

**Rural Transport: Service
Audit and Needs
Assessment**

Kerry County Report

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ANNEXES

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

This service audit and needs assessment was undertaken as part of a wider national rural transport study. The study was commissioned by the Interdepartmental Working Group on Rural Transport, chaired by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. Under the study the consultants were required to:

- develop a template for use by County Development Boards (CDBs) in carrying out service audits and establishing reasonable rural passenger transport needs in their counties;
- work with four CDBs – Westmeath, Laois, Mayo and Kerry – to undertake pilot studies in their counties.

This is the report of the pilot study in Kerry. It is based on a combination of a survey of rural residents about their travel patterns and needs, a consultative workshop with key interest groups, and relevant desk research regarding the county.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the county in terms of the topography, socio-economic profile and spatial structure. Chapter 2 details existing scheduled and non-scheduled passenger transport services in the county. Chapter 3 describes overall rural travel patterns, and assesses the perceived travel needs of rural residents in Kerry. Chapter 4 summarises key findings and draws conclusions in relation to rural passenger transport services in the county.

1.2 Topography

Kerry is Ireland's 5th largest county, with an area of 4,807 km². A scenic mountainous terrain and rugged Atlantic coastline provide a number of particular infrastructural and accessibility problems in the southern half of the county. Soil type in the south and west of the county is also of a poor quality, and much of the land is covered in forests and blanket bog. The remoteness of certain parts of the county is accentuated in the two large peninsulas.

Being one of Ireland's larger counties, the topography of Kerry poses particular transport issues. Its mountainous nature makes transport more difficult in some parts of the county, for example, while its sheer size also increases the relative remoteness of certain parts. Residents in many parts of the county, especially in the south and west, face journey times of 1-1½ hours to reach the three larger centres, Tralee, Killarney and Listowel.

1.3 Socio-economic Profile

Co. Kerry had a population of over 126,000 in 1996. Its population increased by 3.4% since 1991, and the county accounts for 3.5% of the total national population. The county is very rural, with almost 67% of the population (84,222) living in rural areas. Population density is low, at 26 persons per km², with rural population density (18 persons per km²) also below the average for rural areas nationally.

Table 1.1: Socio-economic Profile of Co. Kerry 1996

	County Kerry	Rural Kerry	STATE
Population (1996)	126,130	84,222	3,629,860
Overall population density (per km ²)	26.24	-	51.65
Rural population density (per km ²)	-	18.23	21.81
% population aged over 65	12.3%	14.5%	11.4%
- % male	45.9%	46.9%	42.8%
- % female	54.1%	53.1%	57.2%
% population aged 14 or under	23.7%	23.7%	23.7%
% in socio-economic groups A & B	11.4%	9.4%	11.6%
% in socio-economic group G	8.4%	8.5%	5.8%
% in socio-economic groups I & J	19.4%	27.2%	8.2%
% of population with third level education	10.9%	9.6%	12.7%
% of population with access to a car (1991 Census)	67.1%	70.6%	66.0%

Note: The socio-economic groups are defined as follows: A = Employers and Managers; B = Higher Professional; C = Lower Professional; D = Non-manual; E = Manual Skilled; F = Semi-skilled; G = Unskilled; H = Own Account Workers; I = Farmers; J = Agricultural Workers; Z = All Others Gainfully Employed.

Source: CSO Census of Population

Kerry contains two Gaeltacht areas, with a combined population of 8,145. These areas are very sparsely populated, with a population density of just 13 persons per km².

Just over 12% of the county's population, and 15% of the rural population, is aged 65 or over. This compares to 11.4% nationally. The older population in Kerry is also more male-oriented (46%, compared to 43% nationally). The proportion of young

people in the county (14 or under), on the other hand, is almost identical to the national average (24%), with no difference between urban and rural areas.

The main urban centres in Kerry have the lowest proportion of people aged 65 or over, whereas some peripheral western areas have a slightly higher proportion of older residents (see Map 1.2). Similarly, the younger population in the county is higher in the north and east, but lower in the south and west (see Map 1.1).

Rural-based activities are an integral element of the county's economic profile. The percentage of the population engaged in farming and agricultural activities is more than double the national average (19% compared to 8%), with a higher proportion still in rural areas (27%). The percentage of unskilled people (8.4%) is also higher than average (5.8%), while the population with third level education is below average. The county has a very large tourism industry – it is one of the Top 5 tourism counties in the country.

Unemployment levels are highest in the north, east and south-west of the county (see Map 1.3). Unemployment is slightly lower in the south and in the Dingle Peninsula, though the proportion of older residents in these areas is high.

1.4 Spatial Structure

Tralee is Kerry's county town and also its largest town, with a population of over 19,000. Killarney is its second town, with a population of almost 9,000. Tralee is the main administrative and economic centre in the county, but Killarney is the major tourist hub at both a county and national level. Listowel, Castleisland and Dingle are the only other towns with a population of greater than 1,500.

Table 1.2: Hierarchy of Settlements in Co. Kerry

A.	B.	C.	D.
Tralee	Killarney Listowel*	Castleisland Dingle	Ballybunion Kenmare Killorglin Cahirciveen Ballyheigue Ballyduff Ardfert Tarbert Ballylongford Rathmore Waterville Spa Fenit Newtownandes Milltown Sneem Lixnaw Causeway Glenbeigh Brosna Gneevgullia Annascaul Knightstown Kilgarvan Castlegregory Abbeydorney Cromane

Note: Towns are categorised from A to D. Category A denotes county towns, Category B denotes towns of population > 5,000, Category C denotes towns of population 1,500-4,999 and Category D denotes towns of population < 1,500. The higher the category, the broader the array of services/functions that becomes available. The hierarchy is broadly based on the population of towns as per the 1996 Census. Adjustments are made where a settlement (marked *) is seen to serve more functions than its population might suggest, however.

Table 1.2 provides an indicative hierarchy of settlements in Kerry. In addition to being the county's administrative and economic centre, Tralee also provides the highest level of educational, medical and commercial facilities. Killarney, Listowel, Castleisland and Dingle are the next most important centres, though some smaller centres are also very important for tourism and are heavily reliant on this activity (eg Kenmare, Killorglin, Ballybunion, Waterville).

Kerry has a lower than average national primary road capacity. Two national primary roads serve Kerry, the N20 (Cork-Killarney) and the N21 (Limerick-Tralee). National secondary routes capacity is good, however, and includes the N86 (Tralee-Dingle), the N70 (the coastal route from Tralee to Kenmare which links Cahirciveen, Waterville and Sneem) and the N71 (linking Kenmare to Killarney, an extremely busy route during the tourist season).

Table 1.3: Spatial Context of Co. Kerry

	County Kerry	State
Area (km ²)	4,807	70,273
Kilometres of National Primary Roads:		
- per 100 km ²	1.97	3.73
- per 100 residents	0.08	0.07
Kilometres of National Secondary Roads:		
- per 100 km ²	6.94	3.81
- per 100 residents	0.26	0.07

Source: Derived from CSO/National Roads Authority

1.5 Transportation Overview

The private car is the most important mode of transport in Kerry. Car ownership in the county is on a par with the national average (35 cars per 100 residents). There are almost 44,000 private cars in Kerry, and over 58,000 people (46% of the population) hold a full driving licence.

Nearly 700 privately-owned public service vehicles operate in Kerry, somewhat greater than in Mayo, a similar sized pilot county (this reflects the high number of tour coaches operating in the county). There are also 152 vehicles operating licensed school transport routes for the Department of Education.

There are 17 private licensed bus routes in Kerry. In addition, some 26 Bus Éireann Expressway and local routes serve the county. Over 280 Department of Education licensed school routes are also operated.

Table 1.4: Baseline Transport Statistics

	County Kerry	County Mayo*	State
Number of cars (as at 31-12-99)	43,763	36,176	1,269,245
Number of current full driving licences	58,059	58,876	1,536,761
Number of cars (per 100 residents)	34.71	32.44	34.97
% of population with a full driving licence	46.0%	52.8%	42.3%
Number of Bus Éireann routes (Expressway and local)	26	20	-
Number of private licensed bus routes	17	73	-
Number of DoEd school transport routes (primary & post-primary)	282	409	-
Number of privately-owned public service vehicles ⁺	686	586	-
Number of DoEd school transport vehicles (contracted and Bus Éireann)	152	138	-
Average distance (miles) travelled to:			
- <i>work</i>	4.8	5.0	5.6
- <i>school</i>	3.7	3.6	3.0

* A similar pilot county for rural transport audit.

⁺ Taxis, hackneys and buses combined.

Source: Various

2. Audit of Existing Services

2.1 Scheduled Services

2.1.1 Description of Bus and Rail Services

There are 26 scheduled Bus Éireann services operating in Kerry (see Annex 3). These consist of 18 local and eight Expressway services. Expressway services focus mainly on providing transport from the county's main towns in the north and east (Tralee, Killarney) to Limerick, Cork, Waterford and Dublin. The Tralee-Limerick-Dublin route, for example, operates eight services a day, serving Listowel, Mountcoal and Kilflynn. Dublin-Limerick-Killarney is also served eight times daily, with regular stops at Castleisland and Farranfore and another 3-4 daily onward connections to Beaufort Bridge, Killorglin, Milltown and Castlemaine. Further frequent services are offered on the Tralee-Killarney-Cork route, with regular stops at Farranfore and 2-3 daily stops at Barraduff and Rathmore. In addition, there are other tourist-oriented Expressway routes operated in the county, though these tend to operate during the summer months only.

A number of the county's smaller towns and villages, including Ballybunion, Ballydavid, Ballyheigue, Caherciveen, Castlegregory, Dingle, Kenmare, Kilgarvan, Tarbert and Waterville, are connected to the county's major towns with local Bus Éireann routes. Some of these routes provide frequent services on a daily or week-day basis (eg Tralee-Listowel-Ballybunion, Dingle-Tralee). Several other local routes operate low frequencies on specific days only, however (eg Tralee-Castlegregory-Cloghane). Generally, the north of Kerry seems better served than the south.

There are three Bus Éireann/community group rural transport schemes in operation in Kerry (eg Kilgarvan-Kenmare). Generally, local community groups initiate the schemes, Bus Éireann obtains route licences, and the services are contracted to local private operators. The schemes offer transport one day a week (usually Friday) and buses stop on request. Typically, users are older people doing weekly shopping or collecting pensions.

In addition to the Bus Éireann routes, 17 private licensed bus routes operate in Kerry. Almost all of these are local routes, the exceptions being a Listowel-Cork service for college students and a tourist service operated in Dingle. The majority of the routes are based around Tralee, while two licensed routes operate from Valentia.

The national rail network serves Tralee, Farranfore, Killarney and Rathmore. There are four direct daily week-day services from Tralee to Dublin, while a number of services from Limerick, Cork, Waterford and Ennis also link with these services.

Free Travel Passes are accepted on Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann services. According to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs' database of private transport operators participating in the scheme, there are only two private operators in Kerry that accept Free Travel Passes. Over 23,000 people in the county, or 18% of the population, hold a Free Travel Pass (this is slightly higher than the national average). Of these, 4,700 Free Travel Pass holders (20%) qualify for invalidity or disability reasons.

Table 2.2: Free Travel Pass Holders in Co. Kerry

	County Kerry	County Mayo*	State
Number of free travel pass holders	23,052	23,030	586,363
Number of free travel pass holders (per 100 residents)	18.28	20.65	16.15
Number of free travel pass holders qualifying through receipt of invalidity pension or disability allowances/(% of total)	4,689 (20.3%)	4,733 (20.55%)	124,845 (21.3%)

* A similar pilot county for rural transport audit.

Source: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs

2.1.2 Comparison with Other Pilot Counties

Compared to other pilot counties, Kerry is reasonably well served by scheduled bus and rail services, though the south and west of the county is less well served than the north and east (see Maps 2.1 and 2.2). Map 2.1 shows all scheduled transport services (bus, rail) serving rural parts of the county. Map 2.2 shows scheduled morning and evening services that facilitate access to work in the main towns, ie the service must arrive in the destination before the start of the working day, and return in the evening after work.¹

¹ This means that not all morning and evening services are necessarily included in Map 2.2

Some 63% of the population live in DEDs that are served by some form of scheduled service, compared to 66% in Mayo, 62% in Westmeath and 44% in Laois. This reflects the size of the county and (like Mayo) the fact that it is served by a relatively extensive local bus network. The proportion of the population with access to services that can facilitate transport for work/training opportunities, meanwhile, is 26%, higher than for Mayo and Westmeath but lower than Laois.

Table 2.1: % of Population in DEDs with Public Transport Services¹

	Laois	Kerry	Mayo	Westmeath
Any scheduled service	44%	63%	66%	62%
Daily working service ²	35%	26%	17%	18%
1. Refers to DEDs where services stop. Includes Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and private services.				
2. See text for description.				

Source: Derived from CSO Census of Population, Service Timetables

Service accessibility remains an issue for key target groups (eg older people, the unemployed), particularly in the remote areas in the south and west, where scheduled services provision is limited. Throughout the county, there are people in these target groups who have poor access to daytime passenger transport services, services to large towns and services to education/training facilities, for example (see Maps 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5).

2.1.3 Other Scheduled Services

There are 282 Department of Education licensed school bus routes in Kerry, 133 post-primary and 149 primary. While Bus Éireann is responsible for the operation of routes, 85% of the vehicles which serve them are run by private sub-contractors.

Table 2.1: School Transport Routes in Co. Kerry

	County Kerry	County Mayo*	State
Number of DoEd school transport routes (primary & post-primary)	282	409	6,000
Number of DoEd school transport vehicles (contracted and Bus Éireann)	152	138	2,300
Average distance (miles) travelled to school	3.7	3.6	3.0
* A similar pilot county for rural transport audit.			

Source: Bus Éireann

Ferry services to the offshore islands involve mainly seasonal tourism services to small, mainly uninhabited, islands. Valentia Island (population 676) is the largest island in the county, but is connected to the mainland by bridge.

2.2 Non-scheduled Services

There are 686 privately-owned public service vehicles (ie taxis, hackneys and private buses) operating in Kerry. This includes 91 taxis (five wheelchair accessible), 320 hackneys and 275 private licensed buses. On a per capita basis, Kerry's concentration of taxis and hackneys is similar to the national average.

Table 2.3: Privately-owned Public Service Vehicles in Co. Kerry

	County Kerry	County Mayo*	State
Number of hackneys and taxis:	411	392	13,076
- per 100 km ²	8.55	7.01	18.61
- per 100 residents	0.33	0.35	0.36
Number of private licensed bus operators	98	85	-
Number of private licensed buses:	275	194	-
- per 100 km ²	5.72	3.47	-
- per 100 residents	0.22	0.17	-
Average fleet size of private licensed bus operators	2.8	2.3	-
Number of privately-owned public service vehicles ⁺	686	586	-

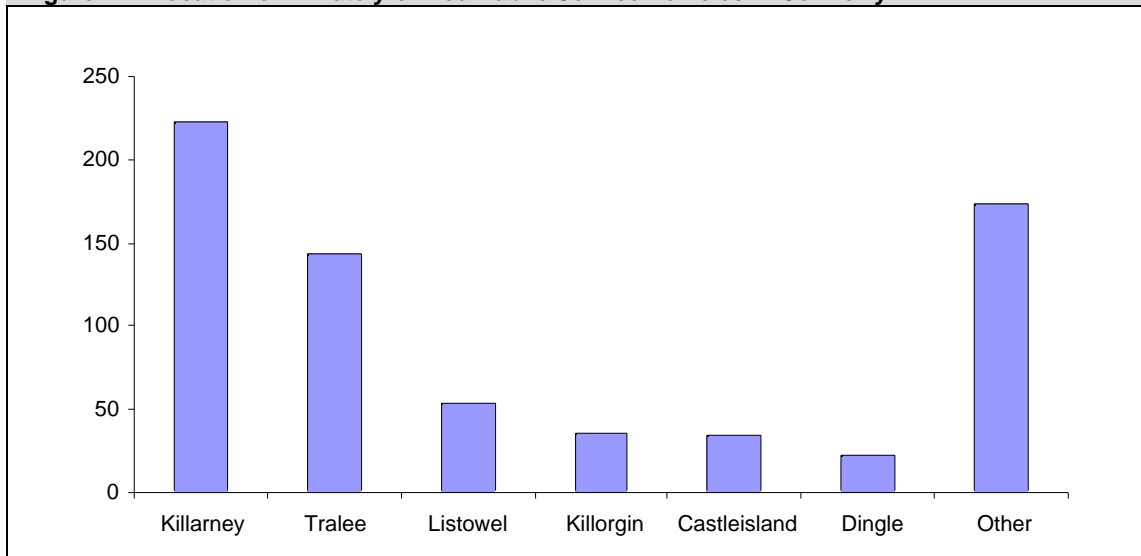
* A similar pilot county for rural transport audit.

⁺ Taxis, hackneys and buses combined.

Source: Departments of the Environment and Local Government/Public Enterprise

As mentioned earlier, only a very small proportion of private licensed buses operate on licensed scheduled routes. The majority of these vehicles are offered for private hire for local groups and schools, and a large proportion of them are owned by specialist tourism travel operators. Average fleet size for private bus operators is 2.8 vehicles, higher than in Mayo (2.3 vehicles).

While all taxis and a large number of hackneys are located in Tralee and Killarney, there is a wide geographic distribution of other hackneys throughout the county, even outside other smaller centres like Listowel, Killorglin, Dingle and Castleisland.

Figure 2.1: Location of Privately-owned Public Service Vehicles in Co. Kerry

The Southern Health Board does not operate any scheduled transport services in Kerry, though it provides means-tested support for hospital trips within Kerry and also for longer trips to Dublin, Cork etc. Support is given in the form of subsidised bus/rail/taxi fares rather than contracting out of services on the Board's behalf. The Board also provides holiday time transport to/from Kerry for children with disabilities in residential care outside the county. This work is contracted out locally.

2.3 Air Services

Kerry is one of the few counties in Ireland which has a regional airport, at Farranfore (between Tralee and Killarney). Aer Arann operates four return flights from Farranfore Airport to Dublin in summer and three return flights in winter. There is no dedicated bus connection from the airport to either town, however.

3. Needs Assessment²

3.1 Key Findings – Private Car Accessibility

3.1.1 Cars in Household

One of the first indicators of transport availability is household car ownership. In the survey of rural residents in Kerry, 9% of rural Kerry residents live in households with no car, whilst almost half live in households with two or more vehicles. This compares favourably with other pilot counties.

Table 3.1: Number of Cars per Household in Co. Kerry

	Kerry		Average of Four Counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
0	31	9%	121	9%
1	148	42%	482	37%
2	127	36%	517	40%
3+	48	13%	172	13%
TOTAL	354	100%	1,291	100%

Source: Local Transport Survey

The population living in households without a car is consistent across most age groups. There are a number of target groups where the proportion living in non-car households is higher, however. These include:

- older people, where over _ live in households with no car;
- people with illness and people with disabilities³, where nearly 40% live in households with no car;
- lower income groups (using medical card holders as a proxy), where 30% live in households with no car.

² A total of 2,023 survey forms were mailed out to individuals in rural Kerry DEDs. Individuals were sampled systematically from the electoral register database. The analysis is based upon 361 completed forms - a response rate therefore of 17.8%. In some cases, this response rate was too small to carry out detailed cross-tabulations, so results for the four pilot counties combined are included. The sample response was adjusted to remove age and sex bias and to produce a weighted dataset that was similar in profile to rural Kerry.

Table 3.2: % Proportion of Sub-groups in Co. Kerry Living in Households with No Car

	Kerry (%)	Average of Four Counties (%)
Age Group		
18-24	7	4
25-44	2	4
45-64	5	6
65+	26	27
Sex		
Male	8	8
Female	11	11
Disability		
Able-bodied	4	6
People with illness or disability	38	30
Free Travel Pass?		
Yes	28	31
No	3	4
Medical Card?		
Yes	28	27
No	3	3
AVERAGE	9	9

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.1.2 Car Availability

Car ownership can mask the real determinant of the need to use alternative, non-private means of transport, ie actual car availability. In many households where there is one car, for example, it might be used by the principal income earner for the work journey and is therefore unavailable to other members of the household during the main part of the day. Around 20% of the rural population of Kerry report that they “rarely” or “never” have a car available for their personal use. This is slightly higher than for other pilot counties.

Table 3.3: Availability of a Car for Use as Driver or Passenger in Co. Kerry

	Kerry		Average of Four Counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
Always	224	69%	851	70%
Often	38	12%	145	12%
Rarely	31	10%	105	9%
Never	32	10%	110	9%
TOTAL	326	100%	1,211	100%

Source: Local Transport Survey

Car availability is highest for the 25-64 age group. Younger people and older people have the lowest levels of car availability, with 51% and 30% respectively having little or no access to household car transport. Women have similar levels of car availability to men. People with illness or with a disability (42%) and those in lower income

groups (39%), on the other hand, are much less likely to have a car available than are the able-bodied/higher income groups.

Table 3.4: % Proportion of Co. Kerry Sub-groups Who Never/Rarely Have a Car Available

	Kerry (%)	Average of Four Counties (%)
Age Group		
18-24	51	41
25-44	9	8
45-64	9	10
65+	30	27
Sex		
Male	21	17
Female	21	20
Disability		
Able-bodied	17	15
People with illness or disability	42	32
Free Travel Pass?		
Yes	37	32
No	15	14
Medical Card?		
Yes	39	34
No	13	12
AVERAGE	18	18

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.2 Overall Travel Patterns

People with higher levels of access to household cars make more journeys than those with lower levels of access. In Kerry, people who rarely/never have a car available make about 11-12 trips per week, compared to 16-17 trips for the population generally.

Table 3.5: Weekly Trips Made per Head in Co. Kerry

	Kerry	Average of Four Counties
All respondents	16.61	16.96
Car available rarely/never	11.41	11.71

Source: Local Transport Survey

The size of the gap in trip making differs by sub-group. Young people in the pilot counties seem to adapt to not having access to a car better than other target groups, as the size of the trip-making gap is smaller (21.3 trips v. 16.9 trips)⁴. For other sub-groups, especially older people and people with illness or disability, lack of access to

⁴ Results for all pilot counties are used because the individual county sample sizes do not allow cross-tabulation to

a car means that individuals are able to make only half, or less than half, the number of trips that those with access to a car are making.

Table 3.6: Impact of Car Availability on Trip Making of Key Target Groups (All Pilot Counties)

Target Group	Weekly Trips made per Head	
	Car Available Always/Often	Car Available Rarely/Never
Age 18-24	21.26	16.90
Age 65+	12.46	4.61
People with illness or disability	15.27	6.07
Medical card holders	15.58	7.00
Free travel pass holders	13.89	5.44

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.3 Types of Journey⁵

Work and education/training journeys are the most important trips for younger people in the pilot counties, followed by sports and social activities. For older people, people with illness or with a disability, and lower income groups, shopping trips are highly important, as is visiting friends/relatives. Church-going is also important to older people and to lower income groups.

Table 3.7: % Relative Importance of Journey Purposes for Key Target Groups (All Pilot Counties)

Journey Purpose	Young (18-24)	Older People (65+)	People with Illness / People with Disability	Medical Card Holders	Free Travel Pass Holders	TOTAL
Work	24%	9%	15%	12%	9%	25%
Training/Education	14%	0%	4%	7%	2%	5%
Food Shopping	9%	26%	17%	19%	23%	14%
Non-food shopping	7%	8%	10%	7%	8%	6%
Personal business	5%	9%	6%	7%	8%	6%
Doctor's appointment	0%	4%	3%	3%	4%	1%
Hospital appointment	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Attending day care centre	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Children to crèche/school	1%	1%	6%	6%	2%	9%
Visiting someone in hospital	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Visiting friends/relatives	12%	10%	11%	10%	10%	9%
Social activities	13%	6%	8%	8%	7%	9%
Sport and recreation	10%	6%	6%	6%	7%	8%
Going to church	4%	17%	8%	10%	15%	7%
Other	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Local Transport Survey

The county town is the most important destination for most journey types. The exceptions to this are food shopping, where all other settlement types are of

⁵ Results for all pilot counties are used because the individual county sample sizes do not allow cross-tabulation to

importance (especially medium-sized towns), and church-going, which is concentrated on smaller towns and villages.

Table 3.8: Destination for Different Journey Types (All Pilot Counties)

Journey Purpose	Settlement Type				
	County Town	Large Town	Medium Town	Small Town	Other
Work	47%	14%	13%	4%	22%
Food shopping	10%	19%	42%	10%	19%
Shop (not specified)	50%	17%	23%	3%	7%
Leisure	73%	13%	-	13%	1%
Visiting friends/relatives	70%	6%	8%	-	16%
Sport	66%	-	-	-	34%
Education/training	48%	19%	11%	6%	16%
Hospital	100%	-	-	-	-
Going to church	-	-	-	23%	77%

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.4 Travel Needs and Attitudes

Typically, around 30-40% of most key target groups in rural Kerry have identified the existence of trips that they would like to make but are currently unable to due to lack of suitable transport. This is similar to other pilot counties. The exception is 18-24 year olds, however, where 52% indicated the existence of such a gap (higher than for the average of all pilot counties).

Table 3.9: Incidence of Unmet Demand for Trips in Co. Kerry by Key Target Group

Target Group	% Incidence of Unmet Demand for Trips	
	Kerry	Average of Four Counties
18-24	52	35
65+	39	37
People with illness/people with disability	40	38
Medical card holders	37	40
Free travel pass holders	37	36

Note: Unmet demand for trips defined as the existence of trips that could not be made due to a lack of suitable transport.

Source: Local Transport Survey

The most strongly favoured type of transport service in rural Kerry (favoured by 34% of respondents) is a pre-booked, direct, door-to-door service, ie a service that is closest in nature to a hackney/taxi service. One quarter of respondents favoured a direct service with no pre-booking and a nearby stop.

Table 3.10: Likelihood of Using New Services in Co. Kerry

Service Description	% Stating They Would 'Very Likely' Use New Service Kerry	Average of Four Counties
A. Pre-booked/door-to-door/direct	34	30
B. Pre-booked/nearby stop/direct	18	15
C. No pre-booking/nearby stop/direct	25	26
D. No pre-booking/nearby stop/interchange required	12	13

Source: Local Transport Survey

For a quarter of the rural population across the pilot counties, the cost of the service would greatly affect their willingness to use it, while for the remainder it would not⁶. Attitudes to cost vary little across the target groups, although people with illness or with a disability and lower income groups appear to be slightly more sensitive to cost.

Table 3.11: Price Sensitivity

Target Group	Extent to Which Fares Would Determine Willingness to Use a New Service (Average of Four Counties)
18-24	27%
65+	26%
People with illness or disability	33%
Medical card holders	32%
Free travel pass holders	25%
AVERAGE	25%

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.5 Rural Transport Workshops/Consultations

In order to assess the current rural transport situation in Kerry and to determine county level opinion on future rural transport options, a workshop was held in the county and was attended by a number of key community, public sector and business representatives. The following were the central issues to emerge from the discussions:

- there are two distinct rural transport issues, firstly providing access to local towns for people living in isolated rural areas and secondly, linking these towns with larger towns in the county;

⁶ Results for all pilot counties are used because the individual county sample sizes do not allow cross-tabulation to

- access for particular target groups to certain services is important. Target groups identified were older people, young people, the unemployed and people with disabilities;
- Kerry has particular transport/congestion problems in the summer months, due to the high levels of tourism in the county;
- the cost of not providing adequate rural transport needs to be addressed, ie effects of social exclusion, isolation and the high levels of suicide in rural areas;
- those residing in rural areas but employed in urban areas have to purchase a car to participate in the labour force;
- community groups and local development groups are best placed to quantify the transport needs of the local communities and can play a vital role in helping to meet these needs;
- there should be a county level transport co-ordinating association;
- there is a need for better co-ordination among existing transport providers, and information on the services they provide;
- the possibilities for developing rail transport in Kerry should also be explored. In particular, the development of a commuter service between Tralee and Killarney could be looked at, and how this could be integrated into a rural transport system.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Key Findings

- Kerry is a very rural county, particularly in the south and west, and its rural population contains a number of key target groups (ie groups where the availability of a private car for transport is limited) that have a greater need for rural transport services, eg older people, people with disabilities, lower income groups, young people. The main types of journey needs include work, shopping and social activities.
- The county is geographically large, with a mountainous and rugged terrain. Population densities are low, and its rural population is very scattered. This means that there are parts of the county that are very isolated, and the availability of rural transport services is an issue for rural dwellers (particularly those in the key target groups).
- Scheduled transport services in Kerry focus mainly on links to/from the main towns of Tralee, Killarney and Listowel. The north and east of the county is therefore better served than the south and west. Many people in the key target groups throughout the county, however, have needs that would currently be met by non-scheduled services. This is reflected in the level of non-scheduled capacity found outside the major tourism centre of Killarney, though again the south and west of the county is less well served.
- Where transport services do exist, there is a general lack of accessible vehicles and accessible infrastructure, prohibiting usage by people with disabilities.
- Those who rarely/never have a car available for private transport in Kerry make about 11 weekly trips on average, compared to 17 weekly trips for those who have a private car available for transport. For certain key target groups, such as older people, people with illness or with a disability, and lower income groups, trips are as low as 5-7 per week. These groups would make other trips, however, were it not for a lack of suitable transport, with about 40% identifying unmet demands.
- The preferred mode of transport for these target groups is a pre-booked, door-to-door, direct service (ie equivalent to current taxi/hackney operations). A direct service with no pre-booking and a nearby stop is the next preference, followed by a pre-booked, nearby stop, direct service.

4.2 Unmet Needs in Co. Kerry

Table 4.1 gives an estimate of the number of people in rural Kerry who have unmet rural transport needs. To arrive at these estimates, a number of steps were taken:

- the Kerry population in each of the key target groups – young people, older people, people with illness or with a disability, and lower income groups – was identified, based on the results of the 1996 Census of Population and the county rural transport survey conducted as part of this audit;
- the proportion of these target groups who rarely/never have a car available was then estimated using the results from the survey. This figure is used as a proxy for people with unmet needs within the target groups;
- two-thirds of those in the target groups who live in DEDs with a suitable work-type journey or daytime journey opportunity are then removed from the estimate on the basis that their needs are in some way met;
- the survey is also used to remove double-counting (eg older people who also have an illness or a disability and/or have a medical card).

Table 4.1: Target Groups with Unmet Needs in Co. Kerry

Priority Group	Type of Service	Population	Car Rarely/Never	In DEDs with a Suitable Service Already	People with Unmet Needs
Young people	Daily morning	12,947	2,460 (19%)	604	1,856
Older people	Daytime	15,544	4,197 (27%)	1,968	2,229
People with illness or disability	Daytime	9,198	2,943 (32%)	1,397*	1,546
Low income	Daytime	21,978	7,473 (34%)	3,547	3,926
Daytime with double-counting removed		28,283	8,436 (30%)	3,980	4,456

* It should be noted that the ability of people with illness or with a disability to avail of transport services may be less than for the other target groups (eg due to lack of wheelchair access). This figure may therefore be conservative.

Source: Derived from CSO Census of Population/Local Transport Survey

It is estimated that there are 4,600 people living in rural Kerry who have unmet rural transport needs (based on the 1996 Census). The need is particularly acute among lower income groups (3,500 people), followed by older people (2,200), young people (1,900) and people with illness or with a disability (1,500).

Annex 1 GIS Maps