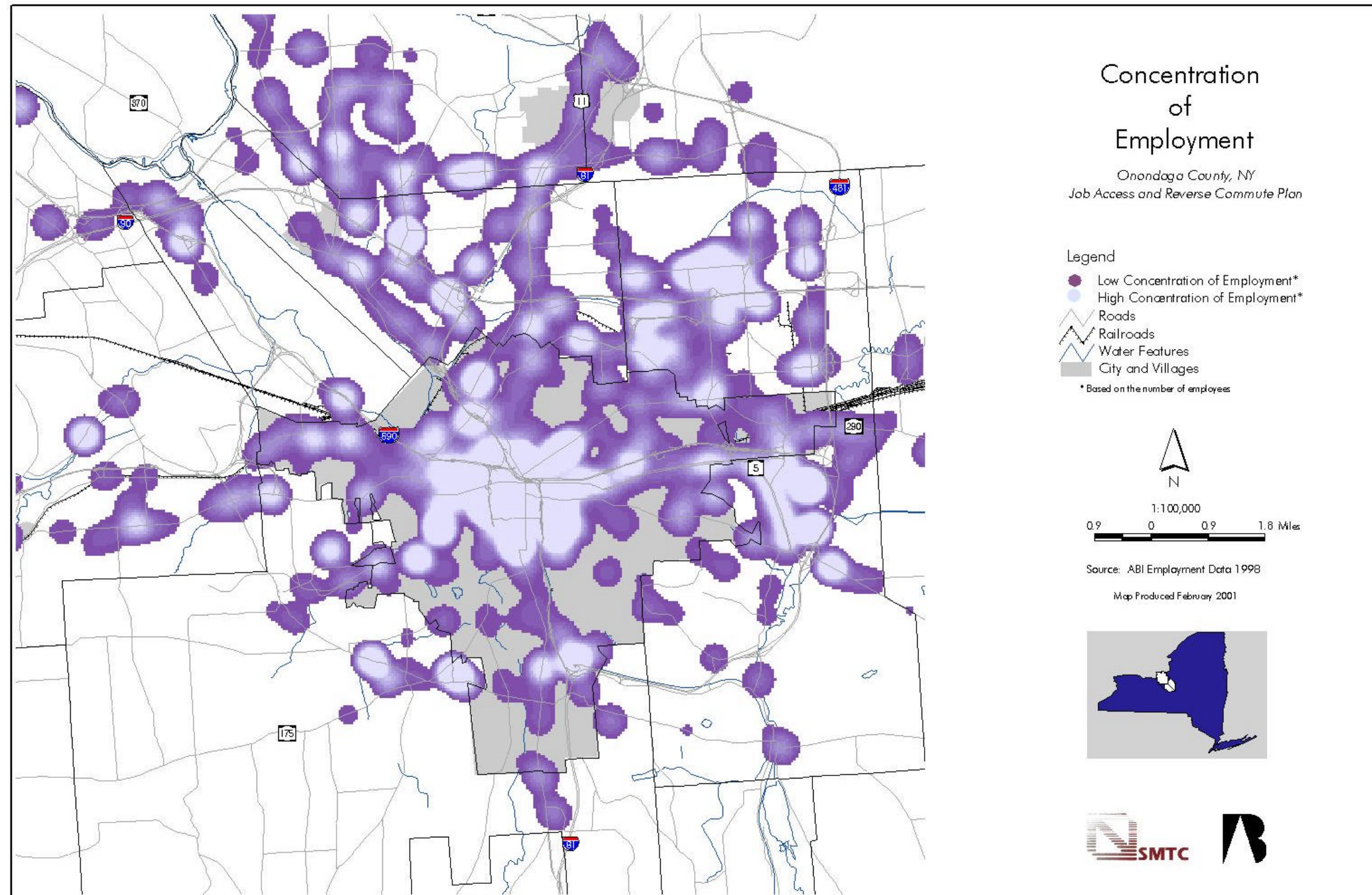


**Figure 6: Concentrations of Employment – Onondaga County**





**Figure 7: Concentrations of Employment – Core Area**



## **C. Public, Private, Non-Profit and Human Service Transportation Services**

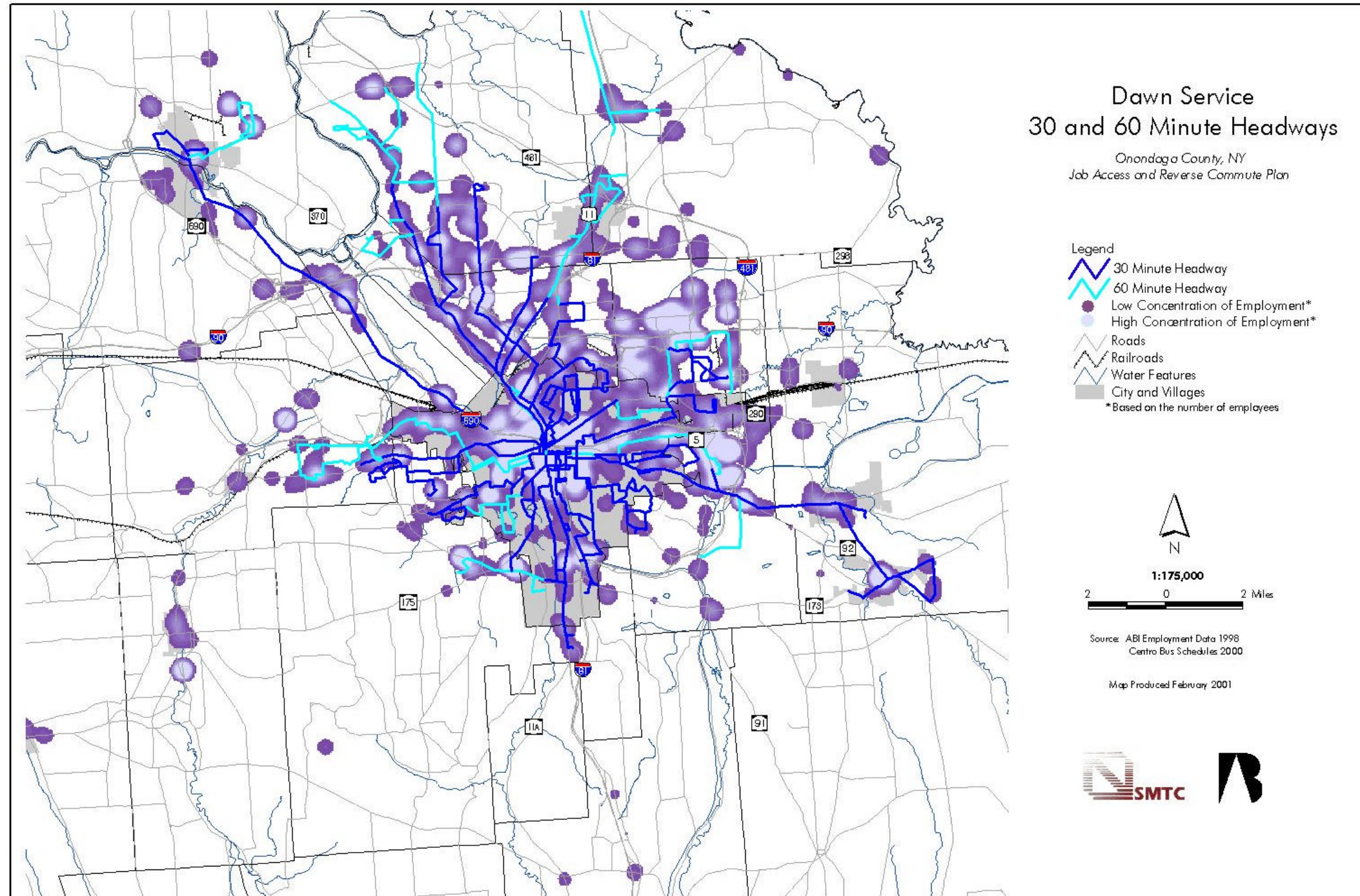
Section 1.G. summarized the existing transportation services available in Onondaga County. Some agencies are limited to transporting clients in the City of Syracuse. Otherwise, there is very little geographic definition to the service areas in which the agencies are providing transportation. Services are, in general, demand responsive and are directly tailored to the specific program's clients. There are times, such as at night, that the agencies providing transportation services have vehicles available, and may be willing to provide services. However, there are a number of barriers to their use for contract services. These include liability issues, ability to hire drivers in the late night and early morning, and mingling of funding sources the agencies receive. However, due to the potential efficiencies that are possible, the coordination of services should continue to be explored whenever possible. This may be a task of the Regional Mobility Manager (See Section V).

Centro provides the only fixed route service in the County. All routes were mapped in GIS. Data regarding service spans (days of the week and hours of service for each route) and headways (frequency of buses on a route) were assigned to the route files in GIS. Headways were classified as 30 minutes or less, greater than 30 minutes but less than 60 minutes, and greater than 60 minutes. As a generalization for the purposes of this study, service with headways of 30 minutes or less are considered good, between 30 and 60 minutes are fair, and service of greater than 60 minutes would be considered poor. However, it must be acknowledged that there are many factors specific to individual routes and portions of routes that would certainly justify service of greater than 60 minutes for valid reasons. For example, one bus later in the evening could be targeted to a specific employer. The following transit route maps do not show service with headways of greater than 60 minutes.

Figures 8 through 12 summarize the frequency of service provided by Centro at different time periods within each weekday as well as Saturday service. Dawn service is before 7:00 AM. Peak service is between 7:00 and 9:00 AM or 4:00 and 6:00 PM. Mid-day service is between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Night service is after 6:00 PM. Figures 8 through 12 show the route service overlaid over the concentrations of employment.

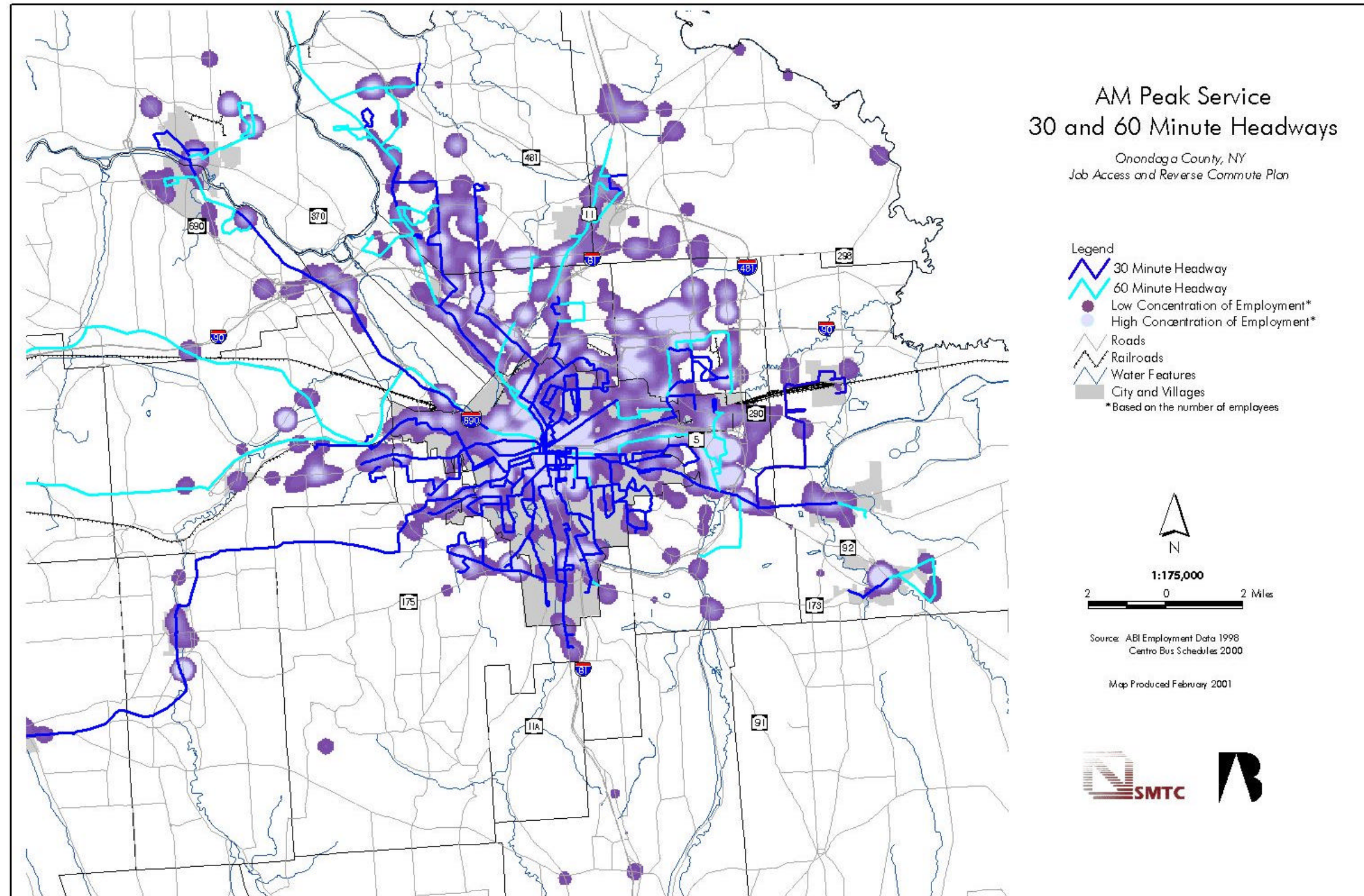


**Figure 8: Centro Bus Service – Weekday Dawn**



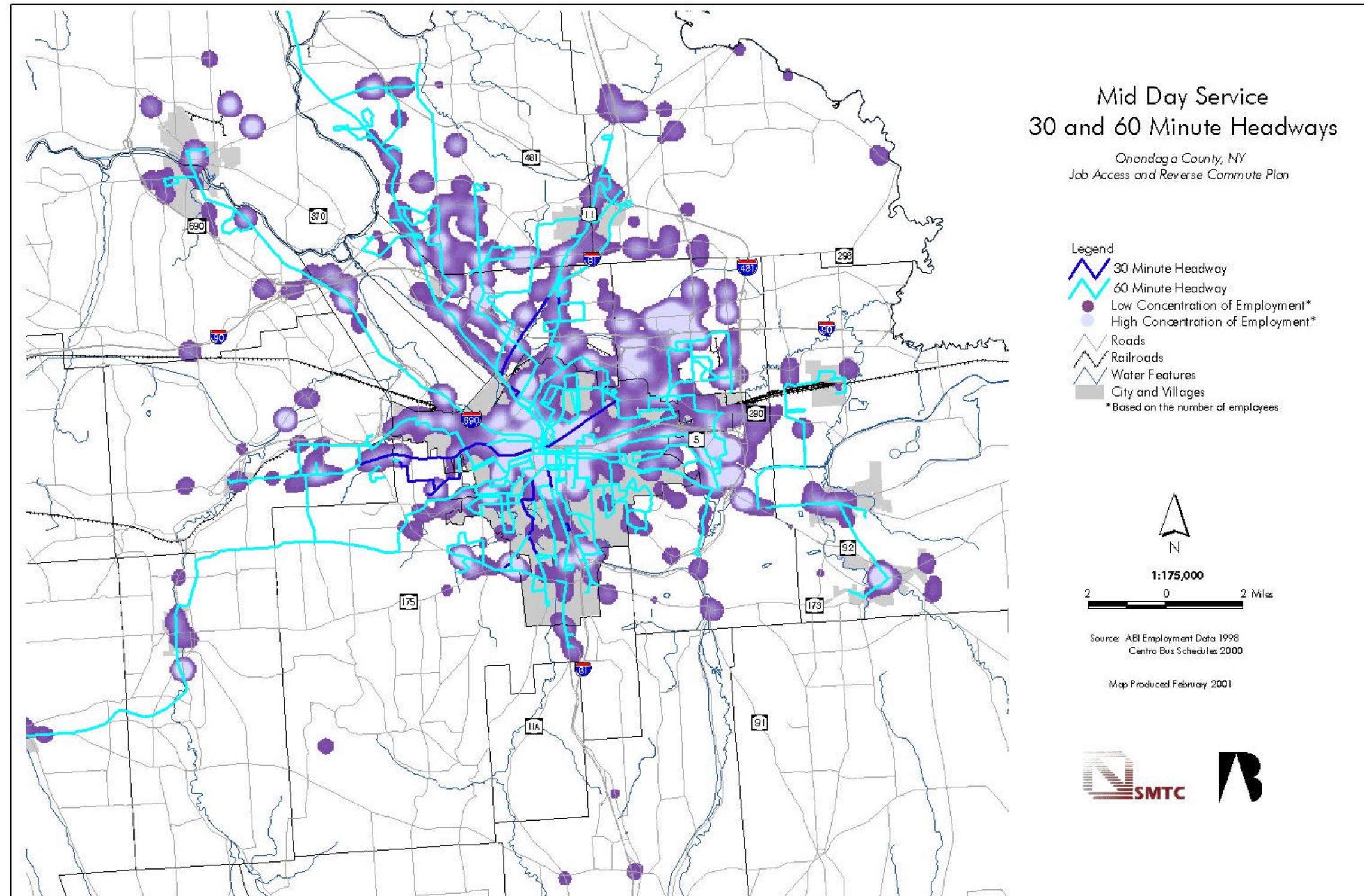


**Figure 9: Centro Bus Service – Weekday Peak**



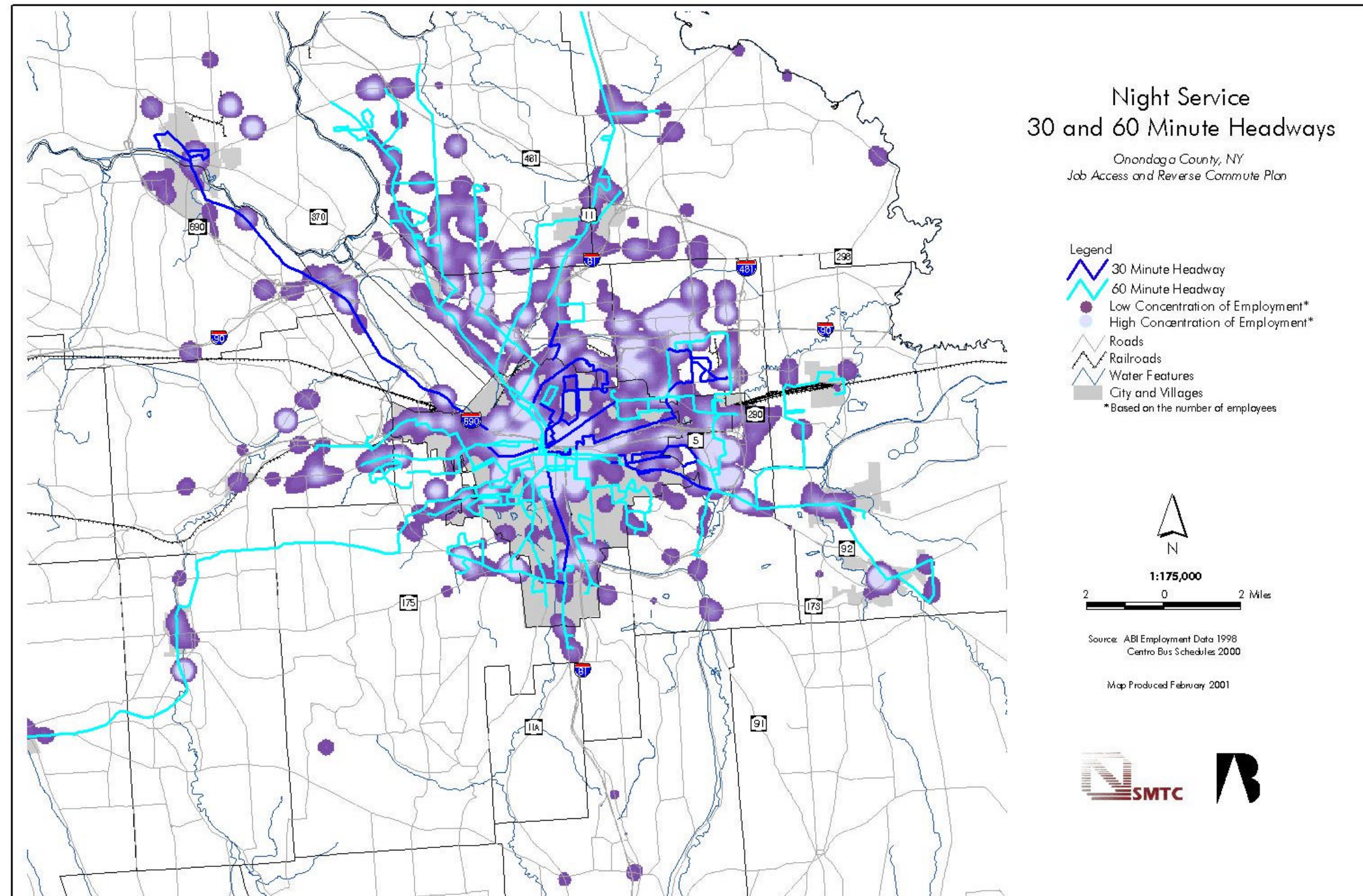


**Figure 10: Centro Bus Service – Weekday Mid-Day**



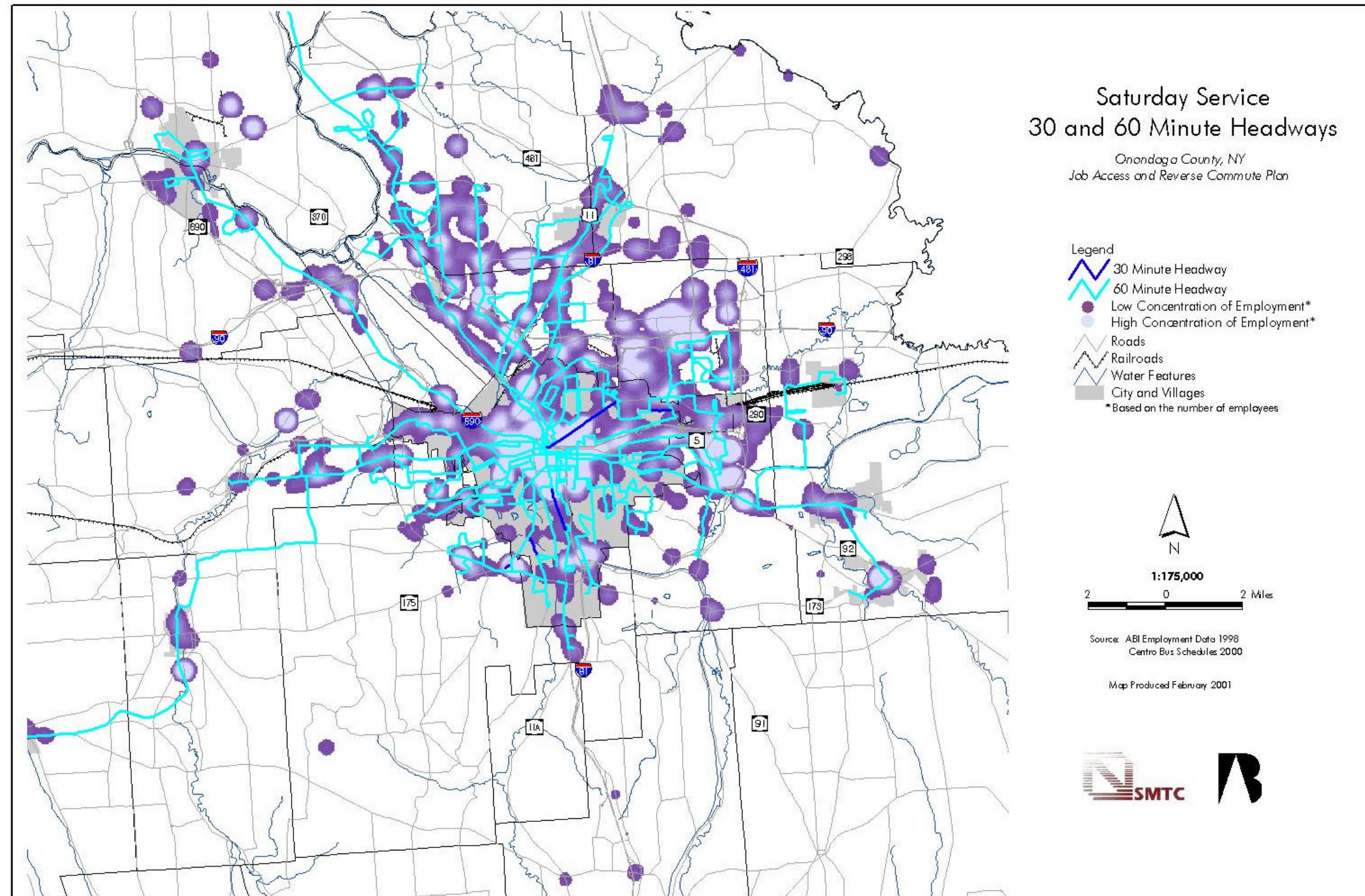


**Figure 11: Centro Bus Service – Weekday Night**





**Figure 12: Centro Bus Service – Saturday**



## **D. Transportation Gaps Between People and Employment**

The locations of employment and welfare recipients in Onondaga County were analyzed, as well as the level of transit service (route locations, headways, and service times) provided by Centro. An inventory of existing human service agencies and private transportation service providers contained in the CNYRTA ReMAP Study was also reviewed. This information was presented to the JARC Study Advisory Committee, stakeholder group, and the public. Valuable input and additional information was received. Follow-up conversations were made with the Metropolitan Development Association, employers, and other individuals and stakeholders. As a result, the following eleven employment clusters represent the main areas where there are transportation service gaps in accessibility by existing transportation services. These areas are illustrated in Figure 13.

### **1. ELBRIDGE - SKANEATELES - JORDAN**

- There are a number of employers located along the western edge of Onondaga County in the towns of Elbridge and Skaneateles such as Auburn Wire/OWI, Tessy Plastics, and Welch Allyn which are served on a limited basis.
- One of the two Welch Allyn facilities and Tessy Plastics are served by two buses per day from Auburn, but not from Syracuse. The large number of employees at the two Welch Allyn facilities (2,000) employees warrants further exploration of transit provision. However, it would likely be employer specific and need to be supported primarily by Welch Allyn.

### **2. MILTON AVENUE BETWEEN BRIDGE AND WILLIS – WEST SIDE OF SYRACUSE**

- Manufacturers such as Nixon Gear (1750 Milton Avenue), Landis Plastics (1500 Milton Avenue), Solvay Paperboard (53 Industrial Drive), and Church & Dwight (1416 Willis Avenue) are several blocks north of the existing Centro service.
- Centro service (Route #8) is currently through the neighborhood south of these employers along Woods Road and Avery Avenue.

### **3. ERIE BOULEVARD TO BRIDGE STREET/NY 290/MANLIUS CENTER ROAD**

- Manufacturers located in this area include such businesses as General Superplating Inc., McIntosh Box and Pallet Co., and Armstrong Mold Corp.
- Centro service is limited on Erie Blvd and Bridge Street during the peak periods and particularly during the dawn and night time periods/
- There are several large service industry employers (shopping centers, restaurants, etc.) located along this corridor.

#### **4. CARRIER CIRCLE AREA (THOMPSON-NORTHERN-MOLLOY-FLY)**

- There are 371 businesses employing 17,800 in this area.
- In general, employers are spread out in this area and, therefore, are not especially suited to service by traditional fixed route public transit service.
- Employer need for employee transportation appears to be high.
- Centro service does not effectively extend north of the Carrier Circle roadway.

#### **5. TAFT ROAD**

- There is currently no Centro service along the extent of Taft Road in the Towns of Clay and Cicero.
- Employment sites are greatly dispersed through this corridor.
- The ReMAP study recommended implementation of a “Salina Connector” that would serve much of Taft Road.

#### **6. AIRPORT**

- At the public meeting for this project, the airport was mentioned as a place with a difficult time getting employees to the job site.
- There is currently no Centro service to the airport. However, service was implemented to the Airport two years ago and discontinued last year due to poor ridership. The shift times that are at the Airport were widely dispersed time-wise and there was no dominant shift.

#### **7. CICERO/ROUTE 11/SOUTH BAY ROAD/ROUTE 31**

- Employers include Kennedy Company (8170 Thompson Road), ICM Corporation (6333 Daedalus Road), and Syracuse Castings (6177 South Bay Road), as well as the retail development at NYS Route 31 near I-81.
- There is currently infrequent Centro service except for during the AM and PM peak periods.

#### **8. HENRY CLAY BLVD AND MORGAN ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA**

- Currently, Centro bus service is in place on Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Roads, but buses are up to a half-mile distant from many of the businesses that are set back from these two roads, not making transit very convenient.
- Service does not reach north to Eagle Comtronics (500 employees) at Henry Clay Boulevard and Waterhouse Road.

#### **9. FARRELL ROAD/ STILES ROAD**



- The Study Advisory Committee identified this as an area in need of service.
- Currently, Centro bus service passes by area on I-690 and State Fair Boulevard rather than routing through Farrell Road and Stiles Road near the Thruway.

## **10. BALDWINSVILLE**

- Currently, Centro service does not reach several major employers around Baldwinsville. For others, service is infrequent.

## **11. SUBURBAN MALLS AND SHOPPING CENTERS**

- There is infrequent inbound service at night to get employees home after the stores close, including the Great Northern, Fairmount Fair, and Shoppingtown retail centers.

## **E. Screening of Employment Service Gaps**

The eleven general gaps in service identified in the previous section were screened, and six were selected for more detailed data gathering and analysis on the specific employers located within these areas. The original list of employment service gaps was screened in order to focus the study's resources on the more detailed approach only for the areas with the greatest potential need for transit. The areas selected were:

- 1) CARRIER CIRCLE AREA (THOMPSON-NORTHERN-MOLLOY-FLY)**
- 2) HENRY CLAY BOULEVARD AND MORGAN ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA**
- 3) ERIE BLVD TO BRIDGE STREET/NYS ROUTE 290/MANLIUS CENTER ROAD**
- 4) TAFT ROAD**
- 5) CICERO/ROUTE 11/SOUTH BAY ROAD/ROUTE 31**
- 6) FARRELL ROAD /STILES ROAD**

The areas are shown in Figure 13.

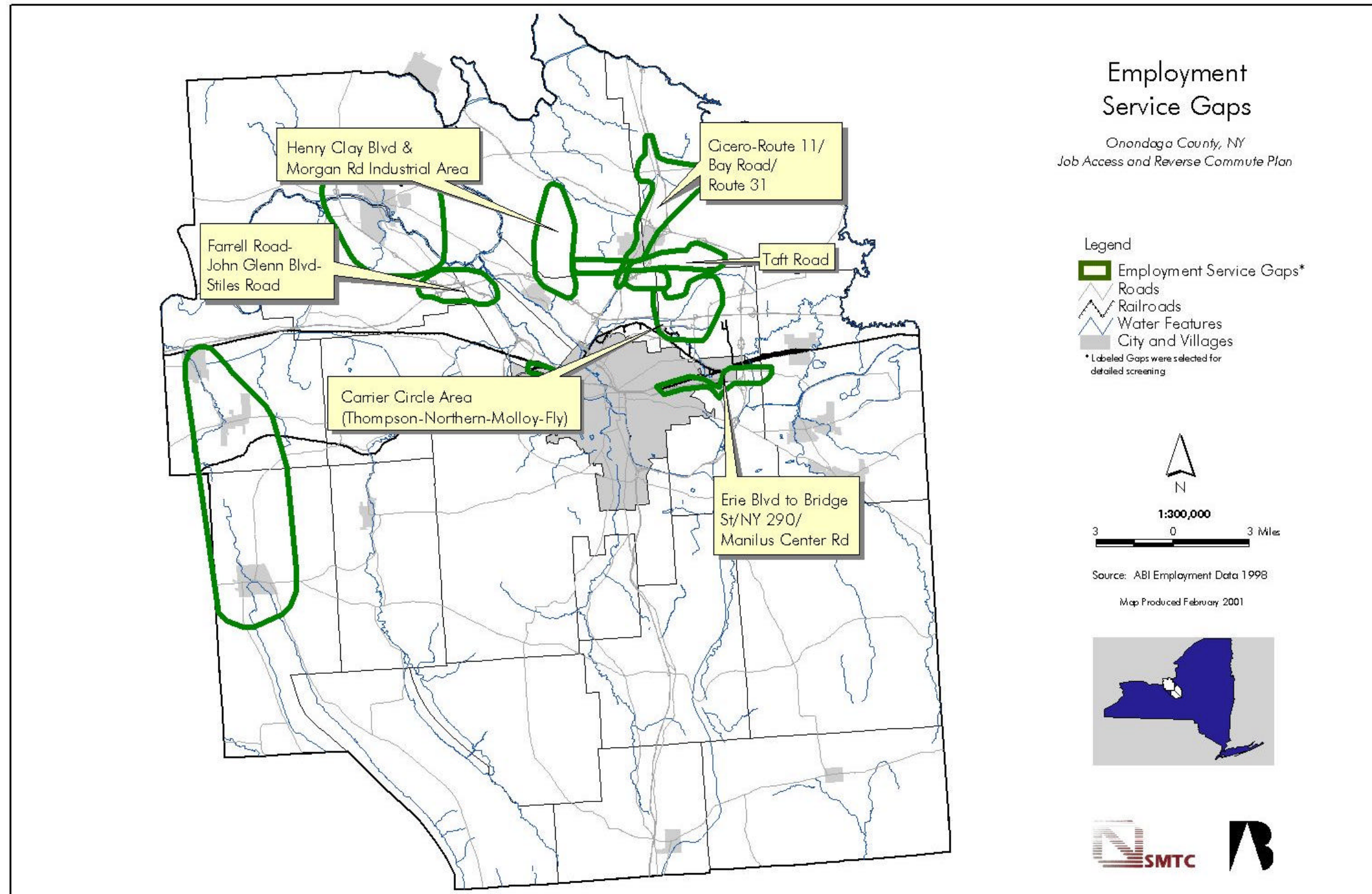
The screening criteria included:

- The degree to which closing the service gap would help meet the goals of the JARC Plan
- Inclusion of employers expressing a public transportation need



- Identification of area by the SAC, study stakeholders, and the public
- Critical mass of employees to support a service solution
- Employment cluster contains a large number of potential entry-level jobs for those moving from welfare to work

**Figure 13: Employment Areas With Service Gaps – Six Areas Identified for Further Detailed Are Labeled**



## **F. Detailed Analysis of Employment Clusters**

An employer telephone survey was conducted in December, 2000. Contact was attempted with all employers located within the geographic extent of the first six service gaps listed above. This list of employers contained over 1,000 businesses. Through the survey, the employers' name and location were verified. The following questions were asked:

1. How many employees are at your site?
2. Have you had difficulty attracting and retaining employees due to transportation?
3. How many of your employees earn less than \$10 per hour?
4. What are your employees' regular shift times?
5. Any other comments?

The second question sought to identify those employers with immediate needs for transit service. The wage level of \$6-10 was used to help define the target market, both to support existing employees to help them from slipping off the employment rolls, as well as to identify those employers that may potentially employ welfare recipients. Shift information was gathered for planning purposes to identify potential coordination of transit services among many employers. One troublesome comment by many employers was that they simply did not hire anyone who did not own a car.

Out of 1,047 employers in the survey, only 64 refused to answer or hung up on the interviewers. Those employers who were contacted had varied responses to the questions asked. Eleven employers simply stated that they would not hire an employee if they did not have their own transportation. 380 employers said that they did not have any problems at all with the bus service. These employers also tended to have shifts that ran during normal business hours as well as commenting that their stops were close to the business.

However, there were employers who stated that more reliable bus service would help them in attracting and retaining employees. Those employers who did not have bus service nearby or the hours of service were different from their hours of business, asserted their need for better service. Most comments that related to the need for service said that the times are inconvenient, the bus stops are not safe, there are no stops close enough, or the bus is not dependable. One hundred eleven employers stated that there were problems with the service as well as a need for service. These employers also had the majority of employees making \$6 – 10/ hour. They account for over 10,000 employees. Only two employers (45 employees) said they needed better bus service that did not have a significant number of employees making less than \$10 per hour.



Over thirty-five percent of the employers that expressed a need for improved transit service to attract and retain employees were eating and drinking establishments. Among other types of businesses expressing a need for improved transit service were retail, manufacturing, and hotels. These types of businesses each accounted for about 15% of those with such expressed need. The remaining twenty percent of employers expressing a need were mixed among construction, social services, general services, and personnel businesses.

All the employer responses were logged into a database (listed in Appendix D) and linked to the geo-coded employer database in GIS. This GIS database was then used to evaluate each of the employment clusters in terms of what types of potential transit services might be most applicable as well as what the general level of demand (not detailed ridership forecasts) might be for those services. The following is a summary of the results for each.

### **1) CARRIER CIRCLE AREA (THOMPSON-NORTHERN-MOLLOY-FLY)**

There are 367 businesses in this area, 82 with greater than 50 employees, employing a total of 17,900 people. The following industry classifications are particularly notable, as employers in these classifications have generally expressed the greatest need for transit.

- Hotels/Lodging= 925 (16 employers)
- Manufacturing= 7,046 (55 employers)
- Retail= 812 (33 employers)
- This area has special shift needs such as UPS at 10:15 PM, 3:00 AM and 5:30 AM and a cluster of hotels in need of night housekeepers and other positions. There does not appear to be any other employers that share shift times with UPS. Shift times at hotels are typically 7 AM, 3 PM, and 11 PM. However, it is known that the shift times at the hotels do vary, even between departments within the same hotel. Therefore, improved coordination of shift times at the hotels will greatly contribute to the success of service recommendations in the Carrier Circle Area.
- Several large manufacturers expressed a need for transit. These employers include Production Products Corp (PPC) with 1,500 employees, most of whom earn less than \$10 per hour. PPC's need is particularly a problem for second and third shift employees (3:30 PM, 12 AM). Another employer is PCI Paper Conversions with 200 employees, half of which make less than \$10 per hour. Sundays are especially difficult for their employees to get to work.
- Due to the concentration and number of hotel rooms near Carrier Circle, there may be a possibility for coordination with the convention center and other visitor destinations. Hotel guests could be connected to the convention center and downtown Syracuse via services developed to bring hotel employees to the Carrier Circle area.

### **2) HENRY CLAY BOULEVARD AND MORGAN ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA**

There are 135 businesses in this area, 46 with greater than 50 employees, employing 10,600 people.

- There was relatively little need for transit expressed in the employer survey.
- Rescue Mission is located in this area and a representative attending the stakeholder meeting expressed the need for additional transit service to their location.

### **3) ERIE BOULEVARD TO BRIDGE STREET/NY 290/MANLIUS CENTER ROAD**

There are 152 businesses in this area, 38 with greater than 50 employees, employing a total of 6,400 people.

- A need for transit was expressed in the employer survey for night and weekend service for closing shifts at retail stores and restaurants.

### **4) TAFT ROAD**

There are 128 businesses in this area, 25 with greater than 50 employees, employing 5,100 people.

- A need for transit was expressed by two large retail establishments, a nursing home, and several restaurants.

### **5) CICERO – ROUTE 11/SOUTH BAY ROAD/ROUTE 31**

There are 198 businesses in this area, 49 with greater than 50 employees, employing 7,500 people.

- ICM Corp on Daedalus Road expressed a need for transit service, with 175 employees earning less than \$10 per hour.

### **6) FARRELL ROAD /STILES ROAD**

There are 59 businesses, 9 with greater than 50 employees, employing 2,400 people.

- Several large grocery warehousing and distribution facilities appear to be good candidates for further exploration of transit needs. These include Penn Traffic and URS Logistics. Other candidates that appear to be candidates for additional transit service include two hotels, a restaurant, and several industrial employers.

- There was a need for transit expressed by PennTraffic, with 150 employees earning less than \$10 per hour; and Solvay Iron Works, with 75 employees earning less than \$10 per hour.

## **G. HOME HEALTH CARE AID TRANSPORTATION SERVICE GAP**

In addition to the list of employment clusters that was identified by geography, a need for transportation services for home health care aids was also identified. This additional service gap, home health care aid transportation, was determined to meet the employment service gap screening criteria by which the six employment clusters were evaluated (see Section II.E.).

The home health care industry has a great need for employees. This need is growing. Most home health care employees make nearly entry-level wages. They must make a number of client visits in various locations throughout the day. This type of travel is difficult to accommodate via public transportation due to the length of service headways and the need for a downtown transfer between routes.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW AND EXPANDED SERVICES**

The decision to implement any new service should be based on the following general guidelines:

- Service should meet goals of this Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan.
- Service should be as cost effective as possible given type of service.
- Service should integrate with existing services if possible to capitalize on existing investments.
- All vehicles should be handicapped accessible.
- Employer support and involvement is very important.
- Guaranteed Ride Home and Ride to Work programs should be in place to support employees' unforeseen work hour requirements or emergencies.
- Service management and funding agencies should exercise patience and give a new service sufficient time to develop ridership and gain informal awareness in the community and neighborhoods where welfare recipients reside.
- Flexibility is key and services should be re-evaluated every six months, if possible. Research indicates that new employees often buy their own vehicles when they accumulate sufficient resources. In addition, employers often go through hiring cycles generating a need for service that was not known previously.
- The role of transportation in access to jobs is important, but there are other equally important issues such as job training, job skills, job search, health care and childcare. A broad-based involvement in planning and implementing transportation services can help to link these elements.
- Fixed route bus services, with modest adjustments, are expected to meet a substantial share of employment access needs.

#### **A. Types of Potential Services**

##### **1. Express Bus Route Service**

This type of service would provide a new express route between a transit hub and the target employment cluster or large employer. It could begin in or stop in downtown Syracuse to generate additional ridership enroute to the transit hub and/or final destination. It would operate non-stop from either the transit hub or downtown stop to the employment destination.

##### **2. Centro Transit Route Service Increase on Existing Route**

This service would reduce headways or would expand the hours of service on an existing route. Reducing headways would decrease the time between buses arriving/departing an employment site. Expanding hours of bus service could include beginning service earlier in the morning or extending it into the evening or night hours, or extending it to Saturdays or Sundays.

### **3. Centro Transit Route Extension**

This service would extend or alter an existing route to serve new employment locations. Alterations of routes could be anywhere along the existing route to serve new employment sites within ½ mile of the existing route. Operating times for the extended service would be based upon the employers' needs.

### **4. Local Circulator Shuttles**

This type of service would circulate smaller buses, vans, or taxis out from a local transit hub servicing employment sites not readily served by typical Centro bus service. This could be due to the dispersed nature of employment sites or atypical shift times such as at night. Often, upgraded mainline service to the transit hub would be considered.

### **5. Public Operator Leasing Vans to Private Operators**

This service type could be similar to the Local Circulator Shuttles, or could be between a specialized location and a number of employment sites. However, administratively the transit agency would likely purchase vehicles and then lease them to private operators for contract service.

### **6. Coordinated Home Health Aid Service**

This type of service would require working with home health service agencies to cluster the home visits for each home health aid worker or groups of workers. If they are clustered enough, a bus can service the "cluster" to/from a transit hub either via regular route service or customized bus service with smaller sized buses. If they cannot be clustered enough, the public transit agency could broker a taxi service, with home health agencies pre-approving specific trips. DSS caseworkers call up representatives at Centro dispatch that could connect a home health aid with the appropriate service (Centro, taxi, or otherwise). These staff members would work closely with the Regional Mobility Manager.

### **7. Subscription Service**

This type of service involves service to meet the needs of a specific set of employees and employers on a contractual basis. Employers contract with the local transit agencies or other service provider to operate bus trips tailored to their needs. These trips can serve multiple employers when shift change times are similar. Employers can assume all of the cost of these trips or employees can be charged a fare to offset operating costs.

### **8. Flex Route**

This type of service would likely operate in the format of a Local Circulator Shuttle but its route would “flex” as needed within certain parameters (distance, advance notification, etc.) . This type of service allows variability of destinations for each run and allows a route to develop and change over time.

## **9. Carpools**

Carpools are typically arrangements between fellow employees to share the driving responsibility of a personal car or truck. However, this is not the most successful method of transportation for a new employee who does not own a car. The ability to obtain and keep a job often depends on a stable, reliable source of transportation. The employee, who does not own a car, but is depending on riding with someone else, will be subject to the driver being ill, changing jobs, or not being available for some other reason.

## **B. Recommended Job Access and Reverse Commute Service Templates**

These project recommendations represent “service templates” of different service types addressing different types of needs. For example, the Carrier Circle service and the Farrell Road/Stiles Road service could represent industrial, manufacturing, and hotel employment in an industrial park setting where there is almost no existing transit service. The Home Health Aids service represents a cooperative approach to serving a group of employees who are “field agents” with multiple work sites throughout the day. The Erie Boulevard service and Cicero/Route 11/South Bay Road/Route 31 service could represent serving retail service type employment corridors with evening and night service.

Each of the “service template” projects that are implemented should be evaluated, improved upon, and implemented in other areas or corridors around Onondaga County as funding becomes available.

**As service templates, it should be noted that although specific recommendations are made, final service implementations are likely to vary from those described in this report.**

Service templates are not being recommended for two of the six employment clusters that were analyzed in more detail. These two are the Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road Industrial Area and the Taft Road corridor.

In the Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road Industrial Area, very few employers expressed difficulties retaining and attracting employees due to transportation. Although there were a significant number of employees earning less than \$10 per

hour, most shift times were during the traditional hours of the existing Centro service in this area. It was recognized that many of the employers in this industrial area are set back a significant distance from Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road. However, efficient solutions to address this situation were not evident.

In the Taft Road corridor, very few employers expressed difficulties retaining and attracting employees due to transportation. Those that did express difficulties were near Centro Route 11 service. There are some employers along this corridor with a significant number of employees earning less than \$10 per hour, but they are dispersed along the corridor and appeared less likely to support successful service than the other corridors for which service template recommendations are being made.

The following projects were developed as potential solutions to the transportation service gaps that were identified.

### **Carrier Circle Service**

The goal of this service is to provide flexible service to this area of dispersed manufacturing and hotel employers in the industrial park-like setting around and north of Carrier Circle. This service would consist of the following five components:

- 1) Mainline transit service (Centro bus routes #1, #2) is enhanced to the Carrier Circle area.
- 2) A temporary (initially) transit center is developed near the Carrier Circle.
- 3) Shuttle buses circulate on a flex route between the Carrier Circle transit center and Thompson Road, Molloy Road, and Northern Boulevard areas during the peak hours of employer shift changes (5:30 AM-8:30 AM, 2:30 PM-6:30 PM, 9:30 PM-12:30 AM weekdays). See Figure 14.
- 4) During other hours, (8:30 AM-2:30 PM and 6:30 PM-9:30 weekdays, 6:30 AM-11:30 PM Saturdays and Sundays) contract vans or taxis are based at the transit center to provide client subscription service.
- 5) During the overnight hours, (12:30 AM-5:30 AM weekdays, 12:30 AM-6:30 AM Saturdays and Sundays) contract vans or taxis provide client subscription service between home and employer.

The flex route service during the peak hours listed would operate generally along the route shown in Figure 14. However, with advance scheduling, the bus could vary from the route shown to serve specific employers on specific runs. The decision would be evaluated on a case by case basis. The “flex” characteristics of this route would likely be oriented more towards being able to modify the route as needed on a monthly basis to ensure that it is serving the maximum number of employees efficiently. This type of service needs constant monitoring and adjustment as needs change.



As shown in Figure 14, it is expected that the Carrier Circle Service will provide service to 54 employers. Among these 54 employers (4,600 total employees), 25 indicated through the survey (Section 2.F.) a need for transit service. Of these 25 employers, all indicated that most of their employees, approximately 2,800, earned less than \$10 per hour. However, consideration should be given to the information concerning ridership expectations, Section IV.A.

Ideally, the shuttle buses would be scheduled to make a timed transfer with the mainline buses at a Carrier Circle Transit Center. The transit center could be as simple as a common meeting point with a bus shelter or more elaborate, given availability of funding. Shuttle buses would be accessible mini-buses with a capacity of 15 passengers. Mini-buses would leave the transit center at least once every 30 minutes weekdays between 5:30 AM-8:30 AM, 2:30 PM-6:30 PM, and 9:30 PM-12:30 AM. Given sufficient operating funds, Centro bus routes #1 and #2 would be upgraded to the Carrier Circle Transit Center such that one bus from Common Center would arrive each half-hour that the Carrier Circle shuttle bus is operating.

Centro mainline buses are currently scheduled to pulse to affect a timed transfer in downtown Syracuse every 70 minutes in weekday off-peak hours and all day Saturday and Sunday. A 60-minute "clock" headway is much preferable to 70 minutes, given sufficient operating funding. Regardless of the off-peak headway, mainline service arriving at the Carrier Circle Transit Center from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM and 6:30 PM-9:30 PM weekdays, and 6:30 AM-11:30 PM on Saturdays and Sundays would be met by contract vans or taxis which would transport employees on a subscription basis to employment locations in this area.

During the non-overnight hours, contract vans or taxis would pick up and distribute persons between the Carrier Circle Transit Center and the employer sites.

During the overnight hours (12:30 AM-5:30 AM weekdays, 12:30 AM-6:30 AM Saturdays and Sundays) when the mainline bus service is not in operation, contract vans or taxis would provide client subscription service between home and employer.

The client subscription process would simply be a request, with appropriate advanced notice, to the Regional Mobility Manager, who would then forward the information weekly to the taxi and van provider. The request for service during the overnight hours would include home address/pickup location and work location within the Carrier Circle service area, and shift start or end time between 12:30 AM-5:30 AM weekdays or 12:30-6:30 AM Saturdays and Sundays. The request for

service any other time, would only include work location and shift start and end times, as the employee would be transported to/from the Carrier Circle Transit Center only. The subscription process would not be necessary for any employees with both shift start and end times during the hours of operation of the circulator shuttle bus.

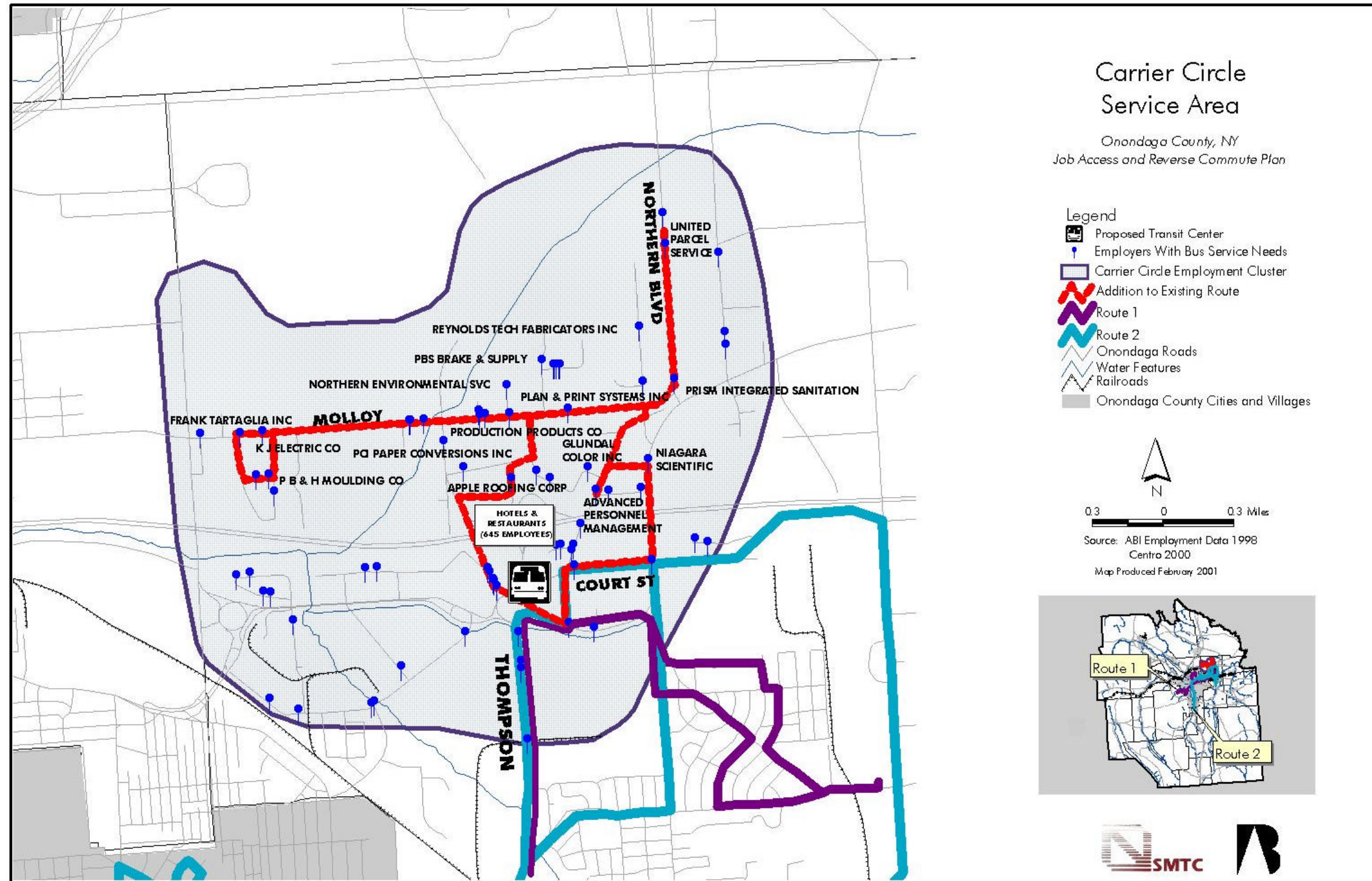


A contract with a taxi service or services would be entered into, whereby a negotiated fixed rate for each trip to/from the Carrier Circle Transit Center would be set. For the overnight service between home and work, a distance-based fee could be negotiated. Also, for larger employers with overnight shift times, special arrangements could be made for shared van trips. If there is not a taxi service with vans, then Centro could explore purchasing a number of vans and leasing them to the taxi service. Another option for these larger employers would be to contract with one of the area human service agencies (Consolidated Industries, ARC, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and St. Camillus) that have indicated an interest in providing transportation services, and leave the trips not warranting a van to the taxi service.

The following are costs to provide this service that will need to be funded:

- Mainline transit service (Centro bus routes #1 and #2) enhancement between downtown Syracuse and the Carrier Circle Transit Center
- Construction (if applicable) and maintenance of the Carrier Circle Transit Center
- Operation of flex route bus service during peak hours of employer shift changes
- Non-overnight contract taxi/van service between the Carrier Circle Transit Center and employer sites
- Overnight taxi/van service between employers and home locations

**Figure 14: Carrier Circle Service**



## **Home Health Aids Service**

The goal of this service is to facilitate entry into and support employment in the home health care industry that is experiencing a great need for employees. This occupation can be very difficult for those persons not owning their own vehicles due to the need to visit many clients in different locations throughout the day. This service would consist of two components:

- 1) Coordination of service locations and bus service to higher density service locations.
- 2) Home health agency car sharing cooperative.

The office of the Regional Mobility Manager could work with the home health agency managers and employees to cluster client visits. The first priority will always be to utilize existing Centro regular route bus services to provide transportation for home health aid employees. Home health aid client visits could be clustered geographically for each individual employee. Where clusters of clients cannot be served by regular route services, customized service could be developed for those employees using a mini-bus type vehicle. The existing Centro bus system should be used for as much of the home health aid employee's work-related transportation needs as possible. The Regional Mobility Manager could serve in a key role to encourage coordination of such services.

In all probability, it may not be possible for many of the home health care visits to be clustered. The home health care agencies could join a car-sharing cooperative to provide cars for all the home health care aids to use for visits for which transit is not a viable solution. The car-sharing cooperative could hire a vehicle fleet management company such as a rental car agency to set up an operation for the home health care agencies. Home health care aids who do not own a private vehicle would take a Centro bus route to the central car sharing cooperative office and lot. Being registered in the program by the employer, the employee would show the appropriate credentials and check out a car for use for his or her shift that day. At the end of the shift, the employee would return the car and take a Centro bus route to return home. The contracted vehicle fleet manager or car rental agency would be responsible for vehicle maintenance. However, there are concerns regarding insurance and liability issues associated with a car-sharing cooperatives that will need to be explored and evaluated further.

The following are costs to provide this service that will need to be funded:

- Staff time in the office of the Centro Mobility Manager
- Cost of providing customized mini-bus transit service where applicable



- Contract cost for the vehicle fleet manager / car rental agency - TANF and JARC funding could subsidize the cost to the home health car agency cooperative.
- Cost of increased insurance to address liability and funding agency requirements.

### **Erie Boulevard Service**

The goal of this service is to provide improved transit access to retail and restaurant employment in this corridor, including times that are outside the normal peak operation of the Centro bus system. This service would change an existing regular route (Centro bus #10L) and combine it with a service extension. The portion of the route serving Erie Boulevard at Bridge Street to Shoppingtown Mall could be deleted. The new routing would be north from Erie Boulevard on Bridge Street to East Syracuse, then east on Manlius Center Road through the Town of Dewitt to a terminus in the vicinity of Fremont Road just inside the Town of Manlius (See Figure 15).

Further analysis of the impact a change to Centro Route 10L will have on riders traveling between Erie Boulevard and Shoppingtown Mall will need to be conducted. However, Centro's new Suburban East service in place since September, 2000, yields some flexibility as it duplicates the 10L service in this area.

There are many service industries, mostly restaurants and retail establishments, along this corridor. Shift times vary but are primarily between 8 AM and 12 AM, although some start earlier and others extend until 2 AM. There are other employers starting as early as 5 AM. One large manufacturing firm, General Super Plating (175 employees), has the following shifts 7:00 AM-3:30 PM, 3:00 PM-11:30 PM, and 11:00 PM-7:00 AM. There are large employers on Manlius Center Road with overnight shift start/end times. One is a manufacturing firm, Armstrong Mold, with 175 of 250 employees earning between \$6 and \$10 per hour and shift times Monday through Friday 5:00 AM-4:00 PM and 4:00 PM-2:00 AM. Others include large retailers. Sam's Club, with 100 out of 120 employees earning between \$6 and \$10 per hour, and one shift that starts at 4:00 AM seven days per week. Wal-Mart is also located in this area, with 250 out of 320 employees earning between \$6 and \$10 per hour, with shifts beginning as early as 7:00AM and ending as late as 12:00 AM

On weekdays, the service on this new proposed route could offer 30-minute headways between 6:30 AM and 10:00 PM, with 70-minute headways between 10:00 PM and 12:00 AM. On Saturdays and Sundays, the service on this new proposed route could offer 70-minute headways between 7:30 AM and 12:00 AM. Service is needed between 12:00 AM and 6:30 AM on weekdays and between 12:00 AM and 7:30 AM on Saturdays and Sundays. However, the Centro system is not currently operating during these hours and there will be no buses to connect with in downtown Syracuse. Service is likely to be needed between 12:00 AM and 2:30 AM

to bring late closing restaurant and other employees home, as well as to bring employees to work for the 4:00 AM and 5:00 AM shift start times.

Contract van service could pick up workers at the larger employer sites and drop them off at home on a subscription basis primarily between 12:00 AM and 3:00 AM. Similarly, van service could pick up workers at home and deliver them to the larger employer sites on a contract basis primarily between 3:30 AM and 6:30 AM (7:30 AM on Saturdays and Sundays). Contract taxis could service the other smaller employers and shifts not warranting vans.

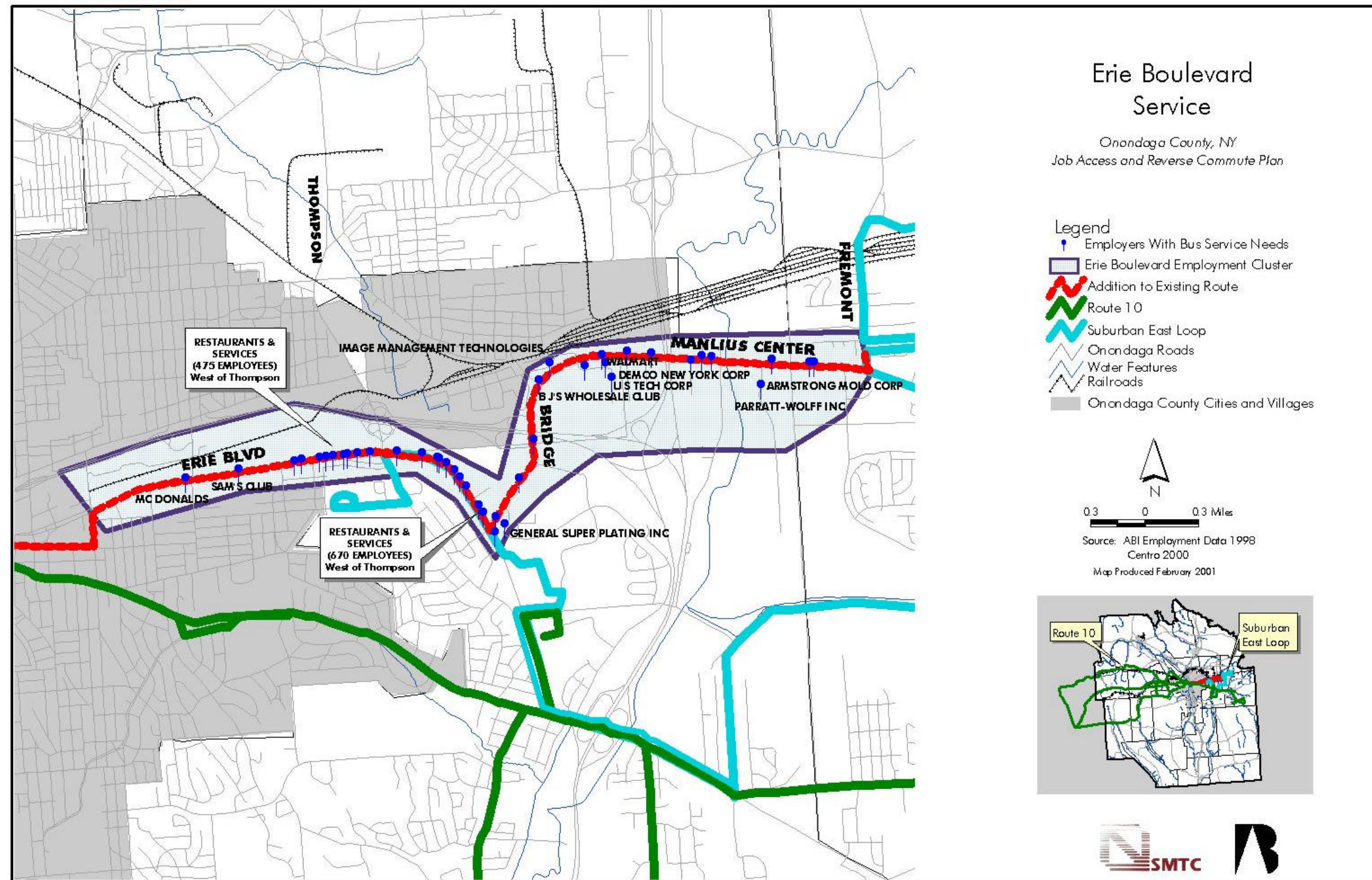
The client subscription process would be a request, with appropriate advanced notice, to the Centro Mobility Manager, who would then forward the information weekly to the taxi and van providers. The request for service would include home address location (within Onondaga County) and work location within the Erie Boulevard-Manlius Center Road service area, as well as shift start or end time between 12:00 AM and 6:30 AM (7:30 AM on Saturdays and Sundays).

A contract with a taxi service or services could be entered into whereby a negotiated distance/time-based rate could be negotiated for each trip between the employees' home location and the work location. If there is demand warranting the van service and there is not a taxi service with vans, then Centro could explore purchasing a number of vans and leasing them to a taxi contractor. Another option could be to contract the van services with one of the human service agencies (Consolidated Industries, ARC, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and St. Camillus) that have indicated an interest in providing transportation services.

The following are costs to provide this service that will need to be funded:

- Operating costs of additional service along the Erie Boulevard corridor.
- Contract taxi and van service between employees' home locations in Onondaga County and their work locations within the Erie Boulevard-Manlius Center Road service area.

**Figure 15: Erie Boulevard Service**





### **Cicero/Route 11/South Bay Road/Route 31 Service**

The goal of this service is to provide new transit access to several manufacturing employers as well as expanded service to the retail and restaurant industry during the evening hours. This service consists of extending an existing Centro Route (#11) geographically as well as extending its hours of service.

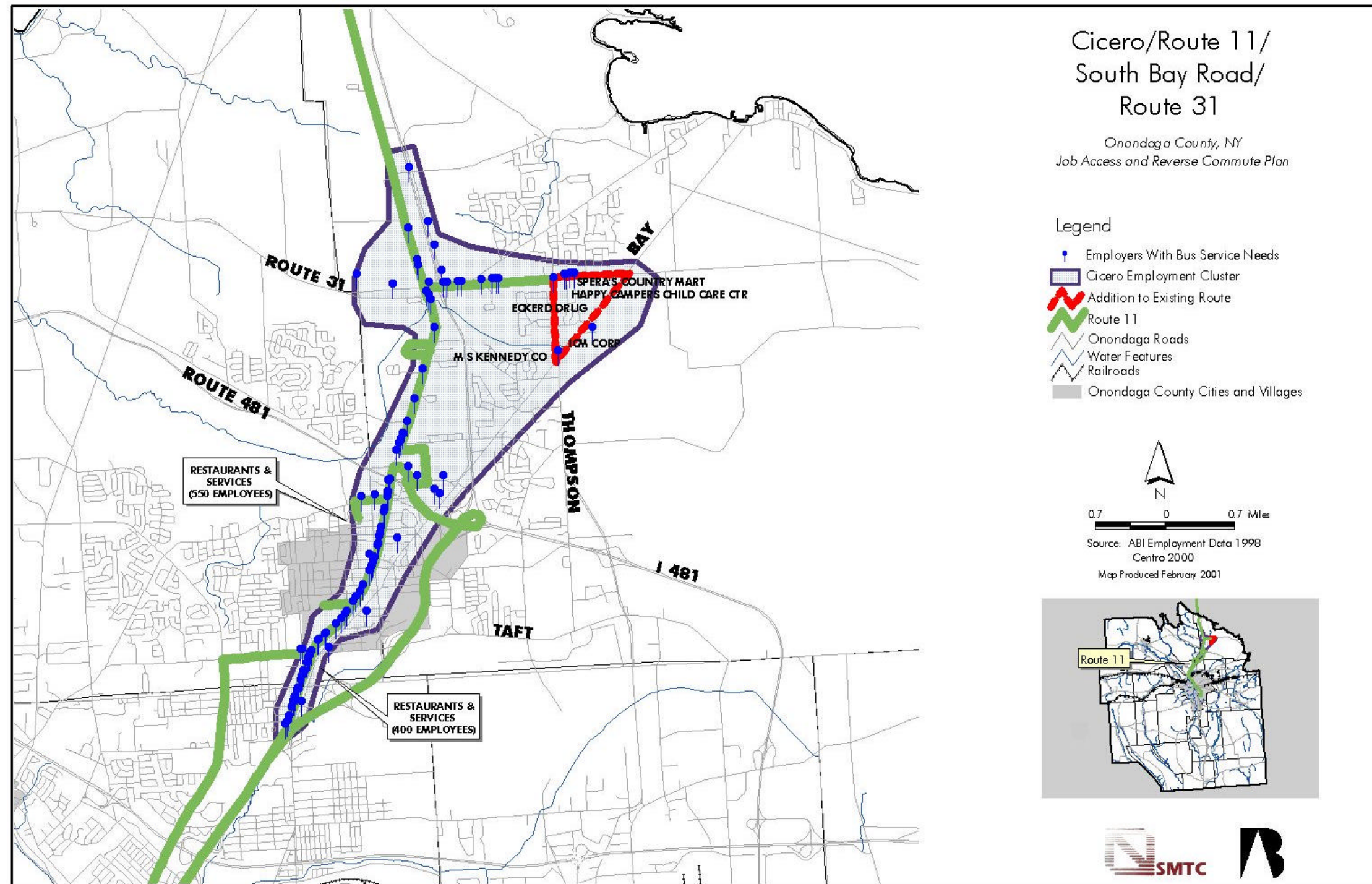
Existing Centro service could be extended east on Route 31 and loop southwest down South Bay Road and back up north on Thompson Road. (See Figure 16.) There are several manufacturing employers in this area, including ICM Corporation (175 out of 230 total employees earn \$6-10 per hour and shift times are 7:00 AM-3:30 PM and 3:30 PM-12:00 AM).

Most of the employers in this corridor are retail and restaurant oriented. As such, they have a need for employees for evening shifts. Service at 70-minute headways could operate between 6:30 PM and 12:30 AM Monday through Sunday.

The following are costs to provide this service that will need to be funded:

- Additional operating costs to continue service into the evening and night hours.
- Additional operating costs to make extension to Route 31/South Bay Road/Thompson Road employers.

**Figure 16: Cicero/Route 11/SouthBay Road/Route 31**



## **Farrell Road/Stiles Road**

The goal of this service is provide new transit access to several major employers not currently accessible by transit. This service recommendation is to re-route the existing Centro Baldwinsville route (#6) in the vicinity of the NYS Thruway and extend its hours of service. (See Figure 17.) Buses during the hours of 6:00 AM-9:00 AM, 3:00-6:00 PM, and 10:30 PM-12:30 AM would be routed via John Glenn Blvd., Farrell Road, and Stiles Road to Interstate Island Road, and Jones Road. Several major employers have expressed a need for transit service to this area. The impact of additional running time for passengers bound for jobs in downtown Syracuse must be carefully considered before implementing this recommendation.

Current Service on the Baldwinsville route ends prior to 7:00pm. Centro service on this route could be increased during the hours noted above for the proposed re-routing. This could consist of adding two to three trips between 3:00PM and 6:00 PM so that an inbound bus would arrive near 3:30 PM, 4:30 PM, and 5:00 PM, in addition to the existing buses arriving near 4:00 PM, 5:30 PM, and 6:00 PM. In addition, evening service would need to be added, with three runs between 10:30 PM and 12:30 AM.

A grocery wholesaler and a cold storage warehouse have expressed a need for transit. Penn Traffic Company has 150 out of 500 employees earning between \$6 and \$10 per hour with shifts 8:00 AM-4:30 PM and 6:00 PM-2:30 AM. URS Logistics employs 150 people, most of whom earn \$6-10 per hour, with shifts 8:00 AM-5:00 PM and 4:00 PM-12:00 AM). A hotel with 100 employees is located in this area as well and a restaurant employing 45 people.

Another major employer expressing a potential need for transit is Solvay Iron Works, all of whose 75 employees earn \$6-10 per hour and have shifts 7:00 AM-3:30 PM, and 3:30 PM-11:00 PM/12:00 AM. However, with its location on the south side of the Thruway on Walters Road, it may be difficult to serve with the rest of the employers located on the north side of the Thruway. Subscription service should be considered for this employer.

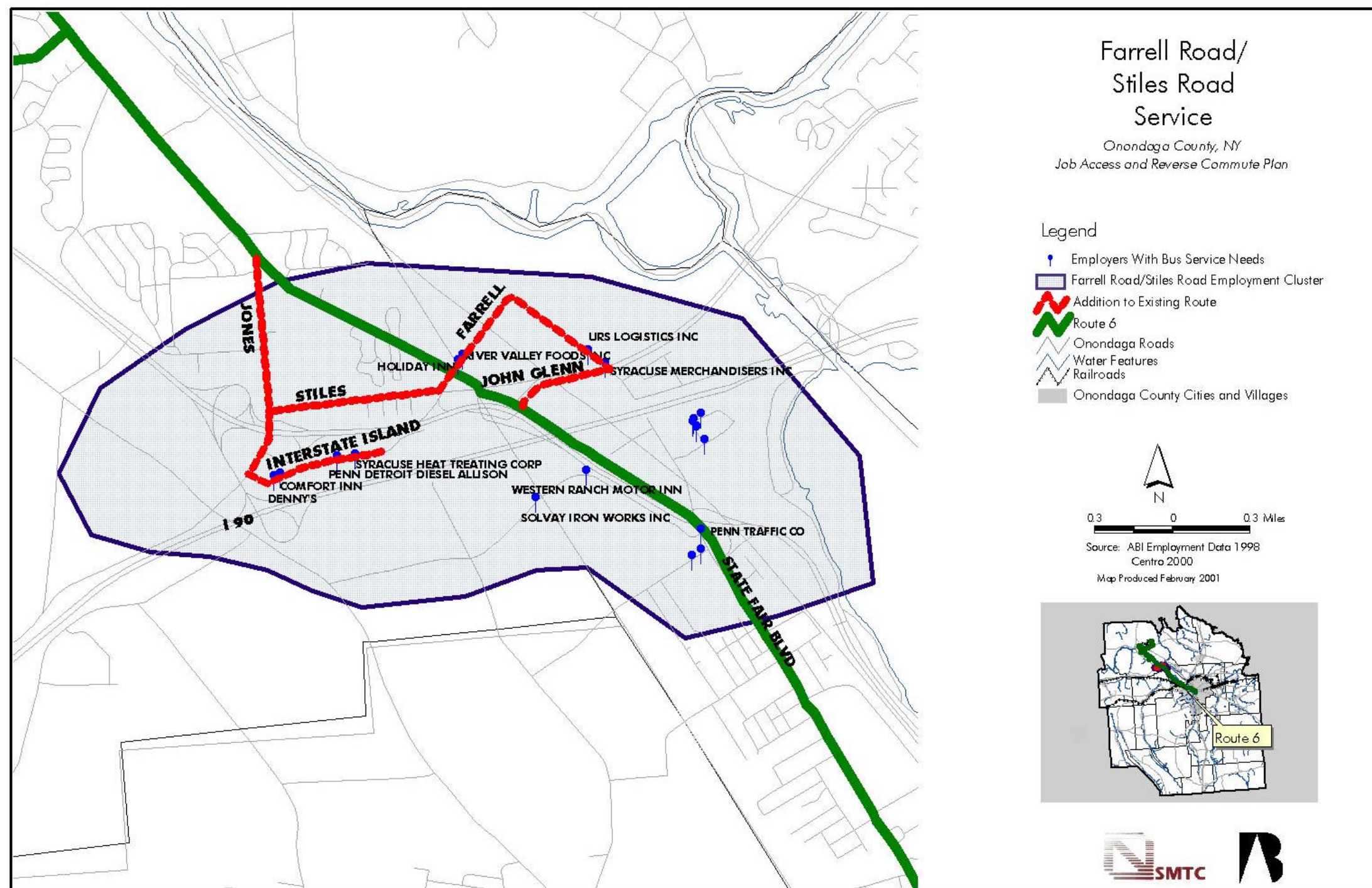
Special arrangements will have to be made with Penn Traffic Company if there is a need to get employees home at 2:30 AM. One option would be to cooperatively develop a customized taxi service.

The following are costs to provide this service that will need to be funded:

- Operating costs to increase service between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM, and to add service between 10:30 PM and 12:30 AM
- Contract taxi service to take employees home from the 2:30 AM shift, if needed.



**Figure 17: Farrell Road/Stiles Road Service**



## **C. Areas for Further Study**

### **Childcare Transportation**

It is widely understood that the two primary barriers that face low-income working families when seeking and retaining employment are childcare and transportation. Issues include a lack of reliable transportation, long commute times, and multiple stops for childcare and employment using public transportation. This issue was identified many times through the public involvement process as a serious issue that needs to be addressed. However, there are important barriers to the provision of childcare transportation. Most importantly the fact that many of the state and federal transportation grants prohibit utilizing funds for childcare transportation.

### **Rural Services**

There were individuals identified in rural areas of the county that may benefit from assistance with transportation to work. They are likely to be isolated individuals or small groups of individuals that may have very different employment destinations, shift times, work days, etc. These locations are identified in Figure 1. These trips can be very difficult to serve with traditional transit. These individuals may benefit from the Wheels For Work program, car or van pools, or other specialized contract services where no other options are available. Additional investigation is needed into the transportation problems of these individuals.

### **Carousel Mall Expansion**

In January 2001, the Onondaga County Legislature approved a proposal from Pyramid Corporation to expand the Carousel Mall. This expansion is expected to nearly quadruple the size of Carousel Mall and may generate 2,500 additional jobs at the mall and possibly thousands more at employers supporting the mall or profiting from its existence. Plans for the Carousel Mall expansion were preliminary at the time of publication of this report. However, it was decided to make explicit mention of this development due to the enormous impact this proposal will have on the Syracuse area. In terms of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan, the Carousel Mall area will be a much larger employment destination for welfare-to-work persons. It is expected that Centro transit services may be modified as a result of an expanded Carousel Mall, and these changes would need to be accounted for in the overall provision of welfare-to-work transportation services.

## **D. Project Prioritization**

The goals of this Job Access and Reverse Commute study were used in Table 2 to prioritize the project recommendations.

The projects received a plus in the table for the goals that are seen as being reached by that project to a greater extent than other projects. Based on this exercise and knowledge and input gained through the study process, the implementation priority would be as follows (in rank order):

- 1) Home Health Aids
- 2) Carrier Circle Service
- 3) Erie Boulevard Service
- 4) Farrell Road/Stiles Road Service
- 5) Cicero/Route 11/South Bay Road/Route 31 Service



<b>Table 2: Project Prioritization Matrix</b>	<b>Carrier Circle</b>	<b>Home Health Aides</b>	<b>Erie Boulevard</b>	<b>Cicero/ Route11/ South Bay/ Route 31</b>	<b>Farrell Road/ Stiles Road</b>
<b>Community Goals For Transportation Services</b>					
<b>1. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for those moving from welfare to work</b>	+	+	+		
<b>2. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for low income workers</b>	+	+			+
<b>3. Provide new and/or expanded transportation services for the TANF recipients who are employed (to help them stay employed and get better jobs)</b>	+	+			
<b>4. Expand job opportunities for those moving from welfare to work and low income workers by providing access to a larger geographic area</b>	+	+			
<b>5. Develop services that are financially feasible</b>	+	+	+	+	+
<b>6. Develop services that have the flexibility to meet employer/employee needs (eg, non-standard shift times, schedule changes, overtime)</b>	+	+	+		
<b>7. Develop services that are reliable (eg, consistent and on-time)</b>					
<b>8. Develop services that are accessible to persons with disabilities</b>	+	+	+	+	+

<b>Table 2: Project Prioritization Matrix (continued)</b>	<b>Carrier Circle</b>	<b>Home Health Aides</b>	<b>Erie Boulevard</b>	<b>Cicero/ Route11/ South Bay/ Route 31</b>	<b>Farrell Road/ Stiles Road</b>
<b>Community Goals For Transportation Services</b>					
<b>9. Meet the needs of employees and their families by connecting existing and new transportation services to other human service needs, whenever feasible (eg, day care, medical, training)</b>					
<b>10. Maintain flexibility in services to meet changing needs of workers and employers</b>	+	+			
<b>11. Provide flexibility by making available a back-up transportation plan (eg, guaranteed ride to work and home)</b>	+	+			
<b>12. Provide transportation services to employment sites in a variety of areas throughout the county, as feasible</b>	+	+			
<b>13. Provide transportation services that are compatible with other plans</b>		+			
<b>14. Provide a system of services that meet the needs of individual municipalities and the county as a whole and can be supported by local politicians</b>	+	+			
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

### **A. Ridership Potential**

As is typical in Upstate New York communities, the overall transit mode share, or the percentage of all trips taken via transit, is relatively small. According to the 1990 Census, 4% of the residents of Onondaga County (including residents of the City of Syracuse) traveled to work via transit. Eleven percent of the residents of the City of Syracuse traveled to work via transit. Six percent of the residents of the City of Syracuse who worked in the towns outside of the City of Syracuse (in general, the “reverse commuters” to the suburban towns) traveled to work via transit.

Given this transit mode share in the Syracuse area, ridership expectations for the services recommended in Section III must remain cautiously optimistic. If expectations are initially unrealistic, the longevity of needed programs could be compromised.

### **B. GIS-Based Job Connections Query System**

It is recommended that the GIS and other data collected for this project be maintained and utilized as a tool for continued planning purposes and service updates.

This resource can be used for monitoring and adjusting JARC type transit services as needs evolve. Initially, the data might be maintained and utilized by the SMTC GIS staff on behalf of Centro and the Centro Mobility Manager and other human service agencies.

Longer term, a user-friendly on-line application could be developed that would allow access over the Internet. Users would include staff at the SMTC, Centro, Onondaga County DSS, Jobs Plus, and other agencies. This application would allow one to locate a welfare recipient’s home location and potential work location. Then, application tools would allow transportation services to be identified that may be able to get the welfare recipient to a job site within a given window of time. Ancillary data would include licensed childcare facilities and job training centers to assist in the planning of work-related transportation for that welfare recipient.

### **C. Marketing/Promotion/Ridership Development**

Specific programs are required to develop ridership on the new transportation services. Marketing efforts could include meetings and presentations to community agencies, the local workforce investment boards, employers, and Chambers of

Commerce to generate referrals. Special effort should be made to cooperate closely with social service workers and employment counselors in the inner city to identify potential riders. Attractive and easily understandable brochures should be developed, in Spanish as well as English, to illustrate the new services and schedules for each. These should be developed and distributed to employers, social service agencies and existing and potential customers. Press coverage and service announcements should also be coordinated.

## **D. Financing**

In addition to cash fares, financial assistance should be encouraged from municipalities. Support from employers in the form of a commitment to purchase employee bus passes should be sought. Combined with federal operating assistance and local transit funds, these sources of funding could help sustain the services. Private sector sponsorship opportunities include the following:

- Provide service
- Paying in full or subsidizing the cost of the service (e.g., additional per hour or per mile cost of extended services)
- Purchase of advertising on vehicles
- Other service marketing activities
- Purchase transit passes for employees
- Construct or sponsor passenger waiting facilities

## **E. Reporting Requirements**

There are reporting requirements for state and federal grants. The grantors need to receive information showing how many people are being served who are the targets of any given program. Special fare media to JOBS Plus! for distribution to eligible TANF recipients have been used to track use of the two new transit routes recently implemented by Centro. All other services funded through the TANF grant will be tailored specifically to TANF recipients and TANF eligible people within 200% of the Federal poverty level (taxis, vans, Guaranteed Ride Home). The same will apply to JARC reporting requirements.

## **F. Vendor Contracting and Insurance**

As the Mobility Manager works to coordinate existing services and contract with vendors to provide job access services, there are several challenges that must be overcome.

The use of private non-profit vendors can be a lower cost alternative to private for-profit vendors. However, the staff may not be as well trained, may have limited capabilities, and may be inclined to favor their own clients. The “nonprofessional” vendors may not be able to meet state and federal requirements, such as driver training, drug and alcohol testing, vehicle maintenance, etc. However, there may be opportunities for CNYRTA to assist vendors through the coordination of such services. Another issue is the ability to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to adequately serve persons with disabilities. These requirements include wheel chair accessibility, headroom, locking systems, and lighting. Additionally, private non-profit vendors may not have sufficient insurance coverage to meet requirements of CNYRTA.



## **V. ROLE OF REGIONAL MOBILITY MANAGER**

The ReMap study recommended the establishment of a Regional Mobility Manager. The following is a summary of the findings of that study; followed by recommendations for specific ways that a Mobility Manager can assist with the implementation of Job Access and Reverse Commute services.

### **A. ReMAP Recommendations for Regional Mobility Manager**

The ReMAP study recommended consolidating several key public transit services under a common management system for Onondaga County for two primary reasons. First, there are many trips provided by numerous agencies that offer many possibilities for sharing resources and services. Second, several agencies have expressed an interest in coordinating services. Consolidating services is accomplished through a Mobility Manager.

The primary role of a Mobility Manager typically is to administer the transportation programs of participating agencies through purchase-of-service contracts with public and/or private vendors. Participation in a brokerage is usually voluntary, and agencies determine the service policies that best meet their needs and those of their clients.

Typically, the core responsibilities of a Mobility Manager include the following:

- Establish policies and procedures to meet sponsor requirements
- Procure service, train and monitor performance of vendors
- Register customers
- Procure, allocate and monitor maintenance of vehicles
- Process invoices from vendors and bill agency sponsors
- Perform customer service functions, and information dissemination and referral services

Other functions might include customer eligibility determination and the provision of items such as vehicles, vehicle maintenance, fuel, insurance, and driver training.

In addition, the Mobility Manager might also be responsible for handling trip reservations, scheduling trips or assigning them to vendors, and/or dispatching. These functions could be performed centrally by the Mobility Manager or handled by each of the participating vendors separately.

The major benefits of a consolidated, brokerage system are improvements in cost-effectiveness and service quality. Improved cost-effectiveness is achieved through the following:

- Elimination of duplicated administration and services
- Beneficial purchases of service from vendors
- Use of the least cost, appropriate mode for each trip
- Broad participation by agencies because the transportation broker (Mobility Manager) is neutral (regarding the assignment of trips to vendor agencies)

Enhanced service quality results from uniform training, quality assurance and safety programs, and the market competition encouraged by consolidating programs and the increased volume of trips available to vendors.

In addition to paratransit trips for agency sponsors, a Mobility Manager could oversee and manage a number of other types of transportation services, including:

- Local, hub-based services for the general public
- Fixed route service/community bus routes
- Flexible transit (route or point deviation) service
- Dial-a-ride paratransit service
- Other contract transportation services
- Subscription bus service
- Hub-to-site shuttles
- Campaigns to involve employers in sponsoring or providing transportation services

As envisioned for Onondaga County, the creation of a Mobility Manager would include the consolidation of key paratransit services in Onondaga County into one service delivery structure. Trips will be provided by several private for-profit and non-profit providers collectively operating a mixed fleet of vehicles. Overall system management and oversight will be provided by the Mobility Manager.

## **B. Regional Mobility Manager and Job Access and Reverse Commute Services**

Centro has recently hired a Mobility Manager, as summarized above in section I.G. However, the implementation of all services described above requires many more staff resources. Nevertheless, this marks a strong beginning towards cooperative management of regional resources. The following are ways that a Mobility Manager can assist with the implementation and operation of Job Access and Reverse Commute services. A strong, continuous inter-agency effort is required for the success of these programs.

1. Assist with the implementation of the JARC services recommended in this Plan.
2. Serve as a key staff member of a continuing JARC steering committee. This would consist of the multi-agency committee (SAC) established for this study and any other key agency personnel identified as the implementation of service progresses.
3. Coordinate / arrange for contract operation of the following in cooperation with steering committee agencies:
  - Local circulator shuttles and flex-route services
  - Leasing vans to private operators
  - Subscription services
  - Contract van and taxi services
  - Car sharing cooperative
4. Work with the home health agency managers to coordinate home health aid client visits. Encourage coordination of services between all of the home health care agencies. Manage the contract with vehicle fleet manager / car rental agency to operate the car sharing cooperative.
5. Coordinate and manage the client subscription process for contract van and taxi services.
6. Coordinate publication/marketing of JARC Services. Solicit customer input and work with employers to monitor Job Access and Reverse Commute Services.
7. Coordinate with DSS and JobsPlus! to monitor the changing needs of the welfare-to-work cases to identify new service needs.
8. Coordinate with Centro management to adjust existing routes and schedules as necessary to ensure services are adapting to changing needs as warranted.