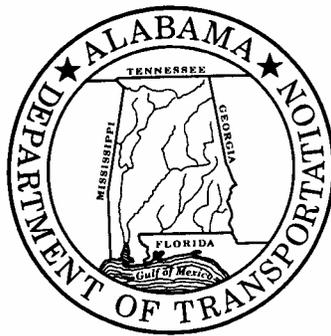


Alabama Public Transportation Needs Assessment

A Research Study for
The Alabama Department of Transportation



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for

UTCA

University Transportation Center for Alabama

The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham,
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16. Abstract <p>The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) oversees “Section 5307” urban transit funds and “Section 5311” rural transit funds, both provided by the Federal Transit Administration. As part of its effort to improve public transportation, ALDOT engaged the University Transportation Center for Alabama (UTCA) to identify additional public transportation needs which these monies might address. The researchers compiled a list of improvements and funding needs that in large part reflects the requests of the public transportation agencies themselves.</p> <p>UTCA researchers reviewed current plans and met with representatives of the 12 urban areas that now receive urban 5311 transit funds. The practical funding requests from these urban areas included \$14 million for the first year (capital and operating costs) and \$7 million per year in succeeding years. The succeeding year value included only operational costs and relied on increased local contributions to replace rolling stock in future years.</p> <p>Additionally, the researchers interviewed all 27 of the rural 5311 transit providers that now serve a total of 50 Alabama counties. Their practical funding requests were added to the costs to initiate rural transit programs in the 17 counties currently without such service. The total came to an additional \$20 million per year, including \$5 million/year to continually upgrade the existing vehicle fleet, \$5 million/year to add service to the 17 un-served counties, and \$10 million/year to improve service in the 50 counties that now have transit service.</p> <p>When both urban and rural transit needs are combined, the total amounts to \$34 million in the first year, and \$27 million in each succeeding year.</p>					
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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) oversees urban transit funds (FTA 5307 funds) and rural transit funds (FTA 5311 funds) in the state through its Multimodal Bureau. ALDOT recognizes that these federal funds are insufficient to provide the high-quality transportation services it desires for Alabama citizens and is working to add state funds to the public transportation system. As part of its effort to improve public transportation, ALDOT contracted with the University Transportation Center for Alabama (UTCA) to quantify additional public transportation funding needs. This report summarizes the results of that study.

Background

The UTCA research team studied Transportation Improvement Plans and Long-Range Transportation Plans for the 12 urban areas that receive FTA 5307 funds. The team then met with representatives from the 12 areas to list practical transportation system improvements drawn from the Plans and to define their associated costs (see Figure 1).

There are 27 rural 5311 transit providers in the state, serving 50 of the 67 counties (see Figure 2). The researchers met with 20 of the providers and performed phone interviews with the other 7 providers to list and quantify their requests for practical service improvements (see Figure 3). Thus, both the urban and rural system improvements in large part reflect the requests of the public transportation agencies themselves.

Funding Assessment Summary

The practical funding requests from the 12 urban areas in Alabama are summarized below:

- \$14M in first year. (This figure includes capital and operating costs)
- \$7M in succeeding years. (This figure includes only operating costs and relies on increased local contributions to replace rolling stock in future years.)

The practical funding requests from the 27 rural transit providers were tabulated, and the costs to initiate rural transit programs in the 17 un-served counties were added. The results are summarized below:

- \$20M is required annually, including the following:
 - \$5M/year to continually upgrade the existing vehicle fleet
 - \$5M/year to add service to the 17 un-served counties
 - \$10M/year to improve service in the 50 counties already being served.

In summary, the combined needs for rural and urban transit systems in Alabama can be expressed as follows: \$34M in the first year and \$27M in each succeeding year.

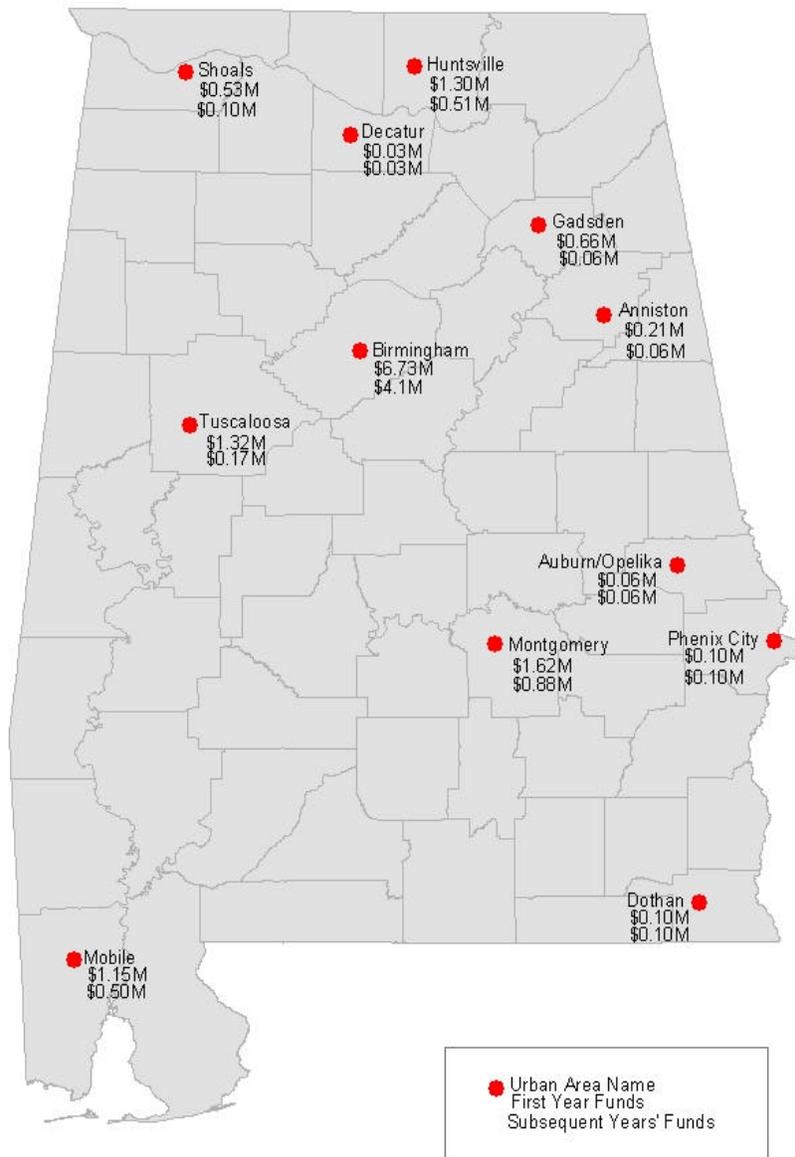


Figure 1: Urban 5307 Transit Programs, Additional Funds Required

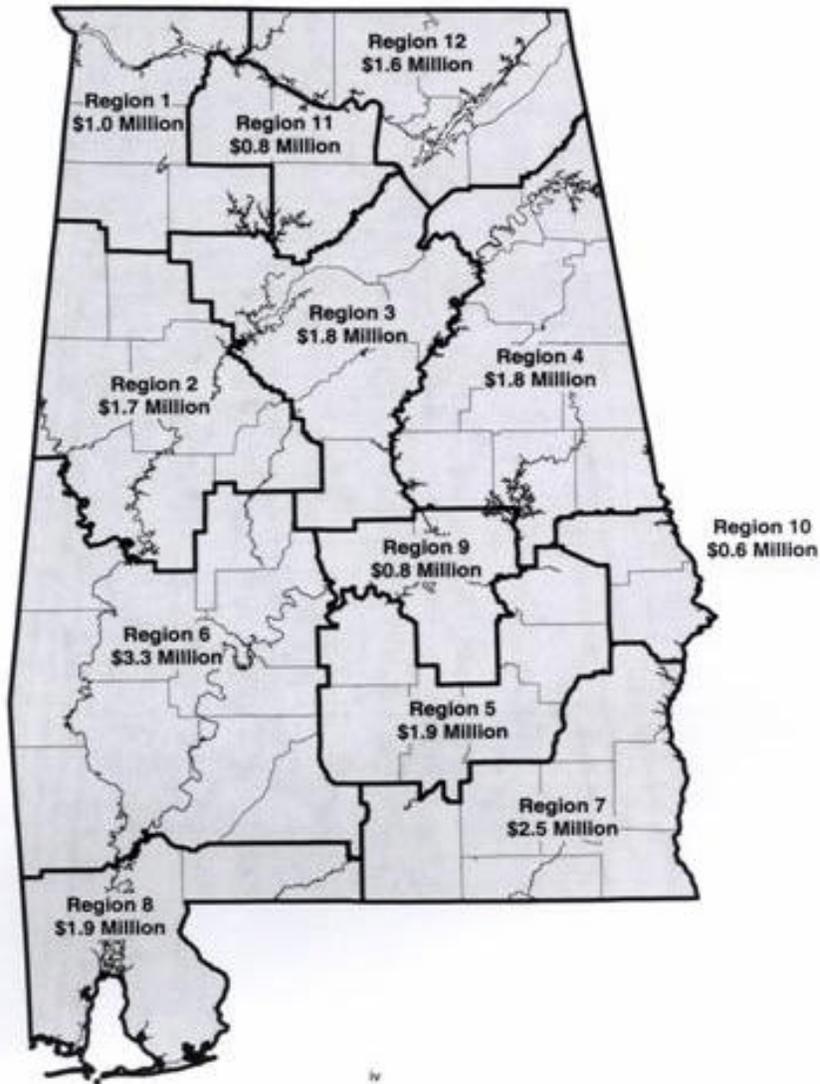


Figure 3: Rural 5311 Transit Programs, Additional Annual Funds Required in Each Regional Planning Commission

1.0 Urban Transit Summary

The primary purpose of this section of the report is to provide an understanding of what it would cost to produce an expansion of services in each urban transit system in the twelve urban areas in the state of Alabama.

This study examines the twelve urban transportation systems individually, and provides a brief description of each system, its characteristics, the services provided, and the current costs of operations. The study also describes each system's proposed plans for expansion and an estimate of the associated expenditures necessary to allow for this expansion.

Based upon this examination of the twelve systems, the estimates provided here show that the costs of expanding transit services in these urban areas—in context—are relatively modest. By the same token, it should also be noted that the specific expansion alternatives considered in this analysis are relatively modest.

The figures used in this study are based upon published information and details supplied by officials of the various transit systems across the state. In particular, the study uses data taken from the most recent Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Long Range Transportation Plan. Additional data is obtained from the National Transportation Database, where available. Local officials provided other documents that have been extremely useful in assembling this study. Many of these officials also met with us to discuss their system (in fact, we were able to meet personally with 10 of the systems and had telephone conversations with the other two providers), and these conversations have been especially helpful in developing a more accurate depiction of the transit systems.

Given the amount of time allotted to this study, it has not been possible to carry out a detailed independent evaluation the costs associated with an alternative nor to conduct an analysis of the impact of the expansion on ridership in the system. In many cases, important assumptions underlie the numbers and if these assumptions prove incorrect, then the costs may be higher or lower. To the extent feasible, an effort was made to be conservative in the projected costs, so as to provide an upper bound on the actual outlays necessary to provide the specific expansion of services. For some communities, the study focuses only on a limited set of high priority alternatives; in other locations, the transit providers show little or no desire to institute any expansion.

It should be pointed out that it is necessary to consider two types of expenditures: capital outlays and operating costs. The important difference, obviously, is that capital expenditures are a one-time expenditure on durable assets; operating costs are ongoing and require a long-term commitment.

Details on the costs of the various expansions can be found in a close reading of the entire study, and the total cost of the expansion proposed by the various systems is approximately \$13,700,000. This total includes \$7 Million in capital outlays and \$6.7 Million in continuing funding for operations. These expenses are summarized by metropolitan planning organization in Table 1.

This study assumes that funds for improvements come from State sources. If federal matching funds are available, then the outlay by the State would necessarily decrease.

Table 1: Urban Areas, Estimated Costs to Expand

City/Area and Name of System	Capital Cost of Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion
Tuscaloosa (Parking and Transit Authority)	\$1,150,000	\$170,000
Shoals (NACOLG)	\$425,000	\$100,000
Mobile (Metro Transit System)	\$650,000	\$500,000
Decatur (MCATS)	\$0	\$30,000
Montgomery (Capital Area Transit)	\$740,000	\$880,000
Huntsville (Huntsville Shuttle)	\$745,000	\$510,000
Gadsden/Etowah/ DART	\$490,000	\$170,000
Birmingham (Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (MAX))	\$2,675,000	\$4,064,000
Auburn-Opelika (LETA)	\$0	\$60,000
Phenix City (PEX)	\$0	\$100,000
Dothan (Wiregrass)	\$0	\$95,000
Anniston (Anniston Express)	\$160,000	\$55,000
TOTALS	\$7,035,000	\$6,734,000

2.0 Overview of Urban Transit

This study focuses on the twelve urban public transportation systems in Alabama and provides a description of each, including details on their operations and the costs associated with those operations. To be specific, the twelve systems examined include:

- Anniston
- Auburn-Opelika
- Birmingham
- Decatur
- Dothan
- Gadsden
- Huntsville
- Mobile
- Montgomery
- Phenix City
- The Shoals Area
- Tuscaloosa

In addition to the description, this section of the report outlines the plans that each system has for the future, focusing on expansion of services. It is appropriate to provide a narrative for each of these systems, in that because of the significant differences among all of these systems, it is not very useful to try to generalize about the characteristics and operations of the systems. A significant amount of the work on this study has been devoted to visiting the transit providers to try to develop a better understanding of the nature of each system. Before referring to the descriptions of each system, it may be valuable to describe, in general terms, some of the features of the different urban transit providers found here in Alabama.

There is a significant amount of variation among these providers that defies generalizations, but there are some commonalities that will aid in an understanding of the individual systems. One way to characterize these systems is the type of transit services provided by the organization. Many of these systems provide fixed route service. These are generally found in the large urban areas, such as Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery and Huntsville. Other systems providing fixed route services include Tuscaloosa, Gadsden, Anniston, and Phenix City (though Phenix City is relatively small, its proximity to Columbus, Georgia, provides a basis for fixed route service). The other systems are found in smaller areas and provide demand response service to their community.

Another distinguishing characteristic is the extent of integration of the system. Many of the smaller systems are combination programs—the transit provider in the locality operates both an urban system and a rural system (this includes NACOLG in the Shoals area, Dothan, and Decatur). In many cases, these are actually one system, and are split up only for accounting purposes imposed on them by the federal government. Other systems have no rural service

whatsoever and are not integrated with the rural services for the county in which they are located—if, indeed, rural transportation services are provided in the county.

A further way of distinguishing each system is how they receive federal funds. Half of these systems deal directly with the Federal Transit Authority to receive their grants (Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa and Gadsden), while the other half are characterized as subrecipients who receive federal dollars via the Alabama Department of Transportation.

One other feature distinguishes some of the systems from others and also relates to federal funding. This distinction is based strictly on size. As of (fiscal year) 1999, federal grants to systems in urban locations with populations exceeding 200,000 persons could only be used for capital and planning purposes. In other words, federal dollars are not available to match operating costs (currently, this is Birmingham, Montgomery and Phenix City). For systems in areas with smaller populations, federal dollars can be used to match local dollars for operating expenses on a 50-50 basis. This obviously has some important implications for the extent to which a locality may be willing and able to provide resources for local public transportation.

2.1 Anniston/Calhoun Area

Introduction

This information is based upon the current TIP from 2000, and on the LRTP from January 2000. Additional information has been obtained via materials supplied from a representative of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. Other details come from conversations with a representative of the planning council.

The Current Transit System

The transit system for the area is known as the Anniston Express. It is operated by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission and is funded locally by the city of Anniston, with additional local funds from Hobson City and a similar arrangement with Weaver. Transportation services operate under contract to a private firm, Alabama Limousine. The transit system is composed of a fixed route system and paratransit services.

Current information indicates that there will be change in the provision of transportation services in the Anniston area. Documents note that operation of the system will revert to the City of Anniston on October 1st of this year. It is unclear how this may affect the operations of the transit system, and in particular, how this will impact any potential expansion of services in this system. The discussion below details the current system.

Fixed Route System The fixed route service operates three routes: East, West and North. Transit services are available Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and on Saturday from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Daily ridership totals 199 passenger trips per day, most who reside in the city of Anniston. The fare for all transit services in the area is \$1.00, with a 50% discount for eligible riders. The fleet consists of six buses, and three are in operation during regular service hours. Headways for all routes average 60 minutes.

Para-transit System Para-transit services for riders with disabilities are provided through a demand response system. The service is door to door, and requires a reservation at least twenty four hours in advance. The hours of service coincide with those available on the fixed route system. There are eligibility requirements for those who use the demand response system, in that they have to be individuals who are unable to use the regular transit services. Para-transit (and regular transit) services for clients of many local social service agencies are made available through the purchase of passes by the agencies. The current paratransit fleet consists of three minibuses, with two in regular service and one available as a spare.

Expansion Plans

While it is unclear what agency will be operating the transit system at the beginning of the next fiscal year, this discussion of expansion used information on plans and expected needs provided by the current operator.

Expansion of the transit system in the Anniston area would focus on the fixed route system. The direction of expansion would be to provide fixed route service to areas beyond the immediate area around the city of Anniston. Two areas in particular could benefit from the availability of service. The addition of service to the city of Jacksonville would provide a route radiating from the transfer point in Anniston, proceeding up the Highway 431 corridor to Jacksonville, passing through the city of Weaver along the way, then circulating through Jacksonville, including the campus of Jacksonville State University, and then return to Anniston.

A second expansion would be to radiate from Anniston south into the Oxford area, covering the Interstate 20/Highway 78 corridor before returning to Anniston. Significant economic development has occurred along the 20/78 corridor, especially in terms of service sector employment and the addition of this route would serve a significant proportion of transit dependent riders (many of whom live in Anniston). This route would also allow transit dependent residents to travel to and from major shopping areas located in the Oxford area. Ridership projection estimates are approximately 5500 passenger-trips per month.

The costs associated with each of these service expansions include the addition of new buses to cover these routes, and the operating costs necessary to provide these services. In both cases, the bus purchases would be approximately \$50,000 per vehicle, and about \$20,000 annually in operating costs—again per vehicle. Previous problems with these expansions are associated with costs, in the case of the Jacksonville route. This would total \$100,000 in capital costs and \$40,000 annually in operating costs. (The city of Jacksonville would have to provide the local match to allow this purchase and the operation of the route, if federal funds prove to be available.) The second case, according to local sources, is more complex. Apparently, underlying political conflicts between municipalities have affected the desirability to fund an expansion of the fixed route system into the Oxford area.

There are related paratransit expansions that could be accomplished. There is sufficient demand for demand response service in the area, such that the addition of at least one new bus for paratransit could be justified. Refusal rates run at approximately five per day, which has the effect of reducing demand for this type of transportation. An expansion of one new bus for this service at a cost of \$60,000 and annual additional operating funds in the neighborhood of \$15,000 per year could be justified based upon the demand for these services.

Table 2: Anniston/Anniston Express characteristics

System Characteristics: Year 2000 Projections									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Fixed Route	3	6	3	3	Bus	DK	M- F Sat.	7 am to 6 pm 10 am to 5 p.m.	60 min.
Demand Response	NA	3	2	3	Bus	100%	M- F	7 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Not Applicable (NA)
Operating Costs and Ridership									
Service Type	Number of Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Fixed Route	61,326			\$31,424	\$233,064		\$1.00	50%	
Note: Other data on the operations of this system were not available.									
Expansion Plans									
Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited		
Fixed Route	1	Add New Routes	Addition of Vehicles (2)	\$100,000	\$40,000	Increase, not quantified	Transit Dependent; Travel to work		
Demand Response	2	Additional services	Addition of Vehicle (1)	\$ 60,000	\$15,000	Increase; not quantified	ADA transit dependent		
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$160,000	\$55,000				

2.2 Auburn/Opelika Area

Introduction

This information is taken from the TIP, dated February 2000, and the Long Range Transportation Plan. The LRTP dates from 1995, so much of its information is dated. This has been supplemented with materials provided by a representative of the Lee Russell Council of Governments. Additional details have been provided from conversations with this representative.

The Current Transit System

The system serving the Auburn and Opelika metropolitan area is operated by the Lee-Russell Council of Governments and is known as LETA. This system is comprised of both a fixed route system that runs through both Auburn and Opelika and a demand response system providing paratransit in these cities and in rural Lee and Russell Counties.

The fixed route system operates over two (2) fixed routes. One operates primarily in Auburn and the second predominantly in Opelika, meeting at a transfer point. Both routes are linearly oriented and loop through each city. Both routes are in service Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with a headway of 60 minutes for each route. The fare is \$1.00, with a 50% discount for senior citizens. The system operates three (3) buses for the fixed route system. This system, as well as the para-transit service, is operated under contract to a private firm, Dixie Excursion, Inc of Auburn. The private sector contract for transit operation is up for re-bid in the Fall, 2000 for a new contract start date beginning February, 2001.

LETA also operates para-transit as a demand response system. Advance reservations are necessary to ride the demand response system. This system operates Monday through Friday with hours from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The fleet consists of thirteen (13) vehicles, with ten (10) in use for normal demand response service. The fare is \$2.00 for a trip within the city limits and \$3.00 outside the city limits. Specific eligibility requirements apply, as only those whose disabilities prevent them from riding the fixed route transportation may use these services. Several of the local social service agencies have contractual arrangements with LETA to provide transit services for their clients. The contract revenue is at a fully allocated cost rate and generates federal and non-federal local revenue sources, when applicable.

Significant amounts of additional revenues are earned for the system via transportation services provided to other groups such as the Area Agency on Aging for Nutrition Center transportation daily for Senior Citizens; Auburn University's para-transit service requirements for the American's with Disabilities Act is met through a contract with LETA, as well as seasonal contracts with the Auburn Airport during athletic events.

Expansion Plans

Expansion of services within the two cities is likely in FY 2001 because of plans to alter routes and schedules for the fixed route system. Headways need to be reduced from 60 minutes down to 30 minutes, which would allow for increased ridership, due to shorter wait times. Also, the coverage area can be better served by more routes flexed into the daily bus schedule. One way to achieve this is through Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the system by a transit consultant. In particular, the aim is to adjust the routes to provide service in such a way to provide for travel to work trips and in particular, for those performing shift work. This could entail changing the hours of operation, but the first task to carry out is to optimize the route system. Such an analysis could be obtained for approximately \$60,000 from a qualified consultant.

Vanpooling is another way to aim toward the journey to work riders due to the volume of residents traveling into and out of the service area to work each day in Montgomery 55 miles one way, Alexander City 45 miles one way, Lagrange –West Point, GA 40 miles one way, and Columbus, GA 35 miles one way. A Ridership/Vanpool coordinator and additional staff would need to be hired in order to handle the administrative duties of marketing, soliciting, and administering the vanpool program.

Table 3: Auburn/Opelika : Lee Russell Council of Governments (LETA) characteristics

System Characteristics: Year 1998									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Fixed Route	2	3	2	3.2	Bus	DK	M - F	6 am to 5 pm	60 min.
Demand Response	NA	13	10	3	Van	100%	M - F	9 am to 4 pm	NA
Operating Costs and Ridership:									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Fixed Route 1998	76,180	195,278	195,278	\$275,423	\$599,277	\$117,170	\$1.00	50%	
1999	39,400	116,771	167,205	170,116					
Demand Response 1998	3,553	22,564	22,564		\$118,248		Demand Response Year: 1998	3,553	
Entire System, Projected 2001 Budget				\$174,385	\$557,250				
Expansion Plans									
Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited		
Fixed Route	1	Improve Operating Efficiency	Transportation Planning	\$0	\$60,000	New Riders	Travel to work; Improved service for existing riders		
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$0	\$60,000				

2.3 Birmingham Area

Introduction

This information taken from the December 1998 TIP, from the 1996 LRTP and the June 2000 document: Transit Development Program FY 2000-2004 (Final Draft Report). Additional information has been obtained from the National Transit Database (NTD). This information has been supplemented with conversations with staff members of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham.

The Current Transit System

The transit system is operated by the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA), which was formerly called the Metro Area Express (or MAX). This system serves the Birmingham metropolitan area. Communities outside the city of Birmingham are provided

transit services if they purchase these from the transit authority. If a community does not “buy-in,” then they do not receive any service. The funding arrangement is based upon a formula set by the enabling legislation that creates the BJCTA. This formula is determined by the amount of hours of service made available to the particular community.

The system operates a large fixed route system and paratransit services supplied by a demand response system. The fixed route system operates 32 routes in Birmingham and in the communities of Bessemer, Fairfield, Homewood, Mountain Brook and Tarrant. These routes operate via a radial network terminating in a new transit facility in downtown Birmingham. The fixed route system operates over 75 vehicles to serve the routes currently provided. A total of 98 vehicles are in the BJCTA fleet. Of these, 29 or 39% are ADA accessible. This system operates from Monday through Friday from approximately 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The base fare is \$1.00, with a 50% discount for eligible riders. Headways are approximately 60 minutes.

Para-transit services provided by the BJCTA (called the VIP system) are available approximately 10 hours per day, Monday through Friday. The system operates a fleet of 15 vehicles during peak time, providing approximately 300 trips per day. A second system (not operated by the BJCTA) also operates in Birmingham, CLASTRAN, which operates 40 vehicles and provide 850 trips per day.

Information from the 1996 plan provides some details about a number of possible changes to the transit system. In particular, the plan discusses use of high volume/capacity corridors with the use of HOV lanes; the addition of a park and ride system; expansion of the fixed route system; and finally, in the long term, the development of a light rail system. More specific plans can be found in the Transit Development report, which forms the basis of the information used to detail the transit authority’s plans for expansion. This report provides a great deal information concerning each of the proposed alternatives for expansion. In addition, it focuses on a small number of these that are considered highest priority. This study will focus on this set of high priority items.

Some of the changes are likely to be expensive, while others would be less costly. A few of these represent changes to the system that would fall outside the scope of this study and are not discussed. (One is the provision of additional bus service to the UAB campus—a campus circulator—and is funded by resources provided by UAB. Three other high priority projects are also not discussed: the initiation of a transit pass system, construction of additional bus shelters and the initiation of a marketing campaign.)

Expansion of Services

The first expansion of fixed route services discussed is weekend service. This alternative adds service on Saturday for nearly all routes. The projected cost is \$1.2 Million annually, which is entirely in the form of operating costs, since additional rolling stock would not be needed to operate this service.¹ Ridership projections are based upon estimates made by the American

¹ Note: According to the discussions with Birmingham officials, this service can be funded with Federal dollars via the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program. This funding is at the 80% level, with a 20% local match.

Public Transportation Association (APTA). These estimates predict that Saturday ridership is typically 50% that of weekday rates. For BJCTA, this would imply an addition 300,000 passenger trips annually. The basis for this proposal is that weekends, and especially Saturday, are becoming increasingly important both as days of employment as well as for other personal activities and would especially benefit transit-dependent riders.

The second fixed route expansion is an extension of hours of service. Current routes are operated approximately twelve hours per day. Expansion would provide services later in the evening. The proposal chooses to extend transit until 9:00 PM for most routes. This does not entail acquisition of additional vehicles but requires higher operating costs. The Transit Development proposal puts these costs at \$1.39 Million annually.² Benefits flow to those whose travel pattern does not fit the M-F 8:00 to 5:00 schedule. A specific prediction of ridership is not made for this proposal, but the later availability of transit services would allow many new riders for whom the public transportation was formerly not an option. Workers in service jobs, whose schedules are often atypical, would be particularly benefited.

The third proposal would be the alteration of the city center circulator (called DART). This service would be operated from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM with a 10 minute headway, operating on a daily basis. Operating cost would be \$737,000 and requires capital costs of \$2.675 Million to acquire new rolling stock.³ Many additional riders can benefit, particularly with the availability in the evening and on weekends. Particularly benefited will be out of town visitors who frequent downtown attractions. Transit dependent riders will benefit marginally from the addition of the services.

Para-transit options mirror the first two proposals: adding Saturday services and extending the hours of service. These costs would be \$468,000 and \$269,000, respectively.⁴ The arguments made for these options above apply equally in the case of the expansion of paratransit services. The plan also discusses efforts to improve coordination between BJCTA and CLASTRAN to allow the implementation of centralized routing and scheduling of paratransit. Costs of this option are deemed to be relatively minor.

However, this funding is available only for three (3) years; subsequently, an alternative source for the funding must be found. The local match amount would be \$240,000.

² According to local representatives, these services, too, could be funded via the CMAQ program and would entail a \$278,000 local match initially and then full local funding after three (3) years.

³ If this is funded via CMAQ, the local match is \$148,000 over three years, and the rollingstock would require the local match of \$535,000.

⁴CMAQ funds can be used here, too, and require a local match of \$94,000 and \$54,000.

4a. Birmingham/Jefferson County characteristics, costs and ridership

System Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Fixed Route									
1998	32	76	64	7.9	Bus	39%	M – F	6 am to 6 pm	60 min
1997	32	75	64	8.9	Bus	39%	M – F	6 am to 6 pm	60 min
1996	32	129	67	9.1	Bus	39%	M – F	6 am to 6 pm	60 min
Demand Response									
1998	NA	18	15	2	Van	100%	M – F	6 am to 6 pm	NA
1997	NA	18	15	3	Van	100%	M – F	6 am to 6 pm	NA
1996	NA	18	15	3	Van	100%	M - F	6 am to 6 pm	NA
Operating Costs and Ridership:									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Fixed Route (MAX) 1998	406,738	748,036	1,655,808	\$1,872,003	\$8,880,655	\$2,127,031	\$1.00	50%	
Para-transit , Demand Response 1998	94,254	585,681	519,841		\$1,350,446	\$0			
Note: Information for 1997 was not available for BJCTA									

Table 4b. Birmingham/ Jefferson County expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Fixed Route	1	Weekend Service	Operate Saturday	\$0	\$1,200,000	Additional Riders	Transit Dependent Travel to work
Fixed Route	2	Extended Hours of Operation	Extend Hours to 9 PM	\$0	\$1,390,000	Additional Riders	Transit Dependent Travel to work
Fixed Route	3	City Center Circulator	Alter routes and add service in CBD	\$2,675,000	\$ 737,000	Increase Ridership	Choice riders Tourist
Demand Response	1A	Weekend Service	Operate Saturday	\$0	\$ 269,000	Additional riders	ADA transit dependent; Travel to work
Demand Response	2A	Extended Hours of Operation	Extend Hours to 9 pm	\$0	\$ 468,000	Additional riders	ADA transit dependent; Travel to work
Total, Highest Priority Alternatives				\$2,675,000	\$4,064,000		

Note: The alternatives listed are eligible for funding at an 80/20 federal-local split from the CMAQ program. The split for operating costs lasts 3 years and then all costs revert to the local jurisdiction if the jurisdiction's population exceeds 200,000 persons.

2.4 Decatur Area

Introduction

This information is based upon the TIP from June of 1999, from the LRTP from February 2000 and information from the National Transit Database for 1997. Additional details have been supplied from a conversation with a representative of the Morgan County Area Transit System.

The Current Transit System

Service is provided throughout the Decatur metro area, which encompasses the Morgan County area. This also includes the cities of Hartselle, Priceville and Trinity, and unincorporated areas in the county and some areas in southern Limestone County.

Transit services are operated by the Morgan County Commission and includes both an urban and a rural transit system. The urban system is a demand-response based system and is called Morgan County Area Transit System (or MCATS). Management is carried out by the county Commission on Aging. The association with the Commission on Aging has caused something of a problem for MCATS, in that a significant proportion of residents associate the operation of the system with the elderly and thus do not regard it as available to other riders. Local funding for the system is provided from appropriations from the city of Decatur.

The MCATS demand response system provides two types of basic transportation services. One is traditional demand response (typically called “Dial-A-Ride” service), which is utilized primarily by elderly residents of the area. The service is available Monday through Friday, with advance notice of 24 hours. The fare is \$1.00 per trip. The second type is subscription services provided via contracts with social service agencies. A number of other social service agencies currently provide their own transportation services for their clients.

MCATS operates a fleet of eighteen (18) vehicles, of which two (2) are reserved as relief vehicles. Seven of these provide transportation for the contract routes; the other vehicles are used for the demand response services.

Expansion Plans

The available documents and recent discussion with the representative of MCATS, implies a primary focus on maintaining current levels of services. According to the LRTP, an assessment of the feasibility of various transit services was conducted. The recommendations from this study focus on no new programs but rather to make public more aware of existing services (essentially a marketing campaign), which are available to all residents of the area rather than only available to elderly riders. This would apparently increase ridership, but from what group or groups is unclear. There is some discussion of the development, over a longer time period, of a ride share program, and even more into the future, a downtown circulator.

The long-term plans discuss the development of coordination efforts with other private transportation providers and the initiation of a rideshare program. The planning document does not indicate which set of riders would be affected by this or the level of ridership that such a program would generate. Costs for the coordination effort are placed at \$5,000 initially and \$5,000 annually thereafter. These efforts would be funded entirely out of local dollars. The rideshare program is projected to cost \$25,000 initially and costs would rise annually after that, first to \$50,000 and subsequently to \$80,000. It is not specified how these costs would be divided among operating and capital outlays. The latter set of costs is well out into the future (5 to 8 years).

5a. Decatur/MCATS characteristics, operating costs and ridership

System Characteristics: Year 1997									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Demand Response 1997	NA	18	16	2.2	Vans	DK	M – F	7 am to 5 pm	NA
Operating Costs and Ridership:									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Fixed Route 1997	281,785	648,420	206,622	\$49,243	\$342,488	0	\$1.00		

5b. Decatur/MCATS expansion plans							
Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type Riders Benefited
Demand Response	1	Improved Service	Coordination of Services	\$0	\$ 5,000	None	Transit Dependent
Demand Response	2	Rideshare Program; Referral Program	Initiation of Programs	\$0	\$25,000	Increase, not quantified	Transit Dependent Travel to work
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$0	\$30,000		

2.5 Dothan/Wiregrass Area

Introduction

This information is based upon the TIP for 2000, and from the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP dates from June 1995, so much of its information is likely to be dated. This information has been supplemented with documents provided by a representative of the Wiregrass Transit Authority as well as by information furnished in conversations with this representative.

The Current Transit System

The system serving this area is called the Wiregrass Transit Authority and operates in the urban area around Dothan and other areas in Houston County, plus a small segment of Dale County. The transit authority operates both a rural and urban system and these operations are largely integrated.

Wiregrass Transit Authority operates a demand response system. This system (rural and urban) has a fleet of twenty-one vehicles, of which fourteen are used for transit services. 100% of the vehicles are ADA accessible. Based upon information from the system, urban transportation accounts for approximately 75% of demand for transportation in the system. Demand response services are provided to all residents of the area via a “dial-a-ride” process. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Basic one-way fare is \$2.00 within the city limits of Dothan, and is \$3.00 from the communities of Webb, Ashford and Cottonwood and \$5.00 from Gordon, Columbia and Wickburg. Hours of operation run from approximately 5:30 AM until 11:00 PM, Monday through Friday. A significant proportion of demand response services are provided to social service agencies in the area under contract, as well as provision of transportation for school age children in after-school programs during the regular school year.

The dial-a-ride system runs at capacity most days. According to the representative of the transit authority, approximately 35% of the requests represent “refusals” as the caller may not be able to schedule their ride at exactly the day and time that they want. In most cases, however, a different time can be arranged with the caller that proves to be satisfactory.

Expansion Plans

The system has not provided any formal plans for expansion, however several pressing needs are perceived by the transit officials. One is the demand for transportation services into the area (specifically into Dothan) from residents of surrounding counties (in particular, Henry, Dale and Geneva Counties). These would be “corridor” routes along major thoroughfares in the region. Obviously, this expansion of service is not part of the urban service, so is not discussed here.

Additional needs would allow for the improvement of operating efficiency in the transit system. This could be handled on the basis of a consultant or a temporary transportation planner whose services could be made available. It would be expected that a private consultant’s services would be in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 range. This could be funded with federal matching funds since this can be considered transportation planning activities.

A second related need is for staff to provide improved operations in the area of scheduling, dispatching and database management. This would require the addition of at least one new employee, at an estimated cost of \$35,000 annually.

Table 6: Dothan/Wiregrass Transit Authority summary

System Characteristics: Year 1999									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Demand Response	NA	21	14	5 years	Bus	100%	M – F	6 a.m. to 11 p.m.	NA
Operating Costs and Ridership: Year 2000 Projections									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Demand Response	143,000	400,000	572,000	\$56,000	\$700,000	DK	\$2 - \$5	50%	
Expansion Plans									
Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited		
Demand Response	1	Improve Operating Efficiency	Transortation Planning	\$0	\$60,000	Unclear	Improved service to existing riders		
Demand Response	2	Improve Operations	Scheduling and Dispatch Management	\$0	\$35,000	Unclear	Improved service to existing riders		
Total, all Expansion Alternatives				\$0	\$95,000				

2.6 Gadsden Area

Introduction

This information is based upon the TIP from January 2000 and the Long Range Transportation Plan from January 2000. Additional information has been taken from the National Transit Database (NTD) for 1997. More current information has been obtained through conversations with representatives in the transit office of the City of Gadsden (and the Metropolitan Planning Organization). Local funding (to provide the match for Federal funding) for the system is provided by the city of Gadsden, with contracts with Attalla and Rainbow City for transit services.

The Current Transit System

The City of Gadsden currently operates a transit system that has two primary components. One is a demand response system, called DART, which provides transportation services in the Gadsden metropolitan area, including the cities of Attalla and Rainbow City. Transit is provided two days per week to Attalla and one day a week to Rainbow City. A second system, The

Gadsden Trolley, has begun operating within the last calendar year that provides fixed route service within the city of Gadsden.

The DART system is a traditional demand response system offering paratransit services. The fleet is comprised of twelve (12) ADA accessible vans utilizing eight (8) of these vehicles during peak operating periods. Service is provide Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This service is door to door and must be reserved at least 24 hours in advance. The fare for this system is \$1.50 (\$0.75 for seniors).

The Gadsden Trolley operates 3 fixed routes within Gadsden. The fleet of three (3) 26-passenger trolleys operate on a deviated fixed route basis, and provide transportation Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and Saturday service from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The three routes are service to East Gadsden (this will cross the river into the CBD of Gadsden), a north-south route (along the Highway 411 corridor), and a route serving the western part of Gadsden, including the South Gadsden and Alabama City. The system operates on a 60-minute headway with a current fare of \$0.25. (It should be noted that there is no taxi service operating in the city of Gadsden.)

Ridership for the DART system is quite strong, and on many occasions, the system is forced to refuse or reschedule a rider. Conversations with Gadsden officials indicate that all of the DART vehicles run at full capacity. Some former DART riders switched to the Trolley once that service was instituted, but there was no drop off in ridership, indicating the need for additional capacity. A number of individuals (or the social service agency for which this person is a client) make what can be called “standing orders” for a ride, which frequently fills a vehicle and leaves no room for subsequent dial-up reservations.

Since the Trolley service was only recently instituted, there is yet to be sufficient data to be able to draw firm conclusions. However, more informal evaluation of ridership indicates that response has been strong. The routes were planned to provide transportation services to those who are transit dependent, especially low-income individuals. The routes provide stops in all of the housing communities operated by the local housing authority (where estimates indicate that 50 to 60% of the residents do not have vehicles) and provide transit to all major shopping and medical areas within the Gadsden urban area. The representatives also suggest that these routes are being used for transportation to work at least on a limited basis. In addition, there is some indication that this trolley system is also being used to provide transportation to the public schools for students who are not already being transported by the school system.

Expansion Plans

Plans for the expansion of the DART demand response service to the entire metropolitan area, would provide these services to the cities of Glencoe, Hokes Bluff, Southside and Reece City. The plan does not indicate specifically what the costs of these additional services would be, nor is there any indication of the additional riders served or their characteristics. However, based upon the information supplied by the city of Gadsden transit staff, additional capacity would provide strong ridership, given the fact that most vehicles currently run at or near 100% occupancy. Such expansion would require the addition of three (3) to five (5) new vehicles.

Capital costs for these (including preventive maintenance) would be in the range of \$165,000 to \$250,000. Operating costs would be likely to be in the \$55,000 to \$90,000 range.

Expansion of the Trolley is also planned. Given the current response, the plan is to add one (1) new trolley route, necessitating an additional vehicle, and subsequently, adding a fifth trolley that could significantly reduce headways (from the current 60 minutes to 30 minutes). These would provide transit services to areas currently not being served and add riders for whom the service is not desirable based upon the time required to move from point to point. New trolleys cost approximately \$120,000 each, so the additional capital costs for both types of expansion would be \$240,000. Operating costs would be about \$40,000 per vehicle, or a total of \$80,000 per year.

Table 7a: Gadsden/Etowah/DART characteristics, costs and ridership

System Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
<u>Gadsden/Etowah/DART</u>									
Demand Response 1997	NA	11	7	5 years	Van	100%	M – F	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	NA
Demand Response 1999	NA	12	8	5 years	Van	100%	M – F	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	NA
<u>Gadsden Trolley</u>									
Fixed Route 2000	3	3	3	1 year	Trolley	100%	M – F Sat.	6 a.m. to 6 p.m. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.	60 min.
Operating Costs and Ridership: Year 2000 Projections									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
<u>Gadsden/Etowah/DART</u>									
1997 Demand Response	37,050	154,375	141,037	\$21,055	\$240,993	\$17,200	\$1.50	50%	
<u>Gadsden Trolley</u> 2000 Fixed Route	22,539			\$5,635			\$0.25	none	
Note: Gadsden Trolley service begun in January 2000; incomplete information is available at this point on operations.									

Table 7b: Gadsden/Etowah/DART expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Gadsden/ Etowah/DART Demand Response	1	Expansion of Service	Addition of 5 vehicles	\$250,000	\$90,000	Increase Not Quantified	Paratransit Transit dependent
Fixed Route	2	Addition of Route	Addition of 1 Vehicle	\$120,000	\$40,000	Increase not quantified	Transit dependent; new riders
Fixed Route	3	Increase frequency of service; Headway Reduction to 30 min.	Addition of 1 vehicle; adjustment of routes	\$120,000	\$40,000	Increase not quantified	Transit dependent; travel to work
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$490,000	\$170,000		

2.7 Huntsville Area

Introduction

This information is based upon the TIP, from January 2000, and the 2000 Long Range Transportation Plan. Additional materials have been taken from the National Transit Database (NTD).

The Current Transit System

The public transit system is operated by the City of Huntsville, Public Transit Division encompassing the urban area of Huntsville. The city operates a variety of public transit systems, including a fixed-route bus system (the Huntsville Shuttle), and a para-transit system (Handi-Ride). In addition, other transit services are provided by a range of public and private social service agencies. Additional programs include a rideshare program and the availability of funding for vanpooling as well as brokerage services provided to match up groups and the funding for the services provided by these groups.

The Huntsville Shuttle is comprised of eleven (11) fixed routes, with a fleet of fourteen (14) ADA accessible buses operating Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. There is a central transfer point service with connections made in the CBD. Headways for the routes range from 30 minutes to 60 minutes depending upon the time of day and the route. The fare is \$1.00, and a 50% discount for students, the elderly and disabled riders.

Para-transit services via the Handi-Ride program operates on a door-to-door basis for eligible individuals (with ADA riders given priority) throughout the city of Huntsville. The fleet is twelve (12) vehicles, of which nine (9) are equipped with wheelchair lifts. The system operates from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Riders must make trip reservations in advance. The fare is \$1.00 with no discounts. The system has eligibility requirements and limits

riders to trips for medical, employment, rehabilitation and personal business. Additional paratransit-type services are provided via the Community Volunteer and Human Service Agency, which operates a 19-vehicle fleet. These services are for riders who need more specialized transportation services that cannot be supplied by the Huntsville Shuttle or Handi-Ride.

A ridesharing program utilizing both carpooling and vanpooling is available, with services provided to match up riders and resources used to provide vanpooling for employers.

Information from the TIP shows allotments to purchase (as opposed to replace) a van in each of the three years 2001-2003, which could allow for some expansion of services. The long range plan notes there is an expectation that currently offered services will meet community needs for the next several years but that there are a number of possible service expansions that could provide additional benefits to the community. In particular, the study notes that both the fixed route shuttle and the paratransit system could both be expanded along with the maintenance of the other existing programs.

Expansion Plans

For the Huntsville Shuttle, the plan recommends addition of the fixed routes into four (4) separate areas. These new routes would serve areas to the west, towards the airport; to the southeast (specifically south of Weatherly Road); and into the west Huntsville area, where ridership is highest. Additional priorities mentioned include the lengthening of service hours, including evening hours and weekend service. The provision of additional resources aimed at reducing headways on several of the routes is deemed important. The ideal would be 30 minutes, with 20 minutes on more heavily used routes.

If 4 additional routes are added, the capital costs would be \$520,000. This is based upon the addition of 4 new vehicles. Operating costs will add \$360,000 to this figure on an annual basis.

For the Handi-Ride program, service expansion would be desirable (the plan notes that the demand for paratransit had doubled over the previous seven years and that there is a need for the capacity to provide 8000 additional passenger trips annually). This would entail the addition of 10 to 15 lift-equipped vehicles.

If the Handi-Ride program is expanded as projected over the next three years:

- Additional vehicles could be obtained by purchasing five per year. At a cost of approximately \$45,000 each, total capital costs would be \$225,000;
- Operating cost per vehicle would be approximately \$30,000 annually, or a total of \$150,000 year. Obviously, these figures would increase each year, with the expansion of the system's fleet of vehicles.

Operating efficiency could be improved, according to the plan, with the availability of a transit facility, which would serve administrative, maintenance and transfer needs.

Table 8a: Huntsville Characteristics, costs and ridership

System Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
<u>Huntsville Shuttle</u>									
Fixed Route 1998	11	14	11	4.4 years	Bus		M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	30-60 min
Fixed Route 1997	10	13	10	4.3 years	Bus		M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	30-60 min
Fixed Route 1996	9	12	9	3.6 years	Bus		M - F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	30-60 min
<u>Handi-Ride (paratransit)</u>									
Demand Response 1998	NA	12	11	5.4 years	Van	75%	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA
Demand Response 1998	NA		11	5.2 years	Van	75%	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA
Demand Response Year: 1998	NA		9	6.1 years	Van	75%	M–F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA
<u>Community Volunteer and Human Service Agency</u>									
Demand Response			19						
Operating Costs and Ridership: Year 2000 Projections									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
<u>Huntsville Shuttle</u>									
Fixed Route 1998	274,758	1,242,307	502,172	\$185,746	\$868,746	\$290,353	\$1.00	50%	
Fixed Route 1997	310,254	1,247,802	453,222	\$225,313	\$786,986	\$142,797			
Fixed Route 1996	262,880	1,316,632	437,720	\$203,473	\$688,662	\$206,861			
<u>Huntsville/Handi-Ride</u>									
Demand Response 1998	287,476	1,415,792	376,281		\$682,313	\$129,452	\$1.00		
Demand Response 1997	276,363	1,369,157	427,982		\$638,320	\$252,774			
Demand Response 1996	245,358	1,252,622	429,412		\$613,008	\$ 45,774			

Table 8b. Huntsville expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Fixed Route	1	New Routes	Addition of 4 vehicles	\$520,000	\$360,000	Increase ridership	Transit dependent
Demand Response	2	Additional Service	Add Vehicles 5 per year	\$225,000	\$150,000	Increase ridership	ADA Transit dependent
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$745,000	\$510,000		

2.8 Mobile Area

Introduction

This information is taken from the TIP and LRTP for the Mobile area (Mobile Area Transportation Study), both of which are dated February 2000. Additional material is taken from the National Transit Database (NTD). This has been supplemented by information from representatives of the Metro Transit System and conversations with these representatives.

The Current Transit System

Public transportation services for the Mobile area are provided by Metro Transit System (previously Mobile Transit Authority). The system operates a fixed route bus service, paratransit and special transportation services.

Fixed Route The fixed route system is comprised of thirteen (13) routes serving Mobile as well as Prichard, Chickasaw and Saraland. Service is provided Monday through Saturday from 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM. There are a total of thirty-one (31) buses in the fleet, and twenty-five (25) are in operation during peak travel periods and twenty-one (21) during off-peak. The fare is \$1.25, with a 10¢ transfer charge; there is a discount for eligible riders of approximately 50%.

Para-transit Services Para-transit services are also provided, both by Metro Transit and a variety of local social service agencies, via a demand response system. A private service provider operates the paratransit services for Metro Transit, and operates 7 vehicles during the peak hours. According to the LRTP, 54% of the fleet is ADA accessible.

Expansion Plans

The discussion in the LRTP indicates that MTS is considering a switch in its fixed route system. The system is currently a radial system that provides routes into and out of the CBD, and adjustments to routes have attempted to provide for trip demands by expanding into a larger

geographic area. The study indicates that this system may not be appropriate for the growth in the area, and that many trips begin and end outside the CBD, implying that a different route system may be more appropriate. The plan proposes to move to a hub system, where there are a number of hubs scattered throughout the metropolitan area, at which transfers could occur. There would be local feeder buses that would collect passengers at each hub and then routes running between the hub points. Such an approach would allow passengers to take suburb-to-suburb routes without having to go into the CBD.

In addition to, or as part of, the change in the fixed route system, the plan proposes the addition of several new routes, encompassing a north-south corridor in the western metropolitan area; a southern route to the Tillman's Corner/Theodore area; a route into the northwestern metropolitan area; and rural to urban routes (to/from the airport, and connecting to Baldwin County). Additional plans call for express bus services and a campus shuttle system for the University of South Alabama.

There do not appear to be plans to expand paratransit services, but rather to operate the existing system more effectively. The plans propose to replace the existing fleet, which relies on lifts to load disabled passengers, to vehicles with low floors. This is because the latter allow ingress more quickly, so the existing fleet would operate in a shorter time, thus allowing for more trips for those who need these services. The plans call for more cooperation among service providers to allow more efficient scheduling of vehicles.

The analysis here focuses on the addition of the 4 new routes. This expansion would necessitate the acquisition of five new vehicles (one per route plus a spare). Acquisition costs would total \$650,000 for these new vehicles. Operating costs for the 4 routes should total approximately \$500,000 annually.

Other plans include the implementation of a CBD circulator service and to integrate this into the multimodal facility that is budgeted to be renovated and put into service. Other ideas concern the use of a vanpool system, carpool program and other ideas aimed at improving transportation effectiveness in the area

No rural transit is provided, but the plan notes that MTS might be the appropriate provider of these services. Study also discusses the possibility of greater coordination of services in the broader geographic area, specifically with Baldwin County.

9a: Mobile transit characteristics

Operating Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
<u>Mobile/Metro Transit</u>									
Fixed Route 1998	13	31	25	7.5 years	Bus	54%	M - S	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	60 min
Fixed Route 1997	13	31	25	8.4 years	Bus	54%	M - S	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	60 min
Fixed Route 1996	13	31	25	8.8 years	Bus	54%	M - S	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	60 min
<u>Mobile Paratransit</u>									
Demand Response 1998	NA	7	7	1 year	Vans	100%	M-S	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	NA
Demand Response 1998	NA	5	5	1.6 years	Vans	100%	M - S	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	NA

9b: Mobile operating costs and ridership: year 2000 projections

Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount
<u>Mobile/Metro Transit</u>								
Fixed Route Year: 1998	991,814	5,424,424	\$1,259,610	\$965,628	\$3,122,838	\$1,710,653	\$1.25	\$0.60
Fixed Route Year: 1997	1,050,485	5,736,076	1,262,874	\$1,017,107	\$2,867,345	\$437,915	\$1.25	\$0.60
Fixed Route Year: 1996	1,086,894	5,934,004	1,281,328	\$ 981,285	\$3,094,589	\$608,116	\$1.25	\$0.60
<u>Mobile/Para-transit</u>								
Demand Response 1998	23,237	194,920	219,162	\$42,740	\$408,891	\$0		
Demand Response 1997	21,849	185,165	169,794	Included in above	\$321,009	Included in above		
Demand Response 1996	20,010	184,838	167,598	Included in above	\$287,041	Included in above		

Table 9c: Mobile Transit System expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Fixed Route	1	Add 4 New Routes	Addition of 5 vehicles	\$650,000	\$500,000	Increase Ridership; New Riders	Transit Dependent
Total for all Expansion Alternatives				\$650,000	\$500,000		

2.9 Montgomery Area

Introduction

This information comes from the TIP from February 2000 and the Long Range Transportation Plan, also from February 2000. Additional information is taken from the National Transit Database (NTD). Other materials have been provided by representatives of the regional planning agency, and details from conversations with these representatives. Some additional information about the Autauga transportation system was obtained in a conversation with a representative of Autauga County Rural Transportation Program.

The Current Transit System

The public transit system in the Montgomery area is comprised to two distinct systems. One serves the city of Montgomery and is called Capital Area Transit (CAT). It provides demand response transit, paratransit services, special transportation services and more recently, a reintroduced fixed route system. Changes to the city government in Montgomery have prompted a reevaluation of the current transit delivery system. Costs have risen sharply while ridership has declined. The city currently has a request for proposals pending which will inaugurate a new transit management contract commencing October 1, 2000. The request directs that the actions of the new management company will result in increased ridership and reductions in operating costs. These changes may affect any expansion of services offered in the city.

Fixed Route and Demand Response For the Montgomery area, regular public transportation is provided via a demand response system, which was inaugurated in 1998 (this system replaced a fixed route system operating 17 fixed routes). This switch was apparently in response to decreases in ridership and in funding available for public transit from the federal government. Documents indicate that the change was the result of the desire to provide a more effective transit service.

During 2000, the demand response service has been augmented with limited fixed route service. There are three fixed routes and the demand response system now serves as a feeder for the fixed route service. The fleet is composed of 39 buses, including the 1998 acquisition of twenty-two

22 wheelchair lift equipped vehicles. Additional buses have been rehabbed for purposes as operating as spares. The fare for both fixed route and demand response is \$1.50 (no transfer fee), with discounts for students, elderly and disabled riders. Hours are from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The demand response system requires advance reservation.

There is also a circulator/trolley service for to transport state employees to and from remote parking lots. To operate the parking lot shuttles, three new trolleys were acquired (backed up by three older trolleys as spares). These services, along with the fixed route and demand response services, are provided through a private contractor, Queen Management Group.

Para-Transit Services Para-transit in Montgomery (Montgomery Area Para-transit, or MAP) is curb-to-curb service within the city limits of Montgomery for those unable to ride the CAT system. The fleet is comprised of 14 wheelchair lift vehicles. Service is provided Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with advanced scheduling, as late as the day of the trip on a first-come, first-served basis. The fare is \$2.00 for this service. There are additional transit services provided by a variety of social service agencies in the Montgomery area, largely based upon the type of clientele served by that agency.

Prattville Transit Services The second system provides limited urban transportation in this area. Transit service in the Prattville area is provided through the services of the Autauga County Rural Transportation Program. This is demand response service, requiring 24 hours notice. The total fleet is 12 vehicles, of which five operate in the urban area of Prattville-Montgomery. The fare is \$2.00, one-way and \$5.00 one-way from Prattville to Montgomery, with a 50% discount for youth, elderly and disabled riders. Services are available Monday through Friday 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Prattville riders totaled over 21,000 passenger trips in 1998.

Expansion Plans

Information from the TIP shows funds for capital expenditures for transit, but it is unclear whether these would allow expansion of services. Some of the funds will be used to provide an intermodal facility. Any changes to the system are likely to be affected by a change in the direction of the transit that may grow from the change in the management and operation of the transit system for the coming fiscal year.

The LRTP does not list any new initiatives for public transportation over the 25-year period in the plan. The emphasis is on the development of the downtown circulator and the use of the DART buses as feeders into this system. One aspect of other plans may have an impact on public transportation: the development of the Intelligent Transportation System could affect the efficient operation of the public transit system in the Montgomery area. The table detailing expenditures for the 25 year period notes capital improvements to the system, but no specific statement outlines how these expenditures are to be allocated.

Our analysis has used information from the long-range plans plus additional information on capital plans to provide estimates of expansions to both the fixed route system and to the paratransit system. This approach calls for the addition of five new buses to the CAT system and the operation of four of these buses, with one as a spare. This would mean that \$600,000 would

be needed to purchase these buses. Based upon the level of operating costs, the analysis implies that operating costs would be approximately \$720,000 per year. For paratransit, the analysis calls for the addition of 2 new vans, at a total cost of \$140,000. Operating costs would be approximately \$160,000 annually.

No information was obtained that indicates any plans for expansion by the urban portion of the Autauga transit provider.

Table 10a. Montgomery Transit System characteristics

Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Montgomery/Capital Area Transit (CAT)									
Fixed Route Year: 2000	3	6	3	3 years (24)	Bus	100%	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	60 min
Demand Response Year: 2000	NA	25	22	2 years	Bus	100%	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA
State Employee Shuttle									
Ciculator Year: 2000	NA	1	6	3 years	Trolley	100%	M – F	AM ; PM	NA
Montgomery Para-transit (MAP)									
Demand Response Year: 2000	NA	14	14		Van	100%	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA
Prattville/Autauga County Rural Transportation									
Demand Response	NA	5	5		Van	100%	M–F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA

Table 10b. Montgomery Transit System operating costs and ridership

Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount
Montgomery/Capital Area Transit (CAT)								
Demand Response 1998	238,954	1,169,085	610,369	\$281,639	\$3,010,378	\$2,042,357	\$1.50	50%
Demand Response 1999	243,161		541,816	\$405,405			\$1.50	50%
Fixed Route 2000 (thru May)	98,264		63,964	\$143,396			\$1.50	50%
Note: Comparisons between years are not useful since there were substantial changes in the system over the last 3 years.								
Montgomery Area Para-transit (MAP)								

Demand Response and Fixed Route	18,000	1,415,792	376,281		\$682,313	\$129,452	\$1.00	
Prattville/Autauga County Rural Transportation								
Demand Response	21,000	1,252,622	429,412		\$613,008	\$ 45,774	\$2.00 \$5.00	

Table 10c: Montgomery Transit System Expansion Plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital (Local Share)	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Montgomery/Capital Area Transit (CAT)							
Fixed Route	1	Additional Services	Purchase 5 Buses	\$600,000	\$720,000	Additional Riders	Transit Dependent
Montgomery Area Para-transit (MAP)							
Demand Response	2	Additional Services	Purchase 2 Vans	\$140,000	\$160,000	Additional Riders	ADA Transit Dependent
Total For All Expansion				\$740,000	\$880,000		
Note: The information obtained from documents and conversations with local representatives indicate no specific plans for expansion. These calculations are based upon capital improvement requests and represents addition of rolling stock rather than simple replacement.							

2.10 Phenix City Area

Introduction

This information is based on the 1996 LRTP with additional documents that have been supplied by representatives of the Lee Russell Council of Governments. Further information is based upon conversations with these representatives. The focus here is only on the Phenix City public transit system, even though there is some coordination between Phenix City and the transit services provided by the city of Columbus, Georgia.

The Current Transit System

The system serving Phenix City known as PEX is administered by the Lee Russell Council of Governments. The transit system is comprised of both a fixed route system and a demand response para-transit system. Funding for PEX has been affected by the growth of the Columbus (Georgia.)-Phenix City metropolitan area, as the population of the area now exceeds 200,000. This is significant because federal matching funds to the system can only be expended for capital purchases rather than operating expenses.

Fixed Route PEX operates one route in its fixed route system that loops through Phenix City and then connects with the Columbus system (METRA) at the Columbus transfer station. The fleet consists of four buses operating Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM and on Saturday from 12:00 to 4:00 PM. Headways over the route average 60 minutes. The fare is \$1.00, with a 50% discount for the elderly and disabled individuals. These routes are operated under contract to Alabama Limousine.

Para-Transit Services Para-transit services are provided through a demand response system providing transit to eligible individuals. This service covers the urbanized area in and around

Phenix City but does not extend into the rural sections of Russell County. As a part of these services, regular subscription services are provided to a number of social service agencies in the area. These services are an extension of the paratransit services that Lee Russell Council of Governments (LETA) provides in Lee County. There is a fleet of two (2) ADA accessible buses operating in Phenix City, and transit is available within the urban area as well as for destinations in Columbus. Transport is available Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM until 2:30 PM.

Expansion Plans

The Phenix City system is currently operating at close to capacity providing basic transit services to transit dependent individuals, largely providing transportation to individuals carrying out ordinary household activities and transportation for health care services. The system is not typically used for travel to and from work, primarily due to the headways prevalent in the fixed route system. As a means to address travel to work transit, the system has received a federal appropriation to provide funds to purchase vans for a ride-to-work program commencing in the next fiscal year. These funds, however, do not cover operating costs or the costs associated with coordinating this system. Thus, funds associated with initiating this service and the underlying operating costs would be useful. These costs would total approximately \$50,000 annually, including personnel costs associated with the vanpool coordinator. Operating costs may be matched by federal dollars, but it is unclear whether the coordination costs would be deemed a part of the operating cost.

A second, related need is to provide the means to determine whether the existing system is operating at its most effective level. One approach to this would be to hire an additional staff person (essentially a transportation planner) to carry out an operations analysis and route audits for the fixed route system. An alternative to this would be to periodically hire a transportation consulting firm to perform these tasks. These personnel costs would generally run at \$40,000 to \$50,000 annually. If these were considered planning activities, then the costs could possibly be matched by federal funds.

Table 11a: Phenix City (Russell Lee Council of Governments (PEX)) system characteristics

System Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Fixed Route 1999	1	4	2	DK	Bus	DK	M – F Sat.	6 a.m. to 5 p.m. 12 noon to 4 p.m.	60 min
Demand Response 1999	NA	2	2	DK	Bus	100%	M – F	7 a.m. to 3 p.m.	NA

Table 11b: Phenix City (Russell Lee Council of Governments (PEX)) operating costs and ridership

Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount
Demand Response 1999	43,944	73,602	87,828	\$61,561	\$115,480	DK	\$1.00	50%

Table 11c: Phenix City (Russell Lee Council of Governments (PEX)) expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Fixed Route	1	Vanpooling	Coordinate vanpooling Additional staff	\$0	\$50,000	Increase Not Quantified	Travel to work; transit dependent
Fixed Route	2	Improve Operating Efficiency	Transportation Planning	\$0	\$50,000	Increase Not Quantified	Travel to work; transit dependent
Total for All Expansion Alternatives				\$0	\$100,000		
Note: Phenix City is in the Columbus-Phenix City MSA, with a population exceeding 200,000 persons. Transit systems in such areas do not receive matching funds for operating expenses, only capital expenditures							

2.11 Shoals Area

Introduction

Information for this report is taken from the TIP from February 2000 and the Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP) from 1997 and information from the National Transit Database (NTD). Additional details have been provided via conversations with officials of NACOLG.

The Current Transit System

The system known as Northwest Alabama Transit Association (NATA) is operated and administered by the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG). Transit services are provided to the entire Shoals area, including Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia. None of the local governments in the area provide funding for these services. Funding through contracts for specific transportation services (as discussed below) does flow from a variety of government agencies in the area.

Demand Response System The transit system is a demand response system integrating both urban and rural services to the area. NACOLG's combined (i.e., urban and rural) fleet currently totals 58 vehicles and is comprised of two types of vehicles. There are seven 24-passenger mini-buses and 51 vans, two of which are raised roof type, and have a capacity of fifteen passengers.

The fleet is twenty-five percent ADA accessible. According to the NTD, 33 of these are used for urban transit; 30 for peak operation and three as spares. Average vehicle age is approximately

five years. Maintenance is achieved through cooperation with the local community college's automotive mechanic program.

While the service in both urban and rural areas is of the demand response type, within this category are a number of different types of activities. NACOLG currently uses its vehicles to provide four different types of services.

- One type of service is characterized as a contract route, for which local social service agencies subscribe to provide transportation services to the agencies' clients. These services evolved from separate systems that were independently operated by each agency. NACOLG moved to providing coordination services and insurance to personnel services, purchasing, finally operation and maintenance. Eventually these services were turned over to NACOLG and now this organization is in charge of transit under contract to these individual agencies. Pick up of clients is generally at a prespecified location, and this is done on a regular basis. Riders on these contract routes pay no fare, since the contract with the agency pays the costs. Contracts provide for full coverage of the operating costs of these routes.
- The second type of transit is the traditional type of demand response paratransit services to the urbanized area of the Shoals. For these services, riders call NACOLG in advance (24 hours notice minimum) to arrange transportation and can also arrange the return trip. This is door-to-door service and all vehicles are handicapped-accessible vehicles. The fare for riders is \$1.00 each way.
- The third type of service is essentially a deviated fixed route system operating through the urban area. It primarily serves resident of the housing communities provided by the Florence Housing Authority and the housing authority provides funds for the operation of these routes. Its primary function is to make available to the transit dependent residents a means to carry out daily activities such as shopping and medical visits. There are currently two of these quasi-fixed routes operating serving the housing communities and providing connections to the major shopping areas in the Shoals region. Operation of these routes averages a 45 to 60 minute headway. Riders are charged \$0.50 each way.
- The final type of transit service provided is described as "home to work" transportation, which is essentially a form of vanpooling. These vans operate from the Shoals area to major employment areas in Huntsville and in Decatur. These vans are self organized in that a single individual rider operates as the driver and must provide a minimum number of passengers (at least 10) who share the expenses of operating the vehicle. Each passenger is charged a weekly rate and for organizing and driving, the driver pays with his or her in-kind services. These home-to-work services generate revenues in excess of the operating costs and serve to provide funds for the other transit services provided by NACOLG.

NACOLG also provides transportation for various special events, such as local festivals and entertainment activities. These are in addition to the regular services described above.

Table 12a: Shoals/Northwest Alabama Transit Association/NACOLG system characteristics

Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Demand Response 1998	NA	33	30	5.2 years	Minibus Van	7	M – F	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	NA
Demand Response 1997	NA	33	30	4.8 years	Minibus Van		M – F	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	NA
Demand Response 1998	NA	34	33	4.6 years	Minibus Van		M – F	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	NA

Expansion Plans

A reading of the TIP and the LRTP does not specify any plans for any changes or expansions to the existing transit system. In conversation with NACOLG officials, while they do not specify any explicit expansion, there is the perceived need to expand their services in all areas. The way that they see this occurring would be to expand to twice the current system operating levels, including the number of vehicles. In the specific areas, the estimates are that such an expansion would double the ridership on the fixed (“shopping”) routes and double the ridership on the home-to-work routes. The ridership on the traditional demand response services are predicted to go by 25% and yield a 10% increase in services provided to agencies subscribing to the contract routes. Based upon the current funding request for Fiscal Year 2001, overall funding would need to rise from \$583,750 to \$1,167,500, or in other words, an additional \$583,750. A closer examination of this request shows that approximately \$500,000 of this amount is in operating and preventive maintenance costs. Doubling this figure would imply an annual expenditure of \$1,000,000 for operating and maintenance outlays.

Additional conversations with NACOLG officials indicate that a smaller increment to the size of the fleet would be placed into service on (1) contract routes and (2) home-to-work routes. If one considers a 20% increase in the operations, this would roughly be equivalent to adding ten new vehicles to the fleet. If these purchases were split between 15-passenger commuter vans and 21-passenger ADA equipped vehicles, the total capital cost would be approximately \$425,000. Based upon current operating and maintenance amounts, this implies that recurring costs would rise by \$100,000.⁵

⁵An alternative calculation has been carried out using information found in the National Transit Database, operating costs per hour for NACOLG are about \$14.00. If a vehicle were in service approximately thirty (30) hours per week, annual costs would be \$21,000. Based upon these calculations, additional costs would be predicted to be \$210,000. This represents a permanent increase in the operating costs. If an expansion of this nature continued for a period of five (5) years, the fleet size would approximately double and operating costs would rise accordingly.

Table 12b: Shoals/Northwest Alabama Transit Association/NACOLG operating costs and ridership

Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Revenue Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount
Demand Response 1998	159,384	1,386,622	393,122	\$80,189	\$388,670	\$ 39,844	Varies	
Demand Response 1997	173,758	747,188	430,091	\$49,467	\$440,390	\$123,662		
Demand Response 1996	187,165	804,790	468,689	\$ 7,580	\$500,876	\$129,741		
Note on Operating Costs: Calculations of operating: these figures are based upon a 20% increase in operating costs. An alternative calculation yields an operating cost of over \$200,000.								

2.12 Tuscaloosa Area

Introduction

This information is based upon information in the TIP from February 2000 and the Long Range Transportation Plan, also from February 2000. Information has also been obtained from a study conducted for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority, *A Comprehensive and Coordinated Transit System Plan for Tuscaloosa County*. Further details were provided from discussions with a representative of the Transit Authority.

The Current Transit System

The system serving the Tuscaloosa metropolitan area is the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority (TCPTA). The transit system provides both a fixed route system and a demand response paratransit system.

Fixed Route The fixed route service covers five routes; four routes loop out radially from a central transfer point in the CBD and a fifth operates between the University of Alabama campus and a local apartment complex. The latter is provided under contract to the apartment management, but is available to riders other than students or residents of the apartment complex.

Table 12c: Shoals/Northwest Alabama Transit Association/NACOLG expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Demand Response	1	Service Expansion	Addition of 10 vehicles	\$425,000	\$100,000	Increase Home to work projected to double; contract routes projected to rise 10%	Travel to work riders; transit dependent (social service agency clients)
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$426,000	\$100,000		
Note: Expansion based upon information from local representatives. Assumption of 20% increase in vehicle fleet and operating costs equivalent to current levels per vehicle. Official project that sufficient demand exists to double current operations levels, with a concurrent doubling of fleet size.							

For the four regular routes, services are provided Monday through Friday from approximately 5:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The fifth route operates Monday through Friday during the regular university calendar, from 7:30 AM to 3:45 PM. The system operates a fleet of 10 buses, with four 31-passenger buses serving regular routes. Headway is typically 60 minutes for these routes. Fares for regular routes are \$1.00 (with a 50% discount for eligible persons).

Para-transit Services Para Para-transit services are also provided by a fleet of vehicles on a demand response basis. Reservations are necessary in advance (with 24 hours notice). The service area includes the entire urban area, and operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The vehicles are handicapped accessible vans. Contract services are provided to the City of Tuscaloosa through two separate grant programs as well as services to the state Department of Human Resources and to The ARC of Tuscaloosa. Additional para-transit services are provided by a fleet of vehicles provided by other social service agencies, including FOCUS on Senior Citizens, the Tuscaloosa Association of Retarded Citizens (The ARC), and DCH Regional Medical Center.

Additional special transportation services are provided for various groups, including a shuttle operating during football season between the U of A campus and University Mall.

Expansion Plans

A primary result of the work of the consultants who conducted the study listed above is the redesign of several of the fixed routes to optimize service. A significant change in operations is the addition of a transfer point is at University Mall. This combined, with other route changes, would allow the addition of services to portions of the Tuscaloosa area that are not currently served by the transit system. The plan as currently constituted requires no other vehicle purchases outside normal replacement. Based upon the figures from the transit study, requires an additional \$35,000 of operational funds supplied locally, on an annual basis. There would also be some capital expenditures (which would not involve purchase of rolling stock) totaling approximately \$340,000. If for some reason the transfer of drivers at University Mall could not be accomplished, then three additional buses would be required. The costs of purchasing these buses are not included in the estimates in the study, so they are not presented in this report.

A second expansion of services is proposed for the paratransit services. In particular, the transit study discusses the coordination of paratransit services by TCPTA for their current demand response services as well as those provided by other local social service agencies. While this coordination activity would not require additional capital expenditures, it would increase annual operating costs by approximately \$25,000.

An additional element would arise if all of the social service agencies joined together to provide all paratransit services under the umbrella of the TCPTA. These services would extend beyond the current urbanized area of Tuscaloosa, to include paratransit services throughout Tuscaloosa County (it was called a “county-wide tour”). Taken all together, providing consolidation of the paratransit services under the operation by TCPTA (and the alterations to the fixed route system described above) would total approximately \$170,000 in additional operating (and administrative) costs. The entire amount of the operating costs would apparently be born locally

because of limitations on the amount of federal matching funds for operating costs. With the reorganization of paratransit, additional vehicles would need to be purchased (projected to be 15 new vehicles). This expansion would require over \$810,000 of new capital outlays.

Table 13a: Tuscaloosa/Parking and Transit Authority system characteristics

System Characteristics									
Service Type	No. Routes	Fleet Size	Operating Fleet (Peak)	Average Vehicle Age	Vehicle Type	Disability Access	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Headway
Fixed Route 1998	5	5	5	5.8 years	Bus	0	M – F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	60 minutes
Demand Response 1998		5	5	3.7 years	Van	100%	M–F	6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	NA

Table 13b: Tuscaloosa/ Parking and Transit Authority costs and ridership

Operating Costs and Ridership									
Service Type	Number Trips	Passenger Miles	Vehicle Rev. Miles	Fare Revenue	Operating Expenses	Capital Expenditures	Fare	Fare Discount	
Fixed Route 1998	195,300	1,379,700	213,192	113,060	\$684,729	\$356,500	\$0.80	50%	
Demand Response 1998	19,656	155,988	124,740		\$405,862	0			

Note: Fare Revenue combines fixed route and demand response revenues.

Table 13c: Tuscaloosa/ Parking and Transit Authority expansion plans

Service Type	Alternative	Type of Expansion	Specific Actions	Capital Cost for Expansion	Operating Cost of Expansion	Impact on Ridership	Type of Riders Benefited
Fixed Route	1	Extension of routes	Optimize Routes – Alternatives or addition of Transfer Point	\$340,000	\$35,000	Increase Not Quantified	Transit Dependent
Demand Response or Paratransit	2	Improved Services	Coordinate Paratransit Services	\$0	\$25,000	No increase	ADA transit dependent
Demand Response/ Paratransit	3	Improved service; Expansion of Coverage Area	Coordinate Para-transit Services	\$810,000	\$110,000	Increase not quantified	ADA transit dependent
Total, All Expansion Alternatives				\$1,150,000	\$170,000		

Note: All of the operating costs would have to be born locally because of apparent limitations on additional federal dollars for operating costs.

3.0 Summary of Rural Transit

Introduction

There are 27 rural 5311 transit providers currently operating in Alabama. These providers cover 50 of Alabama's 67 counties, leaving 17 counties un-served (see Figure 2 at the beginning of this report). The purpose of this portion of the study is to quantify the funds needed to improve rural transit in Alabama.

The section describes three aspects of improved service:

- The extension of service to the 17 un-served counties
- The cost to upgrade the aging fleet in the 50 counties currently served
- The cost to improve service in the 50 counties currently served

Un-Served Counties

The report provides funding requirements to provide basic rural transit service in the 17 un-served counties. This service consists of 4 vehicles and associated administrators, dispatchers, drivers, and maintenance. The estimate to provide this service is approximately \$5M annually, including capital expenses (for vehicle purchase) of \$1.1M annually.

Upgrading The Existing Fleet

There are approximately 560 vehicles in the existing fleet, many of which are old or have high mileage. Results from a study performed by Dr. Michael Anderson of the University of Alabama in Huntsville were used to arrive at a figure of \$5M/year of capital expenses to upgrade and replace the existing fleet.

Improving Existing Service

Many of the 50 counties currently being served require an upgrade in service to reach additional individual riders or to contract with service agencies requiring transportation for their clients. The 27 providers supplied their proposed expansion plans, which were evaluated by UA and ALDOT reviewers. The portions of the plans approved by the reviewers were inserted into a spreadsheet that calculated the capital and administrative/operations funds necessary for implementation. Results indicate that approximately \$10M per year are required to implement improved service, with \$7M of that total required for yearly administration/operation and roughly \$3M required for capital purchases spread over the first 3 years of improved service.

Total Requirements

Total funds required to improve 5311 rural transit service in Alabama are approximately \$20M/year. Of this total, \$5M will add service to un-served counties, \$5M will upgrade the existing fleet, and \$10M will improve service in counties already being served. It may be interesting to look at this data in another way - if federal 5309 funds for capital purchases are available, the \$20M yearly requirement includes \$9M of capital expenses and \$11M for administration/operations.

Additional Data

The following paragraphs provide additional data concerning the three aspects of improving and enlarging 5311 rural transit service in Alabama.

Un-Served Counties The 17 un-served counties in Alabama are shown on Figure 2 (see page viii). Many of these counties are in rural Southeast Alabama, but counties with large populations such as Tuscaloosa, Mobile, and Montgomery are also un-served. Each county was assigned four, \$50k vehicles (68 total). Average values for operating and administrative budgets from three, existing, single-county providers were used as the basis for the funds allocated to start service in these counties:

- Average operating budget: \$156.5k
- Average administration budget: \$50.2k

To reach the total of \$5M per year to operate the system, the vehicles are phased-in over three years, and operating and administration budgets described previously are used. The resulting calculation is given below:

Vehicle purchase:	68/3 x \$50k	=	\$1.1M
Operating costs:	17 x \$156,500	=	\$2.7M
Administration costs:	17 x \$50.2	=	<u>\$0.9M</u>
	Total		\$5.0M

Upgrading the Existing Fleet Dr. Michael Anderson of the University of Alabama in Huntsville performed a “Vehicle Inventory of Alabama’s 5311 Rural Transit Fleet Study” in May, 2000 for the Multimodal Bureau of ALDOT. His findings show that many of the vehicles exceed the desired values of five years maximum age and 100,000 miles maximum odometer reading. As part of his study, he estimated that approximately \$5M/year will be required to upgrade the fleet and to maintain it at the values just described. That value of \$5M/year is used in this report.

Improving Existing Service Fifty counties in Alabama are currently provided 5311 rural transit by 27 different providers. The UA researchers met personally with 20 of those providers and interviewed the other seven by phone or email. The purpose of the interviews was to allow the providers to describe the workings of their systems and present ideas for improving and expanding their service. Results of the interviews are presented as 27, one-page summaries at the end of this report.

The providers’ plans for improving service were scrutinized by UA and ALDOT Multimodal personnel, who checked the plans to ensure that they fit ALDOT’s desire for practical

improvements. This group added funds and services to some of the requests and deleted funds and services from other of the requests. The results are shown in Table 14. The 27 providers and improvements to their systems are listed in the left-most column. FY1999 Cost Allocation (CA) figures and the number of hours that vehicles providing the expanded services operate are used to translate the improvements into dollar figures found at the far right column of the spreadsheet.

Approximately \$14M would be required if all the improvements are implemented in the first year. However, this report assumes that the 120 additional vehicles required for improved service are phased in over a period of three years. If so, the first year would require approximately \$5M of funds, the second year would require \$7M, and the third year would require \$10M. The figure of \$10M was selected as the annual value required to implement improvements in transit service in the 50 counties currently being served.

Providers Not Making Requests Several providers in the 50 counties currently served did not make concrete proposals to the UA researchers for adding or extending service. Reasons included items such as lack of public interest in extended service or lack of time to prepare plans for additional service. It is not the intention of this report to suggest that those providers should be excluded from participation in any additional funding in the future. By the time such funding is obtained, those providers may have finalized plans for additional service.

Geographical Distribution

One way of looking at the geographical distribution of the \$20M annual rural transit need is its distribution by Regional Planning Commission. This distribution is shown on Figure 3 (see Executive Summary). Regions in southern Alabama are allotted the majority of the \$20M for two reasons:

- Several southern regions (e.g. Regions 5, 7, and 9) are dominated by counties that do not currently have rural transit service, and these un-served counties will consume a good deal of the funding.
- Several southern transit providers (e.g. Alabama-Tombigbee, Wiregrass, and West Alabama Health Services) have the highest-mileage fleets, and money will be spent to replace their vehicles first.

Please note that Figure 3 is most accurate for the first year of increased funding. After the first or second year, most of the existing, high-mileage vehicles in southern Alabama will have been replaced, and a portion of the \$5M/year that goes to replacing high-mileage vehicles will shift to other regions.

As an example of the methodology for allocating the \$20M in Figure 3, the calculations for Region 1 follow. Region 1 is made up of the four counties served by NACOLG's existing rural transit service plus Winston County. The first line of the example indicates that there are no un-served counties in Region 1. The second line accounts for the funds spent to upgrade existing vehicles in Region 1 that year. The final line of the example starts with the "total first year cost" for NACOLG from the spreadsheet (\$0.963M). However, since only 1/3 of the required new vehicles will be purchased in one year, the costs for the other vehicles (2/3 of the total of 12 new

vehicles) are subtracted from \$0.963M. Then, \$0.118M is added for Winston County. (The figure of \$0.118M is ¼ of the “total first year cost” for Fayette, Lamar, Walker, and Winston counties, after 2/3 of the cost of the 10 new vehicles has been subtracted.)

Un-served counties:	0	=	\$0.00M
Upgrading existing fleet:	8 veh x \$0.04M	=	\$0.32M
Expanded service:	$\$0.963M - 12 (2/3) (\$0.05M) + \$0.118$	=	<u>\$0.68M</u>
		TOTAL =	\$1.00M

Treatment Of Money

Fiscal year 1999 (FY99) figures were used as the basis of the rural portion of the study. The time-value of money has not been incorporated into the analysis. All analyses assume that any new vehicles required are added over a three-year period.

All final recommendations concerning the needs of public transportation in Alabama were rounded up to the nearest one million dollars.

Sources of Funds

This report is concerned with the funds required to significantly upgrade rural transit in Alabama. The sources of funds have not been specified. The report methodology has assumed that all new funds will come from within Alabama, and that no federal funds (that would require only a partial match by Alabama funds) are involved.

How Much Improvement Is Provided?

Of the \$20M identified, \$5M is requested to provide service to 17 un-served counties with a total of 68 buses. These buses will operate roughly 141,000 hours per year. The typical rural transit bus in Alabama completes about 4.75 trips/hour. At those rates, the 68 new buses will provide about 670,000 trips per year in the counties currently not served.

Another \$5M per year is identified to upgrade the existing vehicle fleet. While not providing additional trips, it will help ensure that sufficient numbers of wheelchair accessible vehicles are available to provide service to disabled persons. New, reliable vehicles will also enhance service consistency.

Another \$10M per year is identified to improve service in the 50 Alabama counties that already have rural transit. These funds will be used to provide greater service Monday through Friday as well as Saturday service in some areas. The new service will involve about 376,000 hours of extra service, potentially resulting in 1,780,000 additional trips in Alabama every year.

Table 14. Summary of Alabama rural transit needs assessment (part 1)

County(ies) Served	CA: \$/hr	CA: \$/mile	CA: \$/bus	Mile /Hr	No. New Buses	Extend Service Total Bus-Hrs/Yr	Total Admin. + Operation Cost/Yr	Capital Cost	Total First Year Cost
AUTAUGA Type of service extension Add Sat. service (1 veh. @ 8 hrs) Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @10 hrs)	\$10.33	\$0.21	\$8,395.00	19	0	520	\$7,446.40		\$7,446
	\$10.33	\$0.21	\$8,395.00	19	3	7800	\$136,881.00	\$150,000	\$286,881
BALDWIN Type of service extension Extend hours (10 veh. @ 4 hrs) Add 15 veh. (15 veh. @ 8 hrs) Add Sat. service (1 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$11.51	\$0.15	\$7,494.00	30	0	10400	\$166,504.00		\$166,504
	\$11.51	\$0.15	\$7,494.00	30	15	31200	\$611,922.00	\$750,000	\$1,361,922
	\$11.51	\$0.15	\$7,494.00	30	0	10400	\$166,504.00		\$166,504
BIBB Type of service extension Extend to full day (2 veh. @ 8 hrs) Add 2 new veh. (2 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$8.40	\$0.33	\$5,362.75	25	2	4160	\$79,989.50	\$100,000	\$179,989
	\$8.40	\$0.33	\$5,362.75	25	2	4160	\$79,989.50	\$100,000	\$179,989
BLOUNT Type of service extension Add Sat. service (2 veh. @ 8 hrs) Add 2 new veh. (2 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$11.83	\$0.17	\$3,877.51	15	0	4160	\$59,820.80		\$59,820
	\$11.83	\$0.17	\$3,877.51	15	2	4160	\$67,575.82	\$100,000	\$167,575
CALHOUN CHEROKEE CLAY COOSA CLEBURNE TALLADEGA Type of service extension Extend hours (12 veh. @ 2 hrs) Add 4 new veh. (4 veh. @ 8 hrs) (They requested 8)	\$15.00	\$1.00	\$7,284.00	25	0	6240	\$249,600.00		\$249,600
	\$15.00	\$1.00	\$7,284.00	25	4	8320	\$361,936.00	\$200,000	\$561,936
CHILTON Type of service extension Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$9.68	\$0.39	\$0.00	25	3	6240	\$121,243.20	\$150,000	\$271,243

Table 14. Summary of Alabama rural transit needs assessment (part 2)

County(ies) Served	CA: \$/hr	CA: \$/mile	CA: \$/bus	Mile /Hr	No. New Buses	Extend Service Bus-Hrs/Yr	Total Admin. + Operation Cost/Yr	Capital Cost	Total First Year Cost
CLARKE CONECUH MONROE Type of service extension None requested. Biggest priority is to upgrade existing fleet.	\$7.98	\$0.40	\$14,804.07	14	0				
COLBERT FRANKLIN LAUDERDALE MARION Type of service extension Add 12 new veh. (12 veh. @ 8 hrs) (NACOLG requested 25veh.)	\$8.69	\$0.35	\$1,256.00	15	12	24,960	\$363,014.40	\$600,000	\$963,014
COVINGTON Type of service extension Add 5 new veh. (5 veh. @ 8 hrs) (They requested 0 veh.)	\$9.56	\$0.13	\$8,934.92	17	5	10,400	\$167,082.60	\$250,000	\$417,082
CULLMAN Type of service extension Extend hours (27 veh. @ 1 hrs) Add 4 new veh. (4 veh. @ 8.5 hrs)	\$11.13 \$11.13	\$0.31 \$0.31	\$7,285.78 \$7,285.78	20 25	0 4	7020 8840	\$121,656.60 \$196,042.32	\$200,000	\$121,656 \$396,042
DEKALB Type of service extension Add 5 new veh. (5 veh. @ 10 hrs) Extend hours (10 veh. @ 2 hrs)	\$14.65 \$14.65	\$0.25 \$0.25	\$16,930.00 \$16,930.00	30 30	5 0	13000 5200	\$372,600.00 \$115,180.00	\$250,000	\$622,600 \$115,180
ESCAMBIA Type of service extension Add Sat. service (2 veh. @ 5 hrs) Add 2 new veh. (2 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$9.64 \$9.64	\$0.35 \$0.35	\$0.00 \$0.00	40 40	0 2	520 4160	\$12,292.80 \$98,342.40	\$- 1,000	1,229 19,834

Table 14. Summary of Alabama rural transit needs assessment (part 3)

County(ies) Served	CA: \$/hr	CA: \$/mile	CA: \$/bus	Mile /Hr	No. New Buses	Extend Service Total Bus- Hrs/Yr	Total Admin. + Operation Cost/Yr	Capital Cost	Total First Year Cost
ETOWAH Type of service extension Add Sat. service (3 veh. @ 5 hrs) Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$10.82	\$0.23	\$7,648.17	27	0	780	\$13,283.40		\$13,283
	\$10.82	\$0.23	\$7,648.17	27	3	6240	\$129,211.71	\$150,000	\$279,212
FAYETTE LAMAR WALKER WINSTON Type of service extension Extend hours (10 veh. @ 6 hrs)	\$6.46	\$0.41	\$4,780.00	25	10	15600	\$308,476.00	\$500,000	\$808,476
COCTAW DALLAS GREEN HALE LOWNDES MARENGO PERRY SUMTER WILCOX Type of service extension Extend hours (50 veh. @ 4 hrs) Add 15 new veh. (15 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$5.18	\$0.59	\$11,187.11	25	0	52000	\$1,036,360.00		\$1,036,360
	\$5.18	\$0.59	\$11,187.11	25	15	31200	\$789,622.65	\$750,000	\$1,539,623
HOUSTON Type of service extension Saturday serv. (2 veh. @ 12 hrs) Ext D/R and sub. (5 veh. @ 5 hrs)	\$10.25	\$0.35	\$0.00	25	0	1248	\$23,712.00		\$23,712
	\$10.25	\$0.35	\$0.00	25	5	6500	\$123,500.00	\$250,000	\$373,500
Jackson Type of service extension Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$9.42	\$0.29	\$0.00	25	3	6240	\$104,020.80	\$150,000	\$254,021

Table 14. Summary of Alabama rural transit needs assessment (part 4)

County(ies) Served	CA: \$/hr	CA: \$/mile	CA: \$/bus	Mile /Hr	No. New Buses	Extend Service Bus-Hrs/Yr	Total Admin. + Operation Cost/Yr	Capital Cost	Total First Year Cost
JEFFERSON									
SHELBY Type of service extension Extend hours (2 veh. @ 4 hrs)	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	25	0	2080	\$104,000.00		\$104,000
Add Sat. service (6 veh. @ 6 hrs)	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	25	0	1872	\$93,600.00		\$93,600
Add 4 new veh. (4 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	25	4	8320	\$416,000.00	\$200,000	\$616,000
LAWRENCE									
Type of service extension Add Sat. service (1 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$11.40	\$0.32	\$8,159.52	25	0	416	\$8,070.40		\$8,070
Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$11.40	\$0.32	\$8,159.52	25	3	6240	\$145,534.56	\$150,000	\$295,535
MACON									
Type of service extension Add Sat. service (2 veh. @ 5 hrs)	\$8.68	\$0.61	\$15,475.00	25	0	520	\$12,443.60		\$12,444
Add 3 new veh. (3 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$8.68	\$0.61	\$15,475.00	25	3	6240	\$195,748.20	\$150,000	\$345,748
MADISON									
Type of service extension Extend hours (16 veh. @ 5 hrs)	\$12.15	\$0.22	\$3,671.05	30	0	20800	\$390,000.00		\$390,000
MARSHALL									
Type of service extension Saturday serv. (1 veh. @ 5 hrs)	\$8.59	\$0.40	\$6,088.00	20	0	260	\$4,313.40		\$4,313
Add 1 new veh. (1 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$8.59	\$0.40	\$6,088.00	20	1	2080	\$40,595.20	\$50,000	\$90,595
Morgan									
Type of service extension No request. Potential to expand D/R in the afternoon	\$8.51	\$0.27	\$3,024.57						
Pickens									
Type of service extension No request. Any extra funds would go to staff salaries	\$9.56	\$0.41	\$10,688.00						

Table 14. Summary of Alabama rural transit needs assessment (part 5)

County(ies) Served	CA: \$/hr	CA: \$/mile	CA: \$/bus	Mile /Hr	No. New Buses	Extend Service Bus-Hrs/Yr	Total Admin. + Operation Cost/Yr	Capital Cost	Total First Year Cost
RUSSELL									
LEE Type of service extension Serve Russell co. (5 veh. @ 9 hrs)	\$22.26	\$0.13	\$0.00	25	5	11,700	\$298,467.00	\$250,000	\$548,467
Add 1 new veh. (1 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$22.26	\$0.13	\$0.00	25	1	2,080	\$53,060.80	\$50,000	\$103,061
TALLAPOOSA									
Type of service extension Extend hours (5 veh. @ 4 hrs)	\$10.30	\$0.21	\$6,088.50	30	0	5,200	\$86,320.00		\$86,320
Add 4 new veh. (4 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$10.30	\$0.21	\$6,088.50	30	4	8,320	\$162,466.00	\$200,000	\$362,466
WASHINGTON									
Type of service extension Add 4 new veh. (4 veh. @ 8 hrs)	\$7.44	\$0.38	\$2,386.36	25	4	8,320	\$150,486.24	\$200,000	\$350,486

Totals: 120 376,116 \$8,244,915.30 \$6,000,000 \$14,244,915

Three year phase in costs
Year 1 \$4,748,305
Year 2 \$7,496,610
Year 3 \$10,244,915
Total: \$22,489,830

4.0 Overview of Rural Transit

Introduction

This portion of the report provides background information obtained in visits and interviews with the 27 rural 5311 transit providers currently operating in Alabama. For each provider, there is contact information about the agency and manager, a thumbnail sketch of the agency and its operations, and brief lists of concerns and needs.

In general, this information is recorded in outline form as obtained during the interviews. If desired by the reader, additional details should be secured directly from the applicable transit system manager.

4.1 Alabama-Tombigbee

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Mark Curl, 334-682-4234, atrc@frontiernet.net, interview of 7/11/00)

Match Provider: Most comes from the 3 counties, through the Reg. Planning Comm.

Provider for 3 counties: Clarke, Conecuh, Monroe (but the operation is headquartered in Wilcox Co. at Regional Planning Commission office)

Buses: 14, plus they're temporarily leasing 2 more

Wheelchair accessible: 2

Driver pay: Not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 14

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 48,100

'99 Demand/Response trips: 576

Typical hours of operation are 8:30 – 4:30, except dialysis, which starts earlier. There are two dispatchers: one serves Conecuh and Monroe; the other serves Clarke. They sometimes fill in as drivers; then phone calls are taken by answering machine. The counties supply in-kind office space. The buses stay in their associated county at night.

Mr. Curl says that contracts come as first priority on his scheduling, and he tries to get people off demand/response and onto contracts, if possible. Biggest contracts are with aging centers, DHR (welfare to work, going to factories and mills) and dialysis (Medicaid). He does all these contracts on a cost allocation basis. The only other rural transit contract that he doesn't have is for mental health/retardation. That group has its own new buses that it uses to transport clients.

A typical round-trip might cost \$5. He has 2 vans that are currently doing vanpooling, then the driver goes off and does demand/response, then he returns at the end of the shift to drive vanpoolers home.

Needs

Mr. Curl indicates no pressing needs as far as extending service hours or purchasing additional vehicles. He states that his biggest problem has been obtaining new vehicles to keep his fleet up to date.

4.2 ARISE, Inc. (Tallapoosa Co.)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Pat Tapley, ariseinc@webshoppe.net, (256) 329-8444, interview of 7/14/00)

Match Provider: Private donations

Buses: 5

Wheelchair accessible: 3

Drivers: 2 FT and 2 PT

Avg. miles driven in an hour of service: 30

Any trouble finding capital match: yes

'99 Contract users: 4 persons

'99 Demand/response trips: 8,869

The Arise program is running 90 to 95% demand response trips with only one contract route with East Alabama Mental Health. The service is funded by Section 5311 Rural Transportation funds. Ridership is mainly elderly, and 50% of trips are for doctor's appointments. Also, Arise has an agreement with the local hospital to provide medical transportation that is paid lump sum at the end of the month based on fare price and number of passengers transported. A 24-hour advance notice is required for scheduling a trip, but some call-ups are taken depending on the day's schedule. Fares are \$1.50 for a one-way trip. When the Section 5311 funds run out for the year, Arise receives support from the Russell Foundation. The County Commission does not provide any support for Transit.

In the past Ms. Tapley had problems with a neighboring provider infringing on her area, and some municipalities in Tallapoosa County did not want her service, but wanted their own city buses to operate. Arise has no in-house maintenance personnel. All preventive maintenance and other work on the vehicles is bid out to local shops. Arise would like more training in the Substance Abuse Employee Training and Training and Interaction for Drivers.

Needs

- Would like to extend operating hours by 4 hours per day for 5 existing buses. She would also like to add two new buses at 8 hours/day.
- Would like to pick up one or two more contract opportunities in her area that would require one to two new buses at 8 hours per day.
- Would like extra funds to hire a mechanic to do maintenance.

4.3 Autauga Co. Rural Transportation Program

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Mary Evelyn Tucker, acrt@mindspring.com, (334) 361-3782, interview of 6/27/00)

Match provider: From County and contracts.

Buses : 7 in rural (6 operating)

Wheelchair equipped: 33%

Driver pay: \$5.20 - \$8.600 plus 18% fringes for 9 of 11 drivers

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 19

Any trouble finding capital match: Probably no.

'99 Contract trips: 16,250

'99 Demand /Response trips: 4,471

Ms. Mary Evelyn Tucker operates a 5307 service in Prattville (5 buses) and a 5311 service in the county (7 buses). Because Prattville is associated with the urban Montgomery area, they get no 5307 funds except for preventive maintenance and a \$22k match from City of Prattville. The county makes up any difference in the Prattville program. The city is mainly dial-a-ride; the county is mainly contracts. (The rest of this page has nothing to do with 5307 service.)

Their program seems to have grown out of the Autauga Aging program, and it is their biggest contract, taking people to nutrition centers. Buses stay with their drivers at night. After buses take folks to the nutrition center, some buses stay there because the driver runs the center. Some buses also deliver meals (which some transit programs won't do) while the people are at the center. On certain days, the bus will take folks to the city after their meal. Demand/response charges \$1 to \$2.50 per trip based on how far people are going.

The program also takes some children to school and some folks to Montgomery for doctor, work (not as part of an official program), etc. The county pays for the city and county drivers, bus match, etc. Ms. Tucker then gives the co. all her revenues, and the county makes up for any shortfall at the end of the year. The county is their biggest supporter.

Needs

Ms. Tucker expresses 3 top rural needs:

- Newer vehicles
- Wants to run on Saturday (use 1 existing bus for 8 hours per week). Would gain 40 trips per Saturday (dialysis and dem/res). Would add another driver or 2.
- Wants own maintenance facility (to work on transmissions, etc.)

Ms. Tucker might also add 3 drivers and 3 vehicles 10 hrs/day to extend service to other county areas, but she believes the list of needs above comes first.

4.4 Baldwin Rural Area Transit System

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Rosie Broadus, (334-947-2728), interview of 6/28/00)

Match Provider: County Commission, and contracts

Buses: 52, a few will be sold, but they will be replaced by new buses

Wheelchair accessible: 90%

Drivers: 60, 25% FT and 75% PT

Avg. miles driven in an hour of service: 30 miles

Any trouble finding capital match - yes she does experience some trouble finding match money

'99 Contract Trips: 350,000

'99 Demand Response Trips: 350,000

The Baldwin Rural Area Transit System (BRATS) runs demand-response and some fixed route service (trolleys around beach area). Also, 1 day a week, a bus goes to the Mobile area and drops passenger off into the Mobile Urban Transit System. A larger demand exists for this service, but at the moment there are not enough resources in buses or drivers to handle the demand. The City of Mobile is currently refurbishing the old GM&O Train Station, which is only 4 miles from the Baldwin County line. Baldwin and Mobile County are discussing using the GM&O as a transfer station for passengers. Mobile is eligible for Job Access and Reverse Commute grants but does not have a rural system in place to help accommodate those potential passengers. Rosie Broadus serves on several boards in the Baldwin County area, which helps her to achieve better coordination with other Service Agencies. Baldwin County also has a Public Transit Coalition that consists of potential employers, Social Services, and Rehab counselors. The purpose of this organization is to identify potential riders (clients), possible match money, and areas in need of service. Baldwin County is currently having a Transit Needs Assessment Study conducted in and around the county.

Needs

- 10 small buses to reach outlying remote areas of the county. Capital money is available, but the operating money is currently not available.
- 12 Drivers would be added to handle these new buses.
- Operate until 11:30 pm with more than a skeleton crew. Use 10 existing buses.
- 5 buses to run between Baldwin and Mobile Counties 8 hours a day. Would need 6 drivers for this route.
- Would like to add 8 hours of Saturday service using existing buses and run until 11:30 pm with more than a skeleton crew.
- Would also like to implement some ITS such as information kiosks that provide route and schedule information in real-time.

4.5 Community Services of West Alabama (Bibb County)

Thumbnail Sketch of the System

(Louis Barnett, Jr. (Marie Weir), 205-926-9384, interview of 6/05/00)

Match Provider: County Commission

Buses: 4 (including one in the shop in need of new transmission, and one more with over 100,000 miles)

Drivers: 1 FT, 2 PT

Avg. miles driven in an hour of service: 25-35 miles

Any trouble finding capital match: yes she has trouble raising matching funds

'99 Contract trips: 2,160

'99 Demand/Response trips: 840

Bibb County is running general rural transit only half days and running contracts in the mornings and afternoons. Lack of buses, drivers, and operating funds is preventing Bibb County from negotiating more contracts and extending general service to full time. Bibb County Transit runs medical service trips to the Tuscaloosa area for DCH and could pick up another contract for cancer patients if buses and funds were available. The system is in desperate need of either new contracts or extended general public service to help inject some program revenue into the system. Bibb County Transit has one contract with Indian Rivers Mental Health & Mental Retardation. The price of the contract is based on mileage and ridership. The Bibb County Commission allows the transit system to purchase gas at their cost, which is lower than the average price per gallon. In addition, the county provides general maintenance to the system's vehicles. Bibb County Transit contacted the Tuscaloosa Transit Authority and discussed a linkage with their program. The idea was on assignment pickup clients in rural Tuscaloosa while coming and going to Tuscaloosa from Bibb County.

Needs

- Extend hours to full time. This would require 2 new buses and 3 drivers.
- Add a contract with DCH for cancer patients and also add some employment transportation. This would require 2 new buses and 3 drivers.

4.6 Blount County Transportation

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Stella South, (205) 625-4160, interview of 7/24/00)

Match provider: Blount County Commission

Buses: 13

Wheelchair equipped: 2

Driver pay: Not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 10

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 41,340

'99 Demand /Response trips: 14,400

Blount County Transportation's hours of operation are as follows:

Contract: 5:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.

Demand/Response: 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Office Hours: 7:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Contracts are maintained with the Blount County Program on Aging, ARC, Headstart, and Retired Senior Volunteers.

Maintenance is provided by local vendors.

Needs

2 top rural needs:

- Extend services to Saturday for a total of 80 hours every week. Estimated additional trips: 5,200/year.
- Wants 2 new buses to extend service for a total of 80 hours every week. Estimated additional trips: 5,200/year.

4.7 Chilton County Transit

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Frances McCullough, (205) 280-4175, FmcCullough@coa.state.al.us, interview of 8/2/00)

Match provider: not provided

Buses: 4

Wheelchair equipped: 1

Driver pay: not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 20

Any trouble finding capital match: Yes

'99 Contract trips: 2,199

'99 Demand /Response trips: 5,018

Chilton County Transit's hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Elderly and disabled passengers make up 85% of their ridership. Planned doctor's visits and general demand/response each account for about 50% of their trips each week.

Needs

Frances McCullough expresses 2 top rural needs:

- Extend services to Saturday with 2 vehicles for 5 hours each, a total of 10 hours every week. Estimated additional trips: 1,500/yr
- Add 2 new buses to extend service for 40 hours each every week, a total of 80 hours every week. Estimated additional trips: 3,000/yr

4.8 Covington County (CATS)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Ms. Ruth Edson, 334-428-2669, catscov@alaweb.com, interview of 7/11/00)

Match provider: Covington Co. plus some city match

Buses: 7 plus 2 on order. (When new buses arrive, 2 older will be retained as back-up).

Wheelchair equipped: 3

Driver pay: 50% are full time, starting \$5.50/hr plus fringes. Part time starts at \$5.50

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 15-18

Any trouble finding capital match: Yes, the county commission may balk.

'99 Contract trips: 19,229

'99 Demand/Response trips: 7,384

Two of the 7 vehicles do only demand/response. The other 5 vehicles work mostly on contracts. Biggest contract is with city schools, taking students on "special transportation" (wheelchairs, learning disabilities, parents on welfare). Some other contracts are with DHR (take students to job readiness training program; also takes some people to work). Typical hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., but some go 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There are essentially no other contracts to be had: CATS is the only transportation service around.

Four buses are standard, 15-passenger vehicles. Three are commuters. The county supplies a mechanic as in-kind match.

The typical passenger is a child, or, for demand/response, an older person going to the doctor or grocery. Costs are \$2 for a round-trip within the city or \$4 for a round-trip within 35 miles of the city (\$5 for farther than 35 miles). CATS does no van-pooling.

Needs

Ms. Edson listed several needs. However, she believes she would have a very difficult time getting local match to purchase buses and a very difficult time to get operating funds to match the 5311.

- Would like to run two2 vehicles from 8 to 12 on Saturday
- Would like to buy two more vehicles to run 8 hrs/day, 5 days/week.
- Would like to upgrade her fleet (several vehicles are high-mileage)
- Would like to get training done at her location so that she doesn't have to shut down operation for a day to attend training (most training requires a minimum of 5 participants). Most useful training would include training on wheelchair tie-downs and on wheelchair lifts.

4.9 Cullman Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(David Reese, (205) 734-1246, interview of 6/29/00)

Match provider: from county commission and contracts

Buses : 27

Wheelchair equipped: 8

Driver pay: \$6.79 - \$7.60 plus fringes. 3 are full time and get full benefits, 19 are part time and get retirement if they work 20 hours or more per week.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 30

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 13,200

'99 Demand /Response trips: 106,800

CARTS provides transportation services in Cullman County. CARTS maintains contracts with organizations such as: Headstart, Cullman Co. Center for the Developmentally Disabled, Daystar, Commission on Aging, and Cullman Co. Mental Health. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

This group focuses on demand/response trips. CARTS does not advertise. The program runs on commission match, contracts, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, which they have in the past, the County Commission makes up the difference.

Needs

Joyce Echols expresses 3 top rural needs:

- Extend hours by 1 hr/day for all of the 27 buses.
- Wants to add new routes: requires 4-5 new buses, 4-5 new part time drivers, and 1 part time driver.
- Would like the County garage to hire a mechanic specifically for their vehicles.

4.10 Dekalb Area Rural Transit System (DARTS)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Carol Beddingfield, (256) 845-8590, interview of 7/24/00)

Match Provider: County Commission and local contracts

Buses: 10

Wheelchair accessible: 3

Drivers: 6 drivers with 1 substitute with pay that ranges from \$7.10 to \$9.85

Avg. miles driven in an hour of service: 30 miles

Any trouble finding capital match: in the past has not had trouble getting match from County Commission, but new County Administrator is coming into office so it is yet to be seen if relationship with county will change.

'99 Contract trips: 37,052

'99 Demand trips: 6,676

Dekalb County runs a demand response program that operates mainly around the county seat. Majority of passengers make their trips to and from the county seat. 91% of Dekalb County Council on Aging are handicap, senior citizens, and low income. The county seat is not centrally located, so outlying areas of county don't receive a lot of service. There is no AMTRAK or Greyhound service in Dekalb County.

The Dekalb Area Rural Transit System (DARTS) is losing passengers to service agencies within the county. Mental Retardation has its own buses that it uses to transfer its clients, so that represents a loss in contract revenue and ridership. The local Headstart program has its own buses, which represents a loss in contract revenue and ridership. A 5310 program called Darden Rehab sponsored by Easter Seals is also running in the county. All maintenance is approved with-in house or outside vendor by the Dekalb County Commission.

Needs

- More buses for demand response with the greatest area of need in medical trips. It would take 10 buses and 7 new drivers.
- Would like to expand hours to after 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm and use 5 buses from additional 10.
- Would like to add 5 buses and 4 drivers to reach outlying remote areas of the county. She would like to use those 5 buses as a variable fixed route system between towns in the county that would feed passengers back into the main system around the county seat.

4.11 East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Shane Christian, (256) 237-6741, schristian@coa.state.al.us, interview of 6/29/00)

Match provider: local gives \$112k out of \$348k budget. Comes from cities/co.'s. Calhoun Co. provides a lot.

Buses : 24

Wheelchair equipped: 85%

Driver pay: \$5.15 - \$9.00 plus fringes. Almost all are full time and get benefits.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 35 (said one of his 12 providers)

Any trouble finding capital match: Some of 12 systems yes; some no.

'99 Contract trips: 1,200

'99 Demand /Response trips: 35,000

There are 10 counties in the RPC. Shane Christian serves 6: Cherokee, Calhoun, Cleburne, Clay, Coosa, and Talladega. Shane Christian operates a 5307 service in Anniston and a 5311 service in 6 counties (24 buses). 12 separate groups within those 6 counties provide rural service. Some have only a driver and an answering machine. Some have dispatchers; at some, the rider calls the county engineer or other county official. Some serve towns; some serve towns and part of surrounding county. Some serve entire counties. They have very few contracts, though Shane sees lots of opportunity to get them. Basically, their hours are 8 to 4.

The programs run on commission match, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, the county or city makes up the difference because East Alabama is the only transportation around. Many buses are inefficiently used, and they could add contracts by better using the same buses. (Sometimes, only 2 or 3 people per day ride a bus.)

The Reg. Planning Comm. has plans to extend to Chambers Co. next year, but they want to take 3 more providers to serve this one county.

There appears to be far too many transit operators involved in this system, and there should be a greater emphasis on increasing ridership, particularly contract ridership.

Needs

Mr. Christian expresses 3 top rural needs:

- Extend hours by 2 hrs/day for 12 of the 24 buses. Would increase trips by 10-15%.
- Wants 8 new buses and drivers to serve un-served areas for 10-15% increase in riders (8 hrs/day/bus). But, these same buses could also do contracts and get 5,000-8,000 additional trips on contracts.
- Wants existing providers to be more aggressive.

4.12 Escambia County Alabama Transit System

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Faye Jernigan, (344) 867-0584, faye@net1inc.net, interview of 7/24/00)

Match provider: Escambia County Commission

Buses: 7

Wheelchair equipped: 2

Driver pay:

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 40

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 13,440

'99 Demand /Response trips: 14,560

ECATS hours of operation are Monday through Friday 6 A.M. to 4 P.M. Contracts are maintained with the Escambia County Area on Aging, which provides senior citizens transportation to a meal site for lunch Monday through Friday. A contract is also maintained with Standard Furniture, which provides transportation to work for employees Monday through Friday. There are also demand response routes, which provide transportation to citizens for activities such as grocery shopping, pharmacy visits, doctor's appointments, and paying bills.

Typical demand/response charges range from \$2 to \$4 per trip. Maintenance work is performed by the County shop.

Needs

Two top rural needs:

- Extend services to Saturday with two vehicles from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM, a total of 10 hours every week. Expected additional trips: 728/year
- 2 new buses to extend service Monday through Friday for 80 hours every week. Estimated additional trips/yr: 27,000.

4.13 Etowah County Transportation

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Bobbie Cochran, (256) 547-1014, etodarling@aol.com, interview of 7/31/00)

Match provider: Etowah County Commission

Buses: 7

Wheelchair equipped: 1

Driver pay: not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 27

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 3 contracts

'99 Demand /Response trips: 1,302

Needs

Bobbie Cochran expresses 2 top rural needs:

- Extend services to Saturday with three buses, five hours each, a total of 15 hours. Estimated additional trips on Saturday are 1,300/year.
- Add one new vehicle to operate 40 hours per week.

4.14 Jackson County Rural Public Transportation

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Rita Williams, (256) 574-6733, coarr@mail1.scottsboro.org, interview of 8/2/00)

Match provider: County Commission and three towns in the county

Buses: 12 (8 in operation, 4 back-ups)

Wheelchair equipped: 5

Driver pay: not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 22

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 16,250

'99 Demand /Response trips: 27,000

Jackson County Rural Public Transportation provides transportation services in Jackson County. Jackson County Rural Public Transportation maintains contracts with mental health centers and nutrition centers.

Three of their buses operate 4 days per week and 1 bus operates 5 days per week bringing passengers into Scottsboro from the rural areas of the county. Two of these buses are wheelchair accessible. The buses arrive in town at about 8:15 a.m. and leave around 2:00 p.m. Three buses operate within the city limits of Scottsboro 5 days per week from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Two of these buses are also wheelchair accessible. The typical rider is a demand/response rider going to the doctor or grocery store.

The program runs on commission match, contracts, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, the County Commission and 3 towns in the county make up the difference.

Needs

Rita Williams expresses a top rural need:

- Add one new bus to operate for a total of 30 hours per week.

4.15 Jefferson/Shelby Co.

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Kevin McGreevy, 205-325-8787, interview of 6/23/00)

Match Provider: Jefferson and Shelby Co. Commissions

Buses: 43, but only 3% of them are used for 5311

Wheelchair accessible: about 35%

Driver pay: \$7.50/hr + 30% benefits to start

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 22-25

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: around 4,000 for 5311

'99 Demand/Response trips: around 2,000 for 5311

This transit system is unique in Alabama. It is called the Birmingham Regional Paratransit Consortium (BRPC) but also goes by the acronym CLASTRAN. It combines 5310 and 5311 service, and BRPC employs the dispatcher(s) who provides lists of passengers each day to a contractor who operates the buses and provides the service. The riders come from Shelby County and from areas in Jefferson county (including the city of Birmingham) beyond the areas served by the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority.

Money comes from three main sources: county commissions, 5311 funds, and 5310 funds that have been flexed from Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. This very large 5310 amount is available because Jefferson/Shelby is an EPA non-attainment area for ozone. Thus, the transit system (which carries many people in one vehicle) reduces the congestion on the roads and improves air quality.

Most of the people carried by the system (about 203,000 trips in FY99) are 5310 passengers (elderly and handicapped). About 3% of the 203,000 were 5311 trips, at the ratio of approximately 2/3 contract riders to 1/3 demand/response riders. Almost all 5311 is in Shelby Co. There's no such thing as a 5310-dedicated or 5311-dedicated bus; they just go where they need to. Current operating hours are 7-4, Monday-Friday. Most vehicles are 15 passenger Ford E-350 vans with a lift and a space for 3 wheelchairs. 5311 trips cost \$4 each way in Jefferson County. In Shelby Co, fares are based on distance. CLASTRAN operates no vanpools. Mr. McGreevy reports that no callers are turned down, though they may be asked to schedule appointments to fit operating hours.

Needs

Mr. McGreevy reports the following needs:

- Extend daily operating hours by 4 hours (for 5311, this is 1 bus/county for a total of 2 buses, 4 hrs/day each)
- Add Saturday service from 9 to 3 (6 buses for 6 hrs/day each, mainly for dialysis)
- Obtain 4 more buses 8 hrs/day to serve Sr. citizens in Jefferson County

4.16 Lawrence County Aging - Rural Transit System (LC-ARTS)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Sheila Bishop, (256) 974-2488, FAX: (256) 974-8056, interview of 8/1/00)

Match provider: county commission

Buses : 23

Wheelchair equipped: 3

Driver pay: not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 57 reported (25 assumed in calculations)

Any trouble finding capital match: Yes

'99 Contract trips: 25,000

'99 Demand /Response trips: 12,000

LC-ARTS provides transportation services in Lawrence County. Approximately 80% of their passengers are elderly or handicapped. Demand/Response requests consist of grocery shopping, doctor visits, pharmacy trips, dialysis trips, and historical trips. They have one vanpool program.

LC-ARTS maintains contracts with organizations such as Head Start and Commission on Aging. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

The program runs on commission match, contracts, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, the County Commission makes up the difference.

Needs

Sheila Bishop expresses a top rural need:

- Extend service to Saturday with one bus for 8 hours.

4.17 Lee-Russell

Thumbnail Sketch of the System

(Candy Masters, 334-749-5264, cmasters@coa.state.al.us, interview of 6/27/00)

Match provider: Lee Co. and local cities. Russell Co. gives no support

Buses: 6.5 in Lee Co. for 5311. Russell Co. not served with demand/response due to lack of county support

% Wheelchair accessible: Did not obtain

Driver pay: Did not obtain

Average miles driven in an hour of service: Did not obtain.

Any trouble finding capital match: Yes, Russell Co. has been unwilling to provide.

'99 Contract trips: 30,434

'99 Demand/Response trips: 7,608

Lee/Russell is a dual system, with both urban and rural transit. In bookkeeping, their budget is 50% urban, 50% rural. They have 2 basic systems: LETA operates in Phenix City (but doesn't provide rural demand/response in Russell Co.); PEX operates in Auburn/Opelika and Lee County. A third-party contractor does the actual operation of the buses.

Russell County won't put up any match, so only contract service is provided there. Lee County does provide match, so both contract service and demand/response service are provided there. The Lee County rural transit consists primarily of Aging contract routes and demand/response service. They use paratransit criteria to decide who can use the rural transit service: retardation, dialysis, wheelchair bound, etc.

Lee Co. currently operates 8 to 5. Russell co. currently operates 7 to 5.

Needs

Ms. Masters expressed the following needs:

- Add 5 new buses to provide basic service in Russell Co. (5 at 9 hrs/day)
- Add 1 new bus to upgrade service in Lee Co. (1 at 8 hrs/day) for taking people to work, etc.

4.18 Macon County Transportation

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(James Upshaw, (334) 727-6105, mrcaa@bellsouth.net, interview of 7/31/00)

Match provider: Macon-Russell CAA

Buses: 6

Wheelchair equipped: 2

Driver pay: not obtained

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 40 – 50 (25 used in calculations)

Any trouble finding capital match: Yes

'99 Contract trips: 4,100

'99 Demand /Response trips: not obtained

Macon County Transportation provides transit services to Macon County. It maintains contracts with organizations such as Macon County Health Department, MCCRR, and Ambulatory Behavioral Health Care Center, Inc. They operate Monday through Friday.

The programs run on commission match, contracts, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, they request support from the county and city governments. Macon County Transportation feels that they would not be able to find matching funds for increased federal funds.

Needs

James Upshaw expresses a top rural need:

- Extend services to Saturday for a total of 10 hours with two buses. Estimated additional trips per year: 750.

4.19 Madison Co.

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Phyllis Seymore, Anne Burkette (256) 532-3505, ped@co.madison.al.us, interview of 6/29/00)

Match provider: Co. gives a lot (\$96k for proposal she just put in for next year. This includes op + admin + capital match). That budget includes 96k match + 31k revenues + 90k 5311 funds.

Buses : 16 (only uses commuters and standard vans)

Wheelchair equipped: 38%

Driver pay: \$7.00 to start + 35% fringes for 2 of 12 who are full time.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 30

Any trouble finding capital match: No, for example, ARC says they won't enter into a contract, but they would help buy a vehicle.

'99 Contract trips: 4,309

'99 Demand /Response trips: 41,689

They serve one county. Passengers are almost all elderly or disabled. Their uniqueness is that they have a big urban area in the middle of their county that they can't draw passengers from. The agencies inside that city don't contract with them to bring people into the city. Madison Co. transit is asked to bring rural folks to satellite centers outside the city (say Council on Aging people for meals or Medicaid folks) and they don't get a real contract for that; the riders only pay the basic fare (which is lower than what transit would get if they had a contract). Mental Health and Adult Education are their only 2 contracts. Basically, their hours are 6:30 to 3:30. County shop does their maintenance.

They do curb-to-curb service, not door-to-door. (They say their drivers would have to do a whole lot more if it was door-to-door.) The county gives them a lot of money, and even gives transit a couple of drivers, but their salaries are paid by the county and don't show up on rural transit's books. The representatives said "don't give matching money to counties currently without service, or our co. commission will be angry about all the money they've given out."

Other Concerns

- Vehicle insurance is going up. Further increases could be really harmful.
- If ALDOT finds more \$ for rural transit, make sure it isn't just for a couple of years.
- Ms. Seymore thinks gas tax should go to transit.
- Thinks Medicaid, COA, etc. should be consulted if/when extra transit \$ is found.

Needs

Ms. Seymore expresses Madison County's needs:

- Would like to extend hours to 5 am to 7 pm for work routes and better service. Estimates 15,000 extra trips/year. Would need no additional buses because they have existing, unused bus capacity. (A while back, they did "activity trips" for after school children and also did Head Start. Those activities are gone, but they still have the buses.)

4.20 Guntersville Public Transportation (Marshall County)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(James Berry, (256) 571-7574, interview of 6/29/00)

Match provider: Guntersville City Council

Buses: 7 (1 car)

Wheelchair equipped: 1

Driver pay: \$5.75 - \$6.33 plus fringes. Half are full time and get benefits and half are part time and get no benefits.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 30 - 35

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips: 16,700

'99 Demand /Response trips: 10,480

Guntersville Public Transportation provides services to the city of Guntersville and the remainder of Marshall County. The bulk of their ridership in both Guntersville and the rest of Marshall County is elderly people. Guntersville Public Transportation maintains contracts with organizations such as: Marshall Co. Mental Health and the local Council on Aging. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

The programs run on commission match, contracts, farebox, and 5311. If they run short of funds, the Guntersville City Council makes up the difference.

Needs

Madeline Mathis expresses 3 top rural needs:

- Extend services to Saturday from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM, a total of 5 hours every week.
- Wants 1 new bus and part time driver to extend service Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM.
- Wants to add communication devices to the current fleet.

4.21 Morgan Co.

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Debra Rains (256) 351-4652, drains@co.morgan.al.us, interview of 6/21/00)

Match provider: Morgan Co. puts up a good deal of match

Buses : 17

Wheelchair equipped: zero. (So far, there's been no need.)

Driver pay: \$6/hr for part time. \$6.89 + 30% fringes to start full time

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 15

Any trouble finding capital match: not so far

'99 Contract trips: Almost 60,000 in Commission on Aging and Head Start

'99 Demand /Response trips: A number was not available. We were told that Head Start and COA make up the bulk of the rural transit work in the county.

Works under Morgan Co. Commission. Started with a Commission on Aging program and expanded from there. They have a dual, rural/urban system. Their budget is 35% rural, 65% urban. They do their demand/response with no age, economic status, etc. requirement. Basic hours are 7-5, M-F. Their rural fare is \$2 each way. However, COA riders don't pay a fare; they make a donation if they want to.

Their buses are busy until 1:30 p.m. doing contract work. Thus, there is not much time for demand/response.

Their biggest contract is with Commission on Aging. 7 of their vehicles are dedicated to it and operate 8 hrs/day.

MCATS employs one full-time maintenance person.

Ms. Rains indicates that the county has many well-off retired persons and only 4.4% employment. This leads to low demand for services and few opportunities to hire drivers. In addition, she says her service is often looked at as "only for elderly people". Thus, there is little demand for more services.

Needs

Ms. Rains expressed Morgan Co.'s needs:

- She'd like to expand demand response in the afternoon, but she's had little request for it. Apparently, many people think her system is only for elderly.

4.22 NACOLG

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Richard Holst (256) 389-0515, rholst@coa.state.al.us Doris Tidwell dtidwell@nwscc.cc.com, interview of 6/21/00)

Match provider: Franklin Co. Comm. and Town of Redbay

Buses : of 56 total, 25 are rural.

Wheelchair equipped: 3 of 25 = 12%

Driver pay: Not obtained.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 10-15

Any trouble finding capital match: Not in rural. In urban, it's a problem due to not being able to use contract revenue as match.

'99 Contract trips: 69,412

'99 Demand /Response trips: 7,713

Serve 4 counties: Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, and Marion. (They also do a Sr. citizens' contract in Winston, but Winston is mainly served by West Alabama Mental Health.)

Maintenance is done through local JUCO. College hires mechanics and charges labor, fringes and uniform costs to NACOLG. But NACOLG gets \$23k /year in-kind for the facility (it would cost them that much to have their own facility). NACOLG puts up 20% match for buying new equipment for the garage.

Sample Concerns

- They'd like transit Coordinating Committees to be reinstated
- They buy 20-passenger buses and smaller due to insurance costs

Needs

Ms. Tidwell expressed NACOLG's needs:

- Would like to double the number of vehicles from 25 to 50. Operating costs were requested to quadruple from current levels. These values were reduced to 12 additional vehicles (at normal cost allocation rates for operating costs) on the accompanying spreadsheet to this report.

4.23 NW Alabama Mental Health

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Tom Amster and Skip Newman, interview of 6/22/00)

Match provider: From contracts. None from counties.

Provider for 4 counties: Fayette, Walker, Lamar, Winston

Buses : 72

Wheelchair equipped: 20% – 25%

Driver pay: \$6.30 - \$6.50 plus 25% fringes

Average miles driven in an hour of service: 25 - 30

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract trips:

'99 Demand /Response trips:

Many of their riders are from mentally ill/retarded on contract routes (Tom also runs that agency in these counties). They also do a good bit of demand response (many “little old ladies”) at \$1/trip. They don't do charters. They do some Head Start and other programs, too.

Basically, they do contract runs from 6:30 to 9:00 a.m. to take folks to such places as mental care/training facilities. They return them home from 2:00 to 5:00. Then, in the middle, they fill in with demand response. They do have other, infrequent runs such as going to T'loosa or B'ham hospitals. In Jasper, he does run 1 bus on a fixed route (special arrangement with the mayor there, who obtained the bus). He can do this because the town population is less than 50,000 and still qualifies for funding.

Each county does things a little differently. The buses for that county stay in that county at night. He has a central maintenance facility in Jasper, but the other 3 counties don't.

Needs

Would like to extend dial-a ride to 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at least in Fayette Co. due to need for more doctor visits, etc. He would maybe like to add Saturday service. A good system would be 15 more buses (15-person, commuter-type, with 50-100% equipped for handicapped) and 13 new drivers. This action would potentially increase ridership by 300 trips per day.

4.24 Help, Inc. (Pickens Co.)

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Dr. Ben Curry, 205-367-2200, helpinc@pickens.net, interview of 6/5/00)

Match provider: Pickens Co. put up \$25k of \$339k total budget (also some money from cities)

Buses : 13 non-commercial Econoline vans

Wheelchair accessible: 4

Driver pay: Not obtained.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: Not obtained

Any trouble finding capital match: Not obtained

'99 Contract trips: Not broken out. He only gave a figure of 199,000 trips/yr

'99 Demand /Response trips: See above

Help Inc. serves one county: Pickens. They have \$52k in fare box and \$145k in contracts out of the total \$330k budget. Help Inc. has almost all the contracts that are available (Sr. Citizen, Mental Health/Retardation, Medicaid, Head Start) although some small amount of people are transferred by ambulance or other service agency bus.

Hours are roughly 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dr. Curry says that his county is basically maxed out: he has all the contracts available; there is no industry, so he can't do vanpools to work or extend hours until 11:00 p.m.; and he believes he's meeting 90+% of the need in his county.

Dr. Curry has a Ford-trained mechanic on his staff. All drivers have CDL, First aid, and CPR training.

Concerns

- Would like administration by ALDOT overhauled by either "Florida Model" where each provider contracts directly with FTA or "Brokerage Model" with 1 person who handles all transit in the state.
- Wants to "bring back" the field reps who used to come work with you
- Reinstate Alabama Inter-agency Transportation Rules Committee (AITRC)
- Rate the systems as part of funding method. (Former field rep Debra Chandler had put together a workable system.)

Needs

Dr. Curry says he has few needs; he believes he is meeting the needs of the county, but he would like the following:

- Any extra money he got from state would first go to improving staff/driver salaries
- Wants to take AIDS patients to the Watley Center in Tuscaloosa
- A better vehicle bid list. He believes the best vehicles aren't available through ALDOT
- An opportunity to get into GPS and dispatch software.

4.25 West Alabama Public Transportation

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(Bobby J. Armstead, (334) 289-5789, interview of 7/14/00)

Match Provider: Lowndes, Wilcox counties and contract revenue

Buses: 100+

Wheelchair accessible: 15

Drivers: 60+

Avg miles driven in an hour of service: 30

Any trouble finding capital match: No

'99 Contract users: 540,000

'99 Demand trips: 360,000

West Alabama Public Transportation provides Demand-Response, medical transportation, recreational activities, employment transportation, fixed route, semi-fixed route, and commuter vanpools. In addition to these services WAPT maintains contracts with 26 organizations over a 9 county operating area. Contract prices are negotiated based on the state cost allocation rates for mileage and hourly fees. Fares for vanpools are \$3/day per person, and transit tickets can be purchased in \$5 and \$10 increments at a rate of \$0.5 a mile. The counties covered by WAPT are Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Wilcox, Dallas, and Sumter Counties.

West Alabama Public Transportation employs a Transit Director, Administrative Assistant, Secretary/bookkeeper, and a Secretary in the Administrative Office. The dispatching/scheduling are handled by the Transit Coordinators in five counties. The dispatching/scheduling of the remaining four counties is handled by the Administrative office.

Needs

- Would like to extend operating hours by 4 hours a day using 50 existing vehicles.
- Would like to add 20-25 new vehicles to help reach remote outlying regions of counties and add one or possibly more contract routes. (These additions could possibly increase ridership by 1 million trips as per WAPT.)
- Would also like funds for Administration (driver) benefits.

4.26 Washington County (Exceptional Children Program) RPT-65

Thumbnail Sketch

(Rose Skanes, 334-847-2970, interview of 6/28/00)

Match Provider: United Way, County Commission, and Contracts

Buses: 11 (3 new buses coming)

Wheelchair accessible: 5

Drivers: 1 FT, 1 ¾ Time, 6 PT

Avg miles driven in an hour of service: 20-30

Any trouble finding capital match: yes

Total trips: 21,110 (1999)

System does not separate the public ridership from the contract ridership.

Washington County relies heavily on contracts to run its operation. The Mental Health facility in Washington County is scheduled to be shut down which will result in a loss of \$36,000 in contract funds for the transit program. Currently, Washington County Rural Public Transportation has contracts with Exceptional Children, Inc., Washington County Mental Health, Wagarville Nutrition, St. Stephen Nutrition, and Millry Nutrition. Washington County Rural Public Transportation would like to add a full-time Dispatcher and an Operations Manager.

Needs

- Since 3 new buses are being added this year she didn't request any more.
- The loss of the MI/MR contract which represents program funds of \$36,000 means Washington County will need to replace that contract.

3.27 Wiregrass

Thumbnail Sketch of System

(John Sorrell (334) 794-4093 x119, transit@sanman.net, interview of 6/27/00)

Match provider: Houston Co. and, for urban system, City of Dothan

Buses : of 21 total, 8 are called rural. 25% are commuters; most of the rest are 25 passenger.

Wheelchair equipped: 100%

Driver pay: Not obtained.

Average miles driven in an hour of service: Not obtained

Any trouble finding capital match: Probably not. He has \$200k in contract revenue.

'99 Contract trips: 85,134. Note that these values are for his combined system, for which 85% of the trips generated start in urban area. He allocates his budget as 60% urban, 40% rural.

'99 Demand /Response trips: 69,655 (Again, these are numbers for his combined system.)

Wiregrass is a combined urban/rural system. About 55% of their riders are contract riders; about 45% are demand/response riders. Sorrell has most of the available contracts locked up. He does say that Medicaid will only pay the demand/response passenger fare, not a contract fare. Because they have long hours, they do take a lot of folks to work, both to conventional employment and as housecleaners, etc. They do contract with DHR to convey some people to work. Geriatric riders are highest-growth segment. Their current workday is 0500 through 2300, Monday through Friday. In total system, 12 buses start at 5:30. In total system, only 3 or 4 buses operate between 5:30 and 11:00. The maximum is 17 from 1:30 to 5:00 pm.

They work through Houston Co. Road and Bridge Department for routine maintenance. For large repairs, they work through businesses that have contracts with the county.

Sample Concerns

- Believes administration must look at transit as part of state's infrastructure
- Doesn't want "un-served" counties to be given their match by the state
- Believes ALDOT should subsidize transit managers' salaries (like co. engineers)
- Would like ALDOT to provide half of the 20% capital match
- Would like a transit coordinator in each Division Office.

Needs

Mr. Sorrell expressed Wiregrass's needs:

- Would like to extend four deviated corridor routes to Enterprise, Geneva, Ozark, and Eufala. These destinations are outside Houston Co, so we will not include them in our cost projections (\$ to serve adjoining counties is included separately).
- Expand weekday service by adding 2-4 vehicles in the 5 to 10 a.m. period to support dial-a-ride for workers and subscription riders.
- Expand service to include Saturdays (2 vehicles, 12 hours/Saturday).