



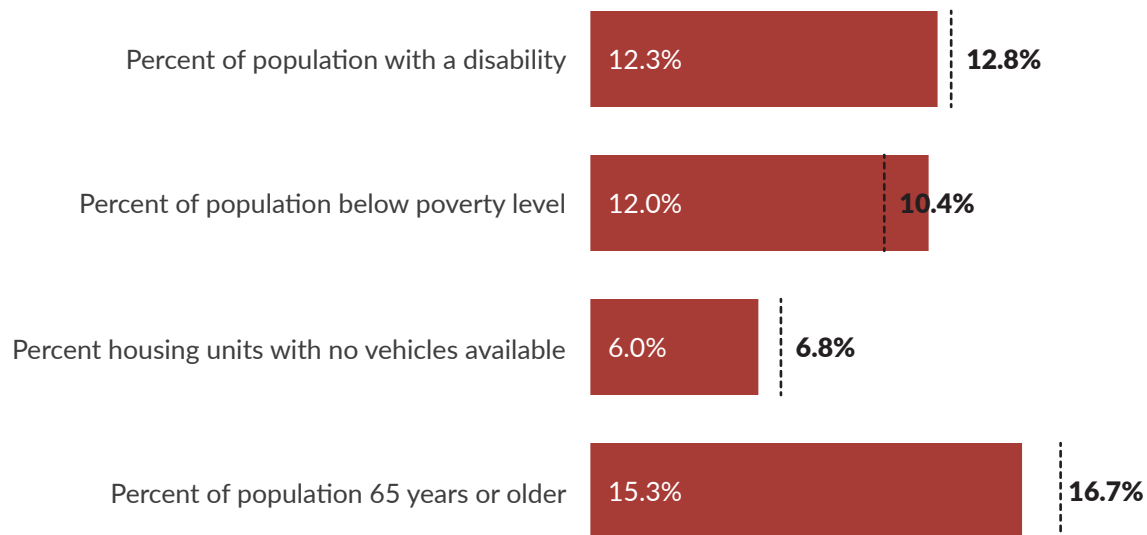
Allen County

Statistics at a glance

Table 1. Allen County and regional statistics

	Allen County	11-county region
Total Population	385,410	797,071
Median Household Income	\$66,222	
Percent of population with a disability	12.3%	12.8%
Percent of population below poverty level	12.0%	10.4%
Percent housing units with no vehicles available	6.0%	6.8%
Percent of population 65 years or older	15.3%	16.7%

Figure 1. Allen County statistics, compared with the 11-county region



Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171) and 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Public and Specialized Transportation Services

Community Transportation Network

The Community Transportation Network (CTN) is a nonprofit agency that provides medical transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities within Allen County, and subscription-based rides to clients of nonprofit agencies serving children and families with low incomes. The mission of CTN is to ease the burden of transportation so that more people can maintain life-sustaining and purposeful connections in the community.

Allen County is the primary service area for CTN, but the agency will provide transportation elsewhere in Indiana if the requested trip is possible within its schedule and capacity.

Table 2. Community Transportation Network statistics

Total Vehicles in Fleet	Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Average Number of Vehicles Used per Day	Number of Full-Time Drivers	Number of Part-Time Drivers
41	41	26	20	15

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne directly operates transportation services for individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and low-income clients within Allen County through the Our Care Van Transportation Program. Hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Transportation service is free to those who are eligible. Donations are accepted.

Table 3. St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne statistics

Total Vehicles in Fleet	Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Average Number of Vehicles Used per Day	Number of Full-Time Drivers	Number of Part-Time Drivers
1	1	1	0*	0*

* 10 volunteer drivers

Fort Wayne Citilink

FW Citilink directly operates fixed routes and ADA-paratransit public transportation services. Transportation is provided in nearly all of greater Fort Wayne. There are no eligibility requirements to use the fixed route services; however, there are eligibility requirements to apply for Citilink Access, a demand-response van service to individuals who meet ADA eligibility requirements and are unable to use the fixed route services. Hours of operation are 6:15 AM to 8:15 PM, Monday through Saturday.

Table 4. Fort Wayne Citilink statistics

Total Vehicles in Fleet	Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Average Number of Vehicles Used per Day	Number of Full-Time Drivers	Number of Part-Time Drivers
61	61	40	87	0

Public Input Summary

A transportation needs assessment survey was advertised to the public online and in hard copy format. It was promoted in local print media, social media, flyers, at public meetings, on websites, and through communications from steering committee members with their peers, employees, and clients. The survey was open from May 19, 2023, through July 24, 2023. Public workshops in June 2023 and virtual meetings in July 2023 provided additional opportunities to discuss transportation with riders and potential riders. Across the region, 4,223 people participated in the public survey.

A total of 532 people from Allen County participated. Almost twenty-nine percent of respondents who answered the survey From Allen County were between 25 to 34, making it the largest group contributing to that county's results.

Because Allen County has a higher density and also fixed route bus service in Greater Fort Wayne, it was important to identify the zip codes for Allen County respondents. The distribution of Allen County responses by zip code is provided in the following map.

4,223 people from throughout the region participated in the public survey.

532 people from Allen County participated.

14.91% were ages 65 and older.

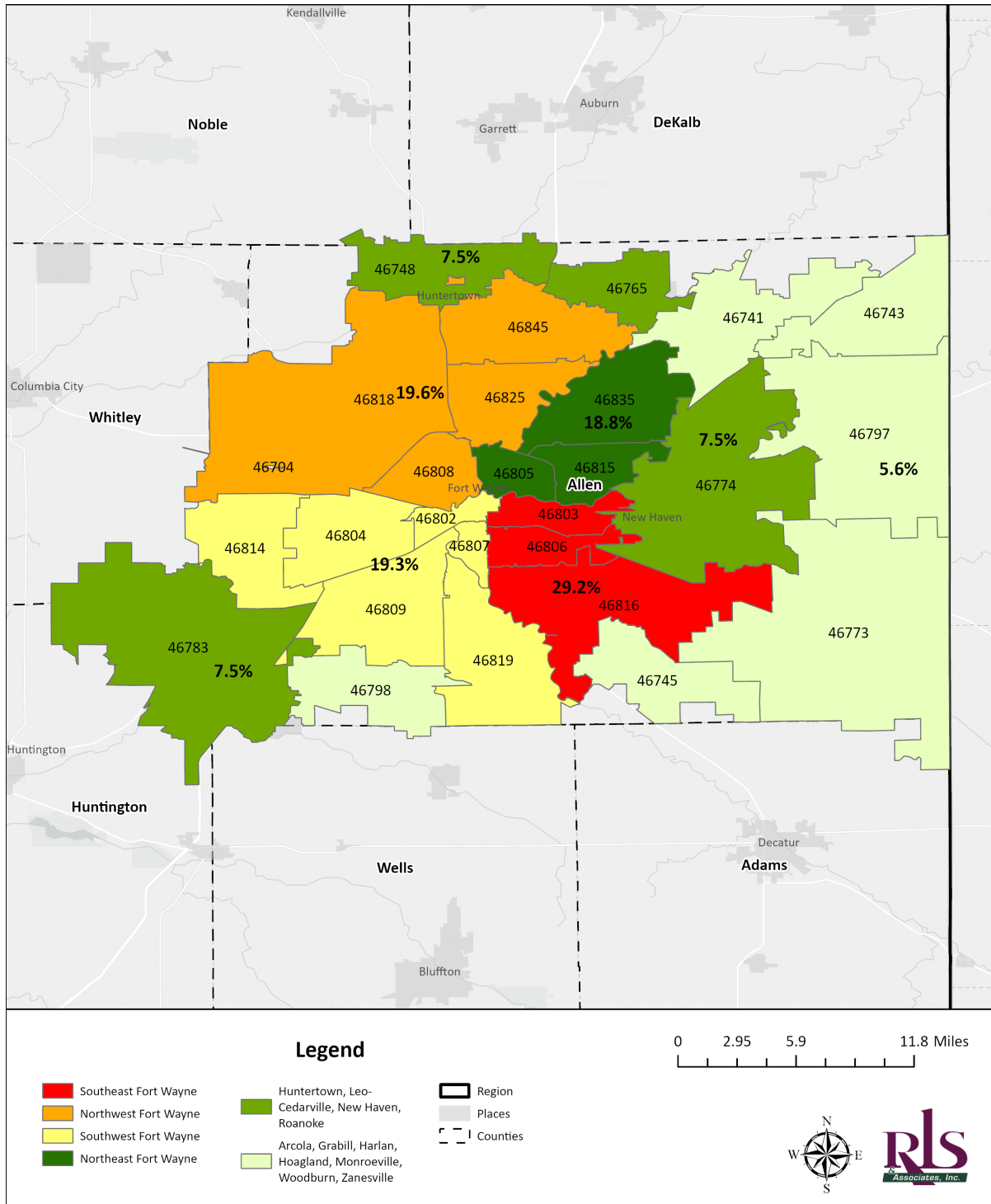
20.84% have a disability that affects their ability to drive.

19.44% live with someone with a disability that affects their ability to drive.

22.88% were pregnant or had been pregnant within the last 18 months.

16.12% had a legal violation that was keeping them from driving.

Figure 2. Allen County Survey Responses by Zip Code



During the public and virtual workshops, participants were asked to answer the question: What is currently working? Some of the positive areas that participants indicated are working well include the following:

- Citilink and CTN service
- Travel training provided

- Well-trained, courteous drivers
- Uber/Rideshare options
- Excellent collaboration between organizations
- CTN grocery shopping pilot
- Door-through-door service

Issues or Challenges

- Capacity constraints
- Service availability
 - No evening or Sunday service
- No transportation service available to the rural areas of the county
- Difficulty of arranging for rides into Allen County for medical purposes
- Service for second and third shift employees

Impact of Not Having Access to Transportation

Approximately thirty-one percent of the people who said that lack of access to transportation limits their ability to shop for food indicated that having friends or family more available to drive them or having lower-cost transportation services would help them get to where they need to go. The number of respondents who indicated that their transportation options limit their ability to shop for food ranged from a low of 51 people in Adams County to a high of 132 in Allen County. Kosciusko County was a close second-highest with 119, and LaGrange County ranked third-highest with 107 people having limited access to food.

Individuals may be able to meet their top priority transportation needs for work, school, and employment with their current transportation resources, but they are not always able to shop for food at a grocery store, food bank, or farmer's market. Poor nutrition contributes to health and wellness challenges that impact other aspects of life.

Allen and Kosciusko Counties had the highest number of respondents who indicated that lack of transportation limits their ability to work outside the home. LaGrange County ranked third highest.

Allen and Kosciusko Counties had the most respondents who indicated that they skip or do not schedule medical appointments or treatments due to lack of transportation.

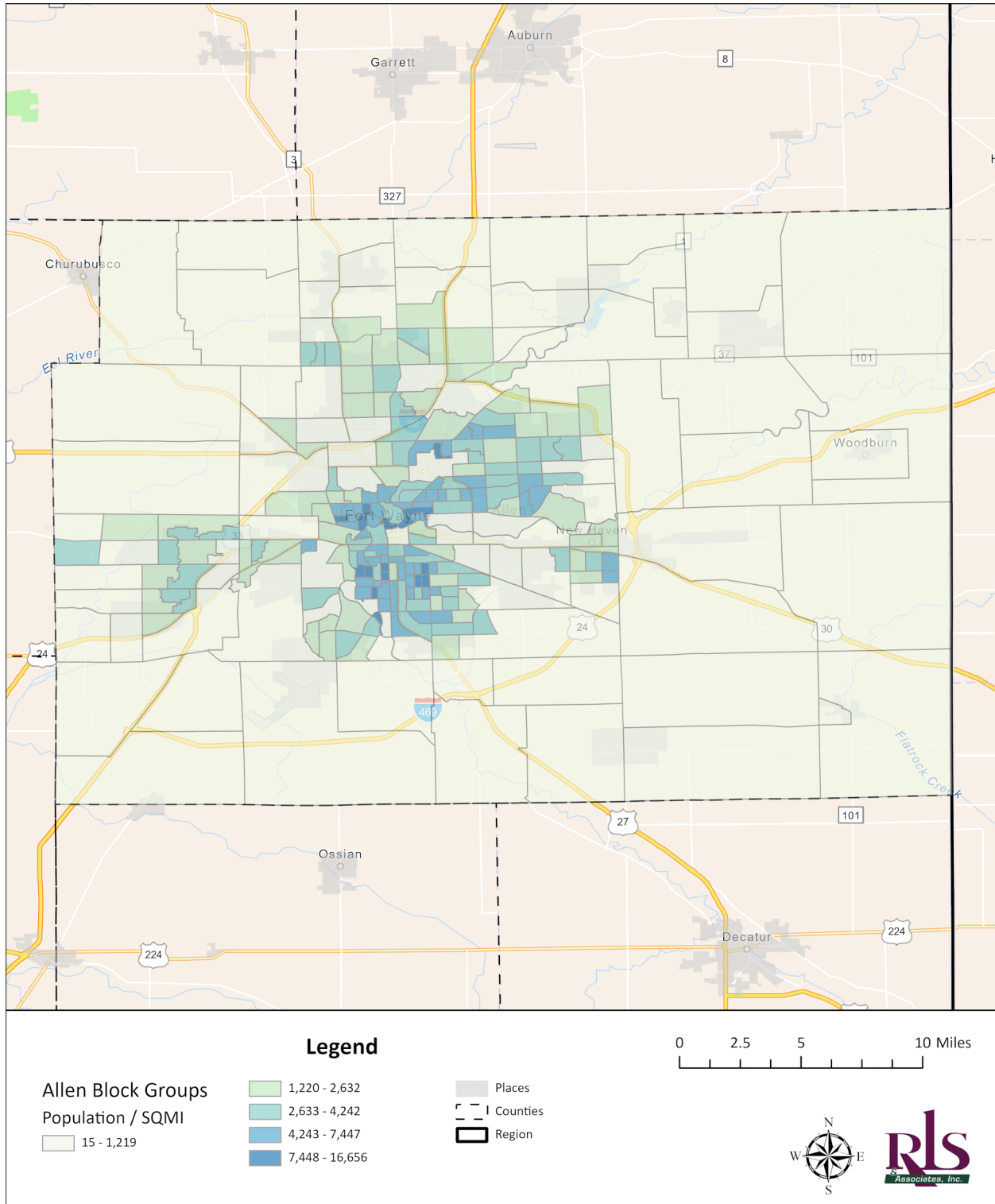
Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that inconvenient bus schedules or routes was an obstacle in using public transportation service. Almost a quarter of respondents indicated that there was no community or public transportation service available.

Population

Allen County has the largest population in the region with approximately 385,410 people. Figure 3 illustrates the population density per square mile in Allen County. The block groups with the

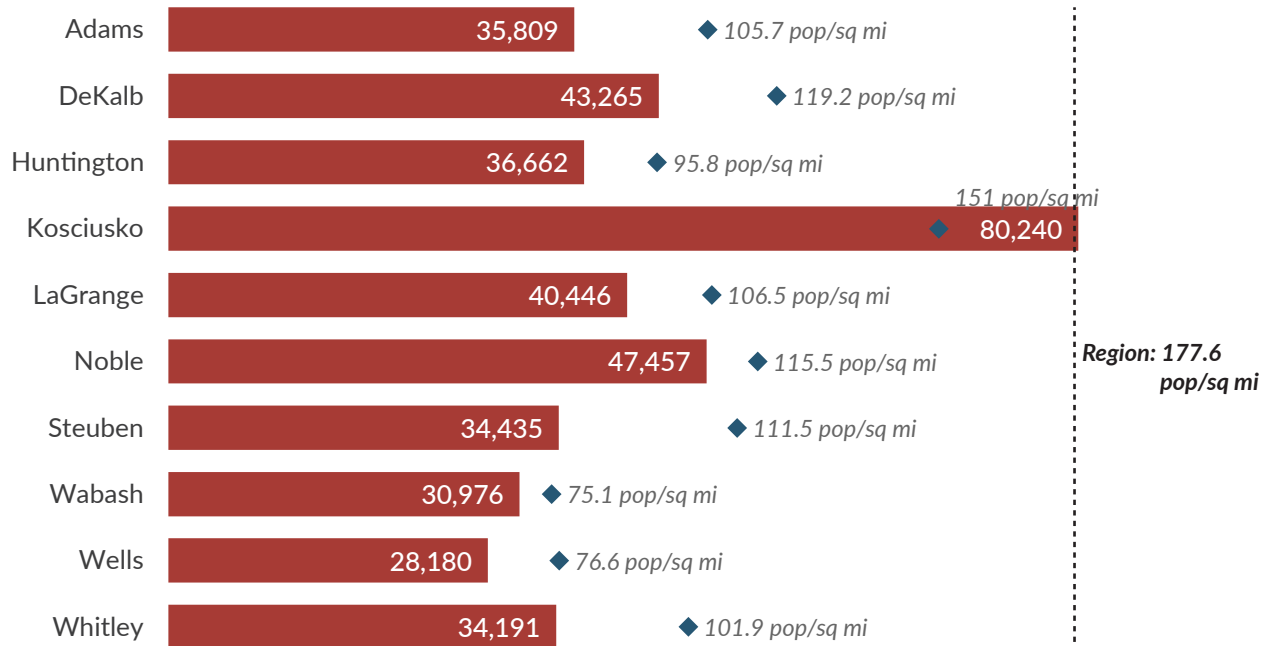
highest density are within or very near Fort Wayne's city limits. Many of these block groups are served by Citilink bus service. The block groups outside of Fort Wayne but within the county have population densities ranging from 15 to 4,242 people per square mile.

Figure 3. Population density of Allen County



The population and population density of the region's rural counties range from 28,000 to 80,000 people. Kosciusko County has the largest population among the rural counties and Wells County has the smallest. Figure 4 illustrates the total population per county. Individual county population density maps are included in Appendix B for reference.

Figure 4. Population density by county



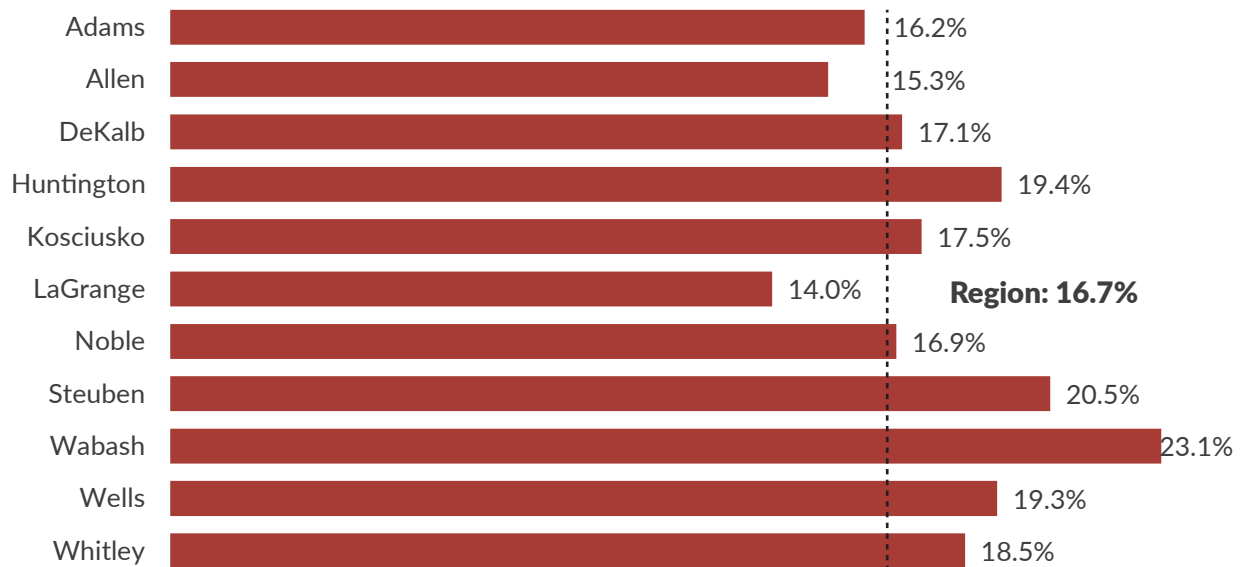
Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

Age

In rural communities, it is common for age to be used as an indicator of current and future transportation demand. That is because as a person ages, they are more likely to need and want alternatives to driving themselves. Older adults are also sometimes living on a retirement or social security income which makes public transportation a more affordable option than owning and operating a personal vehicle.

In five of the region's counties, over 18 percent of the population is age 65 or older. In the other counties, 14 to 17 percent of the population is age 65 or older. LaGrange and Allen Counties have the youngest populations. Wabash, Steuben, Huntington, and Wells counties have the oldest. Figure 5 illustrates the county-by-county percentages.

Figure 5. Percentage of population Age 65 and Older

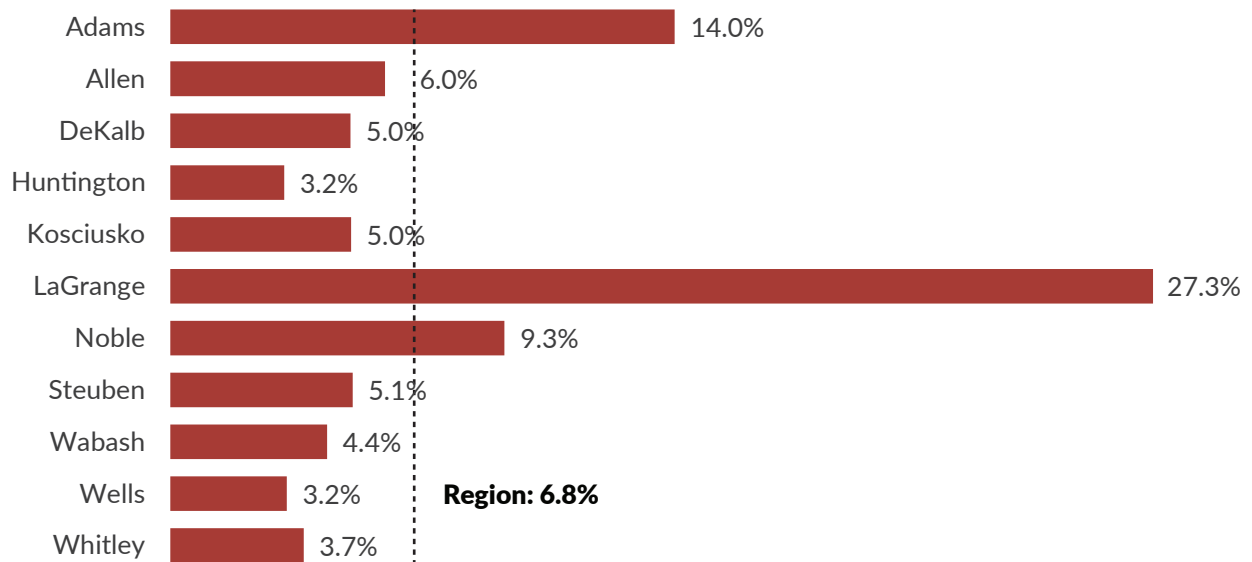


Source: 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

Zero-Vehicle Households and Households Below Poverty

Households without access to a vehicle are highly likely to need transportation from a public or nonprofit agency. In LaGrange County, 27 percent of households have no vehicle available. (LaGrange County also had the lowest percentage of older adult population.) Fourteen percent of households in Adams County have no vehicle. Noble County has 9.3% of its households without a vehicle. All other counties are below the regional average of 6.8%. A breakdown by county is provided in Figure 6.

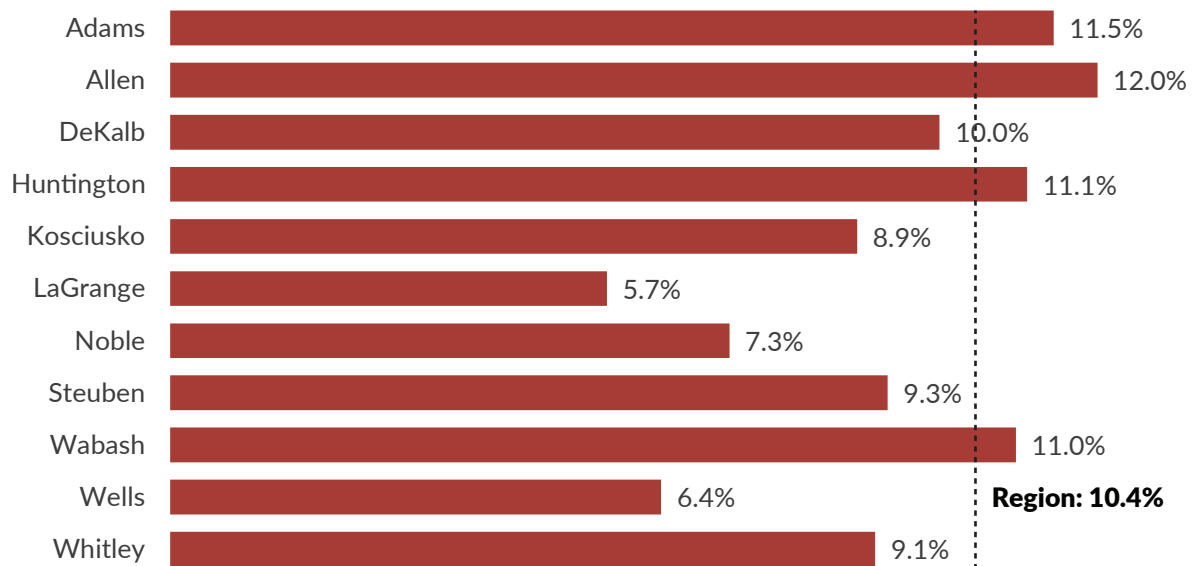
Figure 6. Zero-Vehicle Households



Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04

Four counties, Allen, Adams, Huntington, and Wabash, have poverty rates greater than the regional rate of 10.4 percent. LaGrange County has the lowest poverty rate, at 5.7%.

Figure 7. Percent people below poverty level

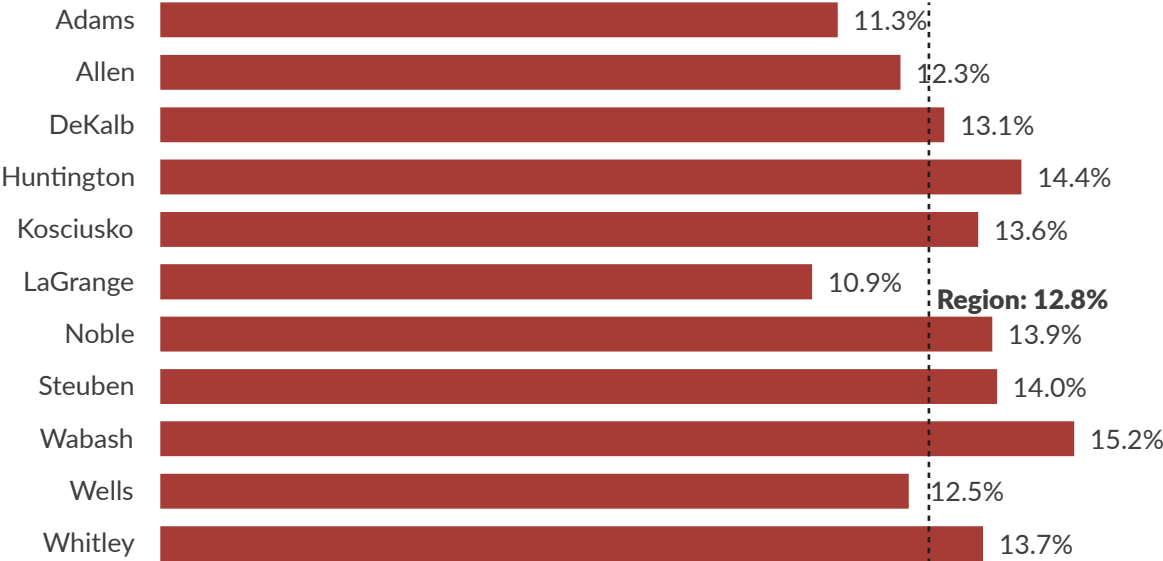


Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table B17001

Individuals with Disabilities

Twelve percent of the population in Allen County has a disability. In all other counties, 10 to 15.2 percent of the population has a disability, according to American Community Survey data.

Figure 8. Individuals with a Disability



Source: 2022 American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP02

Recommendations

The following recommendations listing and Table 5 summarizes the recommendations and action steps pertinent to Allen County. Complete information and a full breakdown of each recommendation and associated action steps/implementation responsibility can be found in the full Needs Assessment report.

- Recommendation 1: Implement Rural Public Transportation in the Rural Areas of Allen County
- Recommendation 3: Regional Scheduling/Dispatching Software Initiative
- Recommendation 4: Assistance for Personal Vehicle Maintenance and Parts
- Recommendation 5: Regional Carpool/Vanpool Program
- Recommendation 6: Design a Regional Transportation Network
- Recommendation 7: Vehicle Sharing Program
- Recommendation 8: Increased NEMT Providers
- Recommendation 9: Increase Participation in Medicaid Family Member and Associate Transportation Provider Program

Table 5. Recommendations tables

Recommendation #1	Action Steps
<p>Currently, there is very limited service available to individuals who do not qualify for transportation by CTN or live outside of the Citilink fixed route or paratransit service area. Rideshare services are too costly and not feasible for many of the zero-vehicle and low-income households, and rideshare services do not have accessible vehicles. Therefore, it is recommended that CTN explore the possibility of creating a public transit division, which would operate separately from existing services, and submit a grant application to the Indiana Department of Transportation to become the rural transit provider for Allen County. This public service could address one of the top priorities for regional transportation by closing the gap between the jurisdictional boundaries of the rural transit systems surrounding Allen County and important regional destinations in Fort Wayne.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTN will present the option to implement public transit to its Board of Directors. • If approved, CTN will develop an implementation plan and service structure details, and identify/secure potential resources for local matching funds. • CTN and Citilink will work together with INDOT to explore opportunities for increasing the amount of available State Public Mass Transit Funds (PMTF) to support a new rural transit system. • CTN will submit a grant application to INDOT for Section 5311 program funding (Federal) and State Public Mass Transit Funds (PMTF). • If funding is awarded, CTN will create the administrative structure to implement services, purchase vehicles (as necessary), and develop policies. • Public outreach campaign to announce the new service • Implement Allen County Rural Public Transit.
Recommendation #3	Action Steps
<p>Allen County could participate in a regional scheduling/dispatching software. Since service limitations and capacity constraints were identified as challenges, this initiative would help eliminate service gaps within the region by expanding access to services between the counties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural transit providers implement broad use of block scheduling to enable more trip-sharing opportunities. • Rural transit providers would establish local permission as well as agreements between agencies to pick up trips that would otherwise go unserved. • Rural transit providers would establish the necessary policies, consistent driver training standards, and customer service procedures.
Recommendation #4	Action Steps
<p>Allen County could participate in a program that assists working individuals with purchasing necessary parts to repair vehicles since a quarter of survey respondents stated having a more reliable vehicle would help improve ability to get to places. The program would involve mechanics who volunteer time and/or offer reduce-priced maintenance. Individuals would submit an application and the lead agency would first explore that individuals' options for using public transit. Should the applicant have transportation needs beyond the service provided by any of the local public transit services, the application would then be taken into consideration and evaluated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a lead agency to administer the program and develop a board or committee for program establishment and fundraising. • Identify program parameters and policies. • Promote the program to potential funders. • Implement the program through partner non-profit agencies that will identify good candidates for the program. • Establish and measure program performance.

Recommendation #5	Action Steps
<p>Because transportation for third shift workers was identified as an obstacle, Allen County could participate in the expansion of the carpool/vanpool program by working with transportation partners to help meet the demand for employment trips during second and third shifts. This program would be developed in coordination with local employers and advertised to employees. This program could be operated either in-house or under contract with a private provider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a lead agency and structure for the carpool/vanpool program (i.e., in-house or contracted). • Meet with local employers to identify the potential level of demand from employees throughout the region. Use this information to help determine the size of the program. • Implement vanpool/carpool services.

Recommendation #6	Action Steps
<p>Allen County could participate in the 11-county regional transportation network initiative in response to INDOT's announcement to establish a regional rural transportation model through Indiana. This could help bridge service gaps and expand availability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene meetings of the Section 5310 and Section 5311 transportation providers in the region for the purpose of establishing the regional transportation network. Establish a regionalization committee. • Determine the most appropriate regional structure for the eleven counties that will provide the most opportunity for increased mobility throughout the region. • Identify a lead agency for the region and/or subregions. • Present regional structure to INDOT. • Submit regional Section 5311 grant application(s).

Recommendation #7	Action Steps
<p>Allen County could participate in a vehicle sharing program which would establish vehicle lease and rental programs so that providers and human service agencies could rent or lease vehicles from another provider when not in use by the owner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify vehicles throughout the region that are idle on days or periods during the day. • Identify and establish an organization to manage the vehicle-sharing lease/rental program. • Develop lease/rental agreement. • Establish a vehicle lease/rental management agency. • Establish vehicle lease/rental rates at a level sufficient to support administration and management of the program.

Recommendation #8	Action Steps
<p>Allen County could participate in collaborative and coordinated regional efforts to review and evaluate current Indiana Medicaid brokerage requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a list of contractual issues that are deterring providers from contracting with NEMT brokers. • Develop recommendations for contract revisions. • Meet with Indiana's NEMT brokers to present and negotiate contract revisions.

Recommendation #9

Allen County could help promote increased participation in the Medicaid program wherein a family member or other person can drive Medicaid-eligible clients to medical appointments and in turn receive gas mileage reimbursement.

Action Steps

- Develop information packet with instructions on how to enroll in the Indiana Medicaid Family or Associate Transportation Program.
- Promote and provide education about the Indiana Medicaid family and associate transportation program.
- Establish a program to assist, as needed, with the completion of the Medicaid Family Member or Associate Transportation Services Form.

