

2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan

Region 10 Lee and Russell Counties



Prepared by Lee-Russell Council of Governments
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INTRODUCTION

Background

A Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan is a requirement of the new federal transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU) for all Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and Section 5317 New Freedom program recipients. For agencies to receive Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 grant funds, the projects they propose must be consistent with strategies and recommendations contained in this document.

Lee-Russell Council of Governments prepared this Coordinated Transportation Plan on behalf of and in cooperation with transit providers and human service agencies in Lee and Russell Counties. These federal programs are explained in more detail in the Background section. A separate plan is being developed for each of the state's Regional Councils. This plan analyzes the transportation services in Lee and Russell Counties and makes recommendations for increasing transportation access and mobility coordination.

Coordinated Transportation Planning Progress and Strategies

Since the last update of the Plan in 2008, Lee and Russell Counties have continued to make strides toward coordinating transportation. The Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council meets each month or quarter and has worked conjunctively to develop new priorities for the region. The 2 Year Action plan (Strategies and Timeline for Coordination) was compiled and presented to stakeholders in the winter of 2010, including 7 major goals; 13 short, medium and long term objectives; and 18 specific action steps that support these objectives. This consensus provided the direction for this update of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

The seven over-arching strategies for coordinating transportation in Lee and Russell counties are listed below:

- Continue to meet as a Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC)
- Increase public awareness of transportation options in the region.
- Seek additional funding for transportation services.
- Improve opportunities for transportation in rural areas.
- Better utilize existing funding.
- Improve customer service and satisfaction.
- Plan for Emergencies.

The following sections in the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan will cover the information listed below:

- **Planning Context:** This section presents an overview of changing demographics in 2010, by using the 2010 US Census and the American Community Survey from 2005-2009, as they relate to the groups of people who use or need the transportation services, such as elderly persons, persons in poverty, and persons with disabilities.
- **Needs Assessment:** This section provides of the existing distribution of transportation services in Lee and Russell Counties, as well as their funding sources. When considered against the Planning Context, this produces a “gap analysis” – or a clear picture of where there are existing and future populations of elderly persons, persons with disabilities or persons in poverty who are not served or who are underserved by the existing mobility services.
- **Strategies and Recommendations:** This section also includes a qualitative assessment of transit needs by summarizing transit-related goals and objectives from the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council and stakeholders in Lee and Russell Counties through CTAC meetings and public meetings. This section also includes a list of strategies to establish or improve transportation options and mobility services in Lee and Russell Counties. For eligible projects to receive FTA Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 grant funds, they must be consistent with the findings of this section.
- **Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council:** This section provides the participating members of the CTAC for Lee and Russell Counties during the update of the CTAC By-Laws and Coordinated Transportation Plan. It also includes information on how a human service agency or transportation provider may become a part of the Council.

COUNTY SUMMARIES

This section of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan will review the geography and demographics of Lee and Russell Counties. Lee-Russell Council of Governments serves as the Regional Planning Council serving these two counties, under the Alabama Association of Regional Councils.

Lee County

Lee County was established by act of the Alabama state legislature on December 5, 1866, out of parts of Macon, Tallapoosa, Chambers, and Russell Counties. The County is named in honor of Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the Confederate Army. It is part of the Auburn, AL Metropolitan Area. The county seat is Opelika, and the largest city is Auburn. There are a total of seven incorporated cities and towns in Lee County, four of which lie entirely within the county.

Geographic Information

Lee County is located in East Central Alabama, along the Chattahoochee River. At the county's eastern border is the State of Georgia. To the north, south and west of Lee County are the Alabama counties of Chambers, Tallapoosa, Macon, and Russell. The land area is 609 square miles. In 2010, the population density per square mile in Lee County was 230.4.

Lee County is bisected by Interstate 85 and lies midway between the capital cities of both Alabama and Georgia. Atlanta, Georgia is one hour northeast. Montgomery Alabama is 45 minutes to the west. Lee County is convenient to Birmingham, the largest Metropolitan area in Alabama, which is located 90 minutes northwest via state Hwy 280. Lee County maintains 611 miles of paved roads and 225 miles of dirt roads.

Population and Projected Growth

In 2010, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Lee County was 140,247. Lee County ranks as the 8th most populous county in Alabama. Between 2000 and 2010, the populations of Lee County increased by 21.9%.

The median age in Lee County is 28. The presence of Auburn University accounts for the larger than expected percent of the population between the ages of 20 and 25 in Lee County.

The major population areas of Lee County are in the cities of Auburn, Opelika, and Smiths Station. Sixty-seven percent of the counties' population resides in these 3 cities. Thirty-three percent reside in the rural and/or unincorporated areas of the county. See Map titled Population Density, page 12, for more information.

Table 1: Lee County and Transit Dependent Percentages

Demographics	Lee County	Alabama
Total Population	140,247	4,779,736
Adults, 65+	8.8%	13.8%
Individuals with Disabilities	7.9%	11.3%
Persons in Poverty	20.7%	17.5%
Households without Vehicles	6.7%	7.3%

Adults Aged 65 and Over

Transportation and mobility are problematic for senior citizens, especially those who live in small urban and rural areas where public transportation options are limited. According to AARP (formerly the America Association of Retired Persons), 20% of Americans over the age of 65 do not drive. In 2010, the US Census Bureau estimated there were 12,342 individuals over the age of 65 in Lee County. If 20% of these individuals do not drive, that means 2,468 senior citizens in the county are in need of transportation assistance.

Projections from the Alabama State Data Center show the elderly population of Lee County growing to 18,400 by 2020, which is a 49% increase. With Auburn and Opelika increasingly seen as desirable retirement locations, it seems certain that transportation services in the county will have difficulty meeting the additional demands for senior citizen transportation in the future. See map titled Population 60+ Density, page 13, for more information.

Individuals with Disabilities

A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual. For transportation planning purposes, the mere existence of a disability is not as important as the individual's capability to perform life activities, especially those outside the home. The 2000 United States Census included several questions about disabilities. However, the category "outside the home disabilities" is generally considered to be the best indicator of individuals with disabilities who are actually in need of public transportation or paratransit services. The 2000 Census found 6,476 persons in Lee County with "outside of the home disabilities." The 2010 US Census is expected to yield a higher number to coincide with the increase in population, however, the disability numbers are not yet available.

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living. SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 5,703 in Lee County.

Persons and Families in Poverty

Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Lee County, 20.7% of the population, or 29,031 persons, live in poverty.

In June 2011, The Alabama Department of Humans Resources reported that in Lee County 372 families (945 individuals) were receiving financial assistance, 6,047 households received food stamps (a 51% increase from May 2008), and 688 children were receiving or child care subsidies (not including those on the waiting list). Additionally, 170 individuals were qualified to participate in the JOBS program. JOBS clients receive support to train for, attain, and maintain employment. Support services include transportation to and from work and training classes. See map titled Population Below Poverty Level, page 14, for more information.

Households without Vehicles

The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. In 2000, 6.7% of households in Lee County reported having no car. While this is a relatively low percentage of the households in the county, it is troubling that some of the higher concentrations of these households are located in the southwestern rural area of the county. These households are far from health and social services, educational facilities, shopping centers, restaurants and pharmacies. See map titled Zero Vehicle Households, page 15, for more information.

Labor Force

According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, there were 61,129 employed citizens in Lee County in June, 2011. The unemployment rate was 9.2%. Major employers in Lee County include: Auburn University, Benteler Automotive, Briggs and Stratton, East Alabama Medical Center, JoAnn Stores, Mando America Corporation, Masterbrand Cabinets, and Walmart Distribution Center.

Lee Russell Public Transit is a public transportation service offered to all citizens of Lee County. The Job Access and Reverse Commute program provides employment and job-training transportation for DHR JOBS clients. Auburn University allows staff and faculty to use the Tiger Transit system to and from work. Eighty-one percent of Lee County workers drove to work alone in 2005-2009, 12 percent carpooled, 1 percent took public transportation, and 4 percent used other means. The remaining 3 percent worked at home. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 19.5 minutes to get to work.

Fuel Prices

Fuel prices in the Lee County area reached an average high of \$3.74 for a gallon of regular gasoline in July, 2011. According to an exclusive analysis of data by the Oil

Price Information Service for CNN Money, American citizens are spending nearly 9% of their total income on gasoline in May 2011. It is more than double what the average American family spent just two years ago. High fuel prices have a disproportional affect on households with lower incomes and fixed incomes. Households in rural areas also suffer more from higher gas prices since they must travel further to access services, employment, medical care, and supplies.

In many parts of the country, public transit ridership has increased as gas prices have risen. During the summer of 2011, Lee County demand-response ridership increased by an average of 7% over the ridership in summer 2010.

Common Destinations and Origins

Shopping areas (Walmart, Winn Dixie, Kroger, Colonial Mall, Tiger Town, Midway Plaza), medical facilities (East Alabama Medical Center, Medical Arts Complex, Health Department), local government services (city halls, county courthouse, post offices, libraries), social services (DHR) and higher education institutions (Auburn University, Southern Union Community College) are among the most popular destinations in Lee County. See map titled Shopping Centers and Restaurants, page 16, for more information.

For the first time in the history of Lee-Russell Public Transportation, more people are accessing transportation to employment opportunities than they are medical appointments. Most are going to Auburn University or to the Technology parks in Auburn; to local restaurants and stores; and to the large warehouses (Jo Ann & Wal-Mart) in Opelika.

Russell County

Russell County was established by an act of the state general assembly on December 18, 1832, from lands ceded to the state by the Creek Indians. The county is named in honor of Colonel Gilbert C. Russell, who fought against the Creek Indians in the War of 1812. Its county seat is Phenix City. Russell County is part of the Columbus, GA- Alabama Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Geographic Information

Russell County is located in East Central Alabama, along the Chattahoochee River. At the county's eastern border is the State of Georgia. To the north, south, and west of Russell County are the Alabama counties of Lee, Macon, Bullock, and Barbour. The land area is 647 square miles. In 2010, the population density per square mile was 82.6.

Russell County is bisected by US Highway 431. US Highway 208 passes through the northeastern corner of the county. The northern areas of the county have access to interstate 85 via the I-185 spur. Atlanta, GA is one hour northeast of Russell County. Montgomery, Alabama is one hour to the west. Russell County maintains 373 miles of paved roads and 199 miles of unpaved roads.

Populations and Projected Growth

In 2010, according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Russell County was 52,947. Russell County is the 25th most populous county in Alabama. Between 2000 and 2010, the populations of Russell County increased by 6.4%. In 2015 the population is projected to be 53,147. By 2025 the population of Russell County will exceed 55,000. The median age in Russell County is 37.

The major population areas of Russell County are in the northeastern area of the county, in and adjacent to the county seat, Phenix City. Sixty-four percent of the county's population is located in this urban and suburban area of the county. The remaining 36% live in the more rural areas of the county. See Map titled Population Density, page 12, for more information

Table 2: Russell County Transit Dependent Populations

Demographics	Russell County	Alabama
Total Population	52,947	4,779,736
Adults, 65+	14.0%	13.8%
Individuals with Disabilities	11.4%	11.3%
Persons in Poverty	19.9%	17.5%
Households without Vehicles	8.4%	7.3%

Adults Aged 65 and Over

Transportation and mobility are problematic for senior citizens, especially those who live in small urban or rural areas where public transportation options are limited. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), 20% of Americans over the age of 65 do not drive. According to the 2010 US Census, there were 7,413 individuals over the age of 65 in Russell County. Using the information from AARP, more than 1,400 senior citizens in the county were in need of transportation assistance in year 2010.

Projections from the Alabama State Data center show the elderly population in Russell County increasing to 8,228 by 2020. It seems certain that transportation services in the county will have difficulty meeting the additional demands for senior citizen transportation in the future. See map titled Population 60+ Density, page 13, for more information.

Individuals with Disabilities

A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual. For transportation planning purposes, the mere existence of a disability is not as important as the individual's capability to perform life activities. The 2000 United States Census included several questions about disabilities. However, the category "outside the home disabilities" is generally the best indicator of individuals with disabilities who actually need public transportation or paratransit services. The 2000 Census found 4,839 persons in Russell County with "outside of the home disabilities." The 2010 US Census is expected to yield a higher number to coincide with the increase in population, however, the disability numbers are not yet available.

Another data source that provides information on disabled populations is the Survey of income and Program Participations (SIPP). The SIPP survey addresses limitations in functional activities, activities of daily living, and instrumental activities of daily living. SIPP provides an estimated count of the ADA eligible population. In 2000, the SIPP estimated this population to be 2,702 in Russell County.

Persons and Families in Poverty

Persons who live below the poverty line experience difficulties maintaining reliable transportation. In Russell County, 19.4% of the population, or 10,271 persons, live in poverty.

In June 2011, the Alabama Department of Human Resources reported that 298 families (701 individuals) in the county were receiving financial assistance, 6,047 households received food stamps (a 67% increase from May 2008), and 520 Russell County children were receiving child care subsidies (not including those on the waiting list). Additionally, 258 individuals in the county were qualified to participate in the JOBS

program. JOBS clients receive support to train for, attain, and maintain employment. Support services provided to JOBS clients include transportation to and from work and training classes. See map titled Population Below Poverty Level, page 14, for more information.

Households without Vehicles

The number of vehicles available to a housing unit is an indicator of the need for transportation services. In 2000, 2,489 households in Russell County reported having no car. This was 12.6% of all the households in the county. Many of these households are located in Phenix City. However, it is troubling that one of the highest concentrations of these households was located in Hurtsboro a very rural town in southwest Russell County. See map titled Zero Vehicle Households, page 15, for more information.

Labor Force

According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, there were 19,432 employed citizens in Russell County in June, 2011. The unemployment rate was 11.9%, which is well above the state average of 9.9%. Major employers in Russell County include: Meadwestvaco, Boral Brick, Hughston Clinic, and IIG Minwool.

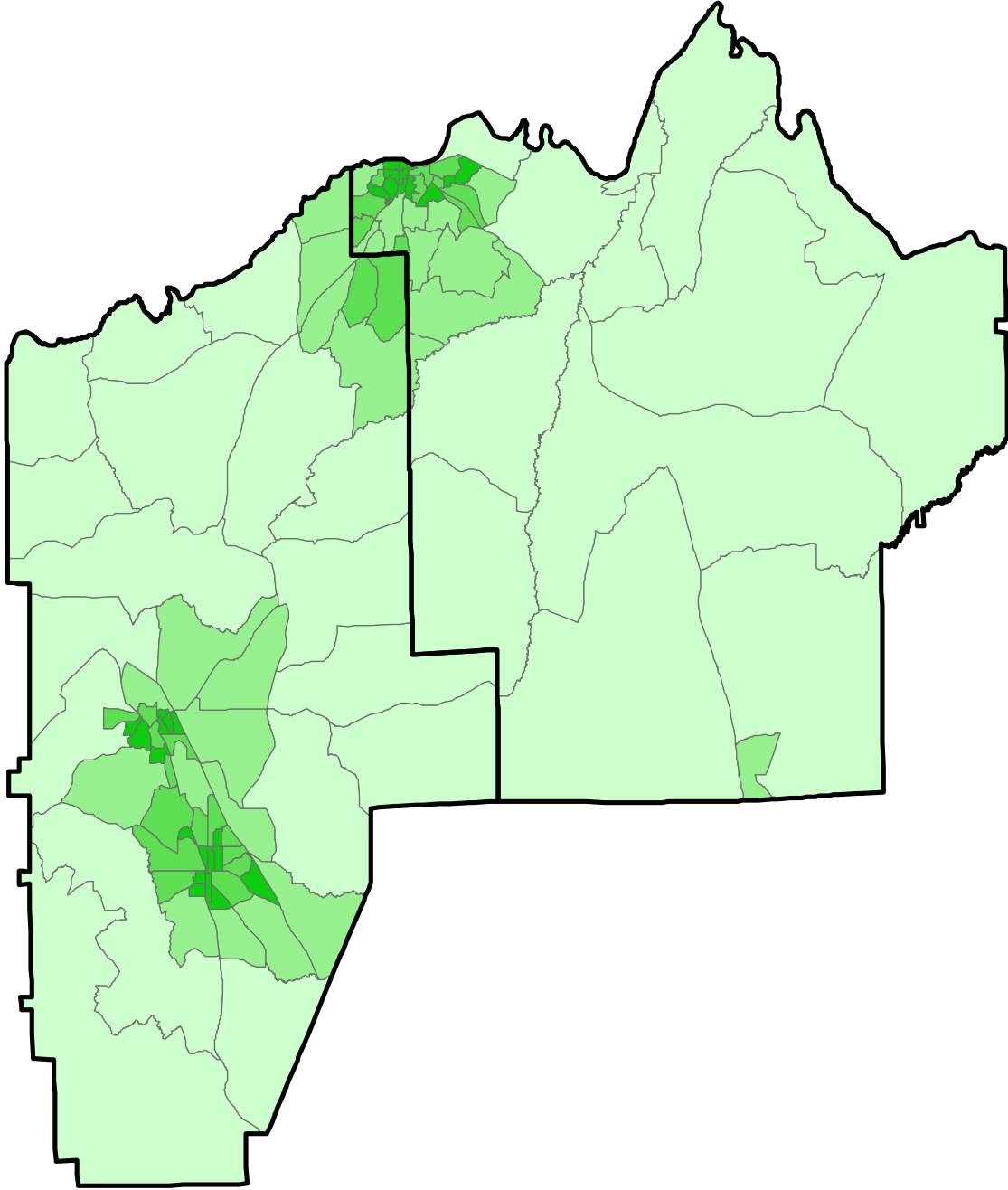
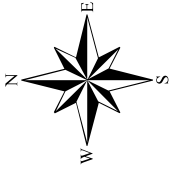
There are no employer transportation programs in Russell County at this time. The average commute time in Russell County was 24.6 minutes.

Fuel Prices

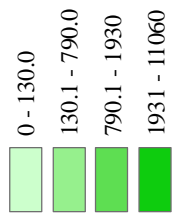
Fuel prices in the Russell County area reached an average high of \$3.65 for a gallon of regular gasoline in July, 2011. According to an exclusive analysis of data by the Oil Price Information Service for CNN Money, American citizens are spending nearly 9% of their total income on gasoline in May 2011. It is more than double what the average American family spent just two years ago. High fuel prices have a disproportional affect on households with lower incomes and fixed incomes. Households in rural areas also suffer more from higher gas prices since they must travel further to access services, employment, medical cared, and supplies.

Common Destinations and Origins

Major destinations include shopping (Walmart, K-Mart, Big Lots, Winn Dixie, Piggly Wiggly), medical facilities (Health Department, Women's Clinic, Regional Rehabilitation Hospital, Mental Health Center), social services (DHR) and higher education institutions (Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Troy State, PC Campus). Public transportation also connects with the Columbus Metra, the public transit system for adjacent Columbus, Georgia. The majority of doctor appointments for individuals in Phenix City and the surrounding area are located in Columbus, Georgia. See map titled Shopping Centers and Restaurants, page 16, for more information.



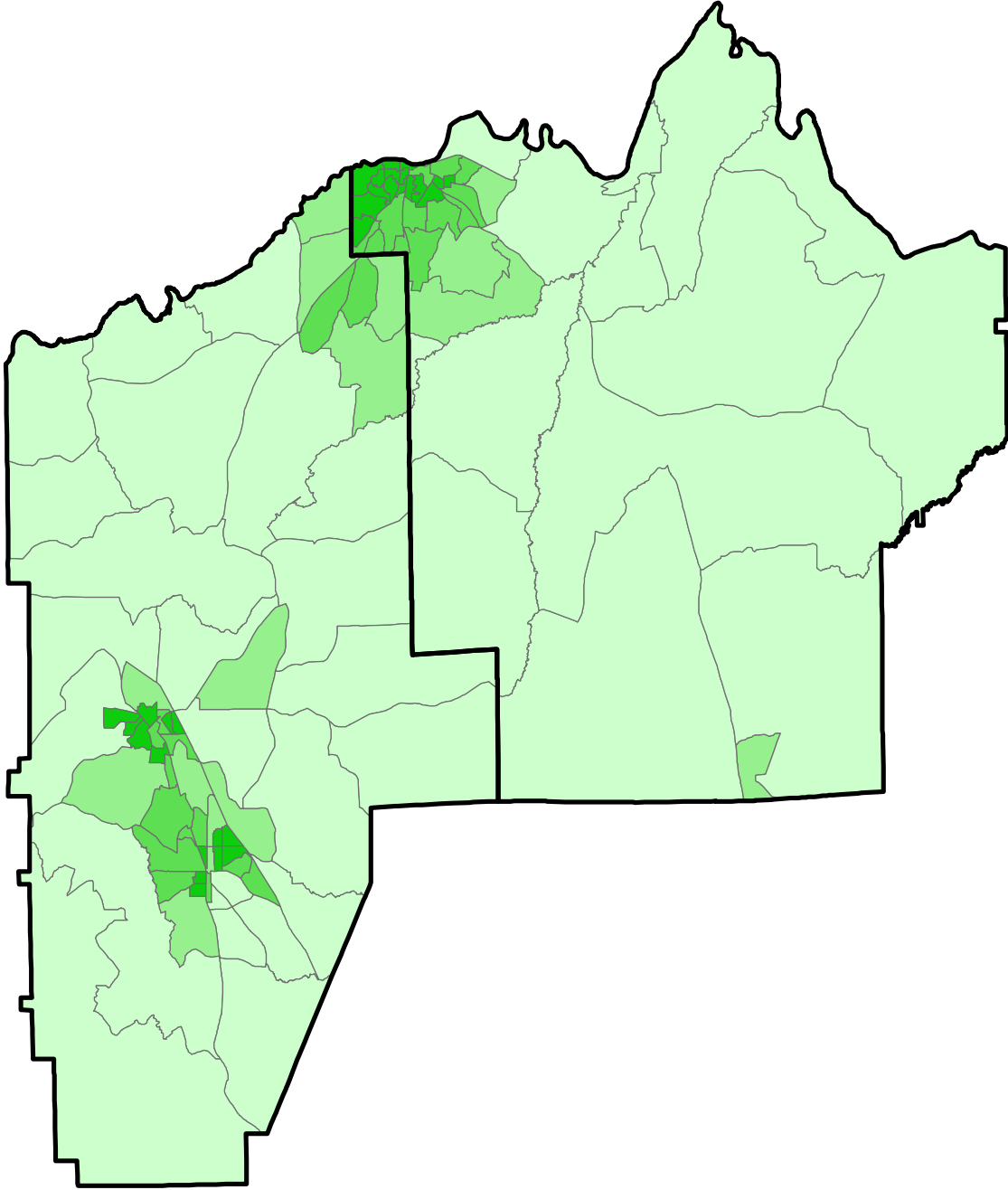
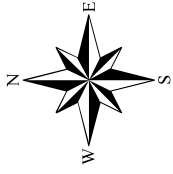
Population Density



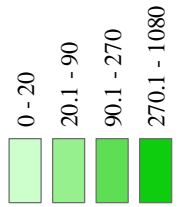
Population Density

**2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Region 10**





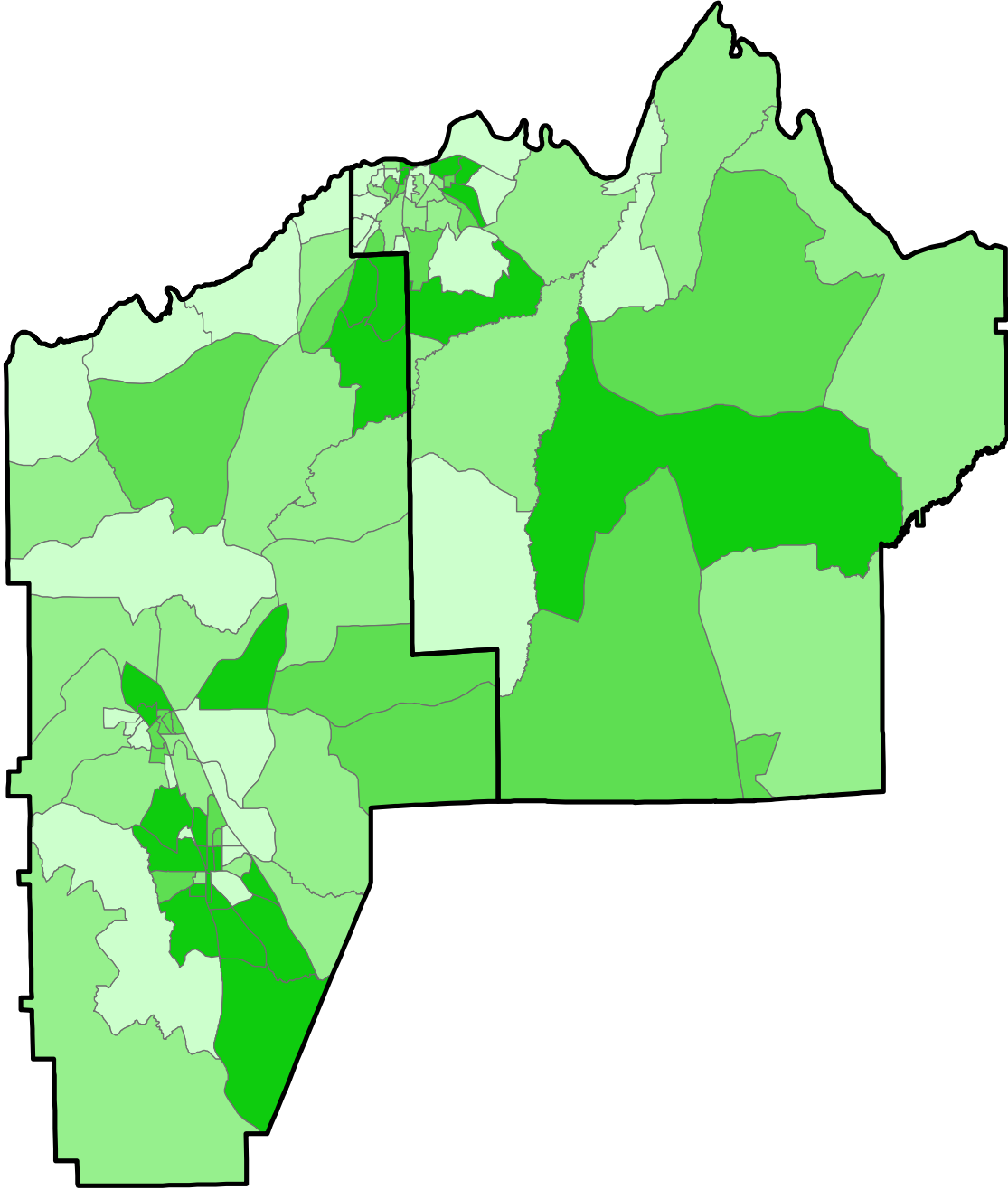
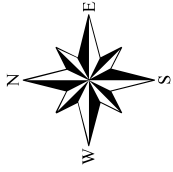
Population Density



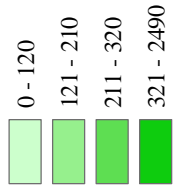
Population 60+ Density

**2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Region 10**





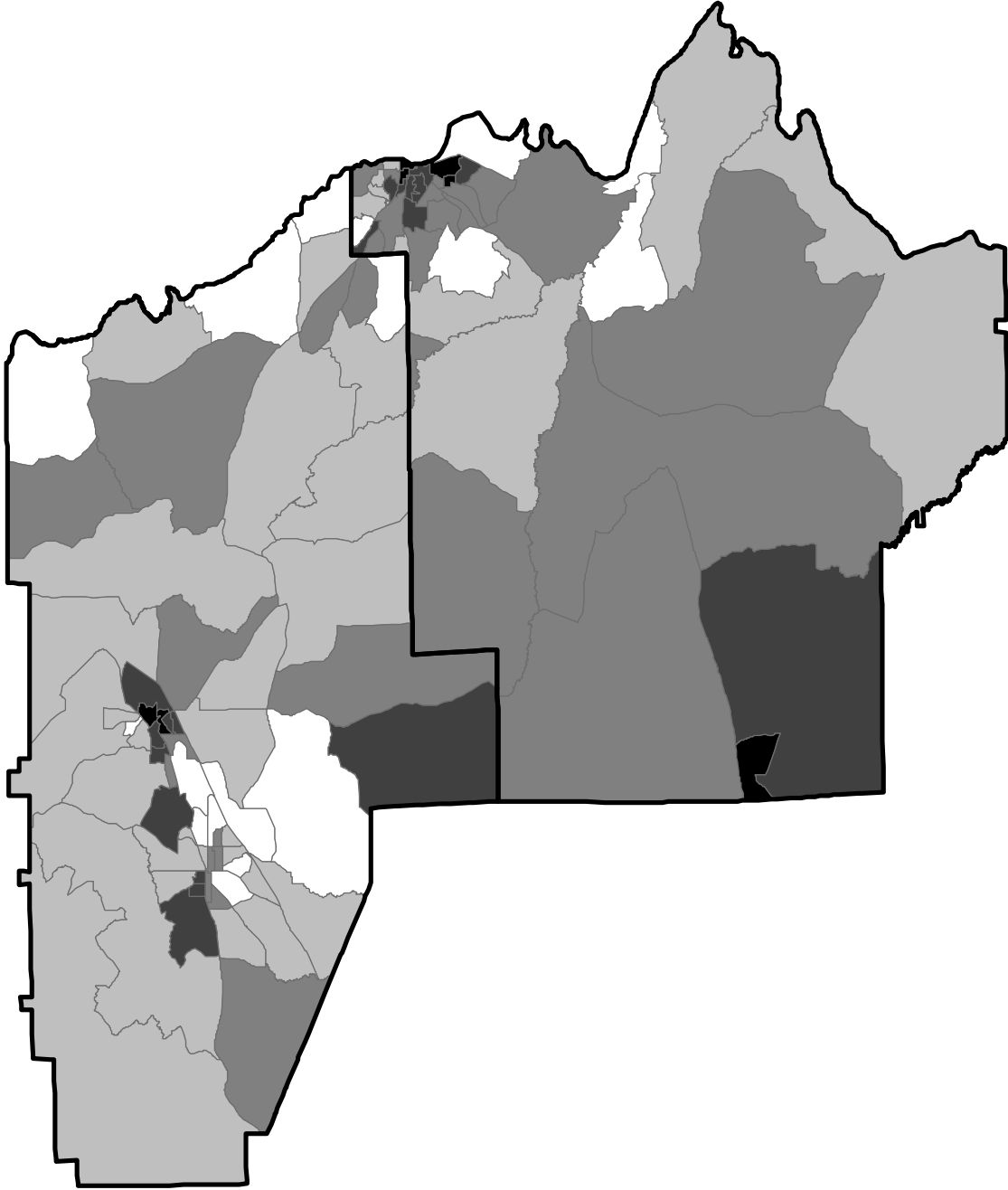
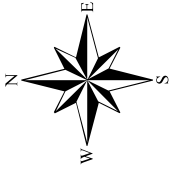
Below Poverty



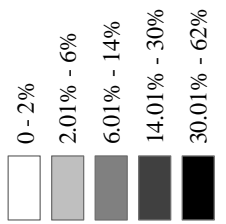
Population Below Poverty Level

**2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Region 10**





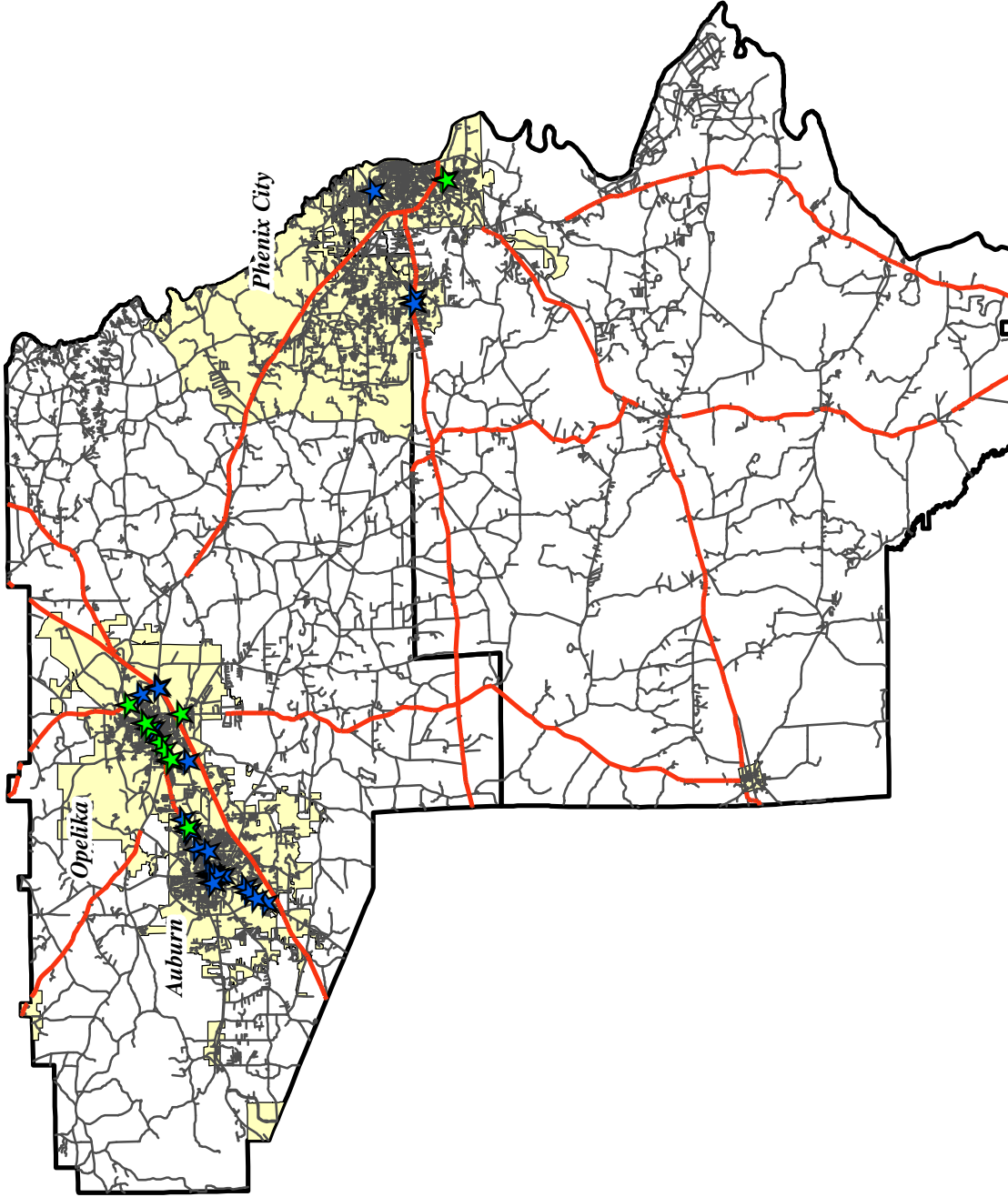
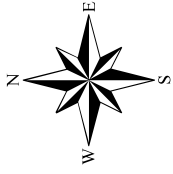
Percentage of Zero Vehicle OHUs



**Zero Vehicle OHUs as
a Percentage of Total OHUs**



**2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Region 10**



Shopping Centers and Restaurants

-  Shopping Centers
-  Restaurants



Shopping Centers and Restaurants

**2011 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Region 10**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Availability of Transportation Services in 2011

This section details the transportation services that are available to Lee and Russell County Citizens in 2011. The Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council considers existing transportation services, taking into account the information detailed in the county summaries, and then works toward filling the gaps in transportation needs in the Lee-Russell County Region.

Achievement Center of East Alabama is a private non-profit serving 5 counties in east central Alabama. The Achievement Center has 4 vans in use and 3 older vehicles in reserve providing transportation to their clients. The clients of the Achievement Center have mental and physical challenges. The Achievement Center operates Monday-Thursday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Vans begin picking up clients at 6:00 in the morning and bring them to the facility in Opelika. Clients are then transported home between 3:15 and 6:30 in the evening. The Achievement Center provides transportation for its clients to appointments and shopping during the day. There is no fee for service.

East Alabama Medical Center operates 4 retirement and assisted living communities in Auburn, Alabama. There are 3 handicap accessible buses and 2 vans available to residents in the retirement and assisted living communities. Transportation is available from 8:30 am until the last resident is returned home. There is no fee for medical related trips. Medical trips have priority and should be scheduled 24 hours in advance, although transportation for shopping and recreation is also available. Personal trips are accommodated for \$5.00 round trip each request with a 24 hour notice.

East Alabama Mental Health is a public not-for-profit organization based in Auburn, Alabama. East Alabama Mental Health serves 4 counties including Lee and Russell. The organization has a fleet of 72 vehicles. Thirty of these vehicles are assigned to residential group homes throughout the service area and serve only the residents at the group home. Other vehicles are reserved for central office staff to provide services to individuals living with their families. The remaining vehicles are used to transport clients to and from the mental health facility for non residential substance abuse and day programs. The behaviors of the clientele may require additional staff on each trip. East Alabama Mental Health also works with Johnson's Express to provide transportation its clients.

East Alabama Services for the Elderly provides transportation for its clients, who are older adults, low-income Medicaid recipients, or 18 years or older with disabilities and are isolated at home. EASE picks up clients at their homes and transports them to their day treatment facility, an adult day care that provides nutrition and interaction for clients and operates 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. One 12 passenger wheelchair accessible van operates 3 routes in Lee County. The agency transports its clients shopping once a

month and makes trips to Wal-Mart once a week on Thursday. There is no fare for services but the agency is limited in the number of clients that can be served.

House of Restoration Homeless Shelter is a faith-based program located in Russell County. The mission of the House of Restoration is to assist homeless individuals in achieving a healthy, independent, self-reliant life. The shelter transports clients to work, job training, medical and social service appointments, and shopping. House of Restoration has 5 vehicles: two vans, two sedans, and one pickup truck. Transportation is available 7 days a week, usually between the hours of 6:00 am and 7:00 pm. There is no fee to clients for this service.

Johnson’s Express, Inc. provides transportation to any individuals needing transportation, including to medical appointments. Transportation is provided seven days a week. Johnson’s Express is a private not-for-profit organization. Six vehicles provide door to door service. The range of fares for clients who are not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement is listed below:

Table 3: Johnson’s Express Fares

In-City	Out-of-County
\$25 for ambulatory passengers	\$1.00 per miles plus \$25.00 base fare
\$35 for non-ambulatory passengers	\$1.00 per miles plus \$35.00 base fare

Lee-Russell Public Transit (LRPT) operated by the Lee-Russell Council of Governments, is a curb-to-curb, demand/response, Dial-a-Ride Public Transportation Service. The service is available to *anyone* living *anywhere* in Lee County and rural Russell County, Alabama, on a first come-first served, space-available basis. Riders do not have to “qualify” to ride. Currently, LRPT operates 25 buses, Monday-Friday, 6:00 am-6:00 pm.

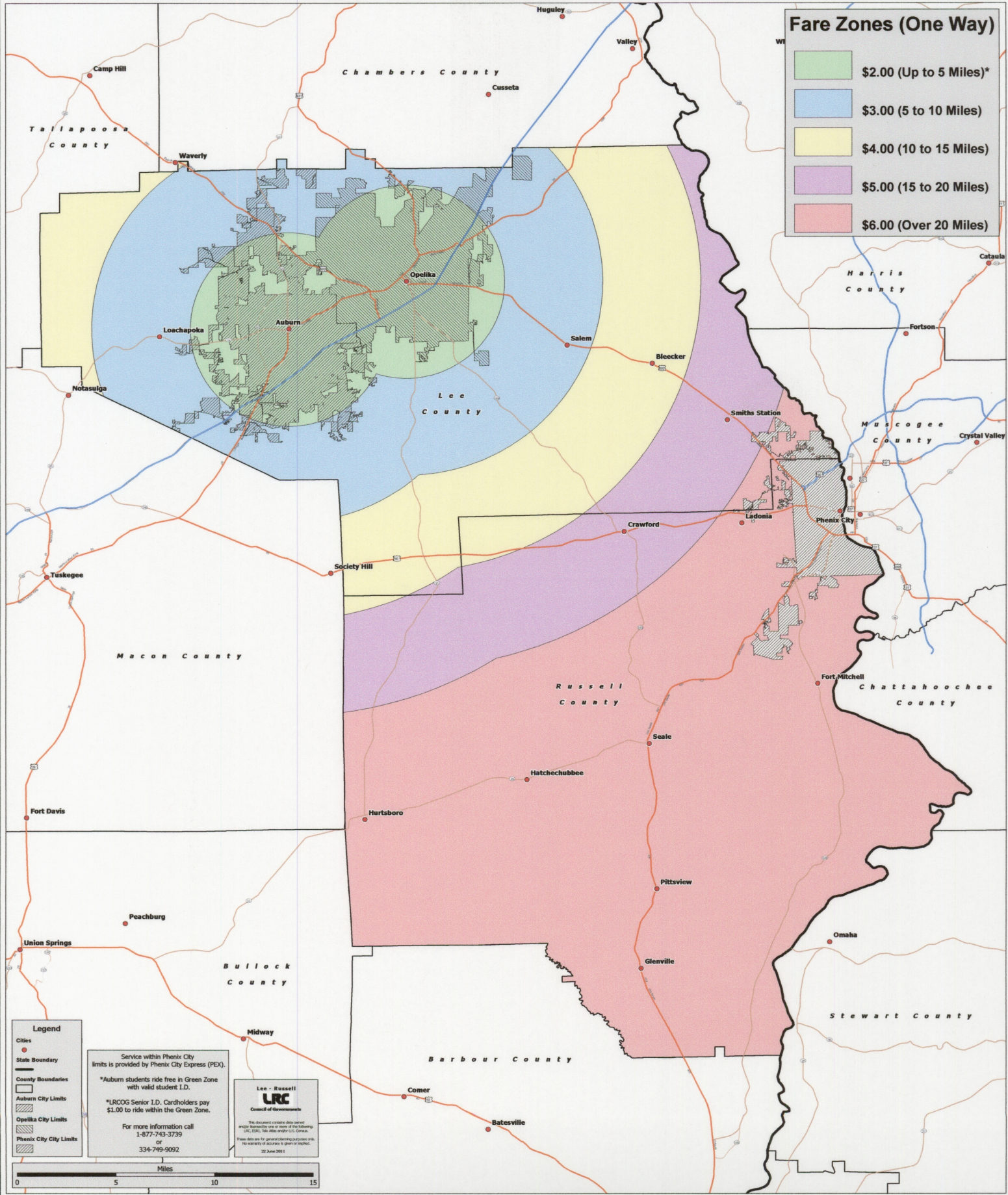
Fares for LRPT are based on distance traveled. Fare cards are available and provide 25% discount for passengers who purchase them. There are also discounts for senior citizens. LRPT also receives funding to provide Job Access and Reverse Commute Services in Lee County. There is no charge to JARC clients for transportation. LRPT fares are listed below:

Table 4: 2011 Lee-Russell Public Transit Fares

Service	0-5 Miles	5-10 Miles	10-15 Miles	15-20 Miles	20+ Miles
Demand Response	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00

See pages 19 and 20 for LRPT service area maps for Lee and Russell Counties.

LEE-RUSSELL PUBLIC TRANSIT Auburn-Opelika Connection Fare Zones

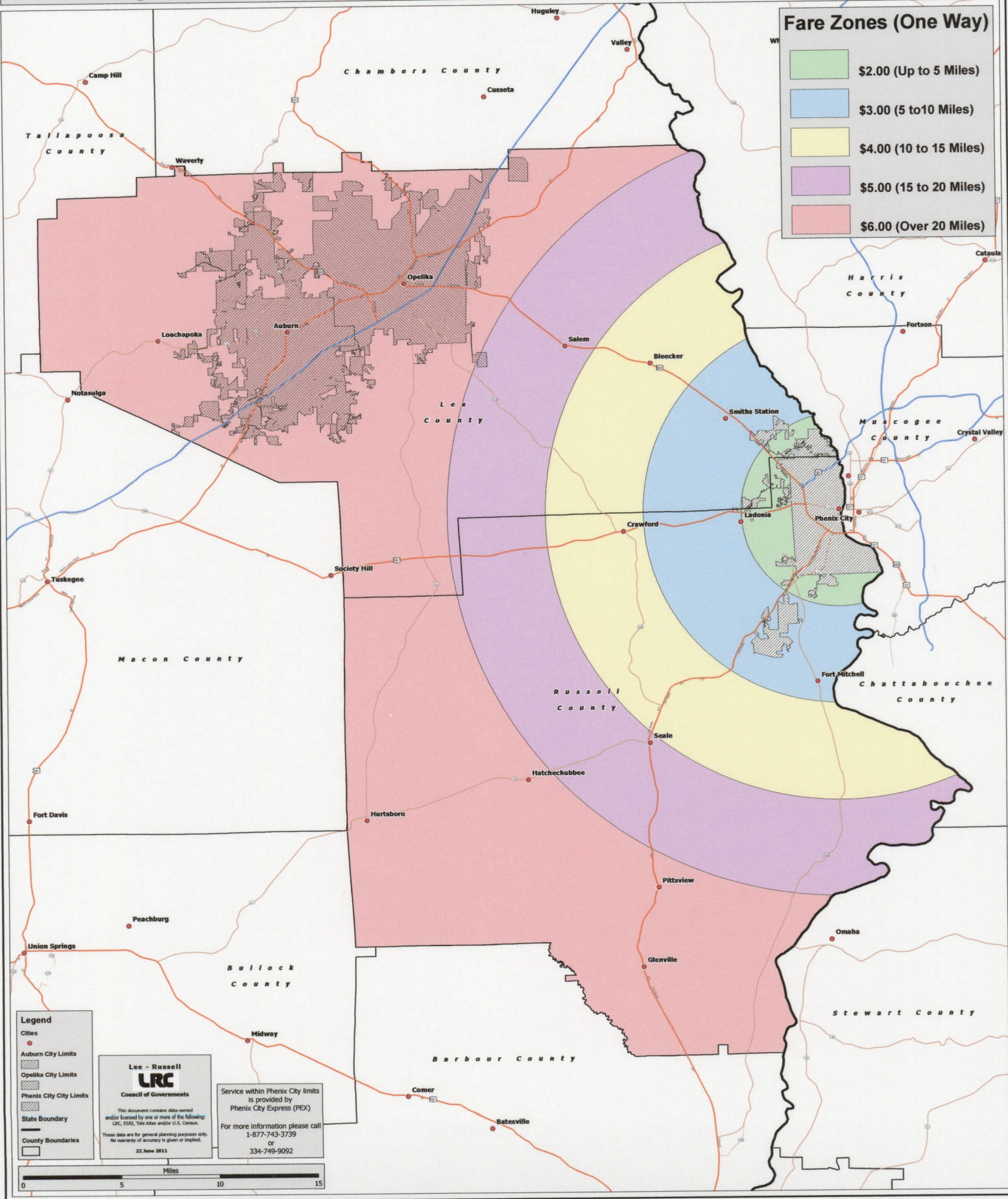


LEE-RUSSELL PUBLIC TRANSIT

Phenix City Connection Fare Zones



	\$2.00 (Up to 5 Miles)
	\$3.00 (5 to 10 Miles)
	\$4.00 (10 to 15 Miles)
	\$5.00 (15 to 20 Miles)
	\$6.00 (Over 20 Miles)



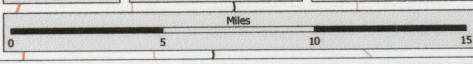
	Cities
	Auburn City Limits
	Opelika City Limits
	Phenix City City Limits
	State Boundary
	County Boundaries

Lee - Russell LRC
 Council of Governments

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 LRC, GIS, Title Atlas and/or U.S. Census.
 These data are for general planning purposes only.
 No warranty of accuracy is given or implied.
 22 June 2011

Service within Phenix City limits is provided by Phenix City Express (PEX)

For more information please call
 1-877-743-3739
 or
 334-749-9092



Phenix City Express (PEX) operated by Lee-Russell Council of Governments, provides fixed route and paratransit services in Phenix City. PEX is funded by the City of Phenix City and USDOT and does not provide services outside of the city limits of Phenix City.

PEX operates 2 routes (north and south) Monday-Friday from 8:00 am-4:00 pm EST, and buses meet every hour at the Central Activities Center. ADA Paratransit services are also available to all disabled individuals inside the city limits of Phenix City and for medical appointments in adjoining Columbus, Georgia. The ADA certification forms, route maps, and schedules can be accessed online at www.lrcog.com.

Table 5: 2011 PEX Fares

Service	Adult Fare	Seniors	Disabled	Children	Under 5
Fixed Route	\$1.00	.50	.50	.75	Free
City Demand Response	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00
Columbus, GA Demand Response	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00

See pages 22 and 23 for PEX Route Maps.

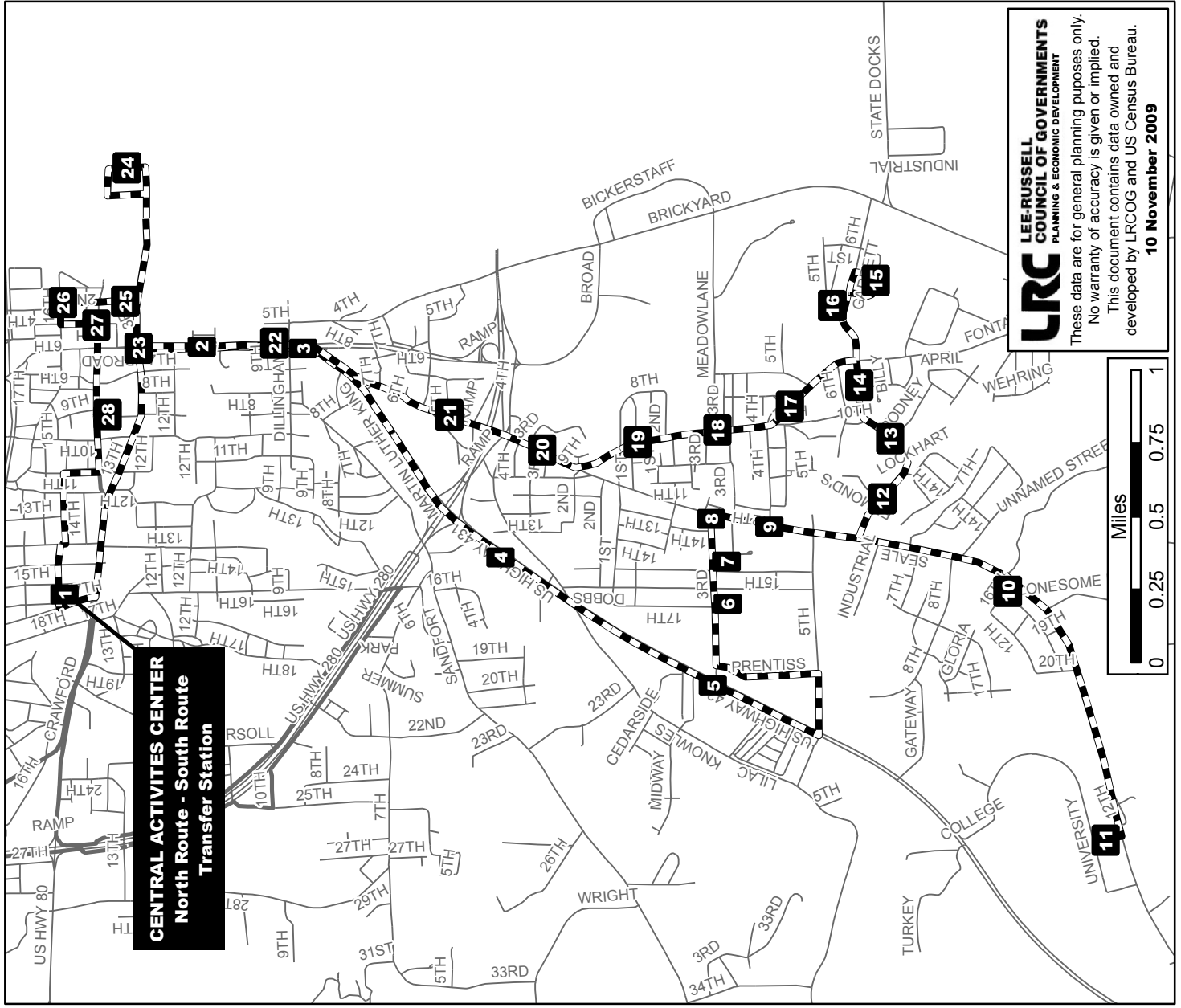
Patriot Cab Co. is based in Phenix City and serves Russell and Lee counties in Alabama, as well as the Columbus Georgia area. It is a private, for-profit company and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Tiger Taxi is based in Auburn, Alabama and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their fleet consists entirely of 7 passenger vans and 3 station wagons. Flat rates to destinations such as Birmingham and Atlanta are available. There are also fares based on mileage and the number of passengers.

I-85 Express provides van shuttle services 5 times each day to the Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta, GA from the Auburn-Opelika area. A flat rate is charged for the trip.



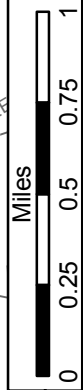
PEX South Route and Stops



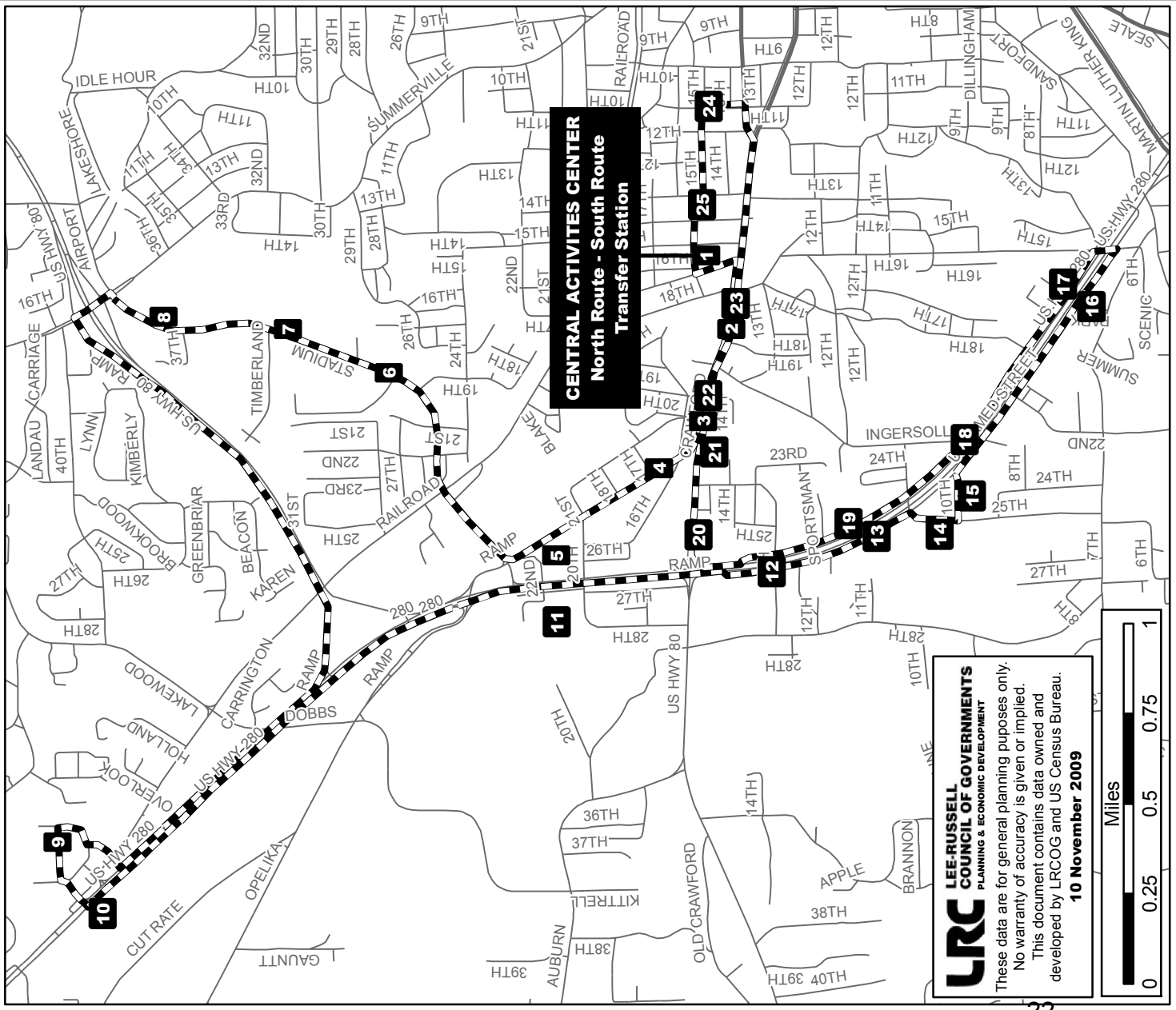
CENTRAL ACTIVITIES CENTER
North Route - South Route
Transfer Station

LRC LEE-RUSSELL
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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10 November 2009



PEX North Route and Stops



CENTRAL ACTIVITIES CENTER
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Sources of Regional Transportation Funding in 2011

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and Section 5317 New Freedom programs are sources of transportation funding for human service agencies and transit programs in our area. For agencies to receive Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 grant funds, the projects they propose must be consistent with strategies and recommendations contained in this Coordinated Transportation Plan. This section details the governance, eligible activities, funding requirements, and existing sub-recipients of these programs in Lee and Russell Counties.

Section 5310 Overview: The Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities program funds ensure the right that elderly citizens and people with disabilities have to utilize public transportation facilities and services. The program also ensures that efforts are made in the planning and design of transportation facilities and services to guarantee their accessibility and effectiveness for elderly citizens and people with disabilities.

- **Governance:** States apply for funds on behalf of local private non-profit agencies and certain public bodies. The FTA allocates Alabama's 5310 funding to ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) as the primary grantee. ALDOT then conducts an application process by which it awards and administers funds to public, tribal or non-profit entities that qualify as sub-grantees. FTA requires that Section 5310 projects selected for funding must be derived from a coordinated plan. All 5310 projects must also be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and the regional Transportation Improvement Program.
- **Eligible Activities:** Funds are used to purchase vehicles or to purchase transportation services. Sub-recipients are required to submit quarterly ridership status reports.
- **Funding Requirements:** FTA requires an 80/20 federal/local match.
- **Existing 5310 Transportation Programs in Lee County:**

East Alabama Services for the Elderly, Inc

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easedirector@bellsouth.net

334-826-5811

Lani Richardson, Director, Auburn Adult Day Center

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334-826-9144

Fax: 334-826-6468

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Auburn, AL 36830

Achievement Center/ Easter Seals

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510 West Thomason Cir.
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Lee-Russell Council of Governments (Purchase Transportation Only)

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Jackie.Pinkard@adss.alabama.gov
334-749-5264 ext. 212
Fax: 334-749-6582
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- **Existing 5310 Transportation Programs in Russell County:**

JET Adult Day Care Center

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Section 5316 Overview: The Job Access and Reverse Commute program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Many new entry-level jobs are located in suburban areas, and low-income individuals have difficulty accessing these jobs from their inner city, urban, or rural neighborhoods. In addition, many entry-level jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment-related trips are complex and involve multiple destinations including reaching childcare facilities or other services.

- **Governance:** States apply for funds on behalf of local private non-profit agencies and certain public bodies. The FTA allocates Alabama's 5316 funding to ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) as the primary grantee. ALDOT then conducts an application process by which it awards and administers funds to public, tribal or non-profit entities that qualify as sub-grantees. FTA requires that Section 5316 projects selected for funding must be derived from a coordinated

plan. All 5316 projects must also be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and the regional Transportation Improvement Program.

- **Eligible Activities:** Funds are used for capital, planning and operating expenses for projects that transport low income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to employment, and for reverse commute projects.
- **Funding Requirements:** FTA requires an 80/20 federal/local match.
- **Existing 5316 Transportation Programs in Lee County:**

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Section 5317 Overview: The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities.

- **Governance:** States apply for funds on behalf of local private non-profit agencies and certain public bodies. The FTA allocates Alabama's 5317 funding to ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) as the primary grantee. ALDOT then conducts an application process by which it awards and administers funds to public, tribal or non-profit entities that qualify as sub-grantees. FTA requires that Section 5317 projects selected for funding must be derived from a coordinated plan. All 5317 projects must also be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and the regional Transportation Improvement Program.
- **Eligible Activities:** Funds are used for capital and operating expenses for *new* public transportation services and new public transportation alternatives to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.
- **Funding Requirements:** FTA requires an 80/20 federal/local match.
- **Existing 5317 Transportation Programs:** NONE

Table 6: Sources of Transportation Funding

Provider	Client Fares/ Contracts	FTA 5307	FTA 5310	FTA 5311	Grants	FTA 5316	Local Gov't	Medicaid Waiver	State Allocation	Student Tuition	VA
Achievement Center	X		X								
East Alabama Medical Center	X										
East Alabama Mental Health									X		
East Alabama Services for the Elderly			X								
House of Restoration					X						X
Johnson's Express	X							X			
Lee-Russell Public Transit	X	X	X	X		X	X				
Phenix City Express	X	X				X	X				
Tiger Transit										X	
Patriot Taxi Cab Co.	X										
Tiger Taxi	X										
I-85 Express	X										

Table 7: Populations Served and Vehicle Inventory in 2011

Provider	General Public	Own Clients Only	Disabled	Elderly	Low Income	Handicap Access	Total Vehicles	CDL Bus Trolley	CDL Van	Non CDL Van	Cars
Achievement Center		X	X			yes	7		2	5	
East Alabama Medical Center		X		X		yes	3		3		
East Alabama Mental Health		X	X			yes	72				
East Alabama Services for the Elderly		X		X		yes	1	1			
House of Restoration		X	X	X	X	no	5			1	4
Johnson's Express	X		X	X	X	yes	7			6	1
Lee-Russell Public Transit	X		X	X	X	yes	25	8			
Phenix City Express	X		X	X	X	yes	8	4			
Tiger Transit		X				yes	55	55			
Patriot Taxi Cab Co.	X					no	79				
Tiger Taxi		X				no	10			3	7
I-85 Express	X					no	5	1		4	

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Coordinated Transportation Planning Process

The Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC) continues to meet with the mission of providing more transportation options for the transportation disadvantaged in Lee and Russell Counties. Lee-Russell Council of Governments, lead agency in coordination efforts, hired a new Mobility Manager in 2010, who facilitates monthly meetings to determine what actions should be taken to overcome the gaps, duplications and unmet transportation needs of the region.

One of the most important achievements of the planning process was the development of interagency workgroups in the areas of Policy, Outreach, Research, Technical Assistance, and Emergency Preparedness, while strengthening the relationships between social service agencies and transportation providers in the region. In keeping with the projected federal initiatives of 1) Health and Wellness/ Reintegration of Veterans, 2) Open Government, 3) Employment, and 4) Comprehensive Funding Policies, the Council has discussed goals and strategies, identifying services they hope to achieve, as well as changes they wish to avoid.

In September of 2010, during its monthly meeting, the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council met to discuss the elements of Coordinated Transportation that should be preserved, eliminated, achieved, and avoided in Lee and Russell counties. The list built upon a brainstorm that had been used previously by the CTAC to update the Coordinated Transportation Plan.

The following list details the consensus on preservation, elimination, achievement, and avoidance:

Preserve:

- One shared mission for transportation coordination.
- Sufficient quantity of wheelchair-accessible vehicles
- Passenger relationships
- Successful fixed route and demand response services
- Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council, which facilitates open communication between public and private entities
- Service to rural areas and small outlying communities
- Public and Private transportation companies offering affordable transportation for lower income individuals who do not qualify for Medicaid or senior service transportation
- A fleet of smaller more energy efficient vehicles

Eliminate:

- Barriers to communication and coordination among human service agencies and transportation providers

- Negative attitudes and misperceptions about the tangible results of coordination
- Barriers to coordinating under-utilized grant resources
- Policy Barriers among agencies for sharing rides/resources

Achieve:

- Better utilization of existing resources by sharing schedules, ridership information, and rides
- Access to additional funding by sharing grant writing capabilities
- Expansion of service to rural areas and small outlying communities
- Reduced individual agency/ transportation provider operating costs
- Transportation agreements with providers in Columbus, GA
- Referral system and referral website to centralize access to transportation
- Openness among all stakeholders involved
- Increased ridership in Lee and Russell Counties
- “Big picture” of unmet need and services available

Avoid:

- Creating another layer of bureaucracy adding excessive paperwork, meeting time, and work to already busy employees
- Commitment without follow-through

Transportation Surveys

In order to guide the recommendations for 2011, a survey of the Senior Centers in Lee and Russell counties was conducted during September and October of 2010. The survey was available online and handed out in a printed version by the Lee-Russell Mobility Manager. A total of 69 surveys were returned from the distribution. The results are as follows:

- 41% of respondents said they do use transportation services provided by human service agencies.
- 44% of those who use transportation services rode 3-5 time weekly, while another 38% stated they rode every day.
- 39% of respondents stated they do depend on others for transportation.
- 29% of respondents stated they sometimes have to cancel plans or appointments due to lack of transportation; 3% stated they cancel plans frequently.
- 90% of people who responded to the survey said they had access to a means of transportation when they wanted/needed it.
- When asked which days of the week they needed transportation for certain trip purposes, work related trips were most likely to be needed Monday thru Friday, transportation on Tuesdays and Thursdays were most likely needed for medical appointments, and transportation on Wednesdays was most likely needed for agency appointments.

- The most common destination respondents would visit if they had a ride was “shopping.” Other answers included: doctor, family, church, and paying bills.
- 45% of respondents stated they used public transportation (LRPT/PEX) in Lee and Russell Counties.
- Of those who had not used public transportation, 56% said there is no transportation in my area. A small percentage (4%) said they didn’t use public transportation because it was not accessible to them due to their physical disability.
- The majority, 38%, stated that getting information by telephone would be the best way to get information on transportation services. Following closely behind, the next best way to get information on transportation services would be through their case managers.
- When asked if they were aware of any faith based or community based organizations that provided transportation, 75% of respondents said no. Of the 25% that said yes, most named church vans as organizations that provided transportation.
- 86% of respondents do not use the internet once or more per week.

Stakeholder Meetings

The CTAC also hosted two stakeholder meetings to complete SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Obstacles, and Opportunities) brainstorming sessions. The Lee County stakeholders’ meeting took place at the Lee-Russell Council of Governments on September 28, 2010 at 10:00 am CST. The public was invited to a public meeting on September 30, 2010 at 6:30 pm CST. The Russell County stakeholders’ and public meetings were combined and took place on November 9, 2010 at 10:00 am EST at the Central Senior Center in Phenix City, AL. The combined results are listed below:

Strengths:

- Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC)/ Mobility Manager
- Shared knowledge of resources among CTAC
- Shared knowledge of the need in Lee and Russell Counties
- Utilization of JARC funding
- Current transit system
- Untapped federal resources
- Grant writing experience
- Private Providers

Weaknesses:

- Often times, “key players” are missing from the discussion table
- Lack of funding
- Cost for providing transportation
- Liability issues
- Lack of Consumer participation
- Disbursement of information to consumers

- Lack of local legislative involvement
- Unmet need
- Scheduling for demand-response services
- Misconceptions regarding transit services

Opportunities:

- Build momentum of CTAC toward implementation of programs
- Identify specific needs
- Taxi cab vouchers
- Emulate success of other states
- University involvement, possibly for marketing purposes
- Collaborate with Faith-based organizations
- Share resources (i.e. training, bidding, consumer rides, vehicle maintenance, etc.)
- Utilize Private sector
- Educate consumers, agencies, and providers

Threats:

- Relatively small number of agencies involved in Coordination efforts
- Amount of transportation options to support economic development
- “Turfism”
- Funding for transportation
- Policies, regulations, and requirements that hinder coordination
- Time/ Scheduling
- Politics
- Lack of Communication

2011 Recommendations

Upon considering the demographics, geography, available transportation services, transportation funding sources, survey responses, and brainstorming sessions, the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council reported the following recommendations and subsequent Action Plan for Lee and Russell Counties:

- **Continue to meet as a Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC).**

Since 2008, the region has had great success in bringing human service agencies and transportation providers to the table to discuss ways in which to increase transportation options for the transportation disadvantaged and to coordinate transportation services. The Council hopes to establish rapport in the transportation community to expand programs and services. The participants in the CTAC are increasingly supportive of implementing cost-saving and service-expanding programs, while decreasing duplication of services to consumers.

The CTAC serves as a forum for education, information, networking and support and continues to build relationships among all parties involved. All members receive a copy of the bylaws, sign Memorandums of Understanding, and attend regularly scheduled meetings. Section 5 contains copies of the CTAC By-Laws and membership list.

- **Increase public awareness of transportation options in the region.**

As transportation providers and human service agencies have come together as a CTAC, they have learned about the needs and services existing in Lee and Russell Counties. It is with this knowledge that the Council will now reach out to educate the public and refer them to available services. As was determined by surveys conducted in the region, the public is often unaware of existing transportation options.

Gathering detailed information about transportation services in the region, keeping it current and making it available to each other and the public is an essential component of coordinating transportation. The CTAC plans to develop an informational booklet that can be widely distributed throughout the community and accessed online. The CTAC also hopes to have a single transportation referral line citizens can call.

Organize Citizens for Accessible Transportation (CAT) Committee that will provide information from the public and also allow the CTAC to easily disseminate information.

- **Seek additional funding for transportation services.**

Transportation services can only be provided at the level to which they are funded. Fuel and insurance costs continue to rise, straining transportation budgets which are already inadequate to meet the needs of citizens. Continual

goals include increasing service to rural areas of the region, as well as expanding service days and hours. Achieving these goals will require additional funding.

Fortunately, many of the organizations participating in the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council have grant writing expertise and/or extensive knowledge of state, local and national funding sources. It is the intention of the group to utilize these skills to bring more dollars to the coordination effort in the future. JARC and New Freedom, as well as less traditional sources, will be accessed, and data gathered from the CTAC members by the mobility manager will create an ongoing report of needs and coordination efforts that will be used to access more funds.

- **Improve opportunities for transportation in rural areas.**

The region has several transportation providers, but options outside the cities of Auburn, Opelika, and Phenix City are very limited. This is very concerning, as households in rural areas are more affected by increasing fuel costs since they must travel longer distances to access employment, shopping venues, and medical care. Further, in Lee and Russell Counties, higher concentrations of households without access to vehicles are found in the rural areas. Involving faith based organizations that may be willing to provide transportation and/or participate in purchasing transportation vouchers for their communities will help to fill in gaps of need.

Efforts to improve transportation to rural areas include the commitment of Lee-Russell Public Transit to continue the county-wide demand response systems and the recruitment of private transportation providers to become part of the CTAC. The CTAC also plans to research and submit grants that will offer additional funding to increase the service area and hours of operation for all transportation providers, including the human service agencies with vehicles.

- **Better utilize existing funding.**

Coordinating transportation can take many forms. Transportation providers in the region share the frustration of insufficient funding to cover the rising cost of providing transportation. There is high interest in finding ways to maximize funding by sharing driver training, as well as the procurement of fuel, tires, and preventative maintenance. Saving money with a purchasing cooperative can free up dollars to provide more rides to more people.

During 2011, the Council aims to develop the policies, procedures, rules and regulations that will make resource sharing a reality for all who are involved and, in turn, decrease costs.

- **Improve customer service and satisfaction.**

To be successful, coordinated transportation must meet the needs of customers. Transportation must be able to take people where they want to go, when they want to go. Further, from beginning to end, the experience should be a pleasant

one for riders, the transportation providers, and any human service organizations who may be involved in the process. Cross training drivers to understand the needs of a diverse community is a priority for the CTAC, as is utilizing best practices while scheduling rides for the general public to insure customer satisfaction.

The ultimate goal of the CTAC is to determine exactly what Coordinated Transportation realistically entails for our unique region and then implementing each component of that vision to the utmost of our abilities and funding. The CTAC commits to continual surveying, recruiting, outreach, information gathering, training, and marketing that will make its vision a reality.

- **Plan for Emergencies.**

The mobility manager now actively participates on the VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) advisory board, gaining awareness about the transportation needs of Lee County citizens in the time of disaster. VOAD, operating under the Lee County Emergency Management Agency, strives to reduce the loss of life and property and protect our community from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, by leading and supporting Lee County in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, recovery, and mitigation.

This VOAD partnership will be key in developing a region-wide coordinated emergency transportation plan for Lee and Russell Counties.

Action Plan: Strategies and Timeline for Coordination

Short Term Goals (within 6 months – Fall 2011):

- **Regular data reporting to Mobility Manager by Transportation Providers and Human Service Agencies.**
 - ✓ Begin transferring/referring individuals with unmet transportation needs to Mobility Manager.
 - ✓ Create form for standard tracking among CTAC participants, to include unmet need, coordination activities, ridership.
- **Recruit private entities to provide transportation for the JARC program to increase availability and accessibility by consumers.**
- **Develop policies/procedures for resource-sharing among transportation providers and users.**
 - ✓ Develop a list of mandatory driver training and hiring requirements.
 - ✓ Develop uniform preventative vehicle maintenance standards.
 - ✓ Emulate resource-sharing accomplished in other states.
- **Begin Citizens for Accessible Transportation (CAT) Committee to gain continuous public insight.**
- **Develop a central referral number (toll free) for use by the public for transportation information and referral.**
- **Increase Outreach and Awareness for transportation options in the region.**
 - ✓ Assemble a brochure of service information and distribute it to the public.
 - ✓ Place transportation information on the web for consumers.
 - Update transportation information through state.
 - Place link to site, <http://aldotgis.dot.state.al.us/altrans/default.aspx>, on web site and in brochure.
 - ✓ Coordinate hands-on passenger training and education activities.

Medium Term Goals (Within 12 months – Spring 2012):

- **Participate in a purchasing cooperative.**
 - ✓ Begin by coordinating among just two agencies at a time.
 - ✓ Collaboratively, secure maintenance services for all providers.
 - ✓ Share procurement of tires, fuel, and preventative maintenance items.
 - ✓ Pool insurance purchases to lower the cost of insurance.
- **Involve Faith-based organization in the coordination planning process.**
 - ✓ Create a central coordination program to prevent duplication of transit voucher purchasing, possibly utilizing “Charity Tracker.”

- ✓ Create initiative for churches to begin to transport community members, including effective marketing and possible insurance pool.
- **Increase recruiting efforts for CTAC members and continue to meet on regular basis with the CTAC.**
- **Research logistics of taxi services to emulate among transportation provider.**
 - ✓ Re-evaluate Scheduling Procedures.

Long Term Goals (Within 18 months – Fall 2012)

- **Begin plans for Emergency Preparedness Coordination and Training among transportation providers and users.**
- **Implement service expansions between rural areas and Phenix City by implementing a modified Demand Response service.**
(Areas identified: Hatchechubbee, Cottonton, Hurtsboro, Loachapoka, Smiths Station, Fort Mitchell)
- **Share grant-writing responsibilities and resources with agencies in the CTAC.**
 - ✓ Collaboratively, research and submit grants for transportation-related funding.
 - ✓ Find ways to maximize LOCAL funds for transportation.
 - ✓ Find funds to subsidize taxi services.

**Lee-Russell Counties
Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council
By-Laws**

Article I: Name

The name of the group shall be Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council. (CTAC)

Article II: Mission

The mission of the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC) is to effectively provide more transportation options to more of our transportation disadvantaged citizens in Lee and Russell counties.

Article III: Purpose

- Cooperation- To create a climate for cooperation, sharing information and resources and meeting together periodically.
- Coordination-To foster common understanding of mobility needs in the community, develop advocacy and deliver services in an integrated manner.
- Communication-To publish and disseminate information pertaining to coordinated public and human services transportation and to develop and maintain a database of member organizations and resources.
- Education-To increase mutual awareness and understanding of each organization and their transportation associated needs.
- Outreach-To conduct proactive efforts to bring new members to the CTAC and encourage representation throughout Lee and Russell Counties.
- Plan Development-To participate in updating the Lee-Russell Coordination Transportation Plan and assist with establishing priorities for the United We Ride Coordination effort.
- Advocacy-To advocate on the local, state and national level for the programs and legislation that will effect coordinated transportation services in Lee and Russell counties.

Article IV: Membership

Membership in the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC) shall be on a voluntary basis by any municipalities, human service agencies, businesses, transportation providers and consumers, and any other organization wishing to participate in the coordinated transportation effort. Active membership is defined as, at a minimum:

1. Attending and actively participating in at least 2 meetings of the CTAC and attending and/or supporting outreach efforts.

2. Responding in a timely manner to requests for data and information.
3. Assisting and participating in updating the Lee-Russell Coordination Transportation Plan.

Each participating member organization will have one vote. Each organizational member's vote can be cast by his/her representative or alternate.

Article V: Officers:

Officers for the Coordinated Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC) shall be elected by a majority vote of members present. The offices to be elected are Chair and Vice-Chair and whose duties shall be customary for such types of office. Terms of office shall be for one year, with the eligibility for re-election. The meeting for the purpose of election shall be held with the first regular meeting of the fiscal year, which begins October 1 of each year. Lee-Russell Council of Governments shall act as Secretary with the duties of sending meeting announcements, distributing minutes and agendas and assuring that accurate records are maintained.

Article VI: Meetings

Meetings shall be held quarterly and at the discretion of participating members. Meetings will also be held at an agreed upon time and place.

Article VII: Committees

Committees shall be formed on an ad hoc basis when specific situations dictate the need for said committee. Committees shall be staffed on a voluntary basis.

Article VIII: Amendments

These By-Laws shall be amended by a majority vote of members present. All participating members will be notified of any changes.

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