HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN FY2020 - 2023

NORTHWEST ALABAMA COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
NACOLG

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Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments

Resolution Adopting the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan

WHEREAS, the most recent transportation authorization bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), and the prior transportation authorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), require the development of a coordinated human services transportation plan in order to be eligible for specific Federal Transit Authority (FTA) funds appropriated from both bills, including Sections 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula Grants), Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5311 (Formula Grants for Rural Areas) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) funds; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments in cooperation with the Alabama Association of Regional Councils and the Alabama Department of Transportation developed the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Northwest Alabama 2020-2023; and

WHEREAS, the Board of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments has reviewed the Plan and has passed recommendation in support of adopting the Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, this 24th day of September 2020 that the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments does hereby adopt the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Northwest Alabama 2020-2023.

Chairman

Attest:

Secretary

PART 1:
Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan
for
Northwest Alabama

1. Project Summary

The Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments area, which includes Colbert, Lauderdale, Franklin, Marion and Winston Counties, has a multi-modal transportation environment that includes several distinct providers of transportation including public transit, private transportation, and human service transportation programs. The objective of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is to identify and prioritize strategies that will improve the efficiency of these services. Ultimately, the goal is to expend funds available to support these community transportation services in the region in the most efficient manner possible, which will enable providers to expand service and reach new clients by introducing new mobility options for those that depend on transportation services.

This plan stems from the most recent transportation authorization to date, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, but applies equally to programs held over from earlier transportation bills, including the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Each of these acts require coordination among providers of public transportation services and human service agencies serving elderly, low-income, and disabled populations in order to improve the coordination of funding for transportation services and to improve overall access and mobility of groups that are dependent on transportation services. Under these transportation bills, coordination is required in order to receive funding from certain programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The role of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) is to serve as a regional planning agency responsible for overseeing the development of the plan addressing the coordination of local community transportation resources. Coordination serves a dual purpose in aiding the more efficient expenditure of monies for public transportation and ensuring that the region will continue to receive funds for transportation from specific programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

2. Federal Planning Requirements and Policies

As mentioned above, FAST, MAP-21 and SAFETEA-LU each require a coordinated plan before entities in the region can access specific FTA funds.

Under the oldest of this legislation, SAFETEA-LU, three programs required a coordinated plan:

Section 5310: Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Program- Funds

were available for capital expenses associated with transporting elderly people and persons with disabilities. Funds were apportioned based on the state's share of these populations. Eligible activities included capital expenses and associated administrative costs. A matching share requirement of 20% of the total project cost was required from local sources. Section 5310 funds were commonly used to support capital expenses to provide transportation services to elderly and disabled populations by purchasing vehicles or transportation services. As of this plan, only two grant recipients had been funded under Section 5310 in northwest Alabama- the ARC of the Shoals for transportation of individuals with disabilities and the Town of Double Springs for a senior center van.

Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program- Funds were available to provide transportation to and from job-related destinations for low income workers. Funds were apportioned among rural and urban areas based on the proportion of low-income and welfare recipient workers. Eligible activities included capital, planning, and operating assistance associated with transportation to and from job-related activities and work. NACOLG Transit has administered funds under Section 5316 via a contract with a local cab company, with matching funds provided by the Alabama Department of Human resources that are administered by ALDOT.

Section 5317: New Freedom Program- Funds were available to expand transportation options for individuals with disabilities beyond those activities required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Funds were apportioned among rural and urban areas by a formula based on the proportion of individuals with disabilities. Funds were expended for capital and operating assistance to expand transportation access for individuals with disabilities. NACOLG was granted Section 5317 funds for the purchase of a vehicle to expand service to individuals with disabilities through its Transit and Aging and Disability Resource Center. To date, these funds have not been drawn down due to financial constraints.

Under MAP-21 and the FAST Act, programs for elderly and disabled individuals were consolidated under **Section 5310**, which now permits funding for uses that parallel the earlier Section 5310 and Section 5317 programs. **Section 5310 of MAP-21 and the FAST Act** allow funds for expenditures to provide transportation to elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities as well as the expansion of services for individuals with disabilities above the requirements of the ADA. Funds are available for capital and operating expenses for these individuals. Section 5310 continues the requirement that applicants qualify funding as part of an approved coordinated plan.

Meanwhile, **Section 5316 of SAFETEA-LU** was consolidated into the categories of funding that provide for urban and rural transportation, **Section 5307 and 5311**, which do not expressly require inclusion in a coordinated plan. Public transit providers, however, must be stakeholders in any approved coordinated plan. This ensures that investments into all categories of FTA funds are part of the coordinated planning effort.

This plan bridges the gap between **SAFETEA-LU**, which initiated the coordinated

planning requirements for transit, and **MAP-21**, under which the State of Alabama still retains funds to be expended, and the FAST Act. Both MAP-21 and FAST Act will fund public transit agencies (including job access activities) under Section 5307 and Section 5311 as well as projects for the elderly and disabled under Section 5310. The plan meets the statutory guidance for coordinated plans in the following ways:

- It identifies public, private and non-profit entities that currently provide transportation services to elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and low income populations and assesses needs and service gaps among members of those groups. It is based upon the experiences and perceptions of members of those groups as well as data assessed from the U.S. Census and from surveys of users of public transportation and stakeholders.
- It identifies needs and gaps in transportation services for these groups and proposes strategies and activities to address the identified gaps and achieve more effective service delivery.
- It prioritizes strategies based upon resources, time and feasibility for specific activities identified.
- It includes stakeholder involvement from public, private, and non-profit transportation providers, human service providers, and members of the general public.

3. Guiding Principles of Coordinated Transportation

Guiding principles provide orientation for transportation providers and all others involved in the provision of services related to meeting the transportation needs of consumers, including the target populations of low-income, elderly, and disabled groups in the region.

- **The Right to Mobility:** People with transportation needs have a right to mobility. Individuals with limited incomes and people with disabilities deserve to have access to their community and their local economy and the provision of transportation services is a basic pre-requisite for their participation. Transportation is a basic necessity and limited access and mobility are a barrier to full participation in society that can only be overcome through a commitment to the right to mobility.

- **Customer Service Focus:** In providing transportation services, the needs of the customer should always come first. Barring any violation of operating principles that are established by law, transportation agencies have an obligation to seek out solutions to transportation needs of their customers. Policies and procedures should be clear and flexible enough to allow for different abilities and to provide support as needed. The goal of every transportation provider should be to facilitate safe and efficient mobility in a timely and courteous manner.

- **Elimination of Service Gaps:** Gaps in service represent a failure of the transportation network to meet obligations for individuals to have full participation in daily life, communities, and economies. To the maximum extent feasible, service gaps should be eliminated.

- **Maximum Efficiency:** Tradeoffs between efficiency and mobility present a difficult problem for transportation providers. Resources and demand rarely align to the extent desired by either customers, providers, or other interested parties. To the maximum extent feasible, transportation providers should seek to provide transportation alternatives while balancing resources toward optimally efficient solutions. Revenues and expenditures must balance in a manner that provides the greatest access and mobility to the most vulnerable populations, while recognizing the basic right of transportation to all individuals including those with specialized transportation needs.

4. Work Plan, Methodology, and Products

The project's work plan and research methodology followed federal requirements. At the outset, a regional discussion group was established to provide input and validation from public and private transportation providers, stakeholders from low income, disabled and elderly groups, and human service agencies. These met during the planning process to provide an assessment of unmet needs and barriers and were provided a copy of the plan for review as the draft became available.

Initial efforts involved primary and secondary research tasks: Reviewing existing coordination efforts and plans, interviewing stakeholders, surveying community transportation and human service agencies, evaluating existing public transportation services, and mapping community socio-economic, demographic, and travel patterns. Data was then analyzed to determine common origins and destinations for transportation service demand and to determine any apparent gaps in service. With this process complete, the NACOLG planning team began to develop preliminary recommendations for coordination polices and strategies.

Once the initial assessment was completed, the NACOLG planning team distributed copies of the draft assessment including an analysis of redundancies, gaps and needs, and strategies for review by members of the stakeholder participant groups. The purpose of the review was to provide an opportunity for these participants to evaluate the assessment and the proposed strategies and to provide guidance as to the resource requirements and effectiveness of the proposals. The draft plan was also published on the NACOLG website and the general public was invited to review and comment on the plan at a public hearing. Press releases were provided to notify the public of the workshops and newspaper articles and legal notices were published to inform the general public of the plan. Finally, the plan was adopted by the NACOLG Board of Directors on September 24, 2015.

The process was repeated during 2017 and 2020, with the regional discussion group

reconvening to discuss progress toward implementation, a review of the data sources and a re-survey of interested parties, and a revision of the plan that was distributed in print and on the NACOLG website. The updated plan was adopted in August 2017 and September 2020.

5. Sources of Data for the Coordinated Plan

The initial 2015 overview and assessment was developed with reference to the statements of transportation providers, a review of existing and past grant awards, social service and human service contracts, and a stakeholder survey of organizations representing elderly, low-income, and disabled individuals in the region. Seventeen organizations responded to the survey, which indicated type and volume of transportation services provided, as well as the number of vehicles, expenditures on transportation, unmet needs, and other key indicators.

In the survey, stakeholders were asked to provide information about the approximate number of clients served and how they accessed services, whether with a private vehicle, public transportation, purchased transportation or some other means. Respondents were asked to identify the modes of transportation they offered, if any. Most respondents- 47%- did not provide transportation directly, while 35% operated agency vehicles and 35% contracted with another agency for transportation services (respondents were allowed to choose more than one mode of transportation). Results indicated that the agencies' clients were dependent on transportation that was provided by the agency, public transportation providers, or some other means in order to access agency services. Stakeholders reported that 933 clients, collectively, used private automobiles, while 1108 used some other form of transportation service and 79 walked to access agency services. The largest provider of transportation was NACOLG Transit, with approximately 442 clients served each day, including general public and contracted services.

A second survey was done among passengers boarding NACOLG Transit vehicles. The survey results indicated a variety of transportation needs among respondents. Comments included a need for night and weekend service; service to destinations in other towns such as Huntsville, Cullman, and Tennessee; service from Russellville to Phil Campbell; timeliness and scheduling issues; length of time on the bus; need for easier scheduling; complaints about the late cancellation policy. Others commented on the need for the service and its quality. Most respondents listed a lack of vehicle access or disability as the reason they used transportation services.

The Alabama Department of Public Health provided a third source of data through a statewide community health assessment. The ADPH conducted telephone interviews with 115 healthcare providers across the state in order to gauge their transportation-related challenges. The ADPH survey included 2 community mental health centers, one rural health clinic, two rural hospitals, two public health departments, one social worker with a regional dialysis clinic, and Kid One Transport. Results indicated difficulty accessing transportation among more remote and rural areas of the region

and among lower income and elderly populations. The outcome of these challenges included missed appointments and difficulty with maintaining treatment for various health issues. A review of the results by transportation providers indicated that healthcare providers lacked an adequate understanding of the existing public transportation options and opportunities for coordination. As a group broadly representative of the general public as well as those that are elderly, disabled or low-income, this survey was provided great benefit for indicating unmet needs and barriers to coordination.

Finally, demographic and statistical information from the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Survey of Income and Program Participation, the Alabama State Data Center and local transportation databases were reviewed for each county to identify concentrations of individuals likely to have transportation challenges. A summary of data is provided along with maps of important data in Part 2 the coordinated plan.

In 2017, the stakeholder survey was repeated among agencies serving elderly, low income and disabled individuals, with similar results. The U.S. Census Bureau demographic and statistical information was reviewed and updated to include the American Communities Survey 5-year estimates from 2011-2015 and the maps were updated to reflect more recent information and to discover changes from two years previous.

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau demographic and statistical information was reviewed and updated to include the American Communities Survey 5-year estimates from 2014-2018 and the maps were updated to reflect more recent information and to discover changes from the past three years.

6. Existing Transportation Providers

Existing transportation services are available through the following entities and organizations:

The Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments: NACOLG Transit operates public transportation in all five counties of northwest Alabama. NACOLG Transit's primary service is demand responsive public transportation, within the hours of 7 AM and 5 PM on Monday through Friday and limited service between 12 PM and 5 PM on Sunday. Transportation is provided with a fleet of 62 vehicles of various sizes, meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for transport of persons with mobility or other constraints. Demand responsive service requires advanced scheduling. Rates vary depending on distance travelled. Within 1.5 miles of the city limits of Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, Tuscumbia, Russellville, Haleyville, and Hamilton a fare of three dollars is charged per one-way trip. From 1.5 to 5 miles, the fare increases to six dollars ($6). Between 5 and ten miles, the fare is nine dollars ($9) per one-way trip. Outside of this area, NACOLG Transit calculates the actual cost of transportation for each trip. NACOLG Transit also

provides service to Huntsville and Birmingham, primarily for non-emergency medical trips, at a cost of $120 round trip to Huntsville and $180 round trip to Birmingham. A grant from the Lauderdale and Colbert County Development Commissions provides assistance for low-income children in need of transportation. In addition to these services, NACOLG Transit provides transportation under contract with a number of social service organizations, including the **Riverbend Center for Mental Health**, **YMCA of the Shoals**, **ARC of the Shoals**, the **Florence Housing Authority**, and **Tri-County Mental Health Services**. Various other agencies pay for transportation for their clients using tickets that can be purchased from NACOLG Transit, including the **Department of Human Resources**, the **Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind**, and the **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services**.

Scope 310: Scope 310 is a non-profit serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Colbert, Lauderdale, and Franklin counties. The agency provides a number of intake and referral, early intervention, case management and residential services for its clients. It operates 40 vehicles that include cars, vans and buses, to aid with transportation needs of its clients.

ARC of the Shoals: The ARC of the Shoals serves clients of all ages with developmental disabilities in Colbert and Lauderdale Counties. The ARC of the Shoals operates adult training, supportive work, residential services and recreational programs that enhance the health, safety, economic self-sufficiency, independence of individuals with developmental disabilities. The ARC of the Shoals operates 27 vehicles of various types, including cars, vans, and buses to serve the needs of its clients. In addition, the ARC of the Shoals contracts with NACOLG Transit to provide transportation to and from its facility at Hope Haven School for its clients.

ARC of Marion and Winston Counties: The ARC of the Marion and Winston Counties serves clients of all ages with developmental disabilities in Marion and Winston Counties.

ARC of Franklin County: The ARC of Franklin County serves clients of all ages with developmental disabilities in Franklin County.

Riverbend Center for Mental Health: Riverbend Center for Mental Health offers mental health treatment services in Colbert, Lauderdale and Franklin counties. The Riverbend Center contracts with NACOLG Transit to provide transportation in Colbert and Lauderdale counties. Riverbend contracts with First Service in the months of June and July while school is out to provide transportation to the center for out of school children. The agency also provides transportation with 17 agency vehicles, both vans and cars.

Department of Human Resources Job Access Reverse Commute Program (JARC): The State of Alabama's Department of Human Resources (DHR) provides matching funds for transport of low-income participants of the DHR JOBS program to and from work and work-related activities. Funds for JARC transportation are

available in all five of the counties of the region, however, the service is provided through private cab service, which is only available in Colbert and Lauderdale Counties through Quad Cities Taxi. The taxi service is available to meet large demand for ridership at off-peak hours, day and night. The JARC clients do not pay for transportation under this program. Instead, the cab companies are paid under contract with NACOLG Transit, with DHR matching funds administered by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

The Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center: Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center has been a recipient of Section 5310 funds for its residential treatment programs for disabled individuals. Headquartered in Jasper, in Walker County, the agency operates residential facilities in Marion County and provides transportation services in the region.

Alabama Kidney Foundation: The Alabama Kidney Foundation is a non-profit providing transportation to and from dialysis treatment for patients across the state. The agency operates primarily through arrangements for reimbursement of private vehicles operated by individuals and family members.

Kid One Transport: Kid one Transport is a non-profit provider of transportation for children and expectant mothers who have transportation challenges. The service provides transportation for those lacking alternatives to travel for various medical and dental appointments. The service is funded primarily through donations and operates in 43 of Alabama's 67 counties including Marion and Winston counties. Kid One owns and operates a fleet of 21 vehicles that operate through advanced scheduling at least 3 days in advance and up to 30 days ahead of the appointment. Service is available on weekdays during times of day when healthcare providers are open for business.

Quad Cities Taxi: Quad Cities Taxi operates private taxi service in the Shoals Area (Colbert and Lauderdale counties). Service is scheduled on demand, and same-day service is available. Rates are typically higher than those of public transportation providers. Quad Cities also contracts with NACOLG Transit to provide JARC transportation services to DHR clients.

Anchor Tours: Anchor Tours is a charter bus service providing transportation services that is located in Colbert County and serves north Alabama and middle Tennessee.

Starship Coach: Starship Coach is a charter bus service providing transportation services that is located in Colbert County and serves north Alabama.

EccoRide: EccoRide is a contract transportation provider with an office in Lauderdale County that operates school bus transportation on a contract basis.

	Public Transportation	Human Service Agencies	Taxi Service	Charter Bus Service
Eligibility	All	Age, income, and disability based	All	All
Geographic Coverage	All	Limited	Limited	All
Reservation Requirement	Advance day before	Advance, some same-day	Same day or advance	Advance
Time of Operations	Weekdays, 7-5	Mostly weekdays, 7-5	All hours	All hours
Allowed Trip Purpose	Any	Agency programs	Any	Chartered transportation
Cost	Lowest	Lowest	Low	High
Service Challenges and Gaps	Availability of buses, drivers, hours and days of operations	Limited purpose, availability of buses, drivers, hours and days of operations	Availability of vehicles, drivers, geographic coverage area	Cost

7. Current Coordination Efforts in the NACOLG Region

Public, private, and non-profit providers transportation services are responsible for a large number of passenger trips provided on behalf of those with mobility challenges. For those without access to personal vehicles or with challenges for operating a personal vehicle, these options allow access and mobility that is essential for their participation in the community and economy. A number of agencies and organizations are engaged in these activities, and the coordinated plan provides an overview and assessment of these activities in order to facilitate more efficient and effective operations.

Coordination in transportation takes many forms, but generally can be summarized as cooperation, shared-use, and consolidation of services among various providers. Cooperation takes place in the process of sharing information about unmet needs, barriers, and existing transportation options. Shared use relies upon the joint utilization of vehicles by multiple agencies through various arrangements. Consolidation is the merger of transportation services into a single organization. In northwest Alabama, cooperation is accomplished through formal and informal communications. Shared use is facilitated by making vehicles available to be used for transportation for human service agencies that have unmet needs. Consolidation has partially taken place by combining five counties' public transportation under the administration of one agencies; little redundancy remains outside of this as a target for consolidation.

The region's public transit provider for all five counties is the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG), which operates NACOLG Transit and is central to the region's coordination efforts. NACOLG sponsors a public transit stakeholder group that provides input into the operation of its public transit services and a forum for agency coordination. NACOLG Transit participates on advisory councils for the Florence Housing Authority, the Lauderdale County Children's Policy Council, the Colbert County Cooperative Extension Service, the Lauderdale County Cooperative Extension Service, the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Rural Planning Organization. In this manner, NACOLG Transit participates in coordinating efforts throughout the region and facilitates cooperation and the sharing of information among agencies with transportation needs. In addition, NACOLG Transit administers the Job Access Reverse Commute program under Section 5316 of SAFETEA-LU, which is nearing exhaustion and will soon be replaced with MAP-21 provisions. This service is administered by NACOLG, matched by the State Department of Human Resources, and service is provided by a local cab company in Colbert and Lauderdale counties.

A second means of coordination takes place through shared use of vehicles. One method of shared use is through purchase of service contracts between NACOLG Transit and public and private social service organizations. This form of shared use provides a means for meeting the transportation needs of agencies with otherwise unmet transportation needs. Another method of shared use is the utilization of vehicles during off-peak hours by qualified human service organizations using volunteer drivers. In this manner, vehicles that would otherwise sit idle while not in use for public transportation may be utilized by qualified human service agencies to meet otherwise unmet transportation needs. This option is currently utilized by several senior citizens' centers in the region; however, other opportunities may exist for this form of shared use.

As previously mentioned, consolidation is a means of coordinating transportation where one or more agencies perform redundant tasks or provide overlapping service. Public transportation is consolidated in all five counties as part of NACOLG Transit. Outside of this, the region's rurality has translated into a general lack of transportation options. As such, there is little redundancy or overlapping service to necessitate consolidation.

Several agencies have received funds through transportation grants requiring coordination under Section 5310, 5316, and 5317. The Town of Double Springs has purchased a van for use at its senior citizens center. The ARC of the Shoals has received grants for vehicles to serve its disabled clients. NACOLG Transit has operated the Section 5316 program and has been granted funds for expanding service under Section 5317, both of which previously coordination under SAFETEA-LU. Despite the lack of express requirements for coordination under MAP-21, NACOLG Transit acts as the public transit provider and will continue to participate in coordination efforts for all of its public transit activities.

8. Barriers to Coordination

Despite some successes in coordination, there are still significant obstacles to improving coordination in northwest Alabama. One of the most significant obstacles to coordination is a **general lack of understanding of the nature and availability of existing transportation services**. A second highly significant obstacle is a **lack of funding, particularly matching funds, for expansion of services** into areas of unmet need, such as night and weekend service and expanded rural transportation services. Together, these form a mutually reinforcing 'trap' in which additional demand generated from better marketing strategies and enhanced public awareness creates stress in the existing system because of a lack of resources to accommodate new demand. Greater trip denials puts the system at risk from a customer service perspective, due to the increasingly negative views of a knowledgeable and underserved public, and in terms of performance metrics used to evaluate public transit systems (trip denials, etc.). In such a situation, however, coordination takes on a greater significance as a means of satisfying unmet transportation needs and improving the efficiency of publicly funded vehicle usage.

Other specific coordination barriers were noted as well and include:

- **Regulatory restrictions and client needs**: Many agencies felt that their specific clientele required specialized transportation due to specialized needs and circumstances that make ride sharing a challenge. Likewise, many agencies may perceive funding restrictions on publicly funded vehicles as a barrier to their shared use.

- **Concern over insurance, accounting, and billing**: Agencies expressed concerns about insurance, accounting, and billing issues imposed by funding sources as a barrier to coordination. Many agencies do not fully break down their actual costs and therefore are uncertain what the actual cost of their transportation service is and they are therefore unsure of the cost savings that might be attained through coordination. In addition, where costs are broken down through methods such as cost allocation, agencies are uncertain as to the rules governing shared use in situations where they are reimbursed for a portion of certain expenditures. For example, where volunteer drivers are utilized or where a partnering agency supplies fuel for a vehicle.

- **Interest in protecting existing resources**: Although not expressed outright, there is likely to be concern among agencies that their resources, funded through matching programs, are devalued through coordination. Even with federal participation, agencies invest scarce resources into capital and operations and expect to be able to guard those resources or receive just compensation, often impossible to calculate, for their use.

- **Staff at smaller agencies can be heavily burdened by coordination efforts**: Many smaller agencies with primary and secondary transportation functions are

inadequately staffed to develop the technical expertise and to fund the administrative staffing requirements that coordination entails. This is true of both public transportation agencies as well as human service organizations with a secondary transportation role. Agency staff do not consistently know how to go about coordination and, while they recognize problems and potential benefits of coordination, they are uncertain how to get started and often lack the time to commit to coordination.

- **Lack of transportation alternatives**: Across the region, there is a lack of alternatives for individuals and agencies to acquire transportation services. NACOLG Transit operates in each of the five-county area but has significant barriers to service. First, hours of availability are limited, and night and weekend service is unavailable because of driver, dispatcher, and manager shortages. Driver recruitment is problematical due to the irregular, largely part-time schedule. Meanwhile, funding shortfalls prevent additional shifts, which require additional dispatcher and management responsibilities. Additionally, demand is inconsistent in rural areas and in periods outside of regular hours, therefore the allocation of resources to meet demand is difficult to plan and execute. Private transportation alternatives are also severely lacking, with only one cab service operating in the region and that one primarily serving the Shoals Area (Colbert and Lauderdale counties). Limited number of cabs, pricing, and consistency of service have been cited as barriers among private transportation providers.

- **Medical reimbursements are limited and often difficult to navigate**: Agencies that accept reimbursement from Medicaid are growing more scare. Medicaid is in constant state of flux with regard to personnel, and new administrative mechanisms are being planned at implemented by the state, including Regional Care Organizations. These arrangements create difficulty administering Medicaid reimbursements among transportation providers.

- **Lack of participation among all agencies**: Not every agency that provides transportation participates in the coordinated planning process. Although extensive outreach is part of the coordinated plan, some agencies are non-responsive. In addition, agencies with headquarters outside of the region (e.g. adjacent counties or centrally located in Birmingham or Montgomery) are difficult to reach in the coordination process. Funding requests from these agencies are often reviewed at the county of their headquarters without respect to the footprint of agency operations.

For all five counties of the region, the barriers to coordination are overlapping and reinforcing. Funding restrictions limit service expansion. Real or perceived restrictions on vehicle use, along with protectionism, limits coordination. Meanwhile, high ratios of demand to capacity limit perceived ability to advertise and market services, and an inability or lack of interest in mixing client populations in vehicles has prevented additional coordination efforts. Overcoming such barriers requires leadership, dedication, technical and administrative expertise, and staffing levels that support

efforts to find solutions, answers, and resources.

9. Unmet Needs and Service Gaps

With this information in mind, this plan has identified a number of areas with unmet needs and service gaps in the five-county northwest Alabama region. While unmet needs may be specific to particular target populations, the unmet needs reported here are aggregated across the entire region and represent a cross-section of the unmet needs identified by each target population from among elderly, disabled, and low-income populations for the five-counties included in this coordinated plan.

- **Demand responsive public transportation is limited to the hours between 7 o'clock AM and 5 o'clock PM on Monday through Friday and between 12 o'clock PM and 5 o'clock PM on Sunday and is closed on most major holidays.**

- **Demand responsive public transportation is available throughout the region, however, it is not always affordable, or rides may not be available in rural areas when demand is high.**

- **Private transportation from taxi service is not available throughout the entire region. Accessibility and affordability are issues with private transportation means.**

- **The physical infrastructure of the region does not support the needs of target populations, especially for those that might be capable of using alternative transportation such as walking or cycling and for those with special needs such as disabled populations that might require crosswalks or frequently placed benches.**

- **Demand for public transportation is increasing and many programs are oversubscribed, i.e. demand is destined to outstrip supply forcing decisions about which areas will remain underserved.**

- **Travel between communities is challenging, especially for older adults and individuals with disabilities and/or limited incomes. Apart from the communities of the Shoals Area, transportation between cities of the region and to areas outside of the region are severely limited.**

- **Although there are several human service organizations in the region, many are not aware of the transportation opportunities that are available to their clients through public transportation or specialized grants.**

- **Human service organizations are reluctant to share trips and assets for coordinated transportation, viewing their clientele as requiring**

specialized transportation.

- **Medical facilities are struggling and in many cases are consolidating, forcing clients to travel farther for care and to face increased transportation challenges.**

- **Advanced scheduling requirements and late cancellation policies are a challenge for many customers with difficulty understanding the rules and policies of various agencies and with unpredictable transportation needs, which are not always able to be scheduled in advance.**

10. Strategies to Address Service Gaps and Unmet Needs

This coordinated plan builds upon the analysis and data identified above to determine appropriate opportunities to meet the unmet needs identified among the target populations of low-income, elderly, and disabled populations in the region. The collection of strategies identified offers the greatest opportunity to meet the unmet needs of these groups, drawing heavily from input and suggestions offered throughout the planning process, from observations of other coordination activities, from data and analysis drawn from surveys and operational analyses, and from observations of plan participants. A list of barriers and unmet needs was analyzed to provide a list of strategies, which were then prioritized based on criteria associated with implementation. Criteria included lead agency identification, estimated cost and potential funding sources, and likely implementation timeline. Strategies were then prioritized as high, medium, or low priorities based on these criteria.

The following pages describes the key criteria and prioritization of each strategy:

Mobility Manager –Information, Outreach, Trip Planning, and Operational Support

A Mobility Manager can be an individual, a group of individuals or an organization that provides mobility management functions for consumers (or agencies that assist with or help meet consumers' mobility needs) and/or for community transportation providers. For example, a Mobility Manager might be responsible for developing, maintaining, and disseminating a centralized directory of community transportation resources. The Mobility Manager who takes on such a function might also staff a help line, much like a "local travel agent" and perhaps provide trip-planning and/or ombudsman/evaluation services. A Mobility Manager could also become responsible for providing ride-matching functions or other services more commonly associated with ridesharing. On the supply side, a Mobility Manager might help coordinate support functions for community transportation services, perhaps eventually taking on the call center function for multiple community transportation providers and/or becoming the broker of a coordinated system. As illustrated above, a Mobility Manager can take on a variety of different functions that are best suited for the area and that range from very simple to very complex functions. A Mobility Manager might also be the driving force behind coordination planning efforts, including organizing or chairing a coordination council for a specific area. Mobility Managers are typically found at the county or regional level; however, there is nothing to preclude Mobility Managers from serving non-profit organizations. For reference, coordination and mobility strategies included in this report that may be supported or led by a Mobility Manager are denoted with a Mobility Manager icon (MM). Individuals or organizations hired to provide mobility management functions often require training and ongoing technical support. Therefore, it behooves a responsible organization such as a an MPO, Regional Planning Commission, or a transit agency to make sure that Mobility Managers in their region are properly trained and supported.

Expected Benefits/Needs Address	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
• Ensures staffing resources dedicated to coordination and implementation of plan strategies • Creates a community resource to promote existing programs and services • Provides information on mobility challenges and raises awareness • Implements programs that lead to efficiency and effectiveness	• Difficult to find skill set required • Must be self-starter with organizational and institutional support • Requires training and support • Requires matching funds from sponsoring agency

Costs

The annual salary cost of a (single) Mobility Manager might range between $30,000 and $45,000, plus benefits for a full-time Mobility Manager. The cost to train and support Mobility Managers would be in addition to the salary cost each year and might best be accomplished through ALDOT and National RTAP workshops and conferences.

Potential Funding Sources

The cost of funding a Mobility Manager is allowed under Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities and Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants under the presumption that the Mobility Manager provides functions pertinent to each program. In each case, this is a capital cost, and hence, federal funds from these programs are available at an 80/20 match.

2020 Update: The position of Mobility Manager has been filled. Barriers to funding the position continue

to b part of the difficulty, as was continued uncertainty about the management of Alabama Medicaid, which saw significant efforts to restructure the program under a managed care model.

Public Transportation Service Expansion- Hours and Days of Availability

Public transportation provides the majority of reported trips each day that are not provided by personal vehicles, according to the information obtained for this study. Although NACOLG Transit covers all areas of Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Marion, and Winston Counties, there are geographic areas that remain underserved due to the cost of providing services. In outlying areas, service is unaffordable because of low trip counts, which means that buses are staged farther away and cost more to dispatch to serve these riders. Even within the cities of the region that are the center of demand responsive service (the cities of the Shoals Area, Russellville, Hamilton, and Haleyville), the system faces significant strains due to driver and vehicle shortages. In addition, night and weekend service is not available, nor is service available on most major holidays. Expanded hours and days of operations will require additional administrative staff to serve as supervisors and dispatchers outside of current working hours. This ensures adequate oversight of operations, accident response, and driver support are provided in accordance with good operating procedure. Service expansion will require significant recruitment of new drivers, new vehicle purchases, and effective marketing to inform the public and potential sources of new revenue about the value of the service.

Expected Benefits/Needs Address	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
• Expanded geographic access to affordable transportation • Expanded hours and days of operations • Reduction in cost per trip for rural transportation activities • Safer, more efficient administration with new off-peak staff hours	• Funding for expanded hours, days, new vehicles, and drivers • Driver recruitment • Rural demand to cost ratio

Costs

Costs for expansion are undetermined but are likely to be higher than the current cost per trip in public transportation because of lower demand for ridership in rural areas and outside of current hours and days of operations.

Potential Funding Sources

Funds are available through Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities for specialized transportation and Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants for public transportation. Sources of matching funds are limited.

2020 Update: Small gains were made in expanding transit services. NACOLG Transit placed vehicles into service in Red Bay and Hackleburg in cooperation with the local governments, which provided drivers for the service at these locations. NACOLG Transit initiated service to Huntsville and Birmingham primarily for non-emergency medical transportation, but also open to the general public.

Expand/ Enhance Vehicle Purchase Program Through Increased Coordination and Available Funding Sources	
Specialized transportation should continue to be available to agencies and human service organizations through various means including contracts with existing public transportation providers and shared use arrangements. However, where agencies have needs that cannot be met under the service and operations of existing providers, vehicles should be purchased to serve demand for transportation among the clients of human service organizations. Where possible, these vehicles should be subject to coordination requirements such as shared use agreements.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Expanded transportation for human service agencies • Increased revenue opportunities for existing public transportation providers • Establishment of funding partnerships among agencies	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Cost sharing the purchase and operations costs of vehicles • Coordinating activities to support existing transportation resources • Enforcing shared use provisions
Costs Costs are determined by state contract price and available options specified by the successful applicant. A typical small van costs approximately $60,000.	
Potential Funding Sources Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities for specialized transportation and Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants may be used to support capital purchases at 80/20 cost share.	
2020 Update: Several agencies applied for and were approved to receive capital funds for the purchase of vehicles to operate specialized transportation services. NACOLG has continued to facilitate applications under Section 5310, reviewing funding requests and certifying their inclusion in this coordinated plan.	

Develop a Central Resource Directory

Centralized resource directory programs are designed to assemble information about available public, nonprofit, and private-sector transportation resources in a single location, source, or directory. In many communities, there are services for persons with low incomes, seniors, and persons with disabilities, but it is up to the consumer to find out hours and days of operation, availability, eligibility, and how to access such services. In a centralized resource directory, information regarding all available providers is assembled in a single place. The directory can be in written, published form or in a searchable online database format. Centralized directories serve as a tremendous resource for consumers, human service staff and case workers, and advocates. Centralized resource directories are helpful to consumers, human service agency staff, and advocates who need to find and/or arrange transportation for members of the target populations (persons with low income, older adults, and persons with disabilities). Outreach efforts conducted as part of this study indicate that consumers have indicated there is no centralized source to find information on the transportation services that are available in the region. Creation and publication of a centralized directory of transportation services would address this problem. Historically, such directories were published in book form. Creation of a centralized resource directory is often a first step in an incremental strategy to implement greater coordination in the future.

Expected Benefits/Needs Address	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
• Directories provide a "one-stop" resource for those seeking information • Provide easy contact and eligibility information for consumers and advocates to identify transportation resources • Non-threatening strategy that may lead to greater coordination	• Requires comprehensive data • Requires frequent update and maintenance to remain accurate • Must be publicized to consumers • Consumer must still meet eligibility or participation rules

Costs

Cost for developing a basic directory might be upwards of $5,000. It would likely be a duty of a Mobility Manager or done under contract due to the additional workload requirements of collecting and compiling the data. Printing costs and maintaining the information would be in addition to the initial cost of compiling information into a guide. A web-based format would require additional support.

Potential Funding Sources

Central resource directories that facilitate enhanced access to services by the public, including older adults, persons with low incomes, and persons with disabilities, are expressly permitted Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities funding as a mobility management strategy. Additionally, the program circular specifically lists the development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers as an eligible funding activity. Costs might be shared among agencies with similar need for a central directory.

2020 Update: The University of North Alabama and 211 are designing an app that would be used to help people navigate resources and services using a cell phone.

Job Access Revere Commute Expansion	
This strategy focuses on linking people, especially those with low income, with job opportunities. These strategies include establishing shuttle services that link transit hubs to employment sites/areas; and ridesharing and vanpool services, along with supporting strategies such as guaranteed ride home services and child transportation services. These strategies can also include extended hours and days of service to permit second- and third-shift employment.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Opens job opportunities to individuals without personal transportation • Employee cost-sharing may reduce cost	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Requires funding • Requires research and analysis of locations for vanpools and ride-sharing departure/destination • May require employer partnership for entering private property
Costs Operating costs for shuttle services based on transit or taxi service rates. Vanpool and ridesharing options may be less expensive.	
Potential Funding Sources Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula funding may be available to support job access activities as general public transportation or separately as specialized job access programs.	
2020 Update: NACOLG Transit has worked to expand JARC services in rural areas through shared use agreements with agencies. To date, DHR is the only agency to supply direct match for JARC services. JARC service agreements are carried out primarily through cab company contracts, which have been the subject of procurement inquiries. The operation of DHR service under the JARC contract has been questioned by the State.	

Taxi Service Expansion

Taxi service is currently unavailable in many locations in the region. Taxis serve an important role in providing transportation for same-day trips and during hours and days when public transportation is unavailable. This is especially true for job access activities, which may require travel at times when no other options are available. An expanded taxi service would also allow expanded JARC service, provided matching funds were available.

Expected Benefits/Needs Address	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
• Expanded transportation during hours when public transportation is unavailable • Expanded transportation in areas where public transportation is too expensive • Same day scheduling in areas without same day transportation services • Expanded JARC program opportunities • Greater access to work for individuals without access to private transportation	• Requires private sector commitment • May require business incentives from local governments • Lack of demand in rural areas, real or perceived • Lack of available drivers

Costs

Cost estimate would require a detailed business plan that would likely include an analysis of demand, capital and operating start-up costs, and revenues.

Potential Funding Sources

Private capital investment, small business support from incentives. Section 5307 and Section 5311 support available for job access activities.

2020 Update: Presently, there is only a single cab service in the region serving Colbert and Lauderdale Counties. This cab service has inquired about providing service in Franklin County but has not registered with the Public Service Commission.

Expand Ticket System	
Provide fare vouchers (tickets) to older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low incomes to increase trip flexibility and coverage; may also be used to support employment. Encourages use of lower-cost travel modes and supports expansion of accessible public transportation.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Increase access using a controlled medium of exchange with no cash value	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Public transportation will not "police" use of tickets for particular purposes • Requires advanced scheduling by individuals
Costs Current fare costs of public transportation.	
Potential Funding Sources Human Service Agencies, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, charitable foundations	
2020 Update: NACOLG Transit continues to experience an increase in ticket sales. NACOLG is exploring electronic fare media as a means of continuing service expansion for those without access to cash for fare media (tickets).	

Coordinate Transportation for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (particularly Medicaid's NET Voucher Program) within the Region	
Coordinate medical trips through central staffing at transportation providers, agencies paying for transportation (especially Medicaid) and with medical centers. Coordinate patient times with transportation times and coordinate payments between agencies through dedicated staff at each agency.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Expedited process for requesting rides • Expedited payment process • Increased opportunity for partnership	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Funding for positions, particularly matching share • Staff turnover • Need to negotiate reimbursements based on established fares and policies • Requires a relationship with Medicaid and with medical office staff
Costs This type of coordination would require at least part-time salary commitment or could be funded as part of a full-time salary in association with a Mobility Manager's position.	
Potential Funding Sources Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities for specialized transportation and Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants may be used to support mobility management and transportation coordination. Matching funds may be shared among agencies.	
2020 Update: Medical trip coordination has not been accomplished due to staffing restriction and inadequate agency contacts at medical offices and Medicaid.	

Recruit Community and Faith-Based Organizations to Provide Transportation in Volunteer Driver Program	
Volunteer driver pools could be used to expand services to medical and shopping locations and employment sites through ridesharing or vanpool services, or support services such as a guaranteed ride home program or child care transportation.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Expanded access to transportation • Volunteer aid in coordination	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Funding for recruitment • Locating and adequately training volunteers
Costs Volunteer time would be donated, but staff resources would be needed to recruit, train, and monitor volunteer.	
Potential Funding Sources Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants may be used to support mobility management and transportation coordination.	
2020 Update: NACOLG Transit has expanded the use of volunteer drivers in Red Bay and Hackleburg as a means of increasing rural service. Franklin County DHR has inquired about the use of volunteers in their programs as drivers in underserved areas or as potential new regular, paid drivers in expanded service areas.	

Provide/ Participate in Networking Opportunities among Transportation Providers and Human Service Agencies	
Attend events and meetings of stakeholder groups as a means to expand coordination through information exchange and networking.	
Expected Benefits/Needs Address • Shared knowledge of transportation needs and alternatives • Sharing of resources for meeting needs • Opportunity for partnerships • Raise awareness among key groups for support	Potential Obstacles and Challenges • Staff resource requirements in addition to daily operations • Requires relationship building and commitment to mutual support
Costs Several hours of existing staff time should be redirected toward participation in agency roundtables and meetings and conference and planning activities. Might also be included in Mobility Manager's duties.	
Potential Funding Sources Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Grants and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants may be used to support mobility management and transportation coordination.	
2020 Update: NACOLG Transit has continued to participate in various steering committees and social service networking opportunities as a means of promotions, marketing, contract development, and community education about NACOLG Transit services and other coordination activities.	

PART 2:
Planning Data and Analysis For Each County of the Coordinated Plan

1. Lauderdale County

Lauderdale County was established in 1818, the year before Alabama became a state. The county is named for Colonel James Lauderdale who served under General Andrew Jackson. It is part of the Florence-Muscle Shoals Metropolitan Area. The county seat/largest city is Florence. There are a total of seven incorporated cities and towns in Lauderdale County, all of which lie entirely within the county.

Lauderdale County is located in Northwest Alabama, along the Tennessee River. At the county's western border is the State of Mississippi. At the county's northern border is the State of Tennessee. To the south and west of Lauderdale County are the Alabama counties of Colbert, Lawrence, and Limestone. The land area is 720 square miles. The population density in Lauderdale County is 129 people per square mile.

Lauderdale County is bisected by US Highway 72 Alternate and U.S Highway 43. The state capital of Tennessee, Nashville, is located 2 hours to the north. Alabama's capital, Montgomery, is 3 hours southwest. Lauderdale County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 2 hours southwest via state Interstate 65 and Huntsville, which is an hour east via U.S. Highway 72.

Population and Projected Growth

In 2015, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Lauderdale County was 92,737. Lauderdale County ranks as the 15th most populous county in Alabama.

The median age in Lauderdale County is 41. The major population area of Lauderdale County is in the city of Florence as forty-three percent of the counties' population resides within the city. Fifty-three percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 1: Lauderdale County Transit Dependent Populations 2015 ACS Data

Demographics	Lauderdale County	Alabama
Total Population	92,737	4,830,620
Adults, 65+	16,510 (17.8%)	14.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	4,949 (5.4%)	5.9%
Persons in Poverty	16,232 (17.9%)	18.8%
Households without Vehicles	2,873 (7.4%)	6.5%

Adults Aged 65 and Older

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), about 10% of

Americans over the age of 65 and 20% those over 85 of do not drive. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 16,510 individuals over the age of 65 in Lauderdale County.

Individuals with Disabilities
The 2015 American Community Survey found 4,949 persons in Lauderdale County with "independent living difficulty."

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living.

SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 18,663 in Lauderdale County.

Persons and Families in Poverty
Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Lauderdale County, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 17.9% of the population, or 16,232 persons, live in poverty.

Households without Vehicles
The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 7.4% of households in Lauderdale County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of households, a more troubling percentage arises when you factor in how many households have fewer vehicles than people. Of the 38,612 households in Lauderdale County, 13,671 or 35.4% have fewer vehicles available than people living within.

2. Colbert County

Colbert County was formed in 1867 after it split from Franklin County due to political issues stemming from the American Civil War. It was formally established as a county in 1870. The County is named in honor of brothers Levi & George Colbert, Chickasaw Indian Chiefs. It is part of the Florence-Muscle Shoals AL Metropolitan Area. The county seat is Tuscumbia, and the largest city is Muscle Shoals. There are a total of six incorporated cities and towns in Colbert County, all of which lie entirely within the county.

Colbert County is located in Northwest Alabama, along the Tennessee River. At the county's western border is the State of Mississippi. To the north, south and east of Colbert County are the Alabama counties of Lauderdale, Franklin, and Lawrence. The land area is 623 square miles. The population density in Colbert County is 87 people per square mile.

Colbert County is bisected by U.S. Highway 72 and U.S Highway 43. The state capital of Tennessee, Nashville, is located 2 hours to the north. Alabama's capital,

Montgomery, Alabama is 3 hours southeast. Colbert County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 2 hours southeast via state Interstate 65 and to Decatur and Huntsville, 30 minutes and 1 hour to the east along Highway 20.

Population and Projected Growth

According to the 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, the population of Colbert County was 54,444. Colbert County ranks as the 25th most populous county in Alabama. The median age in Colbert County is 42. The major population area of Colbert County is in the city of Tri-Cities area as Fifty-seven percent of the counties' population resides within the cities of Muscle Shoals, Tuscumbia and Sheffield. Thirty-seven percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 2: Colbert County Transit Dependent Populations 2015 ACS Data

Demographics	Colbert County	Alabama
Total Population	54,444	4,830,620
Adults, 65+	9,833 (18%)	14.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	4,368 (8.1%)	5.9%
Persons in Poverty	9,406(17.4%)	18.8%
Households without Vehicles	1,339 (6%)	6.5%

Adults Aged 65 and Older

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), about 10% of Americans over the age of 65 and 20% those over 85 of do not drive. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 9,406 individuals over the age of 65 in Colbert County.

Individuals with Disabilities

The 2015 American Community Survey found 4,368 persons in Colbert County with "independent living difficulty."

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living.

SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 13,341 in Colbert County.

Persons and Families in Poverty

Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Colbert County, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 17.2% of the population, or 9,406 persons, live in poverty.

Households without Vehicles

The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 6% of

households in Colbert County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of households, a more troubling percentage arises when you factor in how many households have fewer vehicles than people. Of the 22,204 households in Colbert County, 1,339 do not have access to a vehicle in their household.

3. Franklin County

Franklin County was formed in 1818. The County is named in honor of Benjamin Franklin. The county seat/largest city is Russellville. There are a total of five incorporated cities and towns in Franklin County, all of which lie entirely within the county.

Franklin County is located in Northwest Alabama. At the county's western border is the State of Mississippi. To the north, south and east of Franklin County are the Alabama counties of Colbert, Winston and Marion, and Lawrence. The land area is 646 square miles. The population density in Franklin County is 49 people per square mile.

Franklin County is bisected by U.S. Highway 43 and Alabama 24. The state capital of Tennessee, Nashville, is located 2 and a half hours to the north, and Alabama's capital, Montgomery, is 3 hours southeast. Franklin County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 1 and a half hours southeast via state Interstate 65.

Population and Projected Growth

In 2015, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Franklin County was 31,634. Franklin County ranks as the 37th most populous county in Alabama.

The median age in Franklin County is 38. The major population area of Franklin County is in the city of Russellville as Twenty-eight percent of the counties' population resides within the city. Fifty-six percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 3: Franklin County Transit Dependent Populations 2013 ACS Data

Demographics	Franklin County	Alabama
Total Population	31,634	4,830,620
Adults, 65+	5,051 (15.9%)	14.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	2,354 (7.5%)	5.9%
Persons in Poverty	7,020 (22.5%)	18.8%
Households without Vehicles	702 (5.9%)	6.5%

Adults Aged 65 and Over Individuals with Disabilities

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), about 10% of Americans over the age of 65 and 20% those over 85 of do not drive. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 5,051 individuals over the age of 65 in Franklin County.

Projections from the Alabama State Data center show the elderly population in Franklin

County increasing to 5,433 by 2020 which shows that transportation needs will only increase over the next 5 years.

Individuals with Disabilities
The 2015 American Community Survey found 2,354 persons in Franklin County with "independent living difficulty."

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living.

SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 7,650 in Franklin County.

Persons and Families in Poverty
Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Franklin County, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 22.2% of the population, or 7,020 persons, live in poverty.

Households without Vehicles
The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 5.8% of households in Franklin County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of households, a more troubling percentage arises when you factor in how many households have fewer vehicles than people. Of the 11,980 households in Franklin County, 702 do not have access to a vehicle in their household.

4. Marion County

Marion County was formed in 1818. The County is named in honor of General Francis Marion. The county seat/largest city is Hamilton. There are a total of ten incorporated cities and towns in Franklin County, seven of which lie entirely within the county.
Marion County is located in Northwest Alabama. At the county's western border is the State of Mississippi. To the north, south and east of Marion County are the Alabama counties of Franklin, Fayette and Lamar and Walker, and Winston. The land area is 743 square miles. The population density in Marion County is 41 people per square mile.

Marion County is bisected by Interstate 22 and U.S. Highway 43. Montgomery, Alabama is 2 and a half hours southeast. Marion County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 1 and a half hours southeast via state Interstate 22.

Population and Projected Growth
In 2013, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Marion County was 30,615. Marion County ranks as the 38th most populous county in Alabama.

The median age in Marion County is 44. The major population area of Marion County is in the city of Hamilton as Twenty-two percent of the counties' population resides within the city. Thirty-nine percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 4: Marion County Transit Dependent Populations 2013 ACS Data

Demographics	Marion County	Alabama
Total Population	30,387	4,830,620
Adults, 65+	5,963 (19.6%)	14.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	2,145 (7.21%)	5.9%
Persons in Poverty	5,960 (20.1%)	18.8%
Households without Vehicles	721 (5.7%)	6.5%

Adults Aged 65 and Over

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), about 10% of Americans over the age of 65 and 20% those over 85 of do not drive. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 5,963 individuals over the age of 65 in Marion County.

Projections from the Alabama State Data center show the elderly population in Marion County increasing to 6,728 by 2020 which shows that transportation needs will only increase over the next 5 years.

Individuals with Disabilities

The 2015 American Community Survey found 2,145 persons in Marion County with "independent living difficulty."

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living.

SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 7,383 in Marion County.

Persons and Families in Poverty

Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Marion County, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 19.6% of the population, or 5,960 persons, live in poverty.

Households without Vehicles

The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 5.6% of households in Marion County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of households, a more troubling percentage arises when you factor in how many households have fewer vehicles than people. Of the 12,714 households in Marion County, 721 do not have access to a vehicle in their household.

5. Winston County

Winston County was originally formed in 1850 under the name Hancock County. It was named after John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Eight years later it was renamed in honor of John A Winston, the recent Governor of Alabama. The county seat is Double Springs, and the largest city is Haleyville. There are a total of seven incorporated cities and towns in Winston County, five of which lie entirely within the county.

Winston County is located in Northwest Alabama. The Alabama counties of Lawrence, Cullman, Walker, Marion and Franklin make up the borders. The land area is 632 square miles. The population density in Winston County is 38 people per square mile.

Winston County is bisected by U.S. Highway 278. Montgomery, Alabama is 2 hours southeast. Winston County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 1 hour southeast via state Interstate 22.

Population and Projected Growth

In 2015, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Winston County was 24,130. Winston County ranks as the 43rd most populous county in Alabama.

The median age in Winston County is 44. The major population area of Winston County is in the city of Haleyville as seventeen percent of the counties' population resides within the city. Seventy-one percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 5: Winston County Transit Dependent Populations 2015 ACS Data

Demographics	Winston County	Alabama
Total Population	24,130	4,830,620
Adults, 65+	4,692 (19.44%)	14.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	1,983 (8.3%)	5.9%
Persons in Poverty	5,157 (21.9%)	18.8%
Households without Vehicles	633 (6.7%)	6.5%

Adults Aged 65 and Older

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), about 10% of Americans over the age of 65 and 20% those over 85 of do not drive. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 4,692 individuals over the age of 65 in Winston County. Projections from the Alabama State Data center show the elderly population in Winston County increasing to 5,532 by 2020 which shows that transportation needs will only increase over the next 5 years.

Individuals with Disabilities

The 2015 American Community Survey found 1,983 persons in Winston County with

"independent living difficulty."

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living.

SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 5,678 in Winston County.

Persons and Families in Poverty

Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Winston County, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 21.37% of the population, or 5,157 persons, live in poverty.

Households without Vehicles

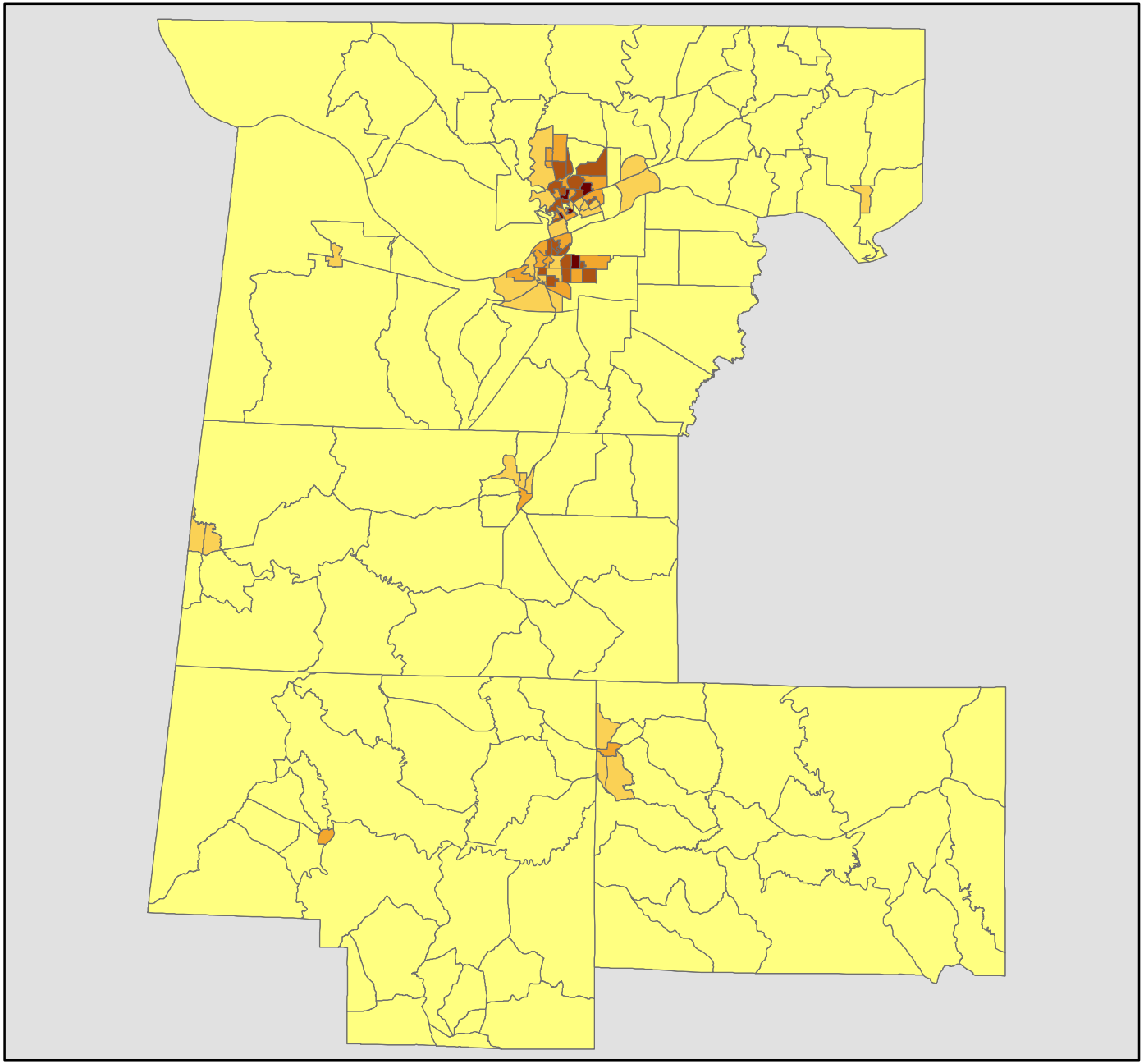
The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 6.7% of households in Winston County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of households, a more troubling percentage arises when you factor in how many households have fewer vehicles than people. Of the 9,409 households in Winston County, 633 do not have access to a vehicle in their household.

6. Common Origins and Destinations

The demographics and characteristics of northwest Alabama reveal much information about common origins and destinations. Travel demand, including demand for public transportation and human service transportation, originates primarily in more heavily populated areas and, more particularly, within areas with the greatest concentration of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. In addition, locations with greatest concentrations of impoverished individuals are more likely to generate travel demand. Less densely developed areas generate less demand for transportation services but are often the most underserved areas. Common origins are centered around concentrations of housing for low income, elderly, and disabled individuals. Common destinations are centered around areas of commercial activity and services such as social services and medical clinics. A GIS inventory of features along with origin and destination data derived from a local database of the urbanized area's public transportation services demonstrates these common origins and destinations.

2020 HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN - REGION 1

POPULATION DENSITY AGE 65 +



Pop 65+ / Sq Mile

- 1 - 50
- 51 - 150
- 151 - 300
- 301 - 500
- 501+

N
W E
S

1 in = 12 miles

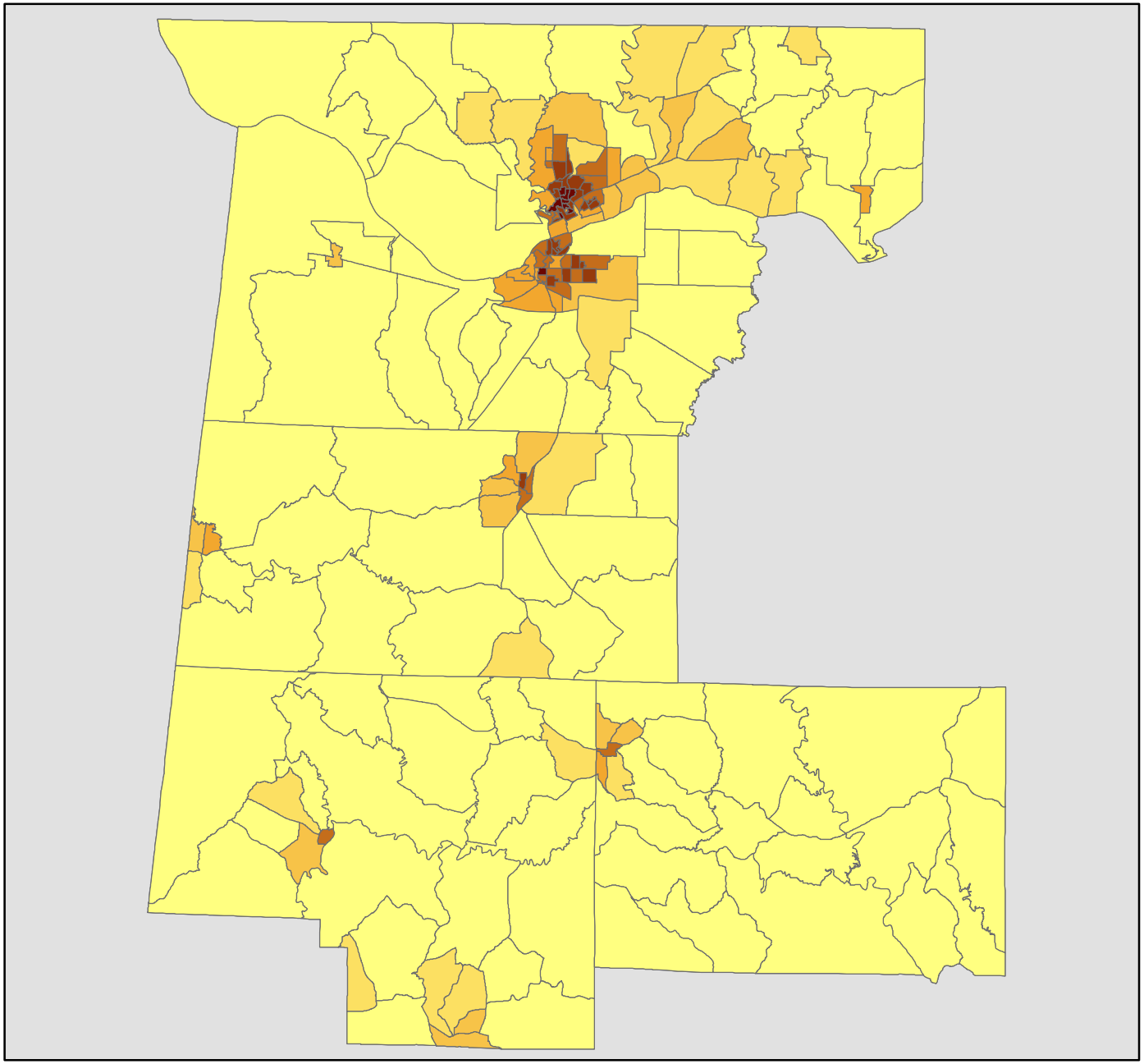
8/31/2020

This map is a graphic representation, not guarenteed to survey accuracy, intended for planning purposes only and based on the best information available as of the date shown. This map is for display purposes only.

ACS '14 - '18 5-year Estimate. 2018

2020 HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN - REGION 1

TOTAL POPULATION PER SQUARE MILE



Population Per Sq Mile

- < 100
- 101 - 200
- 201 - 400
- 401 - 800
- 801 - 1600
- 1601 - 3200
- 6400 >

N
W E
S

1 in = 12 miles

8/31/2020

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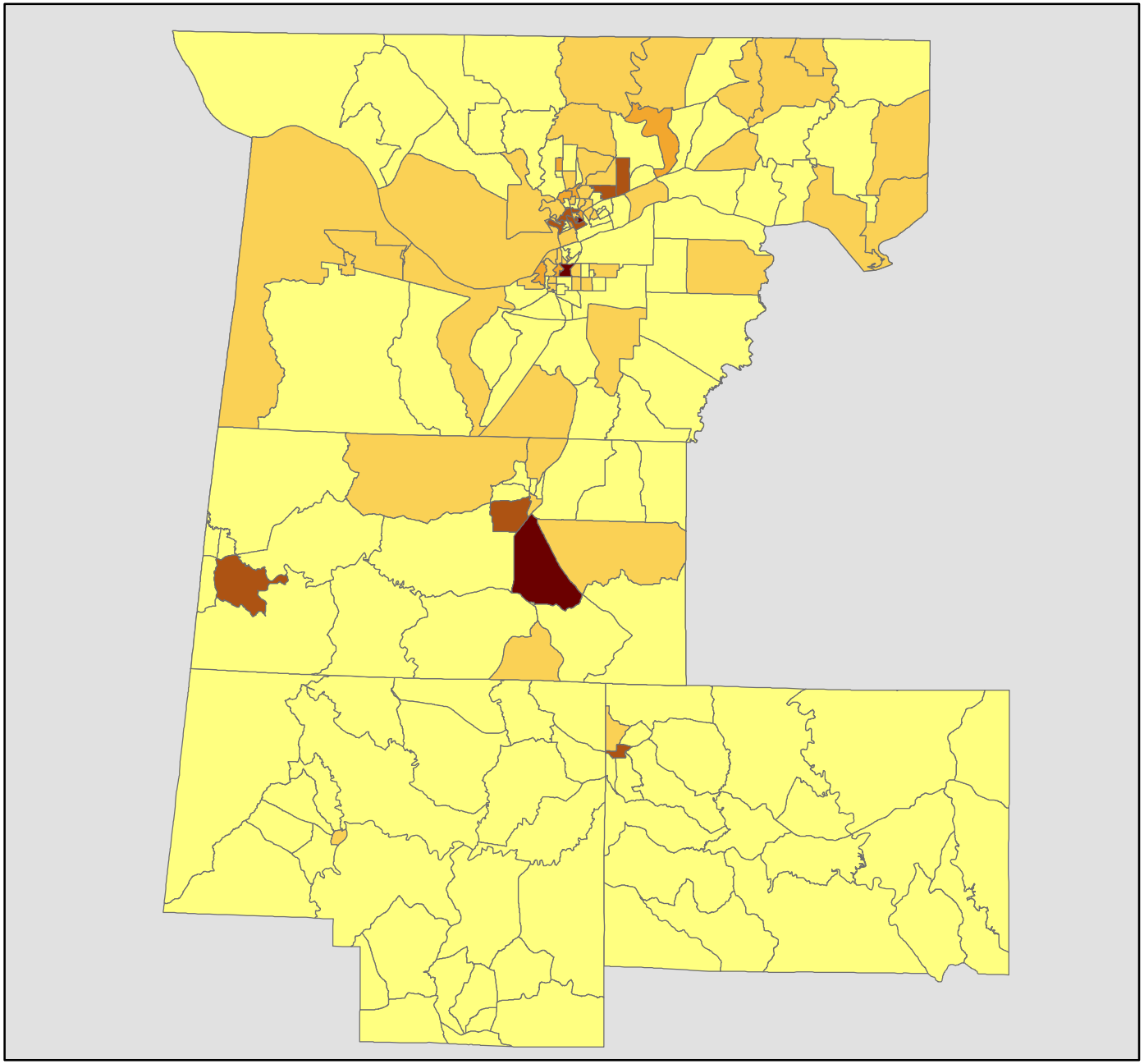
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITHOUT A VEHICLE



% of Pop with No Vehicle

- < 3%
- 3.1% - 10%
- 10.1% - 15%
- 15.1% - 30%
- 30.1% >

N
W E
S

1 in = 12 miles

8/31/2020

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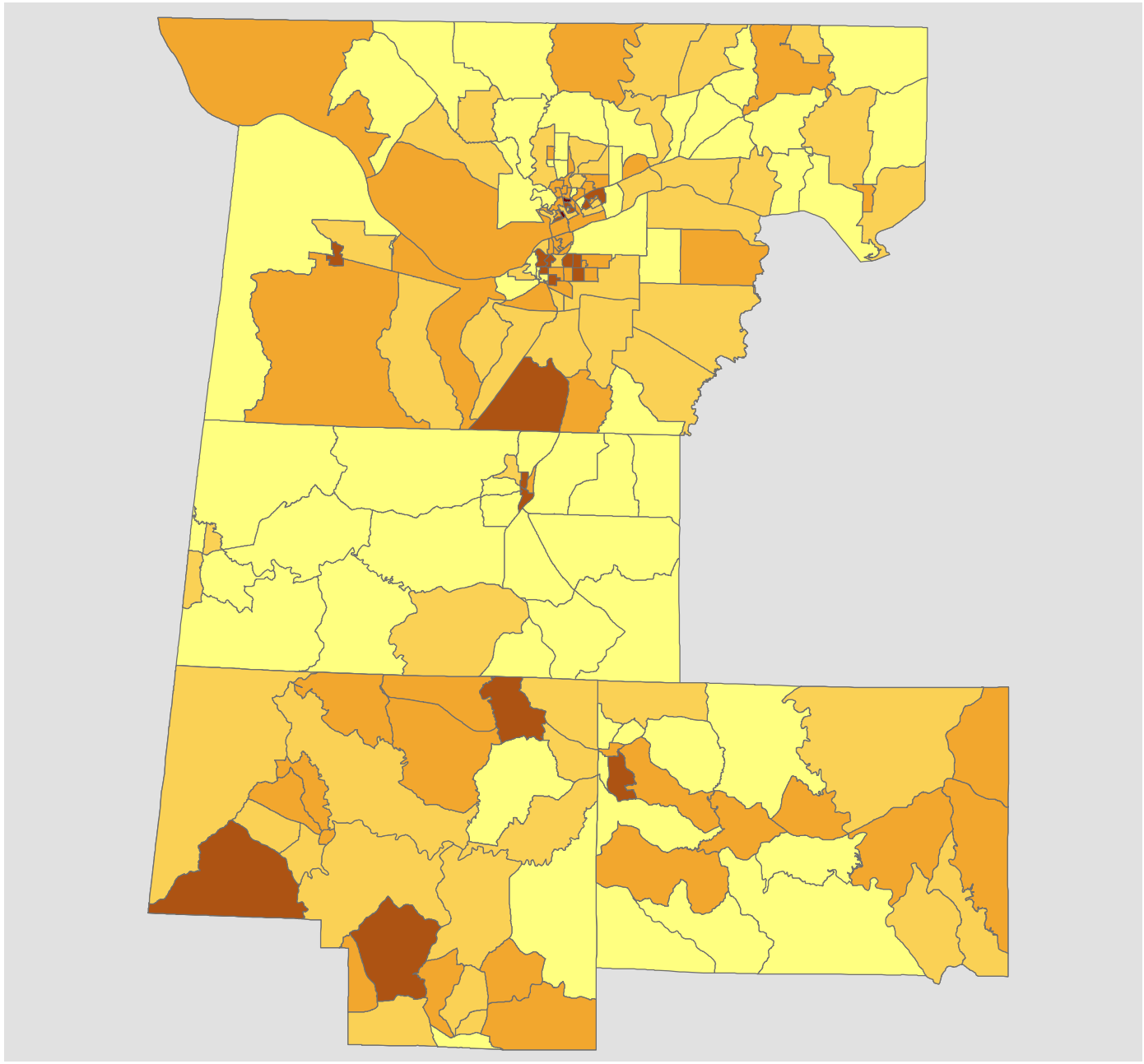
ACS '14 - '18 5-year Estimate. 2018