

COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FOR THE ACADIANA REGION



August 31st, 2020



COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE ACADIANA REGION (2020-2022)

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Acronyms

- ACS: America Community Survey
- ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
- AMPO: Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization
- APC: Acadiana Planning Commission
- ARC: Association of Retarded Citizens
- ARRA: American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT
- CHSTP: Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
- COS: Council on Aging
- DOTD: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- FAST Act: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
- FTA: Federal Transit Administration
- GIS: Geographic Information System
- LPTA: Louisiana Public Transit Association
- LTS: Lafayette Transit Service
- MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users
- STARS: Statewide Transit Tracking and Reporting System
- TDM: Travel Demand Management
- TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
- UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
- US DHH: United States Department of Health and Hospitals
- US DOT: United States Department of Transportation





BACKGROUND

Beginning in FY 2007, the Federal Transit Administration under the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFTEA-LU)* required that projects selected under the New Freedom, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310), and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” In addition, FTA regulations on the Rural Transportation Program (5311) require that these projects also be selected from a coordinated plan. According to these regulations, the coordinated plan should be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.”

The *Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility*, whose membership consists of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Transportation, defines coordination as “a process through which representatives of different agencies and client groups work together to achieve any one or all of the following goals: more cost-effective service delivery; increased capacity to serve unmet needs; improved quality of service; and, services which are more easily understood and accessed by riders.” [*Planning Guidelines*, Chapter 2, Page 1] Therefore, a *Coordinated Plan* that meets the federal mandate should:

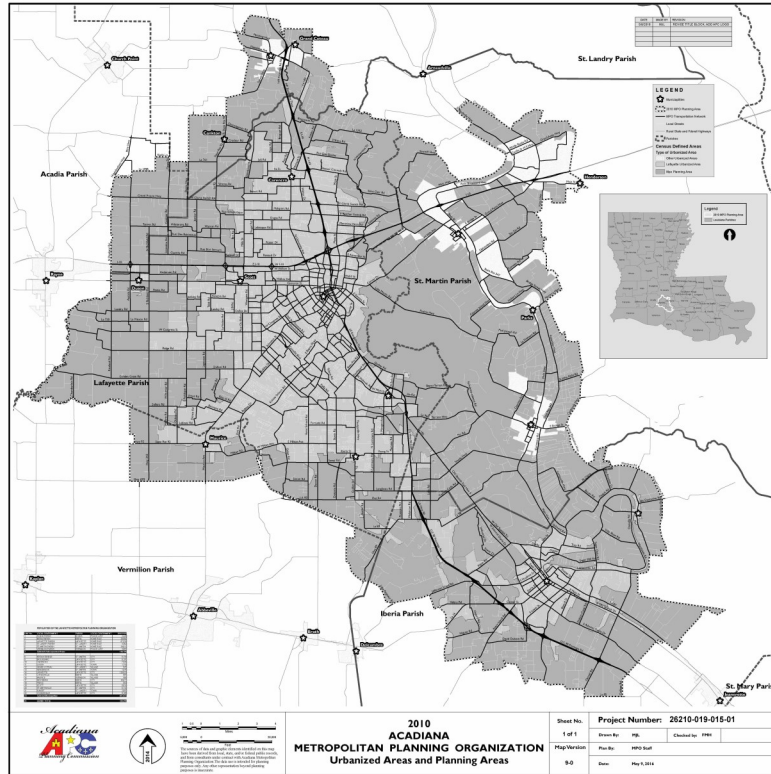
1. Be a unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes, lays out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services for funding and implementation.
2. Maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplications of services.
3. Incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.





There are approximately (13) independent public and private agencies/entities in the seven parish Acadiana Region serving fifty local government jurisdictions by providing coordinated human services transit, paratransit and fixed route public transit. There are federal, state and local restrictions among the transit providers for their respective service clientele depending on funding sources and qualifications. The Coordinated Human Services Public Transit planning process aims to bring together these groups to provide a comprehensive approach to transit operations in Acadiana while ensuring equitable access to transportation for all residents of the area.





Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization

The AMPO is federally funded organization that is responsible for planning program and coordination of federal highway and transit investments in urbanized area. The AMPO’s urbanized area is comprised of following Parish’s Lafayette portions of St. Landry including the City of Sunset, St. Martin including the Cities of Breaux Bridge and St. Martinville, Vermilion including the City of Maurice and Iberia Parish including the city of New Iberia and Acadia including the City of Duson.

CHSTP Regulatory Framework

All projects selected for funding by the 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program must:

- Be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan;
- The plan must be developed through a process with participation from seniors, the disabled, public, private and nonprofit transportation providers, and other members of the public; and

The maximum extent feasible, services funded under the 510 program will be coordinated with transportation services assisted by other Federal departments and agencies, including any transportation activities carried out by a recipient of a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.





About the 5310 Program

The 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program provides formula funding to states for assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. In rural and small urban areas, the state Department of Transportation is the direct recipient. In large urban areas, the direct recipient is chosen by the governor.

At least 55 percent of program funds must be used on capital or “traditional” 5310 projects.

Examples include:

- Buses and vans
- Wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices
- Transit related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/on-call systems
- Mobility management programs
- Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement

The remaining 45 percent is for other “non-traditional” projects. Examples include:

- Travel training
- Volunteer driver programs
- Building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features improving signage, or way-finding technology incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service
- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing and/or vanpooling programs.

Funding and Match

- Federal share is 80% for capital projects
- Federal share is 50% for operating assistance

Formula Details:

- Based on census data, the formula funds are apportioned to each State based on the number of older individuals and individuals with disabilities and allocated by area:
 - o Large UZA’s: 60%
 - o Small UZA’s: 20%
 - o Rural: 20%
- o States can transfer small urban or rural funding to large UZA’s. but not the other way around.





About the 5311 Rural Transit Program

Eligible recipients include states and federally recognized Indian Tribes. Subrecipients may include state or local governments authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

Eligible Activities Include:

- Planning, Capital, operating, job access, and reverse commute projects;
- Acquisition of Public Transportation services

Funding and Match:

- Federal Share 80% capital projects;
- Federal Share 50% operating assistance
- Federal Share 80% Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) non-fixed route paratransit service.

Formula Details:

Funds are apportioned to states based on a formula that includes land area, populations, revenue vehicle miles and low-income individuals in rural areas.

Intercity Bus Program:

Each state must spend no less that 15% of its annual apportionment for the development and support of intercity bus transportation, unless it can certify after consultation with the intercity bus providers, that the intercity bus needs of the state are being adequately met.





PLANNING ACTIVITIES

To Date (2018 –2020)

The Acadiana Public Transit Human Services Providers Coordinating Committee has met regularly on a quarterly basis for the past two years, frequently in conjunction with the Lake Charles Area Human Services Public Transit Providers. In addition to regular updates from the Department of Transportation and Development, the Acadiana Coordinating Committee has developed several new initiatives to promote human services transit including:

- ◆ Ride Acadiana, a pilot project utilizing cutaway buses to provide fixed route services to communities along the US 90 Corridor in Lafayette and Acadia Parish, including Crowley, Rayne, Duson and Scott. The project connected into the Lafayette Transit Fixed Route system. The pilot project ran for several months and demonstrated the value of using cutaway buses to provide flexible, rural fixed rate transit.
- ◆ The 2040 Acadiana Regional Transit Study is a comprehensive transit plan undertaken by the Acadiana Planning Commission to increase and further coordinate transit services in the Acadiana region. The Coordinating Committee was a significant resource in the of the plan.
- ◆ The Committee assisted in the formation of Driver Digital Tablet Software in conjunction with the South Louisiana Community College.





PARTICIPANTS

In the Planning Process

Lafayette Transit System (LTS):	Mike Mitchell, Transportation Supervisor
Lafayette LARC:	Fred Savoie, Transportation Manager Brian Hensgens, Executive Director
Lafayette Council on Aging:	Katherin Boudreaux, Executive Director Nathaniel Kelly, Transportation Manager
SMILE Community Action Agency:	Irma Bourgeois, Director of Field Operations Freddia Ruffin-Roberson, COO/HR Manager
St. Martin Council on Aging:	Shanese Lewis, Executive Director Natalie Blanchard, Transit Manager
St. Martin ARC:	Linda Courville, Transportation Supervisor
ARC of Acadiana:	Anthony Russo, Transportation Manager
Iberia Council on Aging:	Carol Whipp, Executive Director Chantelle Ardizone, Transit Secretary
ARC of Vermilion:	Janise Hardy, Director Hayley Guidry, Transportation Manager
Vermilion Community Action Agency:	Jeffery Beverly, Transportation Manager Clarice Landry
Acadia Council on Aging:	Malita Bartie, Executive Director
Evangeline Council on Aging:	Lisa DeRouen, Executive Director





St. Landry Community Action Agency:

Kirsten Thomas, Executive Director
Patrice Thomas

St. Landry Council on Aging:

Judy Doyle, Executive Director

LPTA:

Administrator

DOTD Public Transportation:

Jamie Ainsworth, Assistant Director
Casey Lewis, Urban Program Manager
Stephanie Barthelemy, Rural Program Manager

Compassionate Care of Louisiana

Tasha Senegal

SLICO-LA

Danielle West





COMMUNITY

Population for Human Services Transit

Human Services Public Transit serves four major groups in the community:

- ◇ Residents whose household incomes for the previous year falls under the official federal poverty threshold;
- ◇ Residents who do not vehicles available in their household;
- ◇ Residents with disabilities that may prevent them for operating a motor vehicle; and
- ◇ Residents who are 65 and older, who may experience delays in reaction time when operating a motor vehicle that can leave them vulnerable to being in a severe or fatal motor vehicle crash.

The chart below outlines the service population for Acadiana by parish.

Parish	Percent of Population that is 65 Years +	Percent of Population with a Disability	Percent of Population With Income At or Below Poverty Level	Percent of Population with No Vehicle Available
Acadia	14.4%	18.9%	23.9%	8.2%
Evangeline	14.7%	24.2%	27.5%	11.8%
Iberia	14.0%	16.4%	21.6%	10.1%
Lafayette	12.3%	11.9%	16.5%	6.9%
St. Landry	15.4%	12.5%	28.7%	10.0%
St. Martin	14.1%	14.9%	17.6%	6.0%
Vermilion	14.7%	16.8%	17.6%	6.7%





SERVICE PROVIDERS

Agency	Type of Service (fixed route, demand/ response/ flexible route)	Funding Source
ARC of Acadiana-Acadia	Demand/Response	5310
ARC of Acadiana- Iberia	Demand/Response	5310 & Local
ARC of Acadiana-Lafayette	Demand/Response	5310 & Local
ARC of Acadiana-St. Landry	Demand/Response	5310, 5311 & Local
ARC of St. Martin	Demand/Response	5310
ARC of Vermilion	Demand/Response	5310
COA-Acadia	Demand/Response	5310
COA-Evangeline	Demand/Response	5310 & 5311
COA-Iberia	Demand/Response	5310, 5311 & Local
OA-Lafayette	Demand/Response	5310 & Local
COA-St. Landry	Demand/Response	5310 & 5311
COA-St. Martin	Demand/Response	5311
CAA-St. Landry	Demand/Response	5311
CAA-Vermilion/St. Mary	Demand/Response	5311
LARC	Demand/Response	5310 & Local
SMILE CAA, Inc.-Iberia	Demand/Response	5310, 5311 & Local





OPERATIONAL

Capacity

- There are 175 transit (La Transit) vehicles operating daily in Acadiana and provided by 13 agency operators.
- Most of the 175 transit vehicles have wheel chair lifts.
- Seven parish school boards also operate similar vehicles for special need students. LPSS has 53 vehicles. Unknown number in remaining area parish school systems.
- Generally, the 175 (La Transit) vehicles are underutilized – operating for two runs a day (pick up clients and return them) or operating for a limited block of hours each day.





OPERATIONAL

Challenges

Throughout the planning process, the Acadiana Public Transit Human Services Providers Coordinating Committee provided feedback on operational challenges for human services transit providers. These challenges include:

- ⇒ Low driver pay
- ⇒ Driver turnover
- ⇒ Required paperwork documenting:
 - ⇒ Every rider
 - ⇒ Funding program paying for rider
 - ⇒ Origin/destination of each rider
 - ⇒ Timeline of each rider
- ⇒ Wheel chair lift repairs
 - ⇒ If it cannot be repaired locally, it must be sent to Ross Transportation in Alexandria. This requires weeks out of service.
- ⇒ Declining local revenue support
 - ⇒ Only two parish Council on Aging (COA) have a dedicated property tax for their operations. The others must generate funding from local governments, fund raisers, fees for services, and other means.
- ⇒ Each provider must duplicate administration and management of transit services .

Each challenge serves as an impediment to coordination efforts.





CONTINUING

Planning Process

The participants in the development of the Coordinated Plan have agreed to meet quarterly for the Plan period to:

- GIS Mapping & Analysis

GIS Mapping is tool that can be utilized to improve coordination in the Acadiana Region. By geocoding the origins and destinations of transit providers' demand response vehicles, providers and coordinators may gain a better understanding of transportation demand and any unmet needs for the region.

- * Identify and work with transit providers interested in sharing data to explore how GIS mapping can be useful to their agency by mapping transit trips, client address etc.. to gain a better understanding of transit activity and need in the region.

- Coordination

- Continue to facilitate four quarterly meeting per fiscal year.
- Monitor and evaluate on-going coordination activities
- Collect data on both needs and services
- Take advantage of any opportunities for coordination that become available
- Continue the coordination planning
- Keep the planning process open to inclusion of additional stakeholders

- Pedestrian Planning for Transit Access

- * Assisting transit providers in identifying transit stops that lack pedestrian infrastructure. Also working with providers to provide ADA compliant transit stops.



