GULF COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2026-2031

Prepared by the

Gulf County
Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board

Big Bend Transit, Inc.
the Community Transportation Coordinator

Apalachee Regional Planning Council
the Designated Official Planning Agency

Approved by the

Gulf County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
on September 9, 2026

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LCB Certification

Apalachee Regional Planning Council

Local Partnerships • Regional Impact

Gulf County

Coordinating Board Membership Certification

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council certifies that:

1. The membership of the local coordinating board, established pursuant to rule 41-2.012(3), F. A. C., does in fact represent the appropriate parties as identified in the following list; and

2. The membership represents, to the maximum extent feasible, a cross section of the local community.

Representation	Member's Name	Alternate's Name	Term
Chairman	Sandy Quinn		
Elderly	Eddie Fields		July 2025 – June 2028
Disabled	(Vacant)		
Citizen Advocate	(Vacant)		
Citizen Advocate/User	(Vacant)		
Veterans	Lynn Lanier		July 2025 – June 2028
Community Action	(Vacant)		
Public Education	Renee Lynn	Diana Dykes	July 2025 – June 2028
Children at Risk	Sharon Trainor	Tracey Leep	July 2025 – June 2029
Workforce Dvp Board	Maria Goodwin		July 2025 – June 2028
Medical	Sarah Quaranta	D.T. Simmons	July 2024 – June 2027
FDOT	Debbie "Toni" Prough	Zach Balassone	July 2025 – June 2028
FDCF	Mylisa Lee	Kayla Williams	July 2025 – June 2028
FDOE/VR	Michelli Ordoyne	Derrick Henderson	July 2025 – June 2028
FDEA	Stormy Johnson		July 2025 – June 2028
AHCA	Ashlee Barton	Latarsha Hampton	July 2025 – June 2028
APD	Mariah Evans	Dwayne Jones	July 2025 – June 2028
Private Trans. Industry	Not Applicable		
Mass/Public Transit	Not Applicable		

Signature:

Ricky O. Jones

Ricky Jones

Date: August 27, 2026

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Update Table

GULF COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN
UPDATE TABLE
September 9, 2026
Updated/amended areas are indicated with a "✓".

LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATION ✓
ROLL CALL VOTE PAGE ✓

DEVELOPMENT PLAN	PAGE	UPDATE
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE AREA		✓
A. Background of the TD Program		
B. Community Transportation Coordinator Designation Date/History	**8 – 9**	✓
C. Organizational Chart		
D. Consistency Review of Other Plans		
E. Public Participation	**13**	✓
II. SERVICE AREA PROFILE/DEMOGRAPHICS		✓
A. Service Area Description		
B. Demographics		✓
a. Land Use		
b. Population/Composition	**15 – 18**	✓
c. Employment	**18 – 19**	✓
d. Major Trip Generators/Attractors		
e. Inventory of Available Transportation Services	**26**	✓
III. SERVICE ANALYSIS		✓
A. Forecasts of TD Population	**28**	✓
B. Needs Assessment	**30**	✓
C. Barriers to Coordination		
IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES		
V. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		

SERVICE PLAN	PAGE	UPDATE
VI. OPERATIONS		✓
A. Types, Hours, and Days of Service		
B. Accessing Services		
C. Transportation Operators and Coordination Contractors		
D. Public Transit Utilization		
E. School Bus Utilization		
F. Vehicle Inventory	**41**	✓
G. System Safety Program Plan Certification	**42**	✓
H. Intercounty Services		
I. Emergency Preparedness and Response		
J. Education Efforts/Marketing		
K. Acceptable Alternatives		
L. Service Standards		
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VII. COST/REVENUE ALLOCATION & RATE STRUCTURE JUSTIFICATION	**52**	✓

QUALITY ASSURANCE		PAGE	UPDATE
VIII.	**QUALITY ASSURANCE**		✓
	A. Coordinator Evaluation Process		
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	D. Planning Agency Evaluation Process	**55**	✓

Adoption of TDSP Roll Call Vote

GULF COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED COORDINATING BOARD MEETING
JUNE 10th, 2026

ADOPTION OF
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN
FOR THE COMMISSION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED

ROLL CALL VOTE

Representation	Member	Voted For	Voted Against	Absent From Voting
Chairman	Sandy Quinn			✓
Elderly	Eddie Fields	✓		
Disabled	(Vacant)			
Citizen Advocate	(Vacant)			
Citizen Advocate/User	(Vacant)			
Veterans	Lynn Lanier			✓
Community Action	(Vacant)			
Public Education	Renee Lynn			✓
Children at Risk	Sharon Trainor ALT 1	✓		
Workforce Dvp Board	Maria Goodwin			✓
Medical	Sarah Quaranta ALT 2	✓		
FDOT	Debbie "Toni" Prough			✓
FDCF	Kayla Williams	✓		
FDOE/VR	Michelli Ordoyne ALT 1	✓		
FDEA	Stormy Johnson	✓		
AHCA	Ashlee Barton	✓		
APD	Mariah Evans	✓		
Private Trans. Industry	Not Applicable			
Mass/Public Transit	*Not Applicable*			

The Coordinating Board hereby certifies that an annual evaluation of this Community Transportation Coordinator was conducted consistent with the policies of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and all recommendations of that evaluation have been incorporated in this Service Plan. We further certify that the rates contained herein have been thoroughly reviewed, evaluated and approved. This Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan was reviewed in its entirety and approved by this Board at an official meeting held on the 10th day of June, 2026.

Coordinating Board Chairperson Ashlee Barton

* * * *

Approved by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

Date

Executive Director

Development Plan

I. Introduction to the Service Area

A. Background of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Transportation is often the vital link between not only quality of life, but also, jobs, access to medical care, and other life sustaining needs for some of the most vulnerable citizens. The Florida Legislature created the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (Commission) in 1989 to coordinate the transportation services provided to the transportation disadvantaged. The authority of the Commission derives from Chapter 427, Florida Statutes and Rule 41-2, Florida Administrative Code. The Commission is an independent agency located within the Department of Transportation for administrative and fiscal purposes. In all respects, the Commission operates independently, with rule making and budget authority. The Commission employs staff to administer and monitor the statutory requirements for the program.

Florida's transportation disadvantaged are defined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, as those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities, or children who are handicapped or high-risk or at-risk. Chapter 427, Florida Statutes was created to promote the delivery of transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged in a coordinated manner that is cost effective, efficient, and reduces fragmentation and duplication of services, as well as increase planning for transportation services.

In 1990, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council applied for the designation as the official planning agency for the county. In the application, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council noted its qualifications, experienced personnel, and knowledge of planning. Also, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council demonstrated how it would comply with the duties and responsibilities of the designated official planning agency for various activities.

Once appointed by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged as the designated official planning agency for the county, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council applied for and received funding from the Commission through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. Since then, the Council has continued to serve as the designated official planning agency for the county.

B. Community Transportation Coordinator Designation Date/History

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council, as the designated official planning agency for the county, initiated a procedure for the selection of a community transportation coordinator in 1990. The Apalachee Regional Planning Council, in consultation with the local transportation disadvantaged coordinating board, contacted local public officials and requested them to post information regarding the community transportation coordinator position in public buildings in the county. Staff also contacted current providers of transportation services. There were three response related to the position, Wat-Co Enterprises, Inc., Victory Taxi Service, Inc., and Gulf County ARC and Transportation The Apalachee Regional Planning Council and the local transportation

disadvantaged coordinating board then evaluated the providers of transportation services and determined that Gulf County ARC and Transportation was the best source to administer the transportation program due to its years of experience, and administrative capabilities. Gulf County ARC and Transportation demonstrated itself to be a reliable transportation service for Gulf County. The transportation disadvantaged coordinating board recommended to the Apalachee Regional Planning Council that Gulf County ARC and Transportation serve as the community transportation coordinator on September 7, 1990. Gulf County ARC and Transportation was then designated by the Commission on October 10, 1990, as the community transportation coordinator. Gulf County ARC and Transportation continued to serve as the community transportation coordinator for Gulf County until June 30, 2025. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged made an emergency designation on June 16, 2025, for Big Bend Transit, Inc. to serve as the community transportation coordinator, effective July 1, 2025, for a one-year term. The most recent designation was made on April 8, 2026, as the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged designated Big Bend Transit as the Gulf County community transportation coordinator, effective July 1, 2026.

C. Organizational Chart

The Florida Coordinated Transportation System is made up of many components. The principal participants in the delivery of transportation disadvantaged services in Florida are described below.

Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged was created to accomplish the coordination of transportation services provided to the transportation disadvantaged. It was created as an independent agency within the Department of Transportation. It administers the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund for the Commission's operations and a statewide local grants program for the delivery of transportation services. The Commission appoints the community transportation coordinators and the designated official planning agency in each service area. The mission statement of the Commission is to "Ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons".

Designated Official Planning Agencies have the responsibility for transportation disadvantaged planning. They recommend to the Commission the community transportation coordinator to serve in the service area. The designated official planning agency also appoints and staffs the local coordinating board.

Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board provides local assistance to the community transportation coordinator. They identify local service needs and provide information, advice, and direction to the coordinator on the coordination of services. Each coordinating board is recognized as an advisory body in its service area and is composed of local representatives from different sectors of the community, such as the elderly, the disabled, the economically disadvantaged, veterans, users, public education, agencies that purchase transportation services, transportation industry/providers, and local government.

Community Transportation Coordinator occupies a highly visible position in the Florida Coordinated Transportation System and must perform its duties in a thoroughly professional manner. The community transportation coordinator is responsible for the actual arrangement and delivery of transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons in a service area. All agencies and transportation operators that receive federal, state, or local government transportation funds are required to contract with the community transportation coordinator for transportation services. The

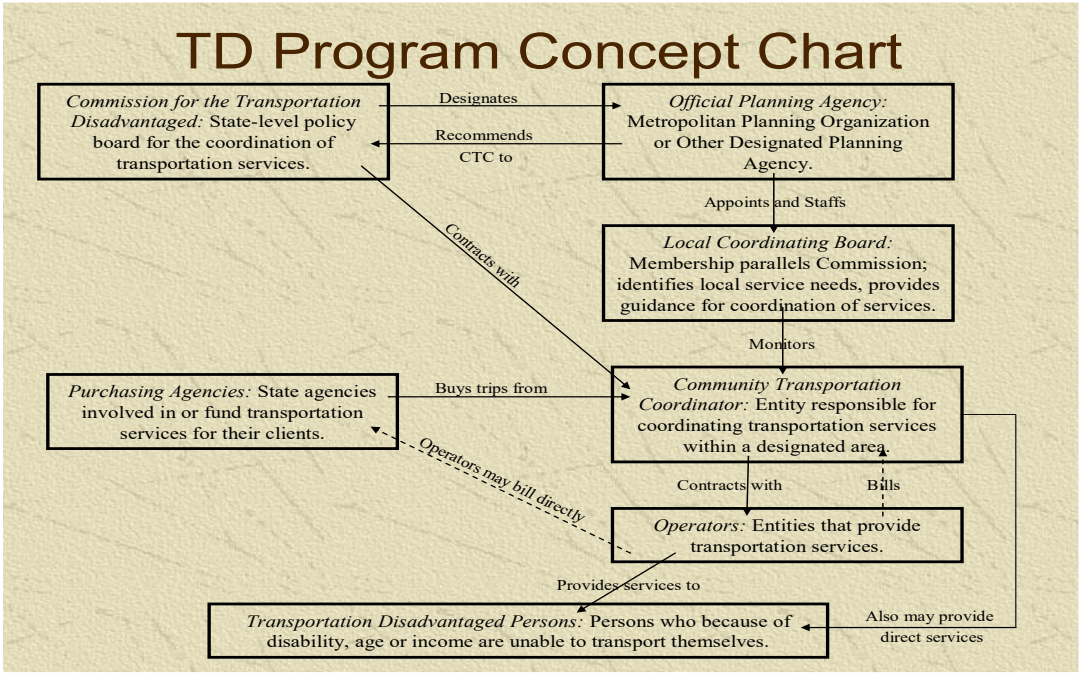
coordinator may contract with local transportation operators to provide transportation or, if none exists, may provide all the transportation services.

Transportation Operators are the actual providers of transportation services. Any public, private for-profit, or private non-profit provider of transportation services under contract with a community transportation coordinator is considered a transportation operator. Any social service agency that operates its own vehicles for the delivery of transportation service is also considered a transportation operator if the vehicles are purchased or operated with federal, state, or local government funds, and it must contract with the community transportation coordinator. The community transportation coordinator is itself a transportation operator if it provides some or all of the service.

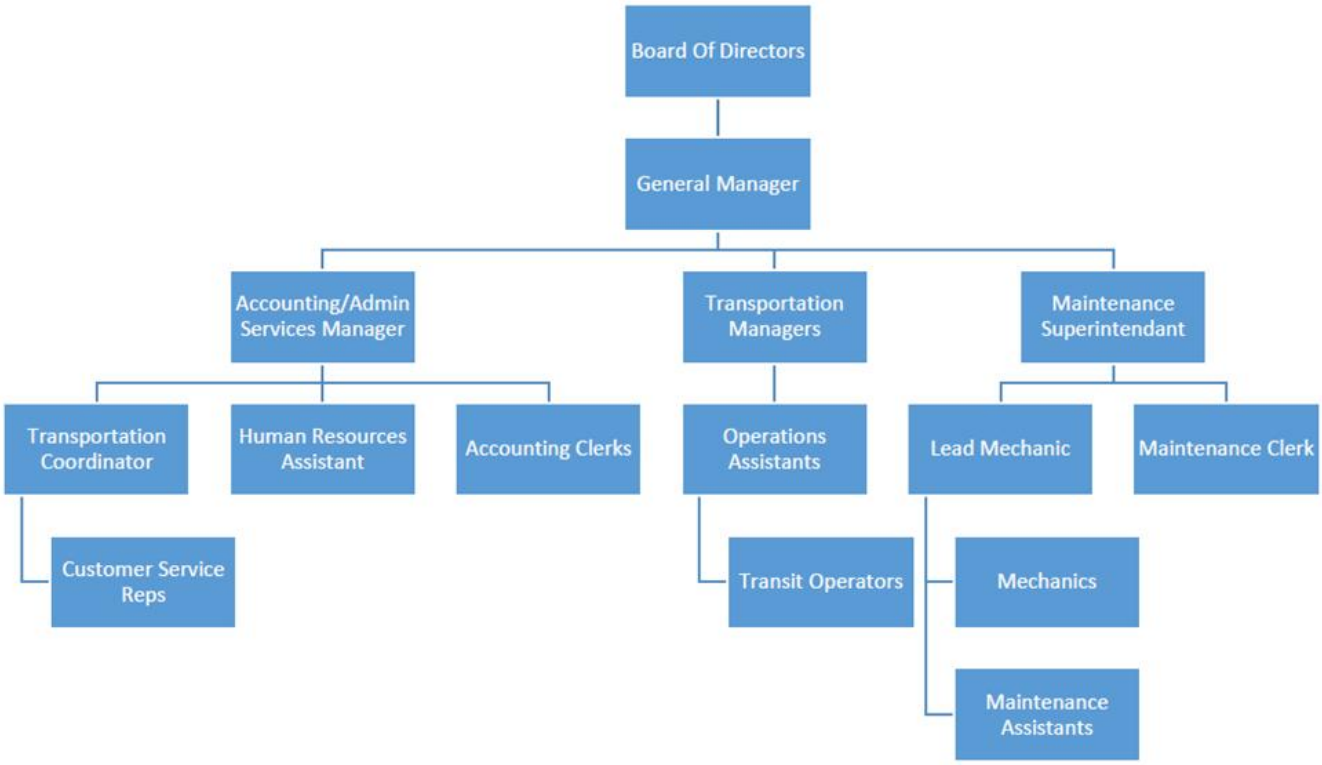
Purchasing and Funding Agencies are those agencies receiving federal, state, or local government funds for transportation. These agencies must purchase service from the community transportation coordinator.

Transportation Disadvantaged Persons are defined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, as those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities. The legislation also includes children who are "high-risk" or "at-risk" of developmental disabilities.

COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



D. Consistency Review of Other Plans

This Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan is consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the following approved documents.

Local Government Comprehensive Plan

Pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, each local government in Florida must prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan which inventories existing land uses, infrastructure, housing conditions, transportation systems and establishes goals, objectives and policies designed to manage growth during the planning period, which must be, at a minimum, ten years. Local comprehensive plans must contain at least one or more specific objectives which would "coordinate with the plans of any appropriate metropolitan planning organization, any public transportation authority, any appropriate resource planning and management plan prepared pursuant to Chapter 380, Florida Statutes, and approved by the Governor and Cabinet, and the Florida Department of Transportation's 5-Year Transportation Plan".

Apalachee Strategic Regional Policy Plan

The Apalachee Strategic Regional Policy Plan, adopted June 1996, establishes a goal to reduce the number of transportation disadvantaged persons not served by the coordinated system.

Included within this goal are policies and implementation strategies necessary for achieving the goal.

Transit Development Plan

This plan is not applicable to this area.

Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged 5 Year/20 Year Plan

The statewide five-year plan, mandated by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes projects the demand for transportation disadvantaged services over the next five years and compares the cost of meeting that demand with the projected availability of funds. The plan also develops goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for meeting the needs of the transportation disadvantaged. The plan is comprised of many sections; among them are descriptions of the transportation disadvantaged services.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan

The county is not located within a metropolitan planning organization and, therefore, this plan is not applicable to this area.

Transportation Improvement Program

The county is not located within a metropolitan planning organization and, therefore, this plan is not applicable to this area.

E. Public Participation

It is important that stakeholders be included in the development and implementation of the transportation disadvantaged service plan. A public hearing is held annually to allow residents the opportunity to discuss unmet transportation needs, or any other areas that relate to the local transportation services. All board and committee meetings are advertised in the local newspapers. The quarterly meeting agendas include an opportunity for public comments.

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council selects the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board's membership from a cross section of the local community to include representation from (a) transportation partners, (b) passengers and advocates, (c) human service partners and (d) others. The Apalachee Regional Planning Council contacts agencies and community human services programs and requests their nominations to the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board. User group nominations such as the disabled, users and the elderly are received by recommendation from community advocates in the community. The Apalachee Regional Planning Council submits the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board membership certification to the Commission and certifies that the membership of the local coordinating board, established pursuant to Rule 41-2.012(3), F.A.C., does in fact represent the appropriate parties. The membership varies throughout the year due to term expirations, resignations, and member's inability to attend meetings on a regular basis. Amendments are provided as needed throughout the year.

LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD CERTIFICATION

Representation	Member's Name	Alternate's Name	Term
Chairman	Sandy Quinn		
Elderly	Eddie Fields		July 2025 – June 2028
Disabled	(Vacant)		
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AHCA	Ashlee Barton	Latarsha Hampton	July 2025 – June 2028
APD	Mariah Evans	Dwayne Jones	July 2025 – June 2028
Private Trans. Industry	Not Applicable		
Mass/Public Transit	Not Applicable		

Updated September 2026

II. Service Area Profile/Demographics

A. Service Area Description

Gulf County is located in northwest Florida and is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico and by Franklin, Liberty, Calhoun, and Bay Counties. The county has 564.01 square miles of land and 191.55 square miles of water for a total area of 755.56 square miles. There are two incorporated municipalities within the county, the Cities of Port St. Joe and Wewahitchka. Port St. Joe serves as the county seat.

B. Demographics

a. Land Use

The fundamental purpose of any transportation system is to move people between specific points. Therefore, the transportation system has considerable influence on the distribution of land uses, population, and activities. Furthermore, the greater the efficiency of and access to a transportation system, the more vital and productive the economy. An adequate system consists of many different modes, including mass transit, paratransit transportation, and individual travel.

In Florida, the allocation and management of land is governed by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, which is known as the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act. Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, required local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan that allocates land by use (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) and establishes density and intensity standards for development. The amount of land assigned by a local government usually correlates to past development trends, population changes, the available transportation network and other public infrastructure, such as potable water, and centralized sewer, and expectations of future behavior and trends.

The comprehensive plans for the municipalities and towns indicate that residential land within the municipalities occupies the largest percentage of developed land. Future land use maps indicate that moderate residential growth will occur in areas presently designated as residential. Other areas were designated as commercial, industrial, and public which would contain retail opportunities, employment centers, and governmental services. The future land use allocations indicate that origination points may change within the next ten years while destination points remain similar.

The roadways of the county have been classified according to their primary function or use utilizing standards developed by the Florida Department of Transportation. The existing level of service indicates that traffic flow within the county is relatively stable and free flowing. These factors indicate that travel time within the county will be influenced primarily by distance.

A key factor affecting the use of alternative means of travel is land use. Locating housing in close proximity to services, shopping, employment, and other facilities can provide accessibility for those who can't or choose not to drive, reducing vehicle trips and reducing trip lengths for those who do drive. Furthermore, a long distance drive to work increases cost to the employee and the transportation system. The reverse, increasing the availability of services, shopping, and employment within the rural county, increases accessibility and reduces traffic impacts in the larger counties.

Staff of the community transportation coordinator has indicated that the majority of inter-county trips is medical trips and has Tallahassee and Panama City as their primary destinations. Based on the existing and adopted Level of Service standards, travel time should be primarily influenced by distance. Within the City of Tallahassee, traffic volumes are higher and may increase the travel time to medical care.

b. Population/Composition

In 2020, the United States Census Bureau's Decennial Census reported the county's population as 14,192. The 2025 Florida Population Studies and the 2025 Florida Estimates of Population, compiled by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), University of Florida, along with the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), provide quick, comprehensive overviews of current economic and demographic characteristics of the county. The information provided by BEBR and the ACS are the most recent datasets available and may vary from the Decennial Census. An overview of current economic and demographic characteristics of the county is provided in the following tables.

Population Growth

Year	*Total*	*0-14*	*15-24*	*25-44*	*45-64*	*65+*	*18+*
2020	15,073	1,816	1,352	4,180	4,395	3,330	12,889
2024	15,131	1,876	1,281	4,010	4,372	3,592	12,849

SOURCE: *American Community Survey*, 2024: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table: S0101

Population Composition

Men	8,724
Women	6,407
Veterans	1,258
Disabled	2,529
Median age (years)	46.9
Public School Enrollment	2,236
High School Graduate or Higher	85.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.5%

SOURCE: *American Community Survey*, 2024: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table(s): DP02, DP05

Population Projections

These charts indicate the anticipated county growth in population based on census counts, estimates and projections.

Gulf	*April 1, 2025 (est) 16,323*	*2030*	*2035*	*2040*	*2045*	*2050*
Low		16,200	16,000	15,600	15,200	14,700
Medium		17,600	18,300	18,800	19,200	19,500
High		19,000	20,600	21,900	23,200	24,300

SOURCE: *2025 Florida Population Studies,* Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Volume 59, Bulletin 203, February 2026

Population Distribution

Location	*2020 Census*	*April 1, 2025 (est)*	*Percentage of Change 2020-2025*
Port St. Joe	3,357	3,896	16.1%
Wewahitchka	2,074	2,261	9.0%
Unincorporated	8,761	10,464	19.4%
County	14,192	16,621	17.1%

SOURCE: *2025 Florida Estimates of Population,* Bureau of Economic & Business Research, April 2025

Housing Classifications and Patterns

As the region continues to grow, additional housing will be needed in every county. Where this housing should be located is a major planning issue. Local, state, and federal government regulations can have a major impact on the location of affordable housing. In some instances, there are regulations encouraging the provision of affordable housing, while in other instances they discourage and sometimes prohibit housing in various locations. Government expenditures, for example on roads, schools, and parks, do the same. Nevertheless, local governments are required in their comprehensive plans to ensure the provision of adequate sites for affordable housing for existing residents and anticipated population growth.

Accessibility of facilities such as shopping, schools, mass and paratransit, recreation and employment is a critical issue. The lack of access to these facilities adversely affects independence, costs, and ability to participate as a member of society, especially for individuals who are unable to drive. For many working Floridians, the inaccessibility of affordable housing with respect to their place of employment is a major problem. The longer the distance to work, the higher the cost to the employee, the fewer the transportation choices, and the lower the reliability of available means of transportation. An imbalance in the location of jobs and housing isolates those without automobiles from new employment opportunities; increases traffic congestion; and artificially inflates the value of housing located near employment centers. The failure to conduct land use planning that is sensitive to affordable housing in the areas of density, jobs-housing balance, and urban mobility is directly contributing to the growing affordable housing shortages.

An additional means of measuring demand for housing is to determine the ratio of existing jobs to existing housing units. According to one study, a mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of affordable housing is forcing employees to reside farther from their workplace than they would otherwise choose. This study states that a "balanced" community has a ratio of jobs to housing units within a range of 0.75-1.50. A high ratio suggests that there is an insufficient supply of available housing within the community so employees must live elsewhere. This analysis has its limits. The jobs must match the workforce skills in that community and the housing costs must generally match the income. Also, there will always be residents who work outside the community, regardless of the jobs/housing ratio. Despite these limits, the ratio does provide a comparative indicator of housing availability.

Household Projections

	2010	*2020*	*Percentage of Change 2010-2020*	*Estimates 2025*	*Percentage of Change 2020-2025*
Households	5,335	5,571	4.4%	6,418	15.2%
Average Household Size	2.33	2.33	0%	2.32	< -0.1%

SOURCE: *2025 Florida Population Studies,* Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Volume 59, Bulletin 202, December 2025

Automobile Ownership and Use

Historically, automobiles have been used primarily for commuting to work. Not only are the preponderate of American automotive trips employment related, and people in the county do not differ from this norm, the majority of these trips are single occupancy. An analysis of data indicates that a person who is defined as transportation disadvantaged may be underrepresented in the labor market, since this segment of the population does not own transportation or is unable to provide its own transportation. Although the Census data indicates that opportunities exist for the provision of employment related trips through the transportation disadvantaged system, the demand for these trips has not been significant in the county.

Automobile Ownership and Use

2024

Labor force (workers 16 years and over)	5,214
Labor force working outside county of residence	28.0%
Labor force with no vehicle(s) available	0.4%
1 vehicle(s) available	22.4%
2 vehicle(s) available	42.8%
3 or more vehicle(s) available	34.5%

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2024: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table: S0801

Means of Transportation for Work Related Trips

Sixty-nine percent of Gulf County workers drove to work alone in 2024; 16 percent carpooled; 0 percent took public transportation; and 15 percent used other means. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 24.1 minutes to get to work.

Historic Traditions/Cultural Descriptions

Gulf County is part of the least populous planning region in the State, the Apalachee Region. Although the region has not seen the phenomenal growth experienced by much of the rest of the state, the rate of growth has increased steadily and is projected to continue.

The slower rate of growth in the Apalachee Region has resulted in the preservation of many of the natural, historic, and cultural resources. There are many special features in the region, some of which are unique in the state: wetlands; springs and sinkholes; ridge and ravine systems; and the numerous state and national parks, preserves, and forests. Wetlands cover more than 25 percent of the region's land area and constitute an important natural feature. Wildlife of many species relies on these areas for habitat and cover. In addition, these areas serve as a vital function in the hydrologic cycle by acting as a buffer zone for floodwaters, recharging, and discharging the aquifer, and filtering debris and pollutants from run-off. Freshwater springs and sinks are features that enhance the region. Five of the ten largest first magnitude springs in the state are in the Apalachee Region. These crystal-clear springs and sinkholes are important local recreational and aesthetic resources. Some are open to the public, many are privately owned. The ridge and ravine systems of north Liberty and west Gadsden Counties are unique in the state, and the endangered Torreya tree is found only in this specific local area and in parts of California and China. In addition to numerous local recreational facilities, the Apalachee Region is home to many state parks and recreation areas; the Apalachee National Forest, the largest national forest in the state; two national wildlife refuges and aquatic preserves; and over 80 historic and archaeological sites. These numerous natural features contribute to the maintenance of a quality of life that includes natural resource harvesting (such as agriculture and silviculture), hunting, outdoor recreation, and low-density development.

Government Descriptions

There are three local governments in Gulf County --- two incorporated communities and the unincorporated area, which is governed by the Gulf County Board of Commissioners. Due to the inclusion of the state capital within the Apalachee Region, virtually every state agency has an office within the region. Most federal agencies have a state headquarters office in Tallahassee, as well. As is to be expected because of the proximity of the state capital, government is one of the primary employment sectors.

c. Employment

In 2024, for the employed population 16 years and over, the leading industries in Gulf County were educational services, health care, and social assistance at 22.1 percent; construction at 14.2 percent; retail trade at 13.2 percent; professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services at 9.8 percent; and public administration at 9 percent. These employers are dispersed throughout the county making the provision of transportation services for employment difficult. The number of persons employed by the employers is relatively small when commuter ratios are considered.

Employment Statistics
2024

Population 16 years and over	13,221
Labor force participation rate	41.8%
Unemployment rate	2.6%
Percentage of families below the income poverty level	12.1%
Median household income	$61,179

SOURCE: *American Community Survey*, 2024: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table: DP03

Employment by Industry
2024

Type of Industry	*Percentage of workers 16 years and over*	*Type of Industry*	*Percentage of workers 16 years and over*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3.2%	Information, Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.2%
Construction	14.2%	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	9.8%
Manufacturing	3.8%	Educational services, health care and social assistance	22.1%
Wholesale trade	0.7%	Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.4%
Retail trade	13.2%	Other Services, except public administration	4.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.7%	Public administration	9%

SOURCE: *American Community Survey*, 2024: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table: DP03

Occupations and Types of Employers

Among the most common occupations were management, business, science, and arts occupations at 37 percent; sales and office occupations at 25.5 percent; natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations at 16.9 percent; service occupations at 12.6 percent; and production, transportation, and material moving occupations at 8 percent. Seventy-two percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 22 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 6 percent were self-employed.

d. Major Trip Generators/Attractors

Trip generators are land use from which trips originate, such as residential areas and group homes, while trip attractors are land uses which serve as the destinations of trips. Types of attractors include shopping areas, employment centers, medical facilities, educational facilities, governmental offices, and recreational areas.

While many of the trips made by clients occur within the confines of the county, the majority of the trips are located in neighboring counties or even more distant communities such as Gainesville. Since these trips tend to be more costly to provide, careful planning and scheduling is required on the part of the community transportation coordinator in order to deliver these services efficiently.

Trip generators and attractors were identified by the planning agency and the community transportation coordinator and are listed below.

Trip Generators and Attractors

Health Care	Buy Rite Drugs	302 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Buy Rite Drugs	218 Hwy 71 S, Wewahitchka
	CVS Pharmacy	110 W Hwy 98, Port St. Joe
	Beacon Hill Therapy & Wellness Center – Integras	190 Lightkeepers Drive, Beacon Hill
	Beacon Hill Therapy & Wellness Center	8622 West Highway 98, Beacon Hill
	Coastal Fitness & Rehabilitation	310 Reid Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Compass Physical Therapy	515 Highway 71 South, Wewahitchka
	Dr. Douglas Altman, Chiropractor	301 20th Street, Port St. Joe
	Spine Care Plus	118 Highway 71 North, Wewahitchka
	Dr. Michael E. Barnes, MD	412 North Highway 71, Wewahitchka
	Dr. Wesley Grace	135 Hunter Circle, Port St. Joe
	Wewahitchka Medical Center	255 West River Road, Wewahitchka
	Family Practice Center Dr. Vincent Ivers	301 20th Street, Port St. Joe
	Shoreline Medical Group, PA	419 Baltzel Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Eye Center of North Florida	528-B Cecil G Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	WeWa Ambulance Service	237 West River Road, Wewahitchka

	Life Management Center of Northwest Florida	311 Williams Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Advanced & Gentle Dental Care	319 Williams Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Dr. David Lister, DMD	403 Highway 71 South, Wewahitchka
	Dr. Frank May, DMD	319 Williams Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Chemical Addiction Recovery Effort	302 3rd Street, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Health Dept.	807 West Highway 22, Wewahitchka
	Gulf County Health Dept.	2475 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Hospice of the Emerald Coast	401 Reid Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Point of Ease Massage Therapy	Port St. Joe
	Champion Medical (oxygen)	324 Long Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Sacred Heart Hospital on the Gulf	3801 E Hwy 98, Port St. Joe
	Davita Dialysis Center	3871 E Hwy 98, Port St. Joe
	The Bridge at Bay St. Joe	220 9th Street, Port St. Joe
Employment	Labor Finders	212 3rd Street, Port St. Joe
	Career Source Gulf Coast	307 Peters St., Port St. Joe
Housing	Lasharaw Development Inc.	104 Broad Street, Port St. Joe
	Liberty Manor	102 Liberty Manor Circle, Port St. Joe
	Moss Creek Apartments	200 Amy Circle Wewahitchka
	Pine Ridge Apartments	125 Venus Drive, Port St. Joe
	Beacon Villa Retirement Center	141 Kaelyn Lane, St. Joe Beach
	GeriCare Assisted Living Facility	180 Lightkeepers Drive, Beacon Hill
	A & A Homecare, Inc.	211 Highway 71 North, Wewahitchka

	NHC Home Care, Inc.	418 Reid Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Omni Home Health Care	5150 Cape San Blas Road, Cape San Blas
Education	Faith Christian School	801 20th Street, Port St. Joe
	Busy Bee Child Development Center	218 Long Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Early Learning Coalition of NW FL	153 Redfish, Highland View
	Growing Minds Center	106 Trade Circle West, Port St. Joe
	Montessori Minutes Preschool	525 Third Street, Port St. Joe
	Gulf Coast State College	3800 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Adult School	2853 Long Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Adult School	817 South 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	Kid's Corner Preschool & Childcare	509 East River Road, Wewahitchka
	New Covenant Children Learning Center	209 Avenue A, Port St. Joe
	North Florida Child Development, Inc.	153 Red Fish Street, Highland View
	North Florida Child Development, Inc.	130 East River Road, Wewahitchka 200 North 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	Port St. Joe Elementary School	2201 Long Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Port St. Joe High School	100 Shark Drive, Port St. Joe
	Port St. Joe Middle School	191 Middle School Road, Port St. Joe
	Wewahitchka Elementary School	514 East River Road, Wewahitchka
	Wewahitchka High School	1 Gator Circle, Wewahitchka
	Wewahitchka High School Gulf Academy	171 East River Road, Wewahitchka

	Wewahitchka Middle School	190 Alligator Alley, Wewahitchka
Shopping	Dollar General	550 West Hwy 98 & Avenue D, Port St. Joe
	Dollar General	309 Highway 71 North, Wewahitchka
	Family Dollar Store	510 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Family Dollar Store	821 Hwy 71 S, Wewahitchka
	Dixie Dandy	236 Highway 22, Wewahitchka
	Howard Creek Country Mart	6407 Doc Whitfield Road, Howard Creek
	Piggly Wiggly	125 West Highway 98, Port St. Joe
	Randy's Discount Grocery	104 Highway 71 North, Wewahitchka
	Rich's IGA	201 West River Road, Wewahitchka
	Finders Keepers Thrift Store	149 Highway 71 North, Wewahitchka
	Goodwill Industries	210 Monument Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Bonus Dollar Store	217 West River Road, Wewahitchka
Social Activities	Constitution Museum State Park	200 Allen Memorial Way, Port St. Joe
	Garden Club	8th Street, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Senior Citizens & Community Center	120 Library Drive, Port St. Joe
	Junior Service League	Port St. Joe
	Lions Club	Sunset Coastal Grill, Port St. Joe
	Red Hat Society Beach Belles	Port St. Joe
	St. Joseph's Bay Country Club	700 Country Club Road, Simmons Bayou
	The 100 Club of Gulf County	St. Joe Bay Country Club, Port St. Joe

	Washington Improvement Group/CAC	401 Peters Street, Port St. Joe
	Wewahitchka Senior Citizens & Community Center	314 North 3rd Street, Wewahitchka
	Wewahitchka Women's Club	Wewahitchka
	Women Athletes Supporting Women Athletes	St. Joe Bay
	Gulf County Association for Retarded Citizens	122 Water Plant Road, Port St. Joe
	People Helping People	2010 Parker Avenue, Port St. Joe
	North PSJ Challenge Center	407 Peters Street, Port St. Joe
Other Life Sustaining Activities	Gulf County Public Library	110 Library Drive, Port St. Joe
	Wewahitchka Branch Library	314 North 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	PeoplesSouth Bank	529 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Centennial Bank	202 Marina Drive, Port St. Joe
	Centennial Bank	125 Highway 71, Wewahitchka
	Capital City Bank	504 Monument Avenue, Port St. Joe
	Nautical Mortgage	260 Marina Drive, Port St. Joe
	One Source Mortgage	1520 C-30 Road, Port St. Joe
	Tyndall Federal Credit Union	501 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
County Government	Emerald Coast Federal Credit Union	530 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Emerald Coast Federal Credit Union	101 East River Road, Wewahitchka
	Port St. Joe City Hall	305 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Port St. Joe Post Office	502 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe

	Wewahitchka City Hall	109 South 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	Wewahitchka Post Office	432 Highway 22, Wewahitchka
	Gulf County Courthouse	1000 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Sheriff's Office	1000 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Veteran's Services	1000 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Veteran's Services	222 North 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	Gulf County Probation Office	1000 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe
	Gulf County Probation Office	222 South 2nd Street, Wewahitchka
	Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program	1000 Cecil G. Costin SR Blvd, Port St. Joe

e. Inventory of Available Transportation Services

The following is a list of all identifiable transportation services that are currently available in the service area. This includes public, private, non-profit, and local commuter service providers.

Name:	*Big Bend Transit, Inc.*	*Gulf County School Board*	*North Florida Head Start Program*
Telephone Number:	850-229-6550	850-227-1204	850-639-5080
Contact Person & Title:	Shawn Mitchell, General Manager	Diana Dykes, Transportation Director	Sharon Gaskin, Executive Director
Number Vehicles:	8	28 buses, 9 vans	4 buses
Provider Type:	Private, Not For Profit	Government	Private, Not For Profit
Does the provider receive public funds and transport individuals in connection with the funds?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the provider provide transportation services to the general public?	Yes	No	No
What are the criteria for passenger eligibility?	Program participants and general public	School children	Program participants
Is the provider part of the coordinated transportation program?	Yes, CTC	No	No

September 2026

III. Service Analysis

In order to ensure service availability, an estimate of the total transportation disadvantaged population and the estimated total demand for trips for the service area must be known. In the coordinated system, the population eligible for program-sponsored trips is larger than the population eligible for trips funded by the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. Separate population and demand estimates are needed for each of these categories.

This section attempts to estimate the need and demand for transportation services by the various transportation disadvantaged populations. It will provide a quantitative transportation needs profile for the various transportation disadvantaged population segments and will estimate the unmet need for transportation in the service area.

Potential Transportation Disadvantaged Population and the Transportation Disadvantaged Population (formerly referred to as "Category I" and "Category II")

The Potential Transportation Disadvantaged Population (Category I) refers to the total population of persons who are eligible for trips through the coordinated transportation program (i.e., persons who have a disability, are elderly, children at-risk, and/or are low income). This population is eligible for trips purchased by social service agencies.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Population (Category II) is a subset of the Potential Transportation Disadvantaged Population and includes those persons who, because of their disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation, and children who are "high-risk" or "at risk." Persons who are included in the Transportation Disadvantaged Population are eligible for trips funded through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. This population is eligible for trips purchased through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund as well as for trips purchased by social service agencies.

Program and General Trips

Program trips are trips made by clients of social service agencies for the purpose of participating in programs of the agencies. Examples of program trips are trips to congregate dining facilities, sheltered workshops, job training facilities, and sponsored agency services. Generally, these trips are purchased by the agencies for their clients. Members of both Transportation Disadvantaged populations are eligible for program trips.

General trips are trips made by transportation disadvantaged persons to destinations of their choice, not to agency programs. Examples of general trips are trips to work or grocery stores, and non-Medicaid medical trips. Most general trips are purchased through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, although social service agencies purchase some general trips for their clients. Only persons in the transportation disadvantaged population are eligible for general trips purchased through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund.

Sponsored and Non-Sponsored

In the transportation disadvantaged system, trips are commonly referred to as either sponsored or non-sponsored. These terms should not be confused with program and general. "Sponsored" and "non-sponsored" refer to the funding source for the trip. Sponsored trips are subsidized by social service agencies, while non-sponsored trips are subsidized with the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. "Program" and "general" refer to the purpose of a trip. All program trips are sponsored because they

are trips funded by social service agencies for transportation to agency programs. General trips can be either sponsored or non-sponsored.

A. Forecasts of TD Population

General TD Population Forecast	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Overlapping Circle Component					
E - Estimate non-elderly/disabled/ low income	599	606	613	620	628
B - Estimate non-elderly/ disabled/not low income	1,003	1,015	1,027	1,039	1,051
G - Estimate elderly/disabled/low income	241	244	247	250	253
D- Estimate elderly/ disabled/not low income	1,008	1,020	1,032	1,044	1,056
F - Estimate elderly/non-disabled/low income	205	207	210	212	215
A - Estimate elderly/non-disabled/not low income	1,819	1,840	1,862	1,884	1,906
C - Estimate low income/not elderly/not disabled	1,464	1,481	1,499	1,516	1,534
TOTAL GENERAL TD POPULATION	**6,339**	**6,414**	**6,489**	**6,566**	**6,643**
TOTAL POPULATION	**15,131**	**15,309**	**15,490**	**15,672**	**15,857**

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2024: PUMA, Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), Florida Statewide Transportation Disadvantaged Plan Population and Demand Forecasts

B. Needs Assessment

The need for transportation is not the same as the demand for transportation. Travel need is the amount of travel necessary to provide an adequate standard of living, a quantity not affected by the price of travel. People may have a need to travel independent of their ability or willingness to pay. On the other hand, demand is based on economic willingness to pay and is related to users' income levels. Demand can be measured by the number of people who will use a service at a given price. Need and demand exist in proportion to each other. High levels of need and low levels of demand more typically characterize rural areas.

Techniques to estimate need are not completely successful, particularly when used in rural areas. The Center for Urban Transportation Research has used an approach that estimates demand based on a correlation between ridership and market characteristics of similar services provided in other areas. The approach uses trip rates derived in a study of paratransit demand in San Francisco, California. This approach was chosen because the trip rates are based on actual experiences of paratransit systems that are meeting most or all of the trip demand in their service areas. The Federal Transit Administration also has recommended this approach for use in estimating demand for Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for complementary paratransit services.

Program trips and general trips will be supplied by operators within the coordinated transportation disadvantaged system and by operators currently outside of the coordinated system. The demand for program trips is a derived demand -- the demand depends on the existence of social service programs. Therefore, assuming that these programs provide sufficient funding to transport their clients to their programs, the supply of program trips will equal the demand for the trips. It is assumed that the demand and supply of program trips within the coordinated system and outside of it will increase at the same rate of growth as the potential transportation disadvantaged population.

General trips will be purchased through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, through local subsidies, and by local service agencies. Within the coordinated system, it is assumed that the supply of

general trips purchased through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund will increase at the same rate as the transportation disadvantaged population and that the supply of general trips purchased through local subsidies and by social service agencies will increase at the same rate as the potential transportation disadvantaged population.

The forecasted unmet demand for transportation disadvantaged trips is the difference between the demand and the supply of these trips. All of the unmet demand consists of demand for general trips.

Since virtually all program trips are sponsored, all demand for "program" trips should be able to be met. A primary objective for the community transportation coordinator is to meet as much demand as possible, although the supply of general trips is dependent on funding from the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund established for non-sponsored trips and other sources.

To solicit concerns and comments regarding the transportation needs and the program, a public hearing is held annually. Concerns can be expressed verbally or written. All concerns are noted in the minutes of the public hearing and responded to in a timely manner.

During the annual evaluation of the community transportation coordinator, the local coordinating board will survey riders of the system. The survey evaluates the transportation program and the services it provides, but it also addresses unmet needs of the users. Rider surveys may be conducted by telephone or on-board during a scheduled trip during a designated period of time.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Improvement Program identifies transportation improvements (such as capital purchases, renovations to buildings), indicates the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board's priorities, groups improvements into staging periods, and includes realistic estimates of costs and revenues for the program period.

New vehicles will be needed to replace old vehicles and to allow for the service expansion that is necessary to provide the increasing number of transportation disadvantaged trips that are forecast during the study period. Transportation disadvantaged trips are provided by a variety of vehicles including automobiles, buses, and vans. Each type of vehicle has unique operating characteristics and replacement cycles. The number of new vehicles required to replace old vehicles was forecasted based on the assumption of the average useful life, increase in vehicle miles required to supply the additional trips forecasted during the period, current average trip lengths and current average service efficiency.

Five-Year Transportation Disadvantaged Improvement Plan

	Project	*Improvement*	*Estimated Cost*	*Estimated Revenue Source*
1	Purchase replacement and/or expansion of paratransit vehicles to provide Transportation for the General public, elderly, and disabled persons.	9 mini-buses with lift equipment	$1,080,000	U.S.C. Sec. 5310, FDOT, CTC
2	Provide paratransit transportation service to the elderly, handicapped, and disadvantaged citizens residing in the county.	Operational Assistance	$1,200,000	U.S.C. Sec. 5311, Non-Government
3	Purchase miscellaneous equipment for operations and/or maintenance	Miscellaneous Equipment	$650,000	U.S.C. Sec. 5339, FDOT, CTC

Updated September 2026

C. Barriers to Coordination

The community transportation coordinator and the local transportation disadvantaged coordinating board have worked together to address and eliminate known barrier to coordination of transportation disadvantaged trips within their control.

Known Barriers

The need to transport out of the service area is the primary barrier. The need for specialized medical services, medical services for veterans, and employment opportunities are not as available in the rural counties as in the urban areas. Transportation to neighboring urban areas to supply these needs is increasing at a remarkable rate. Grouping trips and purposes is difficult and becomes more intricate when going out of the service area.

The lack of funding continues to be a barrier to coordination. Additional funds are needed to increase the availability of core transportation needs such as employment and shopping trips for the non-sponsored.

Local Efforts to Eliminate Barriers

The community transportation coordinator and the local transportation disadvantaged coordinating board will:

- communicate to the public the various routes and schedules. Information about transportation services will continually be provided through brochures, public service announcements, public speaking engagements, interagency affiliations, and attendance at County Commission and Regional Planning Council meetings;
- monitor the performance of the system;
- continue to educate the public about the Voluntary Dollar Program when purchasing and renewing automobile tags so that these donations can be used to increase local revenues for expanded services;

- continue to advocate for transportation disadvantaged persons with local and state government leaders regarding the need for additional funds;
- monitor spending of the non-sponsored funds and work with agencies to include transportation when developing its budget;
- reach out to non-traditional partners that have a desire to improve transportation in the county;
- work cooperatively with local WAGES coalitions to provide assistance in the development of innovative transportation services for WAGES participants; and
- continue coordinating out-of-service-area trips to destinations such as Gainesville, Lake City, Dothan, Pensacola, etc.

IV. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals, objectives, and strategies are critical to the implementation of the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan and each component. They are important policy statements that have been carefully considered by the community transportation coordinator, the designated official planning council with the direction and support of the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board. They represent a statement of local policy that will be used to manage the future transportation disadvantaged program within the service area.

The goals and objectives are based on requirements of Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, and those of the Commission, but are adapted to the local planning area. It should also be noted the goals and objectives would be used, in conjunction with findings of the needs/demands analysis, to develop strategies for goal attainment.

The goals and objectives will be evaluated annually with the required Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged evaluation elements, noting deficiencies and corrective actions, service improvements and expansions. Information will be based on the most recent annual operating report.

GOAL: Increase the number of transportation disadvantaged persons served by the coordinated system.

Objective 1: Improve the availability of transportation service to persons who are transportation disadvantaged.

- Increase the number of sponsored and non-sponsored trips
- Maintain and expand the client database relating to the clients' needs and capabilities
- Utilize Purchase of Service Agreements or rate agreements with all agencies that purchase transportation services with public funds
- Prepare a user's guide and update when needed
- Provide announcements to local newspapers announcing public hearings

Measures:

- Percentage of change in the number of sponsored and non-sponsored trips provided
- Percentage of change in the number of passengers
- Availability of the user's guide in the community
- Number of persons in attendance at public hearings

Objective 2: Ensure that service is delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.

- Maintain an operational fleet of vehicles to meet all needs
- Evaluate and revise routes and schedules when needed
- Develop a workable budget and keep within budget expectations
- Review driver logs for areas of inefficient use of time, drivers, and miles
- Review driver non-revenue hours and reduce when possible
- Review routes, schedules and type of services being provided
- Contract with an adequate number of operators to meet the needs

Measures:

- Operating cost/passenger trip

- Operating cost/vehicle mile
- Operating cost/driver hour
- Reduced average trip length
- Passenger trips/vehicle
- Passenger trips/driver hour
- Passenger trips/vehicle mile
- Miles/trip
- Miles/passengers

Objective 3: Ensure that safe and quality service is provided.

- Provide training on customer satisfaction
- Provide training on passenger assistance techniques
- Maintain an operational fleet of vehicles to meet all needs
- Review routes, schedules and type of services being provided
- Report accidents and roadcalls to the LCB
- Review operator contracts for compliance with safety requirements
- Annually review SSPP and amend as needed
- Provide opportunities for riders to express concerns and suggestions on service delivery
- Sponsor at least one public hearing each year for public comment
- Schedule an opportunity for public comments on all LCB agendas
- Address public organizations and agencies regarding services

Measures:

- Completion of training programs
- Number of grievances filed
- Complaints/trips
- Number of Ombudsman calls recorded regarding service
- Percent of on-time pick-ups to meet or exceed standard
- Percent of on-time to destinations to meet or exceed standard
- Accidents/vehicle miles
- Vehicle miles between roadcalls
- Satisfactory review of operator contracts
- Proof of an annual review of SSPP and updated as needed
- Percent of trip requests denied/unmet
- Satisfactory rider survey results (80% or better)
- Number of persons attending the public hearing

Objective 4: Secure necessary funding to support the TD program.

- Address public organizations and agencies on the need of local financial support
- Promote the Voluntary Dollar Program

Measures:

- Percent of local funds are of total operating revenue
- Increase in voluntary dollars donated
- Increase in funding from new sponsors/sources

Objective 5: Ensure program accountability.

- Provide copies of reports to the LCB for review

- Provide, at least quarterly, operational, and financial information to the LCB
- Provide a copy of audit or annual financial report to LCB
- Provide copies of purchasing agency evaluation/monitoring reports to LCB
- Perform annual evaluation of CTC

Measures:

- Submittal of accurate AOR
- Submittal of on-time MOA
- Submittal of on-time TDSP
- Submittal of TDTF Trip/Equipment grant application
- Submittal of accurate reports to LCB
- Satisfactory audit or annual financial report
- Compliance with annual evaluation findings and recommendations
- Compliance with sponsoring agency's monitoring/evaluations findings and recommendations

V. Implementation Schedule

The Implementation Schedule reiterates the goals and objectives discussed previously. Each goal and objective will be reviewed annually at the time of the community transportation coordinator's evaluation to determine progress made in each area. A determination will be made in each area as to whether the component was met satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily. Unsatisfactory responses will be followed with a corrective action plan.

Objective 1: Improve the availability of transportation service to persons who are transportation disadvantaged.

Strategies	*Responsible Party for Accomplishment*	*Anticipated Beginning & Ending Dates*
Increase the number of sponsored and non-sponsored trips	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Maintain and expand the client data base relating to the clients' needs and capabilities	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Utilize Purchase of Service Agreements or rate agreements with all agencies that purchase transportation services with public funds	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Prepare a user's guide and update when needed	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide announcements to local newspapers announcing public hearings	PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

Objective 2: Ensure that service is delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.

Strategies	*Responsible Party for Accomplishment*	*Anticipated Beginning & Ending Dates*
Maintain an operational fleet of vehicles to meet all needs	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Evaluate and revise routes and schedules when needed	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Develop a workable budget and keep within budget expectations	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Review driver logs for areas of inefficient use of time, drivers, and miles	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

Review driver non-revenue hours and reduce when possible	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Review routes, schedules and type of services being provided	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Contract with an adequate number of operators to meet the needs	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

Objective 3: Ensure that safe and quality service is provided.

Strategies	*Responsible Party for Accomplishment*	*Anticipated Beginning & Ending Dates*
Provide training on customer satisfaction	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide training on passenger assistance techniques	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Maintain an operational fleet of vehicles to meet all needs	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Review routes, schedules and type of services being provided	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Report accidents and roadcalls to the LCB	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Review operator contracts for compliance with safety requirements	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Annually review SSPP and amend as needed	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide opportunities for riders to express concerns and suggestions on service delivery	CTC, LCB	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Sponsor at least one public hearing each year for public comment	PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Schedule an opportunity for public comments on all LCB agendas	PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Address public organizations and agencies regarding services	CTC, LCB, PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

Objective 4: Secure necessary funding to support the TD program.

Strategies	*Responsible Party for Accomplishment*	*Anticipated Beginning & Ending Dates*
Address public organizations and agencies on the need of local financial support	CTC, LCB, PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Promote the Voluntary Dollar Program	CTC, LCB, PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

Objective 5: Ensure program accountability.

Strategies	*Responsible Party for Accomplishment*	*Anticipated Beginning & Ending Dates*
Provide copies of reports to the LCB for review.	CTC, PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide, at least quarterly, operational and financial information to the LCB	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide a copy of audit or annual financial report to LCB	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Provide copies of purchasing agency evaluation/monitoring reports to LCB	CTC	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031
Perform annual evaluation of CTC	LCB, PA	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2031

(CTC/Community Transportation Coordinator, LCB/Local Coordinating Board, PA/Planning Agency)

Service Plan

VI. Operations

The operations element is a profile of the Community Transportation Coordinator's (CTC) current system, which provides basic information about the CTC's daily operations.

The Community Transportation Coordinator, Big Bend Transit, Inc., is a two-part agency that operates as the CTC for Franklin and Gulf Counties. Big Bend Transit, Inc. is otherwise known as Big Bend Transit and is referred to as such throughout the document.

A. Types, Hours, and Days of Service

Types of Service:

- Advance Reservation, Intra-County Service – Curb-to-curb (on exception, door-to-door), ambulatory/wheelchair, and non-emergency transportation service, within Gulf County.
- Advance Reservation, Inter-County Service – Curb-to-curb (on exception, door-to-door), ambulatory/wheelchair, non-emergency transportation service, between Gulf County and other Florida (and, on occasion, South Georgia) Counties.
- Demand Response Service – Curb-to-curb (on exception, door-to-door), ambulatory/wheelchair, non-emergency transportation service that is provided: 1) outside the specific areas of service, and/or 2) outside the specific periods of regular service, and/or 3) without proper advance notification.
- Evacuation Service – Door-to-door, ambulatory/ wheelchair, transportation service, only to the extent of availability per agreement.

Bariatric Transportation:

Transportation Disadvantaged Program: Big Bend Transit is required to transport all "common wheelchairs. A common wheelchair is defined as a device which does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Wheelchairs that exceed these dimensions and weight may not to be transported.

Hours and Days of Service:

- Intra-county service for the general public is available Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.
- Intra-county service for Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF) non-sponsored persons is available Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.
- Intra-county service for other federal, state and/or local government agency(s) is provided as negotiated.

B. Accessing Services

Office Hours:

Big Bend Transit's office hours are Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Phone Number:

Transportation Disadvantaged Program: (850) 229-6550 or Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8711 for TDD access.

- Advance Reservation Service – When requesting advanced reservation service, the name and origin/destination of the passenger to be transported will be placed with the Community Transportation Coordinator by 2:00 PM the day before the day of travel and no more than 14 days in advance of the day of travel.
- Evacuation Service – When requesting evacuation service, the Purchaser will place with the Community Transportation Coordinator the number and type of vehicle required and the time period(s) during which the vehicle(s) will be required. A vehicle service hour begins with the start of the purchaser's requested period of availability and ends with the purchaser's release of vehicle(s).

Hours of the Community Transportation Coordinator for scheduling all transportation services are Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Trip Cancellation Process:

Hours of the Community Transportation Coordinator for cancelling all transportation services are 24 hours, 7 days a week. Trip cancellations shall be made to Big Bend Transit a minimum of two (2) hours prior to the earliest pick-up time. A "No-Show" will be charged to passengers who do not cancel trips a minimum of two (2) hours prior to their pick-up time.

No-Show Policies:

Transportation Disadvantaged Program – Trips must be cancelled a minimum of two hours before the scheduled pick-up time. If trips are not cancelled at least two hours in advance, the passenger will be considered a no-show. Cancellations at the door will be considered no-shows. If an individual is charged with frequent no-shows, they may be temporarily suspended from service.

On the first "no-show," the driver will leave a "no-show" notice on the client's door. On the second "no-show" occurrence, a letter of warning will be sent from the Community Transportation Coordinator. If a third infraction occurs within 60 days, the Community Transportation Coordinator will send a letter notifying the client that they have been suspended from service for a 30-day period. When the client is again reinstated to the program, and if three (3) infractions occur within 60 days, the suspension will be 45 days. When the client is again reinstated to the program and if three (3) infractions occur within 60 days, the suspension will be 60 days.

Transportation Disadvantaged Program Eligibility:

Big Bend Transit will determine through an eligibility application process whether an individual is unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation. Individuals who do not have an operational vehicle in the household; the ability to operate a vehicle; or the ability to find transportation from other sources are considered eligible for Transportation Disadvantaged Program services. Individuals who are unable to purchase transportation will also be considered for Transportation Disadvantaged Program eligibility.

Transportation Disadvantaged Program sponsored services are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Service sponsored by the Transportation Disadvantaged Program may be denied if there are insufficient funds to provide that service.

Transportation Disadvantaged Program Trip Priorities:

Big Bend Transit, in cooperation with the Coordinating Board, has established the following trip priorities for the use of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Funds:

- Life Sustaining Medical Trips
- Employment Trips
- Essential Business Trips
- Education/Training Trips
- Nutrition/Mealsite Trips
- Recreational/Social Trips

C. Transportation Operators and Coordination Contractors

Solicitation for contracted Transportation Operators is need driven and is accomplished through a competitive RFQ process.

D. Public Transit Utilization

There is no fixed route public transportation available in Gulf County.

E. School Bus Utilization

Currently, there is no need to use school buses at this time. If Big Bend Transit determines a need to use school buses in the future, the Gulf County School Board will be contacted for assistance.

F. Vehicle Inventory

Fac	Fac Abbreviation	Fac Name	Asset	Dept	Year	Make	Model	LIC PLT	VIN	Reg #	Class	Unit X-Ref	Operator	Asset Status
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	1603	(0009) BBT GULF	2016	DODGE 91259	GRCAR-	X0383D	2C7WDGBG9GR195505		A	1603		Available, now completed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	1916	(0009) BBT GULF	2018	DODGE 30027	GRCAR-	X2183E	2C7WDGBG5JR363115		A	1916		Available, not needed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	2201	(0009) BBT GULF	2022	CRYSTLR 30091	VOYAGER	X7624E	2C4RC1CG6NR172317		A	2201		Available, not needed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	1702	(0009) BBT GULF	2016	FDTNST 93380	3.5LTT	X1449D	1FBVU4XG7GKB25181		SCUTA	1702		Available, not needed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	2006	(0009) BBT GULF	2020	FORD C 30046	E450--	X5052E	1FDFE4FS4KDC73073		CUTA	2006		Available, now completed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	1705	(0009) BBT GULF	2016	FDTRST 93373	3.5LTT	X5962C	1FBVU4XG2GKB25184		SCUTA	1705		Available, now completed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	2007	(0009) BBT GULF	2020	FORD C 30051		X4969E	1FDFE4FS5KDC72997		CUTA	2007		Available, now completed
1	001	BIG BEND TRANSIT INC.	2503	(0009) BBT GULF	2025	FORD	TRANSIT	X5058F	1FDAX2C85SKA94926		DEFAULT	2503		Available, not needed

Bus Transit System Annual Safety and Security Certification

Certifying Compliance with Rule 14-90, FAC to the
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Certification Date (Current): 2026
Certification Year: (Previous): 2025
Name and Address of Bus Transit System: Big Bend Transit, Inc.

The Bus Transit System (Agency) named above hereby certifies the following:

1. *The Agency has adopted a System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) and a Security Program Plan (SPP) or PTASP pursuant to the standards set forth in Rule Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code.*

2. *The Agency is in compliance with its adopted SSPP and SPP.*

3. *The Agency has performed annual safety inspections on all operational vehicles in accordance with Rule Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code.*

4. *The Agency has conducted reviews of SSPP and SPP or PTASP and the plans are up to date.*

Blue Ink Signature:_____ ***Date:***_2/16/2026_____
(Individual Responsible for Assurance of Compliance)

Name: ***Shawn Mitchell*** ***Title:*** ***General Manager***

Name and address of entity(ies) which has (have) performed bus safety inspections and security assessments:

Name: *Domingo Ortiz*

Address: *2201 Eisenhower Street, Tallahassee, FL*

Name of Qualified Mechanic who Performed Annual Inspections: *Domingo Ortiz*

** Note: Please do not edit or otherwise change this form.*

H. Intercounty Services

Big Bend Transit provides regular scheduled and non-scheduled inter-county transportation service(s). Big Bend Transit participates, when operationally and cost-effective, in inter-county service routes operated by adjacent CTCs.

I. Emergency Preparedness and Response

In cases of emergencies and natural disasters, Big Bend Transit operates under the direction of Gulf County Emergency Management Office. Big Bend Transit attends regular meetings and training sessions put on by the Gulf County Emergency Management. Big Bend Transit is listed in the county plan as a means of evacuation for county residents and those with special needs.

J. Education Efforts/Marketing

The availability of Big Bend Transit transportation services will continue to be promoted through general and specific distribution of informational materials at locations which concentrate eligible population activity.

K. Acceptable Alternatives

No alternatives, based on Chapter 427 F.S. and Rule 41-2 F.A.C., have been requested or approved in Gulf County.

L. Service Standards

The Community Transportation Coordinator and any transportation operator from whom service is purchased or arranged by the Community Transportation Coordinator shall adhere to Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged approved standards. These standards include:

Commission Service Standards

Drug and Alcohol Policy…..41-2.006(4)(a)

Drug and alcohol testing for safety sensitive job positions within the coordinated system regarding pre-employment, randomization, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion as required by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Escorts and Children…..41-2.006(4)(b)

An escort of a passenger and dependent children are to be transported as locally negotiated and identified in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: Children under age 12 will be required to be accompanied by an escort. Escorts must be provided by the passenger. Escorts must be able to provide the necessary assistance to the passenger. Escorts will be transported at the regular rate.

Child Restraint Devices…..41-2.006(4)(c)

Use of child restraint devices shall be determined locally as to their responsibility, and cost of such device in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: All passengers under the age of 4 and/or under 50 pounds will be required to use a child restraint device. This device will be provided by the passenger.

Passenger Property…..41-2.006(4)(d)

Passenger property that can be carried by the passenger and/or driver in one trip and can safely be stowed on the vehicle, shall be allowed to be transported with the passenger at no additional charge. Additional requirements may be negotiated for carrying and loading rider property beyond this amount. Passenger property does not include wheelchairs, child seats, stretchers, secured oxygen, personal assistive devices, or intravenous devices.

Local Policy: Passengers shall be allowed to have two pieces of personal property which they can place in their lap. Passengers must be able to independently carry all items brought onto the vehicle.

Vehicle Transfer Points…..41-2.006(4)(e)

Vehicle transfer points shall provide shelter, security, and safety of passengers.

Local Toll Free Telephone Number For Consumer Comment…..41-2.006(4)(f)

A local toll-free telephone number for complaints or grievances shall be posted inside the vehicles. The TD Helpline phone number (1-800-983-2435) also be posted inside all vehicles of the coordinated system. The local complaint process shall be outlined as a section in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan including advising the dissatisfied person about the Commission's Ombudsman Program as a step within the process as approved by the local coordinating board. All rider information/materials (brochures, user's guides, etc.) will include the TD Helpline phone number.

Out-of-Service Area Trips…..41-2.006(4)(g)

Out-of-service area trips shall be provided when determined locally and approved by the local coordinating board, except in instances where local ordinances prohibit such trips.

Local Policy: Inter-county services between Franklin, Gulf, and Leon Counties are available weekly. Other inter-county services are provided when available.

Vehicle Cleanliness…..41-2.006(4)(h)

Interior of all vehicles shall be free from dirt, grime, oil, trash, torn upholstery, damaged or broken seats, protruding metal or other objects or materials which could soil items placed in the vehicle or provide discomfort for the passenger.

Local Policy: All vehicles shall be cleaned (interior and exterior) on a regular schedule (minimum once a week).

Billing Requirements to Contracted Operators…..41-2.006(4)(i)

Billing requirements of the community transportation coordinator to subcontractors shall be determined locally by the local coordinating board and provided in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. All bills shall be paid within 7 working days to subcontractors, after receipt of said payment by the community transportation coordinator, in accordance with Section 287.0585, F.S.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Passenger/Trip Data Base….. 41-2.006(4)(j)

Passenger/trip database must be maintained or accessible by the community transportation coordinator on each rider being transported within the system.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Adequate Seating…..41-2.006(4)(k)

Adequate seating for paratransit services shall be provided to each rider and escort, child, or personal care attendant, and no more passengers than the registered passenger seating capacity shall be scheduled or transported in a vehicle at any time. For transit services provided by transit vehicles, adequate seating or standing space will be provided to each rider and escort, child, or personal care attendant, and no more passengers than the registered passenger seating or standing capacity shall be scheduled or transported in a vehicle at any time.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Driver Identification…..41-2.006(4)(l)

Drivers for paratransit services, including coordination contractors, shall be required to announce and identify themselves by name and company in a manner that is conducive to communications with the specific passenger, upon pickup of each rider, group of riders, or representative, guardian, or associate of the rider, except in situations where the driver regularly transports the rider on a recurring basis. Each driver must have photo identification that is in view of the passenger. Name patches, inscriptions or badges that affix to driver clothing are acceptable. For transit services, the driver photo identification shall be in a conspicuous location in the vehicle.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Passenger Assistance…..41-2.006(4)(m)

The paratransit drivers shall provide the passenger with boarding assistance, if necessary or requested, to the seating portion of the vehicle. The boarding assistance shall include opening the vehicle door, fastening the seat belt or utilization of wheelchair securement devices, storage of mobility assistive devices, and closing the vehicle door. In the door-through-door paratransit service category, the driver shall be required to open and close doors to buildings, except in situations in which assistance in opening/closing building doors would not be safe for passengers remaining on the vehicle. Assisted access must be in a dignified manner. Drivers may not assist wheelchair up or down more than one step, unless it can be performed safely as determined by the passenger, guardian, and driver.

Local Policy: Drivers are not permitted individually to assist persons in wheelchairs up or down more than one step, through grass or sand or an include of more than 8.33% (1:12 slope).

Smoking, Eating, and Drinking On Vehicles…..41-2.006(4)(n)

Smoking is prohibited in any vehicle. Requirements for drinking and eating on board the vehicle will be addressed in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: The use of tobacco products on vehicles is prohibited. Eating and drinking on board the vehicle is also prohibited.

No-Show Policy…..41-2.006(4)(o)

The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board shall jointly develop a policy on passenger no-shows. Assessing fines to passengers for no-shows is acceptable but such policy and process shall be identified in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy - Passenger no-shows are defined as trips not cancelled a minimum of two (2) hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Passengers shall be notified if they are considered a no-show.
No-Shows will not exceed 1% of the requested trips.

Two-Way Communication Equipment…..41-2.006(4)(p)

All vehicles providing service within the coordinated system shall be equipped with two-way communications in good working order and audible to the driver at all times to the base.

Local Policy: All vehicles shall have two-way radios.

Vehicle Air Conditioning and Heating Equipment….. 41-2.006(4)(q)

All vehicles providing service within the coordinated system shall have working air conditioners and heaters in each vehicle. Vehicles that do not have a working air conditioner or heater will be scheduled for repair or replacement as soon as possible.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

First Aid Policy…..41-2.006(4)(r)

First Aid policy shall be determined locally and provided in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: All drivers shall be certified in First Aid.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Policy…..41-2.006(4)(s)

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation policy shall be determined locally and provided in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: All drivers shall be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Driver Background Screening…..41-2.006(4)(t)

Driver background screening shall be determined locally, dependent upon purchasing agencies' requirements, and provided in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Local Policy: All drivers in the coordinated system shall meet Level 2 criminal background screening requirements in accordance with Chapter 435, Florida Statutes.

Public Transit Ridership…..41-2.006(4)(u)

In areas where fixed route transportation is available, the community transportation coordinator should jointly establish with the local coordinating board a percentage of total trips that will be placed on the fixed route system.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit shall comply with this standard.

Passenger Pick-Up Window…..41-2.006(4)(v)

The community transportation coordinator should establish and address the passenger pick-up windows in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. This policy should also be communicated to contracted operators, drivers, purchasing agencies and passengers.

Local Policy: There is a ninety (90) minute pick-up window in place for all intra-county trips based on the arrival time of the passenger. There is sixty (60) minute pick-up window in place for all intra-county trips based on the departure time of the passenger.

On-Time Performance.....41-2.006(4)(w)

The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board should jointly establish and address the percentage of trips that will be on time in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. This performance measure should be communicated to contracted operators, drivers, purchasing agencies, and passengers. This measure should also be included as a part of the community transportation coordinator's evaluation of its contracted operators, and the local coordinating board's evaluation of the community transportation coordinator.

Local Policy: Big Bend Transit will have a 90 percent on-time performance rate for all completed trips. On-time performance will be measured by random sampling of trips.

Advanced Reservation Requirements.....41-2.006(4)(x)

The community transportation coordinator should establish and address in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan a minimum 24-hour advanced notification time to obtain services. This policy should be communicated to contracted operators, purchasing agencies and passengers.

Local Policy: There shall be a 24-hour notice requirement for all other trips scheduled within the coordinated system, except under special circumstances.

Safety (Accidents).....41-2.006(4)(y)

The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board should jointly establish and address in the service plan a performance measure to evaluate the safety of the coordinated system. This measure should be used in the community transportation coordinator's evaluation of the contracted operators, and the local coordinating board's evaluation of the community transportation coordinator.

Local Policy: There shall be no more than 1.2 chargeable accidents per 100,000 miles during the evaluation period.

Reliability (Roadcalls).....41-2.006(4)(z)

The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board should jointly establish and address in the local service plan a performance measure to evaluate the reliability of the vehicles utilized in the coordinated system. This measure should be used in the community transportation coordinator's evaluation of the contracted operators, and the local coordinating board's evaluation of the community transportation coordinator.

Local Policy: There should be no less than 10,000 miles between each road call.

Accessibility (Call Hold Time).....41-2.006(4)(aa)

This performance measure can be used to address the accessibility of the service. The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board should jointly determine if a standard for a call hold time is needed in the coordinated system and address this in the local service plan. If determined to be necessary, this standard should be included in the local coordinating board's evaluation of the community transportation coordinator.

Local Policy: 90% of all incoming calls will be answered within an average of three (3) minutes.

Quality (Complaints).....41-2.006(4)(bb)

The community transportation coordinator and the local coordinating board should jointly establish and address in the local service plan a performance measure to evaluate the quality of service provided within the coordinated system. The measure should be used in the community transportation coordinator's evaluation of the contracted operators, and the local coordinating board's evaluation of the community transportation coordinator.

Local Policy: 1 complaint for 100,000 miles shall be the maximum number of complaints for the evaluation period.

a. Passenger Code of Conduct

For everyone's safety, drivers and riders of the system are expected to act in an appropriate manner at all times and abide by the policies of Big Bend Transit.

- Riders shall be ready to board the vehicle within 5 minutes of its arrival.
- Riders shall be prepared to share their ride with other passengers.
- No person may eat, drink or smoke on board any vehicle.
- No passenger may operate or tamper with any equipment on board any vehicle.
- Riders may not have radios, cassette tape players, CD players or other sound generating devices in operation while on board a vehicle, UNLESS it is connected to a headset.
- Disruptive behavior, which results in a distraction to the driver is deemed a safety hazard. Such behavior will not be tolerated and shall be grounds for suspension of transportation privileges.

Verbal Abuse:

Verbal abuse by a rider against staff, drivers or other clients will not be tolerated. Verbal abuse includes but is not limited to use of profanity, obscene gestures, yelling or screaming. Riders who verbally abuse staff, drivers or other clients may be suspended from service.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse of either a rider to another rider or rider to a driver will not be tolerated. Physical abuse includes but is not limited to grabbing, hitting, or touching. Such abuse shall be deemed as assault. In such cases, the local police shall be notified, and the rider shall be issued a notice of suspension from service.

Substance Abuse:

No passenger who is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will be transported. If a passenger is scheduled to be returned home and they are under the influence, they will be required to find alternative means of transportation. If a pattern of such behavior exists, a suspension of transportation privileges shall be invoked.

b. Penalties

The following penalties shall apply to service sponsored by Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

Verbal Abuse:

- First offense – written warning
- Second offense – one week suspension of services

- Third offense – 30-day suspension of services
- Fourth offense – 90-day suspension of services
- Fifth offense – permanently removed from service

Physical Abuse:

- First offense - Big Bend Transit will issue a written notice of suspension for 90 days by certified mail. The notice will advise the rider that Big Bend Transit intends to suspend his or her riding privileges and the reason for such action.
- Second offense – 180-day suspension of services
- Third offense - permanently removed from service

c. Appeals

A rider has ten (10) calendar days from the date of issuance of suspension notice to request a reconsideration hearing on the suspension. If a reconsideration hearing is requested, the hearing will be held by the Gulf County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee if the suspension involves transportation provided under Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

All requests for reconsideration must be in writing and delivered to:

Big Bend Transit, Inc.
P.O Box 1721
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

The written request must include the name and address of the person who is requesting the hearing and a statement as to why his or her riding privileges should not be suspended. If the request is not received within ten (10) calendar days from the issue date of the suspension, then the suspension becomes effective ten (10) calendar days from the date of issue. Upon receipt of letter requesting the reconsideration hearing, a hearing shall be held within 10 working days. Gulf County Board of County Commissioners staff will advise the person requesting the reconsideration hearing by return correspondence of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The person will be given the opportunity to present the reasons why they believe the suspension should not take place. The Gulf County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee will make a recommendation whether or not to uphold the suspension. A written statement of the recommendation shall be forwarded to the person requesting the hearing within two (2) working days after the hearing by the Grievance Committee. A written statement of the decision whether or not to uphold the suspension shall be forwarded by certified mail within two (2) working days by Big Bend Transit to the person requesting the hearing.

M. Service Animal Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act {ADA), all transit passengers will be permitted to travel with a service animal trained to assist them. ADA regulations at 49 C.F.R. Section 37.3 define a service animal as "any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items."

Please notify Big Bend Transit, Inc. in advance if you intend to bring a service animal with you.

Animals that are not trained to do work or perform tasks are not considered to be service animals (49 C.F.R. Section 37.167(d). For example, emotional support animals, which provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to an individual with disabilities, but are not trained to do work or perform tasks, are not considered to be service animals.

If you are planning on riding on Big Bent Transit, Inc. with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- Service animals are to be properly leashed and/or harnessed and under the control of their handlers at all times.
- The service animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The service animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The service animal must not be aggressive toward people or other animals.
- You are responsible for any damages or soiling caused by the service animal.
- The rider may be asked to remove his/her service animal from the vehicle if:
    - The animal is out of control and the rider does not take effective action to control it.
    - The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

You are responsible for the care and supervision of your service animal while on board the vehicle.

N. Local Complaint and Grievance Procedure/Process

a. The aggrieved person is to present a formal (written) grievance to the Community Transportation Coordinator within 10 working days of the incident.

b. The Community Transportation Coordinator will have 10 working days from the date of receipt of the grievance to respond in writing to the aggrieved person. The response will include the right to appeal to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee. The Community Transportation Coordinator shall submit a copy of the grievance and the response to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee.

c. The aggrieved person, dissatisfied with the response from the Community Transportation Coordinator, has 5 working days of the received response to request in writing a hearing with the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee.

d. The Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Grievance Committee has 10 working days from the date of receipt of the request to hear the grievance and recommend to the Community Transportation Coordinator in writing any actions that may assist in dealing with the stated grievance. The Grievance Committee will report to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board at the next regular meeting.

e. The aggrieved person, dissatisfied with the advice of the Grievance Committee, has 10 working days from the date of receipt of the response to request in writing a hearing before the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.

f. The Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board will hear the grievance within 60 calendar days, either at its next regular meeting or special called meeting as requested by the Grievance Committee Chairman, based on severity of the issue. The findings, explanations and

recommendations of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board will be in written form, recorded and transmitted to the aggrieved person and the Community Transportation Coordinator within 10 working days following the hearing. The determination of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board is final.

g. The Community Transportation Coordinator will have 10 working days from receipt of the recommendations to address in writing the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board's recommendations.

h. The Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board will review the Community Transportation Coordinator's response to the recommendations at the next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board. A record of the grievances, their status (i.e., resolved, unresolved) and the response to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board's recommendations will be included in the Community Transportation Coordinator's annual evaluation. The grievance record will also be reviewed during the development of the Community Transportation Coordinator's service plan.

i. The customer, dissatisfied with the advice of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board, can file a formal grievance with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The customer may begin this process by contacting the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, 605 Suwannee Street, MS-49, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450 or through the TD Helpline (1-800-983-2435), or by email (CTDOmbudsman@dot.state.fl.us). Upon request of the customer, the Commission will provide the customer with an accessible copy of the Commission's Grievance Procedures.

j. If the Commission is unable to resolve the grievance, the customer will be referred to the Office of Administrative Appeals or other legal venues appropriate to the specific nature of the grievance.

Aggrieved persons with proper standing may also have recourse through the Chapter 120, Florida Statutes' administrative hearing process. Nothing in this process is intended to preclude the aggrieved person from pursuing legal action. Aggrieved persons may contact the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Ombudsman Hotline at 1-800-983-2435.

O. CTC Monitoring Procedures for Operators and Coordination Contractors

The Coordinator is responsible for evaluating its operators and coordination contractors to ensure contractual compliance. The evaluation is done on a periodic basis depending on the needs and requirements of the Coordinator. A comprehensive annual evaluation is to include compliance with the System Safety Program Plan, locally approved standards, Commission standards, annual operating data, and insurance requirements. The same criteria used to evaluate the coordinator will be used annually to evaluate the operators.

P. Coordination Contract Evaluation Criteria

The same criteria used to evaluate the Coordinator will be used annually to evaluate the Coordination Contractors. The evaluation results will be provided to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board to determine whether the issuance or continuation of a coordination contract will be the most cost-effective and efficient utilization of local state, or federal dollars.

VII. Cost/Revenue Allocation & Rate Structure Justification

A. Service Rates Summary & Rate Calculation Worksheets

The Cost Revenue Allocation and Rate Structure are determined by The Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged Rate Calculation Model. The Rate Calculation Model Worksheets are reviewed annually to determine Rate adjustments. Rate changes are calculated annually by changes to the level of service, expenditures and Revenues. The Rate Calculation Model Worksheets are included.

SERVICE RATES SUMMARY

Big Bend Transit, Inc.,

Gulf County Coordinated Transportation System

Effective: July 1, 2026

TYPE OF SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED	UNIT (Passenger Mile or Trip)	COST PER UNIT
Ambulatory	Passenger Trip	$37.43
Wheelchair	Passenger Trip	$64.17

Quality Assurance

VIII. Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance Element contains the steps the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board will take to monitor and evaluate the services provided by or coordinated through the community transportation coordinator, based on the locally established service standards consistent with those of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

Service standards are integral to the development and implementation of a quality transportation program and are intended to bring about uniform service provision in the coordinated system. The transportation disadvantaged coordinating board will annually evaluate the community transportation coordinator's compliance with the established service standards. The community transportation coordinator and any transportation operator from whom service is purchased or arranged by the community transportation coordinator shall adhere to Commission approved standards.

A. Coordinator Evaluation Process

Annually, the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board evaluates the community transportation coordinator to ensure quality of service is being obtained and that it is being provided in the most cost effective, efficient, unduplicated and unfragmented manner. The transportation disadvantaged coordinating board makes a recommendation to the Apalachee Regional Planning Council. The Apalachee Regional Planning Council reviews the evaluation and the recommendation of the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board and recommends to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged the designation of the community transportation coordinator for the next fiscal year.

The evaluation of the coordinator is conducted utilizing the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged approved format. A copy of the most recent coordinator evaluation follows.

The transportation disadvantaged coordinating board has agreed to not evaluate any area of service delivery that was recently evaluated by a purchasing/sponsoring agency or the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The board will appraise the results of the reviews and, if satisfactory, the coordinating board will incorporate the results into their evaluation.

B. Coordinator Monitoring Procedures of Operators and Coordination Contractors

The coordinator is responsible for evaluating its operators and coordination contractors to ensure contractual compliance. The evaluation is done on a periodic basis depending on the needs and requirements of the coordinator. A comprehensive annual evaluation is to include compliance with the System Safety Program Plan, locally approved standards, Commission standards, annual operating data, and insurance requirements. The same criteria used to evaluate the coordinator will be used annually to evaluate the operators.

C. Coordination Contract Evaluation Criteria

The same criteria used to evaluate the coordinator will be used annually to evaluate the coordination contractors. The evaluation results will be provided to the transportation disadvantaged coordinating board to determine whether the issuance or continuation of a coordination contract will be the most cost-effective and efficient utilization of local state, or federal dollars.

D. Planning Agency Evaluation Process

The transportation disadvantaged coordinating board will participate and assist the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged in its quality assurance review of the planning agency.

LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD ANNUAL REVIEW
COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REVIEW PERIOD: FY 25-26

CTC Being Reviewed Big Bend Transit, Inc.

Review Date 03/11/26

General Information
Big Bend Transit, Inc. was designated as the CTC Emergency Designation for Gulf County effective July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. The CTC is a private non-profit organization, operating as a sole provider in a rural area.

Findings and Recommendations

Compliance with Chapter 427, F.S.	Area of Noncompliance: None
Compliance with Rule 41-2, F.A.C.	Area of Noncompliance: None
Commission Standards and Local Standards	Area of Noncompliance: Suggestion: Find ways to improve on-time performance and reduce the number of no-shows.
On-Site Observation of the System	Area of Noncompliance: None
Rider/Beneficiary Survey Summary	Area of Noncompliance: None
Contractor Survey Summary	Area of Noncompliance: None
Purchasing Agency Survey Summary	Area of Noncompliance: None
Level of Cost – Worksheet 1	Area of Noncompliance: None
Level of Competition – Worksheet 2	Area of Noncompliance: None
Level of Coordination – Worksheet 3	Area of Noncompliance: None
Status Report Follow-Up From Last Review	Area of Noncompliance: None

Report completed by: Austin Britt, LCB/ARPC staff

Approved by the LCB on March 11, 2026