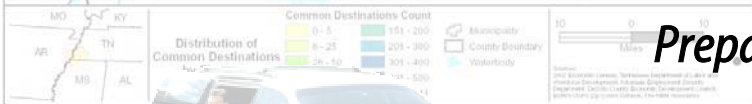


Coordinated Human Services
Transportation Plan for the
Memphis Area

A Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Memphis Area



Prepared for

Memphis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

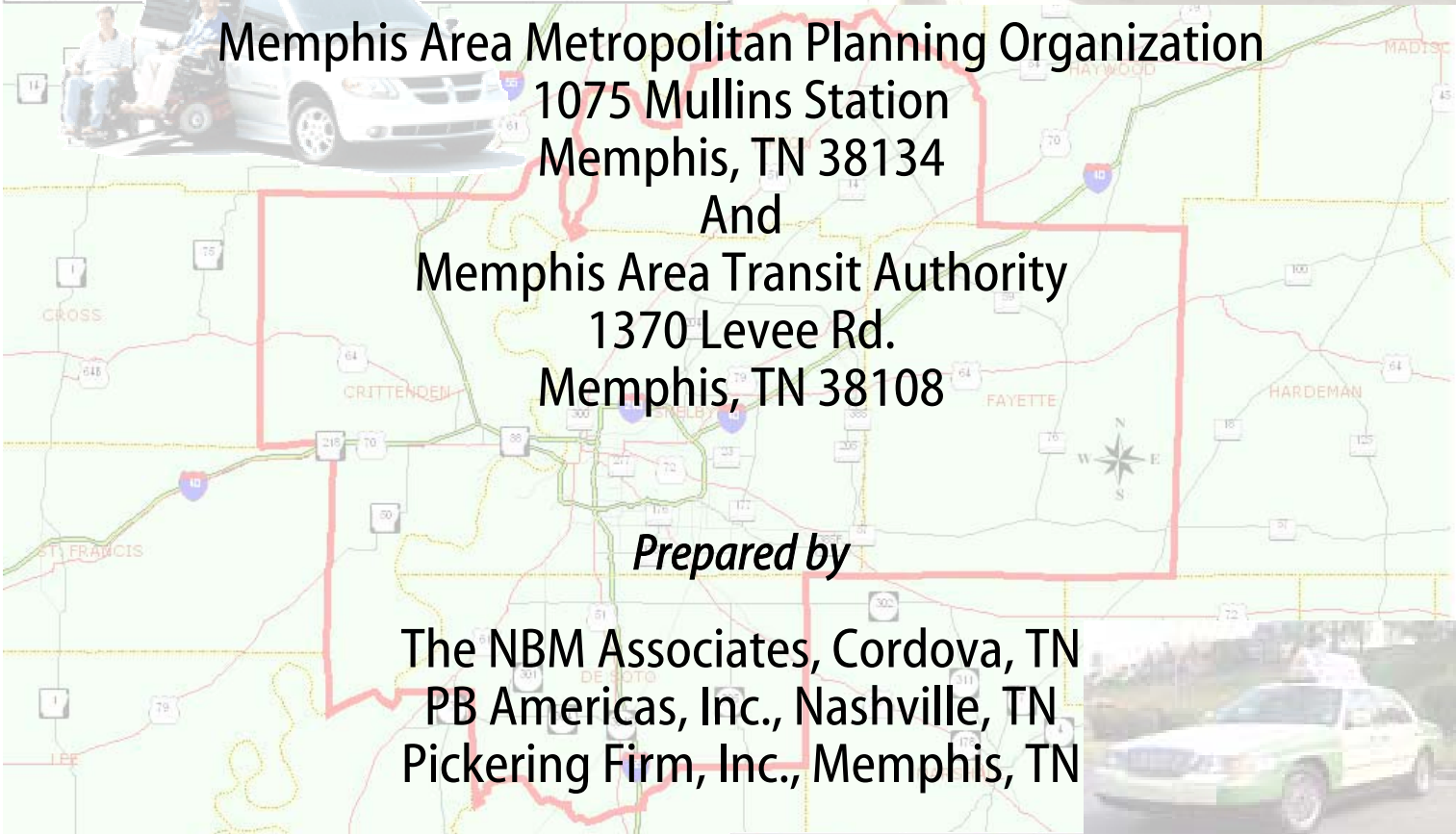
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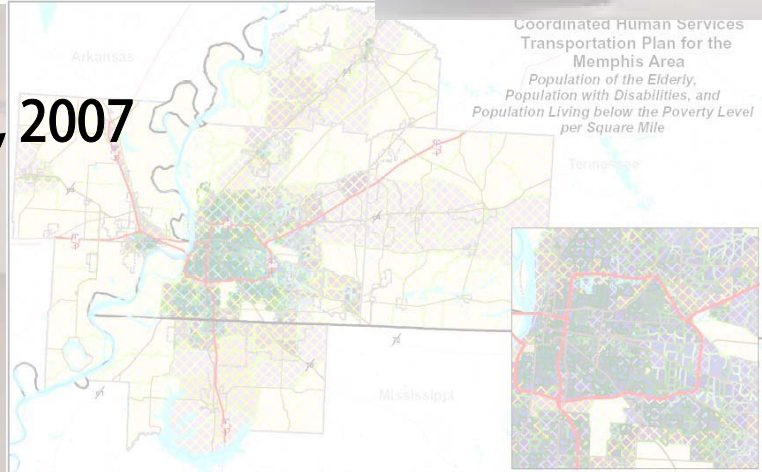


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Plan: The Memphis Area Coordinated Transportation Plan (MACTP) is prepared in response to federal requirements, as set by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310); the Job Access and Reverse Commute program (Section 5316); and the New Freedom program (Section 5317) be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and participation by the public.”

The purposes of the MACTP are to:

- Inventory available transportation services;
- Assess transportation needs of transit-dependent populations including older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals;
- Identify gaps and duplications of services;
- Select projects for meeting unmet transportation needs; and
- Produce an action plan for project implementation.

The Planning Process: The MACTP is developed through a process consisting of both a vertical component and a horizontal component. The vertical component includes identification of public transportation stakeholders; invitation of the public and stakeholders to public meetings or workshops; and conducting a series of public meetings or workshops for public and stakeholder participation in the MACTP planning process. The horizontal component of the planning process includes several parallel lines of effort for data gathering, needs assessment, deficiency areas analysis, and for gaining insight from studies of coordination plans of other areas/regions.

Stakeholder Participation: The Memphis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Memphis MPO) and the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) are the agencies leading the MACTP planning process. Stakeholders are categorized as transportation service providers, human services providers, planning organizations, and representatives of human services transportation users. In total, forty-four organizations representing five counties in three states participated in the MACTP planning process.

Attending public meetings, responding to survey questionnaires, providing data support, and participating in telephone interviews are the four channels of participation used by stakeholders to get involved in the MACTP planning process. In summary, thirty-four (34) agencies attended public meetings or workshops; sixteen (16) agencies responded to survey questionnaires; eight (8) organizations provided data support; and five (5) organizations participated in telephone interviews.

Available Services: Four categories of services are currently available for human services transportation in the MACTP Planning Area. The first is fixed route and fixed schedule services; the second is semi-fixed services that travel on fixed route but with flexible schedules; the third is semi-demand responsive services that travel on flexible routes but with fixed schedule; and the fourth is total demand responsive services that travel on flexible routes and flexible schedules in response to customers' requests.

Bus service, van service, trolley service, cab/car service, and limo service are the five modes of services currently available to human services transportation in the MACTP Planning Area. Bus and trolley services are completely wheelchair accessible. Most van services are wheelchair accessible. Customer groups served by the various transportation services providers in the planning area are the general public, elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and low-income people. Some non-profits and churches only provide transportation services to their members.

Transportation Needs: Current demand for public transit services in the Memphis Area mainly comes from three categories of user groups. The first are transit-dependent elderly and disabled individuals who can not operate a private automobile; the second are people with limited income who can not afford to own and operate a private automobile; the third are out of town and/or non-resident tourists using public transit services for sight seeing and local travelling. Excluding tourists, latent demand for public transit-human services transportation is estimated at 201,472 riders in the MACTP Planning Area.

Gaps of Services: Based on stakeholder discussion and input, the following are gaps of services in human services transportation identified for the MACTP Planning Area:

1. Insufficient/inadequate Services
 - a. Lack of midday service, night service, and weekend service.
 - b. Employment centers are not adequately served by public transportation.
 - c. Lack of service for persons with disabilities outside of MATA's service area, but in the Planning Area.
2. Lack of Funds to Subsidize Services
 - a. Low-income individuals cannot afford to pay for transportation to get to their jobs.
 - b. People with fixed incomes cannot afford to pay for demand responsive service to get to service centers/agencies.
 - c. Cab companies need capital funding for vehicles with easy client accessibility and for demand responsive service to medical appointments.
3. Road and Vehicle Limitations
 - a. Individuals with disabilities are restricted in their use of public transit services due to the lack of sidewalks and/or curb cuts.
 - b. Taxi/cab companies need accessible vehicles to accommodate wheelchairs and assistance to transport individuals with disabilities at reasonable cost.

4. Information and Coordination Barriers
 - a. Narrowly defined user qualification criteria by different recipients of funds prohibit human services and/or public transportation providers from extending services to potential transportation users.
 - b. Need better information on bus routes, service areas of various providers.

Common Origins: Affordable housing sites, senior housing sites, neighborhoods and highway corridors with the most noted number of human services transportation users are identified as common origins of human services transportation users. The top 10 common origins of human services transportation users in the Memphis Area are:

- Chelsea Corridor, Memphis
- Lamar Corridor, Memphis
- Poplar Corridor, Memphis
- Summer Corridor, Memphis
- Third Street Corridor, Memphis
- U.S. Highway 51 (Elvis Presley Corridor and Thomas Street Corridor, Memphis)
- Winchester Corridor, Memphis
- Hickory Hill, Memphis
- Midtown, South Memphis within I-240 Loop
- North Memphis (Frayser, Raleigh)

South Memphis, Midtown south of North Parkway, North Memphis near I-40, and West Memphis are the areas with the most elderly and disabled individuals participating in human services programs. North Memphis (Frayser and Raleigh), South Memphis, West Memphis (AR), and the northern part of Tipton County are the areas with the most case loads of Family First, Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs. Compared with the distribution of elderly and disabled individuals on human service programs, low-income people on Family First, Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs are concentrated in North Memphis, Southeast Memphis (Hickory Hill), and the northern part of Tipton County.

Common Destinations: Career centers, workforce development centers, cultural and recreation locations, educational destinations, human services agencies, medical facilities, retail places, and transportation hubs are locations identified as common destinations of human services transportation users.

Downtown, Midtown, and East Memphis along the Poplar Corridor; Southeast Memphis along the Lamar Corridor; Summer Avenue Corridor; and Collierville (Southeast Corner of Shelby County) are the areas with the most number of destinations for human services transportation users.

Strategies for Meeting Unmet Needs: Both long-term and short-term strategies are needed for meeting unmet needs for human services transportation. Long-term strategies are related to macro issues such as rebuilding walkable communities in areas with existing transportation infrastructure; committing to supporting public transportation and spending continuous efforts to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public

transit services; and educating the public about the importance of public transportation and the benefits of using public transit services.

Short-term strategies should be more operational, targeting specific issues such as adding transit services to a desired location, increasing the frequency of service, adding mid-day and night time services, providing cab companies with wheelchair accessible taxicabs, removing barriers for collaboration among agencies, and subsidizing employees for commuting costs with employer-funded transportation programs, etc.

Services for Meeting Unmet Needs: Categories of services along with sample projects for meeting unmet human services transportation needs are listed below:

1. Maintain current levels of public transportation service.
 - a. Purchase replacement vehicle
 - b. Maintain facilities for shared maintenance
2. Improve service to transit-dependent persons.
 - a. Purchase vehicles to expand service
 - b. Provide new service – time, location, capacity
 - c. Expand existing service – time, location, capacity
 - d. Modify existing vehicles and facilities to enhance standards beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
3. Review state and local policies to enhance public transportation service.
 - a. Conduct planning studies
 - b. Evaluate policies related to drivers, insurance, etc.
 - c. Review land use issues and the location of human service agencies relative to the clients they serve.
 - d. Conduct market studies to help taxi companies justify their investment in purchasing wheelchair accessible taxicabs
4. Develop model contracts and/or agreements for interagency coordination.
 - a. Establish contracts for sharing drivers, mechanical needs, fueling, vehicle utilization, risk management insurance, liability, commercial driver license and drug & alcohol compliance, etc.
5. Evaluate existing and future needs of transit-dependent persons.
 - a. Review routes and schedules relative to origin and destination. Especially where there are high concentrations of transit-dependent persons.
 - b. Identify connection points among providers to better utilize equipment.
6. Improve public transportation for elderly persons.
7. Improve public transportation for persons with disabilities.
8. Improve public transportation for persons with low-incomes.
9. Conduct surveys of providers and users to evaluate service effectiveness and efficiency.
10. Develop facilities to meet the needs of public transportation dependent persons.
 - a. Construct information center, one stop center, transit website, mobility management system, maintenance facilities, etc.
11. Coordinate services with emergency response agencies such as national guards, federal emergency management agency (FEMA), etc.