

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES (DRAFT)



Gila County Transit Governance Study

Prepared for:
Central Arizona Governments in partnership with
Gila County

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**Acronyms/Abbreviations**

ACS	American Community Survey
ADOT	Arizona Department of Transportation
AHCCCS	Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
CAG	Central Arizona Governments
FACT	Fort Apache Connection Transit
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
LEHD	U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
MVS	Mountain Valley Shuttle
NTD	National Transit Database
PGCSC	Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SCMPO	Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families



1. STUDY OVERVIEW

The Central Arizona Governments (CAG), established in 1975 by Executive Order 70-2, is one of Arizona's six regional planning districts created to aid a more cohesive region of similar interests and enhance the lifestyles of its residents. CAG is tasked with providing effective regional planning services to Gila and Pinal Counties, the incorporated cities and towns within, as well as the Native American Tribes within the region and therefore, the impacts of CAG policy and resources affect a wide variety of these communities.

The *Gila County Transit Governance Study* was initiated by CAG to develop an institutional structure that will improve public transportation coordination and connectivity within Gila County. The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive guide to enhance transit services and design investment strategies that make best use of available federal, state, regional, and local funding. A well-defined organizational structure and investment strategy will maximize available resources and improve mobility and access to jobs, healthcare, and shopping within the county.

1.1 STUDY PURPOSE

In 2018, CAG completed the *Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study* to develop a cohesive vision and approach to improve the quality of life for Gila County area residents by providing transit services. The implementation portion of the study made a recommendation to create a Regional Transit Coordination Council to serve as a central contact to help guide local and regional travel throughout Gila County. CAG initiated this study with the primary goal of evaluating transit governance models and create a blueprint to guide the governance, management, and implementation of public transportation services in Gila County. By improving coordination between providers and pooling resources, it could result in greater coverage to the area users, better service frequency, service reliability, improved ridership, and lower operating costs.

Core study objectives include:

- Use previous studies as a foundation to examine existing services and assess future needs for effective regional planning and coordination.
- Analyze how existing and future public transportation services can coordinate and collaborate on service delivery.
- Evaluate a variety of governance and management strategies, including the costs and benefits for each jurisdiction and agency.
- Establish one cohesive vision among the different agencies, tribal governments, cities, and towns on how the region should collaborate, manage, structure and oversee public transportation.



1.2 STUDY AREA

Gila County is located in central Arizona, generally east of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The County covers nearly 4,800 square miles with 55 percent of the land within the Tonto National Forest, 37 percent within the Fort Apache and San Carlos Apache reservations, 4 percent is privately owned, and the rest of the land managed by the Bureau of Land Management or State Lands (see **Figure 1.1**). In general, the Study Area is rural in nature with terrains that range from desert landscapes (2,200 FT) to mountainous terrain (7,900 FT). Due to the area's terrain and scenic nature, Gila County is a popular recreation area for Phoenix residents to partake in the area's wide range of recreational opportunities.

Communities in Gila County includes many residents that are elderly, low-income, and often do not have access to reliable vehicles to reach activity centers. With the population centers being widespread within Gila County, coordination among transit providers is critical. Coordination under a more regional governing structure will enable seamless operations between local and regional transit system without duplication and administrative costs. Gila County is currently served by several public, non-profit, and private transit providers, including:

- Beeline Bus in the Payson/Star Valley area,
- Copper Mountain Transit (formally known as Cobre Valley Community Transit) in the Miami/Globe area,
- Nnee Bich'o Nii Transit operated by the San Carlos Apache Tribe,
- Fort Apache Connection operated by the White Mountain Apache Tribe Division of Transportation,
- Greyhound and Mountain Valley Shuttle that provide regional connecting between communities in Gila County and the Phoenix metropolitan area, and
- Numerous specialized transportation providers through human service providers.

A brief description of the communities within the Study Area are as follows:



1.2.1 TOWN OF PAYSON

Referred to as "The Heart of Arizona", the Town of Payson is located close to the geographic center of Arizona. Located at the base of the Mogollon Rim, the Town is a favorite recreational area due to its mild summers and scenic outdoor winter activities. Payson is the largest communities in Gila County, with numerous medical facilities, shopping opportunities, and tourist facilities. Payson is also a popular second home destination for Phoenix metropolitan residents and for retirees.

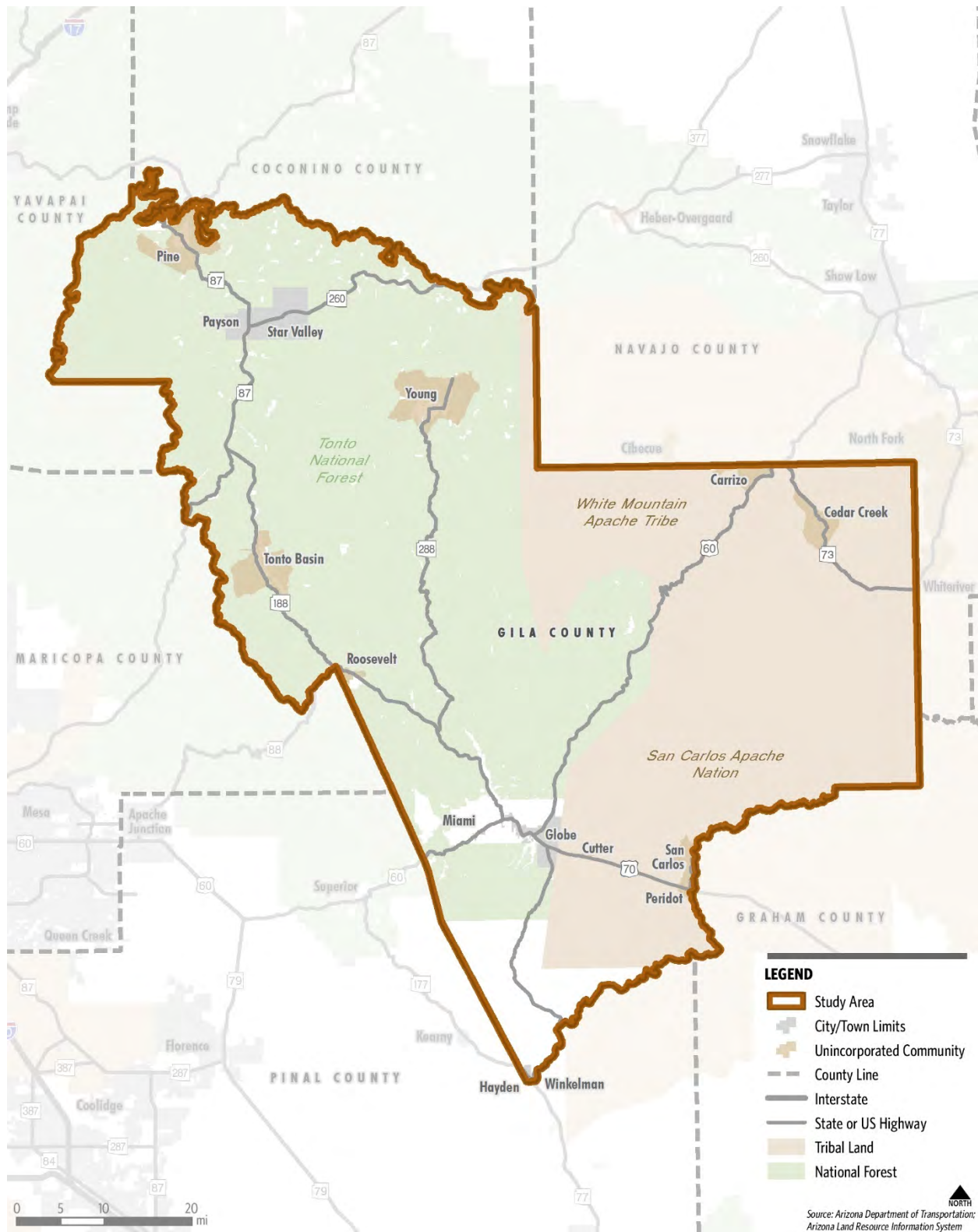


1.2.2 TOWN OF STAR VALLEY

Incorporated in 2005, Star Valley is one of Arizona's newest towns. Located in northern Gila County along SR 260, the Town contains 36 square miles of land immediately east of Payson. Star Valley is a popular location for retirees as well as summer homes for Phoenix residents.



Figure 1.1. Study Area





1.2.3 CITY OF GLOBE

Located in the heart of the Tonto National Forest and surrounded by mountain vistas, the city's colorful history is punctuated by mining discoveries. Known as the "Place of Metal" among local Native American communities, Globe was founded in 1875 as a silver and copper mining town. The opening of the Old Dominion Mine started the population boom and led to the growth of the community. Once a thriving mining town with a bustling Main Street, the flooding of the Old Dominion Copper Mine in the 1920s led to significant declines in population and reduced economic growth. Today the City is the seat of government for Gila County and with a thriving tourism industry. Globe is conveniently located at the junction of four major highways including US 60, US 70, SR 188, and SR 77.



1.2.4 TOWN OF MIAMI

Originally established as a camp for a nearby copper mine, today Miami is a quiet town with antique stores that focus on the cultural, mining and ranching history of the area. Many of the buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are under renovation to help build tourism to the area. Located immediately west of Globe, the two communities are often referred to as Globe-Miami.



1.2.5 TOWN OF WINKELMAN

Winkelman is located at the border of Gila and Pinal Counties and is the smallest incorporated town in Arizona. The history of Winkelman dates back to 1877 and 1878 when a large number of farmers migrated to the region. The community serves primarily as a service center and residential area for families of employees associated with mining and processing activities. The principal employer within the town is the Hayden-Winkelman School District.



1.2.6 TOWN OF HAYDEN

Founded in 1911, Hayden was a company town owned by the Kennecott Copper Corporation for employees working in operations and extraction of high-grade copper ore. Once a thriving area, Hayden's population has significantly decreased after the closing of the mine.



1.2.7 SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE

Located in Gila, Pinal and Graham Counties, the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation was established by executive order on November 9, 1871 and encompasses over 1.8 million acres of land. Located east of the Globe-Miami area, main communities in the reservation include San Carlos, Peridot, Cutter, and Bylas. The Tribe currently has one of the primary transit services available in Gila County, San Carlos Apache Nnee Bich'o Nii Services, which provides services within the reservation as well as to the Globe-Miami and Safford areas.



1.2.8 WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE

Located in Apache, Gila and Navajo Counties, the Fort Apache Indian Reservation spans over on 1.6 million acres through the three Counties. The Tribe has over 12,000 members located on nine major reservation communities. Whiteriver, the capital, is the largest community with over 2,500 residents and is located just outside Gila County. The communities of Carrizo and Cedar Creek are within Gila County.

1.2.9 UNINCORPORATED GILA COUNTY

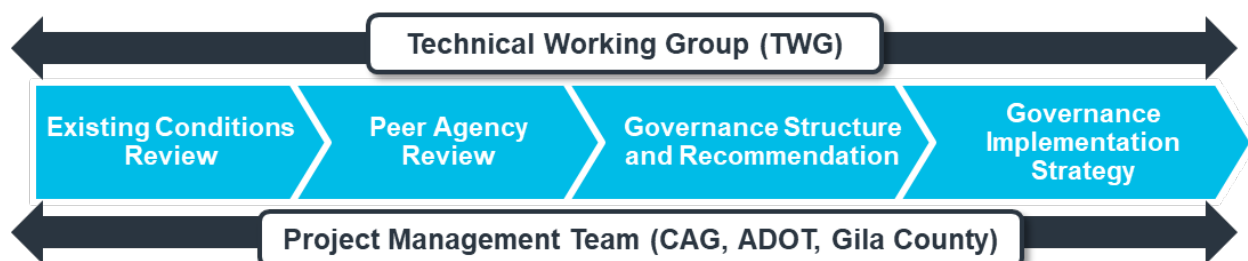
Unincorporated Gila County is primarily comprised of the Tonto National Forest and the unincorporated communities of Pine, Strawberry, Tonto Basin, Young, and Roosevelt. There are a number of popular recreation areas, including Roosevelt Lake, Tonto National Monument, Tonto Natural Bridge State Park, and Fossil Creek, along with popular camping areas within the Tonto National Forest.

1.3 STUDY PROCESS

This study is a multi-phase process, as illustrated in **Figure 1.2**. This working paper documents existing conditions in Gila County and is the first of a series of documents that will be developed throughout the plan. This document includes an assessment of the current and future transit service market, as well as an inventory of existing public transportation services.

The *CAG Gila County Transit Governance Study* will be developed with guidance provided by a Project Management Team that includes CAG, Gila County, and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). A study will also include on-going collaboration with a Technical Working Group (TWG) who will provide input and oversight and will champion the goals and objectives of the study. The TWG includes key staff from local cities, towns, and transit agencies. The Study also includes a robust stakeholder engagement process ensuring that CAG member agencies and transit providers are equitable planning partners throughout plan development.

Figure 1.2. Study Process





1.4 RELATED STUDIES, REPORTS, AND PLANS

Review of completed and current planning efforts provides an insight into previously identified transit issues and potential transit opportunities. The following section provides a summary of relevant documents that will serve as a foundation for this Study.

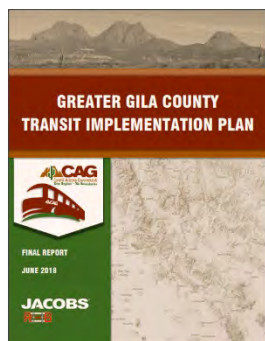
1.4.1 CAG AREA STUDIES



1.4.1.1 CAG and SCMPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan – FY 2020 Update

This Plan was prepared jointly by CAG and the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (SCMPO) with the purpose of identifying transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes residing in Gila and Pinal Counties. It is the culmination of an annual update that provides strategies to meet identified needs. Identified needs in Gila and Pinal Counties included:

- Additional resources and specially equipped vehicles to accommodate disabled riders
- Additional funding and other resources that would allow expansion or enhancement of services
- Replacement or expansion of current fleet
- Centralized maintenance and fueling for fleet vehicles
- Additional public transit options or transportation services connected with community-oriented services, especially to critical destinations (i.e., shopping, jobs, medical appointments, etc.)
- Coordination with transportation resources outside of individual agencies to improve mobility and expand options for residents



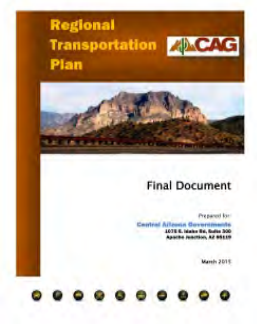
1.4.1.2 Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan (2018)

To address transit needs identified in the *2015 CAG Regional Transportation Plan*, this study was initiated by CAG to develop a cohesive vision and approach to improve the quality of life for greater Gila County area residents by providing transit services. The study evaluated the area's current and future unmet transit needs and identified feasible transit options for underserved residents of the region. The first phase of the project focused on conducting a feasibility review of the expansion or enhancement of existing services; the second phase of the study developed a five-year implementation plan for realizing the plan's recommended enhancements. Key recommendations included:



- Develop two fixed-route transit routes within Payson, with a connection to Star Valley*
- Improve travel times and service frequency for Cobre Valley Community Transit (CVCT) and coordinate service with Nnee Bich'o Nii*
- Develop marketing plan for CVCT*
- Establish a Gila County/CAG regionwide public transit council to improve coordination between providers, create efficiencies, and maximize use of resources. This recommendation is the basis of the *Gila County Transit Governance Study*.

**Since completion of this study, several recommended improvements have been implemented, including developing a fixed-route public transportation service in Payson and Star Valley, coordinating services in Globe-Miami, and rebranding CVCT.*



1.4.1.3 2015 CAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

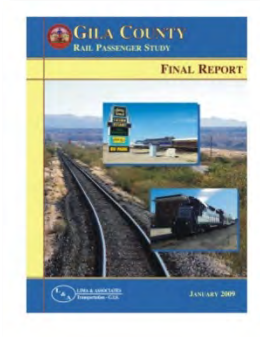
CAG initiated this study to develop a Plan that resulted in transportation improvements. The issues and improvements in the Plan spanned Gila and Pinal Counties with the goal of defining future transportation and its role in community growth. The Transit Element of the RTP indicates that population and employment growth will require appropriate transit services to support greater travel within intraregional corridors and increased commuting associated to neighboring Pima and Maricopa Counties. Expectations for future transit service in the region included:

- Greater capacity and a dramatically higher frequency of transit service to accommodate travel demand
- More moderate transit service systems in the suburban and rural areas to ensure that full mobility and accessibility opportunities are available to the region's populace
- One or more stations in Pinal County associated with the proposed Tucson-Phoenix high-speed passenger rail project

As noted in the document, a key deficiency associated with transit services in the CAG region is the notable lack of general fixed-route public transportation for the region's residents and visitors, even in the larger communities such as Apache Junction, Casa Grande, Payson, and Maricopa. In addition, there are few transportation services connecting communities within the CAG region. Although specialized services accommodate seniors, persons with disabilities, and others with special needs, and provide reasonable coverage for many communities, there is a clear lack of public transportation options accessible to persons lacking their own means of transportation, (i.e., low-income and other persons affected by various socioeconomic constraints).

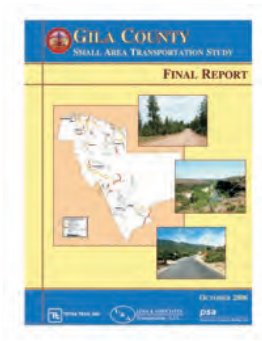


1.4.2 GILA COUNTY STUDIES



1.4.2.1 2009 Gila County Rail Passenger Study

This study conducted a comprehensive review of the potential for a permanent passenger rail service in the Globe-Miami area, utilizing the existing Arizona Eastern Railway tracks. The study reviewed service between Globe, Apache Gold Casino, Miami, and to San Carlos. As an outcome of the study, the Copper Spike Excursion Train began operating rail service between the Apache Gold Casino Resort and downtown Globe. The rail service grew from a small rail car carrying a few hundred passengers to a statewide attraction with over 27,000 passengers a year. In August 2011, however, Iowa Pacific sold the Arizona Eastern Railway and service discontinued.



1.4.2.2 2006 Gila County Small Area Transportation Study

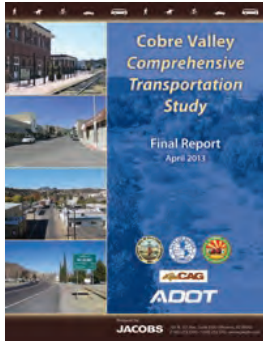
The purpose of the study was to develop a 20-year transportation plan and implementation program to guide Gila County in meeting transportation needs into the future. The study noted that alternative transportation modes within Gila County are very limited and opportunities for alternative modes are limited by the disconnected County Road System. Transit recommendations included:

- Designate a County Transportation Coordinator and consider the establishment of a Countywide regional ride-sharing program
- Construct initial park-and-ride facilities for use by the carpools and van pools
- Monitor number of citizens requesting dial-a-ride and/or transit service both Countywide and in different areas of the County
- Conduct follow-up studies to address the following:
 - Feasibility and implementation of replacement for Greyhound service along the US 60/US 70 Corridor*
 - Expansion of Cobre Valley Transit dial-a-ride service and addition of deviated fixed-route service*
 - Feasibility of future transit service between the Globe and Payson areas
 - Future update of the Payson Area Public Transit Study*

**Since completion of this study, several recommended improvements have been implemented, including developing a fixed-route public transportation service in Globe-Miami and Payson -Star Valley and reestablishing Greyhound service.*



1.4.3 STUDIES FOR CITY/TOWN/TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN GILA COUNTY

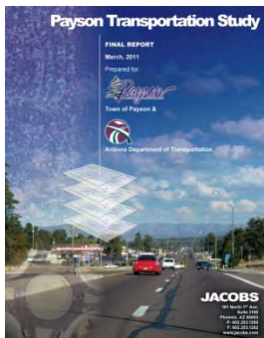


1.4.3.1 2013 Cobre Valley Comprehensive Transportation Study

This study was a joint venture by the City of Globe, Town of Miami, Arizona Department of Transportation, Gila County, and CAG to develop a long-range multimodal plan for the Cobre Valley region. In conjunction with the study, a Cobre Valley Community Transit Study was conducted. The core recommendation from the study was the establishment of a deviated fixed-route system with demand response support. The system would also interface with the San Carlos Transit system at designated transfer points. Additional recommendations included:

- Design and develop a new fixed-route system, with demand response support, and a marketing strategy for the Cobre Valley Community Transit, as well as strengthen partnerships to support the system*
- Re-establish commercial bus service between Cobre Valley, Phoenix, and Tucson*
- Re-establish passenger rail or excursion rail between Miami, Globe, and Peridot

**Since completion of this study, several improvements have been implemented, including developing a fixed-route public transportation service and reestablishing Greyhound service to Phoenix and Tucson.*

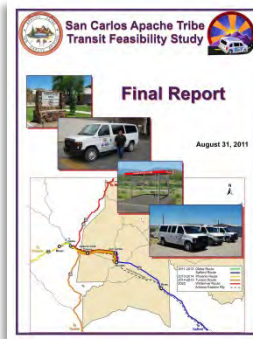


1.4.3.2 2011 Payson Transportation Study

The principal focus of this study was to develop a long-range multimodal transportation plan for the Town to address growing demands placed on local roads as a result of significant population growth, economic development, and increased traffic volume. A key element of the plan was to examine the need for public transportation. Key recommendations included:

- Designate a town transit coordinator and organize a transit advisory committee
- Complete a Transit Implementation Study
- A Transportation Demand Management Program is needed to coordinate and provide public information on public programs that enable people to utilize transit
- Establish a Town Transit department and implement recommendations from transit study

Since completion of this plan, the Payson Senior Center developed a fixed-route public transportation service. Additional information is provided in Section 3.

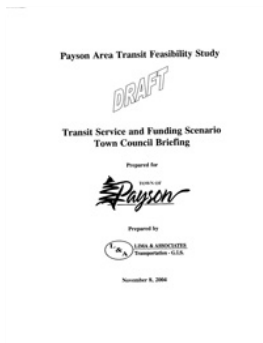


1.4.3.3 2011 San Carlos Apache Tribe Transit Feasibility Study

This study assessed the expansion and enhancement of the San Carlos Apache Transit Services operations and developed a five-year service expansion plan. Recommended routes included:

- Globe – 41 miles one-way; three roundtrips; Monday through Friday
- Safford – 69 miles one-way; three roundtrips; Monday through Friday
- Phoenix – 119 miles one-way; three roundtrips; two days a week; stops in Mesa, Superior and Apache Junction
- Tucson – 114 miles one-way; roundtrips; two days a week; stop in San Manuel
- Whiteriver – two roundtrips; stops in Globe, Whiteriver, Pinetop-Lakeside, and Show Low

Since completion of this plan, the San Carlos Apache Transit Services expanded and enhanced services to incorporate services to the Globe-Miami area, Safford area, Tucson metropolitan area, and to create a connection with the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Additional information is provided in Section 3.



1.4.3.4 2004 Payson Area Transit Feasibility Study

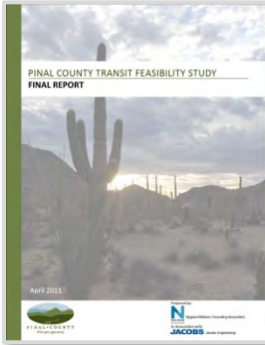
The *Payson Area Transit Feasibility Study* evaluated the transit need and demand in the Payson area and developed recommended transit service scenarios and funding options. Key elements included:

- Deviated fixed-route services is the preferred type of transit service, because a dial-a-ride and fixed-route service would be more costly to operate
- Two interconnected loop routes that intersect at the corner of SR 86 and SR 260, with transfers between routes at the Bashas' shopping center
- Designate a Town Transit Coordinator and organize a transit advisory committee
- Complete a Transit Implementation Study
- A Transportation Demand Management Program is needed to coordinate and provide public information on public programs that enable people to utilize transit
- Establish a Town Transit Department and implement recommendations from transit study

Since completion of this plan, the Payson Senior Center developed a fixed-route public transportation service. Additional information is provided in Section 3.



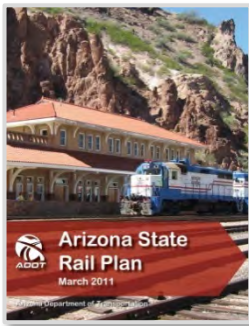
1.4.4 OTHER RELEVANT STUDIES



1.4.4.1 2011 Pinal County Transit Feasibility Study

Due to the regional connectiveness of Gila and Pinal Counties, as well, the communities of Hayden and Winkelman being county's borders, it is important to understand the transit environment in Pinal County. To evaluate key growth impacts to transit and feasibility of transit throughout Pinal County, the agency conducted this study to identify steps to implement effective transit services. Based on the socioeconomic analysis, it was determined that the overall demand for transit service in the County was "low," at the time of the study due to the scattered character of small population and employment concentrations across Pinal County. Potential transit improvements included:

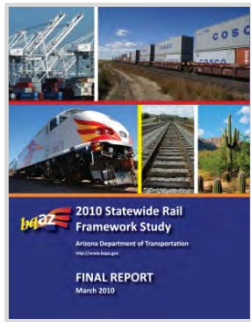
- Winkelman – Tucson: two days a week; stops in Winkelman (located within Gila County), San Manuel, Oracle, and Saddlebrooke
- Kearny – Apache Junction: two days a week; stops in Apache Junction, Superior, Florence Junction, and Kearny
- Potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service to support commuter connections between Apache Junction and the METRO light rail line in Mesa



1.4.4.2 2011 Arizona State Rail Plan

The *Arizona State Rail Plan* expanded on the technical information presented in the *2010 Statewide Rail Framework Study*. The Rail Plan was a collection of multimodal transportation elements, which creates a vision for future rail in Arizona. Key elements included:

- Globe and a large portion of Gila County are within the potential Sunset Corridor
- Copper Basin Railway could be utilized for passenger service from Hayden
- Improvements to Arizona Eastern Railway are needed to enable rural passenger service from Safford to Globe



1.4.4.3 2010 Statewide Rail Framework Study

The *Statewide Rail Framework Study* aimed to identify rail transportation needs and recommendations for improvement. Recommendations included:

- Existing passenger rail service was limited to Amtrak and tourism railway services
- Passenger rail service is needed to meet future long-distance commute demand
- A potential Southwest Interstate High Speed Rail Corridor traverses Gila County



1.4.4.4 2008 Arizona Rural Transit Needs Study

Out of 11 “top candidate travel corridors” identified by the State-sponsored *Arizona Rural Transit Needs Study*, three travel corridors were located in the CAG region. These corridors are candidates for expanded intercity, commuter-oriented general public transportation service. Corridors within this study’s influence area include Payson - Phoenix and Miami – Superior-Mesa. San Carlos Indian Reservation, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and Payson were also identified as candidate locations for New Section 5311 Program Services.

1.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Review of previous studies and plans found several common themes and needed improvements, including:

- Transit services is deemed essential by many communities to provide residents with transportation options.
- Currently there is a lack of regional transit connectivity, but residents generally commute and travel between communities for shopping, medical appointments, government services, and for employment.
- There is a strong desire for Gila County residents to connect to the Phoenix metropolitan area for medical appointments and services. Residents of San Carlos Apache Tribe, Hayden, and Winkelman also have a desire for increased connectivity to the Tucson metropolitan area for medical appointments and shopping.
- Limited funding and transit agency coordination makes regional expansions and enhancements difficult. Many communities see the potential benefit from regional transit coordination to improve regional mobility and connectiveness.



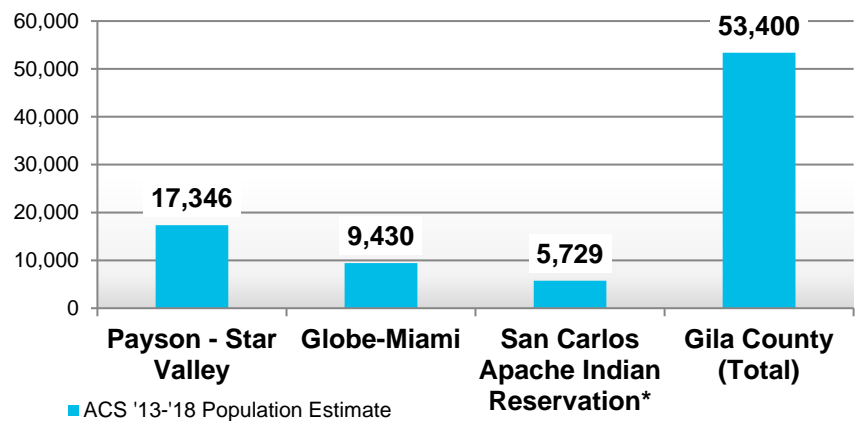
2. GILA COUNTY TODAY AND TOMORROW

Assessing an area's socioeconomic characteristics is a critical element for any transit study. Socioeconomic data is utilized to understand current and future transit demand within the Study Area. This section provides an analysis of the existing demographics for the Study Area to identify areas with the greatest transit needs.

2.1 CURRENT AND FUTURE POPULATION

The decennial 2010 U.S. Census tabulates data into “urban” and “rural” areas. These provide certain federal and state agencies with a basis for implementing programs with urban and rural criteria for allocation of resources. “Urbanized Areas” consist of densely settled, contiguous territory containing 50,000 or more people. The 2010 Census estimated a total of 53,597 persons in the Gila County, of which 58.9 percent of the population resides within an urbanized cluster area.

Figure 2.1. 2018 ACS Population Totals



Since the 2010 Census, Gila County has experienced a slight decrease in population. The 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates Gila County's population to be 53,400. As illustrated in the graphic above, the Payson-Star Valley area has the highest population within the Study Area, with over 17,300 residents. **Figure 2.1** and **Table 2.1** provide an overview of population statistics for the Payson-Star Valley area, Globe-Miami area, the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, and Gila County. **Figure 2.2** illustrates areas with higher population density within the County.

Table 2.1. Population Overview

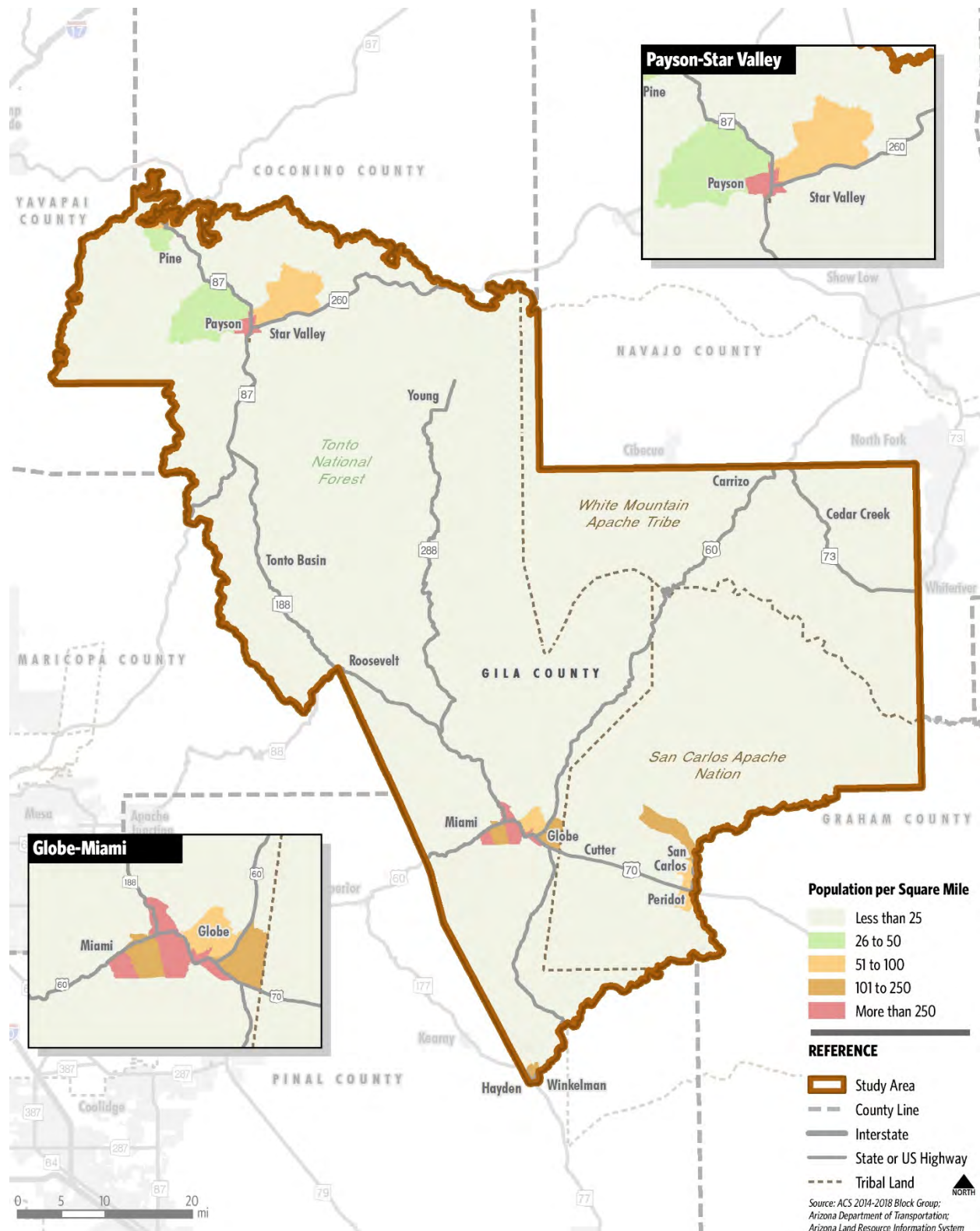
	Payson – Star Valley	Globe - Miami	San Carlos Reservation*	Gila County (Total)
Total Population	17,346	9,430	5,729	53,400
Total Housing Units	10,455	4,596	1,616	33,411
Occupied Housing Units	7,847	3,623	1,332	21,708

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population only includes portions of the reservation within Gila County



Figure 2.2. Current Population Density





Population projections are prepared for all Counties in the state by the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity. The office's goal is to develop reliable, unbiased projections of population growth to serve as a single state repository for population references. Population projections for the Study Area are summarized in **Table 2.2**. Between 2018 and 2045, the population of Gila County is projected to slightly increase. The Globe-Miami area is projected to decrease in population by 228 people, or about 2.4%, while Payson-Star Valley and the San Carlos Reservation populations are projected to increase slightly.

Table 2.2. Population Projections

Area	Current Population	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Gila County	53,400	55,395	55,361	55,065	54,617	54,111
Payson – Star Valley	17,346	18,928	19,056	19,110	19,124	18,936
Globe - Miami	9,430	9,400	9,451	9,378	9,278	9,202
San Carlos Reservation*	5,729	5,427	5,419	5,408	5,387	5,366
Balance of Gila County	20,895	21,640	21,435	21,169	20,828	20,606

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity; current population from American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population only includes portions of the reservation within Gila County

2.2 TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATIONS

In addition to considering the overall population characteristics of the area, understanding specific demographic distributions and needs is vital to evaluating the feasibility and demand of a transit system. Transit riders are typically generalized into two categories:

- **Choice riders** have adequate resources and abilities to own, operate, and maintain a vehicle but chose to use transit. Choice riders are more likely to use public transportation for commuting or when transit offers an advantage over driving (i.e., roads are congested, high parking fees, passenger amenities, etc.)
- **Captive riders**, referred to as transit dependent riders, use public transportation because they lack access or resources to own or operate a vehicle. These riders use public transportation for most of their trips, including to get to work, medical appointments, shops, and social activities.

Choice riders can be located anywhere in a community, with the strongest market areas typically being areas with high population or employment density. Market areas for captive riders, however, is more complex as an understanding of population distributions and considerations for special concerns is needed. For example, older adults tend to travel during the daytime and require shorter walks to/from a bus stop. The following outlines six demographic groups typically associated with higher use of transit:



- **Youth** – individuals under 18 years old may have limited access to a vehicle or are unable to drive.
- **Older adults** – individuals aged 65 and older may become less comfortable driving as they age or are no longer physically able to drive.
- **Low-income individuals** – individuals who live within a set of income thresholds established by the US Census Bureau, which vary by family size and composition. Low-income households traditionally rely on public transportation as it is less expensive than owning and operating a vehicle.
- **Zero car households** – persons residing in households without access to a vehicle traditionally rely on walking, biking, public transportation, or carpooling to meet their mobility needs.
- **Mobility limited** – persons with a disability often have difficulty operating a vehicle and require access to public transportation.

Table 2.3 summarizes the percentage of transit dependent populations in the Study Area.

Table 2.3. Transit Dependent Populations

	Payson – Star Valley	Globe – Miami	San Carlos Reservation*	Gila County
Total Population	17,346	9,430	5,729	53,400
Age Under 18	13.1%	22.9%	37.7%	20.3%
Age 65 and Older	36.2%	19.0%	6.9%	27.7%
Below Poverty	13.1%	21.3%	50.1%	22.5%
Zero Vehicle Households	3.4%	7.2%	21.9%	5.9%
Mobility Limited	23.6%	20.7%	12.9%	22.2%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population only includes portions of the reservation within Gila County



2.2.1 YOUTH AND OLDER ADULTS

Analyzing an area's age composition helps decision-makers understand the potential need for increased transit options. As people age, a person typically begins to drive less and requires alternative modes of transportation for medical appointments, shopping, and visiting family and friends. Children are unable to operate a vehicle and must rely on family, friends, walking, biking, or public transportation to travel. **Figure 2.3** and **Figure 2.4** illustrate areas with concentrations of youth and older adults, respectively.

- Generally, the southern portion of the County, including areas such as Miami, Globe, and the San Carlos Apache Nation, have high percentages of young people. The San Carlos Apache Tribe Indian Reservation has the highest percentage of population aged under 18 within the Study Area (38.4%).
- The northern part of the County, including areas such as Tonto Basin, the Payson-Star Valley Area, and Pine, have high percentages of older adults. Payson-Star Valley has the highest percentage of population aged 65 or older within the Study Area (36.2%).

2.2.2 LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS

Low-income populations are individuals that live within a set of income thresholds established by the US Census Bureau, which vary by family size and composition. Historically, persons with low incomes may rely on active and public transportation more than the general population; therefore, recognition of this group's concentration centers is needed to determine transportation needs. **Figure 2.5** illustrates areas with high percentages of people living below the poverty level.

- The San Carlos Apache Nation, including Cutter, Peridot, and San Carlos, has the highest rates of people living below poverty in the Study Area (47%).
- Globe-Miami's percentage of below-poverty population (21.3%) is similar to the percentage for all of Gila County (22.5%).
- Payson-Star Valley has the lowest percentage of people living below poverty (13.1%).



2.2.3 ZERO CAR HOUSEHOLDS

Vehicle availability may limit a person's ability to commute to work or get to an activity center. Depending on the number of people living in each household, a certain number of vehicles may not be able to provide everyone with a means of transportation. **Figure 2.6** illustrates areas with concentrations of households with no vehicles available.

- The highest densities of zero car households occur in the southeastern part of Gila County, throughout the Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservations, as well as near Roosevelt.
- The San Carlos Apache Tribe Indian Reservation has the highest percentage of zero-vehicle households (22.9%).
- Payson-Star Valley has the lowest percentage of zero-vehicle households (3.4%).

2.2.4 MOBILITY LIMITED PERSONS

Mobility limited populations are civilian, noninstitutionalized persons who have disabilities (such as sensory, physical, self-care, and/or employment disabilities). This population group often has difficulty operating automobiles and may require access to public transportation. **Figure 2.7** illustrates areas with concentrations of persons with mobility limitations.

- The central portion of the County, including areas surrounding Tonto Basin, Roosevelt, and Miami, as well as the area north of Payson-Star Valley see high concentrations of mobility limited persons.
- Payson-Star Valley has the highest percentage of mobility limited persons (23.6%). This area also has the highest percentage of population aged 65 or older, which may explain the high percentage of mobility limited persons.
- The San Carlos Apache Tribe Indian Reservation has the lowest percentage of mobility limited persons (12.9%).



Figure 2.3. Population Under Age 18 by Census Block Group

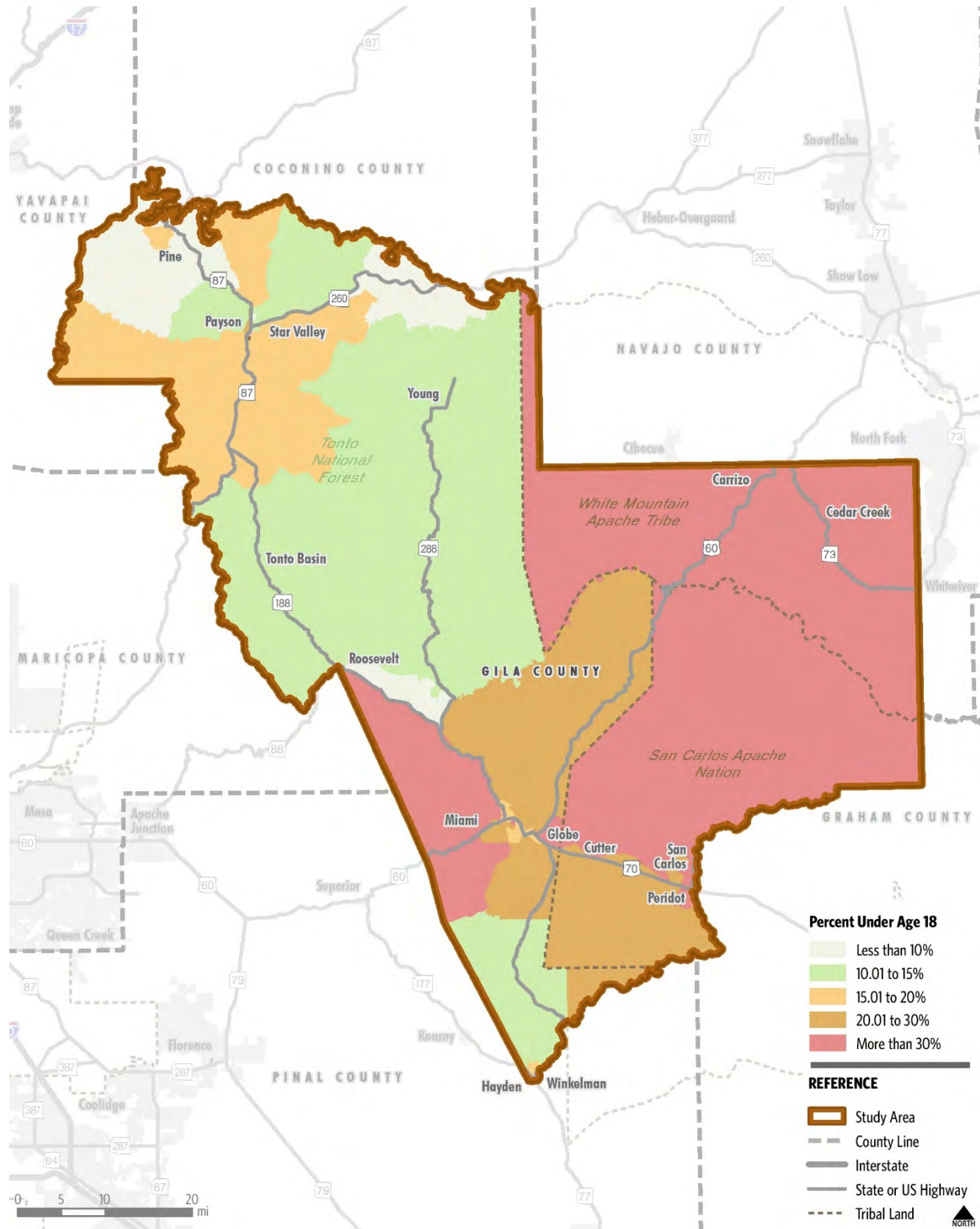




Figure 2.4. Population Age 65 or Older by Census Block Group

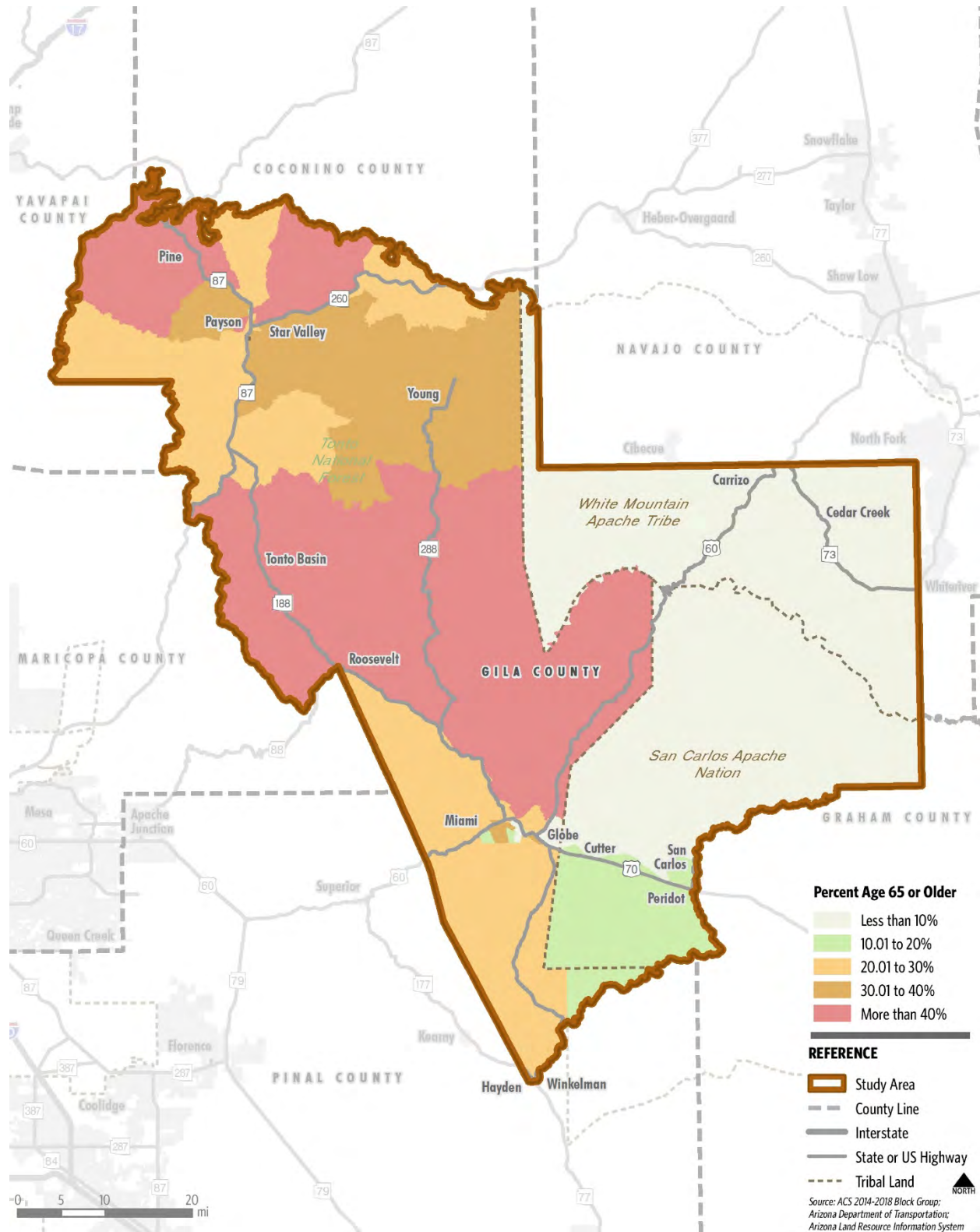




Figure 2.5. Population Below Poverty by Census Block Group

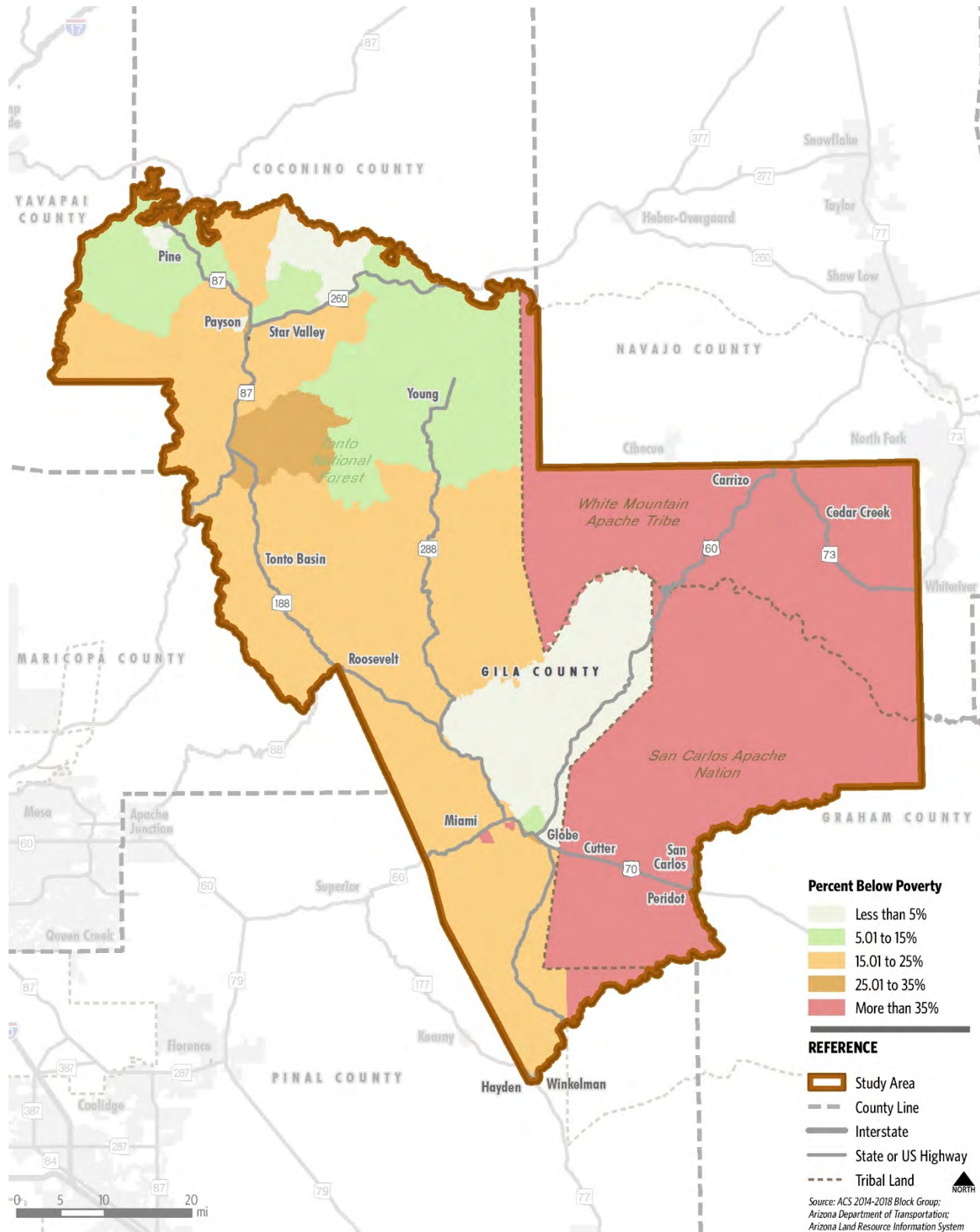




Figure 2.6. Zero-Vehicle Households by Census Block Group

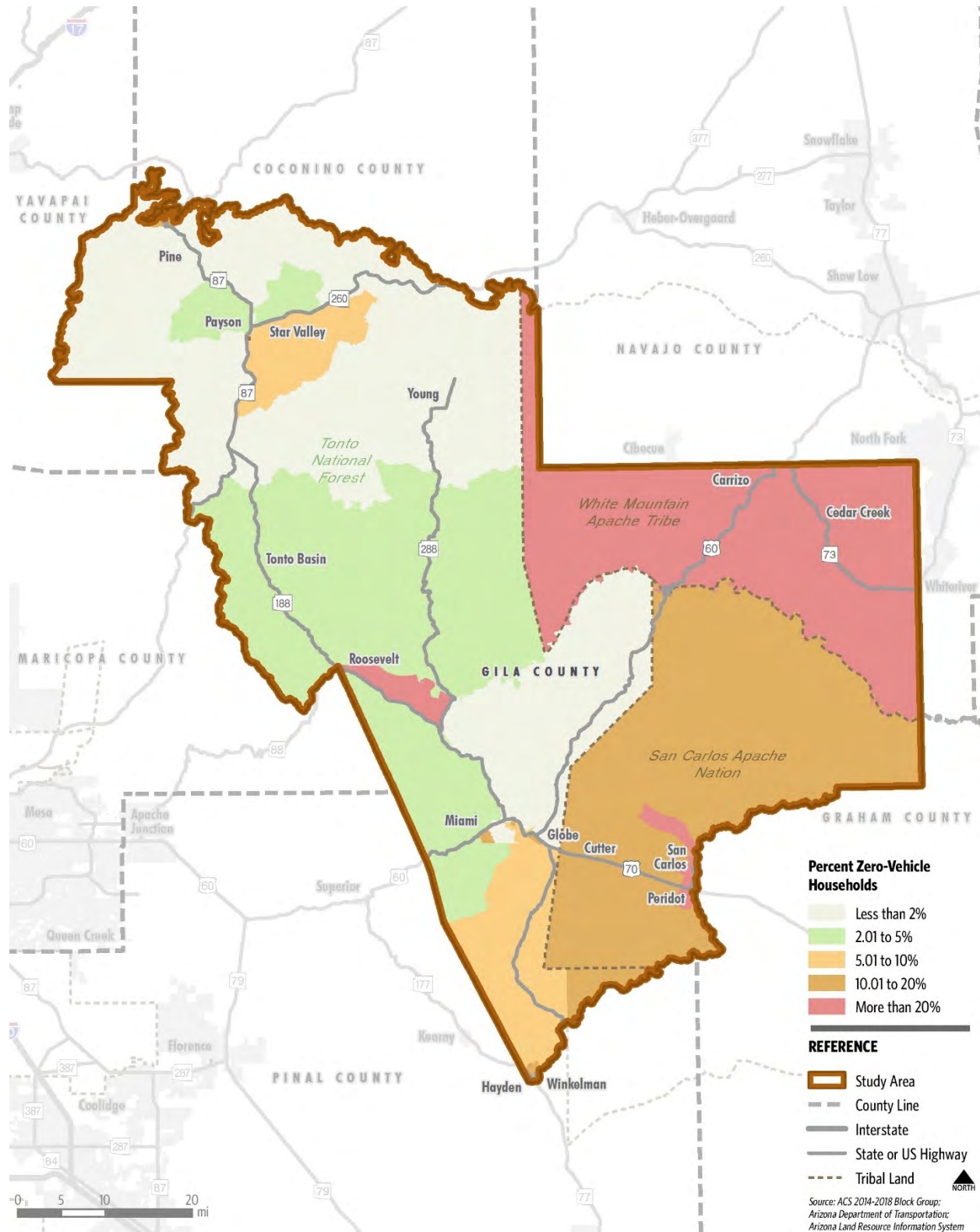
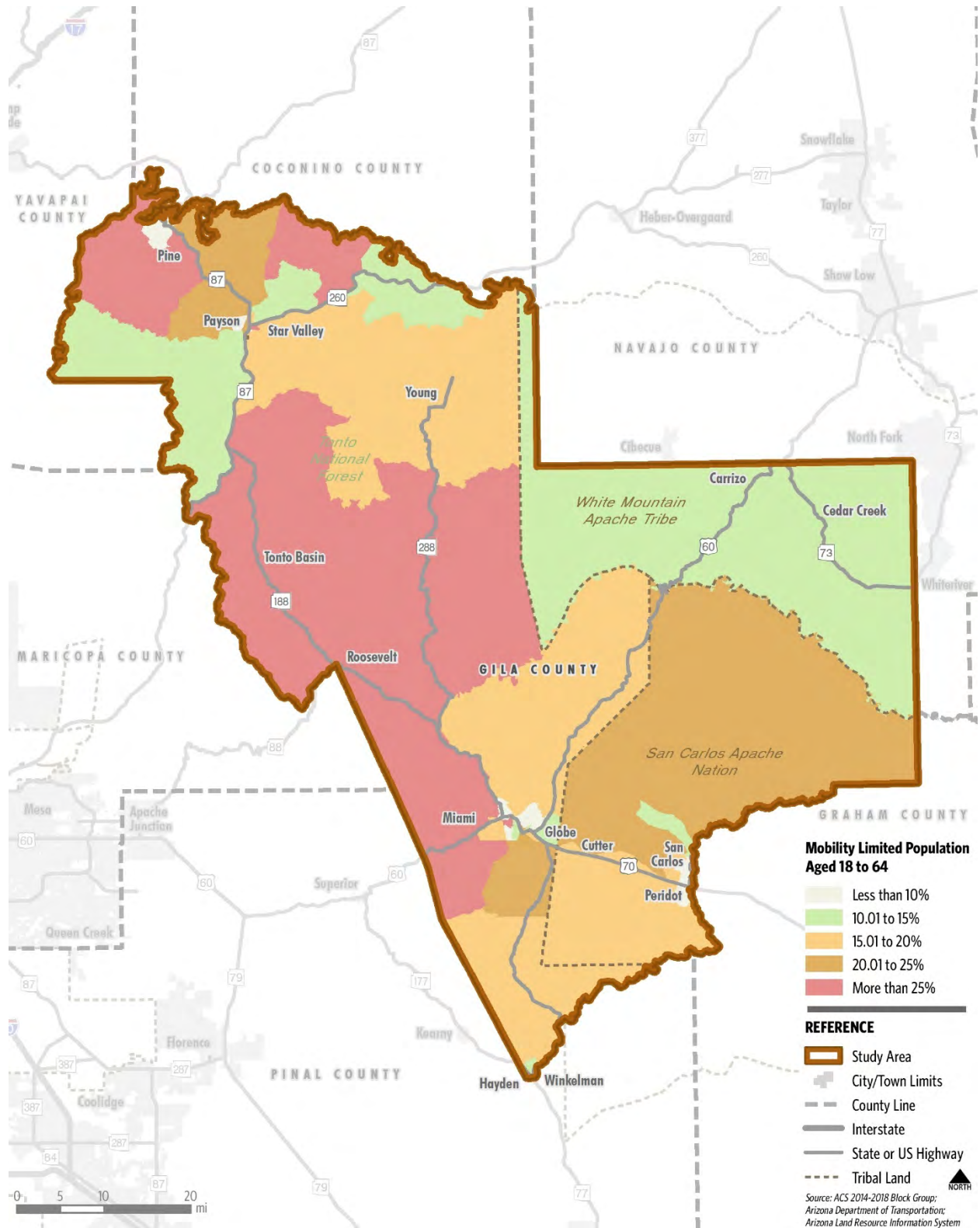




Figure 2.7. Mobility Limited Population by Census Block Group





2.3 TRANSIT RELIANCE INDEX

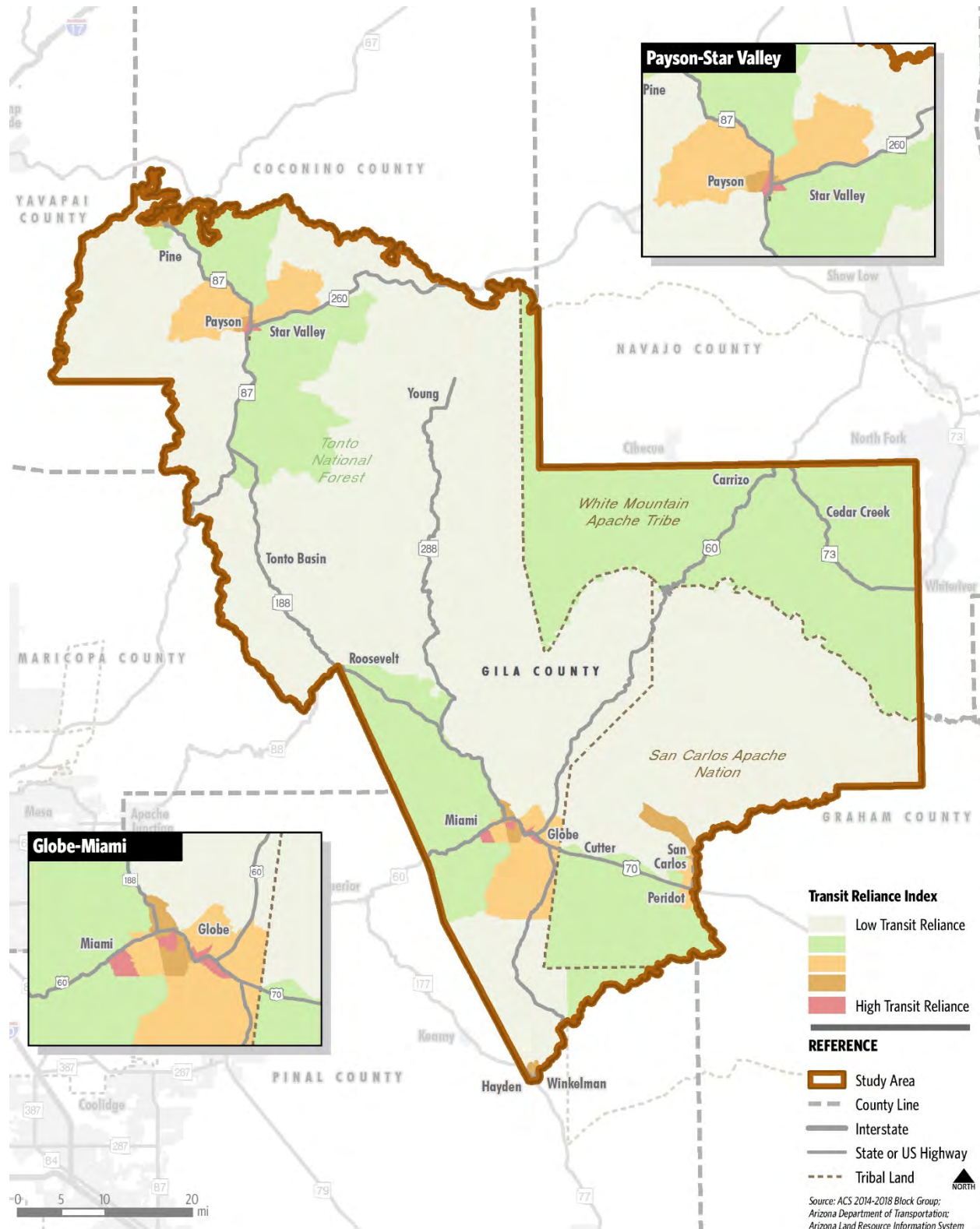
Transit reliance combines key socioeconomic characteristics of transit dependent population groups into a single measure to estimate areas that might have a greater tendency to use public transportation as their primary method of transport. To understand areas within Gila County that may have the highest need for public transportation services, a Transit Reliance Index was developed and mapped. Transit Reliance Index is a common metric to determine areas with a high density of transit-supportive populations - zero-vehicle households, households with incomes below the poverty level, people over the age of 65 or under 18, and people with mobility limitations.

To create the index score, each Census block group was assigned a score between 1 to 5 based on the density of each transit dependent population group. For example, a block group with a high percentage of older adults will receive a score of 5, whereas, if the block group has a low population of youth it would receive a score of 1. After assigning each block group a score, the score for each characteristic is summed, resulting in a number from 6 to 30, called the "Transit Reliance Index." Appendix A provides Transit Index Reliance scores for each of the transit-supportive population groups analyzed.

Figure 2.9 illustrates the composite Transit Reliance Index for the Study Area. Areas with that may potentially have a high reliance on transit include, the Peridot and San Carlos in San Carlos Indian Reservation, Globe, Miami, Payson, Star Valley, and the Hayden -Winkelman area.



Figure 2.9. Transit Reliance Index





2.4 TRANSPORTATION GENERATORS

Transportation generators are locations within a community that act as generators of transportation trips and are frequent destinations within a community. Understanding these destinations is a critical step in the evaluation of existing services and determining transit needs.

2.4.1 MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Mining, medical services, tourism, retail, and casinos are the primary drivers of the region's economy. Based on the statewide employer database, there are approximately 17,665 employees within the Gila County. **Figure 2.10** illustrates the major employers and employment areas within the County. Major employers in the region include:

- ASARCO Hayden Operations - employs 1,370 people
- BPH Copper Company - employs 650 employees
- Gila County – employs about 470 people in the County, with its headquarters in Globe
- Apache Gold Casino and Resort - employs 450 people
- Walmart – employs a total of 350 people at the stores in Payson and Globe combined

2.4.2 MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS

Major activity centers are catalysts in creating trips within communities. Areas of higher numbers of activity centers tend to have more people attempting to commute to them; therefore, it is important to provide transportation options to and from these areas. Within the Study Area there are a multitude of destinations that would benefit from transit access including: shopping centers, downtown districts, public libraries, community and regional parks, the Apache Gold Casino/Resort, Payson Rodeo Grounds, and government buildings.

2.4.3 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

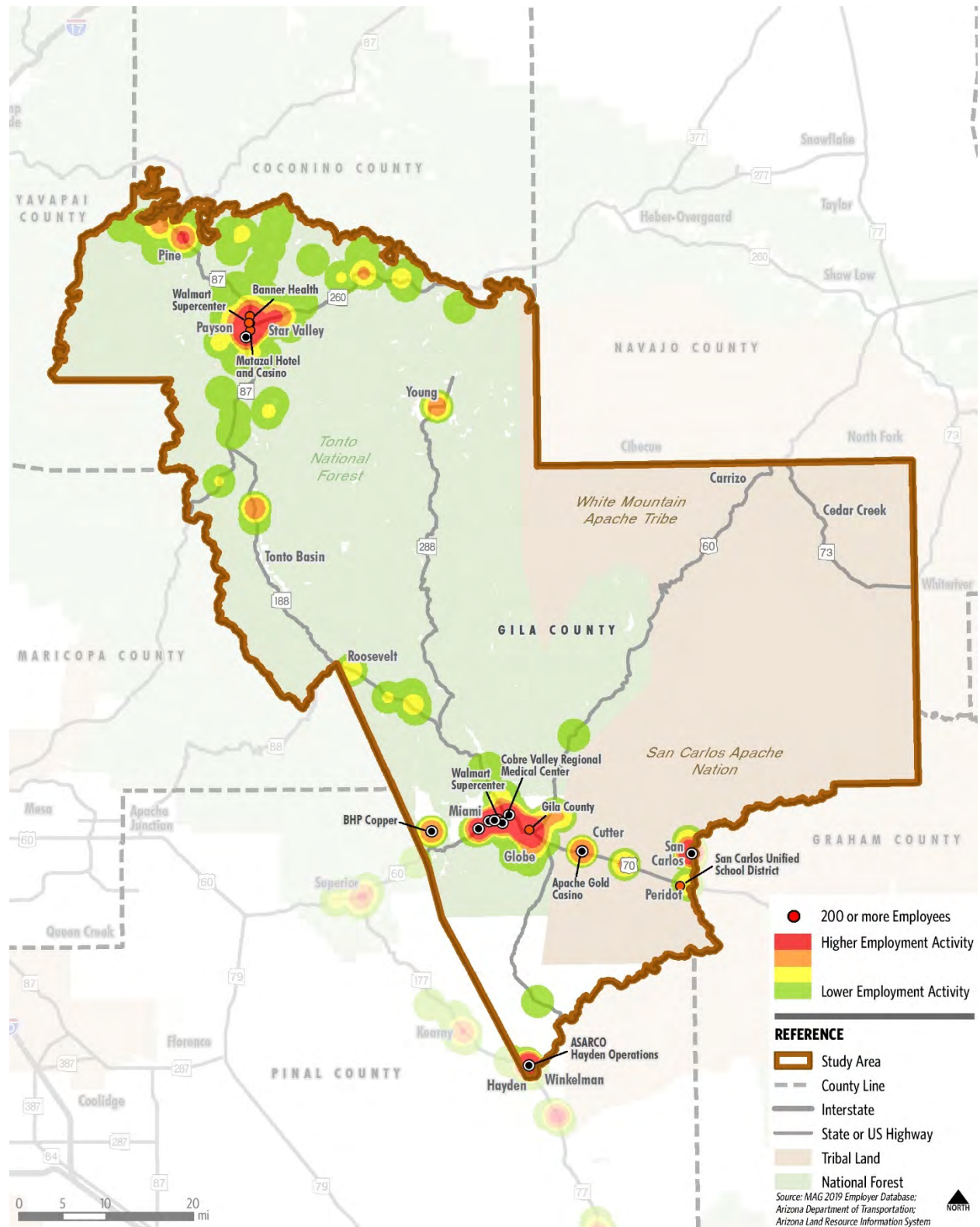
While this study does not focus on providing bus services for elementary, middle, and high school students, providing services for residents to access educational opportunities at colleges is a critical element. Gila Community College has two primary campuses in Globe and Payson, as well as satellite facilities in Hayden, Roosevelt, Tonto Basin, Lower Miami, Pine, and Young. There is also the Central Arizona College Aravaipa Campus in Winkelman. The Rim Country Educational Alliance has recently announced the desire to construct a four-year university in Payson.

2.4.4 MEDICAL FACILITIES

Important medical facilities within the Study Area include; Banner Medical Center (Payson); Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center (Globe); Fresenius Dialysis Center (Globe); San Carlos Apache Healthcare (Peridot); Gila County Health Services (Payson and Globe); and Canyonlands Healthcare (Globe). In addition to these facilities, many residents travel to doctors and hospitals in the Phoenix metropolitan area for medical appointments.



Figure 2.10. Major Trip Generators





2.5 COMMUTE AND TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

Knowing where people take transit or utilize other modes of transportation can help develop effective transit improvements and programs that will better serve the residents and visitors of the Study Area. Utilizing 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data, employee commuting patterns and vehicle availability was identified. With great distances between activity centers, Gila County is primarily an automobile-oriented area; however, many people do not have access to a vehicle or are unable to operate one.

2.5.1 MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

Table 2.4 summarizes the mode of transportation for workers age 16 and older to commute to work within the Study Area. As presented in the table, the San Carlos Apache Tribe had the highest percentage of persons that carpool, walk, or take public transportation to work. All areas within Gila County primarily drive alone to work.

Table 2.4. Means of Transportation to Work

	Payson – Star Valley	Globe – Miami	San Carlos Reservation*	Gila County
Drove Alone	85%	75%	70%	80%
Carpooled	8%	16%	18%	12%
Public Transportation	0%	0%	1%	0%
Biked or Walked	1%	4%	7%	3%
Worked at Home	5%	4%	4%	5%
Other	1%	2%	2%	1%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population includes the entirety of the Reservation

2.5.2 TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

According to the 2014-2018 ACS, the mean, one-way travel time for workers in Gila County is 19.3 minutes. For reference, Pinal County averages a 31.1-minute, one-way commute and the average for the entire state of Arizona is 26.6 minutes. As outlined in **Table 2.5**, 32 percent of employees in the Study Area have a commute time of less than 10 minutes. The shorter the work commute, the less attractive public transportation is for choice riders. Traditional bus public transportation systems are unable to match the commute times associated with the personal vehicle. Interestingly, the majority of employees have a 10 to 19-minute commute time within the Study Area. The San Carlos Reservation has the highest mean travel time, indicating that numerous residents more than likely commute to Phoenix, Camp Verde, or Globe for work.

**Table 2.5. Travel Time to Work**

	Payson – Star Valley	Globe – Miami	San Carlos Reservation*	Gila County
Less than 10 Minutes	47%	28%	26%	32%
10 to 19 Minutes	34%	42%	34%	36%
20 to 29 Minutes	6%	15%	14%	14%
30 to 59 Minutes	4%	10%	19%	11%
60 to 89 Minutes	2%	3%	2%	2%
90 or More Minutes	7%	2%	5%	5%
Mean Travel Time to Work (Minutes)	16.7	15.9	22.6	19.3

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population includes the entirety of the Reservation

2.5.3 ACCESS TO VEHICLES

Vehicle availability may limit a person's ability to commute to work or get to an activity center. Depending on the number of people living in each household, a certain number of vehicles may not be able to provide everyone with a means of transportation. **Table 2.6** outlines the total number of vehicles available per households in the Study Area. According to the 2014-2018 ACS, 6 percent of households in Gila County do not have any vehicles available, forcing residents to utilize alternative means of transportation. The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation has the highest percentage of households without access to a vehicle (23 percent).

Table 2.6. Access to Vehicles

	Payson – Star Valley	Globe – Miami	San Carlos Reservation*	Gila County
Total Households	7,847	3,623	2,251	21,708
Households with No Access to a Vehicle	3 %	7 %	23%	6%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018

*San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation population includes the entirety of the Reservation



2.5.4 COMMUTING PATTERNS

Utilizing the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) OnTheMap application, commuting patterns can be identified. The portal is a nationwide database that reports where workers are employed and where they live. **Figure 2.11** illustrates commuting patterns per the LEHD 2017 data. As the figure illustrates, a high percentage of the Study Area's population reside within the area but are employed in other areas. This is particularly true for the Payson-Star Valley and Globe-Miami areas with 67 and 69 percent of the populations commuting outside the area for employment, respectively.

On a more regional and state-wide level, **Figure 2.12** examines where people living in Gila County work. Almost 35% of workers commute long distances to either a city in Maricopa County or Tucson. Within Gila County, approximately 14% of workers work in Payson, and 11% of workers work in Globe.



Figure 2.11. Inflow-Outflow Commuting Patterns

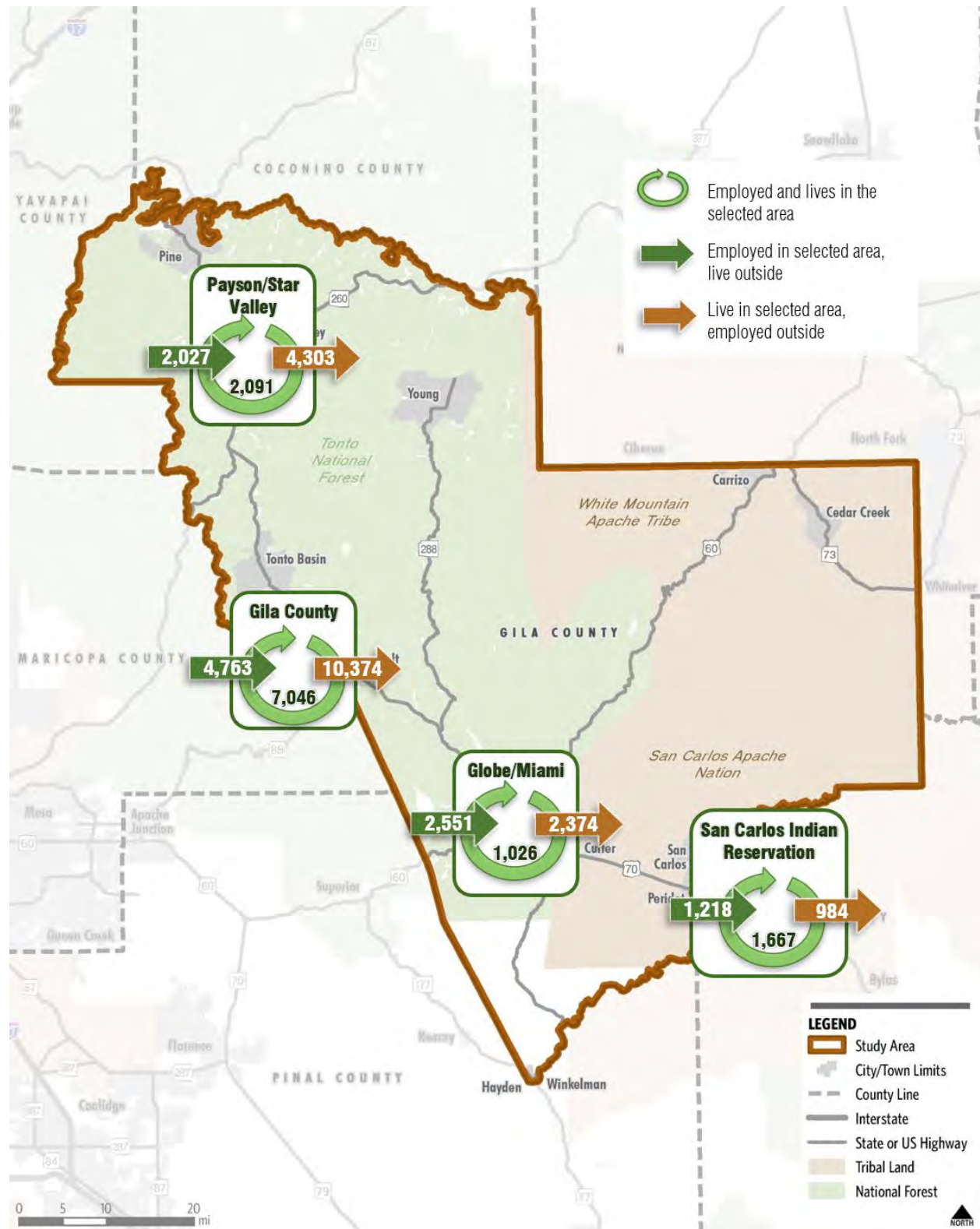
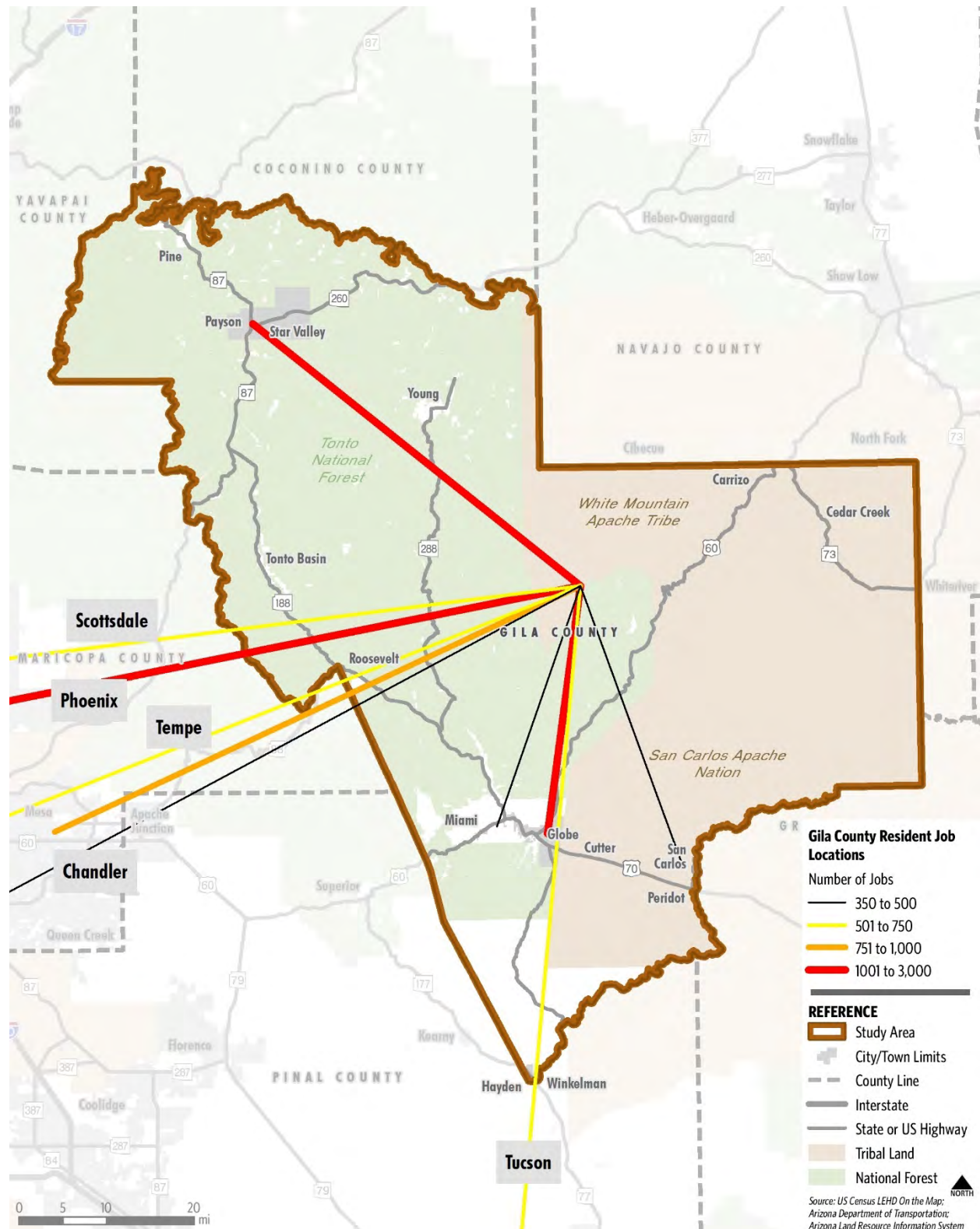




Figure 2.12. Gila County Residents' Employment Destinations





3. CURRENT AND PLANNED GILA COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES

This chapter reviews the public transportation services that are currently active within the Study Area. Transit service options traditionally include:

- **Fixed-Route Service:** Fixed-route bus services operate along a fixed-route at set times and headways. Services typically operate with designated stops or as a flag stop service.
- **Deviated Fixed-Route Service:** A variation of a fixed-route service, a deviated fixed-route service can deviate off the fixed-route to provide curbside service when riders request the service from the driver when they board the bus. Deviated fixed-route services are considered “demand responsive” under ADA regulations.
- **Dial-a-Ride and Paratransit Service:** Dial-a-Ride and Paratransit services use a shared ride concept that mixes elements of traditional bus service with characteristics of a taxicab service. These services provide van or bus service from origin to destination for passengers who are prevented from using a fixed-route bus system due to a disability or mobility limitation.
- **Vanpool:** A type of carpool utilizing a van that usually transports 6 to 15 passengers, typically for work trips.

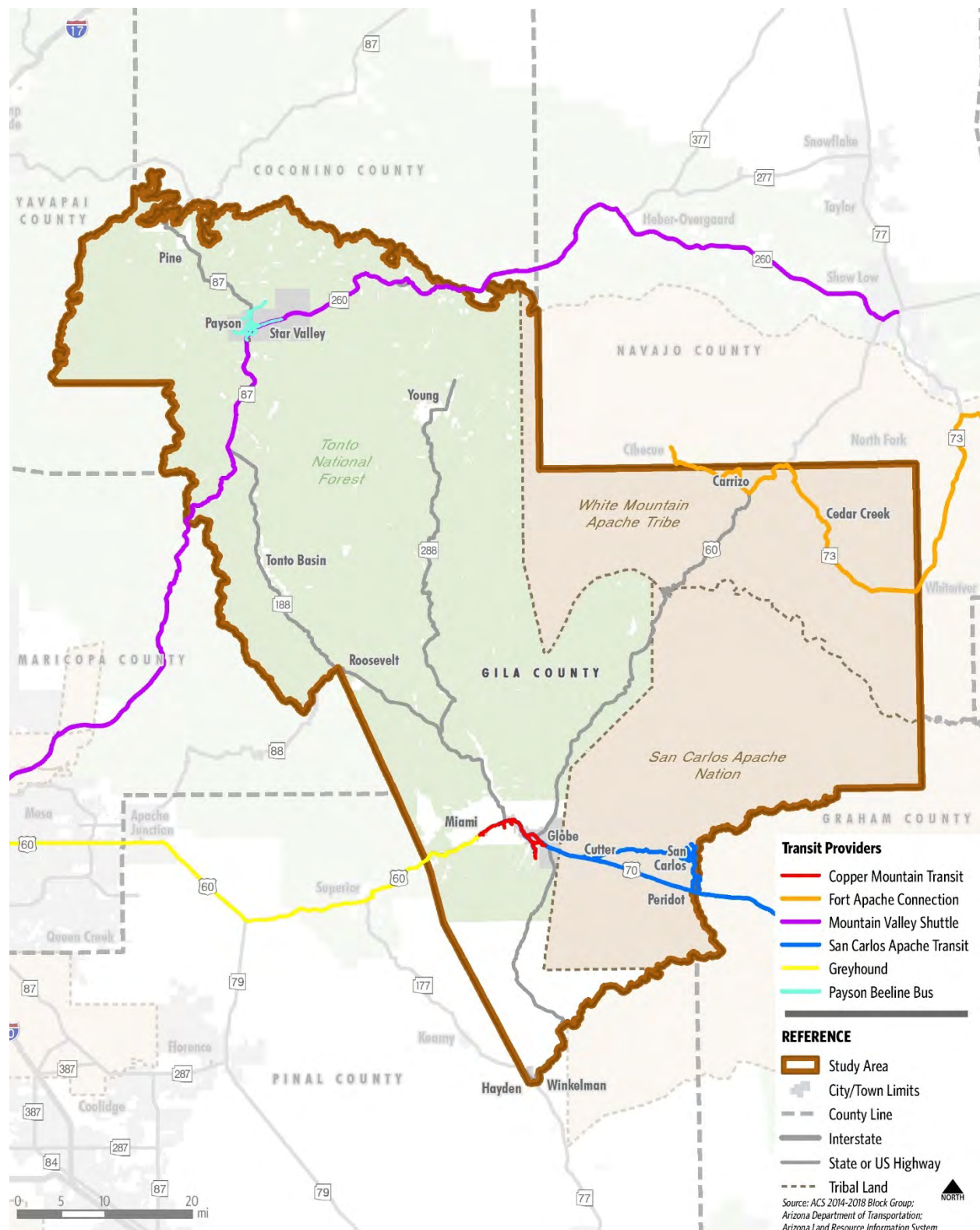
Currently, public transit service in Gila County is primarily demand response and deviated fixed-route service, largely focused on local service. There are total five public and private transit providers within the Study Area. The six fixed-route transit service providers within the Study Area are:

- Town of Miami - Copper Mountain Transit
- Payson Senior Center - Beeline Bus
- San Carlos Apache Transit - Nnee Bich’o Nii
- White Mountain Apache Tribe - Fort Apache Connection
- Mountain Valley Shuttle
- Greyhound

Figure 3.1 illustrates the general routes of the transit services. The following section provides greater detail of each of the current transit providers in the Study Area.



Figure 3.1. Existing Gila County Transit Providers





3.1 COPPER MOUNTAIN TRANSIT

The Copper Mountain Transit system, formally called Cobre Valley Community Transit, is a collaborative effort between the Town of Miami, the City of Globe, and Gila County to provide public transit to major activity centers in the Globe-Miami area.

3.1.1 SERVICE OVERVIEW

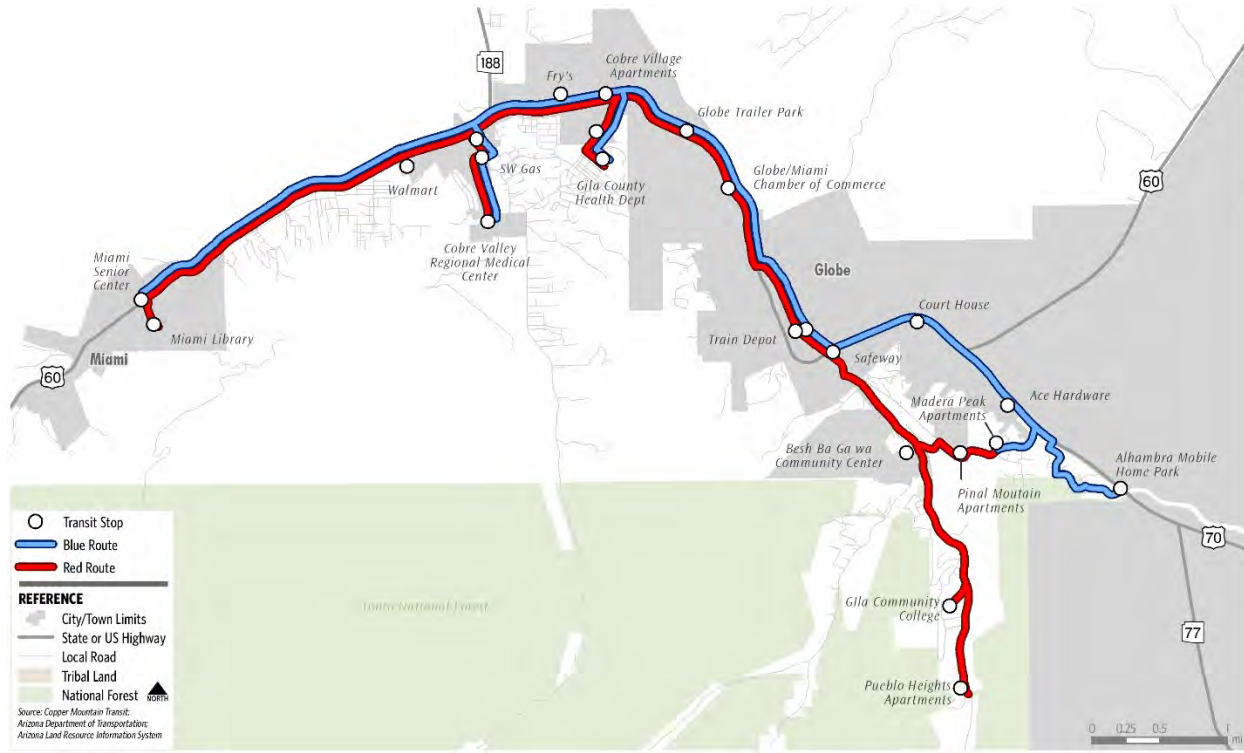
Copper Mountain Transit operates a demand-response/curb-to-curb service and a deviated fixed-route service. Major funding is provided through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311- Rural Areas program. Service includes:



- Two deviated fixed service routes with pre-determined bus stop locations (see **Figure 3.2**) - Red Route (Miami to Globe) and the Blue Route (Globe to Miami)
 - Hours are 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday
 - Fare is \$1 and \$0.50 reduced fare for seniors, disabled and students. Children 12 and under ride free with an adult. Monthly passes are available for purchase from any driver or from the transit office for \$15.00 reduced or \$25.00 full fare
 - Major stops include the Globe Train Depot, Miami Library, Miami Senior Center, Wal-Mart, Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center, Fry's Grocery, Gila County Health Department, Globe Senior Center, and Gila Community College
- Demand Response service allows a rider to make a reservation to be picked up at his or her desired location and taken to any destination within the designated service area
 - Operates Monday-Friday excluding federal holidays, between the hours of 6:15 am and 3:00 pm
 - Required to call at least 24 hours before or can make a reservation up to 7 days in advance



Figure 3.2. Copper Mountain Transit Routes and Stops



3.1.2 AVAILABLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

Table 3.1 outlines available vehicle fleet. Copper Mountain currently has five vehicles in active revenue service. A new 14 seat cutaway bus is scheduled for delivery in 2021. Upon delivery, the 2006 cutaway bus will become a spare vehicle and one of the 2013 vehicles will be disposed of. The entire fleet is wheelchair accessible. Copper Mountain Transit does not have a designated transit hub or bus barn. Buses are currently stored at a parking lot at the Town of Miami's Town Hall at Keystone Avenue and Sykes Alley. The parking lot has a 10-year lease.

Table 3.1. Copper Mountain Transit Fleet

Vehicle Type	Service	Total Active Vehicles	Year Manufactured	Capacity
Cutaway	Fixed-Route	2	2013	16
Cutaway	Fixed-Route	1	2006	15
Minivan	Demand-Response	2	2010	7

Source: Copper Mountain Transit

3.1.3 STAFFING

Copper Mountain has the following staff:

- One full-time Transit Manager/Coordinator
- One full-time dispatcher
- Four full-time drivers and one part-time driver



3.1.4 SERVICE DATA

Figure 3.3 illustrates total ridership for both fixed-route and demand-responsive service from January 2019 to December 2019. **Table 3.2** includes a summary of annual ridership, expenses and revenues, and performance indicators.

Figure 3.3. Copper Mountain Ridership by Month

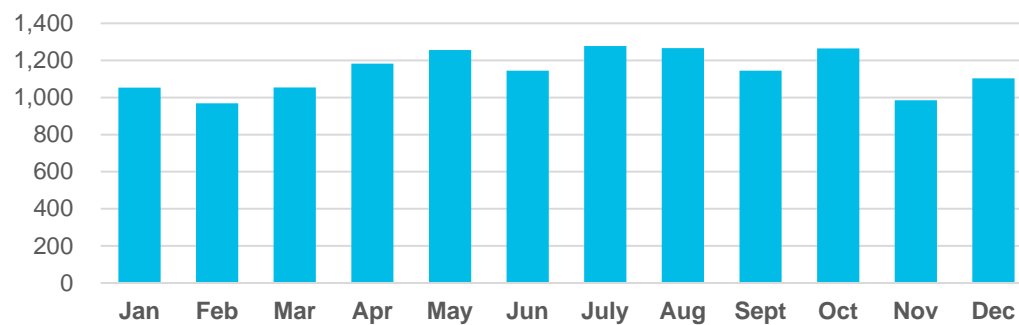


Table 3.2. Copper Mountain Express Service Metrics

Service Metric	Demand Responsive	Fixed-Route	Total
Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	15,038	60,792	75,830
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	2,193	5,862	8,055
Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips	4,131	9,511	13,642

Source: 2019 National Transit Database

According to the National Transit Database (NTD) 2018 Annual Agency Profile, the Copper Mountain Transit reported an average cost per trip of \$22.62, which includes the average between the cost of a demand response trip (\$23.24) and cost of a trip on the bus service (\$22.40). The average cost per hour of service was \$38.41.

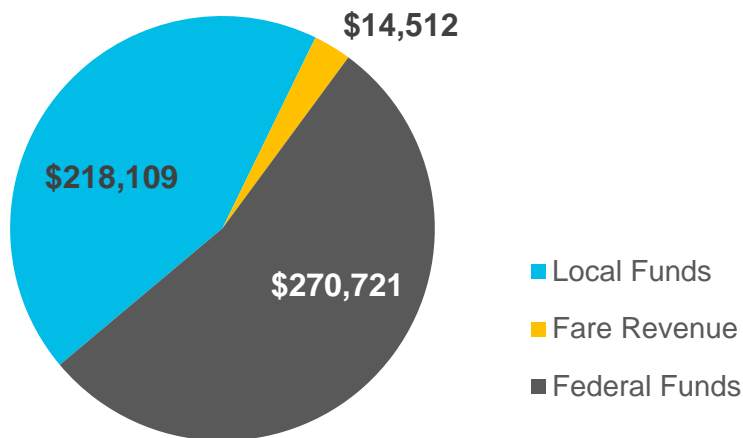


3.1.5 FUNDING OVERVIEW

For FY 2019, the Town of Miami, City of Globe, and Gila County each budgeted \$73,000 to support the transit system. Copper Mountain Transit's annual operating budget for FY2019 was \$503,342. Funding included federal resources (54%), local funding (43%) and fares (3%) (see **Figure 3.2**). The largest source of funding was provided by the Federal Transit Administration's 5311 Grant Program, which is administered by ADOT.

In FY 2020-2021, the Town has budgeted for an additional \$15,000 in funds for building upgrades. **Figure 3.4** outlines Copper Mountain Transit's FY2019 annual budget resources.

Figure 3.4. Copper Mountain Transit FY 19-20 Budget



Source: FTA National Transit Database

Fare revenues account for 3% of Copper Mountain Transit's FY 2019 budget. **Table 3.2** outlines the operating expenses and fare revenues based on the 2019 NTD.

Table 3.2. Copper Mountain Transit Fare Revenue

Service Metric	Demand Response	Fixed-Route	Total
Operating Expenses	\$124,142	\$379,200	\$503,342
Fare Revenues	\$8,281	\$6,231	\$14,512
Farebox Recovery Ratio	0.07	0.02	0.03

Source: 2019 National Transit Database



3.1.6 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Copper Mountain Transit provides service to the communities of Globe and Miami through a partnership with the Town of Miami, City of Globe, and Gila County. The system is operated by the Town of Miami, with equal financial support from the Town of Miami, City of Globe and Gila County. The Transit Manager, drivers, and dispatches are Town employees and are subject to the Town's guidelines for hiring, performance evaluations, and promotions.

Copper Mountain receives input from a Transit Advisory Committee that was created at the start-up of the system to provide guidance, support, and build collaboration. The Transit Advisory Committee meets quarterly and includes representatives from CAG, Gila County, the Town of Miami, and the City of Globe. The Town of Miami Mayor, Town Manager, and Town Council oversee the service and provide policy support and direction. If Gila County and Globe members feel the need to get their council/board approval, they can request approval as needed.

3.1.7 REGIONAL COORDINATION

Copper Mountain Transit currently includes a multi-agency coordination and collaboration to provide transit services within the Globe-Miami area. Coordination efforts between San Carlos Apache Tribe and Copper Mountain Transit is an on-going effort that continues to be refined and strengthen every year. Copper Mountain Transit also coordinates with Statewide Express for non-emergency and DES transportations.

3.1.8 PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

From discussions with Copper Mountain Transit staff, the following improvements are planned:

- Recalibrate routes and stops to streamline service. Preliminary discussions include having one route start in Miami and end at the Globe Train Depot and another route start at the Globe Train Depot and end in Globe.
- Potential to skip some stops during peak-periods so routes can serve as express routes between major activity centers.
- Add a new route to Miami Hostetler Pool during summer months
- Potential long-term expansion of new routes if ridership levels increase and funding is available.
- Preliminary discussions with the Beeline Bus were held to develop a service that connects both routes at Tonto Basin; however, vehicles are not suitable for long-distance travel.



3.2 BEELINE BUS

During the development of the Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility and Implementation Plan, the Payson Senior Center recognized the importance of providing reliable transit service within the Payson-Star Valley area and agreed to serve as the champion and leader for developing public transit service in Payson. Since the study was completed, Payson Senior Center applied and was awarded Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311 Rural



Transit funds to commence transit service within the Payson-Star Valley area. The Beeline Bus commenced in December 2018 and serves the Payson, Star Valley and Mesa Del Caballo areas.

3.2.1 SERVICE OVERVIEW

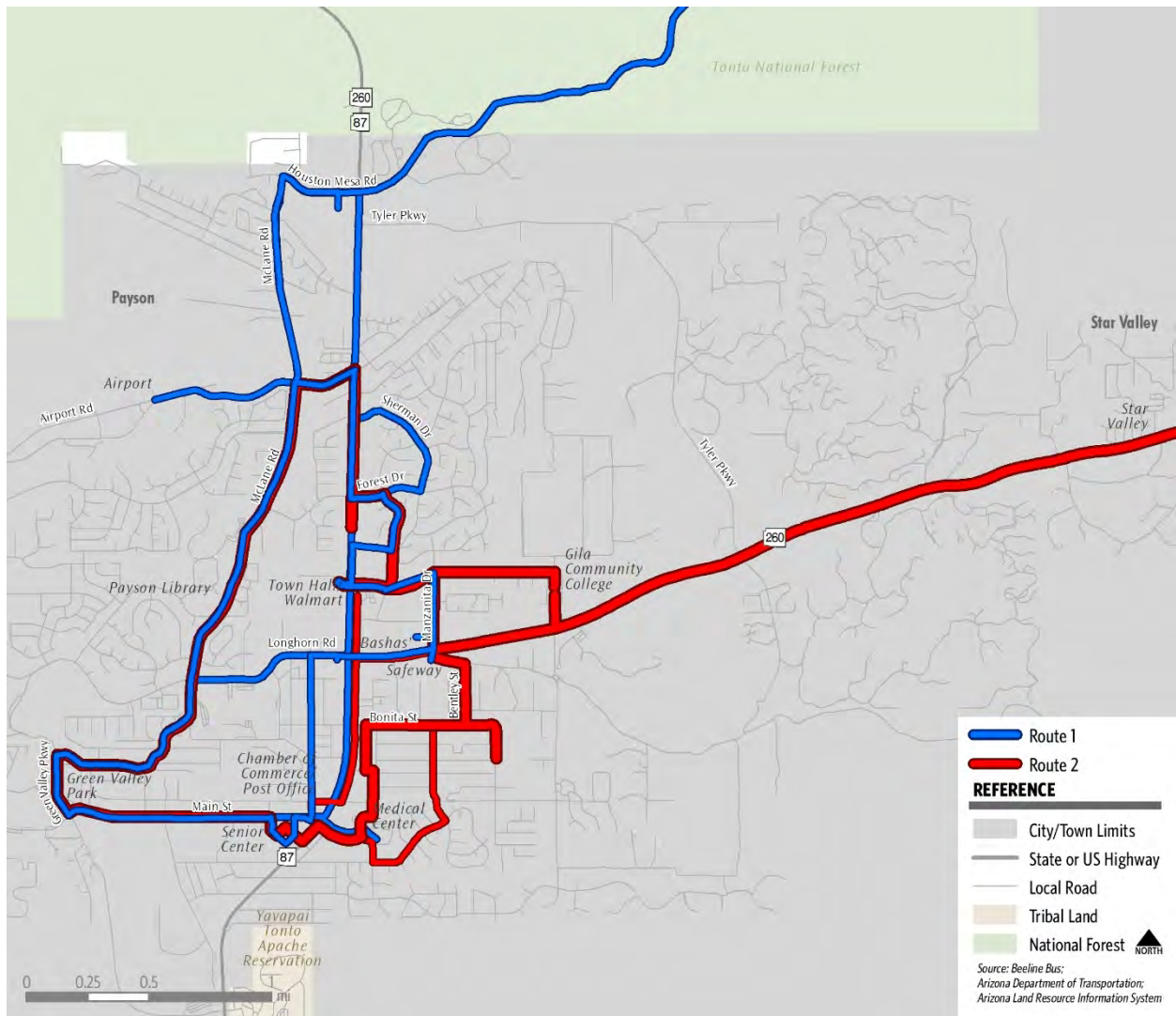
The Payson Senior Center is operating the Beeline Bus as a “pilot program” for the Payson/Star Valley areas. Currently, the Beeline Bus is a general public service with two routes: Blue Route serving Payson north and south and the Red Route serving East Payson and Star Valley. Service includes:

- Two deviated fixed-route services routes with pre-determined bus stop locations. Red Route (Star Valley to Payson circulator) and the Blue Route (Intra-City circulator that connects to Mesa Del Caballo). See **Figure 3.5** for service route information for the Red and Blue routes.
 - Hours are 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday; and 11:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturdays
 - One-way tokens are available for \$1 per adults and \$0.50 for youth and seniors. Monthly passes are also available for \$40 per adults and \$20 for youth and seniors. Beginning October 7th, 2020, Beeline Bus will also be rolling out a \$2.00 All Day Pass.
 - Major stops include Wal-Mart, Big Lots, Sawmill Theater, Safeway, Home Depot, Senior Center, Gila Community College, Swiss Village, and the Banner Payson Medical Center
- Riders can also make a reservation to be picked up at his or her desired location and taken to any destination within 1/4 mile of designated routes.
 - First-time users require a two-day business day notice; thereafter, reservations can be made with 1-day notice



- One-way fare is \$2 per adults and \$1 for youth and seniors.
- Beginning Summer 2020, the Beeline Bus is providing a connector route that will pick-up individuals at their home to get to the nearest bus stop. The connector vehicle is available Monday through Thursday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Figure 3.5. Beeline Bus Transit Routes





3.2.2 AVAILABLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

Table 3.3 outlines available vehicle fleet. The Beeline Bus currently has four vehicles in active revenue service. The entire fleet is wheelchair accessible. The Beeline Bus does not have a designated transit hub or bus barn. Currently buses are stored at the Payson Senior Center at 514 Main Street in Payson. A new bus has been ordered but may not be available until 2021. Upon receiving the new bus, the 2014 Ford Starcraft will become the backup bus and the 2008 Ford Cutaway will be retired.

Table 3.3. Beeline Bus Fleet

Vehicle Type	Service	Total Active Vehicles	Year Manufactured	Capacity
Ford Cutaway	Fixed-Route (Backup Bus)	1	2008	11
Ford Cutaway	Fixed-Route	1	2015	11
Ford Starcraft	Fixed-Route	1	2014	14
2017 Chevrolet Equinox	Connector Service	1	2017	5

Source: Payson Senior Center

3.2.3 STAFFING

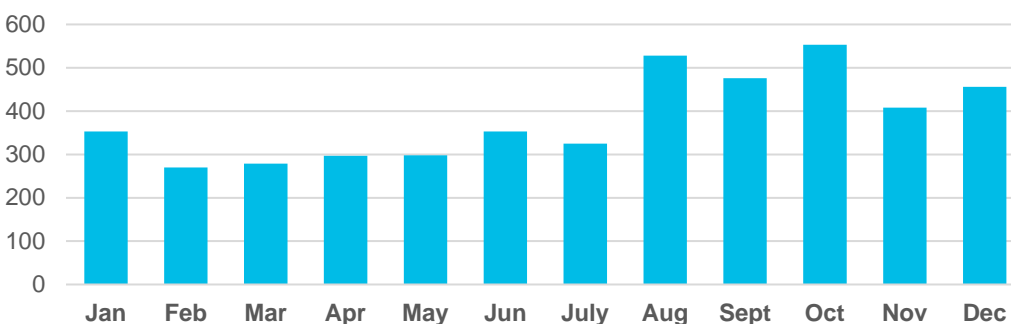
Beeline Bus currently has the following staff:

- One full-time Transit Manager/Coordinator
- Six part-time drivers
- Part-time support from Payson Senior Center employees

3.2.4 SERVICE DATA

Ridership since the system's start date has been steading, averaging over 300 rides per month in 2019. **Figure 3.6** illustrates total ridership from January 2019 to December 2019. **Table 3.4** includes a summary of annual ridership, expenses and revenues, and performance indicators.

Figure 3.6. Beeline Bus 2019 Ridership by Month



Source: Payson Senior Center

**Table 3.4. Beeline Bus Service Metrics**

Service Metric	Total
Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	34,047
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	3,321
Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips	2,093

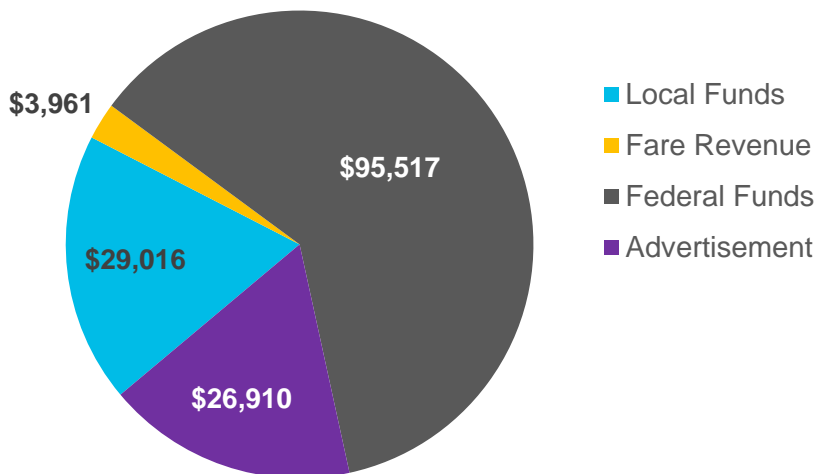
Source: 2019 National Transit Database

According to data provided by Payson Senior Center, the average cost per trip of \$28.92. Additional NTD service data information has been requested and will be incorporated once received.

3.2.5 FUNDING OVERVIEW

FY2019 Annual budget for the Beeline Bus Service was \$185,754 - 84% for operational costs and 16% for capital costs. Funding for operation costs included federal resources (61.5%), local funding (19%), advertisement revenue (17%) and fares (2.5%) (see **Figure 3.7**). 22% of the costs was used for administration and 78% was used for service operations.

Gila County provides a fixed contribution of \$25,000 per year; the Town of Payson and Payson Senior Center have allocated a not-to-exceed limit of \$25,000 each per year to use for transit operations as needed. Star Valley allocated a not-to-exceed limit of \$2,500. Approvals are required from each agency's council/board for each year. In 2019, the Town of Payson worked with the Payson senior center to receive a \$1.4 million grant for pedestrian/user enhancements along the Beeline Bus Route.

Figure 3.7. Beeline Bus Operations Budget

Source: FTA National Transit Database

Table 3.5 outlines the operating expenses and fare revenues based on data provided by the Payson Senior Center.

**Table 3.5. Beeline Bus Fare Revenue (October 2018 – 2019)**

Service Metric	Total
Operating Expenses	\$155,404
Fare Revenues	\$3,961
Farebox Recovery Ratio	2.5%

Source: Payson Senior Center

3.2.6 REGIONAL COORDINATION

Beeline Bus actively works with communities throughout the region to help identify potential public transportation service enhancements, including assisting Copper Mountain Transit with potentially evaluating service route changes. Beeline bus does not coordinate service times with Mountain Shuttle, due to the nature of the private shuttle service.

3.2.7 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Beeline Bus service is provided to the communities of Payson and Star Valley through a partnership with the Payson Senior Center, Town of Payson, Town of Star Valley, and Gila County. The system is operated by the Payson Senior Center with financial support only from Town of Payson, Town of Star Valley, and Gila County. An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between these entities describes the commitments that each organization makes to the transit system and provides the local matching fund commitment that allows the Payson Senior Center to obtain federal funds. It is the goal of the Payson Senior Center to turn the system over to an existing governing body, or a newly created governing body should this study make such a recommendation.

Beeline Bus receives input from a Transit Advisory Committee that was created at the start-up of the system to provide guidance, support, and build collaboration. The Transit Advisory Committee includes representatives from CAG, Gila County, the Town of Payson, Town of Star Valley, Banner Payson Hospital, and the Payson Senior Center.

3.2.8 PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The Beeline Bus Transit Manager has made preliminary plans to enhance and expand services. Planned improvements include expanded service in Star Valley to include service to popular motor vehicle parks to provide much needed transportation services to individuals. Payson Senior Center staff have also identified the need for additional service within the Town of Payson to include residential areas near the airport and off Easy Street.



3.3 NNEE BICH'O NII T

Existing conditions outlined in this section represents information collected by readily available data. In order for the San Carlos Apache Tribe to participate and provide necessary data for analysis, Tribal Council approval is needed. A Tribal Council meeting is scheduled October 14th to review participation in the Plan. After the approval, this section will be updated to reflect information obtained during that meeting.

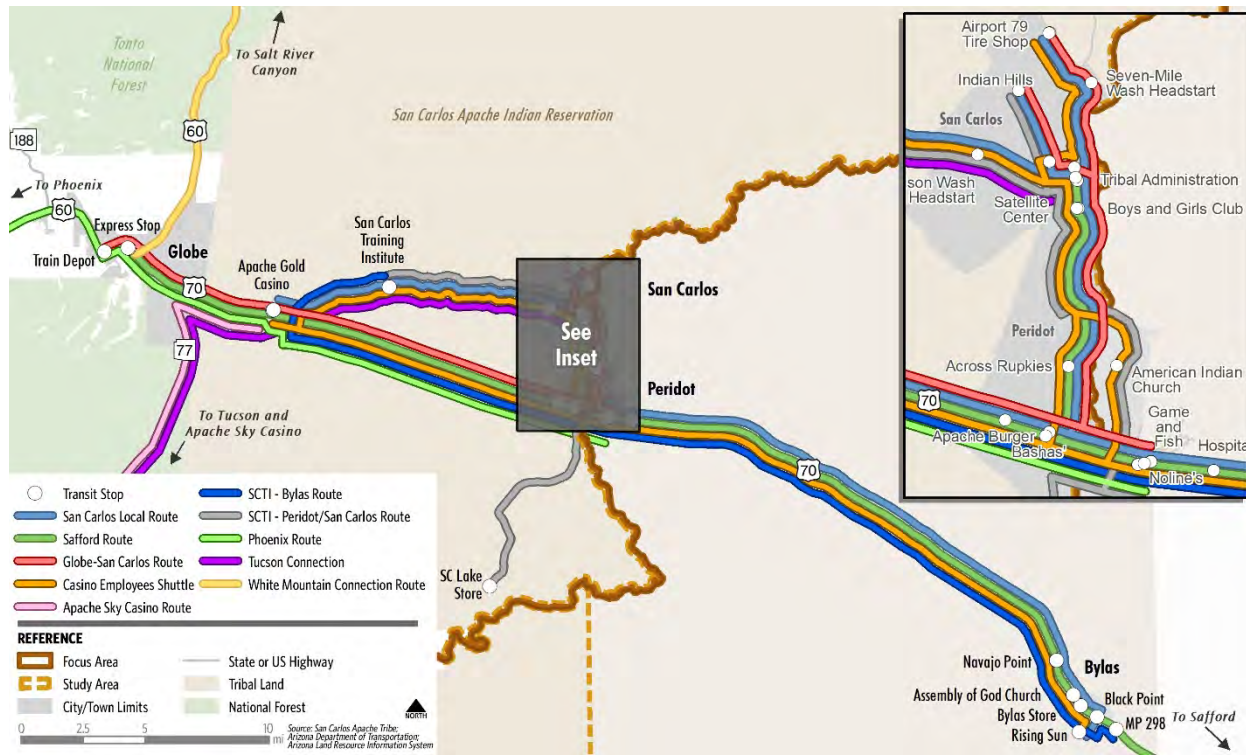
3.3.1 SERVICE OVERVIEW

The San Carlos Apache Tribe established a Transportation Department in 2007 in response to mobility needs for individuals living within the San Carlos Apache Reservation. Nnee Bich'o Nii's services includes the operation of a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and fixed-route transit service in effort to provide local citizens better access to services and employment. The TANF program assists individuals and families that



include deprived dependent children, while Nnee Bich'o Nii provides mobility through transit services on the reservation and on near-reservation areas. Service includes:

- Seven fixed-route services with pre-determined bus stop locations (see **Figure 3.8**):
 - **Globe - San Carlos Route:** fixed-route service operating Monday through Friday that connects Globe, San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, and Safford.
 - **San Carlos - Peridot - Bylas Route:** local area shuttle with services Monday through Friday from 5:50 am to 3:20 pm with the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.
 - **Safford - Globe Route:** fixed-route service operating Monday through Friday from 6:50 am to 5:20 pm that connects Globe and the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. Route connects to the CVCT at the Globe Train Depot.
 - **Apache Gold Casino Employees Route:** van service for employees from areas throughout the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation to the Apache Gold Casino.
 - **Apache Sky Casino Route:** van service for casino employees operates three daily routes from Apache Gold Casino to Apache Sky Casino.
 - **San Carlos Training Institute Routes:** van service consisting of two routes; one from Bylas and one from Peridot/San Carlos both connecting to the San Carlos Training Institute.
 - **Phoenix Route:** shuttle service operating from San Carlos/Peridot to Phoenix on Mondays with return service from Phoenix on Fridays.
- Fares range from \$1 to \$5 depending on the distance traveled
- Major stops include the Apache Gold Casino, Globe Train Depot, Gila Community College, Nnee Bich'o Nii Office, and the Safford Walmart


Figure 3.8. Nnee Bich'o Nii Service Routes


3.3.2 AVAILABLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

Table 3.6 outlines available vehicle fleet. Nnee Bich'o Nii currently has over 20 vehicles in active revenue service. In addition, three new vans will be delivered to Nnee Bich'o Nii in December 2020, replacing older vehicles. The entire fleet is wheelchair accessible. Nnee Bich'o Nii does not have a designated transit hub or bus barn.

Table 3.6. Nnee Bich'o Nii Fleet

Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Year Manufactured	Capacity
Ford	E-350 Econo Van	2008	11
Ford	E-350 Econo Van	2008	11
Ford	E-350 Econo Van	2008	11
Ford	Econo Van LG	2008	14
Ford	Econo Van SM	2008	11
Ford	Econo Van LG	2008	11
Ford	BS Van	2009	11
Ford	BS/WSD Van	2009	11

* Needs replacement

Source: 2020 CAG / Sun Corridor MPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

**Table 3.6. Nnee Bich'o Nii Fleet**

Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Year Manufactured	Capacity
Ford	BS Van	2009	9
Chevy	Express Van	2011	11
Chevy	Express Van	2011	11
Chevy	Express Van	2011	11
Chevy	Express Van	2011	11
Chevy	Express Van	2011	11
Ford	Focus	2003	5
Dodge	Avenger SD	2008	5
Chevy	2500 HD	2012	6
Chevy	2500 HD	2012	6
Chevy	Express 4500*	2012	17
Chevy	Express 4500	2012	17
Ford	E-350	2013	8
Ford	E-350	2013	8
Ford	Starcraft	2015	24
Champion	Defender	2015	32
Transit Works	350 Van	2017	10
Transit Works	350 Van	2017	10
Ford	F-150 Truck	2018	6

* Needs replacement

Source: 2020 CAG / Sun Corridor MPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

3.3.3 STAFFING

Nnee Bich'o Nii currently has the following staff:

- One full-time Transit Director
- One full-time Fleet Supervisor
- One full-time Dispatch Lead
- Three dispatchers
- 15 full and part-time drivers



3.3.4 SERVICE DATA

Ridership data will be available upon Tribal Council on October 14th, 2020.

Table 3.7 includes a summary of annual ridership, expenses and revenues, and performance indicators.

Table 3.7. Nnee Bich'o Nii Service Metrics

Service Metric	Total
Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	646,393
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	22,537
Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips	68,573

Source: Sun Corridor MPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

3.3.5 FUNDING OVERVIEW

Funding data will be available upon Tribal Council on October 14th, 2020. Nnee Bich'o Nii Apache Transit is primarily funded through the FTA Section 5311 program. TANF funds are used for in-kind match.

3.3.6 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Nnee Bich'o Nii is operated by the San Carlos Apache Tribe to provide transportation services to the general public in the San Carlos Apache Reservation and surrounding neighboring cities in Globe and Safford areas. The manager, drivers, and dispatchers are San Carlos Apache Tribal Government employees and are subject to the Tribe's guidelines for hiring, performance evaluations, and promotions.

Nnee Bich'o Nii receives input from the Tribal Transportation Advisory Committee which provide guidance and support to the system. In addition, all budgets, service changes, purchases, policies, and expansion plans must receive approval by the Tribal Transportation Advisory Committee and ultimately the Tribal Council.

3.3.7 REGIONAL COORDINATION

Nnee Bich'o Nii provides numerous opportunities for regional collaboration and coordination. Currently, the Tribe coordinates with the following agencies:

- Copper Mountain Transit – coordinate transit service transfers in Globe
- White Mountain Apache Tribe - coordinate transit service transfers to the Salt River Canyon rest area. White Mountain Apache Tribe has requested connections at Cibecue as well.



3.3.8 PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The following are planned enhancements and improvements for Nnee Bich'o Nii:

- Rerouting the Globe route to provide direct service to Wal-Mart to allow Tribal members more convenient access to shopping
- Establishing a deviated fixed-route connection between San Carlos and the Tucson area that allows for residents in Hayden and Winkelman to use
- Establishing a regional dispatch center to coordinate transit services among the numerous routes operated by Nnee Bich'o Nii Transit

3.4 FORT APACHE CONNECTION TRANSIT (FACT)

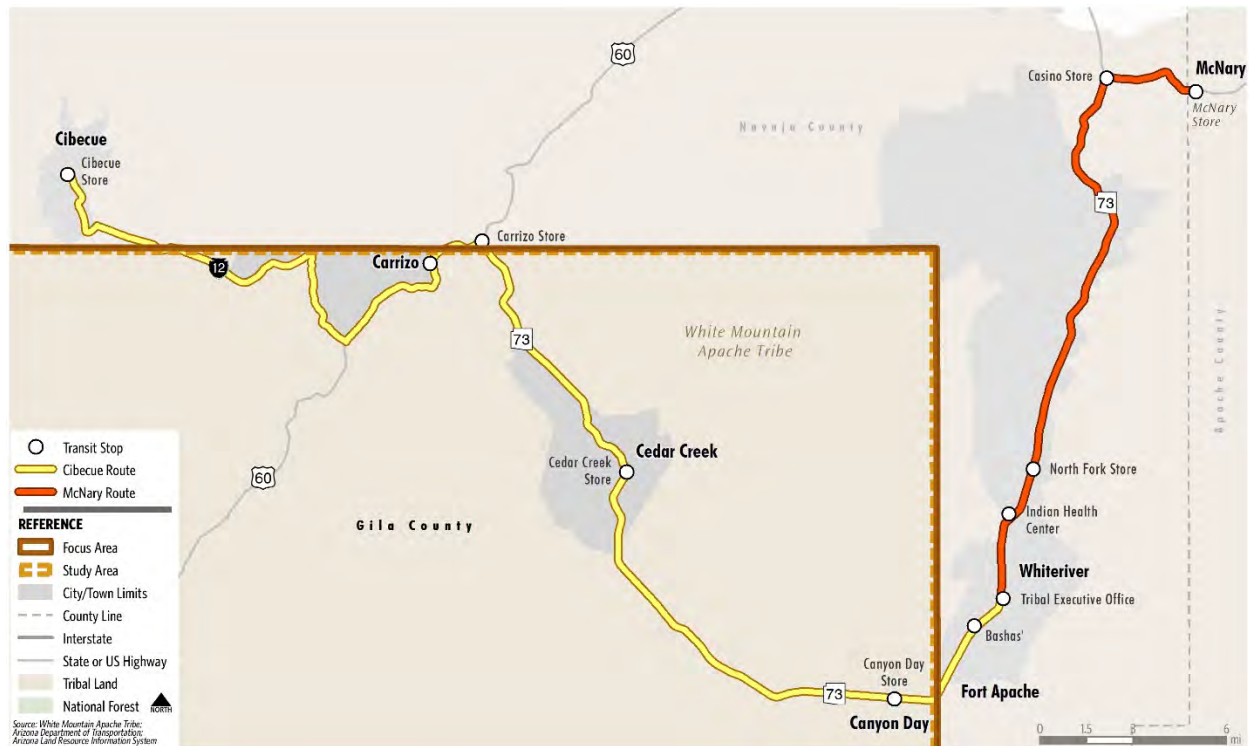
Existing conditions outlined in this section represents information collected by readily available data. Efforts to connect with and obtain data from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Fort Apache Connection will continue. Upon discussion with the Tribe, this section will be updated to reflect current conditions.

The Fort Apache Connection Transit (FACT), operated by the White Mountain Apache Tribe, began public transportation services in June 2017.

3.4.1 SERVICE OVERVIEW

The system currently connects with the Four Seasons Connection in Hon-Dah and plans to connect with the San Carlos Apache Tribe Nnee Bich'o Nii Department in the near future. Over the next several years, the service plans to add more routes to expand its geographic coverage, and to provide transit options for the weekend. Service includes:

- FACT operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 1:45 pm and has fixed-route services routes, each with 12 designated stops (see **Figure 3.9**)
 - Route 1 (Whiteriver to Cibecue): stops include Cedar Creek and Carrizo
 - Route 2 (Whiteriver to McNary): stops include the Indian Health Center, and Hon-dah Store
 - Route 3 (Circulator route in Whiteriver)
- Prominent stops include Bashas', Tribal Executive Building, Cibecue Store, Indian Health Services building, Hon-dah Store, and the McNary Store
- Fares are \$1.00 one-way, with a 50% discount for individuals older than 60
- Daily, weekly, and monthly passes are offered to provide savings for frequent users
- Transit does not run on every 3rd Friday of the month, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and any days the White Mountain Apache Tribe deems a Tribal Holiday


Figure 3.9. Fort Apache Connection Transit Service Routes


3.4.2 AVAILABLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

XXXXX

3.4.3 STAFFING

XXXXX

3.4.4 SERVICE DATA

Ridership data will be available upon discussion with White Mountain Apache Tribe staff. Table 3.8 includes a summary of annual ridership, expenses and revenues, and performance indicators.

Table 3.8. Fort Apache Connection Service Metrics

Service Metric	Total
Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	2,681
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	16,929
Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips	516

Source: Sun Corridor MPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update



3.4.5 FUNDING OVERVIEW

Funding data will be available upon discussion with White Mountain Apache Tribe staff. Fort Apache Connection is primarily funded through the FTA Section 5311 program.

3.4.6 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Fort Apache Connection is operated by the White Mountain Apache Tribe to provide transportation services to the public in the White Mountain Apache Reservation and surrounding neighboring communities. The manager, drivers, and dispatchers are White Mountain Apache Tribe employees and are subject to the Tribe's guidelines for hiring, performance evaluations, and promotions.

3.4.7 REGIONAL COORDINATION

Fort Apache Connection currently coordinates transit service transfers to with Nnee Bich'o Ni at the Salt River Canyon rest area. This connection expands services for passengers who would like to visit family members or travel for work related purposes. White Mountain Apache Tribe has requested connections with Nnee Bich'o Ni at Cibecue as well.

3.4.8 PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Planned improvements will be acquired upon discussion with White Mountain Apache Staff.

3.5 GREYHOUND

Greyhound is an intercity bus carrier that serves more than 3,800 destinations across North America. With funding support from ADOT, Greyhound provides regional connections to the Phoenix metropolitan area and any destination on the Greyhound service route from a station in Miami. The Arco AM/PM convenience store at the corner of Ragus Road and US 60 is the only Greyhound station in Gila County. Bus ticketing at the station is available from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm daily. The Greyhound departs from the Arco AM/PM daily at 11:55 am.



3.6 MOUNTAIN VALLEY SHUTTLE

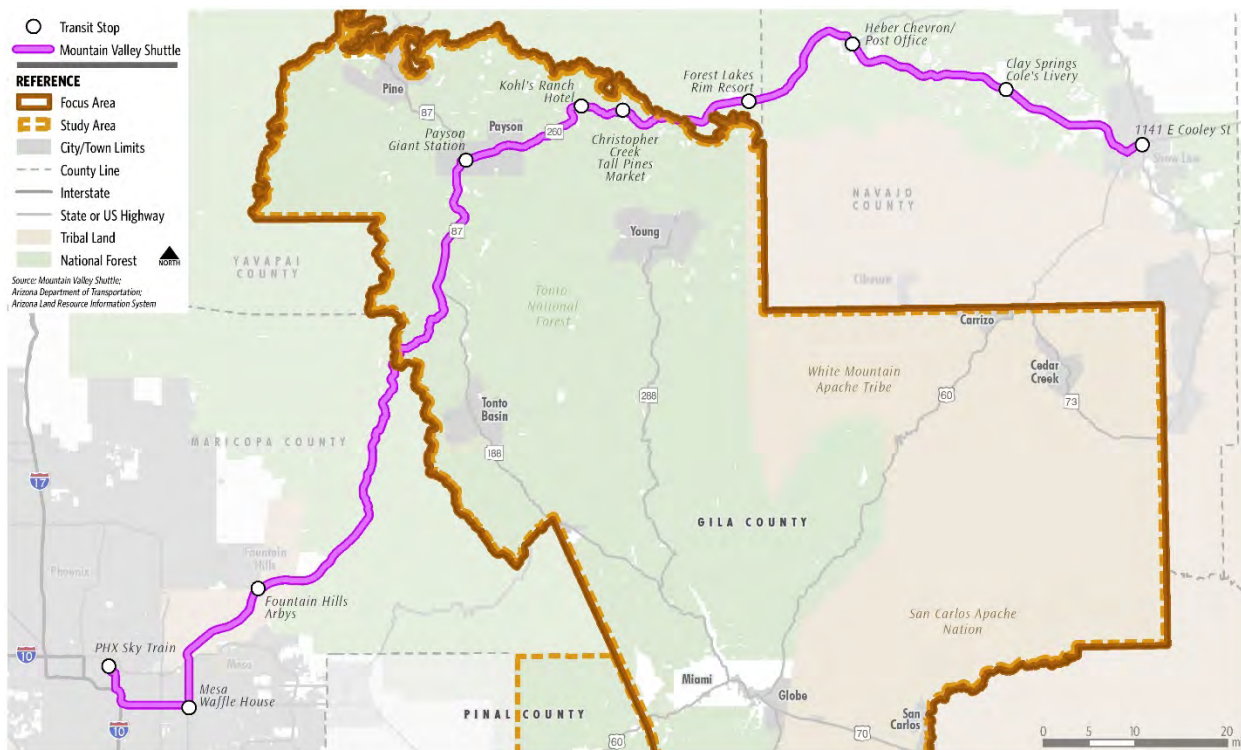
Mountain Valley Shuttle (MVS) provides van transportation services from communities within the White Mountains area to the Phoenix metropolitan area. MVS's service includes:

- Single, daily roundtrip fixed-route van service from Show Low to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport (See **Figure 3.10**).
 - Hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday
 - Stops include: Show Low, Clay Springs, Heber, Forest Lakes, Kohl's Ranch, Payson, Fountain Hills, Mesa, and Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport
 - Fares are based on distance traveled and range from \$20 to \$60. There is a \$5 discount for military, veterans, and seniors over the age of 62.
 - Reservations are recommended and maximum vehicle capacity is 13 passengers.



PASSENGER PRICES											
	SL	CS	HB	FL	CC	KR	PA	FH	MS	PHX	AP
Show Low		30	40	40	45	45	50	70	70	70	70
Clay Springs	30		35	40	45	45	50	70	70	70	70
Heber	40	35		35	40	40	45	65	65	65	65
Forest Lakes	40	40	35		30	30	40	65	65	65	65
Christopher Cree	45	45	40	30		30	35	60	60	60	60
Kohl's Ranch	45	45	40	40	30		35	50	60	60	60
Payson	50	50	45	40	35	35		50	50	50	50
Fountain Hills	70	70	65	65	60	50	50		40	40	40
Mesa	70	70	65	65	60	60	50	40		30	30
Phoenix	70	70	65	65	60	60	50	40	30		
Airport Stop	70	70	65	65	60	60	50	40	30		

Figure 3.10. Mountain Valley Shuttle Route and Stops





To provide an understanding of a few of the human service providers located within Gila County, the following sections outlines agencies that are most actively involved in the Gila-Pinal Rides Transportation Coordination Committee. These agencies provide a brief representation of the types of service provided in Gila County.

3.7.1 HORIZON HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Horizon Health and Wellness is a non-profit integrated health care agency that provides inpatient, outpatient, and residential services in Pinal, Gila, and Yuma Counties. Horizon Health and Wellness provides comprehensive care for its patients, including primary medical care, behavioral health services, nutrition, exercise, and wellness programs, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. They offer affordable self-pay and an income-based sliding fee discount program.

Horizon Health and Wellness offers eligible patients transportation to and from medical appointments or programs at no charge. Transportation services are provided Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Services must be requested at least 48 hours in advance. For individuals residing in agency group homes, transportation services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Horizon's transportation program is funded through FTA Section 5310 and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). According to the 2020 CAG / Sun Corridor MPO *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update*, Horizon has a fleet of 37 vans and minivans and provide over 42,000 annual trips, covering over 470,000 miles, with a service area that includes a 45-mile radius from Globe, Miami, and Payson.

3.7.2 PAYSON SENIOR CENTER

In addition to the Beeline Bus, Payson Senior Center operates a FTA 5310, "door to door" transportation service for seniors aged 60 and older and adults under 60 that are mobility challenged. The "Senior Express" offers transportation to and from medical appointments, shopping centers, and other eligible destinations for a suggested \$5.00 round trip fare, or \$1.00 round trip fare to and from the Senior Center.

Payson Senior Center also provides homebound meals for participants through its "Meals on Wheels" program. There are currently four routes that cover Payson, Star Valley, and Tonto Basin, operating Monday through Friday.

3.7.3 PINAL-GILA COUNCIL FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens (PGCSC) provides services to individuals aged 60 or older in Pinal and Gila Counties, including caregiver support, home repair, meal programs, senior center management, and transportation. PGCSC's transportation services include transportation to and from various senior centers through Pinal and Gila Counties, including those in Hayden, Globe, Miami, and Payson. As the "Area Agency on Aging" for the region, PGCSC provides funding to local senior centers for their own transportation programs.



3.7.4 ON-THE-GO EXPRESS

The Pinal County Department of Public Health operates the On-the-Go Express program, which offers demand response transportation service for adults aged 60 and over and persons with disabilities. This service provides transportation to and from medical appointments, shopping centers, and pharmacies. It operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a suggested fare of \$2.00. In addition to serving individuals in Pinal County, On-the-Go Express serves individuals in the Hayden-Winkelman area as long as their destination is within Pinal County.

On-the-Go Express is funded by Pinal County and Section 5310 funds. According to the 2020 *Pinal County Transit Governance Study*, On-the-Go Express operates a fleet of 6 vehicles, providing over 6,500 annual trips, covering over 100,000 miles.

3.7.5 PORTABLE PRACTICAL EDUCATION PREPARATION (PPEP) / ENCOMPASS

PPEP Integrated Care operates group homes and day programs for developmentally disabled adults. In Globe, PPEP has five group homes and one-day program. PPEP provides transportation and employment services to adults, including seniors, with developmental disabilities who are PPEP Integrated Care clients or state contracted clients. In Gila County, PPEP continues to coordinate with Horizon Health and Wellness and Arizona Mentor in the areas of staff development, transportation, community wide events and sustainable solutions for this rural area. According to the 2020 *Pinal County Transit Governance Study*, PPEP operates a fleet of 19 vehicles, providing over 29,300 annual trips in Gila and Pinal Counties.



4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The review of previous plans and studies, current and projected demographic characteristics, and existing transit services and conditions help provide a helpful context for Gila County to evaluate models and options for expanding and enhancing transit services in the region. The following are key findings identified during existing conditions review. **This section will be updated upon discussions with the remainder of meetings scheduled with key transit agencies and stakeholders.**

4.1 POPULATION AND COMMUTE CONDITIONS

- Population, activity center, and employment density in Payson-Star Valley, Globe-Miami, and San Carlos-Peridot support the densities needed for a public transportation system.
- Gila County is an automobile-oriented area, with long-distance commute times, limited pedestrian infrastructure in densely populated areas, and long walking distances off main roads.
- Gila County is home to many transit-dependent individuals, including seniors, individuals under the age of 18, those with mobility limitations, and those without access to a vehicle. These population groups are largely provided service with current public transportation systems.
- The popularity of the Mountain Valley Shuttle service from Show Low to Payson and the City of Phoenix illustrates the public interest in regional public transportation services. Many Gila County residents travel to the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas for shopping and medical appointments.
- Many Payson-Star Valley residents travel to Globe-Miami for government services, whereas San Carlos Apache Tribe members travel to Globe-Miami for shopping and employment.

4.2 CURRENT TRANSIT SERVICES

- Gila County is currently services by the Globe-Miami Copper Mountain Transit, Payson-Star Valley Beeline Bus, San Carlos Apache Tribe Nnee Bich'o Nii T, White Mountain Apache Tribe Fort Apache Connection, the Mountain Valley Shuttle, and numerous human service providers.
- Current public transportation services in Gila County are essential to its riders and benefit the communities; however, there are numerous local and regional gaps to need to be addressed to meet all the region's mobility needs.
- Connecting rural communities (i.e. Pine, Strawberry, Hayden, Winkelman, etc.) to current transit routes would be beneficial to provide residents and visitors with transportation to employment, medical, education, entertainment, and shopping.



- Gila County's current public transportation providers currently work independently with some coordination and collaboration. Improved coordination among transit providers may better service Gila County residents and workers and provide cost savings.

Table 4.1 provides a summary of existing transit service governance structures in Gila County.

Table 4.1. Summary of Current Gila County Transit Operators

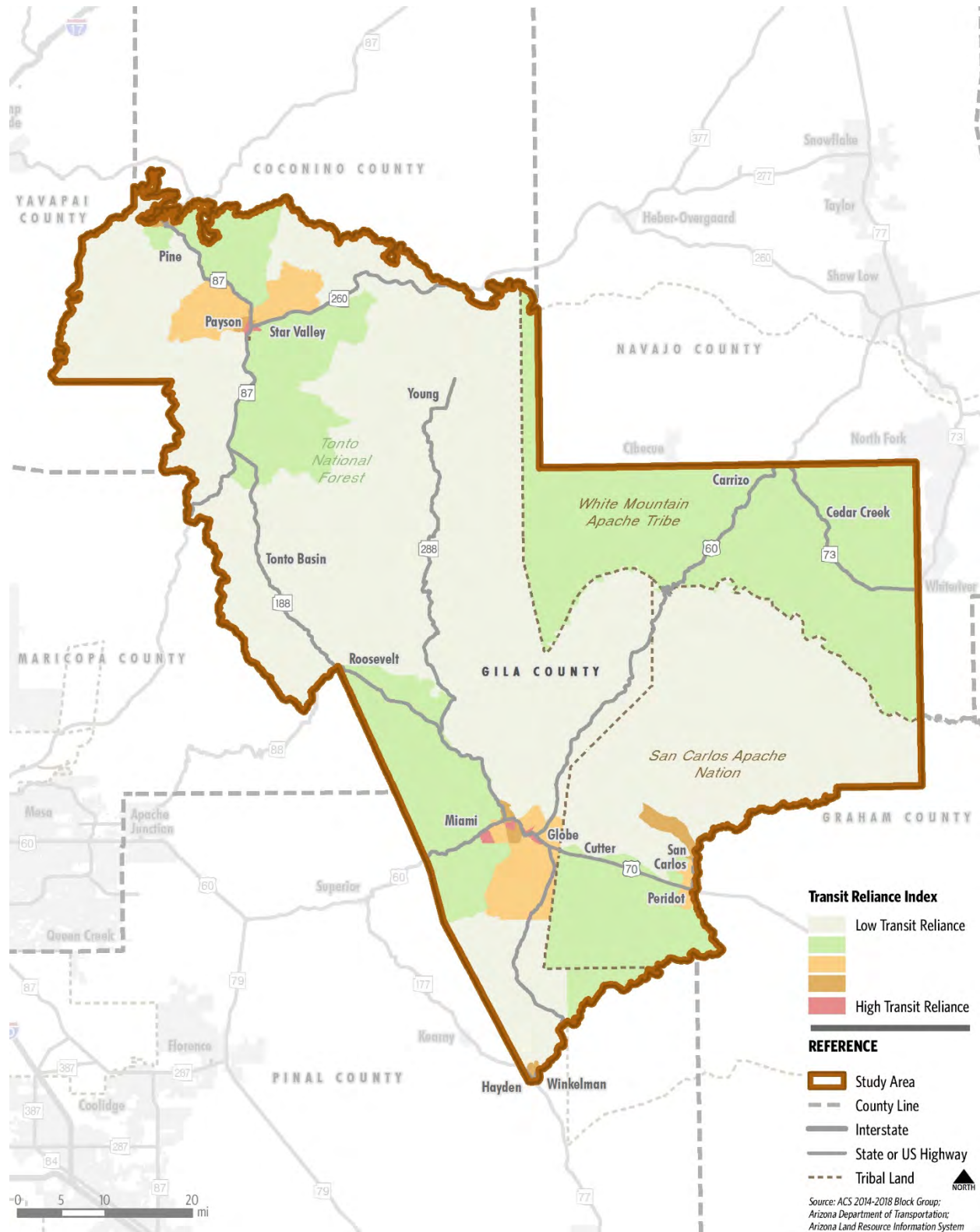
Service	Operator	Funding	Existing Structure
Copper Mountain Transit	Town of Miami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • Local (Miami, Globe, Gila County) • Fare revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by Town of Miami's Public Works Department • Financial support from Miami, Globe, and Gila County • Transit Advisory Committee oversee services • Mayor, Town Manager, and Town Council oversee service • Coordinates with San Carlos Apache Tribe
Beeline Bus	Payson Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • Local (Payson, Gila County, Star Valley, Payson Senior Center) • Advertisement • Fare revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by Payson Senior Center • Financial support and IGA between Payson, Gila County, Star Valley, and Payson Senior Center • Transit Advisory Committee oversee services
Nnee Bich'o Nii T	San Carlos Apache Tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • Tribal TANF • Fare revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by San Carlos Apache Tribal Government's Transit Department • Tribal Transportation Advisory Committee and Tribal Council oversee service operations. • Coordinates with Copper Mountain Transit and Fort Apache Connection
Fort Apache Connection	White Mountain Apache Tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • Fare revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by White Mountain Apache Tribe's Division of Transportation • Coordinates with Copper Mountain Transit and Fort Apache Connection
Mountain Valley Shuttle	Private	Fare revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private shuttle service



APPENDIX A. TRANSIT RELIANCE INDEX SCORES

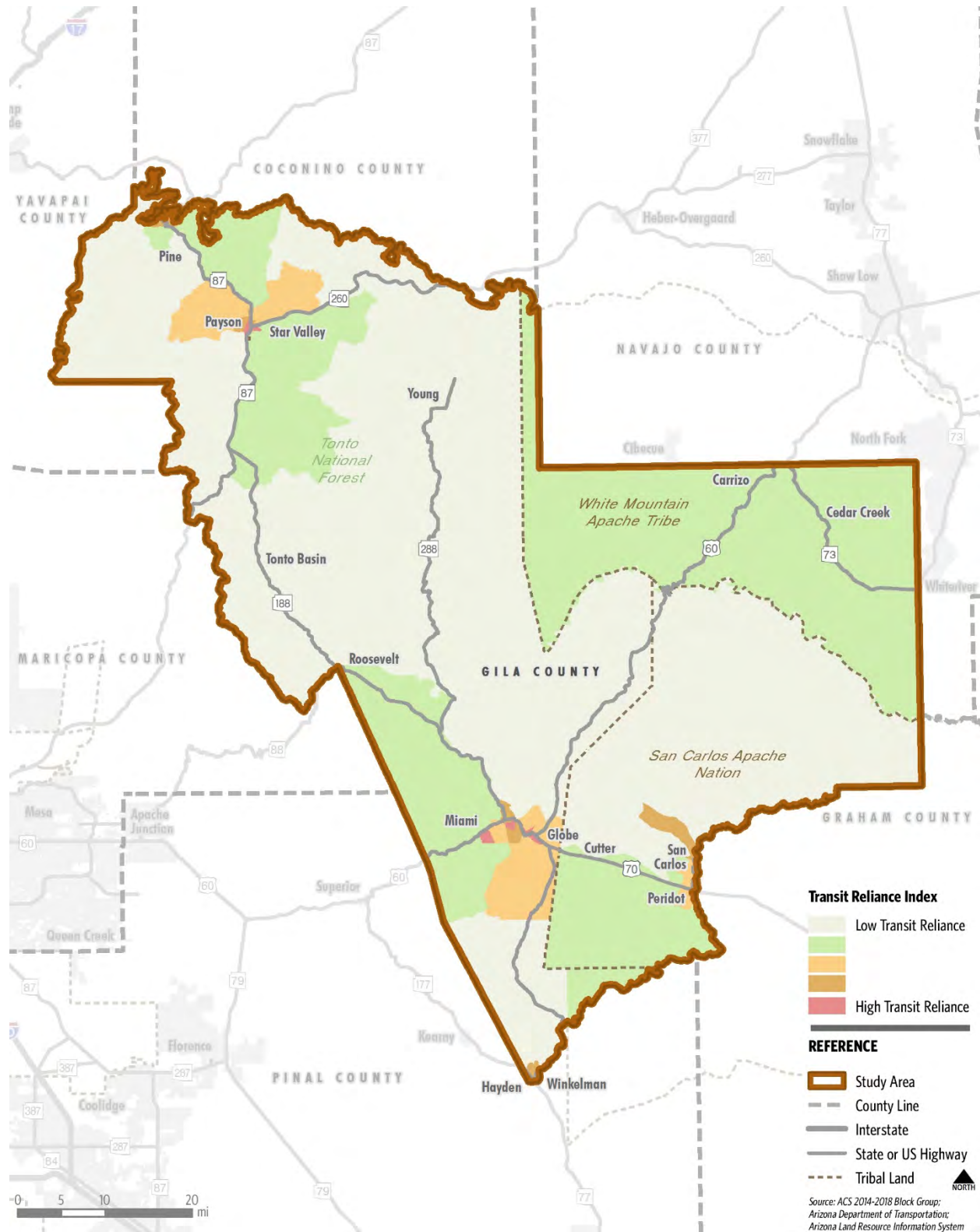


Age 18 and Under – Transit Reliance Index



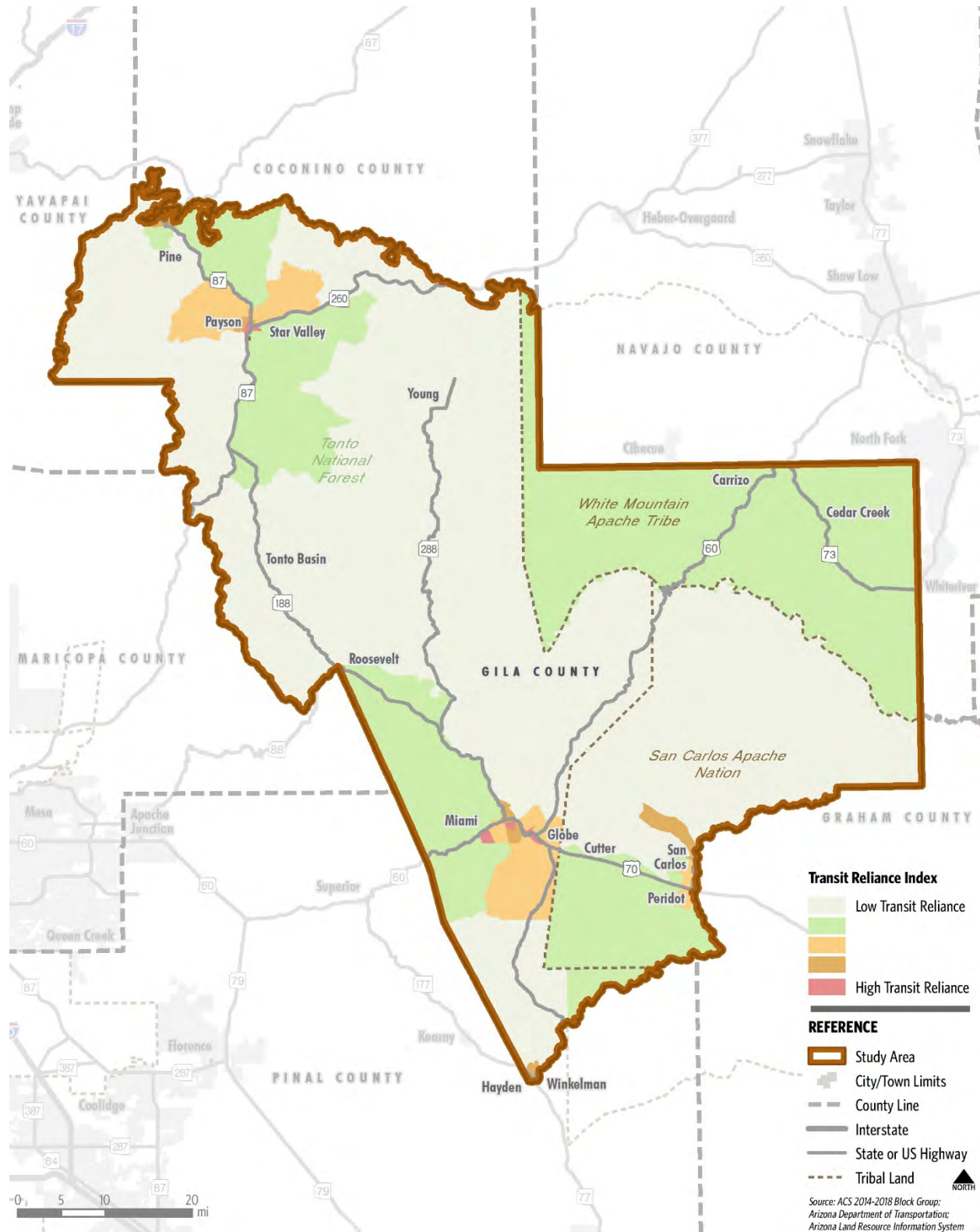


Age 65 and Older – Transit Reliance Index



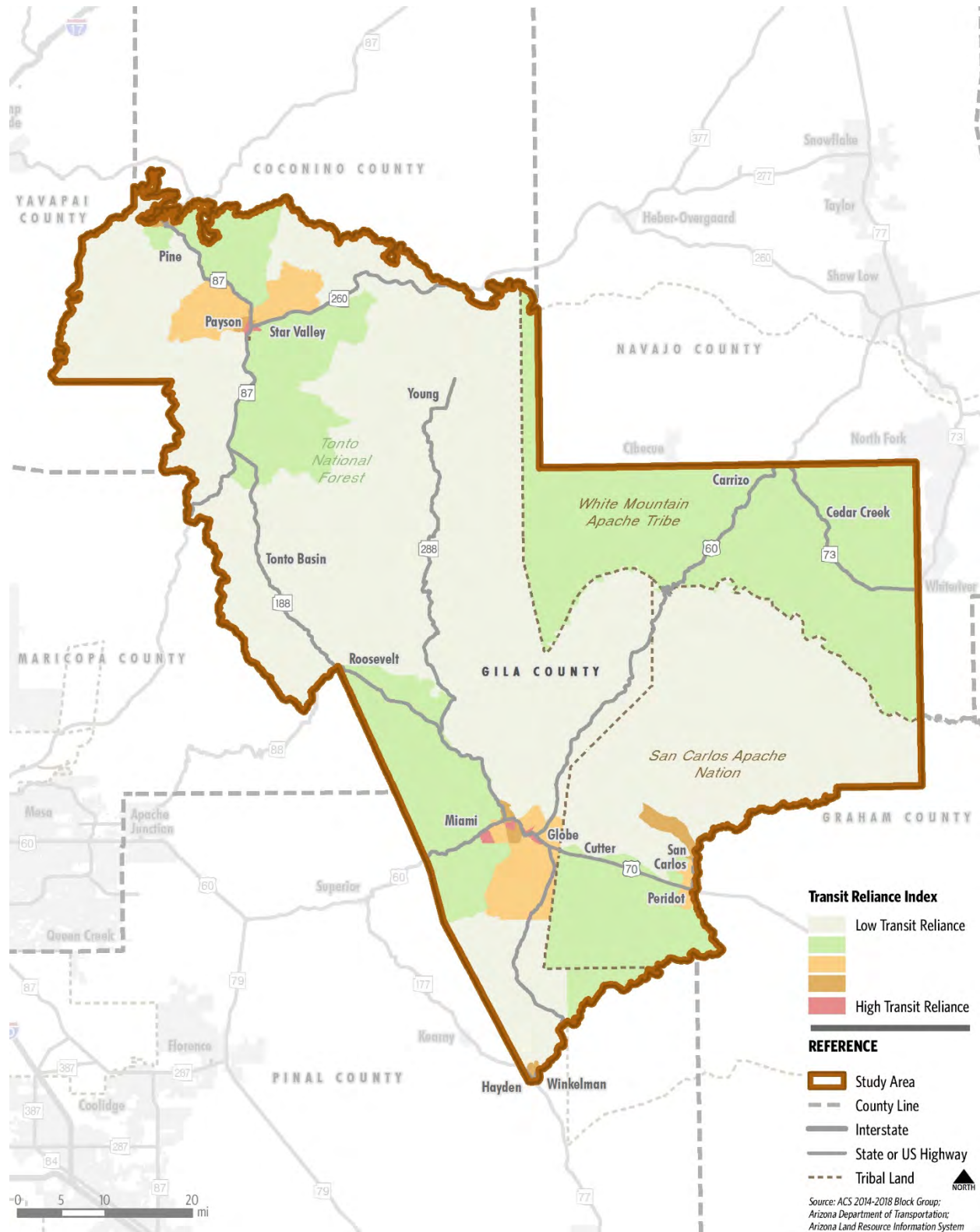


Below Poverty – Transit Reliance Index





Zero Vehicle Households – Transit Reliance Index





Mobility Limitations – Transit Reliance Index

