Coordinated Transportation Plan

Southwest Coordination Region
December 2023

Southwest
Coordination
Region
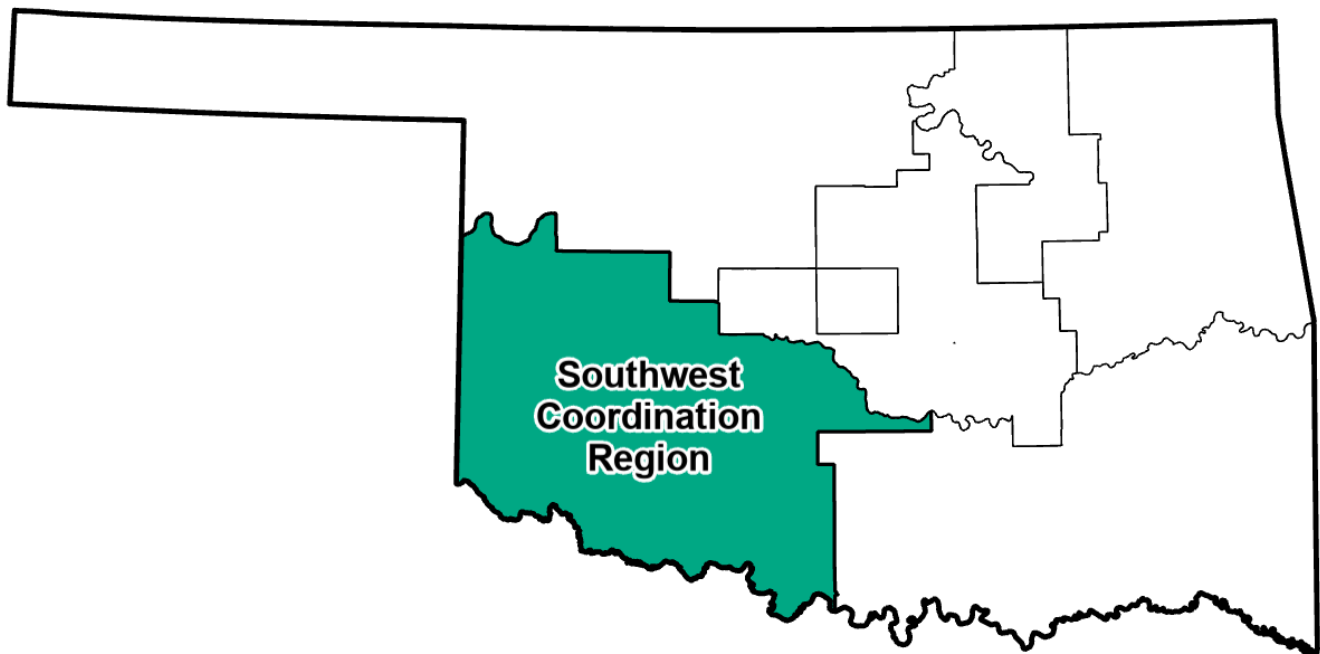
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Agency Abbreviations

This Plan frequently employs acronyms which refer to specific agencies, types of agencies, legislation, and other transportation-related terms. If an acronym used is not immediately clear based on context, please reference Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequently Used Acronyms

Acronym	Acronym Meaning
AAA	Area Agency on Aging
ADA	The Americans with Disabilities Act
ACOG	Association of Central Oklahoma Governments
ASCOG	Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments
COG	Council of Government
FAST	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LATS	Lawton Area Transit System
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
ODOT	Oklahoma Department of Transportation
OKDHS	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
OKDRS	Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
OMPT	Office of Mobility and Public Transit
OSDH	Oklahoma State Department of Health
OTA	Oklahoma Transit Association
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SMP	State Management Plan
SORTPO	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan
SWODA	South Western Oklahoma Development Authority
TIP	Transportation Improvement Plan
UZA	Urbanized Area

Executive Summary

In Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), Office of Mobility and Public Transit (OMPT) has been designated by the Governor of Oklahoma to administer the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-funded Section 5305, 5309, 5310, 5311, and 5339 programs in Oklahoma. Title 49 U.S.C. 5310, as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), requires a recipient of Section 5310 funds to certify that projects selected for funding under this program are included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan and that the plan was developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, nonprofit transportation and human service providers; and other members of the public.

This plan is the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the Southwest Region, including the following counties:

- Beckham County
- Caddo County
- Comanche County
- Cotton County
- Custer County
- Grady County
- Greer County
- Harmon County
- Jackson County
- Jefferson County
- Kiowa County
- McClain County
- Roger Mills County
- Stephens County
- Tillman County
- Washita County

FTA strongly encourages coordination and consistency between the local coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan and metropolitan or statewide transportation planning processes, as described in 23 CFR part 450 and 49 CFR part 613. According to FTA Circular 9070.1G, long-range transportation plans, the transportation improvement plan, and the coordinated plans are supposed to be developed and incorporated into each other. In 2022, ODOT OMPT identified overlap between long-range plans developed by Oklahoma metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and coordinated plans. In addition, coordinated plans thus far have not included substantial participation by MPOs, regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs), or councils of governments (COGs). The COG's and RTPO's have planning expertise that utilizes local knowledge and relationships from public engagement activities and have been identified as key stakeholders in the coordinated planning process.

FTA Circular 9070.1G requires that, "Projects identified in the coordinated planning process and selected for FTA funding must be incorporated into both the transportation improvement plan (TIP) and statewide transportation improvement program (STIP) in urbanized areas (UZA) with populations of 50,000 or more; and incorporated into the STIP for rural areas under 50,000 in population." As such, direct participation by MPOs and RTPOs is highly encouraged in the coordinated planning process, and ODOT and this region's Working Group must coordinate closely to ensure this requirement is met.

Projects selected for funding shall be included in a coordinated plan that minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

(1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit);

(2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;

(3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and

(4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

To develop the 2023 Coordinated Plan, transit providers, local governments, stakeholders and human services organizations came together in an effort to maximize resources to better serve the region. The Coordinated Plan includes updated regional demographic data, transit capacity building strategies, as well as updated information on new and existing transportation providers serving vulnerable populations in Oklahoma.

This assessment of needs and gaps serves as the basis for the coordination strategies and opportunities for future investment identified in the Coordinated Plan that will eliminate or reduce duplicative services, fill service gaps, and otherwise provide more efficient utilization of transportation services and resources for the target populations.

Table 2 below summarizes the priorities assigned to each gap and unmet needs in the Region:

Table 2: Compiled Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation		X	
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths		X	
	Weekday Early Morning Service	X		
	Weekday Business Hours	X		
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service		X	
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)			X
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.	X		
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility	X		
	More Frequent Service	X		
	More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	X		

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In addition, the following goals were identified for the Region:

- Goal 1: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers and office staff.
- Goal 2: Identify additional funding sources.
- Goal 3: Expand services offered outside typical business hours (8AM – 5PM, Monday – Friday).
- Goal 4: Prepare for electric and alternative fuel vehicle implementation.

Each county in the regional planning area has its own distinct needs, service providers, government agencies, stakeholders, and demographic characteristics. This Coordinated Plan synthesizes those needs and identifies strategies and priorities for the local level and region wide.

Agencies and stakeholders that participated in this Coordinated Plan include:

Table 3: Working Group Members

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Stephen Iken	**Southwest Transit (Lead Agency)**	Gilbert Nuncio	Red River Transportation Service
Angela Plumley	Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Transit	Brent Morey	Red River Transportation Service
Brian Stillwell	Comanche Nation Transit	Julie Sanders	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
Terrell Turman	Delta Public Transit	Cristi Williams	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
Vicki Wood	Delta Public Transit	Dana Church	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
N/A	Goodwill Village	Debora Glasgow	South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)
N/A	Kiowa Tribe Fast Trans	Sharlotte Key	Washita Valley Transit
Ryan Landers	Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)		

The FTA does not formally review or approve coordinated plans, thus the lead agency, in coordination with planning process participants, is responsible for the development, approval, and adoption/endorsement of locally coordinated plans. The planning process must include seniors, individuals with disabilities, public/private/nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public.

The Coordinated Plan was endorsed by the Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Network on November 21st , 2023. More information about the planning committee can be found in the **Southwest Region Coordinated Task Force** section of this Plan.

Introduction

The legislative passage of Oklahoma State House Bill 1365 in 2019 facilitated the transfer of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Program previously administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT). The bill also created the Office of Mobility and Public Transit (OMPT) and allowed for the transferring of all state and federal transit programs previously administered by ODOT's Transit Programs Division to the new OMPT. This change required ODOT to legally transfer all 5310 associated agreements, assets, financial documents and to develop a 5310 program compliant with FTA rules and regulation for FTA approval and certification to enable the use of federal funds for the 5310 program in the state.

To administer the 5310 program in compliance with FTA regulations, several program documents must be developed, reviewed, and implemented at the local, state, and federal level. These documents include a Program State Management Plan (SMP), a Subrecipient Project Application, and a Human Service Transportation Coordinated Plan. These three documents work together to outline in great detail the 5310 program rules and requirements, as well as the application format and process for program stakeholders and grantees.

This document - and its contents and information below - directly addresses the federal requirement for the 5310 program to have a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, and that the Coordinated Plan is:

- Locally developed to determine and document availability of transportation options for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the region
- Identifies transportation gaps and unmet needs, and makes recommendations to close these barriers of mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- Developed through participation from the general public, private nonprofit organizations, human service agencies, transit agencies, and stakeholders

The Southwest Region Working Group, with assistance from ODOT OMPT, developed this plan to further facilitate transportation coordination throughout the Southwest Region. This plan is a living document that can and will be updated and changed as local and state transportation programs and strategies develop and mature in the future.

Study Area

ODOT identified five coordinated planning regions upon which ongoing transportation coordination and planning will be based: Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest. These region designations are based primarily on existing RTPO boundaries. The current coordinated planning regions are intended as initial boundaries and may be adjusted over the course of ongoing coordination and planning processes, subject to agreement by working groups and providers who may be affected. Figure 1 displays these coordinated planning regions alongside MPO boundaries.
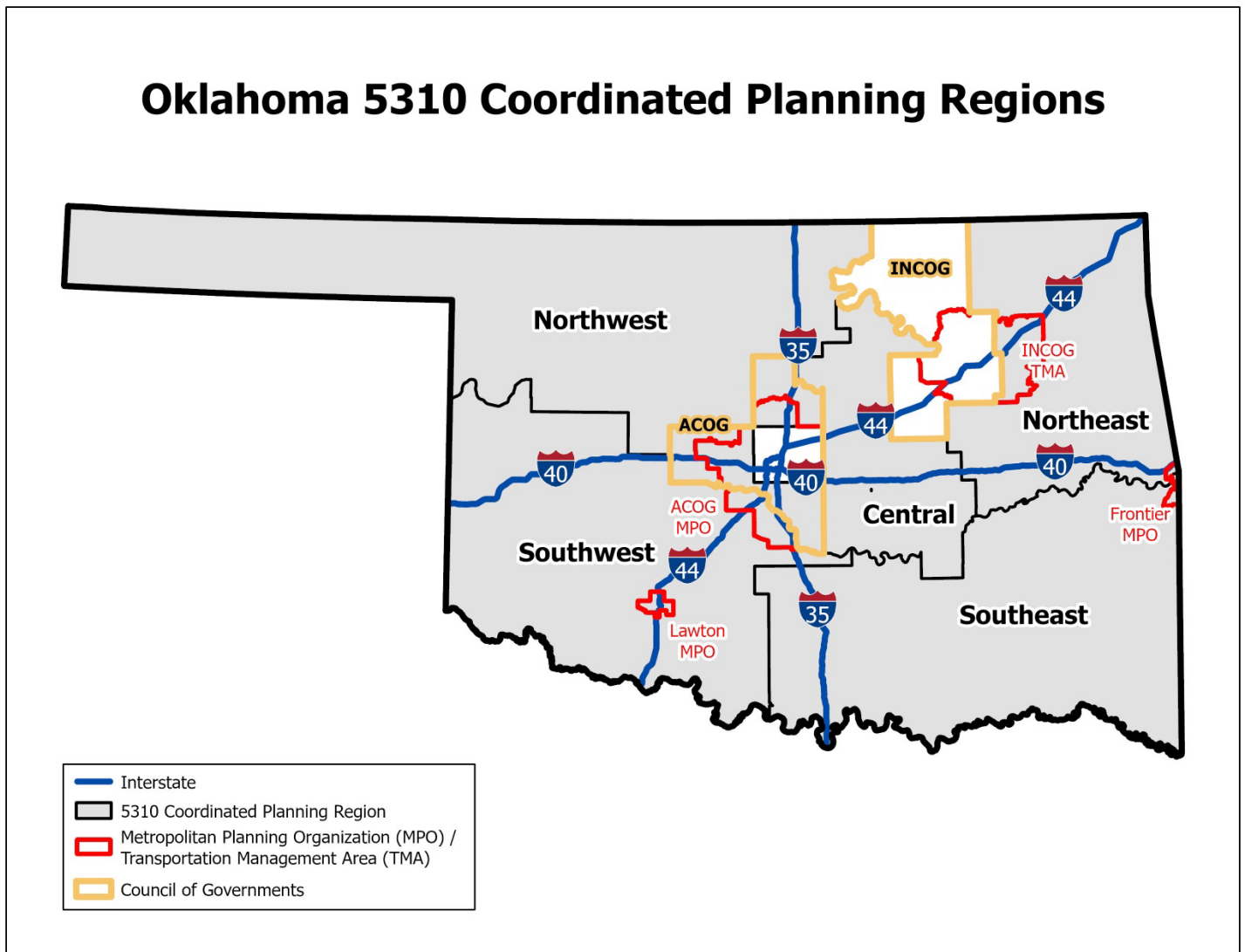
The geographic area covered by this plan, identified by ODOT as the Southwest Region, includes Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Roger Mills, Stephens, Tillman, and Washita County. Counties covered in this plan are mostly rural, with the largest cities in the region consisting of Duncan and Lawton (see Figure 2).

The United States Census Bureau has designated two urbanized areas that are at least partially within the Southwest Region, the Lawton Urbanized Area and the Oklahoma City Urbanized Area. Urbanized areas are based upon agglomerations of populations and development patterns resulting in populations of at least 50,000 people within a relatively compact area. Urbanized areas are the geographic basis upon which numerous Federal transit funding programs and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundaries are based on. The Lawton MPO is entirely within the Southwest Region, being located in Comanche County, while a small portion of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) MPO is located within Grady and McClain County. The purpose of these MPOs is to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process for their planning area, including the planning and programming of transportation projects through the long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program. The metropolitan transportation planning process is an opportunity for transit agencies to advance their interest in potential transportation hubs in the region.

Figure 2: Southwest Coordinated Planning Region
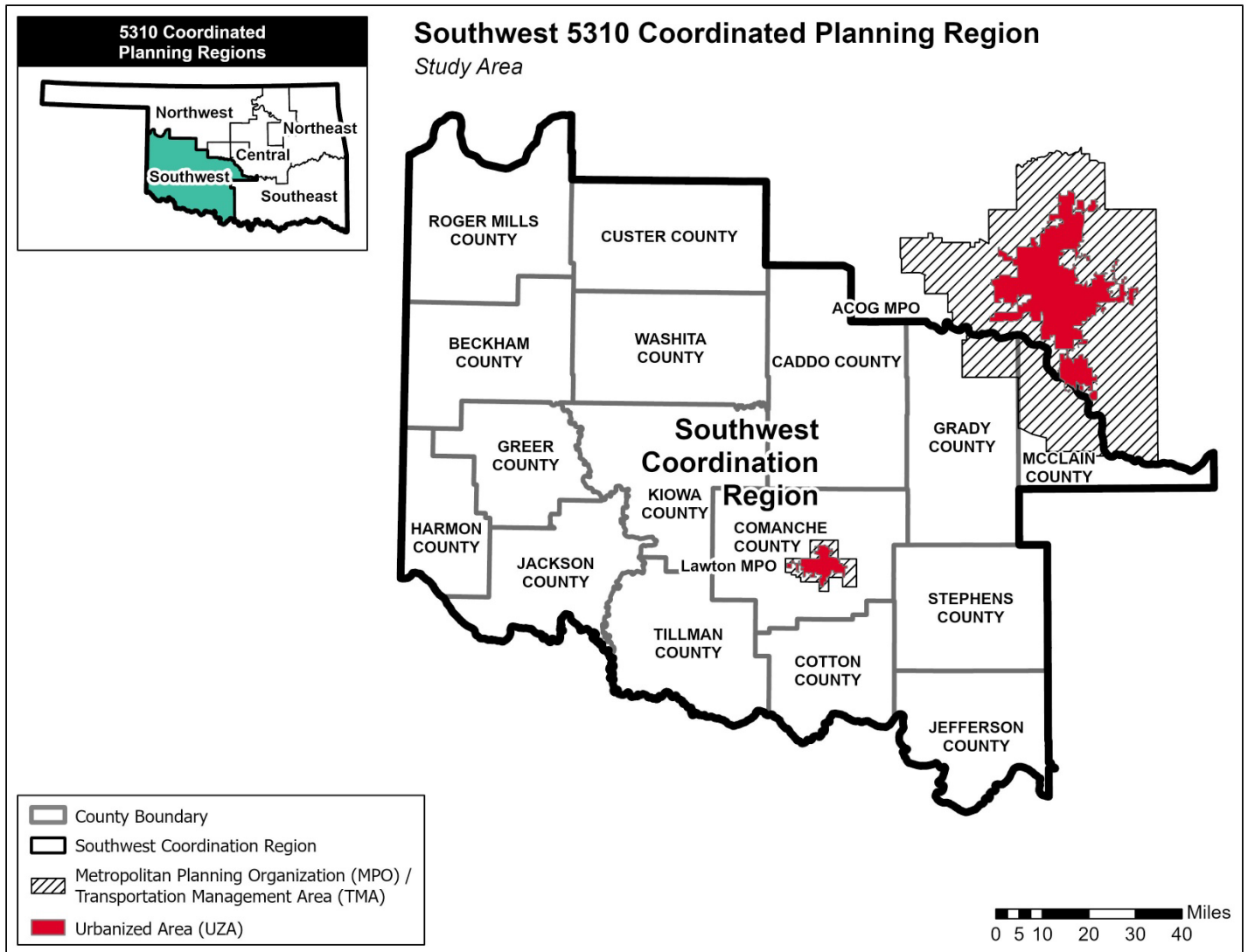
What is a coordinated plan?

A coordinated plan is a process that requires local stakeholders and transit agencies to coordinate efforts in providing transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities. It documents the current local transportation services for this targeted population. Gaps and unmet needs are identified through robust stakeholder engagement, and recommendations to close these barriers are developed.

A coordinated plan is important in detailing and understanding this information. It is also an application requirement and scoring criteria for the ODOT 5310 program application and award process. In the 5310 subrecipient application process, applicants are required to reference the transportation gap or unmet need that their project is proposing to address. ODOT will also view agencies who participated directly in the plan development process favorably compared to those who did not. Without an applicant's understanding and involvement in the coordinated planning process and plan, their application will not be complete and will receive less scoring points.

The **Oklahoma Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan** is prepared in compliance with federal transportation legislation under Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and reauthorized under Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) as described in FTA's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, Section 5310).

Plan Purpose

The Coordinated Plan makes federal resources available to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. To be eligible for 5310 grant funding, the program specifically requires projects selected for funding be "included in a locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan." This document - and its contents and information meet all requirements of the Federal Transit Administration.

These inaugural Coordinated Plans are initial efforts to develop a plan that documents and uses local input and knowledge to better understand and coordinate transportation services for 5310 populations. The plan details regional transportation providers, gaps and unmet needs in their service, and strategies to recommend and prioritize local projects that expand mobility choices for older adults and people with disabilities.

Other on-going ODOT transportation planning and program efforts will eventually develop and better inform the strategies and ideas documented in this Coordinated Plan. In addition, all stakeholders will learn from the initial implementation of this plan. In time, however, the recommendations will be molded to best provide services to seniors and people with disabilities. The Coordinated Plan is a living, breathing document that encourages stakeholders to participate regularly in the development and implementation of this plan so that the plan remains current and continues to provide efficient, coordinated human transportation services.

Plan Development Process

Federal law requires that a Coordinated Plan be developed locally in a manner that includes the participation of older adults, persons with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, as well as members of the public. A coordinated plan needs to include three major elements: 1) information on the current transportation services available, 2) unmet needs and gaps in those services, and 3) recommendations and strategies in prioritizing projects that will fill the identified gaps and unmet transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Developing this plan with these three major elements required a team of professionals over several months to engage in a number of activities to conduct research on transportation programs, services, and demographics of county populations; to engage local residents and transportation stakeholders in providing information, recommendations, and strategies that prioritize and fill those unmet needs and gaps in transportation service; and to analyze this information to create a coordinated plan document.

A timeline of staff and public engagement activities to develop the compliance documents for the 5310 Program - including the Coordinated Plans - is detailed in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: 5310 Coordinated Planning Process

	March		April		May		June		July		August		September		October	
	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4
Demographic Analysis	■	■														
Draft Document			■	■	■	■										
Working Group Meeting (Set 1)				■	■											
Survey							■	■	■	■						
Public Meetings								■								
Working Group Meeting (Set 2)									■							
Update Document										■	■					
Working Group Meeting (Set 3)												■				
Finalize Document													■	■	■	■

The process of gathering the appropriate material and information to develop the Coordinated Plan document included several steps:

- **Transportation Provider and Demographic Analysis:** ODOT reviewed the current transportation providers in the Region as well as the populations of seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income households to determine a baseline of transportation services available and the existing gaps and unmet needs for the targeted population.
- **Working Group Meetings (April 2023 – August 2023):** ODOT convened a series of three working group meetings in which public and private transportation providers and planning agencies participated. These meetings were focused on gathering in-depth information on unmet transportation needs and mobility gaps for seniors and people with disabilities. Stephen Iken with Southwest Transit was selected as the representative from the lead agency. A new lead agency and lead agency representative may be chosen by the Working Group as needed. This group will be responsible for updating the Coordinated Plan on an annual basis.
- **Public Survey (June – July 2023):** ODOT conducted an online public survey to gather information from the general public and organizational stakeholders, including current FTA program recipients, regional planning offices, human service organizations and agencies, and public and private transportation providers. The survey was open from June 6th to July 21st.
- **Regional Virtual Public Meetings (June 2023):** ODOT hosted a regional virtual public meeting to provide general 5310 program information, request additional local input on human service transportation in the region, and to receive feedback on the draft Coordinated Plan. The public meeting took place on June 28th and had 19 public participants.
- **Draft Coordinated Plan for Stakeholder Input (July – August 2023):** A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders the week of 8/21/2023. Additional comment from the public survey and other outreach opportunities were solicited from participants and incorporated in the plan accordingly.
- **Finalize Coordinated Plan document (October 2023):** ODOT has accepted the Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan.

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Regional Socioeconomic Characteristics

Settlement patterns of the general population and transportation disadvantaged populations are critical to analyze to understand where people live and how service can be better designed to meet their needs. ODOT reviewed Census demographic data for general population and various transportation disadvantaged populations throughout the Southwest Region. This data is reported at the county-level using five-year American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2021.

Population Density

As of 2021, the region's population is estimated to be 412,869 with a population density of 28.8 people per square mile (PPSM). Population density is a significant factor in the viability of transit service, with higher population densities tending to support higher frequency and more efficient transit service. Figure 4 displays population density at the county-level in the Southwest Region.

Population is primarily concentrated in the eastern portion of the Region, surrounding the Lawton and Oklahoma City metropolitan areas (Comanche, Grady, McClain, and Stephens County). These aforementioned areas have population densities of at least 40 people per square mile (PPSM). Population is relatively sparse throughout the remainder of the Region. Jackson County has between 30 and 40 PPSM, while Beckham, Caddo, and Custer County have between 20 and 30 PPSM. Multiple counties have very low population densities, with Cotton, Greer, Harmon, Jefferson, Kiowa, Rogers Mills, and Tillman County having between zero and 10 PPSM.

Figure 4: Population Density (Population / Square Mile)
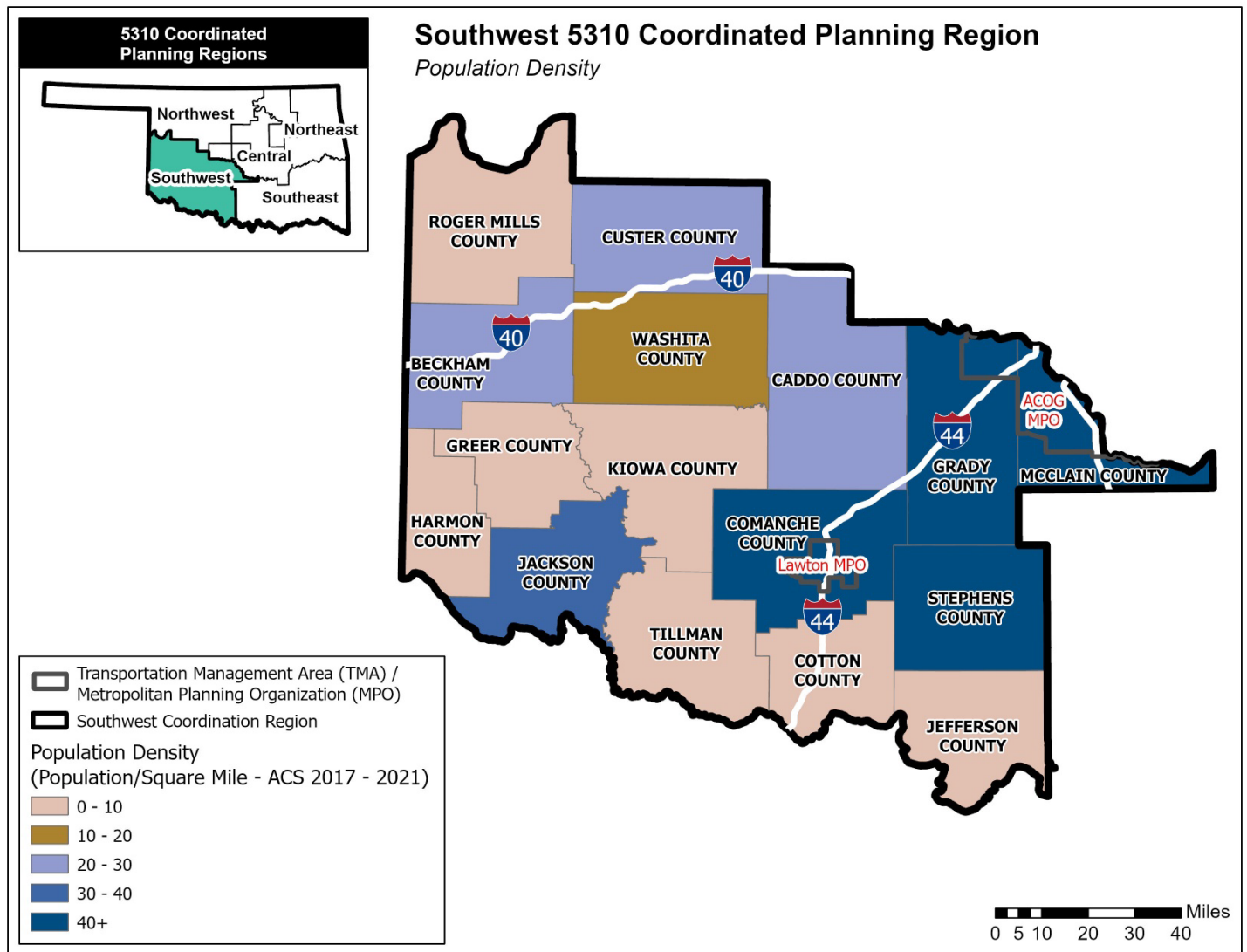
Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

The following sections describe the settlement patterns of the following transportation disadvantaged groups throughout the Southwest Region: Seniors, People with Disabilities, Low-income Individuals, Limited English Proficiency, and Zero-car Households. These groups are unified in the fact that they often face mobility challenges, often due to difficulty in accessing public transit or being unable to operate or afford a personal vehicle. Specific challenges that these groups face in accessing public transit are described in each respective section. It is critical to understand the settlement patterns of these groups in order to develop transportation and other related services that best meet their needs. The locations of Justice 40 areas throughout the Southwest Region are also described.

A number of 5307, 5311, and 5310 agencies provide critical transportation service to these groups in the Southwest Region, including different assistance programs to help them afford transportation fares. These groups often utilize the general fixed-route or demand-response public transit service provided by transit agencies and paratransit services/human service transportation services. More information on these providers can be found in the **Regional Characteristics** and **Transportation Provider Assessment** sections.

Table 4 compares the percentages of each transportation disadvantaged group in the Southwest Region to Oklahoma as a whole. The Southwest Region is largely comparable to Oklahoma itself in terms of percentages of transportation disadvantaged populations. The number of people with disabilities in the Southwest Region is slightly

elevated compared to Oklahoma (18.4% versus 16.3%) as is the percentage of zero-car households (6.0% versus 5.4%). The percentage of limited English proficiency individuals is slightly lower (2.8% versus 3.9%). The remaining percentages of transportation disadvantaged populations in the Southwest Region are within a percentage point the percentage for Oklahoma as a whole.

Table 4: Demographic Summary

	Southwest Region		Oklahoma	
	Region Total	**% of Region**	**OK Total**	**% of OK**
Total Population	**412,869**	**100%**	**3,948,136**	**100%**
Seniors	63,465	15.4%	615,832	15.6%
People w/ Disabilities	71,674	18.4%	631,051	16.3%
Low-income Individuals	59,552	15.2%	583,853	15.2%
Limited English Proficiency Individuals	10,806	2.8%	142,223	3.9%
Total Households	**151,749**	**100%**	**1,503,868**	**100%**
Zero-car Households	9,168	6.0%	81,196	5.4%

Senior Population (Age 65 and Over)

Seniors (age 65 and over) often have unique transportation needs due to a host of age-related physical and cognitive conditions. For example, deteriorating eyesight as a result of age makes it difficult to operate a vehicle. Seniors may face challenges in understanding public transit systems, including the policies that must be followed and the technology that public transit systems utilize. Seniors also typically must access medical care more often than other groups.

Figure 5 displays percentages of seniors in each county throughout the Southwest Region, and these percentages are compared to the percentage of seniors for Oklahoma as a whole (15.6%). County-level percentages of seniors in the Southwest Region are generally similar to the State as a whole. Jefferson and Roger Mills County have particularly high percentages of seniors, between 20% and 25% of the county populations. In the Southwest Region 10 of 16 counties have county populations with between 15% and 20% seniors, while four of 16 have between 10% and 15%.

Figure 5: Senior Population Percentage (Age 65 and Over)
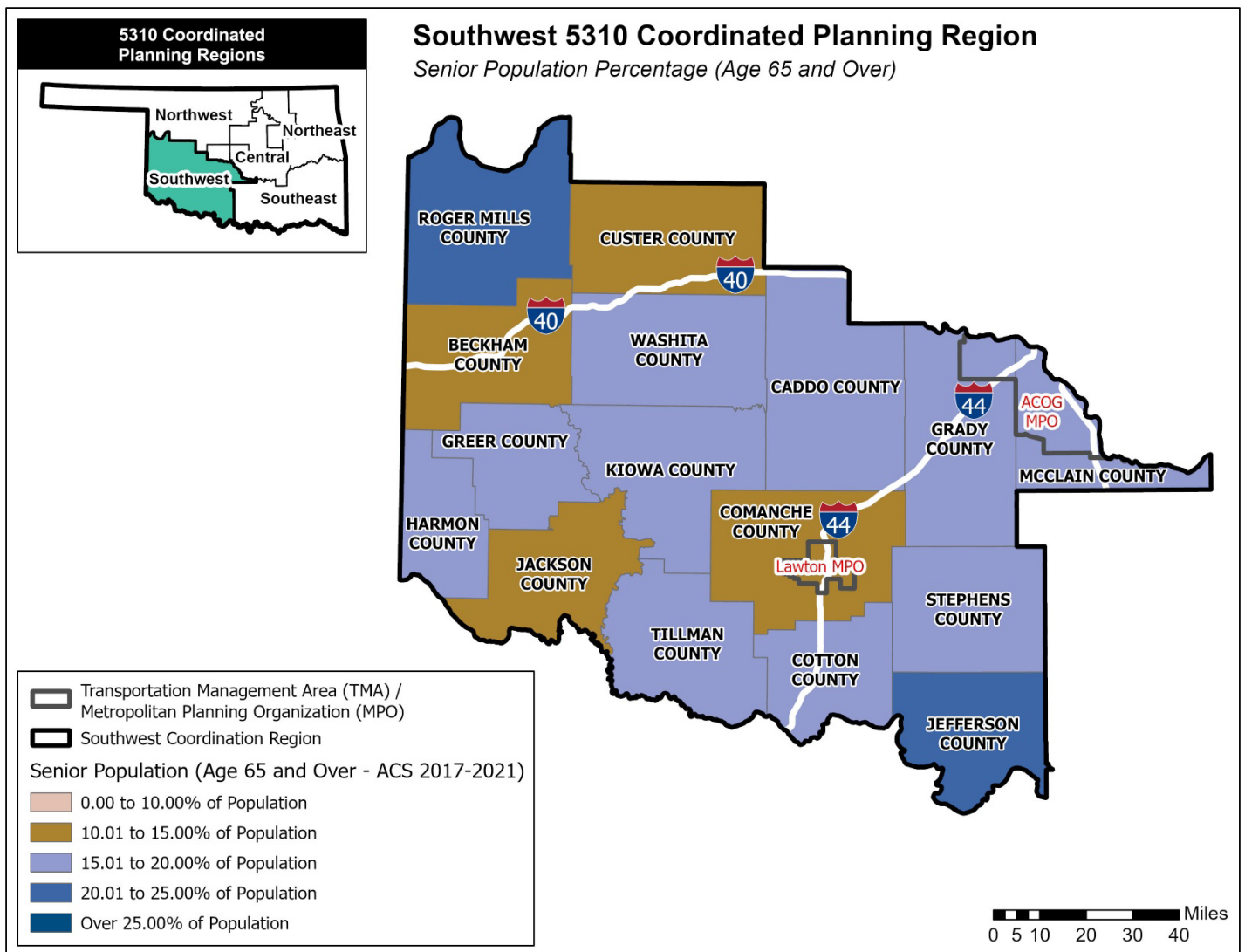
People with Disabilities

People with disabilities, be they physical or cognitive, also often have unique transportation needs. They frequently require personal assistance using public transit, such as a personal care assistant (or PCA). Similar to seniors, they often have an increased need to access medical care compared to individuals without disabilities. Disabilities that people have may also be age-related, creating compounding mobility challenges.

Figure 6 shows percentages of each county in the Southwest Region with a disability, and these are compared to percentage of Oklahomans as a whole with a disability (16.3%). Many counties have percentages of disabled individuals well above Oklahoma as a whole. At least 25% of Jefferson County's population has a disability. In the Southwest Region, eight of 16 counties have percentages of individuals with disabilities between 20% and 25%. Beckham, Custer, and McClain County have particularly low percentages of people with disabilities, between 10% and 15%.

Figure 6: People with Disabilities Population Percentage
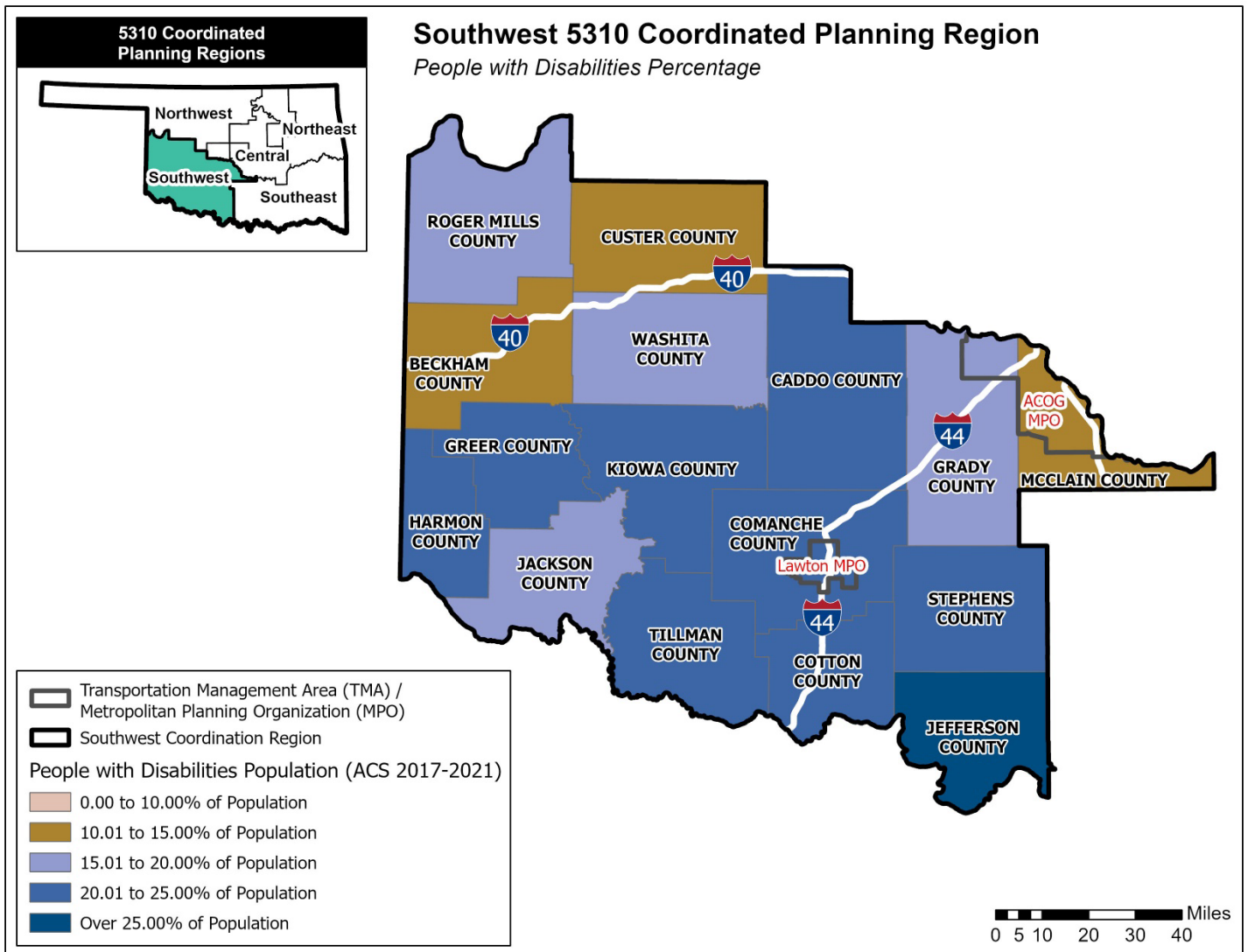
Low-Income Individuals

Defined as individuals with annual incomes below the poverty level ($12,880), low-income individuals similarly face unique mobility challenges. They often struggle to afford forms of transportation available to those with higher incomes, including personal vehicles and ride-hailing services (Lyft, Uber, etc.). As a result, public transit and human services transportation play critical roles in ensuring that low-income individuals can fulfill their day-to-day needs, particularly when low-income individuals are older and/or have disabilities.

Figure 7 displays the percentage of the population in each Southwest Region county that is low-income, and these are compared to the percentage of Oklahomans as a whole that are low-income (15.2%). Most counties in the Southwest Region are near parity with Oklahoma as a whole in terms of percentage of low-income individuals. Cotton, Jefferson, and Kiowa County have elevated percentages of low-income individuals, between 20% and 25%. McClain County has a particularly low percentage of low-income individuals, with between 0% and 10%.

Figure 7: Low-Income Individuals Population Percentage
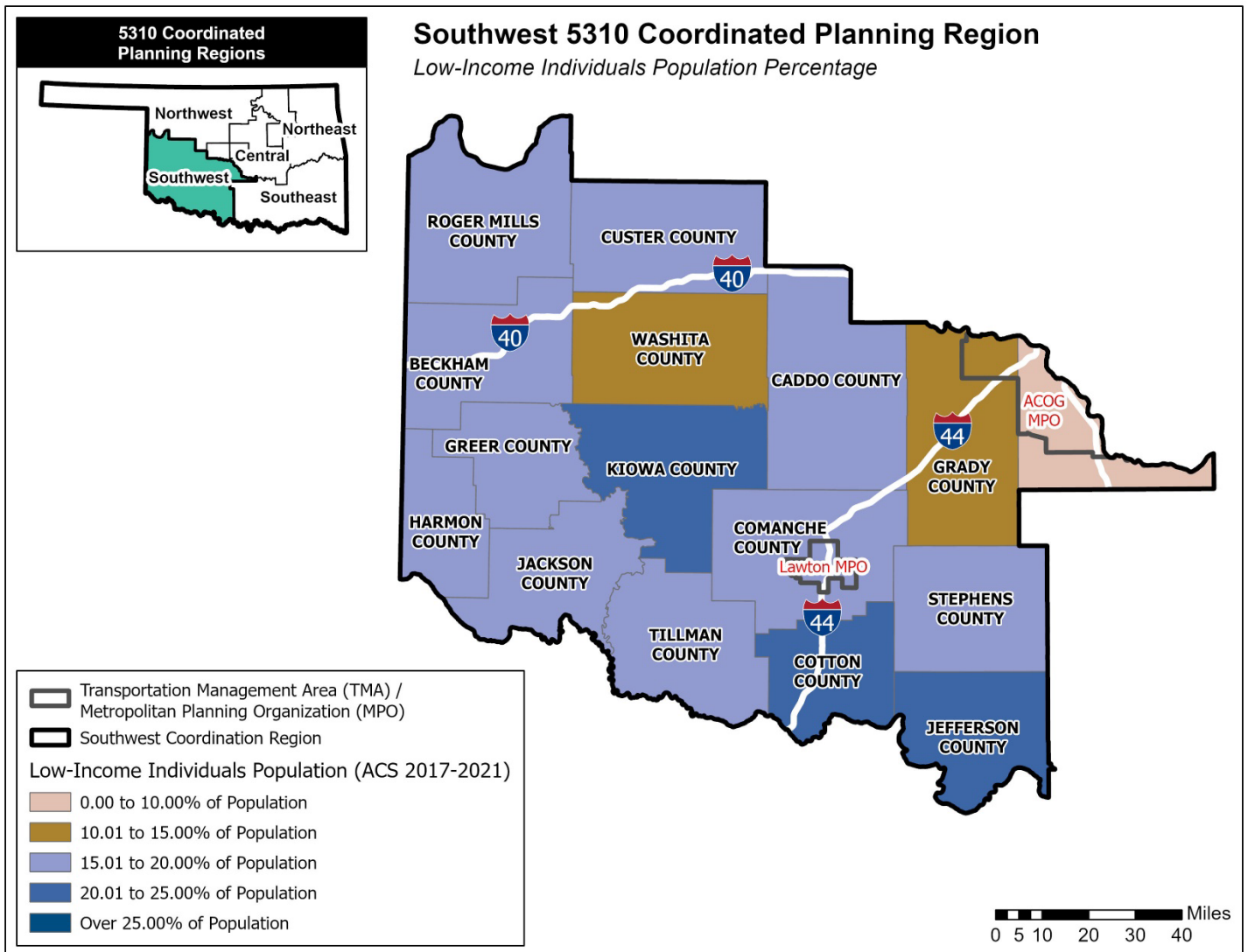
Limited English Proficiency Individuals

Limited English proficiency individuals are those who do not speak English very well. They face challenges in understanding transportation policies and materials as well as communicating with transportation provider staff. They may require special accommodations that make public and private transportation services and materials accessible to them. For example, transit schedules may need to be translated from English into another language, or an interpreter may be needed for a public meeting.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of population of each county in the Southwest Region with a limited English proficiency. Most counties in the Region fall between 0% and 5% percent and Custer and Tillman counties 5.01-10% limited English proficiency.

Figure 8: Limited English Proficiency Population Percentage
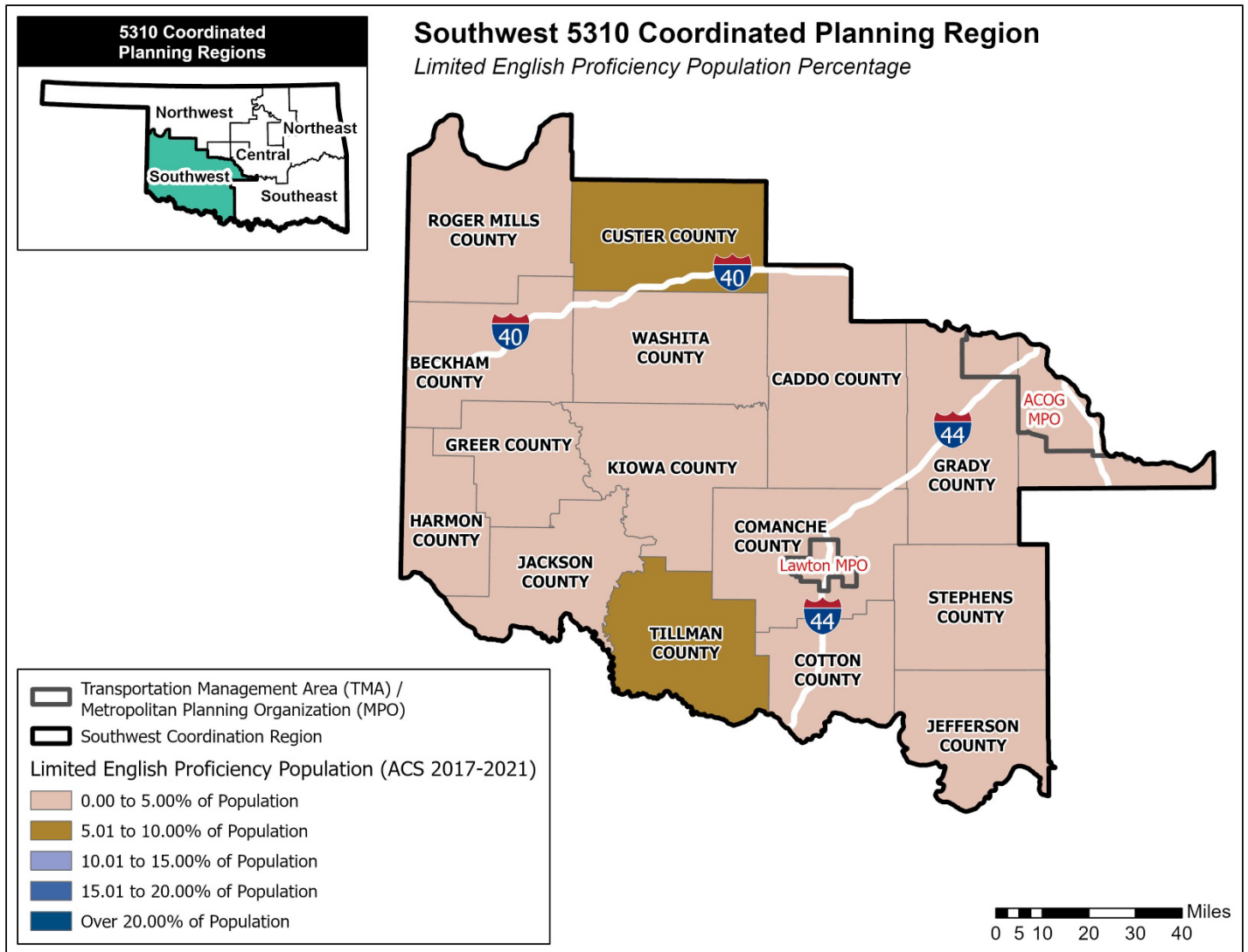
Zero-Car Households

Zero-car households face acute mobility challenges due to most transportation systems being constructed to serve personal vehicle trips rather than public or active transportation. Public transit and other private transportation services are a critical lifeline for these households. Often, there is an overlap between zero-car households and low-income individuals, with limited financial resources making car ownership a challenge.

Figure 9 displays percentages of zero-car households for each Southwest Region county. Percentages of zero-car households are generally low throughout the region, with only two counties, Custer and Tillman counties, ranging between 5% and 10%, while the remaining counties all have between 0% and 5% zero-car households. By comparison, 5.4% of Oklahoman households are zero-car households.

Figure 9: Zero-Car Household Percentage
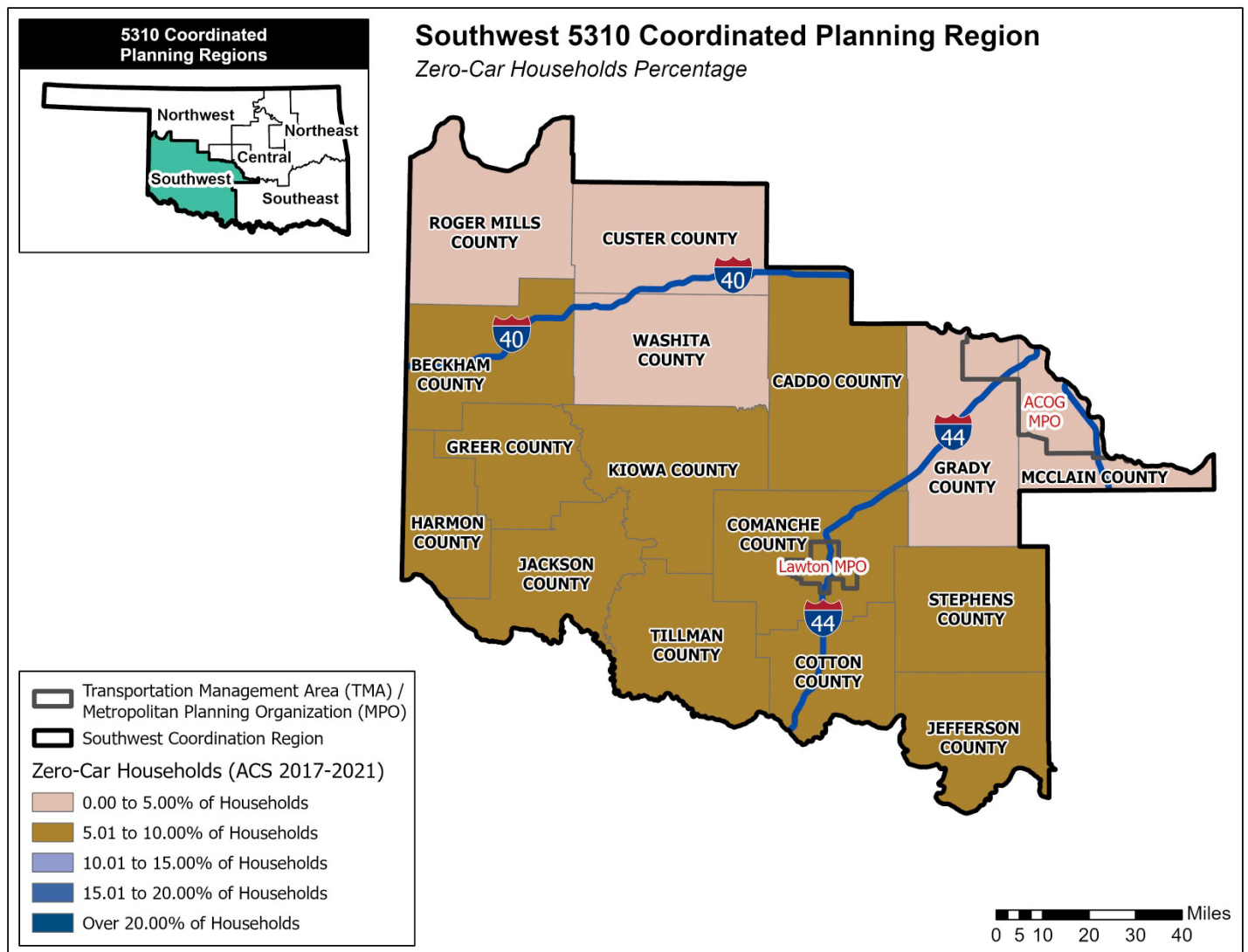
Justice 40 Disadvantaged Areas

Justice 40 Areas are Census tracts that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution, according to numerous socioeconomic and environmental indicators. These designations are made pursuant to Executive Order 14008, which directs the federal government to identify how certain federal investments can be made with the goal of at least 40% of benefits flowing to disadvantaged communities.

Most of the Southwest Region is within Justice 40 areas, with nearly all counties being completely within Justice 40 areas. Grady, Jackson, and McClain County are not entirely within Justice 40 areas. The northwest corner of Grady County is not within a Justice 40 area, which corresponds with the Minco area. The eastern half of Jackson County is not within a Justice 40 area. The portions of McClain County not within Justice 40 areas correspond with the Washington and Newcastle areas.

Figure 10: Oklahoma Justice 40 Disadvantaged Areas
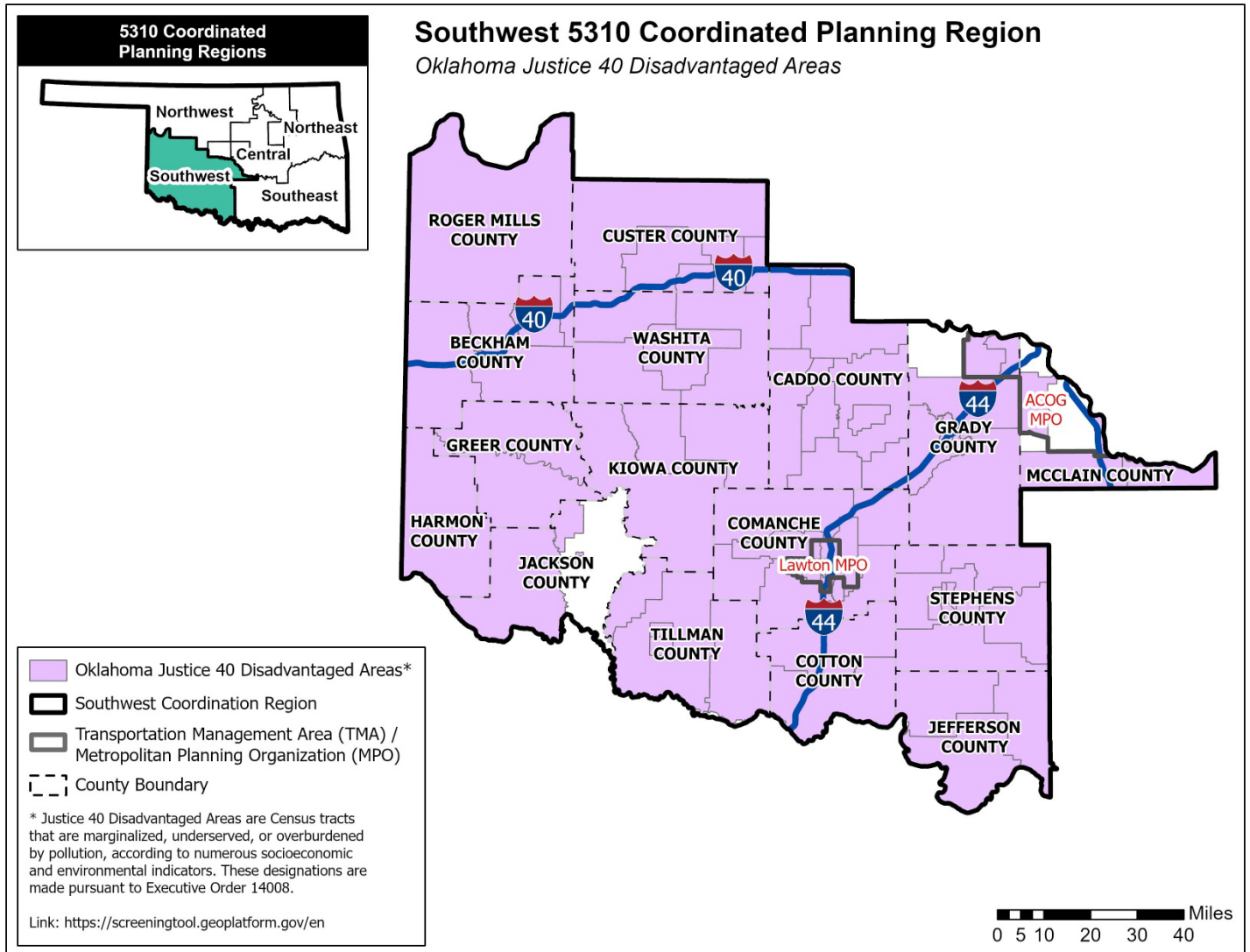
Regional Characteristics

The Southwest Region includes multiple planning agencies that, in concert with transportation providers and mobility navigators, work to ensure the mobility and general human services needs of Southwest Region residents are effectively met through well-coordinated service provision. The following sections describe the different planning agencies within the Southwest Region, as well as any mobility navigators whose service area is within the Southwest Region.

Planning Agencies

The Southwest Region is served by five planning agencies: South Western Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Agency (SORTPO), the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA), the Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments (ASCOG), the Lawton MPO, and the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG). Indian Tribes engage in transportation as well, with variation in the use of formal transportation planning offices or staff.

SWODA and ASCOG are regional COGs in the Southwest Region that provide a number of economic development services critical to the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities and seniors and rural residents in general. SWODA acts as the fiscal agent to SORTPO, which is the regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) for the Southwest Region.

MPOs are primarily responsible for the development, administration, and approval of their long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement program (TIP) as well as various public engagement and statewide transportation coordination activities. ACOG is the designated regional planning agency for central Oklahoma, as well as the parent organization for the ACOG MPO. ACOG serves a number of functions, including transportation planning, public safety, community/economic development, and water resources. The ACOG MPO includes portions of Grady and McClain County. Additionally, the Lawton MPO is located entirely within Comanche County.

Table 5: Planning Agencies

County(ies)	Agency Name	POC	Email	Phone	Website
Canadian, Cleveland, Logan, Oklahoma *A portion of Grady and all of McClain are within the ACOG MPO, but the planning organization is SORTPO.*	Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG)	Mark Sweeney	msweeney@acogok.org	405-234-2264	https://www.acogok.org/
Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Jefferson, McClain, Stephens, Tillman	Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments (ASCOG)	Tom Zigler	zigl_to@ascog.org	580-736-7971	https://www.ascog.org/
Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills	Cheyenne and Arapaho Department of Transportation, Transportation Planning Division	Wilma Tapaha	wtapaha@c-a--tribes.org	405-422-7785	https://www.cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov/transportation/transportation-planning
Johnston, Marshall, Love, Custer, Jefferson, Stevens, Murray, Pontotoc, Garvin, McClain, Grady, Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma	Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	N/A	N/A	580-310-6453	https://www.chickasaw.net/Services/Transportation-Services.aspx
Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Tillman	Comanche Nation Transportation Department	Adrian Tehauno	N/A	580-492-3269	https://comanchenation.com/departments/family-services/transportation
Comanche	Lawton MPO **Lawton MPO serves the City of Lawton and a small portion of Comanche County surrounding Lawton.*	Johnathan Stone	jonathan.stone@lawtonok.gov	580-581-3375	https://www.lawtonmpo.org/
Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Roger Mills, Stephens, Tillman, Washita	Southwest Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)	Julie Sanders	julie@swoda.org	580-562-4885	https://sortpo.org/
Beckham, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, Washita	South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)	Debora Glasgow	debora@swoda.org	580-562-5022	https://www.swoda.org/

Mobility Management

Mobility management professionals help coordinate transportation services throughout the state and conduct mobility management projects. Working with a host agency, mobility management professionals help conduct projects and activities that increase mobility access for all Oklahomans to healthy living resources, healthcare, and employment through various activities that connect transportation with the needs of individuals and communities.

Mobility management is new to Oklahoma, having been implemented in 2023 through pilot programs in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The program is continuing to evolve, and implementation is contingent on funding.

Table 6 below summarizes the mobility management programs which serve the Southwest Region.

Table 6: Mobility Management Programs

Service Area	MM Name	Host Agency	Email	Phone	Website
Counties: Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Roger Mills, Stephens, Tillman, Washita	Cristi Williams, Mobility Navigator	SWODA	cristi@swoda.org	580-562-4882 X 134	www.sortpo.org

Transportation Provider Assessment

The Southwest Region is served by numerous public transit providers, tribal transit providers, and human services transportation providers, all of which serve as key lifelines to individuals with disabilities and seniors. These providers often have overlapping or abutting services areas and thus stand to benefit greatly from increased coordination and communications among each other. This chapter describes the transportation providers in the Southwest Region, including detailed information on their service characteristics (e.g., service area and schedule), and eligibility information.

Public Transit Providers

Figure 11 below displays the public transit agencies and tribal transit agencies within the Southwest Region.

The Southwest Region is served by numerous transportation providers including tribal transit providers, human service providers and public transit. Public transit agencies serving the Southwest Region include Red River Public Transportation, Southwest Transit, Lawton Area Transit System (LATS), Washita Valley Transit, and Delta Public Transit. Tribal transit agencies serving the Southwest Region include Comanche Nation Transit, Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services, Kiowa Tribe Fastrans, and Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Transit.

Figure 11: 5311 Transit and Tribal Transit Providers
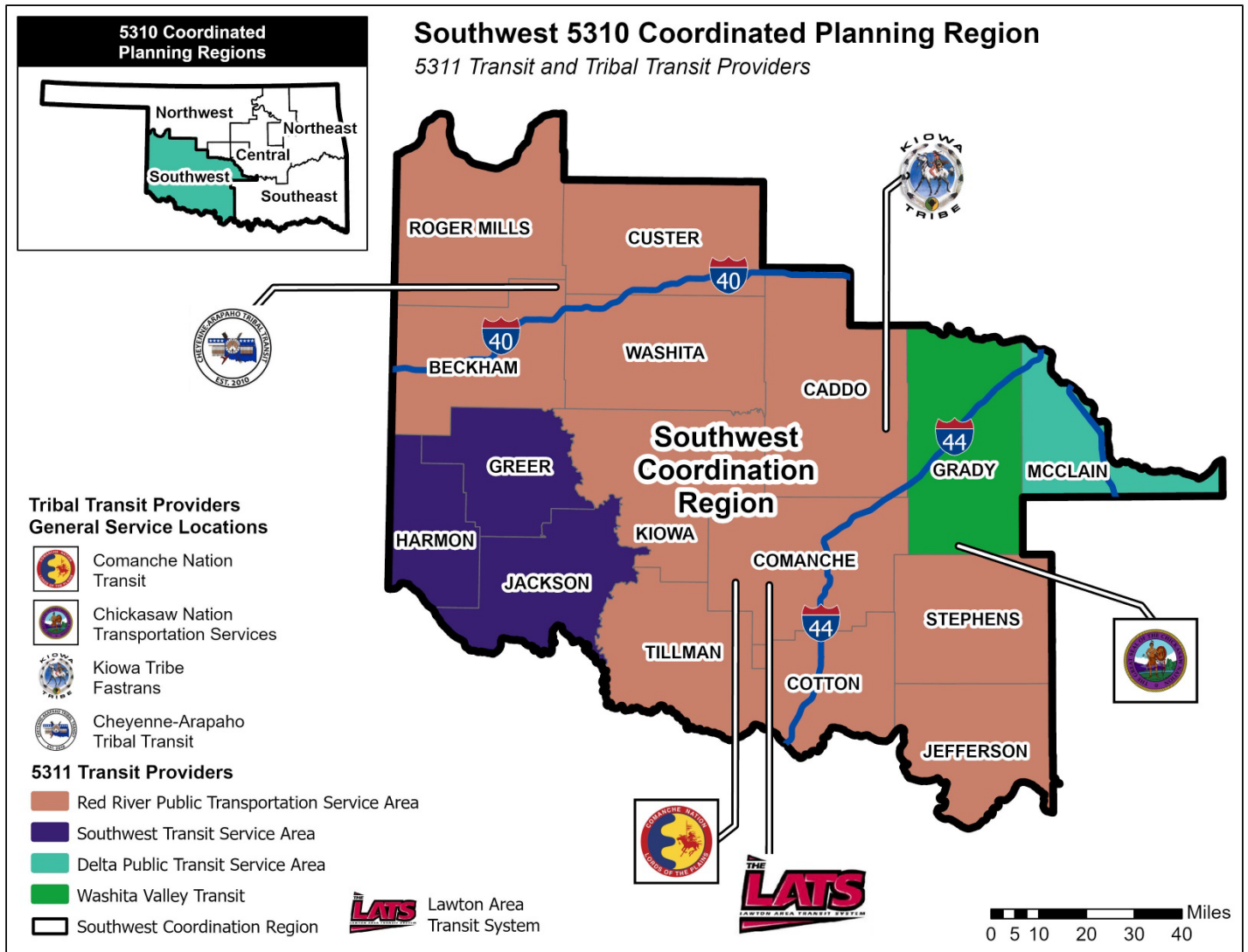
Table 7 shows an inventory of transportation providers in the Southwest Region, including public transit providers receiving 5307/5311/5310 funding, human services transportation providers receiving 5310 funding, and tribal transit providers. The user models of each provider are shown, which may include open-door, closed-door, or combination of open- and closed-door services. Open-door is defined as service that is available to everyone. By contrast, closed-door service is available to members only through the use of eligibility criteria.

More detailed information on each provider is provided in the Appendix in Table 25. This information was derived from a combination of ODOT data and survey responses. Plan users are encouraged to use Table 7 to identify if coordination may be necessary with a particular agency and to use Table 25 in the Appendix to further determine what level of coordination may be possible or appropriate.

Table 7: Transportation Providers

Agency / Transportation Provider Name	Provider Type	User Model	Service Area	Eligibility Criteria (if not open to the public)	5310 Recipient?
A Driver For You	N/A	Open-door	Cities: Norman, Newcastle, Blanchard, Wayne, Dibble, Noble, Little Ax, Purcell, Paul's Valley	N/A	No
Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Transit & Elderly Nutrition Program	Tribal Transit & 5310	Open-door	Counties: Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills	N/A	Yes
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	Tribal Transit	Both closed- and open-door	Counties: Johnston, Marshall, Love, Custer, Jefferson, Stevens, Murray, Pontotoc, Garvin, McClain, Grady, Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma	NEMT: must be a federally recognized First American Employment transportation: open to the public	No
Comanche Nation Transit	Tribal Transit	Open-door	Servicing the Lawton/Fort Sill metropolitan area as well as surrounding communities of Cache, Apache, Elgin, Fletcher, Cyril	Open to the public	No
DAV	Specialized Transportation	N/A	Comanche County	Free transportation to VA medical facilities for injured and ill veterans	No
Delta Public Transit	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Garvin, McClain	N/A	Yes
Goodwill Adult Day Services	Specialized Transportation	Closed-door	Comanche County, City of Chickasha	Must be a participant in Adult Day Service	Yes
Kiowa Tribe Fastrans	Tribal Transit	N/A	Counties: Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Comanche, Custer, Grady, Kiowa, Washita	N/A	No
Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Lawton and Fort Sill areas	N/A	No
Red River Public Transportation	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Beckham, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Jefferson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, Stephens, Tillman, Washita, Woodward	All services are open to the public	Yes
Southwest Transit	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Counties: Greer, Harmon, Jackson	N/A	Yes
Washita Valley Transit	Public Transit Authority	Open-door	Grady County	N/A	Yes

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Human Services Providers

Transportation providers are part of a network of human services providers whose services help ensure that seniors and people with disabilities can maintain a high quality of life. Human services providers who may not provide transportation services still play a valuable role by connecting their clients with transportation providers. Human services providers themselves may be destinations for transportation users or may provide services that assist seniors and people with disabilities in using transportation, such as personal care assistants.

Table 8 below displays an inventory of human services providers throughout the Region, including both those who provide transportation and those who do not. Additionally, the SoonerRide and RideCARE sections below describe the SoonerRide and RideCARE programs, which are State-administered human services transportation programs.

The user models of each provider are shown, which may include open-door, closed-door, or combination of open- and closed-door services. Open-door is defined as service that is available to everyone. By contrast, closed-door service is available to members only through the use of eligibility criteria.

Not appearing in Table 8 does not necessarily preclude an agency from applying for and being awarded 5310 funding, although applications must address the gaps and unmet needs identified in this plan. However, participation in the coordinated planning process will be viewed favorably by ODOT, so potential applicants are encouraged to contact the lead agency of the Southwest Working Group to see how they can participate.

Table 8: Inventory of Human Services Providers

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligible Criteria (if not open to the public)
Accentra Case Management	Counties: Oklahoma, Grady, Caddo, Stephens, Canadian, Logan, Garvin, Comanche, McClain, Cleveland	8AM – 4:30PM	Health Care, Social Services, DHS Advantage Program	N/A	N/A
ASCOG	Counties: Stephens, Tillman, Caddo, Grady, McClain, Comanche, Jefferson, Cotton	7:30AM – 5:30PM	Social Services including Medicare counseling, Advantage case management plan, nutrition and support services, caregiver program, Economic Development	N/A	N/A
Caddo County Health Department	Caddo County	8AM – 5PM	Health Care	N/A	N/A
Complete Home Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
DAV	Comanche County	N/A	Transportation	N/A	The DAV provides free transportation to VA medical facilities for injured and ill veterans
First Baptist Church Food Pantry	Chickasha City	7:30AM - 9AM, last Saturday of each month	Food Pantry	N/A	N/A
Full Circle Adult Day Center	Cities: Norman, Moore, Blanchard, Mustang	7:30AM – 5:30PM, Monday - Friday	Health Care, Respite Care	N/A	N/A
Goodwill Adult Day Services	Comanche County, City of Chickasha	630AM – 5PM	Social Services, Transportation for Seniors/People with Disabilities	Closed-door	Must be a participant in Adult Day Service
Great Plains Youth & Family Services, Inc.	Southwest Oklahoma	8:30AM – 5PM, Monday – Thursday 8:30AM – 3PM, Friday	Social Services, Counseling, Foster Care, After School Program	Both closed-and-open door	N/A
HELP INC	Counties: Beckham, Dewey, Roger Mills, Washita	9AM – 1PM, Monday – Wednesday 3:30PM – 6PM, Tuesday 3rd Saturday of each month	Social Services, Food, Senior Boxes, Senior Meals	N/A	N/A
Jackson County Health Department	Jackson County	8AM – 5PM	Health Care, Social Services	Open-door	N/A
JeffCo Helping Hands Food Pantry	Jefferson County	8AM – 12PM, two Fridays per month	Emergency Food	N/A	N/A

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligible Criteria (if not open to the public)
Judy's Kitchen	Cities: Minco, Pocasset, Union City, Cogar, Gracemont	3rd Saturday of every month	Food Assistance	Open-door	N/A
Lawton Food Bank	Lawton and the surrounding towns	10AM – 1PM, Monday/Wednesday 1PM – 5:30PM, Tuesday/Thursday 8AM – 1PM, second Friday of each month By appointment: 9:15AM, Monday/Wednesday 12:15PM, Tuesday/Thursday	Groceries	Open-door	N/A
Oklahoma Department of Human Services	Southwest Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, some evenings and weekends 24/7 for crisis and family response	Health Care, Social Services, Child Protection, Family Support	Both closed-and-open door	Depends on program: income thresholds, open child welfare cases
Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services	Western Part of Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Job Readiness, Training	N/A	N/A
Oklahoma State Department of Health	Western Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Health Care, Social Services, Economic Development, Emergency Preparedness	Open-door	N/A
OU College of Nursing	Western Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Case Management	N/A	https://nursing.ouhsc.edu/Care-Management/Services
Progressive Independence	Oklahoma, Pottawatomi, McClain, Canadian, Cleveland counties and Southwest Oklahoma	8:30AM – 5PM	Health Care, Social Services, Skills Training, Peer Support	Open-door	N/A
Red Rock Behavioral Health	N/A	24/7	Behavioral health and physical health care coordination services	Open-door	N/A
Resurrection House Association / Life Skills Institute	Chickasha, OK and Grady County	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Overnight Shelters, Transitional Living Assistance	N/A	N/A
RideCARE (Oklahoma Mental Health & Substance Abuse)	Statewide	24/7	Transportation	Open-door	N/A

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Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	Types of Service Provided	User Model	Eligible Criteria (if not open to the public)
SoonerRide (Oklahoma Health Care Authority)	Statewide	7AM – 6PM, Monday - Saturday	Transportation, Lodging, Meal Services	Closed-door	SoonerCare Members
Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc.	Counties: Jackson, Harmon, Greer	8AM – 5PM	Social Services, Public Transportation, Head Start, Housing Assistance, Homelessness Prevention, Domestic Violence Shelter/Services, Senior Nutrition, Services to Developmentally Disabled Adults, RSVP	Open-door	N/A
South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)	Counties: Beckham, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, Washita	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Economic development, community resources and environmental integrity	N/A	N/A
The Salvation Army Grady & Caddo Counties	Counties: Grady, Caddo	Grady: 9AM – 4PM, Monday – Thursday Caddo: 9AM – 12PM, Monday - Friday	N/A	Open-door	N/A
Think Ability, Inc	Duncan, OK	24/7	N/A	Closed-door	DDSD Waiver
United Way of Southwest Oklahoma	Southwest Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	Education, Income Stability, Health, Other Basic Needs	N/A	N/A

SoonerRide

SoonerRide is Oklahoma's Medicaid-backed non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service, which is administered by the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority (OHCA). OHCA provides a suite of Medicaid benefits under the SoonerCare banner, one of which is the SoonerRide program.

SoonerRide connects patients to medical appointments covered by SoonerCare. Trips are booked online or by phone and must be done at least three business days in advance. Alternatively, SoonerCare members who use their own vehicle to transport themselves to a SoonerCare-covered medical appointment can apply for gas and mileage reimbursement.

SoonerCare members can also apply for assistance with lodging and meals if they must travel a long distance for SoonerCare-covered medical services with a specialist. The SoonerCare website documents approved lodging providers in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, as well as Dallas, Texas and Omaha, Nebraska.

RideCARE

Oklahoma Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OMHSA) administers the RideCARE program, a statewide human services transportation program for transporting children and adults to inpatient psychiatric treatment. RideCARE is operated through partnerships with regionally-based human services providers, including OK RideCARE, Grand Lake Mental Health, Harmon Security, and CREOKS Health Services. Figure 12 below displays each provider's service area. Requests for transportation are made by treatment facilities, medical facilities, and law enforcement personnel.

Figure 12: RideCARE Provider Service Areas
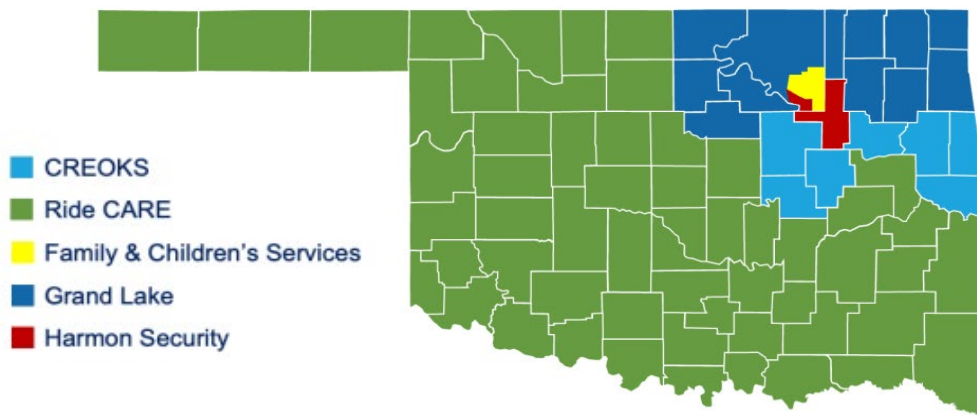
Service Outside Typical Business Hours

Coordinating between services providing service outside typical business hours and those who do not is especially critical to meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. Medical appointments such as dialysis treatment may be scheduled outside typical business hours, or certain trips may require transfers between services where one leg of the trip is outside typical business hours.

Table 9 provides a detailed summary of providers that provide service outside typical business hours, including early/late weekday, weekend, and 24/7 service. Coordinated Plan users are encouraged to use Table 9 to identify potential coordination partners in meeting the need for service outside typical business hours.

Table 9: Agencies Providing Service Outside Typical Business Hours

County	Early/Late Weekday	Weekend by Appointments	Saturday and/or Sunday Service	24/7 Transportation Service
Beckham	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Caddo	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Comanche	Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)	N/A	Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Cotton	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Custer	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Grady	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Greer	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Harmon	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Jackson	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Jefferson	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
McClain	A Driver For You	N/A	A Driver For You	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Kiowa	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Roger Mills	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Stephens	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services Think Ability, Inc. (closed-door)
Tillman	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Washita	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Transportation Technology

Transit technology has advanced appreciably in the recent past, particularly trip scheduling and dispatching platforms. With the requisite training and interoperability between the systems of other nearby agencies, modern transit technology platforms unlock considerable efficiencies and coordination opportunities between agencies. As such, a strong understanding of the technological capabilities of nearby agencies is critical to identifying these opportunities or starting initiatives to acquire software platforms in a coordinated manner.

Simultaneously, limited broadband access in rural areas is a barrier to implementation of new transit technology, both for agencies and current/potential customers. For customers, lack of internet access complicates access to computer and smartphone based transit platforms, such as mobile paratransit scheduling. Similarly, inconsistent broadband coverage results in intermittent connectivity between vehicles, dispatch locations, and other transit facilities, reducing the efficacy of transit technology platforms.

Table 10 below summarizes key scheduling and dispatching systems available to agencies in the region. In certain cases, agencies may not have certain capabilities or may use differing software platforms that do not work together. These should be used as opportunities to identify where technology systems may be coordinated across multiple agencies or even across different regions, including in procurement, to realize the benefits of these technologies.

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Southwest Region agencies generally operate specific call centers that correspond to cities where vehicles are dispatched from, enabling them to better respond to riders depending on their place of residence. Additionally, information on agency services is generally found on the agency website rather than on mobile applications.

Table 10: Provider Technological Capabilities

Agency Name	Scheduling ability on agency website	Scheduling Mobile App for Riders	General Info Mobile App	Name of Dispatching Software	AVL System/GPS
Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Comanche Nation Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Delta Public Transit Service	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Kiowa Tribe Fastrans	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Red River Public Transportation	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Southwest Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Washita Valley Transit	No	No	No	N/A	N/A

Funding Structure for Transportation Programs

The following sections provide information on the various public transit funding programs. Note that many of these programs are specific to public transit agencies. Those interested in more in-depth information on these programs, including eligibility, are encouraged to review the corresponding section in ODOT's State Management Plan. [1]

Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disability Program

Section 5310 is a formula funding program apportioned to states to meet the mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities, especially when existing service is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting those needs. ODOT is the Governor's designee for the administration of state and federal public transit financial assistance programs for areas under 50,000 population. ODOT's Office of Mobility and Public Transit is responsible for the management of these state and federal programs. ODOT is not an operator of public transit services, but through its administration of these programs, financial and technical assistance is provided to Oklahoma's public transit providers. ODOT will only approve 5310 funding to be used for the purchase of traditional ADA-accessible vehicles at a maximum federal share of project costs of 85%.

ODOT administers the 5310 program through a competitive application process due to funding limitations. Eligible applicants include the following: private nonprofits, public transit agencies, federally recognized Indian entities, and public agencies that can certify that no private nonprofit are providing the proposed service in a readily available fashion. Projects proposed in the Southwest Region must be found in the Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan and the coordinated plans of any other coordinated planning regions in which the project will occur.

ODOT will provide notice to potential applicants once 5310 funding will be made available. This notice will include a deadline by which application materials must be submitted. Applicants may be asked to provide the following at different stages throughout the application process to determine if the applicant is eligible to advance to the next stage: notice of intent to apply, draft application, and final application.

Technical assistance in preparing an application is provided by ODOT OMPT. However, the development, preparation and timely submittal of the document is the sole responsibility of the applicant. Application instructions may be obtained by requesting from ODOT OMPT.

Those interested in pursuing 5310 funding in the future are encouraged to review Section 7 of ODOT's State Management Plan, which describes how potential applicants may access 5310 funding in greater detail.[2]

Other Related Transportation Funding Programs

The following funding programs are also used to support public transit service, both for the general public and for people with disabilities and seniors.

Section 5307 Urban Public Transportation[3]

The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation-related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more that is designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

For urbanized areas with 200,000 in population and over, funds are apportioned and flow directly to a designated recipient selected locally to apply for and receive Federal funds. For urbanized areas under 200,000 in population, the funds are apportioned to the governor of each state for distribution.

Eligible activities include: planning, engineering, design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement, overhaul and rebuilding of buses, crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger

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[1] https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/odot/omm/ODOT%20SMP%202022_1.16.23_Final.pdf
[2] https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/odot/omm/ODOT%20SMP%202022_1.16.23_Final.pdf
[3] Section 5307 program language from the FTA's website

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facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. In addition, associated transit improvements and certain expenses associated with mobility management programs are eligible under the program. All preventive maintenance and some Americans with Disabilities Act complementary paratransit service costs are considered capital costs.

Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5311, FTA apportions or awards funds to states and other eligible recipients located in rural areas for planning, public transit capital projects, operating costs, and the acquisition of public transit service. The Section 5311 program supports both the maintenance of existing public transit services and the expansion of those services.

The program year allotment establishes the maximum amount of Section 5311 funds available to the subrecipients. The amount of Section 5311 funding that will be made available to each subrecipient will be determined by the cumulative amounts of their Incentive Allotment and Performance Allotment. Any funds not programmed or obligated by the subrecipient during the contracted program year will be deemed as lapsed by ODOT and any such balance of funding will be carried forward for allocation within the subsequent year's Statewide Allotment. Note that ODOT may evaluate and change the methodology and formula to distribute annual program funds after notifying and receiving input from subrecipients.

The following entities are eligible to access 5311 funding: existing 5311 subrecipient, public agencies, operators of public transit, and federally recognized Indian tribes. ODOT may also accept 5311 applications from agencies that are not current subrecipients if the legislative body of a local government submits a formal request to ODOT.

Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5339, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awards grants under this section to the designated recipients in the large-urbanized areas (UZAs) and States for the purpose of financing capital bus and bus-related projects that will support the continuation and expansion of public transit services in the United States. Only existing 5311 subrecipients are eligible to access 5339 funding.

See the Appendix for ODOT Office of Mobility and Public Transit (OMPT) contact information.

Coordination Efforts

Coordination among transportation providers is essential to meeting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities, as providers can coordinate their services to make up for gaps in each other's service. This section documents existing coordination efforts between service providers in the Southwest Region identified in either the public survey or the working group meetings as well as challenges to coordination. This serves as a record of coordination currently taking place so that other providers may further pool their efforts. This section should also serve as a collection of ideas that may be implemented throughout different areas of the Southwest Region.

Existing Coordination Efforts

Transportation providers and human services agencies had opportunities throughout the working group meetings, public meetings, and through the public survey to report on steps they currently take to coordinate amongst themselves.

Of the five transportation providers that attended Working Group Meeting #1, two reported that they currently coordinate their services with another agency. This agency reported that they visit different agencies when they are out in the field to ensure they are familiar with staff at other agencies. Red River Public Transportation also has an agreement with Southwest Transit to transport passengers from Frederick to Altus while Southwest Transit will return passengers to Frederick.

Additionally, members of this Region's working group are coordinating with **Pelivan** and other Northeast Region providers to implement the PICK (Pelivan, Inca [JAMM], Cimarron, KI BOIS) program.[4] PICK operates in 21 counties in rural eastern Oklahoma, providing curb-to-curb service between 5PM – 9PM Monday to Thursday, 5PM – 10PM on Friday, and between 10AM – 2PM on weekends. It currently operates using Via technology. Users may schedule rides via their computer, smart device, or by calling a telephone number. Originally started among Northeast Region agencies, agencies statewide are coordinating to expand its use.

Active Transportation

Public transit agencies typically are not directly responsible for planning, designing, and maintaining active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Nonetheless, active transportation infrastructure has a direct impact on the attractiveness of public transit and the ability of transit users to reach their final destination. For example, a public transit user who takes a demand-response trip to a centrally located, downtown area may wish to alight at one destination and use sidewalks or bike lanes to circulate among multiple clustered places. Given the lack of direct control that public transit agencies have over this infrastructure, it behooves public transit agencies to coordinate with agencies who do to ensure that active transportation infrastructure meets the needs of public transit users.

Statewide Active Transportation Resources

ODOT is currently developing its first Active Transportation Plan, with the plan tentatively being completed in 2023. As part of that process, ODOT is working with stakeholders to understand their active transportation needs and what statewide policies and resources can used to guide state or local active transportation efforts. More information, including how to participate, can be found on ODOT's website.[5]

BikeOklahoma[6] is a statewide bicycle advocacy organization with the goal of promoting safe bicycling throughout Oklahoma. They have a number of events, initiatives, and other resources that may be helpful for transit agencies wishing to promote active transportation in their communities, including links to guidebooks on creating bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees.[7]

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[4] http://okpicktransportation.com/

[5] https://www.okatp.org/

[6] https://www.okbike.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=86708

[7] https://www.okbike.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=86708&module_id=154201

SORTPO coordinates with ODOT on a number of bases. SORTPO is an active participant in the Active Transportation Plan and coordinates with ODOT's Local Government Division, such as by assisting local communities with Transportation Alternatives Program applications.

SORTPO was also recently awarded a RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity), with which it will soon develop a new regional transportation plan. In addition to coordination on transit matters, this plan is also an opportunity for transit providers to represent their interests in other transportation modes, including active transportation.

Employment Transportation

Public transit often provides vital trips to current employment or employment opportunities. Aside from public transit, various other human services agencies may also provide employment transportation or employment-related services, creating an opportunity to coordinate services in a way that meets the needs of riders in an effective and efficient manner. Table 11 below identifies agencies from the Southwest Region, including both public transit agencies and human services agencies, who provide employment transportation or services as well as key information that may affect coordination of services.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) provides a number of services to members of the public, especially individuals with disabilities and others who need assistance achieving independent living. These services include job readiness and employment training, which can include services such as vocational education, career planning, and health screenings.

Public transit agencies and human services transportation providers should also consider identifying employers with employees who may need reliable transit service in order to get to work. Partnerships with employers are an opportunity to raise revenue while meeting a consistent and reoccurring need for employment-related transportation. For example, Southwest Transit currently has a contract with the Mangum Brick Company to provide rides to its employees. Additionally, the Chickasaw Nation provides employment-related transportation on a sliding-scale fee to the public.

Table 11: Agencies Providing Employment-related Services

Agency Name	Service Area	Service Hours	User Model	Phone #	Contact Email
Chickasaw Nation	Counties: Johnston, Marshall, Love, Custer, Jefferson, Stevens, Murray, Pontotoc, Garvin, McClain, Grady, Canadian, Cleveland, Oklahoma	Variable Hours, Monday - Friday	Both closed- and open-door services	580-610-6453	angie.gilliam@chickasaw.net
Department of Rehabilitation Services	Southwest Oklahoma	8AM – 5PM, Monday - Friday	N/A	N/A	N/A
Enterprise Commute	Statewide	N/A	Closed-door	N/A	Allen.Robbins@ehi.com
Southwest Transit	Counties: Greer, Harmon, Jackson	8:30AM – 4:30PM	Open-door	580-482 - 5040	stephen.iken@socag.org

Unmet Transportation Needs & Gaps

ODOT conducted a series of activities to involve stakeholders and members of the public as much as possible in identifying service gaps and unmet needs. These activities included the following:

- Working group meetings made up of key transportation providers in the Region
- A working group prioritization survey, wherein working group members prioritized the various gaps and unmet needs below
- A virtual public meeting
- An online survey

The working group meetings and public meeting were held on the following dates:

- Working Group Meeting #1: May 16, 2023
- Working Group Meeting #2: July 13, 2023
- Working Group Meeting #3: August 29, 2023
- Public Meeting: June 28, 2023

ODOT made a public survey available online via SurveyMonkey from June 6th to July 21st that asked for information from organizations and individuals regarding their transportation service gaps and unmet needs, particularly those of seniors and people with disabilities. The survey received 1,561 total responses across all regions, 838 of which were from individuals and 723 of which were from organizations. Among respondents who could definitively be assigned to a coordinated planning region, 123 individuals and 81 agencies from the Southwest Region responded.

The subjects covered in the outreach activities described above generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Transit User: needs of users to ensure accessibility of the transportation service
- Service Area: general areas that services are needed in as well as specific types of destinations
- Service Schedule: when service is provided and length of trips
- Outreach & Awareness: accessibility of information about transportation service
- Service Quality: various qualitative aspects of transportation service

Within each category, individual gaps or unmet needs were prioritized by assigning a high/medium/low priority rating. These ratings are based on feedback received from participants in the various outreach activities conducted, with the working group prioritization survey being the primary determinant of priority.

Table 12 displays a high-level summary of categories, gaps/unmet needs, and associated ratings, while the following sections describe the feedback received in each category in more detail. These sections and tables are meant to identify the struggles and limitations that providers face so that goals and strategies can be developed to address them.

Table 12: Compiled Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation		X	
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths		X	
	Weekday Early Morning Service	X		
	Weekday Business Hours	X		
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service		X	
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)			X
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.	X		
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility	X		
	More Frequent Service	X		
	More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	X		

Summary and Prioritization of Gaps and Unmet Needs

Transit User

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding the unmet needs of transit users and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Transit User gaps/unmet needs were generally not a high priority for providers and planning agencies, with none of them receiving a high priority rating. Familiarity with the transit system, door-to-door transportation, and travel assistance received medium priority ratings, while lower costs received low priority rating.

Few provider, agency, and individual written responses concerned familiarity with the transit system itself, nor was familiarity a primary concern among survey responses, despite being a medium priority. Regardless, agencies should continue to monitor comments they receive from riders and other stakeholders to determine if issues arise where increasing familiarity with the system is warranted. Outreach and engagement will continue to be critical to ensuring familiarity with the system, and coordination with and support from ODOT OMPT and other transit agencies is a key resource in doing so.

One issue raised by planning agencies in the Southwest Region was that people sometimes are not comfortable letting their grandparents use transit. Absent documented safety issues this may be a familiarity issue, which could be overcome through outreach to senior population at places like senior centers, assisted living facilities, and senior

nutritional sites. Personal care assistants (PCA) are another way to make people more comfortable with using public transit.

Some transit providers in the Southwest Region have experienced liability issues with drivers providing door-to-door service. While providers are providing door-to-door service in the Southwest Region upon request, it is a concern for agency staff, with lawsuits in the past resulting from accidents while assisting passengers.

Providing door-to-door service also involves additional costs and times compared to curb-to-curb service. Given already limited budgets and challenges in hiring/retaining operators and other staff, agencies need monetary and other support from ODOT OMPT and human services agencies to more easily provide door-to-door service.

Additionally, transit providers do not have staff on hand that can act as PCAs. While operators are generally willing and physically able to provide assistance, this often means taking a vehicle out of service for an increased period of time, particularly at medical establishments, which is difficult to justify from an operational perspective. Partnerships with human service agencies throughout the Southwest Region are a potential opportunity to match riders with PCAs.

Table 13: Transit User Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Transit User	Lower Cost/Fares			X
	Familiarity With the Transit System		X	
	Travel Assistance		X	
	Door-to-Door Transportation		X	

Service Area

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding service area gaps and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Priorities assigned to the various Service Area gaps/unmet needs varied, with access to jobs and medical establishments receiving high ratings and therefore being priorities. Generally increased service area and improved service at origins/destinations received medium ratings, while accessibility and trip lengths received low ratings.

In general, providers, agencies, and the public were most concerned with increasing service to rural areas outside the primary cities and towns in the Southwest Region. Providing trips to rural destinations or picking up passengers in rural areas is often prohibitively expensive for either the provider or the passenger. At least one agency in the Southwest Region has a particularly large service area. As a result, passengers have requested exceptionally long trips that nonetheless stay within a single service area, forcing agencies to make difficult decisions regarding if and how to provide such a trip.

Stakeholders provided a variety of general areas and specific locations that they have either struggled to receive service in or receive service to. General areas frequently mentioned include Duncan, outlying towns around Chickasha, Marlow, Elgin, Comanche, Altus, Oklahoma City, Tillman County, Norman, Admore, Velma, and Moore. Specific destinations include Memorial Hospital, Red Rock Behavioral Health in Lawton, and Waurika Lake. While some of these areas and destinations are not within the Southwest Region itself, they are nonetheless places that people wish to go to fulfill their daily needs.

Providers noted that they have previously offered more regular service in particularly rural areas, including some of the locations noted above. However, due to limited funding and resulting driver shortages, they have had to reduce service. Additionally, trips to rural areas and longer trips to places like Oklahoma City are generally more expensive, stretching already thin budgets. As such, agencies in the Southwest Region need increased funding in two forms: dedicated, regular funding that can be used for operations and short-term, large funding sources for upfront capital costs. Both increased operations and capital costs are critical to expanding operations initially and maintaining it into the future.

There is also a need to coordinate trips across service area boundaries, such that passengers can be transferred to other agencies for different legs of their trips. This would help better serve passengers who require service to places like Oklahoma City. At the same time, trips out to the borders of service areas are often expensive, and it is often difficult to match passengers with other passengers going to the same destination. This further highlights the need for increased funding of transit agencies.

To facilitate increased coordination, Southwest Region agencies proposed obtaining integrated trip scheduling and dispatching software. Integrated dispatching would also allow local transit providers and statewide providers such as SoonerRide to coordinate trips and share resources more efficiently. Coordinated trips would address some of the concerns raised by providers, planning agencies, and members of the public surrounding service between particular areas, as agencies would be better able to transfer rides amongst themselves.

Table 14: Service Area Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Area	It takes a long time to reach final destinations			X
	Service does not go to desired destination		X	
	Accessibility to First-Last Mile Connections			X
	More Sufficient Service at Trip Origins and Destinations		X	
	Access to Jobs	X		
	Access to Medical-related Locations	X		

Service Schedule

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding service schedule gaps and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

The priorities assigned to Service Schedule gaps/unmet needs varied, with weekday service being the primary priority due to consistently receiving high ratings. Weekend service in general and shorter trip lengths were medium priorities, while weekend late nights were a low priority.

Providers find themselves needing to triage the calls for service they receive due to demand for service exceeding their ability to fully provide all trips. Frequently, providers receive calls for trips too late in the day, such that queues of trips are already full, and trips must be scheduled for another day or denied.

Southwest Region providers report particular issues with getting employees to and from work. Hospitals often need employees to arrive at work during early weekday hours, however non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and other medical transportation are generally the only services available so early in the day. Similarly, providers note that they will often take people to work during service hours who may work second shift hours (i.e., 3PM – 11PM), however they get off much too late to use demand-response transit for their ride home, forcing them to make other arrangements.

Providers in the Southwest Region are actively considering participating in the PICK Program, which will enable them to expand their service hours into late weekday hours and on Saturdays using ride hail technology, such as technology provided by Uber and Via. That said, they will need various forms of support to implement the PICK Program. In particular, agencies need additional funding to hire additional staff and acquire new software and equipment to enable participation in the PICK Program.

Beyond the PICK Program, tight budgets and resulting workforce shortages are key limiting factors on the ability of agencies to provide service outside typical business hours in general. Agencies struggle to maintain adequate staffing for typical business hour service due to being unable to provide competitive wages, a challenge that is even more pressing when hiring staff for service outside typical business hours. People are generally unwilling to work during these times and would need to be incentivized to do so, which agencies cannot do. Southwest Region providers will need increased funding to expand services outside typical business hours, both to cover upfront capital costs and ongoing operational costs.

Table 15: Service Schedule Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Schedule	More evening and weekend service	X		
	Shorter Trip Lengths		X	
	Weekday Early Morning Service	X		
	Weekday Business Hours	X		
	Weekday Late Night Service		X	
	Weekend Service		X	
	Weekend Late Nights (Friday and Saturday Nights)			X

Outreach and Awareness

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding outreach and awareness and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

Outreach and Awareness was generally not a primary concern for Southwest Region providers and planning agencies, with better information on services receiving a medium priority rating and the remaining gaps/unmet needs receiving low priority ratings.

Southwest Region public transit providers are struggling to maintain adequate back-office staffing levels in addition to operators. As a result, existing staff are being stretched thin with fulfilling their day-to-day operational duties as well as being tasked with conducting public outreach. Agencies need more staff, particularly dedicated public engagement staff, to ensure that operational duties and public engagement both receive the attention that they deserve. Given limited budgets, agencies will need increased funding to hire more staff, particularly long-term dedicated funding to ensure that additional staff can be maintained over a long period of time.

A mobility navigator has recently been hired in the Southwest Region, who will be an excellent resource moving forward for connecting transit agencies with each other and transit agencies with human services agencies. Equipping the Southwest Region mobility navigator with key information on each agency's services and the challenges they face will be a key step in overall regional coordination and outreach.

Contracts to provide service to employers have been a successful model in the past in the Southwest Region and represent an additional way that providers can provide needed services while raising additional revenue. Beyond public awareness and outreach, outreach to employers is a key first step in identifying demand for public transit and eventually forming a contractual relationship with employers.

Outreach to elected officials such as city managers and mayors is another opportunity to spread awareness of transit. In other regions, agencies develop specific programs to serve seniors and people with disabilities, which Southwest Region agencies should consider pursuing. For example, LIFT Transit and KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS) in the Southeast Region have an active grant with Kiamichi Economic Development District's (KEDDO) Area Agency on Aging to provide cost-free rides to seniors in Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, and Pittsburg County.

Table 16: Outreach and Awareness Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Outreach and Awareness	Better Information on Services		X	
	Service schedule is difficult to understand			X
	Negative Perception of Service			X

Service Quality

This section summarizes the feedback received regarding gaps in service quality and the priorities assigned to each service gap/unmet need.

The priorities assigned to Service Quality gaps/unmet needs varied, with sidewalks/crosswalks, wheelchair accessibility, service frequency, and services for seniors/people with disabilities receiving high ratings. Reliability of service received a medium rating, while the following received low ratings: limited access to transit stops, lack of amenities, personal safety, and transit vehicles.

Frequency is interrelated with scheduling and service area challenges that Southwest Region agencies are facing; Southwest Region agencies are limited by staffing and funding levels to improve these aspects of these service (absent other operational challenges). Multiple providers have reported that they struggle to hire and retain drivers, which has decreased their ability to maintain core business-hour service. Without additional drivers, they cannot improve frequencies, such as by decreasing the lead time with which trips must be scheduled, nor will reliability improve.

Sidewalk and bike lane connectivity were frequently highlighted by members of the public and other agencies, as was a need for more crosswalks. While typically an issue confined to urban areas, a desire for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure was frequently expressed by both smaller town and rural agencies and residents. This infrastructure would better enable rural transit users to take one transit trip to an area with strong pedestrian and bike infrastructure and move about on foot, wheelchair, or bicycle.

Transit agencies generally do not have control over where sidewalks and bike lanes are placed. Agencies typically must work through planning processes overseen by local and regional planning agencies to represent their interests. For example, transit agencies can participate in development reviews to ensure that transit is accommodated in new developments. SORTPO is preparing to update its long-range transportation plan, which is an opportunity for transit agencies to advocate for their interests.

While vehicles were not a main concern among agencies and providers, transit providers noted concerning developments in vehicle acquisition. Providers highlighted that lead times between vehicle orders and delivery are increasing from approximately six months to two years. Additionally, the cost of vehicles is increasing alongside every other piece of equipment. Given already limited budgets, this is already a major challenge that threatens to worsen.

In a similar vein, wheelchair accessibility was rated highly by agencies and planning agencies. Where rural transit is concerned, wheelchair accessibility is primarily maintained and improved through acquisition of new vehicles and equipment. Given the increasing delivery times and costs of vehicles and other equipment, wheelchair accessibility may develop into a challenge in the future.

Table 17: Service Quality Gaps and Unmet Needs

Category	Transportation Service Gap or Unmet Need	Priority		
		High	Medium	Low
Service Quality	Limited Accessibility to Transit Stops			X
	Lack of Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)			X
	More Reliable Service		X	
	Improved Personal Safety			X
	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.	X		
	Transit vehicles that meet my needs			X
	Wheelchair Accessibility	X		
	More Frequent Service	X		
	More Services for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	X		

Statewide Needs

By virtue of its participation in the planning processes for all five regions, ODOT is positioned to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities that are of statewide concern. Described below are challenges that were frequently cited by agencies across multiple regions, indicating the severity of these challenges and the fundamental importance of them to providing transit service.

OKLAHOMA
Transportation

Technology

Technology was commonly cited as a need across different regions, particularly with regard to dispatching, scheduling, and the staffing necessary to implement new transit technology.

New, innovative dispatching software was identified as a desire in multiple regions, particularly with new software platforms offering improved scheduling, route assignments, and data tracking. Newer software platforms also present opportunities for agencies to coordinate across agency boundaries. When multiple agencies with contiguous service areas and the requisite coordination agreements use interoperable dispatching software, agencies can coordinate interagency service in a more efficient and flexible manner.

Similarly, **app-based scheduling** was a common desire of both transportation providers, human services agencies, and members of the public. Given the proliferation of smartphones and other digital technologies, app-based scheduling is seen as the next step beyond the call-center systems that most agencies in Oklahoma currently use. Certain software products include integrated dispatching and user-facing scheduling platforms, ensuring complete and seamless communication between dispatch, drivers, and clients. Beyond convenience, smartphone apps are a way to further increase accessibility of scheduling systems, such as for those with speech impairments who may not be comfortable using the phone or other accessible scheduling options provided.

New technologies present lucrative opportunities, though transit providers noted that **hiring and retaining staff who are trained in these technologies** is a current challenge. Having trained staff members is critical to ensuring that current operations can be sustained with new technology platforms as well as training new or existing staff members who are not yet familiar with these new technologies.

While there are barriers to using new technology to enhance transit service, this has not stopped transit agencies from initiating grassroots efforts on their own behalf. In response to demand for afterhours and weekend service, providers in the Northeast Region began the PICK (Pelivan, Inca [JAMM], Cimmaron, KI BOIS) program.[8] PICK operates in 21 counties in rural eastern Oklahoma, providing curb-to-curb service between 5PM – 10PM on weekdays and between 10AM - 2PM on weekends. It currently operates via the Uber app but is being transitioned over to Via technology. Users may schedule rides via their computer, smart device, or by calling a telephone number. Efforts are underway to expand PICK to the rest of Oklahoma's rural transit agencies.

Figure 13: PICK Transportation Service Area (Source: PICK Website)

Funding

Many agencies described funding challenges that ultimately undergird every current activity or any prospective initiatives. Agencies exclusively viewed their current funding levels as a constraint on their ability to meet demand for public transit on a day-to-day basis, as well as a constraint on the implementation of any new or innovative initiatives or technologies.

As previously discussed, many agencies wish to implement new dispatching and scheduling software and to hire the requisite personnel to train others on these systems and operate them. In general, **agencies are struggling to hire and retain staff,** both for day-to-day operations (drivers, etc.) and to operate new technologies. The fundamental limiting factor on agencies' ability to hire new staff is a lack of funding. Wages are simply too low to reliably attract

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[8] http://okpicktransportation.com/

operators and other backend staff who are critical to day-to-day operations, and agencies do not have the funding to offer competitive wages. Agencies have noted a clear trend of operators earning their commercial driver's license (CDL), working for their agency for a short period, then leveraging their CDL for higher-paying employment.

Funding also acts as a fundamental constraint on the level and breadth of service that agencies can provide. Agencies can easily provide affordable service within a short distance of major towns/cities and near their dispatch locations, but due to how rural much of Oklahoma is, trips outside core service areas quickly escalate in cost due to their length. This forces agencies to make difficult decisions, such as whether to provide these trips at all or to charge significantly higher fares, which may be unaffordable for some clients.

Additionally, **agencies' service schedules are typically limited to normal business hours** (8AM – 5PM). While most trips necessarily occur during this period due to the nature of those trips (employment, shopping, etc.), agencies still note considerable early morning, afterhours, and weekend demand that they are generally unable to meet due to limited funding. Schedule challenges are also related to the workforce challenges that agencies are experiencing, as operators are typically not willing to drive far outside of business hours. Some operators may be incentivized to do, such as through increased wages, but this is unlikely given funding constraints.

SoonerRide

SoonerRide plays a pivotal role in ensuring that seniors and people with disabilities are able to access essential medical services and have been a key partner for rural transit agencies, who enter into contracts with SoonerRide to provide NEMT. Multiple agencies statewide have reported coordination challenges with SoonerRide that are impacting the ability of rural transit agencies to ensure that the medical transportation needs of their clients are being met. Specifically, that clients are not being informed when their SoonerRide contracted trip will not be provided despite recent implementation of text notifications, nor are rural agencies being notified that this is the case so they can fulfill the ride themselves. This communication challenge should be addressed to ensure that SoonerRide and rural transit clients can readily access medical services.

Agencies have additional concerns regarding the ongoing Medicaid reenrollment process, whereby Medicaid users may be stricken from the Medicaid roles due to changes in income or other changes in status that affect their eligibility and therefore their ability to utilize SoonerRide. Agencies are concerned that disenrollment may lead to individuals being unable to access medical care due to lack of transportation and the attendant burden this may place on rural transit agencies. Additionally, agencies are concerned about the degree of communication between SoonerCare and clients about their eligibility, with some clients being unknowingly disenrolled and thereby it being a surprise when they are unable to access SoonerRide.

Goals

During Working Group Meeting #3, working group members held a focused discussion on the goals that they would like to accomplish in the Southwest Region. This discussion included identifying agencies primarily responsible, supporting agencies, resources needed, and other critical aspects for accomplishing these goals. Working Group members were also encouraged to expand on the goals they would like to see for the Southwest Region during the review period of the draft Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan.

The following goals were identified by the Working Group and are discussed in further detail below:

- Goal 1: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers and office staff.
- Goal 2: Identify additional funding sources.
- Goal 3: Expand services offered outside typical business hours (8AM – 5PM, Monday – Friday).
- Goal 4: Prepare for electric and alternative fuel vehicle implementation.

Goal 1: Improve recruiting and retention of qualified drivers and office staff.

Challenges hiring and retaining drivers and office staff were common in the Southwest Region and were identified as a key focus. Addressing these challenges will help alleviate day-to-day operational challenges that agencies face as well as set the stage for level of service improvement in the future.

Table 18 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southwest Working Group in pursuit of Goal 1.

Table 18: Goal 1 Strategy Summary

Goal 1 Strategies
Strategy 1.1: Identify new recruitment opportunities.
Strategy 1.2: Identify ways to improve driver pay and benefits.

Different strategies will ultimately be necessary to both recruit and retain drivers and office staff. In terms of recruitment, it is critical to maximize the reach of recruiting activities, including by identifying previously unutilized recruitment venues. These may include technology and vocational centers, Workforce Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, universities/schools, faith-based organizations, job fairs and school bus driver outreach. Reaching potential drivers through a diverse array of venues will increase the chance of identifying suitable candidates.

Driving for transit agencies must also be made more attractive. The primary concern identified by Working Group members revolves around pay, which significantly affects the attractiveness of jobs. As such, ways to improve pay must be identified. Agencies must coordinate with each other as well as other planning agencies throughout the Southwest Region to investigate and implement ways to do so, especially novel funding sources. For example, novel funding sources may allow agencies to increase the hourly wage of drivers on top of the base wage directly provided by agencies. Similarly, retention and referral bonuses may be possible given new funding, which would enhance both recruitment and retention.

Goal 2: Identify additional funding sources.

Funding undergirds all the activities that transit agencies carry out, with funding levels ultimately determining the level of service that agencies can provide. Identifying additional funding sources will form the foundation for pursuing additional funding and using that funding to improve services.

Table 19 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southwest Working Group in pursuit of Goal 2.

Table 19: Goal 2 Strategy Summary

Goal 2 Strategies
Strategy 2.1: Identify partnership opportunities with tribes, area agencies on aging, hospitals, and other stakeholders.
Strategy 2.2: Coordinate with medical, human service providers, mental health providers, and other stakeholders to establish a pool for transit vouchers.
Strategy 2.3: Identify partnership opportunities with employers to provide employment-related transportation.
Strategy 2.4: Identify and apply for capital and operating grants.

Partnerships with different stakeholders are an opportunity to raise additional funding for local match. Potential partners include tribes, COGs, and hospitals, both for general public transit and services for seniors and people with disabilities. Transit agencies should work towards establishing relationships with these stakeholders, and others, to use as a springboard for partnerships and other contracts resulting in funding for public transit.

Medical providers, human service providers, and other similar organizations may be interested in contracting with public transit to provide rides for clients and patients. Multiple organizations could be brought together to establish a pool for transit vouchers that are applicable for any of the participating organizations. Employers are another opportunity to meet a transportation demand need through partnerships. Employers may be willing to contract with public transit agencies to provide rides to their employees.

Agencies should also identify opportunities to apply for capital and operating grants, including competitive funding programs. These may be in the form of Federal, state, or nonprofit grants, such as Federal capital grant programs that may be used for vehicles.

Goal 3: Expand services offered outside typical business hours (8AM – 5PM, Monday – Friday).

Customers' day-to-day needs are not confined to typical business hours. As such, transit agencies must offer service outside typical business hours to the best of their ability. Doing so will ensure that customers' mobility needs are met, and that public transit is viewed as a competitive mode of transportation.

Table 20 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southwest Working Group in pursuit of Goal 3.

Table 20: Goal 3 Strategy Summary

Goal 3 Strategies
Strategy 3.1: Expand early morning and evening service.
Strategy 3.2: Expand weekend service.
Strategy 3.3: Expand the PICK Program to the Southwest Region.
Strategy 3.4: Coordinate with the Oklahoma Broadband Office to identify opportunities for broadband expansion.

While agencies would like to provide expanded service, they frequently report that increased funding is necessary for them to do so. Additional funding would allow agencies to hire more drivers and improve driver compensation, which ultimately allows agencies to increase their overall level of service. Agencies must work to identify additional funding sources that can be used to expand service hours, including by working with ODOT and municipalities in the region to identify new sources of local match or other supplemental funding sources.

Multiple agencies in the Southwest Region have either submitted grants to participate in the PICK Program or are interested in participating in the PICK Program, which is an opportunity to provide late weekday service and weekend service. ODOT is paying the match for one transit agency, and agencies should pursue possible match funding from ODOT if they wish to also implement the PICK Program.

Multiple agencies also noted that the PICK Program and other similar platforms rely on internet-enabled technology, which can be a challenge, in particularly rural areas such as those in the Southwest Region, where there is little to no internet connectivity. As a result, communication between GPS-enabled vehicles and scheduling and dispatching systems may be intermittent, which complicates real-time fleet management and scheduling. Agencies must work in coordination with the Oklahoma Broadband Office to identify opportunities to expand broadband expansion, such as by participating in studies and other initiatives that allow stakeholder input.

Goal 4: Prepare for electric and alternative fuel vehicle implementation.

Significant resources are being dedicated at the Federal and state level towards replacing traditional internal combustion vehicles with electric and alternative fuel vehicles. While these technologies hold significant promise, significant work must be done to prepare to implement them, especially detailed study of agency needs and the current state of electric/alternative fuel infrastructure in the Southwest Region.

Table 21 summarizes the strategies identified by the Southwest Working Group in pursuit of Goal 4.

Table 21: Goal 4 Strategy Summary

Goal 4 Strategies
Strategy 4.1: Conduct a state-wide planning study that evaluates available fuel technologies and examines agency readiness for implementation.
Strategy 4.2: Become familiar with Federal and state funding sources for electric and alternative fuel vehicles, such as the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) program.

Agencies are not yet positioned to adopt electric and alternative fuel technology. As such, advance study must be conducted to evaluate the most appropriate fuel and charging technologies and examine agency readiness. A statewide planning study would assist in preparing for adopting these technologies, especially by analyzing the challenges that agencies currently face in doing so and how to overcome these challenges. Specific challenges identified by Working Group members included what technology is available, infrastructure needs, and the costs associated with vehicles and charging/fuel infrastructure. Part of the study process may include small-scale testing, whereby agencies are awarded funding to obtain a small number of vehicles to test throughout their service area.

Given the statewide interest in this technology, ODOT is a natural partner to lead a statewide electric/alternative fuel vehicle study, with significant participation by transit agencies, human services agencies, municipalities, and regional planning agencies. ODOT is currently responsible for developing and overseeing Oklahoma's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Plan and funding distributions.

Transit agencies should also familiarize themselves with Federal grant programs such as the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) program. As an example, the CFI program is a competitive application process for funding to install electric vehicles chargers. Municipalities are a natural partner for CFI applications, as chargers are typically available for public use, but the needs of transit agencies can be specifically accounted for in charger locations and pricing. This is also viewed favorably in application evaluations.

Agencies will likely require additional funding to install charging/fueling infrastructure and acquire vehicles given the cost premium electric/alternative fuel vehicles frequently carry. ODOT will play a key role in this process through its oversight of Federal funds that flow to rural transit agencies and 5310 providers. In addition, the structure of the statewide vehicle contract will need to evolve as electric/alternative vehicles become standard, which ODOT must be a willing partner in.

OKLAHOMA
Transportation

The Southwest Region Coordinated Task Force

ODOT and Southwest Region transportation providers worked in concert to establish a coordinated mobility network to maximize participation and coordination by transportation providers and members of the public. This included the Southwest Region Working Group, interchangeably referred to as the Southwest Region Coordinated Task Force, consisting of ODOT personnel and transportation provider staff conducting working group meetings to identify challenges that providers are facing and to foster greater coordination amongst members of the network. Additionally, ODOT and the Southwest Region Working Group held a public meeting to solicit additional feedback from organizational stakeholders and members of the public.

Working Group/Task Force

The coordinated planning region held three working group meetings for the development of the 2023 Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan. These meetings consisted of polling, open discussion, and presentations by ODOT to identify the most pressing issues facing participating providers and solutions that may help address these issues.

Members of the Working Group voted on and selected a lead agency in April/May of 2023, whose responsibilities are to:

- Facilitate regular outreach.
- Host at least one meeting per year to update data and information in the plan.
- Maintain and make available planning process documentation.
- Lead stakeholders through reviews and updates of the plan.
- Submit the final Southwest Region Coordinated Transportation Plan to ODOT.

Southwest Transit was selected as the lead agency for the Southwest Region. The Southwest Region Working Group was composed of the following agencies and individuals:

Table 22: Working Group Members

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Stephen Iken	**Southwest Transit (Lead Agency)**	Gilbert Nuncio	Red River Transportation Service
Angela Plumley	Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Transit	Brent Morey	Red River Transportation Service
Brian Stillwell	Comanche Nation Transit	Julie Sanders	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
Terrell Turman	Delta Public Transit	Cristi Williams	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
Vicki Wood	Delta Public Transit	Dana Church	Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO)
N/A	Goodwill Village	Debora Glasgow	South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)
N/A	Kiowa Tribe Fast Trans	Sharlotte Key	Washita Valley Transit
Ryan Landers	Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)		

The following sub-sections provide dates and high-level agendas for each working group meeting.

Working Group Meeting #1
Working Group Meeting #1 was held on May 16, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #1 were to familiarize working group members with the 5310 program and working group process, gain a broad understanding of challenges and existing coordination among providers, select a lead agency, and provide additional technical resources for members to draw upon.

Working Group Meeting #2
Working Group Meeting #2 was held on July 13, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #2 were to provide an interim update on the planning activities carried out prior to Working Group Meeting #2, set the stage for additional coordination activities prior to Working Group Meeting #3, and to have an in-depth discussion with working group members on activities they had carried out since the previous coordinated plans and initiatives they would like to take to improve service in the future.

ODOT provided summary-level findings from the public survey, public meeting, and Working Group Meeting #1, with a focus on the service characteristics and challenges that appeared to be of most importance based on these activities. This information was used as the basis for focused discussion on activities that providers and planning agencies have taken since the previous coordinated plans to improve their service. Meeting participants discussed challenges and successes they had faced in the past as well as improvements to service they would like to implement in the future. The discussion was structured to also identify challenges that participants may face in implementing these improvements and the resources that they would need to overcome these challenges.

Working Group Meeting #3
Working Group Meeting #3 was held on August 29, 2023.

The primary purposes of Working Group Meeting #3 were to give working group members another opportunity to comment on the gaps and unmet needs in the Region, as well as develop goals and associated strategies.

ODOT highlighted specific sections of the Plan that Working Group members should prioritize during their review, including the **Unmet Transportation Needs & Gaps** section, and incorporated any feedback received during the meeting into this Plan. ODOT then facilitated an in-depth discussion of goals, strategies, responsible parties, required resources, and other aspects of goal development for the Region. This information, alongside information collected during a two-week review period following Working Group Meeting #3, was incorporated into this Plan.

Public Meeting
ODOT and the Southwest Region Working Group conducted a public meeting on June 28, 2023, which had 19 public attendees. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom and consisted of both presentations and discussions in the main Zoom meeting as well as smaller group discussions in breakout rooms facilitated by ODOT and WSP staff.

Members of the public, transit agencies, and human service agencies were afforded the opportunity to discuss mobility challenges facing seniors and people with disabilities. The following are the key challenges identified throughout the public meeting:

- **Lack of Coordination**: Transit providers described different reasons why a lack of coordination amongst each other has been inhibiting the mobility of seniors and people with disabilities. One agency described their service to dialysis providers as well outside typical business hours, starting as early as 3AM and ending as late as 10PM. This same provider believed that other providers were not aware of this service, leading to a lack of necessary coordination with providers who may be unable to provide service during these hours.
- **SoonerRide**: Transit providers and human service agencies reported challenges they have experienced with SoonerRide. They stated that SoonerRide has been canceling scheduled trips and failing to notify the client or the transit agency in a timely manner.
- **Information**: Lack of information, especially for smaller counties, was identified as a major barrier to rural residents accessing public transit.

- **Expense**: Fare prices were identified as a key barrier to potential riders, especially low-income individuals.
- **Community Revenue Streams**: One provider identified community revenue streams as an opportunity to raise additional revenue for agencies. This provider cited examples of existing contracts it has that may be a template for additional contracts with their agency or other agencies, including a contract with Head Start and one with a company in Mangum to provide employment transportation.
- **Vehicle Equipment**: Public meeting participants desired either bike racks or friendlier policies for allowing riders to bring their bikes onto vehicles.
- **Public Outreach**: Generally ensuring that potential riders are aware of transit service and how to use it is a challenge in the Southwest Region. Ideas such as workshops, tabling at events, and doing radio shows were floated as ideas to raise awareness, staff capacity permitting.
- **Service Area**: Multiple service area-related issues were raised by members of the public. Examples included challenges using Lawton Area Transit System (LATS) to access areas surrounding Lawton, as well as the perception that SoonerRide is primarily focused on larger cities and not rural areas, inhibiting users' ability to reach rural destinations.
- **Dispatching Software**: One provider highlighted a need to gradually shift toward software-based dispatching in order to make dispatching more efficient and to enable better coordination between providers.
- **Recurring Trips**: One participant highlighted expansion of recurring trips along key corridors and with frequent riders as a way to increase ridership and coordination. Fixed-route service was also requested.

A copy of the public notice for the public meeting is included in the Appendix.

Public Survey

ODOT conducted an online public survey from June 6, 2023, to July 21, 2023, to gather deeper feedback from both members of the general public as well as to give agencies, including both transportation providers and other human services providers, an additional opportunity to identify unmet needs and potential coordination efforts. Respondents were asked to identify themselves according to the county they were located in, and project staff used this information to assign their feedback to specific regions. Summaries of the agency and public feedback received for this Region are summarized below.

General Public Feedback

In total, 838 members of the general public responded to the public survey, 649 of which provided adequate information to sort them into a region. Of those, 123 respondents were from the Southwest Region. Seniors were disproportionately represented among survey respondents, with 45 of 120 respondents being 60 years of age or older (37.4%). People with disabilities were disproportionately represented compared to their statewide percentage. Thirty-four (34) of 119 respondents reported having a disability (28.6%) versus 16.3% for Oklahoma as a whole.

Public Survey Respondents by Age

Age Group	% of Respondents
18-29	5.0%
30-39	13.3%
40-49	20.0%
50-59	24.2%
60-69	25.8%
70-79	10.8%
80-89	0.8%

How Survey Respondents Typically Get Around	
Personal Vehicle	69.6%
Family/Friends	12.0%
Biking/Walking	11.4%
Public Transit	3.8%
Rideshare	2.5%
Private Services	0.6%
Taxi/Cab	0.0%
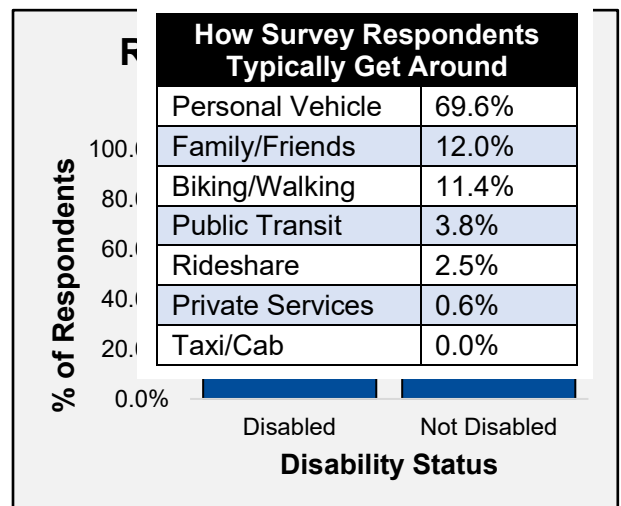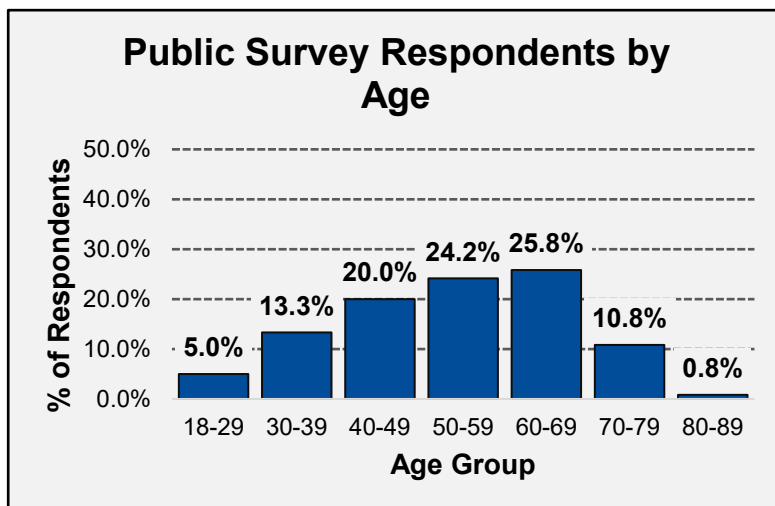
Respondents were asked about their day-to-day travel behavior to establish a basis for how they get around. Personal vehicles were the most common method of transportation used, with 69.6% of responses indicating use of

personal vehicles (or 110 respondents). Rides from friends and family was the second most common response, with 12% of responses, while biking/walking was the third most common response, with 11.4% of responses.

Public transit use and awareness was a key part of the survey to evaluate how agencies may best reach members of the public. Results of questions asking about paratransit use and knowledge of public transit indicate potential information and marketing gaps. Two-point five percent (2.5%) of respondents reported using paratransit, while 61.7% indicated they do not and 35.8% indicated they are unsure or do not know what paratransit is. When asked if public transit is available in their area, 48.3% said no and 9.2% said they do not know.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how they would find information about transit services or private transportation services. General internet searches were by far the most common method, receiving 78 responses (or 39.4% of responses). The second and third most common responses were friends/family and community organizations, respectively. These responses highlight the need for broad-based marketing strategies that reach different people through a variety of means. Such a high number of people searching for information through the internet emphasizes the necessity of having clear and descriptive website and social media information.

Public Transit Use and Awareness						
Do respondents use paratransit?		Is public transit available in respondents' areas?		How do respondents typically find information on public transit?		
Yes	2.5%	Yes	44.2%	Internet Search		39.4%
No	61.7%	No	48.3%	Friends/Family		21.7%
Not sure/Unsure what paratransit is	35.8%	Not sure	9.2%	Community Organizations		12.6%
				Smartphone Apps/Text for Info		11.1%
				Provider Websites		9.6%
				Phone Call to Provider		5.6%
				ODOT		0%

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Discussion of the needs of current and future transit users is critical to understanding those needs and addressing them. Respondents were asked to describe challenges they face in using existing service, including unmet transportation needs and cases where lack of transportation has prevented them from accomplishing a day-to-day activity.
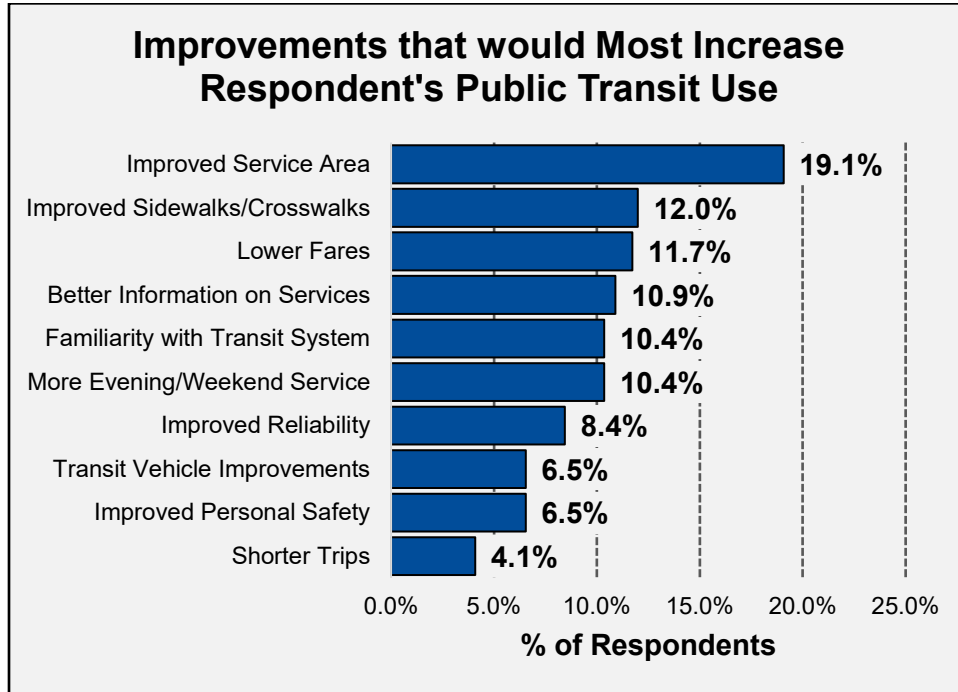
Unmet needs identified by respondents primarily pertained to service area needs. More locations served was the first most common unmet need while access to medical locations was the second most common. Weekend service was the third most common, while service for seniors/people with disabilities, who often require special accommodations such as lifts and personal care attendants, was the fourth most common.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify specific transportation needs. Service schedule related needs were the primary need identified by respondents. Weekend service was the most common need, while weekday business hour service was the second most common need. Door-to-door transportation was the third most common need, while accessibility to existing services was the fourth most common. Access is critical to seniors and people with disabilities, as these groups are often more affected by accessibility barriers, such as poor sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure.

Transportation Needs of Members of the Public			
Unmet Needs of Clients		**Specific Needs of Clients**	
Locations Served	15.2%	Weekend Service	16.3%
Access to Medical Locations	12.0%	Weekday Business Hour Service	15.3%
Weekend Service	11.7%	Door-to-door Transportation	14.3%
Senior/Disabled Services	11.3%	Last Mile Connections	12.3%
Service Frequency	11.0%	Travel Assistance	11.8%
Weekday Late Night Service	9.9%	Weekday Early Morning Service	11.3%
Last Mile Connections	9.9%	Weekday Late Night Service	10.8%
Weekday Early Morning Service	9.5%	Wheelchair Accessibility	7.9%
Access to Jobs	9.5%		

Respondents were prompted for cases when lack of transportation has prevented them from taking part in certain activities. Shopping/personal errands and medical trips were tied for the most commonly identified activities. Recreation and entertainment were close behind being the second most common need, while seeking employment, agency services, and getting to work were tied for the third most common need. The aforementioned activities generally had a similar number of responses, which is reflective of the importance of all these activities to a well-balanced life, including seniors and people with disabilities.

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When asked about improvements that would increase their transit use, service area and accessibility were again common themes. Improved service area received the largest number of responses, while improved sidewalks/crosswalks received the second largest number of responses. These responses reflect that transit must go where riders want to be competitive, and that transit must be accessible for people to use it in the first place. Lower fares received the third highest number of responses, highlighting how cost can sometimes be a barrier to accessing transit. Better information on services also received many responses, which was reflected in written responses, where the need for closer coordination with senior centers was highlighted, such as open houses and training demonstrations.

Improvements that would Most Increase Respondent's Public Transit Use

Category	%
Improved Service Area	19.1%
Improved Sidewalks/Crosswalks	12.0%
Lower Fares	11.7%
Better Information on Services	10.9%
Familiarity with Transit System	10.4%
More Evening/Weekend Service	10.4%
Improved Reliability	8.4%
Transit Vehicle Improvements	6.5%
Improved Personal Safety	6.5%
Shorter Trips	4.1%

% of Respondents

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Agency Feedback

Four hundred and twenty-two (422) agencies responded to the agency survey who provided enough information to assign them to a region. Of those, 81 were from the Southwest Region. Eighty (80) agencies responded with the type of agency they are with heavy representation from private, nonprofit human services agencies (39.4% of responses) and federal/state human services agencies (25.4% of responses).

Agencies were also asked to identify the populations they primarily serve. A diverse mix of populations are served by respondents, with general public (21% of responses), individuals with a disability (17.9% of responses), and low-income individuals (16% of responses) predominating. Veterans and seniors were also well-represented, receiving 13% and 11.5% of responses, respectively.
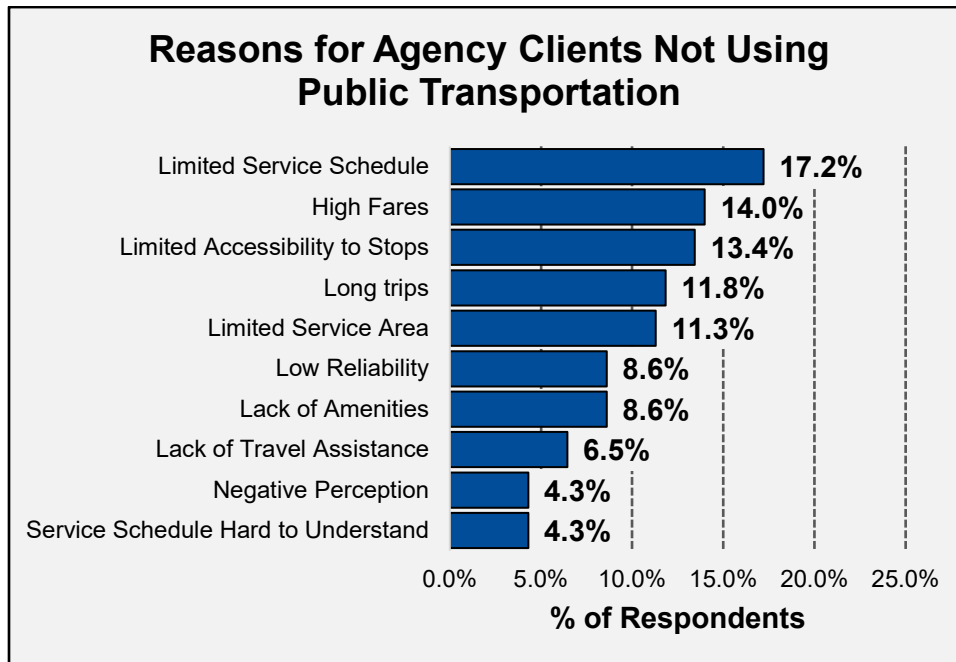
In terms of the services they provide, social services are the primary services (44.2% of responses), followed by health care agencies (33.8% of responses). One agency reported providing transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

When asked about transportation services that agencies provide or purchase, agencies primarily do not provide transportation (51.5% of responses). Among those providing/purchasing transportation services, demand-response and recurring trips were the most common (16.8% and 15.8% of responses, respectively) and fixed-route was the least common (6.9% of responses). Among agencies that provide transportation services, 16 agencies use their own vehicles while nine . One respondent acts as a mobility manager/coordinator for transportation.

Agency Characteristics							
Agency Type		Populations Served		Services Provided		Transportation Services Provided/Purchased	
Private, Nonprofit Human Services	34.9%	General Public	21.0%	Social Services	44.2%	N/A	51.5%
Federal/State Human Services	25.4%	Individuals with Disabilities	17.9%	Health Care	33.8%	Demand-response	16.8%
Regional/State Government	19.0%	Low-income Individuals	16.0%	Economic Development	10.4%	Recurring Trips	15.8%
County Government	6.3%	Seniors (65+ years)	13.0%	Public Transportation	6.5%	Special Events	8.9%
Municipal Government	6.3%	Veterans	11.5%	Senior/Disability Transportation	5.2%	Fixed-route	6.9%
Private, Nonprofit Transportation	3.2%	Youth (17 years or younger)	10.7%				
Tribal Transit	3.2%	American Indians	8.8%				
Public Transit Authority	1.6%	Agency Clients Only	1.1%				
Private, For-profit Transportation	0.0%						

The fleets that respondents use may have significant gaps in ADA-accessibility. Thirteen (13) agencies reported that some vehicles are ADA-accessible, and 10 agencies reported that no vehicles are ADA-accessible. Meanwhile, just five report that all their vehicles are ADA-accessible.

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Agencies were asked a number of questions to identify the challenges faced by and unmet needs of their clients. When asked why agencies' clients do not use public transit, service schedule and cost were the primary reasons identified, with limited accessibility being another major reason for not using public transit. Cost can be a barrier, especially for seniors and people with disabilities, when they must go to doctor's appointments over long distances. Likewise, long rides may necessitate service outside typical business hours.

Reasons for Agency Clients Not Using Public Transportation

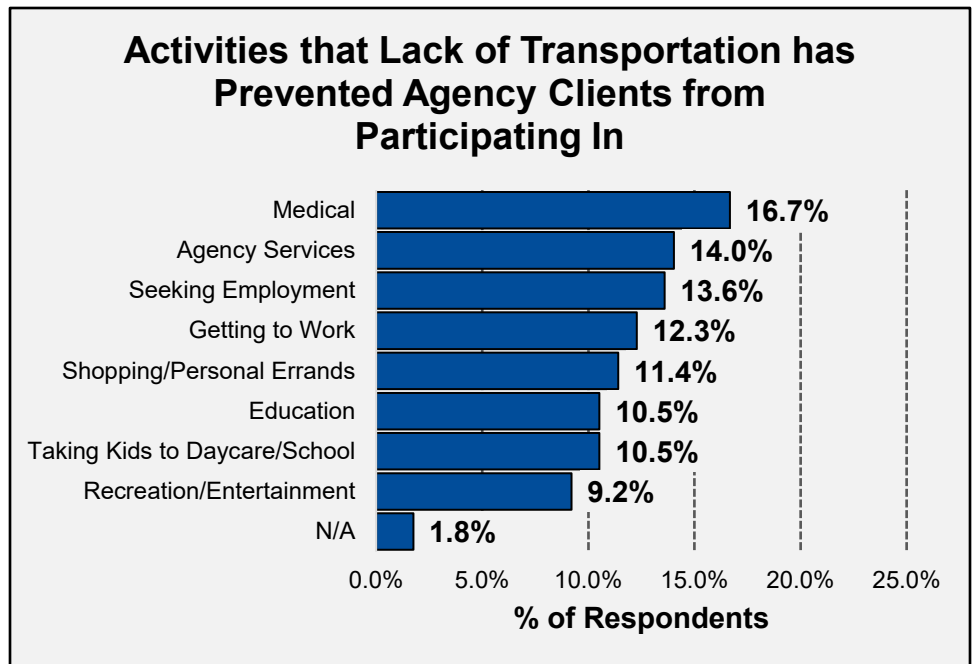| Reason	%
Limited Service Schedule	17.2%
High Fares	14.0%
Limited Accessibility to Stops	13.4%
Long trips	11.8%
Limited Service Area	11.3%
Low Reliability	8.6%
Lack of Amenities	8.6%
Lack of Travel Assistance	6.5%
Negative Perception	4.3%
Service Schedule Hard to Understand	4.3%

% of Respondents

When asked about unmet needs of clients, service area was the most commonly reported by agencies and access to medical-related locations was the third most common. More services for seniors/people with disabilities was the second most common.

Agencies were also asked about specific transportation needs that their clients have. Service aspects associated with older adults and people with disabilities were the most common, with travel assistance and door-to-door transportation being the first and second most common, respectively. Service schedule was also a major theme. Weekday business hour service was the third most common need, while weekday early morning and weekend service were tied for the fourth most common.

Transportation Needs of Agency Clients			
Unmet Needs of Clients		**Specific Needs of Clients**	
Locations Served	14.8%	Travel Assistance	16.1%
Senior/Disability Services	13.0%	Door-to-door Transportation	15.6%
Access to Medical Locations	11.7%	Weekday Business Hour Service	13.3%
Service Frequency	11.2%	Weekday Early Morning Service	12.3%
Weekday Early Morning Service	10.8%	Weekend Service	12.3%
Access to Jobs	10.3%	Weekday Late Night Service	11.8%
Weekend Service	9.9%	Last Mile Connections	9.5%
Weekday Late Night Service	9.9%	Wheelchair Accessibility	9.0%
Last Mile Connections	8.5%		

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Analyzing types of activities where lack of transportation access has been a barrier to participation helps further identify user needs and barriers. Employment (existing jobs and seeking new employment), medical service, shopping/personal errands, and agency services were the most commonly cited activities. These responses reflect the importance of agency services, and medical appointments to seniors and people with disabilities. Additionally, while seniors typically may not work, people with disabilities often are still employed and require strong transportation services.

Activities that Lack of Transportation has Prevented Agency Clients from Participating In

Activity	% of Respondents
Medical	16.7%
Agency Services	14.0%
Seeking Employment	13.6%
Getting to Work	12.3%
Shopping/Personal Errands	11.4%
Education	10.5%
Taking Kids to Daycare/School	10.5%
Recreation/Entertainment	9.2%
N/A	1.8%

Agencies were asked to evaluate their needs as organizations and any constraints they were facing in coordinating. Being unaware of other transportation services in the area and lack of staff were the first and second most common, respectively. Agencies also reported challenges finding drivers and lack of fixed-route services.

Biggest Coordination Constraints Faced by Agencies

Constraint	% of Respondents
Lack of Funding	19.7%
Unaware of Other Transportation Services	16.5%
Lack of Drivers	14.2%
Insufficient Fixed-route Service	11.8%
State or Other Regulations	9.4%
Hard to Coordinate Separate Legs of Trips	9.4%
Lack of Service Outside Business Hours	7.9%
Unable to Combine/Coordinate Grants	5.5%
Lack of Software Interoperability	5.5%
Unable to Obtain Insurance	0.0%

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Continuing Efforts

The Southwest Region Working Group is planning to meet monthly with the Coordinated Plan itself being updated on an annual basis.

Participation in the coordinated planning process is a prerequisite to accessing 5310 funding, and any project an agency wishes to use 5310 funds for must appear in the applicable 5310 coordinated plan. Agencies who wish to participate in the coordinating planning process who are not currently doing so should contact Stephen Iken (Southwest Transit) via email.[9] Alternatively, Olivia Hook with ODOT OMPT can direct interested agencies to the Region's lead agency.[10]

Southwest Working Group Meetings are also open to individuals and organizations not directly associated with transportation providers, such as advocacy groups (e.g., disability coalitions). Those wishing to attend and participate in the working group meetings as an individual or as a representative of an organization, are encouraged to do so.

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[9] stephen.iken@socag.org
[10] ohook@odot.org

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Plan Adoption

The FTA does not formally review or approve coordinated plans; thus, the Southwest Coordinating Transportation Network is responsible for the development, and through consensus, the group endorses/adopts the regional locally developed coordinated transportation plan. The planning process must include seniors, individuals with disabilities, public/private/nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public. Working group members are encouraged to contact mobility management programs and ODOT OMPT staff for help with the coordinated planning process as needed.

After considerable involvement of all groups indicated in Section 5310 Program language, this Coordinated Plan was locally endorsed by the Southwest Region Working Group on November 21st, 2023, and expires in 2027, when a new regional coordinated plan will be developed. The Working Group will update the current plan annually. In relation to the long-range and statewide transportation improvement plan, this Coordinated Plan data is valid for four years until a new Coordinated Plan is written.

Annual Updates

Coordinated Plans are to be updated annually. The Southwest Region Working Group meets monthly to implement strategies and update the Coordinated Plan. The following items are updated annually in the Coordinated Plan:

- Transportation Provider Assessment:
  - Providers are added or removed
  - Information for existing providers is updated
- Goals: Updated statuses for each goal and strategy are provided
- Cover page is updated to reflect annual updates
- Annual Updates section is updated to note that the annual update has been completed

Once updated, the Coordinated Plan may be submitted to ODOT OMPT to review, accept, retain on file and to be used for 5310 program applications. Similar to FTA, ODOT does not formally adopt the regional coordinated plans, however, ODOT does review the plans for completeness, compliance and will only award 5310 projects that are within the FTA 9070.1G Circular eligibility guidelines.

Appendix

Definitions

There are several terms used throughout the plan that may be unique to transportation providers or human service agencies. The terms are defined here for reference.

Agency Transportation Providers: Agency transportation providers, also known as human services transportation, are services that operate for the sole benefit of program participants. Traditionally, the agency operating the service has a non-transportation core mission and elects to provide transportation services to meet the overall core mission.

Coordination: Collaborative efforts toward understanding and meeting mobility needs in the most appropriate, cost effective, and responsive manner.

FAST Act: Congress established the funding for Federal Transit Administration programs through authorizing legislation that amends Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the U.S. Code. On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorizing surface transportation programs through Fiscal Year 2020.

Gaps in Service: A break in the continuity of available transportation resources, such as a break between hours of operation or a break between two or more geographic areas.

Lead Agency: The organization responsible for facilitating outreach; composing a plan that meets the requirements of current Federal and State legislation; maintaining documentation from the planning process and making it available upon request; and leading stakeholders through annual reviews, amendments, and updates of the plan. The Lead Agency is also responsible for submitting the Coordinated Plan and all amendments or updates to participating stakeholders and ODOT.

Mobility Management: Federal Transit Law (49 U.S. Code § 5302) defines mobility management as a capital project "consisting of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers carried out by a recipient or subrecipient through an agreement entered into with a person, including a governmental entity, under this chapter (other than section 5309); but excluding operating public transportation services." This role is also referred to as Mobility Navigator in this plan as that is the job title for many mobility management professionals in Oklahoma.

NEMT: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, any transportation service for medical reasons that does not include emergency medical purposes.

NMT: Non-Medical Transportation; Non-medical transportation is transportation that is used by waiver enrollees solely to access adult day support, vocational habilitation, supported employment enclave, and/or supported employment community services, as specified by their individual service plans (ISP). 5123:2-9-18 (B)(9)

Public Transit Providers: Public transportation is shared-ride transit services that are open to the general public and charge a set fare. There are generally two types of public transit: fixed-route and demand-response transportation services. Fixed-route services operate on a set schedule along a fixed route. Demand-response transportation services operate on a prearranged schedule determined by customer and service provider. Demand-response is a scheduled pick-up and drop-off system that operates between the origin and the destination in the most efficient route possible. Demand-response transportation includes those services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Ridership: The total number of passengers who boarded transportation vehicles are counted each time they board a vehicle.

Section 5307 Program: The Urbanized Area Formula Grants program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation-related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more.

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Section 5310 Program: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides Federal formula funding 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 program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options.

Section 5311 Program: The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000 where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. The program also provides funding for state and national training and technical assistance through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program. Subrecipients may include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

Social Service Providers: In addition to the transportation providers listed above, the Region benefits from numerous human service agencies and organizations which serve as regional partners that have an impact on transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities.

Transportation: Transportation is broadly defined to include traditional transit, human service agency services, on-demand (taxi-like) services, bicycle and pedestrian programs and amenities.

Transportation Service Provider: Any transportation agency or human service agency that directly provides transportation for any reason to a client, patient, or anyone from the public.

Unmet Transportation Needs: Transportation that is wanted or desired but is not currently available.

Working Group: The Working Group is composed of key community stakeholders. The Planning Committee members agree to actively participate in the planning process and act as the plan advisory and adopting entity.

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Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) Office of Mobility and Public Transit
Table 23: ODOT OMPT Staff

Name	Position	Contact Information
Jared Schwennesen	Multi-Modal Division Manager	Oklahoma Department of Transportation Multimodal Division 200 N.E. 21st Street Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-4203 ODOTWeb-transit@odot.org Website: https://oklahoma.gov/odot.html
Eric Rose	Office of Mobility and Public Transit Manager	
Vacant	Sr. Program Manager	
Olivia Hook	Statewide Mobility Manager	
Veronica Clark	Project Manager	
Bobby Parkinson	Program Manager	
John Heavrin	Program Manager	
Liann Alfaro	Program Manager	
Steve Jagosh	SSO Project Manager	
Rileigh Johnson	Project Manager	
Justin Gregory	Project Manager	
Thomas Nutter	Project Manager	
Bart Vleugels	Active Transportation & Rail	
Mike Woodhams	Project Manager	

Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310

Federal transit law, as amended by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU), requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program be "derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" and that the plan be "developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public."

History: Established in 1975, Section 5310 has been primarily directed to social/human service agencies, nonprofit organizations and other public bodies for the purchase of vehicles. The program is administered through the states, and it is at the state level that specific funding decisions are made.

Program Goal: The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities throughout the country. Effective July 1, 2019, Section 5310 responsibilities, oversight and management of the grants and resources associated with Section 5310 will be transferred from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Expenses are reimbursed at 80% federal funds and 20% local match. Certain expenditures made in an effort to satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the Clean Air Act Amendments can be reimbursed at a 90% federal commitment (10% local match).

Vehicles and vehicle-related expenses including buses; vans; radios and communication equipment; vehicle shelters; wheelchair lifts and restraints; vehicle rehabilitation; manufacture, or overhaul; preventive maintenance, as defined in the National Transit Database (NTD); and extended warranties which do not exceed industry standards.

Agencies interested in applying for the 5310 programs can contact one of these offices for more information.

Table 24: 5310 Application Information

Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)	Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG)
Statewide	Tulsa and surrounding areas
The state does not operate public transportation services directly; ODOT administers 5310 federal funds for other areas of the state not served by INCOG (Tulsa and surrounding areas).	INCOG is the designated recipient of Section 5310 funding for the Tulsa region. Local governments and nonprofit agencies are eligible to apply for the funds.
For more information, contact **Eric Rose** OMPT Manager erose@odot.org or 405-514-1419	For more information, contact **Patricia Dinoa** Principal Transportation Planner pdinoa@incog.org or 918-579-9489
https://oklahoma.gov/odot/programs-and-projects/transit-programs/section-5310-elderly.html	https://www.incog.org//Community_Economic_Development/commdev_comdev.html

*Agencies applying for 5310 program grants must participate in the coordination planning process, have the project listed in the coordinated plan, the project must address an unmet need in the plan, and abide by the FTA Section 5310 Circular and the Oklahoma Statewide Management Plan.

FTA Section 5310 Circular

Additional technical assistance for participating agencies in the coordinated planning process can be found by visiting the National Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) www.nationalrtap.org. Agencies can also contact the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Multi-Modal Division and the Oklahoma Mobility Management Program for planning activity support.

Specialized Transportation

Table 25 below summarizes additional information collected from transit agencies and tribal providers following Working Group #3. "N/A" corresponds to agencies who did not explicitly provide this information.

Table 25: Specialized Transportation

Agency Name	Provides Medicaid Eligible Trips?	Primary Funding Source	Primary Source of Match Funds	Level of Passenger Assistance Provided
Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Transit & Elderly Nutrition Program	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chickasaw Nation Transportation Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comanche Nation Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Delta Public Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kiowa Tribe Fastrans	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lawton Area Transit System (LATS)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Red River Public Transportation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southwest Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washita Valley Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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ODOT seeking public input for Coordinated Transportation Plan

ODOT seeking public input for Coordinated Transportation Plan

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Monday, June 12, 2023

ODOT seeking public input for Coordinated Transportation Plan

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is looking for the public's input on the development of the 2023 Coordinated Transportation Plan. The plan is designed to identify transportation needs of Oklahomans with disabilities, seniors and low-income communities. The plan, will provide strategies for meeting those identified transportation needs.

Oklahomans can participate in the development of the plan through an online survey, that can be found here, and through a series of virtual public meetings. The public meetings will be highly interactive and allow participants to provide valuable input towards the plan.

There are five regional meetings scheduled between June 20 and June 29:

Northeast Region (Including rural areas around Tulsa)

- 1 p.m. Tuesday, June 20
- Online: **bit.ly/5310NE**
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 845 9658 2858)

Southeast Region

- 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 21
- Online: **bit.ly/5310SE**
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 864 0808 4567)

Central Region (Including rural areas around OKC)

- 10 a.m. Thursday, June 22
- Online: **bit.ly/5310Central**
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 863 9749 4440)

Southwest Region

- 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 28
- Online: **bit.ly/5310SW**
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 821 4379 8899)

Northwest Region

- 1 p.m. Thursday, June 29
- Online: **bit.ly/5310NW**
- Call: 888-475-4499 (Meeting ID: 865 6063 6177)

To locate your region, click here.

About Coordinated Transportation Plans

Locally developed coordinated plans provide a unified regional strategy for transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged groups in need. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires a coordinated transit-human services plan be locally developed through feedback from older adults and individuals with disabilities, as well as transportation planning agencies, transportation provides and government agencies.

For more information, please click here.

Last Modified on Jun 15, 2023

OKLAHOMA
Transportation