

Marion 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
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Executive Summary

This plan is the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Marion County. The plan was initially developed as a regional plan with Crawford, Marion, and Morrow County in 2017 and updated in 2022. This document replaces the former Crawford County, Marion County, and Morrow County Regional Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan as of July 1, 2025. 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 Marion 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
 - Blue Bell Taxi
 - Lynx EMS
 - Marion Area Transit (MAT)
 - Marion County Veterans Service
 - Marion County Senior Center
 - GoBus
2. Identify and Prioritize community transportation needs
 1. Insufficient staffing and driver shortages
 2. Lack of accessible transportation including for workforce
 3. Lack of countywide transportation
 4. Limited early morning, evening, and weekend service
 5. No same-day, short-notice, or on-demand ride options
 6. Gaps in rural service coverage
 7. High cost of transportation
 8. Inadequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
 9. Lack of sustainable and diversified funding sources
 10. Low public awareness of transportation services
 11. Stigma or lack of public support for public transit
 12. Physical and medical limitations affecting mobility
 13. Distance, weather, and safety concerns for walking and biking
 14. Lack of affordable taxi or private ride services

3. Establish a clear plan for achieving shared goals

To realize the shared goals identified in the Marion County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan, a well-organized and cooperative implementation framework will be followed. Each goal is accompanied by practical strategies, anticipated timelines, assigned responsibilities, and performance metrics to measure progress and maintain transparency.

Mobility Management will oversee the implementation process, working closely with Marion Area Transit (MAT), local government entities, social service organizations, employers, and regional planning bodies. This collaborative network will drive initiatives forward and ensure that resources are used effectively.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will convene on a quarterly basis to review progress, encourage collaboration, and synchronize funding and planning efforts. Activities such as community outreach campaigns, demonstration projects, infrastructure reviews, driver recruitment efforts, and advocacy will unfold in deliberate phases, with routine evaluations guiding any necessary adjustments.

Funding will be sourced from a blend of federal, state, and local channels to support critical needs, including vehicle acquisitions, service expansions, facility improvements, workforce development, and community engagement efforts.

By combining data-driven decision-making, inclusive public involvement, and strong partnerships across sectors, Marion County is committed to building a reliable, inclusive, and sustainable transportation network that meets the diverse mobility needs of its 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 seniors to gain insight into their issues and obstacles faced when desiring public transportation services

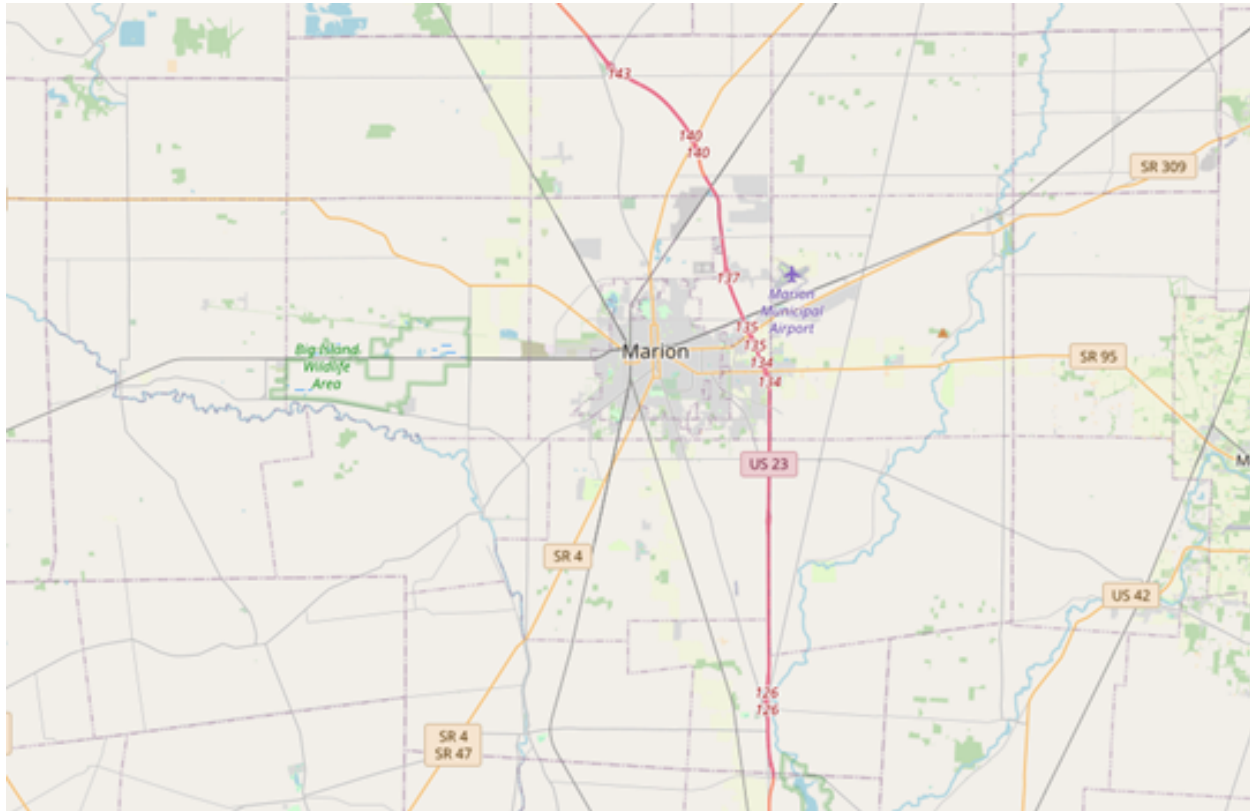
This plan was developed and adopted by Marion County's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). More information about the planning committee can be found in Appendix A.

I. Geographic Area

Marion County is located in north central Ohio. As of the 2020 census, the population was 65,359 and its county seat is Marion. Marion County is part of a Rural Transportation Planning Organization, the Central Ohio Planning Organization. Marion County is designated as a rural area.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 404 square miles (1,050 km), of which 404 square miles (1,050 km) is land and 0.4 square miles (1.0 km) (0.1%) is water.

Map 1: Basic Map of the Geographic Area Covered by the Plan



Below is a map of major trip generators within the county, with the following table detailing the major trip generators.

Map 2: Major Trip Generators in the Geographic Area

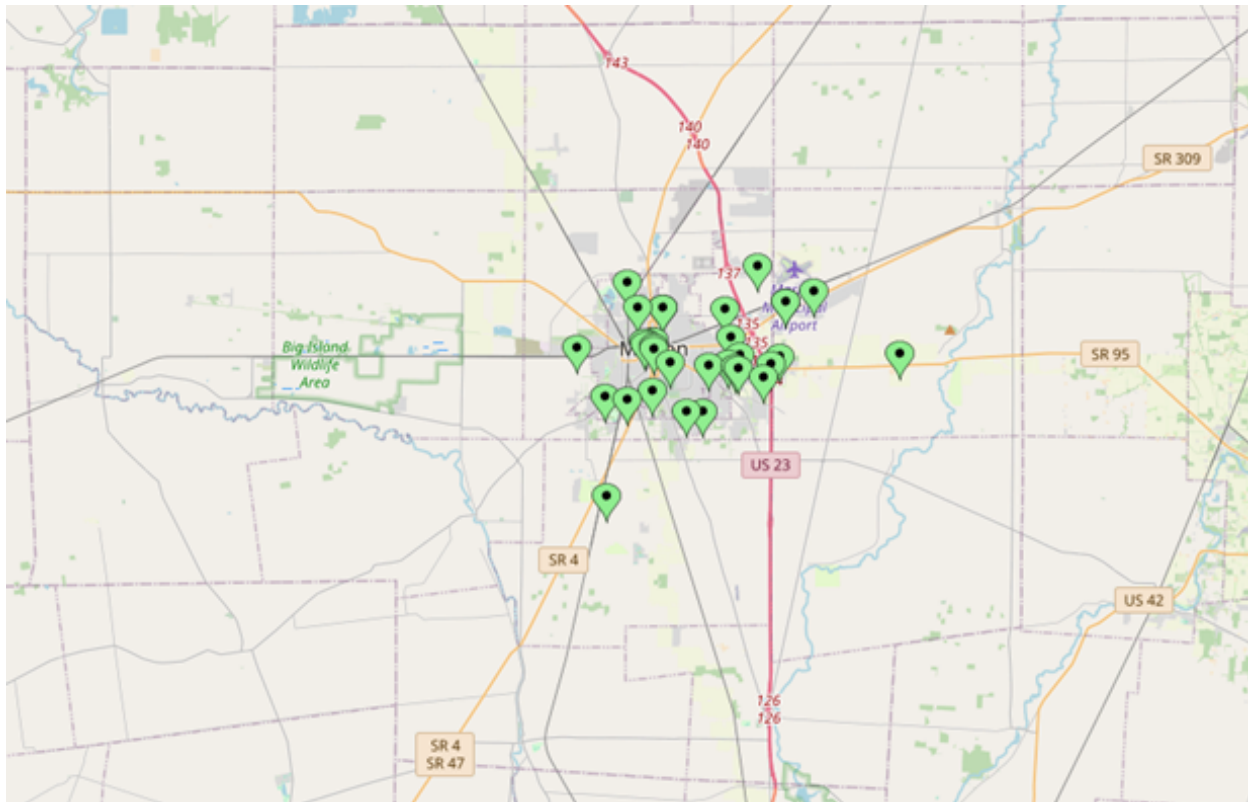


Table 1: List of Major Trip Generators

Healthcare	
Ohio Health Marion General Hospital 1000 McKinley Park Dr, Marion, OH 43302	Center Street Community Health Center 136 W Center St, Marion, OH 43302
Government	
Marion County Commissioners / County Offices 222 W Center St, Marion, OH 43302	Marion City Hall 233 W Center St, Marion, OH 43302
Marion County Courthouse 100 N Main St, Marion, OH 43302	
Schools	
Marion City Schools 420 Presidential Dr, Marion, OH 43302	Marion Harding High School 1500 Harding Hwy E, Marion, OH 43302
River Valley High School 4280 Marion-Mt Gilead Rd, Caledonia, OH 43314	Tri-Rivers Career Center 2222 Marion-Mt Gilead Rd, Marion, OH 43302
Marion Technical College 1467 Mt Vernon Ave, Marion, OH 43302	The Ohio State University at Marion 1465 Mt Vernon Ave, Marion, OH 43302

Manufacturers	
Whirlpool Corporation 1300 Marion-Agosta Rd, Marion, OH 43302	Sika Corporation 1682 Marion-Williamsport Rd E, Marion, OH 43302
Piston Automotive 999 Kellogg Pkwy, Marion, OH 43302	Union Tank 1207 Cheney Ave, Marion, OH 43302
O & M Company 1065 Mt Vernon Ave, Marion, OH 43302	TODCO 1295 E Fairground St, Marion, OH 43302
Recreation	
Marion Recreation Center 240 W Church St, Marion, OH 43302	Bluefusion Fun Center 1340 Mt Vernon Ave, Marion, OH 43302
Marion Family YMCA 645 Barks Rd E, Marion, OH 43302	Willard Swimming Pool 561 W Laurel St, Willard, OH 44890
Shopping	
Eastland Towne Center 1546 Marion-Mt Gilead Rd, Marion, OH 43302	Downtown Marion Shopping S Main St, Marion, OH 43302
Meijer 2153 Marion-Mt Gilead Rd, Marion, OH 43302	Marion County Fairgrounds 220 E Fairground St, Marion, OH 43302
Adult Day Programs/Seniors	
Marion Senior Center 2375 Harding Hwy E, Marion, OH 43302	MARCA Industries Inc 2820 Harding Hwy E, Marion, OH 43302
Wings of an angel 2813 Gooding Rd, Marion, OH 43302	Delco Plaza Shopping Center 1315 Delaware Ave, Marion, OH 43302
Human Services Agencies/Non-Profits	
Marion County Job and Family Services 363 W Fairground St, Marion, OH 43302	Ohio Heartland Community Action 1183 Bellefontaine Ave, Marion, OH 43302
Marion Public Health 181 S Main St #3964, Marion, OH 43302	Marion County Board of Developmental Disabilities 2387 Harding Hwy E, Marion, OH 43302
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living	
Kingston Residence of Marion 464 James Way, Marion, OH 43302	The Wyndmoor of Marion 308 Barks Rd E, Marion, OH 43302

II. Population Demographics

There has been a steady, but slight increase in Marion County's population over the last five years. According to the 2020 census, the total population of Marion County was 65,359. The population increase is seen most in the city of Marion, which is the county seat.

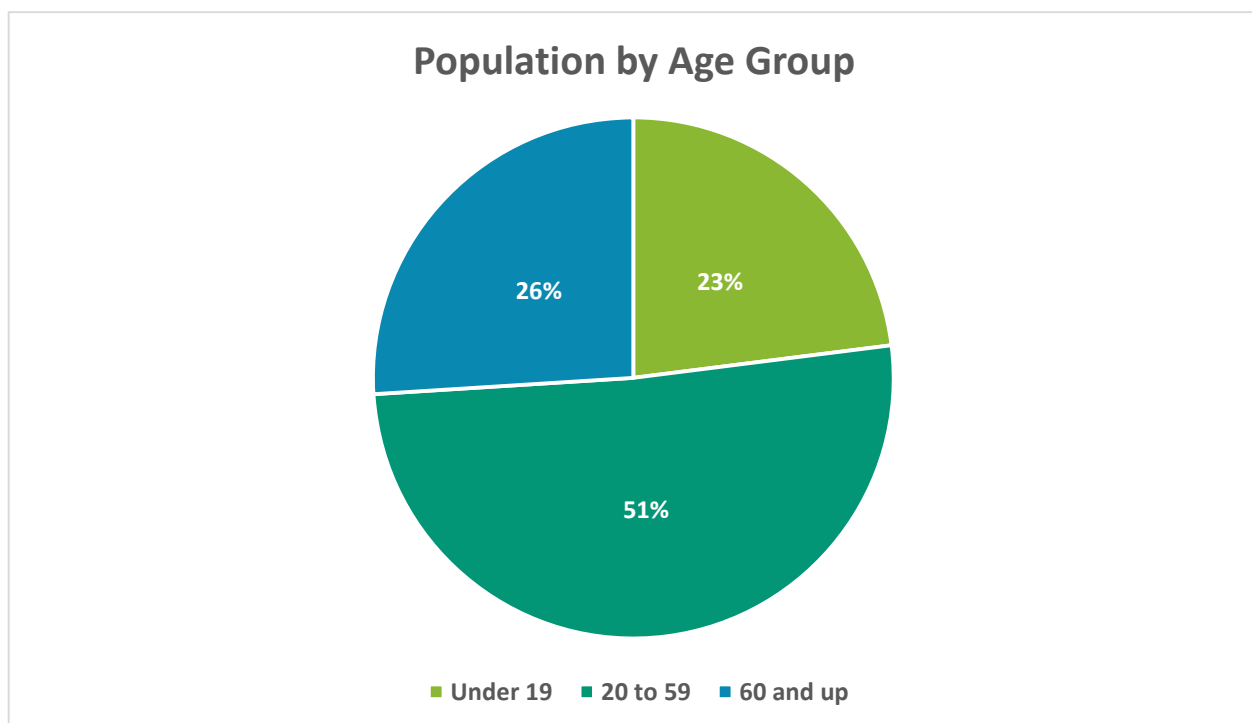
Chart 1 shows the population projections in five-year increments:

Chart 1: Total Population Current and Projected for Five Years

Year	Total Population	Male	Female	Change
2025	65,359	35,331	29,520	+266
2030	65,620	35,472	29,638	+261
2035	65,883	35,614	29,757	+263
2040	66,146	35,757	29,876	+263
2045	66,411	35,900	29,995	+275

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 15,193 people under the age of 19, there are 32,755 people between the ages of 20 and 59, and 16,903 aged 60 and over.

Chart 2: Total Population by Age Group



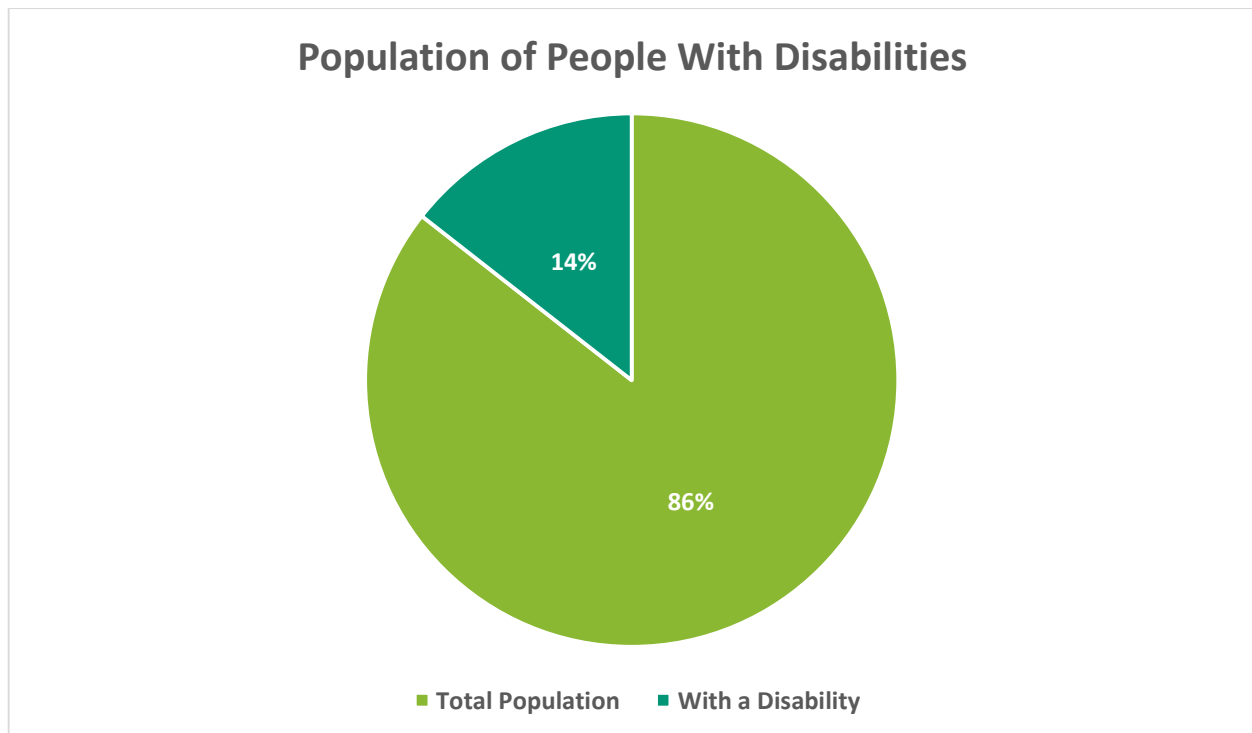
The majority of this area identifies as White (56,754), with the following groups also noted:

Chart 3: Total Population by Race

Black or African American	4107
American Indian and Alaska Native	193
Asian	362
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	16
Some Other Race	827
Two or More Races	3100

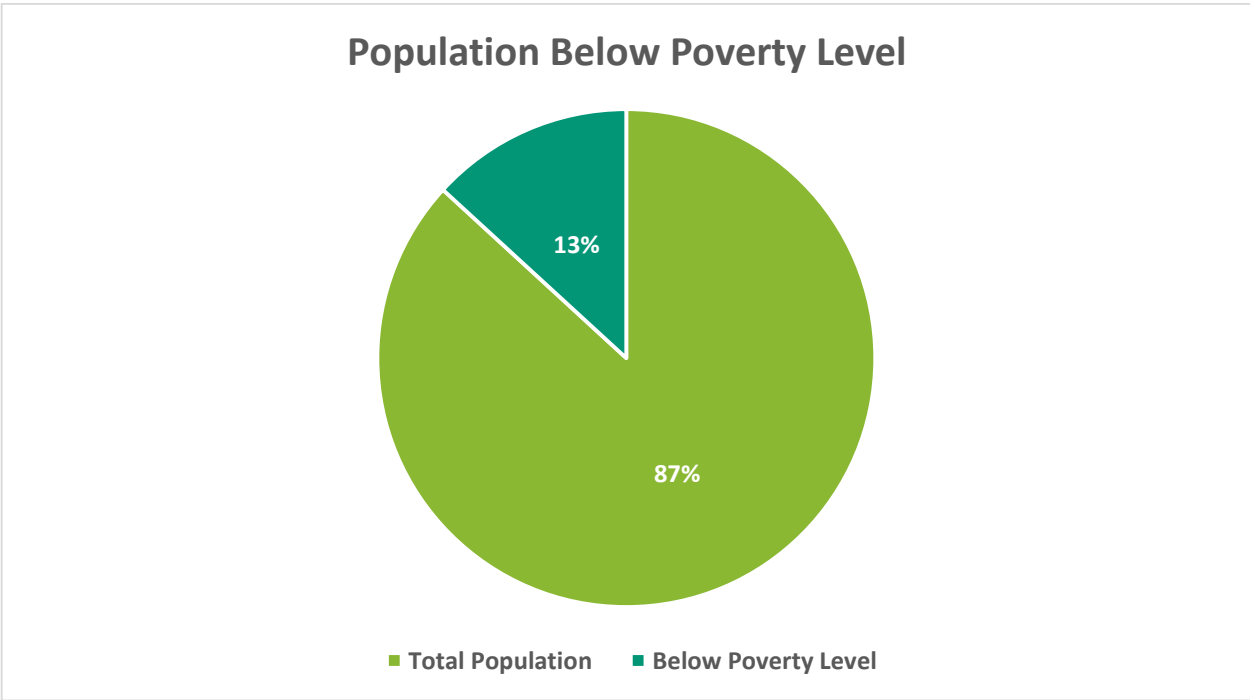
The number of people identifying as having a disability in Marion County is 11,035, or 14% of the overall population, which is slightly above the national average of 13%.

Chart 4: Number and Percentage of People with Disabilities



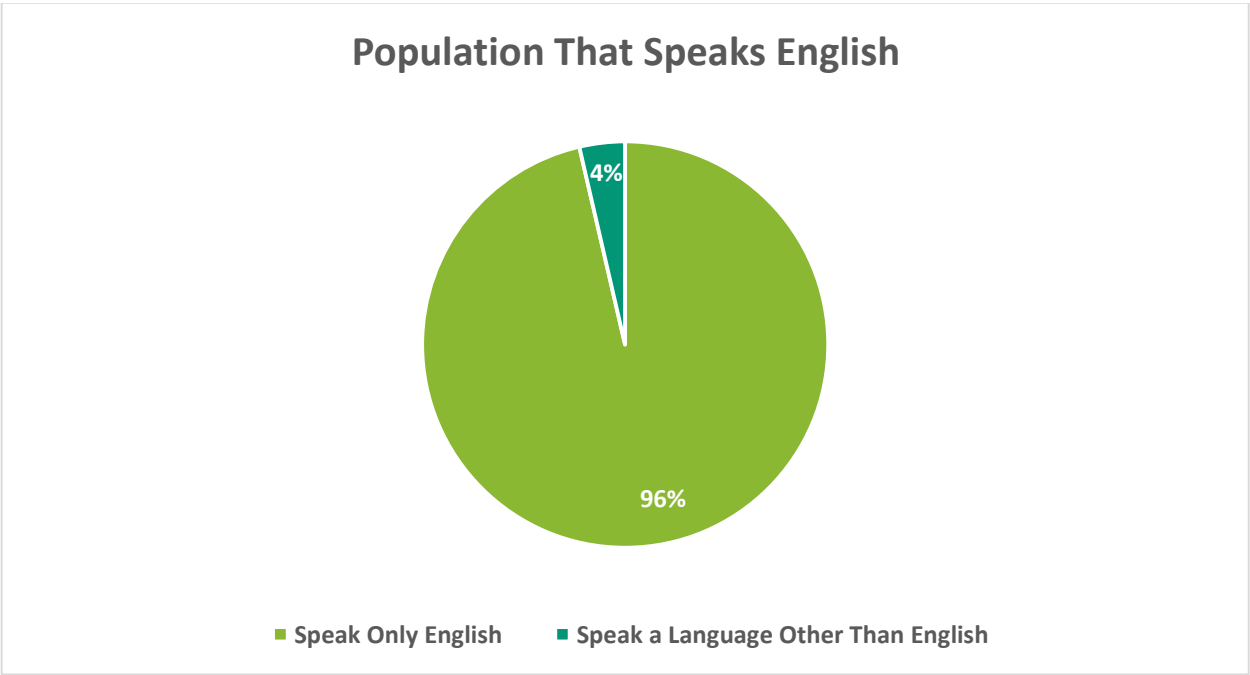
The following chart shows the number and percentage of people or households that have incomes below the Federal poverty level in Marion County is 9,931 people, or 13%, which is slightly above the national average of 11.1%.

Chart 5: Population Below the Federal Poverty Guidelines



In Marion County, the percent of population that speak English as their primary language is 96.3%%, or a total of 59,293. A total of 2,229 people, or 3.6%, speak a language other than English.

Chart 6: Population That Speaks English



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

Chart 7: Means of Transportation to Work

Households with Vehicles	
No Vehicle Available	1.6%
1 Vehicle Available	20.0%
2 Vehicles Available	45.6%
3 or More Vehicles Available	32.8%

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 Marion 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 planning committees, as well as others who the planning committee 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. 5 of the participating organizations provide services on weekdays. 3 agencies operate transportation on Saturdays, 1 agency provides Sunday service, and 3 offer evening services 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 Marion 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 7 organizations provided information about their services.

List of Transportation Service Providers

Agency Name: Blue Bell Taxi

Transportation Service Type: Public taxi

Other Services Provided: Curb-to-curb taxi transportation service

Contact Information: 740-396-5224

Hours: Monday-Saturday 5am-12am

Service Area: Marion County and surrounding Areas

Eligibility Requirements: None

Website: N/a

Agency Name: Lynx EMS

Transportation Service Type: Directly operates ambulance and ambulette emergency services and non-emergency transport services.

Other Services Provided: Provides emergency and non-emergency services to and from private residences, emergency rooms, and long-term care, skilled nursing, or assisted living facilities, as well as behavioral health transports.

Contact Information: 1-877-574-6777

Hours: 24/7/365

Service Area: Surrounding areas of Cleveland, Columbus, Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Lorain, Mansfield, Sandusky, Toledo

Eligibility Requirements: Lynx EMS is a private transportation company specializing in behavioral health transport.

Website: lynx911.com

Agency Name: Marion Area Transit (MAT)

Transportation Service Type: Public

Other Services Provided: Curb to curb, demand response.

Contact Information: 740-382-9850

Hours: Monday – Friday 6am-6pm Enhanced Service

Monday – Friday 8am-4pm Demand Services

Service Area: The city of Marion; Call for details

Eligibility Requirements: None

Website: marionohio.us/transit

Agency Name: Marion County Veterans Service

Transportation Service Type: On demand; non-emergency medical for veterans

Other Services Provided: VA benefits

Contact Information: 740-387-0100

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Service Area: transportation for veterans of Marion County who have medical appointments at any VA location. There are three pickup points for our veterans' convenience-Veteran's Memorial Coliseum, Marion Towers, and Southland Mall Sign.

Eligibility Requirements: US military veteran

Website: marionveteranservice.com

Agency Name: Marion County Senior Center

Transportation Service Type: Public Non-Profit, On-demand service

Other Services Provided: Senior socialization, education, nutrition, programming, and other experiences

Contact Information: 740-387-5444

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am-4:00pm

Service Area: Marion County and surrounding counties

Eligibility Requirements: 60 or over

Website: marionohio.us/seniors

Agency Name: O.C.C.

Transportation Service Type: OCC is a taxi company based out of Richland County that provides taxi services throughout the state

Other Services Provided: OCC provides transportation to dialysis, medical, appointments, personal, airport and train station, and more

Contact Information: 567-560-5228; for airport and train station transportation please call: 419-961-8287

Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; 24/7 for airport and train station transportation

Service Area: Throughout state of Ohio

Eligibility Requirements: Call to verify

Website: occ-taxi.square.site

Agency Name: GoBus

Transportation Service Type: State-wide public transportation bus service

Other Services Provided: GoBus is a non-profit, grant funded rural intercity bus service, connecting Ohio's rural communities to urban centers and beyond.

Contact Information: 888-954-9287 (M-F 8am-4pm)

Hours: Varies by route

Service Area: GoBus stops in 63 cities and towns across Ohio and beyond and makes connections with other regional and national bus carriers in many cities, as well as the Columbus, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati-KY airports.

Eligibility Requirements: Open to the general public

Website: ridegobus.com

Assessment of Community Support for Transit

Community support for public transportation in Marion County continues to build, with strong interest in expanding county wide transportation, service hours, enhancing regional connectivity, and increasing mobility options for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and residents with low incomes. Public feedback gathered through community outreach efforts, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, and input from local employers and service providers highlights a growing demand for transportation solutions that are dependable, flexible, and affordable.

In addition to meeting daily mobility needs, there is a county-wide emphasis on aligning transportation services with workforce development goals. Reliable access to employment opportunities—particularly for individuals without personal vehicles—has emerged as a key priority. As Marion County works to support economic growth and job readiness, public transit will play a vital role in connecting workers with training programs, job sites, and support services.

This ongoing community engagement reflects a shared commitment to building a more inclusive, responsive, and accessible transportation system that supports the well-being and economic stability of all residents

Safety

Improving transportation safety remains a priority in Marion County’s planning efforts. Stakeholders have raised concerns about gaps in pedestrian infrastructure and the lack of bicycle-friendly features in some areas. This plan outlines strategies such as conducting walkability audits, applying Complete Streets principles, and performing localized evaluations to identify and address safety challenges affecting residents of all ages and abilities.

In addition, maintaining high standards for vehicle safety and ensuring comprehensive training for transit personnel—through collaboration with transportation providers and Mobility Management—will help create a safer, more inclusive transportation environment for everyone in Marion County.

Vehicles

Survey/Interview participants listed a combined total of 25 vehicles. Approximately 76% 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.

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 Marion Area Transit and Marion Senior Center 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 37% 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

Marion County's transportation system is anchored by two primary service providers: Marion Area Transit (MAT) and the Marion County Senior Center.

Marion Area Transit (MAT) serves as the county's designated Section 5311 public transit provider, offering ADA-accessible, curb-to-curb transportation primarily within the City of Marion. Door-to-door service is available upon request, and all rides are open to the general public. MAT connects residents to employment, healthcare, retail, and vital community services, playing a critical role for individuals who do not own a vehicle or who are unable to drive due to age, disability, or income constraints. The agency is actively exploring service expansion to better serve areas outside the city, in recognition of unmet transportation needs throughout the broader county.

The Marion County Senior Center provides door-to-door transportation services for older adults, helping them access medical appointments, grocery stores, and community destinations, including the Senior Center itself. In addition to local trips, the Senior Center extends its services beyond county lines for medical appointments, ensuring that older adults can reach specialists and services not available within Marion County. This transportation program plays a vital role in supporting seniors' independence, health, and quality of life.

While some taxi and rideshare options exist in Marion County, availability is limited and inconsistent, particularly outside city limits and during evening or weekend hours. This makes the services provided by MAT and the Senior Center even more essential for many residents.

Planning and coordination efforts are led by the county's Mobility Management Program, which collaborates with local human service agencies, healthcare providers, employers, transportation providers, and municipalities. The Marion County Transportation Advisory Committee plays an active role in identifying service gaps, improving communication among providers, and developing strategies to create a more efficient, inclusive, and accessible transportation system.

Together, these partners and providers form the foundation of a coordinated mobility network designed to meet the diverse transportation needs of Marion County residents, especially those who are older, have disabilities, or live in underserved areas.

IV. Assessment of Transportation Needs and Gaps

In an effort to better understand Marion 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 leading 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 and engaging seniors at the senior center

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 and exhibit illustrate the areas where the number of older adults (age 65 and older) in Marion County is at or above Ohio's average.

Table 2: Population Density of Individuals Aged 65 and Older

65 to 74 years	11.8%
75 to 84 years	5.2%
85 years and over	2.1%

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



The table and exhibit 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: Density of Zero Vehicle Households

No vehicle available	3.4%
1 vehicle available	17.0%
2 vehicles available	45.0%
3 or more vehicles available	34.6%

Exhibit 2: Map of Density of Zero Vehicle Households



Analysis of Demographic Data

Marion County, Ohio, has a population of approximately 65,359 residents as of 2025, with notable demographic characteristics that influence transportation planning. A significant portion of the population, 26% or around 17,000 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 transit 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 Marion 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 3 local meetings and 1 focus group to discuss the unmet transportation needs and gaps in mobility and transportation. 41 people participated in the meetings. Of those, 8 self-identified as older adults and 5 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.

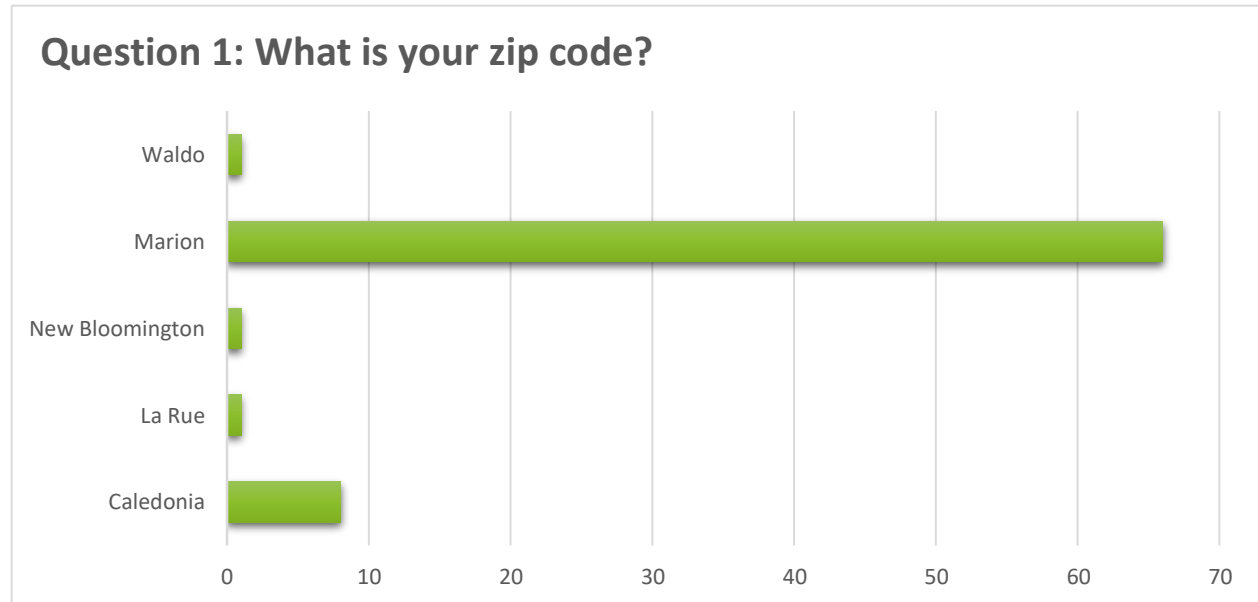
During the meeting, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership presented highlights of historical coordinated transportation in Marion County and discussed the activities since the last Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan that have helped to address some of the unmet transportation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

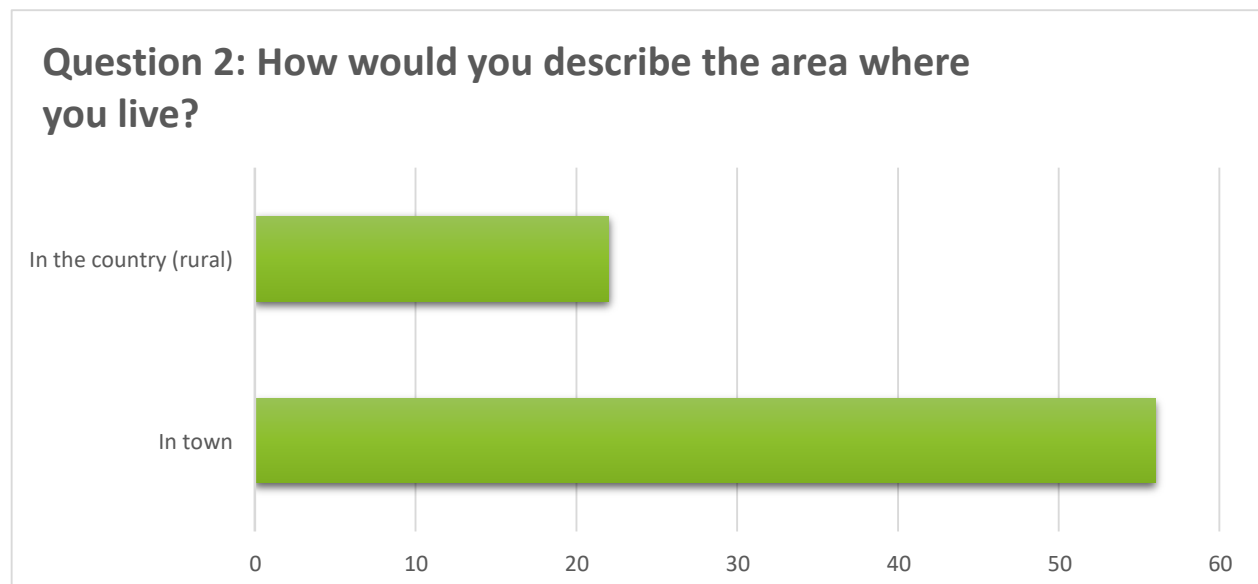
Participants discussed more than 6 mobility issues to achieve, preserve, avoid, or eliminate through coordination during the meeting[s]. Coordinated transportation stakeholders will consider these unmet needs when developing transportation goals and strategies, and grant applications. The exhibit at 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. 79 surveys from the general public: 37.93% of individuals with disabilities completed the survey; 51.58% of older adults completed the survey.

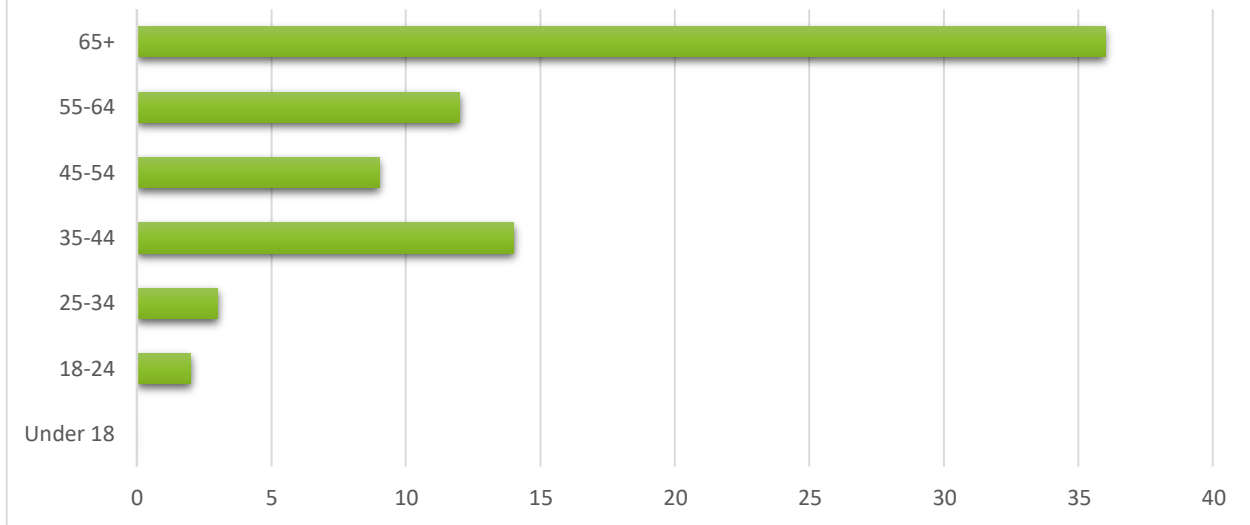


Summary: A majority of respondents from Marion County live in Marion City (86%), 11% live in Caledonia, the remaining in New Bloomington (1%), Waldo (1%), and La Rue (1%).



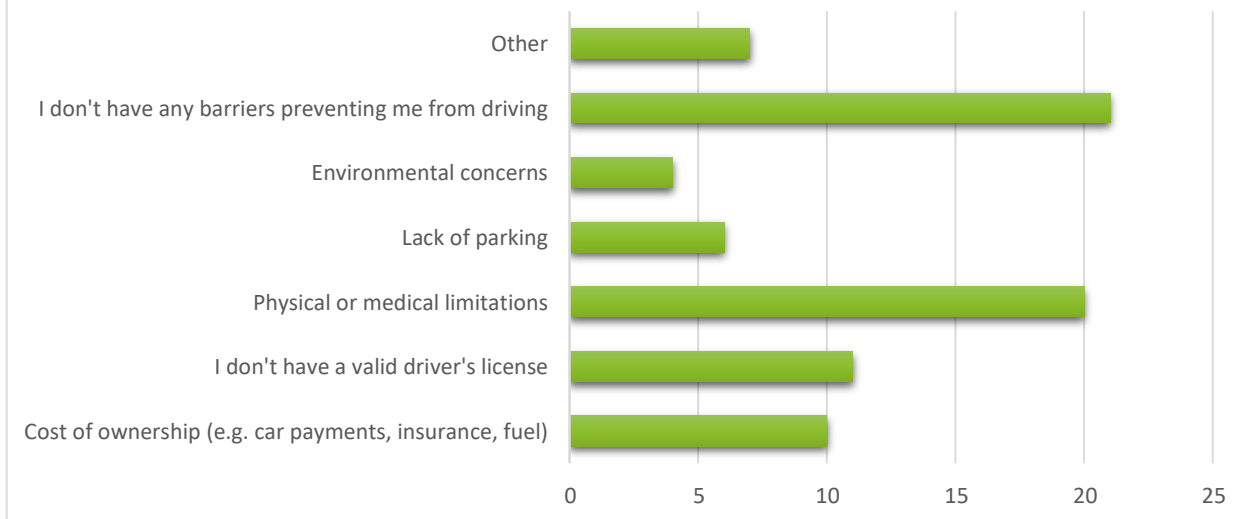
Summary: Most respondents, 71.79%, live in town, while the remaining 28.21% live in the country (rural).

Question 3: What is your age group?



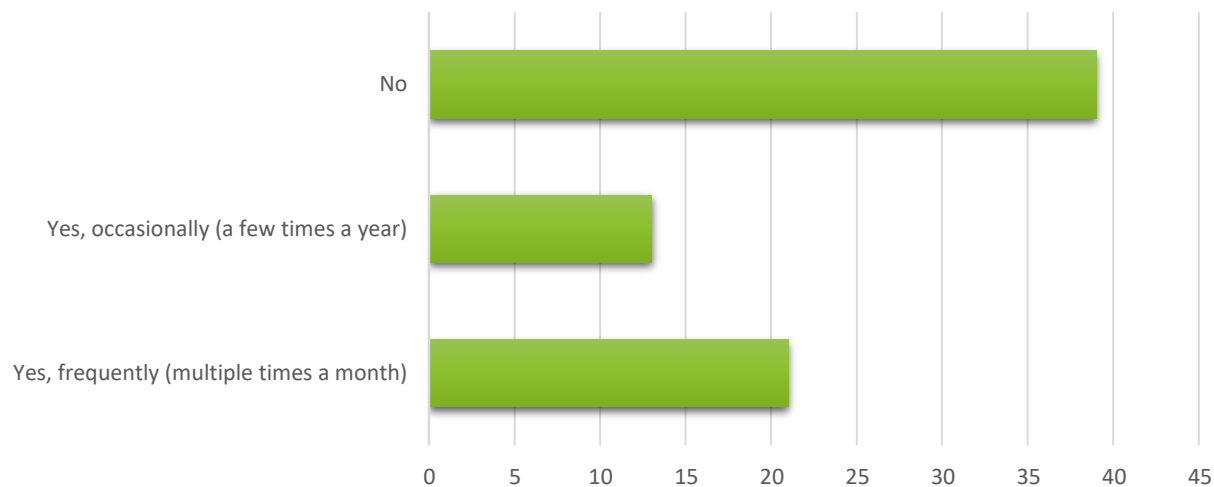
Summary: 47.37% of respondents were over the age of 65, 15.79% between the ages of 55-64, 11/84% between the ages of 45-55, 18.42% between the ages of 35-44, 3.95% between the ages of 25-34, 2.63% between the ages of 18-24, and 0% under the age of 18.

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



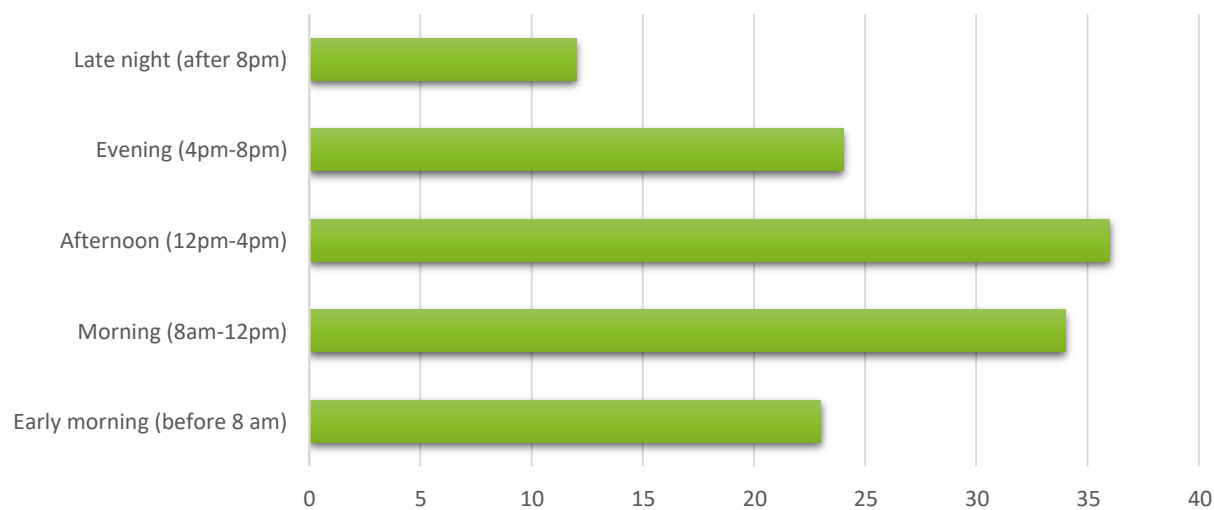
Summary: 32.79% of respondents have a physical or medical limitation that prevents them from being able to drive themselves, 18.03% do not have a valid driver's license, and 16.39% stated the cost of car ownership, while 34.43% did not have any barrier preventing them from driving.

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



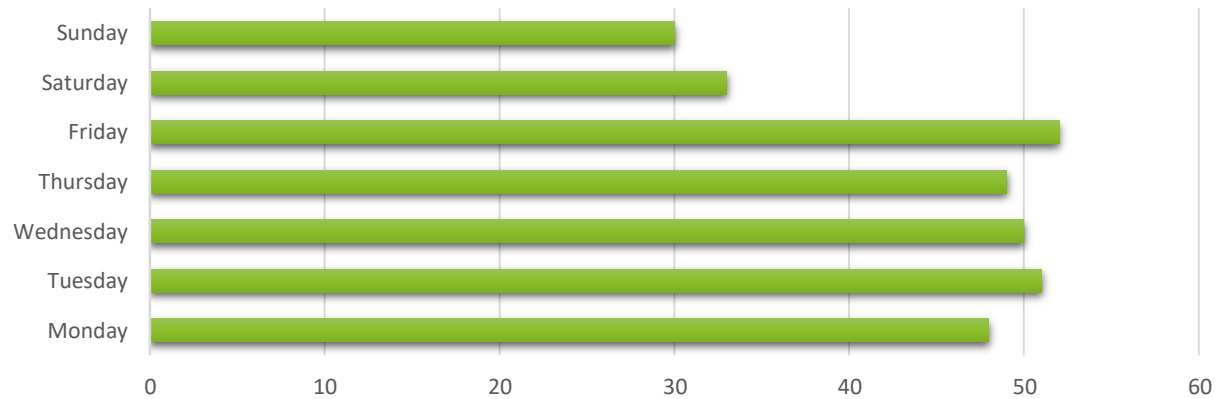
Summary: 46.58% of respondents are unable to go somewhere because of lack of transportation (17.81% is unable to go somewhere a few times a year, and 28.77% is unable to go somewhere multiple times a month); while the other 53.42% are not unable to go somewhere due to lack of transportation.

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



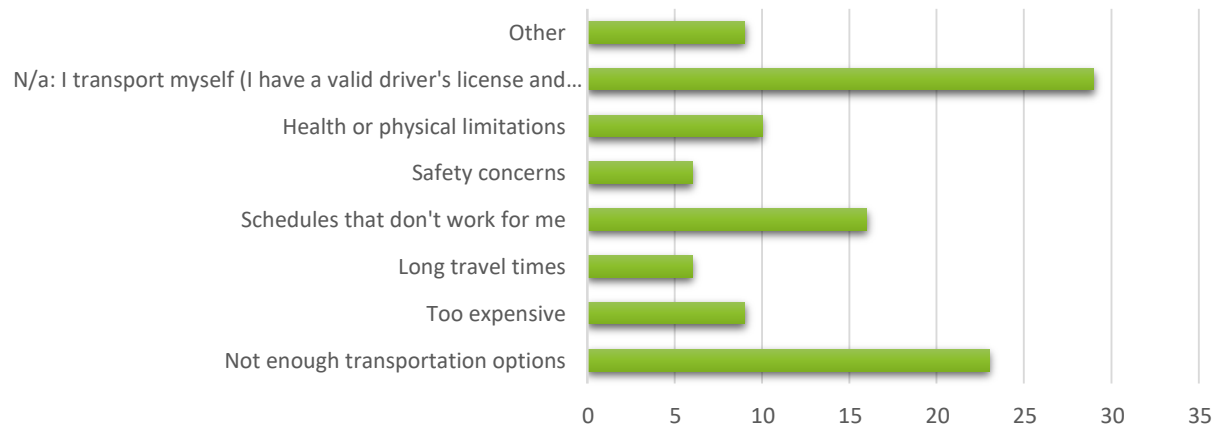
Summary: Most respondents need transportation in the morning between 8am-12pm (57.53%) or afternoon between 12p-4p (61.02%). Other answers include early morning (before 8 am) 38.98%, evening (4 pm - 8 pm), 40.68%, and late night (after 8 pm) 20.34%.

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



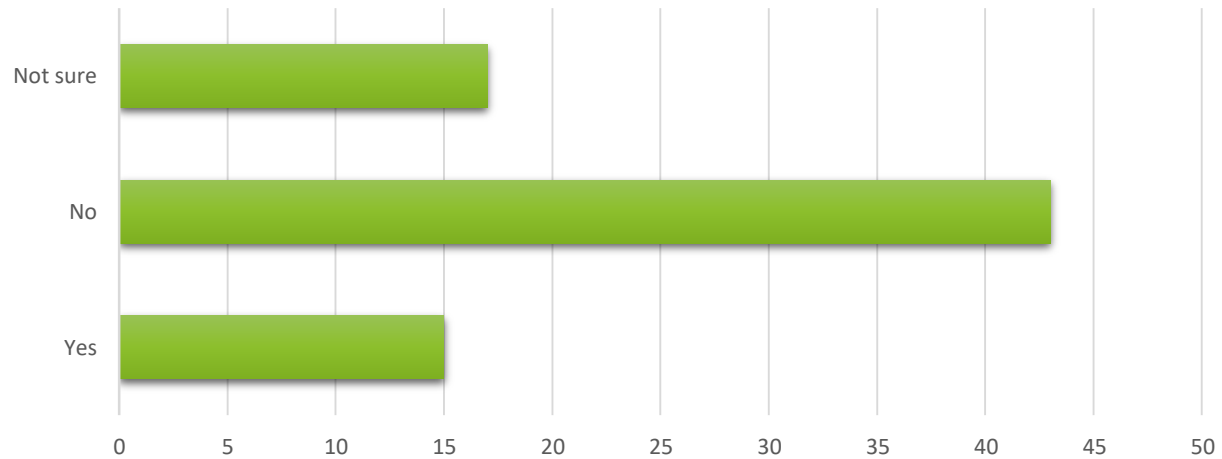
Summary: A majority of the survey respondents expressed they are most likely to travel between the days of Monday-Friday with Monday being at 77.42%, Tuesday: 82.26%, Wednesday: 80.65%, Thursday: 79.03%, and Friday: 83.87%. 53.23% expressed being likely to travel on Saturdays and 48.39% on Sundays.

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



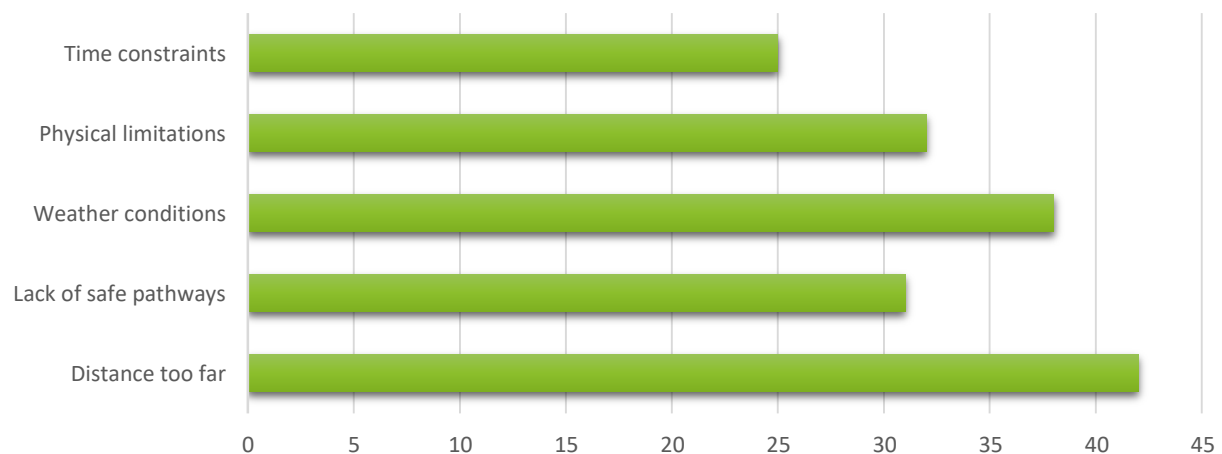
Summary: 34.85% of respondents stated that there are not enough transportation options, followed by: 24.24% stating schedules that don't work for them, 15.15%: health or physical limitations, 13.64% as being too expensive, and 9.09% for both long travel times and safety concerns. 43.94% cited that they don't face any challenges due to being able to transport themselves. 13.64% cited other with open ended responses of not being able to leave their home, not owning a car, or only driving when weather conditions are "perfect".

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



Summary: A majority of respondents, 57.33% stated that they do not feel there are enough transportation options in the area, followed by 22.67% stating that they are not sure, and 20% stating that no, they do feel there are enough transportation options in the area.

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



Summary: A majority of respondents cited distance too far: 60.87%, as the primary reason for not using active transportation, followed by: lack of safe pathways: 44.93%, weather conditions: 55.07%, physical limitations: 46.38%, and time constraints: 36.23%.

Question #11: How would having access to reliable transportation impact your daily life?	
1	"good"
2	"would not need to worry about appts."
3	"Not having to worry about how I am getting to appointments, grocery store, drug store"
4	"Very Little"
5	"too expensive"
6	"Great for out of town appointments"
7	"Multiple handicaps. Appointments with medical specials with practices in Columbus. Drivers who like people. Drivers with self confidence. Drivers who come to my door."
8	"It would be helpful during summer heat or winter snow and ice for groceries or appointments."
9	"I would be able to make appt for doctor, dentist, eye doctor"
10	"It would help family members from helping me all the time."
11	"Our children help us very much with transportation."
12	"?"
13	"100% positive. I can't walk more than 1 block without pain and stop for a breathing break."
14	"Time for ride its 2 weeks. In an urgent need - not able to get ride."
15	"Be able to go"
16	"Could have routine"
17	"Can't get to doctor's appointment"
18	"?"
19	"None"
20	"Dependable"
21	"help so don't have to ask someone to borrow car"
22	"I could go out more to events"
23	"be able to get out"
24	"Too many cars, trucks"
25	"Very Helpful"
26	"N/a have own transportation"
27	"Get out more"
28	"It wouldn't at this time."
29	"Emprove health"
30	"Less stress getting picked up on time for appointments, ease of getting on and off transportation to appointments and getting picked up back up for home delivery."
31	"It would allow me to get to out of town doctor's appointments"
32	"My kids could get to their school when needed."
33	"It would make my life so much easier if i didn't have to find a ride to my 3rd shift job every night"
34	"It would improve my life by being able to get to doctor appointments and stores for prescriptions and food."
35	"Having reliable transportation would allow myself and my family members to keep jobs because the best places to work usually have strict attendance policies and fire people for

	being late or stranded. Many doctor's offices also have no-show policies that will ban people if they are late or stranded. Many residents of Marion have had to sacrifice their healthcare needs because they do not have reliable transportation. Not everyone has the money to pay medical transportation services to pick them up if these providers are too expensive. Also, many addicted residents cannot go to rehab centers and become sober because they do not have access to transportation that would take them to rehab centers that are possibly too far away from their homes. This contributes to the streets of Marion being filled with potentially shady or dangerous people. Reliable transportation would also allow several of my younger relatives to pursue higher education since both OSUM and MTC are very far from most neighborhoods. Reliable transportation that is SAFE would benefit us because most of Marion city is too dangerous to walk or bike through. Drug deals, people speeding down the street and running stop signs/red lights, dangerous or sick animals getting loose and running through the streets, litter and pollution making the streets unsanitary. Safe and reliable transportation would prevent my family from being hurt, killed, or sickened by someone or something in the community. Many places want people to go to work early in the morning while it is dark out and if these people are forced to walk or bike they have a higher risk of being hurt by someone or something."
36	"Get to work, the store, and church easier"
37	"Residents are unable to make important appointments to and from out-of-town appointments"
38	"I could get to work on time and go to the doctors earlier"
39	"I have staff that takes me anywhere and to my appointments and I have my mom and sister takes me on the weekends"
40	"Open new opportunities and can go places after 4pm and weekends to be able to go places would be so helpful"
41	"I have transportation, but many I work for/with do not"
42	"In a huge way"
43	"I could be more independent. I could get out of my apartment more which would help my depression. I could go to church and church functions if I had transportation on the weekends."
44	"I would be able to attend later appointments and work later hours"
45	"I would be able to work regularly, make my doctor appointments on time, and get to the grocery store."
46	"I have transportation"
47	"I have transportation"
48	"Remove barriers for employment options"
49	"N/A"

Summary: This was an open-ended question which received 49 responses with most responses stating that it would be easier to obtain/maintain employment, 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	"many people can't work because they don't have transportation. That needs to be improved."
2	"no"
3	"more vehicles"
4	"More options. More reliability."
5	"Reasonable cost to use, if not free service. Available outside city limits, etc."
6	"I am not enough knowledge to comment Saturday??"
7	"A number one could call when you need help."
8	"No."
9	"?"
10	"Just help to make it easier with normal living. I don't think I have much longer to live."
11	"More transportation"
12	"More ride3 available"
13	"?"
14	"No"
15	"City bus can run longer"
16	"more available"
17	"more options for employed individuals working outside m-f 8am-5pm"
18	"extended times to assist people to get to jobs that are available"
19	"more transportation for those with disabilities"
20	"being open on weekends"
21	"Want flying cars"
22	"Bus or car"
23	"More overpasses"
24	"Make it more available for those that can't get there . Cabs are to costly when you are on a fixed income . Not easy to get in and out of."
25	"24/7 transportation of all kinds. Car Van Bus"
26	"More buses and more safe walking paths"
27	"More busses"
28	"We have M.A.T but they will not go to our trailer park on Marion-Williamsport road"
29	"24/7 MAT buses"
30	"The city buses in my area are very unreliable. They don't seem to be able to get adequate staff and when you can get an appointment sometimes you can't get home"
31	"The Night Moves shuttle is a poor use of money that could be going to the high-demand day time services instead. The entire Marion City Transit system needs a complete overhaul and better, properly educated people running it. We need more transit available for early mornings, but currently the buses do not start until 8 am which is past the time that many people are required to be at work."
32	"Longer bus routes. Expanded bus times during work hours"
33	"offer transportation for seniors in nursing facilities"
34	"More transportation options"

35	"More transportation options"
36	"7 days per week and later hours in the evening. Especially weekends!"
37	"Marion Co needs county wide transportation. At this time unless you are over 60 or have Medicaid there are no options"
38	"More options during night & evenings for all individuals"
39	"We need transportation for nursing facility residents"
40	"Weekend routes and run later in the evening."
41	"Offer later routes"
42	"Stop wasting money on dumb stuff like fancy stickers and lights. Our tax dollars could be spent on better things than driving drunks around."
43	"There should be a scheduled bus route that you know when the bus will arrive and have bus stops throughout the county."
44	"My sister rides it to the doctor when the weather is bad. She has almost had her purse stolen and had some random woman scream at her when she dropped her own phone. She tries to avoid using it. I have driven to town to take her a couple of times"
45	"Stop letting the lying, wasteful "leaders" use our transit money to start a nighttime taxi service for drunks."
46	"Weekend transportation options. Routes for early morning and late night for employers that have 3 shifts"
47	"Access if there are gaps that require expansion."

Summary: This was an open-ended question which received 47 responses ranging from wanting more transportation options, weekend and evening transportation, expanded service region, pedestrian infrastructure, and criticism for how tax dollars are being spent on current transportation. There were also responses stating that they had no specific suggestions or nothing to improve upon.

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:** Marion 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 MAT, 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 drivers in Marion 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:** With the available transportation providers 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:** Marion 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 Marion 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	Lack of countywide public transit service, especially in rural areas	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
2	Inadequate in-county and out-of-county transportation for medical care, including appointments, rehab, and prescriptions	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
3	No reliable transportation for employment, including third-shift and regional job access	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
4	Not enough vehicles or drivers to meet demand; frequent trip denials	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
5	Insufficient transit service hours — no options before 8 AM, after 4 PM, or on weekends	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
6	Insufficient and unstable funding sources limiting service expansion and sustainability	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
7	Lack of diversified local match funding beyond the City of Marion	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
8	Limited formal partnerships or contract agreements with other agencies and municipalities	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
9	Fragmented regional coordination and restricted system growth due to limited funding	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
10	Need for flexible or on-demand transportation options to improve coverage and reliability	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
11	Lack of affordable or no-cost transportation, especially for low-income residents	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
12	Over-reliance on family or friends due to lack of options	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
13	Little to no inter-county transportation for work, healthcare, or other essential trips	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
14	Barriers to access for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
15	Lack of wheelchair-accessible and disability-friendly vehicles	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
16	Limited or no transportation to school, groceries, or food pantry access	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
17	Limited employer participation in workforce mobility planning	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups

18	Limited awareness of available transportation services and how to use them	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
19	No transportation for non-medical needs like church, social events, and community connection	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
20	Unsafe or inaccessible walking and biking conditions due to crime, traffic, or infrastructure gaps	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
21	Lack of safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for seniors and mobility-challenged individuals	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
22	Seniors feel unsafe or uncomfortable driving outside of Marion, especially to Columbus	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
23	Insufficient transportation for individuals with developmental disabilities	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
24	Rider safety concerns while using public transportation	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
25	Stigma or negative public perception of public transit	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups
26	No marketing or promotional funding for Marion Area Transit	TAC meetings, SWOT, surveys & focus groups

V. Goals and Strategies

Developing Strategies to Address Gaps and Needs

Strategies for improving transportation for Marion 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, 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 are 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 26 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: Expand Transportation Options to Enhance Countywide and Regional Connectivity

Description: Expand and improve transportation options to provide countywide coverage by growing services beyond city limits, piloting flexible and on-demand transit options, enhancing regional connections through GoBus, and supporting Marion Senior Center's transportation to ensure accessible and reliable transportation for all residents.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Lack of countywide public transit service, especially in rural areas
- Little to no inter-county transportation for work, healthcare, or other essential trips
- Inadequate in-county and out-of-county transportation for medical care, including appointments, rehab, and prescriptions
- No reliable transportation for employment, including third-shift and regional job access
- Limited or no transportation to school
- Insufficient transit service hours — no options before 8 AM, after 4 PM, or on weekends
- Need for flexible or on-demand transportation options to improve coverage and reliability
- Not enough vehicles or drivers to meet demand; frequent trip denials
- Lack of affordable or no-cost transportation, especially for low-income residents
- Lack of wheelchair-accessible and disability-friendly vehicles
- Barriers to access for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities

Strategy 1.1: Support the expansion of MAT to provide countywide public transportation coverage, including rural and underserved areas

Strategy 1.2: Explore and pilot a micro-transit or on-demand service model to address dynamic community needs across the county

Strategy 1.3: Assess existing route models and develop new flexible options, such as deviated-fixed routes and/or demand-responsive services

Strategy 1.4: Collaborate with GoBus to establish a regional intercity bus stop in Marion County, enhancing regional and statewide transit connectivity

Strategy 1.5: Sustain and expand the Marion Senior Center's in-county and out-of-county transportation services

Strategy 1.6: Coordinate with regional employers, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to identify and support high-demand travel corridors

Strategy 1.7: Ensure compliance with FTA and ODOT rules, regulations, and reporting requirements for all transit services

Timeline for Implementation: 4 years

Action Steps:

- Conduct needs assessment and gap analysis for countywide service expansion
- Consult with ODOT and/or FTA to align expansion plans with regulatory requirements
- Develop phased expansion plan for MAT to go countywide
- Apply for funding to support service expansion, vehicles, staffing, and technology
- Procure additional vehicles and hire drivers to support expanded and flexible service
- Pilot micro-transit/on-demand service in high-priority areas
- Assess and redesign routes to incorporate flexible/deviated-fixed models
- Establish a GoBus stop in Marion County through a formal partnership and planning
- Advocate for sustained funding to expand Marion Senior Center transportation
- Partner with employers, health systems, and schools to support high-need travel corridors
- Conduct ongoing staff training and compliance reviews to ensure adherence to FTA/ODOT rules and reporting

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: MAT, City of Marion, Marion Senior Center, Mobility Management, County Commissioners

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: ODOT, Community organizations, local employers, healthcare providers, educational institutions

Resources Needed: Staff time, vehicles, technology/scheduling platforms for flexible services, funding, training and compliance tools, infrastructure, data analysis and route planning software

Potential Cost Range: \$300,000-\$500,000

Potential Funding Sources: ODOT Section 5311/5310, state and local government, partnerships and sponsorships with local employers and healthcare systems, CDBG, foundations

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: MAT service expansion across Marion County
 - a. Target: Finalize and adopt a comprehensive countywide service expansion plan by the end of 2027
 - b. Target: Increase MAT service mileage and/or operating hours by 20% within two years of plan adoption
2. Measure: Implementation of flexible service models to meet evolving mobility needs
 - a. Target: Identify and designate at least two priority zones or corridors for flexible service based on demand and community feedback by 2027
 - b. Target: Launch at least one micro-transit or on-demand service pilot by 2028
3. Measure: Regional and out-of-county connectivity improvements
 - a. Target: Establish a formal partnership agreement with GoBus to secure a stop in Marion County by 2027
 - b. Target: Collaborate with the Marion Senior Center to expand out-of-county transportation service, aiming to provide a minimum of 10 trips per month throughout the planning period

Goal #2: Advance Workforce Mobility Through Expanded and After-Hours Transportation Solutions

Description: Improve access to employment opportunities in Marion County by addressing transportation barriers to employment, expanding service options and hours between key employment corridors, and improving coordination across jurisdictions.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- No reliable transportation for employment, including third-shift and regional job access
- Insufficient transit service hours — no options before 8 AM, after 4 PM, or on weekends
- Lack of countywide public transit service, especially in rural areas
- Little to no inter-county transportation for work, healthcare, or other essential trips
- Not enough vehicles or drivers to meet demand; frequent trip denials
- Over-reliance on family or friends due to lack of options
- Lack of affordable or no-cost transportation, especially for low-income residents
- Limited employer participation in workforce mobility planning
- Fragmented regional coordination and restricted system growth due to limited funding

Strategy 2.1: Collaborate with the Workforce Mobility Partnership Program to identify and prioritize job access barriers and define solutions

Strategy 2.2: Engage employers and economic development leaders to identify high-demand employment corridors and shift schedules

Strategy 2.3: Evaluate and implement employment transportation options such as contracted services, deviated/fixed-route shuttles, vanpools, and/or other driver supports

Strategy 2.4: Develop cross-county transit partnerships to improve connectivity to in-county and regional employment destinations

Strategy 2.5: Assess and pilot extended MAT service hours for early morning and third-shift transportation needs

Strategy 2.6: Explore subsidized fare programs or employer-sponsored transportation solutions

Timeline for Implementation: 2-3 years

Action Steps:

- Conduct a comprehensive workforce mobility assessment in partnership with the Workforce Mobility Partnership
- Participate in roundtables with local employers and job seekers
- Identify geographic priority corridors for service expansion
- Pilot a workforce transportation solution in a high-need corridor
- Track ridership and employment retention outcomes associated with transportation improvements
- Coordinate with local planning/zoning to support multimodal access near employment hubs
- Analyze demand for transportation before 8:00 AM, after 6:00 PM, and overnight
- Identify pilot routes or demand-responsive services for extended hours
- Launch and pilot extended-hours service and evaluate ridership and cost-effectiveness
- Seek partnerships with major employers to co-fund services or offer employee fare assistance

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: MAT, Nelson Nygaard, City of Marion

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: Mobility Management, Marion County Commissioners, Economic Development, Marion Matters, local employers

Resources Needed: Staff time, data analysis support coordination and collaboration, vehicles

Potential Cost Range: \$200,000-\$750,000

Potential Funding Sources: ODOT Sections 5311, 5310, Ohio Workforce Mobility Grants, Local Employer Contributions

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Number of employers engaged in transportation planning
 - a. Target: Engage at least 5 employers or workforce partners across Marion County by 2026
 - b. Target: Establish at least 1 employer-contributed transportation partnership or pilot program by 2028
2. Measure: Access to employment transportation
 - a. Target: Launch or expand at least one new workforce-focused transportation option by 2028
 - b. Target: Increase ridership on workforce transportation services by 15% by 2030
3. Measure: Workforce retention and access outcomes
 - a. Target: At least 50% of users report improved ability to obtain or maintain employment within 6 months of starting the service
 - b. Target: Decrease no-show or late arrival rates due to transportation issues by 25% among participating employers by 2030

Goal #3: Enhance Public Perception, Education, and Engagement in Public Transit Services

Description: Strengthen community understanding, trust, and usage of public transportation by addressing misconceptions, improving perceptions of safety, and building public buy-in through education, outreach, and communication strategies.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Limited awareness of available transportation services and how to use them
- Stigma or negative public perception of public transit
- Rider safety concerns while using public transportation
- No marketing or promotional funding for Marion Area Transit
- Barriers to access for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities
- Lack of safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for seniors and mobility-challenged individuals

Strategy 3.1: Provide clear, user-friendly information to help community members understand and confidently use MAT services

Strategy 3.2: Rebrand and clarify MAT's route names and service descriptions to accurately reflect service types and ensure compliance with FTA and ODOT guidelines

Strategy 3.3: Update all print and digital materials to clearly explain how each service works, when it operates, and who can ride

Strategy 3.4: Address negative perceptions and stigma around public transit use

Strategy 3.5: Promote bus safety and improve riders' sense of security

Strategy 3.6: Explore bus stop improvements and lighting enhancements at key locations

Strategy 3.7: Establish regular community feedback loops and engagement channels

Strategy 3.8: Promote the economic and environmental benefits of public transit

Timeline for Implementation: Duration of plan

Action Steps:

- Develop clear, easy-to-read print and digital materials
- Hold information sessions at community centers, libraries, and employer sites
- Distribute promotional content via social media, radio, and local newsletters
- Highlight real stories and testimonials from satisfied MAT riders
- Work with community influencers and local leaders to build trust in MAT
- Conduct periodic "Ride with the Mayor" or public official events to boost confidence
- Showcase vehicle safety features, driver training standards, and emergency protocols
- Create a digital feedback form linked to MAT's website
- Promote opportunities for riders to influence service planning

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: MAT, City of Marion, Mobility Management

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: local elected officials, employers and workforce agencies, local media, partnering agencies

Resources Needed: staff time, education and outreach materials, marketing resources, rider engagement incentives, videography

Potential Cost Range: \$10,000-\$75,000

Potential Funding Sources: ODOT, local government support, United Way and/or community foundations,

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Community perception and trust in MAT
 - a. Target: Decrease negative perception responses in public surveys by 20% by 2029
 - b. Target: Publish at least 3 rider success stories or testimonials annually across digital and print platforms
2. Measure: Rider perception of transit safety
 - a. Target: Increase the percentage of riders who report feeling safe while using MAT to 85% by 2028, as measured through rider satisfaction surveys
 - b. Target: Install safety-related upgrades (e.g., lighting, signage, cameras) at 3 high-priority stops or vehicles by 2028
3. Measure: Public Awareness of MAT Services
 - a. Target: Achieve 25% increase in community awareness (via survey or web traffic metrics) by 2028
 - b. Target: Re-design MAT's print and digital outreach materials by 2026 to clearly explain services, schedules, and how to ride

Goal #4: Strengthen and Sustain Coordinated Transportation Services

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

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Lack of affordable or no-cost transportation, especially for low-income residents
- Not enough vehicles or drivers to meet demand; frequent trip denials
- Lack of wheelchair-accessible and disability-friendly vehicles
- Limited awareness of available transportation services and how to use them
- Fragmented regional coordination and restricted system growth due to limited funding
- No marketing or promotional funding for Marion Area Transit
- Barriers to access for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities

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 Marion 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 Marion County Guides, social media content, flyers)
- Participate annually in Ohio Loves Transit Week and other awareness events to promote to advocate for rural 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: MAT, Marion Senior Center, 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 Marion 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: Establish a stable funding foundation for public and human service transportation in Marion County by expanding local match contributions, formalizing strategic partnerships, and leveraging state and federal resources. Address infrastructure and funding challenges by aligning with community stakeholders, optimizing contract opportunities, and increasing local buy-in to ensure long-term service viability.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Lack of diversified local match funding beyond the City of Marion
- Insufficient and unstable funding sources limiting service expansion and sustainability
- Limited formal partnerships or contract agreements with other agencies and municipalities
- Fragmented regional coordination and restricted system growth due to limited funding
- Limited employer participation in workforce mobility planning
- No marketing or promotional funding for Marion Area Transit

Strategy 5.1: Develop a cost-sharing model to distribute match responsibilities beyond the City of Marion to support countywide public transportation coverage

Strategy 5.2: Identify and pursue contracts with public and private partners to generate local match revenue

Strategy 5.3: Leverage state and federal funding by utilizing the 5311 grantee to manage coordinated contracts among agencies countywide through shared transportation providers

Strategy 5.4: Explore and evaluate the 5311-grantee designation to ensure the most effective governance structure for delivering and expanding countywide public transit

Timeline for Implementation: ongoing

Action Steps:

- Facilitate work groups with stakeholders to discuss shared cost models
- Identify and inventory agencies currently purchasing transportation services and explore contract alignment
- Draft and pilot an interagency cost-sharing or service agreement
- Assess administrative and legal requirements of 5311 grantee designee changes
- Engage ODOT to review options for maximizing regional coordination and funding alignment

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Mobility Management, MAT

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: Marion County Commissioners, Human Service Agencies, Local municipalities

Resources Needed: staff time, technical assistance, legal/contract support for formal agreements, outreach and education materials

Potential Cost Range: \$10,000-\$75,000

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

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Number of formalized transportation service or cost-sharing agreements with local agencies and municipalities
 - a. Target: At least 1 interagency agreement by 2028
 - b. Target: Expansion of match contributors beyond the City of Marion by 50% by 2030
2. Measure: Local match revenue generated through new contracts and partnerships
 - a. Target: Secure at least \$25,000 in new local match revenue by 2030
 - b. Target: Increase locally generated match revenue by 15% annually after 2030
3. Measure: Completion of a countywide transit needs assessment and collaborative evaluation of governance and service delivery options
 - a. Target: Conduct a countywide survey and stakeholder outreach process to assess current and future public transit needs by the end of 2027
 - b. Target: Engage with leadership to explore interest and capacity for expanding transit services countywide, contingent upon the identification of additional local match sources by 2027
 - c. Target: If countywide expansion is not feasible under the current structure, facilitate a collaborative review process with stakeholders to explore alternative governance or administrative models to support coordinated countywide transit by 2030

Goal #6: Support Active Transportation Infrastructure and Accessibility to Promote Health and Mobility

Description: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout Marion County to improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity for all residents, with an emphasis on aging populations and vulnerable users by leveraging existing initiatives such as the Creating Healthy Communities grant, Safe Routes to Age in Place studies, Complete Streets policies, and Safe Routes to Schools programs to foster a comprehensive active transportation network.

Need(s) Being Addressed:

- Unsafe or inaccessible walking and biking conditions due to crime, traffic, or infrastructure gaps
- Lack of safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for seniors and mobility-challenged individuals
- Limited awareness of available transportation services and how to use them
- Seniors feel unsafe or uncomfortable driving outside of Marion, especially to Columbus
- No transportation for non-medical needs like church, social events, and community connection
- Barriers to access for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities

Strategy 6.1: Conduct a Safe Routes to Age in Place study to identify infrastructure gaps and prioritize improvements that support seniors' mobility and independence

Strategy 6.2: Support adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies in municipalities across Marion County to ensure streets accommodate all users safely and comfortably

Strategy 6.3: Support the implementation of and advance the county's Active Transportation Plan and the School Travel Plan

Strategy 6.4: Coordinate with schools, local agencies, and health partners to expand Safe Routes to Schools programs, encouraging walking and biking among youth

Strategy 6.5: Promote pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements—including sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails—building on current county projects and Creating Healthy Communities initiatives

Strategy 6.6: Increase community engagement and education efforts to raise awareness about active transportation benefits and safety practices

Timeline for Implementation: ongoing

Action Steps:

- Collaborate with Marion County Health Department to support and expand Creating Healthy Communities grant activities related to active transportation
- Complete a Safe Routes to Age in Place study by 2030, including community input and assessment of priority corridors and barriers
- Update the Active Transportation Plan by working with Toole Design to facilitate
- Work with local governments and stakeholders to review and advance Complete Streets policy adoption by 2030
- Partner with school districts to evaluate and grow Safe Routes to Schools initiatives annually
- Coordinate funding applications for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure grants (e.g., TAP, Safe Routes to School, Community Development Block Grants)
- Organize community workshops and safety events to promote active transportation and gather feedback on infrastructure needs

Parties Responsible for Leading Implementation: Health Department, Planning Departments, Local Municipalities Mobility Management

Parties Responsible for Supporting Implementation: School Districts, Local Advocacy Groups, ODOT, Community Organizations, Public Works Departments

Resources Needed: staff time, planning and technical expertise, community engagement support, grant funding, coordination, auditing materials

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

Potential Funding Sources: Creating Healthy Communities grant, ODOT TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program), Safe Routes to School grants, Community Development Block Grants, local government contributions, foundations

Performance Measures/Targets:

1. Measure: Conduct and utilize Safe Routes to Age in Place study findings
 - a. Target: Collect travel diaries or mobility feedback from at least 10 residents, focusing on seniors and persons with disabilities, to inform planning
 - b. Target: Complete the Safe Routes to Age in Place study by 2030
2. Measure: Improve non-motorized accessibility to transit and essential services
 - a. Target: Secure funding for at least two pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure improvement projects by 2029
 - b. Target: Increase pedestrian and bicycle access to fixed-route transit stops in at least two rural or underserved areas by 2030
3. Measure: Assess and prioritize active transportation needs in Marion County
 - a. Target: Complete walk and bike audits in at least three priority locations by 2028
 - b. Target: Develop a prioritized list of active transportation infrastructure needs based on audit findings by 2029

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 Marion 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 20, 2025, at the Marion Senior Center, 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 20, 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. Corey Pierce from the Marion Public Health District asked for some an additional goal strategy that would include supporting the implementation of the Marion Active Transportation Plan adopted in 2019 and the Marion School Travel Plan adopted in 2022.

Following the public comment period, GLCAP reviewed all feedback and incorporated relevant revisions into the final Coordinated Plan.

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 20, 2025, at Marion Senior Center, 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 12 members attended, including 9 in person and 3 virtually.

A motion to adopt the plan, allowing for any formatting or insignificant changes to be made afterward, was introduced by Natalie Longmeier and seconded by Cory Pierce. 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 Marion 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 26, 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 Marion 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 a final copy of the plan be emailed to them, which was provided on June 26, 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
Steve Badertscher	Marion Senior Center
Natalie Longmeier	Marion Matters
Julie Welch	MAT
Cory Pierce	Marion Public Health
James Walker	Marion Planning
Beth Clayton	Veterans Services-Marion
Roxane Somerlot	JFS-Marion
Cassie Gregory	Marion Council on Aging
Amber Wertman	United Way
Julie Cummings	Board of DD
Brad Gerfen	Board of DD
Bill Collins	Mayor of Marion
Erica Hart	United Way
Mark Davis	Marion County Commissioner

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:

Mindy Birkholz
Mobility Management Coordinator
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
419-333-5087
mabirkholz@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:

Mindy Birkholz
Mobility Management Coordinator
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
419-333-5087
mabirkholz@glcap.org

Annual Review – Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

The Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Review of the Marion County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan was conducted in May 2026. The purpose of the annual review is to evaluate the 2026-2030 Coordinated Plan, adopted in FY2025, and document updates that ensure the plan remains current, relevant, and responsive to the county's evolving transportation needs.

Throughout FY2026, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met quarterly to review transportation priorities, discuss emerging needs, monitor progress toward plan goals, and recommend updates. As a result of the annual review process, the following sections of the Coordinated Plan were amended.

FY2026 Plan Review

The Marion County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan was reviewed in its entirety. The following sections were updated during the FY2026 Annual Review:

Section Updated	Page(s)	Summary of Amendment
Executive Summary	4	Updated community resources to include addition of new transportation services.
Transportation Service Providers	15-16	Updated provider information and service changes.
Various Sections	48-49	Updated GLCAP Mobility Management Coordinator name and contact information to reflect staff transition.
Agency Representation	50	Updated Transportation Advisory Committee members and participating agencies.
Goals and Strategies	50-57	Added FY2026 progress updates and revised implementation status.

Agency Representation – Annual Review FY2026

Name	Agency
Mindy Birkholz, Nadine Thompson	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP)
RJ Bicking	League of Women Voters
Heidi Jones	Marion Area Chamber of Commerce
Steve Badertscher, Misty Witzel	Marion Senior Center
Vacant	Marion Matters
Tara Nicolosi	Marion Area Transit (MAT)
Cory Pierce, Erin Creeden, Michelle Lang	Marion Public Health
James Walker	Marion City/County Regional Planning Commission
Beth Clayton	Marion County Veteran Services
Roxane Somerlot	Marion County Jobs and Family Services
Cassie Gregory	Marion Council on Aging
Brad Gerfen, Julie Cummings	Marion County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Zoe Brown	City of Marion
Erica Hart, Heath Ring, Natalie Longmeier	United Way of North Central Ohio
Commissioner Mark Davis, Commissioner Keven Davidson	Marion County Commissioners
Diane Bricker, John Matthews	Safe Harbor Peer Support Services

Goals and Strategies – Annual Review FY2026

Goal #1: Expand Transportation Options to Enhance Countywide and Regional Connectivity

STRATEGY 1.1:

Support the expansion of MAT to provide countywide public transportation coverage, including rural and underserved areas.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

A Transit Development Plan (TDP) was finalized at the beginning of the fiscal year and included recommendations for countywide service expansion. However, due to budgetary constraints, the City of Marion reduced transit services, including the elimination of the Night Moves service. As a result, countywide service expansion efforts remain on hold pending improved financial stability.

STRATEGY 1.2:

Explore and pilot a micro-transit or on-demand service model to address dynamic community needs across the county.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Strategy not prioritized for 2026 due to funding and operational limitations.

STRATEGY 1.3:

Assess existing route models and develop new flexible options, such as deviated-fixed routes and/or demand-responsive services.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Strategy not prioritized for 2026 due to funding and operational limitations.

STRATEGY 1.4:

Collaborate with GoBus to establish a regional intercity bus stop in Marion County, enhancing regional and statewide transit connectivity.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Completed. A GoBus stop was established at MAT, and service officially launched in March 2026, enhancing regional and statewide transportation connectivity for Marion County residents.

STRATEGY 1.5:

Sustain and expand the Marion Senior Center's in-county and out-of-county transportation services.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

The Marion Senior Center received funding through the Marion County Council on Aging to continue providing in-county and out-of-county medical transportation services, which experienced significant growth during FY2026. The organization is also awaiting delivery of two replacement vehicles to support continued service.

STRATEGY 1.6:

Coordinate with regional employers, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to identify and support high-demand travel corridors.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Completed. Coordination with employers, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and other community stakeholders was completed through the TDP process. This effort identified high-demand travel corridors, transportation needs, and opportunities to strengthen transit connections to key destinations throughout Marion County. The findings will help inform future transit planning and service improvements as funding opportunities become available.

STRATEGY 1.7:

Ensure compliance with FTA and ODOT rules, regulations, and reporting requirements for all transit services.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

MAT transitioned under new leadership during FY2026 and worked closely with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to address compliance-related matters. In response to TAR findings, Mobility Management coordinated and provided driver training to support compliance and strengthen transit operations.

Goal #2: Advance Workforce Mobility Through Expanded and After-Hours Transportation Solutions

STRATEGY 2.1:

Collaborate with the Workforce Mobility Partnership Program to identify and prioritize job access barriers and define solutions.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Completed. The Transit Development Plan (TDP) was completed at the beginning of FY2026 with a primary focus on identifying barriers to employment access and determining how transit services could better connect workers with jobs. The study evaluated opportunities to strengthen Marion County's transit system through expanded service options, including potential countywide service.

STRATEGY 2.2:

Engage employers and economic development leaders to identify high-demand employment corridors and shift schedules.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Completed. As part of the TDP, employers, economic development partners, and other community stakeholders were engaged to identify workforce transportation needs, employment travel patterns, and opportunities to better connect workers with employment throughout Marion County.

STRATEGY 2.3:

Evaluate and implement employment transportation options such as contracted services, deviated/fixed-route shuttles, vanpools, and/or other driver supports.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Strategy not prioritized for 2026 due to funding and operational limitations.

STRATEGY 2.4:

Develop cross-county transit partnerships to improve connectivity to in-county and regional employment destinations.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Implementation of GoBus service strengthened regional transportation connectivity during FY2026. While new cross-county workforce transportation partnerships were not established, the expanded regional network provides a foundation for future coordination efforts supporting employment access.

STRATEGY 2.5:

Assess and pilot extended MAT service hours for early morning and third-shift transportation needs.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

The Night Moves workforce transportation service was eliminated during FY2026 due to budgetary constraints, limiting opportunities to expand early morning and late evening transportation options for workers.

STRATEGY 2.6:

Explore subsidized fare programs or employer-sponsored transportation solutions.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Strategy not prioritized for 2026 due to funding and operational limitations.

Goal #3: Enhance Public Perception, Education, and Engagement in Public Transit Services

STRATEGY 3.1:

Provide clear, user-friendly information to help community members understand and confidently use MAT services.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Public education efforts continued through individualized travel training, presentations on available transportation services, and outreach activities that helped community members better understand and confidently utilize public transportation options.

STRATEGY 3.2:

Rebrand and clarify MAT's route names and service descriptions to accurately reflect service types and ensure compliance with FTA and ODOT guidelines.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Strategy not prioritized during FY2026 as organizational priorities focused on maintaining existing transit services and addressing operational needs.

STRATEGY 3.3:

Update all print and digital materials to clearly explain how each service works, when it operates, and who can ride.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Transportation information resources were updated throughout FY2026, including the Marion County Getting Around Guide, which provides residents with comprehensive information on available transportation providers, eligibility requirements, and how to access transportation services throughout the county.

STRATEGY 3.4:

Address negative perceptions and stigma around public transit use.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Community outreach activities, including participation in local events and resource fairs, increased awareness of available transportation services and provided opportunities to engage residents in conversations about public transportation and mobility options.

STRATEGY 3.5:

Promote bus safety and improve riders' sense of security.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Transit drivers received ongoing training in passenger assistance, wheelchair securement, sensitivity awareness, and other required topics to promote safe, accessible, and customer-focused transportation services.

STRATEGY 3.6:

Explore bus stop improvements and lighting enhancements at key locations.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

MAT secured funding for two new bus shelters to improve passenger amenities and accessibility. Installation of the shelters is anticipated to enhance the rider experience at key transit stop locations.

STRATEGY 3.7:

Establish regular community feedback loops and engagement channels.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Community feedback was encouraged through the TDP process and City Council meetings related to proposed transit fare adjustments. Quarterly Transportation Advisory committee (TAC) meetings also remained open to the public and included opportunities for public comment. These engagement activities supported ongoing collaboration among transit providers, local officials, stakeholders, and the community to inform public transportation planning and service delivery.

STRATEGY 3.8:

Promote the economic and environmental benefits of public transit.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

The discontinuation of the NightMoves shuttle highlighted the critical role public transportation plays in supporting workforce mobility and access to essential services. The TDP further reinforced the importance of maintaining and strengthening transit services to support long-term community and economic development throughout Marion County.

Goal #4: Strengthen and Sustain Coordinated Transportation Services

STRATEGY 4.1:

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

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Section 5310 funding continued to support Marion Senior Center with accessible vehicles to provide both in-county and out-of-county transportation services for older adults. The program experienced continued growth through partnerships, funding opportunities, and improvements to transportation scheduling systems.

STRATEGY 4.2:

Strengthen collaboration between agencies to improve service coordination and reduce duplication.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Collaboration among transportation providers and community partners continued to strengthen during FY2026. A new two-year transportation agreement was established with the Marion Senior Center through the Marion County Council on Aging, and planning discussions continued regarding potential future contracts to expand coordination and transportation services throughout the county.

STRATEGY 4.3:

Develop and implement a marketing and public awareness campaign to promote all transportation services and resources.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

While a formal marketing campaign was not developed during FY2026, public awareness efforts continued through transportation resource materials, community outreach, educational presentations, and participation in the Ohio Loves Transit campaign. These activities promoted available transportation services and increased community awareness of mobility options throughout Marion County.

STRATEGY 4.4:

Advocate for sustainable transportation funding at the local, state, and federal levels.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Advocacy efforts continued throughout FY2026 to support sustainable transportation funding at the local, state, and federal levels. Activities included participation in the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) and its annual Ohio Loves Transit campaign. Mobility Management also participated in transportation advocacy committee activities and supported local advocacy efforts through community engagement and regional coordination.

STRATEGY 4.5:

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

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership applied through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Mobility Management Program to preserve mobility management services supporting transportation planning, coordination, and public education efforts within Marion County.

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

STRATEGY 5.1:

Develop a cost-sharing model to distribute match responsibilities beyond the City of Marion to support countywide public transportation coverage.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Planning efforts continued to explore opportunities for shared financial participation among community partners to strengthen long-term sustainability of public transportation services. Discussions included potential contractual partnerships and cost-sharing opportunities that could expand local match responsibilities beyond the City of Marion and support coordinated transportation services countywide.

STRATEGY 5.2:

Identify and pursue contracts with public and private partners to generate local match revenue.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

MAT continued evaluating strategies to diversify local revenue and strengthen long-term financial sustainability. Planning efforts included exploring advertising opportunities, public fare and monthly pass adjustments, and additional contractual partnerships to support future transportation services.

STRATEGY 5.3:

Leverage state and federal funding by utilizing the 5311 grantee to manage coordinated contracts among agencies countywide through shared transportation providers.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Coordination efforts continued during FY2026 through planning discussions with ODOT and local partners. These discussions evaluated opportunities for coordinated funding, shared transportation contracts, and the role of the 5311 grantee in supporting efficient countywide transportation coordination.

STRATEGY 5.4:

Explore and evaluate the 5311-grantee designation to ensure the most effective governance structure for delivering and expanding countywide public transit.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

This strategy was not prioritized in 2026.

Goal #6: Support Active Transportation Infrastructure and Accessibility to Promote Health and Mobility

STRATEGY 6.1:

Conduct a Safe Routes to Age in Place study to identify infrastructure gaps and prioritize improvements that support seniors' mobility and independence.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

A mini-Community Health Assessment was initiated to identify community health priorities and transportation-related barriers affecting mobility. Findings from this effort will help inform future planning initiatives that improve accessibility and support residents' ability to safely age in place.

STRATEGY 6.2:

Support adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies in municipalities across Marion County to ensure streets accommodate all users safely and comfortably.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Transportation and public health partners continued collaborating to incorporate Complete Streets principles into local planning efforts, supporting roadway designs that improve safety and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.

STRATEGY 6.3:

Support the implementation of and advance the county's Active Transportation Plan and the School Travel Plan.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Development of Marion County's Active Transportation Plan continued during FY2026 to guide future investments in walking, bicycling, and community connectivity throughout the county.

STRATEGY 6.4:

Coordinate with schools, local agencies, and health partners to expand Safe Routes to Schools programs, encouraging walking and biking among youth.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Planning efforts were initiated to establish a Safe Routes to School program within the City of Marion. Although implementation did not move forward due to community concerns regarding the proposed project area, the planning process identified considerations for future Safe Routes initiatives.

STRATEGY 6.5:

Promote pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements—including sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails—building on current county projects and Creating Healthy Communities initiatives.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

The Marion City/County Regional Planning Commission continued advancing transportation planning efforts that support future pedestrian, bicycle, and trail improvements throughout Marion County.

STRATEGY 6.6:

Increase community engagement and education efforts to raise awareness about active transportation benefits and safety practices.

FY2026 PROGRESS UPDATE:

Marion Public Health’s “Built Environment Committee” continued engaging community partners to increase awareness of active transportation and promote collaboration on initiatives that improve health, safety, and mobility throughout Marion County.

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.