

ARKANSAS

Statewide Transit Coordination Plan



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Glossary

- **General Public Transit** - transit service for the general public with no eligibility requirements to ride; funded under FTA's Section 5307 or 5311 program
- **Human Services Transit**- transit service for seniors or persons with disabilities; funded under FTA's Section 5310 program
- **Individual with disability:** a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities
- **Person accessing employment:** a person who is using transit to access employment through specific federal programs
- **Person in poverty:** a person who is living below the federal poverty line as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Public transit provider:** agency that provides transit to the general public and receives funding from FTA
- **Section 5307 Program** - FTA transit funding program for urban areas
- **Section 5311 Program** - FTA transit funding program for rural areas
- **Section 5310 Program** - FTA transit funding program for specialized transit services for seniors or persons with disabilities
- **Seniors** - individuals age 65 or older

Acronyms

- **APTCC** - Arkansas Public Transportation Coordination Council
- **ARDOT** - Arkansas Department of Transportation
- **CCAM** - Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility
- **CDC** - Centers for Disease Control
- **FTA** - Federal Transit Administration
- **LEP** - Limited English Proficiency
- **MPO** - Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **PWDs** - Persons with Disabilities
- **TNI** - Transit Needs Index
- **UWR** - United We Ride

The Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan's overall goal is to improve the availability, quality, and efficiency of transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities and those with limited mobility options. The plan achieves this goal by recommending transportation service coordination strategies and providing analysis findings that support more effective matching of limited transportation resources to transportation needs.

What is Coordination?

Public transit coordination is the ongoing process of transportation providers and human services agencies communicating and working together to manage limited transportation resources more efficiently. Coordination happens at three different levels: federal, state, and local. This plan focuses on coordination at the state level.

Required Coordination Plan Elements

Federal transit law requires that a coordination plan include the following:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers.
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors.
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps.
- Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility.

Why Coordinate?

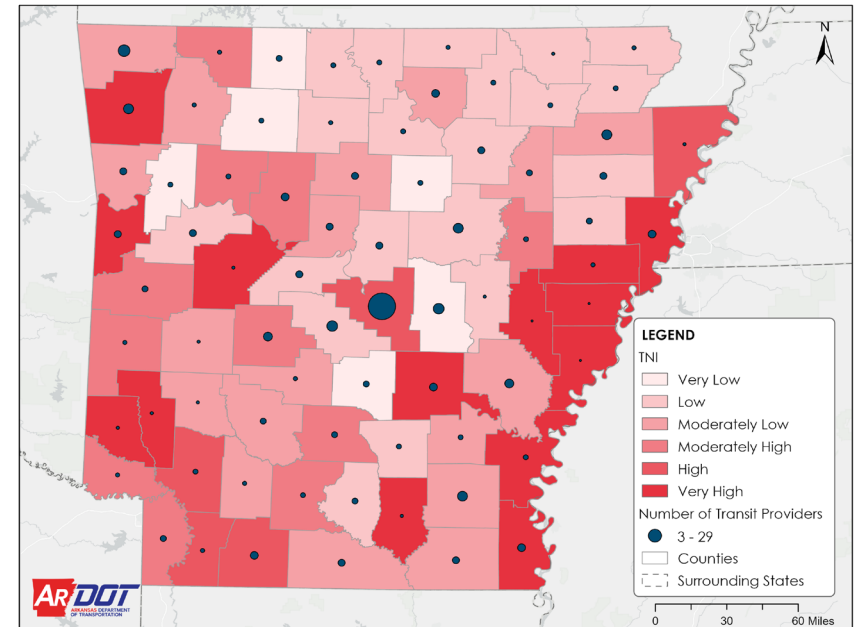
Federal regulations mandate that Section 5310 funded programs or projects be consistent with a locally developed transit coordination plan. Further, ARDOT also requires Section 5310 applicants to confirm which coordination activities they have pursued and to provide information about existing coordination agreements in place.

Benefits of Coordination

There are several benefits to coordination for providers and riders, including an expanded range of resources, increased productivity, expanded service, and reduced costs.

Transportation Needs

The public outreach and geographic analysis conducted for this plan reveals that transit need varies across counties. Rural areas tend to have less offerings for transit yet display higher concentrations of transit-disadvantaged population groups.



Transit Needs Index (TNI) Results

Strategies

To develop a more comprehensive and coordinated transit system for individuals with disabilities and seniors, this plan recommends the following high-level strategies:

- Invest in new technologies and methods to improve operations and public information about services.
- Expand availability of demand-response and specialized transportation services.
- Foster partnerships with providers and state agencies to maintain communication, ensure needs are being met, and confirm that opportunities are being addressed.
- Maximize financial investment and support for providers.
- Provide educational tools to agencies to enhance knowledge, promote funding opportunities, and increase safety.

1. Introduction

The Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan's overall goal is to improve the availability, quality, and efficiency of transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with limited mobility options. Further, the purpose of this plan is to provide a resource for human service providers and transit agencies to better manage the current transportation services and consider the gaps where the transportation mobility is lacking in their communities. Information presented in the plan will serve as a baseline for measuring the performance of Arkansas' coordinated transportation system and the effectiveness of coordination efforts over the next 5 years. To accomplish this, the plan provides an analysis of transit needs and existing resources, interprets and responds to public input, and recommends best practices for improved agency coordination.


Arkansas is the 32nd most populous state in the country with a population of approximately 3.03 million. Arkansas ranks 34th in the United States in terms of population density and is considered relatively rural. There are nine cities throughout Arkansas that have populations greater than 50,000. The City

of Little Rock is the largest of those cities with a population of approximately 199,000, making up 6.6% of the state's total population. Arkansas is separated into 75 counties and eight planning and development districts. The Northwest and Central districts are the most populated, making up 45% of the state's population. The Southeast and Southwest districts have the lowest population totals and do not share in the projected growth of other regions. Between the years of 2020 and 2040, the statewide population is expected to grow by 9.5%, bringing the total population to approximately 3.3 million. With both growth and population decline, coordination between transportation providers is critical to ensuring all residents have access to resources like healthcare, jobs, and other services. The Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan is meant to satisfy the federal laws and compliance requirements listed further in this document to ensure proper funding for projects and performance measures related to transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and others with limited mobility options. Further, this plan provides recommendations and performance measures for a better coordinated transit system in the state of Arkansas.

3.03
million residents

9 
cities with a population
greater than 50,000

75
counties

Northwest & Central
Planning Districts make up
45%
of the state's population


2. Overview of Coordination

Federal Regulations

The regulations listed below include requirements that are in place to promote efficient and effective public transportation projects for improved flexibility and problem-solving within communities. While each of the compliance requirements listed below vary, they each have the same objective: to support the development and maintenance of transportation services, promote consistency, create economic vitality, and increase accessibility and mobility for people in need.

The following laws and regulations outline compliance requirements and guidance for state coordination plans:

- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)
- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)
- 49 United States Code §5310
- United We Ride (UWR) Initiative

Plan Component Requirements

Federal transit law, as amended by MAP-21, requires that any coordination plan be “developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public.” Federal law also requires that all coordination transportation plans include the following elements:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit).
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This can be based on the experiences of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts and gaps in service.
- 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.
- Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Although the coordination plan requirement only applies to communities and organizations applying for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program funding, FTA expects that other federally-funded programs—specifically the urban transit (Section 5307) and rural transit (Section 5311) programs—be included in the coordination planning process and coordination activities.

State Regulations

Arkansas state law also outlines the vehicle for coordination efforts at the state level to ensure a comprehensive approach to transit planning. More specifically, the legislature enacted the Arkansas Public Transportation Coordination Act (A.C.A. §27-3-101-107) to establish the Arkansas Public Transportation Coordination Council (APTCC). The purpose of this council was to encourage public policy that “promotes planning, development, implementation and evaluation of transportation systems provided to the general public, particularly the transportation-disadvantaged.”

While APTCC provides guidance and recommendations, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) has the authority to put policy and programs into effect. The responsibilities of APTCC include the following:

- Serve as a clearinghouse for information relating to public transportation services, funding sources, innovations, and coordination efforts.
- Establish statewide objectives for providing public transportation services for the general public, particularly the transportation-disadvantaged.
- Develop policies and procedures for the coordination of federal, state, and local funding for public transportation facilities and services.
- Identify barriers inhibiting the coordination and accessibility of public transportation services and aggressively pursue the elimination of these barriers.
- Assist communities in developing public transportation systems available for public use, with special emphasis on serving the transportation-disadvantaged.
- Assure that all procedures, guidelines, and directives issued by state agencies are conducive to the coordination of public transportation services and facilities.
- Develop standards covering coordination, operation, costs, and utilization of public transportation services.
- Review, monitor, and coordinate all funding requests for state and federal grants to be used for the provision of public transportation services.
- Coordinate all public transportation programs with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and public transit agencies to ensure compatibility.

The 12-member council, which is comprised of members of various state agencies, officials, and appointees, remains active and has worked with ARDOT over the years to promote transit coordination in Arkansas. Currently, ARDOT requires Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program funding applicants to confirm which coordination activities they have recently pursued and to answer questions about leasing/coordination agreements with other agencies.

What is Coordination?

Public transit coordination is the ongoing process of transportation providers and human services agencies communicating and working together to manage limited transportation resources more efficiently. Coordination is about building trust and relationships among organizations and fostering a willingness to share power, responsibility, funding, and benefits to eliminate service duplication, deliver more cost-effective service, address service gaps, and improve information communication.

Coordination happens at three different levels: federal, state, and local. This plan focuses on coordination at the state level. There are various state agencies responsible for distributing transportation funding (e.g., ARDOT and Arkansas Department of Human Services) that may collaborate to remove the barriers to coordination and promote the sharing of resources created by agency regulations and funding/eligibility requirements. As designated recipients for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program funding, many state departments of transportation (DOTs) are responsible for certifying that projects selected for funding are included in a human services public transit coordinated plan. Some DOTs, including ARDOT, prepare these plans. Additionally, many state DOTs play a supportive role, fostering

local coordination through facilitation of coordination meetings among transportation providers and human services agencies, as well as through implementation of statewide coordination strategies.

Benefits to Coordination

There are many coordination benefits, both for providers and users of transportation services. For providers, benefits can include access to a wider range of funding, staff, and resources; increased productivity; reduced operating costs; and more streamlined processes for reporting, funding application, and data collection. For users of the various transportation services, benefits may include expanded service areas and hours of operation; increased number of options; smoother connections; information that is easier to understand; and more affordable service. Most importantly, coordination improves access to goods, services, and job sites for the target populations that rely on these services.

Barriers to Coordination

Coordination requires commitment and compromise from a variety of people and organizations, each with their own needs, constraints, and responsibilities. This dynamic can sometimes make it difficult for participants in the coordination planning process to realize the benefits of coordination. This is especially true considering coordination benefits are not always enjoyed by those who sacrifice the most time and resources. For these reasons, it is crucial that the coordination planning process

identifies win/win strategies and fosters a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among involved individuals and their agencies.

The Statewide Transit Coordination Plan aims to address unique barriers specific to the transportation providers and human services agencies of Arkansas. To do this, ARDOT hosted and facilitated eight coordination meetings throughout the state where transportation providers, human services agencies, and other groups (e.g., workforce development boards) discussed efforts to coordinate transportation services and the barriers they faced when coordinating.

ARDOT conducted eight coordination meetings in which participants mentioned the following constraints:

- Regulatory and funding restrictions
- Riders do not like using other services with which they are not familiar
- Jurisdictional limitations (i.e. not being able to provide service in other counties or outside of defined service areas)
- Different communications technology
- Unique rider needs that require special assistance or equipment
- Providers acting as competitors

This plan update aims to build on past coordination efforts while building a path forward for improved efforts statewide.

Transit coordination can provide substantial economic benefits for agencies when successfully implemented. The table below provides an estimate of how much transit agencies across the state of Arkansas could save using various coordination strategies. Based on research conducted by the Transit Cooperative Research Program, each strategy is a rounded estimate showing both the range between high and low estimates. The project team used research on national economic benefits to determine a reasonable estimate for the state.

According to a recent report, transit coordination activities led to an average decrease of 50% in the average cost per passenger trip in 5 counties in the United States.



Economic Benefit Strategies	Annual Estimated Benefits in Arkansas
Additional revenues generated when transit authorities provide trips for Medicaid agency clients	\$17,000 - \$56,000
Cost savings realized when nontransit agencies provide ADA and other paratransit services	\$34,000 - \$167,000
Cost savings realized when paratransit riders are shifted to fixed route services	\$102,000 - \$339,000
Cost savings realized when local human service agencies coordinate their transportation services	\$40,000 - \$68,000
Economic benefits realized when transportation services are expanded to areas or populations not now served	\$45,000 - \$149,000
Total	\$237,000 - \$779,000

Sources: Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 91, 2003
 Mobility Management: Empirical Evidence of Fiscal Benefits from Multiple States, 2015

3. Arkansas Coordination Planning Process

The Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan provided a process for ARDOT, human services agencies, transportation providers, the public and other stakeholders to identify the transportation resources and needs throughout the state and develop strategies for action.

The following is an outline of the process taken to develop the Transit Coordination Plan and the various components of the process.

The plan provided a process for ARDOT to **...identify the transportation resources and needs throughout the state and develop strategies for action**

Conduct Public and Stakeholder Outreach

An important part of the coordination planning process is outreach to the public and stakeholders. Receiving feedback and local expertise helps to ensure the outcomes address the needs and challenges of those who are most impacted by the plan and its recommendations. Coordination workshop meetings and surveys were the two methods taken to obtain input for the plan.

To comply with the FTA regulations, ARDOT conducted eight coordination meetings throughout the state. Regional planning councils, MPOs, transportation providers, workforce

development agencies, human services agencies, and the public were invited to attend. The meetings were conducted regionally to understand the local needs, discuss opportunities, and provide a venue for people to learn from each other and begin coordinating.

ARDOT also distributed a survey to reach more riders and agency staff. In addition to online access, surveys were provided in printed format for those who may not have access to a computer. Results of the public engagement efforts are outlined in Chapter 4.

Identify Resources and Needs

The next step involved an assessment of the available transportation resources and development of a Transit Needs Index (TNI). Demographic data and public input both were recorded and analyzed to cultivate a complete assessment of the state of transit in Arkansas. Using this assessment, the planning team worked to develop unique recommendations aimed at addressing gaps in service and barriers to coordination.

The TNI utilized both demographic data and public input to record and analyze a complete assessment of the state of transit in Arkansas

Develop Strategies to Address Gaps

After identifying the gaps in transportation services, the planning team developed strategies to address the gaps and find other opportunities to improve the current transportation services. To find optimal solutions, a best practices study was conducted to review current strategies being used nationally and evaluate the effectiveness of those practices. This study helps frame the overarching goals and corresponding strategies of the plan. Final recommendations consist of specific coordination activities such as establishing a centralized maintenance structure, developing a pooled transit system, and addressing general needs like access to vehicles or grant application assistance.

Establish Performance Measures and Monitor Progress

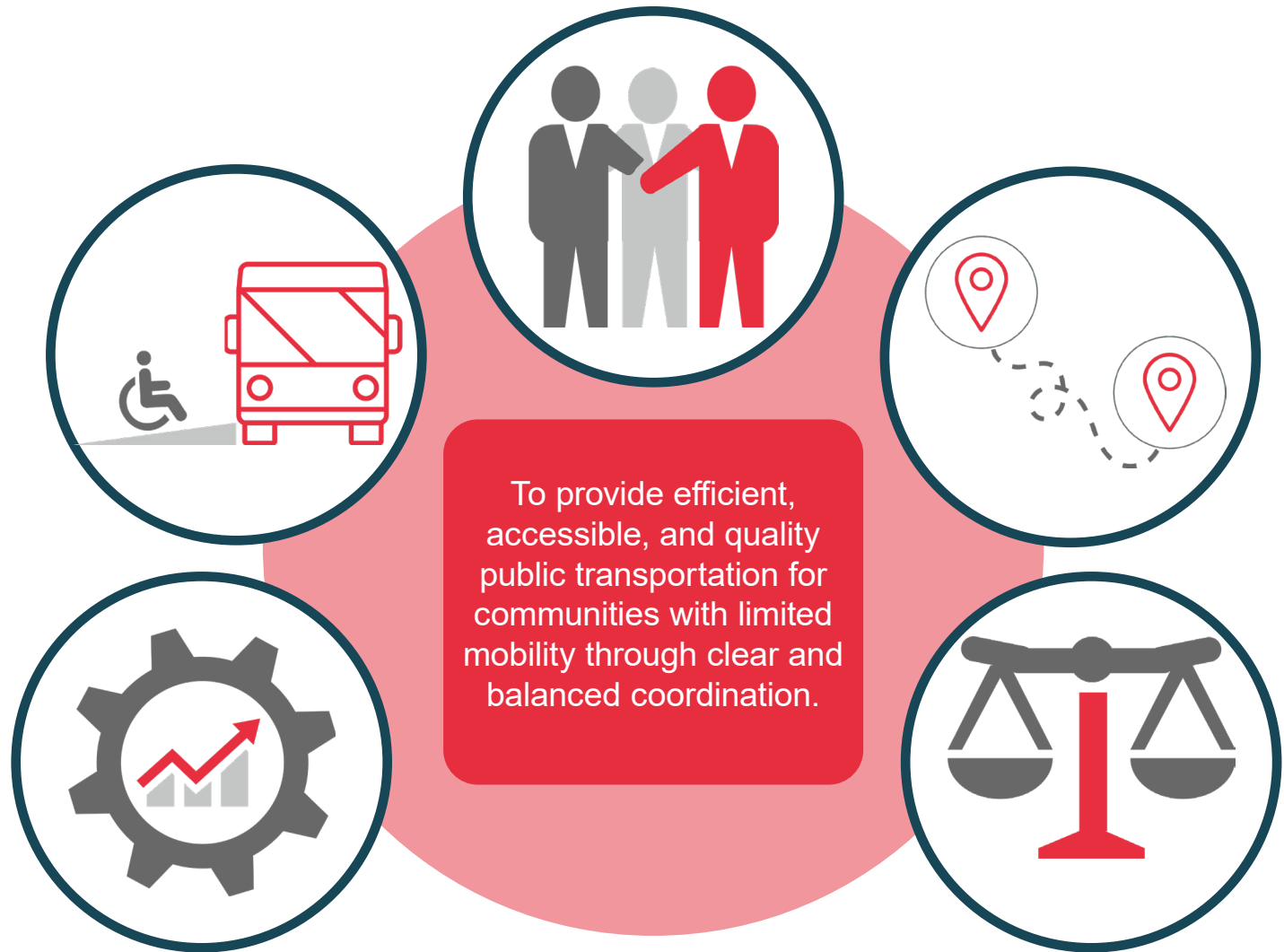
After strategies and goals were obtained through the development stage, the final stage involved creation of a performance matrix and establishing prioritization. To prioritize strategies, information was gathered to identify the feasibility, availability of resources, and the anticipated effectiveness of the strategy. With this information, a performance matrix was created to ensure that tasks are being performed efficiently and accurately.

The performance measures are meant to act as a baseline to compare the quality and availability of transportation services over time. By monitoring the performance matrix, ARDOT can identify those coordination strategies that are working and those needing revision.

Coordination Planning Process



OUR VISION



The ARDOT Transit Coordination Plan aims to eliminate barriers to transportation services, fill service gaps, maintain public awareness, enhance mobility for older adults and persons with disabilities, and foster collaboration between providers. The overarching goal of the plan is to improve the accessibility to and quality of public transportation, particularly for target populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.

4. Transit Needs and Gap Analysis

Transit Needs

The foundation of a Transit Coordination Plan is the identification and assessment of target populations with mobility needs. The Federal Transit Administration requires individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes to be considered in the transit coordination planning process. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identifies additional transportation-vulnerable populations including children, those with no access to a vehicle, racial minorities, unemployed individuals, and those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). It is essential to identify the need and capacity for transit services to support these populations who have a higher likelihood of being affected by a lack of transit to complete essential and daily services and trips. The Transit Needs Index (TNI) is a quantitative assessment designed to identify areas with disproportionately higher concentrations of transit-disadvantaged groups.

Transit Needs Groups

The following population groups were identified for evaluation in the TNI as they are disproportionately affected by access to transportation and may be more likely to depend on transit services: persons with a disability, seniors, children, those with LEP, unemployed persons, members of a racial minority, those with no vehicle access, and those below the poverty level. Any of these transportation disadvantages can be exacerbated for individuals who fall under more than one of these groups. Issues for one critical demographic can often be associated with another; these issues, when compounded, act like comorbidities and may cause additional transportation problems. For example, a low-income person with a disability may have limited access to resources and a greater difficulty navigating their environment.

A disproportionate distribution of mobility options and transit services hinder access to a range of social, educational, and employment opportunities. Potential barriers and challenges associated with transportation access include not having a driver's license, facility design not providing safe and comfortable accommodations, as well as high housing costs in proximity to transportation amenities. Possible barriers to using public infrastructure for those identified in the transit needs groups include but are not limited to peak hour service not accounting for workers whose schedules are outside the 9 am – 5 pm time frame and financial constraints for fixed and low-income individuals. A lack of mobility access can potentially be

Table 1: Transit Needs Index Data Sources

Source	Year	Census Table Name	Information Obtained
ACS 5YR	2019	DP02: Selected Social Characteristics	Population over 5; Speaks English less than "very well"; Total civilian noninstitutionalized population; Population with a disability
ACS 5YR	2019	DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics	Population 16 years and over; Unemployed
ACS 5YR	2019	DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics	Occupied housing units; Households with no vehicles
ACS 5YR	2019	DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates	Race
ACS 5YR	2019	S0101: Age and Sex	Population by age group; Total population
ACS 5YR	2019	S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months	Population for whom poverty status is determined; Population below poverty level

exacerbated during natural disasters or emergencies. These transportation issues are not exhaustive or exclusive to transit needs groups in Arkansas.

Table 2: Example of a Ranking Calculation

County Name	Population over 5	Total LEP Population	Percent of Population with LEP*	State Average Percent of Population with LEP*	Score*
Arkansas County	16,772	150	0.89%	2.02%	0.442
Ashley County	19,036	386	2.03%	2.02%	1.003
Baxter County	39,691	230	0.58%	2.02%	0.287
Benton County	247,049	15,015	6.08%	2.02%	3.006
Boone County	34,996	135	0.39%	2.02%	0.191
Bradley County	10,211	521	5.10%	2.02%	2.524
Calhoun County	4,935	21	0.43%	2.02%	0.211
Carroll County	26,384	1,853	7.02%	2.02%	3.474

*Numbers are rounded for visualization purposes.

Table 3: Example of a TNI Calculation

County Name	Population	Low Income Score*	Racial Minority Score*	Senior Population Score*	Children Population Score*	Limited English Proficiency Score*	Unemployed Score*	Individuals with Disability Score*	No Vehicle Score*	TNI*
Arkansas County	17,914	0.9	1.27	0.98	0.99	0.44	1.09	1.07	1.16	7.9

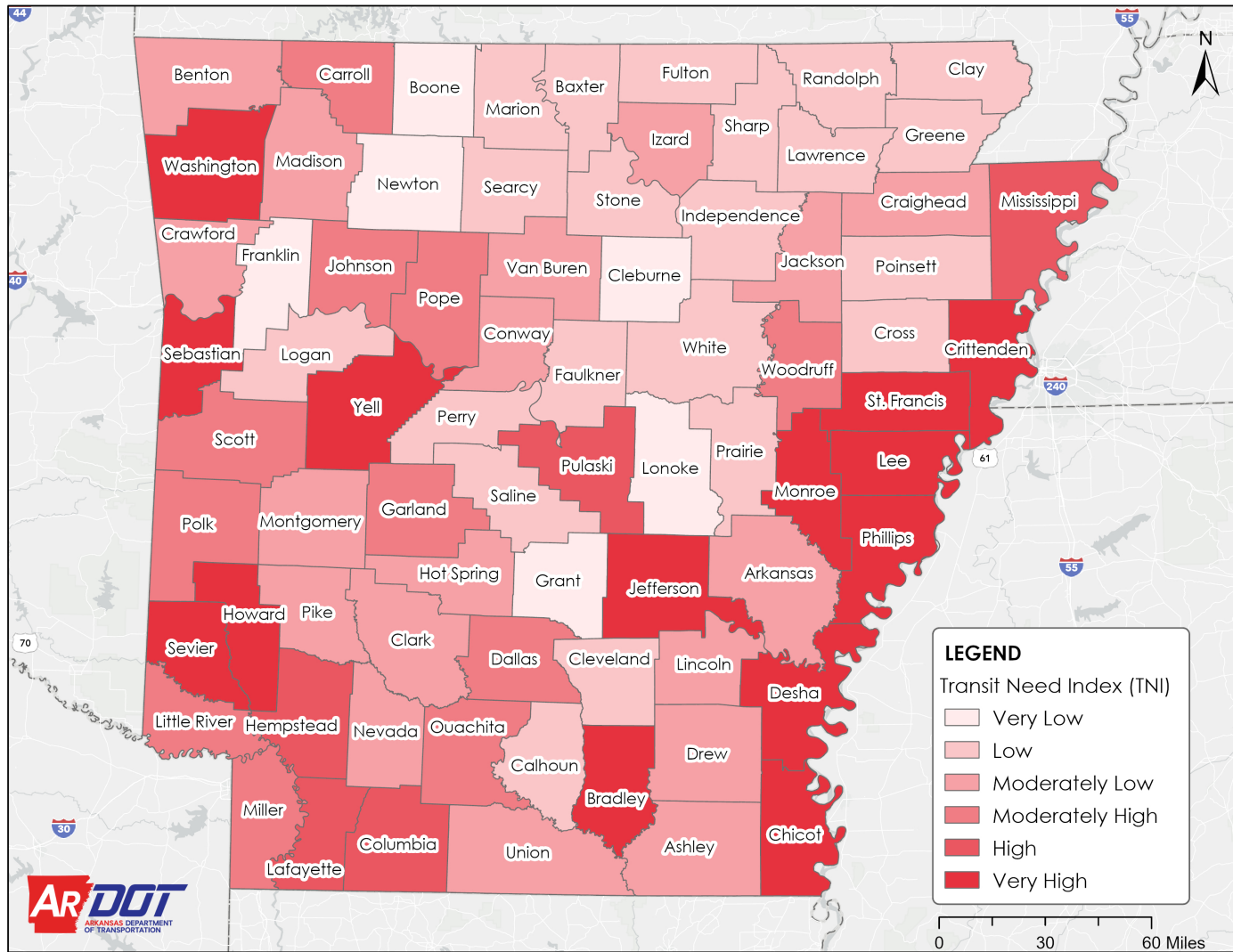
*Numbers are rounded for visualization purposes.

Methodology

The TNI is a cumulative scoring system which identifies the location of concentrations of populations with high transit needs. To create the TNI for Arkansas, the most recently available census data in the demographic categories shown in Table 1 were collected at the county level.

The TNI evaluates whether counties in Arkansas have disproportionately high amounts of populations with significant transit needs. This process began by calculating the percentage that certain population groups represent within each county. By using percentages in the calculation, the relative size of each county is normalized. This number was then divided by the average percentage for all counties to develop a population group score. An example of this scoring process for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population group is seen in Table 2. The Transit Needs Index was generated by summing the scores for each population group, as can be seen in Table 3.

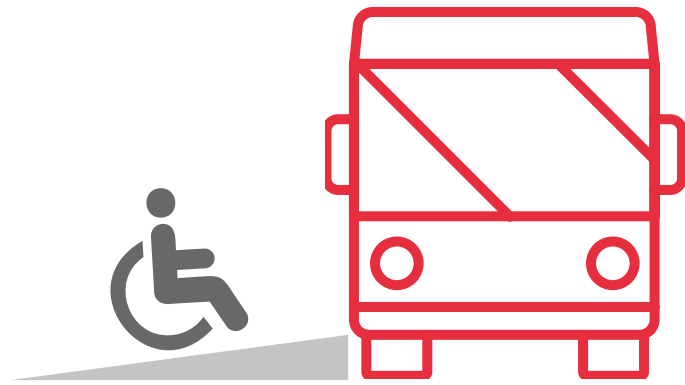
Figure 1: 2022 ARDOT Transit Needs Index



The geographic distribution of the TNI shows a cluster of counties with high transit need along the eastern border of the state; this is similar to the TNI developed in 2018. Other higher scoring counties are spread throughout the state. In the north central part of the state, a cluster of lower scoring counties can be seen.

All other key demographic factors were ranked with the same method used in the LEP example. Conducting analyses with this methodology can help to reduce the risk of underestimating the needs of less populated counties and create a more equal comparison across the state.

The full Transit Needs Index can be found in the Appendix.



Results

Figure 1 displays the TNI score distribution. The TNI scores for each county range from 5.15 to 14.60, with an average TNI of 8. Most counties demonstrated a low transit need, ranging from 6.00 to 6.99. Seventeen counties demonstrated a moderately low need, ranging from 7.00 to 7.99. Fourteen counties scored 10 or above demonstrating a very high transit need. Twelve counties showed moderately high need, or a score from 8.00 to 8.99. The two smallest categories were very low (less than 6.00) and high (9.00 to 9.99), with six and five counties respectively.

Table 4 highlights the counties with lowest and highest Transit Needs Index scores.

Figure 2: TNI Score Distribution

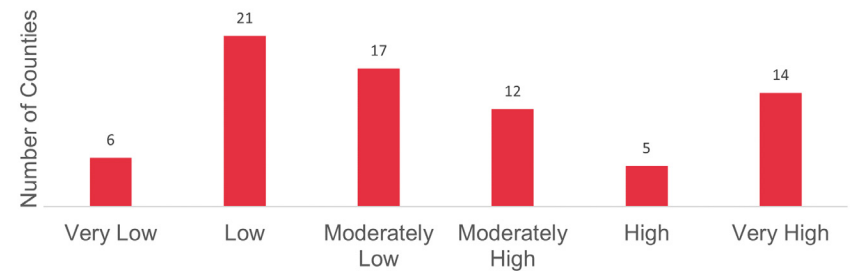


Table 4: Notable TNI Scores

TNI Classification	County	Score*
Lowest Score	Grant	5.15
Very High Need (greater than 10)	Howard	10.02
	St. Francis	10.04
	Crittenden	10.09
	Sebastian	10.10
	Washington	10.11
	Yell	10.11
	Monroe	10.27
	Jefferson	10.31
	Bradley	10.55
	Lee	11.63
	Chicot	11.82
	Phillips	12.00
	Desha	12.84
	Sevier	14.60

*Numbers are rounded for visualization purposes.

Grant County has the lowest TNI and is among six counties that have a TNI below 6. Fourteen counties have a TNI over 10, with Sevier County at the highest end of the range. Figure 1. shows the distribution of TNI scores across the state. Geographically, half of the counties with a TNI over 10 are along the eastern border of the state, with the other seven dispersed throughout the state. Generally, the northern part of the state has the lowest level of need when compared to the rest of the state.

Variation from 2018

The results for the 2022 TNI suggest certain counties have a higher transit need than the previous assessment (2018) indicated. These differences are largely due to the additional datasets used, as well as an updated methodology for calculating the index.

The 2018 TNI utilized census data to identify senior citizens, people in poverty, households with no vehicle access, and people with disabilities; the updated TNI determines a broader definition of potential transit needs in each county to include children, Limited English Proficiency, and unemployment.

The additional datasets created larger scores for each county. Where the 2018 TNI indicated a scale ranging from less than 3.5 to greater than 4.8, the 2022 TNI utilizes a scale ranging from about 5 to 15. Both scales still indicate counties with low and high transit needs.

In the 2018 TNI, many of the counties along the southern and eastern boundaries of Arkansas were determined to have significant transit needs, as can be seen in Figure 3. A number of those counties continue to indicate high transit need with the inclusion of the additional CDC categories.

Table 5: Comparison of TNI Datasets Used

ACS Data	2018 TNI	2022 TNI
Children		✓
Disabilities	✓	✓
LEP		✓
Minority	✓	✓
No Vehicle	✓	✓
Senior Citizens	✓	✓
Unemployment		✓
Total Number of Categories	4	7

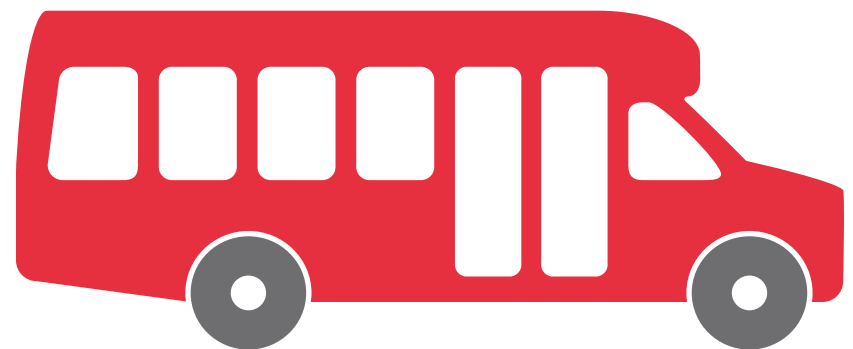
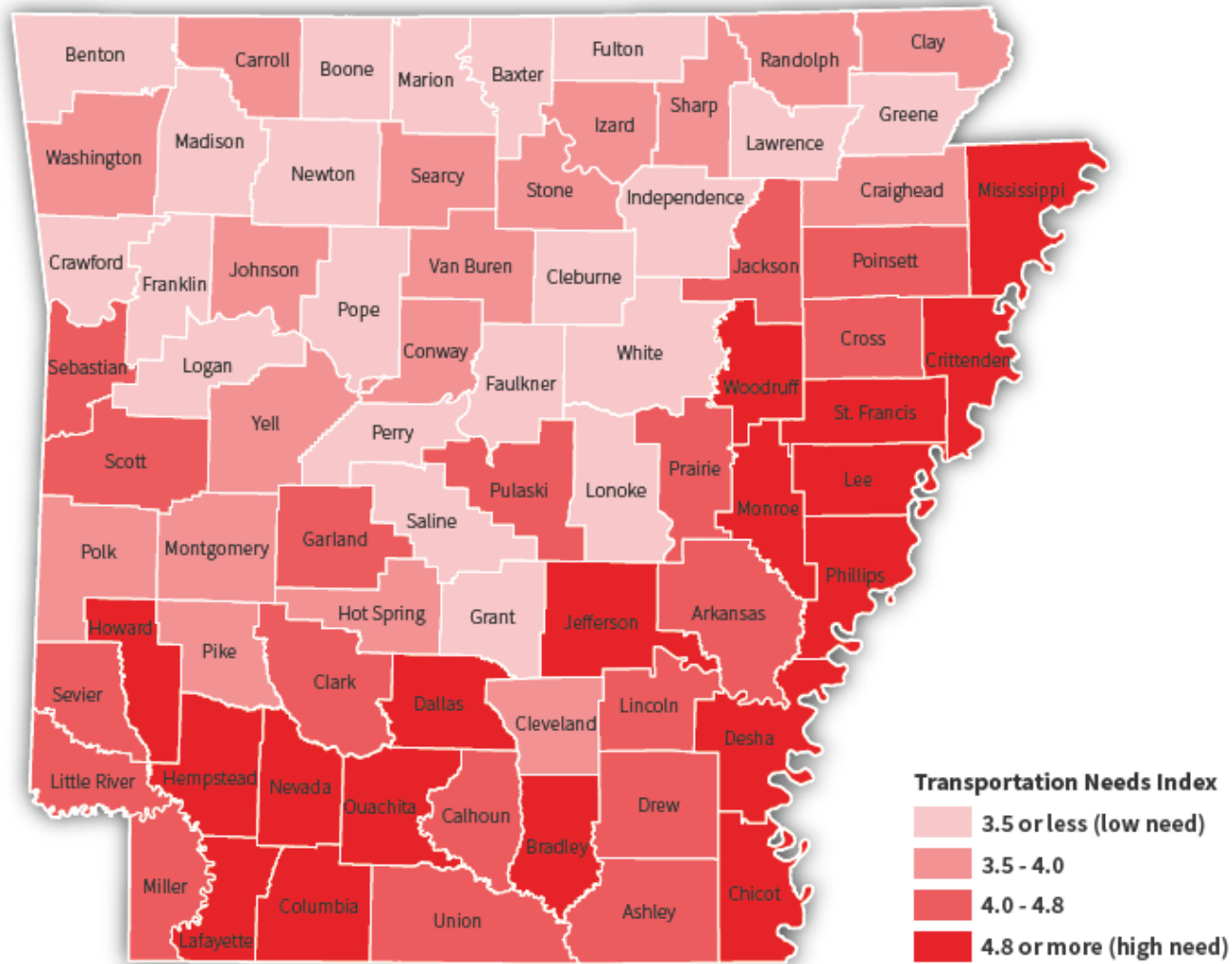


Figure 3: 2018 ARDOT Transit Needs Index



Source: Alliance Transportation Group, 2018

In the 2018 TNI, many of the counties along the southern and eastern boundaries of Arkansas were determined to have significant transit need. A number of those counties continue to indicate transit needs with the inclusion of the CDC categories; however, the highest transit need is concentrated in more urbanized areas.

Key Findings

- The north central part of the state has the lowest TNI.
- The eastern border sees the largest cluster of very high need counties.
- Higher populated areas tend to have a higher TNI.
- There are no clusters of very low need, but a few counties show a very low TNI.
- The northwestern part of the state sees a growing need compared to 2018, as does the entire state generally.
- TNI scores appear more evenly distributed across the state compared to 2018.

The state of Arkansas generally demonstrates a moderate transit need. While the majority of counties demonstrated a moderate transit need, a review of the gaps in the existing transit service will highlight possible areas of improvement for all counties.



Gap Analysis

Building upon the Transit Needs, the Gap Analysis summarizes key findings determined during the investigation of existing Sections 5307, 5310, and 5311 providers in Arkansas. This analysis highlights major gaps in the current level of public and human services transit providers in the state.

Figure 4 displays the current public and human services transit provider gaps in coverage in the state. Eleven counties in the state lack service for three or more population groups. Possible gaps include the following groups: public transit service for all passengers or human services transit for senior, low-income, or employment accessing passengers. Counties with noticeable gaps in coverage include Clay, Cleburne, Greene, Howard, Lawrence, Lee, Lafayette, Mississippi, Phillips, St. Francis, and Stone. Most of these counties with overlapping needs lack services for employment access, low-income, and senior passengers; however, Stone and Cleburne counties lack any public transit option, as well as have limited human services transit options.

Public Transit Providers

There are 17 public transit providers that serve 68 of the state's 75 counties, or 91 percent of the state's land area. The remaining 7 counties rely on human services transit providers to meet the needs of certain population groups. Multiple rural public transit providers have overlapping services which should be evaluated to see if coordination could make better use of resources for these providers. Counties with multiple rural public transit providers operating within the same coverage area include Calhoun, Carroll, Dallas, Lonoke, Madison, and Union counties.

Human Services Transit Providers

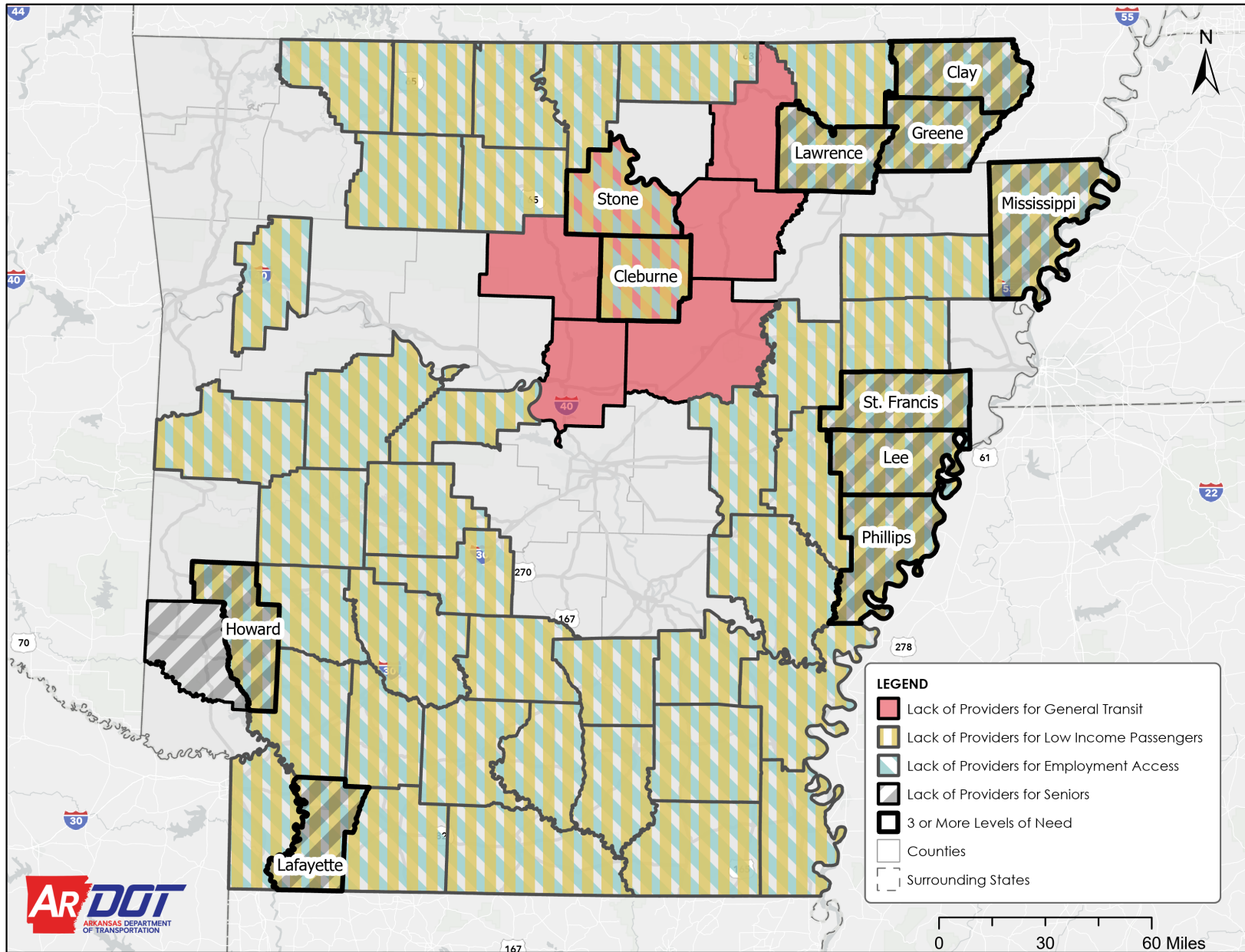
Human services transit providers are widespread in Arkansas, with a diverse offering of services to a variety of passenger types. Many of these providers are community-based and help strengthen transit opportunities for transit-disadvantaged passengers in the state, especially for the seven counties without public transit services.

Senior Passengers

All but 10 counties in the state are within the coverage area of at least one human service transit provider that serves senior passengers. There are multiple concentrations of seniors outside of the central urban area of Little Rock, including to the north, east, and southwest. These areas share an opportunity to grow services and increase coordination to better serve senior passengers. Five counties have this opportunity as they are not included in the coverage area of any human services transit providers: Clay, Lafayette, Lee, Phillips, and St. Francis counties.



Figure 4: Public and Human Services Coverage Area Gaps



Passengers with Disabilities

Every county in the state is within the coverage area of at least one human service provider serving passengers with disabilities. Multiple concentrations are seen in rural areas of the state. In general, these areas show moderate concentrations, but a few counties show very high concentrations of passengers with disabilities. The counties that show the highest concentrations are Calhoun, Dallas, Lafayette, Monroe, Montgomery, Newton, and Woodruff. Information gathered from community meetings can help ascertain if current services are meeting the community's need. Again, this is an opportunity for services to grow and increase coordination.

Poverty

26 counties are served by a provider that accommodates impoverished passengers, or about 35 percent of the state. Concentrations of persons in poverty are largely to the north of Little Rock, with the one county displaying a very high concentration compared to the state average (Sharp County). Garland, Scott, and Yell counties show moderate to high need and lack any human services transit providers with low-income programs. Increased coordination and expanded services could help create better transit opportunities for passengers in poverty.

Employment Access

Opportunities for passengers seeking assistance accessing employment opportunities are limited to 26 counties, or 35 percent of the state. The concentration of unemployed citizens is seen highest in the eastern part of Arkansas, but other concentrations are also seen throughout the state. Much of the state could better serve passengers, with Lee, Monroe, Montgomery, and Woodruff showing the highest concentrations of counties that lack any providers for employment access.

Key Findings

Following review of existing transportation coverage areas and census data, the project team made the following key findings:

- 7 counties are not served by general transit services.
- 11 counties exhibit gaps in services for three or more population groups.
- Services offered to passengers with disabilities experience widespread coverage, but gaps exist for other human services transit passenger types.
- Rural areas of the state have fewer offerings for transit yet often contain higher concentrations of transit-disadvantaged population groups.



Existing Conditions

ARDOT maintains a public transportation directory that provides information about active public and human services transit providers that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding and the areas they serve. The 2019 directory was used as an inventory of the current public and human services transportation providers operating in Arkansas. Past public transportation directories (2012 and 2007) were also used to evaluate information about the change in public transit resources over time. Demographic information presented in this section is taken from the same datasets as those presented in the previous section.

Existing Transportation Resources

Across the state of Arkansas, there are both public and human services transit providers that serve a wide variety of citizens throughout the state's eight planning districts (Figure 5). These providers can be categorized by three major FTA funding sources: urban public transit providers (Section 5307), rural public transit providers (Section 5311), and human services transit providers (Section 5310).

To determine how these resources are distributed across the state, this section presents data on the transportation providers such as an agency's location, number of vehicles available, and ridership levels.

Figure 5: Arkansas State Planning and Development Districts

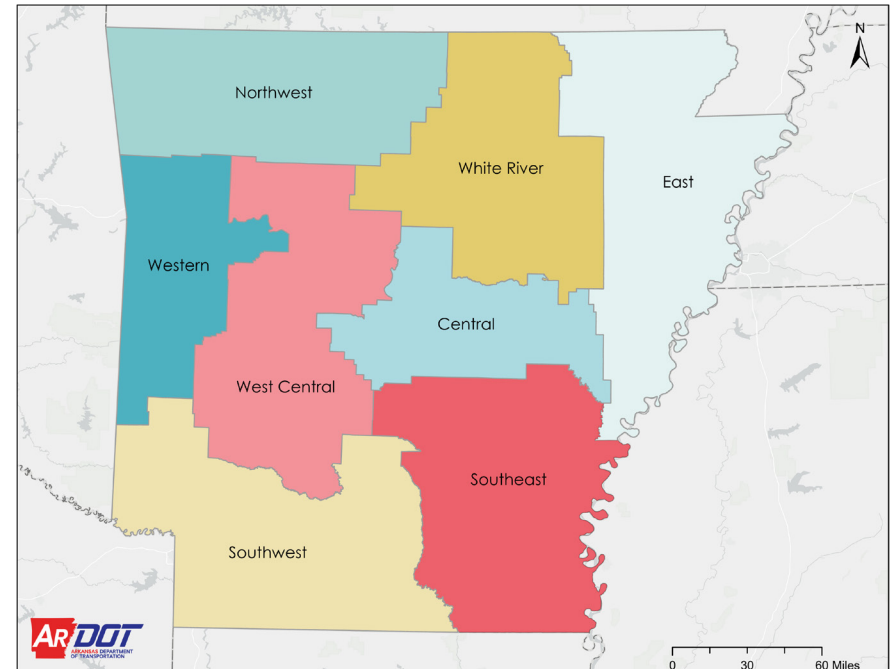


Figure 6: Transit Providers by County

Figure 6 displays the geographic distribution of providers across the state by county based upon mailing address of provider. Upon review, transit providers appear to be more concentrated both in densely populated counties and near large cities.

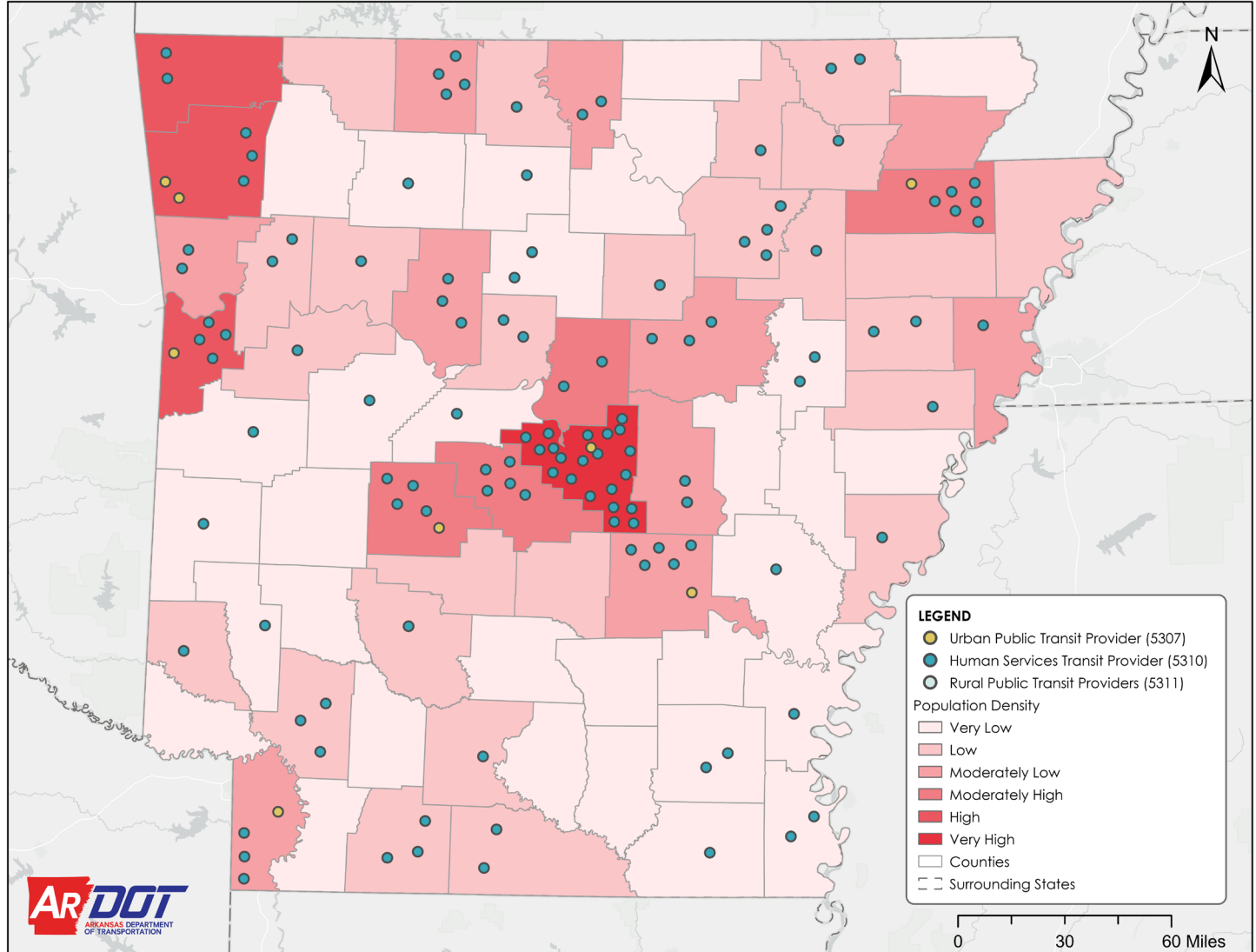


Figure 7: Urban Public Transit Provider Coverage Areas (Section 5307)

Figures 7 and 8 display the coverage areas of each urban and rural public transit provider as described in the public transportation directory.

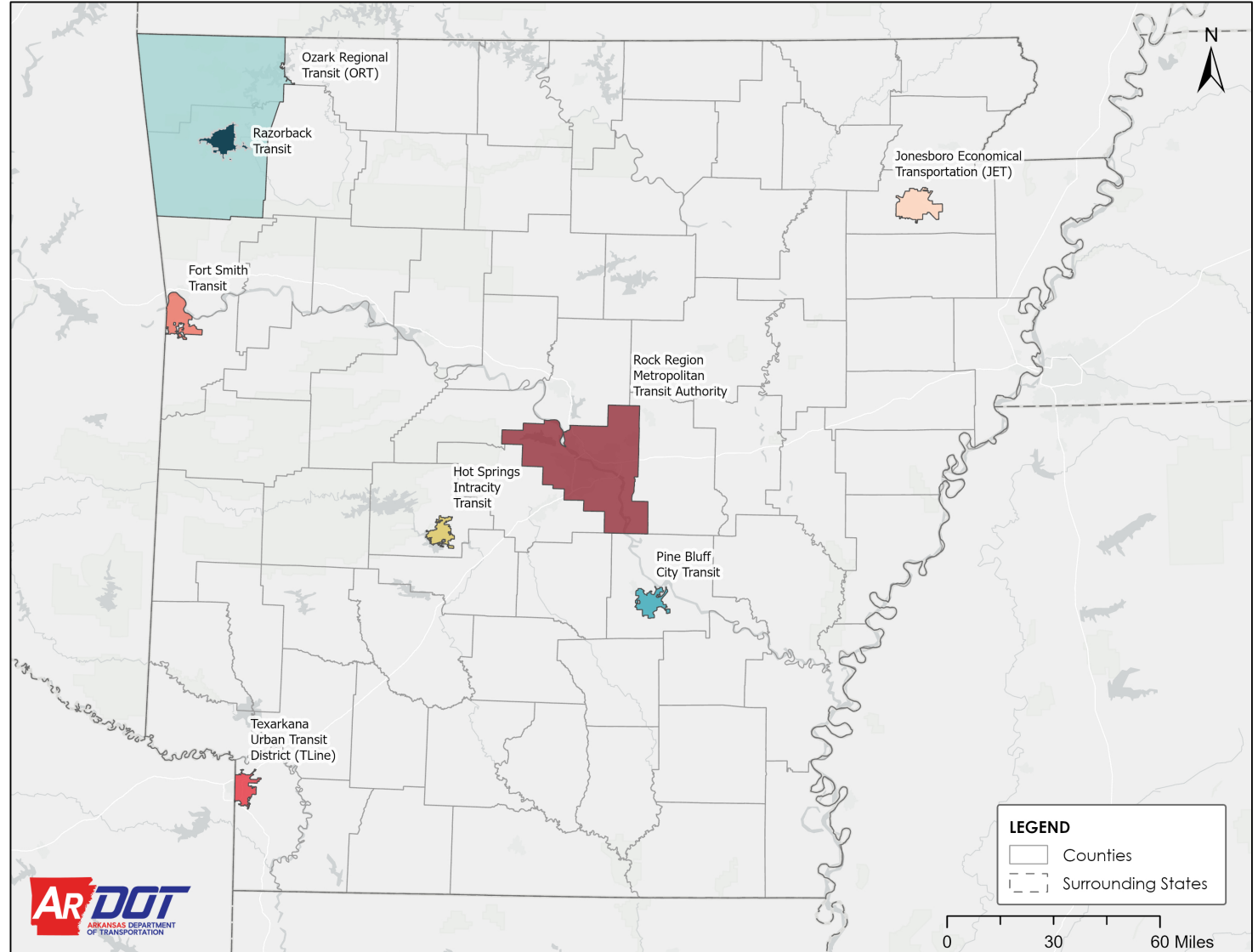


Figure 8: Rural Public Transit Provider Coverage Areas (Section 5311)

From these figures, a noticeable gap of seven counties in the central portion of the state appears where residents are not currently served by public transit providers. Specifically, the counties with no public transit providers are Cleburne, Faulkner, Independence, Sharp, Stone, Van Buren, and White.

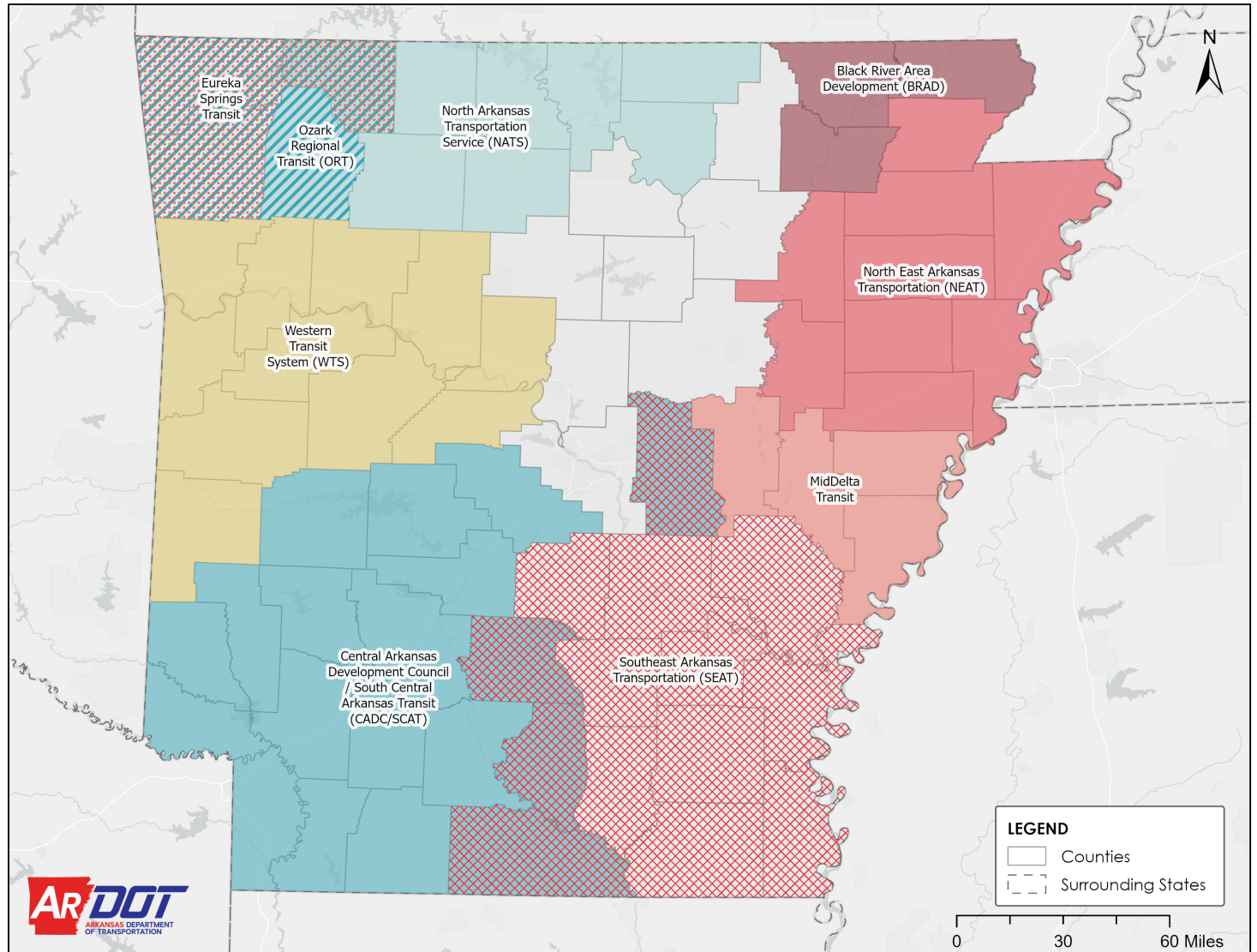


Figure 9: Human Services Transit Provider Coverage Areas by Passenger Type (Section 5310)

On the other hand, every county in the state is served by some type of human services provider through the Section 5310 program as depicted in Figure 9, and many counties have services for multiple specific passenger types through this funding program.

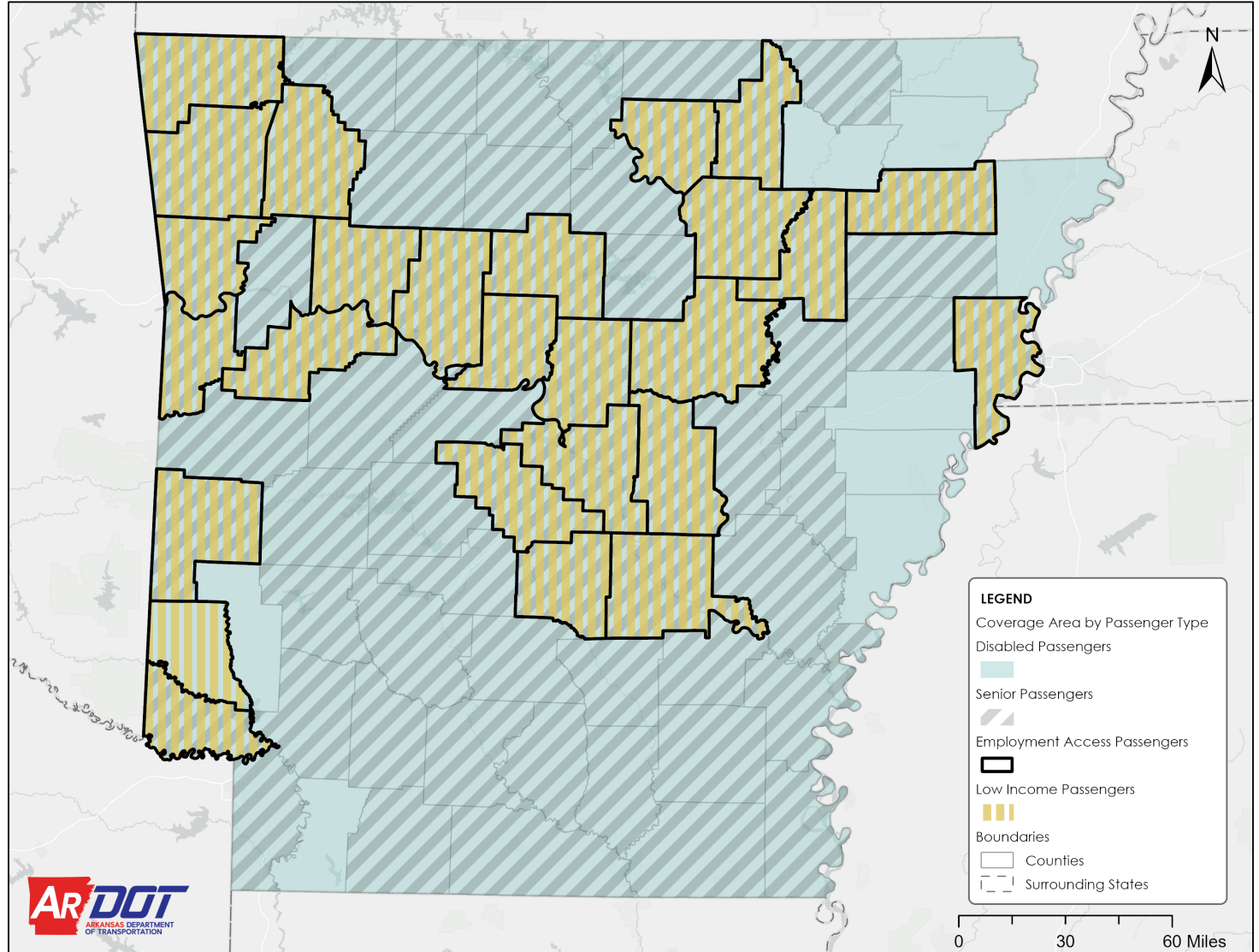
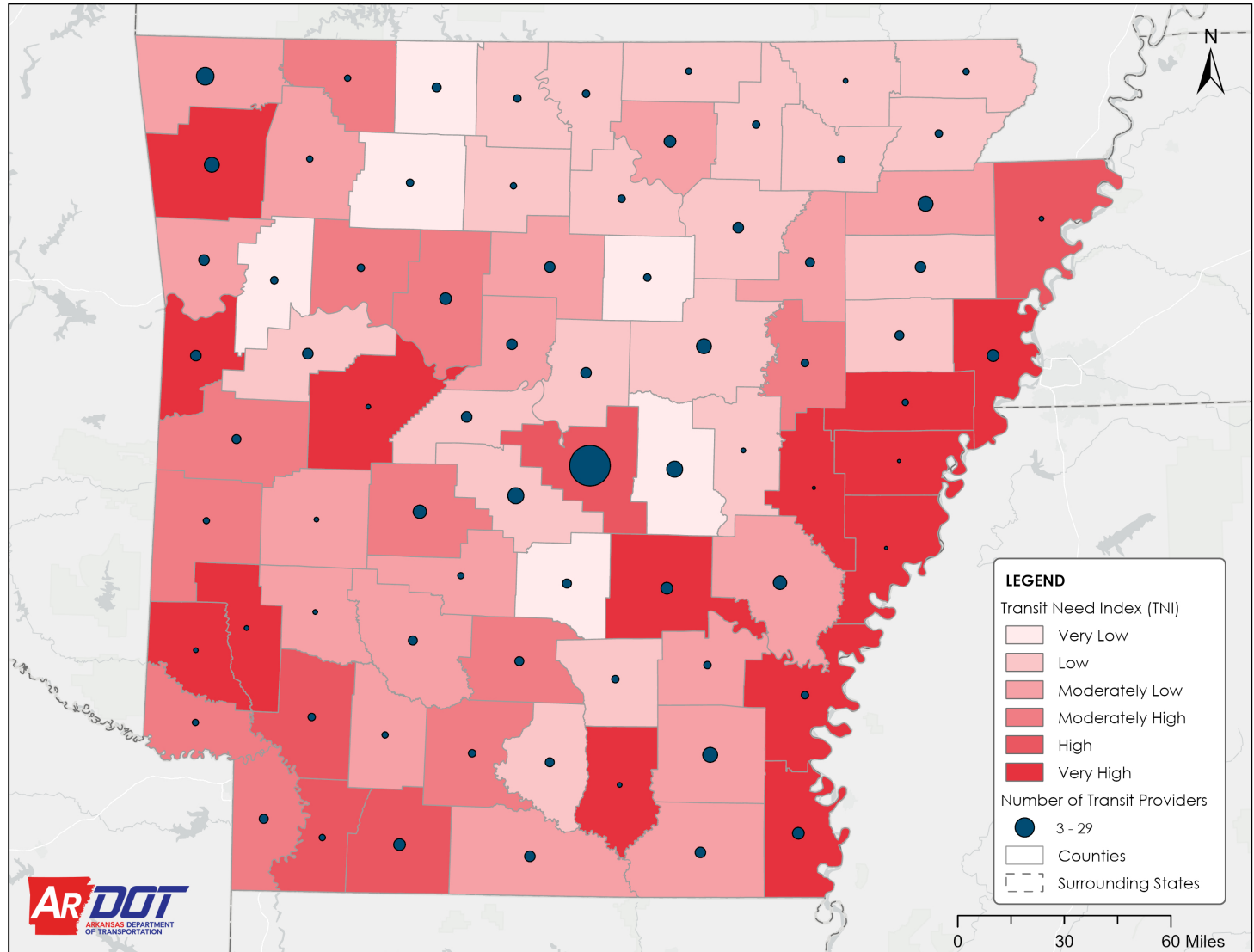


Figure 10: Total Number of Providers Serving Each County (Sections 5307, 5310, and 5311) with Transit Needs Index

Figure 10 displays symbols sized by total number of providers serving each county, overlaid with the Transit Need Index, for all three major FTA programs. The map shows that counties with a higher Transit Need Index tend to have more providers, yet there does seem to be some level of disparity. For example, Sevier County in the southwestern portion of the state exhibits a high transit need with a relatively low number of providers.



Public Transit Providers (Sections 5307 and 5311)

As of 2019, Arkansas had eight urban and nine rural public transit providers that offer either fixed-route or demand-response services. (Note: Ozark Regional Transit provides both rural and urban public transit service.) Table 6 displays these 16 total providers with operations data provided by the public transportation directory. The graphic to the right shows how this information has changed since the last publication of the directory in 2012.

Figure 11 shows the number of vehicles for each public transit provider in urban areas, along with a portion normalized by service area population and multiplied by 1,000 (number of vehicles per 1,000 persons). Figure 12 displays the same information for rural areas. There is a small level of mismatch between where vehicles are located relative to population. For example, Central Arkansas Development Council / South Central Arkansas Transit (CADC/SCAT) has a high number of vehicles; however, when normalized by population, the agency exhibits a lower number of vehicles per capita than peer agencies. This information suggests the agency may not have enough vehicles to fully accommodate its service area population. On the other hand, Eureka Springs Transit has a low number of vehicles but a very high number of vehicles per 1,000 persons suggesting the agency is more adequately equipped to serve its ridership when compared to others in the state.

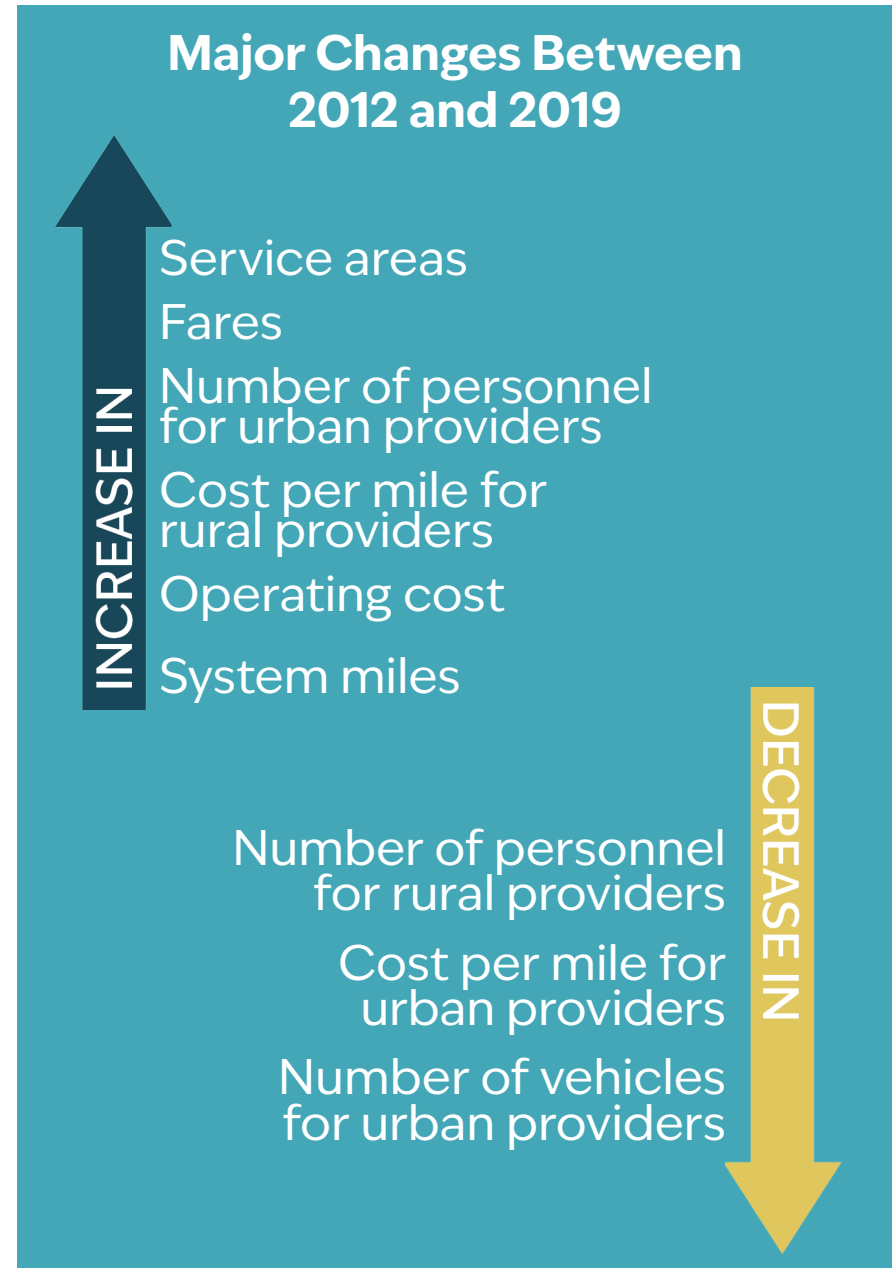


Table 6: Overview of Public Transit Providers (5307 & 5311)

PROVIDER	Funding Type	Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Personnel	Fixed Route Fare Cost	System Population	Operating Cost	Ridership	System Miles	Passenger Trip/Mile	Cost/Mile	Cost/Passenger Trip	Annual Vehicles Hours	System Square Miles	Productivity
Fort Smith Transit	5307	City of Fort Smith	10	33	\$1.25	86,209	\$2,253,855.00	258,946	452,669	0.57	\$4.98	\$8.70	30,739	62	8.42
Hot Springs Intracity Transit	5307	City of Hot Springs	6	10	\$1.25	35,193	\$1,026,318.00	177,749	208,228	0.85	\$4.93	\$5.77	16,108	35	11.03
Jonesboro Economical Transportation (JET)	5307	City of Jonesboro	11	22	\$1.25	67,263	\$856,014.00	137,208	309,418	0.44	\$2.77	\$6.24	21,076	80	6.51
Ozark Regional Transit (ORT)	5307	Benton and Washington Counties	28	61	\$1.25	341,860	\$4,112,132.00	262,375	1,029,307	0.25	\$4.00	\$15.67	65,128	1796	4.03
Pine Bluff City Transit	5307	City of Pine Bluff	6	27	\$1.00	49,083	\$924,701.00	82,122	235,530	0.35	\$3.93	\$11.26	16,900	45	4.86
Razorback Transit	5307	Core of the City of Fayetteville	23	40	\$0.00	73,580	\$3,166,918.00	1,706,727	609,378	2.80	\$5.20	\$1.86	57,634	18	29.61
Rock Region Metropolitan Transit Authority	5307	Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle, Sherwood, Jacksonville, and portions of Pulaski County	88	208	\$1.25	165,730	\$17,260,873.00	2,351,440	3,241,898	0.72	\$5.32	\$7.34	211,246	100	11.13
Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line)	5307	Cities of Texarkana, AR, Texarkana, TX, Nash and Wake Village, TX	9	23	\$1.25	66,330	\$1,610,291.00	318,418	422,866	0.75	\$3.81	\$5.06	28,521	71	11.16

PROVIDER	Funding Type	Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Personnel	Fixed Route Fare Cost	System Population	Operating Cost	Ridership	System Miles	Passenger Trip/Mile	Cost/Mile	Cost/Passenger Trip	Annual Vehicles Hours	System Square Miles	Productivity
Black River Area Development (BRAD) – “Go With Us Ride The Bus”	5311	Clay, Lawrence and Randolph Counties	10	8		51,467	\$429,818.00	25,667	86,180	0.30	\$4.99	\$16.75	6,066	1890	4.23
Central Arkansas Development Council / South Central Arkansas Transit (CADC/SCAT)	5311	Calhoun, Clark, Columbia, Dallas, Garland, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Howard, Little River, Lafayette, Lonoke, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Saline, Sevier and Union Counties	185	218		262,048	\$8,253,234.00	414,748	4,389,677	0.09	\$1.88	\$19.90	278,424	8185	1.49
Eureka Springs Transit	5311	City of Eureka Springs, Carroll, Benton & Washington Counties	9	25		2,073	\$784,335.00	117,507	170,410	0.69	\$4.60	\$6.67	12,176	6.9	9.65
Mid-Delta Transit	5311	Lee, Monroe, Phillips and Prairie Counties	45	57		46,472	\$1,772,346.00	96,758	1,571,809	0.06	\$1.13	\$18.32	68,880	2600	1.40

PROVIDER	Funding Type	Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Personnel	Fixed Route Fare Cost	System Population	Operating Cost	Ridership	System Miles	Passenger Trip/Mile	Cost/Mile	Cost/Passenger Trip	Annual Vehicles Hours	System Square Miles	Productivity
North Arkansas Transportation Service (NATS)	5311	Baxter, Boone, Carroll, Fulton, Izard, Madison, Marion, Newton and Searcy Counties	58	48		159,117	\$1,524,083.00	124,843	682,042	0.18	\$2.23	\$12.21	81,056	5168	1.54
North East Arkansas Transportation (NEAT)	5311	Craighead, Cross, Crittenden, Greene, Jackson, Mississippi, Poinsett, St. Francis and Woodruff Counties	8	9		305,853	\$239,389.00	7,484	201,575	0.04	\$1.19	\$31.99	9,137	6206	0.82
Ozark Regional Transit (ORT)	5311	Benton, Carroll, Madison and Washington Counties	2	8		312,574	\$152,124.00	1,739	15,863	0.11	\$9.59	\$87.48	5,104	3263	0.34

PROVIDER	Funding Type	Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Personnel	Fixed Route Fare Cost	System Population	Operating Cost	Ridership	System Miles	Passenger Trip/Mile	Cost/Mile	Cost/Passenger Trip	Annual Vehicles Hours	System Square Miles	Productivity
Southeast Arkansas Transportation (SEAT)	5311	Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Cleveland, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke (south of I-40) and Union Counties	113	120		230,434	\$5,494,197.00	227,868	4,169,321	0.05	\$1.32	\$24.11	173,534	9617	1.31
Western Transit System (WTS)	5311	Conway, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Perry, Polk, Pope, Scott, Sebastian and Yell Counties	10	7		280,548	\$162,845.00	2,666	92,678	0.03	\$1.76	\$61.08	4,710	7514	0.57

Source: Arkansas Public Transportation Directory, 2019

Figure 11: Total Number of Vehicles—Urban Public Transit Providers

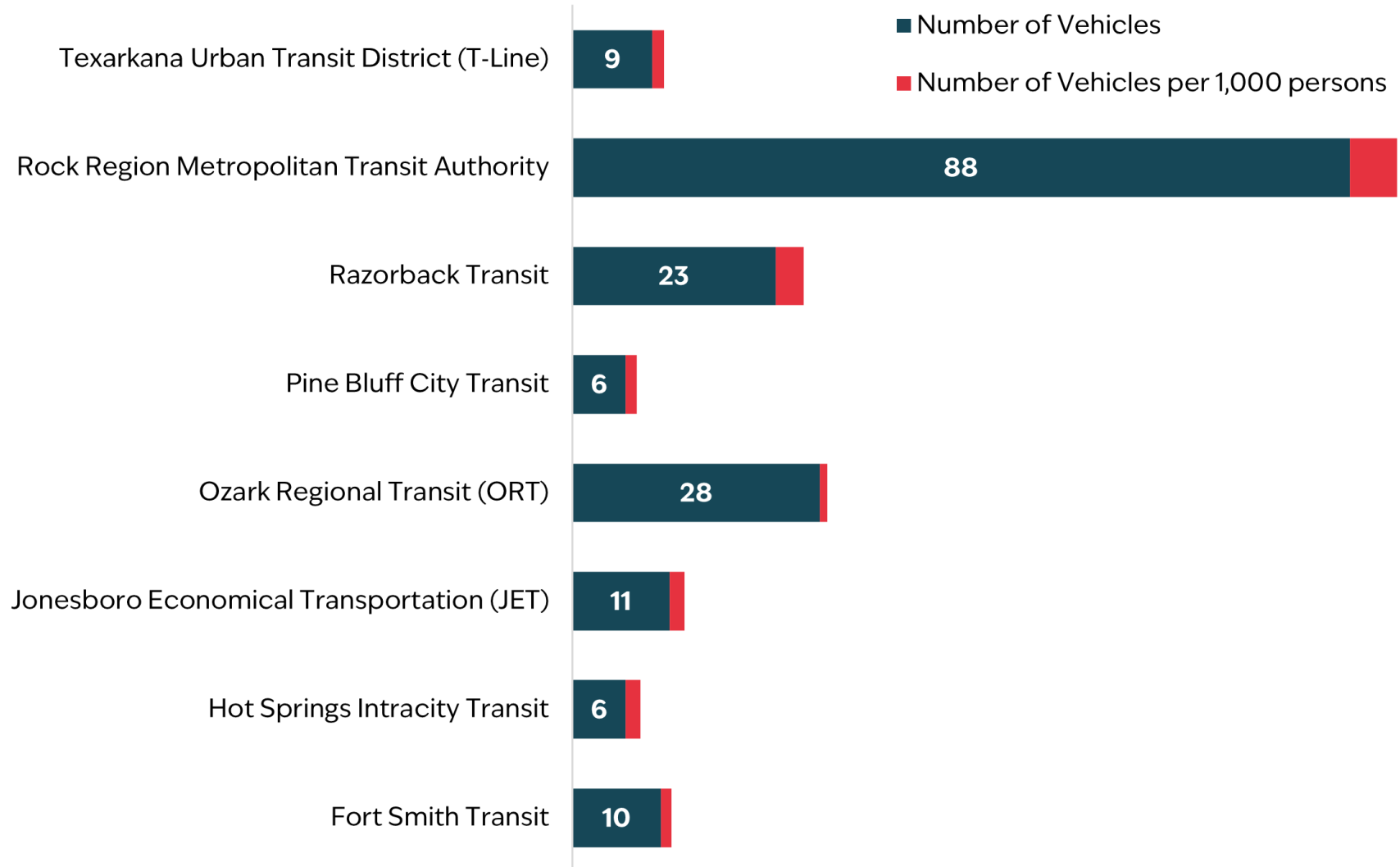
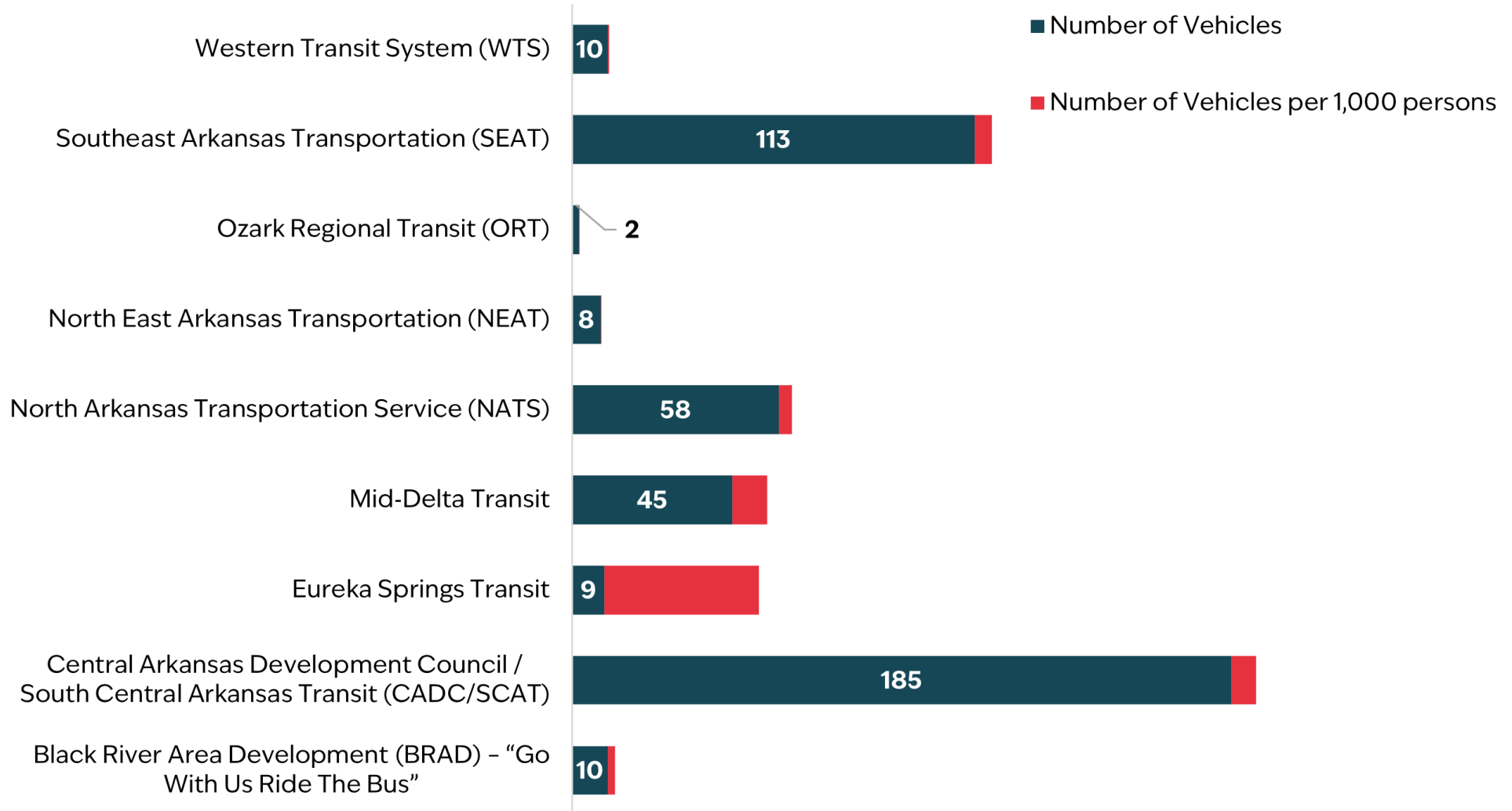


Figure 12: Total Number of Vehicles—Rural Public Transit Providers



Human Services Transit Providers (Section 5310)

As of 2019, the state of Arkansas was served by 130 human services transit providers which provide transportation to seniors, individuals with disabilities, persons in poverty, and persons accessing employment. Every county in the state has at least one type of 5310 provider, with many counties having five or more providers. However, there has been an overall reduction in the number of providers since the last publication of the directory; there were 169 providers in 2012 and 130 in 2019, or 77 percent retained (Figure 13).

Figure 9 depicts the distribution of human services transit providers in the state by type of passenger served. Central and northwest Arkansas offer the most comprehensive coverage with all four passenger types having access to services. Most of the state has services for disabled and senior persons but

lacks services through programs for those who are low-income or need access to employment opportunities by transit. Table 7 includes a list of all providers along with passenger type and coverage area. Most providers serve more than one county, with many having three or more counties within their coverage areas. Pulaski County is a notable outlier and has the highest number of providers at 28, while the average county has six providers operating within their boundaries.

Figures 14 through 17 provide insight into where transit services may need to be expanded by overlaying number of providers in each county on top of the county's concentration of each passenger type as related to the state's average (a key component of the Transit Need Index). Many counties exhibit high concentrations but only have a limited number of providers.

Figure 13: Change in Number of 5310 Providers from 2012 to 2019

There has been an overall **reduction** in the number of providers since the last publication of the directory;

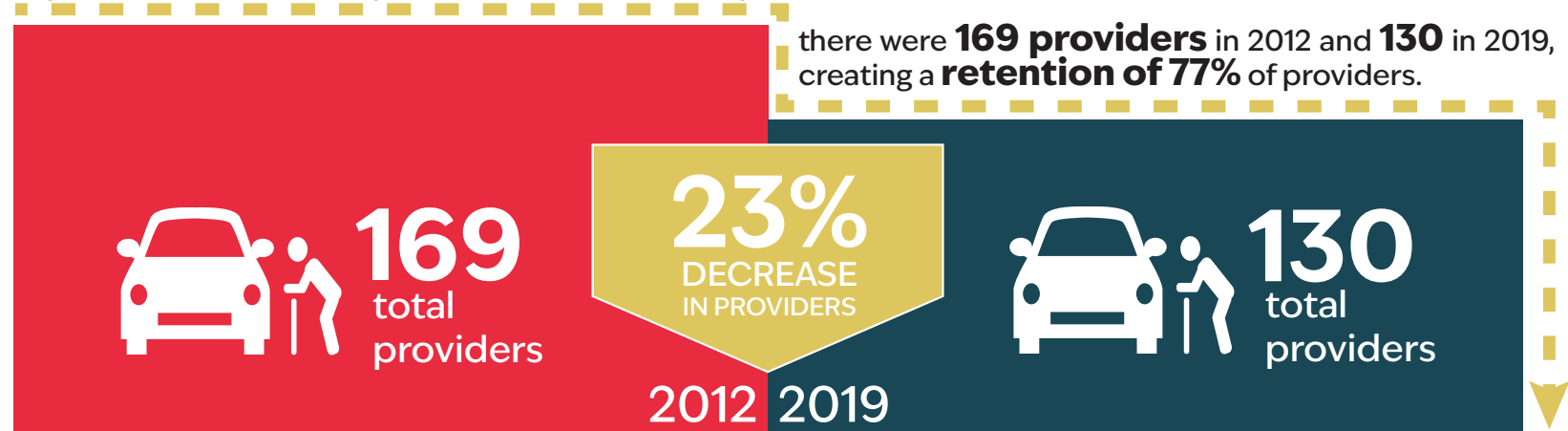


Table 7: Human Services Transit Providers by County (Section 5310)

County	Number of Human Services Providers	Disabled	Seniors	Low-Income	Employment
Arkansas	9	✓	✓		
Ashley	7	✓	✓		
Baxter	5	✓	✓		
Benton	10	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boone	6	✓	✓		
Bradley	3	✓	✓		
Calhoun	5	✓	✓		
Carroll	2	✓	✓		
Chicot	8	✓	✓		
Clark	6	✓	✓		
Clay	4	✓			
Cleburne	6	✓	✓		
Cleveland	5	✓	✓		
Columbia	8	✓	✓		
Conway	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Craighead	9	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crawford	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crittenden	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cross	6	✓	✓		
Dallas	5	✓	✓		
Desha	5	✓	✓		
Drew	10	✓	✓		
Faulkner	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Franklin	5	✓	✓		
Fulton	4	✓	✓		
Garland	8	✓	✓		
Grant	6	✓	✓	✓	✓

Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan

County	Number of Human Services Providers	Disabled	Seniors	Low-Income	Employment
Greene	5	✓			
Hempstead	5	✓	✓		
Hot Spring	4	✓	✓		
Howard	3	✓			
Independence	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Izard	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jackson	6	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jefferson	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Johnson	5	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lafayette	4	✓			
Lawrence	5	✓			
Lee	2	✓			
Lincoln	5	✓	✓		
Little River	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logan	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lonoke	10	✓	✓	✓	✓
Madison	3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marion	5	✓	✓		
Miller	5	✓	✓		
Mississippi	3	✓			
Monroe	2	✓	✓		
Montgomery	3	✓	✓		
Nevada	4	✓	✓		
Newton	5	✓	✓		
Ouachita	5	✓	✓		
Perry	7	✓	✓		
Phillips	2	✓			

Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan

County	Number of Human Services Providers	Disabled	Seniors	Low-Income	Employment
Pike	3	✓	✓		
Poinsett	7	✓	✓		
Polk	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pope	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prairie	3	✓	✓		
Pulaski	28	✓	✓	✓	✓
Randolph	3	✓	✓		
Saline	11	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scott	6	✓	✓		
Searcy	4	✓	✓		
Sebastian	6	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sevier	3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharp	6	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Francis	4	✓			
Stone	6	✓	✓		
Union	6	✓	✓		
Van Buren	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
White	11	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woodruff	5	✓	✓		
Yell	3	✓	✓		

Figure 14: Number of 5310 Providers for Seniors with TNI Sub-Score

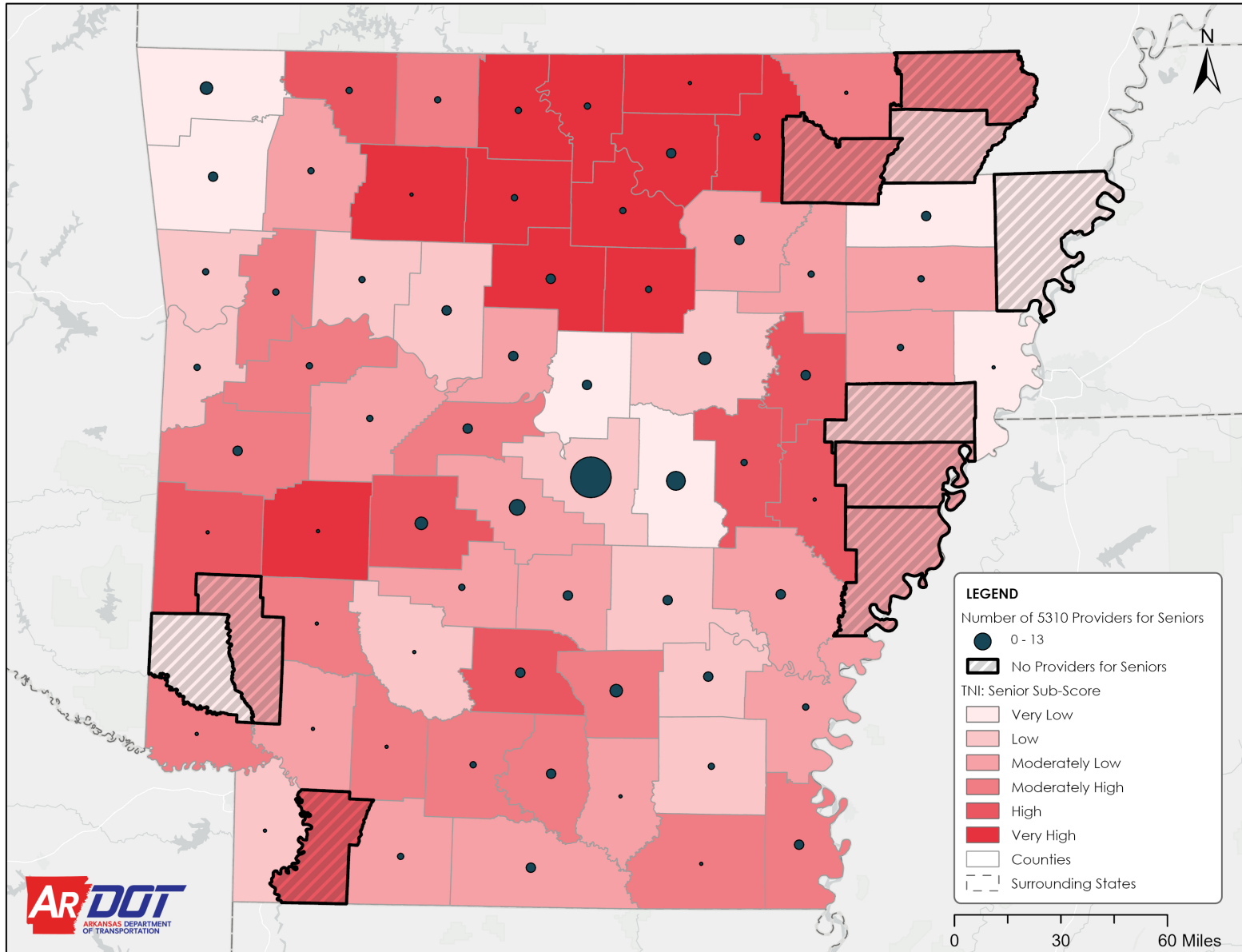


Figure 15: Number of 5310 Providers for Individuals with Disabilities with TNI Sub-Score

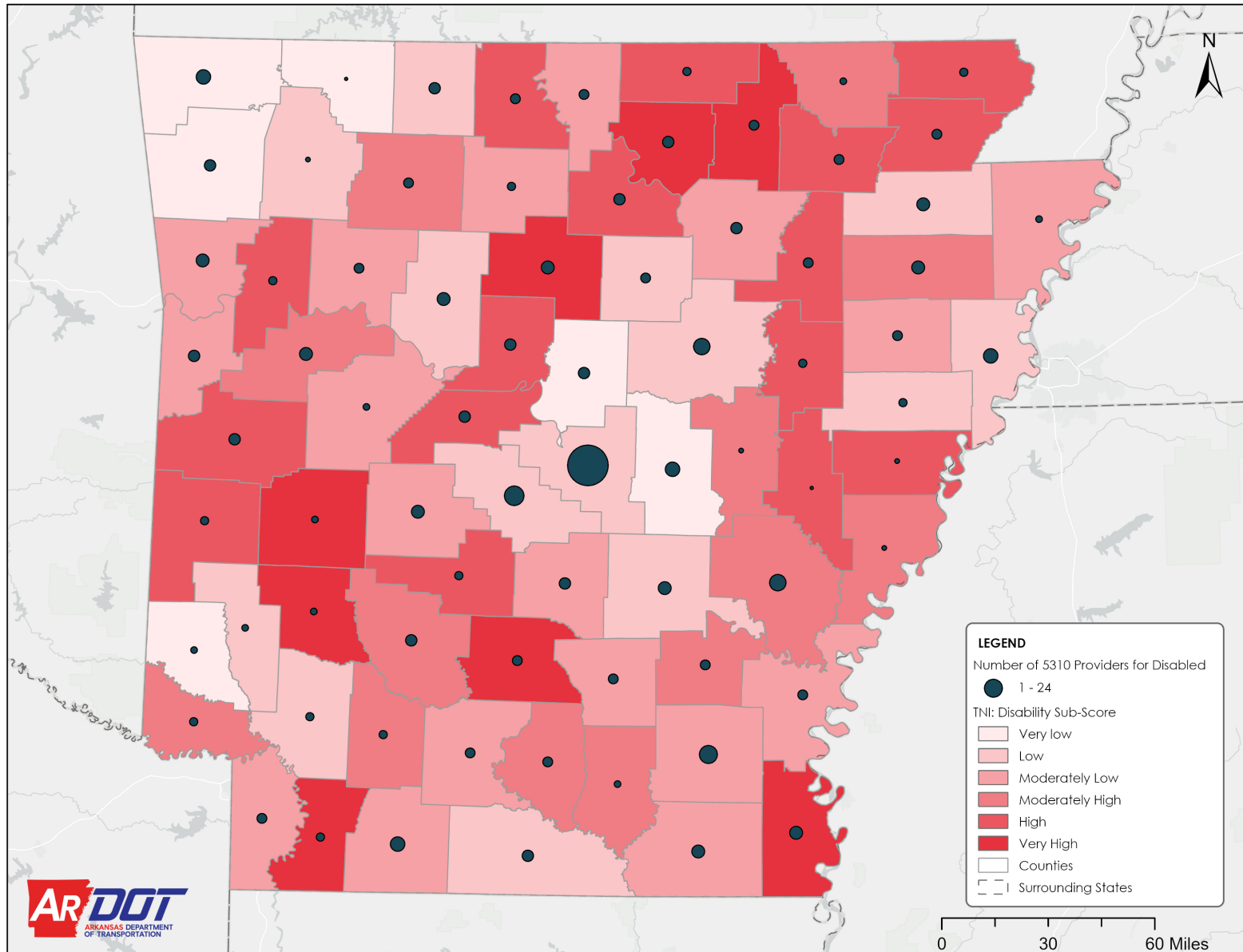


Figure 16: Number of 5310 Providers for Low Income Persons with TNI Sub-Score

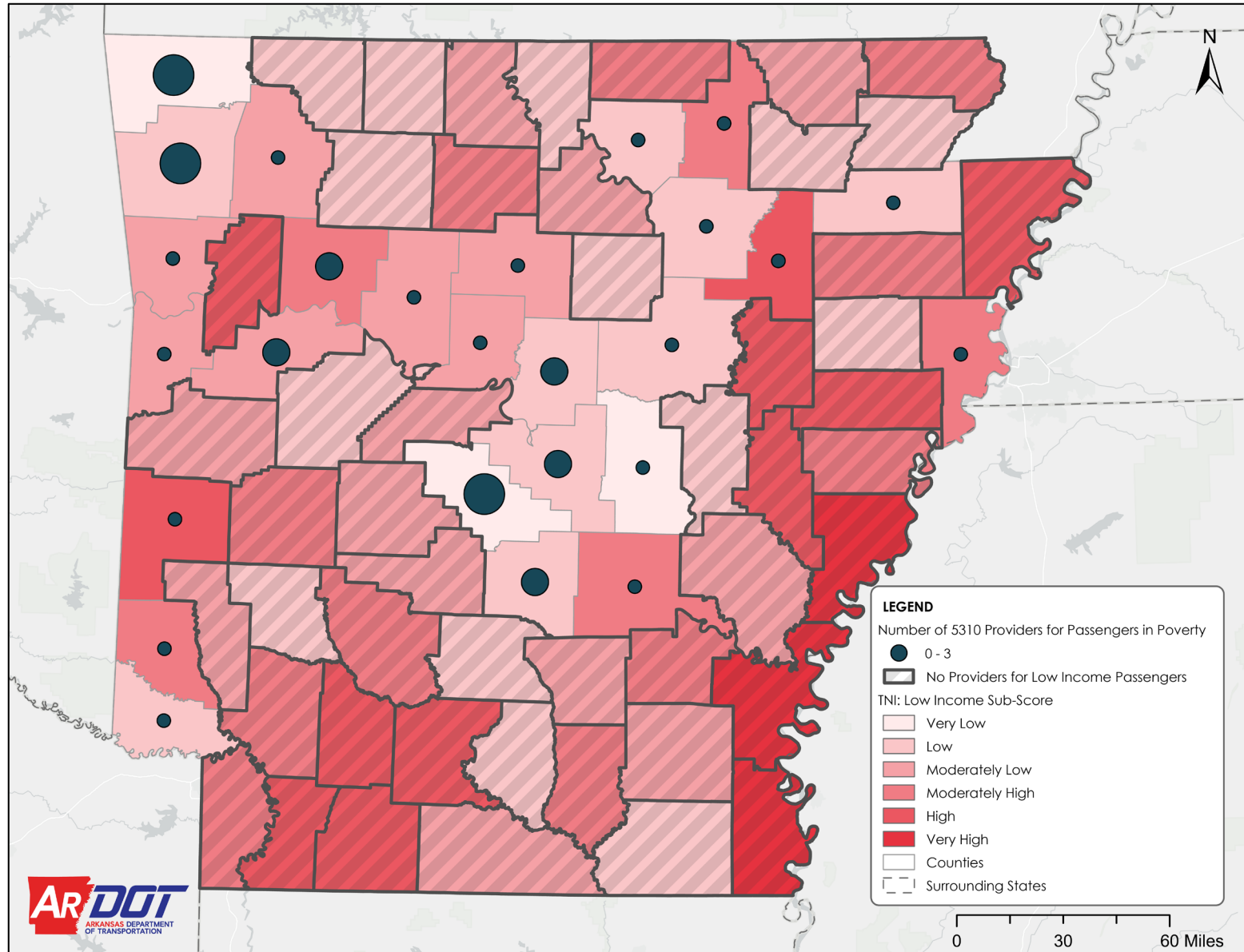
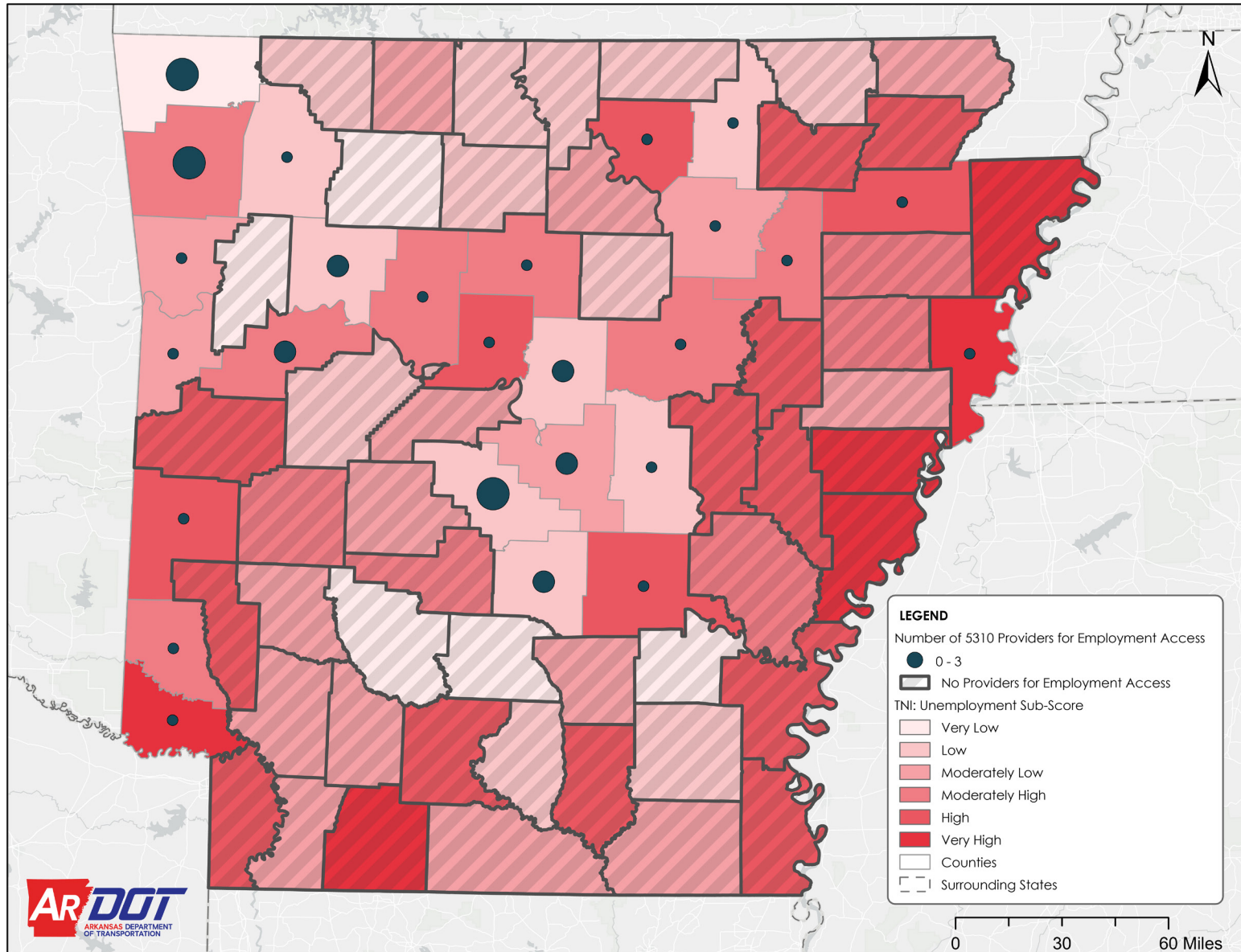


Figure 17: Number of 5310 Providers for Employment Access with TNI Sub-Score



Key Destination Analysis

As part of the existing conditions analysis, an analysis of key destinations served by transit agency was conducted. Locations for various educational, health, governmental, and lifestyle destinations were gathered from the State of Arkansas GIS Catalog to evaluate which destinations are served by both public and human services transit providers. Based upon this analysis, 20 percent of the state’s major destinations are served by urban public transit providers while 83 percent is served by rural public transit providers. Accounting for overlap of coverage areas, about 90 percent of the state’s key destinations are reachable by some form of public transit system. Table 8 displays a breakdown of destinations served by funding category.

Human service transit providers provide services to the entire state, but not every passenger type has access to the same level of service as can be seen in Table 9. Agencies serving individuals with disabilities have wide-spread coverage with 100% of key destinations served. Agencies providing service to seniors also have a large coverage area with 88% of key destinations served. Agencies serving those in poverty and those needing employment access through specific programs have the same level of coverage at 48%. As part of the gap analysis, the levels of key destinations served will be used to support recommendations for improvement. Note: these estimates are based on county served and assumes that all in a county may receive service through that agency.



% of Key Destinations Reachable by Public Transit

Average % of Key Destinations Reached by 5310 Service

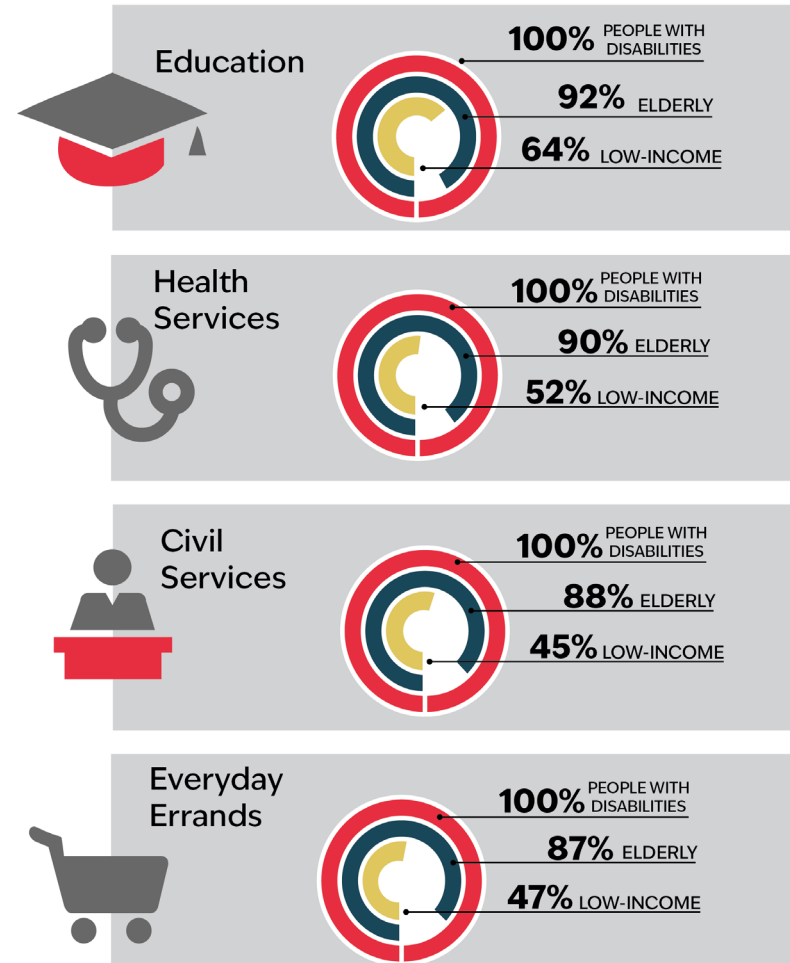


Table 8: Key Destinations Served—Public Transit Providers

	Urban Public Transit Providers		Rural Public Transit Providers		Combined Coverage Areas		TOTAL
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Public Schools	349	33%	828	78%	950	90%	1,056
Private Schools	74	45%	117	71%	140	85%	164
Community Colleges	3	14%	19	86%	20	91%	22
4-Year Colleges	7	58%	8	67%	11	92%	12
Rural Health Clinics	1	1%	67	79%	67	79%	85
Long-Term Care Facilities	163	38%	339	78%	396	92%	432
Hospitals	50	45%	83	74%	101	90%	112
Community Health Centers	27	23%	103	86%	107	89%	120
Town Halls and Courthouses	16	9%	172	91%	176	94%	188
Post Offices	105	15%	589	84%	624	89%	705
Business Establishments	151	7%	1,084	87%	1105	88%	3,559
Fire Stations	256	12%	3,108	83%	3122	85%	1,303
Libraries	38	19%	166	83%	180	90%	201
Veterans Affairs Services	7	41%	14	82%	16	94%	17
Hospital Related Services	224	37%	476	78%	553	91%	609
Churches	1,600	18%	7,559	83%	8,251	91%	9112
City Halls	42	10%	367	86%	377	88%	426
Factories and Plants	366	20%	1,665	92%	1700	94%	1,817
Museums	31	30%	88	85%	97	94%	103
TOTAL	3,510	18%	16,852	84%	17,993	90%	20,043

Source: Arkansas GIS Office, 2022

Table 9: Key Destinations Served—Human Services Transit Providers

	Persons with Disabilities		Elderly		Low-Income/Employment		TOTAL
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Public Schools	1056	100%	963	91%	647	61%	1,056
Private Schools	164	100%	152	93%	112	68%	164
Community Colleges	22	100%	18	82%	11	50%	22
4-Year Colleges	12	100%	12	100%	9	75%	12
Rural Health Clinics	85	100%	70	82%	27	32%	85
Long-Term Care Facilities	432	100%	401	93%	256	59%	432
Hospitals	112	100%	103	92%	68	61%	112
Community Health Centers	120	100%	108	90%	66	55%	120
Town Halls and Courthouses	188	100%	170	90%	79	42%	188
Post Offices	705	100%	609	86%	325	46%	705
Business Establishments	1303	100%	1189	91%	620	48%	1303
Fire Stations	3559	100%	3,265	92%	1300	37%	3,559
Libraries	201	100%	171	85%	107	53%	201
Veterans Affairs Services	17	100%	15	88%	8	47%	17
Hospital Related Services	609	100%	553	91%	327	54%	609
Churches	9,112	100%	7,947	87%	4,119	45%	9,112
City Halls	426	100%	353	83%	181	42%	426
Factories and Plants	1817	100%	1,495	82%	825	45%	1,817
Museums	103	100%	95	92%	52	50%	103
TOTAL	20,043	100%	17,689	88%	9,139	46%	20,043

Source: Arkansas GIS Office, 2022

Table 10: Potential Transit Excess Demand

Daily Trip Rate: Vehicle Access*	Daily Trip Rate: No Vehicle Access*	Transit Gap Trip Rate	Households with No Vehicle Access**	Potential Transit Trip Demand (Daily)	Potential Transit Trip Demand (Annual)	Transit Trips Provided (2019)***	Total Transit Demand	% Transit Demand Met
7.899	3.94	3.95	73,723	290,917	75,638,524	6,314,265	81,952,789	7.70%

* National Household Travel Survey, FHA, USDOT, 2017

** Household Size by Vehicles Available (B08201), 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, American Community Survey

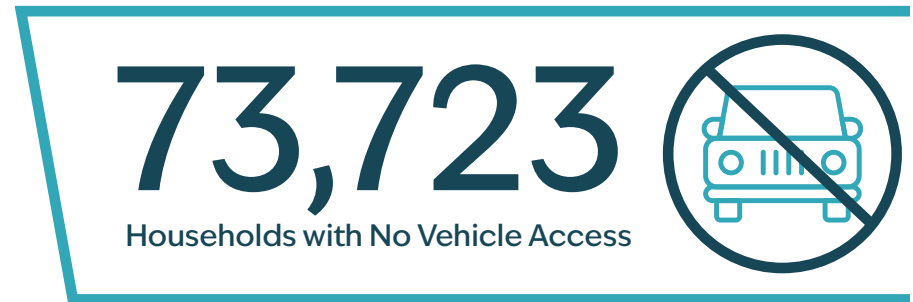
*** Arkansas Public Transportation Directory, ARDOT, 2019

Note: Bolded numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number

Potential Transit Need Estimate

An estimate of potential transit demand was calculated to give a high-level metric of the number of rides an effective statewide transit system could provide. This metric is used for planning purposes and represents a simplified calculation to gauge the amount of transit demand currently being met. The estimate works by assuming that households without a vehicle are limited in the number of daily trips that can be taken, and if these households had access to effective transit systems, they would be taking the same number of trips as a household with vehicle access.

To develop this estimate, daily trip rates were gathered from the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) for households with and without vehicle access. To find the transit gap trip rate, the trip rate for those with vehicles was subtracted from the trip rate for those without access to vehicles. The transit gap trip rate represents the number of trips that each household



without vehicle access would take if they had access to effective transit. Next, the transit gap trip rate was multiplied by the number of households with no vehicle access to find daily potential transit trip demand for all households without vehicle access. An annual weekday number of trips was calculated by multiplying the daily demand by the number of weekdays in a year (260). Last, annual potential trip demand was compared to current ridership levels to see what portion of ridership is being captured. For 2019, 6.3 million rides were provided by 5307 and 5311 transit providers in Arkansas. This represents about 7.7 percent of annual potential transit trip demand. In 2018, 9.4 percent of annual potential transit trip demand was captured.

Summary

The goal of this section was to conduct an analysis of existing conditions of the ARDOT's current transit system; the analysis evaluates the type of transit provider, coverage area, passenger type, and the number of providers. Furthermore, the section presents data on the transportation providers such as an agency's location, number of vehicles available, and ridership levels.

The analysis reveals patterns and tendencies of ridership and providers. Ridership, transit need, and transit providers are more prevalent in densely populated areas and near large cities. The data also reveals the distribution of providers in the state by type of passenger served. This reveals that in some areas where there is ridership and transit need, transit users are

underserved by the amount and type of providers. Central and northwest Arkansas offer the most comprehensive coverage with all four passenger types having access to services. Based on the analysis, and although there are transit providers throughout the entire state, not every passenger type has the best access to the same level of service. The considerations and observations drawn from the analysis will allow progress to be made toward improving and updating ARDOT's Statewide Public Transit Coordination Plan (TCP) and providing more accessible, higher quality services for the transportation-disadvantaged.



Public Outreach

Public engagement consists of community input to help define the existing concerns in the region and foster a dialogue among respective parties. The ARDOT Statewide Public Transit Coordination Plan process featured public outreach to stakeholders, local human service agencies, the community, as well as ARDOT staff members. Creating an open line of communication between various members of the community will help to provide solutions and recommendations that best address the unique needs of the community.

Public Engagement Strategies

Public engagement strategies used for the ARDOT Statewide Coordination Plan centered on the collaboration of human service agencies, public transit agencies, and transit riders. Public meetings and online surveys were the two primary methods used to obtain input for the plan. With the information

obtained from the surveys and public meetings, the planning team can better identify gaps in service, understand the needs of the community, and create a space for providers to discuss opportunities for collaboration and coordination moving forward.

Public Meetings

Eight meetings were held throughout the state to identify gaps, learn more about current transit service areas, and foster a more diverse understanding of each region within Arkansas and existing coordination efforts. The planning team held meetings in each of the eight planning districts of the state. Table 11 lists the meeting dates, times, and locations.

In all, the public meetings generated productive dialogue between agencies and the public. Generally, meetings included a brief presentation of the planning process followed by discussion regarding current operational issues, barriers to coordination, existing coordination between agencies, and support needed to improve coordination efforts on the ground.

Table 11: Public Meeting List

Planning District	Meeting Location	Date	Time
Southwest	Texarkana	August 2	2:00 PM
White River	Batesville	August 11	9:30 AM
East	Jonesboro	August 11	2:00 PM
West Central	Hot Springs	August 12	9:30 AM
Southeast	Pine Bluff	August 12	2:00 PM
Northwest	Springdale	August 15	2:00 PM
Western	Alma	August 16	9:30 AM
Central	Little Rock	August 16	2:00 PM

Feedback Themes

During the meetings, four major issues to service were identified by attendees:

Staffing issues

- There are staffing issues among providers due to the rise in transit need and a shortage of drivers due to increasing cost and availability.
- Increased turnover is leading to a loss of institutional knowledge.

Vehicle shortages and maintenance needs

- Agencies are experiencing shortages of vehicles and maintenance needs because of the lack of affordability and global supply chain issues.

General lack of service

- Some counties lack specific service for seniors or individuals with disabilities.

Route availability and accessibility

- Citizens expressed issues with specific routes and a lack of night transportation.

During the meetings, two major barriers to coordination were identified:

Funding availability and regulatory restrictions

- Funding availability was one of the most identified barriers mentioned throughout the public outreach meetings. Funding has always been an issue for non-profit organizations and governmental agencies; however, with vehicle part

shortages, rising costs for gas, and overall inflation, the need for additional operational funding has increased over time.

- Regulatory issues related to who can be served and trip type were brought up frequently. For example, medical service agencies cannot provide trips to the grocery store or other personal errands.

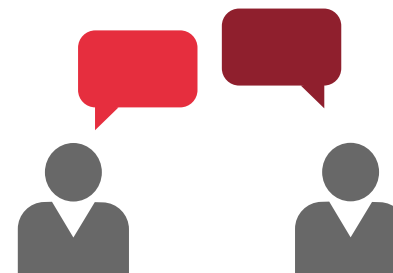
Jurisdictional limitations on providing services

- Agencies also discussed the lack of rides they can provide outside of county boundaries and other service area limitations due to funding sources.

When compared to the 2018 Statewide Transit Coordination Plan, issues related to service provision, such as staffing issues and vehicle shortages are new challenges faced by the agencies. These new issues can primarily be attributed to national workforce shortages and supply chain disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other important findings from the 2022 public meetings include:

- Lack of rural transportation in certain regions.
- High demand for riders who need multiple day trips to appointments.
- General cost of rides is too high.



Surveys

In addition to public meetings, the planning team conducted an online survey to collect data on current coordination efforts and identify needs within the state of Arkansas. Surveys were released for two main groups: one for transit providers and another for transit users. The surveys were open for submission from August 1st until September 9th, 2022. In total, 87 provider surveys and 99 user surveys were completed.

Provider Survey

The provider survey was distributed to both public transit and human service transportation agencies across the state via Google Forms. Upon review of provider survey responses, major issues faced by transit agencies include a lack of vans, a shortage of workers, and an increasing cost of providing service. These issues are consistent with discussions during the public meetings and correspond to the major areas for improvement reported by providers.

The providers indicated the top four groups affected by the availability of public transportation services include:

- People without cars
- People with low or moderate income
- People with disabilities
- Elderly people

Around 80% of providers stated that the quality of transportation services has stayed the same or improved since the last plan update, but nearly the same portion (78%) of providers reported that their counties need additional transportation services beyond what is currently available. Some of the additional

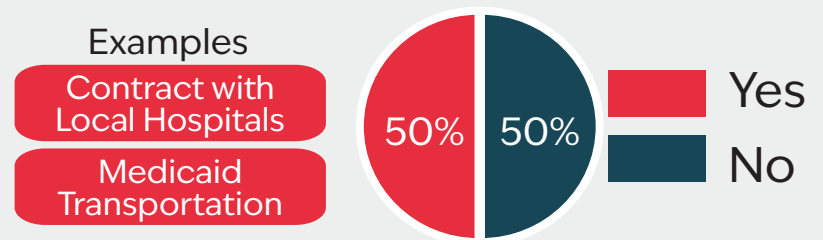
Major Areas for Improvement



Quality of Transportation Services in the Last 5 Years



Does Your Agency Coordinate with Others?







transportation services needed include:

- Access to healthcare facilities
- Access to rural services
- Access to jobs
- Weekend service

While providers reported ample room for improvement, only half engaged in coordination with other agencies, including partnerships with medical facilities and job training programs.

Another area for improvement involves the use of scheduling or data collection technology. Only around 60% of agencies reported using scheduling and data collection technology. Improved use of technology would be a benefit for the users because it creates a more accurate representation of the schedules and helps to determine when public transit is busiest.

Destinations Most Often Traveled To

-  #1 - Doctor/Medical Appointments
-  #2 - Shopping/Errands
-  #3 - To See Family/Friends
-  #4 - Work
-  #5 - Place of Worship

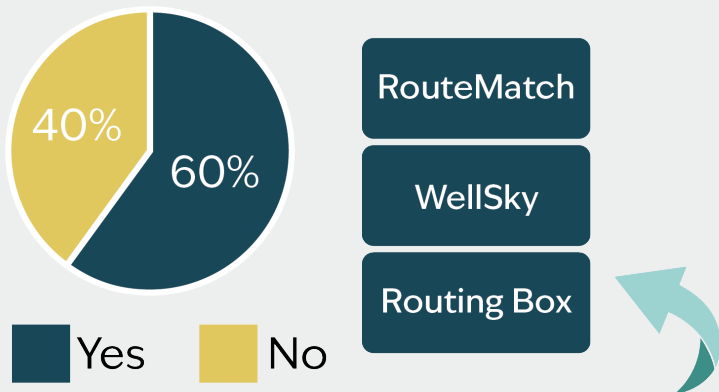
User Survey

The user survey target audience consisted of transit agency riders, including human service agencies as well as the general public. The survey was conducted using Google Forms but was also available in print format for those without access to a computer or smartphone.

Many respondents indicated a desire for weekend service, a predictable schedule, and additional infrastructure to the smaller rural communities outside of city centers. Medical trips were reported as the top destination by respondents.

When asked how often public transit was used, 58.6% responded that they never used it, while 41.4% stated that they used public transit at least a few times a year. Of the respondents, 34.4% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the public transit in their community, while 31.3% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Respondents identified concerns about the

Use of Scheduling or Data Collection Technology



connectivity between cities, the need to focus on multi-modal transportation (including bike and pedestrian infrastructure), and concerns with the cost for service.

The number of users who reported never using public transit was approximately 58%. The reasons cited for not taking transit usually included a lack of availability when or where they need it.

Lastly, the survey asked about the ease of finding transportation information such as schedules, routes, or other updates. 38.4% of respondents said that it was not clear where to find information. The graphic on the following page also shows the top sources that respondents use to obtain information regarding transit. As displayed, word of mouth is one of the top means of information sharing. Creating easier access to information is a major step

towards generating more ridership.

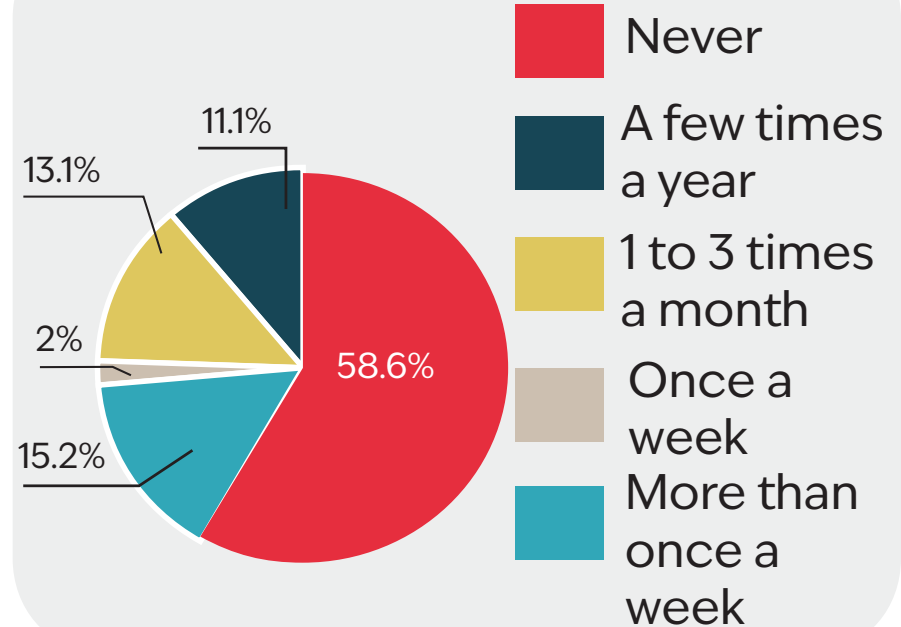
The graphic to the left below displays the top 5 reasons public transit is not taken. The top two reasons center around availability. More service availability across the state could lead to improved quality of life for people with disabilities and the elderly.

Overall, the user survey responses indicate that public transit could be more accessible in terms of service and information. It is important to note that the user surveys are just a small sample of the riders and general population. Every experience is different based on region, urban or rural context, and demographics.

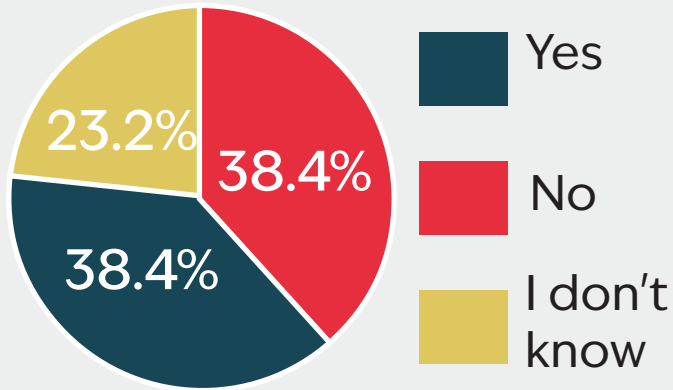
Reasons Public Transit is not Taken

- #1 - It's not available where they live
- #2 - No transit at travel destinations
- #3 - Not available at times of need
- #4 - Wait time is too long
- #5 - Too many transfers

How Often Public Transit is Used



Is it Easy to Find Transit Information?



Top Sources for Transit Information

Website or Phone App

Word of Mouth

Printed Information

Phone Call to Service

Common Issues

When comparing both the provider and user surveys, there are similarities between the issues at the agency and user level. Showing the connections between the provider and user survey results can help solidify the main areas to prioritize public transit coordination efforts. One major correlation is the wait time issues mentioned by users and the lack of drivers and vehicles by the providers. Given that there is a shortage of drivers and vehicles, this could cause longer wait times and less availability of assets for new routes.

Another major issue identified at both the public meetings and through the surveys is service availability. Many public meetings attendees mentioned how vehicle availability and route availability are issues, while the user survey determined that difficulty reaching service is a major determinant of a user's decision to not take transit. Cost of service was also common to both the surveys and public meetings. As mentioned in the public meetings, funding restrictions are an issue due to rising costs and lack of flexibility. Cost of service was also mentioned as one of the major areas of improvement within the provider survey.

Another correlation between the public meetings and surveys was the number of agencies already coordinating with others and the number of agencies who mentioned wanting to work together or at least understand each agency's specialty. 50% of providers mentioned that they coordinate with other agencies on the survey while many of the public meeting attendees said it would be beneficial to have a lead agency to help foster communication and coordination between the agencies.

Key Findings

Upon review of the public meeting and survey results, key findings are presented below that highlight the major issues faced by agencies, barriers to coordination efforts, ideas for improvement, and comments from both the public meetings and surveys. Specific key findings are:

- There is a higher demand for transit with a shortage of drivers.
- There are vehicle shortages and maintenance concerns throughout the state.
- Funding restrictions limit service expansion.
- Facilitation of meetings could help grow collaboration efforts.
- Creating informational workshops and trainings could be a benefit to agencies.
- Riders mention the lack of availability as a major reason for not using public transit.
- Updated and accurate bus route and trip estimate information are needed.
- Routes that emphasize access to key destinations such as grocery shopping, pharmacy runs, and other personal errands would be beneficial to the community.

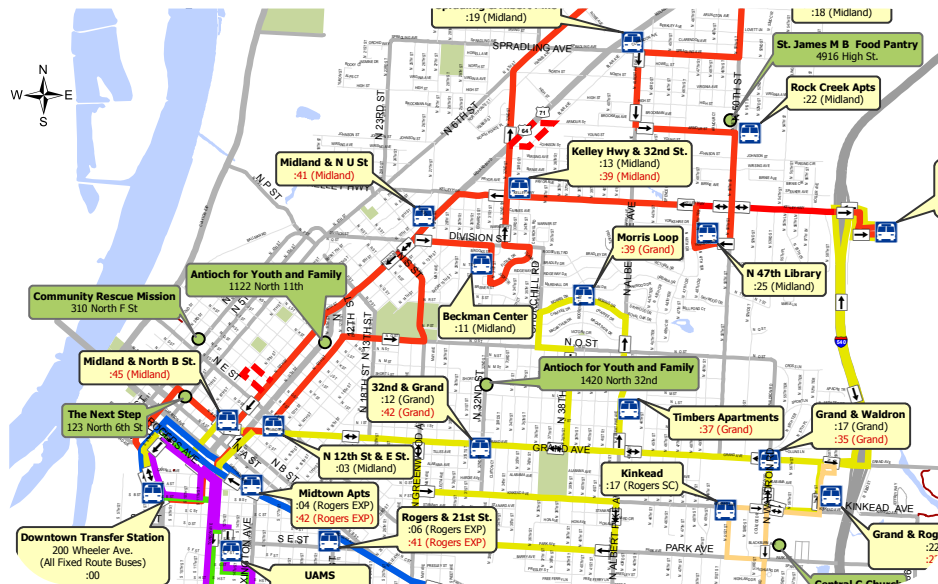




Moving Fort Smith Forward

As a 5307 provider, Fort Smith Transit operates fixed-route public transit as well as paratransit services. As a major stakeholder in coordinated transit, the agency has taken steps to increase access to resources for disadvantaged populations and form lasting partnerships.

In 2019, the Urban Institute conducted a study to identify issues related to food access and to establish actionable strategies to alleviate food insecurity within Sebastian County. Stakeholders interviewed in the study identified transportation as a major barrier to healthy food options and food pantries for the elderly and people with disabilities. Following the study, Fort Smith Transit conducted an internal review of the fixed-route system to ensure that local transit options are available to reach food pantries throughout the community.



FAST FACTS

- Serves General Public within city limits of Fort Smith, Sebastian County.
- 89,142 citizens within Coverage Area.
- 68 Square Miles within City Limits.
- Types of Service: Fixed-Route, Paratransit, Limited Charter Services upon Request.

In addition to food access within Sebastian County, Fort Smith Transit coordinates with the local university, an anchor institution for the community, to increase ridership. Dubbed the Fort Smith Transit Coalition, a group of professors and Fort Smith Transit are working to apply for grant funds to develop a marketing program aimed at boosting ridership among students and university staff. These types of partnerships are crucial to a comprehensive, coordinated system.

Finally, Fort Smith Transit operates an annual program to distribute free transit rides to local human service agencies to fill in gaps in service. Each year, the agency accepts applications to receive a limited number of free rides for use by the agency. The program is widely popular and helps serve unmet needs that agencies are unable to provide given funding constraints and jurisdictional limitations. This program could serve as a model for other transit agencies across Arkansas to help build ridership and increase coordination efforts.

5. Coordination Opportunities

Introduction

Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program be “included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan. Coordinated human service plans identify and evaluate the needs of individuals with disability, older adults, and low-income individuals that may require accommodations for transportation services. These plans prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation to better serve disadvantaged and mobility restricted individuals and communities.

Further, FTA requires coordinated transportation plans to include prioritized strategies for implementation based upon resources, time, and feasibility. These strategies must include measures to encourage statewide coordination opportunities that support both providers and passengers. These opportunities could include investments in new technologies that have the potential to streamline operations and communication with the public and expand the availability of demand-response and specialized transportation services to increase mobility and ridership. Fostering partnerships between providers and agencies increases collaboration and efficiency; moreover, enhanced coordination can lead to improved safety and capacity for transit operations across all agencies. Maximizing funding investment in providers ensures they have the equipment and capacity necessary to serve their communities. Finally, providing educational tools to agencies will increase safety, program effectiveness, and secure future funding.

Coordination Strategies and Prioritization

As part of the planning process, the project team conducted a gap analysis and public outreach efforts that provided data points to begin development of coordination strategies for transit services in Arkansas. Following the analysis, the team developed high impact strategies for implementation. As a starting point for discussion, the team reviewed strategies included in previous iterations of the Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan.

Past Coordination Recommendations

Strategies from previous versions of the plan include:

2007

- Bring new funding partners to public transit service.
- Continue to support capital and operating needs of public transportation providers.
- Coordinate the development of model contracts or agreements.
- Establish new public transit services or operate existing service on more frequent basis.

- Expand availability of demand-response and specialized transportation services to provide additional trips for targeted groups.
- Expand outreach and information on existing transportation options.
- Provide targeted shuttle services to access employment opportunities.
- Regional website development and promotion.
- Support new mobility managers and coordination programs among public transit providers.

2012

- Bring new funding partners such as the Arkansas Department of Workforce and Area Agencies on Aging to public transit and human service transportation.
- Continue to support vehicle and operating needs of transportation providers presently receiving assistance under FTA programs.
- Coordinate the development of model contracts or agreements for sharing vehicles, personnel, joint supply purchasing, group maintenance and insurance, etc.
- Encourage regional services to employment, shopping, medical and social centers through several communities.
- Expand service through existing transit providers. This means expanding current routes, extending hours of service, or increasing demand response times.
- Invest in new transit service where none presently exists.
- Maximize the use of existing fleets operating within the same

city or county, especially for the agencies who are providing services to the same types of clientele.

- Obtain software and/or hardware for system operations and grant management. The software and/or hardware should include, at a minimum, scheduling, dispatching, vehicle tracking modules, financial, National Transit Database Reporting, asset management modules and geographic information systems interoperability.
- Preserve and maintain existing vehicles and equipment.
- Support the development of mobility managers, other coordination programs, or one-call centers at the regional level. This includes developing marketing tools which identifies regional providers and website development.

2018

- Coordinate development of model contracts or agreements for sharing resources.
- Coordinate partnerships between providers to offer free/reduced transfers between services.
- Develop an online directory of services (e.g., maintenance) and trainings offered by transportation providers to other providers.
- Develop an online map version of the public transportation directory.
- Develop informational materials to provide coordination examples and best practices to transportation providers.
- Establish a centralized volunteer driver program.
- Establish a one-call/one-click transportation service center.

- Establish a qualified driver application and job opening directory.
- Establish regional coordination districts to lead local coordination efforts.
- Identify and appoint statewide and/or regional mobility managers.
- Identify and contact agencies that could provide transportation in areas where transportation service gaps exist and provide support to secure funding and establish service.
- Organize reoccurring coordination work sessions that providers are required to attend.

Strategy Development Process

Following this review of previous strategies, the project team conducted an internal charette to brainstorm strategies and action items. Action items are a new addition to this TCP update that contain discrete tasks to support the implementation of each strategy. These strategies and action items are informed by the 2022 Transit Need Index, the gap analysis, and feedback received during public outreach efforts.

To ensure that the coordinated plan's strategies address the needs identified in prior steps of the plan, the project team utilized a proven strategy development workshop tool. This tool is based on the balanced scorecard approach, which is commonly used by businesses and nonprofits to guide strategy development. The balanced scorecard divides potential strategies into four categories: financial, assets, operational, and beneficiary. Using these distinct categories helps guide strategy development

and helped the team develop recommendations that span the full range of an agency's operation, rather than inadvertently focusing on one category. The workshop process included identification of needs, creation of strategies and action items, and development of metrics for success. Specifically, the steps involved the following:

- 1. Identification of needs:** The coordinated planning process involved extensive work to identify the needs of Arkansas transit providers and riders. The project team sorted through the data to identify common themes as a first step in developing strategies.
- 2. Development of strategies:** The next step in this process used coordinated planning best practices to create broad strategies that address local needs. The strategies were then sorted into one of the four previously identified categories. If one category had fewer strategies than others, the team went back to the step above to identify any overlooked needs in that category.
- 3. Creation of action items:** After strategies were identified, the project team developed action items associated with the broader strategies. Action items are specific, measurable steps that can be taken to achieve goals of the plan and specific strategies.
- 4. Development of metrics:** Finally, the team assigned a metric to each action item to gauge the long-term success of the strategy. Metrics are an important part of the balanced scorecard approach because they ensure that needs are acted upon and successes are measured. If a metric is not fulfilled, ARDOT and transit providers can rework their activities to achieve desired outcomes.

To develop strategies for coordination, the project team used the balanced scorecard approach. This approach was first introduced in 1992 and has since been used by businesses and nonprofits to guide strategy development. Traditionally, the approach considers four perspectives: financial, customer, internal processes, and learning/growth. The perspectives may be adapted, but any alterations should align with the original category intent. For example, “Customer” can be changed to “Rider/User” but should not be changed to “Technology.” The project team adapted the four categories to the following: beneficiary, financial, assets, and operational. To increase the effectiveness of this tool, the approach was complemented

and expanded with other planning and engagement tactics that facilitate idea generation, concept organization, and strategy refinement. Use of the tool began with identification of needs and ended with measurement of outcomes. The goal of this tool is to create a standard framework for use in similar projects or plans by transit agencies to use the information gathered in the earlier stages of plan development – including but not limited to gap analysis, public engagement, and plan review – and create strategies based off the findings. This tool can be used for both internally with staff and externally with stakeholders.





Proposed Strategies

Using the balanced scorecard approach, the project team developed the following high-level strategies to support improved statewide transit coordination:

1. Invest in new technologies and methods to improve operations and public information regarding services.
2. Expand availability of demand-response and specialized transportation services for all riders.
3. Foster partnerships with providers and state agencies to maintain communication, ensure needs are being met, and ensure opportunities are being addressed.
4. Maximize financial investment and support of providers.
5. Provide educational tools to agencies to enhance knowledge, promote funding opportunities, and increase safety.

These proposed strategies provide ARDOT with actionable items to implement in coordinated human service planning and help foster intra-agency/intra-organizational partnerships.

Proposed Action Items

For each high-level strategy, the team identified and prioritized action items. These items serve as a list of opportunities the state can take to reduce service gaps and improve coordination. Each is categorized as critical, important, or desirable based on resources, time, feasibility, and potential impact. All action items are paired with a metric that can be used to monitor progress and success over time. Table 12 displays this information in greater detail. Pages 69 through 73 display case studies of selected action items in action.

Table 12: Coordination Strategies and Action Items

Strategy	Action Items
<p>Invest in new technologies and methods to improve operations and public information about services</p>	<p>1 Establish a one-call/one-click transportation service center, including a tool for real-time service updates across general transit providers.</p>
	<p>2 Develop an online map version of the public transportation directory.</p>
	<p>3 Develop an online directory of services (e.g. maintenance) and trainings offered by transportation providers to other providers.</p>
	<p>4 Expand outreach and information on existing transportation options.</p>
	<p>5 Conduct yearly passenger satisfaction surveys.</p>
<p>Expand availability of demand-response and specialized transportation services</p>	<p>1 Encourage regional services to employment, shopping, medical and social centers.</p>
	<p>2 Invest in new transit service where none presently exists.</p>
	<p>3 Identify and contact agencies that could provide transportation in areas where transportation service gaps exist.</p>
	<p>4 Encourage vehicle sharing by providers with similar coverage areas.</p>
	<p>5 Establish a centralized volunteer driver program.</p>
	<p>6 Provide support for coordinated dispatch programs.</p>
<p>Foster partnerships with providers and state agencies to maintain communication, ensure needs are being met, and opportunities are being addressed</p>	<p>1 Organize quarterly coordination work sessions that providers are required to attend.</p>
	<p>2 Establish regional coordination districts to lead local coordination efforts.</p>
	<p>3 Identify and appoint statewide and/or regional mobility managers.</p>
	<p>4 Support new mobility managers and coordination programs among public transit providers.</p>
<p>Maximize financial investment and support for providers</p>	<p>1 Preserve and maintain existing vehicles and equipment.</p>
	<p>2 Bring new funding partners to public transit service.</p>
	<p>3 Continue to support capital and operating needs of public transportation providers.</p>
	<p>4 Coordinate partnerships between providers to offer free/reduced transfers between services.</p>
	<p>5 Award state funding to help make services possible.</p>
<p>Provide educational tools to agencies to enhance knowledge, promote funding opportunities, and increase safety</p>	<p>1 Develop informational materials to provide coordination examples and best practices to transportation providers on topics such as vehicle sharing and volunteer programs.</p>
	<p>2 Coordinate development of model contracts or agreements for sharing resources.</p>
	<p>3 Create workshops for annual educational opportunities to improve transit, consider best practices, driver training, and review safety information.</p>
	<p>4 Provide templates for grant applications.</p>
	<p>5 Establish a qualified driver application and job opening directory.</p>

Critical
Strategies with the highest level of importance and should be prioritized.

Important
Strategies that will play an important role in the future of transit coordination.

Desirable
Strategies that are still important, but are not the primary need currently.

A one-call center is an informational telephone line that provides riders with access to information on all available transportation services within the area. This is beneficial to both the community and to the agencies. Using one number to call when trying to find transportation is efficient for both the riders needing information as well as the agency's employee costs.

BENEFITS:

- Improved communication
- Improved rider experience
- Improved efficiency

BARRIERS:

- Lack of funding
- Varying levels of technology understanding
- Creating third-party integration

SOLUTIONS:

- Requiring client identification numbers to connect to funding sources
- Training on technology solutions
- Creating standards for data connections to standardize the reservation and payment systems

LYNX: Central Florida & Orlando Metro Area

The transit agency for Central Florida, LYNX, utilizes a one-call center for 3 of the main categories of transit operation: trip information, trip booking, and trip payment. In 2005, LYNX was the recipient of a Mobility Services for All Americans (MSAA) grant to begin the process of designing the Model Orlando Regionally Efficient (MORE) Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC). This was meant to be the first of a three-phase venture towards creating better coordinated transportation and technology services within the area. Due to limited funding availability, a smaller version of the TCMM was created for online trip booking for some services and online trip payment for all LYNX services: WebACCESS.

The creation of WebACCESS was formed to support trip booking for LYNX services. WebACCESS also has the ability for users to pay for their trips using the LYNX PawPass, a mobile fare app. In addition to itinerary planning, LYNX also offers bus tracking services. The bus tracking services provide real-time updates using data at actual vehicle locations.

Coordinated dispatch is related to a one-call center in that it utilizes a central dispatching system to deliver rides. Creating coordinated dispatch enhances efficiency, enables higher ridership, and offers a more cost-effective alternative by combining transit resources.

BENEFITS:

- Flexible schedules of volunteers
- Improved ridership
- More cost-effective rides
- Additional drivers and access to vehicles

BARRIERS:

- Creating a partnership between public/private providers
- Maintaining subsidized transportation for individuals with limited incomes and those unable to drive

SOLUTIONS:

- A more unified transit system allows all county residents to access transportation
- Working together in collaboration between public and private partnerships offers the best of both worlds: private flexibility with public cost efficiency
- Expanding availability for subsidized rides

Nobles County Heartland Express/Worthington Taxi: Prairieland Transit System

The Hubbard County Heartland Express offers bus services within the City of Park Rapids, Minnesota. The operations began in 2011 and consisted of two Heartland Express buses and an initial \$15,000 budget for dispatch. The buses hold 12-passenger and are ADA-compliant; services run Monday through Friday from 7:15AM to 4:45PM.

Hubbard County Heartland Express has contracted with Paul Bunyan Transit to provide the dispatch services for the city. “Paul Bunyan Transit used dispatch software, automatic vehicle locators (AVLs), and mobile data terminals to make a direct connection with the Heartland Express vehicles.” The transit users can call the same phone number for service and are transferred to Paul Bunyan Transit for dispatching.

Because of the improved efficiency, the city’s ridership increased by 18% in the first three months of service. The partnership has also provided Heartland Express with inexpensive access to dispatching software and the tools to always track the buses and create reports of bus activity.

Establishing and maintaining a network of volunteers can be an extremely beneficial strategy to both providers and the community at large. Volunteers often have flexible schedules and the desire to give back to their community, and can add to the range of services and locations a provider can serve. Typically, volunteers use their own vehicles and are reimbursed for their mileage based on the federal IRS mileage rate. Volunteers can serve a wide range of roles, from drivers of their own vehicles to helping with dispatch or other administrative duties. By creating a network of volunteers, multiple providers can pull from the same pool of volunteers, and volunteers can be matched with providers.

BENEFITS:

- Flexible schedules of volunteers
- Reduced operating costs, often just fuel or mileage reimbursement
- New ideas and skill sets are introduced to the providers' pool of resources

BARRIERS:

- Recruiting, Retaining, Relying

SOLUTIONS:

- Increased community involvement to spread the word about volunteering
- Engage with volunteers and treat them like paid staff asking for input and listening to their ideas
- Find a balance between paid and volunteer staff to minimize relying on one pool too much

Tri-CAP Transit Connection

The Tri-CAP Transit Connection is a 5311 provider serving Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, and Stearns counties in Minnesota. In addition to its 5311 services, Tri-CAP coordinates the volunteer driver program for all four counties under the Tri-CAP Volunteer Driver Program. Requests for services are sent each day to Tri-CAP, and a case worker assigns the trips to volunteers. The volunteers use their own vehicles, are reimbursed for mileage, and some qualify for a meal stipend. Monthly, Tri-CAP bills each county for the actual cost of providing volunteers trips, as well as an administrative fee for administering and coordinating the volunteer program.



Vehicle sharing presents the opportunity for providers to reduce operating costs through the sharing of resources. There are two types of vehicle sharing programs: time-sharing and ride-sharing. Time-sharing is when two or more providers share the same vehicles, but at different times. For example, one provider may use the vehicle Monday through Saturday, and a second provider uses the vehicle only on Sundays. Ride-sharing is when one provider transports one or more passengers for a different provider. An example would be the transit services of one nursing home also transporting a passenger from another nursing home. Both types of vehicle sharing present the opportunity to more efficiently provide services to the community.

BENEFITS:

- Maximizing the impact of funds
- Sharing of excess resources with the community
- Reducing service gaps and overlaps

BARRIERS:

- Logistics of vehicle sharing
- Impact of safety regulations
- Vehicle insurance

SOLUTIONS:

- Negotiate pooled insurance rates between agencies to reduce costs
- Increase education and outreach about vehicle safety regulations
- Create structured forums for an exchange of information among human service providers

Newtrax, Inc.

The Newtrax model represents an innovative new idea for vehicle sharing, combining both ride- and time-sharing. Two nonprofits operating in the Twin Cities metropolitan area came together to provide services to individuals with disabilities by forming a new nonprofit called Newtrax, Inc. While jointly owned by the two nonprofits, it runs independently and transports clients from both organizations from their homes to program sites. This change was made due to funding cuts as well as the overlapping coverage areas of both nonprofits. Routes were able to be consolidated, and now the same level of ridership is reached utilizing 15 less vehicles. The major benefit of this type of program is the reduction of informal and technical barriers to vehicle sharing by offloading those responsibility to an outside organization that has the resources to do so.



New technologies and innovations support and enhance the services and abilities of providers by providing more information at a faster rate than ever before. As these new trends become commonplace, continued communication improvements will be seen and help facilitate better coordination among often disconnected providers.

BROADBAND ACCESS:

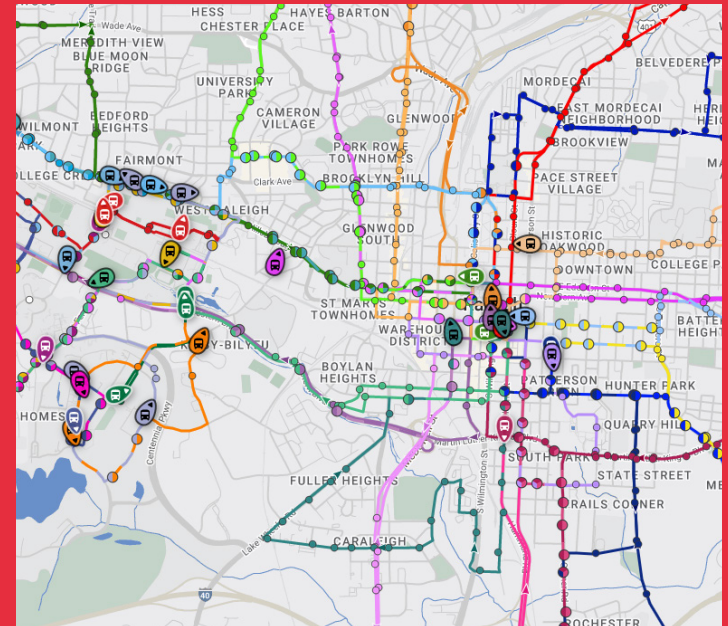
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes funding for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program which aims to get all Americans online. High-speed internet is no longer a rarity, but something our county runs on, and can increase and encourage better coordination among providers. Better and faster internet can facilitate information sharing through databases, apps, and other web-based tools. Providers in the state can use that information to better serve their communities through the instant sharing of resources.

DATA STANDARDIZATION, SHARING, AND REAL-TIME UPDATES:

A common barrier to increased coordination is the lack of information available about other providers, particularly for human service providers who focus their services on clients with special transportation needs. Better coordination could occur if providers were able to see real-time updates to routes, coverage areas, and other information about providers operating in similar areas. New technologies, such as mapping tools and smartphones, can allow for these type of real-time geographically-based updates across the state. Data standardization can also assist clients with special transportation needs by making information easier to digest and access.

GoLive

GoLive is a smartphone app and web-based program that provides real-time travel information to customers for the 7 regional providers, including three major university transit systems, that serve the North Carolina region. GoTriangle is the regional partnership among the providers that introduced the United States' first regional, real-time transit trip planning app. This tool combined data standardization from across agencies with real-time data sharing and updates to allow for a better served community.



Performance Measures

If the metrics above are used to track incremental progress on carefully focused action items, then performance measures identify big picture change over extended periods of time. The previous TCP from 2018 used nine performance measures. This plan has refined that list to seven performance measures. These seven measures provide a high-level view of how transit services are meeting community needs in Arkansas and how these measures can be compared comprehensively over time. The performance measures identified in this plan were compiled using data from the 2012 and 2019 Arkansas Public Transportation Directory, as well as data from the 2018 Arkansas TCP. Table 13 describes each performance measure included, and Figure 19 compares the performance measures from 2012 to 2019, which was when the most recent Public Transportation Directory was released.

Performance measures help evaluate how well Arkansas public transit and human services transportation providers are meeting the demands of their communities and how well they are coordinating transportation services among one another and with other agencies.

Section 5310 human services providers work with distinct populations in different service areas. Therefore, performance measures evaluating their effectiveness should be disaggregated by their passenger type. Data from 2012 broken down in the same way for long term comparison does not exist; future versions of the TCP should do so to create the opportunity for meaningful evaluation over time. Figure 18 shows two key performance measures for Arkansas Section 5310 providers, separated by service.

Figure 18: 5310 Performance Measures

	Individuals with Disabilities	Seniors	Low-Income/ Employment Access
Percent of Counties with Human Service Providers	100%	87%	35%
Percent of Key Destinations Served by Human Service Providers	100%	88%	46%

Figure 19: Performance Measures 2012 - 2019

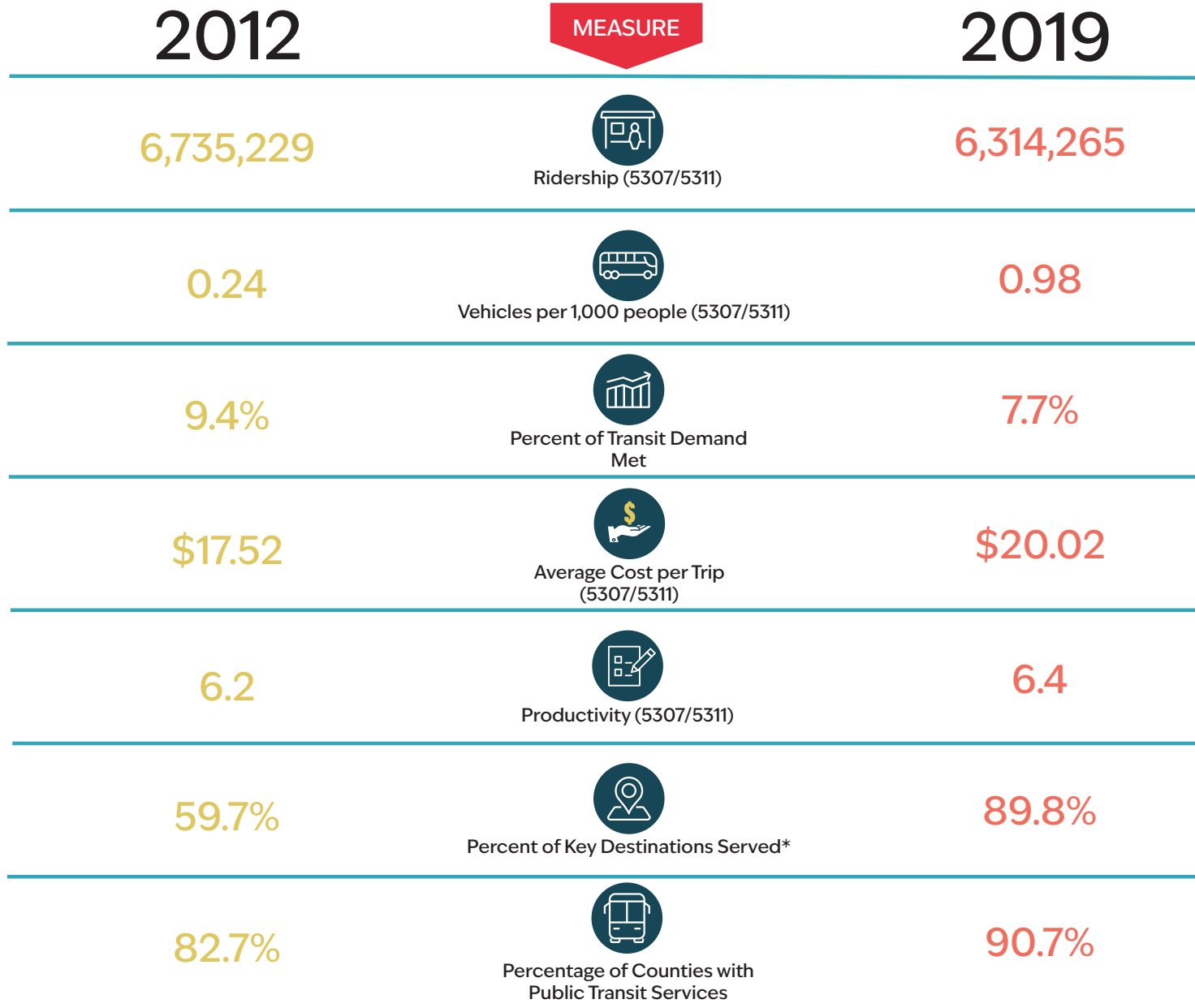


Table 13: Performance Measures

Metric	Description	Programs Included
Ridership	Total annual ridership. Not all 5310 providers track this, so only 5307 and 5311 providers are included.	5307 5311
Vehicles per 1,000 People	Number of vehicles relative to the population the transit provider serves; an increase means more assets are available for the community.	5307 5311
Percent of Transit Demand Met	The percentage of annual ridership captured compared to the total transit demand; serves as a measure to estimate system effectiveness	5307 5310 5311
Average Cost per Trip	Measures cost effectiveness. A decline could mean either that operating costs are falling or more passengers are being served.	5307 5311
Productivity	Measured by dividing the total number of trips by the total number of vehicle revenue hours (Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour); an increase means there are more passengers in the same amount of time vehicles are in service.	5307 5310 5311
Percent of Key Destinations Served	A rough estimate of how many important civic, governmental, educational, medical, and other community destinations are served by transit, as determined by GIS analysis.	5307 5310 5311
Percent of Counties with Public Transit Services	A basic measure of service area coverage and gaps allowing for clear comparison over time.	5307 5310 5311



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Prepared by

