Rural Transit Livability Performance Measures

Suzie Edrington
Texas Transportation Institute

Conference on Performance Measures for Transportation and Livable Communities
September 8, 2011
Rural Livability Performance Measures Suitable for Use at a National Level

Objectives

- Identify, test and recommend a set of metrics that characterize the contributions of rural transit systems to the livability in the communities served

- Assist FTA in gauging the effectiveness of federal transit livability efforts in Rural America
Presentation Outline

- Rural area conditions and trends
- Transit needs index
- Rural area typologies
- Emerging vision for rural livability
- Transit impact on rural livability
- Guidelines for developing rural transit livability performance measures
 Growth Trends

- Fastest growth in fringes/edges
- Significant growth in proximity to scenic landscapes – natural amenities
- Shift in industry
Built Environment Conditions/Trends

- Roadway configuration - freight and intercity needs
- Activity centers clustering along major trade routes
- Business practices in competition with local merchants
- Erosion of pedestrian realm
Larger Share of Older People

Older Americans in Rural America
2000 to 2009

Source: Figures created by EMSI, Inc.
Human Service Risk Index

The Geography of Need: Identifying Human Service Needs in Rural America, June 2011 by Heflin and Miller
Demographic/Economic Factors Vary Across America

- Elderly
- Fertility rate
- Foreign born
- Low education
- No vehicle in household
- Poverty

- Racial/ Ethnic
- Nutrition programs
- Subfamilies
- Transfer payments
- Veteran population
- Work age dependency
Transit Needs Index

- **Factors**
  - Demographic and economic characteristics

- **Applications for the index**
  - Service planning
  - Target public and private investment
Rural Typologies
Not All Rural Areas Are the Same

- Edge
- Traditional main street
- Gateway
- Agriculture dependent
- Single-industry dependent
- University or military
- Second home and retirement

Adapted from ICMA Knowledge Network. *Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities, 2010*
Rural Typologies

Next Steps

- Ingredients for determining typologies
- Recipe to classify rural communities
Emerging Vision for Rural Livability

Provide:
- Regional and local connectivity
- Activities in nodes – accomplish multiple purposes
- Equitable and accessible transportation

Preserve:
- Pedestrian character of main streets/town centers
- Landscapes and agriculture land

Establish:
- Multi-modal connections

Coordinate:
- Planning and funding
Opportunities for Transit

- Provide a network of transit services that link town centers, villages with each other, as well as to intercity routes

- Provide a link in a regional multimodal connection

- Tie to areas where transit can provide access to array of jobs, education, services, health care, recreational opportunities
Opportunities for Transit

- Provide access - equitably
- Provide link between workers and rural area industries
- Pool resources to more efficiently serve region and prevent service duplication
Rural Transit Livability Performance Measures – Guidelines

- National-level data sources
- Spatial representation of measures
- Reflect the 6 Livability Principles (HUD-EPA-DOT)
Candidate Rural Transit Livability Measures – Guidelines

- What decisions will the measure support?
- Measure both direct and indirect jurisdiction
- Include measures that run counter to one another
- Include quantifiable and qualitative
- Leverage existing data – efficiency
- Develop reports to appeal to visual and statistical
- Measure after implementation

Fabish and Haas, Measuring the Performance of Livability Programs, 2010
Summary

- Conditions and trends
- Transit needs index
- Rural community typologies
- Vision and transit opportunities
- Guidelines for developing candidate rural transit livability performance measures
Contact

Texas Transportation Institute
Transit Mobility Program
Suzie Edrington
713-686-2971
s-edrington@tamu.edu