Stark County Human Services/ Public Transit Coordinated Transportation Plan 2018 Update

Prepared for the Stark Area Regional Transportation Authority

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Prepared by:
RLS & Associates, Inc.

3131 South Dixie Hwy. Suite 545
Dayton, OH 45439
937.299.5007
www.rlsandassoc.com

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Coordinated Human Service-Public Transportation Plan Update

STARK AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (SARTA)

PREPARED BY RLS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

This coordination plan serves to update the Stark County Human Services/Public Transit Coordinated Transportation Plan—developed in 2007 and updated in 2014—to meet the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation authorization requirements for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 grant programs. Periodic updates of the coordinated plan are recommended to ensure that any changes in local demographics, planning activities, new potential projects for any of the FTA programs, or other changes in the study area are reflected in the plan and to ensure the continuation of FTA funding for eligible projects. Since the plan's 2007 development and 2014 updates however, there have been two Federal transportation re-authorizations: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

A recipient of FTA program funds shall certify that the Section 5310-funded projects were derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan; and the plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers, human service agencies, and participation by the public including seniors and individuals with disabilities. This Coordinated Plan Update satisfies the FTA requirements.

Funding for the Coordinated Plan Update was provided by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) and involved active participation from local agencies and organizations that provide and/or utilize transportation to the general public, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

FAST Act includes changes to two FTA funding programs, which are relevant to this plan update:

- The FTA Section 5316, Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, was incorporated into FTA Sections 5311 and 5307.
- The FTA Section 5317, New Freedom Program, was incorporated into Section 5310.

The program most significantly impacted by this plan update is the Section 5310 Program because participation in a locally developed Coordinated Plan is one of the eligibility requirements for Section 5310 Program funding. The Section 5310 Program provides formula funding to recipients for the purpose of assisting public, private and nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when the public transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting those needs. The FTA apportions Section 5310 Program funds to urbanized areas annually. As the designated recipient of these funds, SARTA and Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) administer the program and awards funds to organizations for eligible projects through a competitive grant application process. The grants require matching funds, which may be derived from any combination of non-U.S. Department of

Transportation Federal, state, or local resources. Passenger fare revenue is not eligible as local match.

Previous Coordinated Transportation Plans

Since 2007, when the Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan requirement was first established by law, SARTA and SCATS have been working toward the goals set forth by the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The following paragraphs describe the various transportation planning efforts in that have focused on improving mobility and addressing unmet transportation needs throughout Stark County.

Stark County Coordinated Transportation Plan, 2007

The original Stark County Coordinated Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan), adopted in 2007, was developed in order to comply with SAFETEA-LU, which authorized the new Federal transportation grant programs known as Section 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and Section 5317 – New Freedom. During 2007, SARTA and the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) formed a committee to document the County's transportation needs and gaps in service and to develop a grant application and project prioritization process for Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 funds. The 2007 Coordinated Plan identified the following transportation needs in Stark County:

- Emergency/" right now" transportation
- Affordable transportation
- Door-to-door
- Convenient times
- 7-days a week/ 24-hours a day
- Vehicle availability
- Family coverage for multiple destinations
- Frequency of service
- Rural area coverages
- Wheelchair vehicles for disabled – personal vehicles
- Single individuals service in areas where public transit unavailable
- Vehicle aids
- More flexibility
- Coordination of available transportation
- Out-of-county services

The committee established six priorities as transportation coordination goals for Stark County. These priorities are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Priorities Listed in 2007 Coordinated Plan	
Priorities	**Description**
One Call, One Ride	A unified source for individuals to call to be directed to the transportation provider(s) for which they are eligible
Cost-effective out-of-county transportation	A more customer-friendly mode of transportation for getting to out-of-county destinations such as medical appointments in Cleveland, which require customers to transfer between three separate providers; private transportation for such trips is cost-prohibitive
Cost-effective transportation in remote areas	Service for individuals living in areas of Stark County not served by public transportation
Cost-effective family transportation	Service that meets the needs of families, especially those with small children, whose trip needs involve multiple destinations and are difficult to accommodate with existing public transportation options
Door-to-door transportation	Services which provide physical assistance to customers with disabilities who need service beyond that provided by curb-to-curb paratransit
Emergency/quick-response transportation	Service that accommodates the needs of the elderly and people with physical disabilities when same-day service is required (for example, trips due to altered appointments, sudden illnesses and other urgent needs)

Stark County Coordinated Transportation Plan Update, 2014

The 2007 Coordinated Plan was updated in 2014. The update included a needs assessment and prioritized list of goals and strategies, as well as documentation of implementation of the 2007 Plan goals over the prior seven years. The 2014 update described SARTA's One-Call/One-Click Pilot Program shared dispatching system using a Federal Transit Administration's Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant award. This project consisted of improvements to SARTA's demand-response paratransit service, Proline; the opening of Proline to veterans; technology upgrades to improve the trip reservation process, including web-based trip reservations and cancellations; and, interactive voice response telephone alerts.

Additionally, the 2014 Update noted that five FTA-funded JARC and New Freedom projects had been implemented. These included the *Transporting Stark County Back to Work* program, which provided job seekers with transportation for reaching employment; the *Transportation to Enable Successful Re-entry* program, which assisted formerly incarcerated individuals with their transportation needs; the *Ways to Work Loan* program, which supported low-income families in repairing or purchasing vehicles; a dialysis and medical appointment transportation service for seniors and people with disabilities; and a program to transport veterans to medical appointments. The 2014 update noted that the Federal funding programs for all the above projects were eliminated after Federal Fiscal Year 2012, with some funds merging into other FTA grant programs under MAP-21.
The 2014 update assessed community transportation needs and gaps in service through a survey of transportation providers and two workshops. These efforts demonstrated that seniors, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and veterans were the populations with the most critical,

unmet transportation needs. The most common unmet need listed for seniors and individuals with disabilities was access to medical appointments, including mental health and ongoing, repeating appointments such as dialysis. For individuals with low-incomes, the most common unmet needs were transportation to employment and transportation that accommodated circumstances like picking up and dropping off children at childcare and evening appointments. For veterans, a critical need was wheelchair-accessible transportation and rides to Cleveland. The 2014 update documented the following gaps in transportation service:

- Lack of appropriate transportation for families in need of service that allows for multiple stops.
- Infrequent bus service.
- Lack of service on Sundays and holidays.
- Lack of evening service.
- Lack of coordination between Canton, Akron and Cleveland transportation services.
- Wait times on the phone for Proline customers.
- Lack of service in rural areas of Stark County.
- Lack of out-of-county service.
- Inadequate numbers of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

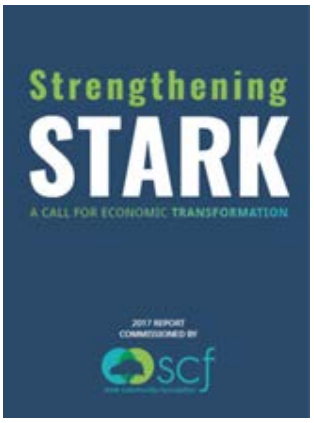
The 2014 Update recommended the coordination priorities listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Priorities Listed in 2014 Coordinated Plan Update

Recommendation	Description
Fully Develop Coordinated Transportation Services Across Stark County	Create a family of services that leverages SARTA's fixed route system to the maximum extent possible and can be used to target the most responsive service for a particular trip need; including travel training for fixed route users and education for stakeholders and the public about SARTA and other available transportation services
Establish a One-Call/One-Click Transportation Center	Create a customer service center with state-of-the-art technology, leveraging the existing SARTA customer service center and Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant-funded platform, that allows multiple agencies to partner in coordinated transportation service delivery
Educate Stakeholders and Individuals about Transportation	Educate agency staff and, when feasible, individuals about using the transportation services that are available; maximize the opportunity for people to in need to use SARTA and partner agency services; work closely with advocates to train individuals with needs
Develop Transportation Services in Creative and Non-traditional Ways	Look for opportunities for collaboration with county school districts; coordinate the services of SARTA, the Stark Developmental Disabilities board and the Stark County Office of Job and Family Services; understand how services could be integrated with those provided through managed care networks; leverage private transportation services; use program funds to support one-call/one-click services
Focus Section 5310 Funds on Coordinated Transportation Services	Prioritize the development of the one-call/one-click center among potential 5310-funded projects; require coordination of transportation services for grantees; prioritize the development of multi-agency contracted transportation services, trip sharing and vehicle sharing between agencies or through a one-call/one-click center

Strengthening Stark: A Call for Economic Transformation

Strengthening Stark is a research report commissioned by Stark Community Foundation in 2017. The report articulated the case for positive economic transformation. The goals in this Coordinated Plan align with the recommendations of Strengthening Stark. As indicated in the report, Stark County has already started to change its way of thinking. In the 2017 report, Stark County provided a framework for achieving a positive economic transformation and identified actions that are being taken to "catalyze the transformation."



Recommendations in the plan focus on seven main points:

1. Economic Governance Structure: Agile Methodology
2. Strengthen Talent Supply Chain
3. Business: Retain and Grow
4. Business: Expand Target Industries
5. Business: Catalyze Entrepreneurship
6. Improve Connective Infrastructure
7. Drive Community Engagement

As a partner in achieving the goals identified in the Strengthening Stark report, SARTA and the Stark Economic Development Board (SEDB) are taking the lead on *Improving the Connective Infrastructure*. Research indicated that many employees lack mobility and the current public transportation network is unable to address needs. In response, SARTA is working with its community partners to identify a multi-pronged strategy that identifies and addresses gaps in transportation for interested citizens. The intended outcome will be connecting employers and employees. Some initial steps in the process include:

- Establishing a menu of transportation options for Stark County businesses and residents.
- Conducting preliminary meetings with on-demand transportation providers and SARTA to identify potential partnership opportunities.
- Prioritizing a handful of key employers and colleges for whom transportation challenges need to be addressed.
- Establish a base plan on how the transportation access can be improved.

SARTA launched a number of the action steps in 2018 and continues to work toward development of a robust solution.

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DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

The demographics of an area are a strong indicator of demand for transportation service. Relevant demographic data were collected and are summarized in this section. The data provided in the following section have been gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates. The ACS is used to ensure that the most current and accurate information is presented. As a five-year estimate, the data represent a percentage based on a national sample and do not represent a direct population count.

The demographic factors included in this chapter were applied to the transportation needs assessment activities to support and/or clarify the information discovered through community outreach and survey activities.

Stark County is located in the northeast portion of Ohio. Canton is the county seat of Stark County. The map in Exhibit 1 depicts the area included in this study. Stark County is served by the following major highways: I-77, US 62 and US 30. SARTA fixed bus routes have been overlaid to show the location of public transit in Stark County.

Population Density

Exhibit 2 displays the population density by block group in Stark County. The block groups with the highest density of total population are in Canton, Massillon, and Alliance. These block groups have densities between 6,639 and 11,480 persons per square mile. Areas with moderately high densities can also be found in Canton, Massillon, Alliance, and Louisville. The remaining County areas have moderate to very low densities of total population. Population densities are an important consideration when planning for the most appropriate mode of service. For example, fixed route bus services operated with larger vehicles are often more effective in areas of higher density. Conversely, areas with lower population densities are often more appropriately served by demand response and on-demand transportation modes and/or small to medium size vehicles.

Exhibit 1: Stark County, Ohio

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update

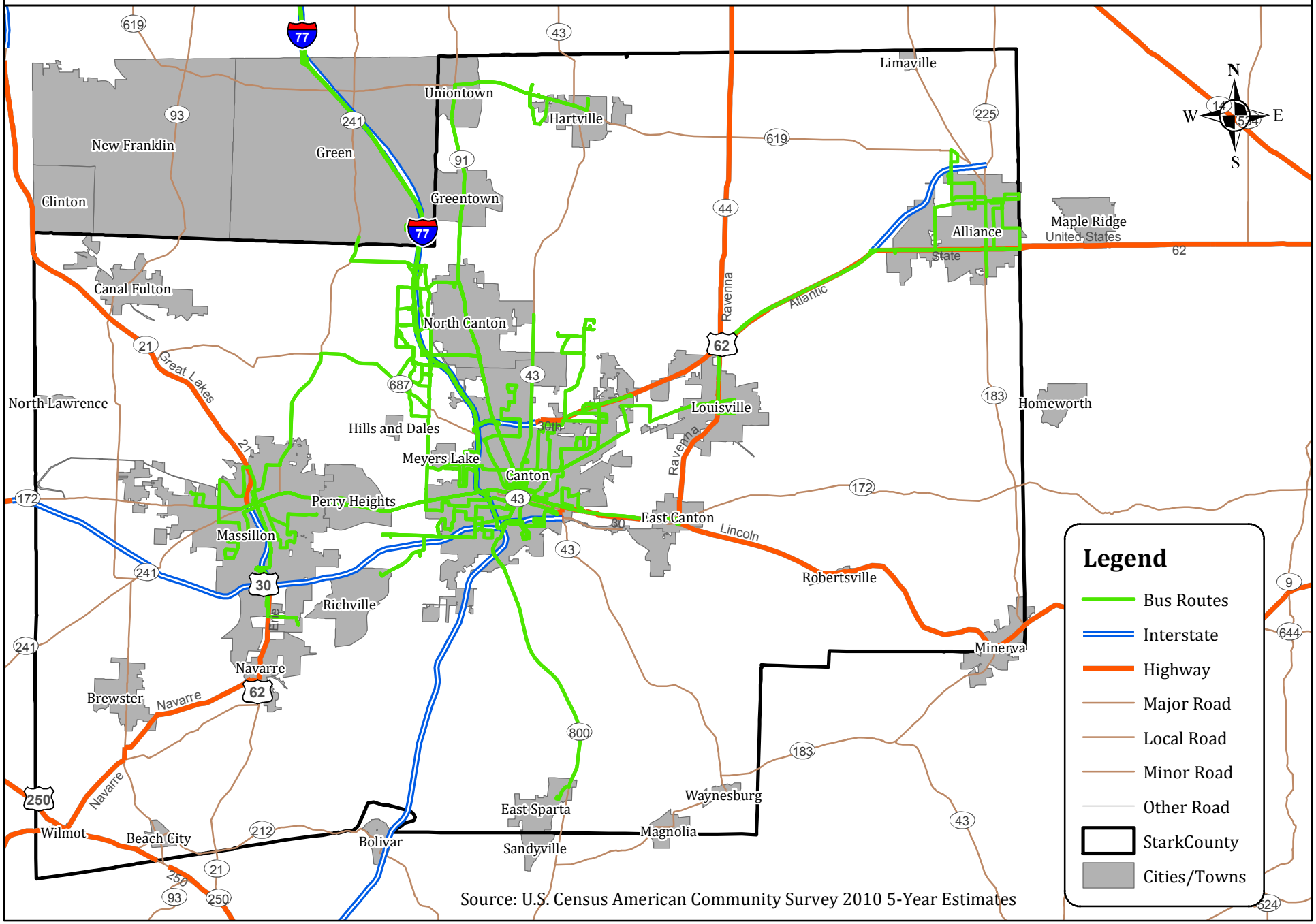
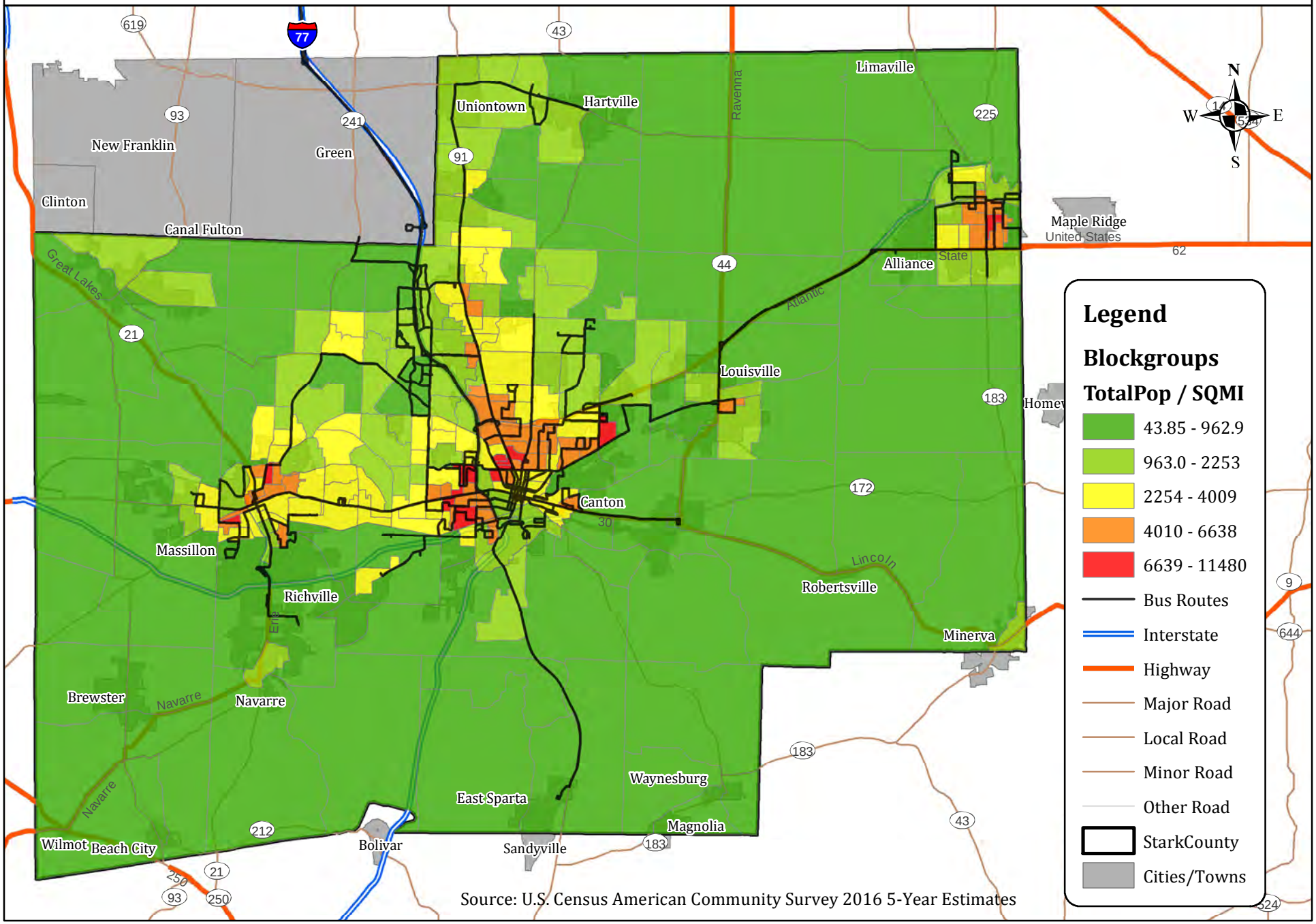


Exhibit 2: Population Per Square Mile

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update



Senior Population

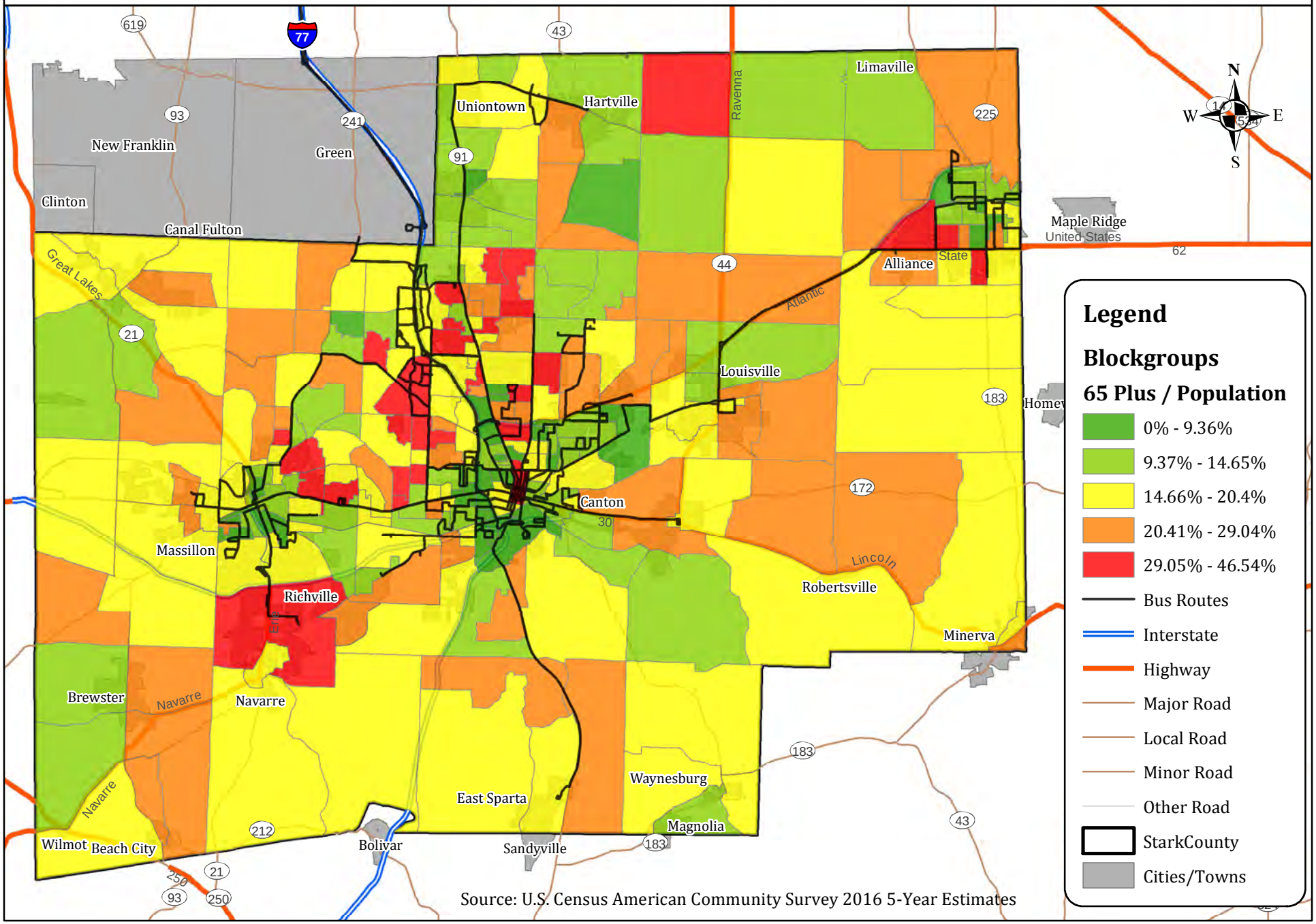
Seniors are most likely to use transportation services when they are unable to drive themselves or choose not to drive. Seniors also tend to be on a limited retirement income, therefore, using transportation services is a cost-saving alternative to owning a vehicle. For these reasons, an area's senior population is an indicator of the likelihood that transportation services will be used.

The Administration on Aging (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) reports that, based on a comprehensive survey of seniors, longevity is increasing and younger seniors are healthier than in all previously measured time in our history. Quality of life issues and an individual's desire to live independently will put a new kind of demand on existing transit services as they restructure to provide mobility to this population. As seniors live longer and remain independent, the potential need to provide transit increases, as does the need to provide transportation in a variety of modes to meet the various demands of the senior population (i.e., such as non-emergency medical trips, social and recreational activities, part-time and full-time work schedules, and shopping).

Exhibit 3 illustrates the percent of the population 65 years of age and older by block group in Stark County. The block groups with the highest percentage of residents ages 65 and older are in Perry Heights, Hills and Dales, Canton, North Canton, Massillon, Richville, Alliance and just east of Hartville. These block groups have percentages of older adults between 29.05 and 46.54 percent. While some areas in the urban cores have higher percentages of seniors, the majority of seniors are living in suburban and rural areas of Stark County.

Exhibit 3: Percent of Population 65 and Over

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update



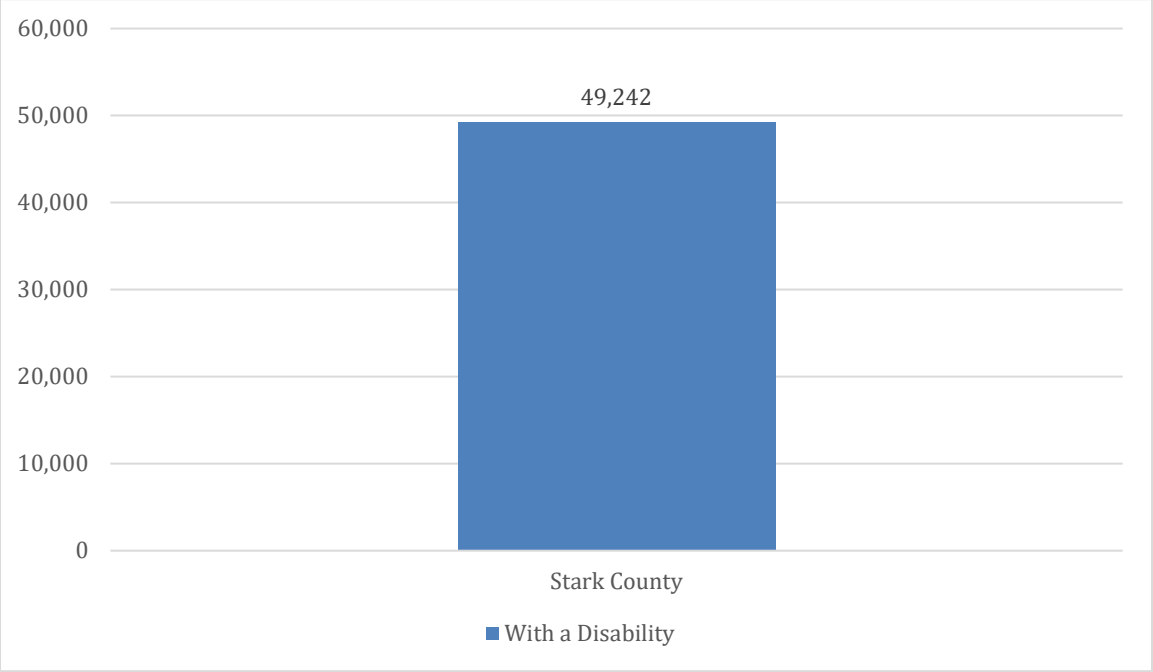
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-Year Estimates

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities that limit their ability to drive are typically transit users. For that reason, it is important to consider the population of individuals with disabilities living in Stark County as an indicator of the level of transit demand. Enumeration of the population with disabilities in any community presents challenges. First, there is a complex and lengthy definition of a person with a disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) implementing regulations. This definition, when applied to transportation services applications, is designed to permit a functional approach to disability determination, rather than a strict categorical definition. In a functional approach, the mere presence of a condition that is typically thought to be disabling gives way to consideration of an individual's abilities to perform various life functions. In short, an individual's capabilities, rather than the mere presence of a medical condition, determine transportation disability.

The U.S. Census offers no method of identifying individuals as having a transportation-related disability. The best available data for Stark County is available through the 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates of disability for the noninstitutionalized population. Exhibit 4 provides the number of people with disabilities within the County. This data is not available at the block group level.

Exhibit 4: Individuals with a Disability



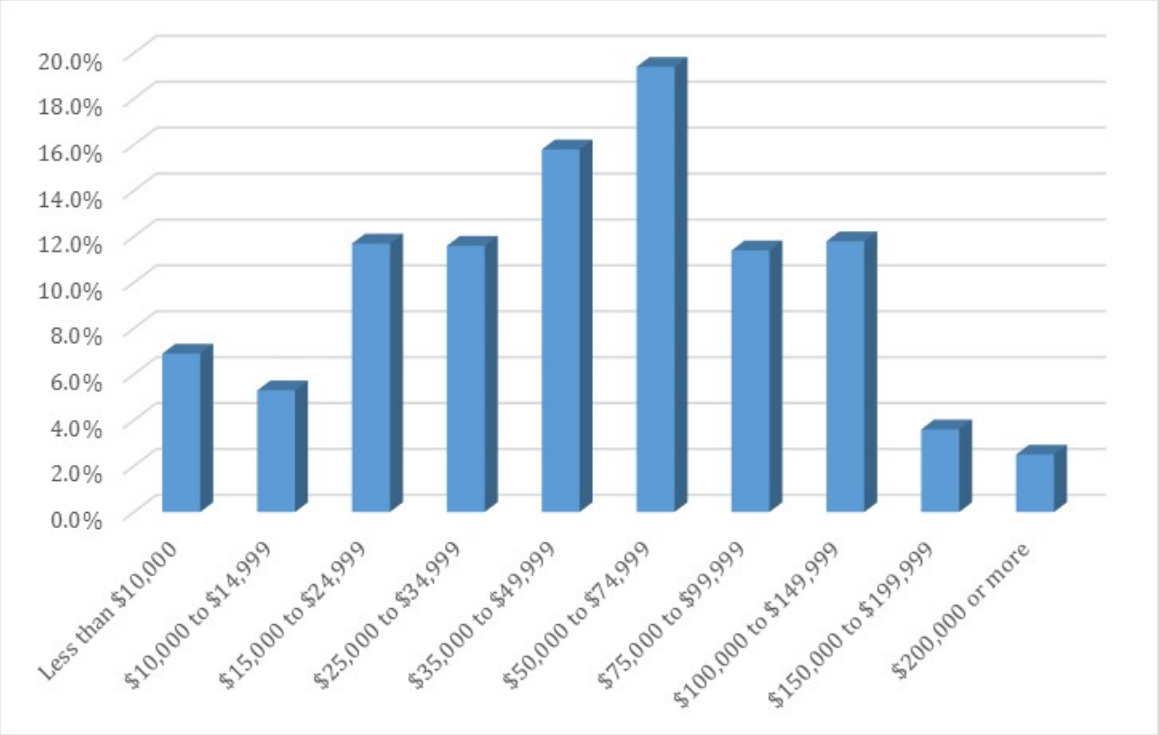
Source: 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates

Household Income

Exhibit 5 illustrates the household incomes for Stark County according to the 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates. According to the survey, there are a total of 151,101 households in Stark County. Of those households, about 35.5 percent earn less than $35,000 annually. Of the households earning less than

$35,000, some 11.6 percent earn between $25,000 and $34,999. Another 17 percent earn between $10,000 and $24,999, and about 6.9 percent earn less than $10,000 per year. The median household income for Stark County is shown in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 5: Household Income



Source: 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates

Exhibit 6: Median Household income

County	Median Income
Stark	$48,714

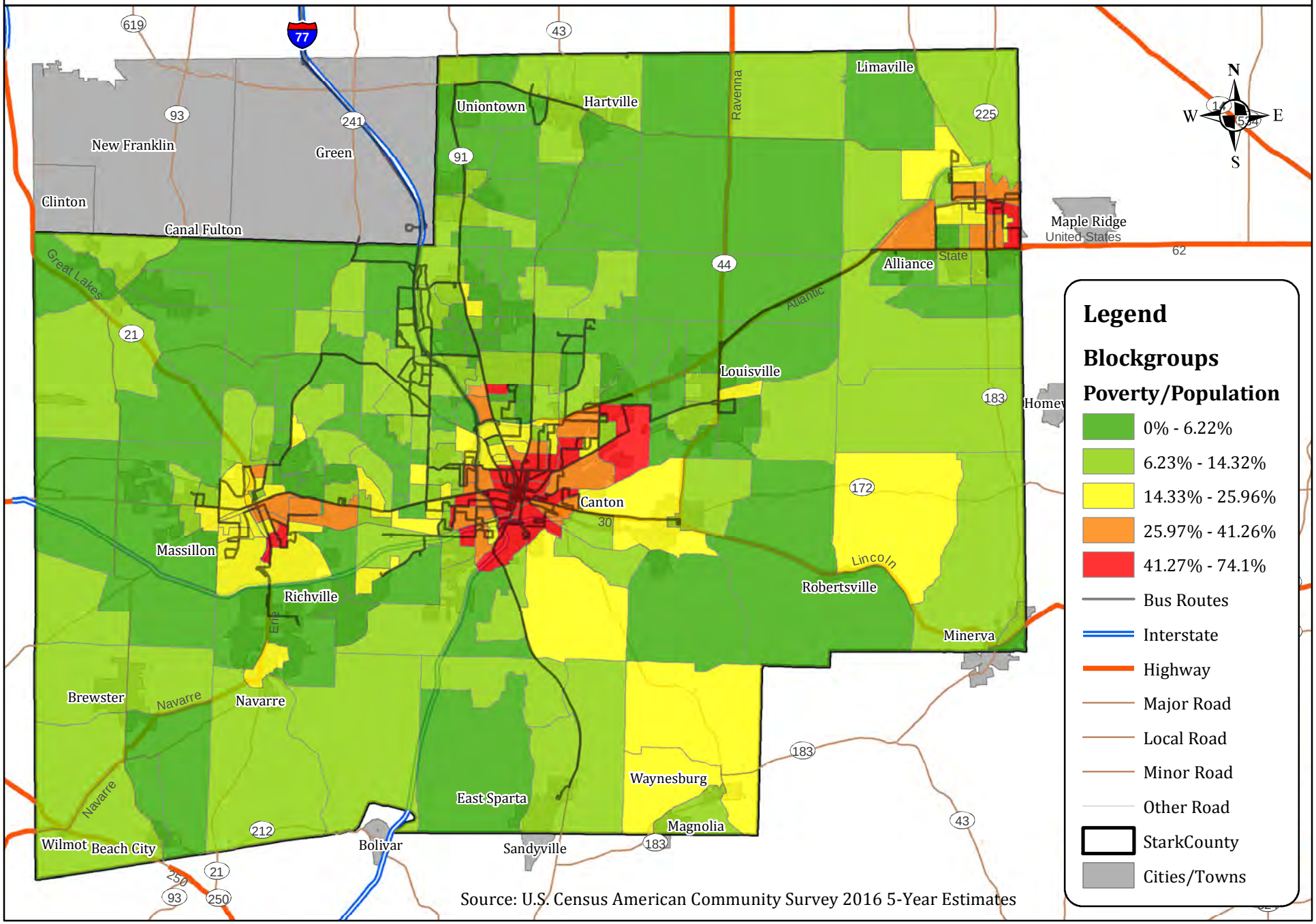
Source: 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimates

Poverty Status

Exhibit 7 illustrates the percentage of the population by block group that lives below the poverty level. The areas of highest percentages of population below poverty (41.27 to 74.1 percent) can be found in southern Massillon, eastern Alliance, and all areas of Canton. Areas of moderately high population percentages living below poverty can be found in those same areas. Pockets of moderate to very low poverty can be found throughout the County.

Exhibit 7: Percent of Population Living Below Poverty

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-Year Estimates

Housing Units with No Available Vehicle

Exhibit 8 illustrates the percentage of housing units with no available vehicle, according to 2016 ACS Five-Year Estimate data. The block groups with the red shading have the highest percentage of housing units with no available vehicle. The block group locations with the highest concentration of zero vehicle housing units are concentrated in central Canton—between 31.66 and 66.72 percent of households within these block groups have no available vehicle. Areas with a moderately high percentage—ranging from 16.63 to 31.65 percent of zero vehicle households—can be found in Canton, Massillon, and Alliance. The remaining block groups have moderate to very low percentages of zero vehicle housing units.

Employment

Exhibit 9 depicts the location of employment in Stark County. Each dot on the map represents the number of employed individuals in the associated census block. The majority of employment can be found along the corridor from Massillon, through Canton and North Canton, to Alliance.

Exhibit 8: Percent Zero Vehicle Households (ZVH)

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update

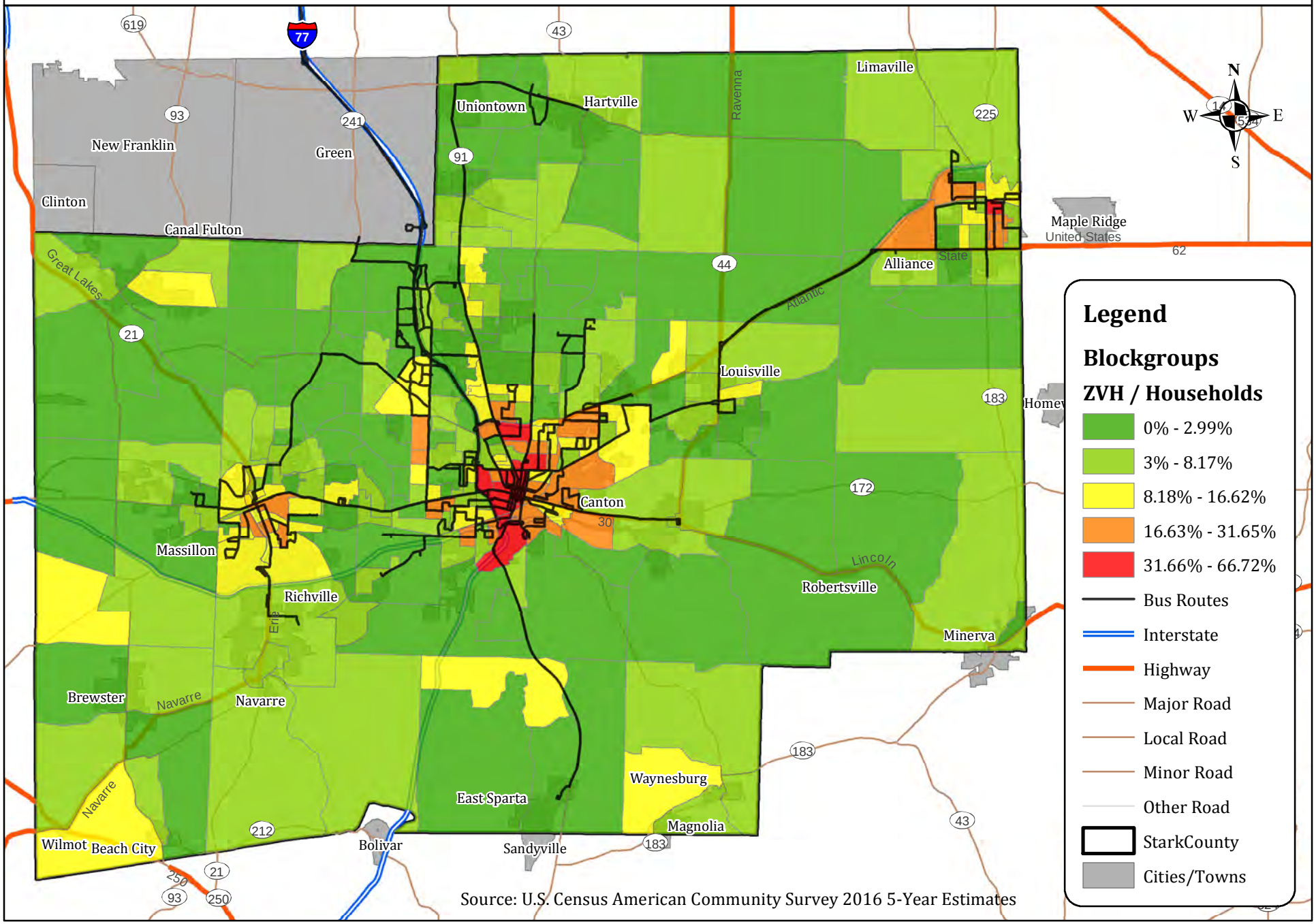
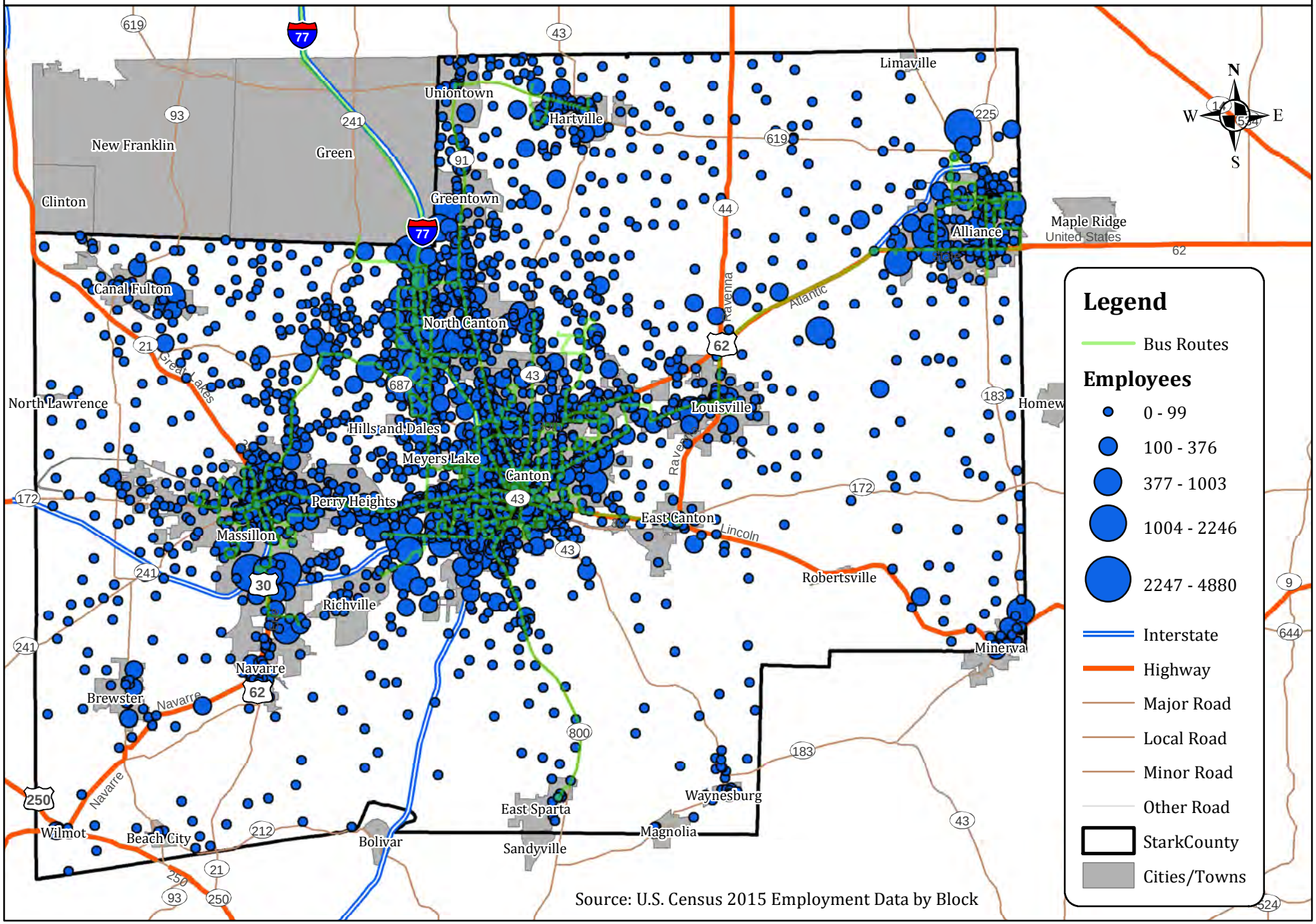


Exhibit 9: Location of Employment

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update



Source: U.S. Census 2015 Employment Data by Block

Transit Propensity

To support route designing efforts and identify which locations transit should serve to provide access to the people most likely to ride, a calculation to determine transit propensity has been applied in Stark County. Transit propensity is a measure of the likelihood that a local population will use transit service, were it available to them, taking into account their demographic characteristics. The model was derived through research completed on transit trip generation in Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 27: Building Transit Ridership and Report 28: Transit Markets of the Future. The end result is an estimate of the relative propensity for transit per census block group.

To calculate transit propensity, U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey 2016 5-Year Estimates data were gathered at the block group level for the entire service area. The data included: total population, total population for which poverty is determined, persons below poverty level, number of persons age 65 and older, total number of housing units, and the number of housing units with zero vehicles available.

The first step in calculating propensity involved creating a threshold value equal to the total number of each variable characteristic divided by the total for the entire service area. The service area is equal to the sum of the populations, poverty population, and households of the study area. Calculations for the threshold values are outlined in the following bullet points.

- Number of housing units with zero vehicles / the total number of housing units within the service area = 8.02%.
- Population within the service area living below poverty / the total population for which poverty is determined = 15.48%.
- Population within the service area that is age 65 and over / the total population of Stark County =17.69%.

The threshold values were entered into the transit propensity model to determine each block group's transit propensity. This process included:

- Calculating the standard deviation for each variable to create a "moderate" category equal to one standard deviation around the mean (threshold). (One-half standard deviation below and one-half standard deviation above the threshold value).
- Query the variables for block groups that experienced percentages within the categories very low, low, moderate, high, and very high propensity.
    - Very low equals all three variables for the block group fell below the lower limit threshold value.
    - Low equals two of the three variables were below the lower limit.
    - Moderate equals block groups within one standard deviation around the mean.
    - High propensity equals block groups that two of the three variables exceed the upper limit.
    - Very high propensity equals block groups that all three variables exceed the upper limit.

Exhibit 10 helps illustrate the process and Exhibit 11 geographically depicts the data.

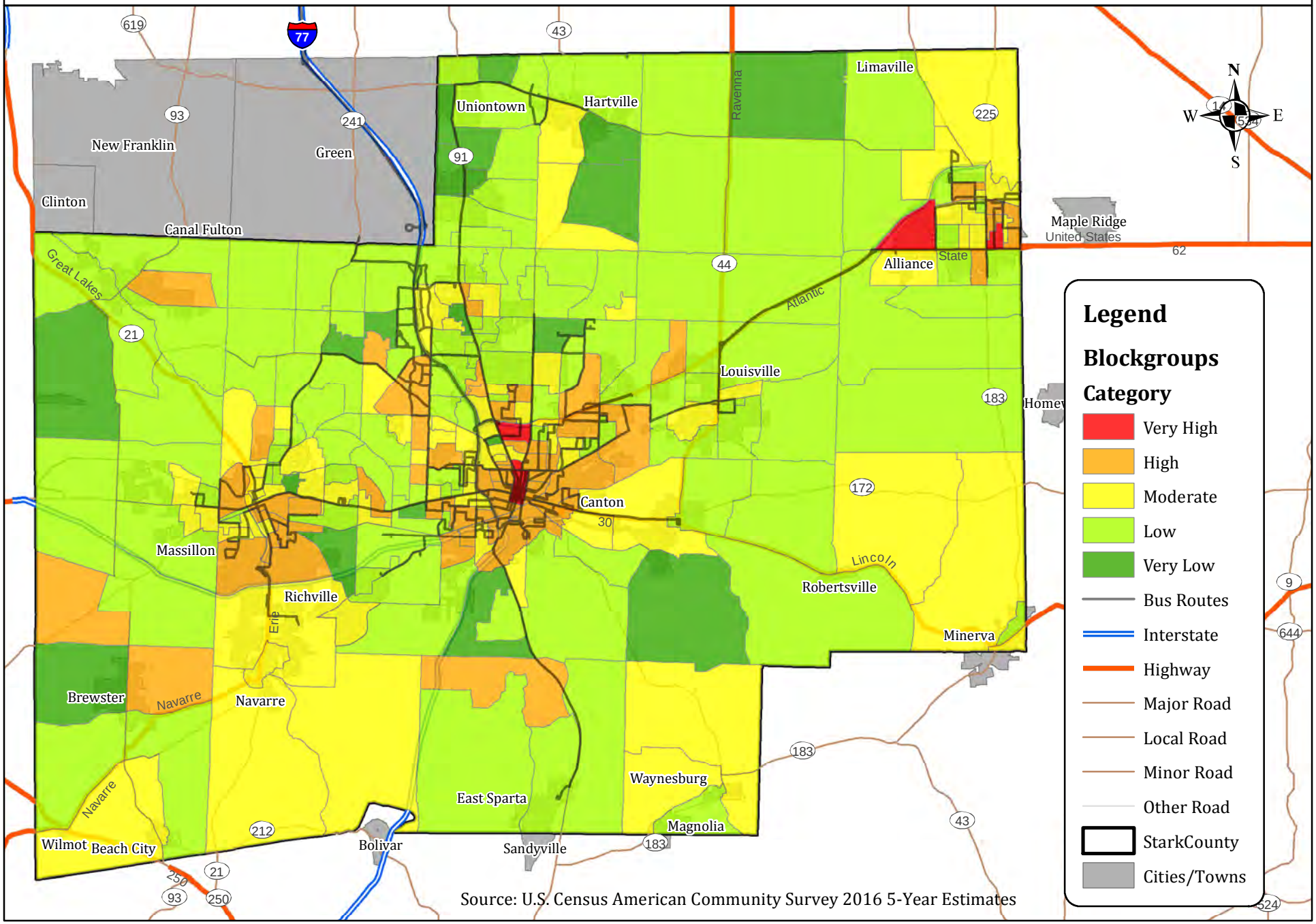
Exhibit 10 – Transit Propensity Process

Transit Propensity					
Variable	**Very Low**	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Very High**
Zero Vehicles	All of the variables fell below the lower limit	2 of the 3 variables fell below the lower limit	3.07% - 12.97%	2 of the 3 variables exceeded the upper limit	All of the variables exceeded the upper limit
Below Poverty			7.58% - 23.39%		
Population 65 Plus			13.60% - 21.78%		

Areas of highest projected transit demand have a combination of the greatest population densities, largest senior populations, highest numbers of housing units without an available vehicle, and the largest population living below the poverty level. The block groups in this category are located around downtown Canton and Alliance. Areas with high transit propensity are located in Massillon, Brewster, North Canton, Canton, and Alliance. Areas in the northern and rural sections of Stark County have the lowest propensity for transit usage.

Exhibit 11: Transit Propensity

Stark County Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Update



EXISITING CONDITIONS AND SERVICES

Stark County residents are served by a network of public, non-profit and private transportation providers. This chapter provides a summary of the services provided by those organizations. The appendix includes a detailed description of the services provided by each transportation service. Table 3 lists provider information for public, private and non-profit organizations serving Stark County. Additional provider information will be added to the report as it becomes available.

Public Transportation Providers
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA)

Senior, Non-Profit and /or Human Service Agency Transportation Providers
The ABCD, Inc.
Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health
Foundations A Place for Education & Recovery
Pathway Caring for Children
Stark County Educational Service Center
Stark County Veterans Service Commission
Stark County Community Action Agency
Stark County Job and Family Services
The Workshops, Inc.

Private Transportation Providers
Koala Kruizers
Scenic View Transportation, Inc.
SarahCare Adult Day Care

Faith -Based Organizations that Provide Transportation
Canton Crossroads United Methodist Church
First Christian Church
St. Joseph Care Center

Hospitals and Clinics
Mercy Medical Center

Table 3: Public, Human Service Agency, Governmental and For-Profit Transportation Providers								
Provider	**Modes of Service**	**Annual Ridership**	**Fare**	**Revenue Sources**	**Operating Budget**	**Service Area**	**Days and Hours**	**Eligibility**
The ABCD, Inc.	Advanced reservation/Demand-response	26,000	Not Applicable	Stark County; Older Americans Act/Title III; FTA Section 5310	$658,525	Statewide	Monday-Sunday, 24 hours/day	Must be Referred by Stark County JFS or Age 60+
Canton Crossroads United Methodist Church	Advanced reservation/Demand-response; Volunteer drivers provide rides	8	Donations Accepted	Passenger Donations; Fundraising	$1,500	Cities of Canton and Massillon	Sunday, 9 AM - 12 PM	No Eligibility Requirements
Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health	Agency purchases tickets/passes from other providers; Agency staff use own vehicles	300	Not Applicable	Charitable Foundation	$8,000	Stark County	Not Provided	Not Provided
Foundations A Place for Education & Recovery	Advanced reservation/Demand-response; Regular routes	600	Not Applicable	Stark County	Not Provided	Stark, Richland, Ashland, Tuscarawas Counties	Monday-Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM	Adults with Disabilities
First Christian Church	Agency staff who are not 'drivers' use agency-owned vehicles; Regular routes	33,386	Not Applicable	FTA Section 5310; Medicaid	Not Provided	Stark County	Monday-Friday, 6:50 AM to 3:50 PM	First Christian Day Services Clients
Koala Kruizers	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Applicable	Not Provided	Stark County; Cities of Akron and Cleveland	Monday-Friday, 7 AM to 5 PM; Evening, Weekend, Holiday by Appointment	No Eligibility Requirements
Mercy Medical Center	Advanced reservation/Demand-response	4,084	Not Applicable	FTA Section 5310; Hospital Operating Budget	Not Provided	Stark, Tuscarawas, Summit Counties	Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM	Mercy Medical Center Clients
Pathway Caring for Children	Advanced reservation/Demand-response; Agency reimburses mileage or auto expenses paid to employees, clients, families, or friends; Agency staff use own vehicles	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA)	Fixed route and ADA paratransit services	2.23 Million	Base fare: $1.50. Seniors & Disabled: $0.75 Varity of fare passes and programs (see appendix)	Federal Transit Administration; ¼% Sales Tax; Passenger Fares, Contracts with Agencies; State of Ohio	$13,36 Million	Stark County	Monday through Saturday 5:45 AM to 1:45 AM	General public and ADA eligible passengers
Stark County Educational Service Center	Fixed route and flexible routes	72	No Fare	School District	Not Provided	Stark, Carroll and Wayne Counties	Based on reservations	Registered Consumers with Disabilities
Stark County Veterans Service Commission	Agency purchases tickets/passes from other providers; Regular routes	25	Not Applicable	Stark County	Not Provided	Stark County	Monday-Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM	Veterans
Stark County Community Action Agency	Agency staff use own vehicles; Regular routes	Not Provided	Not Applicable	Dept. of Health and Human Services	$550,000	Cities of Alliance, Canton, Massillon	Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM	100% of Federal Poverty Guideline

Table 3: Public, Human Service Agency, Governmental and For-Profit Transportation Providers								
Provider	**Modes of Service**	**Annual Ridership**	**Fare**	**Revenue Sources**	**Operating Budget**	**Service Area**	**Days and Hours**	**Eligibility**
Scenic View Transportation, Inc.	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Statewide	Monday-Friday, 6 AM to 6 PM	Medicaid Recipients
SarahCare Adult Day Care	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	10-mile radius of facility	Monday-Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM	SarahCare Clients
St. Joseph Care Center	Agency employees who are not 'drivers' use agency-owned vehicles to drive consumers	400	Not Applicable	Not Provided	Not Provided	Stark County	Not Provided	Residents of St. Joseph Care Center
Stark County Job and Family Services (CJFS)	Advanced reservation/Demand-response; Agency purchases tickets/passes from other providers; Agency reimburses mileage or auto expenses paid to employees, clients, families, or friends; Agency operates scheduled routes	98,276	Not Applicable	Medicaid	$2,170,272	Stark and Summit Counties	Monday - Friday, 5 AM to 10 PM; Weekends: Dialysis and Quest clients only-Hours vary	Medicaid Recipients
The Workshops Inc.	Advanced reservation/Demand-response; Agency staff use own vehicles to transport clients	75,000	Medicaid Reimbursement	Medicaid	Not Provided	Stark and Summit Counties	Monday-Friday, 4 AM to 10 PM; Weekends - as needed	Medicaid Recipients

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the entities that operate transportation for the public or for eligible client populations, there are several other organizations that are key to the development of appropriate transportation services throughout the county. These key stakeholder organizations include local governments, businesses and economic development organizations who share the same consumers and/or employees with the transportation providers. The following sections outline results from interviews conducted with local stakeholders throughout all of Stark County and its communities.

SUMMARY OF NON-TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is supportive of public transit in Stark County. It has supported SARTA financially and publicly advocated for the tax dollars that fund it. Many Chamber member businesses' workforce depend on transit. SARTA moves the local workforce and more. Without SARTA, many people would lose some level of their social independence and quality of life in the area would decline for people who do not drive or prefer to ride transit.

12,649 Summit County residents commute to Stark County for jobs.
24,414 Stark County residents commute to Summit County for jobs.
(Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Worker Inflow & Outflow Reports)

The Regional Chamber would like to see better transit connections between Akron and Canton. The two neighboring cities share the same workforce and if additional regional services (beyond the existing single route connecting these communities) were offered, the alliance would be stronger and the work opportunities greater. Furthermore, the Chamber envisions additional connectivity between Canton, Akron, and Cleveland. With better connectivity, Canton would become more like a suburb to the larger population centers of the Cleveland urban area. Mass transit connections are extremely important in economic development. Interstate 77—the primary connector in the Akron-Canton-Cleveland region--is an economic development spine.

In the local area, changes in land use include the development of land around the Akron-Canton Airport as well as the Pro Football Hall of Fame expansion. The considerations for land development around the airport are focused on the introduction of major employers. The Hall of Fame expansion hopes to attract three to five million visitors per year, up from the 300,000 visitors it receives today. There will be a growing need to move people between the Hall of Fame and the airport, as well as in and out of downtown.

In the western part of the county, between Massillon and Navarre, a collection of local organizations is developing a 350-acre plot of farmland. When this land is developed, transportation demand is likely to increase.

Also, in Belden Village, there are a significant number of hospitality and entertainment businesses. Service workers need affordable and reliable transportation to those employers.

In the opinion of the Regional Chamber of Commerce, coordinated transportation planning should include representatives from the chamber/business community, Stark Economic Development Corporation Board, United Way, Stark Community Foundation, County government, municipal governments, the airport, schools and colleges, and major destinations like the Hall of Fame.

Pro Football Hall of Fame

A representative from the Pro Football Hall of Fame stated that SARTA's strength is that it is visible in the community. Stark County population centers are widely dispersed. Canton is the hub and people need to get to and from Canton for many purposes ranging from jobs to shopping and social activities. SARTA is serving areas where many people do not have access to a car.

To improve services to the community, SARTA could offer incentives such as "Free Fridays/Saturdays" more frequently to benefit people who can't afford to ride the bus. Also, additional loops serving the airport for people who travel to the area would be beneficial. When the Hall of Fame completes its major expansion, it is expecting to have three to five million visitors per year. The expansion will create 14,000 new jobs in the community and these workers are likely to need transportation.

The expansion is planned for completion in Fall 2020. These visitors will need a better way to travel from the airport and from Cleveland.

The Hall of Fame would like to see SARTA operate loops between the Hall of Fame and downtown Canton or a dedicated route. If so, people may take advantage of the dedicated service to access Hall of Fame youth programs. And, those who are visiting the Hall of Fame could ride SARTA back to downtown to shop and eat at restaurants. 15 percent of the jobs in Stark County are related to tourism.

Other highly important transportation needs throughout Stark County include transportation for the younger populations – kids and college students. Also, transportation for special events is needed. The Hall of Fame provides one concert per year now, but in 2019, it will offer six concerts. Everyone from children to senior citizens should have access to these events.

Additional coordination partners in transportation planning should include the Stark Civic Group – these are leaders from local organizations including the Chamber, Schools, United Way, and planners throughout local communities. Support from local State Legislators and Mayors is also needed for progress to happen. The Hall of Fame believes that the community should continue building the transit services that are working well, like SARTA.

North Canton Area Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber representative discussed the community conditions that impact transportation demand today and those conditions that are likely to have a future impact. There were two primary factors influencing transportation in North Canton: (1) the aging population and (2) plans for new jobs, employment, and shopping in the area.

Currently, Stark County has an aging community. Older adults make up a significant portion of the population. Furthermore, there is a high concentration of veterans in North Canton – approximately 1,382 out of 17,000 people. Many of the veterans are also older adults. Direct access from North Canton to the Veterans Administration and other medical destinations, without a transfer in downtown, would most likely appeal to veterans and older adults.

As people age, the likelihood that they will need transportation (daily or periodically) increases. This change in demographics is likely to put an increased burden on the local transportation services.

There is a 'stigma' about driving into downtown Canton from North Canton that many people, especially older adults, cannot overcome. However, if a direct route were available between North Canton and downtown Canton, people may go downtown for arts and entertainment.

Residents of North Canton who are of working age tend to commute to Akron or Cleveland. North Canton is quiet during the day but comes alive in evenings and on weekends. Limited parking near or at the SARTA Transit Center is an inconvenience that commuters avoid by driving to and from work. With adequate parking, some commuters may choose to park and ride to work.

In the near future, North Canton is expecting new development of apartments, shopping and employment in the old Hoover Building.

Eight-hundred new jobs and 133 apartments and retail locations will move into the renovated building. Also, in 2019, the parks in North Canton are adding amphitheaters and small venues for local entertainment events.

With the ongoing and planned development in North Canton, it is a growing destination. Direct access on SARTA fixed routes between Jackson Township and North Canton would be valuable to North Canton residents. Currently, a transfer at Belden Village Transit Center or Downtown is required for the ride between the two communities.

Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS)

SCATS is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the area. One of its roles is to solicit applications for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Section 5310 Grant Program as a partner to SARTA. The agreement between SCATS and SARTA was established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU has been in place for a few years and the roles and responsibilities continue to evolve. SCATS also helps SARTA with the Coordination Committee which was established under prior legislation, SAFETEA-LU. The Coordination Committee participation is declining. Membership includes ABCD, Mercy Medical, and The Workshops, Inc. Goodwill and United

Way organizations as well as some local mental health services organizations were active members in the past, but no longer participate.

The program funds several door-to-door transportation programs. The Section 5310 application and program reporting requirements have become more onerous for agencies. For example, grantees are required to report monthly, and meet Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan requirements. Several organizations do not apply for funding because of the reporting requirements and potentially because their grant applications could be considered competition for SARTA's public transportation services. SARTA has taken on a much more intensive administrative role with the Section 5310 program, including the inspection of vehicles and FTA compliance oversight. SARTA recently pushed for a consolidated dispatch system for all Section 5310 recipients but the program did not materialize.

SCATS and SARTA distribute about $300,000 per year in Section 5310 Grant Program funds. Announcements for available grant funding are distributed to approximately 200 organizations.

SCATS works with other counties in the region and with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to share information and discuss coordinated transportation. SCATS participates in the quarterly ODOT District 4 Coordination Meetings for the region and also the monthly OAR Committee meetings.

In the future, SCATS recommends that SARTA continue to focus on transportation to sustain economic development. SCATS collects employment data by income level and they may be willing to provide this data to SARTA for planning purposes. Current and future areas of economic growth are around the Pro Football Hall of Fame Village, around the airport, and in Jackson Township.

Transportation into Stark County from the rural surrounding counties and/or from rural portions of Stark County into urbanized cities is also an ongoing need. Aultman Hospital provided transportation for the Amish community through the Section 5310 grant program. Other programs may exist, but they are primarily demand response services that may be appropriate for non-emergency medical transportation and health/wellness activities, but do not support daily commuters for work.

Stark County Commission

The Stark County Commission representative is SARTA supporter. Partnerships between SARTA and Job and Family Services would be beneficial.

The county is diverse with employers, townships, cities, and agriculture. New businesses are replacing the old industries. There are two natural gas pipelines that run from Cadiz (located in Harrison County about 50 miles south east of Canton) through the southern portion of Stark County. The region's oil and gas industries are growing and creating new opportunities. Marathon is a major refinery in Canton with approximately 2,000 employees. Future economic development in this area is anticipated in the chemical and natural gas industries.

"SARTA's most important role is to help get people to work – especially employees earning low wages."

Coordination between Stark County, the region, and ODOT is also important for growth and development.

City of Alliance

The City of Alliance's Mayor and Planning and Development Director participated in interviews in July and August 2018. Alliance has a representative on the SARTA Board of Directors who is a proponent of using transit to get people to work. There is an industrial corridor in Alliance with employers that have 200 to 300 employees. Transit service to these workplaces would support local employers with recruitment and retention of employees if the transportation options are affordable, reliable and convenient. The primary geographic location for large employers in Alliance is the Main Street corridor beginning at Rockhill Avenue and stretching west to Sawburg Avenue, then southward on Sawburg Avenue to Glamorgan Street. The largest employers in this corridor include Sun America, Trilogy, and Mac Trailer. Large employers outside of this corridor include Alliance Casting and PTC Alliance. If Alliance Castings reopens, it will employ 300 to 400 people who are potential transit riders. Also, PTC Alliance is north of downtown, and located approximately one-half mile from the closest SARTA route. Mobility options for the first/last mile between the nearest SARTA route and PTC Alliance would support employee access to work.

> **People are getting to employers in and around Alliance but stronger transit service to these workplaces would help the employers with employee recruitment and retention.**

Other major employers are just outside the city limits. Alliance is located near the Stark County border with Mahoning and Columbiana Counties. An industrial park is expanding to the east. When it develops, those employees are going to need a ride. Stark County needs to have some transportation options to support employment there.

Speaking from a personal perspective, the Mayor's wife is the director of nursing for the Alliance Health Department. She sees a need to get people to services in Canton as well as to out-of-county appointments to the east and to the west of Stark County. SARTA is not available for the out-of-county appointments. Alliance has a population of approximately 22,000 people. SARTA has done a good job trying to address those needs.

SARTA is the only game in town. Taxis never last long in Alliance and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are not yet present in Alliance. Alliance offers a small Amtrak train station, on the Capitol Limited line to Pittsburgh or Cleveland. However, the stop in Alliance is in the middle of the night. Within Alliance, people use SARTA to travel from the northern part of town to and from the business district for shopping. The Mayor would like to have direct airport bus service from Alliance. Currently, they must go downtown Canton to transfer before going to the airport.

> **"The opportunities to use SARTA for the appointments in Canton have improved, but it remains a long trip that involves a lot of transfers."**

The City of Alliance believes that SARTA should take the lead in coordinated transportation for the local area and/or the region. It should partner with county government, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development entities.

City of Canton

The City of Canton participated in an interview in August 2018. The City considers SARTA to be an innovative partner in planning for the community. SARTA serves people who have no other transportation options on a daily basis, and is also a great partner for special events.

As new developments in the area occur, SARTA should consider service expansions, such as a dedicated route to the Pro Football Hall of Fame Village. Within three years, a permanent link between downtown and the Hall of Fame will be needed. The City prefers to encourage people to park downtown and take SARTA out to the Hall of Fame Village.

City land use is not projected to change. The zoning code has been rewritten and now has overlays to the target investment areas. The City wants to foster pedestrian right of way and promote roadways for all modes of traffic.

The City has identified six key investment areas which will be served by a tax increase. These will be housing and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas in the future. However, the areas are not yet developed or designed.

There has not been a lot of economic development in the past five years outside of the Hall of Fame and downtown Canton. Downtown will continue to be an investment area. This project is partially funded by the Hoover Foundation. It is located on the edge of downtown, and would be well served by improved connections to downtown amenities. The Hercules Project is attracting millennials but they want to have transit access to downtown. As the area grows, more and more people will want connectivity.

The City envisions SARTA taking the lead in coordination from a transportation perspective to guide the cities and other organizations toward stronger inter-city/regional connectivity.

Also, there is no real connection to the Hall of Fame or from the airport and downtown. There is a right of way owned by the City all the way from downtown to the Hall of Fame. Autonomous vehicles could be used on that right away – as a long-term goal.

In addition, Aultman Hospital has a new development plan that will include student housing (Nursing school) and they look to create TOD there as well as a hub for transit. Currently, Aultman is served by SARTA but not served well.

The City supports inter-city bus service to connect employment centers in the region. The City supports the concept of the MPO and SARTA working with the Akron Regional Planning Commissions and becoming part of NOACCA. The City envisions SARTA taking the lead in

coordination from a transportation perspective to guide the cities and other organizations toward stronger inter-city/regional connectivity.

Specific improvements that the City would like to see in local public transit include:

- Safe Routes to Schools to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to schools.
- Improved waiting areas for SARTA passengers, beginning with improvements to bus stops and shelters in the major corridors. The City would be willing to partner in this effort.
- Bike facilities in the Master Bike Trail Plan should be incorporated into SARTA stops. Canton has bike share facilities but no bikes and no place to lock up the bikes.
- Partner with the Hall of Fame to develop a transportation management program. Potentially involve professionals from Aultman and Mercy Hospitals who recently developed transportation management programs for their facility expansions.
- The transportation services for senior citizens need to be strengthened and improved. Partnerships to improve accessibility from the sidewalk to the bus should be explored.

City of Massillon

The City of Massillon Mayor participated in an interview in August 2018. She indicated that SARTA is a value to the community especially for people who do not have a car and for individuals with disabilities. SARTA has good route coverage. She has ridden the bus and found the buses to be clean.

When asked about what services she would like to see in the community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SARTA or other modes of transportation, the Mayor indicated that Massillon needs charging stations for electric cars (personal vehicles).

Massillon is conducting an Imagine Massillon Downtown Streetscape project to benefit the downtown. There will be new bumpouts and curbing. The city is paving roads and replacing curbs as much as possible. This will enhance downtown economic development. It will probably increase the need for people to go downtown. SARTA could help people get to downtown to patronize businesses. Recently, the downtown was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Developers can receive historic tax credits for area developments. The city is planning for more people to live in apartments downtown.

Community partners for coordinated transportation should include Job and Family Services, faith-based organizations, the United Way, Goodwill Industries, local foundations in community improvement planning, and SARTA.

From a personal perspective, the Mayor finds the process for scheduling rides on Proline to be a hindrance. She suggests an app or another way to reserve trips on Proline to make it easier and more convenient for individuals with disabilities to ride SARTA and live and work in the community.

In the opinion of the Mayor, inter-city transportation options are crucial. People need to go to Canton and other Stark County communities for counseling services and assistance.

Community partners for coordinated transportation should include Job and Family Services, faith-based organizations, the United Way, Goodwill Industries, local foundations in community improvement planning, and SARTA.

City of North Canton

The City of North Canton's Deputy Director of Administration and Development participated in an interview for the study. The City finds SARTA to be a reliable and accessible service. However, the City feels that services in North Canton could be improved. Approximately sixty percent of North Canton's population (approximately 17,000 people) is age 65 or older. The community is home to assisted living facilities as well as adult day rehabilitation facilities with patients, families, and employees that are likely to use transportation if it is available and meets their needs.

> **"With a large older adult and special needs population, access to transportation services is especially important to the community."**

In addition, if the Hoover Development is restarted, it will create expanded residential and retail services in North Canton. Currently, a lot of the North Canton businesses are small employers.

North Canton is also receiving State funds to renovate all of its parks. The City plans to create a park with adaptive equipment for kids with special needs, which will be a destination. The City is working on parking lots at the parks to accommodate buses to bring kids for recreational sports.

The Walsh College entertainment venue is also a top destination in North Canton.

North Canton believes that Goodwill Industries in North Canton and the Canton Tourism Board should be involved in coordinated transportation planning along with SARTA.

Ohio Means Jobs

Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) staff from Stark and Tuscarawas Counties participated in an interview. Strengths of SARTA, from the OMJ perspective include:

- The travel training program and free bus passes for participants, and the free monthly pass to help people get back to work
- SARTA's involvement in community re-entry program support
- SARTA's programs that have assisted low-income people with bus fare
- SARTA's evaluation of its routes based on feedback from the community
- SARTA's focus on environmental friendliness and energy efficiency
- The Pinpoint system
- SARTA's bus vouchers for a homelessness event and other partnerships with the community

Opportunities for improvement include the following:

- Some areas of Alliance are not served or underserved.
- While the agency does not hear a lot of complaints from employers, there are times when SARTA's services do not meet shift changes:
    - Heinz's (Massillon) day shift begins at 5:30 AM or6:00 AM. Drop-off would need to be at 5:15 AM for workers to be able to use SARTA to go to work for this shift. The night shift ends at 11:30 PM or12:00 AM. A 12:30 AM pick-up would support night shift workers in getting home on SARTA.
- Clients in Stark County can get to Summit County on transit but getting between Stark and Tuscarawas is difficult. There are businesses and schools in Dover and New Philadelphia where people could work. Most of the employers there are fast food restaurants and retail. The transit service in Tuscarawas County is satisfactory for a person going shopping, but not for a person trying to work every day.
- It would be helpful for SARTA to have better communication with employers about shift times, so that bus services can help people get to work at the right times.

The most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Stark County is reducing the length of time it takes to get from one location to another, especially to/from outlying cities. Also, transportation improvements in getting employees to employers throughout Stark County, including along the Summit County line and North Canton Industrial Park is a need. Inter-city bus routes are good from the perspective of Ohio Means Jobs staff. Stark County continues to see development in the eastern part of the county, including Mahoning and Columbiana Counties. Also, Stark State College just opened an Akron facility that has Licensed Professional Nurse training. People can ride on SARTA to Stark State in Akron, but not to that specific facility. Any training program needs transportation access.

> **"An employee from Canton currently starts out at 5:00 AM to get to work in Alliance at 9:00 AM on a SARTA bus."**

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

One of the challenges for people with developmental disabilities who are in community jobs is that the jobs are not always on a bus route. Lack of transportation is a significant barrier for employment. Even if the individuals have a waiver, using transportation service, for someone working 2nd shift – for example, 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM at Walmart – they still have difficulty finding transportation because there are very few options available during those hours. An Uber-like service would be ideal. The service would need to be highly personalized to meet the person's need.

> **An "Uber-like" service would be ideal. The service would need to be highly personalized to meet the person's need.**

Board of Developmental Disabilities consumers use Proline but have reported that its timeliness is very challenging both in getting people to their destinations, particularly community employment, on time and being picked up on time. People are sometimes getting to work two hours early and having to wait two hours later, after their shift ends, to be picked up. This is a hardship on them.

Sunday service is always an issue for consumers – for all trip purposes, not just church.

Board of Development Disabilities consumers also use other transportation services including LED Transportation, Nice's Transportation, Peaceful Enterprises, and The Workshops, Inc. The Board of Developmental Disabilities believes that SARTA should take the lead in coordinated transportation for the local area, and that all private and public organizations, and schools, need to participate in coordinated transportation efforts.

SARTA should take the lead in coordinated transportation for the local area, and all private and public organizations, and schools, need to participate in coordinated transportation efforts.

SUMMARY OF NON-TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER FEEDBACK

Overall, the support for SARTA as the leader in the coordinated transportation efforts for Stark County is unanimous. Each organization recognizes the value that SARTA adds to the community and supports its continued leadership in meeting unmet transportation needs and challenges as the community develops.

In particular, SARTA and its transportation provider partner agencies should continue to focus on providing transportation services that meet the needs of individuals with low incomes, people with disabilities, and older adults. SARTA should continue to work with partner organizations from local governments, private businesses/employers, and non-profit agencies.

While SARTA should continue to be the core of the transportation network in Stark County with connectivity to neighboring cities, partner organizations that can operate more efficiently for demand responsive or door-to-door services also play a significant role in addressing needs and should be included in coordinated transportation planning. Not only the transportation providers, but also local governments, agencies, and businesses should actively participate in coordinated transportation planning to strengthen Stark County's economy and the quality of life for residents and visitors.

PUBLIC INPUT

OVERVIEW

This chapter summarizes the results of public input received through a survey of the general public and a public meeting facilitated to identify unmet transportation needs. The results of public input will be considered in combination with other outreach efforts such as the provider and non-transportation provider interviews and the rider survey results.

METHODOLOGY

The consultant team worked with SARTA to gather input through a multi-faceted public involvement process. In addition to the stakeholder and transportation provider summaries included in previous chapters of this report, the team also reached out to the general public – riders and non-riders – to understand their unmet transportation needs, the joys of using public, private, and human service agency transportation in the area, and the gaps that should be overcome.

Public input opportunities included the following:

- Public and Student Survey
- Public Input Meeting
- SARTA Fixed Route Rider Survey (on-board)
- SARTA Proline Rider Survey (mail)

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

The Coordinated Human Services Public Transit Plan Update public meeting took place on May 21, 2018 at the Main Branch of the Stark Library. Nineteen people attended the public meeting. Many, but not all, of the meeting participants were current SARTA riders. The meeting roster and notes from the meeting are included in the appendix. The meeting was open to the public and advertised through local newspapers, on SARTA vehicles, and via SARTA social media posts. Flyers for the meeting were distributed to local stakeholders to post in areas where clients gather.

Meeting participants focused on the gaps in services which included challenges to mobility with regard to spatial (geographic) and temporal (time of day/day of week) gaps in services. Key points at the meeting included the following topics:

- Transportation options in Stark County are limited after 9:30 PM and passengers would like to have a transportation option later at night for access to employment and/or entertainment.
- More services in Hartville, Jackson Township, and Richfield were requested, even if service hours are limited.
- Sunday service, even on a limited basis, was suggested to improve access to faith-based activities, shopping and other local trip purposes.
- Regional transportation connections are needed for employment and entertainment purposes. Additional opportunities to travel between Canton, Akron and Cleveland were requested.
- Seniors and individuals with disabilities are not always able to access fixed route bus stops because the locations of the stops are too far from their origin or destination.
    - A transportation option for the first/last mile of the trip on fixed route would improve their ability to use public transit.
- Transfers on SARTA can be time consuming and may deter choice riders. More direct routes could save travel time.
- Transit waiting environments need improvements – such as more shelters.
- Bike racks that hold up to three bicycles are needed because when the bike rack is full the bike rider must wait another hour (most times) for the next bus.
- Transportation providers and employers should work together to encourage public transit ridership.
- New fare payment options could help to standardize the fare process (such as reloadable passes).

Overall, public meeting participants were supportive of the transportation services offered in Stark County and they all place a high value on their transit system.

PUBLIC SURVEY

The public survey was available between May 1and August 31, 2018. The survey was advertised through a press release, Stark Library, SARTA social media posts, human service agencies, apartment complexes, chambers of commerce, and other local media outlets.

In total, 1,213 individuals participated in the public survey. The distribution of responses was 81.62 percent (990 surveys) from college or university students and 18.38 percent (223 surveys) from non-students. When an individual started the survey, the first question asked was if he or she is currently a student or non-student. Respondents who selected non-student, were directed to the non-student transportation questions. Student respondents were

asked additional questions about their transportation habits. The following paragraphs describe the results from students and non-students. Additional survey responses that are specific to SARTA are included in the appendix.

College/University Students

The majority of student survey respondents attend Stark State College. Less than 10 percent attended any one of the other local colleges or universities. Sixty four percent of respondents started college later in life while 36 percent started immediately after high school.

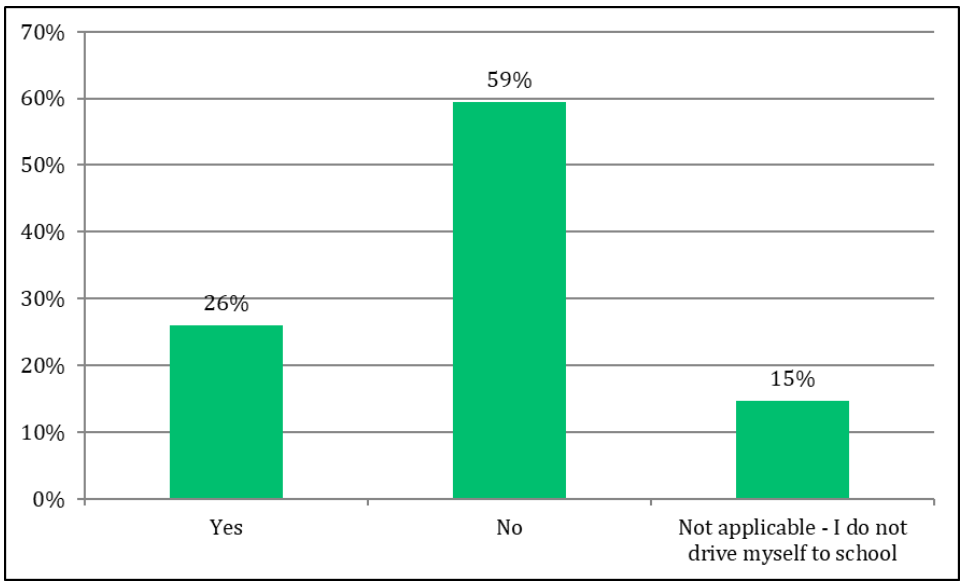
Table 4: Where do you attend college/university?

College/University	Percent	Total
Stark State College	72.98%	543
Kent State University at Stark	8.20%	61
Ross College	6.72%	50
Malone University	5.24%	39
Other College/University (please specify)	3.49%	26
Walsh University	2.96%	22
University of Mount Union	0.40%	3

Parking

Approximately 59 percent of survey respondents who drive to school say that parking can be a challenge. Most of the respondents with parking challenges, 74 percent, attend Stark State College. Another twelve percent of students with parking challenges attend Kent State University at Stark. Nearly eight percent of students with parking challenges attend Walsh University. Less than three percent of respondents from the other colleges have parking challenges.

Exhibit 12: If you drive to school, is parking ever a problem?

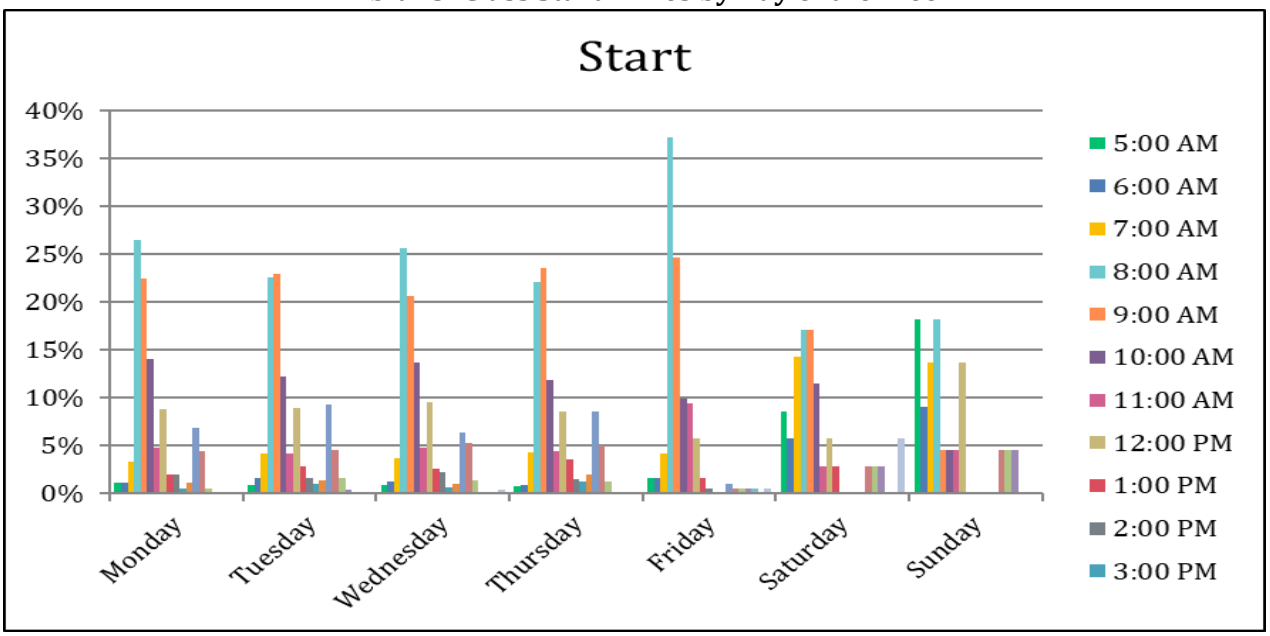


Start and End Times

Approximately 73 to 79 percent of student respondents attend classes Monday through Thursday. The number of students attending on Fridays reduces significantly to about 27 percent of respondents. Only 23 of the survey respondents attend classes on Saturdays, and less than two percent attend class on Sunday.

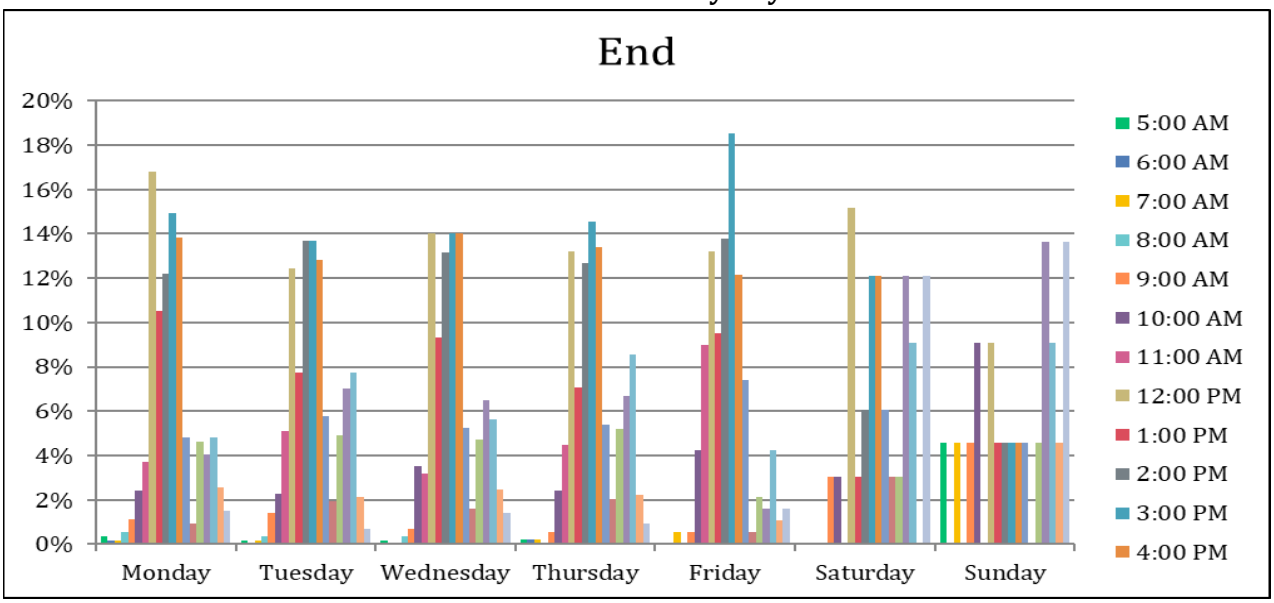
To better identify when transportation is needed for students, respondents were asked about the start and end times of their classes by day of the week. The peak start time is at 8:00 AM, Monday through Sunday (highest on Fridays). The second peak start time is 9:00 AM, Monday through Saturday and 7:00 AM on Sunday.

Exhibit 13: Class Start Times by Day of the Week



On Mondays, the peak time for classes to end is 12:00 PM. On Tuesday through Thursday, most classes end at 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM. On Fridays, most classes end at 3:00 PM; slightly fewer end at 2:00 PM. On Saturdays, most classes end at 12:00 PM, but more than 10 percent of respondents indicated that classes end at 3:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 8:00 PM, or 11:00 PM. On Sundays, most respondents indicated that classes ended at 8:00 PM or 10:00 PM. Other Sunday students are finished with class at 10:00 AM or 12:00 PM.

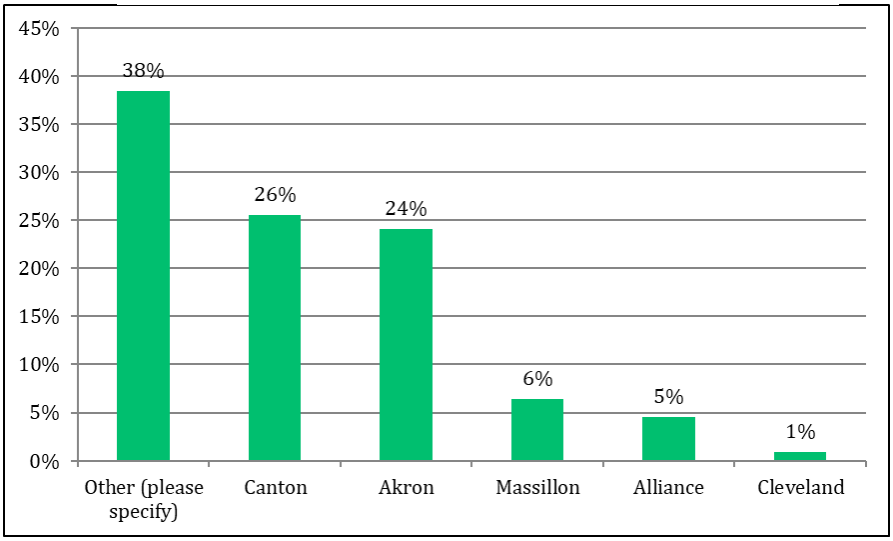
Exhibit 14: Class End Times by Day of the Week



Student Employment and Residences

Approximately 270 students who completed the survey also have a full-time or part-time job. Nearly 40 percent of the student respondents live in communities not listed in the survey (shown below as "other"). Most of the "other" responses were from communities outside of Stark County including Kent, East Liverpool, Carrollton, Wooster, Cuyahoga Falls, and New Philadelphia. Many of the "other" responses were small towns within Stark County. Ninety-five percent of student respondents did not live on campus.

Exhibit 15: Where Do You Live?



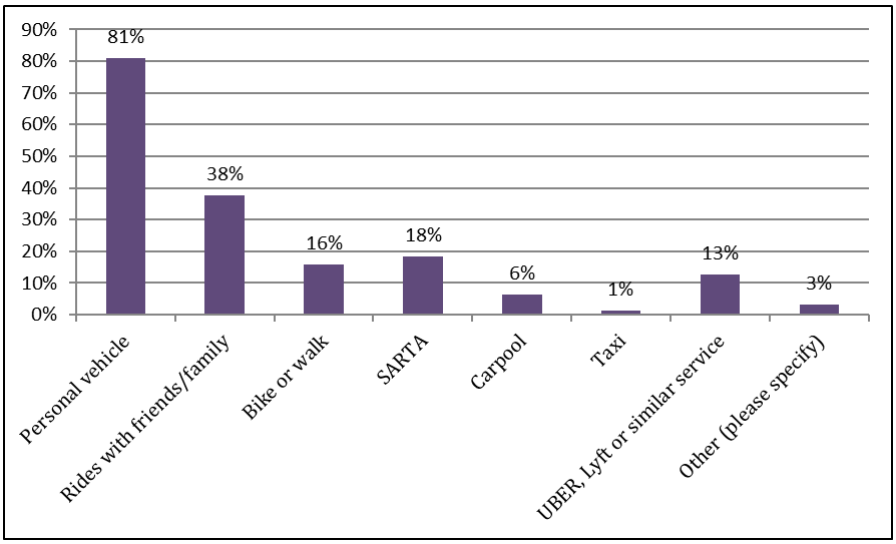
Student and Non-Student Survey Responses

The following charts and paragraphs describe the survey results from all respondents, students and non-students alike. Additional survey topics that are specific to SARTA services are included in the appendix.

Modes of Transportation

Similar to most communities in America, the vast majority (81 percent) of individuals who completed the survey drive their personal vehicle. A significant portion of respondents also rode with friends or family members (38 percent). Eighteen percent of respondents rode SARTA and 16 percent biked or walked. Thirteen percent had used Uber, Lyft or a similar service but only one percent had used a taxi. Six percent of respondents rode in a carpool.

Exhibit 16: Modes Of Transportation Used In The Last 10 Months



Respondents were invited to select all transportation mode options that apply to them, therefore, the results listed in the following exhibit do not total 100%. The results indicate preferences and options for transportation.

Access to Reliable Transportation

Approximately 19 percent of survey respondents indicated they have difficulty getting reliable transportation.

Resources for Information about Available Transportation Services (from any provider)

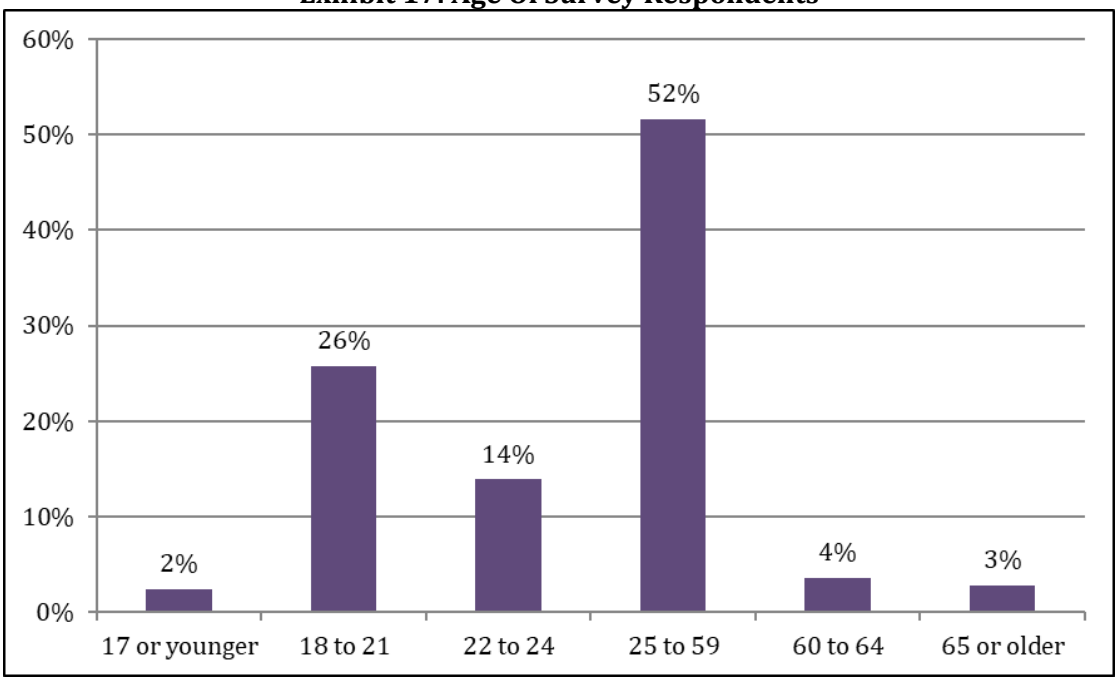
Understanding how people look for information about local transportation services is useful information for transportation planners. Respondents were asked how they typically get information about transportation services when they need a ride. The responses are as follows:

- Not Applicable (48%)
- Transportation provider website (29%)
- Ask a friend, family member or other person (18%)
- Phone call to the transportation provider (10%)
- Other transportation app or social media (9%)
- Organization, such as school or employer (6%)
- Transportation provider Facebook page (4%)
- Other sources (6%)
  - Information pamphlets
  - Google Maps
  - Ask the bus drivers

Demographic Summary

Approximately 96 percent of survey respondents were of the traditional working ages (18 to 64). Seven percent of survey respondents were age 60 or older.

Exhibit 17: Age Of Survey Respondents



PROLINE RIDER SURVEY RESULTS

Proline is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service operated by SARTA for eligible individuals with disabilities. To supplement the public survey results for individuals with disabilities, the coordinated plan utilized input from Proline riders to evaluate unmet transportation needs in the area. The results are provided in the following paragraphs.

A mail-out survey was distributed to 300 registered Proline riders along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Forty-five completed surveys were returned. The results of the survey provide some insights into how people utilize Proline and for what trip purposes.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Summary

The majority of survey respondents reported "Caucasian/White" as their race (72 percent). Near one-quarter (23percent) were "African-American/Black" and two percent were "Other." Approximately 65 percent of survey respondents were age 60 or older.

Exhibit 18: Race

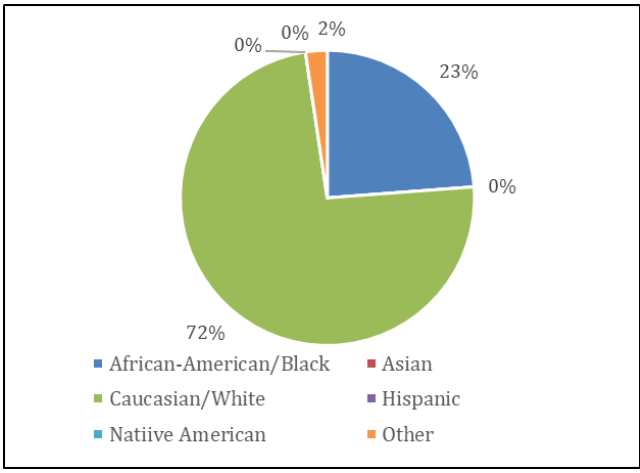
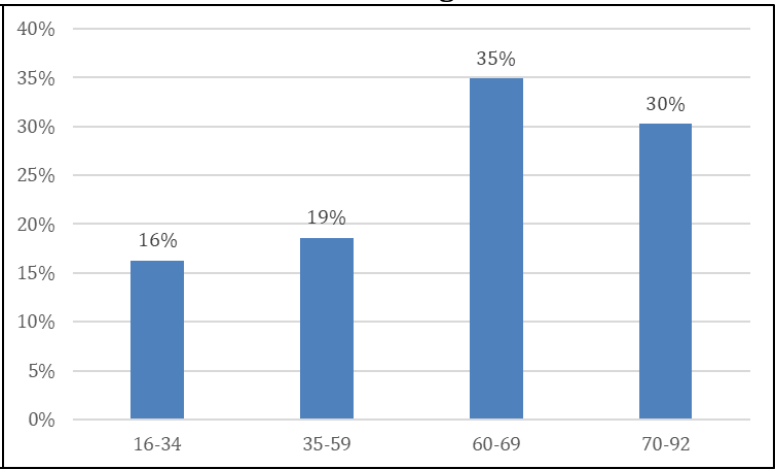


Exhibit 19: Age



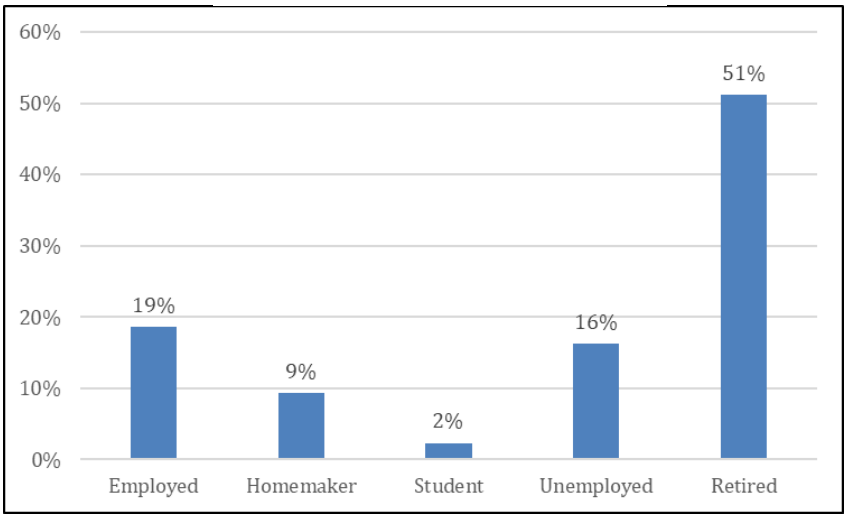
Language and Number of People per Household

One-hundred percent of respondents indicate that English is the language they speak most often at home. Approximately 60 percent of respondents live alone while 23 percent live with one other person in the household. The remaining 17 percent respondents have three or more people living in their household.

Employment

The majority of respondents indicated that they are retired (51 percent). Approximately 19 percent of respondents indicated that they are employed. Of those respondents, 100 percent said that they are able to use Proline to get to and from work every day that they work. However, 33 percent of respondents said that they work on Sunday, when Proline does not operate. It is unclear how those respondents that work on Sunday are getting to and from work.

Exhibit 20: Employment Status



Available Vehicles

Approximately 70 percent of respondents do not have a vehicle at home and 61 percent do not have a valid driver's license.

Rider Characteristics

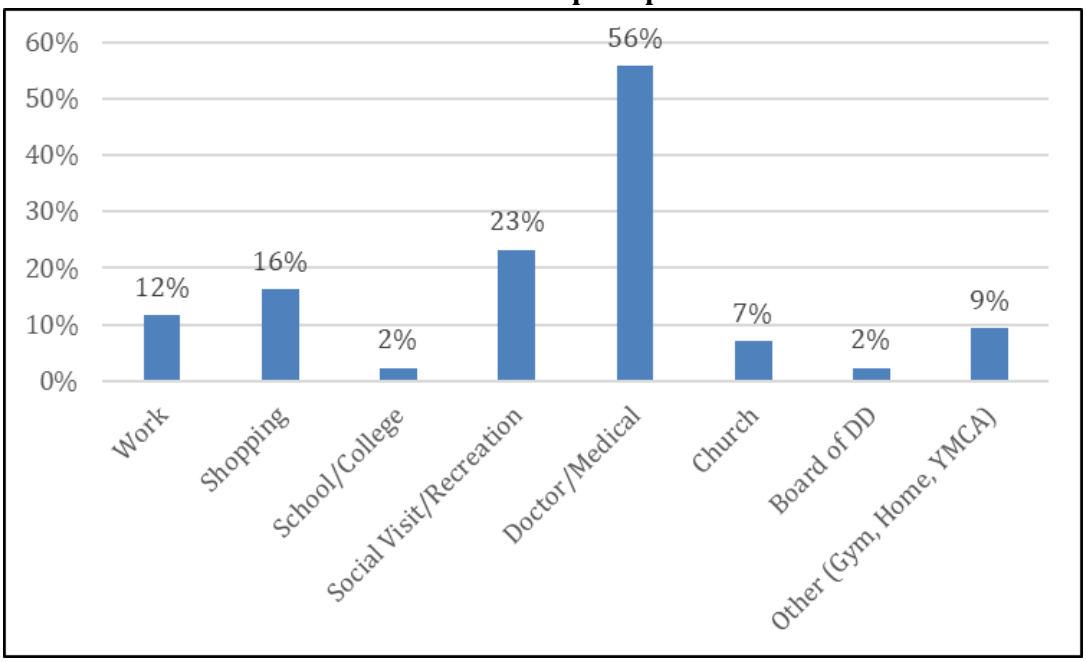
The following list provides information about additional rider characteristics.

- Travels with a personal care attendant (14%)
- Travels with a service animal (0%)
- Schedules rides on Proline by phone (100%)
- Has heard of SARTA's Medline service (15%)
- Is eligible for service under the PASSPORT program (27%)

Trip Purpose

When asked for what purposes they ride Proline, most replied that they use Proline for doctor/medical appointments (56 percent). Social visits, shopping, and work are also common trip purposes.

Exhibit 21: Trip Purpose



Use of Fixed Route Mode of Service

Approximately 65 percent of Proline survey respondents are also able to ride SARTA's fixed route service. Most respondents indicated that they use Proline because they have no other options (fixed

route service does not operate close enough to their home or destination), or because of the convenience that Proline offers.

Service Rating

Service ratings from individuals with disabilities are important to understand because they reflect areas of potential needs or gaps in services for accessible transportation options. Overall, 42 percent of survey respondents rated Proline services as excellent and 32 percent rated the service as good.

- The length of time spent on the vehicle received the lowest satisfaction rating score with 27 percent of respondents rating SARTA fair to poor in this category.
- Getting to appointments on time and getting picked up on time also received relatively low ratings with 13 percent of respondents in each category rating the service as fair to poor.
- The process of scheduling rides on the phone received a relatively low satisfaction score with 12 percent of respondents rating the process as fair to very poor.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND SERVICE GAPS

The following summary outlines the transportation needs and gaps in services identified during the 2014 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update and the 2018/19 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update. Please refer to the complete 2018-19 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update for additional information.

Transportation Needs – Past

The unmet transportation needs and gaps in services identified during the 2014 Coordinated Transportation Plan update are presented in the following tables. The transportation needs in 2014 can be compared to the needs identified in 2018/19 to understand progress that has been made as well as areas of need that still exist.

Transportation needs in 2014 included access to mental health and medical appointments for seniors and people with disabilities of any age. Also, affordable transportation options for employment access as well as transportation options for families with children to access work and child care within a reasonable schedule. Gaps in available transportation services were driven primarily by the need for more direct public transit trips, with fewer transfers; a need for better access to wheelchair accessible transportation; and more options for out-of-county trips.

Table 5: Summary of 2014 Unmet Transportation Needs

2014 Unmet Needs	
Seniors	**Individuals with Disabilities**
• Transporting assisted living residents to medical appointments. • Mature worker safety/weather challenges. • Home-bound individuals unable to get to necessary appointments, social activities. • Elderly mental health patients cannot utilize systems. • Increase in baby boomers. • Increase in senior population. • Transporting assisted living residents to medical appointments	• Dialysis patients and those who have medical appointments on a regular basis. • Mental health clients, patients with sick children. • Individuals with mental health disorders. • Especially to medical treatments between communities. • Disabled person who is under 60 years old. • Access to medical treatment centers – no access to a car; no one to transport. • Increase in people with disabilities. • Individuals with mental health disorders. • Dialysis patients and those who have medical appointments on a regular basis. • More awareness of needs for people with disabilities.

Source: SARTA and SCATS 2014 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

2014 Unmet Needs	
People with Low Incomes • People who are not low income, but cannot pay need to get to work sites. • When we tried to get workers to services that they need. • Low income population – unemployed; seniors; downwardly mobile; multiple destination needs. • Single individuals with no children have no funding stream. • Homeless – many barriers. • Evening appointments. • Job seekers from Alliance and Canton. • Families – multiple transfers on buses – medical appointments. • Cost with combo transport – home-childcare-work. • Multiple children-cost-transfers. • Child illness – from work to child-home-back to work. • Homeless individuals-after hours-motel/shelter. • Students living in shelters can't get home to district. • Unemployed and underemployed.	Veterans • Veterans need transportation to central locations to get them to Cleveland. There is a lack of wheelchair access. • Veterans who are not ambulatory. • Veterans Services Commission lack sufficient capability. • Homeless and unemployed veterans who have transportation needs for work purposes or local VA; need to coordinate veterans services with SARTA and other agencies. • The Veterans Services Commission has been running two 14-passenger vans to transport. 3,000 veterans a year, on a budget $100,000 per year.

Source: SARTA and SCATS 2014 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Table 6: Summary of 2014 Gaps in Transportation Access

2014 Transportation Gaps	
People with Disabilities • More need for wheelchair vehicles; handling of motorized wheelchairs. • Escorts needed for people with disabilities. • Lack of access to wheelchair equipped vehicles • Individualize medical transportation. • Not enough vehicles available to transport large mobility devices. • Drivers – training-medical or mental needs.	Medical • Emergency transportation for seniors. • Medical providers are providing transportation which allows individuals to access medical appointments at no charge. • Individualize medical transportation. • Child illness – from work to child to home to work again.

Source: SARTA and SCATS 2014 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

2014 Transportation Gaps	
Rural and Out-of-County • Limited access to central stops – rural areas. • Rural transportation – coordinated – accessible; affordable; no qualifying factors. • Transportation from rural areas of the county. • Areas of Stark County without bus service. • Job seekers from Alliance – Canton. • Out-of-county travel for medical appointments, employment, social security, and court appearances.	**Fixed Route and Proline** • Families – multiple transfers on buses – medical appointments. • Especially to medical treatments between communities. • Mismatch between school schedules and bus service. • Long bus trips because of need for transfers. • Limited agency funding for transportation assistance for bus passes or for gas. • Buses operating more frequently. • Lack of Sunday or holiday service. • Not being able to afford bus fare. • Public transit coordination between Cleveland/Akron/Canton. • Child care center focus. • Cost to families for transit. • Bus passes for low/no-income (homeless, unemployed, people with disabilities). • Because of losses in funding, holiday and Sunday services were cut - No affordable alternative transportation exists. • Families – multiple transfers on buses – medical appointments. • Cost with combo transit – home-child care-work. • Multiple children-cost-transfers. • Public transit coordination between Cleveland/Akron/Canton. • Evening appointments. • Proline – Wait times or no minutes on phone to wait.

Source: SARTA and SCATS 2014 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Transportation Needs – Present

The unmet transportation needs and gaps in services identified during the 2018-2019 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update are presented below. Seniors, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and people with no or limited access to vehicles continue to need transportation to medical appointments, however, public input did not reveal a high level of need for expansion. While transportation to medical and wellness appointments will be an ongoing need for all of Stark County, more or better access to affordable transportation options for employment, agency appointments, and social activities are also top priority for the public.

Students, seniors, people with disabilities, and the general public need access to work and other locations that are not directly on a bus route or are not currently served during early morning or evening hours when shifts change. Also, the gap between the door of the origin or destination and the nearest transit stop can be a barrier to mobility. Individuals with disabilities would benefit from personalized transportation service and/or aides on the shared ride services.

New employment opportunities are developing throughout the county and affordable transportation options will help to promote access to work for people with low incomes and/or seniors and individuals with disabilities. Similar to the 2013 Needs Assessment, gaps in available transportation services were driven primarily by the need for public transit trips that were more direct, with fewer transfers, a need for more wheelchair accessible services, and transportation options for out-of-county trips for any purpose. In addition to the previously noted gaps, more and more people are indicating that the distance between the nearest bus stop and their origin/destination presents a barrier to using transportation.

Table 7: 2018-2019 Unmet Transportation Needs

2018-2019 Unmet Needs	
Seniors	**Individuals with Disabilities**
• Block Groups with the highest densities of seniors (age 65+) are in Perry Heights, Hills ad Dales, Canton, North Canton, Massillon, Richville, Alliance, and east of Heartsville. • Stark County's population is aging. • There is a high population of veterans in North Canton, many veterans are seniors. • Many seniors from North Canton do not want to drive into downtown Canton but would go there for entertainment or appointments if transportation was convenient. • Approximately 60% of North Canton's population is age 65+; access to transportation services is especially important to this segment of the population for medical, social, and shopping. • People do not understand how to use SARTA or where it serves. • The Senior Ride program should be strengthened. • Transportation options other than driving to and parking at medical facility campuses are needed.	• According to the 2016 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, there were 49,242 individuals with disabilities in Stark County with mobility limitations. • Process for scheduling rides on Proline is a hindrance. • People do not understand how to use SARTA or where they can ride. • Lack of transportation is a significant barrier for employment, particularly for shift work • Personalized transportation for employment is needed. • Transportation options on Sunday are needed for all trip purposes. • Passenger aides or escorts onboard vehicles to assist passengers with disabilities. • Transportation to day programs must be sustained.

Source: 2018-19 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Table 7: 2018-2019 Unmet Transportation Needs (Continued)

2018-2019 Unmet Needs	
People with Low Incomes • 35.5% of households in Stark County earn less than $35,000 annually. Of those households, 6.9% earn less than $10,000 per year - Affordable transportation options are needed for these population groups. • Block Groups with highest densities of households below poverty are in southern Massillon, eastern Alliance, and all areas of Canton. • People who become homeless need transportation to homeless shelters; getting to the shelter in Massillon from neighboring communities is particularly difficult. • Some areas of Alliance are underserved or not served by transportation providers. • Employees working shifts need access to transportation at shift change times. • Individuals with low incomes in Stark County can get to Summit County on transit but not Tuscarawas County. • If the demographic and income trends continue, they will put fiscal strain on every community in the county – more economic activity and a larger tax base are needed.	**Students** • Transportation as late as 10:00 PM for evening classes at Malone University. • 26% of students at local universities/colleges have difficulty finding parking. • 18% of college students have difficulty getting reliable transportation. • Less than 30% of Stark County residents have at least an associate's degree – Affordable and accessible transportation is one barrier to continuing education.

Source: 2018-19 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Table 8: 2018-2019 Unmet Transportation Gaps

2018-2019 Unmet Needs	
Regional Transportation • Transportation into and out of Stark County is needed for all purposes. • 12,649 Summit County residents commute to Stark County for jobs. • 24,414 Stark County residents commute to Summit County for jobs.	**Employment/Economic Development** • Need to focus on employment transportation and include major employers in development of transportation management plans for employees to ride transit to work and/or share rides

Source: 2018-19 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Table 8: 2018-2019 Unmet Transportation Gaps (Continued)

2018-2019 Unmet Needs	
Local Transportation • Direct routes from North Canton to downtown Canton. • Expand hours of operation for transportation services beyond 9:30 PM for entertainment and employment. • Approximately 33% of passengers surveyed wanted buses to run more often. • Transportation options before/after work shifts end. • Improve waiting environments (i.e., shelters and stops) when people are using public transportation. • 16% of people do not know how to use SARTA buses or do not know where SARTA routes go. • 24% of the public want transportation service to be available where they live; they do not know of transportation service where they live if it exists. • Transportation into Stark County from rural surrounding counties and/or from rural portions of Stark County into urbanized cities is an ongoing need and gap in services. • Safe Routes to Schools to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to schools. • More frequent transportation service is needed. • Corridors are well served by buses but people have difficulty getting to/from the bus stop because of the distance from their door to the stop.	**General** • Individuals of working age in North Canton need to travel to Akron or Cleveland for work. • North Canton and Jackson Township are likely to be destinations for employment and entertainment. The travel time between the two communities requires a transfer and is lengthy for working families and individuals. • People need to go to Canton from other communities for counseling services. • People who become homeless need transportation to the homeless shelter in Massillon from neighboring communities. • Some areas of Alliance are underserved or not served by transportation providers. • Employees working shifts need access to transportation at shift change times. • The time it takes to get from one location to another on public transit must be reduced to make using transit more practical, especially for employment-related trips. • Enhanced travel training for people to learn to ride transit. • More capacity for connectivity with bicyclists and transit.

Source: 2018-19 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

The gaps in service acknowledged by stakeholders are intended to identify areas for future direction, and are not a criticism of SARTA or any other transportation or mobility service. This planning process is intended to identify goals and strategies that can be implemented through a coordinated effort to address transportation needs. It is clear from stakeholder input that the Stark County community and the region respects the efforts of SARTA as a leader in transportation services and as an entity that considers the goals and plans of the local and regional communities in its own planning efforts.

The next chapter includes a range of suggested goals and strategies to address the identified needs and gaps in services with a coordinated transportation effort.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The goals and strategies outlined in this chapter were developed and evaluated with input from local stakeholders and the project steering committee to address the identified unmet transportation needs, gaps in service, and access to mobility options. The strategies were developed with consideration of the existing network of transportation options. Strategies and priorities were presented at a public meeting. Approximately 30 members of the general public participated in the final public meeting and provided feedback that has been incorporated into this document.

Seven coordinated transportation goals were identified for Stark County. Multiple strategies for achieving each goal are identified in this chapter. Most of the strategies require additional revenue for implementation and sustainability of service. The estimated cost for implementing and sustaining the strategies and potential revenue sources are included with each strategy and summarized in the conclusion of this report. Revenue sources for service enhancements include a combination of Federal, local and state funding. The majority of the suggested strategies will not be possible without additional funding and/or re-alignment or adjustment to existing SARTA services. For example, SARTA will be evaluating paratransit service changes or the introduction of new modes of service where fixed route bus operations are underperforming so that it can consider reallocating existing funds while continuing to provide mobility services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

The goals and strategies included in this chapter are as follows:

Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program administration practices.

Strategy 1.1: Rejuvenate the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee.
Strategy 1.2: Strengthen regional coordinated transportation.

Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton and surrounding communities.

Strategy 2.1: Airport and Hall of Fame access.
Strategy 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit.
Strategy 2.3: Autonomous vehicle technology.

Goal #3: Implement enhanced transportation assistant service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners.

Strategy 3.1: Enhanced companions/ride-a-long companion.
Strategy 3.2: Coordinated Free Friday/Saturday service.
Strategy 3.3: Travel Training videos.
Strategy 3.4: Add SARTA bus shelters.
Strategy 3.5: Improve accessibility for bicyclists.

Goal #4: Strengthen regional connectivity.

Strategy 4.1: Add feeder service to the Route 81 Express Bus.
Strategy 4.2: Expand hours of operation for the Route 81 Express Bus.
Strategy 4.3: Increase frequency on the Route 81 Express Bus.

Goal #5: Transportation services to support employers and employees working at the Main-Sawburg-Glamorgan Corridor, Alliance.

Strategy 5.1: Bring transit services closer to the employers with a route change or first/last mile partnership.
Strategy 5.2: Reduce travel time for riders on Route 139.
Strategy 5.3: Increase frequency and expand hours of service for routes that feed into Route 139.
Strategy 5.4: Address shifts that begin or end before/after current hours of transit operation.

Goal #6: Coordinated with the City of Massillon downtown development efforts.

Strategy 6.1: Support City of Massillon developments and trends.

Goal #7: Address Sunday Service needs.

Strategy 6.2: Add Sunday service and create a brokerage with partner providers.

Table 9 provides a matrix that associates the unmet needs and gaps in transportation with the respective proposed goals and strategies. Priority levels for each goal were identified through a strategic meeting with the project steering committee and presented to the SARTA Board of Directors and the general public.

Table 9: Summary of Unmet Needs or Gaps in Transportation Services

Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Mobility Services	Goal Identified to Address the Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Service	Priority Level
Regional Transportation Needs		
Improve transportation between Stark County and destinations outside of the county.	**Goal #4: Regional Transit Connectivity** 4.1: Feeder service to Route 81 Express Bus 4.2: Expand hours of operation for Route 81 Express Bus 4.3: Increase frequency on Route 81	Moderately low
Add service to/from Cleveland (earlier and later on weekdays and service on Saturdays).	**Goal #4: Regional Transit Connectivity** 4.2: Expand Hours of Operation on Route 81 Express Bus	Moderately low
Expand coordination activities between the three MPOs in the region for transit planning and funding opportunities.	**Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program administration practices** 1.2: Strengthen regional coordinated transportation	Top priority

Regional Transportation Needs (Continued)		
Expand regional transit service to include Canton – Akron – Cleveland connectivity for employment and entertainment purposes.	**Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program administration practices** 1.2: Strengthen regional coordinated transportation **Goal#4: Strengthen Regional Transit Connectivity** 4.1: Feeder service to Route 81 Express Bus 4.2: Expand hours of operation for Route 81 Express Bus 4.3: Increase frequency on Route 81	Goal #1 = Top priority Goal #4 = Moderately low priority

Table 9: Summary of Unmet Needs or Gaps in Transportation Services (Continued)

Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Mobility Services	Goal Identified to Address the Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Service	Priority Level
Enhanced Stark County Transportation Service		
Reduce overall passenger travel time.	**Goal #5: Enhanced service to support employers and employees** 5.2: Reduce travel time for riders on Route 139 5.4: Address shifts that begin or end before/after current hours of service **Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton** 2.1: Airport and Hall of Fame access 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit (& beyond)	Goal #5 = Moderately high Goal #2 = Moderate
Implement expanded transit services between the Akron-Canton Airport, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and downtown Canton.	**Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton** 2.1: Airport and Hall of Fame access 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit (& beyond) 2.3: Autonomous vehicle technology	Moderate
Enhance transit services in the western part of the county, between Massillon and Navarre to support planned development of 350-acre plot of farmland.	**Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton** 2.1: Airport and Hall of Fame access 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit **Goal #6: Coordinate with City of Massillon downtown development efforts** 6.1: Support Massillon developments and trends	Goal #2: Moderate Goal #6 = Moderately high
Enhance transportation services in Belden Village to better serve the employees of hospitality and entertainment businesses.	**Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton and surrounding communities** 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit 2.3: Autonomous vehicle technology	Moderate

Enhanced Stark County Transportation Service (Continued)		
Provide additional transportation services within North Canton to better serve the aging population and also to serve the future residents and businesses in the Hoover development.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.1: Enhanced companions 3.3: Travel training videos **Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton and surrounding communities** 2.2: Jackson Township microtransit (and beyond) **Goal #4: Strengthen regional transit connectivity** 4.1: Add feeder service to Route 81 4.2: Expand hours of operation for Route 81	Goal #3 = Moderately high Goal #2 = Moderate Goal #4 = Moderately low
Enhance transit services in Alliance to better support employers in the Main Street corridor beginning at Rockhill Ave. to Sawburg Ave. and Glamorgan St.	**Goal #5: Enhanced service to support employers and employees** 5.1: Bring transit closer to the employers 5.2: Reduce travel time for riders on Route 139 5.3: Increase frequency and expand hours of service for routes that feed into Route 139 5.4: Address shifts that begin or end before/after current hours of service	Moderate
Incorporate SARTA and other modes of public transportation in the Massillon Downtown Streetscape project planning by incorporating transit as an additional economic development attraction.	**Goal #6: Coordinate with City of Massillon downtown development efforts** 6.1: Support Massillon developments and trends	Moderately high
Add transit services for special events in Stark County.	**Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth in Canton** 2.1: Airport and Hall of Fame access	Moderate
Improve transit, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to schools.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.1: Travel Training videos 3.5: Improve accessibility for bicyclists	Moderately low

Enhanced Stark County Transportation Service (Continued)		
Focus on employment transportation and include major employers in the development of transportation management plans for employees to ride transit to work and/or share rides.	**Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program administration** 1.1: Rejuvenate the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee 1.2: Strengthen regional coordinated transportation **Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth** 2.2: Airport and Hall of Fame access 2.3: Jackson Township microtransit (and beyond)	Goal #1 = High Goal #2 = Moderate
Extend hours of transportation services beyond 9:30 PM so that people can ride to go to dinner or entertainment events.	**Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth** 2.2: Airport and Hall of Fame access	Moderate
Add transportation services on Sundays (for example, in the area of SARTA route 151).	**Goal #7: Address demand for Sunday transportation service** 7.1: Add Sunday service and create a brokerage with partner providers	Low
Encourage collaboration between SARTA and local communities to provide community-centered transit services when routes are not appropriate.	**Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program administration** 1.1: Rejuvenate the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee 1.2: Strengthen regional coordinated transportation **Goal #2: Build a local transportation network that is prepared to support growth** 2.3: Jackson Township microtransit (and beyond)	Goal #1 = High Goal #2 = Moderate

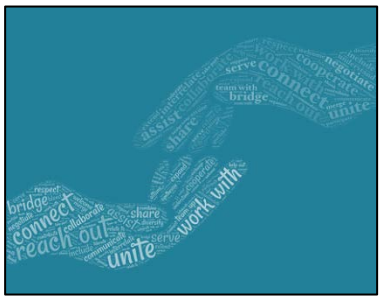
Table 9: Summary of Unmet Needs or Gaps in Transportation Services (Continued)

Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Mobility Services	Goal Identified to Address the Identified Unmet Needs or Gaps in Service	Priority Level
SARTA Service Enhancements		
Improve SARTA passenger waiting environments with more shelters. The transfer centers are nice but the bus stops need better amenities.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.4: Add SARTA bus shelters	Moderately low
SARTA Service Enhancements (Continued)		
Increase the frequency of SARTA buses. Approximately 33 percent of riders wanted buses to run more often. Also, reports from Department of Job and Family Services indicate that employees that work shifts often wait extensive amounts of time before/after their shift because of the route schedule.	**Goal #5: Enhanced service to support employers and employees** 5.3: Increase frequency and expand hours of service for routes that feed into Route 139 5.4: Address shifts that begin or end before/after current hours of transit operations	Moderate
Standardize SARTA driver training customer service standards and policies regarding free rides.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.2: Coordinate Free Friday/Saturday service 3.3: Travel training videos	Moderately low
Provide enhanced travel training so that people learn to ride fixed routes.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.3: Travel training videos	Moderately low
To encourage connectivity with bicyclists, SARTA should incrementally replace the two-bike racks with racks that will hold three bikes.	**Goal #3: Enhanced transportation service for SARTA passengers and coordination partners** 3.5: Improve accessibility for bicyclists	Moderately low

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

SARTA intends to create a centralized mobility management structure and lead implementation of coordinated transportation goals and strategies with support from an active Stark County Coordinated Transportation Committee.

As the mobility manager for the region, SARTA envisions that transportation services in the area will, at minimum, achieve the following goals:



- Meet the needs of riders impacted by the restructure of SARTA services.
- Achieve the goals set in the Coordinated Plan.
- Attract new riders to public and coordinated transportation.
- Drive economic growth and job creation in Stark County.

To support its progress toward Mobility Management goals, SARTA will acquire technology and vehicles that will enable it to offer micro-transit and on-demand services so Stark County will have a more reliable, safer, affordable network of mobility options. SARTA intends to enter into mutually beneficial agreements with other transportation providers when necessary.

COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Each potential strategy is intended to help the transportation stakeholders in Stark County achieve coordinated transportation goals together and to promote effective Mobility Management. With input from the general public, project steering committee and SARTA Board of Directors, the goals and strategies have been prioritized into an action plan for coordinating to improve mobility. Timelines for implementation are based on the likelihood of available revenue to implement and sustain the strategy, funding cycles of identified revenue streams, and active participation from responsible parties.

Goal #1: Improve Mobility Management and Modify Section 5310 Program Administration Practices

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, as authorized under 49 U.S.C. Section 5310 is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program to fund capital costs for eligible organizations that assist in meeting the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities where existing transportation is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient.

This program is typically used to purchase vehicles used primarily for transportation of seniors and individuals with disabilities. However, funding is also available for mobility management activities

that are completed to improve the effectiveness of the local coordinated transportation network of resources. Both vehicles and mobility management activities are eligible under the program as capital expenses and require a 20% local match. Local match can be derived from non-U.S. Department of Transportation Federal programs (i.e., Job and Family Services, Older Americans Act, other), State funds, and local sources. The remaining 80% of project costs are paid through the Federal Section 5310 program funds that are allocated to a sub-recipient.

In Stark County, the Section 5310 program funds are managed jointly by the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) and the Stark Regional Transit Authority (SARTA). A group comprised of transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit) and human service agencies form the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee which assists in management of this funding program in Stark County.

In recent years, participation in the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee has declined and is primarily limited to applicants for the Section 5310 program funding and the program administrators (SCATS and SARTA). A Coordination Committee with active participation and meaningful action items can be a significant asset to the Stark County communities as they continue to experience growth and development trends.

While SARTA is widely respected as the primary transportation provider for the area, fixed route transportation service cannot satisfy all of the unmet needs and gaps in mobility. Rather, a family of services such as those used or provided by human service agencies, private operators, non-profit agencies, and faith-based organizations are necessary to address gaps in access to mobility. Other partners such as Chambers of Commerce and local employers also play an important role in a successful coordinating committee because they can help the transportation providers prepare for changes in employment opportunities, housing development, or just by sharing what they know about transportation with their clients and peers. Innovative ideas come from collaboration and the Coordination Committee is the place for collaboration to happen.

Strategy 1.1: Rejuvenate the Stark County Mobility Coordination Committee

SARTA and SCATS will develop a new mission statement for the Mobility Coordination Committee. Membership on the committee will be open to public, private and non-profit transportation providers, as well as seniors and individuals with disabilities and advocates for those groups. It will provide a networking opportunity and staging ground for innovative transportation improvements throughout Stark County and its unique communities. Participation in the committee and attendance at quarterly meetings will be required for any agency that intends to apply for Section 5310 funding.

Action Steps:

- The Committee will meet quarterly to provide input for specialized transportation improvements and to share information concerning shared-ride and/or public transportation services.
- The Committee will discuss the geographic, time of day, accessibility, and mode of service needs and opportunities throughout Stark County and work together to make recommendations on how to meet those needs in a coordinated manner.

- A sub-committee will be created to actively identify and inform potential new coordinated transportation partners that would support the implementation of strategies identified in this plan and other strategies that are subsequently identified.
- Committee members will inform new partner organizations of the opportunity to apply for funding with the Section 5310 program or other opportunities.
- Participants in the committee also become aware of transportation funding opportunities.

Priority Level: Top Priority

Implementation Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Additional funding is not required.

Potential Revenue Sources: Section 5310 Program funding for program administration.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, SCATS, local agencies, planning organizations, transportation providers, advocates, employers, and the public (especially current transit riders).

SCATS will be responsible for advertising, scheduling, and facilitating the meetings with agenda development support from SARTA. SCATS will be responsible for reviewing and approving applications for membership and monitoring participation.

Strategy 1.2: Strengthen Regional Coordinated Transportation

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is investigating the merits of developing a regional structure for coordinated human services transportation to assess the potential financial efficiencies of service provision and enhance mobility options for the residents of Ohio. The ODOT, Office of Transit has long known that the significant amount of resources applied at the local level could not solve larger scale challenges of mobility within the budget available for coordinated transportation and mobility management. A working group, comprised of representatives from the Ohio Departments of Transportation, Medicaid, Job and Family Services, and the Governor's Office on Health Transformation has provided research and data that contributed to the recommendations for regionalized Human Services Transportation. After significant study and consideration of goals established by the working group, ODOT created new boundaries for Human Services Transportation Coordination (HSTC) based on a combination of travel movement in Ohio, Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Managed Care Organizations (MCO), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), and Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) boundaries.

Based on analysis of travel movement, local demographic and socio-economic data, and existing regional boundaries for various programs, it is apparent that the regional boundary that includes Stark County would actually include a larger region, with Stark County geographically located in the southern portion. This larger regional boundary encompasses the majority of traffic flow patterns for northeastern Ohio. The region includes:

Immediate Area:

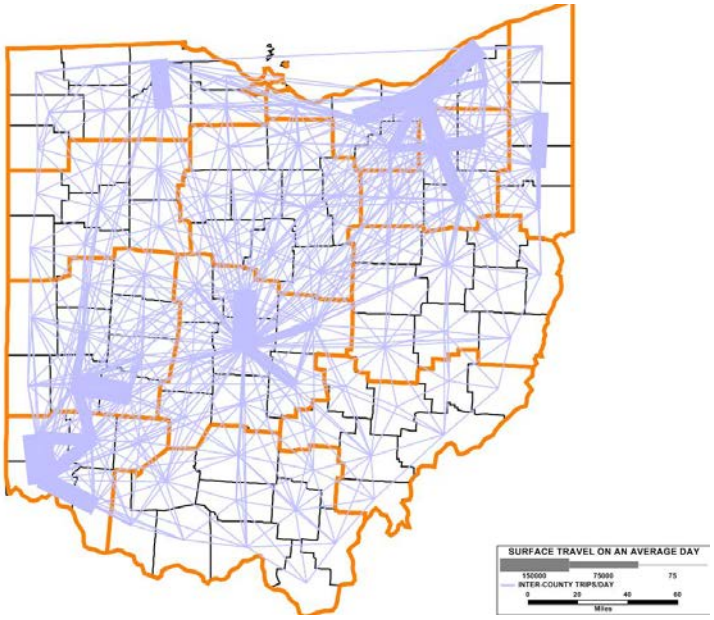
- Stark County
- Wayne County
- Portage County
- Summit County

Adjacent Area (North):

- Medina County
- Erie County
- Lorain County
- Cuyahoga County
- Geauga County
- Lake County

Adjacent Area (East):

- Ashtabula County
- Trumbull County
- Mahoning County
- Columbiana County



The immediate area has the highest concentration of traffic flow between those counties. The adjacent regions also have significant traffic flow to/from Stark County, but with less volume and/or greater demographic or planning differences than the immediate area counties.

While the Coordinating Committee will focus primarily on Stark County transportation needs, the needs for surrounding areas must not be ignored. Participation from State-agencies on the Regional council will serve participants well when seeking to establish new regional coordinated mobility services and to secure new sources of funding to sustain those efforts.

Action Steps:

- A sub-group of the Stark County Coordinating Committee will participate in a larger Regional Coordinating Council that involves the immediate area and/or adjacent areas.

- The Regional Council will have similar roles and responsibilities as the Stark County Coordinated Committee, but with expanded membership, will have a larger scope.

Priority Level: Top Priority

Implementation Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Budget for travel time, agenda development, and labor to participate in meetings will be provided by participating agencies either through Section 5310 Program administrative funding or as in-kind match.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Section 5310 Program.

Responsible Parties: Participants on the Regional Coordinating Council should include SARTA, SCATS, mobility managers from surrounding counties, NEORide, and state-appointed representatives from AAA, JFS, MCOs, and RTPOs.

Goal #2: Build a Local Transportation Network that is Prepared to Support Growth in Canton and Surrounding Stark County Communities

Strategy 2.1: Increased Frequency of Fixed Route Service for Airport and Hall of Fame Access

The planned expansion of the Football Hall of Fame will attract thousands of visitors and employers to the Canton area. Currently, SARTA Routes 81 (Canton-Akron Express) and 117 connect the Airport, downtown Canton, and the Football Hall of Fame. The Football Hall of Fame is a 7- to 10-minute walk from the nearest SARTA Route 117 stop.

Action Steps:

- **Option 1**: Increase headways on Route 117 to approximately 30 minutes by adding a second bus on the route in each direction. This service would support employees and visitors.

- **Option 2**: During events and peak hours of for the Hall of Fame, SARTA will offer two express loops connecting Downtown Canton and the Football Hall of Fame and associated restaurants, hotels and businesses. Express loops will operate on a 10-minute frequency.

Priority Level: Moderate

Implementation Timeframe: 3 to 4 years, contingent upon funding.

Estimated Budget/Expense:

Option 1, increased headways on Route 11: Implementation would essentially double the cost of operating the route today. At the rate of $95.27 per revenue hour, the estimated annual cost to increase frequency would be approximately $457,296. If service were increased only during peak hours, the cost would be reduced proportionately.

Option 2, initiate two express loops that would be operated by SARTA at the system's fully allocated cost of service: The loop service would be operated at the fixed route cost of approximately $95.27 per revenue vehicle hour. If the service is operated with a smaller vehicle, the cost would be adjusted. Operating each loop 12 hours per day, seven days a week (including Sundays) would require an annual operating budget (not including the cost of vehicles) of approximately $3 to $5 Million.

One to two expansion vehicles would also be required for this strategy. A 40-foot CNG vehicle costs approximately $570,000.

Potential Revenue Sources: Potential local revenue sources to support the service expansion of SARTA should be derived from local employers, businesses, the City of Canton, the Airport, and Chambers of Commerce. SARTA will also utilize FTA Section 5307, 5339 and other existing revenue sources, as available. Potential also exists to utilize Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding because operation of the loops should reduce car traffic. However, CMAQ funding is limited to three years and will not be available to sustain the loops long term. Without additional

sustainable revenue, SARTA will need to reduce, change or eliminate services on other, less productive, routes to support this expansion.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, Football Hall of Fame, City of Canton, Canton Chamber of Commerce, and Stark County Commissioners.

Strategy 2.2: Jackson Township Microtransit and Potential Expansion to Other Areas

Microtransit is an emerging transit industry practice that uses technology to offer flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling with vehicles that are smaller than the traditional fixed route bus. There are a growing number of successful examples of Microtransit, including the apparently successful model implemented by the Greater Dayton RTA.

The microtransit options provides SARTA and local stakeholders with the option to expand services without purchase of additional vehicles if multiple local private and non-profit operators choose to join the brokerage. Therefore, SARTA may consider implementing Microtransit in other portions of the service area where fixed route service is not meeting performance standards and/or ridership goals.

Action Steps:

- Explore transit demand in Jackson Township and other communities not served by fixed routes or those that are served by fixed routes but the routes are under productive.
- SARTA will explore opportunities to expand it modes of service and/or partner with private or non-profit transportation providers that will operate microtransit trips on-demand.
    - Microtransit trips will feed into designated SARTA bus stops so that the passenger can continue his or her trip on a SARTA bus.
- Purchase technology platforms, as necessary, to manage the implementation of microtransit services.
- Establish a fare structure and payment method for passengers to pay the fare using SARTA's fare structure and media.

Priority Level: Moderate

Implementation Timeframe: One year.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Annual operating costs are estimated to be $100,000 plus capital costs for implementation (up to 6 small vehicles) projected at $100,000. Additional costs for technology to incorporate microtransit into the mobility management app are also possible. The cost of this program would be scalable to the needs of the service area. Once SARTA and its partners determine the program parameters, and refine the estimated potential demand, a total budget could be derived. The cost of the program would be based on the determined subsidy structure, and the underlying demand.

Potential Revenue Sources: Service provided by SARTA or by contracted private or non-profit operators will be subsidized with FTA Section 5307 funding and a share of SARTA's local tax

revenue. Additional funding to support the service expansion will also be needed and can be derived from communities and employers in Jackson Township that are benefiting from the service expansion and passenger fares.

Because Microtransit can operate at a lower cost and with smaller vehicles compared to fixed routes that are not generating adequate levels of ridership, SARTA may also re-allocate existing operating and capital dollars from its budget by reducing the underproductive fixed route bus services (and complementary paratransit) and replacing the fixed routes with microtransit.

Responsible Parties: SARTA will establish the program and develop contracts with transportation providers, as appropriate. SARTA will schedule the trips and broker them to the appropriate provider. Providers will be responsible for collecting/tracking passenger fare revenue and reporting all statistics to SARTA. SARTA will establish a fare structure for microtransit.

Strategy 2.3: Autonomous Vehicle Technology Pilot

The autonomous vehicle will shuttle passengers along a selected corridor. This alternative is recommended as part of the family of innovative solutions that SARTA is seeking as it enhances mobility options for local residents and visitors and supports the economic development of Canton and all of Stark County.

Action Steps:

- SARTA and its community partners will explore the potential of implementing autonomous vehicle technology for transportation between Downtown Canton and the Football Hall of Fame along the roadway owned by the City of Canton.
- SARTA along with its local partners on this effort will contact ODOT's DriveOhio project (drive.ohio.gov) to explore opportunities to include the AV pilot program for Stark County in Ohio's smart mobility initiative and to request guidance from DriveOhio about building collaboratives with the appropriate partners.
- Potential funding for the pilot program must be identified. SARTA's participation in DriveOhio and its consultation with current AV projects in Ohio may provide opportunities for attracting potential funding partners.

Priority Level: Moderate

Implementation Timeline: 3 to 5 years. Implementation could be expedited if funding sources are identified sooner.

Estimated Budget/Expense: This is a new technology and service with few examples to use as a reference for estimating the budget. However, in Toledo, a similar 3-year pilot program recently received a $1.8 million grant. It is projected, at the time of this report, that SARTA's expenses would be similar to those of the Toledo pilot project.

Potential Revenue Sources: Potential grant funding from the automobile industry, the Federal Highway Administration, and support from local stakeholders (businesses, government, economic

development) will be required to explore the potential for autonomous vehicle technology in Stark County. Planning funds for pilot projects are available to eligible applicants. On-going operating revenue for the program, once established, would need to be identified because the existing SARTA budget does not include autonomous vehicle technology.

Responsible Parties: SARTA would lead the effort with support from local partners including universities, City of Canton, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Stark County, the Hall of Fame, ODOT, and other state and local entities.

Goal #3: Enhanced Transportation Service for SARTA and Coordinated Transportation Partners

Strategy 3.1: Enhanced Companion/Ride-Along

Making transportation services safer and more available for passengers with disabilities is a significant quality of life improvement for the passenger and his or her family members. SARTA's Proline service provides a valuable resource for passengers who are unable to utilize the fixed route bus on a regular or periodic basis. SARTA, however, seeks to provide a higher level of service to address the transportation needs of individuals that are also unable to safely use Proline.

Action Steps:

- SARTA will provide three to four qualified companions, upon request, to specific Proline services for passengers of any age who require additional assistance navigating the trip. Service requests may come from agencies that serve the consumer.
- Establish guidelines for the companion program at SARTA or other coordinated transportation partner agencies.
    - SARTA's program or any program developed by partner organizations should be developed in cooperation with the Ohio Board of Developmental Disabilities, Autism Society of Ohio, and the Department of Education.
    - Similar programs are available from senior center programs and certain Board of Developmental Disabilities services throughout Ohio. Commercially, Enhanced Companion Programs are offered to assist seniors or individuals with special needs as they travel by plane.

Priority Level: Moderately low priority.

Implementation Timeframe: Could be implemented in the short term if funding is identified.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Expenses will include salary and training for the Enhanced Companions. Estimated annual operating costs for the program (including 3 to 4 Companions) range from $10,000 to $25,000.

Potential Revenue Sources: Section 5310 Program funding, Human Services Coordinated Research Funding (applications were due November 13, 2018), and funding from Ohio Board of Developmental Disabilities, local foundations and organizations serving individuals with disabilities.

Responsible Parties: SARTA will work with partnering agencies to develop the scope of services and training requirements for the companion. SARTA will hire and train the companion(s). Training for the companion(s) will be coordinated between partnering agencies.

Strategy 3.2: Coordinate up to 26 Free Friday/Saturday Service Days on SARTA

Free rides on Fridays are a popular benefit (and incentive) for SARTA riders. Many of SARTA's regular riders have low incomes and place a high value on their transit services. SARTA will work with local partners to offer more Free Friday/Saturday service for passengers. Through

sponsorships from employers, businesses, and communities, SARTA will work to increase the number of Free Friday/Saturday opportunities. In exchange for sponsoring the free rides, SARTA will promote the name of all contributing organizations in its Free Fare announcements.

Priority Level: Moderately low priority.

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Based on current fare revenue earned on Fridays and Saturdays, the estimated annual expenses for 26 free Fridays and Saturdays per year range from $111,800 to $145,000. Sponsorship of a free fare day on SARTA would be comparative to the amount of fares SARTA would have received on that day.

Potential Revenue Sources: Contributions from sponsoring businesses, communities and/or employers. Contributions would be given in exchange for advertising for the sponsoring agency on SARTA's free fare promotional ads.

Responsible Parties: SARTA is the lead agency with input from partner agencies.

Strategy 3.3: Travel Training Enhancements

An experienced trainer provides SARTA travel training throughout the service area on a regular basis. However, many individuals who completed the public survey indicated that they do not know how to use public transit. SARTA will continue to enhance travel training efforts and strive to reach additional members of the public. In particular, SARTA will develop travel training videos that are available through the trainer as well as short videos that can be played through the SARTA website. Travel training videos can be targeted to older adults, individuals with disabilities, employers, youth, schools, and/or the general public.

Priority Level: Moderately high priority.

Implementation Timeframe: One year and ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: The cost of video production would be conducted internally to SARTA. This cost is an expansion of SARTA's current travel training budget and would be contingent upon the number, length, and quality of videos produced.

Potential Revenue Sources: SARTA mobility management budget and other training resources. Travel training is a mobility management expense and could be eligible for FTA Section 5310 capital funding which requires a 20% local match. Local match can be derived from any eligible non-U.S. Department of Transportation source, including other Federal, state and local dollars.

Responsible Parties: SARTA.

Strategy 3.4: Add SARTA Bus Shelters

The SARTA Service Standards and Policies identify minimum requirements for SARTA bus shelter placement. However, SARTA passengers and community stakeholders have identified a need for additional shelters so that passengers have a better waiting environment. Indeed, bus shelters are a nice amenity for passengers and they can also be a benefit to the business or community where they are placed, if that business or community is seeking to encourage the use of public transit. SARTA will evaluate its Service Standards and Policies regarding placement of shelters. Also, local communities and businesses will be given an opportunity to purchase and sponsor the maintenance of a new bus shelter.

Action Steps:

- SARTA will add up to 10 shelters/year according to its Service Standards and Policies.

Priority Level: Moderately high priority.

Implementation Timeframe: One year and ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Estimated capital expenses are $80,000 per year. SARTA bus shelters, including cement and shelter installation cost approximately $8,000 each.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Section 5307 Program funding, local tax revenue, and contributions from businesses or local communities that purchase and sponsor the maintenance of a new bus shelter.

Responsible Parties: SARTA and partnering sponsors.

Strategy 3.5: Improve Accessibility for Bicyclists

Action Steps:

- SARTA vehicles are equipped with bike racks for two bikes per vehicle. As bike racks are replaced or expansion vehicles are purchased, SARTA will purchase racks that have capacity for up to three bikes. This expansion will help bike riders who include transit in their commute.

Priority Level: Moderate priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 1 to 5 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: SARTA bike racks with capacity for three bikes. Costs vary by vendor.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Section 5307 Program funding, local tax revenue, and contributions from businesses or local communities that purchase and sponsor the maintenance of a new bus shelter.

Responsible Parties: SARTA.

Goal #4: Strengthen Regional Transit Connectivity

Stark County is part of a vibrant region for employment, entertainment and innovation in northeastern Ohio. While Canton and other communities in Stark County continue to experience new growth in industry, they are becoming more attractive to residents and businesses from surrounding counties. Adequate transportation services to enable employees and potential work force to access Stark County's businesses will support economic development and stability. Likewise, supporting opportunities for Stark County residents to travel to larger centers of industry or education in Akron and Cleveland areas is equally important to sustainability.

Access to entertainment venues in Stark, Summit and Cuyahoga Counties is also an important aspect of the quality of life in the region. Adequate and affordable transportation options will support development and participation in entertainment venues such as concert venues, theatre, sports, and shopping/dining. The following strategies are intended to support regional development and quality of life.

Strategy 4.1: Add Feeder Service to the Route 81 Express Bus between Canton and Akron

SARTA Operates Route 81 with express service between Cornerstone in Canton and the Akron Metro Transit Center in Akron. Stops at Belden Village, the Akron-Canton Airport, and Staples, Arlington Road occur every hour. Stakeholder input from Ohio Means Jobs suggested growth in employment opportunities in the area of Route 81 are increasing but the jobs are not located near a bus stop.

Feeder services are typically provided with smaller vehicles that will meet the main bus line at a designated stop to connect passengers with the bus line and an employer, medical center, or other location that is nearby but not within reasonable walking distance of the bus stop.

Priority Level: Moderate priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 3 to 4 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Estimated annual operating costs are $30,000 based on SARTA as the operator of the feeder services.

Potential Revenue Sources: Feeder services that are open to the public are eligible for FTA section 5307 Program funding. If the services are primarily implemented to support older adults and individuals with disabilities, they may also be eligible for Section 5310 Program funding. If FTA funding is utilized, local matching funds should be provided by a combination of resources including the businesses, communities, or organizations that are directly benefiting from the service. Alternatively, feeder services could be funded entirely with private funding and provided exclusively for employees or consumers of the organization funding the service.

Responsible Parties: Feeder services could be provided directly by SARTA or through coordinated agreements between SARTA and another eligible public, private, or non-profit transportation operator. Feeder service schedules would be arranged between the service provider and the

employer, medical facility, or other primary destination. Feeder services could be developed by/for specific businesses or industrial parks, or for communities, medical facilities, or other groups.

Strategy 4.2: Expand Hours of Operation for the Route 81 Express Bus

To more completely address transportation opportunities for entertainment, expand hours of operation of the Route 81 Express Bus until 12:40 AM on Fridays and Saturdays. The route currently operates until 9:40 PM, Monday through Saturday. If demand warrants further expansion and funding is available, additional hours could be added.

Option: This expansion could be implemented as a pilot project for a minimum of three years.

Priority Level: Moderately low priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 3 to 4 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: At a cost per revenue vehicle hour of $95.27, and an expansion of 300 hours per year (6 hours per week for 50 weeks), would cost approximately $28,581 annually.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Section 5307 and local matching funds.

Responsible Parties: SARTA.

Strategy 4.3: Increased Frequency on Route 81 Express Bus

Currently, frequency on the SARTA Express Route 81 is 60 minutes. The route is marketed as an express route and has five stops. SARTA will explore the opportunity to add frequency to the service by making the existing route the "Canton-Akron Express Local" and adding a more direct route that would operate on approximately 30- to 40-minute headways during peak hours. The more direct route would become the "Canton-Akron Rapid Express."

Priority Level: Moderately low priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 3 to 4 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Additional operating and capital expenses will be based upon the number of hours of service for the additional Rapid Express route. The current Canton-Akron Express route operates at a cost of $95.27 per revenue vehicle hour. At a schedule of 40-minute headways, service would increase from 16 revenue vehicle hours per day to 24 revenue vehicle hours per day. The additional eight hours per day would cost approximately $228,648 per year.

Purchase of additional vehicles will also be necessary to meet demand during peak hours of service.

Potential Revenue Sources: In addition to the existing revenue sources available to SARTA, local revenue sources including City, regional, and employer will need to be identified to cover the gap in funding. Additional revenue sources must be sustainable and could initially be procured as a pilot program, if necessary.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, Akron Metro, local communities.

Goal #5: Enhanced Service to Support Employers and Employees working at the Main-Sawburg-Glamorgan Corridor, Alliance.

Stakeholder input indicated that while people are getting to employers in Alliance, and outside of it, stronger transit service to these workplaces would help the employers with recruitment and retention. The key area in Alliance for large employers is the Main Street corridor beginning at Rockhill Avenue and stretching west to Sawburg Avenue, then southward on Sawburg Avenue to Glamorgan Street. The largest employers in this corridor include Sun America, Trilogy and Mac Trailer. Large employers outside of this corridor include Alliance Casting and PTC Alliance. Alliance Castings employs 300 to 400, although it is currently shut down, possibly reopening and re-employing staff that were laid off. PTC Alliance is north of downtown, approximately one-half mile from the closest SARTA route.

The Main-Sawburg-Glamorgan corridor is served by SARTA Route 139, which originates in Canton, running on one-hour frequencies. The local SARTA routes in Alliance are Routes 130, 131 and 132. Routes 130 and 131 operate on one-hour frequencies and Route 132 uses half-hour frequencies. All four routes run Monday through Saturday, approximately between 6:00 AM and 8:30 PM. Route 130 serves part of the corridor. Route 131 is one-half to one mile from the corridor employers. Route 132 serves a different part of Alliance, although transfers to the other routes are available at the Alliance transit center. Exhibit 28 displays the Main-Sawburg-Glamorgan Corridor, SARTA fixed routes and employer locations. The following strategies describe potential approaches to enhance service to the large employers in Alliance.

Strategy 5.1: Bring transit services closer to the employers with a first/last mile of service partnership.

SARTA will work with the City of Alliance and major employers in the area to plan and implement first/last mile feeder services. New feeder services would be demand response or on-demand rides between the nearest SARTA fixed route bus stop or park-n-ride and the employer (Routes 130, 131 and 132).

If SARTA and the local partners choose to implement the service as a pilot project, it is strongly recommended that the pilot is offered for a minimum of two years.

Priority Level: High priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 1 to 2 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: SARTA fixed route operating costs per revenue vehicle mile in 2017 was $5.91. A route adjustment to bring the fixed routes closer to the employers, if roads are appropriate, would be completed at the cost per revenue vehicle mile or hour of service during the year when the service change is implemented.

Alternatively, SARTA could coordinate with the local employers to develop a first/last mile service pilot project. A potential pilot could be designed to provide a limited service to and from the employers near Routes 130, 131, and 132 and the nearest SARTA stops. A subsidy of $5.00 per one-way trip could be provided to a first/last mile passenger who is provided a code that can be used on eligible trips.

Potential Revenue Sources: The costs of route extensions or first/last mile feeder services are eligible under the rules of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307. However, Federal funding requires a local match. Local match could be shared by annual funding provided by major employers and the City of Alliance. Local matching funds must be provided by sustainable resources so that SARTA can ensure that it will be able to continue providing the service extensions.

Costs of the first/last mile service are contingent upon the use of the service. The service would operate on a unit-cost basis and is scalable. The sponsor agency can set the number of rides by determining the budget for the program, and then deriving the number of subsidized trips that would be available within the budget.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, major employers, and the City of Alliance.

If a first/last pilot project is established the following steps will be key to implementation:

- Identify sponsor agencies
- Establish partnerships with local employers to advocate participation in, and, possibly, help finance the pilot project
- Sponsor agency should set an appropriate and effective subsidy amount in order to maximize trips
    - Dollar amount, rather than distance, is recommended in order to minimize costs
- Develop partnerships with providers
- Establish program parameters
    - Users
    - Service area
    - Service hours
    - Availability to individuals
    - Total budget
- Monitor the program to determine effectiveness

<u>Strategy 5.2: Reduce travel time for riders on Route 139.</u>

SARTA implemented a service change to Route 139 in November 19, 2018. That change is expected to reduce travel time for riders by improving on-time performance of the Route 139 bus arriving at the transit center. Riders making transfers to/from Route 139 to another route (Route 101, for example) will be more likely to make the transfer without extended wait times.

In addition to that change, SARTA will explore opportunities to increase frequency on Route 139. Increased frequency could be applied all day or only during shift change hours to reduce the total travel times for riders, particularly those who are using the service for employment.

Needs assessment activities during the planning process resulted in subjective input that transit dependent employees must arrive very early and/or wait up to an hour or more after work for a ride home because the SARTA routes do not match shift change times. While it is not expected that SARTA can accommodate all shift changes, additional communication between employers and SARTA to identify changes in route schedules that can be made so that passengers have better access to employment is strongly recommended.

Priority Level: Moderate priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 3 to 4 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Increases in trip frequency will require additional funding. At a cost of $95.27 per revenue vehicle hour, it is estimated that an additional $457,296 annually will be needed to increase frequency from 60 minutes to 30 minutes during all hours of operation. The estimated increased annual cost is based on an additional 16 hours per day for 300 days per year. Actual costs would depend upon the number of hours per day for higher frequency if service frequency is only increased during shift change hours.

Two expansion fixed route vehicles will also be required to ensure that SARTA's spare ratio continues to be adequate. Expansion vehicle costs are estimated to be $1.14M for two buses.

Potential Revenue Sources: The costs of route extensions are eligible under the rules of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307. However, Federal funding requires a local match. Local match could be shared by annual funding provided by major employers and the City of Alliance. Local matching funds must be provided by sustainable resources so that SARTA can ensure that it will be able to continue providing the service extensions.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, major employers, and the City of Alliance.

Strategy 5.3: Increase Frequency and Expand Hours of Service for Routes that Feed into Route 139.

SARTA will increase frequency and expand hours of service on routes in Canton which feed into Route 139 at the Transit Center, allowing for enhanced access for Canton residents to employment in the Alliance corridor. Frequency on all routes that currently operate on 60-minute headways will be increased to 30 minutes, at minimum.

Priority Level: Moderately high priority.

Implementation Timeframe: Implementation will depend upon available operating and capital funding as well as vehicle manufacturer schedules to provide additional vehicles.

Estimated Budget/Expense: This strategy would essentially double the operating expenses for each route and require purchase of additional vehicles. In 2017, SARTA's operating expense per vehicle revenue hour for fixed route service was $95.27.

SARTA would also be required to expand it vehicle fleet. Each 40-foot Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicle added to the fleet will cost approximately $570,000.

Potential Revenue Sources: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Sections 5307 and 5339, City of Canton, Stark County, residents, City of Alliance, Ohio Means Jobs, and major local employers that benefit from improved transit options for employees.

Responsible Parties: SARTA.

Strategy 5.4: Transportation for shifts that begin or end before/after current hours of operation for public transit.

Option 1: SARTA will increase frequency, particularly on Route 139, that would accommodate second and third shifts or overtime. Prior to increasing frequency, a detailed survey of employers to identify the level of potential ridership for early or late hours of operation should be completed. Hours of operation should be expanded only if demand is high enough to support the service. Project ridership during expanded hours of operation should be seven to ten passengers per hour, at minimum, due to the cost of operating a transit bus.

All services operated by SARTA must be open and advertised to the general public.

Note that increasing frequency on routes that connect with Route 139 may also be required to facilitate an efficient transfer.

Option 2: Implement a demand response shuttle service for early morning and late-night employment transportation. Service must be scheduled at least 24-hours in advance. The shuttle service would operate for a minimum of six employees. The shuttle would transport passengers to/from their home in Canton or Alliance and place of employment (in Alliance). If possible, to connect with SARTA during its normal hours of operation, the shuttle could drop-off or pick-up passengers from Canton at the Transit Center. For example, if employees from Canton work in Alliance until 5:00 AM, the shuttle would pick them up at work and take them to the Transit Center where they could catch a bus within 30 minutes of drop off to ride home.

Priority Level: Option 1 received a moderately low priority and Option 2 received a moderately high priority.

Implementation Timeframe: Option 1: 4 to 5 years/ Option 2: 2 to 3 years.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Operating costs for Option 1 will reflect the cost per hour of SARTA fixed route and ADA paratransit service. If SARTA operates fixed route service during expanded hours, ADA paratransit must also be available. Alternatively, SARTA could operate the expanded hours as a deviated route and make deviations available up to ¾ mile of the fixed route. A deviated route during expanded hours of operation would operate at a lower hourly cost compared to normal fixed route service hours because paratransit would not be required.

Operating costs for Option 2 will include expenses for a scheduler to arrange the trips, as well as the driver(s) who operates the vehicle(s). Estimated operating expenses if SARTA operates the shuttle are approximately $41.28 per one-way passenger trip.

It is possible that the employee shuttle service is provided by another private for-profit or non-profit transportation operator. If so, the interested transportation provider would offer a price that covers its fully allocated cost of operating the service. Transportation providers that are currently operating during these early/late hours, may be in a better position to provide the service if demand is for eight or fewer passengers per hour. Smaller vehicles would be appropriate for these lower-ridership trips.

Potential Revenue Sources: Major employers served by the expanded service should consider developing an agreement with the service provider to fund the transportation option. Additional partners such as the City of Alliance, Ohio Means Jobs, or other organizations with a mission to support employment opportunities are also potential funding partners.

Responsible Parties: SARTA, major employers, and the City of Alliance.

Goal #6: Coordinate with the City of Massillon Downtown Development Efforts

Strategy 6.1: Support City of Massillon Developments and Trends.
SARTA provides fixed route and ADA paratransit services between Canton and Massillon and to several destinations within Massillon. SARTA will continue discussions with the City of Massillon about route adjustments or other transportation services that could be implemented to support the City's Downtown Development projects and economic development, including the development of farmland planned in the nearby area. It is projected that once the farmland is developed and businesses or homes move in, SARTA will need to expand services in Massillon.

Priority Level: Moderately high priority.

Implementation Timeframe: 2 to 3 years and ongoing.

Estimated Budget/Expense: SARTA fixed route operating expense per revenue vehicle hour is $95.27. Expansions of service would be contingent upon the number of additional hours, but projected expenses are estimated to be $300,000 to $400,000 per year. Purchase of additional vehicles will also be necessary and are estimated to be $600,000. If microtransit options are considered, the cost of service would depend upon the service provider and the mode of service. Any transportation provider, public or private, should provide the service expansion at its fully allocated cost.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Section 5307 Program funding, local tax revenue, and contributions from businesses and/or the City of Massillon to support expansion.

Responsible Parties: SARTA

Goal #7: Address Sunday Service Needs for Employment or Other Purposes

Strategy 7.1: Sunday Service Expansion and Brokerage.

Currently, SARTA does not provide transit services on Sundays. One of the most commonly requested service expansions from passengers was the addition of Sunday service. However, it is a risky expansion because it is difficult to estimate the level of demand on Sundays, which are typically lower ridership days for transit systems that operate seven days per week.

Three organizations, in addition to private taxi services and Uber/Lyft, operate public transit on Sundays: The Workshops, Inc., Canton Crossroads United Methodist Church, and The ABCD, Inc. Other than the on-demand private transportation providers, each of these organizations operate services for certain eligibility groups. It is recommended that SARTA and the Mobility Coordination Committee work with these organizations to explore the possibility of expanding the available Sunday transportation services to make them available to the general public.

SARTA would expand its hours of operation to Sundays and schedule trips for the other organizations that are operating on Sundays. In this manner, SARTA would act as a broker to the participating agencies and would also provide some trips in-house.

Priority Level: Low priority.

Implementation Timeframe: SARTA will re-evaluate this option each year.

Estimated Budget/Expense: Estimated annual operating expenses are estimated to be $500,000. No new vehicles are required for this strategy. Actual costs of service would depend upon the fully allocated cost for each of the partners that participate in the brokerage.

Potential Revenue Sources: FTA Sections 5307 and 5310 Program funding, local tax revenue, and contributions from businesses and/or the City of Massillon to support expansion.

Responsible Parties: SARTA and partner transportation providers.

CONCLUSION

The goals and strategies outlined in the Coordinated Human Services-Public Transportation Plan Update are the foundation for SARTA's vision for the future of transportation in Stark County. SARTA intends to create a centralized mobility management structure to lead implementation of coordinated transportation goals and strategies with support from an active Stark County Coordinated Transportation Committee.

As the mobility manager for the region, SARTA envisions that transportation services in the area will, at minimum, achieve the following goals:

- Meet the needs of riders impacted by the restructure of SARTA services.
- Achieve the goals set in the Coordinated Plan.
- Attract new riders to public and coordinated transportation.
- Drive economic growth and job creation in Stark County.

To support its Mobility Management goals, SARTA will acquire technology and vehicles that will enable SARTA and community partners to add micro-transit and on-demand modes of service to the family of service options. A more diverse offering of service modes will position SARTA to provide a more reliable, safer, affordable on-demand and demand response service for Stark County. SARTA intends to enter into mutually beneficial agreements with other transportation providers when necessary.

Local stakeholder input reinforced the importance of strengthening the local transportation network and also enhancing the regional transit connectivity to enable local and multi-county mobility options that are available with a variety of different modes of service. Building the local transportation network with multiple modes of service that are coordinated and efficient will support growth in Stark County and beyond. The strategies included in this plan identify an approach to building that network.

SARTA will engage with elected officials, regional planning agencies and businesses to anticipate and facilitate growth and job creation. SARTA will work to constantly evaluate and evolve services in Stark County to meet the needs of local residents.

SARTA has taken steps to prepare for the changes needed to achieve the coordinated transportation goals. Among those steps are the following activities:

- SARTA recently required hydrogen fuel cell (HFC)-powered paratransit vehicles.
- SARTA has negotiated a new labor agreement that provides flexibility to offer enhanced on-demand service.
- SARTA is exploring the acquisition of HSC-powered sedans.
- SARTA is evaluating and acquiring needed technology to support enhancements in service.
- SARTA has adopted new mission and vision statements.

Revenue Sources

Identification of funding for expanded transportation services will be key to success. Revenue will continue to be derived from a variety of sources. Currently, revenue sources supporting public transportation in Stark County, SARTA, include the following:

- Sales Tax = 61.4%
- Federal Transit Administration = 28.9%
- Passenger Fares = 8.6%
- Advertising = 1.1%

Other funding sources that support human service agency transportation services in Stark County include but are not limited to the following:

- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- Ohio Means Jobs
- Ohio Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Ohio Department of Aging

Proactively, SARTA is exploring re-alignment of its fixed routes to prepare for implementation of more effective multi-modal services. SARTA estimates that by realigning 10% of its service, SARTA could potentially save $1 Million annually. The savings could be re-allocated to support new transportation strategies and modes. SARTA may also explore options to reduce expenses associated with providing ADA-compliant services that support its fixed route service.

Implementation Costs Summary

A summary of projected expenses for the coordinated transportation goals are provided in the following table. Total projected operating and capital implementation costs for all strategies are $10.6M to $12.8M.

Table 10: Summary of Projected Costs for Coordinated Transportation Strategies

Goals	Projected Annual Operating Costs	Projected Capital Costs	Projected Total Implementation Costs
Goal #1: Modify Section 5310 Program Administration Policies			
Total:	$0	$0	$0
Goal #2: Build a Local Transportation Network that is Prepared to Support Growth in Canton and Surrounding Communities			
Total:	$3,557,296 to $5,557,296	$1,570,000	$5,127,296 to $7,127,296
Goal #3: Implement Enhanced Transportation Service for SARTA and Coordination Partner Agencies			
Total:	$121,800 to $170,000	$80,000	$201,800 to $250,000
Goal #4: Strengthen Regional Connectivity			
Total:	$287,229	$1,140,000	$1,427,229
Goal #5: Enhanced Service to Support Employers and Employees Working in Alliance			
Total:	$757,296	$ 1,740,000	$2,497,296
Goal #6: Coordinate with the City of Massillon Development Efforts			
Total:	$300,000 to $400,000	$600,000	$900,000 to $1M
Goal #7: Address Sunday Service Needs			
Total:	$500,000	$0	$500,000
Conservative Total	**$5,523,621**	**$5,130,000**	**$10,653,621**
Full Total	**$7,671,821**	**$5,130,000**	**$12,801,821**