

2024 Rural Community Innovations: Planning Grant Final Presentations

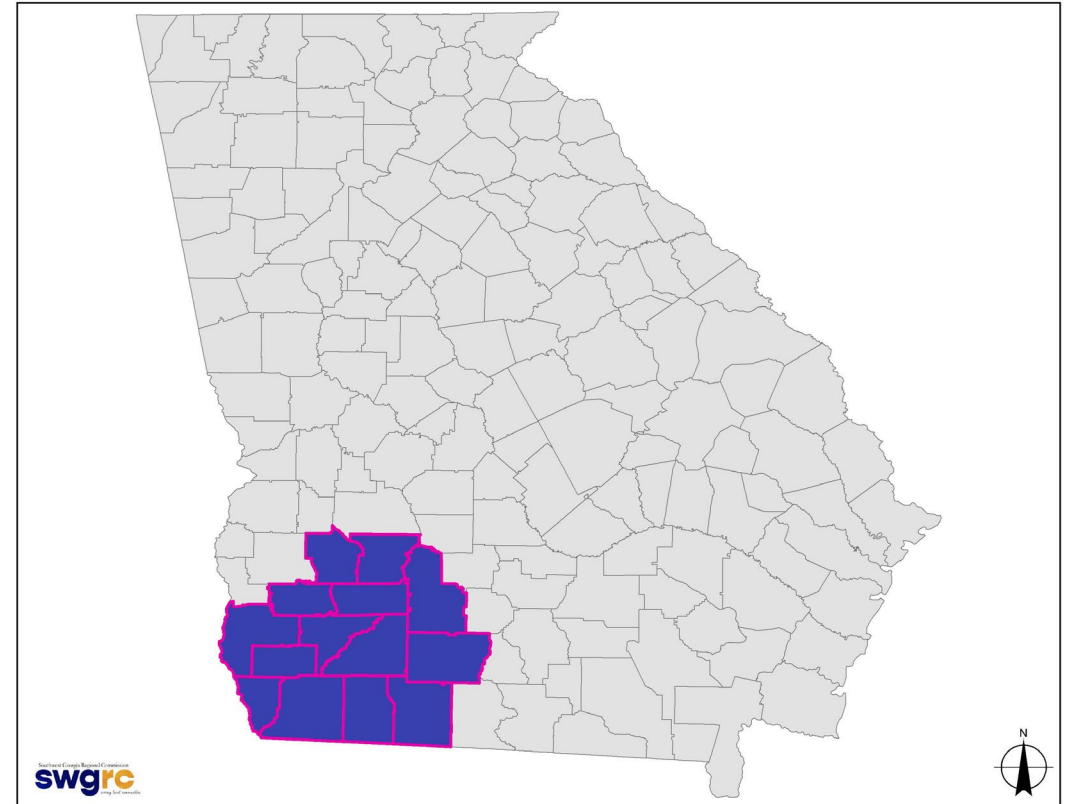
August 19, 2025



Southwest Georgia Aging and Disabled Population

ACCESS TO TRANSIT

The Rural Transportation Plan for Southwest Georgia will focus on development of a strategy to provide increased public transit services to aging and disabled populations in Southwest Georgia. This plan will inventory current ridership and working with strategic partners, will develop a strategy for intentionally increased ridership. This plan will be enveloped into the Southwest Georgia Regional Transportation Plan and strategies assessed annually. This plan will focus on data collection to find gaps in transportation, solutions to fill the gaps, including increased access to ADA compliant vehicles and marketing of services and work with future funding sources for rider sponsorships.



Access to Transit Planning Process:

- Planning Committee
- One on One Conversations
 - Surveys
- Community Conversations
- Goal Setting and Workgroup Assignments

Planning Committee

Megan Ridenhour, Director First Option Care

Lee Wright, Innovative Senior Solutions Administrator

Tim Hester, Regional Services Administrator GDBHDD

Regina Watts, Disability Services Albany Technical College

Heather Smart, Area Manager Georgia DCA

Cathe Hoskins, Pelham City Schools

Angela Hobby, Colquitt County School System

Holly Pollock, Resource Management Systems Inc. Area Manager

Dawn Taylor, Resource Management Systems Inc.

James Eubanks, Mayor City of Pelham

Azalee Vereen, Councilwoman City of Camilla

Rhonda Busbee, Hairdresser

Shelia Williams, Seminole County Commission

Marcie Lu, Transit Rider

Jami Harper, SWGA Council on Aging

Izzy Sadler, SWGA Council on Aging

Rev. Kathy Isreal-McLoud

Dr. Bonita Richter, Dentist

Sheena Stephens, Board Chair, Southwest Georgia Housing Taskforce

Willie Allen, Educational Coordinator of Innovation, Southern Regional Technical College

Markesha Grooms, Family Nurse Practitioner, Hospital Authority of Miller County

Nikki Palmer, Transit Rider

Oliver Floyd, Transit Rider

Samantha Helton, SWGA Council on Aging



Georgia
Department of
Behavioral Health
& Developmental
Disabilities



Hospital Authority of
MILLER
COUNTY



COLQUITT COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
ESTD. 1873

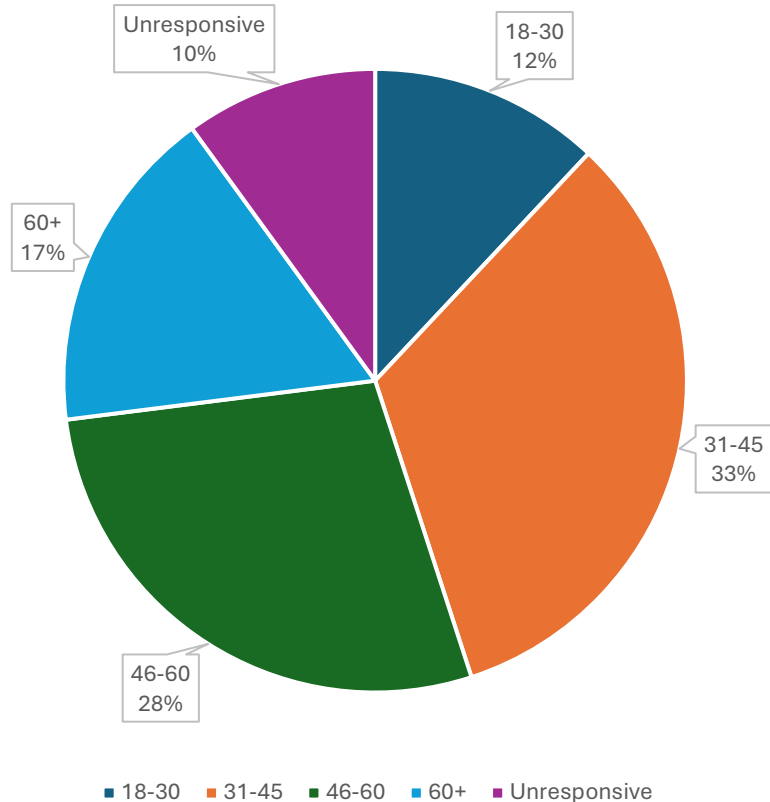


Sowega Council on Aging





Findings:



- 36% of respondents could not drive
- 21% of respondents who were unable to drive due to age-related issues
- Less than 10% of respondents stated cost was not an issue to using transit
- Rural nature of the region is the largest barrier to accessing transit
- Of those who did not have access to personal/borrowed transportation over the past 3 months have ALL missed one or more medical appointments
- 75% of respondents stated missing social and/or religious activities over the last three months due to lack of transportation
- Accessing transit for work is an issue for many

Lessons Learned

- One on One Conversations were the best source of information gathering
- Four versions of the surveys was great in theory; not in practice
 - Planning Committee meetings best conducted virtually
- “Organic Community Conversations” produced the best results
 - Buy-In is best with riders/care-giver involved discussions



Goals and Work Groups

1. GOAL: Increase Awareness of Services
Work Group: SWGRC + Partners
2. GOAL: Increase Participation in Community/ Quality of Life Events
Work Group: Buddy System + SWGRC + Partners + Local Governments
3. GOAL: Discover and Aid other Providers
Workgroup: SWGRC + Partners + Church/Non-Profits
4. GOAL: Increase Transit Funding
Work Group: SWGRC + Providers + Schoos + Industry
5. GOAL: Envelope Aging and Disability Transportation Planning in Local Plans
Work Group: SWGRC + Local Governments

Next Steps:

- increased public transit services to aging and disabled populations in Southwest Georgia.



Community-Driven Engagement: Lessons from the Webster County Public Transit and Active Transportation Plan

Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG)

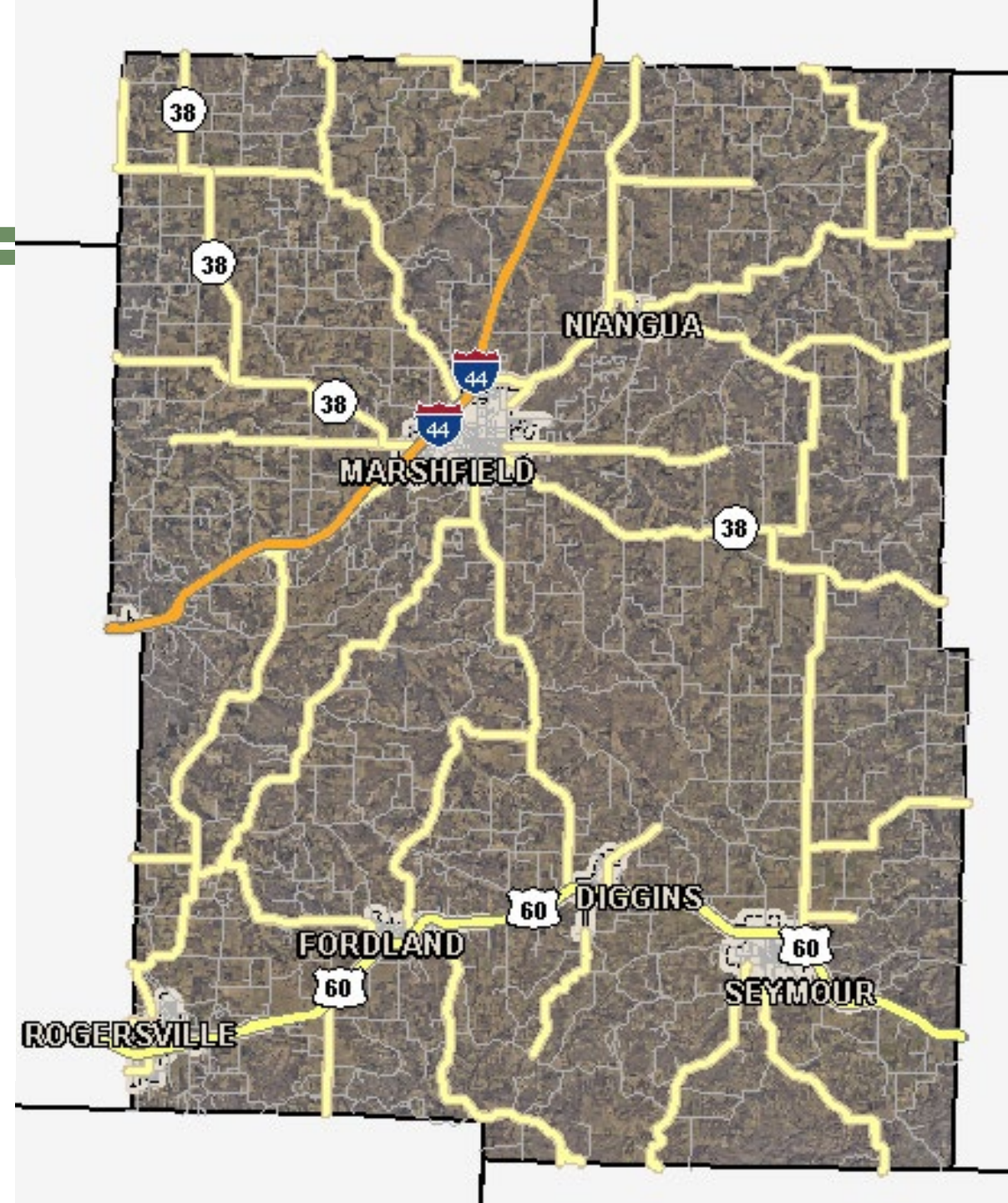
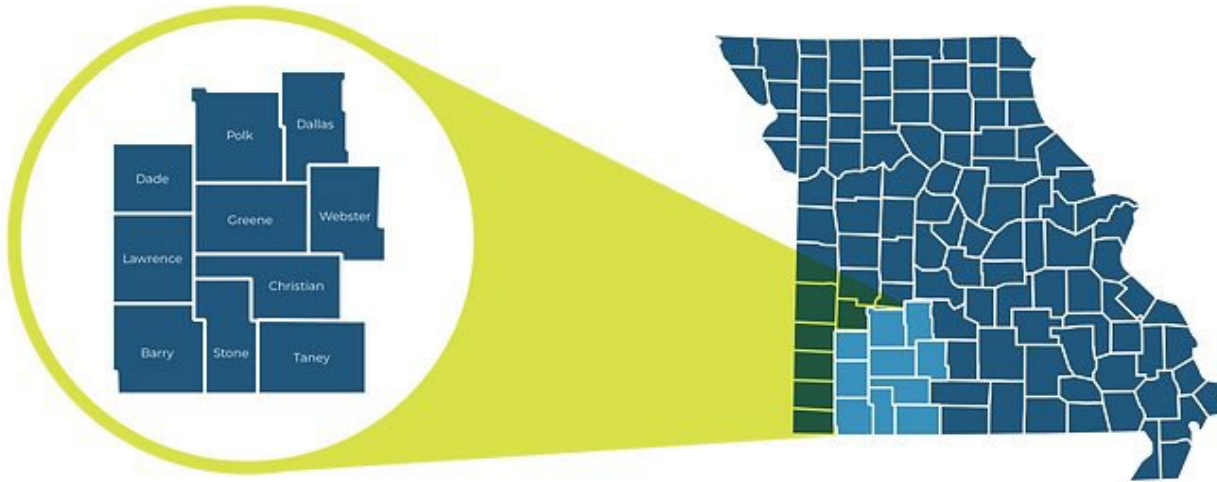
Final Grantee Presentation

August 19, 2025



Project Location

- Webster County, Missouri
- Located within SMCOG's 10-county service area in Southwest Missouri.



Transportation Planning Committee



28 representatives from local organizations and local governments:

- Webster County Health Unit
- Fordland Clinic
- Seymour Senior Center
- OACAC Webster County
- City of Marshfield
- City of Seymour
- City of Fordland
- Senior Age – Area Agency on Aging
- GRO Marshfield
- Webster County Commissioners
- Webster County Sheriff's Office
- Empower Abilities
- Southwest Council for Independent Living
- Burrell Health Center
- Jordan Valley Health Marshfield



Webster County
Health Unit



Fordland Clinic
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER



Engagement Tools Used

- Transportation Planning Committee
 - Representatives from local organizations serving target populations
- Accessible Survey Mediums
 - Online or paper with QR codes and paper copy pick-up at multiple locations
- 3 Rounds of Public Meetings
 - Hosted at senior centers, clinics, libraries, and churches
- Digital and Print Media
 - Social media, press releases, flyers

Webster County Transportation Survey

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

SURVEY OPENS December 2, 2024

SURVEY CLOSES January 10, 2025

You will help guide the County's future by participating in the Transportation Plan survey!

Complete the survey for a chance to win a gift card to a store near you!

Go to smcog.org/webstertransportationsurvey
Or use your phone to scan this QR code!



If you have any other comments or feedback, please contact
Aishwarya Shrestha, Associate Planner, SMCog at (417)-836-6901.

Innovative Engagement Approaches

- Small group format in trusted venues
- TPC members as local outreach leads
- Big map exercises, dot exercises, plain language handouts, sticky note boards
- 10 Public Meetings, 150 Individuals, 220 Survey Responses



- ## What the residents had to say...

"I see so many elderly walking to get where they're going. We need sidewalks!!"

"My wife and I do not need public transportation - yet!"

"Transit should run further in the rural areas."

"The elderly need all the help we can get."

Four donut charts are displayed horizontally, each representing a different transportation goal. The first chart, 'Walk More', is dark green and shows 51.3%. The second, 'Bike More', is light green and shows 44.9%. The third, 'Take Public Transit More', is grey and shows 43.7%. The fourth, 'Drive Less', is red and shows 22.1%.

Transportation Goal	Percentage
Walk More	51.3%
Bike More	44.9%
Take Public Transit More	43.7%
Drive Less	22.1%

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY			
			<div>COUNTY COMMISSIONERS</div> <div>CITY GOVERNMENTS</div> <div>PARTNER AGENCIES</div> <div>RESIDENTS</div> <div>VOLUNTEERS</div>			
GOAL 3: Expand Transit Service Availability and Efficiency						
Objective 1: Provide weekend and extended weekday services to accommodate workers and shoppers	5	Transit service providers capable of providing weekend and extended service in Webster County should be identified.			X	
		Partnerships should be developed with employment, retail, and entertainment venues.			X	X
		Transit demand data should be analyzed to determine the most impactful hours of operation for transit providers.			X	
Objective 2: Introduce a mobile app for trip booking and route planning	7	Transit providers should collaborate with local colleges, universities, or tech companies to design a user-friendly mobile app to help transit users easily utilize services.			X	X
GOAL 4: Increase Visibility of Current Transit Services						
Objective 1: Improve user education of existing transit services	6 TIE	A public awareness campaign to raise knowledge of available transit services should be developed.	X	X	X	
		Transit services should be advertised by promoting this public awareness campaign using social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, X, etc.), local radio, television, and print advertising.	X	X	X	X

Success Factors and Lessons Learned

- Partner with familiar non-profits and human service agencies
- Choose accessible venues and survey mediums
- Incentives for completing survey
- Engage in small group or one-on-one discussions
- Iterative public engagement plan
- Share progress, build trust
- “Go where people are”



Excellence in Regional Transportation Award

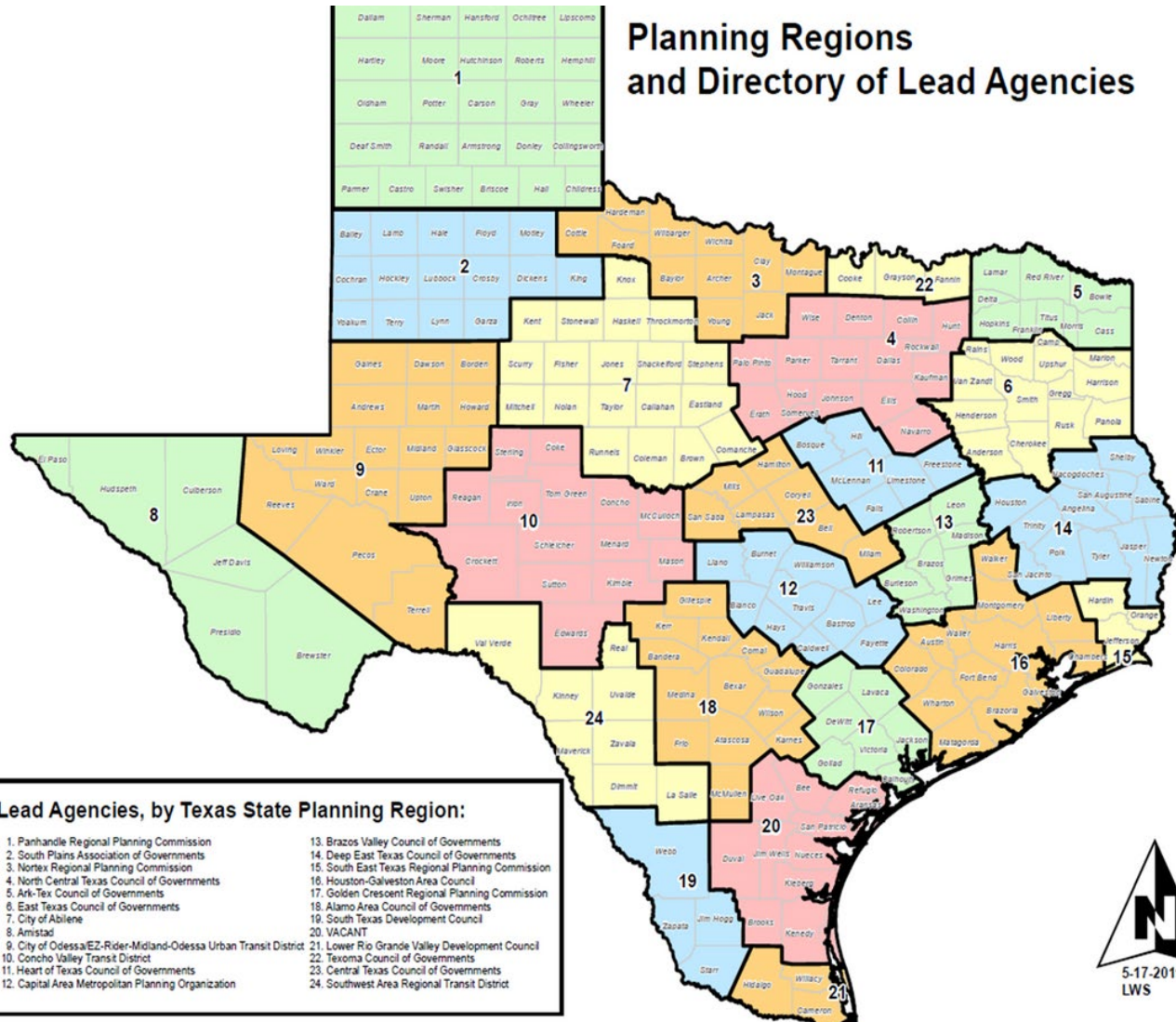
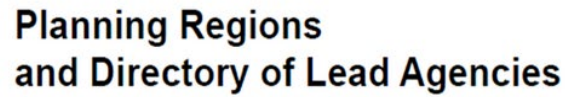




FINAL PRESENTATION



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



Amistad received funding from the NADTC to provide outreach to the rural counties of Region 8 in an effort to plan transportation service improvements in the area.

Amistad committed to creating a survey to be distributed in the rural counties of Brewster, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, and Presidio and coordinate four (4) focus groups in the area to gather the community's concerns.

Engagement strategies included visits to the area twice a month, participating in local outreach events, knocking on doors from business to business, working with community partners.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Area Agency on Aging

Rio Grande Council of Governments

City of El Paso Sun Metro

El Paso County Transportation Authority

South Central Regional Transit District

City of Socorro

New Mexico Family Services

Volar Center for Independent Living

Workforce Solutions Borderplex

Bienvivir

Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend (Focus Group Location)

Centro San Vicente

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization

Region 19

Medical Transportation Management

Sunshine House Senior Center & Meals on Wheels

Alpine Public Library (Focus Group Location)

Ft. Davis Food Pantry (Focus Group Location)

Templo Bautista Emmanuel (Focus Group Location)



CENTRO SAN VICENTE



OUTREACH EFFORTS

Attended Community Organized Events

- Alpine High School Health Fair
- Dell City ISD Migrant Education Program Event

Conducted door to door, business to business outreach

- Targeted all businesses on main streets
- Restaurants, clothing stores, local bar

Connected to agencies that serve the target population

- Food Pantry
- Senior Center

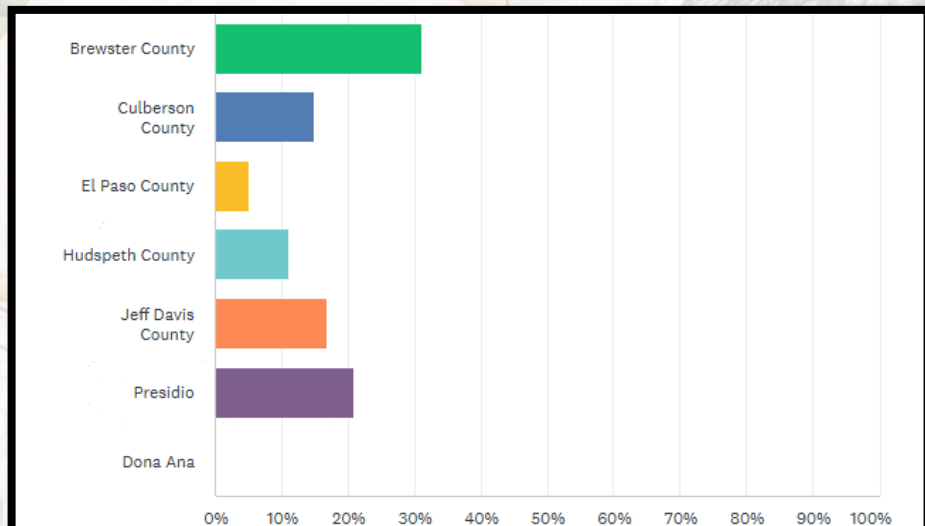
Created a Sub-Committee through WTEP for Rural Area Community Partners, engaged five (5) more partners



WEST TEXAS & SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COMMITTEE



PARTICIPATION DATA

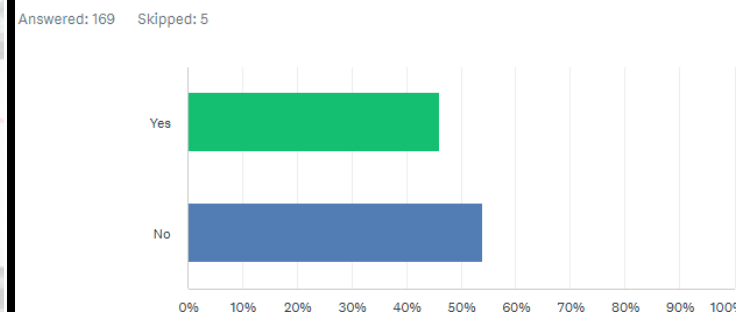


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Brewster County	31.21%	54
Culberson County	15.03%	26
El Paso County	5.20%	9
Hudspeth County	10.98%	19
Jeff Davis County	16.76%	29
Presidio	20.81%	36
Dona Ana	0.00%	0
TOTAL		173

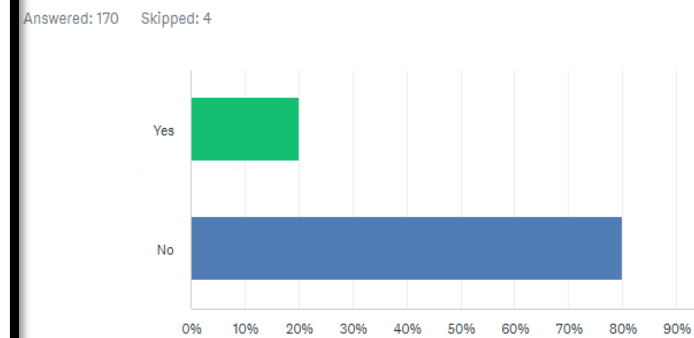
Amistad conducted four (4) support groups (40 participants) & collected 173 survey responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	3.49%	6
25-34	15.70%	27
35-44	14.53%	25
45-54	12.79%	22
55-64	16.86%	29
65+	36.63%	63
TOTAL		172

Has there ever been an occasion in which you were unable to reach a destination due to lack of transportation?



Do you have a disability?



Comments from participants:

"We need every transportation you can provide please!"

"I provide transportation for friends less fortunate because there is no reliable transportation"

"We have none, please bring something"

"The bottom line is, WE ARE FORGOTTEN"

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

MAJOR FINDINGS

SUCCESES:

- Increased collaboration with community partners in the rural communities
- Increased participation in surveys and focus groups after multiple visits and building trust within communities

NEEDS, GAPS, ACCESSIBILITY:

- Constituents in these areas **MUST** travel long distances for access to healthcare and basic necessities.
- Paid services such as UBER do not provide service to these rural counties.
- There is only one shared ride service available and has been reported as unreliable by many constituents and it is high cost (\$50-\$175).
- Constituents rely on family or neighbors to transport them to medical appointments.
- Clients utilizing a whole day to travel to an appointment (8am-11pm)
- Poor infrastructure.
 - Many roads are unpaved and access to homes can be difficult for curb-to-curb services.
 - Main roads are maintained, but others utilized by residents are in need of repair and sidewalks.
 - Poor or no internet connection

What would be helpful for other grantees?

- TRUST is extremely important for community members to open up, which takes time and consistency
- When traveling into the areas, plan during good weather and rent a stronger vehicle
- Travel in teams for support

Next Steps:

Implementation & Sustainability:

- Work with rural community partners to apply for transportation funding
- Advocate for better infrastructure changes in the area
- Continue to engage partners and community members through outreach within other programs such as the Aging, Disability & Transportation Resource Center (ADTRC), 5-Year Regional Plan outreach in the coming year



Cortland County Mobility and Accessibility Plan 2026-2029



Visit Our Website
www.way2gocortland.org

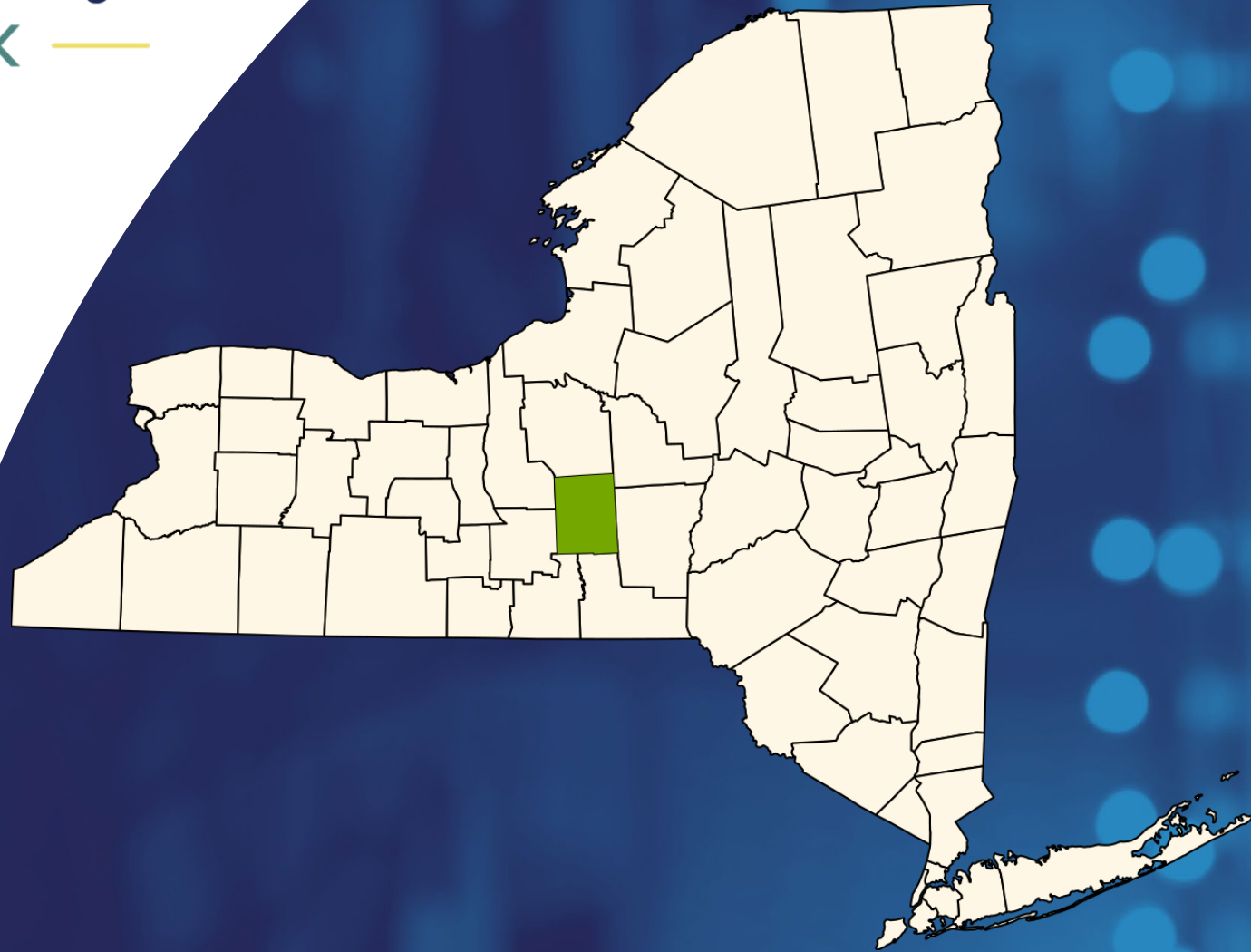




Cortland County

— NEW YORK —

- Rural New York County covering 501.55 square miles
- Population: 45,945
- Predominately agricultural, with vast farmlands.
- The County encompasses: 1 city, 3 villages, and 15 towns
- Median household income: \$67,527
- Poverty rate: 12.81%
- Quintessential rural community in Upstate New York
- Blend of natural beauty and small-town charm



Planning Phase



Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

TAC is comprised of over 15 key stakeholders and agencies works to improve transportation services for residents of Cortland County.



NADTC Subcommittee

Members of TAC that sit on the subcommittee specifically for this grant planning project.



Needs Assessment

Survey was developed and distributed to the partners and community December 2024 - March 2025. There were 237 responses.



Key Stakeholder Interviews

Five (5) Key Stakeholder interviews were completed with NADTC Subcommittee Members.



Outreach Events

Seven (7) community outreach events attended throughout the County.



Community Conversations

Four (4) focus groups were completed. Planning to host a Free Community Conversation and Dinner to engage community feedback in the barriers and gaps identified and proposed solutions at the end of August.

Transportation Advisory Committee & NADTC Subcommittee

Access to Independence

Office for Aging

Catholic Charities

Centro

Cortland Action Program of Cortland County

Cortland County Department of Social Services

Cortland County Health Department

Cortland County Mental Health

Cortland County Legislature

Cortland County Planning Department

Cortland County Mobility Management

Cortland County Grant Administration

Cayuga/Cortland Workforce Development Board

JM Murray Center

Seven Valleys Health Coalition

SUNY Cortland

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Barriers & Gaps Identified



Rural Service Limitations

- Many towns in Cortland County experience sparse or nonexistent public transportation, especially outside the Centro fixed-route and paratransit zones.
- The lack of coverage leaves rural residents with no reliable transit, perpetuating rural isolation.



Transportation Cost Burden

- Rising costs of gas, insurance, and car maintenance are prohibitive for many, especially for low-income households, which report the unavailability of affordable transport.



Lack of Awareness & Coordination

- A significant number of residents are unaware of existing services, such as CAPCO's Volunteer Driver Program and Office for Aging transportation vehicle.
- Service providers lack clarity on available mobility options, leading to underutilization of resources.



Missed Essential Trips

- Approximately 30% of survey participants reported missing a medical or essential appointment in the past three months to a lack of transportation.



Physical Infrastructure Barriers

- Frequent complaints centered on poor sidewalk conditions, inadequate snow removal, and high curbs, which inhibit safe access to bus stops, especially among older adults and those with mobility aids.



Over-Reliance on Informal Networks

- 44% of respondents rely on family or friends for rides, often without a backup option if unavailable.
- Many opt for personal networks over navigating an unfamiliar public transportation system, indicating high dependency on informal support.



Public Transit Accessibility Concerns

- Roughly 30% of survey respondents described fixed-route transit as confusing, unsafe, or inaccessible.



Medicaid Transportation Deficit

- The County lacks a sufficient number of Medicaid-approved transportation providers, resulting in service gaps for eligible individuals who struggle to access non-emergency medical trips.

Strategic Priorities, Solutions & Sustainability



Centralized Access to Mobility Information

Challenge: Many residents and service providers are unaware of the full range of available transportation resources. This lack of information leads to underutilization of services, missed trips, and inefficiencies across programs.

Strategy:

- Expand, strengthen and promote Way2Go Cortland's one-call, one-click mobility access hub to increase its visibility, usability, and community reach.
- Improve user experience on the way2gocortland.org website with updated trip planning tools, eligibility guides, and printable resources.
- Ensure multilingual content and accessibility for residents with disabilities.
- Continue offering direct phone-based assistance through trained staff.
- Promote the hub widely across agencies, clinics, and community centers.
- Provide training to local providers, caseworkers, and front-line staff on how to refer and assist residents using Way2Go Cortland.



Expand Medical & Essential Rides

Challenge: A significant portion of the population, especially older adults and individuals with chronic conditions, report missed medical appointments and delayed access to food and prescriptions due to transportation gaps and barriers.

Strategy:

- Expand volunteer driver programs.
- Develop a mobility management program designed to distribute ride vouchers for medical and essential trips, particularly targeting those ineligible for Medicaid transportation.
- Support partnerships with grocery stores, pharmacies, and local nonprofits to provide subsidized delivery services for residents who are homebound or have limited mobility.
- Launch mobility management pilot programs in collaboration with local health centers to proactively schedule transportation alongside appointments.

Strategic Priorities, Solutions & Sustainability



Enhance Rural First Mile/Last Mile Services

Challenge: Rural isolation continues to be a major barrier to mobility in Cortland County, especially in areas not served by fixed-route transit. Poor first mile/last mile connections inhibit transit use.

Strategy:

- Partner with Local Employers for Last-Mile Shuttles. Coordinate with major employers, and schools to support shuttle service from transit stops to job sites, especially in areas like City of Cortland, Village of Homer, Cortlandville or Village of Marathon.
- Launch “Transit Connector Days.” Pilot special scheduled ride days for rural hamlets (e.g., Tuesdays and Thursdays) with guaranteed trips into Cortland or regional hubs—great for grocery trips, medical appointments, or social services.
- Bike-Share or E-Bike Lending Program in Rural Villages. Offer access to e-bikes or regular bikes with designated loan stations near bus stops or community centers. Include helmets and safety gear. Great for students, older adults, or low-income residents.
- Integrate Greenways and Blueways into First Mile/Last Mile Planning. Leverage existing and planned trails, waterways, and recreation corridors to support transportation access.



Strengthen Public Transit Usability

Challenge: Even when transit is available, usability issues such as unclear signage, language barriers, and limited rider education discourage use, especially among new riders, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

Strategy:

- Host “On the Move” sessions where mobility management staff accompany first-time riders to familiarize them with the system.
- Strengthen “Mobility Meet-up” program, designed to collaborate with agencies to develop a consistent presence in the community. In turn, community members learn to contact Mobility Management staff for questions regarding the transportation options available to them in Cortland County

Strategic Priorities, Solutions & Sustainability



Recruit & Retain Volunteer Drivers

Challenge: A shortage of available drivers limits the capacity of both volunteer and on-demand transportation options. Rural areas are especially impacted due to long distances and fewer willing drivers.

Strategy:

- Incentivize local residents to become Lyft or Uber drivers, particularly in rural areas, through outreach campaigns, signup events, and fuel or maintenance subsidies.
- Build partnerships with churches, schools, veterans' organizations, and civic groups to recruit volunteer drivers from trusted community networks.
- Provide training, background checks, insurance assistance, and scheduling software for volunteers to reduce barriers to participation.
- Create a volunteer driver recognition program to honor contributions and encourage retention.



Improve Accessibility, Walkability & Bikeability

Challenge: Inaccessible infrastructure, ranging from icy sidewalks, to missing curb cuts and disconnected bike routes, creates significant safety and mobility challenges, particularly for individuals using mobility devices, older adults, and parents with strollers.

Strategy:

- Conduct seasonal accessibility audits to evaluate sidewalks, curb ramps, bike lanes, bus stop areas, road and bike infrastructure and pedestrian crossings throughout the county.
- Partner with municipal departments to develop a prioritized repair and upgrade schedule for critical zones, focusing on high-need areas such as those near healthcare centers, senior housing and public transit hubs.
- Collaborate with the Cortland County Planning Department and municipalities to include accessible designs for walkability standards into new developments and renovations.
- Support the development of "Safe Routes to Transit" and "Complete Streets" plans that emphasize safety, equity, and accessibility for all modes, including people walking, rolling, biking or using transit.
- Expand multimodal and micro-mobility access. That includes support infrastructure for alternative transportation options.



Thank You



Melissa Potter, MPH, Mobility Manager
Lillian Jensen, Mobility Coordinator
Morgan Spaulding, Grant Administrator



mobility@cortlandcountyny.gov



www.way2gocortland.org



Way2Go Cortland





Transportation Challenges in Rural Maine: On the Road in Aroostook County

A project supported by the
National Aging & Disability Transportation Center

Aroostook Agency on Aging

Aroostook County Health Improvement Partnership

About Aroostook

➤ Larger than Rhode Island and Connecticut combined

➤ Crown of Maine

➤ Population: 67,351

➤ 26.2% aged 65 and older

➤ 21% living with a disability



What did we do?

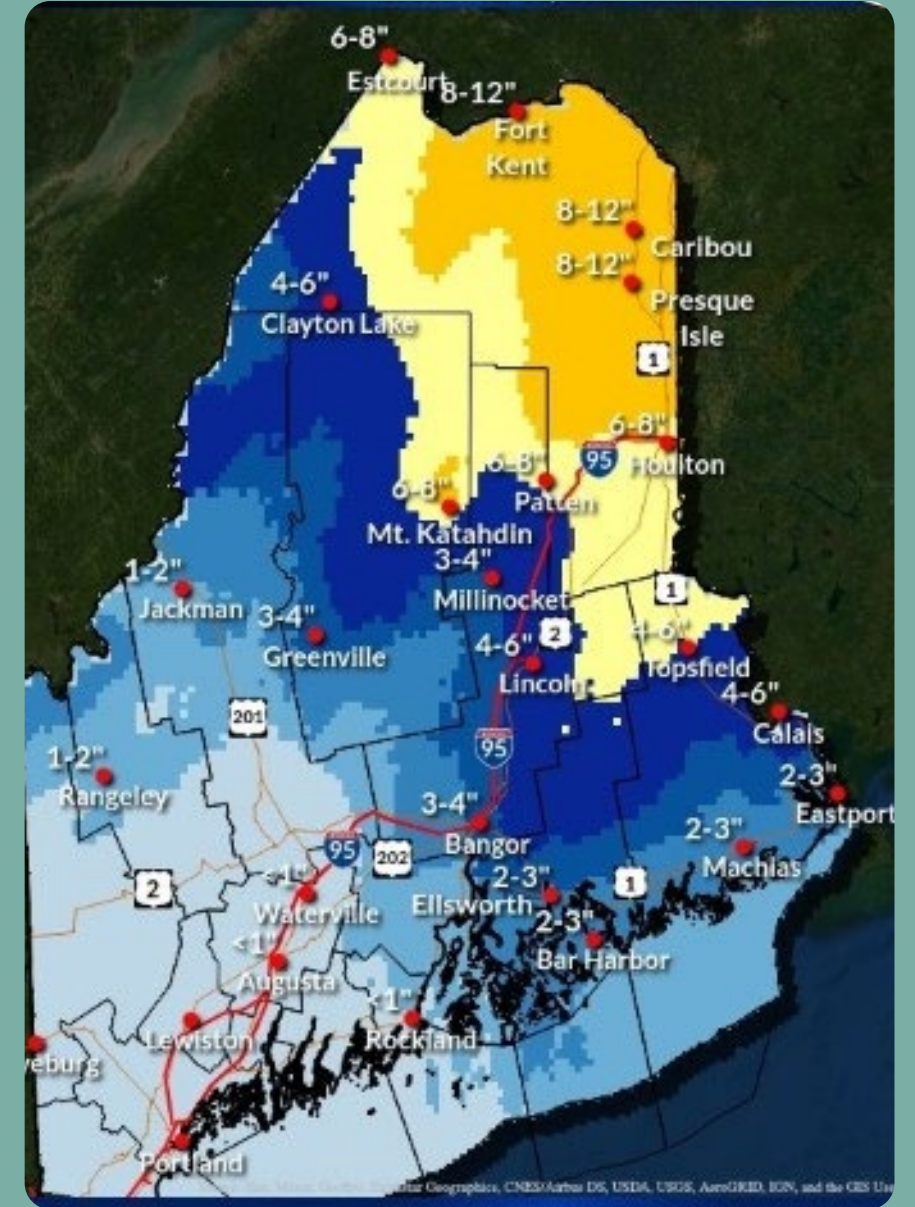
- **Surveys**
 - **200+ Completed**
- **Focus Groups**
 - **3 sites, 1 attendee**
- **Follow up interviews**
 - **19 Conducted**
- **Community meeting**
 - **1 site, 39 attendees**



What did we discover?

Challenges/Needs

- Out-of-County transportation
- Weekend & after-hours transportation
- Public transit: awareness
- Weather conditions & night driving



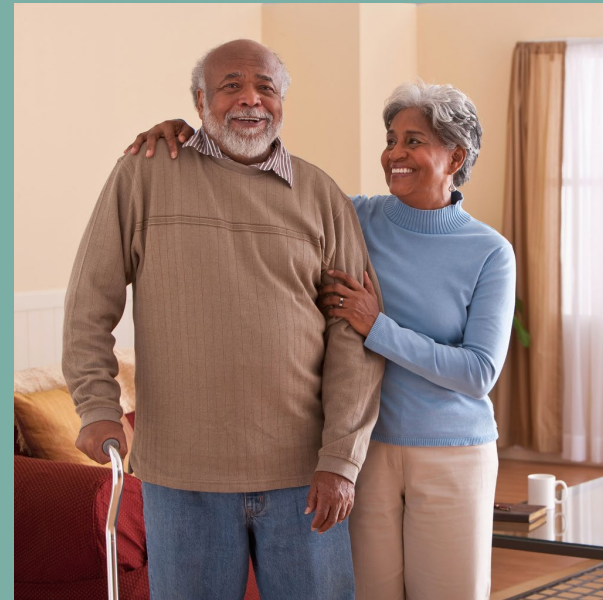


STORIES

❖ Rhonda

❖ Shirley

❖ Roger





What did we learn?

- Set partner expectations at start
- Survey lessons

What's next?

- **Summit**
 - **County-wide**
 - **Connect/Reconnect**
 - **Collaboration**





Thank you!



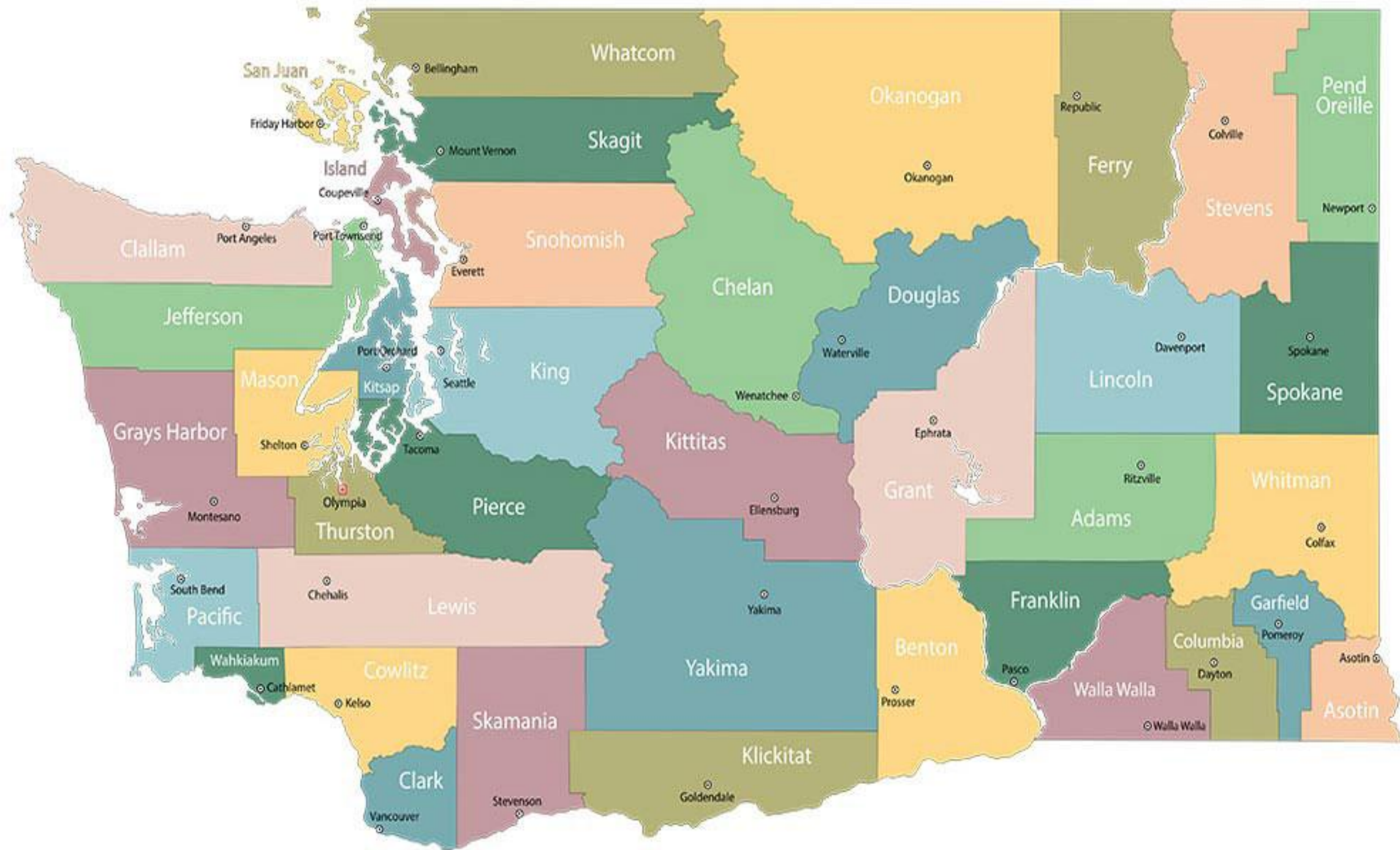
Photos courtesy of Christopher A Mills Photography
Houlton, ME

Snotrac
Snohomish County
Transportation Coalition



Skykomish Valley Transportation Action Plan

NADTC - August 18/19







Engagement efforts

1. **Committee**
2. **Survey**
3. **Focus Groups**
4. **Community Kickoff**
5. **Community Open House**

Committee

Community Transit

Homage Senior Services

Snoqualmie Valley Transportation

City of Monroe Human Services

City of Sultan Administrator

City of Sultan Community Development

City of Gold Bar Mayor

City of Gold Bar Public Works

Snohomish County Council Legislative Staff

Snohomish County Sheriff's Target Zero

WSDOT

Monroe School District

Sultan School District

Skykomish School District

Sultan Boys & Girls Club

Monroe Library

Sultan Library

Arc of Snohomish County

Center for Independence

Courage to Change

North King County Mobility Coalition

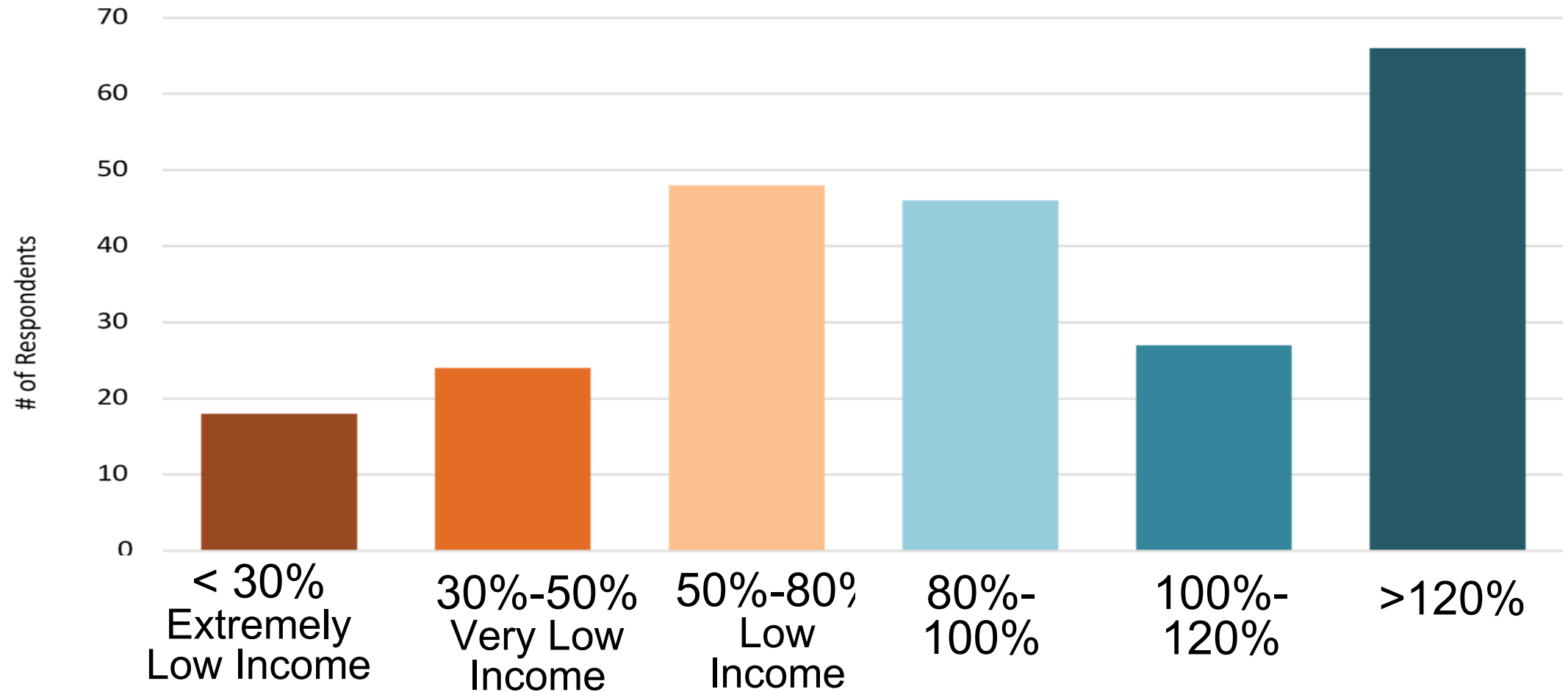
Ideal Option

Survey efforts

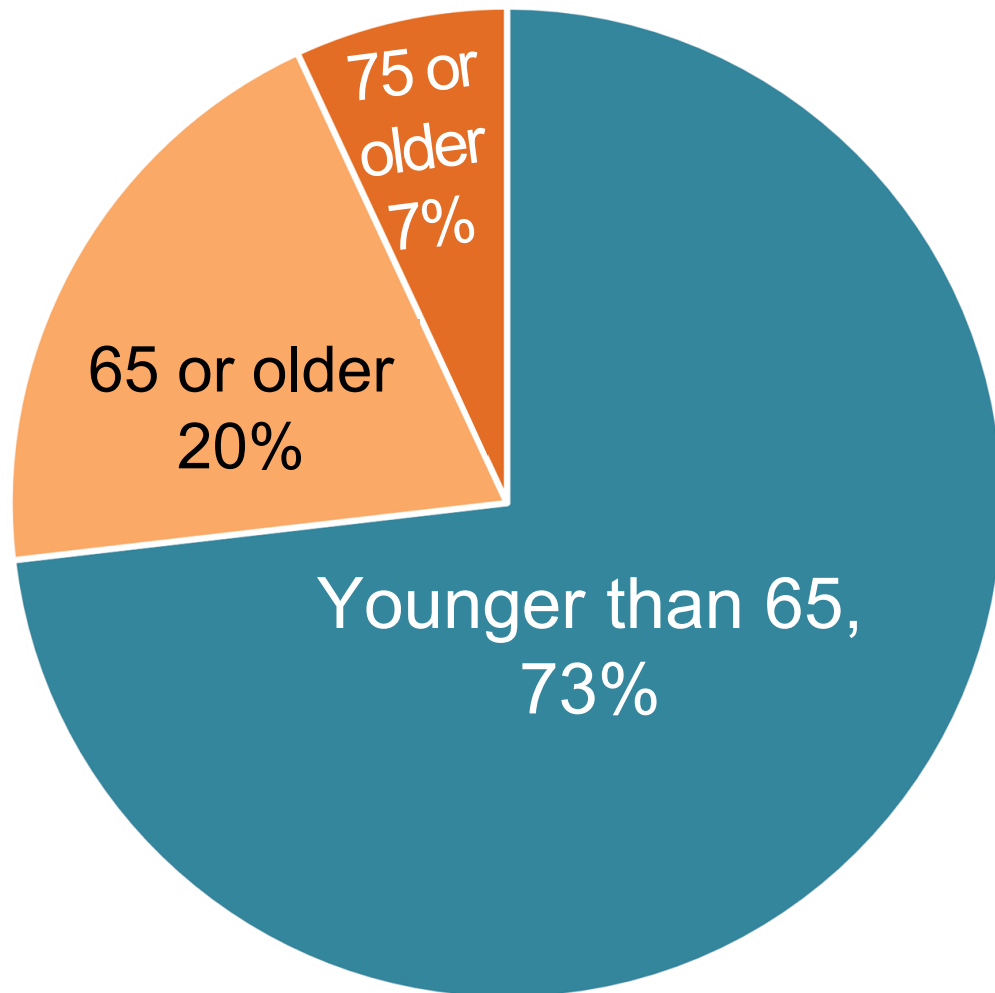
1. **Mailed postcards to 10,684 households**
2. **Partner organizations included messages in e-newsletters and social media posts**
3. **Posted to Facebook groups focused on Skykomish Valley**
4. **Distributed postcards fliers at social service nonprofits**
5. **Put up fliers in civic and other public spaces.**
6. **Press release sent to local media outlets.**

Survey results

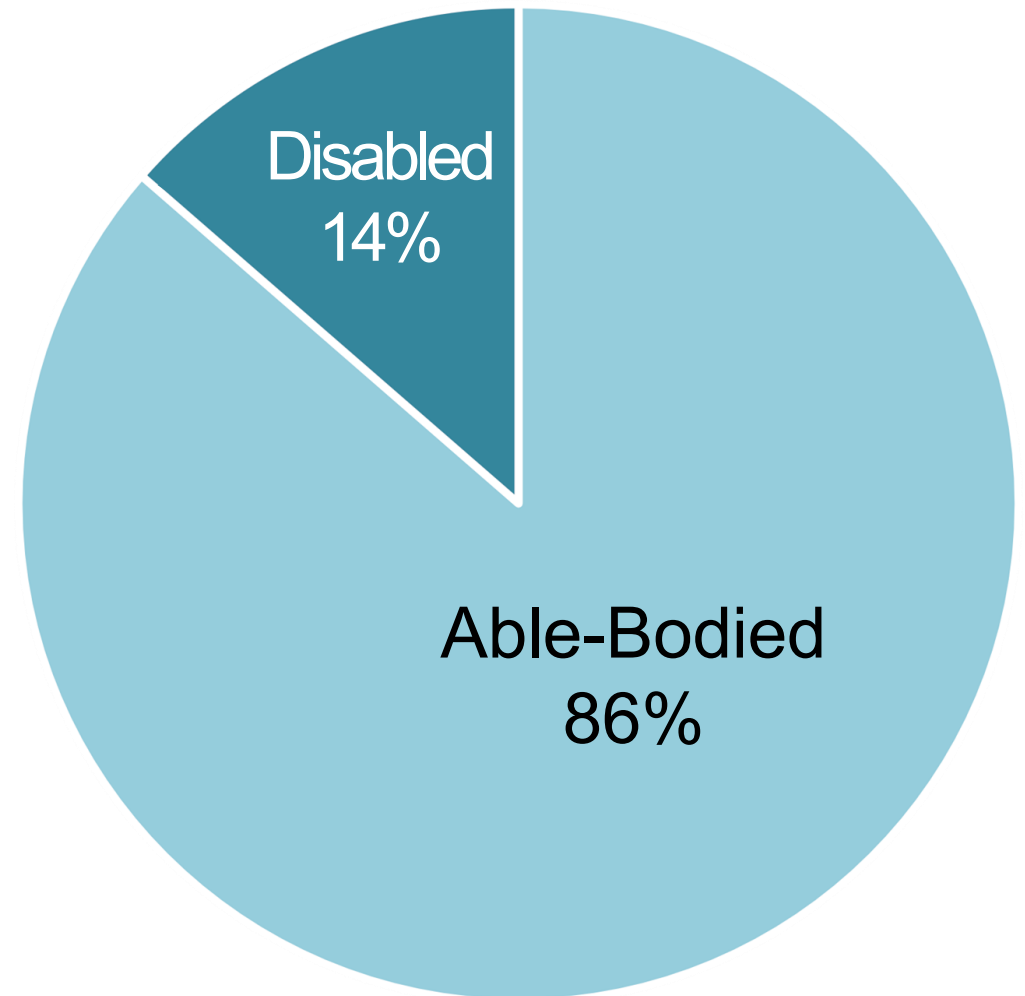
Income Brackets of Respondents



Percent of Respondents who are of Older Age

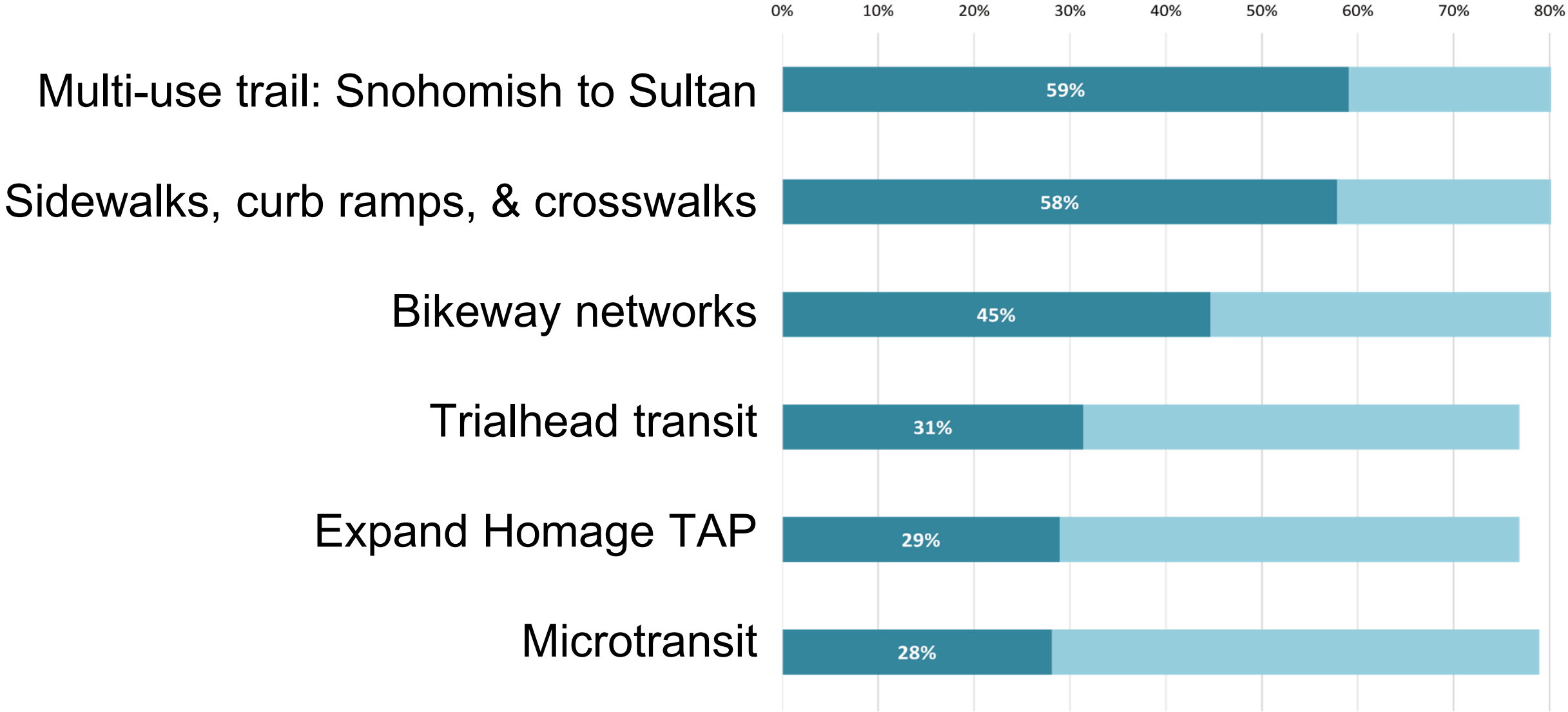


Abilities of Respondents



Desired Solutions, All Respondents

High Priority Medium Priority



Desired Solutions, continued

High Priority Medium Priority

Flex-route service: Monroe to Skykomish

24%

Community Vans

24%

Extend Route 270/271 to Skykomish

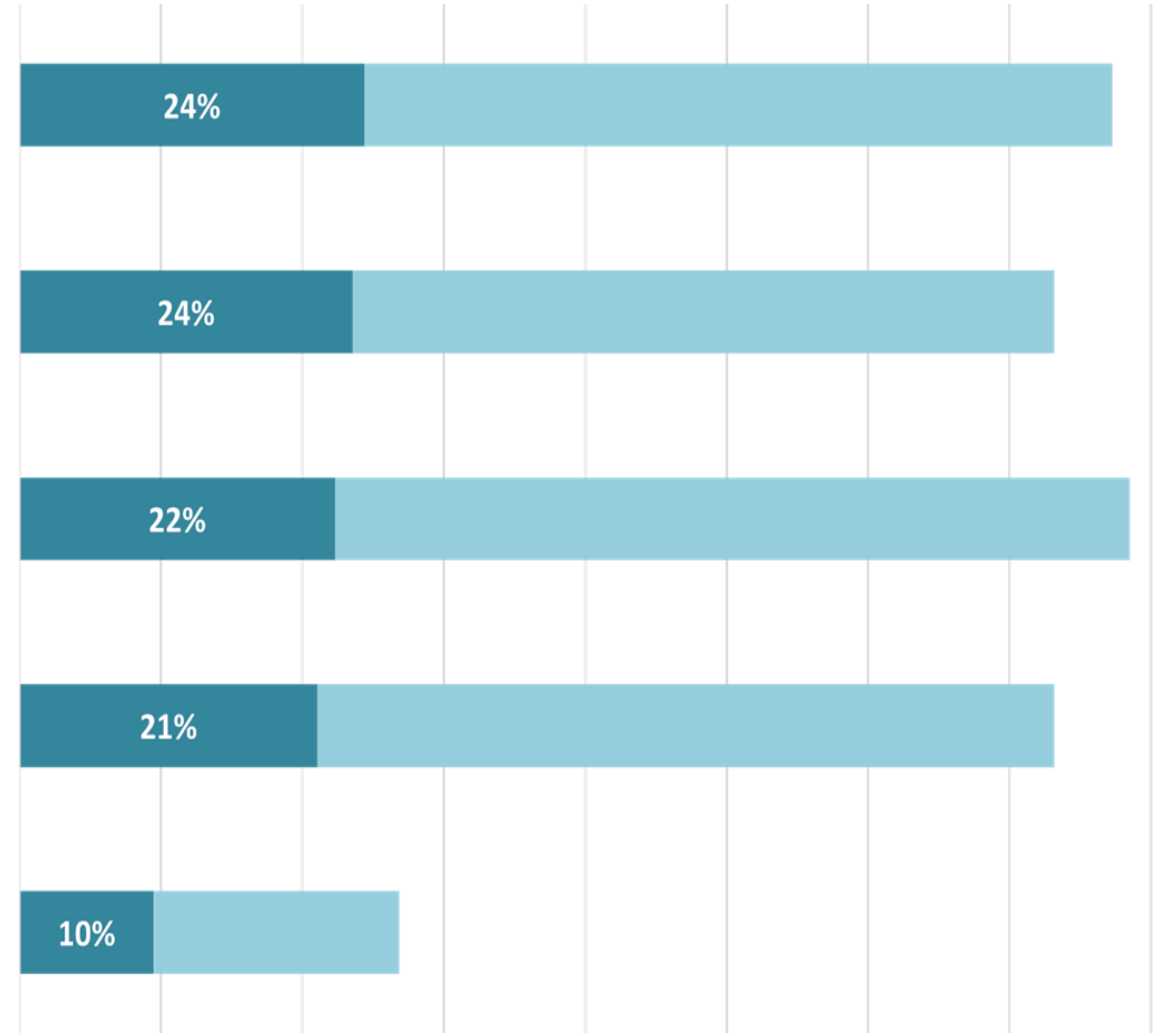
22%

Expand volunteer driver program

21%

Other

10%



Recommendations, continued

- 1. Improve in-city pedestrian & bicycle networks.**
- 2. Pilot microtransit service.**
- 3. Build roundabouts in Sultan.**
- 4. Provide travel training at senior center.**
- 5. Advocate for Amtrak stops.**

Recommendations

- 6. Community Vans.**
- 7. Strengthen Homage TAP.**
- 8. Pilot Trailhead Transit.**
- 9. Explore flex-route to Skykomish.**
- 10. Multi-use trail.**

Penquis C.A.P. Northern Penobscot and Piscataquis County, Maine

Expanding General Public Transportation – A community informed approach

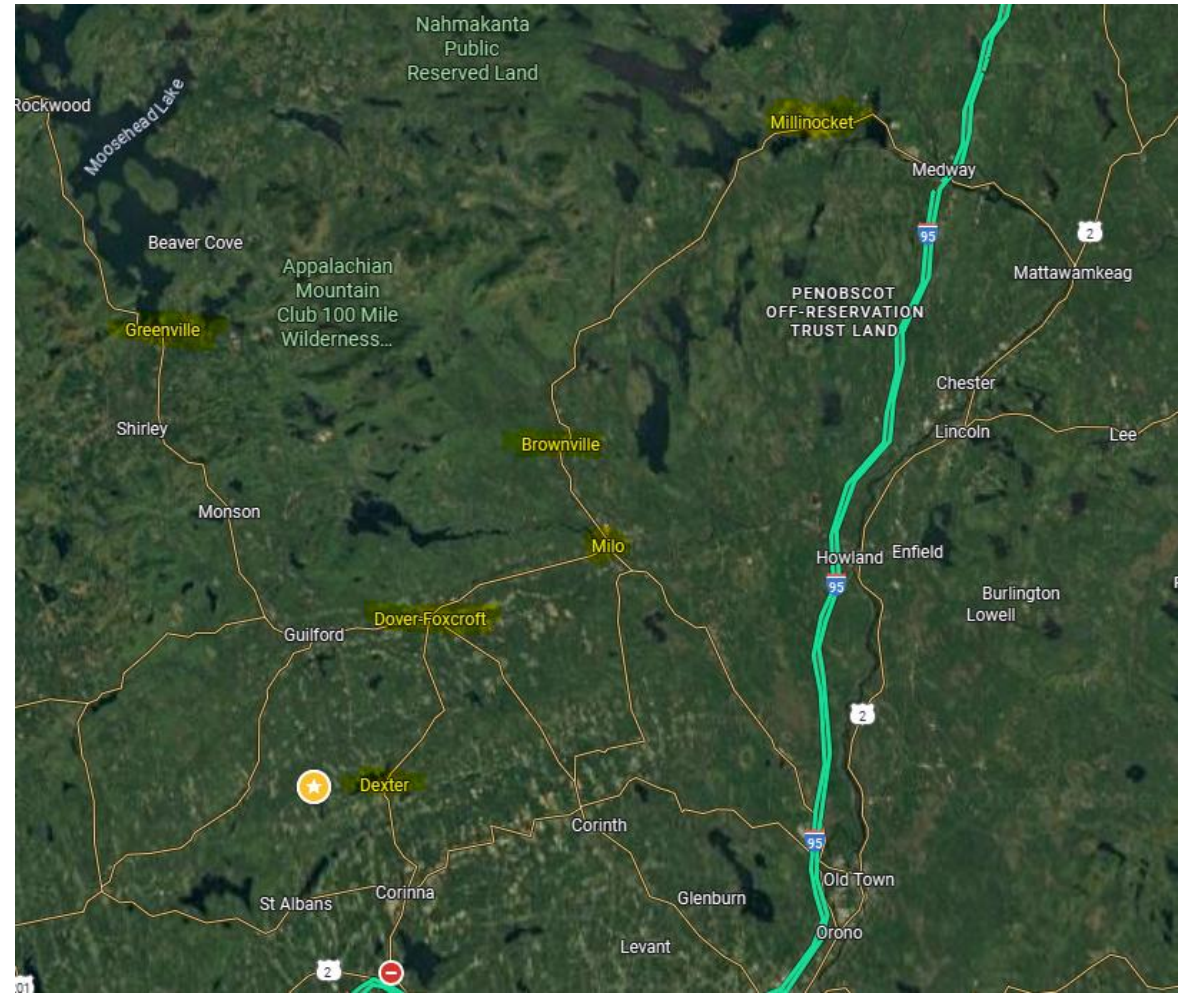
Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties

Landmarks:

Mt Katahdin: 5,271 Ft (Northern Appalachian Trail Terminus)

Moosehead Lake

100 Mile Wilderness



Our Approach to Inclusive Planning

- Advisory Committee
 - Targeted a familiar person as local lead
 - Built out advisory from outspoken attendees in local meetings
 - This promoted geographical diversity across the target region
- Local focus – each town is unique
 - Greenville wanted transportation to other hubs
 - Dover and Milo wanted to get transportation throughout the county for work

Local Advisors and their Roles

Name	Role(s)	Town of Residence
Joy Russell	Rider	Brownville
Karen Cloherty	Rider	Dexter
Liz Breault	Librarian / Community Leader	St. Albans
Paul Bligh	Rider with multiple perspectives	Greenville
Ron Dobz	Potential Rider – Leader	Greenville
Jane Danforth	Community Leader	Millinocket
Mary Kaplan	Rider	Millinocket
John Marden	Librarian Resource Center	Millinocket
Sue Mackey Andrews	Community Leader	Dover-Foxcroft
Teresa Hall	Local AAA Case Mgr.	Milo
Randy Burton	Rider	Milo
Laurie Carver-Estes	Rider	Milo
Margaret Pinette	Rider	Milo

What Worked and What Didn't

- Social media works in some towns but not in others (internet access)
- Paper flyers work in some towns but not in others
- Incentives were not persuasive
- Surveys were effective for our ridership but less so for outside community members
- Comfort in sharing experiences required rapport building
- Smaller groups supported more meaningful conversations



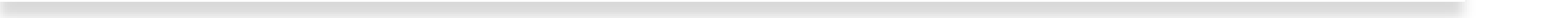
Data Collection and Outreach

- Sent surveys to current riders and shared at community meetings
 - 34% return rate for surveys out of 388 sent
 - 92% of them fell in at least one of the target demographics
 - 71% of them have transportation needs Monday-Friday
 - Additional Data learned through meetings:
 - Peoples stories, concerns and questions
 - What next:
 - Continue surveying
 - More community meetings
 - More permanent advisory meetings
-

What we Learned



We need:

- Better communication for after hours transportation
 - To do more community engagement to build trust
 - Rework all of our documents, brochures, policies to be more accessible
- 

Implementation Activities Underway

- New General Public Brochure Developed
 - Soft release to see interest and concerns
 - Press release to our service area
 - Email and mailing sent to partners and advisory members
- Continued planning for community meetings in the future
- Reworked all documents for Lynx transportation
- Hired four more agency vehicle operators



Wrap Up:

- Our goal was to reduce transportation barriers for people to stay healthy and connected to their communities
 - Increased accessibility for everyone to stay connected to their communities in our coverage area
 - Created lasting relationships with community members & agencies throughout our region (EAAA, Thrive Penobscot, Helping Hands with Heart)
 - 5311 funding will grow along with our ridership
 - Additional work is needed to shore up sustainable funding
-

EXPANDING THE ACCESS PROGRAM

A REGIONAL MICRO TRANSIT SERVICE



Franklin Regional
Council of Governments

NATDC Final Presentation

August 19, 2025



Location of Project:

Franklin County, Massachusetts

**The most rural region
in Massachusetts**

Includes 26 towns

**Average town
population of 1,700**

**Population profile is
growing older at a
high rate**







CHARLEMONT TOWN HALL

TOWN OFFICES

TYLER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
OCT18 6PM HAWLEMONT

PARKING

Planet

UNLEADED DIESEL
352549

Project Details:

Objective and Scope of Work

Objective

The Access Program is a micro-transit service operated by the regional transit authority in 11 towns in Franklin County, MA. There are 15 other towns that are not currently served.

The objective of this project is to determine the needs and steps to **expand the Access Program** to service additional towns **and satisfy unmet transportation needs**.

Scope of Work

- Robust Engagement to **gather input**
- Assess future needs to **identify steps for growth** in the service
- **Identify next steps** and barriers

Project Details:

Public Engagement



2 Advisory Groups were engaged



8 Focus Groups were held



1 Survey (distributed on-line and through paper surveys)

Project Details:

Public Engagement

Advisory Groups

Called on two existing groups to provide input on project:

- Franklin Regional Transportation Planning Organization (FCTPO)
- FRTA Transportation Advisory Committee (FRTA TAC)

Focus Groups

Conducted 8 Focus Group sessions with assistance from Lifepath, Public Health Nurses, Regional Mass in Motion Age Friendly Program, and Senior Centers/Councils on Aging (COA) to engage participants.

- A total of 55 people attended

Survey

Distributed the survey on-line and paper via email list serves, newsletters, town public health nurses, Meals on Wheels deliveries, senior centers/councils on aging activities/outlets, and social media.

- 100 responses received



Advisory Groups



Focus Groups



Survey

Project Details:

Public Engagement



Needs and Gaps

- Rides to medical appointments outside of the county
- Rides on weekends
- Better dissemination of information on existing resources and eligibilities

Issues and Constraints to Expanding

- Fear of unfamiliarity and change
- Funding for rides across RTA borders
- Funding availability at the municipal level

Project Details: Findings



- There are **unmet needs** for transportation in the most rural towns in Franklin County.
- **Social connections** are important.
- People want to **age in their homes**.
- New **cross-collaborative partnerships were invaluable** (Regional Public Health Nurses, Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers and COAs).
- Important to use **online and paper surveys**.
- Code the hard copy surveys **before distribution!**

Project Details:

Next Steps



Two towns were identified as potential candidates for Access service expansion.

- Finalize the **preliminary cost data**.
- Develop a **marketing strategy to overcome fears**.
- Further develop **promotional campaign ideas**:
 - "Meet your driver".
 - "Local leader uses the Access Program".
- Conduct **travel training** with the Senior Centers/COAs.
- Need to "sell" Access Program to **Town Administrators and Town Meeting Voters**.

Thank you!

Contact:



Beth Giannini

Transportation Program Manager

giannini@frcog.org, (413) 774-3167 x 125



Megan Rhodes

Livability Program Manager

mrhodes@frcog.org, (413) 774-3167 x 132

The Arc Chemung-Schuyler

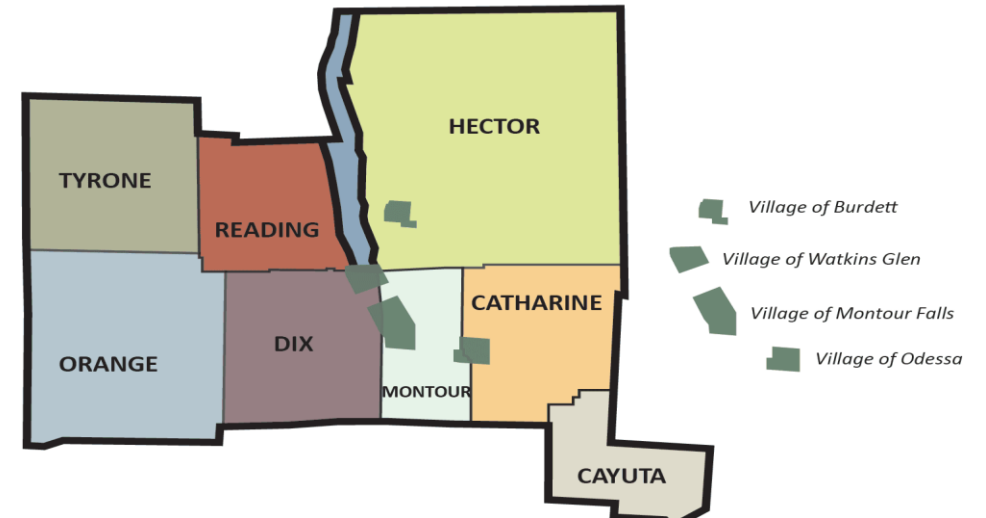
2024 Rural Community Innovations: Transportation Planning Grant

FINAL PRESENTATION



Schuyler County, NY

- 328.3 sq miles
- Divided almost in half by Seneca Lake
- 2nd smallest county in NYS, 11th Least Populated in the NY
- 17,749 people, 54.5 people per square mile
- 22% over 65
- 15.1% Disabled
- 8.9% Veterans
- 13.4% suffer severe housing problems
- 15% at or below Poverty Level
 - 8.9% of those are over 65 YO
- 4.12 % Uninsured, 22.5% on Medicaid, 17.4% Medicare



Building the Advisory Committee

Name	"Their Deets"
Jen Lyn Fisher, The Arc	Mobility Management & Link Line Call Center
Dorothy "Dotty" Asbury, The Arc	Transit Operations & Management
Sal Garozzo, The Arc	CEO, largest provider of services for persons with I/DD in our area
Crystal Kawski, Veterans Services	Represent Veterans
Joan Lindstrom, Schuyler County	Community Planning and Economic Development
Liv Lovejoy, Southern Tier Regional Planning	Sustainability & Planning
Catherine Oberlander, NY Connects	Services & Supports in NYS for people of all ages with any type of disability
Tammy Waite, Office For The Aging	Represent people over 55 and Volunteer Drivers
Frank Doldo, Tompkins County	Transit/Transportation Planning & Sustainability
Nico Piacentini, WG Chamber of Commerce	Employer relationships, economic development
Ashley Kerrick, Catholic Charities	Represent people in poverty
Rae Anne Widmer-Mason, CSS Workforce NY	Represent transportation barriers to employment
Amy Hurd, Centralis Health	Hospital Discharge Planning
Wendy Shutter, The Arc & Later SCOPED	Economic & Community Development/Transit Planning
Debbie Ball, John Ball, Monda Ayers, Wendy Wirth, Jessica Perkins, Mike Cook, Carol Mikoda, Tammy Doane, Barbara Berghoff	Community Members & Transportation users in the community who have disabilities and/or are older

"Being on this committee gives me something to be proud of. I feel like I am a part of something."
-Jessica



Pictured:
Jessica Perkins,
Transit User &
Committee
Member
And
Sal Garozzo,
CEO, The Arc
Chemung-
Schuyler

Outreach Efforts & Methods to Engage

Surveys

- Mass mailed post card with QR Code & Community Meeting Schedule
- Hand delivered to post offices, banks, organizations, libraries, etc..
- Shared on busses, By Phone, and mailed by request

Advertising Blitz

- Public Billboards in our communities
- Digital and in print newspapers, including our weekly free newspapers
- Local radio & TV News Stations, Automated Phone calls, Social Media
- Tabling at community events



Outreach Efforts & Methods to Engage



Sought “Buy In” from local partner agencies to spread the word and get their clients and participants involved.

Three (3) Community Meetings Scheduled

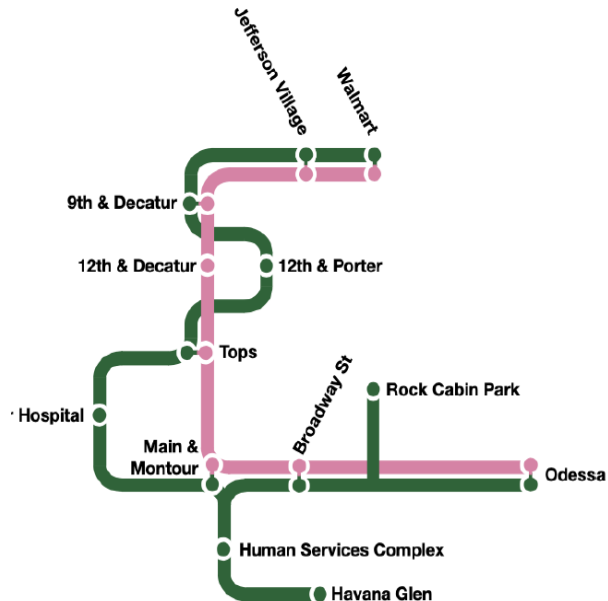
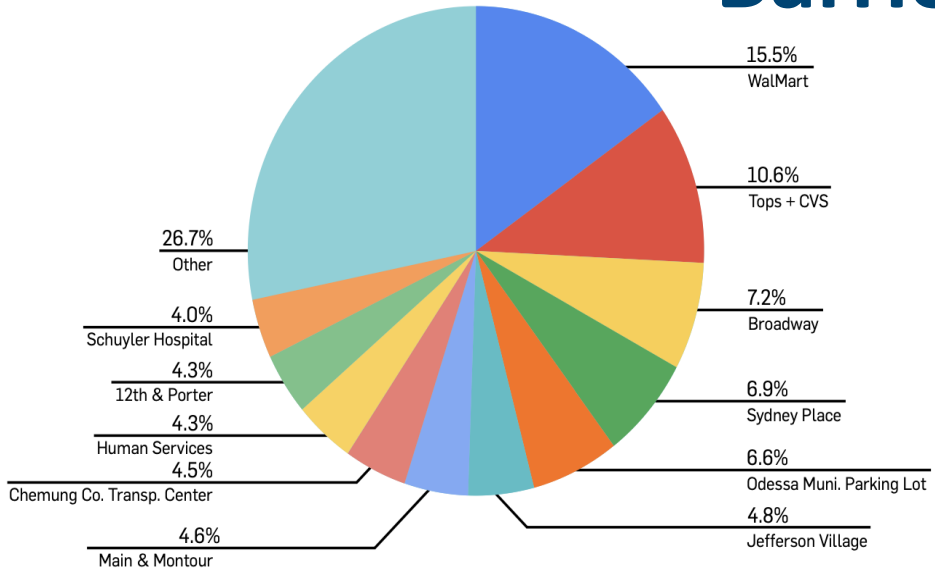
- We brought the meeting to them, in their communities
- Free Transportation provided
- Included engagement activities
- Incentivized by including door prizes drawn at the end of each meeting

Focus Groups

These were designed like the community meetings, but planned to be smaller, drilled down versions



Barriers and Areas of Need



Vs.

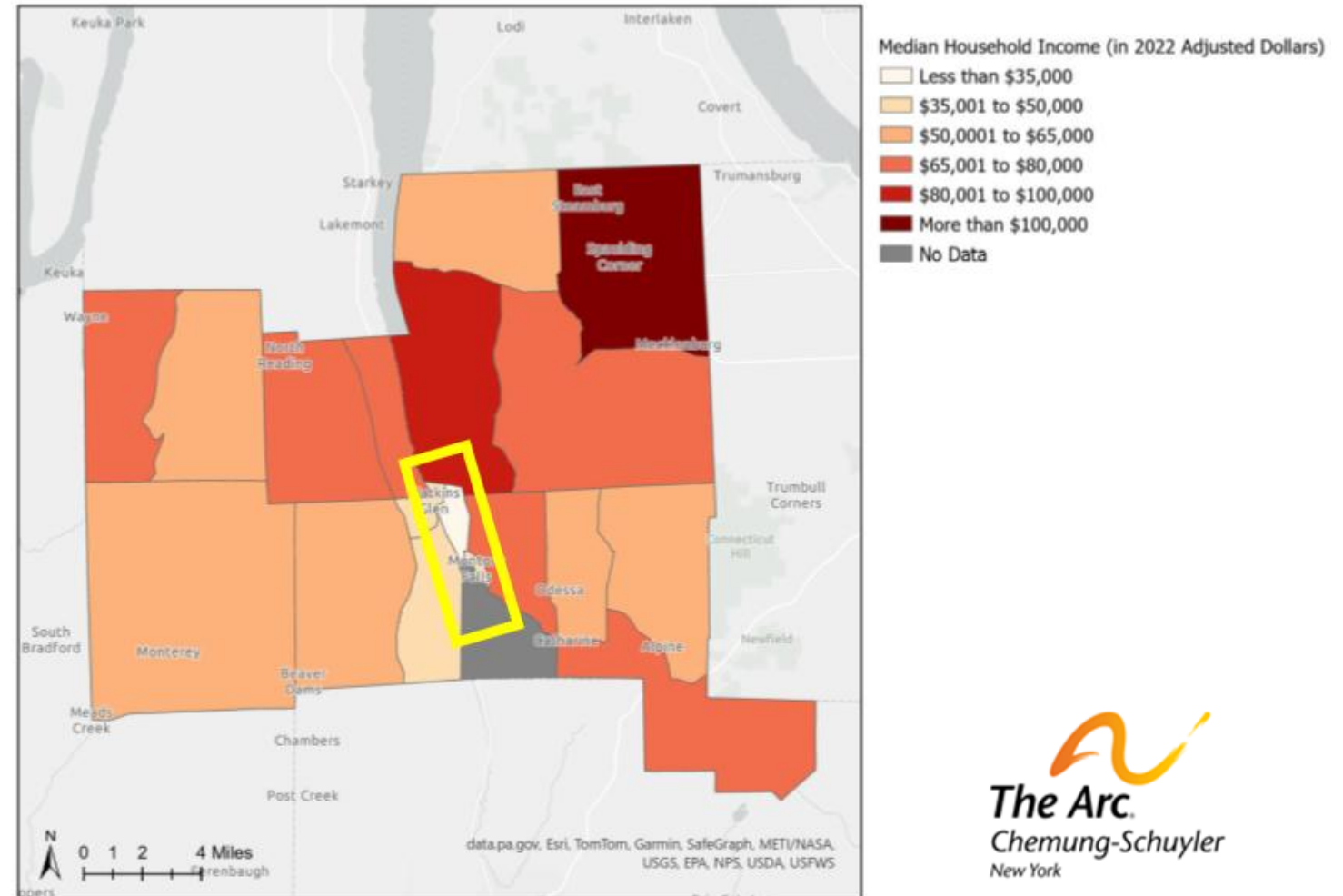


- Improved Service Hours
 - Weekend Service
 - Expanded Dial a Ride Hours
 - Improved Cross System Connections
- Shorter Routes/Express Routes
- Fare Free System
- Driver Recognition/Uniforms/Consistency
- More Easily Accessible Busses
- Service Education / Awareness

What We Learned

- People who use/need transit the most are very well served with all transit routes traveling in the most economically challenged areas (yellow box)
- The areas at the peripheral of our county are higher income, dual car households
- We did not see a demand for fixed route, micro transit, or same day service in the more rural areas – only expanded Dial a Ride Hours – in these more rural areas
- Weekend service, shorter routes, and no fares were top identified barriers

Median Household Income In Schuyler County, NY by Census Block Groups, In 2022 Inflation Adjusted Dollars



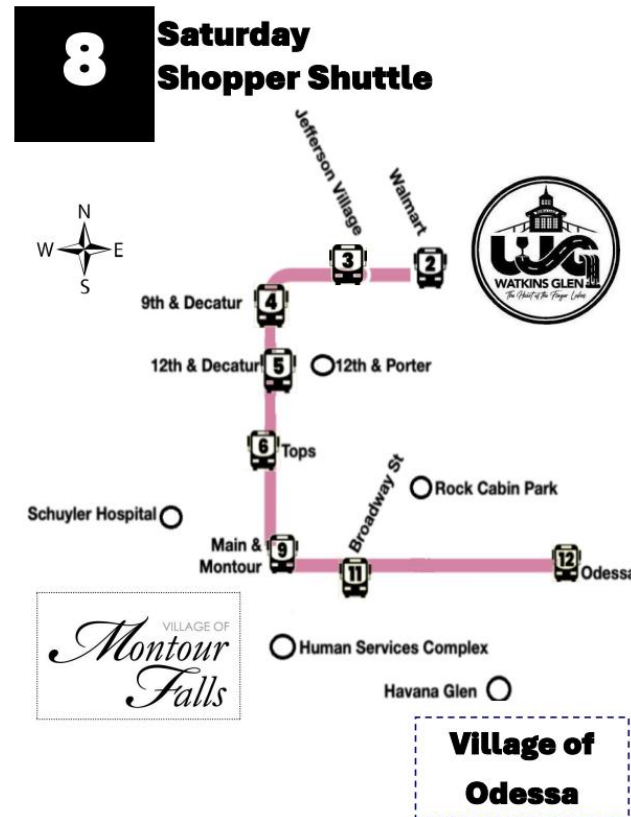
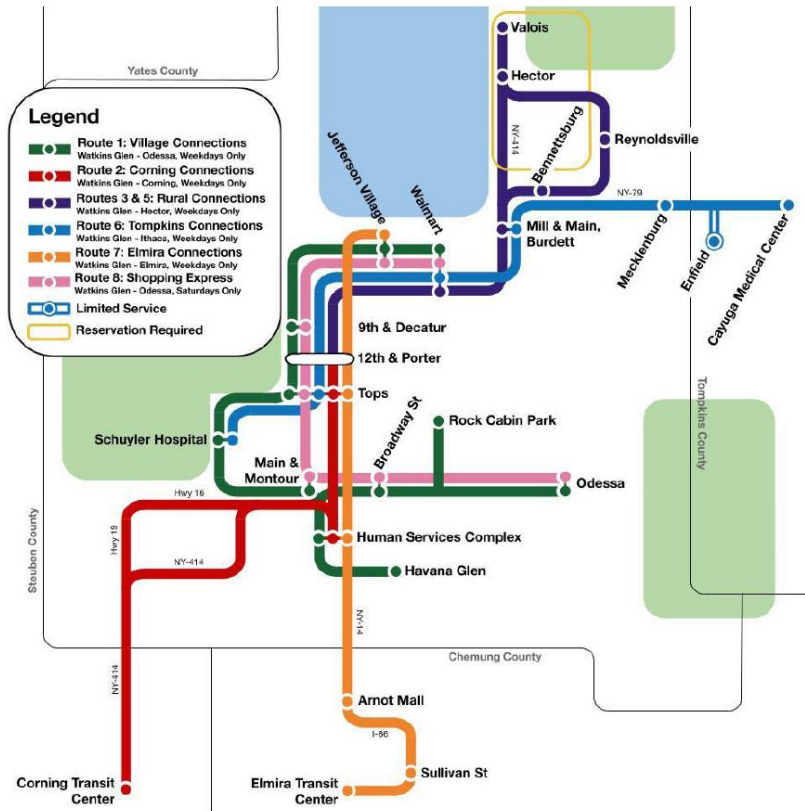


Project Challenges

Engagement is Hard!

- Even by holding the community meetings and focus groups in their communities, with free transportation, people still didn't participate.
- We couldn't get them to come to us, so we went to them!
 - First, we started spending time at the Silver Spoon Café (a congregate meal site for older people) local food banks, church dinners, and Veterans Coffee Talk meetings to conduct impromptu focus groups and gather survey responses.
 - Then we partnered with Office for the Aging, Veterans Services, Workforce NY, and other human services agencies to spread the word almost "one on one"
 - Lastly, we started cold calling and knocking on doors. We created engagement packets that we hand delivered that included a pilot implementation project based on feedback so far.

Implementation: *Testing a new service*



✓ Saturdays (pink)

✓ Shorter Route

✓ Free Fares



Next Steps

1. The Urban and Regional Planning Program (AAP Design Connect) at Cornell University will be conducting a Bus Shelter Study in the Fall/Winter 2025-2026
2. Apply for NRTAP Community Rides Grant – Due 8/29/2025 – for up to \$100,000
 - a. Plan for Year Long Pilot of the Route 8 Shopper Shuttle
 - b. Fare Free System
 - c. Expand Dial a Ride to Monday through Saturday to operate the same times and the Village Connections and Shopper Shuttle Routes
3. We started partnering with local human services agencies to budget a transportation line item to sustain a fare free transit system and expanded Dial a Ride
4. Working with Tompkins County to sign a contract to allow us to modify the Tompkins Connections Route 6 to go to downtown Ithaca and meet the TCAT System for better commuting from Schuyler County to Tompkins County (Cornell has approximately 24,000 employees) where many of our community members work.



Thank You





Rural Montana Transportation Program

Transportation Mission Statement:

To bridge the transportation gap in rural Montana, including Native American reservations, by providing reliable ADA-compliant transportation, enabling access to education, health care, employment, and community, by ensuring their right to mobility and inclusion for aging and disabled individuals.

- Expanding Access Across 18 Counties
- Presented by: Tina Carter, Transportation Coordinator
- Jen Hawkinson-Regional Manager
- Date: 8/19/2025



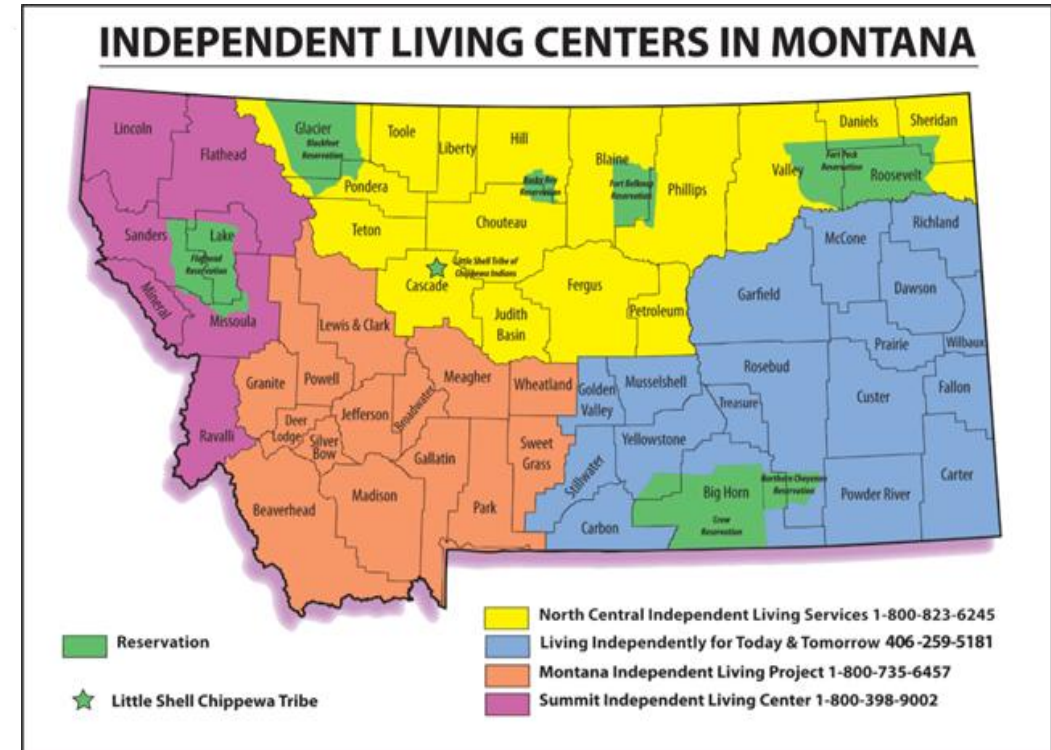
Vastness of Eastern Montana





Service Area Map

Our Service Area Covers:
47,302 sq. miles
Slightly larger than PA &
Slightly smaller than MS





Vision Statement

Empowering aging and disabled individuals to LIFTT themselves above the barriers of life.

Mission Statement

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow's (LIFTT) mission as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Center for Independent Living serving Southeastern Montana is to empower aging and disabled individuals to live independently through education, support, and opportunities.

COMING IN SPRING 2026



Outreach & Promotion

Media Campaigns:

- **Lee Enterprises/Amplified Digital** deployed a campaign for LIFTT using transportation grant funds in January 2025. The campaign includes tactics such as Meta ads (Facebook/Instagram) and Google paid search.
- (Pay-Per-Click), premium impressions on the Billings Gazette's website (billingsgazette.com).
- Partner Posts on the Billings Gazette's Facebook page.
- The campaign is currently pacing at 122.9% to plan, which is slightly up from the last reporting period.
- Local C7 TV Show
- Extensive Grassroots Outreach
- Flyers



**Lillian R. Patterson
Roe Carpenter & Mark Fuller
Dawson County Senior Center**



**Johanna Brutlag & Myrna
Athans
Grandview Retirement Home,
Glendive, MT**

- **521 Surveys collected from the 18 counties we serve to assess transportation needs.**

- **Age Range 65+ 209 people**
- **Disability 255 people**
- **Target Population:**
- **50 & Up 335 people**

Survey & Focus Group Insights

Key Findings from 7 Focus Groups on Rural Transportation Needs

Most Pressing Transportation Challenges:

- Limited Mobility for Elderly Residents: In rural areas with low population density, elderly individuals without personal vehicles face significant barriers to mobility.
- Access to Essential Services: Transportation difficulties hinder access to critical services such as medical appointments and grocery shopping.
- Glendive-Specific Issues: Residents in Glendive struggle to obtain necessities, highlighting the broader transportation challenges in similar rural communities.

Survey & Focus Group Insights, cont.

Key Findings from 7 Focus Groups on Rural Transportation Needs

Desired Service Improvements

- Accessible Transit System: Participants expressed a strong need for a dedicated transit system tailored to the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- Focus on Essential Destinations: The proposed service should prioritize transportation to medical facilities, grocery stores, and other essential locations.

Challenges, Successes, & Failures

- **Main Challenge:** Difficulty in getting participants for focus groups.
- **Initial Success:** Many people were encountered during the survey phase.
- **Reluctance to Participate:** Despite initial contact, people were hesitant to join focus groups.
- **Scheduling Efforts:** Eight focus groups were scheduled with a total of 40 participants.
- **Attendance Issues:** Some focus groups had to be canceled due to low turnout.
- **Outcome:** Completed the focus groups and received valuable feedback.
- **Goal Achievement:** The original goal was five focus groups, and this was exceeded despite the challenges

Challenges, Successes, & Failures

Biggest Success: Completion of the ADA Accessible Transportation Program surveys.

- **Target:** 300 surveys.
- **Actual Completed:** 521 surveys — **221 over the goal.**
- **Key Contributors to Success:**
 - Nurses, Caregivers, Hospitals, Managers of assisted living and retirement homes
- **Reason for Strong Response:** These contributors recognized the importance of the initiative and actively encouraged participation.

Failures of Non-Existence Transportation

(From Jen Hawkinson, Regional Manager)

- Critical Need:** A man required transportation from Glendive to Miles City (75 miles 1 way) for dialysis **three times a week**.
- Lack of Options:** He was **unable to find a ride**, highlighting a major gap in transportation services.
- Life-Threatening Consequence:** As Jen Hawkinson emphasized, *"Without dialysis, he dies."*
- Catalyst for Change:** This case became a **key motivator** for the creation of **LIFTT's transportation program**, underscoring the urgency and importance of accessible medical transportation.

Failures of Non-Existence Transportation

•(From Monica Anderson, LIFTT Outreach Specialist)

•**Urgent Medical Need:** A resident of an assisted living facility in Ekalaka needed to travel to Billings (3 ½ hours, 1 way) for a specialist appointment.

•**No Transportation Available:** The lack of transportation options prevented him from making the trip.

•**Tragic Outcome:** His condition worsened, and he **ultimately passed away**.

•**Preventable Loss:** Monica Anderson emphasized that this death **might have been prevented** with timely access to care.

•**Program Justification:** This case further highlights the **critical need** for LIFTT's transportation program.

Next Steps

- Secure a location & build our transportation facility
- Coordinate with local transit providers
- Develop a scheduling system tailored to rural needs
- Launch pilot routes with ADA vans
- Secure Sustainable Funding



Contact Us:

Tina A Carter

Transportation Coordinator
LIFTT- Living Independently
for Today and Tomorrow

www.liftt.org

119 S Kendrick Ave

Glendive, MT 59330

Email: tinac@liftt.org

Direct Line: (406) 948-1503

Fax: (406) 377-3733

Jen Hawkinson

Regional Manager
LIFTT – Living Independently
for Today & Tomorrow

www.liftt.org

119 S Kendrick

Glendive, MT 59330

Email: jenh@liftt.org

Direct Line: (406) 948-8503

Fax: (406) 377-3733

"We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center for their strong support in helping us secure this grant. This is a tremendous opportunity for Eastern Montana and will undoubtedly have a positive and lasting impact on many lives."

Benzie Transportation Authority

Presentation of Findings
August 19, 2025



Benzie Bus Service Extension Plan FY2026

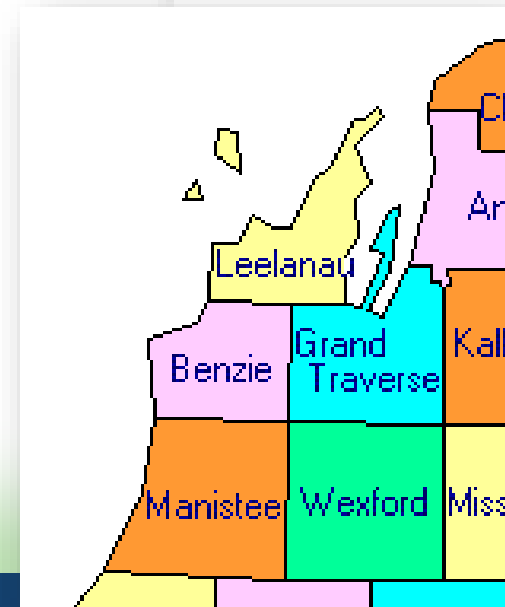
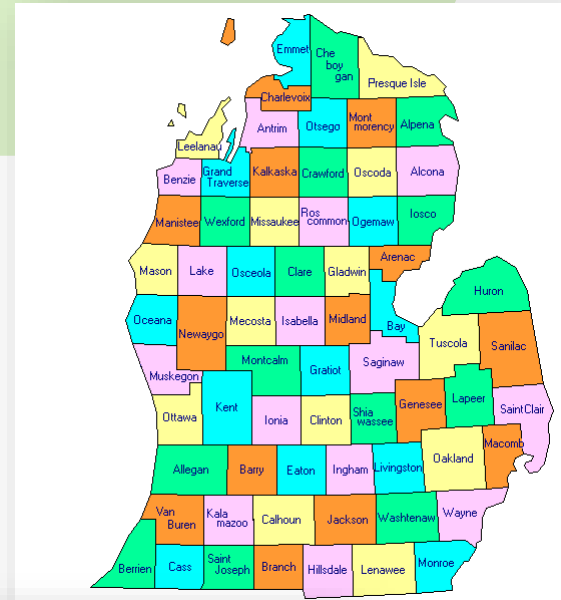
Enhancing Health Rides for a Healthier, More Connected Benzie County

Presented by Rob Scott, Mobility Manager
Benzie Transportation Authority (Benzie Bus)
August 19, 2025

Project Overview and Location

Expansion of Access in Benzie County, NW Michigan, and statewide

- **Goal:** Expand Health Rides to improve non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and community access.
- **Timeline:** FY2026 enhancements (Oct 2025–Jan 2026) and Rides to Wellness (R2W) transition by FY2027.
- **Location:** Benzie County, MI, with regional service to Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Manistee, and Wexford counties.



Listening to Our Community

- Engaged 450+ residents via:
 - Surveys
 - focus groups
 - community meetings.
- Formed a 10-member advisory committee with diverse representation (healthcare, seniors, disabilities).



Community Engagement Efforts



Outreach methods: Sponsored and organic social media/digital media placement, direct mail, feedback sessions at community events, in-person and virtual meetings

Participation: 60% older adults, 25% people with disabilities, 15% caregivers/providers.



Key Findings and Needs

Understanding Community Needs

- **Gaps in service:** 3-day Health Rides schedule leads to 20–25% trip denials, causing missed appointments.
- **Accessibility:** Rural geography and lack of Sunday & evening service limit access to work, worship, and care.



- **Health Equity:** Older adults and people with disabilities face barriers to preventive care.



Proposed Solutions and Timeline

Q1 FY2026 (Oct 2025)

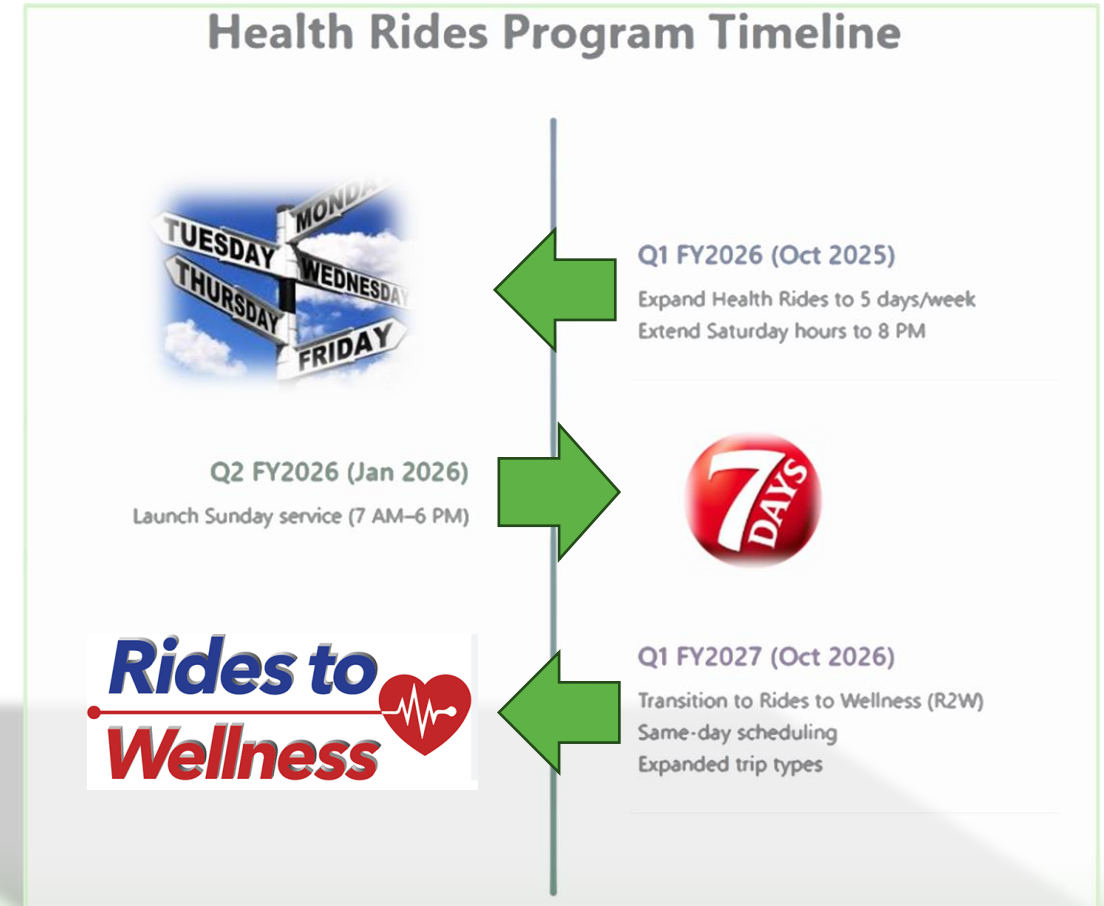
- Expand Health Rides to 5 days/week
- Extend Saturday hours to 8 PM

Q2 FY2026 (Jan 2026)

- Launch Sunday service (7 AM–6 PM)

Q1 FY2027 (Oct 2026)

- Transition to Rides to Wellness (R2W)
- Introduce same-day scheduling
- Expand trip types



Implementation & Performance Metrics

Making It Happen

- Staffing: Add 1 FTE driver (Q1), 2 FTE drivers (Q2), 0.5 FTE dispatcher (FY2027)
- Fleet: Purchase 3 AWD minivans/SUVs and 1 wheelchair-accessible van (\$205,000).
- Funding: 2024 millage, FTA 5310 grants (New Freedom)
- Metrics: Reduce trip denials to <10%; track ridership via Ecolane platform



Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Sharing Our Success

- Lesson: Awareness builds trust and engagement, improved outcomes.
- Lesson: Partnerships with healthcare providers enhance engagement, coordination and funding.
- Recommendation: Engage stakeholders early; use mixed outreach (digital, print, in-person).
- Recommendation: Leverage FTA resources for rural transportation planning and funding.





Contact Information

Call toll-free: 866.983.3222

Email: contact@nadtc.org

Web: www.nadtc.org

**Find us on Facebook, Twitter,
YouTube & LinkedIn!**

