
Section 4: Assessing Community Transit Resources

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this part of the study was to determine the resources available for transit in the study area with the idea of discerning whether they can be directed in a way that accomplishes the conclusions determined from the transit goals of the community as well as the analysis of transit markets.

Funding mechanisms used by transit providers in the three-county study area were identified and defined. Further, operating characteristics of current transportation providers in the region were compared in order to determine how services could potentially be coordinated to better serve the people who utilize or rely on transit for mobility.

4.2 Inventory of Transit Providers

4.2.1 Providers

It is important to understand the various providers, their service hours, who they serve and the trips made by their riders in the three-county study area made up of Riley, Pottawatomie and Geary Counties. The study area is home to a number of transit providers who serve various populations, but primarily provide service to older adults and persons with disabilities.

Table 2 outlines the transit providers in the study area, the counties they service and the audiences they serve. These services allow persons with disabilities, older adults and at times the general public to travel to their destinations at a low cost when traveling by car is not an option. State and federal funds are provided to these transit providers. There are currently twelve transit providers in the three-county study area.

Big Lakes Developmental Center, Inc.

This non-profit corporation provides all types of trips to individuals with developmental disabilities and the general public. This provider uses a modified demand response system to serve all three counties in the study area. The center is funded by Section 5311 funds and owns fourteen vehicles, including nine lift-equipped.

Community Hospital, Onaga Inc.

This non-profit corporation provides a variety of trips to individuals with developmental disabilities. It is a demand response system and serves only Pottawatomie County in the study area. It is funded by Section 5310 and state funds. It has two vehicles including one lift-equipped vehicle.

Geary County Senior Citizen's, Inc.

This non-profit corporation provides all types of trips to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and general public for a six-mile radius around the senior center, including Junction City and Grandview Plaza. The provider utilizes a demand response and deviated route system and is funded by Section 5311 funds. The non-profit owns three vehicles including one lift –equipped vehicle.

Meadowlark Hills Foundation

This non-profit service provides a demand response system serving the older adults in Riley County for all types of trips. The non-profit is funded by Section 5310 and has three vehicles, including two lift-equipped vehicles.

Table 2: Transit Service Providers

Name	Counties Served	Clientele
Big Lakes Development Center, Inc.	Geary, Pottawatomie, Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public
Community Hospital, Onaga Inc.	Pottawatomie	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public
Enterprise Estates Nursing Home	Geary	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities
Geary County Senior Center	Geary	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities
Meadowlark Hills Foundation	Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities
Mercy Regional Health Center	Geary, Pottawatomie, Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities
Pawnee Mental Health Services	Geary, Pottawatomie, Riley	Persons with Disabilities
Pottawatomie County Transportation	Pottawatomie	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public
Flint Hills ATA	Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public
St. Joseph Village	Geary, Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities
Twin Valley Developmental Services, Inc.	Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public
West Community Care Home, Inc.	Pottawatomie, Riley	Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and General Public

Source: Flint Hills Regional Growth Plan

Mercy Regional Health Center

Mercy Regional Health Center is a private non-profit organization built to serve the local community of Manhattan. It provides a variety of trips for the older adults and persons with disabilities. Its transit services are funded by Section 5310 funds. It owns one vehicle with a lift.

Pawnee Mental Health Services

This non-profit corporation provides medical, recreational, and employment trips to persons with disabilities within all counties of the study area. The provider utilizes a demand response and deviated route service, and is funded by Section 5310 and State funds. The agency owns ten vehicles, including one lift-equipped vehicle.

Pottawatomie County Transportation

This non-profit organization provides all types of trips to the elderly, persons with disabilities and general public using a deviated route service. The agency primarily serves Pottawatomie County and surrounding areas. It is funded with Section 5311 funds. The organization owns nine vehicles including one lift-equipped vehicle.

Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency

This private non-profit organization provides demand response and deviated route general public transportation to the citizens of Manhattan and Riley County. The agency is funded by Section 5311 capital and operating funds, and owns six vehicles, all of which are lift-equipped.

St. Joseph Village

This organization provides a demand response transportation service for residents of St. Joseph Village, a healthcare and assisted living facility, to physician appointments, recreation, shopping and banking. The service is also provided to other residents within Riley County with occasional trips to Topeka. State funds support the organization's transportation system, and they have one vehicle, which is lift-equipped.

Twin Valley Developmental Service Transit

This non-profit corporation provides all types of trips, excluding education, to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and general public. Section 5311, Section 5310, and State funds fund the non-profit. The organization utilizes a demand response and fixed route service, with access to eighteen vehicles including seven lift-equipped.

West Community Care Home, Inc.

This nursing facility provides service to the elderly, persons with disabilities and the general public. The agency is funded by Section 5310 funds, and owns one vehicle which is also lift-equipped.

4.2.2 Funding

All of the transit providers listed in Table 2 are members of Coordinated Transit District (CTD) 4 and receive capital and operating assistance from the state and federal governments. CTD 4 is one of 15 Coordinated Transit Districts in Kansas to which Geary, Riley and Pottawatomie belong.

The two primary funding programs for services provided in the study area are Section 5310 funds, which distribute funding for the capital costs of providing transit services specifically for older adults and persons with disabilities and Section 5311 (Rural and Small Urban General Public Transportation) which provides funds for capital and operating grants for services in non-urbanized areas. The following paragraphs include descriptions of providers, their funding mechanisms and vehicle fleet information. Table 3 summarizes the federal funding mechanisms that each provider utilizes.

Table 3: Transit Provider Funding

Name	5310 Capital	5311 Capital	5311 Operating
Big Lakes Development Center, Inc.	X	X	
Community Hospital, Onaga Inc.	X		
Geary County Senior Center		X	X
Enterprise Estates Nursing Home	X		
Meadowlark Hills Foundation	X		
Mercy Regional Health Center	X		
Pawnee Mental Health Center			
Pottawatomie County Transportation		X	X
Flint Hills ATA		X	X
St. Joseph Village	X		
Twin Valley Developmental Services, Inc.		X	X
West Community Care Home, Inc.	X		

Source: Flint Hills Regional Growth Plan

3.2.3 Other Services

Kansas State University Service

Currently Kansas State University offers students three transit services - Safe Ride and an International Student Shopping Shuttle and an on-campus shuttle that extends from Edwards Hall to the KSU Foundation. Safe Ride's purpose is to provide a safer environment in the City of Manhattan by offering alternative transportation options to students who should otherwise not be operating motor vehicles. The service provides a safe ride home for K-State students and guests who live within the designated city limits of Manhattan, from Thursday through Saturday night, from 11:00 PM to 3:00 AM. The program is offered through the Kansas State University Student Governing Association (SGA) and employs a local cab company. SGA is currently negotiating with ATA Bus to operate the service. SGA spends about \$100,000 annually for this service.

The university also provides a twice per week shuttle service for international students. This service began in the fall of 2004 and provides transportation to international students for general shopping purposes. It runs every Saturday and Wednesday night when classes are in session and every-other Saturday during school recesses. Each trip averages 35 to 40 students, and at times there can be up to 100 people utilizing the service. The International Student Shopping Shuttle is primarily funded through the Global Education Initiative. The funding for this service is due to expire at the end of the University's 2010 fiscal year. No replacement funding has been yet identified.

Finally, KSU operates a campus shuttle that connects Edwards Hall, the KSU Union, and the KSU Foundation. This service operates every 30 minutes, Monday through Friday. It is operated by the Parking Services Division of the university at an annual cost of about \$100,000.

City of Manhattan Taxi Coupon Program

The Taxi Coupon Program offers taxi coupons to older adults and persons with disabilities at a reduced rate, which is subsidized by the City. Riders pay \$2.50 for each coupon and in turn the City pays the taxi companies \$4.00 for each coupon they turn in. The coupons can be redeemed for a one-way trip anywhere within the city limits. The service provided approximately 3,500 individual trips in 2009.

Transit Service at Fort Riley

Until recently, Fort Riley offered free public transportation on post to soldiers, families and employees. Because of budgetary issues, that service was discontinued.

Regional Breakthrough Team

In 2009, the Kansas Department of Transportation embarked upon a study to create a regional transit approach to expand and improve delivery of rural transit services. The goal of this study was the development of transit jurisdictions that would cover the entire state. Each jurisdiction would have a lead agency that would be required to meet a specific level of service. On-call dispatching would be required and would assist with scheduling efficiencies. The ideal outcome of this study would be to help identify a coordination plan that could provide more efficient transit services to the study area.

4.2.3 Analysis of Trips and Ridership

It appears that the primary ridership market for most of the transit providers includes older adults and persons with disabilities. The study area providers seem to be more focused on those markets than on the general public. The older adults and persons with disabilities clientele are served by all twelve transit operators in the study area while only six of the transit operators also serve the general public.

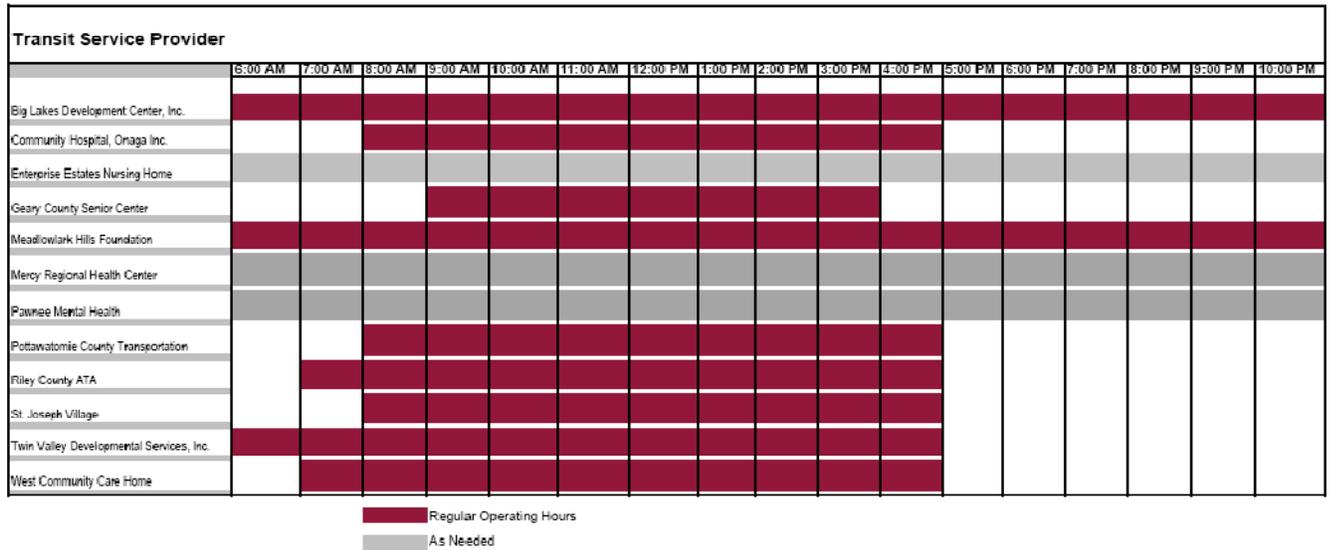
Another conclusion is that the general public is likely not served largely due to the population and employment density of the of the entire study area. The City of Manhattan does have the density that could potentially be served by fixed-route service, but the remainder of the study area is fairly rural in nature. Another reason relates to the acute needs for transportation service for older persons and people with disabilities, creating a higher service priority for them.

Of the 12 transit providers within Riley, Pottawatomie and Geary Counties, there are two that operate between 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM, one operates between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM, two operate between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, three transit providers operate from 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, one operates between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM and three operate on an as-needed basis. Figure 33 illustrates the service hours for each transit provider. These transit providers offer limited weekend service.

While transit providers serve the varying needs of their users, the highest trip purpose is typically for medical reasons. Transit users also utilize services to access shopping centers. Figure 34 below provides information on the number of trips on an average weekday provided by Flint Hills ATA, the largest provider in the study region. The largest numbers of trips occur close to 5:00 PM and the remainder is fairly dispersed throughout a typical day.

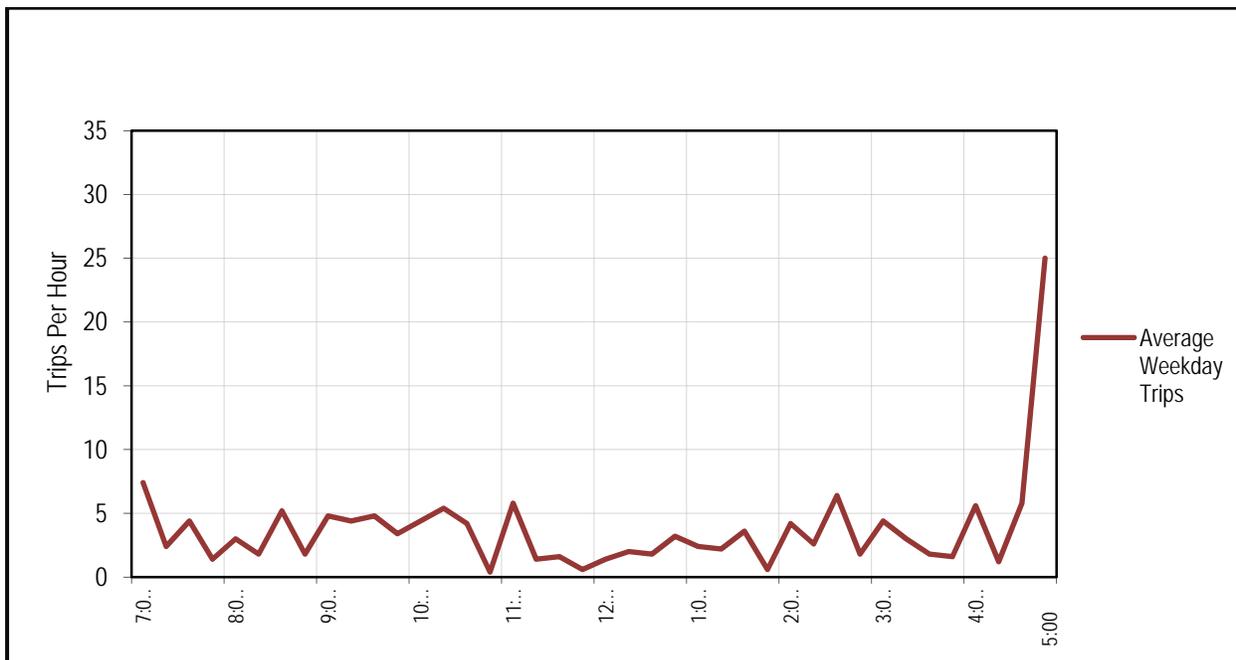
In order to understand the demand placed on area transportation agencies, it is imperative to know the locations of their users. Figure 35 through Figure 38 show pick-up and drop-off locations of the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency as well as for the Big Lakes and the Geary County transit services. These images represent pick-ups and drop-offs over a typical week-long period. All four maps indicate that the commercial area on the east side of Manhattan adjacent to US-24 is heavily served throughout a typical week.

Figure 33: Daily Schedule of Transit Providers in the Study Area



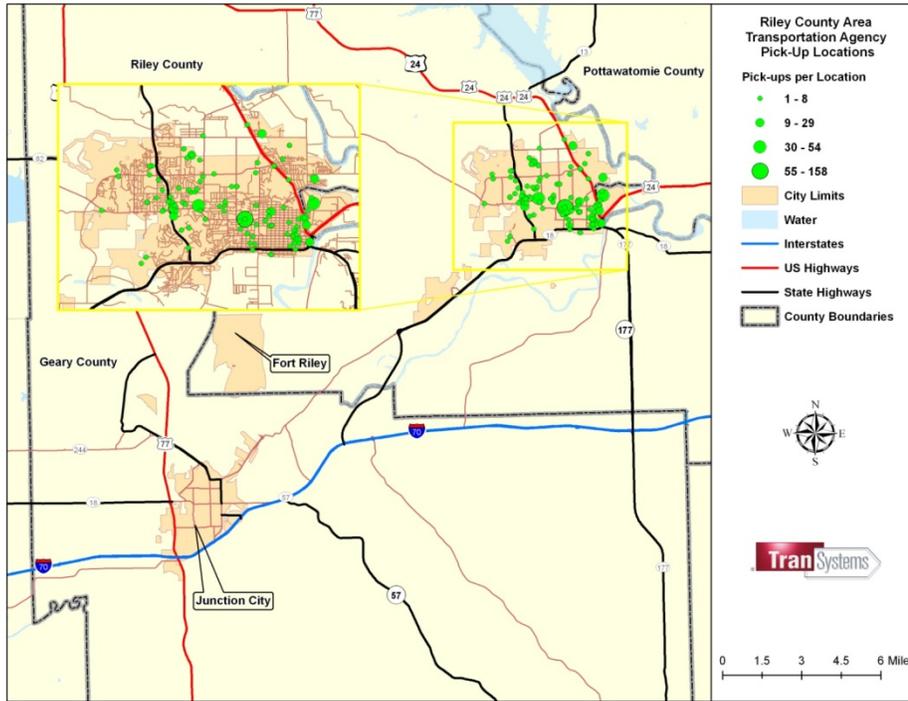
Source: Flint Hills Regional Growth Plan

Figure 34: Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency Average Weekday Trips (November 2009)



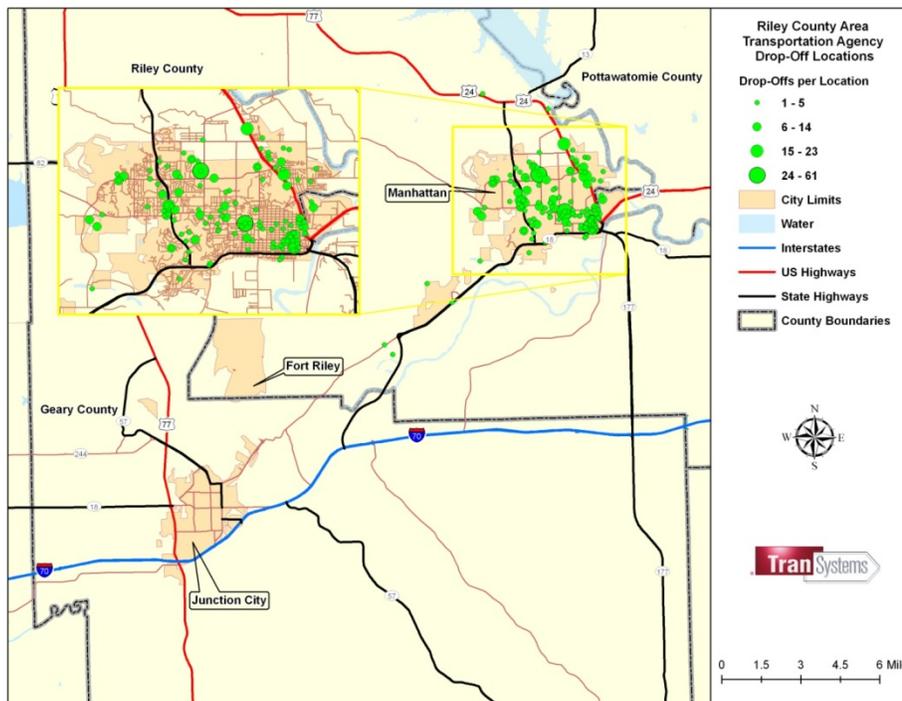
Source: Flint Hills ATA

Figure 35: Flint Hills ATA Pick-Up Locations



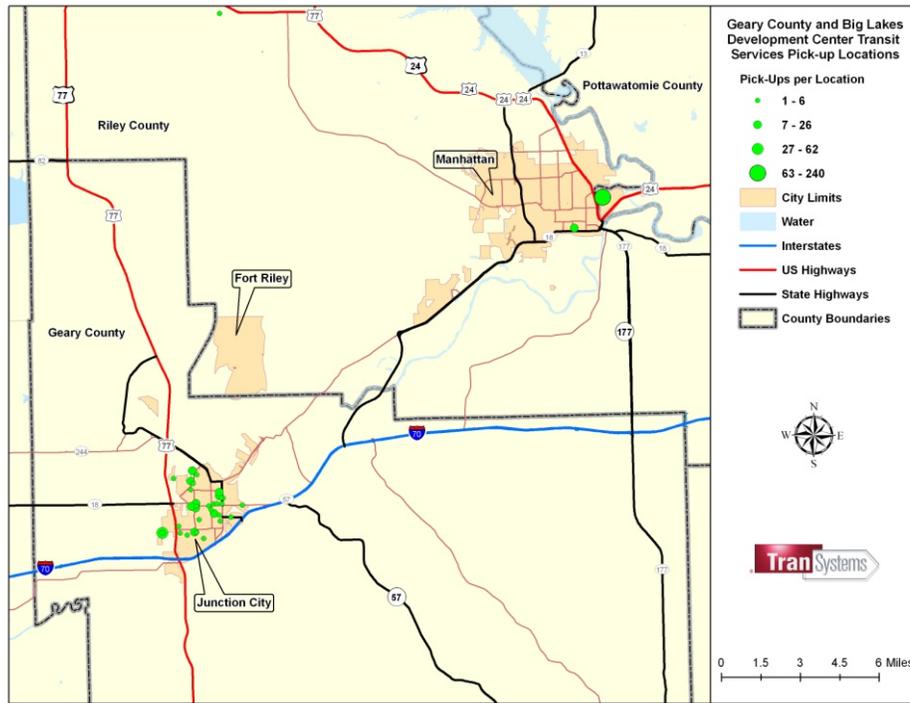
Source: University of Kansas Transportation Center

Figure 36: Flint Hills ATA Drop-Off Locations



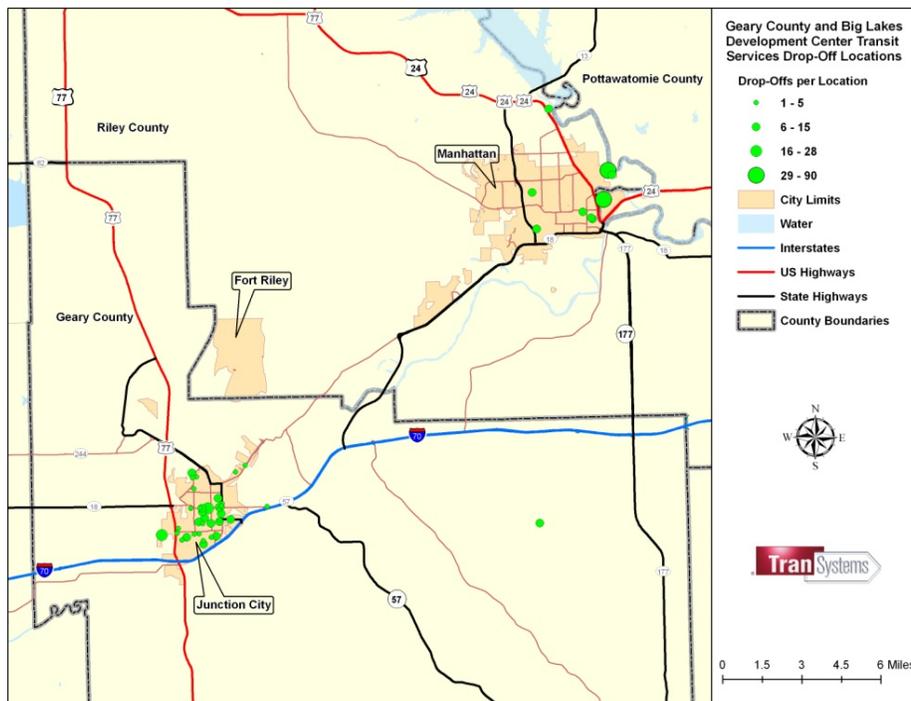
Source: University of Kansas Transportation Center

Figure 37: Geary County and Big Lakes Development Pick-Up Locations



Source: University of Kansas Transportation Center

Figure 38: County and Big Lakes Development Drop-Off Locations



Source: University of Kansas Transportation Center

4.3 Conclusions

The study area has a number of rural transportation options addressing the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities. The population perhaps most in lacking service is the general public including urban residents of Junction City, Manhattan, Wamego and Fort Riley.

As noted previously in the transit markets discussion, the Manhattan portion of Riley County could potentially support fixed route service. Flint Hills ATA, a transit service with significant ridership within Manhattan, could be a provider to handle this type of service based on their current capabilities and operations. However, fixed route service would require substantially more funding resources than have been currently identified. The remaining five general public transit providers who seem to primarily serve areas outside of Manhattan could offer service to those outlying residents through a more coordinated demand response and flexible service plan. The “regional breakthrough” effort could address these coordination challenges.

As resources are examined for future service, Kansas State University's Safe Ride Program, International Student Shopping Shuttle, and Edwards Hall Campus Shuttle as well as the City's Taxi Coupon Program may be potential funding partners in a Manhattan service. However, it is likely that new resources would also be required to expand service to points such as Fort Riley, Junction City and Wamego.