

2.5 EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Regional transportation coordination plans prepared for NACOG, SEACOG and CAAG identified six public transit systems servicing the general public within the Eastern Regional Framework Study Area. The same reports noted there are over 20 specialized transit services primarily servicing seniors and persons with disabilities.

Only one public transit system operates within the Mogollon Rim Focus Area. Approximately 16 percent of the regions specialized transportation providers service the residents of the focus area. Although no public transit exists in the Copper Country Focus Area, almost 20 percent (19.4 percent) of the region's specialized transportation offers coverage to the area; another 12 percent overlap services between the Copper Country and Mogollon Rim Focus Areas between the City of Show Low and the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside. Over 80 percent of the Eastern Region's public transit options and about half (48.4 percent) of specialized transportation services operate within the Cochise-Santa Cruz Focus area.

2.5.1 Local and Regional Transit Systems

Mogollon Rim Focus Area

The Four Seasons Connection is the only public transit system which operates in the Mogollon Rim Focus Area. The service is a joint operation between the City of Show Low and the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside. The service was started 1997, utilizing funding from the FTA Section 5311 (Rural Transit and Procurement) grant program for planning, capital, operating and administrative needs. The operation includes a fleet of four Ford E450 15-passenger vehicles.

The service runs on two routes—one serving Show Low and the other servicing the Pinetop-Lakeside area, with a connection to Hon-Dah on the Fort Apache Reservation. The two routes overlap, providing seamless service. The Four Seasons Connection operates Monday through Saturday from approximately 6:30 am to 6:25 pm, with 57 scheduled stops. The system operates on SR 60 from US 60 to the SR 73 junction at Hon-Dah, as well as US 60 within Show Low, diverting to local streets at various points.

Copper Country Focus Area

There are no public transit services within the focus area.

Cochise-Santa Cruz Focus Area

Catholic Community Services (CCS) in Southeastern Arizona operates most public transit services within Cochise County.

For express service within the county, CCS operates the Cochise Commuter that provides two roundtrips – 8:35 am and 1:00 pm – Monday through Saturday commencing in the city of Douglas. The route has two scheduled stops in Bisbee and five additional stops in Sierra Vista where riders may transfer to Sierra Vista Transit. With major funding through FTA Section 5311 and additional capital monies from FTA Section 5310 (Elderly & Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program), Cochise Commuter operates service utilizing two medium sized 26- and 22-passenger buses.

Douglas Rides is a deviated fixed-route that originates service at the Transfer Point located at 11th Street between J & H Avenues in the city of Douglas. The routes are labeled to reflect their service areas – Bay Acres, Pirtleville & SouthEastern Arizona Medical Center and Midtown. With assistance from FTA Section 5310 and FTA Section 5311 monies, Douglas Rides operates one 18-passenger bus and two seven-passenger vans six days a week between 7:00 am and 6:10 pm.

For passengers with special needs within the Cochise Commuter and Douglas Rides service areas, CCS provides a complementary demand-response service.

Bisbee Bus – funded through FTA Section 5310 and FTA Section 5311 – is a deviated fixed-route service provided by the City of Bisbee and operated by CCS. With an advance notice of 24 hours and for an additional 50 cents, physically challenged riders may request to deviate up to three-quarters of a mile from the fixed route.

One route runs from approximately 6:00 am up to 6:15 pm between over 40 trip generators (i.e., City Hall, Copper Queen Community Hospital) within the cities of Bisbee and Naco. With a fleet of two Ford E350 18-passenger vehicles, Bisbee Bus offers two morning commuter trips, two mid-morning trips and two late-afternoon trips on weekdays. Three additional mid-day trips are available on Saturdays.

The only city to operate its own public transit service within the focus area is the City of Sierra Vista. The system is funded by FTA Section 5311 and FTA Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs. Service is offered along five routes throughout Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca that meet at the Wilcox Transfer Center. Service operates 7:00 am to 9:30 pm on weekdays, Saturdays at 10:00 am to 9:30 pm and Sundays 11:00 am through 3:30 pm.

The City also operates a curb-to-curb, demand-response service for those who are unable to access the deviated-fixed route (i.e., seniors, persons with disabilities). Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance and travel is only within city limits. Both services share a fleet of nine vehicles.

2.5.2 Special Needs Transportation Services

Mogollon Rim Focus Area

The Reeves Foundations, LLC is the only regional transportation provider in the focus area. Demand-response services are available 24 hours, seven days a week to persons with developmental disabilities who wish to travel within Apache and Navajo counties. With capital monies through FTA Section 5310 foundation has two light-duty passenger vehicles and one regular passenger vehicle.

For residents of the Town of Payson, there are two demand response services available. Gila Aging Services offers transportation services to seniors based on the availability of volunteers. The volunteers offer their time and vehicles to the agency. The other service is operated by the Payson Senior Center. Rides are available to seniors, persons with disabilities and persons with low-incomes on weekdays from 7:45 am to 4:00 pm. With assistance from FTA Section 5310, the Center has acquired a fleet of two light-duty passenger vehicles.

The Round Valley Senior Center offers trips to senior residents within the Town of Eagar and Springerville. The one vehicle operation is a demand response service –primarily funded by FTA Section 5310 – that operates on weekdays from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm.