HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTHEAST ALABAMA REGION

2020-2023

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

REGION 7

Serving the counties of:

Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry & Houston

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

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September 25, 2020

Mr. Randy Stroup, Assistant Bureau Chief, Transit
Local Transportation Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36110

Dear Mr. Stroup:

Enclosed you will find one (1) hard copy and two (2) digital copies of the *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan of the Southeast Alabama Region 2020-2023* that replaces the 2017 Revision of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. The Plan has been developed under the terms of the Agreement between the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

The coordinated transportation planning process utilized in the formation of this Plan served to convene stakeholders within the Region, collect data to identify unmet transportation needs, and develop potential solutions to those unmet needs. SEARP&DC will continue to monitor and assist coordinated transportation planning efforts in implementation of this Plan.

Questions or comments regarding this Plan should be directed to Mr. Andrew Windham at (334) 794-4093 or awindham@searpdc.org.

Sincerely,

Kenneth S. Farmer, Executive Director

Enclosures

Prepared by the

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

In cooperation with the

Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)

and the

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

September 2020

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Abstract:

This document is the *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Southeast Alabama Region 2020-2023*, which updates the product that the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) most recently published in September 2015.

The *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Southeast Alabama Region 2020-2023* is developed in accordance with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, as well as former transportation bills, including the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU) and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) federal transportation reauthorizations. Each of these acts require that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310), the Job Access and Reverse Commute program (Section 5316), and the New Freedom program (Section 5317) be ''derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan'' and that the plan be ''developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.'' The requirement for coordinated transportation planning was retained as part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

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Chapter 1 – Plan Introduction

Although the FAST, MAP-21 and SAFETEA-LU federal transportation authorization bills do not define "Coordinated Plan", the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has previously defined a "Coordinated Plan" as a plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting these local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Furthermore, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) proposes that the key elements of a Coordinated Plan include the following:

- An assessment of available services provided by existing transportation providers;
- An assessment of unmet transportation needs and gaps in service for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, based on experiences and perceptions of stakeholders or other data collection efforts;
- Developing strategies, activities, or other projects to address the unmet needs, and to improve efficiencies within the system; and
- Prioritization of strategies based on resources, time, and feasibility.

The purpose of the coordinated transportation planning process includes the following goals:

- Provide a mechanism and framework for coordinated planning on a regional level;
- Incorporate successful planning lessons from groups such as United We Ride;
- Utilize regional stakeholders to develop and assess data pertaining to transportation needs and strategies;
- Utilize data related to common origins, common destinations, existing transportation services, and distribution of target populations;
- Identify those unmet needs, gaps in service, and duplications of service; and
- Develop and prioritize transportation strategies to overcome those unmet needs.

The Plan's primary focus pertains to the needs of the target populations that are more susceptible to transportation challenges. However, the goals for coordinated transportation planning will also benefit the general public, which are also important clientele for public transportation providers and stake the importance of public transportation as a necessary service to the region.

The *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Southeast Alabama Region 2020-2023* is the most recent coordinated transportation planning process, which is in coordination with the ALDOT and the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC). This Plan updates the previous iterations of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

In Chapter 2, the Plan examines the need for transportation coordination and background into programs that serve the target populations under the purview of the planning process. Information about existing transportation providers and the programs and service areas administered are included.

Chapter 3 of the Plan provides a regional assessment that examines common origins of target populations and common destinations that are a necessity for needed medical or educational services, employment opportunities, and quality of life resources.

Within Chapter 4, the Plan explores transportation needs and gaps in services that the target populations rely to convey them to the needed services. As demonstrated, there are multiple gaps and fragmented services within the Region that render impediments that negatively impact lives throughout.

Chapter 5 provides strategies and recommendations to counteract the unmet needs and gaps in service that are pervasive across the Region. The Plan does work to promote the current partnerships and practices that are already in place to solve for the assortment of transportation challenges present.

The Plan facilitators solicited the input of known regional stakeholders, including local governments, transportation providers, senior resource facilities, and social service agencies. In some cases, umbrella agencies provided representation for agencies with limited personnel and resources to fully participate in the coordinated planning process. Through meeting attendance, survey distribution and response, and telephone and in-person communication, the facilitators received valuable information from several sources. However, the state of transportation and providers within the Region is fluid and there will be providers and resources that vacillate. Due to these realities, this Plan and its findings include all providers of transportation services within the Region that actively identify themselves, presently and in the future, whether they have directly participated in the coordinated transportation planning process or not. It also applies to all consumers of transportation services. There will be no attempt to limit or curtail services or access to resources, or the ability to coordinate or collaborate, by any transportation provider or consumer of transportation services merely because they are not specifically included by name in this plan. Ultimately, any transportation service that is proposed or any grant that is requested must address one of the broad areas of unmet needs and how their program fits in the recommended strategies as addressed the Plan to be a participating agent in this process.

Chapter 2 – Program Overview and Funding Sources

Section 2.1 – Overview

The *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Southeast Alabama Region 2020-2023* reviews and transmits information regarding existing transportation resources and unmet needs for what is traditionally considered challenged transportation groups, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons of low income. The Plan specifically focuses on identifying the common origins, common destinations, and existing transportation resources within the region and interpreting the data to assess unmet transportation needs. The Plan utilizes the unmet needs information and develops goals and strategies to advance potential transportation alternatives and coordination of transportation services to meet those needs.

2.1.1. Need for Coordination

The ability to be mobile and utilize transportation is a vital need for individuals, in order to connect with other people, to reach jobs, education, commerce, and recreation, and for many other needs. The primary mode of transportation within Southeast Alabama is use of a private vehicle. However, there are substantial portions of the population that are unable to drive a car, due to certain challenges. Within the Southeast Alabama region, there is a range of transportation options, including public demand-response transit, specialized elderly bus or van programs, and private taxi or charter services. Though these resources exist and provide services to areas within the region, many of these operations are underutilized and can be inefficient. Also, there are many areas that individuals are unable to access those services, due to geography, fiscal circumstances, or disability. The limitations in the current system provide a barrier for multiple elements of the population to access essential services.

In this era of increasingly limited public funding, increased efficiencies and partnerships are very important to expand transportation options to the citizenry. Increased mobility for individuals may improve local economic conditions by providing increased options for working hours if the transportation is available and quality of life by growing connections to social and health networks. More efficient transportation services may decrease operational costs by hours or miles traveled. Overall, improving the coordination of transportation resources can achieve increased resource utilization with decreased duplication of services in order to improve the quality of transportation services within the Southeast Alabama region.

2.1.2. Coordinated Planning Requirements

A requirement for coordinated transportation planning was inserted into the Federal Transit Law by the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) federal transportation reauthorization in 2005 with the statement that projects funded through Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs "be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" that is "developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers and participation by members of the public".

Coordination planning is defined as identifying transportation needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons of low income. A coordinated transportation plan should develop goals and strategies for bridging the gaps within the transportation system for those traditionally challenged transportation groups and develop implementation priorities. Guidance for developing a coordinated transportation plan includes the following elements:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

The requirement for coordinated transportation planning was retained as part of the most recent transportation authorization bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. FAST and MAP-21 also state that providers of public transportation should enhance the coordination of federal resources for human services transportation and retained most of the coordinated transportation provisions instituted under SAFTEA-LU.

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

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

This plan bridges the gap between SAFETEA-LU, which initiated the coordinated planning requirements for transit, and MAP-21, under which the State of Alabama still retains funds to be expended, and the FAST Act. Both MAP-21 and FAST Act will fund public transit agencies (including job access activities) under Section 5307 and Section 5311 as well as projects for the elderly and disabled under Section 5310.

2.1.3. Coordination Efforts to Date

A *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Southeast Alabama Region* was originally published in January 2007 to fulfill the SAFETEA-LU requirements and agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The plan was further revised and updated under agreement with the ALDOT in 2008, 2011, 2012, 2015 and September 2017. Concurrently, the other 11 regional councils in Alabama have also developed coordinated transportation plans through agreement and guidance with the ALDOT.

The 2020-2023 version of the Plan will serve to replace the previous versions, though still utilizing some of the previous efforts and findings from the prior coordinated transportation planning process, as many stakeholders involved in previous versions of the Plan participated in the current planning process.

The guiding methodology for coordinated transportation planning remains the United We Ride's *Framework for Action* and further resources from the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). Input has been gathered from multiple sources. Outreach has been sought through traditional means of multiple meetings in each regional county and through solicitation of information by surveys through social media and direct contact.

Section 2.2 – Federal Transit Programs

Certain programs authorized by the recent transportation authorization bills, SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21, and FAST must certify that projects selected for funding are derived from and included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan.

SAFETEA-LU reauthorized the Section 5310 (Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities) program, while authorizing two new funding sources: Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute – JARC) for transportation services to help low-income individuals and welfare recipients travel to a job or job-related service, and Section 5317 (New Freedom) for transportation services and transportation alternatives for persons with disabilities beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

FAST and MAP-21 reauthorized the Section 5310 program, with a name change (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities), as well as consolidated it with the former Section 5317 (New Freedom) program to increase the program's scope. The former Section 5316 (JARC) program was absorbed as eligible activities within the Section 5307 Urbanized Area program and Section 5311 Rural program. Additional information about these programs and other federal programs providing public transportation in the Southeast Alabama region is provided below.

Both MAP-21 and FAST Act will fund public transit agencies (including job access activities) under Section 5307 and Section 5311 as well as projects for the elderly and disabled under Section 5310.

2.2.1. Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program, commonly known as Section 5310, provides funding for projects that increase the mobility of senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Under SAFETEA-LU, Section 5310 funds are limited to capital expenses to not exceed 80% of activity cost with 20% local match, which in Southeast Alabama have traditionally been busses and vans for senior centers and other non-profit agencies that provide support to populations with senior citizens and disabilities.

Under MAP-21, the previously authorized Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities program and the former Section 5317 (New Freedom) program has been consolidated. At least 55% of available funding must be set aside for "traditional" 5310 capital projects, such as vehicles, other equipment, mobility management, and purchase of service projects. In addition to the required capital projects, up to 45% of funds may be used for other eligible projects, including operational expenses and projects that were formerly eligible under Section 5317 (New Freedom). These projects may include additional public transportation projects that exceed the ADA minimum requirements, improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA-complementary paratransit service, and provide alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

There are three categories of eligible sub-recipients of Section 5310 funds: a) state or local governmental authorities; b) private non-profit organizations; and c) operators of public transportation services. If applying for "traditional" capital projects, state or local government authorities must certify that there are no nonprofit organizations readily available in the area to provide that service.

Section 5310 funds will pay up to 80% of capital costs and up to 50% of operating costs. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) manages the Section 5310 program for the entire Southeast Alabama region (active providers displayed in Figure 2.1), as there are no urbanized areas with a population of over 200,000 in the region. Current vehicles funded by Section 5310 (and former Section 5309) are shown in Table 2.1 below. These vehicles are primarily limited to the users of services provided by these operating agencies.

Table 2.1: Vehicles for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (as of September 2017)

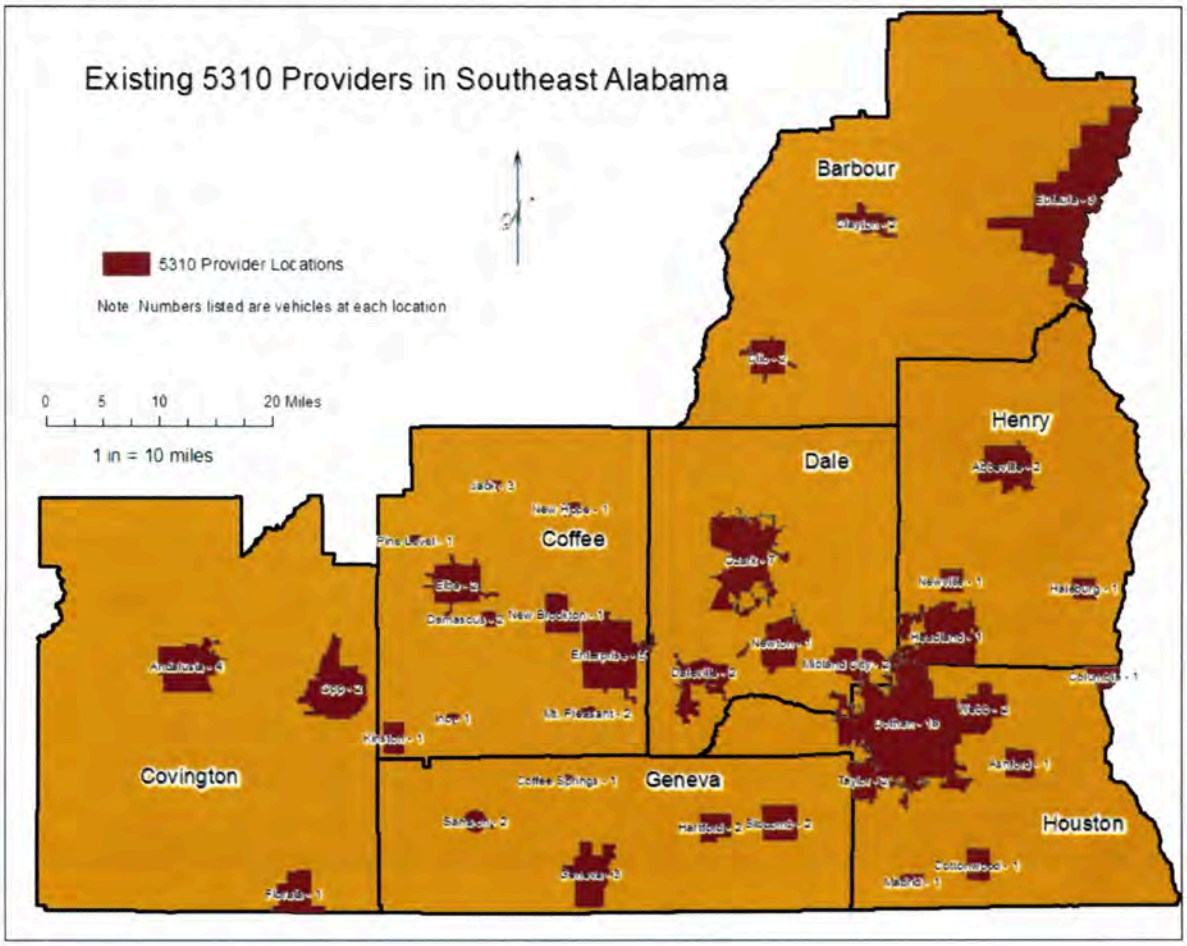
COUNTY	AGENCY	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Barbour	Eufaula Senior Center (Jaxon Life Center) 530 Lake Drive Eufaula, AL 36027	3
Barbour	Clio Senior Citizens, Inc. 21 College Street Clio, AL 36017	2
Barbour	Clayton Senior Citizens, Inc. 51 North Midway Street Clayton, AL 36016	2
Coffee	Health Care Authority of the City of Enterprise 300 Plaza Drive Enterprise, AL 36330	2
Coffee	Mt. Pleasant Senior Citizen Center 388 County Road 650 Enterprise, AL 36330	2
Coffee	New Hope Senior Center, Inc. 2142 County Road 124 Brundidge, AL 36010	1
Coffee	Ino Senior Center 6264 Hwy 134 Kinston, AL 36453	1
Coffee	Damascus Senior Citizen Center 129 County Road 514 Elba, AL 36323	2
Coffee	Enterprise Senior Citizen Center 2401 Neil Metcalf Road Enterprise, AL 36330	3
Coffee	New Brockton Senior Center 103 Vester Cole Street New Brockton, AL 36351	1
Coffee	Elba Senior Center 304 Factory Street Elba, AL 36323	2
Coffee	Pine Level Senior Center 63 County Road 355 Elba, AL 36323	1

COUNTY	AGENCY	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Coffee	Zion Chapel Senior Center 28742 Hwy 87 Jack, AL 36346	3
Covington	City of Andalusia 420 Church Street Andalusia, AL 36420	2
Covington	Florala Community Transportation Services 1338 4th Street Florala, AL 36442	1
Covington	South Central Alabama Mental Health Board, Inc. 19815 Bay Branch Road Andalusia, AL 36420	2
Covington	City of Opp 500 Brantley Street Opp, AL 36467	2
Dale	Daleville Senior Center 18 Old Newton Road Daleville, AL 36322	2
Dale	Dale County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) 830 South Union Avenue Ozark, AL 36360	3
Dale	Ozark / Dale County Senior Center 502 Carroll Avenue Ozark, AL 36360	3
Dale	Midland City Senior Center 1338 Hinton Waters Avenue Midland City, AL 36350	2
Dale	Newton Senior Center 25 East King Street Newton, AL 36352	1
Dale	Mental Retardation Board of Dale County 2047 Stuart Tarter Road Ozark, AL 36360	1
Geneva	Coffee Springs Senior Citizens Center 195 Spring Street Coffee Springs, AL 36318	1

COUNTY	AGENCY	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Geneva	Hartford Senior Center 301 South 3rd Avenue Hartford, AL 36344	2
Geneva	Geneva Senior Center 105 North Washington Street Geneva, AL 36340	2
Geneva	Samson Senior Center 33 East Sellers Street Samson, AL 36477	2
Geneva	Slocomb Senior Center 134 West Bateman Street Slocomb, AL 36375	2
Geneva	Wiregrass Medical Center aka Geneva Co. Health Care Authority 1200 West Maple Avenue Geneva, AL 36340	1
Henry	Headland Senior Center Burdeshaw-Solomon Center 107 Boynton Street Headland, AL 36345	1
Henry	Haleburg Senior Center 10347 George Grimsley Hwy. Columbia, AL 36319	1
Henry	Abbeville Senior Center 215 East Washington Street Abbeville, AL 36310	2
Henry	Newville Senior Center 481 Bowden Street Newville, AL 36353	1
Houston	Dorothy Quick Senior Center 1107 North Pontiac Ave. Dothan, AL 36303	1
Houston	Columbia Senior Center 301 South Main Street Columbia, AL 36319	1
Houston	Town of Madrid 764 Decatur Road Cottonwood, AL 36320	1

COUNTY	AGENCY	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Houston	Webb Senior Center 4095 Enon Road Webb, AL 36376	2
Houston	Ashford Senior Center 409 County Road 33 North Ashford, AL 36312	1
Houston	Wiregrass Adult Care, Inc. 795 Ross Clark Circle, Suite 1 Dothan, AL 36303	8
Houston	Dothan-Houston County Intellectual Disabilities Board 2715 Flynn Rd. Dothan, AL 36303	10
Houston	ABRC Hutto Towers, Inc. Baptist Village 4426 West Main Street Dothan, AL 36305	1
Houston	Taylor Senior Center 1457 South State Highway 605 Taylor, AL 36301	2
Houston	Cottonwood Senior Center 1336 Metcalf Street Cottonwood, AL 36320	1
Houston	Wesley Manor Retirement Center 718 Honeysuckle Road Dothan, AL 36305	1
Houston	City of Dothan Dept. of Leisure Services P.O. Box 2128 Dothan, AL 36302	5
Houston	Elderly and Disabled Transit 2932 Ross Clark Circle, #307 Dothan, AL 36301	1

Figure 2.1: Vehicle Locations in Southeast Alabama



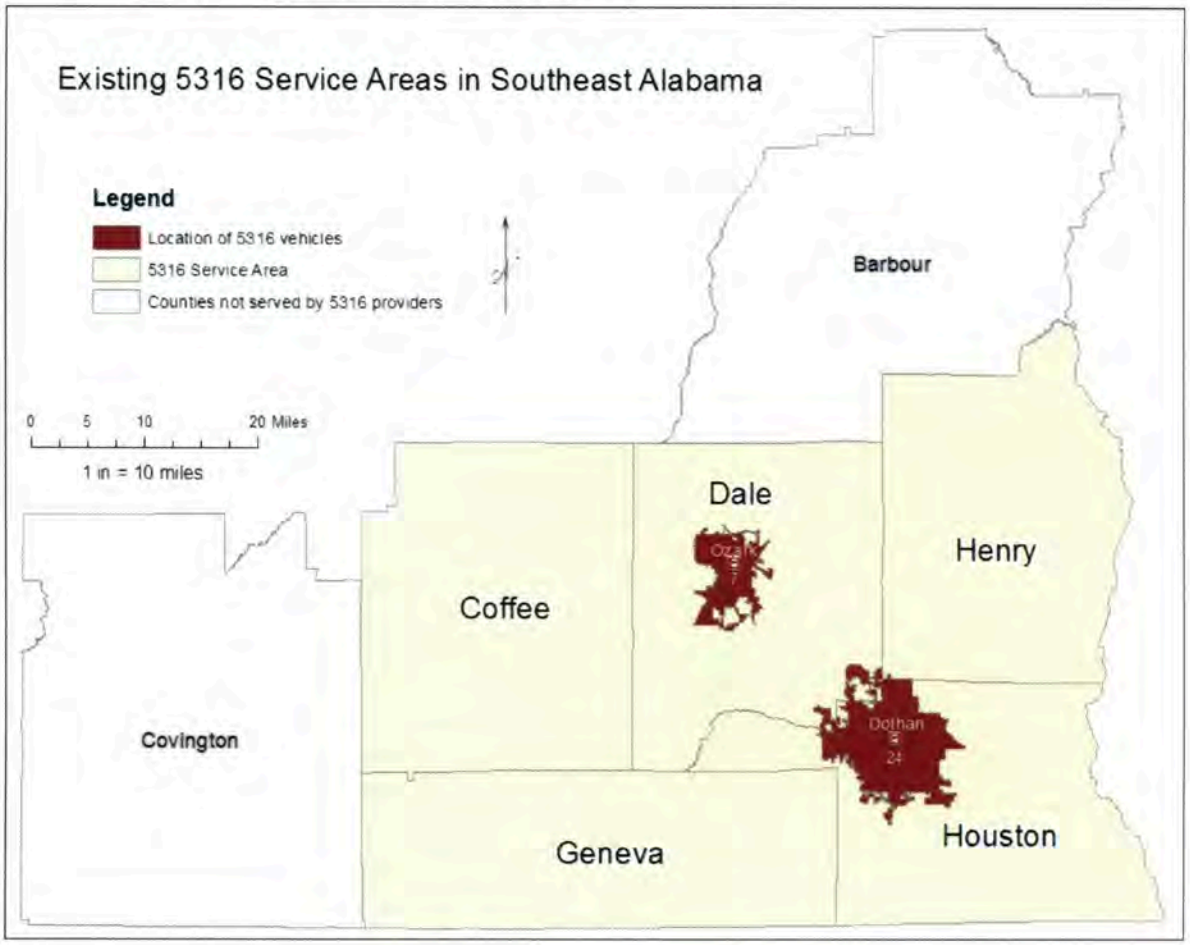
2.2.2. Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316 under SAFETEA-LU / Eligible Activity under Sections 5307 and 5311 under MAP-21 and FAST)

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was authorized as Section 5316 under SAFETEA-LU and established to address transportation challenges for economically disadvantaged citizens who are employed, or seeking employment. Under SAFETEA-LU, Section 5316 funds are eligible for both capital and operating expenses. Federal funding for capital expenses is not to exceed 80% of activity cost with 20% local match, while federal funding for operating costs may not exceed 50% of activity cost with 50% local match. Examples of eligible projects include providing transportations services at night or on weekends when regular public transportation services are not available, demand response van programs, purchase of vehicles, and mobility management.

MAP-21 consolidated JARC program activities into the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula program and the Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program. FAST Act continued the MAP-21 guidelines of the JARC program. Active JARC projects are displayed in Figure 2.2.

Within the Southeast Alabama region, the Wiregrass Transit Authority has utilized operating funds to provide employment and employment related transportation services to Temporary Assistance and Needy Families in Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties and has coordinated and provided employment and employment-related services to social service providers in Dale, and Houston counties, as well as mobility management in Houston County.

Figure 2.2: JARC Locations in Southeast Alabama



2.2.3. New Freedom (Section 5317 under SAFETEA-LU / Eligible Activity under Section 5310 under MAP-21 and FAST)

The New Freedom program was authorized as Section 5317 under SAFETEA-LU and established to support public transportation services and transportation alternatives for persons with disabilities beyond those required by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The intent of the New Freedoms program is to integrate persons with disabilities more fully into the community and workforce through bridging the gaps in public transportation. Under SAFETEA-LU, Section 5317 funds are eligible for both capital and operating expenses. Federal funding for capital expenses is not to exceed 80% of activity cost with 20% local match, while federal funding for operating costs may not exceed 50% of activity cost with 50% local match. Examples of eligible projects include providing paratransit services beyond ADA requirements,

vehicle purchasing to support ride sharing or vanpooling programs, supporting voucher programs within human service provider services, and mobility management.

MAP-21 consolidated New Freedom program activities into the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program. This program continues to be consolidated into the Section 5310 program under the FAST Act.

Within the Southeast Alabama region, services provided through this program have not been offered.

2.2.4. Urbanized Area Formula Grant (Section 5307)

The Urbanized Area Formula Grant program provides grants to Urbanized Areas, which are designated areas with population greater than 50,000 as determined by the decennial census. The Section 5307 program provides funding for capital projects, planning, job access and reverse commute projects, operating costs, and transportation security projects. Federal funding for capital expenses is not to exceed 80% of activity cost with 20% local match, while federal funding for operating costs may not exceed 50% of activity cost with 50% local match.

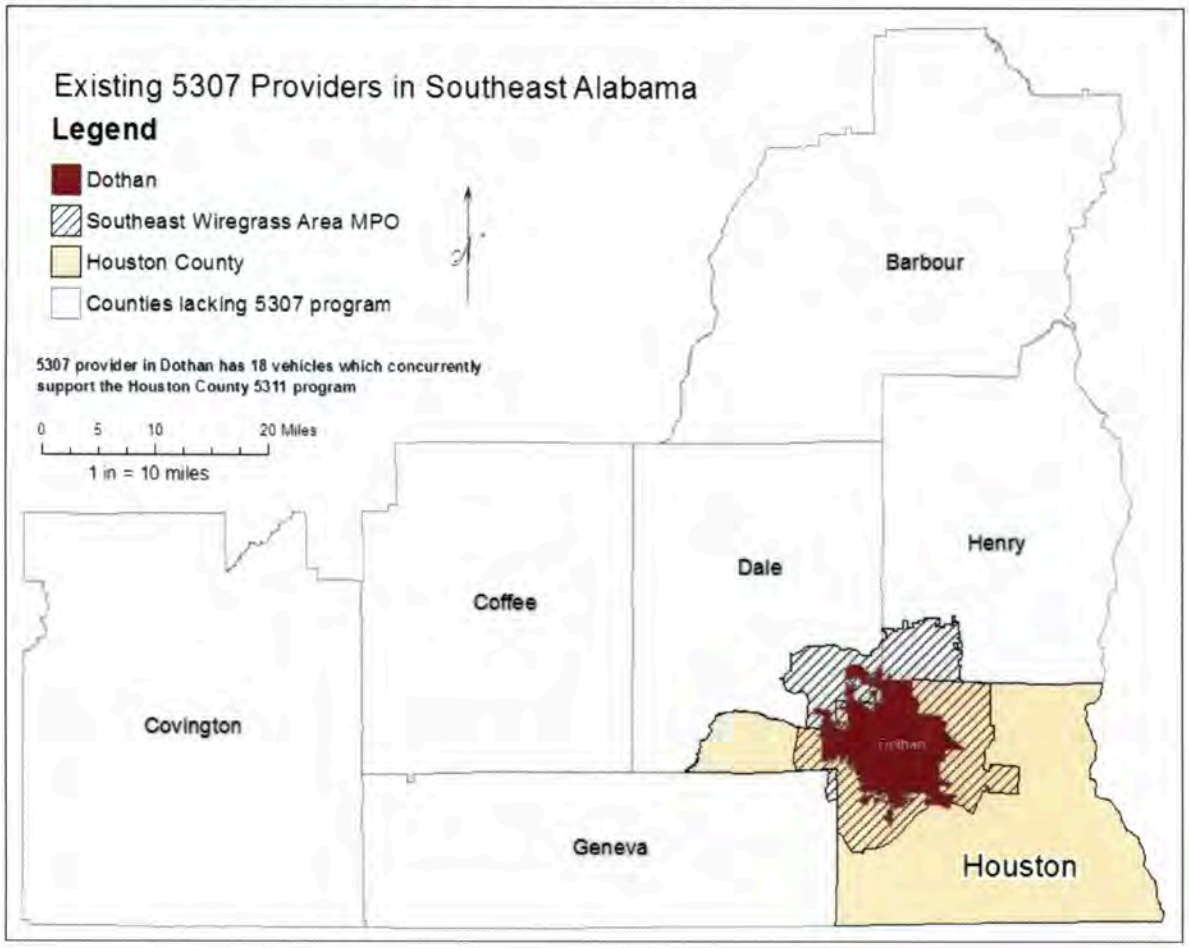
MAP-21 provided a few changes to the Section 5307 program from its SAFETEA-LU authorization. As mentioned above, the primary change affecting transportation opportunities through the Section 5307 program is that job access and reverse commute (JARC) projects are eligible activities for providing transportation services for low-income workers and welfare recipients for jobs and employment opportunities. JARC continues to be consolidated into the Section 5307 program under the FAST Act.

The ALDOT provides Section 5307 funding to Small Urbanized Areas (designated areas with population between 50,000 and 199,999) in Alabama, including the City of Dothan in the Southeast Alabama region (Table 2.2). Section 5307 funding in the Dothan urbanized area is utilized by the Wiregrass Transit Authority (Figure 2.3). Areas with population 200,000 and greater receive Section 5307 funding directly from the FTA.

Table 2.2: Section 5307 Systems in Southeast Alabama Region

NAME	SERVICE AREA	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Wiregrass Transit Authority	Dothan Urbanized Area	20

Figure 2.3: Existing Urbanized Area Formula Grant Areas



2.2.5. Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311)

The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides grants to areas not designed as Urbanized Areas by the decennial census, which are rural counties and municipalities with a population less than 50,000. The Section 5311 program provides funding for capital projects, planning, job access and reverse commute projects, operating costs, and acquisition of public transportation services. Federal funding for capital expenses is not to exceed 80% of activity cost with 20% local match, while federal funding for operating costs may not exceed 50% of activity cost with 50% local match.

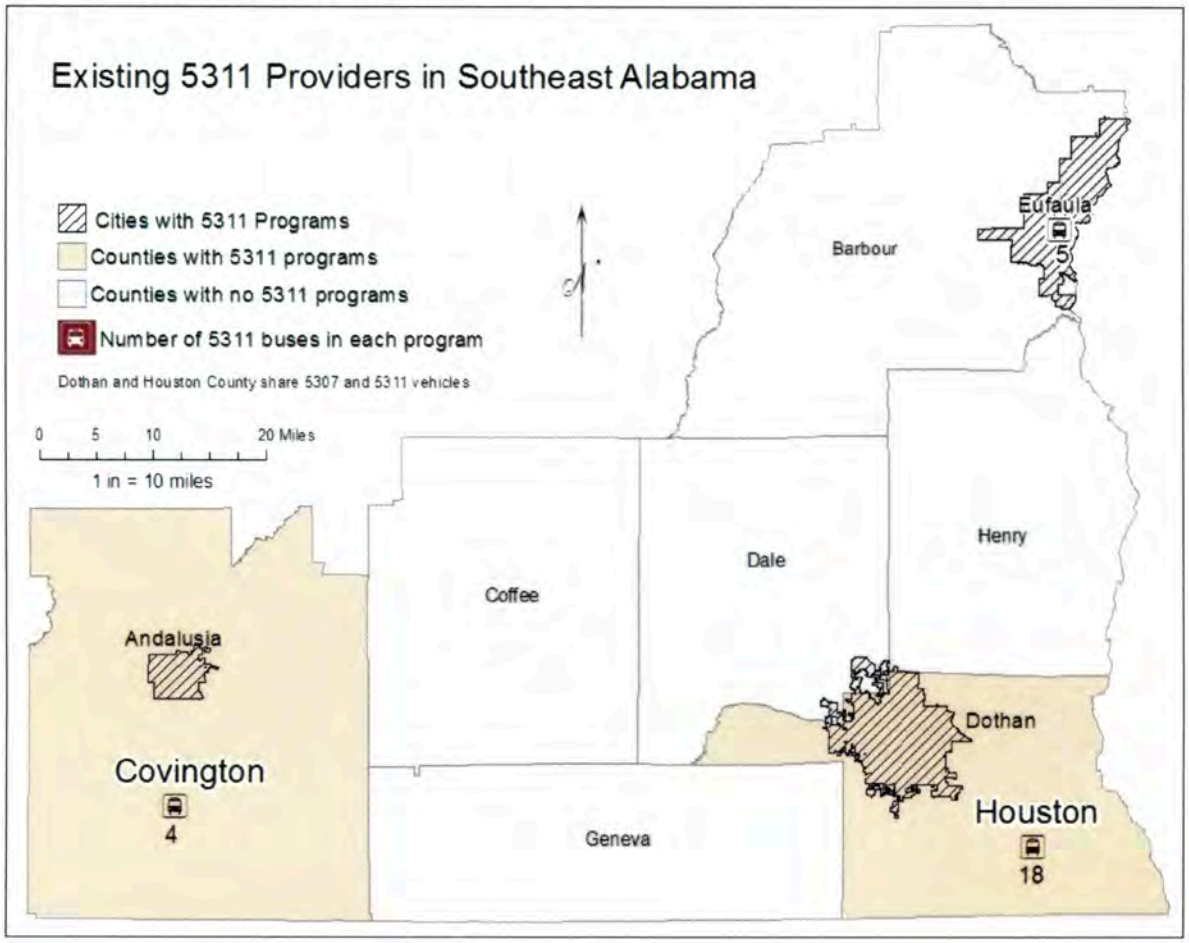
Changes in the MAP-21 authorization for Section 5311 include the eligibility of job access and reverse commute (JARC) projects for low-income workers and welfare recipients for jobs and employment opportunities. JARC continues to be consolidated into the Section 5307 program under the FAST Act. A segment of funding apportionment now includes population of low-income individuals. Planning activities are now eligible for Section 5311 programs. Also, the cost of an unsubsidized portion of privately provided intercity bus services may be eligible as an in-kind local match.

The ALDOT provides Section 5311 funding to rural areas in Alabama, including the City of Eufaula in Barbour County, Covington County, and Houston County (Table 2.3 and Figure 2.4).

Table 2.3: Section 5311 Systems in Southeast Alabama Region

NAME	SERVICE AREA	NUMBER OF VEHICLES
Covington Area Transit System	Covington County	4
Eufaula Barbour Transit Authority	City of Eufaula	5
Wiregrass Transit Authority	Houston County	20

Figure 2.4: Existing Formula Grants for Rural Areas



2.2.6. Other Transportation Providers or Assistance

Besides the transportation resources previously listed that are assisted by federal transit programs, there are several other types of transportation providers in the Southeast Alabama region. This is not necessarily an exclusive list, as certain providers may change regulations or commence/suspend operations.

- Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) Program: Medicaid NET assists in payment for transportation to and from non-emergency medical care that may utilize multiple forms of public or private transportation throughout the region. Users must be covered by Medicaid and the ride must be scheduled at least five days prior to need and approved ahead of time. For the Southeast Alabama region, the NET Program Coordinator is located in Dothan.

- AIDS Alabama: AIDS Alabama provides assistance to HIV-positive and low-income residents of Alabama for medical appointments transportation.

- American Cancer Society Road to Recovery Program: The American Cancer Society provides limited assistance to patients that are receiving cancer treatment. Several days advance notice is required to access the program.

- Alabama Kidney Foundation: The Alabama Kidney Foundation has statewide programs to provide transportation assistance through purchase of service to dialysis patients.

- Call-A-Cab: Taxi service with locations in Dothan and Level Plains, serving Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston Counties with potential trips out of service area.

- Christian Mission Centers: Agency located in Enterprise serving Coffee and Geneva counties within the region that provides limited bus vouchers or gasoline vouchers for individuals and families for emergency assistance.

- Dale County Rescue Mission: Agency located in Ozark that may provide very limited bus fare.

- Disabled American Veterans: Local chapters of Disabled American Veterans may provide medical appointment transportation for veterans.

- Dothan Ambulance Service: Dothan Ambulance (also known as Pilcher's Ambulance) provides non-emergency wheelchair transport for mostly medical-related destinations.

- Dothan Cab Company: Taxi service located in Dothan.

- Dothan Rescue Mission: Agency located in Dothan that provides limited bus tickets for a verified emergency situation outside of the region.

- Dothan Transport: Taxi service located in Dothan, with service in Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston counties, with potential trips out of service area.

- Good Samaritan Helping Hands: Agency located in Enterprise that may provide limited transportation assistance.

- Greyhound Bus Line: Greyhound has national fixed routes with one terminal in the Southeast Alabama region, located in Dothan.

- Medical Transport of Alabama (MTA): MTA is a private medical transportation company that provides medical related transportation throughout the state of Alabama with a fleet of 50+ vehicles and 50+ operators. MTA has a base in Ozark.

- Meredith's Miracles: Meredith's Miracles is a non-profit organization located in Andalusia that provides non-medical related financial support, which may include transportation, to out-of-area specialty care for families with sick and injured children.

- Quick Service Cab: Taxi service located in Ozark.

- R&A Transportation Service: Taxi service located in Abbeville.

- Southeast Safe Taxi: Taxi service located in Dothan.

- Southern Coaches: Southern Coaches is a charter bus service located in Dothan.

- Tri-State Taxi: Taxi service located in Dothan.

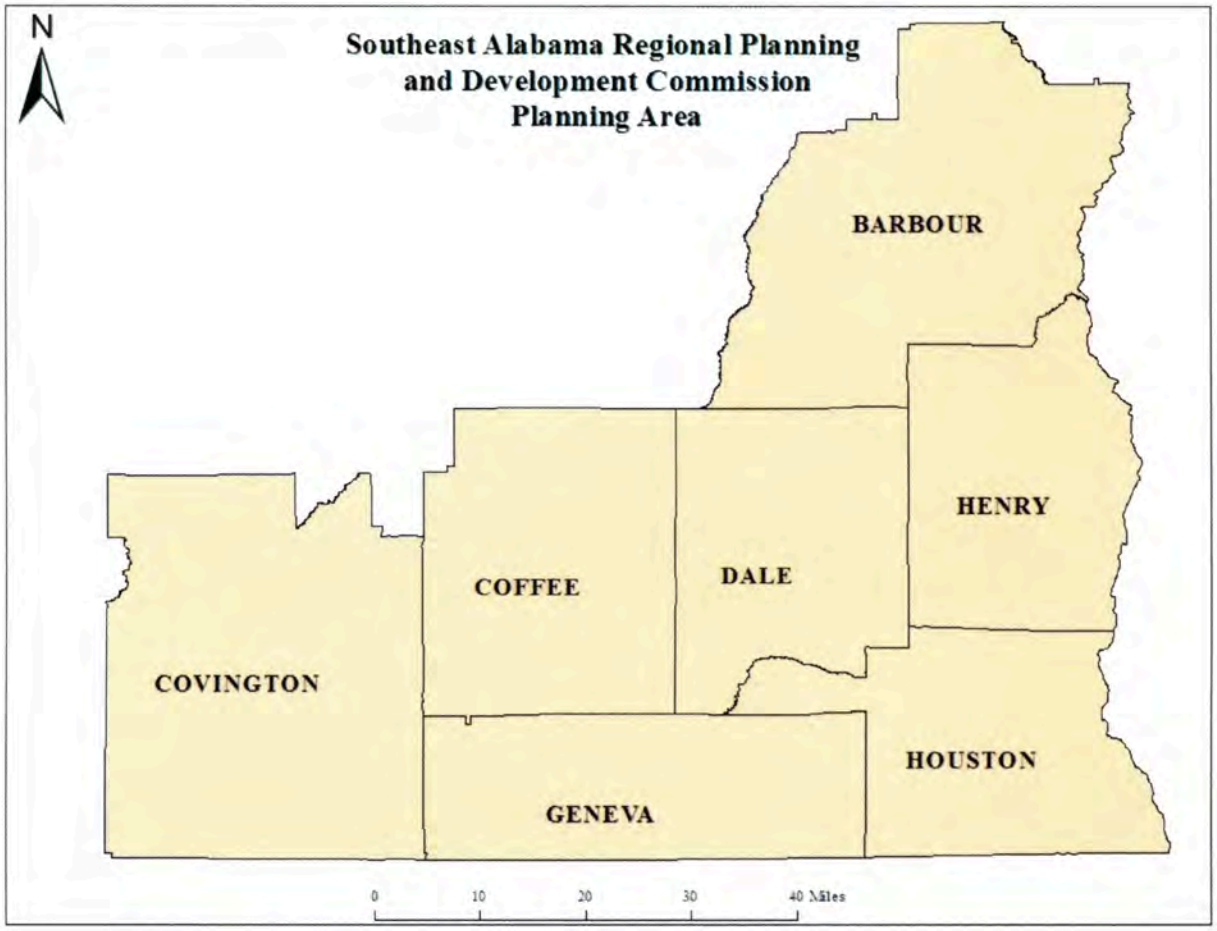
- Wiregrass Safe Taxi: Taxi service located in Dothan.

Chapter 3 - Regional Profile

Section 3.1 – Planning Area

The planning area encompasses the planning region of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC), one of the twelve regional councils within the state. SEARP&DC is located in southeastern Alabama (Figure 3.1) and is comprised of the following seven counties: Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston, and 57 municipalities within those counties.

Figure 3.1: SEARP&DC Planning Area



The total land area of the region is 4,871 square miles, which is slightly less than ten percent (10%) of the state's area, and is presented by county below (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Total Land Area by County

County	Total Area
Barbour County	885 square miles
Coffee County	679 square miles
Covington County	1,030 square miles
Dale County	561 square miles
Geneva County	574 square miles
Henry County	562 square miles
Houston County	580 square miles

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The SEARP&DC planning area has one Urbanized Area, the Dothan, AL Urbanized Area, which is comprised from portions of Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston counties. The Southeast Wiregrass Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) administers transportation planning services for this area.

Section 3.2 - Regional Population Trends

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, the SEARP&DC's planning area total population was 378,936 people, which is a .03% increase from the region's 2010 Census population of 378,812. Most of the slight growth in population occurred within and adjacent to Dothan and Enterprise. These areas also produced additional urban built developments. Houston County, in the southeastern corner of the region and state, is the most populous county (104,352), while Henry County in the eastern portion of the region is the least populous county (17,124). Population counts from the U.S. Census from 2010 and 2018 American Community Survey for each jurisdiction are below (Table 3.2). The Southeast Alabama region comprises 7.79% of the total population in Alabama.

Southeast Alabama is a primarily rural region with mostly small towns, agricultural and silvicultural uses, and the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker with other scattered military zones that comprise the planning area. The largest developed urban area in the region is Dothan with a population of over 66,000, which has been a moderately growing metropolitan area centered in northwestern Houston County. Dothan is a regional economic engine that attracts people from Southeast Alabama and surrounding areas to engage in commercial, medical, and other activities. Enterprise is the second largest city in the region with over 27,000 people, and has been a fast developing area. Bedroom communities near both Dothan and Enterprise in Coffee, Dale, Henry, and Houston counties have grown markedly over the past couple of decades. The municipalities of Ozark and Eufaula have population between 10,000 and 15,000. Municipalities in Southeast Alabama with a population between 5,000 and 10,000 include Andalusia, Daleville, and Opp.

Table 3.2: Regional Jurisdiction Population

Jurisdiction	2010 Census Population	2018 ACS Population	% Change
Barbour County	**27,457**	**25,782**	**-6.10%**
Town of Baker Hill	279	278	-0.36%
Town of Blue Springs	96	95	-1.04%
City of Clayton	3,008	2,900	-3.59%
City of Clio	1,399	1,018	-27.23%
City of Eufaula	13,137	12,289	-6.46%
Town of Louisville	519	496	-4.43%
Coffee County	**49,948**	**51,288**	**2.68%**
City of Elba	3,940	3,852	-2.23%
City of Enterprise (part)	26,139	27,415	4.88%
Town of Kinston	540	708	31.11%
Town of New Brockton	1,146	1,127	-1.66%
Covington County	**37,765**	**37,351**	**-1.10%**
City of Andalusia	9,015	8,864	-1.67%
Town of Babbie	603	557	-7.63%
Town of Carolina	297	258	-13.13%
City of Florala	1,980	1,549	-21.77%
Town of Gantt	222	128	-42.34%
Town of Heath	254	339	33.46%
Town of Horn Hill	228	262	14.91%
Town of Libertyville	117	85	-27.35%
Town of Lockhart	516	282	-45.35%
Town of Onycha	184	119	-35.33%
City of Opp	6,659	6,520	-2.09%
Town of Red Level	487	324	-33.47%
Town of River Falls	526	646	22.81%
Town of Sanford	241	189	-21.58%
Dale County	**50,251**	**49,255**	**-1.98%**
Town of Ariton	764	697	-8.77%
Town of Clayhatchee	589	513	-12.90%
City of Daleville	5,295	5,113	-3.44%
City of Dothan (part)	887	919	3.61%
City of Enterprise (part)	423	444	4.96%
Town of Grimes	558	731	31.00%
Town of Level Plains	2,085	2,478	18.85%
Town of Midland City	2,344	2,144	-8.53%
Town of Napier Field	354	418	18.08%
Town of Newton	1,511	1,722	13.96%
City of Ozark	14,907	14,456	-3.03%

Jurisdiction	2010 Census Population	2018 ACS Population	% Change
Town of Pinckard	647	458	-29.21%
Geneva County	**26,790**	**26,491**	**-1.12%**
Town of Black	207	197	-4.83%
Town of Coffee Springs	228	195	-14.47%
City of Geneva	4,452	4,379	-1.64%
City of Hartford	2,624	2,604	-0.76%
Town of Malvern	1,448	1,773	22.44%
City of Samson	1,940	2,086	7.53%
City of Slocomb	1,980	1,953	-1.36%
City of Taylor (part)	7	7	0.00%
Henry County	**17,302**	**17,124**	**-1.03%**
City of Abbeville	2,688	2,582	-3.94%
City of Dothan (part)	5	5	0.00%
Town of Haleburg	103	132	28.16%
City of Headland	4,510	4,661	3.35%
Town of Newville	539	402	-25.42%
Houston County	**101,547**	**104,352**	**2.76%**
City of Ashford	2,148	2,346	9.22%
Town of Avon	543	463	-14.73%
Town of Columbia	740	661	-10.68%
Town of Cottonwood	1,289	1,291	0.16%
Town of Cowarts	1,871	2,223	18.81%
City of Dothan (part)	64,604	66,948	3.63%
Town of Gordon	332	237	-28.61%
City of Kinsey	2,198	2,211	0.59%
Town of Madrid	350	301	-14.00%
Town of Rehobeth	1,297	1,862	43.56%
City of Taylor	2,368	2,390	0.93%
Town of Webb	1,430	1,453	1.61%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010)

Population projections from the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Alabama indicate that the planning area's population will steadily increase through 2040 (Table 3.3). Both Coffee and Houston counties are expected to continue their trend of population gains, while Covington, Dale, Geneva, and Henry counties are projected to have incremental population growth. Barbour County is projected to have a minor decrease over the period.

Table 3.3: Population Projections (by County), 2020-2040

County	2010	2018	2030	2040	Total Change (%)
Barbour	27,457	25,782	26,190	25,796	-6.0%
Coffee	49,948	51,288	62,722	68,568	37.3%
Covington	37,765	37,351	38,654	38,370	1.6%
Dale	50,251	49,255	52,860	53,932	7.3%
Geneva	26,790	26,491	28,235	28,469	6.3%
Henry	17,302	17,124	18,626	18,839	8.9%
Houston	101,547	104,352	123,492	131,211	29.2%
Region	**311,060**	**333,350**	**350,779**	**365,185**	**17.4%**

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), University of Alabama

Section 3.3 – Target Populations

Addressing the unmet transportation needs of the region must take into account certain demographic information, including population distribution and concentrations of targeted populations that are susceptible to transportation challenges, including aging adults, individuals with disabilities, and low income populations. Potential transportation coordination strategies are not necessarily uniform for the entire Southeast Alabama region, so knowledge of the distribution of key demographic elements will assist in understanding needs that are specific to certain subareas, including counties and municipalities. Utilizing 2010 Decennial Census and 2018 Five-Year American Community Survey Estimates, populations of targeted demographic groups were analyzed and mapped.

Though the estimated presence of targeted population indicators is high in many areas of the Southeast Alabama region, the existence of presumed transportation challenges does not necessarily dictate a need for transportation. While many people who are included in the displayed demographic sectors do have limitations that preclude or severely limit driving (e.g. limitations associated with aging, lack of vehicular access, mobility issues), this information should not be a blanket assumption over these areas. Also, the estimated data in rural areas may be skewed due to a small universe or levels of non-response that may not fully convey the correct attributes for a certain area. However, this data is useful to provide potential origins of transportation challenges within the Southeast Alabama region.

3.3.1. Population and Population Density

Houston County (predominantly near Dothan) has the greatest total population (Figure 3.1) and is the most densely populated area in Southeast Alabama, as demonstrated by having the five most densely populated census tracts in the region (Figure 3.2). The next most populated and densely settled area comprises portions of Coffee County near Enterprise. These two locations are the only areas with more than 900 persons per square mile, with smaller levels of higher density being noted in Ozark and Eufaula. The Southeast Alabama region is predominantly a low-density populated area. There are no census tracts in Geneva or Henry counties with at least 100 persons per square mile.

Figure 3.1: Total Population in Southeast Alabama (by Census Tract)

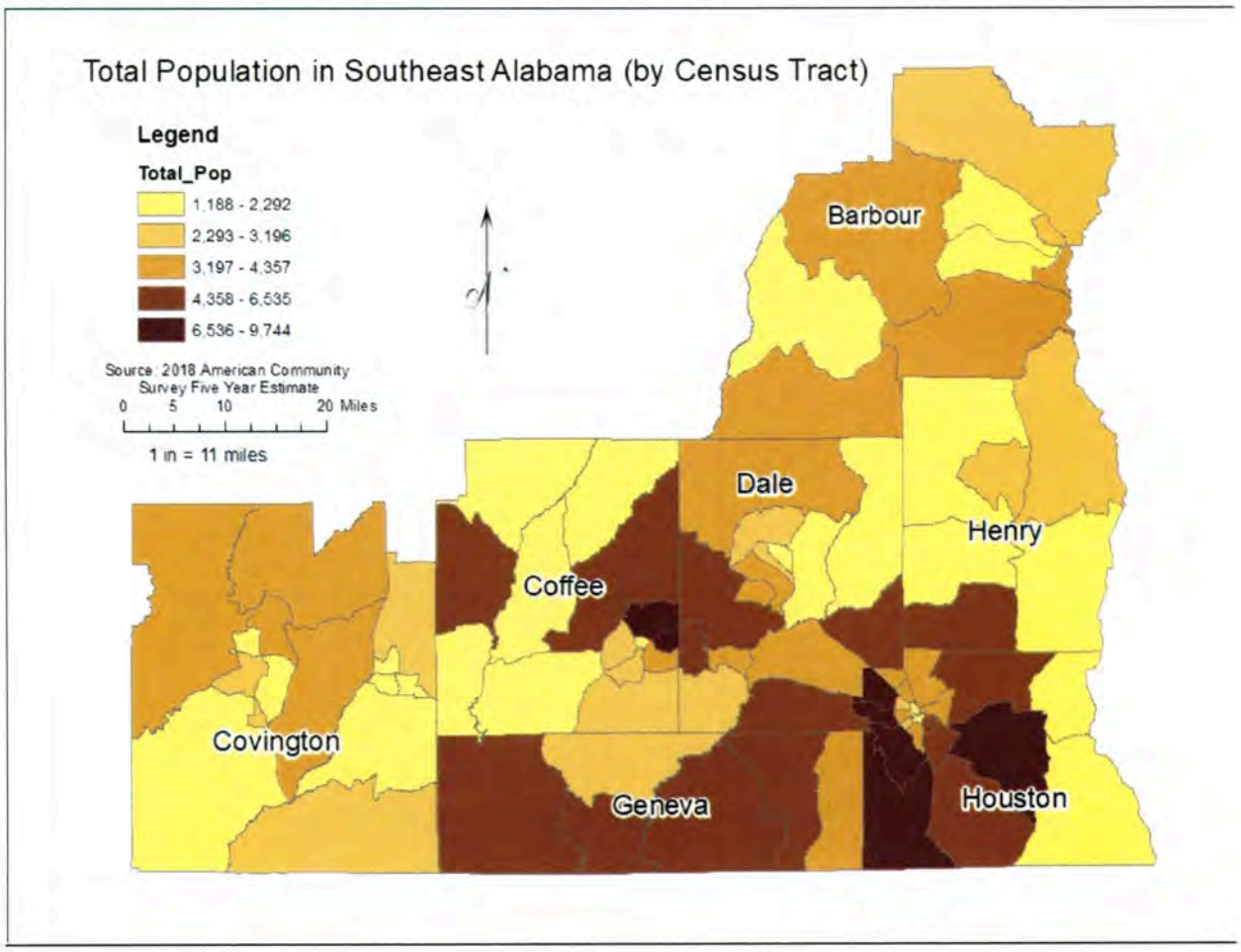
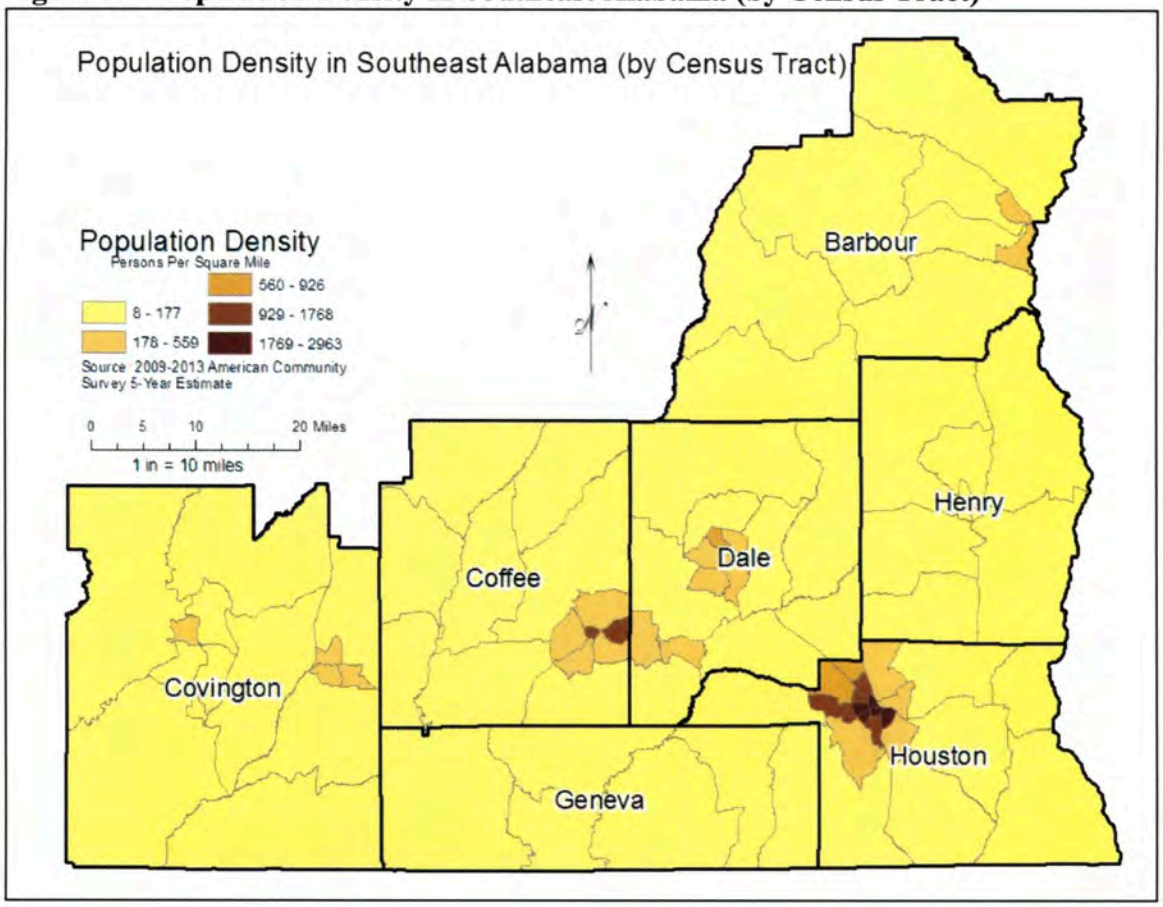


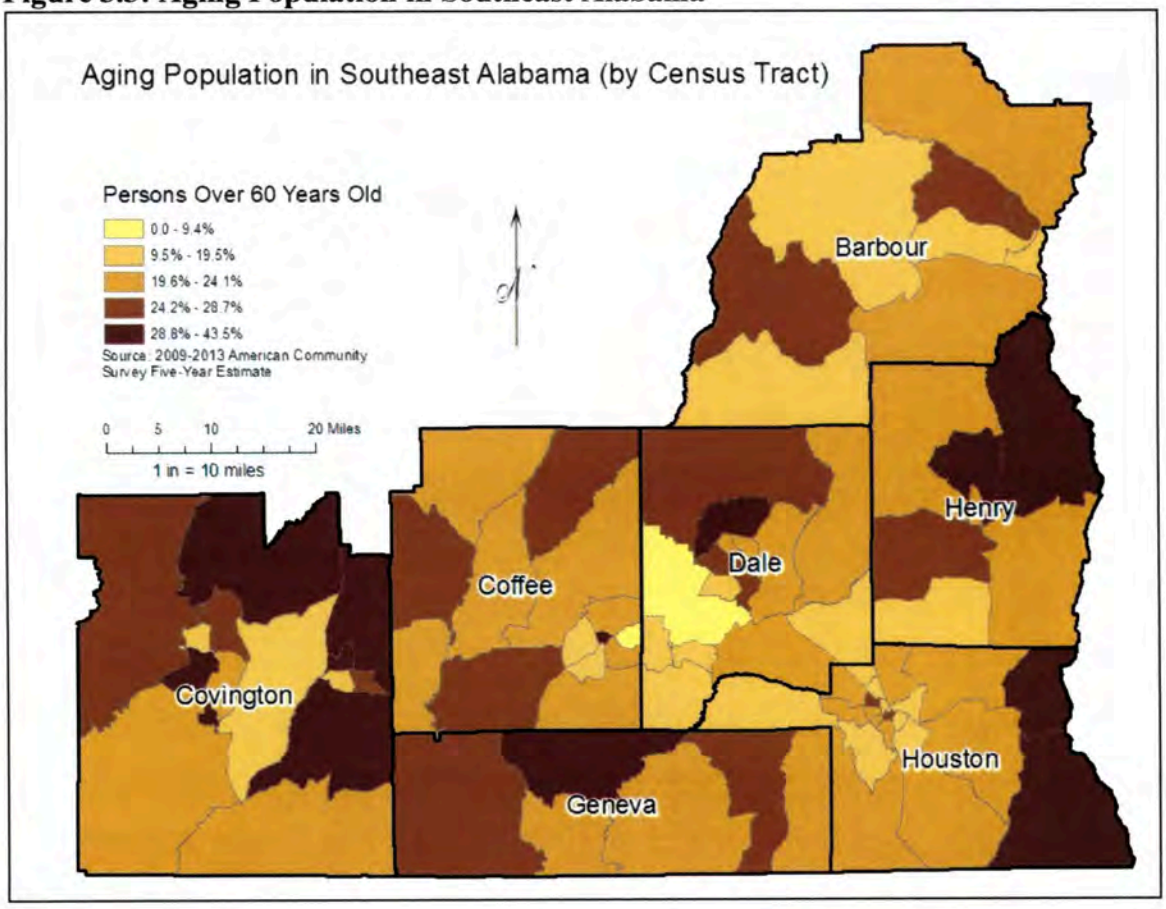
Figure 3.2: Population Density in Southeast Alabama (by Census Tract)



3.3.2. Aging Population

The aging population in Southeast Alabama, as in most other areas in the country, is becoming an increasingly higher proportion within the region. The highest levels of population over 60 years in age are over 20% of population in multiple census tracts within Covington and Henry County, including one census tract in Henry County with over 43% being over 60 (Figure 3.3). This map displays that the more urbanized areas, such as Dothan, Enterprise, Ozark, and Eufaula do not have as high of proportion of elderly population as some rural areas, though total numbers of elderly population remain significant.

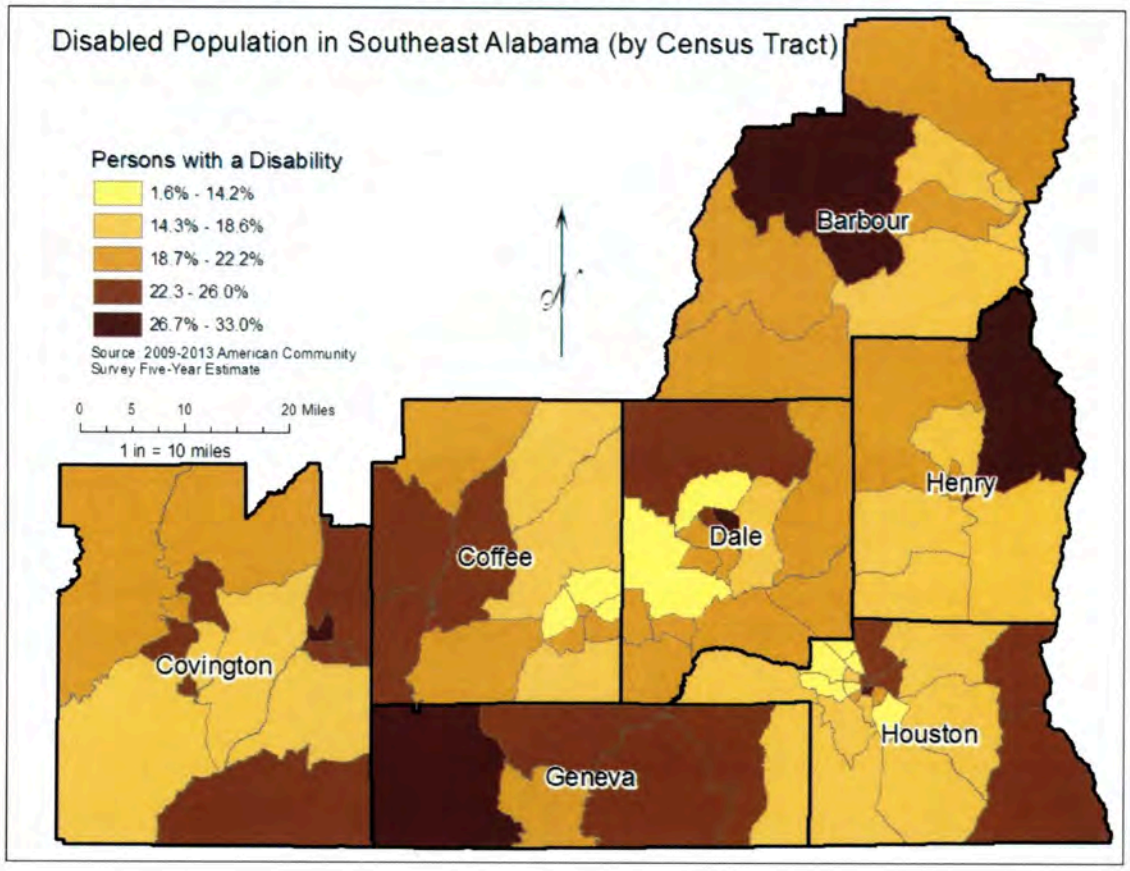
Figure 3.3: Aging Population in Southeast Alabama



3.3.3. Individuals with Disabilities

Areas with high levels of population with disabilities, which includes mobility impairment, are spread throughout Southeast Alabama, including small areas within Dothan (Houston County), Opp (Covington County), and Ozark (Dale County), and more rural locations spread in Barbour, Geneva, and Henry counties (Figure 3.4).

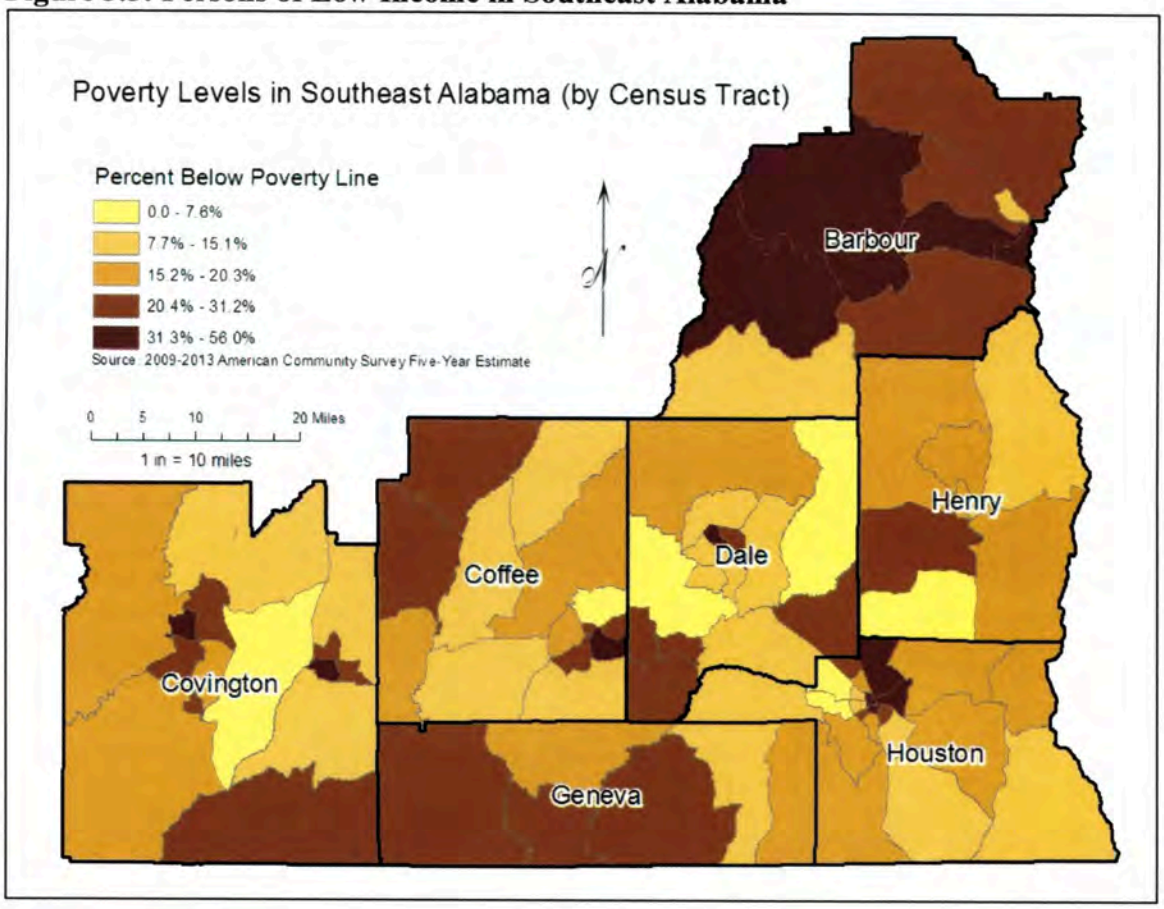
Figure 3.4: Individuals with Disabilities in Southeast Alabama



3.3.4. Persons of Low Income

As can be seen in the map below, much of Barbour County (including Eufaula) has large areas of population that are under the poverty level. Other areas with very high levels of poverty include areas in Dothan (Houston County), Enterprise (Coffee County), Andalusia and Opp (Covington County), and Ozark (Dale County). Many of the areas with high poverty levels (with the exception of rural Barbour County) are in higher density populated areas (Figure 3.5).

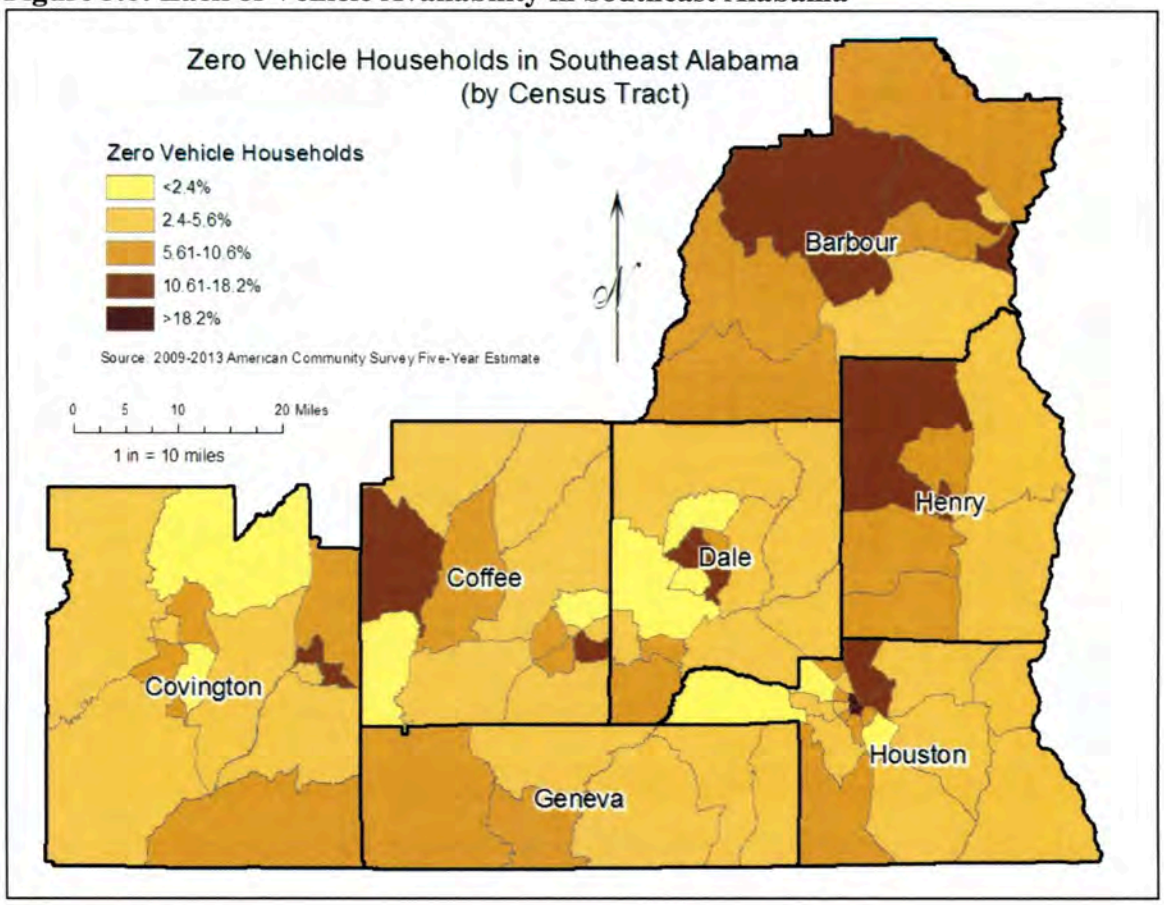
Figure 3.5: Persons of Low Income in Southeast Alabama



3.3.5. Lack of Vehicle Availability

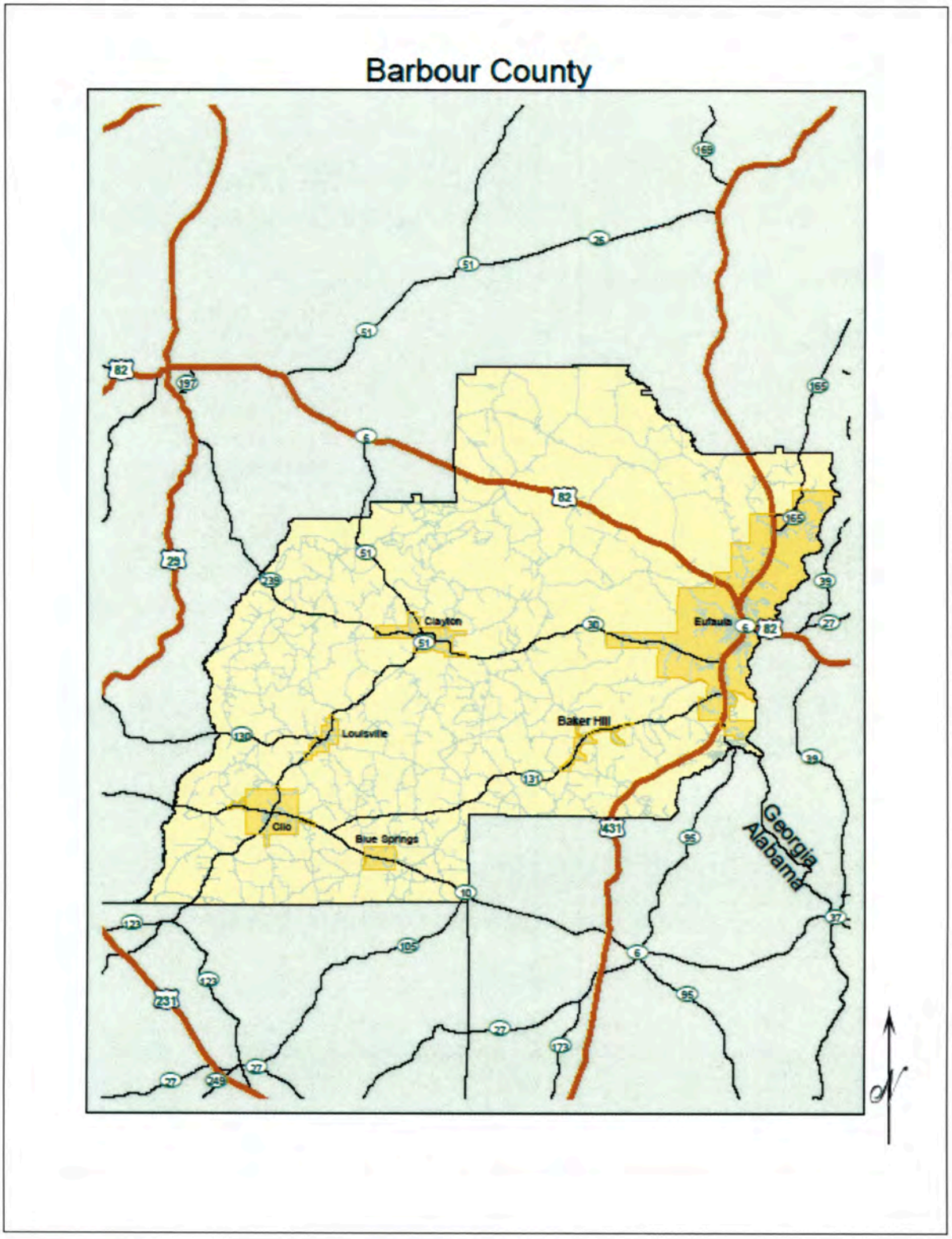
The following map displays estimates of areas with households that have no vehicle available for travel. The two census tracts with the highest percentage of no vehicles available are both located in Dothan (Houston County), which has available public transportation. However, areas with high rates of zero vehicle households are spread throughout the region, including in areas with very few opportunities for transportation alternatives. Overall, this map shows that the higher percentage of zero vehicle households in Southeast Alabama are located in higher density populated areas, including Enterprise, Eufaula, Ozark, Andalusia, and Opp (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Lack of Vehicle Availability in Southeast Alabama



Section 3.4 – County Assessments

3.4.1. Barbour County



Barbour County is the northernmost of the seven Southeast Alabama counties. It is bordered by the State of Georgia to the east, Henry and Dale counties to the south, Pike and Bullock counties to the west, and Russell County to the north. There are six municipalities in Barbour County: Baker Hill, Blue Springs, Clayton, Clio, Eufaula, and Louisville. Barbour County and Quitman County, GA, comprise the Eufaula, AL-GA Micropolitan Statistical Area. Barbour County has an area of 905 square miles, of which 885 square miles are land. There are two federal highways in Barbour County: U.S. 431 (north-south) and U.S. 82 (east-west). U.S. 431 is a major thoroughfare between Atlanta, GA to the north and the Florida Gulf Coast. U.S. 82 is the main route from Barbour County to Montgomery and also provides a link across the Chattahoochee River to Georgia.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Barbour County's 2010 population was 27,457, a decrease of 5.44% from the 2000 Census population of 29,038. The estimated 2018 population is 25,782, which is a 6.1% decrease from 2010. The population density is 31.0 persons per square mile. Nearly half of Barbour County's population is located in Eufaula, located along the eastern boundary of the county. The remainder of Barbour County is rural and sparsely populated. Barbour County is racially diverse, as 49.2% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 48.2% is Black. Approximately 4.5% of Barbour County residents are of Hispanic origin. Barbour County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 18%, which is slightly higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Barbour County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 15.8%, which is slightly lower than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

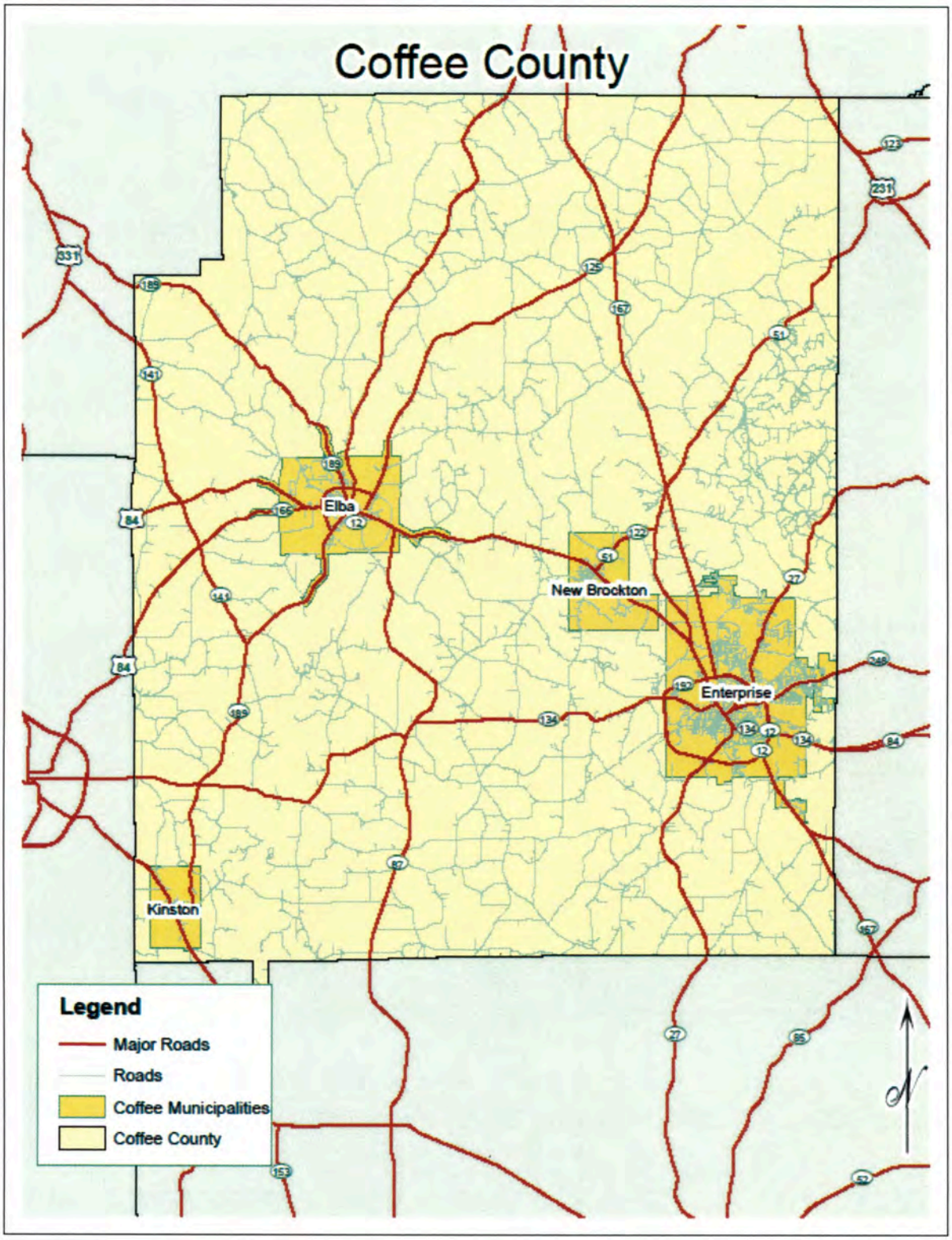
Barbour County shares many of the demographic and economic conditions of the Alabama Black Belt region and is classified as a Distressed County by the Delta Regional Authority. Barbour County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 9.5% and, traditionally, has the highest unemployment rate in the Southeast Alabama region. Barbour County's estimated 2018 median household income was $34,186, which is significantly lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Barbour County residents have a mean travel time to work of 22.7 minutes, which is slightly less than the Alabama average of 24.4 minutes.

Barbour County has extensive historical and recreational sites. The Barbour County Governor's Trail recognizes six Alabama governors with Barbour County ties. Eufaula has an extensive historical district drawing many tourists. The county is also well known for the Walter F. George Reservoir, also known as Lake Eufaula, which is a destination for bass fishing and water related recreation. The Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge is also located in Barbour County.

The Eufaula-Barbour Transit Authority (EBTA) is a Section 5311 provider with local matching funds provided by the City of Eufaula. This system operates with very limited resources (five busses) and within a fairly constrained schedule. Barbour County has three Senior Centers (Clayton, Clio, and Eufaula) with publically-funded vehicles. There is a potential for expanded coordination between the senior centers, SARCOA, social service agencies within the county, and Eufaula-Barbour Transit System.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Barbour County are located within the Eufaula vicinity, as that area has over half of the County's population. The areas within the vicinities of Clayton, Clio, and Louisville also possess concentrations of target population. Primary destinations within Barbour County are clustered in Eufaula and Clayton, including state and local government offices in both communities, and most shopping, employment, higher education, and health care services located in Eufaula. A significant employer (Keystone Foods) is located in Baker Hill. Destinations outside of Barbour County primarily occur in the Columbus, Georgia and Dothan metropolitan areas for health care, shopping and some employment opportunities.

3.4.2. Coffee County



Coffee County is in the western portion of the Southeast Alabama region. It is bordered by Dale County to the east, Geneva County to the south, Covington and Crenshaw counties to the west, and Pike County to the north. There are four municipalities in Coffee County: Elba, Enterprise, Kinston, and New Brockton. Coffee County, along with Dale County, comprises the Enterprise-Ozark, AL Micropolitan Statistical Area. Coffee County has an area of 680 square miles, of which 679 square miles is land. There is one federal highway in Coffee County: U.S. 84 (east-west). U.S. 84 is a major thoroughfare across southern Alabama and is part of the El Camino East/West Corridor. Alabama Highway 167 through Coffee County provides a main route from Troy and areas further north to the Florida Gulf Coast.

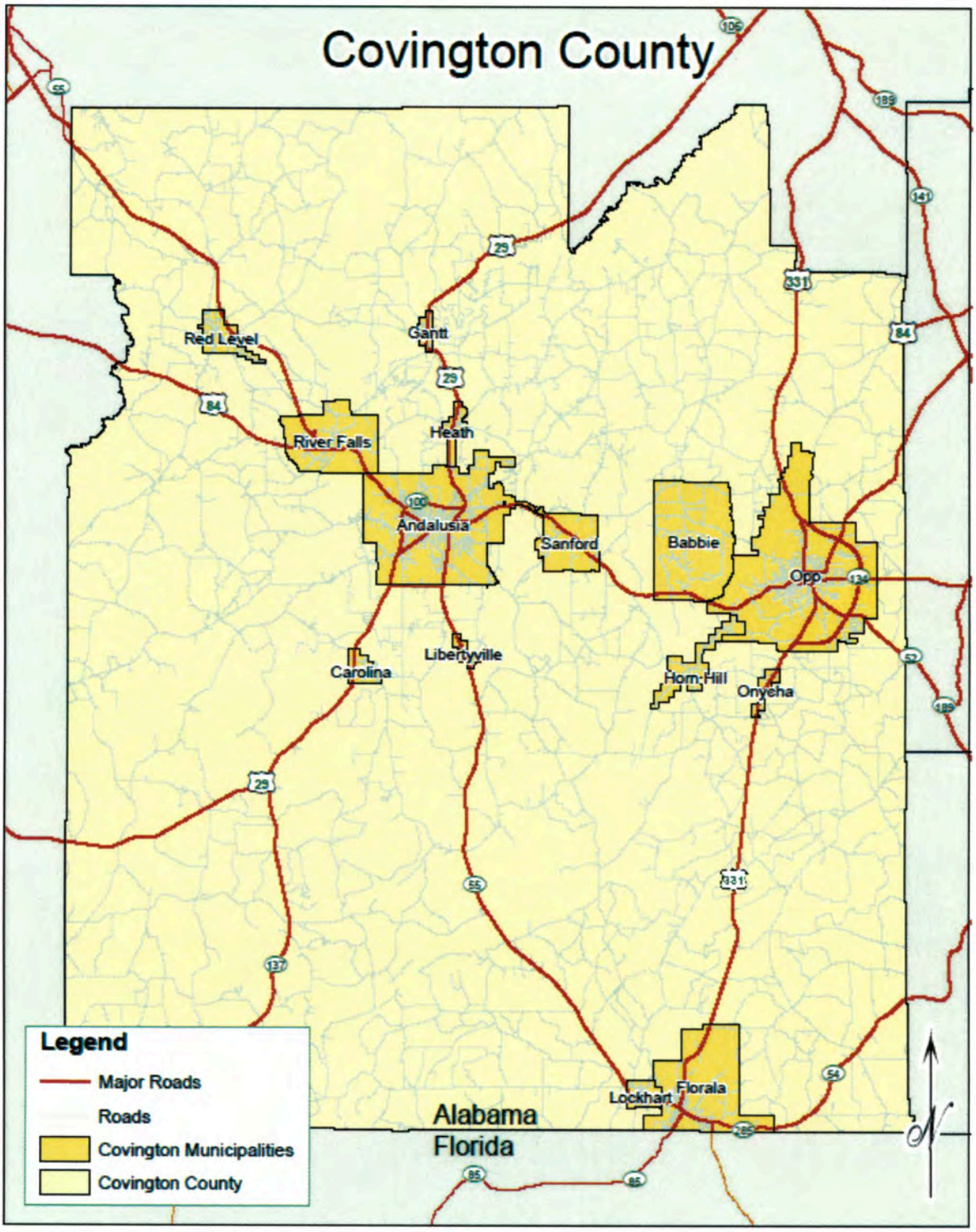
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Coffee County's 2010 population was 49,948, an increase of 14.52% from the 2000 Census population of 43,615. The 2018 population is 51,288, which is a 2.7% increase from 2010. The population density is 73.6 persons per square mile. Over half of Coffee County's population is located in Enterprise, located in the southeastern part of the county. The remainder of Coffee County is primarily rural and sparsely populated. Coffee County's racial composition shows 75.8% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 17.6% is Black. Approximately 8.0% of Coffee County residents are of Hispanic origin. Coffee County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 16.3%, which is slightly higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Coffee County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 12.7%, which is slightly lower than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

Coffee County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 5.9%. Coffee County's estimated 2018 median household income was $53,155, which is higher than the Alabama average of $48,486. Coffee County residents have a mean travel time to work of 22.3 minutes, which is less than the Alabama average of 24.4 minutes.

Coffee County has no public transportation system within the county, even though there is significant need for transportation for individuals without their own means of transportation. There are nine senior center facilities located in Coffee County: Damascus, Elba, Enterprise, Ino, Kinston, Mount Pleasant, New Hope, Pine Level, and Zion Chapel. There is a potential for some coordination between these centers, SARCOA, and social service agencies within the county.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Coffee County are located within the Enterprise area and in the areas immediately surrounding Elba and New Brockton. Primary destinations in Coffee County are primarily located in Enterprise, as it is the hub for most shopping, employment, higher education, and health care opportunities in the county. Secondary destinations are primarily state and local government offices in Elba and New Brockton. Significant employment opportunity exists at Fort Rucker, a federal military installation, and at the chicken processing plants in Jack and west of Enterprise. Destinations outside of Coffee County primarily occur in the Dothan metropolitan area for more specialized health care, shopping, and some employment opportunities.

3.4.3. Covington County



Covington County is the westernmost county in the Southeast Alabama region. It is bordered by Coffee and Geneva counties to the east, the State of Florida to the south, Conecuh and Escambia counties to the west, and Butler and Crenshaw counties to the north. There are fourteen (14) municipalities in Covington County: Andalusia, Babbie, Carolina, Florala, Gantt, Heath, Horn Hill, Libertyville, Lockhart, Onycha, Opp, Red Level, River Falls, and Sanford. Covington County is not part of a Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area. Covington County is the largest county in Southeast Alabama with an area of 1,044 square miles, of which 1,027 square miles is land. There are three federal highways in Covington County: U.S. 84 (east-west), U.S. 29 (northeast-southwest), and U.S. 331 (north-south). U.S. 84 is a major thoroughfare across southern Alabama and is part of the El Camino East/West Corridor. U.S. 29 is a route commonly used to travel to Troy (northeast) and the Pensacola/Mobile areas (southwest). U.S. 331 is a major route between Montgomery and the Destin/Fort Walton Beach, Florida areas. Alabama Highway 55 through Covington County provides a main route northwest to I-65 and is heavily traveled throughout the county.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Covington County's 2010 population was 37,765, an increase of 0.36% from the 2000 Census population of 37,631. The 2018 population is 37,351, which is a 0.9% decrease from 2010. The population density is 36.6 persons per square mile. Much of Covington County is rural and sparsely populated, with Andalusia, Opp, and Florala the only municipalities with populations over 1,000. Covington County's racial composition shows 84.5% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 12.5% is Black. Approximately 1.9% of Covington County residents are of Hispanic origin. Covington County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 20.5%, which is higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2017 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Covington County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 14.8%, which is lower than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

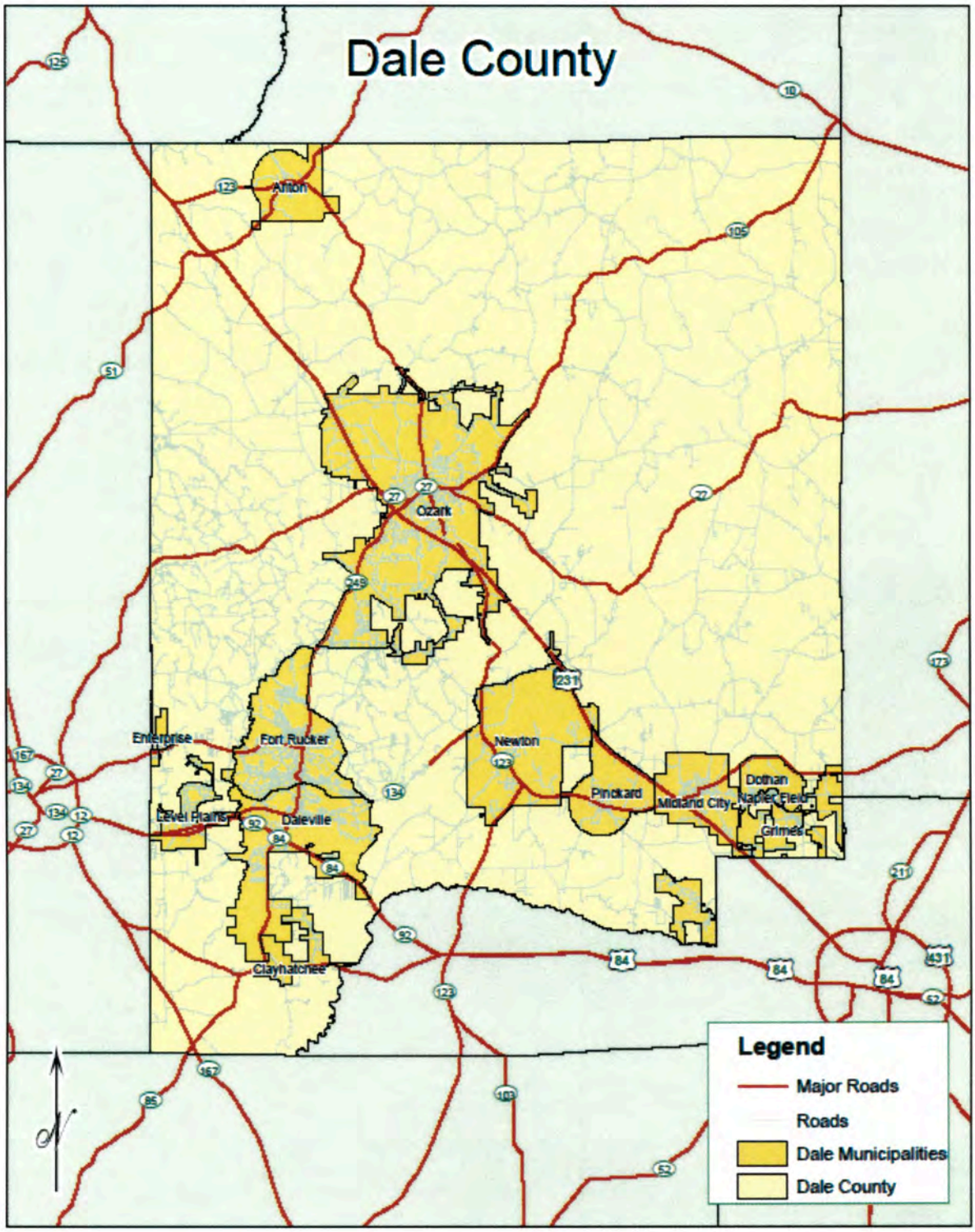
Covington County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 8.7%. Covington County's 2018 median household income was $40,601, which is lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Covington County residents have a mean travel time to work of 25.0 minutes, which is slightly more than the Alabama average of 24.4 minutes.

A large portion of the Conecuh National Forest is located within Covington County. There are two Alabama State Parks in Covington County: Frank Jackson State Park in Opp and Florala State Park in Florala. Gantt and Point "A" lakes along the Conecuh River are also recreation destinations in Covington County.

Covington County has one established public transportation system that operates countywide. The Covington Area Transit System (CATS) is a Section 5311 provider with local matching funds provided by the local governments within the county. This system operates with limited resources (four buses) and within a fairly constrained schedule. There are three senior center facilities located in Covington County: Andalusia, Florala and Opp. There is a potential for expanded coordination between these centers, SARCOA, social service agencies within the county, and CATS.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Covington County are located within the Andalusia and Opp areas. Smaller concentrations exist around Florala and Lockhart. Primary destinations in Covington County are primarily located in Andalusia, as it is the county seat, most populous municipality in the county, and is fairly centrally located. Shopping, employment, health care, higher education, and state and local government offices are located in Andalusia. Secondary concentrations of destinations occur in Opp, as there are also shopping, employment, higher education, and health care locations present. Secondary destinations occur in Dothan and Pensacola, Florida metropolitan areas for health care, shopping, and some employment opportunities.

3.4.4. Dale County



Dale County is located in the center of the seven Southeast Alabama counties. It is bordered by Henry County to the east, Geneva and Houston counties to the south, Coffee County to the west, and Barbour and Pike counties to the north. There are ten municipalities in Dale County: Ariton, Clayhatchee, Daleville, Grimes, Level Plains, Midland City, Napier Field, Newton, Ozark, and Pinckard. Dale County, along with Coffee County, comprises the Enterprise-Ozark, AL Micropolitan Statistical Area. Dale County has an area of 563 square miles, of which 561 square miles is land. There are two federal highways in Barbour County: U.S. 231 (northwest-southwest) and U.S. 84 (east-west). U.S. 231 is the major route between Montgomery to the north and Dothan to the south. U.S. 84 is in the extreme southern portion of Dale County and is the main route between Enterprise to the west and Dothan to the east.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Dale County's 2010 population was 50,251, an increase of 2.28% from the 2000 Census population of 49,129. The 2018 population is 49,225, which is a 2.0% decrease from 2010. The population density is 89.6 persons per square mile. Ozark is, by far, the most populous city in Dale County. The remainder of Dale County is interspersed with small towns and rural communities. Dale County's racial composition shows 73.8% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 21.0% is Black. Approximately 7.0% of Dale County residents are of Hispanic origin. Dale County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 16.1%, which is consistent with the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Dale County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 15.5%, which is slightly lower than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

Dale County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 8.8%. Dale County's 2018 median household income was $45,960, which is lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Dale County residents have a mean travel time to work of 20.4 minutes, which is less than the Alabama average of 21.5 minutes.

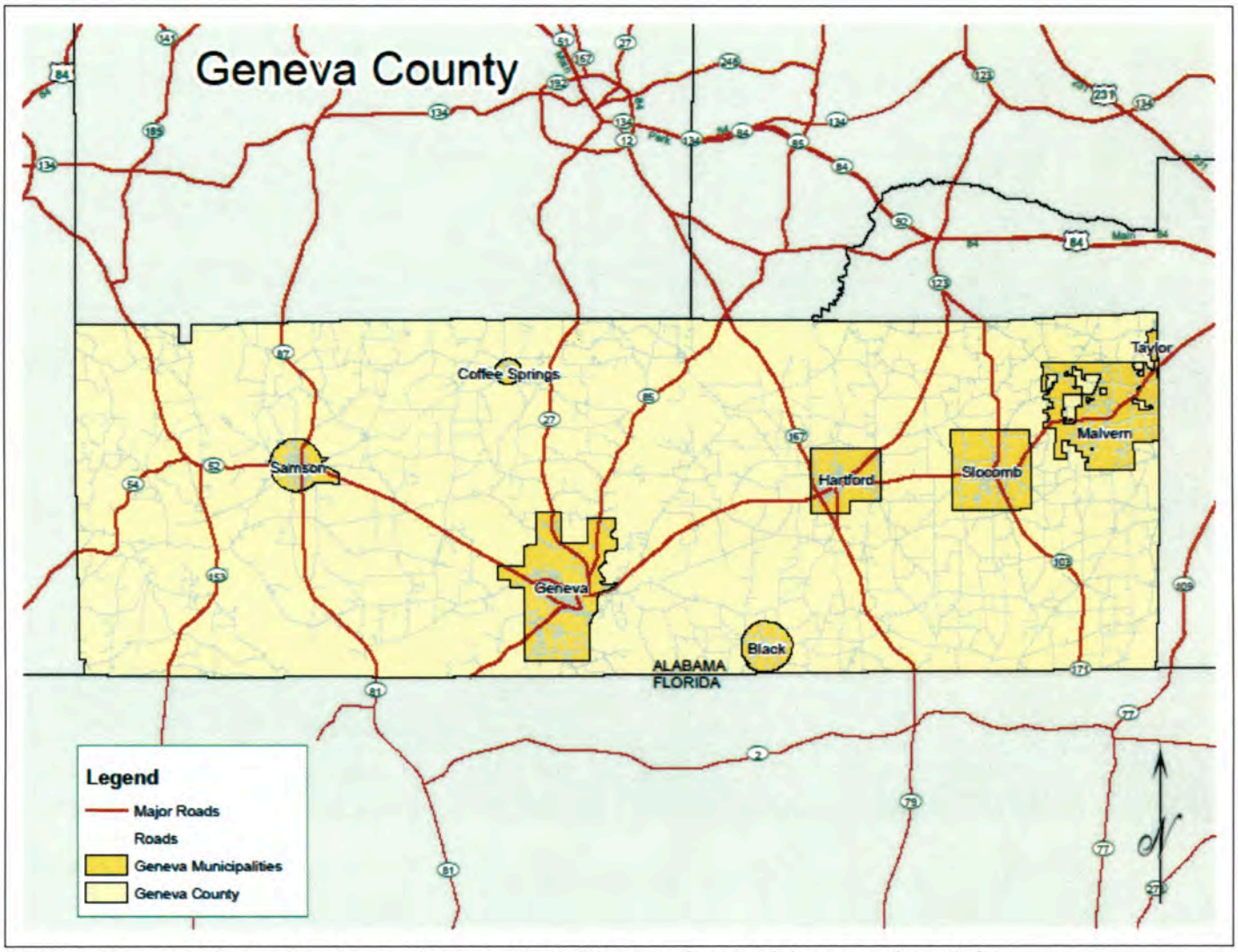
A major asset for Dale County, and the Southeast Alabama region, is the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker. Access to Fort Rucker is located from Enterprise, Daleville, and Ozark. The Dothan Regional Airport is also located in the southeastern portion of Dale County.

Dale County has no public transportation system within the county, even though there is significant need for transportation for individuals without their own means of transportation. There are limited partnerships from agencies in Dale County with the Wiregrass Transit Authority to provide Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) services to eligible citizens. Wiregrass Transit is brokering this service through the primary use of private for-profit vendors. The program has been operating well for several years and is well accepted in providing a needed service to qualified individuals.

There are four senior center facilities in Dale County: Daleville, Midland City, Newton, and Ozark. There is a potential for some coordination between these facilities, SARCOA, and social service agencies within the county.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Dale County are located within Ozark. Smaller concentrations are located in the southeastern portion of the county (Midland City, Newton, and Pinckard) and Daleville. Primary destinations in Dale County are primarily located in Ozark, due its centralized location within the county and being the county seat. Shopping, employment, health care, higher education, and state and local government offices are located in Ozark. Significant employment opportunities also are associated with Fort Rucker and aviation industries adjacent to the Dothan Regional Airport and Blackwell Field in Ozark. Secondary concentrations of destinations occur in Daleville, as there are also employment and shopping opportunities. Destinations outside of Dale County primarily occur in the Dothan metropolitan area for more specialized health care, shopping, and employment opportunities, or in Enterprise.

3.4.5. Geneva County



Geneva County is located in the southern portion of the Southeast Alabama region. It is bordered by Houston County to the east and northeast, the State of Florida to the south, Covington County to the west, and Coffee and Dale counties to the north. There are eight municipalities in Geneva County: Black, Coffee Springs, Eunola, Geneva, Hartford, Malvern, Samson, and Slocomb. Geneva County, along with Henry and Houston counties, comprises the Dothan, AL Metropolitan Statistical Area. Geneva County has an area of 579 square miles, of which 574 square miles is land. There are no federal highways in Geneva County. There are two heavily traveled state routes in Geneva County: Alabama Highway 52 (east-west) and Alabama Highway 167 (north-south). Highway 52 is a major route bisecting Geneva County leading to Dothan to the east and Opp to the west. Highway 167 is a main route from the Florida Gulf Coast to the south to Enterprise, Troy, and Montgomery to the north.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Geneva County's 2010 population was 26,790, an increase of 3.83% from the 2000 Census population of 25,764. The 2018 population is 26,491, which is a 0.8% decrease from 2010. The population density is 46.6 persons per square mile. Geneva County's population is spread throughout the county, with Geneva having the largest population of 4,452 people. Geneva County's racial composition shows 87.1% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 9.3% is Black. Approximately 4.2% of Geneva County residents are of Hispanic origin. Geneva County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 19.4%, which is higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Geneva County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 15.5%, which is slightly lower than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

Geneva County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 8.6%. Geneva County's 2018 median household income was $38,142, which is significantly lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Geneva County residents have a mean travel time to work of 27.5 minutes, which is slightly more than the Alabama average of 24.4 minutes.

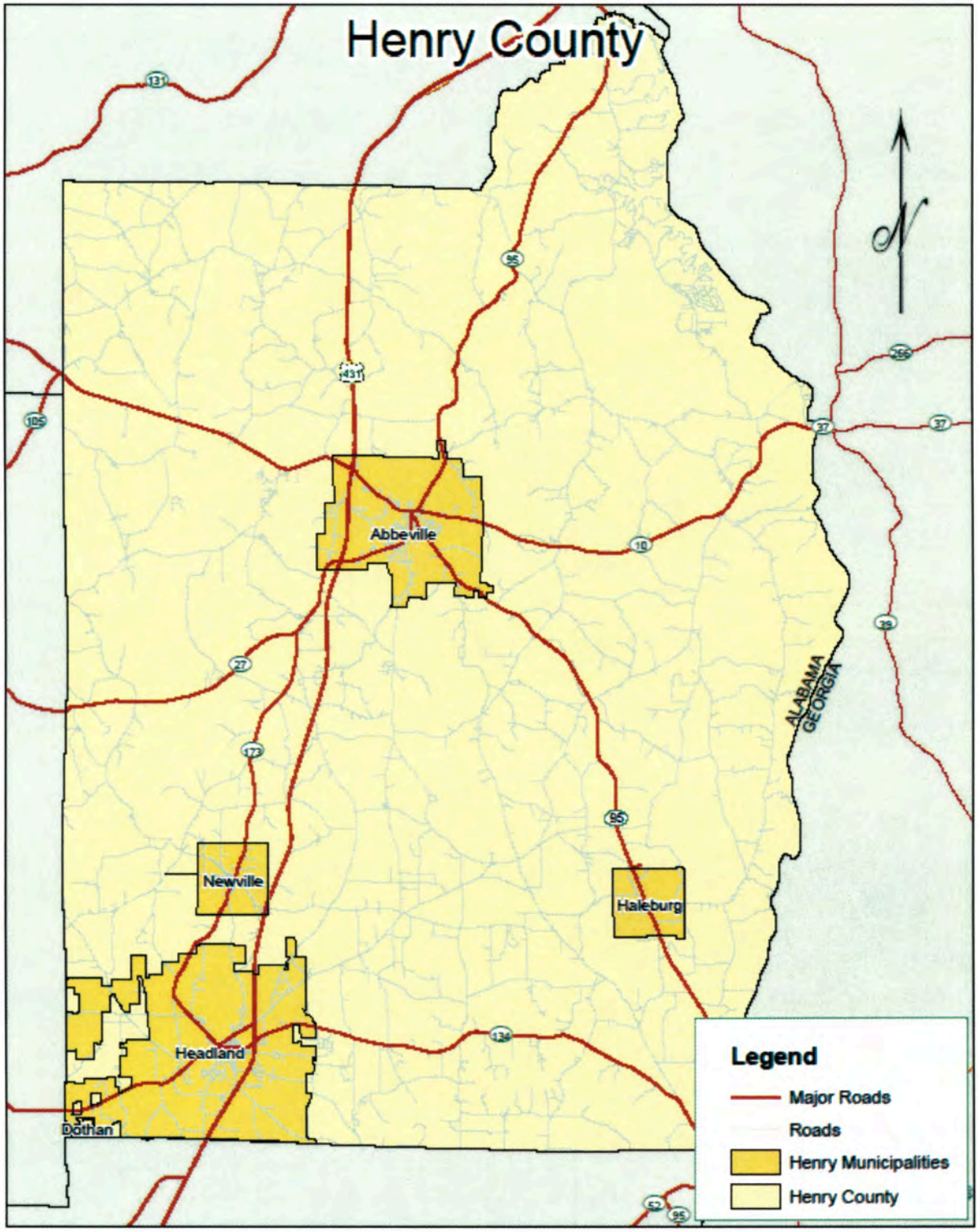
The Geneva State Forest is located in the western portion of Geneva County. The confluence of the Choctawhatchee and Pea rivers is in Geneva, which has a levee system to assist in protecting the city from flooding.

Geneva County has no public transportation system within the county, even though there is significant need for transportation for individuals without their own means of transportation. Given this situation, coordination is not a particular priority nor does it occur at any significant level. This dynamic has changed slightly within the past few years. Geneva County Department of Human Resources has partnered with the Wiregrass Transit Authority to provide Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) services to eligible citizens through the use of private for-profit vendors. The program has been well accepted and has provided a needed service to qualified individuals.

There are five senior center facilities in Geneva County: Coffee Springs, Geneva, Hartford, Samson and Slocomb. There is a potential for some coordination between these facilities, SARCOA, and social service agencies within the county.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Geneva County are located primarily in western portions of the county with small concentrations of target populations in and surrounding Geneva, Hartford, Samson, and Slocomb. Primary destinations in Geneva County are primarily located within Geneva, due to its centralized location within the county and being the county seat. Shopping, employment, health care, and state and local government offices are located in Geneva. Secondary concentrations of destinations occur in Hartford, Samson, and Slocomb, primarily with shopping and some employment opportunities. Dothan is a significant destination outside of Geneva County for specialized health care, shopping, higher education, and employment opportunities. Enterprise is also a secondary destination for mostly similar purposes.

3.4.6. Henry County



Henry County is located in the eastern portion of the Southeast Alabama region. It is bordered by the State of Georgia to the east, Houston County to the south, Dale County to the west, and Barbour County to the north. There are four municipalities in Henry County: Abbeville, Haleburg, Headland, and Newville. Henry County, along with Geneva and Houston counties, comprises the Dothan, AL Metropolitan Statistical Area. Henry County has an area of 568 square miles, of which 562 square miles is land. There is one federal highway in Henry County: U.S. 431 (north-south).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Henry County's 2010 population was 17,302, an increase of 6.08% from the 2000 Census population of 16,310. The 2018 population is 17,124, which is a 0.8% decrease from 2010. Henry County is the least populous county of the Southeast Alabama region. The population density is 30.8 persons per square mile. Headland, adjacent to Dothan, is the most populous city in Henry County with population of 4,510. Besides Headland and the county seat of Abbeville, the remainder of Henry County is primarily rural. Henry County's racial composition shows 71.6% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 25.9% is Black. Approximately 2.7% of Henry County residents are of Hispanic origin. Henry County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 21.6%, which is substantially higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Henry County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 14.1%, which is slightly less than the Alabama average of 16.3%.

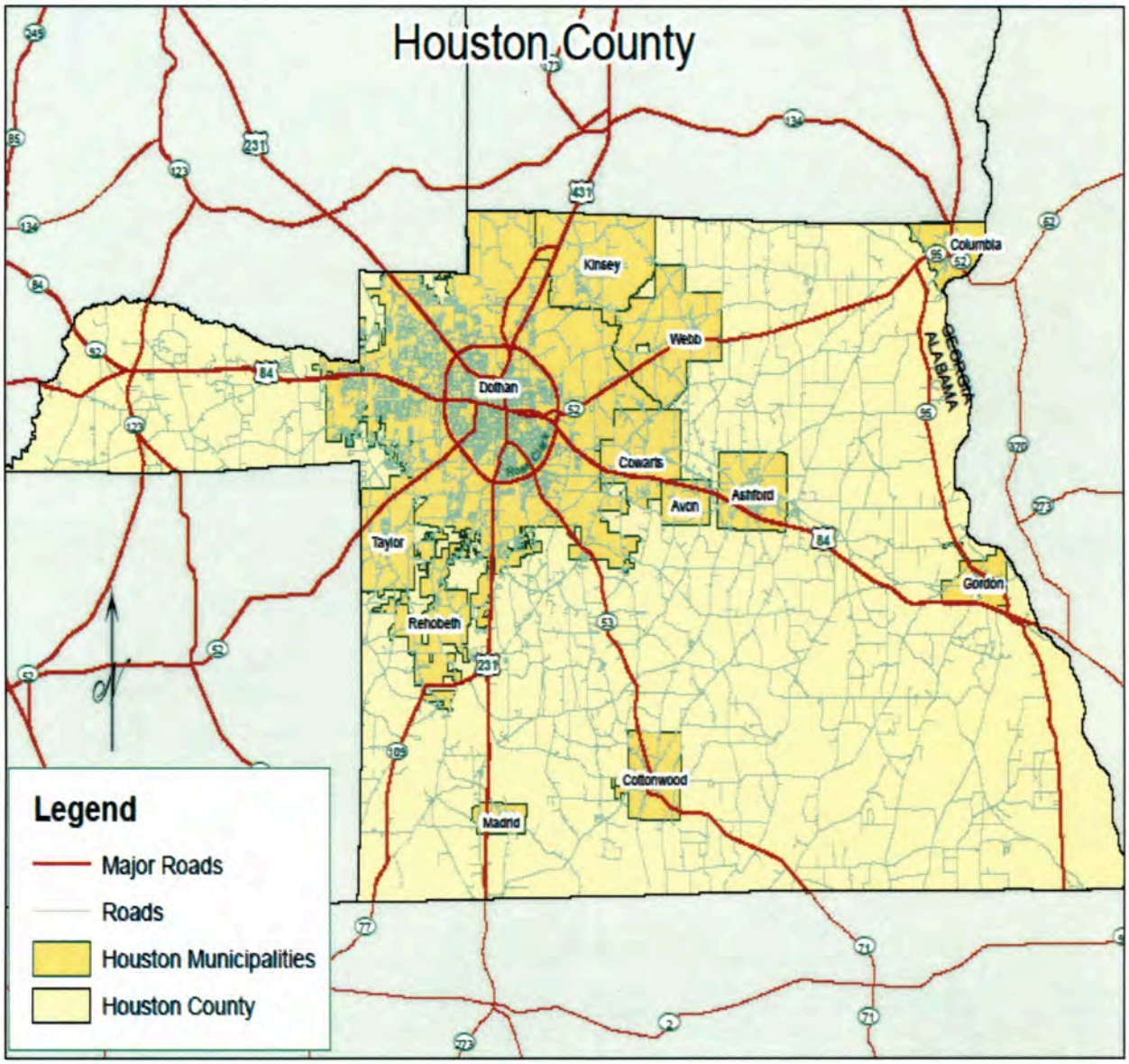
Henry County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 6.7%. Henry County's 2018 median household income was $48,610, which is slightly lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Henry County residents have a mean travel time to work of 26.3 minutes, which is slightly more than the Alabama average of 24.4 minutes.

Henry County has no public transportation system within the county, even though there is significant need for transportation for individuals without their own means of transportation. Given this situation, coordination is not a particular priority nor does it occur at any significant level. This dynamic has changed slightly within the past several years. Henry County Department of Human Resources has partnered with the Wiregrass Transit Authority to provide Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) services to eligible citizens through the use of private for-profit vendors. The program has been well accepted and has provided a needed service to qualified individuals.

There are four senior center facilities in Henry County: Abbeville, Haleburg, Headland, and Newville. There is a potential for some coordination between these facilities, SARCOA, and social service agencies within the county.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Henry County are located primarily in the vicinities of Headland and Abbeville. Primary destinations in Henry County are clustered in Headland and Abbeville. Abbeville is the county seat with state and local government offices and opportunities for shopping, employment, and limited health care. Headland has a minor grouping of state and local government offices, with shopping, limited health care, and employment opportunities. Dothan is the primary destination for health care, shopping, higher education, and employment opportunities outside of Henry County.

3.4.7. Houston County



Houston County is the southeastern corner of Alabama. It is bordered by the State of Georgia to the east, the State of Florida to the south, Geneva County to the west, Dale County to the northwest, and Henry County to the north. There are twelve (12) municipalities in Houston County: Ashford, Avon, Columbia, Cottonwood, Cowarts, Dothan, Gordon, Kinsey, Madrid, Rehobeth, Taylor, and Webb. Houston County, along with Geneva and Henry counties, comprises the Dothan, AL Metropolitan Statistical Area. Houston County has an area of 582 square miles, of which 580 square miles is land. There are three federal highways in Houston County: U.S. 231 (north-south), U.S. 431 (north-south), and U.S. 84 (east-west). U.S. 231 is the major route between Montgomery to the north and the Florida Gulf Coast to the south. U.S. 431 provides a major link between Houston County and Atlanta, Georgia. U.S. 84 provides the main route to Enterprise to the west and southern Georgia to the east.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Houston County's 2010 population was 101,547, an increase of 14.37% from the 2000 Census population of 88,787. The 2018 population is 104,352, which is a 2.5% increase from 2010. Houston County is the most populous county of the Southeast Alabama region. The population density is 175.1 persons per square mile. Dothan is, by far, the most populous city in Houston County and is the regional center for Southeast Alabama. The remainder of Houston County is interspersed with small towns and rural communities. Houston County's racial composition shows 68.8% of the population is White Non-Hispanic and 27.4% is black. Approximately 3.4% of Houston County residents are of Hispanic origin. Houston County's population of persons 65 years old and over is 16.9%, which is slightly higher than the Alabama average of 16.1%. According to the 2011-2015 ACS Five-Year Estimate (the most recent disability data available), the percentage of Houston County residents that are classified as disabled under the age of 65 is 12.9%, which is lower higher the Alabama average of 16.3%.

Houston County had a 2018 unemployment rate of 7%. Houston County's 2018 median household income is $45,496 which is lower than the Alabama average of $48,486. Houston County residents have a mean travel time to work of 21.4 minutes, which is less than the Alabama average of 21.1 minutes.

Houston County borders on the Chattahoochee River, which gives residents quick access to Lake George W. Andrews and Lake Seminole for fishing and other forms of recreation. Houston County also operates the former Chattahoochee State Park, located in the southeastern corner of Houston County.

Houston County has an established public transportation system that operates countywide. The Wiregrass Transit Authority is a combined Section 5307 (urban) and 5311 (rural) provider with local matching funds provided by the City of Dothan and Houston County. This system operates with finite resources and within a fairly constrained schedule. Coordination is ongoing between the various social service agencies within Houston County and the transit system. Local social service agencies are frustrated by coordination efforts, due in large part, to a lack of transit resources available at the times required (most often nights and weekends). Additionally, high expectations for extraordinary service by passengers tend to create additional coordination challenges for the system. In spite of this, coordination has been successful where resources have been available.

In 2010, the City of Dothan funded and implemented a feasibility study on the provision of fixed route transit service within Dothan. This study determined that a need existed, however an analysis of the costs associated and the additional resources required, namely capital, with implementation of a fixed route service led the Dothan City Commission to defer any decision about implementation until such time as the local economy improved or a funding source for this activity could be identified.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, managed by the Wiregrass Transit Authority, has been a major success in Houston County. It has been heralded as one of the best programs of its type within the State of Alabama. This program has expanded to provide service at all hours within Dothan and Houston County, as well as in multiple surrounding counties in the region.

There are 11 senior center facilities in Houston County: Ashford, Columbia, Cottonwood, Gordon, Kinsey, Madrid, Taylor, Webb, and three in Dothan (Baptist Village, Dorothy Quick and Rose Hill). The Southern Alabama Regional Council of Aging (SARCOA) is also physically located in Dothan. There is a potential for expanded coordination between these facilities, SARCOA, social service agencies within the county, and Wiregrass Transit Authority.

The highest concentrations of target populations in Houston County are located primarily within Dothan, with smaller clusters around Ashford, Cottonwood, and the Rehobeth/Taylor area. Primary destinations in Houston County are scattered throughout Dothan, especially along the U.S. Highway 84 or U.S. Highway 231 corridors. Healthcare destinations are located at both the east and west periphery of the city and primary educational destinations are either in central and north areas of the city. Shopping opportunities are spread throughout, with the most densely clustered commercial areas in the northwestern areas of Dothan. State and local government offices are also spread throughout Dothan, with most local government services being provided in Downtown. The smaller communities in Houston County, including Ashford and Taylor has some employment and shopping destinations, but at a much lower extent as Dothan.

Chapter 4 – Needs Assessment

Section 4.1 – Overview

The Coordinated Transportation Plan is mandated to identify gaps in the transportation network and assess those needs. The planning process, which provided outreach to transportation providers, providers that serve the needs of the identified challenged groups, local governments, and the general public, produced some insight into the transportation needs of the Southeast Alabama region.

As found in prior iterations of the Plan, there are clear unmet needs throughout the region in meeting the requirements for mobility of the target populations of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons of low income.

Section 4.2 – Outreach Activities

The transportation needs identified below are derived from a variety of outreach activities that aimed to identify and prioritize transportation needs from the target populations as well as transit operators and other service providers. Public involvement activities for the Plan included the following:

- Two (2) rounds of seven (7) county-level public meetings (February and September 2020) in conjunction with Rural Planning Organization (RPO) with public advertisements of meetings in all regional newspapers. The Plan was also discussed in two sets of Technical Coordinating and Policy committee meetings
- A 2015 Provider Survey distributed electronically to local organizations, including local governments, social service agencies, senior centers, taxi services, and faith-based organizations
- In-person and telephone conversations with users and providers
- Correspondence and survey completed by Wiregrass Transit Director
- Multiple other informal discussions of transportation as part of other regional projects

The planning process also utilizes a Provider-Side Transportation Assessment Survey conducted by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) in 2015. Representatives from ADPH contacted 114 healthcare providers across Alabama, including seven (7) providers within the Southeast Alabama region. These providers include two (2) mental health centers, one (1) federally-qualified health center, two (2) rural hospitals, and two ADPH social workers. The intent of the survey was to identify areas and populations most impacted by transportation challenges and to identify gaps in transportation information for healthcare providers, target populations, and transportation providers.

Future coordinated transportation planning activities will continue to refine and spread outreach to as many stakeholders as possible in order to assess needs, priorities, and potential solutions from transportation providers and users.

Section 4.3 – Outreach Comments

There were 98 surveys received from the 2015 survey effort. Responses were from regional transportation users and surveys were distributed through social media, through contacting social service agencies, senior centers, and other organizations that serve the target populations. The responses received are not a comprehensive view of the region, but they provide examples of transportation opinions and challenges from elements of the target populations for coordinated transportation planning. Below is some background information of the survey respondents:

- Approximately 60% of respondents were White/Caucasian, with 35% Black/African American.
- Over 80% of respondents had an annual household income of less than $20,000.
- 58% of respondents were female.
- 42% of respondents were between the ages of 31-54, and 28.4% of respondents were over the age of 65.
- Respondents' place of residence covered all seven counties.
- Two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents have a disability.
- Approximately two-thirds (67.4%) of respondents do not currently drive.
- 87% of respondents do not use a public transit system.
- 53.6% of respondents are retired, with 19.6% of respondents seeking employment, and 17.9% of respondents working full time.

Table 4.1 provides the survey answers for common destinations.

Table 4.1: "When you leave your place of residence, where do you go?"

Answer	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Visit friends/family	61	65.6%
Shopping (grocery/pharmacy)	60	64.5%
Medical care	52	55.9%
Social/community events	39	41.9%
School/education programs for self	34	36.6%
Dining	27	29.0%
Senior Center	24	25.8%
Social Service Agency	19	20.4%
Job/Work	16	17.2%
School/Childcare for child	8	8.6%
Do not leave home	3	3.2%
Other	9	9.7%

Table 4.2 displays the modes of transportation used within the past month of the survey response.

Table 4.2: "In the past month, what modes of transportation have you used?"

Answer	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Personal vehicle	44	51.2%
Walk	24	27.9%
Borrowed vehicle from family/friends	14	16.3%
Public Transit	10	11.6%
Non-Emergency Medical Transportation	4	4.7%
Bicycle	3	3.5%
Taxi	0	0.0%
Other	23	26.7%

For survey respondents that have restrictions on getting to needed destinations, here were the limitations identified in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: "What is preventing you from getting to needed destinations?"

Answer	Number of Responses	% of Responses
I have no difficulty getting where I need to go	40	43.0%
Do not have driver's license	30	32.3%
Physical limitations (e.g. age/health problems)	28	30.1%
Financial limitations (e.g. cannot afford to drive car/purchase gas)	23	24.7%
No access to personal vehicle	19	20.4%
Times of service do not match my needs	14	15.1%
Transportation services do not include my desired destinations	11	11.8%
Little to no transportation service in my area	9	9.7%
I do not know how to ask for transportation services	9	9.7%

Survey respondents were asked what destinations were difficult to access. Table 4.4 displays those responses and how many times they were mentioned.

Table 4.4: "Are there any destinations that you have difficulty getting to with existing transportation resources?"

Answer	Number of Responses
Medical appointments	3
Higher education facilities (e.g. LBW College)	3
Walmart	2
Church	1
Farmer's Market	1
"Dothan and Ozark"	1
Florida	1
Beach	1

Survey respondents were also asked about potential improvements to transportation resources. Those suggested improvements are listed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: "What improvements would you like to see to transportation services in your area?"

Answer	Number of Responses
Public transportation in area	13
Public transportation options in evening/night	4
Quicker response	2
Expansion of services	1
"Make sure everyone knows how to get transportation when needed. Some people don't know how to get in touch with the transit bus."	1
Taxi service	1
More transportation services for less money	1
More reliable bus system	1
More pedestrian/bicycle options	1

The last questions for survey respondents concerned any additional comments or suggestions pertaining to public transportation. Table 4.6 highlights those comments.

Table 4.6: "Other Comments or Suggestions"

Answer	Number of Responses
Night transportation	3
Public transportation in area	2
"When the time comes that I am no longer able to drive, I will be using public transportation to get to church, grocery shopping, etc."	1
"I want them to keep RDP van."	1
"Not having 2 or 3 days to call for pickup and having to wait to too long for them to come back and get you."	1

Findings pertaining to gaps in transportation coverage that were identified in the ADPH Provider-Side Transportation Assessment Survey are listed below in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Transportation-Related Barriers Specified in ADPH Provider Survey

Referrals to out-of-county specialty care are more difficult.
Scheduling and route limitations on available transportation resources.
Difficulties to the patient in maintaining regularly-scheduled appointments, such as dialysis treatment, without reliable transportation access.
Fees and fares greater than what patients can afford, even for rides obtained from friends and family members. For many patient groups, this is a frequent hardship.
Patients are sometimes forced to choose between paying for transportation or medication.
Mental health patients, especially developmentally disabled patients, are susceptible to being taken advantage of with transportation.
Stigmas associated with mental health patients provide additional difficulty in finding transportation options.
Difficulties accessing and using the Medicaid NET system, including long-delayed reimbursements.
Public transportation that is available is often utilized by specific groups, which can cause difficulties in scheduling services.

Source: ADPH Provider-Side Transportation Assessment Survey (2015)

There were 11 surveys received from regional local governments, social service agencies, and senior center programs. These responses provided transportation opinions and challenges from these entities that either operate transportation programs or provide services to target populations. These providers offer a multitude of services, including transportation, employment, nutrition/meals, recreational and social enrichment, social services, job training and placement, and rehabilitative services.

Table 4.8 describes the survey respondents' role in providing transportation services.

Table 4.8: Role in Transportation

Answer	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Fund transportation for clients	4	40%
Arrange/provide escort services and/or volunteers/drivers	3	30%
Directly operate human service transportation	3	30%
Directly operate public transportation	2	20%
Contract to provide public transportation	1	10%
Assist with transportation as needed	1	10%

All of the survey respondents serve at least some element of the target populations, including persons with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income individuals, veterans, unemployed workers, and the general public.

The survey asked about the providers' largest unmet needs. Table 4.9 displays those responses.

Table 4.9: What is your organization's largest unmet transportation need?

Unable to pick up all members (those unable to drive) who want to come to the center for lunch.
Unable to deliver requested meals to homebound members.
After school care
After hour public transportation for clients
The ability to travel out-of-region to Florida, which is more convenient for shopping.
Rural transportation routes are most difficult.
Need a van
Increasing demand for food delivery service and escort service.

Table 4.10 displays specific recommendations from providers about combating unmet needs.

Table 4.10: What specific recommendations would you offer for providing service to those unmet needs?

More routes needed to bring individuals from rural areas to urban areas for work and medical needs. There are no fixed routes and no regularly scheduled routes that are daily/hourly.
Need more funds and more direct client contact/service.
Allow grant funds to provide out-of-area travel and more comfortable accommodations for a long trip.
Many individuals unable to drive are also low-income and have difficulty paying. Funding programs allow capital purchases, but not the purchase of transportation services, which is needed.

Section 4.4 – Transportation Needs

Through prior coordinated transportation planning efforts and current planning outreach, we find that transportation needs are heavily dependent on the requirements of the specific affected target populations. The needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, or persons from low-income households may require similar resources in certain areas, but different types of transportation resources to reach needed medical services, job locations, or quality of life activities.

Overall, the Southeast Alabama region has very significant transportation needs. More than half of the region does not have any service from public transportation agencies. The areas within the region that are served by public transportation still have multiple limitations inherent for several reasons, some that are related to operational necessities and some that are perceived by user groups based on preconceived notions or limited experiences.

The primary transportation needs in the Southeast Alabama region for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons from low-income households have been identified and summarized below. These categorizations are developed from comments in public meeting, survey responses discussed above, and collected emails and phone calls from regional stakeholders. Many of the listed needs are caused by or associated with other transportation needs, but are separated due to different impacts on the target populations.

4.4.1. Limited Service Areas

The Southeast Alabama region is underserved, or not served in many areas, by public transportation services. More than half of the Southeast Alabama region does not have public transportation services, and the services offered in areas with established public transportation are limited. Overall, the rural areas of the region have a higher incidence of inadequate options for transportation to serve target populations, as providing service in these areas are less cost efficient because of lower population density than serving urban areas.

Currently, there is no public transportation service in three counties within the Southeast Alabama region: Coffee, Dale, and Geneva. There is limited service in one county: Barbour. The Eufaula-Barbour Transit Authority operates in Barbour County, but primarily serves the City of Eufaula only. Service in Barbour County outside of the City of Eufaula is basically non-existing, or extremely limited.

Covington County has a countywide public transportation system administered by the Covington Area Transit System (CATS). However, their resources are limited and Covington County is a very large spatial area, so many needs are unmet due to those limitations.

Houston County has the most comprehensive transportation coverage of the Southeast Alabama region's seven counties administered by the Wiregrass Transit Authority, but services, especially outside of Dothan, are inefficient due to limitations of the demand-response system and the time periods of service.

4.4.2. Limited Access to Out-of-County or Out-of-Region Destinations

This is associated with 4.4.1 (Limited Service Area), as many of the comments related to limitations of the current transportation system pertains to the difficulty of accessing specialized care to healthcare providers in locations outside of the Southeast Alabama region, including VA hospitals in other areas in Alabama, Children's Hospital in Birmingham, or other critically needed services. Even within the Southeast Alabama region, there may be difficulty crossing county lines, requiring multiple levels of coordination that is currently not a very efficient process. Also, there have been two hospitals in the region (Elba, Florala) that have closed in the past few years, causing additional target populations to have to travel further for medical services.

4.4.3. Limited Service Hours

For certain transportation users, services are not available during needed times. In the areas with public transportation service, operations are primarily limited to daytime hours on weekdays, with limited or no offerings outside of those peak hours. Therefore, target populations who are users have very limited options for transportation services on evenings or weekends and cannot do any spontaneous travel, which provides impediments to employment opportunities for those without reliable private transportation, unless they meet the qualifications for the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program in areas that participate.

Night and weekend services are normally not offered due to the increased costs from operating during those times. Therefore, an increase in operational funding is needed to operate during those periods. In most cases, ridership during "off-peak" hours and days are less, so most entities choose to not operate during those traditional periods in which service will be increasingly inefficient.

4.4.4. Duplication or Inefficient Services

Public transportation services provided in the Southeast Alabama region are primarily demand response, which is an inherently inefficient process. It requires users to plan trips in advance and any change in an appointment or other scheduled event may require cancellation, or a rescheduling that cannot be quickly processed. For transportation providers, even with scheduling assistance, many trips are disparate in time and location from one another, which causes duplication of services.

Duplication of services also occurs with public agencies that provide specialized transportation to clientele. Providers from separate programs or agencies will carry clients along similar routes to the same destinations, such as taking one or two clients to a medical facility, but due to program requirements or anxiety about sharing, limited resources are unable to partner to provide shared services.

4.4.5. Coordination between Jurisdictions and Agencies

There are multiple partnerships between local service agencies, local governments, and transportation providers in the Southeast Alabama region. However, those cooperative efforts provide limited impact throughout most of the region for several reasons. With the lack of available public transportation and the infeasibility of most private transportation, many locations with target populations are not within a service area to most public transportation resources, restricting access to a majority of the region.

The limited capital resources available to existing transportation providers and bureaucratic challenges for utilizing those resources to build partnerships and provide services to user groups that are outside of the funding scope of their program are also impediments for further collaboration. There is a common trepidation to share limited transportation resources with other groups, because of not knowing the level of requirement needed to meet the combined needs without the core mission suffering. There is also a perceived fear that any use not expressly authorized may jeopardize funding, which quells potential coordination attempts.

Similarly, regional coordination is a difficult process due to the multiple transportation resources, most of which have different groups of decision makers that prioritize limited resources within their service areas. Mobility management on a regional level would provide assistance in developing opportunities for functional services. Some of the transportation agencies have mobility managers, but their focus is on specific partnerships within those entities. As mobility management becomes more commonplace, increased coordination will likely occur.

4.4.6. Lack of Fixed Route Services

There are no fixed route public transportation services in the Southeast Alabama region. The City of Dothan, through the Southeast Wiregrass MPO, facilitated a study on providing fixed route services in the Dothan area in 2010. The City of Dothan assessed that the development of a fixed route system was not feasible at the present time and will be revisited in the future. Also, resources devoted to a fixed route system would lessen the demand response portion of the system, especially for outlying portions of the service area, creating its own set of unmet needs.

4.4.7. Need for Transportation Services to Desired Activities

With the difficulties caused by limited service areas, limited hours, and lack of funding, it can be very difficult to coordinate transportation to much needed activities for target populations. These activities may include trips to health care facilities, employment opportunities, and education facilities. Stakeholders and providers of services for these target groups do have some partnerships with transportation providers where available. However, the limited areas served by transportation systems leaves many individuals unable to access these needed services on a regular and needed basis.

In many instances there are some resources for transportation of target populations to specific purposes, including nutrition programs or specialized medical services, which may be reimbursed or facilitated through agency contracts. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom activities may also provide transportation opportunities for the target population groups with the coordination of service agencies and transportation providers. However, there are many other trips that target populations need to access, including shopping and visiting friends and family, that are restricted because those type of trips are not allowed under certain contracts or funding programs. Therefore, even in cases that target populations may access transportation for specific purposes, they are unable to participate in the transportation system comprehensively.

4.4.8. Funding Issues

Funding is a significant barrier for both operation and expansion of transportation services in the Southeast Alabama region. There are many layers of funding issues that contribute to gaps in transportation services to target populations. In Alabama, there is a Constitutional prohibition of state gas tax collections being used for anything besides road and bridge infrastructure. Funding from the State's General Fund is not favorable, due to the Fund's current fiscal challenges.

Local governments must match the required capital (20%) and operational (50%) federal investments in public transportation. For most local governments in the region, including Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, and Henry counties, the resources required to fund and operate systems are deemed infeasible for the level of use that is estimated. For those local governments that operate public transportation system, including the cities of Dothan and Eufaula and Covington and Houston counties, any expansion of services requires additional local funding, as well. Therefore, any growth or new ideas that require additional capital are low priorities, as prime concentration is to fund other basic services available. Contracting with local agencies for services can be used to offset local match, but that is always dependent on agency budgets and may not be consistent.

Personal funding is also an issue. Though most public transportation user rates are heavily subsidized, many users, especially on fixed incomes, are still unable or not willing to participate in the system due to those costs. Utilizing the limited private transportation choices available is even more costly for users. Even some reimbursement programs, such as the Medicaid NET, are helpful for users, but have their own limitations. In many cases, reimbursements for payments to use transportation services are sent months later.

4.4.9. Education and Expectations

Traditionally, there has been a disconnect between the expectations of transportation users and the capabilities of the transportation providers. Many users are unaware of the service capacity of transportation providers and what resources are available to them. There is confusion pertaining to the exact services that can be provided to users, especially in relation to if service can be provided beyond public rights-of-way into a person's home. Transportation providers should be aware that many users do not have institutional knowledge of operations and the plethora of regulations for guidance. Many users believe that transportation services should be free to them and believe they should be able to schedule a ride at any time. There is also potential divergence of priorities between social service providers, as each will be a proponent for prioritized services to their clientele, which is difficult if multiple social service providers require transportation services at the same time.

There is also a disconnect between the general public regarding the use of public transportation for target populations. Many members of the general public believe that offered transportation services are only for target populations that cannot drive themselves or access private transportation. This belief leads to public opinion that transportation resources should be a specialized item with a low priority for funding. There needs to be additional education that public transportation is available for everyone and that specific individual needs may change over time.

4.4.10. Private Transportation Services

There are few private transportation services that are available in the Southeast Alabama region. Most taxi or charter companies are located in the Dothan area. For most rural areas, any services that could be provided would likely be expensive for most target populations. However, it is important that there are private providers that are part of the transportation infrastructure in order to increase accessibility to transportation options.

Most of the transportation needs and impediments listed above are fairly comprehensive throughout the Southeast Alabama region. Many of these issues are due to finite resources, bureaucratic regulations, and political priorities that combine to the contribution of transportation shortfalls within the area.

Chapter 5 – Strategies and Recommendations

Section 5.1 – Overview

The Coordinated Transportation Plan is mandated to develop and prioritize transportation strategies to overcome unmet transportation needs. Though there are clear unmet needs and documented shortfalls in the transportation system throughout the Southeast Alabama region, there are multiple examples of coordination among multiple agencies and other groups that has been and is currently being implemented.

Overall, it is understood that additional funding sources, which is heavily mentioned as a necessity to increase efficiency and expand transportation services, are limited and will likely become more so for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is paramount that service providers and local agencies think creatively and be open to partnering opportunities with other entities to help meet some of the documented gaps with the inherent limitations that exist.

There are many factors that affect the potential success of any activity for coordinating, implementing, or operating transportation services to assist in increasing options available for target populations. These factors include local expertise, fiscal constraints, public and/or client concurrence, political feasibility, and program regulations.

Section 5.2 – Strategies to Address Transportation Challenges

Based on comments received and best practices implemented within the Southeast Alabama region and in other areas, a toolbox of strategies and recommendations have been suggested to meet the goals to improve coordination of transportation services, especially to benefit the target populations of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons of low income. These strategies and recommendations are based from ongoing transportation needs that were highlighted in Chapter 4.

5.2.1. Strategies for Limited Service Areas

A. Establish public transportation systems beyond Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) into Coffee, Dale, Geneva, and Henry counties. This would likely be through Section 5311 funding, which would require local match from these entities. This strategy is a high priority, but will likely not be a short-term implementation.

B. Expand the service area of the Eufaula-Barbour Transit Authority to include all of Barbour County. This would occur through increasing Section 5311 funding, which requires additional local match for operations, and likely, capital investments for the expanded service. This strategy is a high priority, but will likely not be a short-term implementation.

5.2.2. Strategies for Access to Out-of-County or Out-of-Region Destinations

A. Identify and coordinate for additional opportunities for non-emergency medical transportation to regional services, such as VA hospitals in Birmingham, Montgomery, and Tuskegee; Children's Hospital in Birmingham; and other specialized services that are located outside the primary service area of an agency. There are some examples of purchase of service reimbursements from the American Cancer Society and American

Kidney Association, but overall these opportunities are limited. This is a great need and a high priority.

B. Facilitate a programmatic policy change that allows an exemption to provide transportation outside of the prescribed service areas for these specialized services. This strategy is not likely to be implemented unless accounted for in federal legislation.

C. Kids One Transport is a transportation provider for primarily transportation challenged families with children who need medical treatments outside of their local areas. The program operates in 44 of 67 counties within Alabama, but no county within the Southeast Alabama region. There is a great need to coordinate with Kids One Transport to expand services to Southeast Alabama.

D. Overall on a broad level, there needs to be additional coordination for additional public-private partnerships and structuring services to provide this much needed service out-of-region.

5.2.3. Strategies for Limited Service Hours

A. Expand service hours to incorporate night and weekend service for public transportation providers (e.g. Wiregrass Transit Authority, Covington Area Transit System, Eufaula-Barbour Transit Agency). Federal funds, including Section 5307 (urban areas), 5310 (for specialized services), or 5311 (rural areas) are available to fund a portion of expanded services. This strategy would incur additional local matching costs, as expanded hours would require additional staffing for dispatching and drivers, and either the purchase of new vehicles, or increased maintenance costs of existing vehicles that would receive additional use. There would also need to be additional marketing information created and distributed to inform potential users of the expanded service hours. Though this is a great need, feasibility of extra resources makes this a medium priority.

B. Partner with service providers and local agencies (e.g. education facilities, medical facilities, government agencies) to expand services to more specialized populations, including expansion of Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) opportunities. This is a high priority.

C. Existing Section 5310 providers can expand current services to non-traditional hours through providing additional opportunities to clientele on evenings and weekends. This expanded activity would require the investment of additional local resources, including drivers, purchase of additional vehicles or shared use agreements, and increased operations and maintenance costs. This is a high priority.

5.2.4. Strategies for Duplicated or Inefficient Services

A. Expand mobility management throughout the region, especially in a climate of coordination and sharing of resources. Mobility management is an allowed activity for Section 5307, 5310, and 5311 programs. Mobility management is considered a capital cost, so that function only is required to be matched 20%, instead of the 50% required for operations activities. Mobility managers can be an integral piece of coordinated

transportation efforts as they can provide varied roles in coordinating transportation resources. A mobility manager can facilitate a network to coordinate transportation resources through working with multiple providers to assess the best allocation of assets to address needed services, can develop a resource directory to distribute to target populations and the public at-large, and overall provide strategies to creatively utilize the limited resources available to facilitate a more comprehensive transportation network. Appropriate training and planning for this role is essential for effective functionality. Regional mobility management is more of a long-term priority, though this process will likely be implemented incrementally on a local level.

B. Develop agreement templates for sharing of vehicles. Most transportation vehicles are only utilized at certain times of day. Since many impediments involve transportation needs during non-traditional hours, increasing utilization of existing vehicles may expand opportunities. Increasing vehicle use will require additional funding for vehicle maintenance and driver costs. This is a high priority.

C. Study the potential for providing same day demand response services for providers with appropriate logistical capabilities. Most likely, same day service would be limited feasibility and would require premium rates for the service. This is more of a long-term priority.

5.2.5. Strategies for Coordination between Jurisdictions and Agencies

A. Expand mobility management throughout the region, as described in Section 5.2.4.

B. Facilitate a study to assess need and feasibility for establishing a regional transportation system to manage transportation resources for the Southeast Alabama region and to serve as the broker for publicly-funded transportation assets. Multiple local agencies facilitating transportation resources may enhance duplicated and inefficient services that are addressed in Chapter 4. Also, for mobility management for one regional entity is more efficient than a group of managers advocating for each user group or agency. This is a long-term priority.

C. Assess and develop additional partnerships with other groups, including taxi services, charter companies, ambulance companies, and other providers to coordinate resources. This is a high priority.

D. Continue seeking partnerships to expand additional services to human services clientele. In many areas, target populations are not within a service area to public transportation resources. There is a need to be creative and resourceful to reach these unserved areas. This is a high priority.

5.2.6. Strategies for Fixed Route Services

A. Implement fixed route system to serve the Dothan area. A 2010 study facilitated by the Southeast Wiregrass MPO demonstrated there would be some demand and support for provision of a fixed route bus system. This would require extensive marketing and

education of the services, as well as additional costs. Although there is need and some demand, fiscal realities dictate this is a long-term priority.

B. Implement a regional, deviated route system in Southeast Alabama along major corridors. The most likely corridors for service include:
   i. Alabama Highway 167
   ii. Alabama Highway 52
   iii. U.S. Highway 84
   iv. U.S. Highway 231
   v. U.S. Highway 431

   A regional, deviated route system would require extensive coordination between regional local governments and additional funding through Section 5307 and Section 5311 programs, as well as additional local match to absorb the additional operational and capital costs required. This is a long-term priority.

5.2.7. Strategies for Transportation Services to Desired Activities

A. Expand access for transportation opportunities to target populations, including utilization of New Freedom activities and further expansion of Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC). Transportation for target populations should be coordinated with existing resources, when possible, including shared agreements between agencies. This is a high priority and an ongoing process.

B. Continue to facilitate sustained and expanded transportation capabilities of existing Section 5310 and other social service providers, including procuring vehicles, wheelchair aids, technology systems, and voucher programs. Though the ultimate goal of coordinated transportation is a fully managed and integrated regional network of transportation resources, specialized providers still maintain an important component in providing those resources to their clients. This is a high priority.

C. Expand volunteer driver programs to provide transportation services to desired activities through ridesharing activities. Additional costs would be associated with driver recruitment and training, scheduling functions, insurance, and other associated administration requirements. This is a high priority.

5.2.8. Strategies for Funding Issues

A. For local governments to politically prioritize match funding needed to operate transportation systems, there must be a commitment from the community to value public transportation and to support the local government's effort. Prioritizing public transportation as a value to the community requires education of transportation needs, capacity, and limitations. This is a long-term priority.

B. State of Alabama facilitates a stable source to provide funding assistance for public transportation. This is a long-term priority.

C. Mandate that agencies reimburse transportation providers at the allocated cost rate for transportation. In certain cases, agencies only reimburse for fare box rate, which is already heavily subsidized by local matching funds. This is a high priority.

D. Provision for funding to account for increasing operation costs. Many of the funding sources provide flat funding. With the fluctuations in fuel costs and increases in insurance costs and other labor costs, more funding must cover those increases leaving less resources for other aspects of operations. This is a high priority.

5.2.9. Strategies for Education and Expectations

A. Provide and market resource directory with detailed information about services provided, including summarization of scheduling process and hours of operation. This is a high priority.

B. Develop communication strategies, especially between transportation providers, agencies, target populations, and the general public, to facilitate better understanding of needs and capabilities concerning public transportation. This is an ongoing process.

5.2.10. Strategies for Private Transportation Services

A. Identify and cultivate additional partnerships with private transportation providers. Private transportation services fulfill a vital role of providing additional options, especially where no public options exist. There are currently some partnerships with the JARC program and through non-emergency medical transportation, but there remain substantial gaps that can be bridged through expansion of services. Potential additional partnerships with private providers may concentrate on types of services or periods of operation that are unable to be served by public providers. This is an ongoing process.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

This Plan has demonstrated multiple transportation impediments and shortfalls within the Southeast Alabama region. These impediments restrict access and mobility for the target populations of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and persons of low income. Most of these impediments can be attributed to fundamental misunderstandings of transportation services available, funding resources, and territorial focus.

Positively, there are many successfully working partnerships that are occurring and ongoing within the Southeast Alabama region that is providing essential transportation services to target populations. Most of these partnerships have been in separate realms. The challenge is that the framework of public transportation within Southeast Alabama is generally fragmented, due to having multiple local public transportation providers and specialized population providers, with no overlying regional process. There is a hope that the continuing discussions and education regarding coordinated transportation will incrementally change the coordination and collaboration atmosphere to become more formalized and comprehensive regionally. This focus will enable additional service coverage and administrative efficiency in providing opportunities to target populations.

Coordinated transportation planning is an ongoing process. This Plan will continue to be updated regularly pertaining to the guidance of federal regulations and the ALDOT. There are many variables that contribute to the public transportation environment. The challenges in state and federal budgeting impact human service agencies that enable many of the partnerships present and may provide additional challenges in the future, as many of these agencies will have to make difficult decisions in their operational structure.

In conclusion, the need for coordinated transportation planning is becoming more important, as fiscal realities become more challenging and the numbers of target populations are significantly increasing. It is imperative that public transportation providers, human service agencies, local governments, and general users are creatively looking at how our current imperfect system can reach more needs more effectively using the resources that are available.

Appendix A – Implementing Resolution

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Resolution Number 382

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

WHEREAS, the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission in cooperation with the Alabama Association of Regional Councils and the Alabama Department of Transportation developed the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Southeast Alabama 2020-2023; and

WHEREAS, the Board of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission has reviewed the Plan and has passed recommendation in support of adopting the Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, this 10th day of September 2020 that the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission does hereby adopt the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Southeast Alabama 2020-2023.

Chairman

Attest:

Executive Assistant

Appendix B – Public Involvement Documentation

SEARP&DC Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan 2020 Survey

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission is seeking your input into the 2020 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. For further information, please contact Andrew Windham at awindham@searpdc.org or by phone at (334) 794-4093. Please submit responses by March 14. Thanks!

1. **Name**

   Jarrod Weed

2. **Position**

   Director Transportation

3. **Type of Organization**

   Check all that apply.

   - [ ] Social Service Agency
   - [x] Local Government
   - [ ] Senior Center
   - [ ] Faith-Based Organization
   - [ ] Taxi Service
   - [ ] Other:

4. **Functions / Services**

Select All That Apply

Check all that apply.

- [x] Transportation
- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Health Care
- [ ] Day Treatment
- [ ] Social Services
- [ ] Nutrition
- [ ] Job Training
- [ ] Job Placement
- [ ] Rehabilitation Services
- [ ] Residential Facilities
- [ ] Recreational/Social
- [ ] Other:

5. **Role in Transportation**

Select All That Apply

Check all that apply.

- [x] Directly Operate Public Transportation
- [ ] Contract to Provide Public Transportation
- [ ] Fund Transportation for Clients
- [ ] Directly Operate Human Service Transportation
- [ ] Contract to Provide Human Service Transportation
- [ ] Arrange/Provide Escort Services and/or Volunteers/Drivers
- [ ] Reimburse/Subsidize Transit,Taxi Fares, Etc.
- [ ] Do Not Provide or Fund Transportation
- [ ] Other:

6. **Clients / Customers**

Select All That Apply

Check all that apply.

- [x] Persons with Disabilities
- [x] Senior Citizens
- [x] General Public
- [x] Low-Income Individuals
- [x] Veterans
- [x] Unemployed
- [ ] Other:

7. **Service Area(s)**
Counties/Cities

Houston County Alabama

8. **Type of Transportation Provided**
Check all that apply.

- [ ] Fixed Route
- [x] Demand Response
- [ ] Flex Route
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other:

9. **Types of Trip Purpose Allowed**
Select All That Apply
Check all that apply.

- [ ] Home Delivered Meals
- [x] Senior Center
- [x] Medical
- [x] Employment/Training
- [x] Recreational/Social
- [x] Shopping
- [x] Education
- [ ] Other:

10. **Fleet Size**

20 bus

11. **Is your fleet handicapped accessible?**
Mark only one oval.

- (x) Yes
- ( ) No

12. **Driver Compensation**

Check all that apply.

- [x] Paid
- [ ] Volunteer
- [ ] Reimbursement

13. **How do you inform the public about your services?**

Signs
Radio
Flyers

14. **What is your organization's largest unmet transportation need?**

New Facility
New Busses
New Riders

15. **What specific recommendations would you offer for providing service to those unmet needs?**

Increase Funding
More Grant Options
More advanced bus or van

16. **What type of services are most desired by your clientele?**

Transportation to work
Transportation for medical

17. **What do you see as the most impactful constraints to the provision of the desired services?**

Money

18. **Do you coordinate your services with other transportation providers?**

If yes, please list

NO

19. **Please provide any additional comments regarding the improvement of transportation services or increased coordination by service providers.**

Need continued funding

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Google Forms

SEARP&DC Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan 2020 Survey

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission is seeking your input into the 2020 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. For further information, please contact Andrew Windham at awindham@searpdc.org or by phone at (334) 794-4093. Please submit responses by March 14. Thanks!

1. **Name**

2. **Position**

3. **Type of Organization**

Check all that apply

- [ ] Social Service Agency
- [ ] Local Government
- [ ] Senior Center
- [ ] Faith-Based Organization
- [ ] Taxi Service
- [ ] Other:

4. **Functions / Services**

Select All That Apply
Check all that apply

- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Health Care
- [ ] Day Treatment
- [ ] Social Services
- [ ] Nutrition
- [ ] Job Training
- [ ] Job Placement
- [ ] Rehabilitation Services
- [ ] Residential Facilities
- [ ] Recreational/Social
- [ ] Other:

5. **Role in Transportation**

Select All That Apply
Check all that apply

- [ ] Directly Operate Public Transportation
- [ ] Contract to Provide Public Transportation
- [ ] Fund Transportation for Clients
- [ ] Directly Operate Human Service Transportation
- [ ] Contract to Provide Human Service Transportation
- [ ] Arrange/Provide Escort Services and/or Volunteers/Drivers
- [ ] Reimburse/Subsidize Transit,Taxi Fares, Etc.
- [ ] Do Not Provide or Fund Transportation
- [ ] Other:

6. **Clients / Customers**

Select All That Apply
Check all that apply

- [ ] Persons with Disabilities
- [ ] Senior Citizens
- [ ] General Public
- [ ] Low-Income Individuals
- [ ] Veterans
- [ ] Unemployed
- [ ] Other:

7. **Service Area(s)**
Counties/Cities

8. **Type of Transportation Provided**
Check all that apply.

- [ ] Fixed Route
- [ ] Demand Response
- [ ] Flex Route
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other:

9. **Types of Trip Purpose Allowed**
Select All That Apply
Check all that apply.

- [ ] Home Delivered Meals
- [ ] Senior Center
- [ ] Medical
- [ ] Employment/Training
- [ ] Recreational/Social
- [ ] Shopping
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Other:

10. **Fleet Size**

11. **Is your fleet handicapped accessible?**
Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

12. **Driver Compensation**

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Paid
- [ ] Volunteer
- [ ] Reimbursement

13. **How do you inform the public about your services?**

14. **What is your organization's largest unmet transportation need?**

15. **What specific recommendations would you offer for providing service to those unmet needs?**

16. **What type of services are most desired by your clientele?**

17. **What do you see as the most impactful constraints to the provision of the desired services?**

18. **Do you coordinate your services with other transportation providers?**
    If yes, please list

19. **Please provide any additional comments regarding the improvement of transportation services or increased coordination by service providers.**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Barbour County Local Public Forum – Barbour County Courthouse
September 3, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

5. **Open Forum**

RPO Background

The RPO was established to develop a transportation planning process for the rural areas of southeastern Alabama and provides a formal link between the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the local governments. The counties served by the RPO include Barbour, Coffee, Covington, and areas of Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston not served by the Southeast Area Wiregrass Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The RPO provides government officials and citizens in these counties an opportunity to receive information and advise the ALDOT on road, bridge, and other transportation projects.

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Coffee County Local Public Forum – Coffee County Community Room
September 3, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Covington County Local Public Forum – Covington County Admin Building Small Conference Room
September 8, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Dale County Local Public Forum – Dale County Admin Building
September 2, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

5. **Open Forum**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Geneva County Local Public Forum – Geneva County Courthouse
September 15, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

5. **Open Forum**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Henry County Local Public Forum – Henry County Courthouse
September 3, 2020 - 1:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

5. **Open Forum**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Houston County Local Public Forum –
Houston County Admin Building 6th Floor Conference Room
September 2, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

5. **Open Forum**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Technical Committee Meeting – Daleville City Hall
September 22, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **RPO Work Program Resolution**

5. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

6. **Open Forum**

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Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Policy Committee Meeting – Daleville City Hall
September 22, 2020 - 2:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and update of ongoing transportation projects in County and Region**

2. **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update**

3. **SEARP&DC BUILD Grant application**

4. **RPO Work Program Resolution**

5. **Safety Suggestions and Recommendations** - Opportunity for citizens and local officials to input safety ideas and suggestions to RPO.

6. **Open Forum**

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RPO Barbour County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 3, 2020, 3:00 PM – Barbour County Courthouse (Clayton)

Name:	Email:
Andrew Winston	awinston@seapdc.org
Brooke Hall	jessicabrookehall@gmail.com
Keria Miller	Ap@barbaurcountyclayton.com

RPO Coffee County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 3, 2020, 10:00 AM – Coffee County Community Room

Name:	Address:	Email:	Organization:
Andrew Windham		Awindham@seapdc.org	SEARPO

RPO Covington County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
September 8, 2020 – Covington County Administration Building
3:00 PM

Name:	Email
Kerry Castleberry	Kcastleberry@covcounty.com

RPO Dale County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 2, 2020, 2:00 PM – Dale County Administration Building

Name:	Address:	Email:	Organization:
DERELL BREWER	202 S. HWY 123 SUITE A. OZARK, AL 36360	dalecorb@ymail.com	DALE COUNTY

RPO Geneva County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
September 15, 2020, 3:00 PM – Geneva County Courthouse

Name:	Email:
TOBY SEAY	toby.seay@genevacountyal.gov

RPO Henry County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 3, 2020, 1:00 PM – Henry County Courthouse

Name:	Email:
Andrew Winsman	awinsman@sapdc.org

RPO Houston County Local Public Forum

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 2, 2020, 10:00 AM – Houston County Admin Building 6th Floor

Name:	Address:	Email:	Organization:
Andrew [illegible]	Dothan AL	[illegible]	SEARPDC

RPO Technical Committee Meeting
Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization
September 22, 2020, 10:00 AM – Daleville City Hall

Name:	Address:	Email:	Organization:
Andrew Winsher		awinsher@searpdc.org	SEARPDC
Will Bridges		wbridges@searpdc.org	SEARPDC
Mark Funk			ALDOT

RPO Policy Committee Meeting

Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization

September 22, 2020, 2:00 PM – Daleville City Hall

Name:	Address:	Email:	Organization:
Terry Holley		holley.5it@gmail.com	Florala
Stephanie Rushing	299 Elba Hwy, Troy, Al.	rushingse@dot.state.al.us	ALDOT - Troy Area

NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:
Kenneth S. Farmer, Executive Director
Southeast Alabama Regional Planning &
Development Commission
P.O. Box 1406
Dothan, AL 36302
(334) 794-4093 * Fax (334) 794-3288

September, 2020

The Southeast Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) will hold the following meetings:

1. Local Public Forums
   A. Barbour County – September 3, 2020, 3:00 p.m. – Barbour County Courthouse (Clayton), Small Conference Room
   B. Coffee County – September 3, 2020, 10:00 a.m. – Coffee County Community Room (New Brockton)
   C. Covington County – September 8, 2020, 3:00 p.m. – Covington County Administration Building (Andalusia), Small Conference Room
   D. Dale County – September 2, 2020, 2:00 p.m. – Dale County Government Building (Ozark), Small Conference Room
   E. Geneva County – September 15, 2020, 3:00 p.m. – Geneva County Courthouse (Geneva), Commission Chamber
   F. Henry County – September 3, 2020, 1:00 p.m. – Henry County Courthouse (Abbeville), Commission Chamber
   G. Houston County – September 2, 2020, 10:00 a.m. – Houston County Administration Building (Dothan), 6th Floor Conference Room

2. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), September 22, 2020, 10:00 a.m. – Daleville City Hall, Board Room

3. Policy Committee, Thursday, September 22, 2020, 2:00 p.m. – Daleville City Hall, Board Room

The scope of the meetings is to discuss transportation safety issues, regional transportation project updates, and coordinated public transportation issues, including the regional coordinated transportation public transit plan, which identifies transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting these local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

The RPO was established to develop a transportation planning process for the rural areas of southeastern Alabama and provides a formal link between the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the local governments. The counties served by the RPO include Barbour, Coffee, Covington, and areas of Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston not served by the Southeast Wiregrass Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The RPO provides government officials and citizens in these counties an opportunity to receive information and advise the ALDOT on road, bridge, and other transportation projects.

All of the meetings are open to the public. Anyone requiring special assistance should contact the SEARP&DC at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at (334) 794-4093.