

Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan

Regional Planning Commission of Jefferson,
Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St.
Tammany, and Tangipahoa Parishes



2020-2022



Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Regional Planning Commission

Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany & Tangipahoa Parishes

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Acronyms

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
CCCD	Crescent City Connection Division of the LADOTD
CMAQ	Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvement Program
DHH	Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
STAR	St. Tammany Area Transportation
JeT	Jefferson Transit
JARC	Job Access Reverse Commute – 43 U.S.C. 5316
LADOTD	Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NACTO	National Association of City Transportation Officials
NEMT	Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RPTA	River Parishes Transit Authority
RTA	New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SBURT	St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
UWR	United We Ride
FAST Act	Fixing Americas Surface Transportation Act

Executive Summary

The Regional Planning Commission has developed this 2020-2022 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, the purpose of which is to:

- 1) Describe the transportation needs of low-income, elderly, and disabled populations in the New Orleans metropolitan areas, and the challenges of providing effective transport to these populations and
- 2) Present a series of locally developed goals, objectives and strategies for confronting and overcoming these challenges

The first chapter serves as an introduction to these themes by providing a background of Coordinated Planning at the national, state, and local level beginning in 2004 up to the development of this document. This latest plan, the fourth created by the Regional Planning Commission, includes a strategic planning component first introduced in 2018.

This diversity of strategies in the plan reflects that of the varied group of stakeholders who contributed to their development. These stakeholders include representatives from transportation providers from the public, private non-profit, and private for profit sectors, advocacy groups for the transportation disadvantaged, and representatives from municipal, regional and state governments, all of whom have participated to some degree in the Coordinated Transportation Planning Advisory Council described in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three describes the transportation assets of the region and primarily focuses on the major providers of public transportation. Descriptions include fleet size, annual ridership and passenger trips, governance, geographic coverage, and summaries of fixed and paratransit service (if applicable). Chapter Four lists and summarizes known major funding sources for public and human services transportation.

In order to identify the needs and challenges of coordinated transportation, this plan takes a two-fold approach. The first is data driven, presenting a geographic and demographic picture of our community and those who live in it. The second approach is derived from the input, observations, and expertise of our planning partners and stakeholders from throughout the region, many of whom personally or professionally face these challenges on a daily basis. These approaches are presented Chapter 5 (Needs Assessment).

This assessment of needs and challenges has led to a set of goals and objectives, described in Chapter 6. The goals and their related objectives have been divided into three categories, though with the recognition that they are complementary in nature. These categories include 1) Improving Accessibility and Mobility; 2) Taking Stock of our Community, and 3) Managing Mobility. Each category includes a series of strategies that have been proposed, developed, and prioritized by the Coordinated Council. Chapter 7 includes performance measures for tracking progress toward these goals.

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan is to identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those with lower incomes, and to identify and prioritize strategies for meeting those needs. The primary reason for this goal is to promote transportation equity among those who may otherwise be transportation disadvantaged. This purpose also supports managing resources efficiently and effectively, fostering cooperation among agencies and organizations, and creating economic development opportunities.

Promoting Transportation Equity

While transportation disadvantaged most obviously describes the physically impaired, it also can include those with mental disabilities, the elderly, as well as those who, because of personal or family economic circumstances, are unable to afford and maintain reliable personal transportation.

In order for these populations to enjoy the independent living and full participation in society that the general population has it is critical that they are provided transport that is suited to meet their needs. Such transportation options are as diverse as the populations they serve and the travel needs those populations have. This range of services may include public transit fixed-route service, specialized demand response, paratransit, ridesharing, taxi cabs, and volunteer drivers. The trip purpose itself can vary from access to employment, medical care, childcare, education, recreation, social visits, among many others.

Key Elements of a Coordinated Plan

- *An Assessment of Transportation Needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with lower incomes*
- *An inventory of service providers that identifies areas of service (public, private, and nonprofit)*
- *Strategies and activities to address the identified gaps in service and achieve efficiencies in service delivery*
- *Identification of coordinated actions that eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources*
- *A discussion of priorities to be met by the plan, and a process for establishing future priorities*
- *A process for continued coordination planning*

Managing Resources Efficiently

The cooperation that comes from a coordinated effort can serve to develop strategies that will address gaps in coverage as well as eliminate duplication of service. When possible, it can also allow for the sharing of resources. The resultant increase of efficiency and the creation economies of scale can result in lower operating costs for many transportation providers, an important benefit given the often low amount of resources and funding available. Perhaps more importantly, coordination can increase the quality of life to those most in need of transportation by providing improved service at lower costs.

Fostering Cooperation

The Coordinated Planning process involves the mutual effort of human service agencies, transportation providers, workforce development agencies, the public, and others. A coordinated planning effort requires communication between these entities, and as such can also provide a venue for the sharing of perspectives and specialized expertise that different agencies, organizations, and individuals have to offer. Communication between stakeholders may also reveal previously unknown funding sources. Finally, a centralized planning effort can serve to increase the visibility of available transportation resources and funding sources to stakeholders and to the community as a whole.

Creating Economic Development Opportunities

Improving special needs transportation can create access to employment, job training, shopping, and other services for those who otherwise may not have such opportunities. Achieving the goals of the coordinated plan may therefore serve to promote self-sufficiency and equal opportunity for employment of individuals thereby contributing to the economic health of the entire community.

Background to Coordinated Planning

National History of Coordinated Planning

On February 24, 2004, President George W. Bush signed executive order 13330 establishing the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. The order called for the formation of a Council on Access and Mobility, consisting of 11 Federal departments, charged with coordinating 62 Federal programs that provide funding for human services transportation. The council developed a report that recommended the most effective means of facilitating inter-agency transportation coordination, focusing on reducing inefficiency and duplication of services, simplifying access and mobility, and the most efficient use of available

resources. FTA's United We Ride (UWR) program, also begun in 2004, provided grants for coordinated planning at the state level and formulated a self-assessment tool to assist states and regions in developing coordinated plans.

The Federal Transit Administration, following guidance put forward in the 2005 *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), requires, as a qualification for certain FTA funds, regions to develop as part of their Metropolitan Transportation Planning activities a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. The Regional Planning Commission began the Coordinated Planning process early in 2007.

This coordinated planning effort continues to be an emphasis area under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Coordinated Planning in the State of Louisiana

Efforts toward coordinated planning in the State of Louisiana formally began in 1992 when Governor Edwin Edwards signed an executive order creating the Inter-Agency Transportation Coordination Council (IATCC). The IATCC was charged with the collection of transportation data and the development of recommendations for coordination. While many of the recommendations that came out of this effort went unheeded, the framework that was established dovetailed with FTA's 2004 United We Ride initiatives. In 2005, with a UWR grant awarded to the state under Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, a statewide task force developed the Louisiana Action Plan for Statewide Coordination.¹ Regrettably, this plan also went unimplemented, in large part due to the disruptive effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In 2011, the Louisiana legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution 131. HCR 131 created a human services coordinated transit work group with participation by representatives from a diverse group of stakeholders from throughout the state. The working group identified six issue areas for future study: data standardization, uniformity of service standards, funding, crossing of jurisdictional boundaries, reporting standards, and statewide governance of a coordinated effort. While it remains to be seen where this effort will lead, the RPC intends to continue working with its partners to develop a permanent statewide coordination framework.

History of Coordinated Planning in the New Orleans Region

The initial Coordinated Planning process in the New Orleans region began in early 2007. It was agreed at this time that the Regional Planning Commission would continue to be the lead

¹ The *Louisiana Action Plan For Statewide Transportation Coordination* can be viewed at www.dotd.la.gov/intermodal/transit

agency in this planning process and that a set of goals and objectives would be created and reviewed by stakeholders and by the public. The result of this process was the *Interim Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*, dated April 2007.

In early 2009 work began on an update to the Interim Coordinated Plan. The majority of participants at this time were either individuals or representatives of agencies that participated in the 2007 meetings. During the update the RPC reiterated the meaning of Coordinated Planning, re-emphasized its importance for the region, and gave old and new stakeholders an opportunity to provide input toward the updated plan. The plan was released in October of that year.

The 2013 Coordinated Plan built on the communication, data collection, identification of common objectives, and development of a shared knowledge base from the previous six years before it. It also introduced the results of strategic planning sessions that identified specific activities that serve to implement an updated set of goals and objectives. Finally, the 2013 Coordinated Plan introduced performance measures that will contribute to the monitoring of human services transportation in the region and allow practitioners and planners to adjust strategies accordingly.

The 2018 plan built upon this already strong framework with updated demographic information and service provider inventories that will allow for better forecasting of transportation trends and needs by planners and service providers.

In early 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic began to disrupt life across the United States and the New Orleans region. Under normal circumstances, this latest update of the Coordinated Plan would be the result of many in-person interviews and group planning sessions. However, with transportation providers struggling to meet the daily needs of their clients, and the limitations imposed by social distancing measures, RPC Staff decided that a cursory update of the 2018 plan would be most appropriate at this time.

While demographic information and vehicle inventories have been updated from the 2018 document, the larger goals, objectives, and planning initiatives remain largely the same.

We look forward to revisiting this document in 2022 when, hopefully, conditionals will allow us to provide a comprehensive review and update of the 2018 Plan. Until then, RPC will continue to work closely with our transportation partners and support them as the Covid-19 situation evolves across the state.

2. The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Advisory Council

2.1 Structure

The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Advisory Council (Coordinated Council) is made up of representatives from public transit authorities and agencies, non-profit and for profit transportation providers, local governments, and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. Quarterly meetings of the committee are hosted by the Regional Planning Commission. The format of meetings focuses on providing all represented entities an opportunity to update fellow committee participants on their agency or organization's activities, to raise and attempt to address concerns their constituents have encountered in acquiring transportation, and to develop strategies and prioritize funding for projects that improve transportation for the transportation disadvantaged as well as the general public.

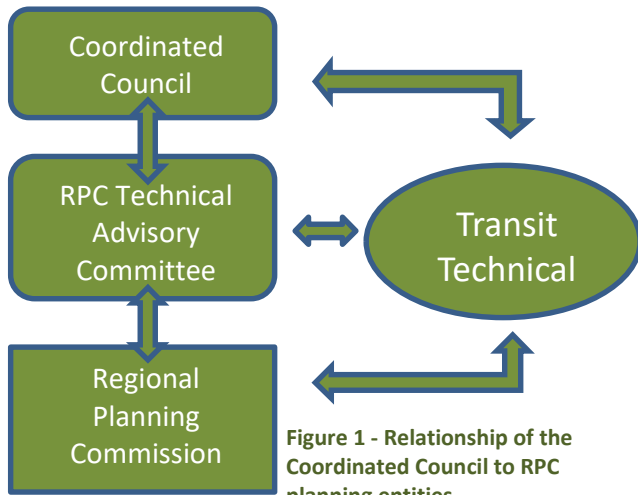
Due to Covid-19, RPC has used *GoTo Meeting* software for our quarterly meetings. LA-DOTD Public transit has temporarily relaxed its attendance requirements for these meetings until regular, in-person meetings can resume. It is the opinion of the RPC staff that the online meetings have not been as productive as in-person gatherings, and we look forward to resuming in-person meetings when safety permits.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The primary roles and responsibilities of the Coordinated Council are:

- Updating, maintaining, and determining how best to implement the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
- Providing a venue for stakeholder interaction, sharing of human services transportation issues, problems, and developing solutions for further action

- Serving as a subcommittee to the RPC Technical Advisory Committee



2.3 Relationship to Regional Planning Commission

The Coordinated Council serves as an advisory body to the RPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which in turn may recommend projects to RPC Transportation Policy Committee for inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. Each TAC meetings includes a briefing from a

of the quarterly representative of the Coordinated Council that includes policy and project updates and recommendations. The Transit Technical Advisory Committee, made up of representatives of all recipients of FTA urbanized area formula funds in the region, participates in the Coordinated Council, the TAC, and the Transportation Policy Committee.

2.4 Coordinated Council Stakeholders

RPC currently permits anyone who is interested in transit and human services transportation to participate in its quarterly coordinated planning meetings. As a result, a wide variety of stakeholders have contributed to the planning process and the work of the Coordinated Council. Listed below are some of the organizations and agencies that participated in the development of this plan by attending the quarterly council meetings since the last plan update in 2009.

- Jefferson Transit
- New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
- River Parishes Transit Authority
- St. Tammany Parish Transit
- Crescent City Connection
- St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit
- City of Westwego
- Jefferson Parish
- Mayor's Advisory Council for Citizens With Disabilities - City of New Orleans
- Jefferson Parish Community Action Planning
- Crossroads Louisiana
- St. Charles Council on Aging
- New Orleans Council on Aging
- Jefferson Council on Aging
- St. Bernard Council on Aging
- St. Tammany Council on Aging
- St. John Council on Aging
- St. Tammany ARC
- ARC of Greater New Orleans
- AARP
- Arc of St. Charles
- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans
- Catholic Charities – Hispanic Apostolate

- Magnolia School
- Lighthouse Louisiana
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Livery Limousines
- Transport for NOLA / Ride NOLA
- The Micah Project
- Catholic Charities – PACE Greater New Orleans
- Kingsley House
- South Central Planning and Development Commission
- Central City Economic Opportunity Corporation
- Jefferson Parish Workforce Investment Board
- Regional Planning Commission

3. Inventory of Transportation Assets

3.1 Summary

The following are summaries of the major public transportation providers in the region. All data listed below regarding fleet and ridership characteristics are considered up-to-date as of the Fall of 2020 unless otherwise indicated.

3.2 Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

RTA Characteristics	
Number of In Service Fixed Route Vehicles (2018)	121
Number of Routes	34 bus, 5 streetcar
Fixed Route Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	18,981,661
Fixed Route Vehicle Revenue Miles (2018)	8,025,199
Number of In Service Paratransit Vehicles (2018)	42
Paratransit Ridership (2018)	228,735

Table 1

Governing Structure

The RTA was established by the Louisiana State Legislature to operate and maintain all of New Orleans' city bus and streetcar routes. The Board of Commissioners is the governing body of the RTA, consisting of appointees from both Orleans and Jefferson Parishes. The RTA Board has the authority to set fares, oversee service and operations, develop operating budgets, approve each year's annual transportation development plan, and decide upon capital purchases and expansions. Following disruptions to transit operations due to Hurricane Katrina in 2003 RTA delegated management to Transdev which oversaw operations, service and grant planning, scheduling, maintenance, and other day-to-day administrative functions. Over the last decade, however, RTA has slowly returned to local, public control.

Fixed Route Service

RTA system includes three streetcar lines and 34 bus routes on both the east and west banks of the Mississippi. Bus stops are generally located every two blocks.

All of RTA's buses and most of the streetcars (St. Charles line excepted) have features such as wheelchair lifts, vehicle kneeling systems, ramps, priority seating areas, and wheelchair

securement devices that allow for use by many disabled riders. RTA also operates pedestrian-friendly ferries across the Mississippi River with special, ADA access to allow those with disabilities to ride comfortably.

Paratransit Service

RTA's complementary ADA paratransit service, The Lift, provided 228,735 unlinked trips throughout all of RTA's service area in 2018. The Lift riders can transfer to JeT's paratransit service at Delgado Community College, Ochner Hospital, and the Gretna-Wilty Terminal. RTA paratransit service is curb-to-curb. Riding on The Lift requires an application for eligibility and 24 hour advance reservations for trips.

The RTA has also established a Paratransit Advisory Committee made up of citizen advocates and organizational representatives. This committee serves to address the concerns of and provide technical assistance to paratransit eligible members of the community, review RTA policies regarding paratransit service, and advise the board of commissioners as appropriate.

3.3 Jefferson Transit (JeT)

JET Characteristics	
Number of In Service Fixed Route Vehicles	31
Number of Routes	13
Fixed Route Total Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	1,984,570
Fixed Route Total Vehicle Revenue Miles (2018)	1,790,112
Number of In Service Paratransit Vehicles	15
Paratransit Total Ridership (2018)	65,711

Table 2

Governing Structure

Jefferson Transit (JeT) is overseen by the Department of Transit Administration within the Jefferson Parish government. JeT contracts with Transdev for transit operations and Solutient for transit planning.

Fixed Route Service

JeT operates 31 fixed route vehicles during peak hours on thirteen routes, six on the east bank of the Mississippi River and seven on the west bank. Bus stops are generally located every two blocks.

The base fare for JeT's fixed route service is \$1.50 with a 50 cent transfer within the system. The fare to cross the river and/or to travel to the New Orleans Central Business District is \$2.00. Eight of JeT's routes offer Saturday service and four offer Sunday service.

All of JeT's buses are equipped with either wheelchair lifts or vehicle kneeling systems (ramps), priority seating areas, and wheelchair securement devices that allow for use by many disabled riders.

Paratransit Service

Jefferson Parish also offers origin to destination paratransit service, known as Mobility Impaired Transit System (MITS). Ridership on MITS requires an application for eligibility and offers next day service up to 7 days in advance reservations for trips. MITS is available throughout urbanized Jefferson Parish and in those portions of Orleans Parish along JeT routes provided the trip either begins or ends in Jefferson Parish. MITS riders can transfer to RTA's paratransit service at Delgado Community College, Ocshner Hospital, East Jefferson Hospital, and Winn Dixie on Veterans Blvd. on the East Bank; and Gretna-Wilty Terminal, Oakwood Shopping Center, and West Jefferson Medical Center on the West Bank.

3.4 St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT)

SBURT Characteristics	
Number of In Service Vehicles	8
Number of Routes	1 (deviated)
Fixed Route Total Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	90,816
Fixed Route Total Vehicle Miles Travelled (2018)	141,042

Table 3

Governing Structure

SBURT is a division within the St. Bernard Parish government.

Service

SBURT provides service between Arabi and Poydras in St. Bernard Parish, primarily via Judge Perez Drive and St. Bernard Highway. The system has a transfer with RTA service at Aycock St. in Arabi. Passengers on SBURT may request a deviation from this route at one of seven locations, one of which is the St. Bernard Council on Aging building. All of SBURT's buses are ADA accessible.

3.5 River Parishes Transit Authority (RPTA)

RPTA Characteristics	
Number of Demand Response Service Vehicles	3 weekday, 2 Saturday
Number of Routes (Total Miles of Routes)	Demand Response
Total Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	18,227
Total Vehicle Revenue Miles (2018)	237,496

Table 4

Governing Structure

River Parishes Transit Authority is governed by a six-member board consisting of representatives from St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist Parish, and an At-Large member. RPTA contracts with Transdev for transit operations, maintenance, scheduling, and service planning, and Solutient for operating, administrative and financial oversight.

Demand Response Service

River Parishes Transit Authority provides curb-to-curb demand response service in St. Charles and St John the Baptist Parishes, with connecting service to St. James Parish. The service also connects to RTA and JeT's service in Kenner, LA. Rides on RPTA's buses are scheduled one day in advance, with service offered between 5:00 AM and 7:30 PM on weekdays, and between 5:30 AM and 7:30 PM on Saturdays. A one-way trip costs passengers \$2.00. All of RPTA's buses are ADA accessible.

3.6 Tangipahoa Parish Transit

TVCOA Transit Characteristics	
Number of Routes	2 (deviated)
Number of Demand Response Vehicles	13
Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	34,174
Total Vehicle Revenue Miles (2018)	262,204

Table 5

Governing Structure

The Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging (TVCOA) is a third party contractor operating the Parish's transportation service. TVCOA's governing body consists of 15 board member recommended by each parish councilman to represent the elderly and disabled population parish-wide.

Service

Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging (TVCOA) provides curb-to curb, demand-response, first-call first serve transportation to the residents of Tangipahoa Parish, however the service has been significantly restricted due to Covid-19.

Transportation will be provided on a limited basis for routine medical appointments and possibly shopping and errands. Riders will be advised when calling to schedule that their temperature will be taken before they board the bus and they will be given a mask that they must wear on the bus. Riders will be scheduled at a limit of 2 or 3 on the bus at one time.

Both the Hammond and Ponchatoula City buses will be suspended until further notice.

3.6 St. Tammany Area Transit (STAR)

STAR Transit Characteristics	
Number of Demand Response Vehicles	29
Number of Routes	Demand Response
Unlinked Passenger Trips (2018)	70,998
Total Vehicle Revenue Miles (2018)	531,548

Table 6

Governing Structure

STAR Transit is a division within the St. Tammany Parish government. The service is currently being operated by the St. Tammany Council on Aging (COAST).

Demand Response Service

STAR operates non-emergency demand response service within the political boundaries of St. Tammany Parish. Urbanized service is provided for trips that originate in the urbanized areas of Mandeville-Covington and Slidell, while rural service is provided for trips originating elsewhere in the parish. Service is curb-to-curb and is first call-first serve. The cost of service is based on the distance of the trip, ranging from \$1.50 one-way for a trip less than ten miles to \$4.00 one way for a trip over 26 miles. Elderly and disabled passengers are eligible for half-fare. All of STAR Transit buses are ADA accessible.

As of May 4, 2020 all passengers are required to wear a face mask.

3.7 Mississippi River Ferries

Two ferry systems in the Greater New Orleans region cross the Mississippi River. One, operated by Plaquemines Parish, manages two river crossings. The other, operated by RTA, manages ferry service at two additional crossings.

RTA currently manages two crossings that connect landings in East Bank Orleans, West Bank Orleans, and St. Bernard Parishes: Canal Street in downtown New Orleans to Algiers, and Paris Road in Chalmette to Patterson Drive in Lower Algiers. The Chalmette-Lower Algiers crossings transport both pedestrians and cars. The Canal-Algiers ferry transports only pedestrians. As of 2018, pedestrian fare is \$2.00 at both crossings, and automobiles pay a two-dollar fare on the Chalmette-Lower Algiers ferry. There is a reduced fare of \$1.00 for seniors 65+, people with disabilities, and Medicare pedestrians. Children under 2 ride free.

Plaquemines Parish provides ferry service at two crossings of the river within the parish. One crossing, connects Belle Chasse to Scarsdale in the upriver part of the Parish, while the other connects Pointe A La Hache on the East Bank to West Pointe A LA Hache on the West Bank. These ferries carry both automobiles and pedestrians, with a fare of one dollar each way for a two-axle vehicle. The next nearest crossings of the river are the LADOTD Lower Algiers-Chalmette Ferry and the Mississippi River Bridge in New Orleans, both an approximately seven-mile drive away.

3.8 Other

One of the ongoing challenges in coordinating transportation, and by consequence one of the strategies identified in this plan, is the identification of other transportation providers in the region, particularly non-profit and for-profit elderly care, disabled care, and social service providers. Some already identified include those operated by municipalities or Parishes such as City of Westwego Senior Transportation or Plaquemines Parish ferry service. Others include non-profits such as Kingsley House, Arc of Greater New Orleans, Lighthouse Louisiana, Crossroads, The Magnolia School, Catholic Charities of New Orleans, and the various Councils on Aging for parishes throughout the metropolitan area.

RPC and its partner agencies and organizations on the Coordinated Council will continue to identify additional providers and their service and funding characteristics in order to improve region-wide coordinated transportation.

4. Funding Sources

The following are program summaries of major funding sources for public and human services transportation. This list is not intended as exhaustive, but to summarize the primary federal and state grant and funding mechanisms that are used for public transportation in the region. Not included in this list are local funding mechanisms such as farebox revenue and property tax mills. Also not included are moneys received from charitable non-profit organizations, such as United Way, that often provide much of the non-Federal match for transportation programs. As noted elsewhere in this plan, one of the strategies of the region's coordinated efforts moving forward will be to continue identifying potential non-federal funding for public and human services transportation and to find ways to appropriately match their availability to potential need.

FTA 5307 – Urbanized Area Formula Program

The FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program (43 U.S.C. 5307) funding is apportioned annually to census defined urbanized areas for transit related expenses and transportation planning. The amount of funding made available is dependent on the population and population density of the area as well as ridership and system characteristics of public transportation in the region.

In the large urbanized areas of metropolitan New Orleans, eligible uses of Urbanized Area Formula funding include capital expenses such as preventive maintenance, bus replacement, security and communications equipment, and transportation planning. In small urbanized areas with populations under 200,000, such as Mandeville-Covington and Slidell, these funds can also be used for operating expenses. While Urban Area Formula funds generally require a 20% local match for capital expenses and 50% for operating, a 90% Federal match may be available for equipment costs related to Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

Under MAP-21, projects previously funded through FTA's JARC program were now made eligible under 5307 in the urbanized area.

FTA 5310 – Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

The FTA Transportation for Elderly Persons and Person with Disabilities program provides funding directly to states for award to private non-profit organizations (and government agencies in cases where no such organizations exist) that provide transport to the elderly and the disabled. Capital project are eligible for funding under this program with a 20% local match, and operating projects with a 50% match. LADOTD is the designated recipient of 5310 funds.

To ensure that funded projects serve to fill gaps in providing service to these populations, FTA requires all 5310 projects to derive from a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. To that end, the LADOTD requires that applicants and recipients for 5310 funding attend at least two out of their region's four annual Coordinated Planning meetings. This attendance requirement has been temporarily suspended due to Covid-19.

FTA 5311 – Formula Grants for Rural Areas

The FTA Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas provides funding directly to states for award to agencies and organizations that provide public transportation to non-urbanized areas, i.e., rural or semi-rural places with populations less than 50,000. 5311 can also be used to fund intercity bus travel. Both capital and operating expenses are eligible under this program, the former requiring a 20% local match and the latter 50%. These funds are awarded by the state to operators in areas where traditional public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate.

FTA 5316 – Job Access Reverse Commute

Under 2012's MAP-21, the JARC function was moved into the 5307 Urbanized Area Formula funding program for urbanized areas and the 5311 Rural Program for non-urbanized areas.

The FTA Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program funded projects that facilitate work or employment related public transportation trips for the low-income population and/or provide reverse commuting opportunities (i.e., trips providing access for urban residents to suburban employment locations). Projects funded by JARC should address the challenges faced by low-income individuals obtaining and maintaining employment, such as late night and weekend trips, and complex multiple destination trips, for which traditional transit service may be inadequate. Capital, planning and operating projects are eligible for JARC, the former two requiring a 20% and the latter a 50% local match.

LADOTD has spent or obligated all remaining JARC funding for the non-urbanized and small urban areas of the state.

FTA 5317 – New Freedom

Under MAP-21, the New Freedom function was moved into the 5310 Transportation for Elderly and Disabled funding program described above

FTA New Freedom provided funding for projects that remove barriers to transit accessibility and mobility for the disabled. New Freedom funding was available for new public transportation projects and transportation alternatives that went beyond the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Both capital and operating projects were eligible for New Freedom funding, the former requiring a 20% and the latter a 50% local match.

Bus and Bus Facilities

The FTA Bus and Bus Facilities program provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase bus and bus related equipment, as well as to construct bus related facilities. Funding amounts are allocated through a formula that considers population, vehicle revenue miles, and passenger miles. Eligible recipients include designated FTA recipients that operate fixed route bus systems and public or private nonprofit organizations engaged in public and/or human services transportation. The Federal share for these projects is 80%. Under MAP-21, the Bus and Bus Facilities program replaced Section 5309.

Competitive Bus Grants

Low or No Emission (Low-No)

The Low or No Emission competitive program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses as well as acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities. Under the FAST Act, \$55 million per year.

State of Good Repair

The FTA State of Good Repair program provides funding for the repair and upgrading of rail transit systems and high-intensity motor bus systems that use high-occupancy vehicle lanes (such as Bus Rapid Transit). Eligible projects include those that replace and rehabilitate rolling stock, track, line equipment and structures, signals and communications, power equipment and substations, passenger stations and terminals, security equipment, maintenance facilities and equipment, and operational support equipment. Federal share for these projects is 80%. These funds will be apportioned to regions based on a formula that considers revenue miles and route miles.

Under MAP-21, the State of Good Repair Program replaced the Fixed Guideway Rail Modernization Formula Program.

Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (“New Starts”)

The FTA New Starts program funds new and expanded rail, bus rapid transit, and ferry systems that reflect local priorities to improve transportation options in key corridors. Under MAP-21, State of Good Repair and Bus and Bus Facilities projects, previously funded under New Starts, are now eligible under their own formula program. Federal share for these projects is 80%. Fixed Guideway is a discretionary program, with grants competitively awarded to applicant agencies.

Flexed Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Surface Transportation Program is U.S. DOT funding provided to states and localities for projects on any roads that are not classified as minor local or rural collectors. States and MPOs have the option of transferring or “flexing” a portion of these funds for any projects that are eligible under FTA’s transit programs (with the exception of any FTA eligible operating assistance). Federal share for these projects is 80%.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)

CMAQ is U.S. DOT funding available to areas with air quality non-attainment. Projects funded by CMAQ must contribute to the attainment of ambient air quality standards by reducing pollutant emissions from transportation sources. CMAQ funding may be used by all projects eligible under FTA programs including operating assistance for up to three years. CMAQ is also available for shared ride services and pedestrian/bicycle improvements. A minimum 20 percent match of non-Federal funds are required for most projects.

As of August 2020 the New Orleans region is within air quality attainment, and therefore currently ineligible for CMAQ funding.

Medicaid

The Department of Health and Human Services’ Medicaid funds Non-Emergency, Non-Ambulatory Medical transportation (NEMT) through state Medicaid programs. Medicaid is by far the largest funder of specialized transportation both nationally and statewide. This program includes reimbursement payments for Friends and Family providers, municipal public transit providers, non-profit and for-profit providers. DHH certifies all vehicles in use by non-profit and for-profit NEMT providers.

Transportation Trust Fund for the Public Transportation Program

The Louisiana Legislature annually authorizes payments from the Transportation Trust Fund directly to governing authorities in the state of Louisiana including, in our region, the Parishes of Orleans, St. Bernard, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Tammany and the City of Kenner.

Funding amounts for governing authorities are determined through a formula that considers population and total passengers.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The TANF program provides block grants to states to help families transition from welfare to self-sufficiency. States may choose to spend some of their TANF funds on transportation to purchase and/or operate vehicles, as well as reimburse costs of transportation.

5. Needs and Challenges

In order to assess the needs and challenges facing transportation disadvantaged individuals in the region, three approaches were taken:

- 1) Review and mapping of demographic data
- 2) Stakeholder discussion and input
- 3) Review of related transit studies

The first part of this chapter contains a summary and geographic presentation of demographic data as derived from

5.1 Demographic Data

Regional Overview

The areas served by the Coordinated Plan include the Southeast Louisiana parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, St. John, St. Tammany, and St. Charles. Within this region is the New Orleans large urbanized area (defined as having a population over 200,000). Also, in St. Tammany Parish, are the small urbanized areas (defined as having a population between 50,000 and 200,000) of Slidell and Mandeville-Covington.

According to 2018 ACS 5-year data, the total population of the seven parish Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is 1,373,224. Table 7 shows population and population density per parish according to 2018 Census estimates.

Table 7 -ACS 2017 Population Density by Parish for New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area

Parish	Total Population	Total Land Area*	Person per Mi ²
Jefferson	435,300	295.63	1472
Orleans	389,648	169.42	2300
Plaquemines	23,373	779.91	30
St. Bernard	45,694	377.52	121
St. Charles	52,724	279.08	189
St. John the Baptist	43,888	213.07	206
St. Tammany	252,093	845.55	298
Tangipahoa	130,504	791.37	165
Total	1,373,224	3,751.90	366
*Total Land Area in square miles as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016			
Louisiana	4,659,978	43,203.9	107.9





Seniors

As people age their transportation needs change. Safe private vehicle use may no longer be possible due to loss of physical abilities, the need for commuting to work will likely decrease, and the need for more routine medical visits may increase. However, the desire to continue living at home, with the ability to make trips to see family and friends and having access to social opportunities and community services, does not diminish. In short, good transportation for the elderly ensures a high quality of life and, to the extent possible, an independent lifestyle.

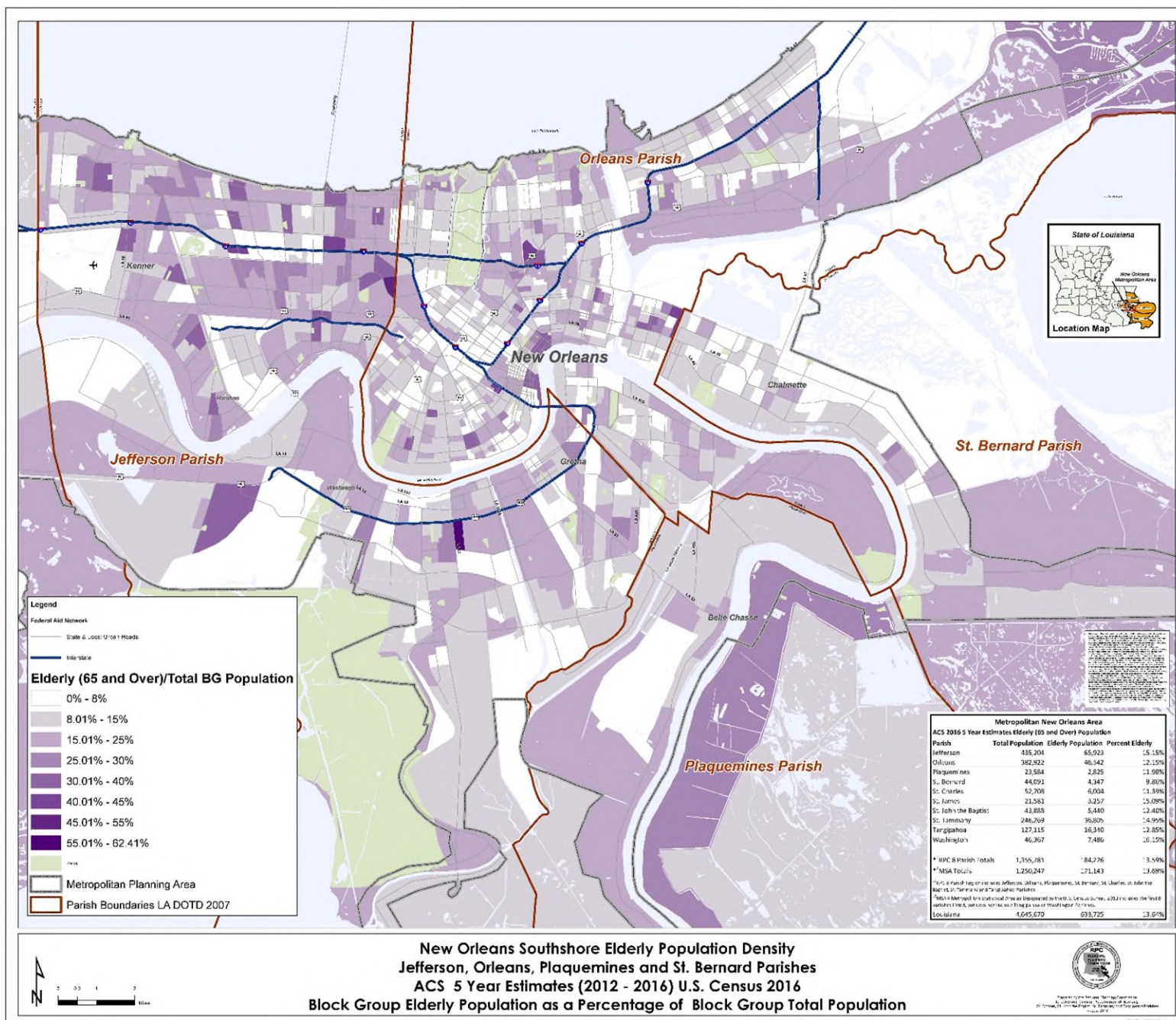
For the purposes of this study, seniors will be defined as people aged 65 or older. Nationally, this population has seen disproportionate growth in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue due to extended life expectancies and the aging of the baby boomer population. According to estimates by the Department of Health and Hospitals' Administration on Aging, the percentage of individuals aged 65 and older nationwide is expected to increase from 13% in 2010 to 19.7% in 2050, and in Louisiana from 12.6% to 19.7% during this same time period².

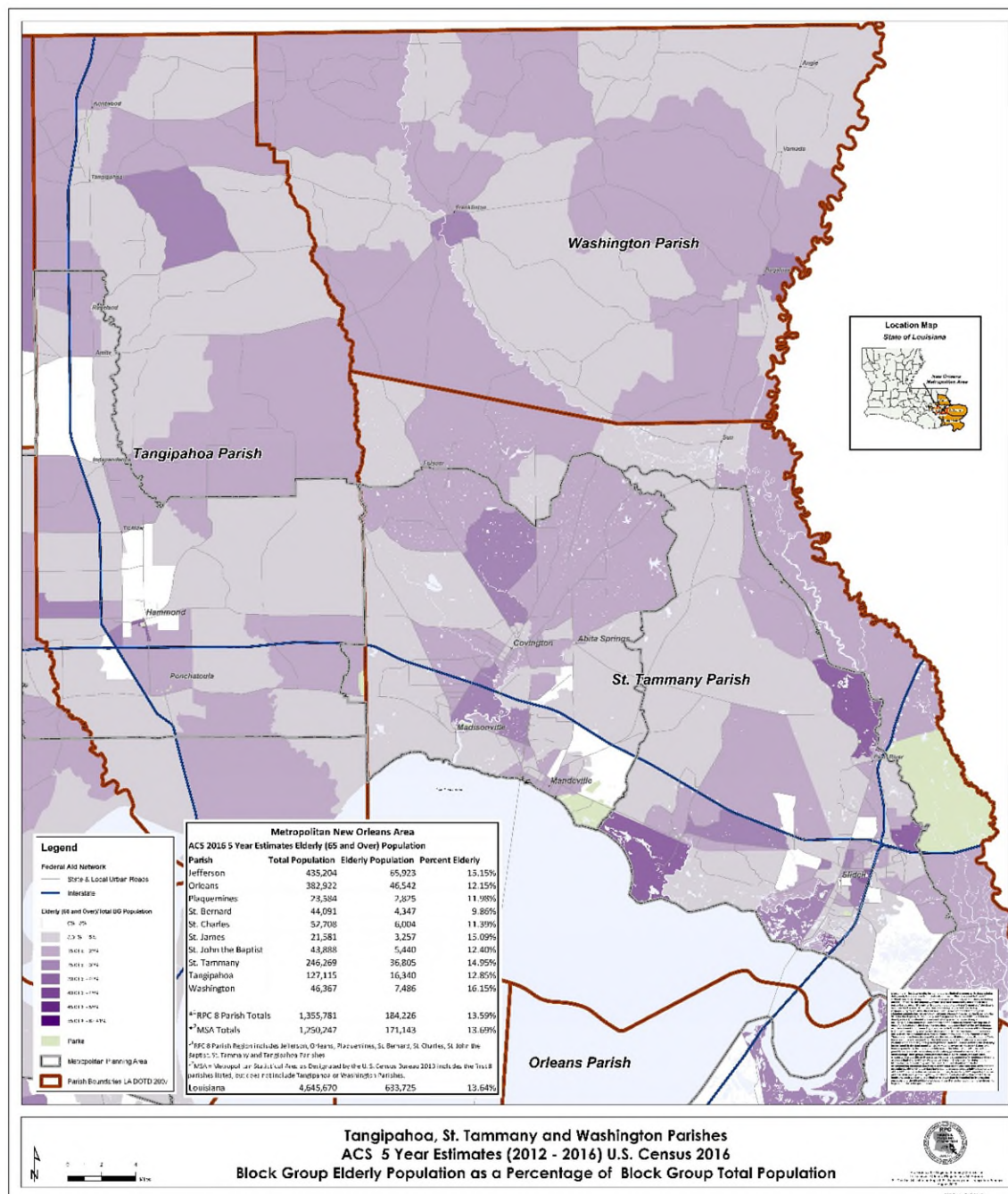
Population, 2018 ACS Data Total		Population Age 65 +	Percent +65
Jefferson	435,300	70,261	16.14 %
Orleans	389,648	52,536	13.48 %
Plaquemines	23,373	2,880	12.32 %
St. Bernard	45,694	4,871	10.66 %
St. Charles	52,724	6,591	12.5 %
St. John the Baptist	43,888	5,802	13.22
St. Tammany	252,093	40,019	15.87 %
Tangipahoa	130,504	17,724	13.58 %
Total	1,373,224	200,684	14.6 %

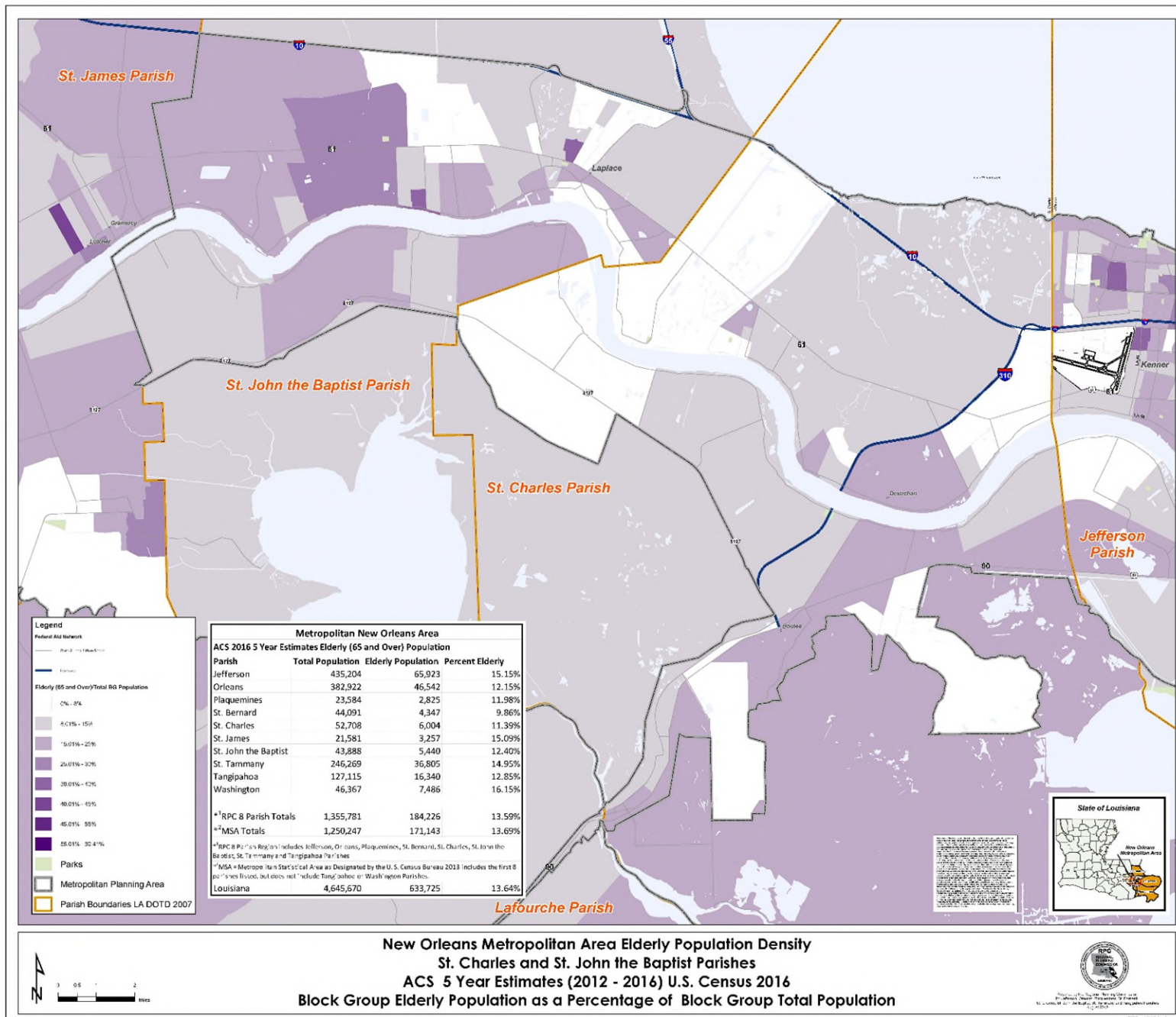
Table 8: Population 65+ by Parish

According to the 2018 ACS estimates, 14.6 percent of the seven parish population is aged 65 and older, an increase from 13.6% according to 2017 data. The distribution of the population can be seen in Table 8.

² www.aoa.gov







People with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.” Given the barriers that exist in the built and social environment, such limitations often result in restrictions on mobility for persons with disabilities, severely impacting access to employment and social opportunities. According to a 2002 Bureau of Transportation Survey, nearly two million Americans with disabilities reported that they rarely if ever left the house, and over half of these indicated that their reason for being homebound was that they did not have access to transportation³.

Identifying the number of residents with disabilities and their location in the New Orleans metropolitan region is a challenge. U.S. Census American Community Survey data provides 2011 figures, though these are limited to samples of the entire population and are only available at the parish level of geography. RPC will continue working to identify the best ways to identify the number of and geographic distribution of persons with disabilities and their transportation needs, including extensive outreach to advocacy groups and citizens.

Persons with Limited Means

Ensuring adequate transportation opportunities for individuals or families with limited means is critical to guaranteeing those with low income a high quality of life with access to medical and social services. It also gives these persons prospects for employment and job training opportunities that may allow them to improve their economic condition. If there is a spatial mismatch between low-income housing, employment centers, and other services, lack of public and human services transportation can be a substantial barrier.

Parish	Total Households	Households in Poverty	Percent Households in Poverty
Jefferson	106,956	24,510	14.51%
Orleans	73,443	37,187	24.14%
Plaquemines	6,714	1,774	20.12%
St. Bernard	10,392	3,018	20.08%
St. Charles	14,099	2,203	11.74%
St. John the Baptist	15,418	2,999	19.45%
St. Tammany	91,975	9,992	10.86%
Tangipahoa	47,527	9,551	20.10%
Total	520,459	91,234	17.65%

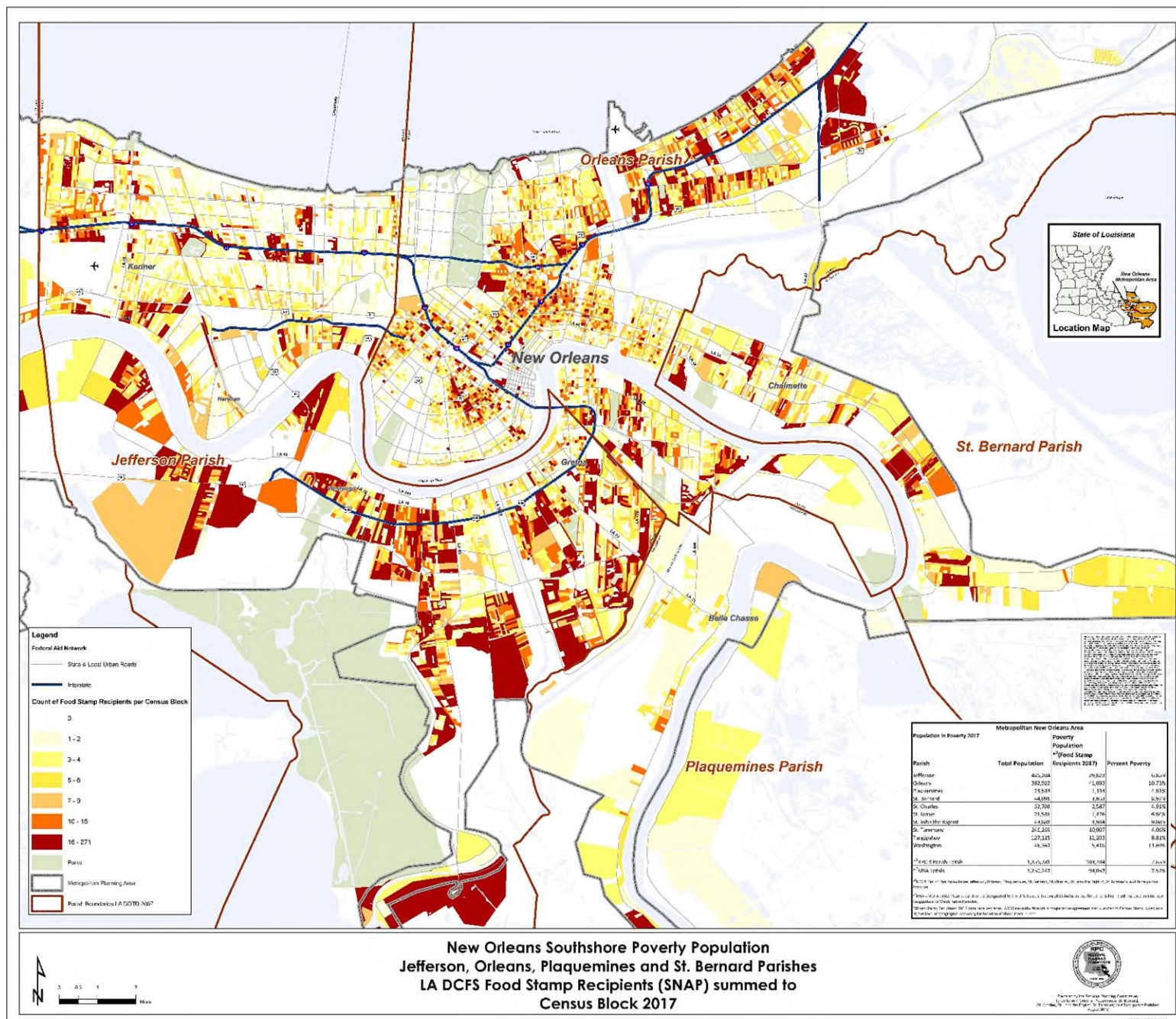
Table 9 – Households in Poverty, 2014-2018 ACD 5-year estimates

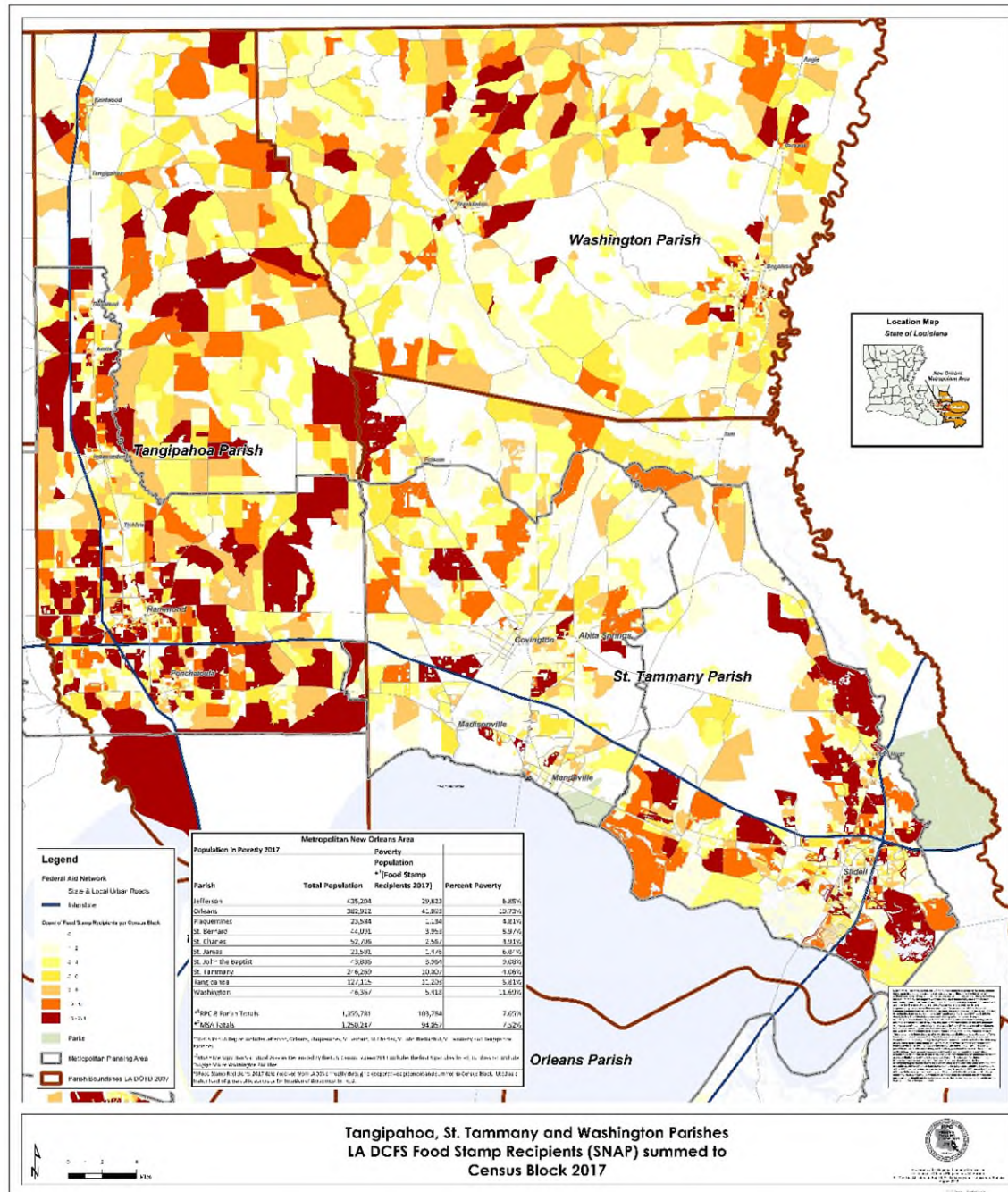
According to 2014-2018 American Community Survey estimates, 17.65% of households in the New Orleans region live in poverty. As this type of data is not collected for the decennial census, RPC relies on other proxy measures and studies to gauge levels of low-income individuals and households in the region. A 2012 study by the RPC, RTA, and JeT showed that 40% of JeT-RTA fixed route service riders made less than \$15,000 annually, and only one third owned a car. Data from the Louisiana Department of Child and Family service show that 7.48% of residents in the MSA receive food stamps. Data from the 2014-2018 ACS on household poverty in the region is displayed in Table 9.

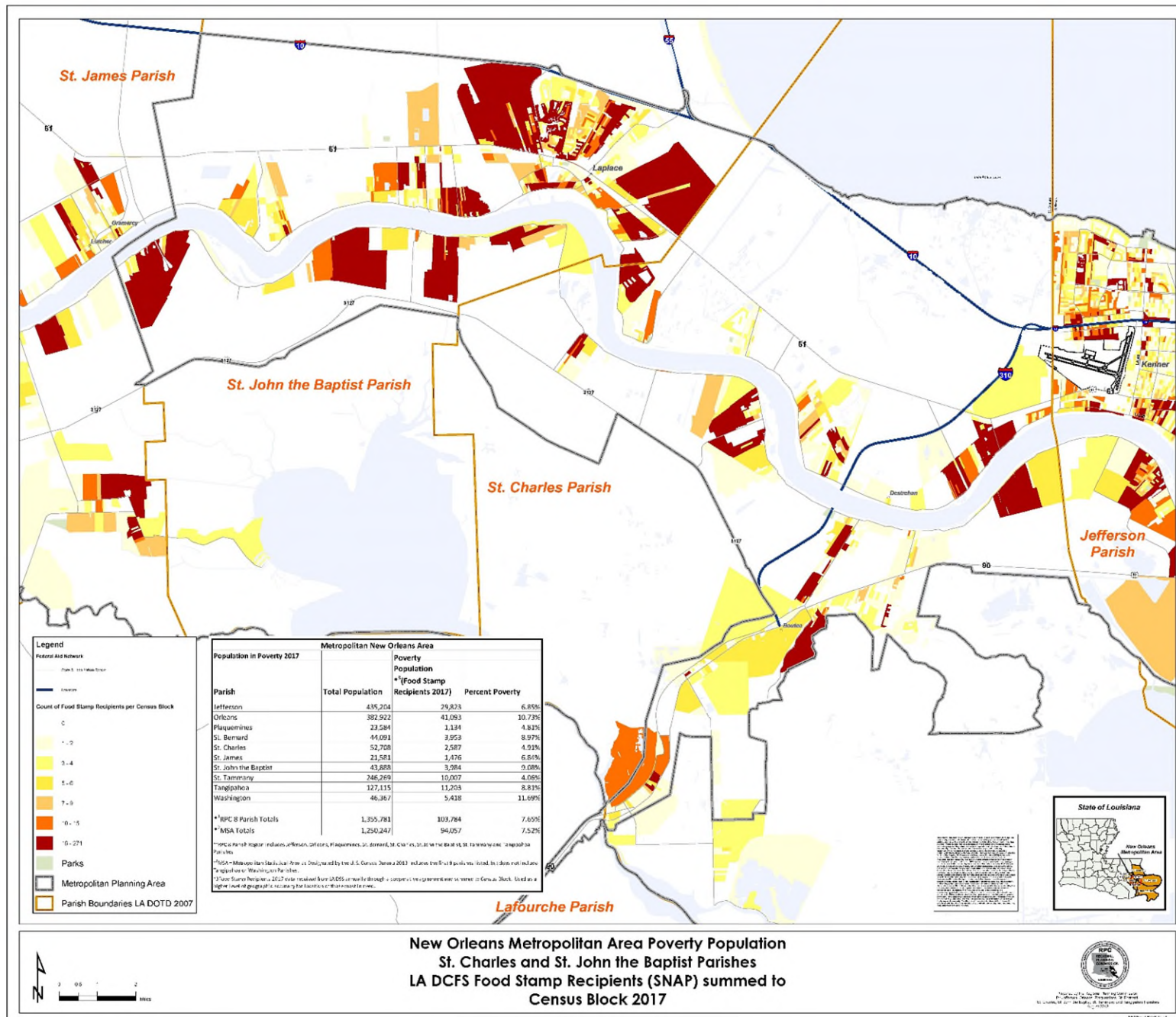
Equally important to identifying low income populations is matching those seeking jobs to employment centers. Additional figures below (pp 32-34) show employment per traffic analysis zone on the south shore, St. Tammany Parish, and the River Parishes. Also shown in these figures are major employment centers such as warehouses, office buildings, colleges and universities, and other high employment locales.

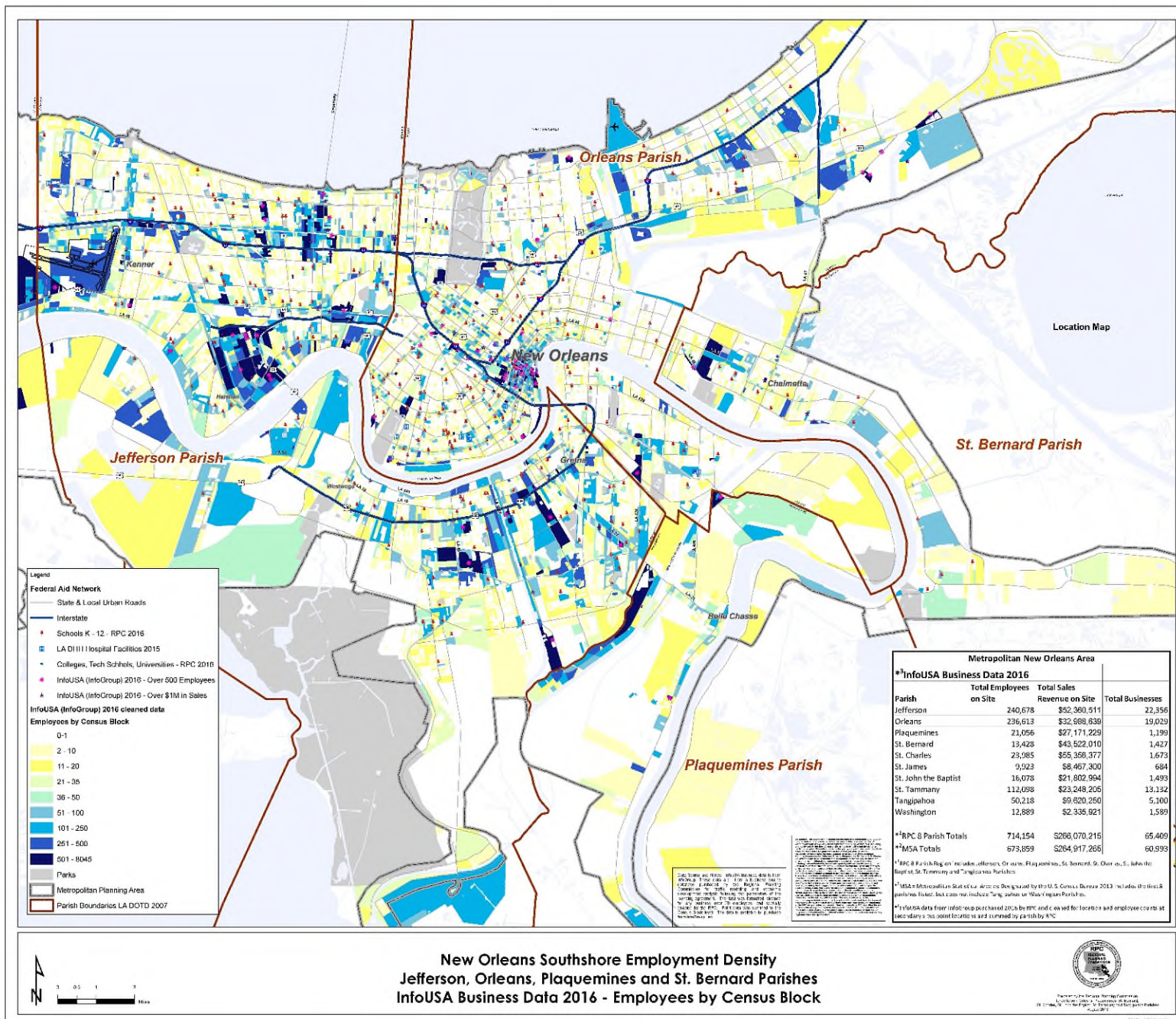
Parish	Total Population	Retail Employees	Non-Retail Employees	Total Employees
Jefferson	435,092	33,530	241,940	275,470
Orleans	376,738	17,590	254,150	271,740
Plaquemines	23,599	830	19,660	20,490
St. Bernard	42,858	1,880	14,650	16,530
St. Charles	52,639	2,140	31,630	33,770
St. John	44,161	2,220	18,910	21,130
St. Tammany	242,960	16,850	115,390	132,240
Tangipahoa	127,115	7,910	51,380	59,290
Total	1,355,781	82,950	747,710	830,660

Table 10 – 2016 Employment by Parish for New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area as extrapolated by the RPC from several data sources. Note: Employees may work in a parish other than the parish in which they reside

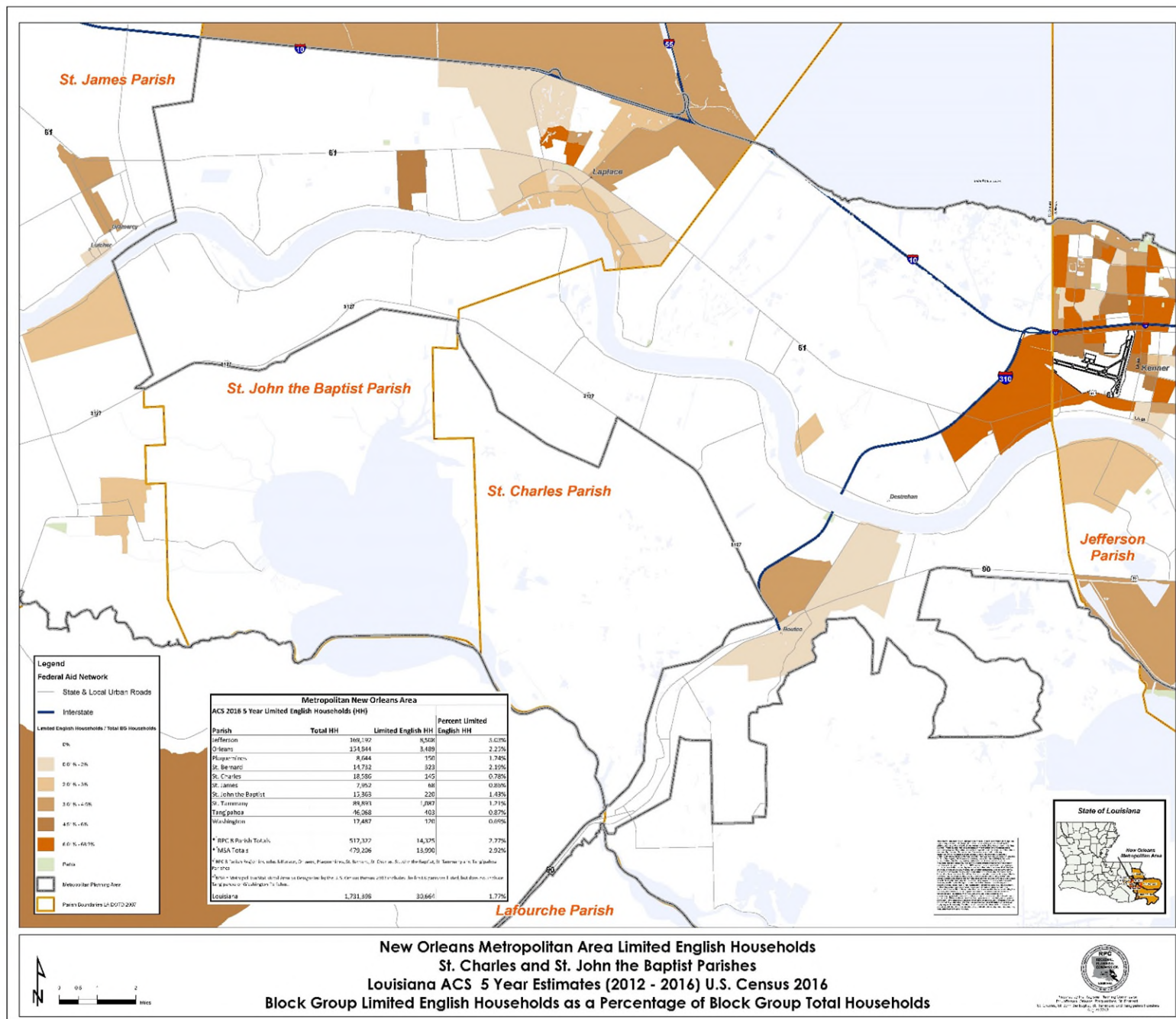












5.2 Challenges

Regional Connectivity

Connectivity refers to the customer's real and perceived ease and convenience when traveling on a public transportation system. From the rider's perspective, a trip on a well-connected transportation network will feel seamless. Schedules and transfers both within one system and between multiple systems are intuitive, predictable, and easily planned. By contrast, a trip on a poorly connected network will be at best frustrating and at worst costly, time-consuming, and a possible deterrent to future use.

In the New Orleans metropolitan region, individual operators devote a large amount of planning and resources toward ensuring a well-connected network within their service area. A consistent theme, however, that has arisen throughout the coordinated planning process is a lack of regional connectivity, particularly when transferring from one system or mode to another. This challenge can be problematic in the New Orleans region where there are multiple large and small providers serving different jurisdictions and where, as the RPC's 2012 Origin-Destination study demonstrated, trips are often regional in nature. According to the same study more than half of all trips on the fixed route system require at least one transfer.

These issues are exacerbated for transportation disadvantaged populations, especially for persons who rely on the public transportation system for most or all of their travel needs. Such riders may have non-traditional trip purposes (such as medical or non-peak hour/weekend employment trips) and unique limitations on time and resources. They may also have a far more difficult challenge navigating a complicated system. From an operator perspective, poor connectivity may lead to an inefficient and undesirable system as well as increased rider reliance on an expensive paratransit system.

Physical and Temporal Barriers

Physical barriers describe those impediments that may prevent access to or from a public transportation stop or prevent entrance or egress to a vehicle or facility. Such impediments may be located at the facility itself, such as obstructions or inadequate boarding space for wheelchairs, or in the area approaching the facility, such as gaps in the sidewalk or insufficient curb ramps and pedestrian crossings. Vehicles may have inadequate or inoperative accessibility equipment such as wheelchair lifts or tie-downs. For the physically impaired, these impediments can range from inconvenience to serious safety hazard. Eliminating these barriers often requires extensive coordination between a transit agency and a local government's public works or streets department, or with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

Temporal barriers occur when a rider must take a trip when service is either infrequently available or not available at all. In order to maximize the efficiency of their service, most providers concentrate the bulk of their frequent service during peak hours, such as rush hours, and pare down or eliminate service during off-peak times, such as late night. Unfortunately, this strategy, though sensible from an operational standpoint, puts a small number of riders such as those who work non-traditional hours at a disadvantage.

Limited Transportation Options

While the fixed route network or its complementary paratransit operation covers most urbanized areas in the region, some less densely populated urban, suburban, rural areas may fall outside of this service area. STAR in St. Tammany Parish and RPTA in St. Charles, St. John, and St. James Parish provide demand response service in their respective service areas. Both of these services are ADA accessible and provide curb-to-curb service. They also both require 24 hours' notice to schedule a ride and are limited to business hours during weekdays. Beyond these services, and given their unavoidable limitations, special needs populations residing or traveling therein may lack sufficient transportation options or rely on options outside of traditional public transit service. The coverage maps in chapter 3 show some of these geographic gaps in service.

These geographic gaps in service may also exist in urbanized areas due to factors of service feasibility for large operators or because of jurisdictional issues (as described elsewhere). Additionally, for the transportation disadvantaged population fixed-route service may not be an option and it falls to other modes of transport to fill in gaps, such as paratransit, taxi-cabs, bicycling and walking, or van service from human service agencies. These modes have their own challenges, such as lack of funding, lack of accessible vehicles, requirements for 24 hour trip notification, lack of infrastructure, rider eligibility determination, lack of intermodal coordination, and limited capacity due to lack of available resources.

Data

Responsible and useful planning requires reliable data. This can include accurate information and up to date data on service and fleet characteristics, ridership, community demographics and demographic trends, employment centers, and travel patterns. These data inform where there are gaps in service, where resources can be used more efficiently, where people who need transportation reside and where they are trying to go. They also allow for the tracking of performance measures.

Unfortunately, collecting these data and utilizing them for the purposes of coordinated planning brings with it a unique set of challenges. In many cases, the data does not exist in a

useful form, and may be prohibitively expensive to collect. In other cases the data does exist, but whether through its proprietary nature or a lack of coordination between agencies and organizations, it is too decentralized to allow for any structured planning effort.

Financial Gaps

Issues surrounding funding remain one of the primary obstacles to implementing coordinated human services transportation. As demand for public transportation rises in the region, the costs of fuel, maintenance, insurance, and other necessities have caused a similar rise in the cost of operating public and human services transportation. At the same time, grant funding for human services transportation has either not kept up with demand or may have even been reduced, as in the case of state Medicaid for non-emergency transportation funding.

In addition to securing grant funding, identifying a dedicated and recurring source of local match presents a challenge, particularly for smaller systems. Operating costs under many FTA programs require a fifty percent local match and in the case of larger providers or within certain grant programs operating costs may not be eligible at all. Ample funding for purchasing vehicles is poorly spent if those vehicle sit unused. Identifying potential sources of funding and matching opportunities and tracking how that funding is being used are both necessary to providing effective human services transportation in the region.

Coordination

A unifying theme of most of the challenges described in this chapter is a lack of coordination between transit operating agencies, human service providers, state agencies, municipal governments, funding agencies, and others. The consequences of this lack of coordination are often readily apparent and result in many of the issues described above. Due to differences in funding eligibility, varying fee structures, and lack of communication there will be multiple providers inefficiently serving a single, specific population while other populations may have no service at all. Some organizations that wish to concentrate on other goals may wish to turn over their transportation services to another provider but are unable to develop that partnership.

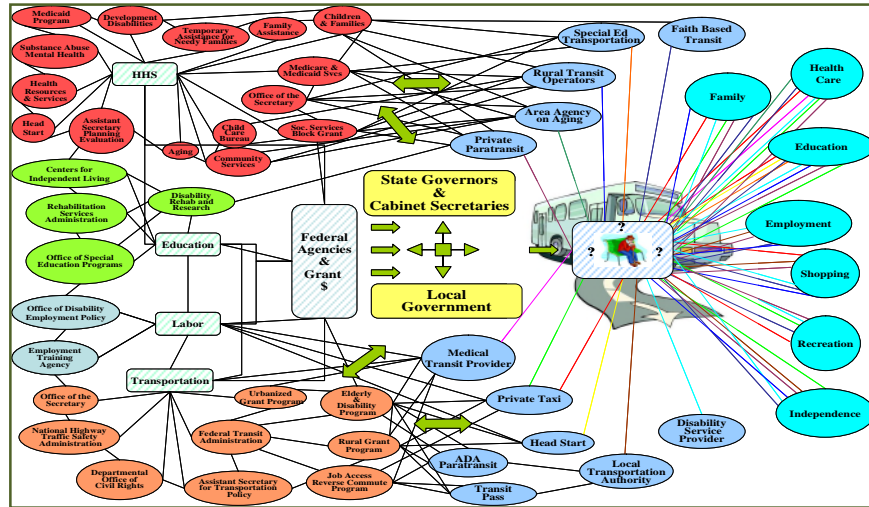


Figure 2 – Conceptual illustration of the complexity of human services transportation delivery

A lack of coordination and communication based on real or perceived regulations and policies can lead to turf battles between political and operational jurisdictions and an inefficient use of available funding and resources for operations and matching requirements. This may also lead to non-connectivity between systems due to political and jurisdictional boundaries. There can also be a lack of perceived benefit to the stakeholder in spending the time and resources necessary for coordination. As a result, the onus may fall on the rider to navigate a complex and ambiguous transportation system.

6. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The following goals, objectives, and strategies were identified by stakeholders during the 2018-2020 iteration of this document as potential means of overcoming the needs and gaps and challenges to human services public transportation described in Chapter IV. Objectives and strategies are divided into three goal categories:

- Improve Accessibility and Mobility
- Maintain Community Database
- Put Customers First
- Improve Coordination

6.1 Goal One: Improve Accessibility and Mobility

Mobility and accessibility are oft two concepts that, while seemingly similar in nature, have distinct (and oft debated) definitions and represent two public transportation concepts. Mobility broadly refers to the amount of time it takes to reach a given location while accessibility refers to the ability to reach a number of desirable destinations. This difference, while important, also demonstrates that accessibility and mobility are not necessarily mutually exclusive goals. Effective human services public transportation can improve personal access to useful locations by improving personal mobility. The following objectives seek to promote this unified goal.

Goal One: Objectives			
Make Improvements to Fixed Route Services	Make Improvements to paratransit and demand response services	Improve Accessibility to and from Transit Stops	Expand innovative Connections
Goal One: Strategies and Activities			
Expand or adjust service in underserved or inappropriately served areas or time periods	Increase same-day paratransit service	Coordinate with Complete Streets, municipal, and parish policy to implement region-wide standards	Develop and implement accessible taxi cab policies and programs
Facilitate schedule coordination at major connections	Adjust fleet sizes and/or services where existing service is inappropriate	Inventory conditions and install amenities at and around transit stops that encourage pedestrian and bicycle access	Develop volunteer driver programs
Implement policies and tools that facilitate regional travel and fare structures			

Objective 1: Make Improvements to Fixed Route Services

Strategy 1A: Expand or adjust service in underserved or inappropriately served areas or time periods

Working with the region's larger transit operators, efforts should be made to identify gaps or deficiencies in the fixed route system and strategies developed to supplement or adjust to a service level more appropriate to the needs of the transportation disadvantaged population. Origin and destination data and latent demand surveys can inform decisions as to where service should be added or extended to better serve, for example, group housing or workplaces for the disabled, medical facilities for the elderly, or employment centers with opportunities for the training or hiring of low-income persons. Added service on highly productive routes can increase frequency and ameliorate capacity issues. Bus or ferry routes that demonstrate productivity but are threatened with funding shortfalls should remain a focus for research and implementation of alternative funding mechanisms. Efforts should be made to increase coordination and deliver appropriate service levels in rural areas of the River Parishes and on the Northshore.

Strategy 1B: Facilitate schedule coordination at major connections

Improved schedule coordination between agencies at major transfers would make connections easier to plan and potentially reduce wait times for riders. The council should continue to work with operators to refine timetables and coordinate route schedules to ensure seamless integration between systems at transfer locations (ex. Canal Blvd. at City Park Ave., Claiborne at Carrollton).

Strategy 1C: Implement policies and tools that facilitate regional travel and fare structures

The council should continue to work with policy makers to implement institutional and technological innovations that promote regional travel among different transit systems. A regional fare would allow for the minimization of competing route structures and promote an integrated regional system. Fare cards usable on all the region's transit systems would similarly promote seamless travel throughout the metropolitan area.

Such integration will require consensus between operating entities, willingness to enter into cost-sharing arrangements and complementary agreements and memorandums of understanding, and the willpower and advocacy necessary to overcome institutional and political roadblocks. The council can provide a forum for such discussions and produce data that support an integrated fare policy. The coordinated council stakeholders should work to identify necessary funding to ensure financial viability and fairness during a pilot regional fare integration program.

Objective 2: Make Improvements to Paratransit and Demand Response Services

Strategy 2A: Increase same-day paratransit service

The Council stakeholders will work to identify and secure the funding necessary to allow transit operators to provide same day paratransit and demand response service. Currently most operators require a 24-hour reservation or a subscription to ride paratransit or demand response service. Allowing for more immediate reservations would make trips easier to plan for potential riders and better accommodate emergency trips.

Strategy 2B: Adjust fleet sizes and/or operations where existing service is inappropriate

The Council stakeholders will work to identify and secure the funding necessary to allow transit operators or demand service providers to purchase new vans or paratransit vehicles or supplement operations in order to more appropriately meet the needs of their customers. Such resources, however, should only be directed toward expansions of service that decrease identified regional gaps in service and won't contribute to duplicative service between agencies.

Objective 3: Improve Accessibility to and from Transit Stops

Strategy 3A: Coordinate with Complete Streets, municipal, and parish policy to implement region-wide standards

Working with local, regional, and state entities, region-wide agencies, guidance should be established that sets accessibility minimums and design recommendations for transit facilities and associated pedestrian facilities. The recently enacted LADOTD Complete Streets Policy and the work of the RPC Complete Streets Advisory Committee provide one opportunity for enacting policies and standards into statewide and regional roadway projects. The Coordinated Council should work closely with these efforts, as well as using nationally accepted best design practices such as those published by AASHTO and NACTO, to develop and implement acceptable accessibility design policies. The council should also explore, in conjunction with municipal authorities, opportunities for funding such improvements such as regulatory policies (tax increment financing (TIF), overlay zones, and development impact fees) and/or joint development policies that require or incentivize private sector participation in the installation or financing of pedestrian and transit amenities.

Strategy 3B: Inventory conditions and install amenities at and around transit stops that encourage pedestrian and bicycle access

An inventory of current conditions and a geographic assessment of deficiencies is required to ascertain priorities toward improving pedestrian and bicycle access. The City of New Orleans recently completed an ADA Transition Plan inventorying curb ramp conditions throughout Orleans Parish, and Jefferson Parish is, as of 2012, undertaking the same. Jefferson Transit has also conducted an inventory and ADA audit of all of its transit stops. Other similar inventory efforts should be encouraged and undertaken. These and comparable efforts should be utilized to identify priority locations for the installation of pedestrian and bicycle accessibility amenities. Improvements should be installed or facilities retrofitted in collaboration with municipal and transit agencies. Improvements should follow any applicable accessibility design standards established in 3A.

Objective 4: Expand Innovative Connections

Strategy 4A: Develop and implement accessible taxicab policies and programs

Though not considered public transportation and therefore not a primary focus of the Coordinated Planning process, the role of taxicabs and other for-hire service in providing special needs transportation should not be overlooked. For such private services to adequately fill this role, however, a sufficient percentage of the overall fleet must be ADA accessible. The Coordinated Council should work when feasible with those Parish and city agencies that can regulate and support an accessible taxi cab fleet. The Council should also seek to identify and secure the funding necessary to support the purchasing of accessible taxicabs. Finally, the Council should work with the appropriate stakeholders to research FTA funded programs that provide taxicab vouchers to eligible riders and if feasible develop and implement such programs.

Strategy 4B: Develop volunteer driver programs

Council stakeholders should explore opportunities for the development of volunteer driver programs. This task should primarily focus on researching national best practices for programs that train volunteer drivers and programs that match transportation disadvantaged individuals with volunteer drivers. Long-term, the council should work toward identifying and implementing volunteer driver programs that are safe and easy to use and that augment existing transit and paratransit options.

6.2 Goal Two: Maintain Community Database

Goal Two: Objectives		
Maintain data on the region's public transportation assets	Maintain data on the region's community characteristics	Track human services transportation performance
Goal Two: Strategies and Activities		
Optimize regional transportation database	Maintain GIS databases of demographic data	Track performance for FTA funded human service projects
Integrate transit research and data on regional travel patterns	Maintain data on regional employment and activity centers	Track performance for regional human services transit and transportation

Objective 1: Maintain Data on the Region's Public and Human Services Transportation Assets

Strategy 1A: Optimize the regional transportation database

The Regional Planning Commission, in collaboration with council stakeholders and in particular with funding agencies, will continue the ongoing task of collecting and hosting data on the region's public transportation and human service providers. Priority will be placed on collecting information on fleet size, coverage area, ridership eligibility, funding, and total ridership on smaller human service, non-profit providers. RPC will also begin emphasizing more outreach to privately funded operations and religious institutions to integrate their systems into region wide planning efforts.

Strategy 1B: Integrate transit research and study data

The Regional Planning Commission in collaboration with council stakeholders and other regional transportation partners will continue to integrate existing and future transportation and transit research studies into the overall coordinated planning effort. The Regional Planning Commission will utilize the regional travel demand model as well as other survey methods conducted by both the RPC and stakeholder partners in order to better understand continually shifting regional travel patterns.

Objective 2: Maintain data on Region's Community Characteristics

Strategy 2A: Maintain GIS database of demographic data

The Regional Planning Commission will continue to maintain data on the population with the regional planning area. In addition to obtaining such data from traditional sources (Census et al.) RPC will seek opportunities to expand its demographic databases through pursuing and building data sharing partnerships.

Strategy 2B: Maintain GIS database of regional employment and activity centers

The Regional Planning Commission will continue to utilize existing datasets (i.e., SIC and NAICS, IRS) and to work with partner agencies (primarily municipal planning departments) to develop geographic databases of current and future land uses in order to better understand regional employment and activity centers.

Objective 3: Track Human Services Transportation Performance

Strategy 3A: Track performance for FTA funded human services transportation projects

RPC will coordinate with the LADOTD and with public and human service transportation operators to regularly monitor performance of FTA funded transportation projects. Reports on performance will be collected annually and reported to the Coordinated Council in order to determine the efficacy of selected project.

Strategy 3B: Track performance for regional human services transit and transportation

The Coordinated Council will develop and monitor performance measures directly related to the goals and objectives of the Coordinated Plan, as described herein. Reports on performance will be collected annually and reported to the Coordinated Council in order to determine the efficacy of coordinated public transit and human services transportation throughout the region, and to better hone the strategic and policy initiatives of the plan itself.

6.3 Goal Three: Manage Mobility

Goal Three: Objectives	
Ease the trip planning experience for riders	Build partnerships and improve coordination
Goal Three: Strategies and Activities	
Develop a regional one call-one click system	Coordinate with RTA JET and other interested providers
Implement regional mobility management technologies	Identify, track, and utilize funding and local matching opportunities
Implement travel training programs	Promote community outreach and marketing
	Coordinate with local, state and national transportation, land-use, and mobility management policy

Mobility management describes a series of strategies that seek to better coordinate efficient and cost-effective human services transportation, to develop sensible transportation policy at a regional and statewide level, and ultimately, through these strategies, to ease the experience of the customer at the point of service delivery. United We Ride describes the range of activities captured under this definition, and the ways in which they differ from traditional transit services, as summarized below:

The Mobility Management Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility Management disaggregates service planning and markets in order to better serve individuals and the community • Mobility Management focuses on service diversity and a “family of transportation services” to reach a wide range of customers...a “family of transportation services” is a wide range of travel options, services, and modes that are matched to community demographics and need • Mobility Management uses multiple transportation providers to offer the most efficient and effective services to all individuals • Mobility Management underscores the importance of service advocacy as a way to improve public transportation management and delivery. A mobility manager acts as a travel agent/service coordinator to seek the most effective means for meeting an individual’s transportation needs.

Table 5: United We Ride's definitions of Mobility Management, from www.UnitedWeRide.gov

The Coordinated Council has identified the activities below as potential mobility management strategies that are worth pursuing in the context of the regional human services transportation landscape in our region.

Objective 1: Ease the Trip Planning Experience for Riders

Strategy 1A: Develop a regional one call-one click center

A one call-one click center is a one stop phone service and/or website that potential customers can access in order to find service most appropriate to their travel needs. All service planning, determination of eligibility and coordination in a one call-one click center takes place behind the scenes. The Council will work with stakeholders to develop the model and programmatic details (where the system will be housed, who will be the managing entity, how participation will be encouraged, etc.) of a center that is suitable for the region, and will identify funding for staffing and implementation.

Strategy 1B: Implement mobility management technologies

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies that assist in regional trip planning and coordinated service delivery include such online system mapping and trip planning, automatic vehicle location, electronic fare payment and collection systems, communications equipment, and computer aided dispatch. The council can assist service providers in determining the need

for such technologies and the best means to finance technology projects. The council can also assist in facilitating the inter-agency coordination required for their success and ensure their appropriate implementation in the context of region-wide mobility management.

Strategy 1C: Implement travel training programs

The council will support the development of programs that raise awareness among individuals of the transportation options that are available to them, and instruct them as to how to access and navigate the transportation system. Such a program can include published materials, classroom style sessions, and volunteer travel escort partners. The Regional Planning Commission can assist program hosts in the development of brochures and pamphlets and the hosting of training sessions.

Objective 2: Build Partnerships and Improve Coordination

Strategy 2A: Facilitate partnerships among providers and between providers and user groups

The Council should provide an ongoing forum that fosters building partnerships that are mutually beneficial to providers and to those groups that serve or advocate for the transportation disadvantaged. One example of such a partnership is between large provider of public transportation and a smaller human services agency who, as part of a larger mission of supporting elderly, disabled, or impoverished citizens, also provides transportation. If the transportation task proves too burdensome for the agency, it may benefit from developing a partnership wherein the larger public transportation provider offers service to the clients of the human services agency, and is reimbursed through the agencies funding stream.

Such partnerships can serve to eliminate duplication of service, allowing one agency to focus limited resources on its primary mission, and takes advantage of the larger provider's economies of scale. The Council will seek out such opportunities and work to facilitate the agreements and terms under which they can thrive.

Strategy 2B: Identify, track, and utilize funding and local matching opportunities

The Regional Planning Commission and the Council will research and document potential funding opportunities for human services transportation and transportation related activities. They will also work with local, state, and federal agencies to discover or create matching opportunities for federal transportation grants, and assist determining the most effective use of these funds. Given the changing funding landscape at the state and national level, and the simultaneously increasing costs and need for public transportation, this activity should be ongoing in nature.

Strategy 2C: Promote community outreach and marketing

The Council will utilize outreach techniques in order to better engage the public for the continued development and implementation of the Coordinated Planning process. Some techniques discussed so far include a once a year open house for the general public and inviting representatives from the public to Coordinated Council meetings. The latter may also involve training participants about the technical and policy issues surrounding transportation and transit planning. The council will continue to work toward ensuring that the public, and particularly the transportation disadvantaged, have an opportunity to contribute to the coordinated effort.

Strategy 2D: Coordinate local, state, and national transportation and land-use policy

The Council and the RPC will continue to work with state and local officials to encourage and implement policies that promote human services and public transportation. At the state level this will involve creating regulatory, transportation financing, and mobility management policies and activities. At the local level this will involve working with parishes, cities, and transit agencies to promote land use policies and transportation initiatives that foster effective public transportation.

6.4 Implementation

Implementation of many of these strategies will rely on dedicated effort from multiple stakeholders. Because RPC is not an operating agency, it's primary role will be the development and maintenance of data sets pertaining to coordinated planning, updating the Coordinated Plan, and hosting Coordinated Council meetings, and, when feasible, facilitating project and program coordination efforts among appropriate stakeholders and entities. This coordination will involve the identification of projects from the Coordinated Plan for implementation based on need and availability of funding. Stakeholders and RPC will assist in developing roles and responsibilities to participating entities as appropriate.

7. Performance Monitoring Plan

Performance Measures are quantitative (or in some rare cases qualitative) indicators used to measure progress toward an identified goal or objective. These measures serve three important purposes:

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies toward meeting outcomes
- Provide a format to report progress in human services transportation to the public and decision-makers
- Demonstrate to stakeholders and decision makers the value of projects and planning

Ideally, performance measures are tied numerically and directly to the goals, objectives, and strategies of a plan. However, as the Coordinated Plan is not an operations plan but instead a vision for human services transportation in the region, the following indicators will measure progress more towards overarching objectives and less toward the specific quantitative outcomes one might find in traditional transit service standards plans.

Goal 1: Improve Accessibility and Mobility

Goal One: Objectives		
Make Improvements to Fixed Route Services	Make Improvements to paratransit and demand response services	Improve Accessibility to and from Transit Stops
Goal One: Performance Measures		
Number of elderly (65+) residents within ¼ of all fixed route service	Number of same day paratransit trips provided	Number of transit stop accessibility improvements
Number of low income residents within ¼ of all fixed route service	Amount of trips provided by FTA 5310 funded service	

Goal 2: Take Stock of the Community

Goal Two: Objectives		
Maintain data on the region's public transportation assets	Maintain data on the region's community characteristics	Track human services transportation performance
Goal Two: Performance Measures		
Number of human service providers region-wide that are documented in a database.	None	None

Goal 3: Manage Mobility

Goal Three: Objectives	
Ease the trip planning experience for riders	Build partnerships and improve coordination
Goal Three: Performance Measures	
Funding made available for mobility management staffing, training, housing, and operations	Number of Coordinated Council Meetings

These indicators were developed during the 2018-2020 iteration of this plan, with the goal of including annual reporting into the appendix. Transit staffing changes at RPC in 2019 along with Covid-19 in 2020 has delayed those reporting efforts.

RPC intends to refocus efforts in FY20 and follow through on the reporting of performance indicators as envisioned in this collaborative document.

Indicators will be documented in Appendix C of the Coordinated Plan. The indicators will also integrate, when applicable, with transit Title VI documentation and RPC Metropolitan Transportation Planning performance measures.

APPENDIX A

Statutory Reference

49 U.S. Code § 5310. Formula grants for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities

(e) Grant Requirements.—

(1) In general.—

A grant under this section shall be subject to the same requirements as a grant under section 5307, to the extent the Secretary determines appropriate.

(2) Certification requirements.—

(A) Project selection and plan development.—before receiving a grant under this section, each recipient shall certify that—

(i) the projects selected by the recipient are included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan;

(ii) the plan described in clause (i) was developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public; and

(iii) to the maximum extent feasible, the services funded under this section will be coordinated with transportation services assisted by other Federal departments and agencies, including any transportation activities carried out by a recipient of a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.