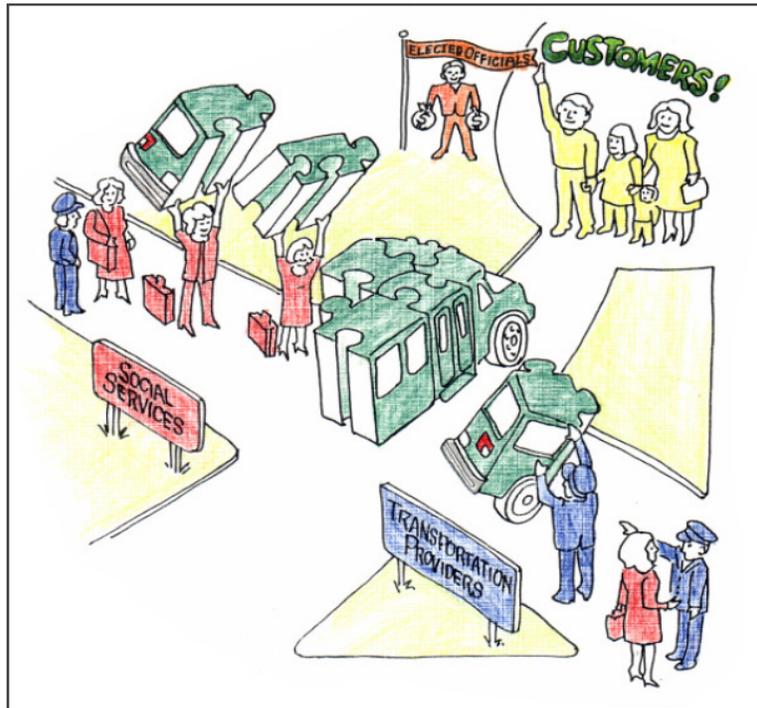


BERRIEN COUNTY
MICHIGAN

Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan



2009

Final Plan

PREPARED BY
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

IN COOPERATION WITH
Federal Transit Administration
Michigan Bureau of Passenger Transportation

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SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND AND REQUIREMENTS OF PLAN

In August 2005, President Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), legislation that provides funding for highway and transit programs. SAFETEA-LU includes new planning requirements for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute – JARC) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) Programs, requiring that projects funded through these programs “must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit- human services transportation plan”. This provision is aimed at improving transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and ensuring that communities are coordinating transportation resources provided through multiple Federal programs.

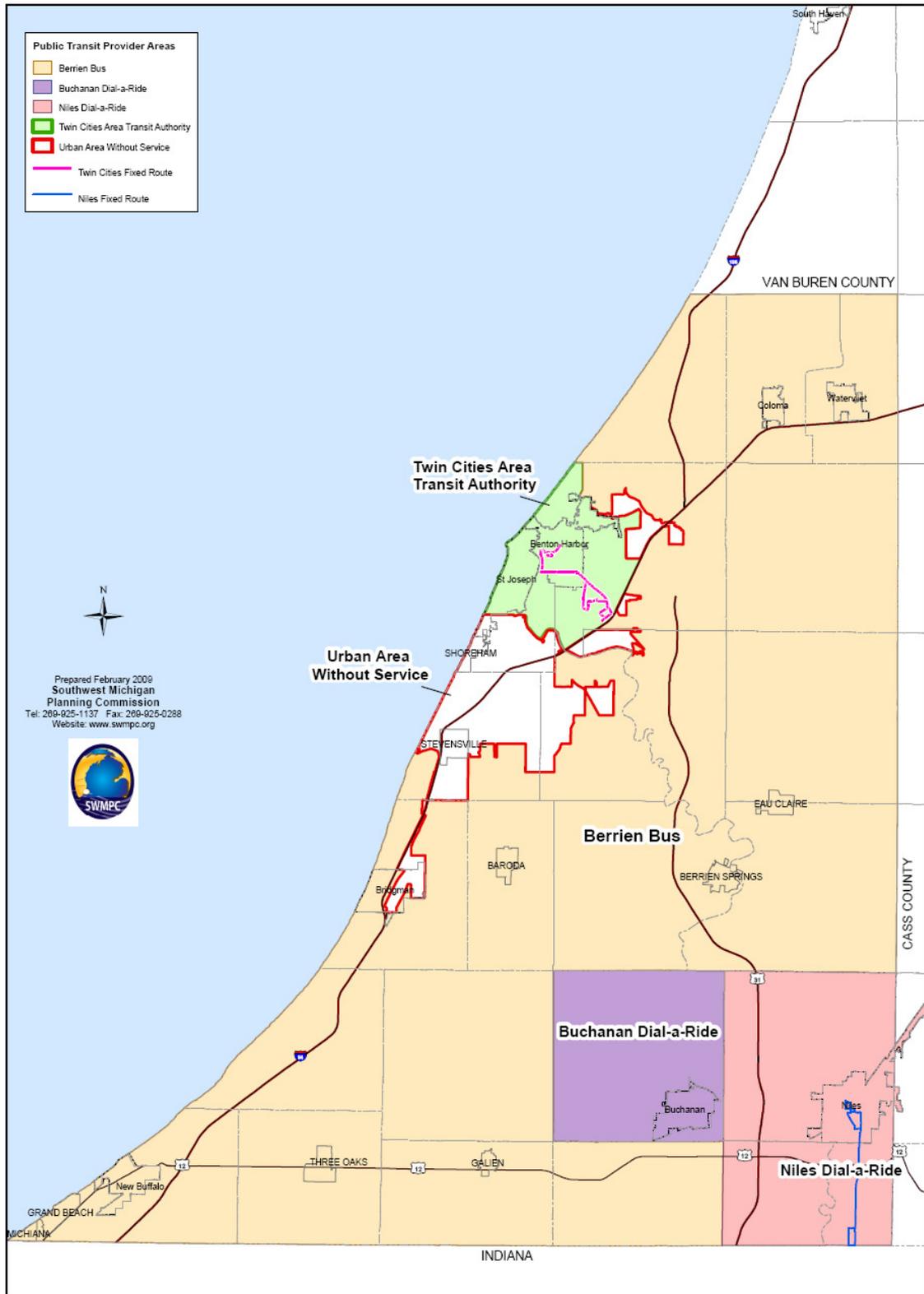
In March 2006, FTA issued proposed circulars with interim guidance for use of Federal FY 2007 funding through the Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom Programs, including the coordinated planning requirements. The final guidance noted that all grant funds obligated in Federal FY 2008 and beyond must be in full compliance with the requirements of these circulars and the coordinated plan requirements.

In the state of Michigan, the Michigan Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation (UPTRAN) assigned the responsibility for developing a local Coordination Plan to counties. To respond to the federal and state requirements, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission took the lead in the development of a countywide Coordinated Transportation Plan for Berrien County. The plan for Berrien County includes the census designated small urbanized areas (St. Joseph-Benton Harbor and Niles) and census designated rural area. The area is shown in **Map 1.1**. With this plan in place, future projects funded through the Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom Programs will be derived from this locally developed plan.

This planning effort is not solely limited to the Section 5310, JARC and New Freedom Programs, but will include and engage the wide spectrum of human service and public transportation services offered by Berrien County's locally operated transit systems and local human service providers. The Coordinated Transportation Plan will also:

- Assess the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities and low income workers.
- Develop strategies for addressing identified gaps and improving efficiencies of services.
- Prioritize specific strategies for implementation.

Map 1.1- Study Area



Funding Program Information

Section 5310 (Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities)

The federal grant funds awarded under the Section 5310 program provide financial assistance for purchasing capital equipment to be used to transport the elderly and persons with disabilities. Eligible recipients include private nonprofit agencies, public bodies approved by the state to coordinate services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities, or public bodies that certify to the state that no nonprofit agencies are available in an area to provide the service. The Section 5310 grant provides 80% of the cost of the equipment purchased, with the remaining 20% provided by the applicant organization, and some non-transportation federal sources may be able to be used as matching funds.

Federal Section 5310 funds are apportioned annually by a formula that is based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each state. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds in Michigan, with the Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation (UPTRAN) providing management and overall policy direction of the Section 5310 program in Michigan.

Job Access and Reverse Commute

The JARC Program provides funding for developing new or expanded transportation services that connect welfare recipients and other low income persons to jobs and other employment-related services. The MDOT is the designated recipient for JARC funds in areas of the State with populations under 200,000 persons.

From its inception in FFY99, Federal JARC funds were awarded as a discretionary grant and Michigan received a significant amount of grant funding under this program. A major impact to the JARC Program in the SAFETEA-LU legislation was a change to a formula program based on the number of low-income individuals in each state, significantly reducing the amount of funds Michigan receives. This change has made JARC funding more competitive, increasing the need for specific priorities to meet the transportation needs of people with low incomes.

New Freedom Program

The New Freedom Program provides funding for capital and operating expenses designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Projects funded through the New Freedom Program must be new and go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (ADA) of 1990. For the purpose of the New Freedom Program, "new" service is any service or activity that was not operational on August 10, 2005, and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the STIP. In other words, if not for the New Freedom Program, these projects would not have consideration for funding and proposed service enhancements would not be available for individuals with disabilities.

Coordinated Transportation Plan Requirements

FTA guidance defines a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan as one that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Required elements of the plan are:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes;
- Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps and achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- Relative priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.
- While the coordinated plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified FTA programs, FTA guidance states that the plan should also incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

SECTION TWO: PLANNING PROCESS

FTA guidance notes that States and communities may approach the development of a coordinated plan in different ways. Potential strategies suggested by FTA include community planning sessions, focus groups, and surveys.

The development of the *Berrien County Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* was built by working closely with public and private organizations to address the transportation needs of individuals moving from welfare to work and individuals with a disability.

Berrien County Transportation Forum

On December 3, 2008, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission hosted a countywide forum to engage a variety of organizations at the local level that are aware of transportation issues in regard to people with disabilities, older adults and people with lower incomes. The forum attracted Over 60 participants, including representatives from:

- Local public transit operators
- Private transportation providers
- County Commissioners
- City and Township Officials
- Workforce development agencies
- Department of Health
- Department of Aging
- Adult day care providers
- Hospice Providers
- Volunteer programs
- Health care providers
- Disability advocacy organizations
- Consumers
- Mental health provides
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Federal Transit Administration
- United We Ride
- Tribal Organizations
- Residential Services
- United Way
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Child and Family Services
- Chamber of Commerce

During the three and a half hour forum, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission presented a brief overview of public transit systems and demographics of the county. Forum participants worked through a mobility management exercise utilizing twenty four scenarios focusing on transportation disadvantaged population groups that included: low income individuals, seniors, youth, employment seekers, medical needs, veterans, homeless, students, and the disabled. Each group was given three scenarios and was charged with the task of finding transportation for each need described in the scenario. Each group presented their “real-life” solutions for each scenario. If no solution was found the entire forum was encouraged to present a solution. This exercise revealed several things including but not limited to; a lack of understanding by participants of transportation provider services, the high costs associated with certain trips, no service areas in the county and the need for additional hours to meet the needs of employment trips.

Outreach Meetings

Several smaller meetings/presentations were held prior to the Berrien County Transit Forum to gain information and build support for the coordination in the future. The meetings featured discussions on the new federal coordinated planning process and reviewed current transportation resources and demographics in the county. A total of five meetings were held with the following groups:

- Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study Group (NATS)
- Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TWINCATS)
- Berrien County Human Services Coordinating Council
- Cass County Human Services Coordinating Council
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Berrien County Coordinated Planning Committee

During the forum participants were invited to stay involved with the coordinated planning process by joining the Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition that would provide guidance with the plan development, especially with specific local/regional needs and potential projects to fill those needs. The Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition was established with forum participants and others who expressed interest. A coalition list is included in **Appendix A**

The Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition met formally and provided comments throughout the planning process. The meetings focused on the coalition’s input on potential strategies and activities to meet the unmet transportation needs identified during the forum. At that meeting there was agreement by the Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition that a structure needs to be formalized to ensure efforts continue to move forward and establish a countywide and eventually a regional structure to support the goals of:

- Improved coordination
- Improved efficiency
- Improved quality of transportation services
- Increased awareness of available services

Project Webpage

To encourage involvement in the on-going coordinated planning process a section was developed on the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission website. www.swmpc.org The website offers information on the planning requirements under 5310, New Freedom and JARC Programs, and the planning process. The section provides information about the planning process including: draft plans, public meeting dates, transit information, and planning tools. The section will also feature links to existing resources to help organizations improve coordination.

Public Comment on the Plan

In addition to review and approval by the Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition, preliminary and final drafts of the *Berrien County Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* will be posted on the website for public review and comment. Participants from the Berrien County Transit Forum and the Berrien County will be notified when plans are available for review, and information will be sent to newspapers regarding the opportunity to comment on the final draft plan.

SECTION THREE: TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND ISSUES

Berrien County is rural in nature and that is reflected by the abundance of rivers, lakes, rolling farmland, orchards and small communities. The rural nature of the county, the scattered population centers and dispersed destinations, present distinct transportation needs for seniors, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes or no vehicle. People who have no/limited access to or ability to use a car have to rely on public transit services and on human service organization-provided transportation that is generally contracted out to private providers.

Many of those trips cross transit service area boundaries, county lines and in some cases state lines.

The county covers 1,581 square miles with a population density of 285 people per square mile. The Benton Harbor/St. Joseph urbanized area includes population centers of 1000 people per square mile.



The identification and assessment of specific transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes in Berrien County was a three fold process. First, census data was collected for the three population segments and mapped to create a transit dependent profile for the census designated rural and urban areas of Berrien County. Second, Transit Forum participants provided input on unmet transportation needs that are detailed in Section Five. Lastly, the Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition provided final review on the needs ultimately included in this plan.

Census Data

Since the plan is meant to address the transportation needs of three potentially transit dependent populations- seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes Census data was gathered at block group level for the entire county, and analyzed to determine highest need.

Table 3.1 shows the number of elderly, disabled and persons below poverty in Berrien County, as well as the percentage of the general population that they represent:

Table 3.1: Berrien County Census Data

DEMOGRAPHICS	Number of People	% of Total Population	Statewide %
Total Berrien County Population	162,453	100%	
Seniors (65+)	23,449	14%	12.3%
People with Disabilities	30,301	20%	18.7%
People with incomes below poverty level	20,202	13%	10.5%

Source: 2000 Census

The data demonstrates that Berrien County as a whole exceeds the statewide average in every category. Obviously this is a county with a significant population of seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes, and one that therefore has extensive transportation needs.

Profile of Transit Dependent Population

To evaluate transportation needs specific to each population group, Census block data for persons over age 65, disabled persons, persons below poverty level as well as other supporting factors including: female householder with no husband present with children, households with no vehicle and percentage of people in labor force were mapped. Based on these maps the geographical distributions of each group provided a visual representation of high, medium, and low levels of transit need throughout the county.

A summary of the county's transit dependent population including people ages 65 and above, disabled and low income are described below. The other supporting factors that were identified are mapped and are located in **Appendix C**

Persons Over 65

Mobility is an important quality of life issue for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. When older Americans lose their ability to drive and maintain an automobile, they become dependent upon outside providers for transportation. This situation can be severe for some, who live in rural areas and have very limited access to transportation.

In Berrien County there are several assisted living facilities and adult day care centers. Many of the larger facilities operate their own vehicles to transport clients, but many times visitation at the facility from older family members is limited due to lack of transportation.

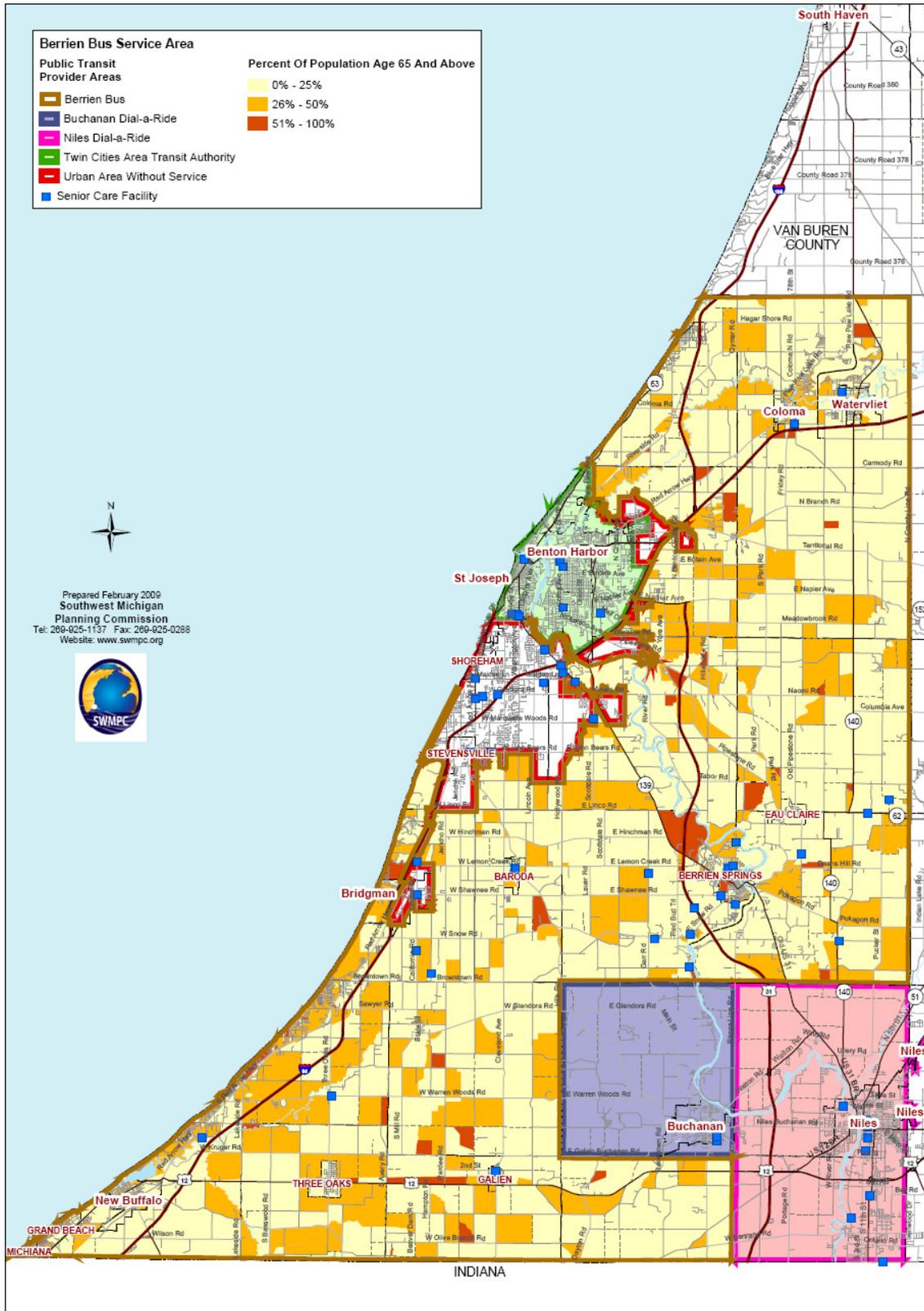
Within the service area of the County's rural provider, Berrien Bus, there are several scattered pockets with 20%-50% of the population over 65. **Map 3.1** illustrates the pockets throughout the rural areas of the county.

The more densely populated St Joseph/Benton Harbor Urbanized Area has several areas with clusters of people over the age of 65. St. Joseph, St. Joseph Township, Benton Township, and Bridgman have areas where 25%-50% of the population is over the age of 65. There are also several senior care facilities located within this urbanized area. Twin Cities Dial-a-Ride services a portion of this area that includes the cities of Benton Harbor, St. Joseph and Benton Township. The remainder of the St. Joseph Benton Harbor urbanized area is without public transit service. **Map 3.2** illustrates the above information.

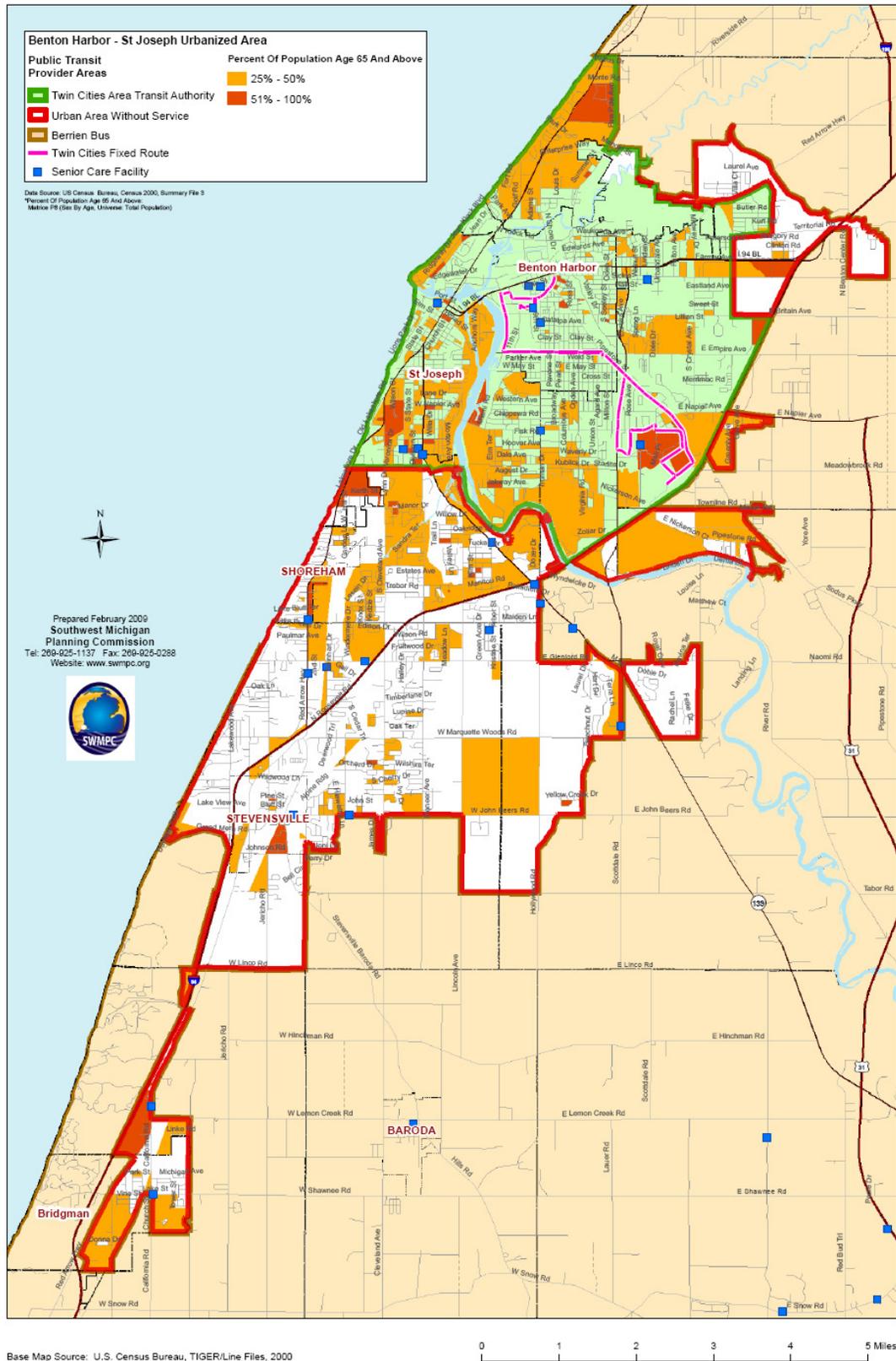
The city of Niles and Niles Township is located in the southern portion of Berrien County and is serviced by Niles Dial a Ride. Over 18% of the city of Niles population is over the age of 65 and there are several senior care facilities within the city. Several of these facilities are located within walking distance of a fixed route transit service. This fixed route and senior care facilities are illustrated on **Map 3.3**

The city of Buchanan is located to the west of Niles and is serviced by Buchanan Dial-a-Ride. Approximately 16% of the cities and townships population is over the age 65. There are several senior care facilities located within the city and areas that have over 50% of the population age 65 and over. **Map 3.4** illustrates the above information.

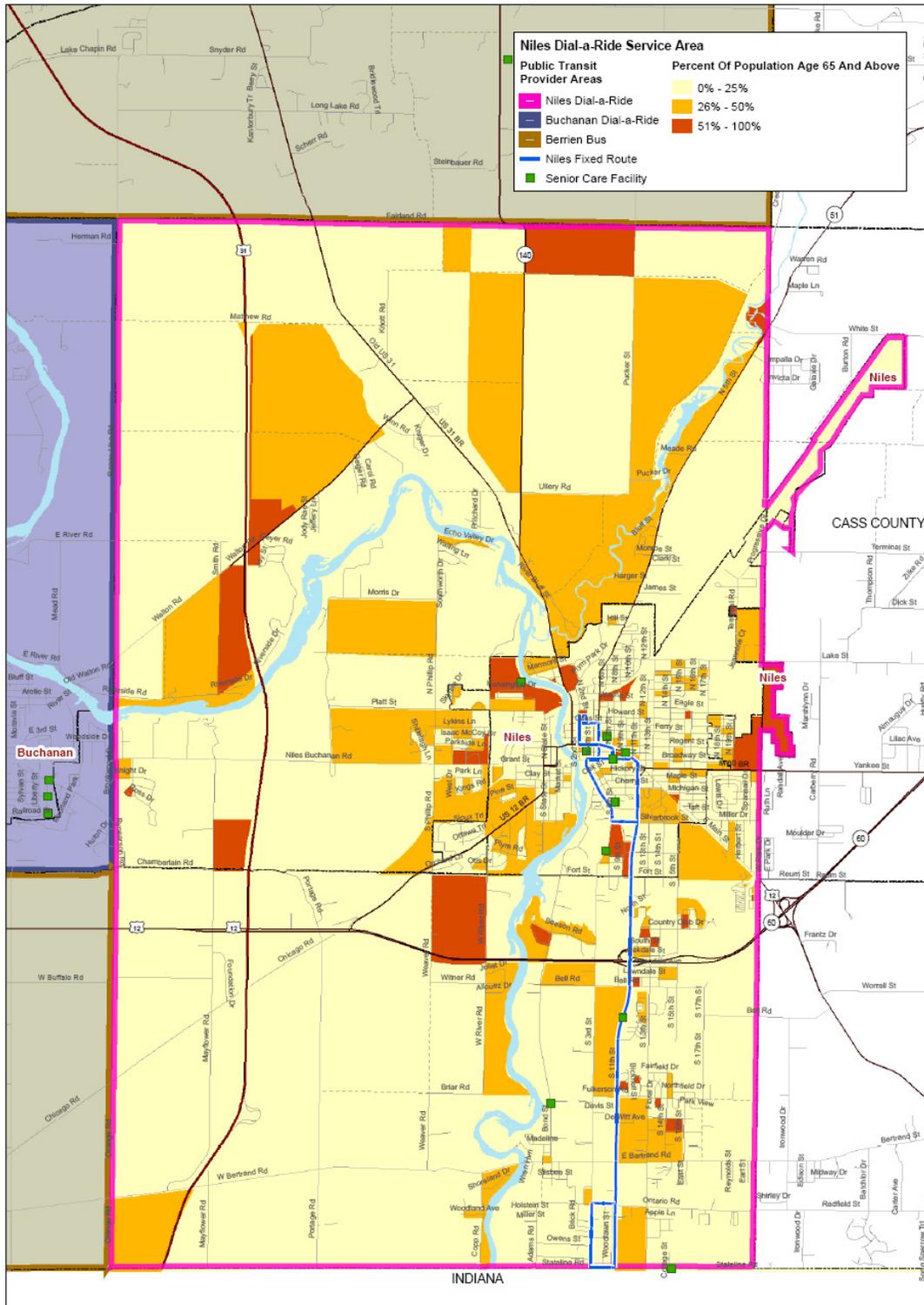
Map 3.1-Berrien Rural – Population Age 65 and Above



Map 3.2- St. Joseph Benton Harbor UZA – Population Age 65 and Above



Map 3.3 – Niles UZA – Population Age 65 and Above



0 1 2 3 Miles

Data Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3
 *Percent Of Population Age 65 And Above
 **Native PS (Sex By Age, Universe: Total Population)
 Base Map Source: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line Files, 2000



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Persons with Disabilities

The transportation needs of persons with disabilities are many and they are varied. From the most basic needs, such as going to the bank and grocery store, or to participate in the work force, people with disabilities continue to face transportation barriers.

Adults with developmental disabilities who are higher functioning have employment opportunities (both gainful and sheltered) employment that is usually dependent upon their ability to acquire reliable and affordable transportation. Many of these people tend to live with their parents who are often unable to provide the needed transportation support due to work requirements.

People who have recently become disabled because of an illness or accident and find themselves in need of transportation services can find it cost prohibitive if they need door to door services. Area Agency on Aging provides support services for seniors with lower incomes who find themselves in a situation where they cannot afford transportation because of a disability.

Within the designated rural area of Berrien County there are several areas that have higher densities of people with disabilities as illustrated in **Map 3.5**. Those areas include areas north of Watervliet, rural Benton Township and Berrien Springs. Many of the designated rural areas with higher densities of people with disabilities have very little choice when scheduling a ride because of service frequency in these areas. Support services including job training, employment, medical services and shopping are located outside the rural providers service area (Berrien Bus) which makes it next to impossible to reach those destinations without making transfers to another service provider which is not feasible for most people with disabilities.

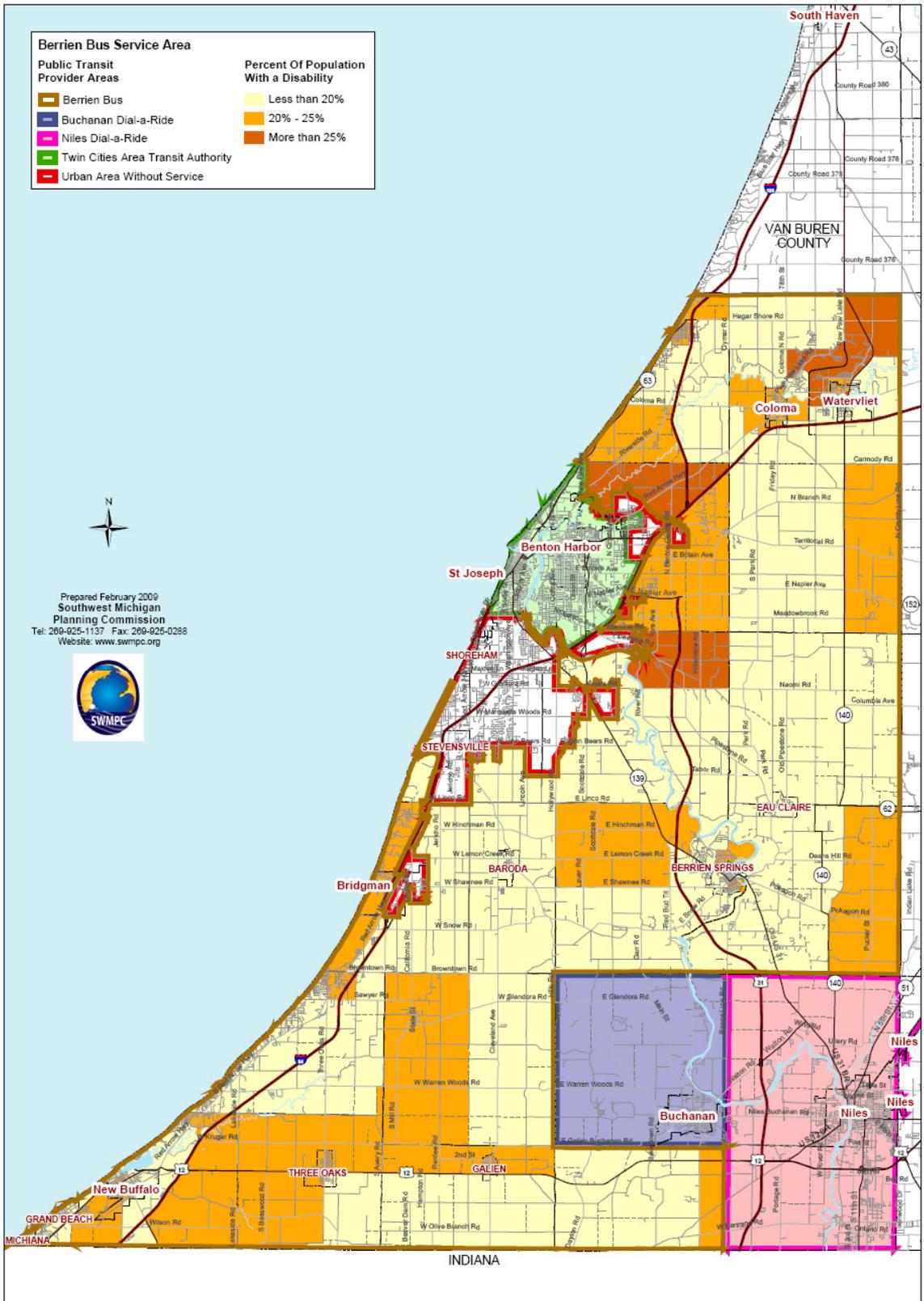
The Benton Harbor/St. Joseph Urbanized Area has the highest percentage of people with disabilities in the county as illustrated in **Map 3.6**. Large areas within the city of Benton Harbor and Benton Township have a disabled population of over 30%. Many of these people are considered newly disabled because of an illness or an accident, or there has been a change in disability status and would include people who are on dialysis or who are suffering from degenerative disease. Many of the medical facilities and support services are located in an area not served by any public transit provider.

Within the Niles Urbanized Area there are several areas that are reporting 20% or more of the population with a disability. See **Map 3.7** There are several group homes that provide services for adults with developmental disabilities as well as senior care facilities. Lakeland

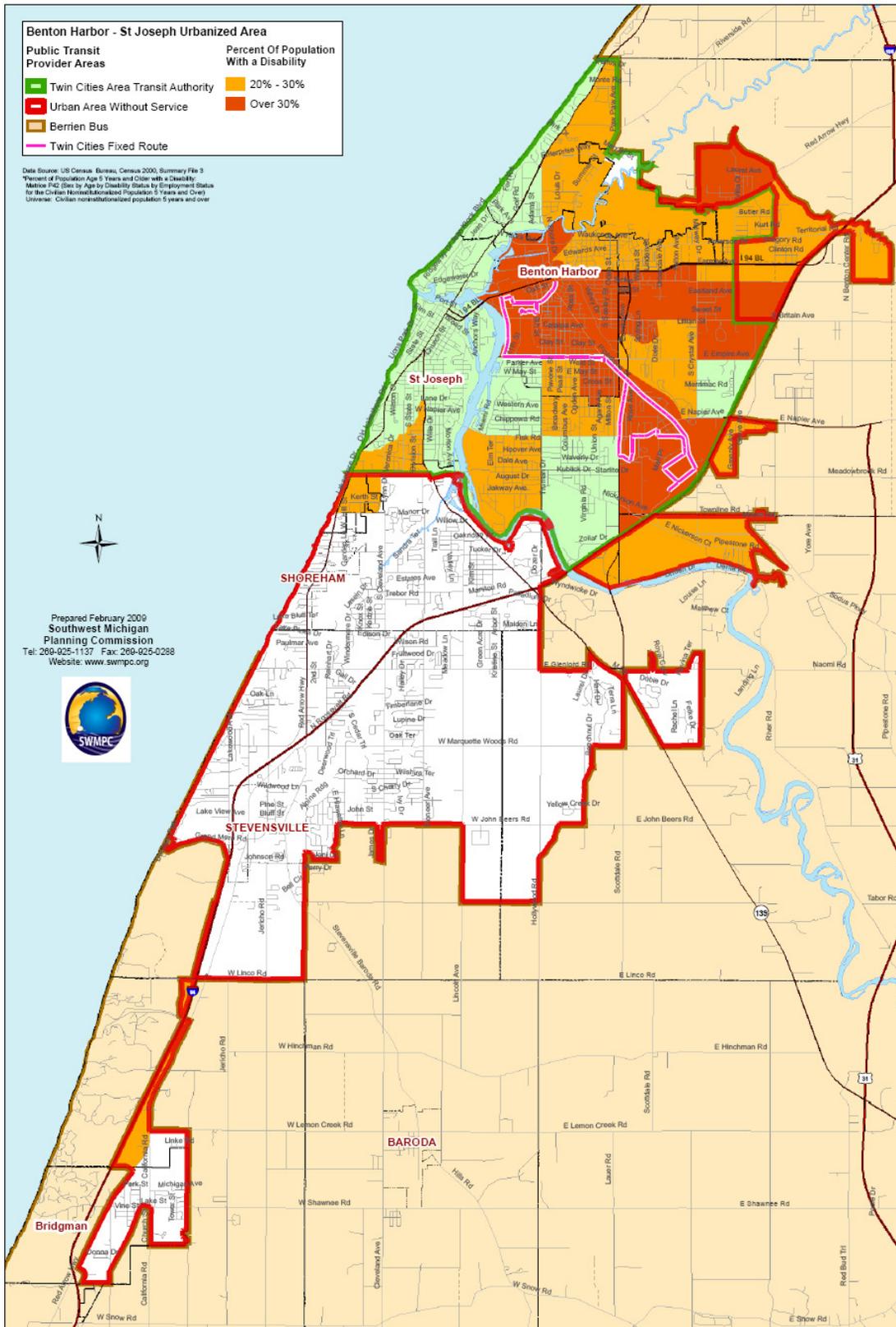
Hospital has a dialysis and rehabilitation unit in Niles which provides services for many people who are newly disabled or have deteriorating health.

West of Niles is the city of Buchanan which is serviced by Buchanan Dial-a-Ride. There is a large area within the city of Buchanan where over 25% percent of the population is reporting a disability. See **Map 3.8** Within that area there are four senior care facilities and a high rate of poverty and unemployment.

Map 3.5 Berrien County Census Designated Rural Area - Persons with a Disability



Map 3.6 St. Joseph Benton Harbor UZA- Persons with a Disability

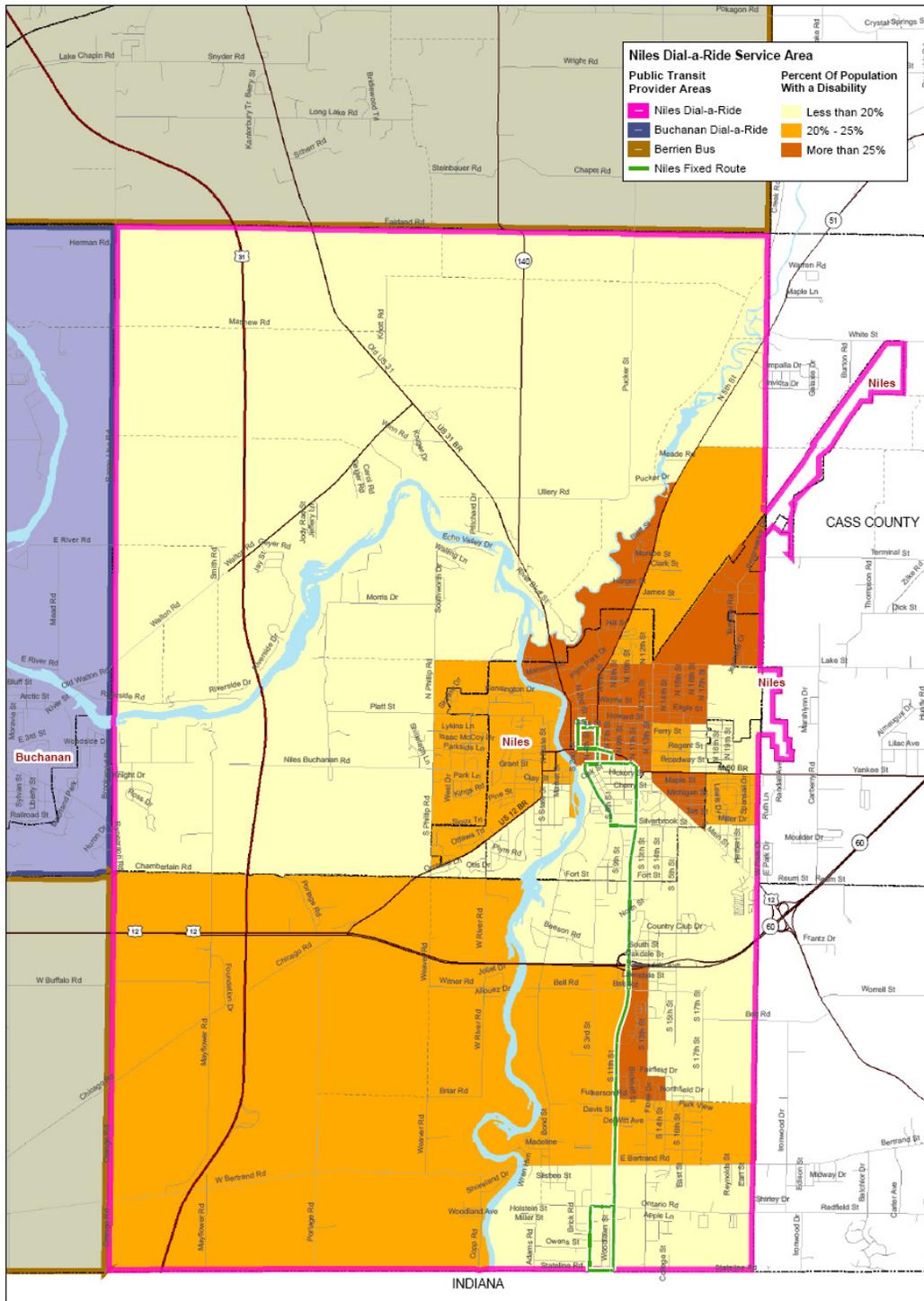


Data Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3
 *Percent of Population Age 5 Years and Older with a Disability
 **Matrix P42 (Rows by Age by Disability Status by Employment Status
 for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population 5 Years and Over)
 Universe: Civilian noninstitutionalized population 5 years and over

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Map 3.7 Niles UZA- Persons with a Disability



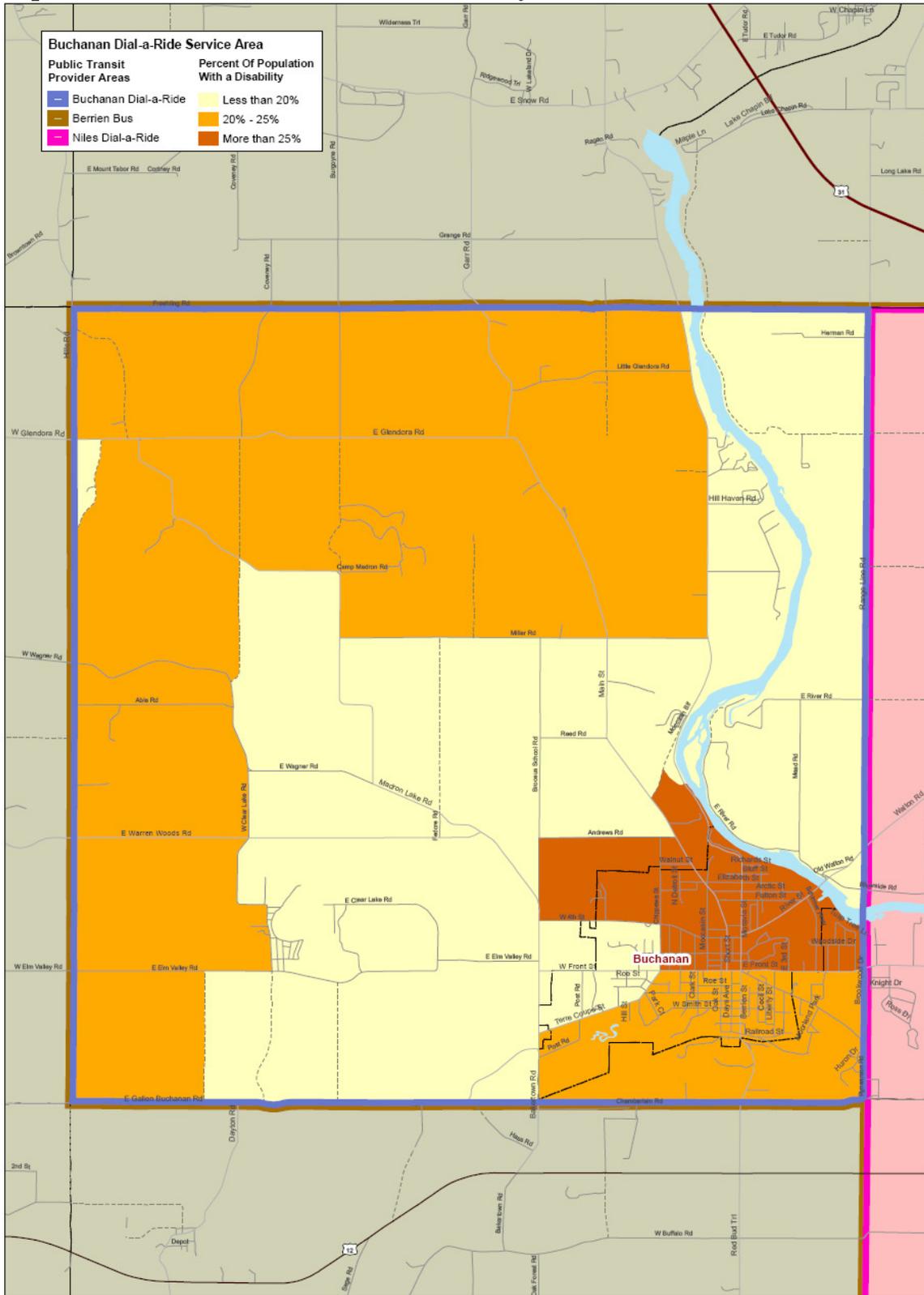
0 1 2 3 Miles

Data Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3
 Percent of Population Age 5 Years and Older with a Disability.
 Maricopa P4Z (Sex by Age by Disability Status by Employment Status
 for the civilian noninstitutionalized population 5 years and over)
 Universe: Civilian noninstitutionalized population 5 years and over
 Base Map Source: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line Files, 2000



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Map 3.8 Buchanan – Persons with a Disability



Persons at or Above Poverty

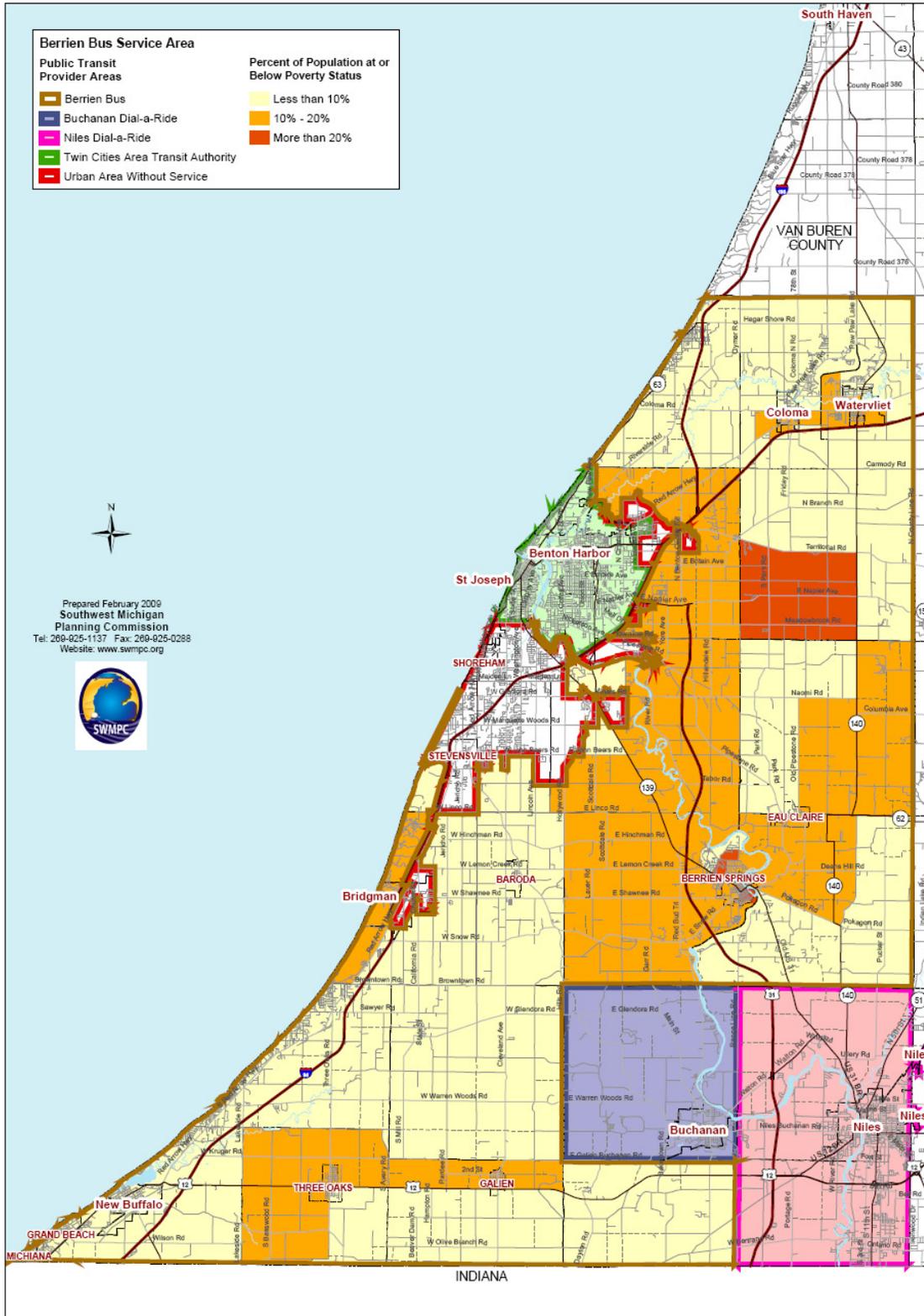
Thirty-seven million Americans live below the official poverty line. Millions more struggle each month to pay for basic necessities, or run out of savings when they lose their jobs or face health emergencies. For a family of four persons, the US Census poverty threshold is an annual income of \$18,810. Many people with lower incomes are either without a car or without a reliable car – which makes it even more difficult to change circumstances. Retaining employment can be difficult for low-income people if they do not have a car and there are limited transportation options. Most entry level positions involve early morning or late night hours when transit service may not be available. Poverty imposes enormous costs on society. Berrien County has the highest child poverty rate in Michigan and is ranked third in overall poverty rate within the state.

Within the Census Designated Rural Area of Berrien County the areas of poverty are dispersed throughout the county. See **Map 3.9**. Several of the smaller rural communities including Eau Claire, Berrien Springs, Sodus, Three Oaks and Galien are surrounded by higher poverty block groups where 10-20% of the population is living at or below the poverty level. Because of the infrequent transit service to rural areas it is more difficult for people living in these rural areas to sustain employment.

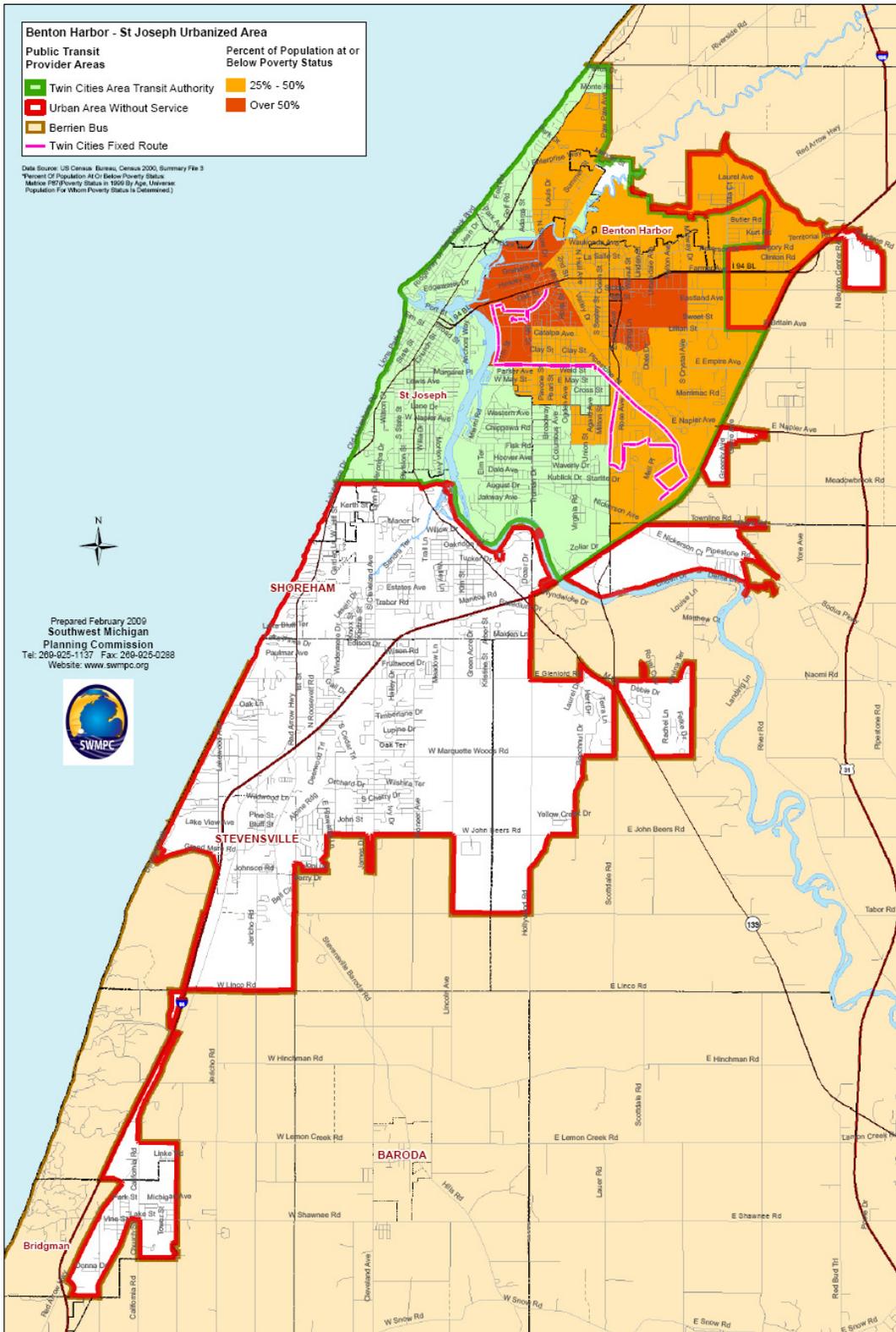
Benton Harbor has the highest rate of poverty in the county with over 50% of the population at or above poverty. See **Map 3.10**. Along with this comes higher than average households reporting no access to a vehicle, higher percentages of women with children under the age of 18 with no husband present and higher rates of unemployment. Twin Cities Dial-a-Ride services the entire city of Benton Harbor with demand response services and one fixed route. Because of the needs of this population, specialized transit is often needed for employment, job training childcare needs, and medical services. Specialized transportation is needed because many of the services and employment opportunities are outside of the Twin Cities Dial a Ride service area and not serviced by any public transit agency.

The Niles urbanized area has several large tracks of 10%-20% of the population at or above poverty. See **Map 3.11**. Many of these tracks of poverty are in line with areas that also have higher rates of unemployment, disabilities, and households with no vehicle. Niles has entry level employment opportunities in service sector jobs that require hours of employment that differ from public transit hours. Private providers are often needed to access these jobs and the cost is prohibitive for those earning a minimum wage.

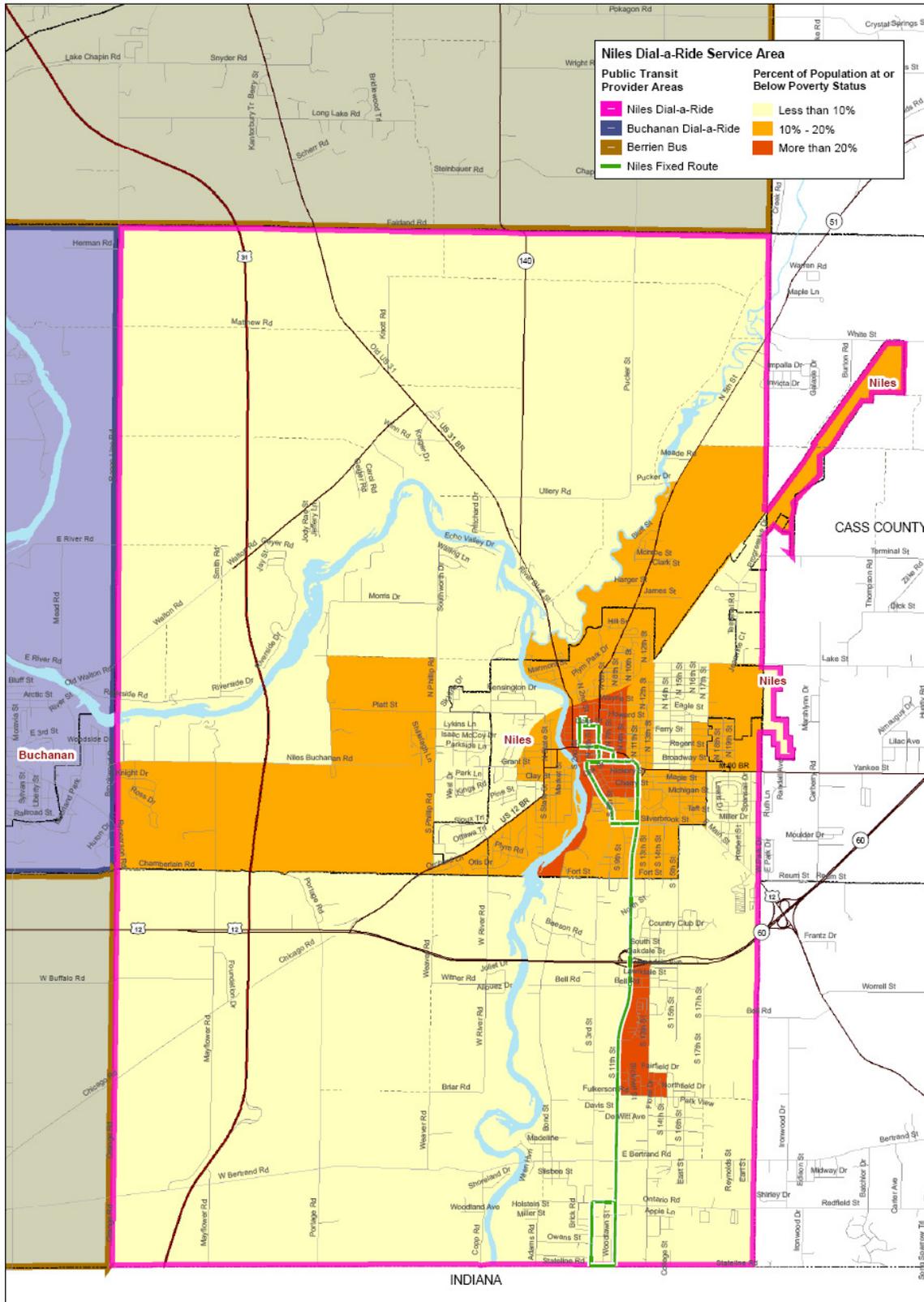
Map 3.9 Berrien County Census Designated Rural Area – Persons at or Below Poverty



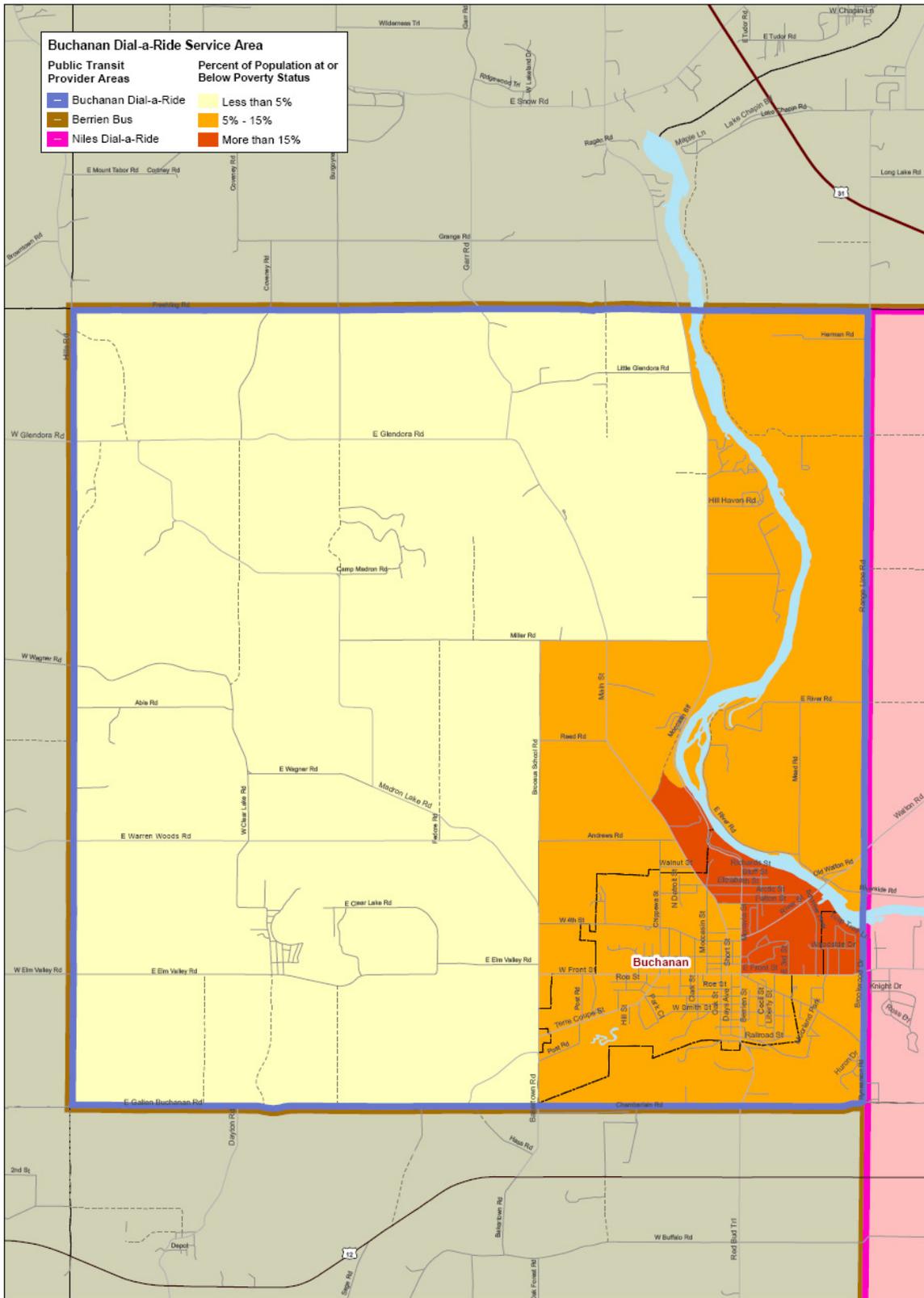
Map 3.10 St. Joseph Benton Harbor UZA Persons at or Below Poverty



Map 3.11 Niles - Persons at or Below Poverty



Map 3.12 Buchanan - Persons at or Below Poverty



Future Trends and Issues

The population the United States is aging – its older population will double over the next 30 years. By 2030, one in five Americans will be 65 or older. In Berrien County those numbers are not much different. In 1980, only 11% of the population was age 65 and above. By 2020, that number of older adults will represent 33% of Berrien County’s population. As the number of older people continues to increase, important issues affecting this population segment need to be addressed. One such issue is preserving the mobility and enhancing the safety of seniors.

Ongoing Transportation Needs

Like most rural areas, older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes in Berrien County need a variety of transportation services designed to meet particular needs. From the Census data and information from previous knowledge of the county, the following overall transportation needs and issues for older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes identified:

- Transit dependent persons living in low density areas have limited access to fixed route public transportation and need transportation options to access jobs, medical facilities, shopping and other community services.
- Transportation services that cross county and state lines are needed in the region to access destinations outside of Berrien County, including medical services and jobs in Kalamazoo, South Bend, Indiana and Battle Creek.
- Appropriate travel training in the use of public transit routes is needed, especially for older adults and people with disabilities unfamiliar with services or unsure in traveling without any knowledge of the system.
- Simplified point of access is needed to obtain information and transportation services regardless of the funding agency, transportation provider or type of service.
- Infrastructure improvements are needed in areas with high concentrations of no vehicle households to allow for non-motorized transportation (biking/walking)
- Sufficient marketing is needed to ensure information is available on transportation options
- In higher density areas, transit-dependent populations need public transit services to access destinations clustered in population or service centers located throughout the county.

SECTION FOUR: CURRENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

A variety of public transit, human service transportation, and private transportation services are provided in Berrien County. This section documents and describes the transportation programs and services in Berrien County. The process to identify the various transportation resources available in the county included:

- Using prior knowledge of the transportation in the county.
- Surveying agencies to collect descriptive and operational data for various agency programs, with a focus on the riders served, and specifics (trips provided, operating costs, funding sources, geographic service area, eligibility requirements)
- Michigan Department of Transportation PTMS system to collect public transit data.
- Documenting and collecting information garnered at outreach meetings and presentations.
- Input from Berrien County Transit Forum

In the collection of this information, various issues and constraints were evident:

- There is no public transit service on Sunday.
- Public transit service hours are not aligned with businesses that have entry level employment opportunities. (Retail, Food, Lodging, Factory, Medical)
- Demand response service is at capacity in densely populated areas.
- There are no eligibility requirements to use demand response service where fixed routes are present.
- Lack of ridership data from agencies.
- Job opportunities for transit dependent population is often available in areas of the county not currently served by a public transit agency.
- Trip chaining using public transportation is very difficult for families in transporting children to and from childcare before and after work which impacts job readiness.
- High cost specialized transportation has to be used to access employment because of public transit service area boundaries and the long commutes associated with them.

- Berrien County has over a 31.5 square mile area with a population of over 37,000 people that is not served by public transit.
- Funding and availability for out-of-county travel is confined to Medicaid eligible clients and for long distance medical trips.

Public Transit Providers

Berrien County is served by four public transit agencies including; a countywide agency that services the Census designated rural area of the county and three dial a ride services that service the Census designated small urban areas of the county. All of the services provide demand response and while just two provide limited fixed route services. Because there are four different transportation services in the county with four different funding sources, service is fragmented, especially for the general public.

Agency	Berrien Bus
Service Description	Berrien Bus is the sole rural public transit provider for all non-urbanized areas in Berrien County. Service primarily operates on a 24-hour reservation curb -to -curb demand response model. Berrien Bus provides contract services to Gateway to serve clients who are unable to use regular service.
Hours	Monday–Friday 5:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Weekends and evenings can be booked for group outings. Trips must be reserved 24 hours in advance.
Operations	Berrien County Public Transportation is a transit service sponsored and under contract by the Berrien County Board of Commissioners. It is contractually managed by Transportation Management, Inc and monitored by the county transit coordinator. Berrien Bus provides approximately 119,500 passenger trips annually utilizing twenty-four vehicles that have a passenger capacity ranging from 12 to 33; twenty three of these are lift-equipped for the disabled. Vehicles and dispatch are located in Berrien Springs.
Local Millage	No
Service Area	Berrien Bus operates 22 vehicles in all non-urbanized areas within the county of Berrien.
Eligibility	Service is open to the general public once all agency contract obligations have been met.
Coordination	Berrien Bus coordinates with local agencies that include Gateway Agency, Berrien County Health Department and Michigan WORKS!

Agency	Twin Cities Dial A Ride
Service Description	Twin Cities Dial A Ride operates in part of the St. Joseph Benton Harbor urbanized area. TCATA operates one fixed route and immediate response service. The fixed route service utilizes two vehicles and serves two senior housing complexes for shopping trips to the mall and various strip centers.
Hours	Hours of demand response service are Mon-Fri from 6 am to 5pm and Sat. from 10 AM to 3 PM. The fixed route service hours are Mon-Fri 9 am to 6 PM and Saturday from 8:00 am4:00 pm
Operations	TCATA provides approximately 175,000 passenger trips utilizing twenty-three vehicles in the fleet that have passenger capacity ranging from 8 to 19; all of them are lift-equipped for the disabled. Vehicles and dispatch are located in downtown Benton Harbor.
Local Millage	Yes – Current Millage: 1.25 Renewal Period: 20 years Beginning: August 2008 Ending: August 2028
Service Area	City of Benton Harbor, St. Joseph and Benton Township.
Eligibility	Services are open to the general public
Coordination	Human service agencies purchase tokens for client transportation

Agency	Niles Dial A Ride
Service Description	Niles Dial a Ride provides two types of service that include one fixed route and immediate request. The fixed route is serviced by one vehicle that serves housing complexes and retail establishments in the City of Niles and Niles Township. The service provided consists of Demand-response/immediate request service is provided within the city limits of Niles, Niles Township and Bertrand Township.
Hours	Hours of demand response service are Mon-Fri from 7 AM to 5 PM and Sat. from 10 AM to 3 PM. The fixed route service hours are Mon-Fri 10 AM to 5 PM
Operations	Niles Dial A Ride is a transit service sponsored and under contract by the City of Niles. It is contractually managed by McDonald Transit Associates and monitored by the City of Niles transit coordinator. Niles Dial A Ride provides almost 76,000 trips annually by demand response/immediate request service and one fixed route. There are eight vehicles in the fleet that have passenger capacity ranging from 10 to 17; all of them are lift-equipped for the disabled. Vehicles and dispatch are located in downtown Niles.
Local Millage	Yes- Current Millage: .25 Renewal Period: 2 Years Beginning: August 2008 Ending: August 2010
Service Area	Niles Dial a Ride provides service to the City of Niles, Niles Township and the south eastern tip of Bertrand Township.
Eligibility	Services are open to the general public
Coordination	None at this time

Agency	Buchanan Dial A Ride
Service Description	It provides demand-response service within the city limits of Buchanan and regular shuttle service to Niles
Hours	Monday-Friday 7:00am-5:30 pm.
Operations	Buchanan Dial A Ride is a transit service sponsored and under contract by the City of Buchanan and Buchanan Township. It is contractually managed by Transportation Management Inc. Buchanan Dial a Ride provides approximately 10,500 passenger trips annually by demand response and shuttle service utilizing three vehicles which are all lift equipped. Dispatch and vehicles are housed in the Berrien Bus facility located in Berrien Springs. Buchanan Dial A Ride is supported by a local millage
Local Millage	Yes, Current Millage: 1.0 Renewal Period: 4 Years Beginning: August 2008 Ending: August 2012
Service Area	It provides demand-response service within the city limits of Buchanan and regular shuttle service to Niles and linkages are also coordinated with Berrien Bus.
Eligibility	Services are open to the general public
Coordination	Transfer points with Berrien Bus and Niles Dial a Ride

Transit Operational Data-2007

Location Operator	Service Area Population	Total Vehicles	# Lift Vehicles	# of seats	Total Passengers	Vehicle Hours	Vehicle Miles	Passengers Elderly & Disabled	% Elderly	% Disabled	Passengers per Vehicle Hour	Passengers per Vehicle Mile	Passengers per Population
Berrien	73,356	22	15	430	119,733	24,728	546,081	84,977	2%	69%	4.84	0.22	1.63
Twin Cities	24,000	23	18	344	175,183	36,486	470,203	59,441	17%	16%	4.80	0.37	7.30
Niles	17,717	8	8	79	75,970	17,289	221,690	34,859	22%	21%	4.39	0.34	4.29
Buchanan	4,992	3	3	30	10,504	3,168	37,209	6,410	29%	32%	3.32	0.28	2.10
TOTALS:	120,065	56	44	883	381,390	81,671	1,275,183	185,687		AVERAGES:	4.67	0.30	3.18

Source: MDOT PTMS-2007

Human Service Transportation Providers

Within the region there are several transportation services provided by human service agencies. The majority of the agencies purchase private and public transportation for a specific trip purposes including, employment, training and medical. While an extensive effort was made to identify the many human service agencies that operate or purchase transportation, this list is not inclusive of all the human service agencies in the county.

Berrien County Human Service Agencies						
Agency	Agency Type	Geographic Area	People Served	Number of People Served Annually	Operate or Purchase Transportation	Hour of Operation
Homebased Non-nursing Care	Private	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	55 and older		Purchase	24/7
Benton Harbor/Benton Township Senior Services, Inc	Private	Benton Harbor and Benton Township	Residents Ages 60-64		Operate	M-F 8am-4:30pm
Berrien County Veteran's Services	Public	Berrien County	Military-Veterans		Operate	M-F 8:30am-5:00pm
North Berrien Senior Center	Private	Bainbridge, Coloma, Hagar, Watervliet Twp. City of Coloma and Watervliet	60+ years		Operate	M-F 8am-4:30 pm
Emergency Men's Shelter	Private	Southwestern Michigan	18 or older		Unknown	7 days 6pm-8am
Developmental Disabilities, Riverwood Center	Public	Berrien County	Disabled-Mentally ill		Purchase	M-F 8:30am-5:00pm
Gateway Services, Niles	Public	Berrien County	Adults and Adolescents		Purchase	M-F 8am-5pm
Gateway Services, Benton Harbor	Public	Berrien County	Adults and Adolescents		Purchase	M-F 8am-5pm
Catholic Community Center	Private	Berrien County	Low Income-All ages		Purchase	M-R 9am-Noon
Buchanan Senior Services	Private	Bertrand, Buchanan, Howard,	Senior Citizens		Provide Transportation	M-F 8am-4pm
CARES	Private	Berrien County	Illness-AIDS/HIV		Purchase	M-F 8am-5pm
Michigan Rehabilitation Services	Public	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	SSI recipients-18-64		Purchase	
Department of Human Services	Public	Berrien County	All ages		Purchase	
United Way of Southwest Michigan	Private	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	All people of all ages	10,000		24/7
Tri County Headstart	Private	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	Ages 5 + above federal poverty line		Operate	M-R 9am-3pm Sept-May
Michigan Works	Public	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	ages 16-65, disabled and income apply	3,500		M-F 8am-5pm
Area agency on Aging	Public	Berrien, Cass and Van Buren	Ages 60 and above, disabled and income apply	12,000	Purchase	M-F 8am-5pm

Private Transportation Providers

Taxi Providers

There are several taxi companies that provide service in the county. Many of the companies are small with only a couple of vehicles. There is no standardized countywide fare system in place.

1. Advance Cab

873 E. Empire Avenue
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone: (269) 925-2115

Hours of Operation- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Service Areas- Berrien County

Fares-meter at \$2.50, 20 cents every 10th of a mile

Accommodations-No

Contracts -Yes

2. Niles Taxi

P.O. Box 997
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (269) 684-1804

Hours of Operation-transportation 24 hours 7 days,

Service Areas- Berrien, Cass and St. Joseph County

Fares-flat rate structure/pre-determined trip rate, no meters city to city

Accommodations-No

Contract-Yes (HMO Medicaid, Michigan WORKS!)

6. A-Cab & Carrier Service

14566 N Red Bud Trl # 66
Buchanan, MI 49107
(269) 697-0427

Hours of Operation-24 hours/7 days a week

Service Areas- Berrien and Cass Counties

Fares-flat rate, city to city

Accommodations-No

Contracts-Yes (Michigan WORKS!)

Shuttles, Charters, Limousine

1. Care-A-Van-Coloma

6001 Mountain Rd
Coloma, Michigan 49038
(269) 468-2273

Fare-by service area and (mileage-mileage only from time of loaded mile)

Service Area-go anywhere, major service areas are between Kalamazoo and South Bend, Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Counties, Battle Creek

Hours of Operation-24/7

Accommodations-wheel chair accessible, Gerry chair, door through door service.

Contract-yes, (Area Agency on Aging, HMO Medicaid)

2. Lighthouse Concierge Services

St. Joseph, MI
(269)-876-8309

Fare: Varies

Service Area: Region

Hours of Operation-24/7

Accommodations: No

Contracts: (Michigan Works)

SECTION FIVE: UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND ISSUES

Participants of the Berrien County Transit Forum provided input on the unmet transportation needs in the county and the region. During this forum participants from across the county who represented various agencies, citizens, private providers and public transit uncovered unmet needs and issues by solving various transportation scenarios for older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes. Each group had to develop two transportation options for each scenario. The options had to include the cost, time, transfers or if the need could not be met with the current transportation options available. At the conclusion of this exercise the following unmet transportation needs were identified by each group.

Unmet Transportation Need/Issue	Older Adults	People with Disabilities	People With Low Income	County/ Service Area Specific
Limited transit/transportation services on Saturday, Sundays and evenings especially to serve work related trips.	X	X	X	Countywide
Appropriate travel training in the use of public transit routes is needed, especially for older adults and people with disabilities unfamiliar with services or unsure in traveling without any knowledge of system.	X	X	X	Countywide
Transportation services that allow trip-chaining, mother needs to stop at a daycare before arriving for work location, or a senior needs to stop to have prescription filled after leaving doctor's office but before arriving home.	X	X	X	Countywide
Lack of countywide coordination is a primary barrier.	X	X	X	Countywide
Need door to door services to be available through public subsidized services.	X	X		Countywide
Transportation services that cross county and state lines are needed in the region to access destinations outside of Berrien County, including medical services and jobs in Kalamazoo, South Bend, Indiana and Battle Creek.	X	X	X	Regional
Need for safe transfer points for user groups who live outside of the fixed route service areas or other service provider areas.	X	X	X	Regional

Berrien County Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Unmet Transportation Need/Issue	Older Adults	People with Disabilities	People With Low Income	County/ Service Area Specific
There is no Sunday service from any public transit provider including senior center transportation.	X	X	X	Countywide
Fares are not consistent across the various public transit service providers and are confusing.	X	X	X	Countywide
Job opportunities for transit dependent population are often available in areas of the county not currently served by a public transit agency.	X	X	X	St. Joseph/Benton Harbor UZA
Need for expanded transit service on Saturday, Sundays and evenings especially to serve work related trips.	X	X	X	Countywide
Limited transportation services to access dialysis facilities, current services are not designed to accommodate return trip after treatment.	X	X	X	Countywide
Sufficient marketing is needed to ensure information is available on transportation options.	X	X	X	Countywide
A simplified point of access is needed to obtain transportation services regardless of the funding agency, transportation provider or type of service.	X	X	X	Countywide
Demand response service is at capacity in densely populated areas.	X	X	X	Twin Cities & Niles Dial-A-Ride
Berrien County has over a 31.5 square mile area with a population of over 37,000 people that is not served by public transit.	X	X	X	St. Joseph/Benton Harbor UZA
Lack of fixed routes in areas with higher population densities.	X	X	X	Benton Harbor, Niles, St. Joseph
Infrastructure improvements are needed in areas with high concentrations of no vehicle households to allow for non-motorized transportation (biking/walking)			X	Benton Harbor
Limited options for unplanned transportation needs, especially for trips that require accessible vehicles.	X	X		Countywide

SECTION SIX: STRATEGIES AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Meeting the specialized transportation needs of the three diverse and often overlapping groups of the population, (seniors, people with disabilities and lower income individuals) is challenging and will become even more so in the future. The following strategies and potential projects identified should:

- Adequately address the unmet/underserved and individualizes transportation needs of the targeted populations.
- Maintains consistency with current Federal and State funding requirement
- Build/or increase overall system capacity and service quality
- Leverage and maximize existing transportation funding and capital resources

While potential projects that could be implemented to fulfill these strategies are listed, the list is far from comprehensive and will be updated frequently as other projects that meet the strategies and address the unmet needs are brought forward to or by the Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition.

Strategy 1:

Establish structure to build and sustain coordination efforts.

Coordination efforts in Berrien County have lagged because there are individual advisory groups serving each of the transit agencies in Berrien County. There is consensus that a more formalized structure needs to be established to pursue opportunities to improve coordination between the four public transit agencies that provide transportation for older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes, and to improve coordination among human service transportation providers.

Unmet Need/Issue Addressed

- Lack of countywide coordination is a primary barrier.
- Limited transportation services to access dialysis facilities, current services are not designed to accommodate return trip after treatment.
- Fares are not consistent across the various public transit service providers and there by are confusing.
- Limited transit/transportation services on Saturday, Sundays and evenings especially to serve work related trips.
- Demand response service is at capacity in densely populated areas.
- Need door to door services to be available through public subsidized services.
- Sufficient marketing is needed to ensure information is available on transportation options.

Potential Funding Programs:

- New Freedom
- JARC

Potential Projects:

- Brining transportation providers together to develop common transfer points, policies and procedures.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Health and Human Services Agencies, Transportation, and Housing Agencies to support coordination efforts.
- Implement new mobility management strategies to build coordination and expand availability of transportation services to older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes. Potential activities include:
- Promote and facilitate integration and coordination of current public and human service transportation services.
- Help establish interagency agreements for sharing rides
- Establish a transportation brokerage to coordinate multiple providers and funding sources.

Strategy 2:

Expand outreach to customers, human service agency staff, employers and others, and provide simplified access to information regarding existing transportation options.

Agency representatives and customers have expressed concerns about the lack of and how transit information is distributed throughout Berrien County. It is vital that customers, caseworkers, agency staff, employers and medical facility personnel are familiar with available transportation services. Efforts could include travel training programs to ensure people helping others with their transportation issues are aware of mobility options in the county and the surrounding region. A greater emphasis can also be placed on the coordination of outreach and information sharing, including a mobility manager to service as a one-stop transportation traveler call center that provides information on all modes of transportation. Expanded use of technology, specifically, the use of a website to provide information on transportation services in Berrien County and the surrounding region would benefit customers and agencies.

Unmet Need/Issue Will Address:

- A simplified point of access is needed to obtain transportation services regardless of the funding agency, transportation provider or type of service.
- Sufficient marketing is needed to ensure information is available on transportation options.
- Lack of countywide coordination is a primary barrier.
- Transportation services that allow trip-chaining, mother needs to stop at a daycare before arriving for work location, or a senior needs to stop to have prescription filled after leaving doctor's office but before arriving home.

Potential Funding Programs:

- New Freedom
- JARC

Potential Projects:

- Implement new or expand outreach programs that provide customers and human service agency staff with training and assistance in use of current transportation services.
- Create and implement marketing program targeting specific audiences and services.
- Pursue opportunities to help offset individual transportation costs, including pass or voucher programs.
- Establish a mobility manager to expand one stop career centers capacity to serve customers with disabilities, older adults and people with lower incomes.
- Implement web based technology that can track individual client activity on a vehicle supported with multiple funding sources.
- Create "Buddy" programs where experienced transit riders accompany and support new riders.
- Improve signage at fixed route and transfer pickup points.

Strategy 3:

Expand fixed route public transportation services

Within Berrien County there is very limited fixed route public transit service available. The two fixed routes in the county are in Benton Harbor and the City of Niles, both with higher population densities. Because of the higher than average rate of poverty, unemployment and households with no vehicle in Benton Harbor this area is of great concern to local, county and state government agencies. Several clusters of entry level employment opportunities are within a ten mile radius of the City of Benton Harbor. Many of these employment opportunities are not accessible by public transportation because the area is not serviced by any transit agency and hours of transit do not match service sector entry level jobs. Expanded geographical coverage, service frequency and hours of service of current and new fixed routes should be considered based on census data, trip based information and GIS mapping employment locations.

Unmet Need/Issue Will Address

- Limited transit/transportation services on Saturday, Sundays and evenings especially to serve work related trips.
- Demand response service is at capacity in densely populated areas.
- There is no Sunday service from any public transit provider including senior center transportation.
- Job opportunities for transit dependent population is often available in areas of the county not currently served by a public transit agency.
- Berrien County has over a 31.5 square mile area with a population of over 37,000 people that is not served by public transit.
- Lack of fixed routes in areas with higher population densities.

Potential Funding:

- New Freedom
- JARC

Potential Projects:

- Expand geographic coverage of fixed route services to entry level clusters of employment that are not currently serviced by public transit agencies.
 - Expand hours and days of service to include evenings and weekends.
 - Increase use of fix route services by creating a fare structure that is financially beneficial for customers who choose to use the fixed route service.
 - Create safe and scheduled transfer points between public transit service areas to enable customer access to fixed routes.
 - The availability of “last mile” services not otherwise provided by regular fixed route services, such as taxis or community shuttles, which can get people from a transit hub or bus stop to their final destination.
-

Strategy 4:

Use current demand-response services more efficiently to expand capacity of current services offered to individuals who need human service and specialized transportation.

There is an existing demand for transportation which is not currently being served because of capacity restraints. This demand is anticipated to grow tremendously over time, yet services will remain constrained because of a lack of funding and/or the lack of political will to provide additional funding. As such, it is up to human service agencies and transportation service providers to make strategic decisions that can help stretch available dollars, making their services operate more efficiently while at the same time maintaining acceptable levels of service.

Unmet Need/Issue Will Address:

- Need for expanded transit service on Saturday and Sundays and evenings especially to serve work related trips.
- Limited options for unplanned transportation needs, especially for trips that require accessible vehicles.
- Demand response service is at capacity in densely populated areas.
- Need door to door services to be available through public subsidized services.
- There is no Sunday service from any public transportation provider including senior services.

Potential Projects

- Create a demand responsive group shopping service that would include assistance in carrying packages.
- Create countywide eligibility criteria for demand response services.
- Expand services to dialysis treatment facilities through current demand response system.
- Increase connections between transit systems especially where these are needed to reach regional medical facilities and county offices.

Strategy 5:

Improve integration between countywide rural service and small urban dial a ride services.

By integrating rural and small urban dial a ride services, the overall transportation system will be as efficient as possible. As more people become comfortable in using the bus or other lower cost modes, it is more likely that funds for more specialized transportation modes will be available to serve people who require a higher level of assistance.

Unmet Needs/Issue Will Address:

- Job opportunities for transit dependent population is often available in areas of the county not currently served by a public transit agency.
- Fares are not consistent across the various public transit service providers and are confusing.
- Need for safe transfer points for user groups who live outside of the fixed route service areas or other service provider areas.

Potential Projects:

- Adequate transfer facilities for dial-a-ride service to coordinate with rural county service.
- Use new scheduling software, which integrates regular route and dial-a-ride service,

SECTION SEVEN: COORDINATION STRUCTURE

Meeting the specialized transportation needs of the three diverse and often overlapping segments of the population, (older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes) has been challenging for human service providers and will continue to be challenging into the future. To meet current and future demand, the county and region must develop the capacity to deliver more trips by increasing efficiency and duplication of services.

The Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition structure will be formalized to ensure efforts continue to move forward and establish a countywide and eventually a regional structure to support the goals of:

- Improved coordination
- Improved efficiency
- Improved quality of transportation services
- Increased awareness of available services
- Expanded capacity of human and public transportation services

The Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition will provide an ongoing forum for members to discuss any local transportation needs, especially those of older adults, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes. The Coalitions will meet three to four times a year, and at minimum shall:

- Review JARC and New Freedom applications and provide recommendations.
- Bring new funding partners to public service transportation. (i.e.: medical facilities, employers, senior care facilities)
- Public transit, human service transportation providers and the public will work together in establishing priorities with regard to county transportation services.
- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating services with other counties in the region and out of state to help expand mobility options.
- Appoint a representative to be on a state level or body (Mobility Coordinator?)
- Annually review and update the Berrien County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

**APPENDIX A:
Questions & Answers Section 5310, JARC, New Freedom**

Questions & Answers Section 5310, JARC & New Freedom Programs

Last Updated February 6, 2009 FTA

All Programs:

1. **June 2007**

Q. Do applicants have to list the source of non-U.S. DOT funds for the local match?

A. As a general rule, applicants do not have to list the source of a non-U.S. DOT local match. However, FTA grant representatives reserve the right to ask for more detailed information from the grantee such as the source of local match.

2. **June 2007**

Q. Are contributions of funds from human service agencies eligible to be used as local match? How are these applied as local match?

A. Local funds and non-U.S. DOT federal funds may be used as local match for these programs. If human service agencies are using other federal funds as a source of local match, the grantee should verify that those funds are eligible to match transportation projects and are being used for eligible costs of the project.

3. **June 2007**

Q. Can revenue from human service transportation contracts be used as local match?

A. Income from contracts to provide human service transportation may be used either to reduce the net project cost (treated as revenue) or to provide local match for New Freedom or JARC operating assistance. In either case, the cost of providing the contract service is included in the total project cost. FTA program funds may not be used as a source of local match for other FTA programs, even when used to contract for service. For example, if a Section 5310 subrecipient has a service contract to buy service from a Section 5311 provider, the Section 5311 provider may not use the revenue from the Section 5310 service contract as local match for other FTA grants.

4. **May 21, 2008**

Q: Can fare-box revenue be used as local match?

A: Fare box revenue cannot be used as local match, however it can be used to reduce the net project cost of a project.

5. **January 5, 2009**

Q: Can Federal Lands Highway Program Funds be used as local match for JARC and New Freedom projects?

A: Yes. While matching funds generally must come from non U.S. DOT funding sources, there is an exception for the Federal Lands Highway Program. According to, 23 USC - Section 120(l), "Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the funds authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Federal lands highways program under section 204 may be used to pay the non-Federal share of the cost of any project that is funded under this title or chapter 53 of title 49 and that provides access to or within Federal or Indian Lands."

49 U.S.C. §5310 contains language permitting Federal Lands Highway Program funds to be used as match, and FTA has determined that this program can be used as match for the Section 5316 (JARC) and 5317 (New Freedom) programs as well. Programs funded through the Federal Lands Highway Program, such as the Indian Reservation Roads program, can only be used as match for those JARC and New Freedom projects that serve the populations for whom Federal Lands Highways Program funds were also intended to serve.

6. **June 2007**

Q. Who is responsible for determining that matching funds are allowable for transportation purposes?

A. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that non-U.S. DOT federal funds may be used to match transportation projects and that the funds are available for the project.

7. **June 2007**

Q. If the MPO, State DOT or other designated recipient had a JARC plan in place prior to the passage of SAFETEA-LU, what else do they need to do to be in compliance with the coordinated planning requirements to receive JARC, New Freedom, or Section 5310 funds for FY 2007?

A. In order to receive program funds for FY 2007 the MPO, State DOT, or other designated recipient must 1) make an assessment of available services; 2) make an assessment of needs; 3) develop strategies to address gaps for target populations; and 4) the lead agency developing the plan should also include the needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in the coordinated plan, unless they do not plan to apply for Section 5310 or New Freedom funding.

8. June 2007

Q. If the MPO, State DOT, or other designated recipient did not have a coordinated plan prior to the passage of SAFETEA-LU, will they need to have a completed plan in place to receive JARC, New Freedom, and/or Section 5310 funds for fiscal year 2007?

A. Yes, and the coordinated plan should be consistent with the program circulars for fiscal year 2007 planning requirements. These requirements are outlined in Chapter V of the program circulars.

9. June 2007

Q. Beginning in fiscal year 2008, must MPOs, State DOTs, and other designated recipients have a completed coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan in place in accordance with the JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5310 programs before they can be awarded any program funds?

A. Yes. FTA expects plans developed for FY 2008 and beyond to include more information than plans developed for FY 2007. Please see Chapter V of the program circulars for the required elements of coordinated plans.

JARC (Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317) Programs:

10. June 2007

Q. Can a Small Urbanized Area be a designated recipient?

A. No. Please see Chapter III, Section 4, ELIGIBLE DIRECT RECIPIENTS, in the JARC and New Freedom circulars, stating, "The State is the designated recipient and may apply directly to FTA for grant funds for itself and its subrecipients." This is consistent with the language found in 49 U.S.C. 5316 and 5317.

11. October 18, 2008

Q: Can New Freedom funds be transferred between the non-urbanized portion of the governor's apportionment to and the small-urbanized apportionment, or to or from a large urbanized apportionment?

A: No. With the exception of consolidating grants to insular areas, Congress did not provide States and Designated Recipients with the authority to transfer New Freedom funds into or out of the areas in which they were apportioned. Accordingly, funds apportioned to non-urbanized areas, small-urbanized, and large-urbanized areas must be used for projects in those areas. New Freedom funds can be transferred to Section 5307 or 5311 recipients provided that they are used for projects that are eligible under the New Freedom program.

12. June 2007

Q. When the State is transferring funds from JARC or New Freedom to Section 5307 or Section 5311, is a certification or declaration needed to assure JARC and New Freedom needs are met?

A. No. Please see Chapter III, Section 8 of the circulars:

- Transfer to Other FTA Programs. A State may transfer funds apportioned to it for rural or small urbanized areas to apportionments under Section 5311(c) or 5307, or both. The purpose of the transfer provision, however, is not to supplement the resources available under the State's Section 5311 or Section 5307 apportionments. Transfer to Section 5311 or Section 5307 is permitted, but not required. Transferred funds must be used for JARC and New Freedom projects. A State may make the transfer only after consulting with local officials and publicly owned operators of public transportation. The period of availability for the transferred funds is not changed by the transfer.
- Notification of Transfers. The State must notify the FTA regional administrator of the State's intent to have funds transferred so that FTA can initiate the transfer. For transfers of JARC or New Freedom funds into the Section 5307 program for urbanized areas (UZAs) under 200,000 in population or Section 5311(c), and for transfers of flexible funds, the notification must indicate the amount of funds transferred, the recipient of transferred funds, and the program to which they are being transferred.

13. June 2007

Q. How do we differentiate State administration for each program at the time of draw down if funds are transferred to Section 5307? How will we know if they are JARC or New Freedom funds?

A. JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5307 funds should not be combined in a single grant. Grantees should have individual Section 5307 grants for each program. A Section 5307 grant that contains JARC or New Freedom funds should use the appropriate scope code in TEAM (646-00 for JARC and 647-00 for New Freedom.)

14. June 2007

Q. What is the difference between a "direct" and a "designated" recipient?

A. The "designated recipient" is the entity designated, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5302(a)(2), by the Governor of a State to receive FTA funds. Under the JARC and New Freedom programs, the designated recipient is responsible for competitively allocating JARC or New Freedom funds to itself and subrecipients in an area. The "direct recipient" is an entity that can apply directly to FTA for grant funding they have received through the designated recipient's competitive selection process.

- The designated recipient may be the direct recipient for all funds on behalf of itself and all subrecipients

For example:

- **In Small UZAs** (50,000 – 200,000 population) an entity receiving Section 5307 funds directly from FTA can be the direct recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds if the State (the designated recipient) transfers the funds to Section 5307 after consultation with responsible local officials and publicly owned operators of public transportation.
- **In a large UZA** (over 200,000 in population) a public entity that is a designated recipient for Section 5307 can be the direct recipient of a JARC and New Freedom grant if it is selected for funding through the designated recipient's competitive selection process.
- **In nonurbanized areas** (areas under 50,000 in population) tribes can be direct recipients for JARC and New Freedom funds if the funds are transferred to the Section 5311 program and applied for in a Section 5311 grant. The appropriate scope codes 646-00 and 647-00 should be used in TEAM.
- **In all other cases**, the entity selected to receive JARC and New Freedom funds will be a sub-recipient of the designated recipient.
 - Private non-profits
 - Private for profit operators
 - Public transportation providers in nonurbanized areas.

15. **January 10, 2008**

Q: Can a Section 5307 recipient in a small urbanized area apply directly to FTA for JARC and New Freedom funds or does the application need to come from the State?

A: The 5307 recipient can apply directly to FTA for funds provided the State has competitively awarded the funds to small urbanized areas and that the State transfers the funds to the Section 5307 recipient. The state must notify FTA of the amount of funds transferred, the program to which they are transferred, and the specific projects to be implemented under JARC and New Freedom.

16. **June 2007**

Q. Does the designated recipient have to be a public agency?

A. Yes, consistent with FTA's interpretation of 49 U.S.C. 5307(a)(2).

17. **June 2007**

Q. Can the title for vehicles purchased using JARC or New Freedom funds pass from a designated recipient through to a subrecipient?

A. Yes. Please refer to Chapter VI, Section 6 "TITLE TO VEHICLES" and Section 7 "SATISFACTORY CONTINUING CONTROL" in the circulars. The designated recipient is encouraged to either hold title or record a lien against the title to vehicles. This is not mandatory, however. What is mandatory is that the designated recipient establish continuing control over the vehicles and accept the responsibility for continued public transit use of the vehicles, and more particularly use for New Freedom purposes, whether by itself or a subrecipient. When capital equipment or facilities are acquired, built, or improved, provisions must be made to assure satisfactory continuing control of that capital equipment and facilities. While the designated recipient may delegate these responsibilities to a subrecipient, the designated recipient is ultimately responsible for compliance with this requirement.

This means that designated recipients responsible for administering JARC or New Freedom funds may hold title to vehicles purchased with Section 5316 or Section 5317 funds, or title may be held by a subrecipient.

18. **June 2007**

Q. Which activities are capital and which are operating? Where can grantees find guidance on determining the difference? Is there a more detailed listing of eligible capital and operating expenses for JARC and New Freedom grants? Specifically, are insurance costs associated with some of the New Freedom projects, costs associated with car loan programs, and costs associated with voucher programs operating or capital expenses?

A. The basic definition of an operating cost is something that does not have a useful life of more than one year. In contrast, a capital item is usually a tangible item that has a useful life of more than one year. For example, vouchers are considered an operating expense, consistent with FTA program requirements; insurance is considered an operating expense; a guaranteed loan fund or a revolving fund used to make loans are capital expenses; and funds used to pay the administrative costs of loan programs are operating expenses. The construction of bus stops, installation of elevators, or the purchase of buses are examples of capital expenses. Also, mobility management is defined by law as an eligible capital expense. Chapter III of each program circular contains a list of eligible activities for the program.

19. **May 21, 2008**

Q: Are private, for-profit taxicab companies that seek to purchase accessible taxis eligible subrecipients under the New Freedom program?

A: In some cases, yes. FTA considers private taxi companies that provide shared-ride taxi service to the public or to special categories of users (such as older adults or persons with disabilities) on a regular basis to be operators of public transportation, and therefore eligible subrecipients. "Shared-ride" means two or more passengers in the same vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together. Similar to general public

and ADA demand response service, every trip does not have to be shared-ride in order for a taxi company to be considered a shared-ride operator, but the general nature of the service must include shared rides.

Local (municipal/State) statutes or regulations, or company policy, will generally determine whether a taxi company provides shared-ride or exclusive-ride service. For example, if the local regulation permits the driver to determine whether or not a trip may be shared, the service is not shared-ride. Similarly, if the regulation requires the consent of the first passenger to hire a taxi be obtained before the taxi may take on additional riders, the service is not shared-ride. In essence, services which can be reserved for the exclusive use of individuals or private groups, either by the operator or the first passenger's refusal to permit additional passengers, is exclusive-ride taxi service, and is not shared-ride taxi service. A recipient passing funds through to a taxi company subrecipient should request documentation from the taxi company to assure the company is providing shared-ride service.

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Taxi companies that provide only exclusive-ride service are not eligible subrecipients; however, they may participate in the New Freedom program. Exclusive-ride taxi companies can receive New Freedom funds to purchase accessible taxis under contract with a State, designated recipient or eligible subrecipient such as a local government or non-profit organization. The taxi company may hold title to the accessible vehicle(s) as long as the agreement between the State, designated recipient or subrecipient and the taxi company is sufficient to establish satisfactory continuing control. Acceptable means of establishing satisfactory continuing control could include a State, designated recipient or subrecipient's lien on the vehicle, or contract provisions that require the accessible taxi to be used to provide transportation to people with disabilities, and that the vehicle may not be removed from service or disposed of prior to the end of its useful life without the express written consent of the FTA recipient or subrecipient.

20. **January 26, 2009**

Q Can New Freedom funds be used to expand service hours and days for existing fixed route or demand responsive services (other than ADA complementary paratransit), and (2) Can NF funds be used to fund public transportation services where they currently do not exist?

A: On January 23, 2008, FTA issued a Notice of Proposed Policy Statement for Eligible New Freedom projects in the Federal Register (See Federal Register volume 74, No.14) proposing to expand the type of projects it considers to be "beyond the ADA" and

thus increase the types of projects eligible for funding under the New Freedom program. FTA proposes that new or expanded fixed route service and new or expanded demand response service would be eligible for New Freedom funding provided that:

- (1) The service is identified in the locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan;
- (2) The service is designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities;
- (3) The service removes barriers to transportation and assists persons with disabilities with transportation;
- (4) The service was not operational on August 10, 2005, and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); and
- (5) The service is not designed to allow an agency to meet its obligations under the ADA or the DOT ADA implementing regulations at 49 CFR parts 37 and 38.

This policy change retains the existing requirement that services under the program be “new” services and adopts the interpretation voiced by transportation providers that transit services other than those that are required to be implemented under the ADA go “beyond the ADA.” Examples of newly eligible projects would be fixed route service

extended to serve a congregate living facility or a workplace serving large numbers of individuals with disabilities; new or expanded demand responsive service, including new hours or days of operation, or increased geographic coverage, to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

FTA will consider finalizing this policy change after reviewing comments submitted to the docket during the 30-day comment period.

21 **August 25, 2008**

Q: Can New Freedom program funds be used to purchase new vehicles designed to accommodate oversized wheelchairs or that include multiple securement areas, for use on fixed route or demand response service?

A: Yes. While the New Freedom circular lists the acquisition of vehicles designed to accommodate oversized wheelchairs and installing additional securement locations within the context of enhancing paratransit services beyond the minimum requirements of the ADA, these vehicles can also be put into service on fixed routes and demand response service, provided that the service is targeted towards people with disabilities. New Freedom funds can

be used to acquire the vehicle and fund the labor costs of aids to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs.

22. **October 17, 2007**

Q: Can a human service transportation provider use New Freedom funds to reduce the cost of fares paid by their clients?

A: No. Although New Freedom program funds can be used to support voucher programs offered by human service providers, the vouchers are intended to supplement existing services and expand the number of providers available or the number of passengers receiving transportation services. Offering reduced fares on an existing service does not meet the New Freedom program goal of expanding services. Other Federal funding is available for transit passes.

23. **January 10, 2008**

Q: Are there limits on what constitutes an “employment support service” for the purposes of the JARC program?

A: FTA considers job training and childcare to be employment support services because access to these services can help low-income persons attract and retain employment. Applicants who are considering providing service to destinations other than job training or child care locations should contact FTA to determine whether these destinations constitute employment support service. Projects that transport children of low-income parents to and from school or after school locations do not constitute transportation to employment support services under the JARC program and would not be eligible for JARC funds.

24. **January 10, 2008**

Q: Can mobility management projects be funded and implemented over multiple years?

A: Yes. Although mobility management refers to “short term”: management activities to plan and implement coordinated services these activities can occur on a multi-year basis.

25. **May 21,, 2008**

Q: Is sidewalk construction an eligible activity under the JARC and New Freedom programs?

A. Sidewalk construction is not an eligible activity under the JARC program and may be an eligible activity under the New Freedom program, provided two conditions are met.

First, the sidewalk must be constructed in order to provide an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible. Secondly, the recipient should determine whether Federal highways or other funds are available for pedestrian improvements before applying for New Freedom funds for this purpose.

26. January 5, 2009

Q: Is bus shelter construction an eligible activity under the JARC and New Freedom programs.

A: Grantees may use JARC funds to construct shelters provided that the shelters are located in predominantly low-income areas and along transit routes that connect low-income persons to employment or employment-related activities. Shelters can also be installed along routes that provide reverse commute service. JARC funds can also be used to make existing shelters accessible for people with disabilities, provided that the above conditions apply.

Grantees may also use New Freedom funds to construct accessible bus shelters or to modify existing bus shelters to make them accessible.

27. March 25, 2008

Q: Is travel training considered a capital expense on an operating expense under the New Freedom program?

A: The New Freedom program circular treats travel training as a component of mobility management, which is considered a capital expense and is eligible for up to an 80 percent Federal match.

Planning Process:

28. June 2007

Q. Do the FTA regional offices have to verify that projects are derived from coordinated plans?

A. Yes, in coordination with the grant application. Direct and designated recipients must certify that projects to be funded are derived from a coordinated plan and the grant application should include a page reference to the plan. In reviewing the application the FTA Regional Office needs to ensure that the grantee provides this information in the program of projects (POP). Appendix A of the circulars includes the following language: "Project activities shall be sufficiently described to assist the reviewer in determining eligibility under the program and shall include the page number of the coordinated plan from which the project was derived, as well as the date the plan was adopted."

29. January 10, 2008

Q: Are applicants required to attach their coordinated plan to their application in TEAM?

A: No. FTA regional offices will not review coordinated plans as a part of their review of an application for Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom funding. Rather, FTA will rely on:

(1)The applicant's certification in the grant that a project is derived from a coordinated plan; and

(2)The "paper clipped" Program of Projects that contains the name of the applicable plan and the page number where the project or strategy is located within the plan.

30. June 2007

Q. Does the State have to have its own coordinated plan or can it rely on local plans?

A. There is no requirement for a State plan, just a local coordinated plan. However, the community will define "local" and in some cases the planning area may be defined as statewide. Please reference Chapter V, Section 2 of the circulars.

31. June 2007

Q. Do projects have to be in both the STIP/TIP?

A: If the project is within the planning boundary of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the project has to be in both the TIP and the STIP. Projects in nonurbanized areas only have to be in the STIP. Depending on State or local requirements, the projects may show on the aggregate (program level) or be listed on the individual project level listing. TIP and STIP listings must be consistent with the metropolitan and statewide transportation plans.

32. January 10, 2008

Q: Can an applicant hold a competitive selection and apply to FTA for funding for projects that are derived from draft coordinated public transit human services transportation plans?

A: Designated recipients can hold a competitive selection for projects that are derived from a draft coordinated plan and can place those projects that were selected e in Category B of their application to FTA. Projects in Category B are those projects the designated recipient anticipates approving during the current year, but have not yet met all of the Federal statutory or administrative requirements. Grant money for projects derived from a draft coordinated plan can be obligated by FTA but may not be expended by the designated recipient until the plan is finalized.

Competitive Selection Process:

33. June 2007

Q. For projects or needs that cross UZA and rural or small urbanized boundaries, whose coordinated plans or competitive selection process should we compete in?

A. This is a local decision. If the service is completely located within an urbanized area, providers should compete for those funds in the urbanized area; and in a rural competition if the area is rural. If the service is targeted to serve the residents of the rural area (even if the provider is located within the urbanized area) the service is eligible for rural funding. Ideally in this situation the coordinated plan boundaries could include services in urbanized, rural, and small urban areas; however, this does not have to be the case.

34. **June 2007**

Q. May a stakeholder or transportation provider that meets the criteria of both urban and rural compete within both categories?

A. A transportation provider that provides services in rural, small urban, and/or large urbanized areas can compete and therefore receive funding in any area to provide services.

35. **June 2007**

Q. May a transportation provider bid on projects if it participated in the coordinated planning process?

A. Yes.

36. **June 2007**

Q. Is a transportation provider required to participate in the coordinated planning process in order to bid on projects?

A. No.

37. **June 2007**

Q. Is it acceptable to compete different project components/costs in each of the categories, urban and rural?

A. Yes, This is acceptable.

38. **June 2007**

Q. Do projects have to be specifically listed or can they be “generally” consistent with the coordinated plan?

A. Projects do not have to be listed specifically, but they have to be consistent with and derived from the coordinated plan. Chapter IV of the circulars contains examples of different types of competitive selection processes. These examples also illustrate how projects may be derived from the coordinated plan without being specifically listed in the plan.

39. **June 2007**

Q. Can the State ask for projects regardless of specific program and then determine under which program the project will be funded?

A. Yes, the State may have an open call for projects which meet the objectives of the various programs. However, the State must use developed criteria to competitively select projects funded by JARC or New Freedom program funds.

40. **January 10, 2008**

Q: In response to a designated recipient's request for proposals, can a potential subrecipient propose to pass through the funds to another subrecipient, or must an applicant conduct a third-party procurement before passing through funds to the subrecipient?

A: States or designated recipients can, in some cases, choose to grant Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom assistance to a subrecipient through an intermediary subrecipient. For example, a state could pass funds to a non-profit organization through a local government authority. The arrangement between the first tier and second tier subrecipient is not a third party contract if the ultimate subrecipient would otherwise be eligible under Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom to receive funds directly from the State or Designated recipient. If the ultimate subrecipient is not otherwise eligible, the intermediary subrecipient would need to conduct a procurement, consistent with FTA guidelines in Circular 4220.1

General Questions/Suggestions:

41. **June 2007**

Q. If a project includes purchase of a vehicle for a specific program and the program ceases to exist before useful life of the vehicle is achieved, what happens to the vehicle?

A. Grantees must follow the requirements of the Common Rule (49 CFR Part 18 or Part 19, depending on the nature of the grantee). This information is also referenced in Chapter VI, Section 5 in the program circulars.

42. **June 2007**

Q. Has oversight for JARC and New Freedom been established?

A. For States and Section 5307 direct recipients of JARC and New Freedom funds, FTA will incorporate additional questions into the State Management and Triennial Reviews. FTA is in the process of exploring oversight options for direct recipients that are not States or Section 5307 direct recipients.

43. **June 2007**

Q. If the State does not want to be responsible for implementing the JARC or New Freedom program can the Governor designate a large metropolitan/urban area to be responsible for the programs?

A. No, the State is the designated recipient for rural and small urbanized areas. For JARC and New Freedom the Governor may designate any state agency to manage the program.

44. June 2007

Q. Can the State be a designated recipient for a large urbanized area?

A. Yes, if the designation is in accordance Section 5307(a)(2).

45. June 2007

Q. Large UZA – If a traditional grantee that is not a designated recipient of New Freedom is allowed to apply directly, do they need to apply in a Section 5317 (“57”) application or can the funds be added to their regular Section 5307 (“90”) application for administrative purposes?

A. A traditional grantee in a large UZA could apply directly to FTA for the Section 5317 funds allocated to them through the designated recipient's competitive selection process. However, the grantee must make an application for a Section 5317 (57) grant in TEAM because there is no transfer provision that allows transfer to Section 5307 for large urbanized areas. A supplemental agreement will need to be executed between the designated recipient and the traditional Section 5307 recipient. This would also be the process if the funds being applied for were JARC funds: the direct recipient would apply for a Section 5316 (37) grant.

46. June 2007

Q. Small UZA – If the state transfers funds to Section 5307 so traditional grantees can apply directly, is a supplemental agreement with the state necessary?

A. No, the transfer also removes the oversight responsibility for those funds from the designated recipient to the grant recipient under Section 5307. The State will only be responsible for the program requirements (such as competitive selection and ensuring projects are derived from a coordinated plan) and data collection for annual reporting purposes. Although the funds can be applied for in a Section 5307 grant, the grant should only contain funding and activities for the New Freedom project. New Freedom, JARC, and Section 5307 funds cannot be combined in a single grant because disbursements cannot be recorded to the appropriate program.

47. June 2007

Q. If different funding programs administered by the State (JARC, New Freedom, 5310, 5311) are included in one application, what grant number is used (37, 57, 16, 18) or does it matter as long as the separate scopes are used?

A. The State will use the grant number for Section 5311 (18); separate scopes would still be used within the project budget to distinguish between the funds used. States may combine

funds from multiple programs in a consolidated Section 5311 grant, but the State must track, manage, and report on each program's funds separately within the consolidated grant.

48. **June 2007**

Q. If a grantee submits one grant for the program administration (10%) for all three programs, how is the grant coded/numbered?

A. Administrative funds may not be combined into a single section 5307 grant. However, Chapter III of the program circulars specifies the following: "FTA will allow all or a portion of the administrative funds for JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5310 to be combined to support activities (such as coordinated planning) that are common to all three programs. Recipients may combine program administration funds into one administrative account, so long as the recipient uses the funds for costs associated with administering the Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom programs. However, FTA must still track the funds attributable to each program at the accounting classification code, Activity Line Item (ALI), and Financial Purpose Code (FPC) Level in respective grants. As a recipient incurs expenses against the pooled funds for program administration, it can draw down the reimbursement against any grant that has undisbursed program administration funds." If the funds for multiple programs are combined in a Section 5311 grant, there could be one line item for state administration, equaling the total of state administration obligated using FPC 06 for all the programs included in the grant.

APPENDIX B

Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition Members

Berrien County Transportation Coalition Members

Felicia Flowers	Michigan Disability Resources
Judy Lammers	Area Agency on Aging
John Plevich	Niles Dial a Ride
Kelly Getman-Dissette	Niles Dial a Ride
Dennis Schuh,	Berrien Bus
Kim O’Haver	Buchanan Dial a Ride
Bill Purvis	Twin Cities Dial a Ride
TJ Taylor	Twin Cities Dial A Ride
Kathy Ellis	Community Connections
Jamie Applin	Michigan WORKS!
Todd Gustafson	Michigan WORKS!
Jeananne Bishop	Disability Navigator
Anna Murphy	United Way
Warren Washington	Child and Family Services
Pamela Miller	Consortium for Community Development
Lindsay Garcia	KPEP
Rose Hunt	Heartland Alliance,
Jennifer Swingler	Opportunity Center
Dawn Schroeder	Opportunity Center
Jerry Franks	Michigan Department of Human Services,
Theresa Green	Berrien County Health Department
Twyla Smith	Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency

APPENDIX C

Profile of Transit Dependent Population Maps

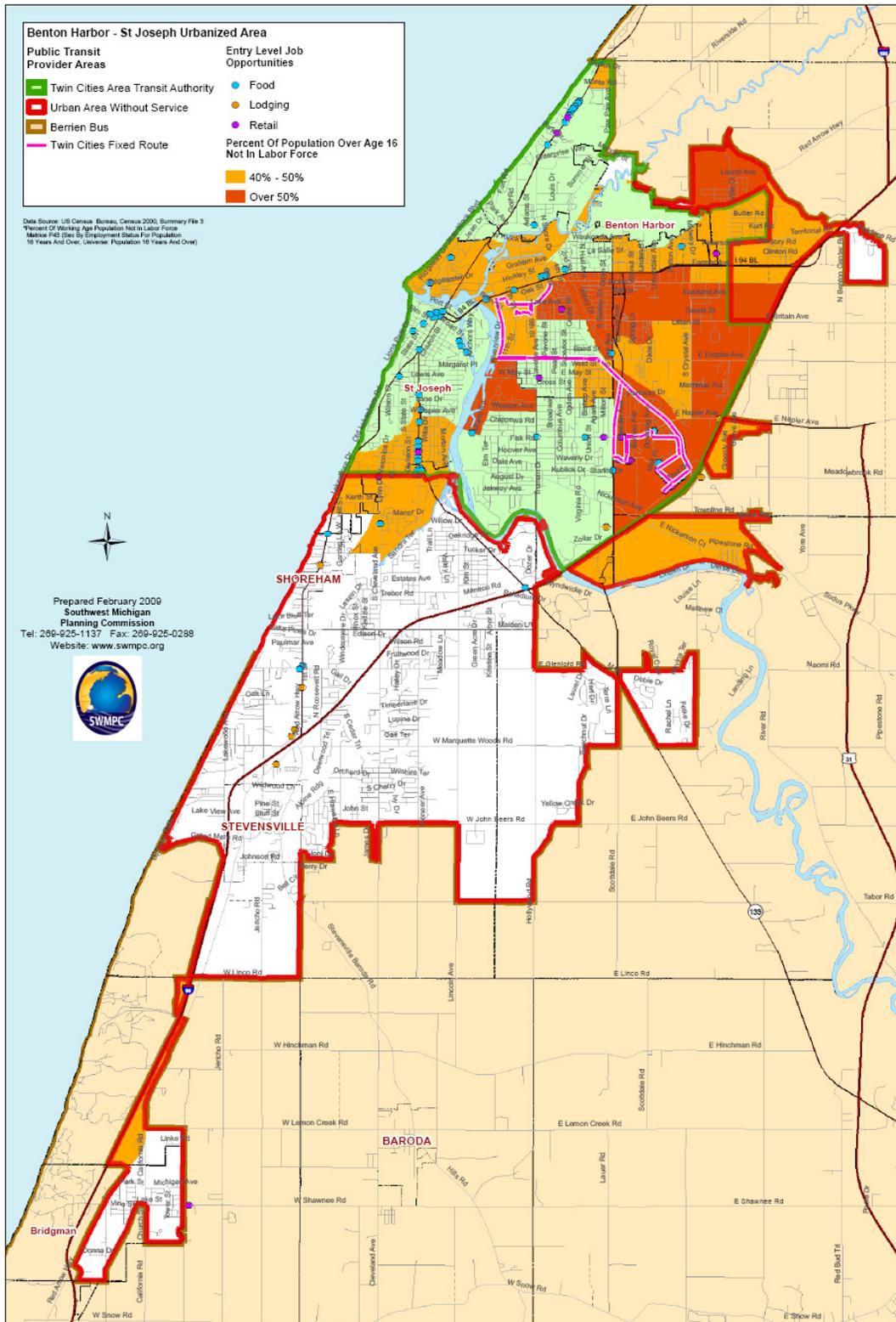
Berrien County Census Designated Rural Area

Benton Harbor St. Joseph UZA

Niles UZA

Buchanan

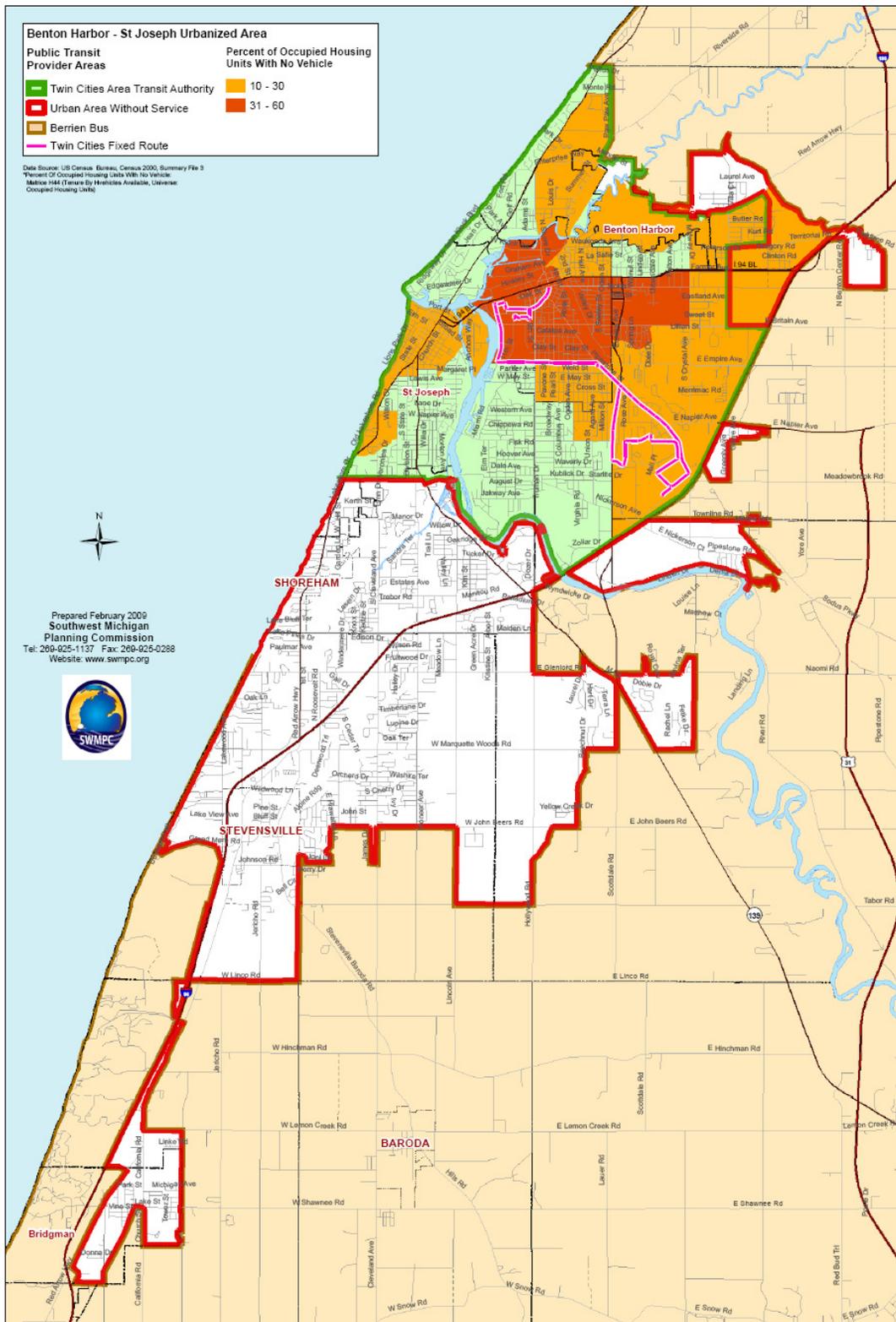
Benton Harbor St Joseph UZA- Population Age 16 or Above Not in Labor Force



Base Map Source: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line Files, 2000

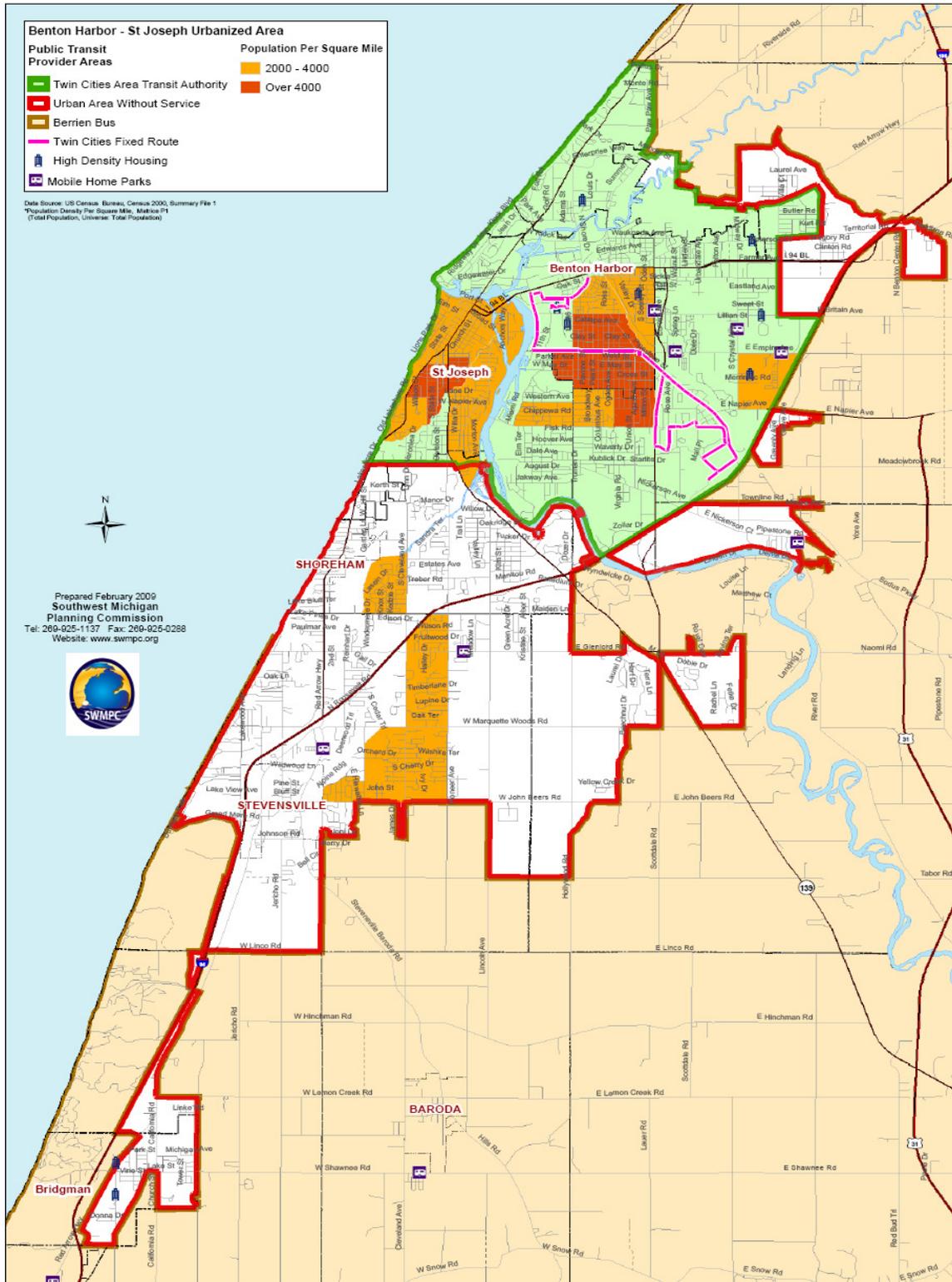


Benton Harbor St Joseph UZA-Households with No Vehicle

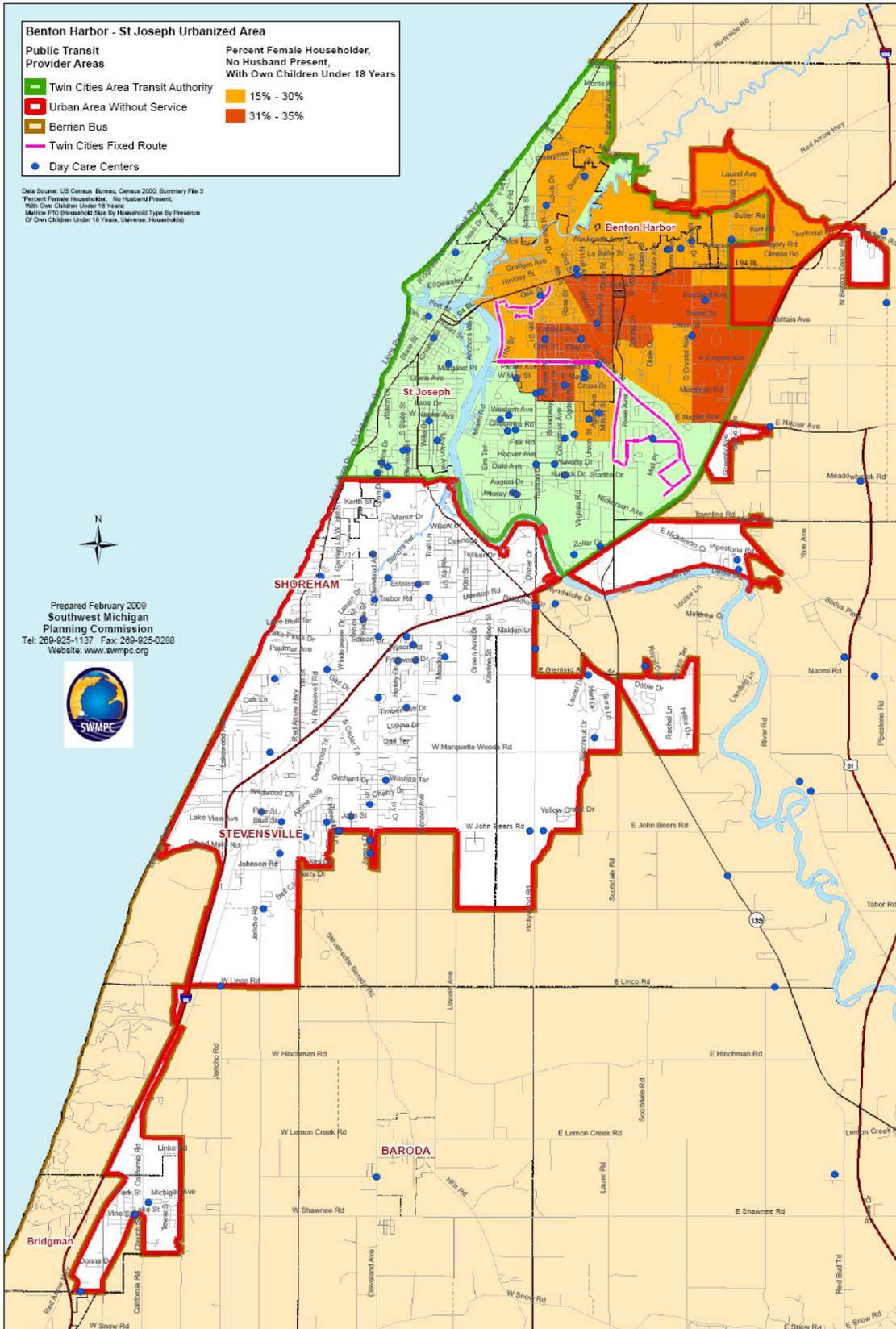


Base Map Source: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line Files, 2000

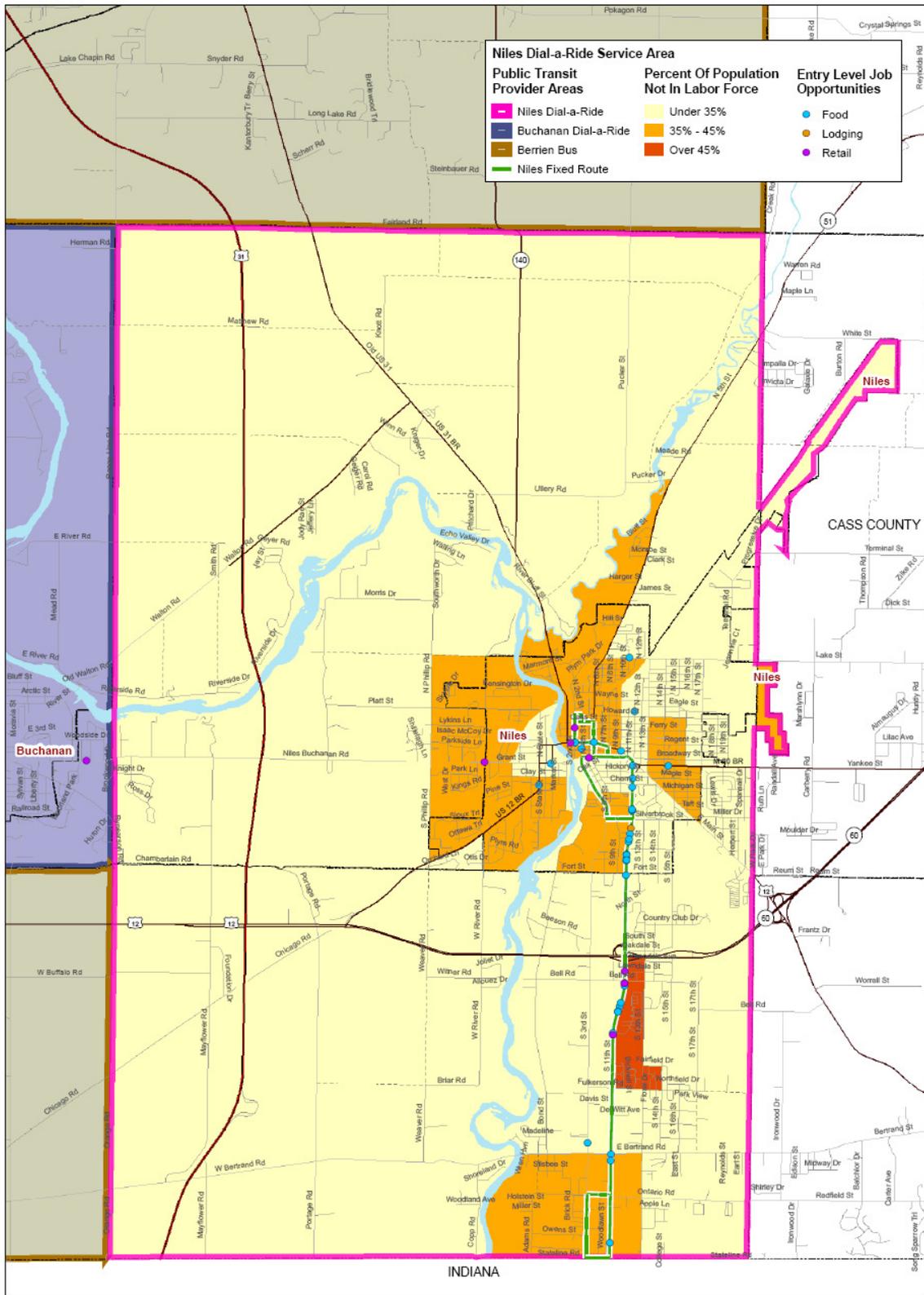
Benton Harbor St Joseph UZA - Densely Populated Areas



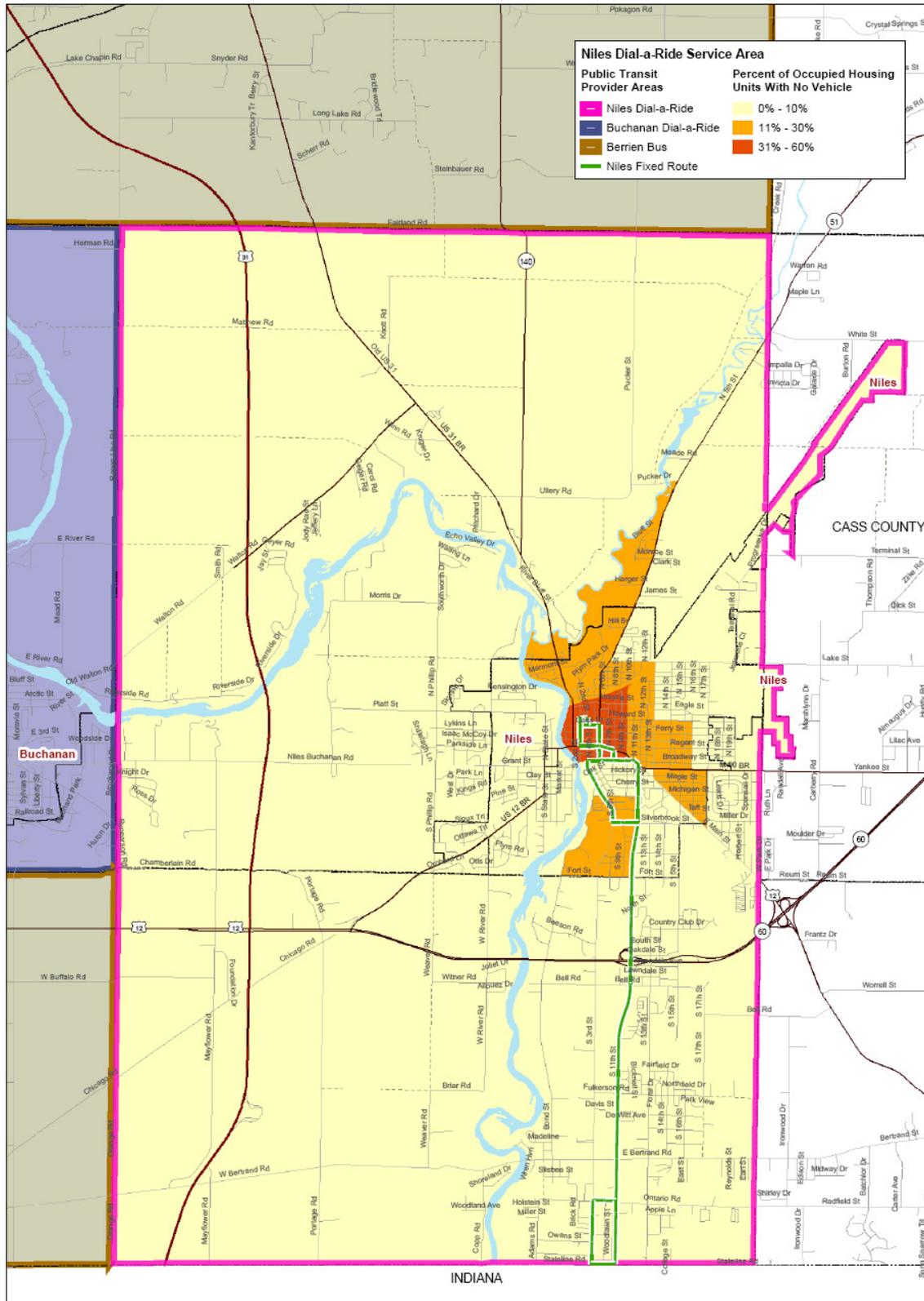
Benton Harbor St Joseph UZA -Female Head of Household With Children under age of 18



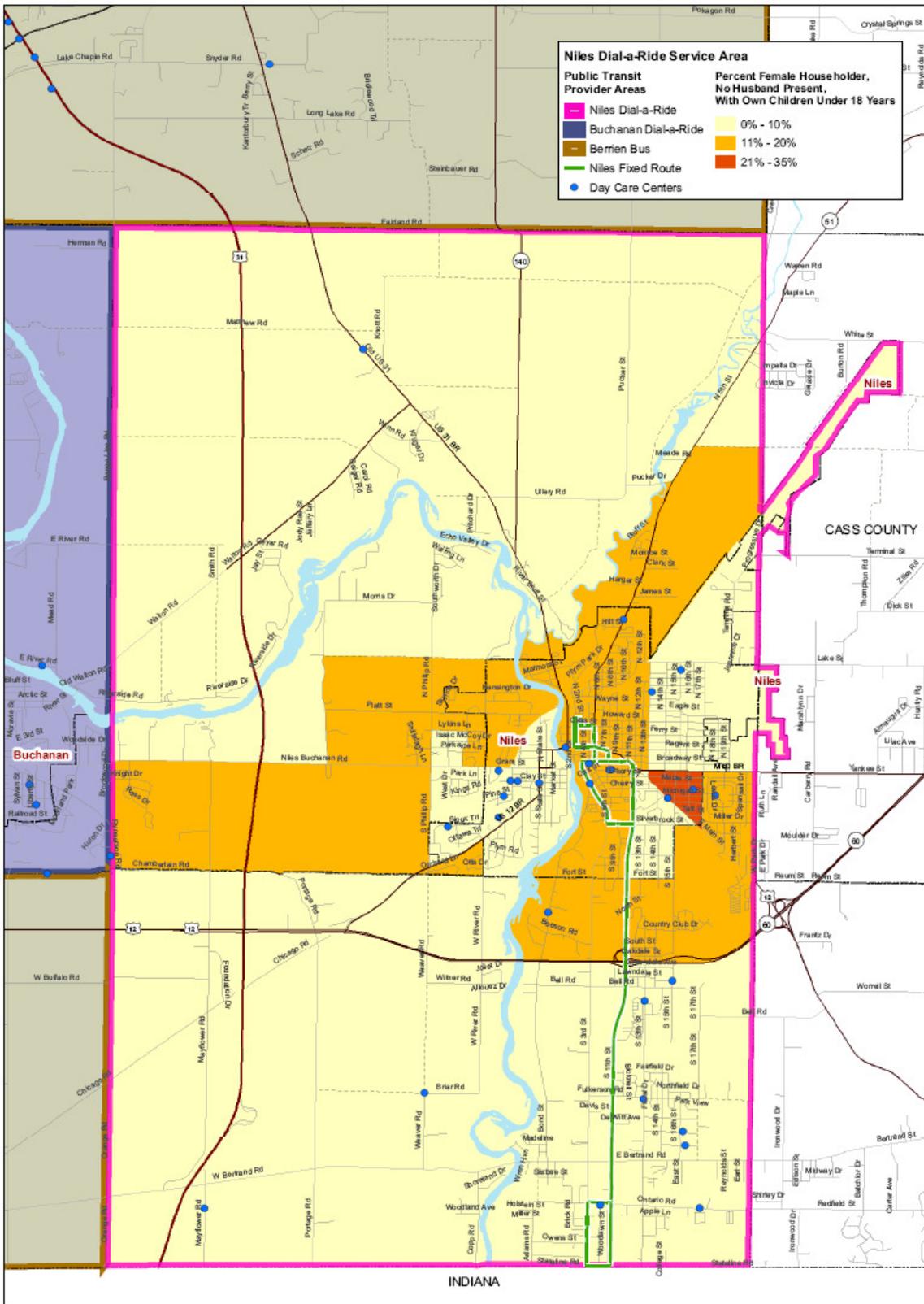
Niles Population Age 16 or Above Not in Labor Force



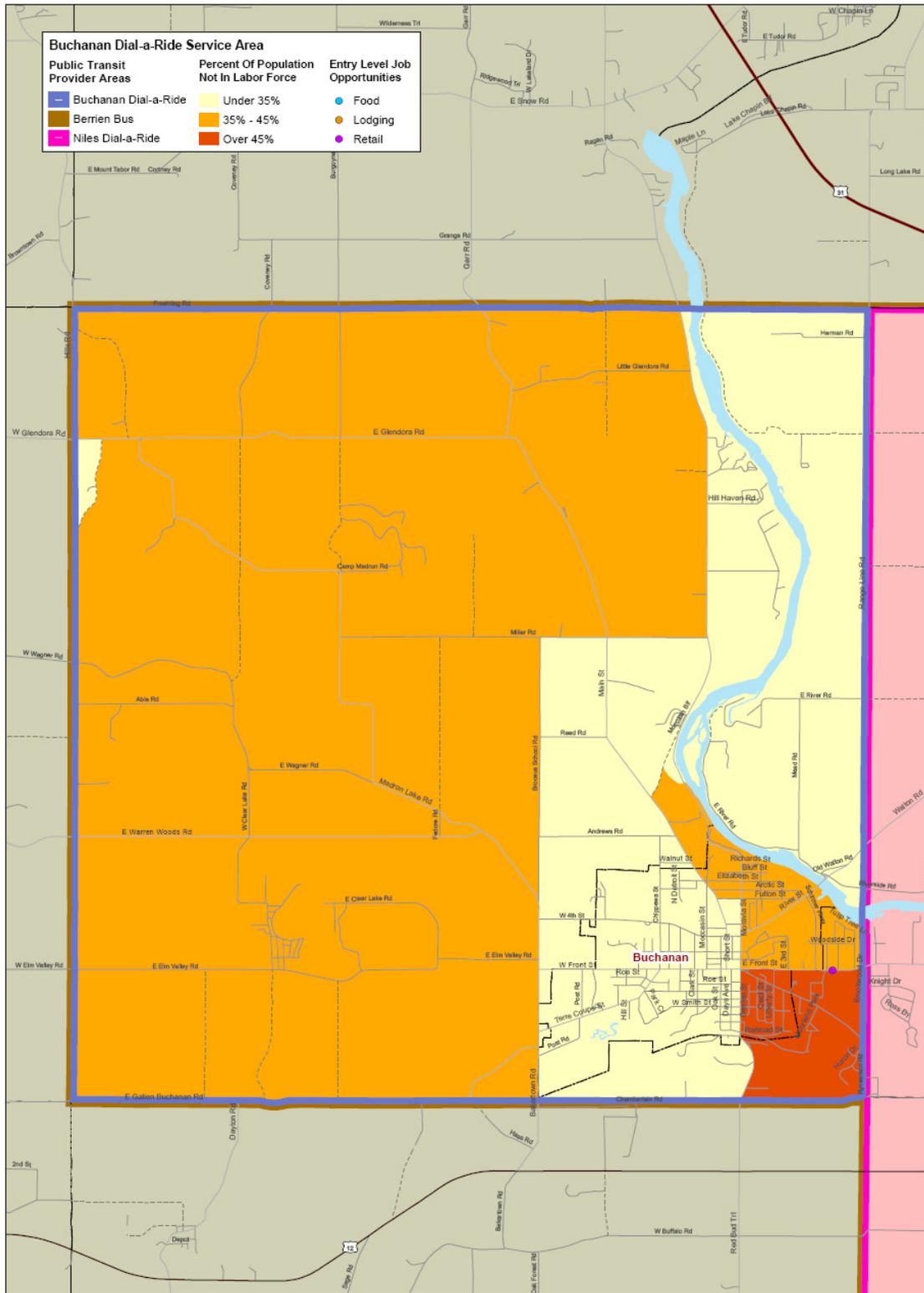
Niles Households with No Vehicle



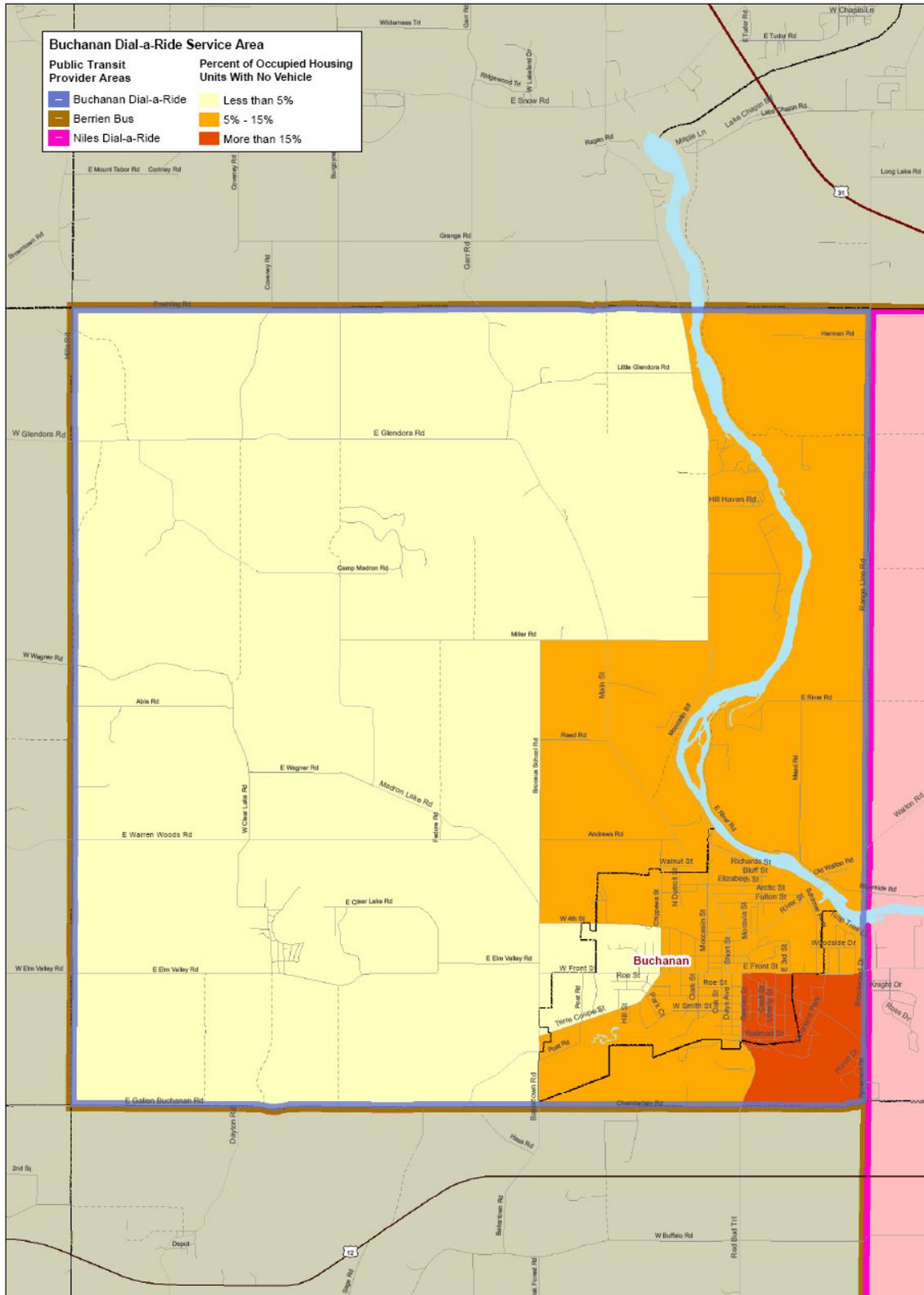
Niles Female Head of Household with Children under age of 18



Buchanan Population Age 16 or Above Not in Labor Force



Buchanan Households with No Vehicle



Buchanan Female Head of Household With Children under age of 18

