Updated Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan For Mahoning County, Ohio and Mercer County, Pennsylvania

FINAL REPORT

Strategies and Solutions
For Improving the Delivery of Transportation Services
For Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, And Low Income
Families and Veterans

Prepared for the
Western Reserve Transit Authority
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
Shenango Valley Shuttle Service
Mercer County Community Transit
Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
Mercer County Council of Governments in Pennsylvania

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Updating the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Metropolitan areas across the country, under requirement of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, have developed plans to coordinate transportation services offered with funding from federal programs across departments and agencies. The original plan, _Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan For Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, Ohio and Mercer County, Pennsylvania_, was completed in 2008.

This original plan was required for public transit systems in the Youngstown OH-PA Urbanized Area, as defined by the 2010 Census. It is within this area that federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration is allocated to the Western Reserve Transit Authority, the Trumbull County Transit Board, through the City of Warren, OH, and the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service, through the City of Sharon PA.

This report presents the _Updated Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan For Mahoning County, Ohio and Mercer County, Pennsylvania_. The focus of the planning has been on the transportation mobility of four target groups: 1) older persons, 2) persons with disabilities, 3) persons from low income families and 4) veterans. The updated plan recommends strategies that improve travel mobility by making better use of federal programs to meet the needs of these target populations. Figure 1 shows the Youngstown OH-PA Urbanized area, highlighting the urbanized area that falls in Mahoning County OH and Mercer County PA.

This report presents the update of the transportation services coordination plan for Mahoning County in Ohio and Mercer County in Pennsylvania. The cooperating agencies are the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Western Reserve Transit Authority, Mercer County Council of Governments, Mercer County Regional Planning Commission and Shenango Valley Shuttle Service. The Trumbull County Transit Board has chosen to complete an update of its portion of the original plan separately. (see Figure 1). The Trumbull County Transit Board has chosen to prepare its own updated coordination plan. Figure 1 shows Trumbull County shaded.

With the passage of recent federal transportation authorizing legislation, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) in December 2015, one funding program administered by the Federal Transit Administration requires the development and update of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Projects selected for funding under the Federal Transit Administration, Section 5310 Program must be included in this plan.

The *FTA Section 5310 Program - Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities* is a program designed for and implemented to meet the special needs of elderly Individuals and Individuals with disabilities. The Section 5310 Program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services.

The program was enacted in its present form in federal authorizing legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and extended in the following legislation, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST). The 5310 Program expanded the program by consolidating the New Freedom Program and Elderly and Disabled Program. Operating assistance is now available under this program.

Eligible Recipients include local government authorities, private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation that receive a grant indirectly through a recipient.

The Western Reserve Transit Authority is the designated recipient for Mahoning County; the Trumbull County Transit Board is the designated recipient for Trumbull County; Mercer County is eligible through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Eligible Activities include:
- At least 55% of program funds must be used on capital projects that are:
  - ✓ Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable.
- The remaining 45% may be used for:
  - ✓ Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA,
  - ✓ Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit,
  - ✓ Alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Other programs of the Federal Transit Administration do not require a plan to coordinate transportation services as a basis for funding eligibility. The requirements related to the FTA Section 5310 Program are discussed later in the report.

Figure 1
Study Area - Mahoning County OH and Mercer County PA
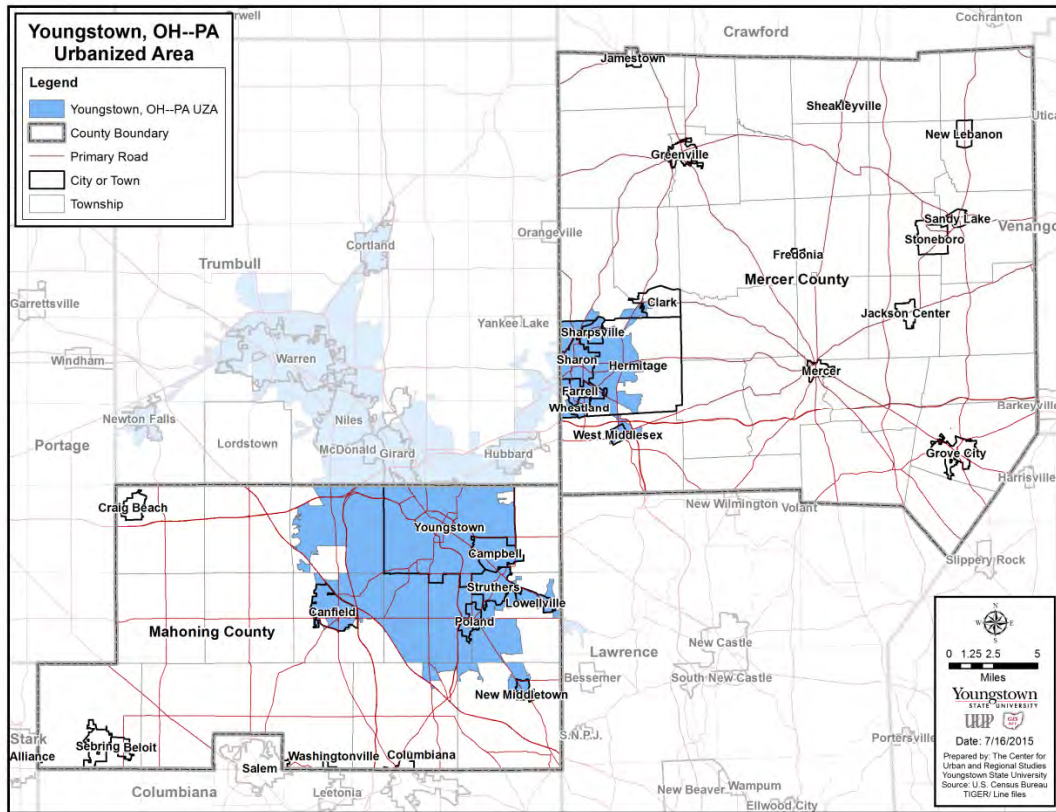
This federal coordination planning requirement offers the opportunity to take a fresh, in-depth and creative look at how transportation services are offered to meet travel needs.

To take advantage of funding from The Section 5310 program, metropolitan areas are required to maintain an *Updated Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*. Projects receiving funding through this program must be consistent with strategies and priorities in the plan. The development of an updated plan requires community outreach to and involvement of the target populations, agencies and advocates serving them and providers of transportation and human services funded by other federal programs.

The updated coordination plan addresses the following elements:

- An assessment of available transportation services, unmet transportation needs, and gaps in transportation services available to the target populations
- Strategies and activities to address gaps and overlaps in transportation services
- Priorities for implementation based on resources, time and feasibility for implementing the specific strategies and activities

Community outreach, collaboration and consensus building have been important in ensuring that the updated coordination plan is responsive to community needs and consistent with the resources that are available.

This updated plan has been developed cooperatively by the public transit systems working with regional transportation planning agencies and representatives of public, non-profit, private transportation providers, human service agencies and seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with low income and veterans. This report presents strategies and solutions, recommended actions and priorities for the coordination of transportation services that are provided by public transportation, human services agencies and private transportation providers.

As lead agencies for transportation planning in the region and as lead agencies in their respective counties for public transportation services, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Western Reserve Transit Authority, Mercer County Council of Governments, Mercer County Regional Planning Commission and Shenango Valley Shuttle Service have key responsibility for implementation of proposed strategies and solutions, recommended actions and priorities in this plan.

The report is organized as follows:
- Chapter 1 – Updating the Coordination Plan
- Chapter II – Transportation Services
- Chapter III - Serving Customers with Mobility Needs
- Chapter IV –Unmet Needs, and Gaps and Overlaps in Transportation Services
- Chapter V - Coordinating Transportation Services
- Chapter VI - Strategies for Coordinating Transportation Services
- Chapter VII - Evaluation of Strategies
- Chapter VIII - Recommended Transportation Coordination Strategies and Solutions

II
Serving Customers with Mobility Needs

Seniors, individuals with disabilities, families with low income, households without vehicles and veterans represent population segments whose members typically are not able to meet their mobility needs through ownership and/or access to a private motor vehicle. Consequently, communities, in one manner or another, organize and deliver transportation services so that they may travel to meet their needs – work, education, shopping, health care services, human service programs, personal and other needs.

Critical Mobility Issues

Several key groups of persons have been identified as having special transportation needs; they are sometimes collectively referred to as "the transportation disadvantaged." Most often, those having special transportation needs are thought of as

- Seniors
- Individuals with disabilities
- Low-income families
- Households without a motor vehicle
- Veterans

Seniors may experience a number of key transportation issues:

- They may have driven for many years, but may be forced to limit or give up driving due to changes in physical or mental capabilities, medications, or other issues.
- They may never have driven but have been dependent on others for their trips; these other persons may have moved away, died, or otherwise become unavailable.
- They may be living on fixed incomes that make travel less affordable.
- Their physical or mental issues may create a need for a travel companion for most of their trips.
- If they are unable to satisfy their basic travel needs, they may be forced to move from their current residence into a facility that offers more care.

Individuals with disabilities may experience a number of key transportation issues:

- They may find it difficult to drive or to use public transportation.
- The kind of transportation that they need may be extremely limited or nearly non-existent.
- Their transportation issues may make it difficult to maintain viable employment, which can in turn lead to issues of limited incomes and problems of affordability.

Low-income families and households without a motor vehicle may experience a number of key transportation issues:

- They may not be able to afford to travel as often, as far, or at the times desired.
- Their transportation issues may make it difficult to maintain viable employment, which can hinder their opportunities to better their situation and may perpetuate the problems of income limitations or poverty.
- They may be forced to rely on less dependable autos, which may hinder their employment attendance.
- They may be forced to rely on less desirable modes of transportation which could lead to problems of excess travel times and increased risk of personal safety.

Veterans and military families may experience a number of key transportation issues:

- Older military veterans share transportation issues with seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Access to local medical services and Veterans Administration hospital services is very important.
- Younger military veterans need access to employment training and jobs.
- Homelessness among younger military veterans is particularly acute, with access to all services being significant. Drug dependency and criminal records are especially significant.

Many of these problems overlap the five groups. Issues for one group often affect another. In situations where an individual shares the characteristics of multiple groups -- for example, being an elderly person with disabilities, or being a low-income person with disabilities -- the transportation challenges are multiplied.

For all these groups, if they are unable to provide their own transportation, they may not be able to access the full range of social, educational, and employment opportunities available to others. They can also be at a distinct disadvantage in terms of protecting themselves in emergency situations.

It is of primary importance to note that the proportion of our population classified as senior is increasing dramatically. In a short time, more than one in five individuals in the United States will be age 65 and older. This will create one of the greatest demographic changes ever seen in this country. By some accounts, the rate of disabilities among our population is declining. However, increased population growth will lead to increases in the numbers of persons with disabilities in the future, even if such persons are a smaller portion of the population. Population projections for low-income persons are even more uncertain, but it is certainly possible that there will be more low-income persons in the future than now even if poverty rates decline. These demographic trends strongly support additional investments in transportation services for persons with special transportation needs.

Target Populations with Mobility Needs

According to the US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, in 2009-2013, the total population of Mahoning County was 237, 033 and 116,059 in Mercer County. Persons with mobility needs have been identified through a review of socio-demographic data. Tables 1 and 2 present target populations of seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with low income and/or no vehicle available and veterans:

Seniors

Table 1 shows there are 64,766 non-institutionalized persons aged 65 or more years of age in the study area:
- 42,935 in Mahoning County, representing 18.1% of the total population
- 21,831 in Mercer County, representing 18.8% of the total population

Table 2 shows important indicators of mobility need among older persons are the following characteristics:
- Seniors with a disability
  - ✓ 35.8% of seniors in Mahoning County
  - ✓ 36.7% of seniors in Mercer County
- Seniors with low income (defined as 150% of the poverty level)
  - ✓ 22.3% in Mahoning County
  - ✓ 17.6% in Mercer county

Individuals with a Disability

Table 1 shows there are 50,391 individuals with a disability in the study area:
- 33,682 in Mahoning County, representing 18.7% of the total population
- 16,709 in Mercer County, representing 19.6% of the Total population

Table 1 shows disability by age:
- In Mahoning County
  - Among persons 18-64 years of age, 13.7% have a disability
  - Among persons 65 and over, 35% have a disability
- In Mercer County:
  - Among persons 18-64 years of age, 14.1% have a disability
  - Among persons 65 and over, 36.7% have a disability

As Table 2 shows, an important indicator of mobility need among individuals with disabilities is income level. In the study area, there are 21,646 individuals with disabilities who are in low income families, representing 6.4% of the total population with a disability.

- In Mahoning County, 14,910 persons, or 6.5% of the total population, have a disability and low income.
- In Mercer County, 6,749 persons, or 6.2% of the total population, have a disability and low income.

Persons with Low Income and Households with No Vehicle

As Table 1 shows, there are 90,666 persons with low income in the study area:
- 64,501 in Mahoning County, representing 28.1% of the total population
- 26,198 in Mercer County, representing 24.0% of the total population

Further, there are 13,462 households with no vehicle available to meet their travel needs:
- 9,152 in Mahoning County, representing 9.3% of the total population
- 4,310 in Mercer County, representing 9.38% of the total population

Veterans

Table 1 shows there are 30,585 veterans in the study area:
- 19,811 in Mahoning County, representing 10.6% of the population aged 18 or more years of age
- 10,774 in Mercer County, representing 11.8% of the population aged 18 or more years of age

Looking at the disability status of veterans in Mahoning County, Table 2 shows:
- 19.0% of the veterans aged 18-64 years of age have a disability
- 36.9% of the veterans aged 65 or more years of age have a disability

Looking at the disability status of veterans in Mercer County Table 2 shows:
- 20.4% of the veterans aged 18-64 years of age have a disability
- 37.7% of the veterans aged 65 or more years of age have a disability

Table 1
Key Demographic Characteristics of the Population of Mahoning County OH and Mercer County PA

	Demographic Characteristics	Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two-County Total
Seniors	Total Population	237,033	116,059	353,092
	Total Population, 65 and Over	**42,935**	**21,831**	**64,766**
	Percent of Total Population 65 and Over	**18.1%**	**18.8%**	**18.3%**
Persons with a Disability	Total Population, Over 18, Poverty Status Determined	180,064	85,236	265,300
	Total Population, 18-64, Poverty Status Determined	139,286	64,530	203,816
	Total Population, Poverty Status Determined	319,350	149,766	469,116
	Total Population over 18 Years with a Disability	**33,682**	**16,709**	**50,391**
	Percent of Population 18 Years and Over with a disability	**18.7%**	**19.6%**	**19.0%**
	Total, 18-64, Poverty Status Determined, with Disability	**19,079**	**9,115**	**28,194**
	Percent of 18-64 Population with a disability	**13.7%**	**14.1%**	**13.8%**
	Total Population, 65 and Over, Poverty Status Determined	40,778	20,706	61,484
	Total Population, 65 and Over, Poverty Status Determined, with Disability	**14,603**	**7,594**	**22,197**
	Percent of 65 and Over Population with a disability	**35.8%**	**36.7%**	**36.1%**
Low Income	Total Population, Poverty Status Determined	229,550	108,935	338,485
	Total Population, Income Below 150% of the Poverty Level	**64,501**	**26,198**	**90,699**
	Percent of Population with Income below the Poverty Level	**28.1%**	**24.0%**	**26.8%**
No Vehicle	Occupied Housing Units	98,201	46,187	144,388
	Occupied Housing Units without Access to a Vehicle	**9,152**	**4,310**	**13,462**
	Percent of Occupied Housing Units without access to a motor vehicle	**9.3%**	**9.3%**	**9.3%**
Veterans	Civilian Population, 18 and Over	186,623	91,421	278,044
	Civilian Population, 18 and Over, Veteran	**19,811**	**10,774**	**30,585**
	Percent of 18 and Over Population that are Veterans	**10.6%**	**11.8%**	**11.0%**
Workers	**Workers by Place of Work, LEHD Program, 2nd Quarter 2012**	**98,243**	**47,269**	**145,512**

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2009-13 5-Year Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2012)

Table 2
Overlapping Socio- Demographic Characteristics
Mahoning and Mercer Counties

		Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two County Total
	Total Population	**237,033**	**116,059**	**353,092**

		Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two County Total
Seniors	**Total civilian noninstitutionalized population 65 years and over (Elderly)**	**40,778**	**20,706**	**61,484**
	Elderly with a disability only	14,603	7,594	22,197
	Percent of Elderly with a disability	*35.8%*	*36.7%*	*36.1%*
	Elderly that poverty status has been determined	40,778	20,706	61,484
	Elderly with low income only	*9,108*	*3,649*	*12,757*
	Percent of elderly with low income	*22.3%*	*17.6%*	*20.7%*

		Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two County Total
Persons with a Disability	**Civilian noninstitutionalized population for whom poverty status is determined**	**229,379**	**108,854**	**338,233**
	Persons with a disability only	**36,416**	**17,952**	**54,368**
	Percent of Total Population with a disability	*15.9%*	*16.5%*	*16.1%*
	Persons with a disability and low income	14,910	6,749	21,647
	Percent of Total Population with a disability and low income	*6.5%*	*6.2%*	*6.4%*
	Percent with a disability who are not low income	*9.4%*	*10.3%*	*9.7%*

		Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two County Total
Persons with Low Income	*Persons with no disability who are not low income*	*62.5%*	*65.7%*	*63.5%*
	Persons who are low income only	**64,479**	**26,187**	**90,666**
	Percent of Persons who are low income	*28.1%*	*24.1%*	*26.8%*
	Percent who are not low income	*71.9%*	*75.9%*	*73.2%*

		Mahoning County	Mercer County	Two County Total
Veterans	**Civilian population 18 years and over for whom poverty status is determined**	**180,064**	**85,236**	**265,300**
	Veterans age 18 to 64	**9,423**	**5,141**	**14,564**
	Percent of Veterans 18-64 years with a disability	*19.0%*	*20.4%*	*19.5%*
	Veterans age 65 and over	**9,986**	**5,269**	**15,255**
	Percent of Veterans 65 and over with a disability	*36.9%*	*37.7%*	*37.2%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2009-13 5-Year Estimates

INCOME TO POVERTY LEVEL IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY DISABILITY STATUS, B17024 AGE BY RATIO OF

Poverty status cannot be determined for people in institutional group quarters (such as prisons or nursing homes), college dormitories, military barracks, living situations without conventional housing (and who are not in shelters), or unrelated individuals under age 15 (not living with a family member).

Geographic Distribution of Target Populations

Just as the socio-demographic circumstances of seniors, individuals with disabilities, persons with low-income and veterans have an impact on mobility needs within communities, so also does where these individuals live. Where people live can have a significant impact on their ability to meet their mobility needs, especially if they do not have access to a motor vehicle.

Table 3 and the following maps, Figures 2 through 6, show the extent to which persons in these socio-demographic groups reside within the area served by fixed-route public transportation service provided by the Western Reserve Transit Authority in Mahoning County and the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service in Mercer County.

In summary, Table 3 shows the following:

- For Mahoning County:
    - ✓ 68.7% of the total population in Mahoning County resides within WRTA's fixed-route service area.
    - ✓ 68.6% of seniors in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area.
    - ✓ 74.7% of individuals with disabilities in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area.
    - ✓ 82.4% of persons with low income in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area.
    - ✓ 69.5% of veterans in Mahoning County reside within the WRTA's service area.

- For Mercer County:
    - ✓ 29.1% of the total population in Mercer County resides within the SVSS fixed-route service area.
    - ✓ 30.4% of seniors in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area.
    - ✓ 33.3% of individuals with disabilities in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area.
    - ✓ 40.2% of persons with low income in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area.
    - ✓ 28.7% of veterans in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area.

Population Within and Outside Western Reserve Transit Authority and Shenango Vally Shuttle Service Fixed Route Service Areas
**Key Demographic Characteristics of the Population of Mahoning County OH and Mercer County PA**

Table 3

	Demographic Characteristics	MAHONING COUNTY					MERCER COUNTY					Two-County Total
		County Total	Inside WRTA Service Area	Percent Inside	Outside WRTA Service Area	Percent Outside	County Total	Inside SVSS Service Area	Percent Inside	Outside SVSS Service Area	Percent Outside	
Seniors	Total Population	237,033	162,804	68.7%	74,229	31.3%	116,059	33,789	29.1%	82,270	70.9%	353,092
	Total Population, 65 and Over	42,935	29,442	68.6%	13,493	31.4%	21,831	6,638	30.4%	15,193	69.6%	64,766
Persons with a Disability	Total, Over 18, Poverty Status Determined	180,064	122,154	67.8%	57,910	32.2%	85,236	25,606	30.0%	59,630	70.0%	265,300
	Total, 18-64, Poverty Status Determined	139,286	94,362	67.7%	44,924	32.3%	64,530	19,258	29.8%	45,272	70.2%	203,816
	Total, 18-64, Poverty Status Determined, with Disability	19,079	14,660	76.8%	4,419	23.2%	9,115	2,991	32.8%	6,124	67.2%	28,194
	Total, 65 and Over, Poverty Status Determined	40,778	27,792	68.2%	12,986	31.8%	20,706	6,348	30.7%	14,358	69.3%	61,484
	Total, 65 and Over, Poverty Status Determined, with Disability	14,603	10,514	72.0%	4,089	28.0%	7,594	2,572	33.9%	5,022	66.1%	22,197
	Total Population, Poverty Status Determined, with a Disability	33,682	25,173	74.7%	8,509	25.3%	16,709	5,562	33.3%	11,147	66.7%	50,391
Low Income or No Vehicle Access	Total, Poverty Status Determined	229,550	156,259	68.1%	73,291	31.9%	108,935	33,230	30.5%	75,705	69.5%	338,485
	Total, Income Below 150% of the Poverty Level	64,501	53,163	82.4%	11,338	17.6%	26,198	10,530	40.2%	15,668	59.8%	90,699
	Occupied Housing Units	98,201	68,657	69.9%	29,544	30.1%	46,187	14,522	31.4%	31,665	68.6%	144,388
	Occupied Housing Units without Access to a Vehicle	9,152	8,043	87.9%	1,109	12.1%	4,310	2,028	47.0%	2,282	53.0%	13,462
Veterans	Civilian Population, 18 and Over	186,623	128,054	68.6%	58,569	31.4%	91,421	25,979	28.4%	65,442	71.6%	278,044
	Civilian Population, 18 and Over, Veteran	19,811	13,777	69.5%	6,034	30.5%	10,774	3,092	28.7%	7,682	71.3%	30,585
Workers by Place of Work	**Workers, LEHD Program, 2nd Quarter 2012**	98,243	82,068	83.5%	16,175	16.5%	47,269	20,607	43.6%	26,662	56.4%	145,512

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2009-13 5-Year Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2012)

Figure 2
Geographic Distribution of Older Persons in the Study Area
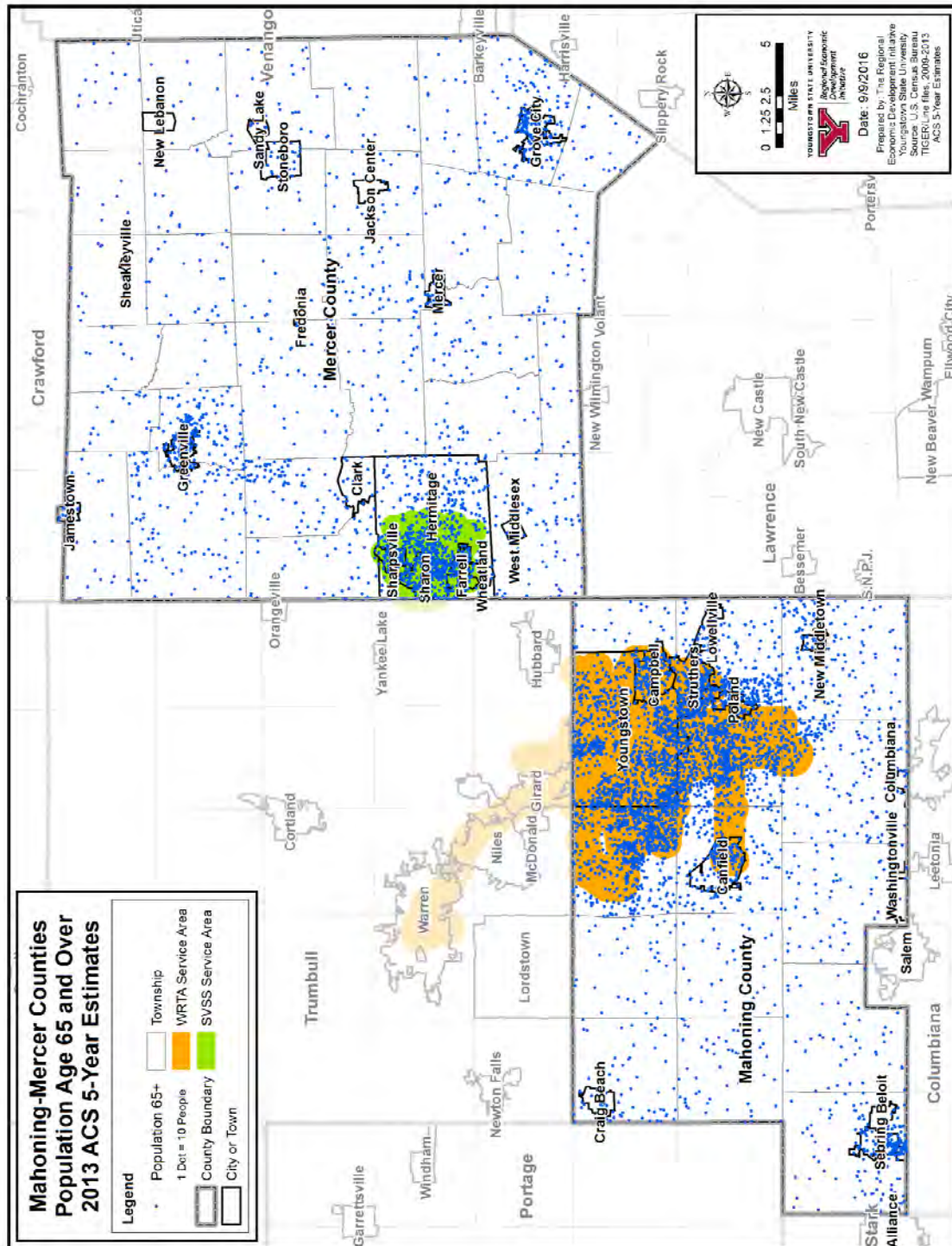
68.6% of seniors in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area
30.4% of seniors in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area

Figure 3
Geographic Distribution of Persons with Disabilities In the Study Area

74.7% of individuals with disabilities in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area
33.3% of individuals with disabilities in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area

Figure 4
Geographic Distribution of Persons with Low Income In the Study Area

82.4% of persons with low income in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area
40.2% of persons with low income in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area

Figure 5
Geographic Distribution of Veterans In the Study Area
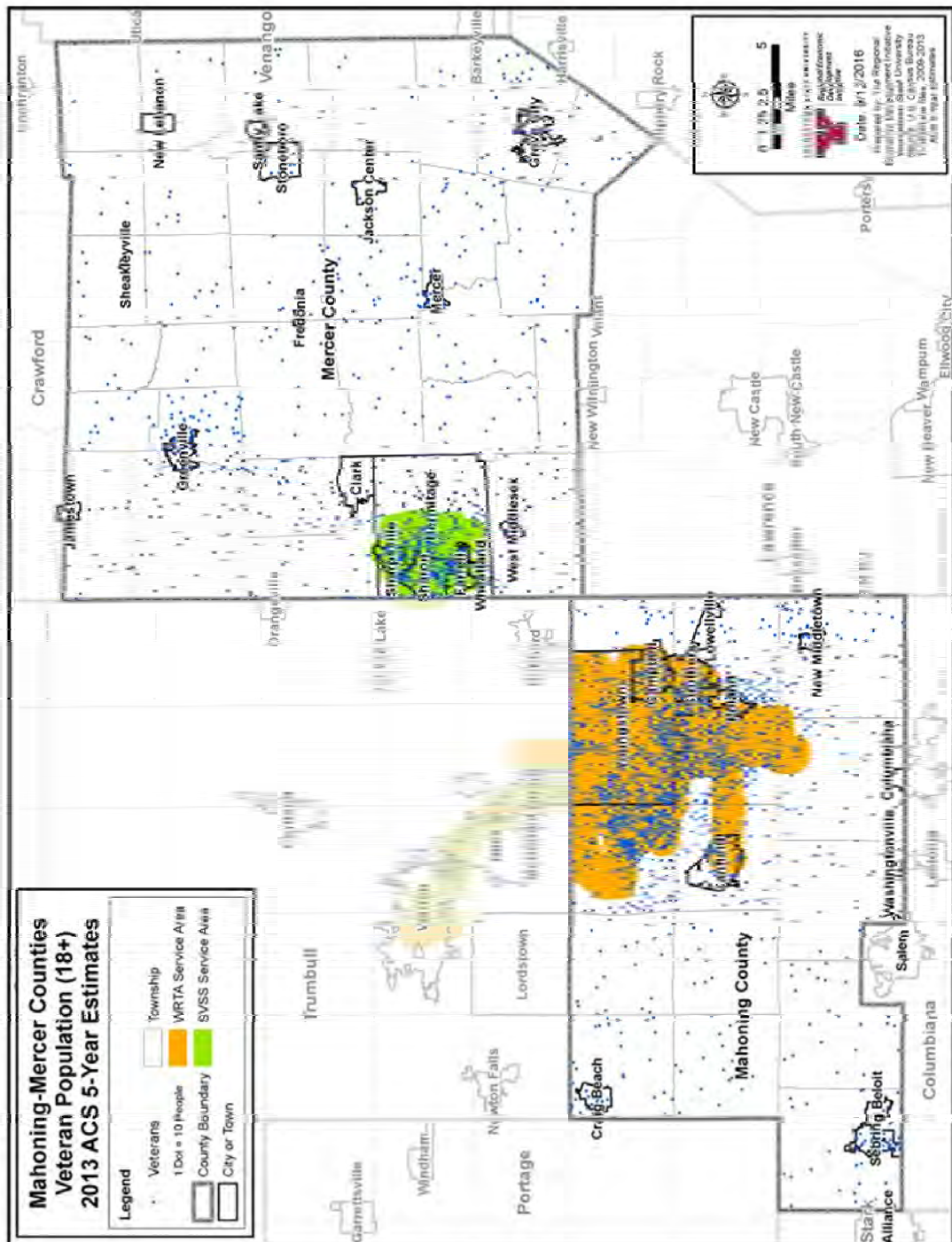
69.5% of veterans in Mahoning County reside within WRTA's fixed route service area
28.7% of veterans in Mercer County reside within the SVSS service area

Figure 6 shows a composite mapping of all of the target population groups together.

Figure 6
Geographic Distribution of Target Populations Combined In the Study Area
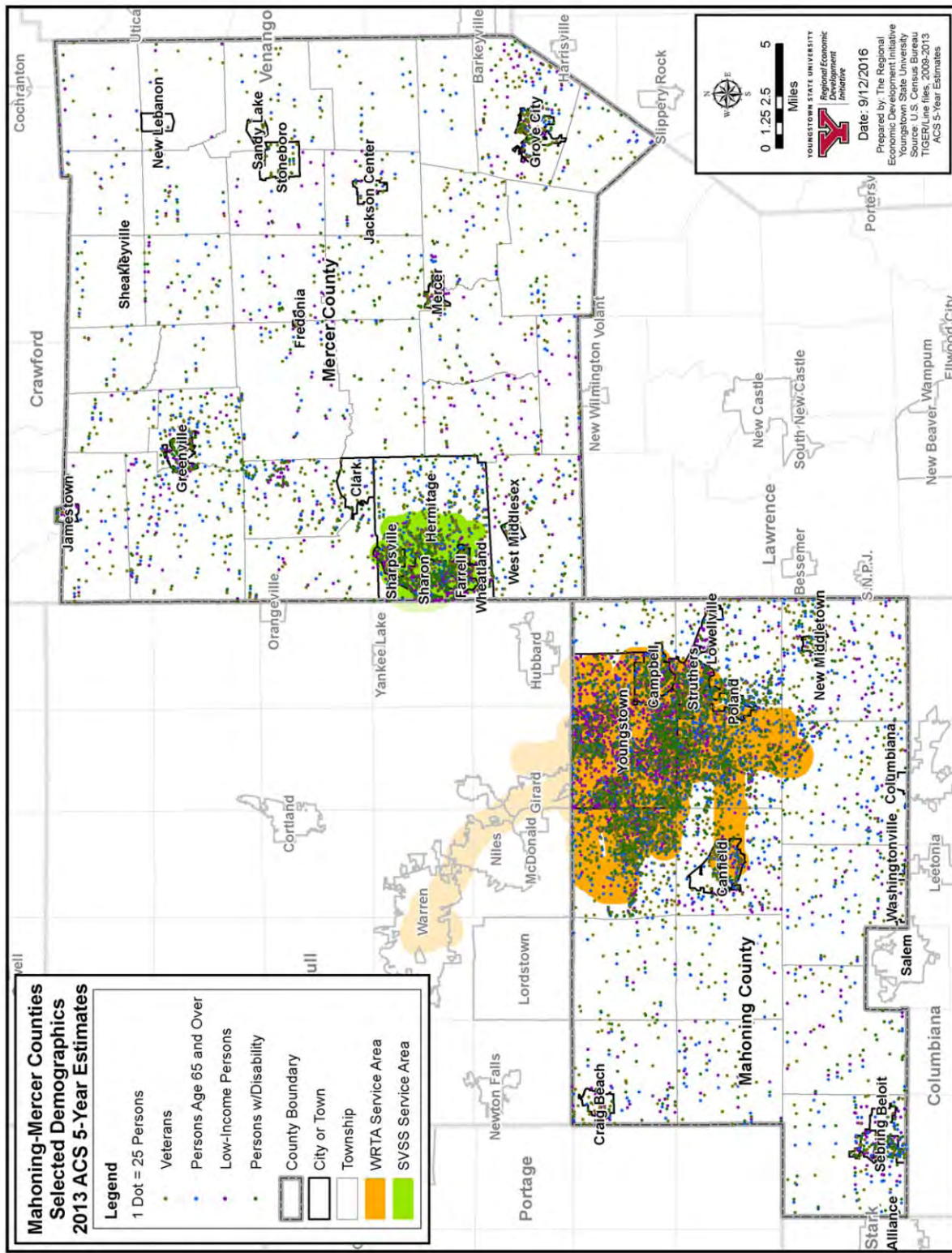
Typical Destinations for Target Populations

Destinations that seniors, persons with disabilities, persons in low income households and veterans need to reach are shown in Figures 7 through 11. These destinations are:

- Employers with 100 or more employees
- Workers by Place of Work
- Retail centers
- Healthcare Facilities
- Nursing homes
- Motels and hotels

People need to reach these locations to take care of their daily needs, including reaching these locations for jobs. Again, the coverage of fixed-route bus service is shown for both Mahoning and Mercer Counties.

Major Employers

Figure 7 shows the location of major employers in Mahoning and Mercer Counties. Most in Mahoning County are located within WRTA's fixed route service area. In Mercer County, however, there are major employers who are located outside the SVSS service area. These locations may be difficult for low income persons to reach if they do not have access to reliable transportation, except for fixed-route bus service.

Figures 8a and 8b show where people go to work based on Census Bureau place of work date.

Healthcare Facilities

Figure 9 shows healthcare facilities are located similarly. Most in Mahoning County are located within WRTA's fixed route service area. This includes facilities that have moved out of Youngstown. Also, there are healthcare facilities in Mercer County both within the SVSS fixed route service area and in rural communities and areas outside the Sharon-Hermitage area in Mercer County.

Retail Centers

Figure 10 shows that most retail centers are located within fixed-route service areas in Mahoning and Mercer Counties. Some retail centers in Mercer County are located in rural communities and areas outside the Sharon-Hermitage area.

Figure 7
Geographic Distribution of Major Employers In the Study Area
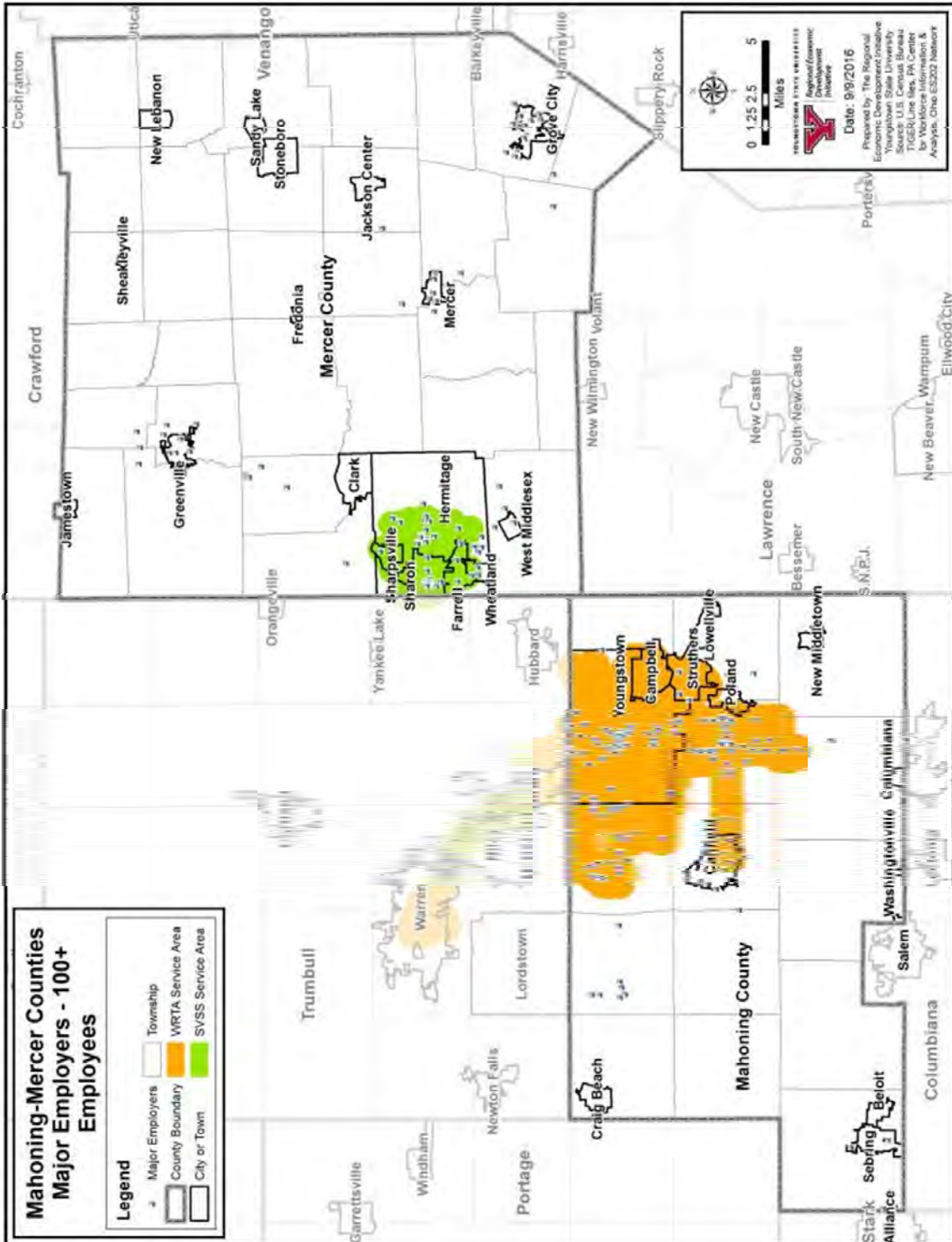
Figure 8a
Geographic Distribution of Workers by Place of Work in Mahoning County In the Study Area
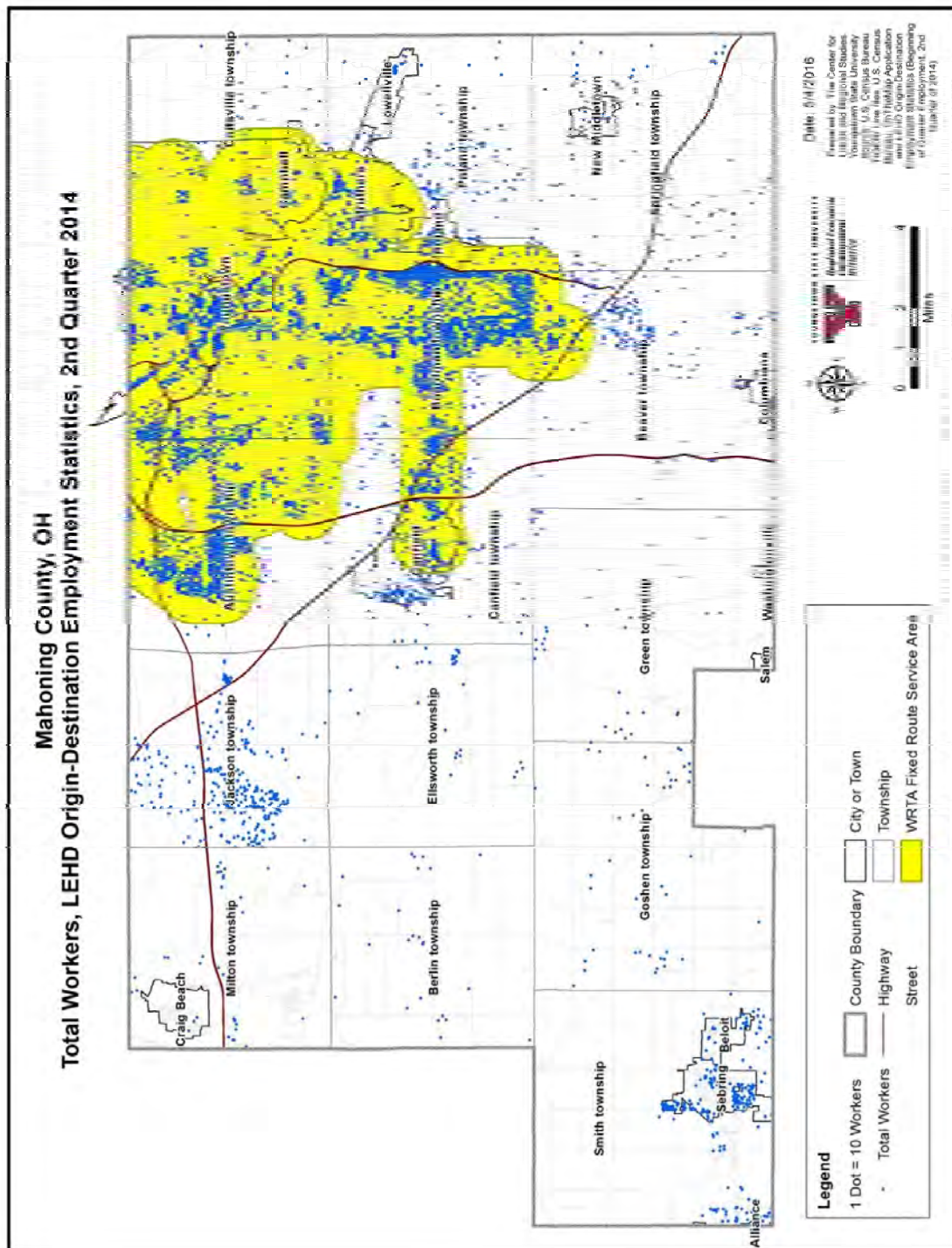
In Mahoning County, 83.5% of workers travel to locations within WRTA's fixed-route service area.
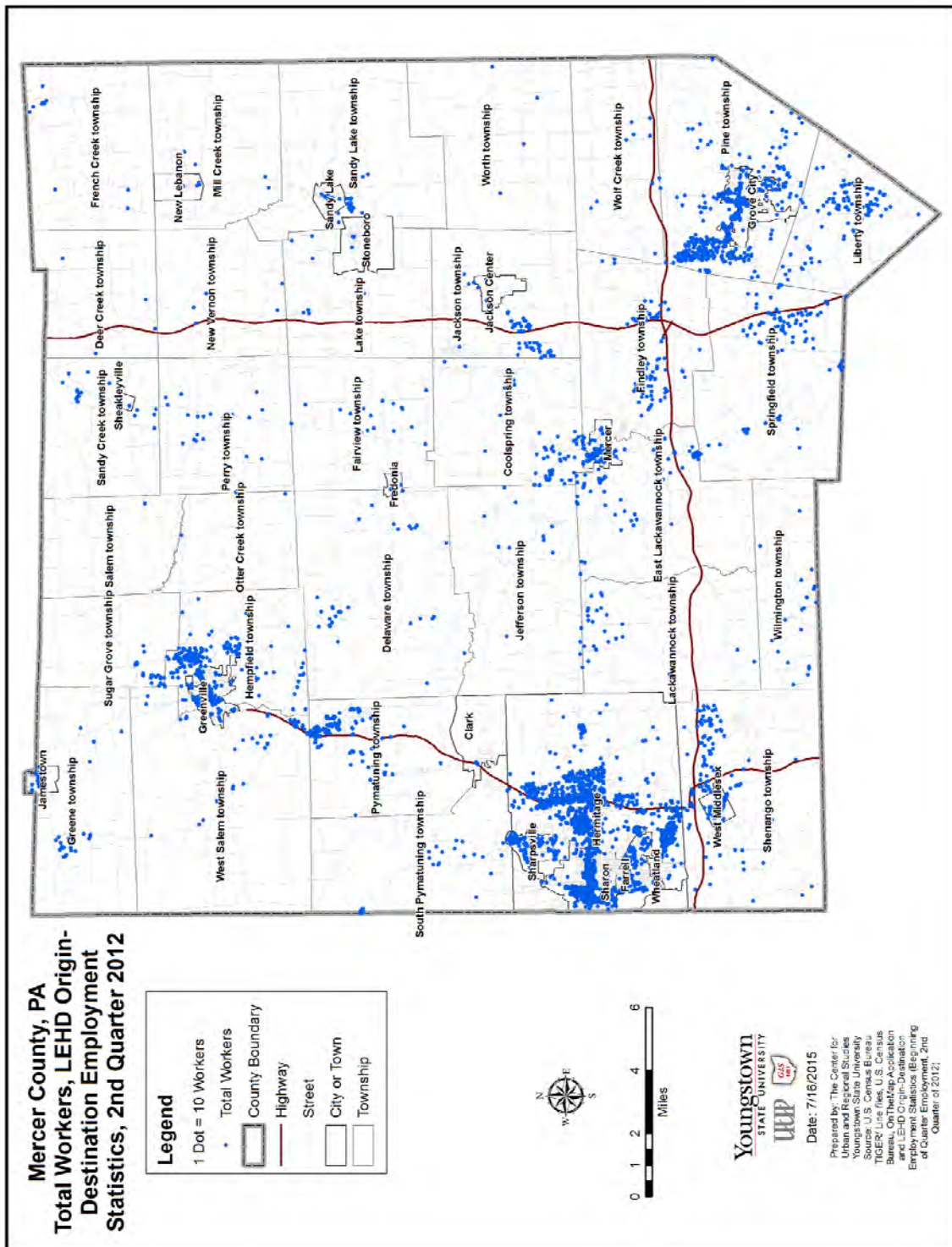
In Mercer County, 43.6% of workers travel to locations within SVSS's fixed-route service area.

Figure 9
Geographic Distribution of Major Healthcare Facilities In the Study Area
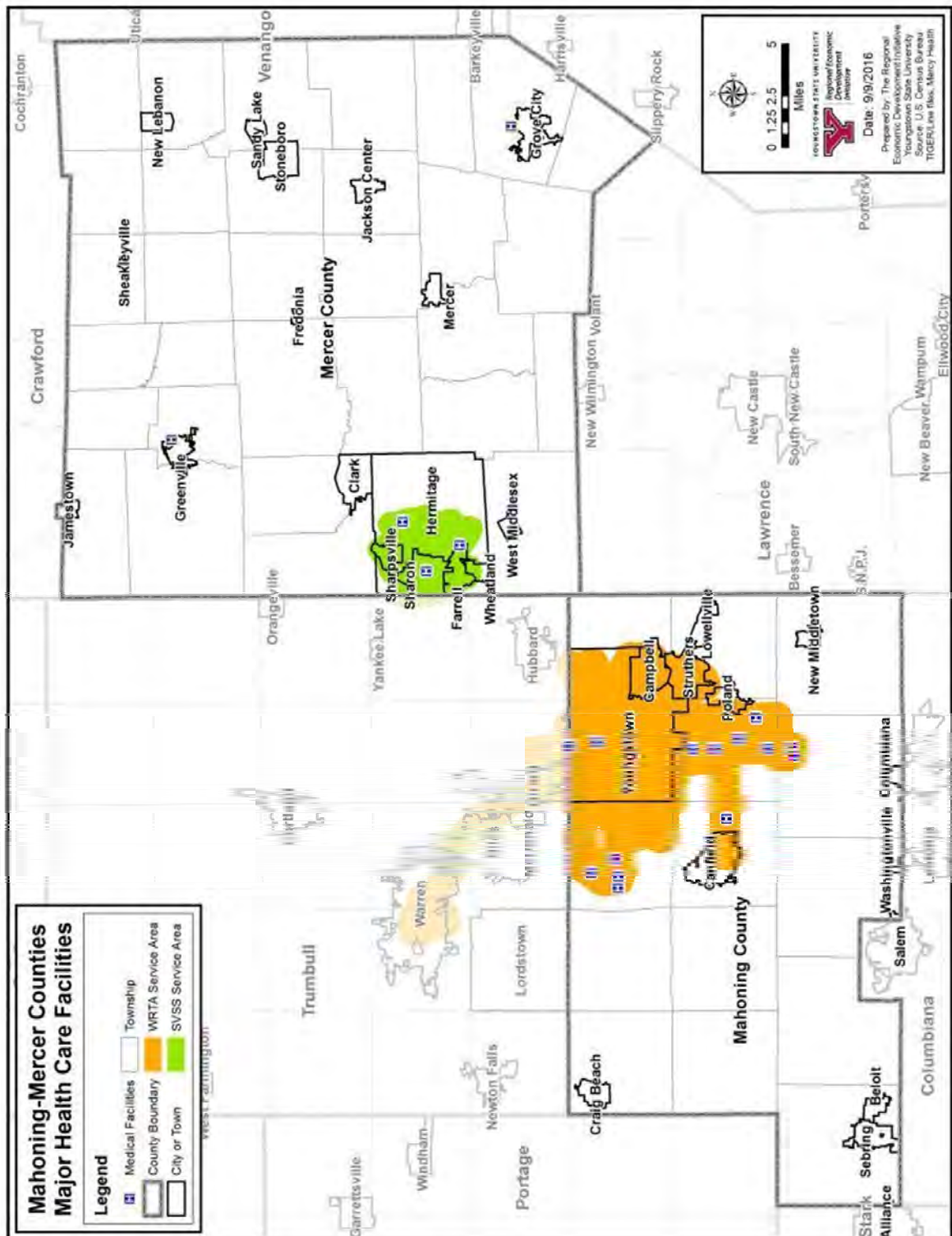
Figure 10
Geographic Distribution of Major Retail Centers In the Study Area
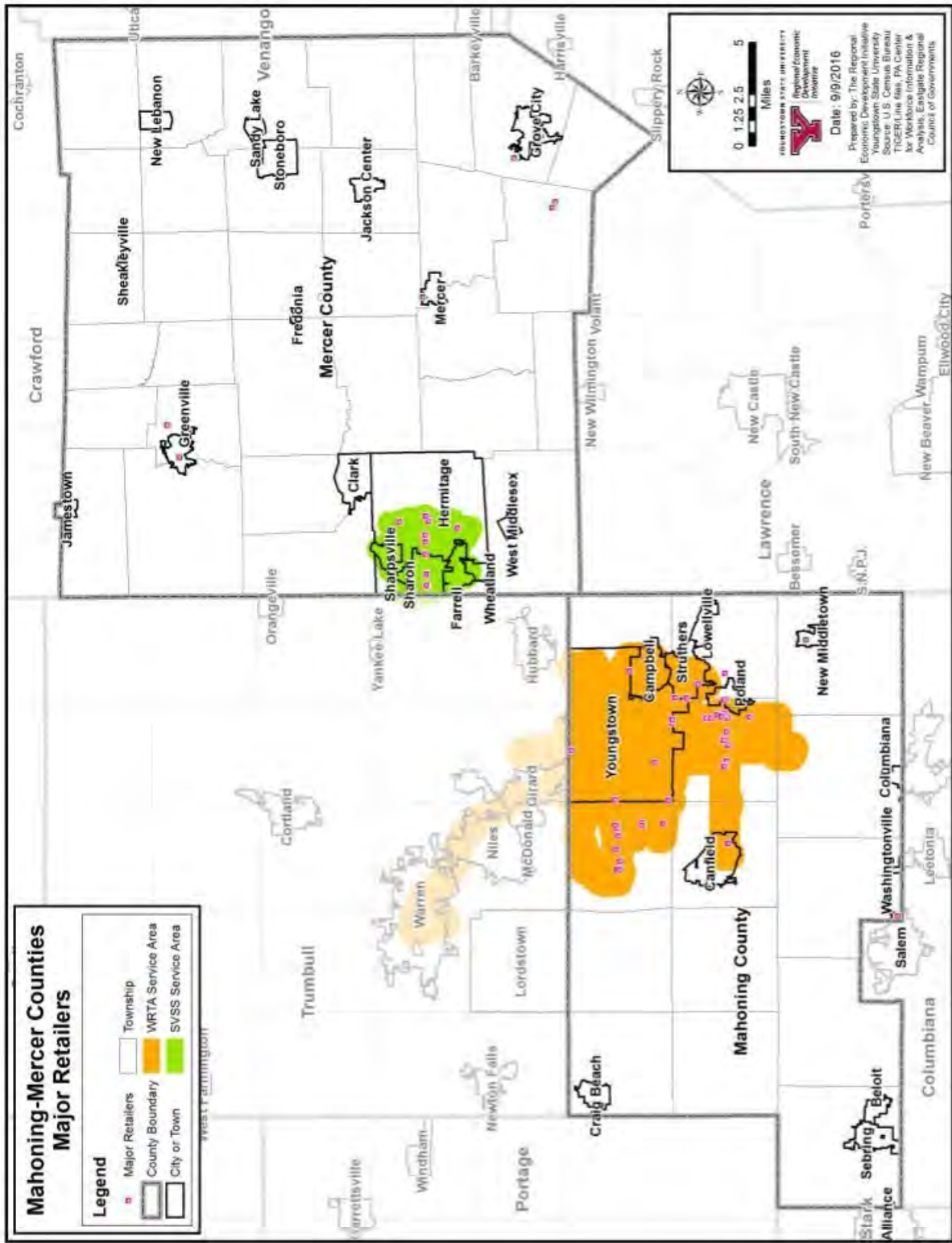
Hotels and Motels

Figure 11 shows the locations of motels and hotels, similar to those of locations for major retail establishments, except that motels and hotels are also found at or near freeway interchanges where fixed route services may be more limited.

Nursing Homes

Figure 12 shows that nursing homes are located in a somewhat more scattered fashion across Mahoning and Mercer Counties. Most are located within WRTA's service area in Mahoning County and the Sharon-Hermitage area in Mercer County. In Mahoning County, nursing homes are also found south of Boardman and in Sebring. In Mercer County, nursing homes are also found in rural communities and areas of the county.

Figure 11
Geographic Distribution of Motels and Hotels In the Study Area
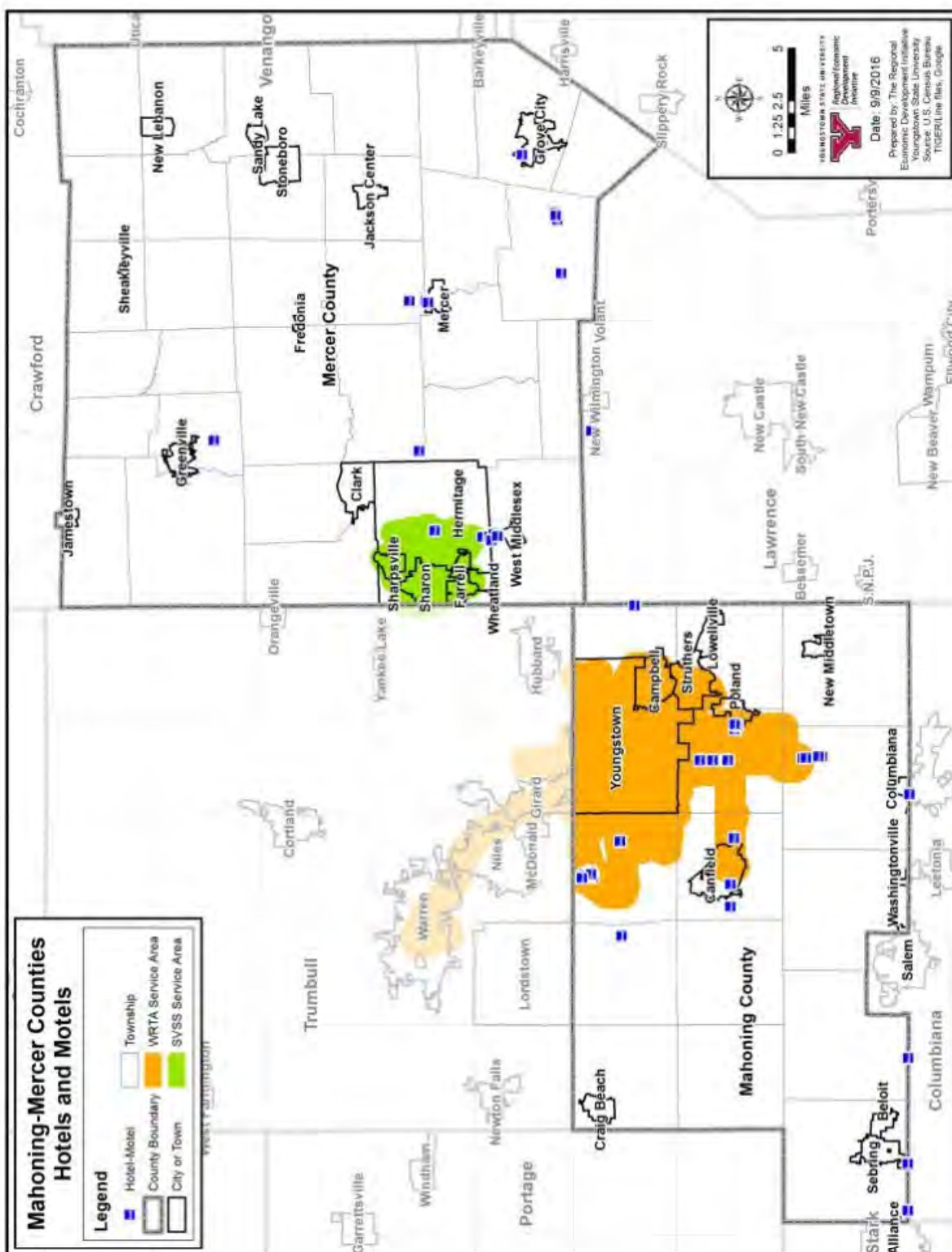
Figure 12
Geographic Distribution of Nursing Homes In the Study Area
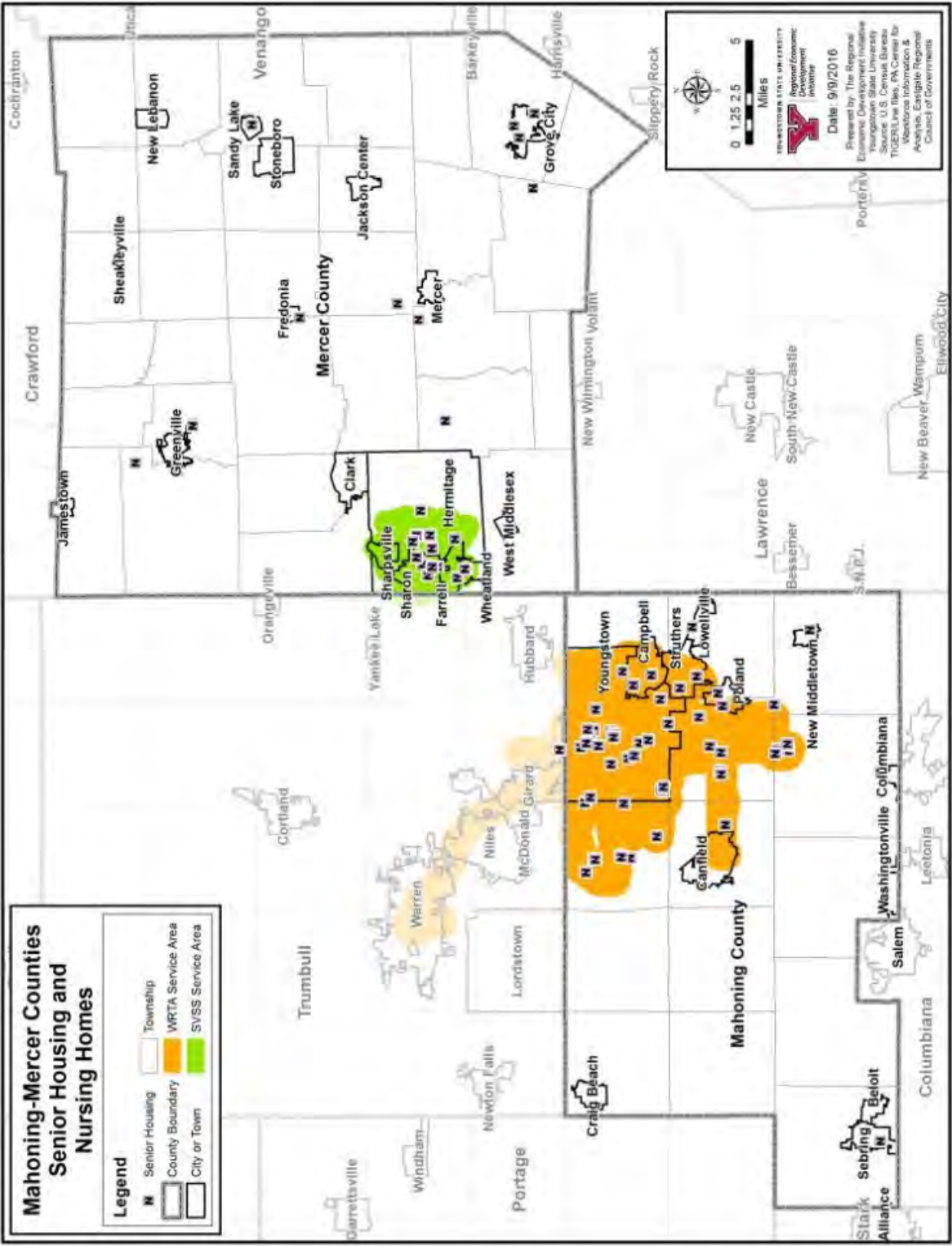
III
Transportation Services

This section provides a review of the transportation services in the region that are available to the target populations to help them meet their mobility needs. These transportation services can be categorized as follows:

- Public transportation services offered by Western Reserve Transit Authority in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties in Ohio and the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service and Mercer County Community Transit in Mercer County, Pennsylvania.
- A range of transportation services offered by human service agencies that focus nearly exclusively on helping their clients use and benefit from the programs that they offer, but are not open to non-agency people or the clients of other agencies
- Private transportation companies that provide transportation services to the public and for clients of human service agencies, such as helping low income people receiving Medicaid health benefits get to medical appointments.

Public Transportation Services

Public Transportation Services in Mahoning County

The **Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA)** is the largest transportation provider in the region, serving all of Mahoning County, with routes extending into Warren and the Liberty Township area in Trumbull County. WRTA is a countywide regional transit authority supported by a voter-approved ¼% sales and use tax levied on all eligible retail sales in Mahoning County.

WRTA offers the following services:
- Fixed Route Services - Bus routes open to the public, operating on a fixed schedule and route
- Special Service Transit, or SST, a small bus door-to-door service for seniors and people with disabilities who live within three quarters of a mile of the area served by WRTA's fixed bus routes, but cannot use or have difficulty using fixed route bus service due to a disability.
- EasyGo Door-to-Door Service, door-to-door service available to the general public within areas of Mahoning County that do not have fixed route and SST service.
- Suburban Loop and Crosstown Services, suburban fixed route services within and between suburban communities, in Campbell, Struthers, Poland, Austintown, Boardman and Canfield.

WRTA services are available on weekdays and Saturdays, generally operating on weekdays from 5:15 am to midnight; and on Saturdays from 6:15 am to 6:35 pm.

Figure 13a shows the location of WRTA's fixed route bus service in Mahoning County.

Figure 13a
Western Reserve Transit Authority Service Area
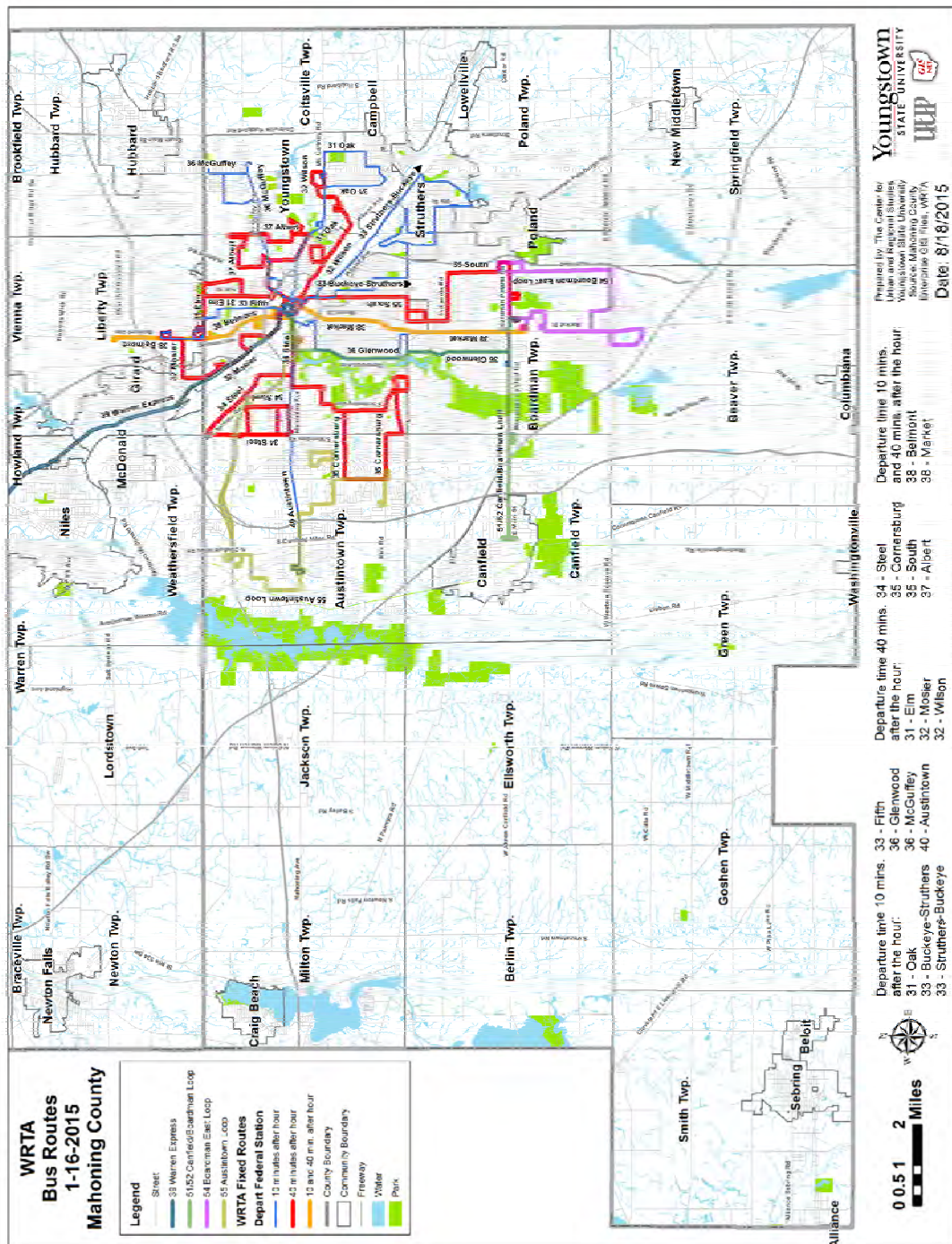
Figure 13b shows WRTA's fixed route bus service in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties and the ¾ mile service area within which alternative door-to-door transportation service as required by the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act.

Figure 13b
Fixed Route Service Area
Western Reserve Transit Authority
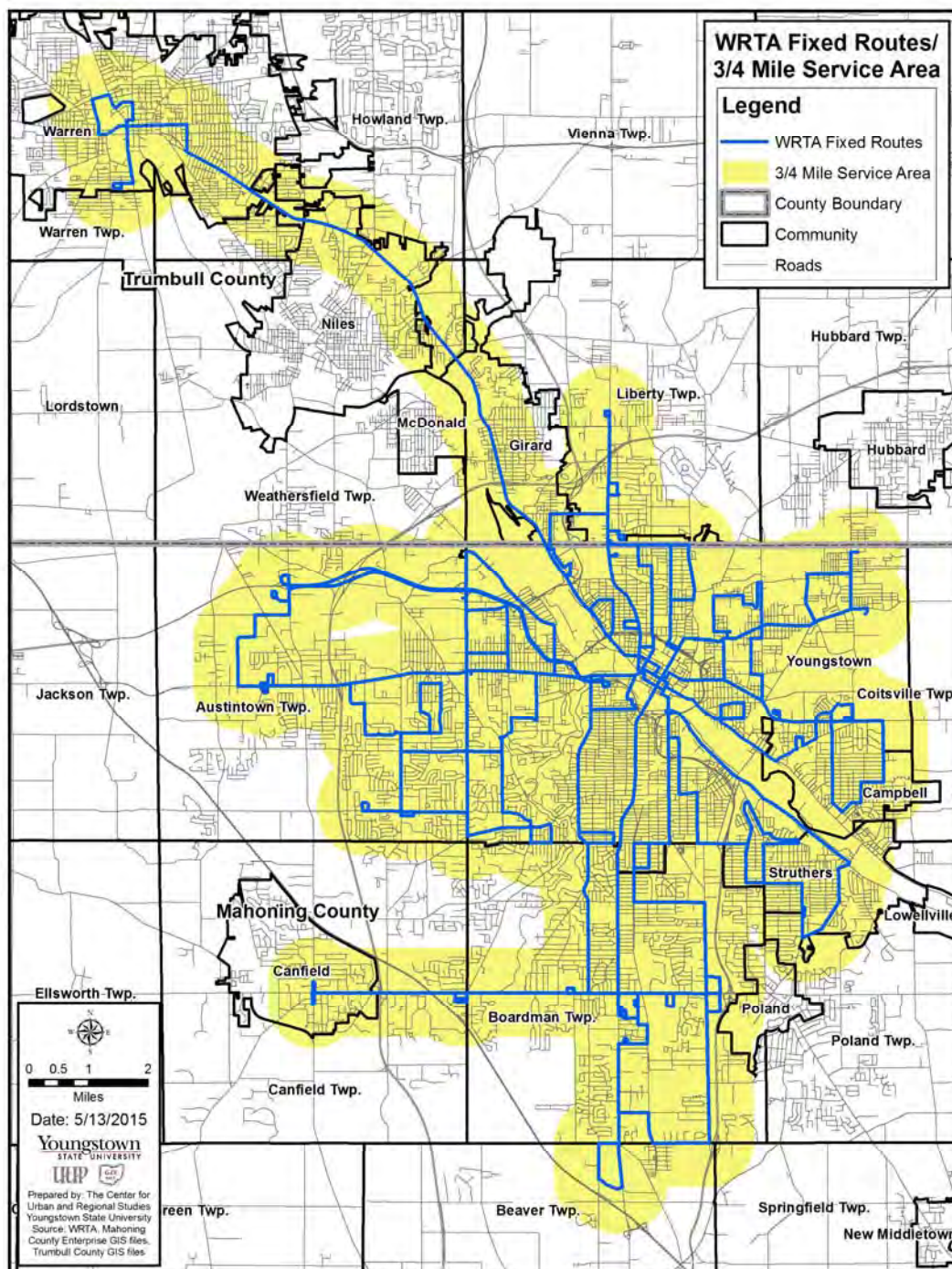
Figure 13c shows WRTA's fixed route service, highlighting the base routes, suburban routes, and arrival and departure times at WRTA's Federal Station, located in downtown Youngstown.

Figure 13c
Fixed Routes and Suburban Loops
Western Reserve Transit Authority
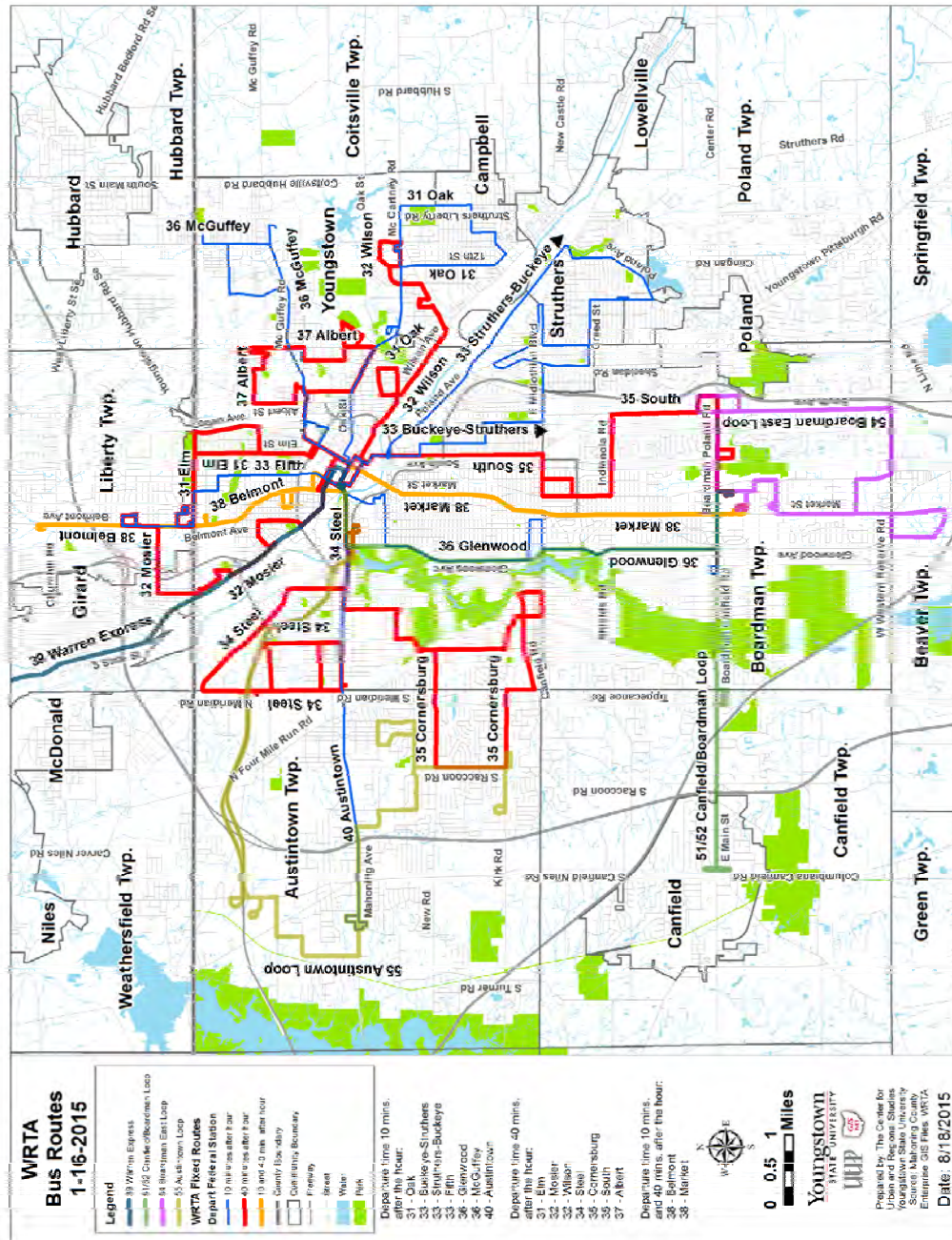
WRTA carries nearly 1.6 million riders annually. WRTA operates 1.5 million revenue miles and 107,000 hours of service annually, with an operating budget of $9.9 million. The number of vehicles operated, ridership and total costs for WRTA and all of the other public transportation services in the region are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Operating Characteristics
Western Reserve Transit Authority
Calendar Year 2015

Characteristic	Fixed Route	Door to Door	TOTAL
Operating Expenses	**$8,360,334**	$1,525,800	$9,886,134
Revenue Vehicle Miles	**1,105,887**	387,125	1,493,012
Revenue Vehicle Hours	**80,063**	27,027	107,090
Passengers Carried	**1,501,210**	46,366	1,547,576
Vehicles			
Total	**53**	22	75
Maximum Service	**35**	17	52
Spares	**18**	5	23
Hours of Service Availability			
Weekday Begins	**5:15am**	5:15am	
Weekday Ends	**Midnight**	Midnight	
Saturday begins	**6:15am**	6:15am	
Saturday ends	**6:35pm**	6:35pm	

Public Transportation Services in Mercer County

The **Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS)** provides fixed-route bus service that serves Farrell, Hermitage, Sharon, Sharpsville, and Wheatland with five routes:

- Central Route - Service between Downtown Sharon and the Shenango Valley Mall along the State Street corridor.
- Courthouse Route - Service between the Shenango Valley and the Mercer County Courthouse.
- Express Route - Service between Longview Road and Wal-Mart along the Route 18 corridor.
- Northern Route - Service between Downtown Sharon and the Shenango Valley Mall via Sharpsville.
- Southern Route - Service between Downtown Sharon and the Shenango Valley Mall via Farrell and Wheatland.

Figure 14a shows SVSS fixed route bus service in the southwestern corner of Mercer County.

Figure 14a
Shenango Valley Shuttle/Mercer County Community Transit Service Area
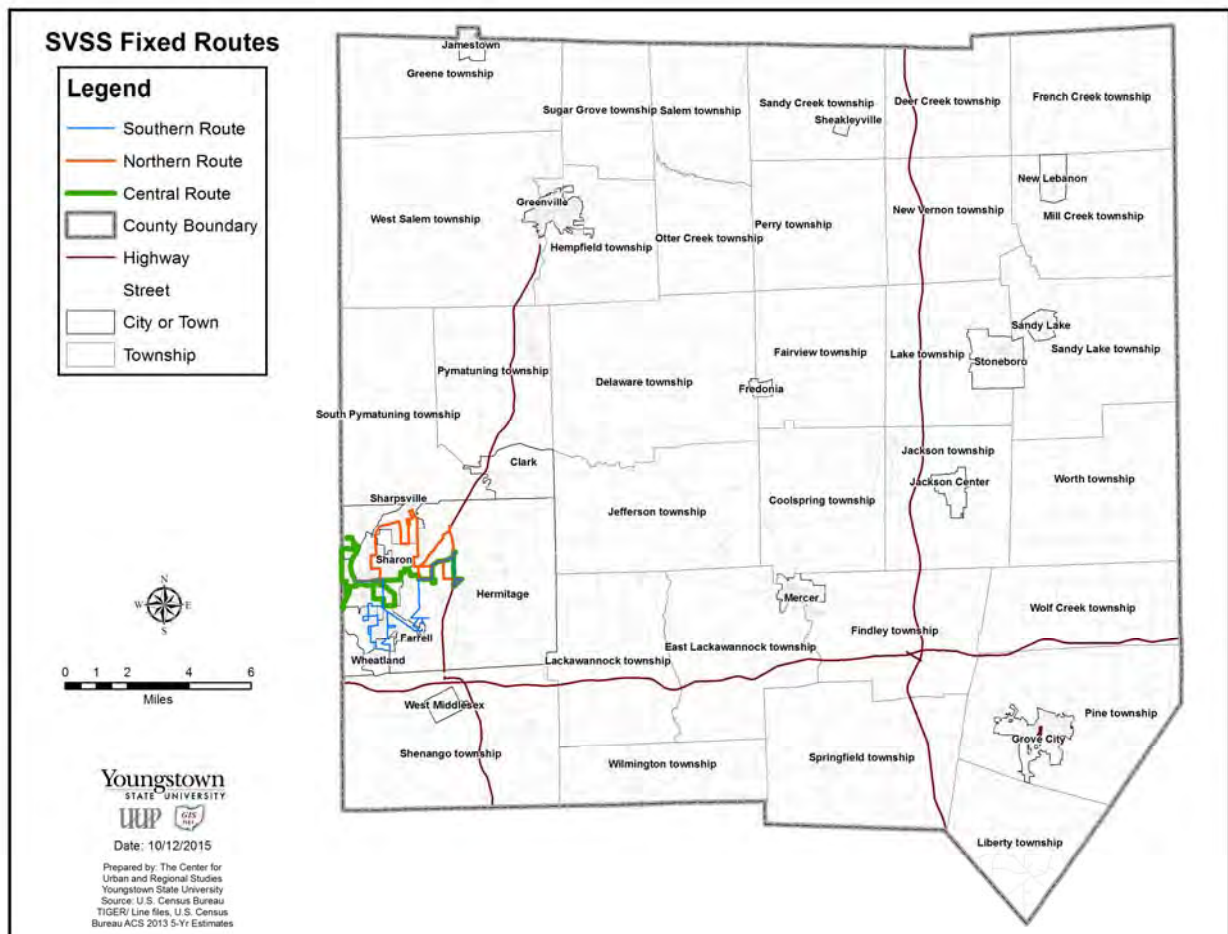
Service is provided from approximately 6:45 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays and Saturdays.

Figure 14b shows the SVSS fixed routes and the communities that are served.

Figure 14b
Shenango Valley Shuttle Service Fixed Routes
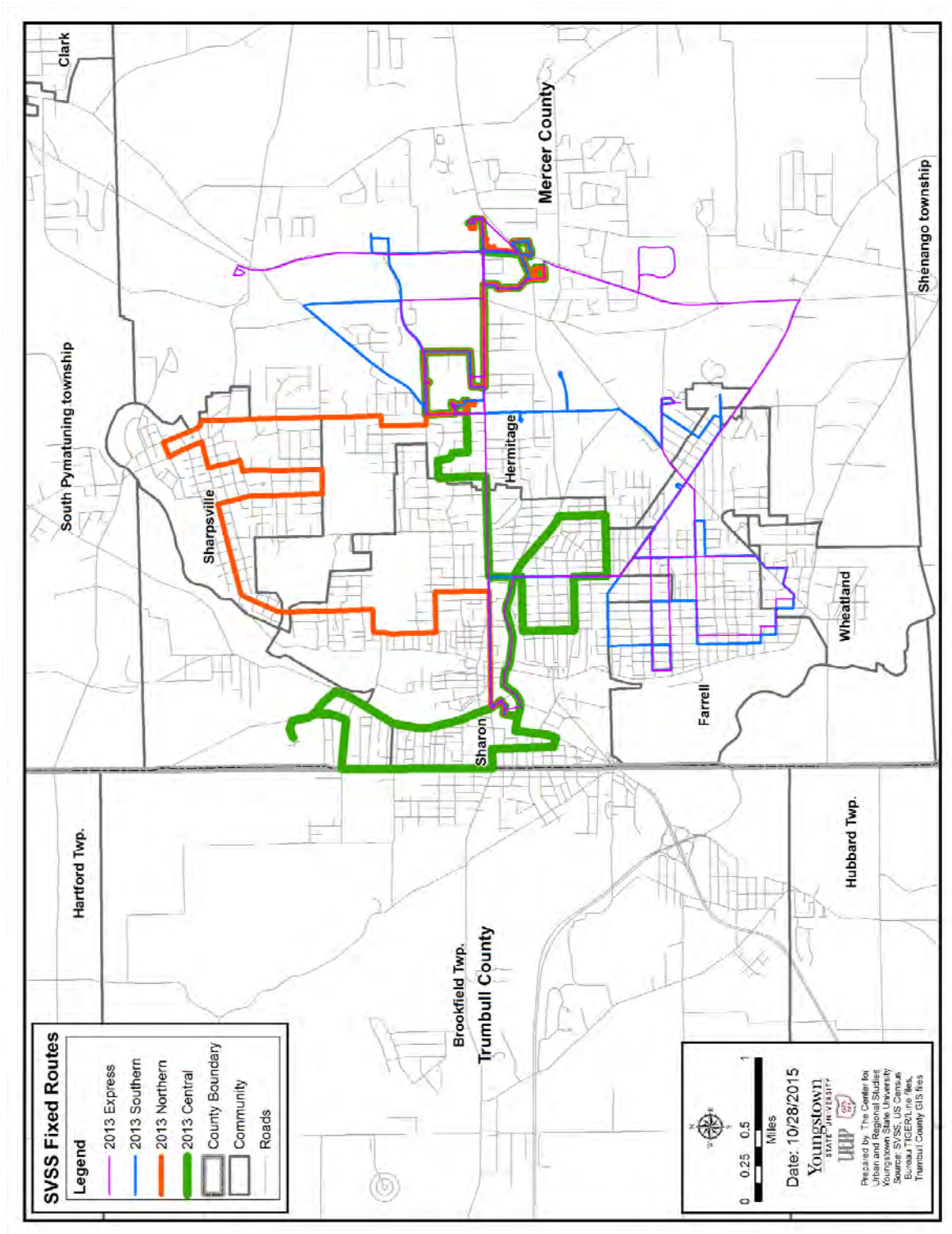
Mercer County Community Transit (MCCT) provides countywide paratransit, or door-to-door, service for the general public throughout Mercer County. In the Shenango Valley area, the service is available from 6:45 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays and Saturdays.

Service to other areas in the county is available from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm on weekdays. There is no weekend service. All trips must be reserved by 2:00 pm on the working day before the trip. MCCT is also a Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) provider, so eligible clients can travel for free.

In Calendar Year 2015, SVSS-MCCT carried nearly 200,000 riders annually. SVSS-MCCT operated 800,232 revenue miles and 55,967 hours of service annually, with an operating budget of $2,661,478. The number of vehicles operated, ridership and total costs for SVSS-MCCT presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Operating Characteristics
Shenango Valley Shuttle/Mercer County Community Transit
Calendar Year 2015

Characteristic		SVSS	MCCT	TOTAL
Operating Expenses		$1,060,017	$1,601,461	$2,661,478
Revenue Vehicle Miles		158,645	641,587	800,232
Revenue Vehicle Hours		11,329	44,638	55,967
Passengers Carried		109,890	88,058	197,948
Vehicles				
	Total	6	28	34
	Maximum Service	5	23	28
	Spares	1	5	6
Passengers Carried		109,890	88,058	197,948
Hours of Service Availability				
	Weekday Begins	6:45am	6:45am	
	Weekday Ends	6:00pm	6:00pm	
	Saturday begins	7:45am	7:45am	
	Saturday ends	4:15pm	4:15pm	

Public Transportation Services in Trumbull County

As reported earlier, there are three public transportation agencies in the Youngstown OH-PA Urbanized Area. These are WRTA in Mahoning County and the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments, operating SVSS and MCCT in Mercer County reported above and the Trumbull County Transit Board. Also noted earlier, the Trumbull County Transit Board is updating its plan separately from this updated plan.

Table 6 shows the operating characteristics and financials for the Trumbull County Transit Board for Calendar Year 2015, the latest available information. It is useful to note areas where the overlap or closeness of public transportation services may lend themselves to facilitating the exchange of riders.

Table 6
Operating Characteristics
Trumbull County Transit Board
Calendar Year 2015

Characteristic	Fixed Route	Door to Door	TOTAL
Operating Expenses	$0	$1,803,698	$1,803,698
Revenue Vehicle Miles	0	755,683	755,683
Revenue Vehicle Hours	0	38,924	38,924
Passengers Carried	0	54,621	54,621
Vehicles			
Total	0	28	28
Maximum Service	0	21	21
Spares	0	7	7
Hours of Service Availability			
Weekday Begins		7:00am	
Weekday Ends		6:00pm	
Saturday begins		8:00am	
Saturday ends		3:00pm	
Sunday Begins		8:00am	
Sunday Ends		3:00pm	

In Calendar Year 2015, TCTB carried 54,621 riders. TCTB operated 755,683 revenue miles and 38,924 hours of service, with a fleet of 28 vehicles. The operating budget was $1,803,698.

WRTA operates fixed route service into the Liberty Township area of Trumbull County and its Warren Express in the US 422 corridor, connecting Youngstown with the City of Warren. Figure 13a shows the location and coverage area of WRTA fixed-route service in Trumbull County.

Figure 15 shows where members of target populations reside in relation to WRTA's coverage area

Figure 15
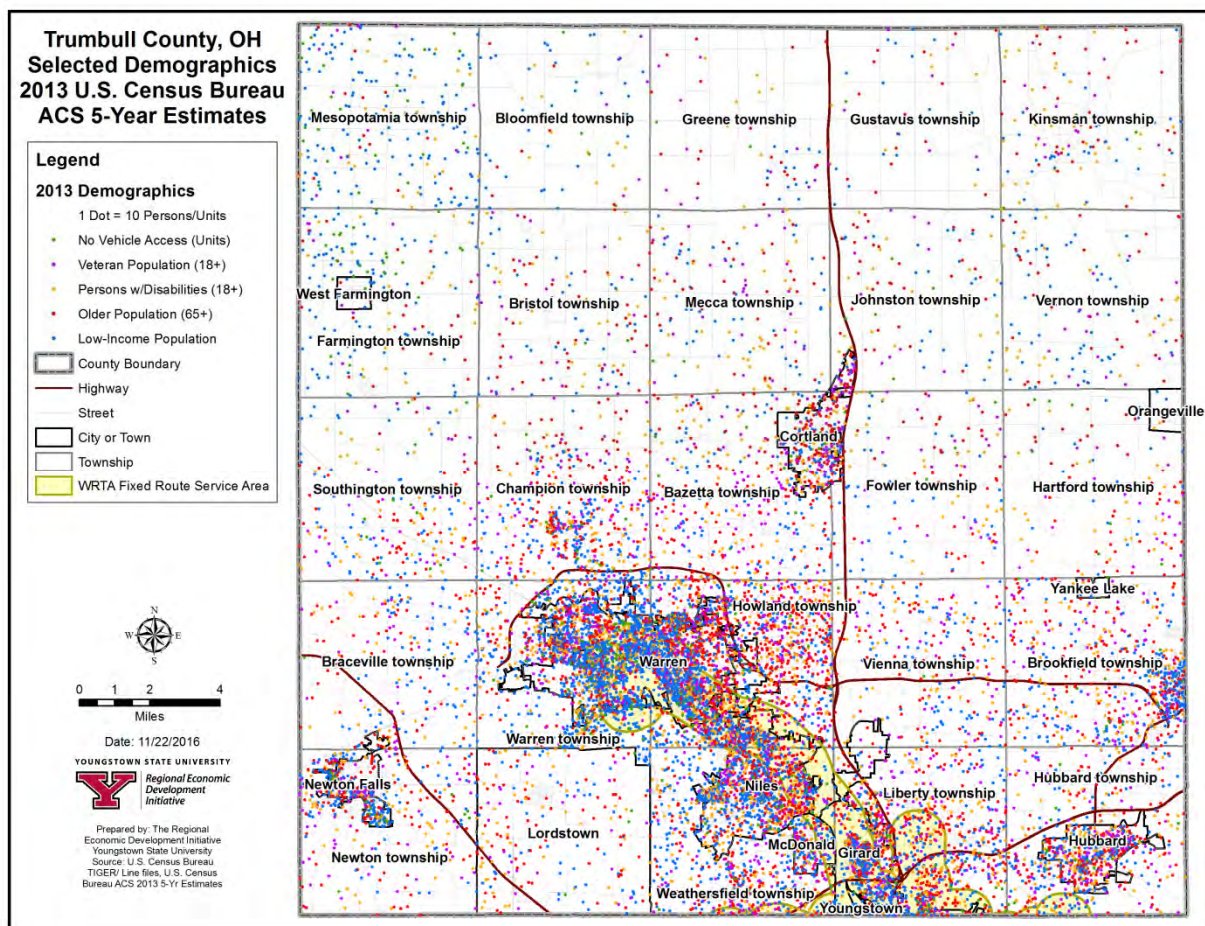
Looking at these target populations in Trumbull County, significant numbers of people have access to WRTA service in Trumbull County:

- Seniors number 37,251, of which 22.3% reside with WRTA's fixed-route coverage area.
- Persons with disabilities number 27,905, of which 26.3% reside within WRTA's fixed-route coverage area.

- Persons with low income number 54,310, of which 33.5% reside within WRTA's fixed-route coverage area.
- Veterans number 18,957, of which 21.5% reside within WRTA's fixed-route coverage area.

Figure 16 shows where people go to work in Trumbull County, highlighting job locations within WRTA's fixed route service area in Trumbull County.

Figure 16
Total Workers –Destination Locations
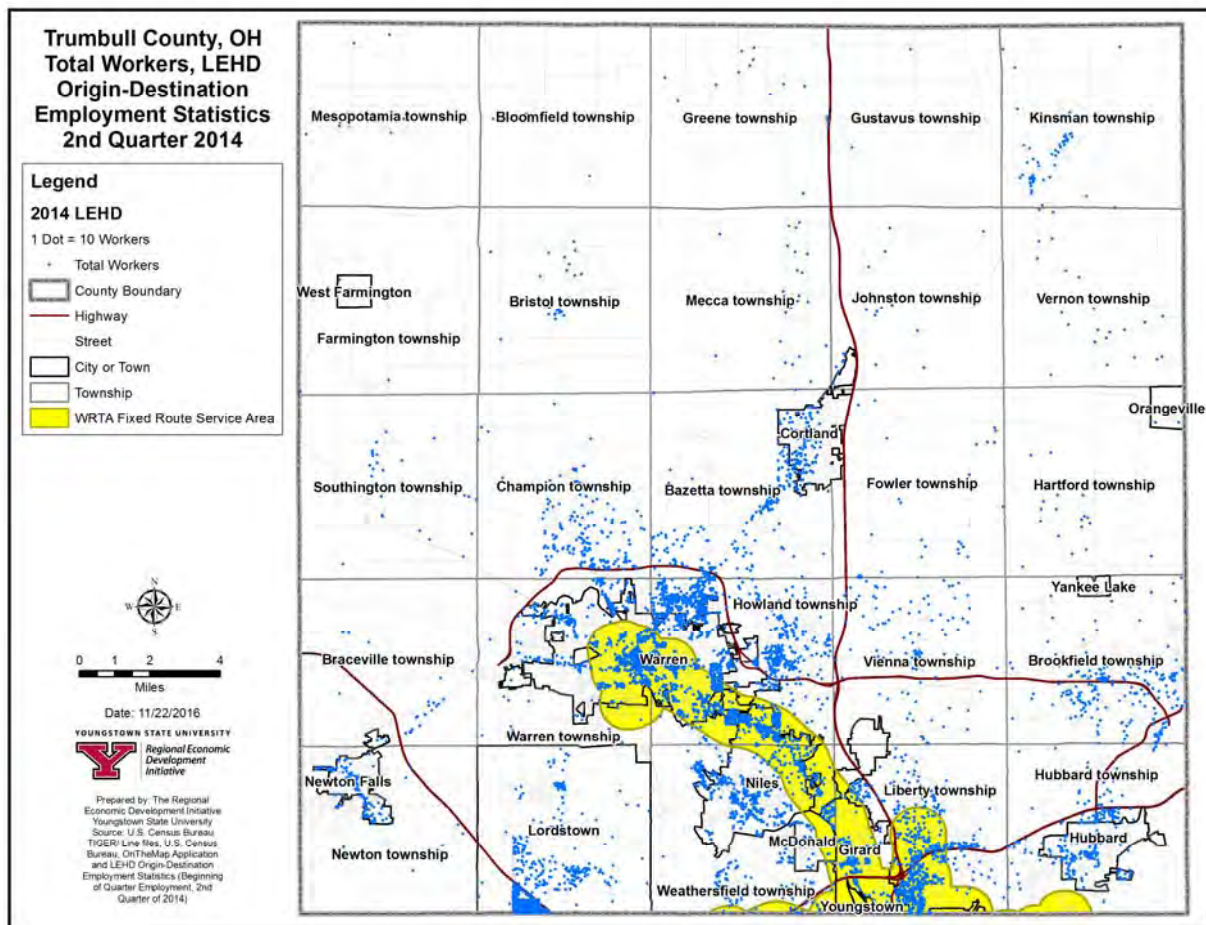
According to 2014 information, 70,334 people were going to work locations in Trumbull County. Of these, 39.41% were within WRTA's fixed-route service area. The people going to these work locations were likely travelling from home in Trumbull, Mahoning and other counties.

WRTA and TCTB are not coordinating their services at present. As a result, people in Trumbull County may or may not be sufficiently aware of WRTA's service to use it. Further, people who are too far from these bus routes are not able to benefit from WRTA's fixed route service in Liberty Township and the Warren Express service.

Human Service Agency and Private Transportation Services

Significant transportation services are provided by human services agencies in Mahoning and Mercer County. The transportation services that are presented are based on a survey of transportation services that was conducted for the plan update. Private transportation services, as reported, are limited. The services that are shown are not complete because all agencies and companies that provide transportation services did not respond to the survey conducted for the plan update.

Human Service Agencies with Sizable Transportation Services

In Mahoning County, the sizable services include:

- Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services
  - ✓ Provides assistance to low-income families with benefits such as food assistance, child care, cash, and medical and support services and referrals
  - ✓ Has contracts with seven transportation providers and purchases bus passes from WRTA to assist clients
  - ✓ To be eligible, a client must be a Medicaid recipient and have a determined need for transportation services to Medicaid-approved providers, for medical reasons only
  - ✓ Transportation expenditures totaled $2.8 million in calendar year 2015.

- Mahoning County Board of Developmental Disabilities
  - ✓ Provides ongoing programs, services, and support to Board of Developmental Disabilities-eligible individuals
  - ✓ Provides services for developmentally disabled children and adults: public school programs; adult day services; workshops for developmentally disabled
  - ✓ Transport clients to and from Day Programs and other related activities
  - ✓ Must have a developmental disability as defined under Ohio law as a "severe, chronic disability"
  - ✓ Transportation expenditures totaled $5.1 million in calendar year 2015.

- Help Hotline Crisis Center
  - ✓ Non-profit agency serving low-income residents in 8 counties, including Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana
  - ✓ Provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services and 2-1-1 information and referral, hotlines, and also services to seniors, the homeless, victims of violence and other crimes, and individuals with mental illness
  - ✓ Online database that provides information on available human services, including transportation services

In Mercer County, the sizable transportation services include:

- Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
    - ✓ Provides senior-oriented services to senior citizens and MATP transportation services to all MATP-eligible clients
    - ✓ Shared ride trips for seniors, MATP trips to medical care, and taxi and ambulette trips for MATP for seniors when necessary
    - ✓ Must be 60 and over for the senior ride share, or must be eligible for MATP program for MA-eligible trips
    - ✓ Total expenditures on transportation services were over $800,000 in calendar year 2015.
    - ✓
- Community Action Partnership of Mercer County
    - ✓ Provides education, employment, housing, veteran's services, weatherization, and utility assistance for low-income residents of Mercer County
    - ✓ Transportation services are provided for veterans.

- Pennsylvania Career Link – Mercer County
    - ✓ Provides employment and training services to Mercer County residents who are attempting to sustain or obtain employment and/or training
    - ✓ Services include job counseling, testing and assessment; resume preparation assistance, interview training and other pre-job guidance services; job matching and referral; unemployment insurance and job registration; labor market and career information; information on financial aid for education and training; and referral for job training, transportation, child care, personal and financial counseling, health care and other human services resources in the community.[1]
    - ✓ Transportation service is provided to reach employment locations and job training services.

These agencies and others are reported on in the sections below.

Transportation Services in Mahoning County

Agency transportation services provided, as reported during preparation of the updated transportation coordination plan are presented in the following pages.

Help Hotline Crisis Center	
County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, Ashtabula[1]
Services Provided and Clients Served	Non-profit law firm serving low-income residents in 8 counties, including Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana
Transportation Services Provided	Provide crisis intervention and suicide prevention services and 2-1-1 information and referral, hotlines, and also services to seniors, the homeless, victims of violence and other crimes, and individuals with mental illness
Eligibility Requirements	N/A
Hours of Service	N/A
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	N/A
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Help Hotline is the information and referral agency servicing Mahoning and other counties in Ohio. Among the information that Help Hotline provides is agencies that provide social services to people and transportation services provided by WRTA, human service agencies and private transportation companies.

Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide assistance to low-income families with benefits such as food assistance, child care, cash, and medical and support services and referrals
Transportation Services Provided	Under contract with seven transportation providers, purchases bus passes from WRTA to assist clients
Eligibility Requirements	Medicaid recipient and have a determined need for transportation services to Medicaid-approved providers, for medical reasons only
Hours of Service	Daily
How Transportation Services are Provided	Contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door with boarding assistance, curb to curb with and without boarding assistance
Scheduling	Requires a new schedule of pick-ups and drop-offs each day
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	7 companies with vehicles
Total Transportation Expenditures	$2,800,000
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	96,000

The Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services has a long history of providing transportation services to its clients. Presently, its' transportation services focus on clients who need access to Medicaid-funded medical care services. JFS also purchases passes and tickets from WRTA so that its clients are able to use WRTA's fixed route bus service.

Mahoning County Board of Developmental Disabilities	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Ongoing programs, services, and support to Board of Developmental Disabilities-eligible individuals Provides services for developmentally disabled children and adults: public school programs; adult day services; workshops for developmentally disabled; Leonard Kirtz School; supported employment; respite care; waiver administration service and support administration; crisis intervention.[1]
Transportation Services Provided	Transport clients to and from Day Programs and other related activities
Eligibility Requirements	Must have a developmental disability as defined under Ohio law as a "severe, chronic disability"
Hours of Service	Weekdays between 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency and by contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Curb-to-curb with boarding assistance
Scheduling	Periodical revisions to pick-up and drop-off locations
Type of Scheduling Software	Trapeze
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	60
Total Transportation Expenditures	$5,058,378
Total Vehicle Miles	750,000
Total Passenger Trips	121,341

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

The Mahoning County Board of Developmental Disabilities provides transportation services to its clients so that they are able to reach agency services and outside services that the Board uses for its clients.

Mahoning County Veterans Services Commission	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide temporary financial assistance and assist Veterans or their Widows in filing for VA Benefits. Provide transportation to Wade Park and Parma VA Hospitals on a daily basis.
Transportation Services Provided	Medical appointments transportation[1]
Eligibility Requirements	Veterans, their families, and surviving spouses in Mahoning County for medical appointments transportation
Hours of Service	Monday-Friday 8am-4pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	By appointment
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	5
Total Transportation Expenditures	$55,712
Total Vehicle Miles	N/A
Total Passenger Trips	1,688

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

The Mahoning County Veterans Services Commission is the county agency that provides a range of services to veterans. Their services include transportation for veterans and their families to reach medical care available at Veterans Administration hospitals in Wade Park and Parma in the Cleveland area.

Easter Seals Community Services-Transportation[1]	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Transportation to medical appointments, congregate meal sites, or social service appointments. Person must be Mahoning County resident, age 60 or over and be able to get on and off transportation unassisted. Door to door service.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation to medical appointments, congregate meal sites, or social service appointments. Person must be Mahoning County resident, age 60 or over and be able to get on and off transportation unassisted. Door to door service.
Eligibility Requirements	Persons 60 years old or older and able to get on and off transportation unassisted.
Hours of Service	Mon-Fri 8am-4:30 pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Unassisted door to door service.
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	8
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care	
County Served	Mahoning and Trumbull Counties
Services Provided and Clients Served	Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care provides compassionate care to older and disabled adults, especially those with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia, during the day. All clients receive nutritious, home-cooked meals, are engaged in conversation and social interaction, receive intellectual stimulation through games and music, and participate in physical activity through handcrafts and light exercise. Some clients also receive medical services or assistance with hygiene and toileting.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation between the Day Care and participants' homes in 12-passenger handicapped accessible mini-buses. The drivers must pass a criminal background check and obtain a physician's statement certifying that they can perform the job safely. Drivers receive CPR training and 8 hours of in-service education annually on driving and safety and health issues pertaining to the client population. They are also trained to maintain the vehicle in a clean and safe condition and ensure that all necessary equipment is available and properly working.
Eligibility Requirements	All participants in Mahoning and southern Trumbull Counties are eligible for transportation between their homes and the Day Care. There is an additional fee for transportation, through PASSPORT, United Health Care, CareSource, and Title III. The Trumbull Senior Levy covers the costs for some participants.
Hours of Service	Weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Curb to curb with boarding assistance
Scheduling	The Executive Director prepares a weekly schedule for each driver, according to the proximity of the participants to each other, so that trips are accomplished in the most efficient and timely manner. Clients and their families are informed about the estimated time the bus will arrive at their house. Should any need or emergency arise, each driver has a cell phone on the bus from which they can make or receive calls.
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	5
Total Transportation Expenditures	$152,750.85
Total Vehicle Miles	81,939
Total Passenger Trips	13,252

United Methodist Community Center Youngstown-Veterans Services

County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull
Services Provided and Clients Served	Program offers computer help, resume, some job search assistance. Emergency help or referral to partner agencies. OASIS transportation for veterans only. 24 hour notice required. Transportation to Doctor appointments, Mahoning County Veterans Court, UMCC, VA Clinics, VA Commissions, VA Outreach centers.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation to Doctor appointments, Mahoning County Veterans Court, UMCC, VA Clinics, VA Commissions, VA Outreach centers.
Eligibility Requirements	Veterans
Hours of Service	Mon-Fri 8am-4pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	24 hour advance notice required.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	1
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Golden String, Inc.

County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull[1]
Services Provided and Clients Served	Non-profit law firm serving low-income residents in 8 counties, including Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana
Transportation Services Provided	Provide non-medical transportation to leisure destinations, employment venues, and medical appointments for adults with disabilities
Eligibility Requirements	Payment for services using an Individual Options (IO) Waiver is preferred, although private payment is also accepted; adults and juveniles with disabilities[1]
Hours of Service	Daily between 6 a.m. and 12 a.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency and by contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door with boarding assistance
Scheduling	In advance at least 24 hours ahead
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	15
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Beatitude House	
County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull[1]
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide support services to homeless women with children, including educational opportunities, coordination with job training agencies for employment, and support services for their children Provide fully furnished apartment to verifiably homeless women with children for a temporary period of time until they are able to obtain permanent housing. Services include case management, availability of mental health counseling, referrals to outside agencies for special needs, housing assistance and referrals, budgeting, job preparation and education referrals, tutoring for children and/or adults, support for basic life skills and parenting, children's support services, other assistance as needed.[1]
Transportation Services Provided	Agency has vehicle that is used to transport clients to appointments, work, and school in the event of inclement weather or missed bus
Eligibility Requirements	In order to drive the vehicle, client must have a valid drivers' license, and request the vehicle for a reason relevant to services agency provides Women and children who are literally homeless[1]
Hours of Service	Weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Curb to curb with boarding assistance
Scheduling	Requires a new schedule of pick-ups and drop-offs each day
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	1
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

D&E Counseling Center & Head Start	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide behavioral health services to children, adolescents, and families, as well as Head Start and Early Head Start preschool programs throughout Mahoning County
Transportation Services Provided	Run 3 buses each day to transport Head Start children to and from school, and contract with Community Busing to transport children to and from home for the Camp Challenge Summer Program
Eligibility Requirements	Must be enrolled in the Head Start Program and meet scoring criteria, or must live in Youngstown for the Camp Challenge
Hours of Service	Weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. for Head Start
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency and by contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Curb to curb without boarding assistance
Scheduling	Periodical revisions to pick-up and drop-off locations
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	5
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Eastern Regional Kidney Foundation[1]	
County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana
Services Provided and Clients Served	Offers limited medication and transportation assistance to dialysis and kidney transplant patients.
Transportation Services Provided	Limited transportation assistance to dialysis and kidney transplant patients.
Eligibility Requirements	Persons on dialysis or have had a kidney transplant.
Hours of Service	N/A
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	N/A
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

McGuffey Centre-Senior and Family Programs[1]	
County Served	Mahoning
Services Provided and Clients Served	Senior social, health and wellness programs, crafts, and lunch program for seniors. Family health program. Some transportation for seniors to Dr. appointments.
Transportation Services Provided	Some transportation for seniors to doctor appointments.
Eligibility Requirements	Senior citizens.
Hours of Service	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	N/A
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

YMCA of Youngstown, Ohio	
County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana[1]
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide families, children, and adults with fitness, recreational, and social programs at three locations in the region
Transportation Services Provided	Two buses to transport children to three facilities for programs, and transport children to the YMCA during the school year for swim and gym instructional programs
Eligibility Requirements	Must be enrolled in YMCA programs
Hours of Service	Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency and by contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Curb to curb with boarding assistance
Scheduling	Requires a new schedule of pick-ups and drop-offs each day
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	2
Total Transportation Expenditures	$36,500
Total Vehicle Miles	9,600
Total Passenger Trips	49,800

Struthers Van for the Elderly[1]	
County Served	Mahoning (Struthers only)
Services Provided and Clients Served	12 passenger van. Transportation for residents of Struthers age 55 and older or disabled persons; Request needs to be made 24 hours in advance.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation for elderly and persons with disabilities
Eligibility Requirements	Age 55 and older, or with a disability
Hours of Service	Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-4pm Van Schedule: MONDAY: 1st Mon - Mall, 2nd Mon- Aldi's, 3rd Mon - Mall, 4th Mon- Big Lots, 5th Mon- Mall. One trip each Monday beginning 9:15-9:30am. TUESDAY: 1st and 3rd Tue - K-mart, Target, Marc's 9:30am to 12pm, If there is a 5th Tue the van will operate. WEDNESDAY: Doctor's appointments - beginning at 9:00am. No appointments after 10:30am. THURSDAY: 1st Thu - Walmart, 2nd and 3rd Thu- Mall, 4th Thu Big Lots, 5th Thu- Mall; FRIDAY - Fifth Street Plaza and Struthers IGA
How Transportation Services are Provided	12 passenger van.
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Request 24 hours in advance.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	1
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

Lowellville Senior Citizens Van[1]	
County Served	Mahoning (Lowellville only)
Services Provided and Clients Served	Transportation for persons 60 +; 24-hours advance notice.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation for persons 60 +; 24-hours advance notice.
Eligibility Requirements	Age 60 or older and Lowellville village resident.
Hours of Service	Mon-Fri 8am-3pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Contact village officer.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	N/A
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

Meridian Women's South[1]

County Served	Mahoning, all areas
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provides up to 24-month transitional housing and supportive services for homeless, chemically dependent women with children. Supportive services include chemical dependency and mental health treatment, case management, on-site childcare, transportation and recreation.
Transportation Services Provided	Supportive services include transportation.
Eligibility Requirements	Women who are homeless and chemically dependent with children.
Hours of Service	Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	N/A
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

Wheels of Mercy[1]

County Served	Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, Ashtabula, Geauga, Mercer and Lawrence PA
Services Provided and Clients Served	Free transportation to Shriner's Hospitals; for children who are burn victims or have orthopedic problems.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation for children who are burn victims or have orthopedic problems.
Eligibility Requirements	Birth to 18 years of age.
Hours of Service	N/A
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	N/A
Total Transportation Expenditures	Not reported
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. (http://hhcc.bowmansystems.com/index.php?option=com_cpx)

Transportation Services in Mercer County

Agency transportation services provided, as reported during preparation of the updated transportation coordination plan are presented in the following pages.

Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc.	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide senior-oriented services to senior citizens and MATP transportation services to all MATP-eligible clients
Transportation Services Provided	Shared ride trips for seniors, MATP trips to medical care, and taxi and ambulette trips for MATP for seniors when necessary
Eligibility Requirements	Must be 60 and over for the senior ride share, or must be eligible for MATP program for MA-eligible trips
Hours of Service	Daily
How Transportation Services are Provided	Contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door and curb to curb with boarding assistance, fixed routes, and flexible routes
Scheduling	Requires a new schedule of pick-ups and drop-offs each day
Type of Scheduling Software	Computer spreadsheet or database, Horizon software, through Mercer County Community Transit
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$801,579
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	97,568

Community Action Partnership of Mercer County	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide education, employment, housing, veteran's services, weatherization, and utility assistance for low-income residents of Mercer County
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation services for veterans.[1]
Eligibility Requirements	Military and veterans.[1]
Hours of Service	N/A
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	Call for information.[1]
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Veterans Health Administration, VA Butler Healthcare - Michael A. Marzano VA Outpatient Clinic (Mercer County)[1]	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Services available: Registration, primary care, physical exams, tobacco cessation counseling, pharmacy counseling, Coumadin clinic, routine laboratory, Tele-Health, Tele-Derm, Tele-Retinal Diabetic Eye Exams, Tele-MOVE!, nutrition, diabetic eye exams, Women's health care, social work services, palliative care, outpatient behavioral health services, physical therapy, podiatry, radiology, and transportation assistance.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation assistance.
Eligibility Requirements	Military and veterans.
Hours of Service	Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm.
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	Call for information.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Pennsylvania 211 Southwest (https://pa211sw.communityos.org/zf/profile/search/advanced/1)

Pennsylvania Career Link – Mercer County	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide employment and training services to Mercer County residents who are attempting to sustain or obtain employment and/or training Services include job counseling, testing and assessment; resume preparation assistance, interview training and other pre-job guidance services; job matching and referral; unemployment insurance and job registration; labor market and career information; information on financial aid for education and training; and referral for job training, transportation, child care, personal and financial counseling, health care and other human services resources in the community.[1]
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation related to employment and job training services[1]
Eligibility Requirements	Unemployed persons[1]
Hours of Service	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm, Wednesday, 8:00am to 6:00pm[1]
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	N/A
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Phil's Dependable Taxi	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Transport clients to clinics or elsewhere
Transportation Services Provided	Paratransit company with 2 vehicles
Eligibility Requirements	N/A
Hours of Service	Monday through Saturday, 6 a.m. to 1 a.m.
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency and by contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door and curb to curb with boarding assistance
Scheduling	In advance at least 24 hours ahead, and on demand
Type of Scheduling Software	Paper
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	2
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Avalon Springs Nursing Center	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide 24-hour, long-term nursing and rehabilitative care, and 15 independent living apartments
Transportation Services Provided	Contract with a local ambulance company
Eligibility Requirements	N/A
Hours of Service	As needed
How Transportation Services are Provided	Contracting with another organization
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	N/A
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Prince of Peace Center	
County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	N/A
Transportation Services Provided	Transport clients to mainstream services such as grocery shopping or to center services and support groups
Eligibility Requirements	Homeless for Ruth or low-income families in need of intensive case management
Hours of Service	Weekdays
How Transportation Services are Provided	Within the agency
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door with boarding assistance
Scheduling	N/A
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Primary Health Network Charitable Foundation - Provide the Ride Medical Transportation Program[1]	
County Served	Mercer, Lawrence, Beaver Clarion
Services Provided and Clients Served	Offers free transportation services for Primary Health Network (PHN) patients who have no means of transportation. PHNCF will pick up and drop off patients to and from their doctors' appointments. PHNCF offers this service to patients residing in Mercer, Lawrence, Beaver, and Clarion Counties.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation to and from doctor appointments.
Eligibility Requirements	Primary Health Network patients who have no means of transportation and do not have a ride to doctor's appointment.
Hours of Service	Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Call for scheduling.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Pennsylvania 211 Southwest (https://pa211sw.communityos.org/zf/profile/search/advanced/1)

Primary Health Network Charitable Foundation - CF Transportation Solutions[1]

County Served	Mercer, Lawrence, Trumbull, Crawford
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provides transportation. Charitable Foundation is committed to safety, providing an on-time and personal system of transportation for all residents in the service areas.
Transportation Services Provided	Transportation for all residents in the service area.
Eligibility Requirements	Customers in the Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, and Trumbull area, 18 or older.
Hours of Service	Hours are from 6:00am to 6:00pm, evening hours available upon request.
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	Door to door.
Scheduling	Call or request online.
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

[1]Source: Pennsylvania 211 Southwest (https://pa211sw.communityos.org/zf/profile/search/advanced/1)

Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission

County Served	Mercer
Services Provided and Clients Served	Provide mental health, drug and alcohol, intellectual disability, and early intervention case management, peer support, intake and assessment, and prevention services
Transportation Services Provided	N/A
Eligibility Requirements	N/A
Hours of Service	N/A
How Transportation Services are Provided	N/A
Type of Transportation Service Provided	N/A
Scheduling	N/A
Type of Scheduling Software	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Fleet	0
Total Transportation Expenditures	$0
Total Vehicle Miles	0
Total Passenger Trips	0

Changes in the Transportation Services Landscape

Transportation services and funding may change as state and federal transportation and human service programs change over time. In addition, with the development of pervasive technology in support of the delivery of transportation services, new opportunities present themselves.

Three such changes in recent years are noteworthy:
1. Local human service agency transportation service supported by federal Medicaid funding, allocated through state government
2. New transportation services provided directly by managed care networks, particularly medical services used by low-income persons. Many of these transportation services are managed by national transportation brokerage companies that have been engaged by the managed care systems.
3. Private transportation services such as Uber and Lyft that operate in direct competition with local taxi services.

IV
Unmet Needs, And Gaps And Overlaps In Transportation Services

Unmet needs and gaps and overlaps in transportation services are presented separately for Mahoning and Mercer Counties. Information was gathered from three initiatives:
1. Online surveys of target populations
2. Discussions among stakeholders at a workshop
3. A survey of transportation services among human service agencies and private transportation companies

Unmet Needs and Gaps and Overlaps in Mahoning County

Surveys of Target Populations

In the fall of 2015, surveys were filled out by Mahoning County residents in the categories of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and low income families. This summary presents information in particular areas of need and gaps in service. Full results are presented in separate reports by demographic groups.

Inability to Travel – Lack of Transportation

- **For seniors**, 25.4% have frequent trouble being able to travel due to a lack of transportation and 28.6% have occasional trouble.

- **For people with disabilities**, 50.6% have frequent trouble being able to travel due to a lack of transportation and 39.8% have occasional trouble.

- **For Veterans**, 32.1% have frequent trouble and 39.3% have occasional trouble making trips due to a lack of transportation.

- **For low income families**, 34.7% percent have frequent trouble and 49.1% of those households have occasional trouble making trips due to a lack of transportation.

Some of the comments made by <u>seniors</u> about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include:

- *"Doctor's appointments"*
- *"Shopping"*
- *"Cannot get a bus"*

Some of the comments made by <u>people with disabilities</u> about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include,

- *"Grocery shopping; legal offices"*
- *"Doctor's appointments"*
- *"Medical appointments"*

Some of the comments made by <u>veterans</u> about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include:

- *"Work, Shopping"*
- *"Medical appointments"*
- *"To pay bills and get groceries"*

Some of the comments made by <u>low income families</u> about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include:

- *"Church"*
- *"Doctor's appointments"*
- *"Work; Shopping"*
- *"Doctor's appointments; Hair; Library; Shopping"*

Difficulty with Travel by Day of Week

- **For seniors,** Tuesday through Sunday are the days of the week hardest to travel, with percentages ranging from 22.4% to 25.4% reporting those days are the most difficult to travel.

- **For people with disabilities, veterans, and low income families**, Saturday and Sunday are the hardest days of the week to travel.

60

- **For seniors, veterans, and low income families,** evening is the hardest time of the day to travel.
- **For people with disabilities,** morning and evening are the most difficult times to travel, with 34.9% and 36.4% reporting those times as difficult respectively.

Some of the comments made by seniors needing or wanting daily service include:

- *"Too early or too late"*
- *"Night time after 6PM"*

Some of the comments made by people with disabilities needing or wanting weekend service include:

- *"Doctor's and job/church on Sunday"*
- *"Saturday and Sundays as well as working second shift at night"*
- *"Later hours on Saturday"*

Some of the comments made by veterans needing or wanting weekend service include,

- *"Sundays and third shift late evenings for work"*
- *"Have a weekend bus service: A Sunday all-day service and Saturday night line service"*
- *"Sundays and Saturday night line"*
- *"Have a weekend bus service: A Sunday all-day service and Saturday night line service"*

Some of the comments made by low income families needing or wanting weekend service include:

- *"The bus doesn't run on Sundays"*
- *"Saturday night; Any Sunday"*
- *"On Sundays. Since the bus service is off on Sunday, I have to find a ride to my two jobs that I work on that day."*

Places that are Difficult to Reach

Some of the comments made by seniors about places that they find difficult to travel include:

- *"Trumbull and Columbiana Counties"*
- *"Hubbard, OH"*

- *"Hillman bus is much needed. Please return the Hillman bus route."*

Some of the comments made by <u>people with disabilities</u> about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- *"Hillman Street bus revived; Sunday service"*

- *"Service to Hubbard"*

- *"There are gaps in the bus routes in sections of Poland and even though your routes have expanded (Boardman Loop/Canfield) it would make a later loop. There is no connecting bus to Struthers area after 7 PM"*

Some of the comments made by <u>veterans</u> about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- *"New Castle connection service; Maybe east or the mall area"*

- *"Get a bus to connect to New Castle"*

- *"Go to Canfield or Warren"*

Some of the comments made by <u>low income families</u> about places that they find difficult to travel include:

- *"More expansion of trips to Warren areas, for shopping visiting, business. would like to see us for Niles, Hubbard areas too. Also extend hours on Saturdays, have buses for Sundays, holidays like other cities."*

- *"To places in Warren"*

- *"Bus on Sundays; Nightline to Struthers"*

- *"There are gaps in the bus routes in sections of Poland and even though your routes have expanded (Boardman Loop/Canfield) it would make a later loop. There is no connecting bus to Struthers area after 7 PM."*

Workshop with Stakeholders

Transportation Needs, Gaps and Overlaps - What is this Information Telling Us?

Unmet Transportation Needs
- Affordability of transportation services – low-income families

Gaps and Overlaps in Transportation Services
- Cross-county transportation
- Weekend services
- Cross state – Cleveland UPMC clinic; UMCC-Pittsburgh; New Castle
- Increased frequency
- Night services
- Added routes (east and west)
- Evening/weekend scheduling
- Wait time for clientele
- Bus service to the Mall – Eastwood
- Cross town buses
    - ✓ Don't want to go downtown bus station – lifestyle, women, children)
    - ✓ Minimize time gaps between stops – time sensitive – costly
    - ✓ Family appointments – Mini-vans?
    - ✓ Afraid to use bus service
    - ✓ Client/community education
    - ✓ Medical community/appointment makers
    - ✓ Homeless with pets

Looking Forward
- More communication between WRTA and service providers
- Service providers should train clientele – how to use transportation services
- Understanding of what system provides
- Service providers (e.g. doctors) need to understand transportation services available
- Travel training
- Marketing
- Education
- State agencies – County Area Agencies on Aging and Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

What Have We Learned?

Unmet Needs
- Affordability of transportation services to low-income families

Gaps and Overlaps in Services
- Evening and weekend scheduling is needed
- Reduction in wait time for clientele is needed

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations
- More communication is needed between WRTA and service providers
- Service providers should train clientele so that they can use the available transportation services
- Client and service providers understanding of what the transportation system provides
- Service providers (e.g. doctors) need to understand the transportation services available

The History of our System: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going?

The Past

Unmet Needs
- Decrease in population
- Veterans rely on bus services than in the past
- Less job opportunities with the city changes transportation needs
- Customer focus interaction – homeless and low income; veterans; and seniors in high rises
- 1 car per household to acceptance of owning more than one car per household
- Concentration of poverty – income levels

Transportation Services
- Service cuts
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Amount of trips reduced
- We used to loan out vehicles, but problems with:
  - ✓ Liability
  - ✓ Gasoline costs
  - ✓ # of vehicles
  - ✓ Staff time
- JFS stopped/cut transportation services
- Less transportation-related calls

- When WRTA transported for schools and the steel mills were open was a very positive time in transportation
- Headway on routes were good
- Cross county in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties
- Reductions in services >>> impact on employment and accessibility

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- In the late 1990's, the state encouraged the development of coordinated plans – both Mahoning and Trumbull launched committees to begin the discussion
- Federal and state funding
- Transportation legislation
- Shift in funding levels – property to sales tax
- Sharing of Federal funds from 1 transit system to three. UZA changes due to Census
- Funding shifts
- Census
- Change in urbanized area
- Higher gasoline prices
- Title 3 funding decrease
- Loss of funding changed the way we approached service
- Hidden subsidization of roadway and gas that distorts cost of ownership of cars
- Zoning and dispersion of land use disrupted development patterns
- Lost property tax and cut service
- WRTA levy
- Changes in ADA rules

The Present

Unmet Needs

- Young clients (adolescent to 30 year olds) don't want to use – narcissism
- Want their own cars; want someone to buy for them; it should be expensive
- Increase in number of low-income individuals needing transportation
- Increase number of population with disabilities
- Rapidly aging population in a shrinking metro
- More difficulty for women who have children to work and go to school
- Getting kids under 5 to daycare
- Larger population of low-income families

Transportation Services

- Additional bus routes for transfer buses
- Increased transportation-related calls and expenses

- Expansion of routes
- Safety standards
- County-wide transportation service
- Reasonable fares
- Accessible vehicles
- FTA Section 5310 opportunity to get busses to serve disabled and elderly
- We do provide bus passes; we assist with rides when bus service is not an option; by connection to other agencies
- We have county-side service now
- New vehicles with bike racks
- 100% ADA accessible
- 1-800 number
- Night service
- ADA (SST service)
- Expanded routes
- Easier access
- Warren express
- YSU routes
- Thinking about adding hourly service
- Increase need of weekend service and nights
- Utilize small buses
- More frequency
- Saturday services are back
- Bus service has expanded to other areas of the county

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations
- Social media
- Agency services are better coordinated to impact outcomes – this is done sometimes by transporting clients to ensure they receive services
- Coordination remains a challenge
- Agency stakeholders have changed; some challenges remain
- Impossible to have transportation system that is not subsidized
- Fed regulation (MAP-21) stronger emphasis on multi-modal and TOD's and performance metrics
- Health care and independent medical centers building new facilities outside the service area population
- Equality now exists
- Discrimination no longer exists

- People and their needs are main focus
- Loss of funding caused us to seek partnerships with community agencies in order to help our clients
- Technology upgrades
- Sales tax to create new routes
- ADA rules
- WRTA now financially stable
- Ohio Mobility Improvement Study – 2012
- Smart phones

The Future

Unmet Needs

- Find more ways to help people pay for fares and get licenses re-instated
- Affordability
- Various ways to pay bus fares
- Service needs – continue to monitor

Transportation Services

- Minimum wait time for transportation services
- Access to all parts of the counties
- With better funding build all routes with 30 minute headway
- Increased frequency of routes; expanded services
- Need increased number of runs on each line, but smaller vehicles on all lines, including fixed route services
- Increase frequency of service
- Transfer hubs within county
- Park and ride (to exchange passenger)
- Inclusion of all on routes
- Expanded hours and routes
- Run 24/7 to meet users' needs
- Extend to large employers
- Change/improve safety of bus stations and riding the bus
- Flex-car type service (probably needs to be publicly subsidized so may not be feasible)

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- Coordinated point of entry to all transportation service
- The change has to be in the way funding is supplied

- What if an agency has a great idea, but does not have matching funds as it applies to transportation
- Would like to have better communication with human resource agencies
- Grow ridership with education and training
- Build relationships with other transit providers
- Mobility management
- Coordination with public, private and social service agencies
- Travel training
- Informed public
- Regional coordination
- Google Transit
- Technology using iPhone – let people know how much time to the next bus
- Change the culture of Mahoning County regarding public transportation
- Smart phones – Uber style
- Marketing
- Travel training
- Increase transportation contracts with non-profits and for profit agencies to transport and service people
- Workforce and medical contracts
- Collaboration – church leaders; meeting coordinators in accessing service
- Educate community and service availability, costs-benefits – individuals, agency providers
- Manage all of the dollars through one state agency/local agency
- Educate! Educate! Educate!
- Simplified system
- More coordination among providers who serve populations with similar needs (commuters), elderly, those with cognitive disabilities, those who need transport to medical facilities
- Digital marketing to familiarize potential riders with availability and benefits of transit services
- Key to coordination – identify a group of stakeholders who want to work on it on a monthly basis
- Develop a marketing team of users to reach out and normalize use of service
- Priorities should be to ensure all agencies have the opportunity to get involved in transportation on some level – if they so choose. It should not be limited by their budget size.
- Encouraging service-oriented development near fixed route

- Embrace MAP-21 and any new legislation
- Smart cars and personalization of everything, including tele-services
- Falling house prices in the valley will allow more that cannot afford to, to be encouraged to move to suburbs
- At least we have something
- Increase funding for seniors as they are growing

What should a well-coordinated transportation system achieve?
- Clients should be treated well and with respect
- Removal of the stigma associated with riding the bus
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- 24/7 service
- Safety
- Convenience
- Regional accessibility
- Infrastructure improvements, including roads, sidewalks, and crosswalks, are needed

Final Thoughts
- It is good that we are collaborating
- We need to educate and help people to ride the bus system
- It is the responsibility of the service providers to educate themselves about the bus system, and then pass this knowledge on to the consumers

Survey of Transportation Services

Unmet Transportation Needs Specific to Agency and clients

- Low income individuals unable to afford passes or tickets. Clients cancel appointments due to having no ride, unable to get adequate care. Medicaid rides have limit, many clients already have met theirs, need alternative transportation.

- Transportation in a timely manner to education and work sites that are not on a current bus route for example, employment hours 9 - 5pm on bus routes do not correspond to these hours. Having to leave 1.5 hours before work in order to connect with routes at the bus terminal.

- Clients are urged to contact our office via telephone, mail and e-mail if transportation is not available. Transportation is needed for office appointments to sign documents and

to get to court. In general, clients come to the office in small groups or as individuals on an ad hoc basis one or two times. Clients struggle to find transportation to Akron for Social Security hearings and to Cleveland for immigration hearings. Homeless clients must trudge in all-weather to get to the library, medical appointments, housing and other services.

- Many of our clients use the bus to get to our office and there is no bus stop in Central Square which is the "business district."

- Transportation Services are only provided for a limited number of Head Start Children due to the operating/staffing costs. No transportation is provided the Behavioral Health clients, other than a limited number of tickets/passes and an occasional cab ride. Transportation is a major barrier for many of our clients.

- Not enough transportation

- There is a need for transportation into Trumbull County.

- We are the 211 for the area and many times our consumers will call asking for assistance with transportation. We also have a community center and some consumers are not able to get to the Northside due to a lack of transportation.

- Access to bus route information so bus passes may be issued to clients rather than providing transportation for them (which is more costly).

- Disabled and homeless veterans have limited income and could use access to discounted monthly bus pass. Weekend services even if limited.

- The YMCA operates two buses to bring schools and groups to our 3 facilities. However, there are many clients who cannot easily access our facilities and programs because they have low income.

General Unmet Transportation Needs in the Community

- Would like to be able to purchase passes for the curb to curb rides so that we can give to clients instead of the cash only (either purchase in advance and be given passes for it or use vouchers and be billed for the rides each month). Many clients unable to get to work on Sundays because of no rides.

- Operate Sunday bus routes for employment, church and social events.

- Homeless clients must trudge in all-weather to get to the library, medical clinic, housing and other 'downtown' services. Volunteers from YSU must walk or find a ride to get from campus to our office downtown. Parking downtown might be relieved if there was a shuttle with a regular route. The route should stretch from Rescue Mission/St. Elizabeth's Hospital/ D&E/YSU to Social Security/Covelli to Oakhill Renaissance Center as well as Federal St.

- Clients cannot always afford bus passes when needed to get to our office, doctor appointments, etc. It would be nice if a certain amount of passes could be provided by agencies, similar to the way they help clients meet the need to pay utilities, etc. In addition, it would be nice if, for example, our office had a few passes we could give to clients when we schedule an appointment.

- Transportation needs to be more available and consistent across the entire area.

- Growing numbers of clients with special needs, Increasing severity (Medical / Behavioral), New technology, Inclusion

- WRTA does a nice job keeping on schedule and trying to reach and service residents and veterans in Mahoning County

- More buses to suburban locations

Unmet Needs and Gaps and Overlaps in Mercer County

Surveys of Target Populations

In the Fall of 2015, surveys were filled out by Mercer County residents in the categories of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and households without automobiles. The surveys were reviewed in particular for areas of need and gaps in services.

Inability to Travel – Lack of Transportation

- **For seniors**, 15.7% have frequent trouble being able to travel due to a lack of transportation and 37.7% have occasional trouble.

- **For people with disabilities**, 32% have frequent trouble being able to travel due to a lack of transportation and 47.4% have occasional trouble.

- **For veterans**, 12% veterans have frequent trouble and 52% have occasional trouble making trips due to a lack of transportation.

- **For households with no automobile**, 10.5% percent of households with no automobile have frequent trouble and 42.1% of those households have occasional trouble making trips due to a lack of transportation.

Some of the comments made by seniors about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include,

- "Appointments are outside jurisdiction."

- "Nighttime meetings/doctor's appointments"

- "Church and shopping"

- "Grocery shopping"

- "I miss out on events at the Senior Center because I can't get here at 8AM"

Some of the comments made by people with disabilities about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include,

- Doctor's appointments; Shopping around the holidays

- Going shopping

- Pick up prescriptions/shopping

- Ride to Labor Day at Buhl Park; Going out of town

Some of the comments made by veterans about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include,

- I cannot take a bus for a steady job. (Only shopping and medical appointments)

Some of the comments made by households with no automobile available about having trouble getting places due to a lack of transportation include,

- Going to church

General Need for Weekend Service

For seniors, people with disabilities and veterans Saturday and Sunday are the hardest days of the week to travel while for households with no car Monday and Wednesday are the hardest days to travel. For seniors and people with disabilities evening is the hardest time of the day to travel. For veterans and households with no automobile mornings are the hardest time of the day to travel.

Some of the comments made by seniors needing or wanting weekend service include,

- "Saturdays"

- "Longer service days, Start weekend service, More than one day to shopping area"

Some of the comments made by people with disabilities needing or wanting weekend service include,

- Events on holidays and weekends

- I would like some weekends and some evenings

- "Out of Mercer County or on weekends"

Some of the comments made by [veterans](#) needing or wanting weekend service include,

- Saturday and evening services; Sunday

- Sunday

- Evenings, holidays, and Sundays. Also have office open on Saturdays. Supply transportation to transit meetings, courtesy stops, plus posted areas of pickups.

Some of the comments made by [households with no automobile available](#) needing or wanting weekend service include,

- Longer service days; Start weekend service; More than one day to shopping area.

- If bus would be available on Saturdays; your drivers are very helpful and are on time 99% of the time.

- Would be nice if pickup was later in afternoon; buses running on Saturday and Sunday

Places Difficult to Reach

Areas of need which were mentioned in the comments sections of the surveys across the four different groups include going to church, doctors' appointments, shopping, Grove City. Armstrong County and Pittsburgh were also mentioned as places to which people would like transportation.

Some of the comments made by [seniors](#) about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- "Greenville bus service"

- "City transportation"

- "To go shopping more than once a week to the Shenango Valley Mall and Grove City Outlets"

- "Church and shopping"

- "To Armstrong County"

- "Bus doesn't much go to town extremities. Always difficult to go to Donofrio's and Patagonia addresses."

Some of the comments made by **people with disabilities** about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- Ride to Labor Day at Buhl Park; Going out of town
- To Mercer courthouse
- Bus to Pittsburgh; bus to take classes after 5PM

Some of the comments made by <u>veterans</u> about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- More transportation services to Niles
- I think you need to have a bus run every 45 minutes from downtown Sharon to the mall to Wal-Mart and back.
- Evenings, holidays, and Sundays. Also have office open on Saturdays. Supply transport to transit meetings, courtesy stops, plus posted areas of pickups.

Some of the comments made by households with no automobile available about places that they find difficult to travel include,

- "Going to church on Sunday and special events on Saturday, both in Grove City and in other areas of Mercer County"

Primary Means of Transportation

- **Seniors** - 25.3% of seniors said they the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service and 28.9% said they take the Mercer County Community Transit. 34.9% said they would drive themselves.

- **People with disabilities** - 43.4% take the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service, and 32.3% take the Mercer County door to door service. Only 7.1% of people with disabilities drive themselves.

- **Veterans** - 48% percent take the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service. 12% take the Mercer County Community Transit but 28% drive themselves.

- **Households with automobiles** - 20% use the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service, 45% use the Mercer County Community Transit, and 15% drive themselves. The Shenango Valley shuttle Service and Mercer County Community Transit are very important to these groups.

Workshop with Stakeholders

Transportation Needs, Gaps and Overlaps - What is this Information Telling Us?

Unmet Transportation Needs

- Concern – A lot of people do not know routes, times.
- Cannot make appointments to work, to health care
- Hard to determine evening needs
- Can get people to work, but not home
- Some people don't have driver's license, insurance or a car
- People do not have money to support their own transportation
- Shift workers need transportation
- Need for dental appointments early morning – everyone wants early
- Are people resistant to riding the bus?
- Employment – limits to jobs in outlying areas – other barriers; work shift times issue
- Where is the need higher?
  - ✓ In population areas
  - ✓ In rural areas
- 65+ free - Fare $1.25 each way; students $0.60; transfers $0.25; disabled
- Sometimes the demand for a ride comes up unexpectedly

Gaps and Overlaps in Transportation Services

- More buses ($400,000)
- Expand the times the buses run
- Prioritize who needs a ride – school students? – and create the route
- New Castle transit can get people to medical appointments
- Saturday and Sunday operation
- Longer hours during the week
- Explore overlapping situations
- Wait times
- Pick-ups move often
- Later hours for weeknights and weekends
- Smaller bus for fixed route
- Scheduling
- Marketing
- Understandable schedule
- Sat. – nothing after 5pm
- Shuttle stops after 5pm

- On weekends, no shuttle – after 5:30 or 6pm
- Need for transport out of county for medical
- Schedule on-line – use more technology
- Wi-Fi on the bus
- Bigger issue is long wait to get the bus and to be picked up
- Bus drivers
- State line issues (transit insurance)
- Crossing state line
- Medicare issues for funding dialysis
- Saturdays – drops and returns – round trip dialysis
- No Sunday service – hours limited
- Cancels and no shows issue – MCCT
- Time issues – SVSS length of and number of daily loops; waits
- Rural "Return on Investments" pick-ups
- Driver shortage (part-time positions?; budget/funding concerns)
- Split between automated vs. non-automated smart cards
- Look to Phil's for coordinating Pittsburgh medical trips

Looking Forward

- *"Copy" a successful program*
- Review "Sanctions" (confirmation improvement system)
- Apps to let riders know where bus is
- Major stops have bus-countdowns to let know when bus is arriving
- *Need to use 211 to connect people*
- Large area of use – Farrell/Sharon
- Stigma to ride the bus
- Metropolitan culture vs. Mercer County and rural needs
- *We don't know about all available transport options – Phone, taxi, shuttle*
- Phone 24/7
- Uber
- Rent cars in the city area

What Have We Learned?

Unmet Needs

- Time commitment needed to ride the bus, and the social stigmas associated with riding the bus or using public transportation are issues that need to be addressed
- There exists a conflict/inconsistency between the bus schedules, and client work schedules and appointments
- Population continues to decline and age in Mercer County

Gaps and Overlaps in Services

- Better marketing, education, and awareness is needed
- Shuttle service needs longer hours of operation
- Service area coverage is lacking in rural parts of Mercer County, as well as a cost-effective way to provide rural coverage
- Amount of no-shows and cancellations average around 150 per month; this costs money and results in lost revenues

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- GPS should be on-board each bus, and a publicly available app should show the current location of each bus to alleviate issues of long wait times for clients
- Funding for transportation services is inadequate in Mercer County
- Perhaps use smaller buses that run more often

The History of our System: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going?

The Past

Unmet Needs

- Changing demographic
- Economic issues
- Population has aged
- Senior transportation need has decreased over the last five years, despite a significantly increasing older population.
- Aging population
- Growth of elderly high-rises, senior communities, assisted living
- Children lived closer to parents as they aged and provided more care

Transportation Services

- Taxi company since 1980
- Can't provide service to shelter workshop

- More routes available
- Loss of "no show" funding from the Medical Assistance Transportation Program through State Department of Human Services
- Shenango Valley Shuttle Service – added new route (express)
- Mercer County Community Transit – Started coordinating trips to Pittsburgh with state funding, four days a week
- Growth of agency transit providers (e.g. Primary Health Network)
- Available technologies that can cut down on no-shows, scheduling irregularities, etc.
- Decrease in number of buses and funding
- Fixed routes are based in urban area – UZA (urbanized area)
- Specific hours, but 2 day notification for Medical Assistance
- Transportation bank – to get people rides

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- Elimination of funding towards transportation programs to support "working poor"
- Funding levels between federal and state programs
- Medicare funding available for ambulance; not as strict with requirements
- Increased oversight from PennDOT and FTA
- Less funding, more issues to address, especially regarding roads and other aging infrastructure
- Government guidelines – restrictive
- Smaller communities in comparison to northeast Ohio
- Economy is not as good as it was
- Fuel prices are stabilized
- Mandated coordination with Federal Transit Administration programs
- Funding able to be utilized older adults transportation through the Pennsylvania lottery has not increased in 8 years
- Housing bust of 2007 – 2009
- Land use patterns…hollowing out of commercial and residential areas in Sharon and changing commercial patterns in Hermitage (e.g. near Route 18/Wal-Mart)
- Shift from manufacturing to service base economy
- Politics – good and bad
- Divided government

The Present

Unmet Needs

- Aging population is increasing (baby boomers)
    - ✓ More health issues
    - ✓ More needs
- Demographic trends do not bode well for sustainable ridership, or growing ridership
- Literacy
- Lack of gratitude for a ride

Transportation Services

- Coordination agreements between public, private and non-profit agencies
- Marketing of services between agencies on what's available in community
- Technology for dispatching
- User guidebook for riders
- Multiple modes of transportation
- Coordinating services, don't repeat things to save time and money
- Rising amount of no-shows and cancellations…not adapting to use available technologies to combat these trends
- Names on the buses – Northern route confusing
- Where to stand for the bus
- Getting people to and from workshops; rely on linkages
- People who have to complete community services – hours of operation limited
- Improve communication about bus schedules
- Fixed routes to get people to the shelter - The agency pays for it.
- 211 – (24 hours) – Not always updated

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- Medicare funding stricter for ambulance; therefore transportation needs higher for dialysis patients
    - ✓ Prior authorization
    - ✓ Requirement every 60 days – doctors not willing to take on another responsibility
    - ✓ So many different funding programs, many with unique qualification requirements to ride public transit from elderly, Americans with Disabilities Act, state Public Works Department, Welfare Department, Medical Assistance Transportation Program. Diverse rules and regs
- Funding is more specific – stagnant amount available for providing transportation, but increased needs may require limiting the variety of trips to those most necessary

- New software for Shenango Valley Shuttle Service and Mercer County Community Transit
- Funding: more regulated specific use, might not be where money is needed most
- Update policies within agencies
- Big cities vs. rural areas
- Funding
- Government regulation
- Increased oversight at state and federal levels (to public transit operators)...but a less than ideal relationship that's not a partnership
- Government guidelines - you cannot add a ride to a scheduled trip

Broader Issues
- Demand for improved roadways have encouraged urban sprawl, This is fine for younger, healthier people; not so much for elderly and disabled
- Tele-commuting – work from home, or Wi-Fi-enabled cafes and restaurants
- Trying to get away from car-centric - Sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.
- Aging infrastructure need and funding
- Lack of an organized, centralized marketing plan to make more people aware of the various services/options available
- Currently there is fear that Managed Care for long-term social services will change the transportation dynamics in the county.

The Future
Increased Coordination of Transportation Services
- Better and more regular coordination between public transit providers and private transit providers
- Increased awareness of available service, se to more and better marketing
- Reduction of duplication of services amongst various transportation providers
- Cost-effective, everyone working together to meet a common goal
- More responsive to customer needs
- Work with other transportation providers to meet as many needs as possible
- Transportation providers:
    - ✓ Communicate with consumers about the availability of services by multiple providers
    - ✓ Consumers needs met
    - ✓ Transportation service flourishes because cooperative nature of providers
    - ✓ Easier access to services – more routes on fixed route; more people aware and using service

- In five years, is it feasible to have all transit providers identified and coordinating with one another?
- Collaborative between agencies
- Increase private contracted services
- Groups, organizations to sublet their transportation needs
- Collaboration with agencies and community – to meet the needs and get an understanding of what each other can do
- Employer sponsorship for transportation

Improvements in Transportation Services

- More easy access to information – more transparency about available services, taking advantage of available technologies
- Simple, easy to use
- Common sense, no need to stop at state line
- Longer hours
- Shorter wait times
- Transportation on Saturday
- Positive marketing
- County marketing of services
- Cross-county transportation points
- Express routes
- Meet the needs of the community – longer hours; weekend hours
- Extended hours
- Priority given to medical appointments
- Higher fees to create funding
- Adding another bus or buses
- Expand perimeter of the services
- Bus pass with Smart card
- Connection to Pittsburgh
- Transit across state lines
- Unlimited transportation access for all county residents
- Better delivery of service

Technology, Funding Programs, Other Considerations

- Google Transit
- Technology
- Uber rentals
- Transfer hubs
- User friendly tools – phone apps, automated reminders

- New technology – Smart phones, Applications
- GPS applications for shuttle and meet arrival times
- Technology – can these access schedules?
- Easier standardized programs and funding to encourage increased ridership for access to fixed routes
- MCCT having a fleet of self-driving vehicles
- Each vehicle would be dedicated to one client for pick-ups and return trips; probably not practical for wheelchair-bound clients
- Bike rentals
- Bike racks
- Uber rentals
- Medicare role >>> broaden
- More restrictive reporting and operational requirements
- Relaxing government regulation
- Increase jobs in area

What should a well-coordinated transportation system achieve?
- Reliable service
- Unlimited access to transportation for residents of Mercer County
- Transportation services should be timely, safe, and sensitive to the needs of the clientele
- Ability of clients to travel regionally as well as locally
- One agency to coordinate transportation services across agencies (211)
- There should be a mechanism to provide funding for private companies in cases when clients cannot pay; private-public partnership
- Reduction of wait time
- Flexibility in scheduling
- Transportation services should be provided at an affordable cost to the customers
- Positive marketing to increase ridership
- De-regulated

Survey of Transportation Services

Unmet Transportation Needs Specific to Agency and clients

- Many of our public housing/section 8 tenants may not own a vehicle or even have a license. Furthermore, their low incomes may prevent meeting transportation needs.

- Located in Mercer, Pa, Avalon Springs provides both long-term nursing care and Independent Apartments. Our apartment residents are routinely searching for transportation to physician appointments, grocery stores, shopping mall or to attend church services. Without any weekend transportation assistance, the current apartment residents feel isolated. The one major concern expressed from those living in our apartments, is: the bus has to be done with transports by 2:30 pm, which makes it difficult to access this service. Our apartment residents suffer from poor vision; poor balance, difficulty walking and a few are dependent on a wheel-chair for mobility.

- Transit doesn't run after 3:00pm, therefore, people cannot depend on it-this is not public transportation

- Clients have to schedule doctor appointments around transit schedule. Clients living in rural areas have even more time restrictions. Some drivers have been rude. Some clients have been dropped off late to appointments & have had to reschedule appointments. Making determination for door to door pick up has taken a long time for some individuals.

- Students have indicated transportation would be welcomed.

- I have spoken to many community agencies, who shared that their clients have transportation issues when making appointment to their doctor or for diagnostic testing at the local hospitals. Sometimes elderly have long waits. Another group with transportation issues is the working poor who work hours after the bus stopped running for the day.

- Lack of public transportation to outlying areas of County and for shift workers

- Some clients have no transportation to food pantries-especially seniors

- On demand return transportation. Ability for consumers to reach driver in early morning or after hours. Expanded hours for rural medical transports.

- The current transit system does not sufficiently meet the needs of individuals, employed or searching for employment to maintain self-sufficiency and/or for the betterment of our families. Individuals employed by health-care or manufacturing, especially, are scheduled in shifts, and therefore are often limited to accept a job or sustain due to the lack of transportation to and from work. Our employers in the foremost "rural" areas of our county, (i.e. Jackson Center, Stoneboro, Transfer and Greenville, Mercer) are not

afforded transportation services to meet their workforce needs. Our "industrial corridor" that would include: Greenville Industrial Park, and industries located on Martin Luther King Blvd. are not served with adequate transportation to allow for skill laborers the opportunity to work. The current and proposed transit scheduled is based for service needs, and not for employment needs of riders. Suggestion to survey our area employers and their employees on what needs are being met and not being met with the current transit service.

- People using walkers or people who are overweight may be unable to climb stairs into a bus easily and drivers do not help and are discourteous with the passenger in the matter. Times or route, long waits in between drop off & pick up.

General Unmet Transportation Needs in the Community

- There are transportation needs for low-income individuals travelling after shuttle service hours (5pm & holidays).

- Limited access

- Rural areas, for example Greenville, Sandy Lake, Grove City, do not have a shuttle service. Those individuals have even more difficult time getting to grocery stores, bank, etc. Many doctor offices are offering evening appointments. Clients who use transit are not able to benefit because of the hours of operation.

- The rural areas of northern Mercer County also struggle with being able to provide or offer adequate transpiration services. I understand people choose to live in more rural areas, but isolation and distance from health facilities, work and access to grocery stores does impact health.

- Many agencies providing their own transportation for clients because transit does not meet their needs.

- Less wait time for pick up/return trips. Hotline to driver for pickup issues that occur in early morning (before office hours)

V
COORDINATING
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

There are a myriad of federal programs that provide funding for the delivery of transportation services to older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income families. At the federal level, over sixty (60) separate programs have been identified. Within the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, financial assistance programs for the support of local public transportation services have been in place and evolving for some forty years.

It was in the late 1960's and early 1970's that the ownership and delivery of public transportation services shifted from the private to the public sector, as the private market for transportation services was no longer profitable. But, communities recognized that not all people would be able to meet their mobility needs without some level of public transportation services. Consequently, local communities took over ownership and control. Over time, local communities and state governments developed programs by which local communities could set up new agencies to control, operate and fund public transportation services.

As a result of actions over that last forty-five years or so, the following has occurred to provide financial assistance to public transportation systems in metropolitan areas:

- The legislature of the state of Ohio has funded programs to support the delivery of public transportation services across the state, in urban and rural counties.
- The US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration has established direct funding for public transportation systems, designating specific entities such as WRTA as recipients of funding from its 5307 Urban Program and its Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program
- WRTA has access to funding on a periodic basis through the Ohio Department of Transportation's, Office of Public Transit.
- In Pennsylvania, the principal direct funding of public transportation services is through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

In addition, new or modified Federal Transit Administration programs are now established through the _Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act_ in December 2015. Principal among the changes in the FAST Act is the Section 5310 Program, newly titled as _Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities_.

Further, there are a large number of programs across government departments and agencies that provide human services for persons in need. Many of these programs provide services to older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income families. In over sixty of the financial assistance programs, transportation services may be provided by human service agencies to help clients get access to program services. Typically, the provision of transportation services is elective by the agencies providing services, not mandatory.

It is generally agreed that there are insufficient resources available for local, state and federal sources and through private funding and contributed services to meet the mobility needs of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income families. Further, it is generally accepted that transportation services offered independently of one another, servicing older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income families operate in the same neighborhoods, especially during weekdays morning and afternoon hours as clients are transported to agency services.

Developing a Family of Transportation Services

Transportation services available to people with mobility needs can take various forms. Typically, transportation services include fixed route bus service such as is operated extensively by WRTA in Mahoning County and to a lesser degree by SVSS in Mercer County. Also, these services include paratransit service, sometimes called door to door or demand responsive service. By whatever name, this service distinguishing itself from fixed route in that smaller vehicles respond to the specific trip patterns that people need to make. Such service may include driver assistance for customers to get on and off a vehicle or to and from a vehicle. In rarer circumstances, assistance is provided "through the door". Through the door service is usually provided by human service agencies rather than public transportation systems.

The concept of a "*family of transportation services*" is rooted in and recognizes the notion that transportation services should be responsive to the specific needs of customers, the variety of trips that they need to make, and the urban-suburban-rural character of the area within which the services are provided. The concept recognizes that older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income circumstances may have very different needs and services may need to be tailored to be responsive to those needs. Without being comprehensive, these may include:

- The lack of access to a motor vehicle
- A disability which prevents them from driving
- Not having family members or friends available to help them travel locally
- Inability to walk a reasonable distance to a bus stop or to be able to wait at a bus stop during hot or cold weather
- Living in an area where urban fixed route bus service is not feasible

Figure 17 presents a chart that characterizes the concept as it relates to the travel mobility and needs of older persons.

Figure 17
A Family of Transportation Services Concept
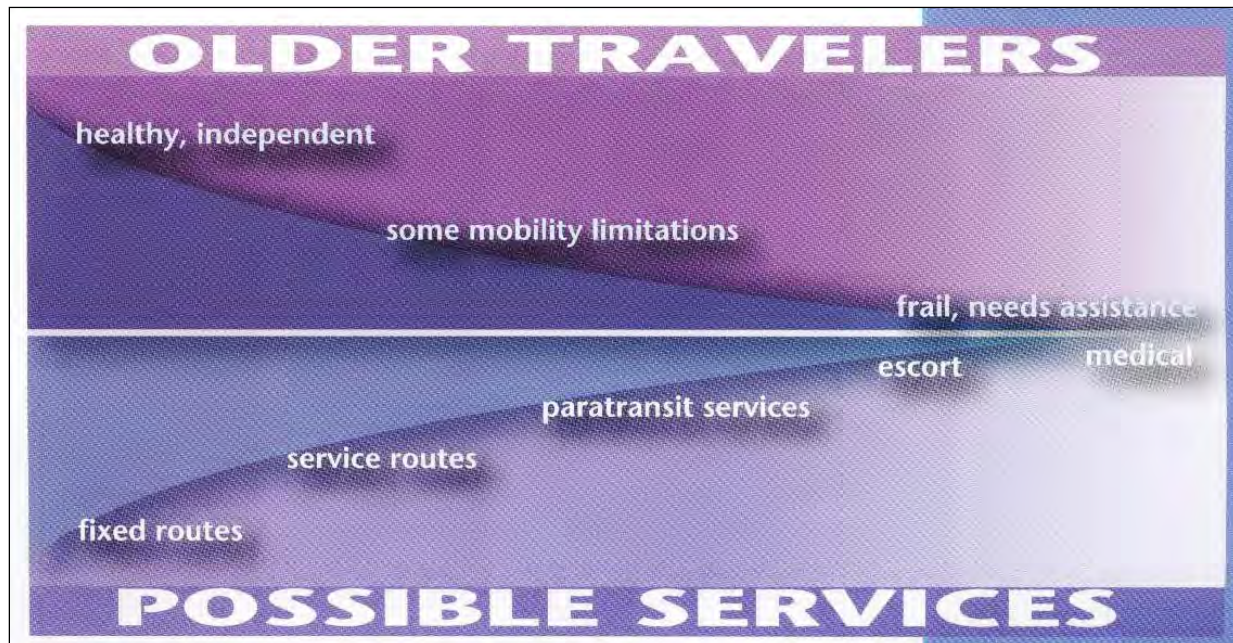
Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program Report #82, Improving Public Transit Options for Older Persons.

Older persons are able to make independent travel decisions as long as they are healthy and able to move about independently outside their homes. However, as their ability to move about their community independently diminishes, they require more specialized means of transportation to maintain their ability to meet travel needs and quality of life. With a family of transportation services available in a community, the services are available to do this.
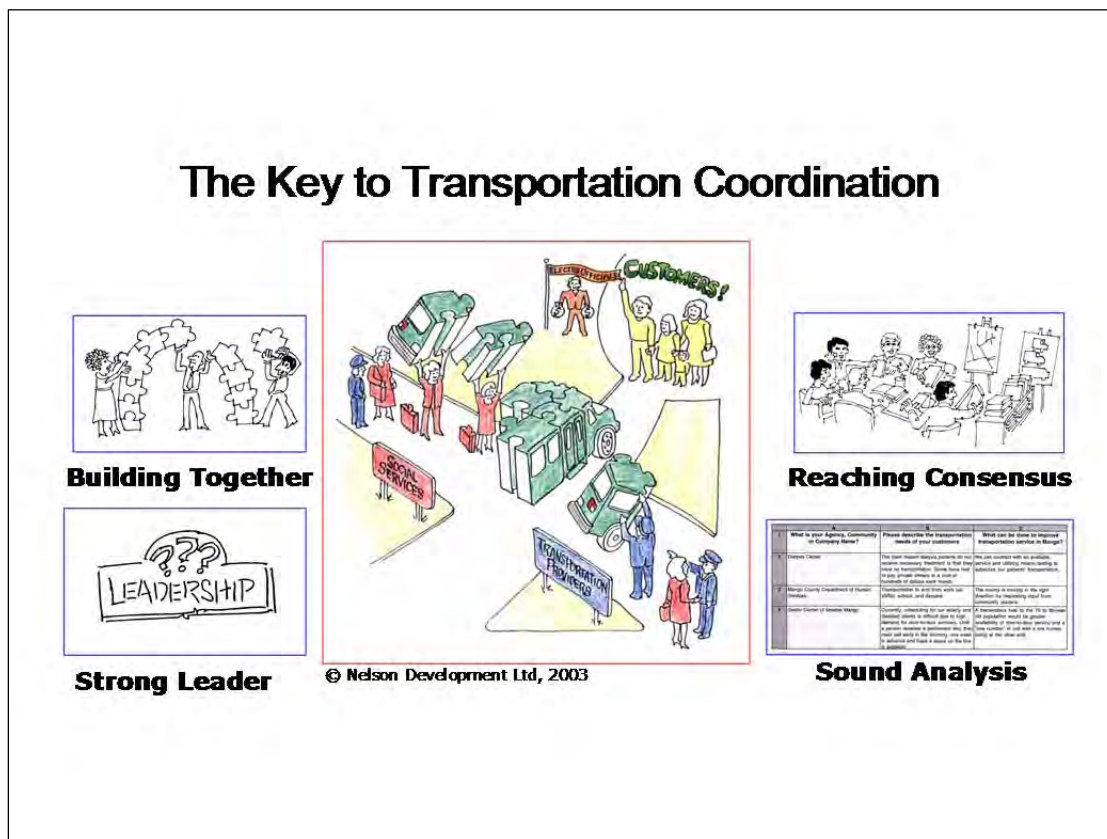
An important element of the concept is customer service that recognizes the need for information, training and planning so older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with low income are able to make the most effective use of the transportation services that are available in the community.

What is Transportation Coordination?

The coordination of transportation services focuses on bringing together in a community all of the key people and organizations that have responsibility for helping people meet their mobility needs in ways that permit decisions about what services are offered and who offers them are driven by an understanding of who are the customers, what are their needs and what kinds of

services under which circumstances can be most cost-effective and cost-efficient in meeting those needs safely and responsively. The key to transportation coordination success is cooperation, collaboration; consensus building and vision (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

The Key to Transportation Coordination

Building Together

Strong Leader

Reaching Consensus

Sound Analysis

© Nelson Development Ltd, 2003

Transportation coordination, as expressed to Figure 16, works best in circumstances where the following conditions exist:

- Customers and meeting their needs are the number one focus.
- There is strong leadership among the key stakeholders and a shared commitment to organize and deliver coordinated services together and reach consensus in setting priorities and taking action.
- Transportation providers work cooperatively and collaboratively with human service agencies to understand the needs and requirements of the agencies and their clients.
- Social service agencies work cooperatively and collaboratively with transportation providers to understand the responsibilities of delivering transportation services in a complex environment.
- The agencies and communities, including taxpayers, which provide funding for transportation services are satisfied with the development and delivery of services, the

use of funding for eligible purposes, and the reporting of results and the use of specifically targeted funding programs

The Benefits of Transportation Coordination

Coordination has been promoted since at least the early 1970s as a way to improve transportation services. Coordination is best seen as a technique for better resource management, in which improved organization strategies are applied to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in service delivery. Coordination is about shared power, which means shared responsibility, shared management, and shared funding. Coordination also involves sharing the benefits of its application. Coordination is like many other political processes in that it involves power and control over resources, and coordination can be subject to the usual kinds of political problems and pressures, such as competing personalities and changing environments.[1]

Coordination can improve transportation services by eliminating duplicative efforts and improving the efficiency of transportation operations. Coordinating transportation means doing better (obtaining more results, such as trips) with existing resources. It requires that professionals from various fields work together with persons from different agencies and backgrounds: adopting the broadest possible perspective is a key element of successful coordination efforts human service agencies and transportation providers. Effective coordination will require a focus on not just a few agencies or client types, but on the entire community, or even multiple communities.

Recent Federal actions have substantially increased efforts to promote or even require coordinated transportation services. For example, the President has issued an Executive Order on coordinated transportation, the United We Ride program is under way, and various agencies (such as the Administration on Aging (AOA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)) have executed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

The Benefits of Coordination

When transportation resources are coordinated in a community, it is usually done with the expectation of positive outcomes. By working for greater efficiency in the use of transportation resources, coordination can lower the costs of providing services. Most communities apply these cost savings to increase the numbers of trips served, thus increasing overall service and productivity. The combination of increased efficiency and increased productivity can create great improvements in unit costs, such as costs per trip, per mile, or per hour.

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1 See Burkhardt, Nelson, Murray, and Koffman, *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services, TCRP Report 101*. Transit Cooperative Research Program, Transportation Research Board, The National Academies: 2004, and Burkhardt and Levi, *Seniors Benefit from Transportation Partnerships: Case Studies from the Aging Network*. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: 2005.

Many specific benefits of coordinating transportation services are possible. The benefits of coordinating transportation often include several of the following kinds of outcomes:

- Access to a greater level of funding and to more funding sources
- Access to the specialized expertise of a wide variety of transportation providers and human service agencies
- Access to state agency expertise and support
- Lower trip costs for riders
- Lower trip costs for agencies
- Transportation services provided in areas that were formerly without service
- Transportation services provided to riders who were formerly without transportation service. This allows some people to remain independent in their own homes for a longer period of time than would otherwise have been possible, thus reducing both personal and social costs of unnecessary institutionalization
- Transportation services available for a wider variety of trip purposes than in the past
- Transportation services available more frequently than in the past
- Greater customer satisfaction with transportation services
- Agency clients travel with a broader segment of society
- An overall increase in the number of trips provided within the community
- Reduced vehicle travel — less duplication of services
- Greater productivity — more riders per vehicle over the entire service period
- The centralization of administration and control
- One-stop shopping for customer access to transportation services available in the community
- Higher quality transportation services (more timely, more responsive, more reliable)
- Higher quality (safer) transportation services, resulting from enhanced training programs and more rigorous risk management
- Better access to jobs, health care, and shopping
- Increased activity for local businesses
- Enhanced image, name recognition, and visibility for transportation providers
- Enhanced ability of human service agencies to focus on their primary missions instead of on transportation
- Stronger support and funding commitments from local elected officials and key leaders in the social service network
- A better match between services and transportation needs
- Broader community support for maintaining and expanding transportation services

Which of these benefits are achieved in a given community depends strongly on local conditions, including the resources and activities of the transportation providers and other key stakeholders, as well as local political considerations.

The Sequence of Changes that Coordination Creates

Table 7 shows the sequence of outcomes that can be expected from coordinated transportation services. Coordination first changes institutional structures (numbers of providers, funding sources used, etc.) and services (service types, hours per day, areas covered, etc.). These structural outputs are then reflected in the performance measures typically used to assess transportation services (efficiency, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness). These changes finally lead to beneficial outcomes such as increased consumer satisfaction, and greater community mobility and its associated benefits, such as increased health and well-being, more economic activity, and decreased institutionalization.

The Costs of Coordination

Coordination is seldom easy. Coordinated transportation services may be more expensive, more difficult, and more time consuming to achieve than most interested stakeholders initially expect. While coordination will most likely increase overall cost-effectiveness or reduce unit costs (for example, costs per trip), coordination may not necessarily free transportation dollars for other activities. Although some agencies have hoped to see money returned to them, this has seldom happened because any cost savings have usually been devoted to the many unmet travel needs found in most urban and rural communities. Also, coordination agreements can unravel over time, so that constant work is necessary to ensure that all parties keep working together. Coordination depends on mutual trust, respect, and good will among all parties involved, so long-standing coordination arrangements can be jeopardized if antagonistic or self-serving individuals become involved in transportation activities. Coordination may be more expensive, more difficult, and more time consuming than expected, but it still offers significant benefits.

When is Coordination Effective?

All interested parties should recognize coordination as one of several possible management or problem-solving tools; it will not solve all transportation problems in all communities. Coordination has its most substantial impact where transportation efficiency can be improved. In communities where persons who need transportation are not being served but existing services are already highly efficient, coordination by itself is seldom an effective strategy. In these cases, additional resources are needed.

Table 7
Results Of Coordinating Transportation Services

THE STRUCTURE OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS CHANGES

Transportation Service Levels Increase
        Expanded hours of service per day
        Expanded days of service per week/year
        Expanded geographic service area
        Expanded numbers and types of persons who can access services

Transportation Service Integration Increases
        More funding sources being coordinated
        More funding for coordinated services
        Less duplication of routes and services
        Fewer restrictions on trip purposes and eligible riders
        Central/single source of customer access
        More centralized oversight and management of transportation services
        More agencies involved in cooperating/coordinating in joint efforts
        Fewer agencies operating single-client transportation services

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES IMPROVE

Resource Efficiency Increases [more service outputs for the same resource inputs]
        Lower cost per vehicle hour or passenger mile

Service Effectiveness Increases [more services consumed for the same service outputs]
        More passenger trips per vehicle hour or vehicle mile

Cost Effectiveness Increases [more services consumed for the same resource inputs]
        Lower cost per trip

COORDINATION CREATES POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Customer Satisfaction Increases
        More acceptable services: greater reliability, comfort, and quality
            More accessible services:
- greater physical accessibility;
- greater information accessibility: 800 number, fact sheets on resources available, web site with information on transportation options/providers/resources, other outreach efforts, mobility managers available to assist travelers with information and scheduling

            More affordable services: reduced cost to passengers
            More adaptable services: services can accommodate schedule changes, packages, wheelchairs, etc
            More positive overall service assessments (ratings)

Community Mobility Increases
        More trips per person
        More passenger trips per service area population
        Wider range of travel opportunities available to more persons
        Wider range of economic and other opportunities available to more persons

Quality of Life Increases
      Greater level of independent living [for example, fewer nursing home admissions per person]
      Decreased numbers of isolated individuals
      Increased participation in social, community, and religious programs
      Increased life satisfaction
      Increased physical and mental health status

What about Barriers to Coordinating?

For many years, some local transportation operators have claimed that they would like to coordinate their service with those of other providers, but that they are "not allowed," "prohibited," or otherwise unable to do what it makes sense to them to do by "barriers" in the

legislation or regulations of programs through which they receive funding. However, many other local operators have succeeded in coordinating the transportation resources of various programs by working through the same administrative, personal, and institutional obstacles that other operators have found more difficult to surmount. In the end, some of these obstacles have turned out to be less formidable than initially perceived.

Much of the funding for transportation services for seniors and other specialized client groups originates with Federal programs aimed at the unique needs of individual client groups. This means that recipients of such funds need to pay close attention to the specific objectives and regulations of these programs. While this can be a complex process, it is certainly not an impossible one. There definitely are "challenges" regarding coordination to be overcome, but there are no barriers that prohibit coordinating transportation services.[2]

Some of the most immediate and significant benefits that can result from coordination include the following:

- more riders per trip, which creates a more cost-effective use of drivers' time and lowers the average cost per trip
- more transportation services available to more people
- transportation services available to a larger service area and at more times
- a focal point for information about all transportation services in the region
- a "one-stop shopping approach" -- one number to call when individuals need a ride or their advocates need information
- agencies for whom transportation is not a focal point of their mission (and perhaps a burden to them) turn this responsibility over to transportation professionals
- lower-cost operators (including those who can use volunteers) provide some trips at lower costs than some of the high-wage agencies
- transportation professionals provide some services (such as dispatching, maintenance, training, planning, administration, grant applications, etc) that may be more expensive or difficult for non-transportation agencies to procure
- agencies save costs on administration, office space and equipment, training, and the capital costs of vehicles by working together
- Coordinated transportation services, operating at higher levels of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, more readily obtain the financial and political support of their communities and higher-level funding agencies.

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[2] *Hindrances to Coordinating Transportation of People Participating in Federally Funded Grant Programs*, Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. General Accounting Office, 1977; *Transportation-disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist,* Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO-03-697). Washington, DC: 2003.

Coordinated transportation services offer many benefits to many communities, but the coordination process takes real work. Many of the challenges to be faced will involve ways to forge cooperation among individuals who are not used to working with each other. Successfully addressing these challenges can create transportation services that serve more persons at lower unit costs.

VI
STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR COORDINATING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

One of the key findings in the research that has been completed so far, not surprisingly, is that the public transportation services offered by WRTA in Mahoning County and the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS)/ Mercer County Community Transit (MCCT) on weekdays in Mercer County should be viewed as the backbone of any system of coordinated transportation services. There is a level and coverage of services available to the general public and, therefore, to the target populations that afford them fundamental mobility that would not otherwise be available for them to meet their travel needs. Human service agencies help their clients, in a number of ways, to use these fixed route services, among them buying tickets and passes to help lower the cost of travel for their clients.

Any program to coordinate transportation services should be built on the fixed route services that are in place. These services should be used to the maximum extent possible, since there is little or no cost associated with more people using the services. The capability to meet mobility needs is there and should be used to the maximum extent possible.

We know, though, that these public transportation services cannot be expected to meet all mobility needs. In reality, to better meet mobility needs, WRTA, SVSS, MCCT and human service agencies in Mahoning and Mercer Counties can and should work better together to coordinate the development and delivery of transportation services.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Mobility Management because it is an essential part of the coordination planning process. The general structure within which strategies are organized and presented is shown in Figure 13.
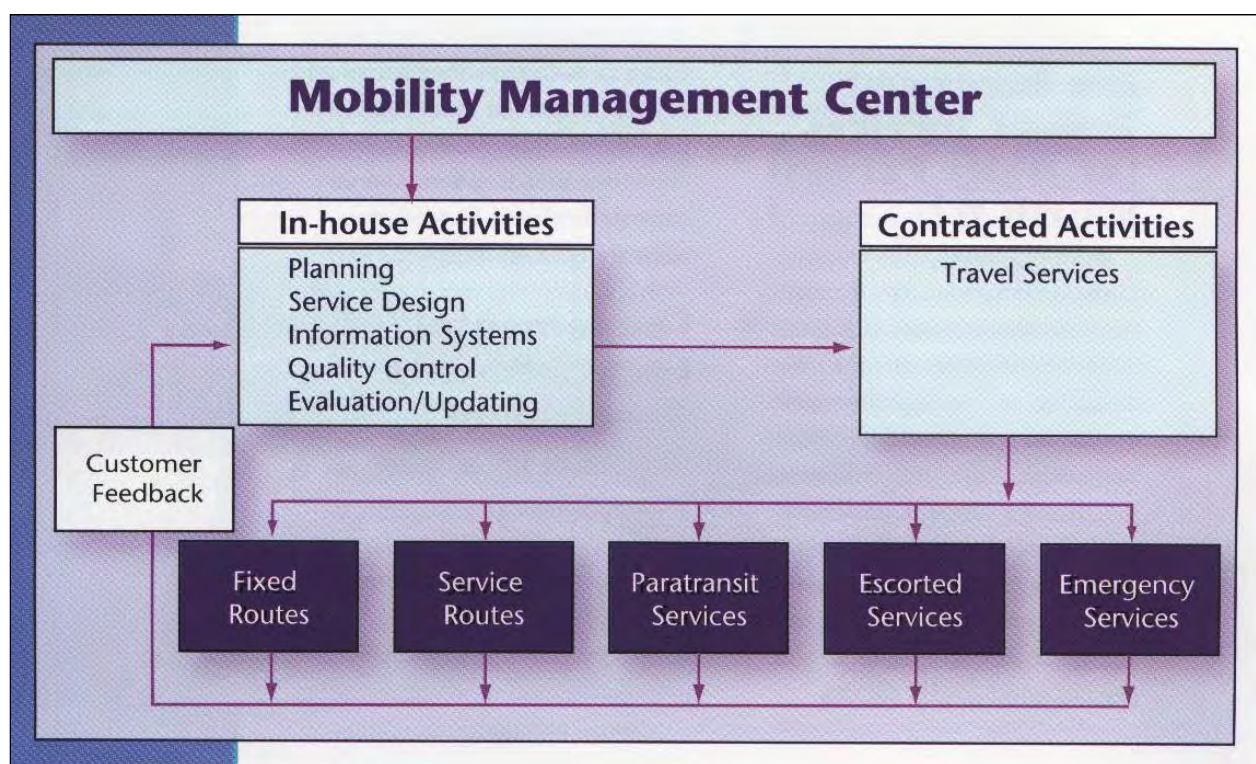
Mobility Management

Mobility Management should be considered an overarching strategy or overall approach to the coordination of transportation services. Mobility management consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers in a county or region. Hence, mobility management is a program which strives to match people with mobility needs with the resources that can meet their needs with the least cost. It includes everything from mileage re-imbursement (for trips it is less expensive for family and friends to provide than sending a bus

out) to travel training to enable people to use the least expensive option for their travel and to know when a fixed route bus might be available for their trip.

It represents a shift in focus from the operation and management of separate transportation services to one of customers, their mobility needs and offering and coordinating the family of transportation services that enables communities to meet those mobility needs in safe, effective, efficient and responsive ways. A good structural representation of mobility management is presented in Figure 19.

Figure 19
A Mobility Management Concept

Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program Report #82, Improving Public Transit Options for Older Persons.

In past transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU), mobility management was recognized as a key element in the delivery of transportation services in a county or region and has been made eligible for capital financial assistance. This has been reinforced in current FAST legislation. Thus, federal funds may be used to move the development of mobility management and transportation coordination forward with funding from present programs. Local matching funds required are low; the federal share is 80% with a 20% local share of total capital costs.

The following provides four representative examples of the many types of activities that can be considered for mobility management funding based on recently published FTA Circulars for federal funding:

- The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals;

- The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations' and Human Service Organizations' customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers;

- The development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs; and

- Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, Global Positioning System Technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a stand-alone capital expense).

Each of the above "approved mobility management activities" could be successfully applied to the counties individually or to the three-county region as a whole. Additional information on project eligibility is presented in appendix E.

A major recommendation that has emerged from the plan development effort is that the region should shift the focus of transportation services to mobility management, instead of maintaining programming separation where each agency develops, funds and operates independent transportation services, focused narrowly on meeting the needs of their own agency's clients without concern for other transportation services in the community or other agencies that are also providing human services to their clients.

Collaborative Mobility Management and Travel Planning

Mobility management shifts the focus from operating individual transportation services to helping people with unmet mobility needs. This means that transportation services are designed, developed and delivered to meet the mobility needs of people in the region. And those needs can be very different across the target populations. For example, the mobility requirements of young mothers with young children are very different from an elderly couple

who no longer are able to drive and do not have family or friends who are able to help them significantly. Both have mobility needs that are important. How specific trips are provided would not necessarily be the same.

In a mobility management setting, proactive trip planning is a key activity. (See Figure 18)

Mobility Management for Workforce Development and Training

Mobility management in the environment of the Ohio Works First (OWF) program would focus on the mobility need of low income people finding a job and providing the most responsive, cost-effective transportation available. A key element is addressing the transportation options early as employment and training options are developed by job developers and Ohio Works First participants. This means that the mobility manager is a partner with the job developer in offering the best recommendations to low income people who need a job that they are able to reach on a daily basis. (See Figure 18below)
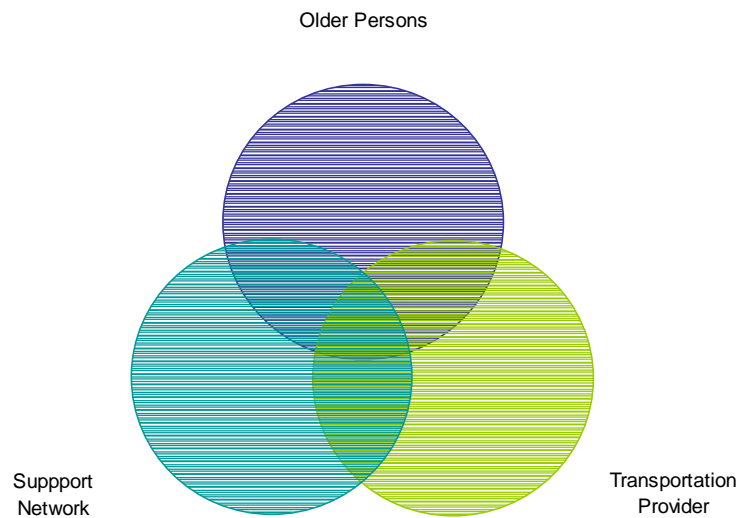
Mobility Management and Maintaining Quality of Life

As people age and lose their ability to drive safely, community transportation alternatives should be available for their use so that they are able to continue to travel where they need to go. For this to happen effectively and seamlessly, travel mobility planning should occur so that older persons are prepared for a transition from driving to using non-driving alternatives. Communities should plan to be ready for these transitions as well. This will require the participation of older persons themselves, family members, medical professionals, social service professionals and mobility managers, acting together, to make sound decisions about maintaining mobility while reducing or curtailing driving. For older persons, the objective needs to be finding a way to maintain mobility and independence while relying on a personal vehicle less and less. (See Figure 20 below)

Figure 20

Mobility Management Triangle
for Labor Force and Job Access

TANF
Participant

Job Developer

Transportation
Provider
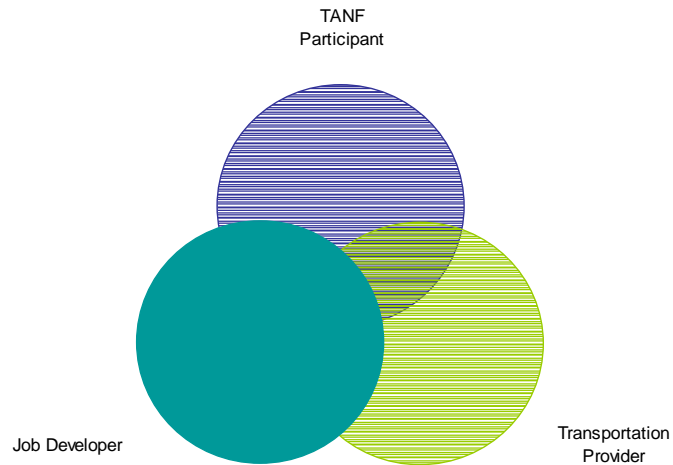
Mobility Management Triangle
for Sustainable Mobility Planning

Older Persons

Suppport
Network

Transportation
Provider

The pacing of the shift in focus to mobility management will depend upon the ability of the participating agencies to work effectively together and their commitment to moving forward on the selected coordination activities. Strategies are presented in two sections below, consistent with the summary structure shown in Figure 21.

FOCUS OF
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION
STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

FIRST ORDER STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

- ➢ **Moving the Focus of Transportation Service Delivery to Mobility Management**

- ➢ **Leadership – Implementation - Organizational Structure**

- ➢ **Centralized Communication - Information – Trip Scheduling – One Number Access**

SECOND ORDER STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

- ➢ **Technology Development**

- ➢ **Trip sharing – Vehicle Sharing**

- ➢ **Maximizing Value of Non-Dedicated Vehicles**

- ➢ **Service Delivery Functions – Administration – Operations – Maintenance – Trip Scheduling and Vehicle dispatching**

- ➢ **Volunteer Driver and Escort Programs**

- ➢ **Subsidized Taxi Fare Programs**

- ➢ **Private Vehicle Programs**

Mobility management shifts the focus from operating individual transportation services to helping people with unmet mobility needs. Mobility management, for example, in the environment of the Ohio Works First program, would focus on the mobility need of low income people finding a job and providing the most responsive, cost-effective transportation available. A key element, however, is addressing the transportation options as employment and training options are studied. This means that the mobility manager is a partner with the job developer in offering the best recommendations to low income people who need a job that they are able to reach on a daily basis.

Transportation Coordination Strategies And Solutions

Transportation coordination strategies and solutions can be organized in a number of ways. The following presents one of the ways. Each of the strategies below has the capability of improving the delivery of existing transportation services, resulting either in cost savings or an increase in transportation services available. In the case of adding new services, unmet travel needs and gaps in transportation services can be reduced. The strategies and solutions below are not mutually exclusive. In fact, different communities may be at different levels of development in the coordination of transportation services. Some solutions are more appropriate than others or the mix and use of several strategies concurrently may differ from community to community.

Central Information Source

Centralizing information improves access to diverse and separately-operated transportation services; people needing transportation services are able to contact a single source, via telephone or computer, to find out how they may get a ride to meet a specific transportation need. Information on transportation services that may be available to them would be provided so they could make contacts to see if they could get a ride.

Central Trip Planner and Trip Broker

The delivery of transportation services would continue to be provided by separate transportation providers. However, a transportation broker would exist to coordinate the delivery of transportation services among participating providers and purchasers. Providers would use the broker to provide selected client trips for other providers and/or use the broker to find providers that would provide a trip for one of their clients.

Coordinate Administrative and Operational Transportation Functions

Selected functions in the delivery of transportation services would be improved by taking advantage of resources and capabilities that may be common among the providers. These common functions could include vehicle fueling; vehicle maintenance; driver training;

scheduling of trips and assignment of vehicles among participating transportation providers; tracking and reporting of operations; financial tracking, billing and payment.

Add New Services

Transportation services that are not currently being offered can be introduced. These could include services that fill gaps in existing services; introduce a new type of service not currently available; services that would meet a need without providing transportation, such as package delivery.

Consolidation of All Transportation Services

The delivery and management of all transportation services and associated functions would be organized within one organization or agency. Agencies formerly providing direct services would contract with this agency for their transportation needs. Agencies that formerly purchased transportation services from one or more providers would purchase their transportation through this agency.

First Order Strategies

The strategies in this section are designated as first order because they involve fundamental decisions that must be made at the beginning of the implementation process. There are two first order recommendations:

- **Leadership – Implementation - Organizational Structure** – This refers to the need to have an organizational structure in place as the region begins to move forward on the selected coordination activities. The discussion of this recommendation includes the presentation of three different strategy organizational structures and some examples of best practices that help to illustrate the organizational arrangements that have been used and the types of coordination activities which have been implemented.

- **Centralized Communication - Information – Trip Scheduling – One Number Access** – this topic is designated as first order because there are important decisions to be made regarding the means for providing essential transportation resource information to the target groups, including the possibility of one number access. In this case there are two strategies to be considered as part of the implementation – that can be characterized as the choice between a gradual low cost approach and a more comprehensive approach involving the extensive use of technology.

Leadership Implementation
Organizational Structure

One of the most important "Lessons Learned" from our peer reviews from other regions is that in order for coordination to be successful, there must be a strong and dynamic "local champion" taking the lead in coordinating services. Without a single agency or individual taking charge and following through with a vision to transform services, major paradigm shifts would not have occurred. A strong leader with vision and the ability to persevere during the difficult implementation challenges is a necessary ingredient for transportation services to proceed under a new "mind set."

It is important to note that a leadership role for WRTA or SVSS/MCCT does not mean that either agency would automatically become responsible for "managing" coordination activities or providing transportation services above and beyond what they are currently providing. In the next subsection we present three options for the selection of a Mobility Manager with public transit agencies being one of the options.

In fact, one could expect that as a transition to mobility management takes place WRTA or SVSS/MCCT may discover that there are benefits in terms of a reduced cost per trip if part of their services are contracted or assigned to a provider with a lower cost structure.

It is anticipated that the leadership role will be one that both provides a driving force in moving toward mobility management and keeps stakeholders at the table building consensus and making decisions. The first step in the process will involve the formation of an organizational structure that will actually serve as the mobility manager.

Strategies for Organizing Mobility Management

There are three basic organizational strategies to be considered for taking the responsibility for mobility management in the region:

- Public Transit Agency (WRTA, for example)
- Existing Human Service or Umbrella Agency
- New Non-Profit Transportation Agency/Broker

Since there is such a diversity of coordination activities that can take place under the title of mobility management, it is important that whichever organizational strategy is ultimately selected has the capability to undertake the required role. The following provides some best practices examples of the different ways that public transit and human service agencies have worked together in a mobility management arrangement.

Public Transit Agency as the Mobility Manager

Under this organizational strategy, WRTA would take the initiative and the responsibility for all mobility management activities. The actual operations associated with the selected activities can be carried out completely in-house or by a contractor depending upon the requirements for mobility management and the capabilities of the organization.

Existing Human Service or Umbrella Agency as Mobility Manager

Another strategy organization for taking on the responsibility for mobility management is an existing human service or umbrella agency.

New Non-Profit Transportation Agency/Broker as Mobility Manager

The third organizational strategy for a mobility manager is the development of new non-profit transportation agency devoted to serving the needs of the target population. This agency would work in close cooperation with the existing public transit agency, and could provide specialized services to the transit agency whenever it is cost-effective.

Strategies for Centralized Communication
One Number Access - Information – Trip Scheduling

Getting a ride to meet a travel need should be the same for everyone, a phone call or a mouse click away. Information and scheduling should be centralized either with an existing service, such as 211 or with a newly developed service, such as a capability developed by WRTA for Mahoning County and SVSS for Mercer County, or collaboratively for the region.

Anyone should be able to make one contact (phone or computer) and know how and with whom they can make a trip, at what cost, and have the trip scheduled and confirmed before the contact is completed.

This area has been included as a first order recommendation because it deals with the fundamental issue of providing usable information to the target population (customers). As noted earlier, information is the key to people using transportation services effectively, both knowing what services are available and having the information they need to make their use of a particular service successful.

There are three strategies in this area which we will identify ranging from low tech to high tech. At the lower end of the scale, a county or region may simply develop a Transportation Resource Directory. Or, as is the case in many areas, telephone reference services may also be provided directly as customers or clients call for information. Typically, this telephone service is for information and referral only. The highest order strategy would be a "One Number Access"

service. With "One Number Access" a customer or client calls a central number, is able to receive the information one needs on available services and is then put in touch with a transportation provider that is able to provide the desired transportation to meet the need. In a fully developed and integrated system, the customer or client need make only one phone call.

The Transportation Resource Directory is a document which may be available at a web site or only in hard copy, containing readily accessible and usable information on the transportation services that are available to the target populations. The information usually includes the contact number for the transportation providers, eligibility criteria, service area and hours of service. It is critical that the information in the directory be kept up-to-date with regularly scheduled follow-ups with each provider. Using the directory, any individual or their representative can quickly identify which providers service their area and can contact the provider directly to arrange for a ride. Most agencies providing centralized information have replaced or supplemented directories with online databases.

A high technology approach combines one number access and the extensive use of technology in transportation operations and administration. WRTA has sophisticated software for paratransit trip reservations, trip scheduling and vehicle assignment. A logical extension of this capability would be to integrate other human service agency transportation capabilities into this system and incorporate the trip scheduling needs of human service agencies that purchase transportation services. This could be a state-of-the-art, centralized call center that serves as a convenient access point for all consumers who require transportation, trip planning, real-time traveler information, and automatic trip reservations. The concept calls for use of the most up-to-date ITS technology which includes interactive voice response (IVR), trip requests via the internet, and online trip planning.

The database information requirements for implementation are extensive and beyond what existing 211 systems have. However, the 211 systems may offer a base around which such a capability is developed. In any case, a "One Number Access" system would require that information be available to direct calls from people needing transportation service, for example, directly to a reservations center.

Second Order Strategies

This section presents strategies that may be developed and implemented within the organizational structure that is developed in each county or the region. Interestingly, some of the strategies may be pursued in parallel with implementation of a mobility management structure and capability. However, it is usually advisable that these strategies be pursued once organization for mobility management is in place.

Technology Development Strategies

Technology development strategies focus on taking maximum advantage of technology to move mobility management forward. The following provides a brief overview of the technology that is available to help transit agencies and human service agencies as they move forward on mobility management.

Tools that Improve Productivity

Tools that improve productivity use new software to improve paratransit service scheduling and service delivery. This includes state-of-the-art trip reservation and scheduling systems and recently developed software that can be used to optimize the mix of dedicated and non-dedicated (typically taxis) vehicles to achieve the lowest cost per trip. The efficiency gains can be used to expand the services provided to meet the highest priority needs of the target population.

Some of the key features of new paratransit scheduling software that help to support coordination include:

- The capability to schedule two distinct services (ADA/human services paratransit and a general public demand-response service) with the same software, and to generate separate reports on each service.

- Budget management features for various human services funding agencies paying for client trips on the paratransit service (i.e. estimated cost of the trip being scheduled is subtracted from the funding agency's budget so that schedulers can manage expenditure). This includes the ability to optimize use of funding agencies' allocated service hours per day by selecting the least expensive way of serving trip requests (through shared rides, for example).

Automatic Vehicle Location and Mobile Data Terminals

Automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems and mobile data terminals (MDT) have become an accepted part of paratransit operations in the United States. It is estimated that the majority of large and medium sized agencies either have this equipment or are planning to purchase it. This technology is an essential part of making the best use of the new paratransit scheduling software features described above. This includes real-time database updating as well. Currently, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), located in Portage County, Ohio is installing MDTs integrated with its Trapeze paratransit reservation and scheduling software.

MDTs are used to transmit messages and information to drivers, to make schedule changes, and for drivers to transmit information, including time of arrival at pick-up and drop-off locations and requests to approve no-shows.

AVL is used in paratransit service as a dispatching aid on an exception basis, for example to help identify a vehicle that can accommodate a new trip, another vehicle that is running behind schedule, to assist lost drivers, to verify that a driver requesting a no-show is in the correct location, and similar functions. In some systems, AVL is also used to help identify vehicles that are in danger of falling behind schedule and as a tool to verify on-time performance as signaled by drivers using MDTs.

The Trip Sharing and Vehicle Sharing Strategies

Trip sharing and vehicle sharing offers opportunities to make more effective and efficient use of transportation capabilities in the region, increase trip-making, save money, and reduce duplication of services in geographic areas within the region.

Trip sharing refers to the commingling of public and human service agency clients on a vehicle. This is a common practice in most coordinated systems which will lead to a higher productivity and a lower cost per trip.

Vehicle sharing or the joint use of vehicles can affect total fleet requirements. Joint use of vehicles should be considered separately from the concept of trip sharing where two or more agencies agree that their customers can ride on any of their vehicles based on scheduling and routing efficiency.

Non-Dedicated Vehicle Strategies

A recently completed Transit Cooperative Research Program project, *Optimal Split of Dedicated and Non-Dedicated Service for Demand-Responsive Paratransit,* explored the potential use of non-dedicated vehicles , such as taxis, as part of the service mix for a paratransit operation, and the potential for offering the opportunity for substantial savings in the cost of transportation service.

Before proceeding, it is appropriate to first define what is commonly understood as *dedicated service* and *non-dedicated service*. These definitions are provided below.

- **Dedicated Service** -- This is an operation where the vehicles are dedicated to exclusively the transportation of customers of a transportation program (or coordinated set of programs) during a specified period of time. The trips scheduled or dispatched to dedicated paratransit vehicles are typically controlled by one entity – either the

responsible organization, its call center or broker contractor, or its operations contractor (for that system or a specific service area).

- **Non-Dedicated Service** -- This is an operation where the vehicles used to provide paratransit service do not exclusively provide transportation for the customers of a particular transportation program (or coordinated set of programs); hence, these vehicles are also used to transport other passengers. The most common example is a taxicab operation that can be called upon to serve a particular trip or a set of trips from a transportation program, but is otherwise free to serve general public trips (dispatched from the base office or flagged from the street) or trips from another contract.

One of the products of the TCRP B-30 project is a spreadsheet-based computer model that is intended to assist in answering a number of questions regarding the use of non-dedicated vehicles in a paratransit service delivery system, such as:

1. Is it cost-effective to use non-dedicated vehicles as part of the service delivery system?

2. What roles are most appropriate for Non-Dedicated Vehicles?
   - Peak service augmentation to level out the dedicated vehicle run structure
   - Handling longer trips that would otherwise reduce the productivity of dedicated vehicle operations
   - Providing service during evenings and other low demand periods

3. Given the dedicated vehicle cost and operating environment, and estimates of the cost and availability of Non-Dedicated Vehicle service, a key question is the optimal split of trips assigned to Dedicated and Non-Dedicated Vehicles. In other words, what "service mix" results in minimizing the overall cost per trip?

Service Delivery Function Strategies

Service delivery function strategies represent all functional areas where collaboration among agencies can achieve improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

This strategy includes all of the functional areas associated with transportation service delivery – administration, operations and maintenance. For the most part, coordination of operations will be an integral part of the earlier strategies including new paratransit scheduling software and trip sharing – vehicle sharing. Collaboration among agencies in the areas of administration and maintenance are encouraged to create cost-efficiencies by sharing services, purchasing power and administrative resources. Two of the areas are:
- Joint Purchasing
- Sharing Resources

Joint purchasing

Joint purchasing focuses on coordinating functions commonly undertaken by multiple organizations as a way to achieve greater cost efficiency and eliminate redundant activities. Community transportation operators, for example, could consolidate vehicle maintenance, purchase of insurance, driver training, and substance abuse testing. Through group-purchasing of common products or services, participating entities may increase purchasing power, and receive preferential service and prices.

Sharing resources

Sharing resources involves the shared purchase and/or use of resources such as vehicles and facilities; support services such as software, driver training, drug testing, program management; and policies, procedures, and implementation plans.

Volunteer Driver and Escort Program Strategies

Since operating costs associated with the driver of a vehicle can represent up to 70% or so of the total operating costs of transportation services, it is important to find low-cost services that can make a difference. Volunteer driver programs offer the opportunity to significantly reduce these costs. Volunteer driver programs typically provide mileage reimbursement to individuals who operate their own vehicles when transporting individuals to places they need to reach. Medical appointments are typically one of the priority trip purposes. Further, many times volunteer services focus on the travel needs of older persons more than other target populations. The benefit is that labor and capital costs are reduced.

Volunteer escort programs have volunteers accompanying riders to/from their destination on transit or paratransit service. Where escorts are helpful for older persons or persons with disabilities who are traveling, again, volunteer escorts can meet the need and save considerable costs.

Volunteer driver programs can be implemented at a variety of scales. While a countywide or regional program has significant benefits, such programs are also valuable when implemented by a single organization such as a church or agency or by a community.

Taxi Subsidy Program Strategies

Taxi subsidy programs typically involve an arrangement between a sponsoring organization (or its agent) and a participating taxi company or companies. These programs accept and accommodate requests from sponsored customers, clients, or residents and/or accept vouchers provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip.

Most taxi subsidy programs focus on seniors and/or persons with disabilities residing within the sponsoring municipality (or agency service area), but some are available to general public residents as well. Human service agencies that employ this strategy generally limited taxi subsidies to agency clientele or program participants.

Private Vehicle Strategies

With the reform of public assistance programs for low income families in the late 1990s, attention has been focused on the importance of reliable transportation so that low income individuals may get to job and other training programs and get to and from work reliably. In fact, for low income persons, ownership and operation of a private motor vehicle is, at best, very difficult and, at worst, not an option under normal circumstances. Recognizing the value of personal mobility and the reality that available transportation services are not always responsive to mobility needs, a number and variety of private vehicle programs have developed.

Private vehicle programs may involve elements of the following:
- Purchase of a vehicle
- One-time repairs on major mechanical components of a vehicle
- Maintenance programs to maintain vehicle reliability
- Loans for the purchase of a vehicle and associated training in family finances

VII
EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

Evaluation - First Order Strategies

Strategies for Organizing For Mobility Management

There are three basic organizational strategies to be considered for taking the lead on mobility management in the region:

- Public Transit Agency, such as WRTA or SVSS
- Existing Human Service or Umbrella Agency
- New Non-Profit Transportation Agency/Broker

The expected benefits associated with the selection of WRTA in Mahoning County or SVSS-MCCT in Mercer County to take responsibility for mobility management stems from the observation that WRTA and SVSS-MCCT are the agencies in each county whose mission is meeting mobility needs in their respective counties. They have expertise in providing transportation services and they have experience in working with many of the human service agencies that need transportation for their clients.

The potential obstacles to selection of a transit agency to lead the mobility management effort include the generally higher cost structure for any operation that is centered in the agency and the possibility of resistance to broadening the overall mission of the agency to start handling such activities as recruiting volunteers or making arrangements for vehicle sharing between two external agencies.

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The shift to mobility management will require a concerted effort on the part of all participating agencies because the management of each agency will have to be involved in the detailed discussions leading to agreement on a lead agency and the structure of the mobility manager. It is anticipated that the implementation time frame will need to seek its pace as agencies and stakeholders organize and begin work.

If the decision is made to form a new non-profit agency to become the mobility manager, the time and effort can be expected to be more extensive, possibly more than one year.

The process leading to the selection and organization of the mobility manager will not require significant funding, but it will involve an extensive commitment of time from each participating agency. The actual costs of implementation will be based on the specific coordination activities that are selected for the mobility manager. These costs and the time associated with each coordination activity are presented as part of the discussion of strategies in the following sections.

Strategies for Centralized Communication
One Number Access - Information – Trip Scheduling

There are two basic strategies in this area which we have identified as low tech (and low cost) vs. high tech. An example of a low tech strategy is a Transportation Resource Directory. This is document which is available on the web and in hard copy format containing readily accessible and usable information on the transportation services that are available to the target populations. The high tech approach combines one number access and the extensive use of technology in transportation operations and administration.

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The creation of a Transportation Resource Directory is a low cost strategy that can be completed within a relatively short time frame of 3 to 6 months. The implementation of a comprehensive Call Center which can provide usable transportation information as well as handling all trip reservations and scheduling functions for a coordinated system is a medium to high cost strategy that will take from one to two years to become fully operational.

Evaluation - Second Order Strategies

Technology Development Strategies

Paratransit operations are frequently called upon to increase service productivity and improve cost efficiency and reinvest "savings" into expanded service. Two operations concepts that focus on improving productivity and cost efficiency but that have not been widely adopted by paratransit operators include: (1) crafting a dedicated vehicle run structure that better matches the temporal demand profile; and (2) assigning to non-dedicated vehicles (e.g., taxis) trips that otherwise negatively affect the productivity of the dedicated fleet.

These concepts are not standard practice among paratransit operators because no reliable tools are available. A new software application was specifically designed to help with these two needs. The software is available, along with a user manual, on the TRB website.

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
• Improve service delivery and increase service productivity	• New tool that needs more testing
• Examine different operating scenarios	• Achieve internal buy-in from planning and operations staff
• Reduce paratransit service costs	• Requires staff resources to learn model and collect and format data to operate it

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The procurement of new paratransit scheduling software that helps to support coordination is a process that typically requires between one and two years for full implementation. This time includes the development of the hardware and software specifications, the time to select a vendor and the time for installation and testing of the new system. This is a medium to high cost strategy.

The use of the new tools to improve productivity and reduce trip costs is a low cost strategy that can usually be implemented within 12 months.

Trip sharing – Vehicle Sharing Strategies

Vehicle sharing or the joint use of vehicles can affect total fleet requirements. Joint use of vehicles should be considered separately from the concept of trip sharing where two or more agencies agree that their customers can ride on any of their vehicles based on scheduling and routing efficiency.

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
• A reduction in fleet size that will allow for reduced overhead costs due to reduced insurance and registration costs.	• Agency policies and requirements
	• Administrative costs to lead agency may be prohibitive
• Provide an increase in the size of the spare fleet which can reduce future vehicle capital funding requirements.	
• Provide extra vehicle capacity that can be used to increase the efficiency (productivity) of operations	

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The implementation of trip sharing or vehicle sharing is a low cost – short time frame activity once the basic information is in place to evaluate the feasibility of either strategy. Such strategies can be implemented over a wide scale of operations, from the occasional trip that would be missed or late to trip making during selected periods of time on certain days of the week.

Use of Non-Dedicated Vehicles Strategies

Paratransit operations are frequently called upon to increase service productivity and improve cost efficiency and reinvest "savings" into expanded service. Two operations concepts that focus on improving productivity and cost efficiency but that have not been widely adopted by paratransit operators include: (1) crafting a dedicated vehicle run structure that better matches the temporal demand profile; and (2) assigning to non-dedicated vehicles (e.g., taxis) trips that otherwise negatively affect the productivity of the dedicated fleet.

These concepts are not standard practice among paratransit operators because no reliable tools are available. A new software application was specifically designed to help with these two needs. The software is available, along with a user manual, on the Transportation Research Board website, www.trb.org.

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
• Improve service delivery and increase service productivity.	• New tool that needs more testing
• Examine different operating scenarios	• Achieve internal buy-in from planning and operations staff
• Reduce paratransit service costs.	• Requires staff resources to learn model and collect/format data to run the model

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The implementation of the Non-Dedicated Vehicle Model is a short time frame and low cost strategy. The actual time to change the operating strategy to capture any potential cost savings will depend upon the availability of taxi companies that can meet the requirements and are willing to participate.

Service Delivery Function Strategies

Joint Purchasing

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
• Agency level cost savings	• Requires lead agency to champion
• More consistent operating procedures	• Administrative costs to lead agency may be prohibitive
• Shares administrative functions rather than resources or services, therefore, may be more easily implemented	• Some agencies may have entrenched procurement/purchasing requirements
• Opportunity to build and develop trust across agencies	• Joint purchase of some items may require large initial expenditure

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

Joint purchasing arrangements can take anywhere from six months to two years to implement depending on the specific items being purchased. The joint purchase of fuel or other supplies can be accomplished fairly quickly, while joint purchase of vehicles or insurance can be expected to take much longer. The process for setting up joint purchase arrangements is typically low cost.

Shared Resources

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
• Lower per trip costs	• Requires lead agency to champion
• Increased vehicle productivity	• Turf issues associated with sharing vehicles due to high costs of purchasing, operating and maintaining vehicles
• Improved service quality	• Reluctance to share agency funded vehicles
	• Requires quality control, monitoring and cost allocation systems

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The implementation of any shared resource strategies, such as vehicle sharing is a low cost – short time frame activity once the basic information is in place to evaluate the feasibility of sharing a specific resource.

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Volunteer Driver and Escort Program Strategies

Expected Benefits

- Increase schedule flexibility and reduce costs

- Develop program advocates in community

- Volunteers can provide physical and emotional support to riders

Potential Obstacles

- Recruiting and retaining volunteers can be challenging and requires on-going effort/attention

- Some shifts are hard to cover with volunteers

- Fuel costs and vehicle insurance can prohibit use of volunteers

- Insurance coverage may limit participation for some

- Most volunteer drivers are limited to ambulatory passengers

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The implementation of volunteer driver and escort programs is a low cost and the implementation time frame can be short (up to 12 months) strategy. Most of the time and effort focuses on the recruitment, training and retention of the volunteer drivers.

Taxi Subsidy Program Strategies

Expected Benefits

- Provide same-day service

- Effective for unanticipated travel and evening and weekend hours

- Effective for trips outside of service area

- Offer way to set/control subsidy per trip

- Effective in low-density areas

Potential Obstacles

- Requires good communication among all parties

- Need to establish fraud-protection mechanisms

- Dearth of taxi companies in less urban areas within the region

- Dearth of accessible taxicabs

Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

Assuming the availability of competent and interested taxi operators, the establishment of a taxi subsidy program can be accomplished within 12 months. Taxi subsidy programs are typically a low cost strategy.

Private Vehicle Strategies

Expected Benefits

- Provide reliable transportation for low income persons to get to job training and work opportunities

- Provide for personal mobility

- Provides low-income families with dependable transportation at affordable terms

- Car donor receives higher **'fair market' value for tax purposes**.

- Effective in low-density areas

Potential Obstacles

- Requires careful screening of applicants

- Need to establish mechanisms for car inspections and quality control

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Implementation Time and Cost Considerations

The establishment of a private vehicle program can be accomplished within 12 months at a relatively low cost.

VIII
COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN – RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES, ACTIONS AND PRIORITIES

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Recommended First Order Strategies

First Order Strategies are critical to the long-term strength and sustainability of high-quality, customer-responsive mobility management and the coordination of transportation services.

- **Move the Focus of Transportation Service Delivery to Mobility Management**

- **Leadership – Implementation - Organizational Structure**

- **Centralized Communication - Information – Trip Scheduling – One Number Access**

- **Technology Development**

Recommended Second Order Strategies

Second Order Strategies are not meant to be all-inclusive. New strategies may emerge and should be embraced for their potential to strengthen and expand mobility management, transportation coordination and the improved delivery of quality transportation services to seniors, individuals with disabilities, persons in families with low income and veterans.

- **Trip sharing – Vehicle Sharing**

- **Maximizing Value of Non-Dedicated Vehicles**

- **Service Delivery Functions – Administration – Operations – Maintenance – Trip Scheduling and Vehicle dispatching**

- **Volunteer Driver and Escort Programs**

- **Taxi Fare Subsidy Programs**

- **Private Vehicle Programs**

- **Capital Development Programs**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In summary form, the transportation coordination recommendations for action are:

- Recommended Action #1 - *CREATE MOBILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN MAHONING AND MERCER COUNTIES* That Shift The Central Focus Of Transportation Services From Operations To Meeting Customer Needs

- Recommended Action #2 – *ORGANIZE AND SUSTAIN PERMANENT MOBILITY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS* That Achieve Full Implementation Of Mobility Management And Transportation Coordination Capability And Potential

- Recommended Action #3 – *CENTRALIZE INFORMATION TO PROVIDE A SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS* For People With Mobility Needs To Access Transportation Services

- Recommended Action #4 - *INVEST IN TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES* To Achieve Maximum Cost-Effectiveness Of Mobility Management Services AND Customer Information Services

- Recommended Action #5 - *IMPROVE SPECIFIC SEGMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ORGANIZATION, OPERATION AND DELIVERY* In A Timely Manner as Funding is Available and Mobility Management Partners are Able to put Agreements in Place

- Recommended Action #6 – *MAINTAIN AND EXPAND THE LEVEL AND COVERAGE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTAITON SERVICES* To Ensure A Strong Network of Public Transportation Services That forms the Base Upon Which Coordinated Transportation Services are Built

- Recommended Action #7 – *ENSURE THAT THE CONTINUITY OF THE EXISTING SECTION 5310 ENHANCED MOBILITY FOR SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM PROJECTS IS MAINTAINED* so that services and capital needs, consistent with the coordination plan, are not interrupted, especially where coordinated service delivery is already in place and the continuation of existing projects to reduce and prevent gaps in service

- Recommended Action #8 – *MONITOR PROGRESS AND PERSEVERE IN THE FACE OF OBSTACLES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS* To Give Mobility Management And Transportation Coordination Full Opportunity To Develop And Transform Community Transportation Services In Mahoning and Mercer Counties

RECOMMENDED FIRST ORDER STRATEGIES

The following First Order Strategies are critical to the long-term strength and sustainability of high-quality, customer-responsive mobility management and transportation coordination.

- **Move the Focus of Transportation Service Delivery to Mobility Management**

  - ✓ Mahoning and Mercer Counties should shift the focus of transportation services from operating services to meeting customer needs.
  - ✓ The culture and approach to transportation service delivery needs to change, from single agency to collaborative multi-agency delivery.
  - ✓ WRTA and SVSS-MCCT, together with the Eastgate COG in Ohio and Mercer County COG and RPC in Pennsylvania should be key leaders in this movement; in fact, they should be the driving forces.
  - ✓ The community will look, especially, to the public transportation systems for leadership, direction, change and transformation of transportation services delivery.

- **Leadership – Implementation - Organizational Structure**

  - ✓ The community needs leadership – from WRTA, SVSS-MCCT, Eastgate COG, Mercer COG and RPC and the key human service agencies in each county
  - ✓ Organizing for implementation is crucial. The options are:
    - WRTA and SVSS-MCCT as the centralized mobility managers
    - An existing human services agency or umbrella agency
    - A new not-for-profit agency organized and managed collaboratively as a result of inter-agency agreements and administered by WRTA or other key agency.
  - ✓ The public transportation systems, especially WRTA in Mahoning County Ohio and SVSS-MCCT in Mercer County are the agencies whose missions are meeting the mobility needs of the general public and the target populations of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in low income families.

- **Centralized Communication - Information – Trip Scheduling – One Number Access**

  - ✓ Getting a ride to meet a travel need should be the same for everyone, a phone call or a mouse click away.

- ✓ Information and scheduling should be centralized either with an existing service, such as 211 or with a newly developed service, such as a capability developed by WRTA and in Ohio and SVSS-MCCT in Pennsylvania, looking to work collaboratively across state lines.
- ✓ Anyone should be able to make one contact (phone or computer) and know-how and with whom they can make a trip, at what cost, and have the trip scheduled and confirmed before the contact is completed.

- **Technology Development**
  - ✓ Take maximum advantage of technology to move mobility management forward

RECOMMENDED SECOND ORDER STRATEGIES

Second Order Strategies are not meant to be all-inclusive. Other new strategies may emerge and should be embraced for their potential to strengthen and expand mobility management, transportation coordination and the improved delivery of quality transportation services to older persons, persons with disabilities and persons in families with low income.

- **Trip sharing – Vehicle Sharing**
  - ✓ Make the best use of collaborative multi-agency transportation capabilities in the region, to increase trip-making, save money and reduce duplication

- **Maximizing Value of Non-Dedicated Vehicles**
  - ✓ Collaboration means finding ways that vehicles in service to a specific client group only can be used for other clients as well. Private sector resources such as taxi services can fill key gaps in services.

- **Service Delivery Functions – Administration – Operations – Maintenance – Trip Scheduling and Vehicle dispatching**
  - ✓ These are all functional areas where collaboration among agencies can achieve improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Volunteer Driver and Escort Programs**
  - ✓ It is important to find low-cost services that can make a difference.

- **Taxi Fare Subsidy Programs**
  - ✓ Taxi service typically operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day. A trip can be provided to someone in need simply by subsidizing all or part of the fare.

- **Private Vehicle Programs**
  - ✓ Private vehicle programs may fill voids in transportation service coverage where transportation services would not be cost effective. Further, these programs should be of such a nature that all elements of vehicle ownership, operation and maintenance are

encompassed. Uber, Lyft and similar personal and carpool transportation services offer opportunities to expand transportation options in new and creative ways.

Recommended Action #1 - *CREATE A REGIONAL MOBILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM* That Shifts the Central Focus Of Transportation Services From Operations To Meeting Customer Needs

The focus of meeting the mobility needs of people in the Mahoning-Trumbull-Mercer County region should shift from a system of decentralized transportation service providers to a centralized mobility management system of collaborating agencies focused on meeting the mobility needs of people in the region.

The mobility needs of people in the region should be met by a centralized mobility management system that focuses on the needs of customers first rather than the operation of individual transportation service providers.

- The Mahoning and Mercer Counties region should shift the focus of transportation services from operating services to meeting customer needs.

- The culture and approach to transportation service delivery needs to change, from single agency to collaborative multi-agency delivery

- WRTA should be the key leaders in this movement in Mahoning County in Ohio; given its long history of public transportation services and its relative size and scale, WRTA should be the driving force and lead agency

- SVSS-MCCT should be the driving force and lead agency in Mercer County.

- The region and its communities will look to the public transportation systems for leadership, direction and change.

Recommended Action #2 – *ORGANIZE AND SUSTAIN A PERMANENT MOBILITY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION* That Achieves Full Implementation Of Mobility Management And Transportation Coordination Capability And Potential

The mobility management organization should focus on the following functional activities:

- Developing the mobility management agency around centralized trip planning and brokering of transportation services among transportation providers

- Centralizing Information on transportation services so that access to service is achieved with one contact, whether it be telephone, computer or other means

- Coordinating administrative and operational transportation functions

- Consolidating the delivery of transportation services selectively so that agencies currently operating transportation services have the opportunity to transfer operating responsibility to others, if they wish

- Adding new services to meet the unmet needs of target populations, fill gaps in services and reduce overlaps in service

WRTA should be the lead agency in Ohio and SVSS should be the lead agency in Pennsylvania, responsible for coordinating transportation services and moving service delivery to mobility management. WRTA and SVSS-MCCT should work closely with the Trumbull County Transit Board to ensure that mobility management and transportation coordination can be implemented across county boundaries. Full partnership with other strategic planning and service delivery partners in the region is essential.

Development of the leadership structure and organization will require incremental actions, time and resources to support its development. The incremental development, organizationally, should include

- Create a Transportation Coordination Leadership Council of agencies with significant investments in transportation.

- Create Transportation Advisory Councils of agencies with a stake and interest in moving from transportation service delivery to mobility management

- Membership on the Transportation Coordination Leadership Council should be invited and require a Memorandum of Understanding among the members

- Membership on the Transportation Coordination Advisory Council should be open and require a Memorandum of Understanding for participation

- Create of a new formal organization charged with responsibility of managing and coordinating the delivery of transportation services.

- The transition to mobility management should occur incrementally
    - ✓ To provide the central point of access to services, broker the trips among participating transportation providers and provide a trip reservation to the customer

- ✓ To selectively consolidate the delivery of transportation services among fewer transportation providers, taking advantage of the desire of some agencies to get out of the business of transportation
- ✓ To sustain a mobility management agency that integrates the diverse activities associated with the cost-effective and cost-efficient delivery of coordinated transportation services

Recommended Action #3 – *CENTRALIZE INFORMATION TO PROVIDE A SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS* For People With Mobility Needs To Access Transportation Services In The Region

This system should centralize information on available transportation services and put people with needs in direct contact with the transportation provider(s) best able to meet a specific mobility need.

The system should integrate information and referral, trip reservations and trip scheduling so that when a person is done, they have their ride arranged.

- WRTA and SVSS-MCCT should work collaboratively with information and referral services that exist in Mahoning and Mercer Counties, working toward the integration of information and referral functions with trip reservations and scheduling among multiple agencies and transportation providers.

Recommended Action #4 - *INVEST IN TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES* To Achieve Maximum Cost-Effectiveness Of Mobility Management Services

Technology development should focus on improving paratransit service scheduling and service delivery, including state-of-the-art trip reservation and scheduling systems. Further, technology development should include streamlining and using technology for online trip planning for customer access to fixed route bus schedule information. Agencies and communities should be encouraged to include links to centralized information and trip scheduling.

- Automatic vehicle location
- Computer-aided dispatch
- Mobile data terminals and mobile data computers
- Coordination and integration of services
- Web-based fixed route trip planning

Technology development should be closely coordinated with existing information and referral capabilities in Mahoning and Mercer Counties, so that there would be a seamless integration,

migration and expansion of information and referral to a robust one-stop center for access to multi-agency delivery of transportation services. Again, existing information and referrals services have the history, experience and knowledge of broad customer-based information systems. They should be strategic partners.

Recommended Action #5 - *IMPROVE SPECIFIC SEGMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ORGANIZATION, OPERATION AND DELIVERY* In A Timely Manner as Funding is Available and Mobility Management Partners are Able to put Agreements in Place

Specific improvements should include:
- Cooperative trip sharing across agencies providing transportation services
- Sharing of vehicle and service resources across agency programs
- Joint purchasing agreements for vehicles, fuel and other materials and supplies
- Training programs for customer service, vehicle operations and safety, administration of drug and alcohol programs
- Introduction of selected new services
- Consolidation of administrative and operational functions as agencies decide to purchase rather than operate transportation services
- Travel and mobility training for customers with disabilities who may safely use fixed route transportation services
- Mobility planning program, especially for older persons

Stakeholders should focus attention on multi-agency projects that strengthen and expand mobility management.

Recommended Action #6 – *MAINTAIN AND EXPAND THE LEVEL AND COVERAGE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES* To Ensure That the Region Has a Strong Network of Public Transportation Services That forms the Base Upon Which Coordinated Transportation Services are Built

- Maintain and increase the coverage of fixed route service in the region
- Maintain and increase demand-response service as the number of older persons and persons with disabilities continues to increase as the population continues to age
- Maintain a focus on the need for sufficient local funding of WRTA and SVSS public transportation services, particularly with the lack of sufficient state funding

Recommended Action #7 – *ENSURE THAT THE CONTINUITY OF EXISTING SECTION 5310 ELDERLY AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS PROGRAM PROJECTS ARE MAINTAINED AND OPPORTUNITIES WHICH ADVANCE COORDINATION ARE ADVANCED* so that services and capital needs, consistent with the coordination plan, are not interrupted, especially where coordinated service delivery is already in place; but new initiatives are pursued.

Section 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities –

- High priority should be given to future projects that replace capital equipment maintain and improve services supported with 5310 vehicles that fulfill unmet needs and fill gaps in transportation services.

- High priority should be given to mobility management initiatives, including centralized information and referral and travel training for enhanced mobility

- High priority should be given to existing programs that serve people with disabilities beyond ADA minimum requirements where such services meet additional unmet needs.

- High priority should be given to capital projects that improve the physical environment that people with disabilities must navigate to effectively use fixed route bus services

Recommended Action #8 – *MONITOR PROGRESS AND PERSEVERE IN THE FACE OF OBSTACLES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS* To Give Mobility Management And Transportation Coordination Full Opportunity To Develop And Transform Community Transportation Services In The Mahoning and Mercer Counties

- Introducing mobility management and transportation coordination in a broad, regional manner will have its ups and downs, fits and starts and rough spots. Be prepared to respond proactively with an eye toward the long-term benefit of community transportation services

- For success long-term, the shorter-term obstacles, problems and unexpected setbacks should be accepted as the price of longer-term success.

- Progress and service delivery need to be monitored so that success and failure can be measured and evaluated and corrective actions can be taken. Clear measureable evaluation criteria needs to be developed across public transportation and human services transportation programs.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

Key Initiatives and Direction for Mahoning County Transportation Coordination

Priority Transportation Coordination Initiatives

- Embrace broad structure of original plan recommendations
  - ✓ What still fits
  - ✓ What needs to be left behind
- Focus on mobility management – adopt an integrated structure
- Implementation of VT/CLI One call/One click Mobility management center – concept plan
- Organize a stakeholder council and meet on a regular basis
  - ✓ Key partnerships – Eastgate Regional COG and Help Hotline 211
  - ✓ Stakeholder Council
  - ✓ Start monthly, move to bi-monthly, then to quarterly meetings
- Broaden and deepen customer service
  - ✓ New customer-responsive website, including smartphone friendly
  - ✓ Avail Technologies My Avail customer service
  - ✓ Two-way integration of WRTA and Help Hotline 211
  - ✓ Travel training
- Technology development for better customer service – WRTA has initiated implementation of its integrated CAD/AVL – Customer Service System
- Maximize use of WRTA fixed route services
- Optimize use and efficiency of Special Service Transit (SST) and EasyGo door-to-door services
- Increasing local financial resources for transportation services
  - ✓ For appropriate service improvements
  - ✓ For stakeholder subsidy of services
  - ✓ Fare payment subsidies for those in need
- Project implementation for FTA Section 5310 Program – capital equipment, mobility management and travel training

Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Buy in for One-call/One click mobility management
- My Avail and travel training for use of fixed route service – customers and agencies
- Stakeholder outreach and education for WRTA fixed route service
- Customer training for effective use of SST and EasyGo
- Effective coordination of public transportation services between WRTA in Mahoning County and TCTB in Trumbull County

WRTA Mobility Management Transportation Service Delivery

Central to moving forward is implementation of WRTA's One-Call/One-Click Mobility Management Transportation Center. The concept plan is shown in figure 17. WRTA made a commitment to implement a One-Call/One-Click Mobility Management Transportation Center when it received funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Veterans Transportation/Community Living Initiative grant. The grant award has provided funding for elements of WRTA's Computer Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) project that is presently underway.

Anticipated to be completed late in Calendar Year 2017, this project will provide significant improvements in WRTA's capabilities to manage its daily fixed route and door-to-door transportation services. WRTA will be able to use this fixed-route technology to ensure on-time operation of service. WRTA will also be able to manage the assignment of buses operating on its Special Service Transit (SST) and EasyGo door-to-door transportation service in real-time, re-assigning buses in real-time to improve on-time pick-up and drop-off of customers.

Also, and equally significant, WRTA will be able to offer its customers real-time information on fixed route service. This will include the following:
- Location of buses on specific routes
- Estimated arrival and departure times of buses at specific bus stops
- Trip planning that offers real-time origin-destination information for specific trips on specific routes

This information will be available on WRTA's web site and via smartphones, so that customers can complete trip planning at a desktop computer or anywhere on a smartphone.

Customers of WRTA's Special Service Transit (SST) and EasyGo door-to-door transportation services will be able to manage their trips online or via WRTA's telephone system. They will be able to schedule, change and cancel trips. Operationally, WRTA will have the capability to provide customers with reminder telephone calls or text messages the day before a scheduled trip and when arrival of a bus for a pick-up is imminent.

As Figure 17 shows, key partners in implementation of the One-Call/One-Click Mobility Management Transportation Center are:
- Western Reserve Transit Authority as the mobility manager
- Help Hotline 211, the regional telephone and database information source for human services available to people in Mahoning County. This telephone/database system includes information on available transportation services.

- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, the regional agency responsible for transportation planning and project programming for state and federal funding that WRTA accesses for its transportation services.
- Stakeholder Council – key agencies and stakeholders active in completion of the updated transportation coordination plan

As Figure 22 shows, the key mission will be to connect people with unmet travel needs to providers of transportation services that are available.

Figure 22

Conceptual Organization Chart
Mobility Management Transportation Service Delivery
In Mahoning County
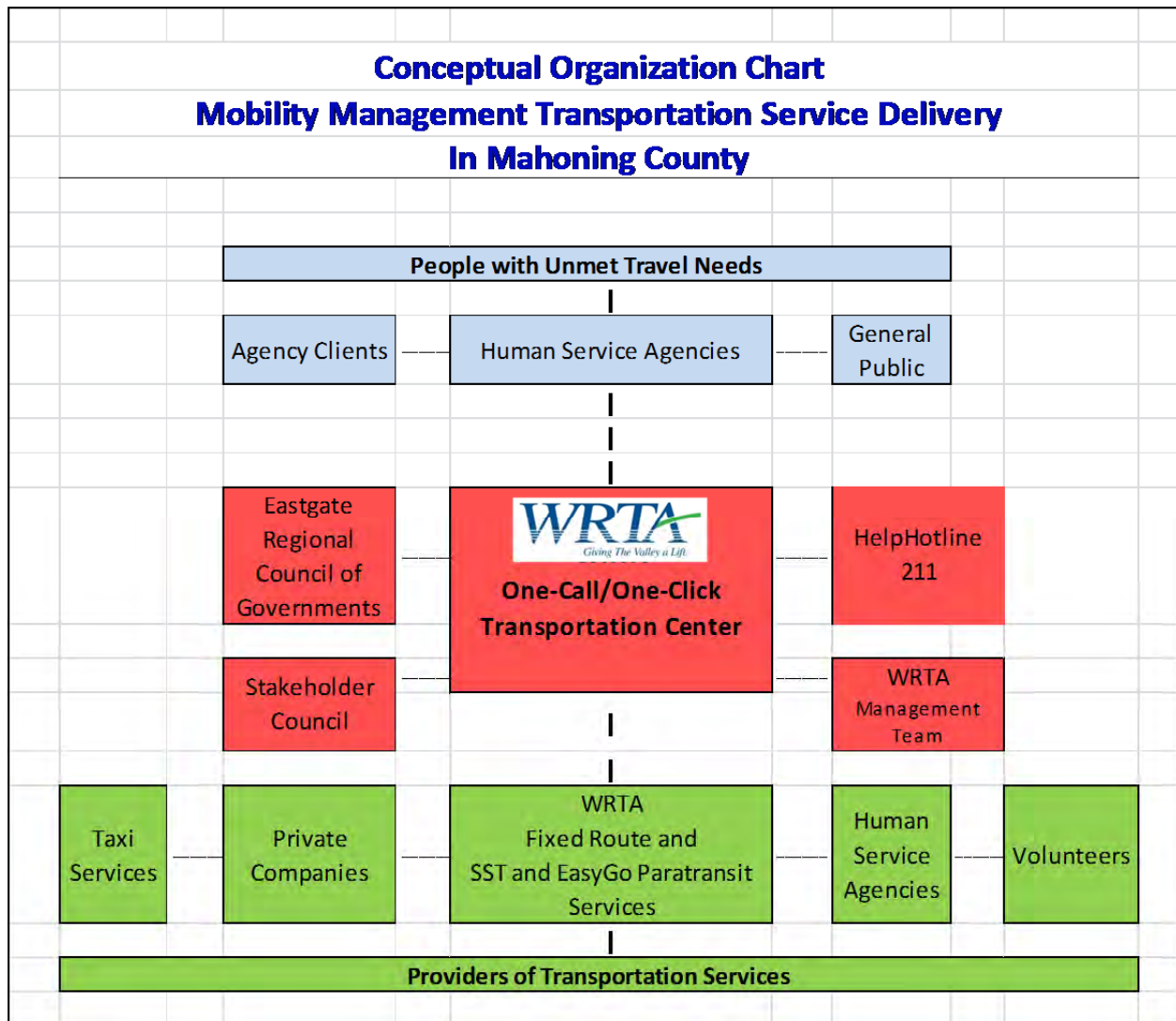
Key Initiatives and Direction for Mercer County Transportation Coordination

Priority Transportation Coordination Initiatives

- Embrace broad structure of original plan recommendations
    - ✓ What still fits
    - ✓ What needs to be left behind
- Focus on mobility management – adopt an integrated structure
- Form a stakeholder council and meet on a regular basis
    - ✓ Key partnership – Mercer County COG and 211
    - ✓ Start monthly, move to bi-monthly, then to quarterly
- Broaden and deepen customer service
    - ✓ New customer-responsive website, including smartphone friendly
    - ✓ Two-way integration of Mercer COG and 211 service
- Technology development for better customer service
- Maximize use of Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS)
- Optimize use and efficiency of Mercer County Community Transit (MCCT)
- Increasing local financial resources for transportation services
    - ✓ For SVSS and MCCT
    - ✓ For stakeholder subsidy of services
    - ✓ Fare payment subsidies for those in need

Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Travel training for use of SVSS
- Stakeholder outreach and education for SVSS and MCCT
- Customer training for use of MCCT

Mobility Management in Mercer County

Key to implementing effective mobility management in Mercer County will be the organization and implementation of a standing Stakeholder Council. This Council will form the initial core group that will meet to define and move mobility management forward. Key partners will be:

- Mercer County Regional Council of Government
    - ✓ Shenango Valley Shuttle Service
    - ✓ Mercer County Community Transit
- Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
- Key agencies and stakeholders active in completion of the updated transportation coordination plan