

Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan for the SEDA-COG and Williamsport Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations



May 2014



Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan

May 2014

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For:

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Executive Summary

Purpose and Background

This plan updates and amends the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (“Coordinated Plan”) of the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Plan was first developed in 2007 and revised in 2008 on behalf of the SEDA-COG MPO and its local stakeholders with an interest in human service transportation programs. The SEDA-COG MPO serves as the regional transportation planning body for the eight counties of Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union. The SEDA-COG MPO closely coordinates transportation planning activities with neighboring Lycoming County, which is served by the Williamsport Area Transportation Study (WATS) MPO. Consequently, for this Plan update, it was determined that the SEDA-COG MPO and WATS MPO would develop a joint Coordinated Plan to satisfy planning requirements and use resources more efficiently. While this joint Coordinated Plan update considers all human service transportation needs, an emphasis is placed on transportation needs of low-income populations, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

This plan also fulfills a federal requirement first enacted in 2005 through the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which stipulated that starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three SAFETEA-LU programs — the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) — are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit–human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) described the plan as a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”

In June 2012, Congress enacted a new two-year federal surface transportation authorization, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), which retained many but not all of the coordinated planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU. Under MAP-21, JARC and New Freedom are eliminated as stand-alone programs, and the Section 5310 and New Freedom Programs are consolidated under Section 5310 into a single program, Formula Grants for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, which provides for a mix of capital and operating funding for projects. This is the only funding program with coordinated planning requirements under MAP-21, but FTA encourages continuation of the coordinated planning process as a best practice for project selection as it ensures the target population for these projects is included in the planning process.

This Plan is intended to meet the federal planning requirements as well as to provide SEDA-COG/WATS MPOs and their regional partners with a “blueprint” for implementing a range of

strategies intended to promote and advance local efforts to improve transportation for persons with disabilities, seniors, and persons with low incomes. The strategies in this Plan inform and are integrated into the respective MPO Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs). Regional transit priorities using federal and state funds are also included on the respective MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) that list projects to be funded over a 4-year period.

Fully coordinated public transit-human services transportation for the region will require certain essential elements: (1) sustainable funding dedicated to the operation of the region's transportation solutions; (2) federal and state policies in support of transit planning; and (3) broad and inclusive involvement from partner agencies and other stakeholders. To best serve the region's needs for mobility services in the future, these partnerships will need to involve not just providers of public transit and human service transportation, but also private transportation providers, advocacy groups representing seniors and people with disabilities, medical and dialysis providers, faith-based groups, veterans' service providers, providers of support services to the working poor, etc.

Plan Methodology and Outreach

The methodology used to develop the plan update included the following steps:

Review Recent Assessments and Best Practices: A review was conducted of the 2011 North Central Pennsylvania Regional Public Transportation Needs Assessment (2011 Needs Assessment) to consider key data and findings from this report to incorporate into the Plan update. Reviews were also done for other recent local studies examining transportation needs in the region, and new research was undertaken on innovative coordinated plan strategies developed since MAP-21 was passed.

Update Demographic Profile: An updated demographic profile of the region was prepared using data from the Census Bureau and other relevant sources, to determine the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on low-income populations, persons with disabilities, seniors, and other individuals that are traditionally more dependent on transit services. Estimates from recent American Community Survey (ACS) datasets were primarily used in generating the demographic profile. Various tables and maps in this Plan were prepared to summarize the demographic data.

Document Existing Transportation Services: This step involved documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in the region. These services primarily include public fixed-route and shared ride services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by human service agencies. Information about public transit operators was obtained from existing resources such as the 2011 Needs Assessment and PennDOT reports, along with new surveying done for this Plan update.

Conduct Outreach: Development of the original Coordinated Plan included stakeholder involvement and public participation via meetings, stakeholder interviews, and convening a committee to examine coordination issues in detail. Through these efforts, transportation gaps were identified or confirmed. Stakeholders provided input on existing barriers to coordination as well as possibilities for improvement. Since the original Plan was developed, SEDA-COG and WATS MPOs have relied on continuous public involvement through annual transit committee meetings, regular public transportation task force meetings, surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews. Considering there has been frequent outreach since 2008, and a detailed Needs Assessment was completed in 2011, streamlined public involvement was used for this Plan update. Methods included outreach conducted via other local and regional planning efforts involving the target populations, meetings with regional stakeholder groups to both review and re-validate findings and to try to reach new perspectives not previously engaged in the initial coordinated planning process, and a new survey of residents and organizations about public transportation issues. Stakeholder comments received during the Plan update outreach process surveying are summarized in Chapter 5 and included in the Appendices.

Assess Needs: The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing how service for low-income populations, seniors, and persons with disabilities should be improved. Needs are based on both a quantitative demand analysis and a qualitative assessment of transit needs developed through the conduct of public outreach, stakeholder interviews, and surveys. The results of the needs assessment are summarized in Chapter 5.

Identify and Prioritize Strategies: Following the identification of service gaps, the planning process identified corresponding potential service solutions. Public transportation committees were used to identify and validate regional priorities, with the understanding that priorities may shift over time, and that certain improvement strategies should be broad enough for transit project applications to be deemed eligible by state and federal approval agencies. The strategies are documented in Chapter 6, and greater details for certain strategies are provided in Appendix E.

Demographic Profile

Key findings emerging from the demographic study of the 9-county region, using U.S. Census Bureau data (largely from the American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates), are identified below. 2007-2011 ACS estimates aggregate the sample responses from households collected from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2011 and represent the average estimate of a population/housing characteristic over the entire 5-year time period. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. Margins of error have been omitted in this report for clarity, but are available for all ACS estimates on factfinder2.census.gov.

Low-Income Population: 13.7% of the region's residents for whom poverty status is determined live below the federal poverty level.

Seniors: 16.7% of the region's total population is age 65 or older. Within this older-adult population, 37.3% have a disability and 8.9% live below the federal poverty level. By the year 2040, the population age 65 and older is projected to increase by 45.7% to nearly 121,000 residents, or 23.1% of the region's total population.

Individuals with a Disability: Persons with a disability total 14.1% of the region's total civilian noninstitutionalized population.

Vehicle Availability: While 8.6% of the region's households overall have no access to a vehicle, the carless percentage is higher for the senior citizens target population, where 13.8% of householders 65 or older have no access to a vehicle.

Additional demographic information about the region's low-income, senior, and disabled populations is detailed in Chapter 3. Data for minority, female householder, journey to work, and other characteristics are also provided there. Detailed mapping by county and Census tract is provided in Appendix A.

Existing Transportation Services

The 2007 Coordinated Plan created an inventory of agencies that provide public transit-human service transportation and collected basic information about the agencies. This inventory was updated as part of the Plan update process, including information from the 2011 Needs Assessment and PennDOT reports. Also, a survey was sent to public transit agencies, as well as a range of public and private agencies that provide transportation for clients, program participants, specific populations, or the general public. Survey invitations were sent by email to over 115 separate organizations (representing public transit, aging, disabled, low-income, educational, health, personal care, and other interests), and they were asked to send the survey link on to others in their network. 33 completed surveys were received; the responses are intended to help understand existing services and support increased coordination and removal of transportation barriers.

Needs Assessment/Transportation Gaps

Several key themes emerged from the outreach efforts, stakeholder consultation, and previous planning projects. These include:

Enhanced Fixed Route Services: For persons who can and do use the fixed route system, there is a need for additional service in rural and suburban areas, and for more direct service to key activity centers that traditional and non-traditional riders need to access. Residents also would like increased frequency to avoid long waits, more service across county lines, and service longer into the evening and on weekends.

Enhanced Shared Ride Services: Shared ride users sometimes need a level of service above and

beyond what is required by the ADA, such as service provided on the same day it is requested, where and when the fixed route service does not operate, or the ability to accommodate other mobility devices.

Connectivity: The need for better connectivity between service providers was expressed, both for inter- and intra-county travel, whether using shared ride or fixed-route service.

Transit Experience: Residents mentioned the need for better shelters and bus stops as well as other amenities and accommodations (e.g., lighting) at transfer sites for user safety and comfort.

Transit Alternatives: For those who need transportation where public transit (fixed-route or complementary shared ride) is unavailable or unsuitable, affordable alternatives are needed that enable people to live independently, such as ride-sharing or volunteer programs, car loan programs, or programs that bring support services to people's homes.

Information and Other Assistance: There is a need for education and information in a variety of formats so that older adults and persons with disabilities can learn how to use public transit and its accessible features. Likewise, there is a need to ensure drivers, dispatchers, and other transit personnel are sensitive to passenger needs, and know how to provide assistance on-board the vehicle.

Transportation for Youth: Transportation gaps specifically related to youth and children were mentioned, including the cost of transportation for K-12 youth and college students in accessing after-school jobs and events or commuting to classes. Transportation for youth and children was also cited as a challenge for parents that need to take children along to medical appointments.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Access: The need to improve accessibility to and from bus stops and transfer centers was received. Sidewalks, curb cuts, curb ramps, crosswalks, bike lanes, bike racks, etc. could overcome some of these accessibility issues for people to use transit services. Safe routes for walking or riding a bicycle are an issue in many low-income communities and rural/suburban areas. Lack of adequate signage and wayfinding information for pedestrians and bikers is a related issue.

Potential Strategies to Address Gaps

Potential strategies are identified to address the gaps that emerged from the outreach process and review of prior plans. These suggested solutions are grouped into three main categories:

- Activities that better coordinate and consolidate transportation services and resources;
- Activities that enhance mobility; and
- Activities that improve communication, training, and organizational support.

These strategies represent categories of potential investments, which might be eligible for Federal Transit Administration funds subject to this plan, or other local sources of funding. Chapter 6 tables list the strategies and their implementation timeframes, while Appendix E provides greater detail for strategies developed through the 2011 Needs Assessment.

Next Steps

This update of the SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPO Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plans has afforded the planning team numerous insights into the current status of coordinated transportation efforts in the region. The public outreach efforts detailed elsewhere in this document point towards several potential activities that should be pursued by the MPOs and their regional partners. The next steps in completing this planning process include the following:

Adopt the Coordinated Plan Update: Adopting this Plan update, to reflect the region’s updated conditions, needs, strategies, and priorities will comprise the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan update required under current federal guidance, and combines into a joint Plan work that was done individually by SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs in the past. [The SEDA-COG MPO adopted this Plan update on May 2, 2014; the Williamsport MPO adopted this Plan update on May 27, 2014.]

Inform Future Funding Decisions Based on Coordinated Plan Update Strategies: There are several actions that the MPOs can take in the coming months and years to ensure funding priorities reflect the findings and strategies outlined in this Plan, particularly the regional strategies outlined in Chapter 6.

Complete Programming of SAFETEA-LU–Funded Programs Subject to Coordinated Planning Requirements: The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) administers and has been responsible for selecting projects for use of Section 5310 funds under SAFETEA-LU, as well as JARC and New Freedom funds in the state’s rural and small-urbanized areas. The SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs stand ready to participate in evaluations and application rankings that may be needed to use up any final SAFETEA-LU JARC or New Freedom funds.

MAP-21 Funding and Program Management: Following the release of finalized FTA guidance for consolidated Section 5310, 5307, and 5311 Programs authorized under MAP-21, SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs will complete their necessary roles with these Programs, as determined by FTA and PennDOT. Activities may include application reviews, project recommendations, Transportation Improvement Program management, etc.

Support Allied Groups and Committees: The SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs should continue to foster the activities of area groups in order to more clearly identify public transportation gaps and implement feasible solutions. Continued close coordination with transit operators will be necessary to bring about capital equipment upgrades and enhanced

service delivery.

Plan Update: Current federal guidelines indicate that at a minimum, the coordinated plan should follow a five-year update cycle for air quality attainment areas. Following adoption of the Plan in May 2014, SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs would next update the region's Coordinated Plan in 2019, although this date is beyond the horizon of the current federal authorization. Because projects funded by transit programs subject to the coordinated planning requirement must be included in the Plan, it may also be necessary to update or amend the list of priority strategies to coincide with future Section 5310 funding cycles, or other funding cycles specific to fund sources subject to this Plan.

Chapter 1: Purpose and Background

This plan updates and amends the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (“Coordinated Plan”) of the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Plan was first developed in 2007 and revised in 2008 on behalf of the SEDA-COG MPO and its local stakeholders with an interest in human service transportation programs. The SEDA-COG MPO serves as the regional transportation planning body for the eight counties of Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union. The SEDA-COG MPO closely coordinates transportation planning activities with neighboring Lycoming County, which is served by the Williamsport Area Transportation Study (WATS) MPO. (See Figure 1 on page 2 for a map of the planning area.) Consequently, for this Plan update, it was determined that the SEDA-COG MPO and WATS MPO would develop a joint Coordinated Plan to satisfy planning requirements and use resources more efficiently. While this joint Coordinated Plan update considers all human service transportation needs, an emphasis is placed on transportation needs of low-income populations, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

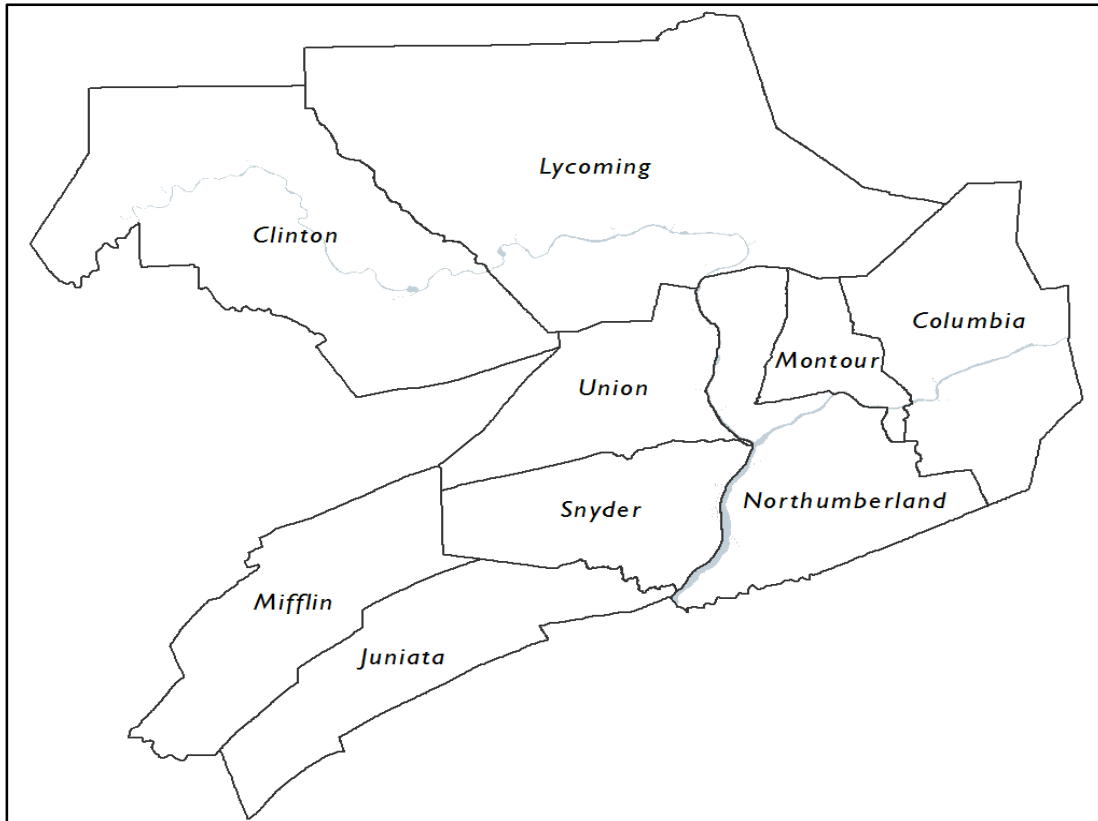
This plan also fulfills a federal requirement first enacted in 2005 through the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which stipulated that starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three SAFETEA-LU programs — the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) — are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit–human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) described the plan as a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”

In July 2012, Congress enacted a new two-year federal surface transportation authorization, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), which became effective on October 1, 2012. This law retained many but not all of the coordinated planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU. Under MAP-21, JARC and New Freedom are eliminated as stand-alone programs, and the Section 5310 and New Freedom Programs are consolidated under Section 5310 into a single program, Formula Grants for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, which provides for a mix of capital and operating funding for projects. This is the only funding program with coordinated planning requirements under MAP-21, but FTA encourages continuation of the coordinated planning process as a best practice for project selection as it ensures the target population for other transit projects is included in the planning process.

This Plan is intended to meet the federal planning requirements as well as to provide SEDA-COG/WATS MPOs and their regional partners with a “blueprint” for implementing a range of strategies intended to promote and advance local efforts to improve transportation for persons with disabilities, seniors, and persons with low incomes. The strategies in this Plan inform and

are integrated into the respective MPO Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs). Regional transit priorities using federal and state funds are also included on the respective MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) that list projects to be funded over a 4-year period.

Figure 1: SEDA-COG & WATS MPO Planning Area



Coordinated Plan Requirements

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has provided specific guidelines for the preparation of the Coordinated Plan. The following are the four main elements required of the Coordinated Plan, taken from FTA Proposed Circular 9070.1G, which incorporates provisions of MAP-21:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- (2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- (3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- (4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time,

and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Essentially, the Coordinated Plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting local needs; and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A Coordinated Plan should maximize the transit programs' collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan must be developed through a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public/private/non-profit transportation and human services transportation providers, and other members of the public.

Three former FTA formula programs, the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs, previously required that eligible projects be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. Under MAP-21, the Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program was repealed and a new eligibility was created for job access and reverse commute projects under Sections 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula Program) and 5311 (Formula Program for Rural Areas). In addition, the Section 5317 program was repealed and a new eligibility was created for these project types under Section 5310. Beginning with funding apportioned for FY 2013, the requirement that eligible projects be derived from a Coordinated Plan only applies to the Section 5310 program. While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under the Section 5310 program, a Coordinated Plan should incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committees

The purpose of the SEDA-COG and WATS Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committees ("Coordinating Committees") is to review, comment on, and recommend for funding transit applications from their respective regions. In addition, the committee members are charged with assessing the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income residents; identifying strategies and/or activities to address identified service gaps; and setting relative public transportation priorities for implementation.

SEDA-COG and WATS did not have existing committees to serve the above purpose when the FFY 2007 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan guidelines were circulated by PennDOT. Therefore, new planning groups were constructed to draw on the knowledge and experience of a wide range of stakeholders familiar with public transit and human services transportation matters. Over the years, SEDA-COG and WATS have continued to reach out to agencies and individuals to request their representation on the committees. The Coordinating Committee members are much appreciated for actively participating, providing valuable feedback on key public transportation issues, asking probing questions, and performing individual research to support the effort. As a more comprehensive, continuous, and coordinated transit planning process is executed, SEDA-COG and WATS will work to engage

more representatives to serve on the Coordinating Committees and chart a course for improved public transportation in the region.

The following dedicated people have agreed to serve on the SEDA-COG Coordinating Committee and/or attended the recent annual committee meetings:

Amanda Boyer, Montour County Transit
Lennea Brown, RiverWoods Senior Living Community
Jennifer Dunkelberger, Columbia County Human Services
Richard Farr, rabbittransit (Northumberland County Transportation)
Carey Mullins, PennDOT Program Center
Megan Janolek, Lower Anthracite Transportation System
Robert McQuillan, LIFE Geisinger
Pat Rumberger, Northumberland County Area Agency on Aging
Daniel Merk, STEP, Inc.
James Plankenhorn, STEP, Inc.
Sandra Ressler, Sunbury Housing Authority
Mark Ryman, MTR Transportation, Inc.
Paul Santomauro, Telos Taxi
Carol Slear, Nottingham Village
Cindy Sunderland, Call A Ride Service, Inc.
Tammy Young, Union-Snyder Community Action Agency
Farida Zaid, Union-Snyder Area Agency on Aging
Louise Spigelmyer, Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance
Cindy Zerbe, Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance

The following dedicated people have agreed to serve on the WATS Coordinating Committee and/or attended the recent annual committee meetings:

Carolyn Bullock, Interested Citizen
Steve Herman, SEDA-COG
John Kiehl, River Valley Transit
Kevin Kilpatrick, River Valley Transit
Daniel Merk, STEP, Inc.
James Plankenhorn, STEP, Inc.

Federal Transit Programs

Below are descriptions of the Federal transit programs applicable for this Plan.

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)

This program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for projects to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

complementary paratransit services. Section 5310 funds are available for capital and operating expenses to provide these services. Examples of eligible capital expenses include:

- Acquisition or replacement of buses or vans;
- Vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul;
- Purchase and installation of benches, shelters, and other passenger amenities;
- Computer hardware and software;
- Dispatch systems;
- Fare collection systems;
- Transit related intelligent transportation systems;
- Leasing of equipment; and
- Mobility management techniques.

Other eligible capital and operating expenses include projects that: meet special needs of seniors and disabled individuals when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate or unavailable; exceed the requirements of ADA; improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA complementary paratransit service; or serve as alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA include:

- (a) Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA;
- (b) Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services;
- (c) The incremental cost of providing same day service;
- (d) The incremental cost (if any) of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not as a reasonable modification for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system;
- (e) Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination;
- (f) Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for wheelchairs under the ADA (i.e., larger than 30" x 48" and/or weighing more than 600 pounds) and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs. This would permit the acquisition of lifts with a larger capacity, as well as modifications to lifts with a 600 pound design load, and the acquisition of heavier-duty vehicles for paratransit and/or demand-response service; and
- (g) Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA.

Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service include:

- (a) Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curbs-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features;

- (b) Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA;
- (c) Improving signage or wayfinding technology;
- (d) Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); or
- (e) New travel training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities.

Public transportation alternatives that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities include:

- (a) Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, and/or vanpooling programs;
- (b) Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers; or
- (c) Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs.

As mentioned earlier, the Section 5317 New Freedom program was a formula grant program that provided funding for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services beyond those required by the ADA and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA, designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services. New Freedom was formerly to be addressed specifically in Coordinated Plans, but it was repealed by MAP-21. While the New Freedom program was repealed under MAP-21, New Freedom activities are now an eligible project type under the Section 5310 program. Funds authorized under the New Freedom program and not yet obligated or expended remain available for obligation in a grant under the terms and conditions of U.S. Code, until the applicable statutory period of availability expires, or until the funds are fully expended, rescinded by Congress, or otherwise reallocated.

Federal/Local Matching Requirements: The Section 5310 Federal share for eligible capital projects is up to 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. The Federal share for eligible operating costs may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the activity. Recipients may use up to 10 percent of their apportionment to support program administrative costs including administration, planning, and technical assistance. The local share of eligible capital costs shall be not less than 20 percent of the net cost of the activity, and the local share for eligible operating costs shall be not less than 50 percent of the net operating cost. The local share may be derived from essentially any source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation. Non-cash share such as donations, volunteered services, or in-kind contributions is eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported, represents a capital cost which would otherwise be eligible under the program, and is included in the net project costs in the project budget.

Eligible Recipients: The eligible recipients include states (for all areas under 200,000 in population) and recipients designated by the Governor of each state. Eligible subrecipients include: states or local government authorities, private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation that receive a Section 5310 grant indirectly through a recipient. Private

operators of public transportation are eligible subrecipients. The definition of “public transportation” includes shared-ride surface transportation services. Private taxi companies that provide shared-ride taxi service to the public or to special categories of users (such as seniors or individuals with disabilities) on a regular basis are operators of public transportation, and therefore eligible subrecipients. “Shared-ride” means two or more passengers in the same vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together. Similar to general public and ADA demand response service, every trip does not have to be shared-ride in order for a taxi company to be considered a shared-ride operator, but the general nature of the service must include shared rides.

Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307)

This program provides grants to Urbanized Areas (UZAs)¹ and to states for public transportation capital, planning, job access and reverse commute projects, as well as operating expenses in certain circumstances. These funds constitute a core investment in the enhancement and revitalization of public transportation systems in the nation’s urbanized areas, which depend on public transportation to improve mobility and reduce congestion. Examples of eligible activities include:

- Capital projects;
- Planning;
- Job access and reverse commute projects that provide transportation to jobs and employment opportunities for welfare recipients and low-income workers; and
- Operating costs in areas with fewer than 200,000 population.

A partial list of eligible Section 5307 projects includes:

- (a) Replacement or overhaul of buses;
- (b) Expansion of bus fleets;
- (c) Purchase and installation of service and support equipment;
- (d) Accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, bus stop signs, supervisory vehicles, fareboxes, computers, and garage equipment;
- (e) Construction or rehabilitation of maintenance facilities;
- (f) Construction of other facilities (e.g., transfer facilities, intermodal terminals, and bus shelters);
- (g) Construction or renovation of intercity bus and intercity rail stations;
- (h) Capital support equipment, including computer hardware, software, bus diagnostic equipment, and other equipment that enhances operating efficiency;
- (i) Pedestrian access and walkways;
- (j) Bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and installing equipment for transportation bicycles on public transportation vehicles;
- (k) Signage;
- (l) Late-night and weekend service;

¹ Areas encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that have been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an “urbanized area” by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

- (m) Guaranteed ride home service;
- (n) Shuttle service;
- (o) Demand-responsive van service
- (p) Ridesharing and carpooling activities;
- (q) Expanding fixed-route public transit routes, including hours of service or coverage;
- (r) Promotion and marketing of transit use;
- (s) Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residence to a suburban workplace;
- (t) Implementing ITS, including customer trip information technology, vehicle position monitoring systems, or geographic information systems software; and
- (u) Supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation.

The Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) was a former formula grant program for projects that improve access to employment-related transportation services for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals, and that transport residents of urbanized and nonurbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. JARC was formerly to be addressed specifically in Coordinated Plans, but it was repealed by MAP-21. Funds that were apportioned to urbanized areas for Fiscal Year 2012 and prior years will remain available for obligation until they lapse or are expended, and remain subject to the program requirements at the time they were apportioned. While the Section 5316 JARC program was repealed under MAP-21, job access and reverse commute projects are now an eligible project type under the Urbanized Area Formula Program.

Federal/Local Matching Requirements: The Section 5307 Federal share for eligible capital and planning projects is up to 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. The Federal share for eligible operating costs may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the activity. The local share of eligible capital and planning costs shall be not less than 20 percent of the net cost of the activity, and the local share for eligible operating costs shall be not less than 50 percent of the net operating cost. The local share may be derived from essentially any source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Eligible Recipients: The eligible recipients include states and designated recipients for urbanized areas, which then suballocate funds to governmental authorities, including public transportation providers. A State is responsible for administering the program on behalf of all UZAs under 200,000 in population, or portions thereof that are located within its boundaries. A designated recipient is responsible for administering the program on behalf of a UZA with a population of 200,000 or more.

Formula Program for Rural Areas (Section 5311)

This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. Examples of eligible activities include:

- Capital projects;

- Planning;
- Job access and reverse commute projects that provide transportation to jobs and employment opportunities for welfare recipients and low-income workers;
- Operating assistance; and
- Acquisition of public transportation services, including agreements with private providers of public transportation.

A partial list of eligible Section 5311 projects includes:

- (a) Buses;
- (b) Vans or other paratransit vehicles;
- (c) Radios and communications equipment;
- (d) Passenger shelters, bus stop signs, park and ride lots, and similar passenger amenities;
- (e) Wheelchair lifts and restraints;
- (f) Vehicle rehabilitation, remanufacture, or overhaul;
- (g) Preventive maintenance;
- (h) Computer hardware or software;
- (i) Pedestrian and bicycle access to public transportation facilities;
- (j) Mobility management techniques;
- (k) Transportation plans, programs, studies, and designs; and
- (l) Job access and reverse commute projects.

MAP-21 created a new eligible project category for “job access and reverse commute projects” under Section 5311. This category includes all types of projects that were formerly eligible under the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. Examples of eligible projects are listed as items (l) through (u) in the Section 5307 project listing on pages 7 and 8.

Federal/Local Matching Requirements: The Section 5311 Federal share for eligible capital and planning projects is up to 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. The Federal share for eligible operating costs may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the activity. The local share of eligible capital and planning costs shall be not less than 20 percent of the net cost of the activity, and the local share for eligible operating costs shall be not less than 50 percent of the net operating cost. The local share may be derived from essentially any source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation. Recipients may count non-cash shares such as donations, volunteered services, or in-kind contributions toward the local match only if the recipient formally documents the value of each non-cash share, and if this value represents a cost that would otherwise be eligible under the project.

Eligible Recipients: The eligible recipients include states and Indian tribes. Eligible subrecipients include state and local governmental authorities, non-profit organizations, operators of public transportation services, or intercity bus operators.

Project Solicitation and Award

Generally, solicitation and approval for the Section 5310, Section 5307, and Section 5311 program projects will be conducted by PennDOT. SEDA-COG and WATS MPOs have traditionally

cooperated with PennDOT to promote the JARC/New Freedom program funding rounds, collect applications from area agencies, and provide funding recommendations to PennDOT. At this writing, it is unclear whether the MPOs' traditional role will change much under the MAP-21 revisions and consolidated Section 5310, Section 5307, and Section 5311 programs. However, the MPOs are committed to playing an active part.

During recent rounds of JARC and New Freedom program funding, PennDOT has placed an emphasis on the following project types:

- Vanpools;
- Commuter buses that reduce congestion (highest priority given to already established commuter routes); and
- Capital projects which provide the infrastructure for service (e.g., accessible buses and vans that support PennDOT's Persons with Disabilities Program).

As appropriate, SEDA-COG and WATS MPOs will use these priorities for future project evaluation under Section 5310, Section 5307, and Section 5311 program funding rounds. The MPOs may also consider expanding upon these criteria and working through their coordinating committees to develop such criteria. Decision support models may be built, using these tools to identify appropriate ranking criteria and evaluate alternatives for using limited funding.

A change in MAP-21 requires that selected projects be included in, and not merely derived from, the coordinated plan. At this writing, FTA proposes to maintain flexibility in how projects appear in the coordinated plan. For purposes of the coordinated plan, FTA is willing to consider that a project is a strategy, activity or specific action addressing an identified service gap or transportation coordination objective articulated and prioritized within the plan. Therefore, individual project applications will not need to be specifically listed in the coordinated plan. Regional applicants can ensure their project's eligibility, though, by noting how it addresses an identified service gap or transportation coordination objective listed within this Coordinated Plan. As a result, the gaps and priorities included in this Plan are intended to be comprehensive; the Plan can be amended if valid projects being submitted by applicants do not relate to a gap or priority listed in the Plan.

Chapter 2: Plan Methodology and Outreach

The methodology used to develop the plan update included the following steps:

Recent Assessments and Best Practices

A review was conducted of the 2011 North Central Pennsylvania Regional Public Transportation Needs Assessment (2011 Needs Assessment) to consider key data and findings from this report to incorporate into the Plan update. Particular attention was paid to the Community Characteristics, Existing Transportation Services, and Transit Needs Analysis sections of this report. Reviews were also done for other recent local studies examining transportation needs in the region, and new research was undertaken on innovative coordinated plan strategies developed since MAP-21 was passed.

Demographic Profile

An updated demographic profile of the region was prepared using data from the Census Bureau and other relevant planning documents, to determine the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on low-income populations, persons with disabilities, seniors, and other individuals that are traditionally more dependent on transit services. Estimates from recent American Community Survey (ACS) datasets were primarily used in generating the demographic profile. Data for the counties, region, and state are summarized in a tabular format, while data at the Census tract level are shown graphically in population distribution maps in Appendix A.

Existing Transportation Services

This step involved documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in the region. These services primarily include public fixed-route and shared ride services, transportation services provided or sponsored by human service agencies, and intercity or taxi carriers. Information about public transit operators was obtained from existing resources such as the 2011 Needs Assessment and PennDOT reports. Information about services provided by human service agencies was also collected through a survey completed for this project (see Appendix C for the results from this survey).

Public Outreach

Development of the original Coordinated Plan included stakeholder involvement and participation via public meetings, stakeholder interviews, and convening a committee to examine coordination issues in detail. Through these efforts, transportation gaps were identified or confirmed. Stakeholders provided input on existing barriers to coordination as well as possibilities for improvement. Since the original Plan was developed, SEDA-COG and WATS have relied on continuous public involvement through annual transit committee meetings, regular public transportation task force meetings, surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews. Considering there has been frequent outreach since 2008, and a detailed Needs

Assessment was completed in 2011, streamlined public involvement was used for this Plan update. Methods included outreach conducted via other local and regional planning efforts involving the target populations, meetings with regional stakeholder groups to both review and re-validate findings and to try to reach new perspectives not previously engaged in the initial coordinated planning process, and a new survey of residents and organizations about public transportation issues. Stakeholder comments received during the Plan update outreach process surveying are summarized in Chapter 5 and included in the Appendices.

Needs Assessment/Gaps Identification

The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing how service for low-income populations, seniors, and persons with disabilities needs to be improved. Needs are based on both a quantitative demand analysis and a qualitative assessment of transit needs developed through the conduct of public outreach, stakeholder interviews, and surveys. The results of the needs assessment are summarized in Chapter 5.

Priority Strategies

Following the identification of service gaps, the planning process identified corresponding potential service solutions. Public transportation committees were used to identify and validate regional priorities, with the understanding that priorities may shift over time, and that certain improvement strategies should be broad enough for transit project applications to be deemed eligible by state and federal approval agencies. The strategies are documented in Chapter 6, and greater details for certain strategies are provided in Appendix E.

Much of the strategy development involved considering how best to coordinate services so that existing resources can be used as efficiently as possible. In updating the strategies to be included in the Plan update, staff and stakeholders reviewed progress on implementation of the strategies included in the 2008 Plan, as well as relevant planning activities that have taken place since 2008 (e.g., the 2011 Needs Assessment), to inform a revised and updated set of coordination strategies.

Furthermore, PennDOT has recently authorized a consultant to perform an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with the transition of public transportation services provided by 9 transit agencies/departments in the North Central region (Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties) to an integrated regional transportation authority. This study represents the first phase of a potentially multi-phase work process and will focus on the financial impact of regionalization on the organizations' administrative and overhead functions. If the counties noted above resolve to proceed to a second phase, then the second phase work order will focus on a detailed organizational and financial analysis, on the development of an integrated fare system and on the development of an implementation plan for such a consolidation.

Chapter 3: Demographic Profile

This chapter describes current data related to the demographic characteristics of seniors, individuals with disabilities and low-income residents in the SEDA-COG/WATS MPO area. These target populations are the primary beneficiaries of FTA programs covered by this Plan. Data for minority, female householder with children, journey to work, and other characteristics are also provided herein, since they commonly correlate to transit dependency. This Plan generally considers employment and major activity center influences on transit need and travel, but these additional factors were thoroughly appraised in the 2011 Needs Assessment.

Identifying potential transit demand is critical in transit planning. Transit demand comes from two major components: captive riders and non-captive riders. The captive riders are those persons that must rely on transit services, such as senior citizens, disabled, students, and persons who do not have access to an automobile. The non-captive riders are those persons who have a choice either to use a transit system or to use an automobile. Socioeconomic characteristics provide a sound basis to identify these potential riders, especially the captive riders.

To develop a current demographic profile and population distribution maps, data were compiled from the 2010 Census and datasets from the American Community Survey (ACS) that provided the information needed. The ACS is a nationwide survey conducted in every county and designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3.3 million addresses across the United States and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). ACS 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates were used for households without access to a vehicle, seniors, low-income individuals, female householder with children, minority, Hispanic ethnicity, mode of transportation, and limited English proficiency. Data on individuals with disabilities were drawn from the ACS 2009-2011 3-Year Estimates. Official 2010 decennial Census counts were used for the total population and population densities.

2007-2011 ACS Estimates aggregate the sample responses from households collected from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2011 and represent the average estimate of a population/housing characteristic over the entire 5-year time period. Similarly, the 2009-2011 ACS Estimates aggregate the sample responses from households collected from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011 and represent the average estimate of a population characteristic over the entire 3-year time period. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. Margins of error have been omitted in this report for clarity, but are available for all ACS estimates on factfinder2.census.gov. Even with the margin of error issue, the ACS provides much more timely information and a reasonable estimate of the population changes that occur between decennial Censuses.

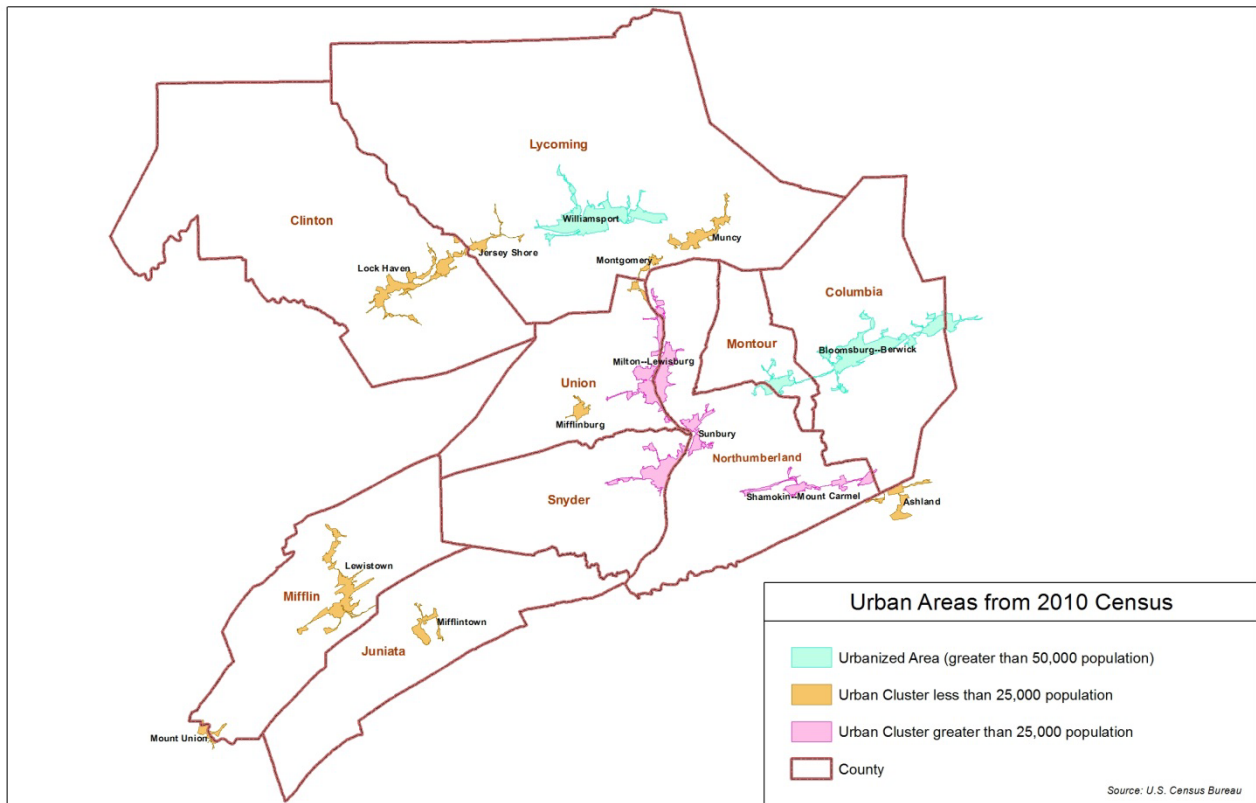
For most classifications on the following pages, data were gathered at the regional level, combining populations from each of the 9 counties, for either individuals or households, depending on the demographic factor. From there, the total number of persons in each demographic group is divided by the appropriate universe (either population or households) for

the 9-county region, providing a regional percentage threshold for that population group. Any Census tract in Appendix A mapping that meets or exceeds the regional threshold level may be considered a sensitive tract for that characteristic.

Plan Area

The SEDA-COG/WATS MPO region is located in north central Pennsylvania and contains the Bloomsburg-Berwick and Williamsport Urbanized Areas (UZAs) requiring representation by MPOs (see Figure 2). The region is comprised of urban, suburban and rural settings. The 9-county region contains 229 municipalities: one (1) Town, four (4) Cities, 57 Boroughs and 167 Townships. The primary urban setting is the City of Williamsport, the Lycoming County seat and largest municipality by population in the region. Williamsport – as well as the municipalities immediately surrounding the city – comprises the Williamsport UZA, which is the major employment and retail center in the region and is the primary service area for the River Valley Transit fixed-route system. The other main urban setting includes the Bloomsburg-Berwick UZA, which includes sections of denser residential and commercial development in Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland Counties. Within the region, there is a pattern of traditional core communities, surrounded by less populated townships with larger land areas and

Figure 2: Urban Areas in the SEDA-COG & WATS MPO Planning Area



significant agricultural land uses and open spaces. The various townships and boroughs that are adjacent to or near the cities represent areas of potential additional demand as a result of their proximity and linkages to the boroughs through the existing highway system. In a larger context, the SEDA-COG/WATS region is bounded by large urban areas, with Harrisburg to the

south, State College to the west, and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre to the east.

The SEDA-COG region is served by a series of major highway corridors. Major corridors are indicated not only by high traffic volumes, but also by their role in the transportation of goods as part of interstate commerce, passenger transportation for tourism or personal purposes, the movement of agricultural products to major market or processing centers, and other factors. Major routes include: Interstate 80, Interstate 180, US Route 11, US Route 15, US Route 22, US Route 220, US Route 322, US Route 522, PA Route 45, PA Route 54, PA Route 61, PA Route 87, PA Route 147, and PA Route 405.

Population and economic projections do not suggest significant changes in the distribution of potential transit demand. Planned improvements to the highway system are not expected to severely alter travel in the region, with the exception of the upgrade of US 15 (future I-99) and the Central Susquehanna Valley Thruway (CSVT).

Regional and County Population Characteristics

One of the chief determinants of transportation need is total population and population density. As shown in Table 1, the total population of the region in 2010 was 491,406 people, a 1.7% increase from 2000. The population in the region represents nearly 4% of the total population in Pennsylvania. The largest absolute change and percent change in population growth between 2000 and 2010 occurred in Union County, which increased by 3,323 people or 8.0% (tied for the most with Juniata County). Lycoming County lost the most population between 2000 and 2010, declining by 3,933 people or 3.3%. (It should be noted that the influx of many persons coming to Lycoming County relative to Marcellus Shale gas exploration are not captured in Lycoming County Census data because these individuals have permanent residences listed outside of the County and Census information is based on the individual’s place of permanent residence.) The population change in the region’s other counties varied from 0 percent to 5.7 percent.

Table 1: Total Population and Population Change

Geographic Area	Total Population			Change from 2000 to 2010	
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2007-2011 ACS Estimate	Change	Percent Change
Clinton County	37,914	39,238	39,015	1,324	3.5%
Columbia County	64,151	67,295	67,020	3,144	4.9%
Juniata County	22,821	24,636	24,439	1,815	8.0%
Lycoming County	120,044	116,111	116,335	-3,933	-3.3%
Mifflin County	46,486	46,682	46,671	196	0.4%
Montour County	18,236	18,267	18,193	31	0.2%
Northumberland County	94,556	94,528	94,321	-28	0.0%

Snyder County	37,546	39,702	39,597	2,156	5.7%
Union County	41,624	44,947	44,872	3,323	8.0%
REGION	483,378	491,406	490,463	8,028	1.7%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,702,379	12,660,739	421,325	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Decennial Censuses, 2007-2011 ACS

Public transportation is more efficient and effective in densely populated areas. Population density (persons per square mile) for the region is shown in Table 2. The region's population density was 106 persons per square mile and Pennsylvania's was 284 persons per square mile, using 2010 decennial Census totals. The largest population density occurs in Northumberland County (206 persons per square mile) and the smallest in Clinton County (44 persons per square mile). The population densities of the remaining counties in the region are higher than the regional average except for Juniata and Lycoming Counties (63 and 95 persons per square mile, respectively). The rather large land areas and considerable state forest/open space districts in several counties contribute to lower countywide population densities. Still, density can be an important factor for establishing public or human services transportation and/or determining the types of services to offer. Figure A-1 of Appendix A mapping portrays the densities at a more suitable Census tract level, reflecting that the greatest tract densities are in or clustered around the region's cities and boroughs.

Table 2: Population Density

Geographic Area	Population (2010)		Land Area (2010)		Persons per Square Mile
	Total	Percent of Region	Total (Sq. Mi.)	Percent of Region	
Clinton County	39,238	8.0%	887.98	19.2%	44
Columbia County	67,295	13.7%	483.11	10.4%	139
Juniata County	24,636	5.0%	391.35	8.4%	63
Lycoming County	116,111	23.6%	1,228.59	26.5%	95
Mifflin County	46,682	9.5%	411.03	8.9%	114
Montour County	18,267	3.7%	130.24	2.8%	140
Northumberland County	94,528	19.2%	458.37	9.9%	206
Snyder County	39,702	8.1%	328.71	7.1%	121
Union County	44,947	9.1%	315.98	6.8%	142
REGION	491,406	100.0%	4,635.36	100.0%	106
Pennsylvania	12,702,379	N/A	44,742.70	N/A	284

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - State & County QuickFacts

Regional and County Target Population Characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of senior citizens, persons with low incomes, and individuals with disabilities that comprise a significant portion of the ridership base using public transportation or targeted by funding programs. The demographic data are derived from the decennial Census/ACS and presented in tabular form focused on the county and regional levels. Appendix A presents the data in mapping focused on the Census tract level, illustrated to generally distinguish the characteristics by the following scale:

- 0 percent to ½ of the regional threshold (overall regional percentage)
- ½ of the regional threshold to the threshold
- The regional threshold to 1.5 times the threshold
- 1.5 times the regional threshold to 2 times the threshold
- 2 times the regional threshold and over

Senior Citizen Population

Persons 65 years of age and older have typically exhibited a greater reliance on public transportation compared to other age groups. It is also more common for these individuals to have limited income and experience challenges that limit their ability to operate a vehicle. The leading edge of the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) has entered the senior citizen demographic and become eligible for discounted public transportation, but it remains to be seen how the Boomers will actually impact transit ridership levels. It seems, however, the traditional assumptions for seniors' travel behaviors are changing, considering factors such as: retirement generally being postponed, people continuing to work in order to make up for losses during the recent economic recession, seniors preferring to maintain personal auto mobility late into life, and residents choosing to age in place (including in the suburban and rural areas where more rapid growth has occurred in recent decades) rather than relocate or enter elder care facilities.

Table 3 provides a summary of population data for persons age 65 and older for the region and its counties in 2000, 2010, and 2007-2011. The 2010 population of persons age 65 and over in the region was 82,759, with nearly ¼ of these citizens living in Lycoming County (19,112 persons). Seniors accounted for 16.8% of the region's total population in 2010, indicating an older composition than is found statewide, where 15.4% of Pennsylvania's population was age 65 and over. The percentage of seniors varies somewhat from county to county, from a low of 14.8% in Union County to a high of 18.6% in Montour County. A county's lower percentage of seniors does not necessarily mean that there are few older adults there (e.g., Union County has the 5th largest number of seniors, and it is also experiencing the fastest growth). Figure A-2 in Appendix A shows the distribution of senior citizens by Census tract.

The regional percentage of residents age 65 and over increased slightly from 16.4% to 16.8% between 2000 and 2010. The regional growth occurred at a rate of 4.5%. The county-level percent change over this time period varied from a decline of 2.7% in Northumberland County to an increase of 19.2% in Union County. It is presumed that most in-migration to the region is from working-age populations, so the increases in the senior population likely represent current

residents aging in place. According to projections prepared by the Pennsylvania State Data Center, by 2040, the region's population age 65 and older is projected to increase by 45.7% compared to 2010. The senior population will equal nearly 121,000 residents, or 23.1% of the region's total 2040 population. This growth could greatly stress social service agencies and public transportation operators.

Table 3: Population Age 65 and Older

Geographic Area	2000 Census			2010 Census			2007-2011 ACS			Pop. Age 65 and Over: Change 2000 to 2010	
	Total Population	Pop. Age 65 and Over		Total Population	Pop. Age 65 and Over		Total Population	Pop. Age 65 and Over		Change	Percent Change
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		
Clinton County	37,914	6,363	16.8%	39,238	6,350	16.2%	39,015	6,387	16.4%	-13	-0.2%
Columbia County	64,151	10,202	15.9%	67,295	10,811	16.1%	67,020	10,675	15.9%	609	6.0%
Juniata County	22,821	3,471	15.2%	24,636	4,134	16.8%	24,439	4,057	16.6%	663	19.1%
Lycoming County	120,044	19,251	16.0%	116,111	19,112	16.5%	116,335	18,968	16.3%	-139	-0.7%
Mifflin County	46,486	7,907	17.0%	46,682	8,643	18.5%	46,671	8,491	18.2%	736	9.3%
Montour County	18,236	3,120	17.1%	18,267	3,395	18.6%	18,193	3,338	18.3%	275	8.8%
Northumberland County	94,556	18,002	19.0%	94,528	17,516	18.5%	94,321	17,401	18.4%	-486	-2.7%
Snyder County	37,546	5,275	14.0%	39,702	6,144	15.5%	39,597	5,983	15.1%	869	16.5%
Union County	41,624	5,584	13.4%	44,947	6,654	14.8%	44,872	6,666	14.9%	1,070	19.2%
REGION	483,378	79,175	16.4%	491,406	82,759	16.8%	490,463	81,966	16.7%	3,584	4.5%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	1,919,165	15.6%	12,702,379	1,959,307	15.4%	12,660,739	1,944,573	15.4%	40,142	2.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Decennial Censuses, 2007-2011 ACS

Low-Income Population

Individuals with low incomes tend to rely more heavily on public transportation, since they might not be able to afford an automobile, or they decide not to use their limited income for costly automobile ownership expenses. The 2007-2011 ACS indicated a total of 63,245 residents in the region living below the poverty level, which represents 13.7% of the total population for whom poverty status is determined. The largest percentage of low-income residents was in Clinton County at 15.8%; the smallest was in Montour County at 10.4%. Figure A-3 in Appendix A shows the distribution of low-income residents by Census tract. The highest concentrations of low-income residents are found in the larger cities and boroughs. However, areas with a proportion of low-income residents up to 2 times the regional average can be found in rural locations of Clinton and Mifflin Counties. The rural and suburban tracts with higher poverty rates can be difficult to serve with frequent and efficient public transportation.

Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters (such as prisons or nursing homes), and people living in college dormitories or military barracks. The numbers in Table 4 represent those individuals earning below the federal poverty level, in adherence with the standards specified by the federal Office of Management and Budget.

Table 4: Low-Income Population

Geographic Area	2007-2011 ACS		
	Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	Population Below Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent
Clinton County	36,211	5,726	15.8%
Columbia County	62,804	9,535	15.2%
Juniata County	24,075	2,546	10.6%
Lycoming County	111,118	15,834	14.2%
Mifflin County	45,973	6,991	15.2%
Montour County	17,641	1,842	10.4%
Northumberland County	90,135	12,364	13.7%
Snyder County	37,052	4,137	11.2%
Union County	35,500	4,270	12.0%
REGION	460,509	63,245	13.7%
Pennsylvania	12,246,520	1,548,869	12.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Individuals with Disabilities

According to the 2009-2011 ACS, there were 64,625 individuals with disabilities living in the region. This equals 14.1% of the region's total civilian noninstitutionalized population. Mifflin County has the highest proportion of individuals with a disability at 16.9%, and only three counties (Columbia, Snyder, and Union) have proportions lower than the regional average. Therefore, the higher disability rates cut across the region's geography, without particular correspondence to the more urban or populated counties. Also included below in Table 5 are the disability rates for seniors. These rates are significantly higher, showing that 37.3% of the region's seniors have some type of disability. The proportion of seniors reporting a disability is greatest in Northumberland County at 40.6%, followed closely by Clinton and Mifflin Counties.

As part of the ACS, a person is counted as having a disability if they report any of the six following disability types: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory

difficulty, self-care difficulty, or independent living difficulty. Persons with these disabilities could be less likely to drive and therefore more likely to be dependent on public transportation than the general population; they could also be eligible for discounted transit fares. While the ACS data totals in Table 5 do not indicate that the disability necessarily impacts an individual's mobility, they can serve as a marker for populations that may need additional transportation assistance.

Table 5: Population with a Disability

Geographic Area	2009-2011 ACS			2009-2011 ACS		
	Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	Population with a Disability		Population 65 Years and Over	Population with a Disability	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Clinton County	38,440	5,890	15.3%	6,217	2,473	39.8%
Columbia County	66,704	7,325	11.0%	10,318	3,363	32.6%
Juniata County	24,186	3,479	14.4%	3,807	1,435	37.7%
Lycoming County	113,715	16,476	14.5%	18,245	6,900	37.8%
Mifflin County	46,228	7,820	16.9%	8,267	3,263	39.5%
Northumberland County	90,609	14,626	16.1%	16,678	6,767	40.6%
Snyder County	39,401	4,487	11.4%	5,918	1,931	32.6%
Union County	39,426	4,522	11.5%	6,248	2,126	34.0%
REGION	458,709	64,625	14.1%	75,698	28,258	37.3%
Pennsylvania	12,502,745	1,641,794	13.1%	1,883,204	671,074	35.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2011 ACS

Montour County omitted because data were not available for it as part of this dataset.

Other Regional and County Population Characteristics

Vehicle Availability

Carless households can be another measure for assessing transit dependency in the region. Owning or having access to a vehicle directly relates to an individual's mobility choices. People without access to a vehicle may rely on family, friends, or public transportation for trips that cannot be made on foot or by bicycle. Areas with significant urban populations often have a greater share of households without access to a vehicle than rural areas due to the availability of goods and services within walking distance and/or the availability of transit service.

While not owning a personal vehicle can be a lifestyle choice for more urban dwellers, it can also be due to limiting factors such as low incomes or disabilities. Especially in non-urban areas, carless households can be correlated with low-income households. Also, as noted in several of

the County Comprehensive Plans within the region, the SEDA-COG/WATS MPO area is home to significant populations of Plain Sects, including Amish, Old Order Mennonites, and other groups. These religious groups are not documented directly in Census counts, but they may show up indirectly when looking at households without vehicle access data.

Table 6 lists the number of households by county without a vehicle available. The regional average is 8.6% of households having zero vehicles available. Mifflin County has the highest percentage (10.8%) of households with no vehicle available, potentially due to the significant Amish population located in the county. Figure A-5 of Appendix A illustrates which Census tracts are significant for concentrations of carless households. As would be expected, several tracts in Williamsport pop up as having the highest percentages of households lacking access to a vehicle.

Table 6: Households without Access to a Vehicle

Geographic Area	Households Without a Vehicle Available, 2007-2011 ACS	
	Number	Percent
Clinton County	1,209	7.9%
Columbia County	1,956	7.6%
Juniata County	600	6.6%
Lycoming County	4,110	8.8%
Mifflin County	2,046	10.8%
Montour County	490	6.8%
Northumberland County	3,994	10.2%
Snyder County	862	6.0%
Union County	1,156	7.6%
REGION	16,423	8.6%
Pennsylvania	569,811	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Female Head of Household with Children

Table 7 presents data for females heading a household with no husband present, and with at least one child under 18 years of age who is a son or daughter by birth, a stepchild, or an adopted child of the householder residing in the home. This factor was chosen for inclusion in this Plan to add gender and children into the profile. These statistics are also meant to acknowledge that there is a correlation between this characteristic and poverty status, which

can lead to transit dependency. Lycoming County at 7% has the highest percentage of female householders with no husband present and a child less than 18 years in the region; this figure also exceeds the statewide percentage. Figure A-6 represents which Census tracts are significant for female head of household, no husband present, with child concentrations.

Table 7: Households Headed by Females with Children, No Husband Present

Geographic Area	2007-2011 ACS		
	Total Households	Female householder, no husband present, with own children under 18 years old	
		Number	Percent
Clinton County	15,282	954	6.2%
Columbia County	25,906	1,537	5.9%
Juniata County	9,103	423	4.6%
Lycoming County	46,604	3,266	7.0%
Mifflin County	18,987	1,018	5.4%
Montour County	7,200	309	4.3%
Northumberland County	39,293	2,402	6.1%
Snyder County	14,320	512	3.6%
Union County	15,310	741	4.8%
REGION	192,005	11,162	5.8%
Pennsylvania	4,952,566	325,191	6.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Non-Hispanic Minority Population

The U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a) on Environmental Justice sets forth steps to prevent disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations. In this Order, “minority” means a person who is:

1. Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
2. Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
3. Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent;
4. American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains

cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition; or

5. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

The U.S. Census Bureau does not include Hispanic or Latino as a racial category, since Hispanic is an ethnicity; persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race. The Census Bureau does, however, consider two other categories in its race data: Some Other Race Alone and Two or More Races.

Table 8 presents data for the region’s total non-Hispanic minority population: those that qualify as Black Alone; American Indian and Alaska Native Alone; Asian Alone; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone; Some Other Race Alone; and Two or More Races. The region’s non-Hispanic minority population percentage is 4.4%, much lower than the statewide 14.7%. Lycoming County has the region’s highest overall number (7,686) of non-Hispanic minority residents and Union County has the highest percentage (9.6%).

Figure A-7 illustrates which Census tracts have significant non-Hispanic minority percentages above the regional threshold. As expected, the urban Williamsport area tracts have among the highest percentages. The presence of the Lewisburg/Allenwood Federal Prisons in Union County and the Coal Township State Prison in Northumberland County represent special cases that likely skew the percentages for the Census tracts containing these correctional facilities.

Table 8: Non-Hispanic Minority Population

Geographic Area	2007-2011 ACS		
	Total Population	Total Non-Hispanic Minority Population	
		Number	Percent
Clinton County	39,015	1,114	2.9%
Columbia County	67,020	2,351	3.5%
Juniata County	24,439	446	1.8%
Lycoming County	116,335	7,686	6.6%
Mifflin County	46,671	881	1.9%
Montour County	18,193	750	4.1%
Northumberland County	94,321	3,050	3.2%
Snyder County	39,597	895	2.3%
Union County	44,872	4,309	9.6%
REGION	490,463	21,482	4.4%
Pennsylvania	12,660,739	1,862,664	14.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Hispanic or Latino Minority Population

As mentioned previously, the USDOT considers Hispanic or Latino to be a minority population in spite of the fact that Hispanic or Latino is technically an ethnicity, with persons of Hispanic origin possibly being of any race. Hispanic origin is used in numerous social justice programs and is vital in making policy decisions. There can be a correlation between Hispanic origin and low-income levels for possible transit dependency. In addition, Hispanic migrant or seasonal workers that sometimes reside in the area could be reliant on public transportation.

Table 9 presents data for the region’s total Hispanic minority population: those individuals, regardless of race, that can be classified as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or of another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. The region’s Hispanic minority population percentage is 2.0%, compared to the statewide level of 5.5%. Union County has the region’s highest overall number (2,306) and percentage (5.1%) of Hispanic minority residents.

Figure A-8 illustrates which Census tracts have significant Hispanic minority percentages above the regional threshold. As expected, the more urban tracts have among the highest percentages. The presence of the Lewisburg/Allenwood Federal Prisons in Union County and the Coal Township State Prison in Northumberland County represent special cases that likely skew the percentages for the Census tracts containing these correctional facilities.

Table 9: Hispanic or Latino Minority Population

Geographic Area	2007-2011 ACS		
	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino Minority Population (may be of any race)	
		Number	Percent
Clinton County	39,015	423	1.1%
Columbia County	67,020	1,348	2.0%
Juniata County	24,439	554	2.3%
Lycoming County	116,335	1,543	1.3%
Mifflin County	46,671	542	1.2%
Montour County	18,193	303	1.7%
Northumberland County	94,321	2,152	2.3%
Snyder County	39,597	637	1.6%
Union County	44,872	2,306	5.1%
REGION	490,463	9,808	2.0%
Pennsylvania	12,660,739	690,128	5.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Limited English Proficiency Population

Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requires all federally funded agencies to make services more accessible to eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language. LEP persons are those individuals who do not speak English as their primary language, and who also have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. The key commonality among LEP persons is their inability to communicate effectively in the English language, regardless of their native tongue. The Census ACS data reveal populations (5 years of age and older) whose primary language spoken at home is other than English and who speak English less than very well. These are considered LEP populations in this Plan.

Government agencies use information on language spoken at home for their programs that serve the needs of the foreign-born and those who have difficulty with English. Limited English proficiency can serve as a barrier to accessing transportation services. Demographic analysis revealing LEP populations that do not speak English well can be used in crafting marketing initiatives or public involvement materials toward LEP groups, including preparing information in the languages spoken by the communities being addressed.

Table 10 presents data for the region’s LEP population. The region’s LEP population percentage is 2.0%, compared to the statewide level of 3.8%. Mifflin County has the region’s highest overall number (1,935) and percentage (4.4%) of LEP residents. This is presumably influenced by the significant Amish settlement in Mifflin County.

Figure A-9 illustrates which Census tracts are significant for LEP concentrations. As expected, some more urban tracts have among the highest percentages. However, several rural, large land area tracts also pop out with the highest LEP percentages. This is likely influenced by the Plain Sect communities, and higher incidences of German and Other West Germanic languages primarily spoken at home by these residents. Also, the margins of error are considerably high for the language data. The presence of the Lewisburg/Allenwood Federal Prisons in Union County represents special cases that likely skew the percentages for the Census tracts containing these correctional facilities.

Table 10: Limited English Proficiency Population

Geographic Area	2007-2011 ACS		
	Total Population Five Years and Over	Primary Language Spoken at Home Other Than English and Speak English Less Than Very Well	
		Number	Percent
Clinton County	36,852	637	1.7%
Columbia County	63,853	729	1.1%
Juniata County	22,918	634	2.8%
Lycoming County	109,884	1,046	1.0%

Mifflin County	43,706	1,935	4.4%
Montour County	17,215	503	2.9%
Northumberland County	89,104	985	1.1%
Snyder County	37,217	1,214	3.3%
Union County	42,708	1,599	3.7%
REGION	463,457	9,282	2.0%
Pennsylvania	11,933,062	453,258	3.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

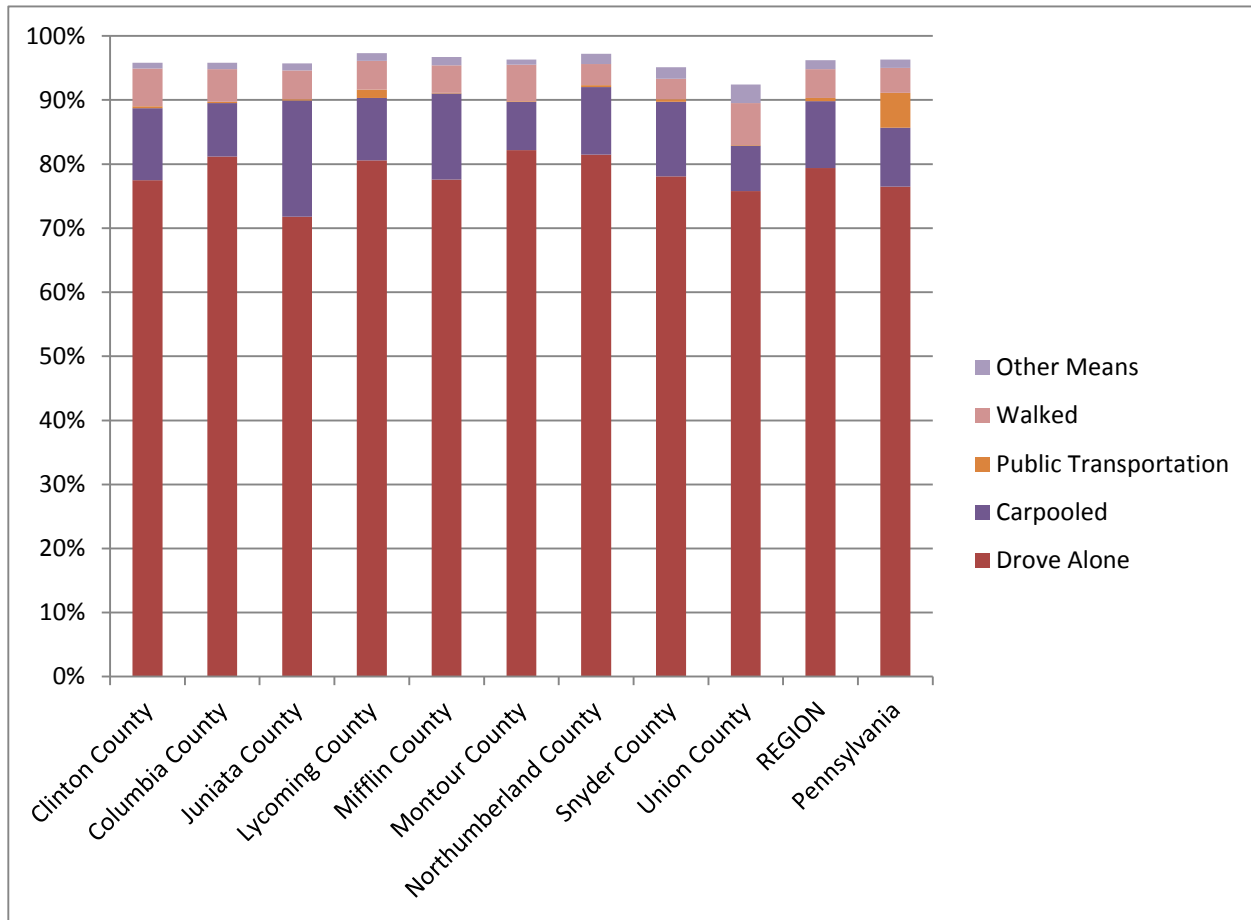
Means of Transportation to Work

Driving to work alone is, by far, the most common method of commuting for the region's workers, as it is for most of Pennsylvanians. Nearly 80% of the region's workforce (those workers 16 years and over) drive alone to work, and nearly 77% of Pennsylvanians commute via single-occupant vehicles. The region's carpooling and walk to work means also correspond with the statewide percentages. However, only 0.5% of the region's workers use public transportation for traveling to work, while 5.4% of Pennsylvanians use public transportation to get to work.

Mode choice data from the 2007-2011 ACS are summarized in Figure 3. (The columns do not reach 100% because they omit the percentage of workers that work at home.) The region's 2nd most popular mode is carpooling at 10.4%, followed by walking at 4.5%, and other means at 1.4%. Juniata County (18.1%) and Mifflin County (13.4%) see high rates of carpool usage, likely due to residents carpooling to major worksites located several miles away in the Harrisburg and State College urbanized areas. High carpooling rates may indicate areas where commuting costs and roadway congestion can be mitigated through public transportation use or more organized commuter services.

As mentioned, residents' use of public transportation (bus or trolley bus, streetcar or trolley car, subway, railroad, or ferryboat) as a means of travel to work is extremely limited in much of the region. Fixed-route, local transit service is only available in portions of Lycoming County and Northumberland County. If non-drivers are not using public transportation, they are finding other means of travel to their workplace destinations, such as family, friends, or human services transportation. As might be expected, use of public transportation as a means of getting to work is highest in those areas that are most urban, where access to the service is the greatest, namely the City of Williamsport and surrounding areas.

Figure 3: Means of Transportation to Work

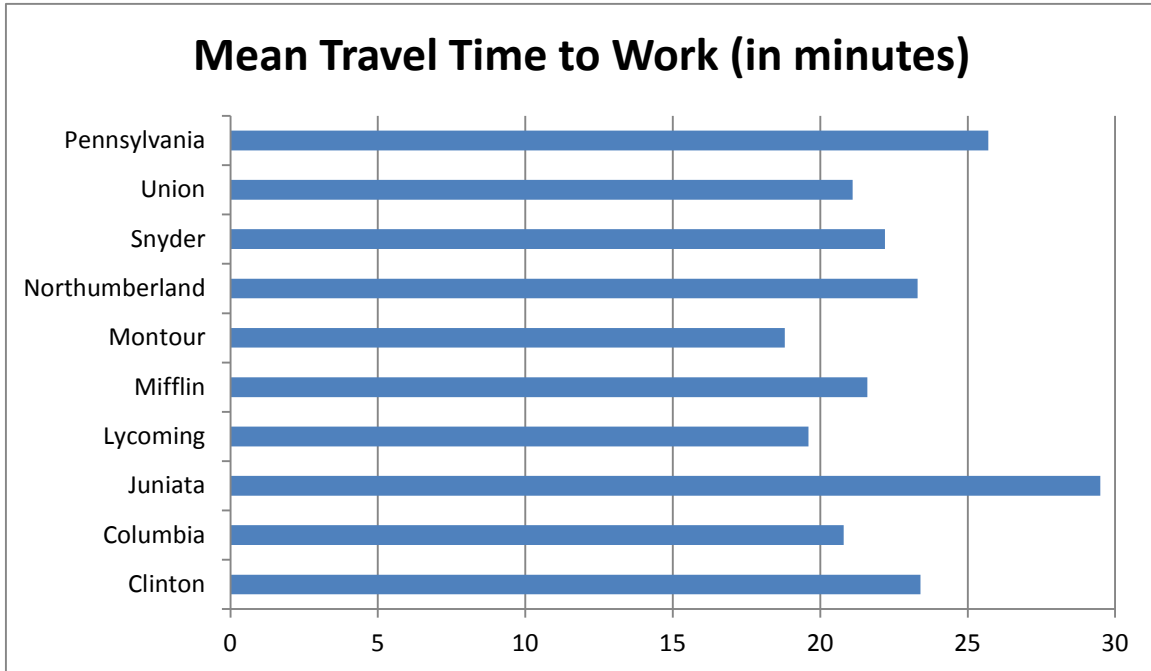


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Mean Travel Time to Work

Mean travel time to work (in minutes) is the average travel time that workers usually take to get from home to work (one way). The mean travel time to work varies somewhat throughout the region. As shown in Figure 4, workers who live in Juniata County have the longest average commute time, at 29.5 minutes, while workers who live in Montour County enjoy the shortest average commute time, at 18.8 minutes. The amount of time workers spend commuting is an important indicator of spatial distribution of workers' residences and their places of work. Commuting time shifts may provide insight into other important community characteristics such as changes in workforce participation rates, infrastructure upgrades, and shifts in availability and usage of different transportation modes.

Figure 4: Mean Travel Time to Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS

Employment

As referenced elsewhere in this report, the need for and the nature of public transportation services in an area relates to the employment conditions. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Quarterly Workforce Indicators data for the 1st quarter of 2013, employment in the region amounted to 177,322 jobs. Table 11 shows the job numbers by county and their percentage of the regional total. Over 50% of the jobs in the region are located in three counties: Lycoming, Northumberland, and Columbia.

Table 11: Employment Numbers by County

Geographic Area	Jobs	Percent of Region Total
Clinton County	11,275	6.4%
Columbia County	21,604	12.2%
Juniata County	6,159	3.5%
Lycoming County	48,504	27.4%
Mifflin County	15,112	8.5%
Montour County	18,977	10.7%
Northumberland County	26,918	15.2%

Snyder County	15,127	8.5%
Union County	13,646	7.7%
REGION	177,322	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD QWI for 1st Quarter 2013

The City of Williamsport in Lycoming County was the Plan area’s top employment center in 2011, with approximately 21,000 jobs, followed by Montour County’s Mahoning Township with 12,543 jobs, and Columbia County’s Town of Bloomsburg with 6,413 jobs. The top 10 municipalities, by jobs, are presented in Table 12. Overall, the majority of the top workplace destinations in the area are concentrated along the major transportation corridors, including US 11, US 15, US 220, I-80 and I-180. Major employment concentrations are a good indicator of land use patterns supportive of transit for work trip destinations.

Table 12: Top 10 Municipalities by Employment

Municipality	Jobs	Percent of Region Total
Williamsport City, Lycoming County	21,018	11.9%
Mahoning Township, Montour County	12,543	7.1%
Bloomsburg Town, Columbia County	6,413	3.6%
Lock Haven City, Clinton County	5,759	3.3%
Loyalsock Township, Lycoming County	5,504	3.1%
Sunbury City, Northumberland County	5,116	2.9%
Berwick Borough, Columbia County	4,552	2.6%
Milton Borough, Northumberland County	4,159	2.4%
East Buffalo Township, Union County	3,849	2.2%
Monroe Township, Snyder County	3,682	2.1%
REGION	176,422	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2011)

Commutation Patterns

Commutation patterns vary widely among the 9 counties in the Plan region. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the top three commute destination counties for residents of each of the region’s counties, using 2006-2010 ACS Estimates. For all nine counties, the top commute destination was the residents’ home county. Lycoming County, at 86%, leads the region in having the

greatest share of resident workers employed within the county of residence. Juniata and Northumberland Counties are nearly tied for the lowest percentage of workers who worked in the county where they resided, at 52.3% and 52.6% respectively. Likewise, Montour County also exports over 40% of its resident workers to employment destinations outside of the residence county. The journey to work numbers reveal that the single highest percentage export of resident workers to another county is the 18.5% of Clinton County residents commuting to work in Lycoming County. The highest total number is the 4,154 resident workers from Northumberland County commuting to Union County for employment.

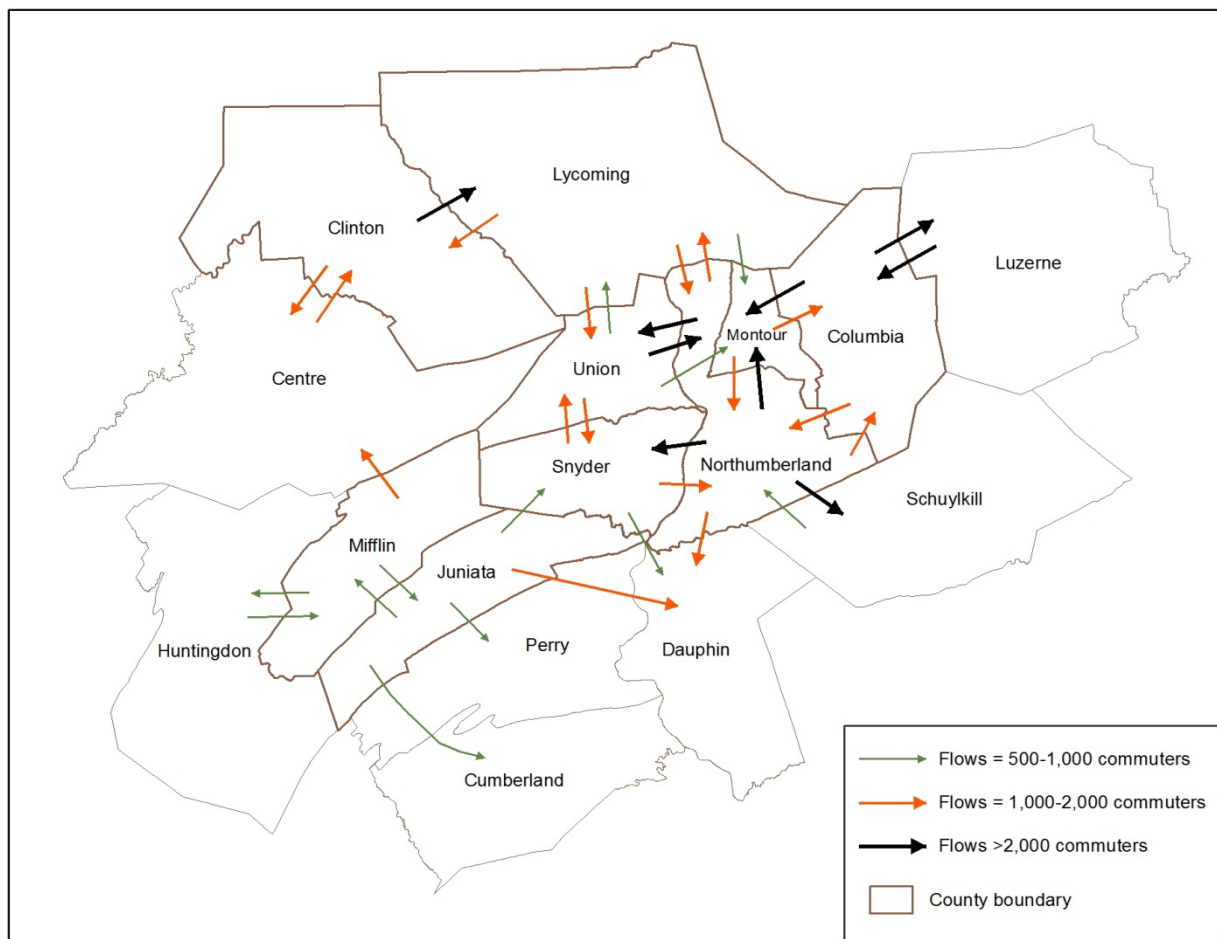
Table 13: Top Three Commute Destinations by County

Resident County	Commute Destination County	2006-2010 ACS	
		Number of Commuters	Percent of Resident County's Commuters
Clinton County	Clinton County	10,348	62.2%
	Lycoming County	3,077	18.5%
	Centre County	1,723	10.4%
Columbia County	Columbia County	21,877	72.4%
	Luzerne County	2,620	8.7%
	Montour County	2,484	8.2%
Juniata County	Juniata County	5,831	52.3%
	Dauphin County	1,564	14.0%
	Cumberland County	870	7.8%
Lycoming County	Lycoming County	45,936	86.0%
	Clinton County	1,533	2.9%
	Union County	1,428	2.7%
Mifflin County	Mifflin County	14,290	75.7%
	Centre County	1,469	7.8%
	Huntingdon County	998	5.3%
Montour County	Montour County	4,579	56.6%
	Northumberland County	1,098	13.6%
	Columbia County	1,098	13.6%
Northumberland County	Northumberland County	21,700	52.6%
	Union County	4,154	10.1%
	Montour County	3,815	9.2%
Snyder County	Snyder County	11,685	63.8%
	Union County	1,967	10.7%
	Northumberland County	1,678	9.2%
Union County	Union County	11,559	65.9%
	Northumberland County	2,283	13.0%
	Snyder County	1,341	7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 ACS

Figure 5 illustrates data from Table 13 and the larger 2006-2010 ACS dataset, breaking down commuter flows by the following ranges: 500-1,000; 1,000-2,000; and greater than 2,000. This figure graphically shows the interdependencies and relationships each county has with its counterparts in the region and surrounding counties with regard to the location of its respective workforce. The schematic shows that Northumberland and Montour Counties are major attractors for workers living in other counties, since they are the only counties that draw at least 500 commuters from 4 surrounding counties. As referenced earlier, there are heavy worker commuter flows from Northumberland County into Union County and Clinton County into Lycoming County. Other significant numeric flows are from Northumberland County into Montour County, from Columbia into Luzerne County, and from Union into Northumberland County.

Figure 5: Commutation Flows



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 ACS

Existing Major Trip Generators

Within the Plan area, there are several major business and community activity centers. These centers serve as logical destinations or generators for many transportation trips. These attractions include: medical centers; large retail establishments and shopping centers; senior

citizen facilities (i.e., nursing/retirement homes and senior centers); post- secondary schools; and government centers and public social service agencies. Examples of these major trip generators were compiled for the 2011 Needs Assessments. A more current listing of major employers (i.e., top 10 employers in terms of number of employees by county) was compiled by downloading data from the PA Department of Labor & Industry’s Center for Workforce Information & Analysis. (See Table 14 below for a listing of major employers in the region.) New data downloads and partnerships with other area organizations can be used to update additional major trip generator listings for public transportation purposes. Comparing these locations to the areas exhibiting higher transit dependent characteristics (discussed earlier in this profile and shown in Appendix A mapping) can give a sense of the likely travel patterns and destinations for persons using public transportation to satisfy mobility needs.

Table 14: Major Employers

Clinton County	
Rank	Employer
1	FIRST QUALITY PRODUCTS INC
2	KEYSTONE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
3	PA STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
4	FIRST QUALITY TISSUE, LLC
5	TRUCK-LITE CO INC
6	WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC
7	LOCK HAVEN HOSPITAL
8	CLINTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
9	STATE GOVERNMENT
10	TRICAN WELL SERVICE LP
Columbia County	
Rank	Employer
1	PA STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
2	AUTONEUM NORTH AMERICA INC
3	WISE FOODS INC
4	BERWICK HOSPITAL CO LLC
5	DEL MONTE CORPORATION
6	BERWICK OFFRAY LLC
7	BLOOMSBURG HOSPITAL
8	KAWNEER COMPANY INC
9	METROPOLITAN TRUCKING
10	DT KEYSTONE DISTRIBUTION RLLLP

Juniata County	
Rank	Employer
1	EMPIRE KOSHER POULTRY INC
2	AC PRODUCTS INC
3	JUNIATA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
4	EXCEL HOMES GROUP LLC
5	ZIMMERMAN TRUCK LINES INC
6	WEIS MARKETS INC
7	BROOKLINE AT MIFFLINTOWN INC
8	STATE GOVERNMENT
9	JUNIATA VALLEY BANK
10	JAY FULKROAD & SONS INC
Lycoming County	
Rank	Employer
1	SUSQUEHANNA HEALTH SYSTEM
2	STATE GOVERNMENT
3	PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
4	WILLIAMSPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
5	WEIS MARKETS INC
6	LYCOMING COUNTY
7	HALLIBURTON ENERGY SERVICES INC
8	WEST PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES INC
9	CS GROUP PAYROLL SERVICES LLC
10	HOPE ENTERPRISES INC
Mifflin County	
Rank	Employer
1	LEWISTOWN HOSPITAL
2	MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
3	STANDARD STEEL LLC
4	TRINITY PACKAGING CORPORATION
5	FIRST QUALITY BABY PRODUCTS LLC
6	TUSCARORA INTERMEDIATE UNIT II
7	PHILIPS ULTRASOUND INC
8	VALLEY VIEW HAVEN
9	WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC
10	GE INSPECTION TECHNOLOGIES LLC

Montour County	
Rank	Employer
1	GEISINGER SYSTEM SERVICES
2	GEISINGER MEDICAL CENTER
3	GEISINGER CLINIC
4	STATE GOVERNMENT
5	DANVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
6	GEISINGER COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES
7	GREAT DANE LP
8	MARIA JOSEPH MANOR
9	HEALTHSOUTH/GHS LLC
10	GRANDVIEW HEALTH HOMES INC
Northumberland County	
Rank	Employer
1	WEIS MARKETS INC
2	H H KNOEBEL SONS INC
3	STATE GOVERNMENT
4	CONAGRA FOODS PACKAGED FOODS CO INC
5	NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
6	SHIKELLAMY SCHOOL DISTRICT
7	SCHERING CORPORATION
8	CENTRAL SUSQUEHANNA INTERMEDIATE UNIT
9	KEYSTONE SERVICE SYSTEMS INC
10	REINHART FOODSERVICE LLC
Snyder County	
Rank	Employer
1	WOOD MODE INCORPORATED
2	STATE GOVERNMENT
3	SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY
4	SELINGROVE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
5	CONESTOGA WOOD SPECIALTIES
6	MIDD WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT
7	PROFESSIONAL BUILDING SYSTEMS INC
8	WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC
9	NATIONAL BEEF
10	UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY OF CENTRAL PA

Union County	
Rank	Employer
1	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
2	EVANGELICAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
3	BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY
4	ALBRIGHT CARE SERVICES
5	WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC
6	MIFFLINBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
7	WHITE DEER RUN INCORPORATED
8	COUNTRY CUPBOARD INC
9	DNA CENTRAL INC
10	PLAYWORLD SYSTEMS INCORPORATED

*Source: PA Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information & Analysis
2nd Quarter 2013 Initial Data; Federal and State Government Entities Aggregated*

Chapter 4: Existing Transportation Services

Inventory of Transit Providers

The SEDA-COG/WATS region is served by a variety of public transportation services, including fixed route, demand responsive, intercity bus, and taxi services. Providers for these services are listed in Table 15. In order to prepare a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, it is fundamental to assess public transportation needs and resources. Regarding the latter, a listing of known current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit) was compiled to shape a picture of what public transportation services are currently available. SEDA-COG staff relied on its prior inventory of transit providers, PennDOT resources, and input from Coordinating Committee members to compile a listing for this plan.

Most of the transportation services provided in the SEDA-COG MPO region are shared ride/demand responsive, primarily serving the needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income users. However, large busing companies offer fixed routes to specific locations for area residents, and Mount Carmel Borough’s Lower Anthracite Transit System provides a fixed-route transit system for communities in lower Northumberland County. Also, Amtrak has a station stop in Lewistown, Mifflin County, making rail passenger service available to the region’s population. In Lycoming County, River Valley Transit offers a number of fixed routes, and coordinates closely with shared ride operations from STEP, Inc. While not exhaustive at this juncture, the below table identifies known current transportation providers.

Table 15: Inventory of SEDA-COG MPO/Williamsport MPO Transit Providers

Area Served & Provider	Address	City/State/ZIP	Phone
Clinton County			
Fullington Trailways (Intercity Bus, also in Juniata, Mifflin, and Lycoming Counties)	4900 Rockton Rd.	DuBois, PA 15801	800-942-8287
STEP, Inc.	2138 Lincoln St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	570-326-0587
Columbia County			
Columbia County Transportation	11 West Main St.	Bloomsburg, PA 17815	570-784-8807
MTR Transportation, Inc.	6725 Keefers Lane	Bloomsburg, PA 17815	570-784-1550
Juniata County			
Call A Ride Service, Inc.	249 West Third St.	Lewistown, PA 17044	717-242-2277
J & D’s, Inc. (bus and MH/MR)	35 School Bus Ln.	Lewistown, PA 17044	717-248-8125
Lycoming County			
River Valley Transit (Fixed Route)	1500 West Third St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	800-248-9287
STEP, Inc.	2138 Lincoln St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	570-326-0587
Susquehanna Trailways (Intercity Bus)	11 West Church St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	800-692-6314
Billtown Cab Company (Taxi)	3575 West Fourth St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	570-322-2222
Mifflin County			
Call A Ride Service, Inc.	249 West Third St.	Lewistown, PA 17044	717-242-2277

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Scotty Taxi	223 Valley St.	Lewistown, PA 17044	717-248-0111
J & D's, Inc. (bus and MH/MR)	35 School Bus Ln.	Lewistown, PA 17044	717-248-8125
Amtrak Lewistown Station	150 Helen St.	Lewistown, PA 17044	800-842-7245
Montour County			
Montour County Transportation	112 Woodbine Ln.	Danville, PA 17821	570-271-0833
Northumberland County			
Lower Anthracite Transit System (Fixed Route)	137 West Fourth St.	Mt. Carmel, PA 17851	570-339-3956
rabbittransit (Northumberland County Transportation)	61 Tyler Ave.	Elysburg, PA 17824	570-505-0921
Paul's Cab Service (Taxi)	735 Market St.	Sunbury, PA 17801	570-259-5661
Shamokin Yellow Cab (Taxi)	212 West Independence St.	Shamokin, PA 17872	570-648-5756
Snyder County			
Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance	1610 Industrial Blvd., Suite 700	Lewisburg, PA 17837	570-522-1390
Union-Snyder Community Action Agency	713 Bridge Street, Suite 10	Selinsgrove, PA 17870	570-374-0181
Union County			
Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance	1610 Industrial Blvd., Suite 700	Lewisburg, PA 17837	570-522-1390
Union-Snyder Community Action Agency	713 Bridge Street, Suite 10	Selinsgrove, PA 17870	570-374-0181
Telos Taxi	27 South Fifth St.	Lewisburg, PA 17837	570-523-8294

A summary of the services provided within the region, and major transit planning activities engaged in since completion of the prior Coordinated Plan follows. More descriptions of individual transit operators begin on page 43.

Fixed Route Services

Fixed route service is operated over designated routes according to a published schedule and is available to the general public. Passengers can board and descend fixed route bus services at any bus stop along the established route. The SEDA-COG MPO region's only public fixed route system is the Lower Anthracite Transportation System (LATS), operated by the Borough of Mount Carmel, and serving the area from Shamokin to Mount Carmel. Three of the SEDA-COG MPO region's universities (Bucknell, Bloomsburg and Susquehanna) operate small fixed route systems for their student bodies. In the WATS MPO region, River Valley Transit (RVT) is the fixed route transit provider serving Lycoming County.

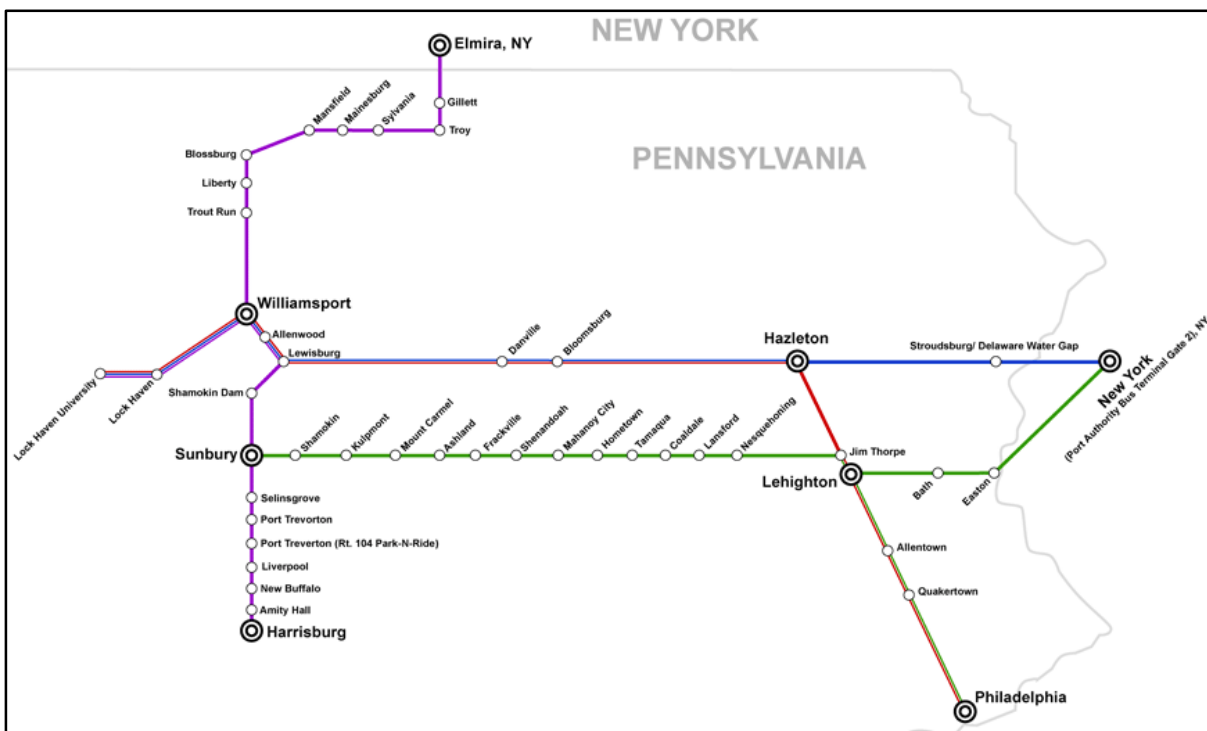
Intercity Bus Service

Intercity bus service is typically operated by private companies and provides connections between communities and over longer distances. Intercity service schedules are typically designed to attract longer distance travelers which often results in less attractive services for persons desiring to make shorter trips (such as within the Plan area). PennDOT's Bureau of

Public Transportation contracts with five carriers across Pennsylvania to provide scheduled fixed route service along routes considered essential links in the regional/statewide network of intercity bus services, but which cannot be financially supported solely from user fares. Several routes pass through or originate within the SEDA-COG region. These include links from State College to Wilkes-Barre and State College to Harrisburg, operated by Fullington Trailways and Greyhound. Of special note is Fullington's State College to Harrisburg Early Morning Bus. The route runs along Route 322 with stops in Lewistown, Mifflintown and Thompsontown. The timing of the stops is conducive to commuter service, and was indicated as an important feature in the Park and Ride study for Juniata County recently conducted by PennDOT. Although many of the intercity routes connect parts of the region with common work destinations, this is the prime example of an alternative poised to provide commuter service.

Susquehanna Trailways provides the highest level of intercity bus service in the region. It has several stops in the region and operates routes connecting area towns to Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Hazleton, Lehigh, Elmira, and New York (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Susquehanna Trailways Routes



Source: <http://www.susquehannabus.com/schedules.asp>

Further information about the routes and communities served can be found on the carriers' websites, or through the PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation website.

In addition to the state-sponsored intercity bus service, private contractors offer routes through the region. The most prominent example is the Megabus service. Although Megabus routes may pass through the region (to stops in State College, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, etc.), routes have yet to be scheduled to points within the region. Trip availability

varies, and can be identified by contacting Megabus directly or via <http://us.megabus.com>.

Demand Responsive Services

All parts of the region are served by demand responsive, or shared ride service, where the route and destination are determined by passenger request. Shared ride service provides consolidated trips between riders' origins and destinations that are not well served by fixed route bus service. Often referred to as "paratransit," shared ride operates during limited hours and specific travel areas. Different riders are grouped together depending upon their travel time and location(s). The services are mostly provided to portions of the population without access to vehicles, such as seniors, persons with disabilities, and low income individuals. Most passengers are able to ride with no or low fares through eligibility for state and federal programs or sponsoring human service agencies that cover the cost on a per-trip basis. Service is available to the general public at full fare, although the utilization of most services at full fare is low. Information on the services within each county can be obtained directly from the local providers.

There are many individual programs within Shared Ride Service. Each of these is governed with a different set of regulations, funding sources, reporting standards and service delivery guidelines. Some of the common funding programs include the following:

- Senior Shared Ride Program
- Aging Services Block Grant Program
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complimentary Paratransit Program
- Persons with Disabilities Program (PWD)
- Welfare to Work (W2W) Program
- Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD)

Taxi Service

Taxi service is also demand responsive, but a key distinction from the typical shared ride demand responsive operators is that same-day trip requests are accommodated by taxis. Limited taxi service is available in most of the region. In several cases, the taxi companies are used as sub-contractors for the demand responsive services providers, as a way to provide services after normal hours.

Passenger Rail Service

The Amtrak Pennsylvanian Route (travels daily between New York City and Pittsburgh) passes through Mifflin and Juniata Counties. Amtrak service can be obtained from the Lewistown station to nationwide destinations.

Vanpool Programs

Several transportation providers are operating or working towards operating vanpool programs that would serve the region's commuters. This includes the Union/Snyder Transportation

Alliance (USTA) vanpool efforts, known as USTA Commute, which have already established and continue to expand vanpools connecting area residents to workplaces in Harrisburg, State College, Williamsport and destinations to be determined. USTA has been successful in receiving Federal and state transit funding to purchase vans and carry out the USTA Commute program. USTA has taken advantage of numerous marketing opportunities to increase interest and usage (see billboard example at right), and it has worked to offer guaranteed rides home for vanpool participants. Additionally, the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA), through CATA COMMUTE, operates existing vanpools in Mifflin County. PennDOT continues to emphasize the importance of vanpools, and it is likely to institute a statewide vanpool program in the near future.



Other Services

A variety of other groups provide additional services that do not fall neatly within the preceding categories. These include additional services for medical transportation provided by agencies for the aging, nursing homes, and health care providers, charter transportation services provided by private companies, and car sharing services, such as the Zip-Car program hosted by Bucknell University. Private non-profit providers of demand responsive services can be difficult to inventory, since many are simply a van provided by a living facility, church or social service agency to allow clients access to their facilities or other services. Although a reasonable effort to capture and update these services is included in each planning activity, no effort is absolutely assured to identify all participants.

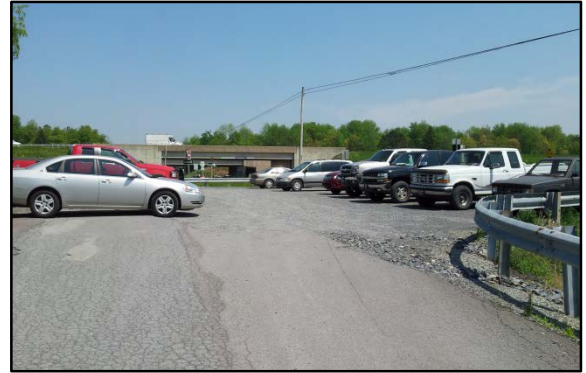
Park and Ride Lots

Park and ride lots are locations where individuals can park their vehicle when participating in carpools/vanpools or using public transportation for a portion of their trip. Travelers must make their own arrangements for transportation to and from the lots. A park & ride facility must be easily accessible and convenient for the greatest number of potential users, and the availability of convenient parking facilities can directly influence commuters' willingness to try transit services or carpool/vanpool alternatives.



Figure 7 shows park & ride lots that are available for people in the region wishing to carpool or vanpool. Nine official park & ride facilities in the region are owned and maintained by PennDOT, denoted by green icons on the Figure 7 map. Six of these lots are located in Lycoming County alone. PennDOT occasionally upgrades the existing park & ride lots when doing roadway resurfacing projects adjacent to them. For example, the park & ride lot at the Turbotville Interchange of Interstate 180 (Exit 5) in Northumberland County will be expanded and improved in 2014 as part of a resurfacing project along a five-mile stretch of I-180. (See picture on following page for a photo of the existing park & ride lot at this exit.)

There are other places where commuters use commercial lots, or have created pull-off parking areas alongside roadways, often without property owner permission. These unofficial pull-off parking areas can pose safety or liability concerns for both the parked vehicles and passing traffic. Therefore, they should be better analyzed and inventoried in the future, along with identifying viable candidate locations for official park & ride lots. Future updates to the MPO long range transportation plans and coordinated plans can address these inventories more comprehensively.



Due to high carpooling rates and potential safety issues with unofficial park & ride areas adjacent to US Route 22/322, PennDOT sanctioned a commuter parking feasibility study for several interchanges along US 22/322 in Juniata County. The 2011 feasibility study report identified eight (8) areas of interest for park & ride facilities (see orange icons in Figure 7, which also symbolize planned park & ride lots associated with the CSVT project). Funds are still being sought for design and construction of a park & ride lot at one or more of the Juniata County locations. The objectives for the new Juniata County Park & Ride facility (applicable to other regional applications) include:

- Provide adequate parking for existing and future commuter use
- Provide additional ride sharing opportunities and/or options
- Provide a safe area for commuter parking
- Alleviate commuter parking infringing upon private parking lots designated to serve other uses
- Promote environmentally friendly conservation efforts

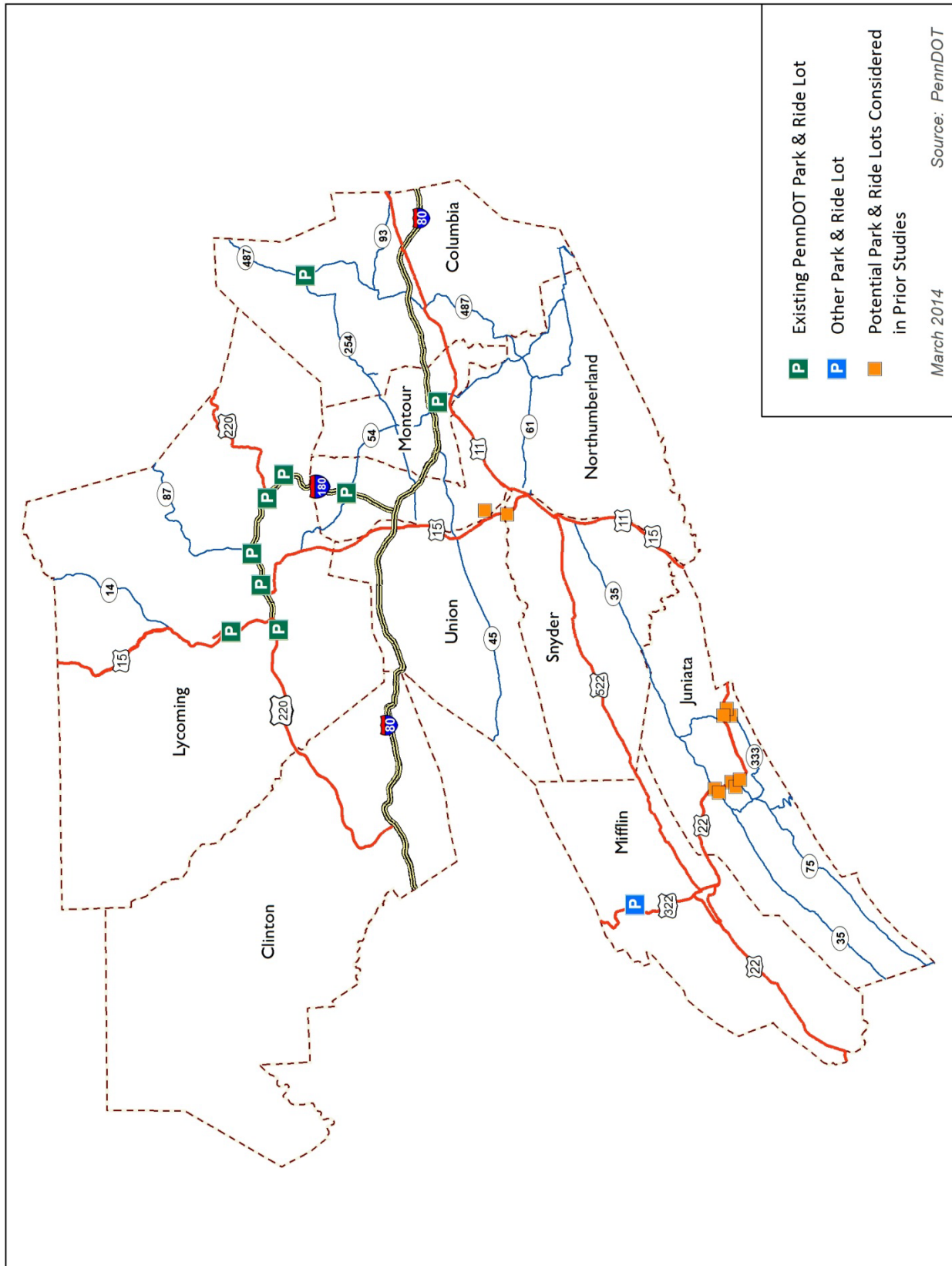
Regional Transit Planning

Since 2008, a regional stakeholder group, known as the North Central PA Public Transportation Taskforce, has emerged to address public transportation issues. The effort emerged out of local efforts to identify community needs, and includes Lycoming County as well as the SEDA-COG counties of Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union. The membership of the group includes transportation providers, chambers of commerce, social service providers, transportation planning organizations, and other agencies.

A 2011 needs assessment was completed for the six counties included, consisting of an inventory of existing services, an assessment of existing transit needs, and recommendations for meeting them. The final report for this assessment can be found on the SEDA-COG website.

The report included five main recommendations for addressing transit needs, ranging from the creation of a centralized resource directory for existing services to the implementation of regional fixed route service, providing both easily implementable steps for existing services, and options for significant extension of service in the future.

Figure 7: Park and Ride Lot Locations



Transit Operator Profiles

The transit operators serving the region are briefly described below. A detailed description of each operator, the services provided, ridership and financial information can be received from the operators or PennDOT.

Fixed Route Operators

River Valley Transportation (RVT) – RVT provides fixed-route transit service in the Greater Williamsport area, including the City of Williamsport, the Boroughs of Duboistown, Hughesville, Jersey Shore, Montgomery, Montoursville, Muncy, and South Williamsport, and the Townships of Loyalsock, Old Lycoming, Piatt, and Woodward. RVT is a unit of the City of Williamsport and is funded mostly with state and federal grants and passenger revenue. The RVT system consists of 15 routes, which include several variations that result in a total of 21 unique route alignments in the system. The transit system primarily serves the City of Williamsport and adjacent communities, with 14 of the 15 routes emanating from the Trade and Transit Centre (T&TC) located in downtown Williamsport. All 27 buses in the RVT fleet are ADA accessible, consisting of standard 35' and 40' long transit coaches, including 23 diesel-powered vehicles and 4 new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. The RVT system operates Monday through Saturday from 5:30 AM to 11:45 PM. However, most of the bus service ends by 7:00 PM, with a “Super Nightline” route comprised of two buses serving an east and west alignment that operate between 7:00 PM and 11:45 PM. RVT does not operate Sunday service.

The base cash fare to ride an RVT fixed route bus is \$2.00 with children age five and under allowed to ride for free when accompanied by a fare-paying adult. Transfers are issued free of charge for the next available bus and are valid for one hour from the time the transfer is issued. All RVT transit vehicles have electronic validating fareboxes that record passengers as they board and pay fares, thus assisting RVT in providing more detailed analysis of performance of each route. A variety of discounted fare programs and multi-ride options are available which lower the cost per ride.

These programs include discounted tokens (four tokens for \$5.00), \$1.00 for youths under the age of 17, and free transportation for riders 60 or older. Discounted fare programs for students, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens are predicated on the rider meeting certain eligibility conditions and showing proper identification. Persons with disabilities ride RVT for \$1.00 on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM and ride for free on Saturdays and designated holidays. Senior citizens (60+) ride RVT for free anytime of the day under the sponsorship grant funding provided by PennDOT (65+) and the Bi-County Office of the Aging (60-64). In addition, students, faculty, and staff from Lycoming College and the Pennsylvania College of Technology also ride RVT for free anytime of the day under a contractual



arrangement between RVT and the Colleges.

ADA complimentary paratransit service is provided by River Valley Transit Plus, which is operated by STEP Transportation under contract to RVT and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This service is available to individuals who are unable to use accessible fixed-route transportation because of a disability. Rides are available during the same operating hours as the fixed-route service with comparable fares. Service has to be provided to locations within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the RVT routes. Responsibility for service delivery has been contracted with STEP Transportation. RVT certifies clients as eligible for the paratransit service, but STEP Transportation is responsible for accepting reservations and providing transportation to meet trip requests. The ADA paratransit service fare is twice the RVT base fare.

RVT also provides special transit services to support a wide variety of activities and community events throughout its service area, including the Lycoming County Fair, Little League World Series, Williamsport Crosscutters minor league baseball games, Penn College Earth Science Center, Lycoming College Homecoming and other college functions, along with charter services using a process that complies with new FTA regulations. A future extension of regular bus service between Williamsport and Lock Haven is possible, as RVT has recently been discussing options with Clinton County officials and Lock Haven University. This service extension could provide work trips targeted to employment clusters located in western Lycoming County and the Clinton County Industrial Park, as well as service for college students to Lycoming College, Lock Haven University, and Pennsylvania College of Technology.



RVT extended its contract with PennDOT to manage the Endless Mountains Transit Authority (EMTA) for an additional two years through June 30, 2015. In addition to continuing efforts to streamline service and operations, improve financial viability, strengthen management systems, and upgrade information technology, it adopted a new name and accompanying logo in 2013 to BeST, a more engaging and representative name that stands for the three northcentral Pennsylvania counties – Bradford, Sullivan, and Tioga – that constitute the service area with the “e” still reflecting the endless mountains of which they are a part. Beyond these numerous operational improvements, BeST partnered with Williams Oil Company – Dandy Mini Mart – to construct a CNG fueling facility, located in Athens, PA, and purchased a new CNG transit vehicle in 2013. Both the fueling facility and the CNG bus were financed with funds from the Department of Environmental Protection’s Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant (AFIG) in the amount of \$750,000.

In 2011 and 2012, RVT was awarded \$3.5 million and \$1.5 million respectively through FTA’s Clean Fuels Program to further retrofit its maintenance facility to create a fast-fill CNG fueling station. This CNG fueling station opened in late 2013, and it will enable RVT to eventually

replace all of its diesel buses with CNG buses to significantly lower its operating costs and reduce carbon emissions, while capitalizing on the Marcellus Shale natural gas resources abundant in the County. The CNG fueling facility will be open for business to other municipalities, private companies and the general public. In addition to its regular capital activities to replace vehicles, RVT also plans to greatly expand its Trade & Transit Centre.

Lower Anthracite Transportation System (LATS) – LATS operates ADA-accessible, fixed-route bus service over three distinct routes in the lower Northumberland County area in and between the City of Shamokin, Coal Township, and the Boroughs of Kulpmont, Marion Heights, and Mount Carmel. The system is operated and administered by the Borough of Mount Carmel and funded mostly with state and federal grants and supplemented by passenger fares. The LATS system operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Saturday service runs between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Recently, LATS has worked with its bus operator (Catawese Coach) to establish a new service route to Knoebel’s Amusement Park that runs mostly during the week and on some weekends during park operations. Additional route extensions were analyzed as part of the 2014 LATS Transit Development Plan, with a route to Sunbury 2 to 3 days a week considered for short-term implementation.

The base cash fare to ride a LATS fixed route bus depends on the origin and destination (i.e., zone or distance based) with fares at \$1.00. Discounted fare programs are available for senior citizens (65+) and persons with disabilities by meeting certain eligibility conditions and showing proper identification. Senior citizens (65+) meeting the requirements can ride LATS for free anytime of the day with the trips paid for through grant funding provided by the Commonwealth. Children up to the age of four ride free; children between the age of five and ten can ride for \$0.50 per trip (all children must be accompanied by a fare-paying adult passenger). Persons with disabilities ride LATS for half-fare during the non-peak period. LATS also offers frequent rider passes and monthly passes for a discounted rate.

ADA complimentary paratransit service in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is available to individuals who are unable to use the LATS accessible fixed-route buses because of a disability. Rides are available during the same operating hours as the fixed-route service with comparable fares. Service has to be provided to locations within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the LATS routes. Responsibility for service delivery has been contracted with the Northumberland County Transportation Department, which is the Shared Ride provider serving Northumberland County. The ADA paratransit service fare is twice the LATS base fare.



Demand Responsive (Shared Ride) Operators

Each shared ride operator provides service for any trip purpose (i.e., medical, shopping, senior

centers, etc.). Most of the trips provided by the systems are subsidized or are provided at no charge to program clients. Services are open to the general public, but these passengers are required to pay the full cost of the trip – this results in relatively high fares that discourage general use. Various levels of coordination are occurring between the demand responsive systems in the Plan area, with each of the systems coordinating cross-county trips with at least one other provider. Coordination between the systems typically involves transferring passengers at county borders, or at specific areas or major destination points.

Call A Ride Service, Inc. (CARS) – CARS is a private, non-profit organization that provides door-to-door, demand responsive transit services to any resident of Mifflin and Juniata Counties. Program services cover Senior Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging, Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP), Welfare to Work (W2W), and the general public. Regularly served destinations are senior centers, hospitals, dialysis clinics, grocery stores, employment locations, and social service agencies. Service hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Passenger fares are distance based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.



Columbia County Transportation – Columbia County Transportation is a unit of Columbia County government that falls under the supervision of the Columbia County Human Services Department. It provides curb-to-curb service for Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP), Welfare to Work (W2W) and other transportation through the Human Services Development Fund (HSDF). The service area includes Columbia County (primary service area), Montour, Northumberland and Luzerne Counties. Regularly served destinations include Geisinger Medical Center, FMC Dialysis, Geisinger-Bloomsburg and the Berwick Hospital. Service hours are Monday through Saturday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Columbia County Transportation subcontracts with K-Cab.

Montour County Transit – Montour County Transit is a unit of Montour County government that provides door-to-door, demand responsive transit services to any resident of Montour County. Program services cover Senior Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging, Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP), Welfare to Work (W2W), LIFE Geisinger, other organizations as contracted, and the general public. The service area includes Montour County (primary service area), Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties. Regularly served destinations are Geisinger Medical Center and surrounding Geisinger affiliated services, dialysis clinics, employment locations, grocery stores, and social service agencies. Service hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with the exception of MATP dialysis patients who are transported on legal holidays and Saturdays if needed. Passenger fares are zone based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.

MTR Transportation/K-Cab – MTR Transportation/K-Cab is a private corporation that operates

door-to-door, demand responsive transit services to any resident of Columbia County. Program services cover Senior Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging, Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), Welfare to Work (W2W), and the general public. The service area includes Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, and lower Luzerne Counties. Regularly served destinations include Geisinger Medical Center, FMC Dialysis, Berwick Hospital, and Bloomsburg Hospital. Service hours are Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM and on Saturday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Passenger fares are distance based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.

Northumberland County Transportation – rabbittransit operates as the coordinator of shared ride service in Northumberland County. Curb-to-curb, demand responsive transit services are provided to any resident of Northumberland County. Program services cover Senior Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging, Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the general public. The primary service area is Northumberland County, but rabbittransit provides trips up to 20 miles past the county line. Regularly served destinations include Geisinger Medical Center, Shamokin Hospital, Evangelical Hospital, Sunbury Hospital, Wal-Mart, grocery stores, senior centers, and Susquehanna Valley Mall. Service hours are Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Passenger fares are distance based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.



STEP, Inc. – STEP Transportation is a program within the Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. – a private, non-profit community action agency. Door-to-door, demand responsive service is available through STEP Transportation to residents of Clinton and Lycoming Counties. Program services cover Senior Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Welfare to Work (W2W), and the general public. The STEP service area encompasses Lycoming, Clinton, Montour, and Union Counties; the system also provides MATP trips throughout Pennsylvania on an as needed basis. Regularly served destinations include Geisinger Medical Center, the Eye Center of Central Pennsylvania, Susquehanna Health System, dialysis units, senior centers, and the STEP Office of Aging. Services hours are Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Passenger fares are distance based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.



Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance (USTA) – USTA is a public, non-profit transportation alliance that was formed for the purpose of providing consolidated transportation services for local human service agencies and the general public. USTA is a division of the Union-Snyder Community Action Agency, a community action program that was formed through a joint effort of the Union and Snyder County Commissioners. Door-to-door, demand responsive service is available through USTA to residents of Union and Snyder Counties. Program services include PennDOT's Shared Ride Program for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Foster Grandparent Program of Central Pennsylvania, PA Department of Welfare's Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), Welfare to Work (W2W), and Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD). USTA's service area encompasses all of Union and Snyder Counties (primary area), and limited service is also provided to the Harrisburg, Hershey, and Lebanon areas in Dauphin and Lebanon Counties, Williamsport in Lycoming County, and Lewistown Borough in Mifflin County. Regularly served destinations include Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Sunbury Hospital in Sunbury, Evangelical Hospital in Lewisburg, senior centers, dialysis clinics, grocery stores, and Suncom Industries. Routine appointments may be scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Earlier appointment times may be accepted for dialysis, one-day surgery/procedures, and employment trips that can be shared. Passenger fares are distance based, with discounted or free fares provided to program clients, and the full fare rate charged to the general public.

As indicated previously, USTA has introduced a Vanpool and Rideshare Program, which began in 2012. The Vanpool Program is designed to accommodate commuters who drive to a regular destination from a regular starting point on a regular basis to pool their individual commute into one vehicle. The service is intended to offer opportunities to individuals looking for mobility options that are environmentally friendly and reduce the cost of traveling to/from work. The optimum number of commuters per van is 10-12. The vanpool participants determine the schedule of the route, pick-up and drop-off locations and designate a volunteer driver. The cost of maintaining the van is divided between the riders and is calculated on a base, mileage and number of riders. Currently, vanpools travel from the Union/Snyder County region to Harrisburg. Additional vanpools are anticipated to form in 2014 due to funding the agency has received to add commuter vans to the fleet. USTA Commute also includes a Guaranteed Ride Home Program that ensures commuters of a ride home because of an emergency. USTA accepts Commuter Benefits, a federal qualified transportation fringe benefit (26 U.S Code Section 132) offered by employers to employees that includes vanpools. In addition to vanpools, the Rideshare Program also accommodates commuters interested in carpooling.



Chapter 5: Needs Assessment/Transportation Gaps

Public Transportation Needs and Gaps Informed by 2013 Surveys and Outreach

This section documents the public transportation needs identified through analysis and outreach completed in 2013, including surveys conducted by SEDA-COG/WATS MPOs. The surveys asked area residents and organizations a variety of multiple choice questions about public transportation topics and also allowed them to enter needs and concerns through open-ended questions. The surveys were available from September 16–November 15, 2013. In total, 474 survey responses were received from residents, and 33 responses were received from organizations (representing public transit, aging, disabled, low-income, educational, medical, nursing home, and other interests). The responses were helpful in identifying and validating unmet needs in the region, information that is critical to develop strategies for enhancing public transportation services. The survey questions and aggregated responses, minus certain open-ended responses, are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Transportation Needs and Gaps Identified through Data Analysis and Surveys

Awareness/Information

Awareness of Available Services

A problem that exists in many parts of the region is a lack of awareness among targeted transportation users (and the general public) that transportation services are available in their community, whether it is public transportation or services available through a human service agency. Residents often are not aware of the transportation options available in their area, who provides it, and what is required to use it. Individuals sometimes know that service exists, but not where or when the service operates. The problem exists among human service agencies as well. Some agencies have clients with transportation needs that they cannot serve but often are not aware that the local transit provider or other agency can fill the need and vice versa.

Despite its importance, the promotion of transportation services can be severely hampered by insufficient marketing budgets or staffing levels. The resident survey responses indicated that direct mailings and traditional print media remain important for communicating information about public transportation services, particularly for user groups without Internet access (see Appendix B, Question 38 results). The lack of transit information in languages other than English can be a barrier for certain permanent and temporary residents in the region.

Another awareness issue involves potential riders not knowing how to actually use the transportation services. Transit novices may not realize how to use schedules, access stops, board vehicles, pay fares, or make transfers. Drivers and other transit personnel may not understand or have the capability to address new passenger needs. Increasing transit travel knowledge can lead to increased and more convenient utilization of existing resources.

Information Clearinghouse

Coupled with the general awareness issue is the fact there is often not a single entity (in the region or in most of the counties) that can be contacted to efficiently find out what services are available. There is no readily accessible and usable one-stop shop for the collection and dissemination of the entire region's public transportation information. Relatively new resources such as 511PA (www.511pa.com/) and PA 2-1-1 (www.pa211.org/) have helped to consolidate access to traveler information, human services, and referral mechanisms. In addition, PennDOT has gathered resources for many transportation modes, including transit and car and vanpooling, and made them available through www.pacommutes.com. Still, there are limitations with these resources for local users in terms of their comprehensiveness, ease-of-use, and updates to maintain currency/accuracy. Additional rideshare tools (free ride-matching services that help long-distance commuters to find easy and economical ways to get to and from work via carpools and vanpools) are also needed, whether hosted by a regional clearinghouse, transit providers, employers, or other entities.

Information Development

This planning effort, like the prior 2011 Needs Assessment, considers needs and characteristics of a large multi-county region. The Census data relied upon for these planning efforts don't drill down below the county, municipal, or Census tract level, and the counts often have significant margins of error that cloud their usefulness. More specific data analysis at the local level is warranted to better understand particular target populations and their transportation needs. Data analysis and more localized outreach can help to identify the spatial characteristics of the target populations and their travel destinations, such as low-income individuals to key employment centers. This information can then be shared among entities able to produce improved transportation service for these targeted clients.

Rider Needs

Transportation for Those Not Eligible for a Transportation Program

Most subsidized transportation programs have strict eligibility requirements for receiving transportation services. Persons that do not quite meet the criteria for the programs but still need transportation may find public transportation to be unaffordable, particularly low-income people with children in rural areas. Some individuals do not meet the income criteria for Medicaid, are not disabled, or are not old enough to qualify for aging programs and thus have problems accessing transportation that may be available in their community. For many individuals, the affordability issue is the additional cost of paying fares for children or family members that must go along on a trip. High fares for the general population deter widespread use.

Low income and at-risk individuals in the region often cannot secure and/or retain employment due to a lack of affordable transportation. Residents trying to get off of public assistance, stabilize their lives, or exit troubling circumstances can run into major stumbling blocks through not having convenient transportation options for accessing steady employment. Family, friends,

and organizations may be functioning to fill some voids, but transportation needs of many disadvantaged residents are not being met, resulting in economic drawbacks, health issues, personal problems, etc. More strategic approaches establishing reliable transportation for underprivileged individuals to access employment will create sizeable socioeconomic benefits.

Inter-County Transportation

As evidenced by Census figures presented in Chapter 3, there are significant journey-to-work trips between counties in the region. Due to the number of medical and educational institutions in the region, residents also travel to other counties for healthcare appointments and college classes. As mentioned previously, coordination is occurring between the transit systems in the Plan area, with each of the systems coordinating cross-county trips with at least one other provider. Additional analysis of where services overlap or operate near another system's services could lead to greater usage of existing transfer sites or identify new locations to facilitate transfers among systems. Survey data indicated a need for greater service from the Lock Haven area to Williamsport, from surrounding counties to the RT 11/15 commercial strip in Snyder County, and from surrounding counties to Geisinger's medical facilities in Montour County. Some of these needs could be facilitated through coordinated transfers among providers, depending on capacity and conducive schedules.

Additional Fixed Route Service and Better Transportation from Rural Areas to Cities/Towns

Many survey respondents mentioned the need for more fixed-route service in the region to connect residents to employment and shopping. There is a need to transport rural residents to the region's cities and towns to access services and conduct personal business. Many transportation providers struggle to provide adequate transportation in rural areas due to low density population and the expense of traveling long distances to pick up a small number of passengers (which can also lead to perception issues among the public seeing largely empty transit vehicles on the road). More direct, frequent, and reliable service to key activity centers in area towns is needed for target populations living in rural areas.

Lack of Same Day Service

The region's shared ride providers have advance reservation requirements. Generally, customers must schedule trips at least one business day in advance. This makes it difficult to address last minute needs or simply take a trip without advance planning. In particular, there is a need to provide same day service for pharmacy stops and hospital discharges.

Travel Time

Transit passengers face long travel times when they travel from rural areas or transfer from one route or service to another. This can be a deterrent to using transit, especially for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. The unreliability of pick-up and drop-off times can discourage frequent users, especially those using the services for medical transportation trips.

Evening and Weekend Transportation

The availability of shared ride transit service in much of the region drops off after 6:00 PM. For persons working a second or third shift job, this temporal gap may mean that they are only able to use public transportation for trips to or from work, but not both. Those that have nontraditional work schedules or unscheduled overtime face similar difficulties. This inhibits some job-seekers from being able to secure and retain employment.

Similarly, a general lack of evening and weekend service hours means residents have reduced opportunities for taking trips for errands, entertainment, recreation, religious services, and shopping among others. However, transportation providers lack funding to extend hours of service, and they typically find they're in a position where they must focus on stabilizing current services that function as lifelines to targeted populations making up the primary ridership. In 2012, STEP Transportation was forced by fiscal issues to pull back from its prior 24/7/365 service to Monday-Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Greater funding levels would be required to extend hours of service across the region.

Accessibility Issues

The mobility options for persons with disabilities are impacted by transit accessibility issues. Some bus stops lack adjacent sidewalks as well as ADA-compliant curb ramps and a level boarding area, or existing sidewalks are in poor condition or impeded by obstructions such as utilities and overgrown vegetation. The distance to bus stops can be a hindrance to those with difficulty walking beyond short lengths. In rural areas, curbs are few and access may be limited by rural roads and long driveways.

Some agencies do not have enough ADA-accessible vehicles or spaces on vehicles to meet the demand for wheelchair trips, and frail individuals may need more intensive assistance to board, ride, and transfer from public transportation vehicles. Other individuals may be inclined to use public transportation if they could connect to it by bicycle and store their bikes on the bus until reaching their ultimate destination. Survey respondents interested in these intermodal connections also expressed a need for more bike lanes and wider shoulders to increase biker safety.

Student Transportation

Students may not comprise a target population, but several survey respondents pointed out the needs of K-12 students from families without vehicles to access after-school programs, events, or jobs. In addition, though some area colleges offer shuttles to their students for on campus travel and for special destinations like airports, another registered need is that of commuter students for accessing college classes and job training through affordable public transportation beyond the Williamsport area.

Long-distance Travel

Several survey respondents (36%) selected that long-distance trips (e.g., to airports and other major transportation hubs) would be a priority reason for them to use public transportation.

This use would offer a great deal of convenience and avoid having to find transportation from friends/relatives or pay considerable parking fees at end points. Quite a few comments were provided in favor of passenger rail service connections for area residents, especially to large cities such as Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington D.C.

Transit Experience

Adding or improving amenities at bus stops can create a better transit experience. These amenities include bus shelters, benches, signage, and lighting. Fear of crime can deter some individuals from using transit; the location of existing fixed route stops and lack of adequate lighting at certain stops can make users uncomfortable.

Operational Issues

Underutilization of Existing Resources

Many transportation-related agencies acquire vehicles through programs to serve the specific needs of their consumers. Sometimes these agencies only use their vehicles a small portion of the day and do not allow other agencies to use the vehicles or purchase service from them in order to increase the usage of the vehicles.

High Fuel Costs

High fuel costs strain transit agency budgets. With the advances in alternative fuels and vehicle technologies, there is a need to convert diesel or gasoline-powered fleets to alternatives such as natural gas, propane, or hybrid electric.

Duplication and Redundancy

Over time, the population of Pennsylvania's cities and communities has been dispersed far beyond urban boundaries, and trip patterns have become more regional. The current configuration of primarily county-based transit systems does not reflect the regional nature of travel patterns. Re-configuring transit systems or aspects of their operations from county-based to regional organizations could be an effective strategy to address increasing costs and changing service demands. As part of its modernization initiatives, PennDOT has begun studying regional consolidation of transit systems in counties where the County Commissioners endorse the study taking place. One such study covering the WATS MPO and six of the SEDA-COG MPO counties commenced in 2014. The analysis will consider potential streamlined administration, economies of scale in procurement, and overall cost savings. The study's first phase will focus on the financial impact of regionalization on the organizations' administrative and overhead functions. If the counties resolve to proceed to a second phase, then the second phase work order will focus on a detailed organizational and financial analysis, on the development of an integrated fare system and on the development of an implementation plan for such a consolidation.

Transportation Gaps Survey of Area Organizations

As indicated earlier, transportation and human service agencies were surveyed as part of the Plan update in order to capture their concerns and priorities for improving transportation programs or services. A brief summary for the results to some questions on transportation gaps in the region follow:

Access to Jobs

64% of survey respondents indicated that Cost (regardless of transportation mode) was the most significant factor for difficulty getting to and from jobs. Lack of Service for 2nd and 3rd Shift Jobs and During Weekends received the next highest vote total as the most significant issue in accessing jobs, as indicated by 28% of respondents.

Access for People with Disabilities

Respondents were fairly evenly split in terms of the most significant issue related to lack of transportation access for people with disabilities. 38% indicated that Lack of Same Day Trip Scheduling was the most significant issue; 27% selected Safe Pedestrian Access Problems as most significant; and 23% chose Reliable On-time Performance Problems as most significant.

Access to Information about Transportation Options

46% of respondents felt that Insufficient Budgets/Staff/Time entail the most significant issue related to difficulties accessing information about transportation options. Difficulty Finding Service Information and the Lack of a Centralized Information Center tied for the 2nd highest vote total, with 23% of respondents selecting them as most significant.

Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation

39% of respondents chose Use of Technology for Improved Transportation Systems (e.g., vehicle tracking systems and computer scheduling) as most significant. The need for a Coordinated Region-wide Transit Trip Planning System received the next highest vote total, with 30% of respondents identifying this as the most pressing technology issue facing the region.

Access to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes

33% of respondents indicated that Limited or No Flexibility in the Use of Transportation Funds was the most significant issue relative to changes needed by legislators or other decision-makers. Close behind was Establishing Sustainable Funding for Transit, which was selected by 29% as the most significant issue for action by legislators or other decision-makers.

Overall Importance of Above Issue Areas

When asked about prioritizing the five issue areas above, respondents felt that Access to Jobs was most important, followed by Access for People with Disabilities, Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation, Access to Information about Transportation Options, and Access

to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes. The survey participants were asked to assume that they could distribute \$100 to fund programs and services aimed at improving the transportation issue areas. Based on their allocation of \$100 across these five issues: Access to Jobs received an average of \$36; Access for People with Disabilities received an average of \$32; Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation received an average of \$19; Access to Information about Transportation Options received an average of \$16; and Access to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes received an average of \$10.

Analysis of Transit Needs from 2011 Needs Assessment

This section documents the results of the analysis of transit demand that was completed as part of the aforementioned 2011 Needs Assessment guided by the North Central PA Public Transportation Taskforce (NCPPTT).

To ensure a comprehensive approach to this topic, the Needs Assessment consultant team completed both (1) a quantitative analysis using actual data and demand estimation techniques that have been successfully employed in similar studies, and (2) a qualitative assessment of transit needs based on stakeholder and public outreach activities. The first part provided a quantitative assessment of the potential magnitude of transit travel in the region as it relates to forecast changes in population and transportation service levels. The second part supplemented the quantitative analysis with qualitative information gathered through a series of stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions. The stakeholder outreach encompassed a wide range of groups in the community affected by public transportation, including but not limited to large employers, major medical and educational institutions, transit service providers, individuals who use transit services, and the general public.

Quantitative Transit Demand Analysis

The approach used in this phase of the demand analysis assumes that travel relationships between transit system supply and demand can be quantified using empirical data. The quantitative analysis described in this report pertained only to demand responsive transportation systems operating in the study area and their peers across Pennsylvania. This was due to the substantial differences in the nature of fixed route and demand responsive services and transit users in urban versus rural areas. This was also deemed appropriate since the Williamsport area (served by River Valley Transit) and the Mount Carmel Area (served by Lower Anthracite Transit System) are both relatively well served in relation to the other urban and rural areas across the area where latent demand is a more important issue.

The quantitative transit demand analysis was intended to view the transportation system from a macro level and draw conclusions regarding potential transit demand based on current relationships. Using empirical information on population, its characteristics and service levels, a travel relationship was established that related the system supply or service levels (i.e., service hours per capita) to demand (i.e., trips per capita). The calibrated relationship for the base year (i.e., 2009) was the basis for estimating future transit potential. Combined with the anticipated

population, ridership potential was established based on assumed service levels. The objective of this analysis was to understand the factors that influence travel and then gauge the magnitude of future travel that might be expected based on shifts in those factors. A detailed description of the datasets and model used in conducting this analysis was included in the 2011 Needs Assessment interim reporting.

In general, the quantitative analysis indicated that at the county level, a large portion of the potential transit market in the area is currently served and to attract new riders, the level of service will have to be increased. Further, increases in transit usage are not attributable to population gains since the area is not expected to experience significant population increases. However, this finding does not mean that there are not localized opportunities for generating increased ridership through strategic service adjustments.

Qualitative Assessment of Transit Needs

The second and more critical part of the transit demand analysis was to gather qualitative information through the conduct of stakeholder outreach activities that consisted of (1) a series of one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in the area, and (2) four workshop-style focus group sessions. Existing fixed route transit providers and human service transportation providers were interviewed. Other key stakeholders were identified by the NCPPTT and prioritized for one-on-one interviews. The focus group sessions, which were held at strategically determined locations across the region, were widely advertised and open to the general public.

Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews were conducted either over the telephone or on-site at the interviewee's office or facility. A total of 18 organizations were invited to take part in the process and a total of 26 individuals participated in the interview sessions. The organizations that participated in this outreach effort included:

- Lower Anthracite Transit System (LATS) – Mt. Carmel Area
- Montour County Transit
- MTR Transportation/K-Cab – Columbia County
- Northumberland County Transportation Department (NCTD)
- River Valley Transit (RVT) – Williamsport Area
- STEP Transportation – Lycoming County
- Union/Snyder Transportation Alliance (USTA)
- Bloomsburg University
- Northumberland County Senior Centers
- Lycoming/Clinton County Office of Aging
- Geisinger Hospital
- Evangelical Hospital
- Shamokin Area Hospital

- Susquehanna Health Systems
- Cherokee Pharmaceuticals
- Luzerne County Community College
- McCann School of Business
- Northumberland County Area Vocational and Technical School
- Smoley’s Van Service

While the stakeholder interview process provides flexibility to tailor the questions to individual circumstances, a list of topics was developed prior to the interviews to provide a systematic process for addressing key topics and obtaining the type of information that supports identification of alternative improvements. The interview “template” provided an outline of issues to be discussed and led to the discussion of some other topics. The topics included:

- Organizational support (financial or non-financial) currently provided to public and/or human service transit providers or transit users
- Opinion of existing services
- Transit needs and desired improvements
- Opportunities/challenges facing public and human service transportation providers that could impact the ability to meet mobility and quality of life needs in the region
- Appropriate types of public transportation service(s) for urban, small urban, and rural areas
- Role for public transportation in the region
- Transit and/or transit-related improvement priorities
- Planned changes or trends
- Adequacy of funding and equitable distribution throughout the region

The interviews with representatives from the transportation providers also included a topic related to transportation administration and operations, while the interviews conducted with the representatives from the other organizations included a topic related to their knowledge and awareness of existing transportation services in the region.

A series of consistent themes emerged from the nineteen interviews and were summarized into six categories. The responses were further sub-categorized as having primarily policy, program, or service implications, which also is an indication of the level at which resolution of the item would likely have to occur. In some instances, a comment/suggestion was designated as being relevant for more than one of these three sub-categories. The results are presented, by topic, in tables below.

Role of Public Transit in the Region	Policy	Program	Service
Provide mobility for transit-dependent population groups to access services, maintain independence, and improve their quality of life	√		
Provide transportation service to employment and		√	

educational facilities			
Serve senior citizens needing access to medical appointments			✓

Transportation Administration and Operations (transit provider responses only)	Policy	Program	Service
Operating costs are increasing for insurance, vehicle maintenance, fuel, and fringe benefits		✓	
It is becoming harder to recruit and retain drivers due to the pay scale and the lack of full-time employment opportunities		✓	
Facilities need to be upgraded and/or expanded		✓	

Human Service Transportation	Policy	Program	Service
Services should be made available and be affordable for persons ineligible for subsidized transportation through agency programs	✓		
Improve marketing and better educate the public about how to access and use the existing services		✓	
Formalize coordination among providers by addressing functional areas related to inter-county transfers, insurance, billing, fare structure, scheduling, etc.	✓	✓	
Expand hours of service (evenings and weekends)		✓	
Relax eligibility requirements and provide same-day service for demand responsive transportation	✓	✓	
More coordination with medical providers for scheduling	✓	✓	
Demand responsive systems generally do a good job with limited resources		✓	
Ensure drivers are properly trained to handle riders with special needs		✓	

Opportunities and Constraints	Policy	Program	Service
The rural character of the region limits opportunities for new fixed route bus services		✓	✓
The senior population is driving at increasingly later ages and uses demand responsive services as a last resort		✓	
Most residents would not use public transit due to: the need to make multiple stops throughout the day, free parking, and longer travel time compared to	✓	✓	

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driving			
Additional funding is required to provide new or expanded service	✓	✓	
Taxi companies operating in the region do not use wheelchair accessible vehicles	✓		
Taxi fares are very expensive, especially for lower income individuals	✓		
Local politicians are aware of transportation issues and do what they can to support service	✓		
It is unlikely that a regional transportation system can be successful when local governments in the region are reluctant to share services and/or consolidate services	✓		

Service Improvement Suggestions	Policy	Program	Service
Expand hours of service (evenings and weekends)		✓	✓
Create carpool/vanpool services and use publicly owned land (i.e., PennDOT property) for park and ride facilities	✓	✓	
Provide fixed route bus service between region's population centers, such as Bloomsburg, Danville, Lewisburg, Northumberland, Selinsgrove, Milton, Middleburg, Mifflinburg, and Sunbury		✓	
Provide special fixed route bus services to access major shopping areas, large employers, and medical centers		✓	
New bus routes should operate along the region's major corridors such as US 11 and US 15		✓	
Increase service into rural areas using affordable taxi services, carpool/vanpool programs, and peak period fixed route bus service		✓	
Any new service must to be given enough time to succeed	✓	✓	
RVT and LATS should serve rural areas with smaller buses		✓	
Create a regional transportation system to maximize resources used by the individual transit providers	✓	✓	

Planned Changes and Trends	Policy	Program	Service
Senior citizens are remaining at home rather than entering senior care facilities		✓	✓
Population in the region is aging		✓	

Population and employment in the region are in decline		✓	
Marcellus Shale gas development is raising housing prices in Lycoming County and providing a boost to the Williamsport area economy; unsure if this industry will impact public transportation. Industry is increasing traffic and volume on Lycoming County roadways	✓		
Increasing number of residents commuting to jobs in Harrisburg		✓	
Growing number of residents from the Philadelphia and New York areas attracted by the lower cost of living		✓	

Focus Groups

Four focus group sessions were held during the week of November 8, 2010, in the following communities:

- Williamsport
- Lewisburg
- Danville
- Shamokin

Handouts, including a summary of previously-completed tasks and a series of worksheets, were provided to the focus group participants and were used during the conduct of facilitated brainstorming, group discussions, and consensus building. Results of the brainstorming were recorded on flip charts and in all but the Danville session, participants were asked to vote for the suggestions recorded on the flip charts that they felt were the most compelling and important to consider. In addition, each participant was asked to complete a series of questions included in the handouts and the completed handouts were collected and used during the compilation of results.

Common Themes from Interviews and Focus Groups

A comprehensive review of the final products, for both the one-on-one interviews and the four focus groups sessions, was performed to identify recurring thoughts and common themes regarding unmet needs and suggestions for improvement. The items listed below were mentioned the most often and/or attracted the highest number of individual votes during the focus group meetings. There is no particular significance to the order in which the items are listed – the ordering is for reference only.

- a. Affordable Service to the General Public
- b. Expand Service Hours (applies to both public and private service providers)
 - i. evenings
 - ii. weekends

- c. Service to Special Events throughout the Region (fairs, festivals, etc.)
- d. Service to Major Generators (retail/commercial, employment sites, hospitals, universities, medical and social services, etc.)
- e. Link Major Communities via Transit (numerous city pairs mentioned as well as “spine services” along major corridors)
- f. Better Marketing of Available Transportation Services, Improved Public Outreach and Stronger Consumer Orientation
- g. Better Communication/Collaboration Between Transportation Operators And Service Providers (e.g., Medical Offices and Social Service Agencies) to Achieve Improved Transportation Efficiency and Customer Service
- h. Blur Jurisdictional Boundaries/Improve Coordination Among Providers
- i. Formal Ridesharing in Various Forms (van/car, park-and-ride, etc.)
- j. Capital Equipment Issues (use smaller buses where appropriate, provide bus shelters, taxis should be accessible for persons with disabilities)

Summary of Analysis of Potential Transit Needs

The qualitative feedback obtained through the one-on-one interviews and the focus group sessions provided valuable insight into the unmet transit needs within the area. The identified needs were reduced to ten areas that represented common themes from across all of the feedback sessions whether one-on-one interviews or group workshops. These common themes formed the foundation for identifying and evaluating potential service improvements in subsequent phases of the 2011 Needs Assessment. The options were analyzed as to their ability to address unmet needs, their estimated costs, and the prospects for obtaining adequate funding and sustainability of any new services (relevant strategies appear in Chapter 6).

Carry-over Needs from 2008 Coordinated Plan

This section highlights the carry-over needs from the 2008 Coordinated Plan that Coordinating Committee members deemed worthy of including in this update. The basic context for assessing service gaps and evaluating transit program application requests revolved around determining the following:

- Who needs public transportation?
- Where do target populations need the service?
- When do users need the transportation?

During the course of discussions with Coordinating Committee members, information was shared on what is being done well, where discrepancies exist between needs and services, why improvement is necessary, and what can propel the region toward efficiencies and better use of available resources. Below are some bulleted points indicating the Coordinating Committee’s comments and perspectives on transportation needs or service gaps:

- a. Medical transportation trips (hospital appointments, pharmacy stops, etc.) are

increasing for many regional providers. These trips are often long-distance, posing difficulties for dispatching. Providers are arranging travel for necessary appointments and other medical transportation to primary hospitals in the region such as Geisinger Medical Center, but also providing access to distant institutions like Hershey Medical Center.

- b. As seniors remain independent and drive themselves longer, some regional transit providers are seeing stabilized or declining ridership in the 65+ population cohort. However, seniors using the system often need a higher level of service due to their frailty or disabilities. This results in greater pressures on existing assets and increased needs for handicapped accessible vans/buses. It remains uncertain exactly how the future wave of retiring baby boomers will impact public transportation services. This age group will have longer life expectancies and probably remain more independent later in life than prior generations. Many could choose to keep residences in suburban areas or other low-density housing types, but lack the ability or the desire to drive themselves to necessary destinations, creating potentially large demand for public transit.
- c. Most current service in the region is shared-ride, which is demand responsive and offers residents door-to-door services, but requires users to make trip requests at least one working day in advance of the trip to arrange transportation that may be shared with other passengers. This inability to satisfy same-day service for individuals needing transportation immediately, without arranging it in advance, is problematic for many low income, elderly, and disabled persons.
- d. Lower Anthracite Transit System (LATS) has experienced difficulty with getting residents to enroll and use the service in its fixed-route service network. People are interested in maintaining their independence as long as possible, so constant outreach by LATS staff is needed to get people throughout the coverage area to sign up for its service.
- e. The region's nursing homes and personal care homes are confronted with problems getting people from their facilities to hospitals for dialysis and other kinds of medical needs, especially those involving regular visits. Many residents don't qualify for medical assistance so they must pay for substantial transportation costs out-of-pocket, and the County transportation program will often not provide service to nursing homes since the ride costs are unsubsidized due to other extensive needs in their jurisdictions. This presents a significant service gap and indicates the need for additional public transportation funding.
- f. Because of the need to combine trips, problems cited above regarding provision of service to nursing homes, and inability for County programs to provide service to non-residents of their county, it might be worthwhile for transportation agencies to request PennDOT approval for third-party sponsors to offer shared-ride service through grant applications.

- g. As older adults prefer to maintain independence and people live longer, it is likely that more independent living facilities will be demanded and built in the region. This will create additional transportation needs that will go unmet by existing service. For example, Geisinger Health System operates a Living Independently For Elders program that includes a facility in Northumberland County that serves frail elderly who might otherwise be confined to a nursing home, but instead are provided comprehensive long term care services within a home and community-based setting. Participants enrolled in the program live in Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, or Schuylkill Counties.
- h. Low-income individuals have significant transportation needs that are difficult for existing providers to meet. Offering transportation to child care is a great need, since individuals often work far from the child care site. The low-income laborers find it difficult to earn enough money to keep up with the costs of child care and transporting their children to the care, especially at current gasoline prices. Several low-income workers are choosing to walk long distances instead. As the movement to help more people off of temporary assistance and welfare continues, transportation and child care remain leading barriers to accomplishing this satisfactorily for low-income individuals.
- i. Many lower income individuals are also unfortunately falling through the cracks or unaware of programs for which they are eligible. More can be done to properly identify these individuals and document and address their needs. Also, new low income housing is being built outside of established communities in some parts of the region, which could isolate residents, create unsafe walking conditions, and further extend public transit operators from efficient trips. Transit providers are already stretched thin and cannot get subsidized for transporting low-income riders to certain destinations.
- j. The general population should not be omitted from this discussion of existing needs and potential future needs or demand. College students, young professionals, middle-income families, and other members of the general population should be considered. Regular surveying of the general population can pinpoint their needs and identify ways to attract them as public transportation users.
- k. The Amish and Mennonite populations in the region have regular transportation needs that are often inadequately or illegally met. Some Amish refuse service through existing programs because they are funded with lottery proceeds, while others are being served by operators uncertified to carry passengers. This issue requires further analysis and outreach.
- l. Transportation remains a primary regional concern, especially for older adults, disabled and low income residents. It is difficult to meet the existing needs let alone plan for expanded service to meet the growing demands of target populations, or to consider offering same-day, fixed route, or service to non-traditional users. Ultimately, additional, dedicated, and reliable funding for public transportation, along with more

flexible program regulations, is essential to meet the significant needs. Improved efficiencies and organizational changes are another part of the equation to improve public transportation.

Chapter 6: Strategies to Address Gaps

The needs/gaps identified in the former section are varied and significant. They reflect the importance of public transportation for providing mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities, accessing jobs, making medical transportation trips, and much more. It's understood that efforts to create a fully coordinated public transit-human services transportation system are challenging and will probably not be measured in years but in decades. Transportation needs will always be greater than available funding to tackle them. However, it's hoped that this Plan will serve to institute a more coordinated approach to satisfying transportation needs, eliminating inefficiencies, spurring collaboration in service delivery, and prioritizing warranted improvements. Below are strategies to overcome primary regional needs based on outreach and analysis of regional data, and to integrate alternative improvement concepts from the 2011 Needs Assessment.

The strategies are grouped into three categories:

- Category 1 Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources
- Coordinate Transportation Services
 - Share Resources
 - Address Regulatory Barriers
- Category 2 Mobility Strategies
- Mobility Management
 - Stabilize Existing Transportation Services
 - Expand or Create New Transportation Services
 - Accessibility Enhancements
- Category 3 Communication, Training, and Organizational Support
- Centralize Information
 - Educate the Public on Transportation Options
 - Improve Awareness of Existing Resources and Programs

The strategies are included in the following tables for each of the categories above. The tables also identify the type of need addressed by each strategy and the timeframe associated with the action strategy. The proposals have been categorized into three implementation timeframes: short (1-3 years), mid (3-6 years) and long term (beyond 6 years). The assigned timeframes reflect various factors, including:

- Revisions to existing versus entirely new programs or services.
- Institutional complexity (e.g., number and type of entities involved and the likelihood of obtaining the necessary buy-in).
- Lead time required to plan and properly execute a transition.
- Whether new funding would be required and the relative amount of funds required.

More detailed descriptions for select strategies are provided Appendix E. Some strategies for meeting regional needs or service gaps have already been approved by the SEDA-COG and WATS MPOs and included in their respective Transit Transportation Improvement Programs. Establishing additional fiscally constrained priorities requires further coordination with regional providers and consumers of public transportation. The MPOs will do their part to advocate for high-priority projects and call for prudent regulatory changes and increased program flexibility that will improve public transportation. The transit consolidation study to be completed by PennDOT’s consultant during 2014 will delve further into some possibilities for enhanced coordination and cost savings in the region.

Strategy	Need Addressed	Timeframe
Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources		
Regional Coordination Council – Establish a Regional Coordination Council (RCC) to promote regional coordination strategies in a voluntary and advisory capacity to the transit systems. While lacking direct authority, the RCC could perform several useful functions: convene regular meetings to improve communication among the counties; identify needs and opportunities; share information related to service planning, operations and funding; and provide an umbrella organization for human service transportation programs.	Efficiency and coordination	Mid-term
Improve coordination among information resources – PA 2-1-1 and 511PA systems could improve the integration of transportation information into their processes and referrals. Area transit provider websites could also have a link to PA 2-1-1 and 511PA sources. Regional One-Call/One-Click transportation information services could be considered for deployment in the region, potentially accessible from computers, smartphones, tablets and strategically located kiosks. Other types of regional information clearinghouses can be explored to collect and maintain an inventory of services, create an access system that would provide service information to passengers, and utilize infrastructure by which information and resources about transportation services can be disseminated to the general public as well as to providers.	Information needs	Short-term
Northcentral Regionalization Study – Complete the first phase, and potentially follow-up phases, of a PennDOT study evaluating the costs and benefits associated with consolidating aspects of public transportation services provided by nine transit agencies/departments in the Northcentral PA region. Pursue implementing appropriate recommendations based on the study findings.	Efficiency and coordination	Short-term
Establish a regional transportation broker – Under a brokered system, a single organization would handle all reservations for demand responsive trips and prepare schedules for daily vehicle runs based on efficiency and other criteria. The broker would also be responsible for scheduling, procurement, contract management, customer registration, record keeping and accounting, service standards and customer service.	Efficiency and coordination	Mid-term

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Pool funding – Pooling funding between agencies to provide transportation services among compatible user populations and types of rides may help to relieve some funding strains while maintaining or increasing service levels. Pursue cooperation on supplies, purchasing, training, facilities, etc.	Efficiency and coordination	Mid-term
Identify match funds – Consider using other federal/state/local funds to match FTA and PennDOT funds. Coordinate grant seeking activities among providers and participate in pilot projects funded by other agencies.	Efficiency and coordination	Short-term
Implement new services through greater use of existing vehicles – Many transit systems and community organizations have down time for their vehicles. Coordinate between agencies to maximize use of these vehicles and reduce the capital expense of new service provision.	Low service levels	Mid-term

Category 2: Mobility Strategies		
Local community bus routes with deviation – Operate local community shuttle service using small vehicles in areas with the highest population and population densities to provide point-to-point service between residential areas and major activity centers. This service concept would operate along a defined route on an established schedule but would deviate to pick-up or drop off passengers and then return to the defined route before the next marked bus stop. Passengers could board and exit anywhere on the route as long as the driver deems it safe to stop the vehicle. This type of service could reduce demand on the existing demand responsive services if the routes are easy to use for seniors and persons with disabilities.	Low service levels	Long-term
Evening and weekend service expansion – The benefits of service expansion would provide transit-dependent groups as well as the general public access to more employment opportunities and more access to shopping and other essential services.	Low service levels	Mid-term
Regional public transportation system – Create a regional network of public transportation connections along major corridors, between various communities, and between population centers and major generators.	Efficiency and coordination	Long-term
Taxi vouchers – Human service agencies or other sponsoring entities could coordinate with taxi companies to establish a voucher or pre-paid taxi ride program for situations in which transit won't meet needs. The rider would pay a nominal fare and the sponsoring entity would provide a subsidy toward the fare. These strategies could utilize taxi services to fill gaps in service hours – especially in the evenings and on weekends – and could also offer the potential to provide same-day service. A greater reliance on taxi services can offer a cost-effective way to address a variety of trip needs, particularly where fixed route bus service is impractical or during times when demand is low. It can be a good approach for patient transportation upon discharge from the hospital.	Affordability	Short-term

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<p><i>Increase shared ride and fixed route capacity</i> – Expand shared ride and fixed route service, adding vehicles and drivers to meet demand for the service. Fund needed investments in computer/communication equipment and transit operator buildings.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p><i>ADA vehicles and service hours</i> – Increase the number of ADA vehicles available (e.g., among taxis) and expand service beyond traditional hours. Transit systems could potentially purchase accessible vehicles (i.e., ramp-equipped low-floor minivans) and lease them to taxi operators, or purchase vehicles with FTA funds and have the taxi company pay the local match.</p>	<p>Accessibility limitations/ Low service levels</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p><i>Carpool/vanpool programs</i> – Establish additional carpool or vanpool programs and promote at major work sites, institutions, in retirement communities and other sites where large numbers of people have similar transportation needs. These programs offer the potential to increase mobility options through cost-effective means for both transit-dependent population groups and the general public. Take advantage of statewide vanpool and rideshare initiatives that may be deployed by PennDOT.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p><i>Car sharing programs</i> – Establish car sharing programs (e.g., ZipCar or other options) for occasional trips when a car is needed. The program allows individuals to use a pool of automobiles for a small annual fee and payment by the hour. Cars are reserved by phone or online and picked up from a designated parking space and returned to the same spot once the trip is complete. The hourly fee includes fuel and insurance costs. Car sharing programs can be for-profit, non-profit, or cooperative organizations and can have widely different objectives, business models, use of technology, and target markets. They work best in areas with relatively high densities; college campuses are good candidates (Bucknell University in Lewisburg and Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove currently operate car sharing programs on their campuses for students and faculty).</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p><i>Intra-regional commuter bus service</i> – Provide bus service during the weekday morning and afternoon peak periods between a limited number of strategically located bus stops (e.g., park and ride facilities) and major employment sites (e.g., Geisinger Medical Center) in areas such as Bloomsburg, Danville, Lewisburg, and Williamsport. Based on the distances traveled by each vehicle, it is likely that the routes would operate limited peak period service, such as one or two round trips in the morning and again in the afternoon. To maintain convenient service and reduce the travel time, the routes would serve a limited number of designated stops.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Long-term</p>

<p><i>Beyond-the-region subscription commuter bus service</i> – Operate inter-county commuter bus service during the weekday peak period between strategic park and ride facilities in the region and major employment centers such as Harrisburg and State College. To expedite service and increase rider convenience, the routes would ideally operate express service from the park and ride facilities or provide a limited number of stops at key locations in the region. This service could be operated on a subscription basis where a passenger receives a reserved seat by paying a weekly or monthly fare in advance. The service would likely operate one trip in the morning and one return trip in the afternoon. Subscription service could be organized by employers, employees, or one of the existing transit systems in the region, with the transit system providing the vehicle and a driver paid an hourly rate or by shift. A private contractor could also operate the service.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p><i>Non-motorized options: Bicycling programs</i> – Enhance access to transportation through bicycling from origin to destination, or to reach a bus stop. Better integration of public transportation and bicycling could be accomplished by installing bike racks on public transit vehicles; installing bike racks for parking; signage to identify shared bike/auto-routes and to remind motorists to be aware of cyclists; educational and promotional activities; developing bike-sharing programs; and infrastructure improvements such as widening road shoulders, designating bike lanes, installing bike racks, and traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>Accessibility limitations</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p><i>Technology enhancements</i> – Improve scheduling systems to allow for better integration between shared-ride and fixed route service, better track vehicle locations, automate reservation processes for outside regular business hours, and use other intelligent transportation systems.</p>	<p>Efficiency and coordination</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p><i>US 11 and US 15: Regional connecting bus service</i> – Implement a linear route(s) linking various municipalities (Berwick, Bloomsburg, Danville, Sunbury, Selinsgrove, etc.) and activity centers along the US 11 & US 15 corridors. This route could use small vehicles and primarily operate along a defined alignment on an established schedule like regular fixed route bus service, but would also deviate to pick up or drop off riders by request and then return to the defined route before the next marked bus stop. Passengers could board and descend anywhere on the route as long as the driver deems it safe to stop the vehicle. This type of service could reduce demand on the existing demand responsive services if the routes are easy to use for seniors and persons with disabilities. Initially, this service could be operated on select weekdays depending on the area being served.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p><i>Transit-oriented development</i> – Facilitate more concentrated or transit-oriented development (TOD), which could make fixed-route transit more feasible in the future. TOD focuses growth around transit stations to promote ridership, affordable housing near transit, revitalized downtown centers and neighborhoods, and to encourage local economic development. Land development plans and design standards can better integrate public transit-human services transportation operator and client needs.</p>	<p>Efficiency and coordination</p>	<p>Short-term</p>

<p>General public rural demand responsive service – As an alternative to trying to operate conventional fixed-route service in the rural areas where the density is low and travel patterns are dispersed, there are various models of general purpose demand responsive services that cost less than fixed route service while maintaining mobility within the community. Further, service capacity can easily be increased or decreased as demand changes. For example, a demand-responsive feeder service could be operated in which passengers make a prior day or same day reservation to be picked up at their door and taken to a transfer point to access the existing RVT and LATS systems or the proposed services, such as the US 11 and US 15 corridor service and/or the community bus service. Another example is Demand Response Direct service which is a combination of fixed route and demand responsive service.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Long-term</p>
<p>Special event/special purpose transportation service – Provide special event transportation service designed to accommodate particular market segments attracted to a special event or certain destinations using either fixed routes or deviated fixed routes. Service could link major activity centers (e.g., shopping centers or college campuses) with nearby parking facilities to mitigate traffic congestion, or could involve making existing college transportation shuttle buses open to the public during the fall and spring semesters through a cost sharing agreement. Another possibility could be to operate bus service between municipalities at certain times of the year as an economic development tool to attract residents and visitors back to the region’s traditional downtown business districts.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>Park and Ride Lots – Increase the number of park and ride lots in the region and expand existing lots where demand or site conditions warrant. Various stakeholders, supported by public input, should work to identify, design, and construct additional park & ride facilities. These facilities will complement many of the other strategies included in this table, and they’ll offer opportunities to reduce traffic volumes, increase economic competitiveness, improve the environment, conserve fuel, lower travel costs, etc. Public and private funding sources would be needed to achieve the outcomes.</p>	<p>Low service levels</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p>Free/reduced cost fares – Public transit agencies and human service agencies could coordinate to make free or reduced cost fares available to low-income youth or adults.</p>	<p>Affordability</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p>Pathway and bus stop enhancements – These enhancements may include adding sidewalks where none exist, moving any obstacles (e.g. telephone poles), repairing sidewalks, installing accessible pedestrian crossings and signals, timely snow removal, and installing or upgrading bus stop signs, benches, shelters, and lighting. These improvements would help address traffic safety and crime fears, bring existing facilities into ADA compliance, and make accessible pathways to transit stops.</p>	<p>Accessibility limitations</p>	<p>Long-term</p>

<p>Car loan programs – The high cost of owning and maintaining cars is a common transportation barrier for low-income individuals that might not be served adequately through existing transit system coverage. Low-interest car loan programs can allow low-income individuals/families to access reliable transportation for maintaining employment, accessing child care, and becoming economically self-sufficient.</p>	Affordability	Mid-term
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Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support		
<p>Improve awareness of information sources – There are a number of information sources already available about transportation options in the region. However, awareness of these resources is limited. Public awareness strategies can help to improve access to these resources and the transportation services that people receive through them. Information about transportation can be more widely placed at locations where target users are likely to be (e.g., doctor’s offices, grocery stores, human services centers, unemployment offices, daycare centers, schools, libraries, senior citizen centers, etc.).</p>	Information needs	Short-term
<p>Centralized resource directory – A lack of basic awareness and understanding is a barrier to people using and benefiting from public transportation. Since mobility needs are often regional in scope, this alternative would organize information regarding all available transit providers into a single place, where the rider or an agency representative could easily obtain essential information regarding eligibility, service hours, geographic coverage, etc. The information should be available in web-based and hard copy formats.</p>	Information needs	Short-term
<p>Transportation Management Association (TMA) – The creation of a TMA could provide a clearinghouse for information on existing services, as well as market, manage, and even implement various transportation services to address specific mobility needs. As an autonomous organization, a TMA has the ability to develop services that local governments may be unable to provide. An important role of a TMA would be to establish and oversee various transportation demand management concepts to increase transportation options, help provide basic mobility, and increase transportation affordability. Concepts include carpool/vanpool matching programs, car sharing, employer services, guaranteed ride home, trip planning, a single source of information, and improved marketing.</p>	Information needs	Mid-term
<p>Travel training – Improve awareness about the travel experience and expand travel training, targeting people who could ride public transportation (e.g., seniors or disabled individuals) but may not feel comfortable or familiar enough to do so. rabbitransit’s travel training program and Shared Ride Guide publication could serve as models.</p>	Information needs	Short-term

<p>“Bus buddy” program – Introduce bus buddy programs to provide extra assistance to individuals who have never ridden a bus, are afraid of riding transit alone, need some assistance to carry packages while riding or who have developmental disabilities that make trip planning and execution challenging without assistance. The bus buddy may be a person on staff at an agency, though they are more commonly volunteers. Colleges, senior volunteer programs, and community service groups are a few potential sources for volunteers. Bus buddies may ride just once with a client or may become a regular riding companion for someone who needs long-term assistance. Other riders may need a higher level of assistance and require escorted travel. Staff and/or volunteers may be considered to assist these riders who have no attendants.</p>	<p>Information needs</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p>Improve public transit marketing to human service agencies – One opportunity to improve coordination is to improve the marketing of the regular route transit system to non-profits. Transit agency staff could provide customized information packets to social service agencies and directly to clients of these agencies. Transit providers could also incorporate a demonstration and training session on itinerary planning and trip scheduling. This could include specialized maps indicating the location of routes, the location of services, and pamphlets outlining how transit works. Transit providers may want to produce personalized pamphlets for large, individual organizations. Another area of specialized marketing is to Limited English Proficiency populations. Service guides in other languages marketed specifically to human services organizations routinely interacting with LEP groups could help reduce barriers.</p>	<p>Information needs</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>
<p>Maximize ridership – Improve information about available service in order to increase readability and comprehension (routes and schedules can be hard for certain population groups to read or follow), while maximizing ridership on transit services. Target marketing to encourage seniors and persons with disabilities to ride transit, and consider joint outreach initiatives with other providers in making presentations to organizations and group homes. Consider special promotions and partnerships with area merchants. Execute strategic public information campaigns (town hall style meetings, workshops, seminars, etc.) throughout the region to increase awareness, meet customer expectations, boost ridership, and garner more support for effective approaches to meet identified needs. Efforts to maximize ridership may also include surveying potential riders to ensure that services meet rider needs.</p>	<p>Efficiency and coordination</p>	<p>Short-term</p>

Chapter 7: Next Steps

A safe, accessible, efficient, and reliable public transit-human services transportation system is critical to the SEDA-COG MPO/Williamsport MPO region's economy and quality of life. It is imperative that the region's seniors, low-income, disabled, and other transit-dependent populations receive adequate mobility through public transportation, so that they can achieve their daily medical, employment, shopping, and leisure needs. This Coordinated Plan is designed to instill a process to properly meet those needs through cost-effective and efficient strategies and/or activities. Regional stakeholders will be encouraged to work together to successfully meet identified needs by sharing information, enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, and offering improved or expanded service to the transportation disadvantaged population.

This update of the SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPO Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plans has afforded the planning team numerous insights into the current status of coordinated transportation efforts in the region. The public outreach efforts detailed elsewhere in this document point towards several potential activities that should be pursued by the MPOs and their regional partners. The next steps in completing this planning process include the following:

Adopt the Coordinated Plan Update: Adopting this Plan update, to reflect the region's updated conditions, needs, priorities, and strategies, will comprise the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan update required under current federal guidance, and combines into a joint Plan work that was done individually by SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs in the past. [The SEDA-COG MPO adopted this Plan update on May 2, 2014; the Williamsport MPO adopted this Plan update on May 27, 2014.]

Inform Future Funding Decisions Based on Coordinated Plan Update Strategies: There are several actions that the MPOs can take in the coming months and years to ensure funding priorities reflect the findings and strategies outlined in this Plan, particularly the regional strategies outlined in Chapter 6.

Complete Programming of SAFETEA-LU–Funded Programs Subject to Coordinated Planning Requirements: The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) administers and has been responsible for selecting projects for use of Section 5310 funds under SAFETEA-LU, as well as JARC and New Freedom funds in the state's rural and small-urbanized areas. The SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs stand ready to participate in evaluations and application rankings that may be needed to use up any final SAFETEA-LU JARC or New Freedom funds.

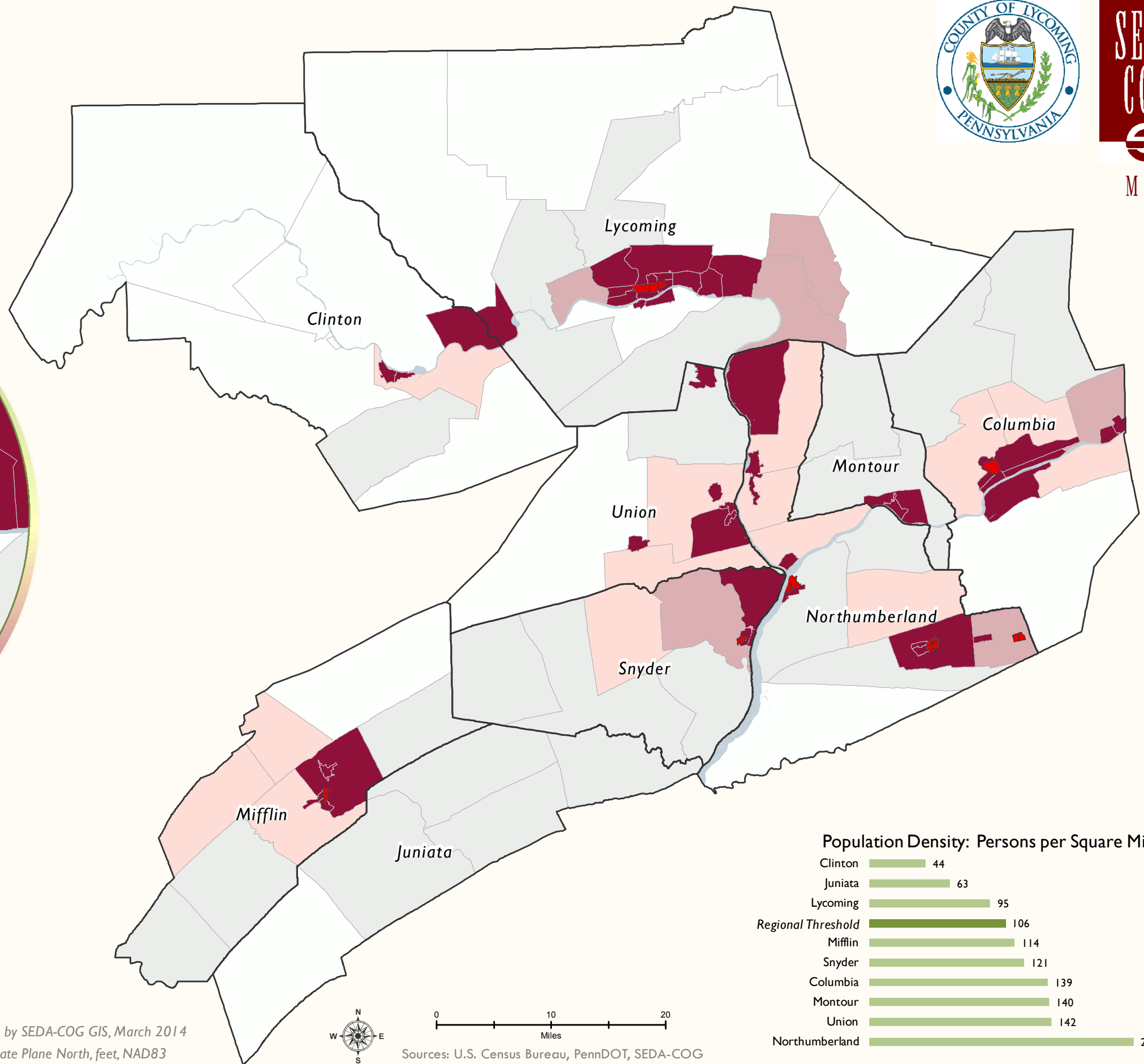
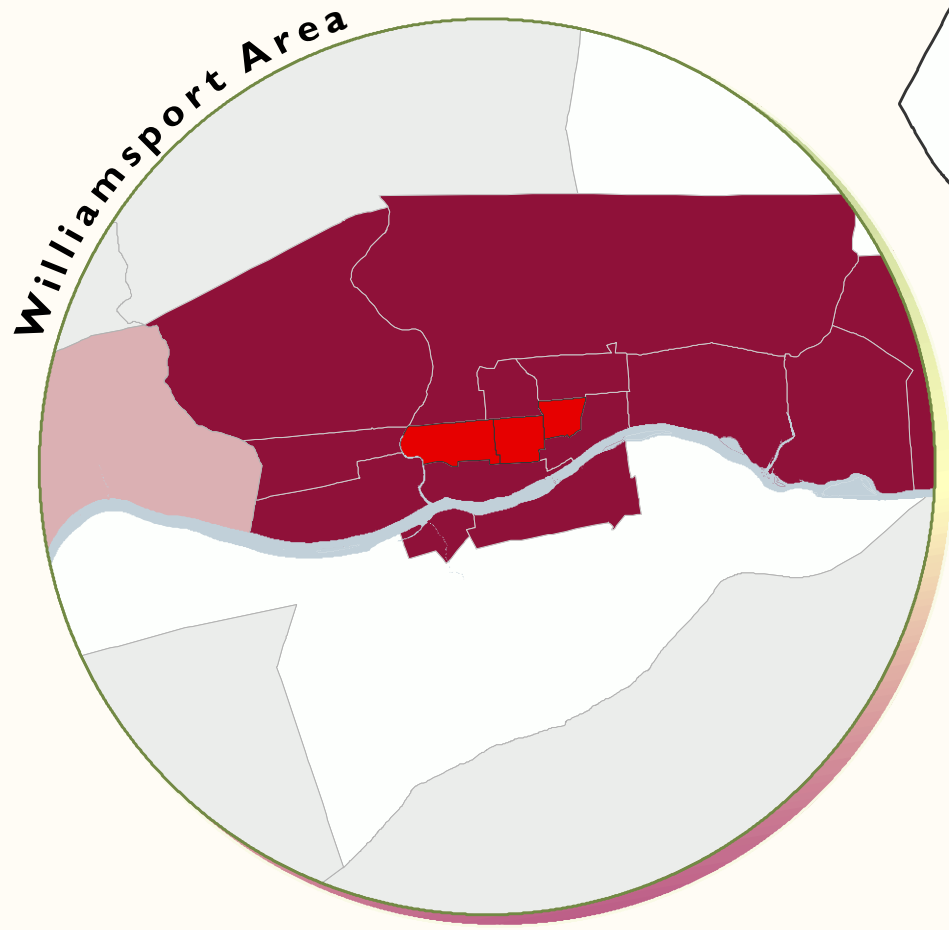
MAP-21 Funding and Program Management: Following the release of finalized FTA guidance for consolidated Section 5310, 5307, and 5311 Programs authorized under MAP-21, SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs will complete their necessary roles with these Programs, as determined by FTA and PennDOT. Activities may include application reviews, project recommendations, TIP management, etc.

Support Allied Groups and Committees: The SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs should continue to foster the activities of allied groups in order to more clearly identify public transportation gaps and implement feasible solutions. Continued close coordination with transit operators will be necessary to bring about capital equipment upgrades and enhanced service delivery.

Plan Update: Current federal guidelines indicate that at a minimum, the coordinated plan should follow a five-year update cycle for air quality attainment areas. Following adoption of the Plan in May 2014, SEDA-COG and Williamsport MPOs would next update the region's coordinated plan in 2019, although this date is beyond the horizon of the current federal authorization. Because projects funded by transit programs subject to the coordinated planning requirement must be included in the Plan, it may also be necessary to update or amend the list of priority strategies to coincide with future Section 5310 funding cycles, or other funding cycles specific to fund sources subject to this Plan.

Appendix A – Demographic Profile Mapping

Figure A-1: Population Density



County Boundary

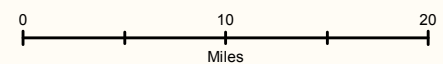
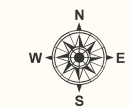
**Population Density (Persons per Square Mile) by Tract
2010 Decennial Census**

- 4 - 52
- 53 - 105 *Regional Threshold: 106 Persons/Sq Mile*
- 106 - 158
- 159 - 211
- 212 - 10,071
- 5,001 - 10,071 (category added for emphasis)

Population Density: Persons per Square Mile

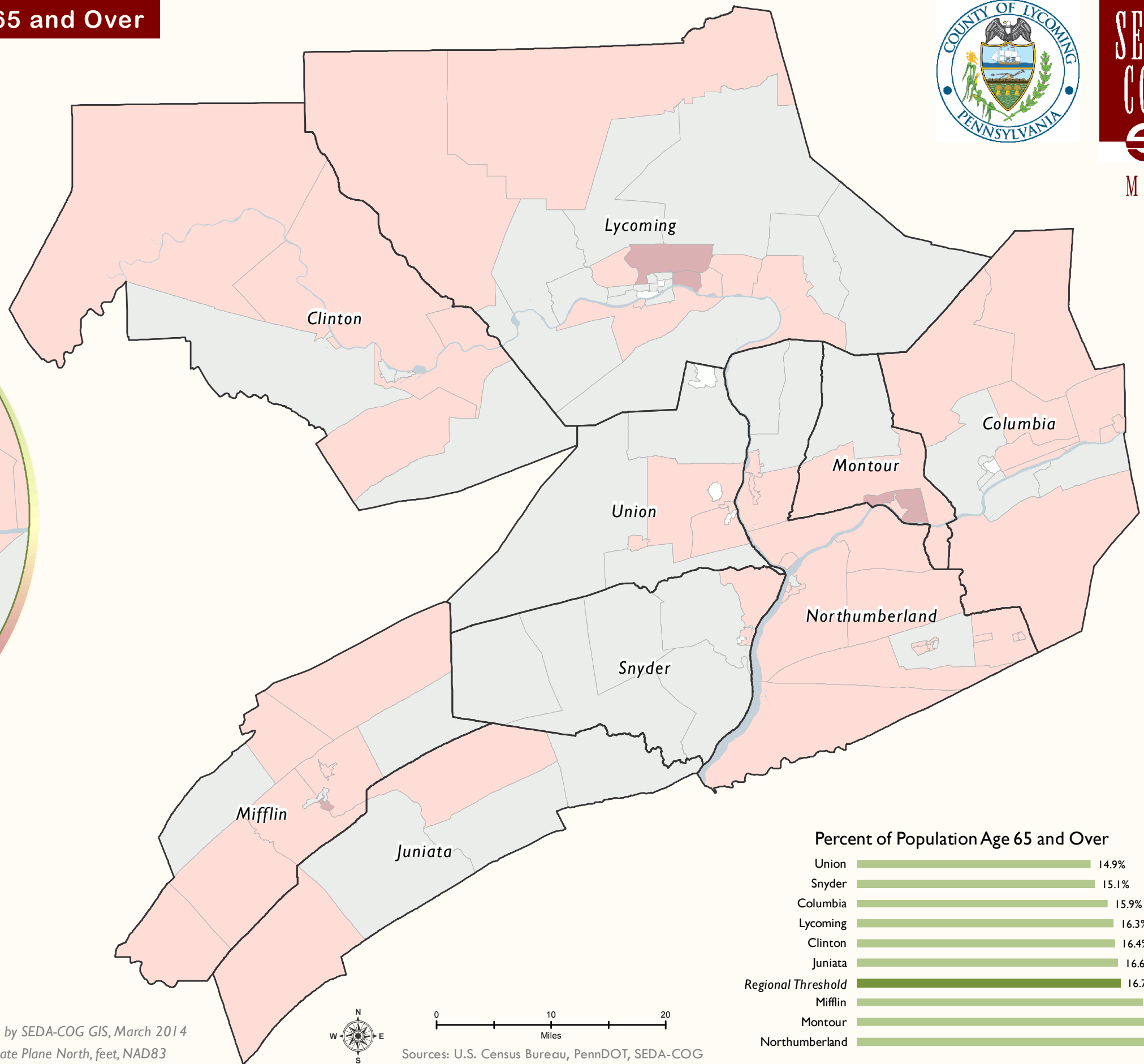
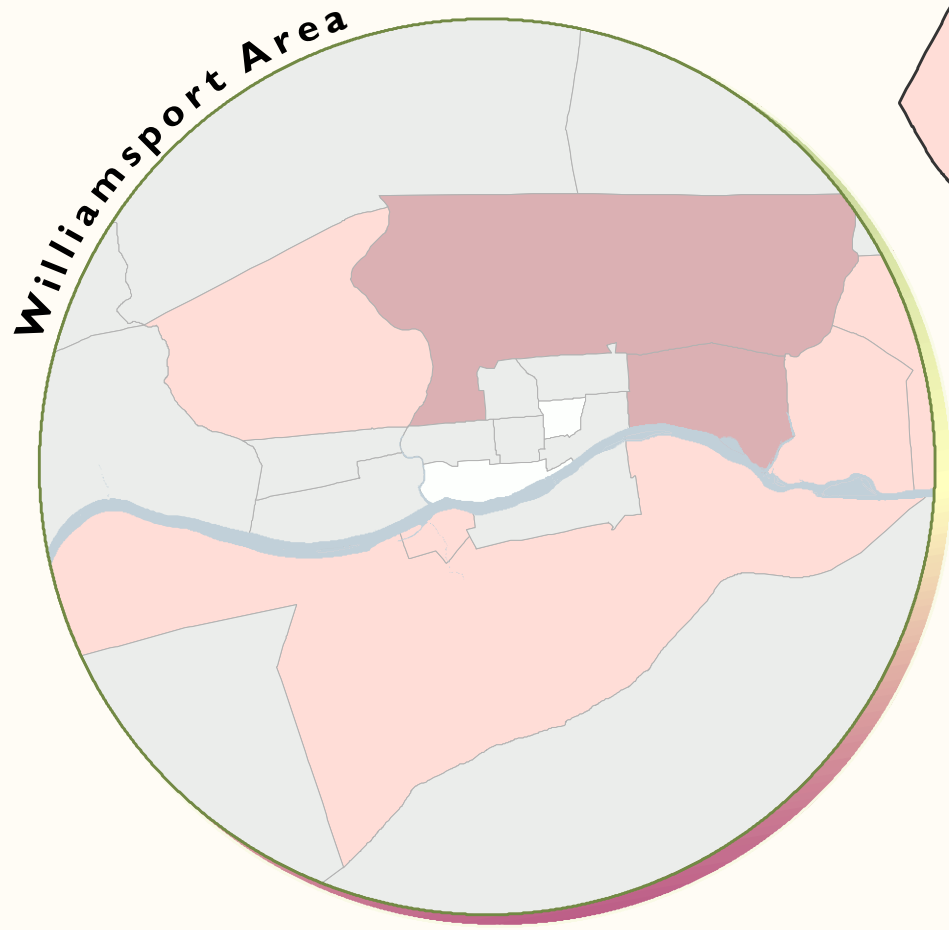
Clinton	44
Juniata	63
Lycoming	95
Regional Threshold	106
Mifflin	114
Snyder	121
Columbia	139
Montour	140
Union	142
Northumberland	206

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-2: Percent of Population Age 65 and Over



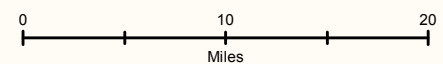
County Boundary
Percent Population Age 65 and Over by Tract
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)
 0 - 8.3
 8.4 - 16.6
 16.7 - 25.0
 25.1 - 33.3
 33.4 - 100

Regional Threshold: 16.7%

Percent of Population Age 65 and Over	
Union	14.9%
Snyder	15.1%
Columbia	15.9%
Lycoming	16.3%
Clinton	16.4%
Juniata	16.6%
Regional Threshold	16.7%
Mifflin	18.2%
Montour	18.3%
Northumberland	18.4%

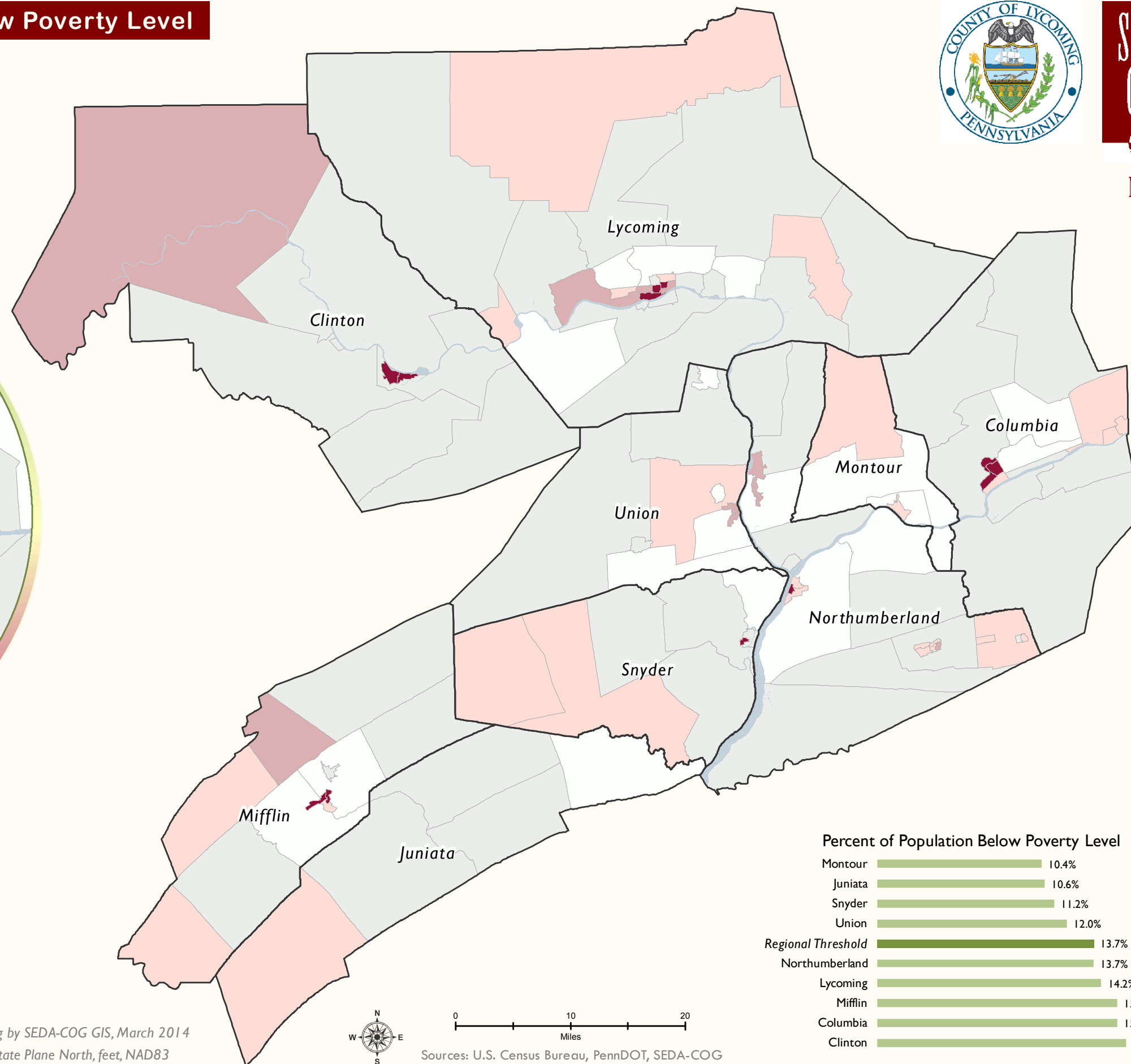
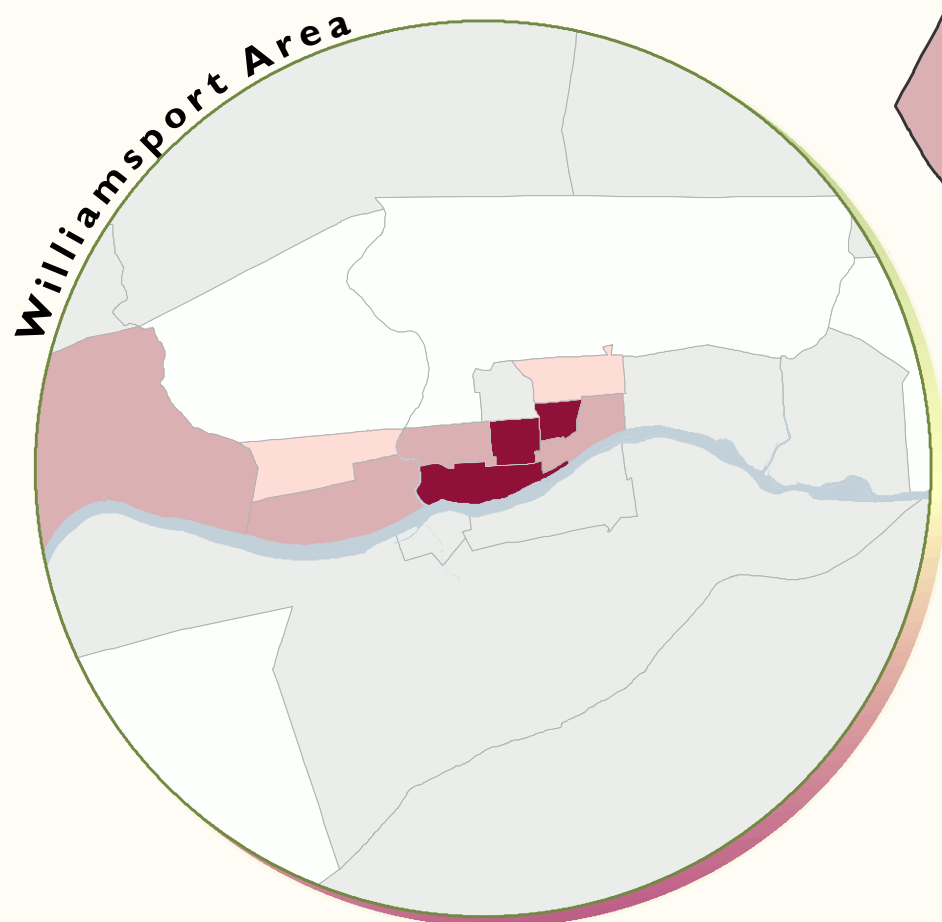
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-3: Percent of Population Below Poverty Level



County Boundary

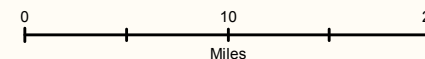
**Percent Population Below Poverty Level by Tract
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)**

- 0 - 6.7
 - 6.8 - 13.6
 - 13.7 - 20.4
 - 20.5 - 27.3
 - 27.4 - 100
- Regional Threshold: 13.7%

Percent of Population Below Poverty Level	
Montour	10.4%
Juniata	10.6%
Snyder	11.2%
Union	12.0%
Regional Threshold	13.7%
Northumberland	13.7%
Lycoming	14.2%
Mifflin	15.2%
Columbia	15.2%
Clinton	15.8%

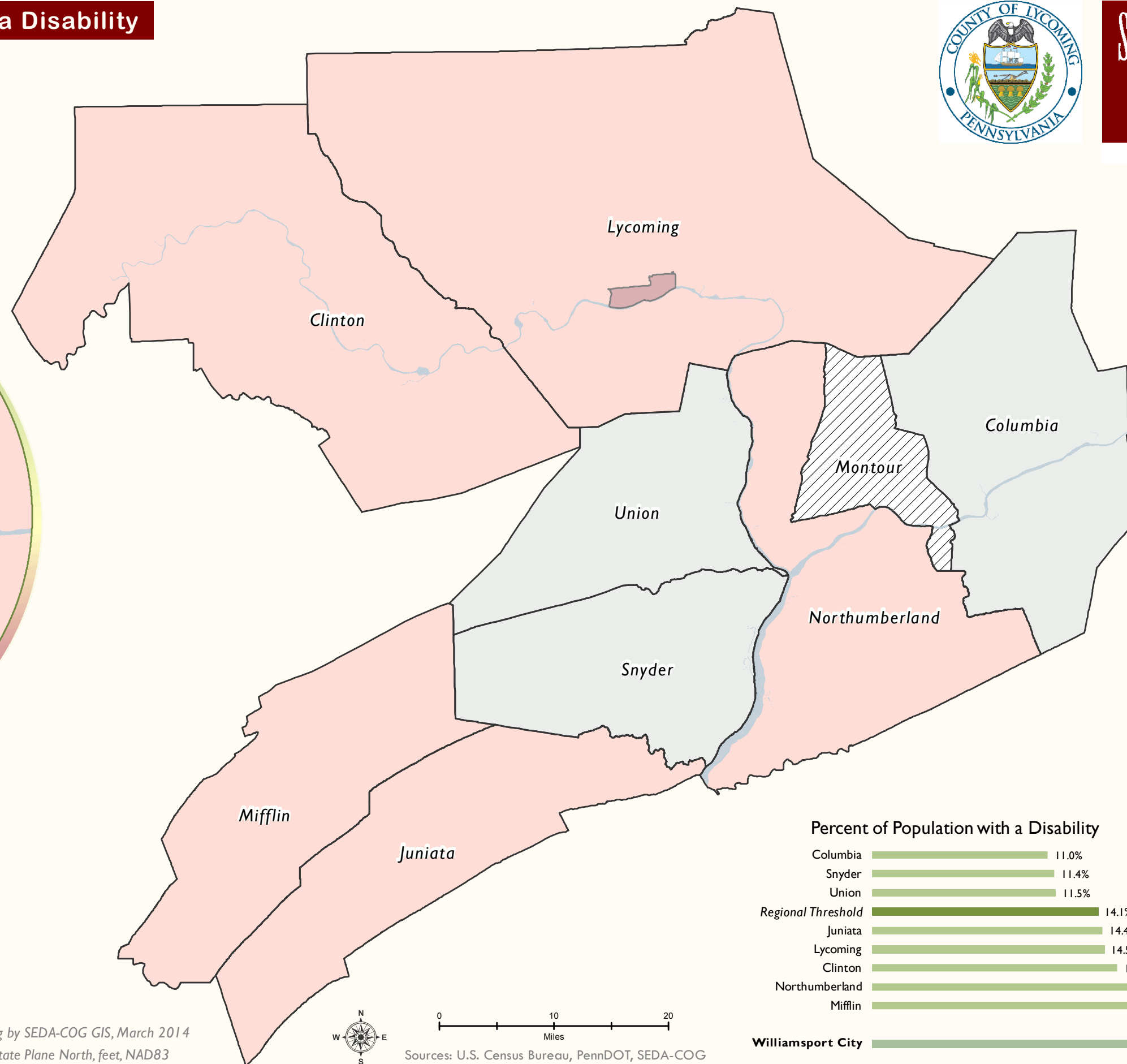
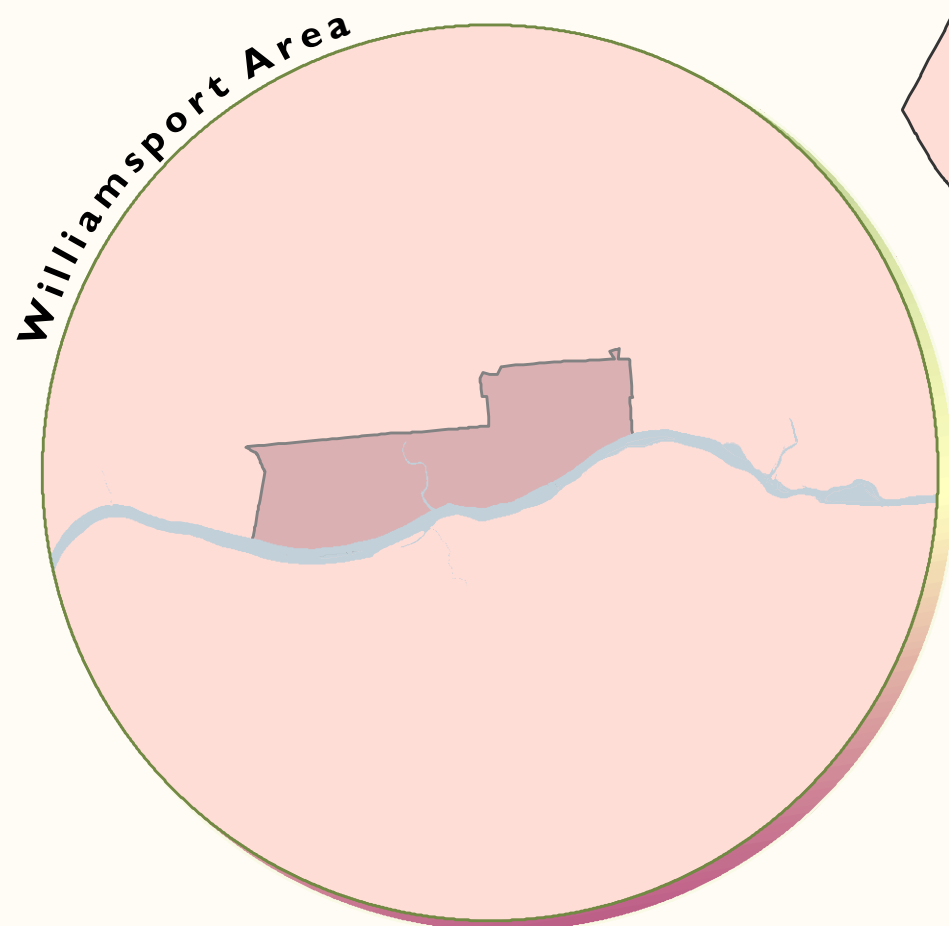
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

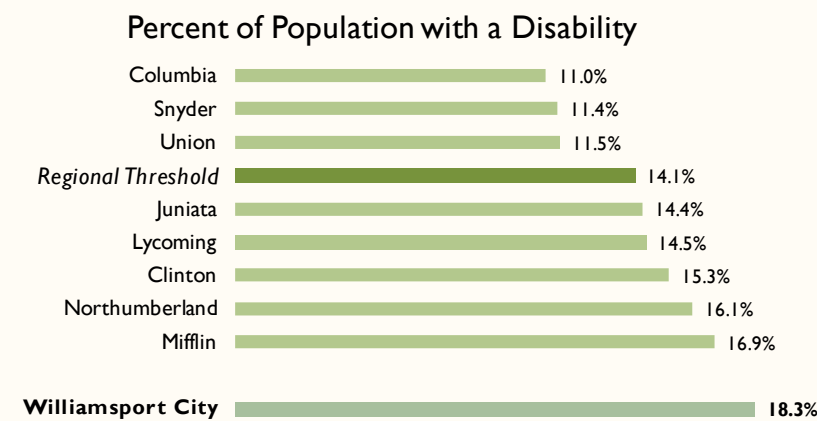
Figure A-4: Percent of Population with a Disability



County Boundary

**Percent Population with a Disability by County
ACS 3-Year Estimates (2009-2011)**

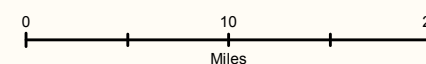
- 7.0 - 14.0 Regional Threshold: 14.1%
- 14.1 - 16.9
- Williamsport City (18.3%)
- Montour County (no data)*



* Data not available for counties under 20,000 population.

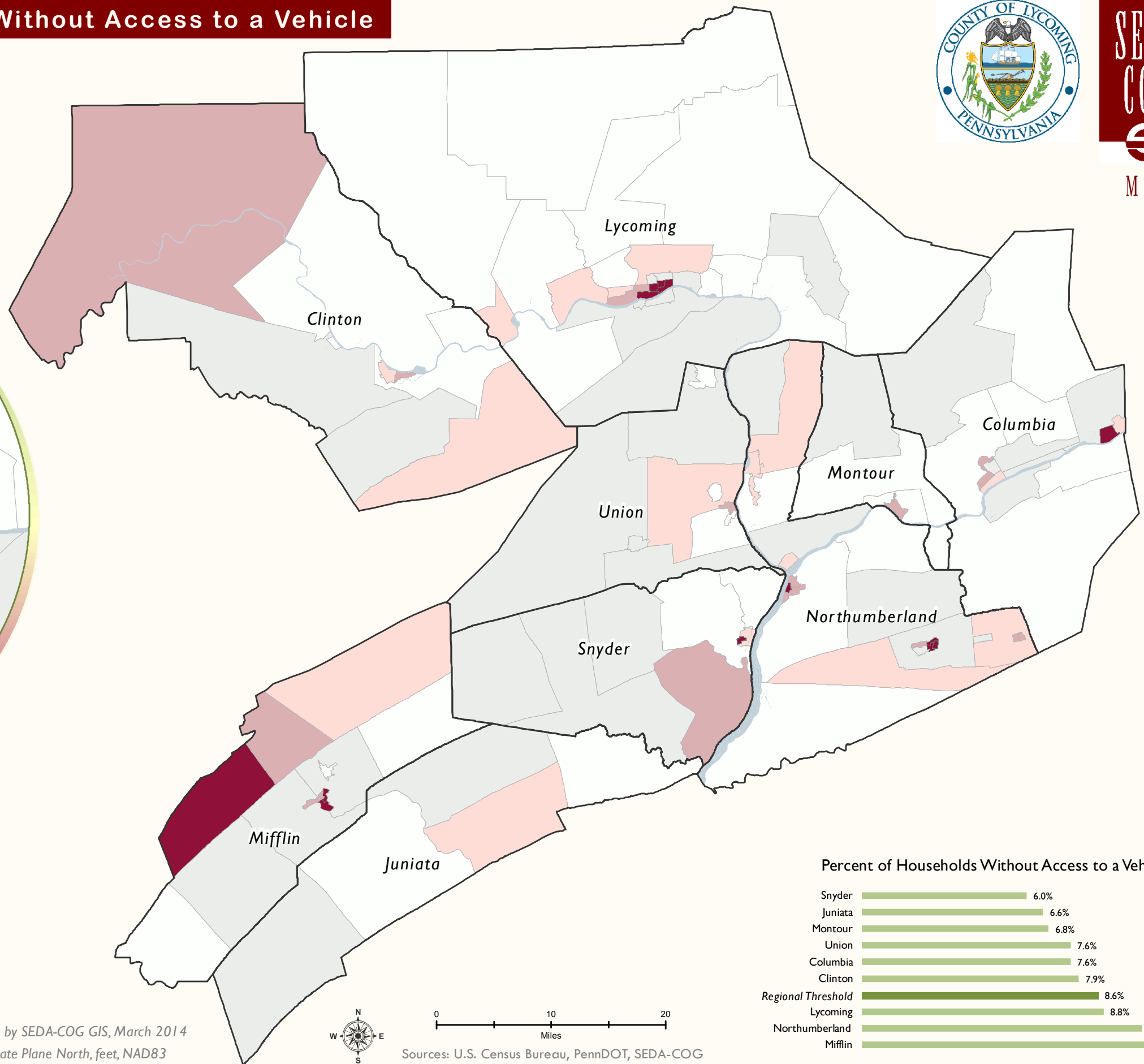
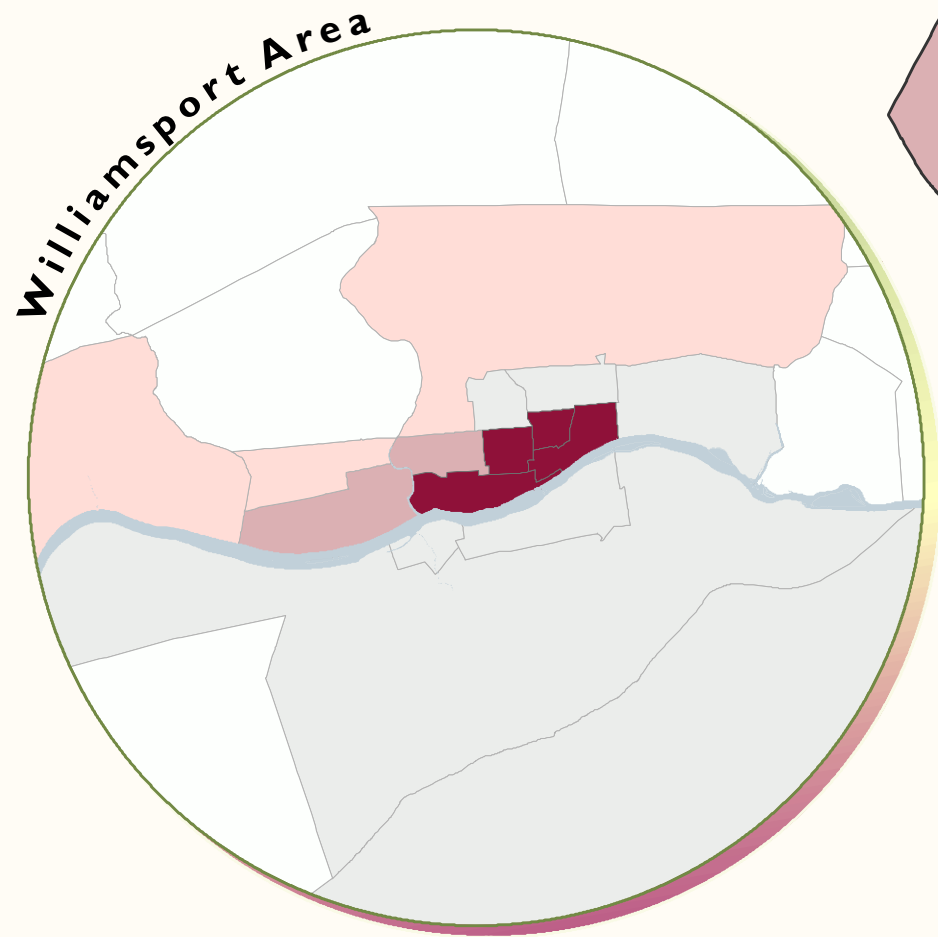
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83

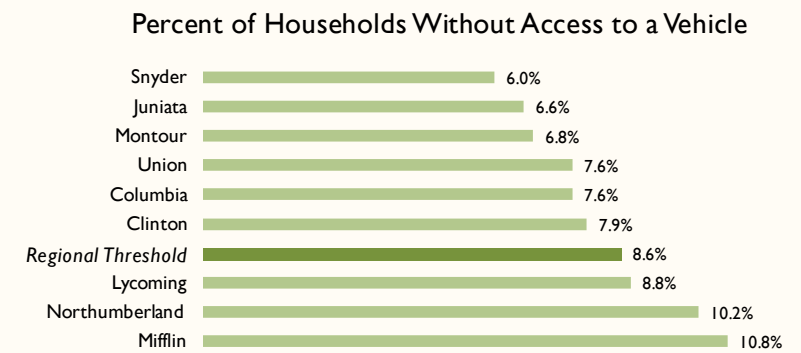


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-5: Percent of Households Without Access to a Vehicle

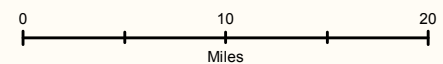


County Boundary
Percent Households Without Access to a Vehicle by Tract
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)
 0 - 4.2
 4.3 - 8.5 *Regional Threshold: 8.6%*
 8.6 - 12.8
 12.9 - 17.1
 17.2 - 100



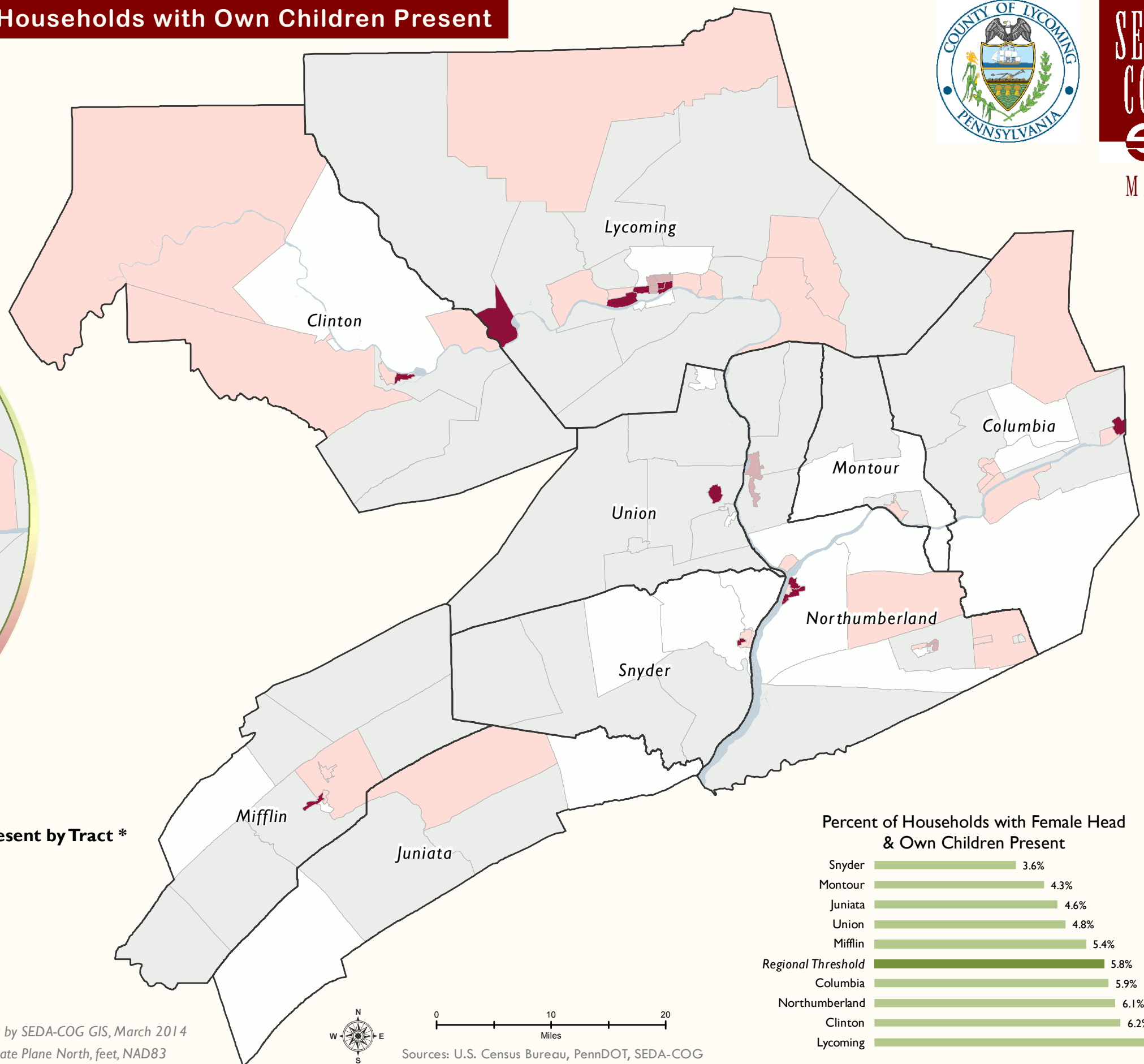
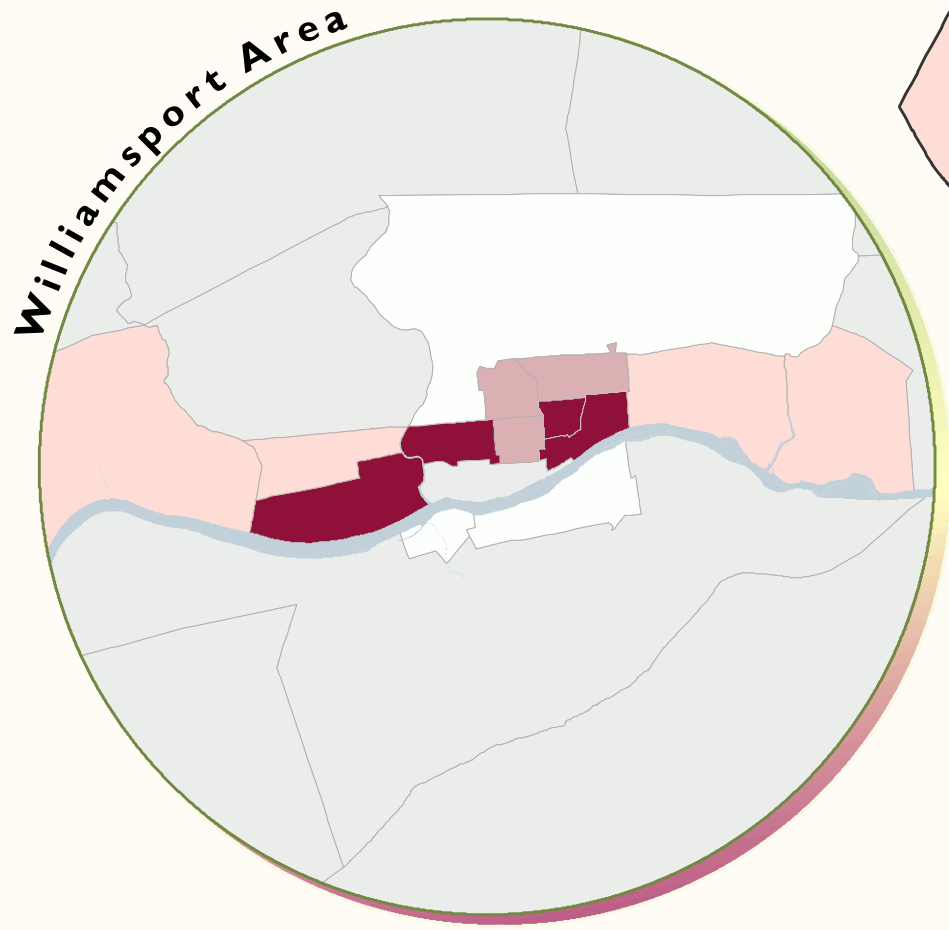
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-6: Percent of Female Headed Households with Own Children Present



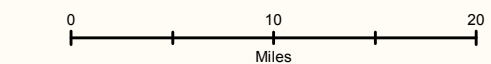
County Boundary
Percent Households with Female Head & Own Children Present by Tract *
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)
 0 - 2.8
 2.9 - 5.7 *Regional Threshold: 5.8%*
 5.8 - 8.6
 8.7 - 11.5
 11.6 - 100

Percent of Households with Female Head & Own Children Present

Snyder	3.6%
Montour	4.3%
Juniata	4.6%
Union	4.8%
Mifflin	5.4%
Regional Threshold	5.8%
Columbia	5.9%
Northumberland	6.1%
Clinton	6.2%
Lycoming	7.0%

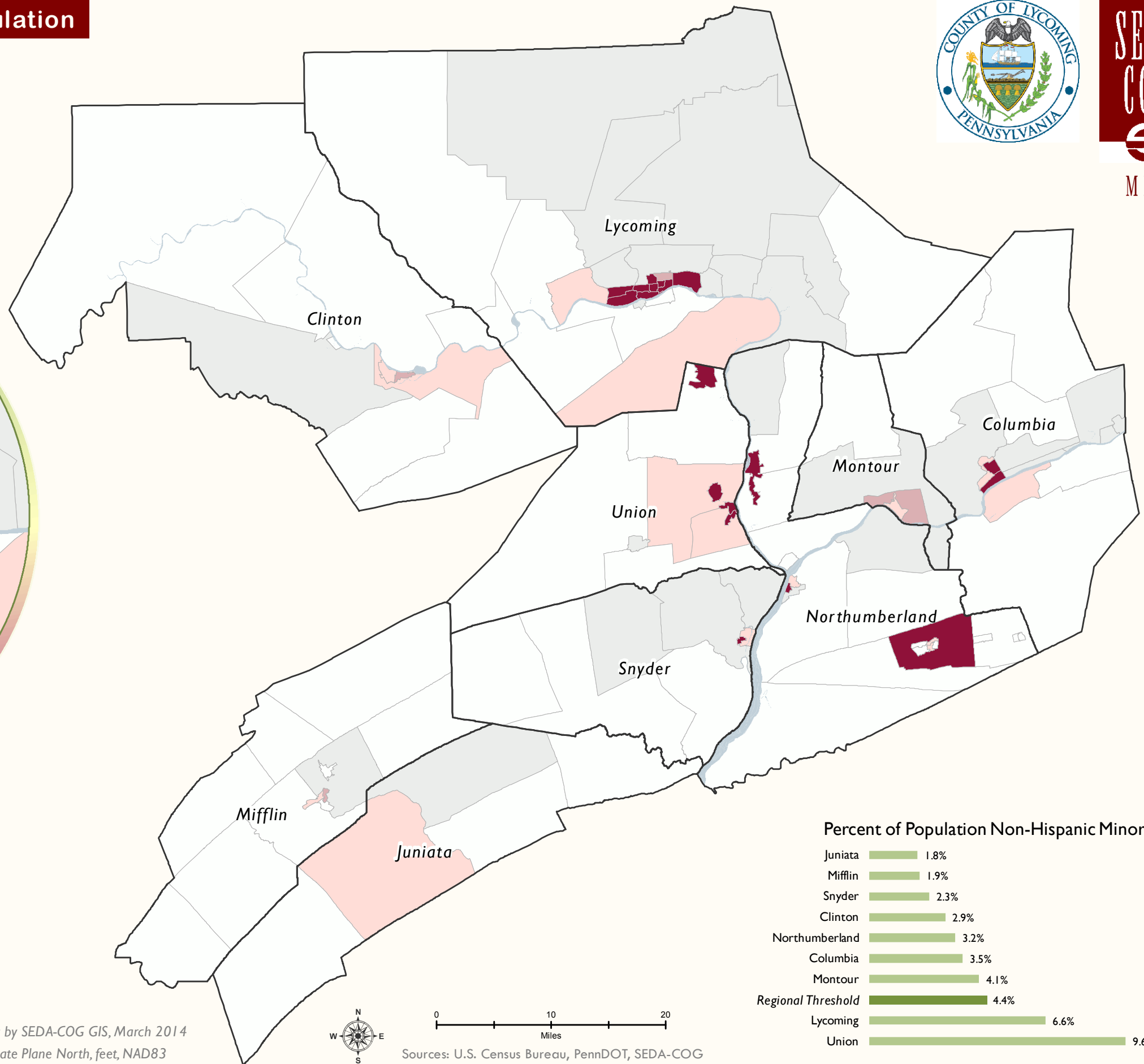
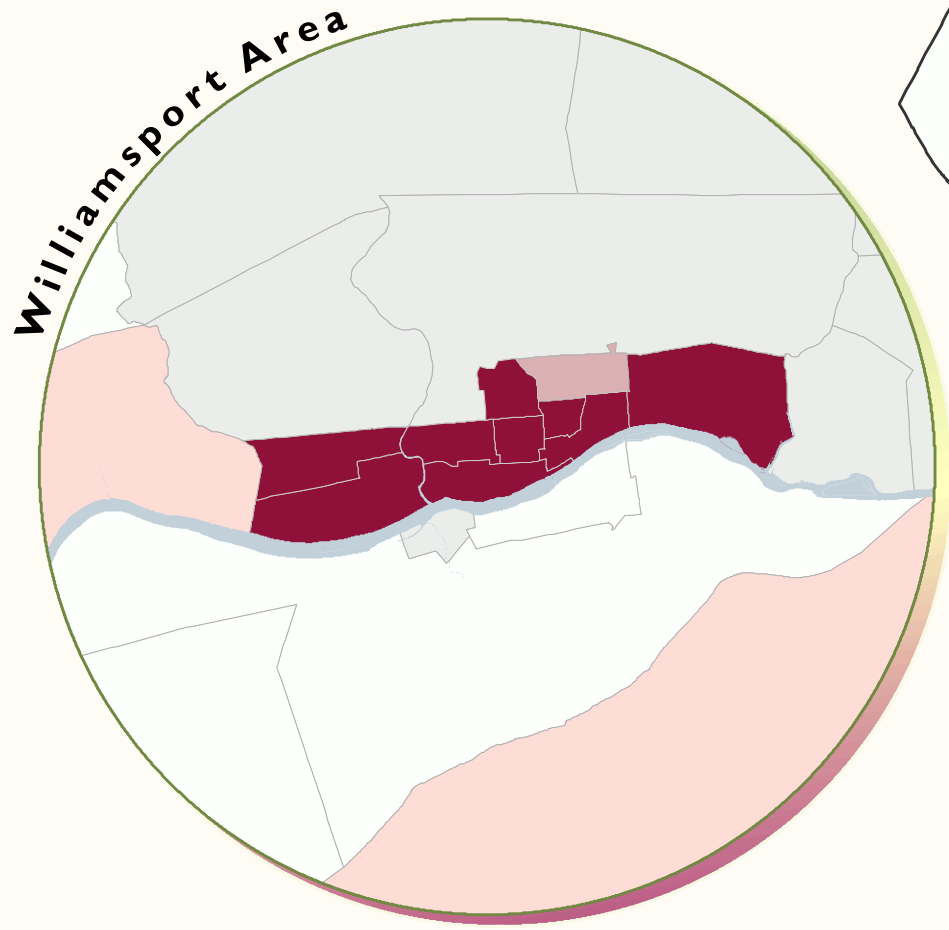
* No husband present, children under 18 years.
 Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
 PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-7: Non-Hispanic Minority Population



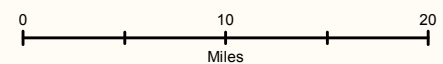
County Boundary
Percent Population Non-Hispanic Minority by Tract
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)
 0- 2.1
 2.2 - 4.3
 4.4 - 6.5
 6.6 - 8.7
 8.8 - 100

Regional Threshold: 4.4%

Percent of Population Non-Hispanic Minority	
Juniata	1.8%
Mifflin	1.9%
Snyder	2.3%
Clinton	2.9%
Northumberland	3.2%
Columbia	3.5%
Montour	4.1%
Regional Threshold	4.4%
Lycoming	6.6%
Union	9.6%

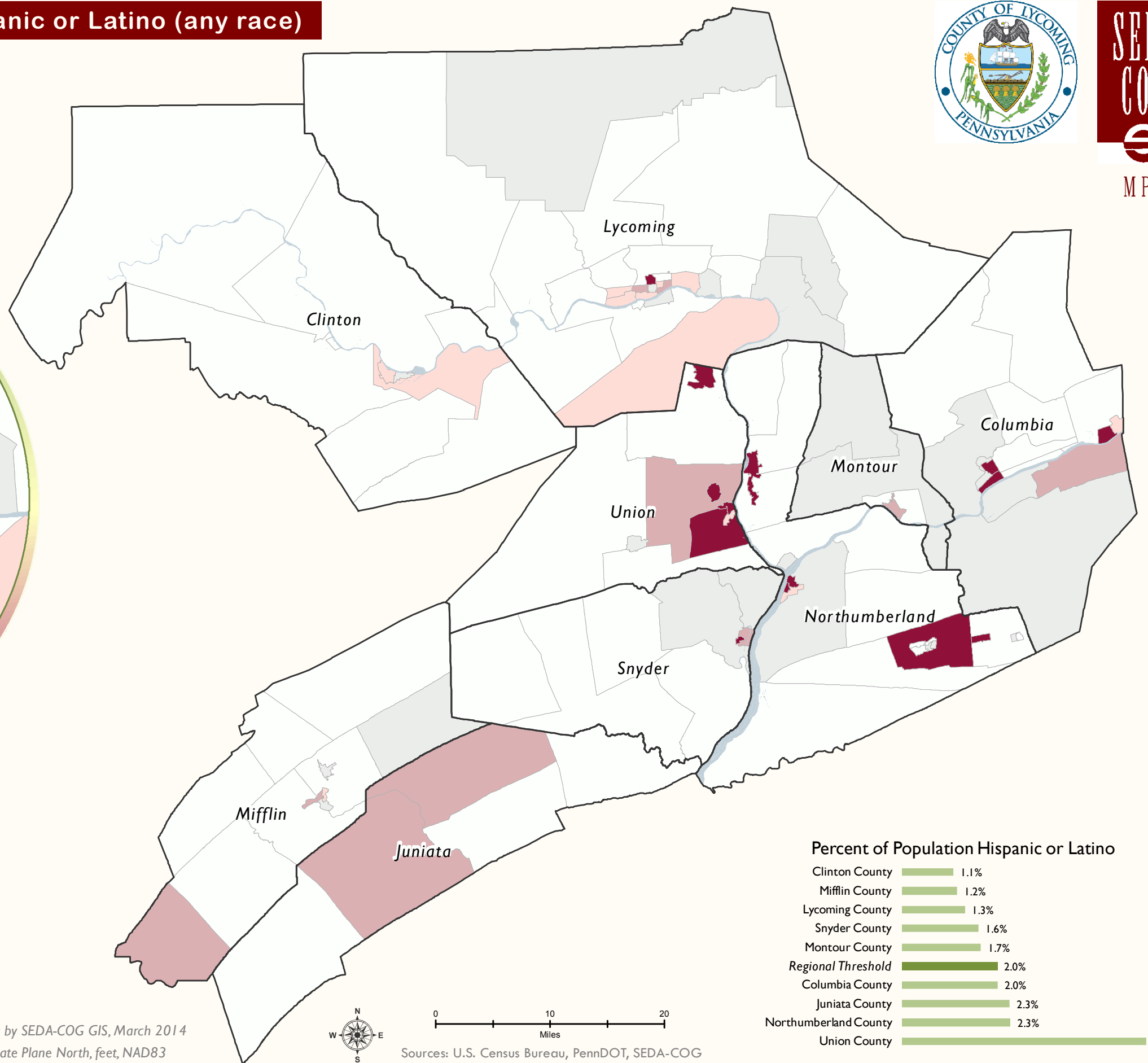
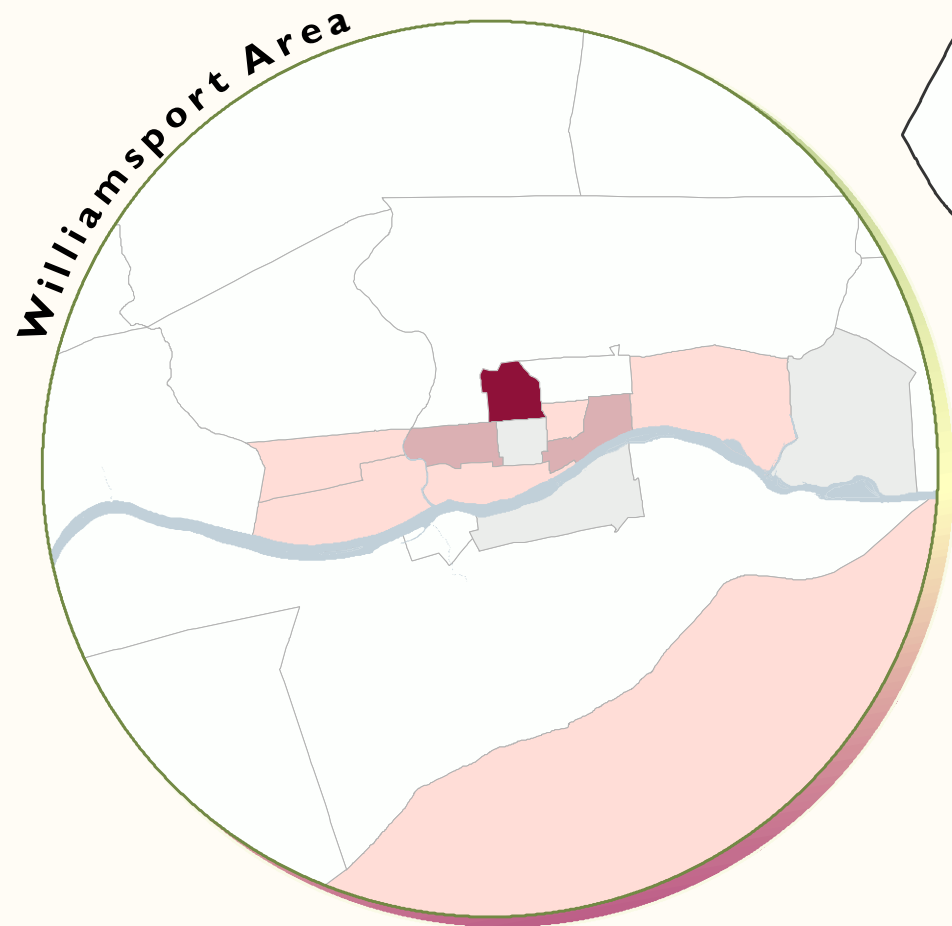
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-8: Percent of Population Hispanic or Latino (any race)



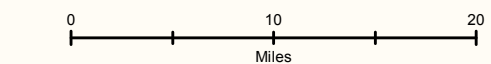
County Boundary
Percent Population Hispanic or Latino (any race) by Tract *
ACS 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011)

- 0 - 0.9
 - 1.0 - 1.9
 - 2.0 - 2.9
 - 3.0 - 3.9
 - 4.0 - 100
- Regional Threshold: 2.0%

Percent of Population Hispanic or Latino	
Clinton County	1.1%
Mifflin County	1.2%
Lycoming County	1.3%
Snyder County	1.6%
Montour County	1.7%
Regional Threshold	2.0%
Columbia County	2.0%
Juniata County	2.3%
Northumberland County	2.3%
Union County	5.1%

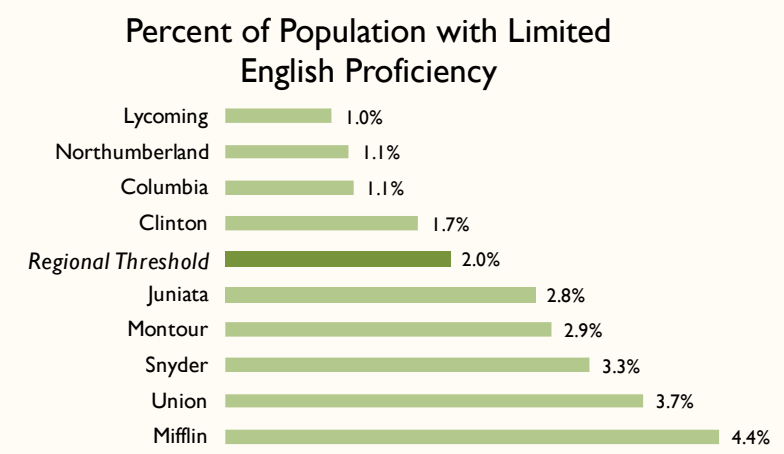
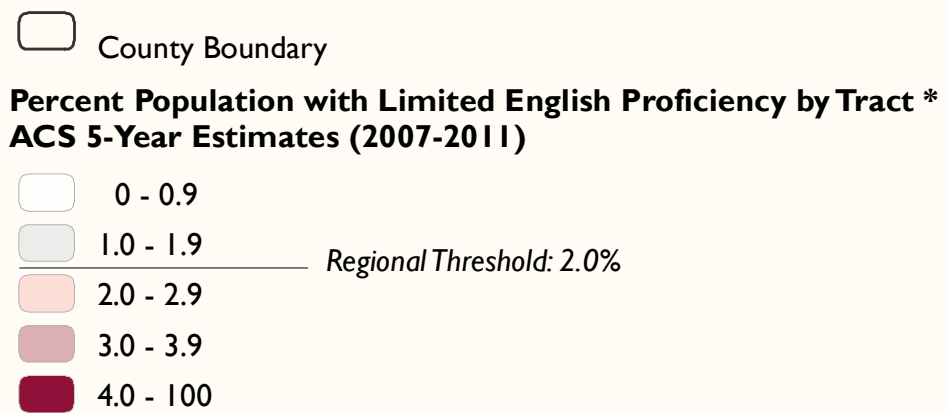
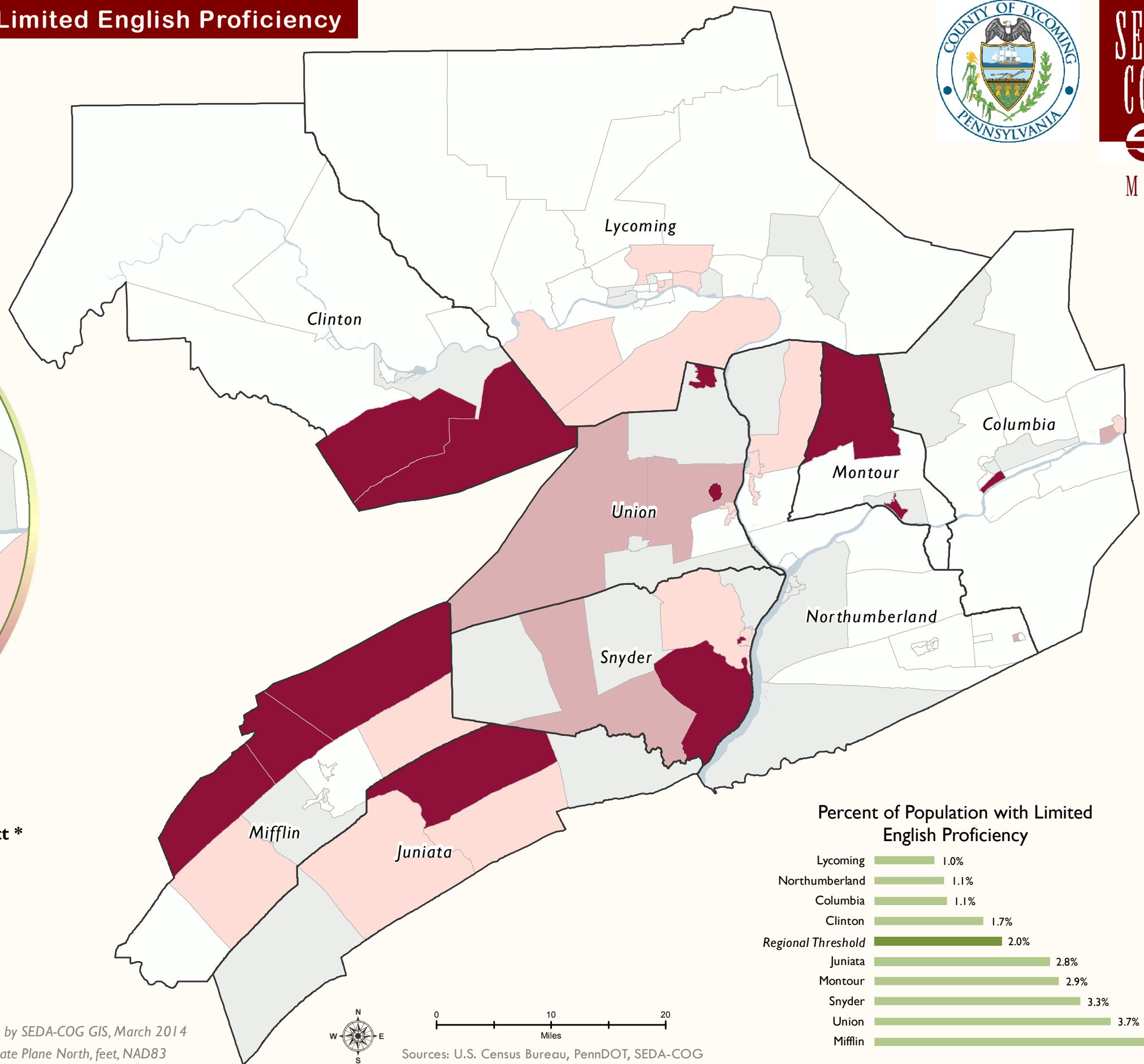
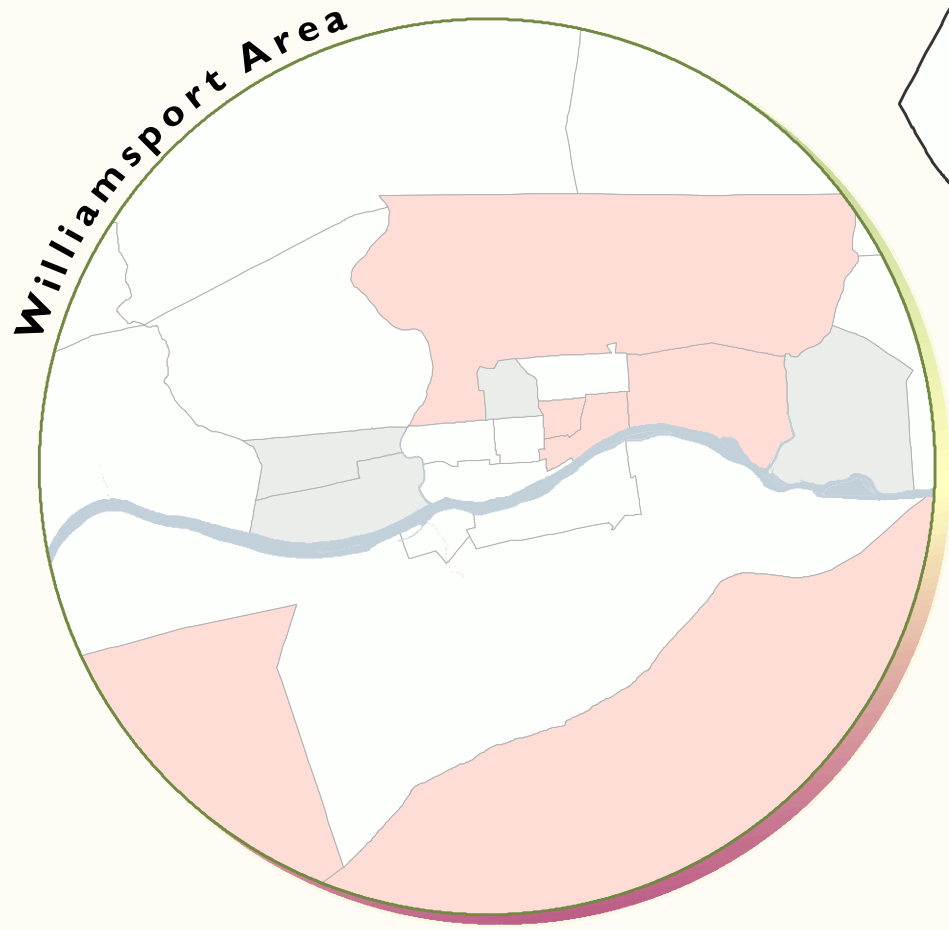
* Hispanic is an ethnicity, not a racial category.
 Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.
 Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
 PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83



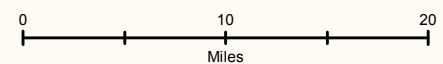
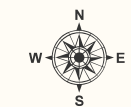
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Figure A-9: Percent of Population with Limited English Proficiency



* Population 5 years and older.
Margins of Error may be large due to small sample size in the ACS.

Mapping by SEDA-COG GIS, March 2014
PA State Plane North, feet, NAD83

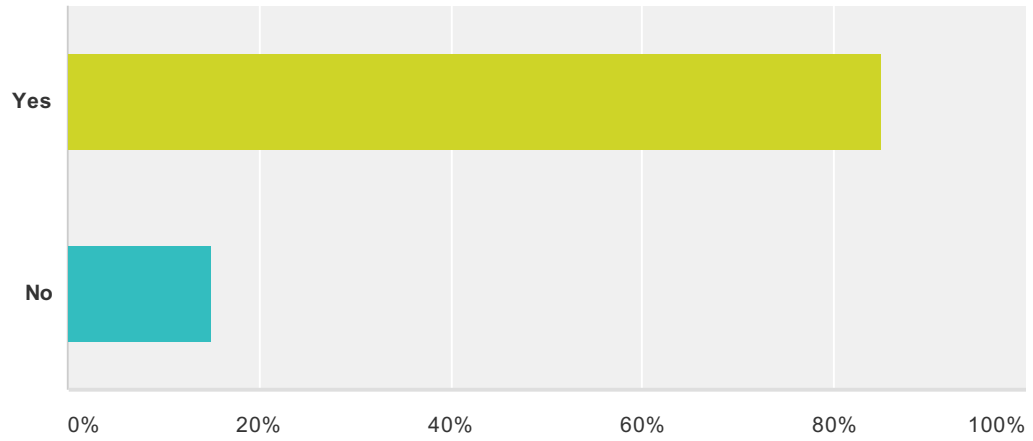


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, PennDOT, SEDA-COG

Appendix B – Resident Survey Results

Q1 Does your household have access to a car or other vehicle that is running, licensed, and insured?

Answered: 468 Skipped: 6

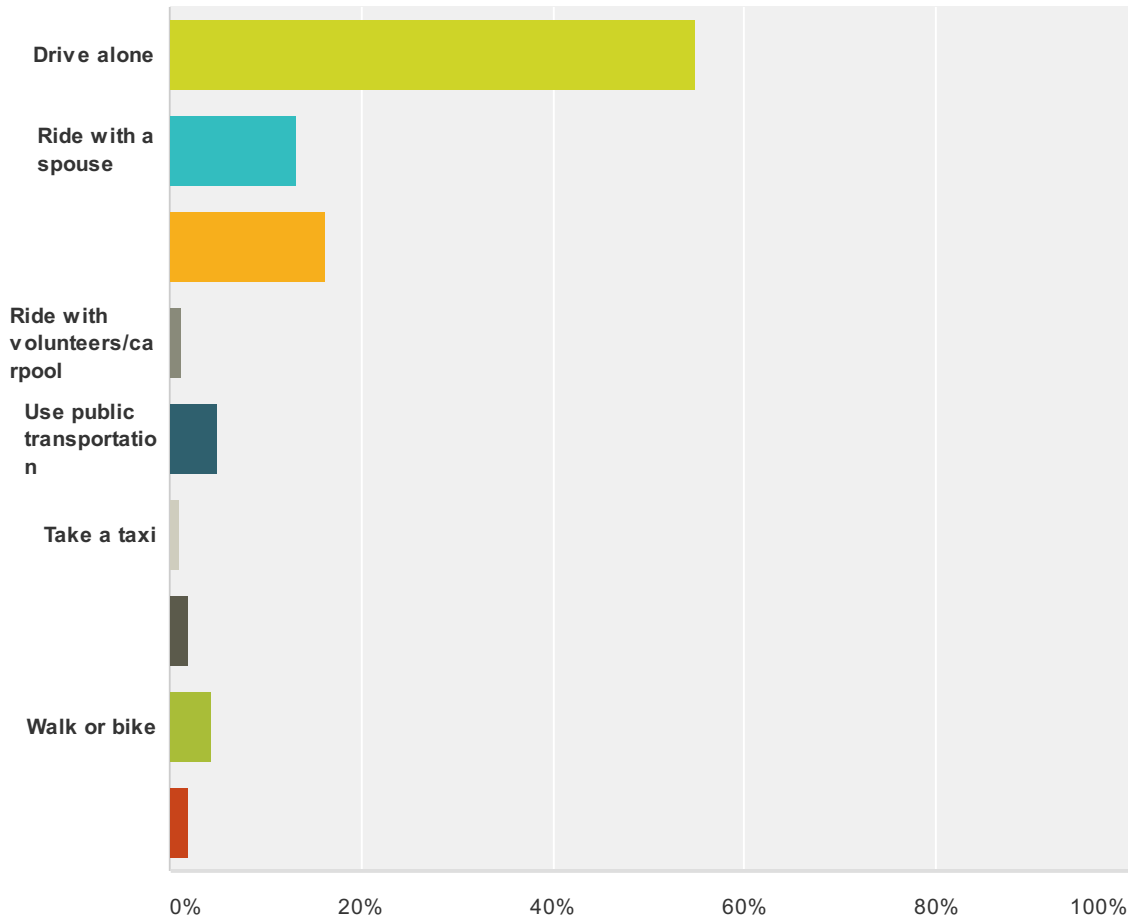


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	85.04% 398
No	14.96% 70
Total	468

Transportation Needs Survey for Community Residents

Q2 For the majority of your local trips, how do you travel?

Answered: 470 Skipped: 4

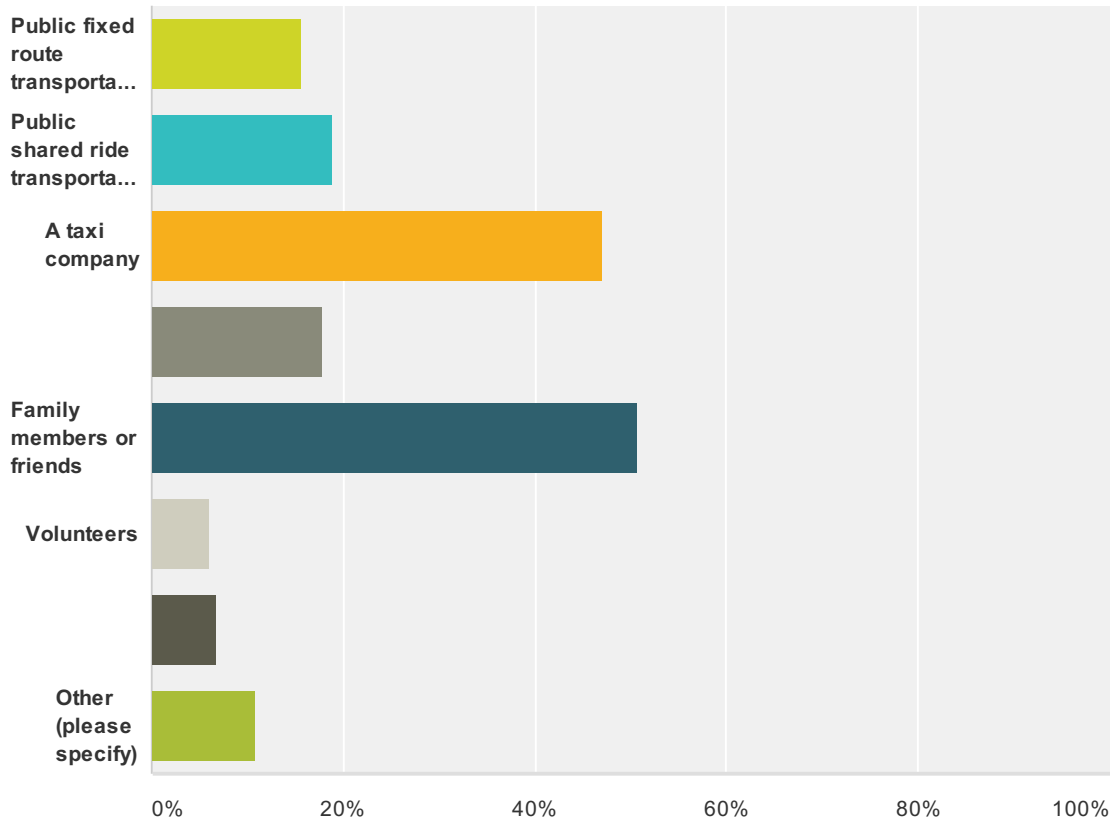


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Drive alone	54.89%	258
Ride with a spouse	13.19%	62
Ride with other family members	16.17%	76
Ride with volunteers/carpool	1.28%	6
Use public transportation	5.11%	24
Take a taxi	1.06%	5
Use human service agency	1.91%	9
Walk or bike	4.47%	21
Other (please specify)	1.91%	9
Total		470

Transportation Needs Survey for Community Residents

Q3 In the area right around your own home, what kinds of transportation services are available for you to use?

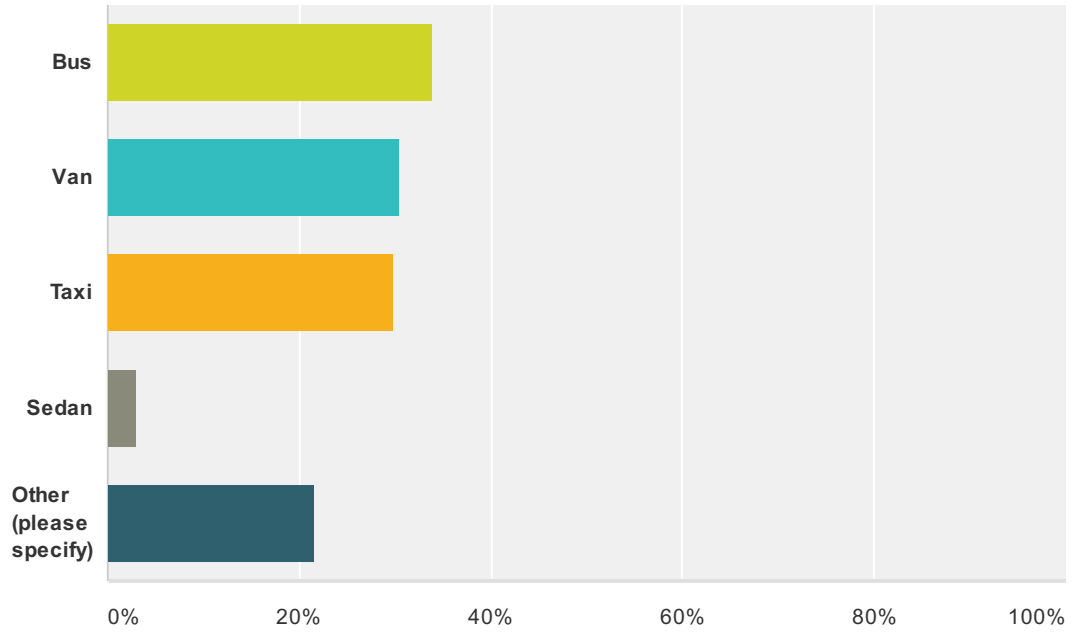
Answered: 444 Skipped: 30



Answer Choices	Responses
Public fixed route transportation	15.54% 69
Public shared ride transportation	18.92% 84
A taxi company	47.07% 209
Human services transportation	17.79% 79
Family members or friends	50.68% 225
Volunteers	6.08% 27
Religious organization(s)	6.76% 30
Other (please specify)	10.81% 48
Total Respondents: 444	

Q4 If you use public transportation, what is used?

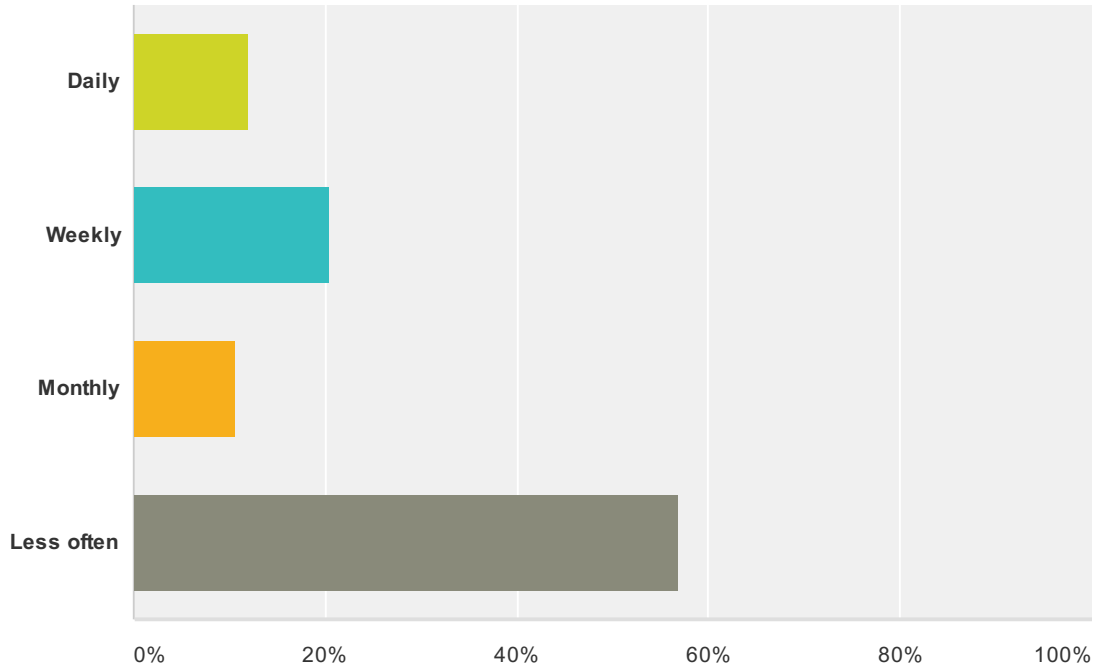
Answered: 204 Skipped: 270



Answer Choices	Responses
Bus	33.82% 69
Van	30.39% 62
Taxi	29.90% 61
Sedan	2.94% 6
Other (please specify)	21.57% 44
Total Respondents: 204	

Q5 If you use public transportation, how often do you use it?

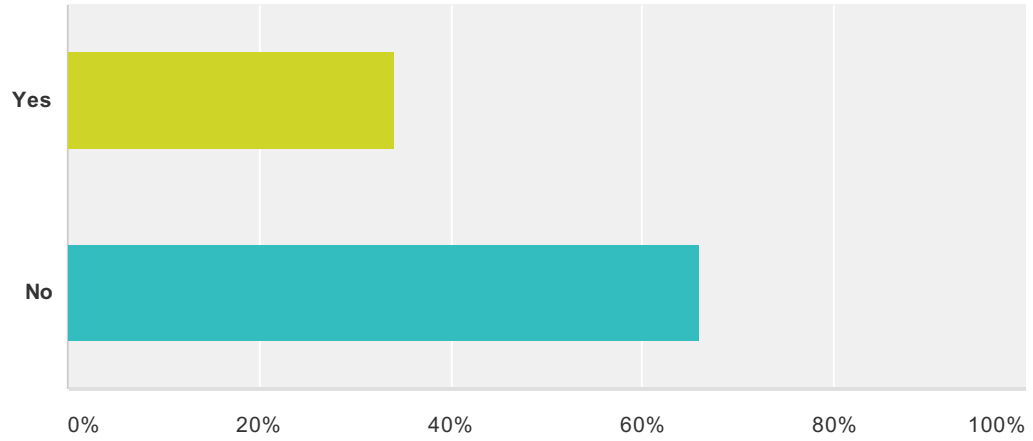
Answered: 216 Skipped: 258



Answer Choices	Responses
Daily	12.04% 26
Weekly	20.37% 44
Monthly	10.65% 23
Less often	56.94% 123
Total	216

Q6 Are there trips you would like to make, but cannot due to lack of transportation?

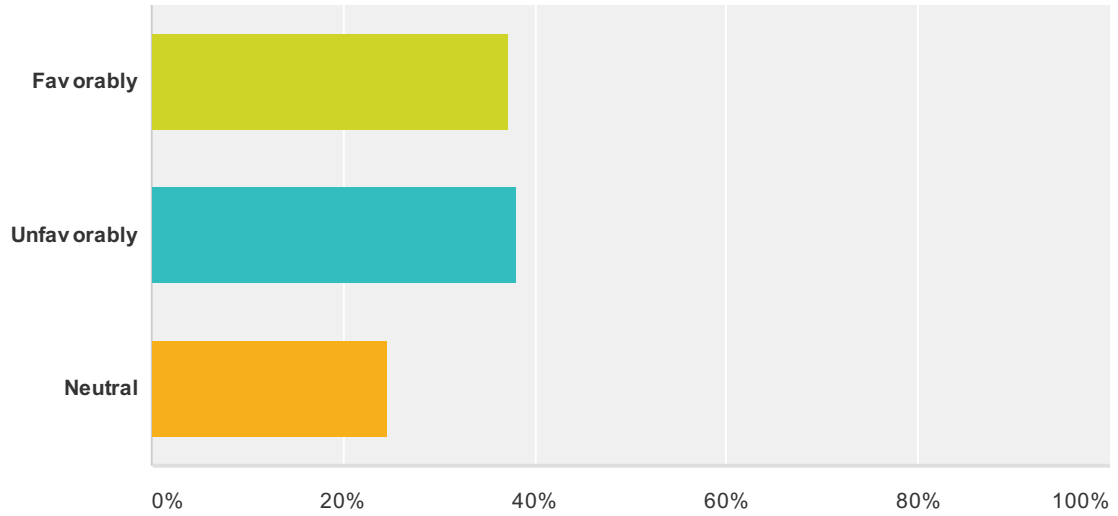
Answered: 431 Skipped: 43



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	34.11%	147
No	65.89%	284
Total		431

Q7 How do you view public transportation in your community?

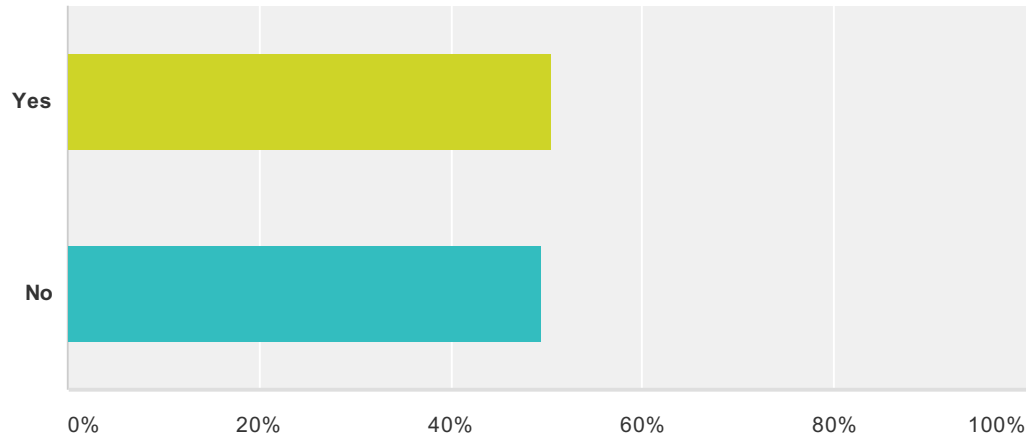
Answered: 446 Skipped: 28



Answer Choices	Responses
Favorably	37.22% 166
Unfavorably	38.12% 170
Neutral	24.66% 110
Total	446

Q8 Have you ever lived in a different community where public transportation was widely available?

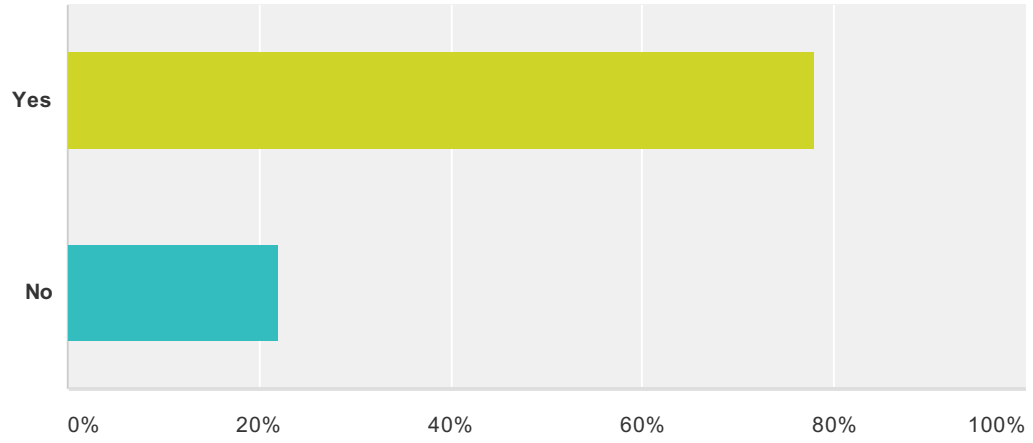
Answered: 467 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	50.54%	236
No	49.46%	231
Total		467

Q9 If you answered yes to question 8, did you use it?

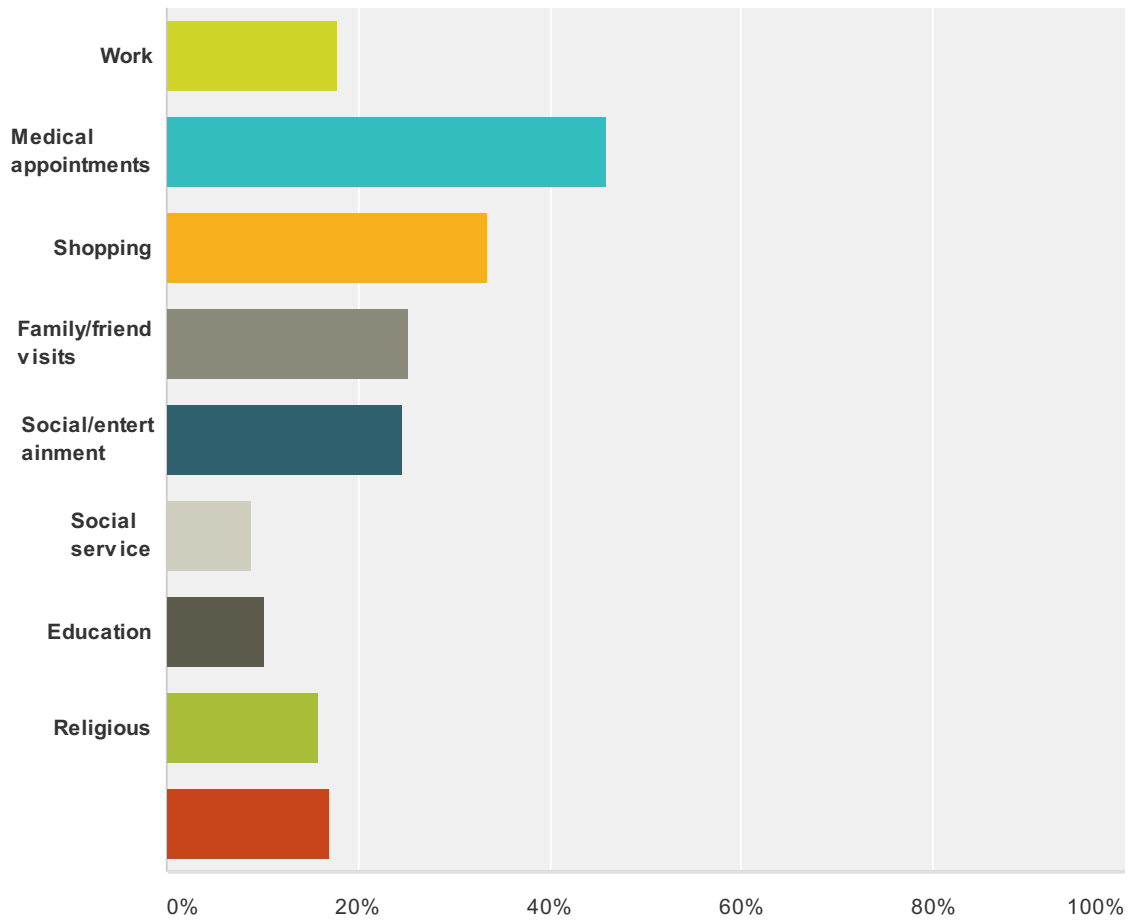
Answered: 250 Skipped: 224



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	78%	195
No	22%	55
Total		250

Q10 In the last six months, have any household members missed any of the following due to a lack of transportation?

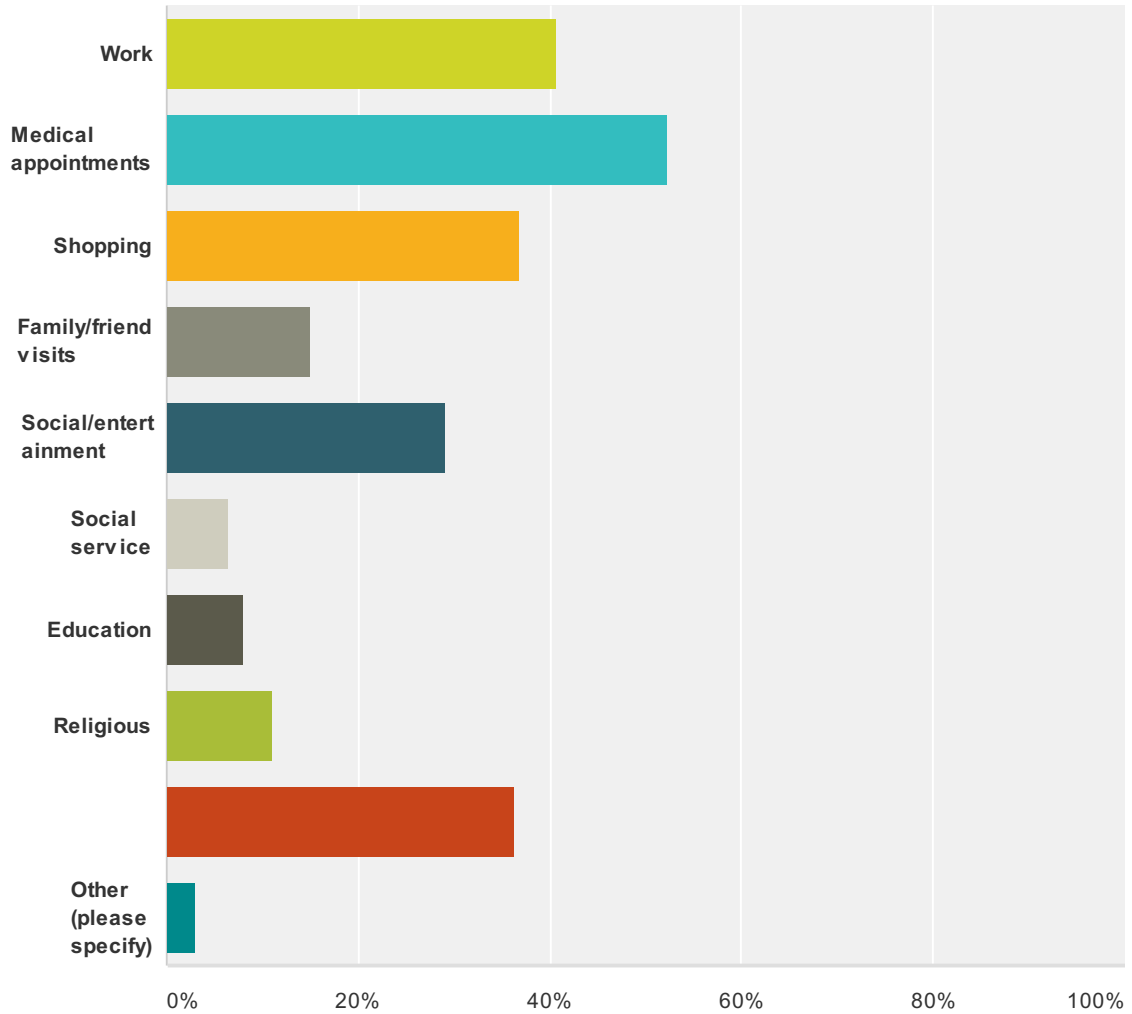
Answered: 146 Skipped: 328



Answer Choices	Responses
Work	17.81% 26
Medical appointments	45.89% 67
Shopping	33.56% 49
Family/friend visits	25.34% 37
Social/entertainment	24.66% 36
Social service	8.90% 13
Education	10.27% 15
Religious	15.75% 23
Other (please specify)	17.12% 25
Total Respondents: 146	

Q11 If you already use or were going to use public transportation, which of the following would be a priority reason for using it?

Answered: 361 Skipped: 113



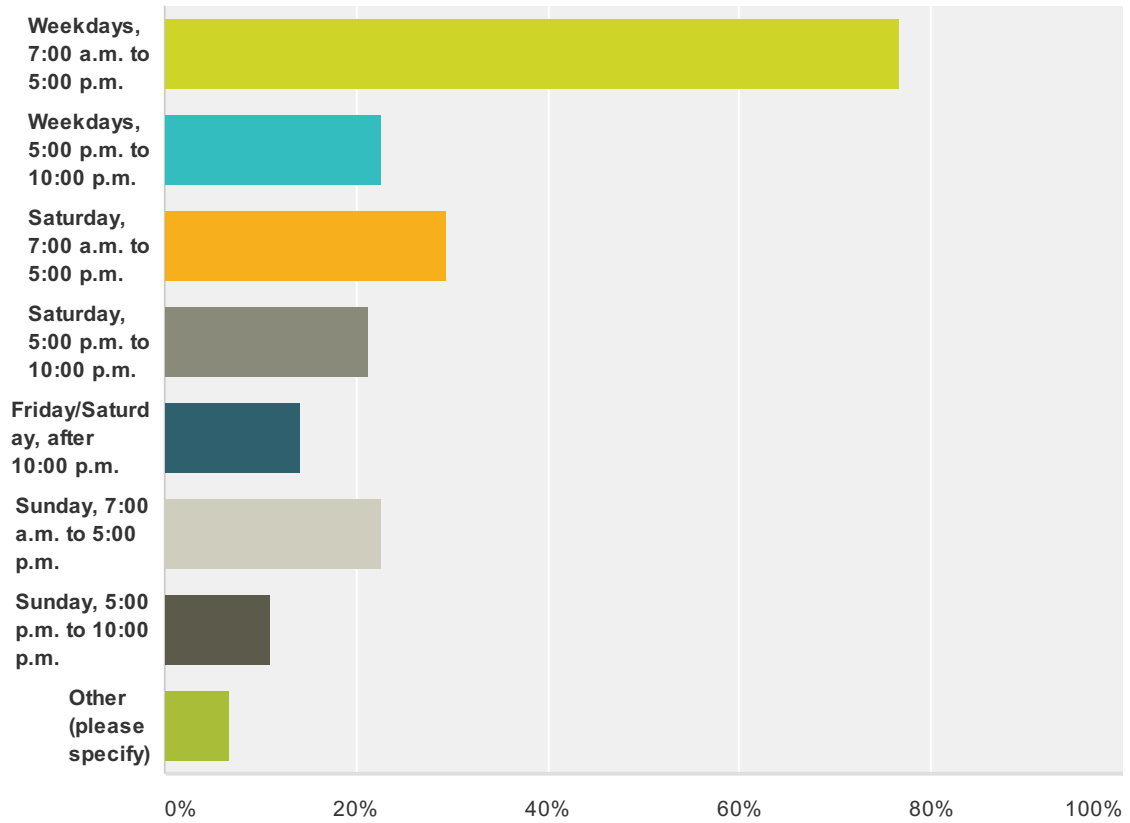
Answer Choices	Responses
Work	40.72% 147
Medical appointments	52.35% 189
Shopping	36.84% 133
Family/friend visits	14.96% 54
Social/entertainment	29.09% 105
Social service	6.37% 23
Education	8.03% 29
Religious	11.08% 40
Long distance trips (e.g., to airports)	36.29% 131

Transportation Needs Survey for Community Residents

Other (please specify)	3.05%	11
Total Respondents: 361		

Q12 If you already use or were going to use public transportation, when do you need it?

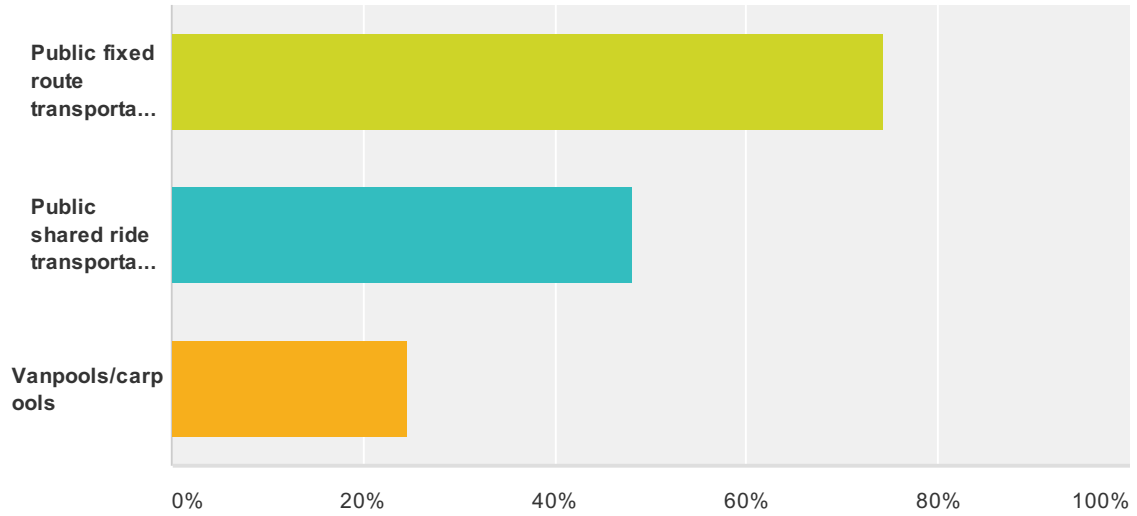
Answered: 335 Skipped: 139



Answer Choices	Responses
Weekdays, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	76.72% 257
Weekdays, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	22.69% 76
Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	29.55% 99
Saturday, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	21.19% 71
Friday/Saturday, after 10:00 p.m.	14.33% 48
Sunday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	22.69% 76
Sunday, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	11.04% 37
Other (please specify)	6.87% 23
Total Respondents: 335	

Q13 If available, which of the following would you use?

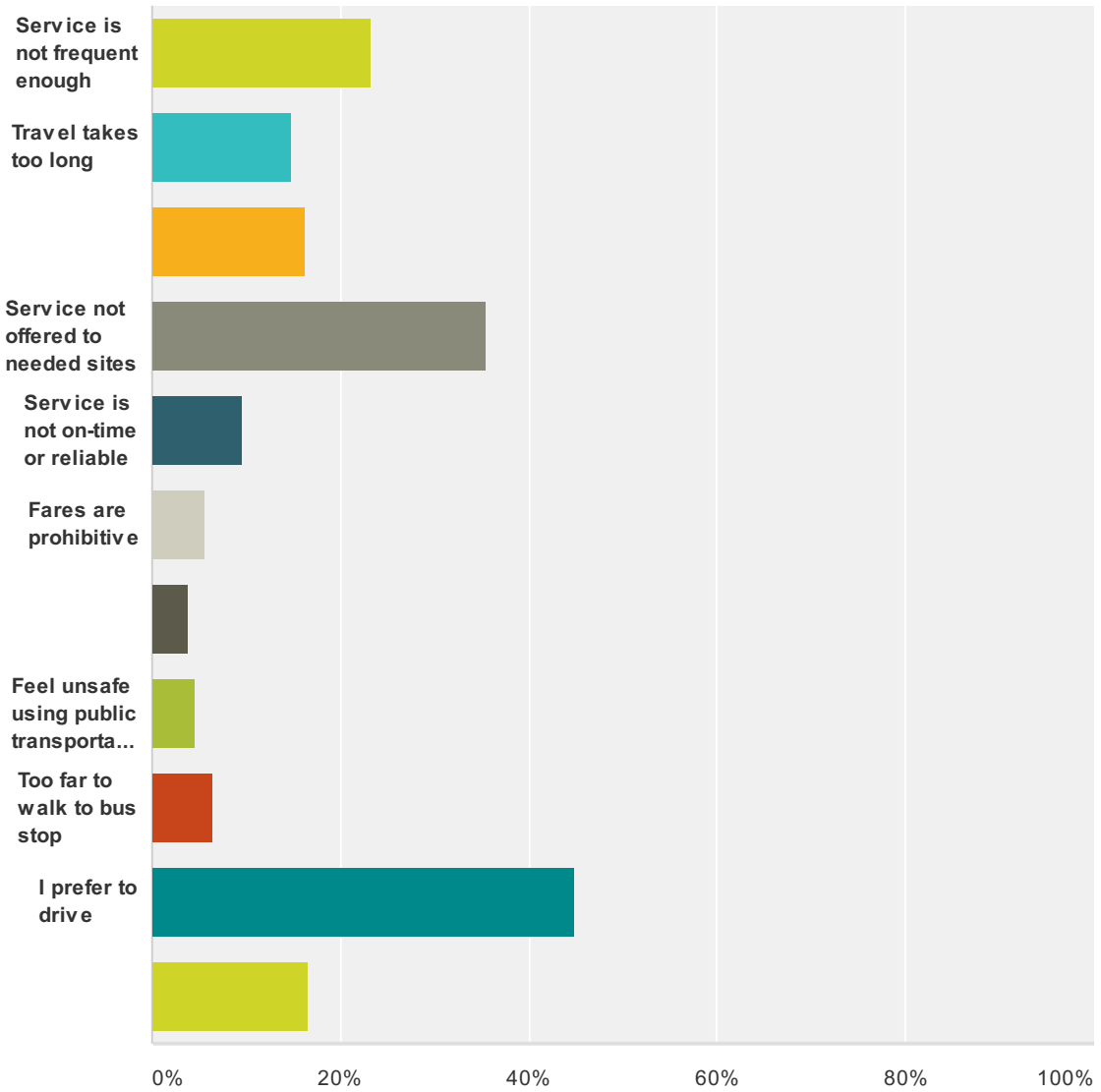
Answered: 370 Skipped: 104



Answer Choices	Responses
Public fixed route transportation	74.32% 275
Public shared ride transportation	48.11% 178
Vanpools/carpools	24.59% 91
Total Respondents: 370	

Q14 Please indicate your reasons if you've never used or no longer use public transportation?

Answered: 343 Skipped: 131



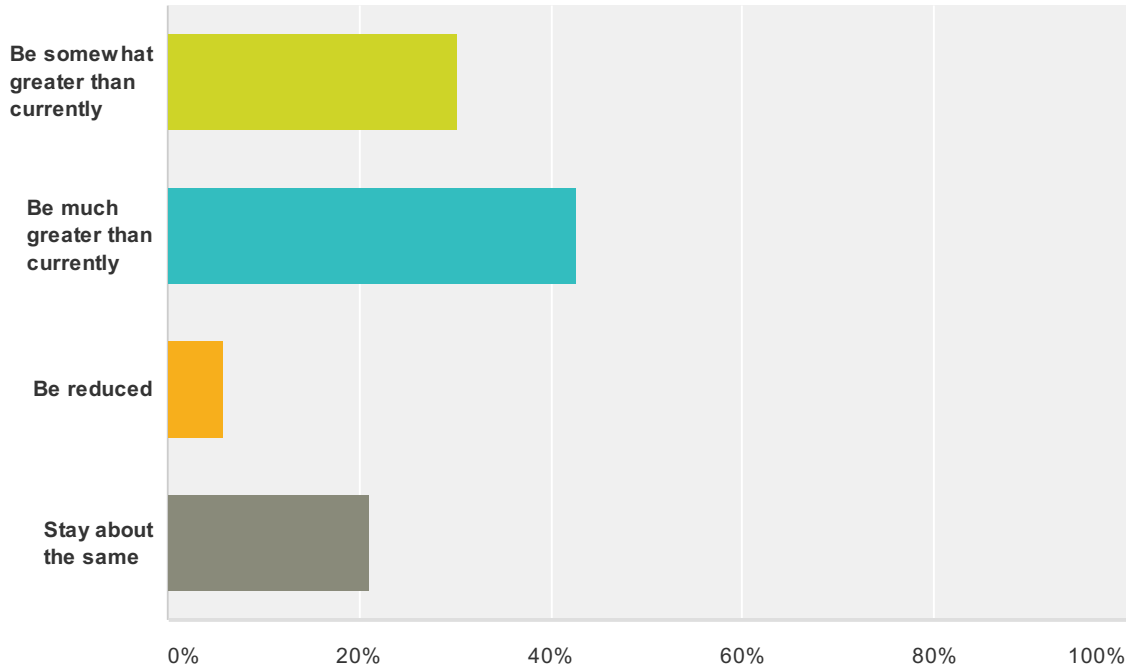
Answer Choices	Responses
Service is not frequent enough	23.32% 80
Travel takes too long	14.87% 51
Service times/days not convenient	16.33% 56
Service not offered to needed sites	35.57% 122
Service is not on-time or reliable	9.62% 33
Fares are prohibitive	5.54% 19
Vehicles are not clean/comfortable	3.79% 13
Feel unsafe using public transportation	4.66% 16

Transportation Needs Survey for Community Residents

Too far to walk to bus stop	6.41%	22
I prefer to drive	44.90%	154
Other (please specify)	16.62%	57
Total Respondents: 343		

Q15 How do you think the current funding level for public transportation in your community should change over the next five years?

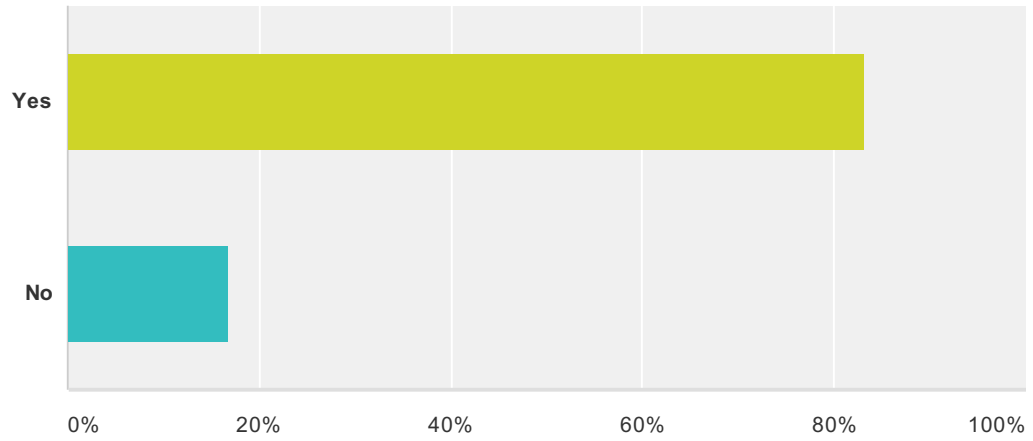
Answered: 407 Skipped: 67



Answer Choices	Responses
Be somewhat greater than currently	30.22% 123
Be much greater than currently	42.75% 174
Be reduced	5.90% 24
Stay about the same	21.13% 86
Total	407

Q16 Do you support increased county and municipal financial support toward public transportation service in your community?

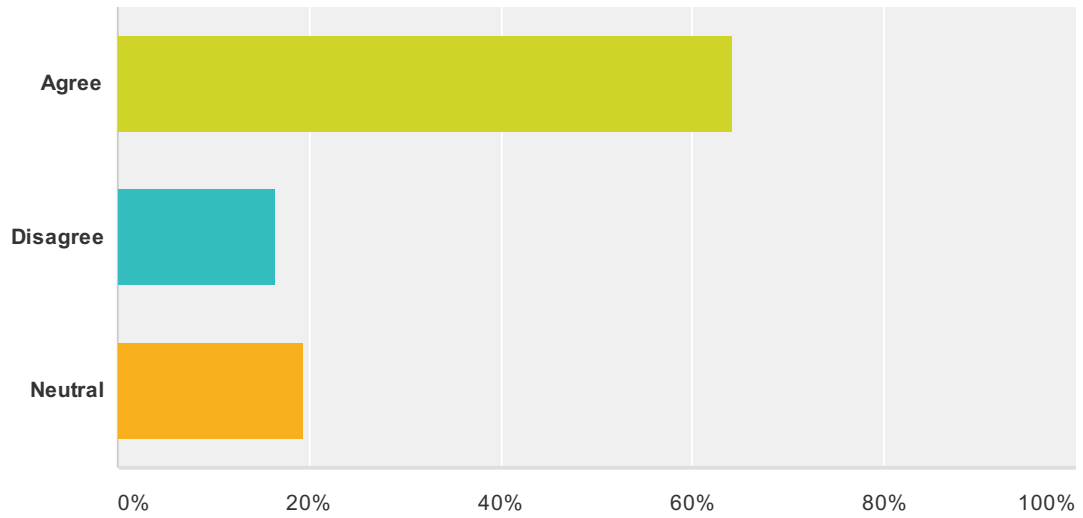
Answered: 417 Skipped: 57



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	83.21%	347
No	16.79%	70
Total		417

Q17 I am familiar with public transit services that are available.

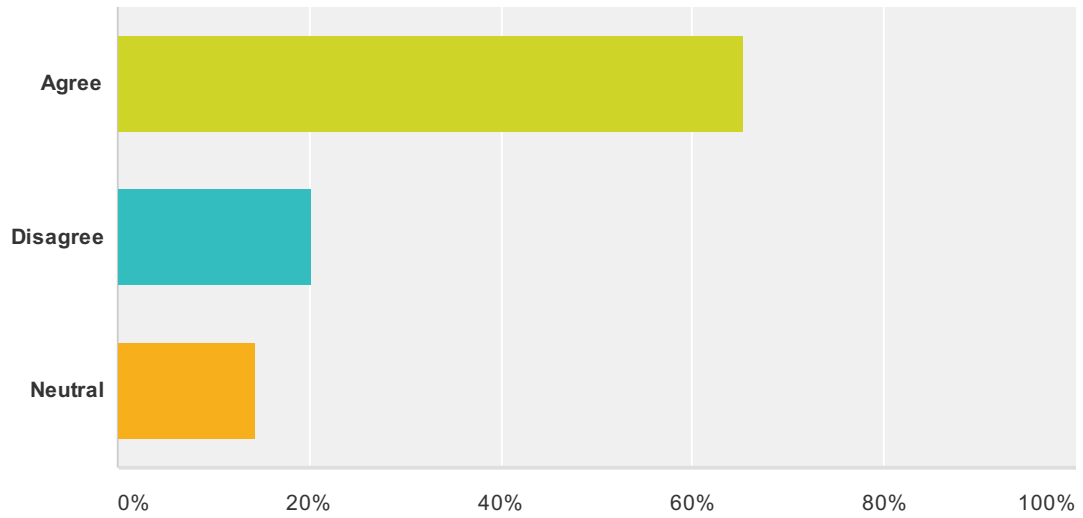
Answered: 421 Skipped: 53



Answer Choices	Responses
Agree	64.13% 270
Disagree	16.39% 69
Neutral	19.48% 82
Total	421

Q18 I would know where to get information about public transit services, if needed.

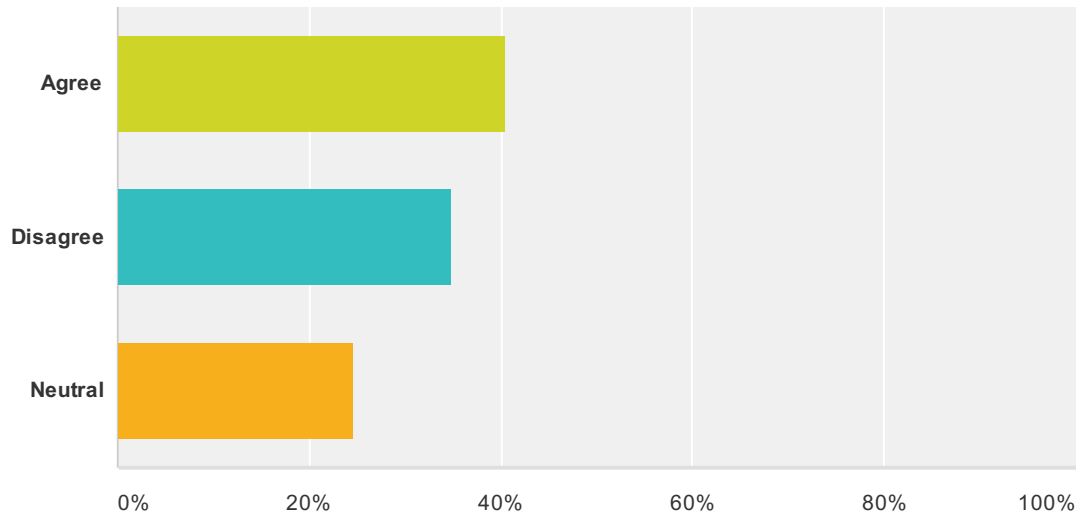
Answered: 421 Skipped: 53



Answer Choices	Responses
Agree	65.32% 275
Disagree	20.19% 85
Neutral	14.49% 61
Total	421

Q19 I think public transit is designed to serve people like me.

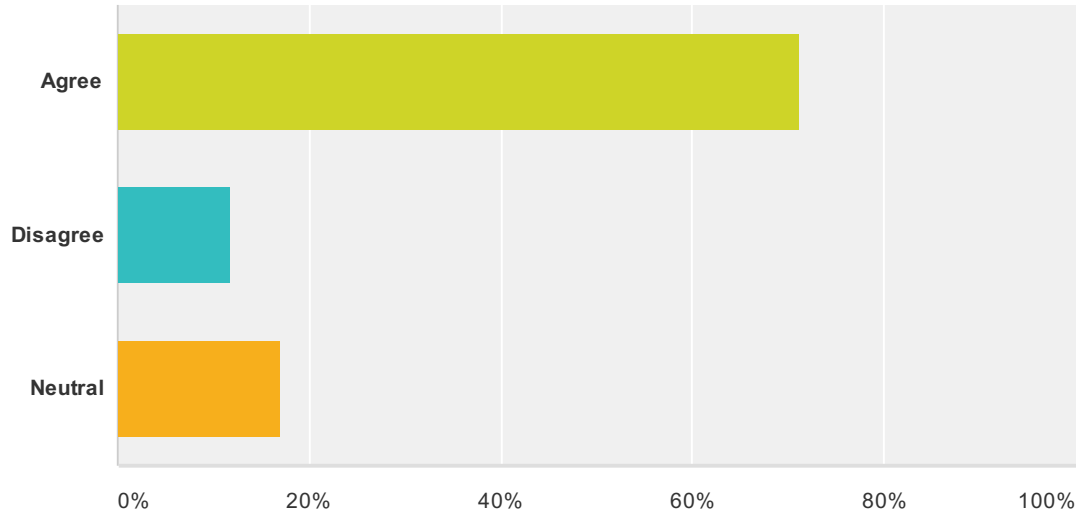
Answered: 418 Skipped: 56



Answer Choices	Responses
Agree	40.43% 169
Disagree	34.93% 146
Neutral	24.64% 103
Total	418

Q20 I think public transit is an affordable alternative to driving a car.

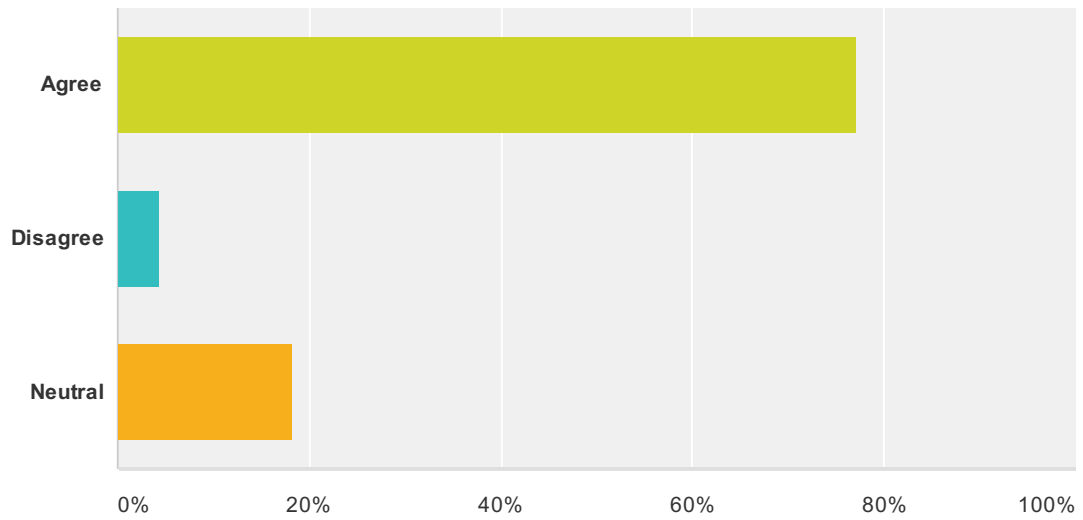
Answered: 423 Skipped: 51



Answer Choices	Responses
Agree	71.16% 301
Disagree	11.82% 50
Neutral	17.02% 72
Total	423

Q21 I think public transit is safe to use.

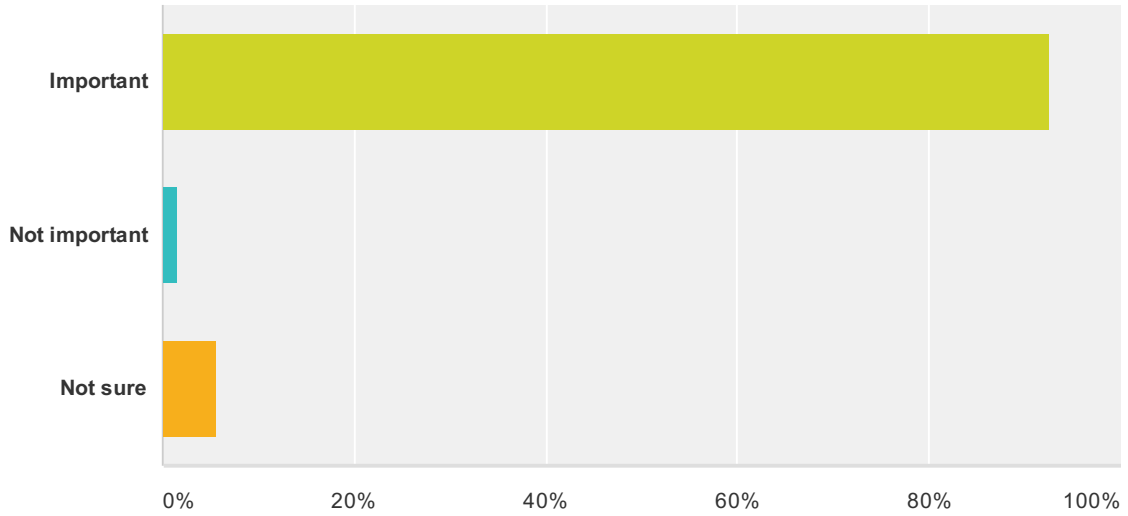
Answered: 422 Skipped: 52



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	77.25%	326
Disagree	4.50%	19
Neutral	18.25%	77
Total		422

Q22 Provide door-to-door service for people with disabilities and special needs.

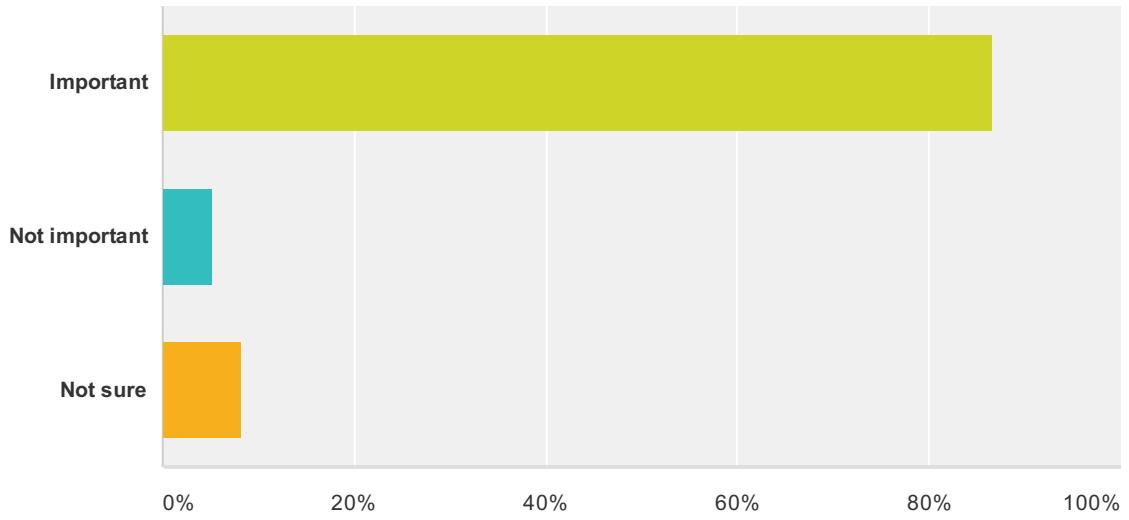
Answered: 423 Skipped: 51



Answer Choices	Responses
Important	92.67% 392
Not important	1.65% 7
Not sure	5.67% 24
Total	423

Q23 Help people get to and from work.

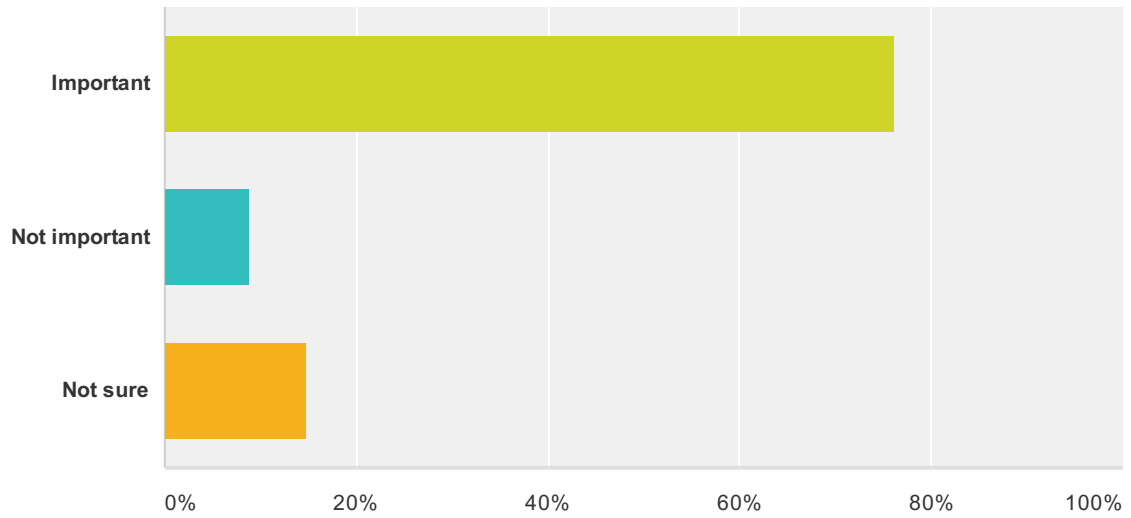
Answered: 417 Skipped: 57



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Important	86.57%	361
Not important	5.28%	22
Not sure	8.15%	34
Total		417

Q24 Help people get to non-work destinations.

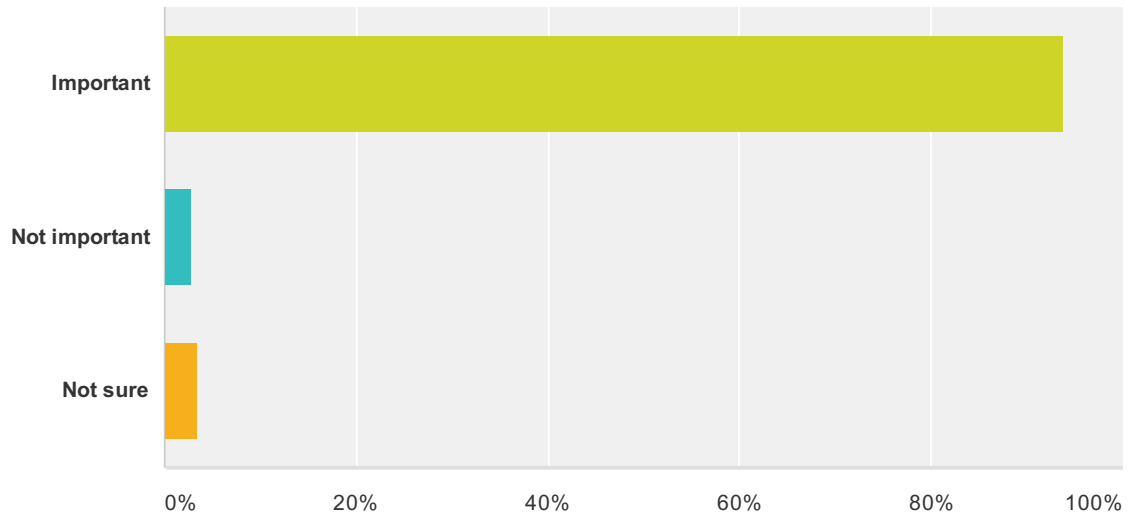
Answered: 416 Skipped: 58



Answer Choices	Responses
Important	76.20% 317
Not important	8.89% 37
Not sure	14.90% 62
Total	416

Q25 Offer transportation for people who are unable to drive or afford a vehicle.

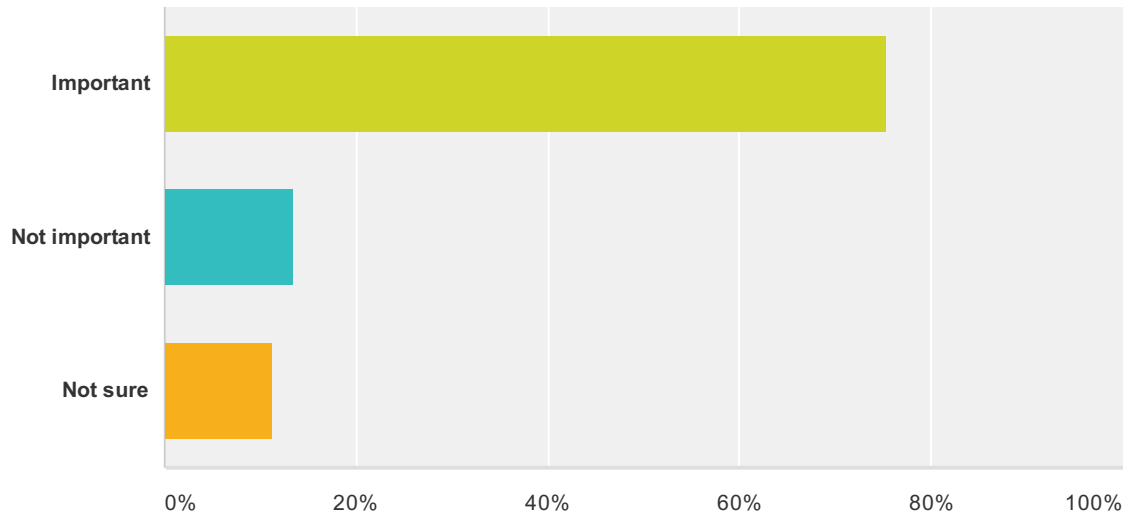
Answered: 420 Skipped: 54



Answer Choices	Responses
Important	93.81% 394
Not important	2.86% 12
Not sure	3.33% 14
Total	420

Q26 Help alleviate growing roadway congestion.

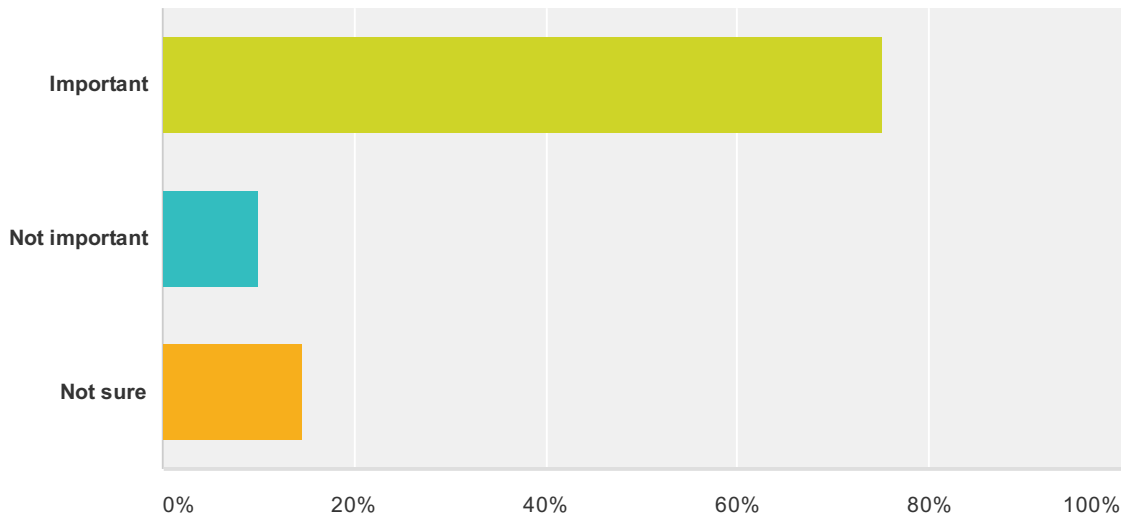
Answered: 417 Skipped: 57



Answer Choices	Responses
Important	75.30% 314
Not important	13.43% 56
Not sure	11.27% 47
Total	417

Q27 Help improve air quality.

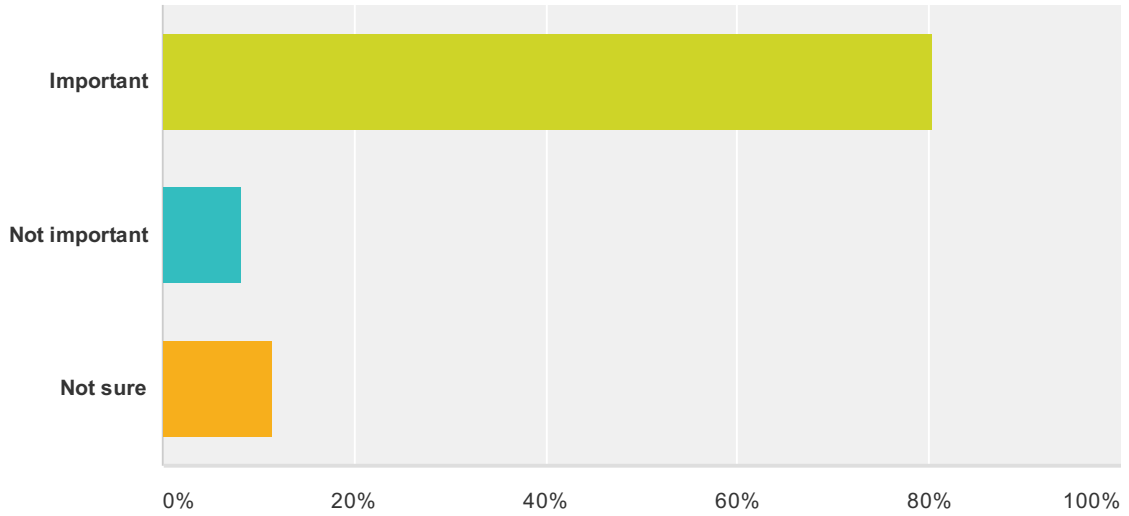
Answered: 416 Skipped: 58



Answer Choices	Responses	
Important	75.24%	313
Not important	10.10%	42
Not sure	14.66%	61
Total		416

Q28 Help reduce fuel consumption and dependence on importing foreign oil.

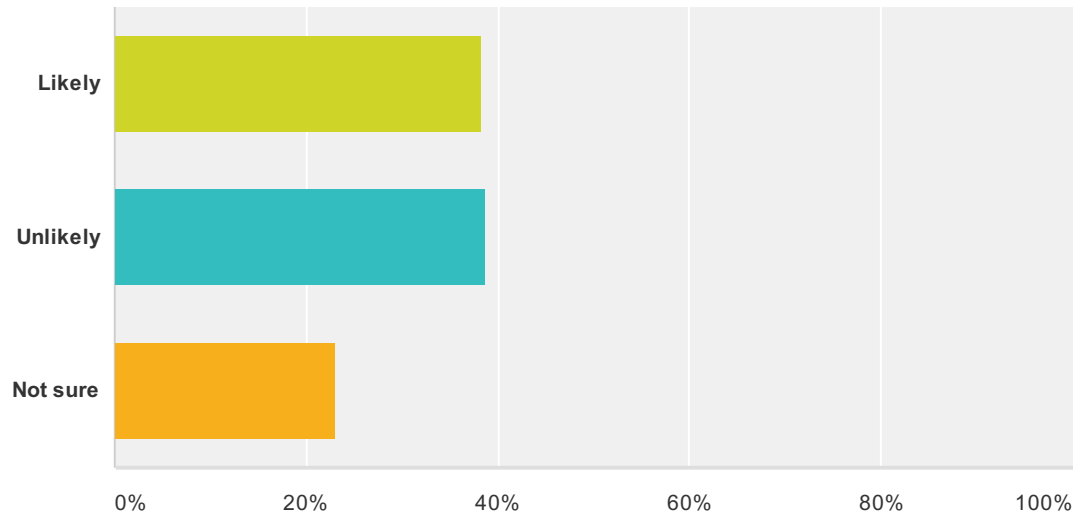
Answered: 414 Skipped: 60



Answer Choices	Responses
Important	80.43% 333
Not important	8.21% 34
Not sure	11.35% 47
Total	414

Q29 Travel time to work by car increases by 10 minutes or more due to traffic.

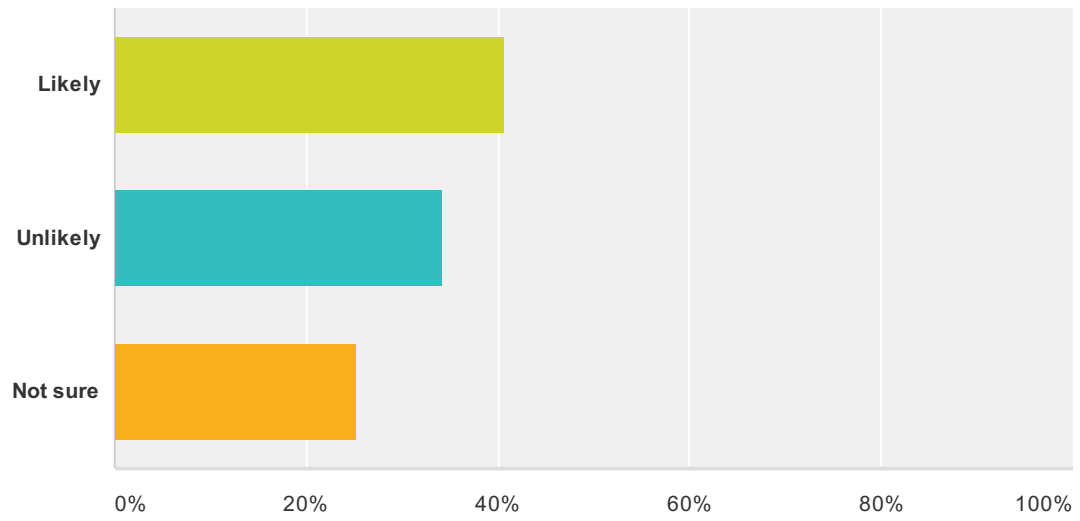
Answered: 405 Skipped: 69



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	38.27% 155
Unlikely	38.77% 157
Not sure	22.96% 93
Total	405

Q30 The cost of parking/violations increases where you work or travel frequently.

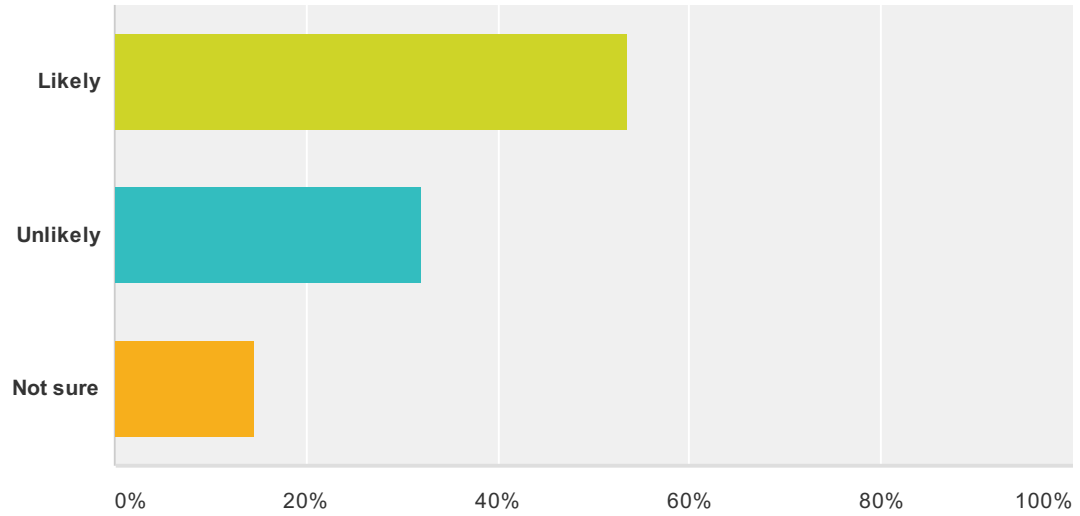
Answered: 409 Skipped: 65



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	40.59% 166
Unlikely	34.23% 140
Not sure	25.18% 103
Total	409

Q31 The time it takes to find convenient parking increases.

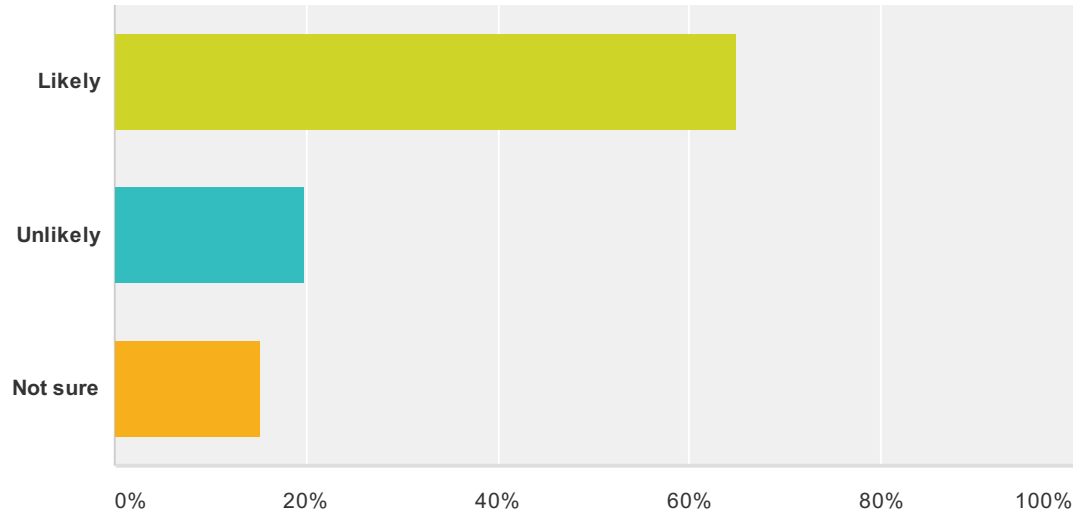
Answered: 406 Skipped: 68



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	53.45% 217
Unlikely	32.02% 130
Not sure	14.53% 59
Total	406

Q32 Transit stops are located closer to your home or your typical destinations.

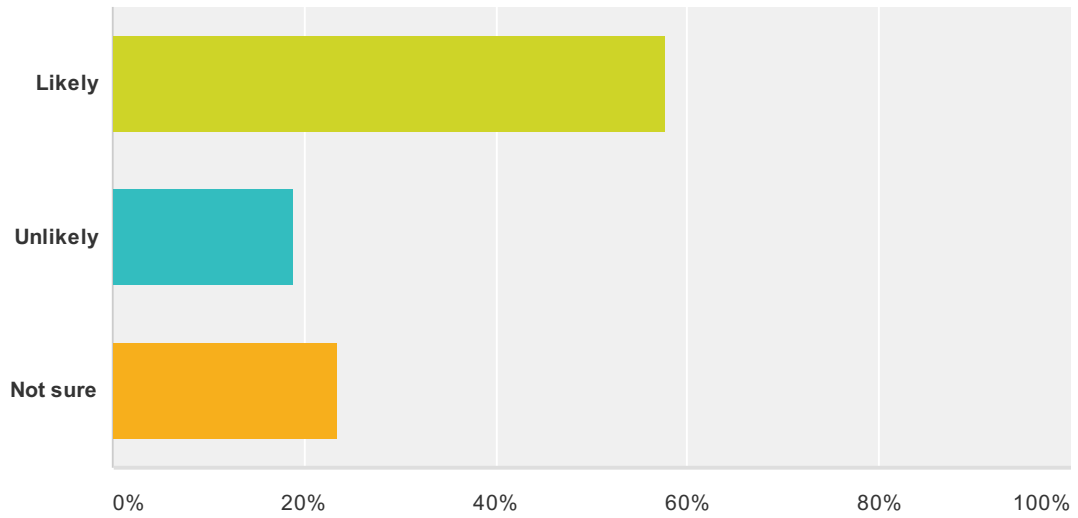
Answered: 408 Skipped: 66



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	64.95% 265
Unlikely	19.85% 81
Not sure	15.20% 62
Total	408

Q33 Vehicles are scheduled to arrive at stops more frequently.

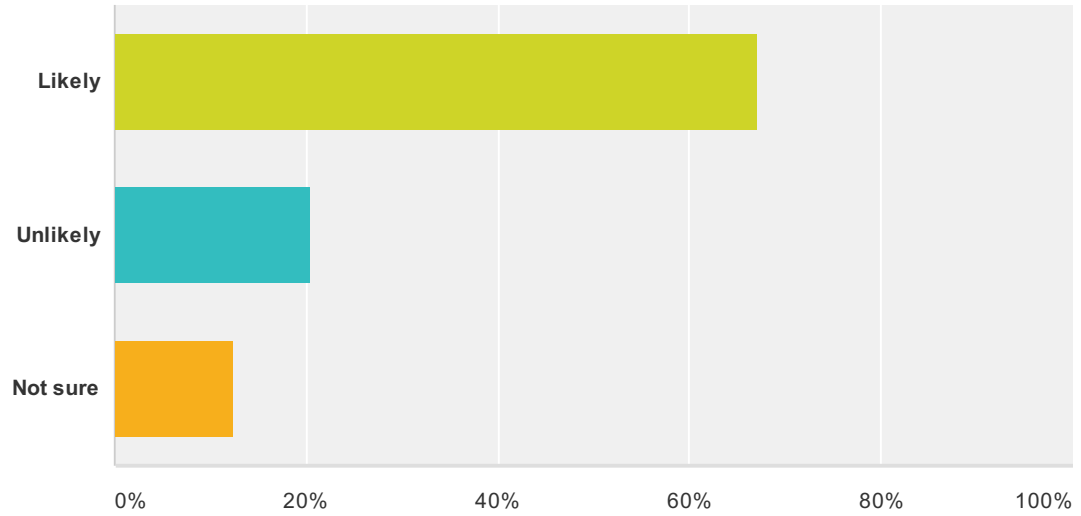
Answered: 402 Skipped: 72



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	57.71% 232
Unlikely	18.91% 76
Not sure	23.38% 94
Total	402

Q34 Your car is not available due to repairs or other reasons.

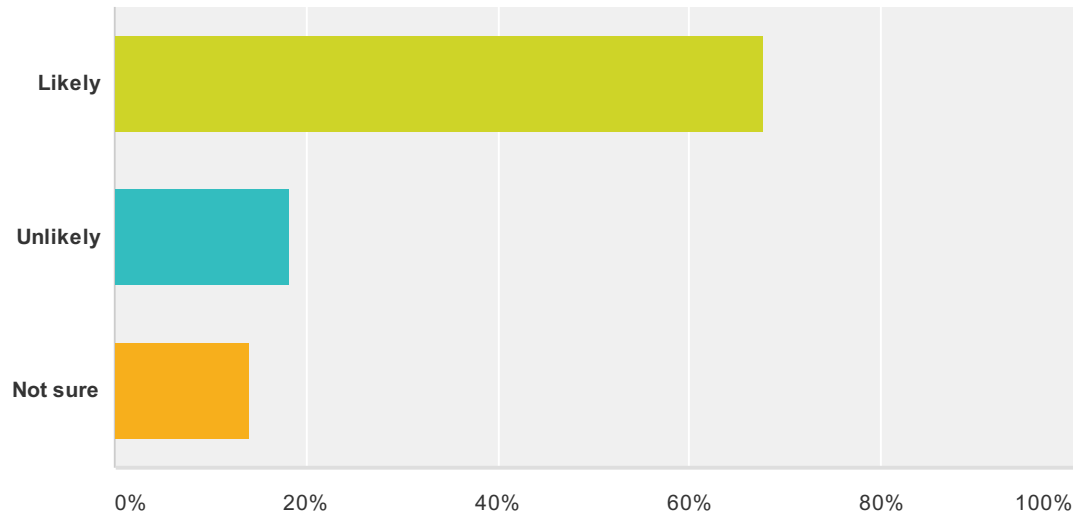
Answered: 395 Skipped: 79



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	67.09% 265
Unlikely	20.51% 81
Not sure	12.41% 49
Total	395

Q35 The price of gas increases significantly.

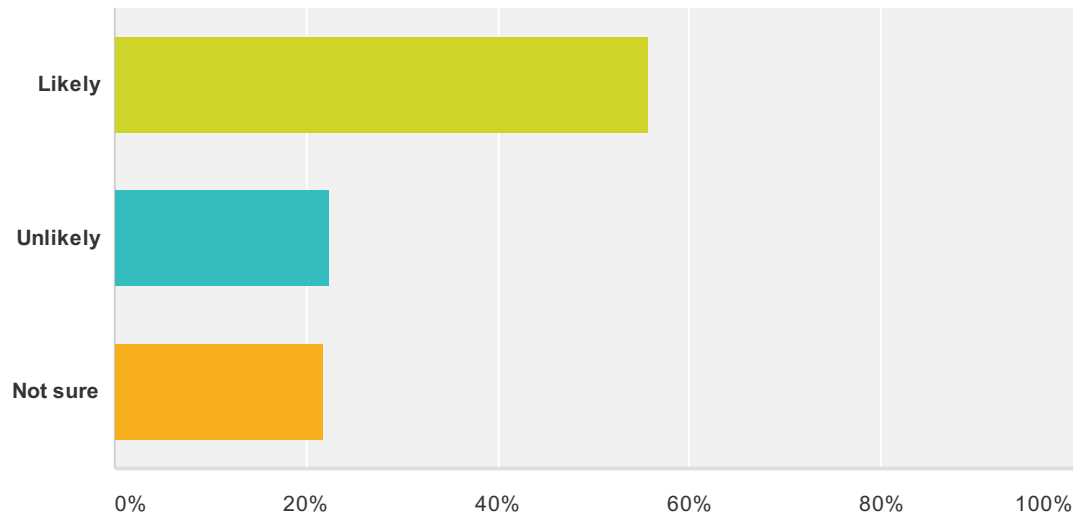
Answered: 401 Skipped: 73



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	67.83% 272
Unlikely	18.20% 73
Not sure	13.97% 56
Total	401

Q36 Your employer offers incentives to use transit services, such as discounted fares.

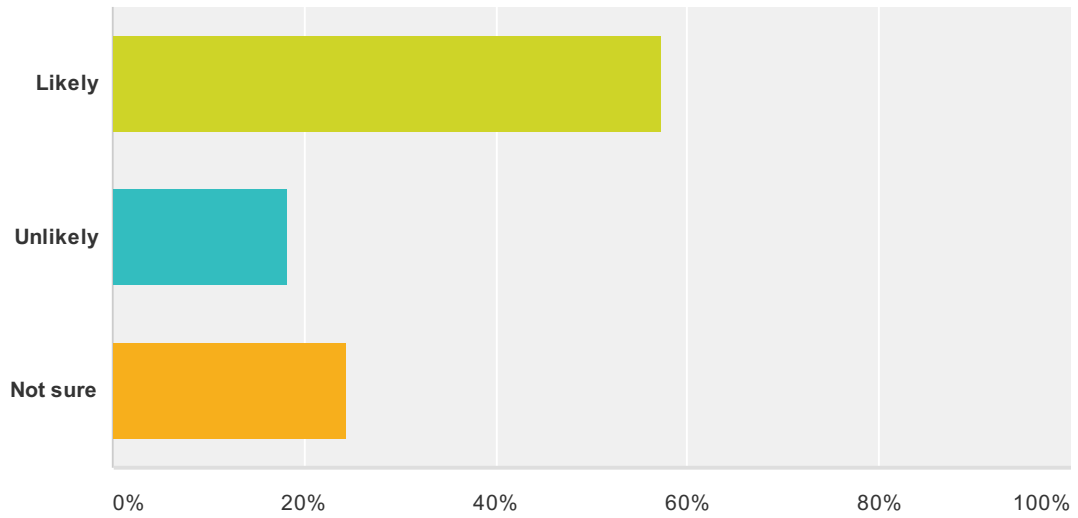
Answered: 388 Skipped: 86



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	55.67% 216
Unlikely	22.42% 87
Not sure	21.91% 85
Total	388

Q37 You are better informed about how to use the transit system.

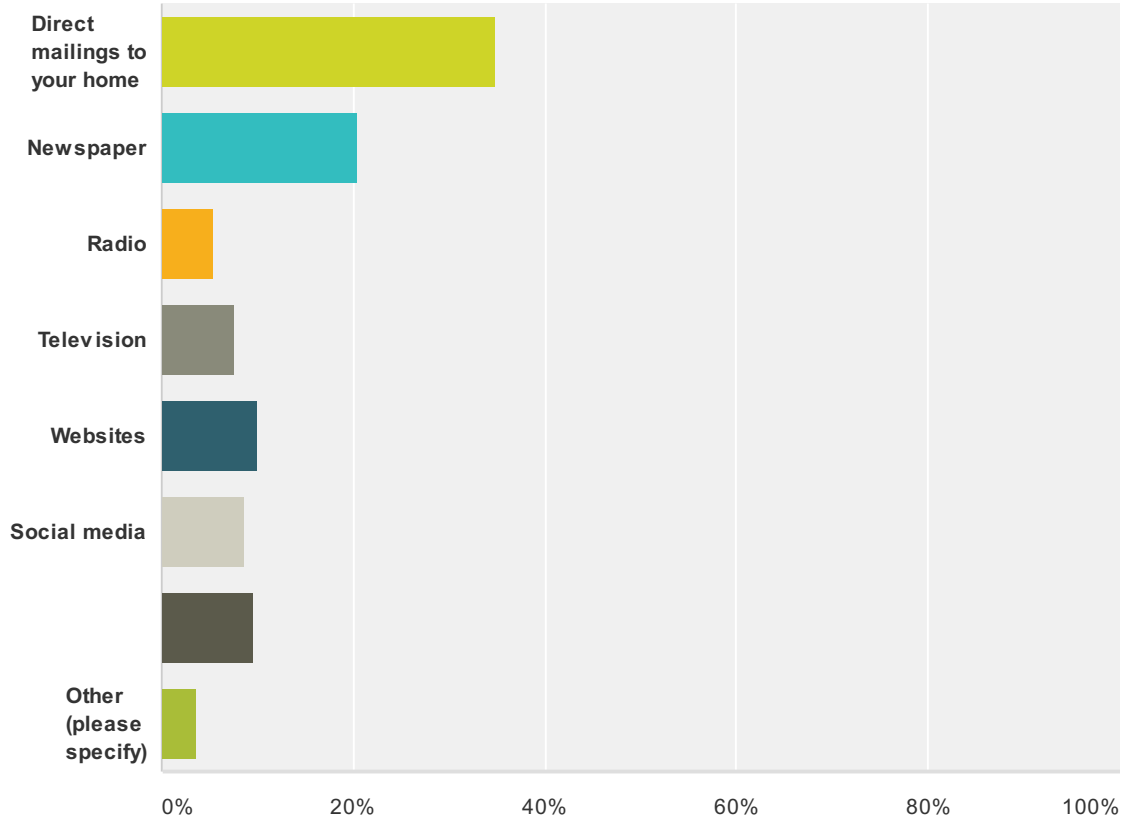
Answered: 400 Skipped: 74



Answer Choices	Responses
Likely	57.25% 229
Unlikely	18.25% 73
Not sure	24.50% 98
Total	400

Q38 Which of the following would be the best means to inform you about public transportation services in your community?

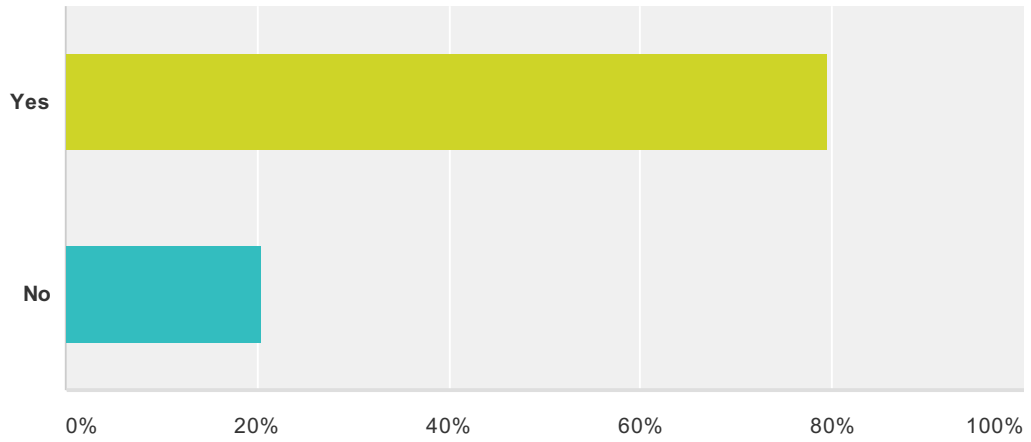
Answered: 408 Skipped: 66



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Direct mailings to your home	34.80%	142
Newspaper	20.34%	83
Radio	5.39%	22
Television	7.60%	31
Websites	10.05%	41
Social media	8.58%	35
Inserts with your municipal bills	9.56%	39
Other (please specify)	3.68%	15
Total		408

Q39 Do you have access to the Internet?

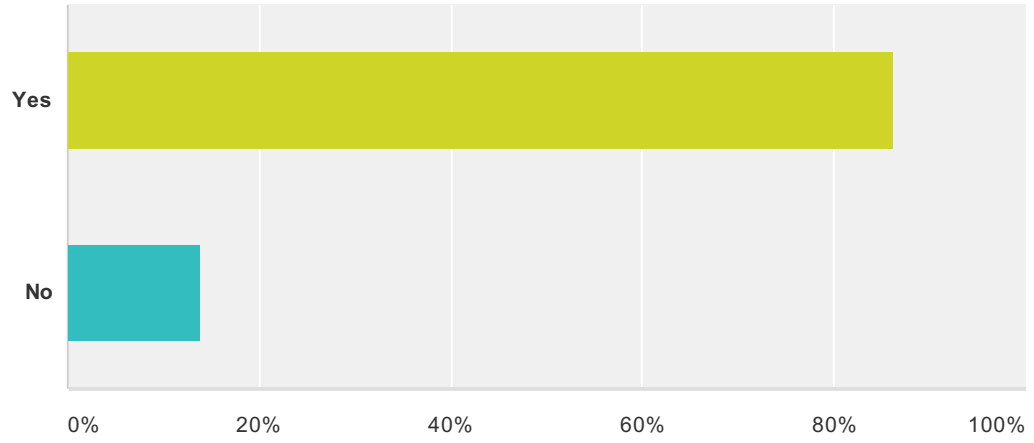
Answered: 420 Skipped: 54



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	79.52%	334
No	20.48%	86
Total		420

Q40 Is your Internet connection high-speed?

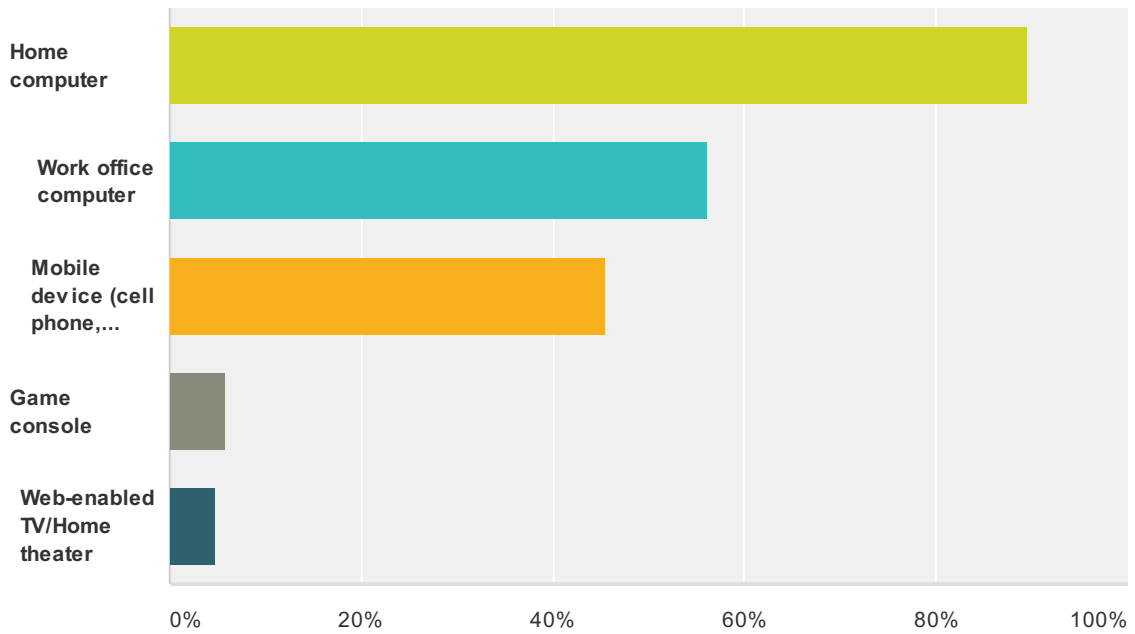
Answered: 353 Skipped: 121



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	86.12%	304
No	13.88%	49
Total		353

Q41 How do you access the Internet?

Answered: 339 Skipped: 135



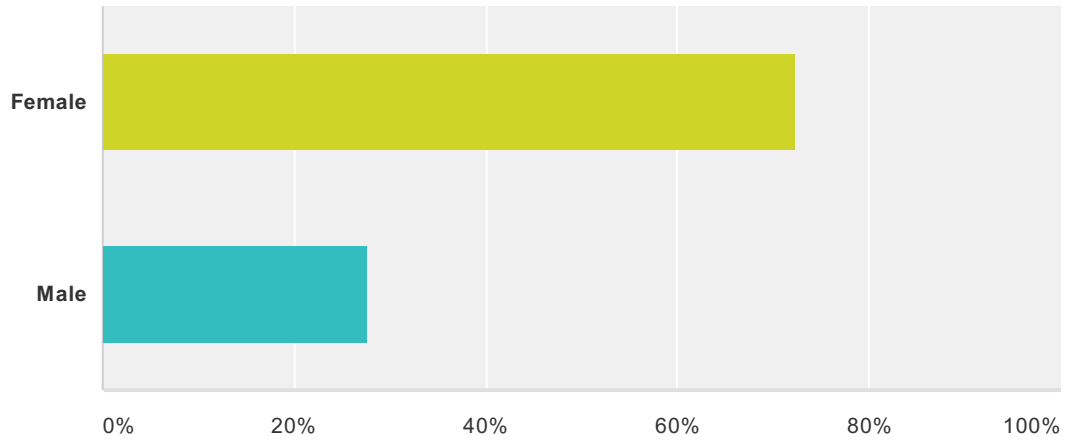
Answer Choices	Responses
Home computer	89.68% 304
Work office computer	56.05% 190
Mobile device (cell phone, tablet, etc.)	45.43% 154
Game console	5.90% 20
Web-enabled TV/Home theater	4.72% 16
Total Respondents: 339	

**Q42 Would you like to add anything else
about public transportation gaps or
strategies in the region?**

Answered: 109 Skipped: 365

Q43 What is your gender?

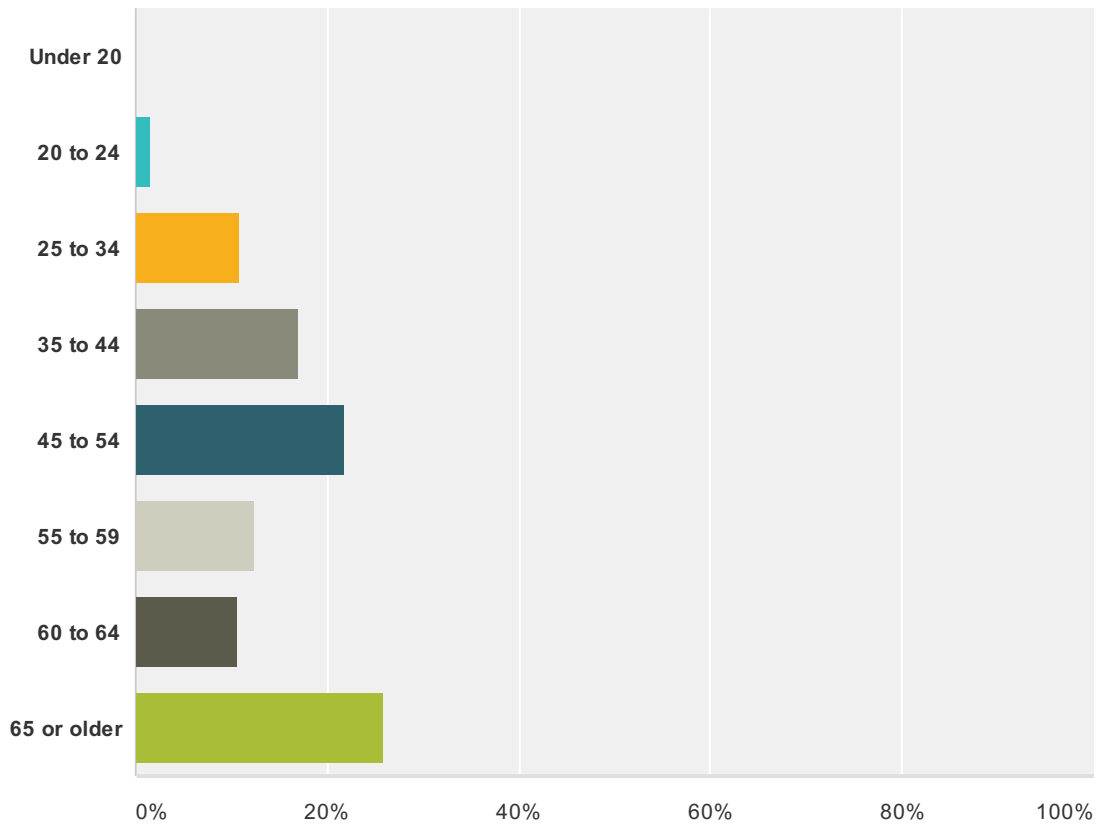
Answered: 417 Skipped: 57



Answer Choices	Responses
Female	72.42% 302
Male	27.58% 115
Total	417

Q44 What is your age?

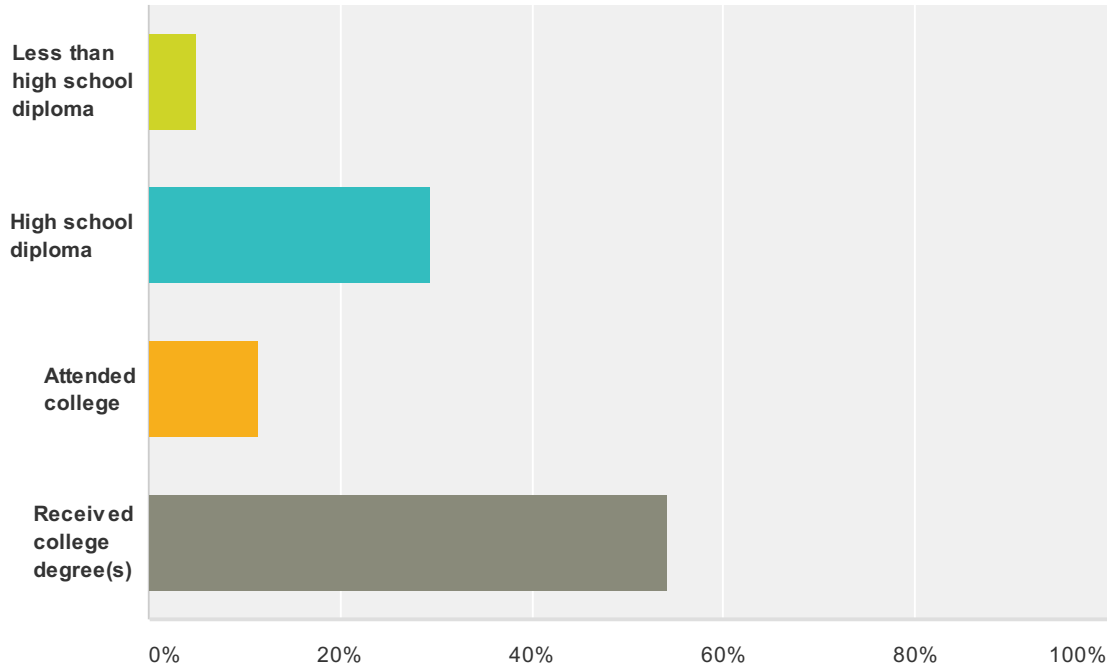
Answered: 418 Skipped: 56



Answer Choices	Responses
Under 20	0% 0
20 to 24	1.67% 7
25 to 34	10.77% 45
35 to 44	16.99% 71
45 to 54	21.77% 91
55 to 59	12.44% 52
60 to 64	10.53% 44
65 or older	25.84% 108
Total	418

Q45 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answered: 404 Skipped: 70



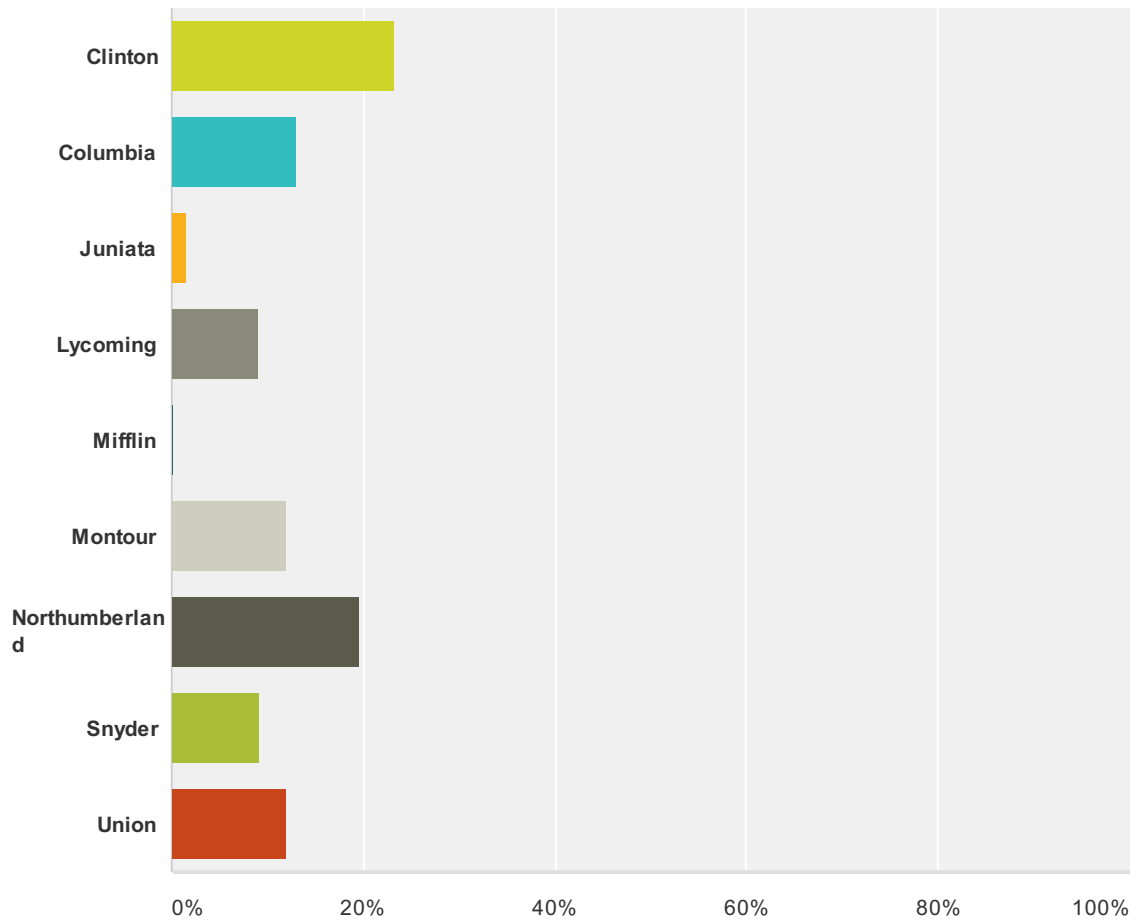
Answer Choices	Responses
Less than high school diploma	4.95% 20
High school diploma	29.46% 119
Attended college	11.39% 46
Received college degree(s)	54.21% 219
Total	404

Q46 In what ZIP code is your home located? (enter 5-digit ZIP code)

Answered: 408 Skipped: 66

Q47 In what county do you live?

Answered: 399 Skipped: 75



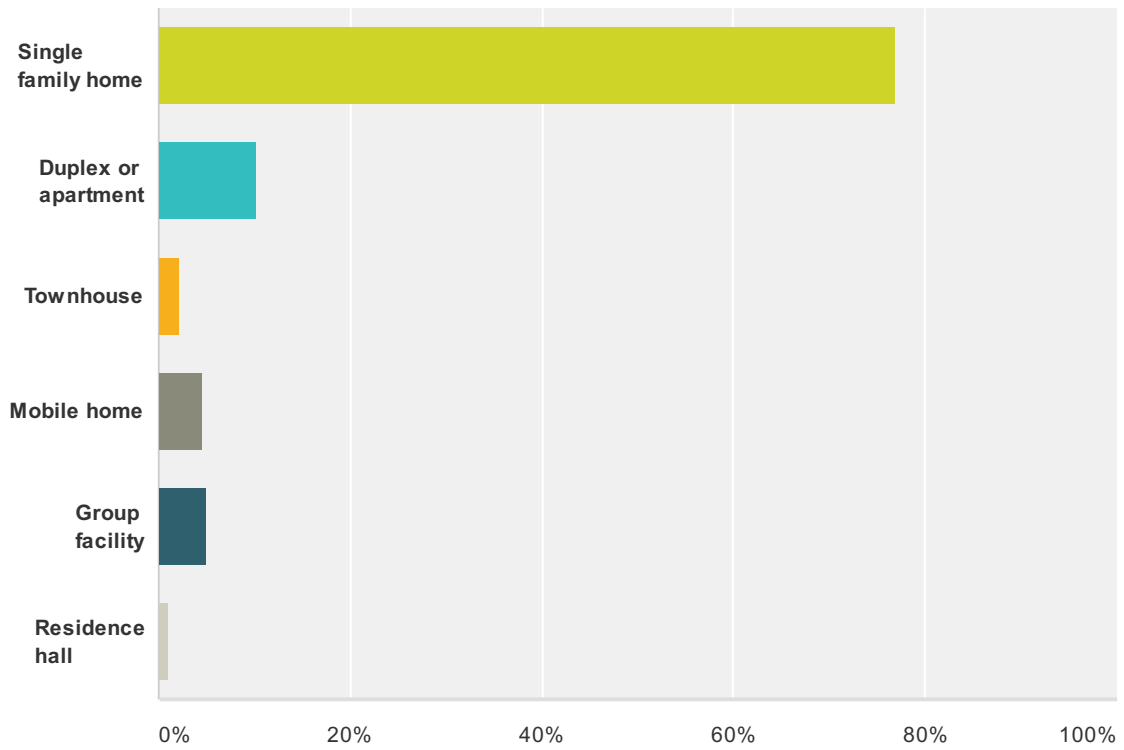
Answer Choices	Responses
Clinton	23.31% 93
Columbia	13.03% 52
Juniata	1.50% 6
Lycoming	9.02% 36
Mifflin	0.25% 1
Montour	12.03% 48
Northumberland	19.55% 78
Snyder	9.27% 37
Union	12.03% 48
Total	399

Q48 In what municipality (city, borough, township) do you live?

Answered: 379 Skipped: 95

Q49 What best describes your residence?

Answered: 412 Skipped: 62



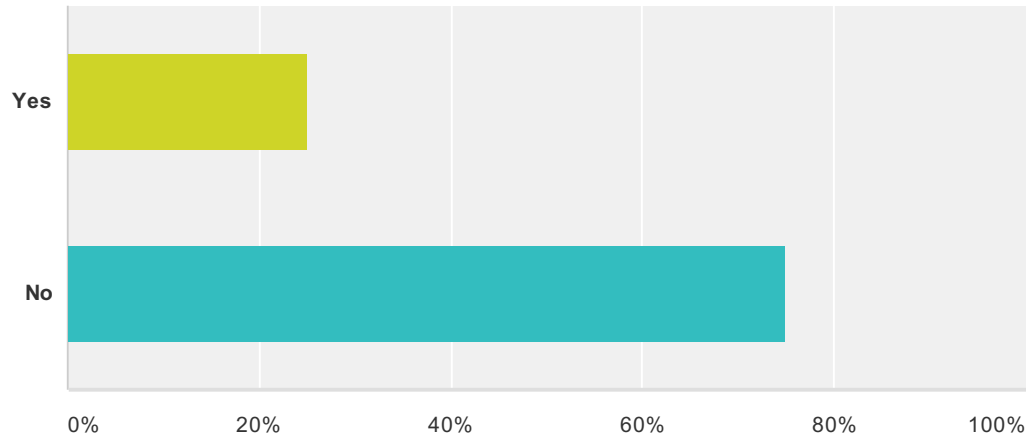
Answer Choices	Responses
Single family home	76.94% 317
Duplex or apartment	10.19% 42
Townhouse	2.18% 9
Mobile home	4.61% 19
Group facility	5.10% 21
Residence hall	0.97% 4
Total	412

**Q50 How many people currently live in
your household?**

Answered: 390 Skipped: 84

Q51 Do any household members have a disability (physical, mental, etc.) that limits their ability to drive?

Answered: 406 Skipped: 68



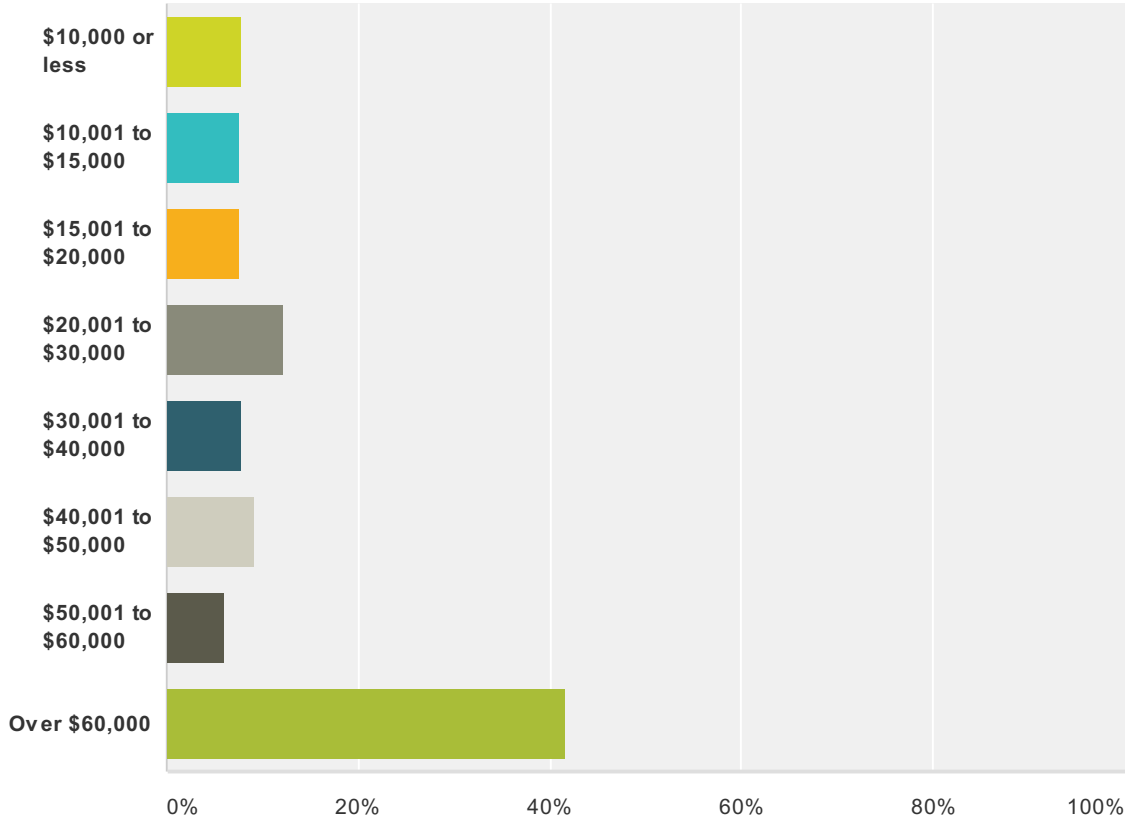
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	25.12% 102
No	74.88% 304
Total	406

Q52 If yes, number of people?

Answered: 90 Skipped: 384

Q53 Which category below best describes the total combined income from all sources for all persons in your household during the year 2012?

Answered: 369 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
\$10,000 or less	7.86% 29
\$10,001 to \$15,000	7.59% 28
\$15,001 to \$20,000	7.59% 28
\$20,001 to \$30,000	12.20% 45
\$30,001 to \$40,000	7.86% 29
\$40,001 to \$50,000	9.21% 34
\$50,001 to \$60,000	5.96% 22
Over \$60,000	41.73% 154
Total	369

Q54 If you'd like to be contacted about upcoming public transit-human services transportation activities and meetings, please provide:

Answered: 50 Skipped: 424

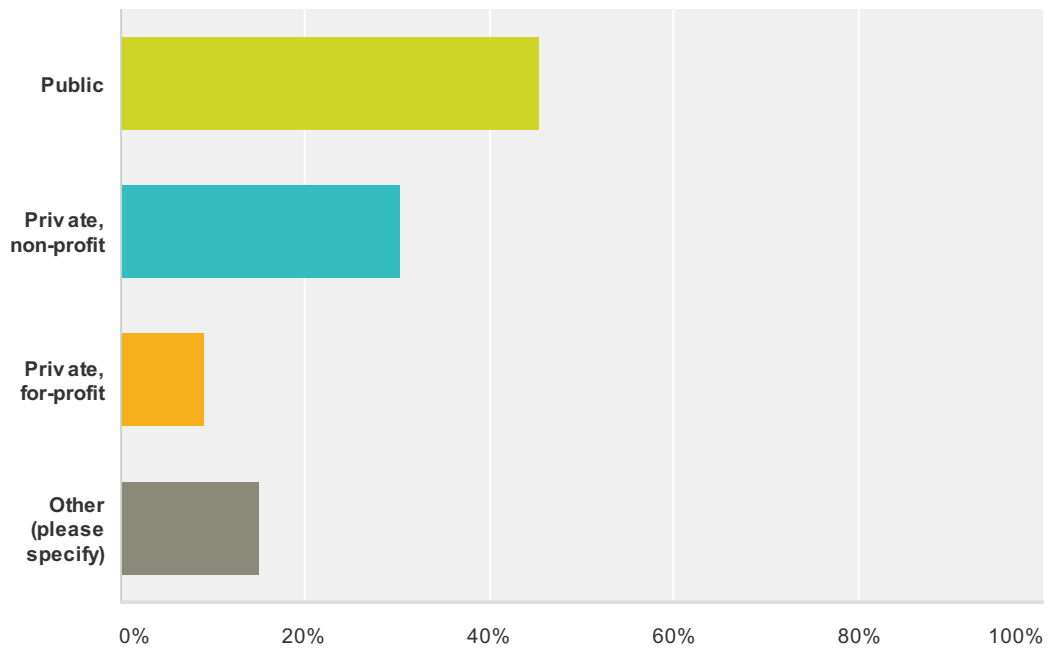
Answer Choices	Responses	
Name	94%	47
Phone	88%	44
Email	72%	36

Appendix C – Organization Survey Results

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q2 Please select your agency type.

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



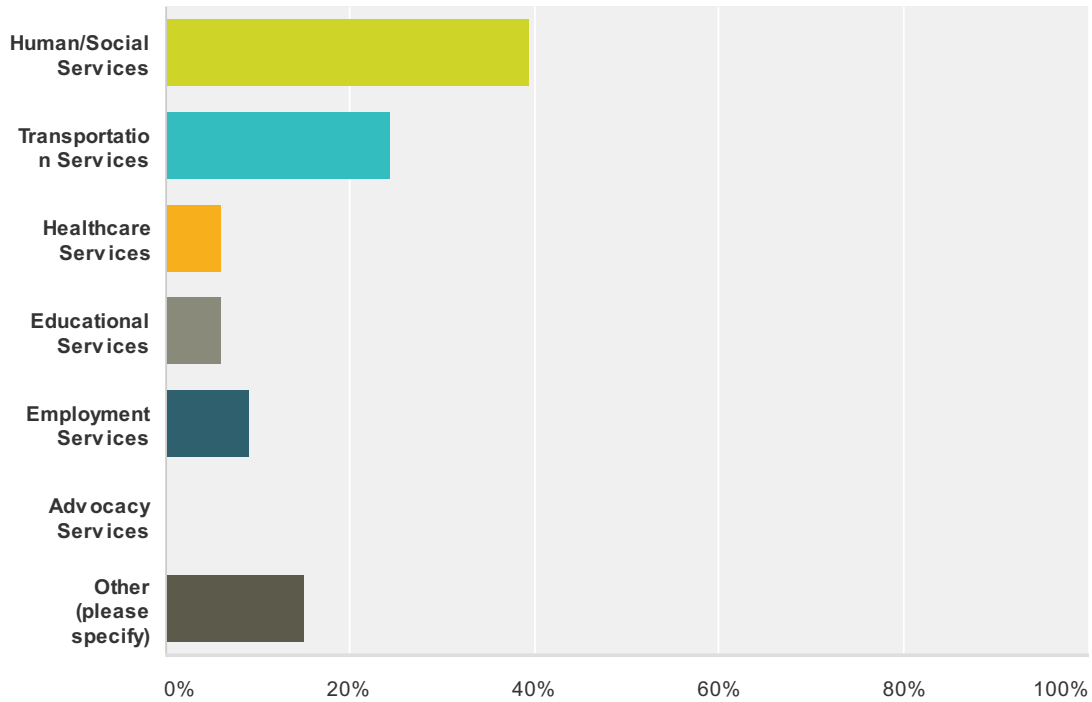
Answer Choices	Responses
Public	45.45% 15
Private, non-profit	30.30% 10
Private, for-profit	9.09% 3
Other (please specify)	15.15% 5
Total	33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Political Subdivision	9/18/2013 10:52 AM
2	County, non-profit	9/17/2013 12:54 PM
3	Non-profit, free medical clinic	9/16/2013 3:44 PM
4	Local Government (County)	9/16/2013 11:42 AM
5	public non-profit	9/16/2013 11:31 AM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q3 Of the clients you have contact with most often through your agency, what is the primary purpose of that contact?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



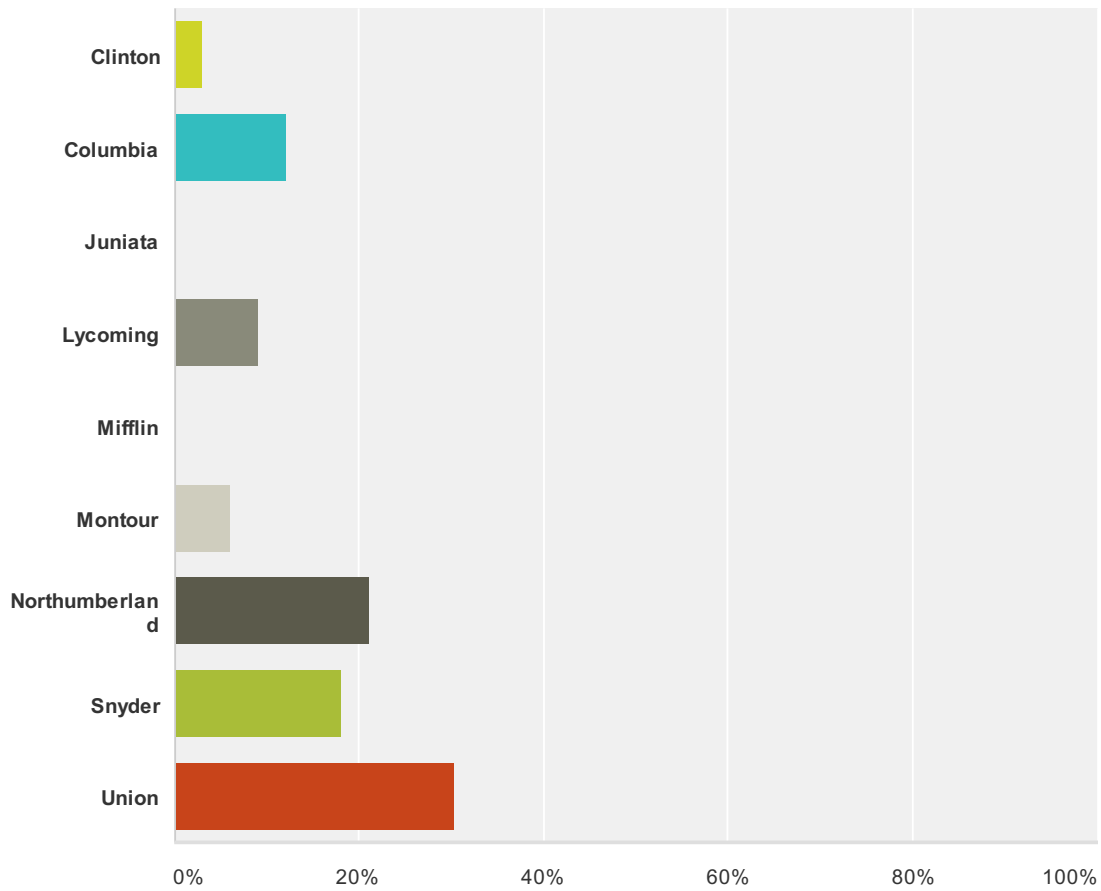
Answer Choices	Responses
Human/Social Services	39.39% 13
Transportation Services	24.24% 8
Healthcare Services	6.06% 2
Educational Services	6.06% 2
Employment Services	9.09% 3
Advocacy Services	0% 0
Other (please specify)	15.15% 5
Total	33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	arts and culture	11/6/2013 8:32 PM
2	Development/Regulation	9/19/2013 11:09 AM
3	We are a federally funded volunteer program.	9/17/2013 8:01 PM
4	Land Development Services	9/16/2013 11:42 AM
5	Multiple - Transportation, Housing, and Development	9/16/2013 10:51 AM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q4 In what county is your organization located?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



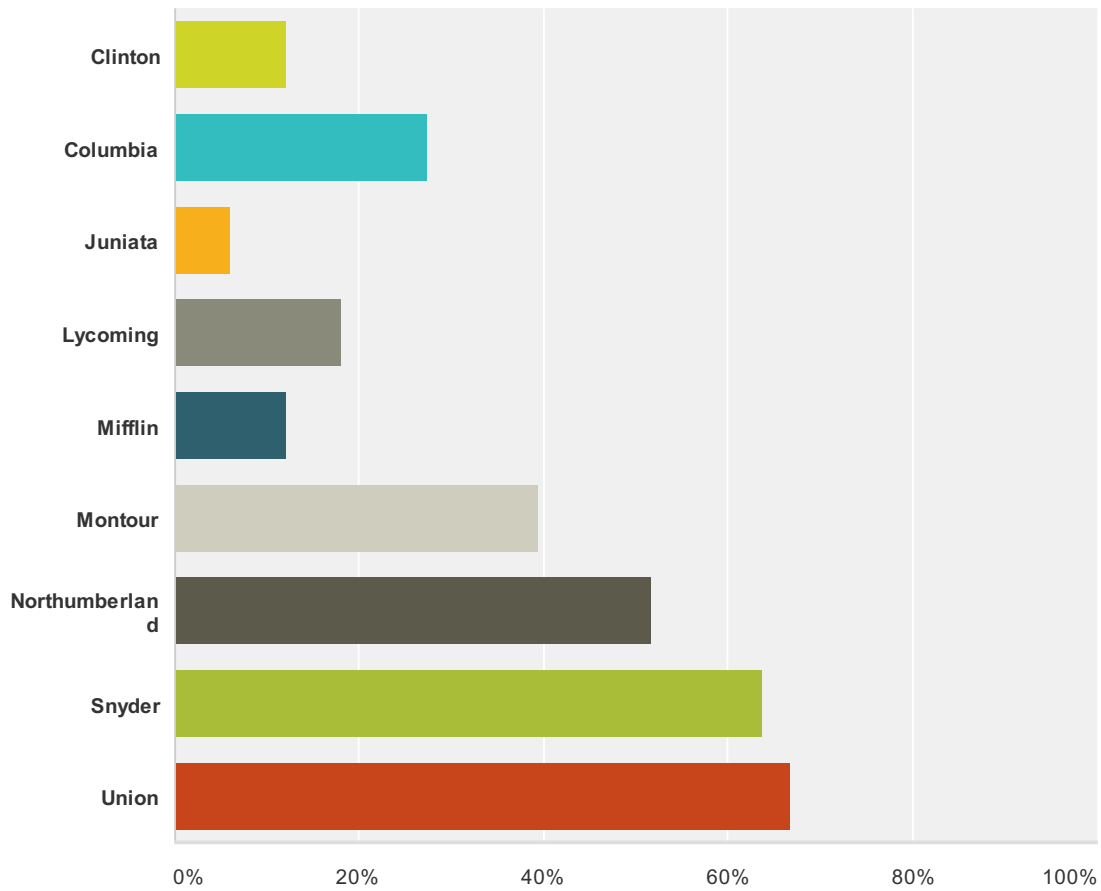
Answer Choices	Responses
Clinton	3.03% 1
Columbia	12.12% 4
Juniata	0% 0
Lycoming	9.09% 3
Mifflin	0% 0
Montour	6.06% 2
Northumberland	21.21% 7
Snyder	18.18% 6
Union	30.30% 10
Total	33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Montour, Snyder and Union	9/17/2013 12:54 PM
2	I also oversee Clinton County Careerlink	9/16/2013 11:29 AM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q5 What counties comprise your service area?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

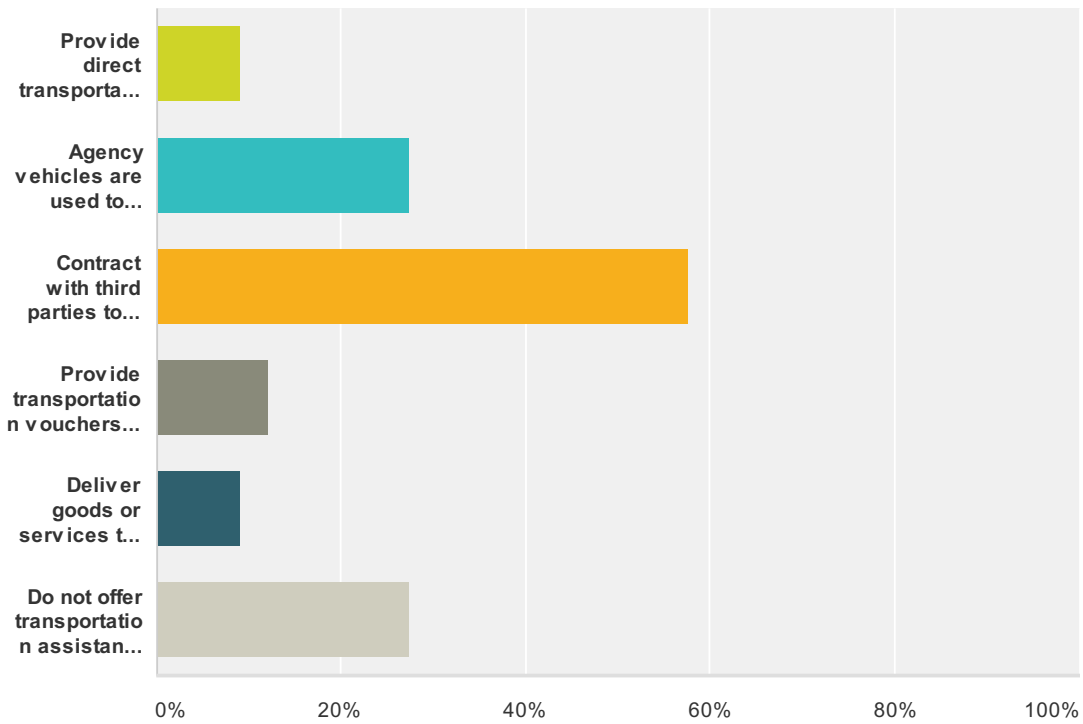


Answer Choices	Responses
Clinton	12.12% 4
Columbia	27.27% 9
Juniata	6.06% 2
Lycoming	18.18% 6
Mifflin	12.12% 4
Montour	39.39% 13
Northumberland	51.52% 17
Snyder	63.64% 21
Union	66.67% 22
Total Respondents: 33	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	We travel to adjoining counties	9/18/2013 10:52 AM
2	Centre	9/16/2013 10:23 AM

Q8 What kind of transportation assistance does your agency offer?

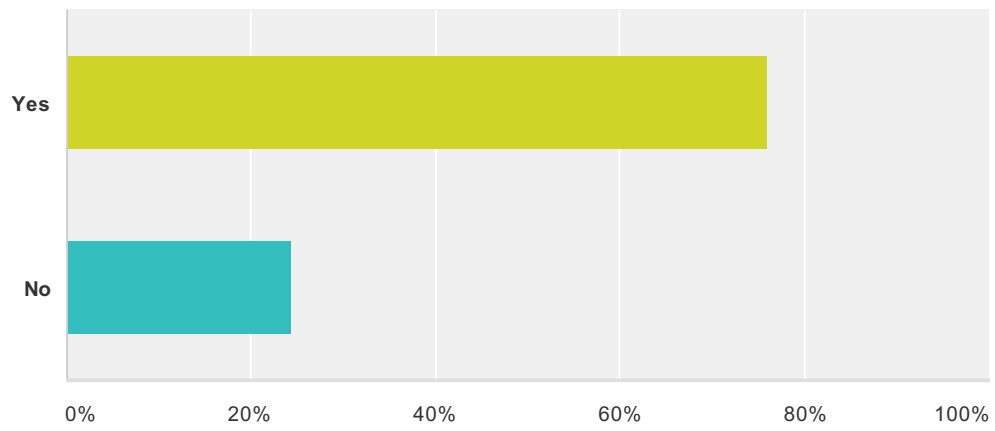
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Provide direct transportation to the public	9.09% 3
Agency vehicles are used to transport clients/residents/members	27.27% 9
Contract with third parties to provide transportation when needed	57.58% 19
Provide transportation vouchers to clients	12.12% 4
Deliver goods or services to clients	9.09% 3
Do not offer transportation assistance to clients	27.27% 9
Total Respondents: 33	

Q9 Do your clients routinely have transportation needs that you cannot serve?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

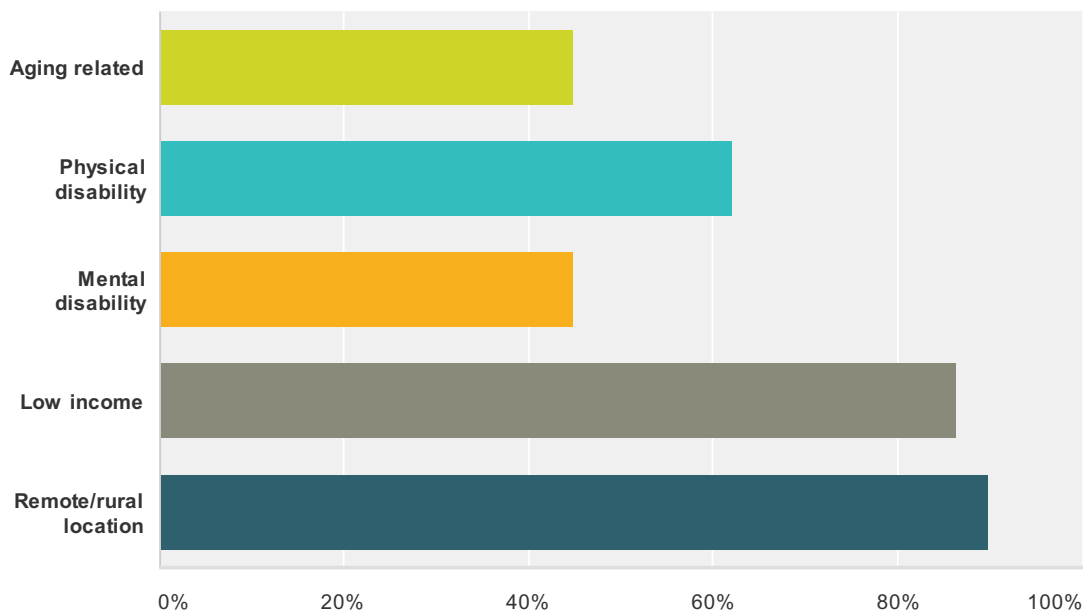


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.76%	25
No	24.24%	8
Total		33

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q10 Please identify the types of transportation limitations experienced by the people you serve.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 4



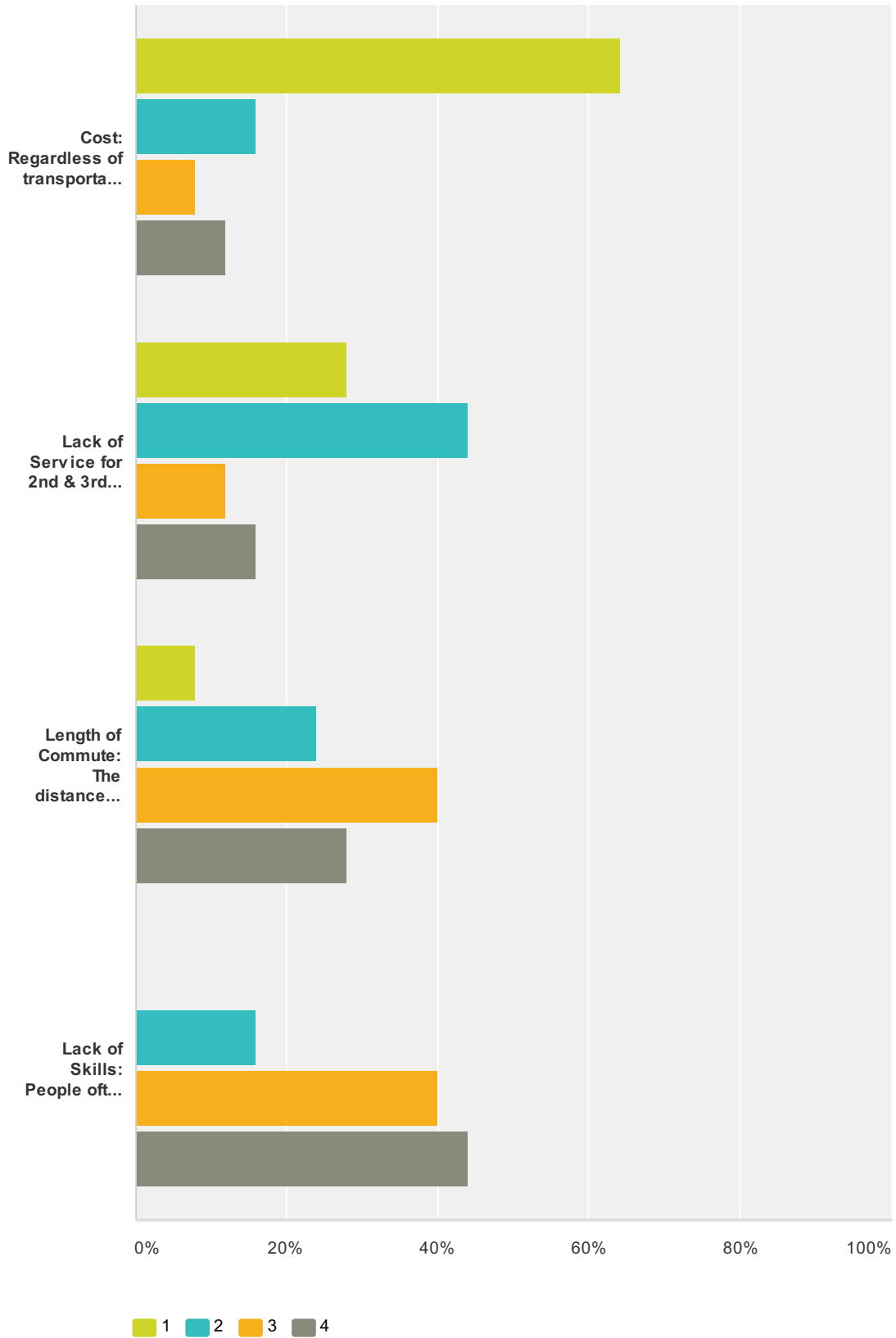
Answer Choices	Responses
Aging related	44.83% 13
Physical disability	62.07% 18
Mental disability	44.83% 13
Low income	86.21% 25
Remote/rural location	89.66% 26
Total Respondents: 29	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	for organizations (i.e. day camps, etc.), low budgets	11/6/2013 8:32 PM
2	Full fare cost prohibitive for those not agency sponsored (General Public)	9/18/2013 10:52 AM
3	Under the age of 65 and cannot ride USTA, etc.	9/17/2013 8:01 PM
4	no affordable mass transportation	9/16/2013 3:44 PM
5	students K-12	9/16/2013 10:37 AM
6	No evening and/or weekend availability	9/16/2013 10:26 AM
7	the school district covers a 100 sq mile radius	9/16/2013 10:13 AM

Q11 Please rank the significance of the transportation issues listed below as they relate to Access to Jobs. Use the following scale: 1 = the most significant issue 2 = 2nd most significant issue 3 = 3rd most significant issue 4 = 4th most significant issue

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Ranking
Cost: Regardless of transportation mode, many people cannot afford the cost of getting to and from the workplace.	64% 16	16% 4	8% 2	12% 3	25	3.32

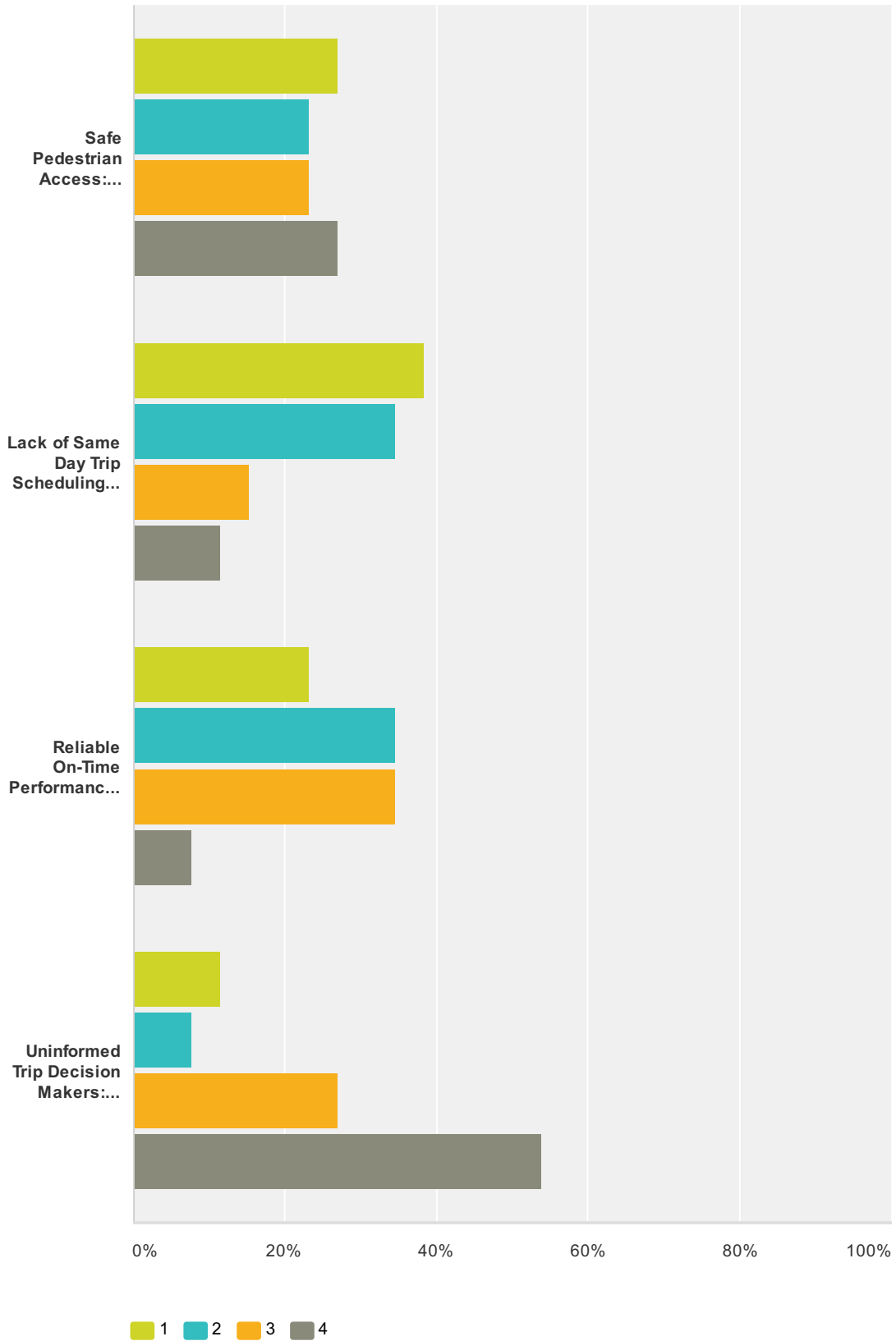
Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Lack of Service for 2nd & 3rd Shift Jobs, and Weekends: The routes and/or schedules of public transit and other types of transportation services do not meet the needs of those workers whose workweek does not coincide with the traditional Monday-Friday schedule.	28.00% 7	44% 11	12% 3	16% 4	25	2.84
Length of Commute: The distance between home and the workplace, combined with the number of transfers or connections to other modes of transportation, discourages workers from staying in any one job for very long.	8% 2	24% 6	40% 10	28.00% 7	25	2.12
Lack of Skills: People often lack the basic life skills needed to plan their work commute, manage the cost of getting to and from the workplace, and arrive at a job on time.	0% 0	16% 4	40% 10	44% 11	25	1.72

Q12 Please rank the significance of the transportation issues listed below as they relate to Access for People with Disabilities. Use the following scale: 1 = the most significant issue 2 = 2nd most significant issue 3 = 3rd most significant issue 4 = 4th most significant issue

Answered: 26 Skipped: 7

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Ranking
Safe Pedestrian Access: Weather conditions, long distances from transit stops/vehicles, deteriorating sidewalks, and busy intersections can create unsafe pedestrian pathways.	26.92% 7	23.08% 6	23.08% 6	26.92% 7	26	2.50

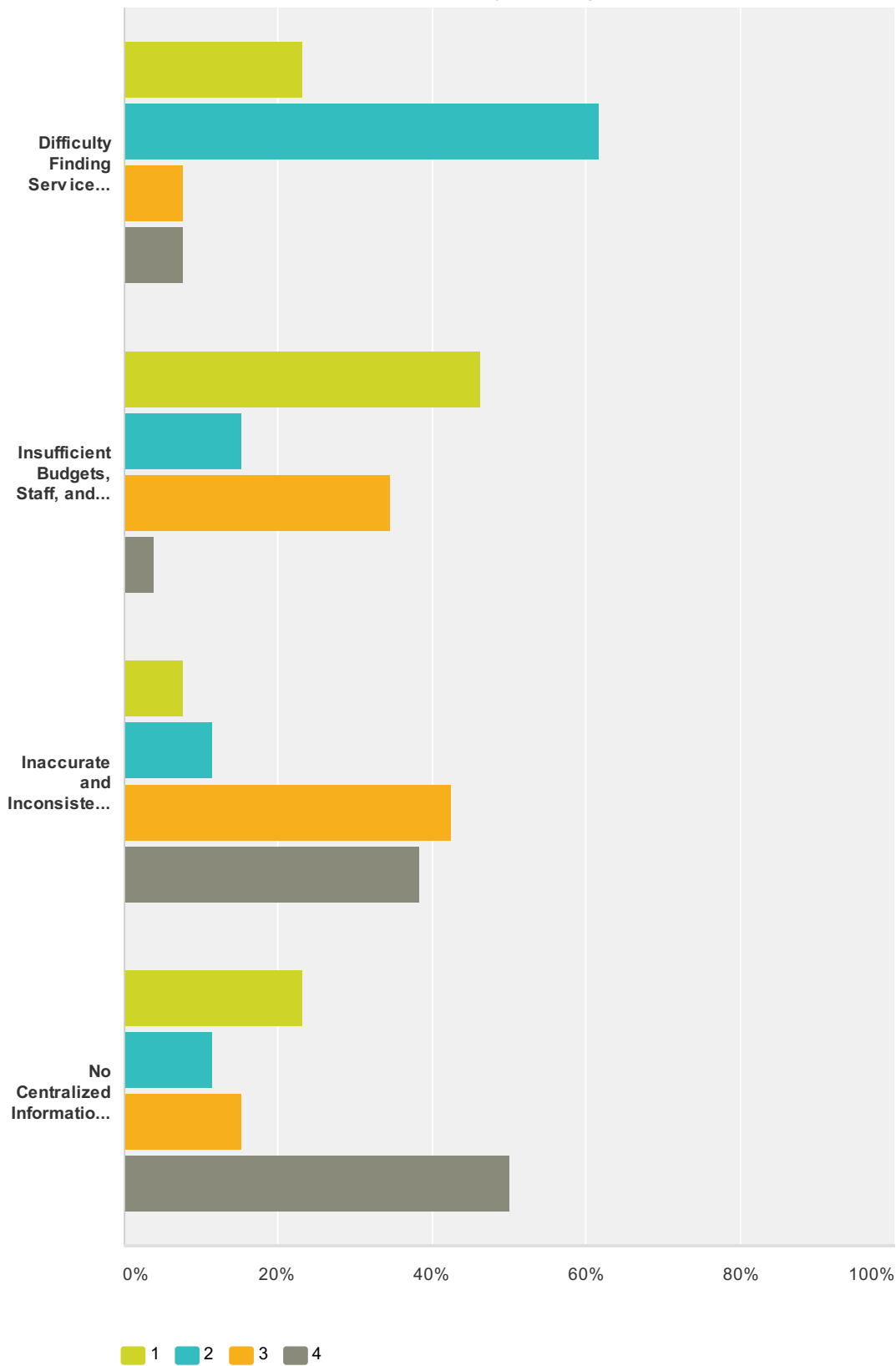
Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Lack of Same Day Trip Scheduling: The lack of on-demand and night-time and weekend paratransit services in most counties along with advance trip scheduling requirements make it difficult to secure a ride, especially during emergency situations.	38.46% 10	34.62% 9	15.38% 4	11.54% 3	26	3.00
Reliable On-Time Performance: Providers of paratransit services sometimes pick-up and drop-off passengers early or late resulting in inconveniences such as long commute times and wait times.	23.08% 6	34.62% 9	34.62% 9	7.69% 2	26	2.73
Uninformed Trip Decision Makers: Agencies responsible for approving paratransit trips do not understand that the transportation needs of people with disabilities are not 'one size fits all.'	11.54% 3	7.69% 2	26.92% 7	53.85% 14	26	1.77

Q13 Please rank the significance of the transportation issues listed below as they relate to Access to Information about Transportation Options. Use the following scale: 1 = the most significant issue 2 = 2nd most significant issue 3 = 3rd most significant issue 4 = 4th most significant issue

Answered: 26 Skipped: 7

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Ranking
Difficulty Finding Service Information: People are not aware of the transportation options available in their area, who provides it, and what is required to use it.	23.08% 6	61.54% 16	7.69% 2	7.69% 2	26	3.00

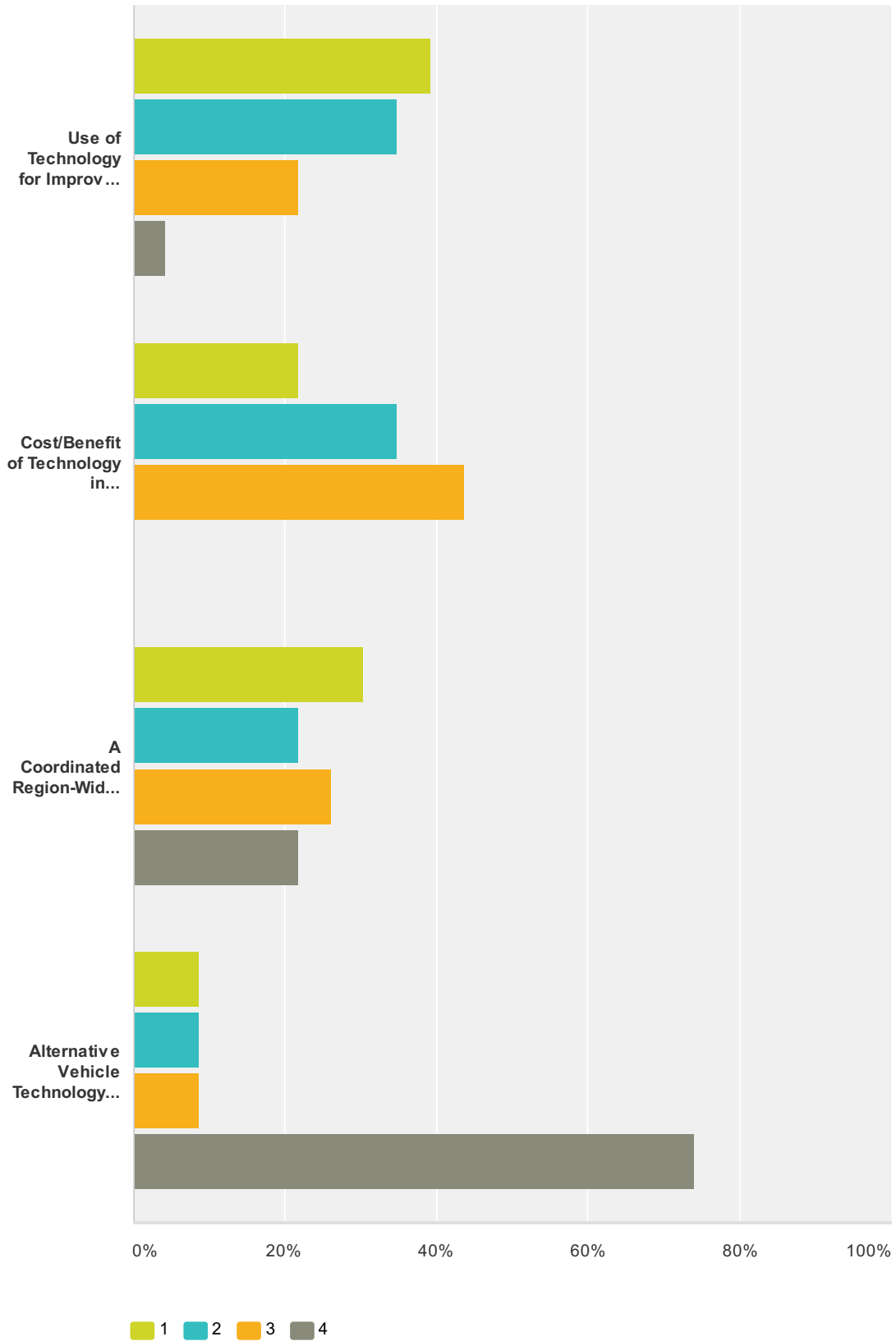
Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Insufficient Budgets, Staff, and Time: Transportation and human service agencies lack sufficient funds, staff/volunteers, and time to further market and advertise service information.	46.15% 12	15.38% 4	34.62% 9	3.85% 1	26	3.04
Inaccurate and Inconsistent Information: Misinformation about transportation options and what is required to use them discourages people from pursuing future utilization.	7.69% 2	11.54% 3	42.31% 11	38.46% 10	26	1.88
No Centralized Information Center: There is no readily accessible and usable 'one-stop shop' for the collection and dissemination of the entire region's transportation information.	23.08% 6	11.54% 3	15.38% 4	50% 13	26	2.08

Q14 Please rank the significance of the transportation issues listed below as they relate to Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation. Use the following scale: 1 = the most significant issue 2 = 2nd most significant issue 3 = 3rd most significant issue 4 = 4th most significant issue

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Ranking
Use of Technology for Improved Transportation Systems: Technology like vehicle tracking systems and computer scheduling can improve real time customer information, same day scheduling and data collection and analysis, resulting in enhanced mobility experiences for users.	39.13% 9	34.78% 8	21.74% 5	4.35% 1	23	3.09

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

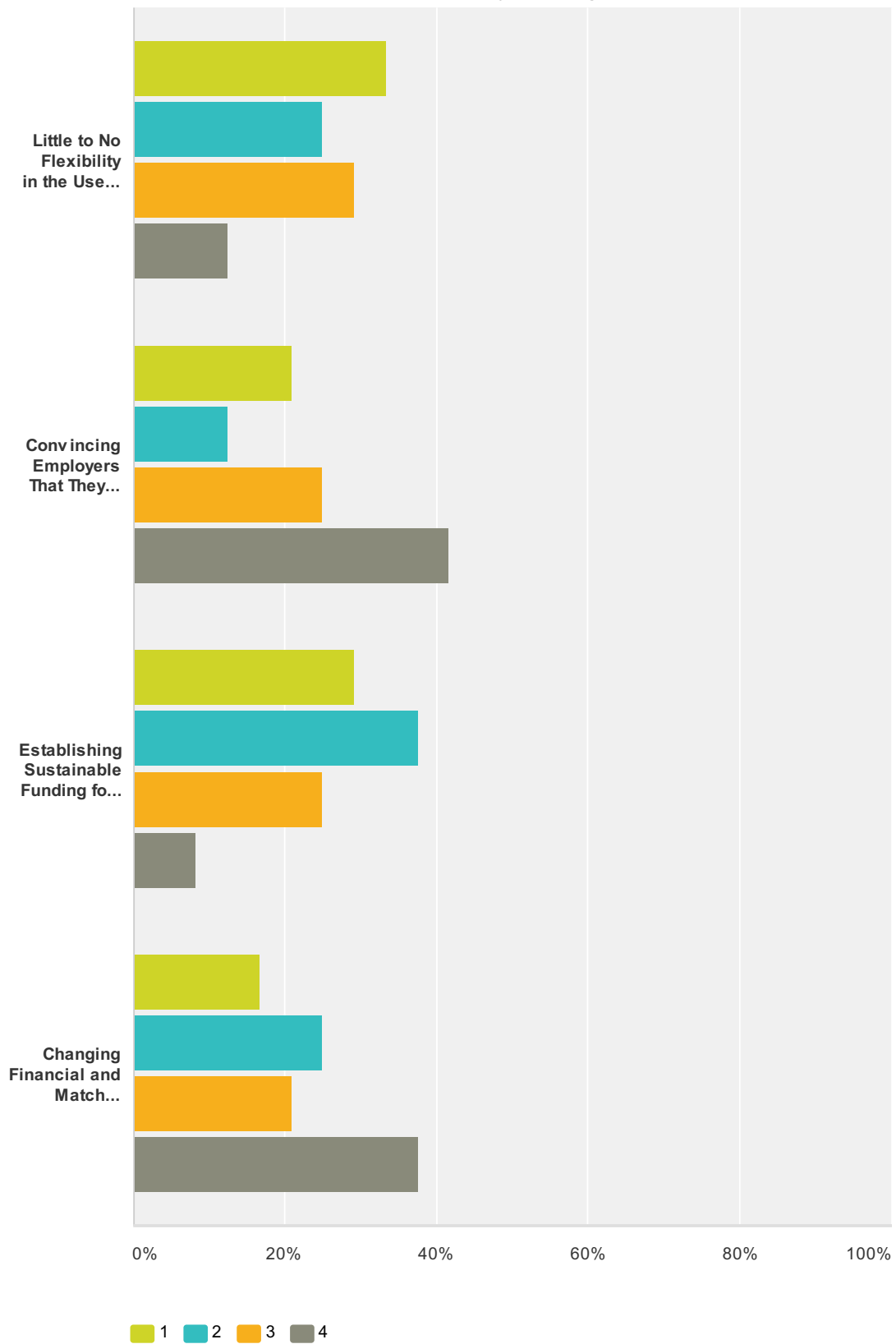
Cost/Benefit of Technology in Transportation: The implementation of innovative technology to improve any transportation system can be costly and, for that reason, the benefits relative to overall cost need to be established.	21.74% 5	34.78% 8	43.48% 10	0% 0	23	2.78
A Coordinated Region-Wide Trip Planning System: The creation of a seamless and transparent regional trip planning system using state-of-the-art scheduling, operations, and fare payment systems.	30.43% 7	21.74% 5	26.09% 6	21.74% 5	23	2.61
Alternative Vehicle Technology: Converting to hybrid/natural gas and more comfortable vehicles is expensive; however, it is critical to convert rolling stock in order to reduce fuel costs, enhance the rider experience, attract more riders, and improve public health.	8.70% 2	8.70% 2	8.70% 2	73.91% 17	23	1.52

Q15 Please rank the significance of the transportation issues listed below as they relate to Access to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes.

Use the following scale: 1 = the most significant issue 2 = 2nd most significant issue 3 = 3rd most significant issue 4 = 4th most significant issue

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Ranking
Little to No Flexibility in the Use of Transportation Funds: Transportation funds are allocated by federal/state departments for specific use and governed by strict regulations, which often encumber an agency's ability to effectively and efficiently serve its riders.	33.33% 8	25% 6	29.17% 7	12.50% 3	24	2.79

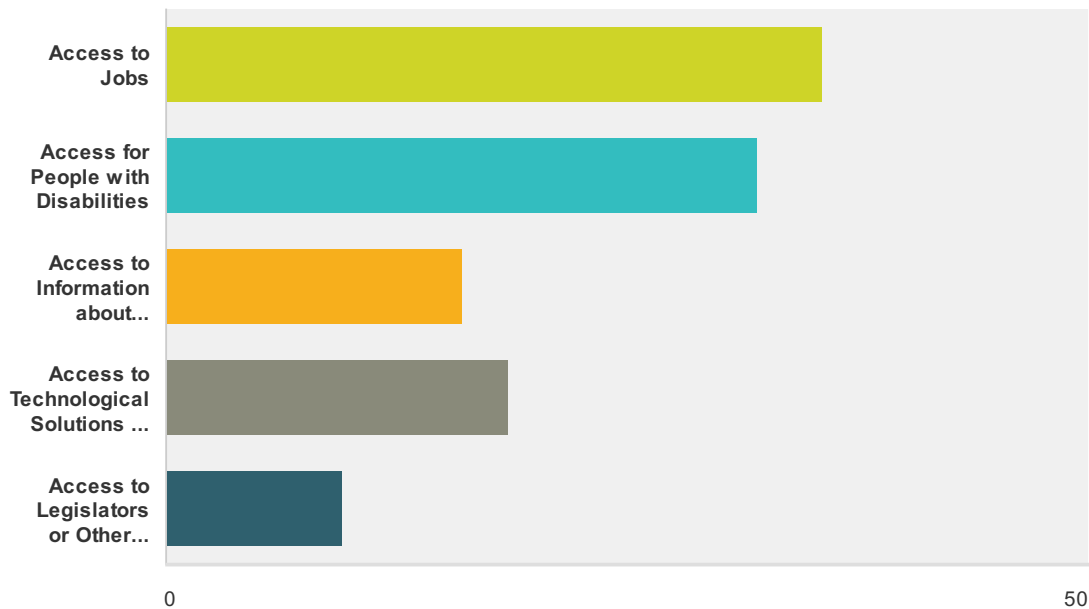
Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Convincing Employers That They Have a Role in Access to Jobs: Employers are largely not engaged or motivated by the transportation access to jobs discussion.	20.83% 5	12.50% 3	25% 6	41.67% 10	24	2.13
Establishing Sustainable Funding for Transit: There are no dedicated ongoing funds for transportation operations/services, which affects the ability of transit agencies to maintain current levels of service or to expand service to meet demand.	29.17% 7	37.50% 9	25% 6	8.33% 2	24	2.88
Changing Financial and Match Scenarios: Limited funding at the state/federal levels is becoming further constrained, and additional local match will be necessary for receiving grants and sustaining transportation services.	16.67% 4	25% 6	20.83% 5	37.50% 9	24	2.21

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q17 Assume that you were asked to distribute \$100 to fund programs and services aimed at improving the transportation issues identified previously in questions 11 through 15. How would you distribute the \$100 across these five issues? Be sure the total adds up to \$100.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Access to Jobs	36	818	23
Access for People with Disabilities	32	705	22
Access to Information about Transportation Options	16	305	19
Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation	19	390	21
Access to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes	10	182	19
Total Respondents: 24			

#	Access to Jobs	Date
1	10	11/6/2013 8:36 PM
2	30	10/1/2013 3:51 PM
3	25	9/25/2013 3:17 PM
4	75	9/25/2013 8:58 AM
5	45	9/24/2013 2:10 PM
6	20	9/19/2013 1:01 PM
7	25	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
8	50	9/18/2013 9:08 AM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

9	20	9/17/2013 1:02 PM
10	5	9/16/2013 4:44 PM
11	40	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
12	80	9/16/2013 3:32 PM
13	50	9/16/2013 3:11 PM
14	25	9/16/2013 3:04 PM
15	25	9/16/2013 12:15 PM
16	75	9/16/2013 11:44 AM
17	100	9/16/2013 11:39 AM
18	10	9/16/2013 11:16 AM
19	10	9/16/2013 11:07 AM
20	33	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
21	40	9/16/2013 10:35 AM
22	20	9/16/2013 10:34 AM
23	5	9/16/2013 10:20 AM

#	Access for People with Disabilities	Date
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1	10	11/6/2013 8:36 PM
2	30	10/1/2013 3:51 PM
3	50	9/25/2013 3:17 PM
4	5	9/25/2013 8:58 AM
5	40	9/24/2013 2:10 PM
6	60	9/19/2013 1:01 PM
7	10	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
8	30	9/18/2013 9:08 AM
9	20	9/17/2013 1:02 PM
10	35	9/16/2013 4:44 PM
11	20	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
12	20	9/16/2013 3:32 PM
13	20	9/16/2013 3:11 PM
14	40	9/16/2013 3:04 PM
15	45	9/16/2013 12:15 PM
16	50	9/16/2013 11:16 AM
17	50	9/16/2013 11:07 AM
18	10	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
19	100	9/16/2013 10:51 AM
20	30	9/16/2013 10:35 AM
21	20	9/16/2013 10:34 AM
22	10	9/16/2013 10:20 AM

#	Access to Information about Transportation Options	Date
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1	20	11/6/2013 8:36 PM
2	10	10/1/2013 3:51 PM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

3	15	9/25/2013 3:17 PM
4	10	9/25/2013 8:58 AM
5	5	9/24/2013 2:10 PM
6	10	9/19/2013 1:01 PM
7	25	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
8	5	9/18/2013 9:08 AM
9	20	9/17/2013 1:02 PM
10	25	9/16/2013 4:44 PM
11	20	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
12	10	9/16/2013 3:11 PM
13	20	9/16/2013 3:04 PM
14	10	9/16/2013 12:15 PM
15	20	9/16/2013 11:16 AM
16	10	9/16/2013 11:07 AM
17	10	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
18	20	9/16/2013 10:34 AM
19	40	9/16/2013 10:20 AM

#	Access to Technological Solutions for Transportation	Date
---	--	------

1	30	11/6/2013 8:36 PM
2	20	10/1/2013 3:51 PM
3	5	9/25/2013 3:17 PM
4	5	9/25/2013 8:58 AM
5	5	9/24/2013 2:10 PM
6	10	9/19/2013 1:01 PM
7	25	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
8	5	9/18/2013 9:08 AM
9	20	9/17/2013 1:02 PM
10	25	9/16/2013 4:44 PM
11	10	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
12	10	9/16/2013 3:11 PM
13	5	9/16/2013 3:04 PM
14	15	9/16/2013 12:15 PM
15	25	9/16/2013 11:44 AM
16	10	9/16/2013 11:16 AM
17	30	9/16/2013 11:07 AM
18	45	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
19	30	9/16/2013 10:35 AM
20	20	9/16/2013 10:34 AM
21	40	9/16/2013 10:20 AM

#	Access to Legislators or Other Decision-makers for Advocacy Purposes	Date
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1	30	11/6/2013 8:36 PM
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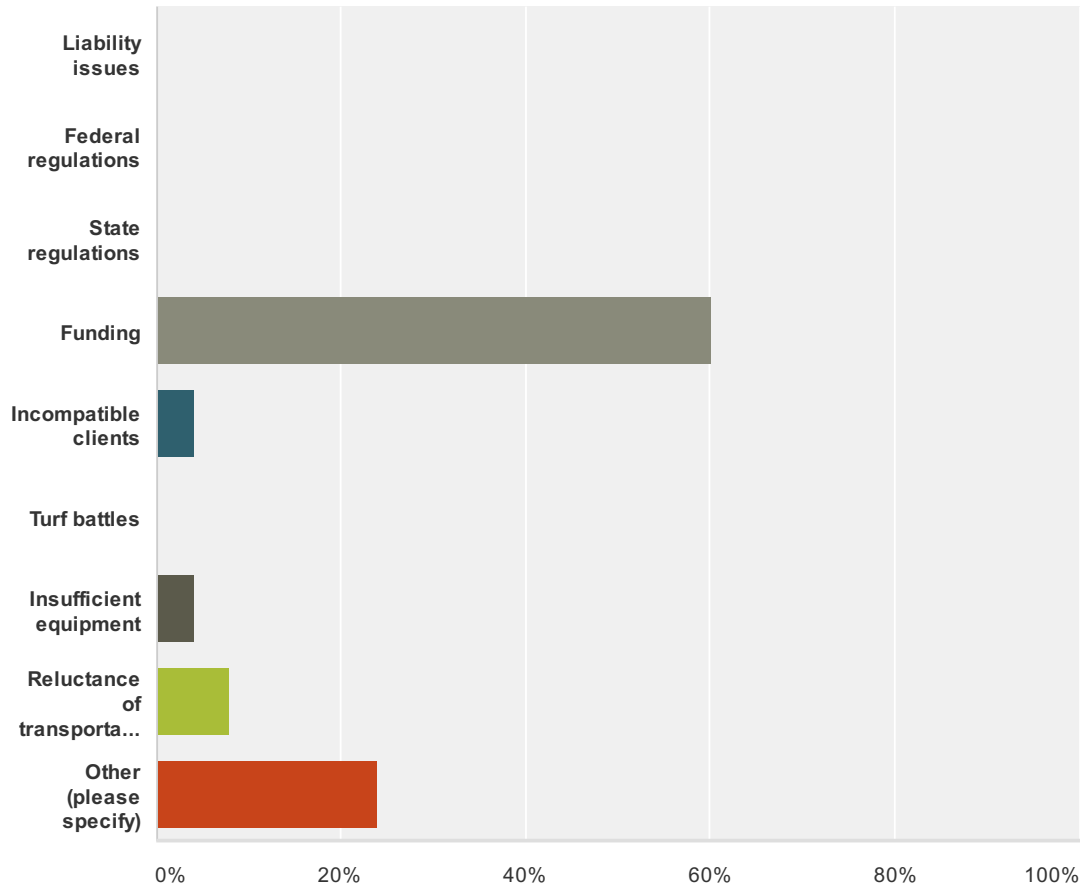
Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

2	10	10/1/2013 3:51 PM
3	5	9/25/2013 3:17 PM
4	5	9/25/2013 8:58 AM
5	5	9/24/2013 2:10 PM
6	0	9/19/2013 1:01 PM
7	15	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
8	10	9/18/2013 9:08 AM
9	20	9/17/2013 1:02 PM
10	10	9/16/2013 4:44 PM
11	10	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
12	10	9/16/2013 3:11 PM
13	10	9/16/2013 3:04 PM
14	5	9/16/2013 12:15 PM
15	10	9/16/2013 11:16 AM
16	0	9/16/2013 11:07 AM
17	2	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
18	20	9/16/2013 10:34 AM
19	5	9/16/2013 10:20 AM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

Q21 What is the most significant barrier to transportation service coordination that your agency has encountered?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



Answer Choices	Responses
Liability issues	0% 0
Federal regulations	0% 0
State regulations	0% 0
Funding	60% 15
Incompatible clients	4% 1
Turf battles	0% 0
Insufficient equipment	4% 1
Reluctance of transportation providers to coordinate	8% 2
Other (please specify)	24% 6
Total	25

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	cost if not covered by a specific program	10/1/2013 3:51 PM

Transportation Needs Survey for Organizations

2	Technology; logistics	9/18/2013 11:28 AM
3	We do not provide opportunities through the organization.	9/18/2013 9:08 AM
4	lack of affordable transportation	9/16/2013 3:53 PM
5	Not applicable	9/16/2013 11:05 AM
6	time to investigate situations that would be conducive to sharing rides	9/16/2013 10:35 AM

Appendix D – Public Comments on Draft Plan

Draft Plan Public Comment Period: March 14, 2014 – April 14, 2014

On March 14, 2014, the Draft Coordinated Plan was released to the public for review and comment. Classified advertisements were placed in The Daily Item and The Williamsport Sun-Gazette newspapers. The Draft Plan was posted on the SEDA-COG and Lycoming County websites, and over 480 stakeholders and interested members of the public (MPO members, county commissioners, municipalities, state and federal agencies, legislators, transit operators, human service agencies, economic development agencies, environmental groups, concerned citizens, adjacent county planning agencies, etc.) were notified via email.

SEDA-COG and Lycoming County staff held a public meeting on March 31, 2014 (with zero members of the public showing). SEDA-COG staff presented information about the Draft Plan and solicited comments at two (2) AGAPE Public Transportation Committee meetings during the comment period. A press release about the Draft Plan was issued to area news media and legislators on April 1, 2014.

Below are comments received during the public comment period from March 14, 2014 – April 14, 2014:

	Category	Agency/Individual	Comment	Response
1	Technical Corrections Existing Transportation Services	Columbia County Human Services (via email)	Page #4 – Replace Kirsti Kritzer’s name with Jennifer Dunkelberger. Page #36 – Table 15: Transit Providers – Columbia County Transportation needs to be added. Page # 43-48 – Transit Operator Profiles – add a profile for Columbia County Transportation.	Correction has been made. This entry has been added. This profile has been added.
2	Demographic Profile Needs Assessment	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region III (via email)	There is a need for the identification of areas of potential Environmental Justice concern. It seems that there is considerable data that would be useful in identifying areas of low income and minority populations that will be impacted by the plan. It would then be logical to look at the potential impacts and challenges to those populations, and determine what steps need	There are varying methods to identify EJ populations. The Coordinated Plan Demographic Profile and Appendix A mapping generally rely on Census Bureau ACS data and GIS mapping by Census tract to present data for low-income, minority and other populations considered to be transportation-disadvantaged. The threshold

	Category	Agency/Individual	Comment	Response
			<p>to be taken to assess and address those potential impacts. It is noted that there are several areas that are repeatedly seen as being above benchmark values just by looking at the demographics values as shown in Appendix A. Identify the areas of Environmental Justice concern.</p> <p>There are a number of concerns pointed out in the needs</p>	<p>approach is used to identify whether a Census tract or countywide sample meets or exceeds the regional average (or countywide average) for the demographic elements. Any Census tract in Appendix A mapping that meets or exceeds the regional threshold level may be considered a sensitive tract for that characteristic. Though fairly easy to calculate, map, and understand, it is recognized that the regional threshold approach has some weaknesses (somewhat arbitrary definition, failure to convey intensity, etc.), and that the Census ACS data may contain significant margins of error for certain geographies. The Appendix A mapping can be used in reviewing public transit projects in terms of potential impacts or benefits to EJ populations across the region. While the Census ACS tract data are easily available and comprehensive for regional plans, they cannot be disaggregated to perform detailed local analysis. Chapter 5 of the Coordinated Plan recognizes this shortcoming, and calls for more specific data analysis and localized outreach for target populations (see Information Development paragraph on Page 50).</p> <p>Chapters 3 and 5 of the Coordinated Plan touch on</p>

	Category	Agency/Individual	Comment	Response
			<p>assessment. The discussion should include the at risk populations from the Environmental Justice standpoint.</p>	<p>the needs of low-income and at-risk populations, and Chapter 6 lists strategies that would benefit EJ populations, transit-dependent populations, and the general public. In terms of more comprehensive analysis of EJ needs, impacts, and perspectives, SEDA-COG MPO will be working with consultant expertise during 2014-2015 to update the region's Public Participation Plan (PPP), perform updated Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis, and develop a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. It's expected that more robust EJ identification/ verification, mapping, and targeted outreach activities for specific EJ populations will result, combined with benefits & burdens analysis for transportation projects and LEP four-factor analysis. EPA Region III staff will be included in the public comment process for the PPP update, and they will be given the opportunity to provide more direct input in that process as appropriate in the update.</p> <p>In addition, the North Central PA Public Transportation Task Force is in the process of forming a work group to further evaluate and address transportation issues facing low-income individuals in the region.</p>

Appendix E – Detailed Strategy Descriptions

Regional Public Transportation System

Category(ies): Organizational/New Service/Service Enhancement

Identified Need:

- Create a regional network of public transportation connections along major corridors, between various communities, and between population centers and major generators.
- Available and affordable public transportation service.
- More consistency across the region in policies, service levels, fares, etc.

Discussion: It is unlikely that the existing collection of individual operators serving individual counties or pairs of counties can successfully address all identified needs solely through coordination efforts. One example of how another predominantly rural region addresses this need is the Area Transportation Authority (ATA) which serves a 5,100 square mile, five-county region in North Central PA consisting of Elk, Jefferson, Potter, Cameron and McKean Counties (limited service is also operated into Clearfield County). ATA operates an array of service types, including demand responsive human service transportation, local fixed-route transportation and fixed-route with deviation service, and a network of regional connection services. The authority is financed through system fares and funded provided by FTA, PennDOT, the Counties and various third-party sponsors of certain types of trips. The system has been in operation for over 30 years with start-up funding provided through a federal demonstration program which no longer exists. Another example is the Endless Mountains Transportation Authority (EMTA) which serves Bradford, Tioga and Sullivan Counties. Other possible approaches would be (a) one county take the lead on creating and managing a multi-county system, and (b) hire a private broker to manage, administer and deliver some or all regional services under the sponsorship and oversight of a regional board.

Implementation Timeframe: Long-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: A new regional body would likely have to be formed through local initiative. Governance is typically provided through a board appointed by the sponsoring entities. The sponsoring entities are typically responsible for providing local matching funds required to qualify for federal and state grant funding.

Benefits:

- Needs of a regional nature get addressed.
- Political boundaries, within the region, should become transparent to users.
- Consistency in service standards, levels of services, fares, amenities, etc.
- Potential efficiencies with a regional system.
- Consistent with latest PennDOT directions.

Probable Funding Implications: Considerable resources are already being expended that could be applied to a regional system. Some economies could be realized but a new network of regional connecting services would likely require additional funding to achieve.

Other Considerations:

- Requires the collaboration and cooperation among the counties and yielding of some control to the regional authority.
- Sharing of local funding responsibilities can be difficult to agree on.
- If one or more counties decide not to participate, it is not practical to operate a multi-county system serving non-contiguous counties.

Regional Coordination Council (RCC)

Category(ies): Organizational/Coordination

Identified Need: Current and previous planning studies, as well as public input, identified numerous issues impacting the ability of the existing demand responsive transportation systems in providing more efficient and effective regional service to transit dependent population groups and the general public. Greater coordination between the region’s demand responsive systems in various functional areas – grants management, administration, procurement, public information, scheduling, reservations, operations, and funding – offers the potential for agencies to reduce costs, save resources and improve customer service.

Discussion: The existing public and human service transportation systems and various public and private transportation-related organizations within the six-county region could establish a Regional Coordination Council (RCC) to promote regional coordination strategies. The Council would be a voluntary organization and act in an advisory capacity with the transit systems retaining full control of their operations and decision making functions. While lacking direct authority, the RCC could perform several useful functions. It could convene regular meetings to improve communication among the counties, identify needs and opportunities, share information related to service planning, operations and funding, and provide an umbrella organization for human service transportation programs. An RCC could take many different forms since the number of agencies willing to participate as well as the functional areas that are coordinated may vary. Since the transit systems retain control of their organizations and can modify their services, offer new types of services, and/or expand the geographic area it serves, the RCC would provide a venue for resolving any conflicts and promoting coordination whenever possible. The North Central Pennsylvania Public Transportation Taskforce (NCPPTT) could be used as a nucleus for the formation of the Coordination Council, which would have a different mission than the NCPPTT.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: The NCPPTT could initiate the formation of the RCC and SEDA-COG could provide “in-kind” services such as meeting space and the provision of office supplies. However, the organizations that agree to participate in the Regional Coordination Council would enter into a cooperation agreement or memorandum of understanding that defined the goals and objectives of the council, funding roles and responsibilities of the participating organizations, management and operational principles, and any other appropriate rules and conditions. Once the goals and objectives of the Council have been clearly defined, working groups or committees could then be established to develop projects and/or action plans to address specific regional transportation priorities.

Benefits:

- Provide consistent regional service delivery standards to manage expectations and ensure that all clients/customers in the region are provided equitable service. This could be achieved through coordinating fares, scheduling, public information, eligibility criteria, customer service, etc.

- An RCC would be a suitable candidate to take the lead in developing a comprehensive transportation directory, standardizing and consolidating driver and staff training, discussing joint procurement opportunities, etc.
- A stand-alone organization that functions well has the potential to enjoy greater visibility of its actions and legitimacy of its position on transportation issues. An informal network or a committee within some other organization that is not created with the primary function of addressing transportation coordination may not have the same visibility or legitimacy.

Probable Funding Implications: No new funding required. It is assumed that existing agencies would commit to participate in the forum and that staff involvement, meeting-related travel and miscellaneous costs would be covered with existing staff and existing budgets.

Other Considerations:

- An RCC would not change the participating agencies' structures or organization since they would continue to have primary responsibility for all functional areas. As a result, the ability of this model to make fundamental policy changes is limited to those areas which are informally negotiated between the agencies involved in the process.
- An RCC would be less effective if one or more existing demand responsive systems decide not to participate.

Establishment of a Regional Transportation Broker

Category(ies): Organizational/Coordination

Identified Need: Similar to a Regional Transportation Authority, a centralized broker system could respond to policy changes and would be well positioned to expand service and meet new and emerging travel needs. This alternative would establish consistent operating and service standards with transportation service managed by a professional team of transit managers.

Discussion: Under a brokered system, a single organization would handle all reservations for demand responsive trips and prepare schedules for daily vehicle runs based on efficiency and other criteria. The broker would also be responsible for scheduling, procurement, contract management, customer registration, record keeping and accounting, service standards and customer service. There are also different options for the establishment of the broker. The counties could procure the services of an outside party, through an IFB or RFP, to act as the broker. Alternatively, one of the existing demand responsive systems could assume the responsibility of the broker either under contract with, or through designation by the counties. In some instances, one entity assumes the role of broker/manager and service provider.

Implementation Timeframe: Mid-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Existing transit systems and local government

Benefits:

- More effective voice in securing funds since it would serve a number of groups and constituencies.
- Improves service delivery through consistent operating and service standards.
- Regional transit needs are addressed.
- Create efficiencies and lower costs through competitive bidding and by assuring the scheduling of the least costly, most appropriate method of transportation for a client. Cost savings could translate into increased service.
- A broker with strong ties to local medical and human service providers can be valuable in promoting coordinated service for clients.
- Consistent with latest PennDOT directions.
- Transfers a substantial portion of the budgetary risk to the broker.

Probable Funding Implications: Considerable resources are already being expended that could be applied to a regional transportation broker. Although certain economies are expected to be realized, it is likely that some combination of local, state, and federal funding will be required to plan for and effect a transition. Local funding can include in-kind grants from area social service agencies and other non-profit organizations that could benefit from a brokered system.

Other Considerations:

- Requires multiple agencies/organizations to champion the broker concept and the support of local elected officials.

- Concerns over service quality, loss of control and client contact.
- If implemented, requires project management and oversight, cost allocation/reimbursement models and service delivery standards.
- A transition plan would be required and transition costs would be incurred.
- The transition could be a phased process to minimize risks and potential disruptions.
- If an outside party is hired as the broker, the lack of knowledge regarding the local environment and human service providers will result in a “learning curve” as that knowledge is acquired.
- Customers will potentially be dealing with new parties and practices which can be confusing for certain types of clients and/or impose more of a burden on their caregivers.

Transportation Management Association (TMA)

Category(ies): Organizational/Service Expansion/Service Enhancement

Identified Need: Public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions during the 2011 Needs Assessment identified a number of ideas to improve the availability and delivery of transportation services in the region. Several of these suggestions included developing alternative transportation services and support facilities (i.e., vanpools/carpools, employment transportation, ridesharing, park and ride facilities, car sharing, etc.), as well as increasing awareness of existing transportation services and improving the overall quality of the information that is provided to the public.

Discussion: Ensuring that the public has easy access to timely and accurate information about available transportation services is an essential component of maximizing mobility and service utilization. This is particularly important in the region where transportation service is provided by a variety of organizations with different policies and procedures, service hours, and service areas. The creation of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) could provide a clearinghouse for information on existing services, as well as market, manage, and even implement various transportation services to address specific mobility needs. As an autonomous organization, a TMA has the ability to develop services that local governments may be unwilling or unable to provide. The services provided by a TMA can be designed according to the needs and expectations of the area in which it serves. An important role of a TMA would be to establish and oversee various transportation demand management concepts to increase transportation options, help provide basic mobility, and increase transportation affordability. Concepts include carpool/vanpool matching programs, car sharing, employer services, guaranteed ride home, trip planning, a single source of information, and improved marketing. An example of a successful local TMA is the non-profit Commuter Services of PA/Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership that includes business groups, transit agencies, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) representing Adams, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties. Commuter Services of PA serves as an information clearinghouse on available transportation services and programs, and provides alternative transportation services to meet mobility needs.

Implementation Timeframe: Mid-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: A TMA is typically a public-private partnership created by a consortium of local municipalities, government organizations, business groups, transit agencies, major institutions (i.e., colleges and medical centers) and large employers to address transportation issues and encourage the use of alternative transportation options.

Benefits:

- A TMA can assist employers in establishing commuter benefit programs that provide employees with subsidies and tax breaks that apply to work-related trips taken on public transportation. The Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit program governed under Section 132[f] of the IRS Code provides a tax incentive to employers for employees who commute to work on a publicly or privately owned or operated transit vehicle. Commuter benefits offered by an employer are exempt from withholding and employment taxes and are not reported as taxable wages on the employee's W-2 form. They are also

deductible as an employer-provided benefit from the employer's gross profit. Businesses can set aside an employee's pre-tax income amount, up to a maximum of \$230 per month, for commuting expenses on a qualified vehicle.

- A stand-alone organization has the potential to enjoy greater visibility of its actions and legitimacy of its position on transportation issues. An informal network or a committee within some other organization that is not created with the primary function of addressing transportation may not have the same visibility or legitimacy.

Probable Funding Implications: TMA membership fees, local funding, PennDOT, federal grants, in-kind contributions and payment for services rendered. A non-profit TMA has access to a greater variety of funding opportunities. For example, it may be necessary to be a nonprofit corporation in order to apply for various grants. Further, corporations' in-kind contributions and payment for services rendered to recognized nonprofit organizations may qualify as a tax deductible expense.

Commuter Services of South Central PA, mentioned above, uses Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funding to support their costs. Currently, no CMAQ funding is available to the communities included in the joint SEDA-COG/WATS Coordinated Plan area.

Other Considerations:

- Would require a private sector "champion" who believes in the need for a TMA and who can use its influence to expand its membership. An initial committee or board is also needed to get the TMA started.
- Challenge to promote member interest and TMA services, document the TMA's effectiveness, maintaining stable, ongoing funding and developing and maintaining services.
- Groups considering forming a TMA in the region would likely need to conduct preliminary planning to identify the existing conditions under which a TMA would be formed, assess the applicability of the TMA concept to local conditions, and perform preliminary organizational, service, and financial planning.

Evening and Weekend Service Expansion

Category(ies): Service Expansion

Identified Need: A general finding from the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions from the 2011 Needs Assessment indicated the need to provide affordable general purpose transportation during evenings and on weekends.

Discussion: With the exception of the RVT system in Lycoming County, none of the other existing transit systems in the region operate evening service. Further, LATS is the only system outside Lycoming County that operates service on Saturday, with its service providing trips between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM in parts of Northumberland County. The benefits of service expansion would provide transit-dependent groups as well as the general public access to more employment opportunities and more access to shopping and other essential services. Existing systems could offer contractual service to local universities, organizations or municipalities to provide evening and/or weekend service.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Transit Systems

Benefits:

- Increases the level of mobility in the region.

Probable Funding Implications: Would likely require additional local, federal and state financial assistance, which could be supplemented with farebox revenue.

Other Considerations:

- Lack of sufficient densities and demand to warrant service.
- Lack of funding to pay for additional service. For example, it may be difficult to obtain a local match to access federal funds.

Centralized Resource Directory

Category(ies): Awareness/Customer Service

Identified Need: Increasing awareness of existing public and human service transportation services throughout the region.

Discussion: Input from the 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach and stakeholder interviews indicated the need for improving the availability and quality of information that is provided to the public. In particular, there appears to be confusion on the part of the consumer in terms of services that are available, eligibility, how to access service, expectations of the services provided, etc. A lack of basic awareness and understanding is a barrier to people using and benefiting from public transportation. Since mobility needs are often regional in scope, this alternative would organize information regarding all available transit providers into a single place, where the rider or an agency representative could easily obtain essential information regarding eligibility, service hours, geographic coverage, etc. The information would be available in hard copy and web-based formats and would also be available via telephone. This directory could be developed out of the service inventories prepared as part of the coordinated plans done by SEDA-COG and the Lycoming County Planning Commission, and could be among the first opportunities for the region to identify, understand and evaluate the variety of existing transportation services.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Best practice models in the transit industry suggest that directories are most effective when prepared by a reliable organization with a regional scope and the ability to partner with transportation providers, municipalities and/or counties. Institutional options, such as a Regional Coordination Council or Transportation Management Association, would be well suited to lead the development of a comprehensive resource directory.

Benefits:

- Improves access to both local and regional services through increased awareness and understanding.
- Enhances mobility options for transit-dependent populations and the general public by increasing awareness of all available public and private transit services and human service agency transportation.
- Increases utilization of existing services with nominal additional investment.
- Increased visibility for public transportation and its benefits among elected officials and policy makers.
- Directories can be particularly useful in larger communities with a large number of public and private sector transportation resources.

Probable Funding Implications: Up to 80 percent of the cost of developing a transportation resource directory may be available through the Federal Section 5317 program, with the remaining 20 percent local match provided by local government, existing transit providers, and/or by local agencies and organizations.

Other Considerations:

- The entity responsible for developing the directory would need to commit to updating and maintaining the directory for a specified period of time.
- Care must be exercised to ensure that the directory or other materials are easy to use and understand, and that distribution channels and techniques maximize effectiveness.
- Directories only alert consumers to the availability of a service provider; consumers and/or agency representatives must still inquire about eligibility and arrange for services.

Taxi Vouchers

Category(ies): Service Expansion

Identified Need: Provision of evening, weekend, and same-day paratransit service that is generally not provided by existing demand responsive systems.

Discussion: A sponsoring entity (transit provider, human service agency, TMA, etc.) would establish an agreement with a taxi company or companies to provide subsidized transportation service to eligible individuals through the use of vouchers. This program could be restricted to agency clients or program participants, but could also be made available to the general public if a source of funding is available for that purpose. The rider would pay a nominal fare and the sponsoring entity would provide a subsidy toward the fare. If the taxi fare for the trip is more than the passenger fare plus the subsidy, the rider would be responsible for the balance. After the trip is served, the sponsoring entity would reimburse the taxi company for the subsidized portion of the trip. Another option under this model could be to allow the rider to travel to any origin and destination point within a defined geographical area for a nominal fare. The sponsoring entity would then pay the taxi company the difference between the set fare and the meter price.

These strategies could utilize taxi services to fill gaps in service hours – especially in the evenings and on weekends – and could also offer the potential to provide same-day service. A greater reliance on taxi services can offer a cost-effective way to address a variety of trip needs, particularly where fixed route bus service is impractical or during times when demand is low.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Human service agencies, transit providers, TMA, etc. Providers or some other entity would have to enter into an agreement with the taxi companies, provide oversight and quality assurance and handle grant administration functions.

Benefits:

- Effective for evening and weekend service and for unanticipated travel needs.
- Effective in low density areas or during times when demand is low.
- Provide same-day service.
- Increases mobility options in the region for transit-dependent population groups and potentially for the general public.
- Can be advanced incrementally.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require new funding.

Other Considerations:

- Would require good communication between sponsoring entities and taxi operators
- Lack of accessible taxi vehicles
- Limited taxi coverage
- Taxi companies may be unwilling to participate.

ADA Vehicles and Service Hours

Category(ies): Service Enhancement

Identified Need: The need for accessible taxi vehicles was identified during the 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach effort and stakeholder interviews. Accessible taxi services could supplement existing demand responsive systems by providing an option for passengers with disabilities, particularly individuals who use wheelchairs.

Discussion: Under this alternative, existing demand responsive transit systems could purchase accessible vehicles (i.e., ramp-equipped low-floor minivans) using FTA funds and local grants and lease them to taxi operators; or purchase vehicles with FTA funds and have the taxi company/taxi companies pay the local match. Accessible taxi vehicles would be an important component of the taxi voucher alternative described above, or could be implemented independent of a taxi voucher program.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term, depending on funding availability and sources

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Human service agencies, transit providers, TMA, taxi companies, etc.

Benefits:

- Would complement taxi voucher program but could be advanced independently.
- Increase mobility options by expanding the number of accessible vehicles in the region.
- Could help fill in service gaps during the hours when existing providers do not operate.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require additional local, state and federal funding assistance. Some local costs could be offset if taxi companies agree to provide all or part of the local match.

Other Considerations:

- Taxi companies may not be interested in the program.
- Some type of local match will be required to access Federal or state programs.
- The entity applying for grant funds will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate maintenance practices, insurance and eligible uses of the vehicles are being adhered to.

Carpool/Vanpool Programs

Category(ies): Service Enhancement

Identified Need: Public outreach and stakeholder interview feedback indicated the need to provide transportation services to employment and educational facilities in the region, with participants suggesting carpool and vanpool services and utilizing existing park and ride facilities as part of this program. These models can also address mobility needs in low density areas where conventional fixed route bus service and general public demand responsive transit service are not financially feasible. Carpool and vanpool matching programs could be part of a larger transportation demand management program organized by the establishment of a TMA, or could be advanced by other appropriate organizations such as SEDA-COG.

Discussion: Carpooling is among the easiest and most flexible ways to share a ride. Carpoolers either pay a pre-established weekly or monthly fee or share actual costs plus parking fees. Carpool riders typically establish rules and etiquette to sustain the carpool partnership, such as timely notifications of absences and whether to eat or drink in the car. Formal arrangements, such as online carpool matching services, could be administered by a large employer or major institution (e.g., medical center or university), SEDA-COG, or a newly created Transportation Management Association (TMA).

Vanpools are generally comprised of groups of 7–15 people to commute to work on a prearranged basis by van, with one of the riders agreeing to be the primary driver and 1–2 others serving as back-up drivers. Vanpool riders may meet at one designated location or at specified pick-up and drop-off stops along the way. The number of passengers, length of trip, insurance, gas, parking fees, and third-party fees, if applicable, will determine the actual cost per passenger. The driver usually travels for free and may also have access to the van on nights and weekends. Participants may all work at the same location or at nearby locations. There are three types of vanpool arrangements available:

- Employer-sponsored or operated vanpool programs in which the employer purchases or leases the vans and is responsible for overall program administration. Insurance is usually obtained through the company's regular fleet policy.
- Individually owned and operated vanpools in which the driver owns and maintains the van and coordinates the daily operation of the vanpool; rider fares are used to cover the purchase and maintenance costs.
- Third-party vanpooling programs in which a private company or organization purchases or leases vans and then offers them to vanpooling groups for a fee that covers the cost of program administration, vanpool promotion, vehicle amortization, operating expenses and van maintenance. One such company is VPSI Inc. which is an international commuter transportation and mobility management company.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: A single vanpool program can be coordinated by an employer, while larger and more complex vanpool arrangements are often handled by an outside organization, such as a TMA or an existing organization such as SEDA-COG. The responsibilities for administering a comprehensive vanpool program would include applying for and managing grant funding, recruiting

riders, approving and training drivers, determining routes, collecting monthly fees, developing marketing materials and publicizing the program, and monitoring and maintaining the program. The administering agency could choose to limit their role. For instance, they could agree to perform all of the facilitation roles but leave financial matters to the participants; or alternatively could simply market the program to private employers and provide technical assistance and sample documents to interested employers.

Benefits:

- Increases mobility options in the region for both transit-dependent population groups and the general public.
- Addresses an unmet need cited in the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions.
- Provides alternative ride-sharing services to under-served areas and serves as a means of assessing the potential for traditional types of public transportation service.
- Improves access to regional services and employment opportunities.
- Provides mobility options for non-drivers, lower income residents, and the general public.
- Vanpools provide a more cost effective means of serving mid-range and long-distance commuters compared to conventional transit service.
- Less costly to public agencies than providing public transit service.

Probable Funding Implications: A ride matching and carpool program, which is relatively inexpensive to implement, should be undertaken first to determine demand and possible interest in developing more formal vanpool arrangements. The carpool program used by the Geisinger Medical Center could serve as a test case or source of guidance for organizations interested in establishing carpool programs.

Other Considerations:

- Increases travel time and lacks flexibility in accommodating changes to working times/patterns. This could be addressed through a guaranteed ride home arrangement with a local taxi company.
- Reliability of the informal arrangements made between individuals which can result in passengers or drivers occasionally not showing up for pre-arranged trips.
- There must be a monetary incentive (e.g., high gas prices or restricted parking availability) and a sufficient number of persons with reasonably similar origins and destinations.
- Potential difficulty in collecting payments from riders.
- Potential for continuing turnover in ridership.
- Volatility in market forces such as gas prices and employment trends.

Car Sharing Programs

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: Public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions indicated the need to provide mobility for transit-dependent population groups to access employment opportunities, services, and maintain independence. There was also a need to provide transportation services to employment and educational facilities in the region. A car sharing program could be a stand-alone program or part of a larger transportation demand management program organized by a TMA or other appropriate organization.

Discussion: Car sharing is intended for occasional trips when a car is needed. The program allows individuals to use a pool of automobiles for a small annual fee and payment by the hour. Cars are reserved by phone or on-line and picked up from a designated parking space and returned to the same spot once the trip is complete. The hourly fee includes fuel and insurance costs. Car sharing programs can be for-profit, non-profit, or cooperative organizations and can have widely different objectives, business models, use of technology, and target markets. In most instances, car sharing programs typically share the following features:

- An organized group of participants that pay an annual fee to become members.
- One or more shared vehicles.
- A decentralized network of parking locations (“pods”) stationed close to homes, workplaces and/or transit stations.
- Usage booked in advance.
- Rentals for short time periods.
- Self-accessing vehicles.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Car sharing programs can be run by local governments, transit agencies, employers and businesses, universities and private-for-profit companies. Bucknell University in Lewisburg and Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove currently operate car sharing programs on their campuses for students and faculty.

Benefits:

- Increases mobility options in the region for both transit-dependent population groups and the general public.
- Addresses an unmet need cited in the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions.
- Cheaper than owning an automobile.
- Lessens parking demand.
- Provides an additional mobility option.
- Complements taxi service which is better suited to one-way trips.

Probable Funding Implications: Would be self-financed through membership and rental fees. May require nominal funding for start-up and program oversight.

Other Considerations:

- Understanding of car-sharing.
- Sufficient members to allow for reasonable user charges that fully cover program costs.
- Regulatory obstacles such as securing dedicated parking spaces.
- Works best in areas with relatively high densities; as a result, the implementation of this program may be best suited for select areas in the region such as Williamsport, certain municipalities along the US 11 and US 15 corridors, or on college campuses.

Intra-Regional Commuter Bus Service

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: A general finding from the 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions was the need for general public transportation service to access major employers and post-secondary institutions along the along the US 11 and US 15 corridors.

Discussion: This transit service option would provide bus service during the weekday morning and afternoon peak periods between a limited number of strategically located bus stops (i.e., park and ride facilities) and major employment sites in the region, such as Bloomsburg, Danville, Lewisburg, and Williamsport. Conceptually, this service could consist of two minibuses that begin from opposite ends of the region – for example, one vehicle starting from the park and ride facility near Benton in Columbia County and the other vehicle starting from the park and ride facility in Hughesville in Lycoming County – and operate inbound along the US 11 and US 15 corridors to serve major employment sites and/or municipalities with a high number of jobs. The two routes would terminate at the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville and then turn around and operate in the outbound direction back to their point of origin. A third vehicle operated by LATS could begin inbound service at a designated stop in Lower Northumberland County and operate northbound on Route 54 to Danville, at which point the route could turn around and operate along the same alignment back to lower Northumberland County. Based on the distances traveled by each vehicle, it is likely that the routes would operate limited peak period service, such as one or two round trips in the morning and again in the afternoon. To maintain convenient service and reduce the travel time, the routes would serve a limited number of designated stops. The services could be scheduled to arrive at the Geisinger Medical Center at approximately the same time so that passengers could transfer to another route for broader access to points throughout the region.

Implementation Timeframe: Long-term, but could be advanced incrementally

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Transit systems and local government

Benefits:

- The three routes would provide direct access to the Geisinger Medical Center – one of the largest employers in the region. Passengers could also transfer to another route to travel to other locations.
- In the long term, the service could be expanded to evenings and weekends to accommodate workers employed during second and third shifts, or workers employed in industries that do not operate according to the typical eight hour weekday work period.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require additional local, state and federal funding assistance. Some costs could be offset through, private sector contributions, and farebox revenue. JARC funding may be available if the focus of the service is on work trips.

Other Considerations:

- Clearly marked and accessible bus stops would need to be designated and should be equipped with a

bus shelter, seating, and public information materials (i.e., route schedule, a listing of existing service providers, contact information, etc).

- Passengers that need to transfer between routes to reach their destination could not likely rely on services for work commutes due to the travel times involved.
- Lack of sufficient demand to warrant service. Driving is faster and parking is generally easy to find and free.
- Would require designation of an entity with multi-county focus and authority to be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the service, which would include preparing grants, quarterly reports, and ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices and vehicle maintenance.

Beyond-the-Region Subscription Commuter Bus Service

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: The 2011 Needs Assessment Community Characteristics report indicated that although most commuters in the region are employed in their county of residence or an adjacent county, the number of jobs in the region is in decline. Further, the loss of employment was a common theme noted throughout the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions. As a result, it is likely that employment centers in Dauphin County (i.e., Harrisburg), Centre County (i.e., State College), and Williamsport will become more prominent commuting destinations for the region's commuting labor force population.

Discussion: This alternative proposes operating inter-county commuter bus service during the weekday peak period between strategic park and ride facilities in the region and major employment centers such as Harrisburg and State College. To expedite service and increase rider convenience, the routes would ideally operate express service from the park and ride facilities or provide a limited number of stops at key locations in the region. This service could be operated on a subscription basis where a passenger receives a reserved seat by paying a weekly or monthly fare in advance. A subscription bus is usually started only when a sufficient number of passengers have committed to the service to ensure cost effective service. The service would likely operate one trip in the morning and one return trip in the afternoon.

Implementation Timeframe: Mid-term, but could be advanced incrementally

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Subscription service could be organized by employers, employees, or one of the existing transit systems in the region, with the transit system providing the vehicle and a driver paid an hourly rate or by shift. A private contractor could also operate the service.

Benefits:

- Provide transit-dependent individuals and the general public with improved access to major employment destinations.
- Could be a more cost effective means of commuting than driving alone, especially if gas prices rise as they did in 2008.

Probable Funding Implications: Requires new funding. Financed through rider fares, private sector contributions, and possible state and federal operating assistance. Subscription services are generally not eligible for public transit grant programs.

Other Considerations:

- The park and ride facilities should be paved and provide a safe waiting area for passengers. The waiting area should have a shelter, seating, and a list of existing transit services with their telephone number and/or e-mail address.
- Unpredictable market forces that influence demand such as gas prices and employment trends. Could be more costly and less flexible than car pooling or van pooling.

- May increase travel time compared to private automobile and lacks flexibility in accommodating changes to working times/ patterns. This could be addressed through a guaranteed ride home arrangement with a local taxi company.
- Would require designation of an entity with multi-county focus and authority to be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the service, which would include preparing and administering grants, quarterly reports, and oversight including ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices, vehicle maintenance, and quality assurance.
- A private operator could be contracted to provide the service but would have to use ADA accessible vehicles.

US 11 and US 15 – Regional Connecting Bus Service

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: A general finding from the 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions was the need for some form of regularly scheduled public transportation service to operate between the population centers located along the US 11 and US 15 corridors. This service is one alternative to provide access to employment sites, retail areas, and other essential services.

Discussion: The Community Characteristics report indicated that several communities located along the US 11 and US 15 corridors – Berwick, Bloomsburg, Danville, Sunbury, and Selinsgrove, among others – were among the highest ranking municipalities in the region in terms of transit need. However, because the overall size of each municipality is rather small and the distance between the municipalities along the two corridors is fairly significant, it is difficult and costly to operate conventional fixed route bus service in this area of the region. However, it is apparent from population and land use patterns that a linear route(s) linking various municipalities and activity centers along the corridors is appropriate. This route would use small vehicles and primarily operate along a defined alignment on an established schedule like regular fixed route bus service, but would also deviate to pick up or drop off riders by request and then return to the defined route before the next marked bus stop. Passengers could board and alight anywhere on the route as long as the driver deems it safe to stop the vehicle. This type of service could reduce demand on the existing demand responsive services if the routes are easy to use for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Initially, this service could be operated on select weekdays depending on the area being served. For example, on Tuesday and Thursday, the route would serve the US 11 corridor between Berwick and Sunbury; then on Wednesday and Friday the route would operate between Danville and the population centers located along US 15 such as Lewisburg and Selinsgrove. Many factors must be taken into account when designing route deviation service, including:

- Customer eligibility for deviated service (general public, persons with disabilities, other rider groups). Timing of requests for deviations (scheduled on the day prior to the trip, scheduled with minimal advance notice, given to the driver when the rider boards the vehicle).
- Accommodation of deviation requests (How to provide deviation requests without negatively affecting fixed route service reliability).
- Area to be served by deviations (maximum distance from the route, all or only portions of the route, only to/from specific key sites). A deviation of three-quarters of a mile would satisfy ADA service regulations.
- The days and hours for deviated service (all days and hours that the route is in operation or only during certain times).

Implementation Timeframe: Mid-term but could be advanced incrementally

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Transit Systems, local government, private sector

Benefits:

- Increases mobility options in the region for both transit-dependent population groups and the general public.

- Would link many of the region’s major activity centers (i.e., retail centers, post-secondary schools, etc.) and transit supportive residential areas.
- Addresses an unmet need cited in the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require additional local, state and federal funding assistance. Some costs could be offset through private sector contributions and fares.

Other Considerations:

- Clearly marked and accessible bus stops would need to be designated and should be equipped with a bus shelter, seating, and public information materials (i.e., route schedule, a listing of existing service providers, contact information, etc). If park and ride facilities are utilized, these lots should be paved.
- Services operated less than five days per week do not serve the work trip market.
- Lack of sufficient demand to warrant service.
- Would require designation of an entity with multi-county focus and authority to be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the service, which would include preparing and administering grants, quarterly reports, and oversight including ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices, vehicle maintenance, and quality assurance.
- Operation could be handled by the same entity or contracted to a private operator.

Local Community Bus Routes with Deviation

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: A general finding from the 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions was the need for regularly scheduled public transportation service for the municipalities located along the US 11 and US 15 corridors. This service is one alternative for providing access to retail areas and other essential services along the corridor.

Discussion: Another route concept involves operating local community shuttle service using small vehicles in areas with the highest population and population densities to provide point-to-point service between residential areas and major activity centers. This service concept would also operate along a defined route on an established schedule but would deviate to pick up or drop off passengers and then return to the defined route before the next marked bus stop. The last stop would always occur at the same pre-determined time. Passengers could board and alight anywhere on the route as long as the driver deems it safe to stop the vehicle. This type of service could reduce demand on the existing demand responsive services if the routes are easy to use for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Area Transportation Authority (ATA) operates a similar type of service in communities with at least 5,000 persons and a population density of at least 2,500 persons per square mile. Some municipalities in the region that meet this criteria and are not currently served by regularly scheduled public transportation include Berwick, Bloomsburg, Danville, Lewisburg, Milton, Selinsgrove, Sunbury, and Watsontown. It is possible that these communities could be divided into two separate service areas that could be served on alternating weekdays. For example, the municipalities along US 11 served Tuesday and Thursday and the municipalities along US 15 served Wednesday and Friday. Many factors must be taken into account when designing route deviation service, including:

- Customer eligibility for deviated service (general public, persons with disabilities, other rider groups)
- Timing of requests for deviations (scheduled on the day prior to the trip, scheduled with minimal advance notice, given to the driver when the rider boards the vehicle).
- Accommodation of deviation requests (would the service accommodate all requests, accommodate requests with either deviation or paratransit service, accommodate requests only if possible without negatively affecting fixed route service quality).
- Area to be served by deviations (maximum distance or time from the route, all or only portions of the route, only to/from specific key sites). A deviation of three-quarters of a mile would satisfy ADA service regulations.
- The days and hours for deviated service (all days and hours that the route is in operation; only during certain times, such as off-peak hours; only on certain days, such as weekends).

Implementation Timeframe: Long-term but could be advanced incrementally

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Transit systems, local government, private sector

Benefits:

- Increases mobility options in the region for both transit-dependent population groups and the general public.

- Service operated less than five days per week does not serve work trip markets.
- Would serve many of the region’s major activity centers (i.e., retail centers, post-secondary schools, etc.) and transit supportive residential areas.
- Addresses an unmet need cited in the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require additional local, state and federal funding assistance. Some costs could be offset through private sector contributions and farebox revenue.

Other Considerations:

- Clearly marked and accessible bus stops would need to be designated and should ideally be equipped with a bus shelter, seating, and public information materials (i.e., route schedule, a listing of existing service providers, contact information, etc).
- Lack of sufficient demand to warrant service.
- Would require an entity with multi-county focus and authority to be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the service, which would include preparing and administering grants, quarterly reports, and oversight including ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices, vehicle maintenance and service quality.
- Service could be provided by the same entity or contracted to a private operator.

General Public Rural Demand Responsive Service

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: A general finding from the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions was the need for affordable general purpose public transportation in the rural areas of the region for individuals who do not qualify for subsidized transportation through agency programs.

Discussion: As an alternative to trying to operate conventional fixed-route service in the rural areas where the density is low and travel patterns are dispersed, there are various models of general purpose demand responsive services that cost less than fixed route service while maintaining mobility within the community. Further, service capacity can easily be increased or decreased as demand changes. For example, a demand-responsive feeder service could be operated in which passengers make a prior day or same day reservation to be picked up at their door and taken to a transfer point to access the existing RVT and LATS systems or the proposed services, such as the US 11 and US 15 corridor service and/or the community bus service. Another example is Demand Response Direct service which is a combination of fixed route and demand responsive service. Under this model, a transit vehicle would operate on a demand responsive basis within a defined geographical area for a particular amount of time and would then operate on a fixed route basis to a particular destination. In the reverse, the route would leave the terminal point, operate on a fixed route basis until it reached the demand responsive zone and would then operate on a demand responsive basis within the zone for a given period of time. Passengers in the defined geographical area could board or alight at any requested location in the geographical area with a reservation. Passengers traveling to and from locations along the fixed route portion could board at any bus stop. It is possible that the region could be divided into separate service areas and served on alternating weekdays. An example is the Area Transportation Authority's (ATA) Call-A-Bus service, which is an entirely demand responsive service that operates in zones covering the system's six county service area. The rider is charged per zone traveled. The service requires a prior day advance reservation and is available to anyone who wants to use the service.

Implementation Timeframe: Long-term but could be advanced incrementally

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Existing service providers and local governments, or a new entity.

Benefits:

- Provides an affordable mobility option for individuals residing in rural areas who don't qualify for subsidized transportation through agency programs.
- Less expensive than operating conventional fixed route bus service. Using defined trip parameters (i.e., certain day or geographical area) provides the opportunity to group trips and provide more cost effective service.
- Addresses an unmet need cited in the public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions.

Probable Funding Implications: Would require additional local, state and federal funding assistance. Some costs could be offset through farebox revenue.

Other Considerations:

- Clearly marked and accessible bus stops would need to be designated for any fixed route components of the service and should ideally be equipped with a bus shelter, seating, and public information materials (i.e., route schedule, a listing of existing service providers, contact information, etc).
- Service operated less than five days per week does not address work trip markets.
- Would require designation of an entity with multi-county focus and authority to be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the service, which would include preparing and administering grants, quarterly reports, and oversight including ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices, vehicle maintenance, and service quality.
- Service could be provided by existing entities or contracted to a private contractor(s).

Special Event/Special Purpose Transportation Service

Category(ies): New Service

Identified Need: The 2011 Needs Assessment public outreach and stakeholder interview sessions identified the need for some type of transit service to be available for special events in the region, or to be available during certain times of the year such as the holiday season, summer fairs or when the local colleges are in session.

Discussion: Special event transportation service is often designed to accommodate particular market segments attracted to a special event or certain destinations using either fixed routes or deviated fixed routes. Service could link major activity centers (i.e., shopping centers or college campuses) with nearby parking facilities to mitigate traffic congestion, or could involve making existing college transportation shuttle buses open to the public during the fall and spring semesters through a cost sharing agreement between the colleges and the municipalities or activity centers desiring service. Another possibility could be to operate bus service between various municipalities at certain times of the year as an economic development tool to attract residents and visitors back to the region's traditional downtown business districts. This service could be made more attractive and distinguished by operating rubber-tire, trolley replica vehicles. Special event services operated by River Valley Transit (RVT) could serve as potential models.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: A public-private partnership that would distribute responsibilities for designing, operating and financing the service.

Benefits:

- Addresses an unmet need identified through the stakeholder outreach and public forums.
- Could be a useful economic development tool to help local merchants and older downtown business districts in the region, especially during the holiday season or special events that bring large numbers of visitors to the area.

Probable Funding Implications: A combination of local, state, and federal funding could be pursued along with significant contributions from local institutions and the private sector, such as local visitor bureaus. In addition, passenger fares could be utilized to help offset operating costs.

Other Considerations:

- Specialized nature of service would not be suited for work trips.
- Would require designation of an entity to be responsible for administration of the service, which would include preparing and administering grants, quarterly reports, and oversight including ensuring compliance with various government agencies in terms of reporting practices, vehicle maintenance, and service quality.
- Service could be provided by existing entities or contracted to a private contractor(s).

Non-Motorized Options – Bicycling Programs

Category(ies): Service Enhancement

Identified Need: Access to transportation could be enhanced if opportunities for bicycling from origin to destination, or to reach a bus stop was available.

Discussion: The integration of public transportation and bicycling can include the installation of bike racks on all public transit vehicles and installation of bike racks for parking; signage to identify shared bike/auto-routes and to remind motorists to be aware of cyclists; educational and promotional activities; and infrastructure improvements such as widening roadway shoulders, designated bike lanes, installation of bike racks, and traffic calming measures. River Valley Transit (RVT) has bike racks on some of the buses in their fleet.

Another option could include developing bike-sharing programs serving the region's college campus areas. Bike-sharing is becoming increasingly common at colleges and universities throughout the United States and can be designed in a variety of ways to suit local needs. For example, a person with a campus identification card could access a bike at kiosks placed throughout campus. A bike could be rented at one location and returned to a different bike kiosk located somewhere else on-campus or even somewhere off-campus. This program could be free and paid for through student fees or could be designed to charge users by the minute or hour the bike is in use.

Implementation Timeframe: Short-term

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Local colleges and agencies or a newly formed TMA.

Benefits:

- Bicycling is inexpensive and provides mobility options for people who do not have an automobile or access to public transportation.
- Planning for bicyclists is supported by PennDOT and is included as a component of PennDOT planning guides and design checklists.
- Consistent with SEDA-COG's long range transportation plan.

Probable Funding Implications: A combination of local, state, and Federal programs could be pursued to assist in bicycle infrastructure improvements. The costs of establishing a bike sharing program would be relatively modest and be paid for by the participating colleges and/or local municipalities.

Other Considerations:

- Physical improvements to infrastructure are expensive and require commitment from local authorities.
- Bike-sharing is best suited to college campuses and/or within specific municipalities where activity centers and residential areas are clustered together.
- A temperate climate comprised of hot summers and cold winters can affect the convenience of bicycling as a viable transportation mode during these time periods.