

CENTRAL LOUISIANA

Rural Public Transportation Study

December 2021



RAPPC
Rapides Area Planning Commission

Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study

Rapides Area Planning Commission

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**Alexandria/Pineville
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Policy Committee**

RESOLUTION #RAPC-211208-1

(Adopting the Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study)

I, Mayor Clarence Fields, Chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Policy Committee, do hereby certify that at a meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee duly convened in Alexandria, Louisiana, at 10:30 AM on December 8th, 2021, the following Resolution was adopted:

“WHEREAS, the Transportation Policy Committee, composed primarily of elected officials, is the regional transportation policy body associated with RAPC and continues to be a regional forum for cooperative decisions on transportation; and,

WHEREAS, the Alexandria-Pineville Metropolitan Planning Organization conducted an in-depth rural public transportation study encompassing Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn Parishes with the primary goal of improving the quality of life and mobility options for Central Louisiana area residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study also determined feasibility and created a strategic blueprint outlining a new rural public transportation service to address regional mobility gaps in Central Louisiana;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on December 8, 2021, at the regularly scheduled Transportation Policy Committee meeting to receive staff information and additional public comment and a 14-day public comment period from December 9 through December 23; and

WHEREAS, the transportation policy committee is the decision making body for the Alexandria Pineville metropolitan planning organization; has reviewed and approved the study; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Transportation Policy Committee does hereby approve and adopt the Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study and directs staff of the Rapides Area Planning Commission to submit said document to the appropriate federal and state agencies.”

ADOPTED by the Transportation Policy Committee at its meetings on the 8th day of December 2021.

Signed and executed on the 29th day of December 2021.



Mayor Clarence Fields, Chairman
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Policy Committee



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Acknowledgements

Alexandria District Probation and Parole
Alexandria VA Medical Center
Allen COA
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Avoyelles COA
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Evangeline COA
Louisiana Central
Louisiana Department of Health
MediTrans
Rapides Foundation
Rapides Senior Center
Central Louisiana Technical Community College
United Way of Central Louisiana
Vernon COA
Workforce Development Commission

Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	2
1. <u>Introduction</u>	7
2. <u>Peer Review</u>	18
3. <u>Transit Demand Analysis</u>	23
4. <u>Engagement and Outreach</u>	29
5. <u>Initial Findings and Recommendations</u>	31
6. <u>Next Steps</u>	38
7. <u>Conclusion</u>	45

Appendix A – CENLA Region Travel Pattern Report

Appendix B – Presentation Provided to 5311 Providers

Appendix C – Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Application Documentation & Letters of Support

List of Tables:

- [Table ES1](#) Unmet Demand
- [Table 1.1](#) Study Area Demographics
- [Table 1.2](#) Existing 5310 and 5311 Transit Providers
- [Table 1.3](#) 2021 Statewide 5311 Apportionment
- [Table 2.1](#) Peer Systems Overview
- [Table 3.1](#) Annual Demand for Rural Transit
- [Table 3.2](#) Peer Trip Table
- [Table 3.3](#) Peer Review Annual Demand for Rural Transit
- [Table 3.4](#) Unmet Demand
- [Table 4.1](#) Agency and Stakeholder Meetings
- [Table 5.1](#) Meet the Demand Scenario
- [Table 5.2](#) Equal Service Scenario
- [Table 5.3](#) Cost Constrained Pilot
- [Table 6.1](#) Rural Transit Pilot Application Information

List of Figures:

- [Figure ES1](#) Rural Regional Public Transportation 12-Parish Study Area
- [Figure ES2](#) Alexandria-Pineville Urbanized Area Boundary
- [Figure 1.0](#) Alexandria-Pineville Urbanized Area Boundary
- [Figure 1.1](#) Study Area
- [Figure 1.2](#) Study Area USDOT Persistent Poverty Census Tracts
- [Figure 1.3](#) Study Area Population Density
- [Figure 1.4](#) Study Area Employment Density
- [Figure 1.5](#) Study Area Rural Transit Provider Overview
- [Figure 3.1](#) Average Weekday Trips to Alexandria

Executive Summary

This report summarizes a comprehensive study effort undertaken by the Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) to better understand current and future demand for rural public transportation within a twelve-parish region within the Central Louisiana region (CENLA), including parishes of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn (**Figure ES1**). Note that this study area is exclusive of public transportation demand within the Alexandria-Pineville Urbanized Area (UZA), as this area is serviced by Alexandria Transit (**Figure ES2**).

The study effort identifies the area as being high-needs area for rural public transportation based on demography, socio-economic data, as well as historic documentation from the Human Service Transportation Planning process. From a data perspective, based on 2015-2019 American Community Survey, the study area is on average, more poor, more disabled, older, and more unemployed than the statewide average. This finding is supported through a series of coordinating meetings held with regional agencies which include The Rapides Foundation, United Way of Central Louisiana, and the Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition. In addition, agencies such as the Louisiana Office of Public Health Region 6, have identified the lack of reliable and accessible public transportation as a factor for poor health outcomes in the region.

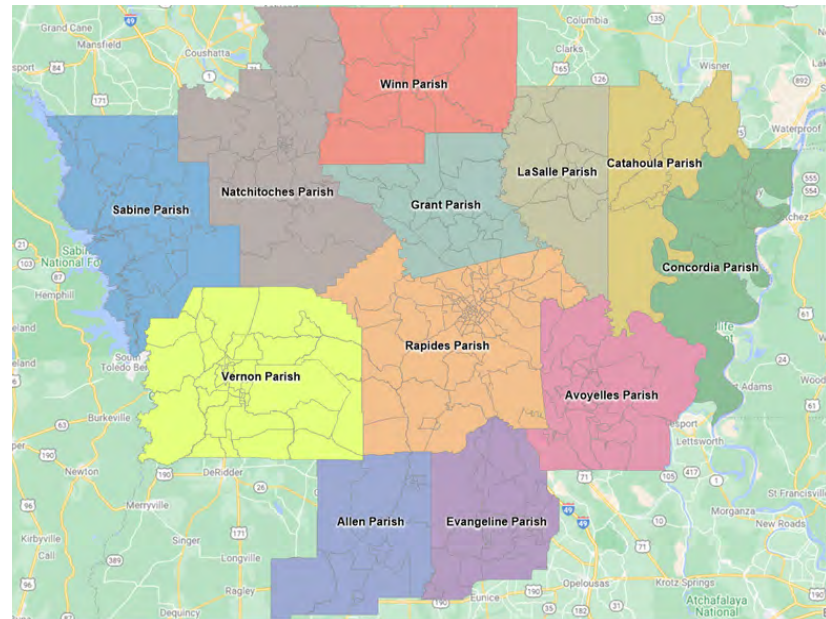


Figure ES1 Rural Regional Public Transportation 12-Parish Study Area

Currently, the 12-parish study area has five (5) existing rural public transportation providers, utilizing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 formula funding to provide demand response-type service. These providers are located in Allen, Avoyelles, Evangeline, Rapides, and Vernon Parishes. They provide trips across the CENLA region (and sometimes outside of it) but with origin points within their parish of operation. The remaining seven (7) parishes have no dedicated rural public transportation options. There are some other providers who utilize 5310 formula funding in any given year to provide demand response type service in Avoyelles, Catahoula, LaSalle, Rapides, Sabine, and Winn Parish. Note that Grant and Natchitoches Parishes are the only two in the CENLA region that have no existing providers (5310 or 5311). However, due to the requirements of the FTA 5310 program, these providers may or may not choose to participate in a given year. Participation as a 5310 provider is dependent upon a given agency's ability to provide service, as well as its ability and desire to apply for and leverage 5310 resources. Both FTA Section 5310 and 5311 resources are administered through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD).

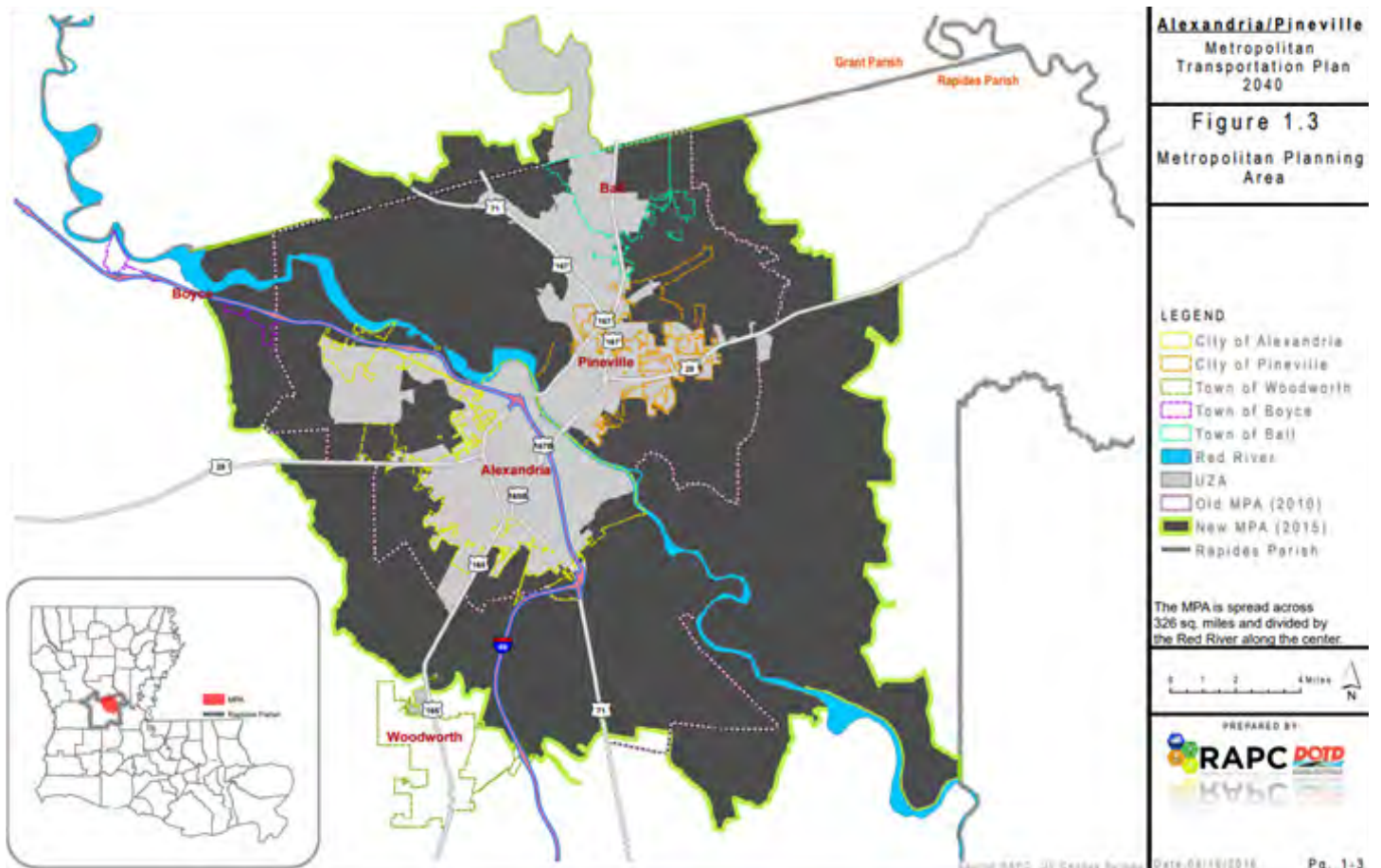


Figure ES2 Alexandria-Pineville Urbanized Area Boundary

A regional trip flow analysis was completed utilizing cell phone data to understand travel patterns throughout the region. The analysis identified the following

- Most trips in the region are intra-parish, occurring within a given parish.
- Trips to and from activity centers (Alexandria and Natchitoches Medical Centers) originate from throughout the entire region but are generally not a significant number of overall trips from the other parishes in the CENLA region.
- Saturday and Sunday trips occur at a level of about 75% of weekday trip flows
- Traditional rural demand response service is likely the best strategy for providing transit options throughout the rural areas of the CENLA region.

Forecasting for quantifying the need for additional rural public transportation was completed using methodology generated from the Transportation Research Board’s Transit Cooperative Research Program. This forecasting identified a total annual regional demand of 443,310 trips and an unmet demand of 281,519 trips, which indicates a significant gap between the total demand and existing service. Population forecasts indicate generally flat growth for the foreseeable future

Table ES1 Unmet Demand

Parish	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual/365)	Actual Annual Trips	Actual Daily Trips (Annual/365)	Unmet Annual	Unmet Daily	Percent Unmet
Allen	30,828	84	13,027	36	17,801	48	57%
Avoyelles	59,374	163	30,965	85	28,409	78	48%
Catahoula*	10,292	28	6,832	19	3,460	9	32%
Concordia*	21,547	59	-	-	21,547	59	100%
Evangeline	51,557	141	13,753	38	37,804	103	73%
Grant*	26,522	73	-	-	26,522	73	100%
LaSalle*	16,620	46	14,389	39	2,231	7	15%
Natchitoches*	40,816	112	-	-	40,816	112	100%
Rapides	84,288	231	61,886	170	22,402	61	27%
Sabine*	28,296	78	5,990	16	22,306	62	79%
Vernon	54,444	149	12,902	35	41,542	114	77%
Winn*	18,826	52	2,147	6	16,679	46	88%
Totals/Average	443,410	1,216	161,891	444	281,519	772	66%

Asterisks (*) indicate parishes with no existing 5311 providers

This analysis suggested that 5310 providers could help to meet demand, in some parishes, to a significant degree (Catahoula, LaSalle) and that in other parishes significant demand exists with no or few options available (Concordia, Grant, Natchitoches, Sabine). Additionally, certain parishes with existing 5311 and 5310 providers still are experiencing significant unmet demand (Evangeline, Vernon).

The study effort included **stakeholder engagement** that involved meetings with the RAPC, the Louisiana DOTD, existing 5310 and 5311 providers, area economic development organizations, healthcare organizations, Medicaid providers, local governments, and non-profits. These meetings were completed as one-on-one virtual meetings, larger group meetings, and telephone calls. The meetings derived the following information:

- Each existing 5311 provider is independently responsible for operating, advertising, and administering public transportation service, limiting its ability to utilize economies of scale.
- The majority of 5311 providers rely on Medicaid revenue to support their operations and generate match for federal funding.

- Existing providers generally have a focus area on the elderly and disabled, which may limit outreach and engagement to the general public.
- The lack of public transportation is impeding access to healthcare, education, goods, and services.
- Transportation was identified as a high-need area by all stakeholders
- The potential exists to coordinate partnerships with businesses (such as RoyOMartin), foundations (United Way, Rapides Foundation), education institutions (Central Louisiana Technical Community College), and local governments (municipalities, parishes) to identify sources of local share contributions.

Based on these conversations, and the data analyzed, **three options** were prepared to address the public transportation gap in the CENLA region:

1	<p>Meet Demand (Meet Full Annual Demand in CENLA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$30M Year 1 - \$9.5M Year 2
2	<p>Equal Service (Provide Equivalent Level of Service in All Parishes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$15.5M Year 1 - \$3.5M Year 2
3	<p>Cost Constrained Pilot (Grant and Natchitoches Parish Pilot Effort)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$762k Year 1 - \$402k Year 2

The **Meet the Demand Scenario** is simply not feasible given budgetary constraints in the CENLA region from a federal, state, and local perspective. However, the information is provided to understand the true cost to provide a comprehensive level of service. The **Equal Service Scenario** is theoretically feasible given a reallocation of regional/statewide transit resources and a concerted effort to fund rural public transportation throughout CENLA. The **Cost Constrained Pilot Scenario** can be implemented in the short term through a combination of RAPC resources and FTA / DOTD resources currently available.

The planning effort culminated in the creation of a strategy for the creation of a Rural Public Transportation Cooperative (RPTC) under the umbrella of the RAPC. The strategy recommends beginning the provision of new 5311-funded service in unserved areas in partnership with DOTD and other regional entities. Following this pilot program, the RPTC can begin to consider voluntary consolidation of existing 5311 providers to begin to leverage economies of scale region wide. Coordination with the DOTD should occur to facilitate the set-aside (where possible) of 5310 resources for existing 5311 providers so they can continue to provide 5310-eligible trips.

Ultimately the RPTC would evolve to become a robust rural regional public transportation agency, providing service across the 12-parish region. Along the way, the **strategy recommends the following**:

- The creation and documentation of administrative documents and **policy frameworks** related to service area definition, organizational structure of the RPTC, vision, mission, and goals, the development of compliant policies, plans, and procedures, maintenance/asset management plans, performance measures, and other related documents.
- The creation of a **centralized mobility manager position** to include trip matching/dispatching services for the RPTC. This should consider a partnership with United Way of Central Louisiana's 211 system.
- The creation of a **public engagement program and outreach program** (to include an easy to use and dedicated web-presence) to target potential riders. The outreach program should also consider the hiring of public engagement staff to actively engage with stakeholder agencies and community groups organizations.
- The creation of a **consolidated transit vehicle inspection program** so that only one inspection is necessary to satisfy federal, state, and local requirements. Currently transit agencies must undergo several inspections to satisfy requirements from different entities.
- Partnering with the Workforce Commission and the Central Louisiana Technical Community College to create a **driver training and certification program**.
- Providing **directly operated transit service**.
- Pursuing **FTA grantee status** to facilitate the direct receipt of federal discretionary funding.
- Pursuing **funding** through state and federal agencies to support increased capability and to continually work to meet unmet demand.
- Forming **partnerships** with partners such as the District Probation and Parole Office, Central Louisiana Technical Community College System, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition, VA Medical Center, and others to identify methods to efficiently provide public transportation trips to and from these partner agencies facilities.

This plan provides a summary of current and future projected unmet rural transit demand for the CENLA region, presents a phased study area transit service profile, identifies the challenges and opportunities associated with providing regional rural transit, outlines a system operating plan and budget, develops a startup strategy for operations, and prepares a list of priority tasks for the RPTC to consider moving forward.

Other activities completed through this planning process include the creation of a Fiscal Year 2021 FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Application (**Appendix C**) to support the creation of the documents, plans, and materials listed above. The consultant team also assisted RPTC staff in the development of a DOTD Section 5311 application to initialize the pilot project service in Grant and Natchitoches parishes.

1. Introduction

The **Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC)** is a regional organization providing transportation planning, land use planning, development review, technical assistance, geographic information, and other planning and enforcement services for its member governments as well as other partnered political subdivisions. The RAPC is the fiscal agent and provides operational staff for the **Alexandria-Pineville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** which provides transportation planning for the urbanized area (UZA) consisting of Alexandria, Pineville, portions of Ball and Woodworth, as well as adjacent pockets of unincorporated Rapides Parish. The MPO also provides transit planning for the urbanized area along with the rural, eight-parish Kisatchie-Delta Planning and Development District. This particular planning effort considers an area larger than the traditional RAPC region and is inclusive of what is generally referred to as the Central Louisiana (CENLA) region.

The CENLA region consists of 12 parishes in Central Louisiana – Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn.

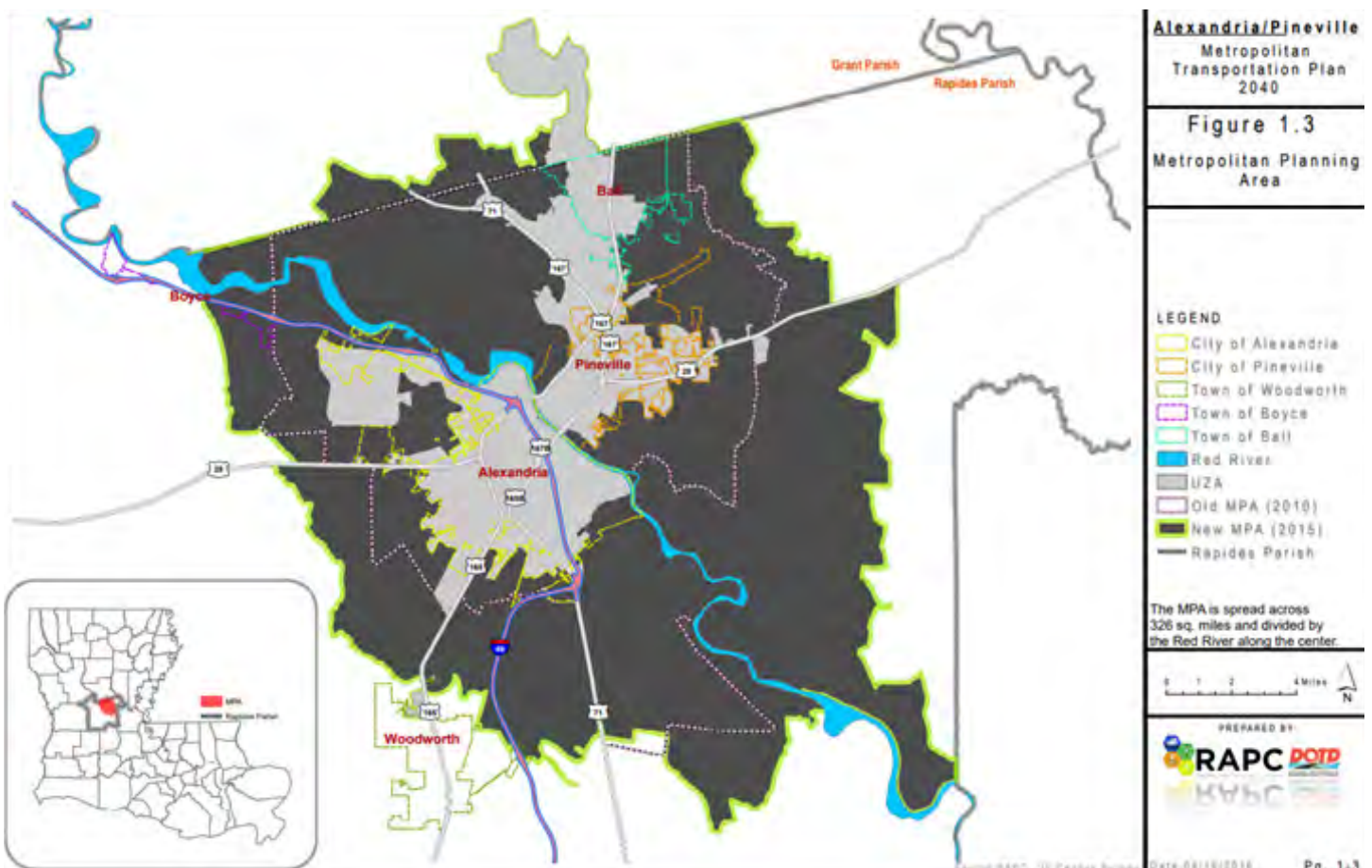


Figure 1.0 Alexandria-Pineville Urbanized Area Boundary

The RAPC sponsored the **Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study (RPTS)** in partnership and with financial support from the **Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)**. The purpose of the RPTS is to:

- Evaluate and quantify unmet rural transit demand in Central Louisiana
- Identify options for meeting rural transit demand
- Explore sustainable administrative and service delivery models to address rural transit need
- Provide a start-up strategy for consideration

The overarching goal of the RPTS is to develop a framework to better meet the demand for rural general public transportation throughout Central Louisiana.

Existing Conditions

The study area for the RPTS comprises 12 parishes which includes Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn (**Figure 1.1**). U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) lists over 40 percent of the census tracts in each of the 12 parishes as areas of persistent poverty (**Figure 1.2**), and five parishes as parishes of persistent poverty – Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, and Winn.

This 12-parish area encompasses almost 20,000 square miles (over a third of the State) and has a population of approximately 425,000 residents. On the following pages, **Figure 1.3** and **Figure 1.4** show the study areas population density and job density, respectively.

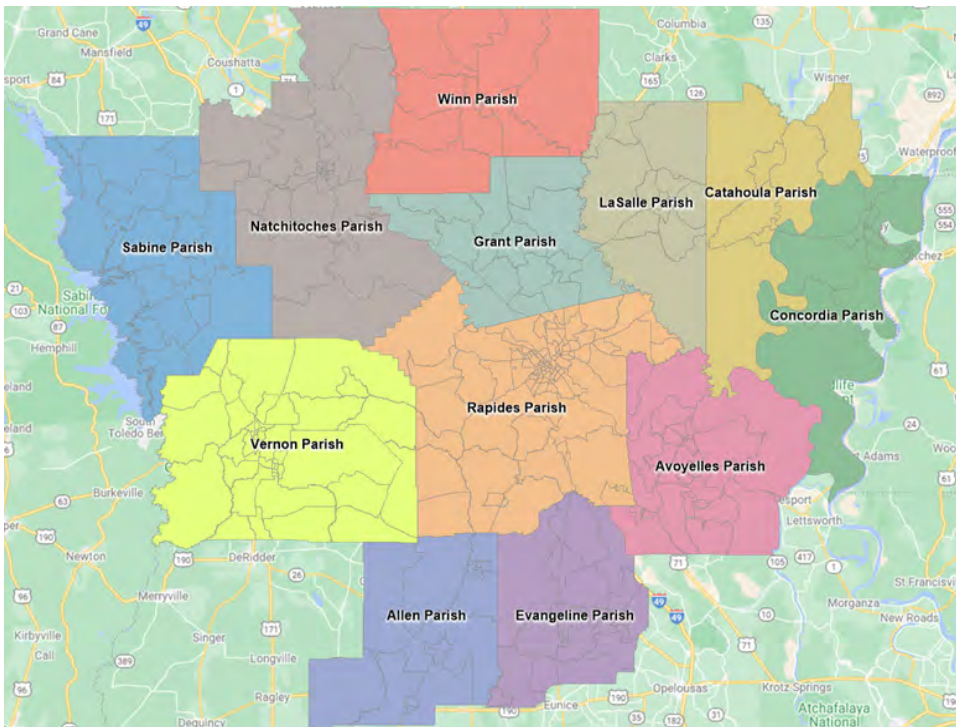


Figure 1.1 Study Area



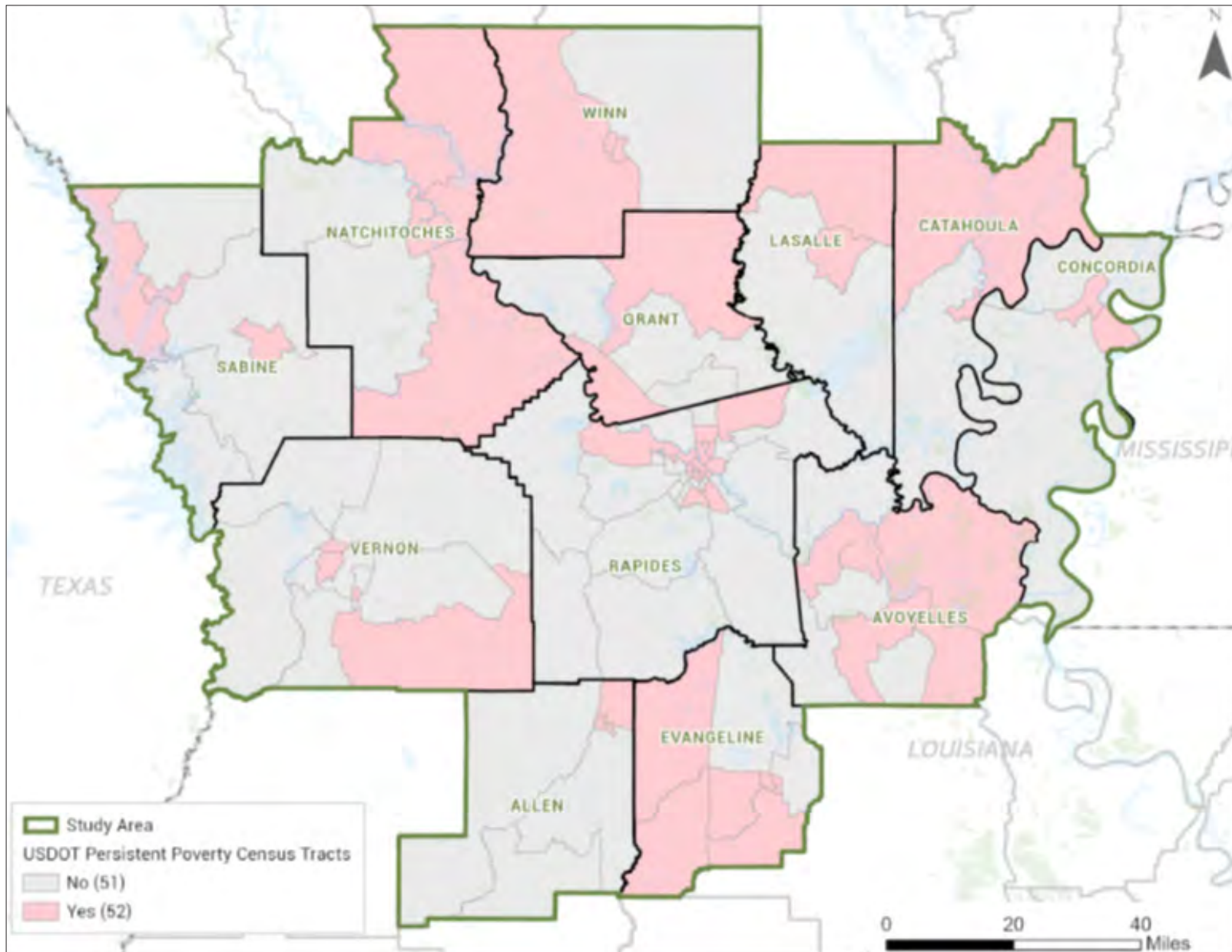


Figure 1.2 Study Area USDOT Persistent Poverty Census Tracts

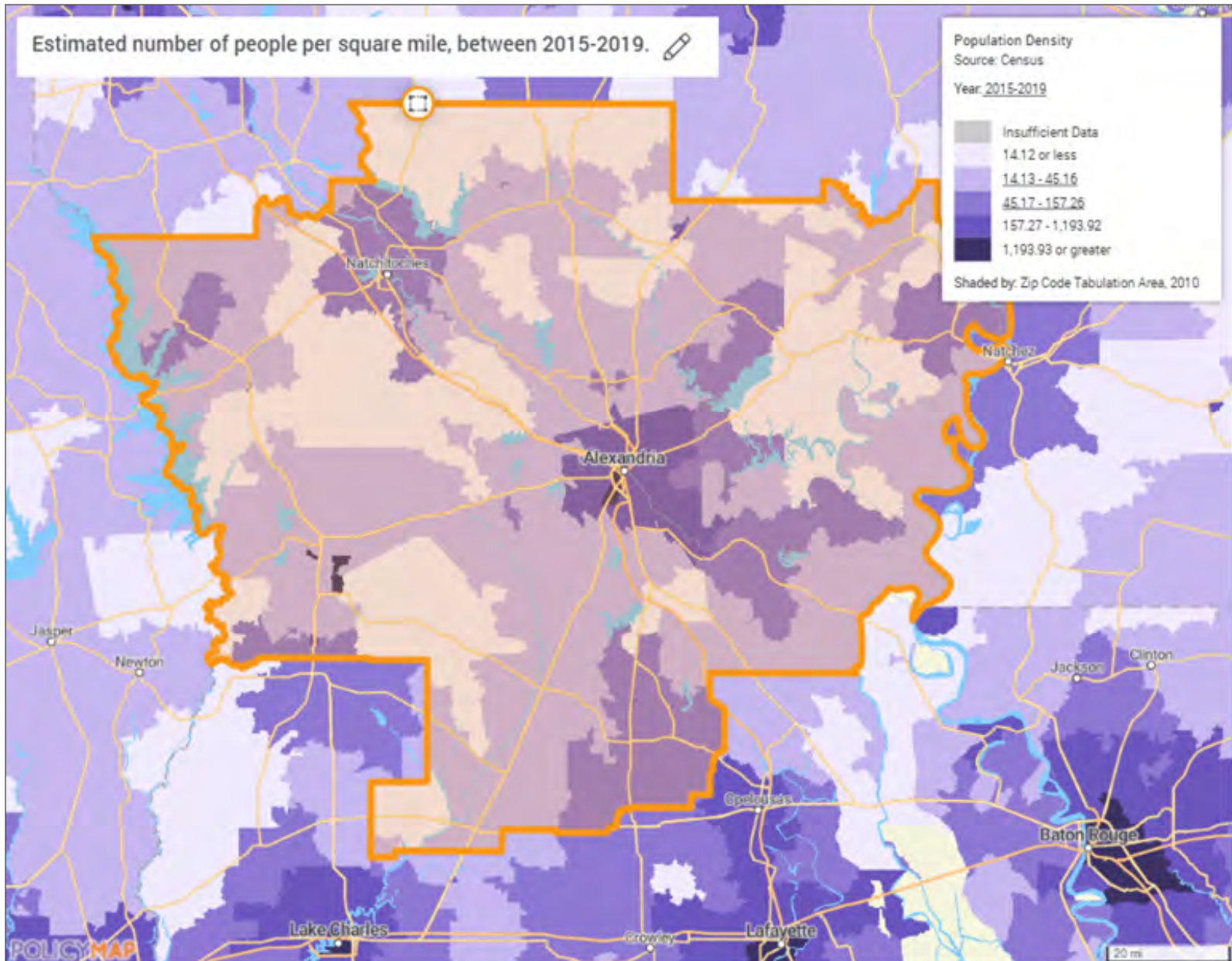


Figure 1.3 Study Area Population Density

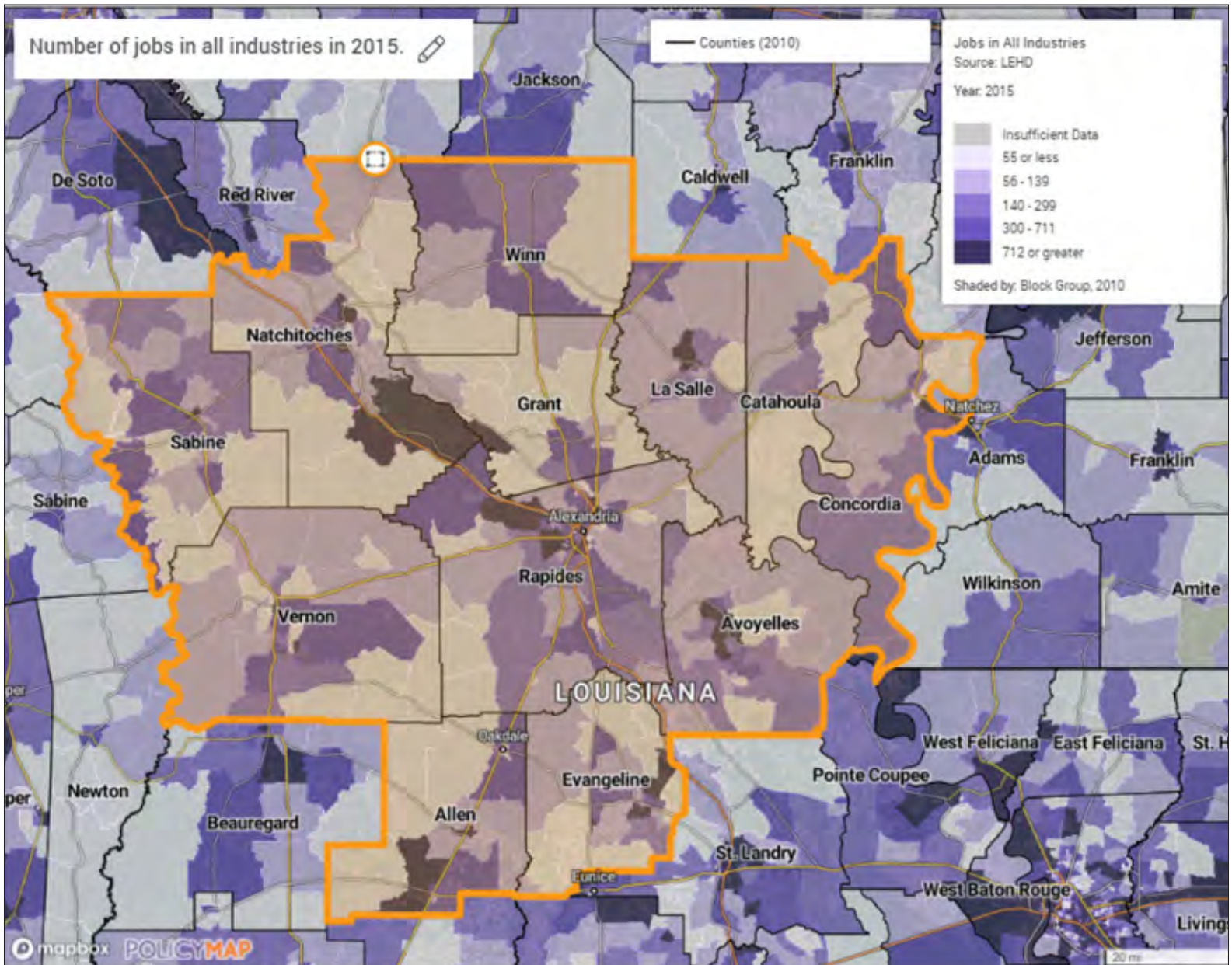


Figure 1.4 Study Area Employment Density

Table 1.1 summarizes the demographic statistics of the study area. The 12-parish area on average has higher percentages of population with a disability living in poverty, households with zero vehicles, population over 65, and unemployment than the state average. Individually, five parishes have a higher percent poverty than the state average; half of the study area parishes have a higher percentage of the population with a disability living in poverty and population over 65 than the state average; five parishes have a higher percent of households with zero vehicles than the state average; and four parishes have a higher percentage of unemployment than the state average.

Table 1.1 Study Area Demographics

Parish	Population	Households	% Poverty	% Poverty with Disability	% HH with Zero Vehicle	% Pop. Age 65+	% Unemployment
Allen	25,618	7,925	14.5%	38.1%	7.7%	14.7%	5.7%
Avoyelles	40,669	15,163	24.4%	29.5%	7.9%	16.7%	5.8%
Catahoula	9,766	3,364	22.1%	5.0%	8.8%	16.8%	6.4%
Evangeline	19,778	7,162	25.1%	14.2%	7.5%	16.9%	6.5%
Grant	33,589	12,172	28.7%	30.0%	11.7%	15.1%	5.9%
La Salle	22,340	6,989	18.8%	24.1%	5.4%	14.7%	5.8%
Natchitoches	14,936	4,814	20.0%	18.6%	3.7%	16.7%	4.3%
Rapides	38,769	14,659	32.3%	12.5%	10.8%	16.1%	6.0%
Sabine	130,970	48,488	19.6%	21.3%	9.5%	15.9%	5.1%
Vernon	23,991	9,158	18.6%	17.0%	8.0%	20.1%	5.1%
Winn	49,646	17,696	17.3%	24.5%	7.3%	11.7%	6.2%
Study Area	14,313	5,483	18.7%	32.3%	7.5%	18.3%	6.3%
Louisiana	424,385	153,073	21.7%	22.3%	8.0%	16.1%	6.0%

Source: 2015 – 2019 American Community Survey

Existing Transit

According to the Louisiana Transit Resource Guide, existing transit service in the RPTS study area consists of ten (10) 5310 providers and seven (7) 5311 providers. The 5310 providers receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula funds from the DOTD for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. The 5311 providers receive FTA formula funds, suballocated through the DOTD, for public transportation agencies servicing areas that are outside of an urban boundary with a population of 50,000 or less.

On the following page, **Table 1.2** shows the existing 5310 and 5311 providers in the study area. **Table 1.3** shows the 2021 statewide 5311 apportionments for each agency. Subsequent sections provide a brief description of each transit agency, note that there are currently no 5311 providers north of Vernon, Rapides and Avoyelles Parishes. This is demonstrated in **Figure 1.5** in addition to which parishes are included in the Human Service Transportation Plan as well as the Rapides Area Planning Commission.

Table 1.2 Existing 5310 and 5311 Transit Providers

Parish	Type	Operator	Population Served	Eligible Trip Type	Monday – Friday Hours*	Wheelchair Accessible
Allen	5311	Allen COA	Seniors	Program Related	7am-4pm	Yes
Avoyelles	5311	Avoyelles COA	General Public, ADA Eligible Individuals	All Trip Types	6am-6pm	Yes
	5310	Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled	People with Disabilities (clients only)	Program Related, Shopping	6:30am-3:30pm	Yes
Catahoula	5310	Catahoula ARC	People with Disabilities (clients only)	All Trip Types	8am-3pm	Yes
	5311	Catahoula COA	Seniors	Program Related	9am-3pm	No
Concordia	5310	Concordia COA	Seniors	Program Related	8am-3pm	Yes
Evangeline	5311	Evangeline COA	Seniors	Program Related	6am-5pm	Yes
LaSalle	5310	LaSalle ADD	People with Disabilities (clients only)	Program Related, Shopping	7:30am-3:30pm	Yes
Rapides	5311	Alexandria Transit	General Public, ADA & Medicaid Eligible Individuals	All Trip Types	6am-10pm	Yes
	5310	Rapids ARC/J. Eskew Center	People with Disabilities (clients only)	All Trip Types	6am-5pm	Yes
	5311	Rapides Senior Citizens Center	General Public, ADA Eligible Individuals	All Trip Types	8am-2pm	Yes
	5310	St. Mary's Residential Training School	People with Disabilities (residents only)	All Trip Types	On-call	Yes
	5310	Alexandria VA Health Care System	Disabled Veterans	Medical	6am-6pm	Yes
	5310	Town of Ball	Seniors	Program Related	8am-12pm	No
Sabine	5310	Sabine COA	Seniors	Program Related	8am-4pm	Yes
Vernon	5311	Vernon COA	General Public, ADA & Medicaid Eligible Individuals	All Trip Types	6am-5pm	Yes
Winn	5310	Winn COA	Seniors, General Public	All Trip Types	7am-3pm	Yes

Source: Louisiana Transit Resource Guide, October 2021

*Alexandria Transit operates Monday – Saturday

Table 1.3 2021 Statewide 5311 Apportionment

Parish	5311 Provider	Federal Funds	Local Funds
Allen	Council on Aging	\$177,664	\$193,613
Avoyelles	Council on Aging	\$210,992	\$213,566
Evangeline	Council on Aging	\$156,534	\$153,841
Rapides	Rapides Senior Center	\$53,539	\$55,540
Vernon	Council on Aging	\$198,885	\$178,968
Total		\$798,885	\$795,528

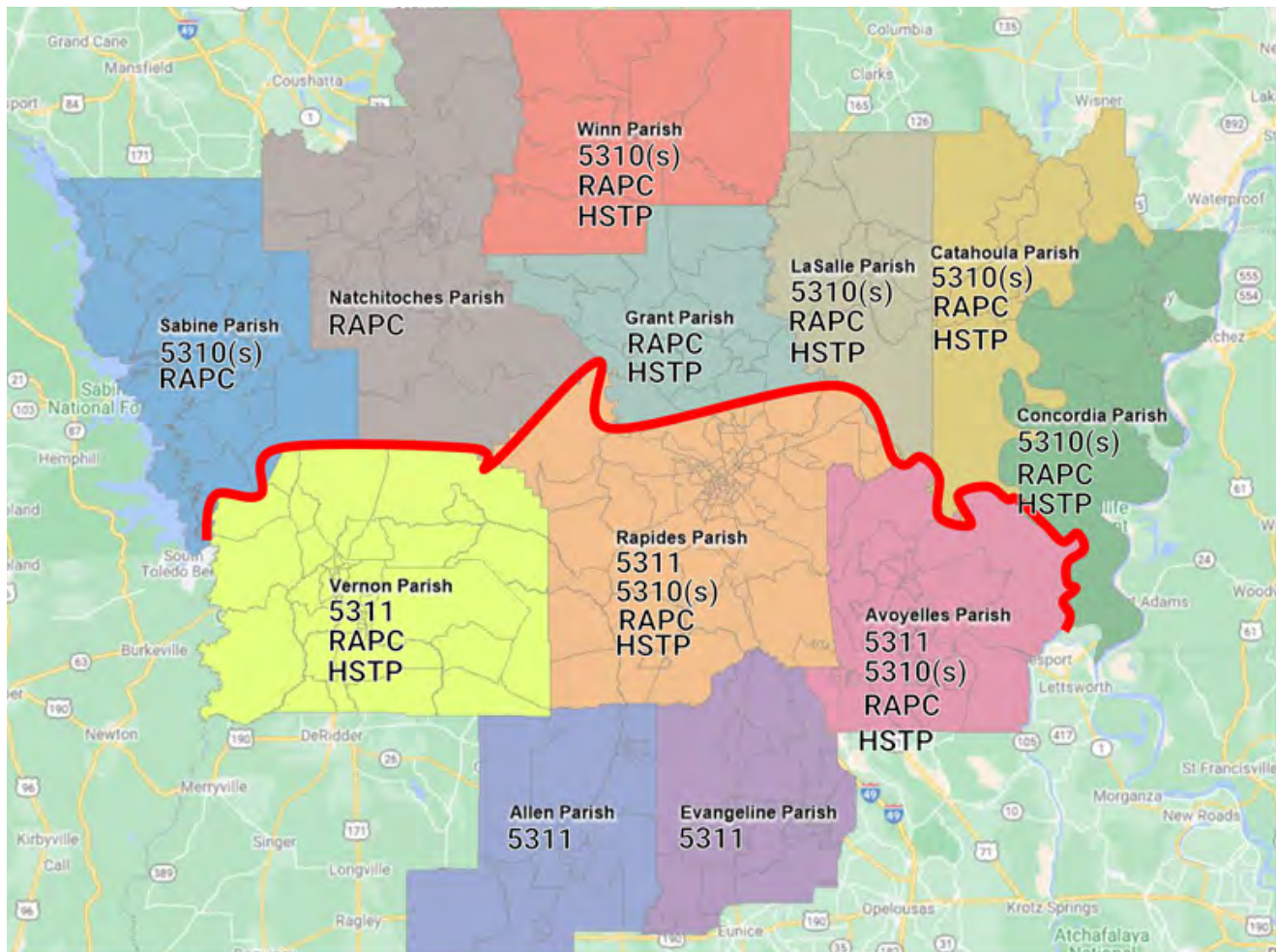


Figure 1.5 Study Area Rural Transit Provider Overview



Allen Council of Aging

Allen Council on Aging, in Oakdale, through its Transportation Department, Allen Parish Transit, has served the general public with certified transportation through three transportation programs: rural public transportation, elderly and disabled transportation, and non-emergency medical transit for ten years. Allen COA operates demand response service operates every weekday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. They have 10 ADA accessible vehicles and fares are based on trip mileage and cost of fuel. Elderly and disabled transportation must be booked locally by 9:00am the day of the trip and all other trips must be booked 24 hours in advance of the trip.

Avoyelles COA

Avoyelles COA/Avoyelles Parish Public Transit (APPT) in Marksville has been providing transportation in Avoyelles Parish for over 25 years. APPT's fleet consists of 11 vehicles which are wheelchair lift equipped. APPT serves the entire Avoyelles Parish and travels into two adjoining parishes – Rapides and St. Landry. APPT operates every weekday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm and provides the general public trips to destinations such as grocery stores, medical facilities, government offices, work sites, job training, bank and medical facilities. Fares are based on trip miles

Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled

Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled is in Marksville that serves the developmentally disabled individuals in the entire Avoyelles Parish. The agency has four ADA accessible vehicles that operate from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Catahoula ARC

Located in Jonesville, Catahoula ARC provides transportation to developmentally delayed adults from 18 years of age and older. Transportation is provided to and from the Center, employment sites and individual consumer needs (bank, post office, dollar store, grocery store, doctor appointments community outings). Catahoula ARC operates from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Catahoula COA

Catahoula COA in Jonesville provides transportation assistance to seniors. Transportation is offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. In addition to transportation assistance, Catahoula COA provides congregate meals, home meal delivery, and other services directed to the senior population.

Concordia COA

Concordia COA in Vidalia provides transportation to seniors and persons with disabilities. They operate three 11-passenger ADA accessible vans from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. In parish one-way trip ranges from \$2.00 to \$8.00 depending on the destination.

Evangeline COA

Evangeline COA, in Ville Platte, operates Evangeline Transit. Evangeline Transit has been in operation since 1984 and provides transit on a demand response basis. They are a certified Medicaid provider and are contracted to transport clients to dialysis centers in Evangeline Parish. They operate eight vehicles from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday with a fare ranging from \$1.00 to \$40.00 depending on the destination.

LaSalle ADD

LaSalle ADD in Jena operates six vehicles Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. Half of the vehicles are ADA accessible. LaSalle ADD provides specialized transportation services to their clients which are individuals with disabilities.

Alexandria Transit

Alexandria Transit (ATRANS) provides fixed route bus service (eight routes) to the cities of Alexandria and Pineville. Their system is operated by the City of Alexandria. ATRANS has 13 ADA accessible buses and three paratransit vans which provides demand response paratransit service for qualifying persons who are unable to access the fixed route service because of disabilities. ATRANS fares are \$0.75 for an adult and \$0.35 for seniors and children age 1 to 13. Paratransit one-way fare is \$0.75. ATRANS operating hours are Monday through Saturday from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm with night service being offered from 6 pm to 10 pm for all service

Rapids ARC/J. Eskew Center

Rapids ARC in Alexandria provides demand-responsive transportation services to seniors and persons with disabilities. They have 16 ADA accessible vehicles which operate Monday – Friday from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm. Rapids ARC services Rapides and South Grant Parishes.

Rapides Senior Center

Rapides Senior Center is located in Pineville and operates demand response service to Woodworth, Glenmore, Lecompte, and Boyce. They operate two ADA accessible vehicles Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Fares are:

- Inside town limits (age 60 and over) - \$2.00
- Inside town limits (adults) - \$5.00
- Over 10-miles (age 60 and over) - \$6.00
- Over 10-miles (adults) - \$10.00

St. Mary's Residential Training School

St. Mary's Residential Training School in Boyce takes care of children and adults with developmental disabilities. It is a 5310 provider and offers on-call transportation services to its clientele.

Alexandria VA Health Care System

Alexandria VA Health Care System's Engineering department operates a shuttle bus service for disabled veterans to access medical care. The service is available from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Town of Ball

The town of Ball operates demand response service for seniors and persons with disabilities within the city limits Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Sabine COA

Sabine COA is in the Town of Many and provides demand response program-related transit service to seniors and persons with disabilities in Sabine Parish. They have five ADA accessible vehicles that operate from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. They do not charge a base fare, but request in-parish trip donations of \$8.00 for adults and \$10.00 for wheelchairs. Out-parish trip donations are \$15.00 for adults and wheelchairs. For shopping trips, they request a donation of \$5.00.

Vernon COA

Vernon Parish Public Transit, located in the City of Leesville, is operated by the Vernon COA and serves the entire Vernon Parish. The parish transit system was designed to provide accessible and affordable transit service for all ages. Vernon Parish is the third largest parish in the state and is very rural in nature. The transit system is vital to the well-being of parish residents.

Vernon Parish Public Transit is demand response and is tailored to meet the personal needs of present and future residents of the parish. Trips that are made in the service area provide access to medical appointments, shopping, senior centers, and businesses.

Vernon Parish Transit operates eight ADA accessible vehicles Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm. One-way fares range from \$8.00 within the Leesville city limits to \$16.00 outside of Leesville. Medical trips range from \$25.00 - \$450.00 depending on the destination.

Winn COA

Winn COA in Winnfield operates Winn Parish Transit. Winn Parish Transit provides demand response service to the disabled and elderly individuals located within the parish. They also provide transportation to the general public if seats are available. Winn Parish Transit is the only transportation option in the parish except for non-emergency medical transport.

Winn Parish Transit operates three vehicles with one being ADA accessible from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. Fares for the general public range from \$10.00 to \$15.00 and the elderly are asked for a contribution.

Role of Rapides Area Planning Commission and Rural Public Transportation

Historically the RAPC has functioned as a regional collaborator and been responsible for the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process amongst the existing public transportation providers in the region. This has largely been accomplished through the Human Services Transportation Planning process, coordinated through the Central Louisiana Coordinated Transportation Coalition (CLCTC), which is an entity shepherded by the RAPC. The RAPC is also the entity responsible for the creation of the federally required Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) every five (5) years.

The RAPC instituted this planning process with the hypothesis that there may be unmet transit demand within the CENLA area and that there may be an opportunity to create efficiencies within areas where public transportation is currently being provided.

2. Peer Review

The purpose of the peer review is to provide a comparison of common performance measures to evaluate existing services, while also illustrating the performance of systems that provide demand response service types that could be explored by the RAPC in the future. Five peer transit agencies were identified, they include:

- Tri-CAP Public Transit Connection, Waite Park, Minnesota
- Licking County Transit, Newark, Ohio
- River Parishes Transit Authority, LaPlace, Louisiana
- Central Texas Rural Transit District, City and Rural Rides (CARR), Coleman, Texas
- Colorado Valley Transit, Columbus, Texas

For each system, the following information is gather:

- Service area
- Services provide
- Primary service area population
- Governance structure
- Hours of Operation
- Annual Ridership
- Fleet size
- Fare structure

On the following page, **Table 2.1** provides an overview of each peer system, the subsequent sections provide more detail on each system and their operations.

Table 2.1 Peer Systems Overview

Transit System	Service Area (Counties)	Primary Service Area Population (2019)	Service Area Size (sq. mi.)	Governance Structure	Hours of Operation	Annual Ridership (2019)	Fleet Size	One-Way Adult Fare
Tri-CAP Public Transit Connection	Benton, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburn, Stearns Counties, MN	358,543	4,089	14-Member Board of Directors	Mon-Fri: 6a-6p Sat: 8a-5p	132,056	26	City Advanced: \$1.25 Rural Advanced: \$3.00 City Same Day: \$2.00 Rural Same Day: \$3.75
Licking County Transit	Licking County, OH	179,862	687	7-Member Transit Board	M-F: 5a-8p Sat: 6a-6p	113,893	27	\$4.00
River Parishes Transit Authority	St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist Parishes, LA	117,033	1,017	7-Member Transit Board	M-F: 5a-7:30p Sat: 5:30a-7:30p	17,487	5	\$2.00
Central Texas Rural Transit District	Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Erath, Nolan, Runnels, Shackelford, Stephens, Rural Taylor Counties, TX	310,326	10,837	11-Member Transit District Board	M-F: 7:30a-5:30p	109,697	86	\$1.00-\$12.00 Depending on Trip Mileage
Colorado Valley Transit District	Austin, Colorado, Wharton, Waller Counties, TX	148,058	3,242	7-Member Board of Directors	M-F: 6a-6p	99,491	23	Inner City: \$1.00 Inner County: \$2.00 County-to-County: \$5.00

Tri-CAP Public Transit Connection

The Tri-CAP Public Transit is operated by the Tri-County Action Program (Tri-CAP), a non-profit organization based in Waite Park, Minnesota. Established in 1965, Tri-CAP provides transit in areas of Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Mille Lacs, and Sterns Counties. Tri-CAP Public Transit also provides transit service in the cities of Albany, Holdingford, Sauk Center, Melrose, Cold Springs, St. Joseph, Paynesville, Little Falls, Big Lake, Milaca, Princeton, and Elk River Minnesota.

Tri-CAP Public Transit is part of the Tri-CAP. The public transit system is managed day-to-day by a professional staff with oversight provided by the Tri-CAP Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The Tri-CAP TAC provides recommendations to the Tri-CAP Board of Directors to make service policy and organizational changes to the public transit service.

Tri-CAP Public Transit provides various types of transit service including demand response, flexible route, and contract services as well as coordinates volunteer driver program. Most of the annual riders utilize demand response transit service. Service hours varies on the county and city served, but generally fall between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Saturday service is only offered in Little Falls and Sauk Center from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Fares for the transit service are as follows:

- Advanced Reservation City - \$1.25
- Advanced Reservation Rural - \$3.00
- Same Day Reservation City - \$2.00
- Same Day Reservation Rural - \$3.75

Tri-CAP Public Transit currently has 26 buses in its fleet. Sixteen of them are accessible lift-equipped class 400 medium-size light-duty transit buses, while ten are class 500 larger accessible lift-equipped medium-duty transit buses.

Licking County Transit

The Licking County Transit (LCT) is the sole public transportation provide for Licking County, Ohio. LCT provides demand response transit service across the county to the general public, as well as limited destinations outside the county. LCT was established in 1998 and is owned, operated, and governed by the citizens of Licking County through the Licking County Transit Board (LCTB).

LCT is currently governed by an appointed seven-member LCTB which is consisted of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and representatives from Licking County and cities, villages, townships, and local agencies within Licking County. The LCTB has the responsibility of ensuring that transit services are being provided in accordance with federal and state regulations and setting policy. LCT services are funded, in part, by the FTA, the Ohio Department of Transportation, Licking County Board of Commissioners and users. Additional funding is acquired through contracts with agencies to provide transportation services to their clients.

LCT provides demand response service Monday through Friday from 5:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. To provide service, LCT utilizes 33 lift-equipped accessible Light Transit Vehicles and five small ramp equipped Accessible Vans. Fares for LCT are:

- General Public - \$4.00
- Elderly and Disabled - \$2.00
- 1st Child with Adult – Free
- Additional Children with Adult - \$1.00
- Ages 7-12 Traveling Alone - \$4.00

River Parishes Transit Authority

The River Parish Transit Authority (RPTA) was created by special Louisiana legislation for the purpose of providing regional transit service covering St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist parishes. The RPTA is governed by a seven-person board with representatives from each parish. RPTA provides the general public demand response service in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes with connectivity to St. James Parish and the city of Kenner's transit systems.

RPTA has a contract with Transdev Services to operate the service and to provide grant management services. Transdev provides drivers and dispatchers who are under the supervision of an operations manager assigned to the RPTA.

RPTA operates five 10 to 12 passenger vehicles. Each vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair lift and can accommodate two wheelchair passengers. Service is provided Monday through Friday between 5:00 am and 7:30 pm and Saturday from 5:30 am to 7:30 pm. The fare for a one-way trip is \$2.00. Children four years old and under ride free.

Central Texas Rural Transit District

The City and Rural Rides (CARR) is a rural public transit service operated by Central Texas Rural Transit District (CTRTD). Transportation is available to the general public in Brown, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Erath, Nolan, Runnels, Shackelford, Stephens, and rural Taylor counties. The CTRTD is governed by a 11-member Board.

CARR operates a demand response, curb-to-curb service. Door-to-door service for elderly and disabled passengers is available upon advanced request. Ride request must be made at least one business day by 3:30 pm prior to the desired trip date and may be scheduled up to 60 days in advance. Same day schedule is available if space is available. CARR has a fleet of 86 ADA accessible Type III Bus with a capacity of 14-30 passengers.

CARR service hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm with no weekend service. All passengers are required to pay a fare for each one-way trip which is based on the trip mileage. The fare is \$1.00 for the first 5 miles, then additional \$1.00 for every additional 5 miles. Fares may be paid with cash, check, or pre-paid fare ticket. Credit and debit cards are currently not accepted. Pre-paid fare passes are sold in \$20.00 increments.

Colorado Valley Transit District

The Colorado Valley Transit District (CVTD) is a rural transit district organized under Chapter 458 of the Texas Transportation Code as a political subdivision of the state and an entity responsible for transit services in a 3,200 square mile four-county area surrounding Houston. CVTD provides demand response transportation services to Austin, Colorado, Waller, and Wharton counties. CVTD is governed by a Board of Directors made up of eight members with two from each of the four counties. The Board provides regional perspectives and plans for operating a variety of community-based passenger transportation services.

CVTD delivers transportation tailored specifically for each of the communities it serves and provides connections between these communities. CVTD operates a 100-percent accessible fleet made up of light- and medium-duty buses.

CVTD provides service Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm with no weekend service. Door-to-door and curb-to-curb demand response services are available with a 24-hour advance reservation. Deviated route service is available for inner city, within a county, or county-to-county transportation. This service is available in:

- Austin County
 - Bellville
 - Sealy
 - Wallis
 - San Felipe
- Colorado County
 - Columbus
 - Eagle Lake
 - Weimar
- Wharton County
 - El Campo
 - Wharton

Current fares are \$1.00 for an inner-city trip, \$2.00 for an inner-county trip, and \$5.00 for a county-to-county trip.

Key Findings

There are several key findings that the RAPC should consider when evaluating the potential for providing rural transit service. These include:

- Each peer agency has a transit-specific board of Directors or Transit Board to guide the agency. If the RAPC is to become a transit provider, the creation of a dedicated Transit Board, consisting of representatives from each member Parish should be considered. This Board should provide the RAPC a regional perspective and guide the planning for service delivery.
- Operating hours for the peers are fairly consistent. If the RAPC is to become a transit provider, the RAPC should look at operating Monday through Friday from at least 6:00 am to 6:00 pm initially and then consider adding Saturday service from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm if the demand exists. After an initial pilot period of operations, the Monday to Friday operation hours should be looked at to determine if demand exists to extend later into the evening or the potential to add Sunday service.
- Regarding fares, the rural regional fare structure could consider an inter-county fare structure and an intra-county fare structure. The inter-county fares could be a flat rate, while the intra-county structure could be mileage based. Other options worthy of consideration include a flat mileage-based fare structure (regardless of destination, within the defined service area), such as \$2 for the first 10 miles then an additional \$0.25 each additional mile per one-way trip.

3. Transit Demand Analysis

The understanding of RAPC travel patterns is based on emerging and innovative data sources. LBS data are anonymized data extracted from cell phone applications that continuously record a device's location. For this study, LOCUS data, Cambridge Systematics' LBS data product, was used to understand travel patterns in the 12-parish region. The full report can be found in **Appendix A**.

LBS data enables the identification of home and regularly frequented locations by tracking devices over time. Home locations are those where individuals stay overnight and on the weekends. Regular places refer to workplaces, schools, or other places that individuals frequently go to and spend the bulk of their weekdays. As such, the trip purposes considered for this study are listed below:

- HBR – Home-based Regular
- HBO – Home-based Other
- RBO – Regular-based Other
- OBO – Other-based Other

The following are the key takeaways from the analysis of the travel patterns in the study region:

- Intra-parish trips account for the largest portion of trips originating or ending in a parish.
- While there is a clear pattern of weekday trips from rural Rapides to Alexandria and vice versa (as shown in **Figure 3.1**), trips to/from Alexandria are insignificant for the other 11 parishes.
- Natchitoches Regional Medical Center and Alexandria Mall seem to be trip generators in the region.
- Data points to traditional rural demand response can be used as a logical service delivery strategy for the region.
- Micro-transit could be considered in places where there are higher population densities coupled with substantial intra-regional trips, at the parish level or even at the urbanized area level.
- Data does not indicate the need for any new commuter-type services from the rural to urban areas.

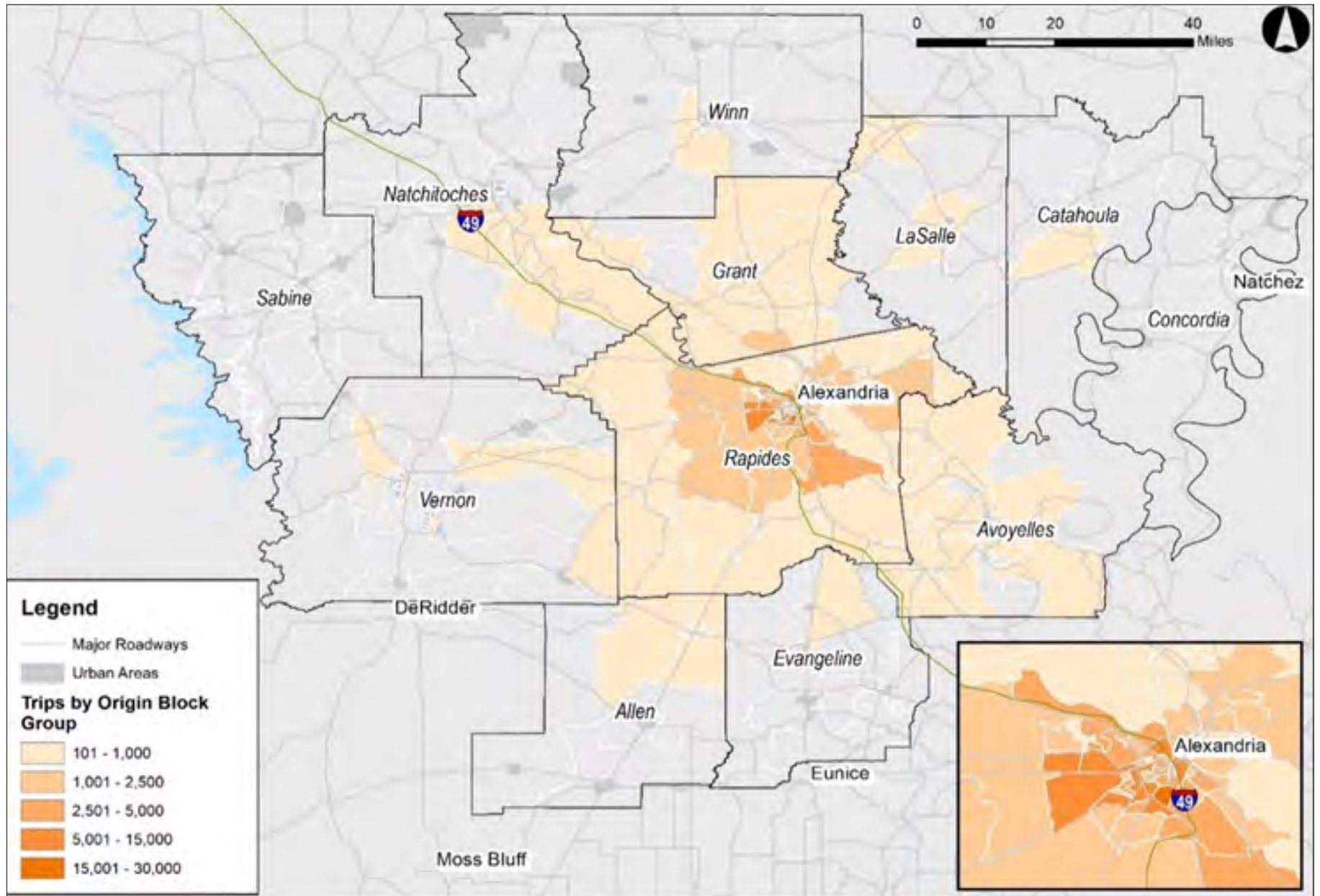


Figure 3.1 Average Weekday Trips to Alexandria

Unmet Transit Demand

The TCRP Report 161 (Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation) outlines two methods to calculate the unmet transit demand. These methods were used to determine the unmet transit demand in the 12-parish region. Method 1 uses demographic data (population over 60, zero vehicle households, population ages 18-64 with limited mobility). Method 2 uses peer data from nearby systems and other similar systems to validate the results from Method 1.

Methodology 1

The formula below was used to calculate the demand for rural transit in the region:

$$\text{Demand for Rural Transit} = (2.20 \times \text{Population Age 60+}) + (5.21 \times \text{Mobility Limited Population Age 18-64}) + (1.52 \times \text{Residents of Households with Zero Vehicle})$$

This function accounts for the need for transportation services in an area, regardless of the type of service needed and the amount of service provided. This method produces an estimate of annual demand for rural transit in each of the 12 parishes. The results of the calculation are shown in **Table 3.1**. The 12-parish region has an annual transit demand of 443,410 trips.

Table 3.1 Annual Demand for Rural Transit

Parish	Pop. 60+	Pop. Disabled	Pop in HH with Zero Vehicles	Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Daily Demand for Rural Transit (annual/365)
Allen	5,157	3,485	872	30,828	84
Avoyelles	9,299	6,985	1,661	59,374	163
Catahoula	2,389	835	451	10,292	28
Concordia	4,578	1,907	1,013	21,547	59
Evangeline	7,285	6,145	2,312	51,557	141
Grant	4,441	3,023	659	26,522	73
LaSalle	3,552	1,593	333	16,620	46
Natchitoches	8,514	3,434	2,759	40,816	112
Rapides*	17,525	8,149	2,156	84,288	231
Sabine	6,506	2,365	1,093	28,296	78
Vernon	8,173	6,450	1,881	54,444	149
Winn	3,556	1,919	661	18,826	52
Total	80,975	46,290	15,851	443,410	1,216

*Rapides Parish data excludes Alexandria and Pineville as those areas are urban and receive urban transit service from ATRANS.

Methodology 2

This methodology utilizes peer data from nearby systems and other similar systems to validate the results from Methodology 1. Ten peers were selected for this analysis:

- Copiah County Human Resource Agency, Mississippi
- Senior Services Incorporated of Chester County, South Carolina
- DeKalb County Council on Aging, Indiana
- Huntington County Council on Aging, Indiana
- Noble County Council on Aging, Indiana
- Fulton County Council on Aging, Indiana
- Pointe Coupee Council on Aging, Louisiana
- Jefferson Davis Council on Aging, Louisiana
- Bienville Council on Aging, Louisiana
- Desoto Council on Aging, Louisiana

The first step in the peer review is to determine the Trips per Capita, Trips per Vehicle Mile, and Trips per Vehicle Hour for each agency (**Table 3.2**). The second step is to multiply the maximum, average, median, and minimum of the Trips by Capita from all the peer agencies by the population of each Parish to determine the annual and daily trips (**Table 3.3**). As a result, the peer review validates the Methodology 1 as the projections are consistent across both approaches.

Table 3.2 Peer Trip Table

TCRP 161 – Peer Estimate	Copiah County Human Resource Agency	Senior Services Incorporated of Chester County	DeKalb County Council on Aging	Hunting County Council on Aging	Noble County Council on Aging	Fulton County Council on Aging	Pointe Coupee Council on Aging	Jefferson Davis Council on Aging	Bienville Council on Aging	Desoto Council on Aging
State	MS	SC	IN	IN	IN	IN	LA	LA	LA	LA
Type	NP	NP	COA	COA	COA	COA	COA/NP	COA/NP	COA/NP	COA/NP
Population	28,065	32,124	13,056	36,520	47,744	20,096	21,730	10,180	13,564	27,463
Annual Vehicle Miles	369,709	426,168	270,807	322,338	461,413	230,371	300,668	225,678	224,237	120,033
Annual Vehicle Hours	14,323	21,642	18,869	25,016	26,421	15,861	13,857	11,644	12,041	8,207
Tips	56,788	56,279	27,798	41,743	29,668	41,413	24,220	11,071	12,852	12,045
Tips per Capita	2	1.75	2.13	1.14	0.62	2.06	1.11	1.09	0.95	0.44
Trips per Vehicle Mile	0.2	0.13	0.10	0.13	0.06	0.18	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.10
Trips per Vehicle Hour	4	2.60	1.47	1.67	1.12	2.61	1.75	0.95	1.07	1.47

Table 3.3 Peer Review Annual Demand for Rural Transit

RAPC Parishes	Peer	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natch	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Annual	Daily
Population		25,618	40,669	9,766	19,778	33,589	22,340	14,936	38,798	69,721	23,991	49,646	15,313	364,136	998
Trips by Capita Maximum	2.13	54,485	86,496	20,771	42,065	71,438	47,514	31,766	82,455	148,285	51,025	105,589	32,568	774,458	2,122
Trips by Capita Average	1.00	34,112	54,153	13,004	26,336	44,726	29,747	19,888	51,623	92,838	31,945	66,107	20,390	484,869	1,328
Trips by Capita Median	1.13	28,918	45,907	11,024	22,325	37,915	25,217	16,860	43,763	78,701	27,081	56,041	17,285	411,038	1,126
Trips by Capita Minimum	0.40	11,236	17,837	4,283	8,674	14,732	9,798	6,551	17,004	30,579	10,522	21,774	6,716	159,706	438
TCRP 161 Estimate		30,828	59,374	10,292	21,547	51,557	26,522	16,620	40,818	84,288	28,296	54,444	18,826	443,410	1,215

Based on the is analysis, there is a projected annual demand total for all parishes of approximately 443,410 annual trips. With the annual actual trips provided of approximately 161,891, there is an unmet demand of approximately 281,519 transit trips (**Table 3.4**).

Table 3.4 Unmet Demand

Parish	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual/365)	Actual Annual Trips	Actual Daily Trips (Annual/365)	Unmet Annual	Unmet Daily	Percent Unmet
Allen	30,828	84	13,027	36	17,801	48	57%
Avoyelles	59,374	163	30,965	85	28,409	78	48%
Catahoula*	10,292	28	6,832	19	3,460	9	32%
Concordia*	21,547	59	-	-	21,547	59	100%
Evangeline	51,557	141	13,753	38	37,804	103	73%
Grant*	26,522	73	-	-	26,522	73	100%
LaSalle*	16,620	46	14,389	39	2,231	7	15%
Natchitoches*	40,816	112	-	-	40,816	112	100%
Rapides	84,288	231	61,886	170	22,402	61	27%
Sabine*	28,296	78	5,990	16	22,306	62	79%
Vernon	54,444	149	12,902	35	41,542	114	77%
Winn*	18,826	52	2,147	6	16,679	46	88%
Totals / Average	443,410	1,216	161,891	444	281,519	772	66%

*Indicates no existing 5311 provider

As shown in **Table 3.4**, there are seven parishes with no 5311 rural providers. These parishes have a total transit demand of approximately 162,919 annual trips with a current unmet demand of 133,561 annual trips, or about 82% of the total. The remaining five parishes who currently have 5311 rural providers have a total demand of 280,491 annual trips with a current unmet demand of 147,958 annual trips, or about 53% of the total.


There is significant amount of unmet demand within the region and there is a direct linkage between unmet transportation needs, unemployment, access to health care, goods, and other services. The consequences of the existing unmet transit demand are dire for this area. Studies have shown that lack of access to training and jobs is a major characteristic of rural areas which have areas of persistent poverty.

4. Engagement and Outreach

Throughout the planning process multiple meetings were held with existing 5310 and 5311 transit providers and other stakeholders in the region. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce them to the project, provide updates on project status, and gather information on what services an agency provides, their challenges in providing service, existing funding and funding challenges, and thoughts on how to better serve the region. **Table 4.1** lists the agencies that participated in these meetings.

Table 4.1 Agency and Stakeholder Meetings

Name	Agency Type	Meeting Date
Alexandria District Probation and Parole	Public Safety	July 27, 2021
Alexandria VA Medical Center	Medical	July 28, 2021 & August 5, 2021
Allen COA	5311 Provider	July 20, 2021
Avoyelles ASDD	5310 Provider	July 15, 2021
Avoyelles COA	5311 Provider	July 28, 2021
Catahoula Economic Development District	Parish Economic Development	July 27, 2021
Central Louisiana Chamber	Chamber of Commerce	July 26, 2021
Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition	Non-Profi	July 22, 2021
Evangeline COA	5310/5311 Provider	July 8, 2021
Louisiana Central	Economic Development	July 27, 2021
Louisiana Department of Health	State Health Department	July 26, 2021
MediTrans	Medicaid Transportation	July 6, 2021
Rapides Foundation	Non-Profi	August 3, 2021
Rapides Senior Center	5311 Provider	July 27, 2021
Central Louisiana Technical Community College	Education	July 21, 2021
United Way of Central Louisiana	Non-Profi	September 1, 2021
Vernon COA	5311 Provider	July 29, 2021
Workforce Development Commission	Workforce Training	July 27, 2021



Transportation is our biggest barrier.”

–Carmen Coutee, Re-Entry Program Manager, Alexandria District Probation and Parole

The common theme from the meetings was that the lack of public transportation in the region is impeding residents' access to healthcare, education, shopping. All agencies realize that improvements to the public transit system will help people to get out of poverty and will greatly benefit the region. The biggest concern that arose was how to fund a region wide system, particularly how to come up with the 50 percent local match federal funds. Other items identified via the coordination included:

- There is precedent for **partnerships** between regional agencies as it relates to public transportation. For example, the Alexandria District Probation and Parole office has recently purchased 30,000 single ride bus pass tickets from ATRANS. A similar purchase could be made through a rural regional provider to provide service outside of the ATRANS service area. Another example exists with Central Louisiana Technical Community College, who could consider partnering with a rural regional provider to facilitate access to Natchitoches and other campuses not served by ATRANS.
- Certain agencies could consider **contracting** with rural public providers to supplement their service. This came up in the context of the Veteran's Administration.
- Other agencies had identified ways they could be more effective if a **rural public transportation provider** existed. One example is the Central Louisiana Homeless Commission, who had few options outside of Alexandria to house their clients due to the lack of rural transportation service.
- Certain **private** companies, such as RoyOMartin, were providing their own rural public transportation options. There could be opportunities to leverage these efforts and broaden the scope.
- The recent creation of a CENLA State Legislative Caucus may be a conduit towards **state legislative initiatives** to help further this cause. This initiative has been led by State Representative Mike Johnson.
- The existing 5311 and 5310 agencies generally contract with non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) brokers to generate non-federal matching funds. Coordination with the individual brokers and their individual requirements is a major challenge. Specific areas of concern include duplication in training, vehicle inspections, and drug and alcohol testing. All providers agree that these requirements exist for a reason, but there should be a mechanism in place to facilitate a **centralized system** for them.
- From a **public health** perspective, 10% of the approximately 56,000 individuals annually who are served by the Louisiana Department of Health walk to their appointments. Approximately 30% miss appointments due to a lack of reliable transportation. The shift to telemedicine has helped ameliorate these issues to some degree – but not eliminated them.
- United Way of CENLA has **infrastructure** in place, such as their 211 system, which may be leveraged by a regional provider in terms of outreach and general mobility management.

Central Louisiana Coordinated Transportation Coalition Meeting & 5311 Provider Workshop

Meetings were facilitated with the Central Louisiana Coordinated Transportation Coalition, which is the steering committee in charge of the Human Services Transportation Plan, and with the existing 5311 providers via a separate, stand-alone workshop. The meetings respectively occurred in May and June of 2021. The meetings generally provided an overview of the information in this report. A version of this presentation is available in **Appendix B**.

5. Initial Findings and Recommendations

As determined in **Section 3** and **Section 4**, there is significant amount of unmet transit demand in the region. Currently, there are some 5310 providers that are helping to meeting demand in Catahoula and LaSalle Parishes. In these parishes there is an opportunity for these 5310 providers to transition to 5311 status which will create an opportunity to expand to the general public. Rapides, Vernon, and Evangeline Parishes have existing 5311 and 5310 providers, but still have unmet demand, while Natchitoches, Grant, Sabine, and Concordia Parishes have a significant amount of demand with no or few available transit options.

The RAPC realizes there is a significant amount of unmet demand within the region and there is a direct linkage between unmet transportation needs, unemployment, access to health care, goods, and other services. Currently, there is a significant amount of administrative redundancy among the existing federally supported transportation providers (5311/5310) and non-emergency medical providers in the area in terms of trip matching and assignment, federal/state compliance requirements, vehicle inspections, etc. It suggests that the RAPC can provide an umbrella coordinating role leading to more efficient services to reduce existing unmet public transportation needs. There is a disparity among the transportation providers within the study area in terms of bus operator hiring experience, vehicle inspection requirements, resource allocation, service area, and other metrics which, if standardized, will lead to higher efficiencies, cost savings, and more effective transit service in the region.

To better meet the demand for rural public transportation throughout CENLA, it is recommended that the RAPC leads the creation of a centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC) under the umbrella of the RAPC. The creation of the RPTC under the umbrella of the RAPC could complete and/or facilitate the following activities:

- 1. Centralized Scheduling and Dispatching** – consolidate existing dispatching activity of all participating parishes into a single contact point including phone number, web presence, and other outreach. Consolidation of existing dispatching activity will improve the existing conditions of the rural transit systems in the region, the reliability of rural transit services, enhance access to transit and mobility in the service areas, introduce innovative technology, and demonstrate regional and local support.
- 2. Create an Outreach Program** – outreach program that will target unmet demand through information and community resources which better inform the community of how to access transportation. The outreach program will gather information that helps the rural transit systems improve their existing conditions, and leads to increase reliability, and enhance access to transit.

- 3. Create a Consolidated Transit Vehicle Inspection Program** – create a process where only one inspection is required to satisfy federal, state, and local requirements. Currently, transit agencies must go to multiple locations to satisfy their inspection requirements. This can cause buses to be out of service longer than necessary which, in turn, reduces the availability of transit service. A one-stop inspection process location will allow agencies to minimize the time their buses are out of service and minimize any disruption in service.
- 4. Create an Operator Centralized Training Center** – work in concert with the Workforce Commission and the Central Louisiana Technical Community College, where individuals can receive training and certification for rural transit vehicle operation. This centralized training center will incorporate the latest innovative training software. Each transit agency will work with the RPTC to determine what training is needed and when. This will help reduce the operating costs of each agency by providing a centralized location for their employee training.
- 5. Provide Direct Transit Resources** – identify resources to fill in the gaps in regional service delivery, identify additional funding resources, and consider acting as a contracting agency for other providers to deliver trips for employment, medical, goods and services. This will improve access to transit and mobility in the region.
- 6. Pursue Funding** – pursue discretionary state and federal resources to support increase service capability to meet unmet demand. The RPTC will work with the regional transit agencies and stakeholders to identify common needs to jointly develop state and federal grant applications for future service enhancements, joint bus purchases, etc.
- 7. Form and Implement Partnerships** – the Cooperative will work to enter into agreements with partners such as the District Probation and Parole Office, Central Louisiana Technical Community College System, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition, VA Medical Center, and others to identify methods to efficiently provide public transportation trips to and from these partner agencies facilities. The recently completed study has set the framework for these partnerships so that they can be actualized via this Persistent Poverty funded effort.

The overall goal of the RPTC is to improve reliability and increase access to transit in the region. With improved transit in the region, barriers to low-income housing through facilitating at-risk residents' access to work, medical appointments, and shopping, will enable residents to choose affordable housing close to where they want to live, knowing they have an option to utilize transit to get to school, work, etc.

In terms of providing direct transit resources, it is recommended to begin the provision of new 5311-funded service in unserved areas in partnership with DOTD and other regional entities. Following this pilot program, the RPTC can begin to consider voluntary consolidation of existing 5311 providers to begin to leverage economies of scale region wide. Coordination with the DOTD should occur to facilitate the set-aside (where possible) of 5310 resources for existing

5311 providers so they can continue to provide 5310-eligible trips. Ultimately the RPTC would evolve to become a robust rural regional public transportation agency, providing service across the 12-parish region. Other activities, eventually necessary would include:

- The creation and documentation of administrative documents and **policy frameworks** related to service area definition, organizational structure of the RPTC, vision, mission, and goals, the development of compliant policies, plans, and procedures, maintenance/asset management plans, performance measures, and other related documents.
- The creation of a **centralized mobility manager position** to include trip matching/dispatching services for the RPTC. This should consider a partnership with United Way of Central Louisiana's 211 system.
- The creation of a **public engagement program and outreach program** (to include an easy to use and dedicated web-presence) to target potential riders. The outreach program should also consider the hiring of public engagement staff to actively engage with stakeholder agencies and community groups/organizations.
- The creation of a **consolidated transit vehicle inspection program** so that only one inspection is necessary to satisfy federal, state, and local requirements. Currently transit agencies must undergo several inspections to satisfy requirements from different entities.
- Partner with the Workforce Commission and the Central Louisiana Technical Community College to create a **driver training and certification program**.
- Provide **directly operated transit service**.
- Pursue **funding** through state and federal agencies to support increased capability and to continually work to meet unmet demand.
- Form and implement **partnerships** with partners such as the District Probation and Parole Office, Central Louisiana Technical Community College System, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition, VA Medical Center, and others to identify methods to efficiently provide public transportation trips to and from these partner agencies' facilities.

Transit Scenarios

To meet the unmet transit demand in the 12-parish region, three (3) demand response transit scenarios were developed – Meet the Demand Scenario, Equal Service Scenario, and Cost Constrained Pilot Scenario. These scenarios generally depict the conceptual evolution of the RPTC through various levels of service intensity.

1	Meet Demand (Meet Full Annual Demand in CENLA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- \$30M Year 1- \$9.5M Year 2
2	Equal Service (Provide Equivalent Level of Service in All Parishes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- \$15.5M Year 1- \$3.5M Year 2
3	Cost Constrained Pilot (Grant and Natchitoches Parish Pilot Effort) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- \$762k Year 1- \$402k Year 2

Demand Response transit service is any non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling by the passenger. In a hypothetical service scenario, passengers will call the RPTC to schedule a ride, who then will dispatch a transit vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. This type of operation is characterized by the following:

- The transit vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or on a fixed schedule except, perhaps, on a temporary basis to satisfy a special need.
- Typically, the transit vehicle may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations and may even be interrupted enroute to these destinations to pick up other passengers.

Meet the Demand Scenario

The Meet the Demand Scenario envisions a demand response system that will meet the entire unmet demand (100 percent) in the 12-parish region. As shown in **Table 5.1**, the first year of operation would cost over \$30 million. Over \$20 million of it is capital cost for purchasing vehicles, and the rest approximately \$9.5 million is operating cost.

The following is used to calculate daily demand, number of vehicles, capital cost, operating hours, and operating cost:

- Total Annual Demand = Output from TCRP methodology
- Total Daily Demand = Total Annual Demand/365 (assumes 7 days a week service)
- Number of Vehicles = Total Daily Demand/6 trips per day + 2 spares
- Year 1 Capital Cost = Number of Vehicles x \$90,000 per vehicle
- Revenue Hours = 1.87 trips per hour¹
- Year 1 Operating Cost = Revenue Hours x \$40.00 per hour
- Year 1 Total = Year 1 Operating Cost + Year 1 Capital Cost

The scenario would provide a level of service that provides approximately 280,000 more trips annually than are currently being provided. This scenario would also deliver services to the five (5) parishes that currently have no existing rural public transportation provider. Overall, the scenario would provide a significantly higher level of service, to a significantly wider geography, at a significantly higher cost. This scenario is not feasible for consideration due to local, state, and federal funding constraints, but it is provided to understand the magnitude of need within the region.

Table 5.1 Meet the Demand Scenario

Parish	Total Annual Demand	Total Daily Demand	Number of Vehicles	Year 1 Capital Cost	Revenue Hours	Year 1 Operating Cost	Year 1 Total
Allen	30,828	84	16	\$1,440,000	16,486	\$659,422	\$2,099,422
Avoyelles	59,374	163	30	\$2,700,000	31,751	\$1,270,032	\$3,970,032
Catahoula*	10,292	28	7	\$630,000	5,504	\$220,150	\$850,150
Concordia*	21,547	59	12	\$1,080,000	11,522	\$460,898	\$1,540,898
Evangeline	51,557	141	26	\$2,340,000	27,571	\$1,102,824	\$3,442,824
Grant*	26,522	73	15	\$1,350,000	14,183	\$567,316	\$1,917,316
LaSalle*	16,620	46	10	\$900,000	8,888	\$355,508	\$1,255,508
Natchitoches*	40,816	112	21	\$1,890,000	21,827	\$873,070	\$2,763,070
Rapides	84,288	231	41	\$3,690,000	45,074	\$1,802,952	\$5,492,952
Sabine*	28,296	78	15	\$1,350,000	15,132	\$605,262	\$1,955,262
Vernon	54,444	149	27	\$2,430,000	29,114	\$1,164,578	\$3,594,578
Winn*	18,826	52	11	\$990,000	10,067	\$402,695	\$1,392,695
Total	443,410	1,216	231	\$20,790,000	237,118	\$9,484,706	\$30,274,708

*Indicates no existing 5311 provider

¹ This figure is on the high end that is currently seen in the CENL region amongst existing 5311 providers but is generally consistent with the national average based on National Transit Database summaries and trends

Equal Service Scenario

The Equal Service Scenario meets approximately 37 percent of the total unmet demand for the 12-parish region. As **Table 5.2** shows, it provides an equal amount of daily trips and operating hours across the entire region and lowers the operating cost to around \$3.5 million. With the reduced number of vehicles needed, the initial capital cost is approximately \$15.5 million. The overall year one total cost for operation is half of the Meet the Demand Scenario at \$15 million.

The following is used in this scenario:

- Total Trips = This figure was calculated based on an operating cost per hour of \$40/hr. and the number of operating hours and trips per hour (at 1.87) required to provide basic level of service throughout the region and meet a \$3.5M annual operating budget
- Daily Trips = Total Annual Demand/251 (assumes 5 days a week service)
- Number of Vehicles = Total Daily Demand/6 trips per day + 2 spares
- Year 1 Capital Cost = Number of Vehicles x \$90,000 per vehicle
- Revenue Hours = 1.87 trips per hour
- Year 1 Operating Cost = Revenue Hours x \$40.00 per hour
- Year 1 Total = Year 1 Operating Cost + Year 1 Capital Cost

This scenario would provide an equivalent amount of service to each parish within the region. Note that it depicts a slightly lower number of trips in Catahoula Parish – this is because the demand exercise completed indicates a total annual transit demand of only 10,292 trips. The Equal Service Scenario is feasible given a reallocation of regional/statewide transit resources and a concerted effort to fund rural public transportation throughout CENLA. It would require approximately doubling federal and local resource investment into regional rural public transportation from an operating perspective and would require a significant up-front capital investment – along with a long-term plan to sustain capital investments as a component of a regional transit asset management strategy.

Table 5.2 Equal Service Scenario

Parish	Total Trips	Daily Trips	Number of Vehicles	Year 1 Capital Cost	Revenue Hours	Year 1 Operating Cost	Year 1 Total
Allen	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Avoyelles	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Catahoula*	10,292	41	9	\$795,060	5,504	\$220,150	\$850,150
Concordia*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Evangeline	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Grant*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
LaSalle*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Natchitoches*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Rapides	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Sabine*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Vernon	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Winn*	14,025	56	11	\$1,018,147	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Total	164,567	656	133	\$11,994,681	88,004	\$3,520,150	\$15,514,831

*Indicates no existing 5311 provider

Cost Constrained Pilot

The Cost Constrained Pilot scenario was created to conservatively and feasibly develop a scenario which would allow a small pilot project to be implemented in parishes which are currently not being served and have a relatively high unmet demand. For this exercise, Grant and Natchitoches Parishes were selected due to their proximity to Rapides Parish, their high transit demand, and the lack of a presence of an existing transit provider. As **Table 5.3** shows, this scenario provides flexibility on the operations side by increasing the cost per hour from \$40/hr. (used in Equal Service Scenario) to \$100/hr. However, to prevent high up-front capital costs, this scenario is lean on the capital side and does not include any spare vehicles.

The following is used in this scenario:

- Total Trips = Daily Trips x 251 (assumes 5 days a week service)
- Daily Trips = 6 trips per day per vehicle
- Number of Vehicles = Set at two (2) per parish
- Year 1 Capital Cost = Number of Vehicles x \$90,000 per vehicle
- Revenue Hours = 1.5 trips per hour (reduced to the low end of the regional 5311 data)
- Year 1 Operating Cost = Revenue Hours x \$100.00 per hour
- Year 1 Total = Year 1 Operating Cost + Year 1 Capital Cost

Table 5.3 Cost Constrained Pilot

Parish	Total Trips	Daily Trips	Number of Vehicles	Year 1 Capital Cost	Revenue Hours	Year 1 Operating Cost	Year 1 Total
Grant*	3,012	12	2	\$180,000	2,008	\$200,800	\$380,800
Natchitoches*	3,012	12	2	\$180,000	2,008	\$200,800	\$380,800
Total	6,024	24	4	\$360,000	4,016	\$401,600	\$761,600

*Indicates no existing 5311 provider

This Cost Constrained Pilot option will deliver a number of trips which are well below the demand projected based on the TCRP methodology utilized in Chapter 3. The total demanded trips between both parishes is 67,338.

6. Next Steps

The next steps in the development of the RPTC include the implementation of a variety of administrative/operational activities along with the commencement of a funding and sustainability plan to incrementally and sustainably grow the RPTC’s operations.

Implementation Phases

The strategy to implement the RPTC can be broken in to three phases.

Short Term Pilot Phase

This phase, demonstrated in Table 6.1, comprehends the RAPC applying for 5311 funding from the DOTD beginning in Louisiana Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. It is recommended that a slightly modified version of the Cost Constrained Pilot Scenario is submitted through the DOTD for their consideration. This would include the procurement of four (4) vehicles and operating assistance to begin a rural curb-to-curb demand response service in Grant and Natchitoches Parishes. The request should also include resources for a Mobility/Transit Manager along with planning resources to assist in initial program development. The per vehicle cost in this application is slightly less (\$80,000 / vehicle) than in the previously identified scenario based on costs available through procurement via DOTD’s pre-existing transit vehicle contracts. A summary of this request is as follows:

Table 6.1 Rural Transit Pilot Application Information

FY23	Federal	Local	Total
Capital (4 vehicles)	\$272,000	\$48,000	\$320,000
Operating	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000
Mobility/Transit Manager	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000
Planning	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
Total	\$782,000	\$48,000	\$830,000

FY24	Federal	Local	Total
Capital (4 vehicles)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operating	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000
Mobility/Transit Manager	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000
Planning	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
Total	\$510,000	\$0	\$510,000

	Federal	Local	Total
FY23	\$782,000	\$48,000	\$830,000
FY24	\$510,000	\$0	\$510,000
Total	\$1,292,000	\$48,000	\$1,340,000

RPTC Implementation Phase I

Phase I is broken into five tasks and is the most important phase in the creation of the RPTC. Each item is necessary to establish a viable new program which includes developing the Board of Directors, defining the service area, and creating a financial plan.

- **Task 1: Create and Execute Interlocal Agreements** – this task includes creating and executing interlocal agreements with participating parish police juries and cities that will become part of the RPTC. This task will define the transit service area, create the Board of Directors, establish service standards and coverage, and establish membership participation agreements and financial plan.
- **Task 2: Create the RPTC** – this task will entail the formal creation of the RPTC under the umbrella of the RAPC. A staffing plan, operating plan, resource plan along with vision, mission and goals, and agency bylaws will be developed.
- **Task 3: Develop Compliant Policies, Plans, and Procedures** – this task will include the development of FTA and Louisiana DOTD compliant policies, plans and procedures. It will also establish the RPTC as an FTA grantee, as well as 5311 recipient status through DOTD. The task will also establish National Transit Database (NTD) reporting and Title VI requirements, procurement procedures, financial and fiscal policies, and a Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan.
- **Task 4: Financial and Implementation Plan** – in this task, the RAPC will develop a five-year financial and implementation plan. The plan will identify potential local matching resources. The RAPC will work with partners, municipalities, parishes, and the state legislature on creating local resources to match federal 5311 funding in the future.
- **Task 5: Information and Outreach Plan** – the RAPC will develop a detailed marketing strategy, identify stakeholders, and develop a public involvement plan. These plans will be designed to target seniors, environmental justice communities, and areas of persistent poverty.

RPTC Implementation Phase II

Phase II of the RPTC implementation plan focuses on establishing performance measures, creation of the centralized dispatch, and procuring routing software. The two tasks in Phase II are as follows.

- **Task 1: Efficiency Measures Coordination** – the RAPC will work with the State Department of Health, transit providers, and other agencies on ways to improve efficiency. The goal of this task is to evaluate and select dispatching and routing software, and the creation of a centralized location for dispatching, driver training, driver drug testing, and inspection of transit vehicles.
- **Task 2: Establish Performance Measures** – the establishment of performance measures will help evaluate not only the existing transit service but also any proposed service improvements. Performance measures are planning, and management tools used to define reasonable levels of service. The assessment of performance requires a defined set of performance indicators and service guidelines that will need to be specified separately for different service delivery methods.

Grant Opportunities for Implementation

Federal funding is available to assist the RAPC in the development of the RPTC in the form of competitive grants. The following sections outline potential federal grant opportunities that the RAPC could pursue to provide funding for the development of the RPTC. Note that these programs exist within the context of the current surface transportation bill (the FAST Act) authorized at the time this report was generated. It is expected that future transportation reauthorization bills will contain new and/or modified programs for exploration and consideration.

Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

The Areas of Persistent Poverty program provides grants for planning, engineering, technical studies, or financial plans to improve transit services in areas experiencing long-term economic distress. It also supports coordinated human services transportation planning to improve transit service or provide new services, including paratransit.

The Areas of Persistent Poverty program supports President Biden's Build Back Better initiative to mobilize American ingenuity to build modern infrastructure and an equitable, clean energy future. Applicants for the grant must be eligible recipients or sub-recipients under section 5307, 5310, or 5311 of title 49, U.S. Code. Eligible project partners and sub-recipients may include, but are not limited to:

- Public transportation systems
- Operators of transportation, such as employee shuttle services or airport connector services, or university transportation systems
- State or local governments
- Other organizations that may contribute to the success of the project team including consultants, research consortia or nonprofit industry organizations, and institutions of higher education

The minimum Federal share for projects selected under the program is 90 percent of the total project cost with a 10 percent local match.

Note that a grant application through this program has been developed in full (but not submitted) and is available in **Appendix B**.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

The RAISE Discretionary Grant program is an annual competitive grant that provides an opportunity for the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants.

The eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors at the State and local levels to obtain funding for multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to support through traditional Department of Transportation programs. RAISE can provide capital funding directly to any public entity, including municipalities, counties, port authorities, tribal governments, MPOs, or others

in contrast to traditional Federal programs which provide funding to very specific groups of applicants. The Federal share for selected RAISE projects is generally 80 percent of the total project cost with a 20 percent local match, however, this varies from year to year and can sometimes be adjusted based on need. In addition to planning resources, this program can also make resources available for capital and operating costs to augment any pilot program that the RPTC is currently engaged on. This program can offer significant (\$25M) funding if the local share can be identified.

Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities, 5339(b)

The 5339(b) grant program is an annual competitive grant program available through the FTA made available to fund bus and bus facility capital projects. Project proposals for 5339(b) grants are available for rural areas through application through their state designated recipients. The RPTC can coordinate with DOTD to develop and submit a CENLA-region application to fund a variety of capital needs to include rolling stock, facilities, and pedestrian-transit improvements such as sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The Federal share for selected projects is generally 80 percent of the total project cost with a 20 percent local match. Note that an 85 percent federal participation can be applied for acquiring clean-fuel vehicles or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) projects. This program can offer significant (\$5M) funding if the local share can be identified.

Community Mobility Ready-to-Launch Grants

The National Center for Mobility Management, through the FTA, provides grants and technical assistance to support communities in capital and operating costs related to the implementation of transportation solutions towards low-income and otherwise underserved residents. This program has a modest award ceiling in size (\$75k), but no local share is required.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The USDA offers several grant and loan programs which support rural resiliency in areas of health, employment, and transportation. Ongoing programs include the following:

- **Rural Business Development Grants (RBOG) Program** - funds are made to public bodies and non-profit corporations to assist businesses and/or non-profits in their communities. RBOG funds may be used to assist in the economic development of rural areas by providing technical assistance, training, and planning towards workforce development efforts. Stakeholder engagement completed as a component of this project has identified a connection between CENLA-region workforce challenges and transportation.
- **Rural Development's flexible Community Facilities Program** - funds combine USDA resources with private capital markets which enables public bodies to use program funds to construct, expand or improve rural transportation infrastructure in eligible rural communities with populations of 20,000 or fewer. The project must be located within an eligible rural area and primarily serve and benefit rural residents and communities. While this funding is primarily targeting facilities and equipment, it can become another tool in the toolbox for future RPTC programs.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) Programs

The EDA offers a variety of ongoing programs, such as their Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs, towards business attraction, creation, and retention. While their programs are predominantly economic development focused, they also have funded public transportation projects which are geared towards fulfilling regional economic development needs. There is strong potential for the RPTC to develop a future application to provide capital and/or operating support towards program objectives. Generally, the EDA will fund small to mid-size projects (\$1-\$5M) with up to a 100 percent federal share, depending on the demonstrated need of applicants.

FTA Grantee Status Summary and Rationale

The objectives of the RAPC and the establishment of the RPTC are to close the gap between existing rural transit service within CENLA parishes and meet unmet demand. These objectives are key components towards achieving better connectivity to medical, employment, goods/ services and destinations which enable a better quality of life for CENLA residents, many of which live in areas of persistent poverty. The RAPC's lack of FTA grantee status inhibits the agency from the direct pursuit of several discretionary FTA resources which can greatly facilitate the major objective of closing the unmet transit demand gap.

In order to qualify for FTA grantee status, an entity must demonstrate that it has the legal, technical, and financial capacity to undertake the responsibility of direct receipt, expenditure of federal funding, and all of the procedural and reporting requirements which attach thereto. It is clear that the RAPC meets these requirements and can become a FTA grantee. Note that this will likely require concurrence and/or support from DOTD.

- **Legal Capacity** – As a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, the RAPC was created pursuant to State of Louisiana Revised Statutes title 33, Section 118 and provided all the powers of any municipality. As constituted by state legislation, the RAPC has the authority and legal capacity to act as a grantee of the federal government and to receive and expend federal funding.
- **Financial Capacity** – The RAPC receives local funding through member contributions due to services it provides to its members. The Commission has the capacity to approve the use of unrestricted local funding as a match for federal grant funding.
- **Technical Capacity** – The RAPC staff serves as the technical resource for the agency and has recently completed several regional mobility and demand studies which have underscored the needs and benefits of meeting unmet transit demand and providing rural transit coordinating services through the RPTC.

FTA grantees must provide a resolution of support from their governing body and an opinion of counsel which confirms their legal, financial, and technical capacity to undertake the project for which federal funding is being sought; and, that there is no pending and/or threatened litigation or legislation which would preclude the RAPC from fulfilling their duties as an FTA grantee. Potential grantees must also agree to Certifications and Assurance which relates to Title VI,

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Buy America and other provisions associated with the receipt and expenditure of FTA funding.

FTA grantee status provides the RAPC with the ability to pursue discretionary federal funding for several (but not all) of the FTA programs identified above. Grantee status will also allow the RAPC and the RPTC to ‘flex’ other transportation funds, directly allocated to the MPO, for the direct provision of public transportation service.

Create a Not-for-Profit Corporation pursuant to IRS Section 501 (3)(c)

One of the strategies for the future sustainability of the proposed RPTC, as a division of the RAPC, is to position this new office to receive grants, donations, and loans specifically targeted for non-profit organizations. Pursuit of foundation funding targeted toward areas of poverty and under/employed individuals can be further facilitated through a 501 (3)(c) organization. Pursuant to state and federal guidelines the steps necessary to create this tax-exempt philanthropic organization are as follows:

1. Create the Articles of Incorporation of the entity
2. File for Corporate non-profit status with the State of Louisiana
3. Create a Board of Directors which can be composed of public and private individuals
4. Create a Mission Statement
5. Request the Internal Revenue Service to grant recognition of exemption from federal income tax pursuant to Section 501 (a)
6. To obtain 501(c)(3) status, a nonprofit corporation must apply to the Internal Revenue Service for recognition of tax exemption by filing IRS Form 1023.
7. Form 1023 is complex, and it is recommended that the RAPC seek a professional to assist. It is important that the mission and Board of Directors present no potential for “conflict of interests” nor potential for benefit to insiders, etc.
8. Some states require registration with Charitable Organization in order to solicit grants from foundations. The state of Louisiana has limited registration requirements.

The IRS has quality and detailed resources available to assist in this process.²

² <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4220.pdf>

It is suggested that the 501 (3)(c) organization be created as a stand-alone entity, separate from the RAPC and the RPTC. The organization can be used when it will provide benefit in terms of being eligible for specific grants, donations, and potentially loans.

There are several foundations which have historically supported, or have the potential to support rural transportation in areas of persistent poverty, including:

- The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
- NADO Research Foundation
- The Rapides Foundation
- The Retirement Research Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- United Way
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

While it may not be necessary to initialize a non-profit agency to leverage partnerships with these foundations, it will likely be helpful. This report encourages continued coordination with previously identified foundation partners and the development of new relationships with others

7. Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the need for additional public transportation resources in the rural CENLA region. This need has been demonstrated through technical analysis and via a stakeholder engagement process. To meet the need, both long- and short-term implementation plans have been suggested. The most immediate recommendation is to pursue FTA Section 5311 funding made available through DOTD. This funding will enable the facilitation of a pilot project to serve Grant and Natchitoches parishes. Commensurate with this effort, the RAPC can begin to create a division within their organization, referenced in this report as the Regional Public Transportation Cooperative, or RPTC. A series of programmatic recommendations are provided in this report to fully equip this new division of the RAPC to sustainably provide service.

In addition, this report provides a series of recommendations towards an incremental and feasible growth strategy. While the strategy is complex, and includes numerous potential options for consideration, the work completed through this process provides an opportunity towards improved quality of life outcomes for the underserved populations in Central Louisiana.



Appendix A

CENLA Region Travel Pattern Report

Memorandum

TO: Jim Webb, Susan Maclay, Robert McHaney; The Goodman Corporation

FROM: Hannah Santiago, Zeina Wafa, Vivek Yadav; Cambridge Systematics

DATE: June 15, 2021

RE: Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) Rural Transit Demand

This memorandum describes the travel patterns observed in the region encompassing the 12 parishes of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the existing and potential unmet rural transit demand within the study area over the next 20 years.

General Findings

The following are the key takeaways from the analysis of the travel patterns in the study region:

- Intra-parish trips account for the largest portion of trips originating or ending in a parish.
- While there is a clear pattern of weekday trips from rural Rapides to Alexandria and vice versa (as shown in Figure 1), trips to/from Alexandria are insignificant for the other 11 parishes.
- Natchitoches Regional Medical Center and Alexandria Mall seem to be trip generators in the region.
- Data points to traditional rural demand response (door to door) as the service delivery strategy for the study region.
- Micro-transit could be considered in places where there are higher population densities coupled with substantial intra-regional trips, at the parish level or even at the urbanized area level.
- Data does not indicate a need for any new commuter-type services from the rural to urban areas.

Understanding RAPC Travel Patterns

Location-based Services (LBS) Data

The understanding of RAPC travel patterns is based on an emerging and innovative data source, location-based services (LBS) data. LBS data are anonymized data extracted from phone

applications that continuously record a device's location. The data are particularly useful to produce origin-destination flow tables that show travel patterns of the residents and visitors of a defined region. For this study, LOCUS data, CS's LBS data product, were used to understand travel patterns in the 12 parish region.

LBS data enable the identification of home and regularly frequented locations by tracking devices over time. Home locations are those where individuals stay overnight and on the weekends. Regular places refer to workplaces, schools, or other places that individuals frequently go to and spend the bulk of their weekdays. As such, the trip purposes considered for this study are the following:

- HBR – Home-based Regular
- HBO – Home-based Other
- RBO – Regular-based Other
- OBO – Other-based Other

Parish to Parish Trips

There are about 1.3 million trips in the 12 parish region on an average weekday. Table 1 shows the parish to parish trip distribution on an average weekday, highlighting the top two destinations for each origin parish. The top destination for each parish is the parish itself, showing a high share of intra-parish trips, and confirming that the other major attraction in the region is Rapides Parish, albeit to a lesser extent. Table 2 and Table 3 show similar patterns for Saturday and Sunday trips, respectively.

Table 1. Parish to Parish Weekday Trip Distribution (All Purposes)

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn
Allen	88%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%	0%
Avoyelles	0%	88%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Catahoula	0%	1%	76%	13%	0%	0%	6%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Concordia	0%	0%	7%	90%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Evangeline	2%	1%	0%	0%	93%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grant	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	60%	2%	2%	32%	0%	0%	2%
LaSalle	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	2%	84%	0%	6%	0%	0%	2%
Natchitoches	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	92%	3%	2%	0%	1%
Rapides	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	90%	0%	1%	0%
Sabine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%	90%	4%	0%
Vernon	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	93%	0%
Winn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	4%	3%	0%	0%	86%

Source: LOCUS Data (2019)

Table 2. Parish to Parish Saturday Trip Distribution

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn
Allen	86%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%	0%
Avoyelles	0%	88%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Catahoula	0%	1%	75%	12%	0%	0%	6%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Concordia	0%	1%	8%	89%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Evangeline	3%	2%	0%	0%	91%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Grant	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	55%	2%	2%	36%	0%	0%	2%
LaSalle	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	3%	81%	0%	8%	0%	0%	2%
Natchitoches	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	90%	4%	3%	1%	1%
Rapides	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%	1%	88%	0%	1%	0%
Sabine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%	89%	4%	0%
Vernon	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	2%	91%	0%
Winn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%	4%	5%	0%	0%	84%

Source: LOCUS Data (2019)

Table 3. Parish to Parish Sunday Trip Distribution

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn
Allen	89%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	2%	0%
Avoyelles	0%	90%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Catahoula	0%	0%	78%	12%	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Concordia	0%	0%	7%	90%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Evangeline	2%	2%	0%	0%	93%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grant	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	62%	2%	2%	30%	0%	0%	3%
LaSalle	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	2%	86%	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%
Natchitoches	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	91%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Rapides	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%	1%	89%	0%	1%	0%
Sabine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	89%	5%	0%
Vernon	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	3%	92%	0%
Winn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%	4%	3%	0%	0%	86%

Source: LOCUS Data (2019)

Special Trip Generators

A review of the regional travel patterns revealed potential special trip generators that may influence travel in the study region. Those identified are the City of Alexandria, Alexandria International Airport, the Alexandria Mall, Natchitoches Regional Airport, and Natchitoches Regional Medical Center.

The subsequent maps suggest that there may be a need for a demand response transit service to serve retail trips to/from Alexandria Mall, especially for the rural areas in Rapides Parish. Another good candidate for such transit service is Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, especially with more than 20% of the parish population over the age of 60 (2015-2019 ACS).

Figure 1 shows the trips destined to Alexandria on an average weekday. Rapides Parish and parts of Grant and Avoyelles Parishes seem to contribute the most to trips headed to Alexandria. A similar pattern is found for weekday trips originating in Alexandria in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Average Weekday Trips to Alexandria

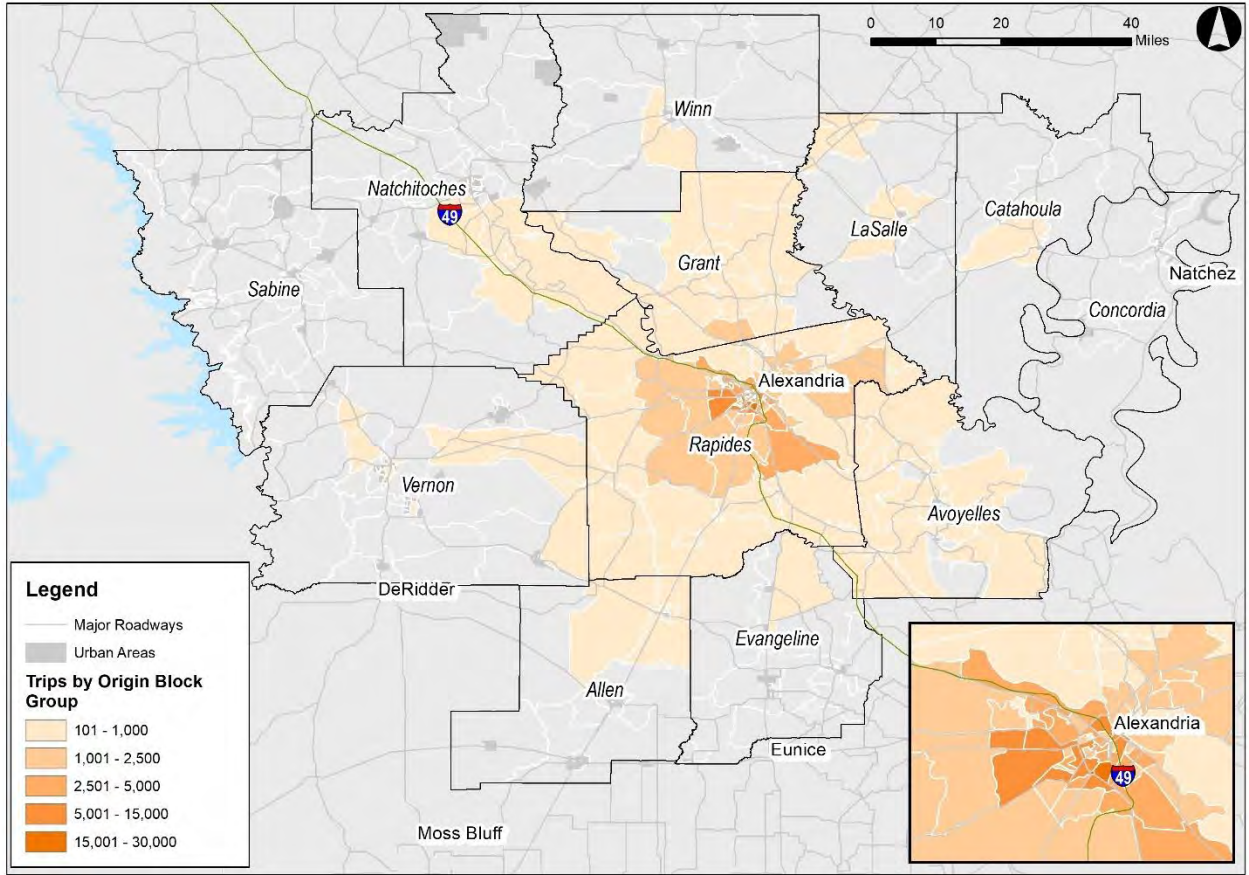


Figure 2. Average Weekday Trips from Alexandria

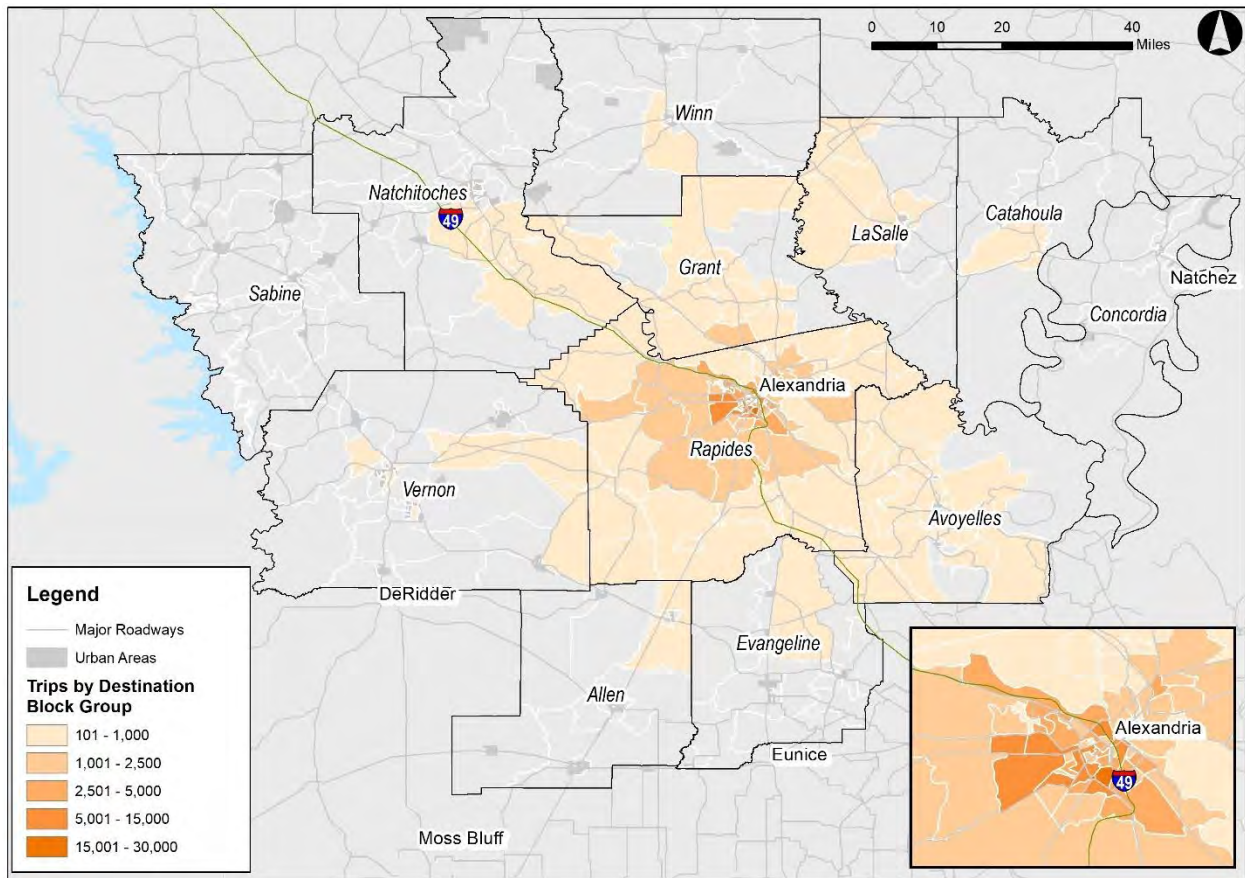


Figure 3 shows trips destined to Alexandria International Airport on an average weekday. Despite it being the only major airport in the study region, the airport seems to attract trips from Rapides Parish only. Similar patterns are found for trips exiting the airport in Figure 4.

Figure 3. Average Weekday Trips to Alexandria International Airport

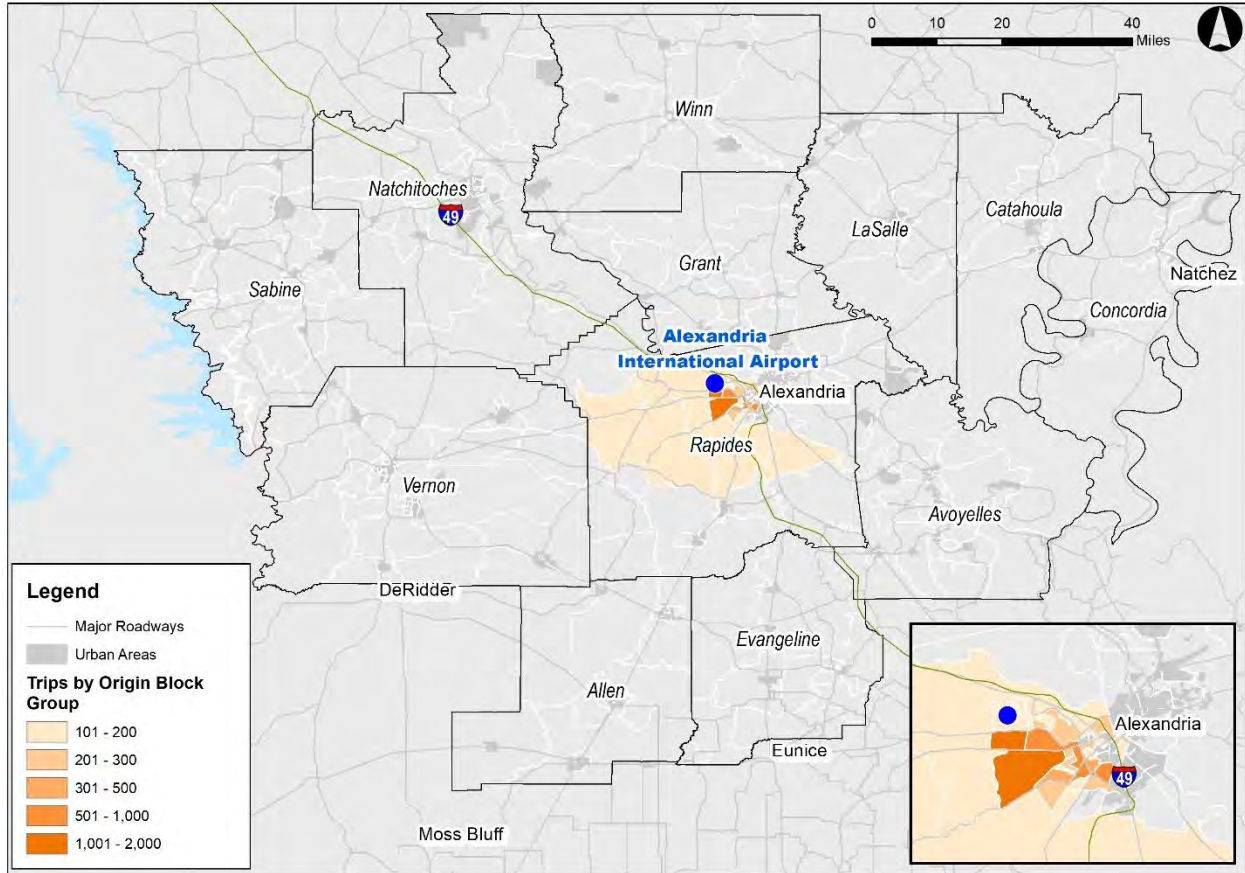


Figure 4. Average Weekday Trips from Alexandria International Airport

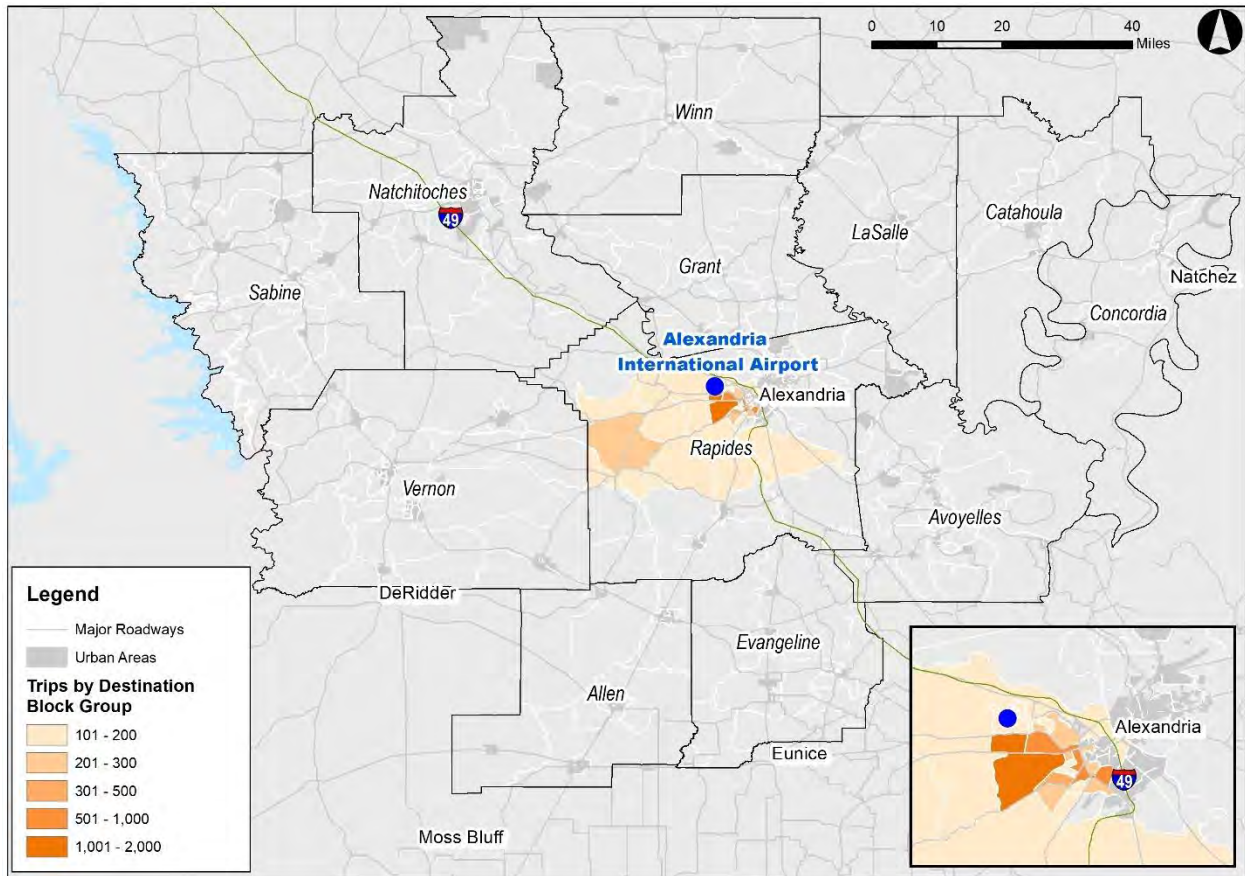


Figure 5 shows the majority of trips to Alexandria Mall on an average weekday originate in Rapides Parish. Similar patterns are found for the weekday trips originating in the mall in Figure 6. The catchment area of the mall extends for Saturday and Sunday travel, but still is largely confined to Rapides Parish, as can be seen in Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10.

Figure 5. Average Weekday Trips to Alexandria Mall

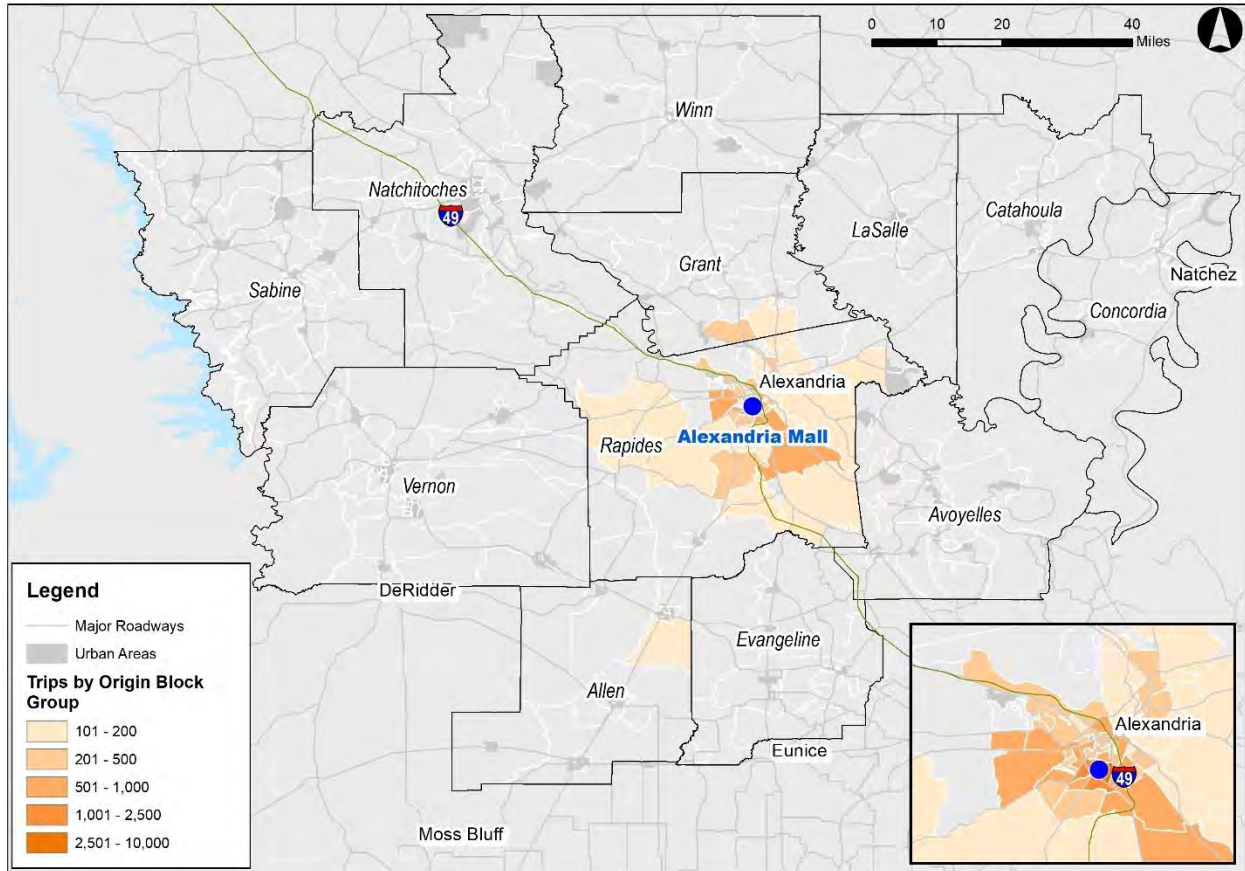


Figure 6. Average Weekday Trips from Alexandria Mall

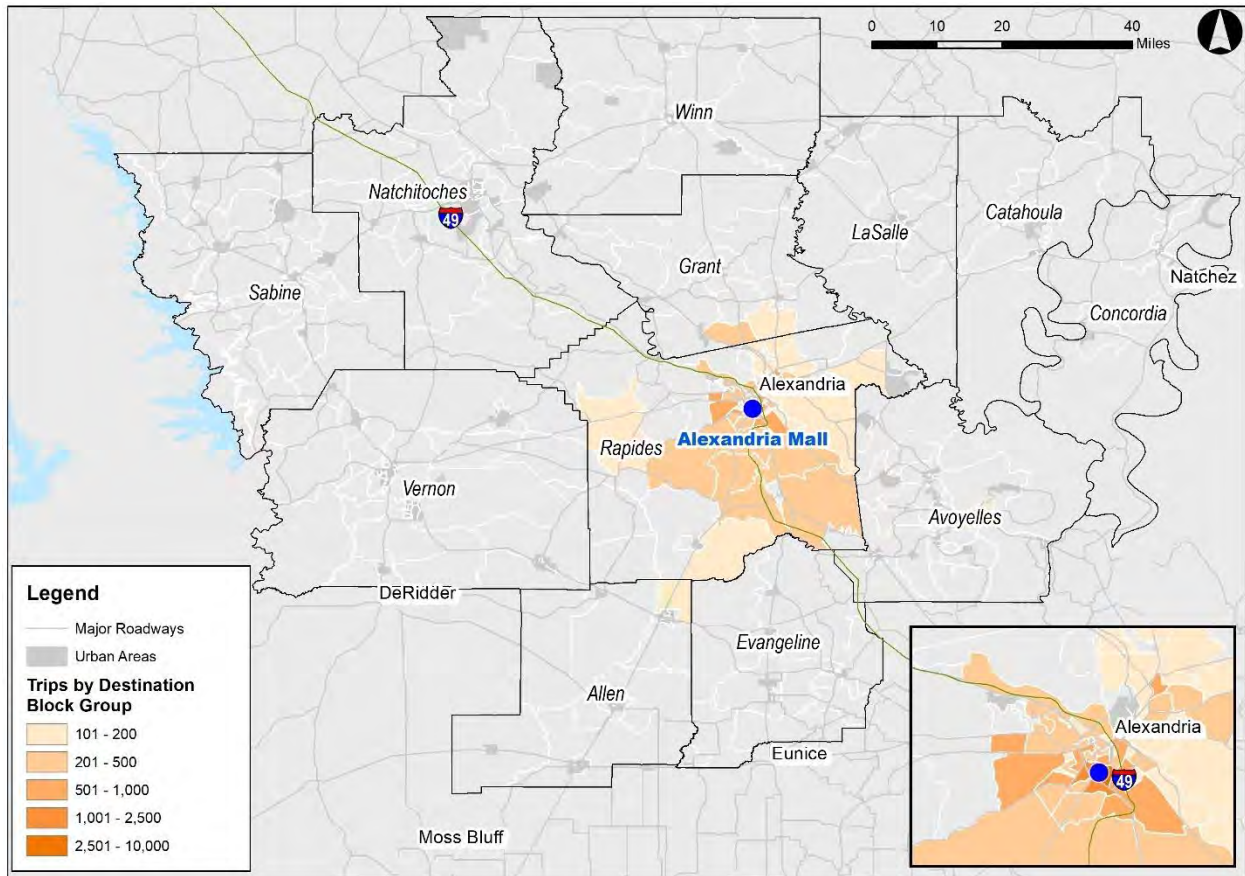


Figure 7. Average Saturday Trips to Alexandria Mall

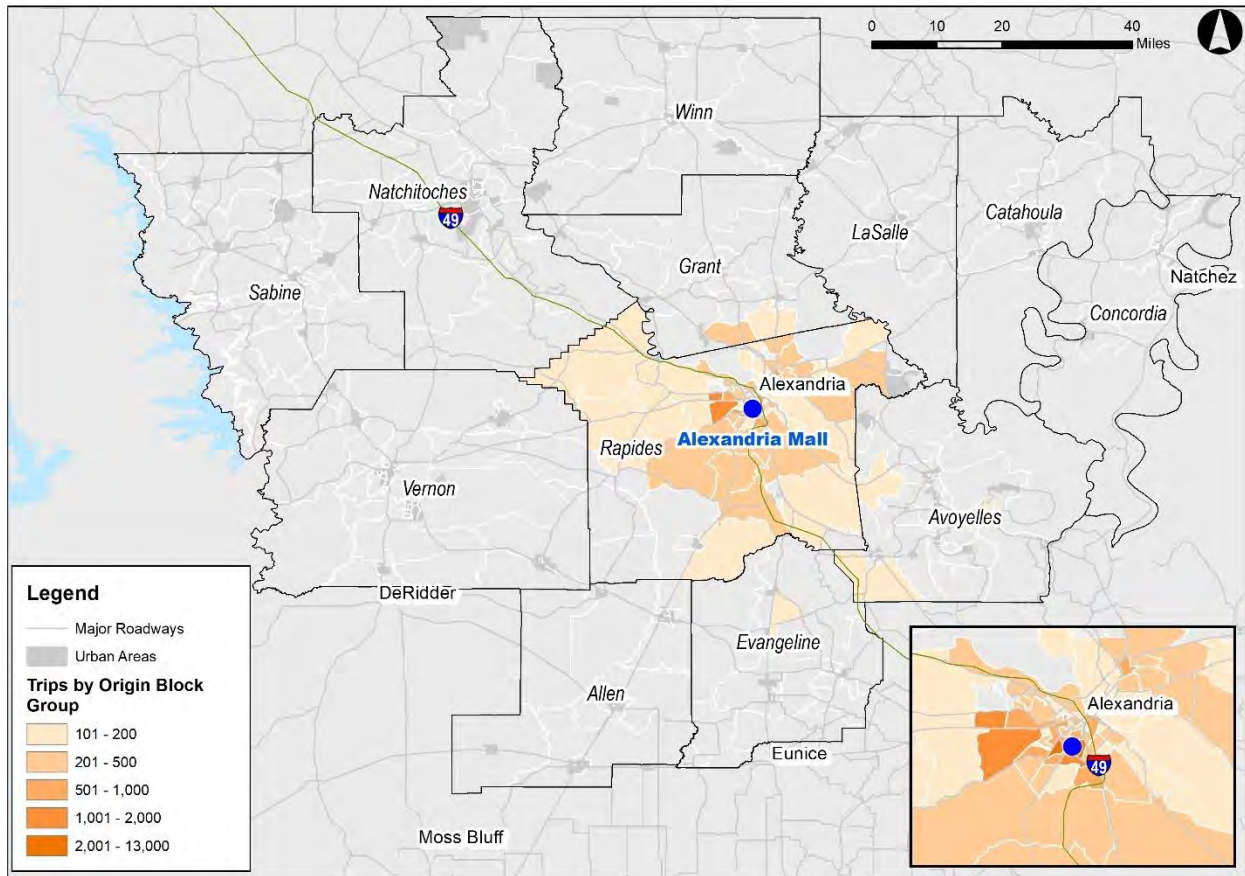


Figure 8. Average Saturday Trips from Alexandria Mall

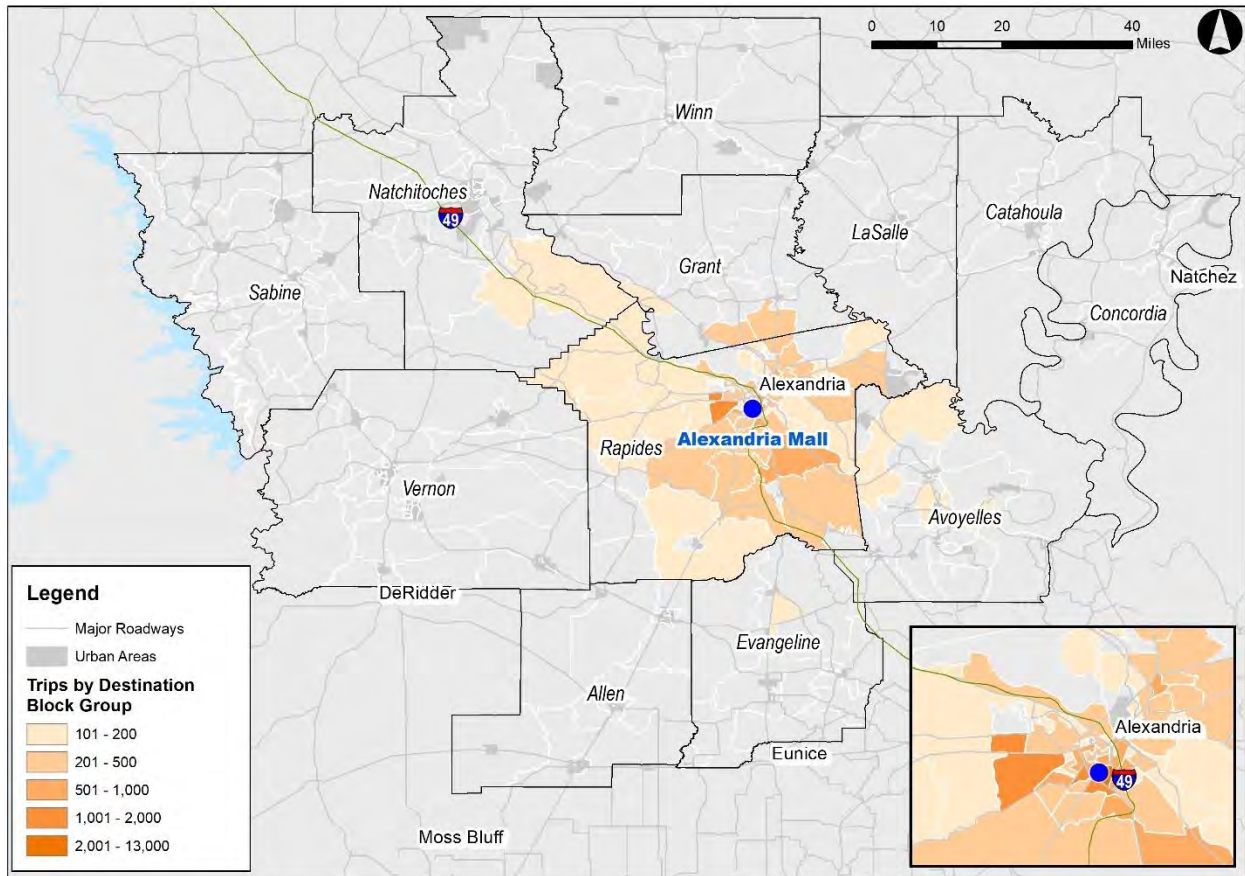


Figure 9. Average Sunday Trips to Alexandria Mall

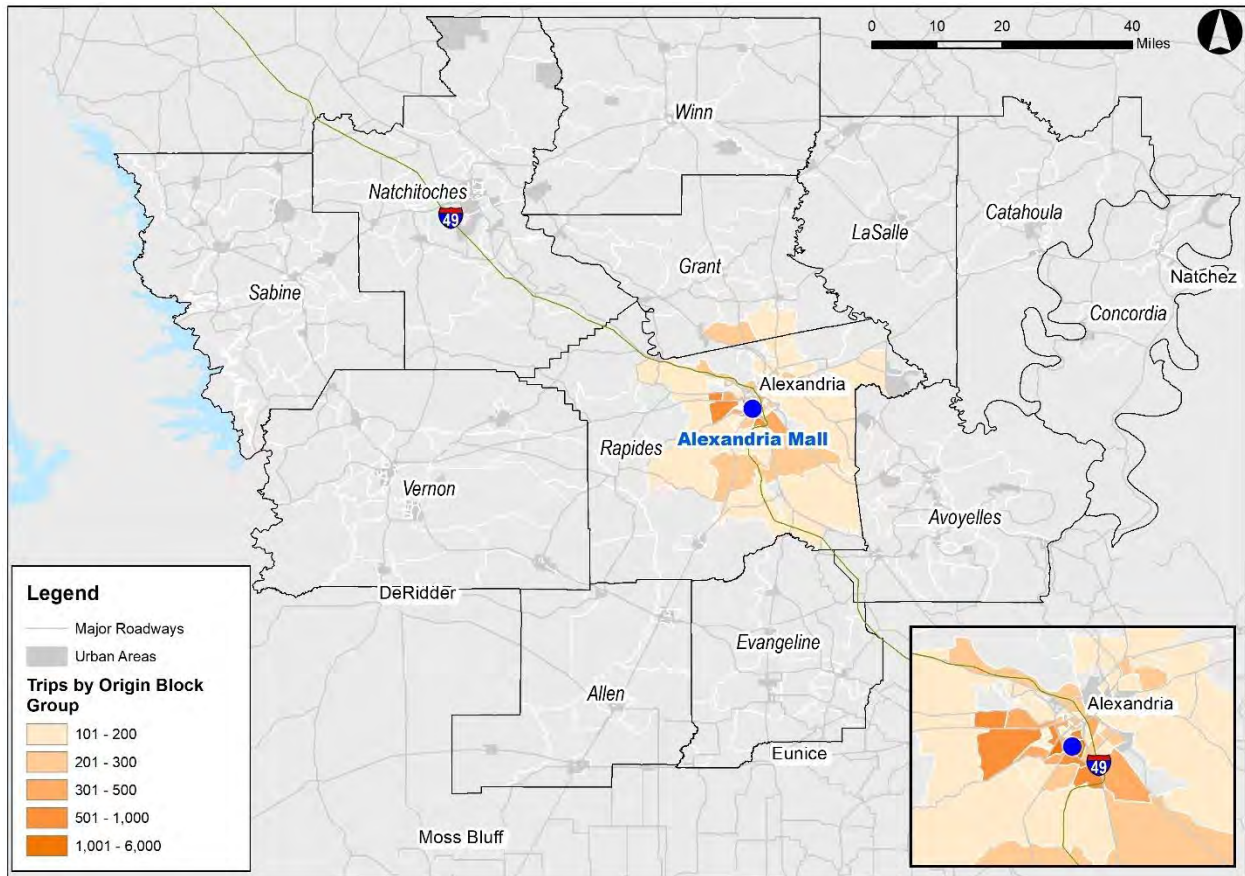


Figure 10. Average Sunday Trips from Alexandria Mall

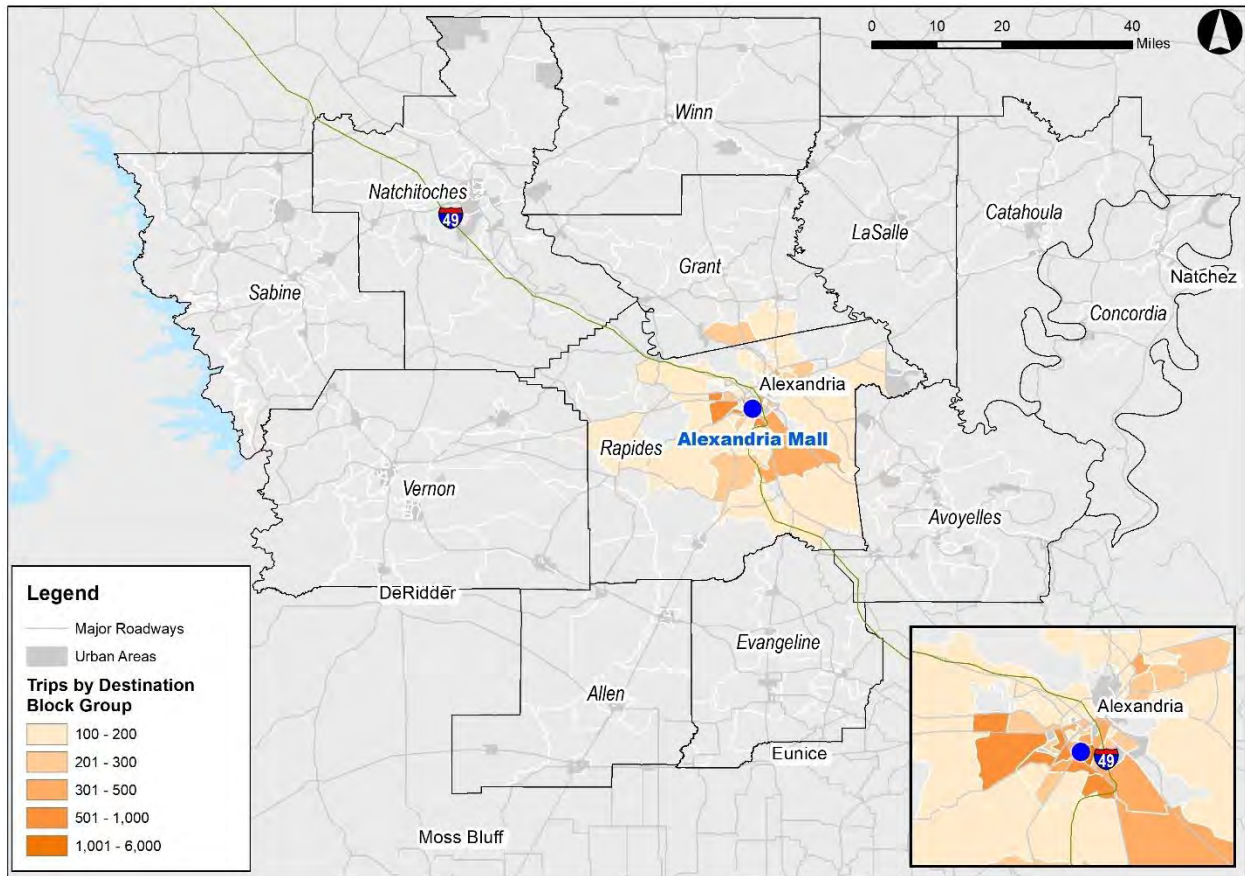


Figure 11 and Figure 12 show that the block groups generating and attracting weekday trips from Natchitoches Regional Airport are those in its immediate vicinity. This is to be expected from a smaller airport.

Figure 11. Average Weekday Trips to Natchitoches Regional Airport

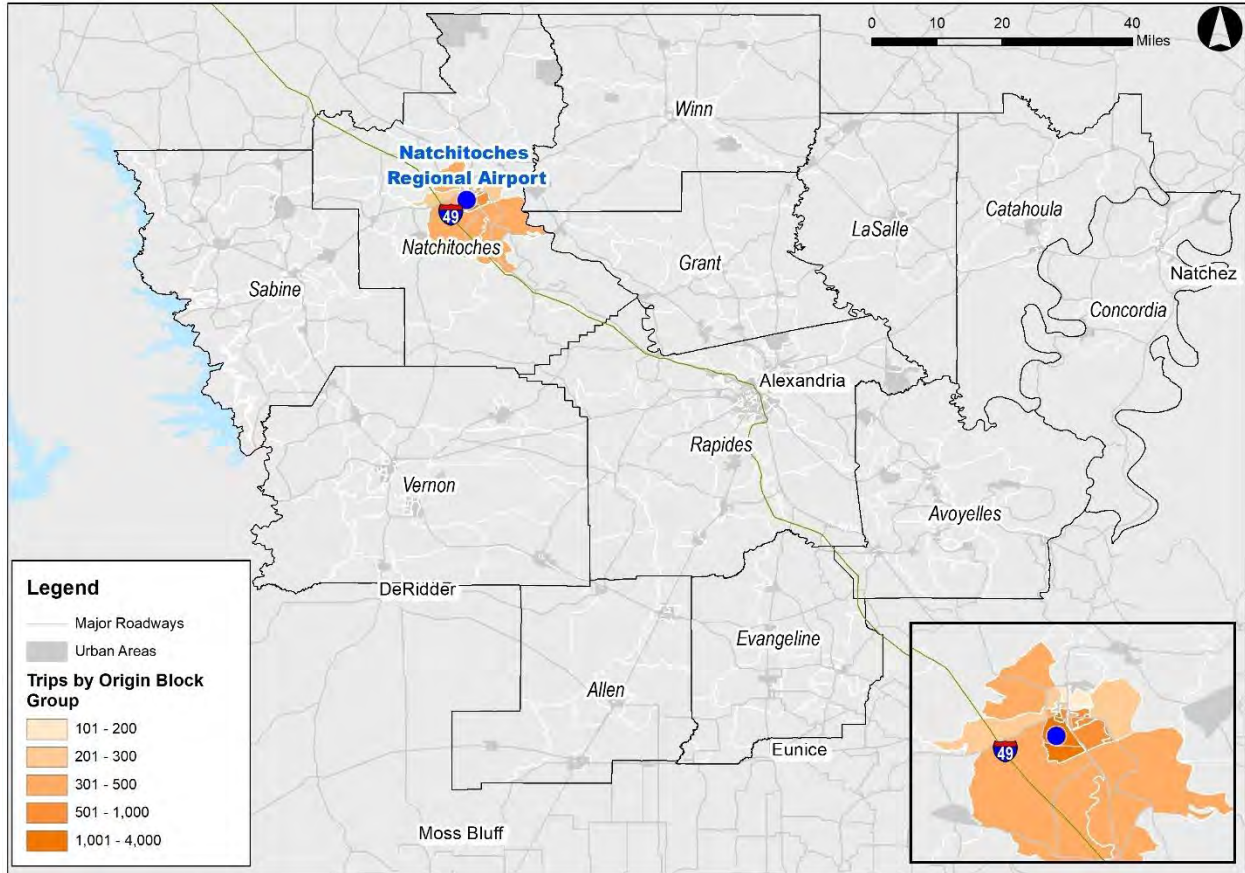


Figure 12. Average Weekday Trips from Natchitoches Regional Airport

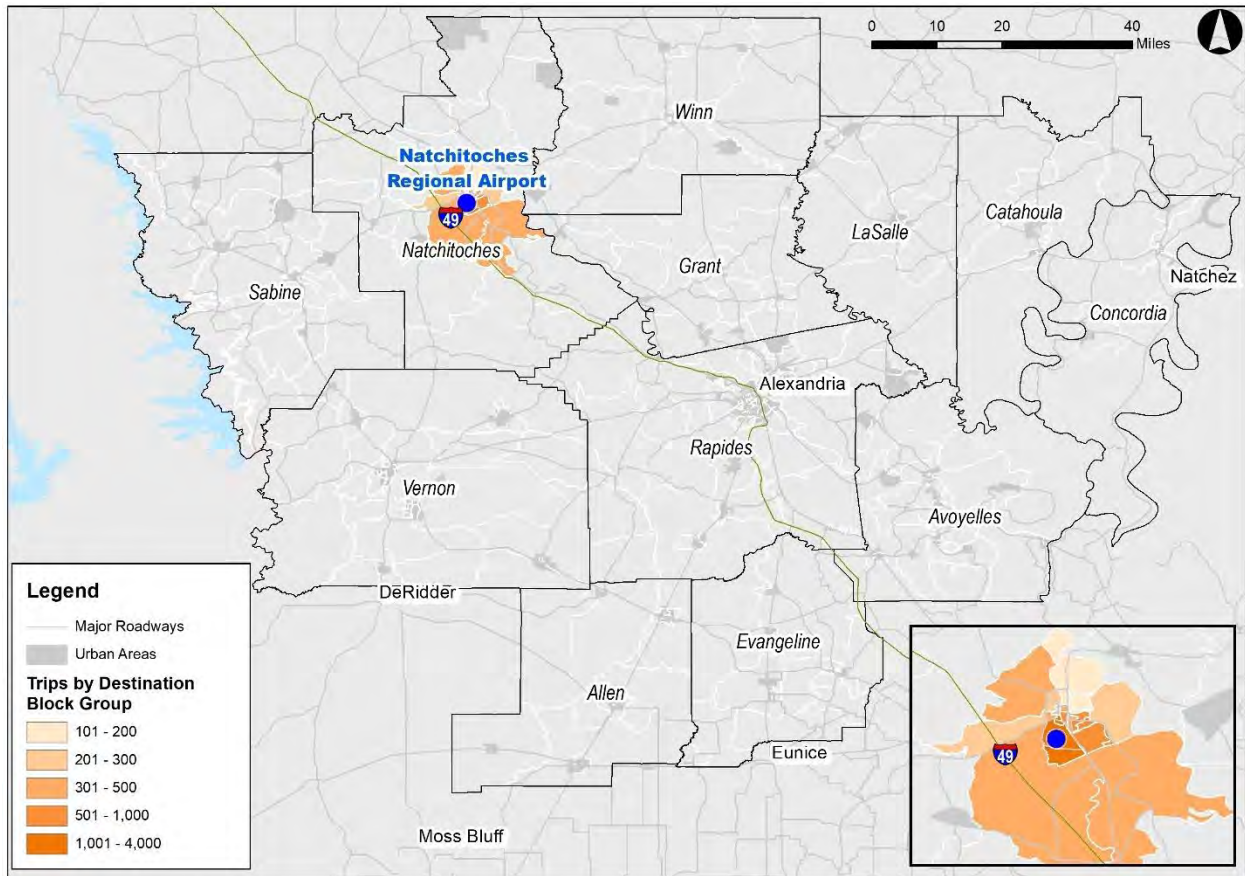


Figure 13 and Figure 14 show the weekday medical trips to and from the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, respectively. Trips are largely confined to Natchitoches Parish.

Figure 13. Average Weekday Trips to Natchitoches Regional Medical Center

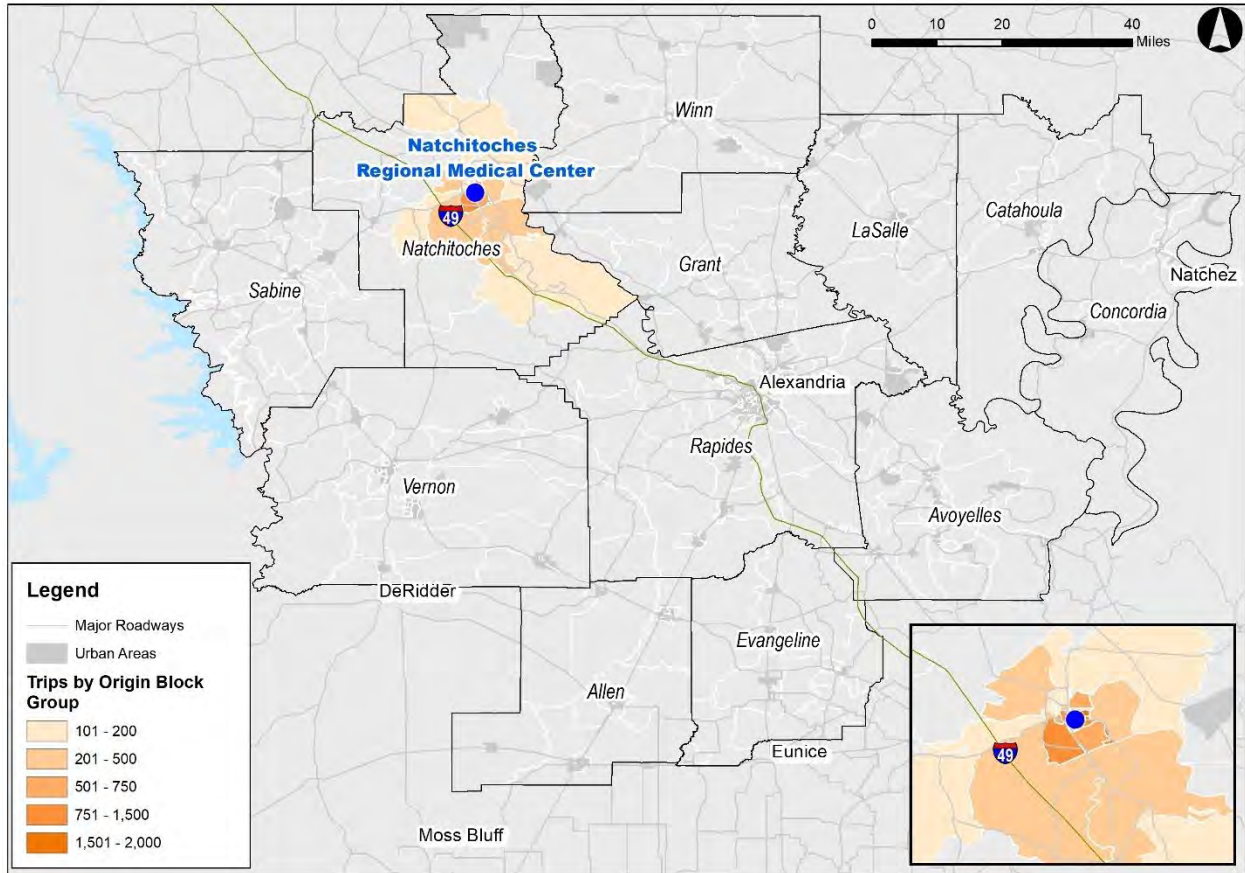
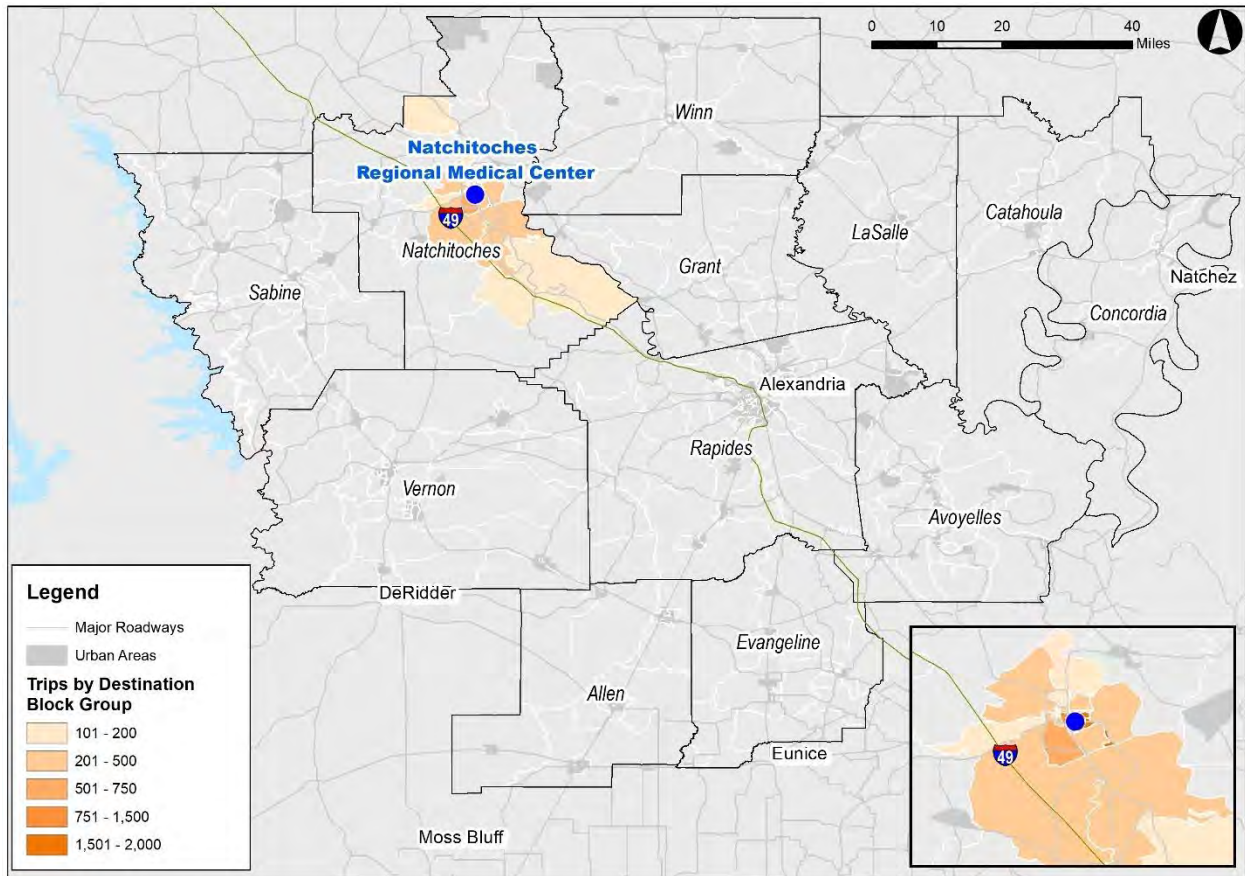


Figure 14. Average Weekday Trips from Natchitoches Regional Medical Center



Intrazonal Travel

By removing the barriers of manual scheduling and booking, many operators using micro-transit can serve a wider variety of trips and travel needs of residents. Micro-transit operations in rural areas aim to aggregate trips to optimize the number of passengers per trip and ensure efficient operations. In some micro-transit systems, operators provide on-demand services with guaranteed wait times in areas of concentrated trip demand, such as the intra-urbanized areas discussed below. In the peripheral areas beyond those zones, areas with a less concentrated trips, such as the intra-Parish trip demand described below, operators maintain requirements for prescheduled trip times to manage their fleet demands, while improving the scheduling optimization, reducing reservation window requirements, dynamic routing and passenger scheduling interface.

Intrazonal travel is typically a good candidate for a demand response micro-transit service due to the concentrated trip patterns. Concentrated trips supports the feasibility of guaranteed wait times, which requires varying degrees of dead-head travel for the operator. Table 4 and **Error! Reference source not found.** show the intra-urbanized areas with at least 10,000 intrazonal trips on an average weekday. Depending on transit mode share, transit service in and surrounding urban areas such as Natchitoches may be warranted if the current demand response services have reached capacity similar to the case of Wilson, North Carolina described below..

Table 4. Intra-Urbanized Area Trips by Day of Week

Urbanized Area	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Average Sunday
Natchitoches	83,320	50,438	44,407
Ville Platte	25,211	14,106	14,096
Leesville	24,306	12,776	11,787
Oakdale	22,750	14,712	15,997
Winnfield	18,036	11,244	10,506
Many	16,026	9,722	9,534
Kinder	15,800	15,188	14,438
Marksville	15,253	9,743	9,278
Fort Polk South	14,186	8,197	7,024
Jena	10,130	6,679	6,323

Figure 15. Intra-Urbanized Areas with Demand Over 10,000 Average Weekday Trips

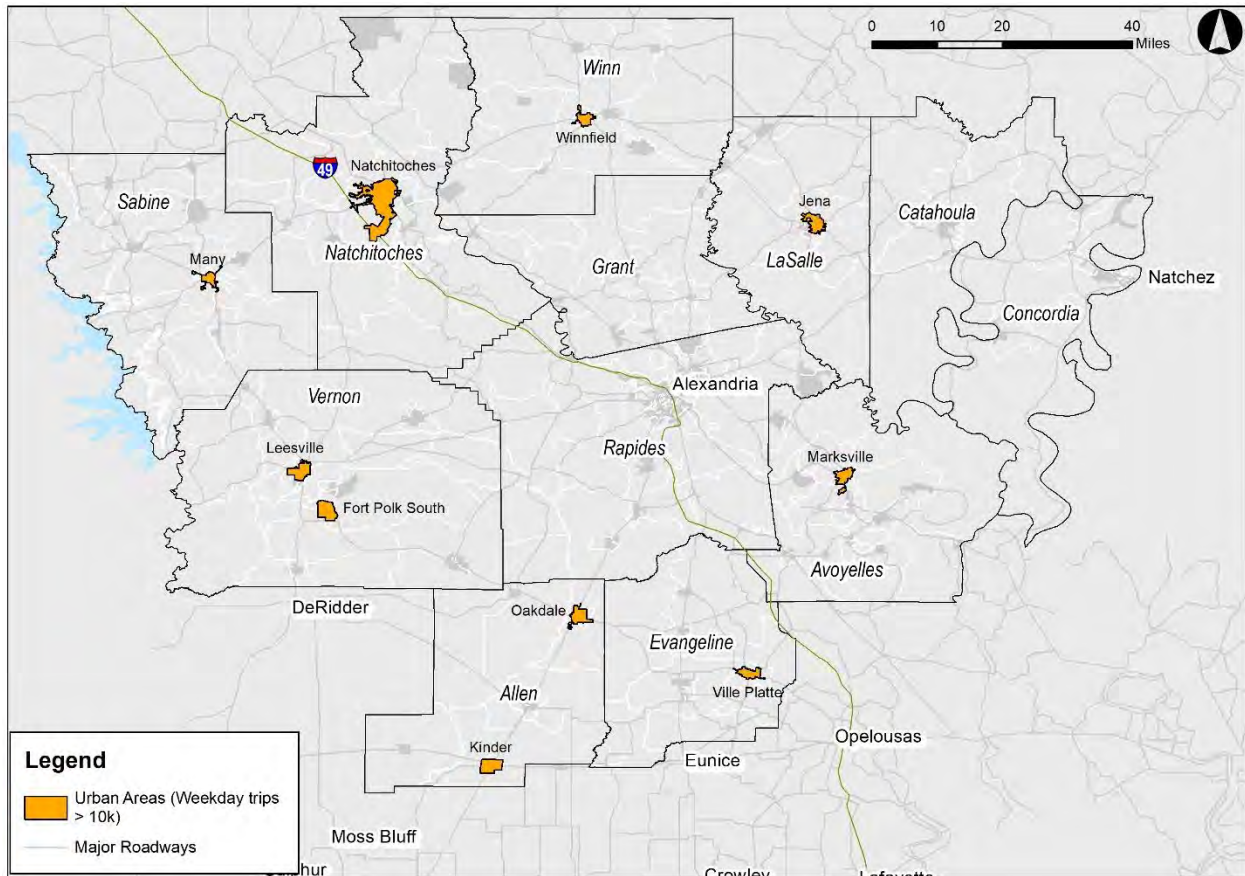


Table 5 expands on the urban areas listed in Table 4 to include the corresponding parishes as candidates for micro-transit. As aforementioned, intra-parish travel constitutes the largest portion of travel originating in each parish, making it ripe for transit operation. Given that more than 90% of intra-parish trips are 15 miles or less, it appears to be a good candidate for a demand response micro-transit service, similar to the case of Baldwin County, Alabama described below.

Table 5. Intra-Parish Trips by Day of Week

Parish	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Average Sunday
Allen	57,213	44,441	45,383
Avoyelles	97,354	80,232	77,873
Evangeline	72,111	51,367	52,346
LaSalle	38,494	24,875	28,398
Natchitoches	124,531	83,628	79,494
Sabine	62,231	52,266	52,618
Vernon	133,838	88,197	85,213
Winn	35,074	24,376	26,069

Micro-transit Considerations and Case Studies

Rural areas across the U.S. are considering micro-transit solutions to meeting growing demand and customer expectations. Demand-respond transportation services in rural areas have been operating for decades. Passengers booking a ride through a call center or mobile application is nothing new for rural transportation services. A constant challenge for operators is providing service flexibly and conveniently to customers, shifting the pickup and drop-off locations and times as needed. New and emerging technologies, emulated by micro-transit pilots and implementation, are improving the scheduling and dynamic routing to improve mobility and provide a better customer experience. Presented below are two case studies of micro-transit implementation based on different trip concentration and demand.

RIDE¹, the micro-transit service operating in the small community of Wilson, North Carolina, replaced the City's fixed-route service in Fall 2020. The fixed route system had had limited geographic coverage and 60-minute headways, whereas RIDE provides on-demand service across the entire city.

The micro-transit service improves access to employment and daycare centers while being far more fuel-efficient and cost-effective than fixed route systems. The service is convenient, accessible, affordable, and customized to the rider's needs. It is attractive not only to those captive riders (minorities, low income, seniors, people with disabilities, etc.), but also to those who own their vehicles. The fare is comparable to that of fixed-route service (\$1.50) with the potential to save by purchasing multiple trips at once.

The service provides seamless cross-jurisdiction trips with a simple phone app reservation and reduced wait times (15 minutes). The system is mostly used for commuting (52%) and 38% for essential errands (retail and medical trips). Overall, the micro-transit service, despite the reduced vehicle capacity associated with the pandemic, captured more ridership than the fixed route system, prompting the discontinuation of the fixed-route service.

¹ <https://www.wilsonnc.org/residents/all-departments/public-works/wilson-transit-ride-wilson-industrial-air-center/ride>

Figure 16. Micro-transit vans in Wilson, North Carolina



Another successful micro-transit implementation example is the Baldwin Regional Area Transit System (BRATS). BRATS serves 2,000 square miles in a community of 223,000 people. In FY 2019, Baldwin County Commission was selected to receive FTA’s Integrated Mobility Innovation funding to create a mobility-on-demand platform to automate routing, scheduling and dispatching technology. The grant aimed to enhance transit access for all residents while increasing efficiency, reducing wait times and improving reliability. BRATS provides door-to-door public transit services to all residents and visitors.

Figure 17. Service Map of BRATS Public Transportation



To ensure transit service accessibility throughout the entire region, the service was designed to aggregate trips in a manageable way for the transit operator. The areas of highest trip concentration were identified and established as four separate sub-zones. Customers are able to book on-demand trips anywhere within each sub-zone or schedule rides between the zones or to destinations outside the core zones (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The pricing varies by mileage, ranging from \$2.00 for trips under 5 miles to \$5.00 to trips between 30 and 35 miles.

The micro-mobility implementation expanding the reach of BRATS who was limited by the manual scheduling and booking of each ride. By optimizing the routing, scheduling and booking, BRATS is providing a better customer experience, greater access to transit throughout the region, and more efficient public transportation operations.

Estimating Rural Transit Demand

The subsequent estimates of rural transit demand in the study region are largely based on guidance from the TCRP 161 Report: *Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation*.

Mobility Gap

The report defines *Mobility Gap* as “the difference between the number of trips made by persons who reside in households owning no personal vehicle and the number of trips that would likely be made by those persons if they had access to a personal vehicle.”

The need is defined as follows:

$$\text{Need} = \text{Households with Zero Vehicles} * \text{Mobility Gap Factor (State Specific)}$$

The report states the gap factor for the state of Louisiana is 2.0. Table 6 shows the calculated daily mobility gap at the parish level. The recommended annualization factor is 300, resulting in an annual need of 5,795,400 trips.

Table 6. Daily Mobility Gap in the Study Region (2019)

Parish	HH with Zero Vehicles	Daily Mobility Gap
Allen	610	1,220
Avoyelles	1,192	2,384
Catahoula	297	594
Concordia	537	1,074
Evangeline	1,426	2,852
Grant	377	754
LaSalle	179	358
Natchitoches	1,588	3,176
Rapides	1,013	2,026
Sabine	732	1,464
Vernon	1,295	2,590
Winn	413	826
Total	9,659	19,318

Source: American Community Survey (2015-2019)

However, this measure can be misleading because residents in households with no vehicles may still complete their trips using alternative modes (sharing a ride with someone, using a transportation network company such as Uber or Lyft, or using transit if available). The measure is also one-dimensional, as it does not take into account other demographic variables such as income, age, or disability status, as well as trip characteristics such as time of day, distance to destination, and cost of the trip.

General Public (Non-program) Demand Function

The following function was developed to estimate annual demand for rural transit, regardless of the type of service needed and the amount of service provided:

$$Demand = (2.20 * Pop Age 60+) + (5.21 * Mobility Limited Pop Age 18 - 64) + (1.52 * Residents of HH with zero Veh)$$

Table 7 lists the annual demand for rural transit by parish. It is important to note here that demographics associated with Alexandria and Pineville are excluded from those of Rapides Parish so that the urban nature of these two cities does not skew the calculations for the demand for rural transit.

Table 7. Demand for Rural Transit in the Study Region (2019)

Parish	Population 60+	Population Disabled	Population in Households with Zero Vehicles	Demand for Rural Transit
Allen	5,157	3,485	872	30,828
Avoyelles	9,299	6,985	1,661	59,374
Catahoula	2,389	835	451	10,292
Concordia	4,578	1,907	1,013	21,547
Evangeline	7,285	6,145	2,312	51,557
Grant	4,441	3,023	659	26,522
LaSalle	3,552	1,593	333	16,620
Natchitoches	8,514	3,434	2,759	40,816
Rapides	17,525	8,149	2,156	84,288
Sabine	6,506	2,365	1,093	28,296
Vernon	8,173	6,450	1,881	54,444
Winn	3,556	1,919	661	18,826
Total	80,975	46,290	15,851	443,410

Source: American Community Survey (2015-2019)

Commuters to Urban Centers

The report also provides guidance for estimating the demand for commuter transit services from a rural county to an urban place. The function is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Daily Commute Trips} \\
 & = \text{Proportion Using Transit for Commuter Trips} \\
 & * \text{Number of Commuters} * 2
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Proportion} \\
 & = 0.024 + (0.0000056 * \text{Workers Commuting from Rural County to Urban Place})^2 - \\
 & (0.00029 * \text{Distance in Miles from Rural County to Urban Place}) +
 \end{aligned}$$

² <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>



0.015 (if the Urban Place is a state capital)

Annual Commute Trips = 255 * Daily Commute Trips

Table 8 lists the transit mode share for commuter trips and the associated daily transit commute trips by parish. It is important to note here that workers residing in Alexandria and Pineville are excluded from those of Rapides Parish so that the urban nature of these two cities does not skew the calculations for the transit commuter trips from rural county to urban place.

Table 8. Transit Commuter Trips to Alexandria

Parish	Number of Workers (2018)	Distance from Maps (mi) Google	Proportion Using Transit	Daily Transit Commute Trips
Allen	199	61.3	0.7%	3
Avoyelles	1,356	41.1	2.0%	53
Catahoula	113	51.9	1.0%	2
Concordia	118	66	0.6%	1
Evangeline	163	40.3	1.3%	4
Grant	1,680	32.3	2.4%	81
LaSalle	217	39.3	1.4%	6
Natchitoches	595	58.6	1.0%	12
Rapides	10,346	17.1	8.7%	1,800
Sabine	132	81.1	0.1%	0
Vernon	526	49.1	1.3%	13
Winn	162	49.9	1.0%	3

Source: United States Census Bureau OnTheMap

Table 8 presents an ideal scenario where the number of workers and the distance to the urban destination dictate mode choice. In reality, mode choice is more nuanced and is largely dependent on the availability of modes in the rural county. Table 9, on the other hand, shows the current transit commute behavior by parish, a mere 734 daily transit commute trips for the 12 parish region excluding the Alexandria and Pineville urban centers.

Table 9. Current Commuter Transit Trips (American Community Survey)

Parish	Origin Trips	Commute Proportion Transit (ACS)	Using	Daily Commute Trips	Transit
Allen	8,519	0.1%		17	
Avoyelles	16,280	0.2%		65	
Catahoula	3,505	0.0%		0	
Concordia	7,494	0.1%		15	
Evangeline	11,217	0.8%		179	
Grant	7,070	0.2%		28	
LaSalle	5,067	0.1%		10	
Natchitoches	18,024	0.7%		252	
Rapides	20,077	0.1%		20	
Sabine	7,545	0.2%		30	

Vernon	22,612	0.1%	45
Winn	6,092	0.6%	73

Note: Origin commute trips are derived from the location based-services data.
Source: American Community Survey (2015-2019)

Transit Mode Share

Table 10 shows the suggested transit mode shares for trips originating in each parish by trip purpose. The HBR mode share is a range dictated by observed commute transit shares from Table 9 and the calculated commute transit share from Table 8.

The transit mode shares for the remaining trip purposes were calculated by dividing the annual rural transit demand from Table 7 by the total number of weekday trips by parish. The resulting mode shares are very similar to those extracted from the ACS.

Table 10. Suggested Transit Mode Shares by Parish

Parish	HBR	HBO	RBO	OBO
Allen	0.1% - 0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Avoyelles	0.2% - 2.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Catahoula	0.0% - 1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Concordia	0.1% - 0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Evangeline	0.8% - 1.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Grant	0.2% - 2.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
LaSalle	0.1% - 1.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Natchitoches	0.7% - 1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Rapides	0.1% - 8.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Sabine	0.2% - 0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Vernon	0.1% - 1.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Winn	0.6% - 1.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Future Travel and Transit Demand

Two population and employment growth scenarios are considered in this study:

1. Flat growth, i.e. trips, population, and employment do not change in the short and long term, reflective of historical growth trends in the study region which shows the region experiencing negative growth.
2. Modest growth consistent with 2010-2040 population and employment growth that RAPC provided.

Table 11 and Table 12 represent Scenario # 2, showing the percent growth between 2010 and 2040 as well as the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for population and employment, respectively.

Table 11. RAPC Population Growth

Parish	2010	2040	% Change	CAGR
Allen	25,764	32,657	27%	0.79%
Avoyelles	42,070	48,744	16%	0.49%
Catahoula	10,407	10,724	3%	0.10%
Concordia	20,823	21,457	3%	0.10%
Evangeline	33,984	38,420	13%	0.41%
Grant	22,309	33,433	50%	1.36%
LaSalle	14,890	17,578	18%	0.55%
Natchitoches	39,567	43,018	9%	0.28%
Rapides	131,439	156,847	19%	0.59%
Sabine	24,233	26,776	10%	0.33%
Vernon	52,334	63,988	22%	0.67%
Winn	15,312	15,880	4%	0.12%
Total	433,132	509,522	18%	0.54%

Source: RAPC

Table 12. RAPC Employment Growth

Parish	2010	2040	% Change	CAGR
Allen	8,317	11,062	33%	0.96%
Avoyelles	11,119	15,964	44%	1.21%
Catahoula	2,330	3,594	54%	1.46%
Concordia	5,908	7,069	20%	0.60%
Evangeline	8,148	10,596	30%	0.88%
Grant	3,221	6,081	89%	2.14%
LaSalle	4,758	5,744	21%	0.63%
Natchitoches	13,019	15,578	20%	0.60%
Rapides	58,126	67,046	15%	0.48%
Sabine	5,304	6,629	25%	0.75%
Vernon	14,811	27,032	83%	2.03%
Winn	5,191	5,663	9%	0.29%
Total	140,252	182,058	30%	0.87%

Source: RAPC

It is assumed that home-based trips (HBR and HBO) will grow consistently with population (at an average annual rate of 0.54%), whereas other trips (RBO and OBO) will grow consistently with employment (at an average annual rate of 0.87%). This results in the growth rates listed in

Table 13.

Table 13. Assumed Compound Annual Growth Rates by Parish and Purpose (Scenario #2)

Parish	HBR	HBO	RBO	OBO
Allen	0.79%	0.79%	0.96%	0.96%
Avoyelles	0.49%	0.49%	1.21%	1.21%
Catahoula	0.10%	0.10%	1.46%	1.46%
Concordia	0.10%	0.10%	0.60%	0.60%
Evangeline	0.41%	0.41%	0.88%	0.88%
Grant	1.36%	1.36%	2.14%	2.14%
LaSalle	0.55%	0.55%	0.63%	0.63%
Natchitoches	0.28%	0.28%	0.60%	0.60%
Rapides	0.59%	0.59%	0.48%	0.48%
Sabine	0.33%	0.33%	0.75%	0.75%
Vernon	0.67%	0.67%	2.03%	2.03%
Winn	0.12%	0.12%	0.29%	0.29%

The base and forecast year parish to parish trips are provided in separate Excel workbooks.

Appendix B

Presentation Provided to 5311 Providers



**Central Louisiana Coordinated
Transportation Coalition**

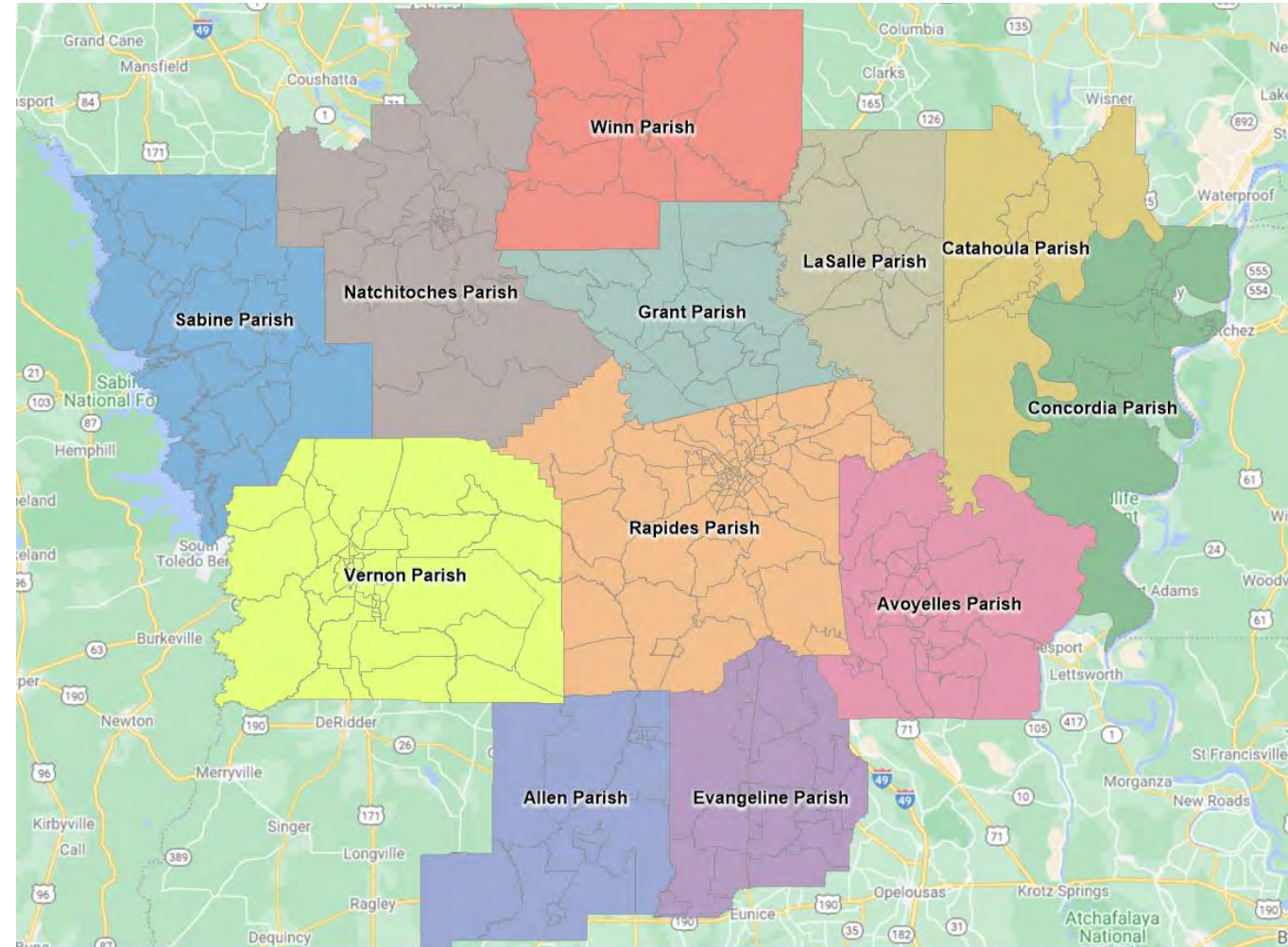
Rural Transit Provider Feasibility Study & Implementation Plan Introduction and Rural Transit Demand Analysis

June 10, 2021

Mapping tool: <https://thegoodmancorp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73b4ef9dc7204d279cf64822599e499f&extent=-10580301.864%2C3528077.9097%2C-9993265.4867%2C3802333.9672%2C102100>

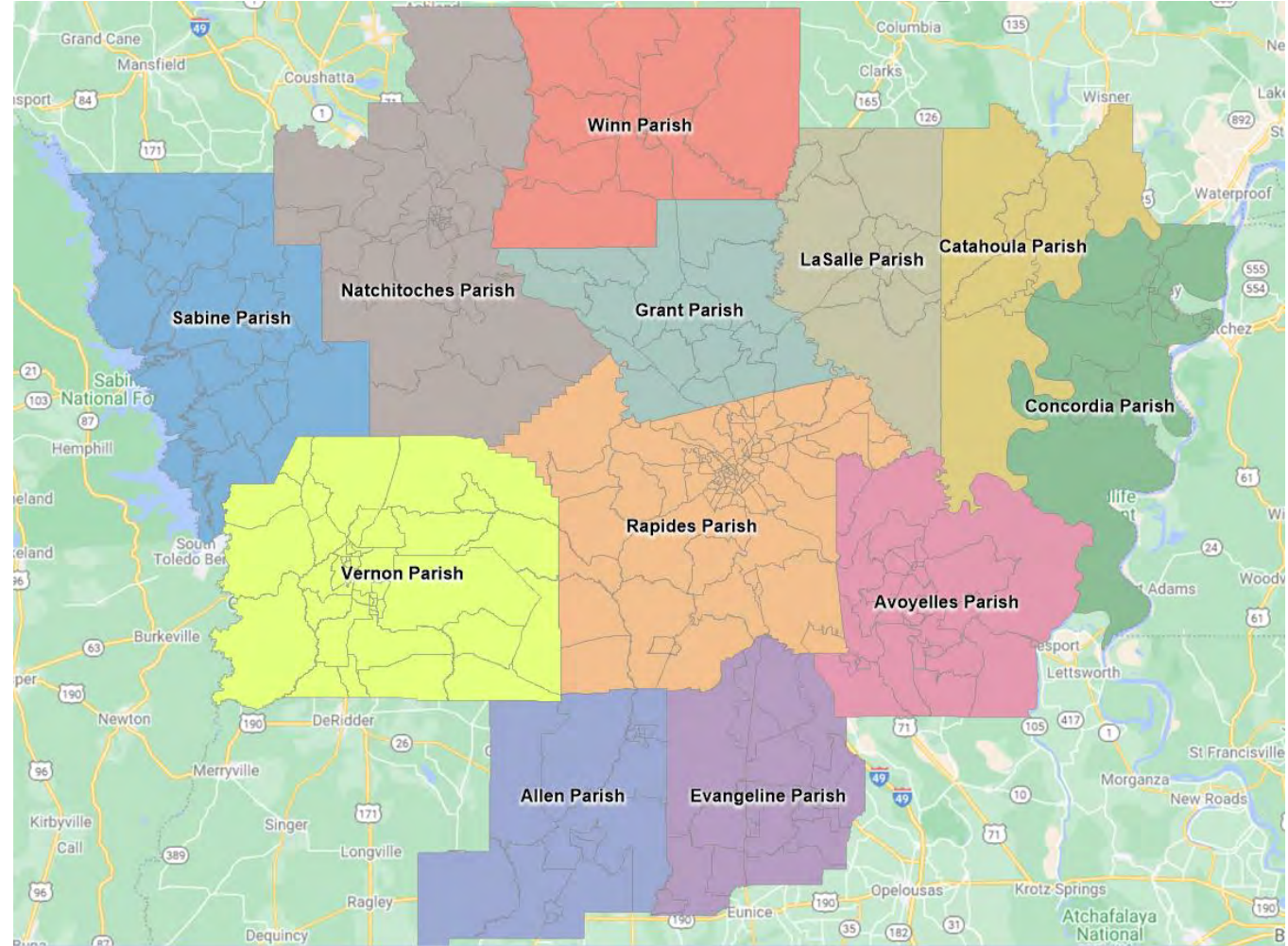
PROJECT PURPOSE:

- Project sponsored by Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) in partnership and financial support from Louisiana DOTD
- Evaluate and quantify unmet rural transit demand in Central Louisiana
- Identify options for meeting rural transit demand
- Explore sustainable administrative and service delivery models to address rural transit need
- Provide a start up strategy for consideration
- **How can a framework be developed to better meet the demand for rural general public transportation throughout Central Louisiana?**



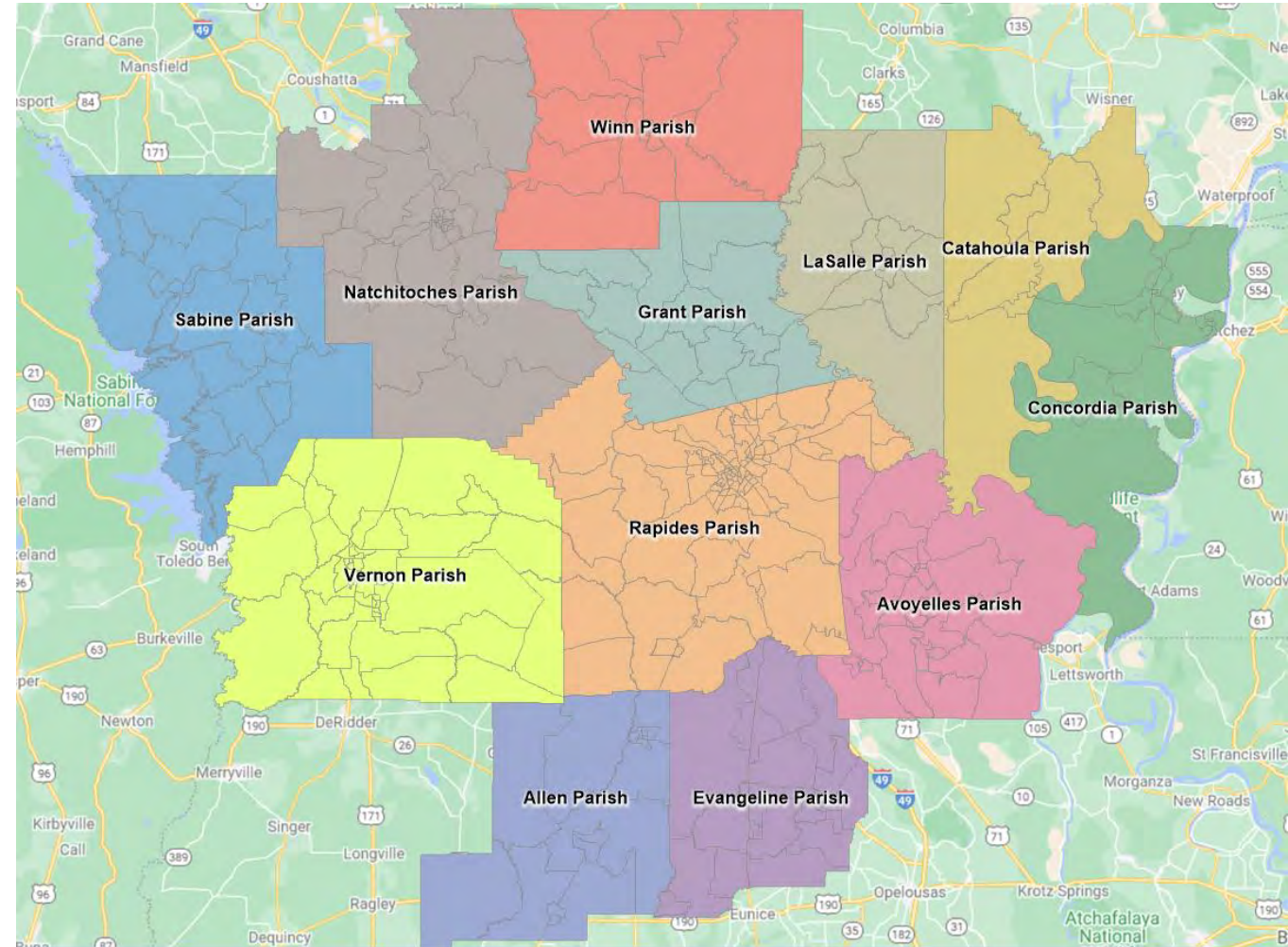
TODAY:

- Evaluate and quantify unmet rural transit demand in Central Louisiana – now and in the future
- Begin to discuss options for meeting rural transit demand
- Begin discussion on sustainable administrative and service delivery models to address rural transit need



FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY DISCUSSIONS:

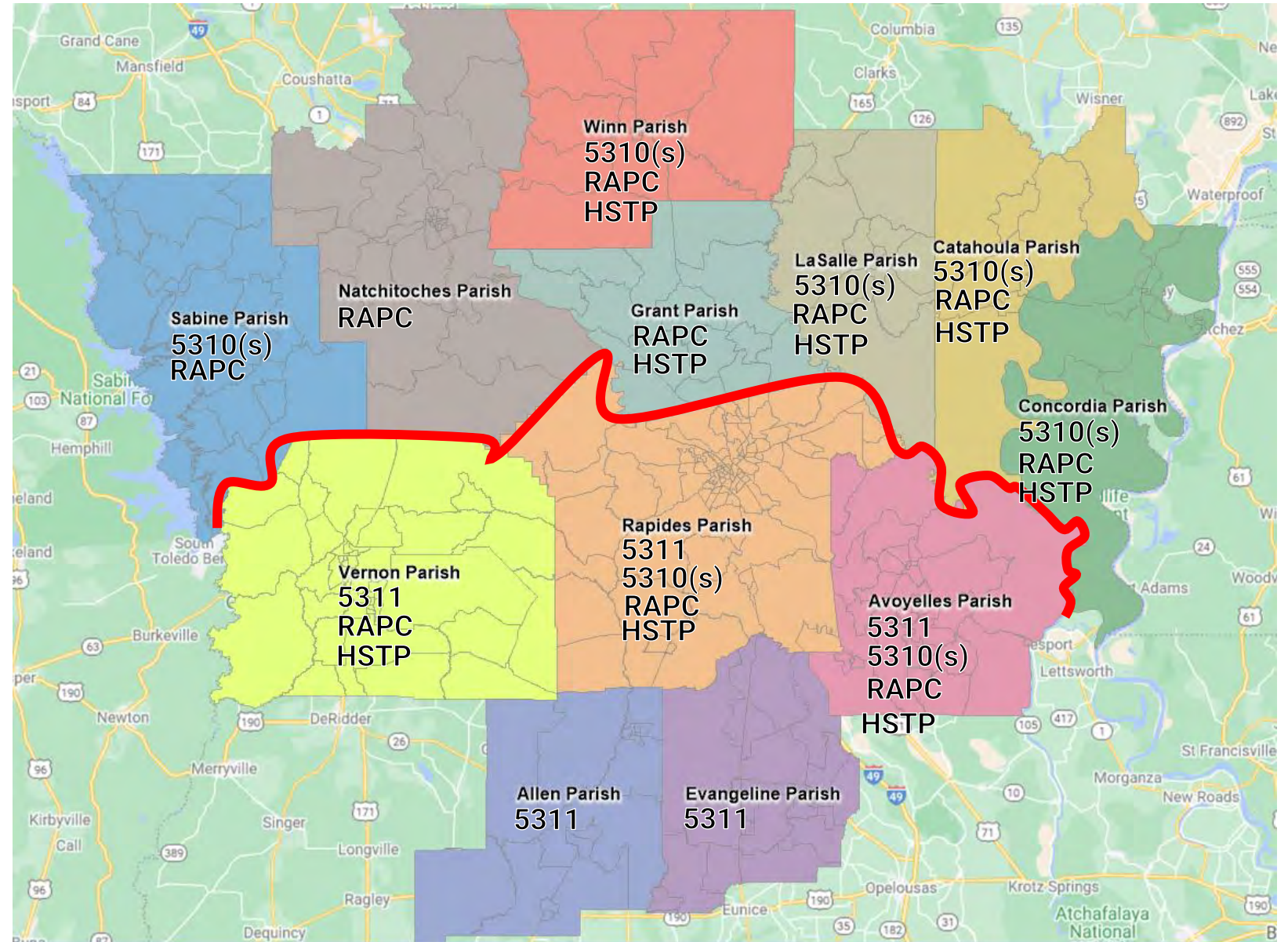
- Administrative
 - Potential provider(s)
 - Direct/sub-recipient structure
 - Funding and local share
 - Regional and community partnerships
- Operating Details
 - Type of service (DR, microtransit)
 - Hub or stop locations
 - Routes/zones
 - Operational hours
 - Fare structure(s)
 - Vehicle type, quantity, and cost
 - Storage, maintenance, and fueling
 - Drivers and staffing
 - Service delivery mechanism (self provided or third-party contract)



PROJECT AREA:

Geography

- 12 parishes
- 19,572 square miles (over 1/3 of LA)
- 424,385 pop. (2015-2019 ACS)
- 2010 – 2019 ACS avg. trend: -3%
- DOTD projection: +5%
- Five (5) 5311 providers
- **No** 5311 providers north of Vernon/Rapides/Avoyelles line
- Nine (9) 5310 providers in seven (7) parishes
- Significant need demonstrated through demography and HSTP (historic and current)
- Red line indicates north-south split where no 5311 providers exist today



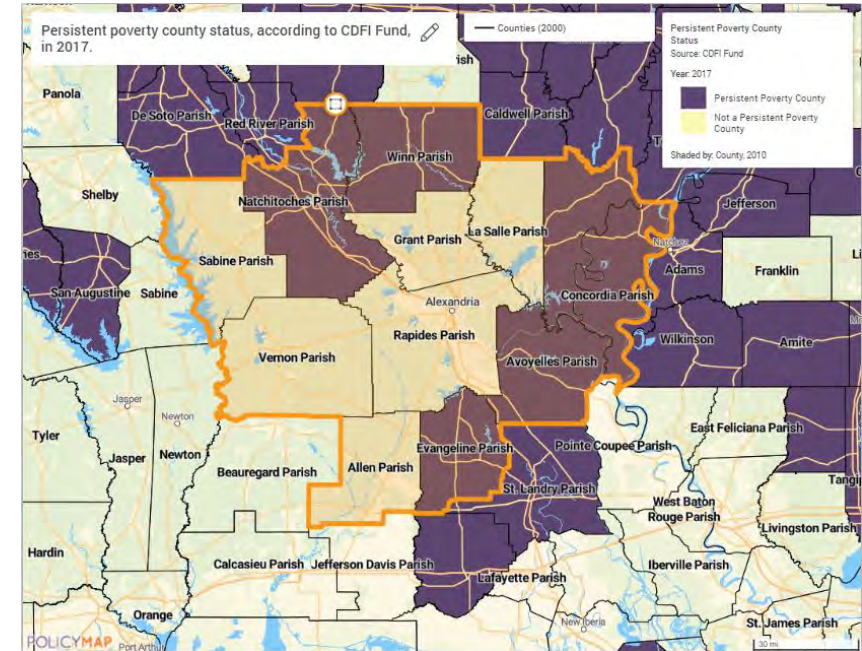
PROJECT AREA:

- Six (6) parishes of persistent poverty:
 - Any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau.

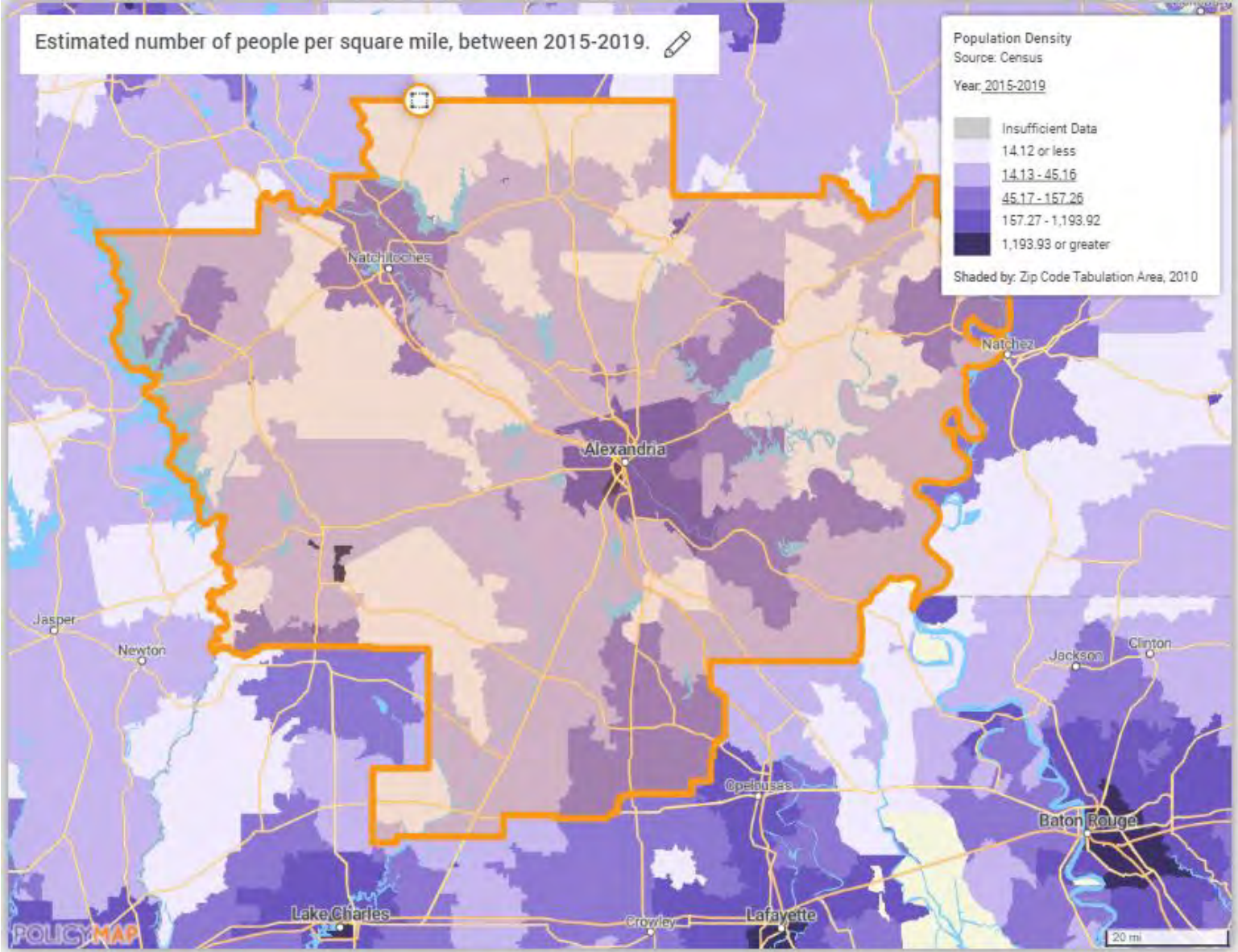
Parish	Population	Households	% Living in Poverty	% Living in Poverty with a Disability	% HH Zero Veh	% Pop Age 65+	Unemp. %
Allen	25,618	7,925	14.5%	38.1%	7.7%	14.7%	5.7%
Avoyelles	40,669	15,163	24.4%	29.5%	7.9%	16.7%	5.8%
Catahoula	9,766	3,364	22.1%	5.0%	8.8%	16.8%	6.4%
Concordia	19,778	7,162	25.1%	14.2%	7.5%	16.9%	6.5%
Evangeline	33,589	12,172	28.7%	30.0%	11.7%	15.1%	5.9%
Grant	22,340	6,989	18.8%	24.1%	5.4%	14.7%	5.8%
LaSalle	14,936	4,814	20.0%	18.6%	3.7%	16.7%	4.3%
Natchitoches	38,769	14,659	32.3%	12.5%	10.8%	16.1%	6.0%
Rapides	130,970	48,488	19.6%	21.3%	9.5%	15.9%	5.1%
Sabine	23,991	9,158	18.6%	17.0%	8.0%	20.1%	5.1%
Vernon	49,646	17,696	17.3%	24.5%	7.3%	11.7%	6.2%
Winn	14,313	5,483	18.7%	32.3%	7.5%	18.3%	6.3%
Study Area*	424,385	153,073	21.66%	22.25%	8.0%	16.1%	6.0%
Louisiana	4,664,362	1,739,497	19.23%	20.31%	8.3%	15.0%	4.8%

* *Italicized is average of Parish totals*

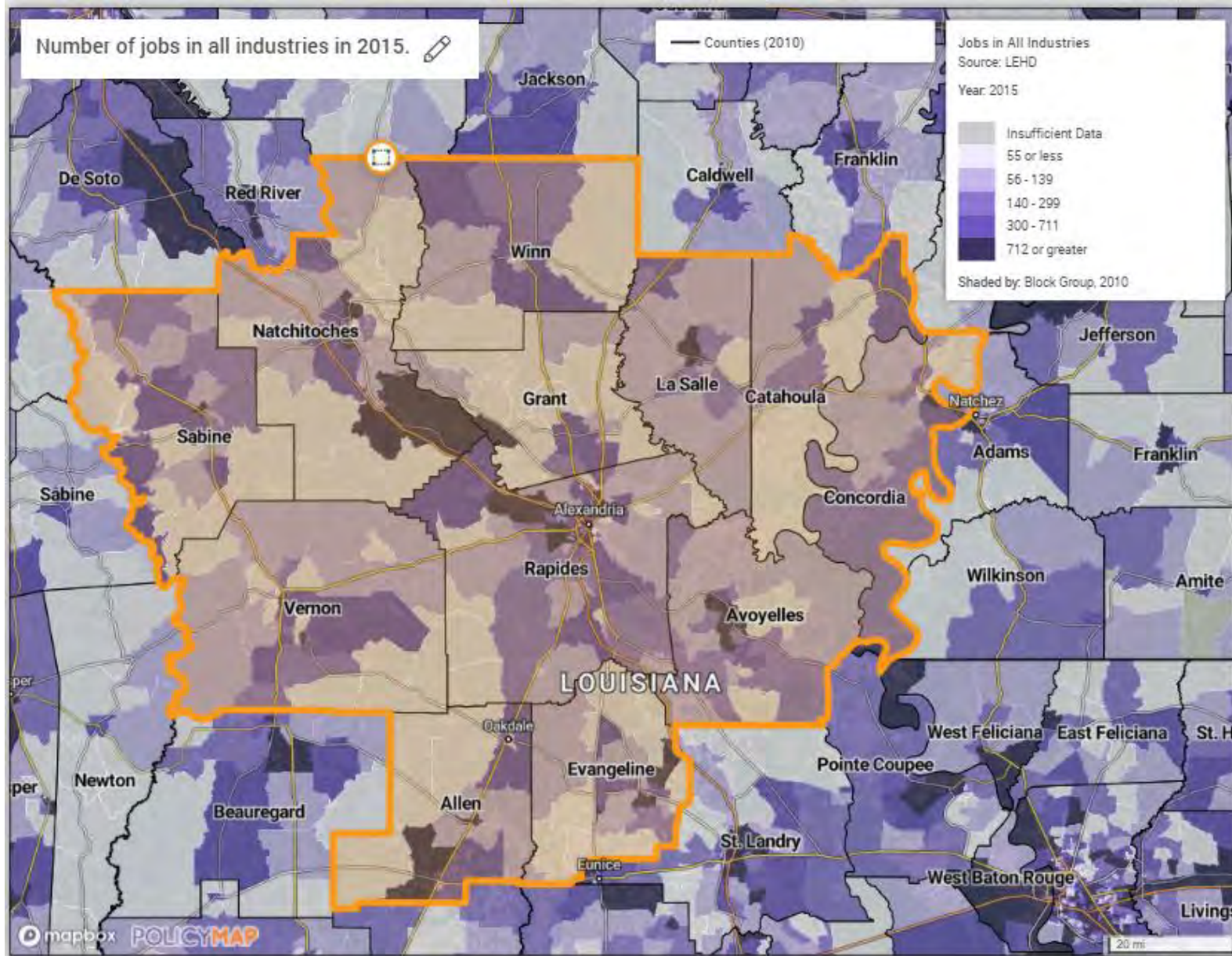
Source: 2015-2019 ACS



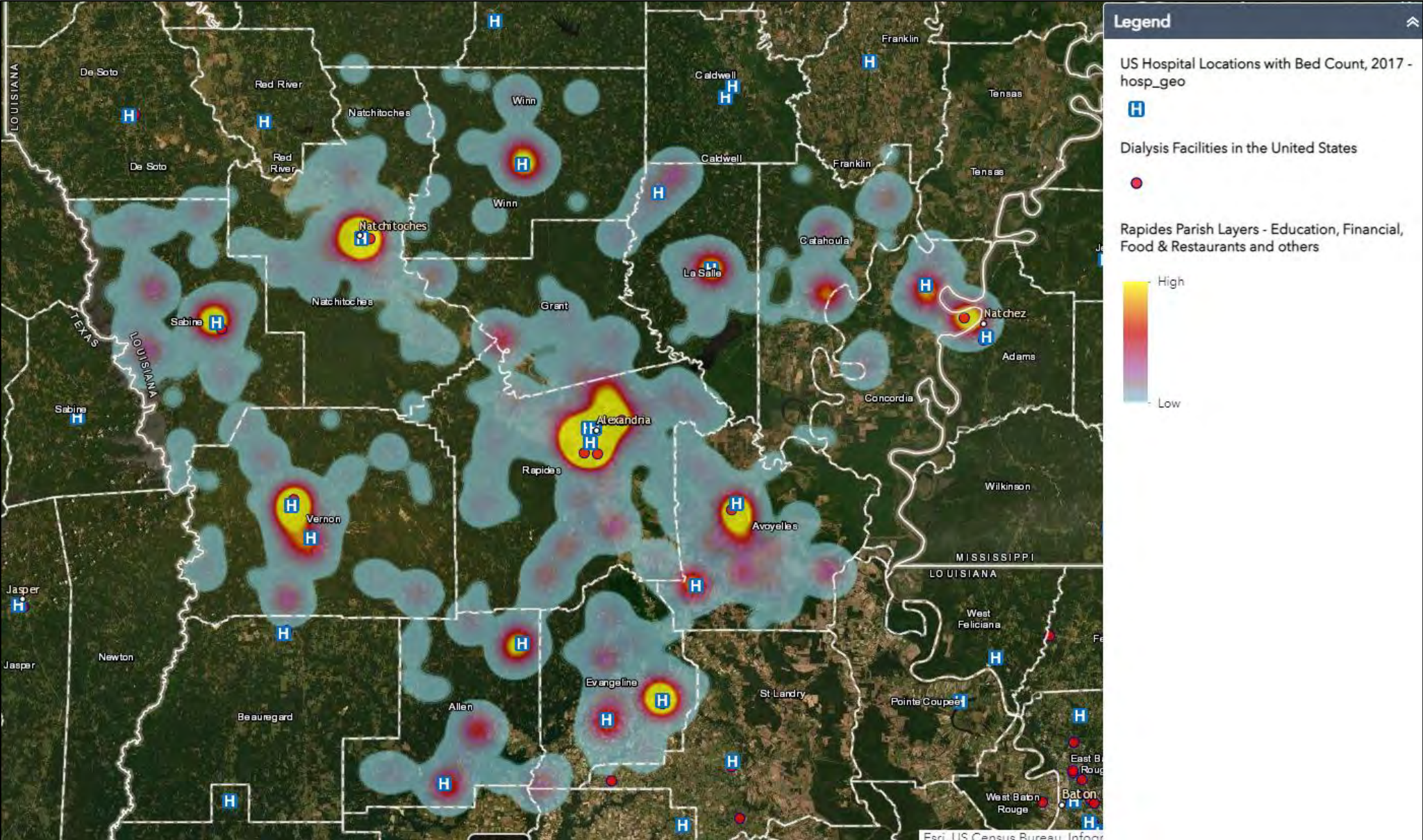
POPULATION DENSITY:



JOB DENSITY:



DESTINATION CENTERS:



TRIP FLOW ANALYSIS SUMMARY:

- Intra-parish trips account for the largest portion of trips originating or ending in a parish.
- Trips to/from Alexandria are insignificant for the 11 parishes outside Rapides Parish.
- There is a clear pattern of weekday trips from rural Rapides to Alexandria and vice versa.
- Saturday/Sunday trips significant; about 75% of the weekday trips.
- Rapides and Natchitoches Medical Centers are the only real regional attractors.
- Data points to traditional rural demand response (door to door) as the service delivery strategy for interparish transportation in this area.
- Microtransit could be considered in places where there are relatively higher population densities; Microtransit could also be an option for intra-parish transportation in the study area.
 - 90% of intra-parish trips are 15 miles or less in distance
- Data does not indicate a need for any new commuter type services from the rural to urban area.

WEEKDAY TRIP FLOWS:

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Total
Allen	57,213	198	13	7	1,530	44	35	56	4,558	61	1,185	10	64,910
Avoyelles	192	97,354	193	186	1,127	302	188	212	10,529	38	92	39	110,452
Catahoula	14	195	20,776	3,467	6	70	1,784	34	1,052	3	15	39	27,455
Concordia	6	178	3,497	44,899	4	70	333	36	890	9	25	183	50,130
Evangeline	1,646	1,116	15	10	72,111	37	80	60	2,399	32	91	8	77,605
Grant	55	291	66	58	38	28,866	931	814	15,397	78	98	1,143	47,835
LaSalle	23	174	1,730	321	84	929	38,494	110	2,697	81	56	1,000	45,698
Natchitoches	58	215	33	20	46	771	111	124,531	3,855	3,189	439	1,742	135,011
Rapides	4,604	10,532	1,057	893	2,345	15,612	2,643	3,871	419,387	618	4,608	1,314	467,485
Sabine	31	31	3	6	59	57	73	3,188	582	62,231	2,562	83	68,907
Vernon	1,250	109	14	14	102	92	51	445	4,711	2,664	133,838	28	143,319
Winn	14	46	64	165	6	1,124	1,005	1,751	1,360	94	18	35,074	40,720
Total	65,106	110,438	27,463	50,046	77,458	47,974	45,726	135,108	467,418	69,099	143,026	40,663	1,279,526

WEEKDAY TRIP DISTRIBUTION:

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Total
Allen	88%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%	0%	100%
Avoyelles	0%	88%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Catahoula	0%	1%	76%	13%	0%	0%	6%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Concordia	0%	0%	7%	90%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Evangeline	2%	1%	0%	0%	93%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Grant	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	60%	2%	2%	32%	0%	0%	2%	100%
LaSalle	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	2%	84%	0%	6%	0%	0%	2%	100%
Natchitoches	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	92%	3%	2%	0%	1%	100%
Rapides	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	90%	0%	1%	0%	100%
Sabine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%	90%	4%	0%	100%
Vernon	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	93%	0%	100%
Winn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	4%	3%	0%	0%	86%	100%

*Top two destination parishes highlighted for each parish.

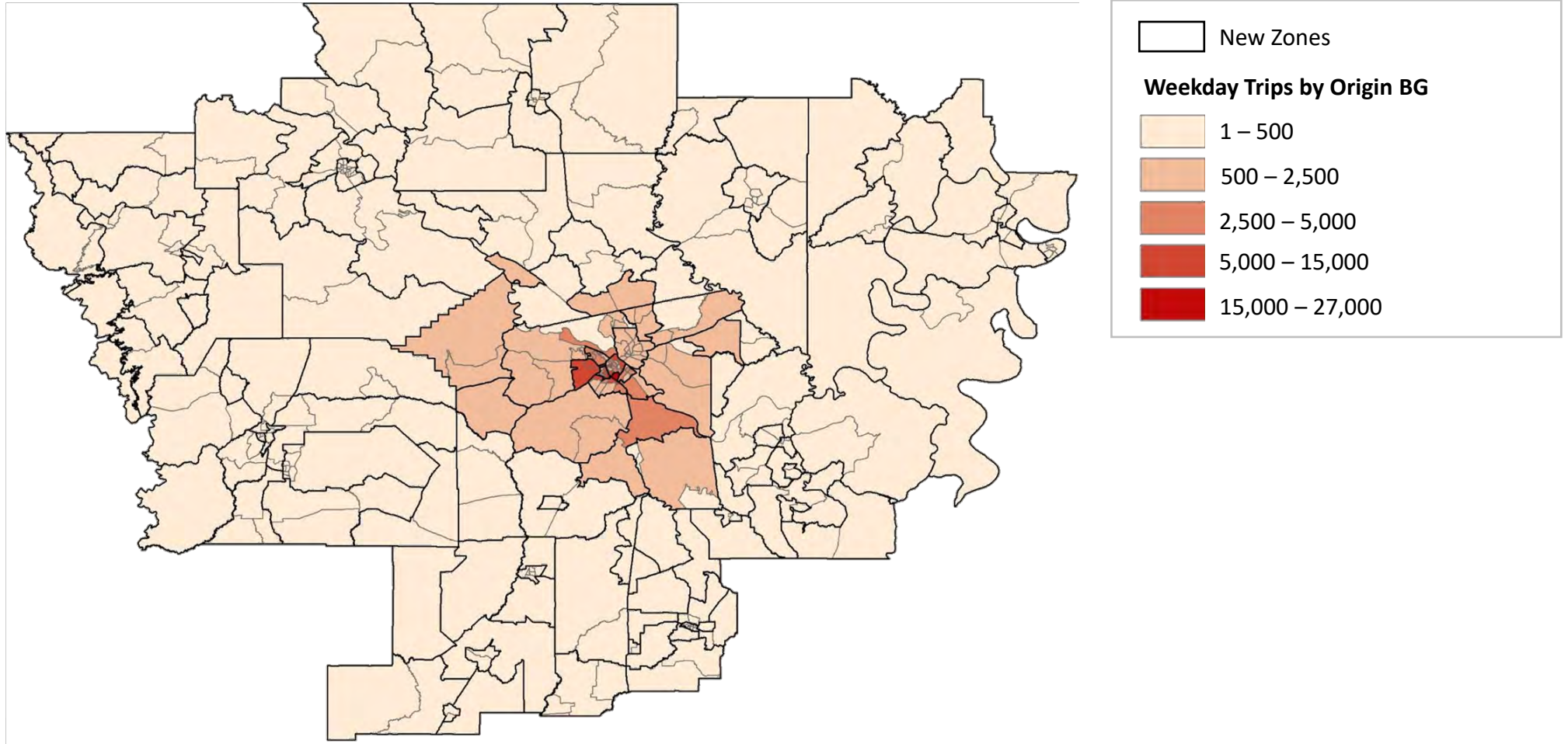
SATURDAY TRIP FLOWS:

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Total
Allen	44,441	257	8	3	1,412	89	17	40	3,772	94	1,227	38	51,399
Avoyelles	272	80,232	158	214	1,013	380	133	190	8,224	15	48	87	90,966
Catahoula	23	141	16,466	2,743	6	98	1,346	14	1,078	12	13	60	21,998
Concordia	6	232	2,857	33,637	0	79	372	38	657	25	2	67	37,972
Evangeline	1,500	1,059	3	20	51,367	68	55	39	2,238	75	97	18	56,539
Grant	72	311	66	59	69	21,997	806	814	14,470	59	111	989	39,823
LaSalle	31	112	1,371	299	71	781	24,875	106	2,460	35	28	547	30,717
Natchitoches	38	240	23	4	32	770	118	83,628	3,559	2,846	555	1,322	93,136
Rapides	3,714	8,501	1,090	707	2,204	14,406	2,554	3,482	315,484	695	3,715	1,296	357,848
Sabine	84	34	0	7	31	106	33	2,750	762	52,266	2,483	89	58,645
Vernon	1,342	91	18	3	91	113	31	567	3,692	2,415	88,197	60	96,621
Winn	8	85	30	40	13	1,066	553	1,220	1,387	60	67	24,376	28,905
Total	51,531	91,297	22,090	37,735	56,308	39,953	30,892	92,887	357,783	58,598	96,542	28,949	964,566

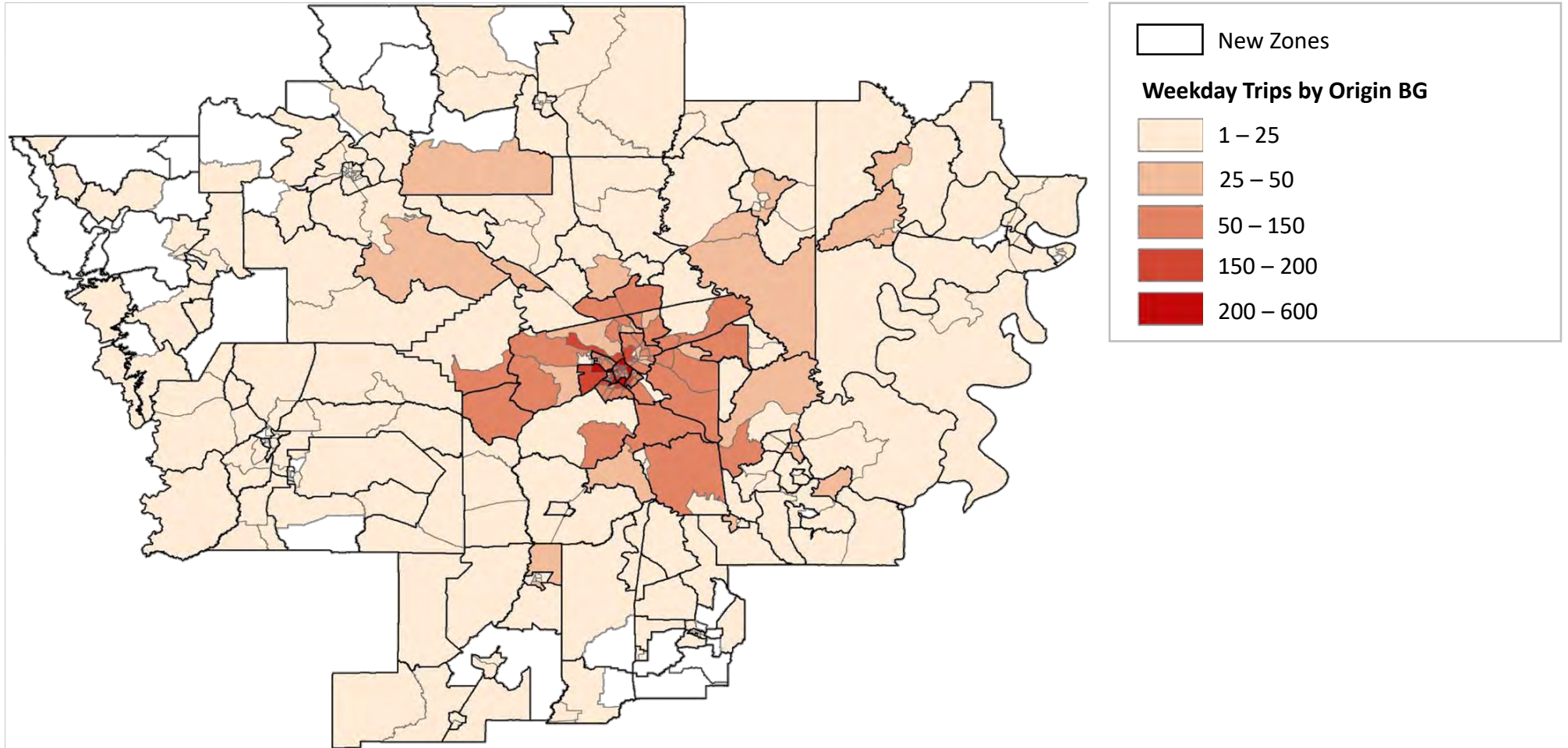
SUNDAY TRIP FLOWS:

	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	LaSalle	Natchitoches	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Total
Allen	45,383	260	14	4	1,093	102	10	59	3,218	34	1,053	10	51,239
Avoyelles	292	77,873	102	177	942	314	98	168	6,682	29	95	44	86,816
Catahoula	14	99	18,226	2,773	4	49	1,555	23	542	0	2	38	23,325
Concordia	8	182	2,738	34,436	14	13	220	19	437	69	0	86	38,223
Evangeline	1,157	920	10	2	52,346	50	113	71	1,588	23	41	9	56,330
Grant	83	249	33	21	46	24,999	695	693	12,033	67	75	1,201	40,193
LaSalle	19	60	1,454	228	77	783	28,398	82	1,539	8	28	490	33,167
Natchitoches	32	178	19	25	17	615	71	79,494	2,722	2,445	597	1,277	87,491
Rapides	3,114	6,863	534	492	1,656	11,923	1,577	2,778	280,144	476	2,718	973	313,247
Sabine	108	66	4	2	150	62	55	2,575	674	52,618	2,763	32	59,109
Vernon	1,071	69	4	0	88	51	48	509	2,657	2,486	85,213	26	92,223
Winn	15	50	19	81	2	1,267	624	1,209	969	63	35	26,069	30,403
Total	51,296	86,868	23,157	38,242	56,435	40,228	33,465	87,679	313,205	58,318	92,619	30,255	911,766

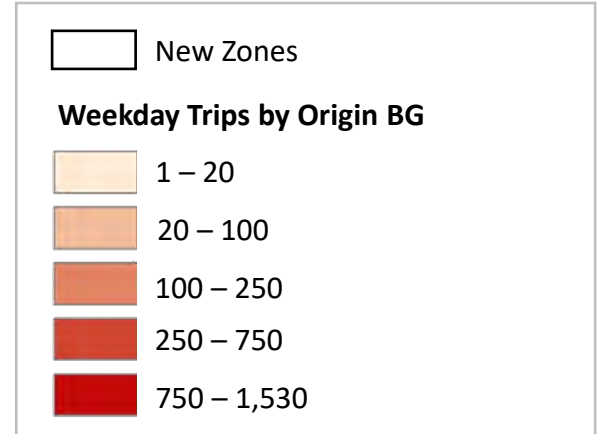
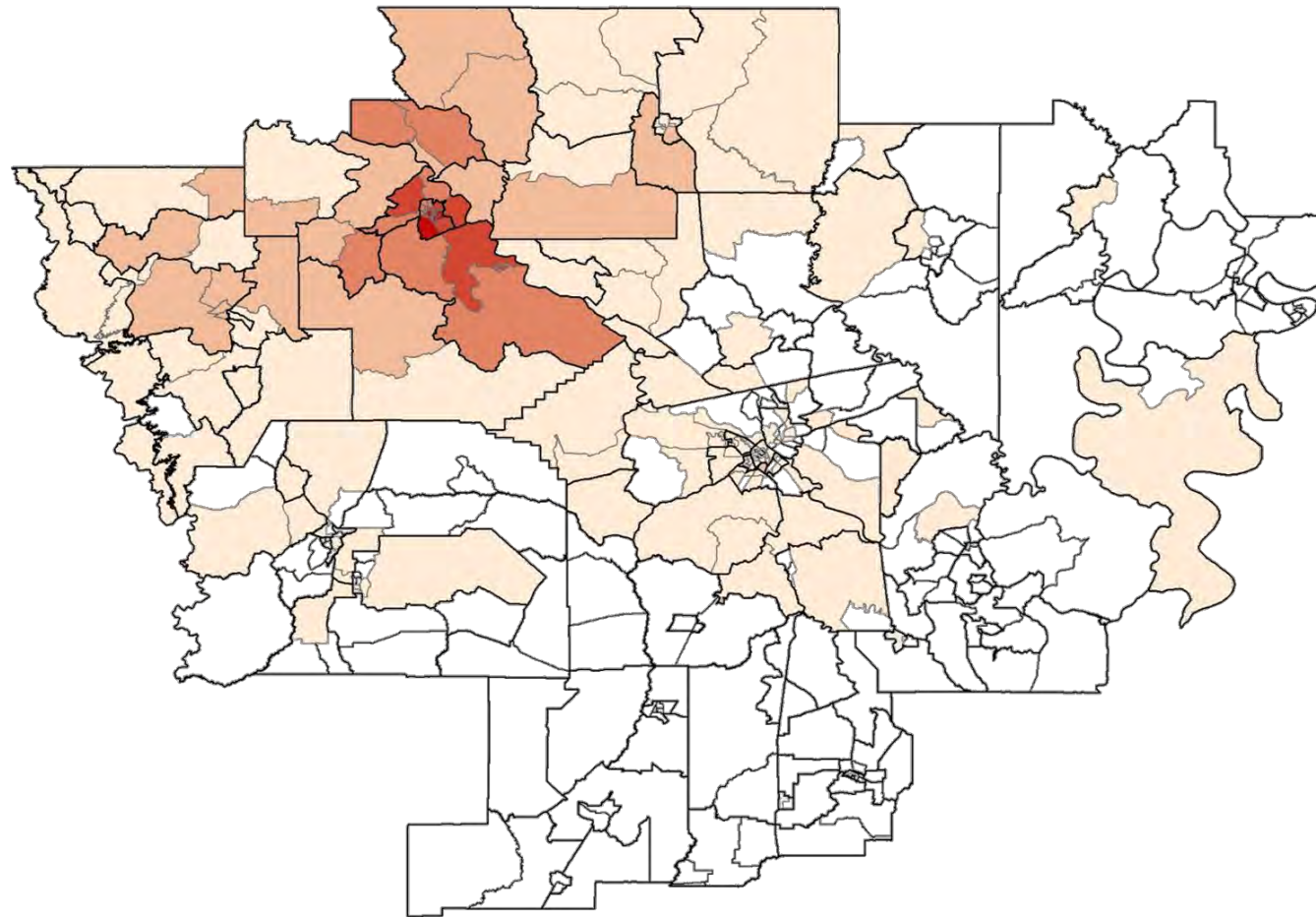
WEEKDAY TO ALEXANDRIA:



WEEKDAY TO RAPIDES MEDICAL CENTER:



WEEKDAY TO NATCHITOCHES MEDICAL CENTER:



METHODOLOGY 1 – TCRP 161



Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation: Final Workbook (2013)

DETAILS

70 pages | 8.5 x 11 | PAPERBACK
ISBN 978-0-309-25889-0 | DOI 10.17226/22619

Demand for Rural Transit

Demand

$$= (2.20 \times \text{Population Age 60 +}) + (5.21 \times \text{Mobility Limited Population Age 18-64}) \\ + (1.52 \times \text{Residents of Households with Zero Vehicle})$$

This function accounts for the need for transportation services in an area, regardless of the type of service needed and the amount of service provided. This method produces an estimate of how much demand will result related to the amount of service provided.

Mobility Limited populations are those with an independent living difficulty.

METHODOLOGY 1 – TCRP 161

Parish	Pop 60+	Pop Disabled	Pop in HH with Zero Vehicles	Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual / 365)
Allen Parish	5,157	3,485	872	30,828	84
Avoyelles Parish	9,299	6,985	1,661	59,374	163
Catahoula Parish	2,389	835	451	10,292	28
Concordia Parish	4,578	1,907	1,013	21,547	59
Evangeline Parish	7,285	6,145	2,312	51,557	141
Grant Parish	4,441	3,023	659	26,522	73
LaSalle Parish	3,552	1,593	333	16,620	46
Natchitoches Parish	8,514	3,434	2,759	40,816	112
Rapides Parish*	17,525	8,149	2,156	84,288	231
Sabine Parish	6,506	2,365	1,093	28,296	78
Vernon Parish	8,173	6,450	1,881	54,444	149
Winn Parish	3,556	1,919	661	18,826	52
Totals	80,975	46,290	15,851	443,410	1,216

* Rapides Parish data excludes Alexandria and Pineville as those areas are urban and receive urban transit service (ATRANS).

METHODOLOGY 2 – TCRP 161



Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation: Final Workbook (2013)

DETAILS

70 pages | 8.5 x 11 | PAPERBACK

ISBN 978-0-309-25889-0 | DOI 10.17226/22619

Demand for Rural Transit

Peer data from nearby systems / other similar systems

Used to validate prior methodology.

METHODOLOGY 2 – TCRP 161

TCRP 161 - Peer Estimate	4R05-40987 Copiah County Human Resource Agency	4R07-41146 Senior Services Incorporated of Chester County	5R02-50330 DeKalb County Council on Aging	5R02-50361 Huntington County Council on Aging	5R02-50422 Noble Co. Council on Aging	5R02-50484 Fulton County Council on Aging	6R02-60135 Pointe Coupee Council on Aging	6R02-60163 Jefferson Davis Council on Aging	6R02-60251 Bienville Council on Aging	6R02-60261 Desoto Council on Aging
State	MS	SC	IN	IN	IN	IN	LA	LA	LA	LA
Type	NP	NP	COA	COA	COA	COA	COA/NP	COA/NP	COA/NP	COA/NP
Population	28,065	32,124	13,056	36,520	47,744	20,096	21,730	10,180	13,564	27,463
Annual Vehicle Miles	369,709	426,168	270,807	322,338	461,413	230,371	300,668	225,678	224,237	120,033
Annual Vehicle Hours	14,323	21,642	18,869	25,016	26,421	15,861	13,857	11,644	12,041	8,207
Trips	56,788	56,279	27,768	41,743	29,668	41,413	24,220	11,071	12,852	12,045
Trips per Capita	2	1.75	2.13	1.14	0.62	2.06	1.11	1.09	0.95	0.44
Trips per Vehicle Mile	0.2	0.13	0.10	0.13	0.06	0.18	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.10
Trips per Vehicle Hour	4	2.60	1.47	1.67	1.12	2.61	1.75	0.95	1.07	1.47

METHODOLOGY 2 – TCRP 161

RAPC Study Area Counties	Peer	Allen	Avoyelles	Catahoula	Concordia	Evangeline	Grant	La Salle	Natch	Rapides	Sabine	Vernon	Winn	Annual	Daily
Population		25,618	40,669	9,766	19,778	33,589	22,340	14,936	38,769	69,721	23,991	49,646	15,313	364,136	998
Trips by Capita Max	2.13	54,485	86,496	20,771	42,065	71,438	47,514	31,766	82,455	148,285	51,025	105,589	32,568	774,458	2,122
Trips by Capital Avg	1	34,112	54,153	13,004	26,336	44,726	29,747	19,888	51,623	92,838	31,945	66,107	20,390	484,869	1,328
Trips by Capital Median	1.13	28,918	45,907	11,024	22,325	37,915	25,217	16,860	43,763	78,701	27,081	56,041	17,285	411,038	1,126
Trips by Capital Min	0.4	11,236	17,837	4,283	8,674	14,732	9,798	6,551	17,004	30,579	10,522	21,774	6,716	159,706	438
TCRP 161 Est		30,828	59,374	10,292	21,547	51,557	26,522	16,620	40,816	84,288	28,296	54,444	18,826	443,410	1,215

Serves to validate methodology as projections are consistent across both approaches

UNMET DEMAND:

Parish	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual / 365)	Actual Annual Trips	Actual Daily Trips (Annual/365)	Unmet Annual	Unmet Daily (Unmet /365)	% Unmet
Rapides	84,288	231	61,886	170	22,402	61	27%
Vernon	54,444	149	12,902	35	41,542	114	77%
Natchitoches	40,816	112	-	-	40,816	112	100%
Evangeline	51,557	141	13,753	38	37,804	103	73%
Avoyelles	59,374	163	30,965	85	28,409	78	48%
Grant	26,522	73	-	-	26,522	73	100%
Sabine	28,296	78	5,990	16	22,306	62	79%
Concordia	21,547	59	-	-	21,547	59	100%
Allen	30,828	84	13,027	36	17,801	48	57%
Winn	18,826	52	2,147	6	16,679	46	88%
Catahoula	10,292	28	6,832	19	3,460	9	32%
LaSalle	16,620	46	14,389	39	2,231	7	15%
Totals/Average	443,410	1,216	161,891	444	281,519	772	66%

Indicates no existing 5311 provider

	Rural Provider Parishes	No Rural Provider Parishes
Total Demand	280,491	162,919
Current Unmet Demand	147,958	133,561

OBSERVATIONS:

Parish	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual / 365)	Actual Annual Trips	Actual Daily Trips (Annual/365)	Unmet Annual	Unmet Daily (Unmet /365)	% Unmet
Rapides	84,288	231	61,886	170	22,402	61	27%
Vernon	54,444	149	12902	35	41,542	114	77%
Natchitoches	40,816	112	-	-	40,816	112	100%
Evangeline	51,557	141	13,753	38	37,804	103	73%
Avoyelles	59,374	163	30,965	85	28,409	78	48%
Grant	26,522	73	-	-	26,522	73	100%
Sabine	28,296	78	5,990	16	22,306	62	79%
Concordia	21,547	59	-	-	21,547	59	100%
Allen	30,828	84	13,027	36	17,801	48	57%
Winn	18,826	52	2,147	6	16,679	46	88%
Catahoula	10,292	28	6,832	19	3,460	9	32%
LaSalle	16,620	46	14,389	39	2,231	7	15%
Totals/Average	443,410	1,216	161,891	444	281,519	772	66%

Indicates no existing 5311 provider

	Rural Provider Parishes	No Rural Provider Parishes
Total Demand	280,491	162,919
Current Unmet Demand	147,958	133,561

- 5310 providers helping to meet demand, in some Parishes, to a significant degree (Catahoula, LaSalle) – consistent with transition of other 5310 providers to 5311 status – opportunity to expand to other populations (general public)
- Certain Parishes have significant demand with no or few options available (Natchitoches, Grant, Sabine, Concordia)
- Certain Parishes with existing 5311 and 5310 providers still have significant unmet demand (Vernon, Evangeline).

EXISTING 5311 PROVIDERS:

2021 Statewide 5311 FTA Apportionment: **\$13,437,243**

Parish	5311 Provider	Federal	Local	Vehicles Operated	Annual Trips	Annual Revenue Miles	Cost per Trip	Trips / Rev. Hour	Cost per Revenue Hour	Veh/Trip/Day	Average Trip Distance (mi)
Allen	Council on Aging	\$177,664	\$193,613	11	13,027	245,773	\$ 29.58	1.40	\$ 41.31	4.55	19
Avoyelles	Council on Aging	\$210,992	\$213,566	7	11,598	181,968	\$ 39.28	1.50	\$ 58.75	6.37	16
Evangeline	Council on Aging	\$156,534	\$153,841	9	13,753	166,985	\$ 22.77	1.50	\$ 34.55	5.88	12
Rapides	Rapides Senior Center	\$ 55,539	\$55,540	7	7,031	61,005	\$ 16.55	1.80	\$ 29.96	3.86	9
Vernon	Council on Aging	\$198,156	\$178,968	6	12,902	168,235	\$ 29.82	1.30	\$ 38.98	8.27	13
	Totals	\$798,885	\$795,528	40	58,311	823,966					
	Average	\$159,777	\$159,106	8	11,662	164,793	\$ 27.60	1.50	\$ 40.71	5.79	14

2019 NTD Data

EXISTING 5310 PROVIDERS:

2021 Statewide Rural 5310 FTA Apportionment: **\$1,093,220**

Parish	5310 Provider	Annual Trips	Annual Revenue Miles
Avoyelles	Society for Disabled	19,367	68,774
Catahoula	Catahoula ARC	6,832	57,267
LaSalle	La Salle ADD	14,389	35,026
Rapides	The ARC Rapides, Inc.	51,716	172,383
Rapides	St. Mary Residential School	3,139	26,396
Sabine	Sabine COA	5,990	112,970
Winn	Winn Council of the Aged	2,147	6,673
	Totals	103,580	479,489
	Average	14,797	68,498

FY20 Subrecipient Data Provided by DOTD

PROVIDER OBSERVATIONS:

- Each agency independently responsible for operating, advertising, and administering public transportation service – hindering ability to fully utilize economies of scale.
- Existing providers may have additional missions and goals which extend beyond general public transportation services.
- Multiple providers with different websites and resources present potential challenges for the end-user in identifying resources for public transportation and to understand how they are utilized.
- LaDOTD responsible for reporting and compliance activities for its subrecipients at the 5311 and 5310 level – various users presents administrative challenges for reporting information.
- **How can a framework be developed to better meet the demand for rural general public transportation throughout Central Louisiana?**
- **Can we do so in a way to enable agencies to continue to provide 5310 eligible and funded trips?**

MEET THE DEMAND SCENARIO:

Parish	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual / 365)	Number of Vehicles (6 trips per day) + 2 spares	Year 1 Capital Cost (\$90K per)	Operating Hours (1.87 trips per hour)	Year 1 Operating Cost (\$40 / hr)	Year 1 Total
Allen Parish	30,828	84	16	\$1,440,000	16,486	\$659,422	\$2,099,422
Avoyelles Parish	59,374	163	30	\$2,700,000	31,751	\$1,270,032	\$3,970,032
Catahoula Parish	10,292	28	7	\$630,000	5,504	\$220,150	\$850,150
Concordia Parish	21,547	59	12	\$1,080,000	11,522	\$460,898	\$1,540,898
Evangeline Parish	51,557	141	26	\$2,340,000	27,571	\$1,102,824	\$3,442,824
Grant Parish	26,522	73	15	\$1,350,000	14,183	\$567,316	\$1,917,316
LaSalle Parish	16,620	46	10	\$900,000	8,888	\$355,508	\$1,255,508
Natchitoches Parish	40,816	112	21	\$1,890,000	21,827	\$873,070	\$2,763,070
Rapides Parish	84,288	231	41	\$3,690,000	45,074	\$1,802,952	\$5,492,952
Sabine Parish	28,296	78	15	\$1,350,000	15,132	\$605,262	\$1,955,262
Vernon Parish	54,444	149	27	\$2,430,000	29,114	\$1,164,578	\$3,594,578
Winn Parish	18,826	52	11	\$990,000	10,067	\$402,695	\$1,392,695
Totals	443,410	1,216	231	\$20,790,000	237,118	\$9,484,706	\$30,274,706

Indicates no existing 5311 provider

CONSTRAINED SCENARIO:

Parish	Total Trips Provided (Constrained)	% of Total Trip Demand	% of 5311 Trips Currently Being Provided	Daily Trips Provided (Constrained)	Total Annual Demand for Rural Transit	Total Daily Demand for Rural Transit (Annual / 365)	Number of Vehicles (6 trips per day) + 2 spares	Year 1 Capital Cost (\$90K per)	Operating Hours (1.87 trips per hour)	Year 1 Operating Cost (\$40 / hr)	Year 1 Total
Allen	14,025	45%	108%	38	30,828	84	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Avoyelles	14,025	24%	121%	38	59,374	163	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Catahoula	10,292	100%	None Provided	28	10,292	28	7	\$630,000	5,504	\$220,150	\$850,150
Concordia	14,025	65%	None Provided	38	21,547	59	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Evangeline	14,025	27%	102%	38	51,557	141	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Grant	14,025	53%	None Provided	38	26,522	73	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
LaSalle	14,025	84%	None Provided	38	16,620	46	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Natchitoches	14,025	34%	None Provided	38	40,816	112	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Rapides	14,025	17%	199%	38	84,288	231	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Sabine	14,025	50%	None Provided	38	28,296	78	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Vernon	14,025	26%	109%	38	54,444	149	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Winn	14,025	74%	None Provided	38	18,826	52	9	\$810,000	7,500	\$300,000	\$1,110,000
Totals/Average	164,567	50%	128%	451	443,410	1,216	106	\$9,540,000	88,004	\$3,520,150	\$13,060,150

Indicates no existing 5311 provider

- \$2M in additional resources could provide general rural public transportation service to full 12-parish region (\$1M local share + \$1M 5311)

OTHER SCENARIOS:

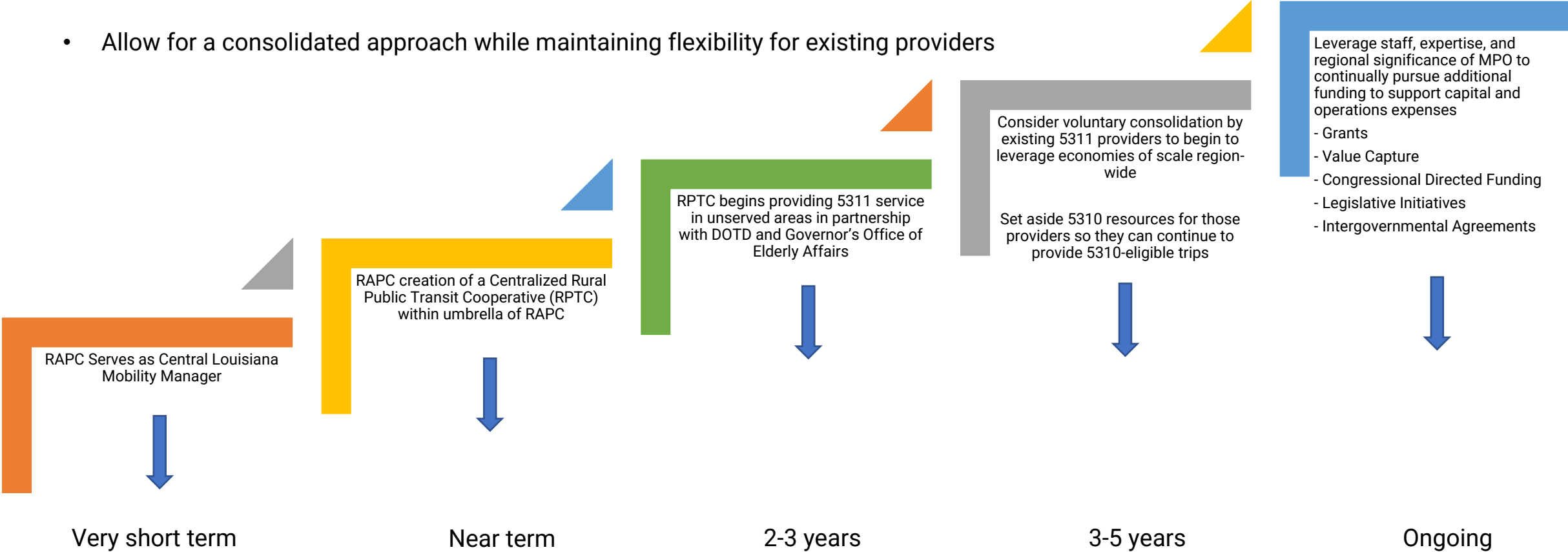
- Biggest constraint, especially with new T&I bill – is going to be local funding match (50%)
- Microtransit could be implemented as a piece of the puzzle
- Could structure entire system as microtransit in that intra-parish trips are provided same day similar to a microtransit model and inter-parish trips are reserved and booked 24-hours in advance
- Separate microtransit zones could also be established in zones which have a relatively high amount of intrazonal trip flows
- Major difference between traditional rural DR and microtransit oriented system is really the software used to book and deliver trips between the rider and the driver(s)
- Will add a nominal amount of cost which is estimated at \$30,000 set up + \$6,000 vehicle / year – SaaS fes

Locality	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Average Sunday
Natchitoches	83,320	50,438	44,407
Ville Platte	25,211	14,106	14,096
Leesville	24,306	12,776	11,787
Oakdale	22,750	14,712	15,997
Winnfield	18,036	11,244	10,506
Many	16,026	9,722	9,534
Kinder	15,800	15,188	14,438
Marksville	15,253	9,743	9,278
Fort Polk South	14,186	8,197	7,024
Jena	10,130	6,679	6,323

POTENTIAL PATH FORWARD:

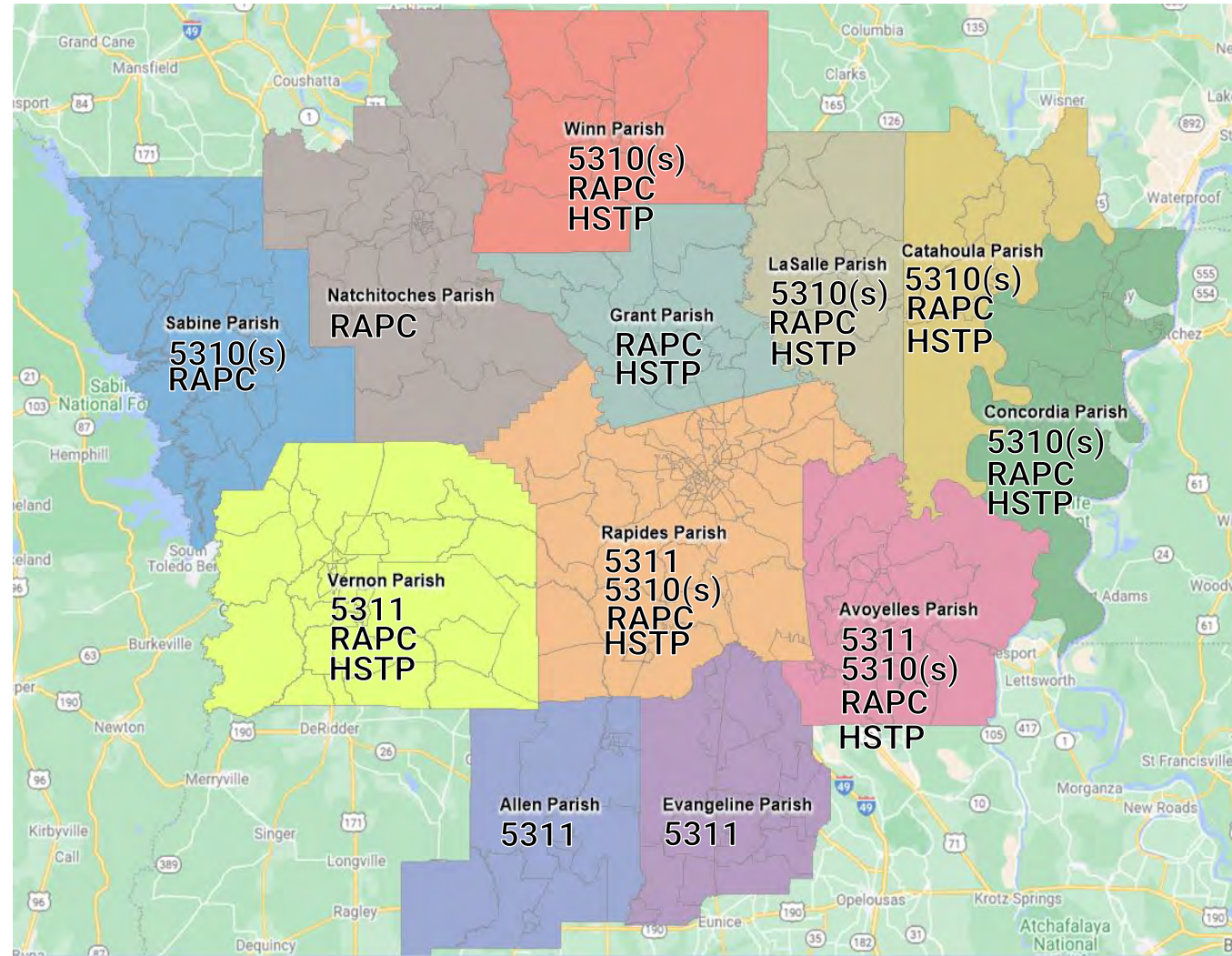
Series of incremental steps to...

- Address unmet demand
- Create efficiencies in the provision of rural general public transit service
- Incorporate mechanisms for sustainable funding of services
- Allow for a consolidated approach while maintaining flexibility for existing providers



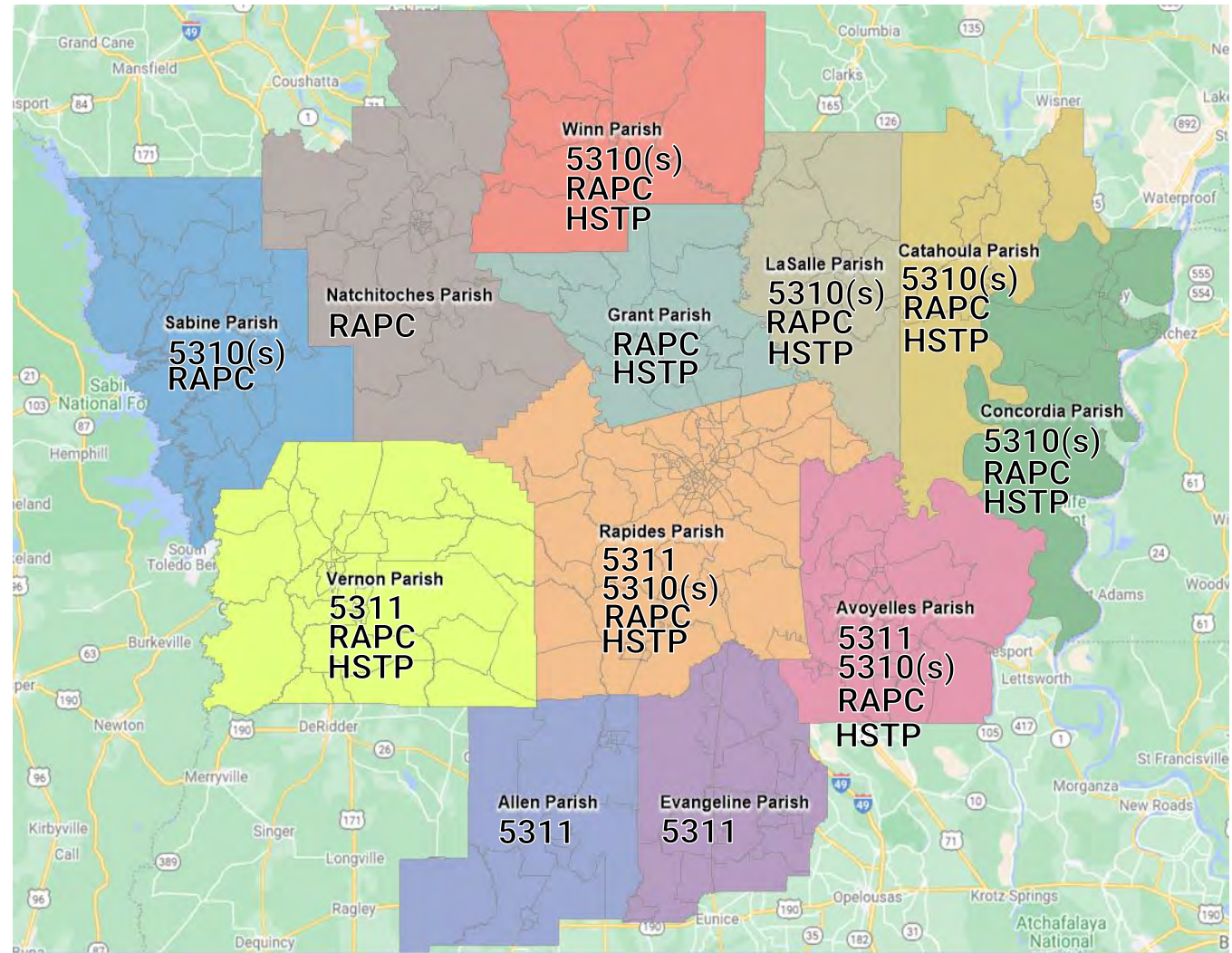
SEED CAPITAL:

- CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Resources
- RAISE and 5339(b)
- New T&I Bill likely to plus up resources
- Congressionally directed funding
(Community Projects & Member Directed Funding)
- Monitor the Toll Credit Marketplace Act as a source of local match for 5311 dollars
- Monitor EDA and other programs that are not transit specific but have a nexus with equity, addressing poverty, and assisting overburdened communities



DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- What do you think are benefits / drawbacks to this approach?
- How would this impact your organization?
- Given that local match is the resource with the most scarcity – could local funds that are being used for public transportation – but allocated to Councils on Aging – be coordinated with a third party (i.e., RAPC) to provide the service?
- Who might the primary partners be in the parishes that do not have an existing 5311 provider?
- Are there any other potential funding partners that should be considered?
- How could/should Medicaid transportation fit into the model?
- Other questions or comments?



FEEDBACK, COMMENTS, QUESTIONS?

Jim Webb, AICP, ENV SP

jwebb@thegoodmancorp.com

Barry Goodman

barry@thegoodmancorp.com





Appendix C

Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Application Documentation
& Letters of Support

Validate Form

FY 2021 Grants under the Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Applicant and Proposal Profile

Is this a resubmission due to an invalid/error message from FTA? Yes No

Section I. Applicant Information

Organization Legal Name: Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC)

FTA Recipient ID Number: tbd

Organization Chief Executive Officer: Matt Johns, (318) 487-5401, ext. 27
(Name and Direct Phone Number)

- Project Location:
- Large Urban (200,000 or greater)
 - Small Urban (199,999 to 50,000)
 -

Is the proposed project located in an Area of Persistent Poverty?
Qualifying areas can be found here: <https://datahub.transportation.gov/stories/s/tsyd-k6ij> Yes No

Specify the County(s) and State where the project is located using the link above. If your area qualifies as an Area of Persistent Poverty based upon census tracts, please specify the individual census tract(s):

Parishes of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, Winn. State of Louisiana.

The following list includes the census tracts within each Parish which meet Area of Persistent Poverty criteria:

- Allen – Census Tracts 9502, 9503
- Avoyelles – Census Tracts 301, 303, 304, 307, 309
- Catahoula – Census Tracts 1, 2
- Concordia – Census Tracts 2, 3
- Evangeline – Census Tracts 9502, 9503, 9504, 9505, 9506, 9508
- Grant – Census Tracts 201, 203
- La Salle – Census Tracts 9701, 9702
- Natchitoches – Census Tracts 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
- Rapides – Census Tracts 105, 110, 113, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 125, 127, 129, 131, 137, 139
- Sabine – Census Tracts 2, 3, 5
- Vernon – Census Tracts 9504, 9505, 9507.04, 9508
- Winn – Census Tracts 9602, 9603, 9604

Eligible Recipient or Subrecipient of 49 U.S.C. 5307, 5310, or 5311? Yes No

If applicant is not a direct recipient, identify the organization that has agreed to secure funding on their behalf in FTA's grants management system. Is documentation of that agreement included in the application?

The City of Alexandria passed a Resolution on August 10, 2021, to serve as the FTA Direct Recipient partner with the RAPC who will serve as a sub-recipient if the grant is awarded. A copy of the resolution is attached.

Applicant Eligibility
(select all that apply):

- State
- Local government authority
- Public Transit Provider
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Federally-recognized Native American Tribe
- Private Non-Profit Organization
- Other

If Other,
specify:

Section II. Project Information

About the Project

Project Title:
(Descriptive title of this project)

Central Louisiana Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC)

Project Executive Summary:

The Central Louisiana RPTC project will provide resources for regional planning and implementation-oriented efforts which support increased transit access for environmental justice populations and underserved communities within rural central Louisiana. The project will develop an implementation and finance strategy to address the improvement of transit services through efficiencies, and address areas of unmet demand through the creation of a Centralized RPTC under the umbrella of the RAPC.

Project Statement of Work (one sentence summarizing request):

Funding to support development of a Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC) for a centrally coordinated public transportation and human services organization system to improve efficiency and fulfill unmet transit demand in the Central Louisiana region.

- Project Type (select all that apply):
- Planning for Services to Address Equity
 - Planning for Addressing Climate Change
 - Transit Planning Study for Services and Routes
 - Engineering Study of Transit Facilities or New Facilities
 - Technical Study or Plan for Advancing Innovative Technologies
 - Transit Financing Study or Plan
 - Planning and Environmental Linkage Study
 - Environmental Analysis
 - Planning for Low or No Emission Buses
 - Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Planning
 - Integrated Fare Collection Study
 - Other

If Other, specify:

General Information

Describe how this application would address racial equity and/or environmental justice in persistent poverty communities. Environmental justice populations include low income and minority populations(s) as defined in Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations " and FTA's Environmental Justice Circular 4703.1:

All twelve (12) parishes in the RAPC service area have over 40% of their census tracts listed as areas of persistent poverty, and five (5) parishes – Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, and Winn – are listed as parishes of persistent poverty. This application will, if approved, provide a targeted and comprehensive response to address unmet rural transit demand within areas of persistent poverty through the creation of the Office of Rural Transit coordination. Improvement of public transit access available in these areas, will reduce unemployment, enhance the quality of life, increase access to health care, education, goods, and other services, especially for the large number of disabled, poor, and senior residents.

Increasing rural transit coverage in the region will provide residents increased options while reducing dependence on Single Occupant Vehicles (SOVs). This would lead to a reduction in congestion, fuel dependency and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, while improving overall resiliency in the region.

RAPC currently manages the WAYFARE program that operates as a voluntary travel demand management program providing local employers assistance to offer travel alternatives for their employees. The goal of this program is to reduce vehicular congestion and vehicle emissions through a reduction in the number of SOV commuter trips through Central Louisiana.

Creation of a RPTC will further enhance the goals outlined in the WAYFARE program by enhancing service and connectivity. Additionally, with the development of a five-year capital plan and transit asset management plan, RPTC will identify existing buses in use by FTA Section 5311 providers which are due for replacement with low-emission (CNG) or zero emission (electric) buses. The vision of the RPTC is to create a centralized fleet of electric vehicles of all sizes, and the construction of a solar farm to provide a source of clean energy for bus charging. This will help in advancing regional climate and air quality goals.

Project Budget

Description	QTY	Federal Amount	Federal Match Amount	Other Federal Funds	Other	Total Cost	
Task 1: Create & Execute Interlocal Agreements	1	45,000	5,000	0	0	50,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 2: Create Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative	1	112,500	12,500	0	0	125,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 3: Compliant Policies, Plans, & Procedures	1	90,000	10,000	0	0	100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 4: Finance & Implementation Strategy	1	135,000	15,000	0	0	150,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 5: Information & Outreach Plan	1	45,000	5,000	0	0	50,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 6: Efficiency Measures Coordination	1	67,500	7,500	0	0	75,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task 7: Establish Performance Measures	1	45,000	5,000	0	0	50,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="button" value="Insert Item"/>	Total:	540,000	60,000	0	0	600,000	

Matching Funds Information

Matching Funds Amount (must match project budget amount):

Source of Matching Funds:

On July 27, 2021, the RAPC Board approved a resolution supporting a 10% match for the Central Louisiana Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC) FY 2021 Persistent Poverty Program Grant. A copy of the resolution is attached.

The source of the local match is through the Planning Commission's general fund and locally generated fees, which is funded by regional membership agreements.

Matching Funds Availability:

The matching funds are currently available and have been set aside specifically for this project.

Project Scalability

Is project scope scalable? Yes No

If Yes, specify minimum Federal Funds necessary:

Provide explanation of scalability with specific references to the budget line items above:

The project can be implemented in phases. The first, and most important, phase of the project is creating and executing the interlocal agreements (Task 1), creating the RPTC (Task 2), preparing required compliant policies, plans, and procedures (Task 3), creating a viable Finance/Implementation strategy (Task 4), and an information/outreach plan (Task 5), all necessary to establish a viable new program.

Project Proposed Milestones Timeline (Please be as specific as possible)

Timeline Description	Timeline Date	
Task 1: Create & Execute Interlocal Agreements	04/04/2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 2: Create Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative	04/28/2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 3: Draft FTA & DOTD Compliant Policies, Plans, & Procedures	04/28/2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 4: 5-Year Finance & Implementation Strategy	04/28/2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 5: Information & Outreach Plan	05/09/2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 6: Efficiency Measures Coordination	04/28/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task 7: Establish Performance Measures	01/08/2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Congressional Districts (Place of Performance)

Congressional District

LA-004

LA-005

Insert Item

Section III . Evaluation Criteria

***** Address each of the evaluation criteria as described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.*****

Demonstration of Need

Describe the need for project and how the activities would support eligible projects under Chapter 53 of Title 49.

The Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) recently completed a rural transportation study for its twelve-parish area which includes Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn parishes. All twelve (12) parishes have over 40% of their census tracts listed as areas of persistent poverty, and five (5) parishes – Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, and Winn – are listed as parishes of persistent poverty. This Central Louisiana area encompasses almost 20,000 square miles (over a third of the State) and has a population of approximately 425,000. The study identified the following conditions:

- There is a significant amount of unmet demand within the region – it is estimated that there are approximately 300,000 transportation trips needed, but unmet annually.
- There is a direct linkage between unmet transportation needs, unemployment, access to health care, goods, and other services. The population includes a disproportionate number of disabled, poor, and seniors.
- The Central Louisiana region is struck by persistent poverty as defined by the federal government definition of the criteria. Five parishes in the study area meet the criteria as a whole and every parish in the study area has over 40% of their census tracts which meets the definition of persistent poverty.
- There is significant administrative redundancy among the existing federally supported transportation providers (5311/5310) and non-emergency medical providers in the area in terms of trip matching and assignment, federal/state compliance requirements, vehicle inspections, etc. suggesting that the RAPC can provide an umbrella coordinating role leading to more efficient services to reduce existing unmet public transportation needs.
- There is disparity among the transportation providers within the target area in terms of bus operator hiring experience, vehicle inspection requirements, resource allocation, service area, and other metrics which, if standardized, will lead to efficiencies, cost savings and more effective transit services.
- There are numerous agency and community partners that service in the areas of healthcare, social services, economic development, education, and municipal/parish governance, who have identified transportation as a major need and priority.

In terms of unmet transit demand, there is a projected annual demand total for all parishes of approximately 443,410 annual trips. With the estimated annual actual trips of approximately 161,891, there is an unmet demand of approximately 281,519 transit trips. The consequences of the existing unmet transit demand are dire for this area. Studies have shown that lack of access to training and jobs is a major characteristic of rural areas which have areas of persistent poverty. From discussion with various agencies and employers in the region, the RAPC has found this statement to be true.

The RAPC proposes to utilize this grant opportunity to provide resources for planning and implementation-oriented efforts to support increased transit access for environmental justice populations and underserved communities. The RAPC proposes to address the improvement of services through efficiencies and address unmet transit demand through the creation of a Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC) under the umbrella of the RAPC.

Demonstration of Benefits

Describe how the proposed activities would improve the ability to address one or more of the following factors: improve the existing condition of the transit system, improve the reliability of transit service for its riders, enhance access and mobility within the service area, accelerate the introduction of innovative technologies, reduce vehicle emission, reduce barriers to low income housing, and demonstrate regional and/or local support.

The creation of the RPTC under the umbrella of the RAPC will:

1. Centralized Scheduling and Dispatching – consolidate existing dispatching activity of all participating parishes into a single contact point including phone number, web presence, and other outreach. Consolidation of existing dispatching activity will improve the existing conditions of the regions rural transit systems, the reliability of rural transit services, enhance access to transit and mobility in the service area, introduce innovative technology, and demonstrate regional and local support.
2. Create an Outreach Program- outreach program that will target unmet demand through information and community resources which better inform the community of how to access transportation. The outreach program will gather information that helps the rural transit systems improve their existing conditions, and leads to increase reliability, and enhance access to transit.
3. Create a Consolidated Transit Vehicle Inspection Program- will create a process where only one inspection is required to satisfy federal, state, and local requirements. Currently, transit agencies must go to multiple locations to satisfy their inspection requirements. This can cause buses to be out of service longer than necessary which, in turn, reduces the availability of transit service. A one-stop inspection process location will allow agencies to minimize the time their buses are out of service and minimize any disruption in service.
4. Create an Operator Centralized Training Center – this center will work in concert with the Workforce Commission and the Central Louisiana Technical Community College, where individuals can receive training and certification for rural transit vehicle operation. This centralized training center will incorporate the latest innovative training software. Each transit agency will work with the RPTC to determine what training is needed and when. This will help reduce the operating costs of each agency by providing a centralized location for their employee training.
5. Provide Direct Transit Resources – identify resources to fill in the gaps in regional service delivery, identify additional funding resources, and broker to other providers the delivery of trips for employment, medical, goods and services. This will improve access to transit and mobility in the region.
6. Pursue Funding – pursue discretionary state and federal resources to support increase service capability to meet unmet demand. The RPTC will work with the regional transit agencies and stakeholders to identify common needs to jointly develop state and federal grant applications for future service enhancements, joint bus purchases, etc.
7. Form and Implement Partnerships – the Cooperative will work to enter into agreements with partners such as the District Probation and Parole Office, Central Louisiana Technical Community College System, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition, VA Medical Center, and others to identify methods to efficiently provide public transportation trips to and from these partner agencies facilities. The recently completed study has set the framework for these partnerships so that they can be actualized via this Persistent Poverty funded effort.

The overall goal of the RPTC is to improve reliability and greater access to transit in the region. With improved transit in the region, barriers to low-income housing through facilitating at-risk residents' access to work, medical appointments, and shopping, will enable residents to choose affordable housing close to where they want to live, knowing they have an option to utilize transit to get to school, work, etc.

The RPTC will contribute to the reduction of vehicle emissions by increasing rural transit coverage in the region and by the implementation of low or zero emission buses. This gives residents mobility options access school, work, medical appointments, and shopping.

Local Financial Commitment

Describe the source of non-Federal match and whether non-Federal match is available, currently reserved or committed for this project, or will be secured upon project approval. Provide documentation, if available.

Non-federal match has been committed towards this project by the RAPC. A resolution has been provided with this application.

Project Implementation Strategy

Describe the Work Plan, Schedule, and Deliverables for the proposed activities. Describe the Partnerships involved in the project. Describe the technical capacity of the Partnership to undertake the proposed work.

The project is estimated to take 24 months to complete. The scope of work and deliverables are as follows:

Task 1: Create and Execute Interlocal Agreements

This task includes creating and executing interlocal agreements with Police Juries and Cities of participating entities that will become part of a Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC).

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Service area definition
- Creation of Board of Directors
- Establish coverage and service standards
- Evaluate available equipment and related needs for recapitalization
- Membership participation agreements and financial plan

Task 2: Create Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC)

This task will entail the formal creation of a RPTC under the umbrella of the Rapides Area Planning Council (RAPC).

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Staffing plan
- Operating plan
- Resource plan
- Vision, Mission, and Goals
- Bylaws

Task 3: Develop Compliant Policies, Plans, and Procedures

This task will include development of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) compliant policies, plans and procedures. This task will also establish RPTC as a FTA grantee, and update DOTD's 5311 recipient status. It will also establish National Transit Database (NTD) reporting and Title VI requirements, procurement procedures, financial and fiscal policies, and a Transit Asset Management plan (TAM).

Task 3 Deliverables:

- FTA grantee status
- DOTD 5311 recipient status
- NTD reporting
- Title VI, DBE, EEO documents
- Procurement manual
- Financial and Fiscal Policies
- TAM Plan

Task 4: Financial and Implementation Plan

In this task, RAPC will develop a five-year financial and implementation plan. The plan will identify potential local matching resources. RAPC will work with partners, municipalities, Parishes, and the State Legislature on creating local resources to match federal 5311 funding in the future.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Five-Year Financial and Implementation Plan

Task 5: Information and Outreach Plan

The RAPC will develop a detailed and detailed marketing strategy, identify stakeholders, and develop a public involvement plan. These plans will be designed specifically to target seniors, environmental justice communities, and areas of persistent poverty.

Task 5 Deliverables:

- Marketing strategy
- Public involvement plan

Task 6: Efficiency Measures Coordination

The RAPC will work with the State Department of Health, transit providers, and other agencies on ways to improve efficiency. The goal of this task is to evaluate and select dispatching and routing software, and the creation of a centralized location for dispatching, driver training, driver drug testing, and inspection of transit vehicles.

Task 6: Deliverables:

- Agency and efficiency measures roadmap

Task 7: Establish Performance Measures

The establishment of performance measures will help evaluate not only existing transit service but also any proposed service improvements. Performance measures are planning, and management tools used to define reasonable levels of service. The assessment of performance requires a defined set of performance indicators and service guidelines that will need to be specified separately for different service delivery methods.

Task 7 Deliverables:

- Performance measures

Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

Describe the technical, legal, and financial capacity of the applicant to undertake the project and describe any outstanding legal, technical or financial compliance issues from an FTA compliance review or Federal Transit grant-related Single Audit Finding and the status of work to address them.

The RAPC is a Regional Planning Commission and a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO undergoes certification review by FHWA every four (4) years and has always been found to have the technical, legal, and financial capacity to receive, administer, and

utilize federal resources. RAPC is committed to assisting during the project implementation process through financial management, identification of project management support, technical assistance, and grant compliance management. If this project is awarded funding, the RAPC will appoint a dedicated project manager assigned to it to ensure the project's scope, schedule and budget remain on track and complies with required laws and regulations. There are no outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues that would make this a high-risk project.

All required statewide and local planning processes and guidelines will be followed to ensure that the project is appropriately considered and approved by all planning bodies. Letters of support from project partners are included in the attachments.

Validate Form

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



JAMES M. LE BLANG
SECRETARY

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

On behalf of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, I submit this letter of support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Rapides Area Planning Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James M. LeBlanc".

James M. LeBlanc
Secretary



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Alexandria VA Health Care System
Post Office Box 69004
Alexandria, Louisiana 71306-9004

August 13, 2021

In Reply Refer To: 502/002

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

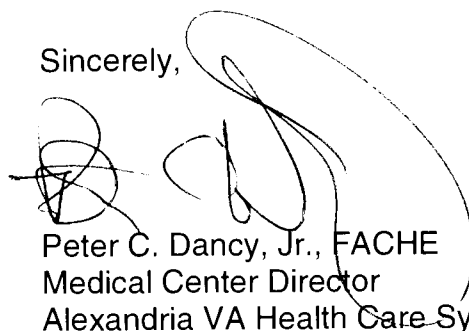
Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

Please accept this letter documenting Alexandria VA Health Care System's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated with it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter C. Dancy, Jr.", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Peter C. Dancy, Jr., FACHE
Medical Center Director
Alexandria VA Health Care System



602 East Fifth Avenue - Post Office Drawer EL - Oakdale, Louisiana 71463
(318) 335-3195 - 800-256-2851 - Fax (318) 335-3199

Patricia R. Jones
Executive Director

allencouncil@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez, Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

Re: FY: Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez

Please accept this letter documenting ALLEN COUNCIL ON AGING'S support of the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated with it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if ALLEN COUNCIL ON AGING can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia R. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia R. Jones, Executive Director
Allen Council on Aging

Tony Hebert
PRESIDENT
Ruffin George, Jr.
VICE PRESIDENT
Jacob Dillehay
ADMINISTRATOR/PARISH ENGINEER
Colleen Sonnier
SECRETARY-TREASURER
Erica Strother
ASST. SECRETARY-TREASURER
Joel B. Johnson
ROAD SUPERINTENDENT
Angle Plante
SW/BLDG MAINT. SUPERVISOR
Tiffany Williams
RECEPTIONIST-A/P CLERK



Allen Parish Police Jury

P.O. Drawer G
Oberlin, Louisiana 70655
Telephone: (337) 639-4328 ~ Fax: (337) 639-4326
www.allenparishpolicejury.com

District 1
RUFFIN GEORGE, JR.
District 2
HEATH ARDOIN
District 3
JOHN W. STROTHER
District 4
H. CREIG VIZENA
District 5
TONY HEBERT
District 6
ALLEN COURVILLE
District 7
CHAD SANDERS

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting the Allen Parish Police Jury's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Allen Parish Police Jury can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Hebert", is written over a horizontal line.

Tony Hebert
President
Allen Parish Police Jury

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

Chasity Cole
Executive Director
Avoyelles Society for the Developmentally Disabled

**CATAHOULA ECONOMIC & INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (CEIDD)**

Board of Commissioners

**P. O. Box 441 ♦ Harrisonburg, LA 71340
CEIDD@yahoo.com**

August 5, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Catahoula Economic & Industrial Development District is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission application filed with the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years, our members have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty, through access to quality jobs, access to higher education, improving access to quality health care, and addressing other factors associated with limited transportation in poverty-stricken areas.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if Catahoula Economic & Industrial Development District can be of any assistance as you go through your process. I can be reached at 318-715-6887 (cell).

Sincerely,


Sandra Cooley-Redmon
President

CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY

P. O. BOX 258
HARRISONBURG, LOUISIANA 71340

"Catahoula Cur - The Official State Dog"

HAROLD SONES
PRESIDENT

JEREL A. EVANS
VICE-PRESIDENT

PATTI C. MIZELL
SECRETARY-TREASURER

WARD 1 BRADY NELSON
P. O. BOX 5
SICILY ISLAND, LA 71368

WARD 2 JEREL A. EVANS
P. O. BOX 411
SICILY ISLAND, LA 71368

WARD 3 DEBORAH McCORMACK
3816 HIGHWAY 124
ENTERPRISE, LA 71425

WARD 4 HAROLD SONES
P. O. BOX 162
HARRISONBURG, LA 71340

WARD 5 RODNEY SONES
946 HIGHWAY 923
JONESVILLE, LA 71343

WARD 6 JEFFERY ESTES
247 PONDEROSA ROAD
JONESVILLE, LA 71343

WARD 7 RICKIE CRUMPTON
512 MOUND STREET
JONESVILLE, LA 71343

WARD 8 DEBRA JONES-HAWKINS
703 FRITZ STREET
JONESVILLE, LA 71343

WARD 9 JOHNNIE ADAMS
538 BLUE CANE ROAD
JONESVILLE, LA 71343

Regular Monthly
Meetings 2nd & 4th
Mondays each Month
at 6:00 p.m.

CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY SUPPORT FOR RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION'S PURSUIT OF FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION PERSISTENT POVERTY GRANT FUNDING RESOLUTION NO. 08-09-2021

A RESOLUTION BY THE CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY IN SUPPORT OF THE RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FOR FUNDING PURSUANT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Catahoula Parish has an interest in fostering improved access to public transportation for its residents and visitors;

WHEREAS, the Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) is in the process of completing an initial planning study to analyze and define unmet need and options for improving rural public transportation and quality of life for those that need it the most;

WHEREAS, study deliverables have identified that there is significant unmet need in rural central Louisiana to include in areas, such as Catahoula Parish, identified as being in persistent poverty as defined by the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, study recommendations point towards creating a consolidated rural public transit agency/authority housed within the RAPC to more efficiently coordinate and in some cases directly provide public transit service throughout Central Louisiana, including Catahoula Parish;

WHEREAS, the effort has begun to define an implementation framework that requires additional planning work to facilitate the coordination and execution of interlocal agreements, the creation of this new transit organization, the creation of FTA and DOTD compliant policies, plans, and procedures, as well as a detailed finance and implementation plan;

WHEREAS, the FTA Persistent Poverty Grant Program can provide up to 90% of the cost to necessary to complete the work outlined in the implementation framework; and

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

WHEREAS, the RAPC is pursuing funding via this FTA program and has committed to provide the requisite local share requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE POLICE JURY OF CATAHOULA PARISH THAT: The Catahoula Parish Police Jury supports this grant pursuit to efforts by the Rapides Area Planning Commission and agrees to work with the RAPC in continuing the planning process.

ON A MOTION BY JEREL EVANS, SECONDED BY RICKIE CRUMPTON AND UNANIMOUSLY PASSED, RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON THIS 9th DAY OF AUGUST 2021.



HAROLD SONES, PRESIDENT
CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY



PATTI C. MIZELL, SECRETARY
CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY



CENTRAL LOUISIANA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
1118 Third Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301
Ph 318.442.6671 Fax 318.442.6734
www.cenlachamber.org

August 11, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting support of the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and its application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program.

Over the years we have worked in partnership with the RAPC in its efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout the region of central Louisiana. The Chamber Board and I are gratified by RAPC's newest initiative to strengthen the capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. Access to transportation is an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it. This effort, when realized, will provide an opportunity to transform the lives of many people in the central portion of Louisiana. As the result of a tight job market, there are many positions open in the regional manufacturing and healthcare sectors, with employers eager to provide on the job training. For far too many, lack of transportation places these job opportunities out of their reach. This program would be a win-win for people who are seeking a path to a better life and for businesses and industries desiring to invest in the people of central Louisiana.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce can be of assistance during the application process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deborah Randolph

President

Our Mission The mission of the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce is to provide value for members by advocating pro-business policies and delivering innovative programming and services that create an environment for economic growth.

Our Vision The vision of the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce is to be an influential, vital, dynamic force in the region, creating the preferred community in which to live and conduct business.



August 11, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting the Central Louisiana State Legislative Caucus's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and its application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program.

Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in its efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout the region of central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen the capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Central Louisiana State Legislative Caucus can be of assistance during the application process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Louie Bernard, Dist. 31, Natchitoches

Senator Jay Luneau, Dist. 29, Alexandria

Senator Mike Reese, Dist. 30, Leesville

Senator Glen Womack, Dist. 32, Harrisonburg

Representative Rhonda Butler, Dist. 38, Ville Platte

Representative Gabe Firment, Dist. 22, Pollock

Representative Lance Harris, Dist. 25, Alexandria

Representative C. Travis Johnson, Dist. 21, Vidalia

Representative Mike Johnson, Dist. 27, Pineville

Representative Ed Larvadain, Dist. 26, Alexandria

Representative Jack McFarland, Dist. 13, Jonesboro

Representative Rodney Schamerhorn, Dist. 24, Hornbeck

RESOLUTION NO. 0198-2021

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA (CITY) IN SUPPORT AND IN PARTNERSHIP OF THE RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION'S (COMMISSION) APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FOR FUNDING PURSUANT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the RAPC is a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana and is considered an eligible applicant under the FTA Persistent Poverty Grant Program, which will make transit-related planning resources available for areas considered to be in persistent poverty;

WHEREAS, the RAPC is in the process of completing an initial planning study to analyze and define unmet need and options for improving rural public transportation and quality of life for those that need it the most;

WHEREAS, study deliverables have identified that there is significant unmet need in rural central Louisiana to include in areas identified as being in persistent poverty as defined by the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, study recommendations are related towards creating a consolidated rural public transit agency/authority housed within the RAPC to more efficiently coordinate and in some cases directly provide public transit service throughout Central Louisiana;

WHEREAS, the effort has begun to define an implementation framework that requires additional planning work to facilitate the coordination and execution of interlocal agreements, the creation of this new transit organization, the creation of FTA and DOTD compliant policies, plans, and procedures, as well as a detailed finance and implementation plan;

WHEREAS, the rural transit program would assist in transporting the rural central Louisiana population to Alexandria to utilize goods, services, businesses, and medical care;

WHEREAS, the RAPC requires an existing FTA Direct Recipient to partner with to execute any awarded funding within the FTA grant management system;

WHEREAS, the City can serve as this FTA Direct Recipient partner at no cost to the City; and

WHEREAS, the program funds, if awarded, would be coordinated with the RAPC as a sub-recipient.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA THAT:

The Mayor is authorized to provide documentation to the RAPC and the FTA indicating the City's support and willingness to serve as the FTA Direct Recipient to implement this effort.

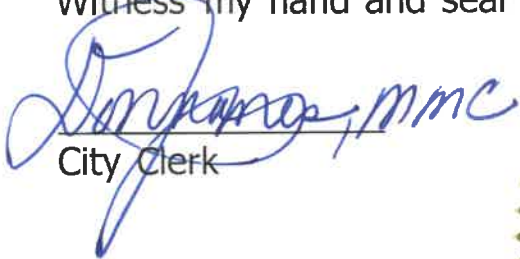
PASSED AND ADOPTED at Alexandria, Louisiana, this the 10th day of August, 2021.

/S/ Donna Jones
City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned duly qualified and City Clerk acting on behalf of the City of Alexandria, Louisiana certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 0198-2021 adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Alexandria City Council held on August 10, 2021.

Witness my hand and seal of this office.


City Clerk



**TOWN OF JONESVILLE
SUPPORT FOR RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION'S PURSUIT OF FEDERAL TRANSIT
ADMINISTRATION PERSISTENT POVERTY GRANT FUNDING
RESOLUTION NO 0812B-2021**

A RESOLUTION BY THE CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JU IN SUPPORT OF THE RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FOR FUNDING PURSUANT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Catahoula Parish has an interest in fostering improved access to public transportation for its residents and visitors.

WHEREAS the Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) is in the process of completing an initial planning study to analyze and define unmet need and options for improving rural public transportation and quality of life for those that need it the most.

WHEREAS study deliverables have identified that there is significant unmet need in rural central Louisiana to include in areas, such as Catahoula Parish, identified as being in persistent poverty as defined by the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

WHEREAS study recommendations point towards creating a consolidated rural public transit agency/authority housed within the RAPC to more efficiently coordinate and in some cases directly provide public transit service throughout Central Louisiana.

WHEREAS the effort has begun to define an implementation framework that requires additional planning work to facilitate the coordination and execution of interlocal agreements, the creation of this new transit organization, the creation of FTA and DOTD compliant policies, plans, and procedures, as well as a detailed finance and implementation plan.

WHEREAS, the FTA Persistent Poverty Grant Program can provide up to 90% of the cost to necessary to complete the work outlined in the implementation framework; and

WHEREAS, the RAPC is pursuing funding via this FTA program and has committed to provide the requisite local share requirements.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF JONESVILLE OF CATAHOULA PARISH THAT:

The Town of Jonesville supports this grant pursuit effort by the Rapides Area Planning Commission.

APPROVED ON THIS 12TH DAY OF AUGUST 2021

TOWN OF JONESVILLE, CATAHOULA PARISH:


MAYOR


TOWN CLERK

Evangeline Council on Aging

1012 North Reed St.
P.O. Box 312
Ville Platte, LA. 70586
Telephone: (337)766-0060
FAX: (337)363-5301

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

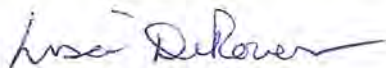
Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting Evangeline Council on Aging's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if Evangeline Council on Aging can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,



Lisa DeRouen
Executive Director
Evangeline Council on Aging





Evangeline Parish Police Jury

1008 W. LaSalle Street
Telephone (337) 363-5651
Fax (337) 363-5652
VILLE PLATTE, LOUISIANA 70586-4490



OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Ryan Williams

VICE-PRESIDENT
Bryan Vidrine

SEC-TREASURER
Donald Bergeron

MEMBERS

DIST. 1
Keith Saucier
803 Whispering Pine Ln.
Ville Platte, LA 70586

DIST. 2
Sidney Fontenot
1632 Duplechin Ave.
Basile, LA 70515

DIST. 3
Ryan Ardoin
1925 L.D. Verrette Rd.
Mamou, LA 70554

DIST. 4
Lamar Johnson
3308 Crooked Creek Parkway
Ville Platte, LA 70586

DIST. 5
Kevin Veillon
1047 Family Dr.
Ville Platte, LA 70586

DIST. 6
Eric Soileau
P. O. Box 38
Reddell, LA 70580

DIST. 7
Bryan Vidrine
415 Scenic Dr.
Ville Platte, LA 70586

DIST. 8
Ryan Williams
1049 Rachael Dr.
Ville Platte, LA 70586

DIST. 9
Daniel Arvie
968 Railroad St.
Ville Platte, LA 70586

August 20, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting Evangeline Parish Police Jury's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Evangeline Parish Police Jury can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

Ryan Leday Williams

President

Evangeline Parish Police Jury



August 12, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting Louisiana Central's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated with it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably.

Sincerely,

Jim Clinton
President and CEO



State of Louisiana
Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting the Louisiana Office of Public Health, Region 6 (Central Louisiana) support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region.

Central Louisiana remains the poorest, least educated and sickest part of Louisiana, which is already 50/50 in state health outcomes. With a \$24,000 per capita income, only 15% college graduates and shockingly low health outcomes, especially in the rural parishes (counties), it represents a great opportunity to address some of the area's chronic transportation woes. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Louisiana Office for Public Health, Region 6 (Central Louisiana) can be of any assistance as you go through your process. Please feel free to contact me at the information provided below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Holcombe" followed by a stylized monogram.

David J. Holcombe, MD, MSA, FACP
Regional Administrator/Medical Director
Louisiana Office of Public Health, Region 6 (Central Louisiana)
5604-B Coliseum Blvd
Alexandria, LA 71303 David.holcombe@la.gov, Cell 318-542-9790



Office of the Secretary
PO Box 94245 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245
ph: 225-379-1200 | fx: 225-379-1851

John Bel Edwards, Governor
Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., Secretary

August 12, 2021

Ms. Nuria I. Fernandez
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: FY 21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program Letter of Support for Rapides Area Planning Commission

Dear Ms. Fernandez:

I am writing in support of the Rapides Area Planning Commission's FY 21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program grant application. Over the years, we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it, while increasing growth opportunities for transportation in the region.

As we move forward into the 21st century, I believe it is important that our public transit systems are able to improve efficiencies, be cost effective, and provide reliable transportation options for meaningful sustainable impact on communities throughout Central Louisiana. Thank you for your favorable support of this project.

Sincerely,

Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D.
Secretary

SDW:MH:mh

**RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVAL OF PERSISTENT POVERTY GRANT REQUEST**

RESOLUTION #RAPC-210727-1

A RESOLUTION BY THE RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION (RAPC) COMMITTING LOCAL SHARE PARTICIPATION AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FOR FUNDING PURSUANT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the RAPC is a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana and is considered an eligible applicant under the FTA Persistent Poverty Grant Program, which will make transit-related planning resources available for areas considered to be in persistent poverty;

WHEREAS, the RAPC is in the process of completing an initial planning study to analyze and define unmet need and options for improving rural public transportation and quality of life for those that need it the most;

WHEREAS, study deliverables have identified that there is significant unmet need in rural central Louisiana to include in areas identified as being in persistent poverty as defined by the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, study recommendations are related towards creating a consolidated rural public transit agency/authority housed within the RAPC to more efficiently coordinate and in some cases directly provide public transit service throughout Central Louisiana;

WHEREAS, the effort has begun to define an implementation framework that requires additional planning work to facilitate the coordination and execution of interlocal agreements, the creation of this new transit organization, the creation of FTA and DOTD compliant policies, plans, and procedures, as well as a detailed finance and implementation plan;

WHEREAS, the FTA Persistent Poverty Grant Program can provide up to 90% of the cost to necessary to complete the work outlined in the implementation framework;

WHEREAS, the estimated total cost of the above program is \$600,000, with a local share requirement of approximately \$60,000; and

WHEREAS, the program funds, if awarded, must be obligated by federal fiscal year 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE RAPIDES AREA PLANNING COMMISSION THAT:

1. The Executive Director is authorized to submit an application to the Federal Transit Administration seeking funding through the Areas of Persistent Poverty program for the purposes identified above.

2. If awarded, the Commission is committed to providing a local share requirement of 10%, up to \$60,000 for the final project total as identified in the application.

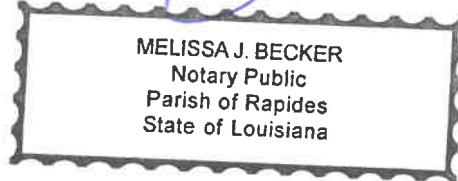
APPROVED, SIGNED AND EXECUTED ON THIS 27TH DAY OF JULY 2021

Charles Moore

Charles Moore, Chairman

Sworn and subscribed before me this 27th day of July 2021.

Melissa J. Becker
Notary #64291





THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

Ashley M. Stewart, MPH
Director of Programs

July 26, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting The Rapides Foundation's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. The Rapides Foundation's mission is to improve the health status of Central Louisiana communities. The Foundation focuses our work in three strategic areas: *Healthy People*, to improve access to healthcare and promote healthy behaviors; *Education*, to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status; and *Healthy Communities*, to improve economic opportunity and family income, and enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations.

The Foundation's service area encompasses the nine parishes of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn. Forty-four percent of the area's population live below 200% of the federal poverty level. A communities' ability to address poverty is linked to their ability to access healthcare, education, jobs and other community support services. Lack of reliable transportation options limits access. For example, The Rapides Foundation's 2018 Community Health Assessment reveals that 10% of adults in our nine-parish service area could not access medical care at some point in the previous year due to a lack of transportation.

The Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty by providing access to critical opportunities and resources.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably.

Sincerely,

Ashley Stewart
Director of Programs

DISTRICT A
DAVRON "BUBBA" MOREAU
148 SUSAN DRIVE
PINEVILLE, LA 71360

DISTRICT B
JOSEPH "JOE" BISHOP
4200 STILLMEADOW LANE
PINEVILLE, LA 71360

DISTRICT C
CRAIG SMITH
20 PAUL CEMETERY ROAD
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DISTRICT D
THEODORE FOUNTAINE, JR.
509 EVANGELINE LANE
ALEXANDRIA, LA 71302



DISTRICT E
RUSTY WILDER
152 WILDERNESS DRIVE
BOYCE, LA 71409

DISTRICT F
OLIVER "OLLIE" OVERTON
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ALEXANDRIA, LA 71302

DISTRICT G
SEAN MCGLOTHLIN
5242 RUE MARIA
ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303

DISTRICT H
DAVID JOHNSON
170 MITCH JOHNSON ROAD
GLENMORA, LA 71433

DISTRICT I
SCOTT PERRY, JR.
4324 ENGLAND DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303

August 18, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting the Rapides Parish Police Jury's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application, and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if the Rapides Parish Police Jury can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

Craig Smith, President
Rapides Parish Police Jury

MIKE JOHNSON

4TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

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LEESVILLE, LA 71446/PHONE: (337) 423-4232



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

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AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

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AND THE INTERNET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBER, INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES
AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

August 12, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

I have been informed the Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC) is applying for funding through Federal Transit Administration Area of Persistent Poverty Program. I am told RAPC plans to establish a Centralized Rural Public Transit Cooperative (RPTC) under the umbrella of RAPC. A recent study conducted by the RAPC shows a significant amount of unmet demand in the Central Louisiana study area within the RAPC's jurisdiction.

I am told the project will provide better coordination of public and human service transportation to help efficiently meet the unmet transit demand of Central Louisiana. The creation of the RPTC will benefit a disproportionate number of disabled, poor and senior adults within the service area. The study summary shows that six parishes meet the criteria as a whole and all parishes in the study area have at least one census tract which meets the definition persistent poverty.

I applaud RAPC for assisting the parishes in Central Louisiana with a plan to improve their unmet transit needs. I ask that you give full consideration to their proposal. A report of the final decision would be helpful and appreciated. I may be reached through Pam Gras at Pam.Gras@mail.house.gov or 318-840-0309 for any questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mike Johnson
Member of Congress

MJ/pg

JULIA LETLOW, Ph.D.
5TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES

NUTRITION, OVERSIGHT AND
DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

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Washington, DC 20515-1805

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109 E OAK STREET
AMITE, LA 70422
TEL: (895) 284-5200

letlow.house.gov

Mr. Jonathan Bolen
Rapides Area Planning Commission
803 Johnston Street
Alexandria, LA 71301

August 24, 2021

Dear Mr. Bolen,

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Rapides Area Planning Commission's (RAPC) application to the Federal Transit Administration's Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

I contacted the appropriate authorities at the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of your application. My official letter of support was sent directly to the Department on your behalf and a liaison confirmed a receipt of the letter. I will let you know if any additional information about your submission becomes available.

It is a privilege to represent the Fifth District of Louisiana. Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.

Sincerely,



Julia Letlow
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

JL:ad



WINN PARISH POLICE JURY

P.O. Drawer 951, WINNFIELD, LOUISIANA 71483-0951

Phone (318) 628-5824 Fax (318) 628-7336

E-Mail: pj1admin@wppj.net

www.winnparishpolicejury.com

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District Four
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District Five
Kirk Miles

District Six
Author Robinson

District Seven
Frank McLaren

August 16, 2021

Nuria I. Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

Please accept this letter documenting Winn Parish Police Jury's support for the Rapides Area Planning Commission and their application through the FY21 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program. Over the years we have worked in partnership with the Commission in their efforts to coordinate activities relating to public transportation throughout Central Louisiana. We are excited by the Commission's newest initiative to strengthen their capacity to directly improve efficiency and access to transit throughout our region. This effort, when realized, will be an important component in combating and reversing poverty and the limited choices associated it.

We appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's review of this application and we hope that it will be evaluated favorably. Please let us know if Winn Parish Police Jury can be of any assistance as you go through your process.

Sincerely,

Joshua McAllister
President



Central Louisiana Rural Public Transportation Study

Rapides Area Planning Commission

October 2021