

LORAIN COUNTY

Overview

- Lorain County sits along the northern boundary of the state, along Lake Erie.
- Lorain is the largest city in the county and the county seat is Elyria. The county is part of the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- The nearest metropolitan area is Cleveland, which is located 40 miles east of Lorain.



Factors Influencing Transit Reliance and Demand

Employment, Demographics and Socio-Economic Characteristics

- Lorain County's population increased sharply between 2000 and 2007, and then continued to grow at a slower pace through 2012. Total population increased by 6% since 2000.
- The number of youth in Lorain County has decreased by more than 1,600, and youth now represent 1.6% less of the population than it did previously.
- Older adults aged 65+ increased by nearly 9,000, or 2.3%. Older adults now make up nearly 15% of the population.
- The low-income population increased 57% from 2000 to 2012, by more than 24,200 individuals. During the same time period, zero-vehicle households remained steady.

Figure 1 Selected County Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics: Historical Trends

Characteristic	2000		2007*		2012*		Change 2000-2012
Total Population	284,664		300,659		301,611		↑ 16,947
Youths (5-17)	54,816	(19.3%)	55,186	(18.4%)	53,201	(17.6%)	↓ 1,615 (↓1.6)
Older Adults (65+)	35,583	(12.5%)	39,222	(13.0%)	44,580	(14.8%)	↑ 8,997 (↑2.3)
Persons with Disabilities^	45,224	(17.5%)	39,389	(14.3%)	39,973	(13.6%)	-
Low-Income Individuals†	42,675	(15.5%)	53,765	(18.5%)	66,891	(23.0%)	↑ 24,216 (↑7.5)
Zero-Vehicle Households‡	6,967	(6.6%)	6,923	(6.3%)	7,376	(6.3%)	↑ 409 (↓0.3)

Sources: 2000 Census, SF1 100% data & SF3 sample data; 2007 ACS 3-year estimates; 2012 ACS 3-year estimates

*2007 ACS estimates are weighted based on 2000 Census 100% data whereas 2012 ACS estimates are weighted based on 2010 Census 100% data. The Census asks users to use caution when making comparisons across a decennial census year and warns that the estimates may not be strictly comparable.

[^]The disability questions asked on the 2000 Census and ACS forms through 2007 were substantially different from the questions asked on the 2008 ACS form and later (including the 2010 Census). Therefore, one cannot say with certainty what changes occurred to the prevalence of disabilities between 2000 and 2012.

[†]Defined as all family members if the family income is less than 1.5 times the poverty threshold set by the federal government.

[‡]Note that the data reported here are households and the percentage = (zero-vehicle households)/(total households in the county).

- It is impossible to conclude with certainty the historical trend of the prevalence of people with disabilities. However, accounting for sampling error and considering results from 2000 and 2007, in all likelihood at least 13% of the current population in Lorain County has some disability.
- According to 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, Lorain County had 93,056 jobs within the county. In that same year, 75,482 residents of Lorain County were employed outside of the county, which accounts for 56.6% of residents who are employed.
- Based on a combined measure of low-income individuals, zero-vehicle households, persons with disabilities, and adults aged 65 and over, the areas with the highest transit reliance are Lorain and Elyria, plus a small sliver of Vermillion in northwest Lorain County (see Figure 2).
- Other areas showing moderate-high transit reliance are Avon and North Ridgeville, east of the Lorain region.
- East of Lorain County, pockets of high transit reliance exist in Westlake and North Olmstead approaching Cleveland.

Transit Supportive Development Patterns

- Lorain County has higher density within the cities of Lorain and Elyria, and medium densities in the surrounding communities of Amherst, Sheffield Lake, Avon Lake, and North Ridgeville. Southern parts of the county are primarily low-density. Of the roughly 301,600 people in the county, 88.3% live in areas of higher density and 11.7 % are in areas of lower density (based on 2010 Census block data).
- The cluster of Lorain, Elyria, and Amherst is the primary area that, based on national evidence, suggests an ability to support transit service with a frequency of every 60 minutes or less (see Figure 3). Small pockets of transit-supportive areas exist in Oberlin, North Ridgeville, Avon, Avon Lake, and Sheffield Lake.
- Many of the areas that indicate a demand for transit service suggest that deviated-fixed-route (orange on Figure 3) service may be more appropriate than standard fixed-route (red on Figure 3) services. For example, Lorain is primarily orange interspersed with blocks of red.
- East of Lorain County, many communities show transit-supportive densities for both fixed and deviated-fixed route service. Transit-supportive patterns trend toward fixed-route service moving farther east into Cleveland.

Existing Transit Services

- Transit service (fixed-route and paratransit) is available through Lorain County Transit (LCT) in the cities of Lorain and Elyria.
- LCT operating characteristics:
 - ✓ Four routes Monday - Friday, two local routes between Lorain and Elyria and two loop routes in East Elyria, 5:30 AM – 6:30 PM
 - ✓ No service on weekends
 - ✓ All routes operate at two hour frequency
 - ✓ Complementary ADA paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of their fixed-routes Monday – Friday, 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM

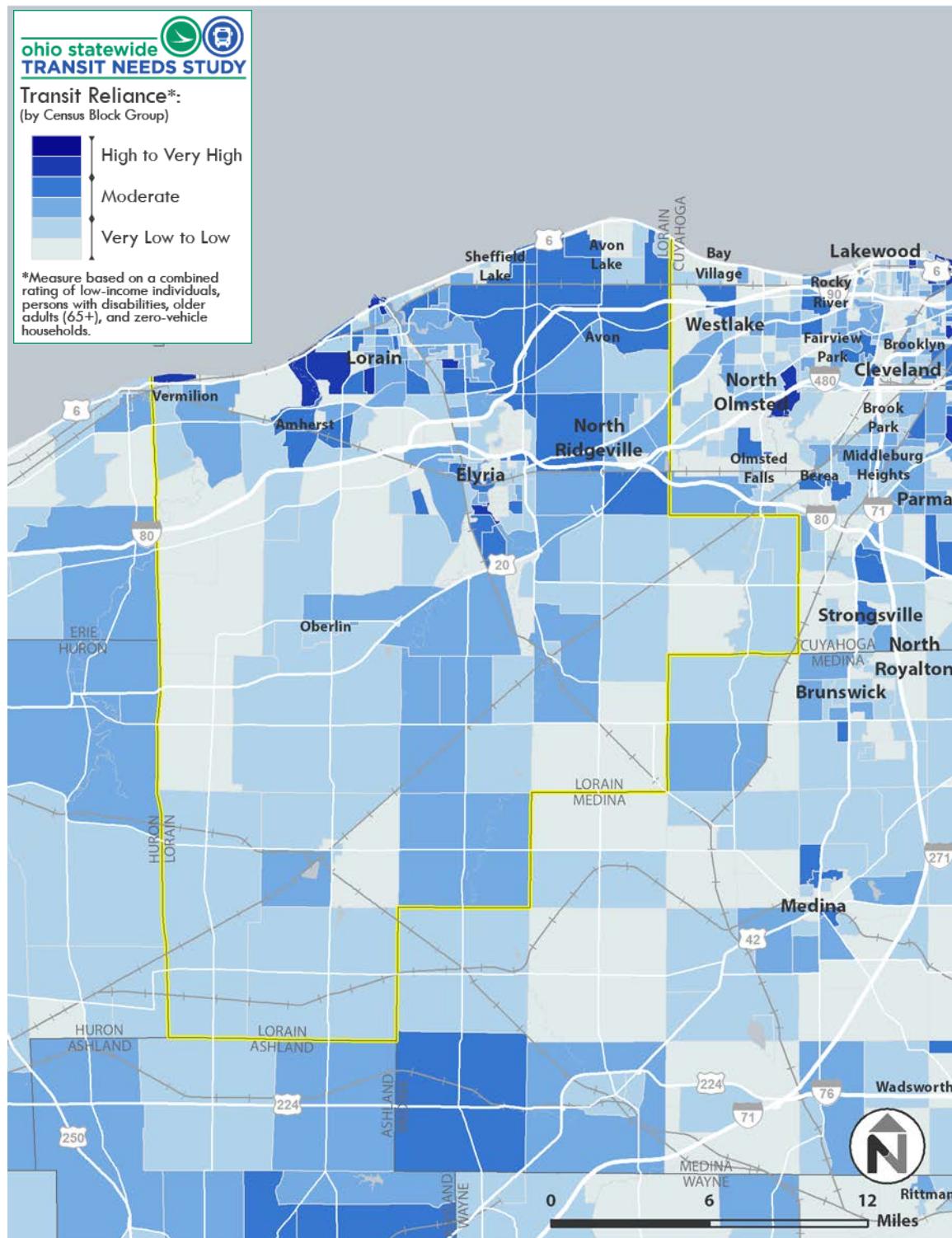
- Vanpool service is administered by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordination Agency (NOACA)
- Local funding is partially provided from the Lorain County Board of Commissioners and partially from the City of Oberlin. The city contributes about \$25,000 annually to provide demand response service within Oberlin and to Lorain or Elyria.
- 2012 Transit Riders per Capita¹: **0.25**
- 2012 Operating Expenditure per Capita¹: **\$4.67**

Opportunities, Challenges, and Needs

- Due to major service cuts in 2009, Lorain County is no longer meeting all the transit needs of its constituents. Service has been ramped down from 14 routes to two.
- Unemployment in the county continues to grow, decreasing ridership.
- The market for transit is primarily those with disabilities. The community of Oberlin is also a strong supporter of transit for environmental reasons.
- The dial-a-ride service meets a huge need for dialysis transportation; 99% of dial-a-ride customers are standing orders to dialysis treatment centers.
- Service is needed to Cleveland. Lorain County Transit ran some commuter routes that generated ridership, but not enough to justify costs in the eyes of the county commissioners. Rather than providing service directly to Cleveland, LCT would like to explore service to GCRTA park-and-ride lots, where riders can transfer to service into downtown Cleveland.

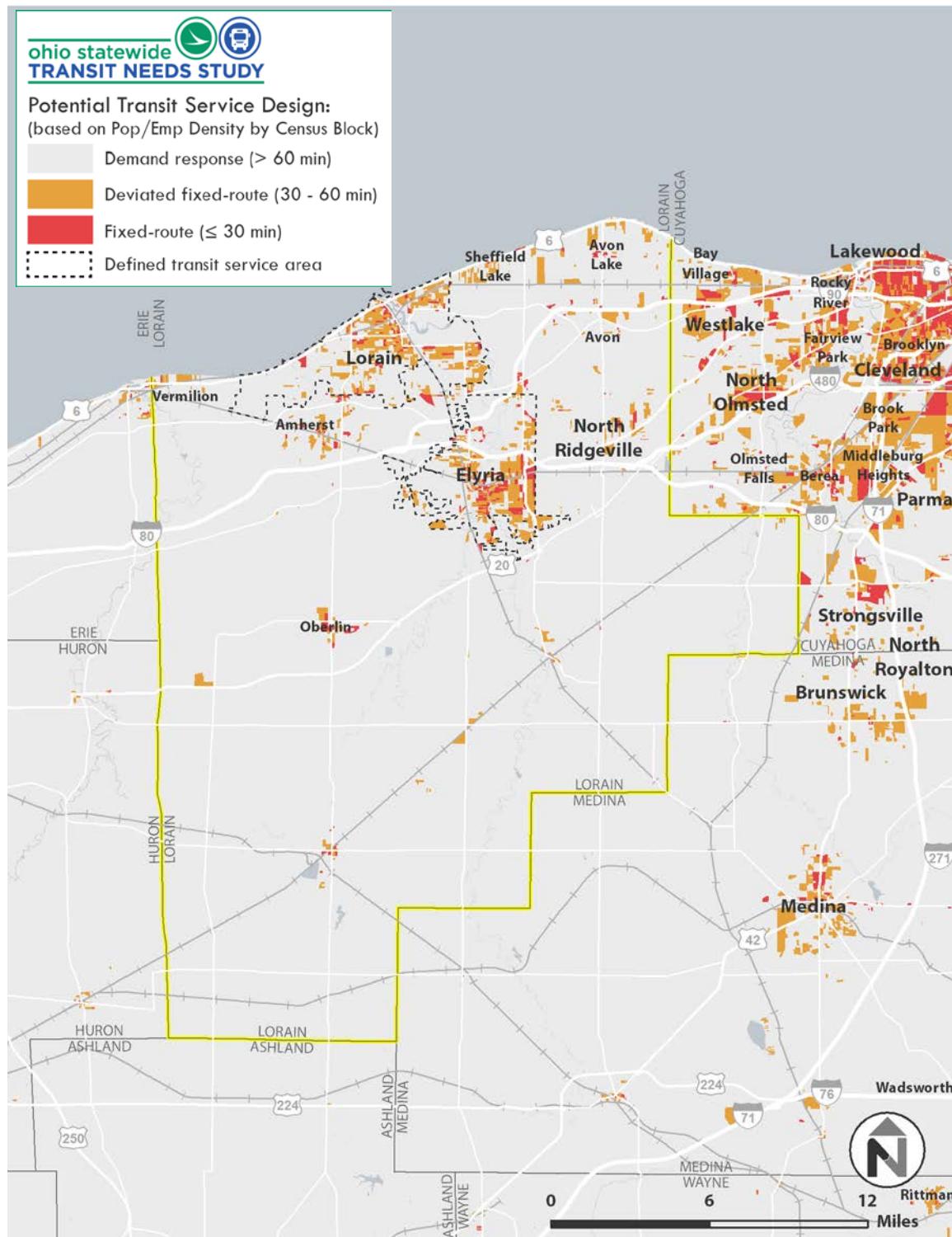
¹ Based on 2012 ACS estimates for Lorain County (301,611).

Figure 2 Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics Affecting Reliance on Transit Service



Source: 2008 - 2012 5-year ACS Estimates; TIGER/Line Files; ESRI; ODOT

Figure 3 Development Patterns (Population and Employment Density) Influencing Transit Service Design



Source: 2011 LEHD; 2010 Census SF1 100% data; TIGER/Line Files; ESRI; ODOT

Note: The "defined transit service area" indicates the official boundaries of the agency service area and does not necessarily indicate the coverage of the current routes in operation.