

West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan

Report for 2021



Developed by the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC)
in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation

Adopted February 12, 2021 by the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Adopted February 22, 2021 by the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Tuscaloosa Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
&
West Alabama
Rural Planning Organization (RPO)**

***West Alabama
Coordinated Public Transit Plan
Report for 2021***

This document is posted at
<https://www.warc.info/mpo-documents>

For information regarding this document, please contact
David A. Norris, Transportation Planning Director
West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North
P.O. Box 509
Northport, AL 35476-0509
Telephone: 205-333-2990
FAX: 205-333-2713
Email: david.norris@westal.org

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Date adopted by the Tuscaloosa Area MPO: February 22, 2021

For language assistance email david.norris@westal.org, subject line: "Interpreter".
Por idioma asistencia email david.norris@westal.org, línea de asunto: "Interpreter".
Für sprachliche Unterstützung email david.norris@westal.org, Betreffzeile: "Interpreter".
Pour obtenir une assistance email david.norris@westal.org, l'objet de la langue: « Interpreter ».
语言协助电子邮件david.norris@westal.org, 主题行: "Interpreter".

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James D. Brown, ALDOT West Central Region Engineer
Walt Maddox - City of Tuscaloosa Mayor
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Representative, Northport City Police Department
Representative, Tuscaloosa City Police Department
Representative, Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office

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James C. (Jimmy) Hamner
Tommy Nix
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Charlene Wilkinson

Northport

Lewis (Lew) C. Drummond
Robert Green
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Jimmie Cain
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Mike Freeman, Fayette County Commission Representative
Tennyson Smith, Greene County Commission Representative
Arthur Crawford, Hale County Commission Representative
Jeff Long, Lamar County Commission Representative
Mark Gray, Pickens County Commission Representative
James D. Brown, West Central Region Engineer, Alabama Department of Transportation
Dennis Stripling, Executive Director, West Alabama Regional Commission
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Latasha Johnson, Greene County Mayors Representative
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Bradley B. Lindsey, Local Transportation Engineer, ALDOT
Debbie Handley, Technical Coordinating Committee Chairman
Al Elbert, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee Chairman
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Josh Knight, Fayette County Engineer
Willie Branch, Greene County Engineer
Fred Powell, Hale County Engineer
Chris Wilbanks, Lamar County Engineer
Clint Terry, Pickens County Engineer
Brad Darden, ALDOT West Central Region Pre-Construction Engineer
Michael Hora, ALDOT Bureau of Local Transportation
Debbie Handley, Fayette and Lamar County Transit Provider
Bobby Armstead, Greene and Hale County Transit Provider
Patricia McCafferty, Pickens County Transit Provider
Shannon Taylor, Airport Representative
Vontra Giles, Federal Highway Administration
James Garner, Railroad Representative
George Newman, Trucking Representative
Representative, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Representative
David Norris, West Alabama Regional Commission

Non-Voting

Representative from each municipality in the study area
Scott Anders, Tuscaloosa County Engineer
Fayette City Engineer
Russell Lawrence, Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority
Brian Latham, District 51 (Fayette/Lamar) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Jonathan Anderson, District 53 (Pickens/Greene) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
James Kyzar, District 54 (Bibb/Chilton) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Talbert Essary, District 55 (Hale/Perry) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Chris Bedwell, District 56 (Greene/Sumter) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Members (Continued)

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

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Joanne Craighead

Municipal Appointments

Jerry C. Pow

Freddie Shoults

Fayette County

County Appointments

Allen Dunavant

Municipal Appointments

Wanda Deavours

Bobbie Kemp-Driver

Greene County

County Appointments

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Judy Jarvis

Municipal Appointments

Julia D. Fuller

Iris Sermon

Hale County

County Appointments

William Thomas

Tony Lee

Municipal Appointments

Jerry Elkins

Austin Long

Lamar County

County Appointments

Wayne Baines

Al Elbert

Municipal Appointments

Wayne Christian

Lane Gilliam

Pickens County

County Appointments

Joan Owens

Municipal Appointments

Marva Gipson

Rusty Tate

Prepared by the
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC)
Staff to the MPO and RPO

Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Resolution MPO 2021-5

Adopting the
*West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan
Report for 2021*

WHEREAS, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) requires the development of a coordinated human services transportation plan in order to be eligible for Section 5310 - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds, and

WHEREAS, the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization and the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation developed the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - Report for 2021*, and

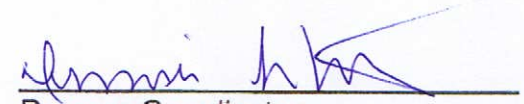
WHEREAS, the Transit Committee, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Technical Coordinating Committee of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization have reviewed the plan and have passed recommendations in support of adopting the plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this **22nd day of February 2021**, that the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization does hereby adopt the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - Report for 2021*.



MPO Chair

Attest:



Process Coordinator

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West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

Resolution RPO 2021-1

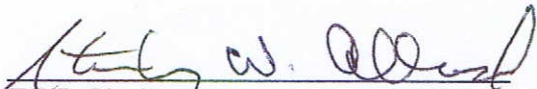
**Adopting the
West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan
Report for 2021**

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WHEREAS, the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization and the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation developed the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - Report for 2021*, and

WHEREAS, the Transit Committee, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Technical Coordinating Committee of the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization have reviewed the plan and have passed recommendations in support of adopting the plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this **12th day of February 2021**, that the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization does hereby adopt the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - Report for 2021*.


RPO Chairman

Attest: 

Process Coordinator

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the status of *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019*. The plan determined transit gaps and coordination opportunities among publicly funded, human services transportation programs in west Alabama and developed strategies to address the identified gaps and coordination issues. This report reviews the current transit systems in West Alabama, describing changes since the transit plan was adopted in August 2019. It also documents any progress made addressing the identified needs and barriers. This report will provide the Alabama Department of Transportation and the local entities with information to make decisions regarding the allocation of limited federal and local transit funds.

1.2 Summary of Regional Meetings

To produce this report, the West Alabama Transit Committee (WATC) met twice in Fiscal Year 2021. In October 2020, the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) staff sent the committee a meeting notice that contained a link to the plan and a request to submit revisions. The first meeting was held on November 4, 2020. At the November meeting, the committee updated the content of the plan, including agency information, needs, barriers, and strategies.

The transit plan updates provided by the WATC were reviewed at the combined committee meeting of the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) on November 13, 2020, and the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) December 2020 meetings.

On January 13, 2021, the West Alabama Transit Committee (WATC) met for a second time. At this meeting, the WATC reviewed changes submitted after the November meeting and comments provided by the RPO and MPO committees. The WATC recommended that the RPO and MPO adopt the final report in February 2021. More information on the meetings, including agendas and minutes, are located in Appendix A.

2.0 Bibb County

2.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit service be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **AM-Serv EMS**

AM-Serv EMS is a private, non-profit transportation provider operating in Bibb County. The agency operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and provides emergency and non-emergency transportation. The agency is located in Centreville and is associated with the Bibb County Medical Center.

- **Bibb County Department of Human Resources**

The Bibb County Department of Human Resources (DHR) purchases transportation service for some of its clients. The DHR provides social services to adults and children in the county.

- **Indian Rivers Behavioral Health**

Indian Rivers Behavioral Health (IRBH) serves mental health, substance abuse, and intellectually disabled clients by providing mental health treatment, life skills training, and residential support. The agency is located in Tuscaloosa. Its service area includes Bibb, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. The agency provides transportation to its clients on a case-by-case basis and/or assistance with accessing public transit services. Generally, client-specific transportation is provided Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, Indian Rivers manages numerous residential facilities where transportation service is available to those individuals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The agency serves over 6,000 people annually.

- **West Alabama Public Transportation**

The West Alabama Public Transportation (WAPT) agency is the largest transit provider in the State. WAPT utilizes FTA Section 5311, 5311(f), and grants to fund their service. The agency also maintains numerous contracts to provide

specialized transportation to different agencies. The WAPT serves nine counties in West Alabama, including Bibb, Greene, and Hale. The WAPT Administrative office is located in Demopolis in Marengo County.

WAPT has no age or income limitations, and customer charges vary. WAPT transports clients for medical/dental services, recreational activities, personal business, employment, and other services. The WAPT 5311 service operates from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., depending on scheduling Monday through Friday, and provides limited weekend service.

The service has several fixed routes but also offers demand-response service. The WAPT averages over 360,000 passenger trips per year in their nine-county service area. The WAPT fleet consists of approximately 65 vehicles with capacities ranging from seven to 30 passengers. The fleet includes 12 wheelchair lift vehicles.

In Bibb County, WAPT a contract with the Alabama Kidney. WAPT is also on the Alabama Medicaid Agency transportation provider registry in Bibb County.

Private Systems

- **Cahaba Medical Care Foundation**

Cahaba Medical Care Foundation is a private company located in Centreville. The company provides gas cards and transportation vouchers to clients. The vouchers are accepted by West Alabama Public Transportation and CV Transerv.

- **CV Transerv - Bibb Medical Center**

The CV Transerv is a non-emergency transportation service provided by the Bibb Medical Center. The company serves nursing homes, clinics, and hospital patients in the Centreville area. In addition to local service, the company also provides transportation to Tuscaloosa and Clanton for dialysis treatments. The company operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The company has two wheelchair-accessible vans. On average, the company transports between 14 and 20 people per week.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

- **South Mobile Area Regional Transit**

South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) is a private provider operating in Bibb County. The company provides on-demand transportation services within a 200-mile radius of the county with trips routinely made to Tuscaloosa, Shelby,

Perry, and Jefferson County. SMART operates 24 hours a day, year-round, and has two wheelchair-accessible buses, one regular van, and two cars. The company charges by the mile. The company is an as-needed service provider for the DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa.

2.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Bibb County, coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations. The Bibb County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Bibb County Contracts

- Alabama Department of Human Resources contracts with South Mobile Area Regional Transit company
- Alabama Kidney Foundation contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation

2.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county.

2.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders in the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service
- Weekend service
- Service to rural areas of the county
- Additional public and private providers
- Service to other counties
- Additional shopping service
- Additional recreation service
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)
- Reliable scheduling method
- Communication between clients and drivers

- Coordination of client trips that originate at a common community and end at common destinations
- Qualified drivers

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

2.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The Cahaba Medical Care Foundation indicated that Kid One stopped providing service in Bibb County, CV Transerv is not always available due to its commitment to the hospital, and Uber and Lyft do not serve most rural areas or are cost-prohibitive. These issues have limited transportation options for the clients of the Foundation. In addition, the Foundation highlighted the need for transportation service for their clients from Tuscaloosa and Jefferson County into Bibb County.

2.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and using the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

2.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

2.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)
- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)
 - Nights
 - Weekends
 - Rural areas of the county
 - Inter-county
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers (Additional funding required) (**High**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)
- Improve current transit service (Additional funding may be required) (**High**)
 - Scheduling
 - Communication between clients and drivers/providers
 - Trip coordination
 - Driver training

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

2.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the county during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5311	2020	\$175,514	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$752,900	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$1,224,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5339	2020	\$120,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Capital	Purchase 2 Modified Vans	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$705,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$453,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$809,400	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$1,326,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 JARC	2021	\$87,757	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama

3.0 Fayette County

3.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit service be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo Counties**

The ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo Counties (ARCFLM) provides transit service exclusively to clients with developmental disabilities. The program makes frequent medical trips and weekly recreational trips. The ARCFLM provides transit service Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. but also offers 24-hour availability. The ARCFLM makes regular trips to Jasper, Northport, Tuscaloosa, Winfield, Guin, Hamilton, and Birmingham. The ARCFLM drivers serve as day habilitation and residential training assistants when they are not driving. The agency indicated that insurance problems would prevent any sharing of resources. The ARCFLM office is located in the City of Fayette, and its transportation service area includes Fayette, Lamar, and Marengo County. The agency uses FTA Section 5310 grants to purchase vehicles.

- **Fayette County Aging Program**

The Fayette County Aging Program (FCAP) has a contract with the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to provide transportation to the AAA clients and transport them to the three AAA senior centers. The FCAP provides transit service Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Due to contractual agreements and insurance, the FCAP service is limited to its AAA clients. The agency has used FTA Section 5309 and 5310 grants to purchase vehicles. The FCAP is located in the City of Fayette, and its service area covers Fayette County.

- **Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center**

The Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center (NWAMHC) is a comprehensive mental health program that offers adults and children outpatient services in Fayette, Lamar, Marion, Walker, and Winston Counties. NWAMHC operates day

rehabilitation/day habilitation programs in Fayette and Winfield and adult mental illness residential services in Fayette and Berry. The center provides medical, shopping, and recreation transportation exclusively to its consumers. In Fayette County, NWAMHC provides approximately 31,000 transit trips per year. NWAMHC is a non-profit agency and is located in the City of Jasper in Walker County. The center uses FTA Section 5310 grants to purchase vehicles.

- **West Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) serves senior citizens in west Alabama. The AAA provides transportation to their centers. The AAA contracts with the Fayette County Aging Program to provide this service in Fayette County.

Private Systems

- **Fayette County Nursing Home**

The Fayette County Nursing Home is a private company that purchases transportation service for its clients. The company currently works with Northstar EMS (Fayette EMS) for medically related transportation.

- **Generations of Vernon**

Generations of Vernon is a private company that provides transit service to its clients. Its service area includes Fayette and Lamar County. The company has one wheelchair-accessible van and provides demand response service for medical and recreational purposes.

- **Northstar EMS**

The Northstar EMS (Fayette EMS) provides non-emergency service to hospital patients, nursing home residents, and dialysis patients. Northstar EMS operates year-round, 24 hours a day, and serves Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa Counties. The EMS has an office in the City of Fayette. Northstar EMS, located in Northport, owns the company.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

3.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Fayette County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save

money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations. The Fayette County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Fayette County Contracts

- Alabama Department of Mental Health contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo
- West Alabama AAA contracts with the Fayette County Aging Program

3.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county.

3.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Weekend service
- Service to rural areas of the county including Bluff, Kirkland, and Wayside
- Additional public and private providers, including a Section 5311 provider
- Service to other counties including Tuscaloosa and Walker
- Shopping service
- Newer vehicles
- More frequent service
- Recreation service
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

3.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

3.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
 - Operating funds
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

3.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

3.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)

- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)
 - Weekends
 - Rural areas of the county including Bluff, Kirkland, and Wayside
 - Inter-county
 - Shopping
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers, including a 5311 provider (Additional funding required) (**High**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**High**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

3.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The transit agencies in the county did not receive Federal Transit Administration funds in fiscal year 2020 or early 2021.

4.0 Greene County

4.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit agencies be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **Community Service Programs of West Alabama**

The Community Service Programs of West Alabama (CSPWA) contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation to serve 90 Head Start students in Greene and Hale County. CSPWA operates Head Start programs in six of the seven west Alabama counties.

- **Greene County Commission**

The Greene County Commission provides transit service for senior citizens to the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) nutrition centers in Eutaw and Forkland. The service is provided through a contract with the AAA. The County has two vans that were purchased with federal funds dedicated to seniors.

- **Kid One Transport System, Inc.**

Kid One Transport System, Inc. is a non-profit transit provider that serves numerous Alabama counties, including Greene. Kid One provides medical trips for children, 19 and under, and expectant mothers. The agency generally operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The Kid One office is located in Birmingham in Jefferson County. Kid One has utilized Section 5310 and 5317 funds in the past.

- **West Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) serves senior citizens in west Alabama. The AAA contracts with the Greene County Commission to provide transit service to its nutrition sites in Greene County.

- **West Alabama Mental Health Center**

The West Alabama Mental Health Center provides mental health and substance abuse treatment. It has offices in five counties, including Greene and Hale County. It contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation to transport between 30 and 42 patients a day in these two counties.

- **West Alabama Public Transportation**

The West Alabama Public Transportation (WAPT) agency is the largest transit provider in the State. WAPT utilizes FTA Section 5311, 5311(f), and grants to fund their service. The agency also maintains numerous contracts to provide specialized transportation to different agencies. The WAPT serves nine counties in West Alabama, including Bibb, Greene, and Hale. The WAPT Administrative office is located in Demopolis in Marengo County.

WAPT has no age or income limitations, and customer charges vary. WAPT transports clients for medical/dental services, recreational activities, personal business, employment, and other services. The WAPT 5311 service operates from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., depending on scheduling Monday through Friday, and provides limited weekend service.

The service has several fixed routes but also offers demand-response service. The WAPT averages over 360,000 passenger trips per year in their nine-county service area. The WAPT fleet consists of approximately 65 vehicles with capacities ranging from seven to 30 passengers. The fleet includes 12 wheelchair lift vehicles.

In Greene and Hale County, the WAPT has contracts with the West Alabama Mental Health Center. These contracts do not prevent WAPT from serving other segments of the population. WAPT is also on the Alabama Medicaid Agency transportation provider registry. The intercity bus transportation is also available (connector to Greyhound Bus Stations).

Private Systems

- **E&C Taxi Service**

E&C Taxi Service provides demand response service in Greene, Hale, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company currently serves Medicaid clients. E&C operates Monday through Saturday from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. The company does not own a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

- **Greene County Ambulance Service**

The Greene County Ambulance Service is located in Eutaw. In addition to emergency trips, the company provides non-emergency trips to hospitals and other medical facilities. The company requires 24-hour notice for non-emergency trips. The company does not serve wheelchair clients.

- **Greene County Nursing Home**

The Greene County Nursing Home is a 72-bed facility located in Eutaw. The Nursing Home uses West Alabama Public Transportation (WAPT) to transport between two and five nursing home residents a month. Due to the loss of the facility-owned van and cars, the WAPT will be utilized more for future transportation needs.

- **Greyhound Bus Line**

The Greyhound Bus line has four stops in the West Alabama region. These stops are not stand-alone bus stations but are generally housed with small businesses. The stops and associated businesses are listed below:

- Eutaw, gas station
- Greensboro, gas station
- Moundville, community center
- Tuscaloosa, gas station

The stops offer limited service, and tickets can only be purchased at the Tuscaloosa location.

- **Northstar EMS**

Northstar EMS serves Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company provides emergency and non-emergency trips. The company operates Monday through Saturday, 7:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The company has contracts with several nursing homes and medical facilities in the area. This company does not provide wheelchair service. This company is on the Alabama Medicaid transportation provider registry.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

4.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Greene County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support

their operations. The Greene County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Greene County Contracts

- Greene County Nursing Home contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation
- West Alabama AAA contracts with the Greene County Commission
- West Alabama Mental Health Center contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation

4.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county.

4.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service
- Weekend service
- Additional public and private providers
- Additional shopping service
- Additional recreation service
- Service to rural areas of the county
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

4.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

4.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

4.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

4.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)
- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)

- Nights
- Weekends
- Rural areas of the county
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

4.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the county during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5311	2020	\$175,514	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$752,900	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$1,224,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5339	2020	\$120,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Capital	Purchase 2 Modified Vans	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$705,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$453,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$809,400	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$1,326,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 JARC	2021	\$87,757	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama

5.0 Hale County

5.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit agencies be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **Community Service Programs of West Alabama**

The Community Service Programs of West Alabama (CSPWA) contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation to serve 90 Head Start students in Greene and Hale County. CSPWA operates Head Start programs in six of the seven west Alabama counties.

- **RSVP of Tuscaloosa and Hale County**

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Tuscaloosa and Hale Counties is a senior citizen volunteer program sponsored by FOCUS 50+. FOCUS 50+ provides transportation to volunteers in Tuscaloosa and Hale counties for special volunteer opportunities.

- **West Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) serves senior citizens in west Alabama. Prior to COVID-19, the AAA contracted with West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transit service to its elderly clients in Hale County. The contract has been suspended, and the AAA does not know if it will resume after the pandemic.

- **West Alabama Mental Health Center**

The West Alabama Mental Health Center provides mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse treatment. It has offices in five counties, including Greene and Hale County. It contracts with West Alabama Public Transportation to transport between 30 and 42 patients a day in these two counties.

- **West Alabama Public Transportation**

The West Alabama Public Transportation (WAPT) agency is the largest transit provider in the State. WAPT utilizes FTA Section 5311, 5311(f), and grants to fund their service. The agency also maintains numerous contracts to provide specialized transportation to different agencies. The WAPT serves nine counties in West Alabama, including Bibb, Greene, and Hale. The WAPT Administrative office is located in Demopolis in Marengo County.

WAPT has no age or income limitations, and customer charges vary. WAPT transports clients for medical/dental services, recreational activities, personal business, employment, and other services. The WAPT 5311 service operates from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., depending on scheduling Monday through Friday, and provides limited weekend service.

The service has several fixed routes but also offers demand-response routes. The WAPT averages over 360,000 passenger trips per year in their nine-county service area. The WAPT fleet consists of approximately 65 vehicles with capacities ranging from seven to 30 passengers. The fleet includes 12 wheelchair lift vehicles.

In Greene and Hale County, the WAPT has a contract with the West Alabama Mental Health Center. This contract does not prevent WAPT from serving other segments of the population. WAPT is also on the Alabama Medicaid Agency transportation provider registry. Intercity bus transportation is also available (connector to Greyhound Bus Stations) from WAPT.

Private Systems

- **Colonial Haven Care and Rehab Center**

The Colonial Haven Care and Rehab Center is a long-term care and rehabilitation facility located in Greensboro. Its service area includes Hale County. The company purchases transit service from the Hale County EMS and Northstar EMS. The company uses Medicaid to fund its transit purchases.

- **E&C Taxi Service**

E&C Taxi Service provides demand response service in Greene, Hale, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company currently serves Medicaid clients. E&C operates Monday through Saturday from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. The company does not own a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

- **Greyhound Bus Line**

The Greyhound Bus line has four stops in the West Alabama region. These stops are not stand-alone bus stations but are generally housed with small businesses. The stops and associated businesses are listed below:

- Eutaw, gas station

- Greensboro, gas station
- Moundville, community center
- Tuscaloosa, gas station

The stops offer limited service, and tickets can only be purchased at the Tuscaloosa location.

- **Hale County EMS**

The Hale County EMS is an ambulance service serving Hale County. Its office is located in Greensboro. The company provides emergency and non-emergency trips for local nursing homes, hospitals, and other medical facilities. The company does not serve wheelchair clients.

- **Moundville Health and Rehab**

The Moundville Health and Rehab (MHR) office is located in Moundville. Its service area includes Hale and Tuscaloosa County. The MHR purchases transit service from private providers. The MHR uses Medicaid to fund its transit purchases.

- **Northstar EMS**

Northstar EMS serves Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company provides emergency and non-emergency trips. The company operates Monday through Saturday, 7:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The company has contracts with several nursing homes and medical facilities in the area. This company does not provide wheelchair service. This company is on the Alabama Medicaid transportation provider registry.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

5.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Hale County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations. The Hale County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Hale County Contracts

- Colonial Haven Care and Rehabilitation Center contracts with Hale County EMS and Northstar EMS
- Moundville Health and Rehab contracts with Northstar EMS
- West Alabama Mental Health Center contracts with WAPT

5.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county. The West Alabama AAA contract with West Alabama Public Transportation has ended but could resume when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

5.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service
- Weekend service
- Additional public and private providers
- More frequent service
- Service for senior citizens who are less than 60 years old
- Service to Shelton State Community College (Tuscaloosa) and Wallace Community College (Selma)
- Service to large employers in Tuscaloosa
- Additional shopping service
- Additional recreation service
- Service to rural areas of the county
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

5.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

5.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

5.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

5.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)

- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)
 - Nights
 - Weekends
 - Rural areas of the county
 - Inter-county
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

5.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the county during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5311	2020	\$175,514	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$752,900	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311	2020	\$1,224,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5339	2020	\$120,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Capital	Purchase 2 Modified Vans	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$705,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2020	\$453,000	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$809,400	West Alabama Public Transportation	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 CARES	2021	\$1,326,600	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama
5311 JARC	2021	\$87,757	West Alabama Public Transportation	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Bibb, Greene, Hale, and Others Outside of West Alabama

6.0 Lamar County

6.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit agencies be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo Counties**

The ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo Counties (ARCFLM) provides transit service exclusively to clients with developmental disabilities. The program makes frequent medical trips and weekly recreational trips. The ARCFLM provides transit service Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. but also offers 24-hour availability. The ARCFLM makes regular trips to Jasper, Northport, Tuscaloosa, Winfield, Guin, Hamilton, and Birmingham. The ARCFLM drivers serve as day habilitation and residential training assistants when they are not driving. The agency indicated that insurance problems would prevent any sharing of resources. The ARCFLM office is located in the City of Fayette, and its transportation service area includes Fayette, Lamar, and Marengo County. The agency uses FTA Section 5310 grants to purchase vehicles.

- **Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center**

The Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center (NWAMHC) is a comprehensive mental health program that offers adults and children outpatient services in Fayette, Lamar, Marion, Walker, and Winston Counties. NWAMHC operates a specialized child program in Vernon, out-patient and day rehabilitation programs in Vernon, and two adult mental illness residential programs in Sulligent. The center provides medical, shopping, recreation transit service exclusively to its consumers. In Lamar County, NWAMHC provides approximately 20,000 transit trips per year. NWAMHC is a non-profit agency and is located in the City of Jasper in Walker County. The center uses FTA Section 5310 grants to purchase vehicles.

Private Systems

- **Generations of Vernon**

Generations of Vernon is a private company that provides transit service to its clients. Its service area includes Fayette and Lamar County. The company has one wheelchair-accessible van and provides demand response service for medical and recreational purposes.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

6.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Lamar County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations. The Lamar County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Lamar County Contracts

- Alabama Department of Mental Health contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo

6.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county.

6.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service
- Weekend service
- Additional public and private providers, including a Section 5311 provider
- Service to rural areas of the county including Kingville, Cody, Detroit, and Beaverton
- Additional service in Millport and Sulligent

- Out-of-county service including Tuscaloosa and Columbus, MS
- Shopping service
- Recreation service
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

6.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

6.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
 - Operating funds
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never

appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

6.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

6.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)
- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)
 - Nights
 - Weekends
 - Millport and Sulligent
 - Rural areas of the county including Kingville, Cody, Detroit, and Beaverton
 - Inter-county
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers, including a 5311 provider (Additional funding required) (**High**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**High**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

6.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The transit agencies in the county did not receive Federal Transit Administration funds in fiscal year 2020 or early 2021.

7.0 Pickens County

7.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**
The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.
- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**
The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.
- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**
The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.
- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**
The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit agencies be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **HELP Inc.**

HELP Inc. is the designated Section 5311 provider in Pickens County. The agency is located in Carrollton, the county seat. The agency provides transit service Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m. The agency has a fleet of five vehicles, with two being wheelchair accessible.

Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, HELP Inc. contracted with the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to transport AAA clients to the Aliceville and Reform AAA senior centers. The contract did not prevent the agency from serving other segments of the population. The contract with the AAA could resume after the COVID-19 limitations are lifted.

The agency provides approximately 15,000 passenger trips per year to the general public, without age or income limitations. A modest fare is charged for the service. Transportation is provided for medical appointments, shopping, pharmacy visits, and other personal business and activities. The agency also offers service to Tuscaloosa County on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- **Indian Rivers Behavioral Health**

Indian Rivers Behavioral Health (IRBH) serves mental health, substance abuse, and intellectually disabled clients by providing mental health treatment, life skills training, and residential support. The agency is located in Tuscaloosa. Its service area includes Bibb, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. The agency provides transportation to its clients on a case-by-case basis and/or assistance with accessing public transit services. Generally, client-specific transportation is provided Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, Indian Rivers manages numerous residential facilities where transportation service is

available to those individuals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The agency serves over 6,000 people annually.

- **West Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) serves senior citizens in west Alabama. The AAA provides transportation to its clients, including service to the AAA senior centers. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, the AAA contracted with HELP, Inc. to provide transit service to its elderly clients in Pickens County to two of the AAA senior centers.

Private Systems

- **Arbor Woods Health and Rehab**

The Arbor Woods Health and Rehab (AWHR) is a private nursing facility that provides and purchases transit service for its clients. The facility is located in Reform and serves 81 clients. The AWHR has one van to transport clients for medical and recreation services and also purchases service from Northstar EMS (Pickens County Ambulance Service). The AWHR uses Medicaid to fund its transit purchases.

- **Northstar EMS**

Northstar EMS (Pickens County Ambulance Service) serves Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company provides emergency and non-emergency trips. The company operates Monday through Saturday, 7:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The company has contracts with various nursing homes and medical facilities in the area. This company does not provide wheelchair service. The EMS has an office in the Town of Carrollton.

- **REACH**

The REACH program, located in Carrollton, offers transportation to its clients. REACH is a youth alternative treatment program that is part of the Pickens County Juvenile Court.

- **RushHour Transit**

RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.

7.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Pickens County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers and contracts. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their

clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations. The Pickens County providers did not identify any cases of sharing transit resources.

Pickens County Contracts

- Alabama Department of Human Resources contracts with HELP, Inc.
- Arbor Woods Health and Rehab contracts with Northstar EMS

7.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county. The West Alabama AAA contract with HELP, Inc. has ended but could resume when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

7.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service, including early morning and early evening times
- Weekend service
- Additional public and private providers
- Decreased call-in times
- Additional shopping service
- Additional recreation service
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)
- Out-of-county trips

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips

Based on the survey responses and committee discussions, there does not appear to be any duplication of service in the county.

7.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

7.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

7.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

7.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)
- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)

- Nights
- Weekends
- Rural areas of the county
- Additional service to reduce call-in times
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers (Additional funding required) (**Low**)
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**Medium**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

7.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the county during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5311	2020	\$50,000	HELP, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR	Pickens
5311	2020	\$130,235	HELP, Inc.	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Pickens
5311	2020	\$89,012	HELP, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Pickens
5339	2020	\$58,200	HELP, Inc.	Capital	Purchase 1 Modified Van	Pickens
5311 CARES	2020	\$69,000	HELP, Inc.	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2020	Pickens
5311 CARES	2020	\$39,000	HELP, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Pickens
5311 CARES	2021	\$20,000	HELP, Inc.	Capital	Support Equipment FY2021	Pickens
5311 CARES	2021	\$142,395	HELP, Inc.	Administration	Administrative Expenses FY2021	Pickens
5311 CARES	2021	\$107,052	HELP, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021	Pickens
5311 JARC	2021	\$25,000	HELP, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - DHR Rural	Pickens

8.0 Tuscaloosa County

8.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section contains a description of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in the county. Any changes to the agencies or companies since the adoption of the plan in 2019 are described, including new providers or purchasers, discontinued services, and modifications to transportation programs. In cases where agencies or companies did not participate in the process, a note has been added. The agency descriptions are divided into public/non-profit and private. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Public and Non-Profit Systems

- **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) maintains an office in every county in Alabama. The DHR Family Assistance Division has an interagency agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Through that agreement, ALDOT identifies and secures transportation vendors across the state, which transport eligible persons to work and work-related activities, and DHR provides matching funds to reimburse ALDOT for a portion of the expense. In west Alabama, DHR contracts with the South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) and HELP, Inc., to provide transportation service for its clients.

- **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

The service area for the Alabama Department of Mental Health - Region II Community Services program includes Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. In west Alabama, the agency contracts with the ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, and West Alabama Public Transportation to provide transportation service for their clients.

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) provides transportation service to people with vision and/or hearing loss. The AIDB has a regional center in Tuscaloosa. Their main office is in Talladega. The AIDB Center in Tuscaloosa serves Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County.

- **Alabama Kidney Foundation**

The Alabama Kidney Foundation purchases transit service for clients in all 67 Alabama counties. Their clients are limited to kidney patients who make \$1,000 or less per month. State appropriations and private contributions fund the transit service. The Foundation utilizes numerous transit providers throughout the state. The Foundation also reimburses client family and friends who provide transportation. The transit program operates from 5:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The Foundation is located in Birmingham, Jefferson County. The Foundation indicated that it would like to provide service to

individuals above the \$1,000 threshold but cannot due to funding limitations. The Foundation also noted the lack of transit service in rural areas is a problem.

- **Alabama Medicaid Agency**

The Alabama Medicaid Agency offers non-emergency transit service to full-covered Medicaid beneficiaries for Medicaid covered medical appointments. The agency provides Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to its clients to purchase transit service. The agency requires that public transit agencies be used instead of for-profit companies if the service meets the needs of its clients. However, the EBT cards can be used for reimbursement of private vehicle use. This is the most common use of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation program in Alabama. Most of the service is associated with recurring medical needs, such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency does not contract with transit providers. The Agency does maintain a registry of licensed transit providers for its clients. Registered providers in west Alabama include HELP, Inc., Kid One, Northstar EMS, and West Alabama Public Transportation.

- **Arc of Tuscaloosa County**

The Arc of Tuscaloosa County provides transit services for adults with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, including physical and mental disabilities. The Arc office is located in the City of Tuscaloosa, and its service area is Tuscaloosa County. The agency serves individuals 21 years of age and older. The Arc currently operates a fleet of 16 vehicles, most of which were purchased with FTA Section 5310 funds.

The Arc offers day programs and employment services. The Arc transportation services are provided daily, Monday through Friday, 249 days a year, for the clients attending day programs. This includes transportation to and from their homes to programs for community and independent skills training.

The Arc operates the 26 demand response routes Monday through Friday, typically between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Prior to COVID-19, transportation was provided for mobile crews, enclaves, and travel to community sites for training. The mobile crews and enclaves have been temporarily placed on hold due to COVID-19. However, The Arc continues to provide daily, random trips for shopping, grooming, and volunteer activities. The Arc averaged about 45,000 annual trips per year. The Arc drivers also serve as direct care providers for the agency clients.

- **Arts 'n Autism**

Arts 'n Autism is an after- school, early intervention, day, and summer camp program that provides services for individuals with autism in Tuscaloosa and surrounding counties. The program is housed in the City of Tuscaloosa, and its transportation area is primarily Tuscaloosa County. In the summer, vans are

sometimes used for trips within a 100 miles radius of Tuscaloosa. In 2018, the program served 135 students in the ILEAP (early intervention), After School (Pre-K-12), Scouting (3rd-9th grades), LIFEE (Learning Independence for Education and Employment), and Summer Camps (ages 3-young adult). Arts 'n Autism operates two ALDOT buses and one ALDOT van purchased with 5317 funds and a privately donated SUV for the transportation services. Transportation is provided for after school pick-up from 16 area schools, weekly field trips/activities, job training, and college classes for LIFEE students. The vehicles operate 220 days per year, Monday through Friday 8:30-5:30 p.m. The program further contracts with the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education and Tuscaloosa Charter Services to provide additional transportation.

- **Crossing Points (University of Alabama)**

The Crossing Points Program provides post-secondary transition education to adults with intellectual disabilities. The program has a van that is used to transport participants to educational, employment, and recreational functions. The program is a collaborative effort between the University of Alabama and the Tuscaloosa City and County School Systems.

- **DCH Regional Medical Center**

The DCH Regional Medical Center is a publicly owned hospital in Tuscaloosa. The Center purchases transportation for clients on a limited basis. The Center maintains a contract with Alabama Sterling Limo-Cab. In addition, South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) is an as-needed service provider for the Center.

- **Eagles' Wings, Inc.**

Eagles' Wings, Inc. (EWI) is a non-profit organization that provides services to people 21 years of age and older with cognitive, physical, or medical disabilities. Because of COVID-19, the services offered at this time are Community Day Habilitation and Supported Employment Small Group. Service is from 7:30 a.m. till 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

EWI operates two modified vans and eight minivans purchased with FTA Section 5310 funds. EWI currently provides transportation services to 34 individuals. The individuals are transported to and from their home or a designated pick up location daily. Because of COVID-19, transportation needs have changed. Trips, including those to parks, gardens, scenic locations, and places of employment, are not scheduled on a daily basis. Social distancing and masks are required in order for transportation services to be provided.

Five of the 34 individuals EWI serves live at Eagles' Pointe, the residential component of Eagles' Wings, Inc. Therefore, the transportation needs are geared toward their personal health and welfare.

- Easter Seals West Alabama**
 Easter Seals West Alabama is located in Tuscaloosa. The agency utilizes Job New Freedom Program (Section 5317) grants and funds from the United Way of West Alabama, Alabama Department of Human Resources, and Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to provide transit service in Tuscaloosa County. The program offers work or work-related trips exclusively. To be eligible, clients must have an income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The program uses three mini-vans, which are wheelchair accessible, to provide transit service. The program operates from Monday through Friday, 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Annually, approximately 13,000 trips are provided by Easter Seals.
- FOCUS 50+**
 The FOCUS 50+ Transportation Program provides door-to-door transit service to elderly and disabled individuals age 50 and older in Tuscaloosa County. FOCUS 50+ has a contract with the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to transport clients to the AAA senior nutrition/activity centers, and also provides transit service for medical and social services appointments. In addition, the organization sponsors the RSVP of Tuscaloosa and Hale Counties and provides transportation for special volunteer opportunities. FOCUS operates seven vehicles that were purchased with FTA Section 5310 grants, and the agency provides an average of 17,000 trips per year. The transportation office is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Indian Rivers Behavioral Health**
 Indian Rivers Behavioral Health (IRBH) serves mental health, substance abuse, and intellectually disabled clients by providing mental health treatment, life skills training, and residential support. The agency is located in Tuscaloosa. Its service area includes Bibb, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa County. The agency provides transportation to its clients on a case-by-case basis and/or assistance with accessing public transit services. Generally, client-specific transportation is provided Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, Indian Rivers manages numerous residential facilities where transportation service is available to those individuals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The agency serves over 6,000 people annually.
- Kid One Transport System, Inc.**
 Kid One Transport System, Inc. is a non-profit transit provider that serves numerous Alabama counties, including Tuscaloosa. Kid One provides medical trips for children, 19 and under, and expectant mothers. The agency generally operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The Kid One office is located in Birmingham in Jefferson County. Kid One has utilized Section 5310 and 5317 funds in the past.

- **Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority**

The Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority is the designated Section 5307 agency in Tuscaloosa County. The Authority is located in the City of Tuscaloosa. Since the City of Tuscaloosa and the University of Alabama are the only local governments providing matching funds, the Authority only operates within the city limits of Tuscaloosa.

The Authority operates seven fixed routes in the City of Tuscaloosa. The fixed-route service runs from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The routes begin in the Tuscaloosa Central Business District (CBD) at the Intermodal Facility, extend outward, and return to the CBD to form a series of loops. The Intermodal Facility is the only terminal for the fixed-route system.

The Authority also maintains a demand response system for elderly and disabled individuals. The Authority takes requests for this service and schedules trips on a first-come-first-served basis. The service covers the City of Tuscaloosa portion of the Tuscaloosa Urban Area. The service is provided between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Authority uses a fleet of handicapped accessible vans for this system.

The Authority has a contract to provide specialized transit service to clients of the Easter Seals West Alabama. The Authority also has an agreement with the City of Tuscaloosa to provide transit service to a group of elderly and disabled individuals from a public housing development to an exercise and education program.

The Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority is the designated Section 5311 provider for Tuscaloosa County. However, the Authority does not provide rural transit service because of the lack of financial support.

- **Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation Authority**

The Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation Authority (PARA) provides transportation to its recreation program participants. The service is limited to the days and times of the various program schedules. Some of the PARA vehicles are wheelchair accessible. The PARA drivers perform other tasks at the agency when they are not driving.

- **United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama**

The United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCP) provides transit service to its clients with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. The clients include elderly and low-income individuals. UCP is located in Northport, but its service area is all of the counties in West Alabama. However, UCP only offers transit service in Tuscaloosa County. Its day-program transit service operates from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The agency uses four vans, each with ten seats and two wheelchair spaces, and two smaller seven-seat vans. The vans were purchased with FTA Section 5310 funds. UCP also utilizes FTA Section

5317 New Freedom grants matched with United Way of West Alabama funds. The UCP drivers serve as direct support professionals and are not available to drive for other agencies.

- **University of Alabama**

In 2007, the University of Alabama created the Crimson Ride transit system. The University initially used student fees to fund the operation of the system. Previously, the University received FTA Section 5309 grants for capital purchases. The University currently maintains thirteen on-campus routes and eleven off-campus routes. The eleven off-campus routes service twelve apartment complexes. These routes operate between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, during the fall and spring semester. Two-night routes operate between 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m. – 12 a.m. Saturday and Sunday during the fall and spring semester. During the summer semester, the system operates from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. A shopping shuttle is also offered from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. on Sundays. In addition to these routes, the University contracts with the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority to provide service from the Intermodal Center in Downtown Tuscaloosa to the University campus. There is no charge to ride the buses for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The University contracts with First Transit to operate the system.

- **Veterans Administration Medical Center**

The Veterans Administration Medical Center (VA) provides transit service for its clients with mental health issues in Tuscaloosa County. The VA service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program is limited to disabled veterans who need transportation to VA activities, job interviews, and job assignments. The VA purchases its vehicles from the GSA Fleet Service program using VA funds. The VA staff indicated that many of their clients use the fixed-route system operated by the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority. However, the lack of night and weekend service by the Transit Authority creates problems.

- **West Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging (AAA) serves senior citizens in west Alabama. In Tuscaloosa County, the AAA provides transportation to its senior centers through a contract with FOCUS 50+.

- **Whatley Health Services, Inc.**

Whatley Health Services, Inc. is a non-profit community health center that provides primary health care services to medically underserved residents in west Alabama. The center has a van that is used to transport clients to appointments at the center. The transportation service is limited to twice per week per client.

Private Providers

- **A1 Taxi Service**

A1 Taxi Service serves Tuscaloosa County.

- **Ambassador Limousine Service, Inc.**
Ambassador Limousine Service, Inc. generally serves Tuscaloosa and Jefferson County. The company provides limousine service and has a limited ability to serve wheelchair clients.
- **Crown Limousine Service**
Crown Limousine Service generally serves Tuscaloosa and Jefferson County but will transport anywhere. The company has nine vehicles but cannot serve wheelchair clients. The company charges by the hour, with rates dependent on the vehicle used. The company has no contracts with other agencies at this time.
- **Dunn's Taxi**
Dunn's Taxi provides service in Tuscaloosa County.
- **E&C Taxi Service**
E&C Taxi Service provides demand response service in Greene, Hale, Tuscaloosa, and Jefferson County. The company currently serves Medicaid clients. E&C operates Monday through Saturday from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. The company does not own a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- **Greyhound Bus Line**
The Greyhound Bus line has four stops in the West Alabama region. These stops are not stand-alone bus stations but are generally housed with small businesses. The stops and associated businesses are listed below:
 - Eutaw, gas station
 - Greensboro, gas station
 - Moundville, community center
 - Tuscaloosa, gas station

The stops offer limited service, and tickets can only be purchased at the Tuscaloosa location.

- **Lee's Taxi**
Lee's Taxi serves Tuscaloosa County.
- **Life Care Ambulance**
Life Care Ambulance serves Tuscaloosa County. The company has a contract with the VA Medical Center.

- **Lyft**
Lyft is a smartphone-based taxi company that provides service in Tuscaloosa County. With the Lyft App, anyone can summon a driver to their location. Riders have the option to choose the type of vehicle. The cost is based on the type of vehicle, miles driven, and time. The minimum fare is \$4.20, and the maximum is \$200. Payment is through the Lyft App with charges to a debit or credit card.
- **Moundville Health and Rehab**
The Moundville Health and Rehab (MHR) office is located in Moundville. Its service area includes Hale and Tuscaloosa County. The MHR purchases transit service from private providers. The MHR uses Medicaid to fund its transit purchases.
- **Northstar EMS**
Northstar EMS serves Fayette, Greene, Hale, Tuscaloosa, Pickens, and Jefferson County. The company provides emergency and non-emergency trips. The company operates Monday through Saturday, 7:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. The company has contracts with several nursing homes and medical facilities in the area. This company does not provide wheelchair service. This company is on the Alabama Medicaid transportation provider registry.
- **Radio Cab**
Radio Cab generally serves Tuscaloosa and Jefferson County. The company operates year-round, 24 hours a day. The company has five to six vehicles and eight to 10 drivers. The company provides limited wheelchair service. Radio Cab has a contract through the Veterans Administration.
- **RushHour Transit**
RushHour Transit operates out of Tuscaloosa and provides service to all six counties in the west Alabama region and parts of Jefferson County. The company serves individuals, private schools, community service organizations, and employment staffing companies. The company has two transit vehicles but currently does not offer wheelchair transportation.
- **South Mobile Area Regional Transit**
South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART) is a private provider operating in Bibb County. The company provides on-demand transportation services within a 200-mile radius of the county with trips routinely made to Tuscaloosa, Shelby, Perry, and Jefferson County. SMART operates 24 hours a day, year-round, and has two wheelchair-accessible buses, one regular van, and two cars. The company charges by the mile. In addition, the company is an as-needed service provider for the DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa.
- **Sterling Limo**
Sterling Limo provides taxi service to the Tuscaloosa area. The company maintains a contract with DCH Regional Medical Center. The company owns

three taxis and three limousines. The company does not serve wheelchair clients.

- **Tuscaloosa Charter Service**

Tuscaloosa Charter Service provides service throughout Alabama. The company can serve wheelchair clients. The company has a contract with the Arts 'n Autism program. Tuscaloosa Charter owns 11 vehicles.

- **Uber**

Uber, a smartphone-based taxi company, provides service in Tuscaloosa County. With the Uber App, anyone can summon a driver to their location. Riders have the option to choose the type of vehicle. Payment is through the Uber App with charges to a debit or credit card. Prices vary based on current demand and driver availability.

8.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

In Tuscaloosa County, current coordination efforts include the utilization of existing providers, contracts, and transit resources sharing. These efforts address a previously identified transit gap. In many cases, an agency that needs transportation for its clients will use an existing provider rather than start a transit system. The transit purchasing agency can simply direct its clients to the providers or enter into a contract with the provider. These mutually beneficial arrangements allow agencies that need transportation for their clients to take advantage of existing transit services. Transit purchasing agencies save money and time by using the existing providers. The providers gain revenue to support their operations.

Tuscaloosa County Contracts

- Alabama Department of Human Resources contracts with South Mobile Area Regional Transit company
 - Alabama Department of Mental Health contracts with the Arc of Tuscaloosa
 - Alabama Kidney Foundation contracts with Northstar EMS
 - Arts 'n Autism contracts with Tuscaloosa Charter Service and the Tuscaloosa City School Board
 - City of Tuscaloosa contracts with the Transit Authority
 - DCH Regional Medical Center contracts with Alabama Sterling Limo-Cab
 - Moundville Health and Rehab contracts with Northstar EMS
 - Veterans Administration Medical Center contracts with Life Care Ambulance
 - West Alabama AAA contracts with FOCUS
- The Arc of Tuscaloosa, FOCUS 50+, and the United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama have an agreement to share vehicles for special events and when an agency has a vehicle out of service. The agreement also includes the YMCA, the Boy Scouts, the Tuscaloosa County PARA, a local mental health association, the Cancer Society, and the American Heart Association.

- As part of a cooperative agreement, the United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama transports clients daily for Arts 'n Autism.
- The 2008 update of this plan recommended that a centralized routing project be undertaken. The project was to feature a calling center that would allow potential transit clients in Tuscaloosa County to make one telephone call to schedule a trip regardless of who will provide the trip. The call center would then determine the best agency for the trip and make the necessary arrangements. The Easter Seals agency volunteered to lead the project with ARC, UCP, FOCUS, and the Transit Authority agreeing to participate.

During the fall of 2009, Easter Seals performed a two-week simulation of the proposed project. Easter Seals used their licensed routing software and trip logs from all participating transit agencies to run the simulation. The simulation revealed that the project had the potential to reduce the use of two transit vehicles on most days but that the cost to implement and operate the program, including additional software licenses and personnel, would outweigh any cost savings. The use of counselors as drivers at several of the transit agencies limited the possible coordination opportunities.

8.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the county.

8.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

Surveys were provided to transit providers, social service organizations, and transit riders during the Fall of 2018. The staff and transit committee used the survey responses to develop a list of needs in the county. In December 2018, the transit committee verified these needs.

Needs Not Currently Addressed

- Night service
- Weekend service
- Holiday service
- Decreased fixed-route headways
- Additional public and private providers
- City of Northport service
- Service to rural areas of the county including Brookwood, Holt, Peterson, Vance, Lake Tuscaloosa area, Duncanville, Taylorville, and McCalla
- Out-of-county service including Jefferson County and Bibb County
- Additional service for shopping, medical appointments, recreational activities, and church
- Decreased call-in times
- Decreased wait times

- Maintaining schedules (pick-up and drop-off times) demand response service and fixed routes
- Vehicles that will accommodate larger people
- Additional service from the UA campus to other areas of the community
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects, including telephone notification
- Additional accessible vehicles
- Alternative fuel options
- Additional fixed-route bus stop shelters
- Education of general public (services available, how to use, application process, operations times, costs, contact information)

Needs Met or Partially Met with Current Service

- Daytime, Monday through Friday Service
 - Medical trips
 - Work trips
 - Vocational training trips
 - Shopping trips
 - Recreation trips
 - Local trips
 - Out-of-county trips
 - Service for senior citizens who are less than 60 years old

The Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority, the Arc of Tuscaloosa, Easter Seals West Alabama, FOCUS 50+, and United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama indicated that there is some duplication of transit service in the county. All of the agencies have agreed to work together to reduce the duplication when economically feasible.

8.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the county.

8.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Lack of financial support by the City of Northport
- Lack of financial support by Tuscaloosa County
- Dispersed population
- Large land area

- Training required to manage some clients
- Aides required for some clients
- Drivers sometimes serve as social workers and are not available to drive for other agencies

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

8.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the county.

8.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current transit service (**High**)
- Maintain current transit contracts and coordination efforts (**High**)
- Expand current transit service (Additional funding required) (**High**)
 - Nights
 - Weekends
 - Holidays
 - Reduce fixed-route headways
 - City of Northport
 - Rural areas of the county including Brookwood, Holt, Peterson, Vance, Lake Tuscaloosa area, Duncanville, Taylorville, and McCalla,
 - Inter-county
 - Shopping, recreation, and church
 - Additional service to reduce call-times, wait times, and schedule delays
 - Additional service for senior citizens
 - Purchase or modify vehicles to accommodate larger people
 - Additional service from the UA campus to other areas of the community
 - Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)

- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) (**Medium**)
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source (**High**)
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources (**High**)
- Support/Establish alternative fuel options for existing and future transit providers (**Medium**)
- Develop education/outreach programs (Additional funding may be required) (**Medium**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

8.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the county during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5310	2020	\$77,000	ARC of Tuscaloosa County	Capital	Purchase 2 Mini Vans - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5310	2020	\$77,000	ARC of Tuscaloosa County	Capital	Purchase 2 Mini Vans - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2020	\$71,810	Arts N Autism	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$75,500	Arts N Autism	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5310	2020	\$115,725	Eagles Wings, Inc.	Capital	Purchase 3 Mini Vans - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$243,100	Eagles Wings, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2020	\$44,240	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR Rural	Tuscaloosa
5317	2020	\$160,000	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020 - DHR Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$15,000	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - DHR Rural	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$60,000	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - DHR Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$40,000	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Rural	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$160,000	Easter Seals West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5317	2020	\$86,006	FOCUS 50+	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Tuscaloosa
5317	2021	\$86,006	FOCUS 50+	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Urban	Tuscaloosa
5307	2020	\$1,100,000	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority	Operating	Operating Expenses CY2020	Tuscaloosa
5307	2020	\$1,499,000	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority	Capital	Purchase 1 30' Bus, Shop Equipment, Support Vehicles, GPS Vehicle Tracking Software, Employee Training, and Rehab Maintenance Facility, and Preventative Maintenance	Tuscaloosa
5339	2020	\$2,375,000	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority	Capital	Purchase 6 30' Buses and 1 <30' Bus	Tuscaloosa
5307 CARES	2020	\$2,850,000	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority	Operating	Operating Expenses CY2020 and CY2021	Tuscaloosa
5307 CARES	2020	\$2,916,327	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority	Capital	Preventative Maintenance and ADA Paratransit Expenses CY2020 and CY2021	Tuscaloosa
5317	2020	\$106,000	United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2020	Tuscaloosa

9.0 West Alabama Region

9.1 Transit Resource Assessment

This section includes a list of each agency or company that provides or purchases transit service in West Alabama County. The lists are divided into private-for-profit and public or non-profit. The public and non-profit agencies were grouped because public organizations or governments generally fund the non-profits.

Private For-Profit Companies that Provide or Purchase Transit Service in West Alabama

Agency Name	Type of Transit Agency	West Alabama Counties Served
A1 Taxi Service	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Ambassador Limousine Service	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Arbor Woods Health and Rehab	Provider & Purchaser	Pickens
Cahaba Medical Care Foundation	Purchaser	Bibb
Colonial Haven Care and Rehabilitation Center	Purchaser	Hale
Crown Limousine	Provider	Tuscaloosa
CV Transerv	Provider	Bibb
Dunn's Taxi	Provider	Tuscaloosa
E&C Taxi Service - Formerly E&C Transport	Provider	Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Fayette County Nursing Home	Purchaser	Fayette
Generations of Vernon	Provider	Fayette, Lamar
Greene County Ambulance Service	Provider	Greene
Greene County Nursing Home/Medical Center	Provider & Purchaser	Greene
Greyhound Bus Lines	Provider	Greene, Hale, Tuscaloosa
Hale County EMS	Provider	Hale
Lee's Taxi	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Life Care Ambulance	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Lyft	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Moundville Health and Rehab	Purchaser	Hale, Tuscaloosa
Northstar EMS	Provider	Fayette, Greene, Hale, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Radio Cab	Provider	Tuscaloosa
REACH	Purchaser	Pickens
RushHour Transit	Provider	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
South Mobile Area Regional Transit (SMART)	Provider	Bibb, Tuscaloosa
Sterling Limo, Formerly Alabama Sterling Limo-Cab	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa Charter Service	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Uber	Provider	Tuscaloosa

**Public Agencies and Non-Profit Companies
that Provide or Purchase Transit Service in West Alabama**

Agency Name	Type of Transit Agency	West Alabama Counties Served
Alabama Department of Human Resources	Purchaser	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Alabama Department of Mental Health, Region II Community Services	Purchaser	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (Tuscaloosa Regional Center)	Provider & Purchaser	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Alabama Kidney Foundation	Provider	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Alabama Medicaid Agency	Purchaser	Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Am-Serv	Provider	Bibb
ARC of Fayette/Lamar/Marengo, Inc.	Provider	Fayette, Lamar
ARC of Tuscaloosa County	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Arts n' Autism	Provider & Purchaser	Tuscaloosa
Bibb County Department of Human Resources	Purchaser	Bibb
Community Service Programs of West Alabama	Purchaser	Greene, Hale
Crossing Points (University of Alabama)	Provider	Tuscaloosa
DCH Medical Center	Purchaser	Tuscaloosa
Eagles Wings	Provider & Purchaser	Tuscaloosa
Easter Seals West Alabama	Provider & Purchaser	Tuscaloosa
Fayette County Aging	Provider	Fayette
FOCUS on Senior Citizens of Tuscaloosa County	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Greene County Commission (Senior Centers)	Provider	Greene
HELP Inc.	Provider	Pickens
Indian Rivers Mental Health	Provider & Purchaser	Bibb, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
Kid One Transport System, Inc.	Provider	Greene, Tuscaloosa
Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center	Provider	Fayette, Lamar
RSVP of Tuscaloosa and Hale County (FOCUS)	Provider	Hale, Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa County Parking & Transit Authority	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation	Provider	Tuscaloosa
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama	Provider	Tuscaloosa
University of Alabama	Provider	Tuscaloosa
Veterans Administration Medical Center (Tuscaloosa)	Provider	Tuscaloosa
West Alabama Area Agency on Aging	Purchaser	Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa
West Alabama Mental Health Center	Purchaser	Greene, Hale
West Alabama Public Transportation (West Alabama Health Services, Inc.)	Provider	Bibb, Greene, Hale
Whatley Health Services, Inc.	Provider	Tuscaloosa

Please see the appropriate county chapter for a description of the agencies.

9.2 Coordination Efforts Identified in the 2019 Plan

There are no regional coordination efforts in west Alabama.

9.3 New Coordination Efforts Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any new coordination efforts in the region.

9.4 Transit Needs Identified in the 2019 Plan

In West Alabama, there are limited inter-county transportation options. A reliable method to transport people from the rural west Alabama counties to Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Selma, Meridian, Mississippi, or other economic hubs is needed. This is especially true in Fayette, Lamar, and Pickens County. The hub communities offer national travel options (air, rail, and bus), employment opportunities, medical facilities, educational institutions, shopping, and recreation. Rural residents have to travel to these hubs for at least some of their needs.

West Alabama Public Transportation provides service from Bibb to Tuscaloosa and from Greene and Hale to Selma. However, other rural counties do not have access to a similar service. A public or private service could address this need.

The Greyhound Bus Line operates four stops in the West Alabama region (Greene, Hale, and Tuscaloosa County) and has facilities in Birmingham and Selma. Amtrak has stations in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, and Meridian, Mississippi. The closest commercial air service is located in Birmingham, Meridian, and Columbus, Mississippi.

Some of the transit gaps reviewed in the previous chapters could be addressed by eliminating or reducing the Alabama Public Service Commission regulation that prevents publicly funded systems from picking up riders in counties they pass through because they are not the designated transit provider for that county. Many of the rural transit providers transport their clients to appointments in larger communities such as Tuscaloosa. This regulation denies transit service to potential clients that live in unserved areas of counties, such as rural Tuscaloosa County. If this rule could be changed, some of the identified transit gaps could be addressed.

Needs Not Currently Addressed or Only Partially Addressed

- Additional inter-county service to connect rural residents with national bus service, Amtrak service, commercial air service, jobs, medical facilities, shopping opportunities, recreation facilities, education, and training opportunities; including west Alabama and out-of-region travel

9.5 Changes in Transit Needs Since August 2019

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any changes in needs in the region.

9.6 Transit Service Barriers Identified in the 2019 Plan

The staff, working with the transit committee and the survey responses, developed a list of barriers that prevent the needs from being addressed. These barriers are consistent across the rural counties in the region. The local agencies and governments have limited control over the barriers, which are often related to economic issues, personal choice decisions, and the nature of rural communities.

Barriers

- Lack of funding (local, state, federal, private)
- Small client base limits opportunities for profits
- Cost of for-profit service
- Dispersed population
- Alabama Public Service Commission service area restrictions

The challenge of the transit agencies and local governments is to find ways around these barriers. The funding to address every need will never be available. The economics of providing transit service to a small number of dispersed clients will never appeal to a for-profit business. Innovative ideas will be required if the needs are to be met.

9.7 Transit Service Barriers Removed Since August 2019 and Effects on Transportation

The West Alabama Transit Committee did not identify any barriers that have been removed in the region.

9.8 Strategies to Address Needs and Barriers

The staff, working with the transit committee, developed the following strategies. Several of the proposals are related to maintaining the current level of service. These were included because the existing services are addressing gaps that previously existed. The strategies are general so as not to preclude any future projects. Many of the strategies indicate that additional funding will be required for implementation. In some cases, the additional funding could be a reallocation of existing funds or programs. New funding streams may not always be needed.

Strategies

- Maintain current inter-county transit service in Bibb, Greene, Hale County **(High)**
- Add inter-county transit service (Additional funding required) **(High)**
- Support/Establish additional transportation providers, where needed (Additional funding required) **(Medium)**
- Support/Establish alternate transit options where transit service is not available or cost-prohibitive, such as car/vanpools and transportation stipends (Additional funding required) **(Medium)**
- Support efforts to establish a state transit funding source **(High)**
- Support efforts to combine and/or leverage funding sources **(Medium)**

- Support efforts to modify the Alabama Public Service Commission service area restrictions (**High**)

The list of strategies includes an implementation priority (High, Medium, Low) assigned by the transit committee. The priority is based on available resources, time, and feasibility. The priority given does not directly correlate to the amount of support or the amount of need. It merely reflects the existing reality based on the ranking criteria. If circumstances change, a low or medium priority strategy could be implemented before one that was ranked as a high priority.

9.9 Federally Funded Project Activities

The following chart lists the Federal Transit Administration funded activities in the region during fiscal year 2020 and early 2021. The funds were used to continue existing services.

Federal Transit Administration Funded Activities

Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Total Funding	Agency	Scope	Description	County
5311 CARES	2021	\$3,500,000	Greyhound Lines, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Intercity	Region
5311	2021	\$4,000,000	Greyhound Lines, Inc.	Operating	Operating Expenses FY2021 - Intercity	Region

10.0 Continuing Efforts

The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) will monitor transit issues in the region to determine if the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019* needs to be modified. Changes to existing transit conditions could require the addition, deletion, or re-prioritization of strategies or projects. Any necessary adjustments to the plan can be accomplished through amendments adopted by the Policy Committees of the MPO and RPO. The joint MPO and RPO transit committee, which helped develop this plan, will meet as needed to assist in these efforts and facilitate the implementation of the identified strategies.

The committees of the MPO and RPO will continue to meet regularly. The MPO committees meet every other month, and the RPO committees meet once per quarter. The Section 5307 and 5311 providers in the region are voting members on the MPO and RPO technical coordination committees. At the meetings, the committees discuss various transportation issues, usually focusing on federally funded projects, including transit programs.

Based on the current ALDOT contract, the MPO and RPO will prepare another summary report for the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019* plan in 2022. If the federal planning requirements continue past 2022 and funds are available, the plan will likely be revised in 2023.

Appendix A

Regional Meetings Information



NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:

David Norris
West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North, Suite 1
Northport, AL 35473
(205) 333-2990 * FAX (205) 333-2713

October 14, 2020

The West Alabama Transit Committee will hold a virtual meeting on **Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.** This meeting is the first of two that will be used to produce a status report for the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019*. Please contact David Norris at david.norris@westal.org or 205-333-2990 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting if you would like to participate.

It is important that every agency that provides or purchases transit service be represented at these meetings. Also, any agency that intends to pursue a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 - Elderly and Disabled Program, Section 5311 - Nonurbanized Program, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, or Section 5317 - New Freedom Program grant must participate in the report development. The 2019 plan is posted at (<https://www.warc.info/mpo-documents/>).

The plan, report, and transit committee are cooperative efforts between the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO). The MPO and RPO staff will prepare the report with the assistance of the West Alabama Transit Committee.

The meeting is open to the public. Anyone requiring special assistance should contact the WARC at least 48 hours before the day of the meeting. For **special assistance**, call the WARC at 333-2990.

- End -
A-2



NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:

Zane Davis
West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North, Suite 1
Northport, AL 35473
(205) 333-2990 * FAX (205) 333-2713

December 23, 2020

The West Alabama Transit Committee will hold a virtual meeting on **Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.** This meeting is the second of two that will be used to produce a status report for the *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019*. Please contact Zane Davis at zane.davis@westal.org or 205-333-2990 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting if you would like to participate.

It is important that every agency that provides or purchases transit service be represented at these meetings. Also, any agency that intends to pursue a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 - Elderly and Disabled Program, Section 5311 - Nonurbanized Program, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, or Section 5317 - New Freedom Program grant must participate in the report development. The draft report is posted at (<https://www.warc.info/mpo-documents/>).

The plan, report, and transit committee are cooperative efforts between the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO).

The meeting is open to the public. Anyone requiring special assistance should contact the WARC at least 48 hours before the day of the meeting. For **special assistance**, call the WARC at 333-2990.

West Alabama Transit Committee
A Joint Subcommittee of the West Alabama RPO and the Tuscaloosa Area MPO
Location: Online
November 4, 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Anissa Bates Alabama Department of Human Resources
Wiley Brooks Alabama Department of Transportation
Emily Bryant United Way of West Alabama
Larry Daniels First Transit (UA)
LeAnna Feely United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama
Vontra Giles FHWA Alabama Division
Lekeisha Harrison United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama
Matt Holdbrooks Kid One, Inc.
Becky Johnson Eagles Wings, Inc.
Ronny Johnston Easter Seals West Alabama
Leslie Jones Cahaba Medical Foundation
Belinda Jones Turning Point Services
Alisa Kincaid Arts 'n Autism
James Knickrehm University of Alabama
Jeff Knox YMCA Tuscaloosa
Russell Lawrence Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority
Patricia McCafferty HELP, Inc.
Dana Pigg FOCUS 50+
Deronza Pruitt The Arc of Tuscaloosa
Robbie Stewart Alabama Institute of the Deaf and Blind
Delshonda Thomas The Arc of Tuscaloosa

WARC Staff:

Zane Davis
David Norris
Chris Wriley

Items provided by WARC

1. Agenda
2. *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - 2021 Report Schedule*
3. *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - 2021 Report*

The West Alabama Transit Committee, a joint subcommittee of the West Alabama RPO and the Tuscaloosa Area MPO, met at **10:00 a.m.** on **Wednesday, November 4, 2020**, using an online platform.

The committee members typed their name in the chatbox. The staff added the names of those who joined the meeting by telephone.

1. Review schedule

Mr. Norris highlighted important dates on the schedule, including RPO meetings, MPO meetings, and the report deadline.

2. Review of the draft report

Mr. Norris reviewed each chapter in the report. He read aloud each agency or company that provides or purchases transit services in the region. He requested those present to give him updates for these agencies and companies. He also asked the committee members to present any recommendations or changes to the needs, barriers, and strategies in the 2019 adopted plan.

Ms. Jones stated in Bibb County West Alabama Public Transportation no longer provided trips to Jefferson County. She also indicated that Kid One no longer served Bibb County. (After the meeting, Ms. Jones emailed additional transportation issues affecting the clients her agency serves.)

Ms. Stewart stated that the description presented for the Alabama Institute of the Deaf and Blind was correct.

Mr. Lawrence indicated the text for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority was current. He also typed that Lee's Taxi Service and Dunn's Taxi Service were still in business.

Ms. Bryant requested a digital copy of the report. (Mr. Norris emailed the report and plan on November 4, 2020.)

3. Next meeting date

The next committee meeting will be on January 13, 2021.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35.

West Alabama Transit Committee
A Joint Subcommittee of the West Alabama RPO and the Tuscaloosa Area MPO
Location: Online
January 13, 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Tamika Alexander, United Way of West Alabama
Anissa Bates, Alabama Department of Human Resources
Emily Bryant, United Way of West Alabama
Lori Colburn, Arts 'n Autism
Becci Hauser, UCP of West Alabama
Matt Holdbrooks, Kid One, Inc.
Becky Johnson, Eagles Wings, Inc.
Leslie Jones, Cahaba Medical Foundation
Carolyn Morrison, West Alabama mental Health
Deronza Pruitt, The Arc of Tuscaloosa
Robbie Stewart, Alabama Institute of the Deaf and Blind
Tammie Thomas, Bibb DHR
Janice Trotter, NWMH
Jackie Wuska

WARC Staff:

Zane Davis
Chris Wriley

Items provided by WARC

1. Agenda
2. *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - 2021 Report Schedule*
3. *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan - 2021 Report*

The West Alabama Transit Committee, a joint subcommittee of the West Alabama RPO and the Tuscaloosa Area MPO, met at **10:00 a.m.** on **Wednesday, January 13, 2021**, using an online platform.

The committee members typed their name in the chatbox. The staff added the names of those who joined the meeting by telephone.

1. Review schedule

Mr. Davis highlighted important dates on the schedule, including RPO meetings, MPO meetings, and the report deadline.

2. Review of the draft report

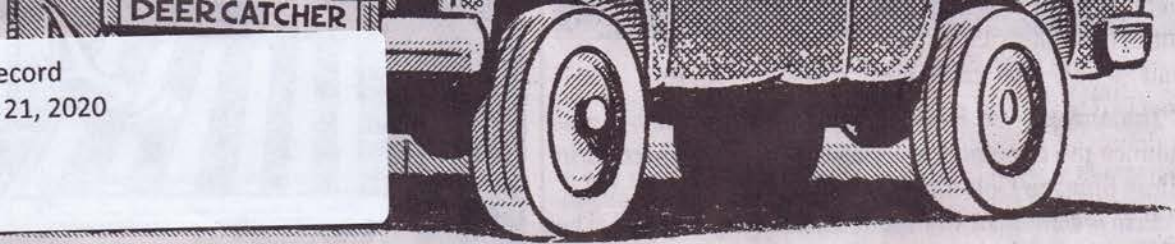
Mr. Davis reviewed each chapter in the report. He requested those present to give him updates for these agencies and companies. He also asked the committee members to present any recommendations or changes to the needs, barriers, and strategies in the 2019 adopted plan.

3. Next meeting date

The next committee meeting will be on November, 2021.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20.



WARC to hold virtual transit meeting on Nov. 4

The West Alabama Transit Committee will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 4 at 10 a.m.

This meeting is the first of two that will be used to produce a status report for the West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019. Contact David Norris at david.norris@westal.org or (205) 333-2990 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting if you would like to partici-

pate.

It is important that every agency that provides or purchases transit service be represented at these meetings. Also, any agency that intends to pursue a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 - Elderly and Disabled Program, Section 5311 - Nonurbanized Program, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, or Sec-

tion 5317 - New Freedom Program grant must participate in the report development.

The 2019 plan is posted at (<https://www.warc.info/mpo-documents/>).

The plan, report, and transit committee are cooperative efforts between the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the West Alabama Rural Planning

Organization (RPO).

The MPO and RPO staff will prepare the report with the assistance of the West Alabama Transit Committee.

The meeting is open to the public. Anyone requiring special assistance should contact the WARC at least 48 hours before the day of the meeting. For special assistance, call the WARC at (205) 333-2990.

Community Foundation accepting applications

The Fayette Community Foundation is currently accepting applications for a new round of grants.

Organizations recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code are eligible to apply for Foundation grants, as well as other public agencies.

Note: All 501(c)3 organizations who are applying are required to attach written verification of their current tax-exempt status. Those organizations not generally eligible for support are religious programs, individuals, and start-up organizations.

All applicants should be

aware that the grant application has changed this year and all previous versions will not be accepted.

Applications are available at the Fayette County Probate Office, located on the first floor of the courthouse, beginning Thursday, Oct. 1 through Friday, Oct. 30. Office

hours are Mondays 8-5, Tuesday through Friday 8-4.

All applications must be received in-hand by the Fayette Community Foundation's Administrative Coordinator Susan Sims by 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30. Grants will be awarded in late November of this year.

City of Fayette sanitation exemption affidavits

The City of Fayette Sanitation Service will be accepting Exemption Affidavits beginning Nov. 1 until Nov. 30.

Under Alabama Law, this exemption must be applied for annually.

All households seeking an exemption from pay-

ment of the garbage fee must apply for the exemption and qualify.

To qualify for exemption, the sole source of income must be solely from social security.

An application will be mailed to existing cus-

tomers that are exempt. You may come by City Hall and pick up an application to fill out beginning Nov. 1.

The City of Fayette does not charge a fee for this process. You must provide all documentation that the city is requiring or your ap-

plication will be denied.

The deadline to turn in the completed affidavit will be November 30.

THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.

This exemption will begin Jan. 2021.

**Let us hear from you!
Send your**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

West Alabama Transit Committee Meeting - January 13, 2021

The West Alabama Transit Committee will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. This meeting is the first of two that will be used to produce a status report for the West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019. Please contact Zane Davis at zane.davis@westal.org or 205-333-2990 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting if you would like to participate. It is important that every agency that provides or purchases transit service be represented at these meetings. Also, any agency that intends to pursue a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 - Elderly and Disabled Program, Section 5311 - Nonurbanized Program, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, or Section 5317 - New Freedom Program grant must participate in the report development. The 2019 plan is posted at (<https://www.warc.info/mpo-documents/>).

The plan, report, and transit committee are cooperative efforts between the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO). The MPO and RPO staff will prepare the report with the assistance of the West Alabama Transit Committee. The meeting is open to the public. Anyone requiring special assistance should contact the WARC at least 48 hours before the day of the meeting. For special assistance, call the WARC at 333-2990:



LAMAR COUNTY SCHOOLS LUNCH MENU JANUARY 11th thru JANUARY 15th

All students will receive FREE BREAKFAST and LUNCHES

MONDAY, JANUARY 11th
Chicken Tenders, Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy, Green Beans, Roll, Applesauce Cup

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12th
Taco, Garden Salad, Refried Beans, Corn, Orange

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13th
Pepperoni Pizza, Carrot Sticks w/Ranch, Potato Rounds, Banana

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14th
Grilled Chicken Sandwich or Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Lettuce & Tomato, Chips, Ranch Potatoes, Baked Apples

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15th
Cheeseburger, Lettuce & Tomato, Chips, Cherry Tomatoes, Chocolate Chip Muffin, Peaches

ARMED AGAINST

Reappor Is

As we close the book on 2020, we will close the door on national politics and get back to the basics, good old Alabama politics. That's my game. It is what I know and like to write and talk about. Some say my prognostications and observations on Alabama politics are sometimes accurate. However, not so much so on the national level.

About a decade ago there was an open presidential race and a spirited Republican battle for the nomination had begun. One of the entrants stood out to me. U.S. Senator Fred Thompson from Tennessee looked like the real thing to me. Tall, tough, articulate, a movie star, player in the Watergate hearings. He looked like a president. He had a deep voice and gravitas and he had done a job as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee. He had even been born in Alabama.

So I wrote a glowing column about him. He looked like presidential timber. I had a limb and boldly predicted that he would go on to win the presidency. My prediction was so pronounced that soon after it was printed it was picked up by him and his wife called me from Nashville. He thanked me for my comments. He said he had dropped out of the race for my presidential prognostication.

The Governor and Legislature had a myriad of issues to tackle as the new year began. A good many issues have to be addressed in the upcoming regular session, in less than a month. The major problem is the fact that the U.S.

We have a tendency to be negative, especially when things don't go our way. The chorus of an old hymn that I love goes like this: "Count your blessings name them one by one - Count your blessings see what God has done."

If we spent as much time counting our blessings as we do our curses, we would all be better off. Since we are in the first week of a new year, it is a good time to reflect. It is an understatement that 2020 was challenging, but it encourages us to count our blessings.

First, I am thankful for the