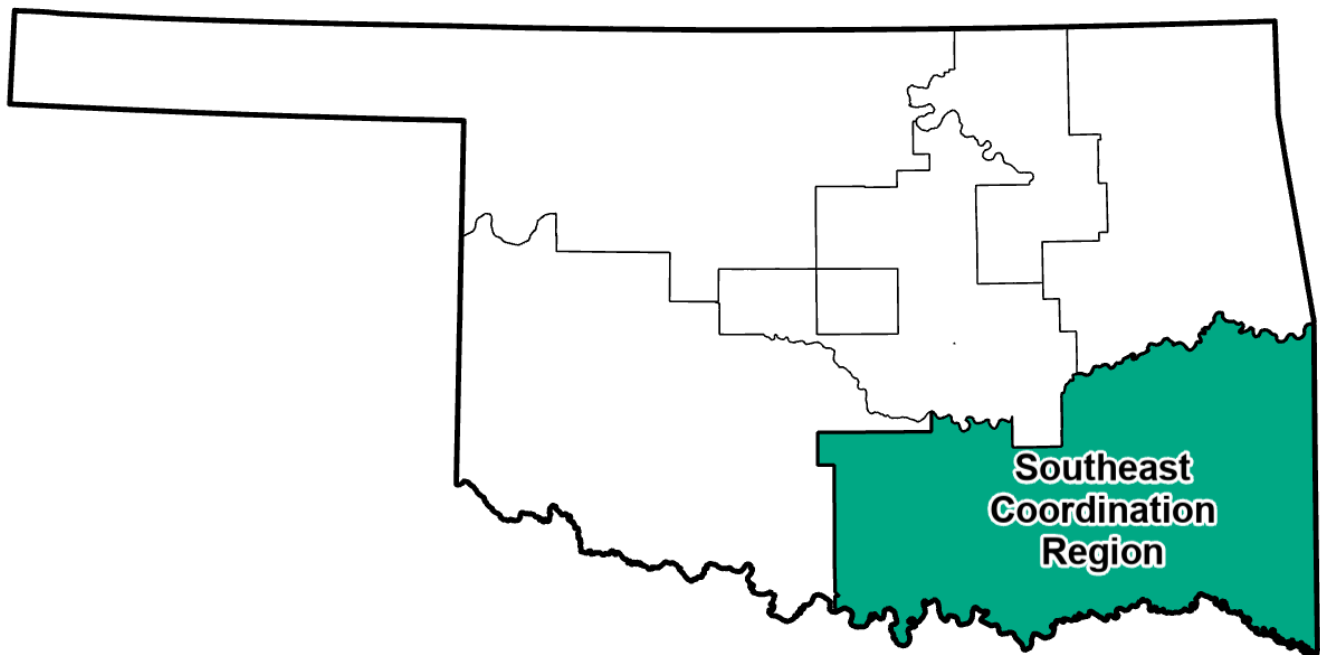


Coordinated Transportation Plan

Southeast Coordination Region

December 2023



Lead Agency: Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS)
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Frequently Used Acronyms

This Plan frequently employs acronyms which refer to specific agencies, types of agencies, legislation, and other transportation-related terms. If an acronym used is not immediately clear based on context, please reference Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequently Used Acronyms

Acronym	Acronym Meaning
AAA	Area Agency on Aging
ADA	The Americans with Disabilities Act
CAR	Call a Ride Public Transit
COG	Council of Governments
FAST	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
KATS	KI BOIS Area Transit System
KEDDO	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma
LIFT CAA	LIFT Community Action Agency (LIFT Transit)
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
ODOT	Oklahoma Department of Transportation
OKDHS	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
OKDRS	Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
OMPT	Office of Mobility and Public Transit
OSDH	Oklahoma State Department of Health
OTA	Oklahoma Transit Association
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SCORTPO	South Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SMP	State Management Plan
SODA	Southern Oklahoma Development Association
SORTS	Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Plan
UZA	Urbanized Area

Executive Summary

In Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Office of Mobility and Public Transit (ODOT OMPT) has been designated by the Governor of Oklahoma to administer the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-funded Section 5305, 5309, 5310, 5311, and 5339 programs in Oklahoma. Title 49 U.S.C. 5310, as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), requires a recipient of Section 5310 funds to certify that projects selected for funding under this program are included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan and that the plan was developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, nonprofit transportation and human service providers; and other members of the public.

This plan is the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the Southeast Region, including the following counties:

- Atoka County
- Bryan County
- Carter County
- Choctaw County
- Coal County
- Garvin County
- Haskell County
- Johnston County
- Latimer County
- LeFlore County
- Love County
- Marshall County
- McCurtain County
- Murray County
- Pittsburg County
- Pontotoc County
- Pushmataha County

FTA strongly encourages coordination and consistency between the local coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan and metropolitan or statewide transportation planning processes, as described in 23 CFR part 450 and 49 CFR part 613. According to FTA Circular 9070.1G, long-range transportation plans, the transportation improvement plan, and the coordinated plans are supposed to be developed and incorporated into each other. In 2022, ODOT OMPT identified overlap between long-range plans developed by Oklahoma MPOs and coordinated plans. In addition, coordinated plans thus far have not included substantial participation by MPOs, regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs), or councils of governments (COGs). The COG's and RTPO's have planning expertise that utilizes local knowledge and relationships from public engagement activities and have been identified as key stakeholders in the coordinated planning process.

FTA Circular 9070.1G requires that, "Projects identified in the coordinated planning process and selected for FTA funding must be incorporated into both the TIP and STIP in UZAs with populations of 50,000 or more; and incorporated into the STIP for rural areas under 50,000 in population." As such, direct participation by MPOs and RTPOs is highly encouraged in the coordinated planning process, and ODOT and this region's Working Group must coordinate closely to ensure this requirement is met.

Projects selected for funding shall be included in a coordinated plan that minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit);

- (2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- (3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- (4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

To develop the 2023 Coordinated Plan, transit providers, local governments, stakeholders, and human services organizations came together in an effort to maximize resources to better serve the region. The Coordinated Plan includes updated regional demographic data, transit capacity building strategies, as well as updated information on new and existing transportation providers serving vulnerable populations in Oklahoma.

This assessment of needs and gaps serves as the basis for the coordination strategies and opportunities for future investment identified in the Coordinated Plan that will eliminate or reduce duplicative services, fill service gaps, and otherwise provide more efficient utilization of transportation services and resources for the target populations.

Table 2 below summarizes the priorities assigned to each gap and unmet needs in the Region:

Table 2: Compiled Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation			X
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths			X
	Weekday Early Morning Service		X	
	Weekday Business Hours			X
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service	X		
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)		X	
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.			X
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility			X
	More Frequent Service	X		
More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities			X	

In addition, the following goals were identified for the Region:

- Goal 1: Streamline transportation services provided for riders 60 years of age and older.
- Goal 2: Improve service coordination between agencies.
- Goal 3: Eliminate eligibility barriers, such that more types of riders can use public transit services.
- Goal 4: Increase use of technology to enhance service provision.
- Goal 5: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers.

Each county in the regional planning area has its own distinct needs, service providers, government agencies, stakeholders, and demographic characteristics. This Coordinated Plan synthesizes those needs and identifies strategies and priorities for the local level and region wide.

Agencies and stakeholders that participated in this plan include:

Table 3: Working Group Members

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Tanya Gleghorn	Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS, Lead Agency)	Kara James	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO)
Bethany Anderson	Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS, Lead Agency)	Charla Sloan	KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS)
Misty Knoepfel	Call-A-Ride Public Transit (CAR)	Jeannie McMillin	LIFT Community Action Agency (LIFT Transit)
Angie Gilliam	Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	Steve Mills	South Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SCORTPO) / Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA)
Johnny James	Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit	Kyle Henry	SCORTPO/SODA
LaQuita Thornley	JAMM Transit	Joye Angel	SCORTPO/SODA
Erica Pogue	JAMM Transit	Teri Kaleiohi	SODA, Area on Aging (SODA AAA)
Samantha Humphreys	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO)	Todd O'Neal	SCORTPO/SODA

The FTA does not formally review or approve coordinated plans, thus the lead agency, in coordination with planning process participants, is responsible for the development, approval, and adoption/endorsement of locally coordinated plans. The planning process must include seniors, individuals with disabilities, public/private/nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public.

The Coordinated Plan was endorsed by the Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Network on December 19th, 2023. More information about the planning committee can be found in the **Southeast Region Coordinated Task Force** section of this Plan.

Introduction

The legislative passage of Oklahoma State House Bill 1365 facilitated the transfer of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Program previously administered by Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT). The bill also created the Office of Mobility and Public Transit (OMPT) and allowed for the transferring of all state and federal transit programs previously administered by ODOT's Transit Programs Division to the new OMPT. This change required ODOT to legally transfer all 5310 associated agreements, assets, financial documents and to develop a 5310 program compliant with FTA rules and regulation for FTA approval and certification to enable the use of federal funds for the 5310 program in the state.

To administer the 5310 program in compliance with FTA regulations, several program documents must be developed, reviewed, and implemented at the local, state, and federal level. These documents include a Program State Management Plan (SMP), a Subrecipient Project Application, and a Human Service Transportation Coordinated Plan. These three documents work together to outline in great detail the 5310 program rules and requirements, as well as the application format and process for program stakeholders and grantees.

This document - and its contents and information below - directly addresses the federal 5310 requirement for the program to have a Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan, and that the Coordinated Plan is:

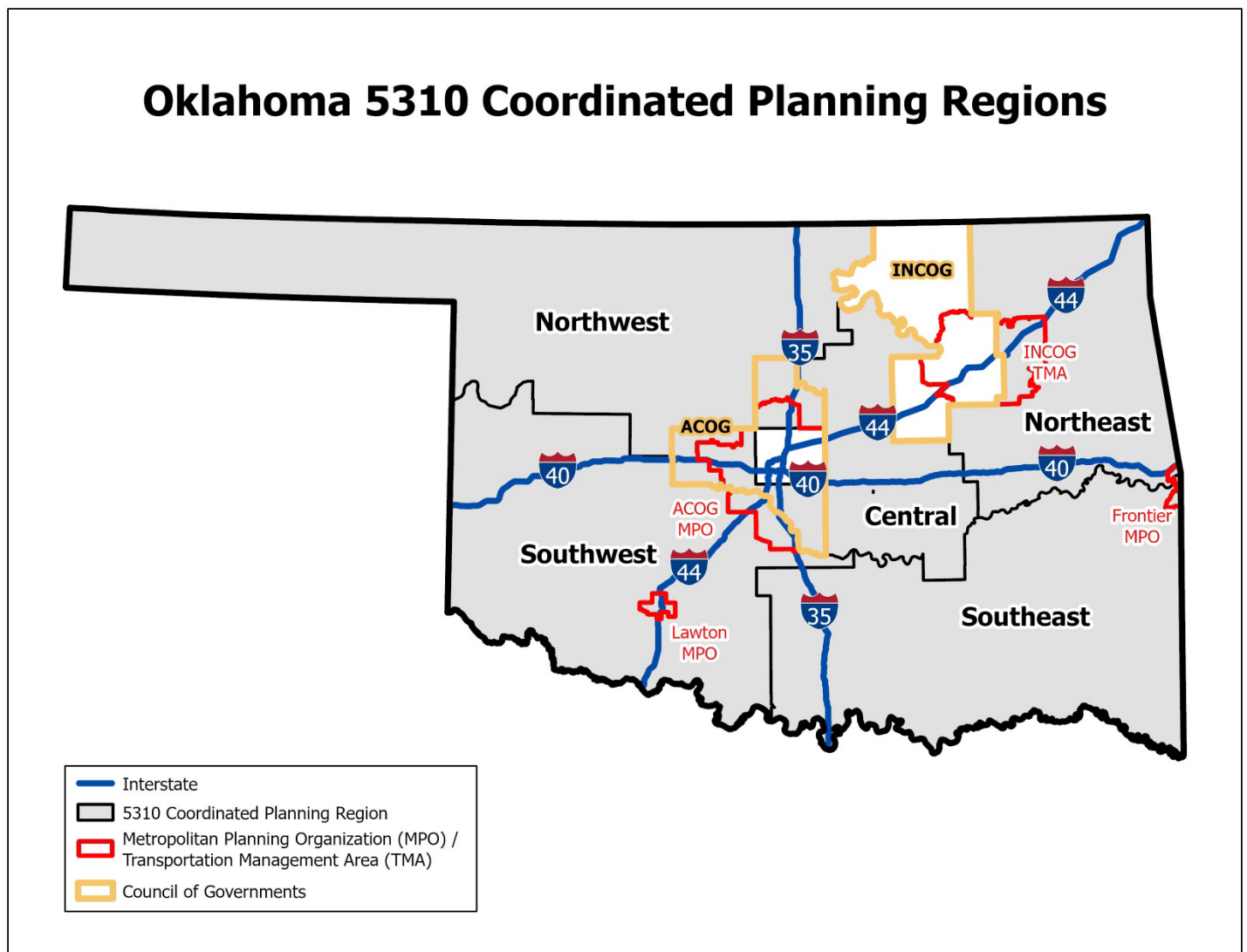
- Locally developed to determine and document availability of transportation options for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the region
- Identifies transportation gaps and unmet needs, and makes recommendations to close these barriers of mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- Developed through participation from the general public, private nonprofit organizations, human service agencies, transit agencies, and stakeholders

The Southeast Region Working Group, with assistance from ODOT OMPT, developed this plan to further facilitate transportation coordination throughout the Southeast Region. This plan is a living document that can and will be updated and changed as local and state transportation programs and strategies develop and mature in the future.

Study Area

ODOT identified five coordinated planning regions upon which ongoing transportation coordination and planning will be based: Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest. These region designations are based primarily on existing RTPO boundaries. The current coordinated planning regions are intended as initial boundaries and may be adjusted over the course of ongoing coordination and planning processes, subject to agreement by working groups and providers who may be affected. Figure 1 displays these coordinated planning regions alongside MPO boundaries.

Figure 1: Oklahoma 5310 Coordinated Planning Regions



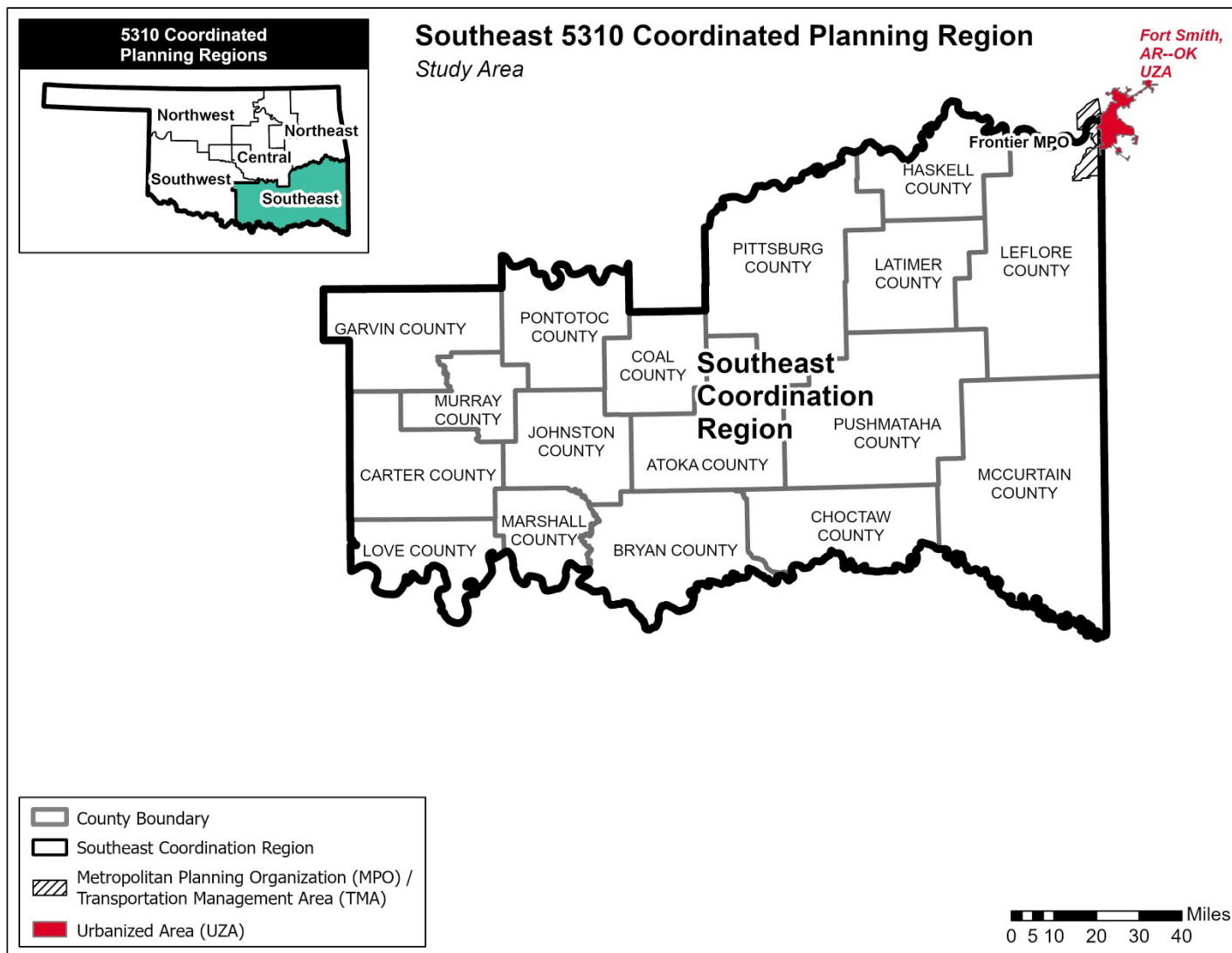
The geographic area covered by this plan, identified by ODOT as the Southeast Region, includes Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Coal, Garvin, Haskell, Johnston, Latimer, LeFlore, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, Murray, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, and Pushmataha. Counties covered in this plan are mostly rural, with the largest cities in the region consisting of Ada, Ardmore, Durant, and McAlester (see Figure 2).

The United States Census Bureau has designated one urbanized area at least partially within the Southeast Region, the Fort Smith Urbanized Area. Urbanized areas are based upon agglomerations of populations and development patterns resulting in populations of at least 50,000 people within a relatively compact area. Urbanized areas are the geographic basis upon which numerous Federal transit funding programs and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundaries are based on. Transit providers are subject to a suite of rules and regulations that determine how Federal transit funding may be used, including when Federal funding may be used for certain transit trips and how transit agencies are incorporated (and may therefore receive Federal funding).

There is one MPOs partially within the Southeast Region, the Frontier MPO, which is partially located within LeFlore County. The purpose of MPOs is to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process for their planning area, including the planning and programming of transportation projects through the long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program.

Growing cities and towns of the Region should be monitored as they approach populations of 50,000, as this is a critical population threshold at which Census-designated urban areas are likely to be created and MPOs will be designated. The metropolitan transportation planning process is an opportunity for transit agencies to advance their interest in potential transportation hubs in the region.

Figure 2: Southeast Coordinated Planning Region



What is a coordinated plan?

A coordinated plan is a process that requires local stakeholders and transit agencies to coordinate efforts in providing transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities. It documents the current local transportation services for this targeted population. Gaps and unmet needs are identified through robust stakeholder engagement, and recommendations to close these barriers are developed.

A coordinated plan is important in detailing and understanding this information. It is also an application requirement and scoring criteria for the ODOT 5310 program application and award process. In the 5310 subrecipient application process, applicants are required to reference the transportation gap or unmet need that their project is proposing to address. ODOT will also view agencies who participated directly in the plan development process favorably compared to those who did not. Without an applicant's understanding and involvement in the coordinated planning process and plan, their application will not be complete and will receive less scoring points.

The **Oklahoma Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Plan** is prepared in compliance with federal transportation legislation under Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and reauthorized under Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) as described in FTA's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, Section 5310).

Plan Purpose

The coordinated plan makes federal resources available to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. To be eligible for 5310 grant funding, the program specifically requires projects selected for funding be "included in a locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan." This document - and its contents and information meet all requirements of the Federal Transit Administration.

These inaugural Coordinated Plans are initial efforts to develop a plan that documents and uses local input and knowledge to better understand and coordinate transportation services for 5310 populations. The plan details regional transportation providers, gaps and unmet needs in their service, and strategies to recommend and prioritize local projects that expand mobility choices for older adults and people with disabilities.

Other on-going ODOT transportation planning and program efforts will eventually develop and better inform the strategies and ideas documented in this Coordinated Plan. In addition, all stakeholders will learn from the initial implementation of this plan. In time, however, the recommendations will be molded to best provide services to seniors and people with disabilities. The Coordinated Plan is a living, breathing document that encourages stakeholders to participate regularly in the development and implementation of this plan so that the plan remains current and continues to provide efficient, coordinated human transportation services.

Plan Development Process

Federal law requires that a Coordinated Plan be developed locally in a manner that includes the participation of older adults, persons with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, as well as members of the public. A coordinated plan needs to include three major elements: 1) information on the current transportation services available, 2) unmet needs and gaps in those services, and 3) recommendations and strategies in prioritizing projects that will fill the identified gaps and unmet transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Developing this plan with these three major elements required a team of professionals over several months to engage in a number of activities to conduct research on transportation programs, services, and demographics of county populations; to engage local residents and transportation stakeholders in providing information, recommendations, and strategies that prioritize and fill those unmet needs and gaps in transportation service; and to analyze this information to create a coordinated plan document.

A timeline of staff and public engagement activities to develop the compliance documents for the 5310 Program - including the Coordinated Plan - is detailed below:

Figure 3: 5310 Coordinated Planning Process

	March		April		May		June		July		August		September		October	
	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4
Demographic Analysis	■	■														
Draft Document			■	■	■	■										
Working Group Meeting (Set 1)				■	■											
Survey							■	■	■	■						
Public Meetings								■								
Working Group Meeting (Set 2)									■							
Update Document										■	■					
Working Group Meeting (Set 3)												■				
Finalize Document													■	■	■	■

The process of gathering the appropriate material and information to develop the Coordinated Plan document included several steps:

- Transportation Provider and Demographic Analysis:** ODOT reviewed the current transportation providers in the Region as well as the populations of seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income households to determine a baseline of transportation services available and the existing gaps and unmet needs for the targeted population.
- Working Group Meetings (April 2023 – August 2023):** ODOT convened a series of three working group meetings in which public and private transportation providers and planning agencies participated. These meetings were focused on gathering in-depth information on unmet transportation needs and mobility gaps for seniors and people with disabilities. Tanya Gleghorn from SORTS was selected as the representative from the lead agency. A new lead agency and lead agency representative may be chosen by the Working Group as needed. This group will be responsible for coordinating and updating the Plan on an annual basis.
- Public Survey (June – July 2023):** ODOT conducted an online public survey to gather information from the general public and organizational stakeholders, including current FTA program recipients, regional planning offices, human service organizations and agencies, and public and private transportation providers. The survey was open from June 6th to July 21st.
- Regional Virtual Public Meetings (June 2023):** ODOT hosted a regional virtual public meeting to provide general 5310 program information, request additional local input on human service transportation in the region, and to receive feedback on the draft Coordinated Plan. The public meeting took place on June 21st and had 25 public participants.
- Draft Coordinated Plan for Stakeholder Input (July – August 2023):** A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders the week of 8/21/2023. Additional comment from the public survey and other outreach opportunities were solicited from participants and incorporated in the plan accordingly.
- Finalize Coordinated Plan document (October 2023):** ODOT has accepted the Southeast Regional Coordinated Transportation Plan.

Regional Socioeconomic Characteristics

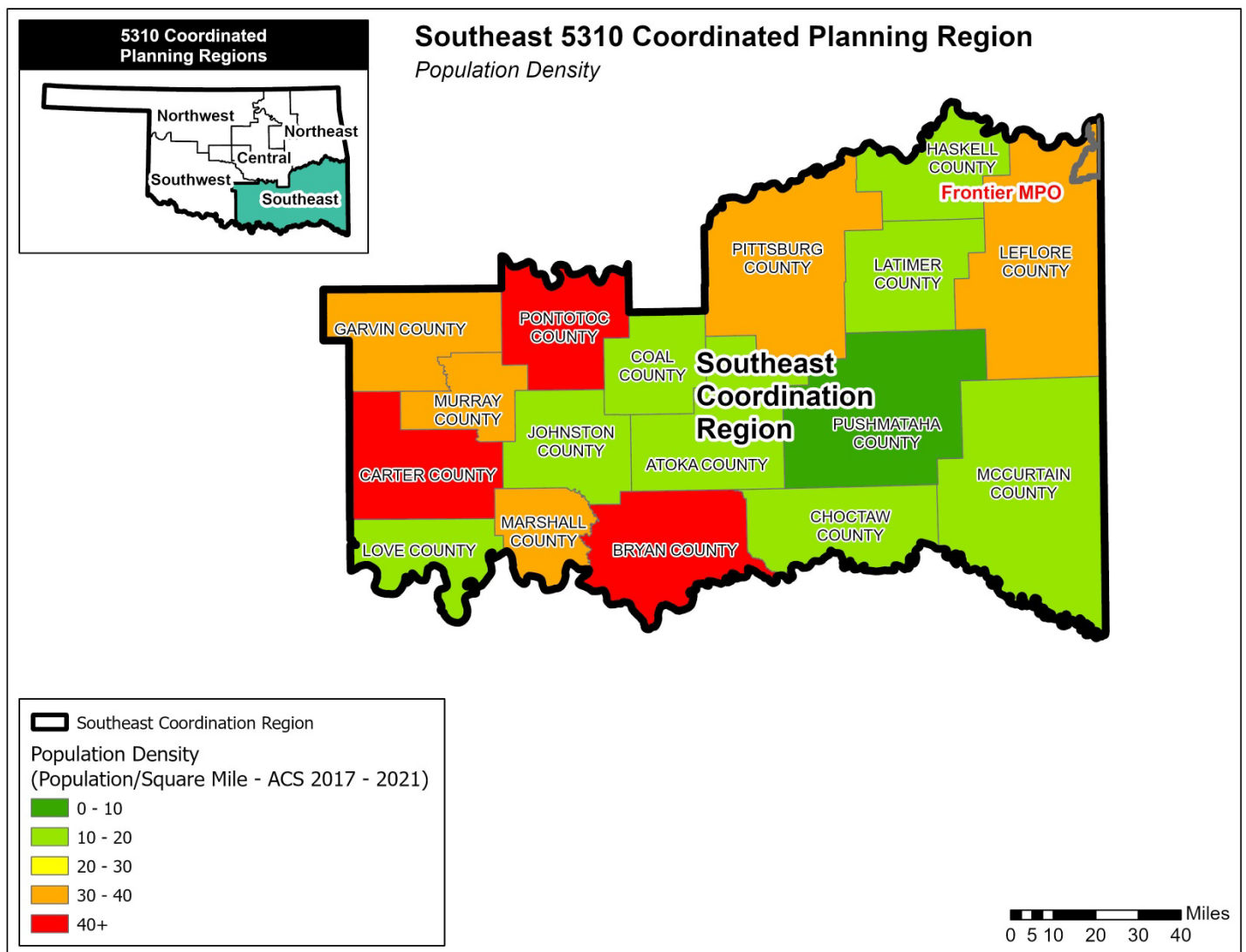
Settlement patterns of the general population and transportation disadvantaged populations are critical to analyze to understand where people live and how service can be better designed to meet their needs. ODOT reviewed Census demographic data for general population and various transportation disadvantaged populations throughout the Southeast Region. This data is reported at the county-level using five-year American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2021.

Population Density

As of 2021, the region's population is estimated to be 396,970 with a population density of 25.9 people per square mile (PPSM). Population density is a significant factor in the viability of transit service, with higher population densities tending to support higher frequency and more efficient transit service. Figure 4 displays population density at the county-level in the Southeast Region.

Population density generally decreases from west to east in the Southeast Region. A significant driver of this pattern is Oklahoma City being located immediately north of Garvin and Pontotoc County. Bryan, Carter, and Pontotoc County have the highest population densities in the Southeast Region, with at least 40 PPSM. Garvin, LeFlore, Marshall, Murray, and Pittsburg counties have between 30 and 40 PPSM. Pushmataha County has a particularly low population density of less than 10 PPSM.

Figure 4: Population Density (Population / Square Mile)



Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

The following sections describe the settlement patterns of the following transportation disadvantaged groups throughout the Southeast Region: Seniors, People with Disabilities, Low-income Individuals, Limited English Proficiency Individuals, and Zero-car Households. These groups are unified in the fact that they often face mobility challenges, often due to difficulty in accessing public transit or being unable to operate or afford a personal vehicle. Specific challenges these groups face in accessing public transit are described in each respective section. It is critical to understand the settlement patterns of these groups in order to develop transportation and other related services that best meet their needs. The locations of Justice 40 areas throughout the Southeast Region are also described.

A number of 5307, 5311, and 5310 agencies provide critical transportation service to these groups in the Southeast Region, including different assistance programs to help them afford transportation fares. These groups often utilize the general fixed-route or demand-response public transit service provided by transit agencies and paratransit services/human service transportation services. More information on these providers can be found in the **Regional Characteristics** and **Transportation Provider Assessment** sections.

Table 4 compares the percentages of each transportation disadvantaged group in the Southeast Region to Oklahoma as a whole. Aside from limited English proficiency individuals, the Southeast Region has elevated

percentages of transportation disadvantaged populations compared to Oklahoma as a whole. The Southeast Region has a notably higher percentage of people with disabilities compared to Oklahoma (21.4% versus 16.3%). Levels of seniors and low-income individuals are also higher in the Southeast Region compared to Oklahoma (Seniors, 18.3% versus 15.6%; low-income individuals, 18.1% versus 15.2%). The Southeast Region's percentage of limited English proficiency individuals is half that of the Oklahoma's (2.0% versus 3.9%).

Table 4: Demographic Summary

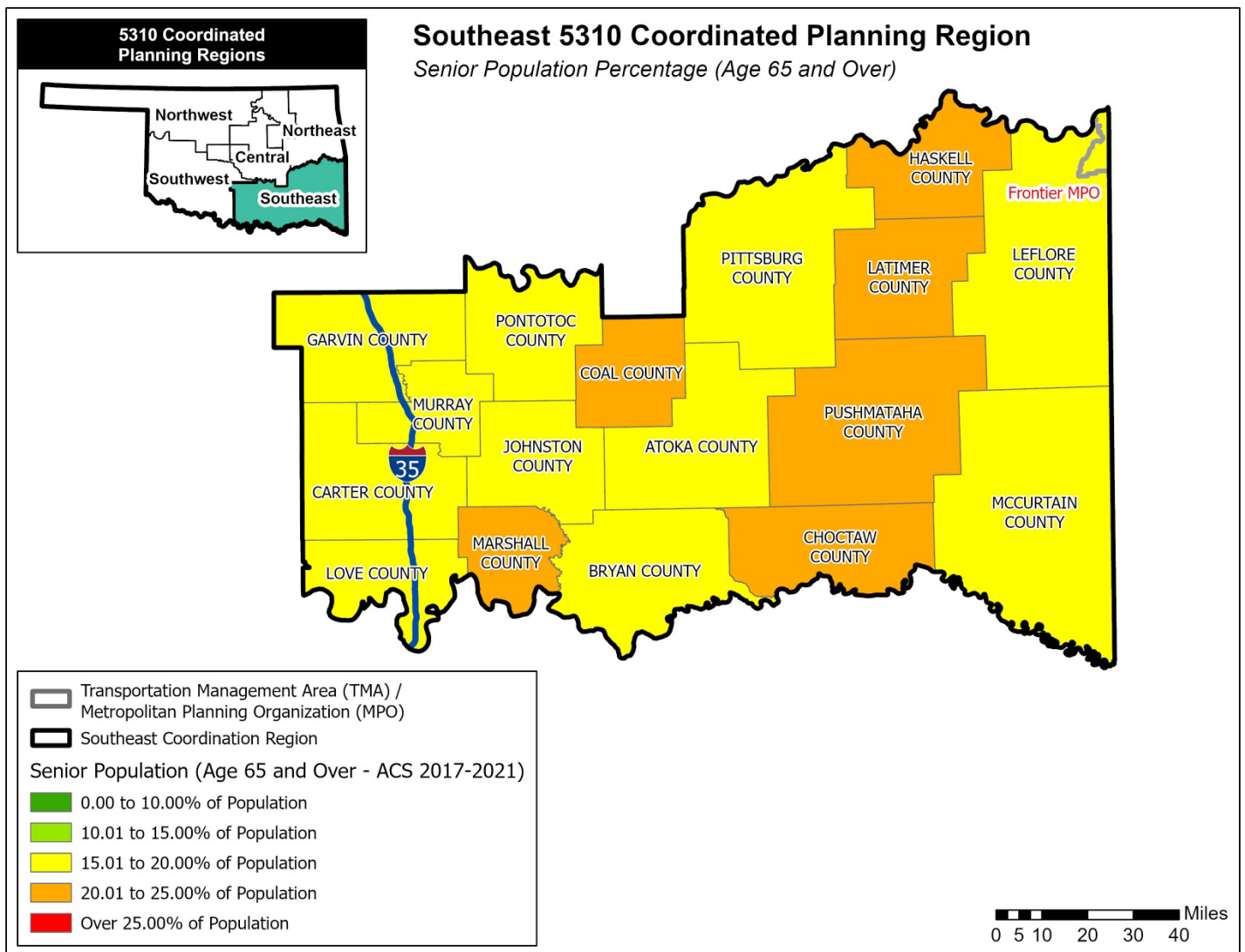
	Southeast Region		Oklahoma	
	Region Total	% of Region	OK Total	% of OK
Total Population	396,970	100%	3,948,136	100%
Seniors	72,789	18.3%	615,832	15.6%
People w/ Disabilities	83,218	21.4%	631,051	16.3%
Low-income Individuals	70,082	18.1%	583,853	15.2%
Limited English Proficiency Individuals	7,398	2.0%	142,223	3.9%
Total Households	149,986	100%	1,503,868	100%
Zero-car Households	8,728	5.8%	81,196	5.4%

Senior Population (Age 65 and Over)

Seniors (age 65 and over) often have unique transportation needs due to a host of age-related physical and cognitive conditions. For example, deteriorating eyesight as a result of age makes it difficult to operate a vehicle. Seniors may face challenges in understanding public transit systems, including the policies that must be followed and the technology that public transit systems utilize. Seniors also typically must access medical care more often than other groups.

Figure 5 displays percentages of seniors in each county throughout the Southeast Region, and these percentages are compared to the percentage of seniors for Oklahoma as a whole (15.6%). County-level percentages of seniors in the Southeast Region are either generally similar to or elevated compared to Oklahoma's percentage of seniors. Of the 17 counties in the Southeast Region, 11 have percentages of seniors between 15% and 20%, or percentages at parity with or moderately elevated compared to Oklahoma as a whole. The remaining six counties have percentages between 20% and 25%, or moderately to significantly elevated percentages of seniors.

Figure 5: Senior Population Percentage (Age 65 and Over)

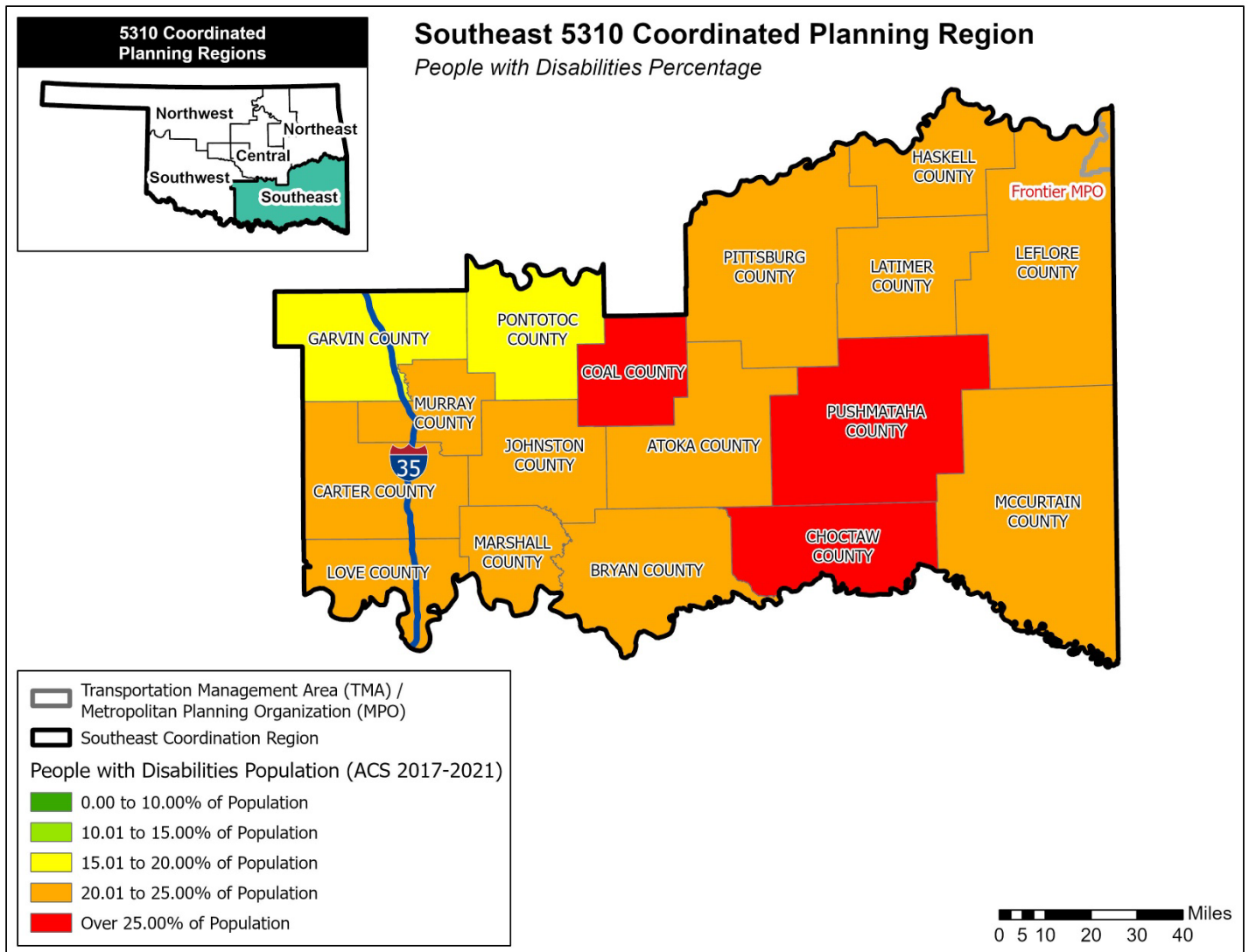


People with Disabilities

People with disabilities, be they physical or cognitive, also often have unique transportation needs. They frequently require personal assistance using public transit, such as a personal care assistant (or PCA). Similar to seniors, they often have increased need to access medical care compared to individuals without disabilities. Disabilities that people have may also be age-related, creating compounding mobility challenges.

Figure 6 shows percentages of each county in the Southeast Region with a disability, and these are compared to percentage of Oklahomans as a whole with a disability (16.3%). Fifteen of the 17 counties in the Southeast Region have at least a moderately elevated percentage of people with disabilities compared to Oklahoma as a whole, with Garvin and Pontotoc County having lower percentages of people with disabilities. In 12 of 17 counties, between 20% and 25% of county populations have disabilities. In Choctaw, Coal, and Pushmataha County, at least 25% of county-level populations have a disability.

Figure 6: People with Disabilities Population Percentage

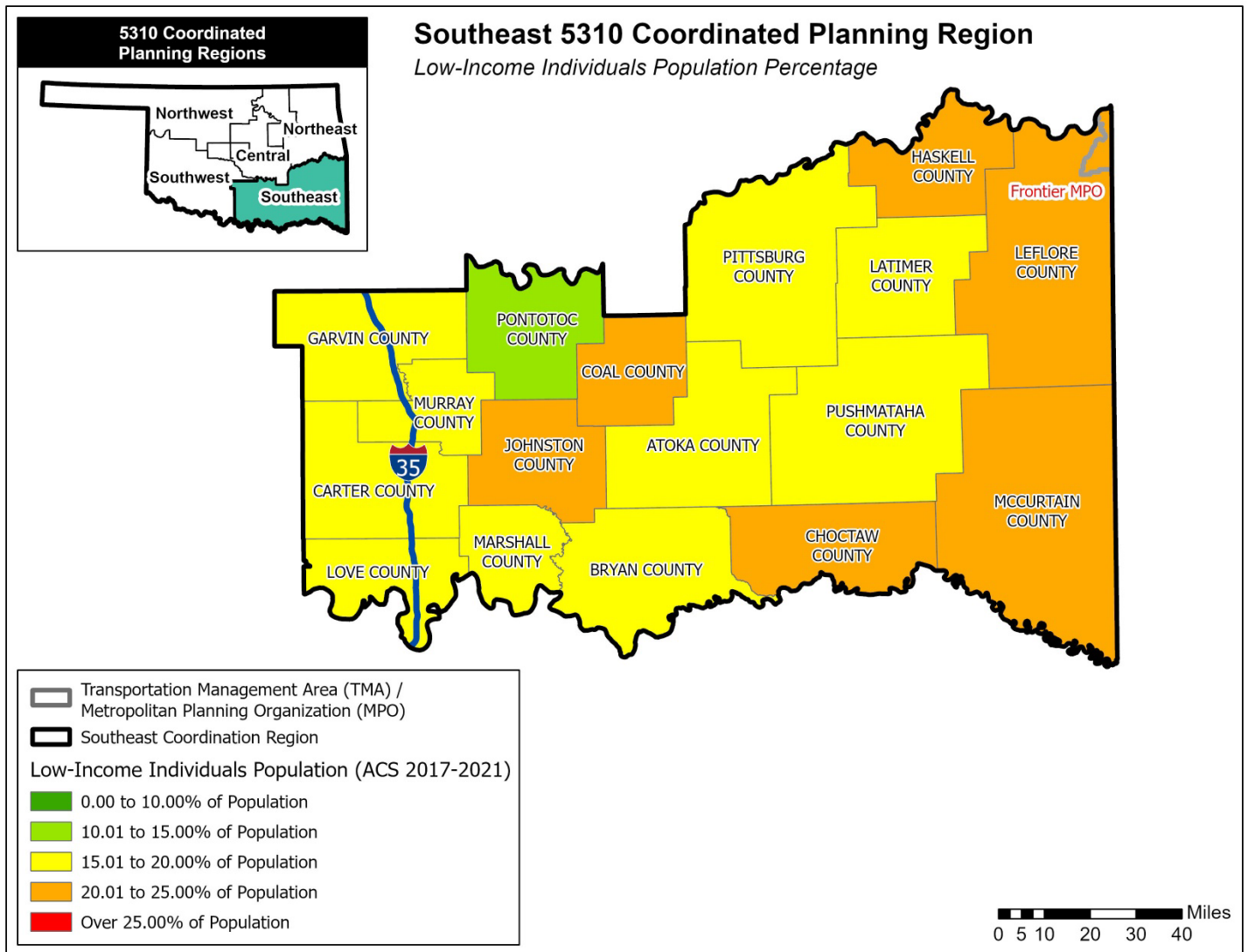


Low-Income Individuals

Defined as individuals with annual incomes below the poverty level (\$12,880), low-income individuals similarly face unique mobility challenge. They often struggle to afford forms of transportation available to those with higher incomes, including personal vehicles and ride-hailing services (Lyft, Uber, etc.). As a result, public transit and human services transportation play critical roles in ensuring that low-income individuals can fulfill their day-to-day needs, particularly when low-income individuals are older and/or have disabilities.

Figure 7 displays the percentage of the population in each Southeast Region county that is low-income, and these are compared to the percentage of Oklahomans as a whole that are low-income (15.2%). Southeast Region counties are generally at parity with or have elevated percentages of low-income individuals compared to the state as a whole. Six of 17 counties have significantly elevated percentages, with between 20% and 25% of county residents classified as low-income. Ten of 17 counties have percentages of low-income individuals near the statewide percentage, between 15% and 20%. Pontotoc County is the one exception in the region, with 10% to 15% of individuals classified as low-income.

Figure 7: Low-Income Individuals Population Percentage

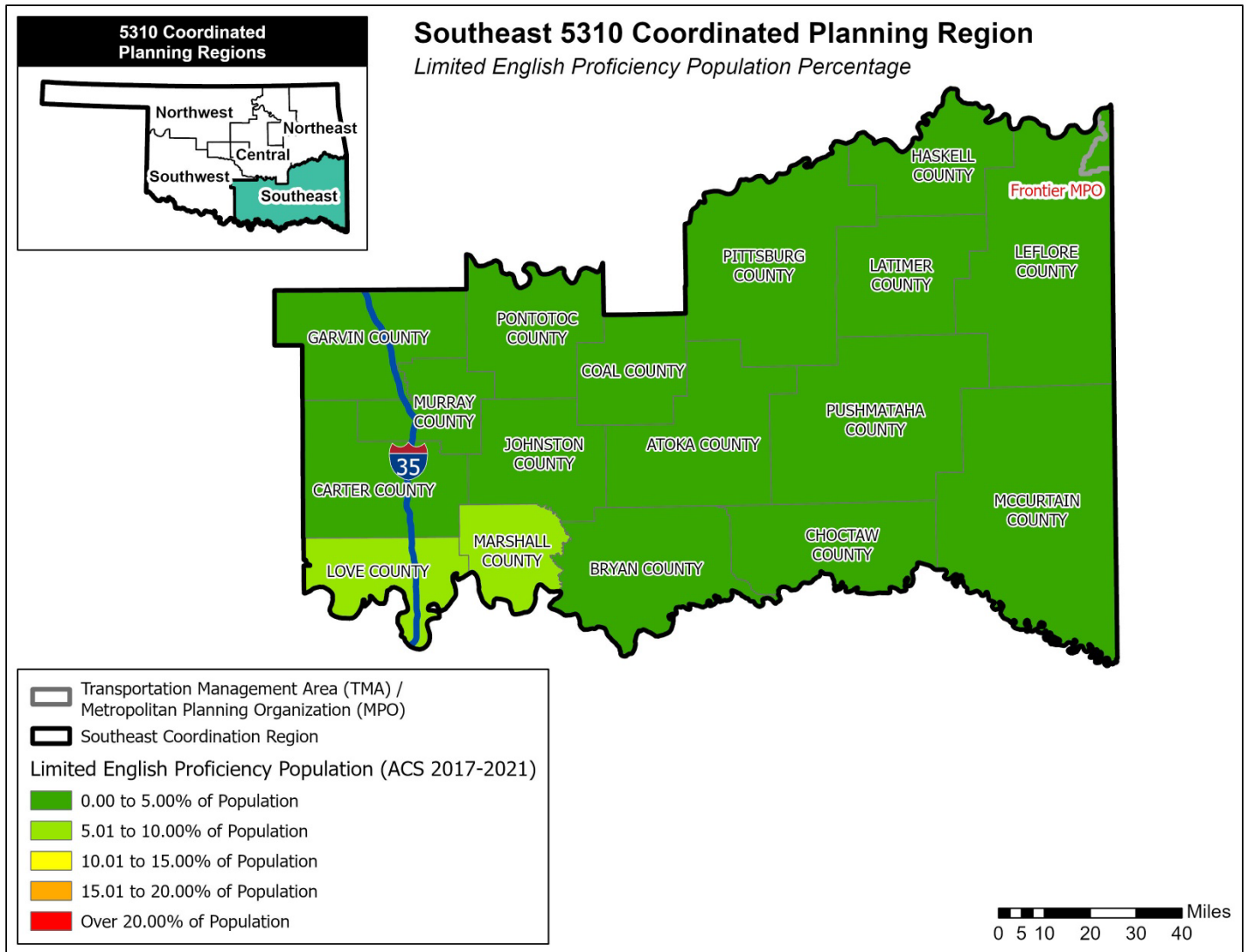


Limited English Proficiency Individuals

Limited English proficiency individuals are those who do not speak English very well. They face challenges in understanding transportation policies and materials as well as communicating with transportation provider staff. They may require special accommodations that make public and private transportation services and materials accessible to them. For example, transit schedules may need to be translated from English into another language, or an interpreter may be needed for a public meeting.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of population of each county in the Southeast Region with a limited English proficiency. The Southeast Region generally has low levels of limited English proficiency, with all having between 0% and 10%. In comparison, 3.9% of Oklahomans as a whole have a limited English proficiency.

Figure 8: Limited English Proficiency Population Percentage

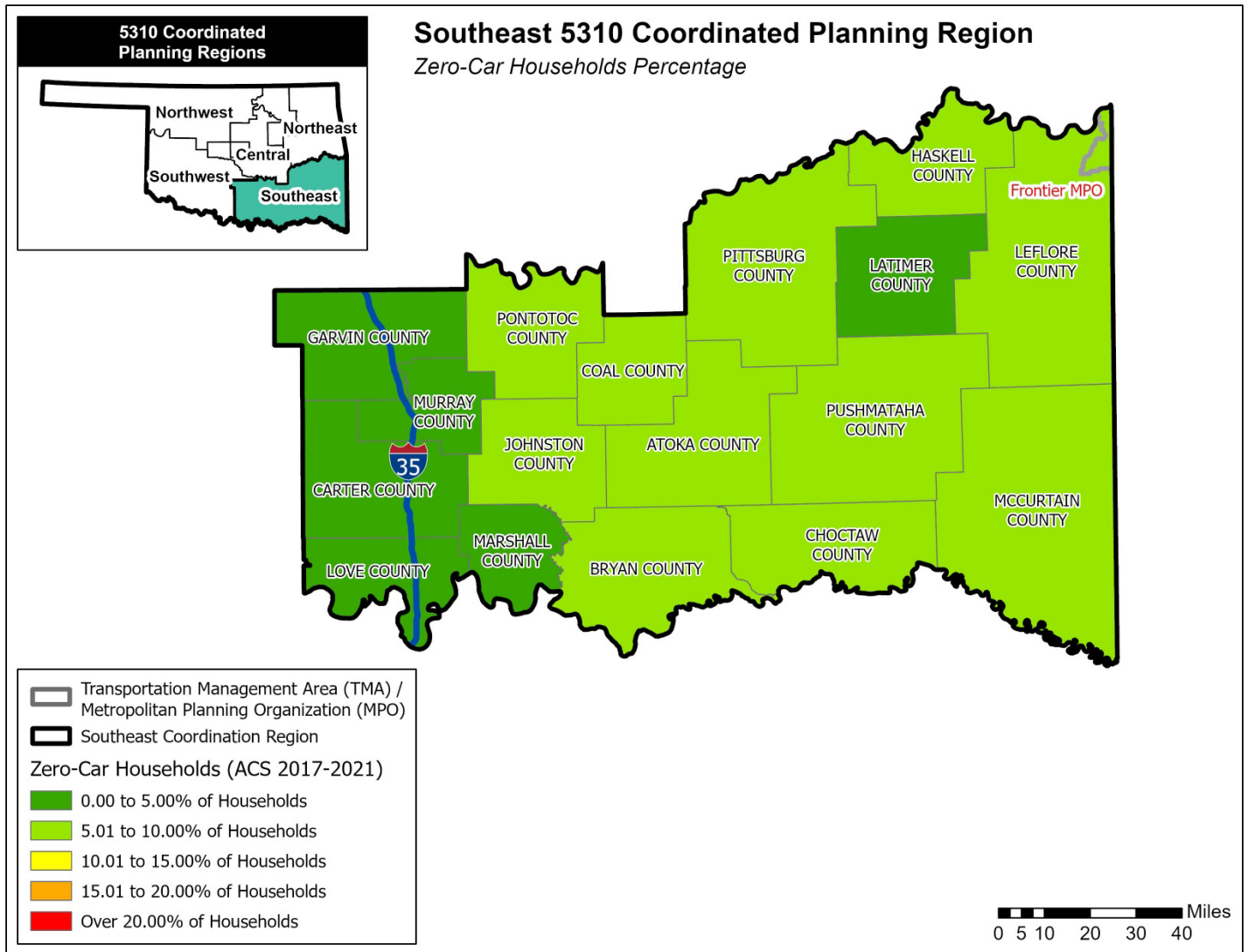


Zero-Car Households

Zero-car households face acute mobility challenges due to most transportation systems being constructed to serve personal vehicle trips rather than public or active transportation. Public transit and other private transportation services are a critical lifeline for these households. Often, there is an overlap between zero-car households and low-income individuals, with limited financial resources making car ownership a challenge.

Figure 9 displays percentages of zero-car households for each Southeast Region county. Percentages of households without a car vary between 0% and 10%, with six of 17 counties having between 0% and 5% zero-car households and the remainder having between 5% and 10%. By comparison, 5.4% of Oklahoman households are zero-car households.

Figure 9: Zero-Car Household Percentage

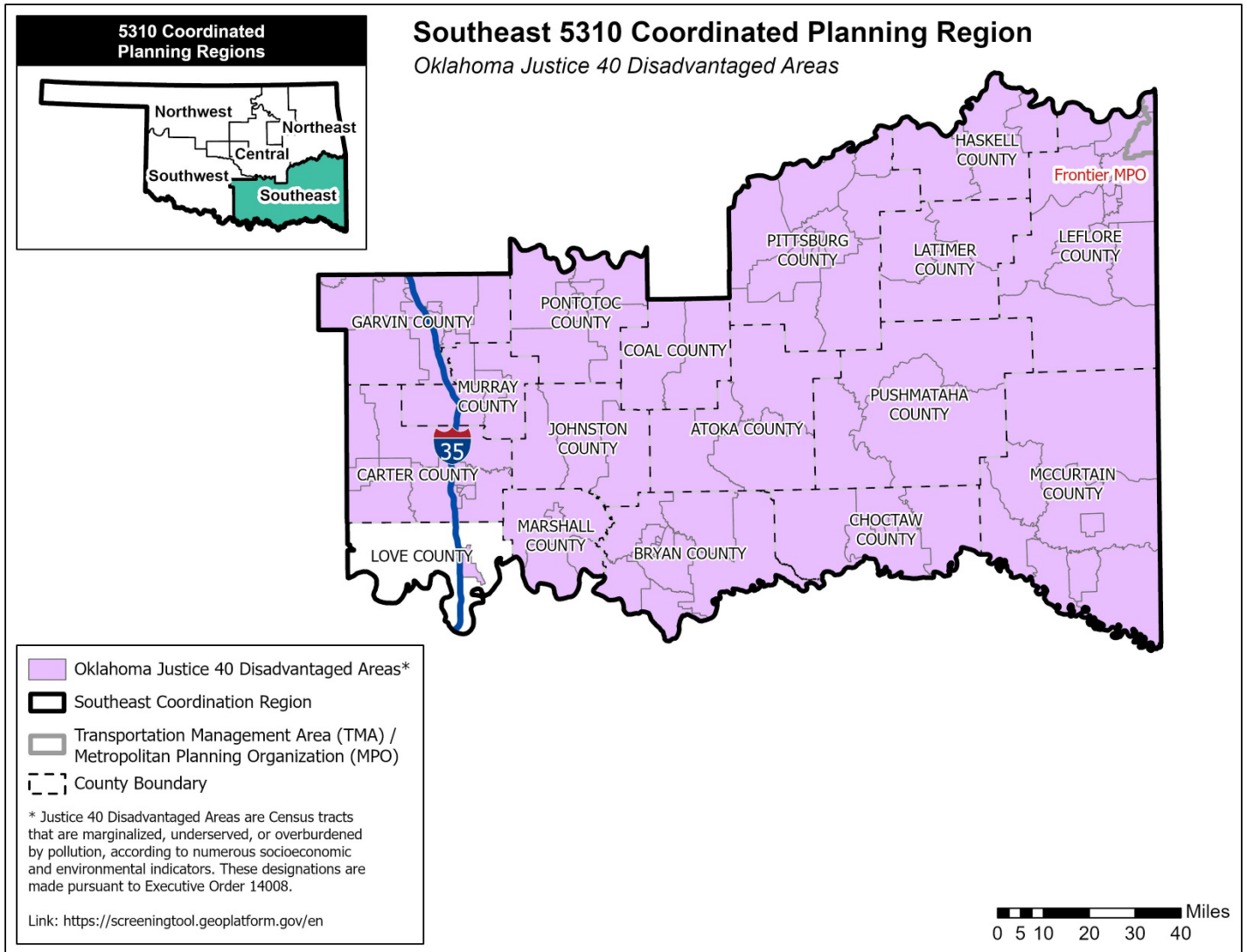


Justice 40 Disadvantaged Areas

Justice 40 Areas are Census tracts that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution, according to numerous socioeconomic and environmental indicators. These designations are made pursuant to Executive Order 14008, which directs the federal government to identify how certain federal investments can be made with the goal of at least 40% of benefits flowing to disadvantaged communities.

Aside from Love County, the entirety of the Southeast Region is within Justice 40 areas. The portion of Love County within a Justice 40 area corresponds with Marietta.

Figure 10: Oklahoma Justice 40 Disadvantaged Areas



Regional Characteristics

The Southeast Region includes multiple planning agencies that, in concert with transportation providers and mobility management programs, work to ensure the mobility and general human services needs of Southeast Region residents are effectively met through well-coordinated service provision. The following sections describe the different planning agencies within the Southeast Region, as well as any mobility navigators whose service area is within the Southeast Region.

Planning Agencies

The Southeast Region is served by four separate planning agencies: the South Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Agency (SCORTPO), the Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA), the Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO), and the Frontier MPO.

SODA and KEDDO are regional COGs in the Southeast Region that provide a number of services critical to the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities and seniors and rural residents in general. Services provided to seniors include caregiver support, case management, home care services, and many others. Its service area is in the western portion of the Southeast Region. SODA acts as the parent organization to SCORTPO, which is the regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) for the Southeast Region.

The Frontier MPO's planning area is based around the Fort Smith, Arkansas metropolitan area. Its planning area encompasses portions of Sequoyah and LeFlore County.

MPOs are primarily responsible for the development, administration, and approval of regional long-range plans and transportation improvement program (TIP) as well as various public engagement and statewide transportation coordination activities.

Table 5: Planning Agencies

County(ies)	Agency Name	POC	Email	Phone	Website
LeFlore, Sequoyah	Frontier MPO	Reese Brewer	rbrewer@wapdd.org	479-785-2651	https://www.frontiermpo.org/
Choctaw, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pushmataha	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO)	Kim Rose	krrose@keddo.org	918-465-2367	https://www.keddo.org/
Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Coal, Garvin, Haskell, Johnston, Latimer, LeFlore, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, Murray, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pushmataha	South Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SCORTPO)	Kyle Henry	khenry@soda-ok.org	580-920-1388 x 117	https://www.soda-ok.org/scortpo/
Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Johnston, Love, Marshall, Murray, Pontotoc	Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA)	Dr. Steve Mills	smills@soda-ok.org	580-920-1388 x 106	https://www.soda-ok.org/

Mobility Management

Mobility management professionals help coordinate transportation services throughout the state and conduct mobility management projects. Working with a host agency, mobility managers and navigators help conduct mobility management projects, which increase mobility access for all Oklahomans to healthy living resources, healthcare, and employment through various activities that connect transportation with the needs of individuals and communities.

Mobility management is new to Oklahoma, having been implemented in 2023 through pilot programs in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The program is continuing to evolve, and implementation is contingent on funding.

Table 6 below summarizes the mobility management programs which serve the Southeast Region.

Table 6: Mobility Management Programs

Service Area	MM Name	Host Agency	Email	Phone	Website
Counties: Atoka, Coal, Johnston, Bryan	Todd O'Neal, Mobility Navigator	SODA	toneal@soda-ok.org	580-920-1388	https://www.soda-ok.org/

Transportation Provider Assessment

The Southeast Region is served by numerous public transit providers, tribal transit providers, and human services transportation providers, all of which serve as key lifelines to individuals with disabilities and seniors. These providers often have overlapping or abutting services areas and thus stand to benefit greatly from increased coordination and communications among each other. This chapter describes the transportation providers in the Southeast Region, including detailed information on their service characteristics (e.g., service area and schedule), and eligibility information.

Public Transit Providers

Figure 11 below displays the public transit agencies and tribal transit agencies within the Southeast Region.

Public transit agencies serving the Southeast Region include KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS), LIFT Community Action Agency (CAA) Transit, Call A Ride (CAR), JAMM Transit, Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS), and Delta Public Transit. Tribal transit agencies serving the Southeast Region include Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit and Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services.

Figure 11: 5311 Transit and Tribal Transit Providers

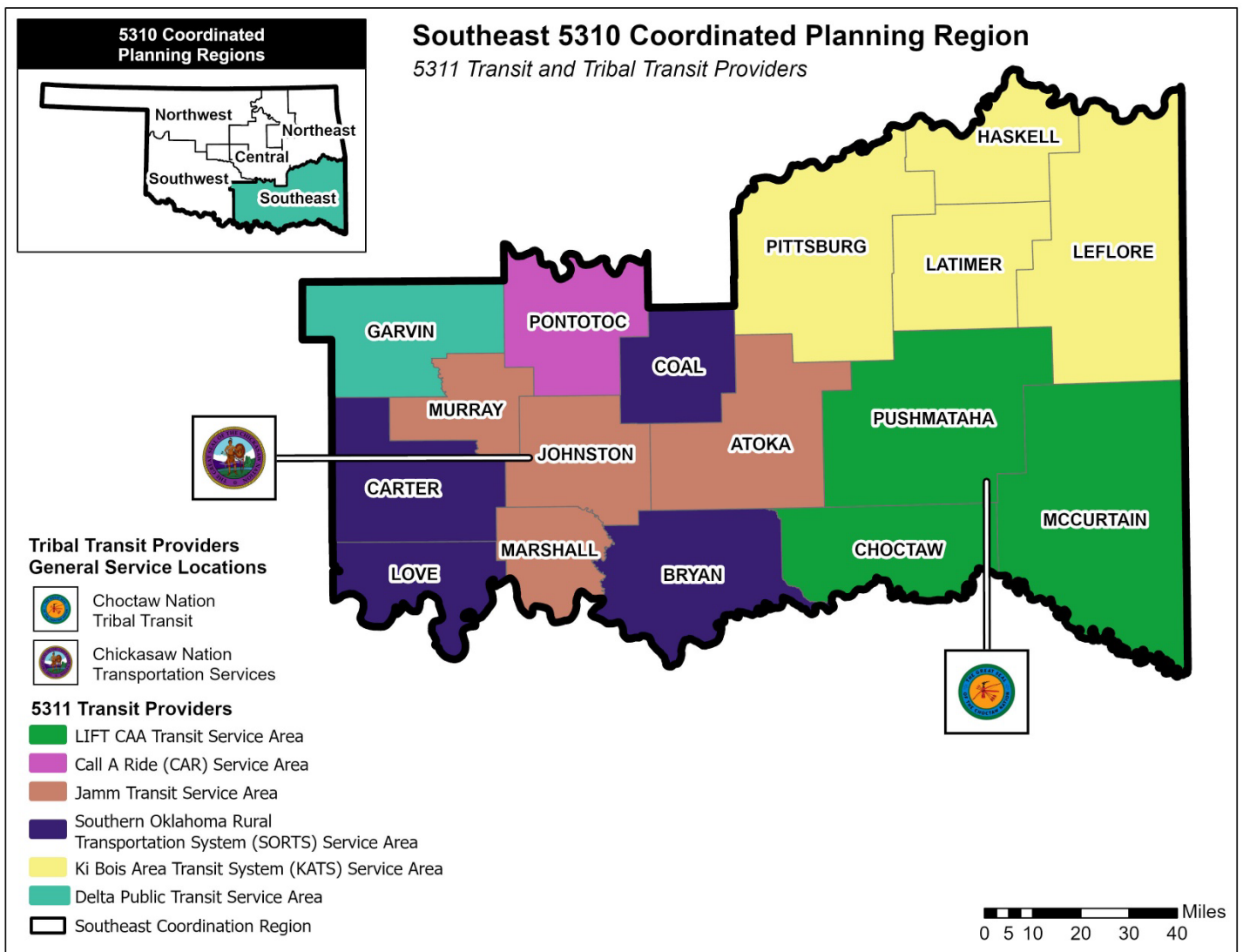


Table 6 shows an inventory of transportation providers in the Southeast Region, including public transit providers receiving 5307/5311/5310 funding, human services transportation providers receiving 5310 funding, and tribal transit

providers. The user models of each provider are shown, which may include open-door, closed-door, or combination of open- and closed-door services. Open-door is defined as service that is available to everyone. By contrast, closed-door service is available to members only through the use of eligibility criteria.

More detailed information on each provider is provided in the Appendix in Table 25. This information was derived from a combination of ODOT data and survey responses. Plan users are encouraged to use Table 6 to identify if coordination may be necessary with a particular agency and to use Table 25 in the Appendix to further determine what level of coordination may be possible or appropriate.



Table 7: Transportation Providers

Agency / Transportation Provider Name	Provider Type	User Model	Service Area	Eligibility Criteria (if not open to the public)	5310 Recipient?
A Driver For You	Private, nonprofit transportation company	Open-door	Cities: Norman, Blanchard, Newcastle, Little Ax, Wayne, Dibble, Noble, Purcell, Paul's Valley	N/A	No
Call a Ride (CAR)	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Pontotoc County	N/A	No
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	Tribal Transit	N/A	Counties: Johnston, Marshall, Love, Custer, Jefferson, Stevens, Murray, Pontotoc, Garvin, McClain, Grady, Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma	N/A	No
Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit	Tribal Transit	N/A	Counties: Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pushmataha	N/A	No
Delta Public Transit	Public Transit Authority	N/A	Counties: Garvin, McClain	N/A	Yes
JAMM Transit	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Atoka, Johnston, Marshall, Murray	N/A	Yes
KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS)	Private, nonprofit transportation company	Open-door	Counties: Adair, Cherokee, Haskell, Hughes, Latimer, LeFlore, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Pittsburg, Sequoyah, Wagoner	N/A	Yes
LIFT Community Action Agency (CAA)	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Choctaw, McCurtain, Pushmataha	N/A	Yes
Oklahoma Department of Human Services	Federal or State human services agency	Open-door	Murray County	Depends on program: income thresholds, open child welfare cases	No
Oklahoma State University Health Access Network	Federal or State human services agency	Closed-door	Counties: Adair, Bryan, Cherokee, Delaware, Garfield, Mayes, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Payne, Pontotoc, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagon, Washington	SoonerCare member	No
Oxford Healthcare	Private, for-profit transportation company	Open-door	Greater Eastern Oklahoma	Must meet ADV or SPCC requirements	No
SOAR	Private, for-profit transportation company	Both closed-and open-door	Ada	N/A	Yes
SODA AAA	Federal or State human services agency	Both closed-and open-door	Counties: Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Johnston, Love, Marshall, Murray, Pontotoc	Age 60+	No
Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS)	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Bryan, Carter, Coal, Love	N/A	No
Van Buren House of MRHC		Closed-door	McAlester	N/A	No



Human Services Providers

Transportation providers are part of a network of human services providers whose services help ensure that seniors and people with disabilities can maintain a high quality of life. Human services providers who may not provide transportation services still play a valuable role by connecting their clients with transportation providers. Human services providers themselves may be destinations for transportation users or may provide services that assist seniors and people with disabilities in using transportation, such as personal care assistants.

Table 7 below displays an inventory of human services providers throughout the Region, including both those who provide transportation and those who do not. Additionally, the SoonerRide and RideCARE sections below describe the SoonerRide and RideCARE programs, which are State-administered human services transportation programs.

The user models of each provider are shown, which may include open-door, closed-door, or combination of open- and closed-door services. Open-door is defined as service that is available to everyone. By contrast, closed-door service is available to members only through the use of eligibility criteria.

Not appearing in Table 7 does not necessarily preclude an agency from applying for and being awarded 5310 funding, although applications must address the gaps and unmet needs identified in this plan. However, participation in the coordinated planning process will be viewed favorably by ODOT, so potential applicants are encouraged to contact the lead agency of the Southeast Working Group to see how they can participate.

Table 8: Inventory of Human Services Providers

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligibility Criteria (if not open to the public)
Accentra Advantage Case Management	Counties: Oklahoma Grady, Caddo, Stephens, Canadian, Logan, Garvin, Comanche, McClain, Cleveland	8AM – 4:30PM	Health Care, Social Services, DHS Advantage Program	N/A	N/A
Ada Irving Community Center	Pontotoc County	8AM – 4PM, Monday - Friday	Meals, Educational Classes		N/A
Atoka/Coal Food Storehouse	Counties: Atoka, Coal	9AM – 3PM, three days per month	Food Assistance	N/A	N/A
Big Five Community Services, Inc.	Counties: Bryan, Carter, Coal, Love, Pontotoc	N/A	Transportation, Social Services for Seniors, Head Starts, Emergency Services and Referrals, Housing, Rx for Oklahoma Assistance	Open-door	N/A
Carter County Health Department	Ardmore	8AM - 5PM	Health Care, Social Services	N/A	N/A
Cartwright Community Resource Center	Cities: Cartwright, Colbert, Platter, Calera	9AM – 1PM	Social Services, Food Pantry, Community Meals, Free Events, Outreach	Open-door	N/A
Chickasha Adult Learning Center	Counties: Grady, McClain, Garvin	8AM – 4PM/5PM – 730PM, Monday – Thursday	High School Equivalency, English as a Second Language	N/A	N/A
Complete Home Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Country Style Health Care	Eastern Oklahoma	8AM – 4:30PM, Monday - Friday	Health Care	Closed-door	Advantage member
Garvin County Health Department	Garvin County	8AM – 5PM	Health Care	N/A	N/A
Hands of Hope	Counties: Bryan, Marshall, Johnston, Atoka, Coal, Pushmataha	3PM – 6PM, Monday 8AM – 12PM, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday	Utility Assistance, Gas Vouchers, Bus Tickets, Clothes for Work	Both closed- and open-door	N/A
Hill Nursing Home, Inc.	Will travel as much as 250 miles	Based on resident need	Long-term Care	N/A	N/A
Hope Medical Clinic	Atoka and adjacent counties	The last Saturday morning of every month	Health Care	Open-door	N/A



Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligibility Criteria (if not open to the public)
INCA	Counties: Johnston, Atoka, Marshall, Murray	8AM – 5PM	Social Services, Public Transportation	Open-door	N/A
JAMM Transit	Counties: Johnston, Atoka, Marshall, Murray	7AM – 5PM	Social Services, Public Transportation, Transportation for Services/People with Disabilities, Headstart	Open-door	N/A
KEDDO Area Agency on Aging	Counties: Choctaw, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pushmataha	8AM – 4:30PM, Monday - Friday	Social Services, Economic Development, Transportation for 60+	Open-door	N/A
LIFT Transit	Counties: Choctaw, McCurtain, Pushmataha	8AM – 4PM, Monday-Friday	Social Services, Public Transportation, Transportation for Seniors/People with Disabilities, Economic Development	Open-door	N/A
Mercy Hospital Ada, OK	Pontotoc County and adjacent counties	24/7	Health Care	N/A	N/A
Mercy Hospital Ardmore	Counties: Carter, Love, Johnston, Murray	24/7	Health Care	N/A	N/A
Moore Youth & Family Services, Inc.	Northern Cleveland and Southern Oklahoma Counties	8AM – 8PM, Monday – Thursday 8AM – 5PM, Friday	Social Services	Both closed-and open-door	N/A
Oklahoma Child Welfare Services	District 3 of Child Welfare	24/7	Social Services	Closed-door	Open child welfare case
Oklahoma Department of Human Services	Southeast Oklahoma	24/7	Health Care, Social Services, SNAP, TANF, Child Welfare, Visual Services	Open-door	Depends on program: income thresholds, open child welfare cases
Oklahoma State Department of Health	Southern Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM	Health Care, Social Services	Open-door	N/A
Oklahoma State Department of Rehabilitative Services	Southeast Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Independent Living Services	Open-door	N/A
Oklahoma State University Health Access Network	Counties: Adair, Bryan, Cherokee, Creek, Delaware, Garfield, Mayes, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Payne, Pontotoc, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington	8AM – 5PM, some PM hours	Health Care, Social Services, Public Transportation	Closed-door	SoonerCare member

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligibility Criteria (if not open to the public)
Oxford Healthcare	Eastern Oklahoma	Member-requested	Health Care	Closed-door	Must meet ADV or SPCC requirements
Pontotoc County Health Dept	Pontotoc County	8AM – 5PM	Health Care, Social Services	Open-door	N/A
RideCARE (Oklahoma Mental Health & Substance Abuse)	Statewide	24/7	Transportation	Open-door	N/A
SoonerRide (Oklahoma Health Care Authority)	Statewide	7AM – 6PM, Monday - Saturday	Transportation, Lodging, Meal Services	Closed-door	SoonerCare members
Southern Oklahoma Development Association, Area Agency on Aging	Counties: Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Johnston, Love, Marshall, Murray, Pontotoc	8AM - 5PM	Social Services, Transportation for Seniors/People with Disabilities, Medicare	Both closed-and open-door	N/A
Van Buren House of MRHC	McAlester	N/A	Health Care, Public Transportation, Transportation for Seniors/People with Disabilities	Closed-door	N/A
Victory Home Health	Southern Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM		Closed-door	N/A



SoonerRide

SoonerRide is Oklahoma’s Medicaid-backed non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service, which is administered by the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority (OHCA). OHCA provides a suite of Medicaid benefits under the SoonerCare banner, one of which is the SoonerRide program.

SoonerRide connects patients to medical appointments covered by SoonerCare. Trips are booked online or by phone and must be done at least three business days in advance. Alternatively, SoonerCare members who use their own vehicle to transport themselves to a SoonerCare-covered medical appointment can apply for gas and mileage reimbursement.

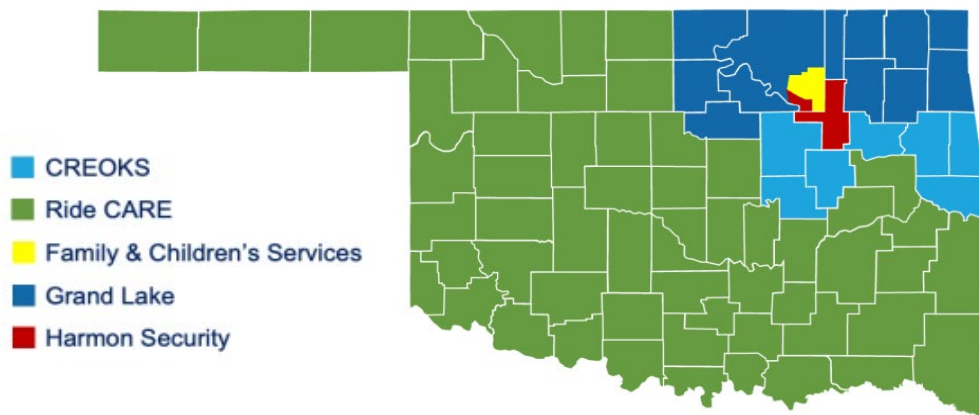
SoonerCare members can also apply for assistance with lodging and meals if they must travel a long distance for SoonerCare-covered medical services with a specialist. The SoonerCare website documents approved lodging providers in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, as well as Dallas, Texas and Omaha, Nebraska.

RideCARE

Oklahoma Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OMHSA) administers the RideCARE program, a statewide human services transportation program for transporting children and adults to inpatient psychiatric treatment. RideCARE is operated through partnerships with regionally-based human services providers, including OK RideCARE, Grand Lake Mental Health, Harmon Security, and CREOKS Health Services. Figure 12 below displays each provider’s service area. Requests for transportation are made by treatment facilities, medical facilities, and law enforcement personnel.

Figure 12: RideCARE Provider Service Areas

Statewide CMHC Services FY2022



Service Outside Typical Business Hours

Coordination between services providing service outside typical business hours and those who do not is especially critical to meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. Medical appointments such as dialysis treatment may be scheduled outside typical business hours, or certain trips may require transfers between services where one leg of the trip is outside typical business hours.

Table 9 provides a detailed summary of providers that provide service outside typical business hours, including early/late weekday, weekend, and 24/7 service. Plan users are encouraged to use Table 9 to identify potential coordination partners in meeting the need for service outside typical business hours.

Table 9: Agencies Providing Service Outside Typical Business Hours

County	Early/Late Weekday	Weekend by Appointments	Saturday and/or Sunday Service	24/7 Service
Atoka	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Bryan	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Carter	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mercy Hospital Love, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Choctaw	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Coal	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Mercy Hospital Ada, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Garvin	A Driver For You	N/A	A Driver For You	Mercy Hospital Ada, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Haskell	KATS	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Johnston	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Mercy Hospital Ada, OK Mercy Hospital Love, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Latimer	KATS	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
LeFlore	KATS	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Love	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mercy Hospital Love, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Marshall	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
McCurtain	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Murray	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mercy Hospital Ada, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services Mercy Hospital Love, OK
Pittsburg	KATS	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Pontotoc	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mercy Hospital Ada, OK Oklahoma Department of Human Services SOAR
Pushmataha	N/A	N/A	Hope Medical Clinic	Oklahoma Child Welfare Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Transportation Technology

Transit technology has advanced appreciably in the recent past, particularly trip scheduling and dispatching platforms. With the requisite training and interoperability between the systems of other nearby agencies, modern transit technology platforms unlock considerable efficiencies and coordination opportunities between agencies. As such, a strong understanding of the technological capabilities of nearby agencies is critical to identifying these opportunities or starting initiatives to acquire software platforms in a coordinated manner.

Table 10 below summarizes key scheduling and dispatching systems available to agencies in the region. In certain cases, agencies may not have certain capabilities or may use differing software platforms that do not work together. These should be used as opportunities to identify where technology systems may be coordinated across multiple agencies or even across different regions, including in procurement, to realize the benefits of these technologies.

Southeast Region agencies generally operate specific call centers that correspond to cities where vehicles are dispatched from, enabling them to better respond to riders depending on their place of residence. Additionally, information on agency services is generally found on the agency website rather than on mobile applications. KATS and JAMM Transit are exceptions in that while their primary business hour service is scheduled via phone, evening and weekend service offered through the PICK program can be scheduled through the VIA phone app, online, or by phone.

Table 10: Provider Technological Capabilities

Agency Name	Scheduling ability on agency website	Scheduling Mobile App for Riders	General Info Mobile App	Name of Dispatching Software	AVL System/GPS
Call A Ride (CAR)	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Delta Public Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
JAMM Transit	Yes (PICK)	Yes (PICK)	Yes (PICK)	N/A	N/A
KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS)	Yes (PICK)	Yes (PICK)	Yes (PICK)	N/A	N/A
LIFT CAA	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS)	No	No	No	N/A	N/A

Funding Structure for Transportation Programs

The following sections provide information on the various public transit funding programs. Note that many of these programs are specific to public transit agencies. Those interested in more in-depth information on these programs, including eligibility, are encouraged to review the corresponding section in ODOT's State Management Plan.¹

Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disability Program

Section 5310 is a formula funding program apportioned to states to meet the mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities, especially when existing service is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting those needs. ODOT is the Governor's designee for the administration and state and federal public transit financial assistance program for under 50,000 population (rural and small urban 5310 funds). ODOT's Office of Mobility and Public Transit is responsible for the management of these state and federal programs. ODOT is not an operator of public transit services, but through its administration of these programs, financial and technical assistance is provided to Oklahoma's public transit providers. ODOT will only approve 5310 funding to be used for the purchase of traditional ADA-accessible vehicles at a maximum federal share of project costs of 85%.

ODOT administers the 5310 program through a competitive application process due to funding limitations. Eligible applicants include the following: private nonprofits, public transit agencies, federally recognized Indian entities, and public agencies that can certify that no private nonprofit are providing the proposed service in a readily available fashion. Projects proposed in the Southeast Region must be found in the Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Plan and the coordinated plans of any other coordinated planning regions in which the project will occur.

ODOT will provide notice to potential applicants once 5310 funding will be made available. This notice will include a deadline by which application materials must be submitted. Applicants may be asked to provide the following at different stages throughout the application process to determine if the applicant is eligible to advance to the next stage: notice of intent to apply, draft application, and final application.

Technical assistance in preparing an application is provided by ODOT OMPT. However, the development, preparation and timely submittal of the document is the sole responsibility of the applicant. Application instructions may be obtained by requesting from ODOT OMPT.

Those interested in pursuing 5310 funding in the future are encouraged to review Section 7 of ODOT's State Management Plan, which describes how potential applicants may access 5310 funding in greater detail.²

Other Related Transportation Funding Programs

The following funding programs are also used to support public transit service, both for the general public and for people with disabilities and seniors.

Section 5307 Urban Public Transportation³

The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation-related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more that is designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

For urbanized areas with 200,000 in population and over, funds are apportioned and flow directly to a designated recipient selected locally to apply for and receive Federal funds. For urbanized areas under 200,000 in population, the funds are apportioned to the governor of each state for distribution.

Eligible activities include: planning, engineering, design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement, overhaul

¹ https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/odot/omm/ODOT%20SMP%202022_1.16.23_Final.pdf

² https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/odot/omm/ODOT%20SMP%202022_1.16.23_Final.pdf

³ Section 5307 program language from the FTA's website

and rebuilding of buses, crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. In addition, associated transit improvements and certain expenses associated with mobility management programs are eligible under the program. All preventive maintenance and some Americans with Disabilities Act complementary paratransit service costs are considered capital costs.

Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5311, FTA apportions or awards funds to states and other eligible recipients located in rural areas for planning, public transit capital projects, operating costs, and the acquisition of public transit service. The Section 5311 program supports both the maintenance of existing public transit services and the expansion of those services.

The program year allotment establishes the maximum amount of Section 5311 funds available to the subrecipients. The amount of Section 5311 funding that will be made available to each subrecipient will be determined by the cumulative amounts of their Incentive Allotment and Performance Allotment. Any funds not programmed or obligated by the subrecipient during the contracted program year will be deemed as lapsed by ODOT and any such balance of funding will be carried forward for allocation within the subsequent year's Statewide Allotment. Note that ODOT may evaluate and change the methodology and formula to distribute annual program funds after notifying and receiving input from subrecipients.

The following entities are eligible to access 5311 funding: existing 5311 subrecipient, public agencies, operators of public transit, and federally recognized Indian tribes. ODOT may also accept 5311 applications from agencies that are not current subrecipients if the legislative body of a local government submits a formal request to ODOT.

Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5339, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awards grants under this section to the designated recipients in the large-urbanized areas (UZAs) and States for the purpose of financing capital bus and bus-related projects that will support the continuation and expansion of public transit services in the United States. Only existing 5311 subrecipients are eligible to access 5339 funding.

See the Appendix for ODOT Office of Mobility and Public Transit contact information.

Coordination Efforts

Coordination among transportation providers is essential to meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities, as providers can coordinate their services to make up for gaps in each other's service. This section documents existing coordination efforts between service providers in the Southeast Region identified in either the public survey or the working group meetings as well as challenges in coordination. This serves as a record of coordination currently taking place so that other providers may further pool their efforts. This section should also serve as a collection of ideas that may be implemented throughout different areas of the Southeast Region.

Existing Coordination Efforts

Transportation providers and human services agencies had opportunities throughout the working group meetings, public meetings, and through the public survey to report on steps they currently take to coordinate amongst themselves.

Of the five transportation providers that attended Working Group Meeting #1, one reported that they currently coordinate their services with another agency. This agency reported that they visit different agencies when they are out in the field to ensure they are familiar with staff at other agencies.

Multiple agencies described active relationships between them and regional development agencies in the Region during Working Group Meeting #2. LIFT Transit and KATS noted that they have an active grant with KEDDO's Area Agency on Aging to provide cost-free rides to seniors in KEDDO's jurisdiction. SORTS noted that they have a comparable relationship with SODA.

Additionally, members of this Region's working group are coordinating with **Pelivan** and other Northeast Region providers to implement the PICK (Pelivan, Inca [JAMM], Cimarron, KI BOIS) program.⁴ PICK operates in 21 counties in rural eastern Oklahoma, providing curbside service between 5PM – 9PM Monday to Thursday, 5PM – 10PM on Friday, and between 10AM – 2PM on weekends. It currently operates using Via technology. Users may schedule rides via their computer, smart device, or by calling a telephone number. Originally started among Northeast Region agencies, agencies statewide are coordinating to expand its use.

Active Transportation

Transit agencies typically are not directly responsible for planning, designing, and maintaining active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Nonetheless, active transportation infrastructure has a direct impact on the attractiveness of public transit and the ability of transit users to reach their final destination. For example, a transit user who takes a demand-response trip to a centrally located, downtown area may wish to alight at one destination and use sidewalks or bike lanes to circulate among multiple clustered places. Given the lack of direct control that transit agencies have over this infrastructure, it behooves transit agencies to coordinate with agencies who do to ensure that active transportation infrastructure meets the needs of transit users.

Statewide Active Transportation Resources

ODOT is currently developing its first Active Transportation Plan, with the plan tentatively being completed in 2023. As part of that process, ODOT is working with stakeholders to understand their active transportation needs and what statewide policies and resources can be used to guide state or local active transportation efforts. More information, including how to participate, can be found on ODOT's website.⁵

BikeOklahoma⁶ is a statewide bicycle advocacy organization with the goal of promoting safe bicycling throughout Oklahoma. They have a number of events, initiatives, and other resources that may be helpful for transit agencies

⁴ <http://okpicktransportation.com/>

⁵ <https://www.okatp.org/>

⁶ https://www.okbike.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=86708

wishing to promote active transportation in their communities, including links to guidebooks on creating bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees.⁷

During working groups and the public meeting, no agency in the Region has indicated that they coordinate with ODOT or other local agencies, committees, or other bodies on active transportation matters.

Employment Transportation

Public transit often provides vital trips to current employment or employment opportunities. Aside from public transit, various other human services agencies may also provide employment transportation or employment-related services, creating an opportunity to coordinate services in a way that meets the needs of riders in an effective and efficient manner. No survey respondents indicated that they provide employment-related services in the Southeast Region.

Table 11 below summarizes agencies providing employment-related services in the Southeast Region. The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) and the Chickasaw Nation are the two primary agencies that reported providing employment-related services. OKDRS provides a number of services to members of the public, especially individuals with disabilities and others who need assistance achieving independent living. These services include job readiness and employment training, which can include services such as vocational education, career planning, and health screenings. Additionally, the Chickasaw Nation provides employment-related transportation on a sliding-scale fee to the public.

Public transit agencies and human services transportation providers should also consider identifying employers with employees who may need reliable transit service in order to get to work. Partnerships with employers are an opportunity to raise revenue while meeting a consistent and reoccurring need for employment-related transportation. At the moment, no transit agency in the Southeast Region has indicated that they currently have partnerships with employers.

Table 11: Agencies Providing Employment-related Services

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	User Model	Phone #	Contact Email
Chickasaw Nation	Counties: Johnston, Marshall, Love, Custer, Jefferson, Stevens, Murray, Pontotoc, Garvin, McClain, Grady, Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma	Variable Hours, Monday - Friday	Both closed-and open-door services	580-610-6453	angie.gilliam@chickasaw.net
Department of Rehabilitation Services	Southeast Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	N/A	N/A	N/A
Enterprise Commute	Statewide	N/A	Closed-door	N/A	Allen.Robbins@ehi.com

⁷ https://www.okbike.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=86708&module_id=154201

Unmet Transportation Needs & Gaps

ODOT conducted a series of activities to involve stakeholders and members of the public as much as possible in identifying service gaps and unmet needs. These activities included the following:

- Working group meetings made up of key transportation providers in the Region
- A working group prioritization survey, wherein working group members prioritized the various gaps and unmet needs below
- A virtual public meeting
- An online survey

The working group meetings and public meeting were held on the following dates:

- Working Group Meeting #1: May 9, 2023
- Working Group Meeting #2: July 12, 2023
- Working Group Meeting #3: August 28, 2023
- Public Meeting: June 21, 2023

ODOT made a public survey available online via SurveyMonkey from June 6th to July 21st that asked for information from organizations and individuals regarding their transportation service gaps and unmet needs, particularly those of seniors and people with disabilities. The survey received 1,561 total responses across all regions, 838 of which were from individuals and 723 of which were from organizations. Among respondents who could definitively be assigned to a coordinated planning region, 41 individuals and 70 agencies from the Southeast Region responded.

The subjects covered in the outreach activities described above generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Transit User: needs of users to ensure accessibility of the transportation service
- Service Area: general areas that services are needed in as well as specific types of destinations
- Service Schedule: when service is provided and length of trips
- Outreach & Awareness: accessibility of information about transportation service
- Service Quality: various qualitative aspects of transportation service

Within each category, individual gaps or unmet needs were prioritized by assigning a high/medium/low priority rating. These ratings are based on feedback received from participants in the various outreach activities conducted, with the working group prioritization survey being the primary determinant of priority.

Table 12 displays a high-level summary of categories, gaps/unmet needs, and associated ratings, while the following sections describe the feedback received in each category in more detail. These sections and tables are meant to identify the struggles and limitations that providers face so that goals and strategies can be developed to address them.

Table 12: Compiled Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation			X
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths			X
	Weekday Early Morning Service		X	
	Weekday Business Hours			X
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service	X		
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)		X	
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.			X
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility			X
	More Frequent Service	X		
More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities			X	

Summary and Prioritization of Gaps and Unmet Needs

Transit User

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding the unmet needs of transit users and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Transit User gaps/unmet needs were generally not a high priority for providers and planning agencies, with none of them receiving a high priority rating. Familiarity with the transit system and travel assistance received medium priority ratings, while lower costs and door-to-door transportation received low priority ratings.

Few provider, agency, and individual written responses concerned familiarity with the transit system itself, nor was familiarity a primary concern among survey responses. Regardless, agencies should continue to monitor comments they receive from riders and other stakeholders to determine if issues arise where increasing familiarity with the system is warranted. Outreach and engagement will continue to be critical to ensuring familiarity with the system, and coordination with and support from ODOT and other transit agencies is a key resource in doing so.

Transit providers report that they have experienced travel assistance challenges, with passengers who appear to need a personal care assistant (PCA) not having one or bringing PCAs who are in worse physical shape than the rider. At the same time, transit providers do not have staff on hand that can act as PCAs. While operators are

generally willing and physically able to aid riders, this often means taking a vehicle out of service for an increased period of time, particularly at medical establishments, which is difficult to justify from an operational perspective. Partnerships with human service agencies throughout the Southeast Region are a potential opportunity to match riders with PCAs.

Southeast Region agencies are providing door-to-door service on an as-needed basis, fulfilling their responsibility to do so without fundamentally altering the character of their service. With that said, providing door-to-door service involves additional costs and time compared to curb-to-curb service. Given already limited budgets and challenges in hiring/retaining operators and other staff, agencies need monetary and other support from ODOT and human services agencies to provide door-to-door service more easily.

Table 13: Transit User Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation			X

Service Area

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding service area gaps and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Priorities assigned to the various Service Area gaps/unmet needs varied, with access to jobs and medical establishments receiving high ratings and therefore being priorities. Generally increased service area and improved service at origins/destinations received medium ratings, while accessibility and trip lengths received low ratings.

In general, providers, agencies, and the public were most concerned with increasing service to rural areas outside the primary cities and towns in the Southeast Region. Transit providers noted that there are medical services in Texas that they frequently receive requests for, though they struggle to fulfill those requests because Texas does not provide funding for the Texas portions of routes, thus Oklahoma providers must eat those costs. Similarly, providers struggle to receive reimbursement for trips within Oklahoma that are nonetheless outside their service areas.

Stakeholders provided a variety of general areas and specific locations that they have either struggled to receive service in or receive service to. General areas frequently mentioned, include rural areas around Ardmore, Duncan, Velma, Moore, Oklahoma City, rural areas around Kenefic, and Sulphur. Specific destinations include: the Food and Resource Center of Southern Oklahoma, the Tyson Plant, Reese Foods, and Cardinal Fiberglass. While some of these areas and destinations are not within the Southeast Region itself, they are nonetheless places that people wish to go to fulfill their daily needs.

Providers noted that they have previously offered more regular service in particularly rural areas, including some of the locations noted above. However, due to limited funding and resulting driver shortages, they have had to reduce service. Additionally, trips to rural areas and longer trips to places like Oklahoma City are generally more expensive, stretching already thin budgets. As such, agencies in the Southeast Region need increased funding in two forms: dedicated, regular funding that can be used for operations and short-term, large funding sources for upfront capital costs. Both increased operations and capital costs are critical to expanding operations initially and maintaining it into the future.

There is also a need to coordinate trips across service area boundaries, such that passengers can be transferred to other agencies for different legs of their trips. This would help better serve passengers who require service to places like Oklahoma City. At the same time, trips out to the borders of service areas are often expensive, and it is often

difficult to match passengers with other passengers going to the same destination. This further highlights the need for increased funding of transit agencies.

Table 14: Service Area Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		

Service Schedule

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding service schedule gaps and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

The priorities assigned to Service Schedule gaps/unmet needs varied, with weekend service being a priority for providers and planning agencies. Weekday service outside typical business hours received medium ratings, late weekends, business hour weekdays, and shorter trips lengths received low ratings.

A lack of service outside business hours as well as differing lead time requirements for scheduling were scheduling challenges highlighted by providers. While providers would like to coordinate to provide service outside of typical business hours, few provide early or late service that can be coordinated around.

Multiple human service agencies that would like to purchase trips from transportation providers also noted that differences in lead time requirements for scheduling appointments made public transit services cumbersome to use. Particularly when human service agencies would like to schedule appointments for separate legs of trips through separate providers, they have found this difficult.

Tight budgets and resulting workforce shortages are again key limiting factors in the ability of agencies to provide service outside typical business hours. Agencies struggle to maintain adequate staffing for typical business hour service due to being unable to provide competitive wages, a challenge that is even more pressing when hiring staff for service outside typical business hours. People are generally unwilling to work during these times and would need to be incentivized to do so, which agencies cannot do.

Southeast Region providers will need increased funding to expand service outside typical business hours, both to cover upfront capital costs and ongoing operational costs. The need for funding will apply whether service is directly provided as part of agencies' regular service or through programs such as the PICK program, which utilizes ride hailing technology to connect drivers with passengers in the evenings. Critically, programs such as PICK need upfront program development costs to fund acquisition of vehicles and technology as well as long-term, dedicated funding that will ensure continuity of service.

Table 15: Service Schedule Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths			X
	Weekday Early Morning Service		X	
	Weekday Business Hours			X
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service	X		
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X

Outreach and Awareness

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding outreach and awareness and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Outreach and Awareness was generally not a primary concern for Southeast Region providers and planning agencies, with better information on services receiving a medium priority rating and the remaining gaps/unmet needs receiving low priority ratings.

Southeast Region agencies generally have social media presences and are active participants in local human services coalitions, which are opportunities to directly interact with regional stakeholders and raise the profile of their transit service. One provider in the Region also has an app on which they do promotions and allow for ride scheduling.

With that said, transit providers are struggling to maintain adequate back-office staffing levels in addition to operators. As a result, existing staff are being stretched thin with fulfilling their day-to-day operational duties as well as being tasked with conducting public outreach. Agencies need more staff, particularly dedicated public engagement staff, to ensure that operational duties and public engagement both receive the attention that they deserve. Given limited budgets, agencies will need increased funding to hire more staff, particularly long-term dedicated funding to ensure that additional staff can be maintained over a long period of time.

Additionally, no agencies reported that they conduct outreach to employers, nor do they have contracts with employers to provide rides. To the extent that this is true, this is an opportunity to fulfill a need for employment-related transportation in the Southeast Region while raising additional revenue. With that said, increased coordination between transit agencies and employers is another task that increased staffing, and therefore increased funding, will facilitate.

Similarly, multiple agencies reported that they have active grants with development districts in the Southeast Region to provide rides. Agencies who do not currently have these types of relationships should be seeking out these opportunities, as they represent another opportunity to serve people with disabilities and seniors while raising revenue. Agencies who already have these agreements should seek to maintain them.

Table 16: Outreach and Awareness Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X

Service Quality

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding gaps in service quality and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

The priorities assigned to Service Quality gaps/unmet needs were generally low, with the exception of more frequent service, which received a high priority rating. Additionally, lack of transit amenities and improved reliability received medium priority ratings.

Agencies report that they are generally able to provide immediate demand-response service in core cities and towns, around vehicle dispatch locations. Although, lead times may be necessary when riders either live in more rural areas or are requesting rides to farther destinations. It is more difficult to combine multiple riders with fewer trips. As a result, more vehicles must be used, thus stretching already limited pools of vehicles and drivers.

Frequency and reliability are interrelated; the ability of Southeast Region agencies to provide these aspects of service is ultimately dependent on staffing and funding levels (absent other operational challenges). Multiple providers have reported that they struggle to hire and retain drivers, which has decreased their ability to maintain

core business-hour service. Without additional drivers, they cannot improve frequencies, such as decreasing the lead time with which trips must be scheduled, nor will reliability improve.

Uber-like on-demand service is commonly mentioned by human services agencies and members of the public. With short lead times, vehicle tracking, and intuitive interfaces, Uber-like services offer a high level of service that is convenient to use. The technology allows vehicles to be tracked in real-time, which improves both the ability of agencies to respond to unforeseen issues, increasing actual reliability, and it allows riders to see the status of their vehicles, increasing perceived reliability. No agencies in the Southeast Region offer scheduling on their website, and few offer scheduling via mobile applications. Uber-like services are often opportunities to offer these options to riders.

Transit agencies also would like to implement Uber-like service, however they need increased funding to do so. As mentioned before, agencies struggle to maintain adequate staffing levels, which limits the ability to increase service frequencies and administer new technologies. These technologies also require upfront acquisition and ongoing costs that agencies will need assistance with, such as upgrades to AVL systems and acquisition of new software. Agencies need increased funding to use these technologies, both in long-term operational funding and short-term project development funding.

Transit amenities, particularly shelters and benches, were requested by human services agencies and members of the public. While typically these amenities apply to traditional fixed-route providers, of which there are none in the Southeast Region, these amenities are still important to the health and comfort of demand-response riders. Southeast Region providers should look for opportunities to partner with destinations that they frequently serve, such as large hospitals, to install benches, shelters, and other amenities that make demand-response transit a more comfortable and attractive mode of transportation.

Table 17: Service Quality Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)		X	
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.			X
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility			X
	More Frequent Service	X		
	More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities			X

Statewide Needs

By virtue of its participation in the planning processes for all five regions, ODOT is positioned to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities that are of statewide concern. Described below are challenges that were frequently cited by agencies across multiple regions, indicating the severity of these challenges and the fundamental importance of them to providing transit service.

Technology

Technology was commonly cited as a need across different regions, particularly with regard to dispatching, scheduling, and the staffing necessary to implement new transit technology.

New, innovative dispatching software was identified as a desire in multiple regions, particularly with new software platforms offering improved scheduling, route assignments, and data tracking. Newer software platforms also present opportunities for agencies to coordinate across agency boundaries. When multiple agencies with contiguous

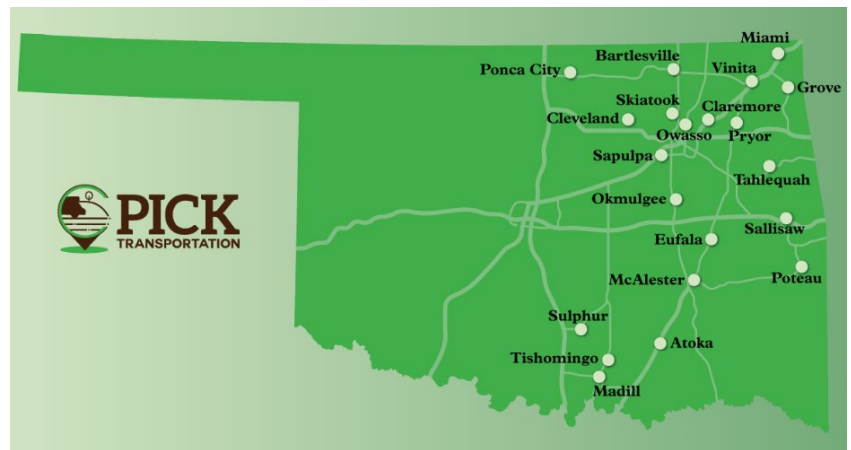
service areas and the requisite coordination agreements use interoperable dispatching software, agencies can coordinate interagency service in a more efficient and flexible manner.

Similarly, **app-based scheduling** was a common desire of both transportation providers, human services agencies, and members of the public. Given the proliferation of smartphones and other digital technologies, app-based scheduling is seen as the next step beyond the call-center systems that most agencies in Oklahoma currently use. Certain software products include integrated dispatching and user-facing scheduling platforms, ensuring complete and seamless communication between dispatch, drivers, and clients. Beyond convenience, smartphone apps are a way to further increase accessibility of scheduling systems, such as for those with speech impairments who may not be comfortable using the phone or other accessible scheduling options provided.

New technologies present lucrative opportunities, though transit providers noted that **hiring and retaining staff who are trained in these technologies** is a current challenge. Having trained staff members is critical to ensuring that current operations can be sustained with new technology platforms as well as training new or existing staff members who are not yet familiar with these new technologies.

While there are barriers to using new technology to enhance transit service, this has not stopped transit agencies from initiating grassroots efforts on their own behalf. In response to demand for afterhours and weekend service, providers in the Northeast Region began the PICK (Pelivan, Inca [JAMM], Cimmaron, KI BOIS) program.⁸ PICK operates in 21 counties in rural eastern Oklahoma, providing curb-to-curb service between 5PM – 10PM on weekdays and between 10AM - 2PM on weekends. It currently operates via the Uber app but is being transitioned over to Via technology. Users may schedule rides via their computer, smart device, or by calling a telephone number. Efforts are underway to expand PICK to the rest of Oklahoma’s rural transit agencies.

Figure 13: PICK Transportation Service Area (Source: PICK Website)



Funding

Many agencies described funding challenges that ultimately undergird every current activity or any prospective initiatives. Agencies exclusively viewed their current funding levels as a constraint on their ability to meet demand for public transit on a day-to-day basis, as well as a constraint on the implementation of any new or innovative initiatives or technologies.

As previously discussed, many agencies wish to implement new dispatching and scheduling software and to hire the requisite personnel to train others on these systems and operate them. In general, **agencies are struggling to hire and retain staff**, both for day-to-day operations (drivers, etc.) and to operate new technologies. The fundamental limiting factor on agencies’ ability to hire new staff is a lack of funding. Wages are simply too low to reliably attract operators and other backend staff who are critical to day-to-day operations, and agencies do not have the funding to offer competitive wages. Agencies have noted a clear trend of operators earning their commercial driver’s license (CDL), working for their agency for a short period, then leveraging their CDL for higher-paying employment.

Funding also acts as a fundamental constraint on the level and breadth of service that agencies can provide. Agencies can easily provide affordable service within a short distance of major towns/cities and near their dispatch

⁸ <http://okpicktransportation.com/>

locations, but due to how rural much of Oklahoma is, trips outside core service areas quickly escalate in cost due to their length. This forces agencies to make difficult decisions, such as whether to provide these trips at all or to charge significantly higher fares, which may be unaffordable for some clients.

Additionally, **agencies' service schedules are typically limited to normal business hours (8AM – 5PM)**. While most trips necessarily occur during this period due to the nature of those trips (employment, shopping, etc.), agencies still note considerable early morning, afterhours, and weekend demand that they are generally unable to meet due to limited funding. Schedule challenges are also related to the workforce challenges that agencies are experiencing, as operators are typically not willing to drive far outside of business hours. Some operators may be incentivized to do, such as through increased wages, but this is unlikely given funding constraints.

SoonerRide

SoonerRide plays a pivotal role in ensuring that seniors and people with disabilities are able to access essential medical services and have been a key partner for rural transit agencies, who enter into contracts with SoonerRide to provide NEMT. Multiple agencies statewide have reported coordination challenges with SoonerRide that are impacting the ability of rural transit agencies to ensure that the medical transportation needs of their clients are being met. Specifically, that clients are not being informed when their SoonerRide contracted trip will not be provided despite recent implementation of text notifications, nor are rural agencies being notified that this is the case so they can fulfill the ride themselves. This communication challenge should be addressed to ensure that SoonerRide and rural transit clients can readily access medical services.

Agencies have additional concerns regarding the ongoing Medicaid reenrollment process, whereby Medicaid users may be stricken from the Medicaid roles due to changes in income or other changes in status that affect their eligibility and therefore their ability to utilize SoonerRide. Agencies are concerned that disenrollment may lead to individuals being unable to access medical care due to lack of transportation and the attendant burden this may place on rural transit agencies. Additionally, agencies are concerned about the degree of communication between SoonerCare and clients about their eligibility, with some clients being unknowingly disenrolled and thereby it being a surprise when they are unable to access SoonerRide.

Goals

During Working Group Meeting #3, working group members held a focused discussion on the goals that they would like to accomplish in the Southeast Region. This discussion included identifying agencies primarily responsible, supporting agencies, resources needed, and other critical aspects for accomplishing these goals. Working Group members were also encouraged to expand on the goals they would like to see for the Southeast Region during the review period of the draft Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Plan.

The following goals were identified by the Working Group and are discussed in further detail below:

- Goal 1: Streamline transportation services provided for riders 60 years of age and older.
- Goal 2: Improve service coordination between agencies.
- Goal 3: Eliminate eligibility barriers, such that more types of riders can use public transit services.
- Goal 4: Increase use of technology to enhance service provision.
- Goal 5: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers.

Goal 1: Streamline transportation services provided for riders 60 years of age and older.

Public transit plays a critical role in ensuring that seniors can meet their daily needs, including accessing medical care and engaging in shopping and other personal errands. Agencies require a variety of resources to expand their service offerings to seniors and provide sufficient accommodations such that seniors are comfortable using public transit.

Table 18 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southeast Working Group in pursuit of Goal 1.

Table 18: Goal 1 Strategy Summary

Goal 1 Strategies
Strategy 1.1: Expand training offerings and provide other support to drivers in how to best accommodate the needs of seniors.
Strategy 1.2: Find additional funding sources for providing transit to seniors.
Strategy 1.3: Identify ways that transit agencies can assist in connecting seniors with PCA services.

Seniors often have needs that must be met, and transit drivers frequently are a key actor in doing so. As such, they require specific training to understand the needs of seniors and how to meet them. Southeast Region agencies should investigate expanding their portfolio of training offerings for accommodating seniors on a region-wide basis, such that materials are readily accessible to all agencies in the Region. Existing training partners, or new training partners as needed, would be an invaluable resource in identifying critical training resources, whether they be classes, online resources, training manuals, or other options.

Given the region-wide need for training, mobility navigators would be a natural leader in identifying resources and connecting agencies with training providers, as well as assembling resources into an easy to access format. Similarly, area agencies on aging could assist in this process as well, given their deep expertise in working with seniors and wide networks for service providers for seniors.

Agencies in the Southeast Region also require additional funding to maintain current services to seniors as well as expand services. Some agencies still receive Title 3 funding through the Older American's Act; however, this funding is limited and should be supplemented from other sources. To the extent possible, partnerships with area agencies on aging, municipalities, and other entities who possess funding that can be put towards senior transportation should be explored. Likewise, additional funding that ODOT can provide, whether in the form of competitive or formula funding is welcome.

PCA services were noted as a priority for ensuring that the needs of seniors are met when using public transit. Transit agencies themselves are unlikely to be able to provide PCA services, however transit agencies may help seniors connect to PCA providers through their network. Similarly, area agencies on aging and other regional planning entities may help in referring seniors to PCA providers as needed.

Goal 2: Improve service coordination between agencies.

Enhanced service coordination will allow agencies to address the service-related challenges they face better than if they act alone, as well as open new service opportunities not previously available without coordinated service. For example, agencies with active coordination agreements can offload certain trips to other agencies when they cannot otherwise provide them. Additionally, agencies can transfer passengers at service area boundaries to enable longer-distance trips for customers.

Table 19 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southeast Working Group in pursuit of Goal 2.

Table 19: Goal 2 Strategy Summary

Goal 2 Strategies
Strategy 2.1: Establish coordinating agreements.
Strategy 2.2: Identify opportunities to transfer riders between agencies.
Strategy 2.3: Increase the sharing of information between agencies.

Agencies should work towards identifying locations in every county that can serve as transfer points, where agencies can transfer riders between services. These would increase the range that riders can take public transit. They do not require any improvements or other capital expenditures. They can be as simple as a parking lot, a safe street corner, or at different public institutions (e.g., a public library).

Doing so will require agencies to regularly enter the service areas of other agencies, potentially deeply. As such, agencies must also ensure that the requisite coordinating agreements are in place to ensure service is not duplicated and that costs can be allocated in a fair manner.

Achieving this goal will primarily depend on the openness of transit agencies to coordinate with each other in this way. Agencies must cooperate in identifying locations that meet the needs of agencies that will be using them. Similarly, agencies must be open to establishing coordinating agreements that meet the needs of all agencies involved, such that transfer locations can be reached in the first place.

Agencies must also work with local stakeholders and maintain relationships with them to ensure that transit locations can be implemented and maintained long-term. For example, if transit agencies wish to use the parking lot of a public library as a transfer location, an agreement must be gained from the public library for use of their facilities, as well as to ensure that the needs of the library are met.

Increased sharing of information between agencies will be critical to improved service coordination. Both technology and continual maintenance of relationships between agencies are two ways that information exchange can be increased. In terms of relationships, agencies must continually correspond with each other and ensure that they are familiar with staff at other agencies, such they can readily call upon each other for assistance when needed.

Developing an online map or dashboard was identified as a way of creating a unified reference for transit agency information, such as information on service area and other organizational characteristics. Agencies, mobility navigators, and others would be able use this platform to improve coordination efforts amongst themselves, such as by readily accessing information on who referrals can be made to.

Mobility navigators will play a critical role in facilitating relationships between agencies as well as being a central resource for agencies to refer to. The ability of mobility navigators to achieve this will depend on strong integration of mobility navigators into the day-to-day operations of Southeast Region agencies. Doing so will expose mobility navigators directly to the challenges that agencies face and allow mobility navigators to gain the relevant background information they need to act as a technical resource for the agencies. Having a strong understanding of transit in general as well as the operations of specific agencies will allow mobility navigators to better connect agencies to each other as appropriate.

Goal 3: Eliminate eligibility barriers, such that more types of riders can use public transit services.

Southeast Region providers expressed a desire to expand eligibility to senior/people with disability transportation, such that members of the general public will be able access these services. Doing so would ultimately make this service more competitive, given that the pool of potential riders would be wider.

Table 20 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southeast Working Group in pursuit of Goal 3.

Table 20: Goal 3 Strategy Summary

Goal 3 Strategies
Strategy 3.1: Identify funding opportunities that can enable providers to expand eligibility criteria.
Strategy 3.2: Identify grant opportunities that can assist in expanding eligibility criteria.
Strategy 3.3: Ensure coordination agreements are in place that allow providers to transport the general public.

Providing expanded service to the general public will require additional funding to ensure that local match requirements can be met. As such, agencies must work towards identifying funding sources that can be used to do so. Potential partners include municipalities, who may be willing to assist with covering the local match for providing service within their municipal boundaries. Employers are another possible partner, who may be willing to contract with transit providers to provide employment transportation to their employees. Agencies should also investigate grant opportunities. These can range in their source, from Federal agencies, state agencies, to various nonprofits and other quasi-governmental entities.

Coordination agreements and related policies should also be examined to ensure they are supportive of providing service to the general public. Some agencies may be unable to expand their eligibility to include the public, however nearby agencies may be able to provide certain public trips, say if the origin or destination is close to the boundary between two agencies. A properly structured coordination agreement could enable this to take place.

Goal 4: Increase use of technology to enhance service provision.

New technologies can greatly improve transit service provision through increased efficiency in various processes (planning, scheduling, etc.) and enabling greater coordination between agencies. Particularly when used in coordination with other agencies, technologies hold great promise in improving service delivery in ways that can outweigh the costs of implementing technology.

Table 21 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southeast Working Group in pursuit of Goal 4.

Table 21: Goal 4 Strategy Summary

Goal 4 Strategies
Strategy 4.1: Identify opportunities to implement technology into day-to-day service provision, such as in dispatching, scheduling, and vehicle inventory management.
Strategy 4.2: Leverage group procurement when procuring new technology to achieve system interoperability and cost-savings.
Strategy 4.3: Advertise that agencies are implementing new technologies as a way to demonstrate the ease of use when accessing transit.

Southeast Region agencies should work towards identifying opportunities for implementing new technology into their day-to-day activities. In particular, more advanced dispatching and scheduling software has the potential to streamline multiple transit functions, including recordkeeping and driver assignments. Agencies should also consider supporting technologies necessary to implement different software programs, such as adding GPS-capabilities to vehicles to allow vehicles to be monitored by dispatchers, other transit staff, and mobility navigators.

New technology also enables agencies to improve the experience of users, particularly by making scheduling more intuitive. Mobile phone applications and web applications are familiar to many transit users, or transit users may be taught to use these interfaces. These applications need not necessarily replace traditional phone-based scheduling. Rather, they may supplement phone-based scheduling, which ultimately offers more choice and flexibility to transit users.

Associated advertising and awareness campaigns can be paired with the implementation of new technology to both educate users on how to use the platforms as well as to demonstrate the advances that public transit is making, thereby enhancing its competitiveness. Agencies may conduct training with users, hold open houses at senior centers and other service provider locations, or post on social media to spread awareness of technology.

Group procurement represents an opportunity to collectively acquire software, hardware, and other new technologies at prices that otherwise would not be feasible if procured individually. Additionally, it would enable agencies to acquire technology that is natively interoperable with the technology used by other agencies, which facilitates direct coordination between agencies.

Transit agencies will be the primary party responsible for identifying opportunities, as they have the greatest understanding of their daily needs and will ultimately be using the software. This may involve researching different available technologies, speaking with other agencies to understand their needs (such as through the Working Group), and meeting with vendors for demos.

Transit agencies and ODOT must work closely to ensure that group procurement is supported, particularly if done as part of a statewide technology procurement. Similarly, transit agencies pooling their efforts independent of ODOT will need to work collectively to identify their needs, investigate different technologies, and select vendors. OTA may also play a supporting role in identifying and evaluating different vendors.

Mobility navigators may play a supporting role in identifying new technologies, including by doing research themselves and convening discussions among different providers. Similarly, OTA may be a resource given its coordination among all transit agencies in Oklahoma. ODOT may also play a supporting role in evaluating new technologies and identifying potential funding sources to acquire technology.

Goal 5: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers.

Challenges hiring and retaining drivers were common in the Southeast Region and were identified as a key focus. Addressing these challenges will help alleviate day-to-day operational challenges that agencies face as well as set the stage for level of service improvement in the future.

Table 22 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southeast Working Group in pursuit of Goal 5.

Table 22: Goal 5 Strategy Summary

Goal 5 Strategies
Strategy 5.1: Identify new recruitment opportunities.
Strategy 5.2: Identify ways to improve driver pay and benefits.

Different strategies will ultimately be necessary to both recruit and retain drivers. In terms of recruiting new drivers, it is critical to maximize the reach of recruiting activities, including by identifying previously unutilized recruitment venues. These may include technology and vocational centers, Workforce Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, and diversion programs. Reaching potential drivers through a diverse array of venues will increase the chance of identifying suitable candidates.

Driving for transit agencies must also be made more attractive. Two primary concerns identified by Working Group members revolve around pay and work schedules, both of which can significantly affect the attractiveness of jobs. As such, ways to improve both of these aspects must be identified. Agencies must coordinate with each other as well as other planning agencies throughout the Southeast Region to investigate and implement ways to do so, especially novel funding sources. For example, novel funding sources may allow agencies to increase the hourly wage of drivers on top of the base wage directly provided by agencies. Similarly, retention and referral bonuses may be possible given new funding, which would enhance both recruitment and retention.

The Southeast Region Coordinated Task Force

ODOT and Southeast Region transportation providers worked in concert to establish a coordinated mobility network to maximize participation and coordination by transportation providers and members of the public. This included the Southeast Region Working Group, interchangeably referred to as the Southeast Region Coordinated Task Force, consisting of ODOT personnel and transportation provider staff conducting working group meetings to identify challenges that providers are facing and to foster greater coordination amongst members of the network. Additionally, ODOT and the Southeast Region Working Group held a public meeting to solicit additional feedback from organizational stakeholders and members of the public.

Working Group/Task Force

The coordinated planning region held three working group meetings for the development of the 2023 Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Plan. These meetings consisted of polling, open discussion, and presentations by ODOT to identify the most pressing issues facing participating providers and solutions that may help address these issues.

Members of the Working Group voted on and selected a lead agency in April/May of 2023, whose responsibilities are to:

- Facilitate regular outreach.
- Host at least one meeting per year to update data and information in the plan.
- Maintain and make available planning process documentation.
- Lead stakeholders through reviews and updates of the plan.
- Submit the final Southeast Region Coordinated Transportation Plan to ODOT.

SORTS was selected as the lead agency for the Southeast Region. The Southeast Region Working Group was composed of the following agencies and individuals:

Table 23: Working Group Members

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Tanya Gleghorn	Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS, Lead Agency)	Kara James	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO)
Bethany Anderson	Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS, Lead Agency)	Charla Sloan	KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS)
Misty Knoeppel	Call-A-Ride Public Transit (CAR)	Jeannie McMillin	LIFT Community Action Agency (LIFT Transit)
Angie Gilliam	Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	Steve Mills	South Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SCORTPO) / Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA)
Johnny James	Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit	Kyle Henry	SCORTPO/SODA
LaQuita Thornley	JAMM Transit	Joye Angel	SCORTPO/SODA
Erica Pogue	JAMM Transit	Teri Kaleiohi	SODA, Area on Aging (SODA AAA)
Samantha Humphreys	Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO)	Todd O'Neal	SCORTPO/SODA

The following sub-sections provide dates and high-level agendas for each working group meeting.

Working Group Meeting #1

Working Group Meeting #1 was held on May 9, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #1 were to familiarize working group members with the 5310 program and working group process, gain a broad understanding of challenges and existing coordination among providers, select a lead agency, and provide additional technical resources for members to draw upon.

Working Group Meeting #2

Working Group Meeting #2 was held on July 12, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #2 were to provide an interim update on the planning activities carried out prior to Working Group Meeting #2, set the stage for additional coordination activities prior to Working Group Meeting #3, and to have an in-depth discussion with working group members on activities they had carried out since the previous Coordinated Plans and initiatives they would like to take to improve service in the future.

ODOT provided summary-level findings from the public survey, public meeting, and Working Group Meeting #1, with a focus on the service characteristics and challenges that appeared to be of most importance based on these activities. This information was used as the basis for focused discussion on activities that providers and planning agencies have taken since the previous Coordinated Plans to improve their service. Meeting participants discussed challenges and successes they had faced in the past as well as improvements to service they would like to implement in the future. The discussion was structured to also identify challenges that participants may face in implementing these improvements and the resources that they would need to overcome these challenges.

Working Group Meeting #3

Working Group Meeting #3 was held on August 28, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #3 were to give working group members another opportunity to comment on the gaps and unmet needs in the Region, as well as develop goals and associated strategies.

ODOT highlighted specific sections of the Plan that Working Group members should prioritize during their review, including the **Unmet Transportation Needs & Gaps** section, and incorporated any feedback received during the meeting into this Plan. ODOT then facilitated an in-depth discussion of goals, strategies, responsible parties, required resources, and other aspects of goal development for the Region. This information, alongside information collected during a two-week review period following Working Group Meeting #3, was incorporated into this Plan.

Public Meeting

ODOT and the Southeast Region Working Group conducted a public meeting on June 21, 2023, which had 25 public attendees. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom and consisted of both presentations and discussions in the main Zoom meeting as well as smaller group discussions in breakout rooms facilitated by ODOT and WSP staff.

Members of the public, transit agencies, and human service agencies were afforded the opportunity to discuss mobility challenges facing seniors and people with disabilities. The following are the key challenges identified throughout the public meeting:

- **Lack of Coordination:** Transit providers described different reasons why a lack of coordination amongst each other has been inhibiting the mobility of seniors and people with disabilities. One agency described their service to dialysis providers as well outside typical business hours, starting as early as 3AM and ending as late as 10PM. This same provider believed that other providers were not aware of this service, leading to a lack of necessary coordination with providers who may be unable to provide service during these hours.
- **SoonerRide:** Transit providers and human service agencies reported challenges they have experienced with SoonerRide. They stated that SoonerRide has been cancelling scheduled trips and failing to notify the client or the transit agency in a timely manner.

- **Information:** Lack of information, especially for smaller counties, was identified as a major barrier to rural residents accessing public transit.
- **Service Schedule:** Services were described as stopping too early or not running early enough, such as for dialysis appointments scheduled atypically early or late. Riders struggled to schedule rides after 3PM for example. Additionally, weekend service was cited as a need, such as for people discharged from hospitals or Sunday services.
- **Service Area:** Participants experienced challenges crossing county lines, particularly when crossing into service areas of multiple providers. Similarly, participants reported struggling to schedule rides that go outside municipal boundaries or rides being prohibitively expensive when they do go outside municipal boundaries.
- **Ride Scheduling:** Human service agencies found the fact that different transit agencies had different lead time requirements for scheduling rides to be cumbersome. Riders also disliked the lack of flexibility from agencies that require riders to schedule rides multiple days in advance.
- **Hiring:** Multiple participants reported struggling to retain drivers, as compensation is higher for those with their commercial driver's license (CDL) outside of public transit.
- **ADA Accessibility:** Participants described anxiety regarding whether or not their vehicle would be ADA accessible, particularly when they were unfamiliar with the driver they were assigned.

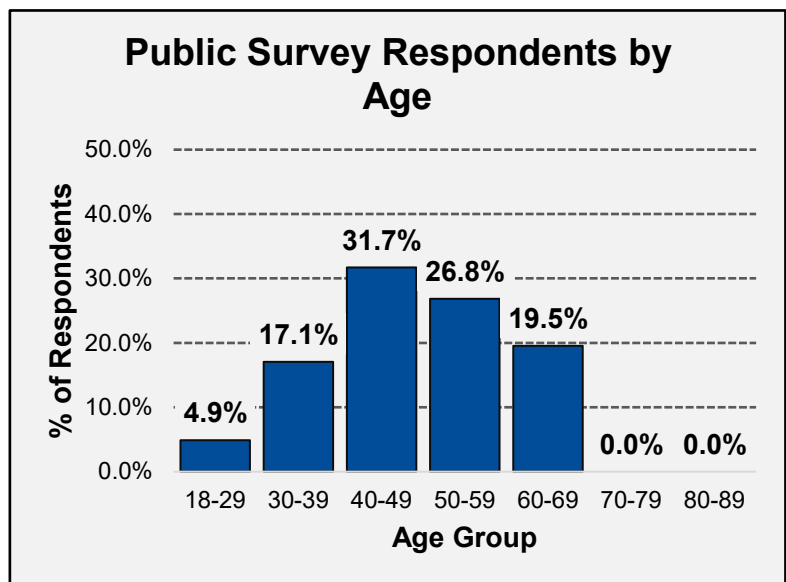
A copy of the public notice for the public meeting is included in the Appendix.

Public Survey

ODOT conducted an online public survey from June 6, 2023, to July 21, 2023, to gather deeper feedback from both members of the general public as well as to give agencies, including both transportation providers and other human services providers, an additional opportunity to identify unmet needs and potential coordination efforts. Respondents were asked to identify themselves according to the county they were located in, and project staff used this information to assign their feedback to specific regions. Summaries of the agency and public feedback received for this Region are summarized below.

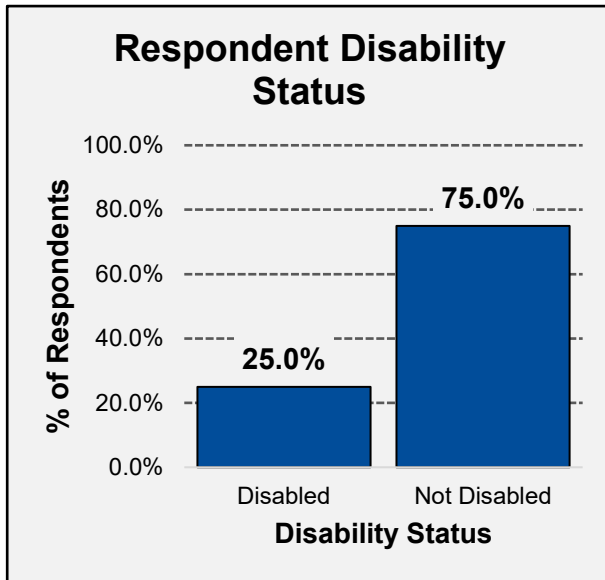
General Public Feedback

In total, 838 members of the general public responded to the public survey, 649 of which provided adequate information to sort them into a region. Of those, 41 respondents were from the Southeast Region. Seniors were disproportionately represented among survey respondents, with eight of 43 respondents being 60 years of age or older (19.5% of respondents).



People with disabilities were disproportionately represented relative to their statewide percentage. Ten of 40 respondents had a disability (25%) versus 16.3% for Oklahoma as a whole.

Respondents were asked about their day-to-day travel behavior to establish a basis for how they get around. Personal vehicles were the most common method of transportation used, with 84.8% of responses indicating personal vehicles (39 respondents). Rides from family and friends was the second most common mode, with 10.9% of responses. Private transportation services and biking/walking both received a single response.



How Survey Respondents Typically Get Around	
Personal vehicle	84.8%
Family/Friends	10.9%
Private Services	2.2%
Biking/Walking	2.2%
Public Transit	0.0%
Taxi/Cab	0.0%
Rideshare	0.0%

Public transit use and awareness was a key part of the survey to evaluate how agencies may best reach members of the public. Results of questions asking about paratransit use and knowledge of public transit indicate potential information and marketing gaps. No survey respondents reported using paratransit, while 51.2% indicated they do not and 48.8% indicated they are unsure or do not know what paratransit is. When asked if public transit is available in their area, 43.9% said no while 22.0% said they do not know. Thirty-four-point one percent (34.1%) confirmed that public transit is available in their area.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how they would find information about transit services or private transportation services. General internet searches were by far the primary way respondents find information about transportation services, while smartphone apps, phone calls to providers, and friends/family were the other common means of finding information. These ways of finding information are widely disparate and generally depend on knowing of public transit in the first place, underscoring the importance of having a broad-based marketing and information strategy to reach people through different means.

Public Transit Use and Awareness					
Do respondents use paratransit?		Is public transit available in respondents' areas?		How do respondents typically find information on public transit?	
Yes	0%	Yes	34.1%	Internet Search	46.0%
No	51.2%	No	43.9%	Friends/Family	17.5%
Not sure/Unsure what paratransit is	48.8%	Not sure	22.0%	Community Organizations	11.1%
				Phone Call to Provider	9.5%
				Smartphone Apps/Text for Info	9.5%
				Provider Websites	4.8%
				ODOT	1.6%

Discussion of the needs of current and future transit users is critical to understanding those needs and addressing them. Respondents were asked to describe challenges they face in using existing service, including unmet transportation needs and cases where lack of transportation has prevented them from accomplishing a day-to-day activity.

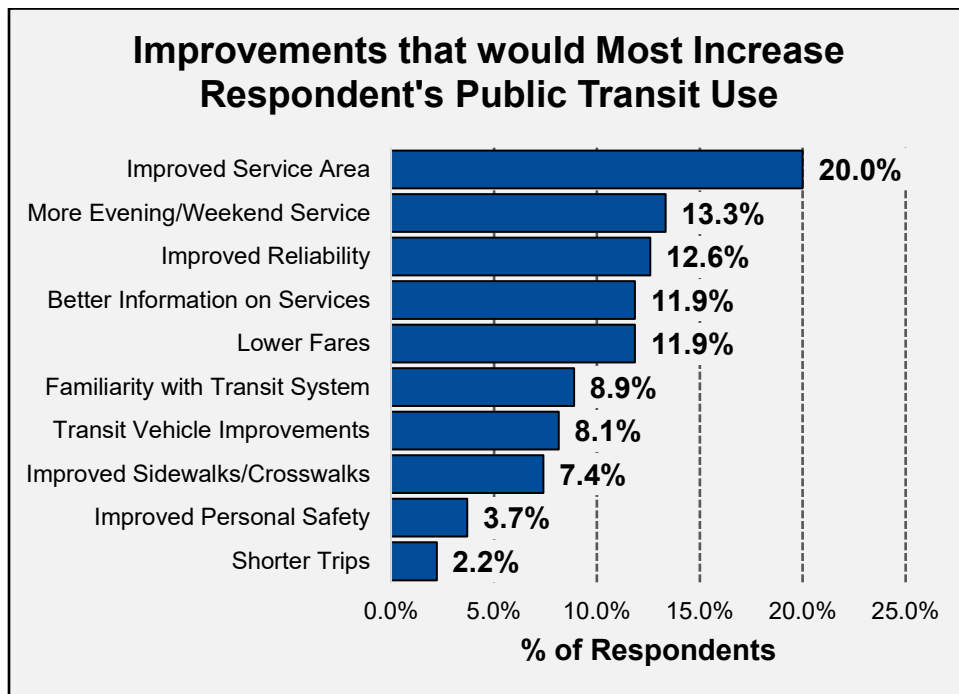
There were no significant standout unmet needs identified by members of the public. More services for people with disabilities/seniors and more locations served were the most common unmet needs. More frequent service was the second most common, while weekend service was the third. These responses underscore the importance of fundamental service characteristics (service area, frequency, schedule, etc.) to meeting the needs of people with disabilities and seniors, in addition to the general public.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify specific transportation needs. There were likewise no significant standout responses, although service schedule and services for seniors and people with disabilities were again primary concerns. Weekday business hour service was the most common need, while weekday early morning and weekend service were tied for the second most common needs. Travel assistance, door-to-door transportation, and wheelchair accessibility also had significant numbers of respondents indicating they were a need, reflective of how seniors and people with disabilities may need personal care attendants or similar assistance throughout their trip.

Respondents were prompted for cases when lack of transportation has prevented them from taking part in certain activities. Medical trips, agency services, employment (getting to work and seeking employment), and shopping/personal errands were the primary activities identified. Such a diverse range of activities is indicative of the importance of all of these activities in maintaining a well-balanced life.

Transportation Needs of Members of the Public			
Unmet Needs of Clients		Specific Needs of Clients	
Seniors/Disability Services	13.5%	Weekday Business Hour Service	16.2%
Locations Served	13.5%	Weekday Early Morning Service	14.1%
Service Frequency	12.6%	Weekend Service	14.1%
Weekend Service	11.7%	Travel Assistance	13.1%
Weekday Early Morning Service	10.8%	Door-to-door Transportation	12.1%
Weekday Late Night Service	10.8%	Wheelchair Accessibility	11.1%
Access to Medical Locations	10.8%	Last Mile Connections	10.1%
Access to Jobs	9.9%	Weekday Late Night Service	9.1%
Last Mile Connections	6.3%		

When prompted for improvements that would most increase their use of public transit, fundamental service characteristics were again the most common. Improved service area was the most common response, with service schedule-related factors (more evening/weekend service, more reliable service), and lower fares also being commonly cited improvements.



Agency Feedback

Four hundred and twenty-two (422) agencies responded to the agency survey who provided enough information to assign them to a region. Of those, 70 were from the Southeast Region. Sixty-nine (69) agencies responded with the type of agency they are with heavy representation from private, federal/state human services agencies (40.7%) and private nonprofit human services agencies (20.3%).

Agencies were also asked to identify the populations they primarily serve. A diverse mix of populations are served by respondents, with a subset of populations predominating but not overly so. The three most commonly identified populations were the general public (21.6%), low-income individuals (18.3%), and individuals with disabilities (15.1%).

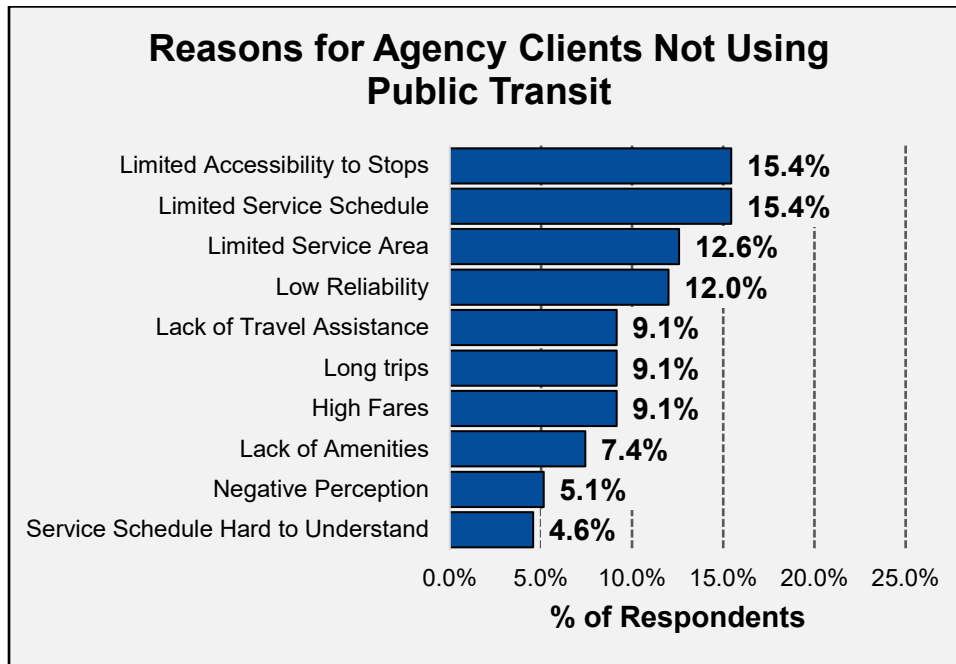
In terms of the services they provide, social services (38.9%) and health care (35.8%) are the primary services provided by respondents. Ten-point five percent (10.5%) of respondents also provide transportation for seniors and public transit.

Respondents were asked which types of transportation services they provide or purchase, with an option for not providing or purchasing any transportation. Respondents generally provided/purchased demand-response transportation (27.6% of responses) or did not provide/purchase transportation at all (39.8% of responses). Comparatively minor numbers of agencies provided/purchased recurring trips (16.3% of responses), special event transportation (9.2% of responses), or fixed-route services (7.1% responses). Among agencies providing transportation services directly, 17 do so using their own vehicles while six use non-agency-owned vehicles. An additional two agencies serve as coordinators for transportation services and three agencies provide transportation for human services agencies.

Agency Characteristics							
Agency Type		Populations Served		Services Provided		Transportation Services Provided/Purchased	
Federal/State Human Services	40.7%	General Public	21.6%	Social Services	38.9%	N/A	39.8%
Private, Nonprofit Human Services	20.3%	Low-income Individuals	18.3%	Health Care	35.8%	Demand-response	27.6%
Regional/State Government	16.9%	Seniors (65+ years)	15.1%	Public Transportation	10.5%	Recurring Trips	16.3%
County Government	10.2%	Individuals with Disabilities	13.3%	Senior/Disability Transportation	10.5%	Special Events	9.2%
Private, Nonprofit Transportation	5.1%	Veterans	10.1%	Economic Development	4.2%	Fixed-route	7.1%
Municipal Government	1.7%	Youth (17 years or younger)	10.1%				
Private, For-profit Transportation	1.7%	American Indians	9.6%				
Public Transit Authority	1.7%	Agency Clients Only	1.8%				
Tribal Transit	1.7%						

Agencies' vehicles are generally ADA-accessible, with 13 agencies reporting that the entirety of their fleets is ADA-accessible and 10 agencies with partially ADA-accessible fleets. Eight agencies noted that their fleets are not ADA-accessible.

Agencies were asked a number of questions to identify the challenges faced by and unmet needs of their clients. When asked why their clients do not use public transit, service schedule, service area, reliability, and accessibility to services were the most common reasons. Service schedule and service area are fundamental service characteristics that determine how useful transit service is, while accessibility pertains to how easy it is to reach service or interpret it. Reliability of service affects the confidence that riders have that their vehicle will be on time or available when they need it. All these aspects are important for high quality transit, as service must be appropriate to the needs of riders as well as accessible so that riders can reach the service in the first place.

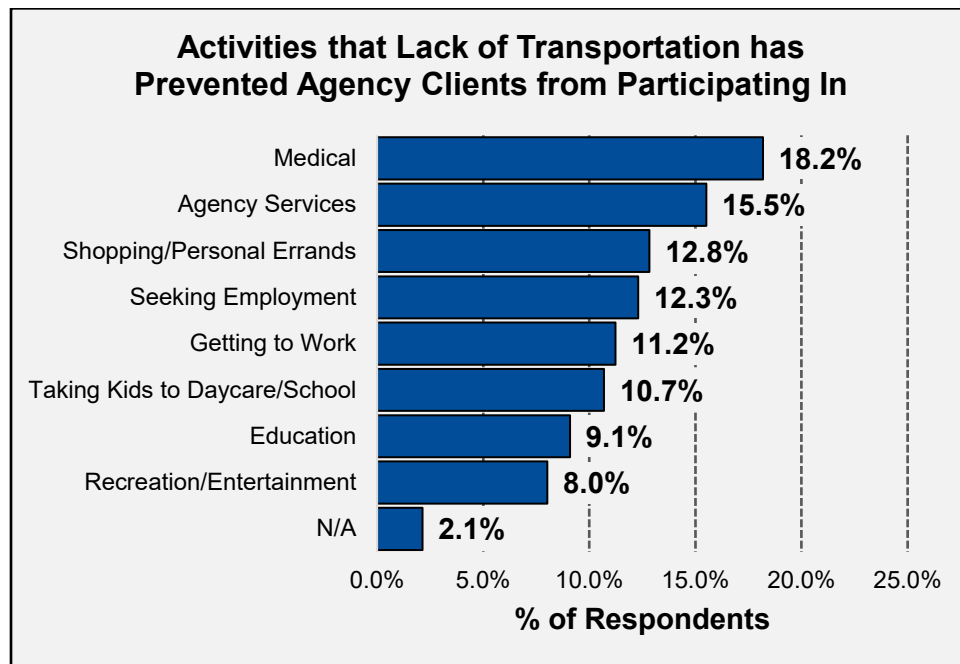


When asked about unmet transportation needs of agency clients, service schedule and service area were again primary concerns, while services for seniors and individuals were also a concern. More locations served was the most common unmet need, while services for seniors/people with disabilities and more frequent service were the second and third most common, respectively. As before, transportation service must go where riders want it to at the right time to be attractive as a transportation service. Similarly, seniors and individuals often require special accommodations to fully utilize transit services, a concern identified in this question.

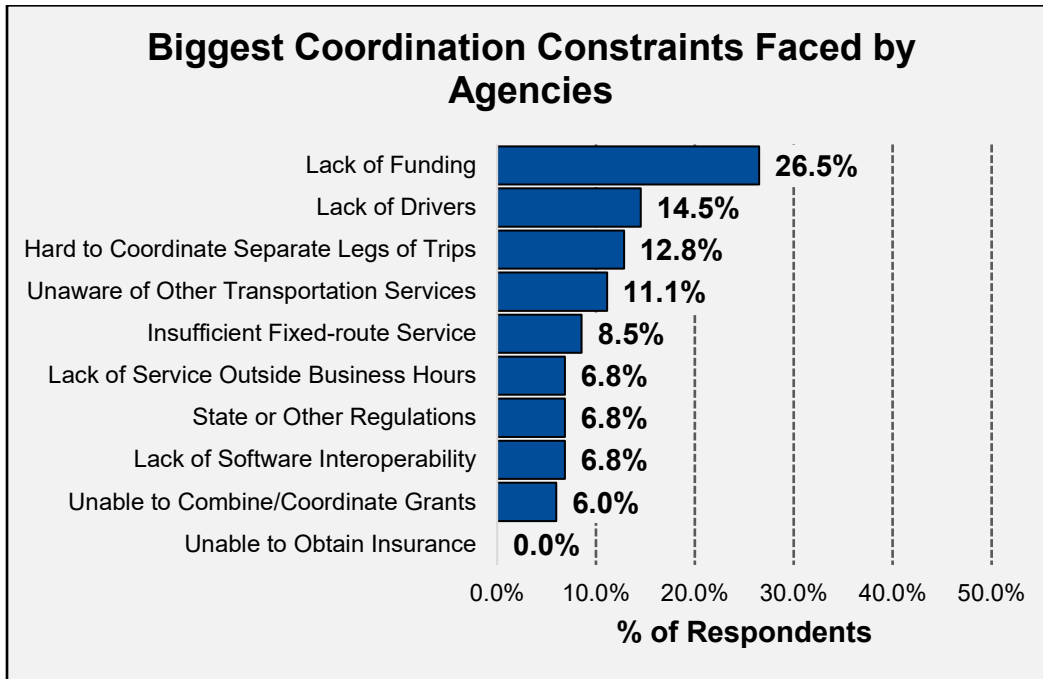
Agencies were also asked about specific transportation needs that their clients have. Similar to other questions, service schedule and services for seniors and people with disabilities were the most common needs. Travel assistance was the most common need, while weekday business hour service was the second most common need. Wheelchair accessibility and door-to-door transportation were each the third most common need.

Transportation Needs of Agency Clients			
Unmet Needs of Clients		Specific Needs of Clients	
Locations Served	14.7%	Travel Assistance	16.8%
Senior/Disability Services	14.7%	Weekday Business Hour Service	15.2%
Service Frequency	13.0%	Door-to-door Transportation	14.1%
Weekday Early Morning Service	11.9%	Wheelchair Accessibility	14.1%
Access to Medical Locations	11.3%	Weekday Early Morning Service	12.5%
Weekend Service	10.7%	Weekend Service	11.4%
Weekday Late Night Service	10.2%	Weekday Late Night Service	9.2%
Access to Jobs	8.5%	Last Mile Connections	6.5%
Last Mile Connections	5.1%		

Analyzing types of activities where lack of transportation access has been a barrier to participation helps further identify user needs and barriers. Medical trips, agency services, seeking employment, and shopping/personal errands were the most common activities identified by respondents. All these activities are important to maintaining a well-balanced lifestyle, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities.



Beyond the needs of clients, agencies were asked to evaluate their needs as organizations and any constraints they were facing in coordinating with each other to provide improved service. Lack of funding was by far the most common constraint cited, which can be a limiting factor on service schedule and serving area expansion. Similarly, lack of staff to drive was the second most common constraint noted. Expanded service areas and schedules often require additional staff, and a lack of staff can curtail efforts to expand service offerings.



Continuing Efforts

The Southeast Region Working Group is planning to meet monthly with the Coordinated Plan itself being updated on an annual basis.

Participation in the coordinated planning process is a prerequisite to accessing 5310 funding, and any project an agency wishes to use 5310 funds for must appear in the applicable 5310 coordinated plan. Agencies who wish to participate in the coordinating planning process who are not currently doing so should contact Tanya Gleghorn (SORTS) via email.⁹ Alternatively, Olivia Hook with ODOT OMPT can direct interested agencies to the Region’s lead agency.¹⁰

Southeast Working Group Meetings are also open to individuals and organizations not directly associated with transportation providers, such as advocacy groups (e.g., disability coalitions). Those wishing to attend and participate in the working group meetings as an individual or as a representative of an organization, are encouraged to do so.

⁹ tglehorn@bigfive.org

¹⁰ ohook@odot.org

Plan Adoption

The FTA does not formally review or approve coordinated plans; thus, the Southeast Coordinating Transportation Network is responsible for the development, and through consensus, the group endorses/adopts the regional locally developed coordinated transportation plan. The planning process must include seniors, individuals with disabilities, public/private/nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public. Working group members are encouraged to contact mobility management programs and ODOT OMPT staff for help with the coordinated planning process as needed.

After considerable involvement of all groups indicated in Section 5310 Program language, this Coordinated Plan was locally endorsed by the Southeast Region Working Group on December 19th, 2023, and expires in 2027, when a new regional coordinated plan will be developed. The Working Group will update the current plan annually. In relation to the long-range and statewide transportation improvement plan, this Coordinated Plan data is valid for four years until a new Coordinated Plan is written.

Annual Updates

Coordinated Plans are to be updated annually. The Southeast Region Working Group meets monthly to implement strategies and update the Coordinated Plan. The following items are updated annually in the Coordinated Plan:

- Transportation Provider Assessment:
 - Providers are added or removed
 - Information for existing providers is updated
- Goals: Updated statuses for each goal and strategy are provided
- Cover page is updated to reflect annual updates
- Annual Updates section is updated to note that the annual update has been completed

Once updated, the Coordinated Plan may be submitted to ODOT OMPT to review, accept, retain on file and to be used for 5310 program applications. Similar to FTA, ODOT does not formally adopt the regional coordinated plans, however, ODOT does review the plans for completeness, compliance and will only award 5310 projects that are within the FTA 9070.1G Circular eligibility guidelines.

Appendix

Definitions

There are several terms used throughout the plan that may be unique to transportation providers or human service agencies. The terms are defined here for reference.

Agency Transportation Providers: Agency transportation providers, also known as human services transportation, are services that operate for the sole benefit of program participants. Traditionally, the agency operating the service has a non-transportation core mission and elects to provide transportation services to meet the overall core mission.

Coordination: Collaborative efforts toward understanding and meeting mobility needs in the most appropriate, cost effective, and responsive manner.

FAST Act: Congress established the funding for Federal Transit Administration programs through authorizing legislation that amends Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the U.S. Code. On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorizing surface transportation programs through Fiscal Year 2020.

Gaps in Service: A break in the continuity of available transportation resources, such as a break between hours of operation or a break between two or more geographic areas.

Lead Agency: The organization responsible for facilitating outreach; composing a plan that meets the requirements of current Federal and State legislation; maintaining documentation from the planning process and making it available upon request; and leading stakeholders through annual reviews, amendments, and updates of the plan. The Lead Agency is also responsible for submitting the adopted Coordinated Plan and all amendments or updates to participating stakeholders and ODOT.

Mobility Management: Federal Transit Law (49 U.S. Code § 5302) defines mobility management as a capital project "consisting of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers carried out by a recipient or subrecipient through an agreement entered into with a person, including a governmental entity, under this chapter (other than section 5309); but excluding operating public transportation services." This role is also referred to as Mobility Navigator in this plan as that is the job title for many mobility management professionals in Oklahoma.

NEMT: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, any transportation service for medical reasons that does not include emergency medical purposes.

NMT: Non-Medical Transportation; Non-medical transportation is transportation that is used by waiver enrollees solely to access adult day support, vocational habilitation, supported employment enclave, and/or supported employment community services, as specified by their individual service plans (ISP). 5123:2-9-18 (B)(9)

Public Transit Providers: Public transportation is shared-ride transit services that are open to the general public and charge a set fare. There are generally two types of public transit: fixed-route and demand-response transportation services. Fixed-route services operate on a set schedule along a fixed route. Demand-response transportation services operate on a prearranged schedule determined by customer and service provider. Demand-response is a scheduled pick-up and drop-off system that operates between the origin and the destination in the most efficient route possible. Demand-response transportation includes those services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Ridership: The total number of passengers who boarded transportation vehicles are counted each time they board a vehicle.

Section 5307 Program: The Urbanized Area Formula Grants program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation-related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more.

Section 5310 Program: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides Federal formula funding for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options.

Section 5311 Program: The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000 where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. The program also provides funding for state and national training and technical assistance through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program. Subrecipients may include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

Social Service Providers: In addition to the transportation providers listed above, the Region benefits from numerous human service agencies and organizations which serve as regional partners that have an impact on transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities.

Transportation: Transportation is broadly defined to include traditional transit, human service agency services, on-demand (taxi-like) services, bicycle and pedestrian programs and amenities.

Transportation Service Provider: Any transportation agency or human service agency that directly provides transportation for any reason to a client, patient, or anyone from the public.

Unmet Transportation Needs: Transportation that is wanted or desired but is not currently available.

Working Group: The Working Group is composed of key community stakeholders. The Planning Committee members agree to actively participate in the planning process and act as the plan advisory and adopting entity.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) Office of Mobility and Public Transit

Table 24: ODOT OMPT Staff

Name	Position	Contact Information
Jared Schwennesen	Multi-Modal Division Manager	Oklahoma Department of Transportation Multimodal Division 200 N.E. 21st Street Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-4203 ODOTWeb-transit@odot.org Website: https://oklahoma.gov/odot.html
Eric Rose	Office of Mobility and Public Transit Manager	
Vacant	Sr. Program Manager	
Olivia Hook	Statewide Mobility Manager	
Veronica Clark	Project Manager	
Bobby Parkinson	Program Manager	
John Heavrin	Program Manager	
Liann Alfaro	Program Manager	
Steve Jagosh	SSO Project Manager	
Raleigh Johnson	Project Manager	
Justin Gregory	Project Manager	
Thomas Nutter	Project Manager	
Bart Vleugels	Active Transportation & Rail	
Mike Woodhams	Project Manager	

Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310

Federal transit law, as amended by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program be "derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" and that the plan be "developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public."

History: Established in 1975, Section 5310 has been primarily directed to social/human service agencies, nonprofit organizations and other public bodies for the purchase of vehicles. The program is administered through the states, and it is at the state level that specific funding decisions are made.

Program Goal: The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities throughout the country. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 5310 responsibilities, oversight and management of the grants and resources associated with Section 5310 will be transferred from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Expenses are reimbursed at 80% federal funds and 20% local match. Certain expenditures made in an effort to satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the Clean Air Act Amendments can be reimbursed at a 90% federal commitment (10% local match).

Vehicles and vehicle-related expenses including buses; vans; radios and communication equipment; vehicle shelters; wheelchair lifts and restraints; vehicle rehabilitation; manufacture, or overhaul; preventive maintenance, as defined in the National Transit Database (NTD); and extended warranties which do not exceed industry standards.

Agencies interested in applying for the 5310 programs can contact one of these offices for more information.

Table 25: 5310 Application Information

Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)	Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG)
Statewide	Tulsa and surrounding areas
The state does not operate public transportation services directly; ODOT administers 5310 federal funds for other areas of the state not served by INCOG (Tulsa and surrounding areas).	INCOG is the designated recipient of Section 5310 funding for the Tulsa region. Local governments and nonprofit agencies are eligible to apply for the funds.
For more information, contact Eric Rose OMPT Manager erose@odot.org or 405-514-1419	For more information, contact Patricia Dinoa Principal Transportation Planner pdinoa@incog.org or 918-579-9489
https://oklahoma.gov/odot/programs-and-projects/transit-programs/section-5310-elderly.html	https://www.incog.org//Community Economic Development/commdev_comdev.html

*Agencies applying for 5310 program grants must participate in the coordination planning process, have the project listed in the coordinated plan, the project must address an unmet need in the plan, and abide by the FTA Section 5310 Circular and the Oklahoma Statewide Management Plan.

[FTA Section 5310 Circular](#)

Additional technical assistance for participating agencies in the coordinated planning process can be found by visiting the National Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) www.nationalrtap.org. Agencies can also contact the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Multi-Modal Division and the Oklahoma Mobility Management Program for planning activity support.

Specialized Transportation

Table 26 below summarizes additional information collected from transit agencies and tribal providers following Working Group #3. “N/A” corresponds to agencies who did not explicitly provide this information.

Table 26: Specialized Transportation

Agency Name	Provides Medicaid Eligible Trips?	Primary Funding Source	Primary Source of Match Funds	Level of Passenger Assistance Provided
Call A Ride Public Transit	Yes, contract with ModivCare	Section 5311	Pontotoc County	Manual wheelchair ramp 28" wide/300#, stow mobility devices, extended arm, open facility doors
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Delta Public Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
JAMM Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
KEDDO	No, our Area Agency on Aging is funded under DHS, so are payer of last resort.	Older Americans Act	KEDDO	Contract with KI BOIS and LIFT therefore pass funds through from Older Americans Act Title III
KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS)	Provides Medicaid eligible Trips for all 12 counties (Adair, Cherokee, Haskell, Hughes, Latimer, Le Flore, McIntosh, Okmulgee, Okfuskee, Pittsburg, Sequoyah, Wagoner Counties)	Oklahoma Department of Transportation	Medicaid Transportation (ModivCare)	As needed on each trip
Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



ODOT seeking public input for Coordinated Transportation Plan

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Monday, June 12, 2023

ODOT seeking public input for Coordinated Transportation Plan

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is looking for the public's input on the development of the 2023 Coordinated Transportation Plan. The plan is designed to identify transportation needs of Oklahomans with disabilities, seniors and low-income communities. The plan, will provide strategies for meeting those identified transportation needs.

Oklahomans can participate in the development of the plan through an online survey, that can be found [here](#), and through a series of virtual public meetings. The public meetings will be highly interactive and allow participants to provide valuable input towards the plan.

There are five regional meetings scheduled between June 20 and June 29:

Northeast Region (Including rural areas around Tulsa)

- 1 p.m. Tuesday, June 20
- Online: bit.ly/5310NE
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 845 9658 2858)

Southeast Region

- 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 21
- Online: bit.ly/5310SE
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 864 0808 4567)

Central Region (Including rural areas around OKC)

- 10 a.m. Thursday, June 22
- Online: bit.ly/5310Central
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 863 9749 4440)

Southwest Region

- 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 28
- Online: bit.ly/5310SW
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 821 4379 8899)

Northwest Region

- 1 p.m. Thursday, June 29
- Online: bit.ly/5310NW
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 865 6063 6177)

To locate your region, click [here](#).

About Coordinated Transportation Plans

Locally developed coordinated plans provide a unified regional strategy for transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged groups in need. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires a coordinated transit-human services plan be locally developed through feedback from older adults and individuals with disabilities, as well as transportation planning agencies, transportation providers and government agencies.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Last Modified on Jun 15, 2023

