

Erie County

Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan

2026-2030

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
For more information about this plan please contact the
Mobility Management Coordinator at 419-333-5087
Funding for the development of this plan was provided by the
Ohio Department of Transportation

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Executive Summary

This plan is the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Erie County. The plan was initially developed in 2016 and updated in 2021. This plan fulfills the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs (IIJ) Act, signed into law as a reauthorization of surface transportation programs through Fiscal Year 2026. According to requirements of the IIJ Act, locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans must be updated to reflect the changes established by the IIJ Act legislation. The IIJ Act applies new programs and rules for all Fiscal Year 2026 funds and authorizes transit programs for five (5) years.

Transportation is a critical component of the communities in Erie County. Transportation provides access to jobs, education, health care, human services and allows all community members, including older adults and people with disabilities, to live independently and engage in community life. It is the purpose of this plan for local stakeholders to work collaboratively to do the following activities:

1. Identify all community resources including
 - STS
 - Ability Works
 - Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities
 - Erie County Job and Family Services
 - Serving Our Seniors
 - Flat Rock Homes Inc.
 - Lucy Idol Center
 - Erie County Senior Center
 - Erie Residential Living, Inc.
2. Identify and Prioritize community transportation needs
 1. Limited transportation options for travel between Erie County and neighboring counties
 2. Insufficient connectivity between rural areas and the City of Sandusky's fixed route system
 3. Lack of micro-transit, on-demand, and flexible service models that better serve rural and transit-dependent populations
 4. Insufficient transportation access to regional destinations for employment, education, healthcare, and services
 5. Gaps in service coordination and communication between transit providers and human service agencies
 6. Uncertainty and instability of long-term transit funding, including challenges with identifying local match
 7. Transit governance challenges related to the 3rd-party operating contract and jurisdictional limitations
 8. Lack of data on the economic impact of public transportation to support future investment and planning

9. Limited availability of wheelchair-accessible vehicles for both public and specialized transportation
 10. Barriers to driver and vehicle maintenance staff recruitment and retention
 11. Inadequate sidewalk infrastructure, crossings, and pedestrian accessibility
 12. Gaps in bicycle infrastructure and limited access to micromobility options (e.g., bikeshare, senior tricycles)
 13. Limited capacity to meet rising demand for transportation services across the county
 14. Perceived stigma around public transit and a lack of awareness of its value as an essential public service
 15. Inefficient scheduling and dispatching systems that affect reliability and trip coordination
 16. Challenges associated with sprawling land use patterns that make efficient transit service delivery difficult
 17. Need for consistent community input and engagement in transportation planning and decision-making processes
 18. Inadequate infrastructure or policies to support aging in place, including senior-friendly active transportation options
 19. First-mile/last-mile barriers that limit access to fixed-route services
3. Establish a clear plan for achieving shared goals

To achieve the shared goals outlined in the Erie County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan, a collaborative and structured implementation approach will guide progress. Each goal is supported by clear, actionable strategies, defined timelines, designated lead agencies, and measurable performance indicators to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Mobility Management will lead coordination efforts in partnership with STS, local governments, human service agencies, employers, and planning organizations.

Quarterly meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will provide a platform to monitor progress, gather stakeholder input, and align resources. Key activities – such as targeted outreach, pilot programs, infrastructure evaluations, driver recruitment initiatives, and advocacy – will be implemented according to established timelines, with regular assessments of impact. Funding will be pursued from federal, state, and local sources to support vehicle acquisition, service expansion, infrastructure upgrades, staffing, and public awareness campaigns.

By aligning data-driven decision-making with community engagement and cross-sector partnerships, Erie County aims to build a flexible, sustainable, and inclusive transportation network that meets the needs of all residents.

Fundamental to the Coordinated Transportation Plan process is the active and meaningful involvement of stakeholders. For projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 program, participation in planning activities must include participation and/or representation of the following, at minimum:

- Seniors
- Individuals with disabilities
- People with low incomes
- Public, private and non-profit transportation providers
- Human services providers
- The general public

In order to ensure participation from the above groups the following stakeholder involvement activities were performed

- A series of stakeholder planning meetings with agencies and individuals who serve target populations
- A SWOT analysis with transportation providers, social service agencies, and other local agencies
- Social media and other outreach methods
- Completion of surveys by a sample of persons representing the disabled, seniors, and the general population, many of whom are of low income, to learn of priorities and obstacles facing any of these user groups
- Facilitation of a focus group of individuals with disabilities to gain insight into their issues and obstacles faced when desiring public transportation services

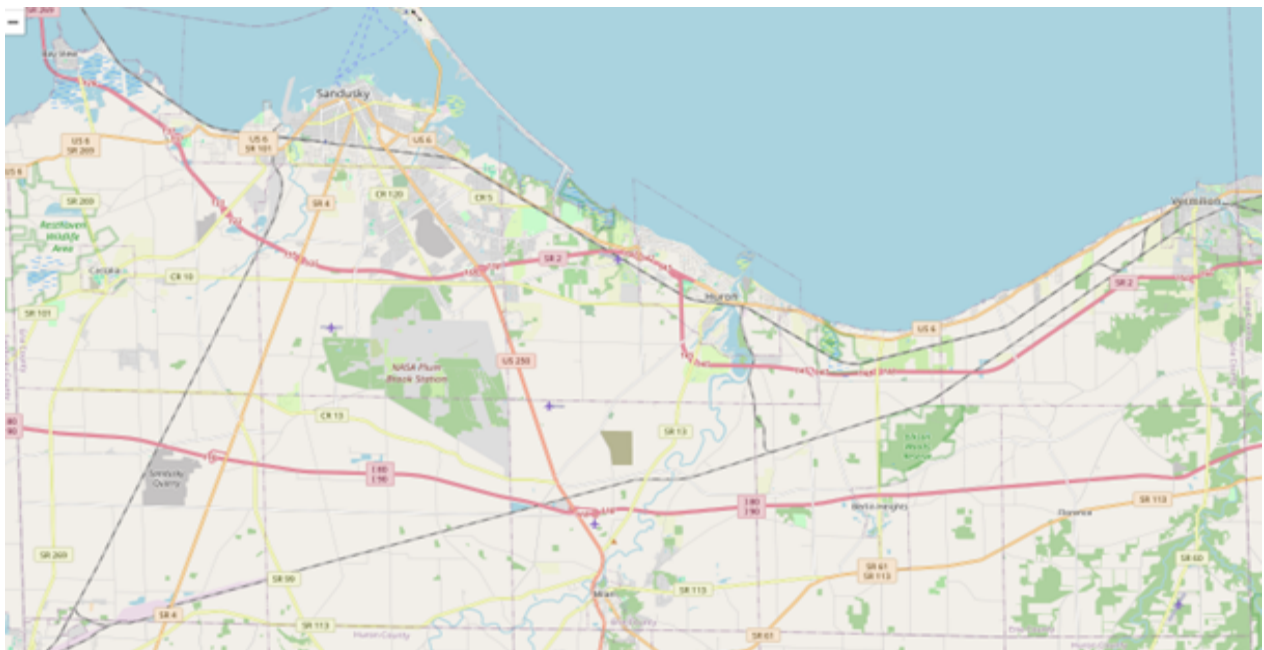
This plan was developed and adopted by Erie County's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). More information about the planning committee can be found in Appendix A.

I. Geographic Area

Erie County is a county in the northern portion of the U.S. state of Ohio. As of the 2020 census, the population was 75,622. Its county seat and largest city is Sandusky. Erie County has its own Metropolitan Planning Organization and is not a Rural Transportation Planning Organization. Erie County is designated as a small urban metropolitan area.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 626 square miles (1,620 km), of which 252 square miles (650 km) is land and 374 square miles (970 km) (60%) is water. It is the second-smallest county in Ohio by land area after Lake County. The county is bordered on the north by Lake Erie; the opposite shore is made up of two counties in Ontario, Canada.

Map 1: Basic map of the geographic area covered by the plan



Below is a map [Map 2] of trip generators within the county with the following table [Table 1], detailing the major trip generators.

Healthcare	
Firelands Regional Medical Center 1111 Hayes Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Sandusky Dialysis Center 211 Lakeside Park Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870
Firelands Dialysis Center 904 Pierce St, Sandusky, OH 44870	DaVita Home Dialysis Services Of Sandusky 2819 Hayes Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870
Government	
Erie County Commissioners 2900 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Erie County General Health District 420 Superior St, Sandusky, OH 44870
Erie County Common Pleas Court 323 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Erie County Municipal Court 150 W Mason Rd, Milan, OH 44846
Sandusky City Hall 240 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	
Schools	
Sandusky High School 2130 Hayes Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Perkins High School 3714 Campbell St, Sandusky, OH 44870
Sandusky Central Catholic School 410 W Jefferson St, Sandusky, OH 44870	Margaretta High School 209 Lowell St, Castalia, OH 44824
Huron High School 710 Cleveland Rd W, Huron, OH 44839	Vermilion Local School District 1250 Sanford St, Vermilion, OH 44089
Manufacturers	
Sandusky International Inc 615 W Market St, Sandusky, OH 44870	ThorWorks Industries Inc 2520 Campbell St, Sandusky, OH 44870
Ventra Sandusky 3020 Tiffin Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Ardagh Metal Beverage USA, Inc – Huron 1608 Sawmill Pkwy, Huron, OH 44839

Humanetics ATD Manufacturing 900 Denton Dr, Huron, OH 44839	Main Street Vermilion 685 Main St, Vermilion, OH 44089
Recreation	
Cedar Point 1 Cedar Point Dr, Sandusky, OH 44870	Cedar Point Sports Center 2701 Cleveland Rd W, Sandusky, OH 44870
Sawmill Creek Resort 400 Sawmill Creek Dr W, Huron, OH 44839	Kalahari Resorts & Conventions – Sandusky 7000 Kalahari Dr, Sandusky, OH 44870
Shopping	
Sandusky Mall 4314 Milan Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870	Crossings of Sandusky 911 Crossings Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870
Sandusky Plaza Shopping Center 1420 Sycamore Line, Sandusky, OH 44870	Park Place Shopping Center 5500 Milan Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870
San Marco Plaza 4108 Milan Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870	Port Huron Plaza Shopping Center 501 Cleveland Rd W, Huron, OH 44839
Marketplace Downtown 133 E Market St, Sandusky, OH 44870	Pointe Plaza 3104 Milan Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870
Adult Day Programs/Seniors	
Ability Works, Inc. 3920 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870	Compass Point Adult Day Center 420 Superior Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870
Erie County Senior Center 620 E Water St, Sandusky, OH 44870	Serving Our Seniors 310 E Boalt St, Sandusky, OH 44870
Human Services Agencies/Non-Profits	
Erie County Job & Family Services 221 W Parish St, Sandusky, OH 44870	Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities 4405 Galloway Rd, Sandusky, OH 44870
Community Action Commission of Erie, Huron & Richland Counties 908 Seavers Way, Sandusky, OH 44870	
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living	
The Commons of Providence 5000 Providence Dr, Sandusky, OH 44870	Ohio Veterans Home Sandusky 3416 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH 44870

II. Population Demographics

There has been a steady, but slight decrease in Erie County's population over the last five years. According to the 2020 census, the total population of Erie County was 75,622, the population loss is seen most in the city of Sandusky, which is the county seat.

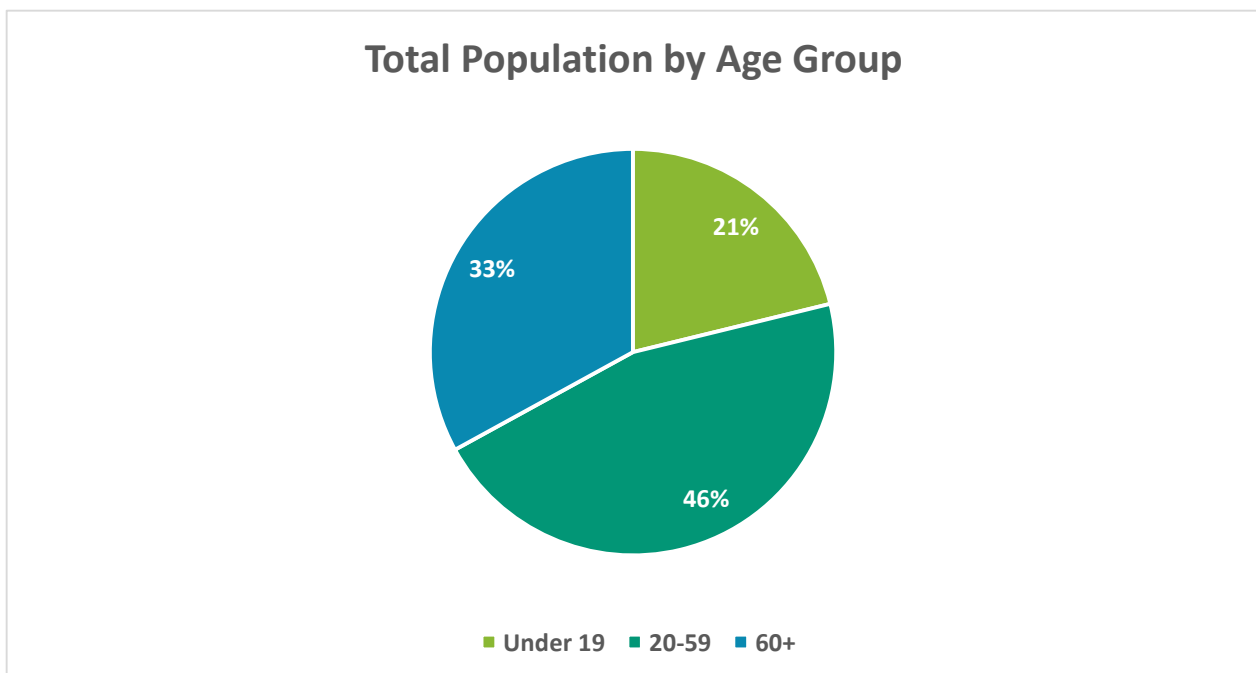
Chart 1 shows the population projections in five-year increments:

Chart 1: Total Population Current and Projected for Five Years

Year	Total Population	Male	Female	Change
2025	75,622	38,296	37,326	
2030	74,035	37,502	36,533	-1,587
2035	72,480	36,714	35,766	-1,555
2040	70,958	35,943	35,015	-1,522
2045	69,468	35,189	34,279	-1,490
2050	68,009	34,450	33,560	-1,459

The chart below shows the population divided into various age groups. The age group of 65+ is expected to grow over the next five years according to the US Census. There is a total of 15,673 people under the age of 19, there are 33,947 people between the ages of 20 and 59, and 24,415 aged 60 and over.

Chart 2: Total Population by Age Group



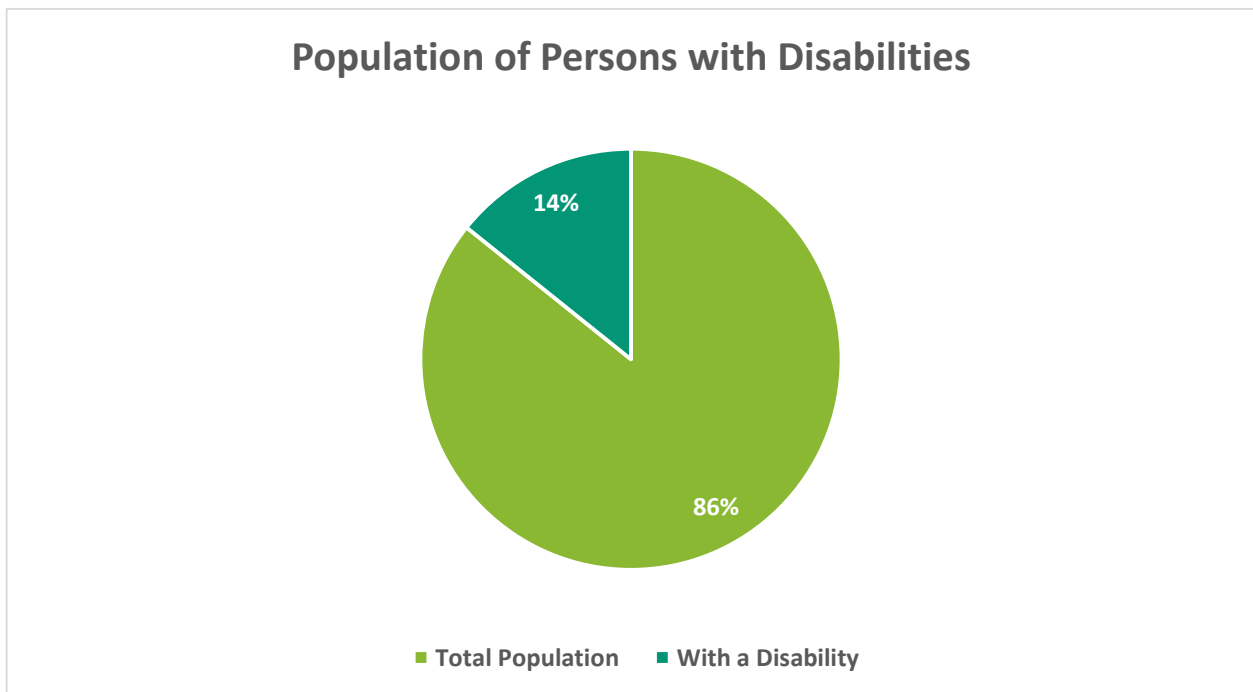
The majority of this area identifies as White (62,122), with the following groups also noted:

Chart 3: Total Population by Race

Black or African American	6,807
American Indian and Alaska Native	195
Asian	481
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	11
Some Other Race	815
Two or More Races	5,191

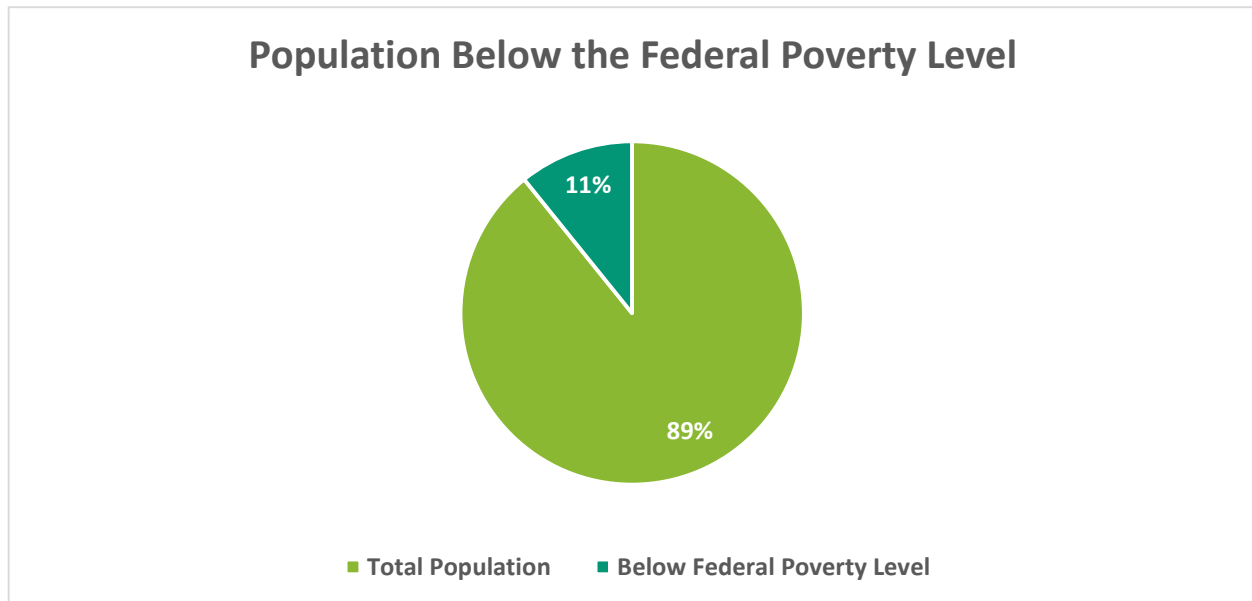
The number of people identifying as having a disability in Erie County is 12,576, or 15% of the overall population, which is slightly larger than the national average of 13%.

Chart 4: Population of Persons with Disabilities



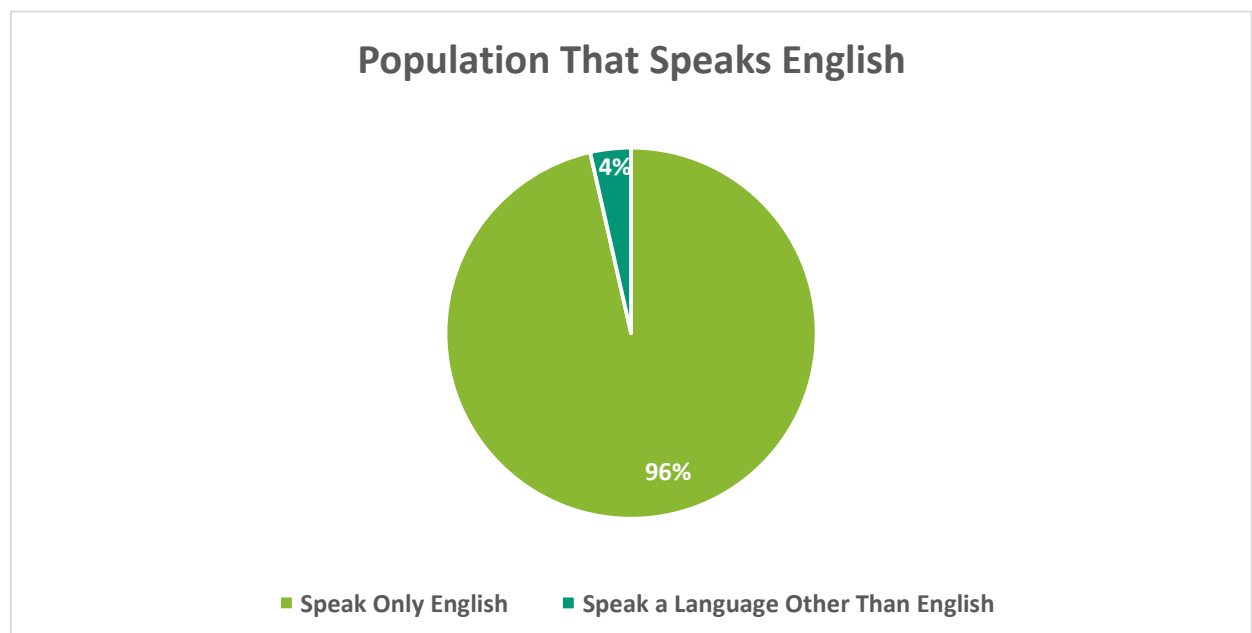
The number and percentage of people or households that have incomes below the Federal poverty level in Erie County is 9,164 people or 11%, which is on par with the national rate of 11.1%.

Chart 5: Population Below the Federal Poverty Guidelines



In Erie County, the percent of population that speak English as their primary language is 96.4%, or a total of 68,615. A total of 2,534, or 3.5%, speak a language other than English.

Chart 6: Population That Speaks English



The chart below shows the various ways that individuals use to get to work, utilizing their own vehicle as the primary way. Working from home has increased over the last few years.

Chart 7: Means of Transportation to Work

Means of Transportation	Percentage
Car, truck, or van	89.0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.4%
Walked	1.3%
Bicycle	0.1%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	2.3%
Worked from home	6.9%

The majority of households in Erie County have at least one vehicle. The following chart shows the percentages of homes with no vehicles or one or more vehicles.

Chart 8: Number of Vehicles per Household

Vehicles Available	
No vehicle available	2.4%
1 vehicle available	16.3%
2 vehicles available	39.1%
3 or more vehicles available	42.3%

III. Assessment of Available Services

Conducting an evaluation of service provider capabilities and analyzing the existing gaps and duplications of services for transportation resources in each community, provides transportation planners with the information needed to implement changes that will improve the network of transportation resources and services in Erie County and across county lines.

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership identified stakeholders to participate in the assessment of available services. These stakeholders included those who were represented in the current or past Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), as well as others who the TAC identified as being appropriate stakeholders.

Interviews were conducted with each of the identified stakeholders. The purpose of the interview was to offer the stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the specific transportation services, gaps, needs, and priorities for their respective service areas or communities.

When applicable, information reported in the previous coordinated plan was used to supplement information gathered during this planning effort.

Inventory of Transportation Providers

Included in this section is a list of all participating transportation providers. Descriptions of transportation providers include organizations that subsidize transportation at the local level, administer transportation or mobility programs, directly operate vehicles, and/or arrange transportation on behalf of an individual.

The participating organizations provide a wide range of transportation including demand response, on-demand, ambulette, and human service agency contracted transportation. 11 of the participating organizations provide services on weekdays. 4 operate transportation on Saturdays, Sundays, and 4 operate on evenings after 6pm.

Transportation-related expenses and revenues also differ by organization. ODOT 5311 and 5310 funds, federal, state, and local grants, are common revenue sources for transportation operators in Erie County, Ohio, with local match requirements being met by local social service agencies and other contracts.

Existing Transportation Services

The following information is based on tabulations from the survey and interview results. A total of 11 organizations provided information about their services.

List of Transportation Service Providers

Agency Name: Ability Works, Inc.

Transportation Service Type: Transportation services are provided for Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities (DD) consumers. Consumers travel to and from the Ability Works, Inc. facility for employment, or for other community events.

Other Services Provided: Ability Works, Inc. is the provider of choice for individuals with disabilities pursuing interests in employment, recreation, leisure, and personal development.

Contact Information: 419-626-1048

Hours: As needed

Service Area: Erie County and Surrounding Areas

Eligibility Requirements: Disability

Website: ability-works.com/

Agency Name: Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Transportation Service Type: Does not provide transportation services themselves, but through contracting with existing transportation providers for individuals who are eligible for Board Services.

Other Services Provided: Services range from early intervention, which can begin the day a child comes home from the hospital to senior care.

Contact Information: 419-626-0208

Hours: As needed

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: Disability

Website: eriecbdd.org

Agency Name: Erie Residential Living, Inc.

Transportation Service Type: Offers a variety of transportation services including Homemaker/Personal Care (HPC) transportation to medical appointments, stores, and community and Non-Medical Transportation to adult day support, career planning, group employment support, individual employment support, vocational habilitation, and employment

Other Services Provided: Provides licensed home (24-hour support) to individual home-based care

Contact Information: 419-626-0316

Hours: As needed

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: Individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities

Website: erieres.org

Agency Name: The Lucy Idol Center

Transportation Service Type: Services are for clients of the Lucy Idol Center and others who do not have access to transportation services because of a disability. Rides may be for medical, dental, work, volunteer, and recreational activities.

Other Services Provided: Creates opportunities for people with diverse challenges to enhance their personal growth, develop relationships and have life experiences that they choose to promote positive mental and physical health.

Contact Information: 440-967-6724

Hours: Typically, weekdays but vary depending on need

Service Area: Erie and Lorain Counties

Eligibility Requirements: Have a disability or barrier that requires a specialized transportation service.

Website: lucydolcenter.org

Agency Name: Erie County Job and Family Services

Transportation Service Type: Erie County JFS contracts for transit services with the Sandusky Transit System (STS). Erie County JFS also purchases transportation through private taxis and the taxis are used for trips to help with the volume of service and out-of-county trips.

Other Services Provided: Serves individuals in Erie County who need child support, children services, family and workforce development, fiscal help, and investigation and legal services.

Contact Information: 1.888.399.6065

Hours: As needed

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: Minor

Website: eriecounty.oh.gov/JobFamilyServices.aspx

Agency Name: Sandusky Transit System (STS)

Transportation Service Type: Public transit services including fixed-route, demand response, and paratransit. STS contracts with area social service agencies to generate matching funds for formula operating and capital grants. STS operates out of the Amtrak station building and also serves as a greyhound bus stop.

Other Services Provided: None

Contact Information: 419-627-0740

Hours: Office Hours 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: None

Website: cityofsandusky.com/community/Sandusky_transit_system

Agency Name: Serving Our Seniors (SOS)

Transportation Service Type: Coordinates a contract with STS. SOS also facilitates a senior volunteer driver program to get seniors to out-of-county doctor appointments.

Other Services Provided: As an organization created for the purpose of advocating for older adults without duplicating existing services, Serving Our Seniors seeks every opportunity to work with existing community programs and agencies to fill gaps in services for older adults.

Contact Information: 419-624-1856

Hours: 8AM-5PM Monday-Friday

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: Erie County residents 60 years or older

Website: servingourseniors.org

Agency Name: Flat Rock Homes Inc.

Transportation Service Type: Door-to-door, demand response to individuals with disabilities enrolled in services.

Other Services Provided: Flat Rock Homes, Flat Rock Care Center and Flat Rock Community Services provide services to youth and adults with disabilities, with a special focus on adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Programs include a 36-bed intermediate care facility (Seneca County); supportive living homes (Seneca, Erie, Huron and Lorain Counties); homemaker and personal care services (Seneca, Erie, Huron, and Lorain Counties); non-medical transportation (Seneca, Sandusky, Erie, and Huron Counties); Adult Day Support Program (Seneca, Sandusky, Erie, and Huron Counties).

Contact Information: 419-483-7330

Office hours: 8:00-4:30 Monday – Friday

Service Area: Any destination required by individuals enrolled for medical, school, employment, social events, and activities. Past trips have included many out-of-county destinations as far as Cleveland, Toledo, and/or Mansfield.

Eligibility Requirements: Individuals with disabilities who enroll in the non-medical transportation program in the primary service area of Seneca, Sandusky, Erie, Huron, and Lorain Counties.

Website: flatrockhomes.org

Agency Name: Erie County Senior Center

Transportation Service Type: Transportation services are provided for Erie County senior citizens to events and other activities.

Other Services Provided: The Erie County Senior Center is a multi-faceted service and activity center providing opportunities for the senior citizens of Erie County. Educational and recreational programs are provided for active individuals, as well as essential services to home bound seniors.

Contact Information: 419-626-2560

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Service Area: Erie County

Eligibility Requirements: senior citizen

Website: eriecountyseniorcenter.org

Agency Name: AM/PM Taxi

Transportation Service Type: Curb-to-curb transportation service, vehicles are not ADA accessible.

Contact Information: 419-656-6656

Hours: 24/7

Service Area: The City of Sandusky and surrounding counties

Eligibility Requirements: None

Website: taxiservicesandusky.com

Agency Name: Turbo Taxi

Transportation Service Type: Curb-to-curb transportation service, vehicles are not ADA accessible.

Other Services Provided: Offers wedding, prom, sporting event, airport transportation, group trips, delivery services, shuttle services, and medical transportation.

Contact Information: 419-975-0324

Hours: Sunday-Thursday 7am-10pm; Friday-Saturday 7am-12am

Service Area: Lorain, Erie, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Huron Counties

Eligibility Requirements: None

Website: None

Assessment of Community Support for Transit

Community support for transit in Erie County continues to grow, with a focus on enhancing accessibility, reliability, and service availability. The county's robust fixed-route system plays a vital role in connecting residents and visitors to employment, healthcare, shopping, and tourist destinations. However, feedback gathered through public engagement, Transportation Advisory Committee meetings, and input from local human service agencies, employers, and residents highlights a continued need for more accessible transportation options—particularly for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

While Erie County benefits from strong transit coverage in key areas, expanding flexible and affordable transportation options remains important, especially for those living outside of major service corridors or with specialized mobility needs. Improving coordination among providers and stakeholders will be essential to ensuring that the transportation system meets the needs of all residents and supports the county's workforce, healthcare access, and vibrant tourism economy.

Safety

Enhancing transportation safety remains a key focus in Erie County's planning efforts, particularly given its role as a popular tourist destination. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to ensure safe access for both residents and visitors. Concerns around sidewalk gaps, lack of bike lanes, and safe crossings were common themes throughout public engagement.

This plan outlines several strategies to address these issues, including conducting walkability and bikeability assessments, and implementing Complete Streets principles. Additionally, maintaining high vehicle safety standards and providing comprehensive staff training—coordinated through STS and Mobility Management—are essential to creating a safe, accessible, and inclusive transportation network across Erie County.

Vehicles

Survey/Interview participants listed a combined total of 78 vehicles. Approximately 67% of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Most of the transportation providers provide at least 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle, while some organization's fleets are primarily wheelchair accessible vehicles. While there are 78 vehicles in Erie County, 26 of those vehicles between Flat Rock Homes Inc. and Lucy Idol Center are in other counties such as Lorain, Sandusky, Seneca, etc., so they are not exclusively serving Erie County.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles are used by older adults and individuals with disabilities to access medical appointments, employment, grocery store, and other essential destinations throughout the county. While public and nonprofit providers like STS and Ability Works maintain accessible fleets, community feedback and provider reports consistently indicate high demand and unmet needs. Trip denials, advance scheduling requirements, and limited-service hours/service areas – especially in rural or low-density areas suggest that the current number of wheelchair accessible vehicles is insufficient to meet the existing demand. Around 60% of the vehicles are at least 10 years of age or older. As vehicles age, they require additional maintenance, may break down more often, and become costlier to operate. Vehicle replacement, based on age and condition, is vital to the overall cost effectiveness of the transportation services provided.

Summary of Existing Resources

Erie County's transportation network is primarily served by the Sandusky Transit System (STS), which offers both fixed-route and demand-response services. STS provides ADA-accessible transportation that connects residents to employment, healthcare, shopping, and other essential destinations throughout the county. With both curb-to-curb and door-to-door service options, STS ensures mobility for individuals who do not drive or who lack access to a personal vehicle. In addition to its demand-response offerings, STS operates a robust fixed-route system that plays a vital role in supporting daily travel needs and accommodating Erie County's strong tourism activity. These services are especially important for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and others facing transportation barriers.

Ability Works is a key transportation provider in Erie County, delivering high-volume, demand-response services primarily for individuals with disabilities and Medicaid recipients. Operating in both Erie and Huron counties, Ability Works plays a significant role in filling transportation gaps by offering rides to medical appointments, employment sites, and essential services. Their accessible fleet and flexible service model help expand mobility for individuals who might otherwise lack viable options.

Serving Our Seniors contracts with STS to provide transportation for older adults across the county, while the Lucy Idol Center and Flat Rock Homes Inc offer specialized transportation for individuals with disabilities who enroll in their transportation programs.

The City of Sandusky, as an urbanized area, is also served by a small number of taxi services and private transportation providers. However, the rest of Erie County is predominantly rural and lacks similar transportation resources, creating challenges for residents outside the city who need accessible, affordable mobility options.

Planning and coordination efforts in Erie County are supported by the Mobility Management program, in collaboration with local human service agencies, healthcare providers, employers, and municipal partners. Together, these stakeholders work to strengthen a safe, reliable, and inclusive transportation network that enhances access and equity for all Erie County residents.

IV. Assessment of Transportation Needs and Gaps

In an effort to better understand Erie County's needs, the TAC examined research and data, as well as solicited input from the community to gather information about needs and gaps in transportation services.

The demographic and socio-economic conditions of the study area are discussed in the Demographics Chapter of this plan. The following overview is an evaluation of the gaps in service based upon geographic data as well as from the perspective of the targeted populations, transportation providers, and the general public.

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership partnered with a variety of stakeholders in the area in an attempt to solicit input and request participation from any organization that could potentially be impacted by the coordinated transportation planning process. More information on how the lead agency engaged stakeholders and the general public is available upon request.

The following methods were used to assess transportation needs and gaps:

- Assessment of data and demographics (required)
- A SWOT analysis/stakeholder focus group
- Surveys performed with senior centers and the general public
- A focus group involving individuals with disabilities

Local Demographic and Socio-Economic Data

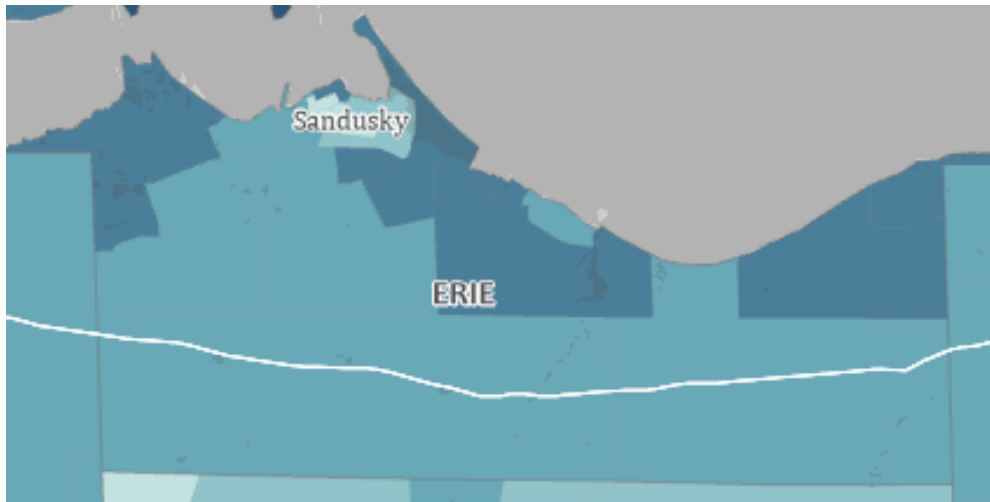
Data for each target population group was aggregated by Census Block Group for transportation analysis. The demographic and socio-economic data is valuable because it allows for a comparison of where the highest and lowest densities of individuals who are most likely to need transportation live. This information can then be compared to the locations of (1) major trip generators, and (2) available transportation services.

The following table [Table 2] and exhibit 1 illustrates the areas where the number of older adults (age 65 and older) is at or above Ohio's average.

Table 2: Number of Older Adults (Age 65 and Older)

65-74 years	13.9%
75-84 years	7.3%
85 years and over	3.3%

Exhibit 1: Map of Population Density of Individuals Age 65 and Older

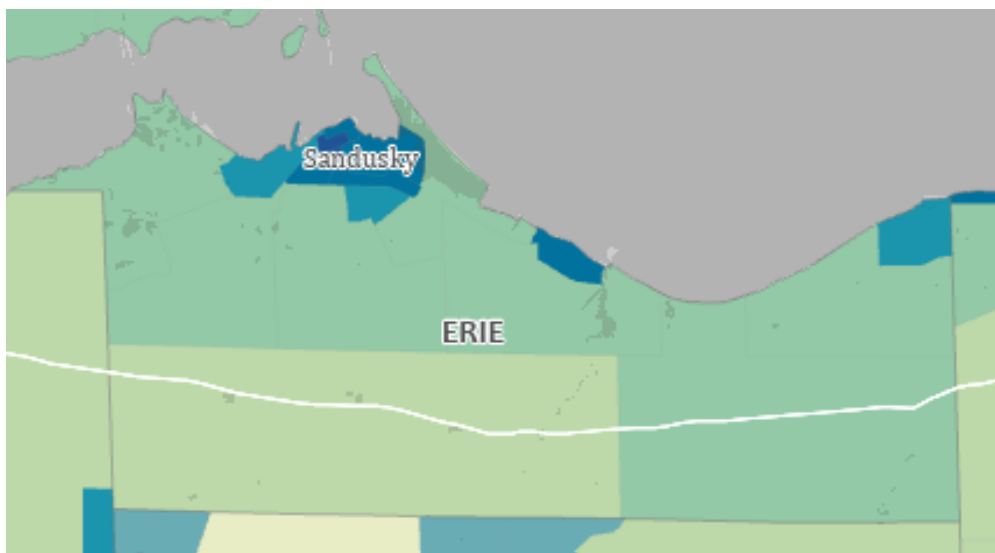


The following table [Table 3] and exhibit 2 below, indicate the areas where the number of zero vehicle households is above Ohio's average. The absence of a vehicle in the household is often an indication of the need for transportation services.

Table 3: Percentage of Zero Vehicle Households

No vehicle available	2.4%
1 vehicle available	16.3%
2 vehicles available	39.1%
3 or more vehicles available	42.3%

Exhibit 2: Map of Density of Zero Vehicle Households



Analysis of Demographic Data

Erie County, Ohio, has a population of approximately 75,622 residents as of 2025, with notable demographic characteristics that influence transportation planning. A significant portion of the population – 46%, or around 24,000 individuals is aged 65 or older; indicating a growing need for transportation services that accommodate aging adults. Many of these residents require accessible and reliable transportation options to maintain independence, access medical care, and engage in community activities.

The county also faces socioeconomic challenges. Median household income levels are below the state average, and certain communities experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment. This economic landscape reinforces the importance of affordable transportation solutions for low-income individuals and families who may not have access to a personal vehicle.

Additionally, the rural makeup of Erie County means that many residents live in areas with limited access to public transportation, highlighting the need for flexible, on-demand services. Individuals with disabilities represent another important demographic, requiring transportation that supports mobility aids and specialized assistance.

These demographic trends underscore the necessity of coordinated and inclusive transportation planning that prioritizes equity, accessibility, and regional connectivity to support all segments of the population.

General Public and Stakeholder Meetings/Focus Groups

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership hosted and facilitated 4 local meetings and 1 focus group to discuss the unmet transportation needs and gaps in mobility and transportation. 48 people participated in the meetings. Of those, 12 self-identified as being a person with a disability. More information about what meetings were held and attendance at those meetings is available upon request.

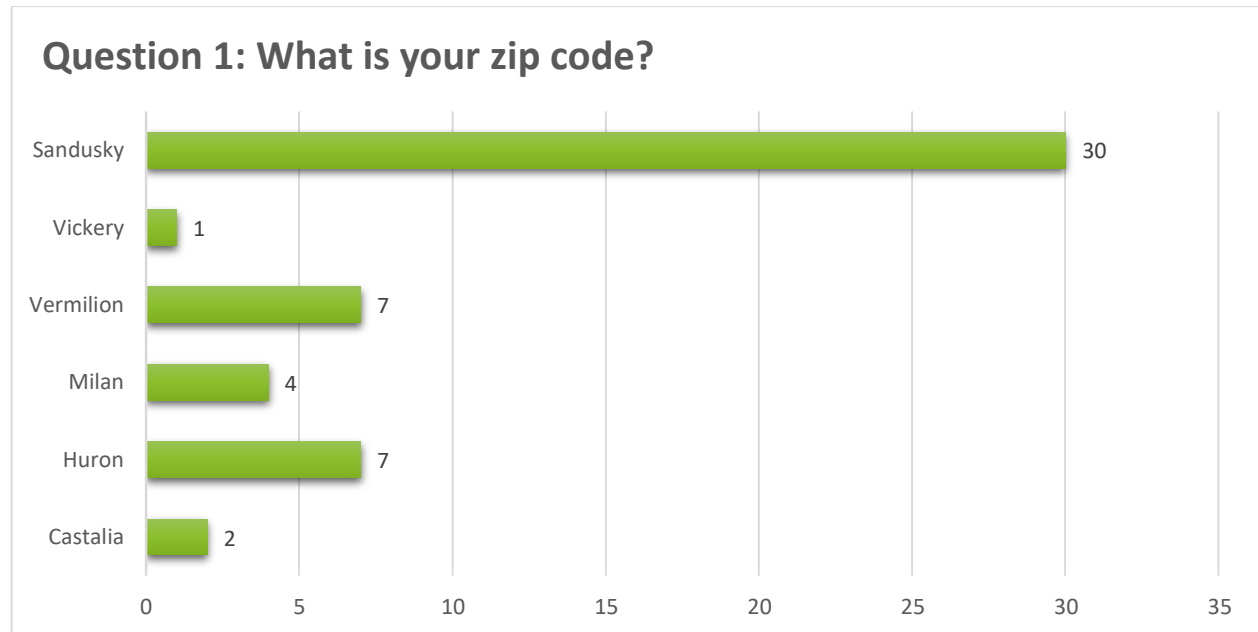
During the meeting, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership presented highlights of historical coordinated transportation in Erie County and discussed the activities since the last Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan that have helped to address some of the unmet transportation needs and gaps in services for the area.

Following the initial presentation, the stakeholders were asked to review the gaps in transportation services and needs from the previous plan/or update and identify any gaps that were no longer valid and any new needs/gaps, which the facilitator deleted/added to/from a list. The focus of the discussion was transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. However, several topics discussed also impact mobility options for the general public.

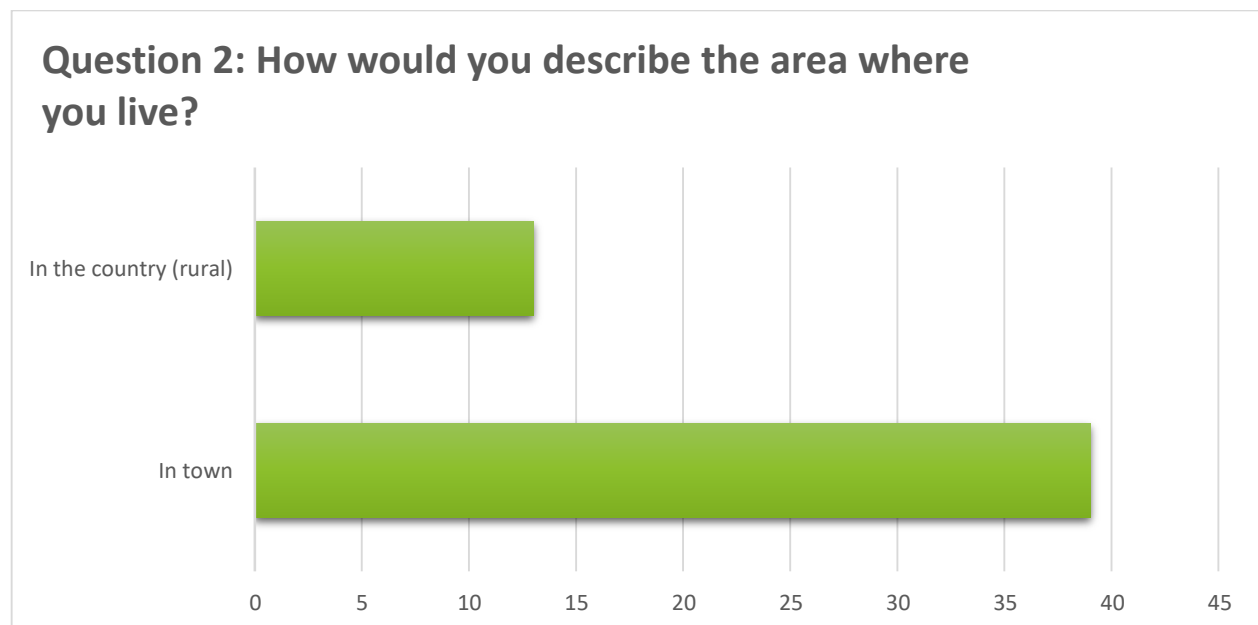
Participants discussed more than 5 mobility issues to achieve, preserve, avoid, or eliminate through coordination during the meeting[s]. Coordinated transportation stakeholders will consider the unmet transportation needs when developing transportation goals and strategies, and grant applications. The exhibit at the end of this section provides a summary of the unmet mobility needs discussed during the meeting as well as the needs identified by the survey results.

Surveys

The following survey summary includes the information gained from the following surveys that were performed. A total of 52 surveys from the general public were completed with 21.28% of individuals identifying as having a disability and 22.45% identifying as being an older adult.

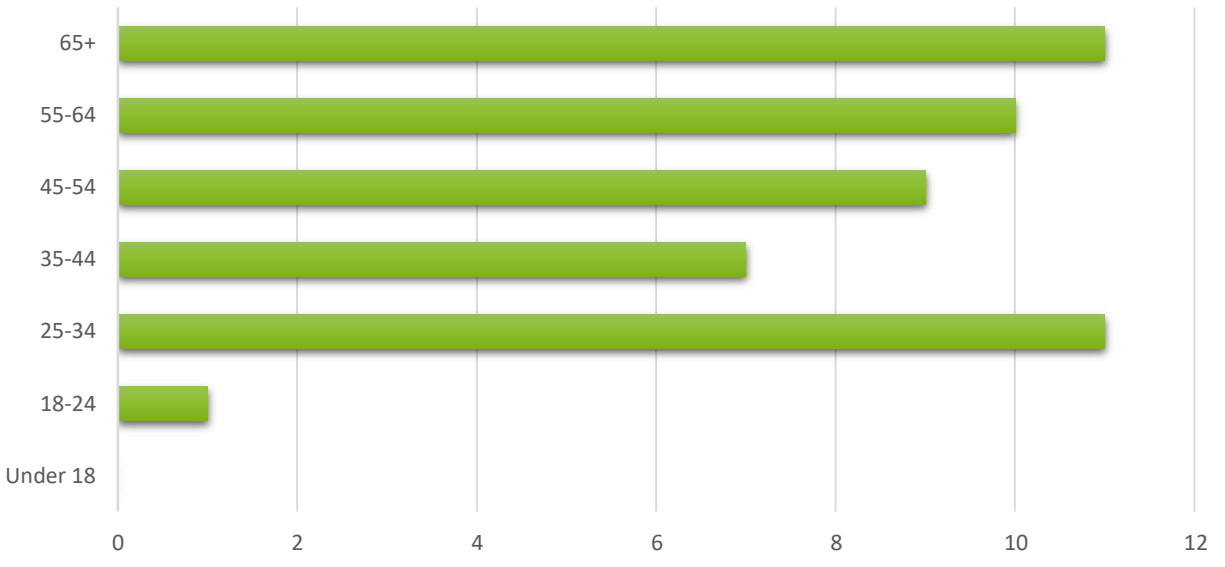


Summary: A majority of respondents from Erie County live in either Sandusky (59%), with the rest living in either: Vermilion (14%), Huron (13%), Milan (8%), Castalia (4%), or Vickery (2%).



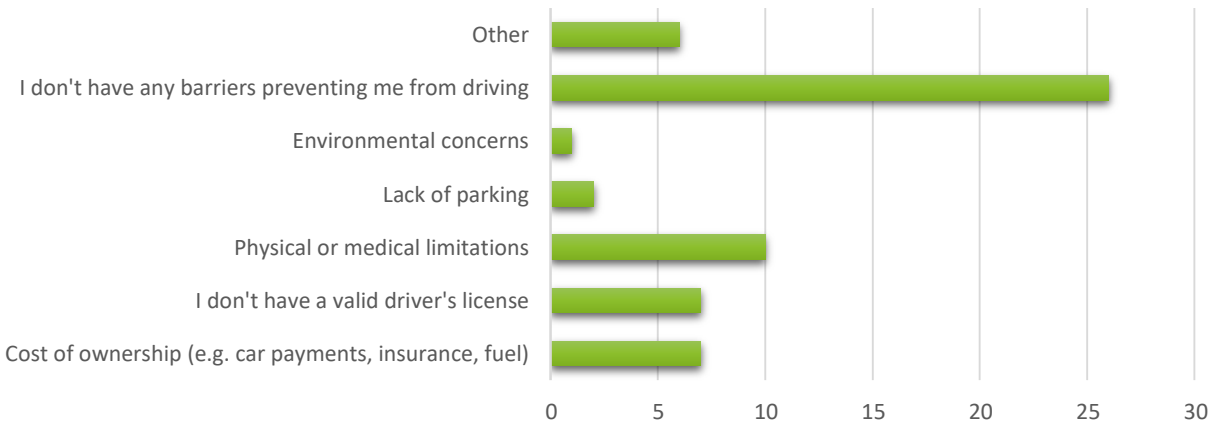
Summary: Most respondents, 75% live in town, while the remaining 25% live in the country (rural).

Question 3: What is your age group?



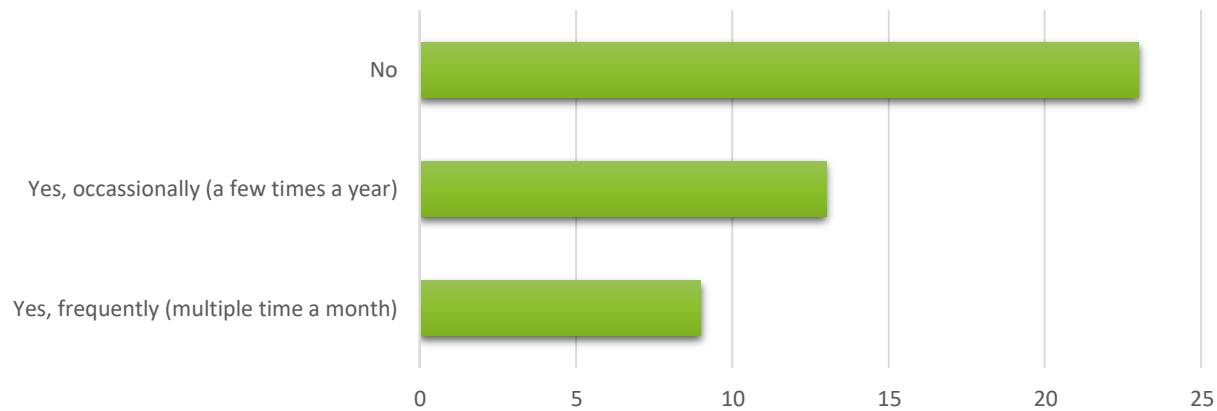
Summary: 22.45% of respondents were over the age of 65, 20.41% of respondents between the ages of 55-64, 18.37% of respondents between the ages of 45-54, 14.29% of respondents between the ages of 35-44, 22.45% between 25-34, 2.04% were between the ages of 18-24, and 0% under the age of 18.

Question 4: Are there any barriers that prevent you from driving or owning a vehicle? (Check all that apply)



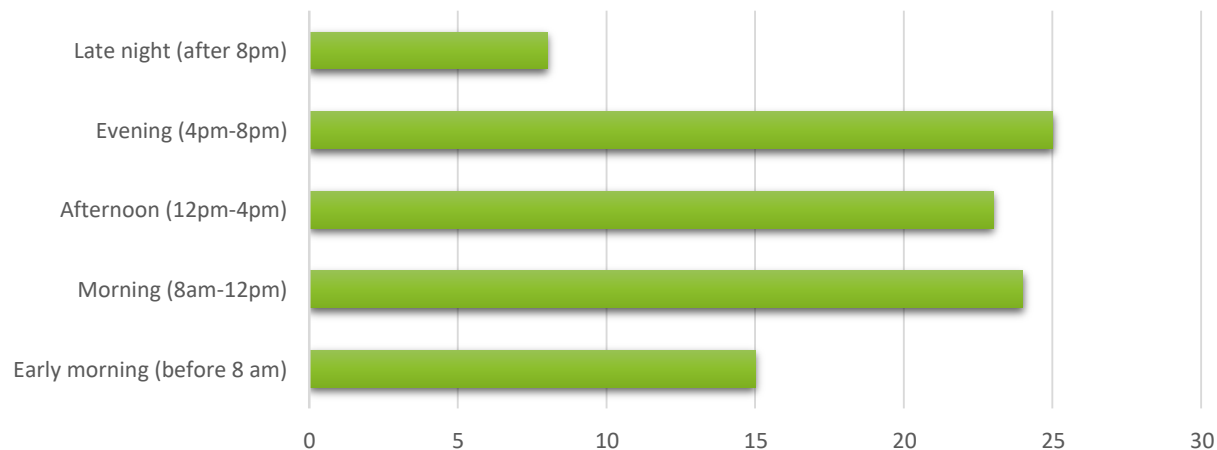
Summary: 21.28% of respondents cited having a physical or medical limitation that prevents them from driving or owning a vehicle. In addition, 14.89% cited cost of ownership and/or not having a valid driver's license, 4.26% cited lack of parking, 2.13% cited environmental concerns, and 12.77% cited other reasons. 55.32% did not face a barrier preventing them from driving or owning a vehicle.

Question 5: Are you ever unable to go somewhere because of lack of transportation?



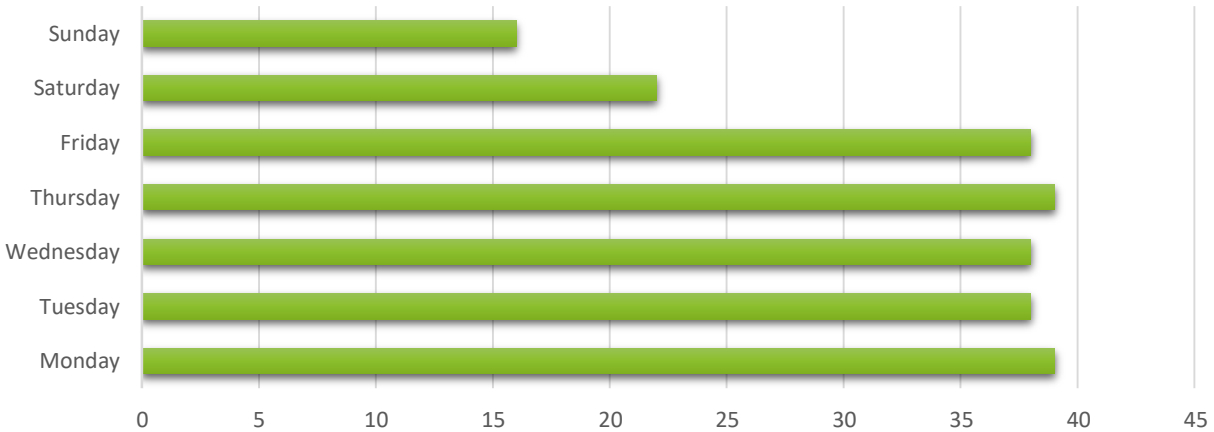
Summary: 48.89% of respondents responded that they are unable to go somewhere because of lack of transportation with 20% stating that they do frequently (multiple times a month), and 28.89% stating that they do occasionally (a few times a year). 51/11% responded that they are not unable to go somewhere because of lack of transportation.

Question 6: What time of day do you typically need transportation? (Check all that apply)



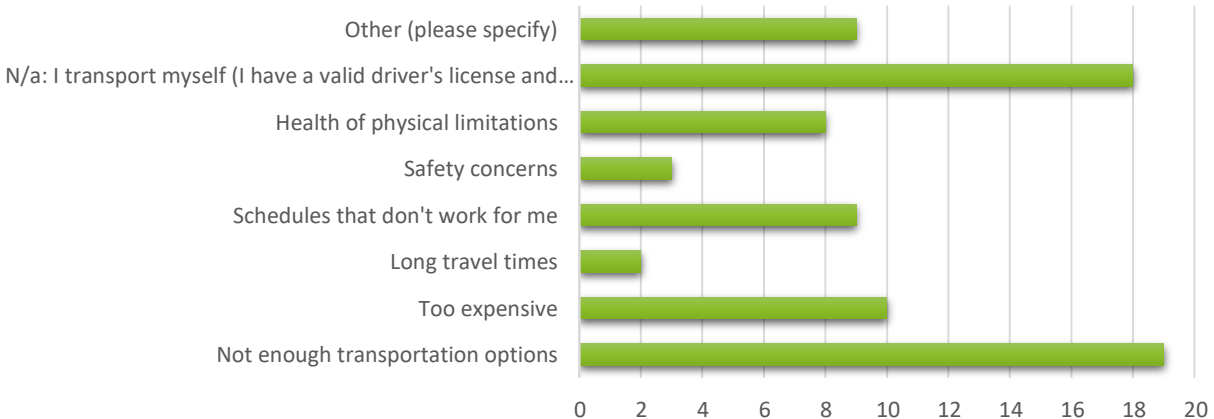
Summary: Most respondents need transportation in the evening between 4pm-8pm (60.98%), with morning between 8am-12pm (58.54%) following, and then afternoon between 12pm-4pm (56.10%), early morning before 8am at (36.59%) and late night after 8pm (19.51%).

Question 7: What days of the week are you most likely to travel? (Check all that apply)



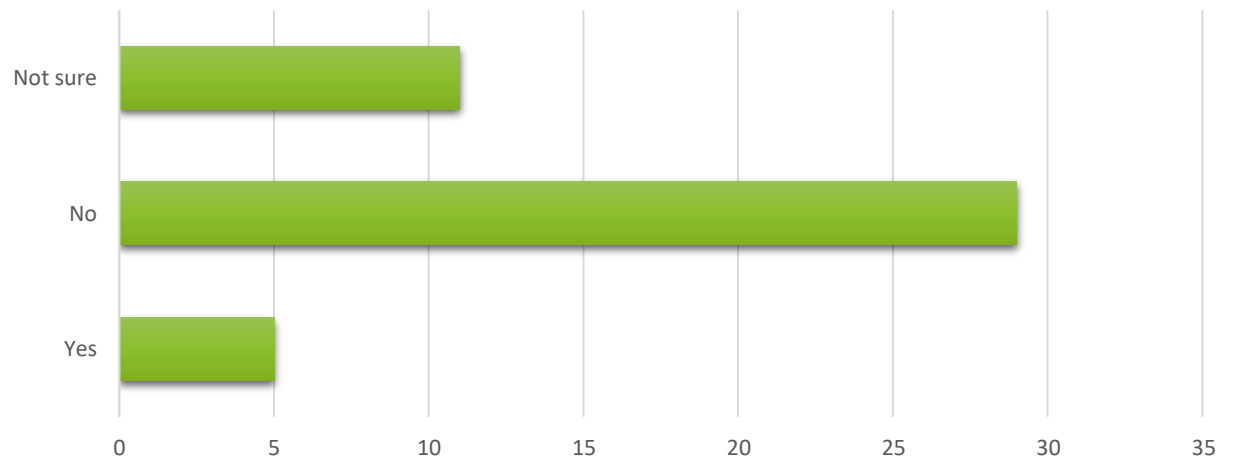
Summary: A majority of respondents expressed they are most likely to travel between the days of Monday-Friday with Monday and Thursday being highest at 95.12%, followed by 92.68% for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. 53.66% responded that they are likely to travel on Saturday and 39.02% on Sunday.

Question 8: What challenges do you face with your current transportation options? (Check all that apply)



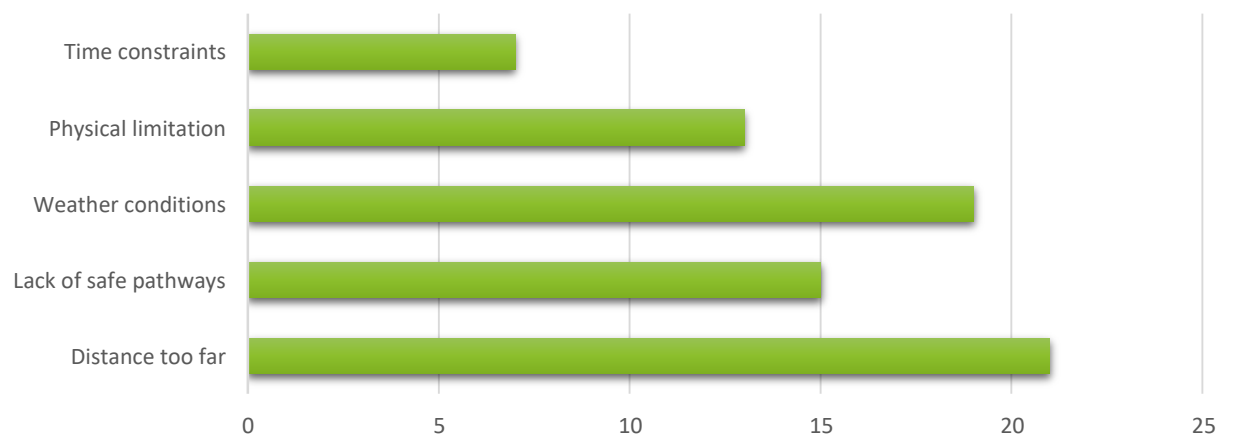
Summary: A majority of respondents (43.18%) responded that there were not enough transportation options, 22.73% responded with it's too expensive, 20.45% responded with schedules that don't work for them, 18.18% responded with health or physical limitations, and 20.45% responded with "other" citing reasons as being outside of Sandusky and needing wheelchair access. 40.91% cited that they transport themselves and do not face challenges with their current transportation options.

Question 9: Do you feel there are enough transportation options in your area?



Summary: A majority of respondents, 64.44% stated that they do not feel there are enough transportation options in the area, followed by 24.44% stating that they are not sure, and 11.11% stating that there are enough transportation options in their area.

Question 10: What are the primary challenges to using active transportation (walking, biking, etc.)? (Check all that apply)



Summary: A majority of respondents stated that the distance being too far (51.22%) was a challenge to using active transportation followed by: weather conditions (46.34%), lack of safe pathways (36.59%), physical limitations (31.71%), and time constraints (17.07%).

Question #11: How would having access to reliable transportation impact your daily life?

1	"would be an aspect to use a different form of transportation"
2	"I have a vehicle and drive. I have an electric bike I would like to be able to use to get around town. However cars do not know to look for bikers and often pull out when I have the right away. Sidewalk are in poor condition. Those using strollers or wheelchairs are forced into the roads. If biking somewhere there is nowhere to safely store bike while at store or location."
3	"it would help me out in to the community. it would help me get to doctors appointments"
4	"For someone who has health issues public transportation with the large windows of time for pick up is hard if you are not well and have to wait long periods of time or pick up way before your appointment"
5	"I could work more consistently and pay my bills."
6	"NA"
7	"n/a"
8	"not at all. I already have reliable transportation. I can't imagine how drastically my life would change if I did not own my own car and have my drivers license."
9	"Positively"
10	"I would rely less on loved ones to transport me."
11	"NA"
12	"it would dramatically improve my life."
13	"improve"
14	"Getting to dr appointments. On list for dial-a-ride, but sometimes they're too busy, sometimes they're fine."
15	"Would be able to meet with peers to socialize at community activities. Be able to access medical appointments and not rely on aging parent. (She does not drive in the evenings when dark)."
16	"Streamline time needing obligations for physical therapy and medical office visits"
17	"Make it much easier, have to pay a neighbor lady to take me grocery shopping and it's expensive; I only get what I absolutely have to have. My son goes to Kroger and I make out a list of things for him to get me, but I don't make it too long because that's not fair to him. So I don't get a lot of things that I normally would. It's hard not being able to jump into a car and go like I used to."
18	"It would make it easier to get to medical appointments, grocery stores and recreational activity."
19	"Better health, exercise!! Being involved in the community."
20	"be able to go someplace. i don't have a car because i am 94 and don't drive any more"
21	"Could get a better job"
22	"Could not work. Could not run errands."
23	"It would definitely help finances and stress of locating transportation or asking others for rides."
24	"for other's the town could have more people working"

Summary: This was an open-ended question which received 24 responses with most responses stating that it would be easier to go to appointments, run errands, have social visits, and gain independence.

Question #12: Do you have specific suggestions for improving transportation in your area?

1	"wheelchair vehicle"
2	"Safety need to be improved for non drivers. Bus stops are located across parking lots forcing people to walk to use wheelchair in unsafe conditions. Biking is not realistic due to messy roads, bad sidewalks, lack of awareness from vehicle drivers, and lack of safe storage and locations for bikes when biking. There is no way for locals to get into Cedar Point if they do not drive."

3	"to have transportation available when i need it like Huron County in Norwalk Dr. Ruggles"
4	"increased door to door for aging and disabled pick up windows smaller for workers who need to get to work expand hours 24/7"
5	"Assistance for car repairs and using the bus to get to work."
6	"NA"
7	"Have a transportation just for senior citizens. Get the news out about it. Many senior citizens do not know about reliable transportation in our area. Let the public know what a driver needs to go through on a yearly basis to be able to drive so others feel safe. Have a helper of some sort with these drivers so senior citizens can have the assistance that is needed."
8	"Can Serving Our Seniors and GLCAP work together on a paper survey or telephone survey of older adults who live beyond the city of Sandusky and the proximal points of Perkins Twp?"
9	"No"
10	"Streamline the scheduling of services so they can be set up long term."
11	"anything available to me is currently \$25 or more per trip, that is pretty much a paycheck at the end of the week so I don't use transportation for leisure."
12	"cheaper rates, more options, availability, distance"
13	"Safe driving, reliable vehicles, and inexpensive fares would benefit those individuals that cannot afford a vehicle of their own."
14	"No ubers around here. None of my friends drive and family lives away. If there were more available transportation that would be nice. Small town in Huron, not a lot of options. Wish we had something more."
15	"Have available and affordable options in Vermilion. Cab rides \$50 or more per side to Sandusky to activities"
16	"Out of county appointments are not possible with Erie County transportation, does use Huron County Senior Enrichment services, but has to schedule appointments 1 month out. Have appointments every 3 months. Drivers in Erie County don't seem to take most efficient routes when only 1 passenger in the vehicle and not picking up anyone else, drivers seem to try to get more hours in by going out of the way. If physical therapy appointment is at 1pm and gets done at 2pm, have to wait until 5pm to get pick up. Scheduling issues and out of county issues. Live in Erie County and have a frequent dr appointment in Bellevue which is less than 1 mile outside of Erie County into Huron County and then takes 1 month to schedule apt with Huron County transportation"
17	"Huron has dial-a-ride for medical use only in county; need transportation option for groceries"
18	"For one thing, here in Sandusky the cedar point kids are on the public transit buses because cedar point pays Sandusky transit to deal with the influx. Many times the buses are full and if you are waiting at a stop they will tell you they don't have any seats and then you may have to wait up to an hour for another bus to come. They need more buses and more drivers."
19	"More open times with Sandusky Transportation."
20	"More options that are safe affordable and reliable"
21	"Agreements with multiple employers on cheaper rates for employees who must use transportation daily. Fifteen dollars per round trip or per day is not feasible. Employees can't book rides several weeks in advance when they receive their schedules weekly."
22	"Additional and affordable."
23	"N/A"

24	"N/A"
25	"offering some kind of public transportation"

Summary: This was an open-ended question which received 25 responses with responses varying from more options, cheaper rates, out-of-country travel, safety concerns, and wheelchair accessibility.

Challenges to Coordinated Transportation

In addition to identifying needs, the planning committee gathered information from stakeholders and used their own professional experience to identify challenges to providing coordinated transportation services. These challenges include the following:

- **Limited Transportation Coverage:** Erie County is largely rural, with many residents living in areas that are not easily accessible. This results in gaps in service coverage, especially in outlying areas where demand may be lower but still significant for key groups like seniors and low-income residents.
- **Inadequate Service Hours:** Current transportation services, including those provided by STS, have limited operating hours, making it difficult for residents who need transportation during evenings, weekends, and non-traditional hours to access services. This affects people working night shifts, those needing to attend medical appointments, and individuals who require transportation for other time-sensitive needs.
- **Shortage of Transportation Drivers and Providers:** There is a significant shortage of qualified transportation drivers in Erie County, which limits the capacity to expand services or extend operating hours. Additionally, the county lacks sufficient transportation providers, with very few taxi services and ridesharing options available. This shortage makes it challenging to meet the growing demand for flexible, on-demand transportation, particularly for residents who do not have access to private vehicles.
- **Lack of Coordination Among Providers:** Although multiple transportation providers are available in the county, there is insufficient coordination between them. This lack of collaboration can result in duplicated services in some areas and unmet needs in others. A more integrated system could ensure that resources are used more efficiently and that service gaps are identified and addressed.
- **Limited Funding and Resources:** Securing funding for transportation services remains a challenge, with many programs reliant on grants and local match. While federal and state funding, such as the Section 5310 program, is available, the funding may not always be sufficient to cover growing transportation needs. Additionally, there is a need for investment in fleet upgrades and the maintenance of accessible vehicles.
- **Infrastructure Limitations:** Erie County's aging infrastructure, including narrow streets and outdated utilities, limits the development of more extensive transportation routes. Many areas lack adequate pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks, creating challenges for people with mobility issues and increasing the potential for accidents.
- **Public Awareness and Engagement:** While there is a demonstrated need for transportation services, some residents are unaware of existing resources or are unsure of how to access them. Effective marketing and public outreach are needed to increase awareness of available services and to better educate the public on how to utilize them.

These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive planning, expanded funding, and better coordination to create a transportation system that meets the needs of all residents in Erie County.

Summary of Unmet Mobility Needs

The following table describes the identified unmet transportation needs that were identified and the method used to identify and prioritize each need. Needs are listed in order of their rank in highest to lowest priority.

Exhibit [3]: Prioritized Unmet Mobility Needs

Rank	Unmet Need Description	Method Used to Identify and Rank Need
1	Limited transportation options for travel between Erie County and neighboring counties	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
2	Insufficient connectivity between rural areas and the City of Sandusky's fixed route system	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
3	Lack of micro-transit, on-demand, and flexible service models that better serve rural and transit-dependent populations	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
4	Insufficient transportation access to regional destinations for employment, education, healthcare, and services	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
5	Gaps in service coordination and communication between transit providers and human service agencies	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
6	Uncertainty and instability of long-term transit funding, including challenges with identifying local match	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
7	Transit governance challenges related to the 3rd-party operating contract and jurisdictional limitations	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
8	Lack of data on the economic impact of public transportation to support future investment and planning	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
9	Limited availability of wheelchair-accessible vehicles for both public and specialized transportation	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
10	Barriers to driver and vehicle maintenance staff recruitment and retention	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
11	Inadequate sidewalk infrastructure, crossings, and pedestrian accessibility	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
12	Gaps in bicycle infrastructure and limited access to micromobility options (e.g., bikeshare, senior tricycles)	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
13	Limited capacity to meet rising demand for transportation services across the county	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
14	Perceived stigma around public transit and a lack of awareness of its value as an essential public service	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
15	Inefficient scheduling and dispatching systems that affect reliability and trip coordination	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
16	Challenges associated with sprawling land use patterns that make efficient transit service delivery difficult	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
17	Need for consistent community input and engagement in transportation planning and decision-making processes	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups

18	Inadequate infrastructure or policies to support aging in place, including senior-friendly active transportation options	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
19	First-mile/last-mile barriers that limit access to fixed-route services	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups

V. Goals and Strategies

Developing Strategies to Address Gaps and Needs

Strategies for improving transportation for Erie County should address the service gaps and user needs identified in this plan, if they are to be effective. As described, the gaps and unmet needs were based on information obtained from geographic analysis, the attendees participating in the meetings/focus group, and responses to the public survey.

Based on information gathered throughout the planning process, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership developed the following strategies to address the gaps and unmet transportation needs. Priority levels were assigned by considering the primary funding sources that could be available to support plan implementation compared to the importance of meeting this unmet need expressed by the public and stakeholders. Not all strategies are activities specifically eligible for funding under the existing programs, nor is it guaranteed that sufficient funding will be available to achieve every strategy identified. In addition, the local stakeholders will need to provide support and commit to pursuing the strategies if they are to be accomplished. Nonetheless, these strategies have been tailored to 19 of the identified primary gaps and needs.

Below is an outline describing the prioritized strategies to address each of the identified unmet transportation needs and gaps in service.

Goal #1: Conduct a Comprehensive Transportation Study to Assess the Economic Impact of Transit Services

Description: Conduct a thorough study to assess the economic impact of transportation services in Erie County, identifying how transit affects local employment, healthcare access, tourism, and other critical sectors to provide data to inform future investments in transit and demonstrate the value of public transportation to the local economy

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Lack of data on the economic impact of public transportation to support future investment and planning
- Perceived stigma around public transit and a lack of awareness of its value as an essential public service
- Uncertainty and instability of long-term funding, including challenges with identifying local match

Strategy 1.1: Partner with Greater Sandusky Partnership, Erie Regional Planning Commission and MPO, and the Erie County Community Foundation to secure funding and support for the transportation economic impact study

Strategy 1.2: Explore hiring a consulting firm to conduct the economic impact study, similar to the methodology used in the OMEGA Transit Technical Report

Strategy 1.3: Identify key economic sectors (e.g., employment, healthcare, tourism) that benefit from transit services and develop metrics to measure these impacts

Strategy 1.4: Use the study findings to advocate for continued and expanded transportation funding and services across Erie County

Timeline for Implementation: 1-3 years

Action Steps:

- Engage Greater Sandusky Partnership, Erie Regional Planning Commission and MPO, and Erie County Community Foundation for initial funding and partnership support.
- Select and hire a consulting firm or utilize Mobility Management to conduct the study, using best practices and methodologies such as those found in the OMEGA report.
- Collect baseline data on transit usage and its impact on economic sectors (employment, healthcare, etc.).
- Analyze and report on the cost-benefit ratio of Erie County's current transportation services.
- Present study findings to Erie County Commissioners, local businesses, and other stakeholders to inform transportation policy decisions.

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Mobility Management, Greater Sandusky Partnership, ERPC

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: STS, Erie County Community Foundation, local employers, healthcare providers, and other transit providers

Resources Needed: staff time, research funding, access to local economic data, analytical tools, consultant expertise

Potential Cost Range: \$50,000-\$150,000

Potential Funding Sources: Erie County Community Foundation, federal/state grants

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Completion of the economic impact study
 - a. Target: Complete the economic impact study by 2028
 - b. Target: Deliver a final report with comprehensive data on the economic benefits of public transportation in Erie County upon study completion
2. Measure: Identification of key economic sectors impacted by transportation
 - a. Target: Identify at least 3 key economic sectors positively impacted by public transportation
 - b. Target: Quantify the economic benefits in each identified sector (e.g., jobs, healthcare access, tourism)
3. Measure: Advocacy and stakeholder engagement

- a. Target: Share the study findings with at least 25 stakeholders, including policymakers, local businesses, and community organizations
- b. Target: Secure at least 2 meetings with local or state policymakers to discuss study findings and recommendations

Goal #2: Expand Transportation Options to Enhance County and Regional Connectivity

Description: Enhance Erie County's transportation network by developing flexible and accessible transit options, connecting rural and urban areas, and improving regional access for medical, employment, and other key destinations

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Limited transportation options for travel between Erie County and neighboring counties
- Insufficient connectivity between rural areas and the City of Sandusky's fixed route system
- Lack of micro-transit, on-demand, and flexible service models that better serve rural and transit-dependent populations
- Insufficient transportation access to regional destinations for employment, education, healthcare, and services
- First-mile/last-mile barriers that limit access to fixed-route services
- Challenges associated with sprawling land use patterns that make efficient transit service delivery difficult
- Limited capacity to meet rising demand for transportation services across the county
- Transit governance challenges related to the 3rd-party operating contract and jurisdictional limitations

Strategy 2.1: Assess the feasibility of implementing micro-transit or on-demand transportation options to improve access from rural areas to fixed-route services within the City of Sandusky

Strategy 2.2: Evaluate the potential for establishing county line or in-county mobility hubs that connect rural communities to urban transit corridors

Strategy 2.3: Support regional connections through initiatives such as a GoBus stop or expanded use of 5310-contracted transportation services

Strategy 2.4: Coordinate with transportation providers in adjacent counties to identify shared service needs, reduce duplication, and enhance access to out-of-county destinations

Strategy 2.5: Maintain and strengthen participation in regional planning discussions and partnerships that support cross-county transit access

Strategy 2.6: Develop pilot programs to test scalable, cost-effective solutions for rural-to-urban and inter-county transportation

Strategy 2.7: Explore opportunities for innovative funding to support transportation expansion

Strategy 2.8: Relaunch and expand Serving Our Senior's volunteer driver program for senior medical transportation

Timeline for Implementation: 4 years

Action Steps:

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify key rural-to-urban corridors and underserved populations.
- Partner with transportation providers to develop micro-transit or hub-based pilot programs.
- Coordinate with GoBus and ODOT to assess requirements for establishing a stop.
- Identify suitable locations for in-county mobility hubs and evaluate infrastructure needs.
- Convene regular meetings with regional transportation providers and stakeholders.
- Apply for 5310 and other grant programs to fund inter-county connectivity solutions.
- Research non-traditional or innovative funding sources, such as private-public partnerships, foundation grants, or pooled local contributions.

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Mobility Management, STS

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: ERPC, ODOT, GoBus, Serving Our Seniors, Erie County BDD, local health systems, transportation providers

Resources Needed: staff time, community input and engagement, vehicle and infrastructure investment, technology/software for micro-transit/on-demand transportation, funding partnerships

Potential Cost Range: \$250,000-\$1,000,000

Potential Funding Sources: ODOT, FTA, pilot or innovation grants, local funds

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Increase access from rural Erie County to fixed-route in Sandusky
 - a. Target: Complete feasibility assessment of micro-transit/on-demand and rural connector services by 2028
 - b. Target: Implement at least micro-transit/on-demand rural pilot program by 2030
2. Measure: Improve regional transportation access to adjacent counties
 - a. Target: Secure at least one new inter-county connection (e.g., GoBus, 5310 contract) by 2027
 - b. Target: Collect and analyze baseline and ongoing ridership data for inter-county trips to and from Erie County by 2027
3. Measure: Advance mobility hub planning and funding
 - a. Target: Identify and assess at least two potential mobility hub sites by 2027
 - b. Target: Develop a phased implementation plan for at least one mobility hub by 2027

Goal #3: Enhance Active Transportation Infrastructure and Accessibility

Description: Support safe and equitable mobility in Erie County by assessing and enhancing infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized users – particularly older adults and individuals with disabilities

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Inadequate sidewalk infrastructure, crossings, and pedestrian accessibility
- Gaps in bicycle infrastructure and limited access to micromobility options (e.g., bikeshare, senior tricycles)
- Inadequate infrastructure or policies to support aging in place, including senior-friendly active transportation options

Strategy 3.1: Assess sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure near key destinations (e.g., transit stops, senior housing, public services)

Strategy 3.2: Identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements in underserved neighborhoods and communities with high mobility needs

Strategy 3.3: Evaluate the feasibility of implementing accessible bicycle or tricycle programs for older adults and individuals with disabilities

Strategy 3.4: Partner with Serving Our Seniors to implement a Safe Routes to Age in Place study

Strategy 3.5: Explore opportunities to partner with local jurisdictions on Complete Streets and/or Safe Routes initiatives

Strategy 3.6: Collaborate with local health systems and planning agencies to support walkability and bikeability efforts through active transportation and health grants

Timeline for Implementation: duration of plan

Action Steps:

- Conduct walk and bike audits in high-priority locations based on community input and transportation usage
- Gather resident input through travel diaries to document mobility patterns and barriers
- Partner with local jurisdictions to map existing pedestrian and bike infrastructure and identify gaps
- Use survey and focus group data to identify priority areas for improvements
- Pursue funding opportunities for infrastructure enhancements through ODOT and public health sources
- Pilot an adaptive bike/trike lending program in collaboration with local senior centers or community hubs
- Promote community walkability through events, signage, and public outreach

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: ERPC, Mobility Management

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: Erie County Health Department, Family Health Services, Greater Sandusky Partnership

Resources Needed: Staff time, audit tools, mapping resources, adaptive bicycles/tricycles, infrastructure improvement funding

Potential Cost Range: \$25,000-\$500,000

Potential Funding Sources: ODOT, Transportation Alternative Funding, Health grants, foundations

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Assess and prioritize active transportation needs in Erie County
 - a. Target: Complete walk and bike audits in at least three priority locations by 2027
 - b. Target: Collect travel diaries from at least 10 residents to inform planning
2. Measure: Improve non-motorized accessibility to transit and essential services
 - a. Target: Secure funding for at least two pedestrian or bicycle improvement projects by 2027
 - b. Target: Increase pedestrian access to fixed-route transit stops in at least two rural or underserved areas
3. Measure: Expand access to adaptive mobility options
 - a. Target: Launch a pilot adaptive bike/trike program by 2030
 - b. Target: Partner with at least one agency or senior centers to host equipment or events

Goal #4: Strengthen and Sustain Coordinated Transportation Services

Description: Support a coordinated and sustainable transportation network in Erie County by expanding public awareness, leveraging funding for accessible vehicles and services, and enhancing inter-agency collaboration.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Gaps in service coordination and communication between transit providers and human service agencies
- Limited availability of wheelchair-accessible vehicles for both public and specialized transportation
- Barriers to driver and vehicle maintenance staff recruitment and retention
- Inefficient scheduling and dispatching systems that affect reliability and trip coordination
- Need for consistent community input and engagement in transportation planning and decision-making processes

Strategy 4.1: Support the ongoing use and expansion of 5310 funding to acquire accessible vehicles, transportation operations, and programming

Strategy 4.2: Strengthen collaboration between agencies to improve service coordination and reduce duplication

Strategy 4.3: Develop and implement a marketing and public awareness campaign to promote all transportation services and resources

Strategy 4.4: Advocate for sustainable transportation funding at the local, state, and federal levels

Strategy 4.5: Preserve mobility management services to support planning, coordination, and public education across the transportation network

Timeline for Implementation: ongoing

Action Steps:

- Conduct an annual assessment of 5310 applications and needs
- Identify shared coordination opportunities among local transportation providers and agencies
- Host quarterly Transportation Advisory Committee meetings and work groups to advance Erie County's Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan
- Design a communications strategy to promote transportation services across all audiences
- Develop and distribute marketing materials (e.g., Getting Around Erie County Guides, social media content, flyers)
- Participate annually in Ohio Loves Transit Week and other awareness events to promote to advocate for rural/small urban transportation
- Meet with local and state officials to advocate for transportation investment and policy support
- Maintain and secure Section 5310 funding to support vehicle replacement, service continuity, and mobility management programming

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Mobility Management

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: STS, Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Serving Our Seniors, ODOT, Ohio Public Transit Association, community and business partners

Resources Needed: operational funding, vehicles, staff time, coordination/collaboration, communications/outreach materials, meeting space

Potential Cost Range: \$250,000

Potential Funding Sources: Section 5310 ODOT Funding, community foundations, local government match and in-kind contributions

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Increase awareness and utilization of transportation services

- a. Target: Develop an annual Getting Around Guide that lists the transportation providers in Erie County
 - b. Target: Distribute 250 Getting Around Guides throughout the county annually
- 2. Measure: Support accessible transportation through effective use of 5310 resources
 - a. Target: Maintain 100% operational readiness of 5310 -funded vehicles
 - b. Target: Submit at least 2 5310 grant applications annually
- 3. Measure: Maintain mobility management services
 - a. Target: Sustain a full-time Mobility Manager position annually
 - b. Target: Convene 4 Transportation Advisory Committee meetings
- 4. Measure: Advocate for ongoing transportation funding and awareness
 - a. Target: Participate in Ohio Loves Transit each year
 - b. Target: Meet with local and state policymakers about transit priorities at least once per year
 - c. Target: Publish or present one advocacy-related update or success story annually

Goal #5: Achieve Financial Sustainability and Enhance Service Delivery Through Strategic Partnerships

Description: Strengthen the long-term viability and efficiency of Erie County's transportation services by identifying diversified funding sources, building strategic partnerships, and leveraging technology and shared resources to improve operations and rider experience

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Uncertainty and instability of long-term transit funding, including challenges with identifying local match
- Transit governance challenges related to the 3rd party operating contract and jurisdictional limitations
- Gaps in service coordination and communication between transit providers and human service agencies
- Inefficient scheduling and dispatching systems that affect reliability and trip coordination
- Limited capacity to meet rising demand for transportation services across the county
- Perceived stigma around public transit and a lack of awareness of its value as an essential public service
- Lack of data on the economic impact of public transportation to support future investment and planning

Strategy 5.1: Assess opportunities to streamline operations through partnerships, shared service agreements, or regional collaboration

Strategy 5.2: Identify and pursue stable and diversified funding sources to support long-term transit sustainability

Strategy 5.3: Evaluate and adopt technology improvements that support efficient scheduling, dispatching, and fare collection

Strategy 5.4: Strengthen relationships with community partners to support transit through in-kind contributions or coordinated programming

Strategy 5.5: Build transit agency capacity by investing in staff development, training, and planning

Strategy 5.6: Explore and evaluate the FTA 5307 grantee designation to ensure the most effective governance structure for delivering and expanding public transit services

Timeline for Implementation: duration of plan

Action Steps:

- Convene a work group of stakeholders to evaluate partnership models and shared service options
- Research and apply for non-traditional funding (e.g., healthcare, education, private foundations)
- Develop marketing and outreach strategies to demonstrate transit value to employers and institutions
- Engage in long-term financial planning, including reserve strategies and diversified revenue modeling
- Identify succession planning needs and build internal pipelines for workforce development
- Review governance models and engage with ODOT and FTA on 5307 designation and eligibility implications

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Mobility Management, STS

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: ODOT, FTA, ERPC, Greater Sandusky Partnership, Erie County Commissioners, Human Service Agencies, Local municipalities

Resources Needed: staff time, technical assistance, financial modeling and cost analysis tools, legal/contract support for formal agreements, outreach and education materials

Potential Cost Range: N/a

Potential Funding Sources: FTA, ODOT, local agency contributions, in-kind

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Progress toward financial sustainability
 - a. Target: Secure at least two new funding sources by 2028
 - b. Target: Identify and evaluate at least three potential long-term funding opportunities by 2027
2. Measure: Strengthen collaborative partnerships to support service delivery

- a. Target: Formalize at least two new partnerships with community-based organizations, local governments, or employers by 2027
 - b. Target: Host or participate in at least four partner-led planning or coordination meetings annually
- 3. Measure: Advance strategic planning and governance
 - a. Target: Complete and initial assessment of the 5307-grantee designation structure by 2027
 - b. Target: Share findings with the Transportation Advisory Committee and key stakeholders for input
 - c. Target: Identify next steps and potential implementation options based on assessment outcomes

VI. Plan Adoption

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJ) requires that the plan development process must include older adults, individuals with disabilities, members of the general public, and representatives from public, private and non-profit transportation, and human services providers but does not mandate the body or organization that must adopt the plan. However, the Section 5310 program specifies that individuals who adopt the plan must include individuals who were involved in the planning process. Therefore, ODOT has taken the step of requiring that the local Transportation Advisory Committee that was developed at the onset of the planning process will have the responsibility of plan adoption and approving future amendments of the plan.

In accordance with the requirements set forth by the IIJ Act and ODOT, the Erie County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan included a designated public comment period to allow for stakeholder and community input prior to plan adoption. A draft of the Coordinated Plan was made available upon request for review by stakeholders and the general public prior to a community meeting held on May 15, 2025, at the Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities, with the option to attend virtually to ensure accessibility. Specific outreach efforts were made to engage older adults, individuals with disabilities, and representatives from public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers.

Outreach and notification efforts included the following:

- A public notice posted on April 9, 2025, announcing the opportunity to request, review, and comment on the draft plan throughout the month of May.
- Social media promotion on April 10, 2025, to broaden awareness and reach additional community members.
- Calendar invitations sent on April 9, 2025, to private, non-profit, and human services providers involved in the planning process.
- An email reminder sent on May 14, 2025, to ensure that key stakeholders had the opportunity to attend and provide final feedback at the public meeting.

All outreach and engagement efforts were documented and will be maintained by GLCAP.

Comments were received from April 10th-May 31st, 2025. Stakeholders requested improved clarity and inclusivity within the plan. Sue Daugherty, Serving Our Seniors, requested a Safe Routes to Age in Place study to be a specific strategy. Including the seniors volunteer driver program through Serving Our Seniors was also requested to be added. Questions about ODOT's 5310 specialized transportation and 5310 contracted services award announcements, and about the transportation economic study were also posed.

Following the public comment period, GLCAP reviewed all feedback and incorporated relevant revisions into the final Coordinated Plan. Questions regarding funding and the economic study were addressed in person during the public meeting.

The draft plan was distributed electronically via email to all Planning Committee members, with hard copies available upon request to ensure efficient and equitable access.

The Coordinated Plan was formally presented to the Planning Committee during a public meeting held on May 15, 2025, at the Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities, with a virtual participation option also available. The meeting was open to the public and promoted through previously established outreach channels used throughout the planning process. A total of 10 members attended, including 5 in person and 5 virtually.

A motion to adopt the plan, allowing for any formatting or insignificant changes to be made afterward, was introduced by James Stacey and seconded by Diane Corso. The Planning Committee voted unanimously in favor of adoption.

Following the incorporation of feedback from the public comment period, the lead agency prepared the final draft of the Erie County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan. The updated version of the plan, along with documentation of all comments received and the corresponding responses or revisions, was shared with the Planning Committee on June 23, 2025. No significant edits or objections were received from the Planning Committee following the distribution of the final draft. As a result, the plan advanced to the final adoption stage without requiring an additional stakeholder review.

To meet state requirements for rural and small urban counties, GLCAP contacted the Erie County Board of Commissioners on April 9, 2025, to present the Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan to ensure that the appropriate local authority was informed and involved in the final adoption process. The Board declined a formal presentation but requested that a final copy of the plan be emailed to them, which the lead agency provided on June 23, 2025.

The Final Coordinated Plan was then submitted to the Special Project Manager within the Office of Transit at ODOT for a final review. Once the review was complete with any corrections, a Plan Adoption Page was distributed to each Planning Committee member for signature, confirming both their involvement in the planning process and their approval of the final plan. The signed adoption page will be submitted to ODOT alongside the final plan and made available to all stakeholders, including via publication on the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership's website.

Appendix A: List of Planning Committee Participants

The planning committee consists of representation from local agencies as well as participation of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and members of the general public. More information about the planning committee is available upon request by contacting

Agency Representation

Name	Agency
Doreen Ehler	Ability Works
Jim Roth	Ability Works
Mackenzie Lynch	Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE)
James Stacey III	City of Sandusky
Bill Vasil	CrewTrak
Bob Kazma	CrewTrak
Diane Corso	Erie County Board of DD
Kevin Cannon	Erie County Regional Planning Commission and MPO
Jan Beck	Erie Residential Living, Inc.
Rebecca Riddle	Erie Residential Living, Inc.
Karen Kilgo	Flat Rock Homes, Inc.
Sherri Buehl	Flat Rock Homes, Inc.
Courtney Curtis	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP)
Jim Oliver	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP)
Mindy Birkholz	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP)
David White	Greater Sandusky Partnership
Breanna Mantz	Goodwill of Erie, Huron, Ottawa, and Sandusky Counties
Cyndi Johnson	Goodwill of Erie, Huron, Ottawa, and Sandusky Counties
Sue Daugherty	Serving Our Seniors

In addition to participants listed above, the planning committee also included representation of older adults, people with disabilities, and members of the general public. In addition to hosting a planning committee, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership and other planning committee members also conducted a wide variety of activities designed to increase involvement of community stakeholders in identifying community resources, addressing community needs, and setting goals and priorities. More information about the efforts that occurred is available upon request. To request additional information please contact:

Jim Oliver
Mobility Management Coordinator
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
419-333-5087
jaoliver@glcap.org

Appendix B: List of Annual Reviews and Plan Amendments

It is required that this plan be reviewed by the planning committee annually. For more information on when the next annual review will occur, how to be involved in the annual review process or to request information on how to make changes or corrections to this plan between annual reviews, please contact:

Jim Oliver
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
419-333-5087
jaoliver@glcap.org

Appendix C: Definitions

There are several terms used throughout the plan that may be unique to transportation providers or human service agencies. The terms are defined here for reference.

Coordination – Collaborative efforts toward understanding and meeting the mobility needs in the most appropriate, cost effective, and responsive manner.

Gaps in Service – A break in the continuity of available transportation resources such as a break between hours of operation or a break between two or more geographic areas.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law on November 15, 2021, authorizes significant funding to improve the nation’s transportation infrastructure, including public transit. The IIJA provides \$550 billion in new investments over five years, with a focus on modernizing infrastructure, enhancing safety, and expanding access to reliable and affordable transportation options. Specifically, it includes funding for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to improve transit systems, support the transition to electric buses, enhance transit safety, and promote equitable access to transportation services across rural and urban communities.

Lead Agency – The organization responsible for facilitating outreach; composing a plan that meets the requirements of current Federal and State legislation; maintaining documentation from the planning process and making it available upon request; and leading stakeholders through annual reviews, amendments, and updates of the plan. The Lead Agency also is responsible for submitting the adopted Coordinated Plan and all amendments or updates to participating stakeholders and ODOT.

Planning Committee – (indicate if the planning committee has another formal name) The Planning Committee is composed of key community stakeholders. The Planning Committee members agree to actively participate in the planning process and act as the plan advisory and adopting entity.

Ridership – The total number of passengers who boarded transportation vehicles are counted each time they board a vehicle.

Section 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (49 U.S.C. 5310) provides Federal formula funding for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options.

Section 5311 Program – The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000 where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. The program also provides funding for state and national training and technical assistance through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program. Subrecipients may include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

Section 5307 Program – The Urbanized Area Formula Grants program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation-related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more.

Transportation – Transportation is broadly defined to include traditional transit, human service agency services, on-demand (taxi-like) services, bicycle and pedestrian programs and amenities.

Unmet Transportation Needs – Transportation that is wanted or desired but is not currently available.