

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan



Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation
Authority

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Abbreviations

ACS: American Community Survey
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
AUA: Aguadilla Urbanized Area
BIL: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
CPT-HSTP: Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan
DTPW: Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works
FAST Act: Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
JARC: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program
LRTP: Long-Range Transportation Plan
MLRTP: Multimodal Long Range Transportation Plan
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
OCF: Oficina de Coordinación Federal (Federal Coordination Office)
PIP: Public Involvement Plan
PRHTA: Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority
SJUA: San Juan Urbanized Area
STIP: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TMA: Transportation Management Area
UZA: Urbanized Area(s) under 200,000 population
UZAs: Urbanized Areas

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan



Executive Summary

Background and Plan Purpose

The PRHTA is the direct recipient for Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds and is responsible for the planning and programming of projects related to the 5310 Program. Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority (PRHTA) has developed a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP), for all its Urbanized Areas under the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Plan was developed to comply with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Area of Study

In accordance with the 2020 Census of Population, there are two urbanized areas with population over 200,000- also known as Transportation Management Area (TMA)- San Juan and Aguadilla urbanized areas, and nine consolidated urbanized areas with population of 50,000 to 199,999 (under 200,000 population). This plan addresses: San Juan Urbanized Area (SJUA), Aguadilla Urbanized Area (AUA), Urbanized Areas under 200,000 population and Rural Areas.

Transportation Service Providers

Within the Urbanized and Non-Urbanized Areas, there are different types of service providers: public, private and nonprofit entities. All these service providers help to guarantee the mobility of seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals. Coordination between the transit providers and interested stakeholders is important to achieve a reliable and efficient transportation system.

Transportation Needs

Puerto Rico has a total population of 3,227,627 according to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates (ACS 2023). A significant amount of the Island population presents a transportation disadvantage (advanced-age people, people with a disability, and people with low- income).

The service gaps and unmet needs identified for the study area of Puerto Rico are outlined in the Table. The table indicates the different service gaps and unmet needs grouped by the three (3) populations: elderly population, population with disabilities and population with low income.

Table 1 Table 1: Summary of Transportation Service Gaps and Unmet Needs in the Study Area

Categories	Gap and Unmet Needs
Elderly Population	ADA-compliant public transportation
	Access to both urban and rural locations
	Transportation for services such as: medical appointments, government offices, community centers, places of worship, supermarkets
	Availability of extended services hours
	Trained, courteous, and sensitive drivers
Population with Disabilities	Transportation for services such as: medical appointments, government offices, community centers, places of worship, supermarkets
	Adapted vehicles with ramps, lifts, handrails, and space for wheelchairs/walkers
	Personalized assistance and accommodation for physical, sensory, or cognitive limitations
	Properly modified infrastructure (ramps, sidewalks, signage)
	Secure, comfortable, and dignified travel experience for all users
Population with Low Income	Affordable or free transportation is critical
	Flexible schedules covering early mornings, nights, and weekends to accommodate non-traditional work hours.
	Well-maintained, comfortable vehicles designed for safety.
	Access to medical services, community centers, recreation, and social/cultural events
	Transport coverage for rural or marginalized areas, not just metropolitan zones.

Introduction

The Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority (PRHTA) has developed a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP), for all its Urbanized Areas under the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The PRHTA is the direct recipient for Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds and is responsible for the planning and programming of projects related to the 5310 Program. PRHTA will update or reaffirm at least every 4 years, or sooner upon significant changes in needs, services, or federal requirements. PRHTA responsibilities also include a fair and equitable distribution of funds, adhering to federal and state program guidelines, notifying eligible applicants about the availability of the program developing program criteria, soliciting applications, and monitoring and improving coordination of public transportation services at the local and state levels.

PRHTA will certify eligibility of applicants by:

- ✓ review applications,
- ✓ select applications for approval,
- ✓ apply for and receive funding,
- ✓ execute contracts,
- ✓ monitor grants,
- ✓ ensure that audits are performed
- ✓ close out projects.

PRHTA will also provide appropriate technical assistance to all sub recipients, including Municipalities and Non-Profit Entities. For more information about the Section 5310 apportionments and Requirements for request of funding under Section 5310, refer to Appendix B and C.

This Plan was developed through a process that includes representatives of public and private and nonprofit transportation and human services, transportation providers and participation by different sectors. PRHTA conducted surveys with diverse groups of stakeholders, as an instrument to evaluate the current transportation services, the transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults and low incomes, and the strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identifies gaps between current services and needs.

FTA Programs

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310):

Under the MAP-21, the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) included activities that “supported public transportation services beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services”. The New Freedom Program was repealed by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST) and it was merged with the 5310 Program.

The Section 5310 goal is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities, expanding transportation mobility options and remove any barriers that limit the transportation services.

Eligible projects include both “traditional” capital investment and “nontraditional” investment beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. and the New Freedom (Section 5317).

Eligible Activities:

According to Circular FTA C 9070.1H, Traditional Section 5310 project examples include:

- buses and vans
 - wheelchair lifts, ramps, and security devices
 - transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems
 - mobility management programs
 - acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement
- Nontraditional Section 5310 project examples include:
- travel training
 - volunteer driver programs
 - building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
 - improving signage, or way-finding technology
 - incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service
 - purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxis, rides sharing and/or vanpooling programs
 - mobility management programs

Urbanized Area Formula Funding Program (Section 5307)

In the past under the MAP-21, FTA had in place the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316) that served elderly, people with disabilities and low-income communities. JARC projects included “services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment, including transportation projects that facilitate the provision of public transportation services from urbanized areas and rural areas to suburban employment locations”. The JARC Program was repealed under the FAST Act and included under Section 5307 (49 U.S.C. 5307).

The Section 5307 Program goal is to assist recipients in transit capital and operating assistance and transportation-related planning in urbanized areas.

Eligible projects can consist of:

- Planning, engineering, design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies.
- Capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement, overhaul and rebuilding of buses.
- Crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities.
- Capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software.
- Associated transit improvements and certain expenses associated with mobility management programs are eligible.

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program (Section 5339)

The goal of the Buses and Bus Facilities Program (Section 5339) is financing capital bus and bus-related projects that will support the continuation and expansion of public transportation services.

Some of the eligible capital project expenses involve:

- Expansion of bus and van fleets and replacement of vans and buses.
- Overhauling and rebuilding vans and buses.
- Purchase and installation of accessories and miscellaneous equipment.
- Purchase and installation of new technology.

Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program (Section 5311)

The goal of the Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311) planning, public transportation capital projects, operating costs, job access reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation service to States and Indian Tribes located in rural areas.

Eligible activities include:

- Planning projects such as transportation plans and programs.
- ADA complementary paratransit services.
- Acquisition of buses and vans.
- Equipment for rolling stock.
- Operational support and assistance.
- Intercity Bus program.

Plan Purpose

The CPT-HSTP of the PRHTA is complying with the latest transit federal law (BIL) in which all project selection for Section 5310 needs to be included in a “locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan”. This plan should include “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public”.

The CPT-HSTP will allow for a better transportation system for a disadvantaged population: elderly people, people with disabilities and people with low income. The plan will help to prioritize and program projects directed to the populations, in the PRHTA planning and programming documents such as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP), among other planning documents of the Agency.

Relationship with other transportation planning processes

The 2050 Puerto Rico Multimodal Long Range Transportation Plan (MLRTP):

The MLRTP 2050 establishes a multimodal transportation system, including transit, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and accessible transportation in Puerto Rico. The plan identifies how the transportation system will meet the state’s economic, transportation, development, and sustainability goals – among others – for a 20+ year planning horizon. Includes all the Urbanized Areas and Non-Urbanized Areas.

As part of the goals identified in the plan, the GOAL C: Improve Transportation Mobility and Access for People and for Goods, is to “Achieve better mobility and access for all the transportation system users; provide more travel choices, integration between modes and connections between major population centers”. One of the objectives of the GOAL C is:

C.5 Facilitate the access of transportation to elderly population, people with disabilities, or economic disadvantaged communities.

Additionally, one of the Appendices of the MLRTP 2050, the Appendix Chapter 7 - Project Prioritization Process, includes a Project Evaluation Criteria in which projects included in transportation planning process shall be evaluated based on seven (7) evaluation measures. One of the measures is Equity and it's linked to GOAL C. Under the scoring criteria for Equity, it's divided into five (5) categories:

- Distribution of Transit Service Frequency
- Transit Services within underserved Areas
- Travel Time Savings within Equity Areas
- Multimodal Safety within Equity Areas
- Community Impacts

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

FTA states that “Each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is required, under 49 U.S.C. 5303(j), to develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—a list of upcoming transportation projects—covering a period of at least four years.” The TIP is developed with the State and public transit providers and includes all the transportation projects: capital, non-capital, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transportation enhancements, Federal Lands Highways projects, and safety projects.

In the TIP, projects are programmed according to each Section of FTA. Section 5310 projects are included for San Juan Urbanized Area, Aguadilla Urbanized Area, Urbanized Area under 200,000 population and Non-Urbanized Area (Rural). Programmed projects include Municipalities, Agencies and Non-Profit Entities.

Puerto Rico Complete Streets Plan and Design Guidelines

In December 2010, it was approved Law Num. 201 (Ley para Declarar la Política Pública sobre la Adopción del Concepto de Calles Completas o “Complete Streets”) in which the Government of Puerto Rico declared its public policy “regarding the adoption of the Complete Streets concept as part of the planning, design, new construction, reconstruction, remodeling, and maintenance of public roads in Puerto Rico”. It also orders the Municipalities to incorporate in their public policies Complete Streets concepts.

DTPW and PRHTA, with the help of a consultant firm, developed the Complete Streets Plan and Design Guidelines in which three (3) main objectives were established:

- Guide state and local efforts to improve access and mobility conditions and develop new facilities to improve the quality of life of our communities;

- Improve and/or provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the public transportation system and the public spaces; and
- Provide safe and affordable access for people of all ages and abilities in accordance with the FHWA's Livability Initiative, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the goals set forth by the Puerto Rico Law 207 of August 25, 2000 for the development along the Tren Urbano Corridor, as well as by the Puerto Rico Law 201.

Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Puerto Rico

The DTPW and the PRHTA, following the policies included in the Vehicle and Traffic Law of Puerto Rico (Law Num. 132 of June 3, 2004, amending Law Num. 22 of January 7, 2000) and the Puerto Rico Long Range Transportation Plan 2040 (PRLRTP), developed a plan in collaboration with stakeholder groups such as the AARP, the Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente – MAVI, the PR Advance Age Procurer Office and the PR Disable Procurer Office. This Plan was endorsed by the Puerto Rico Planning Board, and it complies with the Public Policy of the Comprehensive Plan of Strategic Sustainability and the Land Use Plan for Puerto Rico.

The Plan establishes six (6) focus areas with goals and benefits, as described in the document as the 6 E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Environment, Economy, Evaluation and Everyone. For the Everyone Focus area, the Goal is to "Provide facilities and programs that meet the needs of all users" and as Benefit "Inclusive walking and cycling facilities complete local transportation systems".

Study Area

In Puerto Rico, there is one MPO and there are two (2) urbanized area with population over 200,000- also known as Transportation Management Area (TMA)- San Juan and Aguadilla urbanized areas, and nine consolidated urbanized areas with population of 50,000 to 199,999 (under 200,000 population). The three (3) UZAs considered under the MPO are the San Juan Urbanized Area (SJUA), Aguadilla Urbanized Area (AUA) and Urbanized Areas under 200,000 population (UZA).

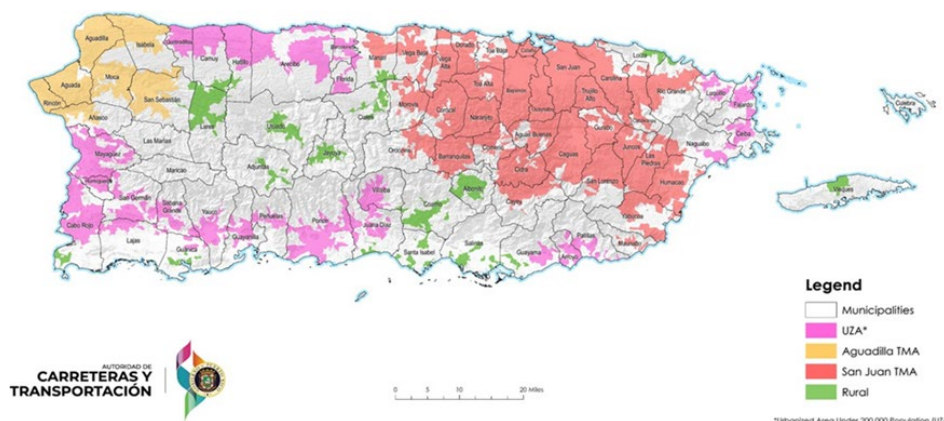


Figure 1. Urbanized Areas defined by the 2020 Census

The SJUA is defined by the 2020 Census as falling into the funding category of areas with over one million inhabitants and comprising the following thirty-three (33) municipalities:

Aguas Buenas	Barranquitas	Bayamón	Caguas
Cayey	Canóvanas	Carolina	Cataño
Comerio	Corozal	Cidra	*Coamo
Dorado	Gurabo	Guaynabo	Humacao
Juncos	Las Piedras	Manatí*	Maunabo
Morovis	Naguabo	Naranjito	Orocovis
Rio Grande	San Juan	San Lorenzo	Trujillo Alto
Toa Alta	Toa Baja	Vega Alta	Vega Baja
Yabucoa			

The AUA is comprised of seven (7) Municipalities:

Aguada	Aguadilla	Añasco	Isabela
Moca	San Sebastián	Rincón	

The UZA is comprised of twenty-eight (28) municipalities:

Urbanized Area (50,000- 199,999)	Comprising municipalities
Arecibo	Arecibo**, Camuy, Hatillo, and Quebradillas
Fajardo	Ceiba, Fajardo, Luquillo, and Naguabo
Barceloneta--Florida--Bajadero, PR	Florida, Barceloneta, Arecibo**, Manatí
Guayama	Arroyo, Guayama, Patillas

Juana Díaz	Juana Díaz, and Villalba
Mayagüez	Añasco, Hormigueros, and Mayagüez
Ponce	Ponce
San Germán	Cabo Rojo, Lajas, Sabana Grande and San Germán
Yauco	San Germán, Guánica, Guayanilla, Peñuelas, and Yauco
**Arecibo is indeed in two Urbanized Areas: in Arecibo Urbanized Area and in Barceloneta--Florida--Bajadero, PR Urbanized Area.	

Also, there are thirteen (13) non-urbanized municipalities, according to the Census 2020:

Adjuntas	Aibonito	Ciales	Culebra	Jayuya	Las Marías
Lares	Loíza	Maricao	Salinas	Santa Isabel	Utuado
Vieques					

*These Municipalities belong to more than one urbanized area, that is why they can request funds for each of these areas from the corresponding federal allocation.

Plan Development Process and Public Participation

PRHTA designed the public participation process to ensure that a broad range of stakeholders were engaged in developing the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP). The process involved:

Questionnaire Development: A questionnaire was created to assess current transportation services, identify needs for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations, and suggest strategies to address service gaps. Included in Appendix A is the questionnaire that was used as part of the data collection.

Language Accessibility: The questionnaire was distributed in Spanish to improve communication and participation among stakeholders.

Target Audience: The survey was distributed via email to all Puerto Rico municipalities and non-profit entities involved with transportation and human services.

Peer Review: In addition to local input, PRHTA reviewed Human Coordinated Plans from other U.S. states for benchmarking and best practices.

Peer Reviewed Documents

For this Plan, PRHTA reviewed different documents from other DOTs. The following are the reviewed Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plans:

- June 2024. Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan Update – North Carolina Capital Area, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO).
- May 2024. Broward County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update - Broward County, Florida, Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization and Broward County Community Transportation Coordinator (Broward County Transportation Department).
- September 2023. Coordinated Public Transit— Human Services Transportation Plan – Boston, Massachusetts, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- May 2022. Statewide Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan 2020+ - Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Department of Transportation

Available Services

Service Providers

Within the Urbanized and Non-Urbanized Areas, there are different types of service providers. All of these providers, help to guarantee the mobility of seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals.

Table 2. Service providers under Section 5310 with their fleet status:

Transit Providers	Location	Urbanized Area	Fleet Status (Vehicles)
Acción Social de PR, Inc. (Lares)	Lares	AUA	1
Acción Social Égida Los Cantares, Inc.	Bayamón	SJUA	1
Adfan -Campea (Bayamón)	Bayamón	SJUA	1
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región Centro - Este)	Caguas	SJUA	1
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región de Bayamón)	Bayamón	SJUA	1
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región de Caguas)	Caguas	SJUA	3
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región de Mayagüez)	Mayagüez	UZA	1
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región de Ponce)	Ponce	UZA	1
Administración de Rehabilitación Vocacional (Región de San Juan)	San Juan	SJUA	1
Asociación Mayagüezana de Personas con Impedimentos, Inc.	Mayagüez	UZA	1
Asociación Benéfica de Ponce, Inc.	Ponce	UZA	2
Asociación Comunitaria Palmarejo II, Inc.	Lajas	UZA	1
Casa Matilde Nielsen, Inc.	Cayey	SJUA	1
Centro Club de Oro, Inc.	Caguas	SJUA	3
Centro Cultural de Servicios Cantera, Inc.	San Juan	SJUA	1
Centro de Ayuda y Terapia a Niños con Impedimentos, Inc. (Ayani)	Moca	AUA	2

Transit Providers	Location	Urbanized Area	Fleet Status (Vehicles)
Centro de Cuidado Diurno para Envejecientes Ave. Hostos, Inc.	Ponce	UZA	1
Centro de Desarrollo Educativo y Deportivo, Inc.	Moca	AUA	1
Centro Geriátrico La Milagrosa, Inc.	Mayagüez	UZA	1
Centro Pro-Vida Independiente, Inc.	Ponce	UZA	1
Centro Providencia Loíza, Inc.	Loíza	SJUA	1
Centro Ramón Frade, Inc.	Cayey	SJUA	2
Comité de Gericultura de Guayama, Inc.	Guayama	UZA	1
COSSMA, Inc.	Las Piedras	SJUA	1
COSSMA, Inc.	Yabucoa	SJUA	1
Departamento de la Familia (Servicios Múltiples Guayama)	Guayama	UZA	1
Departamento de la Familia (Servicios Múltiples Juana Díaz)	Juana Díaz	UZA	1
Égida del Policía, Inc.	Guaynabo	SJUA	1
Esperanza para la Vejez, Inc. (Llorens Torres).	San Juan	SJUA	1
Fundación Educativa Enfermería Práctica, Corp.	San Juan	SJUA	1
Fundación Modesto Gotay, Inc.	Trujillo Alto	SJUA	1
Hogar Paz de Cristo, Inc.	Ponce	UZA	1
Hogar San José, Inc.	Hormigueros	UZA	1
Hogar Santa Marta	Ponce	UZA	1
Iniciativa Comunitaria de Investigación, Inc.	San Juan	SJUA	1
Instituto Psicopedagógico de Puerto Rico, Inc.	Bayamón	SJUA	7
Movimiento para el Alcance Vida Independiente, Inc. (MAVI)	Caguas	SJUA	1
Movimiento para el Alcance Vida Independiente, Inc. (MAVI)	Río Grande	SJUA	1
Municipality of Adjuntas		RURAL	2
Municipality of Aguada		AUA	1
Municipality of Aguas Buenas		SJUA	3
Municipality of Aibonito		RURAL	3
Municipality of Añasco		AUA	2

Transit Providers	Location	Urbanized Area	Fleet Status (Vehicles)
Municipality of Arecibo		UZA	1
Municipality of Arroyo		UZA	7
Municipality of Barceloneta		UZA	4
Municipality of Barranquitas		SJUA	2
Municipality of Bayamón		SJUA	1
Municipality of Cabo Rojo		UZA	3
Municipality of Caguas		SJUA	6
Municipality of Camuy		UZA	6
Municipality of Canóvanas		SJUA	5
Municipality of Cataño		SJUA	5
Municipality of Cayey		SJUA	1
Municipality of Ceiba		UZA	2
Municipality of Ciales		RURAL	3
Municipality of Cidra		SJUA	4
Municipality of Coamo		SJUA	5
Municipality of Comerío		SJUA	1
Municipality of Corozal		SJUA	4
Municipality of Fajardo		UZA	1
Municipality of Florida		UZA	3
Municipality of Guánica		UZA	5
Municipality of Guayama		UZA	4
Municipality of Guaynabo		SJUA	2
Municipality of Gurabo		SJUA	4
Municipality of Hatillo		UZA	2
Municipality of Hormigueros		UZA	5
Municipality of Humacao		SJUA	4
Municipality of Isabela		AUA	2
Municipality of Jayuya		RURAL	1
Municipality of Juncos		SJUA	2
Municipality of Lajas		UZA	3
Municipality of Lares		RURAL	2
Municipality of Las Piedras		SJUA	2
Municipality of Loíza		RURAL	5
Municipality of Luquillo		UZA	2
Municipality of Manatí		UZA	2
Municipality of Maunabo		SJUA	3
Municipality of Mayagüez		UZA	2
Municipality of Moca		AUA	3
Municipality of Morovis		SJUA	2
Municipality of Naranjito		SJUA	3
Municipality of Patillas		UZA	2

Transit Providers	Location	Urbanized Area	Fleet Status (Vehicles)
Municipality of Ponce		UZA	6
Municipality of Quebradillas		UZA	1
Municipality of Rincón		AUA	1
Municipality of Río Grande		SJUA	6
Municipality of Sabana Grande		UZA	1
Municipality of Salinas		UZA	2
Municipality of San Germán		UZA	3
Municipality of San Juan		SJUA	17
Municipality of San Lorenzo		SJUA	5
Municipality of San Sebastián		AUA	1
Municipality of Santa Isabel		RURAL	1
Municipality of Toa Alta		SJUA	2
Municipality of Toa Baja		SJUA	4
Municipality of Trujillo Alto		SJUA	2
Municipality of Vega Baja		SJUA	2
Municipality of Yabucoa		SJUA	4
Municipality of Yauco		UZA	4
National Church Residences	Fajardo	UZA	1
National Church Residences	Guaynabo	SJUA	1
National Church Residences	Carolina	SJUA	1
Oficina del Procurador del Veterano (La Casa del Veterano)	Juana Díaz	UZA	1
Oficina ProAyuda Personas con Impedimentos (OPAPI, Inc.)	Yabucoa	SJUA	1
Sociedad Americana Contra el Cáncer	San Juan	SJUA	1
Waves Ahead Corp.	Maunabo	SJUA	1
Waves Ahead Corp.	Cabo Rojo	UZA	1
TOTAL			258

**This list of providers is updated as of May 2025. PRHTA is expecting a major Bus Purchase for all its subrecipients of Section 5310, which will grant more availability of services across the island.*

Additionally, services for the elderly and disabled population are being provided by private operators, focusing the services for medical appointments. Some of the principal providers are listed below:

Table 3. Private providers for services related to medical appointments

Transit Providers	Location
First Medical Vital	San Juan
Golden Age Transportation Inc.	San Juan
Ida y Vuelta Inc.	Ponce

MedTransport	Manatí
Puerto Rico Medical Transport Inc.	Humacao
TransCita	Guaynabo
VarMed Transport	San Juan

Unlike municipal and non-profit providers, these private operators do not receive Section 5310 funds—which are allocated for enhancing mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Instead, private operators rely directly on payments from users or through contractual arrangements with healthcare providers (such as insurance companies or medical centers).

Existing Levels of Coordination

Effective coordination among transit providers—including public, private, and non-profit entities—and relevant stakeholders is essential for building a reliable and efficient transportation system. The Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority (PRHTA), in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), leverages the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) structure to facilitate collaboration across various sectors, including the Policy Board Committee, Public Participation Committee, and Technical Advisory Committee.

PRHTA coordinates annually under the Federal Coordination Office (OCF), the planning and programming of projects for transportation systems funding. These efforts involve the Municipalities, Non-Profit Entities, Governmental Agencies and Private Transit Providers, in decision-making towards transit projects.

Description of the Available Services

According to the Municipalities and Non-Profit Entities that participated in the survey, the services that were described by the participants are detailed below:

Table 4. Services described by the participants

Urbanized Area	Population Served	Description of Services
SJUA	Elderly, people with disabilities and low-income	Transportation services to: medical appointments, trips to purchase groceries, trips to errands, governmental offices, social and recreational activities, home to elderly center and from elderly center to home.
AUA	Elderly, people with disabilities	Transportation to: home to elderly center and from elderly center to home, trips to medical appointments.

UZA	Elderly, people with disabilities and low-income	Transportation to: home to elderly center and from elderly center to home, trips to medical appointments.
RURAL	Elderly, people with disabilities and low-income	Transportation to: home to elderly center and from elderly center to home, trips to medical appointments.

Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

Elderly population, individuals with disabilities, and those with low incomes often face the greatest challenges in accessing transportation services. In Puerto Rico these transportation disadvantaged populations have challenges finding transportation to medical services, shopping for necessities, personal errands, employment, and recreational and social activities, among others. To study and define the service gaps and unmet needs of these transportation disadvantaged populations, it is imperative to take a closer look at them.

Elderly Population

A person of advanced age is defined, according to Title 49 of the United States Code, as an individual who is at least 65 years old. In Puerto Rico, the estimated population of individuals aged 65 and older is 731,239, representing 22% of the island's total population. Table 5 provides a breakdown of this population by urbanized areas.

Table 5. Population of 65 years or more by Urbanized Area

Urbanized Area	Population	Population of 65 years or more	Percent of Population of 65 years or more (%)
SJUA	1,860,933	413,720	22.2
AUA	250,870	57,254	22.8
UZA	894,561	211,074	23.6
RURAL	221,263	49,191	22.2
TOTAL	3,227,627	731,239	22.7
Source: ACS 2019–2023 5-year estimates			

Contextual Observations:

In the San Juan Urbanized Area, the five (5) municipalities with the highest population with advanced age are: San Juan (82,221), Bayamón (42,716), Carolina (36,648), Caguas (27,467) and Guaynabo (21,986). Together, these municipalities account for a significant portion of Puerto Rico's elderly population, reflecting demographic trends associated with urban centers.

It is expected that San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico, has the most elderly residents, likely due to its healthcare services (such as Centro Médico) and senior-friendly communities. Bayamón and Carolina also have large aging populations, influenced by their size, closeness to San Juan and accessibility to resources. Caguas, located in the center area of the island, may attract retirees with its mix of city and suburban living. Guaynabo, known for its high quality of life, has a significant number of older residents who may prefer its stability and amenities.

For the Aguadilla Urbanized Area, the five (5) municipalities with the highest population with advanced are: Aguadilla (12,666), San Sebastián (9,857), Isabela (9,172), Aguada (8,375) and Moca (7,354). These municipalities represent a substantial portion of the western region's elderly population, highlighting demographic trends linked to both urban and semi-rural communities.

Like San Juan, Aguadilla has the largest elderly population in its Area, likely due to its coastal location, healthcare access, and economic activity in tourism and trade. San Sebastián, a landlocked area, attracts retirees with its slower pace and affordability. Isabela and Aguada, both coastal towns, offer a mix of seaside living and rural tranquility, making them appealing to older residents. Moca, though smaller, still has a notable senior population, benefiting from its close-knit community and proximity to urban centers.

In the Urbanized Area under 200,000 population, the five (5) municipalities with the largest elderly population are: Ponce (32,564), Arecibo (20,082), Mayagüez (18,199), Cabo Rojo (11,388) and Manatí (9,377). The distribution of elderly populations in these municipalities suggests a concentration of older residents in historically significant urban center.

Ponce, following the trends from the municipalities of San Juan and Aguadilla, has the largest elderly population in UZA, is known for its rich cultural heritage and established infrastructure, which likely supports aging residents with healthcare and community services. Arecibo and Mayagüez follow closely, both being hubs of economic and educational activity that may attract retirees seeking access to amenities and social engagement. Cabo Rojo and Manatí, while smaller in elderly populations, still reflect a trend of aging demographics in areas that offer coastal and suburban lifestyles, potentially preferred by retirees for their tranquility. This pattern highlights the importance of adequate transit planning and mobility strategies to ensure adequate services for elderly residents in these municipalities.

In the Rural Area, the distribution of the largest elderly population is: Utuado (6,830), Lares (6,149), Aibonito (5,878), Salinas (5,539) and Loíza (5,036). Utuado's strong generational ties and reliance on local economies, like agriculture, contribute to its high elderly population. Lares' seniors likely stay due to affordable housing and close-knit communities. Aibonito's mountainous, tranquil environment attracts older residents but presents healthcare access challenges. Salinas and Loíza, both coastal municipalities, share similar elderly distributions and require strong healthcare connections.

People with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, is a federal civil rights law designed to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities in daily life. Similar to other civil rights protections, the ADA ensures that people with disabilities are not

discriminated against, just as laws safeguard individuals from discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. By definition, a person with a disability is:

a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, b) has a history or record of such an impairment (such as cancer that is in remission), or c) is perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn).

The ADA is a comprehensive law that ensures equal opportunities for people with disabilities across various aspects of society, such as employment, public services (including government), business and public transportation. Public transportation, which includes buses and trains, is also required to provide accessible transportation options. Transit systems are required to provide features like wheelchair ramps, elevators, and designated seating areas to accommodate mobility needs. Audio and visual announcements must be available to assist passengers with hearing or vision impairments. This accommodation is crucial for the accessibility of people with disabilities in their everyday life.

Following the ADA, the government of Puerto Rico enacted the The Bill of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (“La Carta de Derechos de las Personas con Impedimentos”), Act 238-PR of 2004, which adopts public policy with the purpose to ensure the right to equality for the people with disabilities in Puerto Rico. One of the general rights established in the Act is access to benefits and public services in the areas of education, vocational rehabilitation, housing, social services, health, transportation and employment. In the duties under the government of Puerto Rico, it states that it will incorporate the perspective of people with disabilities in all plans (including short, medium and long range) for economic development, housing, health, education and infrastructure, across municipal and state level.

There is an estimated population of 734,989 individuals with disabilities in the study area of Puerto Rico, which represents a 23% percent of the total population of the Island. The Table 6 reflects the population with disabilities by Urbanized Area, that is not institutionalized.

Table 6. Population with Disabilities by Urbanized Area

Urbanized Area	Population	Population with Disability	Percentage of Population with Disability
SJUA	1,860,933	408,200	22%
AUA	250,870	67,550	27%
UZA	894,561	205,233	23%
RURAL	221,263	54,006	24%
TOTAL	3,227,627	734,989	23%
* Source: ACS 2019–2023 5-year estimates			

Contextual Observations:

Evaluating the demographic distribution of individuals with disabilities within the San Juan Urbanized Area reveals significant concentrations in key municipalities: San Juan (70,285), Bayamón (41,111), Caguas (31,483), Carolina (29,604) and Toa Baja (21,029).

Following a similar trend in the San Juan Urbanized Area, San Juan, being the capital city and most populated municipality in Puerto Rico, has the largest population of people with disabilities. Bayamon, also being a major city in the Metropolitan Area, has a vast number of healthcare facilities and hospitals that can provide services to the population with disabilities. For Caguas, as a major urban city in the center of the island, it serves as a connection between the north and south areas of Puerto Rico, providing accessibility to various resources and services. Carolina, another municipality close to San Juan, has a large population with disabilities, that can benefit from all the resources available within the area. Toa Baja, although having a smaller population than the rest of the municipalities mentioned, it has large population with disabilities that can benefit from the closeness to important healthcare facilities between the Metropolitan Area.

In the Aguadilla Urbanized Area, the municipalities with the highest population of individuals with disabilities are Aguadilla (6,861), San Sebastián (5,710), Aguada (5,272), Isabela (4,588), and Añasco (3,893). This distribution highlights Aguadilla as the leading municipality in terms of disability population, suggesting a potential need for increased resources, infrastructure, and support services to accommodate residents with disabilities. San Sebastián and Aguada also have substantial numbers, emphasizing the importance of accessibility policies and inclusive community initiatives across the region. Isabela and Añasco, though slightly lower in population, still represent a significant portion of residents with disabilities.

For the Urbanized Area under 200,000 population, the highest concentration of individuals with disabilities are: Ponce (32,708), Arecibo (17,737), Mayagüez (16,496), Juana Díaz (12,218) and Cabo Rojo (9,991).

Ponce represents a healthcare hub in the area, likely attracting those seeking medical services, while Arecibo's aging population and industrial history may contribute to disability prevalence. Mayagüez, an important urban hub in the west region, highlights the need for better accessibility in public spaces, and Juana Díaz's socioeconomic factors may influence its disability rates. Cabo Rojo, as a coastal municipality, faces mobility challenges, especially for population with disabilities.

Although Puerto Rico's rural areas are geographically smaller compared to its urbanized regions, they still house municipalities with substantial populations of individuals with disabilities: Aibonito (8,621), Salinas (7,835), Lares (6,785), Utuado (6,165) and Santa Isabel (6,054).

As most of the rural municipalities located in the mountain region, Aibonito has a challenge for mobility due to narrow roads and topography. Salinas, although does not share the same geographical characteristics as Aibonito, is limited to its rural landscapes, availability of services and distance of urban centers. Lares and Utuado, like Aibonito, share the same characteristics and challenges from the mountain region such as access to healthcare services. Santa Isabel, similar to Salinas, rural communities and lack of access to urban centers in which services are provided.

Persons with Low Income

According to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau establishes income thresholds that differ based on family size and composition to assess poverty status. If a family's total income falls below the designated threshold, both the family as a whole and each individual within it are classified as living in poverty. A "low-income individual" refers to someone from a family whose taxable income in the previous year was no more than 150% of the poverty level, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

In the study area of Puerto Rico there is an estimated population of 448,119 people with low-income. This represents approximately 56% of the total of families in the Island. The Table 7 illustrates the total of families with income below 150 percent of poverty level by Urbanized Area.

Table 7. Families with Income Below 150 Percent of Poverty Level by Urbanized Area

Urbanized Area	Number of Families	Families with Income Below 150 Percent of Poverty Level	Percent of Families with Income Below 150 Percent of Poverty Level
SJUA	474,767	239,445	50%
AUA	61,562	38,352	62%
UZA	217,756	134,510	62%
RURAL	53,515	35,812	67%
TOTAL	807,600	448,119	56%
* Source: ACS 2019–2023 5-year estimates			

Contextual Observations:

Analyzing how families with low income are distributed across the San Juan Urbanized Area, the highest concentration is found amongst the following Municipalities: San Juan (38,078), Bayamon (21,118), Carolina (17,324), Caguas (15,219), Toa Baja (9,294) and Toa Alta (7,855). Additionally, the correlation between low-income families, elderly populations, and individuals with disabilities suggests that San Juan serves as a critical hub for vulnerable communities. Similarly, Bayamon, Carolina and Caguas, being municipalities with large populations in the region and being important urban areas, represent a large population with

low income. Toa Baja and Toa Alta, bordering municipalities, have a significant population with low income, although smaller population in comparison to other municipalities.

Within the Aguadilla Urbanized Area, a notable pattern emerges regarding the distribution of low-income populations. The municipalities with the highest numbers of individuals living under low-income conditions include Aguadilla (8,762), San Sebastián (6,414), Isabela (6,189), Aguada (5,764), and Moca (5,782).

This trend suggests that economic hardship is concentrated in specific municipalities, potentially due to factors such as employment opportunities, industry distribution, and local cost-of-living variations. Aguadilla, having the highest number, may indicate a significant urban center with both economic activity and disparities in wealth distribution. San Sebastián and Isabela also reflect sizable low-income populations, hinting at underlying socio-economic conditions that contribute to financial instability. Understanding these numbers in relation to regional infrastructure, government assistance programs, and employment opportunities could provide further insight into how economic challenges affect different areas within the Aguadilla Urbanized Area.

Within the municipalities in the Urbanized Area with populations under 200,000, a distinct pattern emerges regarding low-income communities. The municipalities with the largest populations experiencing economic hardship include Ponce (20,649), Arecibo (12,471), Mayagüez (10,552), Juana Díaz (6,722), and Cabo Rojo (6,661).

The concentration of low-income residents in these areas suggests underlying economic and social factors at play. Ponce, with the highest number, may reflect a combination of economic disparity and a high cost of living relative to income levels. Arecibo and Mayagüez, both significant urban centers, could be experiencing challenges related to job opportunities, industrial decline, or shifts in local economies. Juana Díaz and Cabo Rojo, while having smaller numbers, still indicate substantial segments of the population facing financial instability.

In the Rural Area, the distribution of low-income populations reveals significant trends in economic hardship. The municipalities with the highest numbers of residents under low income include Lares (5,554), Utuado (4,698), Salinas (3,948), Loíza (3,733), and Aibonito (3,375).

The presence of substantial low-income populations in these rural municipalities suggests that economic challenges may be linked to limited job opportunities, lower wages, and reduced access to essential services. Lares and Utuado, located in the central mountainous region, may face difficulties related to infrastructure and economic development, which can impact residents' ability to secure stable employment. Salinas, a coastal town, could be experiencing economic disparities tied to industry shifts or environmental factors affecting local businesses. Loíza has faced socio-economic challenges that could contribute to persistent financial instability among its residents. Aibonito, while a smaller municipality,

still shows a notable number of individuals living under low-income conditions, which may be influenced by agricultural dependency and rural economic limitations.

Availability of a Vehicle

The significant number of people in Puerto Rico without access to a vehicle underscores the essential need for reliable transportation services to meet their daily requirements. In Puerto Rico there is a total of 169,891 households that don't have a vehicle available. This means that a total of fourteen (14) percent of the occupied households in Puerto Rico don't have a private vehicle. Table 8 presents the total of households with no vehicle available by Urbanized Area.

Table 8. Households with No Vehicle Available by Urbanized Area

Urbanized Area	Number of Households	Households with No Vehicle Available	Percent of Households with No Vehicle Available
SJUA	711,530	101,514	14%
AUA	91,065	11,214	12%
UZA	328,631	45,950	14%
RURAL	78,723	11,213	14%
TOTAL	1,209,949	169,891	14%
*Source: ACS 2019–2023 5-year estimates			

Contextual Observations:

Similarly, as established in the other population categories, the San Juan Urbanized area, the municipalities with the highest households with no vehicles are San Juan (33,271), Bayamon (8,631), Carolina (6,685), Caguas (6,430) and Guaynabo (3,431).

San Juan has the highest number of households without vehicles, reflecting its urban density and reliance on public transit. Bayamón's residents may struggle with job access and essential services due to limited transportation connectivity. Carolina's transit system must support both workers and residents, particularly those commuting to major employment hubs like the airport. Caguas faces greater mobility challenges due to its suburban nature, while Guaynabo, despite having fewer vehicle-less households, still requires efficient transit options for access to workplaces and commercial areas.

In the Aguadilla Urbanized Area, the municipalities with the largest number of households without vehicles are: Aguadilla (3,527), Isabela (1,829), San Sebastián (1,640), Aguada (1,550) and Moca (1,202).

This distribution suggests a reliance on public transportation, ridesharing, or alternative means of mobility in these areas, particularly in Aguadilla, which has the highest number. Additionally, municipalities like Isabela, San Sebastián, and Aguada may benefit from

improved transit systems to support residents with mobility challenges. Moca, while having the fewest households without vehicles among the listed municipalities, still faces concerns related to connectivity and accessibility.

Evaluating the distribution among the municipalities under the Urbanized Area under 200,000 population, the highest concentration of households without vehicles is: Ponce (8,909), Mayagüez (5,818), Arecibo (4,100), Manatí (2,630) and Juana Díaz (2,114).

The substantial number in Ponce suggests a reliance on alternative transportation methods, such as public transit or shared mobility services, which could be influenced by urban density, economic factors, or infrastructure availability. Similarly, the figures for Mayagüez and Arecibo indicate notable portions of the population lacking personal vehicles, possibly pointing to socioeconomic conditions. Meanwhile, the lower numbers in Manatí and Juana Díaz, though still significant, may reflect varying levels of transportation infrastructure, employment centers, or population distribution. Overall, this data underscores potential mobility challenges in these municipalities and highlights the importance of efficient transportation systems to support residents who rely on alternatives to private vehicles.

Analyzing the Rural Area, the largest municipalities with households with no vehicles are: Loíza (1,671), Utuado (1,651), Salinas (1,412), Lares (1,348) and Aibonito (1,190).

In Puerto Rico's rural areas, transportation accessibility varies among municipalities, revealing potential socioeconomic impacts. Loíza, with 1,671 households without vehicles, likely faces mobility challenges due to economic constraints and limited infrastructure, possibly affecting access to employment. Utuado (1,651) also shows a high dependence on alternative transportation, which may reflect the mountainous terrain and dispersed population, making travel more difficult. Salinas (1,412), a region with agricultural and industrial activity, might experience workforce mobility limitations, potentially influencing economic output. Lares (1,348), a historically agricultural municipality, may have residents relying on community-based transport, affecting accessibility to essential services. Aibonito (1,190), could face similar issues with transportation dependency, possibly hindering local commerce and employment prospects.

Table 9. Summary of Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

POPULATION	SJUA	AUA	UZA	RURAL	TOTAL
Persons of 65 years or more	413,720	57,254	211,074	49,191	731,239
Persons Non-institutionalized with a Disability	408,200	67,550	205,233	54,006	734,989
Families with Income Below 150 Percent of Poverty Level	239,445	38,352	134,510	35,812	448,119

Service Gaps and Unmet Needs

To properly identify the needs and gaps in the services provided, a **questionnaire** was distributed via e-mail among the agencies, municipalities and nonprofit entities. A total of 207 individuals participated in the questionnaire. Through this instrument it was possible to analyze the unmet needs for transportation services to disadvantage population.

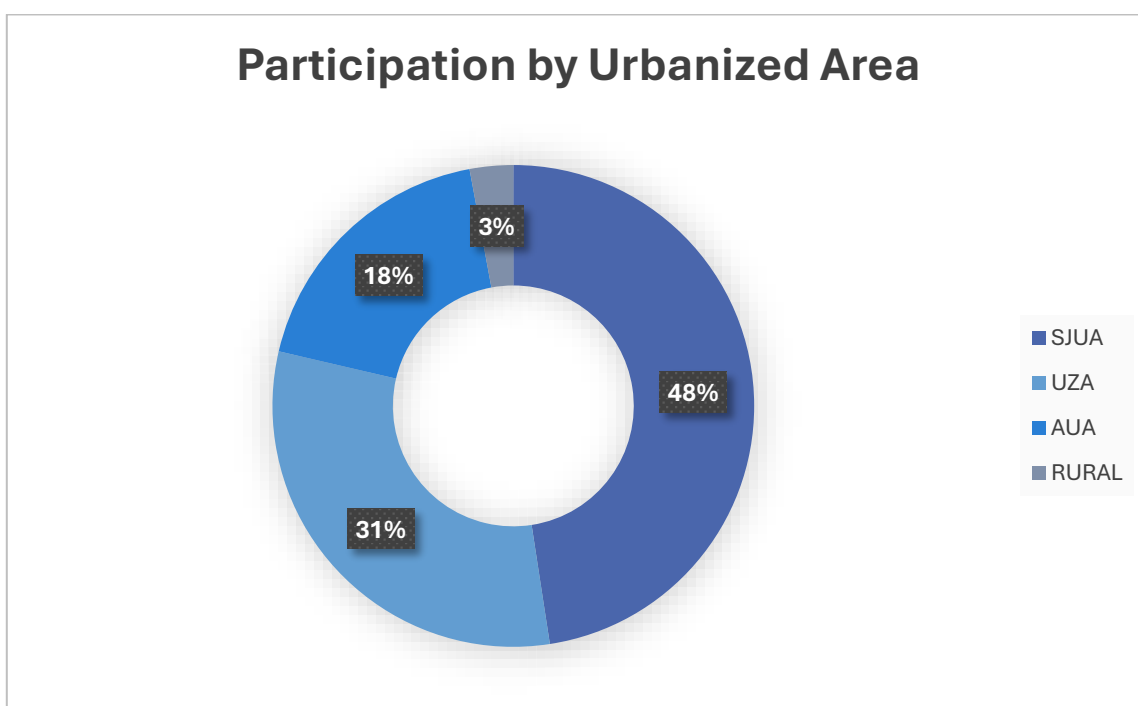


Figure 2. Participation by Urbanized Area and Rural Area

The questionnaire included four (4) open questions that the participants answered according to their needs and expectations:

How would you define the concept of mobility?

What are the key needs in transportation services for elderly population?

What are the key needs in transportation services for people with disabilities?

What are the key needs in transportation services for low-income population?

Table 10. Survey-Derived Gaps and Unmet Needs

Categories	Gap and Unmet Needs
Elderly Population	ADA-compliant public transportation
	Access to both urban and rural locations
	Transportation for services such as: medical appointments, government offices, community centers, places of worship, supermarkets
	Availability of extended services hours
	Trained, courteous, and sensitive drivers
Population with Disabilities	Transportation for services such as: medical appointments, government offices, community centers, places of worship, supermarkets
	Adapted vehicles with ramps, lifts, handrails, and space for wheelchairs/walkers
	Personalized assistance and accommodation for physical, sensory, or cognitive limitations
	Properly modified infrastructure (ramps, sidewalks, signage)
	Secure, comfortable, and dignified travel experience for all users
Population with Low Income	Affordable or free transportation is critical
	Flexible schedules covering early mornings, nights, and weekends to accommodate non-traditional work hours.
	Well-maintained, comfortable vehicles designed for safety.
	Access to medical services, community centers, recreation, and social/cultural events
	Transport coverage for rural or marginalized areas, not just metropolitan zones.

Survey Analysis

Elderly Population

The elderly population faces significant barriers when it comes to accessing public transportation that meets their needs. A major concern is the lack of ADA-compliant infrastructure across many transit systems, which limits mobility for individuals with physical, visual, or auditory impairments. Additionally, geographic coverage is uneven—urban areas may be relatively well served, while rural regions often lack adequate routes or any service at all, leaving many older adults isolated from essential destinations. Public transportation frequently overlooks important locations such as medical facilities, government offices, community centers, places of worship, and supermarkets, particularly those situated outside central areas. This limits seniors' ability to complete errands, attend appointments, and stay socially connected. Compounding these challenges is the limited availability of service hours; many systems operate strictly during business hours, preventing elderly riders from scheduling travel during early mornings, evenings, or weekends. Finally, the human element cannot be overlooked: drivers are not consistently trained to assist elderly passengers with the patience, courtesy, and sensitivity they deserve. This lack of empathetic service can make public transportation feel inaccessible or intimidating, further discouraging use. Altogether, these gaps reveal a pressing need for more inclusive, flexible, and respectful transit solutions tailored to the aging population.

Population with Disabilities

Access to transportation remains a significant challenge for many people with disabilities, underscoring a series of persistent gaps and unmet needs in mobility services. Despite their critical reliance on transportation for essential services like medical appointments, visits to government offices, community centers, places of worship, and grocery stores, available systems often fall short of being truly inclusive. Many transit options lack adapted vehicles equipped with ramps, lifts, handrails, and sufficient space for wheelchairs and walkers, rendering travel not only inconvenient but sometimes impossible. Beyond physical accessibility, individuals with sensory or cognitive limitations are frequently left without the personalized assistance they need to navigate public transportation safely and effectively. Infrastructure also plays a crucial role—many areas lack properly modified elements such as ramps, level sidewalks, and clear, readable signage, further limiting independent mobility. These gaps collectively compromise users' dignity, comfort, and sense of security, making every day travel an uphill struggle rather than a reliable resource. Addressing these needs calls for an integrated approach that prioritizes not just physical access, but also a respectful, responsive experience that affirms the rights and autonomy of disabled individuals.

Population with Low Income

Access to reliable and affordable transportation remains a crucial yet underserved need among low-income populations. Many individuals depend on public transit not just for commuting, but for reaching vital destinations such as medical facilities, community centers, recreational spaces, and cultural or social events. However, current transportation services often fail to offer sufficient coverage, particularly in rural or marginalized areas, effectively isolating residents from these opportunities. While affordability is paramount—especially for those juggling tight budgets—fare structures and limited subsidies can make even routine travel financially burdensome. Moreover, rigid scheduling and limited-service hours do not align with the reality of non-traditional work shifts, such as early mornings, late nights, or weekend employment, resulting in lost wages and missed commitments. The state of the vehicles themselves also matters; fleets that are poorly maintained or uncomfortable can compromise rider safety and dignity, discouraging consistent use. These gaps reveal a pressing need for a more equitable transit system—one that expands its reach, offers flexibility, and prioritizes both cost-effectiveness and care in design.

Objectives and Strategies

Objectives for the CPT-HSTP

As part of the questionnaire, five (5) objectives were shared with the participants for them to rate them according to their importance or significance for the transportation to all the populations involved.

- ✓ **Expand access to transportation by identifying where services are lacking and creating new routes to meet the needs of all the populations.**
 - ✓ **Increase the availability of accessible and functional vehicles.**
 - ✓ **Improve service quality, including staff training and the use of technology.**
- ✓ **Launch a promotional campaign for the service aimed at the identified population.**
 - ✓ **Encourage coordination among agencies, municipalities, entities, and/or organizations regarding transportation services.**

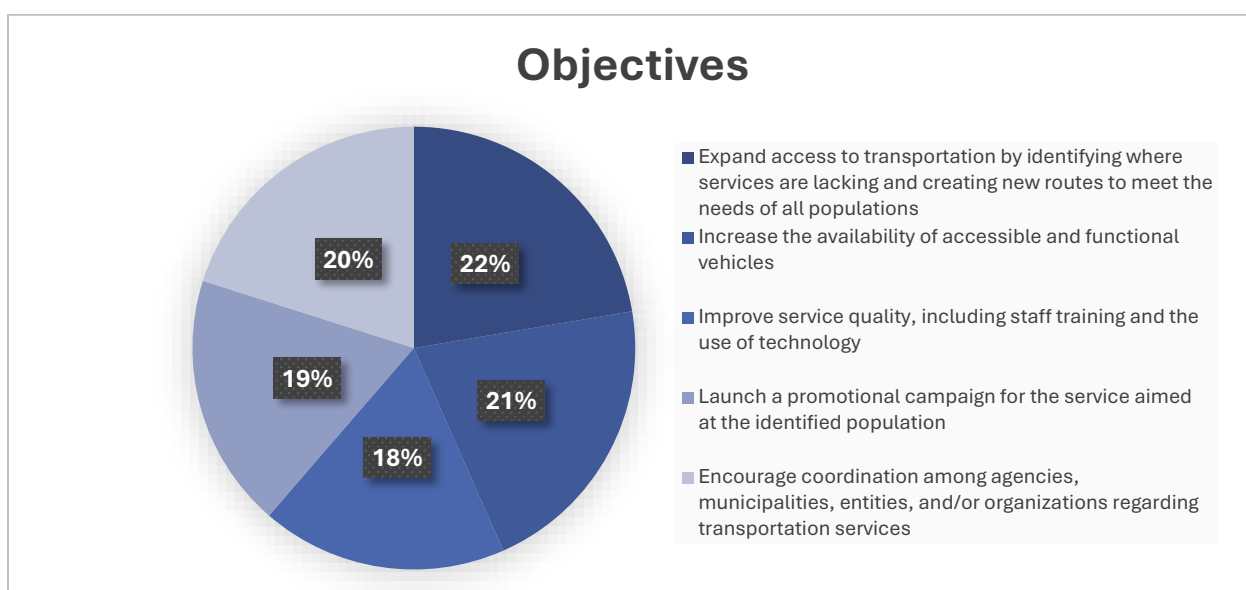


Figure 3. Objectives of the Plan

The data presents a well-rounded vision for enhancing transportation systems, with the most urgent emphasis—22%—on identifying service gaps and establishing new routes that serve all populations. This highlights a strong recognition that geographic and demographic inequalities must be addressed first to ensure equitable mobility. Following closely at 21%, there is a push to increase the availability of accessible and functional vehicles, reinforcing the need for infrastructure that supports people with varying needs. Coordination across agencies and organizations (20%) is also seen as a pivotal component, suggesting that systemic improvements rely heavily on collaborative governance and shared resources.

Promotional efforts (19%) and improving service quality, including technology and staff training (18%), round out the strategy by ensuring user engagement and reliable service delivery. Together, these priorities reflect a holistic approach—balancing physical infrastructure, community engagement, and interagency cooperation—to build a transportation ecosystem that is inclusive, efficient, and sustainable.

Key recommendations and Guidelines

To properly address the identified gaps and needs, key recommendations and guidelines were developed based on the responses by the participants. These strategies should complement programmed projects in the short and long term. The following is a discussion of some strategies to be implemented and assist in the promotion of specific projects.

Service Accessibility and Provision

- ✓ Analyze actual service areas to identify new routes, destinations and demand – offer patterns.
- ✓ Explore and provide guidance in the acquisition of buses and vehicles with technological features and easy accessibility.

Service Quality

- ✓ Implementation of training for staff to improve services provided.
- ✓ Explore variables that affect safety and reliability on transit services.

Transit Related Improvements

- ✓ Identification of available funds and plans to enhance and implement accessibility through transit related improvements.

Information and Awareness

- ✓ Public education campaigns.
- ✓ Workshops to promote the availability of program funds to implement.

Operation, Administration and Coordination

- ✓ Establish a multisectoral committee that will provide guidance and coordination between transit initiatives.
- ✓ Establish a Committee for Coordination between public and private providers at different scales.
- ✓ Training and workshops to enhance Program Management Capacity.

Short- term Strategies and Activities

- Explore and provide guidance in the acquisition of buses and vehicles with technological features and easy accessibility

Participants identified obstacles in accessing rural places and narrow streets in urban spaces because of the dimensions and specifications of the buses. The provision of guidance to acquire vehicles and buses with smaller dimensions, that are following FTA funding requirements, would be implemented. It would be encouraged to include technological features such as Digital Signage and Automated Announcements or Assistive Technologies such as screen readers, talking signs and Braille displays.

- Implementation of trainings for staff to improve provided services

To enhance the quality of provided transit services is key to implementing a series of trainings related to client service for staff working with elderly population, people with disabilities and low- income groups. Most of the participants expressed the importance of empathy when it comes to their treatment during the transit service that is being provided. Training that emphasizes respect and care for the diverse populations served by the transit system must be included in handbooks and other materials.

- Public educational campaigns

To promote awareness and participation in available services, it would be necessary to launch educational campaigns that not only encourage providers and users to engage with various programs, but also highlight the benefits of participation, address barriers such as lack of information or accessibility, and tailor messaging to the specific needs of the populations being served.

- Workshops to promote the availability of program funds to implement transit services

To promote awareness and access to FTA Section 5310 funds, it is essential to reinforce promotional efforts by implementing targeted workshops for interested parties. These workshops should offer clear guidance on eligibility criteria, application procedures, and funding opportunities, while also fostering collaboration among local stakeholders such as transit agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community representatives. Additionally, providing multilingual materials and scheduling sessions at accessible locations can help broaden participation and ensure equitable outreach.

- Training and workshops to enhance Program Management Capacity

It would be necessary to implement comprehensive training and workshops for Program Managers to enhance their understanding of the requirements for applying for funds and complying with all related federal and state regulations. These sessions should include step-by-step guidance on grant application processes, reporting and documentation

standards, updates on evolving compliance policies, and strategies for effective program implementation.

Long- term Strategies and Activities

- Analyze actual service areas to identify new routes, destinations and demand – offer patterns.

To analyze and evaluate the current services, projects related to transportation studies must be incorporated in the planning and programming documents of the MPO. The results of the planning studies will provide and recommend routes, evaluate the demands of the population and determine the actual patterns of the users.

- Explore variables that affect safety and reliability on transit services

The provision of reliable services with on time schedules and vehicles in good maintenance would enhance services. The analysis of variables that affects service reliability would need to be performed as well as the implementation of projects and technology to keep up with trip schedule and maintenance of vehicles.

- Identification of available funds and plans to enhance and implement accessibility through transit-related improvements

To identify funding for the accessibility and mobility of the users, every Fiscal Year, FTA publishes its annual apportionments, which includes Section 5310 funding. Also, under FTA, there is discretionary funding, like Enhancing Mobility Innovation Program that its funding will support the implementation of innovative strategies towards the transportation services.

- Establish a multisectoral committee that will provide guidance and coordination between transit initiatives

To formally establish coordination between the service providers (public, private or non-profit), PRHTA shall serve as a liaison between the interested stakeholders. An example would be creating a committee to be a part of the MPO or Technical Committees, in the programming process.

- Establish a Committee for Coordination between public and private providers at different scales

Following the same steps to create a multisectoral committee, PRHTA will bring guidance and coordination to the stakeholders. The efforts could be divided locally, such as communities within a Municipality, or as a regional effort, that would include various Municipalities or organizations.

Other projects whose efforts are not included in the long-term or short-term strategies presented in this plan could be evaluated and/or considered, in the case that there is available funding and the projects comply with the established requirements.

Appendix A

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

Como parte de la actualización del plan, estamos recopilando el insumo de los usuarios de los servicios de transporte colectivo, dirigidos a la población envejeciente y/o con diversidad funcional.

[Fecha límite para responder el cuestionario: 21 de julio 2025](#)

De tener cualquier duda o pregunta, se pueden comunicar a la Oficina de Coordinación Federal al 787-721-8787 EXT. 51601

* Required

Perfil del individuo

1. Seleccione el grupo que mejor lo representa: *

- ☐ Empleado de égidas o centros de envejecientes
- ☐ Proveedor de servicios de transporte
- ☐ Funcionario de gobierno local o estatal
- ☐ Usuario de sistema de transporte
- ☐ Ciudadano

2. ¿En qué municipio reside o dónde se encuentra localizada su entidad? *

3. ¿Ofrece algún tipo de servicio de transporte? *

- ☐ Sí
- ☐ No

4. Si seleccionó "Sí", ¿a qué población esta dirigido el servicios que provee? *

- ☐ Población envejeciente
- ☐ Personas con diversidad funcional
- ☐ Personas de bajos recursos

5. ¿Recibe fondos de la Administración de Transportación Colectiva (FTA, por sus siglas en inglés) para ofrecer los servicios (Sección 5310)? *

Programa 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program): los fondos son otorgados por la ACT.

- ☐ Sí
- ☐ No

Preguntas

Aquí podrán incluir su ítem de acuerdo a las preguntas establecidas.

6. ¿Cómo definirías el concepto de movilidad? *

7. ¿Cuáles son las necesidades clave en servicios de transportación para las **personas envejecientes**? *

Servicios de transportación relacionados a: servicios médicos, servicios recreacionales o servicios esenciales (supermercados, oficinas de gobierno).

8. ¿Cuáles son las necesidades clave en servicios de transportación para las personas con **diversidad funcional**? *

Servicios de transportación relacionados a: servicios médicos, servicios recreacionales o servicios esenciales (supermercados, oficinas de gobierno).

9. ¿Cuáles son las necesidades clave en servicios de transportación para las **personas de bajo ingreso**? *

Servicios de transportación relacionados a: servicios médicos, servicios recreacionales o servicios esenciales (supermercados, oficinas de gobierno).

10. ¿Cuáles serían, en orden de prioridad, los objetivos clave para mejorar la transportación de personas envejecientes, con diversidad funcional o de bajos ingresos económicos? Orden de Prioridad: 1 (mayor prioridad) al 5 (menor prioridad) *

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Ampliar el acceso a la transportación identificando dónde faltan servicios y crear nuevas rutas para atender las necesidades de todas las poblaciones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mayor disponibilidad de vehículos accesibles y funcionales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mejorar la calidad del servicio, incluyendo entrenamiento a al personal y uso de tecnología.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impulsar campaña promocional del servicio dirigidos a las poblaciones identificadas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fomentar la coordinación entre las agencias, municipios, entidades y/o organizaciones en cuanto a los servicios de transportación	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Podría mencionar algunas herramientas o estrategias para mejorar la **coordinación** de servicios de transportación a los usuarios del Programa 5310? *

Ejemplo: inclusión de aplicaciones tecnológicas en los servicios, mayor comunicación entre las entidades, atención al mantenimiento a vehículos para brindar mejor servicio

12. ¿Qué acciones recomienda para fomentar la **cooperación** entre distintos proveedores de transporte (como municipios, égidias y agencias) y así mejorar la calidad de los servicios ofrecidos? *

13. Comentarios Adicionales *

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Appendix B

Section 5310 apportionments

Section 5310 funds are apportioned annually by FTA to urbanized and rural areas based on formula factors. PRHTA, as designated recipient, programs funds for:

- San Juan UZA
- Aguadilla UZA
- Urbanized Areas under 200,000 population
- Rural Areas

Apportionments are typically available in the fiscal year following federal appropriations. Project selections align to available balances by area, pending TIP/STIP programming and FTA grant awards.

Recent and Anticipated Apportionments

San Juan Urbanized Area

SECTION 5310 ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM	
FY 2023 Apportionment	\$3,547,731.00
FY 2024 Apportionment	\$3,501,663.00
FY 2025 Apportionment	\$3,478,832.00

Aguadilla Urbanized Area

SECTION 5310 ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM	
FY 2024 Apportionment	\$472,848.00
FY 2025 Apportionment	\$484,238.00

Urbanized Areas under 200,000 population

SECTION 5310 ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM	
FY 2023 Apportionment	\$2,497,269.00
FY 2024 Apportionment	\$2,857,501.00
FY 2025 Apportionment	\$2,911,595.00

Rural Area

SECTION 5310 DS URBANIZED AREA	
FY 2023 Apportionment	\$60,576.00
FY 2024 Apportionment	\$538,093.00
FY 2025 Apportionment	\$545,122.00

Appendix C

Process for the request of funding through Section 5310 under PRHTA

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

The following institutions are considered eligible recipients for this program:

1. Private Non-Profit Corporation

Any organization which is incorporated as a private non-profit corporation with the Puerto Rico Department of State. The organization doesn't have to be a unit of state or municipality, government or public corporation, board or commission established under the law of any state or municipality.

2. Public Bodies

- a) Any public body are an agency whom has been approved by the state to coordinate service for elderly persons and persons with disabilities

This category includes all public bodies that have at least one of the following characteristics:

- 1. Responsibility of establishing the government's public policy related to elderly people and persons with disabilities services.
- 2. Have the responsibility of establishing goals and objectives for coordinated services.
- 3. Bring services directly to elderly people and persons with disabilities. Some examples of these public bodies are:
 - a. Department of Family
 - b. Department of Labor (Vocational Rehabilitation)
 - c. Department of Health, Mental Health Division

b. Public Bodies would be certifying that there are no non-profit organizations readily available in an area to provide Program 5310 service

This category includes all public bodies that gives services to general public and that has a program that offer or brings services for the elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

These Public Bodies must hold a public hearing to comply with the following requirements:

1. Notify through a public notice at least in one (1) newspaper the following:
 - a) The transit needs of elderly and people with disabilities in their service area.
 - b) The availability of funds under Program 5310.
 - c) The opportunity for a private non-profit organization to provide Program 5310 services.
 - d) Invite general public, interested groups and private bus and “público” operators to submit comments and recommendations on the proposed project. The public body must bring fifteen (15) days from the date of this notice before held the public hearing. If any comments are received, a copy must be included with the application package.

If any private non-profit organization or other public body don't notify their interest and availability to provide such services, then the public body qualifies to participate in the Program 5310.

The public body must certify to the Executive Director of Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority that no non-profit corporations or associations are readily available in that area to provide the service. A copy of all their efforts to notify and invited interested groups should be included.

d. Requirements for all Public Bodies

All public body applicants must afford an adequate opportunity for a public hearing and such hearings must be held if someone with a significant economic, social, or environmental interest in the matter requests a hearing.

2. Requirements for all Applicants

a. Transportation Improvement Program Inclusion

Each applicant from an urbanized area is required to submit their Program 5310 application to their regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) member (Municipal Government) for the inclusion of their proposal in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

b. Endorsements – as part of application an endorsement letter of the following public bodies are required:

1. The Office of the Ombudsman for the Pension and the Elderly

2. Department of Family

- c. One (1) original application and one (1) copy
 - d. Transportation Service Area Map
 - e. Evidence of financial capability
 - f. If the clientele are persons with disabilities, the entity should be including a list that identifies the disabilities. (Please, don't include names)
 - g. For private non-profit entities only.
- 1. Copy of Certification issued by the Department of State of the Commonwealth of P. R.
 - 2. Upon approval of this application, the entity is responsible, among other requirements, for complying with the Puerto Rican Department of Treasury requirements applicable to the acquisition of these vehicles (vehicles tax fees).

The PRHTA recommends the entities to request Tax exemption, if applicable.