



# Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan



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This HSCTP was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), and local governments in partial fulfillment of requirements in Title 23 USC 134 and 135, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Section 11201, November 2021. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and/or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

## Resolution



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## PURPOSE

To be eligible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program funds, including but not limited to Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities), proposed projects must be derived from a locally-developed human services coordinated transportation plan (HSCTP). The plan will guide the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) in decision-making regarding the allocation of funds.

The RPCGB serves six counties—Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker (see Figure 1). The plan’s purpose is to address mobility issues for transportation disadvantaged individuals. Many people mistakenly assume that transportation disadvantaged individuals comprise only those people with disabilities or people using wheelchairs. Transportation disadvantaged include those who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to their age, income, health, or physical limitations.

While the HSCTP aims to improve quality, efficiency, and mobility of transportation services for all citizens in the Greater Birmingham area, it is specifically designed to improve services for transportation disadvantaged individuals by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources. Coordination enhances transportation access and facilitates the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources.

**Figure 1: Map of Greater Birmingham Region**





The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA Section 5310) program goal is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation mobility options available. To that end, the FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Eligible projects include traditional capital investment and nontraditional investment beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services.

### **Seniors**

Transportation for seniors is a vital concern. Seniors rely on their automobiles to maintain independence. In the Greater Birmingham area, there are few, if any, viable alternatives to the private automobile. This can compel people to drive when they are not able.

### **Disabled**

The population of disabled individuals is diverse, ranging from minor to severe and infant to elderly. It does not discriminate among race, age, income, or education. In many cases, an inability to drive is the only thing that interferes with leading a relatively normal lifestyle. Even if there is adequate public transit and individuals are physically able to negotiate it, they may not be able to get to/from bus stops, due to a lack of sidewalks or other features that interfere with accessibility. Great strides have been made since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, but there remains much room for improvement.

Many disabilities are not visually apparent. Drivers need training on how to effectively assist passengers and how to react (or not react) to certain behaviors. Traveling independently can be confusing. It is important to make every passenger feel comfortable and help them reach their destination safely, without incident.



## STUDY AREA

The area within the RPCGB’s jurisdiction consists of the counties of Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker. It has an area of 4,740 square miles with a total population of 1.1 million, accounting for 21.8% of the state’s population. The six-county region includes large urban, small urban, and rural areas. All of Jefferson and Shelby counties are in the Birmingham urbanized area (UZA).

Demographic indicators help determine the likelihood of residents being dependent on others for transportation. Typical indicators are age 65 and over, no vehicle in the household, no high school education, and poverty. The combined population of the six-county region makes up 23% of the state’s population. Jefferson is the most populous county, having 14% of the state’s population.

Graphics and tables of demographic cohorts follow, each showing a comparison of all six counties (Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 through 7). The figures visually demonstrate the array of differences among the counties. Each county’s demographic data are individually reviewed and presented later in this section.

**TABLE 1: Cohort Comparison of Counties**

Cohort	Blount	Chilton	Jefferson	Shelby	St Clair	Walker
Zero Vehicle Households	4.8%	3.3%	6.9%	2.6%	3.3%	4.7%
Population 65+	18.3%	16.8%	15.9%	16.2%	17.4%	19.6%
Poverty	14.2%	14.5%	17%	6.8%	10.9%	16.4%
25+ No High School Diploma	18.2%	17.8%	8.9%	6.2%	12.7%	17.3%
Median Household Income	\$57,440	\$62,471	\$63,595	\$90,618	\$73,218	\$52,987

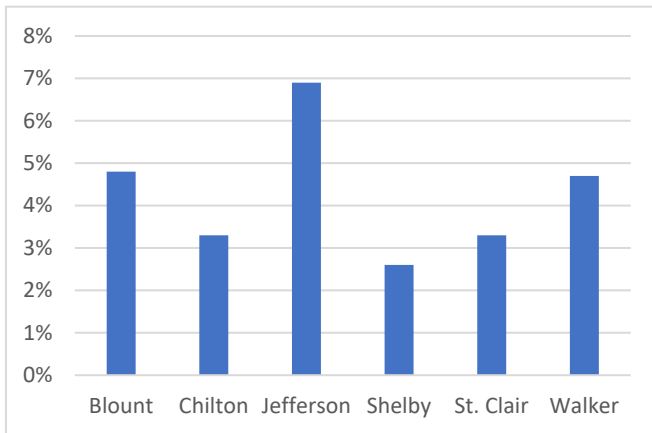
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

**TABLE 2: Population and Growth (2000-2020)**

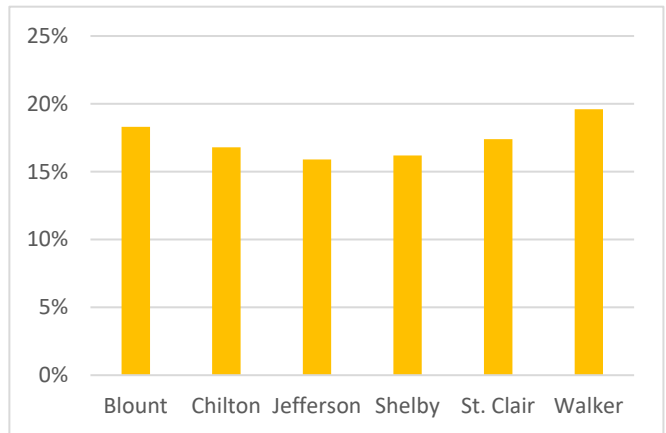
County	Population 2000	Population 2010	Population 2020	Growth 2000-2020
Blount	51,024	57,322	59,134	15.9%
Chilton	39,593	43,643	45,014	13.7%
Jefferson	662,047	658,466	674,721	1.9%
Shelby	143,293	195,085	223,024	55.6%
St Clair	64,742	83,593	91,103	40.7%
Walker	70,713	67,023	65,342	-8.2%

Source: 2000, 2010, and 2020 Decennial Censes

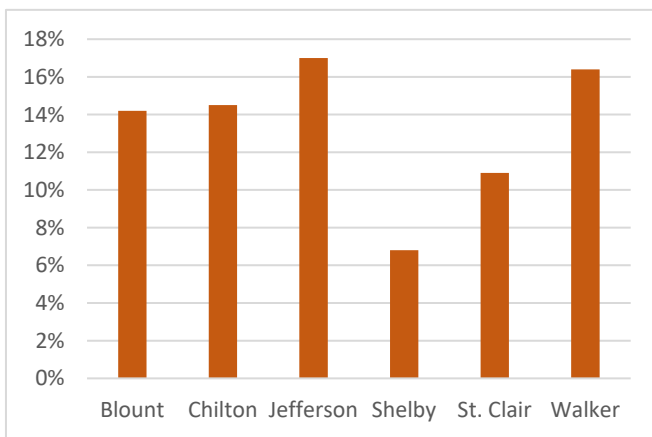
**FIGURE 2: Zero-Vehicle Households**



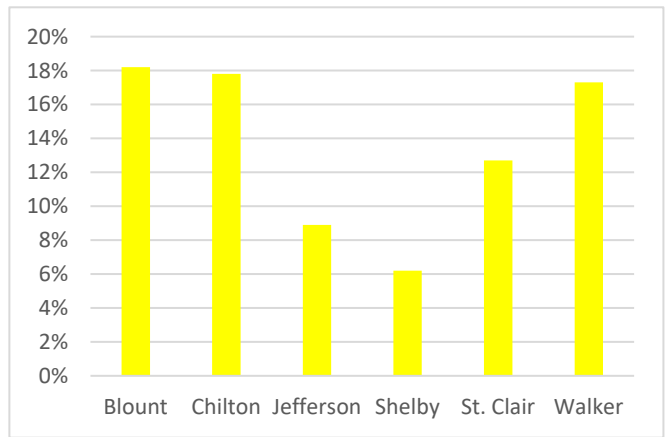
**FIGURE 3: Age 65 and Over**



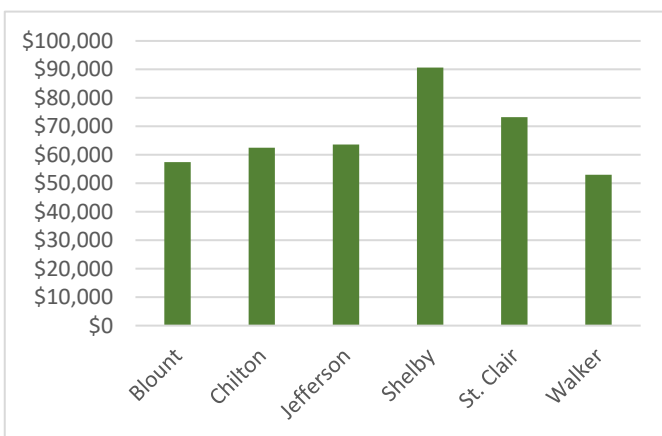
**FIGURE 4: Poverty**



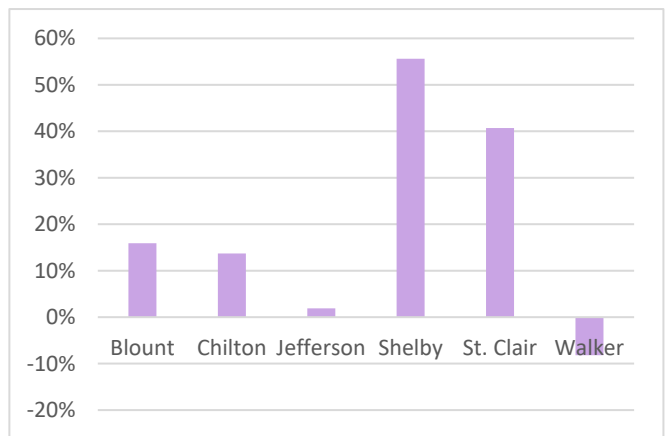
**FIGURE 5: Age 25+ No High School Diploma**



**FIGURE 6: Median Household Income**



**FIGURE 7: Population Growth 2000-2020**



## INVENTORY OF SERVICES

The Greater Birmingham area offers various resources to meet the transportation needs of its citizens, including fixed route public transit (and ADA complementary paratransit), on-demand and demand response public transportation, nonprofit agencies that transport clients, private transportation providers such as local taxi services, and interregional service via Greyhound and Amtrak. In addition, Uber and Lyft operate throughout Alabama.

### Fixed Route

The Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority provides fixed route transit service in the Birmingham area, with complementary ADA paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of the fixed route.

### On-Demand

The City of Birmingham has contracted with Via to operate an on-demand shared-ride service in a limited service area. The program hires local drivers and provides accessible vehicles for riders with disabilities.

Uber and Lyft operate throughout the State of Alabama.

### Demand Response

In the counties of Jefferson and Shelby, ClasTran operates a curb-to-curb demand response service. ClasTran receives grant funding for capital equipment, administration, and operations under FTA Sections 5310 (urban) and 5311 (rural), along with local contributions for match.

Collat Jewish Family Services operates a door-to-door service for individuals who are over 60 or have a disability. Service is limited to a 5-mile radius of their location.

Blount, Chilton, St. Clair, and Walker counties have transportation primarily funded by the representative county government.

### Interregional

Amtrak has train service between Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Anniston. There is only one trip in and out every day, making it nearly impossible to complete a round trip in a single day.

Greyhound bus serves 29 cities in Alabama with several routes, making it possible to complete a one-day round trip between Birmingham and many cities.

### Vanpool/Carpool

CommuteSmart organizes the local vanpool and carpool program. CommuteSmart maintains a database to match riders, will provide a van, financial subsidy to riders, and other supporting services including a guaranteed ride home in case of emergency.

### School Bus

School districts provide transportation for students in their district who are in grades K-12. They may also transport children for education assistance programs, including children living outside district boundaries who need to access programs not available in their home district.

### Indirect Providers

Indirect providers bring services or goods to a person's home, so a passenger trip is not needed. They may transport people under certain circumstances, but transportation is not their primary business. These organizations generally focus on a specific client group, for example:

- Grocery stores and pharmacies that make home deliveries
- Hot meal delivery services
- Personal services, companion, and in-home care
- Hospitals and medical clinics (telehealth)
- Residential long-term care facilities and group homes
- Senior and community centers
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Child and adult care facilities
- Job training/employment development services
- Social service agencies

### Direct Providers

Direct transportation providers are private organizations whose primary purpose is to transport people. They contribute to overall community mobility and include:

- Taxicabs and private drivers
  - Jason's Van Service (Walker County)
  - King Cab
  - Need-A-Ride
  - Silver Cab
  - Apex
  - Over the Mountain Sedan
  - Allen
  - Uber and Lyft (throughout Alabama)
  - Yellow Cab
- Nonprofit
  - ClasTran
  - Collat Jewish Family Services
  - Kid One
- Nonemergency medical
  - Medical Transport of Alabama
  - Careavan Transport
  - Care Transit
  - Loving Care
  - SOS
  - Helping Hands
  - ALTransit
  - Johnson's Wheels of Love
- Airport shuttle
  - Groome Transportation

## FUNDING

For the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 program, funds are apportioned based on each state's share of the population of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Formula funds are apportioned to designated recipients. For rural and small urban areas, this is the Alabama Department of Transportation, while in large urban areas, a designated recipient is chosen by the governor. Designated recipients have flexibility in how they select projects for funding, but their selection process must be identified in a state/program management plan. The selection process may be formula-based, competitive, or discretionary, and subrecipients can include states or local government authorities, private nonprofit organizations, and/or operators of public transportation.

For the Birmingham UZA, the RPCGB is the direct recipient of 5310 funds. It manages all aspects of the Section 5310 program and performs all administrative functions of the grant. In addition, RPCGB ensures that all applications for FTA Section 5310 funds comply with the following:

1. Proposed projects must seek to address service barriers and support plan goals.
2. Proposed projects must comply with all regulations set forth in FTA C 9070.1G.
3. Applicants must identify a secure source for matching funds.
4. Applicants requesting vehicles must have at least one wheelchair-accessible vehicle in their fleet.
5. All agencies that receive funding to purchase vehicles must participate in efforts to coordinate the use of those vehicle(s) in emergencies.

## NEEDS

Input was received from an online survey (Appendix A), and discussions were held with a diversity of individuals, i.e., local politicians, agency employees, transportation providers, caregivers, and individuals who are transportation disadvantaged. Information gathered was used to develop this plan. Similarities were seen across counties regarding needs, barriers, and solutions.

The survey did not use the words “need” or “barrier.” Instead, it asked to identify changes respondents thought would be helpful.

The most common responses included:

- expanded days/hours and areas of service
- increased funding
- cross-county transportation
- improved reliability
- accessible bus stops
- connectivity with other transportation options
- sidewalks and bike lanes
- increased capacity
- better promotion of transportation options
- online payment options
- a central call center

## BARRIERS

From the suggested changes, the following barriers were derived.

### Availability

Availability of transportation includes service area, hours of operation, and reliability. Public transportation service is limited, even in Jefferson and Shelby counties, where some public transit exists. Many people are unable to use Section 5310 demand response service, due to capacity constraints and eligibility criteria.

Of concern in Blount, Chilton, St. Clair, and Walker counties is the ability to get to and from other counties, especially since the bulk of medical and social services are in Jefferson County. People are denied services for which they are eligible because they cannot access facilities.

### Infrastructure

Sidewalks and bike lanes are often nonexistent, making it necessary to walk and ride in streets or in other areas not designed for pedestrians or cyclists. For individuals living within a few miles of a town or grocery store, walking or biking is an obvious and convenient choice. But on a two-lane road where vehicles are traveling over 55 miles per hour, it is not feasible.

### Public Awareness

Many people are unaware of public transportation options in their county and the respective cost and eligibility criteria, if any. Hence, there is a need for public education and marketing. Public awareness leads to increased efficiencies and overall effectiveness. Other benefits of increased access to jobs and shopping are an increased tax base and overall public health.

Additionally, the public needs to be educated about overall funding of transit. Most people are unaware of how much public transportation costs and how it is funded.

### Central Call Center

In the Birmingham metropolitan area, there are a variety of transportation options but there is no central location to go or call to determine availability and cost. In addition, not being able to pay online can deter a potential rider who lacks exact change.



## GOALS

Improve  
coordination of  
transportation  
services and  
resources

1

Improve  
efficiencies by  
sharing resources  
and using collective  
purchasing power

2

Increase service  
availability and  
accessibility

3

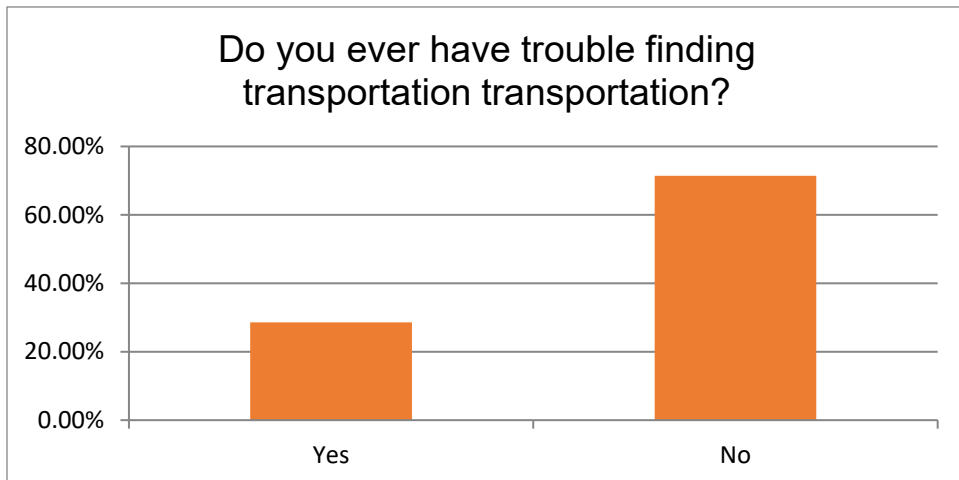
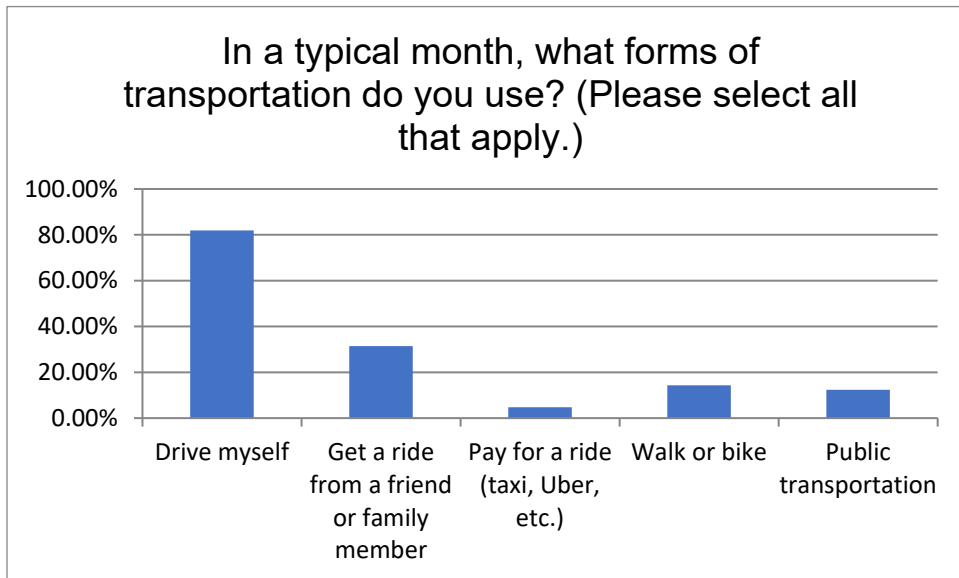
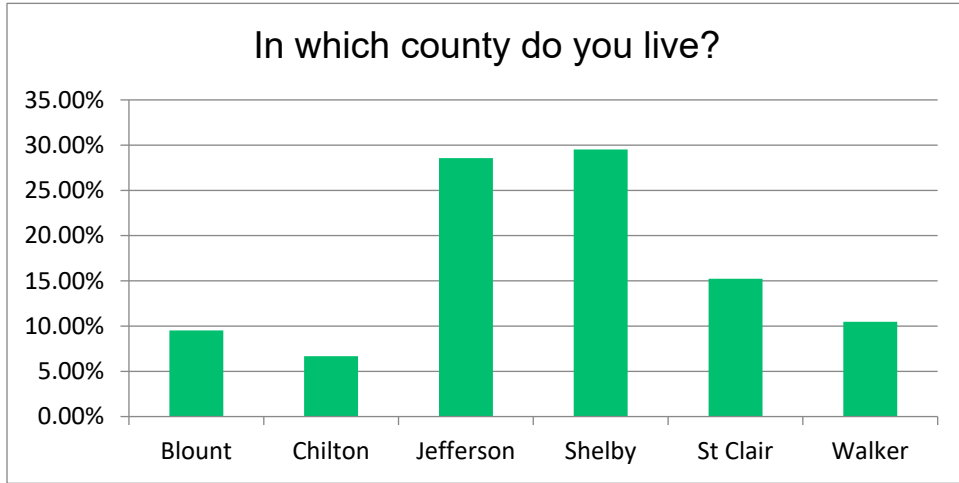
Increase awareness  
of public  
transportation  
and resources

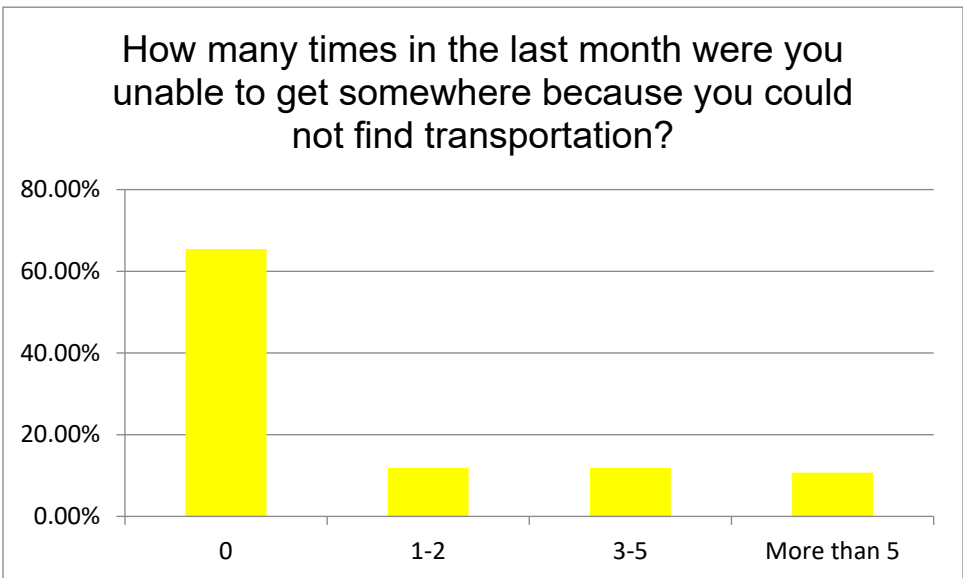
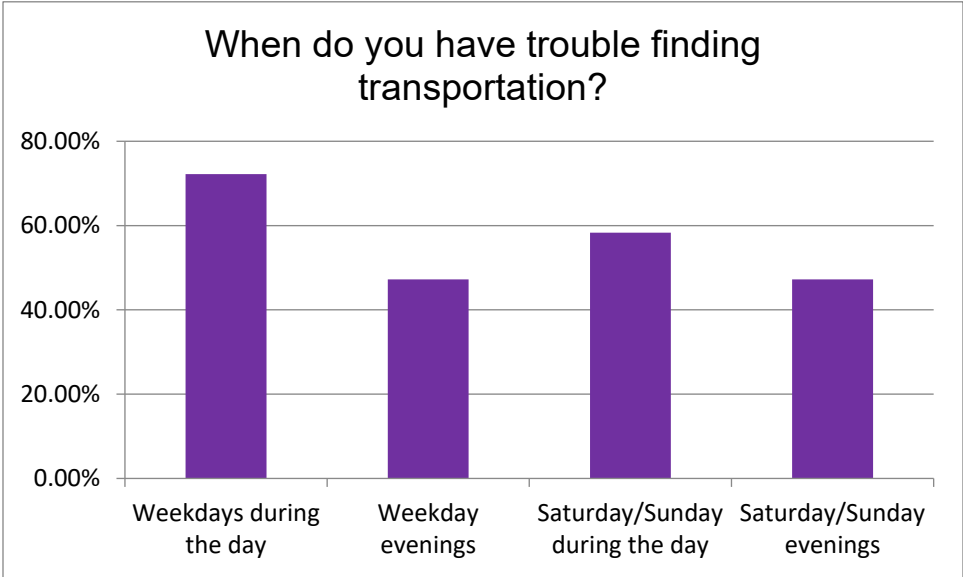
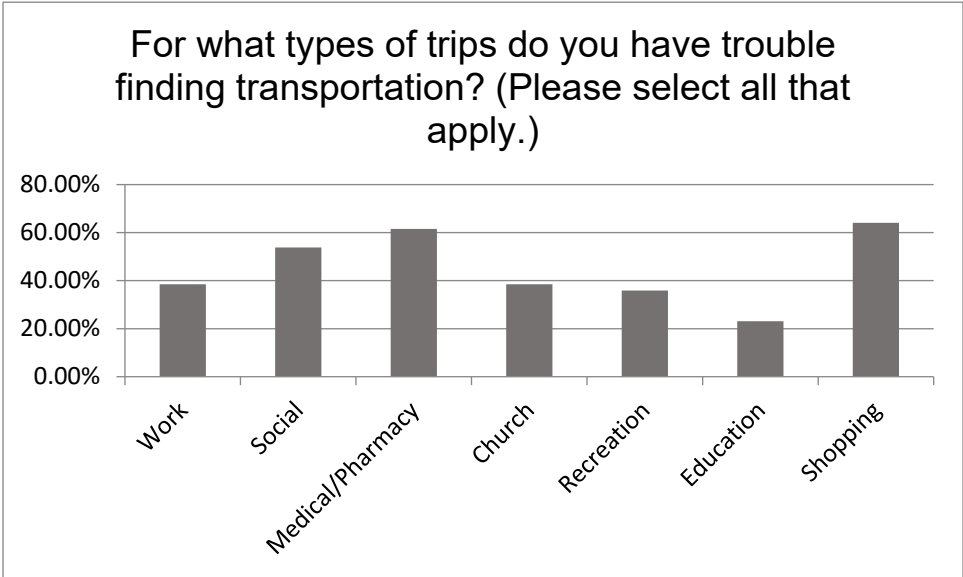
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## STRATEGIES



## APPENDIX A SURVEY RESULTS





**Please share positive comments about available transportation in your area**

We have a lot of elderly people, who may not have the ability to get some one to drive them . This will be a great help to our community
I am not sure there is alot of available transportation in Chilton Co for those in need.
I sometimes see the public transportation vehicles in my area
I live in walker county and I am one of the blessed ones that does not have to rely on others to get around. So while I feel like this survey is not for, I do know that there are good people in the community that try and give rides when able.
Only other transportation I've used is Uber. Even though I'm in a manual wheelchair, I've never had a problem with getting a ride because of that
I depend on Friends and Family because they are reliable and dependable
The paratransit in my area has good coverage and is an option for people who would otherwise not be able to leave home.
We have plenty of great transpotation services around being the most helpful is max bus and Birmingham Now transportation
Uber is available but if its short notice it can be super expensive
We have a city shuttle and Clastran. I have had to use both in the past for elderly family members and neighbors.
We have Chilton transportation
bus is great!
New sidewalks are being added that are helping the walkability of some parts of the City
it seems available within small sections in the county
Clean Trolley, Nice and Safe Driver ..always keeps schedule
there are not any positives
Blount County offers public transportation for low rates.
Since reporting transportation problems through the workplace, issues and concerns are being addressed.
It's available
I am a socual worker but soeaking from the voices of adults and clients i serve.
We have a county shuttle
There a several transportation services in the area Clascan and Max. These sever ices are very effective to getting you where you need.
Great service for city center
There's something
The St. Clair County Transportation can provide rides to local medical appointments.
The columbiana trolley is helpful
very few alternatives
Bus driver is the best!
It's good! Good driver!
I use ClasTran regularly. I always appreciate the caring and patient driver..
I unfortunately do not have any positive comments.
I think ClasTran is needed for many who are unable to drive.
Public transportation is not available in my area
I rely on VA to take me to appointments. Sometimes they are on time.
Need more available transportation. The schedule is always full.
Public transportation is unreliable and cumbersome to use due to inconsistent pickup times and punishing delays if a bus is missed. A better transportation network is needed especially helping complete the last mile of the trip after using public transportation.
Community Action runs a good curb to curb program
The new express bus system is a step in the right direction.
Good

**Please share positive comments about available transportation in your area (continued)**

County transportation does a good job but could always use more.

There are several types, but do not always serve the underserved communities

Moody area has the St. Clair Transportation van. Need more

There are many different transportation options in the downtown area. Options are limited and fewer outside of the central business district of Birmingham (suburbs).

Moody area has the St. Clair Transportation van. Need more

I do not currently use public transportation but I'm glad it is there.

They take me to the senior center

Blount County has a public transportation that is reasonably priced

Drivers are friendly.

I have my own transportation

We live close enough to my work that we have plenty of options (Transit, microtransit, scooters, sidewalks, bike lanes). We chose to live where we did for that reason and were able to drop from two to one cars

I'm grateful for the transportation that is available.

Blount County does provide public transportation for those in the county. As far as I know there is no issues.

**Please indicate any changes you believe would be helpful in meeting transportation needs for individuals who are elderly, disabled, and/or low-income.**

Make transportation available.
More transportation options
I live in walker county and I am one of the blessed ones that does not have to rely on others to get around. So while I feel like this survey is not for, I do think have free or cheaper options for rides would be good. Also looking into more inclusive options.
Possibly trying to catagorize trips i.e. work, medical, groceries etc and going at it from a divide and conquer standpoint
More accessible reliable dependable transportation options
I believe an expanded regular transport system would be helpful. Right now it's very difficult to find transportation outside of Birmingham City Limits. Additionally, having paratransit options that are more reliable would make them more accessible to the people who need them.
Maybe a rewards program for members to get discounts on some services.
no change at this time.
Medical transportation from Chilton County to Birmingham for medical appointments, treatments, such an, treatments, such as chemotherapy, and follow ups.
We need public transit offering transportation access within 15 minutes. A mix of fixed route and on-demand.
Help with ride-share resources, Help navigating resources like Uber. Financial help for low-income.
I'm unsure how great the need would be here but if there was a way those who need assistance getting to doctor's appointments or the grocery store could schedule transportation would be a great program.
There is very little private ride-share availability (uber/lyft), and we need more on-call options for service.
It would be beneficial to have some form of transportation that would cross county lines into Jefferson for doctor appointments and treatments.
Trolly meets all
Rural areas need more options
need evening and night time options. Also need options that go beyond county line.
help elderly and disabled on and off the clastrans and to and from their door
More public transportation for the disabled.
It would be great to have a service accessible where you could call a number and arrange transportation either for a future date or for immediate use. Hopefully the service would be either free or very affordable.
Pre paid funding would be a great asset as those who ride the bus have to have exact change and know how many stops and pick ups they will have per transport.
More handicap or disability transportation available in the community.
We need buses that go to Birmingham and Leeds
More buses reaoruces
Free transp. and/or additional low cost transp.
Reduce paperwork and time associated with receiving transportation
funding for private sources
There needs to be more options that are accessible around the clock.
There is a great need for transportation to medical appointments outside of the county.
Columbiana needs repairs to sidewalks and to make them ADA accessible
metro area bus
Shelby County is in need of low costs public transportation
I don't feel comfortable using public transportation for medical appointments. I guess using something like Uber might be an option, but I can't really afford it. Also, I use a prepaid flip phone and have difficulty utilizing different forms of technology.
There needs to be public transportation for all of Shelby county, not just the urban population of Shelby county, but the rural areas as well.
Advertise the ClasTran service so that everyone will understand who qualifies for the service.



**Please indicate any changes you believe would be helpful in meeting transportation needs for individuals who are elderly, disabled, and/or low-income. (continued)**

Provide more public and affordable means of transportation
There needs to be more options that Medicare can cover for elderly people
Anything to allow transportation for kids beyond to and from school to other places safely.
More walking spaces.
More appointments available. Car/SUV transportation rather than just buses.
Better sidewalks and other options to complete the hyper-local connections to public transportation networks.
Sidewalks. Nonemergency medical transport
Door to door transportation
Reevaluation of current transportation services. Meeting the needs of the underserved
Need more vans and drivers
More sidewalks and bus service
Developing an online option to reserve and pay for transportation would allow for an improved customer experience.
Need more vans and drivers
More advertisement of what is available
They have trouble getting public transportation to doctors visits and to the grocery store
Public transportation routes are very limited considering the county as a whole.
Only availability is weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm
More money for local roads
I wish the sidewalks were in better shape and that there was a BRT service near Norwood
Greater connectivity; more streamlined; less time-consuming
More ev charging stations
The public transportation system does not operate during weekend and holidays. Transportation for these times could be helpful.

**Please provide any other comments regarding transportation in your area.**

Safe, affordable, and inclusive travel is needed and would be received well.

I don't know what's available to me that is accessible reliable dependable

The biggest obstacle to transportation I see in my non-profit job is income. Many people cannot afford a car and loss of a car may lead to homelessness due to lack of reliable transportation. If we expanded transportation it would decrease rates of poverty and homelessness for people who are one missed paycheck away from becoming unhoused.

I am able to drive myself so I don't have transportation issues. But many residents in Walker County struggle with this. We do not have ready available public transportation that is reliable.

It is good to have the transportation provide in my area. It takes the pressure off of those who do not have a personal transportation. Thanks for the service in our area.

Limit the time trains can block tracks.

Daryl is amazing!

Need help to access transportation that is available.

We don't have any program that comes to our area to assist elderly or disabled.

I enjoyed the Service

Little to none available

I am not aware of any transportation service available in my area other than family or friends. Ah Uber or taxi is expensive and may take quite some time for a trip.

I am unaware if the Blount County public transport system can pick up individuals for doctors appointments or other appointments outside Blount County.

Need buses

Limited transp. resources in SC Co.

While I have no problems with transportation the people I serve do. Due to literacy issues it has been hard for some providers that come to the program to get transportation.

changes to the Clastran program

Transportation vouchers would be helpful thru local resource agencies.

US 280 is dangerous

It's good. Picks me up and drops me off at the door.

Two of the bus stops I've seen locally were not accessible. I rely on and appreciate how ClasTran comes to my home to pick me up.

It is much needed!

Currently, transpiration is not an issue for me, but I am a former bus rider. It's critical to have access to buses, wheel chair accessible vehicles for all areas of transportation needs.

I would use the bus system if it was safer and not so confusing

With the community of folks I serve in my job, transportation is a constant struggle.

Many roads are in poor condition, and increase the wear on a vehicle.

Lots of need for transportation, out of the county as well.

Need bike lanes. Connected sidewalks

More small vans to help elderly & disabled

Better Public Transportation. This cannot be only about those with disabilities

No additional comments

The seniors have trouble with the public transportation taking them to get groceries, doctors appointments or to their bank

The County's residents would benefit from a larger service area for the public transportation provided and an indigent grant be considered for funding those indigent.

Would like to see more grant money for County and Municipal streets.

Transit is still not always reliable outside of BRT/Magic City Connector. Improved service including signage with live arrival times would be appreciated

We need some type of public transportation in the rural areas for people that, for some reason, don't drive or have a vehicle. In my area there is no public accessible transportation that is reliable.