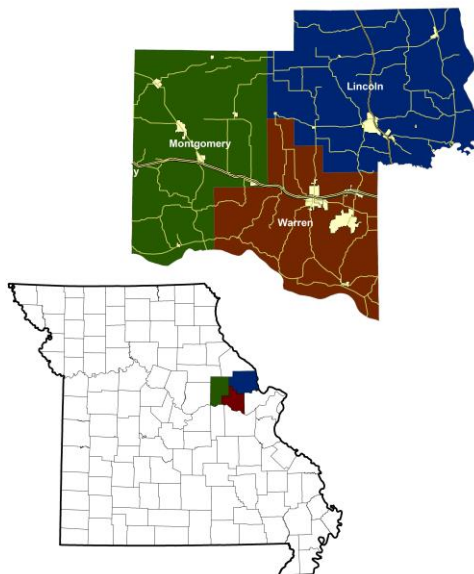


# **Boonslick Region Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan 2023**



**PREPARED BY  
BOONSLICK REGIONAL PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
SERVING  
LINCOLN, MONTGOMERY & WARREN  
COUNTIES**



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## Introduction

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law”) into law. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and economy in our Nation’s history. It provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, and mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband.

**Required Elements:** The locally developed, coordinated public transit – human services plan minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- (2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- (3) Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps and achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- (4) Relative priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.

## Funding Programs

### Section 5310 of Chapter 53, Title 49, U.S.C. Federal Transit Administration

FTA Section 5310 formula grants target agencies serving the mobility needs of senior citizens and/or persons with disabilities. MoDOT administers the Section 5310 program as a capital program to procure and fund 80% of the cost of vehicles for such agencies as developmental disability resource boards (Senate Bill 40 boards), sheltered workshops, senior citizen services boards (House Bill 351 boards), senior centers, and not-for-profit medical service agencies.

### Section 5311 of Chapter 53, Title 49, U.S.C. Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Transit Administration provides grants to states on a formula basis for nonurban transit in the Section 5311 program. Rural transit providers and intercity bus carriers apply to MoDOT’s Transit Section for these Section 5311 grants to carry out rural public transit related service, planning and capital projects.

## Section 5339

MoDOT's Transit Section also administers grants to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. The federal transit capital grants in FTA's Section 5339 grant program fund 80% of the cost of these activities.

### Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)

The Transit Section also administers the rural transportation assistance program by providing training and technical assistance functions funded by FTA. Free on-site training courses for rural transit agencies include defensive driving, CPR, first aid, passenger assistance techniques and emergency procedures.

## Planning Process

The Public Transit Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan is essential to maintain funding access to transportation services in the region. Lincoln, Montgomery and Warren counties comprise the Boonslick Regional Planning Commission service area. Transportation providers, human service providers, potential and existing transit clients, city and county officials, and the public were invited to participate in the planning process.

Transportation provider surveys, human service provider surveys and customer surveys are utilized to inventory the existing services and identify gaps in the services. The rest of this section covers the demographics specifically for senior population, low income, disability and commuting patterns. The sources include- 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, US Census Bureau and ESRI: GIS mapping software.

## The Boonslick Region

The State of Missouri, and the Boonslick Region have experienced significant population growth over the past two decades and the growth is projected to continue at a substantial rate through 2030. The state increased by an average of more than 165,986 residents from 2010 to 2020 which is 2.8 percent change.

The Boonslick Regional Planning Commission serves Lincoln, Montgomery and Warren counties in east central Missouri. As per 2020 Census, the total population of the region is 106,428.

The region is centered on Interstate 70 and lies immediately west of the St. Louis metropolitan area. Neighboring jurisdictions are Audrain and Pike counties on the north, Audrain and Callaway counties on the west, St. Charles County on the southeast, the Mississippi River to the northeast and the Missouri River on the south.

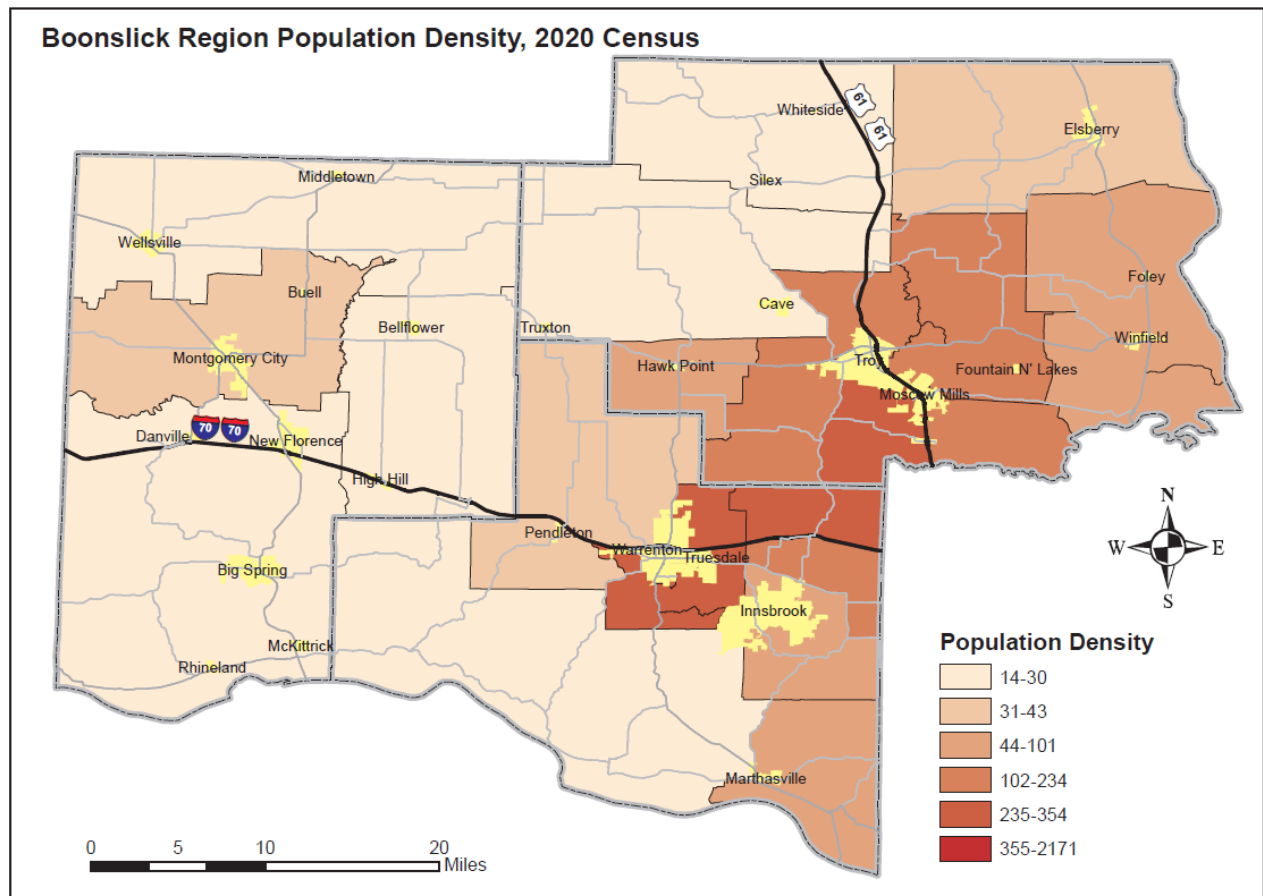
The Boonslick region encompasses 1,645 square miles, 27 municipal governments and 3 county governments. Lincoln County covers 630 square miles and has 12 municipalities: Chain of Rocks, Elsberry, Foley, Fountain N Lakes, Hawk Point, Moscow Mills, Old Monroe, Silex, Troy, Truxton, Whiteside, and Winfield. Troy serves as Lincoln County's county seat.

Montgomery County consists of 584 square miles and 9 cities: Bellflower, High Hill, Jonesburg, Middletown, Montgomery City, McKittrick, New Florence, Rhineland and Wellsville. Montgomery City is the county seat of Montgomery County.

The remaining 6 incorporated communities are in Warren County. These cities include Innsbrook, Pendleton, Marthasville, Truesdale, Warrenton, and Wright City. Warrenton serves as the county seat. Warren County is the smallest county in the Boonslick region consisting of 432 square miles.

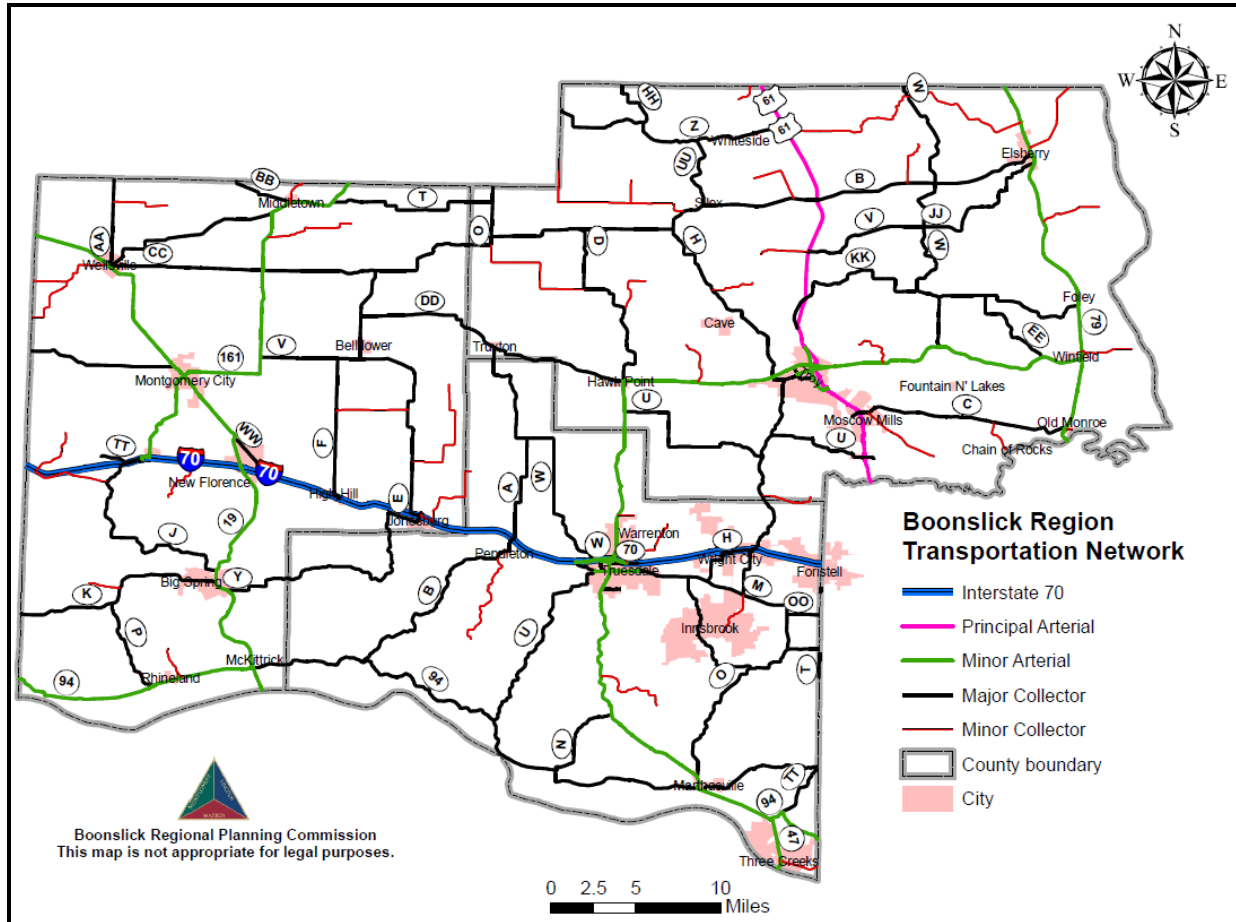
Total Population			
	2000	2010	2020
<b>Lincoln</b>	38,944	52,566	59,574
<b>Montgomery</b>	12,136	12,236	11,322
<b>Warren</b>	24,525	32,513	35,532
<b>Boonslick Region</b>	75,605	97,315	106,428
<b>10-YR Growth Boonslick Region</b>	15,824	21,710	9,113
<b>Annual % Increase Boonslick Region</b>	20.9%	22.3%	9.5%

The map below illustrates population density in the region, with the highest density areas being co-located with municipalities offering employment opportunities and along major commuting corridors such as Interstate 70, US Highway 40.



The map below shows the transportation network in the region.

### Boonslick Region transportation network



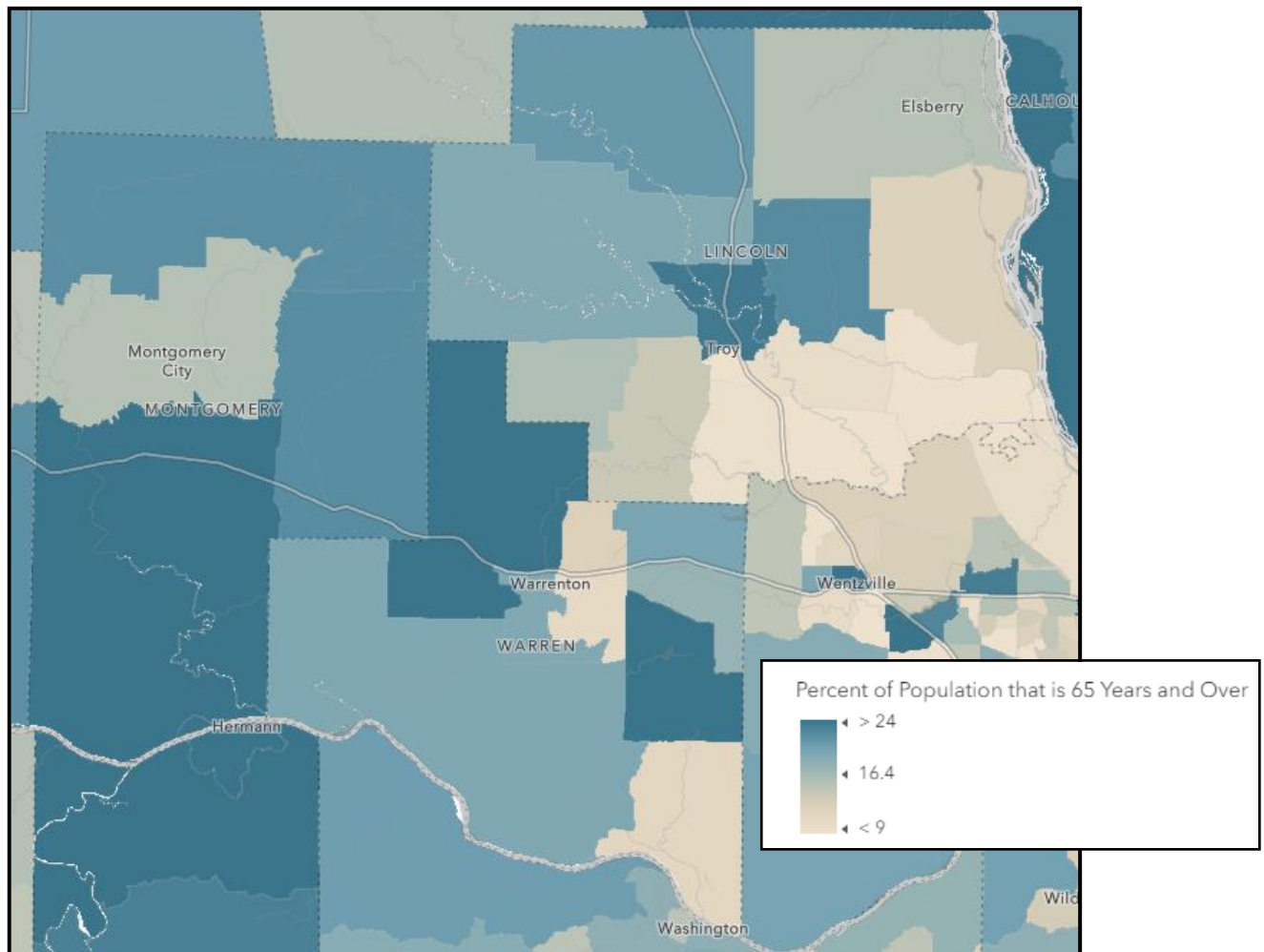
## Transportation Needs Assessment

### Senior Population

The total number of seniors (65 and over) within the Boonslick Region increased by 23%. Warren County experienced the greatest increase followed by Lincoln and Montgomery.

Place	Seniors 65+ and over, 2010	Seniors 65+ and over, 2016–2020 ACS Estimates	Percent change
Boonslick Region	12,750	15,673	23%
Lincoln	5,715	7,086	24%
Montgomery	2,286	2,355	3%
Warren	4,749	6,232	32%

The map below shows the percentage of population that is 65 and over by census block group.





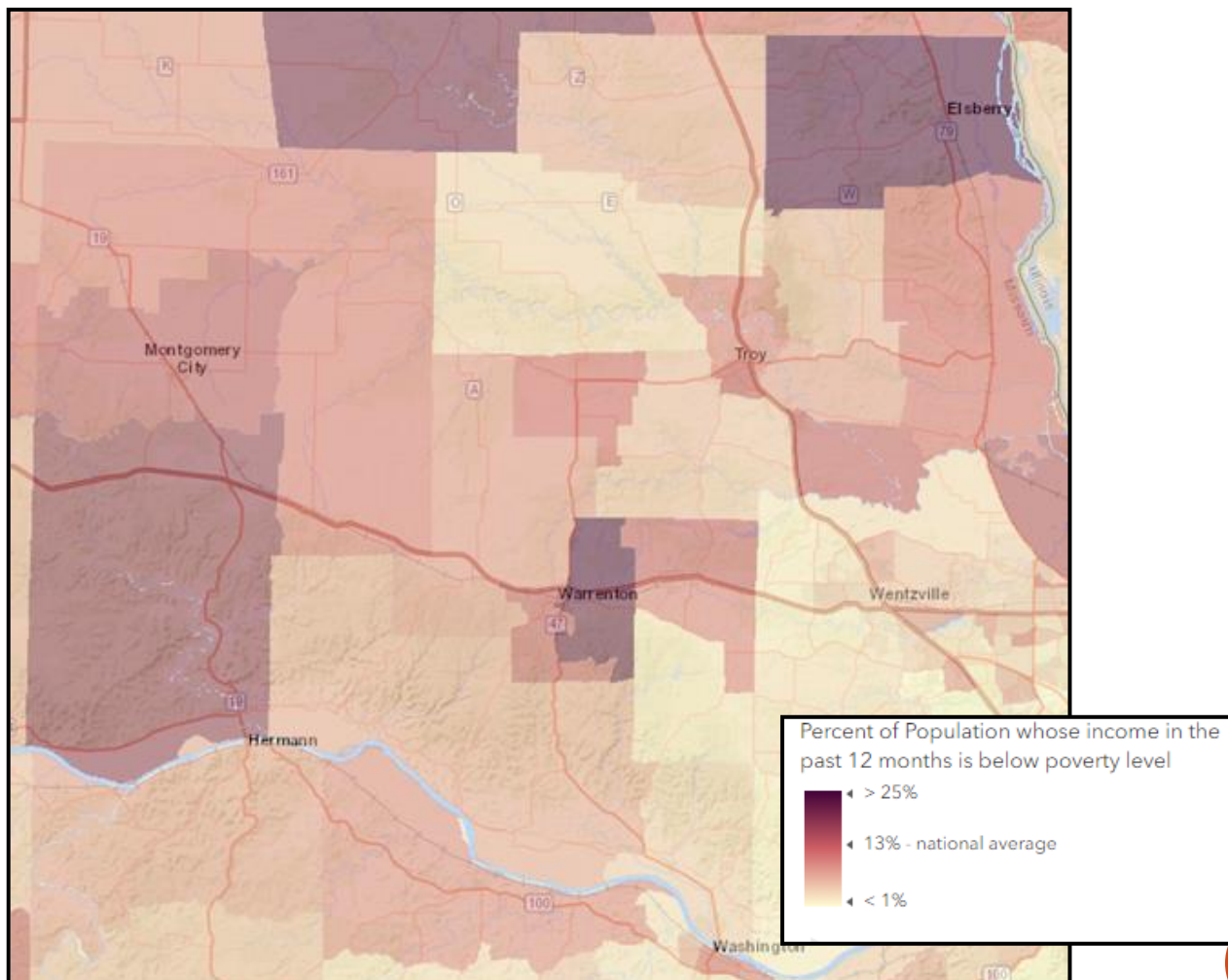
## Low-Income

According to the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), regionally, the percentage of low-income population is lowest in Warren County with 9.0 percent, followed by Lincoln County at 9.4 percent, and Montgomery with 13.0 percent. This compares to 10.47 percent for the Boonslick Region and 12.1 percent for Missouri.

The poverty in these communities underscores the need for transit options for those who may not be able to afford an automobile. In addition, many of the communities do not have the employment opportunities necessary on a local level to help residents escape from poverty.

One of the common barriers to physical activity for low-income people include lack of meaningful transportation choices, poor access to parks and recreational facilities, poor health and lack of social support for exercise. Since, most of the infrastructures such as roads, schools, shopping centers, workplaces and other major community destinations are placed and designed only for convenient access by cars, the car is a virtual necessity for even the most basic transportation needs.

The map below shows the percentage population whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level by census block group.

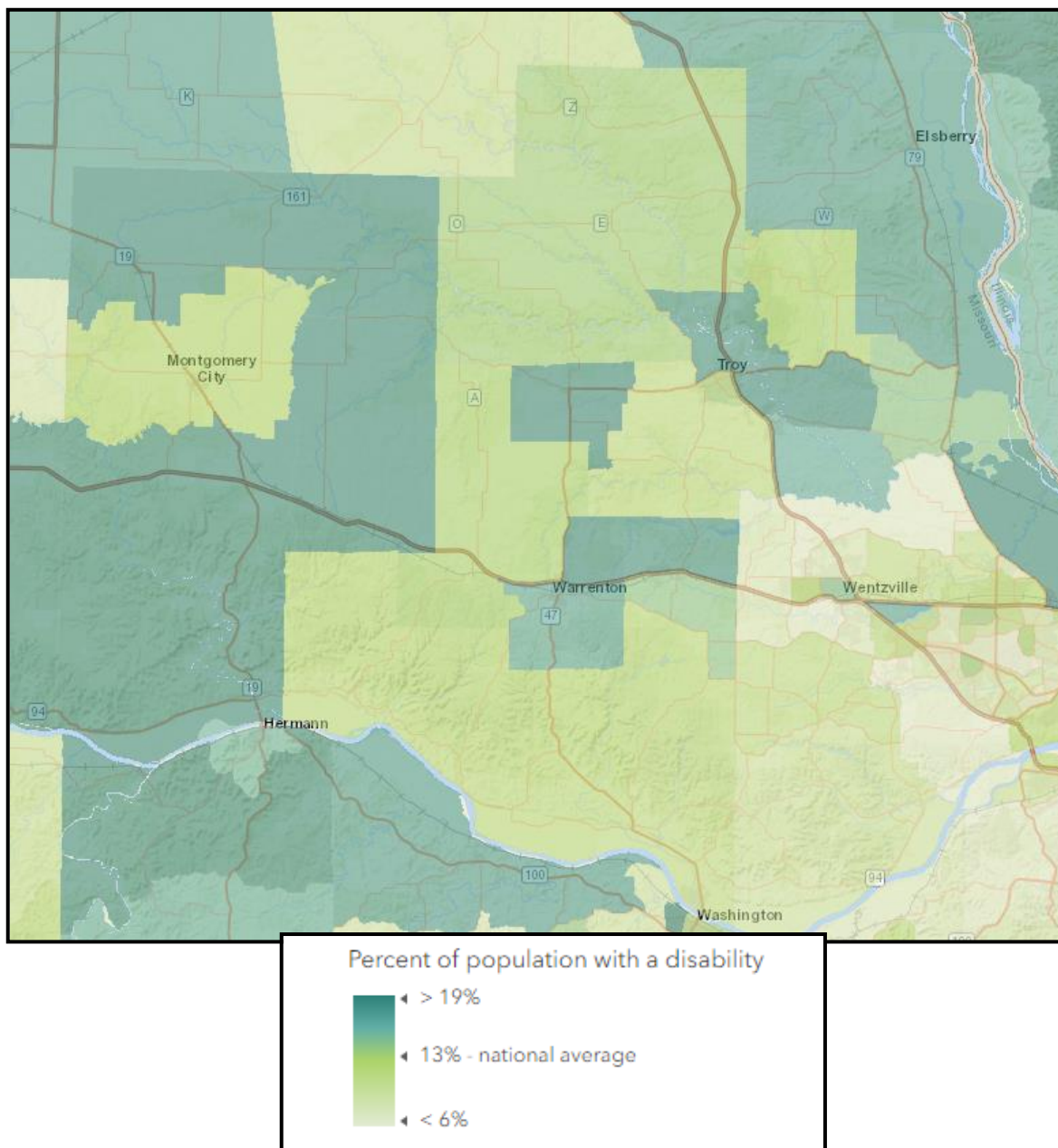


## Disability

As per 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the total number of people with disability for Boonslick Region is 16.1%. 13.8 percent of population in Lincoln County has a disability; 18.8 percent in Montgomery County has a disability and 15.8 percent in Warren County has a disability.

The disability population includes population with hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty and independent living difficulty. The developmental disabilities population data was unavailable.

The map below shows the percentage of population with a disability by census block group.

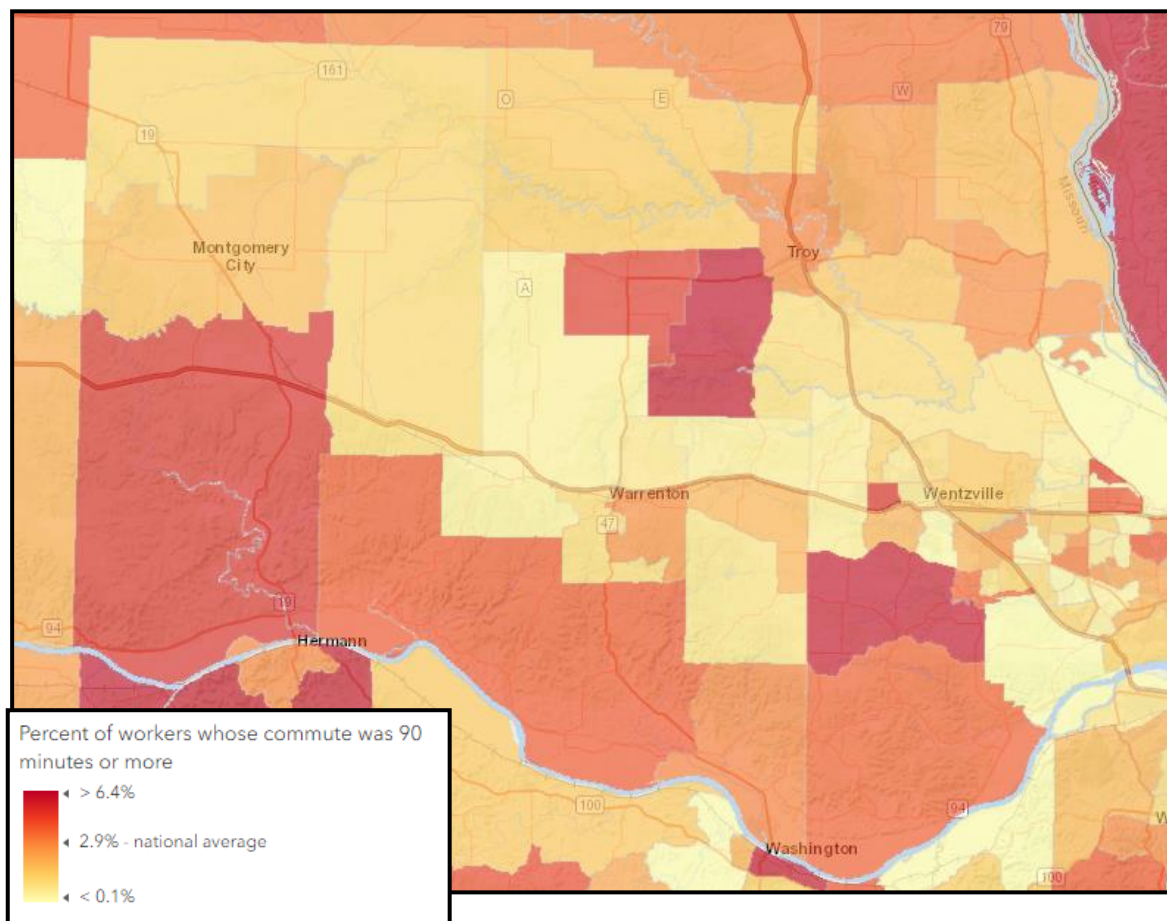


## Commuting Patterns

Over 50% of the region's employed workforce drive 30 minutes or more to get to their place of employment, with 14% driving more than one hour. The remaining 50% drive less than 30 minutes to reach their destination, with 13% driving less than 10 minutes.

As per 2016-2020 five-year averages, 63% of Lincoln County, 47% of Montgomery County, and 65% of Warren County labor force leaves the county of their residence for employment. More than 80 percent of the total population use cars as a means of transportation. Less than one percent population of the region use public transportation.

Means of Transportation to Work (workers 16 years and over) (Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)			
County	Drove alone	Carpooled	Public transportation (excluding taxicab)
Lincoln	85%	8%	0.3%
Montgomery	80%	12%	0.5%
Warren	85%	10%	0.2%



## Assessment of Current Transit Services

Several methods of community outreach were employed to assess the current level of public and paratransit services in the region. Firstly, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission gathered existing regional data from MoRIDES referral service and reached out to the transportation providers as well as service providers.

Secondly, Boonslick RPC reached out to the Regional Community Agency Partnership meeting taskforce members. Finally, Boonslick RPC convened a task force of mobility stakeholders from the region, including transit providers, human services agencies and users. The list of agencies reached out to to be part of this planning process includes all the transportation and service providers. The participating task force include the following agencies:

- Community Opportunities
- Lincoln County Economic Development
- OATS Public Transportation
- Youth In Need
- Missouri Job Center
- North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC)
- Warren County Handicapped Services
- Warren County Sheltered Workshop, Inc
- Developmental Disabilities Assistance Board of Montgomery County
- Turning Point
- Lincoln County Sheltered Workshop
- Compass Health
- Emmaus Home, Inc.
- Temco Inc.
- Literacy Council of Montgomery County
- Health Departments
- Warren County Senior Center
- Warren County Developmental Disabilities Board
- Youth in Need- Headstart
- Family Support Division
- Robertson Center
- 360 Quality Care
- Agape
- Axel



- BCI Skills Center
- Bridgeway behavioral health
- Burger park limousine
- Connections to Success
- Harbor run united
- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc.
- Oasis Resource Center
- Pregnancy Options center of Warren County
- Prevent+Ed
- Right at home in home care
- St. Charles Community College
- Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Services
- United Way of Greater St. Louis
- Warren County fragile & homeless
- Zipcare transportation
- St. Patrick center
- MORIDES
- Warren County Pathfinders
- DAV
- Probation and Parole

Third, Boonslick RPC, released two regional transit surveys: one for providers & non-providers and one for existing and potential transit users, which was available online as well as distributed in paper form.

### **OATS Inc.,**

OATS Inc. founded in 1971, which is one of the largest providers in the nation, is a private, not-for profit organization serving 87 of Missouri's 114 counties. According to OATS, there are more than 32,000 people in Missouri who utilize the services.

OATS serves anyone who lives in a rural area, regardless of age or income. Transportation assistance is also provided by various human service programs offered by state and local agencies for customers based on financial or physical need.



General public transit in the Boonslick region is provided by OATS. OATS operates in all three counties in the region. General workforce transit is supplied by The LINC in Lincoln County, and by OATS in Warren County (daily routes for disabled workers, and multiple workforce trips). OATS, Inc. provides demand-response trips in the region. The agency serves from 7am-6pm during weekdays. They offer contract service during weekends.

## LINC

The source of federal funding in assisting in the funding of LINC is the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 which OATS (who operated LINC) received from MoDOT in conjunction with the Lincoln County, Community Opportunities and Delta Center. The LINC provides public transportation for all residents of Lincoln County regardless of age or income. The LINC operates within Lincoln County, Monday through Friday. The LINC transports Lincoln County residents to destinations outside Lincoln County for medical appointments.



## Other Services

Taxi services in the Boonslick region exist at a basic level. Several taxi companies based in St. Louis County and St. Charles County offer limited service to the counties in the Boonslick region, but cost is prohibitive for most users.

The majority of paratransit services within the region are needs-specific services offered by an array of non-profit human service providers. The services include workforce and medical appointment transit for people with disabilities, and need-based transportation for customers of service providers.

Some of the agencies are private non-profit and some are government based. Most of the agencies serve clients with physical condition related mobility limitations and clients who cannot afford motor vehicle. Most of the clients utilize transportation for medical related purposes. These services are generally in-house and are limited to the clients or customers of the particular agency, though OATS often provides transportation services for agencies without in-house transportation options.

## Mobility Management

With the help of MoDOT & Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, Boonslick RPC started the MORIDES transportation referral program which initially served Lincoln, Montgomery, Warren, St. Charles, and Franklin Counties. Later, the program gained momentum and with continued MoDOT funding, MORIDES currently serves the entire State of Missouri.

The main aim of the program was to create a transportation solution that is accessible, affordable and available to people with disabilities in our community. A one-call center as well as a website <http://morides.org/> were created to provide the transportation referral service for the Boonslick area plus 2 other counties- St. Charles and Franklin.

The main goals of the mobility management include:

- Improving access to, and providing information on available transportation options throughout the region;
- Coordinating transportation and managing mobility for people with disabilities, senior citizens with mobility issues, and low-income population lacking access to transportation;
- Expanding the available transportation options throughout the region.

The screenshot displays the MoRides website interface. At the top left is the 'MoRides' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Transportation Providers', 'About', and 'Contact'. The main heading reads 'We help connect you with transportation providers across Missouri.' Below this, a subtext states: 'MO Rides is a free service that works with you to find a provider that's right for you.' A prominent blue button labeled 'Find a Ride' with a right-pointing arrow is positioned below the text. Underneath the button, it says 'Or call us at 844-836-7433'. On the right side of the page, there is a large circular image showing an elderly man and woman standing next to a white van. The man is using a blue walker. Below the image, there are several horizontal blue bars of varying lengths, likely representing a progress bar or a list of items.

## We're Here to Help

MO Rides is a free service that connects individuals in need of transportation assistance with available providers in their community. Whether you are seeking a ride to the doctor, the grocery store, employment, or for any other purpose, we are here to work with you to find the right provider to meet your needs.



In Boonslick Region, approximately 824 calls (Lincoln-270; Montgomery-223 & Warren-331) were received for transportation referral till date. Nineteen percent of the people who called are developmentally disabled and 24 percent are seniors. To date, approximately 6,654 calls (St. Charles County- 1,447; St. Louis County- 1,410 & Other counties in the State- 3,797) were received for transportation referral. The average calls per day vary from seven to ten. The average call back time for referral service is less than 24 hours. The major issue of the callers requesting a ride is affordability. For the most part, what is affordable is not always flexible for the riders.

The mobility manager is continuously making efforts to raise awareness of the referral service, updating the website, adding new transportation companies, building & maintaining relationships with transportation providers and attending conferences nationwide.



## Gap Analysis

After reviewing existing transit services and options within the region and after analyzing the survey responses from the provider surveys, the following gaps in service and needs are identified which, if met, would benefit the region.

### General Public Transit

The overwhelming view of task force members and survey respondents is that OATS and the various service agencies which provide transit services do an outstanding job in the region. The several issues that would be a concern are adding more routes and more frequent trips. Cost is another factor, both in terms of accessible pricing for potential transit users, as well as necessary cost effectiveness for providers. The theme heard again and again in this discussion is convenience. Without it, any attempt at boosting the level of public transit in the region will not be successful.

### Accessibility

Accessibility to transit was identified as perhaps the greatest unmet need in the Boonslick region. The catch-all term “accessibility” includes a number of issues:

- Increasing the number of transit vehicles in service;
- Increasing the number of vehicles equipped for special needs riders;
- Increasing wheel chair accessibility with relation to sidewalks and bus stops in the region;
- Increasing the number of routes and expanding hours of operation;
- Increasing evening transit as well as weekend transit options;
- Increasing the number of routes for intercity travel within Boonslick Region, for example: Warrenton and Troy & vice versa;
- Increasing awareness of transit options to persons currently not using public or paratransit;
- Increasing overall access to transit options in the region;
- Increasing transit options to long distance travel such as St. Charles and St. Louis metro areas;
- Increasing the number of trips to outside the county medical related persons as most of the specialists are located outside the region; and
- Increasing effective scheduling options for the travelers thereby, decreasing long wait times.

### Increased Demand

The explosive growth in population in both Warren & Lincoln counties is translating into increased users, and increased potential users. As this trend continues, the demands on transit services of all types will constitute one of the greatest burdens on service delivery. This will initially affect the operating costs of transit providers in terms of fleet growth, increased maintenance and personnel costs. This, in turn, will have a dampening effect on route expansion and increasing the number of trips.

### **Fleet Maintenance and Repair**

Increased demands for transit services from an aging, and growing, population may spell disaster for transit providers. Increased funding mechanisms to match the increasing demand were identified as a top priority by transit providers. Added to the cost of fleet replacement, the rising costs of vehicle maintenance, fuel and other operating costs are a constant challenge for providing transit service in the region.

### **Funding to Assist Low Income Populations**

While funding for senior and disabled transit users is lacking, the situation for economically disadvantaged populations in the region is much worse. Access to jobs, especially in a predominantly rural area with a few regional economic hubs, is too often tied to availability of transportation. Given the high cost of operating transit in an area of low population density and long travel distances, additional funding opportunities for low income transit options is a critical need in the region.

Missouri Job Center staff, in their efforts to assist job seekers in the Boonslick region, are often confronted by the lack of transportation serving as a barrier to employment options for many of their customers. Finding practical solutions to this pressing issue was identified as a top priority.

### **Rural Transit**

Taking all of the aforementioned needs together, the overarching needs of rural transit revolve around the high cost of providing service to a smaller, geographically dispersed user population. With the lack of available capital funding for fleet replacement needs, meeting current level of service demands are challenging. Further complicating this challenge is the anticipated increased demand for service from a rapidly growing population.

## Provider and Non-Provider Survey results

Here are the needs from the provider and non-provider survey results:

- More senior transportation
- Replacement of buses
- Affordable transportation for employment
- Shuttles to public service offices/food pantry/courts/laundry mat/grocery stores
- Funding to provide direct financial support to those who wish to utilize transit services, but who cannot afford to do so.

## Customer Survey results

Top priorities as reported by survey respondents in the
More flexible in scheduling rides
Better advertisement
Increased service hours
Increased weekend service
Need for intercity travel (example: Warrenton to Troy & vice versa)

## Strategies and Activities

The Action Plan B under Strategy from 2018 Plan- “Improve dispatch system” is deleted as OATS has updated their dispatch system that helps with dispatching rides.

The top priority identified during this update is to fix the acquisition process to comply with Buy America Policy. Many of the transportation providers during this plan update process have been waiting for over 2 years on the funding requested for purchasing buses.

### Strategy prioritization

Strategy	Activity	Priority High, Medium or Low
1. Maintain current level of service in the region.	A. Educate the public and public officials about current public transportation services in the region.	High
	B. Maintain and increase current level of funding.	High
	C. Researching partnership opportunities with non-profit organizations, religious agencies etc.	High
	D. Market the available public transportation services in the region.	Medium
2. Expand transit services to meet the growing demand in the region.	A. Expand fleets, routes, and demand-response capabilities including additional staffing.	High
	C. Research ride sharing options in Boonslick region	High
	D. Identify priorities for expansion based on days of the week and hours of the day.	Medium

Strategy	Activity	Priority High, Medium or Low
3. Increase accessibility to meet the needs of all transit user populations in the region.	A. Increase transportation options to all populations needing services such as medical, low-income, elderly, and disabled.	High
	B. Improve accessibility to medical and disabled populations.	High
	C. Provide accessible designated stops for the users.	High
	D. Subsidize transportation fee to low-income populations.	Low
4. Maintain Mobility management.	A. Maintain and increase current level of funding.	High

### Implementation

The plan has been reviewed by the Regional Transportation Advisory committee and approved by the Boonslick Board. The implementation of the above activities would be based on agency resources, availability of time and feasibility.

### Next Steps

This plan has been developed to meet federal requirements in order to apply for future funding. The key transit and mobility stakeholders who participated in the plan development can use it to take transportation in the region to a new level. This plan can be a basis for greater communication and coordination between transportation as well as social service providers. With continued focus on the prioritized strategies and activities in this plan, senior, disabled, low-income and general public of the Boonslick Region will surely benefit.

## Appendix

Meetings sign-in-sheets

Newspaper publications

Email documentation

Website postings