RURAL OPPORTUNITIES TO USE TRANSPORTATION FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS

R.O.U.T.E.S.

www.transportation.gov/rural

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Rural America feeds our nation, fuels our gas tanks, and offers recreational fun.

Rural networks are necessary for...
- Production of agriculture ($381B), mining ($97B), forestry ($55B), and energy products ($305B in coal, oil and gas)
- Outdoor recreation ($400B+)
- Quality of life for rural residents and for urban residents accessing tourism/recreational opportunities

But, rural transportation has unique challenges
- Safety – fatality rate 2.1 times higher than urban areas and off-the-roadway fatality rate is 50% higher in rural areas
- Productivity – rural industries require heavy trucks that have significantly more wear-and-tear on roadways and cannot traverse bridges that are posted for weight restrictions
- Limited multimodal transportation options for local and intercity travel – difficult for an aging population and for those in poverty

And, rural communities are less likely to fund their own projects or competitively apply for Federal grants
- Local governments own 72% of rural roads, but most are ineligible for Federal formula funds
- Local agencies lack resources for capital improvements and creating applications for Federal grants/funds
- DOT innovative financing programs just recently adapted to rural challenges and needs
Rural Areas Have 9x More Roadway Infrastructure per Capita

19% of Americans live in rural areas but 69% of our nation’s total lane-miles are in rural areas

Urban areas: 1,064 lane miles per 100,000 residents

Rural areas: 9,925 lane miles per 100,000 residents

Notes: Total does not add due to rounding. Urban = Census urbanized area, rural otherwise

Rural Transportation Challenges:
1. Safety
2. Infrastructure Condition
3. Traffic/Usage
Safety: rural areas have significantly higher fatality rates on roads and at rail crossings

Fatality Rate Per 100 Million Vehicle-Miles Traveled is 2.1 times greater in rural areas

- Rural = 1.79
- Urban = 0.85

46% of highway fatalities occur on rural roads

- Rural: 17,216
- Urban: 19,038

39% of fatalities at highway-rail crossings occur in rural areas

80% of railroad crossings without active warning devices are found in rural areas
Infrastructure Condition:
80% of closed bridges and
90% of posted bridges are in rural areas

Detours required by a closed or
posted bridge are
3x longer
in rural areas

Posted: 53,924
Closed: 3,290

Source: National Bridge Inventory (NBI), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Notes: Bridges in poor condition include any bridge where any of four condition attributes are poor or worse, as defined by FHWA.
**Traffic/Usage:** 81% of U.S. counties have rural transit service

1,333 public transit operators in rural America

62% provide only demand-response service

- Costs 2x per trip more than fixed route service
Traffic/Usage: rural networks are critical for nationwide freight and passenger travel

44% of rural passenger vehicle traffic: urban residents traveling to destinations outside their urban home

From 2000-2017, rural volume per interstate lane-mile grew 6.5% in rural areas versus less than 1% in urban areas

47% of Truck VMT Occurs in Rural Areas

Two-thirds of rail freight originates in rural areas

Volume of freight (millions of tons per year)

250 100 50

Interstate highway
Non-interstate highway
Railway
Inland waterway

Sources: Freight Analysis Framework, version 4.4, as of May 2019; Bureau of Transportation Statistics and Federal Highway Administration; Annual Commodity Waybill Sample; Surface Transportation Board and rail freight flow assignment by Federal Railroad Administration; Annual vessel Operating Activity and Load Performance Monitoring System, Institute of Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Notes: Highway flows are based on FAF data for 2013. Waterway is based on 2017 data and rail is based on 2016 data. 1 short ton = 2,000 lbs.
R.O.U.T.E.S.
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R.O.U.T.E.S. is a new DOT initiative that will...

✓ Collect input from stakeholders on the benefits rural projects offer for safety and economic outcomes, as well as the type and degree of assistance rural projects require

✓ Provide user-friendly information to rural communities to enhance understanding about DOT’s infrastructure grant options

✓ Improve DOT’s data-driven approaches to better assess needs and benefits of rural transportation infrastructure projects