

AS OF JUNE 2025

NEBRASKA
RURAL TRANSIT

GAP ANALYSIS

Southeast Region



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
CENTER FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS RESEARCH

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Journey.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
CENTER FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS RESEARCH

Center for Public Affairs Research

University of Nebraska at Omaha

6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182

402.554.2133 | cpar.unomaha.edu



Good Life. Great Journey.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Nebraska Department of Transportation

1400 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE 68502

402.479.4871 | dot.nebraska.gov/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) conducted a comprehensive analysis of rural transit in Nebraska’s Southeast region at the request of the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT). This region includes 21 counties in southeastern Nebraska and is served by 11 transit providers. By analyzing data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, NDOT records, and local transit providers, the study provides insights into ridership by agency, identifies common rider destinations, and examines service gaps and overlaps across the region. Based on this analysis, we propose opportunities for coordination and strategies to enhance the reach of rural transit services in Nebraska.

A key finding is the essential role of rural transit in supporting the region’s increasingly transit-dependent population. Over 20% of rural residents are aged 65 or older and the relative percentages of older and disabled populations are growing across the region, indicating a growing need for accessible and reliable transit services. Fortunately, more than 96% of the region’s rural population lives in areas served by at least one rural transit provider.

Rural transit providers in the region serve a wide range of communities across Southeast Nebraska, with very little overlap in service. Very few of the rural residents of the Southeast region (10%) are served by three providers. This suggests the current service is provided efficiently but may leave residents with few options during periods of increased demand.

Based on the data and analysis, the report offers several actionable recommendations. Very few of the providers in the region are currently using ride-tracking software. Initiatives which encourage digitizing rides would greatly help NDOT make data driven decisions. Relatedly, many of the providers in the region advertise trips to Omaha and Lincoln; with limited rides reported for this analysis, we cannot determine the level of redundancy in those rides and encourage a closer study of trips to Omaha and Lincoln. Lastly, Washington County is not served by any of the providers based in the Southeast region and may be better grouped in the Northeast Mobility Management region.

This study highlights the need for continued investment in rural transit. Enhancing intercity services, fostering regional coordination, and planning strategically will help ensure that all residents, especially those who depend on transit, can access the services and opportunities they need.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



6	INTRODUCTION
9	ABOUT THE ANALYSIS
10	SOUTHEAST REGION OVERVIEW
16	SOUTHEAST TRANSIT PROVIDERS
50	TRIP DESTINATIONS
55	AVAILABILITY OF TRANSIT
58	KEY FINDINGS
59	RECOMMENDATIONS
60	SOURCES

INTRODUCTION



This analysis examines the gaps and overlaps in Nebraska’s rural transit services to help ensure reliable access to transit across rural areas of the state. By identifying areas where service can be optimized, the study aims to improve the efficiency, reach, and effectiveness of rural transit. This work is supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), which administers funding from the Federal Transit Administration’s Formula Grants for Rural Area Programs (49 U.S.C. 5311) to public transit providers in areas with populations under 50,000. NDOT has contracted with the Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to conduct this gap analysis as part of its commitment to strengthen Nebraska’s rural transit system.

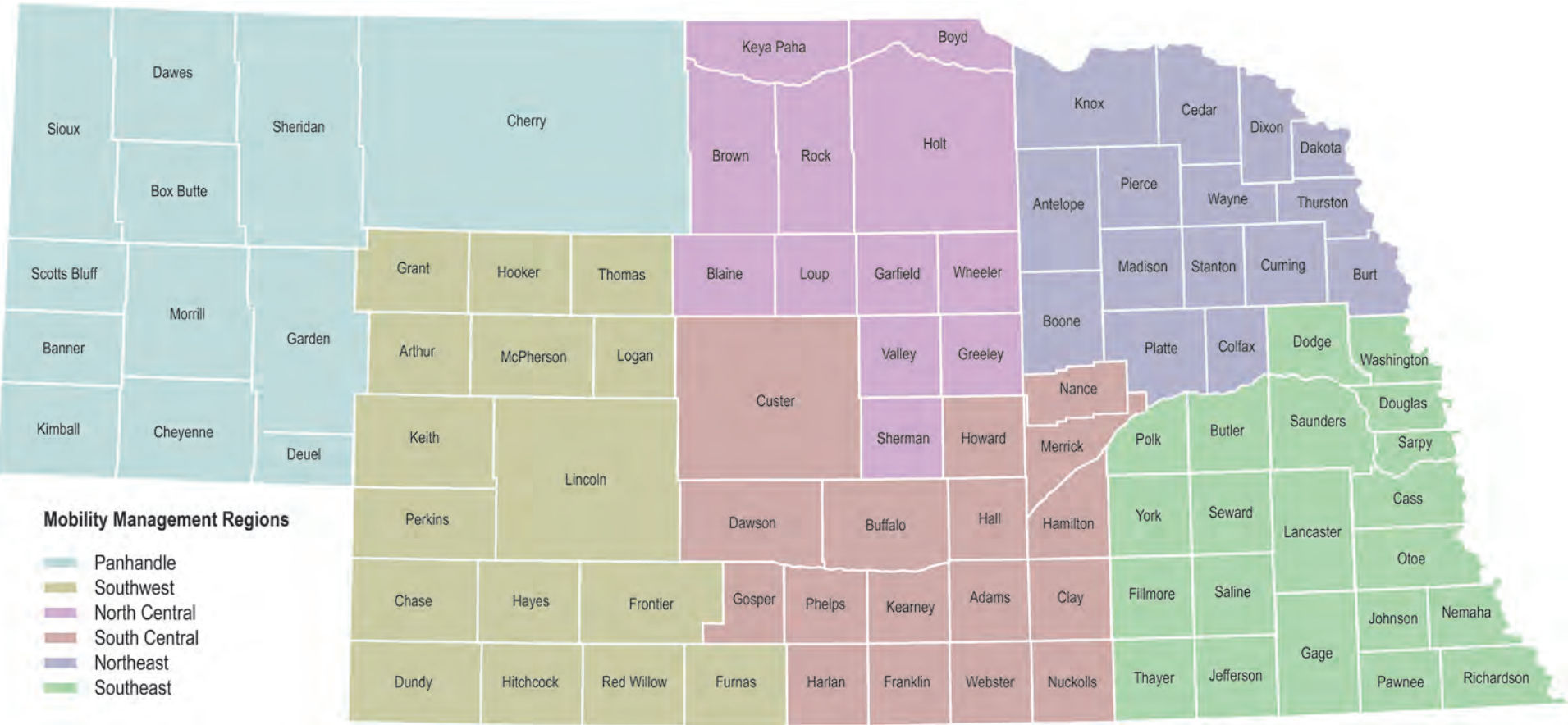
- This gap analysis has several key components:
- An overview of Section 5311 rural transit providers in the region, including their reported coverage area.
 - A summary of the most common drop-off destinations served by these providers.
 - An assessment of gaps and overlaps across providers in each region.
 - Evidence-based recommendations to support and expand efficient, effective rural transit across Nebraska.

The analysis is conducted using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and data about coverage areas, drop-off and pickup locations provided by service providers across Nebraska receiving Section 5311 funds as described in the About the Analysis section.

NEBRASKA MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REGIONS

As part of the management of Federal Transit Administration funding, NDOT divides Nebraska into six Mobility Management regions. A distinct analysis for each region is provided.

Figure 1. Nebraska Mobility Management regions, 2023



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

- Avera St. Anthony’s Hospital
- Community Memorial Health Center
- Loup City Public Transportation
- Valley County Transit System

NORTHEAST REGION

- Avera Creighton Hospital
- Cedar County Transit
- City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit
- City of Plainview Handivan
- Columbus Area Transit System
- Good Samaritan Society-Albion Public Transit
- JoyRide Public Transit
- North Fork Area Transit
- Oakland Public Transit
- Ponca Express
- Schuyler Public Transit
- Wayne Public Transit

PANHANDLE REGION

- Alliance Public Transit
- Chadron City Transit
- City of Sidney Transportation System
- Crawford Public Transportation
- Garden County Public Transportation
- KCTS
- Open Plains Transit
- Tri-City Roadrunner

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

- Callaway District Hospital Public Transit Service
- Hall County Rural Transportation
- Harlan County Public Transportation
- Midland Public Transit
- Nance Trans, Inc.
- Phelps County Public Transit
- RYDE Transit

SOUTHEAST REGION

- Blue Rivers Transportation System
- Butler County Rural Transit Service
- City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit
- Fillmore County Rural Transit Service
- Fremont Transit Program
- Lancaster County Public Rural Transit
- Saline County Area Transit
- Saunders County Public Transportation
- Seward County Public Transit
- Southeast Nebraska Community Action
 - Cass County Transit
 - Pawnee County Transit
 - Richardson County Transit
- York County Public Transportation

SOUTHWEST REGION

- Chase County Transportation System
- City of Benkelman Handi Bus
- City of McCook Transit
- City of Ogallala Public Transit
- Grant Arthur Handi Bus
- Hitch & Hay Public Transit
- Hooker County Handi Bus
- North Platte Public Transit System
- Perkins County Public Transit
- Tri Valley Public Transportation

ABOUT THE ANALYSIS



Our analysis uses a range of data and methods to examine rural transit services in each mobility region. We built this approach by drawing on existing rural transit analyses from other states (e.g., DRPT, 2023 [Source 2]; MCDOT, 2020 [Source 3]; MOOver, 2022 [Source 4]; SWRPC, 2022 [Source 5]; Wave Transit, 2023 [Source 6]) and leveraging our own expertise.

Data for this analysis comes from three primary sources.

- The first is the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. These estimates provide detailed information about population characteristics and help us estimate transit demand for each region.
- The second source is data from rural transit agencies, provided through the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal. This data enabled us to analyze transit offerings, ridership, and geographic service coverage.
- Third, we requested samples of completed rides from transit providers. Not all agencies provided samples over the same time periods or same length of time. However, they are all illustrative of agency service. These samples included pick-up and drop-off locations in 2024. Using the U.S. Census Geocoder (Source 7), we geocoded these locations to generate latitude and longitude coordinates, which were key in creating visual representations like heatmaps and coverage maps.

The metrics we examine for each agency include: provider coverage area (e.g., city-specific, county-wide, regional), boardings per vehicle per fiscal year, miles per vehicle per fiscal year, miles per boarding per fiscal year, drop-offs at or near reported locations in the sample, observed coverage area in square miles, vehicles per square mile of the observed coverage area, and boardings per square mile of the observed coverage area.

The analysis begins with an exploration of the population characteristics and transit demand in each region. This step uses demographic and socioeconomic data to understand the needs of rural transit users. Next, we profile each transit agency’s services, detailing ridership statistics, geographic coverage, and operational metrics. These profiles offer insights into the capacity of existing transit systems.

To illustrate the state of rural transit services, we present maps derived from the geocoded ride sample data. Heatmaps highlight the density of drop-off destinations, while polygon maps delineate the observed coverage areas. These visual tools help convey the extent and uses of transit services. In addition to visual analysis, we conduct a detailed review of trip destinations and service patterns to identify gaps in coverage and overlaps between agencies. This helps assess how well current transit services meet regional needs and highlights opportunities for improvements.

Finally, we synthesize these findings into a regional summary that evaluated transit availability, accessibility, and coverage gaps. The report concludes with a set of actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing rural transit services in the region.

SOUTHEAST REGION OVERVIEW

This document focuses on rural transit agencies in the Southeast Mobility Management region, comprised of 21 counties in the southeastern corner of Nebraska, bordering Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. This region also encompasses the urbanized areas surrounding Omaha and Lincoln. These areas each house more than 50,000 residents, excluding them from the funding opportunities provided by 49 U.S.C. 5311.

Figure 2. Southeast Mobility Management region

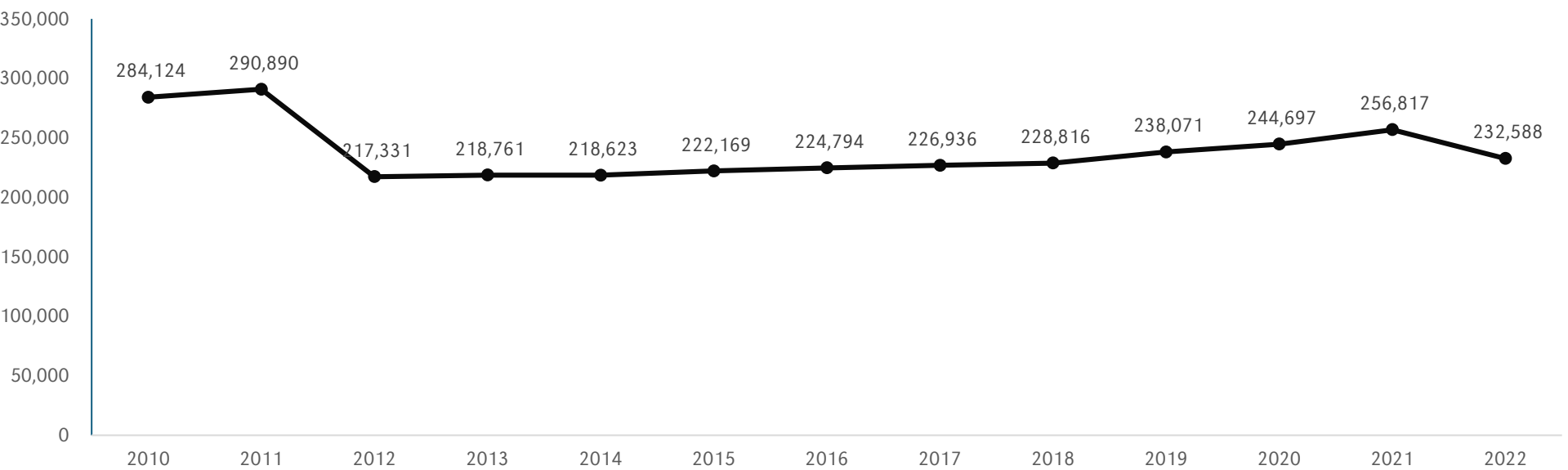


Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

POPULATION TRENDS

The population of the Southeast region as a whole — including Omaha and Lincoln — has consistently increased from 2010 to 2022, rising from 1,179,054 to 1,340,954. The rural population, excluding the urban areas surrounding Omaha and Lincoln, has declined overall, most sharply between 2011 and 2012. In 2022, the total rural population of the region — excluding the urban areas surrounding Omaha and Lincoln — was estimated at 232, 588.

Figure 3. Total rural population in the Southeast region, 2010-2022



Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2010-2022

TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATION

In addition to evaluating the overall population, we analyzed the transit-dependent population in the region. The transit-dependent population includes those who cannot drive due to age, lack financial resources to own a vehicle, or have physical disabilities (Jiao & Dillivan, 2013; Jiao & Wang, 2021). Reports from other state DOTs, such as those in Arkansas, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire, as well as local reports from agencies like DuPage County in Chicago, Illinois, and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, consider the following groups as transit-dependent:

- a. Individuals aged 65 or older.
- b. Individuals below the poverty level.
- c. Individuals with hearing, vision, ambulatory, or other physical difficulties.
- d. Households without access to a private vehicle.

Table 1. Transit-dependent population in the Southeast Region, 2022

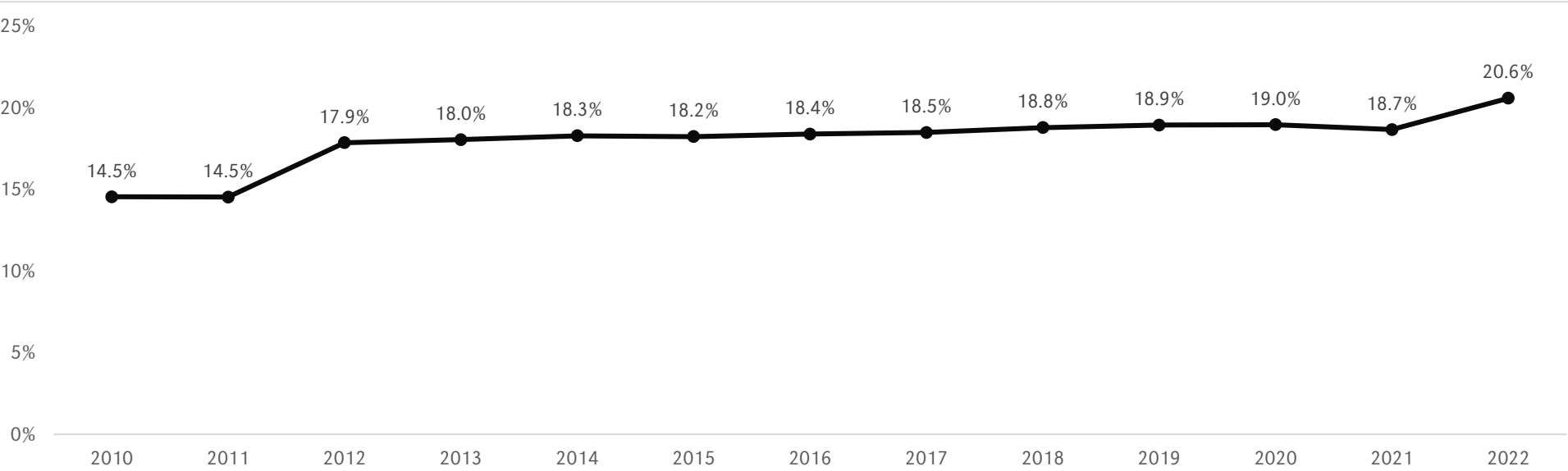
Region	Total Population	Percent of Population 65 Years or Older	Percent of Population Below Poverty	Percent of Population with a Disability	Occupied Housing Units	Percent of Occupied Housing Units with No Private Vehicle
Nebraska	1,958,939	16.2%	10.4%	12.0%	776,379	5.1%
Southeast (total)	1,340,954	14.7%	8.6%	11.2%	529,651	5.3%
Southeast (rural)	286,256	20.6%	5.0%	12.1%	127,872	2.7%
Butler	8,373	20.5%	7.9%	11.7%	3,508	2.7%
Cass	26,749	18.0%	5.6%	12.6%	10,339	3.5%
Dodge	37,175	19.4%	9.1%	14.9%	14,624	4.8%
Douglas (total)	582,638	13.5%	11.0%	10.5%	231,469	6.5%
Douglas (rural)	14,610	44.5%	2.6%	10.2%	12,153	5.5%
Fillmore	5,557	23.9%	7.0%	15.0%	2,383	2.5%
Gage	21,654	21.4%	13.4%	15.8%	9,154	7.7%
Jefferson	7,185	24.7%	11.1%	20.0%	3,122	6.0%
Johnson	5,294	18.7%	6.1%	18.5%	1,722	5.5%
Lancaster (total)	322,063	14.6%	11.8%	11.3%	129,869	5.1%
Lancaster (rural)	31,546	19.6%	3.6%	10.2%	11,506	1.4%
Nemaha	7,019	20.3%	15.3%	16.7%	2,851	6.0%
Otoe	15,995	20.3%	11.4%	14.6%	6,408	3.8%
Pawnee	2,553	28.4%	13.3%	17.3%	1,070	7.3%
Polk	5,182	22.4%	7.7%	11.9%	2,019	2.4%
Richardson	7,850	24.2%	10.9%	16.7%	3,587	6.6%
Saline	14,275	15.9%	11.3%	12.3%	5,137	2.0%
Sarpy (total)	191,272	12.2%	5.5%	9.9%	71,142	3.0%
Sarpy (rural)	9,331	33.7%	2.6%	4.2%	7,042	2.9%
Saunders	22,374	18.3%	6.7%	12.4%	8,789	3.5%
Seward	17,644	17.5%	6.8%	11.7%	6,576	4.6%
Thayer	5,006	25.3%	9.7%	12.4%	2,056	4.1%
Washington	20,884	18.4%	8.0%	11.9%	8,234	2.7%
York	14,212	20.3%	9.3%	14.1%	5,592	2.8%

Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2022

In 2022, the Southeast region overall — including Omaha and Lincoln — had a lower estimated transit-dependent population than the Nebraska statewide average, as summarized in Table 1. In the rural parts of the region, however, the transit-dependent populations were mixed. The percentage of the rural population aged 65 or older and the percentage with a disability were both higher than the statewide average, while the percentage of the rural population living in poverty or without access to a private vehicle were both lower than the statewide average.

In the rural areas of the region, the population aged 65 or older has consistently increased from 2010-2022, accounting for 14.5% of total rural population in 2010 and 20.6% in 2022. Rural Douglas County has the highest estimated percentage aged 65 or older (44.5%).

Figure 4. Percent of rural population age 65 or older in the Southeast region, 2010-2022



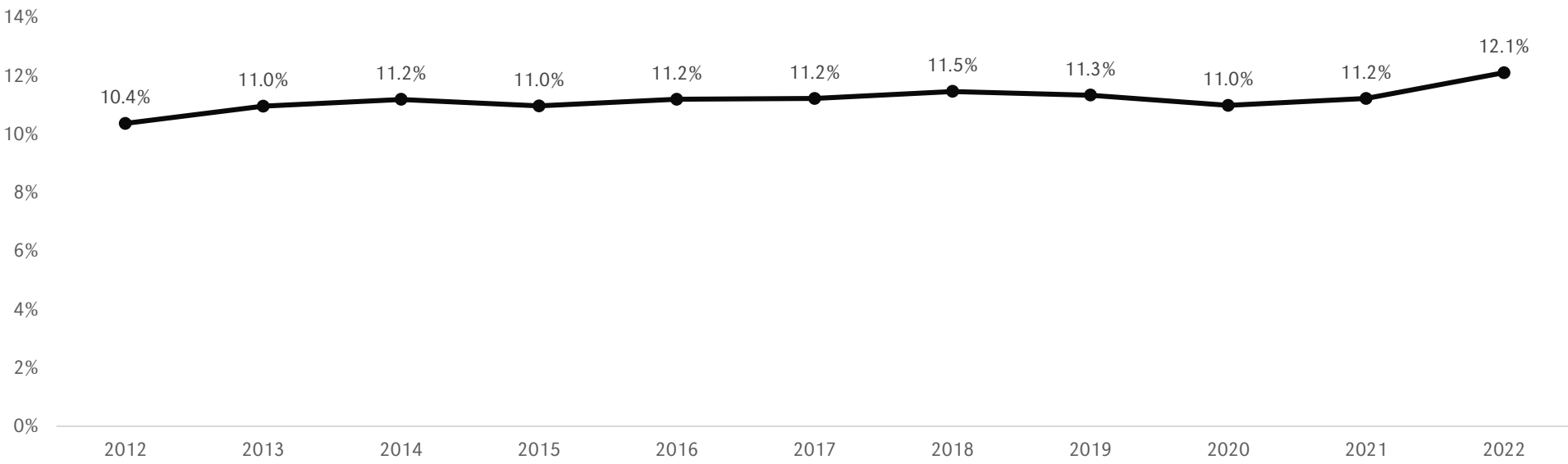
Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2010-2022

The percentage of overall rural population living below the poverty level (5.0%) was notably lower than the Nebraska average (10.4%). Nemaha, Gage, and Pawnee counties, however, showed poverty population over 13%, indicating that transit-dependent individuals may be concentrated in these areas.

The percentage of individuals with difficulties in the rural Southeast region also increased from 2012-2022, rising from 10.4% to 12.1%. The overall estimate of disability population was slightly higher than the Nebraska average in 2022. Among Southeast counties, Jefferson and Johnson showed the highest percentage of population with difficulties at 20.0% and 18.5%, respectively.

The percentage of housing units with no private vehicles in the rural Southeast region showed a sharply lower estimate compared to the Nebraska average.

Figure 5. Percent of rural population with difficulties in the Southeast region, 2012-2022



Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2012-2022

Based on these estimates, **the rural population of the Southeast region is generally older than the population of Nebraska as a whole but otherwise less dependent on transit.** The relative percentage of transit dependent rural population is growing in the Southeast, however, meaning the need for public transit will likely increase.

SOUTHEAST TRANSIT PROVIDERS

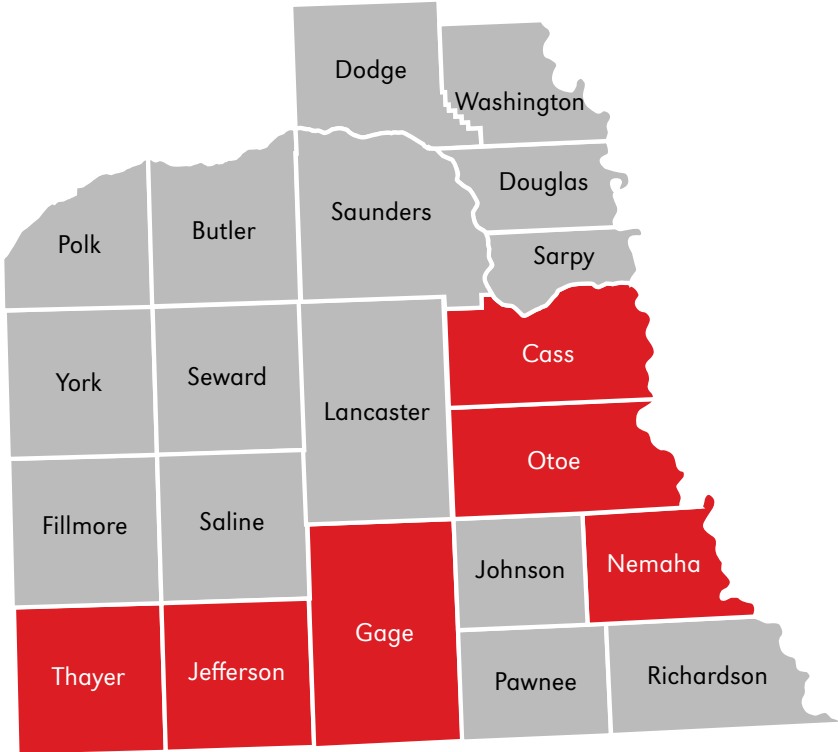
To respond to the growing transit needs of the region, the Southeast region is currently served by 11 rural transit providers. This section provides an overview of the service provided by each of those providers.



BLUE RIVERS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Blue Rivers Transportation System offers demand response service to residents within Cass, Gage, Jefferson, Nemaha, Otoe, and Thayer counties. They also operate two inter-city routes providing trips to Lincoln and Omaha.

Figure 6. Map of Southeast region with Blue Rivers Transportation System service area counties shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Rides are provided Monday through Friday on the following schedule:

- Gage County — Beatrice from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 12:30-4:30 P.M.
- Gage County — Wymore from 9 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-4 P.M.
- Jefferson County — Fairbury from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-5 P.M.
- Nemaha County — Auburn from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-5 P.M.
- Otoe/Cass County — Nebraska City from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-5 P.M.
- Otoe County — Syracuse from 8 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. and 1-4:30 P.M.
- Thayer County — Hebron from 8:45 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1-3:45 P.M.

Source: (13) Blue Rivers Transportation System website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated eight vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 20,000 rides. The number of boardings has increased slightly FY 2022, rising by 5.1%. Total miles traveled increased as well, indicating an increase in overall demand.

Conversely, Blue Rivers Transportation System has cut the size of their fleet by more than half since FY 2022. This may be in part due to non-replacement of aging vehicles.

Average miles per boarding increased over the three-year period as well. The average trip length is still less than nine miles per boarding, suggesting most rides are in-town trips within one of the municipalities served by Blue Rivers Transportation System, with fewer long trips between cities.

Table 2. Ridership statistics for Blue Rivers Transportation System, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	21	11	8	-61.9%
Boardings	19,130	19,018	20,103	5.1%
Mileage	133,256	158,040	170,541	28.0%
Boardings Per Vehicle	911.0	1,728.9	2,512.9	175.9%
Miles Per Vehicle	6,345.5	14,367.3	21,317.6	235.9%
Miles Per Boarding	7.0	8.3	8.5	21.8%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Blue Rivers Transportation System did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



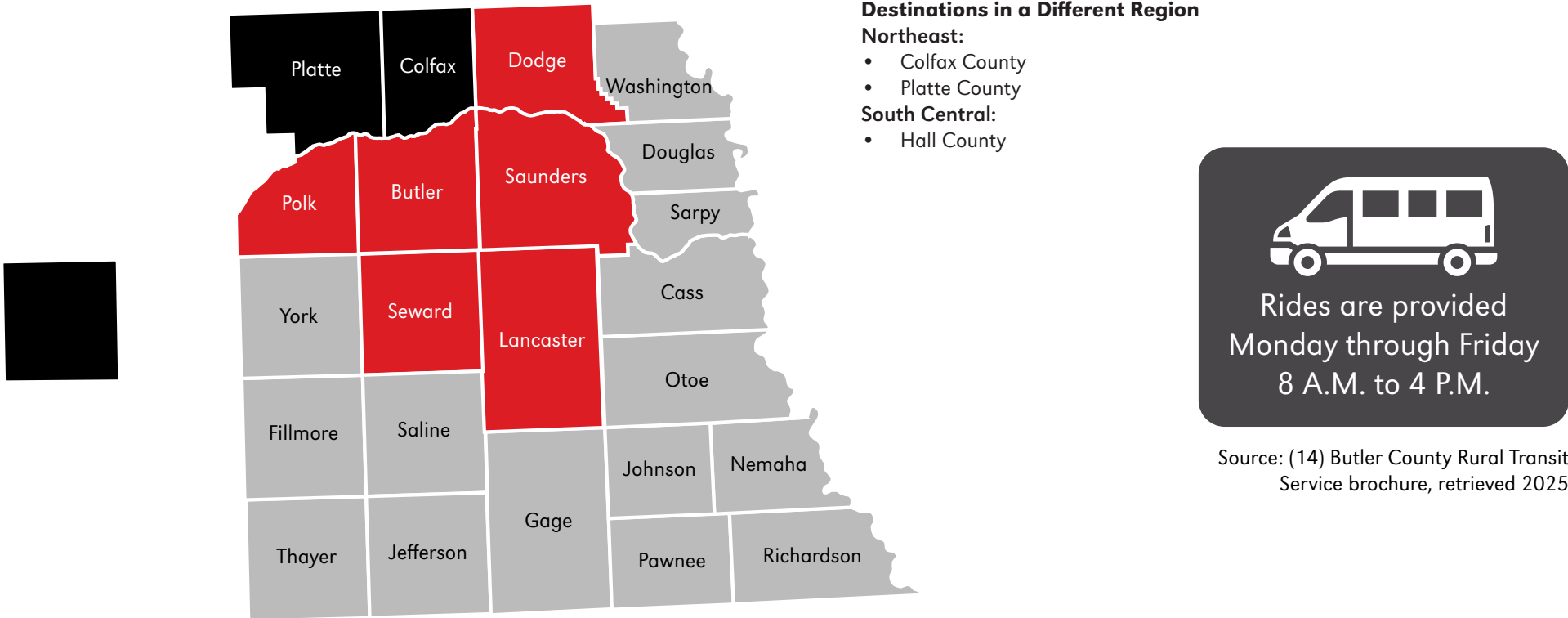
Blue Rivers Transportation System reported an increase in service from FY 2022 to FY 2024, with boardings, mileage, and average trip length all increasing over the three-year period. The average trip length suggests that most trips are between nearby communities rather than longer inter-city trips.



BUTLER COUNTY RURAL TRANSIT SERVICE

Butler County Rural Transit Service provides demand response and non-emergency medical transit to residents of Butler, Colfax, Dodge, Hall, Lancaster, Platte, Polk, Saunders, and Seward counties.

Figure 7. Map of Southeast region with Butler County Rural Transit Service service area county shaded in red and Northeast and South Central region service area counties shaded in black



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

Source: (14) Butler County Rural Transit Service brochure, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated four vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 4,000 rides. The number of boardings has varied since FY 2022 but is up 5.1% in FY 2024 compared to FY 2022. Total miles traveled nearly doubled during the same period.

Average miles per boarding increased sharply over the three-year period. This suggests that the average trip length has increased greatly from FY 2022, perhaps indicating that riders are more likely to request intercity transit than to request local, in-town rides.

Table 3. Ridership statistics for Butler County Rural Transit Service, FY 2022 to FY 2024

Vehicles	4	4	4	0.0%
Boardings	3,854	4,167	4,049	5.1%
Mileage	38,619	57,044	69,821	80.8%
Boardings Per Vehicle	963.5	1,041.8	1,012.3	5.1%
Miles Per Vehicle	9,654.8	14,261.0	17,455.3	80.8%
Miles Per Boarding	10.0	13.7	17.2	72.1%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Butler County Transit Service did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



Butler County Rural Transit Service reported a small increase in boardings from FY 2022 to FY 2024 coupled with a steep increase in annual mileage. **The average trip length has increased sharply over the two year period, suggesting longer, intercity trips are becoming more frequent.**

CITY OF TECUMSEH/JOHNSON COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit provides demand-response service to residents of Johnson County. Monthly trips are taken to Beatrice and Lincoln on scheduled days.

Figure 8. Map of Southeast region with the City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Rides are provided
Monday through Friday
from 7:30 A.M. to 12 P.M.
and 12:30-2:30 P.M.

Source: (15) City of Tecumseh/Johnson
County Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operates one vehicle in FY 2024 and provided 3,735 rides. The number of boardings has decreased by more than 10% compared to FY 2022. Total miles traveled also decreased over the same period, down from 7,207 total annual miles in FY 2022 to 6,103 in FY 2024. Fleet size remained constant; the agency operates a single, lift-equipped van.

Average miles per boarding decreased slightly but remains between one and two miles for the average trip. The short distance suggests most of the rides provided are within the City of Tecumseh rather than across the rest of the county.

Table 4. Ridership statistics for the City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	1	1	1	0.0%
Boardings	4,219	2,791	3,735	-11.5%
Mileage	7,207	5,848	6,103	-15.3%
Boardings Per Vehicle	4,219.0	2,791.0	3,735.0	-11.5%
Miles Per Vehicle	7,207.0	5,848.0	6,103.0	-15.3%
Miles Per Boarding	1.7	2.1	1.6	-4.3%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit provided a sample of bus driver logs from July 2024 listing 44 unique rides. In most cases, only a city or town name was included rather than a specific address. Figure 9 shows a heatmap of drop-offs, along with the five most common destinations.

The top destinations are primarily within the City of Tecumseh, Nebraska. The top destination was the SENCA Head Start facility in Nebraska City, followed by the Tecumseh Central Market along with other health services and discount stores in Tecumseh.

Figure 9. Drop-off locations for the City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit, July 2024



Source: (10) City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit reported ride data, July 2024

Due to the small number of rides provided in the sample, we could not determine a reasonable coverage area for City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit based on the ride sample and instead report their coverage area based on the advertised area of Johnson County.

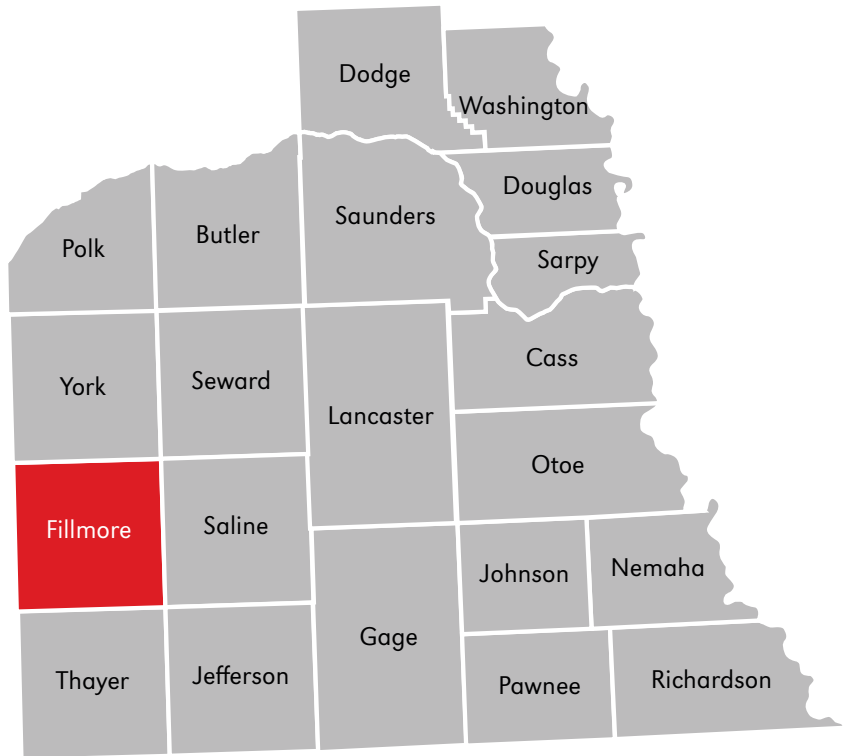
Top Five Drop-off Locations	City/Town	Number of Drop-offs
SENCA Head Start/CASA/Ooutreach	Nebraska City	7
Tecumseh Central MarketARKET	Tecumseh	5
Family Health Services, Inc.	Tecumseh	4
Family Dollar	Tecumseh	2
Chief Drug	Tecumseh	2

City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit has shown an overall decrease in service since FY 2022. Trip lengths remain very short — less than 2 miles per trip on average — suggesting that **most service is in the City of Tecumseh itself rather than the rest of Johnson County.**

FILLMORE COUNTY RURAL TRANSIT SERVICE

Fillmore County Rural Transit Service provides demand response transit services to residents of Fillmore County. They provide rides to Lincoln, Hastings, Grand Island, and York on select days.

Figure 10. Map of Southeast region with Fillmore County Rural Transit Service service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Source: (16) Fillmore County Rural Transit Service website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated three vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 6,000 rides. The number of boardings has remained relatively steady since FY 2022. Total miles traveled increased by nearly one third during the two-year period.

Average miles per boarding also increased over the three-year period. The relatively low trip length — less than six miles per boarding — suggests most rides are in-town trips or between neighboring communities with fewer long trips between cities.

Table 5. Ridership statistics for the Fillmore County Rural Transit Service, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	3	3	3	0.0%
Boardings	6,037	5,484	5,918	-2.0%
Mileage	24,082	30,515	31,374	30.3%
Boardings Per Vehicle	2,012.3	1,828.0	1,972.7	-2.0%
Miles Per Vehicle	8,027.3	10,171.7	10,458.0	30.3%
Miles Per Boarding	4.0	5.6	5.3	32.9%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Fillmore County Rural Transit Service did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.

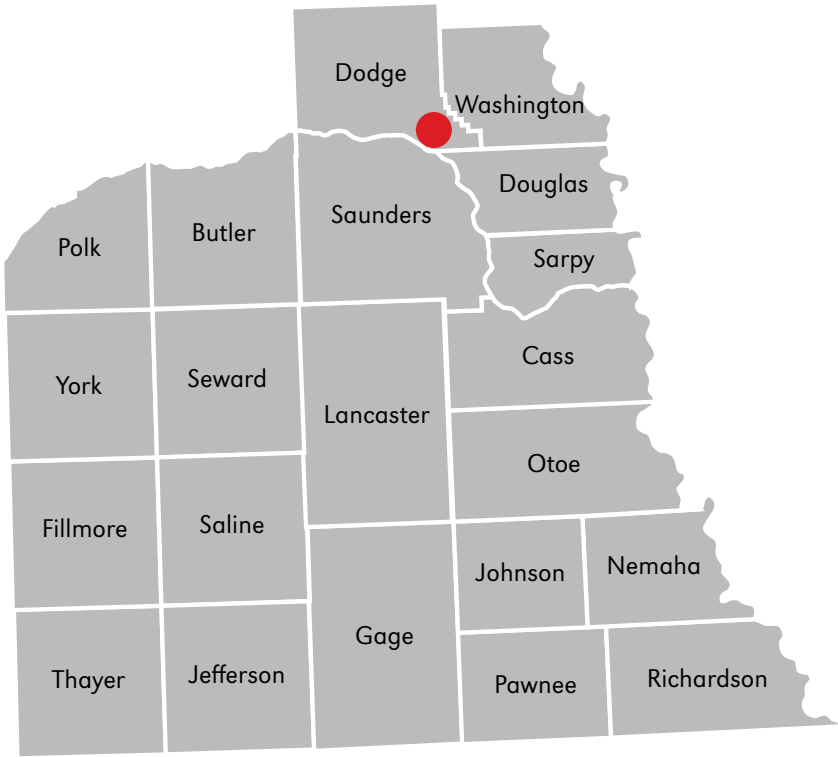


Fillmore County Rural Transit Service reported a consistent number of boardings from FY 2022 to FY 2024 despite an increase in total annual mileage. **The average trip length suggests that most trips are short, in-town or within county trips rather than longer intercity rides.**

FREMONT TRANSIT PROGRAM

The Fremont Transit Program provides demand-response transit service to residents of the City of Fremont and within two miles of the city limits.

Figure 11. Map of Southeast region with Fremont Transit Program service area shown as red dot



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Source: (17) Fremont Transit Program website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated three vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 5,500 rides. Fremont Transit Program began service in FY 2024 and did not report statistics for FY 2022 or FY 2023.

Average miles per boarding is relatively low, suggesting that trips are taken within the City of Fremont. This corresponds with the both the reported and observed service based on the ride sample.

Table 6. Ridership statistics for Fremont Transit Program, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	N/A	N/A	3	N/A
Boardings	N/A	N/A	5,553	N/A
Mileage	N/A	N/A	20,633	N/A
Boardings Per Vehicle	N/A	N/A	1,851.0	N/A
Miles Per Vehicle	N/A	N/A	6,877.7	N/A
Miles Per Boarding	N/A	N/A	3.7	N/A

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Fremont Transit Program provided a sample of 1,429 rides from July 2024 to September 2024. Figure 12 shows a heatmap of drop-offs, along with the five most common destinations.

All reported destinations are within the City of Fremont. The top destination is Christensen Field, an outdoor event center in Fremont, followed closely by DaVita Dialysis’ Fremont location. The remaining top destinations include a public housing facility, a credit bureau, and Dollar General.

Figure 12. Drop-off locations for Fremont Transit Program, July 2024 to September 2024

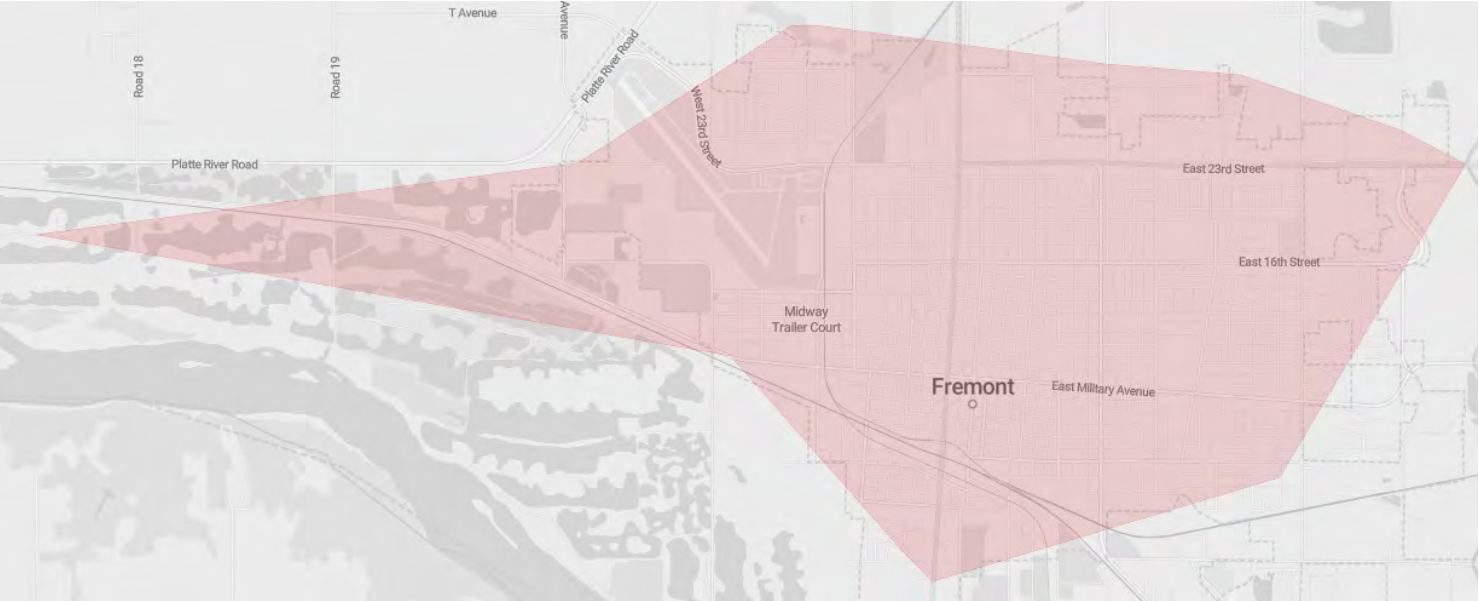


Source: (11) Fremont Transit Program reported ride data, July 2024 to September 2024

Top Five Drop-off Locations	City/Town	Number of Drop-offs
Christensen Field	Fremont	155
DaVita Dialysis	Fremont	148
Stanton Tower Public Housing	Fremont	60
Credit Bureau Services, Inc.	Fremont	58
Dollar General	Fremont	57

The observed coverage area based on the reported pick-up locations spans approximately 9.4 square miles, closely corresponding to the city limits of Fremont. This is consistent with the agency’s advertised service area.

Figure 13. Observed pick-up area for Fremont Transit Program, July 2024 to September 2024



Source: (11) Fremont Transit Program reported ride data, July 2024 to September 2024

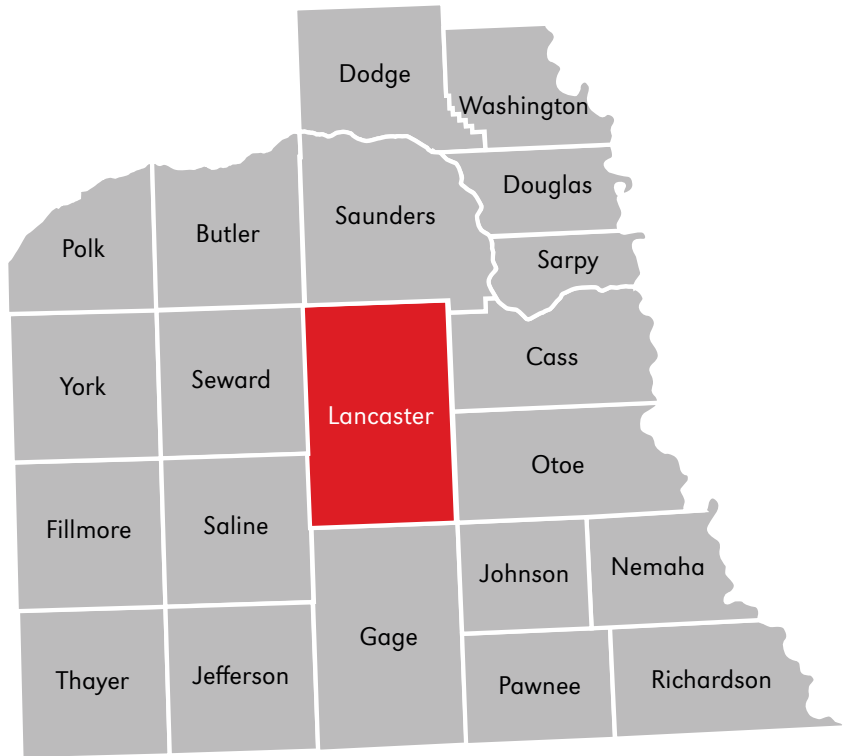


Fremont Transit Program began service in FY 2024 and thus reported no data for FY 2022 or FY 2023. The average trip length and reported ride sample indicate that most rides are within the City of Fremont. **The observed coverage area also closely matches the City of Fremont, showing that the agency is providing service consistent with their advertised area.**

LANCASTER COUNTY PUBLIC RURAL TRANSIT

Lancaster County Public Rural Transit offers demand-response services to residents of Lancaster County.

Figure 14. Map of Southeast region with Lancaster County Public Rural Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

Rides are provided Monday through Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Source: (18) Lancaster County Public Rural Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated three vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 1,400 rides. The number of boardings has decreased since FY 2022, as has the total miles traveled. This may suggest a slight decrease in overall demand.

Average miles per boarding also decreased slightly over the three-year period. The average trip length suggests that most trips are within Lancaster County or to nearby counties rather than between more distant cities.

Table 7. Ridership statistics for Lancaster County Public Rural Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	3	3	3	0.0%
Boardings	1,573	1,315	1,426	-9.3%
Mileage	30,378	29,119	26,424	-13.0%
Boardings Per Vehicle	524.3	438.3	475.3	-9.3%
Miles Per Vehicle	10,126.0	9,706.3	8,808.0	-13.0%
Miles Per Boarding	19.3	22.1	18.5	-4.0%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Lancaster County Public Rural Transit did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



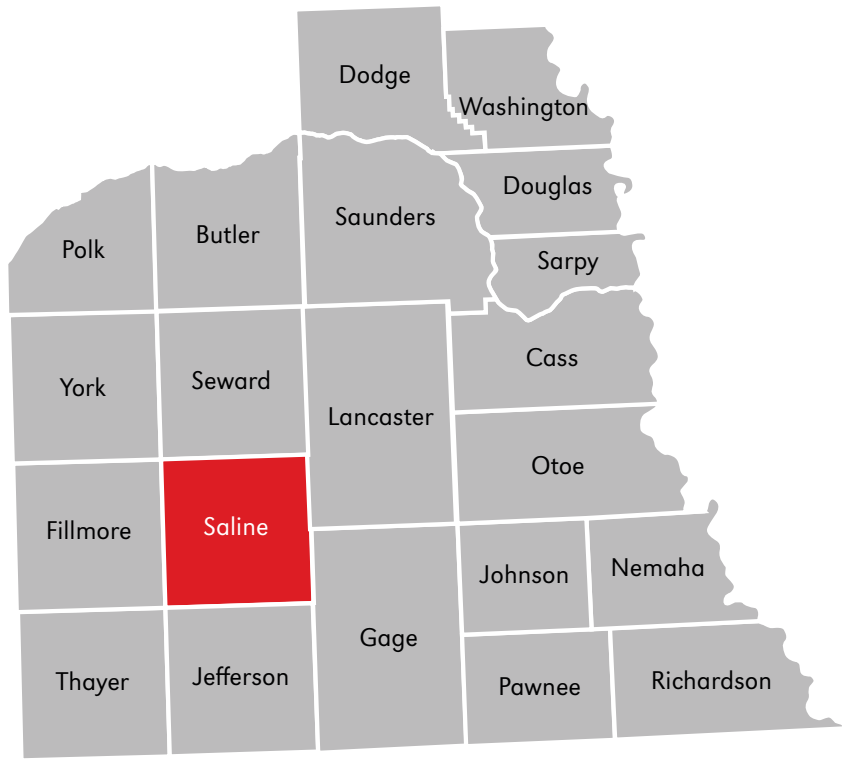
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit reported a decrease of service from FY 2022 to FY 2024, with boardings, mileage, and average trip length all decreasing over the three-year period. **The average trip length suggests that most trips are within the county rather than either short in-town trips or longer intercity trips.**



SALINE COUNTY AREA TRANSIT

Saline County Area Transit provides demand response service to residents of Saline County.

Figure 15. Map of Southeast region with Saline County Area Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Countywide rides are provided
Monday through Friday from
8 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

City of Crete rides are provided
Monday through Friday 5 A.M.
to 12 P.M. and 1-5 P.M.

Source: (19) Saline County Area Transit website,
retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated five vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 18,000 rides. The number of boardings increased by 56.0% between FY 2022 and FY 2024. Annual miles traveled also increased by 32.3% during the same period.

Average miles per boarding decreased between FY 2022 and FY 2024, decreasing by nearly one mile per trip on average (a percentage decrease of 15.2%). This suggests that the increase in boarding is being driven by shorter trips rather than longer ones.

Table 8. Ridership statistics for Saline County Area Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	5	5	5	0.0%
Boardings	11,611	16,577	18,113	56.0%
Mileage	63,556	82,531	84,112	32.3%
Boardings Per Vehicle	2,322.2	3,315.4	3,622.6	56.0%
Miles Per Vehicle	12,711.2	16,506.2	16,822.4	32.3%
Miles Per Boarding	5.5	5.0	4.6	-15.2%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Saline County Area Transit did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



Saline County Area Transit reported an increased level of service from FY 2022 to FY 2024, with boardings and mileage both increasing over the three-year period. **The average trip length suggests that the increase in boarding primarily came from shorter, in-town trips rather than longer rides.**

SAUNDERS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Saunders County Public Transportation provides demand response service to residents of Saunders County.

Figure 16. Map of Southeast region with Saunders County Public Transportation service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

Rides are provided
Monday through Friday
from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Source: (20) Saunders County Public Transportation website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated one vehicle in FY 2024 and provided around 2,500 rides. The number of boardings has increased by 38.1% compared to FY 2022. Total miles traveled also increased, rising from 10,232 total annual miles in FY 2022 to 13,736 in FY 2024. Fleet size remained constant.

Average miles per boarding decreased slightly but remained near five miles per ride. This suggests that most rides are short, likely within and around the City of Wahoo.

Table 9. Ridership statistics for Saunders County Public Transportation, FY 2022 to FY 2024

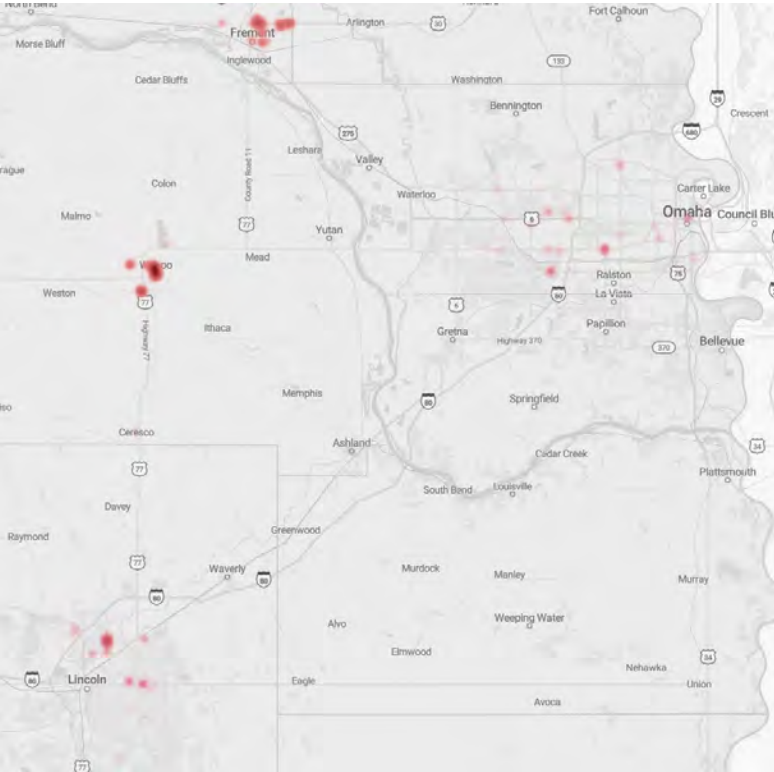
	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	1	1	1	0.0%
Boardings	1,864	2,416	2,575	38.1%
Mileage	10,232	11,052	13,736	34.2%
Boardings Per Vehicle	1,864.0	2,416.0	2,575.0	38.1%
Miles Per Vehicle	10,232.0	11,052.0	13,736.0	34.2%
Miles Per Boarding	5.5	4.6	5.3	-2.8%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Saunders County Public Transportation provided a sample of 457 rides from May 2024 to August 2024. Figure 17 shows a heatmap of drop-offs, along with the six most common destinations.

The top destinations are split between the City of Wahoo and the City of Fremont, with a few trips to Omaha and Lincoln. The Saunders Medical Center south of Wahoo was the most frequent destination, followed by the Family Fare grocery store and the Dairy Queen. The drop-offs in Fremont are all shopping destinations, including the Goodwill, Walmart Supercenter, and the Fremont Mall.

Figure 17. Drop-off locations for Saunders County Public Transportation, May 2024 to August 2024

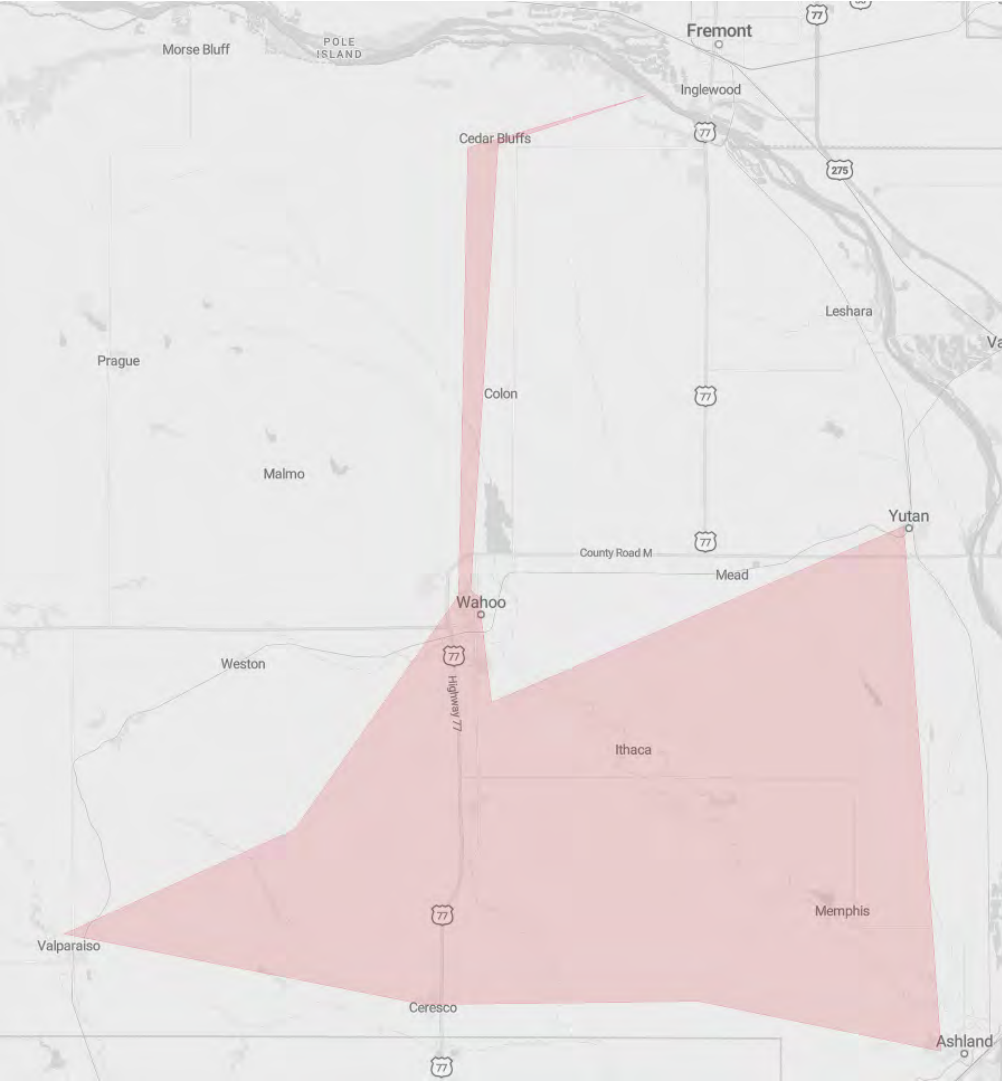


Source: (12) Saunders County Public Transportation reported ride data, May 2024 to August 2024


Top Six Drop-off Locations	City/Town	Number of Drop-offs
Saunders Medical Center	Wahoo	30
Family Fare	Wahoo	25
Dairy Queen	Wahoo	18
Goodwill	Fremont	17
Walmart Supercenter	Fremont	16
Fremont Mall	Fremont	16

The observed coverage area based on the reported pick-up locations spans approximately 190 square miles, primarily extending south from Wahoo toward Ashland and Valparaiso. Fewer pickups were reported in northern Saunders County.

Figure 18. Observed pick-up area for Saunders County Public Transportation, May 2024 to August 2024



Source: (12) Saunders County Public Transportation reported ride data, May 2024 to August 2024

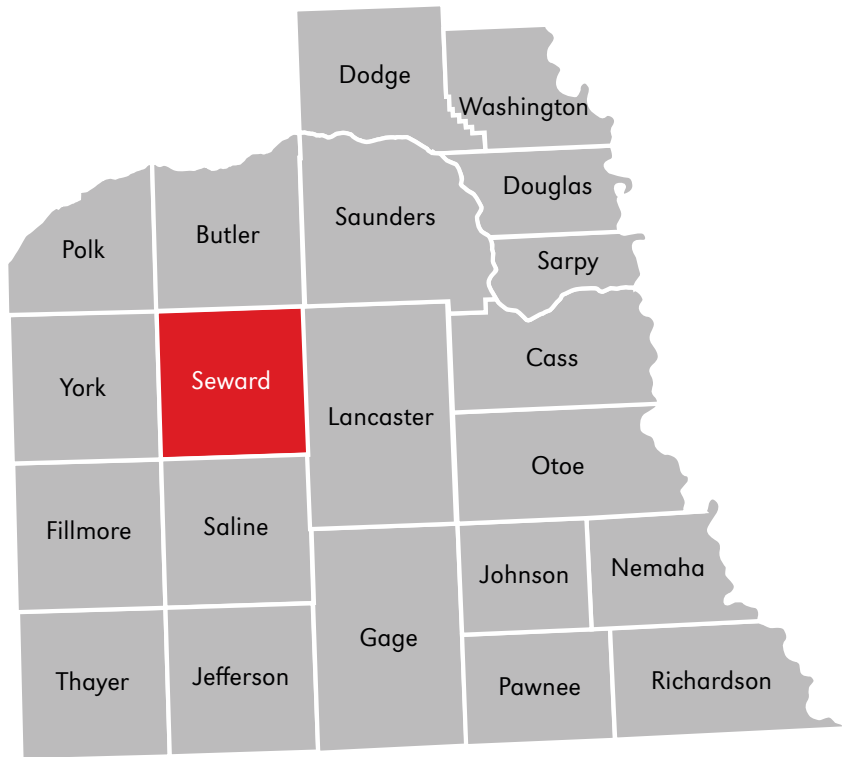
-----  -----

Saunders County Public Transportation has shown an increase in both annual boardings and annual mileage since FY 2022. This suggests demand may be increasing. **The average trip length has remained relatively flat, with mostly relatively short rides.** We observe that pick-ups are primarily reported in southern Saunders County, with few to none reported north of the City of Wahoo.

SEWARD COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT

Seward County Public Transit provides demand response service to residents of Seward County.

Figure 19. Map of Southeast region with Seward County Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Source: (21) Seward County Public Transit website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated four vehicles in FY 2024 and provided 11,730 rides. The number of boardings is nearly the same compared to FY 2022. Total miles traveled increased over the same period, rising from 58,242 total annual miles in FY 2022 to 67,338 in FY 2024. Fleet size decreased slightly, with the removal of one vehicle in FY 2023.

Average miles per boarding increased from 4.9 miles per boarding in FY 2022 to 5.7 miles in FY 2024. This suggests a shift in ridership from shorter, local trips to longer trips between neighboring cities in the region.

Table 10. Ridership statistics for Seward County Public Transit, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	5	4	4	-20.0%
Boardings	11,915	12,481	11,730	-1.6%
Mileage	58,242	54,853	67,338	15.6%
Boardings Per Vehicle	2,383.0	3,120.3	2,932.5	23.1%
Miles Per Vehicle	11,648.4	13,713.3	16,834.5	44.5%
Miles Per Boarding	4.9	4.4	5.7	17.4%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Seward County Public Transit did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



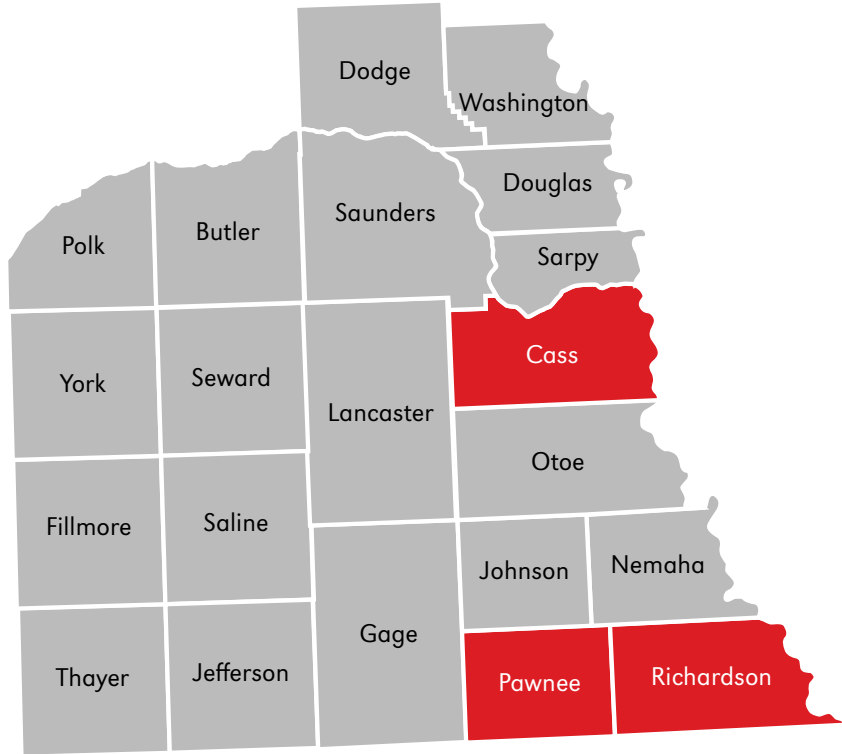
Seward County Public Transit has shown an increase in annual mileage since FY 2022 despite consistent boardings over the same period. This suggests that the **average trip length has increased during the same period, emphasizing longer trips.**



SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA COMMUNITY ACTION

Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA) provides demand response transit service in three counties in the Southeast region — Cass, Pawnee, and Richardson.

Figure 20. Map of Southeast region with Seward County Public Transit service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024



Rides are provided Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. in Richardson County and from 9 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. in Pawnee County. Hours were not provided for Cass County.

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated five vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 7,800 rides. The number of boardings increased 16.8% since FY 2022, but the annual total mileage more than doubled. Mileage increased from 21,532 in FY 2022 to 56,392 in FY 2024. The number of vehicles also increased from three to five, possibly as SENCA expanded service into additional counties.

Average miles per boarding more than doubled over the three-year period as well. The average trip length rose from 3.2 miles per trip — more consistent with short, in-town trips — to more than seven miles per trip, indicating that the additional trips are typically longer rides.

Table 11. Ridership statistics for Southeast Nebraska Community Action, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	3	4	5	66.7%
Boardings	6,730	7,764	7,858	16.8%
Mileage	21,532	32,544	56,392	161.9%
Boardings Per Vehicle	2,243.3	1,941.0	1,571.6	-29.9%
Miles Per Vehicle	7,177.3	8,136.0	11,278.4	57.1%
Miles Per Boarding	3.2	4.2	7.2	124.3%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

SENCA did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.



SENCA reported a small increase in annual boardings from FY 2022 to FY 2024, but a much larger increase in total annual mileage. **The growth in average trip length suggests that trips have tended to be longer recently compared to FY 2022.**

YORK COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

York County Public Transportation provides demand response and non-emergency medical transport services to residents of York County. They serve an area within a 120-mile radius of the City of York, subject to availability.

Figure 21. Map of Southeast region with York County Public Transportation service area county shaded in red



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

Rides are provided Monday through Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. and limited Saturdays.

Source: (?) York County Public Transportation website, retrieved 2025

According to the Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, the agency operated five vehicles in FY 2024 and provided around 13,500 rides. The number of boardings has increased since FY 2022. Total miles traveled decreased during the same period.

Average miles per boarding also decreased over the three-year period. This may indicate that the increase in rides came as short, in-town trips within the City of York rather than longer rides from outlying areas of York County.

Table 12. Ridership statistics for York County Public Transportation, FY 2022 to FY 2024

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Percent Change FY 2022 to FY 2024
Vehicles	5	5	5	0.0%
Boardings	10,351	11,367	13,439	29.8%
Mileage	67,127	50,535	49,700	-26.0%
Boardings Per Vehicle	2,070.2	2,273.4	2,687.8	29.8%
Miles Per Vehicle	13,425.4	10,107.0	9,940.0	-26.0%
Miles Per Boarding	6.5	4.4	3.7	-43.0%

Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

York County Public Transportation did not provide a sample of rides for this analysis.

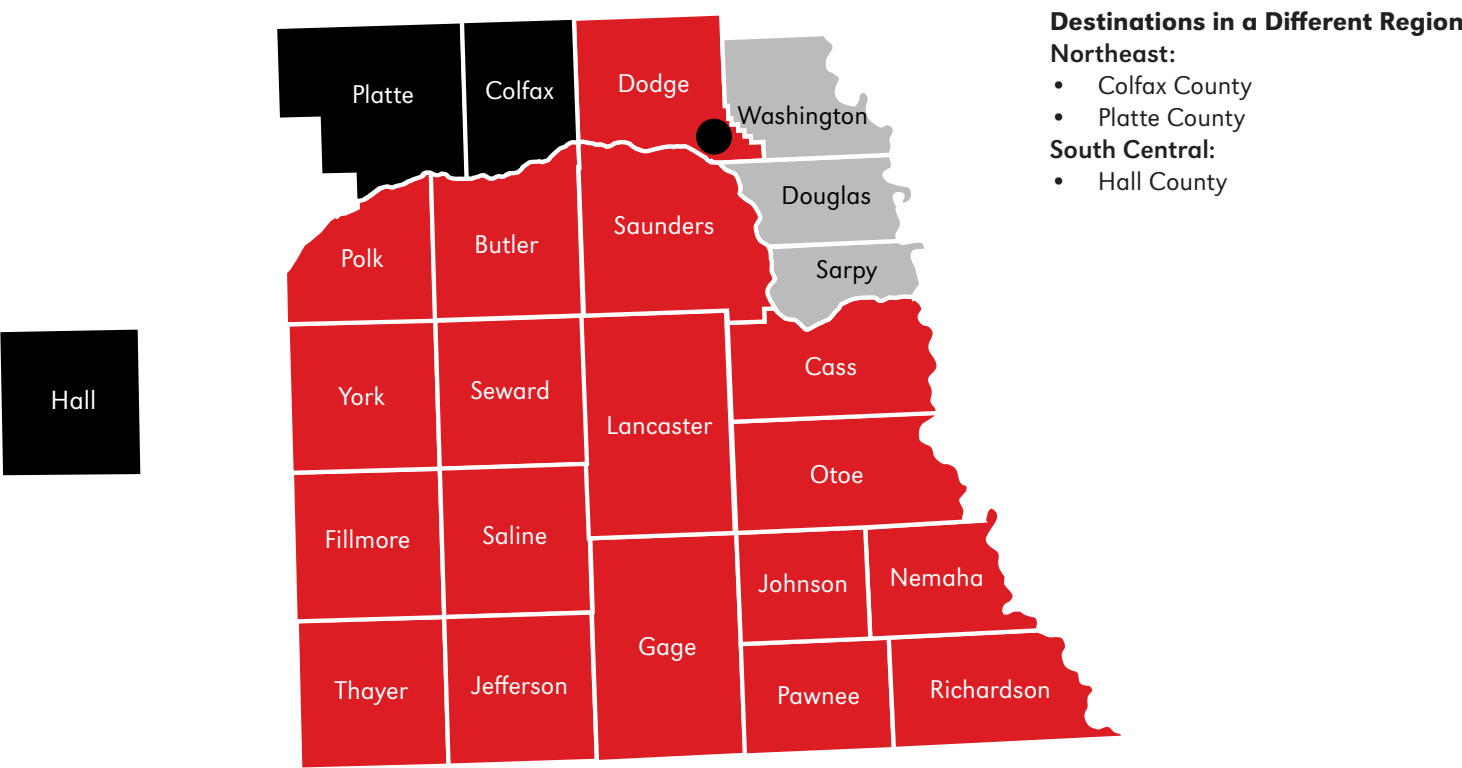
York County Public Transportation reported an increased in boardings from FY 2022 to FY 2024 along with a decrease in total annual mileage. This reduced the average trip length, suggesting that **the additional rides are likely shorter and may be concentrated within the City of York rather than outlying areas of York County.**

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

This section summarizes the overall services these providers offer, including miles traveled, passenger boardings, and vehicle usage. Additionally, it analyzes service changes across all 11 providers and offers insights into regional trends.

The 11 transit providers in the region serve 18 of the 21 counties, along with a few Nebraska locations outside the region. The one city-specific provider operates in the city marked with a black dot. The reported coverage areas are shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Service area of Southeast region transit providers



Source: (1) Nebraska Public Transit website, retrieved 2024

Each fiscal year, Nebraska’s rural transit providers report the total number of passenger miles traveled. This metric is critical for evaluating rural transit services, as the area served by each provider may be very large. Table 13 summarizes the mileage and estimated coverage area for each provider in FY 2024, based on sample ride data.

Table 13. Summary of total miles traveled and observed coverage area

Provider	Service Category	Total Miles (FY 2024)	Percent Total Miles	Observed Coverage Area (Square Mile)
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	Regional	170,541	28.6%	3,605.1
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	69,821	11.7%	5,409.8
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	County-wide	6,103	1.0%	377.3
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	31,374	5.3%	576.5
Fremont Transit Program	City-specific	20,633	3.5%	9.4
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	County-wide	26,424	4.4%	846.4
Saline County Area Transit*	County-wide	84,112	14.1%	576.3
Saunders County Public Transportation	County-wide	13,736	2.3%	190.7
Seward County Public Transit*	County-wide	67,338	11.3%	575.9
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	Regional	56,392	9.5%	1,553.4
York County Public Transportation*	County-wide	49,700	8.3%	575.8
Totals		596,174		

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-12) provider reported ride data

In FY 2024, Blue Rivers Transportation System recorded the highest annual mileage among the providers in the region, accounting for 28.6% of all reported miles in the region. The remaining providers each cover a smaller portion of the region, typically one to three counties. Very few of the advertised service areas overlap, with each provider in the region focusing on a unique area.

City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transportation reported the fewest total miles traveled in FY 2024, focusing mainly on the City of Tecumseh itself. This suggests that demand for rural transit may be overall low in the rest of Johnson County currently.

- In summary, the data reveals two key findings regarding annual mileage and coverage area:
- Service is relatively evenly distributed among the providers in the region.
 - City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transportation appears to focus mostly on in-town service in the City of Tecumseh.

Nebraska’s transit providers also report annual boarding figures. Table 14 summarizes the number of boardings reported in FY 2024, the percentage of the region’s total boardings, the miles traveled per boarding (calculated using the total miles reported earlier), and the boardings per square mile of observed coverage area.

Table 14. Summary of passenger boardings and trip length

Provider	Service Category	Number of Boardings (FY 2024)	Percent Total Boardings	Miles Per Boarding	Boardings Per Covered Square Mile
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	Regional	20,103	21.3%	8.5	5.6
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	4,049	4.3%	17.2	0.7
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	County-wide	3,735	4.0%	1.6	9.9
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	5,918	6.3%	5.3	10.3
Fremont Transit Program	City-specific	5,553	5.9%	3.7	587.8
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	County-wide	1,426	1.5%	18.5	1.7
Saline County Area Transit*	County-wide	18,113	19.2%	4.6	31.4
Saunders County Public Transportation	County-wide	2,575	2.7%	5.3	13.5
Seward County Public Transit*	County-wide	11,730	12.4%	5.7	20.4
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	Regional	7,858	8.3%	7.2	5.1
York County Public Transportation*	County-wide	13,439	14.2%	3.7	23.3
Totals		94,499		6.31	

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-12) provider reported ride data

Blue Rivers Transportation System accounted for 21.3% of the reported boardings in the region in FY 2024, followed closely by Saline County Area Transit with 19.2% of boardings. The remaining 59.5% of the boardings are relatively evenly spread among the remaining providers, with Seward County Public Transit and York County Public Transportation accounting for the next highest number of boardings.

Butler County Transit Service reported fewer than one boarding per square mile of coverage area, suggesting there is low demand in much of their expansive service area. In contrast, Fremont Transit Program reported a much smaller coverage area and a higher number of rides.

Across all providers, the average trip length is relatively short at 6.3 miles per boarding overall. This suggests that the average ride connects nearby communities or brings residents into town from outlying areas of the county.

- These data reveal two findings:
- Larger coverage areas do not imply more demand in the Southeast region.
 - Relatively short average trip length across the region suggests most trips are between neighboring communities or bringing residents to nearby communities.

In addition to tracking miles traveled and boardings, NDOT monitors the vehicles each transit provider uses in their services. Table 15 lists the number of vehicles in service for each provider in FY 2024.

Table 15. Summary of provider vehicles and vehicle usage

Provider	Service Category	Number of Vehicles (FY 2024)	Percent Total Vehicles	Boardings Per Vehicle	Miles Per Vehicle	Covered Square Mile Per Vehicle
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	Regional	8	20.0%	2,512.9	21,317.6	450.6
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	4	10.0%	1,012.3	17,455.3	1,352.4
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	County-wide	1	2.5%	3,735.0	6,103.0	377.3
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	County-wide	3	7.5%	1,972.7	10,458.0	192.2
Fremont Transit Program	City-specific	3	7.5%	1,851.0	6,877.7	3.1
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	County-wide	1	2.5%	1,426.0	26,424.0	846.4
Saline County Area Transit*	County-wide	5	12.5%	3,622.6	16,822.4	115.3
Saunders County Public Transportation	County-wide	1	2.5%	2,575.0	13,736.0	190.7
Seward County Public Transit*	County-wide	4	10.0%	2,932.5	16,834.5	144.0
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	Regional	5	12.5%	1,571.6	11,278.4	310.7
York County Public Transportation*	County-wide	5	12.5%	2,687.8	9,940.0	115.2
Totals		40		2,362.5	14,904.4	

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-12) provider reported ride data

In FY 2024, the 11 providers operated a combined total of 40 vehicles, 8 of which were operated by Blue Rivers Transportation System. Vehicle utilization varies but typically remains in the range of 1,000-3,700 boardings per vehicle.

Lancaster County Public Transit reported the highest mileage per vehicle, nearly twice the average across all vehicles in the region. A second vehicle might reduce the load on their current vehicle.

- In summary:
- Providers in the region reported similar levels of vehicle usage.
 - Most providers in the region operate a small number of vehicles.

Table 16 summarizes ridership changes across the region from FY 2022 to FY 2024. Boardings and mileage were both up across the region overall, suggesting an increase in overall demand for rural transit. Average trip length also increased overall, although many individual providers reported a decrease in miles per boarding. This may suggest that some providers — particularly Southeast Nebraska Community Action and Fillmore County Rural Transit Service — are absorbing increased demand for regional transportation while other providers — York County Public Transportation and Lancaster County Public Rural Transit — are concentrating service around larger communities within their service area.

Table 16. Summary of changes in service from FY 2022 to FY 2024

Provider	Vehicles	Boardings	Miles Traveled	Boardings Per Vehicle	Miles Per Vehicle	Miles Per Boarding
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	-61.9%	5.1%	28.0%	175.9%	235.9%	21.8%
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	0.0%	5.1%	80.8%	5.1%	80.8%	72.1%
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	0.0%	-11.5%	-15.3%	-11.5%	-15.3%	-4.3%
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	0.0%	-2.0%	30.3%	-2.0%	30.3%	32.9%
Fremont Transit Program+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	0.0%	-9.3%	-13.0%	-9.3%	-13.0%	-4.0%
Saline County Area Transit*	0.0%	56.0%	32.3%	56.0%	32.3%	-15.2%
Saunders County Public Transportation	0.0%	38.1%	34.2%	38.1%	34.2%	-2.8%
Seward County Public Transit*	-20.0%	-1.6%	15.6%	23.1%	44.5%	17.4%
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	66.7%	16.8%	161.9%	-29.9%	57.1%	124.3%
York County Public Transportation*	0.0%	29.8%	-26.0%	29.8%	-26.0%	-43.0%
Overall	-17.6	22.3	31.2	27.9	44.60	20.7%

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.
+Note: Fremont Transit Program started service in FY 2024.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal

Vehicle utilization increased across the region overall, with boardings per vehicle and miles per vehicle both increasing. This appears to be largely driven by an overall decrease in fleet size. Fewer vehicles operating in the region means increased usage for each remaining vehicle.

- In summary:
- Demand for rural transit appears to be increasing across the region.
 - Reductions in fleet size are increasing vehicle utilization across the region overall.

TRIP DESTINATIONS



To better understand the state of rural transit across the region, we examined the most frequent drop-off destinations for all the regional providers who shared a sample of their rides. We first geocoded each reported drop-off using the U.S. Census Geocoder to determine a latitude and longitude for each destination and counted the number of drop-offs that occurred at or very near that location. We then determined the “point of interest” nearest each location to report a name for each destination, excluding locations that we determined to be single-family homes.

Three of the 11 providers in the Southeast region provided us with sample ride data, for a total of 1,901 individual rides taken between May 2024 and September 2024. Together, the three providers listed a total of 283 unique destinations. The number of rides and unique destinations reported by each provider are summarized in Table 17, including the number of boardings reported for FY 2024.

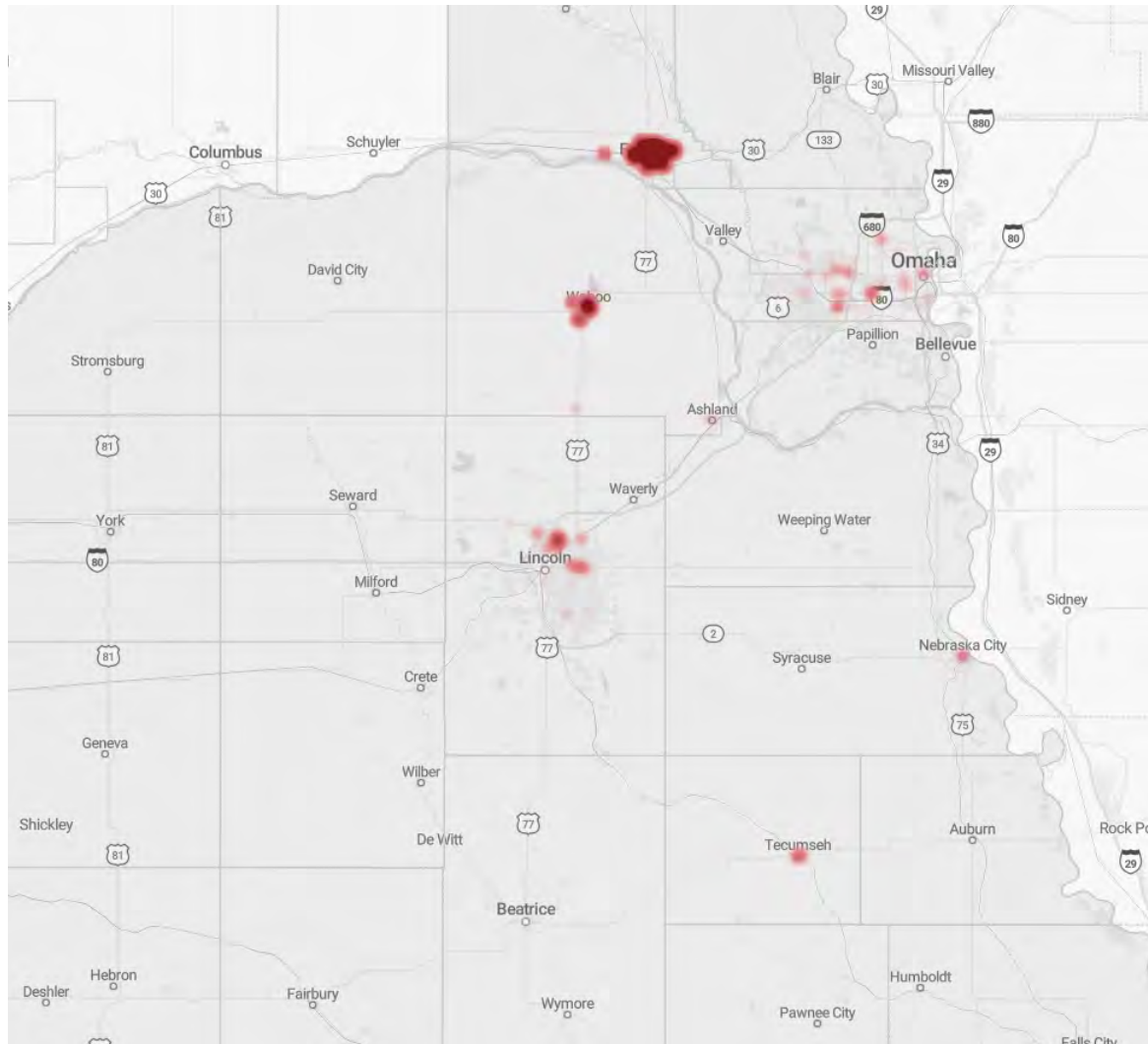
Table 17. Number of rides, unique destinations, and boardings reported by each provider, January 2024 to July 2024

Provider	Number of Rides in Sample	Percent Total Rides	Number of Unique Destinations	Percent Total Unique Destinations	Number of Boardings (FY 2024)	Percent Total Boardings
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20,103	21.3%
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,049	4.3%
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	22	1.2%	7	2.5%	3,735	4.0%
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,918	6.3%
Fremont Transit Program	1,429	75.2%	154	54.4%	5,553	5.9%
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,426	1.5%
Saline County Area Transit*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18,113	19.2%
Saunders County Public Transportation	450	23.7%	122	43.1%	2,575	2.7%
Seward County Public Transit*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,730	12.4%
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,858	8.3%
York County Public Transportation*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13,439	14.2%
Totals	1,901		283		94,499	

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.
Source: (9) Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal, (10-12) provider reported ride data

Most drop-offs are concentrated around the cities of Fremont and Wahoo, the cities hosting two of the three providers reporting a ride sample. The top 10 most frequent drop-off destinations are listed in Table 18. All of the top 10 destinations are within the City of Fremont, dominated by health care providers and shopping destinations.

Figure 23. Drop-off locations within and around the Southeast region (shaded light gray) for reported rides by Southeast transit providers



Source: (10-12) provider reported ride data, various dates

Table 18. Top 10 drop-off locations for 3 out of 11 Southeast region transit providers, May 2024 to September 2024

Drop-off Location	City/Town	Number of Combined Drop-offs
Christensen Field	Fremont	155
DaVita Dialysis	Fremont	148
Walmart Supercenter	Fremont	68
Stanton Tower (Public Housing)	Fremont	60
Credit Bureau Services, Inc.	Fremont	58
Dollar General	Fremont	57
Fremont Omega Apartments	Fremont	56
Methodist Physicians Clinic	Fremont	39
Fremont MallFREMONT MALL	Fremont	38
Methodist Fremont Health	Fremont	37

Source: (10-12) provider reported ride data, various dates

In summary, we make two main observations from our analysis of the drop-off data:

- Reported drop-offs in the Southeast region are concentrated in Fremont and Wahoo.
- Many of the providers in the area advertise scheduled rides to Lincoln and Omaha, suggesting those communities are also frequent destinations.

SHARED DESTINATIONS

To explore the intersections among the agencies, we identified destinations served by multiple transit providers. Among the 142 unique destinations, one was shared by three of the providers and another five were held in common by two distinct providers. As the data from Midland and Nance Trans only included city-level destinations, we consider only cities and towns for this analysis rather than exact locations.

The top five shared destinations are listed in Table 19. Fremont Transit Program and Saunders County Public Transportation both reported trips to or within the City of Fremont, particular the listed shopping centers and grocery stores.

Table 19. Top five shared drop-off locations for 3 out of 11 Southeast region transit providers by number of drop-offs, May 2024 to September 2024

Drop-off Location	City/Town	Number of Combined Drop-offs	Number of Providers
Walmart Supercenter	Fremont	68	2
Methodist Physicians Clinic	Fremont	39	2
Fremont Mall	Fremont	38	2
Baker’s	Fremont	31	2
Goodwill	Fremont	18	2

Source: (10-12) provider reported ride data, various dates

AVAILABILITY OF TRANSIT



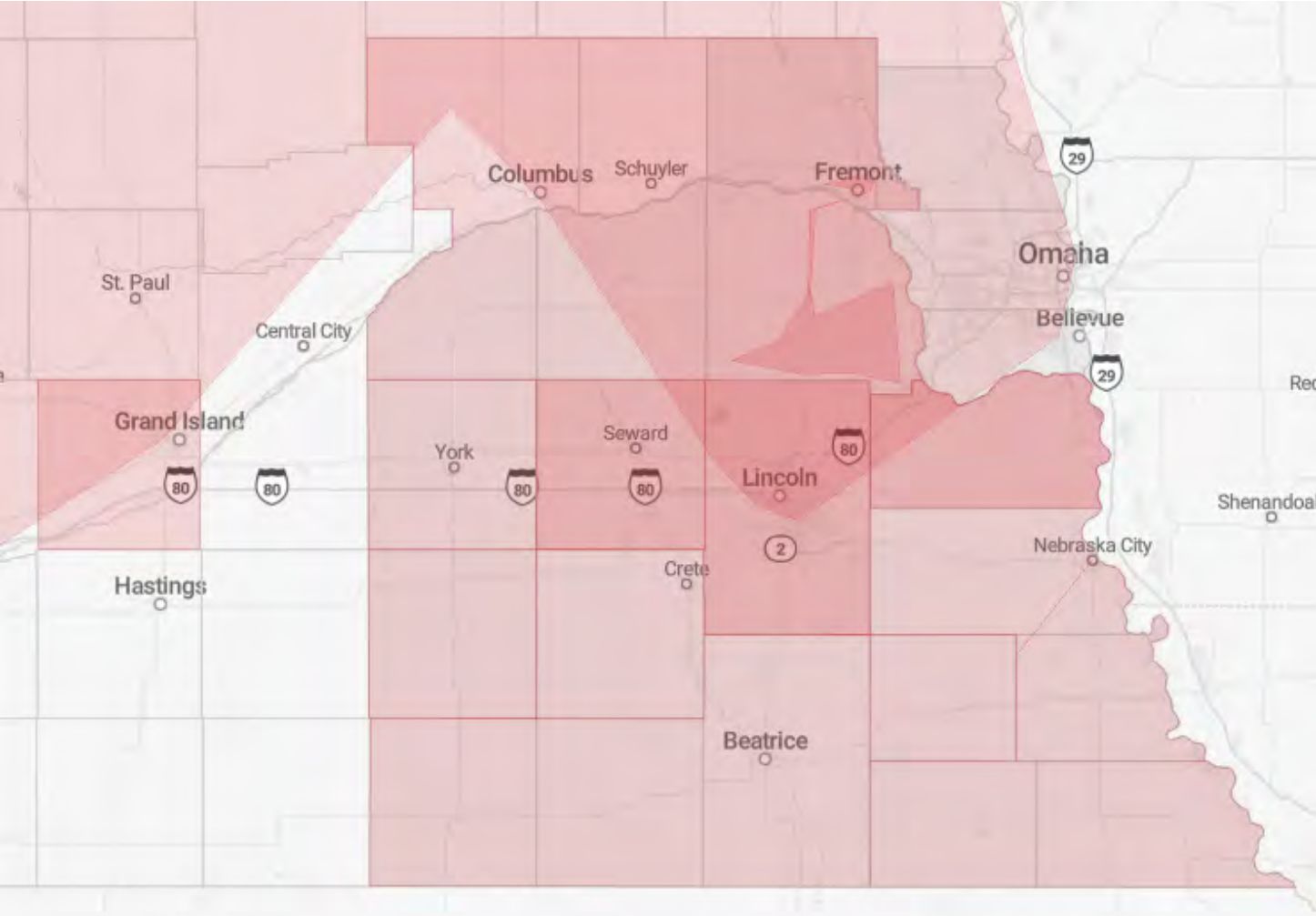
Along with frequent destinations, we also analyzed the areas in which riders were picked up by each transit provider as reported by the samples of ride data obtained from the providers. We analyzed the pickup data by first determining the observed area served by each provider and computing the estimated total and transit dependent populations that fall within each area. We then used that information to identify gaps and overlaps in service areas and any populations that may be underserved.

The 11 providers in the Southeast region advertise service in all but three counties in the region: Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties. However, as shown in our analysis of the Northeast Mobility Management Region, those three counties are all at least partially served by Ponca Express.

The Southeast region also includes Nebraska’s two largest metropolitan areas, both of which exceed the 50,000 population limit considered as rural according to 49 U.S.C. 5311. We therefore report the percentages of coverage based on the total rural population, excluding the population of the urban areas surrounding Omaha and Lincoln.

Nearly all the Southeast region’s rural population (an estimated 96.2%) live in an area with reported or advertised pickups by at least one provider, as shown in the map of the observed coverage areas in Figure 24. Around one third of the population is covered by two or more providers, but only a small fraction (10.1%) is covered by three providers. This indicates that there is very little overlap in the advertised or observed coverage areas for providers in the Southeast.

Figure 24. Overlaid pick-up areas within the Southeast region for all reported rides by Southeast region transit providers; darker areas indicate overlap among pick-up areas



Source: (10-12) provider reported ride data, various dates


Among the transit dependent population, more than 97% of the transit dependent rural populations in the Southeast region have access to at least one rural transit provider. A much smaller percentage have access to more than one provider, however, which may limit transit options at busy times.

Table 20. Population of reported pick-up regions, by number of providers, 2022

	Total Population	Percent of Total Population	65 years or older	Percent 65 years or older	With a Disability	Percent With a Disability
Southeast (total)	1,340,954	-	197,120	14.7%	150,187	11.2%
Southeast (rural) ⁺	420,973	100.0%	70,186	16.7%	46,661	11.1%
Covered by...						
3 Transit Providers	42,625	10.1%	8,224	11.7%	5,346	11.5%
2 Transit Providers	141,634	33.6%	26,812	38.2%	17,447	37.4%
1 Transit Providers	405,112	96.2%	68,584	97.7%	45,680	97.9%
0 Transit Providers	15,861	3.8%	1,602	2.3%	981	2.1%
Blue Rivers Transportation System*	83,608	19.9%	17,154	24.4%	12,192	26.1%
Butler County Rural Transit Service*	121,895	29.0%	23,538	33.5%	14,933	32.0%
City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit*	5,557	1.3%	1,326	1.9%	803	1.7%
Fillmore County Rural Transit Service*	19,345	4.6%	3,581	5.1%	2,954	6.3%
Fremont Transit Program	31,147	7.4%	6,251	8.9%	3,147	6.7%
Lancaster County Public Rural Transit*	14,275	3.4%	2,270	3.2%	1,733	3.7%
Saline County Area Transit*	6,223	1.5%	1,153	1.6%	772	1.7%
Saunders County Public Transportation	37,152	8.8%	7,449	10.6%	5,067	10.9%
Seward County Public Transit*	17,644	4.2%	3,090	4.4%	2,029	4.3%
Southeast Nebraska Community Action*	5,300	1.3%	993	1.4%	801	1.7%
York County Public Transportation*	14,212	3.4%	2,888	4.1%	1,926	4.1%

*Note: Provider did not provide any sample ride data for this analysis. Coverage area based on reported coverage area.

⁺Note: Excludes the populations of the urbanized areas of Lincoln and Omaha.
Source: (8) U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2022

 Overall, we do not find there is a large gap in rural transit services available to the population of the region. Nearly all the Southeast’s population, more than 96%, live in an area with reported pickups or claimed coverage by at least one provider, with nearly one third living in an area served by multiple providers.

KEY FINDINGS



Our analysis shows that the rural population of the Southeast region is generally older than the population of Nebraska as a whole but overall less dependent on rural public transportation. The percentage of the rural population aged 65 years or older in the Southeast is 20.6%, compared to 16.2% statewide, while the percent living in poverty is 5% compared to 10.4% statewide. The relative percentage of transit dependent rural population is growing in the Southeast region, however, meaning the need for public transit will likely increase.

Fortunately, rural transit is widely available across the Southeast region. Nearly all the Southeast’s population (more than 96%) live in an area with reported pickups by at least one provider. Three counties in the region — Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington — are not served by providers headquartered in the Southeast, however.

Roughly one third of riders have multiple options available for rural transit, but very few have a choice among more than two providers. This indicates there is very little overlap among the services offered by the area’s providers. Many advertise trips to Lincoln and Omaha in specific, however, which could indicate some redundant rides into those cities.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on our analysis, we offer the following recommendations:

- 1. Encourage providers to digitize ride tracking and other records**
Only three of the 11 providers in the Southeast region provided ride data for our study, and only two of those already use ride-tracking software. Many of the others reported that their rides are only tracked via paper logs. In one case, no data was provided because “the driver knows where they go.” Efforts to expand the use of digital ride-tracking systems will be of particular importance in the Southeast region.
- 2. Investigate redundant rides to Omaha and Lincoln**
Many of the providers in the area specifically advertise scheduled trips to Omaha and Lincoln, which may result in some redundancy that is not captured based on our observed pick-ups and drop-offs. More deeply examining rides to those cities may help improve the mobility of residents in the Southeast region.
- 3. Group Washington County in the Northeast Mobility Management Region**
None of the providers based in the Southeast region provide service to Washington County, including the city of Blair. Ponca Express and Joyride in the Northeast region, however, do provide service to Blair and Washington County. It may be more appropriate to consider Washington County part of the Northeast region when considering mobility management.
- 4. Prioritize Access to Essential Destinations**
Medical facilities, public or affordable housing, and grocery or discount stores are the most common destinations for transit riders. Maintaining reliable service to these critical locations is essential, especially for low-income, elderly, and transit-dependent populations. Moreover, given that the Southwest region has a growing proportion of elderly residents and individuals with disabilities than the state average, transit agencies may need to develop programs specifically tailored to these populations and destinations.
- 5. Improve Data Collection and Performance Metrics**
Standardizing how transit providers collect and report ride data would provide clearer insights into service usage and unmet demand. Incorporating performance metrics such as on-time performance, rider satisfaction, and trip frequency would help providers refine operations and identify gaps more effectively.



1.

Nebraska Transit (2024). Provider-reported coverage area. Retrieved from <https://www.nebraskatransit.com>.

2.

DRPT. (2023). *Rural Microtransit Case Study and Report*. Virginia Department of Rail And Public Transportation. <https://drpt.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/drpt-rural-microtransit-case-study-and-report-final.pdf>

3.

MCDOT. (2020). *Ride on Flex Microtransit Performance Assessment*. Montgomery County Department of Transportation. https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/Resources/Files/timetables/Flex%20Microtransit%20Performance%20Assessment%20-%20Final%20Report%20-%20Updated%20_11_2021.pdf

4.

MOOver. (2022). *Springfield & Windsor Microtransit Study*. Vermont Public Transportation Association. https://www.moover.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/MOOver-Microtransit-Study_May2022.pdf

5.

SWRPC. (2022). *Microtransit Feasibility and Fixed Route Transit Service Plan Design Assistance Study*. Southwest Region Planning Commission. <https://www.swrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SWRPC-Microtransit-Feasibility-and-Fixed-Route-Transit-Service-Plan-Design-Assistance-Study.pdf>

6.

Wave Transit. (2023). *State of the System Analysis: Wave short range transit plan*. Wave Transit. https://www.wavetransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Wave-Transit-Reimagined-SOTS_web.pdf

7.

U.S. Census Geocoder (2024). Retrieved from <https://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder>.

8.

U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

9.

Nebraska Transit Invoice Portal (2024). Provider-reported ridership and vehicle data. Retrieved from <https://invoice.nebraskatransit.com>.

10.

City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit. Ride data, July 2024.

11.

Fremont Transit Program (2024). Ride data, July 2024 to September 2024.

12.

Saunders County Public Transportation (2024). Ride data, May 2024 to August 2024.

13.

Blue Rivers Transportation System (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://www.braaa.org/publictransit>.

14.

Butler County Transit Service (2025). Brochure. Retrieved from https://butlercountyne.gov/pdfs/senior_service/Public%20Transportation%20Brochure.pdf.

15.

City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://tecumsehne.com/handibus>.

16.

Fillmore County Rural Transit Service (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://www.bvca.net/service/fillmore-county-rural-transit-services/>.

17.

Fremont Transit Program (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://fremontne.gov/984/Fremont-Transit-Program>.

18.

Lancaster County Public Rural Transit (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Aging-Partners/Handy-Home-Services-and-Transportation/Transportation-Options>.

19.

Saline County Area Transit (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://www.salinecat.com/>.

20.

Saunders County Public Transportation (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://saunderscounty.ne.gov/webpages/transportation/transportation.html>.

21.

Seward County Public Transit (2025). Website. Retrieved from <https://www.sewardcountyne.gov/seward-county-public-transit>.

FURTHER READING

1.

Jordahl, K. (2014). GeoPandas: Python tools for geographic data. Retrieved from <https://github.com/geopandas/geopandas>.

2.

ARDOT. (2018). *Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan*. Arkansas Department of Transportation. <https://www.ardot.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ARDOT-Transit-Coordination-Plan-2018.pdf>

3.

VPTA, & VTrans. (2023). *Vermont Statewide Microtransit Study*. Vermont Public Transportation Association & Vermont Department of Transportation. [https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/Research/2023%20Symposium/via-final-report_Statewide%20Assessments%2005172023%20\(003\).pdf](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/Research/2023%20Symposium/via-final-report_Statewide%20Assessments%2005172023%20(003).pdf)

4.

DuPage County. (2023). *DuPage County Mobility Plan: Gap and Service Analysis Technical Report*. DuPage County. <https://cms5.revize.com/revize/dupage/Transportation/Documents/DuPage%20Mobility%20Framework/DuPage%20Mobility%20Framework%20Gap%20Paper%20Fall%202023%20Public%20Comment%20Version.pdf>

5.

Alliance Transportation Group. (2020). *Connect Northwest Arkansas: 10-year Transit Development Plan*. Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission. <https://www.nwarpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ConnectNWATDP.pdf>

6.

Jiao, J., & Dillivan, M. (2013). Transit deserts: The gap between demand and supply. *Journal of Public Transportation*, 16(8), 23-39.

7.

Jiao, J., & Wang, F. (2021). Shared mobility and transit-dependent population: A new equity opportunity or issue?. *International Journal of Sustainable Transportation*, 15(4), 294-305.



The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its education programs or activities, including admissions and employment. The University prohibits any form of retaliation taken against anyone for reporting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for otherwise engaging in protected activity.