



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
INTERCITY BUS STUDY

FINAL REPORT | JANUARY 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
I. INTRODUCTION	2
A. Study Purpose	2
B. Study Background	2
C. Intercity Bus Definition	3
II. BACKGROUND DATA	9
A. Demographic Profile	9
1. Persons in Poverty	9
2. Persons with a Disability	9
3. College Age Students	14
4. Older Adults	14
5. Zero-Vehicle Households	14
B. Employers	15
III. EXISTING INTERCITY BUS SERVICES	17
A. Existing Intercity Services	17
B. Gaps in Existing Service	22
C. Fares	23
D. Stations and Passenger Amenities	23
IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT	26
A. Literature Review	26
B. Peer Review	30
C. Regional Coordination Transportation Groups	32
1. Delta Rides	32
2. EZTAG	32
3. Southern Mississippi Transit (SMT)	32
4. Ride the Smile	33
5. TRANS-CON	33
6. Southwest Mississippi Accessible Regional Transportation (SMART)	33

D. Identification of Gaps in Service	33
1. The Golden Triangle Region: Starkville, Columbus, and West Point	35
2. Canton	35
3. Pascagoula	35
4. The Southeast Quadrant of the State	35
E. General Unmet Needs	36
V. FUNDING	37
A. 5311(f) Program	37
B. In-Kind Match	37
C. State Specifics	38
VI. FEEDER SERVICES	39
A. Introduction	39
B. Eligibility	40
C. Challenges	40
VII. PROPOSED FEEDER ROUTE CONCEPTS	41
A. Background	41
B. Gulfport to Meridian Feeder	41
C. Tupelo-Golden Triangle-Meridian Feeder	43
D. Grenada-Oxford-Tupelo Feeder	44
E. Existing Services to Be Modified	46
1. Bay St. Louis to Gulfport Feeder	46
2. Pascalouga to Biloxi Feeder	46
3. Choctaw to Meridian Feeder	47
4. Greenwood to Greenville Feeder	47
5. Canton to Jackson Feeder	47
VIII. FACILITIES	48
A. Hattiesburg	48
B. Brookhaven	48
APPENDIX A	50
APPENDIX B	55
APPENDIX C	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Number of Persons per Square Mile	4
Figure 2.	Number of Persons in Poverty per Square Mile	5
Figure 3.	Percentage of the Population that Live in Poverty	6
Figure 4.	Number of Persons with a Disability per Square Mile	7
Figure 5.	Percentage of the Population Five Years of Age or Older with a Disability	8
Figure 6.	Number of College-Aged Persons (18-24) per Square Mile	10
Figure 7.	Percentage of the Population That Is College-Aged (18-24 years)	11
Figure 8.	Number of Zero-Vehicle Households per Square Mile	12
Figure 9.	Percentage of Households That Have Zero Vehicles Available	13
Figure 10.	Mississippi's Existing Intercity Bus Network	16
Figure 11.	Mississippi's Regional Coordination Transportation Groups	34
Figure 12.	Proposed Intercity Bus Feeders	49

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Major Employers in the State of Mississippi	15
Table 2.	Mississippi Intercity Bus Service Schedule	18
Table 3.	Woodville to Brookhaven Schedule	22
Table 4.	Advance Payment Fares	24
Table 5.	Standard Fare	25
Table 6.	Peer State Demographic Comparison	30
Table 7.	Peer State Intercity Service Comparison	31
Table A-1.	Mississippi Tract Rankings	51
Table B-2.	Agency Interviews	56

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has undertaken an Intercity Bus Study for the purpose of determining the level of intercity bus (ICB) needs in the State of Mississippi. MDOT is required to spend 15 percent of its annual Section 5311 apportionment to carry out a program to develop and support intercity bus transportation. This study recommends how best to utilize the Section 5311(f) funds.

The report thoroughly examines existing conditions in the state in order to determine which areas have the greatest need for intercity bus. Demographic groups that have a propensity to use intercity bus are often the same groups that use public transit more often than the general population: persons with a disability, persons who live in poverty, persons without a vehicle available, older adults, and college aged students. These populations were mapped by number and by density. The infrastructure and routing of the current intercity bus carriers in the state (Greyhound, Delta Bus Lines, and Colonial Trailways) were then examined to determine how accessible they were to these transit dependent populations and local public transit services.

Analysis of this data leads to the conclusion that there are some significant gaps in the intercity bus service in the state that need to be addressed. The Golden Triangle (Starkville, Columbus, West Point), Canton, Pascagoula, and Southeast Mississippi were identified as the areas and communities in the state with the highest unmet need.

Once the need for service is established, the report lays out funding strategies the state can pursue, including a thorough explanation of how to use the 5311(f) in-kind local match program. Existing public transit services in the Biloxi-Gulfport MSA, Canton, Meridian, and the Delta Region were cited as being eligible for this type of funding if modified to fit the programs requirements, and three new routes were proposed. The new routes would be between Grenada and Tupelo via Oxford; Tupelo and Meridian via Starkville; and Gulfport and Meridian via Hattiesburg. As part of the improvement of the intercity bus service, station relocations were recommended in the cities of Brookhaven and Hattiesburg. If the existing public transit service was modified, these new routes implemented, and station locations moved, the intercity bus gaps of the state should be largely minimized if not eliminated.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Study Purpose

The Mississippi Department of Transportation has undertaken an Intercity Bus Study for the purpose of determining the level of intercity bus (ICB) needs in the State of Mississippi. This information will be used to determine how MDOT can best utilize its annual apportionment of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program funds and to support MDOT's next submission for certification to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

As the designated agency responsible for the administration of the Section 5311 program (49 U.S.C. 5311 Nonurbanized Area Formula Program), MDOT is required to spend 15 percent of its annual Section 5311 apportionment to carry out a program to develop and support intercity bus transportation, unless the Governor certifies that the intercity bus service needs of the State are being adequately met. This determination must include consultation with the State's intercity bus providers. This study will incorporate this consultative process to recommend how best to utilize the Section 5311(f) funds.

B. Study Background

FTA Circular 9040.IG Formula Grants for Rural Areas, defines intercity bus services as:

Regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available.

The Circular also outlines the objectives for the 5311(f) program, saying:

One objective of the funding for intercity bus service under Section 5311, therefore, is to support the connection between rural areas and the larger regional or national system of intercity bus service. Another objective is to support services to meet the intercity travel needs of residents in rural areas. A third objective is to support the infrastructure of the intercity bus network through planning and marketing assistance and capital investment in facilities. FTA encourages states to use the funding under Section 5311(f) to support these national objectives, as well as priorities determined by the state.



The current Intercity Bus Study takes a much needed new look at ICB services in the State of Mississippi. A comprehensive review of system efficiency and effectiveness is warranted to maximize the benefit to the state provided by the existing annual investment in intercity transit, as well as a more detailed look at transit needs and potential connections.

The intercity bus market is growing rapidly and the opportunities for continued expansion are significant. An analysis of 5311(f) spending across all 50 states suggests that Mississippi has been above the median for the past five fiscal cycles, yet the State's current intercity bus service (which includes both Greyhound and Delta Bus lines) accounts for less than 60,000 trips per year.

This study draws its analysis from a review of existing conditions, extensive stakeholder interviews, a survey of transit agencies, research, and knowledge of the industry. From this information, gaps in ICB service will be assessed and targeted market areas to expand ICB services will be identified.

C. Intercity Bus Definition

The FTA defines Intercity Bus service as “regularly scheduled bus service for the general public which operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity which has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers and which makes meaningful connections with scheduled Intercity Bus service to more distant points, if such service is available”. Urban areas are defined by the FTA as municipalities that are appropriate for a local mass transportation system to serve individuals in the locality.

The difference between Intercity Bus service and public transportation service is that Intercity Bus service has a limited schedule and does not provide extensive circulation within a local area, and instead only has one or two centralized stops. Service which only incidentally stops at an Intercity Bus facility among other destinations within the city at either end of a route which covers a long distance, without regard to scheduled connections, is eligible for Section 5311 assistance as public transportation, but is not an intercity feeder service. Likewise, commuter service is excluded because it is considered a local public transportation service, eligible for assistance under Section 5311 but not counting toward the required percentage for Section 5311(f).

Intercity Bus service **needs to connect two or more “urban” areas not in close proximity.**

There are many cities in the State that would be considered urban areas including the cities of Vicksburg, Greenville, Meridian, Tupelo, Starkville, Oxford, and Columbus. Larger urban areas classified as census designated urbanized areas or UZAs include the cities of Olive Branch-Horn Lake-Southaven (part of the Memphis TN metropolitan area); Hattiesburg; Jackson; and Biloxi-Gulfport (which also includes Pascagoula and Bay St Louis).

The cities of Vicksburg, Oxford, and Starkville currently have fixed route transit services. Although Oxford's population is lower than the others, the student population at Ole Miss allows the city to support a fixed route transit system. The City of Meridian is attempting to restore their fixed route system, suspended in 2011, and The City of Tupelo as recently as 2014 was seriously considering restoring fixed route service. Therefore, all of these cities would fit the FTA definition of an urban area.

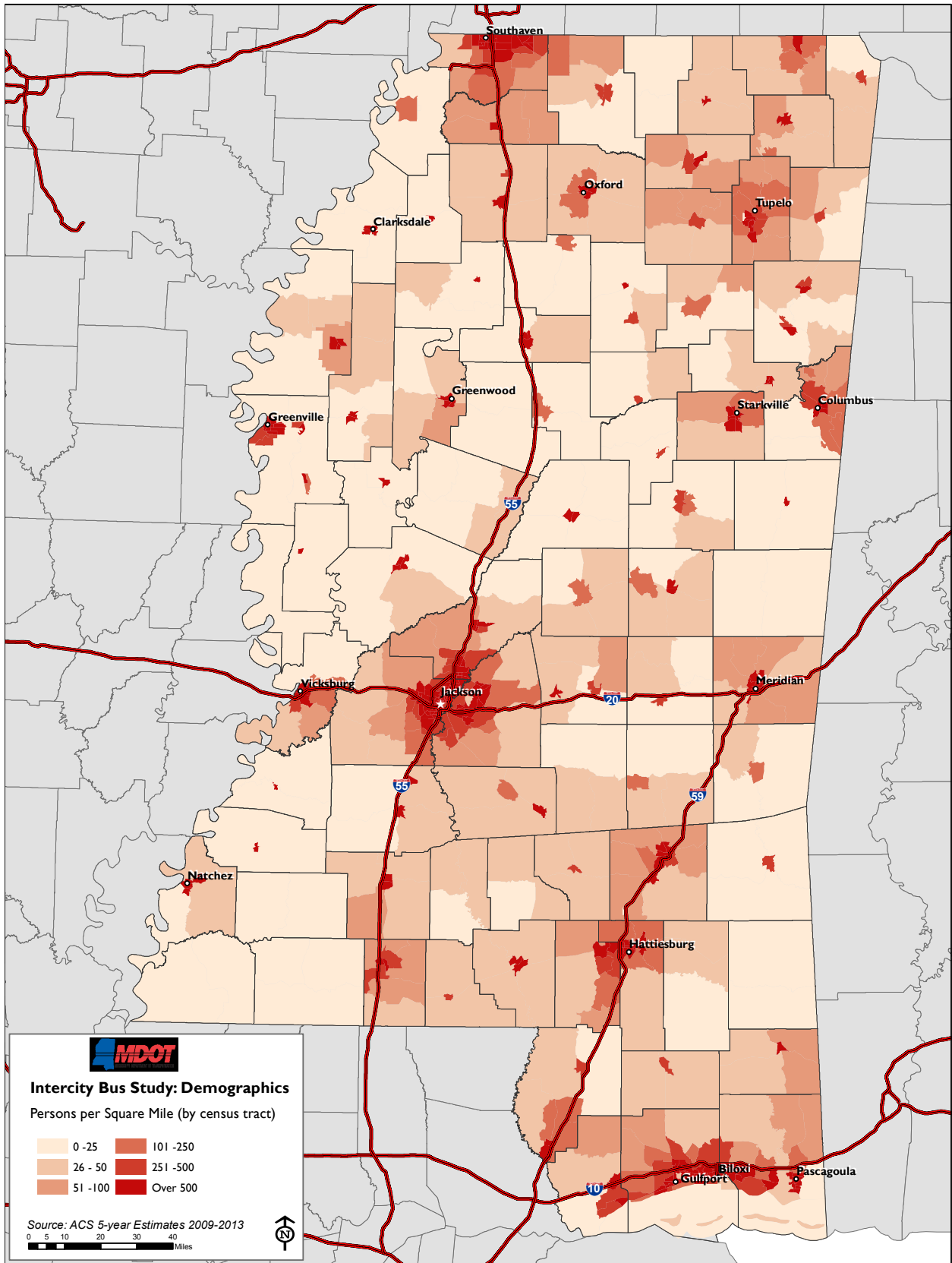


Figure 1. Number of Persons per Square Mile

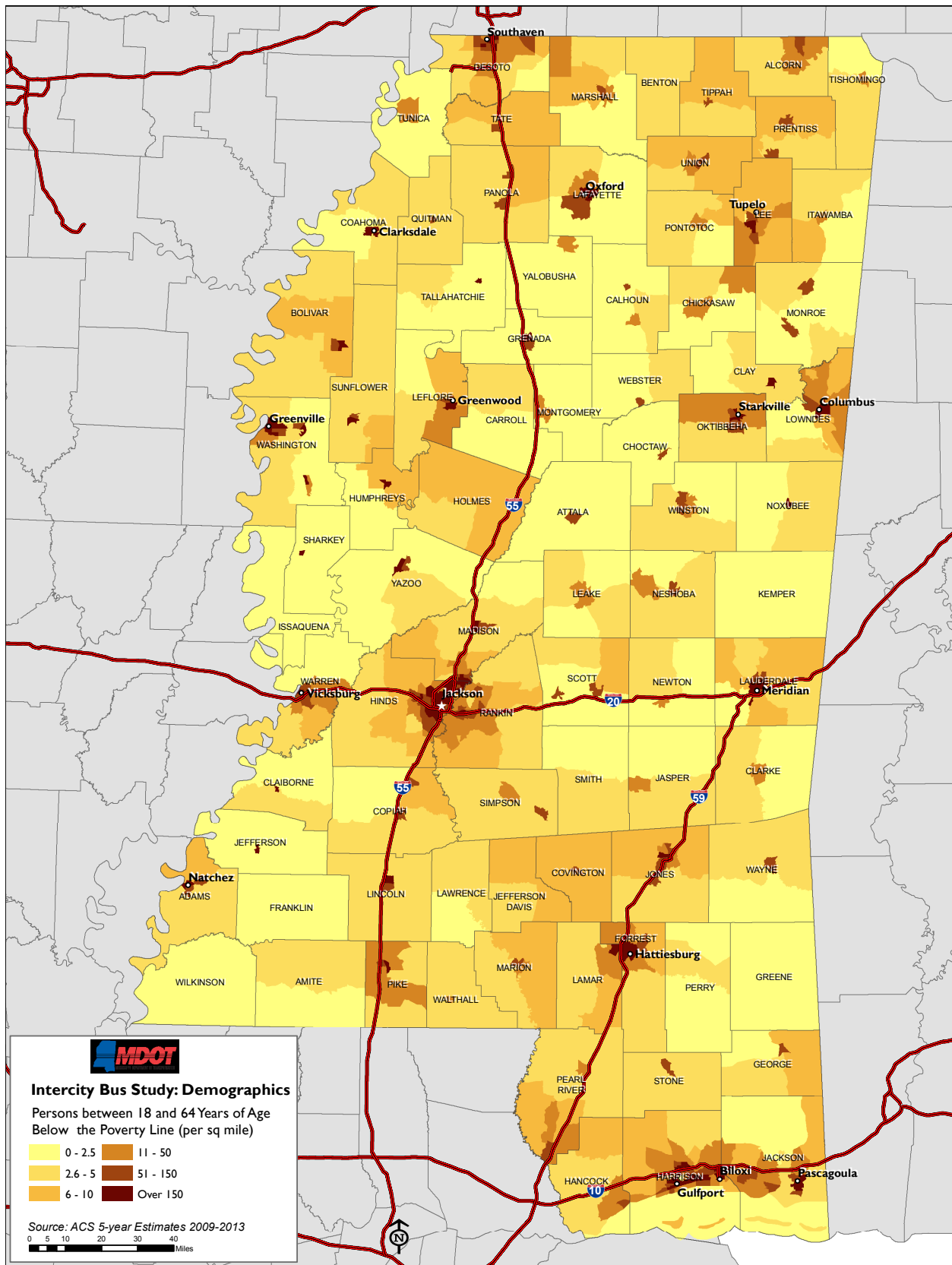


Figure 2. Number of Persons in Poverty per Square Mile

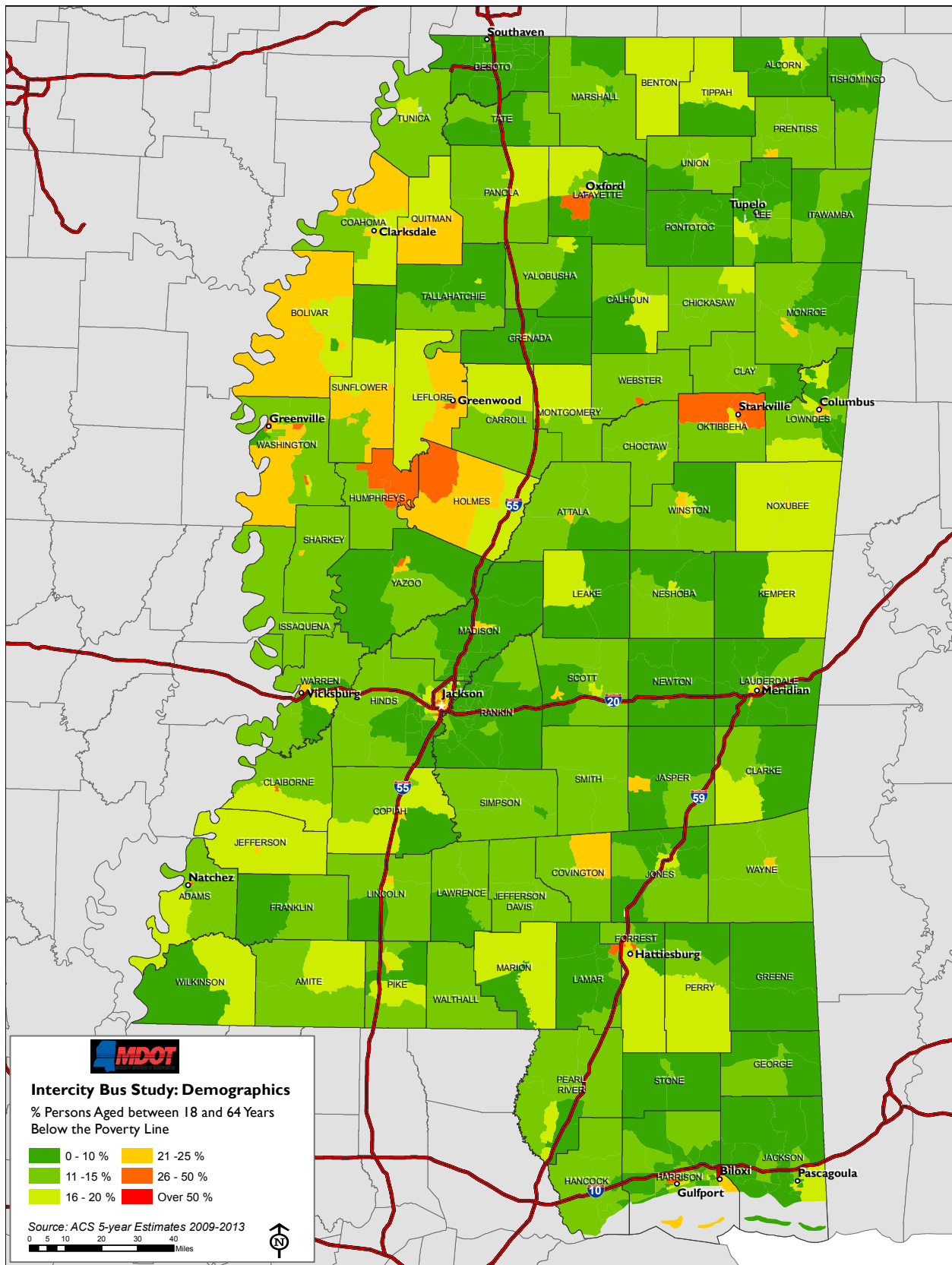


Figure 3. Percentage of the Population that Live in Poverty

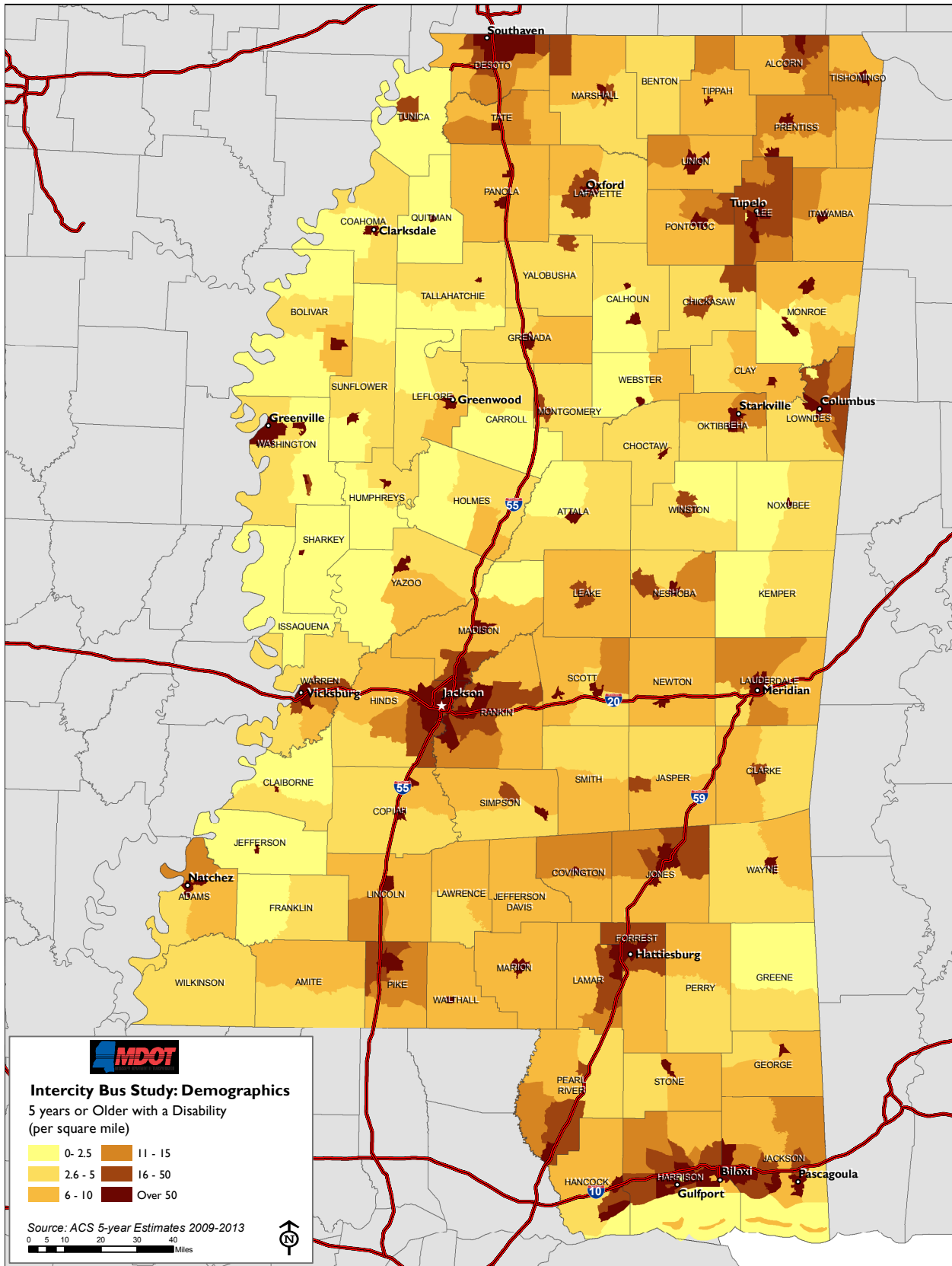


Figure 4. Number of Persons with a Disability per Square Mile

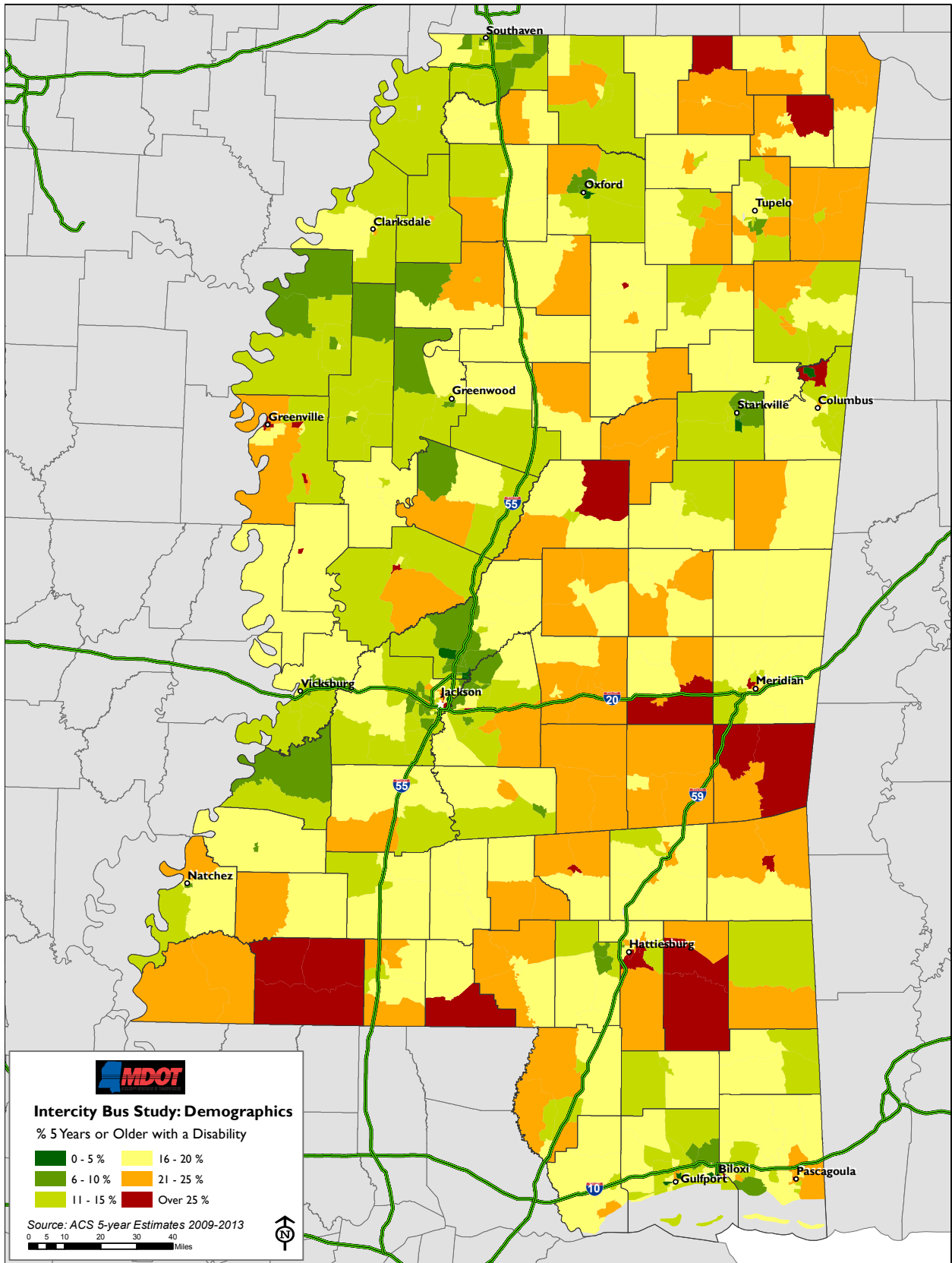


Figure 5. Percentage of the Population Five Years of Age or Older with a Disability

II. BACKGROUND DATA

A. Demographic Profile

A number of demographic factors contribute to how and where intercity bus services should be provided. Areas that have more utilized successful intercity bus services tend to be areas where there are higher levels of poverty, seniors, persons with disabilities, college students, and households with no access to a vehicle. American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census were collected to identify the areas of the State where these populations are more significant.

The relevant census data was analyzed at the census tract level and focuses on the concentration of these groups per square mile. To get a sense of the prevalence of these groups in a given region, maps are included.

1. Persons in Poverty

Areas where a high concentration of persons living below the poverty line can be found in almost every county in the state, primarily near the cities of Jackson, Vicksburg, Southaven, Greenville, and Starkville. Other communities with concentrations of poverty include the cities of Clarksdale, Hattiesburg, Meridian, and Natchez. Each of these communities is currently served by intercity bus service. Communities without a nearby intercity bus station that have a concentration of persons in poverty above 500 persons per square mile include Starkville, Greenwood, and Pascagoula. Figures 2 and 3 show persons in poverty per square mile and the percentage of the overall population that lives in poverty.

2. Persons with a Disability

As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the areas with the highest concentration of persons with a disability are in De Soto, Forrest, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Lauderdale, and Washington counties. The tract with the highest concentration of persons with a disability in the state is in Greenville. With almost 1,080 persons with disabilities per square mile, persons with disabilities make up almost a quarter of the total population in that tract. Other communities with concentrations of persons with disabilities include Jackson, Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Meridian, Pascagoula, and Southaven. With the exception of Pascagoula, all of these communities have intercity bus stations nearby.



Figure 7. Percentage of the Population That Is College-Aged (18-24 years)

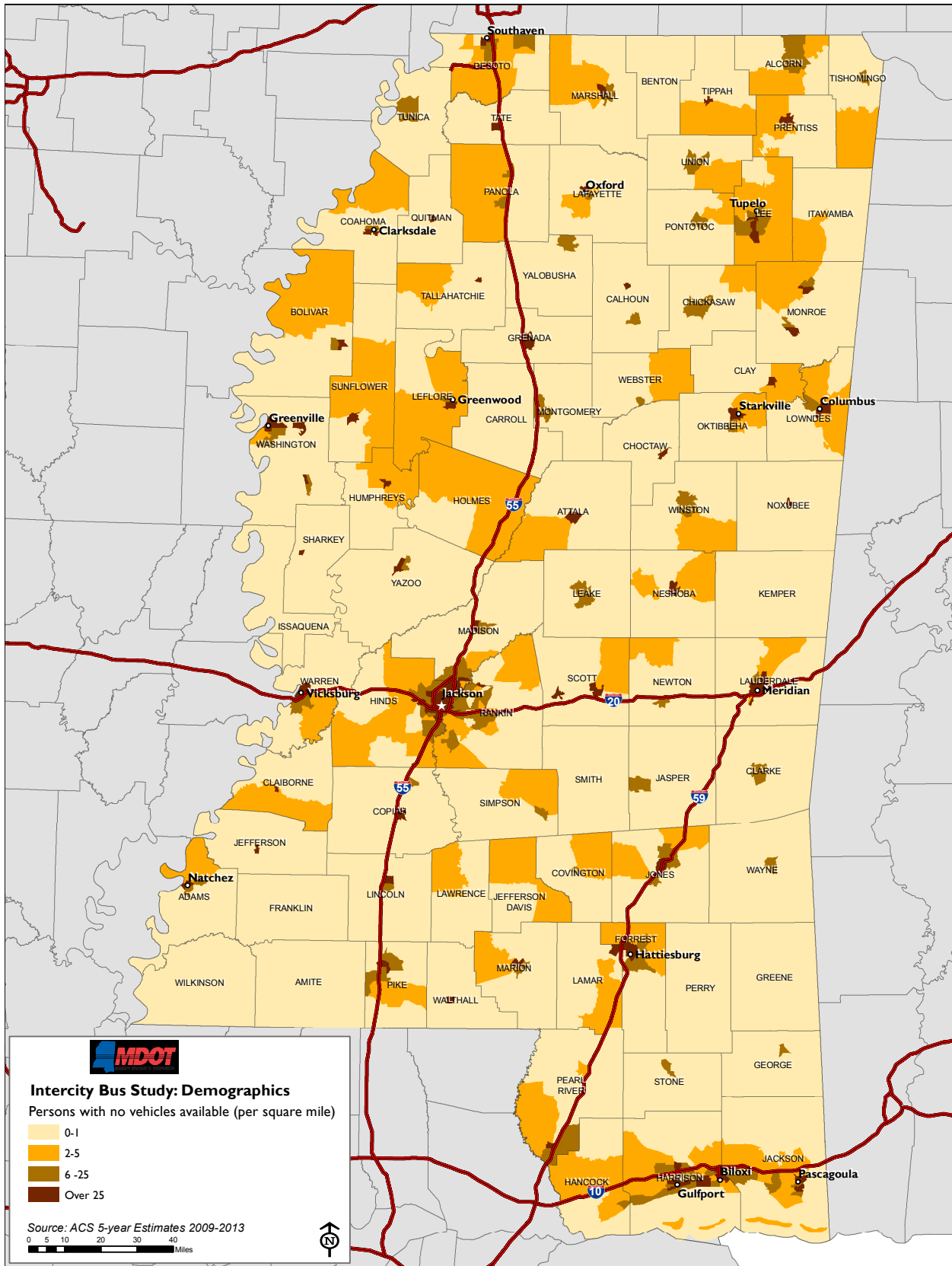


Figure 8. Number of Zero-Vehicle Households per Square Mile

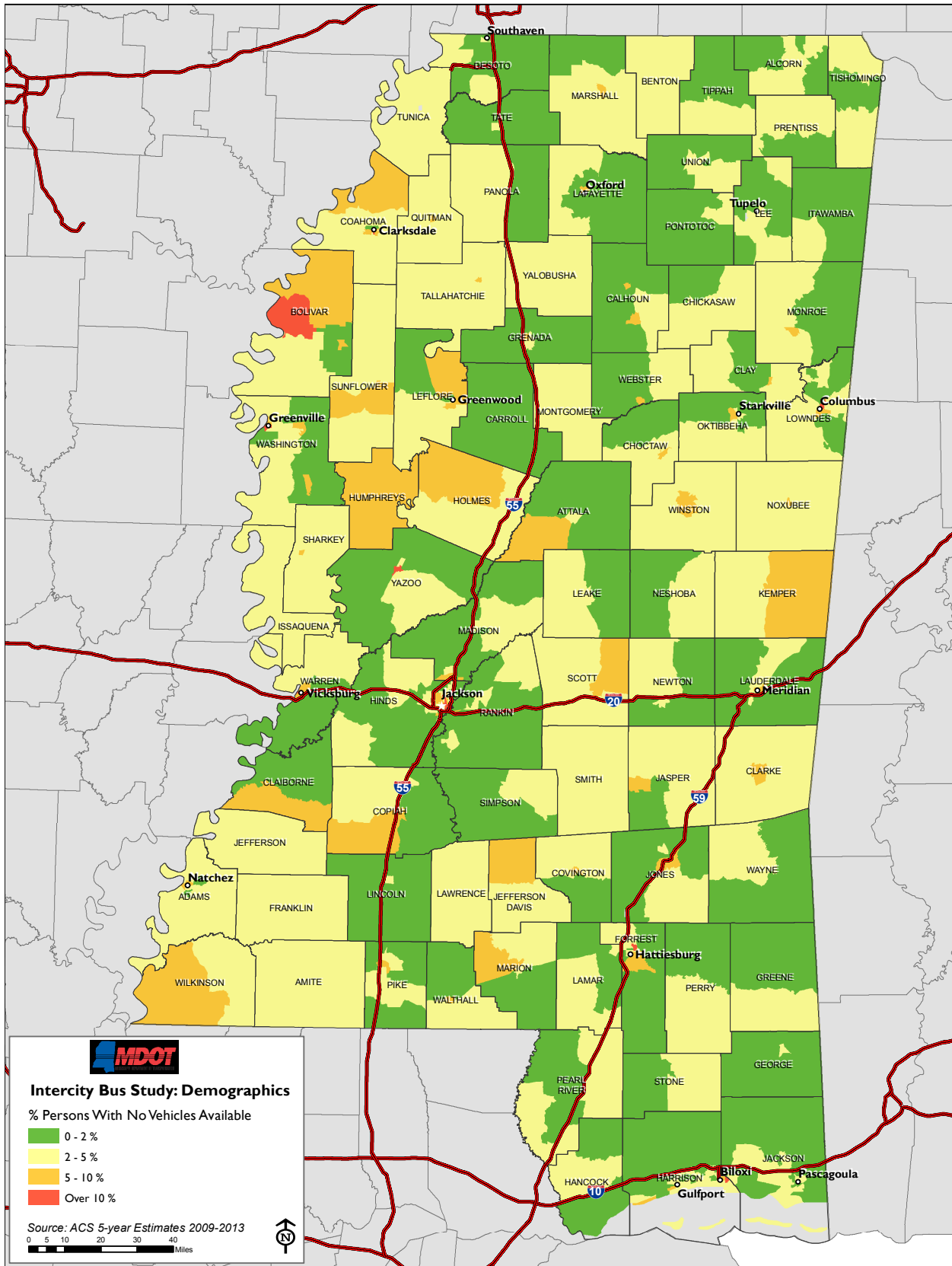


Figure 9. Percentage of Households That Have Zero Vehicles Available

3. College Age Students

There are numerous colleges and universities located throughout the State. De Soto, Forrest, Harrison, Hinds, Lauderdale, and Washington counties have the highest concentration of college aged students. (persons age 18 to 24). The highest concentration of college aged students resides on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, with 129 college-age persons per square mile. Other communities with concentrations of college-aged people include Jackson, Oxford (University of Mississippi), Greenville, Meridian (near Meridian Community College), Biloxi (housing for Kessler Air Force Base), Gulfport (housing for the Naval Construction Battalion Center), Starkville (Mississippi State University), and Southaven. With the exception of Oxford and Starkville, all of these communities currently have intercity bus stations nearby, although the Hattiesburg station is six miles from campus. Figure 6 shows the number of college-aged persons per square mile. Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of the total population that is between age 18 and 24.

4. Older Adults

Census tract level data on older adults is included in the transit index in the appendix, but not described in great detail here, nor has it been mapped, due to a glaring error in the Census data. According to the Census Bureau, persons 65 years of age and older make up 13.9% of the statewide population. It is thought that communities with high concentrations of older adults include Biloxi, Gulfport, Jackson, Meridian, and Southaven. All of these communities currently have intercity bus stations nearby.

5. Zero-Vehicle Households

The areas with the highest concentration persons without access to a vehicle are in Coahoma, Forrest, Hinds, Lauderdale, Madison, Warren, and Washington counties. Not surprisingly, except for Madison County, the counties identified in this category mirror those with the highest concentration of persons in poverty. The highest concentration of persons without a vehicle resides in Greenville in the area near Frisbee Park, with 33 people per square mile. Other communities with high concentrations of carless individuals include Canton, Clarksdale, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Meridian, and Vicksburg. All of these communities except Canton currently have intercity bus stations nearby.

B. Employers

There is potential for intercity bus to serve employment centers, particularly large employers who hire lower wage workers. The potential, however, is not considered to be significant. Table 1 provides a list of major employers within the State of Mississippi that employ lower-wage workers, including the number of employees, the proximity of the employment center to an intercity bus stop, and the availability of local demand response service to provide a connection between intercity bus and the company's front door.

Table 1. Major Employers in the State of Mississippi

COMPANY	CITY LOCATION	COUNTY LOCATION	BUSINESS TYPE	CLOSEST INTERCITY BUS	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM STATION	LOCAL DEMAND RESPONSE TRANSIT	TOTAL JOBS
Ashley Furniture	Ecru	Pontotoc	Furniture Manufacturing	Tupelo	22 miles	None	3,000
Pearl River Resort	Philadelphia	Neshoba	Casino, Water Park, Golf Club	Meridian	37 miles	Choctaw Transit	2,500
Tyson Foods	Carthage	Leake	Poultry Processing and Animal Nutrition	Jackson	54 miles	Choctaw Transit	1,700
Howard Industries	Laurel	Jones	Electronics Manufacturing	Hattiesburg	31 miles	DJ Transit Community Development	2,000
Sanderson Farms	Summit	Pike	Poultry Processing	Brookhaven	29 miles	5 County	1,700
Cooper Tire	Tupelo	Lee	Tire Manufacturing	Tupelo	2 miles	None	1,500
Tyson Foods	Forest	Scott	Chicken Processing and Animal Nutrition	Jackson	46 miles	None	1,500
Lane Furniture	Tupelo	Lee	Furniture Manufacturing	Tupelo	8 miles	None	1,200
Wayne Farms	Laurel	Jones	Poultry Processing	Hattiesburg	31 miles	DJ Transit Community Development	1,200
Koch Foods	Forest	Scott	Poultry Processing	Jackson	46 miles	None	1,100
Franklin	Houston	Chickasaw	Furniture Manufacturing	Tupelo	34 miles	None	1,005

Source: www.business.msstate.edu/programs/ib/resources/ms/index.php (Accessed April 2, 2015)

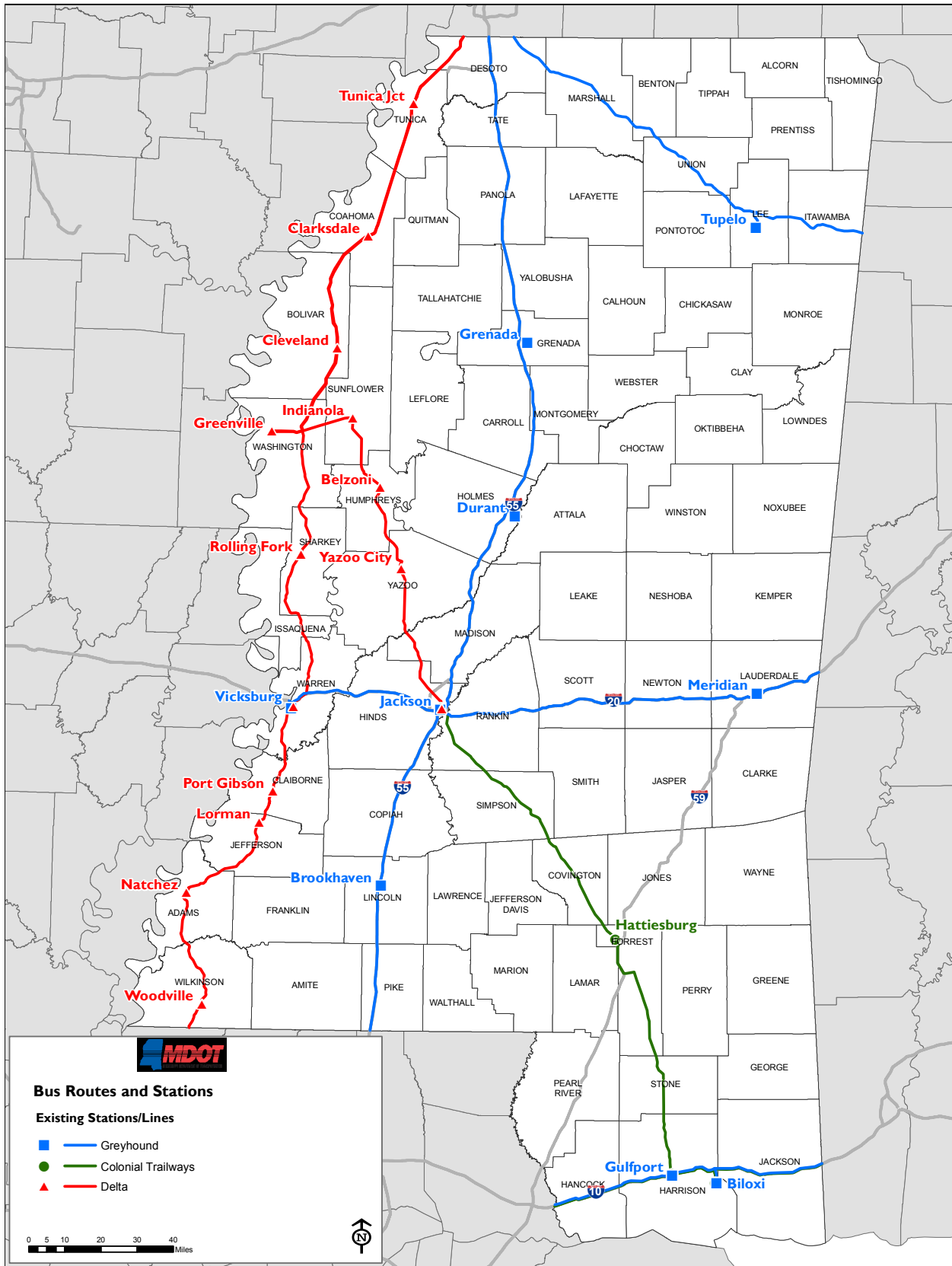


Figure 10. Mississippi's Existing Intercity Bus Network

III. EXISTING INTERCITY BUS SERVICES

A. Existing Intercity Services

Currently, three intercity bus carriers serve the State of Mississippi, which are Greyhound, Delta Bus Lines, and Colonial Trailways as shown in Figure 10. Greyhound Lines, by far the dominant carrier in America, operates six routes in the state. Greyhound serves nine communities located throughout the state, with Jackson having the most service, as it is the main hub for Greyhound service in the State. Vicksburg, Tupelo, and Meridian also have extensive Greyhound service. Other cities served by Greyhound include Biloxi, Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Grenada and Durant. All routes except the one serving Tupelo are local routes, making several intermediate stops between their final destinations, which are generally larger regional cities. On Greyhound Lines, Mississippi residents can travel by bus to out-of-state destinations such as Atlanta, GA; Memphis, TN; Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and New Orleans, LA; Dallas, TX; Birmingham, Mobile, and Montgomery, AL; and Tallahassee, FL without transferring (depending on the traveler's origin city).

Delta Bus Lines, a carrier which until recently had an interline agreement with Greyhound allowing through tickets to be purchased, operates two routes in western Mississippi, serving smaller communities along the US 61 corridor. One route travels between Memphis and Jackson, while the other is a through-route between Memphis and Baton Rouge. Delta Bus Lines serves 14 communities, using intermodal stations in Natchez and Cleveland and dedicated stations in Vicksburg (where transfers can be made to Greyhound Lines), Clarksdale, and Indianola. The remainder of Delta Bus Lines stops are in shared facilities, often just a seating area inside a gas station. Delta Bus Lines operates its own Website and its stations are branded with the Delta Bus Lines logo. Tickets can be purchased online through Greyhound or if a rider is connecting to the Greyhound network. Tickets between Delta Bus Lines stations must be purchased through them.

Another carrier interlining with Greyhound is Colonial Trailways, which has an agreement to carry passengers on most routes operating out of Biloxi and Gulfport. Trailways tickets can be purchased through Greyhound. There is no separate branding or signage for this service; it is contracted by Greyhound to provide service. Trailways buses serve four communities: Hattiesburg, Biloxi, Gulfport and Jackson. Table 2 provides service information for communities served by intercity bus.

Table 2. Mississippi Intercity Bus Service Schedule

COMMUNITY	ROUTE STARTS	ROUTE ENDS	TIME	CARRIER	SERVICE TYPE	SERVICE DAYS	LOCAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS
Belzoni	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	9:55	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	14:25	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
Biloxi	Mobile	Jackson (MS)	8:20	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Tallahassee	9:40	Greyhound	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Mobile	10:00	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Atlanta	12:40	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	Atlanta	New Orleans	15:35	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	Jackson (MS)	Mobile	17:00	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
Brookhaven	Baton Rouge	Memphis	13:25	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Copiah County 5 County Transit
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	14:20	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Copiah County 5 County Transit
Clarksdale	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	7:00	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	11:00	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	16:55	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	20:10	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
Cleveland	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	7:45	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	11:50	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	16:15	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	19:30	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA
Durant	Memphis	Baton Rouge	11:00	Greyhound	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	16:15	Greyhound	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
Greenville	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	8:45	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	12:45	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	15:25	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	18:35	Delta	Local	Daily	
Grenada	Memphis	Baton Rouge	9:55	Greyhound	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	17:20	Greyhound	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit

Note: Schedules as of February, 2015

COMMUNITY	ROUTE STARTS	ROUTE ENDS	TIME	CARRIER	SERVICE TYPE	SERVICE DAYS	LOCAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS
Gulfport	Mobile	Jackson (MS)	8:50	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Tallahassee	9:05	Greyhound	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Mobile	9:25	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	New Orleans	Atlanta	12:05	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	Atlanta	New Orleans	15:05	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
	Jackson (MS)	Mobile	16:20	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	CTA
Hattiesburg	Mobile	Jackson (MS)	10:25	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	Community Development
	Jackson (MS)	Mobile	14:50	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	Community Development
Indianola	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	9:20	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	15:00	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
Jackson	Atlanta	Dallas	2:50	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Dallas	Atlanta	5:15	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Atlanta	Dallas	6:55	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Dallas	Atlanta	7:50	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	11:20	Delta	Local	Daily	JATLAN, AMTRAK
	Mobile	Jackson (MS)	12:05	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	JATLAN, AMTRAK
	Dallas	Atlanta	12:45	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN, AMTRAK
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	13:00	Delta	Local	Daily	JATLAN, AMTRAK
	Jackson (MS)	Mobile	13:00	Colonial Trailways	Local	Daily	JATLAN, AMTRAK
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	13:20	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Atlanta	Dallas	13:50	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	14:55	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Dallas	Atlanta	18:50	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
	Atlanta	Dallas	19:25	Greyhound	Local	Daily	JATLAN
Atlanta	Dallas	22:00	Greyhound	Local	Daily		
Dallas	Atlanta	22:30	Greyhound	Local	Daily		

Note: Schedules as of February, 2015

COMMUNITY	ROUTE STARTS	ROUTE ENDS	TIME	CARRIER	SERVICE TYPE	SERVICE DAYS	LOCAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS
Lorman	Memphis	Baton Rouge	15:15	Delta	Local	Daily	CCHRA Public Transit
Meridian	Dallas	Atlanta	00:10	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Atlanta	Dallas	00:40	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Dallas	Atlanta	6:55	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Dallas	Atlanta	9:30	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Choctaw Transit AMTRAK
	Atlanta	Dallas	11:05	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Choctaw Transit AMTRAK
	Dallas	Atlanta	14:25	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Choctaw Transit AMTRAK
	Atlanta	Dallas	17:00	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Choctaw Transit AMTRAK
	Atlanta	Dallas	19:35	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Dallas	Atlanta	20:35	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
Natchez	Baton Rouge	Memphis	14:50	Delta	Local	Daily	Natchez Transit
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	15:55	Delta	Local	Daily	Natchez Transit
Port Gibson	Memphis	Baton Rouge	15:05	Delta	Local	Daily	CCHRA Public Transit
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	15:40	Delta	Local	Daily	CCHRA Public Transit
Rolling Fork	Memphis	Baton Rouge	13:35	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	18:00	Delta	Local	Daily	MVSU Mass Transit
Tunica Junction	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	5:50	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	10:05	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	17:40	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	19:00	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA, DARTS
Tupelo	Memphis	Atlanta	12:01	Greyhound	Express	Daily	
	Atlanta	Memphis	12:25	Greyhound	Express	Daily	
	Memphis	Atlanta	16:00	Greyhound	Express	Daily	
	Birmingham	Memphis	17:05	Greyhound	Express	M, F, Sa, Su, H	
	Atlanta	Memphis	21:45	Greyhound	Express	Daily	
	Memphis	Birmingham	22:45	Greyhound	Express	M, F, Sa, Su, H	
	Atlanta	Dallas	7:45	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Dallas	Atlanta	10:45	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	14:35	Delta	Local	Daily	

Note: Schedules as of February, 2015

COMMUNITY	ROUTE STARTS	ROUTE ENDS	TIME	CARRIER	SERVICE TYPE	SERVICE DAYS	LOCAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS
Vicksburg	Atlanta	Dallas	14:40	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Nroute
	Dallas	Atlanta	16:55	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Nroute
	Baton Rouge	Memphis	17:05	Delta	Local	Daily	Nroute
	Atlanta	Dallas	20:15	Greyhound	Local	Daily	Nroute
	Dallas	Atlanta	20:40	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
	Atlanta	Dallas	22:50	Greyhound	Local	Daily	
Woodville	Baton Rouge	Memphis	14:15	Delta	Local	Daily	
	Memphis	Baton Rouge	16:35	Delta	Local	Daily	
Yazoo City	Memphis	Jackson (MS)	10:30	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA
	Jackson (MS)	Memphis	13:50	Delta	Local	Daily	BCCA

Note: Schedules as of February, 2015

B. Gaps in Existing Service

Intercity service coverage is especially lacking in the northeastern portion of the state. The only route in this region is a Greyhound express route with a single stop in Tupelo, despite traveling nearly 125 miles through Mississippi. The problem has been exacerbated by the recent loss of service to Starkville, Oxford, and Columbus due to Megabus and ATR Express ceasing scheduled operations in the past year. However, even in the western part of the state, which has relatively good intercity service, traveling between communities in the Delta and the rest of the state is often a chore. For instance as demonstrated by Table 3, it can take over 24 hours to travel by bus from Woodville to Brookhaven, a distance of just 70 miles. A person travelling this route would have a four hour layover in Vicksburg and then, due to a late arrival in Jackson, spend 16 hours until the only southbound bus between Jackson and Brookhaven arrives.

Table 3. Woodville to Brookhaven Schedule

STOP	ARRIVES	DEPARTS	LAYOVER	CARRIER	MEALS/REST STOP
(START) Woodville, MS		02:15 PM		Delta	
Natchez, MS	02:45 PM	02:50 PM	:05	Delta	
Port Gibson, MS	03:40 PM	03:40 PM		Delta	
Vicksburg, MS	04:35 PM	(TRANSFER)		Delta	Yes
(TRANSFER) Vicksburg, MS		08:40 PM		Greyhound	
Jackson, MS	09:35 PM	(TRANSFER)		Greyhound	Yes
(TRANSFER) Jackson, MS		01:20 PM		Greyhound	Yes
(END) Brookhaven, MS	02:20 PM	(END)		Greyhound	

Source: Greyhound

Other challenges to intercity bus service in the state include a lack of scheduled service to in-state or regional airports and poor bus station location. For instance, despite attempts to relocate the station, the Brookhaven Greyhound station is a long walk without sidewalks to the where Five County Transit is headquartered in the AMTRAK station and the Hattiesburg station is not served by the Hub City Transit system. With the Meridian fixed route transit system ceasing operation in 2011, only Jackson, Vicksburg, Biloxi, and Gulfport have regularly scheduled (i.e. routes that operate on an hour or less frequency for at least eight hours) fixed route bus service connections to intercity bus stations. However, the Natchez and Cleveland Delta Bus Line stops are located at the local transit agency headquarters, so it would be easy to arrange a ride at this location. In addition, Choctaw Transit has recently located a satellite office in Meridian and has begun to restore services through a regional partnership with the City of Meridian. Several attempts were made to partner with Greyhound in Brookhaven to relocate the Greyhound stop to the multimodal facility there but the two parties were not in agreement.

C. Fares

Jackson, as the hub of Mississippi's intercity bus network, sports the lowest average fare to in-state locations, with the \$8.50¹ fare to Vicksburg being the state's cheapest. Tupelo has the highest average fares; most likely because it is on an express route heading out-of-state. A passenger must transfer out of state in Memphis, TN or Birmingham, AL in order to travel to any other Mississippi locations on this route.

Table 4 and Table 5 provide specific fare information for pay in advance and standard fares, respectively.

D. Stations and Passenger Amenities

Depending on the city's size, stations can either be part of an intermodal station (such as the Greyhound stations in Jackson, Meridian, and Biloxi); as a dedicated intercity bus station (such as the Greyhound stations in Durant and Vicksburg); or in a shared space with another business, generally a convenience store or gas station (such as the Greyhound stations in Brookhaven, Grenada, among others). However, some of the station locations at gas stations or convenience stores are not well advertised as a bus station and have little or no passenger amenities

¹ Based on 2-week advance purchase price as of February 4, 2015

Table 4. Advance Payment Fares

	BELZONI	BILOXI	BROOKHAVEN	CLARKSDALE	CLEVELAND	DURANT	GREENVILLE	GRENADA	GULFPORT	HATTIESBURG	INDIANOLA	JACKSON	MERIDIAN	NATCHEZ	PORT GIBSON	ROLLING FORK	TUPELO	VICKSBURG	WOODVILLE	YAZOO CITY
BELZONI		\$32.00	\$31.00	n/a	n/a	\$21.00	n/a	\$26.00	\$32.00	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$9.00	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$21.00	n/a	\$40.00	\$21.00	\$36.00	n/a
BILOXI	\$32.00		\$29.00	\$40.00	\$42.00	\$32.00	\$37.00	\$37.00	\$5.50	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$24.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$32.00	\$35.00	\$59.00	\$29.00	\$35.00	\$29.00
BROOKHAVEN	\$31.00	\$29.00		\$29.00	\$26.00	\$18.00	\$26.00	\$24.00	\$29.00	\$11.00	\$11.00	\$9.50	\$9.50	\$24.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$45.00	\$18.00	\$29.00	\$18.00
CLARKSDALE	n/a	\$40.00	\$29.00		n/a	\$29.00	n/a	\$24.00	\$40.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$24.00	\$32.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$26.00	\$24.00	n/a	n/a
CLEVELAND	n/a	\$42.00	\$26.00	\$29.00		\$29.00	\$26.00	\$29.00	\$24.00	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$21.00	\$32.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$29.00	\$18.00	n/a	n/a
DURANT	\$21.00	\$32.00	\$18.00	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$26.00	\$32.00	\$9.50	\$37.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$9.50	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$35.00	\$15.00	\$29.00	\$18.00
GREENVILLE	n/a	\$37.00	\$26.00	n/a	n/a	\$26.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$37.00	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$21.00	\$29.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$35.00	\$15.00	n/a	n/a
GRENADA	\$26.00	\$37.00	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$29.00	\$9.50	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$5.50	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$18.00	\$29.00	\$32.00	\$26.00	\$37.00	\$29.00	\$24.00	\$35.00	\$24.00
GULFPORT	\$32.00	\$37.00	\$29.00	\$40.00	\$37.00	\$29.00	\$37.00	\$29.00	\$24.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$18.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$56.00	\$29.00	\$40.00	\$26.00
HATTIESBURG	\$24.00	\$12.00	\$21.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$21.00	\$29.00	\$26.00	\$11.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$37.00	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$40.00	\$21.00	\$32.00	\$21.00
INDIANOLA	n/a	\$12.00	\$24.00	n/a	n/a	\$24.00	n/a	\$29.00	\$35.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$11.00	\$26.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$37.00	\$21.00	n/a	n/a
JACKSON	\$9.00	\$35.00	\$9.50	\$24.00	\$21.00	\$9.50	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$24.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$9.50	\$15.00	\$18.00	\$9.50	\$13.00	\$29.00	\$8.50	\$24.00	n/a
MERIDIAN	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$24.00	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$35.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$40.00	\$21.00	\$32.00	\$21.00
NATCHEZ	\$26.00	\$35.00	\$24.00	n/a	n/a	\$26.00	n/a	\$32.00	\$35.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$18.00	\$24.00	\$24.00	n/a	n/a	\$47.00	\$12.50	n/a	n/a
PORT GIBSON	\$21.00	\$32.00	\$21.00	n/a	n/a	\$21.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$32.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$9.50	\$24.00	\$24.00	n/a	n/a	\$50.00	\$21.00	n/a	n/a
ROLLING FORK	n/a	\$35.00	\$21.00	n/a	n/a	\$21.00	n/a	\$37.00	\$32.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$13.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	n/a	n/a	\$44.00	\$14.00	n/a	n/a
TUPELO	\$40.00	\$59.00	\$45.00	\$26.00	\$29.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$29.00	\$66.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$29.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$44.00	\$44.00	\$39.00	\$68.00	\$41.00
VICKSBURG	\$21.00	\$29.00	\$18.00	\$24.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$15.00	\$24.00	\$29.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$6.50	\$21.00	\$12.50	\$21.00	\$14.00	\$39.00	\$15.50	\$15.50	\$13.00
WOODVILLE	\$36.00	\$35.00	\$29.00	n/a	n/a	\$29.00	n/a	\$35.00	\$40.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$24.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	n/a	n/a	\$58.00	\$15.50		n/a
YAZOO CITY	n/a	\$29.00	\$18.00	n/a	n/a	\$18.00	n/a	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$9.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	n/a	n/a	\$41.00	\$13.00	n/a	

Based on 2-week advance purchase price as of February 4, 2015

Table 5. Standard Fare

	BELZONI	BILOXI	BROOKHAVEN	CLARKSDALE	CLEVELAND	DURANT	GREENVILLE	GRENADE	GULFPORT	HATTIESBURG	INDIANOLA	JACKSON	MERIDIAN	NATCHEZ	PORT GIBSON	ROLLING FORK	TUPELO	VICKSBURG	WOODVILLE	YAZOO CITY
BELZONI		\$57.00	\$39.00	n/a	n/a	\$39.00	n/a	\$45.00	\$54.50	\$44.00	n/a	\$15.00	\$44.00	\$47.00	\$39.00	n/a	\$72.00	\$41.50	\$66.00	n/a
BILOXI	\$57.00		\$53.00	\$79.50	\$91.50	\$57.00	\$80.50	\$67.00	\$11.00	\$24.00	\$76.00	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$72.50	\$66.00	\$72.50	\$109.00	\$53.00	\$63.00	\$53.00
BROOKHAVEN	\$39.00	\$53.00		\$53.00	\$47.00	\$36.00	\$53.00	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$39.00	\$44.00	\$19.00	\$44.00	\$44.00	\$39.00	\$39.00	\$81.00	\$36.00	\$63.00	\$36.00
CLARKSDALE	n/a	\$79.50	\$53.00		n/a	\$53.00	\$47.00	\$48.50	\$72.00	\$57.00	n/a	\$44.00	\$57.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$47.00	\$44.00	n/a	n/a
CLEVELAND	n/a	\$91.50	\$47.00	n/a		\$53.00	\$47.00	\$53.00	\$67.00	\$57.00	n/a	\$39.00	\$57.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$53.00	\$36.00	n/a	n/a
DURANT	\$39.00	\$57.00	\$36.00	\$53.00	\$53.00		\$47.00	\$19.00	\$53.00	\$39.00	\$44.00	\$19.00	\$44.00	\$47.00	\$39.00	\$39.00	\$69.50	\$36.00	\$63.00	\$36.00
GREENVILLE	n/a	\$80.50	\$47.00	n/a	n/a	\$47.00		\$57.00	\$67.00	\$53.00	n/a	\$39.00	\$53.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$63.00	\$31.00	n/a	n/a
GRENADE	\$45.00	\$67.00	\$44.00	\$48.50	\$53.00	\$19.00	\$57.00		\$63.00	\$47.00	\$53.00	\$36.00	\$53.00	\$57.00	\$47.00	\$74.00	\$58.50	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$44.00
GULFPORT	\$54.50	\$11.00	\$53.00	\$72.00	\$67.00	\$53.00	\$67.00	\$63.00		\$22.00	\$63.00	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$63.00	\$57.00	\$57.00	\$100.00	\$53.00	\$72.00	\$72.00
HATTIESBURG	\$44.00	\$24.00	\$39.00	\$57.00	\$57.00	\$39.00	\$47.00	\$47.00	\$22.00		\$47.00	\$27.00	\$27.00	\$67.00	\$44.00	\$47.00	\$72.00	\$39.00	\$57.00	\$39.00
INDIANOLA	n/a	\$76.00	\$44.00	n/a	n/a	\$44.00	n/a	\$53.00	\$63.00	\$47.00		\$18.00	\$27.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$67.00	\$39.00	n/a	n/a
JACKSON	\$15.00	\$44.00	\$19.00	\$44.00	\$39.00	\$19.00	\$57.00	\$36.00	\$44.00	\$27.00	\$18.00		\$29.00	\$36.00	\$19.00	\$27.00	\$53.00	\$17.00	\$44.00	\$16.00
MERIDIAN	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$44.00	\$57.00	\$57.00	\$44.00	\$53.00	\$53.00	\$63.00	\$27.00	\$47.00	\$29.00		\$53.00	\$44.00	\$47.00	\$72.00	\$39.00	\$57.00	\$39.00
NATCHEZ	\$47.00	\$72.50	\$44.00	n/a	n/a	\$47.00	n/a	\$57.00	\$63.00	\$67.00	n/a	\$36.00	\$53.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$85.00	\$24.50	n/a	n/a
PORT GIBSON	\$39.00	\$66.00	\$39.00	n/a	n/a	\$39.00	n/a	\$47.00	\$57.00	\$44.00	n/a	\$19.00	\$44.00		n/a	n/a	\$97.50	\$37.00	n/a	n/a
ROLLING FORK	n/a	\$72.50	\$39.00	n/a	n/a	\$39.00	n/a	\$74.00	\$57.00	\$47.00	n/a	\$27.00	\$47.00	n/a	n/a		\$86.50	\$25.50	n/a	n/a
TUPELO	\$72.00	\$109.00	\$81.00	\$47.00	\$53.00	\$69.50	\$63.00	\$58.50	\$100.00	\$72.00	\$67.00	\$53.00	\$72.00	\$85.00	\$97.50	\$86.50		\$72.50	\$113.00	\$80.50
VICKSBURG	\$41.50	\$53.00	\$36.00	\$44.00	\$36.00	\$36.00	\$31.00	\$44.00	\$63.00	\$39.00	\$39.00	\$17.00	\$39.00	\$24.50	\$37.00	\$25.50	\$72.50		\$37.00	\$28.50
WOODVILLE	\$66.00	\$63.00	\$53.00	n/a	n/a	\$53.00	n/a	\$63.00	\$72.00	\$57.00	n/a	\$44.00	\$57.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$113.00	\$37.00		n/a
YAZOO CITY	n/a	\$53.00	\$36.00	n/a	n/a	\$36.00	n/a	\$44.00	\$47.00	\$39.00	n/a	\$16.00	\$39.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$60.50	\$28.50	n/a	

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Literature Review

As part of the needs assessment, a two-part literature review was conducted. First, the current Coordinated Public-Transit Human Services Coordination Plans for agencies around the state were reviewed. The purpose reviewing the coordination plans was to identify any unmet needs related to intercity bus services listed in each plan. Then, available reference materials were studied that were related to intercity bus in order to incorporate “best practices” and “lessons learned” into study recommendations. A brief synopsis of each report is referenced here.

Central Mississippi Regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (December 3, 2013)

- No intercity bus needs identified

Delta Rides Plan for Regional Coordinated Transportation (June 26, 2014)

- “There should be [public transit] connections to existing intercity bus carriers such as Delta Bus Lines as well as plans to connect to rail road corridors such as AMTRAK.”

East Central Transit Action Group, Regional Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Assessment (September 2008)

- Although not specifically mentioned, the need for intercity bus services is implied based on the narrative provided within the report.

Southern Mississippi Transit, Coordinated Transportation Services Regional Planning (May 27, 2007)

- No intercity bus needs identified

KFH Group. “Effective Approaches to Meeting Rural Intercity Bus Transportation Needs,” TCRP Report 79 (2002)

This research report addresses funding for intercity bus projects, discusses barriers to implementation of service, and identifies strategies for initiating, preserving, and enhancing effective intercity bus transportation.

Part II: Strategies to Improve and Support Intercity Bus Services is structured around a series of questions that commonly arise when states, transportation planners, and others plan, program and sponsor intercity bus projects. Strategy 2 provides information on how best to measure intercity bus travel demand. Through use of a literature review of other state intercity bus studies, several measurements common to those studies were cited.

The reported route model used was developed in 1982 for a TCRP conference. Elements of the model include length of the route, fare level, frequency of service, and population served. No other route-level model demand forecasting model has been used since then. Drawbacks to model include its age (it was developed before deregulation), and the fact that the population served refers just to the central city (of bigger cities), and not the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The trip rate model was developed as an alternative to the route model. The ridership model can be developed by using boarding data in each town, combined with service frequency and population. This method is most useful for towns served by just one route, and that currently have service. The model can be extrapolated to predict demand by using revenue or ridership data for currently served stops, and using a regression model to compare those stops to comparable, unserved locations.

Hough, Jill, Jeremy Mattson, Del Peterson, David Ripplinger, William Thoms. “Assessing Demand for Rural Intercity Transportation in a Changing Environment,” Small Urban & Rural Transit Center Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (2010)

By means of an administered survey to 2,000 individuals (12% response rate) in North Dakota and Minneapolis, respondents were asked to state their preference for intercity travel. While 87% preferred the car, that number changed as gas climbed to a (theoretical) cost of \$6 a gallon, with lower-income travelers preferring bus, van, air, or train to travel. Older Americans also preferred more terrestrial means of travel as compared to younger Americans. It is worth noting, however, that bus is the least preferred method of travel in a market that also offered train, air, and van travel. In the model, the demographic factors of mode choice are age, gender, income, and transit experience; the trip characteristics are trip purpose and party size; and the mode characteristics are travel time, cost, service frequency, and need for a transfer.

The study concludes that there is indication that women, a high percentage of lower-income residents, and those over 60 may be a good market for intercity bus, where other means are not available— providing that gas prices stay high. One surprising finding is that van service (where a ride is shared with a maximum of 14 people) may be preferable to riding a bus when journeying between cities.

Barboza, Reyes, Frederic Fravel, Jason Quan, Jason Sartori. “Toolkit for Estimating Demand for Rural Intercity Bus Services,” TCRP REPORT 147 (2011)

This report provides a tool kit for intercity service providers to use when assessing whether it is feasible to serve a rural community. This tool kit can also be used as background to inform state transportation agencies when determining if subsidies are justified to attract carriers to these communities. The tool kit was developed by conducting stakeholder interviews; doing an inventory of existing services and facilities in rural areas; and evaluating existing forecasting tools and ridership trends. The report states that there were some issues in data collection include reluctance of carriers for turning over proprietary data to calibrate the models, and the changing nature of the industry, which has left many rural communities behind. The report includes a CD-ROM that can allow states to model potential routes (using Microsoft Excel and Word), using a regression and trip rate formula utilizing user generated census data.

Montana Department of Transportation. “Limited Feasibility Study for Intercity Bus Service Connecting AMTRAK Rail Service in Montana to Salt Lake City and Denver,” (2011)

This is a more limited study, looking at the feasibility of connecting two major urban, western cities on the California Zephyr (Salt Lake City and Denver) to Empire Builder service in Montana. The analysis includes a rider survey, bus specifications, and financial and ridership data from Rimrock, a statewide intercity service provider. Some service is already provided between the Montana towns of Shelby and Whitefish to the larger cities. The study concluded additional service connecting the two AMTRAK lines was not warranted.

Cherry, Christopher, Hongtai Yang. “Statewide Rural-Urban Bus Travel Demand and Network Evaluation: An Application in Tennessee,” *Journal of Public Transportation*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2012)

The paper examines the characteristics of intercity bus riders within Tennessee and proposes methods to identify service gaps and prioritize network expansion, particularly focusing on rural-urban connections. Data were collected through an on-board survey and compared with intercity auto trips. Compared to personal auto users, intercity bus riders are more likely to be of minority races, unemployed, unable to drive, and from low-income households. Five demand levels were determined based on the population distribution with these characteristics. The service areas of existing bus stops were identified and compared with the high demand areas. The result shows that an insufficient number of stops are located in high demand area. Still, approximately 80% of stops connect to meaningful destinations such as hospitals. The results imply that bus stations are well-connected to destinations but poorly connected to potential riders. Changes to the current network could better cover high-demand areas.

KFH Group. “Intercity Bus Needs Assessment and Policy Options,” Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan White Paper (2012)

This report reflects on a study of intercity bus demand as it relates to the State of Vermont. The report identifies existing services, unmet needs, and policy prescriptions to solve those issues. The analysis of intercity bus demand focuses on the following five demographic groups: older adults (65+), persons with disabilities, low-income residents, autoless households, and young adults (18-24 years old). Data from the 2000 U.S. Census was compiled for block groups, which were then ranked, according to the density of those target groups to identify potential pockets of unmet demand. The study does not include potential “choice” riders. Studies with a similar methodology were done in the past five years for Utah, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Montana.

Yang, Hongtai “Rural to Urban Intercity Transit User Characteristics Analysis, Demand Estimation and Network Design,” Phd diss., University of Tennessee (December 2013)

This dissertation focuses on intercity bus trips that are 100 miles or less. A survey was performed in Tennessee, focusing on riders from rural areas feeding into an urban core. The survey was conducted by handing out on board questionnaires to be collected by the driver. The survey found riders to be more likely to be minorities, unemployed, unable to drive (e.g. because of a disability), and a lower income, less cars per household, and higher household size than the general population. This data was fed into a map, with census tracts being rated high-medium high-medium-medium low-low to assess potential demand. Persons within ten miles of a station were considered served. Perceived high demand destinations were also mapped, including tracts including military bases, universities and colleges, hospitals, and airports. The report concludes that those using intercity buses for short trips have different characteristics than those using the cars for intercity travel.

B. Peer Review

Mississippi has a unique demographic profile with a majority of its population living in rural areas, which makes a peer review somewhat difficult. Using population and size as a guide, several states emerged that resembled Mississippi.

Table 6. Peer State Demographic Comparison

	POPULATION	AREA	POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS (%)	POPULATION IN SMALL CITIES (%)	RURAL POPULATION (%)	POPULATION DENSITY (PER SQ MI)	POVERTY RATE (%)	OVER 65 (%)	WITHOUT A CAR (%)	DISABLED (%)	5311 (F) FUNDING (2014)	5311 (F) FUNDING PER CAPITA (2014)
Alabama	4,779,736	52,420	48.7	10.4	41.0	95.4	19.0	14.9	6.5%	16.2	\$1,989,680	\$0.42
Arkansas	2,915,918	53,178	39.5	16.6	43.8	56.9	18.8	15.4	6.4%	16.8	\$1,517,595	\$0.52
Kansas	2,853,118	82,278	50.2	24.0	25.8	35.4	13.6	14.0	5.4%	12.2	\$1,406,600	\$0.49
Kentucky	4,339,367	40,407	41.0	17.4	41.6	111.3	19.0	14.4	7.9%	17.0	\$1,924,837	\$0.44
Louisiana	4,533,372	52,378	61.3	11.9	26.8	107.1	18.7	13.3	8.6%	15.1	\$1,535,531	\$0.34
Mississippi	2,967,297	48,431	27.6	21.7	50.7	63.7	22.4	13.9	7.0%	16.4	\$1,727,540	\$0.58
Nebraska	1,826,341	77,347	53.8	19.4	26.9	25.4	12.9	14.1	6.0%	10.7	\$981,492	\$0.54
New Mexico	2,059,179	121,590	53.8	23.7	22.6	17.2	20.4	14.7	5.9%	14.4	\$1,225,624	\$0.60
Oklahoma	3,751,351	69,898	45.8	20.5	33.8	56.1	16.9	14.3	5.8%	15.5	\$1,696,174	\$0.45
Oregon	3,831,074	98,378	62.5	18.6	26.8	40.9	15.8	15.5	8.1%	14.1	\$1,462,910	\$0.38
West Virginia	1,852,994	24,430	33.2	15.5	51.3	77.1	18.1	17.3	8.6%	19.4	\$1,006,772	\$0.54

Source: American Census 2010, American Community Survey 2013; American Bus Association

Mississippi is closest to Alabama and Arkansas in physical size; to Arkansas in population; West Virginia in the rural/urban divide in population; and population density with Arkansas. Among its peers, Mississippi has the highest poverty rate and contains the lowest percentage of older adults; it is the median in percentage of carless households and percentage of the population with a disability. Taken as a whole, Arkansas would seem to be the closest state, demographically, to Mississippi.

Mississippi does not compare well to peer states in terms of intercity bus access. Considering that Nebraska's sparse service can be attributed to a few people living in the western two-thirds of the state and West Virginia is a much smaller state (as well as one with many more geographic constraints) than Mississippi, the state ranks near the bottom in the number of routes, trips, communities served, and airport access. Because Mississippi does not have a major airport within its state borders, service to airports in Birmingham, New Orleans, and/or Memphis would be potential markets.

For those communities in the state that do have intercity bus service, Mississippi has done a better job than its peers to integrate those services into an intermodal transit center, with the newly minted Natchez Transit Center being a good example. Local transit connections are also common. However, with the exception of Biloxi, Gulfport, Vicksburg, and Jackson, more of those services are demand response services (that require advance reservations) than in peer states, making schedule reliability and ease of use an issue, especially with travelers who may be visiting a community for the first time.

Mississippi is also overly dependent on one carrier, Greyhound, for its intercity bus service. When Greyhound cut some of its service in Mississippi in 2006, there were no regional competitors to pick up those routes, as was the situation in Nebraska. Other peer states have more in-state competition for passengers. Compared to its peers, Mississippi could do a better job of leveraging its 5311(f) funding; Despite having the highest federal intercity bus funding per capita, it has much less service than other states, especially Oregon, which receives 20 cents less per capita.

Table 7. Peer State Intercity Service Comparison

	ROUTES	TRIPS	INTERMODAL STATIONS	COMMUNITIES SERVED	WITH LOCAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS	AIRPORT ROUTES	CARRIERS	5311 (F) FUNDING	5311 (F) FUNDING PER CAPITA
Alabama	13	87	1	23	12	2	Greyhound, Colonial Trailways, Groome, Akai, Megabus	\$1,989,680	\$0.42
Arkansas	15	55	1	23	9	0	Greyhound, Jefferson Lines, Megabus	\$1,517,595	\$0.52
Kentucky	7	50	2	17	8	0	Greyhound, Hoosier Ride, Megabus, Lakefront	\$1,924,837	\$0.44
Mississippi	8	31	5	22	15	0	Greyhound, Colonial Trailways, Delta Lines	\$1,727,540	\$0.58
Nebraska	7	18	0	16	9	2	Burlington Trailways, Jefferson Lines, Arrow/Black Hills Stage, Megabus, Navigator	\$981,492	\$0.54
Oregon	18	94	8	72	51	3	Costal Breeze, Caravan, Eugene-Bend, Greyhound, HUT Airport Shuttle, Valley Retriever, Bolt Bus, Fronteras Del Norte	\$1,462,910	\$0.38
West Virginia	8	26	0	13	9	1	Barons, Greyhound, Grey Line, Megabus	\$1,006,772	\$0.54

C. Regional Coordination Transportation Groups

There are six Regional Coordination Transportation Groups in the State of Mississippi: Delta Rides, Trans-Con, Southwest Mississippi Accessible Regional Transportation (SMART), Southern Mississippi Transit (SMT), EZTAG, and Ride the Smile. Figure 11 illustrates the service areas of each of the groups. Each of the regional coordination groups were contacted, both by the consultant and by MDOT, in an attempt to arrange a discussion during a regularly scheduled meeting. All of the agencies responded to our request. A meeting was held with the groups to request information from their service providers, including their knowledge of intercity bus serving their communities and the need for new or expanded services.

The following recaps the understanding from each of these meetings:

1. Delta Rides

Members of Delta Rides have met with businesses, such as the Nissan plant in Madison County, but have not been able to get a route established. There are casinos in north Mississippi that people could commute to via intercity bus (ICB) services but it's difficult to set up a route due to the nature of shift work. (Note: BCCA and DARTS provide flex routes to those casinos). There are also a number of people who could go to work at the Toyota plant if intercity bus services were available. The biggest barrier to establishing these services is matching funds.

2. EZTAG

There is a Greyhound Station and AMTRAK Station located at Union Station in Meridian. Choctaw Transit (demand response) relocated their service headquarters to Union Station in May, 2015.

The transit group members have received requests in the past to serve areas outside the EZTAG region for both employment and medical purposes. There is an interest in serving the Birmingham, AL area and the Houma, LA area. Along the Louisiana coast there are off shore rigs which employees need transportation to. Additionally, there is a demand for transportation to cancer treatments at the Birmingham, AL medical center. EZTAG has had to get permission from MDOT to serve outside the EZTAG area. There is a definite need for intercity bus to provide service to these areas from the EZTAG area.

3. Southern Mississippi Transit (SMT)

The members of the SMT transportation group stated they are aware that Greyhound serves the cities of Gulfport and Biloxi but that they get limited requests from their riders to serve either station. Greyhound service used to also serve the Laurel, MS area but no longer does.

It was felt that it would be beneficial to expand intercity bus services in their communities in order to serve employment needs, provide connections to cities with larger medical centers, and bring tourist and additional revenue into their communities. Additionally, it could be used to fill in the gaps for the longer trips that some of these service providers are making, including trips between the cities of Laurel and Hattiesburg.

4. Ride the Smile

The members of the transportation group were aware of the Greyhound service to Tupelo, but they do not get requests to serve this station. They did not feel their customers necessarily needed access to Intercity Bus.

5. TRANS-CON

Greyhound is available for some in the service area; there are no intercity bus services in the southcentral region of the service area. In Warren County, especially Vicksburg, NROUTE could possibly connect to ICB services if the ICB provider would cooperate. MCCA serves the Jackson County Intermodal Center (Union Station), which is also served by Greyhound. There are times when agencies have received requests to make those connections.

6. Southwest Mississippi Accessible Regional Transportation (SMART)

Natchez Transit, which is within the SMART service area, has integrated Delta Rides into their new transit facility. Other than the Natchez Transit facility, ICB facilities in the area are poorly marked and there is no way to distribute transit literature there. Desire to connect to ICB services vary. Few riders in the eastern part of the service area desire to connect to an ICB service, while riders between I-55 and the Mississippi River are much more likely to be aware of, and request rides to, ICB services. However, especially in areas with both AMTRAK and ICB service, there is more demand to make connections with AMTRAK.

D. Identification of Gaps in Service

In order to identify possible gaps in service, demographic data provided in Chapter II was used to identify which areas of the state are isolated from intercity bus service that would potentially have demand for that service.

The demographic groups identified in Chapter II-A (higher levels of poverty, older adults, persons with disabilities, college students, and households with no access to a vehicle) were used to identify possible gaps in service. Dividing these groups up into quantiles, a ranking system was developed, with “1” being tracts with the lowest concentration of a given demographic group (bottom 25% in the state), and “4” being the highest (top 25%). When each group was analyzed, the resulting rankings were summed, and those with a total ranking of over 20 were considered tracts with the highest potential intercity bus demand (refer to Table A-1 in Appendix A for a complete listing of high ranking tracts). While most of these tracts are within 15 miles of a bus station, a few communities stand out as being isolated from the state’s intercity bus service. (Note: for the purposes of this study, a long distance journey is one that is taken irregularly and is greater than 50 miles).

Regional Coordination Transportation Groups

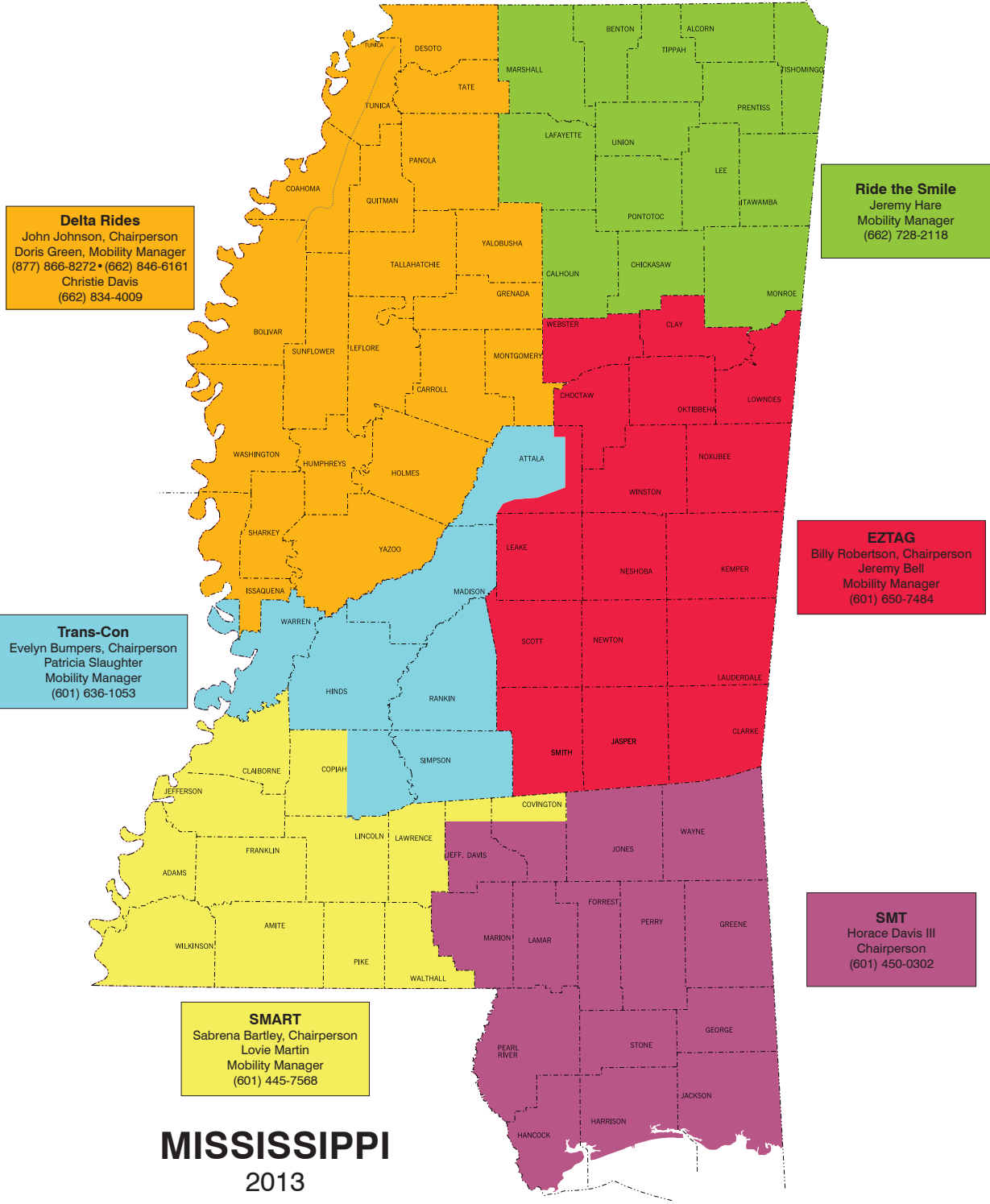


Figure 11. Mississippi's Regional Coordination Transportation Groups

1. The Golden Triangle Region: Starkville, Columbus, and West Point

Areas of Starkville (home to Mississippi State University) west of the University and downtown, have high concentrations of poverty (565 persons in poverty per square mile), college age students (14 per square mile), and those without a vehicle available (143 per square mile). These numbers are consistent with a high number of college students. On the west side of West Point, there are less college-age residents, but many residents without access to a car (126 per square mile), and living in poverty (326 per square mile). Columbus, the largest of the three cities, has a large concentration of persons with disabilities (302 per square mile) and a fair amount of people living in poverty (429 per square mile). Like Starkville, this is a college town, home to the University of Mississippi for Women. The area noted is located on the northeast side of town and consists of small single family houses with few sidewalks or gutters and a majority of industrial concerns.

This developing area is home base to the new Toyota Plant at Blue Springs; the northeastern quadrant continues a progressive path of economic development that has been ongoing since the early twentieth century. Columbus, MS, is home to the Columbus Air Force Base, Oxford is home to the University of Mississippi, and as previously mentioned, Starkville is home to Mississippi State University. The only inter-city bus service is from Memphis, TN to Tupelo, MS, to Birmingham, AL, but not to the rest of Mississippi.

2. Canton

The city has large amounts of younger people and older people (14 and 11 per square mile, respectively), as well as a sizeable concentration of persons with disabilities (216 per square mile). The center of town in the area between the Canadian National tracks and US 51, has the highest concentration of these demographic groups.

3. Pascagoula

While Tornado, an intercity bus carrier not meeting FTA's intercity bus guidelines, has a stop in this community, the company does not have an interline agreement with Greyhound, which makes through ticketing much more difficult. In addition, the only time the bus stops in Pascagoula is during the early morning hours. Hurricane Katrina has put great strains on the region, with many residents slipping into poverty (and losing access to vehicles) in the aftermath of the storm. The high numbers of retirees and itinerant workers would seem to benefit from Greyhound to provide additional and more convenient service.

4. The Southeast Quadrant of the State

Important destinations within this area remain unserved by ICB services, including like Laurel, Lucedale, Waynesboro, Wiggins, Bay Saint Louis, Poplarville, Picayune, Lumberton, and the Stennis Space Center.

E. General Unmet Needs

- Gaps in service identified through demographic analysis: Golden Triangle region, Canton, and Pascagoula
- Medical transportation to cancer treatment center in Birmingham, AL
- Roundtrip intercity bus service between Batesville and Oxford
- Coordination between local tourism bureaus and intercity carriers to make tourists aware of available transit options
- ISTEA provided transportation enhancement funds to renovate historic transportation facilities. Many stations in Mississippi were renovated to become intermodal transportation hubs. There is a considerable amount of civic pride about these renovated facilities, and towns and cities would like the inter-state bus companies to use them. For the most part they do not.
- The bus companies tend to establish pick-up points on the outskirts of town, in service stations and convenience stores, rather than more centrally located points. This results in a disconnect with other modes of transportation. It also adds to a perception that bus travel only caters to lower income groups.
- An intercity route from Jackson up the SR 25/45 corridor to Tupelo and Corinth
- An east/west route along the US Highway 6/78/278 corridor from Tupelo to Clarksdale
- A north/south route along the SR 45 corridor from Pascagoula to Meridian to Tupelo and Corinth
- An east/west route along the US 98 corridor from Natchez to Hattiesburg
- A route along Interstate 59 from Picayune and the Stennis Space Center to Meridian
- Better coordination among intercity and rural transit providers

V. FUNDING

A. 5311(f) Program

The “Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas” is a federal program issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the U.S. Department of Transportation. Known as Section 5311, it is a rural program that is formula based and provides funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas, and urban areas with a population of less than 50,000. Under 49 USC §5311(f), the state is required to spend fifteen percent (15%) of its annual Section 5311 apportionment “to carry out a program to develop and support ‘Intercity Bus’ transportation²”. Eligible activities under the 5311(f) program include:

- Planning and marketing for Intercity Bus transportation;
- Capital grants for Intercity Bus facilities;
- Joint-use facilities;
- Operating grants through purchase-of-service agreements, user-side subsidies, and demonstration projects; and
- Coordinating rural connections between small public transportation operations and Intercity Bus Carriers

The Federal share for Intercity Bus projects under 5311(f) is the same as for the Section 5311 program as a whole: 50 percent (50%) of the net cost for operations and 80 percent (80%) of the net cost for capital projects and project administration. State administration, planning, and technical assistance activities in support of Intercity Bus transportation are eligible at 100 percent Federal share if applied against the cap on state administration expenses. The amount of Section 5311 funds used for planning for Intercity Bus transportation is not limited by the 15 percent (15%) cap on state administration. The Federal share of any planning assistance for Intercity Bus not included in the 15 percent (15%) allowed for state administration is limited to 80 percent (80%) of the planning costs.

B. In-Kind Match

Intercity Bus funding supports the connection between non-urbanized areas and the larger regional or national system of Intercity Bus service by subsidizing feeder or new intercity routes. Funding also supports the infrastructure of the Intercity Bus network through technical, planning and marketing assistance and capital investment in facilities.

² Note that each State should determine, after consultation with affected intercity bus service providers, whether their intercity bus service needs of the State are being met or not being met. If they feel that their needs are being met, then the Governor of the State has to certify to the Secretary of Transportation that that is the case and then the funding for 5311(f) can be shifted to state transit operating assistance.

With the codification of the Intercity Pilot Match Program in MAP-21³, states are allowed to use the capital costs of the unsubsidized, privately operated mainline Intercity Bus routes as the in-kind local match for the operating costs of connecting rural intercity bus feeder service. Note that the unsubsidized private operator costs can be used as the local match only “if the private operator agrees in writing to the use of the costs of the private operator for the unsubsidized segment of Intercity Bus service as an in-kind match.” To be eligible under 5311(f), the net project costs contributed by the private operator as in-kind match must connect the rural community to further points⁴. This type of funding mechanism is authorized under Section 5311(g)(3)(d), which allows some or all of the remainder of the 50 percent (50%) of the cost to the state to be funded this way. Rural transit providers interested in using the feeder service as an in-kind match would need to apply to the Intercity Bus provider and get approved. A sample application is included in Appendix A.

The feeder service is not required to have the same characteristics as the intercity service with which it connects. Therefore, there is also an opportunity for the State to also expand access to Intercity mainline routes through the Section 5311(f) program, which provides operating money to extend the hours of existing rural, general public demand response service to better coordinate with existing Intercity Bus service in a transit agency’s service area.

Private mass transportation companies should be involved to the maximum extent feasible in this program. States may either pass through funds to local public bodies and to private nonprofit organizations as subrecipients, who would then contract with private for-profit operators of transportation service in the form of third party contracts. States can also directly pass through funds directly to private Intercity Bus providers in a subrecipient relationship. In either case, the state should use a merit based selection process to ensure that the private operator is qualified, will provide eligible service, can comply with Federal and state requirements, and is the best, or only, provider available to offer service at a fair and reasonable cost.

C. State Specifics

The State of Mississippi has determined that it’s appropriate to utilize at least 15% of its 5311 funding for Intercity Bus services as there is a need to support these services. In 2014, the State of Mississippi received \$14,469,416, in 5311 and Appalachian funds⁵; of this amount 15% or \$2,096,377 was allocated to intercity bus (5311(f)). (Although the 5311 funding allocation varies each year, it can be assumed that a similar allocation for Intercity Bus will be made each year.)

3 MAP-21= Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act

4 The guidance provided in this paragraph is from the FTA Circular C 9040.1G

5 40 U.S. Code § 14102 (a)(1)(e) states that the following Mississippi Counties are considered in the Appalachian Region: Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Itawamba, Kemper, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, and Yalobusha. These counties are eligible for the funds.

VI. FEEDER SERVICES

A. Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, there is a possibility that existing rural public transportation services, whether they are demand response flex, or fixed route, can be put into service as a feeder route, thereby acquiring the ability to fund service via the in-kind local match. In order for this to be feasible, existing routes need to have the following characteristics:

- Must connect to an existing Intercity Bus scheduled service in a reasonable time frame (within two hours)
- Must have limited stops, i.e. one per community
- Must have the ability to through-route ticketed passengers onto other Intercity Bus services
- Must have a vehicle that has the ability to carry passengers' luggage
- Must be a rural transit provider receiving 5311 funding

The existing routes cannot:

- Be a commuter route
- Make multiple local stops within a community
- Operate on limited days
- Run service without a fixed schedule
- Run service entirely within an urbanized⁶ area

⁶ An urbanized area (UZA) is an area encompassing a population of not less than fifty thousand people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an "urbanized area" by the Secretary of Commerce.

B. Eligibility

To be eligible for funding under 5311(f), a rural feeder service must make a meaningful connection with an Intercity Bus service. A meaningful connection is defined by the FTA as having a common transfer location where customers have a safe, comfortable place to wait for a transfer and connection times of less than two hours. Because 5311 funding is for rural areas only, public transportation providers that are in areas that are considered to be UZAs or “urbanized” would not be eligible for 5311(f) funding.

C. Challenges

There are some challenges in using existing rural transit providers in the State to operate feeder routes to Intercity Bus. First, there may be jurisdictional issues to consider. Mississippi’s rural transit providers often operate in limited service areas that do not encompass an Intercity Bus stop. Many of the operators that do have experience operating fixed route systems are limited by their governing bodies to operate within the boundaries of their taxing districts—generally, the city limits. In addition, many rural transit providers do not have the equipment required to operate an Intercity Bus connector, primarily using vans without luggage capacity to transport their passengers. They may also lack a cooperating business that would allow passengers to wait for the bus in a secure location, protected by the elements (one of the things Greyhound, for instance, looks for an applicant to assure). In addition, few systems operate fixed route service or demand response services on a fixed schedule and would need expertise to schedule and maintain the service. In some cases, service may need to be modified to ensure that a vehicle is guaranteed to be available to meet Intercity Bus arrivals and departures. For demand response scheduled trips, this would mean that a fixed timepoint would need to be added at a bus station, guaranteeing connectivity (generally, within two hours of a departure/arrival).

VII. PROPOSED FEEDER ROUTE CONCEPTS

A. Background

For purposes of this report, feeder routes designed to serve Intercity Bus stations are proposed in this Chapter. These feeder services are conceptually presented to meet the 531 I(f) guideline for funding and in-kind match as stated in Chapter II. The proposed service improvements are designed to fill in the gaps in the Intercity Bus network in Mississippi. Particular focus has been made on the eastern edge of the state, which has the least Intercity Bus connectivity in the state. The Golden Triangle area (Starkville, West Point, Columbus) and Oxford have the demographic profile to support Intercity Bus service, and both areas recently lost service. The large college age population in these areas especially is a growth market for this type of service. This may also aid in the recruitment and retention of disadvantaged students in Mississippi, as they would have better access to family support networks than they do currently.

Below shows new feeder service ideas that could be developed further and implemented.

B. Gulfport to Meridian Feeder

Greyhound currently serves the cities of Gulfport and Meridian. A proposed feeder service operating between these two cities would provide a connection between the Intercity Bus stations and the towns of Laurel, Hattiesburg, Poplarville and Picayune. Poplarville and Picayune are both towns where there is a demand for Intercity Bus. The proposed feeder, which would be eligible for 531 I(f) funding as it operates in a rural area, would provide connections to the Greyhound Station in both Meridian and Gulfport.

A proposed schedule is shown to the right, which provides a wait time of less than two hours between the feeder service and the Greyhound service, a requirement for 531 I(f) funding. The operating cost information that follows provides an estimate for an in-kind match.

- Cost: 1 Bus – 10.5 hours⁷ @ \$43.24 per hour (\$165,717 a year)

⁷ Assumes cutaway vehicles appropriate for airport transit or coaches would be operated; cost per vehicle hour of Community Development Inc demand response service.

MERIDIAN – GULFPORT PROPOSED FEEDER (SB)

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER			0000
	Meridian, MS		LV	08:00
	Laurel, MS			08:30
	Hattiesburg, MS			09:15
	Poplarville, MS			10:20
	Picayune, MS			10:50
	Gulfport, MS		AR	11:50

GULFPORT – MERIDIAN PROPOSED FEEDER (NB)

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER			0000
	Gulfport, MS		LV	14:25
	Picayune, MS			15:25
	Poplarville, MS			15:55
	Hattiesburg, MS			16:50
	Laurel, MS			17:35
	Meridian, MS		AR	18:35

Potential Provider(s): DJ Transit, Community Development, Hub City Transit

The in-kind match calculation for this route is as follows:

- Greyhound schedule #1516 arrives at Meridian at 6:45 AM
- Connects to southbound feeder leaving Meridian at 8:00 AM
- Northbound feeder arrives at Meridian at 6:35 PM
- Connects to Greyhound schedule #1567 arriving at Meridian at 7:35 PM

The cost to operate the connecting miles shown below determines the amount of the available in-kind match:

- Meridian to Vicksburg (enroute to Dallas, TX) (connecting unsubsidized service) is 133 miles; mileage between Meridian and Tuscaloosa (en route to Atlanta) is 95 miles. Total mileage is 228.
- Current guidelines allow the use of 50% of the cost of the unsubsidized service (Greyhound)
- If the cost of each mile is approximately \$4.00 per mile, the value of the connecting miles is $(\$4.00 \times 0.5 \times 133 \times 365) + (\$4.00 \times 0.5 \times 95 \times 365) = \$166,440$
- In-kind match amount available: \$166,440, sufficient to pay for the new connecting service.

Any application for funds must include documentation that the connecting operator authorizes the applicant to utilize the capital value of its route for the purpose of providing in-kind match on the route specified; that the data used in the application to calculate the capital value of the connecting route is true and accurate; and that the Mississippi route mileage of the connecting route will not be utilized in any other State for in-kind match under 5311(f) for the duration of the contract period. The application will be looked on more favorably by the connecting carrier if interline ticketing is available. A passenger on the subsidized service needs be able to travel from a rural community to anywhere within the Intercity Bus network on a single ticket, preferably available at stations along the route or through the operator of the feeder.

C. Tupelo-Golden Triangle-Meridian Feeder

This service would provide timed connections to the Greyhound Intercity Bus serving the City of Tupelo and the City of Meridian, as well as providing feeder service to the Golden Triangle, a region showing demand for Intercity Bus. The proposed feeder would be eligible for 531 I(f) funding as it operates in a rural area. A conceptual schedule is shown below.

MERIDIAN - TUPELO PROPOSED FEEDER (NB)

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER			0000
	Meridian, MS		LV	07:30
	Macon, MS			08:35
	Columbus, MS			09:15
	Starkville, MS			09:55
	West Point, MS			10:35
	Okaloma, MS			11:10
	Tupelo, MS		AR	11:35

An example of timed connections at Tupelo would be as follows:

- Morning northbound feeder arrives at Tupelo, MS at 11:35 AM and connects to Greyhound schedule #3861 leaving Tupelo at 12:25 PM going to Memphis, TN
- Greyhound schedule #3861 arrives at Tupelo at 12:15 PM from Birmingham, AL and connects to the afternoon southbound feeder

TUPELO - MERIDIAN PROPOSED FEEDER (SB)

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER			0000
	Tupelo, MS		LV	14:00
	Okaloma, MS			14:25
	West Point, MS			15:05
	Starkville, MS			15:40
	Columbus, MS			16:15
	Macon, MS			17:00
	Meridian, MS		AR	18:00

An example of timed connections at Meridian would be as follows:

- Greyhound schedule #1516 arrives at Meridian at 6:45 AM from Vicksburg, MS and connects to the morning northbound feeder
- Afternoon southbound feeder arrives at Meridian at 6:00 PM; connects to Greyhound schedule #1567 leaving Meridian at 6:35 PM (going to Vicksburg)

It will cost approximately \$165,000 to operate the service annually. The cost is based on the following assumptions:

- Cost: 1 Bus – 10.5 hours @ \$43.24 per hour⁸ (\$165,717 a year)

The estimated mileage needed for the in-kind local match would be approximately 228 miles. Refer back to the formula provided in the Meridian-Gulfport Feeder example in Section B to see how this number is derived.

Potential Provider(s): Choctaw Transit and Northeast Mississippi Community Services.

⁸ Assumes cutaway vehicles appropriate for airport transit or coaches would be operated; cost per vehicle hour of Community Development Inc demand response service.

D. Grenada-Oxford-Tupelo Feeder

This service would provide timed connections to the Greyhound Intercity Bus serving the City of Tupelo and the City of Grenada, as well as providing feeder service to the area of the City of Oxford, a city showing a need for Intercity Bus access. The proposed feeder would be eligible for 5311(f) funding as it operates in a rural area. A conceptual schedule is shown below.

GRENADA – OXFORD – TUPELO PROPOSED FEEDER (EB)

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER		0000		0001	
	Grenada, MS	LV		10:30		18:40
	Oxford, MS			11:40		19:50
	Pontotoc, MS			12:25		20:35
	Tupelo, MS	AR		13:10		21:20

An example of timed connections at Tupelo would be as follows:

- Greyhound schedule #3866 arrives at Tupelo from Memphis at 11:40 PM
- Connects to westbound feeder leaving at 1:30 PM
- Greyhound schedule #3868 arrives at Tupelo from Memphis, TN at 10:30 PM and leaves for Birmingham, AL at 10:45 PM
- Connects to eastbound feeder arriving at Tupelo at 9:20 PM and connects to westbound feeder leaving at 11:00 PM

**TUPELO – OXFORD – GRENADA
PROPOSED FEEDER (WB)**

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER			0000	0001	0002
	Tupelo, MS		LV		13:30	23:00
	Pontotoc, MS				14:15	23:45
	Oxford, MS			07:50	14:50	24:20
	Grenada, MS		AR	09:00	16:00	

An example of timed connections at Grenada would be as follows:

- Greyhound schedule #1209 arrives at Grenada at 9:55 AM from Jackson, MS and leaves for Memphis, TN at the same time
- Connects to westbound feeder arriving at Grenada at 9:00 AM and connects to eastbound feeder leaving at 10:30 AM
- Greyhound schedule #1728 arrives at Grenada from Jackson at 5:55 PM and leaves for Memphis at the same time
- Connects to westbound feeder arriving at Grenada at 6:00 PM and connects to eastbound feeder leaving at 8:40 PM

It will cost approximately \$326,000 to operate the service annually. This is based on the following assumptions:

- Cost: 1 Bus – 16.3 vehicle hours @ \$54.76 per vehicle hour⁹ (\$325,794 a year)

The estimated mileage needed for the in-kind local match would be approximately 447 miles. Refer back to the formula provided in the Meridian-Gulfport Feeder example in Section B to see how this number is derived.

Potential Provider(s): Oxford University Transit (OUT), DARTS, or MVSU Mass Transit.

⁹ Assumes cutaway vehicles appropriate for airport transit or coach vehicles would be used; cost per hour of DARTS demand response service.

E. Existing Services to Be Modified

Currently, there are certain transit agencies that are already providing services that could be modified in order to provide connections to Intercity Bus. For those agencies in an urbanized area, the additional operating cost associated with the feeder service would not be covered by 5311(f). However, it is important that these services allow for better connections to existing and future Intercity Bus services. Additionally, there are rural agencies where it would be necessary to modify service to meet to FTAs criterion for an Intercity Bus connector in order to receive funding. Recommendations on how to revise these services so that they become true feeder services are described below.

1. Bay St. Louis to Gulfport Feeder

The closest Intercity Bus stops to Bay St. Louis are Gulfport, MS (to the east) which is 21 miles away, and Slidell, LA (to the west) is 30 miles away. Due to the close proximity of these communities, it is unlikely that an Intercity Bus company would establish another stop in Bay St. Louis. Therefore, the best way to connect this community with the Intercity Bus network is to use existing 5310 funding to extend the hours of the current (paratransit and elderly only) Handy Ride Transportation Service provided by the Coast Transit Authority (CTA) from its Tuesday and Thursday service from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM to every day with operations from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This service expansion would allow CTA to meet six daily Greyhound buses up from the two buses it could meet currently. So that the service is open to the general public, the CTA should also apply for additional 5307 funding, which would allow the general public to also use this transportation to access Intercity Buses. Since this service area is in an urbanized area, it is not eligible for 5311 funding. However, Bay St. Louis is an area that shows the need for connecting to Intercity Bus, and subsequently any feasible connections between Bay St. Louis and the Intercity Bus should be explored.

2. Pascalouga to Biloxi Feeder

Tornado, a carrier that caters to the Hispanic population, is currently the only Intercity Bus service serving Pascagoula. However the hours (buses stop between 1:30 and 2:00 AM) and the station location at the Pilot Gas Station in Moss Point, seven miles from the center of Pascagoula, are not convenient for residents of that city. In addition, the FTA does not consider Tornado an Intercity Bus service under their guidelines. The closest Greyhound and Trailways bus stops to this community are Biloxi, MS (to the west) which is 21 miles away, and Mobile, AL (to the east) which is 40 miles away. Due to the close proximity of these communities, it is unlikely that another Intercity Bus company would establish a stop here.

In addition, the city is in an urbanized area not eligible for 5311(f) funding. The best way to connect this community with the Intercity Bus network is to use existing Section 5310 funding to extend the hours of the paratransit service provided by the CTA (Coast Transit Authority) from its current weekday service to service on all days. The CTA would also need to apply for 5307 funding, which would allow the general public to also use this transportation to access Intercity Buses.

3. Choctaw to Meridian Feeder

Meridian lost its local fixed route transit system in 2011. Choctaw Transit has recently agreed to operate limited service within Meridian (three days a week) and already provides a limited number of daily trips to and from Meridian to the tribal areas to the northeast. Adding a few additional trips to connect with the Greyhound Station would allow the service to be funded under the Section 5311(g)(3)(d) provision of the 5311(f) program. Stops within the tribal areas to the northeast would need to be limited and could include the Pearl River Resort and Casino (Pearl River) and the towns of Bouge Chitto, and Philadelphia. The mileage to be used as an in-kind local match could be the Greyhound mileage between the cities of Vicksburg and Tuscaloosa, as Meridian is located in between the two cities.

5. Canton to Jackson Feeder

The Madison County Citizen Services Agency runs daily weekday commuter routes to and from the City of Jackson. As the 5311(f) funding explicitly bars funding from going to commuter services, the agency could use the Section 5311(g)(3)(d) provision of 5311(f) funding to operate this service during off-peak times, or to add weekend service to connect with Greyhound, Delta Lines, and Colonial Trailways lines serving Jackson. The mileage to be used as an in-kind local match is to be determined, depending on which trips the added service would connect to in Jackson.

4. Greenwood to Greenville Feeder

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) transit currently offers scheduled service (four daily round trips) between the towns of Greenwood and Itta Bena and the towns of Itta Bena and Greenville, with intermediate stops in Moorhead, Indianola, and Leland (three round trips). These trips are not currently designed to meet Intercity Buses at Greenville or Indianola operated by Delta Bus Lines. Adding additional through trips to these routes, with solitary stops at central locations in Greenwood (AMTRAK station), Itta Bena (MVSU Campus), Moorehead (Mississippi Delta Community College), Indianola (Delta Bus Lines stop), Leland (City Hall), and Greenville (Delta Bus Lines stop), would allow this scheduled service to better connect to the Intercity Bus network via Delta Bus Lines. A portion of the connecting Delta Bus Line service could be in-kind local match.



Delta Bus Lines Station in Greenville

Photo Source: Dave Ingles

VIII. FACILITIES

Some communities could use more centrally located facilities dedicated to Intercity Bus service. Having a dedicated facility helps create better awareness of the service and allows better intermodal connections between Intercity Bus and local transit. Especially important is that an intermodal, or dedicated, bus station enables local fixed route and demand response transit to have a place to distribute their literature, giving passengers awareness that a “last mile” connection is available. In addition, many carless households are located near the centers of cities and towns, which would allow passengers to reach an Intercity Bus stop without using a vehicle. An estimated operating cost to relocate the Intercity Bus stop is presented as background information.

A. Hattiesburg

Despite having one of the few fixed route transit systems in Mississippi, and having Intercity connections with AMTRAK, Colonial Trailways stops seven miles away at a gas station in Rawls Springs. Serving the AMTRAK station would cost an extra 15 minutes of time. The difference in operating time would cost about \$4,200 per year (i.e. 15 minutes extra @ \$23.40 per hour¹⁰ \$4,270 a year). This operating cost is not eligible for 5311(f) funding as Hattiesburg is in an urbanized area.

¹⁰ Motorcoach Census 2011



Godbold Transportation Center in Brookhaven

Photo Source: Dave Ingles

B. Brookhaven

Five County Transit has an office at the AMTRAK station in Brookhaven, and they take many people in their service area to and from the AMTRAK station. However, they take few passengers to the Greyhound Intercity Bus stop, and expressed unfamiliarity with either the bus stop location or the schedule. The bus stop location is currently inside a grocery store (and does have outside signage, reflecting some sense of permanence). The store is located a few blocks away from the AMTRAK station. Moving the Greyhound station to the AMTRAK Station would make transferring between modes more seamless, and increase the visibility of Intercity Bus transit in the town. The estimated operating cost would be approximately \$1,400 per year (i.e. 10 minutes extra @ \$23.40 per hour¹¹ \$1,423 a year.) It is not known what the capital costs would be to relocate the stop. As the City of Brookhaven is a non-urbanized area, the operating and capital cost to Greyhound of relocating their station would be eligible for Section 5311(f)(1)(b) (capital costs of relocating the ticketing infrastructure) and Section 5311(g)(3) (d) funding.

¹¹ Motorcoach Census 2011

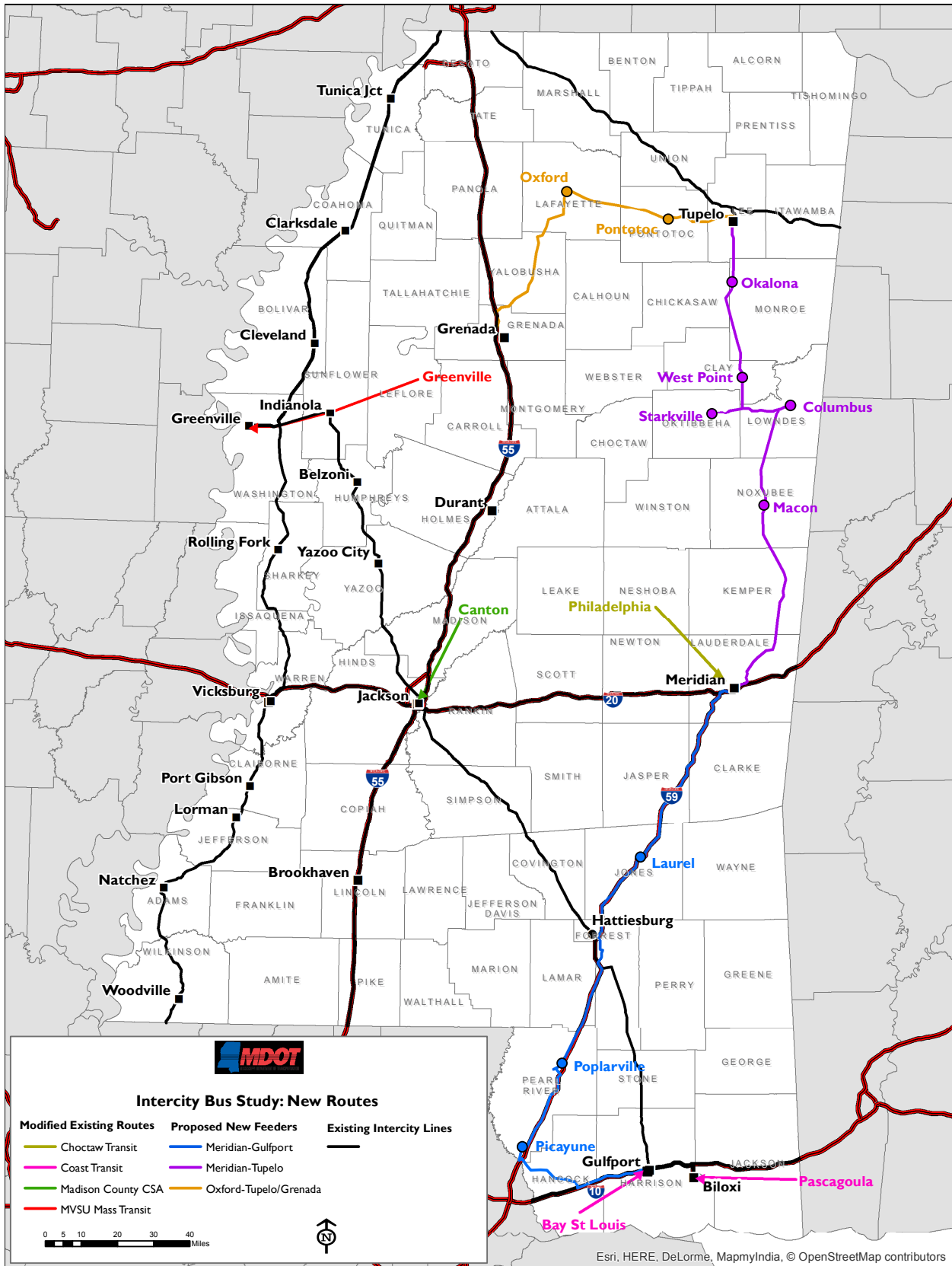


Figure 12. Proposed Intercity Bus Feeders

APPENDIX A

Table A-1. Mississippi Tract Rankings

Name	Disabled (Above 5 Years old) ¹⁷	Disabled Quartile	Households with No Vehicle ¹⁸	No Vehicle Quartile	Below Poverty Level (18-64)	Poverty Quartile	College Age (18-24)	College Age Quartile	Total Transit Needs Index
Census Tract 11, Washington	1080	4	496.85	4	1416.25	4	20.663	4	16
Census Tract 9, Hinds County,	996	4	163.35	4	995.95	4	17.469	4	16
Census Tract 2, Lauderdale County,	994	4	362.03	4	721.77	4	11.342	4	16
Census Tract 19, Hinds County,	993	4	176.30	4	1044.91	4	26.015	4	16
Census Tract 12, Washington	735	4	134.43	4	559.91	4	8.263	4	16
Census Tract 3.01, Hinds County,	701	4	222.67	4	1215.80	4	17.143	4	16
Census Tract 418, Jackson County,	701	4	71.27	4	286.71	4	9.666	4	16
Census Tract 10, Hinds County,	682	4	218.12	4	734.06	4	22.022	4	16
Census Tract 3, Lauderdale County,	678	4	79.61	4	644.34	4	13.683	4	16
Census Tract 16, Hinds County,	667	4	246.87	4	693.78	4	27.134	4	16
Census Tract 6, Hinds County,	667	4	154.91	4	789.67	4	8.547	4	16
Census Tract 703.25, DeSoto	666	4	53.47	4	517.88	4	9.472	4	16
Census Tract 25, Hinds County,	648	4	225.28	4	541.99	4	9.409	4	16
Census Tract 3, Forrest County,	637	4	70.24	4	685.31	4	16.154	4	16
Census Tract 11, Hinds County,	621	4	309.64	4	538.72	4	6.698	4	16
Census Tract 10, Washington	620	4	348.92	4	847.37	4	26.861	4	16
Census Tract 8, Lauderdale County,	605	4	196.11	4	462.64	4	26.654	4	16
Census Tract 22, Hinds County,	596	4	179.01	4	713.10	4	15.407	4	16
Census Tract 6, Washington	594	4	280.55	4	510.08	4	9.309	4	16

¹⁷ All numbers per square mile
¹⁸ ACS Community Survey 2013 5-Year estimates

Name	Disabled (Above 5 Years old) ¹⁷	Disabled Quartile	Households with No Vehicle ¹⁸	No Vehicle Quartile	Below Poverty Level (18-64)	Poverty Quartile	College Age (18-24)	College Age Quartile	Total Transit Needs Index
Census Tract 703.24, DeSoto County, Mississippi	591	4	94.62	4	455.59	4	10.981	4	16
Census Tract 9507, Coahoma County, Mississippi	587	4	260.03	4	662.24	4	4.281	4	16
Census Tract 37, Harrison County, Mississippi	574	4	125.22	4	477.56	4	9.221	4	16
Census Tract 422, Jackson County, Mississippi	567	4	120.43	4	617.27	4	9.158	4	16
Census Tract 114, Hinds County, Mississippi	535	4	398.50	4	658.50	4	26.243	4	16
Census Tract 417, Jackson County, Mississippi	519	4	70.07	4	197.39	4	6.909	4	16
Census Tract 115, Hinds County, Mississippi	518	4	175.03	4	760.87	4	86.791	4	16
Census Tract 19, Harrison County, Mississippi	513	4	83.26	4	588.54	4	17.793	4	16
Census Tract 704.11, DeSoto County, Mississippi	507	4	57.30	4	343.79	4	22.690	4	16
Census Tract 421, Jackson County, Mississippi	496	4	84.43	4	592.56	4	8.287	4	16
Census Tract 24, Hinds County, Mississippi	492	4	104.94	4	564.23	4	8.718	4	16
Census Tract 9, Washington County, Mississippi	490	4	61.63	4	429.89	4	7.685	4	16
Census Tract 5, Hinds County, Mississippi	462	4	160.27	4	689.24	4	7.539	4	16
Census Tract 4, Hinds County, Mississippi	460	4	62.84	4	510.86	4	14.495	4	16
Census Tract 23, Harrison County, Mississippi	443	4	146.91	4	484.90	4	15.821	4	16
Census Tract 704.22, DeSoto County, Mississippi	435	4	48.02	4	244.00	4	11.291	4	16
Census Tract 20, Hinds County, Mississippi	429	4	149.05	4	401.14	4	21.713	4	16
Census Tract 302, Hinds County, Mississippi	421	4	153.44	4	520.55	4	9.032	4	16
Census Tract 4, Washington County, Mississippi	420	4	141.55	4	536.82	4	7.004	4	16
Census Tract 26, Harrison County, Mississippi	414	4	166.70	4	491.32	4	9.826	4	16
Census Tract 21, Hinds County, Mississippi	410	4	256.84	4	722.81	4	12.484	4	16
Census Tract 301.06, Madison County, Mississippi	390	4	197.20	4	371.37	4	7.658	4	16
Census Tract 420, Jackson County, Mississippi	388	4	75.90	4	233.66	4	4.554	4	16
Census Tract 2, Forrest County, Mississippi	386	4	113.99	4	378.08	4	10.496	4	16

¹⁷ All in numbers per square mile

¹⁸ ACS Community Survey 2013 5-Year estimates

Name	Disabled (Above 5 Years old) ¹⁷	Disabled Quartile	Households with No Vehicle ¹⁸	No Vehicle Quartile	Below Poverty Level (18-64)	Poverty Quartile	College Age (18-24)	College Age Quartile	Total Transit Needs Index
Census Tract 12, Hinds County, Mississippi	386	4	127.34	4	529.99	4	14.554	4	16
Census Tract 17, Harrison County, Mississippi	383	4	94.28	4	327.94	4	4.248	4	16
Census Tract 12.01, Harrison County, Mississippi	378	4	86.94	4	252.96	4	6.075	4	16
Census Tract 9508, Lee County, Mississippi	372	4	87.07	4	392.23	4	6.763	4	16
Census Tract 9504, Warren County, Mississippi	369	4	250.74	4	607.91	4	6.127	4	16
Census Tract 4, Adams County, Mississippi	361	4	174.15	4	687.77	4	5.714	4	16
Census Tract 9507.02, Bolivar County, Mississippi	356	4	111.12	4	416.71	4	8.751	4	16
Census Tract 6, Lauderdale County, Mississippi	345	4	121.03	4	351.70	4	12.530	4	16
Census Tract 3, Adams County, Mississippi	335	4	158.08	4	420.67	4	6.587	4	16
Census Tract 9503, Warren County, Mississippi	333	4	201.37	4	741.12	4	10.276	4	16
Census Tract 37, Hinds County, Mississippi	333	4	36.29	4	596.51	4	10.709	4	16
Census Tract 9505, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi	323	4	143.63	4	565.06	4	14.067	4	16
Census Tract 8, Lowndes County, Mississippi	312	4	156.41	4	429.92	4	3.733	4	16
Census Tract 38, Hinds County, Mississippi	311	4	118.47	4	525.35	4	11.602	4	16
Census Tract 9502, Sharkey County, Mississippi	301	4	67.45	4	228.41	4	5.365	4	16
Census Tract 5, Forrest County, Mississippi	299	4	68.51	4	276.61	4	11.818	4	16
Census Tract 7, Forrest County, Mississippi	295	4	54.54	4	257.89	4	7.492	4	16
Census Tract 12.02, Harrison County, Mississippi	291	4	84.82	4	271.29	4	4.346	4	16
Census Tract 9507, Leflore County, Mississippi	290	4	120.32	4	542.45	4	9.665	4	16
Census Tract 13, Hinds County, Mississippi	289	4	74.53	4	275.62	4	3.703	4	16
Census Tract 9506, Coahoma County, Mississippi	270	4	172.72	4	403.91	4	14.615	4	16
Census Tract 32, Hinds County, Mississippi	263	4	122.26	4	478.03	4	27.264	4	16
Census Tract 9504, Grenada County, Mississippi	250	4	63.36	4	163.23	4	4.671	4	16
Census Tract 9503, Clay County, Mississippi	247	4	126.27	4	326.42	4	4.069	4	16

¹⁷ All numbers per square mile

¹⁸ ACS Community Survey 2013 5-Year estimates

Name	Disabled (Above 5 Years old) ¹⁷	Disabled Quartile	Households with No Vehicle ¹⁸	No Vehicle Quartile	Below Poverty Level (18-64)	Poverty Quartile	College Age (18-24)	College Age Quartile	Total Transit Needs Index
Census Tract 704.12, DeSoto County, Mississippi	246	4	96.54	4	398.70	4	11,033	4	16
Census Tract 39, Harrison County, Mississippi	236	4	56.21	4	253.57	4	3,816	4	16
Census Tract 7, Adams County, Mississippi	230	4	60.42	4	150.11	4	6,233	4	16
Census Tract 11.01, Lauderdale County, Mississippi	222	4	46.49	4	161.25	4	5,529	4	16
Census Tract 416, Jackson County, Mississippi	219	4	36.08	4	217.36	4	5,879	4	16
Census Tract 307, Madison County, Mississippi	217	4	58.38	4	258.84	4	14,870	4	16
Census Tract 23, Hinds County, Mississippi	212	4	105.57	4	556.21	4	15,524	4	16
Census Tract 9502, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi	209	4	91.08	4	273.78	4	5,528	4	16
Census Tract 20, Harrison County, Mississippi	204	4	62.87	4	444.39	4	6,657	4	16
Census Tract 3, Harrison County, Mississippi	203	4	87.48	4	325.92	4	7,055	4	16
Census Tract 9503, Grenada County, Mississippi	176	4	43.79	4	204.84	4	4,005	4	16
Census Tract 107, Forrest County, Mississippi	171	4	123.85	4	298.30	4	6,699	4	16
Census Tract 9504.01, Sunflower County, Mississippi	167	4	36.79	4	137.22	4	3,740	4	16
Census Tract 15, Hinds County, Mississippi	165	4	84.61	4	383.63	4	19,614	4	16
Census Tract 30, Hinds County, Mississippi	165	4	39.34	4	270.61	4	4,253	4	16

¹⁷ All numbers per square mile¹⁸ ACS Community Survey 2013 5-Year estimates

APPENDIX B

Agency Interviews

Part of the procedure for identifying intercity bus needs throughout the State includes generating meaningful input from various stakeholders. To that end, staff from Pritchett Engineering conducted a series of interviews with different stakeholders throughout the State. Of the stakeholders contacted, only Colonial Trailways provided no response.

Table B-2. Agency Interviews

Agency	Name and Title	Interview Date
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD)	Mike Monk, Director of Community and Economic Development	2/17/2015
City of Hattiesburg	Beatty Brantley, Director of City Planning	2/26/2015
City of Jackson	Eric Jefferson, Chief City Planner	2/17/2015
City of Laurel	Mary Ann Hess, City Clerk	2/26/2015
City of Laurel	Johnny Magee, Mayor	3/2/2015
Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation	Kappi Allen, Tourism Director	2/10/2015
Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation	Ron Hudson, Executive Director	2/10/2015
Delta Bus Lines	Joe Howard, Owner	2/7/2015
Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization	Christine Brown, Division Manager	2/26/2015
Greyhound	Randy Isaacs, State Government Affairs Manager	unknown

Kappi Allen, Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation

Ron Hudson, Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation

Coahoma County and its county seat, Clarksdale, are in the Mississippi Delta at the intersection of Mississippi highways 61, 49, and 6. This heavily agricultural county is known internationally as the birthplace of the blues, is the home of the Delta Blues Museum, and contains many important blues sites. Coahoma County's largest employer is blues tourism. Tourists from all over the world come to Clarksdale to explore the county's blues heritage. Notable numbers of tourists visit from Scandinavia, England, China, Europe, and Japan.

There are numerous blues tourism attractions in Clarksdale, and there are important historical blues sites scattered all around the County at places like Friars Point, Moon Lake, and the various contested locations of the Crossroads, where blues artist Robert Johnson supposedly sold his soul to the Devil. Other large major employers in Coahoma County are the Public School System, the county hospital, and the Isle of Capri Casino. There is considerable commuter travel on Highway 6 between Clarksdale; Batesville, MS; and Oxford, MS. Coahoma County is also the home of Delta Bus Lines, LLC., an interstate bus line. Delta Bus Lines services Clarksdale as a stop on its daily route between Memphis, TN, and Baton Rouge, LA. There is no intercity bus service on the commuter route between Clarksdale, Batesville, and Oxford.

According to those interviewed, it was not uncommon for European tourists to telephone the Tourism Bureau office from Memphis and ask how to get transportation to Clarksdale. Since there is no scheduled airplane or train service to Clarksdale, the agency often suggests that visitors take the bus.

Once in Clarksdale, visitors generally use taxis and, since the topography of the Mississippi Delta is completely flat, Clarksdale is very walkable. There are also pedicabs and a private service called Delta Bohemian Driving Tours.

Beatty Brantley, City of Hattiesburg
Christine Brown, Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization

Hattiesburg is the fourth largest city in Mississippi and has a population of 47,560. The city's major employers are the University of Southern Mississippi, Forest General Hospital, Kohler Engines, William Carey College, the City of Hattiesburg, and Camp Shelby, a U.S. Army training facility.



Hattiesburg is served by Greyhound Bus Lines on the route from Jackson, MS, to the Gulf Coast.

According to the City Planner, Beatty Brantley, intercity bus service is inadequate. When the Intermodal Center was renovated about ten years ago, the MPO coordinated with Greyhound and they were to establish their bus station in the Intermodal Center, but Greyhound backed out at the last minute. Since then the Greyhound stop has been located in various service stations on the outskirts of the City, currently at a Shell Station on Highway 49. Without asking a local, “it is hard to identify the Shell station as a Greyhound facility.”

In the past, the City has invited Greyhound to attend transportation planning meetings where improving interstate bus service would be discussed, but Greyhound representatives have declined. Thus, Greyhound has never been a part of the City's planning process.

Ms. Brantley is of the opinion that Greyhound's failure to use the Intermodal Center is symptomatic of inadequate service. She is not aware of the level of ridership, but AMTRAK (at the Intermodal Center) seems to be highly utilized. It is common for passengers to arrive at the AMTRAK station by train and then need to connect with Greyhound to finish their journey, but since AMTRAK is located in the center of the city and Greyhound is located on the outskirts of the city, there is no good way to get from the Intermodal Center to the Shell station, and so they are referred to a taxi. The problem is that many of the people who are travelling by bus and train use those modes because they are inexpensive. Hattiesburg has limited taxi service and the cost of the taxi to the bus stop at the Shell station can exceed the cost of the bus ticket.

Hattiesburg does have a local transit system, Hub City Transit, but there has been no attempt to connect the local transit system with the interstate bus system. Ms. Brantley believes that, because of this disconnect between AMTRAK, the local transit system, and the interstate bus system, the [intercity bus] service is inadequate. The MPO would like all carriers to use the Intermodal Center, although is concerned about the

impact of bus traffic in the downtown. At a minimum, there needs to be more coordination between the interstate carrier and local transit.

Mary Ann Hess, City of Laurel

Laurel, Mississippi, in Jones County, has a population of 18,540. It is the 22nd largest City in Mississippi. The city's major employers are Sanderson Farms, the South Central Regional Medical Center, Wayne Farms, Howard Industries, and the oil and gas industry.

Laurel is not currently served by any intercity bus line. Previously, Laurel was served by Greyhound Bus Lines, but they have terminated their service to the City; the City is not happy with this the Greyhound's termination of its service to the City and wants someone to provide intercity bus service. Laurel is on the Crescent Line of AMTRAK, with service from Laurel to New Orleans and to New York City. Unfortunately, there is no direct AMTRAK service to Jackson, MS.

Laurel has no city transit service and very poor taxi service. Laurel's train depot was renovated about ten years ago and the City would like it to serve as an intermodal transportation center with intercity bus service. (Note: DJ Transit has relocated offices in Laurel and is now providing some services but is trying to increase service by using public awareness methods and meeting with local officials, businesses and local people.)

Ms. Hess said there is a critical need to provide older adults and persons with disabilities in Laurel with some sort of transportation service to get them to doctors and hospitals, both locally and in Jackson and Hattiesburg.

Eric Jefferson, City of Jackson

JATRAN does not formally coordinate with rural transit providers. However, Mr. Jefferson was aware that many of the rural transit providers in Mississippi do often bring their clients to Jackson--usually for medical treatments. The Madison County Citizen Services Agency, a rural transit provider, has scheduled routes between Canton, MS, and the Intermodal Transportation Center in Jackson, MS. Those routes are largely used by commuters who work in Jackson. They are scheduled by the Madison County Citizen Services Agency to connect with JATRAN. JATRAN then delivers those riders to their job locations. Similar service is provided back to Canton in the evenings.

While the intercity bus lines serving Jackson could probably improve service, Mr. Jefferson suspects that most of the ridership is for personal convenience rather than employment or education. Nevertheless, he would like to see the service improved. He expressed disappointment that Megabus recently ceased operations in Jackson.

Mike Monk, Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD)

He did not know what intercity bus service was available in CMPDD's area except that he knew about the Greyhound Service at the Intermodal Transportation Center in Jackson. Since CMPDD has never evaluated the interstate bus needs for its area, there is no mention of interstate bus needs in CMPDD's Coordinated Transit Plan.

Joe Howard, Delta Bus Lines

On February 3, 2015, TranSystems staff rode the northern half of the bus routes for interstate bus carrier Delta Bus Lines, LLC. The trip began at the Delta Bus Lines/Greyhound bus terminal in Vicksburg, MS, and followed Delta Bus Lines' Highway 61 route to Clarksdale, MS. TranSystems is also very familiar with their route down Highway 49 from Clarksdale to Jackson, MS.

In Clarksdale, TranSystems met with Mr. Joseph Howard, the owner and president of Delta Bus Lines, LLC. Mr. Howard started in the intercity bus business in the early 1970's as an agent for Greyhound. He founded Delta Bus Lines, LLC, around 1980. At that point he took over the Greyhound routes in western Mississippi. Greyhound supported that takeover, and he was a franchisee for Greyhound for some years after the founding of Delta Bus Lines, LLC. Delta Bus Lines is no longer a franchisee for Greyhound, but Greyhound and Delta Bus Lines sell each other's tickets and share the same ticketing software.



The Mississippi Delta is one of the most impoverished areas in the United States. Delta Bus Lines sees that poverty reflected in its ridership. Ridership peaks at the beginning and end of each month when Electronic Benefit Cards (EBT cards) are issued to low income families by various Federal and State agencies. Buses have relatively high ridership around the first of the month, but may carry only three or four passengers around the middle of the month. Most of Delta Bus Lines' passengers do not have credit cards.

Mr. Howard is not aware of any passengers who use Delta Bus Lines to commute to their places of employment. Most of the passengers are traveling for personal business or recreation. He suggested that the reason for the most common trip is to visit relatives.



Possibilities for the expansion of interstate bus service were discussed. Particularly with the recent drops in fuel prices, Mr. Howard would love to expand service, but he would have to have ridership. He pointed out that, with the encouragement of MDOT's Transit Division, he recently started a new route connecting service from his Greenville, MS, terminal with Greenwood, MS. This failed, because he could not get enough ridership. In addition, the two cities did little or nothing to help. He noted that when he closed the Greenwood to Greenville route he expected what little ridership he had to reappear catching his buses at other locations. This did not happen, and Mr. Howard found that typical. He said that, in his experience, when a route closes the riders tend to find other means of interstate transportation. If you reopen a closed route, much of the ridership never returns.

When Mr. Howard was asked if there were areas within the State that he believes to be underserved, he said that much of the eastern half of the state is underserved, and that is particularly true of the northeastern part of the state. The State lacks east/west interstate bus service except on Interstate 20 and Interstate 10.

For example:

- A direct trip from Jackson, MS, to Tupelo, MS, a 3 hour drive, takes the bus 12 hours with an overnight layover in Memphis, TN. This is not a feasible transportation alternative.
- There is no bus service to the following cities or to towns near them:
- Starkville, MS, home of Mississippi State University;
- Oxford, MS, home of the University of Mississippi;
- Columbus, MS, home of the Mississippi University for Women and the Columbus Air Force base;
- Laurel, MS;
- Columbia, MS

Starkville and Oxford are university towns with very effective local transit operations. Laurel has a rail terminal for AMTRAK.

Mr. David Futral, president of ACR Coach Leasing of Starkville, tried to establish intercity bus service in northeast Mississippi, and he even went as far as obtaining approval for a 5311(f) grant from MDOT. That attempt to provide new service failed for lack of ridership. Now ACR in Mississippi only operates coaches for lease.

Mr. Howard stated that smaller bus lines like his need to avoid direct competition with Greyhound.

Greyhound is so large that if they compete with a small company directly, the smaller company has little chance of success.

Mr. Howard works closely, but informally, with rural transit providers in Mississippi. He said Delta Rides, SMART, and the Bolivar County Council on Aging have been particularly good to work with. However, he has not specifically coordinated his routes with theirs. He said that MDOT's Transit Division has been helpful in general and specifically by encouraging him to cooperate with rural transit agencies.

Randy Isaacs, Greyhound

Stephanie Gunnerman, Greyhound

Steve Abernathy, Greyhound

Greyhound cancelled many of its poor performing lines in the United States between 2004 and 2006, including some in Mississippi. Many of the stations that service was removed from had not had a single customer in over a year. Removal of service was part of a nationwide strategy to reorient the business into a national, rather than local, network, and has nothing to do with the conditions in the state of Mississippi, per se.

Delta Bus Lines is considered a reliable partner for Greyhound in Mississippi. The company is also interested in exploring partnering with rural transit providers to provide feeder service to their main line routes. They would also be open to looking at running any long-haul routes proposed in this plan.

APPENDIX C

Greyhound Rural Feeder Service Application

General Information

1. Organization Name: _____
2. Street Address: _____
3. City: _____
4. State: _____
5. Zip Code: _____
6. Telephone: _____
7. Toll Free Number: _____
8. Facsimile: _____
9. System Website: _____
10. Contact Person: _____
11. Contact Email Address: _____

12. Service Information (Check applicable service type)
13. Fixed-route, fixed schedule _____ No. of days per week Operated _____
14. Fixed-schedule route deviation _____
15. Demand Response _____
16. Area Served (include both counties and primary communities) _____

17. Greyhound Location(s) to which you plan to feed passengers _____
18. Do you currently provide connections to Greyhound at this location? _____
19. If so, on average how many of your passengers purchase a ticket and board/disembark at this Greyhound location per month? _____
20. Do you currently receive 5311(f) assistance for this service? _____
21. If so, please describe how this service currently operates _____

