

Agency Name: Wilkes County Board of Commissioners



Title VI Plan

Date Adopted: October 14, 2021



Title VI Plan Activity Log

Date	Activity (Review/Update/Addendum/ Adoption/Distribution)	Concerned Person (Signature)	Remarks
12-11-14	Update/approved/adopted	Chairman	
11-8-18	Updated/approved/adopted	Chairman	
10/14/21	Updated/approved/adopted	Chairman	

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1.0 Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy Statement and Management Commitment to Title VI Plan

49 CFR Part 21.7(a): Every application for Federal financial assistance to which this part applies shall contain, or be accompanied by, an assurance that the program will be conducted or the facility operated in compliance with all requirements imposed or pursuant to [49 CFR Part 21].

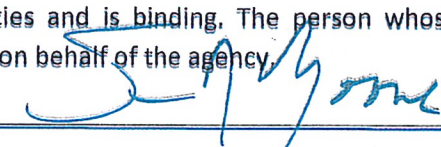
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners assures the Georgia Department of Transportation that no person shall on the basis of race, color, and national origin as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Federal Transit Laws, 49 CFR Part 21 Unlawful Discrimination, Nondiscrimination In Federally-Assisted Programs Of The Department Of Transportation and as per written guidance under FTA Circular 4702.1B, dated October 2012, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any program or activity undertaken by the agency.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners further agrees to the following responsibilities with respect to its programs and activities:

1. Designate a Title VI Liaison that has a responsible position within the organization and access to the recipient's Chief Executive Officer or authorized representative.
2. Issue a policy statement signed by the Executive Director or authorized representative, which expresses its commitment to the nondiscrimination provisions of Title VI. The policy statement shall be circulated throughout the Recipient's organization and to the general public. Such information shall be published where appropriate in language other than English.
3. Insert the clauses of Section 4.5 of this plan into every contract subject to the Acts and the Regulations.
4. Develop a complaint process and attempt to resolve complaints of discrimination against Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.
5. Participate in training offered on the Title VI and other nondiscrimination requirements.
6. If reviewed by GDOT or any other state or federal regulatory agency, take affirmative actions to correct any deficiencies found within a reasonable time period, not to exceed ninety (90) days.
7. Have a process to collect racial and ethnic data on persons impacted by the agency's programs.
8. Submit the information required by FTA Circular 4702.1B to the GDOT. (refer to Appendix A of this plan)

THIS ASSURANCE is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all federal funds, grants, loans, contracts, properties, discounts or other federal financial assistance under all programs and activities and is binding. The person whose signature appears below is authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the agency.

Signature: _____



Printed Name: Sam J. Moore, Chairman, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

Executive Director/Signatory Authority, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, Date: Month/Day/Year

2.0 Introduction & Description of Services

This is a section of the plan which covers general information about the transit agency.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners submits this Title VI Plan in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 49 CFR Part 21, and the guidelines of FTA Circular 4702.1B, published October 1, 2012.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is a sub-recipient of FTA funds and provides service in Wilkes County. A description of the current Wilkes County Board of Commissioners system is included in Appendix B.

Title VI Liaison

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Liaison Name and Title Newton Gunter, Director
Employed by (TPO or Sub recipient) Wilkes County Board of Commissioners
Phone Number 706-678-4459
Address 23 Court Street; Rm 222, Washington, GA 30673

Alternate Title VI Contact

Alternate Title VI Contact Name and Title Karen Burton, County Clerk
Employed by (TPO or Sub recipient) Wilkes County Board of Commissioners
Phone Number 706.678.2511
Address 23 Court Street; Room 222; Washington, GA 30673

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners must designate a liaison for Title VI issues and complaints within the organization. The liaison is the focal point for Title VI implementation and monitoring of activities receiving federal financial assistance. Key responsibilities of the Title VI Liaison include:

- Maintain knowledge of Title VI requirements.
- Attend training on Title VI and other nondiscrimination authorities when offered by GDOT or any other regulatory agency.
- Disseminate Title VI information to the public including in languages other than English, when necessary.
- Develop a process to collect data related to race, color and national origin of service area population to ensure low income, minorities, and other underserved groups are included and not discriminated against.
- Implement procedures for the prompt processing of Title VI complaints.

2.1 First Time Applicant Requirements

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 3: Entities applying for FTA funding for the first time shall provide information regarding their Title VI compliance history if they have previously received funding from another Federal agency.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is not a first time applicant for FTA/GDOT funding. The following is a summary of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners' current and pending federal and state funding.

Complete the following list, add and remove number as necessary.

Current and Pending FTA Funding

1. Section 5311, July 1, 2020, 103,193.00 Contract #T007200
2. [Title], [Date], [Amount], [Current] or [Pending]

Current and Pending GDOT Funding

1. Section 5311, July 1, 2019, 98,488.00, Contract #T00400
2. [Title], [Date], [Amount], [Current] or [Pending]

Current and Pending Federal Funding (non-FTA)

1. Section 5311, July 1, 2018, \$95,372.00 Contract #T006312
2. [Title], [Date], [Amount], [Current] or [Pending]

Current and Pending State Funding (non-GDOT)

1. [Title], [Date], [Amount], [Current] or [Pending]
2. [Title], [Date], [Amount], [Current] or [Pending]

During the previous three years, Federal Agency or State Agency did complete a Title VI compliance review of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has not been found to be in noncompliance with any civil rights requirements.

2.2 Annual Certifications and Assurances

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 2: Every application for financial assistance from FTA must be accompanied by an assurance that the applicant will carry out the program in compliance with the Title VI regulations.

In accordance with 49 CFR Section 21.7(a), every application for financial assistance from FTA must be accompanied by an assurance that the applicant will carry out the program in compliance with Title VI regulations. This requirement shall be fulfilled when the applicant/recipient submits its annual certifications and assurances. Primary recipients will collect Title VI assurances from sub-recipients prior to passing through FTA funds.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will remain in compliance with this requirement by annual submission of certifications and assurances as required by GDOT.

2.3 Title VI Plan Concurrence and Adoption

This Title VI Plan received GDOT concurrence on November 9, 2021. The Plan was approved and adopted by Wilkes County Board of Commissioners' Board of Directors during a meeting held on October 14, 2021. A copy of the meeting minutes and GDOT concurrence letter is included in Appendix C of this Plan.

3.0 Title VI Notice to the Public

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 5: Title 49 CFR 21.9(d) requires recipients to provide information to the public regarding the recipient's obligations under DOT's Title VI regulations and apprise members of the public of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI.

3.1 Notice to Public

Recipients must notify the public of its rights under Title VI and include the notice and where it is posted in the Title VI Plan. The notice must include:

- A statement that the agency operates programs without regard to race, color and national origin
- A description of the procedures members of the public should follow in order to request additional information on the grantee's nondiscrimination obligations
- A description of the procedure members of the public should follow in order to file a discrimination complaint against the grantee

The notice is included in Appendix D of this Plan. The notice will be translated into other languages, as necessary.

3.2 Notice Posting Locations

The Notice to Public will be posted at many locations to apprise the public of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners obligations under Title VI and to inform them of the protections afforded them under Title VI. At a minimum, the notice will be posted in public areas of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners' office including the reception desk and meeting rooms, and on the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners' website at wilkescountyga.org. Additionally, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will post the notice at stations, stops and on transit vehicles.

The notice is included in Appendix D of this Plan along with any translated versions of the notice, as necessary.

The public notice must be provided in any other language which meets the Safe Harbor threshold (See Appendix G).

4.0 Title VI Procedures and Compliance

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 6: All recipients shall develop procedures for investigating and tracking Title VI complaints filed against them and make their procedures for filing a complaint available to member of the public.

4.1 Complaint Procedure

Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color or national origin by Wilkes County Board of Commissioners may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting the agency's Title VI Complaint Form (refer to Appendix E). Wilkes County Board of Commissioners investigates complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will process complaints that are complete.

Once the complaint is received, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will review it to determine if our office has jurisdiction. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing him/her whether the complaint will be investigated by our office.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has ninety (90) days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners may contact the complainant. The complainant has ten (10) business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case. If the investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within ten (10) business days, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners can administratively close the case. A case can also be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, she/he will issue one of two letters to the complainant: a closure letter or a letter of finding (LOF). A closure letter summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed. A LOF summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training of the staff member or other action will occur. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has seven (7) days to do so from the time he/she receives the closure letter or the LOF.

The complaint procedure will be made available to the public on Wilkes County Board of Commissioners website (www.wilkescountyga.org) or at Wilkes Transit, 706.678.4459.

4.2 Complaint Form

A copy of the complaint form in English is provided in Appendix E and on Wilkes County Board of Commissioners website (www.wilkescountyga.org).

The complaint form must be provided in any languages spoken by the LEP population which meet the Safe Harbor threshold (See Appendix G).

4.3 Record Retention and Reporting Policy

FTA requires that all direct and primary recipients (GDOT) document their compliance by submitting a Title VI Plan to their FTA regional civil rights officer once every three (3) years. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will submit Title VI Plans to GDOT for concurrence on an annual basis or any time a major change in the Plan occurs.

If your agency receives funding from more than one primary recipient, this paragraph should be modified to note that the Title VI Plan will be submitted to all primary recipients, as needed. Compliance records and all Title VI related documents will be retained for a minimum of three (3) years and reported to the primary recipient annually.

4.4 Sub-recipient Assistance and Monitoring

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners does not have any sub-recipients to provide monitoring and assistance to. As a sub-recipient to GDOT, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners utilizes the sub-recipient assistance and monitoring provided by GDOT, as needed. In the future, if Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has sub-recipients, it will provide assistance and monitoring as required by FTA Circular 4702.1B.]

4.5 Sub recipients and Subcontractors

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is responsible for ensuring that subcontractors (TPOs) are in compliance with Title VI requirements. Sub recipients may not discriminate in the selection and retention of any subcontractors. Subcontractors also may not discriminate in the selection and retention of any subcontractors. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, subcontractors, and/or TPOs may not discriminate in their employment practices in connection with federally assisted projects. Subcontractors and TPOs are not required to prepare or submit a Title VI Plan. However, the following nondiscrimination clauses will be inserted into every contract with contractors and subcontractors subject to Title VI regulations.

Nondiscrimination Clauses

During the performance of a contract, the contractor, for itself, its assignees and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "Contractor") must agree to the following clauses:

1. **Compliance with Regulations:** The Contractor shall comply with the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation (hereinafter, "USDOT") Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 21, as they may be amended from time to time, (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations), which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
2. **Nondiscrimination:** The Contractor, with regard to the work performed during the contract, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national origin in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not

participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited by section 21.5 of the Regulations, including employment practices when the contract covers a program set forth in Appendix B of the Regulations.

3. **Solicitations for Subcontractors, including Procurements of Materials and Equipment:** In all solicitations made by the Contractor, either by competitive bidding or negotiation for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment; each potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the subcontractor's obligations under this contract and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin.
4. **Information and Reports:** The Contractor shall provide all information and reports required by the Regulations or directives issued pursuant thereto, and shall permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the *Georgia Department of Transportation and/or the Federal Transit Administration*, to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Regulations, orders and instructions. Where any information required of a Contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish this information the Contractor shall so certify to the *Georgia Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration*, as appropriate, and shall set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.
5. **Sanctions for Noncompliance:** In the event of the Contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this contract, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners shall impose contract sanctions as appropriate, including, but not limited to:
 - a. withholding of payments to the Contractor under the contract until the Contractor complies, and/or
 - b. cancellation, termination or suspension of the contract, in whole or in part.
6. **Incorporation of Provisions:** The Contractor shall include the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (6) in every subcontract, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the Regulations, or directives issued pursuant thereto. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any subcontract or procurement as the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, Georgia Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration, may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Policy

As a condition of your agreement with GDOT, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners and its contractors and subcontractors agree to ensure that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises as defined in 49 CFR Part 26, as amended, have the opportunity to participate in the performance of contracts. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners and its contractor and subcontractors shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the performance of any contract. The contractor shall carry out applicable requirements of 49 CFR Part 26 in the award and administration of GDOT-assisted contracts. Failure by the contractor to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this contract, which may result in the termination of the contract or such other remedy as the recipient deems appropriate.

E-Verify

As a condition of your agreement with GDOT, vendors and contractors of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners shall utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired by the vendor or contractor while contracted with Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Additionally, vendors and contractors shall expressly require any subcontractors performing work or providing services pursuant to work for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners shall likewise utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired by the subcontractor while working for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.

5.0 Title VI Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 7: In order to comply with the reporting requirements of 49 CFR 21.9(b), FTA requires all recipients to prepare and maintain a list of any of the following that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin: active investigations....; lawsuits, and complaints naming the recipient.

In accordance with 49 CFR 21.9(b), Wilkes County Board of Commissioners must record and report any investigations, complaints, or lawsuits involving allegations of discrimination. The records of these events shall include the date the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegations; the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by Wilkes County Board of Commissioners in response; and final findings related to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. The records for the previous three (3) years shall be included in the Title VI Plan when it is submitted to GDOT.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has had no investigations, complaints, or lawsuits involving allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin over the past three (3) years. A summary of these incidents is recorded in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Investigations, Lawsuits, and Complaints

	Date (Month, Day, Year)	Summary (include basis of complaint: race, color, or national origin)	Status	Action(s) Taken
Investigations				
1.				
2.				
Lawsuits				
1.				
2.				
Complaints				
1.				
2.				

6.0 Public Participation Plan

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 4.a.4: Every Title VI Plan shall include the following information: A public participation plan that includes an outreach plan to engage minority and limited English proficient populations, as well as a summary of outreach efforts made since the last Title VI Plan submission. A recipient's targeted public participation plan of minority populations may be part of efforts that extend more broadly to include constituencies that are traditionally underserved, such as people with disabilities, low-income populations, and others.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners was developed to ensure that all members of the public, including minorities and Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, are encouraged to participate in the decision making process for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Policy and service delivery decisions need to take into consideration community sentiment and public opinion based upon well-executed outreach efforts. The public outreach strategies described in the PPP are designed to provide the public with effective access to information about Wilkes County Board of Commissioners services and to provide a variety of efficient and convenient methods for receiving and considering public comment prior to implementing changes to services. The PPP is included as Appendix F to this Title VI Plan.

Current Outreach Efforts

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is required to submit a summary of public outreach efforts made over the last three (3) years. The following is a list and short description of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners recent, current, and planned outreached activities.

- Articles in local newspaper and handouts
- Spoke at 3 local Civic Club meetings

Public outreach information is available at the offices of Wilkes Transit and on each Transit vehicle. Further information may be obtained by calling Wilkes Transit at 706.678.4459.

7.0 Language Assistance Plan

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 9: Recipients shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are limited English proficient (LEP).

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners operates a transit system within Wilkes County. The Language Assistance Plan (LAP) has been prepared to address Wilkes County Board of Commissioners who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English are LEP. In Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area there are 245 residents or 2.8% who describe themselves as not able to communicate in English very well (Source: US Census). Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is federally mandated (Executive Order 13166) to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information and other important portions of its programs and activities for individuals who are LEP. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has utilized the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) LEP Guidance Handbook and performed a four factor analysis to develop its LAP. The LAP is included in this Title VI Plan as Appendix G.

Wilkes County does not meet the required percentage for the LEP!

8.0 Transit Planning and Advisory Bodies

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 10: Recipients that have transit-related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees, or similar committees, the membership of which is selected by the recipient, must provide a table depicting the racial breakdown of the membership of those committees, and a description of efforts made to encourage the participation of minorities on such committees.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners does not have a transit-related committee or board, therefore this requirement does not apply.

9.0 Title VI Equity Analysis

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 4.a.8: If the recipient has constructed a facility, such as vehicle storage, maintenance facility, operation center, etc., the recipient shall include a copy of the Title VI equity analysis conducted during the planning stage with regard to the location of the facility.

Title 49 CFR, Appendix C, Section (3)(iv) requires that “the location of projects requiring land acquisition and the displacement of persons from their residences and business may not be determined on the basis of race, color, or national origin.” For purposes of this requirement, “facilities” does not include bus shelters, as they are considered transit amenities. It also does not include transit stations, power substations, or any other project evaluated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Facilities included in the provision include, but are not limited to, storage facilities, maintenance facilities, operations centers, etc. In order to comply with the regulations, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will ensure the following:

1. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will complete a Title VI equity analysis for any facility during the planning stage with regard to where a project is located or sited to ensure the location is selected without regard to race, color, or national origin. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will engage in outreach to persons potentially impacted by the siting of the facility. The Title VI equity analysis must compare the equity impacts of various siting alternatives, and the analysis must occur before the selection of the preferred site.
2. When evaluating locations of facilities, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will give attention to other facilities with similar impacts in the area to determine if any cumulative adverse impacts might result. Analysis should be done at the Census tract or block group level where appropriate to ensure that proper perspective is given to localized impacts.

3. If Wilkes County Board of Commissioners determines that the location of the project will result in a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners may only locate the project in that location if there is a substantial legitimate justification for locating the project there, and where there are no alternative locations that would have a less disparate impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners must demonstrate and document how both tests are met. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will consider and analyze alternatives to determine whether those alternatives would have less of a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin, and then implement the least discriminatory alternative.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has not recently constructed any facilities nor does it currently have any facilities in the planning stage. Therefore, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners does not have any Title VI Equity Analysis reports to submit with this Plan. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will utilize the demographic maps included in Appendix I for future Title VI analysis.

10.0 System-Wide Service Standards and Service Policies

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 10: All fixed route transit providers shall set service standards and policies for each specific fixed route mode of service they provide.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is not a fixed route service provider.

11.0 Appendices

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Appendix A

FTA Circular 4702.1B Reporting Requirements for Transit Providers

Every three years, on a date determined by FTA, each recipient is required to submit the following information to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as part of their Title VI Program. Sub-recipients shall submit the information below to their primary recipient (the entity from whom the sub-recipient receives funds directly), on a schedule to be determined by the primary recipient.

General Requirements

All recipients must submit:

- Title VI Notice to the Public, including a list of locations where the notice is posted
- Title VI Complaint Procedures (i.e., instructions to the public regarding how to file a Title VI discrimination complaint)
- Title VI Complaint Form
- List of transit-related Title VI investigations, complaints, and lawsuits
- Public Participation Plan, including information about outreach methods to engage minority and limited English proficient populations (LEP), as well as a summary of outreach efforts made since the last Title VI Program submission
- Language Assistance Plan for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), based on the DOT LEP Guidance
- A table depicting the membership of non-elected committees and councils, the membership of which is selected by the recipient, broken down by race, and a description of the process the agency uses to encourage the participation of minorities on such committees
- Primary recipients shall include a description of how the agency monitors its sub-recipients for compliance with Title VI, and a schedule of sub-recipient Title VI Program submissions
- A Title VI equity analysis if the recipient has constructed a facility, such as a vehicle storage facility, maintenance facility, operation center, etc.**
- A copy of board meeting minutes, resolution, or other appropriate documentation showing the board of directors or appropriate governing entity or official(s) responsible for policy decisions reviewed and approved the Title VI Program. For State DOTs, the appropriate governing entity is the State's Secretary of Transportation or equivalent. The approval must occur prior to submission to FTA.
- Additional information as specified in Chapters IV, V, and VI, depending on whether the recipient is a transit provider, a State, or a planning entity (see below)

Requirements of Transit Providers

All Fixed Route Transit Providers must submit:

- All requirements set out in Chapter III (General Requirements)
- Service standards
 - o Vehicle load for each mode
 - o Vehicle headway for each mode
 - o On time performance for each mode
 - o Service availability for each mode
- Service policies
 - o Transit Amenities for each mode
 - o Vehicle Assignment for each mode

Transit Providers that operate 50 or more fixed route vehicles in peak service and are located in an Urbanized Area (UZA) of 200,000 or more people must submit:

- Demographic and service profile maps and charts
- Demographic ridership and travel patterns, collected by surveys
- Results of their monitoring program and report, including evidence that the board or other governing entity or official(s) considered, was aware of the results, and approved the analysis
- A description of the public engagement process for setting the “major service change policy,” disparate impact policy, and disproportionate burden policy
- Results of service and/or fare equity analyses conducted since the last Title VI Program submission, including evidence that the board or other governing entity or official(s) considered, was aware of, and approved the results of the analysis

Appendix B

Current System Description

Current System Description

1. An overview of the organization including its mission, program goals and objectives.
 Wilkes County Board of Commissioners current and long-term focus as a transportation provider is on maintaining the best-coordinated transportation system possible for this community. Our goal is to create a coordinated system with the objective of providing safe, reliable, timely and efficient transportation services to county residents.
2. Organizational structure, type of operation, number of employees, service hours, staffing plan and safety and security plan.
 Wilkes County is a department within Wilkes County local government. Our organization is made up of 5 full-time employees, 0 part-time employees, and 0 volunteers. Our Director is responsible for all of the day-to-day operations of our organization and reports directly to our Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Our BCC is committed to this program and has, therefore, incorporated our service within the County's Public Transportation Program. Transportation services are provided in accordance with the BCC's approved Operations Manual/System Safety/Security Program and its Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP). Our agency staffing plan is outlined in our 2011 Transit Development Plan (page 201) and 2012 Operations Handbook (page 34). We will continue to operate at previous year (2011) service hours averaging 84 total fleet service hours per day or approximately 25,200 annual service hours (assuming 300 operating days).
3. Indicate if your agency is a government authority.
 Wilkes County Board of Commissioners operates as the local government of Wilkes County.
4. Who is responsible for insurance, training and management, and administration of the agency's transportation programs?
 Wilkes Transit director is responsible for training and management of our transportation program. All safety sensitive employees are required to complete GDOT approved safety and security training course as part of their new hire orientation. All new employees are also required to complete 80 hours of on-the-road drivers training, which includes riding with a training driver, behind-the-wheel training, and training on proper use of wheel chair lifts and securement devices. The Transportation Services Manager is responsible for annual renewal of all liability insurance for both GDOT and agency owned vehicles, as well as vehicle registration renewal. It is the Transportation Manager's responsibility to administer all aspects of the transportation program and to control access and usage of all agency vehicles.
5. Who provides vehicle maintenance and record keeping?
 Maintenance on all agency vehicles is provided by Andrews Tire & Auto, LLC who employs only ASE certified technicians with experience in working on commercial passenger vehicles like the type our agency uses. All maintenance is performed using the Preventative Maintenance Plan, which conforms to the State Vehicle Maintenance Guidelines set forth in the GDOT Preventative Maintenance Guidelines document. All vehicle files and driver files are kept on-site at our

operations base located at 108 Marshall Street, Washington, GA and are maintained by the Director. All records are maintained and retained for a minimum of four (4) years.

6. Number of current transportation related employees

Our transportation department has a total of 5 employees that include: 3 full-time drivers, 0 part-time drivers, 1 administrators and 1 support staff.

7. Who will drive the vehicle, number of drivers, CDL certifications, etc.?

Only transportation employees that have completed all of the required safety and drivers training requirements will be allowed to drive the agency vehicles. All our drivers are required to carry a Commercial Driver's License. This allows coverage of all of the larger vehicles and for the opportunity for the other drivers to fill in on service routes with the larger vehicles.

8. A detailed description of service routes and ridership numbers

Currently, we use a variety of vehicles to provide passenger services. Our fleet includes vans and modified vans. One of our vehicles is equipped for wheelchair service. We prioritize grouping trips and multi-loading to the maximum extent possible. We make 105 passenger trips per day on average and leverage our fleet resources so that all vehicles are used in a responsible manner to provide full coverage and retire the vehicles at a consistent pace and appropriate age and mileage.

Appendix C
Title VI Plan Adoption Meeting Minutes
and GDOT Concurrence Letter



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

November 4, 2021

Diana Hall
Wilkes County Transit
108 Marshall Street
Washington, GA 30673

Dear Ms. Hall,

The Department has completed its review of your Title VI Plan and has determined that it meets the requirements established in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients," effective October 1, 2012.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and compliance of the FTA Civil Rights Program requirements. Should you need assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ashley Finch, Rail/Transit Planner directly at afinch@dot.ga.gov or (470) 432-1751.

Sincerely,

**Patricia
Smith**

Patricia Smith
Transit Program Manager
Division of Intermodal

Digitally signed by
Patricia Smith
Date: 2021.11.06
18:09:11 -04'00'

Insert a copy of the Title VI Plan adoption meeting minutes and the GDOT concurrence letter.

October 14, 2021

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met for a luncheon provided by the 4H Office at 12 Noon. The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met for a work session at 1:00 pm on October 14, 2021 with Chairman Sam Moore and Commissioners Ed Geddings, Esper Lee and Charles Jackson present. Commissioner Clem Slaton was not present. County Attorney Charles LeGette and County Clerk Karen Burton was also present. A few visitors were present for the meeting. Moore opened the work session at 1:00 pm.

The regular meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners was held on October 14, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Chairman Moore, with Commissioners Ed Geddings, Esper Lee and Charles Jackson present. Commissioner Clem Slaton was not present. County Clerk Karen Burton and County Attorney Charles LeGette was also present. A number of visitors were present for the meeting.

Moore called on Ed Geddings to open with a prayer.

Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Charles Jackson to approve the minutes as appear on record. Motion carried 4-0.

LeGette and Moore presented a Kettle Creek Battlefield Association Conserve Georgia Grant Resolution for Application for funding. This grant will provide funding for land purchase and site improvements including trails. Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Charles Jackson to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

Moore presented the FY 2022 LMIG Road Project bids for approval. Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Esper Lee to approve the low bid from C & H Paving for \$669,91.41. Motion carried 4-0.

Moore presented the FTA Section 5311 FY 2023 Authorizing Resolution that authorizes the filing of an application with DOT and US DOT for funding. Motion was made by Charles Jackson and seconded by Esper Lee to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

Moore presented the 5311 Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy Update for 2021 which is a 3 year requirement to continue receiving Federal financial assistance. Motion was made by Charles Jackson and seconded by Esper Lee to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

Burton reported that the SPLOST for the month of August 2021 was \$111,065.30, LOST was \$72,192.17 and TSPLOST was \$98,200.68.

Moore stated that the Reapportionment Office had sent a new map for the redistricting of voting districts. There was very minor changes in the county and no changes in the city. Motion was made by Charles Jackson and seconded by Ed Geddings to approve the changes in the Redistricting map as provided by the Reapportionment Office. Motion carried 4-0.

Moore stated that a meeting on November 8th had been scheduled with the mayors to begin the process to call for a SPLOST referendum for May 24, 2022.

Moore stated that the city had voted to take over the city portion of Hotel/Motel Taxes. Moore emphasized that the County had been handling this since around 2007 and that 100% of the revenues were given directly to the Chamber of Commerce, with County not retaining a penny.

Moore announced the next regular meeting would be November 4th (a week early due to Veterans Day) at 6:00 pm.

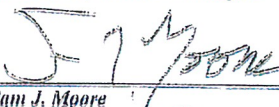
Moore stated he and Esper Lee had a Retired Teachers Proclamation to sign.

Blake Thompson, EMS/EMA Director, stated they had been busy. He announced that David Hook and Raegen Bentley were now paramedics. He also stated he is working on a grant for equipment for EMS.

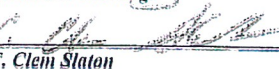
Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Charles Jackson go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Motion carried 4-0.

After a brief discussion in executive session, Moore reopened the regular meeting. Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Charles Jackson to approve personnel changes as discussed in Executive Session. Motion carried 4-0.


Motion was made by Ed Geddings and seconded by Charles Jackson to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.



Sam J. Moore Chairman


Edward J. Geddings Comm.


C. Clem Slaton Comm.


Esper Lee Comm.


E. Charles Jackson Comm.


Karen M. Burton County Clerk



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

November 4, 2021

Diana Hall
Wilkes County Transit
108 Marshall Street
Washington, GA 30673

Dear Ms. Hall,

The Department has completed its review of your Title VI Plan and has determined that it meets the requirements established in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients," effective October 1, 2012.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and compliance of the FTA Civil Rights Program requirements. Should you need assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ashley Finch, Rail/Transit Planner directly at afinch@dot.ga.gov or (470) 432-1751.

Sincerely,

**Patricia
Smith**

Patricia Smith
Transit Program Manager
Division of Intermodal

Digitally signed by
Patricia Smith
Date: 2021.11.06
18:09:11 -04'00'

Appendix D

Title VI Notice to Public

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI**Wilkes County Board of Commissioners**

- Wilkes County Board of Commissioners operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.
- For more information on Wilkes County Board of Commissioners' civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact 706-678-4459, email wcseniorcenter@yahoo.com or visit our administrative office at 108 Marshall Street, Washington, GA 30673.
- If information is needed in another language, contact 706-678-4459
- You may also file your complaint directly with the FTA at: Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor - TCR 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590

Appendix E

Title VI Complaint Form

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

Title VI Complaint Form

Section I:				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
Electronic Mail Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
Section II:				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?			Yes*	No
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.				
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are complaining:				
Please explain why you have filed for a third party:				
Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party.			Yes	No
Section III:				
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin				
Date of Alleged Discrimination (Month, Day, Year): _____				
Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form.				
_____ _____				
Section IV				
Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?			Yes	No

Section V

Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?

Yes No

If yes, check all that apply:

Federal Agency: _____

Federal Court _____

State Agency _____

State Court _____

Local Agency _____

Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed.

Name:

Title:

Agency:

Address:

Telephone:

Section VI

Name of agency complaint is against:

Contact person:

Title:

Telephone number:

You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint.

Signature and date required below

Signature

Date

Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to:

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Title VI Liaison
23 Court Street; RM 222
Washington, GA 30673

Appendix F

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Introduction

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners was developed to ensure that all members of the public, including minorities and Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, are encouraged to participate in the decision making process for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Policy and service delivery decisions need to take into consideration community sentiment and public opinion based upon well-executed outreach efforts. The public outreach strategies described in the PPP are designed to provide the public with effective access to information about Wilkes County Board of Commissioners services and to provide a variety of efficient and convenient methods for receiving and considering public comment prior to implementing changes to services. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners also recognizes the importance of many types of stakeholders in the decision-making process, including other units of government, metropolitan area agencies, community based organizations, major employers, passengers and the general public, including low-income, minority, LEP, and other traditionally underserved communities.

Public Participation Goals

The main goal of the PPP is to offer meaningful opportunities for all interested segments of the public, including, but not limited to, low-income, minority and LEP groups, to comment, about Wilkes County Board of Commissioners and its operations. The goals for this PPP include:

- **Inclusion and Diversity:** Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will proactively reach out and engage low-income, minority, and LEP populations for the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area so these groups will have an opportunity to participate.
- **Accessibility:** All legal requirements for accessibility will be met. Efforts will be made to enhance the accessibility of the public's participation – physically, geographically, temporally, linguistically and culturally.
- **Clarity and Relevance:** Issues will be framed in public meetings in such a way that the significance and potential effect of proposed decisions is understood by participants. Proposed adjustments to fares or services will be described in language that is clear and easy to understand.
- **Responsive:** Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will strive to respond to and incorporate, when possible, appropriate public comments into transportation decisions.
- **Tailored:** Public participation methods will be tailored to match local and cultural preferences as much as possible.
- **Flexible:** The public participation process will accommodate participation in a variety of ways and will be adjusted over time as needed.

Public Participation Methods

The methods of public participation included in this PPP were developed based upon best practices in conjunction with the needs and capabilities of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Wilkes County

Board of Commissioners intends to achieve meaningful public participation by a variety of methods with respect to service and any changes to service.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will conduct community meetings and listening sessions as appropriate with passengers, employers, community based organizations, and advisory committees to gather public input and distribute information about service quality, proposed changes or new service options.

The public will be invited to provide feedback on the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners website (www.wilkescountyga.org) and all feedback on the site will be recorded and passed on to Wilkes County Board of Commissioners management. The public will also be able to call the Wilkes Transit office at 706-678-4459 during its hours of operation. Feedback collected over the phone will be recorded and passed on to Wilkes County Board of Commissioners management. Formal customer surveys to measure performance, and listening sessions to solicit input, will be conducted periodically. The comments recorded as a part of these participation methods will be responded to as appropriate.

Meeting formats will be tailored to help achieve specific public participation goals that vary by project or the nature of the proposed adjustment of service. Some meetings will be designed to share information and answer questions. Some will be designed to engage the public in providing input, establishing priorities, and helping to achieve consensus on a specific recommendation. Others will be conducted to solicit and consider public comments before implementing proposed adjustments to services. In each case, an agenda for the meetings will be created that work to achieve the stated goals and is relevant to the subject and not overwhelming for the public.

For all public meetings, the venue will be a facility that is accessible for persons with disabilities and, preferably, is served by public transit. If a series of meetings are scheduled on a topic, different meeting locations may be used, since no one location is usually convenient to all participants.

For community meetings and other important information, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will use a variety of means to make riders and citizens aware, including some or all of the following methods:

- In-vehicle advertisement
- Posters or flyers in transit center
- Posting information on website
- Press releases and briefings to media outlets
- Flyer distribution to community based organizations, particularly those that target LEP population
- Flyers and information distribution through various libraries and other civic locations that currently help distribute timetables and other information
- Communications to relevant elected officials
- Other methods required by local or state laws or agreements

All information and materials communicating proposed and actual service adjustments will be provided in English and any other language that meets the "safe harbor" criteria.

Public Hearing

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is not required to perform public hearings.

LCB Meetings

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners does not conduct LCB meetings.

Appendix G

Language Assistance Plan (LAP)

I. Introduction

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners operates a transit system within Wilkes County. The Language Assistance Plan (LAP) has been prepared to address Wilkes County Board of Commissioners responsibilities as they relate to the needs of individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Individuals, who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English are LEP. In Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area there are 245 Spanish speakers out of the 9263 total residents as not able to communicate in English "very well" (Source: US Census 2019 American Community Survey). Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is federally mandated (Executive Order 13166) to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information and other important portions of its programs and activities for individuals who are LEP. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has utilized the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) LEP Guidance Handbook and performed a four factor analysis to develop its LAP.

Calculate the number and percentage of people who do not speak English very well by using Appendix H.

The U.S. Department of Transportation Handbook, titled "Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers, (April 13, 2007) " (hereinafter "Handbook"), states that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulations provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance (Handbook, page 5). The Handbook further adds that Title VI prohibits conduct that has a disproportionate effect on LEP persons because such conduct constitutes national origin discrimination (Handbook, page 5).

Executive Order 13166 of August 16, 2000 states that recipients of Federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons (Handbook, page 6). Additionally recipients should use the DOT LEP Guidance to determine how best to comply with statutory and regulatory obligations to provide meaningful access to the benefits, services, information and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are LEP (Handbook, page 6). These provisions are included in FTA Circular 4702.1B in Paragraph 9 of Chapter III (pages III-6 to III-9).

For many LEP individuals, public transit is the principal transportation mode available. It is important for Wilkes County Board of Commissioners be able to communicate effectively with all of its riders. When Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is able to communicate effectively with all of its riders, the service provided is safer, more reliable, convenient, and accessible for all within its service area. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is committed to taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for LEP individuals to this agency's services in accordance with Title VI.

This plan will demonstrate the efforts that Wilkes County Board of Commissioners undertakes to make its service accessible to all persons without regard to their ability to communicate in English. The plan

addresses how services will be provided through general guidelines and procedures including the following:

- Identification: Identifying LEP populations in service areas
- Notification: Providing notice to LEP individuals about their right to language services
- Interpretation: Offering timely interpretation to LEP individuals upon request
- Translation: Providing timely translation of important documents
- Staffing: Identifying Wilkes County Board of Commissioners staff to assist LEP customers
- Training: Providing training on LAP to responsible employees.

II. Four Factor Analysis

The analysis provided in this report has been developed to identify LEP population that may use Wilkes County Board of Commissioners services and identify needs for language assistance. This analysis is based on the "Four Factor Analysis" presented in the Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons, dated April 13, 2007, which considers the following factors:

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a Wilkes County Board of Commissioners program, activity or service.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Wilkes County Board of Commissioners programs, activities or services.
3. The nature and importance of programs, activities or services provided by Wilkes County Board of Commissioners to the LEP population.
4. The resources available to Wilkes County Board of Commissioners and overall costs to provide LEP assistance

a. Factor 1: The Number and Proportion of LEP Persons Served or Encountered in the Eligible Service Population

Of the 9293 residents in the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area 245 residents describe themselves as speaking English less than "very well". People of [Spanish ethnicity] descent are the primary LEP persons likely to utilize Wilkes County Board of Commissioners services. For the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area, the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau shows that among the area's population 99% speak English "very well". For groups who speak English "less than very well", 2.6% speak Spanish

Appendix H contains a table which lists the languages spoken at home by the ability to speak English for the population within the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area.

b. Factor 2: The Frequency with which LEP Individuals Come into Contact with Your Programs, Activities, and Services

The Federal guidance for this factor recommends that agencies should assess the frequency with which they have contact with LEP individuals from different language groups. The more frequent the contact with a particular LEP language group, the more likely enhanced services will be needed.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has assessed the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the transit system. The methods utilized for this assessment include analysis of Census data, examining phone inquiries, requests for translated documents, and staff survey. Phone inquiries and staff survey feedback indicated that Wilkes County Board of Commissioners dispatchers and drivers interact infrequently with LEP persons. The majority of these interactions have occurred with LEP persons who mainly spoke English or Spanish. Over the past 26 years, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has had no requests for translated documents.

c. Factor 3: The Nature and Importance of the Program, Activity, or Service Provided by the Recipient to People's Lives

Public transportation and regional transportation planning is vital to many people's lives. According to the Department of Transportation's *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipient's Responsibilities to LEP Persons*, providing public transportation access to LEP persons is crucial. A LEP person's inability to utilize public transportation effectively, may adversely affect his or her ability to access health care, education, or employment.

An on-board passenger survey was conducted to collect data on usage of and access to the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners services. According to the survey, the most common age among all the participants in the survey was 65 or older. This supports the fact that Wilkes County Board of Commissioners can be considered a senior transit service as most of its patrons are over the age of 65.

To further assess personal mobility options, each respondent was asked how he or she would have made the surveyed trip had Wilkes County Board of Commissioners not been available. The most frequent response was "friend or family member" (40 percent). An additional 25 percent indicated they would not have made the surveyed trip if the service was not available. This data indicates that the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Service is very important as a primary means of transportation for its customers.

d. Factor 4: The Resources Available to the Recipient and Costs

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners assessed its available resources that are currently being used, and those that could be used, to provide assistance to LEP populations. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners provides a reasonable degree of services for LEP populations in its service area.

III. Language Assistance Plan

In developing a Language Assistance Plan, FTA guidance recommends the analysis of the following five elements:

1. Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance
2. Providing language assistance measures
3. Training staff
4. Providing notice to LEP persons
5. Monitoring and updating the plan

The five elements are addressed below.

a. Element 1: Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance

Federal guidance provides that there should be an assessment of the number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be serviced or encountered and the frequency of encounters pursuant to the first two factors in the four-factor analysis.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has identified the number and proportion of LEP individuals within its service area using United States Census data (see Appendix H). As presented earlier, 99% of the service area population speaks English only. The largest non-English spoken language in the service area is Hispanic (.5%). Of those whose primary spoken language is Hispanic, approximately 2.6% identify themselves as speaking less than "very well". Those residents whose primary language is not English and who identify themselves as speaking English less than "very well" account for 2.6% of the service area population.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners may identify language assistance need for an LEP group by:

1. Examining records to see if requests for language assistance have been received in the past, either at meetings or over the phone, to determine whether language assistance might be needed at future events or meetings.
2. Vehicle operators and front-line staff (i.e. Dispatchers, Transit Operation Supervisors, etc.) will be surveyed on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.

b. Element 2: Language Assistance Measures

Federal Guidance suggests that an effective LAP should include information about the ways in which language assistance will be provided. This refers to listing the different language services an agency provides and how staff can access this information.

For this task Federal Guidance recommends that transit agencies consider developing strategies that train staff as to how to effectively deal with LEP individuals when they either call agency centers or otherwise interact with the agency.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has undertaken the following actions to improve access to information and services for LEP individuals:

1. Survey transit drivers and other front-line staff annually on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.
2. When an interpreter is needed in person or on the telephone, staff will attempt to access language assistance services from a professional translation service or qualified community volunteers.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will utilize the demographic maps provided in Appendix I in order to better provide the above efforts to the LEP persons within the service area.

c. Element 3: Training Staff

Federal guidance states staff members of an agency should know their obligations to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP persons and that all employees in public contact positions should be properly trained.

Suggestions for implementing Element 3 of the Language Assistance Plan, involve: (1) identifying agency staff likely to come into contact with LEP individuals; (2) identifying existing staff training opportunities; (3) providing regular re-training for staff dealing with LEP individual needs; and (4) designing and implementing LEP training for agency staff.

In the case of Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, the most important staff training is for Customer Service Representatives and transit drivers.

The following training will be provided to Customer Service Representative:

1. Information on Title VI Procedures and LEP responsibilities
2. Documentation of language assistance requests
3. How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint

d. Element 4: Providing Note to LEP Persons

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners will make Title VI information available in English and Spanish on the Agency's website. Key documents are written in English and Spanish. Notices are also posted in Wilkes County Board of Commissioners office lobby, on buses, and Wilkes Transit. Additionally, when staff prepares a document or schedules a meeting, for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, then documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas will be printed in an alternative language based on the known LEP population.

e. Element 5: Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The plan will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. Updates will consider the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed

- Determine whether Wilkes County Board of Commissioners's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners understands the value that its service plays in the lives of individuals who rely on this service, and the importance of any measures undertaken to make the use of system easier. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is open to suggestions from all sources, including customers, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners staff, other transportation agencies with similar experiences with LEP communities, and the general public, regarding additional methods to improve their accessibility to LEP communities.

IV. Safe Harbor Provision

DOT has adopted the Department of Justice's Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a "safe harbor" for recipients regarding translation of written materials for LEP population. The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if a recipient provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written translation obligations. Translation of non-vital documents, if needed, can be provided orally. If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the five percent (5%) trigger, the recipient is not required to translate vital written materials but should provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners service area does not have LEP populations which qualify for the Safe Harbor Provision. As shown in Appendix H, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners does not have LEP groups which speak English less than "very well" which exceed either 5.0% or 1,000 person.

The Safe Harbor Provision applies to the translation of written documents only. They do not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable. Wilkes County Board of Commissioners may determine, based on the Four Factor Analysis, that even though a language group meets the threshold specified by the Safe Harbor Provision, written translation may not be an effective means to provide language assistance measures.

Appendix H

Operating Area Language Data:

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

Service Area

Language	County	Percent of Population
Total	9293	
Speak only English	8760	
Spanish or Spanish Creole	470	5%
Speak English "very well"	225	
Speak English less than "very well"	245	
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	22	.0029
Speak English "very well"	22	
Speak English less than "very well"		
French Creole		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Italian		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	7	.0007
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
German		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Yiddish		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Other West Germanic languages		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Scandinavian languages		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Greek		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Russian		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Polish		
Speak English "very well"		
Speak English less than "very well"		
Serbo-Croatian		

Appendix I

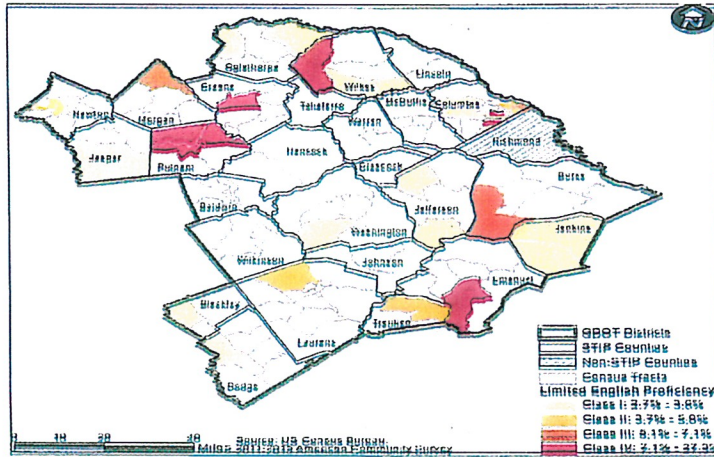
Demographic Maps

Environmental Justice Identification and Proposed Outreach Report

5.2.5 LEP EJ Population

Figure 19 is a map of the LEP EJ population located in District 2. Within District 2, 29 percent of the tracts have a LEP population above the LEP EJ threshold. The analysis shows 8 Class IV tracts located in the following counties: Columbia, Emmanuel, Greene, Putnam, and Wilkes. The analysis also shows 6 Class III tracts, 8 Class II tracts, and 18 Class I tracts. Tract locations can be found in Figure 19:

Figure 19: District 2 LEP EJ Population

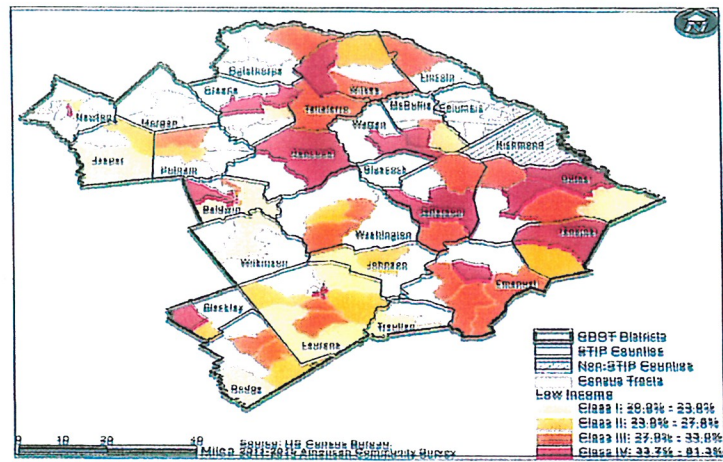


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5.2.3 Low-income EJ Population

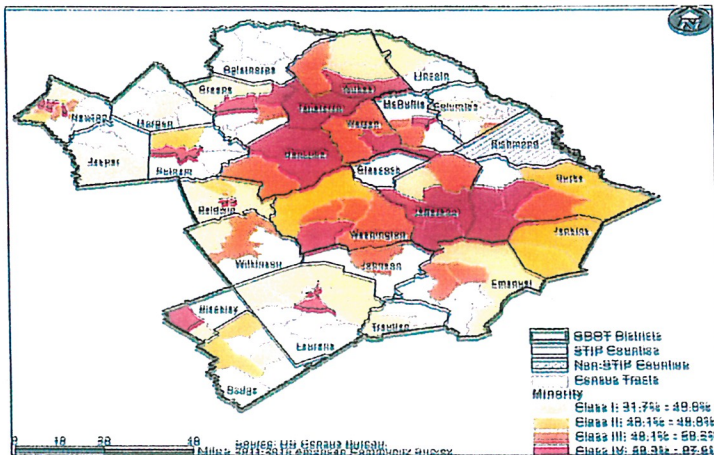
Figure 17 is a map of the low-income EJ population located in District 2. Within District 2, 51 percent of the tracts have a low-income population above the minority EJ threshold. The analysis shows 20 Class IV tracts located in the following counties: Baldwin, Blackley, Burke, Emmanuel, Greene, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Laurens, Newton, McDuffie, Warren, and Wilkes. The analysis also shows 21 Class III tracts, 14 Class II tracts, and 14 Class I tracts. Tract locations can be found in Figure 17.

Figure 17: District 2 Low-income EJ Population



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Figure 15: District 2 Minority EJ Population



Appendix J

Title VI Equity Analysis

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has not preformed Title VI Equity Analysis.

