



Oberlin Research Group
Spring 2014 Report
Public Transportation in Lorain County

2014 Public Transportation in Lorain County

Oberlin Research Group

Prepared By

Chloe Peeples, Project Director
Shauna Godfrey, Project Manager
Nicholas Kuipers, Project Manager
Mitchell Mattox, Project Manager

Eric Bronson, Chief Financial Officer

Ikchan An, Analyst
Lila Bhide, Analyst
Monica Hunter-Hart, Analyst
Christopher Moser, Analyst
Jesse Neugarten, Analyst
Matthew Rogers, Analyst
Conrad Schloer, Analyst
James Scott, Analyst

Dr. Eve Sandberg, President

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Executive Summary

ORG Conclusions

- Maintaining a robust and effective transportation system requires multiple sources of funding and a constant commitment to seek new funds.
- In previous years, the amount of public transit service provided in Lorain County was much greater than it is today.
- The TRB analysis of possible demand indicates that there is an unmet need for public transit in Lorain County.
- The existence of a public transit system not only supplies demand, but it also generates it.

ORG Recommendations for funding Lorain County Transit

- Lorain County should pursue a **County-Centric Funding Structure through a dedicated levy to fund Lorain County Transit.**
 - In a county with at least two cities – Lorain and Elyria – the logistics of a city-centric or joint-funding structure would be more difficult. The latter two structures, moreover, are far more susceptible to political winds than a dedicated levy that is only up for consideration once every five years.
 - Lorain County should hire a part-time Grants Administrator who is in charge of tracking, applying for, and administering grants.
1. If a tax levy continues to be pursued, it should be put on the ballot of an off-season primary; this holds the best chance for success.
 - Campaigns should start two years in advance and should involve more rallying of community members to raise funds.
 - A full-time, experienced, and paid campaign staff is needed.
 - A stronger communications strategy with a singular, precise, and coherent message such as linking public transit to economic development is necessary.
 2. ORG Recommends considering revenue from:
 - Grants that Lorain County would be eligible to apply for. These include: The Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program, Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program, Rural Transit Program, The Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership Program, Local Government Innovation Fund, Elderly and Disabled Transit Fare Assistance Program, New Freedom Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, FTA Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program, FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Program, and TIGER Grants.
 - Intermodal Centers: they are a cost-effective and efficient way of housing multiple transit organizations.
 - Advertising Revenue: this doesn't cover a large percentage of total operating revenue, but it can still raise a sizable amount of income.
 - Bonds and Debt Leveraging: these should be considered only when funds are needed immediately to undertake a project, when there would be a significant gain in economic or environmental benefits from early implementation, or to save on financing costs due to avoided inflation.
 - Foundations: these do not invest directly in public transportation projects but they do fund groups and organizations involved in public policy, research, and advocacy.

Lorain County should investigate and adopt (with modifications to the local context) one of the funding structures listed below:

1. A **Joint Funding Structure**, Hall County Model, whereby the County Government and the major cities contribute equally towards funding the public transit system.

Is effective when:

- The funding for (a) demand response and (b) fixed route services are separated and relegated to one governmental entity.
- There is a strong divide between the needs for transportation between the more rural and more urban centers of the community.

Other Findings from Hall County:

- Outsourcing management of the transit system can be one possible way to improve efficiency if there is not an abundance of public transit talent in a region.
- Red Rabbit, in Hall County, had significant influence on local economic activities.
- A Passenger Survey from 2012 found that people most often use Red Rabbit for shopping, personal reasons, and to get to work. It also found that public transit benefits the middle class, as well as the lower class, disabled persons, and seniors.

2. A **City-Centric Funding Structure**, Sandusky Model, whereby the City takes the lead in funding for the public transit system.

Is effective when:

- Cities must fund their own public transit systems without County support.
- The city pursues a mixture of funding sources from federal and state grants to local stakeholders.
- There is a single central urban area with outlying rural communities.
- Demand response and Fixed Route are equally emphasized.
- There is an integration of multiple public transit systems.

3. A **County-Centric Funding Structure**, Stark County Model, whereby the county regularly approves a countywide sales tax to fund its public transit system.

Is effective when:

- There is strong countywide support for public transit and need is equally distributed across the county.
- Fixed route services are emphasized over demand-response.
- Federal funds are sought for capital outlays.

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History

The Oberlin Research Group (ORG) is a student-staffed consultancy group overseen by Dr. Eve Sandberg. It is run through the Oberlin College Politics Department as a course, "Practicum in Applied Research."

The group undertakes either one large project or several small projects during the course of the spring semester. Since its founding in 1999, ORG has worked with various non-profit organizations based in Lorain and Cuyahoga counties, the City of Oberlin, and elected officials in Ohio, producing consultancy-based research and evaluation.

This year, ORG was tasked with undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the public transportation system currently in Lorain County, along with its history and funding options for the future.

Structure

The Oberlin Research Group (ORG) 2014 is composed of thirteen students that work together as a consultancy organization.

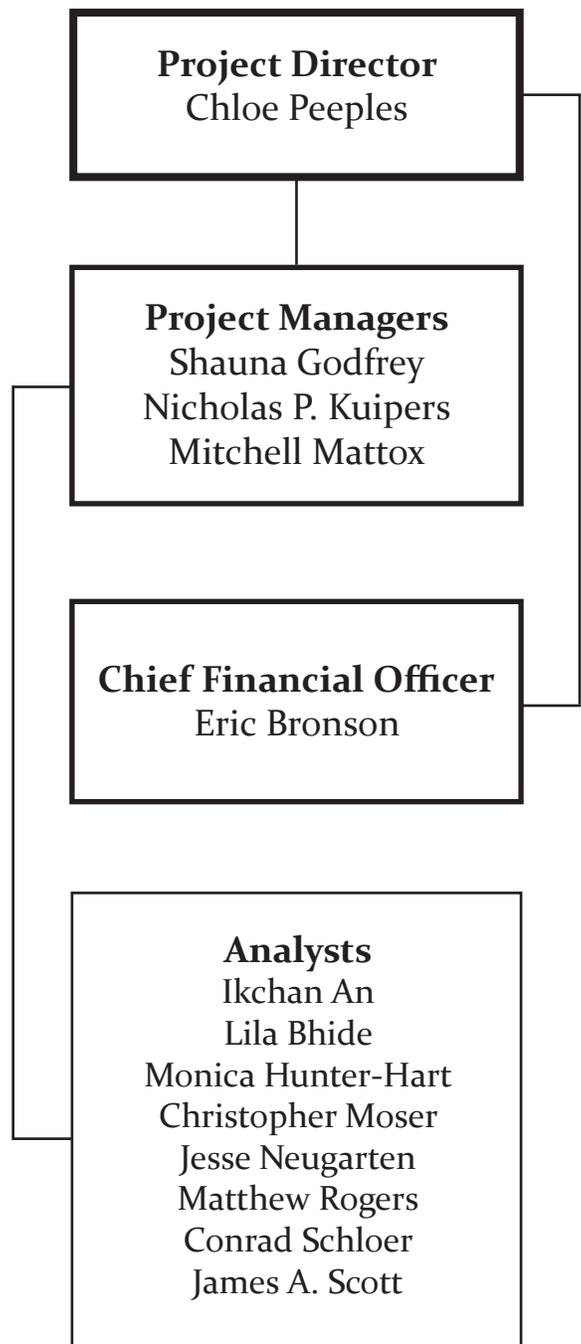
ORG is organized in a 3-tiered hierarchy- with one Project Director, three Project Managers, and nine Analysts.

The Project Director oversees and guides all aspects of the project.

The Project Managers assist the Project Director in envisioning how to undertake the project and they are each tasked with a portion of the project to take charge of and direct analysts in their research, interviews, and reporting of findings.

The Analysts are involved in completing document research, organizing data, and conducting interviews to gather all information needed for the project.

The Chief Financial Officer prepares a budget and handles all expenses and reimbursements.



Introduction

The ORG was tasked with

1. Analyzing the history and assessing the current situation of public transit in Lorain County.
2. Identifying similar case studies, which were then used to determine how similarly situated counties fund their own public transit systems.
3. Identifying key funding possibilities.

ORG was split into three sub-groups, each headed by a Project Manager and given one of the three tasks to research and on which to provide recommendations. This report details the work and findings of each group.

Group One was designated with the task of detailing the history and current situation of public transit in Lorain County, Ohio. It began by inquiring into a variety of areas that could potentially affect public transit, including detailed studies of Lorain County's history and conducting a general investigation into all possible forms of public transit. As the project progressed, and after consultation with transit development experts, the methodology shifted to a focused review of the bus public transit system and an inquiry into demonstrations of need for that system.

Group Two was designated with identifying counties similar to Lorain and using them as case studies to demonstrate how other counties contribute to their respective public transit systems. First, the group had to identify coun-

ties that could be used as case studies. Looking through counties with an eye towards similarities in (1) demographics; (2) proximity to urban center; and (3) the existence of an Amtrak station, four counties were chosen, two from outside Ohio and two within. The case studies analyzed are:

1. Augusta County, VA – Staunton Transit
2. Hall County, GA – Hall Area Transit (HAT)
3. Erie County, OH – Sandusky Transit System (STS)
4. Stark County, OH – Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA)

Group Two then analyzed the ways in which each county or city funded its public transit system and identified the most efficient and effective ways of funding.

Group Three was tasked with identifying key funding possibilities and determining their applicability to Lorain County. It started out researching Foundations and Venture Capitalists but the focus was shifted after consultation with transit experts. The group shifted its focus to levy initiatives, grants, federal programs, and bonds and debt leveraging.

Methodology

The Oberlin Research Group utilized a variety of research methods to determine: (1) the history, current situation, and potential for transit in Lorain County, (2) the options for funding based on similarly situated case studies, and (3) more detailed information about funding options for Lorain County. The teams consulted secondary sources including journal articles, books, news reports, and state & national statistics on public transportation. Primary sources included interviews with state and local government officials in Lorain, Stark, Erie, Hall, and Augusta counties, historians, and interest groups.

ORG research spanned 10 weeks. Beginning February 19th, the Oberlin Research Group started gathering research from secondary sources. On March 10th, the request for approval from the Oberlin College Institutional Board of Review was accepted and groups started gathering information by conducting interviews.

For the first four weeks of the project, groups focused on rail transit and funding through foundations and venture capitalists. After consultation from Grace Gallucci, Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, the groups switched focus to bus transit and funding through levies and grants.

Public Transportation In Lorain County

Demonstrated Need in Lorain County



Applying the Transportation Research Board’s Analysis of Transit Propensity to Lorain’s Transit

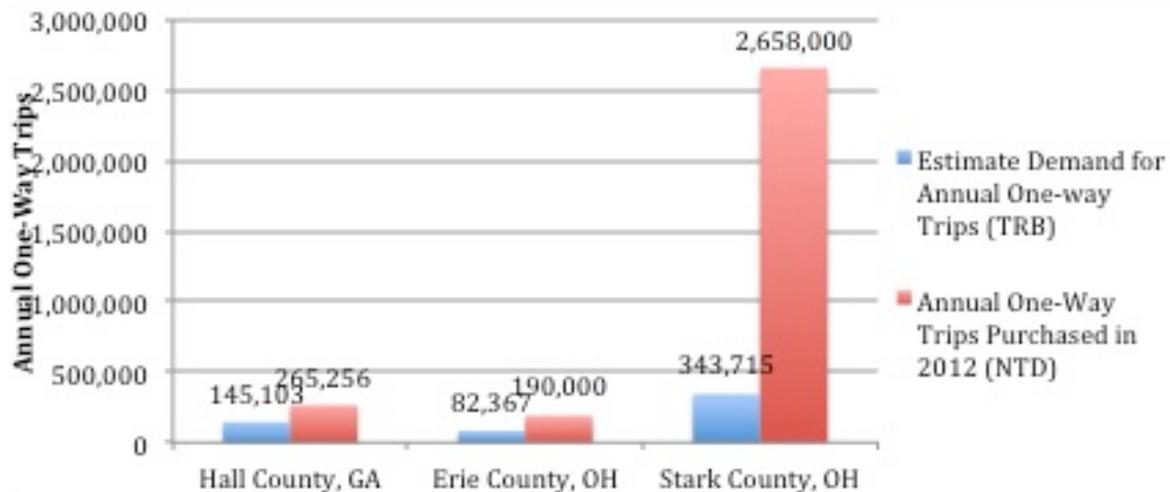
Understanding the demand for transportation in Lorain County is important in assessing the viability of investing in transportation. The Transportation Research Board has provided a manual to interested parties for assessing (a) need for public transit and (b) demand for public transit in communities. By inputting demographic data, this manual provides us with a working estimate for how successful a transit system will be prior to its implementation. Based on the case studies analyzed, it is evident that actual ridership categorically exceeds estimates based on de-

mographics. See Chart 1.0 for a demonstration.

TRB’s Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report: *Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation* presents step-by-step procedures for quantifying the need for passenger transportation services and the demand that is likely to be generated if passenger transportation services are provided.¹

The TCRP estimates that as of 2014, 54,800 people in Lorain County have a need for transportation services. The county has roughly 7,712 households without access to a vehicle. Using the TCRP, ORG **estimates a demand for 180,900 annual one-way passenger trips, and 10,800 daily one-way passenger trips.**²

Chart 1.0: TRB Analysis. Source: TCRP Report



Our calculations were derived using the following formula: Need (trips) = Number of Households with No Vehicle Available x Mobility Gap. This methodology is based on the definition of mobility gap, which is defined as, "The difference between the number of trips per day made by persons living in households having one personal vehicle available and those living in households that own no personal vehicles. This is a more conservative measure than comparing the trip rate for households with no vehicle available against households having one or more vehicles available."³

Demographics: Who Needs Transit in Lorain County

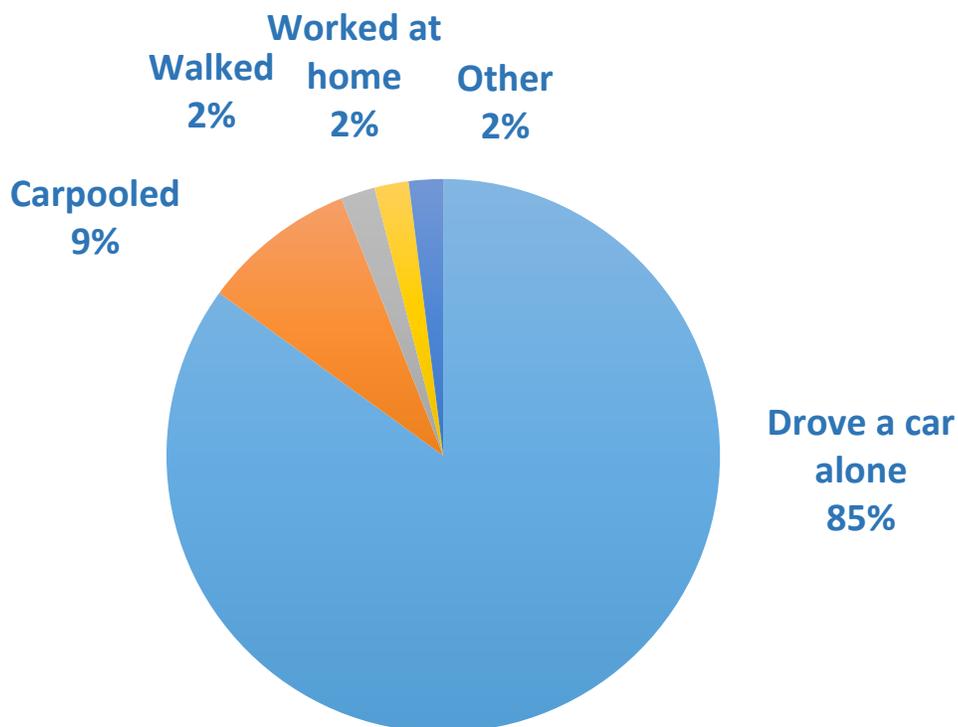
Of the 77.1% of people surveyed across Lorain County in the 2013 Oberlin League of Women Voter's Transportation Study who said that they did not use public transit, 56% stated that the reason was because adequate transit options were not available.⁴ Where in particular does this unmet demand lie?

Youth & Students

Americans do not drive as much as they used to: from 2004 to 2011, the number of miles driven by the average citizen decreased by 6%.⁵ One reason for this trend is that the "Millennial Generation" (those born approximately between the early 1980's and early 2000's) is not relying on automobiles as much as previous generations. Whereas 92% of 20- to 24-year-olds had drivers' licenses in 1983, only 80% of the same group had licenses in 2010.⁶ They utilize other forms of transit instead. In 2009, 16- to 34-year-olds traveled 40% more miles on public transportation than in 2001.⁷

In light of nationwide trends, public transportation is therefore an important resource for the 32.3% of Lorain County's population that was under 25 in 2010.⁸ In particular, it is valuable for Lorain County's student population. Of those who stated that they did use Lorain County public transit in the League of Women Voter's 2013 report, 27.7% said that they used it to get to school or for post-secondary education purposes.⁹ In 2009, before Lorain County Transit cut the main routes that Lorain County Community College students used, 1,000 of the

Chart 1.1: Mode of Transportation to Work in Lorain County. Source: City-Data.com



11,000 LCCC students used public transit.¹⁰ The decreased options have resulted in what Elyria Mayor Brinda calls a “connectivity issue” for people who cannot access the college. “We get a lot of phone calls in my office from residents... many of whom are young mothers with small children, who,” she says, “can’t figure out a way to get there.”¹¹

Elderly and Disabled Residents

The population of Lorain County is growing older, its median age having risen from 36.5 to 40 between 2000 and 2010.¹² In that same time frame, the demographic between 45-64 grew 31.1% and the demographic over 64 grew 21.2%.¹³ Elderly and disabled citizens may be unable to drive a car and need alternative means of traveling. County Commissioner Ted Kalo notes that often these residents can’t get to “doctors” appointments, treatment centers, drug stores” or even “just grocery shopping.”¹⁴ 33.9% of residents who said they do use Lorain County public transit in the 2013 League of Women Voter’s survey stated that they did so to

reach medical appointments.¹⁵

Low-Income Residents

For the 14.2% of Lorain County residents who live beneath the federal poverty level it is difficult for them to afford a car: and indeed, 13% of Lorain County households do not own one.^{16,17}

Lorain County’s unemployment rate is 8.7%.¹⁸ Lorain Mayor Ritenauer cited one of the most important uses of public transit as helping people in “getting to the job.”¹⁹ According to the 2013 League of Women Voters survey, 42% of county residents who use public transportation do so to get to work.²⁰ Yet this statistic must be put into perspective, as most residents do not utilize public transit. As Chart 1.1 demonstrates, only 1% of people in Lorain County use public transit to commute to work. 94% of people in Lorain County commute to work in personal vehicles (driving alone or carpooling). This may suggest that there is a demand for public transit that connects to places of employment and that this demand is insufficiently met at the present time.

Public Transit and Economic Development

Lorain’s Economy

Lorain’s unemployment rate increased from 5.3% in 1997 to 8.7% as of May 2010.²¹ In 2005, 33,000 people in Lorain County were below the poverty line. By 2008, 37,000 residents were below the poverty line.²² In the 2011 census, the poverty level in Lorain County was consistent with the Ohio and U.S average of around 24%.²³ However, the per capita income in Lorain County stands below the Ohio average and about \$7000 below the U.S average.

Commuting to Work in Lorain

In 2010, the average commute to work in Lorain County was 24.4 minutes.²⁴ The region has roughly 132,726 workers who are 16 years and over that commute to work; only 1,149 of those people use public transportation. For people over 16 years of age, 15,465 are unemployed and 86,608 are not in the labor force at all. According to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) service, Lorain County will see weak employment growth or a decline in the short fu-

ture.²⁵ This data suggests that the county is in need of a more efficient transportation system that allows large numbers of residents without access to a car to commute to work.

Economic Development

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, every dollar invested in rail or other transit leads to 3 dollars in economic benefits.²⁶ The mayors of Lorain and Elyria emphasize that public transportation can and should be used as an economic development tool. In speaking about the Lorain County Transportation Center project, Mayor Brinda stated that she hopes it will “increase feet on the street in our downtown,” which “will in turn encourage the reestablishment of restaurants and entertainment.”²⁷ Mayor Ritenauer noted that a better transit system—particularly one that connected Lorain to Cleveland—would help Lorain “market itself to young professionals.”²⁸ For examples of how increasing public transit options impact local economies, see the case studies starting on page 22 of this report.

Current Situation

Lorain County Profile

Lorain County is located in northeastern Ohio with a history of blue-collar workers and industrial factories. Because of the northern region's proximity to the Cleveland metropolitan area, Lorain County's largest cities (such as Lorain, Elyria, and North Ridgeville) are all located in northern Lorain County. This means that most of the 300,000 people that live in Lorain County are densely situated in the northern part of the county.

The differences in population density between north and south Lorain County have led to polarized views on public transit. Small townships in southern Lorain County have historically opposed passing tax levies for public transportation. The lack of demand for public transit in the more rural townships makes it difficult to pass countywide public transportation initiatives.

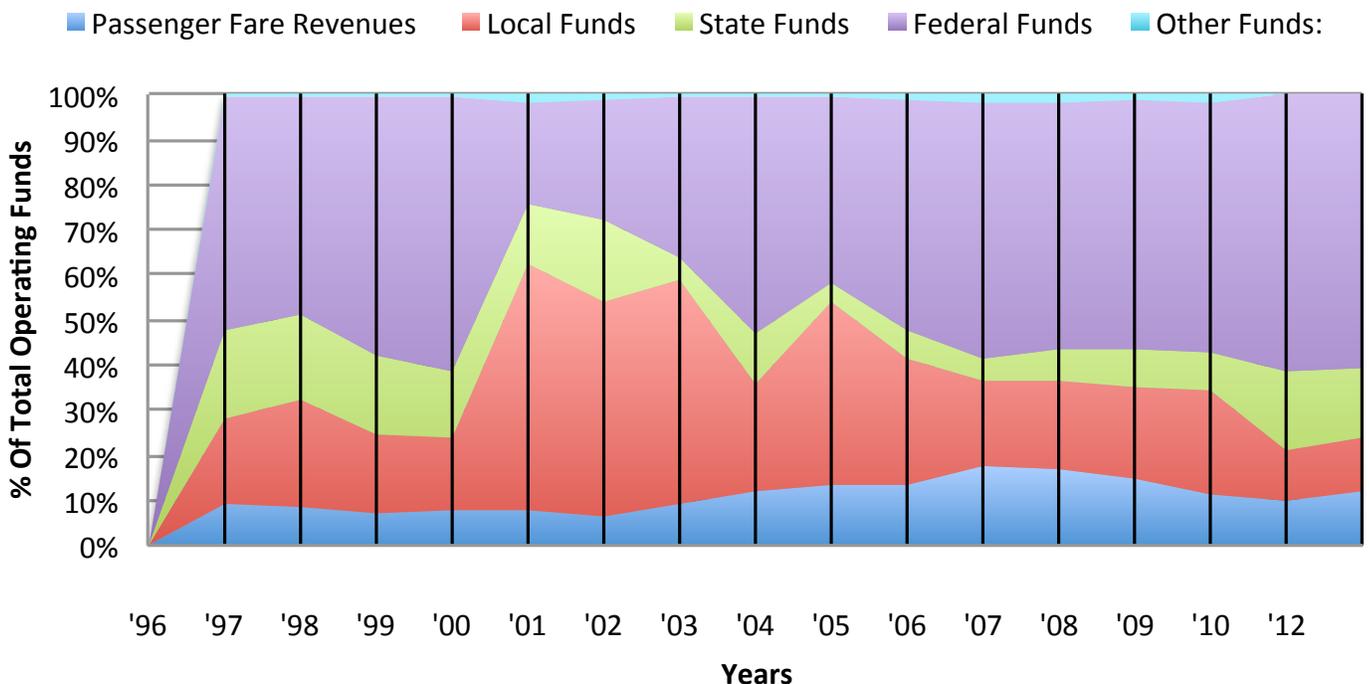
The absence of support for public transportation in the southern region of Lorain County is not the only reason levy initiatives have struggled. Past attempts to bring public transit to the county have encountered many missteps, and taxpayers have endured the burden. For many

years Lorain County paid an independent transit board to administer Lorain County Transit (LCT). The County Commissioners dismantled the board in 2005, but its unpopularity contributed to the general public's resentment toward any new transportation initiatives. In 2013, a proposed tax levy for public transportation was rejected by 59% of voters, reflecting the continued lack of support from taxpayers.²⁹

County Finances

In recent years, Lorain County has been forced to return millions of federal dollars to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODoT) because it could not come up with matching funds. In 2013 alone, \$2.2 million in federal dollars were lost.³⁰ There are many organizations in Lorain County that are interested in public transit, such as Veteran Services, Goodwill, and the Salvation Army. The problem, says County Commissioner Ted Kalo, is that many of these groups want to run point-to-point services rather than a fixed route transit system. According to Commissioner Kalo, if these independent service providers were to join forces they could provide 60% of the needed funds for a public transit system.³¹

Chart 1.2: Sources of Funding as % of LCT Operating Expenses, 1996-2012
Source: National Transit Database



Lorain County Transit Today

Today, transportation options are limited. According to County Commissioner Ted Kalo, the Lorain County Transit (LCT) system was averaging 849,000 passengers a year prior to 2009.³² Today there are only two intracity bus routes in Lorain and two in Elyria. There is only one intercity bus option, Greyhound in Elyria. Other transit options include taxis, Lorain County Regional Airport, Ohio Rideshare, and NOACA Bike Buddies.³³

The Lorain County Transportation Center is a stop for Greyhound and LCT, although it is mostly used as a center for catering and business meetings.³⁴ A project is being planned to expand the station; in particular, renovations would include relocating Elyria's Amtrak station to the center, increasing connectivity between these modes of transit and offering the option of processing luggage to its final destination.³⁵ Ridership at Elyria's Amtrak station has increased dramatically in recent years, rising 91% from 3,426 in 2008 to 6,548 in 2013.³⁶ Yet the Elyria station could be more productive, as it currently processes from only one track.³⁷

Funding Situation

Unlike many public transit systems, the Lorain County Public Transit system has no dedicated stream of tax revenue, and therefore must be funded out of the county's general fund. Chart 1.2 illustrates a breakdown of operational bud-

get funding sources from 1996-2012 (excepting 2011), and indicates that federal funding has been a significant part of the LCT operation for over a decade. As Chart 1.3 indicates, total-operating expenses decreased dramatically from 2009 to 2010. Moving more money into public transit from the general operating fund is not an easy solution, as the general fund is also losing money. From 2008 to 2013, the general operating fund decreased by \$13 million leaving lawmakers with difficult budgeting decisions.³⁸

On May 6, 2014 the county will vote on a property tax levy that would generate \$402,804 annually for public transportation.³⁹ With this money the county would be able to match \$400,000 in federal funding; last year about \$2,200,000 federal money had to be returned because it could not be matched.⁴⁰ With these funds, Lorain County Transit could add 1,500 hours to its transportation routes each month and possibly add four new routes.⁴¹ The levy would cost about \$2.28 a year for a house with a market value of \$100,000.⁴²

Chart 1.3 is convincing evidence that total operating expenses have been decreasing in recent years. This decrease cannot be attributed to a more efficient system. Likely, this decrease is due to the elimination of bus routes.

As Chart 1.4 indicates, the service efficiency measure of operating expense for vehicle revenue miles has increased dramatically since 2009, indicating a decrease in ridership and

Chart 1.3: LCT Operating Expenses, 1996-2012
Source: National Transit Database

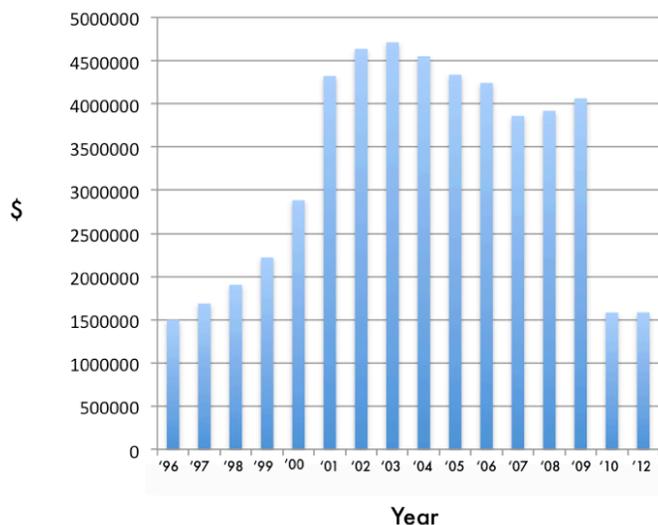
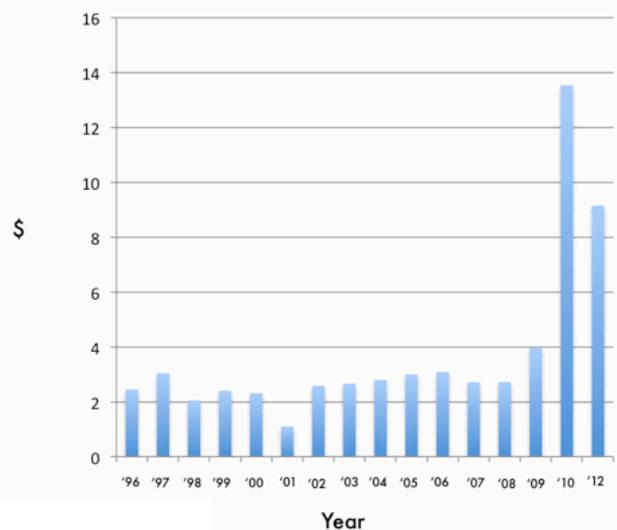


Chart 1.4 Service Efficiency Measure: Operating Expense Per Vehicle Revenue Miles
Source: National Transit Database

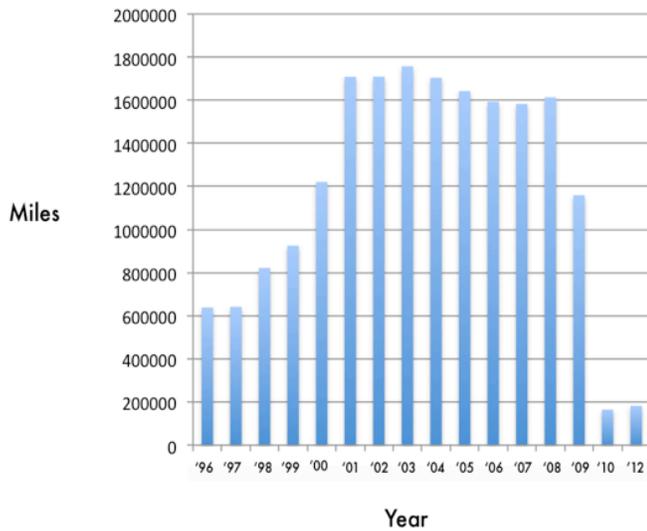


increasing costs borne by the LCT in providing public transit.

Annual Vehicle Revenue miles, shown in Chart 1.5, refer to the miles a public transportation vehicle travels while in revenue service, which means that the vehicle is currently en route serving passengers. In Lorain County, this has significantly decreased in recent years. The amount of routes available to the public has decreased. More service routes may be necessary to increase ridership and vehicle revenue miles.



Chart 1.5: Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles
Source: National Transit Database





Intermodal Centers

Lorain County has a facility built that can be used as an intermodal center with the proper funding. The Lorain County Transportation Center was originally constructed in 1923, but was completely re-furbished and renovated for its reopening on December 16, 2010. This facility is located in the downtown portion of the City of Elyria. This building used to be a rail station over 20 years ago, but is not currently being used for transportation services. An option moving forward with the Amtrak project would be to convert the space into an intermodal center and bring other businesses on board, such as Greyhound. This would help with the costs and make the station as efficient as possible for users.⁴³

An intermodal center is a transportation hub that can house various forms of transit together in a central location. The most prominent example of a modern intermodal center is the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) in Miami, Florida. Scheduled for completion in 2014, this center will offer “centralized transfer” between rental

cars, buses, taxis, as well as Metrorail, Amtrak, and Tri-Rail train services. These centers have become popular because they allow multiple transit organizations to work together to find the most efficient and cost-effective way of getting people to popular locations around the County. The DOT called the MIC a “project of national significance” allowing the MIC to receive a loan of \$269 million in 2000 and another loan of \$270 million in 2007.

Other intermodal centers can be ports that connect with automobile and rail systems, or airports that have trains, cars, buses, etc. available for use to help the flow of people. An intermodal center could be the most effective way for Amtrak to succeed in Lorain County simply due to the fact that it can be a multi-purpose transit center. The ability to have buses, cabs, and rental cars would significantly help any funding and/or transportation grants (like TIGER) because of the large-scale transit possibilities it would bring.

History of Transit in Lorain County

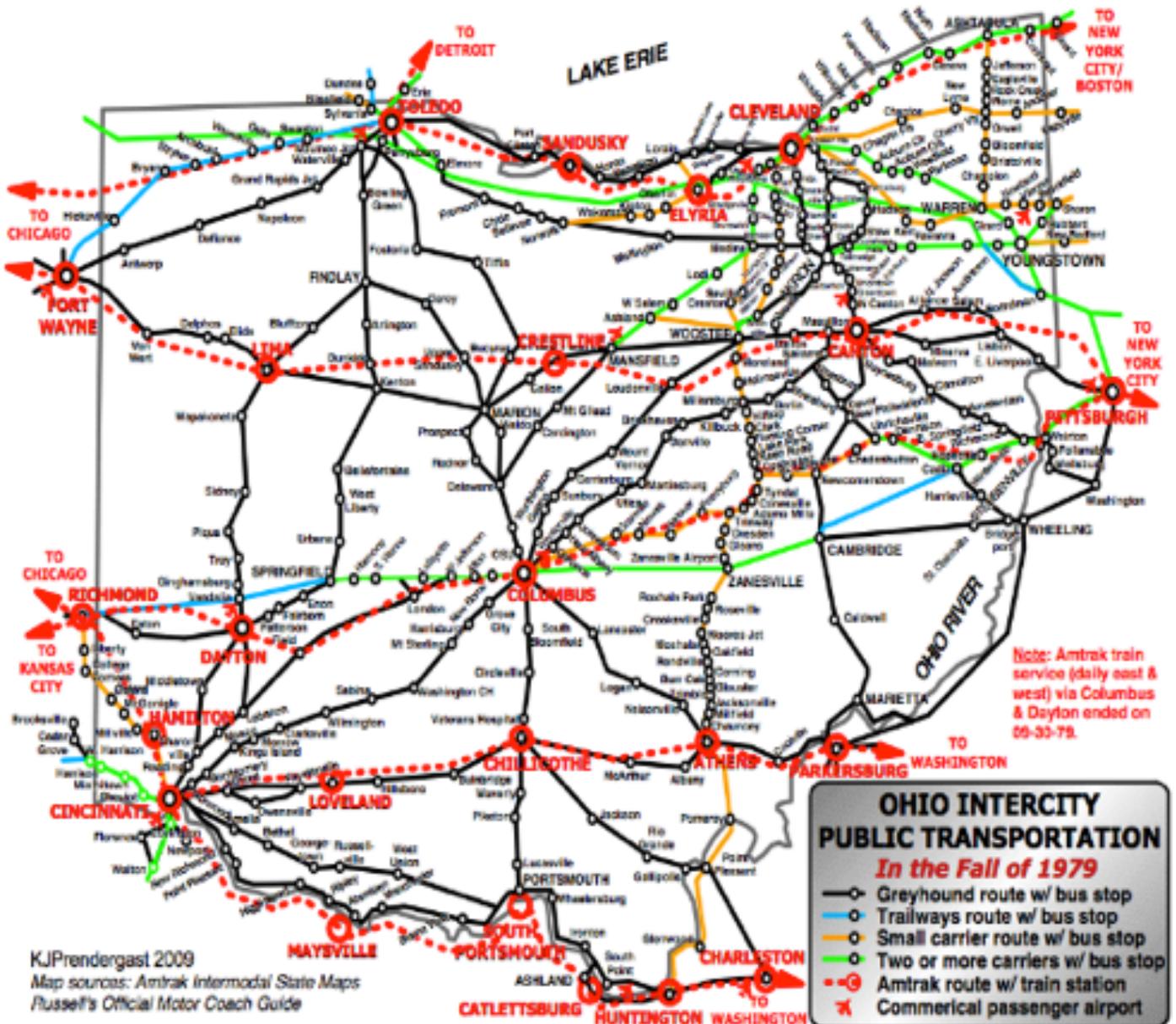
In August of 2000, the Lorain County Transit (LCT) fixed route system was completely restructured: the 13 routes that were implemented at that time are the basis of the (now diminished) system that LCT has today.⁴⁴ LCT, to determine the transit propensity for Lorain County used a model from the Transportation Research Board made in 1979.⁴⁵ Therefore **the skeleton of the current fixed route system has been constructed using an outdated model made over 30 years ago.**

The fixed route system has become drastically

more inefficient in the last few years, as seen in Map 1.1 as compared to Map 1.0. Yet the system has had problems with efficiency for many years: in LCT's 2004 Operational Analysis it was noted that, because of the routes' one-way loops, it could take up to 50 extra minutes to travel somewhere by bus, rather than by car.⁴⁶

Since 2000, low ridership, lack of funds, inefficiency, and other factors have forced the county to remove many of the original routes. In 2004, LCT still had 12 routes in operation; in the decade since then, 8 have been removed--includ-

Map 1.0: Ohio Intercity Public Transportation. Source: Amtrak Intermodal State Maps



ing 2 of the most productive ones.^{47,48,49}

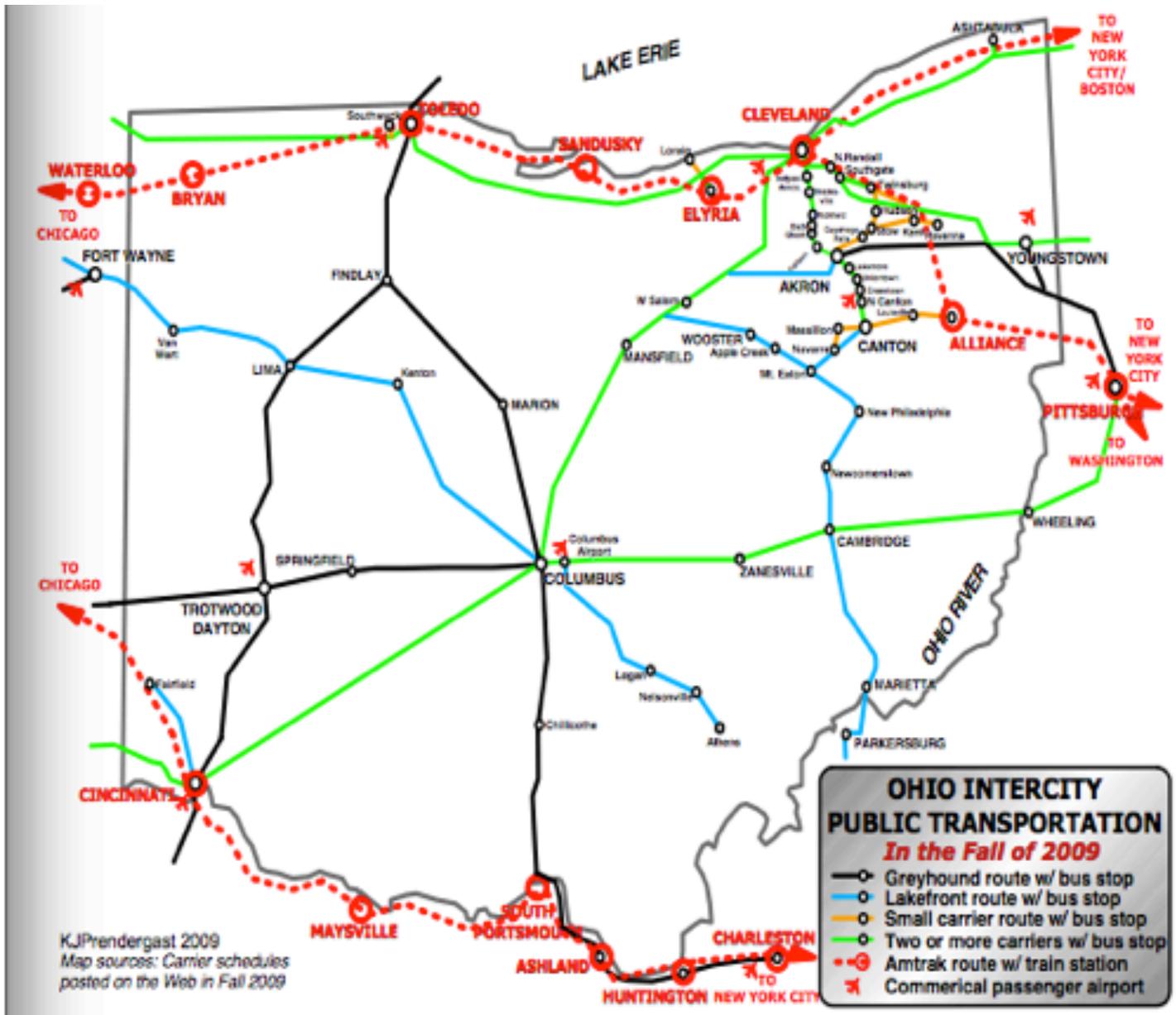
The removal of these routes is related to a state-wide trend of decreasing public transit options, as seen in Maps 1.0 and 1.1 from All Aboard Ohio, which show intercity transportation options in Ohio in 1979 as compared to 2009.⁵⁰

LCT ridership has declined in recent years, as seen in the chart on the right, compiled by the Oberlin chapter of League of Women Voters; this is in part because of LCT's route reductions. Elyria Mayor Holly Brinda would hesitate to see declining ridership as evidence that the need for public transit in Lorain has decreased: "We haven't created demand," she says, "because people don't know what it can do for them."⁵¹

Table 1.0: Lorain County Transit Ridership 2003-2012 Source: League of Women Voters

| Year | Fixed Route | Dial-A-Ride | Total |
|------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| 2003 | 642,532 | 63,326 | 705,858 |
| 2004 | 746,625 | 65,946 | 812,571 |
| 2005 | 796,475 | 59,212 | 855,687 |
| 2006 | 791,717 | 57,305 | 849,022 |
| 2007 | 674,187 | 47,616 | 721,803 |
| 2008 | 666,020 | 46,198 | 712,218 |
| 2009 | 556,827 | 33,354 | 590,181 |
| 2010 | 98,912 | 8,324 | 107,236 |
| 2011 | 79,225 | 9,697 | 88,922 |
| 2012 | 67,193 | 6,977 | 74,170 |

Map 1.1: Ohio Intercity Public Transportation. Source: Amtrak Carrier Schedules Fall 2009



Case Studies

Introduction

To better understand the ways in which Lorain County can fund its public transit system, ORG was tasked with identifying similarly situated counties and demonstrating the methods they used to effectively fund their public transit. These case studies were selected with an eye towards three key variables: (1) demographics; (2) proximity to urban center; and (3) the existence of an Amtrak station. Two of the case studies come from within Ohio and one comes from Georgia. The case studies selected are:

1. Augusta County, VA – Staunton Public Transit
2. Hall County, GA – Hall Area Transit (HAT)
3. Erie County, OH – Sandusky Transit System (STS)
4. Stark County, OH – Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA)

These case studies do not demonstrate a single approach to properly funding public transit. Instead, they demonstrate three different approaches to funding public transit. Hall County demonstrates a **Joint-Funding Structure** where the county government and the major city government both contribute to a jointly operated public transit system. Erie County demonstrates a **City-Centric Funding Structure** where the City of Sandusky is in charge of securing the resources to fund the public transit. Stark County demonstrates a **County-Centric Funding Structure** where the county government is in charge of the public transit system by levying a .25% countywide dedicated sales tax.

Although ORG recommends that Lorain County pursue a **County-Centric Funding Structure** to fund its public transit because it shores up a broad base of support and brings in sizable revenues, ORG recognizes that there are other options worth considering. The **Joint-Funding Structure** and the **City-Centric Funding Structure** both demonstrate unique ways of funding public transit, as can be seen in the Hall County and Erie County case studies, respectively.

Case Study 1: Augusta County, VA



Augusta County is located along the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia; Staunton is the largest town in Augusta and is, similarly to Elyria, home to an Amtrak station. Table 2.0 demonstrates the demographic similarities between Lorain and Augusta Counties.

Table 2.0: Augusta County/Lorain County Comparison. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| | County Comparison | | City Comparison | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| | Lorain County | Augusta County, VA | Elyria | Lorain | Staunton, VA |
| Population | 301,597 | 73,635 | 54,086 | 63,707 | 23,921 |
| Household Income | \$51,756 | \$50,971 | \$41,531 | \$34,823 | \$42,918 |
| Demographics | | | | | |
| White (%) | 87.1 | 93.9 | 78.1 | 67.9 | 83.7 |
| Black (%) | 8.8 | 4 | 15.5 | 17.6 | 12.1 |
| Hispanic or Latino (%) | 8.7 | 2.2 | 4.9 | 25.2 | 2.2 |
| Population Density (ppsm) | 613.6 | 76.3 | 2,651 | 2,707 | 1,188 |
| Average Commute (min) | 24.4 | 24 | 21.7 | 23.5 | 20.5 |
| Population Under 18 (%) | 23.2 | 20.5 | 24.2 | 26.7 | 19.4 |

Staunton Public Transit

The Commonwealth of Virginia is unique among the other 49 states in that it is the only state in which all incorporated cities are classified as independent cities. This means that the City and County governments do not share jurisdiction. There is little coordination between the City and County governments in fiscal and planning matters. For the purpose of this case study, then, Staunton – not Augusta County – will be instructive. Particularly, the funding of public transportation in and around Staunton, such as the Coordinated Area Transportation Services (CATS), the 250 Connector, and Trolley Service will be informative.

The City of Staunton operates two fixed route bus services: (a) what it refers to as a “trolley system,” which serves downtown and (b) the “250 connector” which serves the county. Although it is competitively priced and referred to as a “trolley,” it is, in practice, a bus system. The vehicles are, in fact, buses. There are three routes with designated stops, and it costs 25 cents to ride. The Trolley System’s three lines provide access to the majority of the city, and arrive every 30 minutes. The Green line travels along a 4.5 mile loop, the Silver line operates on an 8 mile loop, and the Red line operates on a 3 mile loop.

The city also operates the “250 Connector.” For the price of 50 cents each way, riders may take the bus from downtown Staunton to the Augusta Health Campus or continue on to the neighboring city of Waynesboro (the second largest city within Augusta County). The 250 Connector travels along a route that is approximately 13 miles long from one end to the other.

Aside from the Trolley System and the 250 Connector, which are operated by the City of Staunton, Virginia Regional Transit also operates demand response transportation in the form of the Coordinated Area Transportation Services (CATS). CATS serves Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County. The buses, which are handicap accessible, are intended for everyone, but according to the Planning Commissioner of Staunton, Sharon Angle, the curb-to-curb service primarily serves seniors and those with disabilities. The service costs \$1 each way for seniors and persons with disabilities and \$2 each

for the general public. Trips to Augusta Health are free. Rides need to be booked at least 24 hours in advance.

The overall budget for the Staunton transit system is \$1,602,000. The majority of transportation funding comes from federal and state sources and amounts to \$1,542,000. The funds are disbursed through the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, which coordinates transportation projects in Augusta County, Bath County, Rockbridge County, Highland County, and Rockingham County as well as the 5 cities and 11 towns. Within the Commission, there is the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO). As the area was designated an Urbanized Area by the U.S. Census on March 26th, 2012, Federal regulations require the creation and maintenance of an ongoing transportation process. Revenues accrued from fares are used to fund only a very small portion of the system’s overall budget. The city of Staunton contributes \$60,000 annually from its general fund, but the city has not implemented a special tax to pay for transportation projects. A portion of this local contribution is used to pay for the 250 Connector, as well. In addition to the funds contributed through the city’s general fund, Staunton sells advertising space on the trolleys in order to cover costs for some aspects of the program.⁵² Sharon Angle was unable to provide additional data to ORG at the time of publication.



Above: Coordinated Area Transportation Services (CATS) “trolley” bus. Though outfitted to look like a trolley, the vehicles are, in fact, busses. Source: nbc29.com

Lessons Learned From Augusta County

Augusta County, VA employs a **city-centric funding structure** whereby Staunton is in charge of the funding and operation of the public transit system. From our analysis, this structure is effective when:

- **The city pursues a mixture of funding sources from federal and state grants to local stakeholders.**

The vast majority of funding for Staunton's Public Transit system comes from state and federal sources. With such a small tax base and limited need, local sources are unlikely to be reliable.

- **There is a single central urban area with outlying rural communities.**

Staunton is the only urbanized area in Augusta. Demanding countywide funding when the need is localized in Staunton is politically infeasible.

- **There is an integration of multiple public transit systems.**

Given the shortage of funding with such a small tax-base, Staunton has creatively linked up their services with a number of other public transit systems to provide a web of transportation. This allows them to, in effect, provide much greater service without expending funds.

Case Study 2: Hall County, GA



Hall County is located in northeast Georgia and is part of the larger Atlanta metropolitan area. The City of Gainesville constitutes the largest urbanized area within Hall County and is akin to Lorain or Elyria. Table 2.1 demonstrates the statistical similarities between Hall County and Lorain County.

Table 2.1: Hall County/Lorain County Comparison. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| | County Comparison | | City Comparison | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| | Lorain County | Hall County, GA | Elyria | Lorain | Gainesville, GA |
| Population | 301,597 | 185,055 | 54,086 | 63,707 | 34,786 |
| Household Income | \$51,756 | \$52,174 | \$41,531 | \$34,823 | \$40,159 |
| Demographics | | | | | |
| White (%) | 87.1 | 87.5 | 78.1 | 67.9 | 54.2 |
| Black (%) | 8.8 | 8.1 | 15.5 | 17.6 | 15.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino (%) | 8.7 | 26.9 | 4.9 | 25.2 | 41.6 |
| Population Density (ppsm) | 613.6 | 457.5 | 2,651 | 2,707 | 1,058 |
| Average Commute (min) | 24.4 | 25.8 | 21.7 | 23.5 | 22 |
| Population Under 18 (%) | 23.2 | 27.5 | 24.2 | 26.7 | 30.4 |

Hall Area Transit (HAT)

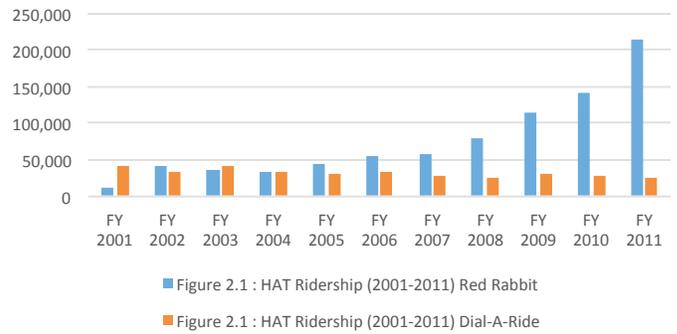
Hall County is serviced by its public transportation system, Hall Area Transit (HAT), which is managed by an intergovernmental authority - the Gainesville-Hall County Community Service Center. The mission of HAT is "to provide efficient, effective, and affordable public transportation allowing riders to access employment, retail shops, recreational facilities, medical offices, social service agencies, government offices, and other key destinations."⁵³ To this end, HAT operates two types of services: (1) a fixed route service known as the Red Rabbit and (2) a demand responsive service known as Dial-A-Ride.

HAT has served the City of Gainesville and Hall County since 1983.⁵⁴ Initially, HAT only provided the demand response service, Dial-A-Ride.⁵⁵ Its purpose is to pick up passengers "residing and working in Hall County [but] outside of the Red Rabbit service area."⁵⁶ It also provides a useful service for seniors and citizens with mobility disabilities. Dial-A-Ride requires 48-hours advance for appointments and operates from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays. Passengers pay two dollars for the first mile and less than a dollar per a mile after that.

In January 2001, HAT received program funding for a fixed route service through the Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program. The fund (\$150,000) was granted through the Georgia Department of Transportation for this project and HAT initiated the fixed-route Red Rabbit service.^{57,58} Red Rabbit operates thirteen busses to provide service to the more urbanized areas of Hall County, such as the City of Gainesville and the City of Oakwood. Its service area is 38 square miles and it services a population of 31,782.⁵⁹ Its fare is one dollar for persons from ages 8 to 59 and free for all others. Operation hours are different for each route, but most routes operate between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays.⁶⁰ Buses run in 60-minute intervals along each route.⁶¹ As of 2012, Red Rabbit serviced 240,190 annual one-way trips, up from 40,657 in 2002, as seen in Chart 2.0. Recently, Red Rabbit was characterized as "one of the fastest-growing bus systems in the country."⁶²

The economic impacts of Red Rabbit have not been measured. However, a passenger survey

Chart 2.0: HAT Ridership, 2001-2011.
Source: National Transit Database



conducted in 2012, as seen in Table 2.2, indicates that Red Rabbit has had significant influence on local economic activities.⁶³ The survey found that people most often use Red Rabbit for personal and shopping reasons. Also, the survey showed that a significant number of people have used Red Rabbit in order to get to work. Over 70% of riders of Red Rabbit had annual gross incomes of \$15,000 or more. This result suggests that public transit benefits the middle class as well as the lower class, disabled persons and seniors.

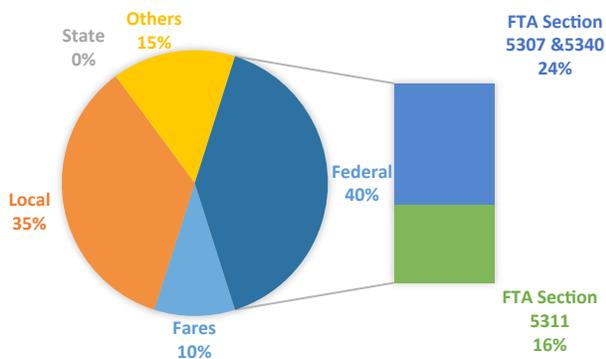
Table 2.2: Passenger Survey, 2012.
Source: Hall Area Transit

| | Dial-A-Ride | Red Rabbit |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| FY 12 Ridership | 27,116 | 240,190 |
| Purpose of Trip | | |
| Personal and Shopping | Ranked 4 th | Ranked 1 st |
| Education | Ranked 5 th | Ranked 5 th |
| Medical | Ranked 2 nd | Ranked 2 nd |
| Social | Ranked 6 th | Ranked 4 th |
| Employment | Ranked 3 rd | Ranked 3 rd |
| Nutrition/ Senior Center | Ranked 1 st | Not Ranked |
| Other Personal Characteristics | | |
| Disabled | 33% | 26% |
| Senior Citizen | 60% | 17% |
| Gender-Female | Over 50% | Over 50% |
| Widowed/Not Married/ Single | Over 50% | Over 50% |
| Empoloyed and/or Student | 20% | 42% |
| White / Caucasian | 83% | 29% |
| Annual Gross Income of \$15,000 or more | Over 50% | Over 70% |

Until 2013, the funding of HAT’s operating expenses was straightforward: half of the costs were covered by federal assistance while the other half was equally split between the City of Gainesville and Hall County governments. For example, in fiscal year 2012, total operating funds expended were \$1,317,508. As seen in Chart 2.1, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) paid 40% of the costs; of the percentage the FTA paid, three-fifth of the federal funds (\$321,768) came from the FTA Urbanized Area Program (Section 5307) and the remaining (\$208,153) came from the FTA Non-Urbanized Program (Section 5311). The two local governments, the City of Gainesville and Hall County, paid 17.5% each. All the local funds were from the general revenues of these two local governments. The last 15% was financed by Coordinated Transportation funds that were provided by the Georgia Department of Human Services.⁶⁴

This financing scheme is instructive insofar as it suggests the plausibility of a joint operation between the county government and the city government when there is an urbanized area embedded in a larger rural county. When the rural parts of the county will see less benefit from the transit system than the more urbanized, such as is the case in Lorain County vis-à-vis Elyria, HAT’s pre-2013 model is instructive.

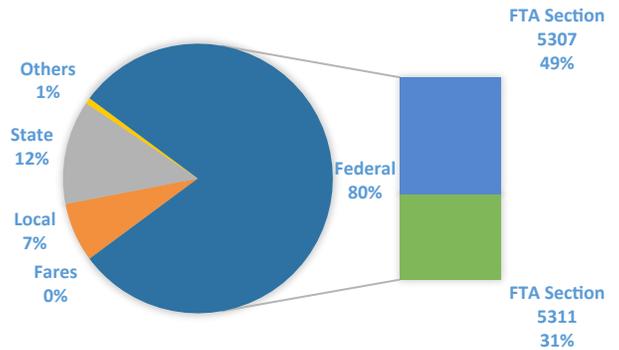
Chart 2.1: HAT Operating Funds, 2012.
Source: National Transit Database



For capital outlays, such as the acquisition of new vehicles, software, computers and building improvements, HAT is dependent on federal assistance. According to 2012 statistical data, HAT expended \$324,969 on capital. As seen in Chart 2.2, 80% of these funds came from the federal government, while state and local governments covered 12% and 7%, respective-

ly. Again, HAT received two-thirds of its federal funds (\$159,150) from the FTA Urbanized Area Program (Sections 5307 & 5340) and the remaining one-third (\$103,879) from the FTA Non-Urbanized Program (Section 5311). Funding from the state and local governments came from their general revenues.⁶⁵

Chart 2.2: HAT Capital Funds, 2012.
Source: National Transit Database



Facing pressure from the County Commissioners in 2012, however, HAT saw its budget decrease. The County Commissioners made the argument that Hall County residents should not have to pay for Red Rabbit since they had “neither access to nor the need for the service”.⁶⁶ The City Council of Gainesville proposed a compromise by offering to increase fares and cut hours of operation.⁶⁷ Starting in the summer of 2012, adult fares increased from \$1.00 to \$1.25 and hours of operation were cut down from 6:30 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.⁶⁸

After the rise in fares, ridership dropped about 45% from about 240,000 rides to 156,000 rides annually. According to Phillipa Lewis Moss, the Director of the Gainesville-Hall Community Service Center, although raising fares brought \$19,000 more in fare revenues, the two local governments saved less than \$10,000, while the service lost 84,000 passengers. Consequently, Red Rabbit efficiency declined: the cost-per-trip rose from 3.05 dollars per ride to 4.65 dollars.⁶⁹

Finally, in April 2013, the Hall County Board of Commissioners refused to apply for the grants from the FTA that had helped to fund Red Rabbit for fiscal year 2014. Three of five County Commissioners were against using the federal funds thereby threatening the continuation of service.⁷⁰ In an effort to save the service, the Gainesville City Council approved a separation



Source: gainesvilletimes.com

of Red Rabbit and Dial-A-Ride services. The city agreed that it would take on full responsibilities, including capital expenses, liabilities and operating costs for Red Rabbit starting in July 2013. Hall County agreed to take total responsibility for Dial-A-Ride starting in fiscal year 2015.⁷¹ Currently, Hall County Government executes the Federal Transit Administration's Rural Transit Program grant application and provides the 50% local match using general funds. The City of Gainesville executes the Federal Transit Administration's Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program application and provides the 50% local match using its general funds.⁷²

In October 2013, the Gainesville City Council reversed all the changes that had been made in Red Rabbit's service during the summer of 2012. **It re-extended operation hours and lowered its fares. It was reported in January 2014 that ridership had grown 23%,**

even as revenue remained stable.⁷³ In March 2014, Red Rabbit was renamed Gainesville Connector while services remained the same. On March 10th, the city unveiled seven new busses that were funded through a \$700,000 federal grant received from the last of the ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) funds.⁷⁴

Another notable point of HAT is that it has hired a professional transit company, McDonald Transit Associates, to manage the transit system. A staff member from this private company takes responsibility for the daily operations. Also, the company helps to keep HAT abreast of national trends as well as changes in federal regulations.⁷⁵ Outsourcing management of the transit system can be one possible way to improve efficiency if there is not an abundance of public transit talent in the region transit talent in a region.

Lessons Learned From Hall County

Hall County, GA employs a **joint funding structure** whereby the County Government and the major cities contribute equally towards funding the public transit system. From our analysis, this structure is effective when:

- **There is a strong divide between the needs for transportation between the more rural and more urban centers of the community.**

As evidenced by the fact that fixed route services reach only 30,000 out of the 180,000 residents of Hall County, there is a strong disparity between the transit needs of the urban areas and the rural areas. The Hall County Commissioners, along these lines, argued that so few county residents had access to the public transit system that it should be jointly funded between the city and the county government.

- **The funding for (a) demand response and (b) fixed route services are separated and relegated to one governmental entity.**

Given that a joint funding structure is used as a way of compromising between diverse transit needs, separating the demand response and fixed route services is an effective way to disconnect the needs of the city from the needs of the county. The county pursues what it desires, the demand response, and the city pursues what it desires, the fixed route.

- **Increases in fare prices disproportionately stifle ridership without substantially increasing revenues and, on these grounds, ought to be avoided.**

As the decision to increase fare prices in 2012 demonstrate, even minor increases in fares can disproportionately hamper ridership. Generally speaking, fares only account for 10% of a public transit system's operating budget, such increases ought to be avoided.

Case Study 3: Erie County, OH



Erie County is located in the Northwest quadrant of Ohio. Sandusky’s economy is largely driven by tourism produced by attractions such as Cedar Point and the Kalahari Resort. Keeping that in mind, there are a number of parallels in demographic variables that can be drawn between Erie County and Lorain County. Particularly, this section focuses on the city of Sandusky and its parallel to Elyria or Lorain. Sandusky – the county seat of Erie County – will be the focus of this case study. We will assess the ways in which Sandusky, without county support, contributes to public transit in order to consider how Elyria or Lorain might similarly contribute in the absence of countywide support. Table 2.3 demonstrates the statistical similarities between Lorain and Erie Counties.

Table 2.3: Erie County/Lorain County Comparison. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| | County Comparison | | City Comparison | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| | Lorain County | Erie County, OH | Elyria | Lorain | Sandusky, OH |
| Population | 301,597 | 76,398 | 54,086 | 63,707 | 25,493 |
| Household Income | \$51,756 | \$46,906 | \$41,531 | \$34,823 | \$34,018 |
| Demographics | | | | | |
| White (%) | 87.1 | 87.6 | 78.1 | 67.9 | 70.4 |
| Black (%) | 8.8 | 8.7 | 15.5 | 17.6 | 22 |
| Hispanic or Latino (%) | 8.7 | 3.6 | 4.9 | 25.2 | 4.9 |
| Population Density (ppsm) | 613.6 | 306.4 | 2651 | 2707 | 2652 |
| Average Commute (min) | 24.4 | 20 | 21.7 | 23.5 | 17.4 |
| Population Under 18 (%) | 23.2 | 21.4 | 24.2 | 26.7 | 23.9 |

The Sandusky Transportation System (STS)

The Sandusky Transportation System (STS) primarily operates a demand response program, although it also maintains a fixed route service called the Sandusky Perkins Area Ride Connection (SPARC). There were 190,300 riders of STS in 2013. 55% of all STS trips are work related.⁷⁶

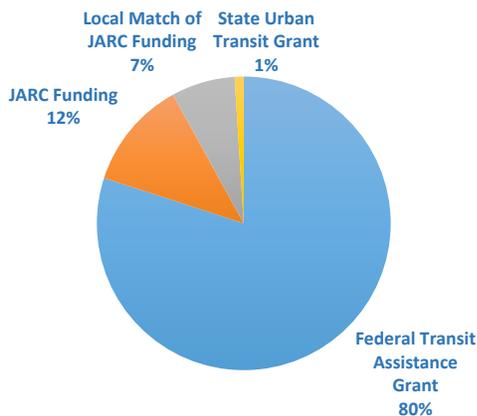
The demand-response transportation program has been running since 1992 and has steadily seen its ridership increase. Between 2011 and 2012, for example, there was a 14% increase in use. It is speculated that the rising cost of gas has been the primary driver of this increase as Sandusky faces a 27.7% poverty rate and residents spend 8% of their yearly incomes on gasoline on average.⁷⁷ Fares are priced at \$2.00 for travel within Zone 1 and \$3.00 to travel within Zone 2. The City of Sandusky is considered "Zone 1" and the adjacent Perkins Township and City of Huron are considered "Zone 2."

The fixed-route system, SPARC, provides transportation between the low-income neighborhoods of Sandusky and the area between Perkins and Route 2 along Route 250. This corridor is said to have around 2,600 jobs. SPARC is intended to foster economic vitality by providing affordable transportation to the multitude of re-

tail establishments along the routes including 6 shopping centers and a mall. Original funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) fund for SPARC was secured because it caters to the employment needs of low-income residents. Although this particular grant may not be available in the future, Transit Administrator Thomas Schwan is confident that there will be funding for job access in the future. In an interview with ORG he stated, "they haven't guaranteed anything past 2015 with the JARC grants obviously but... you will either apply for that money...through the state or...through another grant system... but I don't believe for one minute that they're just gonna say 'ok this money's gone, there's no money available' because they know how valuable the services are that they were providing with this money so it's just gonna be a matter of either it's gonna be named something else or be in something else."⁷⁸ There are 16 loops per day with 23 stops totaling 28 miles. SPARC has been highly successful since the beginning; there were 20,000 riders in the first 6 months of operation and there was an 18% increase in ridership in 2012 from its totals in 2011.

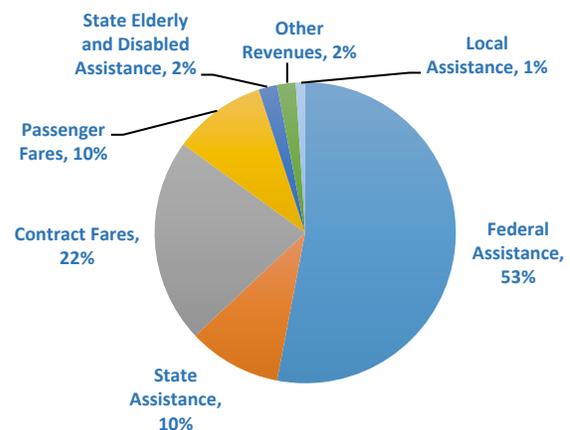
The total operating costs of running Sandusky's transportation system as of 2012 were \$1,538,241 with an operating recovery ratio of 28.95%.

Chart 2.3: Dedicated SPARC Funding, 2010.
Source: National Transit Database



| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| JARC Funding | \$100,000 |
| Local Match of JARC Funding | \$55,016 |
| State Urban Transit Grant | \$6,450 |
| Federal Transit Assistance Grant | \$632,183 |

Chart 2.4: STS Funding, 2012.
Source: National Transit Database



| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| State Assistance | \$139,044 |
| Federal Assistance | \$742,215 |
| Local Assistance | \$10,000 |
| Passenger Fares | \$135,462 |
| Contract Fares | \$309,925 |
| Other Revenues | \$45,613 |

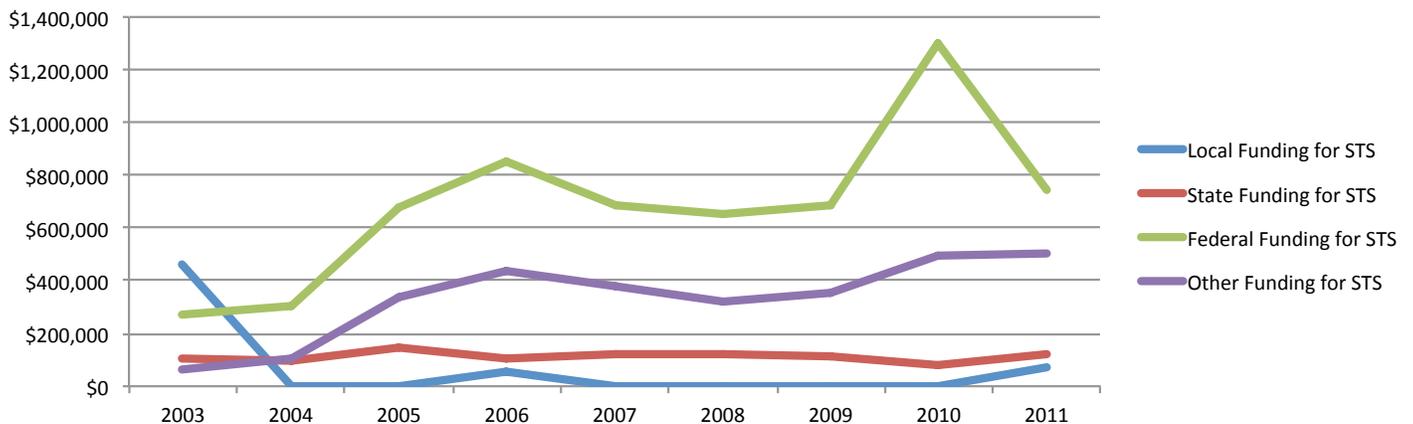
As evidenced by the variety of revenue sources, STS pursues a mixed-funding strategy – a strategy that is critical for a small-to-medium sized urbanized area that hopes to fund a public transit system. The following demonstrate ways in which STS and the City Council have been putting pressure on unconventional sources of funding to make ends meet:

- The Kalahari Resort, an attraction in Sandusky, collaborated with STS since many of its workers use SPARC to get to work. Kalahari has funded an analysis of transportation in Sandusky and has looked into the possibilities of a shuttle to the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.⁷⁹
- STS is also looking into ways to increase the revenue generated by STS, including ad placement inside and outside the busses.
- STS is working with Child and Family Services to look into the possibility of becoming a Medicaid service provider so they can bill Medicaid directly for these trips.⁸⁰
- STS has collaborated with a local elderly persons interest group, Serving Our Seniors, to secure funding for a portion of the demand response transportation for riders ages 60 and up through a contract with the Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities.⁸¹
- Pursuing funding and grants through governmental and non governmental organizations:
 - In 2009, STS received \$68,579 in stimulus package money (ARRA) to install shelters for SPARC stops.⁸²

- STS pursued and received funding for a coordinated dispatch center through a grant from the Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership Program.
- STS partnered with a number of regional players including Erie County, the City of Vermillion, Lorain County, Firelands Regional Medical Center and Senior Enrichment Services in order to secure a \$100,000 grant through Ohio’s Local Government Innovation Fund to conduct a feasibility study of coordinated regional transportation.⁸³

This mixed-funding strategy carries with it a degree of uncertainty, however. In 2013, STS required funding from the City of Sandusky for a bailout when the STS ran a \$318,000 budget shortfall. The City of Sandusky transferred this money from their operating budget but the Council has since made it clear that such extensive emergency funding would not be repeated, particularly because the city has fallen short of its own budget by \$1.1 million and has made extensive cuts. Sandusky Transit Administrator has explained “The reason we had a shortfall the year before is because we went from being an urbanized system to a rural system, we had three months where we weren’t funded by any kind of a grant because...federal grants ends on September 30th...but the rural grant doesn’t start until January 1st, so we did not have a funding source for three months.”⁸⁴ According to the Sandusky Transit Administrator, the money was then repaid to the city through Lorain County’s unused FTA money. For 2014, the City of Sandusky has allotted only \$60,000 in its budget to support the STS if last minute help is needed again.

Chart 2.5: Funding for STS, 2003-2011. Source: National Transit Database



Lessons Learned From Erie County

Erie County, OH employs a **city-centric funding structure** whereby the City of Sandusky takes the lead in funding for the public transit system. However this city centric system must also be supported by a strong relationship with the county to provide effective transportation. From our analysis, this structure is effective when:

- **The city pursues a mixture of funding sources from federal and state grants to local stakeholders.**

It is difficult for a city to secure funding for a public transit system because (1) The tax base is not as large as a county's thereby making a levy ineffective and (2) the general fund is often smaller thereby hampering potential contributions from the city. As such, pursuing a multitude of options to "scrap together" funds is often necessary.

- **Services aim to reach a diverse range of the population through an emphasis on both demand-response and fixed route services.**

By demonstrating that public transit can serve not just urban residents, but everyone, the transit system can shore up support that turns itself into funding.

- **There is a single central urban area with outlying rural communities.**

A city-centric funding structure allows a public transit system to localize the funding where it serves individuals most. Instead of imposing a countywide burden on constituents who do not benefit, having the main city (where the transit system gets the most use) exclusively fund the system allows the service to maintain its popularity.

Case Study 4: Stark County, OH



Stark County is situated in the northeastern quadrant of Ohio. Table 2.4 demonstrates that there is a strong parallel between Stark and Lorain Counties with a number of demographic indicators. Most notably, the parity in average commute times and population densities indicates a similar propensity toward public transit. Yet, Stark County operates a significantly more robust public transit system, which indicates that Lorain County, with proper funding, could see similar success. As well, table 2.4 also indicates similar populations and median incomes, which points to a similarly sized tax-base to draw on for funding.

Table 2.4: Stark County/Lorain County Comparison. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| | County Comparison | | City Comparison | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|-----|
| | Lorain County | Stark County, OH | Elyria | Lorain | N/A |
| Population | 301,597 | 375,105 | 54,086 | 63,707 | |
| Household Income | \$51,756 | \$45,689 | \$41,531 | \$34,823 | |
| Demographics | | | | | |
| White (%) | 87.1 | 89 | 78.1 | 67.9 | |
| Black (%) | 8.8 | 7.7 | 15.5 | 17.6 | |
| Hispanic or Latino (%) | 8.7 | 1.7 | 4.9 | 25.2 | |
| Population Density (ppsm) | 613.6 | 652.9 | 2651 | 2707 | |
| Average Commute (min) | 24.4 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 23.5 | |
| Population Under 18 (%) | 23.2 | 22.3 | 24.2 | 26.7 | |

Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA)

Stark County maintains a robust public transportation system through SARTA. SARTA service began in 1997 following the passage of a .25 % countywide sales tax that turned the localized Canton Regional Transit Authority into a larger operation. Between 1997 and 1998, in fact, ridership jumped from 747,000 annual one-way tickets to 1,352,000 annual one-way tickets. By 2012, over 2.6 million individual fares were purchased – 2.5 million for fixed route services and 100,000 purchased for demand response services.⁸⁵ This is demonstrably higher than the 75,000 fares purchased in the Lorain County Transit (67,000 fixed route; 8,000 demand response). This disparity is also reflected in the square miles serviced by the routes: SARTA services 567 square miles, whereas LCT only reaches 49 square miles.⁸⁶

Charts 2.6 and 2.7 demonstrate the sources of

revenue for both operating and capital expenses, respectively. In 2012, SARTA's total operating expenses amounted to \$15.59 million and its capital expenses were \$8.64 million. As the figures demonstrate, SARTA employs a mixture of funding sources to make ends meet: passenger fares, local, state and federal funding. The local funds, according to a County Commissioner in Stark County, are totally beyond the purview of the local government, however. Instead, there is a .25% countywide sales tax that, having been in place since 1997, brings in anywhere from \$7.3 million (1998) to \$12.9 million (2005).

The levy was first put in place in 1997 where it passed with 57.6% of the vote. In 2002, it passed with 63% of the vote and in 2006 it passed with 57%. Most recently, the tax – Issue 13 – was reaffirmed in 2011 with 66% of the vote supporting the levy.⁸⁷ The support for the levy was due in part to the campaign's ability to properly brand support for the measure as a "continuation" rather than a "tax." **An active network of supporters known as, "Support-**



Chart 2.6: SARTA Operating Expenses, 2012
(\$15,592,660)

Source: National Transit Database

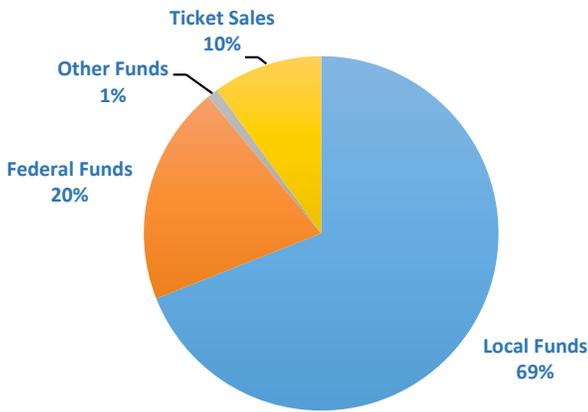
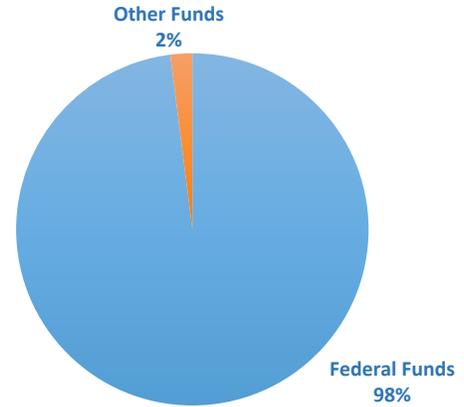


Chart 2.7: SARTA Capital Expenses, 2012.
(\$8,646,468)

Source: National Transit Database

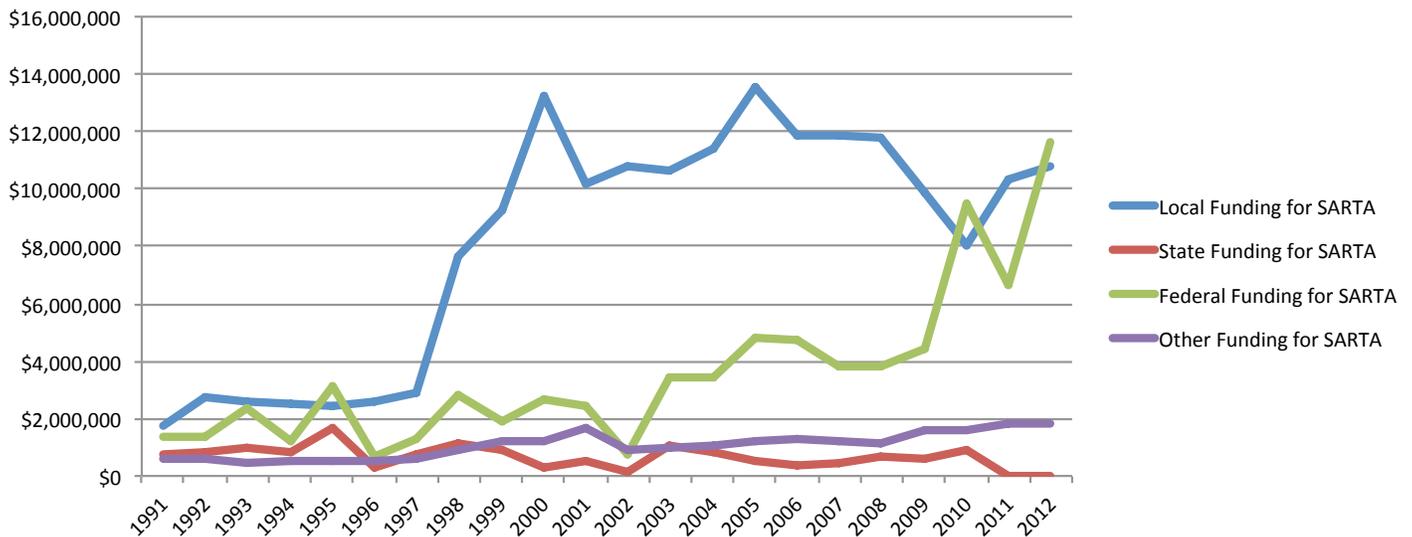


ers of Stark Area Regional Transit Authority” were largely responsible for this effort. Those close to the campaign indicate that the effort was well supported by SARTA administrators.

Although SARTA maintains its popularity – and therefore much of its funding - through effective and far-reaching service, it also relies on federal grants for its capital expenses. In 2012, for example, SARTA received two discretionary grants through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Qual-

ity program (CMAQ) totaling \$2,981,252.⁸⁸ The FTA and The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have jointly administered nearly \$30 billion to roughly 29,000 environmentally minded transportation projects to state Departments of Transportation (DOT) and metropolitan planning organizations through CMAQ since 1991.⁸⁹ In 2012, SARTA rolled out its first six natural gas powered buses with plans to convert the entire fleet. With 50 natural gas buses, SARTA officials expect savings of up to \$500,000 yearly.⁹⁰

Chart 2.8: Funding for SARTA, 1991-2012. Source: National Transit Database



Lessons Learned From Stark County

Stark County, OH employs a **county-centric funding structure** whereby the county regularly approves a countywide .25% sales tax to fund its public transit system. From our analysis, this structure is effective when:

- **There is strong, countywide support for public transit and need is equally distributed across the county.**

A county-centric approach to funding public transit can take two forms: (1) funding from the general fund and (2) a countywide levy, be it a property or sales tax. Although Stark County has opted for the levy, both strategies demand strong countywide support, which implies a dispersed and diverse demand for transit.

- **Fixed route services are emphasized over demand-response.**

When a county-centric approach to funding is employed, it implies dispersed and diverse need for public transit across the county. Demand-response routes are limited in their capacity to serve a large number of constituents insofar as they operate with specialized routes.

- **Federal funds are readily accessible for onetime capital outlays.**

Bringing in dedicated funds from a countywide source allows transit systems to run a robust operation that also makes federal grant money more accessible. Federal matching funds are available through a number of grants that can be employed for onetime capital expenses, such as the purchase of new buses and the dedicated county funds can readily act in a matching capacity. CMAQ and JARC grants are past examples that Stark County took advantage of.

Funding Options

Introduction

Finding relevant funding options is essential when looking to improve or implement a public transportation system. The following section gives a thorough look and breakdown of financial alternatives that are potential sources of funding for transportation projects that could be utilized in Lorain County. The sources include: tax levies, grants, advertising revenue and bond and debt leveraging. This section demonstrates that some methods of funding, such as tax levies are a more definite way of securing funding, but an approach using a variety of funding options will yield the most amount of funds.

Levies

2013 Primary Issue 2

In May 2013, Lorain County voters rejected a .04 mills property tax, Issue 2, which would have raised dedicated funds for the Lorain County Transit (LCT). The millage system of property taxation measures in terms of dollars per \$1000 of taxable property; 1 mill equates to \$1 per \$1000 and .04 mills equates to 4 cents per \$1000. This millage rate applies only to the taxable portion of real property value, which is set in Ohio at 35%. The levy would have lasted for a five-year period and generated about \$234,000 of revenue per year. The tax would have cost property-owners \$1.40 per \$100,000 of real market property value per year.

Issue 2 was defeated in most areas of the county. The measure failed with 41% voting yes, 59% voting no. The margin of loss was just under 5,000 votes. There was a strong victory in the city of Oberlin and a narrow victory in the city of Lorain. The issue narrowly lost in Elyria. The most substantial losses were found in the villages and townships, which, combined into a single figure, showed a defeat by over 2,000 votes. Other high-turnout areas, like Avon Lake and North Ridgeville, showed sound defeats.

There was never a formal campaign for the Issue 2 levy. Instead, the campaign focused on

“grassroots efforts, word of mouth and newspaper coverage.” Fallout from the loss included the return of \$2.2 million dollars of federal matching funds that were originally allocated for Lorain County, but were redistributed around Ohio following the failure to raise local funds. The loss in 2012 factors into the as much as \$5 million total returned in recent years.⁹¹

The loss here seems to be largely the result of a lack of campaign structure. The same May ballot included two additional levies aside from Issue 2, one for the Murray Ridge Developmental Disabilities School and one for the Lorain County Drug Task Force, both of which were approved by voters despite having a higher millage rate. This indicates a willingness of Lorain County voters to, firstly, pass levies and, secondly, to pass levies that may in reality only benefit a small portion of the population, as is the case with the Developmental Disabilities Programs.

2014 Primary Issue 11

In January 2014, the County Commissioners placed a new levy on the ballot, Issue 11, to be voted on in the upcoming primary election on May 6, 2014.⁹² The levy, another property tax, is designed to generate funds for the LCT and is at a slightly higher rate of .065 mills. The levy

Table 3.0: May 6 2013 Issue 2 Area by Area Results. Source: Lorain County Board Of Elections

| | Yes | | No | | Total Votes |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Votes | Percent | Votes | Percent | |
| Amherst | 935 | 39.6% | 1,424 | 60.4% | 2,359 |
| Avon | 454 | 44.9% | 558 | 55.1% | 1,012 |
| Avon Lake | 2,199 | 37.4% | 3,681 | 62.6% | 5,880 |
| Elyria | 1,449 | 49.4% | 1,487 | 50.6% | 2,936 |
| Lorain | 2,019 | 50.2% | 2,003 | 49.8% | 4,022 |
| N Ridgeville | 1,239 | 35.5% | 2,255 | 64.5% | 3,494 |
| Oberlin | 731 | 90.0% | 81 | 10.0% | 812 |
| Sheffield Lake | 190 | 32.6% | 392 | 67.4% | 582 |
| Vermillion | 352 | 42.2% | 483 | 57.8% | 835 |
| Village & Townships | 1,603 | 30.3% | 3,686 | 69.7% | 5,289 |
| TOTAL | 11,171 | 41.0% | 16,050 | 59.0% | 27,221 |



was estimated to generate \$400,000 per year for the next 5 years. Property owners would see an additional tax of \$2.28 per \$100,000 of property value per year.

Campaigns for Lorain County

Though the possibility of restricting a future tax levy to apply only to relevant and supporting cities (i.e. Lorain, Elyria) was looked into, it was concluded that a countywide levy is the most productive way forward. Legal roadblocks exist for funding a county-wide levy with funds collected from city-wide levies; utilizing funding from city levies would only be possible with a dramatic restructuring of LCT, as demonstrated by the Hall County, VA case study.

The possibility of a citywide levy is made even less appealing by the loss in tax revenue resulting from a more narrow geography. A citywide tax levy at .065 mills, the level of the current Issue 11, would result in about \$58,000 of revenue per year for the city of Lorain, and about \$54,000 in revenue for Elyria.⁹³ Even combined, this still amounts to just over a quarter of the revenue that would be received from a countywide levy. An increase in millage could make up for lost revenue, but would also increase cost to taxpayers and might make passage more difficult.

Election cycle analysis determines that an off-year primary election (the next one being June 2015) holds the best chances for success. Yes/No percentages per area from 2013's Issue 2 demonstrated negligible changes when applied to turnout rates from the primary and general elections from 2012 and 2010. The 2012 General election numbers showed the most substantial change, amounting to only one additional percentage point for the 'Yes' vote. Attempting

to run a campaign in one of these larger voting blocks would require larger amounts of funding, which is already in short supply.

Our analysis of past failed efforts indicates a few areas for improvement. First, a campaign should start earlier, involve more rallying of community members to raise funds, and be as professional as possible by acquiring a campaign consultant and having polling and/or focus group testing done with regards to possible messaging, targeting, and voter percentages. Secondly, a stronger communications strategy with a singular, precise and coherent "tested" message will rally support more effectively than a nebulous message. Thirdly, a precinct-by-precinct analysis reveals that campaign resources should not be wasted in areas where strong opposition already exists, as it will only serve to motivate voters to turn out in opposition to the levy. Instead, campaign resources should focus on strongholds in Elyria, Lorain, and Oberlin. A winning campaign will need to make up for the 5,000-vote loss gap both by increasing turnout and swaying some previous no-voters in these key areas.

Campaign Structure

If a 2015 primary campaign is going to be launched, preparations should start immediately for fundraising and swaying community leaders. The importance in this process of knowledgeable local officials on a campaign committee should not be underestimated. At the same time, a future campaign would benefit from the presence of at least one experienced, paid manager who is solely devoted to the campaign project.⁹⁴ By managing both communications and field operations, this manager could provide the coherence necessary for victory. While volunteers ought to be used for much of the field operation, there is a need for a strong managerial presence in guiding their efforts.

Communications Strategy

A more effective campaign involves a more precise use of language. Voters need one concrete, oft-repeated message that emphasizes, in positive terms, the benefits associated with the levy.

An economic message seems most promising: one that links improved transit to an improved economy and more jobs. In addition, campaign materials should feature unifying visual themes to link them together and form a memorable campaign.⁹⁵

A future campaign, in the case that Issue 11 fails, will need to center around a concise, easily digestible message. Campaign communications and materials should be consistent and well designed, including elements like a single color theme and a compelling tagline. In addition, free media opportunities should be kept on message to the best of the abilities of those interviewed or questioned.

Field Strategy

Precinct-by-precinct results indicate a strong rural/urban divide in Lorain County. Future efforts should focus on robust field campaigning and door-to-door communications in the areas of Lorain, Elyria, and Oberlin. Conversely, campaigning should be kept to a minimum in areas of opposition for fear of motivating “No” voters to come out to the polls. Because students at LCCC are an important LCT passenger segment, and because the Oberlin community represented the most resounding support of Primary 2013 Issue 2, we recommend utilizing student volunteers from these communities to assist in the ground-work of a future campaign.



Lorain County Community College

Grants



FTA budget allocation:

Looking at the allocation of funds that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has set aside for different programs provides guidance regarding the best programs to apply for transit in Lorain County funding.

Every year, the President of the United States creates a budget for how the FTA will spend its money. For the 2015 fiscal year, the President's budget requests \$13.9 billion for formula grants "that support transit capital investment, state of good repair, safety, planning, bus and railcar purchases and maintenance, and transit operations in small rural areas."⁹⁶ Within the formula grant section of the budget, there has been a \$1.5 billion increase in providing new busses all over the United States. The capital investment grants section of the budget is at \$2.5 billion; this money is to be allocated for new transit projects for transit improvements.

Despite the FTA's allocation of funds, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODoT) does not invest that much money in transit. Of ODoT's \$3 billion budget, transit is allocated 1% of the total budget despite 9% of households in Ohio not having a car.

The Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program (Section 5307)

This program funds public transportation initiatives in urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more. The Urbanized Area Formula Program is the largest allocation of federal public transportation program funding shares.⁹⁷ Both Elyria and Lorain have populations of over 50,000 and would be eligible to apply for this program.

Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5311)

The program provides funding for public transportation programs in non-urbanized areas. Rural and small urban areas are considered to have a population under 50,000. Each year Congress allocates \$65-85 million for the program.

The states are in charge of the program and in accordance with State Management Plans. Recipients that are eligible to apply are public bodies and non-profit organizations. A private for-profit enterprise under contract is also an eligible recipient.⁹⁸

Rural Transit Program (Section 5311)

This program gives funds to assist with operating and capital expenses for public transportation services in rural and small urban areas (population under 50,000)

Up to 50% of the total project cost can be used for operating expenses and up to 80% for the cost of capital expenses.

State General Revenue funds, from the Ohio Public Transportation Grant Program, are available for up to 30% of operating costs and up to 10% of the costs of capital projects.

Counties, Municipalities, Villages, Regional Transit Authorities, County Transit Boards, Private Nonprofit Corporations designated by county or

municipality, and County or Municipal departments on behalf of a county, municipality or village can apply for this program.⁹⁹

FTA Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program (Section 5310)

The program gives formula funding to States that will allocate the funds to private nonprofit groups that work to assist in the transportation needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. The funds are given based on the annual list of projects included in the statewide grant application.

States are the direct recipients, but sub-recipients can be private non-profit organizations. The funds are divided between the States by a formula that includes the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State from the most recent U.S. census data. At least 20% of the net cost of the activity has to be the local match of capital costs.¹⁰⁰

FTA Bus and Bus Facilities (Sections 5309, 5318)

The Bus and Bus Related Equipment and Facilities Program gives capital assistance for new and replacement buses, related equipment, and facilities. It funds both urban and rural areas.



State and local governments are eligible recipients of the program. Sub-recipients may include public agencies; private companies engaged in public transportation and private non-profit organizations.

There is matching of federal funds for this program. The federal share of the eligible capital costs is 80% of the net capital project cost. However if the project is related to the ADA, the Clean Air Act (CAA), and certain bicycle projects, the federal share may be higher than 80%.¹⁰¹

JARC: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program

JARC is an FTA program that provides grants to state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and local transportation advisors in order to improve access to transportation services for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals who are seeking employment, job training or support activities. Funding for capital and operating projects can also receive money from this program. Up to 50% of the net project cost can use the federal funds for operating costs. The capital projects can use the federal funds for up to 80% of the total project cost.

The rest of the project expenses must be raised by local sources. The local component of funds has to include non-US DOT federal funds. "Revenue from human service contracts; non-US DOT federal funds; state or local appropriations; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; and net income generated from advertising and concessions" are all appropriate options.

MAP-21 repealed JARC so beyond the already designated funds for 2014, the funding picture is less certain.

New Freedom Program

This program provides tools to reduce barriers for Americans with disabilities by granting assistance with integration into the work force and society. It goes beyond what is required in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (which assists disabled individuals with their transportation) by providing for new transportation ser-

VICES and public transit alternatives.

The New Freedom Program funding can also be used to finance capital and operating expenses for transit projects. State governments, local governments, non-profit organizations and local transportation providers can apply for funding from the New Freedom Program as long as the project is serving an area of under 200,000 people.

Projects that are selected have to come from locally developed public transit-human services transportation plans. The federal funds cannot be used for more than 80% of the capital costs of the project. The federal funds for operating costs cannot exceed more than 50% of the net operating costs of the project. The local funds that are contributing to the project cannot be from federal DOT funds. The application this year is due May 7th, 2014.¹⁰²

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program

This program helps to support “surface transportation projects and other related efforts that contribute [to] air quality improvements and provide congestion relief”. It has given around \$30 billion in almost 29,000 transportation environmental projects. Each year MAP-21 gives more than \$2.2 billion in funding for CMAQ. Stark County, for example, received \$2.9 million from CMAQ in 2012.¹⁰³

TIGER Grants

TIGER grants are funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DoT) and stand for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER). According to the official website of the DoT, these grants allow for investments in road, rail, port, and transit projects that promise to “achieve critical national objectives.” Since 2009, Congress has dedicated and approved over \$4.1 billion for TIGER grants alone.

For each TIGER grant, there are six rounds of approval in which projects can be chosen to be



funded. All eligible projects must have a significant impact on a regional or metropolitan area. These rounds all have separate project approval times and for each round the DoT receives various applications for specific investments of transportation needs. These are sorted through and ranked by priority so that the most critical needs will be addressed in the first few rounds. In other words, the highest priority and largest projects that will benefit the most people (i.e. large population areas, heavy transit areas, etc.) will be approved in round one, with the smaller projects being approved in the later rounds. A project from a large city would be a round one approval, whereas a project from Lorain or Elyria would more likely be a round five or six approval. According to the DoT website, since 2009 the \$4.1 billion has been allocated in the following format: \$401 million to port projects, \$808 million to rail projects, \$27 million to planning projects, \$987 to transit projects, \$153 million to bicycle projects, and \$1 billion to road projects.

An example of TIGER funding in use is the 2013 TIGER grant approval for a rail station in New Haven, Connecticut. This project received \$10,000,000 from the DoT and will add a second rail platform to New Haven’s downtown State Street rail station. This will expand weekday trips from the current rate of 12 per week to 24, vastly improving rail transit.¹⁰⁴

According to Virginia Hayes, the Administrative Coordinator for Lorain County’s Community Alliance, it has been made official that the DOT will make around \$600 million available for TIGER grants in 2014. The applications are due April 28, and **are received annually**. In spe-

cific terms of rail funds, 13 awards for freight/rail projects totaled \$121.3 million (\$9.3 million average) in 2013. It is also noted that TIGER grants are designed specifically for “multi-modal” projects.¹⁰⁵

The Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership Program (OTPPP)

The OTPPP gives federal dollars to urban transit systems in Ohio. When allocating these dollars, this program focuses on the preservation of public transit. Preservation is being defined as “working to maintain, sustain, or keep in a good sound state the transit system in Ohio”. Lorain County is eligible to apply for these funds but the authority that receives the funds has to already be a recipient of FTA section 5307, the Urbanized Area Formula Program.

\$14 million has been allocated for this fund for this fiscal year (2014). The ODOT Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ) and the Surface Transportation Program (STP) are the funding sources for OTPPP.¹⁰⁶

Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF)

This fund offers assistance to communities in Ohio by providing funding to help improve the efficient delivery of services. Transit projects fit within this domain because they help “facilitate improved business environments and promote community attraction with their plan for efficiency, collaboration, or shared services.” When there is a robust transit system people are encouraged to go out more and explore their local community leading to greater and more cooperative services.

The applications for this grant are accepted quarterly. Erie County’s transit system received this grant in the past. LGIF gives funding to either feasibility studies or demonstration projects. The feasibility studies receive up to \$50,000 of funding per study.

The Fund gives up to \$100,000 in loan assistance per project and up to \$500,000 for “collaborative demonstration projects”. Each applicant for a collaborative project can receive

\$100,000. If there are multiple bodies interested in getting funding for a project, for example an intermodal center, this could be an efficient option for funding.¹⁰⁷

Elderly and Disabled Transit Fare Assistance Program

This program is under Section 5501.07 (B) of the Ohio revised code. This program allocates funds to reimburse public transit systems that offer reduced fares for the elderly and those with disabilities. These funds offset the loss encountered by transit systems from the reduced price.

Lorain County is currently receiving these reimbursement funds. There is no application involved in this program; it is merely a reimbursement program. It is a fair source of additional revenue, but it is not a supplementary form of funding.¹⁰⁸

Advertising Revenue

Advertising is an integral part of any transit system, given the natural status of buses and trains as kinds of “moving billboards” with the potential to reach large audiences. Advertising revenue itself is “typically modest,” generally representing between 0.1 and 3.0 percent of total operating revenue. But advertising in total dollar amounts can still be quite sizable.

For instance, the Metro Regional Transit Authority (MRTA) of Akron, OH (population ~200,000 people) typically sells external advertisements on its buses for \$100 to \$300 each per month. In 2002, the MRTA brought in \$298,000 from all advertising.

Even more encouragingly, small and medi-

um-size transit agencies located near major metropolitan areas tend “to show relatively high advertising revenues considering the size of the agency and includes agencies that operate suburban bus routes with substantial commuter service into the central city or between suburbs, or both.” This suggests that Lorain County is well situated to receive greater advertising revenue than its population size alone would suggest.

For further revenue projection and comparison, the below table estimates the advertising revenue per 500 buses with regards to variable types and amounts of advertisements.¹⁰⁹

Table 3.1 Source: <http://www.tcrponline.org/>

POTENTIAL GROSS VALUE: BUS VEHICLE ADVERTISING⁽¹⁾ 500 Bus Agency⁽²⁾
ORDER OF MAGNITUDE ESTIMATE*

| Asset Category | Total per Month | Annual per Unit | Annual Ad Revenue (\$) |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Interior bus ads ⁽³⁾ | 30 ads/bus | One bus | 2,700,000 fully sold |
| 500 buses | \$15/ad | \$5,400 | 1,350,000 half sold 675,000 25% sold |
| Exterior ads-1,000 ⁽⁴⁾ | 2 ads/bus | One bus | 2,400,000 fully sold |
| Kings and Queens | \$200/ad | \$4,800 | 1,200,000 half sold |
| Painted buses | 1 bus | | 300,000 fully sold |
| 10 buses | \$2,500 bus | \$30,000 | 150,000 half sold |
| Tail light displays | \$175/bus | \$2,100 | 1,050,000 fully sold |
| 500 | | | 525,000 half sold |
| Total Potential Gross Revenue | | | 6,450,000 fully sold 3,225,000 half sold |
| With 25% of the interior car cards sold | | | 2,550,00 |

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Most contacts call for a 15% commission of the rate card price for the advertising agency. This must be taken into account when calculating potential ad revenue

⁽²⁾ Cities with approximately 500 buses in service include: Miami (MDTA); Portland (Tri-Met); and Denver (RTD).

⁽³⁾ Interior bus ads range from \$10 to \$30 per unit per month depending on such variables as city location, bus route, number of riders, number of ads, and amount of time ad is displayed. Rarely are 50% of available ads sold in any given month.

⁽⁴⁾ Queens, Kings and Super Kings range from \$150 to \$250 per unit per month with all the same variables listed above Exterior ads are easier to sell than interior ads

*Passenger shelter advertising is not included in this chart because most shelter programs produce revenue for the cities, not transit agencies.

Bonds and Debt Leveraging

Another category of funding sources is borrowing mechanisms such as bonds and anticipation notes. A municipal bond is “an interest-bearing certificate issued by governments and corporations when they borrow money.” The bonds are sold to private purchasers “at par” or for their face value, traditionally at \$5,000 each. The number of bonds sold depends on the total funds that the governmental entity wishes to raise. The issuer, with interest, then repays these bonds on a specified date, often 10-30 years later. Bonds should be considered when funds are needed immediately to undertake a project, to gain economic or environmental benefits from early implementation, or to save on financing costs due to avoided inflation.¹¹⁰

It is important to note that these methods actually constitute a deferral of payment, as the municipal bonds sold must be paid back with interest. Such interest is generally exempt from federal income tax as well as state and local taxes. One of the primary strengths of bonds is their ability to give access to funds and begin project construction on “more expeditious timetables.”¹¹¹ There are a variety of bond types and debt vehicles, which can be used to finance transit, such as:

General Obligation Bonds

Bonds secured from the general revenue of the issuer, rather than from a specific tax. The funds raised from these bonds can be used to match federal funds, but place increased pressure on other services funded from the general revenue stream such as schools, making them a largely unpopular option in financing transit.¹¹²

Tax Revenue Bonds

The most common type of bond for transit projects, tax revenue bonds are backed by a designated tax, most commonly a sales tax. These bonds are “relatively low-cost” because of the positive view that rating agencies and the investment community as a whole take of them.¹¹³

Grant Anticipation Financing

Grant anticipation notes (GANs) are bonds backed primarily or wholly by federal or state grants rather than tax revenue as in the case of tax revenue bonds. Over the past 20 years, GANs have gained market acceptance as rating agencies have begun to look favorably on the credit reliability of federal funds, even those allocated from future authorization acts. GANs are particularly advantageous as they are exempt from debt ceiling restrictions and borrowing limits that constrain the previous two types of financing.¹¹⁴



Loan Agreements

If a transit project is deemed too small to attract sufficient bond investment, loan agreements provide an alternative mechanism of finance. These loans can be either secured, requiring an asset to be given as collateral to the lender, or unsecured. In addition to private commercial banks, the Ohio State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) is also a potential source of loans. Both commercial banks and the SIB require credit rating evaluation and designated repayment streams.¹¹⁵

The Community Development Transportation Lending Services, Inc. (CDTLS) is a lending institution based in Washington D.C. which offers loans specifically to transportation providers. They offer loans for site development, vehicle financing and even loans as local matches for federal and state grants. All CDTLS loans are secured, and their rates are negotiable.¹¹⁶

Foundations



Some of the key players when it comes to funding public transportation projects are private investment foundations, which provide support through a variety of avenues. ORG identified three major foundations with a strong emphasis on transportation: The Surdna Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. These foundations averaged 150 million dollars in grants for fiscal year 2012, demonstrating their considerable clout.¹¹⁷

Foundations, virtually without exception, do not invest directly in public transportation projects. Their contributions to such projects are auxiliary, as they fund the groups and organizations involved in public policy, research, and advocacy. These third-party public-private partnerships are important to the public transportation funding process, as they provide the white papers and advocacy that can be mobilized to win support for such projects at both the bureaucratic and electoral levels. Indeed, setting up just such a partnership may be beneficial in the future so as to:

- Build strategies for future expansion and management
- Spread awareness of transportation improvements. It is important to note that private foundations like the three we focus on here are 501(c)(3) tax status organizations and federal law prohibits their funds being used for campaigns.¹¹⁸

When choosing to fund a transportation-related project, foundations have a variety of components that they look for in a potential grantee. If choosing to pursue a foundation grant, certain elements of the proposal ought to be emphasized so as to increase the likelihood of receiving the grant.

- **Environmental Considerations:** The importance of sustainable or low-emissions criteria is evenly divided among the major transportation foundations. Some foundations, like the Surdna Foundation, group their transportation grants under a “sustainable environments” category, and heavily favor grant applications geared toward environmental projects. Other foundations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, do not prioritize environmental impacts above their primary goal in transportation grants of expanding access to under-served groups.
- **Low-Income and Marginalized Groups:** Many foundations emphasize the goal of, as the Rockefeller Foundation phrased it in an interview, “building more inclusive economies” with their transportation funds. These criteria are centered around job access for the unemployed, transportation that links inner-city urban centers, and transit that helps cut the car-based transportation costs for low-income individuals. All three of our above-identified major transportation foundations strongly indicated that they evaluate the impacts on these marginalized groups when reviewing grant applications.

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- ¹² Kim, S. J. (2011)
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Kalo, T. (2014, April 15). Personal interview.
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Oberlin Research Group 2014 Members

- **Ikchan Anthony An**, from South Korea, is currently a junior in Oberlin College. He majors in Economics and Mathematics, especially interested in macroeconomics and statistics. He loves to play soccer and baseball, and is a big fan of Manchester United. After graduation, he wants to study economics in a graduate school.
- **Lila Bhide** is a second year at Oberlin College who intends to double major in Politics and Environmental Studies. She is an active member of the Responsible Investing Organization, the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association, the Slow Food Oberlin club, and a mentorship program for Oberlin elementary school students called the Fifth and Sixth Grade Transitions Program (FAST mentorship). Lila got involved with the Oberlin Research Group this year because she is interested in urban planning and development and she hopes to continue working in this field after graduation. Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, this city has inspired her love for cities and their potential to foster positive and sustainable communities.
- **Eric Bronson** is a senior Politics and History double major from Eugene, Oregon. He likes bowling, reading, playing video games, writing, traveling, and painting. He is a co-founder of the Oberlin Politics Majors Committee, and is an editor of the Oberlin College Journal of Political Science. Eric's long-term plan is to reinvigorate center-left politics in the Pacific Northwest. In the short-term, he hopes sometime this summer to find himself somewhere obscure, be it in Eastern Europe or Alaska.
- **Shauna Godfrey** is a senior Biology major from Toronto, Canada. She is interested in applying business models to organizations as a way of maintaining sustainability. She is the Executive Director of Kenya Reads, an organization that provides resources to help keep youth in rural Kenyan slums in school. Shauna loves cooking, traveling, and playing guitar.
- **Monica Hunter-Hart** is a third year student at Oberlin College majoring in English and International Studies. After graduation, she wishes to pursue education policy reform, specifically in the area of multicultural education. To this end, she is involved in efforts to improve Oberlin's diversity and inclusion practices through her membership on the Oberlin College Educational Plans and Policies Committee and participation in a student working group attempting to implement and improve anti-oppression trainings and workshops on campus. Monica also participates in many musical endeavors; for example, she co-directs Oberlin's steel drum ensemble, "OSteel."
- **Nick Kuipers** is a fourth year Politics major at Oberlin College expecting to graduate in May 2014. Nick is currently writing an honors thesis in political theory and works as a research assistant for Professor Michael Parkin. Although in the future Nick envisions law school and a career in public policy, he will spend next year in Indonesia on a Fulbright Fellowship.
- A native of Louisville, Kentucky, **Mitchell Mattox** is a fourth year student at Oberlin College. He is currently pursuing degrees in Politics and German Studies, and seeks to gain professional experience for his post-graduate future. As a second year transfer student, Mitch involved himself in Student Government, serving as the head of the Oberlin College Student Union Board. As one of the three project managers in the ORG, his work this year has been to provide an overview and general background of the public transit situation in Lorain County. He is grateful for the opportunity to work with the ORG.
- **Christopher Moser** is a third year student from Virginia, but he will almost always say he's from Washington DC. He is currently majoring in Politics and Latin American Studies. He spent the fall semester in São Paulo, Brazil, and he speaks both Spanish and Portuguese. Christopher enjoys playing Lacrosse as a member of Oberlin's Varsity team.

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- **Jesse Neugarten** is currently a junior at Oberlin College majoring in Economics with a Mathematics concentration. He is very interested in economic policy, specifically tax policy reform and policy making to enhance living standards in developing countries. In the future, he is interested in pursuing economics in graduate school studying economic development. He is currently a member of the Oberlin College Varsity Basketball Team and the Oberlin College Investment Club. Along with working with the Oberlin Research Group (ORG) this past semester, he also conducted undergraduate research on Short Term Interest Rates in the U.S economy.
 - **Chloe Peeples** is a senior, graduating in May 2014 with a BA in Politics and a minor in Economics. Chloe is currently the co-chair of the Oberlin branch of Shining Hope for Communities, a non-profit organization located in the slum of Kibera, Kenya that combats gender inequality and poverty by linking a free tuition school for girls to community benefits for all. After graduation, Chloe hopes to launch her career in strategy consulting and her long-term plan is to work as a consultant making non-profits more efficient and effective.
 - **Matthew Rogers** is a graduating senior at Oberlin majoring in Politics. He is originally from Melbourne, Florida and was a four-year varsity letter winner on the lacrosse team. Matthew plans to attend law school and one-day work for the Department of Defense. He also enjoys surfing and video games.
 - **Conrad Schloer** is a sophomore Computer Science major at Oberlin College with interests in game design and bioinformatics. He is a member of the ultimate frisbee team at Oberlin and is the treasurer for Keep Cottage, a 75 person dining co-op. He has worked as a data modeler at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and will be working at MIT during the summer of 2014 teaching teenagers basic programming skills.
 - **James Scott** is a fourth-year Politics and Creative Writing double major at Oberlin College. He has worked on various political campaigns in California, including ballot issues and candidate campaigns at both local and state levels. James is interested in electoral politics, design, and publishing.

Glossary

- **Advertising Revenues-** The revenue earned from displaying advertising materials on transit agency vehicles and property. The amounts should be net of any fees paid to advertising agencies, which place the advertisement with the transit agency
- **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009-** Signed into law by the President on February 17, 2009, the ARRA supports government wide efforts to stimulate the economy and provide grants to several transit agencies.
- **ARRA TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Multimodal Discretionary Program-** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriated \$1.5 billion in discretionary grant funds to be awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure. Known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, these grants are awarded on a competitive basis to fund up to 100 percent of project costs for transportation investments that have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area or a region. This is a multi-modal program that includes transit capital improvements
- **Auxiliary Transportation Revenues-** The funds earned from operations closely associated with transportation operations. Auxiliary transportation funds include: Concessions - station and vehicle concessions; Advertising revenues; Other - including ID card fees (seniors, persons with disabilities, employees), fare evasion and park-and-ride lot fines, and automotive vehicle ferriage.
- **Average Trip Length-** The average distance ridden for an unlinked passenger trip (UPT) by time period (weekday, Saturday, Sunday) computed as passenger miles traveled (PMT) divided by unlinked passenger trips (UPT).
- **Bonds-** Financing mechanism used to raise funds. Bonds are secured debt offered through a legal entity (usually a state or local government) that guarantees two rights to the purchaser:
 - The right to receive a fixed interest payment (e.g., 10%), often semiannually, on the par value of the bond (e.g., \$10,000), and
 - The right to be paid the par value of the bond (e.g., \$10,000) at a definite future date when the bond matures (e.g., 20 years after issuance).
- **Bus Rapid Transit (RB)-** Fixed-route bus mode in which the majority of each line operates in a separated right-of-way dedicated for public transportation use during peak periods; and that includes features that emulate the services provided by rail fixed guideway public transportation systems, including:
 - a. defined stations;
 - b. traffic signal priority for public transportation vehicles;
 - c. short headway bidirectional services for a substantial part of weekdays and weekend days; and
 - d. any other features the Secretary may determine are necessary to produce high-quality public transportation services that emulate the services provided by rail fixed guideway public transportation systems.

- **Bus Stop-** Pre-defined location for passengers to board and/or alight the transit vehicle, typically on-street, at the curb, or in a median, sometimes with a shelter, sign, or lighting.
- **Buses (BU)(vehicle type)-**Vehicle type: Rubber-tired passenger vehicles powered by diesel, gasoline, battery or alternative fuel engines contained within the vehicle. Vehicles in this category do not include articulated, double-decked, or school buses
- **Capital Expenses-** The expenses related to the purchase of equipment. Equipment means an article of non-expendable tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals the lesser of the capitalization level established by the government unit for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.
- **Commuter Bus (CB)-** Fixed-route bus systems that are primarily connecting outlying areas with a central city through bus service that operates with at least five miles of continuous closed-door service. This service typically operates using motorcoaches (aka over-the-road buses), and usually features peak scheduling, multiple-trip tickets, and multiple stops in outlying areas with limited stops in the central city.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)-** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds transferred from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) to FTA for transit projects. This program is to help improve air quality and to manage traffic congestion. Transferred funds may be used for capital expansion and improvements that increase ridership, travel demand management strategies, shared ride services, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- **Contract Revenues-** Reimbursement by any organization, government, agency, or company, as a result of a formal contractual agreement with the transit service operator, for trips provided to a specific passenger or group of passengers.
- **County-** A small administrative district of a country; esp., the largest local administrative subdivision of most States of the U.S.
- **Customer-** An individual on board a revenue transit vehicle or an intending/deboarded passenger in a transit facility. Excludes operators, transit employees, and contractors.
- **Demand Response Service (Rural Module)-** Shared use transit service operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who schedules a vehicle to pick up the passengers to transport them to their destinations.
- **Demand Response-Taxi (DT) -** A special form of the demand response mode operated through taxicab providers. The mode is always purchased transportation type of service.
- **Direct Cost-** An object class cost (e.g., labor, services, materials and supplies) that is incurred exclusively for a particular function, mode and type of service (TOS). For example, an operator whose time is spent solely in driving a bus (MB) (vehicle operations - MB/DO) or a mechanic who works only on directly operated (DO) buses (MB) (vehicle maintenance - MB/DO).
- **Directly Generated Funds-** Any funds where revenues are generated by or donated directly to the transit agency, including: passenger fare revenues, advertising revenues, donations, bond proceeds, and taxes imposed by the transit agency.
- **Directly Levied Tax-** the tax revenues to transit agencies that are organized as independent political subdivisions with their own taxation authority.
- **Estimated Unlinked Passenger Trips (EUPT)-** the number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.

- **Federal Capital Assistance (Rural Module)-** Financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration to assist in paying the capital costs of providing transit service.
- **Federal Government Funds-** Financial assistance obtained from the Federal government to assist with paying the costs of providing transit services.
- **Federal Operating Assistance (Rural Module)-** Financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration to assist in paying the operating costs of providing transit service.
- **FHWA-** Federal Highway Administration
- **Fixed Route Services-** Services provided on a repetitive, fixed schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pickup and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed route trip serves the same origins and destinations, such as rail and bus (MB); unlike demand responsive (DR) and vanpool (VP) services.
- **Flexible Funding Programs-** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) programs that allow the transfer of funds to the FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program (UAF) to be used for transit projects:
 - Surface Transportation Program (STP)
 - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
 - National Highway System (NHS)
- **FTA-** Federal Transit Administration
- **FTA Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)-** The FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Program (§5339) is a formula program that finances capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. Grants received under the old §5309 Bus and Bus Facilities program should be reported under §5309; this category should be used only for new grants made under MAP-21.
- **FTA Capital Program (Section 5309)-** Financial assistance from Section 5309 of the Federal Transit Act. This program provides capital assistance for three primary activities:
 - New and replacement buses and facilities
 - Modernization of existing fixed guideway (FG) systems
 - New fixed guideway (FG) systems.
- **FTA Clean Fuels Program (Section 5308)-** Financial assistance from Section 5308 of the Federal Transit Act. This program supports the use of alternative fuels in air quality maintenance or nonattainment areas for ozone or carbon monoxide, both for urbanized and other than urbanized areas. Funds may be used for the purchase or lease of clean fuel buses, the construction of clean fuel electrical recharging facilities, improvement to existing facilities to accommodate clean fuel buses, and the re-powering and retrofit or rebuild of pre-1993 engines if before a mid-life rebuild.
- **FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute Formula Program (JARC) (Section 5316)-** Financial assistance from Section 5316 of the Federal Transit Act. This program pertains to:
 1. Access to jobs projects for the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment, including: Transportation projects to finance planning, capital, and operating costs of providing access to jobs;
 - Promoting public transportation by low-income workers, including the use of public

transportation by workers with nontraditional work schedules;

- Promoting the use of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals; and
- Promoting the use of employer-provided transportation, including the transit pass benefit program under section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

2. Reverse commute projects for public transportation designed to transport residents of urbanized areas and other than urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities, including any projects to: Subsidize the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urbanized areas and other than urbanized areas to suburban workplaces;

- Subsidize the purchase or lease by a nonprofit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace; or
 - Otherwise facilitate the provision of public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities.
- **FTA Metropolitan Planning (Section 5303)**- Financial assistance from Section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act. This program supports the cooperative, continuous and comprehensive planning program for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas.
 - **FTA New Freedom Program (Section 5317)**- Financial assistance from Section 5317 of the Federal Transit Act. This is a formula program to encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Funds may be used for associated capital and operating costs.
 - **FTA Other Than Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5311)**- Financial assistance from Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act. This program provides formula funding to States and Indian Tribes for the purpose of supporting public transportation in areas with a population of less than 50,000. Funding may be used for capital, operating, State administration, and project administration expenses. Under Section 5311, SAFETEA-LU also includes provisions for Growing States and High Density States Factors.
 - **FTA Research, Development, Demonstration and Training Projects (Section 5312)**- Financial assistance from Section 5312 of the Federal Transit Act. This program promotes research, development and demonstration projects to improve or help public transportation meet total urban transportation needs, and also projects that use innovative techniques in managing and providing public transportation; and provides training fellowships in managerial, technical and professional positions in the public transportation field.
 - **FTA Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) Formula**- SAFETEA-LU establishes a provision in the FTA Urbanized Area Formula program (Section 5307) to distribute funds to urbanized areas under 200,000 population. Under the formula for STIC, funds are apportioned to urbanized areas (UZA) with a population less than 200,000 that meet or exceed the average level of service for all UZAs with populations between 200,000 and 1,000,000. The UZAs must operate at a level of service equal to or above the industry average level of service for all UZAs with a population of at least 200,000 but not more than 999,999, in one or more of six performance categories:
 1. Passenger miles traveled per vehicle revenue mile,
 2. Passenger miles traveled per vehicle revenue hour
 3. Vehicle revenue miles per capita,

4. Vehicle revenue hours per capita,
 5. Passenger miles traveled per capita, and
 6. Passengers per capita.
- **FTA Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program (Section 5310)**- Financial assistance from Section 5310 of the Federal Transit Act. This program provides capital assistance to state and local governments and private non-profit groups in meeting the transportation needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. A seven State pilot program for FY 2006-2009 has been established to determine whether expanding eligibility to operating assistance would improve services to elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. In the pilot, up to 33% of a participating State's apportioned Section 5310 funds may be used for operating expenses. The State (or State-designated agency) administers the section 5310 program,)
 - **FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307)**- Financial assistance from Section 5307 of the Federal Transit Act. This program makes Federal resources available for capital and operating assistance for transit in urbanized areas (UZAs). The Urbanized Area Formula Program also supports planning, in addition to that funded under the Metropolitan Planning program (Section 5303). Funding is apportioned directly to each UZA with a population of 200,000 or more, and to the State Governors for UZAs with populations between 50,000 and 200,000. Generally, operating assistance is not an eligible expense for UZAs with populations of 200,000 or more. However, there are several exceptions to this restriction (See SAFETEA-LU). Under Section 5307, SAFETEA-LU also includes provisions for Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) Formula and Growing States and High Density States Factors.
 - **Funds Allocated to Transit out of General Revenues of the Government Entity**- Any funds allocated to transit out of the general revenues of the governmental entity. General revenue funds are usually determined through a state or local government's annual budgeting process
 - **Funds Dedicated to Transit at their Source**- Any funds raised specifically for transit purposes and which are dedicated at their source, rather than an appropriation of general funds. These funds include: dedicated taxes; bridges, tunnels and highway tolls; bonds and loans; other dedicated funds.
 - **Intercity Bus (IB)(Rural Module)**- Regularly scheduled public service using an over-the-road bus that operates with limited stops between two urbanized areas or that connects rural areas to an urbanized area. Intercity bus mode should only be used by private, intercity bus providers
 - **Interest Expenses (511)**- The charges for the use of borrowed capital incurred by the transit agency, including: interest on long term; short-term dept obligations; and interest charges pertaining to construction debt that is capitalized will not be reflected as interest expenses.
 - **JARC**- FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute Program
 - **Jitney (JT)**- A transit mode comprised of passenger cars or vans operating on fixed routes (sometimes with minor deviations) as demand warrants without fixed schedules or fixed stops.
 - **Joint Expenses or Shared Costs**- An object class cost (e.g., labor, services, materials and supplies) that is shared by one or more functions, modes or types of service (TOS). For example, bus (MB) and demand response (DR) revenue vehicles may fuel at the same location (vehicle operations function - MB and DR/DO) so that fuel expenses (object class 504.01) and their taxes (object class 507) are shared.
 - **Local Capital Funds (Rural Module)**- Financial assistance from local entities to assist in

paying capital. They include:

- Tax levies - A specified amount from local tax levies that is dedicated to supporting the capital costs of the public transit system;
- General funds - Transfers from the general fund of local governments to cover the Local Share portion of transit system capital costs;
- Specified contributions - Contributions from the local government towards the Local Share portion of transit system capital costs;
- Reserve funds - Transfers from a capital reserve fund of local governments expressly established to be used to cover the Local Share portion of transit system capital costs; and
- Donations - Donations from individuals or organizations to help cover the transit system capital costs.

Local Government Funds- Financial assistance from local governments (below the state level) to help cover the costs of providing transit services.

Local Operating Funds- Financial assistance from local entities that support the operation of the transit system. They include, but are not limited to:

- Tax levies - A specified amount from local levies that is dedicated to supporting public transit system operating costs;
- General funds - Transfers from the general fund of local governments to cover the Local Share portion of the transit system budget;
- Specified contributions - Contributions from city, county or other municipal government towards the Local Share portion of the transit system budget;
- Donations - Donations from individuals or organizations to help cover the costs of providing transit service but which are not related to specific passengers or trips; and
- Other - Other revenues such as advertising.

- **Mass Transportation-** Synonymous term with public transportation.
- **Multi-County/Independent City-** Service operated primarily within the boundaries of two or more counties/independent cities or parishes.
- **Multi-Modal Stations-** A passenger station that serves more than one mode of transit, possibly including modes not included in NTD.
- **Operating Expenses (OE)-** The expenses associated with the operation of the transit agency, and classified by function or activity, and the goods and services purchased. The basic functions and object classes are defined in Section 5.2 and 6.2 of the Uniform System of Accounts (USOA). These are consumable items with a useful life of less than one year or an acquisition cost which equals the lesser of the capitalization level established by the government unit for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.
- **Passenger-** An individual on board, boarding, or alighting from a revenue transit vehicle. Excludes operators, transit employees and contractors.
- **Passenger Fares-** revenue earned from carrying passengers in regularly scheduled and demand response service. Passenger fares include: the base fare; zone premiums; express service premiums; extra cost transfers; and quantity purchase discounts applicable to the passenger's ride.
- **Passenger Stations-** A passenger boarding / deboarding facility with a platform; buildings

with a waiting room, ticket office or machines, restrooms, or concessions.

- **Public Agency or Transit System-** A public entity that provides public transportation services. It may be a state or local government, or any department, special purpose district (e.g. transit or transportation district), authority or other instrumentality of one or more state or local governments (e.g., joint powers agency).
- **Public Entity-** Any of the following three categories (49CFR37): Any state or local government;
 - Any department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of one or more state or local governments; and
 - The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and any commuter authority.
- **Public Transportation-** As defined in the Federal Transit Act, "transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but does not include school bus, charter, or intercity bus transportation or intercity passenger rail transportation provided by the entity described in chapter 243 (or a successor to such entity)."
- **Service Area-** A measure of access to transit service in terms of population served and area coverage (square miles). The reporting transit agency determines the service area boundaries and population for most transit services using the definitions contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), i.e. a corridor surrounding the routes $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side, or for rail, a series of circles of radius $\frac{3}{4}$ mile centered on each station. Transit agency reporters are required to submit service area information on the Identification form (B-10).
- **Service Area — Demand Response-** As Demand Response does not operate over a fixed route, but rather serves a broad area, the service area cannot be measured by corridors (see Service Area — Bus (MB)). Therefore, the service area for demand response (DR) is the area encompassing the origin to destination points wherever people can be picked up and dropped off.
- **Social Service Agency-** A public or private nonprofit organization providing specialized programs and transportation service to a specific clientele such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- **State Capital Assistance-** Financial assistance from any state agency to assist in paying capital costs.
- **State Government Funds-** Financial assistance obtained from a state government(s) to assist with paying the costs of providing transit services.
- **State Operating Assistance-** Financial assistance from any state agency that supports the operation of the transit system. It includes, but is not limited to:
 - Tax levies - A specified amount from state levies that is dedicated to supporting public transit system operating costs;
 - General funds - Transfers from the general fund of state governments to cover the Local Share portion of the transit system budget; and
 - Specified contributions - Contributed from the state towards the Local Share portion of the transit system budget.
- **Taxes (507)-** The taxes levied against the transit agency by Federal, state and local governments.
- **Transit-** Synonymous term with public transportation.

- **Transit agency (also called transit system)**- An entity (public or private) responsible for administering and managing transit activities and services. Transit agencies can directly operate transit service or contract out for all or part of the total transit service provided. When responsibility is with a public entity, it is a public transit agency. When more than one mode of service is operated, it is a multimodal transit agency.
- **Trolleybus (TB)**- A transit mode comprised of electric rubber-tired passenger vehicles, manually steered and operating singly on city streets. Vehicles are propelled by a motor drawing current through overhead wires via trolleys, from a central power source not onboard the vehicle.
- **Urbanized Area (UZA)**- An area defined by the U. S. Census Bureau that includes:
 - One or more incorporated cities, villages, and towns (central place); and
 - The adjacent densely settled surrounding territory (urban fringe) that together has a minimum of 50,000 persons.
 - The urban fringe generally consists of contiguous territory having a density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. Urbanized areas do not conform to congressional districts or any other political boundaries.

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