



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**

Rural Transportation Challenges:

1. Safety
2. Infrastructure Condition
3. Traffic/Usage

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

Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Highway Information Management, *Highway Statistics*, table HM-60, available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics.cfm>.

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

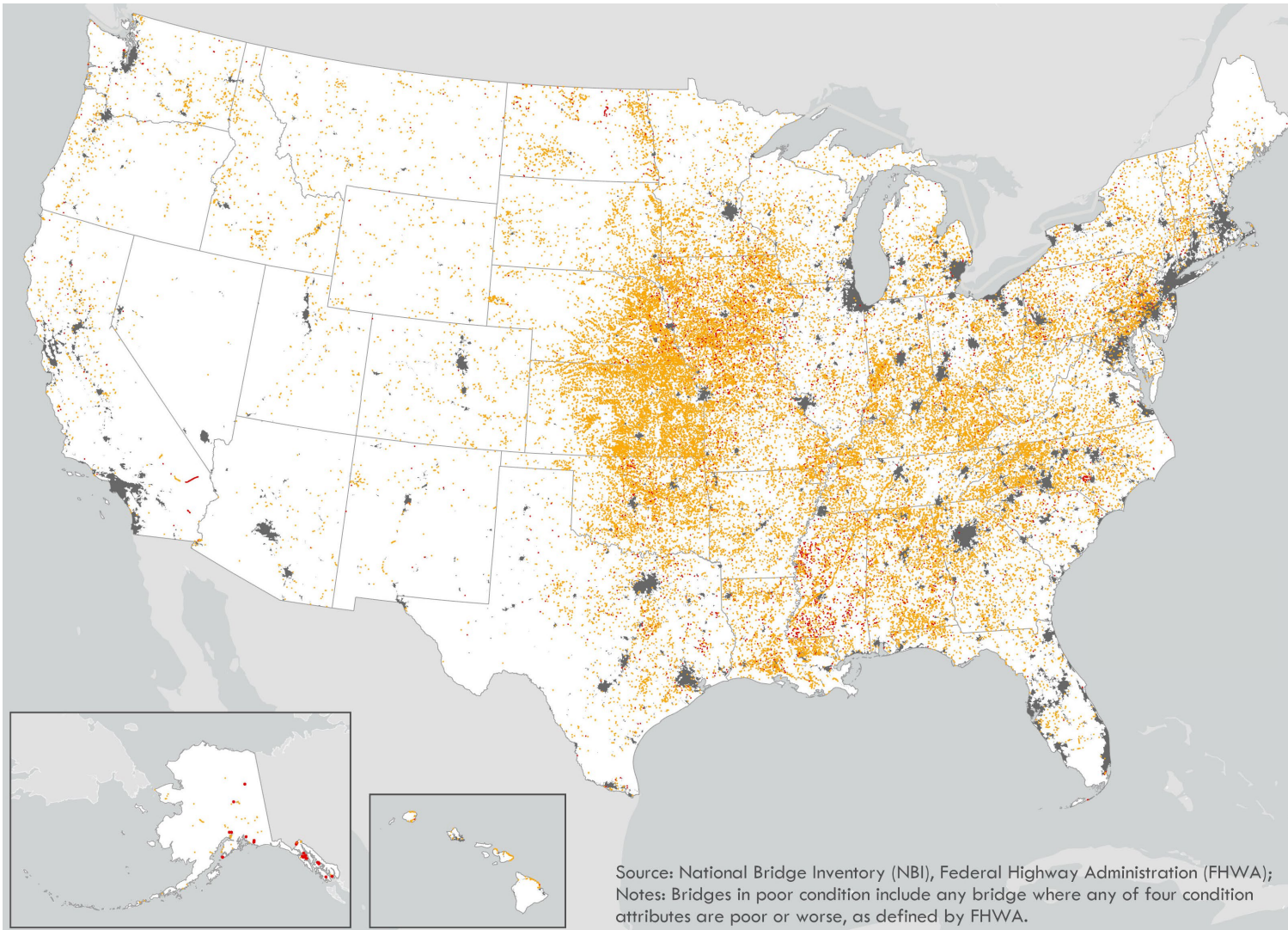
39%

**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



Posted:
53,924

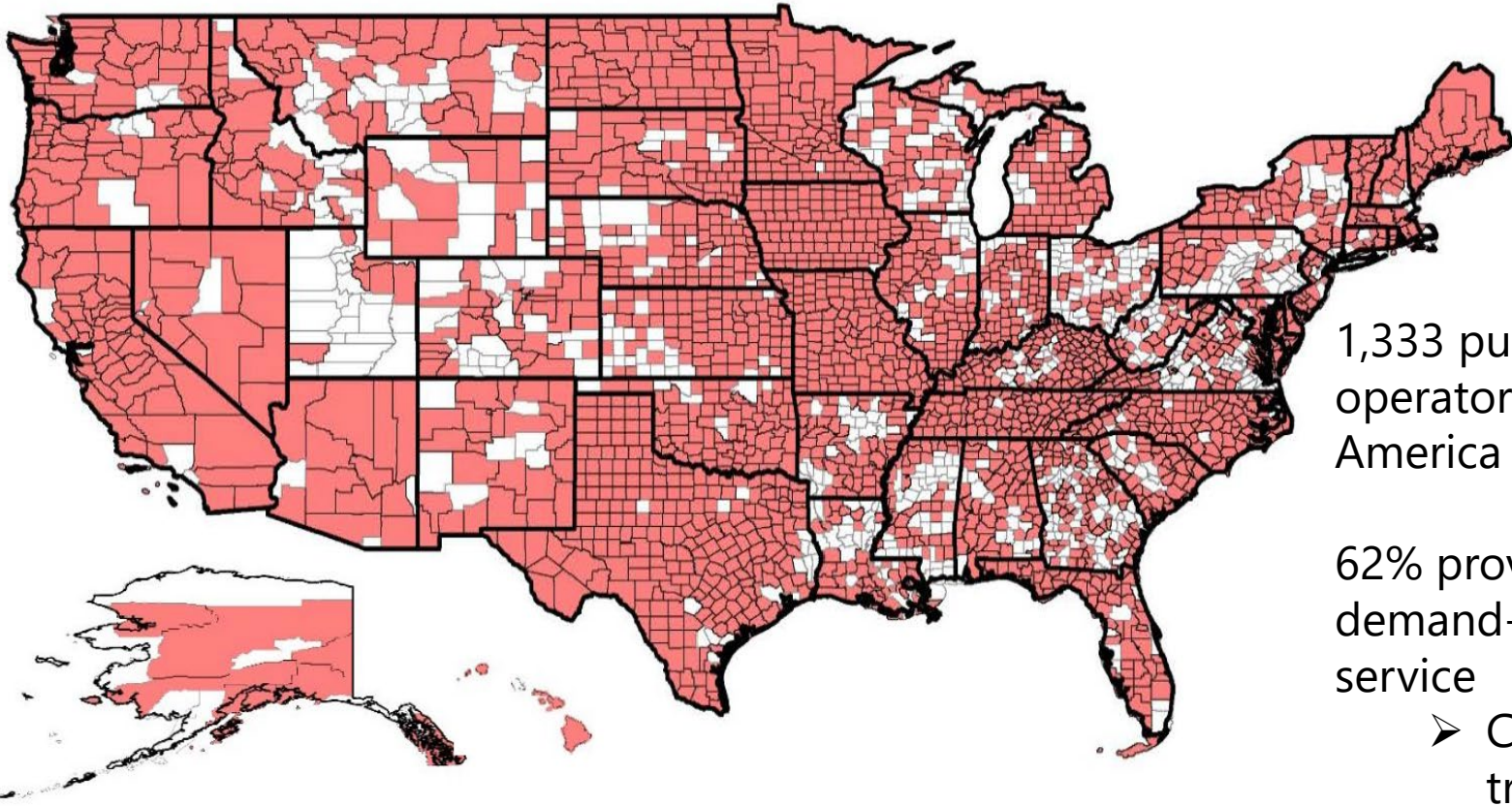
Closed:
3,290



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

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

Map of U.S. Counties with Rural Transit Service

Traffic/Usage: rural networks are critical for nationwide freight and passenger travel

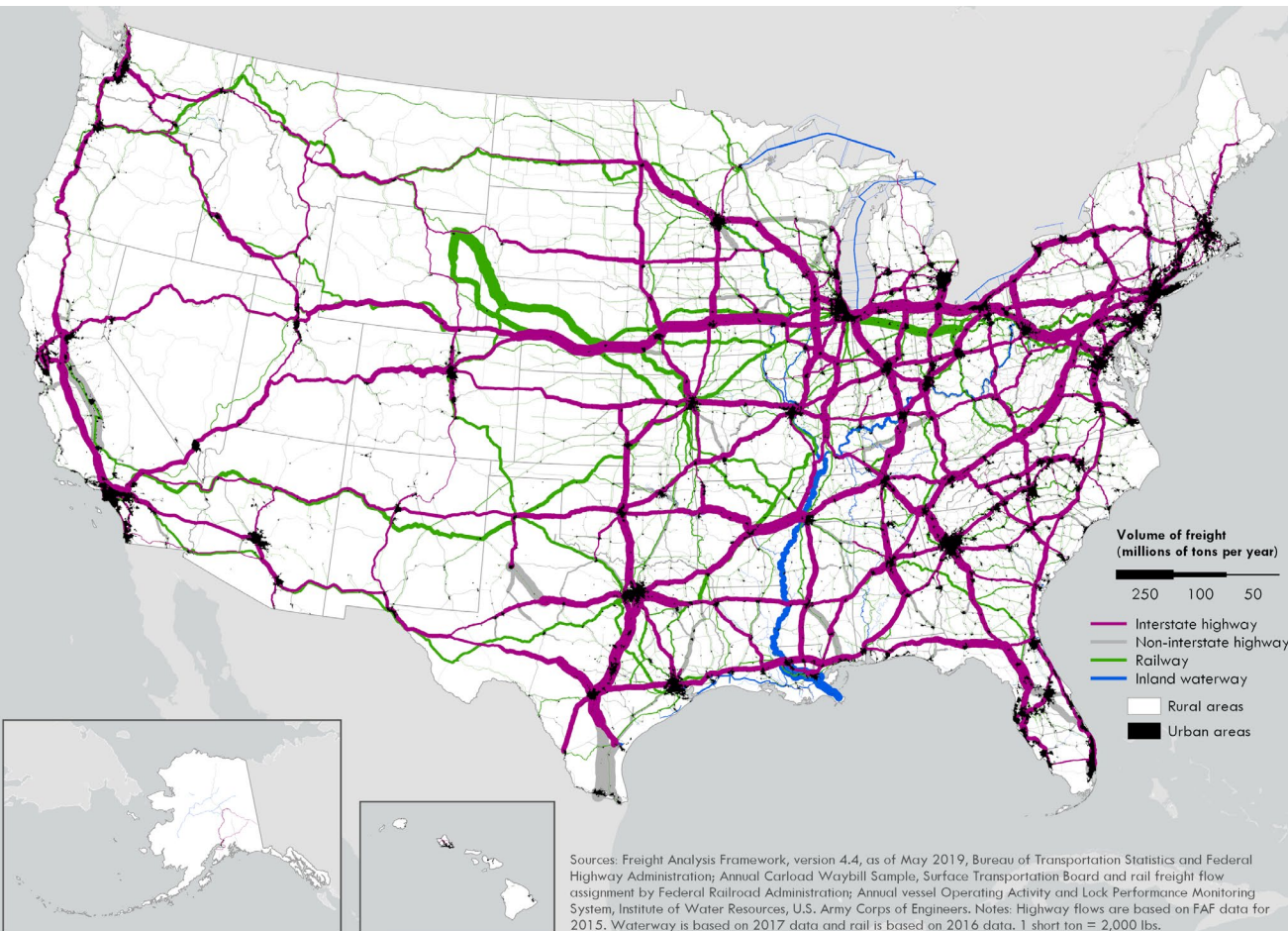


**44% of rural passenger vehicle traffic:
urban residents traveling to destinations outside their urban home**

**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



Sources: Freight Analysis Framework, version 4.4, as of May 2019, Bureau of Transportation Statistics and Federal Highway Administration; Annual Carload Waybill Sample, Surface Transportation Board and rail freight flow assignment by Federal Railroad Administration; Annual vessel Operating Activity and Lock Performance Monitoring System, Institute of Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Notes: Highway flows are based on FAF data for 2015. 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.

Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success



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

