Alabama Transportation Planners Association Conference

WHEN DRIVING ISN'T AN OPTION:
Planning for Mobility, Access, and Independence

Presenters:

Becky Rogers, PE, PTP, RSP$_1$
Vice President/Senior Project Manager

Ellen Soll, AICP
Transportation Planning Deputy Practice Lead

NEEL-SCHAFFER

July 29, 2026

Who Drives? Who Doesn't Drive?

35% of Alabama residents over age 10 do not or cannot rely on a personal vehicle to meet their daily needs

- Children & Teens
- Older Adults
- People with Disabilities
- People who choose not to drive
- People who cannot afford a vehicle or share a vehicle

What Comes To Mind When You Hear The Word “Transit”?

Subways

Light Rail Trains

City Buses

Who Rides Transit?

Primary Transit Users

- ELDERLY
- DISABLED
- LOW INCOME POPULATIONS
- CHILDREN
- COMMUTERS IN BIG CITIES

Who Else Could Benefit From Transit?

Potential Transit Users

PEOPLE WITHOUT CARS

INJURED PEOPLE

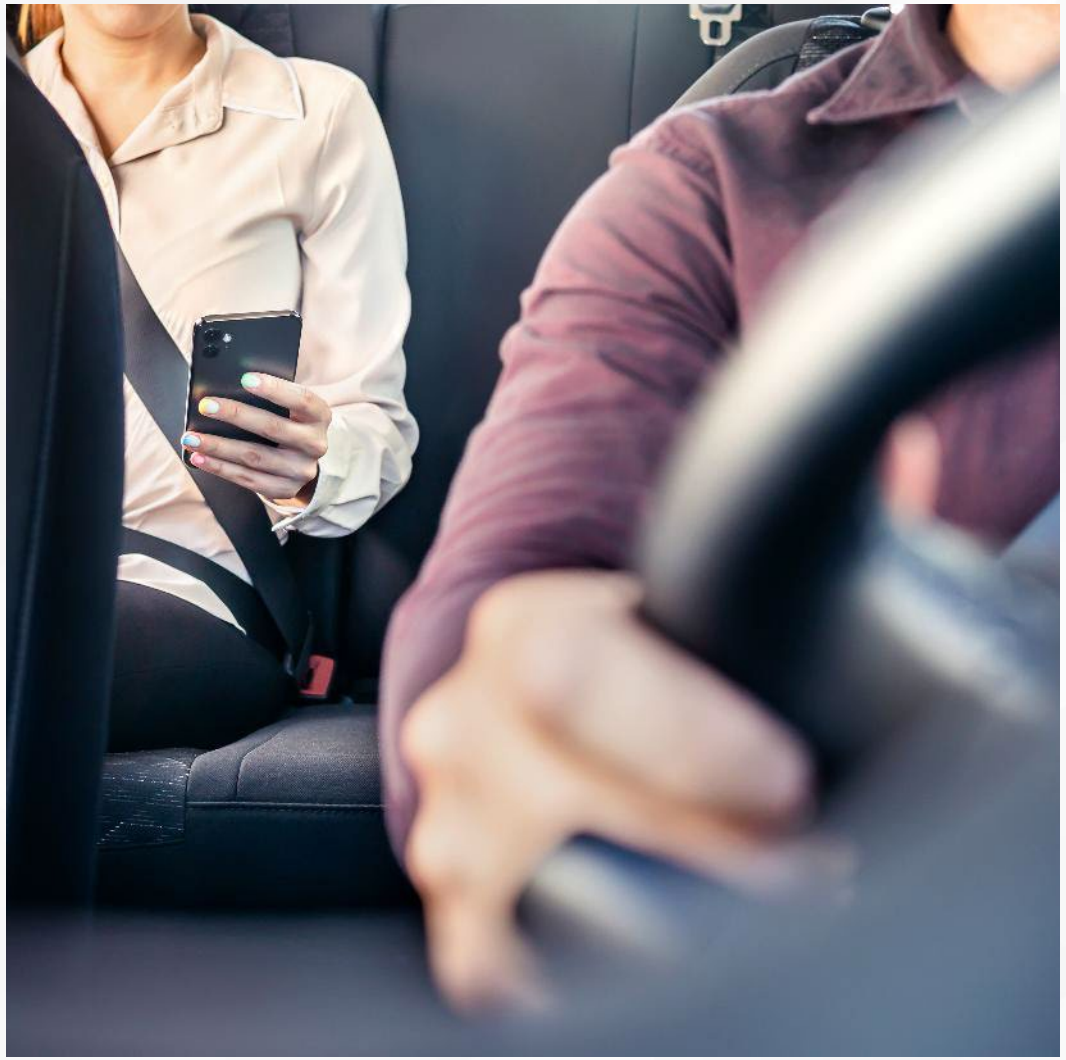
NON-DRIVERS BY CHOICE

Rural Transit Types

Demand Response

- Dial-a-ride
- Flexible scheduling and routing
- Book rides in advance
- Larger vehicles
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles

Rural Transit Types



Rideshare

- Carpool/vanpool
- On-demand
- Advanced scheduling
- Technology based (online or mobile app)
- Smaller vehicles

Rural Transit Types

Volunteer Driver

- Sponsoring agency
- Flexible scheduling and routing
- Door-to-door
- Passenger assistance
- Smaller vehicles

Rural Transit Types

Microtransit

- Flexible scheduling and routing
- Operate within service areas
- Multi-passenger vehicles
- First/Last mile connections
- Technology based (online or mobile app)

Benefits of Transit

Transit Riders

- Reliable Travel Mode
- Lower Cost
- Statistically Safer
- No Need for Parking
- Reduced Stress
- Social Opportunities

Non-Riders

- Less Road Congestion
- Improved Air Quality
- More Parking Availability
- Transportation Option When Needed

Transit Challenges

- Funding Deficits
- Driver Shortages
- Public Perception
- Aging Infrastructure
- Suburban Sprawl
- Unpredictable Fuel Costs
- Accessibility Provisions
- First/Last Mile

First and Last Mile: Where Do People Need To Go?

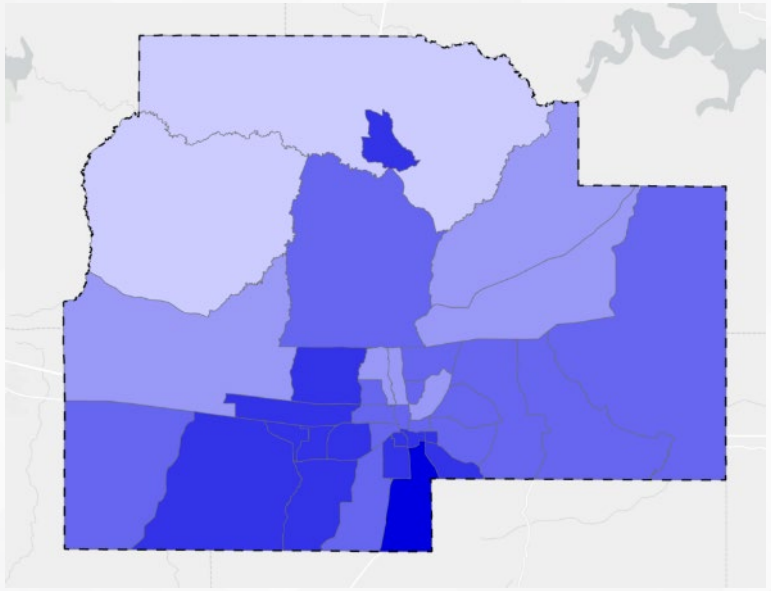
If there are no facilities, how do we know where people want to go?

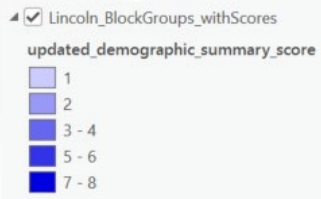
- Many roads were designed without walking or biking in mind, but still have destinations
- Traditional travel demand modeling is based on observed trips, where infrastructure exists
- Collecting non-motorized trip data is relatively rare

Latent Demand Analysis

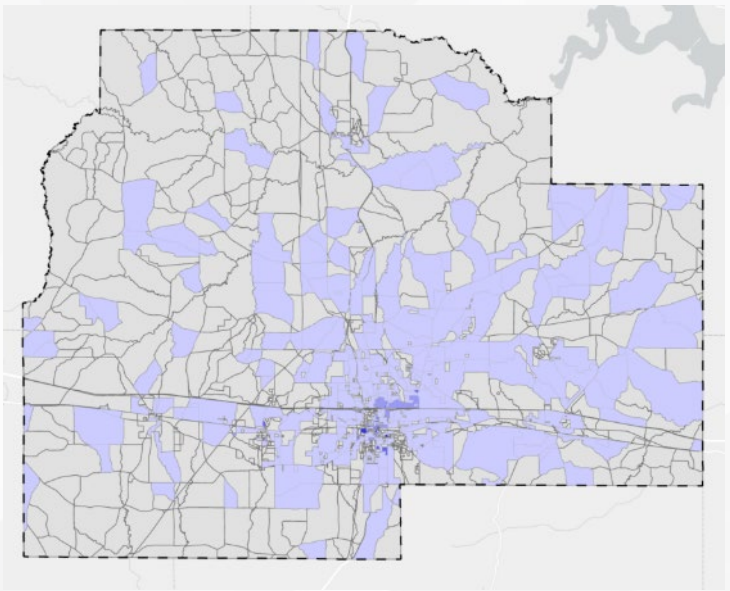
- Mobility demand can be observed and measured
- Current conditions might suppress trips

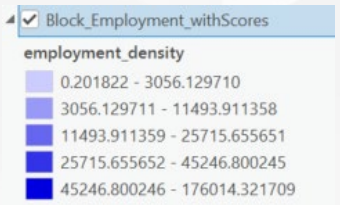
Demographics



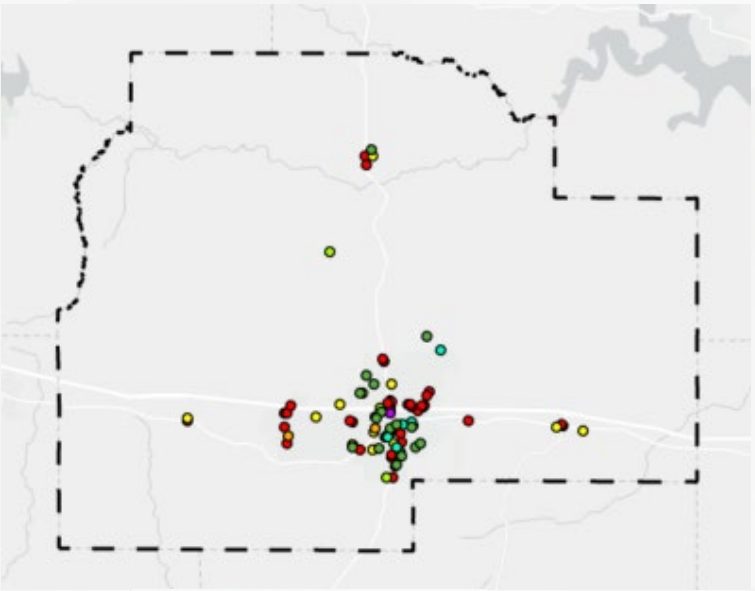


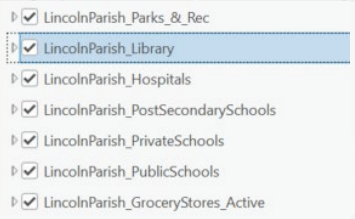
Density



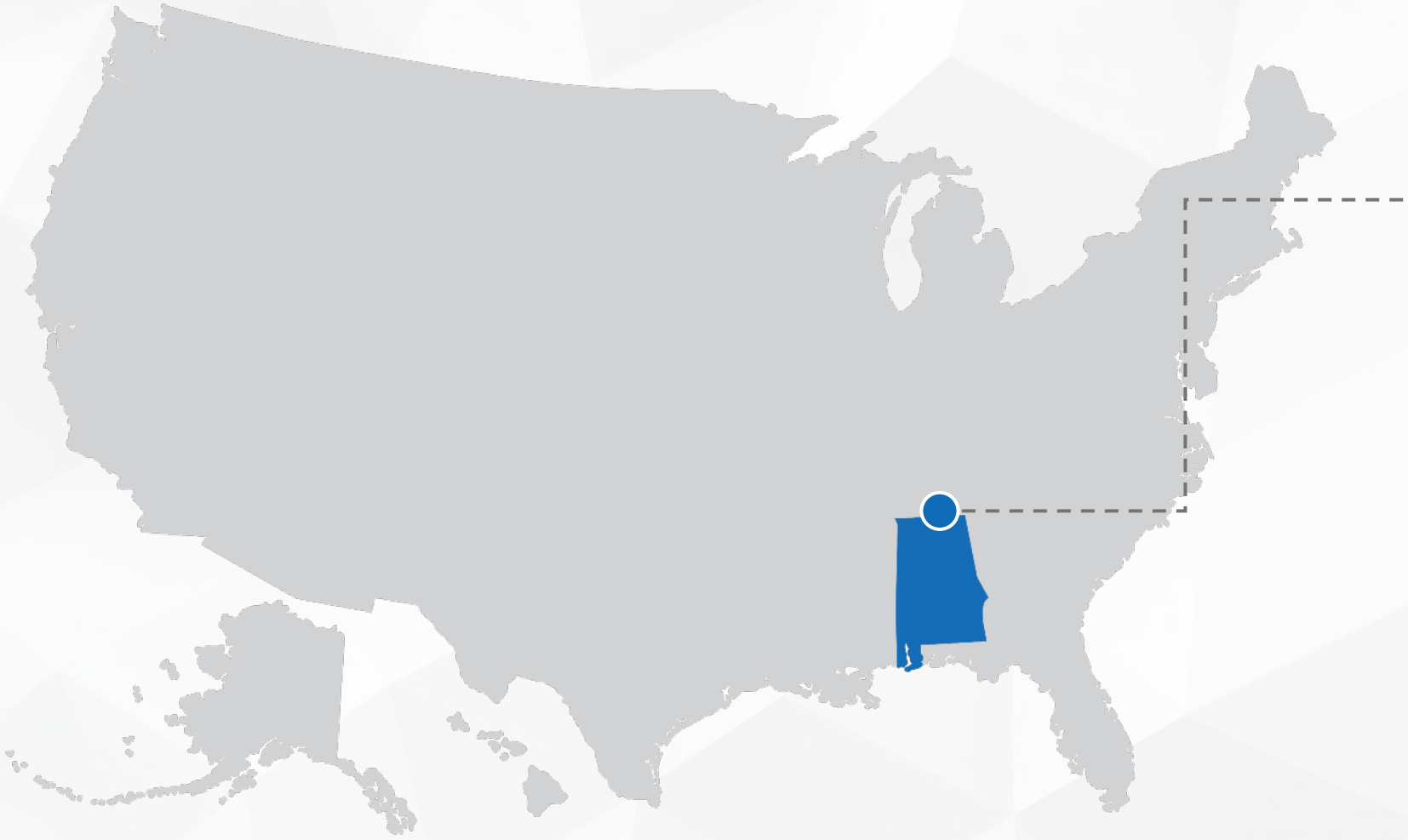


Destinations





Safety Risks - Crashes



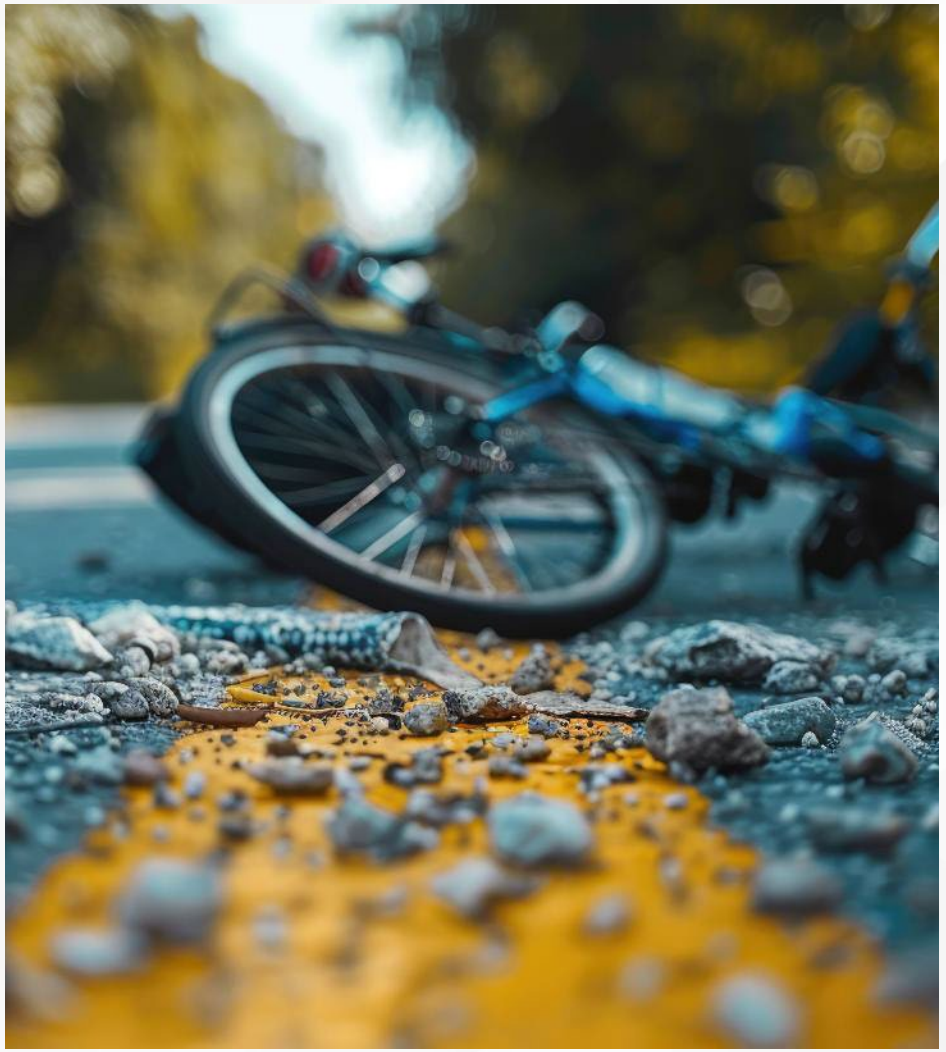
2.34

Alabama Avg Annual Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100K (2020-2024)

2.15

US Avg Annual Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100K (2020-2024)

Safety Risks - Speed



When hit by a vehicle traveling at the following speeds…

18%
Likelihood of severe injury

50%
Likelihood of severe injury

81%
Likelihood of severe injury

Safety Risks - Visibility

66%

Of pedestrian fatal and serious injury crashes occurred in dark conditions

50%

of bicyclist fatal and serious injury crashes occurred in dark conditions

Safety Solutions - Speed

Safety Solutions for Speed

- Speed Management
  - Appropriate Speed Limits
  - Variable Speed Limits
  - Speed Cameras
- Street Design
  - Traffic Calming
- Crossing Treatments
  - Raised crossings
  - Median refuge islands
  - Pedestrian hybrid beacons

Vulnerable Road Use Safety Solutions

- Connected Networks
  - Bicycle Lanes
  - Walkways
- Safe Crossings
  - Median and Pedestrian Refuge Islands
  - Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements
- Enhanced Driver Awareness
  - Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon
  - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons
- Street Design
  - Road Diets
  - Curb Extensions

Transportation Choices Go Beyond Safety

Community
- Foster social connections
- Create vibrant public spaces

Resilience
- Reduce dependence on single travel mode
- Adapt to changing needs

Economy
- Lower household costs
- Expand access to jobs

Safety
- Reduce crashes and conflicts
- Create safer streets

Health
- Increase physical activity
- Improve mental health

Access
- Connect people to destinations
- Support independence at every age

Why Is This Important?

Key Takeaways

Not everyone drives.

People show us where they want to go.

Safety and comfort determine mode choice.

Small network gaps create major barriers.

Mobility options improve safety, health, and independence.

We are all aging and can lose mobility at any time.

Questions?

Becky Rogers, PE, PTP, RSP$_1$

Vice President / Senior Project Manager
40 Inverness Center Parkway, Suite 600
Hoover, AL 35242
205.912.8540
becky.rogers@neel-schaffer.com

Ellen Soll, AICP

Transportation Planning Deputy Practice Lead
1340 Poydras Street, Suite 1950
New Orleans, LA 70112
504.610.3765
ellen.soll@neel-schaffer.com

NEEL-SCHAFFER