Northeast Indiana Regional Transportation Needs Assessment

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January 2024

NEI TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

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providers:

- **Adams County Council on Aging**
- **Community Transportation Network (CTN)**
- **Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation (Citilink)**
- **DeKalb County Council on Aging**
- **Easterseals Arc**
- **Fellowship Missions**
- **Huntington County Council on Aging**
- **Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS)**
- **Kosciusko Senior Services**
- **LaGrange County Area Transit**
- **Living Well in Wabash County**
- **Noble County Council on Aging**
- **St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne**
- **Steuben County Council on Aging**
- **Wells on Wheels**
- **Whitley County Council on Aging**

supporting organizations:

- AARP
- AWS Foundation
- Community Foundation of DeKalb County
- Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne
- Community Foundation of Wabash County
- Community Foundation of Whitley County
- Community Research Institute, Purdue University Fort Wayne
- The Dekko Foundation
- Downard Development Strategies, LLC
- Fort Wayne Metals
- Fortify Life
- Healthier Moms & Babies
- Huntington County Community Foundation
- K21 Health Foundation
- Kosciusko County Community Foundation
- LaGrange County Council on Aging
- Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)
- Northeastern Center
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)
- Olive B. Cole Foundation
- Parkview Boys & Girls Club
- Parkview Noble Hospital
- Pathfinder Services
- Region 3-A
- St. Joseph Community Health Foundation
- The Arc Noble County Foundations
- The Arc of LaGrange County
- Turnstone

In 1998, an assessment was completed in Allen County, Indiana exploring the transportation gaps. The results were given to a group of nonprofit leaders who were tasked with changing the status quo. The result was Community Transportation Network.

Twenty-five years later, CTN's Board of Directors commissioned a similar assessment, but on a much larger scale. This report is the culmination of more than a year of study and evaluation of the eleven-county region we call northeast Indiana. It includes breakout data for each of the eleven counties and nine recommendations presented by RLS & Associates, the consultants hired to evaluate our region.

To be completely honest, for those of us working in transportation, the data isn't a surprise. We know the need for affordable and reliable transportation is critical. We know the need for inter-county transit continues to grow. And we know that transportation is one of the greatest barriers to healthy independent living for thousands of seniors and people with disabilities. But now you know as well.

The data presented, in many ways, mirrors national reports. But our response should be better.

For the most part, the recommendations presented by RLS & Associates are not targeted at any one community, county, or transportation provider. For more than twenty years, our region has worked together on economic development deals and advocacy efforts at the Indiana State House. This report indicates the transportation community is ripe for collaboration as well.

CTN is not a public transportation provider, we fill in the gaps when public transportation is overextended or unavailable. It is not our intention to replace or preclude any other provider from doing what they do best. It is our goal, however, to convene parties across the region to continue the discussion started in 2023 and ask the question "what's next?"

We've been incredibly grateful for the work of our partners and the support of our funders. This could not have been accomplished without them. And it will take all of us to solve these challenges.

Justin Clupper
Executive Director, CTN

Jared Helge
Board Chair, CTN

A special thank you to the foundations and organizations who funded this project.

Community Foundation of Dekalb County • Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne • Huntington County Community Foundation • Kosciusko County Community Foundation • St. Joseph Community Health Foundation • Community Foundation of Wabash County • Community Foundation of Whitley County

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Transportation is an essential part of being able to participate in activities such as healthcare, education, employment, shopping, and social events. Without available transport options, people have limited ability to participate in social and wellness activities, and enjoy limited independence. If transportation is not available, accessible, and affordable to an individual, they may not be able to go to the grocery store, maintain medical treatment, work, or visit friends and family.

Understanding the importance of access to transportation, and that there are unmet transportation needs throughout Northeast Indiana, Community Transportation Network (CTN) partnered with multiple organizations to initiate an in-depth transportation assessment in the eleven-county region to clarify the spatial, temporal, and other gaps that exist between those who need transportation and the available services. The counties included in the study are Allen, Adams, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

Methodology

Multiple local organizations joined with CTN and formed a project steering committee, with CTN serving as the lead agency. The committee was tasked to assess the availability of transportation and mobility options in the eleven-county region. CTN contracted with RLS & Associates, Inc. to evaluate the transportation services and unmet needs of the region with the goal of determining the most appropriate and effective service design for the region.

This needs assessment is based on demographic research and input from transportation stakeholders and the general public that was collected through public meetings, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The results of the assessment are documented and summarized in this report. The following tasks were completed:

- A Project Steering Committee was established and engaged at key project intervals.
- An inventory of existing transportation services provided by public and nonprofit organizations identified the benefits and limitations of mobility options.
- Consultants analyzed demographic and socioeconomic conditions and travel patterns relevant to transit demand and identified needs for local as well as multi-county trips.
- More than 4,000 people participated in a public survey about transportation needs and identified their priorities.
- Stakeholders participated in interviews to discuss existing services and transportation needs.
- 11 public meetings (one per county) provided opportunity for public input about needs.
- Eight focus groups were facilitated to take a deep dive into potential solutions.
- Data analysis resulted in the development of local and regional service design recommendations.

Chapter 2: Existing Transportation Resources

Transportation in the eleven-county region is provided by a network of public, nonprofit and for-profit entities. Figure 1 depicts the location of providers in each county. Including CTN, more than 12 organizations provide transportation to individuals with disabilities, older adults, dialysis and cancer patients, and the general public. Specialized and public transportation services provide an important—and often life-sustaining—link for anyone who needs a ride to appointments, groceries, work, school, recreation, and medical care. All of the transportation providers included in this inventory have a service area that is restricted to local jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., county lines or municipal limits). Many of the providers cross over the jurisdictional boundaries on a limited basis such as for medical appointments.

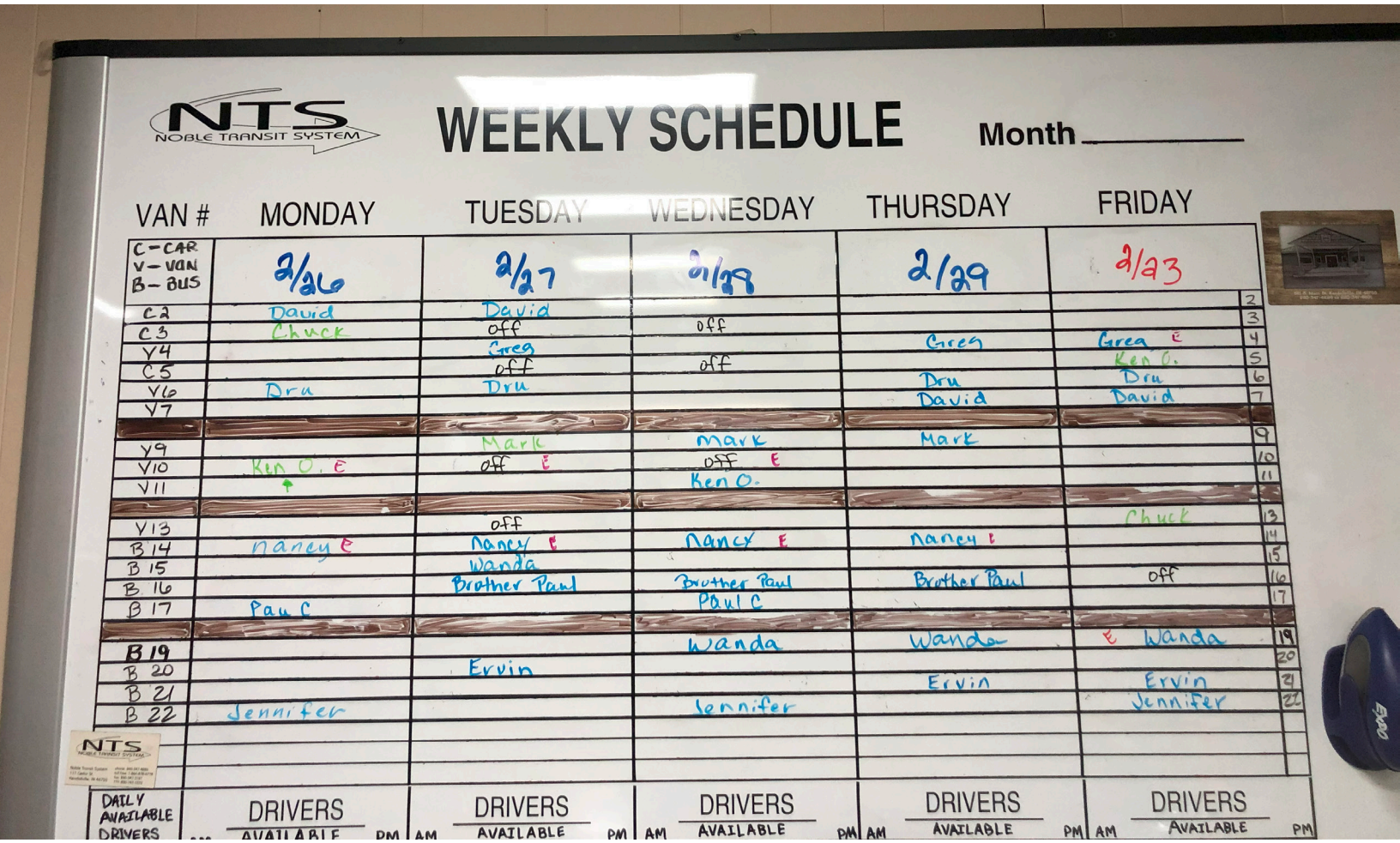


Figure 1. Existing Transportation Services

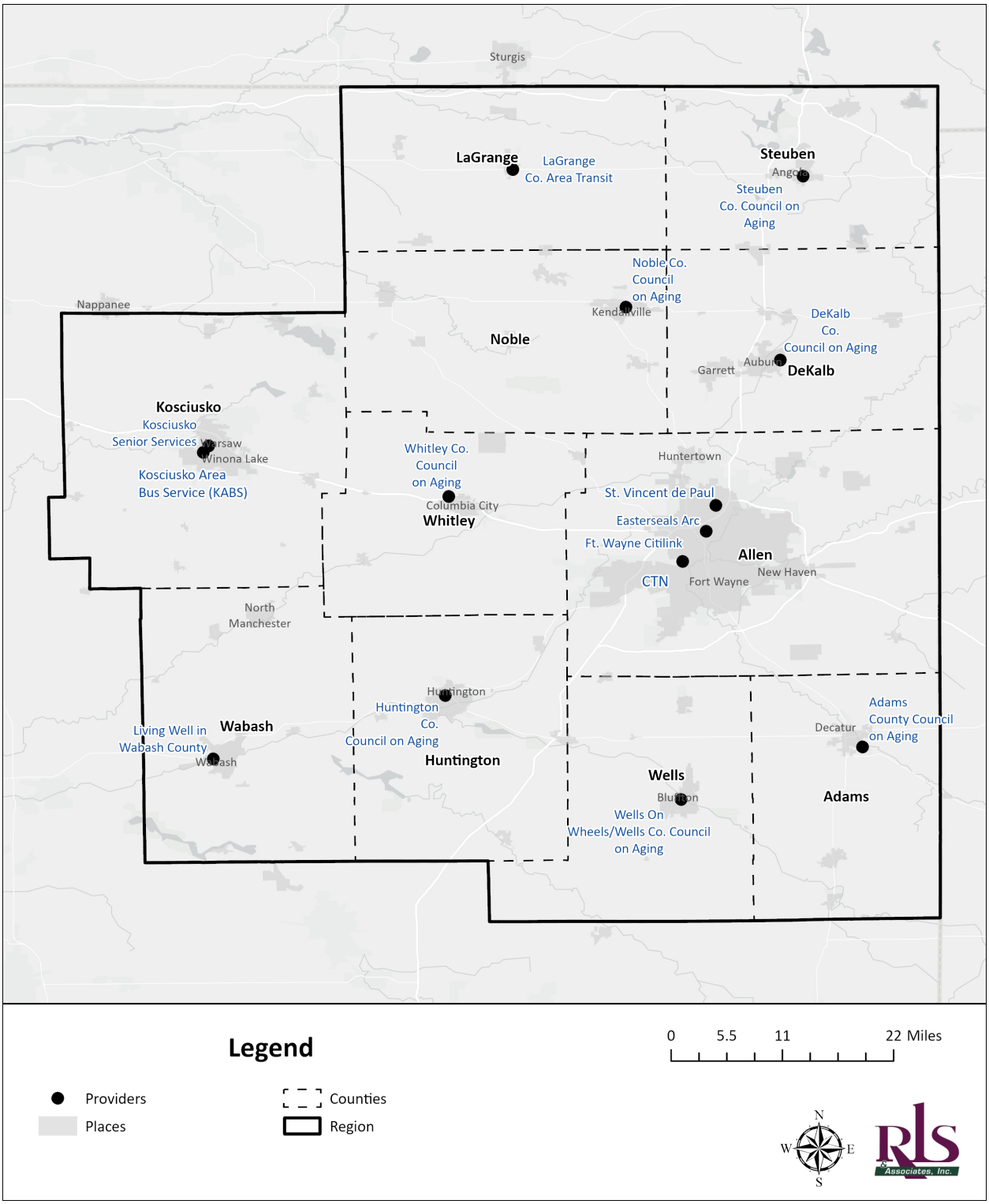


Table 1 provides an overview of available transportation services. Detailed information about each service is included in Appendix A. It is noted that limited private transportation services also

operate in the area and although those services were not documented in detail for the inventory, they are recognized throughout the report, where appropriate.

Table 1. Summary of Provider Resources

Program or Agency Name	Service Area	Passenger Eligibility Requirements	Total Vehicles in Fleet	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Avg. # Vehicles Used per Day	Full-Time Drivers	Part-Time Drivers
Adams County Council on Aging	Adams County	General public	7	7	4 or 5	0	9
Community Transportation Network (CTN)	Allen County with subscription rides outside of Allen County	Individuals with disabilities and older adults	41	41	26	20	15
DeKalb County Council on Aging (DART)	DeKalb County	General public	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fellowship Missions	Kosciusko County	Clients	Volunteers	Volunteers	Varies	Volunteers Only	Volunteers Only
Easterseals Arc	As needed to support the consumer	Eligible Easterseals Arc clients	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fort Wayne Citilink	Greater Fort Wayne Area	General public	61	61	40	87	0
Huntington County Council on Aging/ Huntington Area Transit (HAT)	Huntington County and part of Markle (Wells County)	General public	16	15	16	3	12
Kosciusko Senior Services	Kosciusko County	Ages 60+ and Medicaid Waiver eligible	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS)	Kosciusko County	General public	12	12	9	4	5
LaGrange County Council on Aging, Inc.	LaGrange County and to Allen, St. Joe, Elkhart, and Steuben Counties	General public	15	14	9	5	7

Program or Agency Name	Service Area	Passenger Eligibility Requirements	Total Vehicles in Fleet	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	Avg. # Vehicles Used per Day	Full-Time Drivers	Part-Time Drivers
Living Well in Wabash County	Wabash County	General public	8	8	4 to 5	2	6
Noble Transit Service	Noble County	General public	17	14	7	0	13
Steuben County Council on Aging (STAR Transportation)	Steuben County	General public	8	8	5	0	8
St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne	Allen County	Individuals with disabilities, older adults, people with low incomes	1	1	1	Volunteers Only	Volunteers Only
Wells County Council on Aging (Wells on Wheels)	Wells County	General public	14	14	10	4	8
Whitley County Council on Aging	Whitley County	Individuals with disabilities, senior citizen program participants	12	12	7	1	11
Total			*200*	*195*	*131–133*	*125*	*83*

Chapter 3: Public Input Results

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 provided an additional opportunity to discuss transportation with riders and potential riders. This chapter highlights a summary of the survey and public engagement results.

To kick off each public workshop, 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:

- Rural county transportation is available
- Medicaid transportation is available
- The drivers are positive and respectful
- Verida
- Seniors are receiving meals and gaining socialization because of the transportation providers
- There is a strong network/partnership among social service agencies

Existing Issues or Challenges

Workshop participants, which included social services and transportation providers, riders, and non-riders from all counties, also shared the most common challenges for the existing transportation network. Common challenges mentioned during the meetings were as follows:

- Lack of transportation between counties
- Service days/hours
  - No weekend or early/later service times
- Same-day service is not available
- Transportation providers have capacity constraints and cannot increase service levels
- Lack of employment transportation, particularly for second and third-shift workers
- Gap populations
  - Low-income individuals who do not qualify for assistance, yet fares are too expensive
- Limited transportation for mental health treatment programs and appointments
- Limited transportation for recreation/sports
  - Children are unable to participate in sports
- Lack of access to technology in some parts of the region
  - Cell phones/WiFi
- The stigma of public transit or agency transportation services keeps people from riding
  - “Transit is not for me”

- Driver/vehicle shortages
  - As well as high vehicle maintenance expenses
- Difficulty reaching very rural areas
- Transportation for hospital discharges
- Lack of coordination between transportation providers
- Accessibility of roads/sidewalks
  - Could use a mobility device or walk to certain places if appropriate sidewalk/road access was available
- Door thru door service is a necessity for some riders but not all transportation providers have the capacity to provide that level of service

The public survey reached far more people than the public workshops yet many of the themes presented at the workshops help to clarify the survey results.

A total of 4,223 people completed the survey. At least 214 and as many as 578 responses were received from each county. The response rate by county is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Responses by County

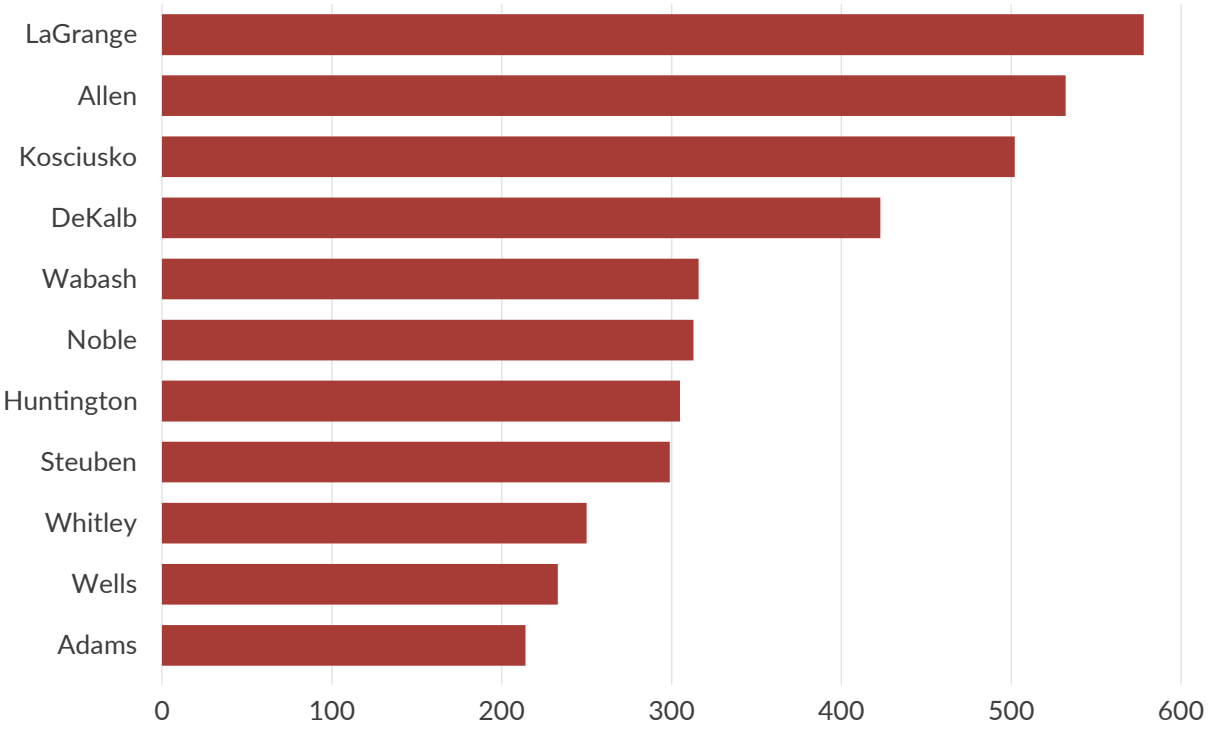
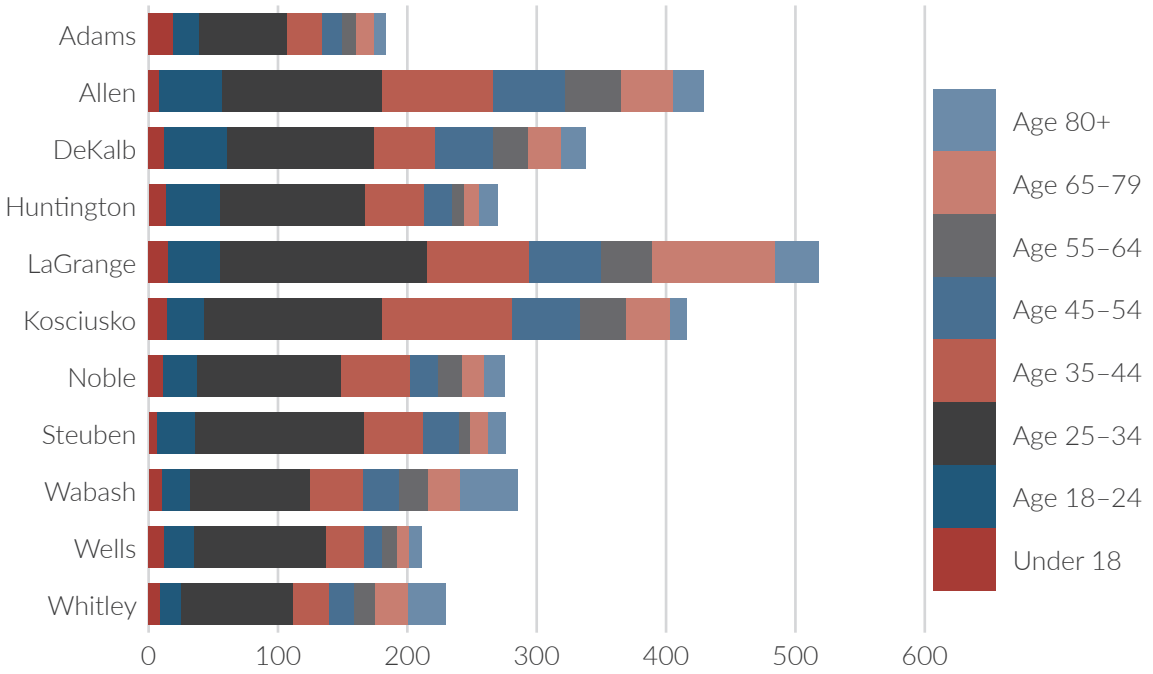


Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of responses by county, by age group. In each county, people of working age were the most frequent contributors to the survey. Nearly 10 percent of respondents from Adams County were under age 18. In LaGrange County, people ages 25 to 34 were the largest group. The largest group of respondants over age 80 came from Wabash County.

Figure 3. Response by County, by Age Group



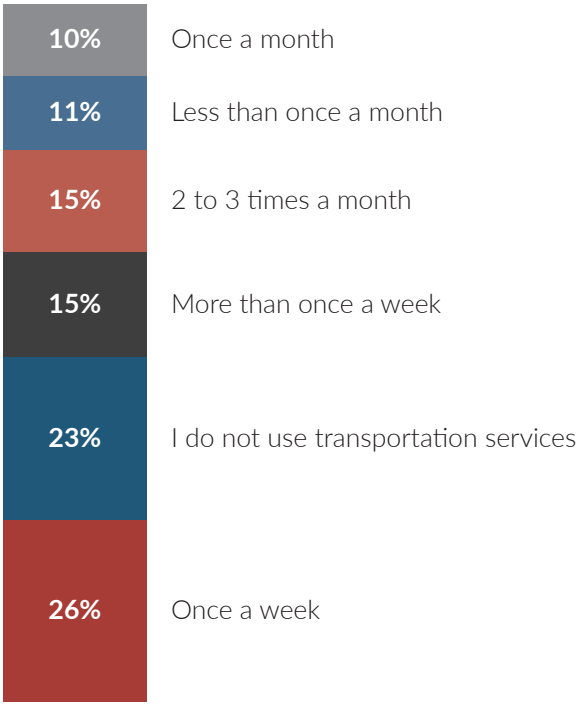
Frequency of Using Public or Community/Medicaid Transportation Services

Seventy-four percent of survey respondents use transportation services; more than 25 percent of them ride once a week. Twenty-three percent do not use public transit or a community/Medicaid transportation service.

The distribution of responses ensures that survey results reflect input from people who frequently use transportation services as well as those who do not ride. Figure 4 depicts the responses.

In a rural area, it is not unusual for a significant number of public survey respondents to not use public or community transportation services. Most households in rural America have access to one or more vehicles and often drive because it is more convenient and socially acceptable.

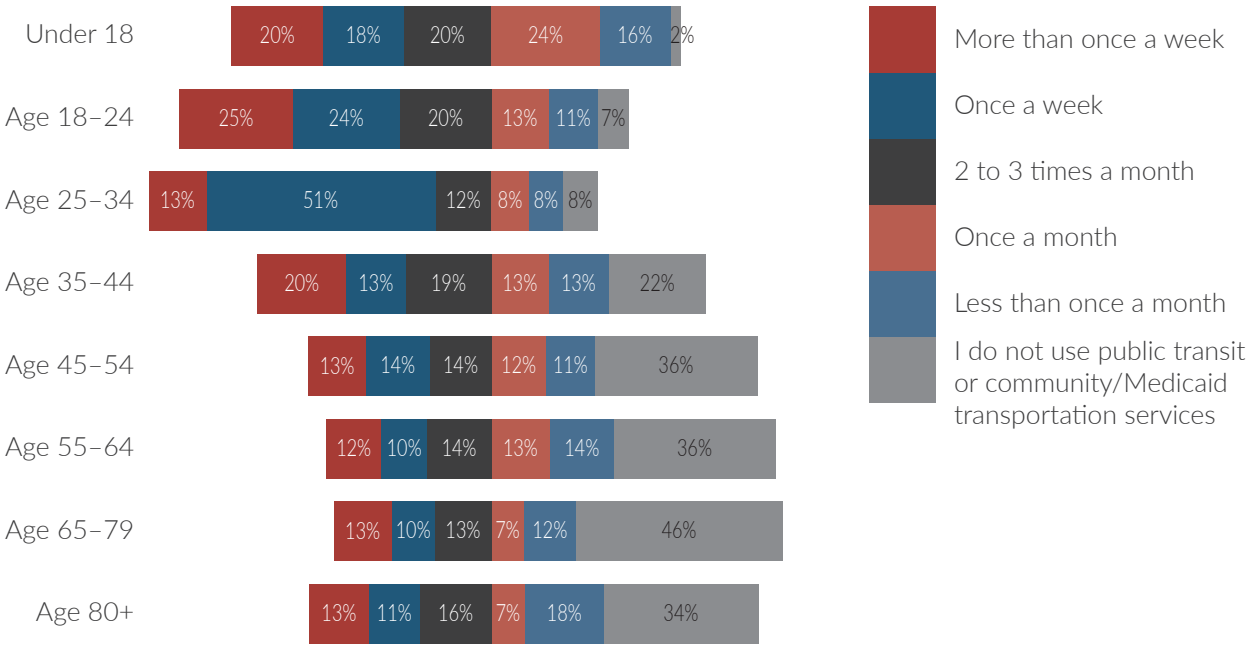
Figure 4. How often do you use public transit or community/Medicaid transportation services? (n=3,824)



Interestingly, the percentage of people who do not use public transit increased as the ages increased. For example, seven percent of respondents who were between ages 18 and 24 did not use transportation compared to 46 percent of people between ages 65 and 79. The trend begins to reverse for people age 80 and older. This trend is unusual in rural communities because older adults are more likely to need alternatives to driving themselves due to age-related mobility limitations or a preference to not drive. The higher rate of people of working age who use public transit potentially indicates that people are riding public transit as a choice (over owning a vehicle) or that a significant number of local public transit riders rely on the service because they are unable to drive, do not have reliable access to a vehicle, or because transit is more affordable than owning a car. The types of obstacles to driving are included later in this chapter.

Also, the respondents who ride most frequently tend to be in the age group that is early in their professional career and may be working entry-level jobs. Approximately 51 percent of the respondents between ages 25 and 34 ride once a week. In all other age groups, 10 percent to 18 percent of respondents ride once a week. Figure 5 illustrates the responses by age group.

Figure 5. How often do you use public transit or community/Medicaid transportation services? (Results sorted by age.) (n=3,410)



The primary reasons why many non-riders make other choices for their transportation are because they are not aware of how to use local transportation services, or the service is not available where they live or work, and therefore, is not an option. Survey results are consistent with the feedback received during public workshops. For example, survey respondents indicated that bus service is not available where they live or work. This is consistent with the input received about needing transportation services that cross county lines for access to work, medical appointments, or shopping.

Others choose not to ride because they have access to a vehicle or share a ride with a family member or friend. Public workshop feedback indicates that people who are relying on a friend or family member may not have a ride when they need or want it because the family member/friend may not have enough flexibility in their schedule to fully meet the person's needs. This scenario is indicated as an obstacle in the following question.

Top Reasons for Not Riding Community Transportation Services:

- *I prefer to drive my own vehicle.*
- *Bus service is not available where I live or work.*
- *I am not familiar with the local bus/transportation service.*
- *My friends/family drive me where I need to go.*

Obstacles to Driving Yourself

1. Cost of gas for my car (25%)
2. I don't like driving at night (25%)
3. I have a disability or other physical/cognitive limitation that restricts driving (23%)
4. I don't have a driver's license/insurance (21%)
5. I do not own a car/truck (21%)
6. I don't like driving at any time (21%)
7. Unreliable car/truck; needs repairs (20%)
8. Friends/family members are not always available to drive me (20%)
9. Difficulty getting children to school, childcare, and other locations (18%)

While a significant number of survey participants state that they drive a vehicle, many of the drivers are not always able to use their vehicle. This survey result is consistent with the fact that a significant portion of the respondents with a vehicle were older adults who may be more likely to have mobility limitations that impact their ability to drive safely. During situations when the person with a vehicle cannot or should not drive, public transportation is an option when it is available to them.

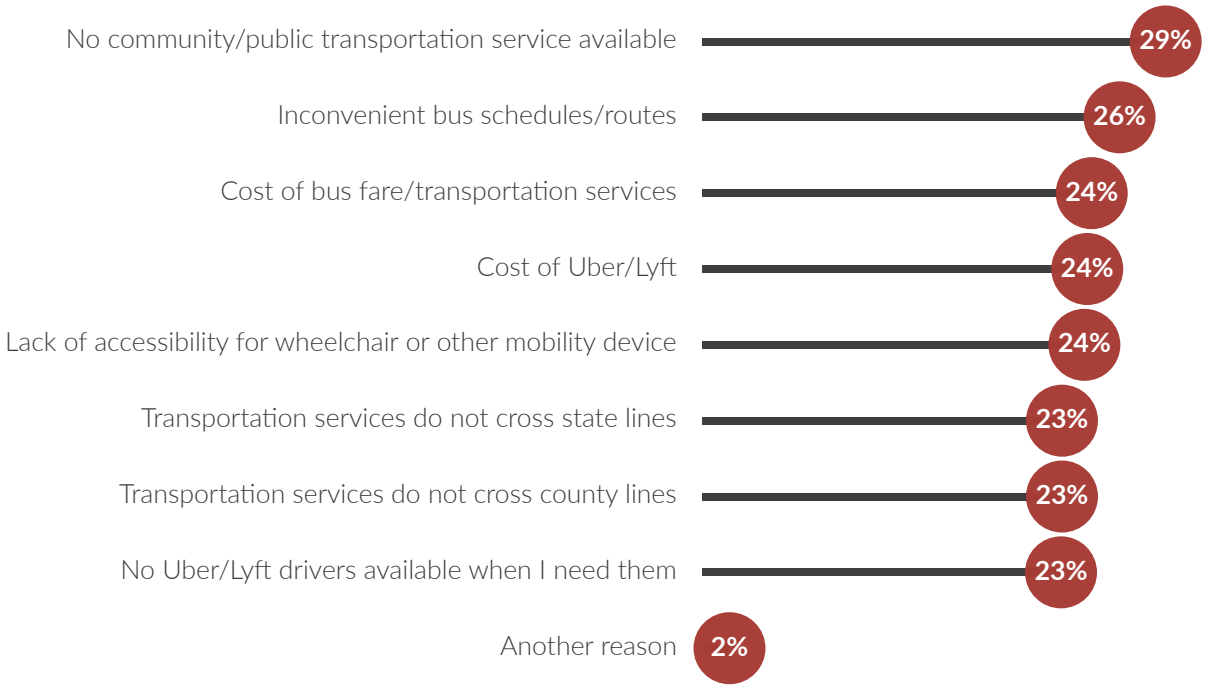
The survey question about obstacles to driving was open ended. Other reasons for not driving included faith-based reasons, dislike of driving in bad weather, health issues, and dislike of driving in Fort Wayne traffic or on the highways. These results again are consistent with public workshop participant feedback indicating that residents of rural areas are sometimes unable to drive to the larger communities, such as Fort Wayne.

Obstacles to Using Transportation Services

1. No community/public transportation service available to me (29%)
2. Inconvenient bus schedules/routes (26%)
3. Cost of bus fare/transportation service (24%)
4. No available wheelchair accessible vehicle (24%)

All of the reasons listed in Figure 6 were selected by more than 20 percent of the respondents and mentioned by public workshop participants.

Figure 6. Obstacles to Using Transportation Services (n=3,453)



Notable county-by-county facts about obstacles to using community transportation:

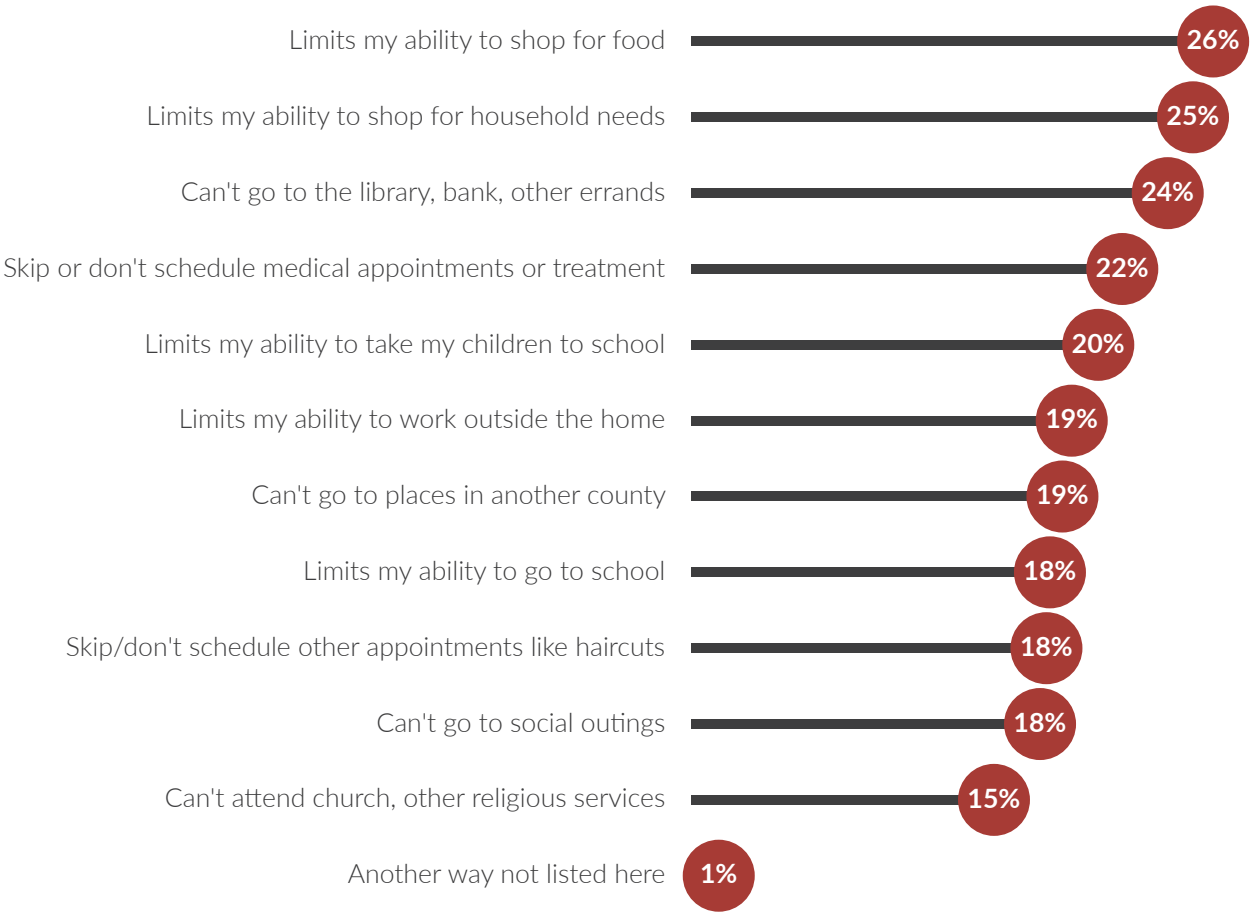
- Allen and Kosciusko Counties had the highest percentage of respondents stating that the bus schedules/routes are inconvenient.
- DeKalb and Kosciusko Counties had the highest percentage of respondents stating there was no community transportation service available to them.
- Allen, Huntington, and Adams Counties had the highest percentage of respondents needing to cross county lines.
- Huntington and Steuben Counties had the highest percentage of respondents without enough accessible vehicles for transporting wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Impact of Not Having Access to Transportation

1. Limited ability to shop for food
2. Limited ability to shop for household needs
3. Cannot go to the library, bank, or other errands

Figure 7 illustrates the response to all of the impacts that lack of transportation has on the individuals participating in the survey.

Figure 7. Impact of No Transportation Access



Comparison of Key Results by County

Access to Food

Approximately 30 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 119 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.

Access to Work

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. It is important to note that survey respondents of working age use transportation more frequently than older survey respondents which corresponds to the higher need for reliable daily transportation to support employment.

Access to Medical

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.

Most Requested Improvements

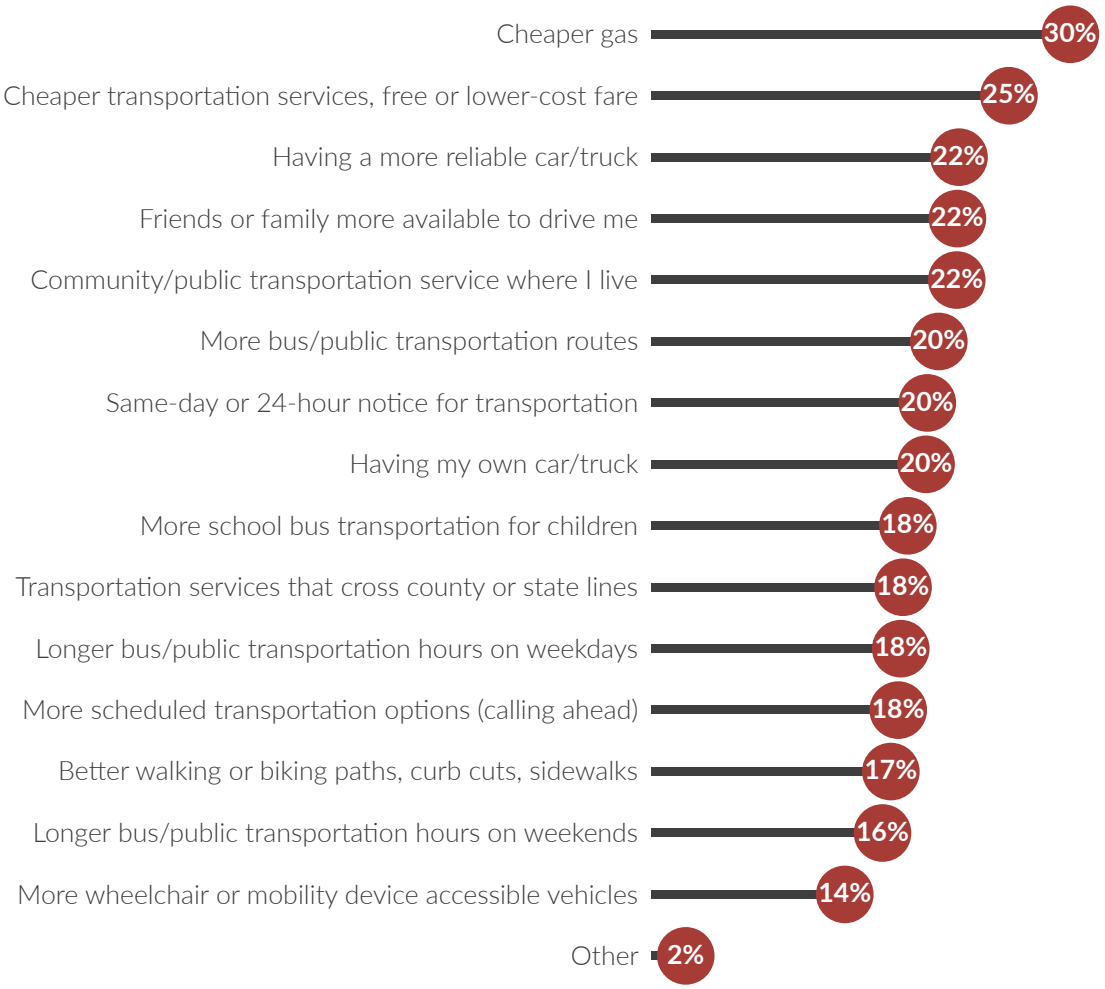
Respondents were asked to select the top three things that would most improve their ability to get where they need to go. The top choices were:

1. Cheaper gas (30%)
2. Cheaper transportation services, including free or lower-cost bus fares (25%)
3. Having a more reliable car/truck (22%)
4. Friends and family more available to drive me (22%)
5. More bus/public transportation services where I live (22%)

Having more bus service where I live was a predominant theme during public workshops, particularly for rural communities where service may not exist, or is not convenient or frequent enough to support daily transportation needs.

Also, during meetings with nonprofit agencies, representatives from homeless shelters and programs supporting addiction recovery or workforce reentry indicated that there is a significant need for affordable vehicle parts and maintenance to repair a car/truck. Often times, public transit is not available to support a second or third shift job and the individual has a car but cannot afford to buy a part or maintenance. Assistance that makes driving a personal vehicle more affordable was discussed as a necessary part of the transportation solution.

Figure 8. Overall Top Priorities for Improvement



It is noted that 30 percent of people indicated that gas prices impact their decision to drive or use an alternative transportation option. National industry trends show that when gas prices reach a high threshold, demand on public transit services increases. As many as 30 percent of residents in the region are likely to look toward public transportation to meet their needs if gas prices exceed their budgetary limits. In some communities the increase in transit demand occurred when prices reached $5.00/gallon. In communities with more lower income households, the threshold is lower.

There were no significant differences when analyzing the results by county. There were noteworthy differences when analyzing the results between people who said that they have a car and prefer to drive and those who did not have a car; those differences are outlined below.

Top Priorities for Drivers and Non-Drivers

People with a Car

Interestingly, while cheaper gas was the most common reason for not riding transit for respondents with their own car, only 36 percent of those with a car selected

cheaper gas as a priority. The top priorities (in order) for people who said that they have their own car were:

1. Cheaper gas
2. Cheaper transportation services, including free or low-cost bus fare
3. Having a more reliable car/truck

All Other Respondents

Analysis of the results without respondents who indicated that they drive a car reveals the priorities in a slightly different order, and indicates that cost is a major decision factor/ barrier in their transportation choices.

1. Cheaper transportation services, free or lower-cost bus fare
2. Cheaper gas
3. Friends or family more available to drive me
4. Having a more reliable car/truck

Other high-ranking priorities selected by more than 20 percent of respondents in this group were as follows (in order of importance):

1. More bus/public transportation routes
2. Community/public transportation services where I live
3. Same-day or 24-hour notice transportation options

There were also notable differences when analyzing the top priorities by the age of the respondent.

Top Priorities for Older Adults

People Age 65 to 79

The top three options for people ages 65 to 79 were (in order):

1. Same-day or 24-hour notice for scheduled transportation services
2. Transportation services that cross county or state lines
3. Longer bus/public transportation hours on weekdays

The priority for cheaper transportation services indicates the potential for car drivers and non-drivers to use public transit when it is affordable.

The need for a more reliable car/ truck indicates the potential need for affordable vehicle maintenance and parts options.

People Ages 80 and Older

The top three options for people ages 80 or older were (in order):

1. Friends or family more available to drive me
2. Better walking or biking paths, including curb cuts and sidewalks
3. More vehicles to accommodate a wheelchair or mobility device
4. Longer bus/public transportation hours on weekdays

According to the survey results, older adults are more likely to need convenient transportation options and options that cross county or state lines than the overall group. And, after the age

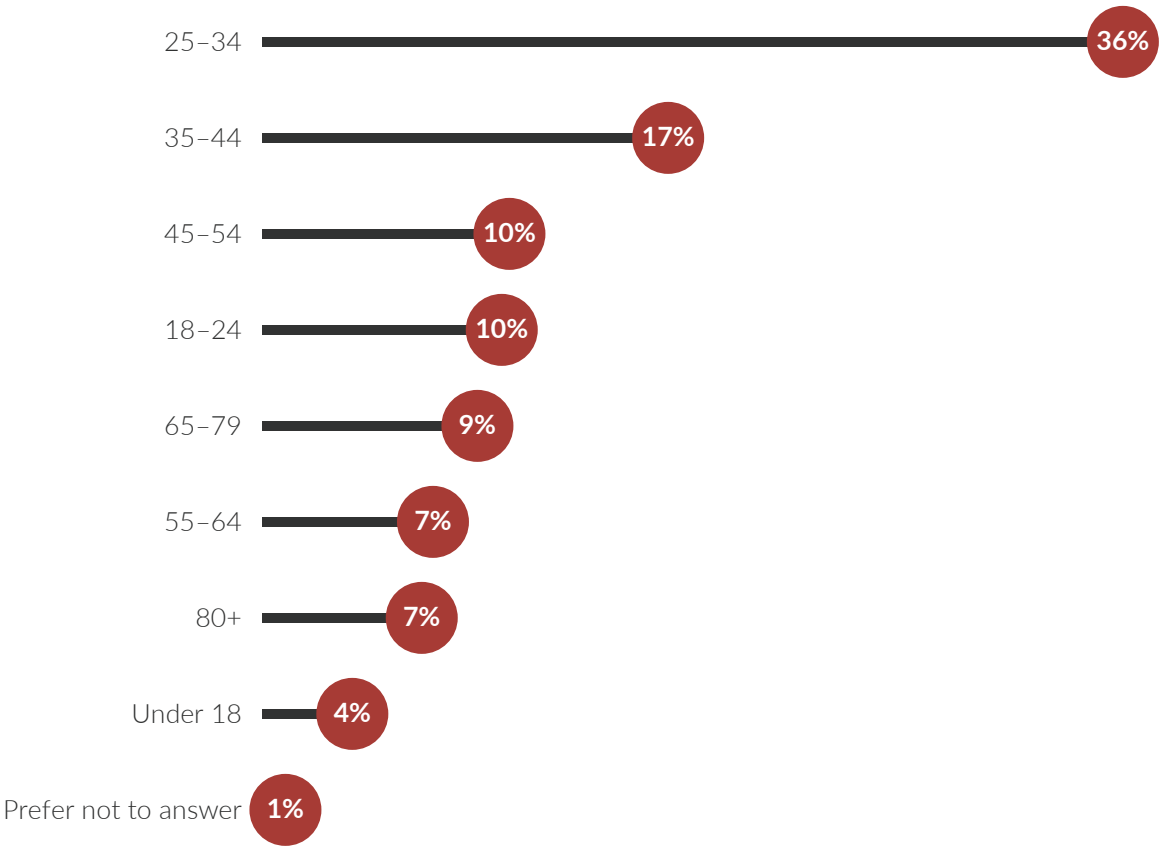
of 80, respondents were even more likely to emphasize the importance of having personalized service by a provider they recognize and a driver they know, similar to what can be provided by friends and family. They also recognized the importance of accessible walking paths and vehicles to accommodate mobility limitations and devices.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Age

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of ages from the pool of respondents.

Figure 9. Age of Respondents



Language and Ethnicity

Seventy-two percent of respondents spoke English at home. Approximately nine percent of the respondents spoke Pennsylvania Dutch followed by Burmese or a similar language (7.4%) and Spanish (6.6%).

Approximately 24 percent of respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Race

Sixty-nine percent of respondents identified as White. Approximately 10 percent were Black or African American race. Seven percent identified as multiracial, and seven percent were Asian. The remaining respondents preferred not to say or selected the 'other' category.

Pregnancy

Twenty-one percent of respondents had been pregnant in the past 18 months. Sixty-six percent had not been pregnant and the remaining selected 'not applicable' to the survey question.

Public workshop results indicated that some counties have no or limited prenatal care within the county and therefore pregnant women must travel outside of their home county for medical care. Without public transportation options that cross county lines, these women miss scheduled appointments or do not make the appropriate appointments because they know that they do not have transportation. Likewise, the challenge continues after the baby is born as there are childcare deserts in rural communities throughout the region. Mothers with no transportation have the additional barrier of finding childcare that is accessible by their transportation provider or else childcare is not an option.

Education

Thirty percent of respondents had some college education but no degree. Approximately 19 percent had a Bachelor's degree. Thirteen percent had an Associate's degree. Eleven percent had a graduate or professional degree.

Approximately 15 percent were high school graduates or equivalent. Ten percent did not finish high school.

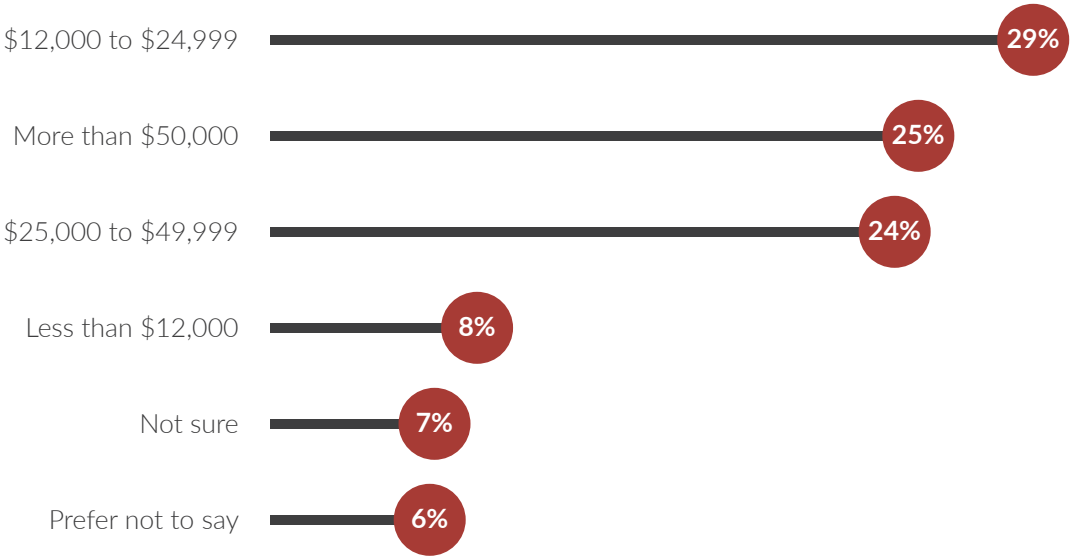
Mobility Limitations

Approximately 22 to 24 percent of the individuals who completed a survey have a disability or live with someone who has a disability that affects their ability to drive. Twelve percent elected not to answer the question and the remaining 64 to 66 percent said they do not have a disability and do not live with someone who has a disability.

Household Income

Twenty-nine percent of survey respondents reported having a household income of $12,000 to $24,000. Another 25 percent indicated an income of between $25,000 and $49,000 or more than $50,000. About 13 percent of respondents were not sure of their income or did not want to report it.

Figure 10. Household Income (n=3,455)



Income by Age

- Nearly 50 percent of those who did not want to report their household income were age 65 or older.

Earn less than $12,000 per year:

- Twenty-five percent of the respondents earning less than $12,000 per year were age 65 or older.
- Thirty-four percent of those earning less than $12,000 were ages 18 to 34.

Earn $12,000 to $24,000 per year:

- Sixty-three percent were ages 25 to 34.

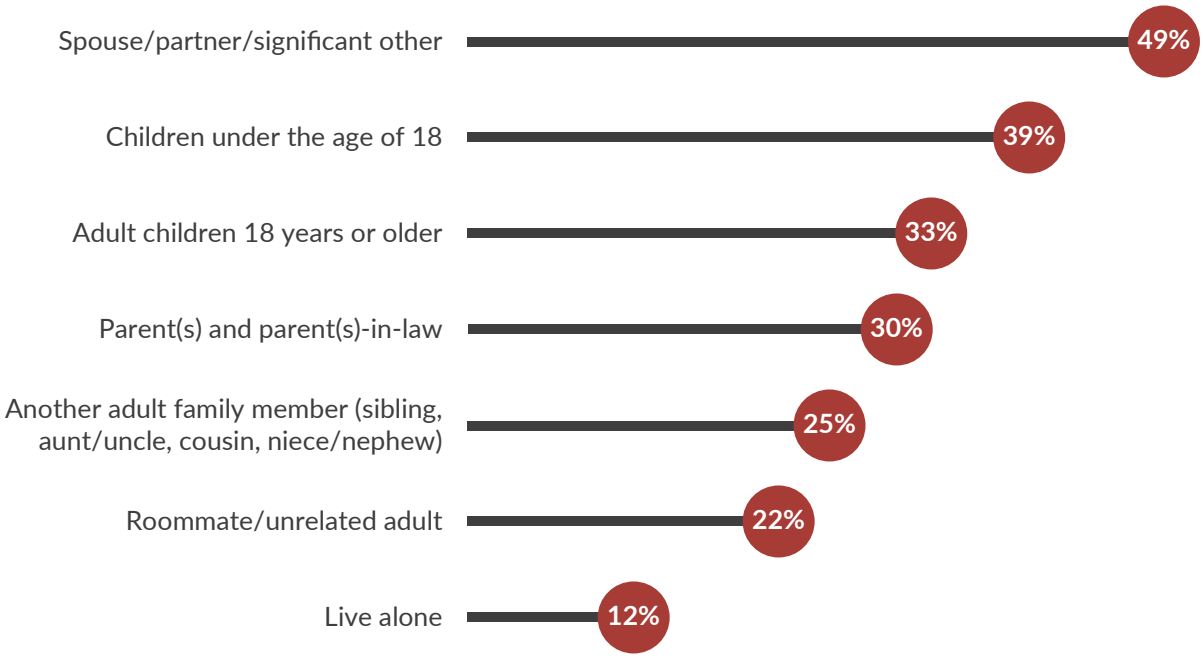
Earn more than $50,000 per year:

- Twenty-one percent were ages 18 to 24.
- Twenty-eight percent were ages 25 to 34.

Number of People in Household

Only 12 percent of the survey respondents live alone. All other respondents live with a significant other, child, parents/in-laws, roommate, or another adult family member.

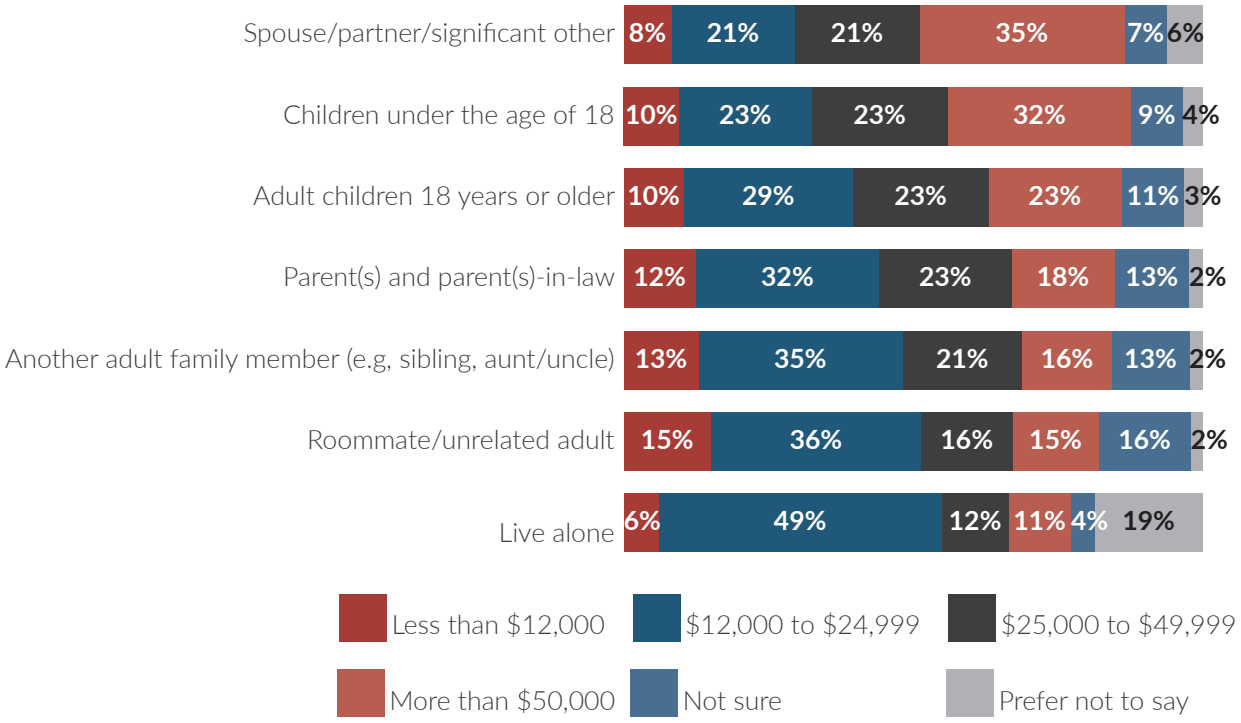
Figure 11. Number of People in the Household



Household Size by Annual Household Income

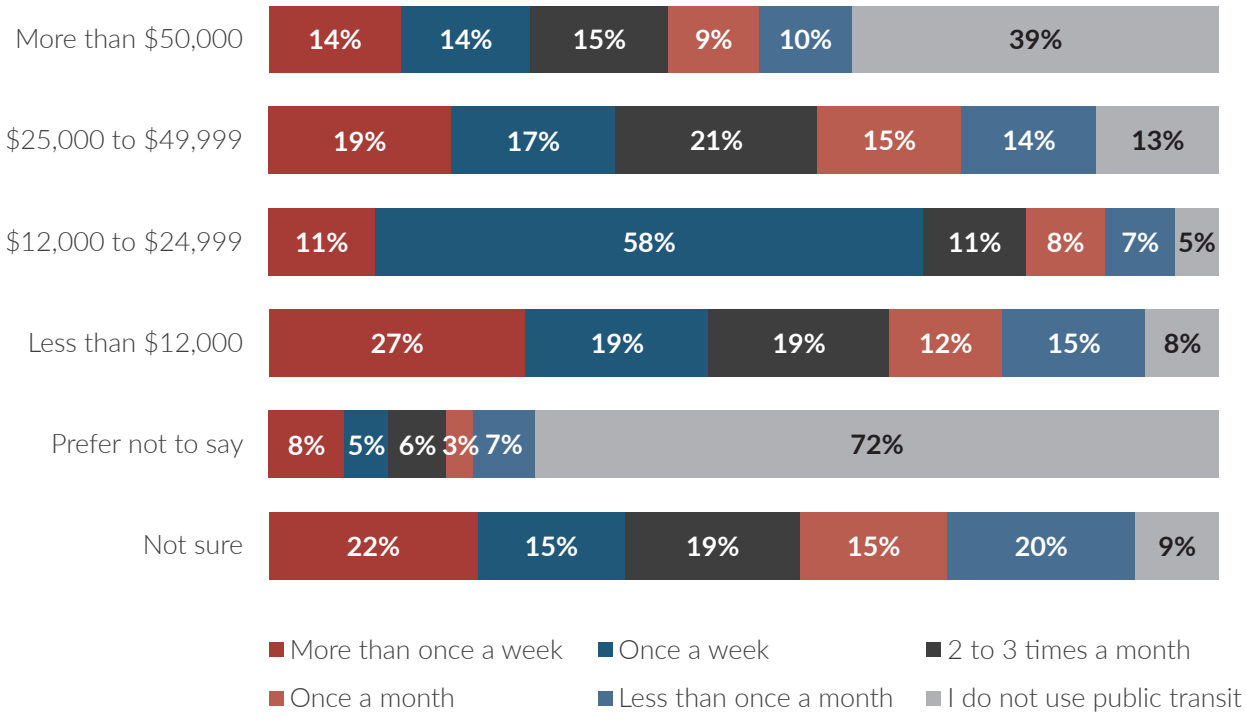
Survey results indicate that households with higher incomes tend to have a mixture of either parents and children or adults living with their parent(s) and parent(s)-in-law whereas lower-income households are more likely to be single adults or multiple unrelated adults. Therefore, a household with an income of less than $49,999 with multiple adults is living below the poverty level. Some households above $50,000 may also be below the poverty level.

Figure 12. Annual Household Income by Household Size (n=3,444)



Survey results indicate that respondents with lower household incomes tend to ride public transit more frequently than higher-income households. And the highest income households or households that did not share their income levels are the most likely to not use public transit. These results support the importance of cost/affordability as a factor in mobility choices.

Figure 13. Frequency of Riding Transit by Household Income (n=3,433)



Vehicle Accommodations

Approximately 40 percent of the survey respondents said that they do not need a vehicle equipped with special accommodations (i.e., lift, ramp, space to store a wheelchair, seat belt modifications, etc.). Of those who said that they do need a modification, the following modifications were listed by 11 to 13 percent of respondents (in order of highest number of responses to lowest):

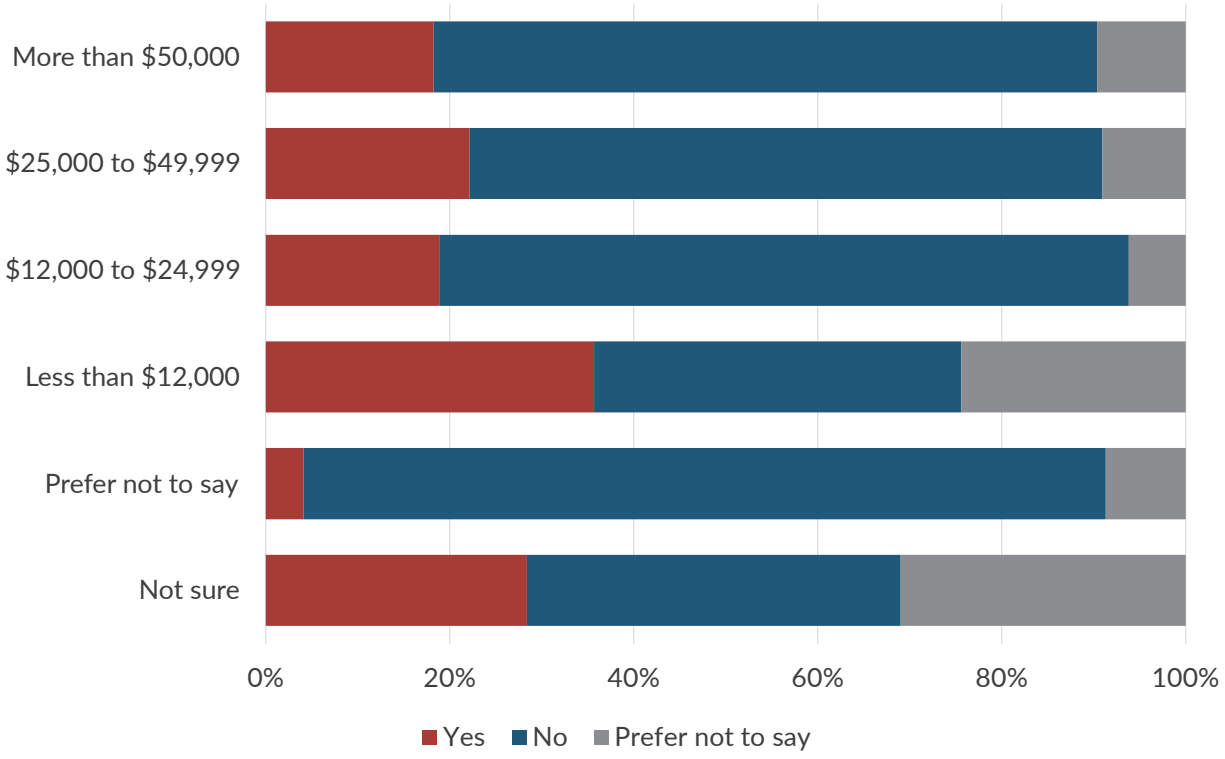
1. Space to store a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or other mobility device (818 responses)
2. Hand/foot controls, steering wheel knobs (809 responses)
3. Assistance straps/rings (806 responses)
4. Swivel seats, and other seat modifications (760 responses)
5. Seat belt modifications (758 responses)
6. Ramp (734 responses)
7. Lift (708 responses)
8. Space for service animal (673 responses)

Legal Obstacles to Driving

Twenty-one percent of the respondents said that they or someone they live with has a legal obstacle to driving, such as a suspended license, lack of insurance, or court order. Sixty-eight percent said they did not have a legal obstacle and 11 percent declined to answer.

About 36 percent of the individuals with a household income of less than $12,000 per year had a legal obstacle to driving such as a suspended license, lack of insurance, or court order not to drive. Overall, households with lower incomes were more likely to have a legal obstacle to driving than higher-income households.

Figure 14. Legal Obstacles to Driving (n=3,433)



The Value of Public Transportation Services

Approximately 72 percent of all survey respondents indicated that public transportation is important or very important to them and anyone who lives with them. Similarly, approximately 67 percent of respondents felt that public transportation is important or very important to the economic and physical health of their community. These results indicate that regardless of how often they ride or if they own a vehicle, the majority of the community is supportive of public transit and recognizes the benefits of transit in the local community.

Exploring Solutions

Following the survey and public workshop meetings, focus group participants were presented with an update of survey and demographic analysis information. Meeting facilitators guided the discussions to explore transportation challenges, unmet needs, and potential solutions. The following bullet points outline the potential solutions derived from the analysis of data and discussions with focus group participants:

- Improving/Establishing partnerships among service providers throughout the region

    - Working together to provide access across county lines (particularly trips into the Fort Wayne area)
    - Possible pilot program between business and the airport (especially in the Fort Wayne area)
- Increasing vehicle independence
    - Working with mechanics and trade schools for lower-cost repairs
- Vanpooling/rideshare
    - Perhaps use volunteers
- Community engagement/education about transportation options
- Education of the public
    - Educating in simple language about available resources
    - Travel training
- Possibility of adding some cars/non-accessible vehicles to the fleets of accessible vehicles
    - More cost effective to operate than large, wheelchair-accessible vehicles
- Reduced the out-of-pocket cost of passenger fares
- Setting up a regional call center for scheduling trips
- Setting up consistent service and safety standards among providers in the eleven-county region

Summary

Survey responses were collected from a combination of transportation riders and people who own a personal vehicle and drive. The consensus from all respondents is that public transportation is an important resource for them, their friends and families, and their community. Transit riders and non-riders alike indicated that their top priorities for improving mobility options are related to the cost of transportation. Respondents indicated that making it more affordable to ride transit or own and operate a vehicle are the top priorities for improving their personal mobility situation. And, respondents from the older age groups, who may have access to reduced transit fares and therefore have a more affordable option, indicated that improvements to sidewalks would help remove barriers to their mobility.

Individuals with lower household incomes use public transit more frequently than individuals in the higher income groups.

Lack of transportation is a barrier to accessing food, work, and medical appointments. As discussed in the following chapter, in many cases, the barrier is created because transportation operators do not cross county lines and people are unable to find medical care, prenatal care, childcare, employment, or affordable food in their local area. Allen and Kosciusko Counties had the highest percentage of respondents indicating that transportation is a barrier to accessing employment and medical treatment. Allen, Kosciusko and LaGrange Counties had the highest number of respondents who indicated that lack of transportation impacts their ability to shop for food or visit a food pantry. In Allen County, where many employers and medical facilities are located, the transportation barrier may be experienced most often by people who live outside of the CitiLink service area where there is no public transportation. In Adams, LaGrange and Kosciusko Counties, transportation would likely be available where the people live but it may not go to the employment or medical destinations that are needed.

Chapter 4: Travel Patterns

Trip Generators/Destinations

Estimating demand is an important balance to understanding the source of transportation needs. It helps transportation providers and local partners to understand the level of service and most appropriate service structures necessary to address the needs. Understanding where people travel is an important factor in estimating demand. The travel patterns are explored in this section.

Employment

There are employers located throughout every county in the region. However, the largest employers are in Fort Wayne, Allen County, Warsaw (Kosciusko County), Steuben County, LaGrange County, and Bluffton (Wells County). Fort Wayne has, by far, the most employers. Huntington and Adams Counties have smaller employers that attract less concentrated travel demand compared to the largest employers. Kosciusko County has several moderate employers and a high concentration of jobs in and around Warsaw.

Employers, especially those with entry-level positions, operate a variety of shift start and end times, making shared-ride and demand response transportation a challenge for the employees. Fixed route transportation services that operate on a set schedule and provide access to employers during the employer's hours of operation are ideal for addressing areas with the highest concentrations of employers. In rural areas, where population and employer densities are low, shared-ride services such as vanpools are sometimes a more affordable and effective solution.

Figure 15. Employment Locations

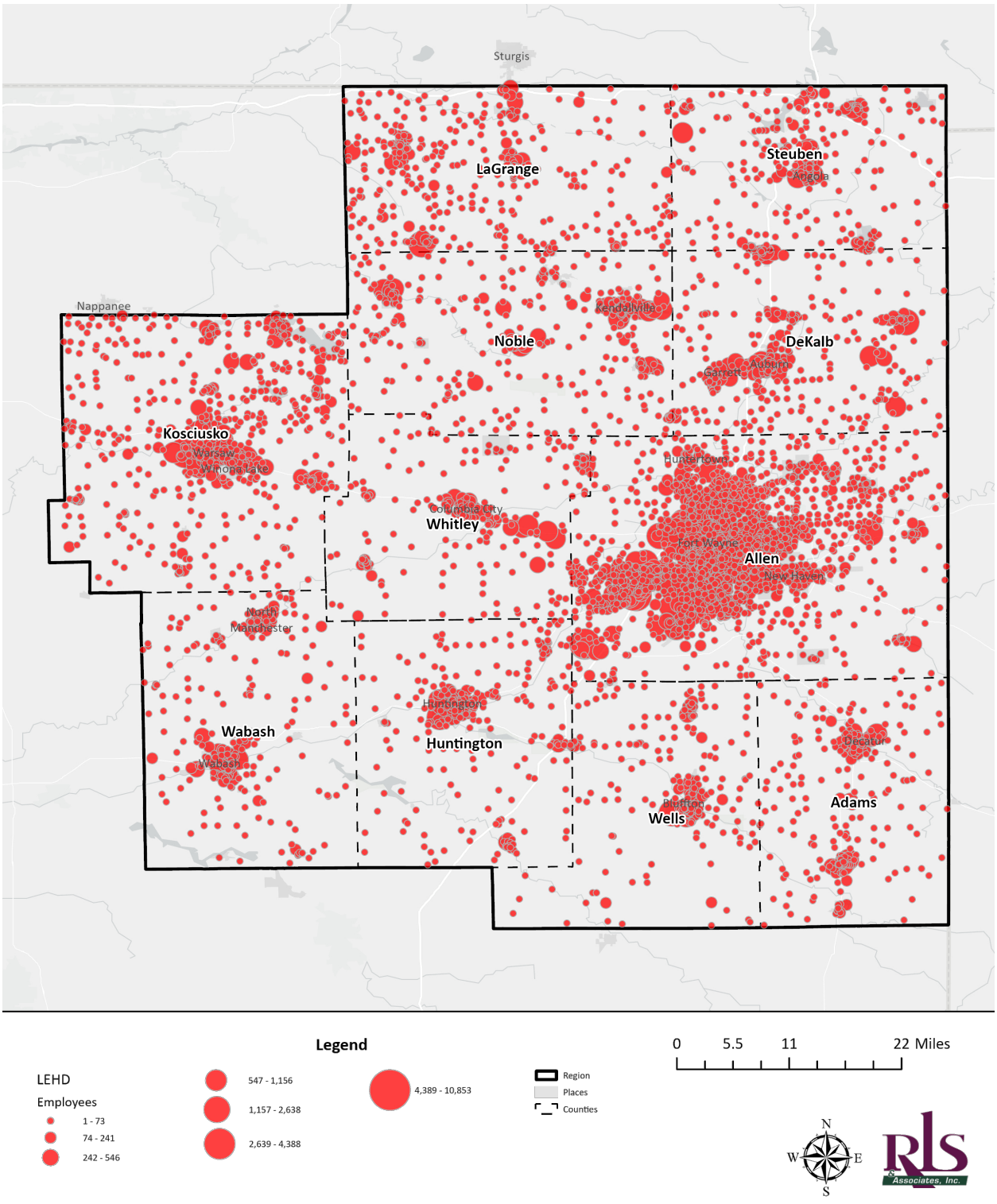


Table 2 below is a matrix of multi-county travel patterns for employment. The county of origin for the trip is across the top (horizontal) and the county of destination is down the side (vertical).

Data indicates that in Allen and Kosciusko Counties, more than half of the work trips start and end within the same county. In all other counties in the region, more people travel outside of their county of residence for work than stay within the county. Between 24 and 32 percent of employed people in Whitley, Wells, Huntington, and DeKalb Counties travel to Allen County for work. It is noted that nearly 28 percent of LaGrange County's employed people travel to Elkhart County. Noble and Kosciusko Counties also have a significant portion of work travel into Elkhart County. Employed people from Steuben County travel to DeKalb County almost as often as they travel to Allen County for work.

Table 2. Travel to Work by County

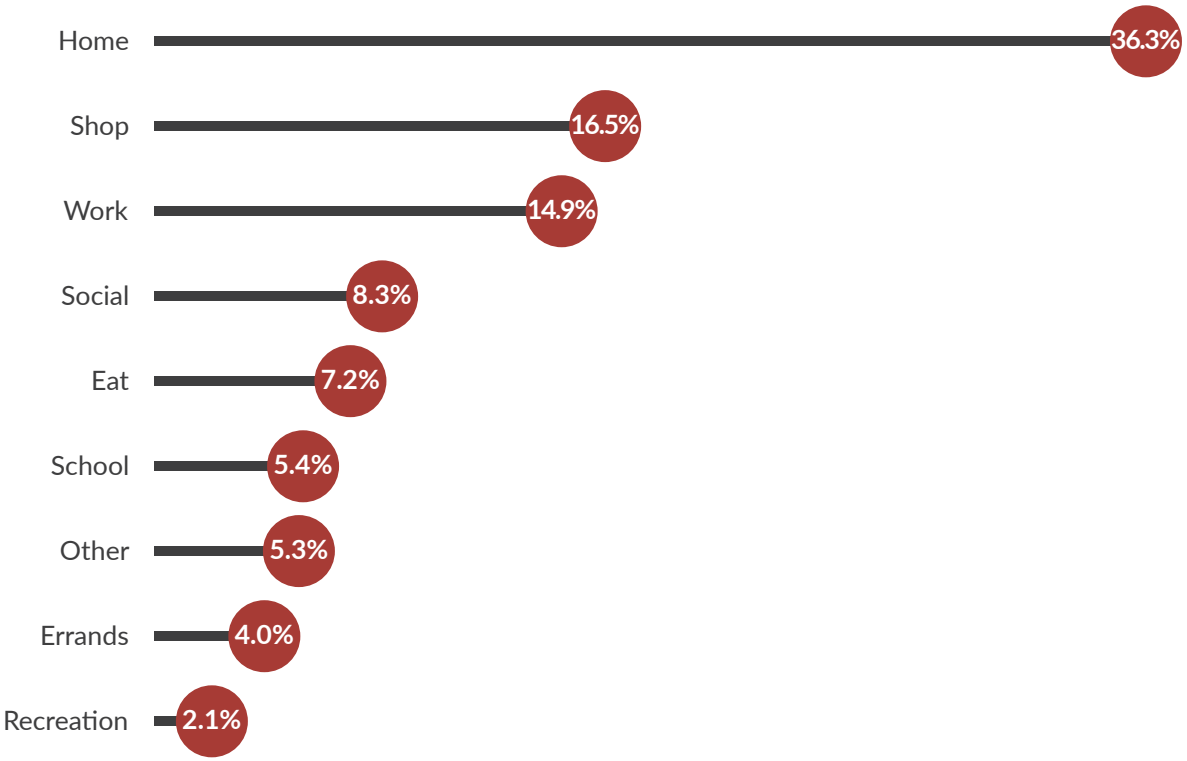
Destination county for work trips (only shares over 3% are shown)	Home county for work trips										
County	Adams	Allen	DeKalb	Huntington	Kosciusko	LaGrange	Noble	Steuben	Wabash	Wells	Whitley
Adams	48.8%									6.4%	
Allen	18.8%	72.6%	24.3%	27.6%	3.2%	6.0%	16.7%	12.0%	3.7%	28.4%	31.9%
DeKalb			40.8%				6.5%	10.4%			
Elkhart			4.7%		16.7%	27.9%	13.3%	6.9%			
Grant				3.3%					4.9%		
Huntington				37.3%					4.7%	4.3%	
Kosciusko					56.4%		4.1%		10.3%		11.0%
LaGrange						38.3%	6.0%	3.6%			
Marion	4.0%	3.5%		3.1%					4.4%	3.2%	3.2%
Noble			7.9%			4.4%	34.8%	3.4%			4.1%
St. Joseph					3.6%						
Steuben			5.2%					46.2%			
Wabash				3.5%					44.8%		
Wells	6.0%			3.5%						36.3%	
Whitley				3.1%			3.7%				29.3%

Source: 2020 Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Other Destinations

On a typical weekday, the purpose for travel away from one's home in the region is most often for shopping (16.5%) or work (14.9%). Other common travel purposes are socialization, eating, attending school, running errands, and recreation. Figure 16 illustrates the distribution of trips by trip purpose.

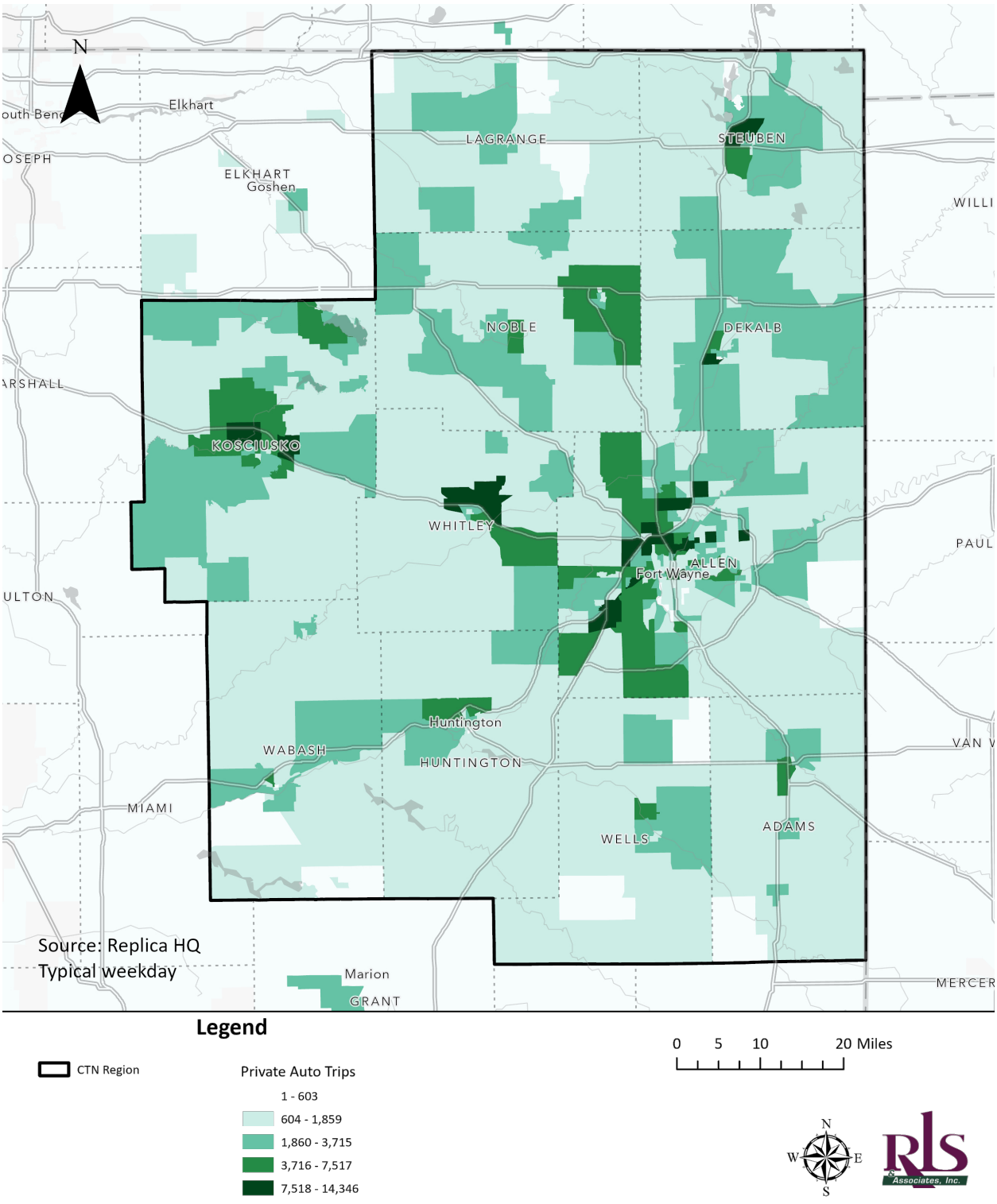
Figure 16. Travel by Trip Purpose, Regional



Source: Replica

Figure 17 on the following page illustrates the comparison of frequency for destinations visited by a private automobile during a typical weekday. The darkest areas are block groups with the most private vehicle trip destinations. The lightest colored areas have the fewest number of destinations. Trips to these destinations may include any of the above-noted trip purposes.

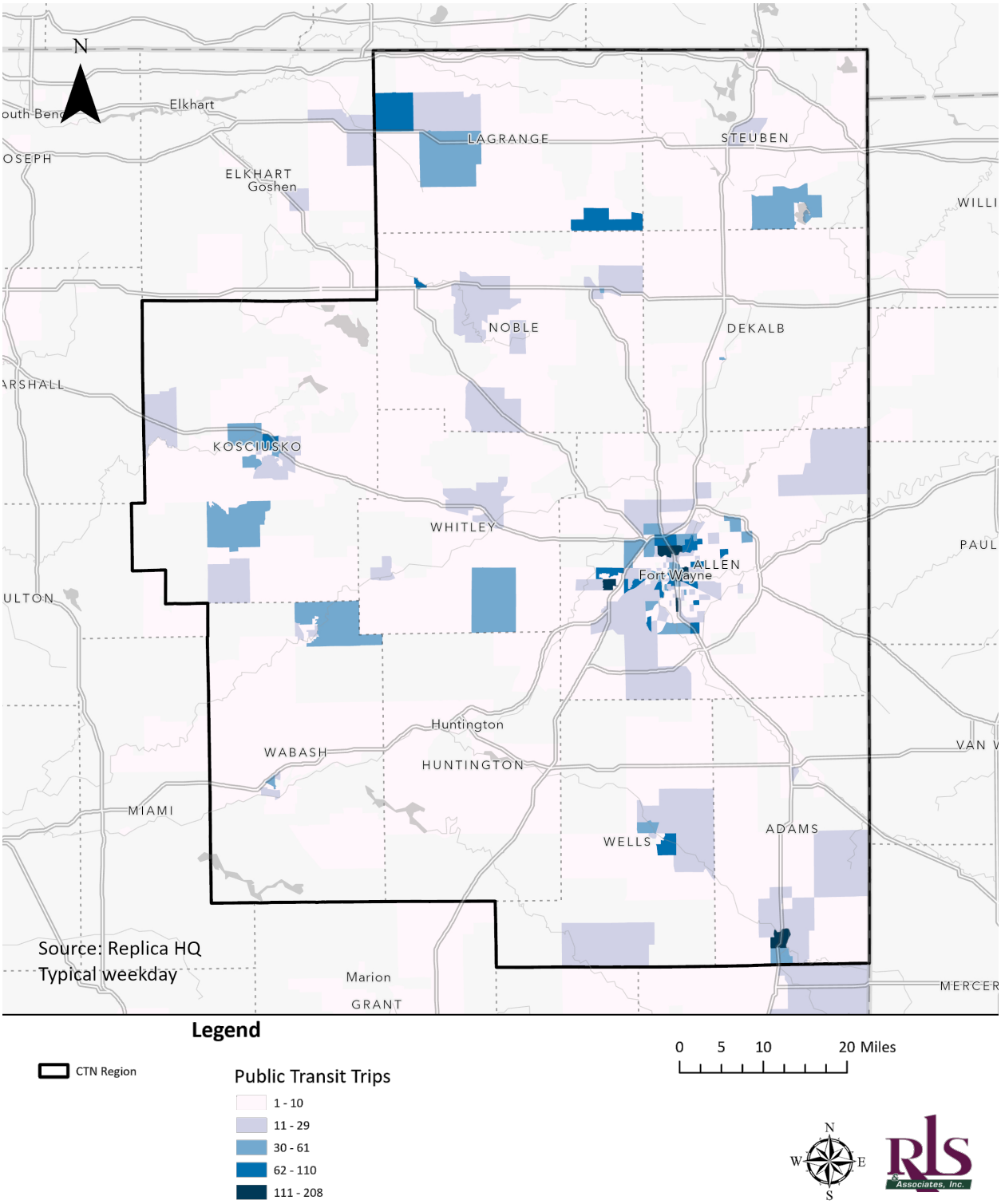
Figure 17. Private Auto Trip Destinations



By comparison, Figure 18 illustrates the frequency of destinations on a typical weekday for public transit services. The darkest shaded block groups are the most frequent destinations for transit riders, according to available data. The trips included in this map may be for any of the purposes

illustrated in Figure 16. High-frequency destinations are located in Fort Wayne, Warsaw, and areas of Adams, LaGrange, and Wells Counties.

Figure 18. Public Transit Destinations



Summary

Population density, age, income, access to a vehicle, and the presence of a disability are typical factors when projecting the level of demand for transportation services in a rural and small urban community. Other factors such as the location of trip generators like major employers and hospitals, also factor into projections for demand.

Because it has the largest population in the region, Allen County also has the highest level of demand for transportation services. The other counties are similar in size and demographic factors. Therefore, the level of demand from each of the rural counties is likely to be comparable with higher levels of demand coming from the counties with the largest populations: Kosciusko, Noble, Steuben, and LaGrange.

In the northeast Indiana region, LaGrange County's Amish community makes it unique. The Amish community does not drive and is reliant on shared-ride transportation from agencies, employers or friends. Therefore, while the older adult population and number of households below the poverty level are lowest, the potential demand from the Amish community will likely be just as high as with the neighboring counties.

Travel destinations such as employment, shopping, food, and schools are located throughout the region with high concentrations being in Fort Wayne. For employment, more than half of the employed population in Kosciusko and Allen Counties stay within their county of residence for work. In the nine other counties, more than half of the employed population travel to employers outside of their county of residence. In many cases, the majority of out-of-county work trips are going to Allen County. There are more employed people in Whitley County who work in Allen County than stay in Whitley.

Chapter 5: Recommended Solutions

Facts about the transportation needs of the region are identified in the previous chapters and in other recent local and regional planning efforts. The recommended solutions included in this chapter build upon the identified needs and the existing transportation options, and describe incremental strategies that would address priority needs and close the gaps in a person's ability to access valuable community resources.

Some of the following recommendations will take more time, funding, and/or effort to fully implement than others. Incremental progress toward implementation and establishment of milestones is recommended for longer-term projects and the recommendations are not necessarily interdependent upon one another. Any recommendation can be implemented as a stand-alone effort or in combination with other efforts.

Recommendation 1: Implement Rural Public Transportation in the Rural Areas of Allen County

The expansion of general public, demand response transportation service into unserved neighborhoods and rural areas of Allen County that are beyond the Citilink service area will substantially increase transportation options for all residents, especially people with low incomes and individuals with disabilities. Currently, individuals who do not qualify for transportation by CTN and live outside of the Citilink fixed route or paratransit service area must rely on family and friends or drive themselves. Limited private rideshare transportation services like Uber/Lyft and taxis also may be available for some people. However, the price to ride may not be feasible on a day-to-day basis for many of the zero-vehicle and low-income households in the area. Private rideshare and taxi services either have no wheelchair-accessible vehicles or very few, which further limits the transportation options for individuals with disabilities who use a mobility device.

Additionally, the historical funding available to support CTN or other nonprofit transportation services that could serve this rural community is becoming more limited in 2024 and is likely to continue to be limited. A significant mobility gap is created when the resources dedicated to transportation are reduced.

It is recommended that CTN explore the possibility of creating a public transit division that would operate separately from the existing CTN services, but share the same administrative structure, facilities, and maintenance. If agreeable to the CTN Board of Directors, CTN will submit a grant application to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to become the rural transit provider for Allen County. The application to INDOT will identify an annual operating budget and request a grant from the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 program funds to support up to 50 percent of the operating costs for rural transit. The remaining 50 percent of program operating costs will be requested from INDOT State Mass Transit Fund (SMTF) and local match. The local match must be identified from local government, grants, and/or contracts for service to agencies or businesses.

This recommendation will allow Allen County to leverage available Federal dollars to address the gaps in access to work, medical, and other community resources. The new public service will 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 the important regional destinations in Fort Wayne.

Table 3. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
CTN will present the option to implement public transit to its Board of Directors.	Second Quarter 2024	CTN and Board of Directors
If approved, CTN will develop an implementation plan and service structure details, and identify/secure potential resources for local matching funds.	Second Quarter 2024–First Quarter 2025	CTN and Board of Directors
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.	Second Quarter of 2024–First Quarter of 2025	CTN and Citilink with support from NIRCC
CTN will submit a grant application to INDOT for Section 5311 program funding (Federal) and State Public Mass Transit Funds (PMTF).	First Quarter 2025	CTN
If funding is awarded, CTN will create the administrative structure to implement services, purchase vehicles (as necessary), and develop policies.	Second Quarter 2025–Third Quarter 2025	CTN
Public outreach campaign to announce the new service	Third Quarter 2025	CTN
Implement Allen County Rural Public Transit.	Fourth Quarter 2025	CTN

Recommendation 2. Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) Fixed Route

Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) provides demand response rural public transit service throughout Kosciusko County. Passengers call ahead to schedule trips. Transportation is available on weekdays between 5:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Service is provided with a fleet of 12 wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Needs assessment activities indicated that the KABS service is valuable to the community and that it should continue. The demographic assessment, as well as qualitative data provided through the public engagement activities of this study, indicated a strong potential for a successful fixed route or deviated fixed route service in Warsaw. The route would operate on a fixed schedule and path so that passengers could ride without making a reservation for convenient and reliable service to work, grocery shopping, wellness programs, and social activities.

It is estimated that KABS would continue to dedicate three to four vehicles each day to provide countywide demand response service. Another two to four vehicles would be dedicated to operating the fixed route(s) in Warsaw. If KABS offers a lower fare for fixed route services compared to demand response, passengers will be encouraged to ride the routes. As more individuals ride the routes, the system will experience less demand for its scheduled (demand response) services. The addition of the fixed route service would relieve vehicle and driver capacity issues and enable KABS to provide service to areas of Kosciusko County that are currently not served, such as Syracuse and North Webster.

In addition to the KABS fixed route service, there are indications of the need for additional transportation options during evenings and Saturdays for this growing community. One rideshare driver currently serves the area. It is recommended that Kosciusko County expand the rideshare Uber program by recruiting additional drivers.

Table 4. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
KABS initiates an evaluation of existing demand within Warsaw by evaluating current origins and destinations by time of day. Using that data and an evaluation of existing trip generators, KABS will design potential fixed route services.	2024	KABS
KABS identifies policies and a schedule for the routes and trains drivers and staff.	2024–2025	KABS
KABS will pilot the fixed route services for a minimum of one year and up to three years.	2024–2028	KABS
KABS makes adjustments to the routes as necessary.	2025–2028	KABS
Continue operation of the successful routes following the pilot program.	Ongoing	KABS

Recommendation 3. Regional Scheduling/Dispatching Software Initiative

Each county in the region has local public transportation services (with the exception of rural Allen County which is served by CTN and other specialized transportation programs). The rural transit systems operate primarily within their respective jurisdictional boundaries defined primarily by county boundaries, with some exceptions that include small towns or areas just outside of the county boundary.

Each of the local rural public transit systems provides a valuable service to its community and is highly respected by the riders. Each system also has an identity and brand of its own. That transit system identity and brand have become a trusted resource for riders in the local area because the system is the primary mode of transportation for most of its patrons. Transit becomes like part of the family for many riders in rural communities.

The rural transit systems are serving their local communities, but regional (multi-county) travel demands are increasing as hospitals, childcare facilities, and employers in the area are serving the region and there are fewer services or resources located in the individual small towns and communities. The jurisdictional boundaries within the region create a gap in transportation access for resources, particularly in Fort Wayne.

Improvements in regional transportation must be made, especially with access to Fort Wayne from the surrounding counties. It is recommended that the rural public transit systems implement software that will enable them to see each other's trips. The participating agencies will have access to the out-of-county trip requests received by each agency as well as the out-of-county trips that are scheduled. Systems other than the one that receives the request may accept the trip request when it fits within their schedule.

For example, if Steuben County is scheduled to provide a trip to Fort Wayne, and it is passing through DeKalb County, it will pick up a trip request submitted to DeKalb County that is within the same service area. The additional passenger will fill an otherwise empty seat on the Steuben County vehicle. The passenger also will have the option for a trip that would not have otherwise been available.

Table 5. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
The lead organization works with all rural public transit systems to negotiate a potential information-sharing technology platform or software.	2024	A local rural public transit system or Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)
Identify an owner of the software that would distribute licenses to the agencies.	2024–2025	Potentially NIRCC
Providers implement broad use of block scheduling to enable more trip-sharing opportunities.	2025–2026	Rural transit providers
Establish local permission as well as agreements between agencies to pick up trips that would otherwise go unserved.	2026–2027	Rural transit providers
Establish the necessary policies, consistent driver training standards, and customer service procedures.	2026–2027	Rural transit providers
Expand the program to include interested nonprofit transportation providers.	2028 and ongoing	Rural transit providers and interested nonprofit transportation providers

Recommendation 4. Assistance for Personal Vehicle Maintenance and Parts

Survey results indicated that drivers and transit riders prioritized reducing the cost of repairing and operating a personal vehicle. In a rural area, with limited transportation during evenings and weekends, a personal vehicle expands a person's ability to obtain and maintain employment, access medical appointments, shop, and attend social events. Individuals with low incomes may be working at entry-level positions that are more available in and around Fort Wayne and are often second and third-shift positions. The current transit structure is not sufficient to meet the wide range of potential needs that occur at all hours of the day.

It is recommended that the key stakeholders initiate a program to assist working individuals with purchasing necessary parts to repair vehicles. The program would work in coordination with mechanics who volunteer time or offer reduced-price maintenance for the program participants. Before being accepted into the program, the lead agency should explore the options for using public transit. If the applicant has transportation needs that exceed the service provided by any local public transit service, the application will be evaluated.

As an additional aspect of the program, the lead agency will work with local businesses to purchase parts to modify vehicles for wheelchair accessibility and incorporate vehicle modification parts into the program.

Table 6. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Identify a lead agency to administer the program and develop a board or committee for program establishment and fundraising.	2024	Local transit agencies and non-profit partners
Identify program parameters and policies.	2024	Lead agency (to be determined)
Promote the program to potential funders.	2024	Lead agency (to be determined)
Implement the program through partner nonprofit agencies that will identify good candidates for the program.	2024–2025	Lead agency (to be determined)
Establish and measure program performance.	2024 and ongoing	Lead agency (to be determined)

Recommendation 5. Regional Carpool/ Vanpool Program

Transportation partners work to expand the carpool/vanpool program to address transportation demand for employment trips during second- and third-shift hours. The program must be developed in coordination with local employers and advertised to employees. Employers may choose to offer incentives to employees using the vanpool program.

The vanpool program may be operated in house or under contract to a private provider.

Citilink is a potential lead agency if the state legislature allows them to extend service outside of Allen County. Similar permission has been given to Tippecanoe County and potentially could be granted to Allend County. Citilink's role, if permitted, would at minimum include funding and capturing operating performance for services provided within Allen County and for reporting to the National Transit Database.

Table 7. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Identify a lead agency and structure for the carpool/ vanpool program (i.e., in house or contracted).	2025	Citilink and partner agency
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.	2025	Citilink and another lead agency, as identified in Step 1
Implement vanpool/carpool services.	2026–2027	Lead agency

Recommendation 6. Design a Regional Transportation Network

In May 2023, the Indiana Department of Transportation, Office of Transit (INDOT) announced their intention to begin the process of establishing a regional rural transportation model throughout Indiana. The purpose of the INDOT initiative is to remove intercounty boundaries and encourage sharing of trips to increase service capacity and performance. While this initiative is in its beginning stages, INDOT is offering voluntary participation now. Northeast Indiana has the opportunity to build on the relationships established in the Northeast Indiana Regional Transportation Assessment to develop a regional network. The partners should work to design a regional transportation network that will be beneficial and effective for the eleven-county region. The design of one or more regional networks in the eleven counties will allow the region to consider local conditions and, therefore, the most appropriate rural public transportation regional model(s) and structure(s) to present to the Indiana Department of Transportation.

The design of the regional network will require ongoing participation in a transportation development committee that would include all providers receiving funding derived from FTA rural transit funding programs Section 5310 and Section 5311 and Citilink.

Table 8. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
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.	Summer 2024	Rural transportation providers in the region, NIRCC, and Citilink
Determine the most appropriate regional structure for the eleven counties that will provide the most opportunity for increased mobility throughout the region.	2025	Regionalization Committee with assistance from INDOT consultant and NIRCC
Identify a lead agency for the region and/or subregions.	2025	Regionalization Committee
Present regional structure to INDOT.	2025	Regionalization Committee
Submit regional Section 5311 grant application(s).	2026 and ongoing	Lead agency(ies)

Recommendation 7. Vehicle Sharing Program

Some areas within the eleven-county region do not have an adequate number of vehicles to be used for individual or group trips. The assessment revealed that there are vehicles available throughout the region that are used infrequently only on specific days, for special events, or only during certain times of day. These vehicles and others that are available throughout the region should be made available for lease or rental to other providers and human service agencies when not in use by the owner. This program would be established modeling vehicle lease and rental programs, whereby the lessee/renter is responsible for liability insurance and vehicle fuel. Costs associated with the program administration and vehicle maintenance would be allocated in the lease or rental agreement rate.

This lease/rental concept could also be expanded to incorporate business-owned vehicles such as businesses that provide client or customer transportation services.

Table 9. Summary of Implementation

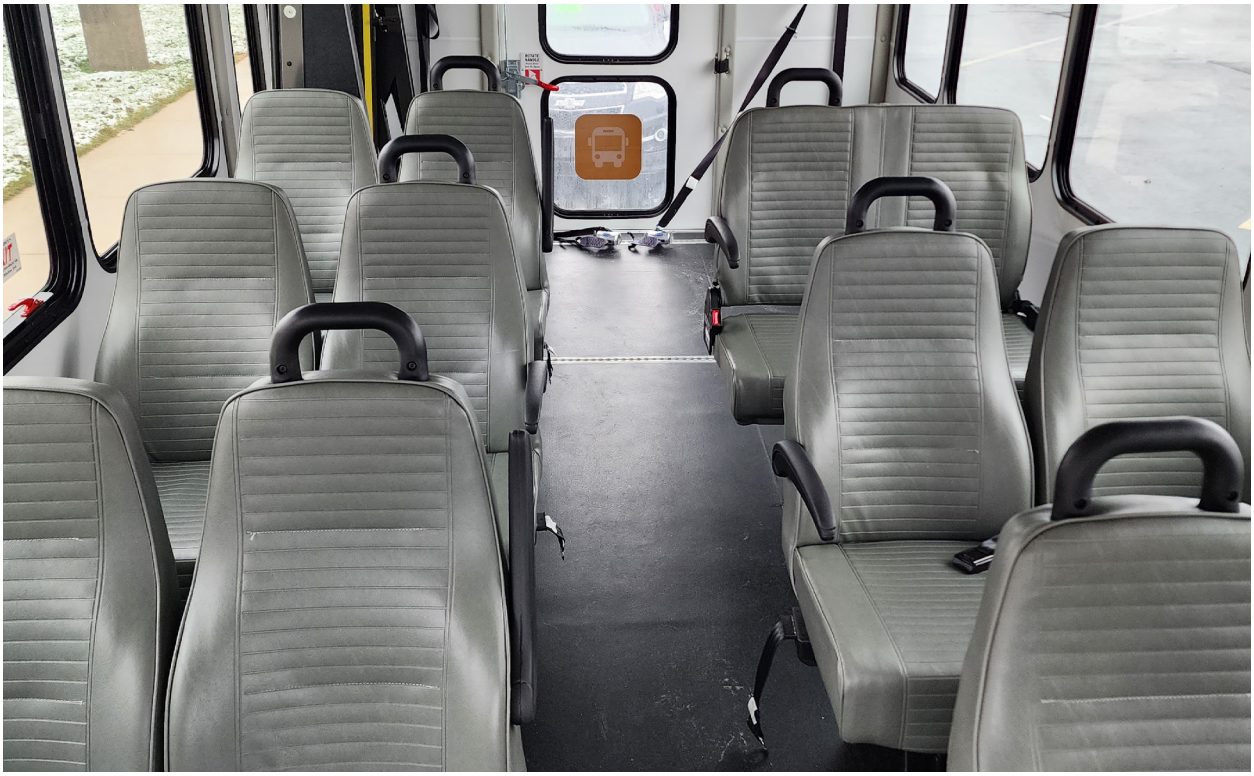
Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Identify vehicles throughout the region that are idle on days or periods during the day.	2024 and ongoing	A local rural public transit system or Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)
Identify and establish an organization to manage the vehicle sharing lease/rental program.	2025	Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) or existing transportation advisory committee
Develop lease/rental agreement.	2025	Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) or existing transportation advisory committee
Establish a vehicle lease/rental management agency.	2026	Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) or existing transportation advisory committee
Establish vehicle lease/rental rates at a level sufficient to support administration and management of the program.	2026	Management agency and Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) or existing transportation advisory committee

Recommendation 8. Increased Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Providers

Using a collaborative and coordinated regional effort, review and evaluate current Indiana Medicaid brokerage requirements. Convene meetings with interested transportation providers and brokers, including Verida, to negotiate contractual requirements including, but not limited to, insurance coverage levels, customer complaint driver suspensions, unit rate reimbursement, no-show reimbursement, and other requirements.

Table 10. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Develop a list of contractual issues that are deterring providers from contracting with NEMT brokers.	2024	Rural transportation providers in the region
Develop recommendations for contract revisions.	2024	Rural transportation providers in the region
Meet with Indiana's NEMT brokers to present and negotiate contract revisions.	2024	Transportation providers in the region



Recommendation 9. Increase Participation in Medicaid Family Member and Associate Transportation Provider Program

A family member or another person can drive Medicaid-eligible clients to medical appointments and receive gas mileage reimbursement for their service. This option is available in Indiana for traditional Medicaid members as well as members of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), Hoosier Care Connect, and Hoosier Healthwise. In order to receive gas mileage reimbursement for their service, they must enroll in Indiana Medicaid by completing the Medicaid Family Member or Associate Transportation Services Form. This opportunity should be promoted throughout the region.

Table 11. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Develop information packet with instructions on how to enroll in the Indiana Medicaid Family or Associate Transportation Program.	2024	Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), existing transportation advisory committee, social services agency, or human service agency
Promote and provide education about the Indiana Medicaid family and associate transportation program.	2024 and ongoing	Transportation providers in the region, human service agencies, and social service agencies.
Establish a program to assist, as needed, with the completion of the Medicaid Family Member or Associate Transportation Services Form.	2024 and ongoing	Human service and social service agencies.

Recommendation 10. Establish a Regional Information Campaign to Promote Local and Regional Transportation Services and Initiatives

Local transportation providers and organizations that represent communities, businesses, and individuals will initiate a promotion and marketing campaign to increase community outreach and education efforts and to expand awareness and understanding of available transportation options. This campaign would be especially beneficial since Adams County just began public transportation service in January 2024.

The marketing campaign will include, but not be limited to the following efforts:

- Rider guide for people searching for transportation options that include a summary of services available by geographic area and eligibility requirements. The guide will be available online and in print.
- Suggested hashtag campaign to promote special programs or new services such as the implementation of rural transit or vanpool services.
- Social media posts created to share the benefits and challenges of transit in the local communities. The posts will be designed for the general public and all community partners.

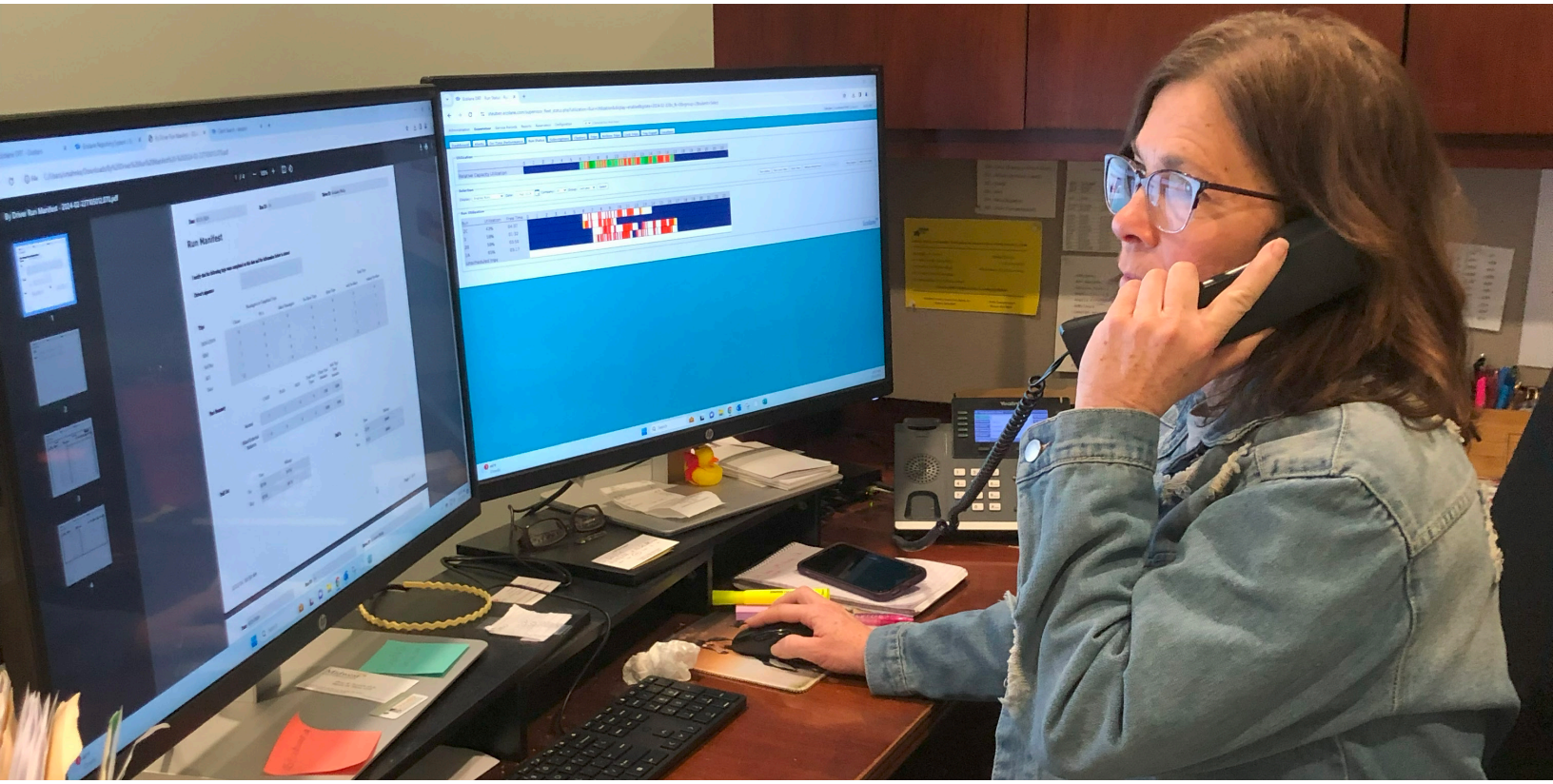


Table 12. Summary of Implementation

Action Steps	Timeframe	Implementation Responsibility
Organize a task force to design the outreach campaign purpose and approach.	2024	CTN and interested community partners
Identify a lead agency to develop a style guide and marketing kit for local transportation providers to use	Third quarter 2024	Transportation providers in the region, human service agencies, and social service agencies.
Create the template marketing materials and kit and distribute it to partner agencies.	Fourth quarter 2024	Community partners will identify a lead agency. Potential need to contract this task to a marketing or community engagement professional with appropriate expertise.
Create and distribute marketing materials and track performance/results. Share results in a quarterly or annual report for all public transit operators in the region.	2024 and ongoing	Identify an individual responsible for collecting and reporting data within the committee.
Revisit the performance of the marketing kit and activities on an annual basis and revise as necessary based on performance measures.	2025 and ongoing	All transportation providers and other interested parties

Appendix A: Existing Transportation Resources

Transportation in the eleven-county region is provided by a network of public, nonprofit and for-profit entities. The paragraphs that follow offer a brief overview about these operators. Including the Community Transportation Network (CTN), more than 12 organizations provide transportation to individuals with disabilities, older adults, dialysis and cancer patients, and the general public. Public and specialized transportation services provide an important—and often life-sustaining—link for anyone who consistently or occasionally needs a ride to appointments, groceries, work, school, recreation, and medical care.

The transportation providers are LaGrange County Council on Aging, Inc.; Steuben County Council on Aging; St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne; Huntington County Council on Aging/Huntington Area Transportation (HAT); Noble County Council on Aging; Wells County Council on Aging/Wells on Wheels; Fellowship Missions; Living Well in Wabash County (Wabash County Public Transportation); Adams County Council on Aging; Whitley County Council on Aging; DeKalb County Council on Aging (DART); and Kosciusko Senior Services.

Some of the private, nonprofit transportation services have geographic service areas that are primarily limited to their county and transportation is provided to eligible individuals. A summary of each organization that participated in the study is provided in the following paragraphs.

Information about the transportation providers was collected through a variety of sources, including interviews with the providers and review of the 2045 Transportation Plan, 2040 Transportation Plan, the Allen County Coordinated Human Services-Public Transportation Plan, and the Regional Coordinated Human Services-Public Transportation Plan.

Private, Nonprofit Organizations that Operate Transportation

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.

It is important to note that CTN has roots in coordinated and collaborative service design. Since the 1990s, CTN has coordinated with local human service agencies and other local organizations to determine the best way to address the transportation needs in Allen County. The organization began after a committee was formed to complete a study of unmet transportation needs. The committee was convened by Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities and the initial needs assessment was funded by the Foellinger Foundation.

By the end of CTN's first year of providing medical transportation (June 2001), in collaboration with Turnstone, Allen County Council on Aging, and St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation, it had provided 1,078 trips with three vans. The service gained in importance and expanded to include more partners and more services. By June 2019, CTN was providing more than 100,000 trips per year for 7,500 people and 85 partner agencies. CTN continues to provide important, reliable and flexible transportation in Allen County for individuals and groups.

CTN has a 15-member board of directors that includes representatives from the local medical and economic development communities. It provides resources for 85 groups and agencies. The resources provided by CTN are possible, in part, due to three special partnerships with Turnstone, Brightpoint Head Start, and Easterseals Arc that consolidated their individual transportation programs into CTN. The consolidation allowed for the more effective use of existing resources to offer transportation for more people. For example, since the consolidation occurred, Brightpoint school buses have been operated by CTN. In addition to providing service to all Brightpoint Head Start sites in Northeast Indiana, CTN also uses the buses to provide transportation for 20 additional childcare centers. In other words, the consolidated trips allow CTN to use one fleet of buses to satisfy the transportation needs of 21 childcare programs.

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 13. 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

The funding sources for CTN are 50 percent private philanthropy, and 50 percent earned revenue, encompassing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funding, Medicaid, private pay reimbursement, and charter service revenue. The annual operating budget is approximately $3 million.

Fellowship Missions

Fellowship Missions provides resources and support for those affected by substance use addiction and their families. The organization offers both an emergency shelter program for homeless individuals and families and addiction recovery programs. Fellowship Missions is located in Kosciusko County. The agency has capacity for 51 residents.

The agency relies on a strong network of volunteers. In addition to preparing meals and helping to care for children, volunteers provide transportation for clients in need. Fellowship Missions has a fleet of vehicles that volunteer drivers use to provide rides. Transportation needs for clients typically occur with short notice and require an affordable option. Volunteers transport people for any purpose, including employment and grocery runs, at no cost to the client. However, the agency faces an ongoing challenge of finding volunteers with availability to provide transportation. Daily trips that would be needed to support employment are difficult to find and sometimes not feasible within the volunteer network. These hard to serve needs are the biggest challenge faced by Fellowship Missions. The agency would be interested in coordinating with other transportation providers to help meet the transportation needs of its clients sustainably and reliably. Additional transportation services within Kosciusko County such as routes that would take passengers to grocery stores and on other errands would help serve an important need.

Huntington County Council on Aging/Huntington Area Transportation (HAT)

Huntington County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) directly operates public transportation through Huntington Area Transportation (HAT), and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided throughout Huntington County and a portion of the Town of Markle in Wells County. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 4:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday. General public passenger fares are collected and donations are also accepted. Seniors 60 and older do not have to pay a fare, but donations are encouraged. The fare structure is as follows:

- $3.00 one way based on the smallest radius listed on the map provided in the Rider's Guide
- $4.00 one way based on the larger radius listed on the map provided in the Rider's Guide
- $5.00 one way beyond the larger radius listed on the map provided in the Rider's Guide
- Out-of-county trips are $8.00 one way, plus, a mileage charge at the current reimbursement rate determined by the Department of Transportation

The annual operating budget for transportation is between $800,000–$900,000. Sources of funding for transportation include Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 funding, Indiana Public Mass Transit Fund (PMTF), the Older Americans Act Title III-B, contract revenue, and local government.

Table 14. Huntington County Council on Aging/Huntington Area Transportation (HAT) 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
16	15	16	3	12

LaGrange County Council on Aging, Inc.

LaGrange County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) directly operates public transportation and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided anywhere in LaGrange County and to Allen, St. Joe, Elkhart, and Steuben Counties. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 5:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. General public passenger fares are collected and donations are also accepted. The fare structure is mileage based, as follows:

Table 15. LaGrange County Council on Aging fares

Trip Distance	Price/Fare
0–4 Miles	$4.00
5–9 Miles	$7.00
10–15 Miles	$10.00
16–20 Miles	$12.00
Out of County	$1.25 per mile

The annual operating budget for transportation is approximately $950,000. Sources of funding for transportation include general public passenger fares, county government, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act Title III-B.

Table 16. LaGrange County Council on Aging 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
15	14	9	5	7

Living Well in Wabash County

Wabash County Public Transportation (Living Well in Wabash County COA, Inc.) directly operates public transportation and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided anywhere in Wabash County. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The fare structure is as follows:

- Age 60+ ride by donation
- Age 59 and under:
  - $2.00 one way within the city limits of North Manchester and Wabash
  - One-way fare anywhere else within the county is $4.00

Wabash County Public Transportation offers free rides to any soup kitchen, pantry, WIC office, and 85 Hope in Wabash County.

The annual operating budget for transportation is $753,225. Sources of funding for transportation include FTA Section 5311, PMTF, contract revenue, Older Americans Act Title III-B, and local government.

Table 17. Living Well in Wabash County 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
8	8	4–5	2	6

Noble Transit Service (Noble County Council on Aging)

Noble Transit Service directly operates public transportation and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided anywhere in Noble County. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 5:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The fare structure is as follows (for ages 59 and under and nonmedical trips for 60+):

Table 18. Noble Transit Service (Noble County Council on Aging) fares

Trip Distance	Price/Fare
0–5 Miles	$4.00 one way
6–10 Miles	$7.00 one way
11–15 Miles	$10.00 one way
16–20 Miles	$13.00 one way

Trips over 20 miles are $1.50 per mile from the pick-up point to the drop-off point.

For individuals age 60 or older, medical trips are by donation in Noble County only.

The annual operating budget for transportation was approximately $534,000 in 2020. Sources of funding for transportation include FTA Section 5311, PMTF, and Older Americans Act Title III-B.

Table 19. Noble Transit Service (Noble County Council on Aging) 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
17	14	7	0	13

Steuben County Council on Aging (STAR Transportation)

STAR Transportation directly operates public transportation, services for individuals with disabilities, and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided anywhere in Steuben County. There are no eligibility requirements to use STAR Transportation.

Hours of operation are 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The fare structure is as follows (for ages 59 and under and nonmedical trips for people who are age 60 and older):

Table 20. Steuben County Council on Aging (STAR Transportation) fares

Trip Distance	Price/Fare
0–5 Miles	$3.00 one way
6–10 Miles	$6.00 one way
11–15 Miles	$9.00 one way
16+ Miles	$12.00 one way

The annual operating budget for transportation was $361,522 in 2020. Sources of funding for transportation include FTA Section 5311, PMTF, Older Americans Act Title III-B, contract revenue, and local government.

Table 21. Steuben County Council on Aging (STAR Transportation) 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
8	8	5	0	8

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.

The current annual operating budget for transportation is approximately $11,000; however, the service is expected to expand within the next couple of years. Sources of funding for transportation include various foundations and individual donations.

Table 22. 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

Wells County Council on Aging/Wells on Wheels

Wells County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) directly operates public transportation through Wells on Wheels (WOW), and senior citizen programs and services. Transportation is provided throughout Wells County. Trips up to 50 miles outside of Wells County are also provided on Tuesday and Thursday. There are no eligibility requirements to use the WOW transportation services.

Hours of operation are 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM, weekdays. General public passenger fares are collected and donations are also accepted. The fare structure is as follows (fares based on one-way trips):

- Senior citizens (60+) can ride within Wells County for donation only
- $2.00 for trips within Bluffton city limits
- $5.00 for trips outside Bluffton city limits, but within Wells County
- $20.00 for trips outside of Wells County up to 30 miles from Bluffton (only available on Tuesday and Thursday)
- $50.00 for trips 31–50 miles from Bluffton (only available on Tuesday and Thursday)
- $1.00 for children under the age of 12 and accompanied by an adult
- Children under the age of 12 traveling alone are subject to regular fares listed above

The annual operating budget for transportation is approximately $850,000. Sources of funding for transportation include FTA Section 5311 (Rural Transit) and 5339 (Bus and Bus Facilities) Program funds, PMTF, Wells County government, United Way of Wells County, A1HS Title III funds from the Older Americans Act, general public passenger fares, fundraising efforts, and charitable contributions.

Table 23. Wells County Council on Aging/Wells on Wheels 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
14	14	10	4	8

Adams County Council on Aging

Adams County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) provides transportation for senior citizens 60 and older, as well as individuals with disabilities. Transportation is provided throughout Adams County. Adams County Council on Aging will become a public transportation provider beginning in January 2024.

Hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, weekdays. Donations are suggested.

The annual operating budget for transportation in 2022 was $170,301. Sources of funding for transportation include Older Americans Act Title III-B, the Social Service Block grant funds, the CHOICE program, Adams County Commissioners, the City of Decatur, the City of Berne, the Town of Geneva, United Way of Adams County, endowment funds, and local foundations and organizations.

Table 24. Adams County Council on Aging 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
7	7	4 or 5	0	9

Whitley County Council on Aging

Whitley County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) directly operates public transportation through Whitley County Transit, services for individuals with disabilities, and senior citizen programs and services. Door-to-door public transport service is provided for individuals who reside in Whitley County and also to Allen, Huntington, DeKalb, Kosciusko, and Noble Counties upon request. Whitley County Transit will also transport to Indianapolis and the VA Hospital in Marion for medical appointments. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 7:00–8:00 AM, 9:00–11:00 AM and 1:00–5:00 PM, weekdays. General public passenger fares are collected and donations are also accepted. The fare structure is as follows:

- 1–4 miles: $6.00 one way, $12.00 round trip
- 5–10 miles: $8.00 one way, $16.00 round trip
- 11–15 miles: $12.00 one way, $24.00 round trip
- 16–25 miles: $15.00 one way, $30.00 round trip
- Over 25 miles: $17.00 one way, $34.00 round trip
- Out of County: $29.00 one way, $58.00 round trip

The annual operating budget for transportation in 2023 was $746,400. Sources of funding for transportation include Older Americans Act Title III-B, FTA Section 5311, Whitley County Commissioners, in-kind CPA services and fares.

Table 25. Whitley County Council on Aging 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
12	12	7	1	11

DeKalb County Council on Aging (DART Transportation)

DeKalb County Council on Aging, Inc. (COA) directly operates public transportation through DeKalb Area Rural Transit (DART), services for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people of all ages. DART provides trips within DeKalb County, as well as travel outside the county. Trip reservations are preferred at least 24 hours in advance. There are no eligibility requirements to use the COA transportation services.

Hours of operation are 6:00 AM–6:00 PM, Monday–Friday. Other hours of service may be available. General public passenger fares are collected and donations are also accepted. The fare structure is as follows:

Travel Within DeKalb County

- $5.00 per passenger, per stop within the same city/town
- $6.00 per passenger, per stop out of any city/town

Travel Outside DeKalb County

- $35.00 one-way trip
- $50.00 round trip

Suggested Donations

- $5.00 one way within city/town
- $6.00 one way out of city/town

The annual operating budget for transportation in 2020 was $553,538. Sources of funding for transportation include Older Americans Act Title III-B, FTA Section 5311, contract revenue and local government.

Table 26. DeKalb County Council on Aging (DART Transportation) 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
Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided

Kosciusko Senior Services

Kosciusko Senior Services provides handicapped-accessible van transportation to all of Kosciusko County. Rides are scheduled by calling the office, with 7 to 10 days advance notice requested. Priority rides are given to clients with medical and/or nutritional service needs. Service is provided to individuals 60 years and older and Kosciusko Senior Services is a Medicaid Waiver provider.

Van transportation is available Monday–Friday. Suggested donations are $3.00 in town and $4.00 out of town.

Sources of funding include state and federal funding through Area 2 Agency on Aging, United Way, and the Kosciusko County council/commissioners.

Public, Nonprofit Organizations That Operate Transportation

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. General public adult passenger fares are as follows:

Table 27. Fort Wayne Citilink fares

Ticket to Ride	All-Day Pass	31-Day Pass
$1.25	$3.00	$45.00

Reduced price passes are available for those ages 5–18, individuals with disabilities, senior citizens 60 and older, and Medicare members, as follows:

Table 28. Fort Wayne Citilink reduced fares

Reduced Ticket to Ride	Reduced All-Day Pass	Reduced 10-Ride Card	Reduced 31-Day Pass
$0.60	$1.50	$6.00	$22.00

Access Pass is available to individuals with disabilities who are pre-certified to use the Citilink Access service. The cost is $2.50 per ticket.

The annual operating budget for transportation is approximately $19,000,000. Sources of funding for transportation include passenger fares, FTA funds, PMTF, local property taxes, and advertising revenue.

Table 29. 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

Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) (aka Cardinal Services)

KABS directly operates demand response public transportation services in all of Kosciusko County. There are no eligibility requirements to use the service.

Hours of operation are 5:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. General public passenger fares are as follows:

Table 30. Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) (aka Cardinal Services) fares

Trip Distance	Price/Fare
0–10 Miles	$1.00 one way
11–25 Miles	$2.00 one way
26+ Miles	$3.00 one way

The KABS Passenger Guide is available on the website: cardinalservices.org/services/kabs/.

Sources of funding for transportation include passenger fares, FTA grants, PMTF, and county funds.

Table 31. Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) (aka Cardinal Services) 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
12	12	9	4	5

Other Transportation Services

Easterseals Arc

Easterseals Arc is located in Fort Wayne. The organization is dedicated to helping people with intellectual disabilities or other challenges thrive in the community. The programs offered include youth and adult services, employment services, respite, behavior solutions, recreation, and an on-site clinic. Transportation is arranged on a case-by-case basis to support the needs of the individual. A portion of transportation costs are covered by Medicaid or vocational rehabilitation programs.

Other organizations serving the region include public and private nonprofit agencies, for-profit companies, and volunteer organizations.

Summary of Transportation Services

Transportation services are available for the general public in each county within the service area except Allen County where public transportation is limited to the Greater Fort Wayne area and does not extend into areas of the county that are beyond the municipal boundaries. Countywide transportation in Allen County is currently only available for eligible clients of CTN or other nonprofit agencies.

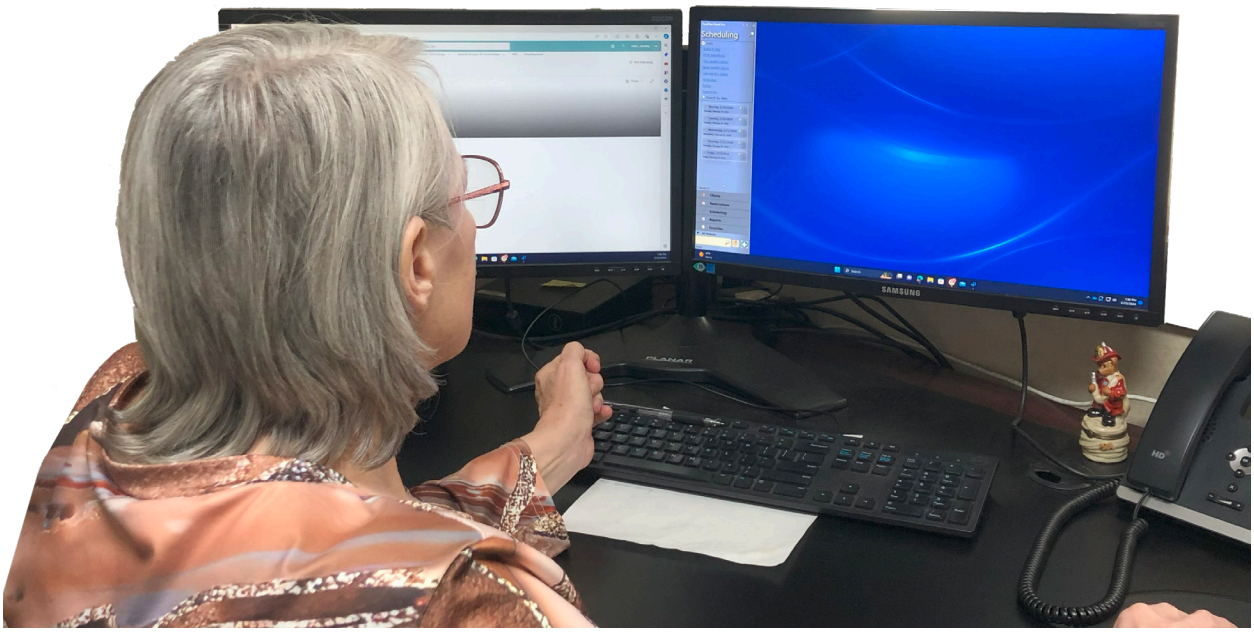
While transportation is available throughout the region, the services are localized and limited to county or municipal boundaries, except Huntington Area Transportation, which serves part of the town of Markle in Wells County and LaGrange which will take people from LaGrange County to St. Joe, Allen, Elkhart, and Steuben Counties.

Except Huntington Area Transportation and Citilink which operate until approximately 8:00 PM on weekdays, transportation operators generally end service by 5:00 PM or 6:00 PM. Likewise, most providers start service at 6:00 AM or 7:00 AM, except HAT and KABS, which start at 4:00 AM and 5:15 AM, respectively. Citilink is the only transportation provider that operates on Saturdays.

More than 200 vehicles are operated by the 12 agencies included in the inventory, plus volunteer driver vehicles. Approximately 97 percent of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible. On average, 131 to 133 vehicles are operated per day, and the agencies have more than 213 drivers, including volunteers. The exhibit on the following page provides a summary of transportation resources.

Private taxi and Uber/Lyft operators were not included in this inventory. However, stakeholders indicated that taxi and Uber/Lyft services are extremely limited or nonexistent, especially

outside of Fort Wayne. There are intercity bus services available on a limited basis and private transportation services that cover the region, state, or multistate area. The statewide/multistate transportation services were not included in this inventory because the study focused on a local transportation needs assessment. School bus inventories were not included in the study because school bus service is typically restricted for school-related purposes.



5601 Industrial Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

(260) 420-3280

support@ridectn.org