



Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

Franklin County Metropolitan
Planning Organization

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Purpose

Since 2007, coordinated human services transportation plans have been a crucial tool for regional multimodal transit planning, as human service transportation provides accessible and affordable transportation for people with limited mobility options. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act continued the requirement from previous federal transportation reauthorization bills that all projects selected for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program funding be included on a locally developed coordinated human services plan. The FTA established that coordinated human services transportation plans must include an assessment of available transportation services (public, private, and non-profit); an assessment of transportation needs for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals; strategies and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and future needs; and priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility.

The purpose of this plan is to help improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes in Franklin County through a better coordinated transportation system. The Franklin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serves as the lead agency in such transportation planning initiatives. This plan was developed in coordination with key human service stakeholders including rabbitransit, Commuter Services of Pennsylvania, Keystone Health, Chambersburg Hospital, Franklin County Human Services Administration, Franklin County Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities/Early Intervention Department, Franklin/Fulton Drug and Alcohol Authority, Franklin County Office of Veterans Affairs, and Disabled American Veterans.

This plan is an administrative update to Franklin County MPO's previous coordinated human services plan, which was adopted in May 2007. Interviews conducted with key stakeholders provided the foundation for updating the transportation inventory, identifying key destinations in the region, and defining human service transportation challenges that citizens in Franklin County may face. These stakeholders also played a key role in developing strategies to improve options for citizens receiving services within the county.

Overview

Franklin County, located in south-central Pennsylvania, is 773 square miles in size and is comprised of 15 townships and seven boroughs. According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, Franklin County has an estimated population of 155,027 persons. The Board of Commissioners is comprised of three elected members and constitutes the chief governing body of the county. The board also serves as the legislative and policy-making board for the county government. They are entrusted with providing countywide services and facilities and are the sole contractors for the county.

In the early 1700's, families began settling in the Cumberland Valley. In 1730, Benjamin Chambers settled in the valley and built a house and grist mill in what is now known as Chambersburg. He founded Chambersburg in 1764. On September 9, 1784, Franklin County, was created from the western part of Cumberland County. On March 21, 1803, Chambersburg was established as the county seat and was incorporated as a borough.

Franklin County has diverse geography consisting of farmlands, state forests, and urban areas. Having access to both urban and rural opportunities, the county's residents may experience advantages as well as disadvantages related to transportation. The county's south-central location and network of roadways allow for easy accessibility to neighboring states as well as larger metropolitan areas within Pennsylvania. However, the disadvantages that residents may experience include the accessibility of public transportation and human and health services.

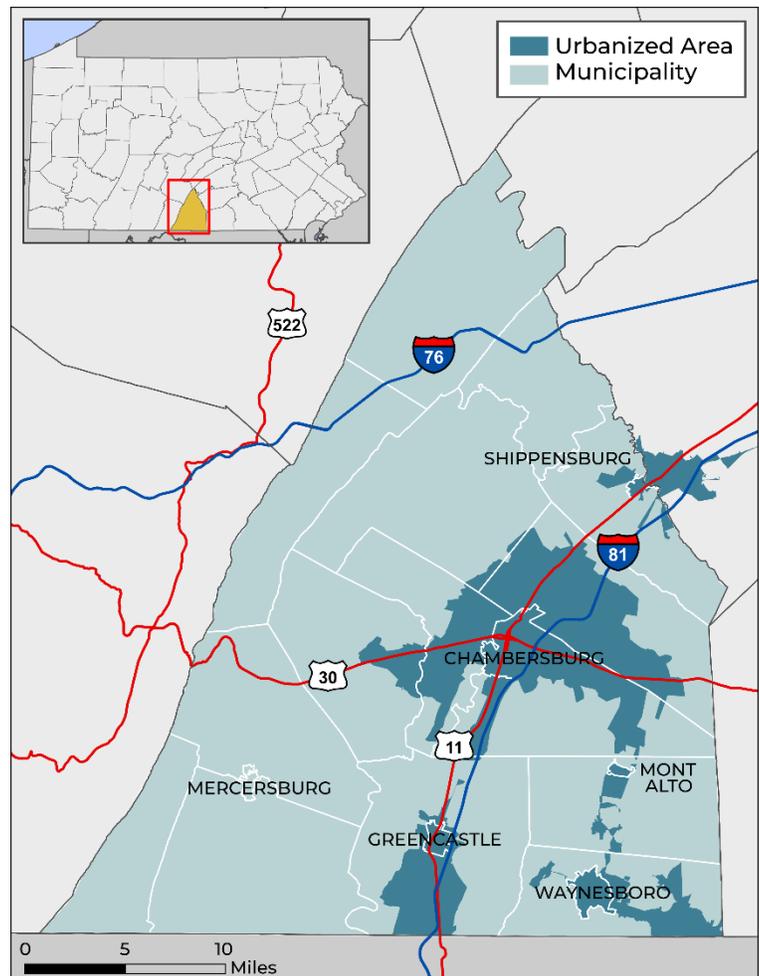
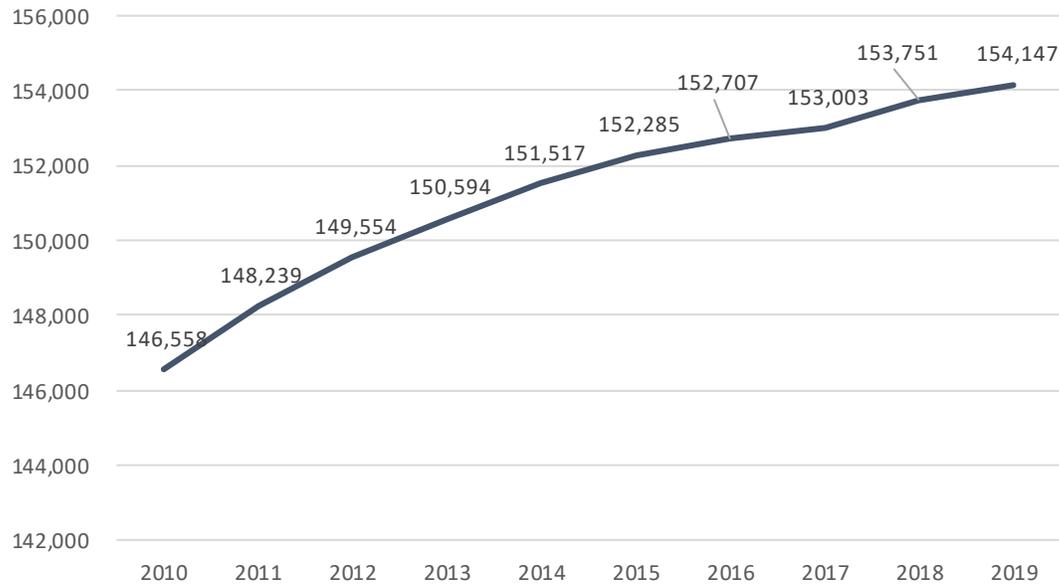


Figure 1: Franklin County Urbanized Area Map

Demographics

According to the 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, Franklin County has an estimated population of 154,147, a 5% increase since 2010. In contrast, Pennsylvania’s statewide population saw an increase of 1.5% over the same period.

Figure 2: Franklin County Population Growth, 2010-2019



Analysis of the composition of the population can help determine various service needs in a community. Between 2010 and 2019, Franklin County has seen a steady increase in its aging population as 19% of the population was 65 years or older in 2019. This exhibits an increase from 16.2% in 2010. The percentage of youth 14 years or younger has declined over the same period, from 19.7% to 18.4%. Similarly, the median age of Franklin County’s population has increased from 39.9 years in 2010 to 41.6 years in 2019. Estimates also indicate that 14.3% of the non-institutionalized population of the county have a disability, with 6.4% aged 65 years or older, and 1% being 18 years or younger. The 2019 estimates also exhibit that 14.3% of the non-institutionalized population of the county have a disability, with 6.4% being 65 years or older.

Figure 3: Franklin County Age Distribution, 2010

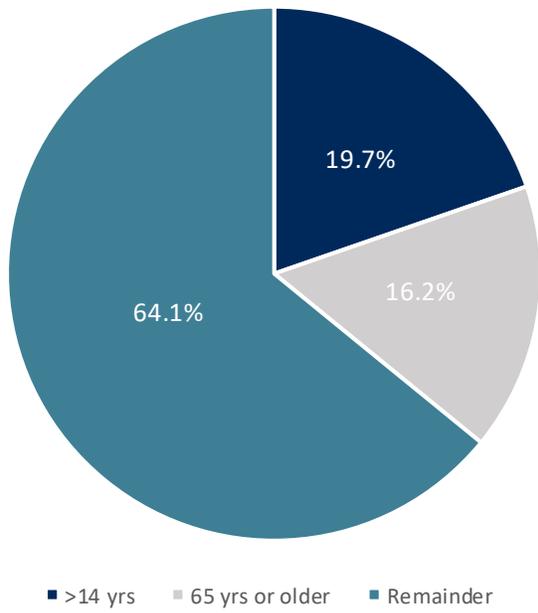


Figure 4: Franklin County Age Distribution, 2019

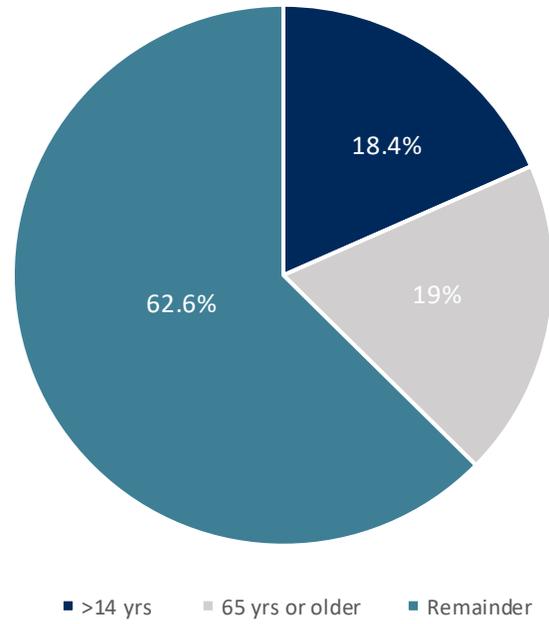
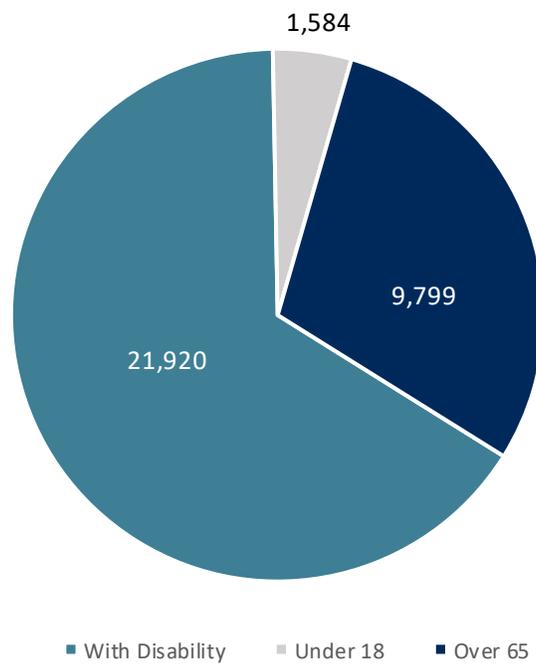
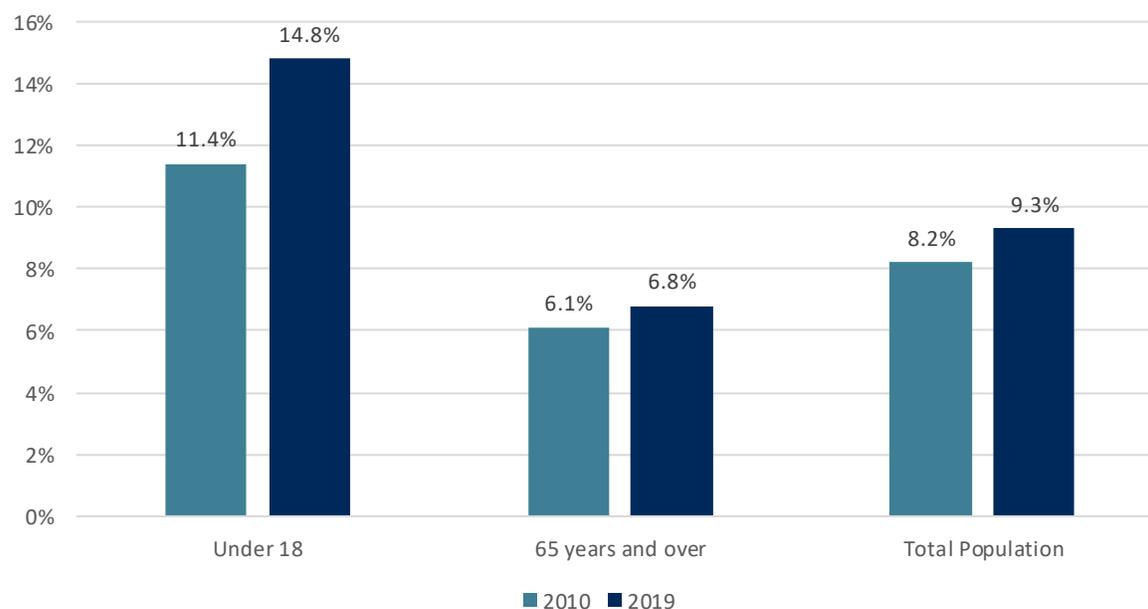


Figure 5: Franklin County Residents with Disabilities, 2010-2019



Over the course of the past decade, the county's aging population has continued to rise. With many persons living on fixed incomes, the poverty rate has increased among younger individuals. Persons 18 years or younger living below the poverty line increased from 11.4% in 2010 to 14.8% in 2019. Older residents, aged 65 years or older, living below the poverty line has remained steady, increasing by only 0.7% over the same time-period. Among the total population, poverty rates have risen from 8.2% to 9.3% over the past decade.

Figure 6: Franklin County Poverty Rate, 2010-2019



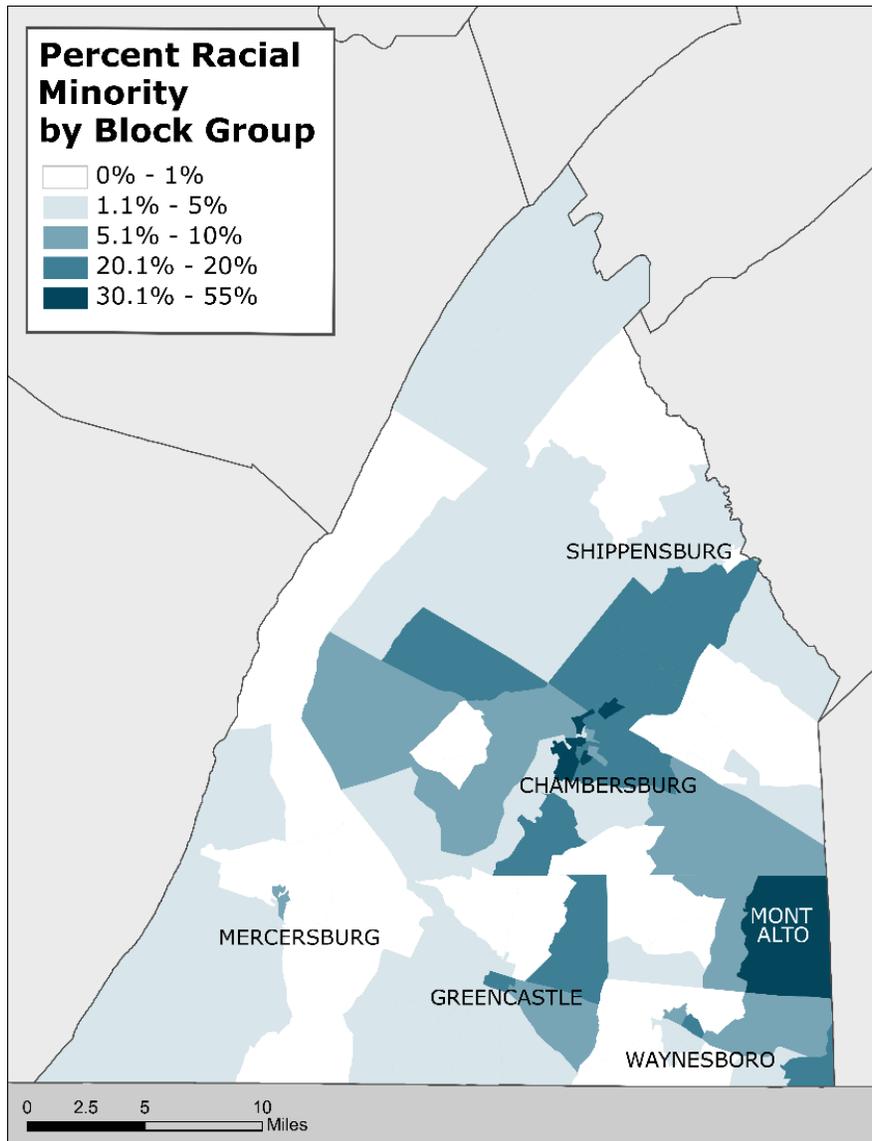
Transit poverty refers to a systemic lack of transportation and mobility options. In this context, there is a proven correlation between low incomes and transit poverty, whereby mobility problems are the result of poverty situations and at the same time compound them. Transit poverty might be connected to a lack of transit services or infrastructure and is commonly associated with private vehicle ownership. Having access to a car is an important determinant of labor market outcomes. Car ownership in Franklin County is approximately the same as the national average, with an average of two cars per household according to DataUSA. Approximately 89% of the county's residents own at least one vehicle while 10.9% do not have a vehicle in their household. Transport affordability is only a subset of a broader 'transit poverty' problem.

The inability to effectively communicate can also be very limiting and stressful. Language barriers create difficulties in navigating an environment. Among county residents, 11.4% speak a language other than English while at home. According to 2019 Census estimates, 4.3% of this population said they speak English "less than very well". Primary languages spoken within the county include English (88.6%), Spanish (5%), other Indo-European languages (3.7%), and Asian and Pacific Islander languages at (1%).

While population and employment density are the primary drivers of transit demand, other factors have an influence over the decision for a traveler to take transit, or someone's transit propensity. National research including Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 28: Transit Markets of the Future, identified that some population groups have a higher propensity for transit use than the overall population. Those groups include women, seniors, adults under 25 years old, low-income residents, zero-vehicle households, persons with disabilities, ethnic and racial

minorities, workers with a GED-equivalent degree or less, and foreign-born residents. Figure 7, Percent Racial Minority by Block Group, displays areas of Franklin County with high percentages of minority residents. Residents in these areas that receive human services have a higher probability of needing transportation assistance.

Figure 7: Percent Racial Minority by Block Group



Transportation Inventory

Generally, common transportation options include walking, cycling, privately owned automobiles, carpooling, public transportation, and taxis/transportation network companies (TNCs).

Walking

According to the ACS 2019 5-year estimates, 2.2% of Franklin County's working population indicated walking as their main means of traveling to work. Due to the demographic and geographic nature of the county, walking is not an ideal form of transport. The county lacks a fully connected sidewalk network, causing safety concern for residents who walk. To reach the Franklin County Human Services offices, located on Franklin Farm Lane in Chambersburg, residents must cross at the busy intersection of Franklin Farm Lane and Lincoln Highway (US 30), which does not have sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure.

Cycling

Only 0.1% of the working population indicated that they primarily commute by bicycling. Bicycles can be a cheaper, more accessible alternative to owning a vehicle; however, there is not a wide-reaching network of bicycle infrastructure to support safer commuting by cycling.

Carpooling

In 2019, 9.8% of commuters indicated carpooling as a means of traveling to work, compared to 82.3% driving alone. Carpooling occurs when multiple people share a vehicle to journey together, preventing the use of multiple vehicles being driven to a location. By multiple people using a single vehicle, the overall cost of the journey decreases per person which may include fuel costs, tolls, parking fees, and vehicle maintenance. Franklin County residents can use the Commuter Services of Pennsylvania program that helps commuters find carpool partners and groups of commuters for their vanpool services by utilizing the Commute PA smartphone app.

Public Transportation

An estimated 0.3% of commuters utilize PennDOT's public shared-ride service, provided in Franklin County by rabbitransit. The service is a demand-response, door-to-door service that groups riders together based on their travel times and destinations. This fare-based program is available to the public and is subsidized to be more affordable for seniors, persons with disabilities, and Medical Assistance (MATP) users.

TNCs / Taxis

Transportation Network Companies (TNC) and taxi services are private organizations that transport individuals to and from destinations determined by the passenger. The most popular TNCs are Uber and Lyft. TNCs ride-source by connecting passengers via digital technology to drivers providing rides using their personal vehicle. Some TNCs offer ridesharing with other riders as well. Taxis operate ride-hailing services using a fleet of company-owned vehicles. Franklin County does not currently have a reliable supply of TNCs or taxi services to provide predictable travel.

Current Service Providers

The following are the current providers of organized transportation for the public in Franklin County.

rabbittransit

PennDOT’s shared-ride transportation service is provided by rabbittransit 4am-11pm Monday through Saturday, 7am-7pm Sundays.

All riders must register using the application on PennDOT’s website. Once registered, reservations are required to be made in advance. All reservations must be made by noon the business day before the desired trip reservation. Trips may also be reserved as far as two weeks in advance. If reserving a trip for Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, reservations must be made by noon on Friday.

Trips may be reserved by calling the rabbittransit Call Center at 1-800-632-9063. Trip planning and scheduling shared ride trips can be done online using the FindMyRidePA website www.FindMyRidepa.com.



The shared-ride service fare rate is based on fare type and mileage.

Fare Type	Zone 1 (up to 9.99 miles)	Zone 2 (10 – 19.99 miles)	Zone 3 (20 – 29.99 miles)	Zone 4 (30+ miles)
Senior Shared Ride: 65+	\$2.40	\$3.75	\$4.80	\$6.75
Senior Shared Ride: 60+ (Medical, Errands, Work)	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50
Senior Shared Ride: 60-64 (Shopping, Restaurant, Beauty Salon)	\$16.00	\$25.00	\$32.00	\$45.00
Persons with Disabilities	\$2.40	\$3.75	\$4.80	\$6.75
Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
General Public	\$16.00	\$25.00	\$32.00	\$45.00

Uber / Lyft

Due to Franklin County’s sparse population, residents are unable to rely on TNCs such as Uber or Lyft as a means of transportation. Stakeholders reported that TNC services are often not available to hail for a trip. When a TNC is available, many potential riders cannot afford the costly fare. Uber and Lyft also do not generally offer paratransit options or child car safety devices, making this service difficult to use for many residents needing Human Services. Some jurisdictions across the United States have contracted with TNCs to provide paratransit services.

Taxis

Taxis operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, however, only residents living in or near Chambersburg benefit from these services. The two taxicab companies in Franklin County are:

- Chambersburg City Cab
562 Broad St, Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 261-1538
- Chambersburg Taxi Present Paratransit Car Service
208 South Main Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 377-0806

Office of Veterans Affairs

The Office of Veterans Affairs aids county veterans by assisting in healthcare enrollment, benefit claims submission and appeals, and provides information on available resources and benefits. Veterans have limited options if they want to utilize the Veterans' Health Administration (VA)'s healthcare system and receive reimbursement. In addition, they must rely on community and recovery support resources (e.g., halfway house manager, fellow support group members, family members) as the county's Veteran Affairs staff is not allowed to drive them.

A volunteer transfer network offers transportation services by appointment, Monday through Friday from 9:00am through 1:00pm. Passengers must be able to get to the van on their own, placing limitations on disabled veterans.

Agency on Aging

Franklin County Area Agency on Aging assists residents who are sixty years and older by providing a planned program of supported services to optimize their independence and enhance their quality of life. Residents can enroll in the Free Pass Program if they are at or under 133% of the federal poverty limit, allowing them to have their rides subsidized for essential trips.

Children and Youth Services

The local public child welfare agency, Franklin County Children and Youth Service (FCCYS) is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of dependent children from birth to eighteen years of age. County vehicles are utilized for medical appointments, family visits, and court-ordered assessments. Contracted in-home provider agencies can also be utilized for patient transportation.

Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities/Early Intervention (MH/IDD/EI)

MH/IDD/EI partners with the community to provide services to children and adults with a serious mental illness, an intellectual disability, or a developmental delay. ANR Transportation is a contracted service through the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs. It provides transport to Occupational Services, Inc (OSI) if residents are registered with IDD. Contracted residential service agencies occasionally use their own vehicles to provide transportation for clients.

Commuter Services of Pennsylvania

This organization works to reduce traffic congestion by helping commuters find alternatives, other than driving alone, and by reaching out to employers so they can help their workforce find those options. Residents can utilize the Commute PA smartphone app to connect with others to find carpooling and vanpooling solutions. The app promotes ridesharing in partnership with the area's major employers and can help users join a car or vanpool. More information can be accessed at www.pacommuterservices.org.



Occupational Services, Inc. of Chambersburg (OSI)

OSI assists adults with disabilities or other employment barriers by helping them maximize their abilities and reach their highest potential through vocational programs and employment services. Using private transportation, OSI provides individuals that utilize their service with transportation to and from job sites. Clients must find their own transportation from their residence to OSI.

The ARC of Franklin & Fulton Counties

The ARC's goal is helping individuals with developmental disabilities to be able to fully participate in civil, social, educational, health, and employment activities in their communities. Transportation is available to adults with developmental disabilities and provides transportation to and from OSI. Fare is based on a per trip basis. Transportation one-way to a destination is considered a "trip."

Keystone Health

Keystone Health is the only federally qualified Community Health Center in Franklin County. It is an affordable, full-service, primary care facility. A grant-funded contract was signed with Lyft using their Healthcare program. Unfortunately, this service has not been utilized since 2019 due to the lack of availability of drivers and the previously mentioned difficulties of using TNCs.

Transportation Needs and Service Gaps

Through the collaboration and cooperation of human service agencies, transportation organizations, advisory councils, and the general public, various needs and service gaps continue to be identified in Franklin County over time. Four key themes were identified by conducting key stakeholder interviews with the county's human services agencies and were also presented to the Franklin County Transportation Advisory Committee for their review and approval. These themes include:

Location / Access to Services

Human services are widespread throughout the county with some located outside of the county. The locations that provide necessary services are not always located in areas that are walkable, bikeable, or easily accessible.

Hours of Service

Most human services offered operate during normal business hours, which may create conflicts for clients and limit their availability due to work or other commitments.

Lack of Access to Affordable Transportation Options

The cost of transportation can be a barrier for some individuals requiring human services. Affordable public transit options are limited by a lack of fixed-route transit service and the general lack of taxis and transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft.

Wait Times and Flexibility

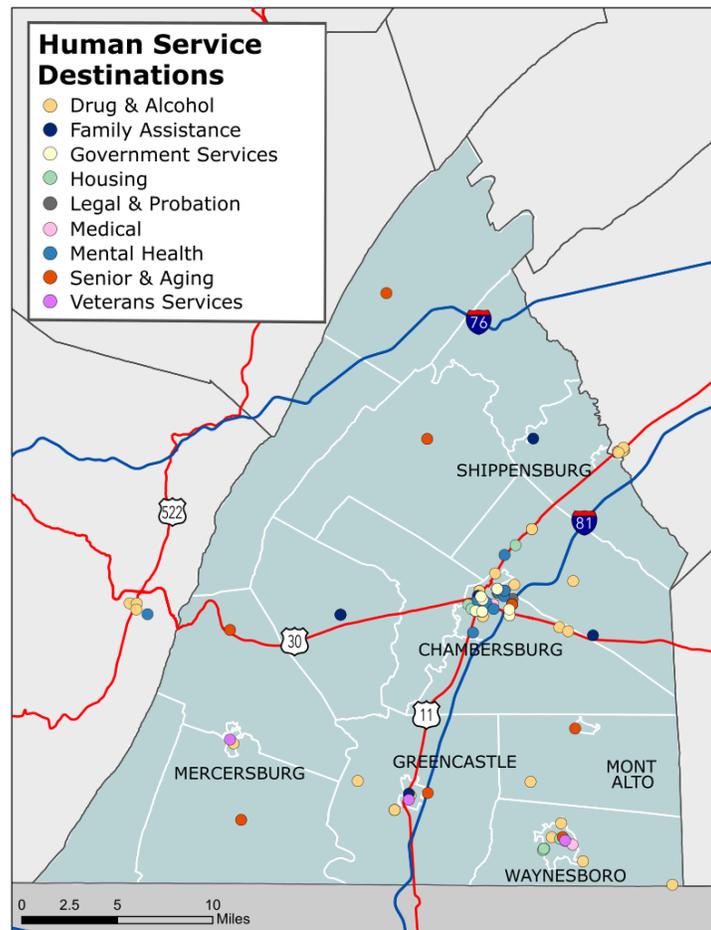
Demand response trips on transit require advanced scheduling with pick-up and drop-off windows. Appointments, events, or errands may only last for an hour, but clients may have to wait up to an hour for their return trip to arrive. This can create a situation where a one-hour task could require three hours.

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders provided countless examples where these key themes in human services transportation limited the provision of necessary services to their clients.

Location and Access to Services

While most of the county-provided services are centrally located, other services and important destinations for clients are spread widely throughout the county, with some even located beyond Franklin County’s borders. Human services stakeholders indicated that their services among others are not always easily accessible, especially for those whose primary means of travel is walking or biking.

Figure 8: Human Service Destinations



Services across Franklin County may not be easily accessed by walking or biking due to lack of infrastructure or density.

Since Franklin County’s human services are spread out over its 773 square miles, safe access by walking or biking is hindered by the distance between these services and the lack of necessary bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on the county’s transportation system. This is a critical consideration for individuals who do not own or have access to a private, personal car. Stakeholders mentioned that while most of the county’s human services departments are all centrally located, they are primarily accessed from the Lincoln Highway (US 30), which is not very accommodating to pedestrians and bicyclists. The sidewalk network is not entirely connected, and wide shoulders are not always available to provide safe separation between pedestrians, bicycles, and motorized vehicles. In more densely developed areas like the boroughs, lighting is not always suitable for

individuals to feel safe and secure while walking or cycling in the evening hours, even if adequate infrastructure is in place.

Individuals in need of transportation services may have multiple appointments in a single day. Riders may also require transportation multiple times throughout a single day to access more than one appointment or service. For example, a person dealing with substance abuse may need to meet with their probation officer, go to a medical appointment, and attend recovery support counseling all within one business day. Depending on a client's schedule, these appointments with different service providers may be taking place within a short timeframe or may conflict. Since many of these services are not centralized in the county, stakeholders indicated that their clients are not always able to arrive for appointments in a timely manner due to transportation barriers, forcing them to choose between commitments. Based on the example above, the individual with substance abuse issues may choose to attend the meeting with their probation officer to avoid legal penalties rather than the necessary medical appointment due to lack of transportation.

Hours of Service

To better accommodate daily schedules, residents who are employed during the day, do not have access to a personal vehicle, or need to reach multiple services within a single day would benefit from longer hours of operation for human services, including evenings and weekends.

Human services limited to normal business hours may require a client and/or other individuals to take additional time off from work.

Currently, a person utilizing Franklin County's human services programs can only access these services on weekdays during normal business hours. Without additional, flexible hours of service, clients may have to take time off from their job for their scheduled trip, as well as to attend their appointment. If someone has frequent appointments or multiple appointments in one day, this could potentially cause clients to have to schedule, reschedule, or cancel appointments due to transportation barriers, hindering their overall quality of life.

Lack of Access to Affordable Transportation Options

While a fixed-route service would be beneficial in Franklin County, it is not feasible or economically viable due to the county's rural landscape and low population density. This results in a high dependence on other transportation options including shared-ride and demand-response services. Franklin County previously had a fixed-route service operated by the Chambersburg Transit Authority (CTA). CTA was created in 1991 to provide public transportation in the Borough of Chambersburg and eventually expanded service to Waynesboro in 1997. Due to internal circumstances, operations to cease and prompted the Authority to disband in 2004. Currently, there are no other fixed-route services within Franklin County's boundaries.

In April 2016, Franklin County appointed rabbittransit as their shared ride provider; however, without flexibility and diversity in transportation options, residents who do not qualify for reduced fare programs have limited transportation options.

Lack of access to affordable public transit options or availability may lead to difficulties meeting the needs of low-income and disabled populations.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 ACS estimates, 81.5% of Franklin County's population commute to work and travel to appointments or errands alone in a personal vehicle. For people who do not own or cannot afford a personal vehicle, public transit or ridesharing can be a lifeline in accessing job opportunities, healthcare services, and other support networks. If transportation services are unavailable, elderly or physically disabled individuals are relying upon the availability of

paratransit services or the support of family, friends, and neighbors to keep appointments for job interviews, medical care, errands, and volunteer responsibilities.

Wait Times and Flexibility

Riders need to budget for appointment times, both trip times, and pick-up/drop-off windows.

For some programs, trip reservations must be booked in advance and passengers cannot change the location of return trips on the day of the trip. On average, there is a 30-minute pick-up window that begins 15 minutes before the scheduled trip time and extends 15 minutes after. Riders are asked to be ready and waiting during that window. Appointments, events, or errands may only last an hour, but passengers must sit and wait at the stop for the next available transport vehicle. This may lead to a one-hour task becoming a three-hour task. Passengers may also have to sit for long periods of time on the van before getting dropped off. These long travel times can be difficult for seniors, those with disabilities, with children, or those running errands.

Some transportation services have limits on the number of individuals allowed to escort a passenger.

Passengers are commonly allowed one escort for their trip; however, some passengers may need more than one person to accompany them under certain circumstances. This may include multiple children or a caregiver and a child. For example, a parent may need to accompany their disabled child and in need of transportation service; however, they may not have childcare for another child at home. As a result, they may need to bring that second child along as well. Some mentally disabled passengers may also require that more than one caregiver travels with them. This may cause unwanted, additional stress on both the caregiver and the passenger, and may lead to the cancellation of a necessary appointment due to these external circumstances. For cab and ride-hailing services, many riders with children or other persons accompanying them may not have the scheduling flexibility or the financial resources to utilize the service.

Wait times for service may be extended due to limited vehicle accommodations and accessibility or fleet sizes.

Vehicle accommodations and fleet sizes may cause riders to experience longer waits for transportation services. Stakeholders expressed that this is a concern for physically disabled riders and for families with one or more children.

Depending on the service provided and the vehicle being used for transport (e.g., passenger van, small bus, a driver's personal vehicle), only a certain number of passengers in wheelchairs or scooters may be accommodated at one time. If a passenger van is only accessible to one wheelchair or scooter, that van is unable to transport another physically disabled person until the first has completed their trip and disembarked. This may cause long delays in service and the individual may miss their scheduled appointment if they have no other means of transportation. Wait times may extend even longer if fleet sizes that can accommodate physically disabled passengers are small, decreasing overall efficiency.

For riders with children under the age of eight, booster seats may be required to ride safely per Pennsylvania child safety laws. Booster seats may not be readily available or provided depending on the transportation service being used. For example, ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft do not regularly provide child booster seats and cannot offer rides to young children without one.

Goals

Franklin County's human service providers are working diligently to provide vital services to the community. The following goals support their efforts within the context of transportation:

- 1. Provide clients with resources to better utilize transportation services**
Within the county, there is a multitude of transportation options available, but they are not all well-known nor all easily accessible. This goal includes a focus on resources such as access to information and education, access methods, and other strategies to enable citizens to find transportation. This also includes strategies to maintain, and the potential to enhance the current demand response transit system already in place.
- 2. Promote coordination of human services within the county to mitigate potential transportation conflicts**
As some citizens require multiple human services, this goal is focused on improving coordination between those services to mitigate avoidable transportation challenges. Strategies include considering extended hours of service, coordination of appointments across agencies, and consideration of service locations.
- 3. Enable future planning efforts to support inclusive transportation throughout the county**
Franklin County's agencies and organizations have developed strategies to meet the needs of their respective clients. This goal is focused on continued progress towards a coordinated transportation system. Strategies include policy and guidance to ensure future services are supported by affordable transportation options.

Implementation Strategies

Short-Term (1-2 years)

Continue to meet with the stakeholder group assembled for this plan update

Public and private sector stakeholders provided valuable feedback on each of the themes and contributed to the development of the plan's implementation strategies. Their continued involvement in the coordination of human services transportation could be both transformational and serve as a role model for other jurisdictions.

Expand / Diversify hours of service for human services

Longer hours of service on evenings and weekends would help accommodate residents without access to a vehicle, job schedules, and residents having to reach multiple services within a single day. Private sector organizations, such as medical providers, have made this adjustment over the past decade. It is not uncommon to find medical offices with evening appointment availability on at least one weekday and/or appointment availability on one weekend per month. This can be achieved with negligible cost impacts by shifting hours from other days.

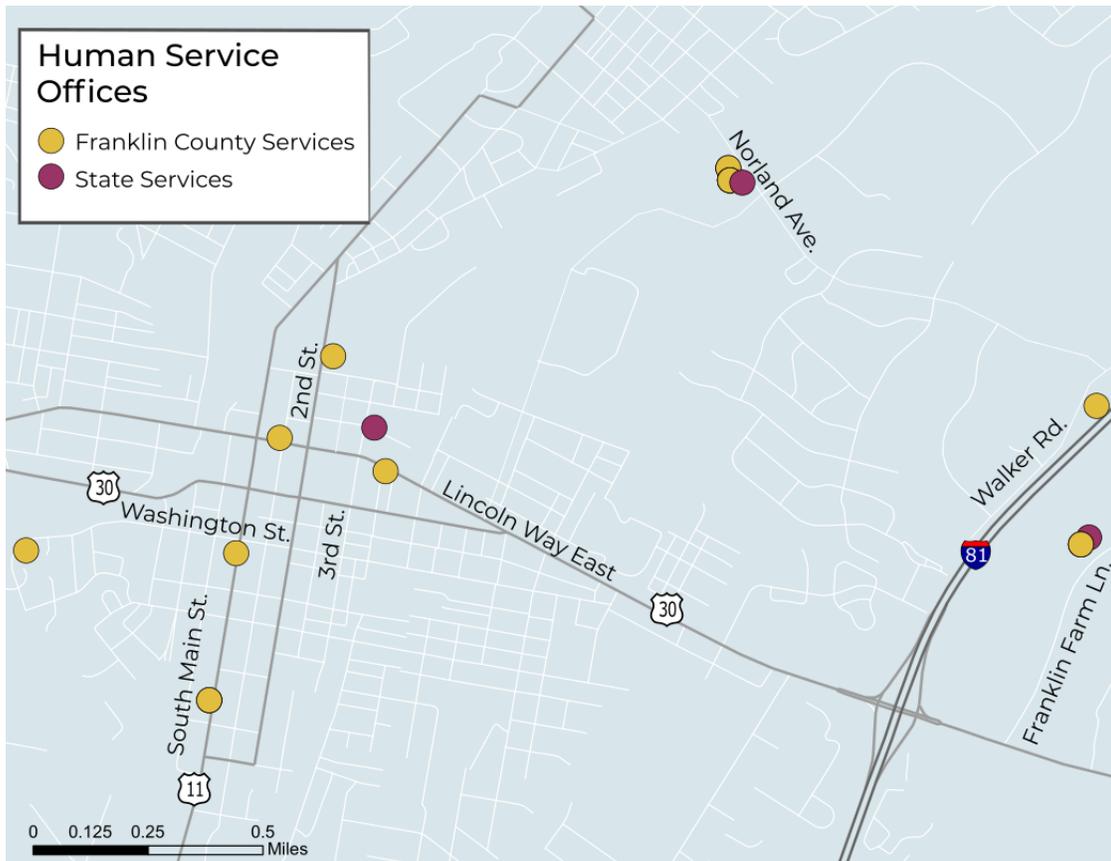
This change would mitigate some of the need for clients to take off from work or have a family member take off from work to transport them to an appointment. It would also potentially facilitate multiple appointments with different agencies on the same day by expanding the period between appointments.

Develop satellite meeting spaces for human service appointments

Coordination of services between agencies could facilitate multiple appointments in a single location. For example, stakeholders provided anecdotal examples of case managers and probation officers meeting clients at locations other than their offices. Other stakeholders expressed support for these types of arrangements by offering such office space at their facilities. It may be possible for human service organizations to partner with local medical facilities to meet clients on dedicated days at those locations. This would reduce the number of trips a client would need to take. With careful coordination between the most frequently used human services, appointments could be coordinated to minimize trips for both staff and clients.

The county could also establish agreements between its departments so that they may utilize space within each other's facilities for client meetings. Establishments may include county-owned facilities, libraries, medical facilities, or schools and would accommodate those without a vehicle or those having to access multiple services within a single day.

Figure 9: Franklin County Human Service Offices



Human Service Offices in Chambersburg are spread out and the lack of necessary bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can make accessing these services dangerous and timely.

Add a summary of all the Human Services departments and the community services offered onto the Human Services landing page on the Franklin County website

An informational, user-friendly website can allow users to access information at their own convenience. Having an overview of the departments and the available services on the Human Services landing page allows users to decide which service(s) they need without having to click on each department’s page. The website’s Information and Referral page has “Where to Turn for Help” guides that include descriptions of services that could provide these summaries. Adding these guides to the landing page would also be beneficial as they give a more thorough list of services. The same information could be made available as a hard copy brochure that could address the segment of the population that does not have access to the Internet.

Evaluate the potential for Transportation Management Association

A transportation management association (TMA) is an organization comprised of groups that use selected approaches to facilitate movement within an area. TMAs allow organizations to pool their resources to support transportation strategies and can act in an advocacy role with Franklin County on behalf of its membership. There are already multiple organizations such as churches within Franklin County that are providing strategic transportation services on a volunteer basis. If these organizations work together and organize their efforts, they could provide a system that could close the gap created by the lack of a fixed-route transit system. The business community may be willing to provide additional resources to support such a TMA. For example, there are successful TMAs in

Pittsburgh, Houston, and Seattle that complement already extensive transit systems. If the study determines a TMA is feasible, it could be implemented as a mid-term strategy.

Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Study the feasibility of first-and-last mile connection solutions

First-and-last mile connections would increase residents' access to public transportation.

- Subsidized Bike Program

Bicycles are a cost-effective active transportation mode that could be an effective tool to support human services transportation. Bicycles could be used by clients that do not own a vehicle but have a need to travel a distance too long to walk in a reasonable time. For example, a 3-mile walk could take a reasonable person 1-hour to complete but could be bicycled in 18 minutes. A program to provide low or no cost bicycles could provide a solution to those clients that are physically capable of cycling but who lack the means to purchase a safe bicycle. As an alternative, Franklin County could partner with a bike-share company and provide subsidized access to bike rentals.

- Sidewalks

Improving safe pedestrian access is important to all citizens, especially those that do not own a vehicle. Sidewalks can be an expensive asset for some homeowners to add to their properties. Ongoing maintenance requirements may also deter businesses from installing sidewalks on own. Franklin County could establish a sidewalk grant program that subsidizes a modest amount of sidewalk installation each year. This type of a program may encourage businesses and neighborhood associations generate sidewalk programs that would not otherwise be completed.

Begin budgeting for long-term strategies

Identifying and programming federal transportation funding for long-term strategies should begin in the mid-term to support implementation in the long-term. This process should be included in future iterations of the MPO's transportation improvement program development process.

Long-Term (Beyond 5 years)

Establish a Human Services Center where human service agencies could be co-located

Currently, human services are spread out across the county and it can be difficult and time-intensive for residents to reach multiple services within a single day. A single, central location could also be beneficial to the county's human services' departments and offer them the opportunity to work together and possibly streamline services. It may be advantageous for Franklin County to consider a single building or complex where the most used human services could be co-located.

Implement feasible first-and-last mile connections

Implementation of the first-and-last mile connection solutions that were identified in the study conducted in the mid-term can be implemented in the long-term. Budgets developed in the mid-term should support these solutions.

Conclusion

Human service agencies provide support for Franklin County’s most vulnerable residents, and access to their services is critical to many individual families and to the health and quality of life for residents of the county. A reliable transportation network is essential to allow seniors to age in place, individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the life of the community, and disadvantaged individuals to maintain their health and safety. This plan documents the collaborative efforts of stakeholders with both a vested interest in human services, and potentially the influence and resources to implement change.

The Franklin County MPO will continue to evaluate solutions and coordinate with the county’s human services agencies to better understand the public’s needs. The MPO has a desire to collaborate with surrounding counties to develop a more comprehensive plan to support the region and this plan will offer valuable inputs into that process.