

# Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

## *Western Maryland Region*

*Allegany, Frederick, Garrett and Washington Counties*

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# Acknowledgments

Input from a wide range of stakeholders was a key component in the development of this plan. Special thanks to the stakeholders who participated in regional workshops and focus groups and provided input throughout the planning process. Their input was especially beneficial in the assessment of transportation needs in the region and in the development of potential strategies to improve mobility. In addition, appropriate information and pictures were obtained from the websites of some regional stakeholders.

Special thanks go to Tri-County Council for Western Maryland for their assistance throughout the development of this plan, and in particular with workshop logistics and outreach efforts.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), maintained formula grants through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. This program funds transportation services planned, designed, and provided to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. As noted by the FTA, Section 5310 Program funding can be used for "traditional" capital projects and for "nontraditional" capital and/or operating projects that go beyond the scope of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service or public transportation alternatives designed to assist older adults and people with disabilities.

One of the federal requirements of the Section 5310 Program is that projects selected for funding must be included in a locally-developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (Coordinated Transportation Plan). In response to this requirement, the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration's (MDOT MTA) Office of Local Transit Support (OLTS) that administers the state's public transit and human services funding programs, including the Section 5310 Program, led the update of regional coordinated transportation plans. This is the Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Western Maryland Region that includes Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties as shown in **Figure 1-1**. This plan builds upon an initial version produced in 2007, and subsequently updated in 2010, 2015, and 2019. Future projects funded through the Section 5310 Program will be derived from this updated Coordinated Transportation Plan.

### Plan Contents

**Chapter 1** (this chapter) provides background information on the planning process and the Section 5310 Program.

**Chapter 2** discusses outreach efforts and the involvement of regional stakeholders in the planning process.

**Chapter 3** provides a review of recent plans and studies in the region that are relevant to the planning process.

**Chapter 4** provides a review of current transportation services and resources in the region.

**Chapter 5** provides an assessment of the transportation needs in the region based on input from key stakeholders.

**Chapter 6** provides an assessment of transportation needs in the region through a demographic analysis.

**Chapter 7** presents strategies to meet transportation needs as identified and prioritized by regional stakeholders.

**Chapter 8** discusses proposed ongoing arrangements in the region to continue the momentum from the planning process.

**Chapter 9** provides the process for approval of this coordinated transportation plan.

**Chapter 10** provides helpful resources with efforts to improve mobility in the region.



## Section 5310 Program

The goal of the Federal Section 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the country by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. Toward this goal, FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas—large urbanized, small urbanized, and rural. The program requires coordination with other federally-assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of federal resources.

The program is designed to supplement other capital and operating assistance programs by funding transportation projects for seniors and individuals with disabilities in urbanized, small urban and rural areas. The program seeks to enhance coordination of state- and federally-assisted programs and services to encourage the most efficient use of resources and achieve the programs' goal of improved mobility.

The objectives of the Section 5310 Program in Maryland are to:

- Maximize the use of funds available to the State of Maryland
- Distribute funds in an equitable and effective manner
- Promote and encourage applications from a broad spectrum of interested agencies
- Establish criteria for evaluating applications for program funds
- Provide technical assistance to organizations through workshops and administrative assistance
- Coordinate Maryland's efforts to provide quality human services transportation by working with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, transit customers, and transportation providers to develop a cooperative, coordinated, and human services transportation system

More information on the Section 5310 Program in Maryland can be found at <https://www.taminc.org/5310-grant>.

## Coordinated Transportation Planning Requirements

FTA guidance defines a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan as one that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services and projects for funding and implementation. There are five required plan elements:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identify 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, and opportunities to achieve efficiency in service delivery.
- (4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing the specific strategies and/or activities identified.
- (5) Where less than 100 percent fleet accessibility for demand-response service is anticipated, a demonstration of how the requirement for equivalent service will be met.

All vehicles funded through the Section 5310 Program in Maryland are accessible. In addition, public transit systems in the region that provide demand-response services utilize accessible vehicles, and those that operate fixed routes provide ADA complementary paratransit services for persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route system. Therefore, this plan addresses elements one through four.

## Coordination with Other Federal Programs

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) is a federal interagency council that works to coordinate funding and provide expertise on human services transportation for three targeted populations—people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income. The CCAM works at the federal level to improve coordination of transportation resources and to address barriers faced by states and local communities when coordinating transportation. The CCAM's mission is to issue policy recommendations and implement activities that improve the availability, accessibility, and efficiency of transportation for CCAM's targeted populations, with the vision of equal access to coordinated transportation for all Americans.

As part of the coordination efforts, CCAM encourages federal fund braiding for local match that allow grant recipients to use funds from one federal program to meet the match requirements of another, such as the Section 5310 Program. The CCAM Federal Fund Braiding Guide provides information to

potential grantees on acceptable fund-braiding arrangements on transportation-related projects. The guide defines federal fund braiding for local match and examines whether federal fund braiding is also allowable for 61 programs across CCAM agencies that may fund transportation. More information on CCAM and access to the braiding guide can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/coordinating-council-access-and-mobility>. This website also provides links to multiple FTA-funded transportation technical assistance centers that also offer guidance with coordination efforts.

Additionally, in March 2022, FTA posted guidance clarifying coordination of human services transportation on a new transportation coordination webpage. As noted by FTA, coordinated transportation involves multiple entities working together to deliver one or more components of a transportation service to increase capacity. The transportation coordination guidance aims to reduce overlap between the federal programs across nine agencies that may fund human services transportation and incentivize collaboration by clarifying eligible reporting into the National Transit Database (NTD). This new guidance addresses the following topics as they relate to NTD reporting: definition of public transportation; paratransit; charter service; incidental use of transit assets; and trip brokering. This guidance can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/access/ccam/about/transportation-coordination>.

## Going Beyond the Federal Requirements

While this plan meets federal coordinated transportation planning requirements, it is also consistent with FTA guidance—encouraging broad efforts that incorporate activities offered under a variety of transportation programs sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact. Therefore, this plan takes a broad approach that includes:

- Documenting the variety of transportation services offered in the region, and beyond those funded through the Section 5310 program.
- Incorporating and building upon ongoing and recent extensive planning efforts in the region.
- Placing an emphasis on moving people and expanding mobility options, by whatever means possible and through a variety of services.
- Providing strategies and potential projects beyond services funded through the Section 5310 program.

Overall, this plan is designed to serve as both a blueprint and a practical document for future discussions and efforts in the Western Maryland Region to improve regional mobility and coordination.

## Chapter 2

# Outreach and Planning Process

## Introduction

FTA guidance notes that states and communities may approach the development of a coordinated plan in different ways. This guidance also provides recommendations on the stakeholders, groups, and organizations that should be invited to participate in the coordinated planning process. MDOT MTA, in conjunction with regional planning agencies and the KFH Group, led a broad approach that incorporated these federal guidelines. This effort also built upon previous coordinated transportation planning activities to ensure the involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the planning process.

## Regional Outreach Efforts

Primary outreach efforts for the previous coordinated planning process in Western Maryland involved regional in-person workshops. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was recognized that some stakeholders may now prefer opportunities to participate through online efforts. Therefore, a hybrid approach that offered both in-person and online options at the two most important points in the planning process was utilized:

- An initial in-person regional workshop was conducted early in the planning process to gather and update information on transportation needs and transportation resources. A week later, an online focus with a similar agenda was conducted for stakeholders that preferred to participate in that manner.
- At a later in-person workshop, possible strategies were presented for stakeholder input and possible inclusion on the regional plan. Around the same time, an online focus group was held to obtain input from stakeholders that preferred to participate in that way.

Also recognizing that some stakeholders may have interest in multiple outreach events, marketing was conducted through a statewide effort that highlighted the initial workshop and focus groups in Western Maryland along with those in the other four regions. A statewide invitation list was developed that included various agencies and organizations familiar with transportation issues, especially regarding older adults and people with disabilities. Collectively, the invitation list was distributed to over 475 stakeholders, who were also encouraged to share the invitation through their contact lists to help ensure an even broader outreach effort.

Overall, consistent with FTA guidelines, the following stakeholder groups and organizations were included in outreach efforts:

- Transportation planning agencies
- Public transportation providers
- Private transportation providers
- Nonprofit transportation providers
- Past or current organizations funded under the Section 5310 Program
- Human services agencies funding, operating, and/or providing access to transportation services
- Advocacy organizations working on behalf of targeted populations
- Agencies that administer health, employment, or other support programs for targeted populations
- Nonprofit human services provider organizations that serve the targeted populations
- Job training and placement agencies
- Housing agencies
- Healthcare facilities
- Mental health agencies
- Economic development organizations
- Faith-based and community-based organizations

## **Western Maryland Area Coordinated Transportation Planning Workshops and Focus Groups**

In Western Maryland, the initial workshop and focus group were conducted in September 2025, and included representatives from:

- Aging programs
- Civil rights organizations
- Educational facilities
- Healthcare providers
- Human services agencies (including Section 5310 subrecipients)
- Local citizens
- Local governments
- Local transit systems
- Maryland Department of Transportation – Maryland Transit Administration
- Regional medical centers
- Regional planning agencies
- Workforce development agencies

The September workshop and focus group began with a review of the coordinated transportation planning process and the Section 5310 Program, along with a discussion on the important role of stakeholders in providing their input on transportation needs and potential solutions and in the collection of appropriate information and data for this plan. The major focus of those September outreach events was to obtain feedback from participants on transportation needs and identify opportunities to improve transportation services and mobility options in the region, particularly for older adults and people with disabilities.

At the conclusion of the initial outreach events, stakeholders were invited to stay involved with the coordinated planning process by participating in a second round of workshops and focus groups. These events were conducted in November 2025 and provided opportunity to review the transportation needs and gaps identified through the initial focus group and to discuss preliminary strategies for meeting these needs.

## Ongoing Stakeholder Input

While the rounds of workshops and focus groups served as the formal gathering of regional stakeholders, they also had multiple opportunities throughout the planning process to review interim documents and provide their input. This ongoing involvement included:

- Reviewing and commenting on a summary of the transportation needs from the initial outreach events.
- Reviewing and commenting on an inventory of public transit, human services transportation, and private transportation services identified in the region.
- Reviewing and prioritizing strategies identified as the most appropriate for improving mobility in the region.
- Reviewing and providing input on a draft version of this plan.

## Maryland Coordinated Community Transportation Website

To assist in outreach and planning efforts, a project website was established at <https://marylandcoordinatedplans.com>, and is shown in **Figure 2-1**. This website offered background information on the study and details on regional outreach events, was used to promote these events, and served as a place for stakeholders to register. The website was also used to post interim planning documents and a draft plan for stakeholder review and comments.

Figure 2-1: Home Page of the Maryland Coordinated Transportation Planning Website



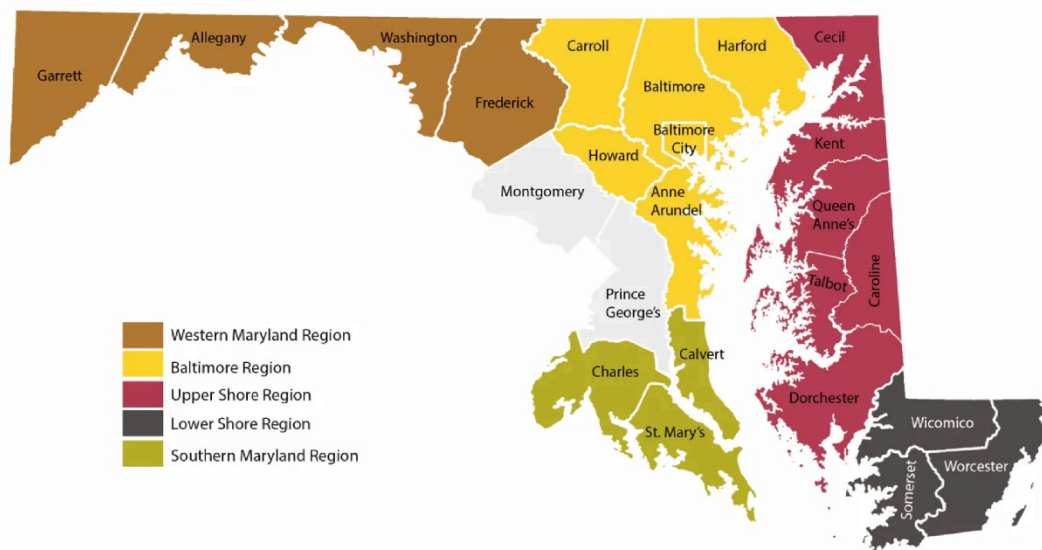
## Maryland Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plans

Welcome to the *Maryland Coordinated Transportation Planning* website. Through this effort the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) leads the development of regional Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plans that:

- Identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.
  - Provide strategies for meeting local and regional needs.
  - Prioritize transportation services and projects for funding and implementation.
  - Serve as the basis for federal funding through Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program.
- Therefore, it is vital that current and prospective applicants for Section 5310 funds are involved in the planning process.

Working in conjunction with regional planning organizations, and with assistance from the KFH Group, MDOT MTA is initiating an update of current regional plans. Stakeholders will have both in-person and online opportunities to provide input on transportation needs and possible strategies, activities, and/or projects to meet these needs. **Please click on the Regional Plan page of most interest to you for information on the events in your region and to register.**

### CLICK ON THE MAP BELOW TO ACCESS THE REGIONAL PLANS



Note: Montgomery and Prince George's counties are included in the *Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region*

## Chapter 3

# Previous Plans and Studies

### Introduction

As part of the overall assessment of conditions in Western Maryland, this chapter provides a review of recent plans in the region relating to public and specialized transportation. The primary components of this review are the previous version of this Western Maryland Coordinated Transportation Plan and the most recent versions of the Transit Development Plans (TDPs) conducted for the Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS).

### Previous Plans and Studies

#### Western Maryland Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (2019)

The 2019 version of this plan is the most recent version prior to the current one, and it serves as the foundation for the plan update.

The plan used a methodology and structure very similar to this current plan and developed a list of goals and strategies that would benefit Western Maryland:

- Maintain existing services
- Ensure customers are aware of existing transportation options
- Expand public transportation options in the region
- Expand specialized transportation services for people who are unable to use or access public transit services
- Consider a broader variety of transportation services that target specific needs identified through the coordinated transportation planning process
- Secure additional funding and resources to support community transportation services
- Expand access to employment opportunities in the region
- Improve coordination and connectivity between transportation providers in the region

## Transit Development Plans

This section discusses the most recent TDP conducted for the LOTS in the region. A TDP serves as a guide for public transportation improvements in a community or service area for the short-range future, and includes an assessment of transit needs, a review of the existing transit services, and a plan for proposed improvements for the county transit system. Those proposed improvements are what is highlighted in this section, divided into short-term (to be done within about a year), mid-term (two to four years), and long-term (five or more years). The LOTS use their TDPs as the basis for preparing Annual Transportation Plans (ATPs) that serve as their application for transit funding grants.

### Allegany County TDP (2025)

The most recent Allegany County TDP was completed earlier in 2025. It calls for a major overhaul of the fixed-route system, including new schedules and new hours for certain routes. The overall effect will be a system with similar levels of service, but with more regular routes. The Purple route's transition to demand response has already occurred.

#### Short-Term Improvements

- Transition Purple route from fixed route to demand response
- Develop new driver schedules for anticipated route changes
- Pilot new schedules for the Green and Gold routes, where Green focuses on serving the outskirts of Cumberland, and Gold focuses on connecting Frostburg to Cumberland
- Increase promotion of the IT Curves app

#### Mid-Term Improvements

- Significant changes to fixed-route schedules, including:
  - Elimination of Silver and Yellow routes
  - Red line begins running at 6:15 a.m. instead of 7:15 a.m.
  - Blue line runs until 6:30 p.m. instead of 4:30 p.m.
  - Full implementation of Green and Gold changes
- Publish new route and schedule materials to reflect service changes
- Work on system rebranding
- Evaluate success of demand-response Purple route
- Begin installing shelters at high-ridership bus stops

#### Long-Term Improvements

- Evaluation of service changes
- If funding is available, implement either additional demand-response service or Saturday service.
- Continue installing bus shelters

## Frederick County TDP (2022)

The proposed service plan for Frederick County from the county's 2022 TDP is below. It calls for several adjustments to the fixed routes, and for the service to be fare-free.

### Short-Term Improvements

- Minor route adjustments to #10 and Route 85 Shuttle.
- Merge routes #60 and #61 into one combined route
- Have routes #50 and #51 serve different areas
- Turn North Frederick Shuttle into a regular route

### Mid-Term Improvements

- Introduce fare-free service on fixed routes
- Sunday service
- Expanded Saturday service
- Pilot East Frederick Shuttle or Route 85 Shuttle as microtransit zones.
- Allow ADA-eligible passengers to ride free on fixed-routes

### Long-Term Improvements

- Increased connector route frequency
- Turn Route 85 Shuttle into the Ballenger Creek Connector
- Later evening hours

## Garrett County TDP (2019)

Garrett County's TDP is currently being updated. More information from that planning process will be added to the final version of this plan. The 2019 TDP recommended expanding the weekday hours and adding service on Saturday and Sunday.

## Washington County TDP (2025)

Washington County's most recent TDP calls for some minor changes to routes, as well as expanding service options to include fixed-scheduled service to rural areas as well as microtransit. The proposed service plan for Washington County is:

### Short-Term Improvements

- Minor route adjustments to Valley Mall route
- Minor route adjustments to Premium Outlets route
- Minor route adjustments to Maugansville route
- Eliminate peak and off-peak pricing – set a flat rate of \$2.00

## Mid-Term Improvements

- Introduce a new Hagerstown-Funkstown-Robinwood route
- Consolidate the two Long Meadow routes into one bidirectional route
- Pilot fixed-schedule service to Smithsburg, Boonsboro, and Clear Spring so that these rural communities have service without the cost of a fixed route
- Allow ADA-eligible passengers to ride free on fixed-routes

## Long-Term Improvements

- Improved branding and marketing
- Addition of Sunday service
- Extended evening hours
- Increased service frequency on Valley Mall, West End, and Robinwood routes
- Microtransit pilot in Hagerstown

# Comprehensive Plans

## Allegany County Comprehensive Plan (2014)

Allegany County's most recent comprehensive plan is from May 2014. The transportation element of the plan includes nine goals, along with supporting objectives and recommendations. These goals are:

- Encourage transportation infrastructure that enhances economic development.
- Support the development of trails and provide safe, convenient, and efficient bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout Allegany County.
- Provide an accessible, integrated, and well-maintained multimodal transportation network that provides for the movement of people and goods in a safe and efficient manner.
- Coordinate land use and transportation plans in decision making to ensure that transportation facilities are compatible with planned development.
- Correct safety problems and provide for street and roadway continuity.
- Recognize and promote the economic benefit of transit-oriented development.
- Increase walkability on roadways in Allegany County.
- Improve flow of local traffic patterns.
- Improve transportation networks—specifically at gateways leading into communities.

Specific objectives and recommendations pertaining to the public transportation network are as follows:

- Seek to maintain mobility and accessibility options throughout the county by continuing the interconnection of major activity centers such as LaVale and Cumberland with a system of arterial and collector roadways, while providing for the connection of those same centers with bus service.
- Strive to increase reliance on transit, carpooling and other travel options such as bicycling and walking, and trip reduction. Reduce the demand on the roadway network and provide mobility choices for those who do not have access to an automobile or would rather not use one.

## Frederick County Comprehensive Plan (2019)

The Livable Frederick Master Plan, adopted in September 2019, is a large-scale, long-term plan for Frederick County's growth and development until 2040. The plan takes a holistic approach to improving Frederick County for residents, workers, and visitors, and encompasses planning for Frederick County's community, health, economy, and environment. Public transit is emphasized throughout the plan as a manner of improving the transportation infrastructure, public health, workforce development, and environmental stewardship. The plan focuses specifically on creating a more multimodal community, where projects to improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users are undertaken to decrease the county's dependency on automobiles. Multimodal development in mixed use areas could relieve congestion, spur economic development, and provide housing to satisfy increased demand.

Specific transit-related goals are:

- Build housing in transit-accessible locations
- Focus development on target growth areas where multimodal development can be encouraged
- Develop a hub-and-spoke transit system between Frederick and outlying areas of the county
- Focus on Transit-oriented development in the south Frederick triangle, especially around the Monocacy MARC station
- Focus on Transit-oriented development in the Ballenger Creek area
- Establish a Bus Rapid Transit line along the I-270 corridor, and encourage transit-oriented development
- Use public art to encourage transit and non-motorized transportation
- Continue switching transit vehicles to alternative fuels

## Garrett County Comprehensive Plan (2022)

The Garrett County Comprehensive Plan serves as a long-range guide for managing growth, development, and conservation throughout the county. Transportation is included in the plan under the "Vibrant Economy" chapter. Transit is not a major focus, but there are some transit-related goals. These include:

- Promoting mobility for all by encouraging transit use
- Increased funding for GTS to provide competitive wages for drivers
- Seasonal fixed-route service to alleviate congestion
- Better coordination between GTS and the business community

The plan also highlights that GTS supports economic development by contracting with the Wisp Resort to provide shuttle service during ski season. However, the lack of transit caused issues for the county:

- There is not enough service for employers and workers
- A lack of fixed routes means that they are not providing an incentive for businesses to locate in downtown areas, hindering revitalization
- Having no fixed routes limits state funding and therefore the transit budget

- An aging population is going to need more transit service
- While the Garrett County Community Action Committee is trying to build more housing developments, state funding for them often goes to communities with transportation hubs and transit-oriented development.

## Washington County Comprehensive Plan (2022)

Washington County recently completed its 2040 Comprehensive Plan which seeks to guide development over the next 20 years. The key takeaways for transit from the transportation chapter are listed below.

- About 39% of commuters who rely on public transportation do not have access to a car.
- More Washington County workers are commuting from outside of the county.
- The increasingly complex transportation needs of the transit-dependent populations mean that current service hours are not sufficient.
- Transit-oriented development should be encouraged, as should increased density around transit stops and routes.
- Transit service needs to adapt to meet new development patterns in Washington County, such as service to new housing and warehouse developments outside of downtown Hagerstown.
- The county should work with employers to encourage workers to use carpooling and transit.

## Other Plans and Studies

### HEPMPO Direction 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (2022)

The Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization recently completed the Direction 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The plan focuses predominantly on projected development in the region and how the transportation network and transit service must adapt to meet the needs of that development.

The plan highlights that challenges facing HEMPO are traffic congestion, bus driver shortages, and a funding shortage for WCT, along with service gaps. Many of its recommendations are for increased WCT service, including more service to Martinsburg, Clear Spring, and Boonsboro, as well as Sunday service in Hagerstown. It also recommends implementing common fare instruments in HEMPO region, thereby being able to establish joint operating and marketing plans and have one centralized call center for dispatch.

## Cumberland Area MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (2021)

The 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, “The Mountain Side,” was adopted by the Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) in March 2021. The 25-year plan includes the following goals:

- Maintain and improve the transportation network.
- Foster safety and health.
- Sustain the environment and livable communities.
- Move people and goods efficiently.
- Revitalize the economy.
- Expand mobility options to advance equity.

The plan envisions that by 2050, the region will increase carpooling, decrease driving alone, double the number of people walking, biking, and working from home, and increasing bus use by a factor of five. The plan advocates flexibility of transit services, high frequencies, and access to bus stops. The plan also advocates for improved sidewalks, shelters, connecting paths, and wayfinding.

Specific public transportation projects included within the plan’s fiscally-constrained list are:

- The Frostburg Mobility Hub/Cumberland Study
- Frostburg Hillside Tram Connector Project
- ACT – replace maintenance garage service doors
- ACT – bus fleet updates
- MD 736 Braddock Road – sidewalks and bike lanes
- ACT – City Center Transit and Community Center

The plan also includes biking and walking projects, which are typically important for transit riders.

## Allegany County Health Planning Coalition Local Health Action Plan July 2020 – June 2023

To help improve the health and well-being of Allegany County residents, the Allegany Health Planning Coalition developed the Local Health Action Plan (LHAP). This plan is based on the results of a community health needs assessment. There are three priority areas addressed in the plan:

The primary goal within the transportation area is to “increase access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation.”

The objectives listed for this goal are:

- Each year of this cycle, educate at least 100 transportation users or service providers about the transportation options and system changes.
- Each year of this cycle, identify existing transportation alternatives (including delivery services and reverse transport options) and seek at least one new option to reduce the transportation barrier.

The desired outcomes are to reduce the percentage of missed medical appointments within the community due to a lack of transportation, and to reduce the percentage of people not being able to get to the grocery store also due to a lack of transportation.

The transportation committee of the Allegany Health Planning Coalition developed the following supporting strategies to help meet these objectives:

- Develop One-Call One-Click-shared system (Trip Master- CTS Software) for scheduling and tracking rides.
- Link dispatch services.
- Streamline the rules across services; coordinate transports to outlying areas.
- Coordinate rides during off-hours across the agency.
- Collaborate on grants for transportation.
- Increase education for users and staff who assist people with transportation.
- Establish Express Loops with certain days and routes; use geo-mapping of historic-use rides.

## 2020 Frederick County Bus Stop Assessment

In May 2020, funded by an MDOT MTA Statewide Transit Innovation Grant (STIG), Frederick County assessed approximately 325 of its 375 bus stops for ADA compliance and amenities to determine where improvements were most needed. All bus stops were evaluated for the presence of 10 bus stop attributes, listed below:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Accessible landing   | • Sidewalk connecting |
| • Drainage hazard      | • Sidewalk damage     |
| • Lighting             | • Sidewalk existing   |
| • Marked crosswalk     | • Sidewalk width      |
| • Opposing usable ramp | • Usable ramp         |

Additional reference data was provided for each stop to prioritize stops for repairs or improvements. This data included boardings, nearby trip generators, jurisdiction, and the presence of a shelter. These factors were used to create a prioritization score for each stop. Stops that had high average daily boardings and/or were near several trip generators received higher prioritization scores.

## Chapter 4

# Current Transportation Services and Resources

## Introduction

A variety of public transit, human services transportation and private transportation services are provided in the Western Maryland Region. This chapter offers an overview of transportation programs and services identified. The process to identify the various transportation resources available in the region included:

- Using information from the previous coordinated transportation plan for the region.
- Incorporating transportation resources identified by Tri-County Council for Western Maryland.
- Reviewing information from the most recent Transit Development Plans (TDPs) conducted in the region.
- Obtaining input from regional stakeholders through the coordinated transportation planning process.

## Public Transit

Each of the four counties in Western Maryland has their own Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS). Frederick, Washington, and Allegany Counties all provide fixed-route service, while Garrett County only operates demand response. Frederick County and Washington County are also served by MDOT MTA Commuter Service, and Frederick County has a countywide paratransit service for older adults and individuals with disabilities that goes beyond the complementary ADA service.

## Allegany County

### Allegany County Transit (ACT)

ACT routes center around a transfer station in downtown Cumberland, where all routes meet (except the FSU Shuttle). Most routes arrive there on the hour or the half hour, allowing for timed transfers. The Red and Blue routes serve Cumberland, while the Gold, Green, and Purple serve other parts of the county. The Yellow and Silver go everywhere the other routes go, but in the evening and early morning, respectively. Oversight, administration, and the operation of public transportation services in Allegany County are provided by the Allegany County Department of Public Works. There are eight fixed routes within Allegany County, as shown in **Table 4-1**. These routes are shown in **Figure 4-1**.

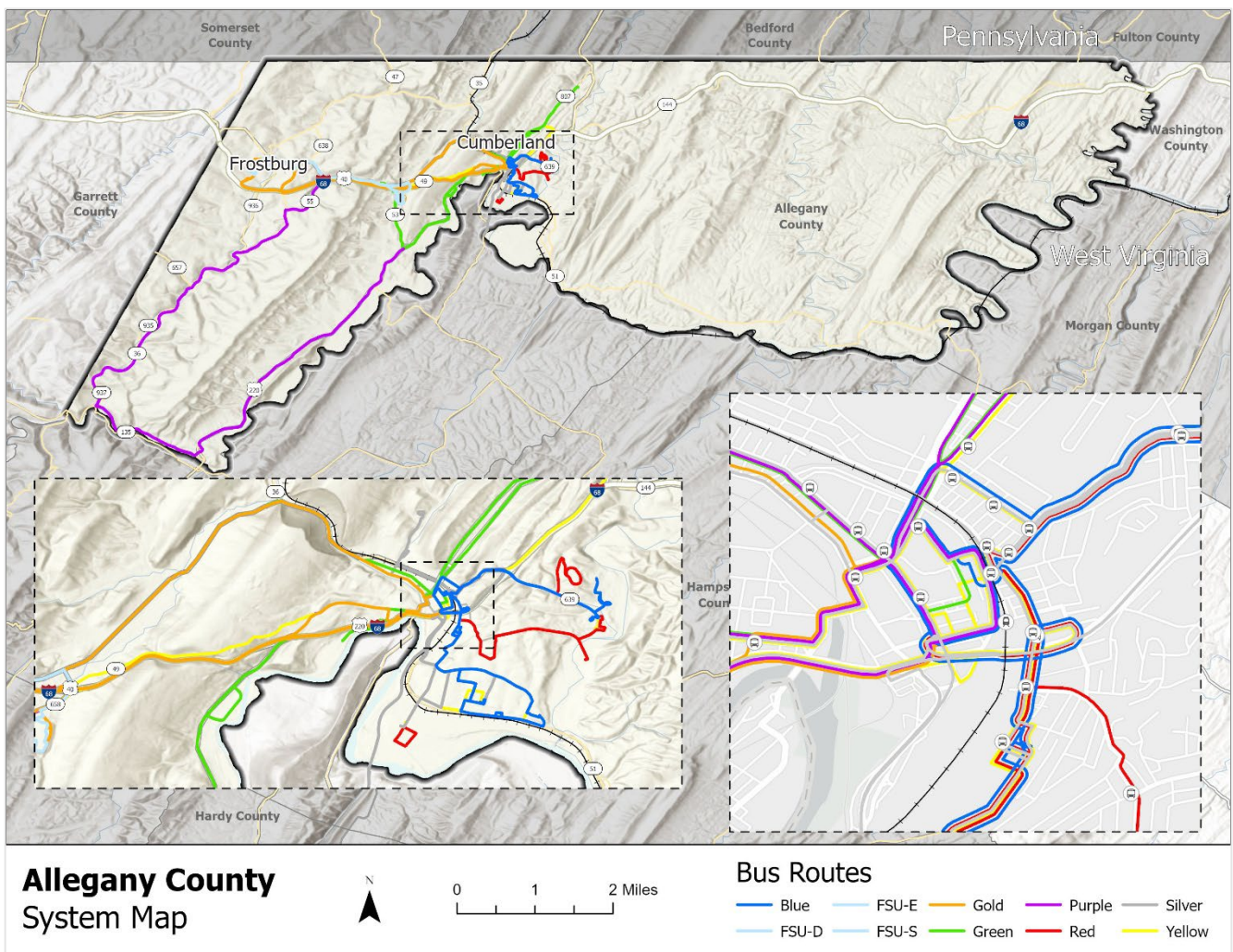
**Table 4-1: Allegany County Transit Routes**

| <b>Allegany County Transit Fixed Route</b> | <b>Destinations Served</b>   | <b>Headways</b> | <b>Hours of Operation</b> | <b>Days of Operation</b>      |
|--|--|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Red Line                                   | Downtown Cumberland, Hospital, Allegany College, HRDC                        | 60 minutes      | 7:30 a.m. – 3:56 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| Blue Line                                  | Downtown Cumberland, South Cumberland, Hospital/Allegany College             | 60 minutes      | 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| Green Line                                 | Country Club Mall, Frostburg   | Variable        | 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| Purple Line                                | Westernport, Lonaconing, Country Club Mall                                   | On-Demand       | 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.     | T, Fri                        |
| Yellow Line                                | Downtown Cumberland, Hospital/Allegany College, Frostburg, Country Club Mall | Variable        | 3:50 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| Gold Line                                  | Country Club Mall, Frostburg   | Variable        | 8:00 a.m. – 4:55 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| Silver Line                                | Downtown Cumberland, Hospital/Allegany College, Frostburg, Country Club Mall | Variable        | 5:55 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.     | M-F                           |
| FSU Shuttle                                | FSU Campus   | 20 minutes      | 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.     | M-F when school is in session |

Allegheny County Transit has some “Request” stops, where the bus normally does not stop but riders can call ahead and request to be let off, or to be picked up there. Generally, the bus will also drop off riders at places on the route that are not explicitly listed as stops.

Allegheny County Transit’s complementary ADA paratransit is branded as Alltrans. Service is only within ¾ mile of ACT’s fixed routes. Alltrans also has a senior transportation service which provides curb-to-curb paratransit service for older adults, with a priority on providing medical trips. Other trip purposes are accommodated on a space-available basis.

**Figure 4-1: Allegheny County Transit Map**



## Amtrak

The Amtrak Floridian route serves Cumberland, with one trip a day in each direction. Westbound trips are at 4:00 p.m., and eastbound trips are at 9:30 a.m. each day. The Floridian connects Chicago and Miami, including service to Pittsburgh and Washington, DC.

## Frederick County

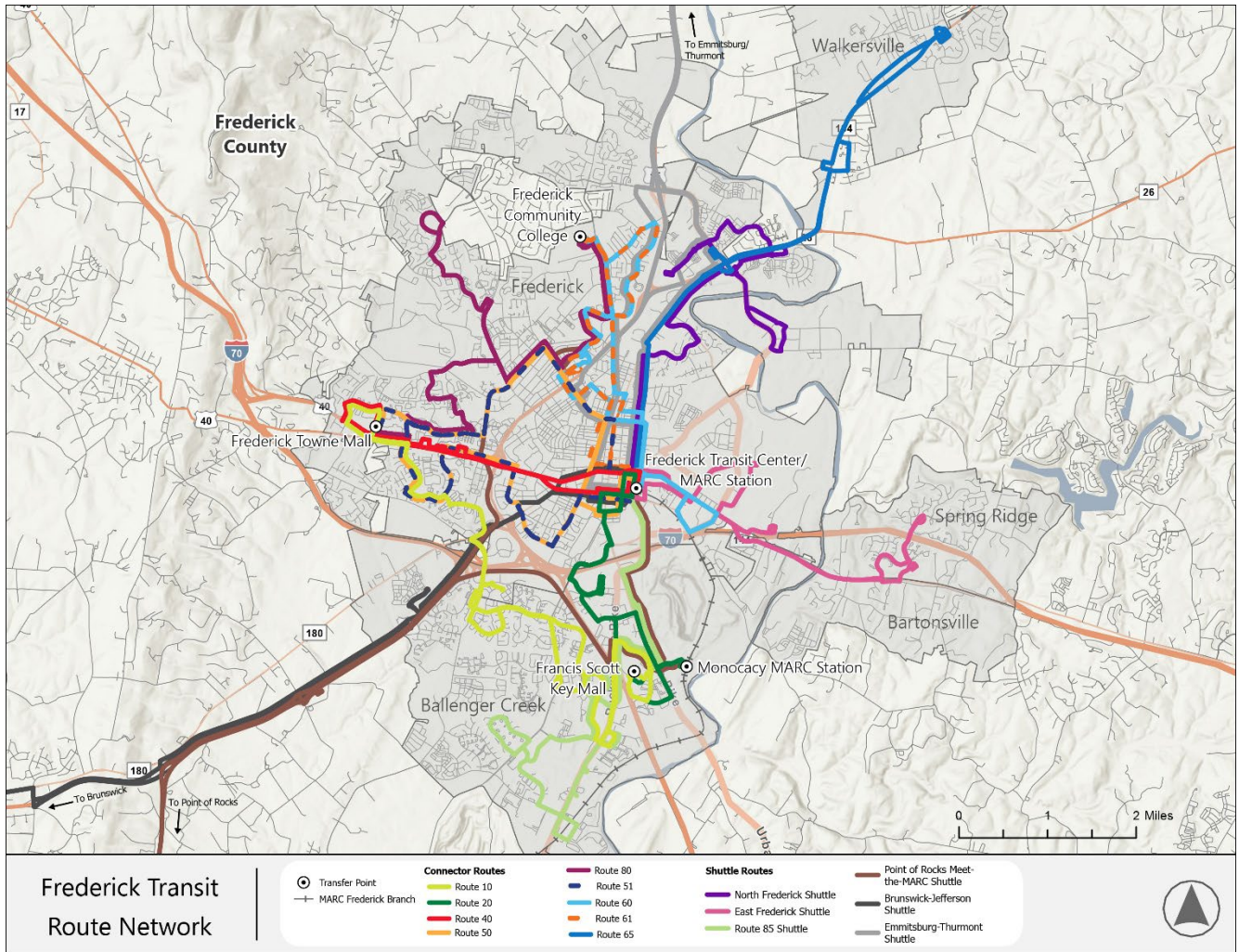
Transit Services of Frederick County refers to its routes in two distinct ways —numbered routes which are largely local to urbanized area which includes the City of Frederick, Town of Walkersville, and Ballenger Creek in Frederick County, and “Shuttles” which serve other parts of the county, as shown in **Figure 4-2**. All buses except the #10 and the #80 stop at the Transit Center near downtown Frederick, where transfers are available. Transit is operated by the Transit Services Division of the Frederick County Government. **Table 4-2** lists the destinations and hours of operations for Transit.

Transit-plus is a curb-to-curb demand-response paratransit service for older adults (60+) and people with disabilities. Other transit-dependent persons may use this service on a space-available basis. Complementary ADA paratransit services are also available between locations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of a fixed route.

**Table 4-2: Frederick Transit Routes**

| Transit Fixed Route                     | Destinations Served  | Headways                                      | Hours of Operation                                   | Days of Operation |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------|
| #10 Mall-to-Mall Connector              | Bosco's, FSK Mall, Ballenger Creek Plaza                                   | ~40 minutes                                   | 5:50 a.m. (7:32 Sat) – 9:35 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #20 FSK Mall Connector                  | FSK Mall, Monocacy MARC, Walmart   | ~30-60 minutes                                | 6:05 a.m. (7:30 Sat) – 9:40 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #40 Golden Mile Connector               | Waverley Drive, Lidl, Square Corner  | ~30-60 minutes                                | 5:45 a.m. (7:55 Sat) – 9:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #50 Waverley via Prospect Boulevard     | Waverley Drive, Carroll Park Manor, Frederick Hospital,                    | ~30-60 minutes                                | 5:40 a.m. (8:05 Sat) – 9:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #51 Waverley via 7 <sup>th</sup> Street | Waverley Drive, Carroll Park Manor, Frederick Hospital,                    | ~30-60 minutes                                | 5:40 a.m. (8:05 Sat) – 9:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #60 FCC Connector via East Street       | Frederick Community College, YMCA, Frederick Shopping Center               | 60 minutes                                    | 6:15 a.m. (7:30 Sat) – 9:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #61 FCC Connector via Taney Avenue      | Frederick Community College, Frederick Hospital, Frederick Shopping Center | 60 minutes                                    | 6:00 a.m. – 9:45 p.m.                                | M-F               |
| #65 Walkersville Connector              | Walmart, Walkersville  | 60 minutes                                    | 5:20 a.m. (7:30 Sat) – 9:55 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| #80 North-West Connector                | Frederick Community College, Frederick Senior Center, Bosco's, Whittier    | 30 minutes – 120 minutes                      | 6:30 a.m. – 9:40 p.m.                                | M-F               |
| Brunswick Jefferson Shuttle             | Brunswick, Jefferson, Frederick  | 4 roundtrips per weekday, 2 on Sat            | 5:55 a.m. – 5:40 p.m.<br>(8:00 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. Sat) | M-Sat             |
| Emmitsburg Thurmont Shuttle             | Thurmont, Emmitsburg, Frederick  | 3 roundtrips per weekday, 2 on Sat            | 6:35 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.<br>(9:30 a.m. – 4:20 p.m. Sat) | M-Sat             |
| East Frederick Shuttle                  | Spring Ridge Shopping Center, Frederick Fairgrounds                        | ~60 minutes                                   | 8:15 a.m. – 6:10 p.m.                                | M-F               |
| Meet-the-MARC Shuttle                   | Point of Rocks MARC Station, Frederick MARC Station                        | 3 drop-offs in morning, 2 pick-ups in evening | 5:20 a.m. – 7:28 p.m.                                | M-F               |
| North Frederick Shuttle                 | Walmart, Monocacy Village, Riverside Tech Park                             | ~60 minutes                                   | 8:50 a.m. – 5:40 p.m.                                | M-Sat             |
| Route 85 Shuttle                        | FSK Mall, Metropolitan Court, Westview                                     | 4 roundtrips per day                          | 7:15 a.m. – 5:10 p.m.                                | M-F               |

**Figure 4-2: Frederick Transit Map**



## MARC

Frederick County is served by the MARC Brunswick line, which connects it to Washington, DC's Union Station. The stops in Frederick County are Frederick, Monocacy, Point of Rocks, and Brunswick, as seen in **Table 4-3**.

**Table 4-3: Frederick County MARC Service**

| Frederick County Stations | Number of Trips per day                                     | Hours of Operation    | Days of Operation |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Frederick                 | 3 outbound trips in the morning, 3 inbound in the afternoon | 5:00 a.m. – 8:21 p.m. | M-F               |
| Monocacy                  | 3 outbound trips in the morning, 3 inbound in the afternoon | 5:06 a.m. – 8:11 p.m. | M-F               |
| Point of Rocks            | 7 outbound trips in the morning, 7 inbound in the afternoon | 5:00 a.m. – 8:23 p.m. | M-F               |
| Brunswick                 | 7 outbound trips in the morning, 7 inbound in the afternoon | 4:50 a.m. – 8:47 p.m. | M-F               |

## MDOT MTA Commuter Bus Service

There are three MDOT MTA commuter buses that operate in Frederick County, as shown in **Table 4-4**.

**Table 4-4: Frederick County Commuter Buses**

| Route | Frederick County Stops   | Destination             |
|-------|--|-------------------------|
| 204   | Monocacy MARC Station, Urbana Park and Ride  | College Park            |
| 505   | Meyersville Park and Ride  | Shady Grove/Rock Spring |
| 515   | North Frederick Park and Ride, Frederick MARC, Monocacy MARC Station, Urbana Park and Ride | Shady Grove/Rock Spring |

## Garrett County

### Garrett Transit Service (GTS)

Garrett County has no fixed-route service. Instead, Garrett County Transit offers a shared-ride, door-to-door service, available to all Garrett County residents. Transportation services are demand-response through which customers call GTS in advance to schedule their rides. GTS operates Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Customers are instructed to call by 2:00 p.m. the day before for local trips, and at least three days in advance for trips outside the local area. GTS accepts reservations up to 30 days in advance, and customers may request standing reservations for recurring trips.

Beyond public transit services, GTS also provides non-emergency medical assistance transportation (NEMT) through a contract with the Garrett County Health Department. This transportation is designed for Medicaid recipients who have no other means of getting to their medical appointments. GTS also operates Head Start transportation and delivers Meals on Wheels. GTS is one of the departments of the Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc. (GCCAC). GCCAC is a private non-profit agency and one of Maryland's 19 Community Action Agencies.

## Washington County

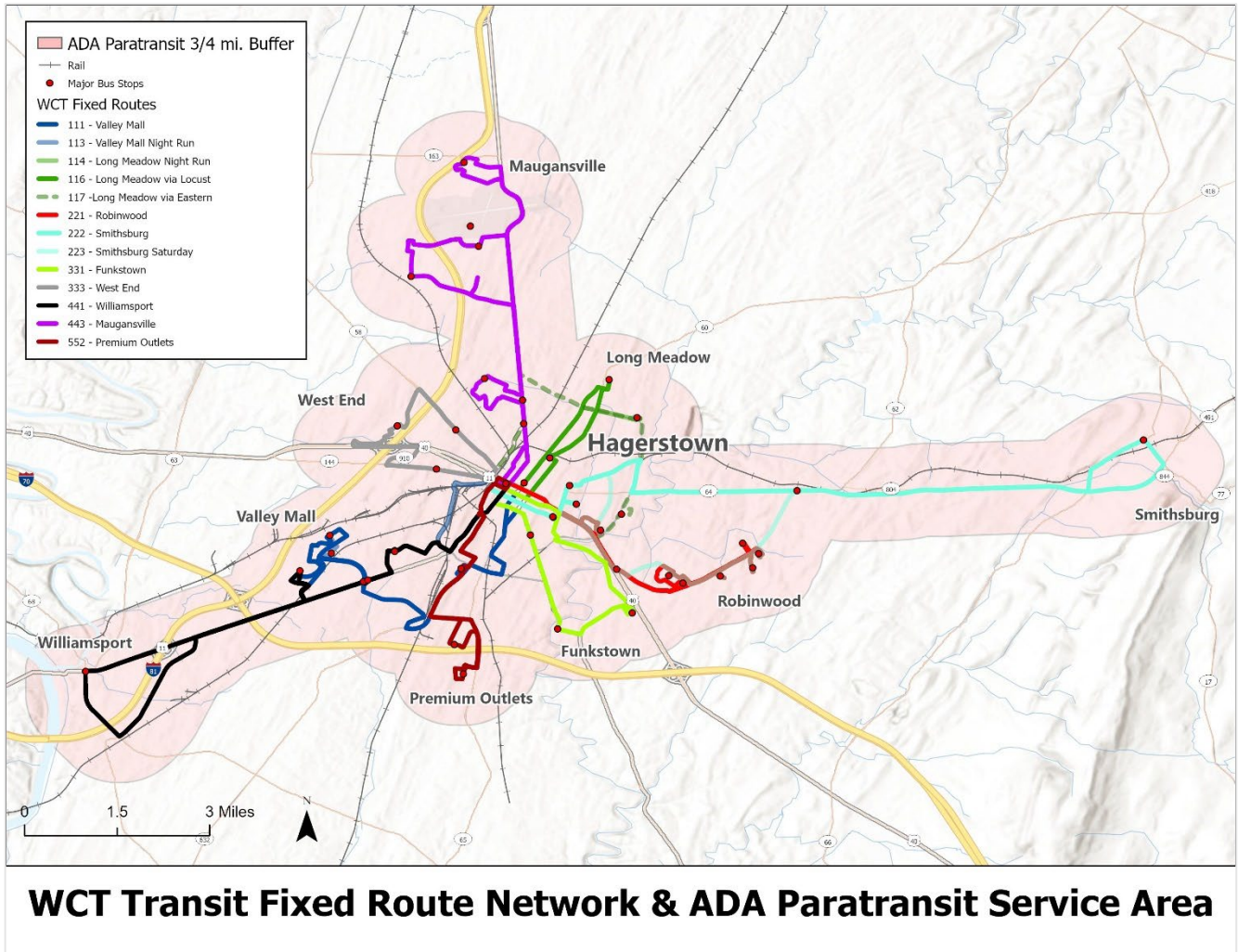
WCT also has ADA Paratransit service within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile area around all fixed routes. A specialized transportation service through a Ride Assist Program is provided to those 60 years of age and older, as well as individuals with disabilities who cannot ride the fixed routes.

WCT also offers the JOBS Opportunity Bus Shuttles (JOBS). Job seekers receive service through the Job Opportunity Access Program in cooperation with the Washington County Department of Social Services (WCDSS). JOBS assist low-income households with transportation to and from work and childcare facilities. The JOBS shuttle offers point-to-point service within a defined area, including stops at childcare facilities within the service area when the primary trip purpose is employment related. The service area encompasses Williamsport, Clear Spring, Citicorp, Smithsburg, Funkstown, Hagerstown, Maugansville, and the surrounding communities. **Table 4-5** highlights the nine fixed routes that Washington County Transit operates. **Figure 4-3** shows the full map for WCT routes and paratransit network.

**Table 4-5: Washington County Transit Routes**

| Frederick Transit Fixed Route | Destinations Served                                     | Headways                       | Hours of Operation                                   | Days of Operation |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Valley Mall                   | Southern Hagerstown, Valley Mall                        | ~ 60 minutes                   | 7:45 a.m. (8:45 Sat) – 8:25 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| Long Meadow                   | Northern Hagerstown, YMCA                               | ~ 30 minutes                   | 6:45 a.m. (8:15 Sat) – 8:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| Robinwood                     | Hagerstown Community College, Smithsburg                | 60 minutes                     | 6:15 a.m. – 6:15 p.m.                                | M-F               |
| Smithsburg                    | Eastern Hagerstown, Smithsburg                          | 5 round trips per day          | 7:15 a.m. – 6:15 p.m.<br>(7:45 a.m. – 6:45 p.m. Sat) | M-Sat             |
| Funkstown                     | Funkstown, Southern Hagerstown                          | 60 minutes                     | 6:15 a.m. (8:15 Sat) – 6:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| West End                      | Walmart, Western Hagerstown                             | 60 minutes                     | 6:45 a.m. (7:45 Sat) – 9:15 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| Williamsport                  | Valley Mall, Williamsport                               | 60 minutes                     | 6:45 a.m. (7:45 Sat) – 6:45 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |
| Maugansville                  | Hamilton Park, Airport, Health Department, Maugansville | 30 minutes<br>(60 minutes Sat) | 6:15 a.m. – 6:45 p.m.<br>(8:45 a.m. - 5:45 p.m. Sat) | M-Sat             |
| Premium Outlets               | MVA, Premium Outlets, Walmart                           | 60 minutes                     | 7:15 a.m. (9:15 Sat) – 7:15 p.m.                     | M-Sat             |

**Figure 4-3: Washington County Transit Map**



### MDOT MTA Commuter Bus Service

There is one MDOT MTA commuter bus that operates in Washington County, as shown in **Table 4-6**.

**Table 4-6: Washington County Commuter Buses**

| Route | Washington County Stops        | Destination             |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 505   | Hagerstown & MVA Park and Ride | Shady Grove/Rock Spring |

## Non-Profit and Human Services Transportation Providers

### Section 5310/Senior Ride/JARC/New Freedom Program Recipients

**ARC of Washington County:** The ARC of Washington County provides a range of services to individuals with disabilities.

**Appalachian Parent Association, Inc. (APA):** APA (a.k.a. Appalachian Crossroads), provides personnel, services, activities, programs, and facilities for the evaluation, training, employment, socialization, support, and transportation of persons who have developmental disabilities, handicaps, economic disadvantages, or are aged, to enable them to become more productive and functional members of society, to promote their quality of life, or to maintain themselves in the community. To meet the needs of such a diverse group, the agency provides a full continuum of services aimed at assisting individuals by providing the support necessary to live, work, and socialize in the community according to their preferences and abilities.

**Daybreak Adult Day Services:** Daybreak offers day programs and respite care for seniors. Their service includes meals, activities, medical oversight, and transportation.

**Diakon Child, Family & Community Ministries:** Diakon offers a variety of programs for youth, seniors, and people with substance use disorders.

**Easterseals Adult Day Services-Hagerstown:** Easterseals is a non-profit agency serving people with disabilities of all ages. The Easterseals Adult Day Services in Hagerstown provides clinical services, engaging daily activities, transportation, field trips, and nutritious meals for older adults and adults with disabilities.

**Friends Aware:** Friends Aware is a private non-profit agency that provides both residential and respite care, transportation, and training to those with developmental disabilities in Allegany County. Friends Aware provides client transportation to and from the day program, job sites, medical appointments, shopping, and recreation.

**Human Resources Development Commission (HRDC):** HRDC is a community action agency that provides a range of essential services, including transportation for several of its programs including Head Start/Early Start, senior services, and adult medical day care. HRDC operates a fleet of vehicles used to transport clients to various programs. There is also a mobility management program that provides bus vouchers for qualified applicants, utilizes Alltrans when needed for eligible applicants, and cab vouchers when all other options have been exhausted.

**Star Community, Inc.:** Star Community supports people with disabilities in achieving their goals and living a meaningful life filled with opportunity. They offer residential and day programs, along with employment services and therapeutic equestrian services.

**Unified Community Connections, Inc.:** Unified Community Connections supports people with disabilities to be productive, achieve independence, and have the quality of life they seek.

**Washington County Human Development Council:** Washington County Human Development Council provides a wide range of services for individuals with disabilities, including employment, day programs, and residential services.

**Way Station – Sheppard Pratt:** Way Station offers a variety of integrated community housing options for people with serious mental illness. Options include 24/7 supervised group homes, 24/7 supervised apartment complex, apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes with support available at varying levels depending on the individual's needs. Specialized housing units include residences for transitional youth (ages 18-24), senior/aging adults, co-occurring substance use disorders and co-occurring developmental disabilities.

## Other Non-Profit and Human Services Transportation Providers

**Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS):** Adult Evaluation and Review Services offers a free evaluation to assess Garrett County residents, 18 or older, for available community services. The goal of the program is to link clients with resources which may enable them to stay in their home as long as possible. After the evaluation is completed, the nurse will make recommendations to available community resources, which include Alzheimer's education, private duty caregiver listings, in-home services, medication assistance, MedBank of Garrett County, Meals on Wheels, respite funds, clinical services, housing, and transportation assistance.

**Allegany County Health Department:** The Health Department funds non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) for Medical Assistance (Medicaid) recipients. Service is scheduled through the Health Department and provided by a contractor. NEMT is reserved for recipients who have no other means of transportation.

**ARC of Frederick County:** The ARC of Frederick County provides a range of services to individuals with disabilities.

**Archway Station:** Archway Station is a private non-profit agency that provides psychiatric rehabilitation services for adults and children with mental illness and developmental disabilities in Allegany County. The agency partners with ACT to provide clients with "Freedom Cards," that allow them to use ACT fixed-route services. Archway also owns vans that it uses to provide transportation for clients who reside in Archway residential homes.

**Community Living, Inc.:** Community Living provides support and services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including day programs, residential homes, and vocational services.

**Comfort Keepers:** Comfort Keepers assist seniors who live independently at home, and the caregivers are trained in care, transportation, and overall support. Comfort Keepers provides in-home care, specialized care, Alzheimer's and dementia care, senior health and wellness services, respite care, and veterans home care.

**Council for Exceptional Children and Adults:** The Council is a private, non-profit agency that provides residential and support services for people with physical, developmental, and intellectual disabilities. Transportation is provided as part of the Council's services.

**Division of Aging and Independence, Frederick County:** This county service provides a variety of services for seniors, including senior centers and Meals on Wheels.

**Family Partnership:** Family Partnership is a service offered by the Family Services division of Frederick County that supports parents with a wide range of services.

**Frederick Community Action Agency:** Frederick Community Action Agency provides food, shelter, medical care, housing, and other forms of assistance to families and individuals who are low-income or homeless. This includes a free van run that transports people on weekdays to a variety of health and human services agencies located around Frederick City.

**Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc. (GCCAC):** Beyond the administration of GTS, GCCAC, a private non-profit corporation, runs activities and projects that focus on strategies that assist low-income people to be more self-sufficient. The agency provides a variety of services for individuals, families, and older adults. The GCCAC Wheels to Work program assists low-income individuals in obtaining and maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of getting to and from work. It is funded by the Department of Social Services and administered by GCCAC. Applicants must have at least one child and be eligible for Temporary Cash Assistance through the Department of Social Services.

**Garrett County Department of Social Services (DSS):** The Garrett County DSS provides adoption services, adult protective services, childcare coordination, child support enforcement, family support services, food stamps, foster care services, in-home aide services, medical assistance, housing programs, social services, and temporary cash assistance.

**Garrett County Lighthouse, Inc.:** Garrett County Lighthouse, Inc. is a private non-profit behavioral health organization that provides services for psychiatric rehabilitation, residential rehabilitation, residential crisis and respite to adults with serious and persistent mental illness in Garrett County. Residential crisis and respite services are also provided in Allegany County.

**Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS):** The Allegany County Health Department's MHSO Office is responsible for planning, managing, and monitoring publicly-funded mental health services in the county. MHSO provides transportation for clients as well as purchasing services through cabs and ACT.

**Partners in Care (PIC):** PIC supports older adults living alone with services that make aging in place easier, including transportation to medical appointments and social activities.

**Ray of Hope, Inc.:** Ray of Hope is a private non-profit organization providing residential, employment, and support services for adults with developmental disabilities in Allegany County. The agency operates a day program based in Cumberland, as well as residential homes. Client transportation is provided by the agency.

**Safe Ride Foundation:** The Safe Ride Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Frederick County that promotes transportation safety and accessibility. Its flagship program, SOS Safe Ride, prevents drunk driving by providing affordable, on-demand rides for individuals who have been drinking—using two drivers to ensure that both the passenger and their vehicle get home safely. In 2024, the Foundation expanded its mission with Rides for Good, a volunteer-based ride-matching network that serves residents facing transportation barriers, particularly in rural or underserved areas. The program connects registered riders with volunteer drivers for essential trips such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, job interviews, and social or faith-based activities, offering an affordable transportation option supported by community volunteers and donations.

**Scott Key Center:** The Scott Key Center is a county service that provides employment training and employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Unified Community Connections:** Unified Community Connections is a private, non-profit organization that provides services for children and adults with cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities. The agency provides services statewide, with a program based in Cumberland. Client transportation is provided.

**Washington County Community Action Council, Inc.:** The Washington County Community Action Council offers transportation services for the elderly, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities in Washington County through their Community Action Transit (CAT) program, which began in 2009. CAT focuses on assisting people with disabilities, older adults, and low-income populations by providing rides to employment via the Hopewell Express, medical appointments, and special groups and events upon approval.

The Hopewell Express provides free transportation for low-income workers from downtown Hagerstown to employment centers along the Hopewell Road corridor. This service operates hourly from Monday through Friday, covering over 24 hours a day to accommodate shift and overnight work schedules. It begins operations on Monday at 5:00 a.m. and runs continuously through Saturday at 7:30 a.m., starting from 1000 West Washington Street. Key stops include 29 E. Antietam Street, E. Antietam Street (behind Cannon Avenue and King Street), 1000 W. Washington Street (Wash-Co Commuter), 130 W. Franklin Street (Christ Reformed Church), Tractor Supply, FedEx, Staples Distribution Center, PetSmart, Home Depot, and Lenox.

CAT also offers medical transportation for residents of Washington County. This grant-funded service is currently free for riders and does not require an application or approval process. While individual medical transportation is free, there is a fee for group services. Additionally, all CAT vehicles are wheelchair accessible, ensuring accessibility for all passengers.

**Washington County Health Department-Medical Assistance Transportation Program:** The Washington County Health Department provides health-related services to the residents of Washington County. The Washington County Health Department houses the Division of Behavioral Health, providing mental health services and support. They fund transportation services for individuals on medical assistance. For example, the Washington County Health Department contracts with the Community Action Council for transportation through the Job Opportunity Bus Shuttle, County Commuter, and Hopewell Express.

**Washington County Human Development Council, Inc:** Washington County HDC is a non-profit organization established to address the need for more provider agencies in Western Maryland. Its mission is to facilitate the integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities from institutional settings into the community and independent living environments. HDC offers a variety of programs, including day services, nursing services, and residential and community learning services. Additionally, HDC provides reliable and safe transportation services for individuals participating in all of their day programs, ensuring transport to and from centers, homes, community activities, and job sites.

## Private Transportation Providers

### BayRunner Shuttle

The BayRunner Shuttle is designed to facilitate long-distance travel by bringing people from parts of Maryland that do not have regional or national connections to Baltimore's travel hubs, namely BWI, the Amtrak Station and the Greyhound Station. It stops in all the Western Maryland counties: Garrett County has one stop, at the Pilot Travel Center in Grantsville; Allegany County has three, on each at Frostburg State University, Allegany College, and the Cumberland Amtrak Station. In Washington County, the shuttle stops on Main Street in Hancock and at the Washington County Transit Center. In Frederick County the shuttle stops at Frederick Transit Center and Frederick Airport.

### Other Providers

Other services:

- Affordable Taxi
- All American Ambulance Transport
- Atomic Taxi and Sedan Dispatch
- Bonnies Transportation
- Bowie Taxi
- County Caravan, LLC
- Crown Taxi
- Deep Creek Shuttle
- Downtown Sedan
- Easy Transport
- Frederick City Cab
- Frostburg Taxi
- Gordon's Transportation
- Glens Transportation
- Grab A Ride
- Hagerstown Airport Shuttle & Car Service
- Henry's Airport Service
- Miller Transportation
- Morgan Taxi
- Queen City Taxi
- Taxi Fiesta
- Valley Cab, Hancock, MD
- Yellow Cab

## Commuter Assistance

The Frederick County Government helps connect people with vanpools and provides some financial support for vanpool operators.

## Volunteer Driver Programs

**SOS Safe Ride Foundation:** The Safe Ride Foundation operates two different volunteer driver programs in Frederick County. The first is SOS Safe Ride, which is focused on preventing drunk driving. Volunteers provide rides home for people who drove to a location where they consumed alcohol and are no longer competent to drive. The other program is Rides for GOOD, which helps residents who lack transportation options. Trips can be for a wide range of reasons, including medical appointments, shopping, social outings, and jobs interviews.

**Partners in Care:** Partners in Care has volunteers who take members to medical appointments, grocery stores, community events, and more in Frederick County.

# Chapter 5

## Assessment of Transportation Needs

### Introduction

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) coordinated transportation planning guidelines require an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. While the transportation needs assessment for the Western Maryland region focuses on these population groups, the planning process involves a broader approach that builds upon needs identified in the previous coordinated transportation plan for the region. These transportation needs and gaps in mobility were updated based on stakeholder input through both the in-person workshop and an online focus group and are summarized in this chapter.

While many of the transportation needs are interrelated, they are segmented by those that are regional in nature and those that are more specific to one of the counties in the region.

### Regional Transportation Needs

This section highlights regional transportation needs broken out by the following key categories and themes that were expressed by regional stakeholders:

- Expanded or Improved Transportation Services
- Improved and Expanded Outreach, Marketing, and Education
- Improved Coordination
- Additional Funding

### Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

**Service Gaps and Unmet Demand** – Transit demand throughout the region far exceeds available supply. Frederick County alone provides approximately 40,000 trips per year but estimates future demand for more than 60,000. Other counties reported similar service gaps and long waiting lists for essential medical and employment trips. Many residents require cross-county or out-of-region transportation—particularly to larger medical centers in Cumberland, Morgantown, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh—which local systems are sometimes unable to provide under current program constraints.

**Limited Evening and Specialized Transportation Options** – Evening and late-shift transportation options are limited across Western Maryland, creating barriers for workers whose schedules extend beyond standard operating hours. Participants also identified unmet needs for specialized

transportation, including human services agency staff who do not drive, and for families traveling to visit children receiving behavioral health treatment outside the area. Current 5310 program rules, which prohibit the use of vehicles for transporting youth, further restrict options for these populations. Expanding flexible, demand-responsive, or volunteer-based services could help address these gaps.

**Expand Volunteer Driver Programs** – Volunteer driver programs were widely recognized as an important way to fill service gaps, particularly in rural and low-density areas. The SOS Safe Ride program in Frederick County, which relies on more than 100 volunteer drivers, was highlighted as a successful example. The program provides first- and last-mile connections and transportation for seniors and individuals in transit deserts. SOS Safe Rides also utilizes the Frederick Taxi Access Program. This program is open to those who are eligible for Transit Plus, which is Frederick Transit’s complementary ADA paratransit service. This program can be seen as a good example of coordination between private transportation programs and public transit agencies. However, participants noted that liability, insurance, and driver recruitment remain significant barriers to expanding such models. Programs in other counties have struggled to attract enough volunteers, and many potential drivers are deterred by complex insurance requirements. Models such as Howard County’s Neighbor Ride were identified as best practices worth exploring regionally.

**Enhancing Transit Infrastructure and Accessibility** – Participants noted ongoing needs for basic infrastructure upgrades such as bus stop signage, shelters, and ADA-compliant boarding areas. Washington County, for example, has roughly 600 bus stops, but only about 100 with signage. In rural areas, efforts to introduce fixed-route service have often met with low ridership, as many residents prefer door-to-door options. Expanding infrastructure and improving visibility were seen as key to building trust and usability of the system.

## Improved and Expanded Outreach, Marketing, and Education

**Building Transit Knowledge and Managing Demand** – Transit agencies in Frederick and Washington Counties have developed effective outreach strategies to educate both the public and partner organizations about available transportation options. Travel training programs teach riders, particularly seniors, how to use fixed-route systems, read schedules, and plan trips using tools like Google Maps. Frederick County developed a very successful model of onboard ride-alongs with individuals in government, non-profits, local and higher education, and religious institutions with the goal of expanding knowledge and understanding of Frederick’s transit network. Washington County adapted Frederick’s model and achieved strong participation from social service agencies, even inviting their staff to ride the bus. These programs have increased awareness and use of transit services while strengthening relationships between transportation providers and human services partners.

At the same time, agencies cautioned that marketing efforts must be balanced with system capacity. Overpromoting services without sufficient resources could lead to an increase in denied ride requests. Outreach through social service organizations was viewed as an effective and manageable way to expand awareness without overwhelming existing systems.

**Funding Awareness and Technical Support** – Finally, participants highlighted the need for better access to information about available funding sources. Smaller counties often lack dedicated grant-writing staff and may miss opportunities simply because they are unaware of programs or deadlines. The group recommended that the Coordinated Plan includes an appendix or resource guide listing all applicable grants, technical assistance programs, and relevant contacts. Shared regional grant-writing support could also help rural providers secure funding for critical needs such as fleet replacement, technology upgrades, and expanded service hours.

## Improved Coordination

**Regional Coordination and Shared Services** – Participants discussed the need for greater coordination between counties, as well as among human services agencies, healthcare providers, and transportation operators. Some suggested exploring regional funding models or shared service options to better connect isolated communities and reduce duplication. Carpooling and vanpooling programs were cited as cost-effective ways to improve regional mobility, though awareness and participation remain limited.

## Additional Funding

**Funding Stability and Shortfalls** – Across Western Maryland, transit providers face ongoing funding shortfalls that limit their ability to maintain and expand essential services. Participants from every county emphasized that funding stability is their greatest challenge. There are increasing requirements for local match from federal programs, which place additional pressure on already stretched budgets. Smaller counties such as Allegany and Garrett are reported to be especially vulnerable, with some anticipating staff reductions or service cutbacks if current funding levels continue to decline.

**Impacts on Operations and Equity** – Several participants expressed concern that state and federal funds are concentrated in Central Maryland, leaving rural and economically disadvantaged regions like Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore at a disadvantage. Agencies are struggling to keep pace with growing demand while managing rising costs, aging fleets, and limited revenue streams. These financial challenges have also led to staff turnover, reduced capacity, and lower ridership in some areas.

**Local Funding Strategies for Service Improvements** – Counties also expressed interest in exploring alternative funding mechanisms to support infrastructure and service improvements, such as special financing districts near major destinations (e.g., Deep Creek Lake) and sponsorship programs. These local strategies could help supplement limited federal and state funds.

## County-Specific Transportation Needs

This section highlights transportation needs by county. While regional themes were consistent, each county described unique challenges in their local communities and agencies.

## **Allegany County**

Agency staff expressed strong concern over inequitable funding distribution across the state. Participants emphasized the need for improved coordination of medical trips—particularly those crossing state lines—and for restoring staffing levels after recent attrition.

## **Frederick County**

Frederick County faces mounting demand due to rapid population growth Countywide as well as new age-restricted senior communities being built in areas without access to fixed route transit options, such as Urbana. In addition, Transit is experiencing higher demand for rural routes as residents are pushed out of the traditionally affordable areas near services within the City of Frederick and are moving to outlying communities due to rising housing prices. This is where programs like SOS Safe Ride can complement the transit gaps in Frederick County by serving those who live beyond the service area of traditional fixed route transit. The county's innovative training programs and their proactive engagement with developers have been effective strategies for managing this growth.

## **Garrett County**

Garrett County's needs reflect its rural isolation and financial vulnerability. The county recently raised fares for the first time in 20 years, met with public resistance, and may face lay-offs if funding continues to decline. Riders' preference for door-to-door service and the lack of available grant-writing resources add to the operational challenges. Garrett County began a shuttle service in Oakland, but it was discontinued due to low ridership—the riders preferred door-to-door service.

## **Washington County**

Washington County's priorities center on continued public education and outreach. The county has made progress through partnerships with local agencies but continues to face infrastructure challenges and limited mobility options for seniors.

# Chapter 6

## Demographic Analysis

### Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of future population trends for the Western Maryland region, as well as an analysis of the demographics of population groups that often depend on transportation options beyond an automobile. This analysis is coupled with the input from regional stakeholders documented in the preceding chapter to provide a broad transportation needs assessment. This assessment can then be used to develop strategies, projects, and services to meet identified needs, along with expanding mobility to generate recommendations that will improve coordination within the region.

### Population Analysis

This section summarizes the total population and population density of the Western Maryland region. In addition to current population, historical and projected population data was used to reinforce this part of the demographic analysis.

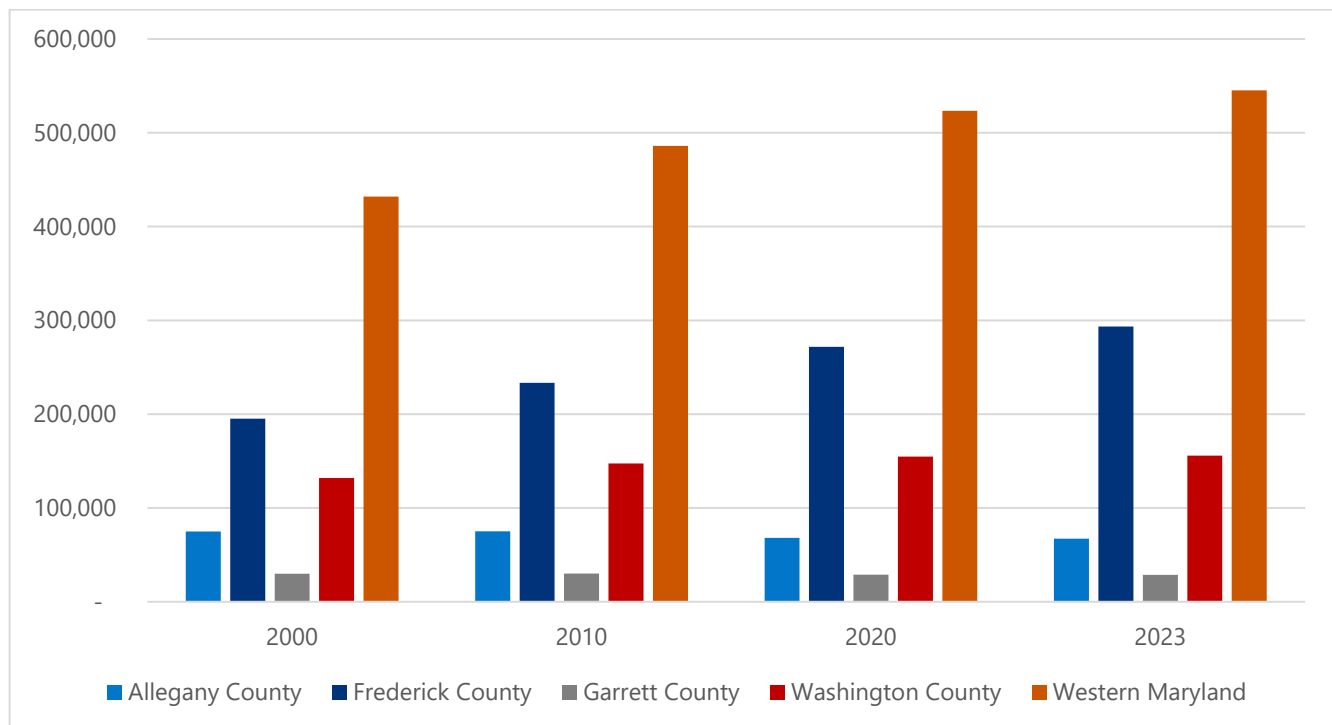
### Population Growth

The Western Maryland region is one of the more sparsely populated regions in Maryland but is not the least populated. The five counties account for 9% of the state's population, with Frederick County being the most populous county in the region. The region's population has increased consistently since 2000, but not evenly. The two eastern counties (Frederick and Washington) experienced moderate to significant population growth while the two western counties (Allegany and Garrett) experienced population loss from 2000 to 2023. The overall regional population grew by 13% between 2000 and 2010 and by 8% from 2010 to 2020. Of the five counties in the Western Maryland region, Frederick County experienced the highest growth rate during this time period. Between 2000 and 2010, Frederick County saw a 20% growth rate, between 2010 and 2020 it saw a 16% growth rate, and between 2000 and 2023 grew by 50%. Washington County also experienced a high growth rate of 12% between 2000 and 2010, 5% between 2010 and 2020, and between 2000 and 2023 it grew by 18%. However, Allegany and Garrett Counties, which already had much smaller populations, experienced population loss during this period. Allegany County saw a mere 0.2% growth rate from 2000 to 2010 and -9% between 2010 and 2020, leading to an overall -10% population loss between 2000 and 2023. Garrett County had a 1% growth rate between 2000 and 2010 and a -4% population loss from 2010 to 2020, and an overall -4% population loss from 2000 to 2023. **Table 6-1** and **Figure 6-1** show these data figures.

**Table 6-1: Historical Population**

| Geography         | 2000    | 2010    | 2020    | 2023    |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Allegany County   | 74,930  | 75,087  | 68,106  | 67,273  |
| Frederick County  | 195,277 | 233,385 | 271,717 | 293,391 |
| Garrett County    | 29,846  | 30,097  | 28,806  | 28,713  |
| Washington County | 131,923 | 147,430 | 154,705 | 155,813 |
| Western Maryland  | 431,976 | 485,999 | 523,334 | 545,190 |

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) 5 YEAR TABLES – 2019 TO 2023, US DECENNIAL CENSUS

**Figure 6-1: Historical Population**

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) 5 YEAR TABLES – 2019 TO 2023, US DECENNIAL CENSUS

## Population Forecasts

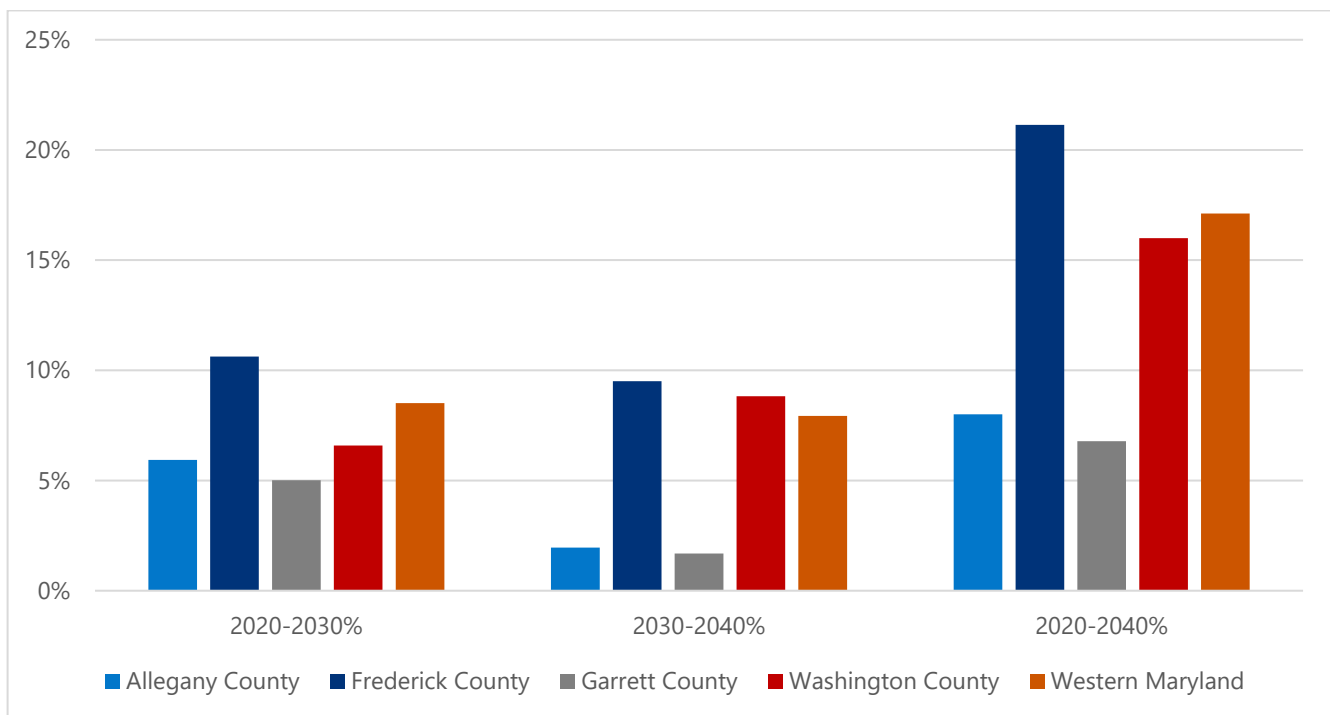
Future population forecasts for the region anticipate moderate population growth to the year 2040. The region is expected to experience a 17% growth rate during the period from 2020 to 2040. During this period, the area is expected to grow from 523,334 people to 612,920 people, an increase of 89,586 people. **Table 6-2** shows the forecasted population growth and **Figure 6-2** provides a visual illustration of the growth within each county.

**Table 6-2: Population Forecasts**

| Geography         | 2020    | 2030    | 2040    |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Allegany County   | 68,106  | 72,150  | 73,560  |
| Frederick County  | 271,717 | 300,580 | 329,150 |
| Garrett County    | 28,806  | 30,250  | 30,760  |
| Washington County | 154,705 | 164,900 | 179,450 |
| Western Maryland  | 523,334 | 567,880 | 612,920 |

SOURCE: MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, MARYLAND STATE DATA CENTER

**Figure 6-2: Future Population Growth**



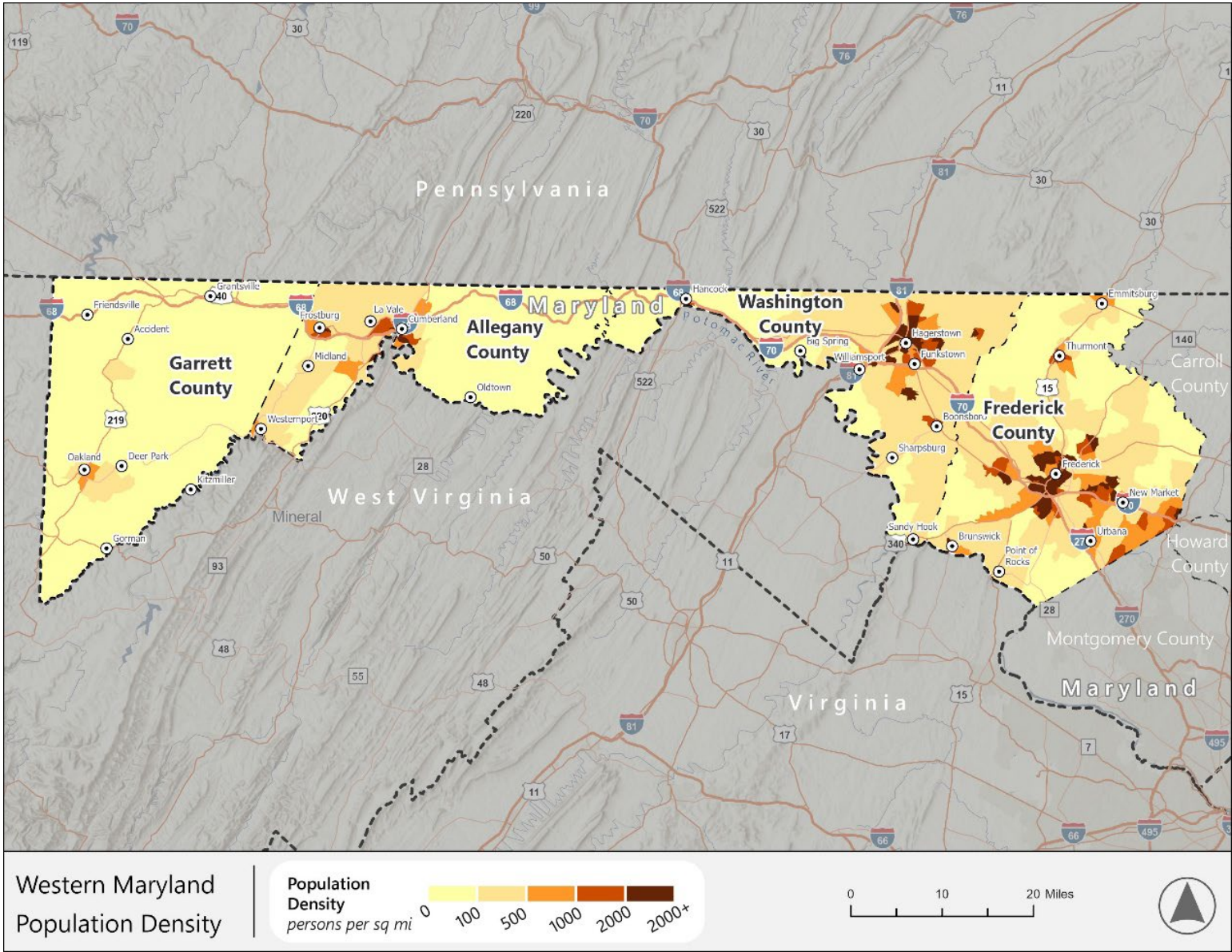
SOURCE: MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, MARYLAND STATE DATA CENTER

## Population Density

One of the most important factors in determining the level of transit service in an area is population density. Locations with population densities above 2,000 people per square mile are generally suited well for fixed-route transit. Western Maryland is generally characterized by its mountainous terrain, low population density, and long distances between population centers. This is especially true for Allegany and Garrett Counties, while Frederick and Washington Counties have higher populations and densities. Frederick County has both the highest population and the most high-density census block groups. Most of the population is centered around the city of Frederick, with some higher density block groups in Urbana and the southern portion of the county near the border with Montgomery County. Washington County's population centers are in and around the Hagerstown area, with the county becoming much less dense in the western portion of the county.

Allegany County's population centers include the cities of Cumberland and Frostburg, which have enough density and need for fixed-route transit, despite the rest of the county being very low population density spread across great distances of the rugged terrain. Garrett County is the least populous and least dense of the four western counties. The densest part of the county is the county seat of Oakland, accounting for the only larger-population center. None of the block groups score above 2,000 people per square mile, so Garrett Transit Service only operates demand-response transit. The population density for the entire region can be seen in **Figure 6-3**.

Figure 6-3: Population Density



## Transit-Dependent Populations

Public transportation needs are defined in part by identifying the relative size and location of those segments within the general population that are most likely to use transit services. These transit-dependent populations include individuals who may not have access to a personal vehicle or are unable to drive themselves due to age or disability. Determining the location of these populations assists in the evaluation of current transit services and the extent to which the services meet community needs.

The Transit Dependence Index (TDI) is an aggregate measure displaying relative concentrations of transit-dependent populations. Five factors make up the TDI calculation:

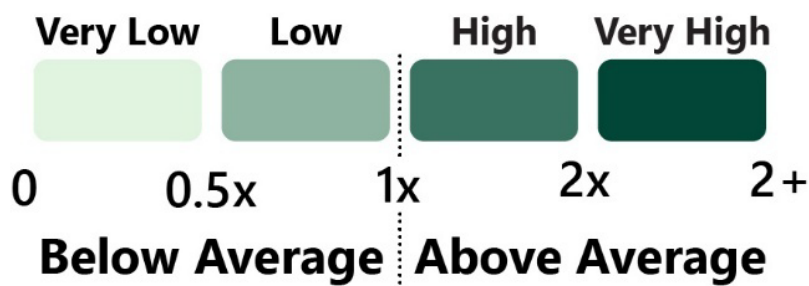
- Autoless households
- Individuals with disabilities
- Elderly populations (ages 65 and older)
- Youth populations (ages 10-17)
- Below-poverty populations

These factors represent specific socioeconomic characteristics of residents in the region. For each factor, individual census block groups were classified according to the prevalence of the vulnerable population relative to the county average. The factors were each classified into a score from one to four, then multiplied by a population density score to yield a composite TDI score. This score represents the viability of fixed-route transit within that block group.

As illustrated in **Figure 6-4**, the relative classification system utilizes averages in ranking populations. For example, areas with less than half of the average transit-dependent population fall into the “Very Low” classification, and areas that are more than twice the average will be classified as “Very High.” The classifications “Low” and “High” represent block groups which fall between the two classes, with the study area average serving as the dividing line.

**Figure 6-4: Transit-Dependence Index Classification System**

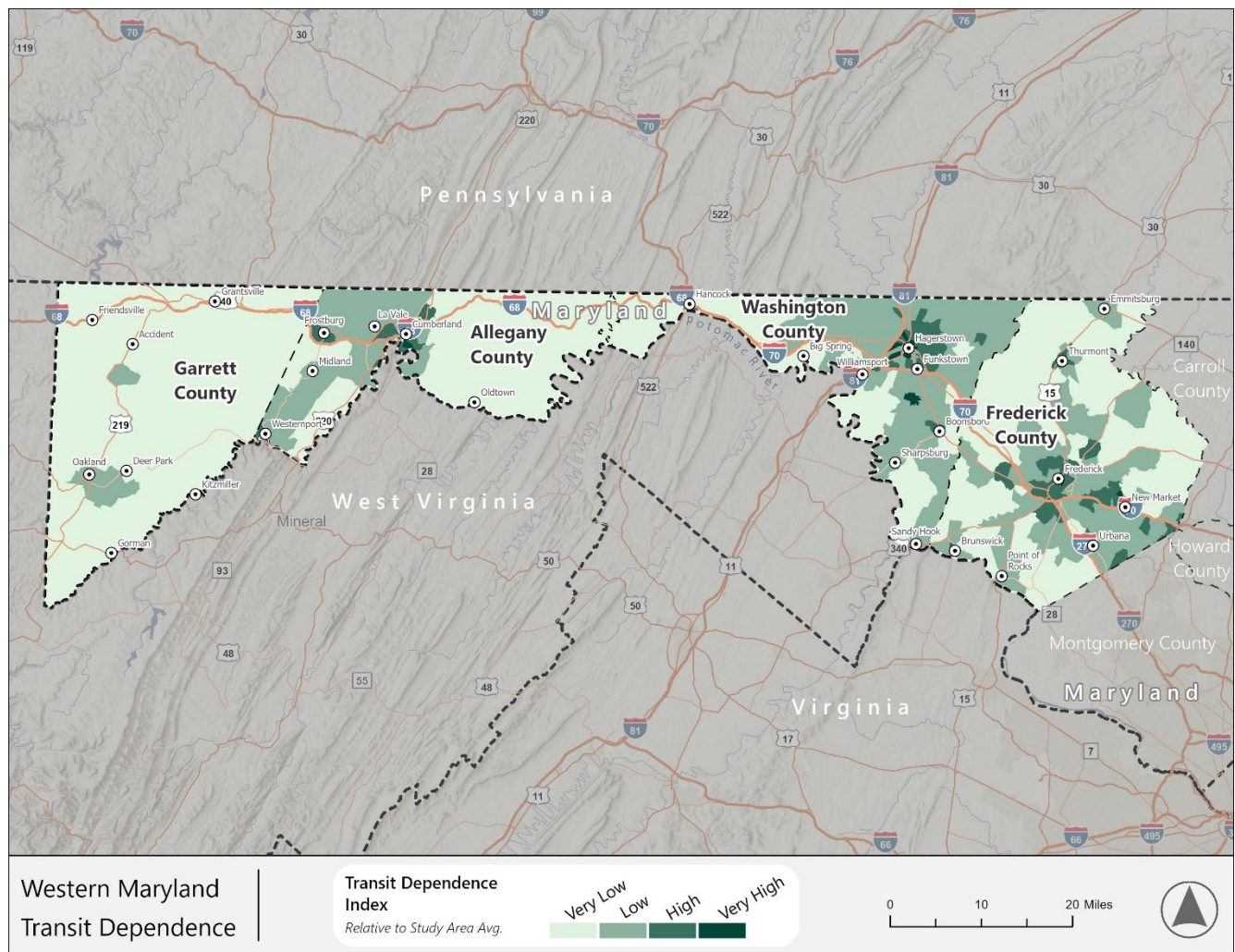
### ***TDI Scoring Methodology***



## Transit-Dependence Index

Similar to population density, much of the Western Maryland region is classified as low or very low on the transit-dependence index, owing to its lower population density and rural nature. Many areas that are scored as high or very high include portions of the city of Frederick in Frederick County, several areas of Hagerstown in Washington County, and much of Cumberland in Allegany County. Garrett County had no block groups categorized as high or very high. This does not necessarily indicate that there is no demand for transit in the county, but rather that the population densities are so low that none of the block groups get a high score. There are many other areas in the region that score as high, which can be found in proximity to the “very high” block groups, with the exception of Garrett County. **Figure 6-5**, below, illustrates where the transit-dependent populations reside.

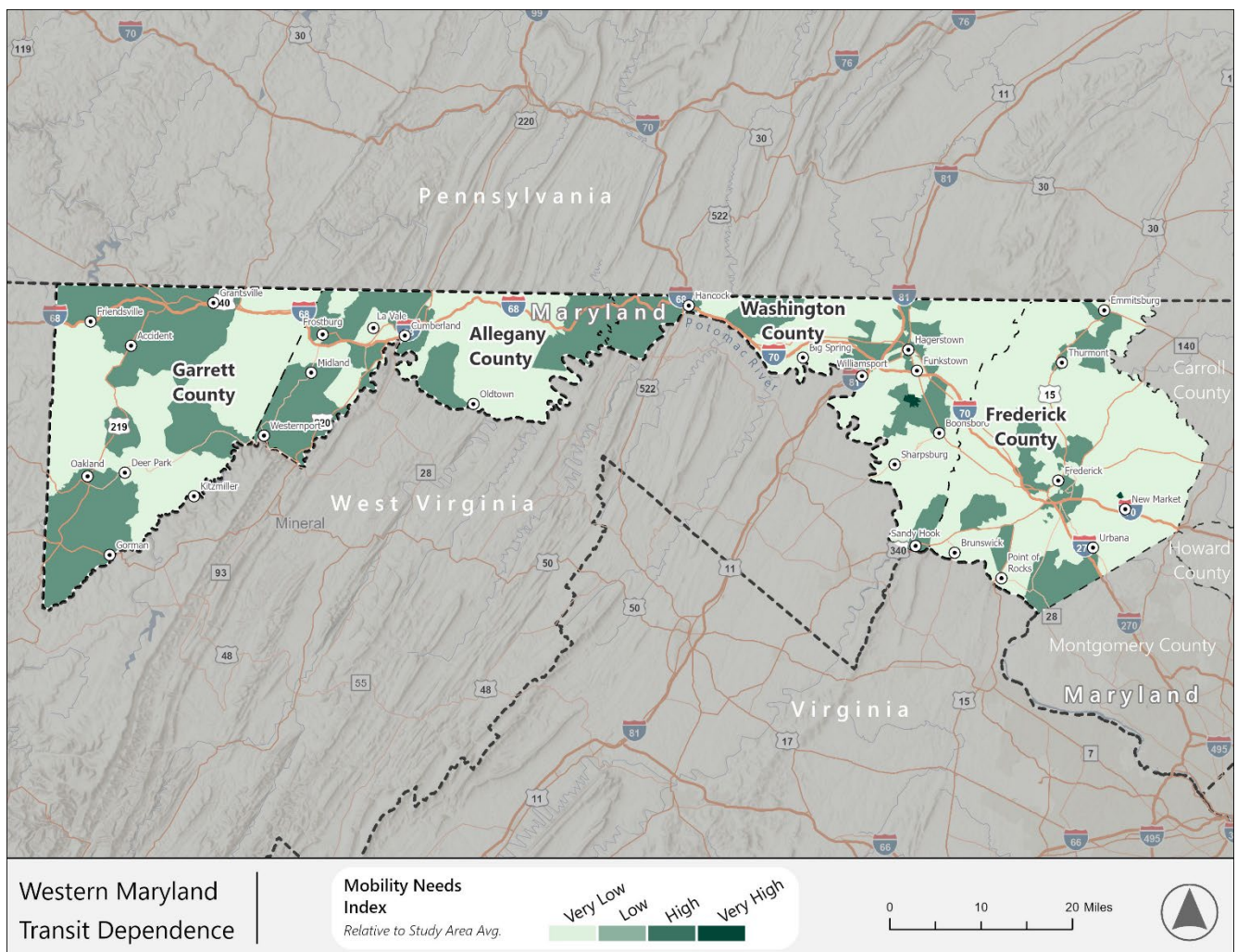
**Figure 6-5: Transit Dependence Index**



## Mobility Needs Index

The Mobility Needs Index (MNI) provides a complementary analysis to the TDI measure. It is nearly identical to the TDI measure except for the exclusion of population density. By showing the degree of need rather than the total amount of need, the MNI can show where there is high transit need in areas with lower population densities. In other words, TDI will show high need in areas with larger transit-dependent populations, and MNI will show high need in areas where transit-dependent individuals make up a larger portion of the total population, regardless of population size. The mobility needs index for the Western Maryland region can be found below in **Figure 6-6**.

**Figure 6-6: Mobility Needs Index**



## Autoless Households

Households without at least one personal vehicle are more likely to depend on the mobility offered by public transit than those households with access to a car. Although autoless households are reflected in both the TDI and MNI measures, displaying this segment of the population separately is important since travel in the Western Maryland region heavily favors personal vehicles, even with a larger share of transit routes and customers. **Figure 6-7** displays the concentration of autoless households in the Western Maryland region. In Frederick County, many of the very high block groups are found in the central and southern portions of the county. In Washington County, the very high block groups are located in the southern and central and north central parts of the county. The very high block groups of Allegany County can be found in the eastern portion, in and around the Cumberland area, and some of the western portions near Midland. Garrett County's very high block groups can be found along the US 219 corridor from McHenry down to Oakland and continuing south.

## Elderly Population

A second socioeconomic group analyzed by the TDI and MNI indices is the elderly population, defined as individuals at least 65 years of age. Elderly individuals may scale back their use of or be unable to safely operate personal vehicles as they age, leading to greater reliance on public transportation compared to individuals in other age brackets. **Figure 6-8** displays the relative concentration of elderly individuals in the Western Maryland region. High concentrations are found in a broad swath across the region in areas such as Frederick, Urbana, Funkstown, Cumberland, Midland, and McHenry.

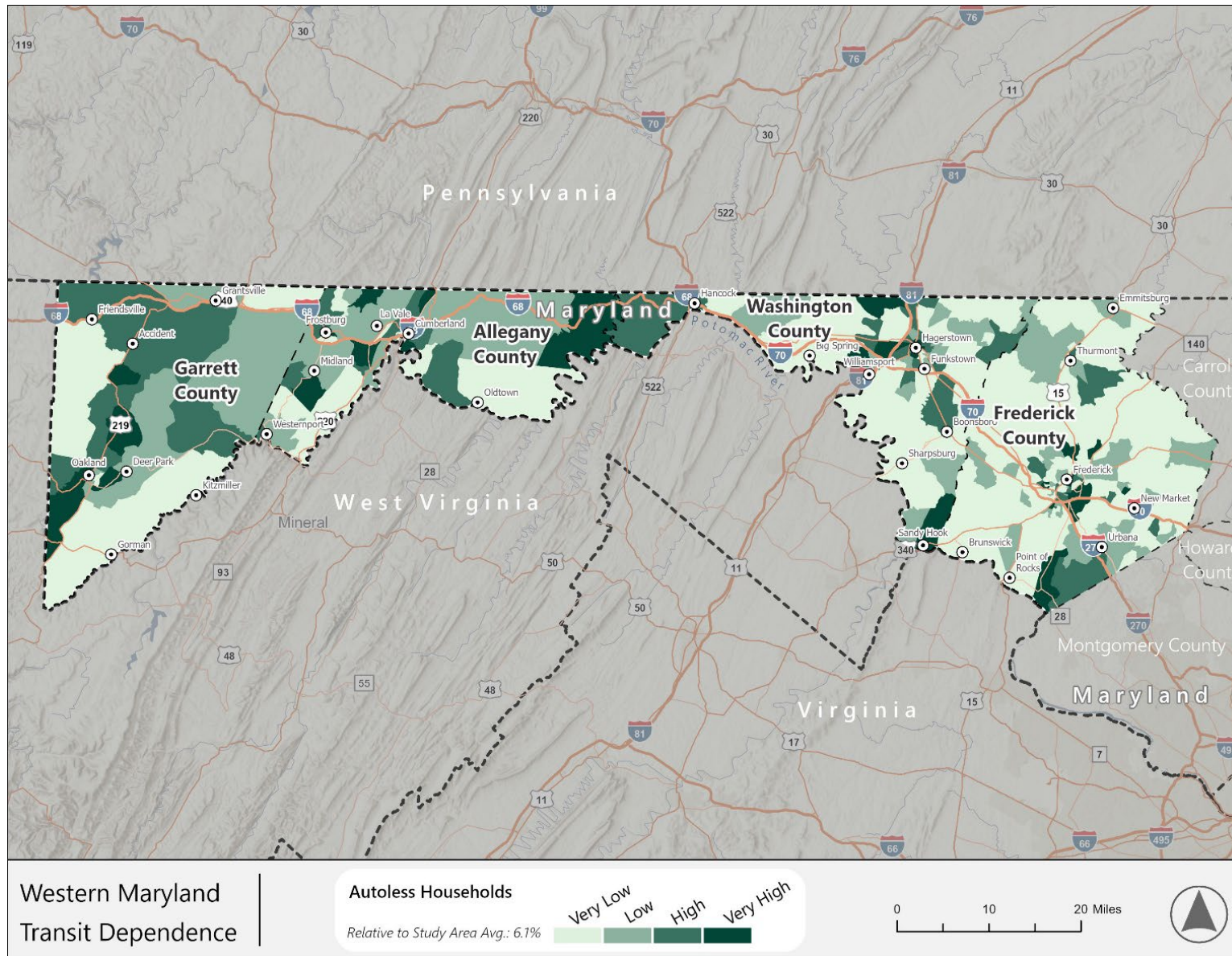
## Youth Population

Youths and teenagers, ages 10 to 17 years, who cannot drive or do not have regular access to an automobile, may rely upon the mobility offered by public transportation. As seen in **Figure 6-9**, the concentration of the youth population is somewhat evenly distributed across the region. Several of the block groups across the region are categorized as high and very high including Urbana, Clear Spring, and Midland.

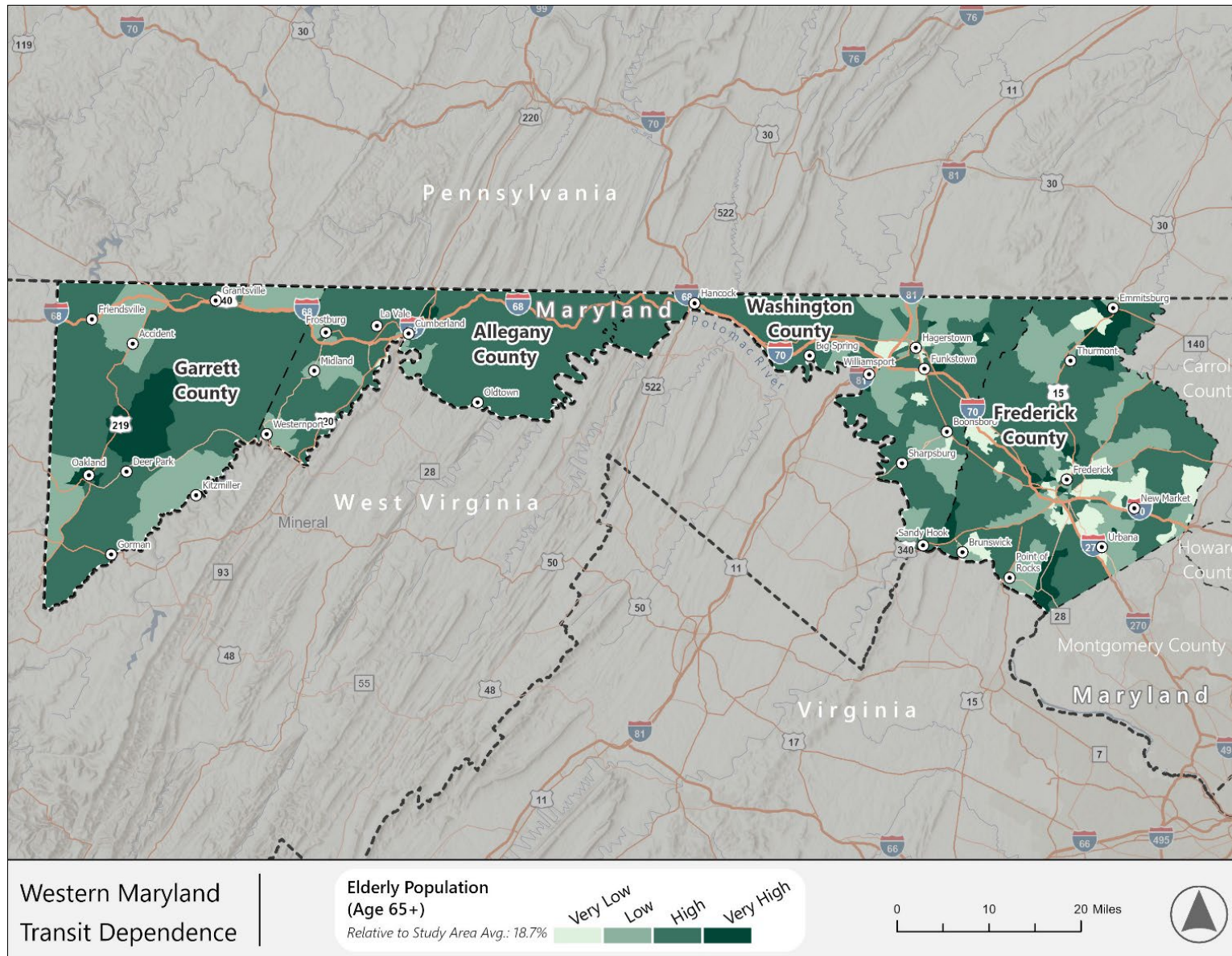
## Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may be unable to operate a personal vehicle and are consequently more likely to rely upon public transportation. As shown in **Figure 6-10**, the block groups with very high concentrations of individuals with disabilities can be found in Thurmont, Funkstown, Hagerstown, Cumberland, Accident, and Oakland.

**Figure 6-7: Autoless Households**



**Figure 6-8: Elderly Population**



**Figure 6-9: Youth Population**

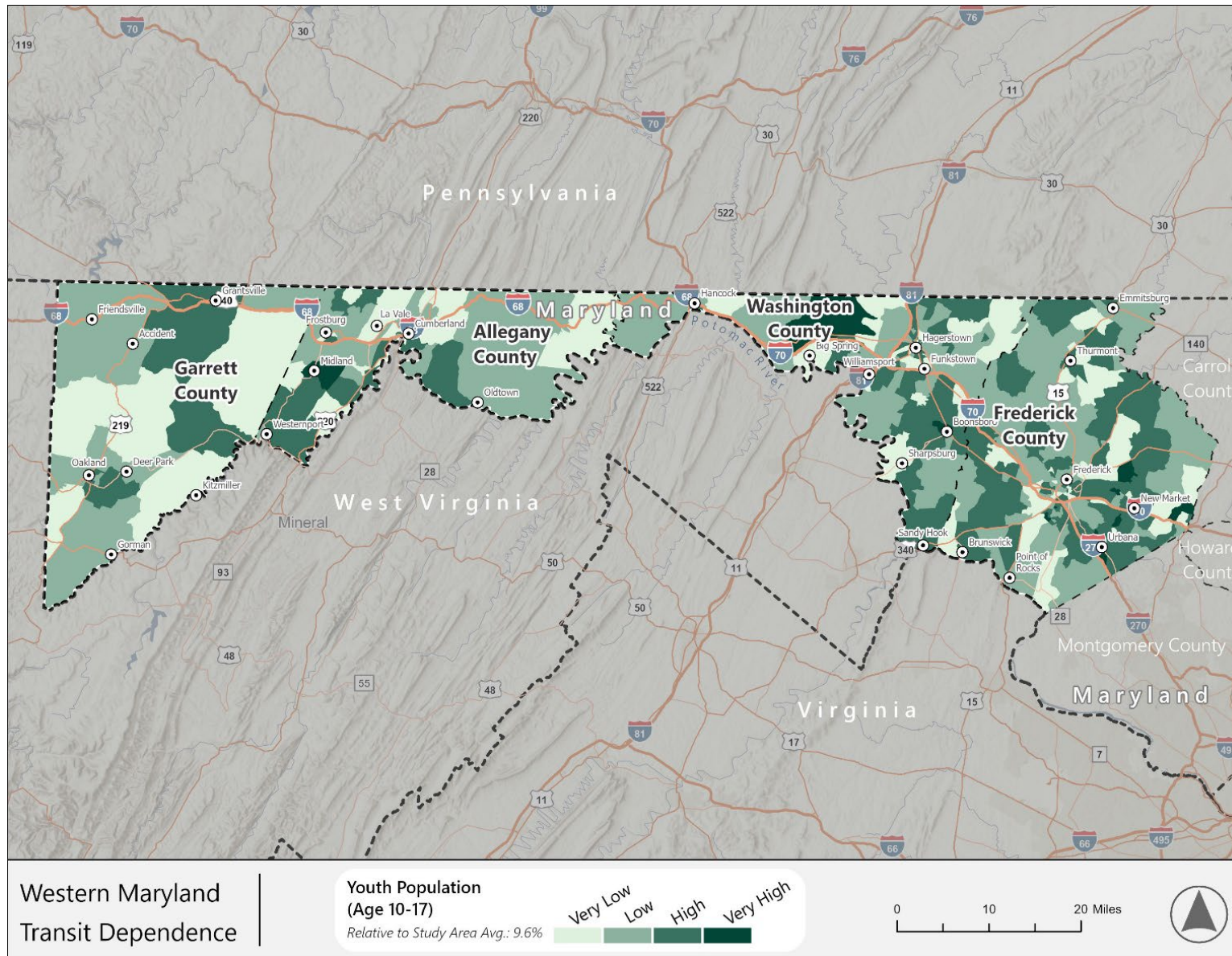
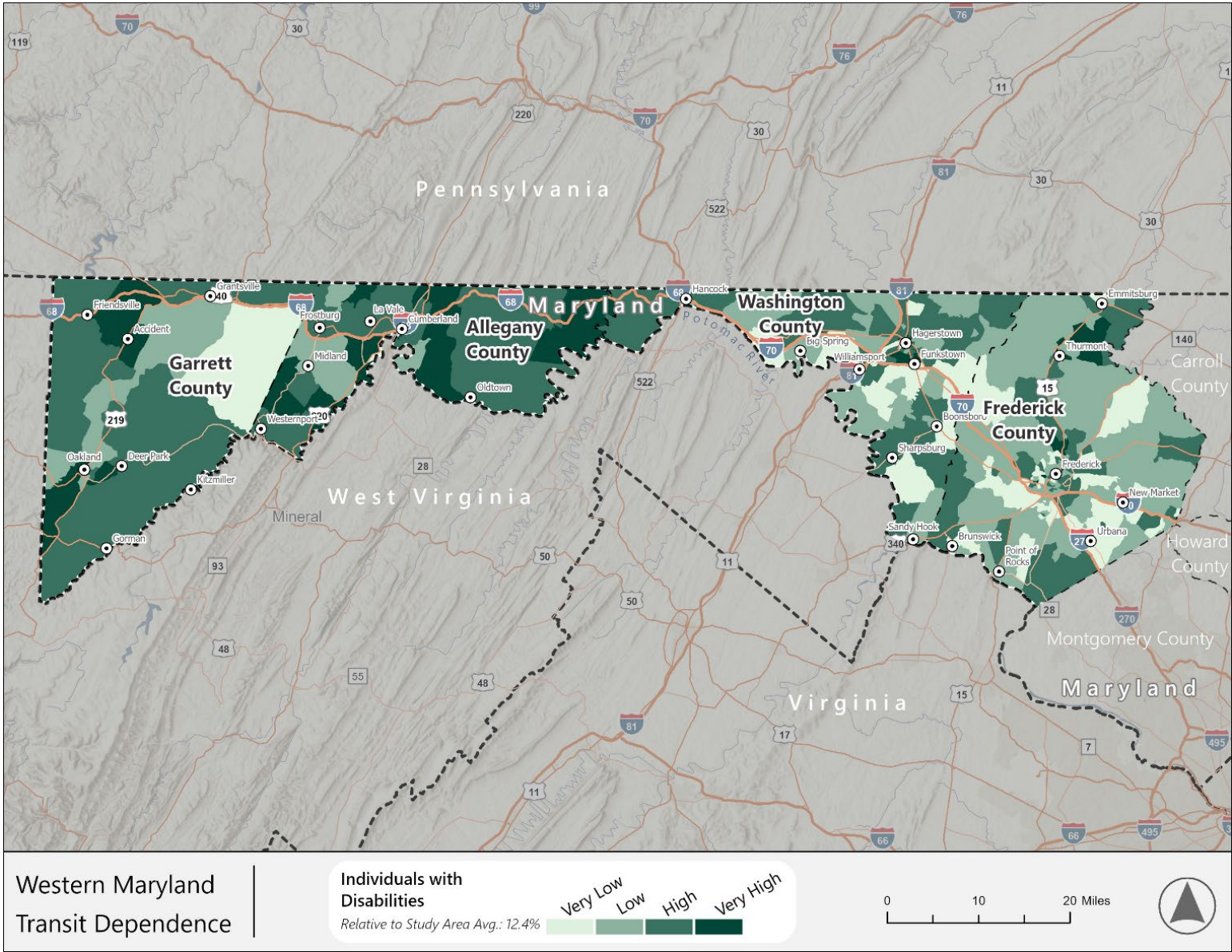


Figure 6-10: Individuals with Disabilities



## Title VI Demographic Analysis

As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal subsidies. This includes agencies providing federally-funded public transportation. The following section examines the minority and below-poverty populations within the Western Maryland region.

### Minority Population

It is important to ensure that areas with an above-average percentage of racial and/or ethnic minorities (represented by the “High” and “Very High” classifications) are not disproportionately impacted by any proposed alterations to existing public transportation services.

**Figure 6-11** depicts the percentage of minority individuals per block group in the Western Maryland region. Very High concentrations of minority population can be found in many block groups in and around Frederick, Hagerstown, and Cumberland.

### Below Poverty-Level Population

The second socioeconomic group included in the Title VI analysis represents those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level. These individuals face financial hardships that might make the ownership and maintenance of a personal vehicle difficult. In such cases, they may be more likely to depend upon public transportation.

**Figure 6-12** depicts the percentage of individuals below poverty per block group in the Western Maryland Region. The areas of the region that have a “Very High” density of individuals below the poverty line are somewhat evenly distributed across the region, with higher concentrations found in and around Frederick, Thurmont, Emmitsburg, Hagerstown, Cumberland, Oldtown, Westernport, Loch Lynn Heights, and Gorman.

Figure 6-11: Minority Population

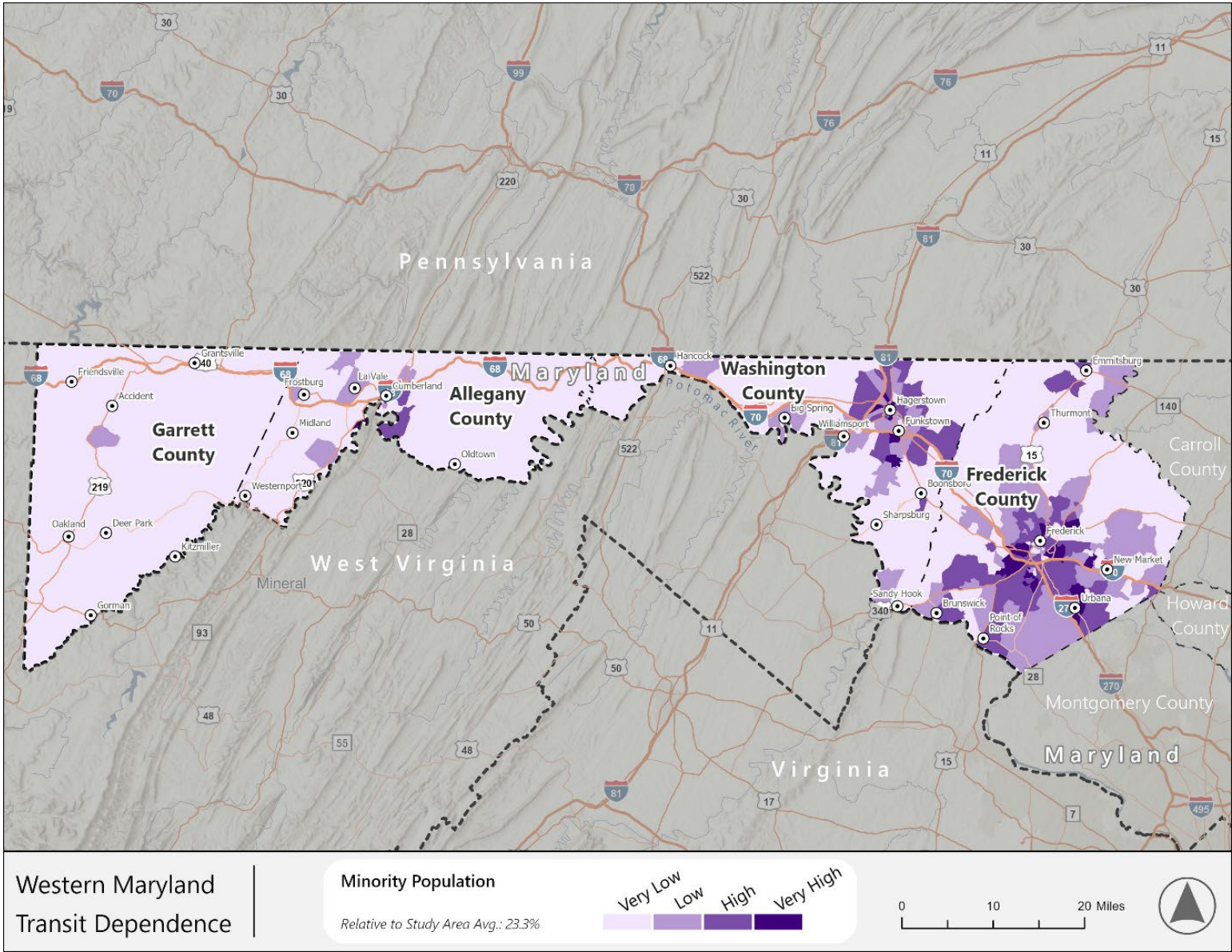
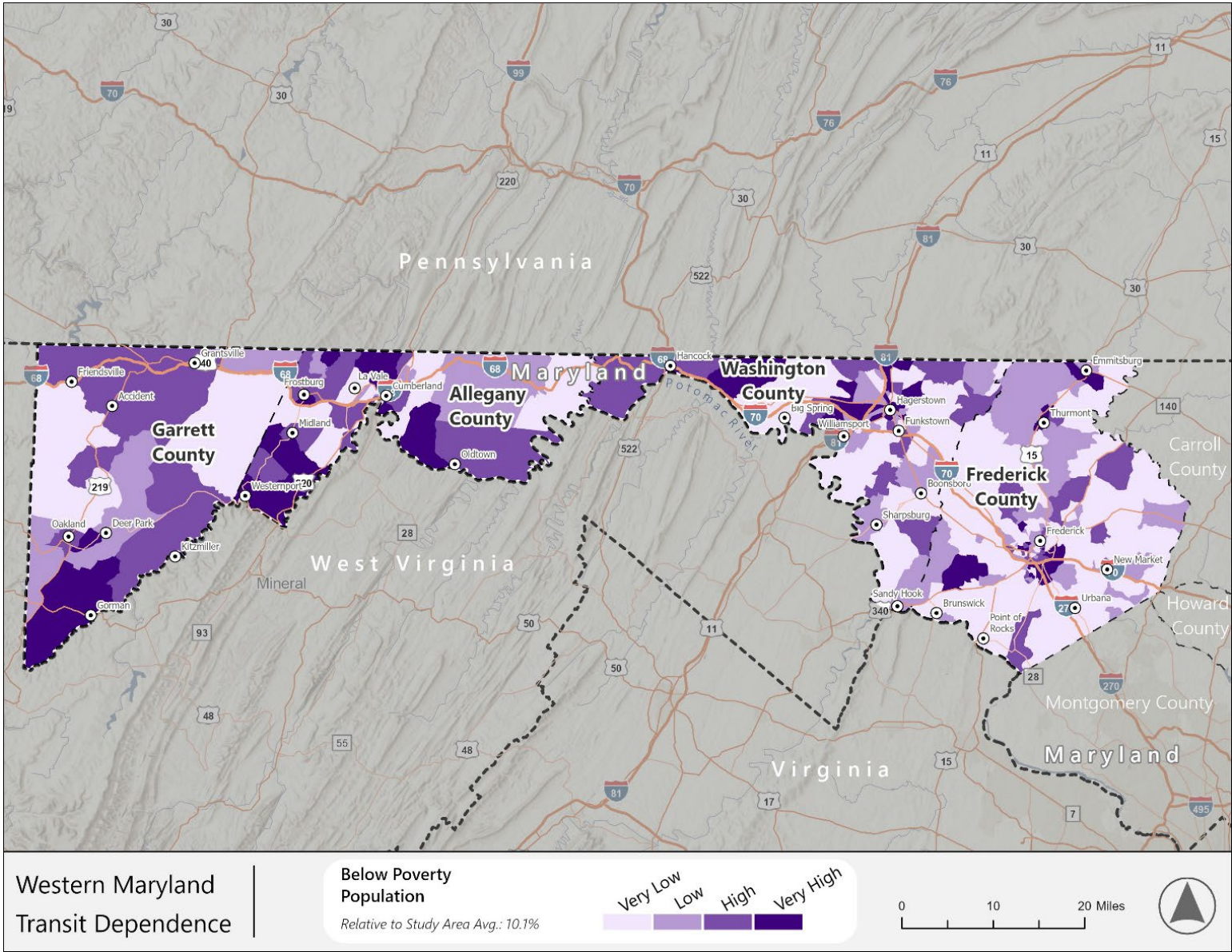


Figure 6-12: Below-Poverty Population

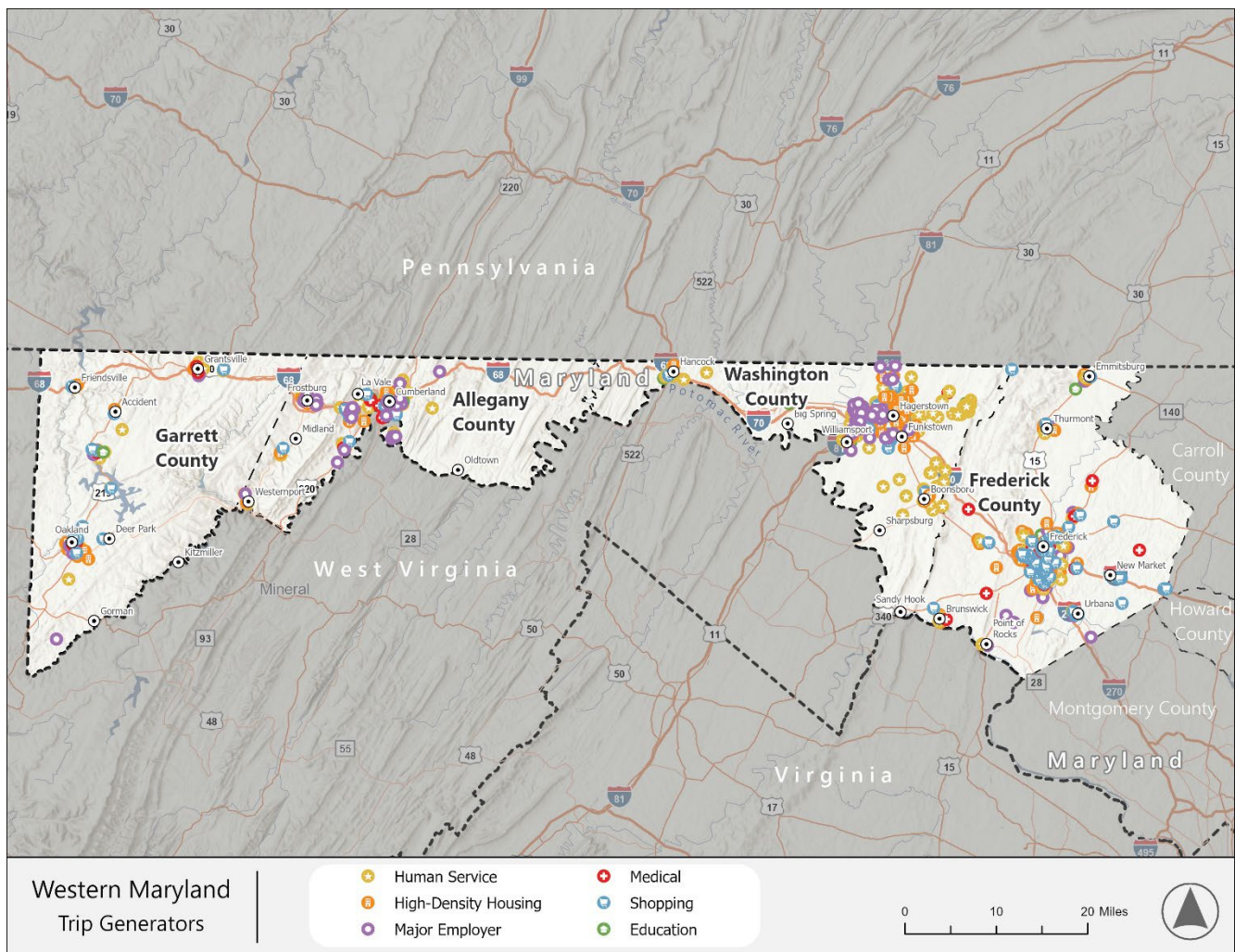


## Land Use Profile

### Major Trip Generators

Identifying land uses and major trip generators in the Western Maryland region complements the above demographic analysis by indicating where transit services may be most needed. Trip generators attract transit demand and include common origins and destinations like high-density housing, major employers, medical facilities, educational facilities, non-profit and governmental agencies, and shopping centers, as seen in **Figure 6-13**. Trip generators closely align with population density. As such, most trip generators can be found in population centers such as Frederick, Hagerstown, Cumberland, Frostburg, and Oakland. Other trip generators can be found in some of the smaller towns such as Brunswick, Thurmont, Hancock, Westernport, Friendsville, and Grantsville.

**Figure 6-13: Trip Generators**



## Travel Patterns

In addition to considering the region's major origins and destinations, it is also important to consider the community patterns of residents and workers. Nearly 90% of the region's employees work in Maryland. Most commuters in the region's counties drive alone to work, accounting for 72%. Frederick County had the largest portion of people who use public transit to get to work, at 1.5%. It shows 68% of employed residents are employed in their county of residence. The distribution of places of locations of employment and trips to work can be found in **Table 6-3**.

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) dataset from the Census Bureau is an additional data source that provides valuable insights into employee travel patterns. According to 2023 data, the top three employment destinations for residents of Allegany County were Cumberland, MD, Frostburg, MD, and La Vale, MD. For Frederick County, the top three employment destinations were Frederick, MD, Ballenger Creek, MD, and Rockville, MD. In Garrett County, the top three employment destinations were Oakland, MD, Grantsville, MD, and Cumberland, MD. For Washington County, the top three employment destinations were Hagerstown, MD, Frederick, MD, and Robinwood, MD. Other notable employment destinations in the region include Baltimore, MD, Washington, DC, Bethesda, MD, and Germantown, MD (**Table 6-3**).<sup>1</sup> **Table 6-4** shows these employment patterns in the Western Maryland region.

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<sup>1</sup> Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2023.

**Table 6-3: Journey-to-Work Travel Patterns**

| Place of Residence:                 | Allegany County |        | Frederick County |        | Garrett County |        | Washington County |        | Western Maryland Region |        |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|------------------|--------|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| Workers 16 Years and Older          | 29,062          |        | 162,907          |        | 13,396         |        | 72,229            |        | 277,594                 |        |
| Location of Employment              | #               | %      | #                | %      | #              | %      | #                 | %      | #                       | %      |
| In State of Residence               | 23,804          | 81.91% | 149,943          | 92.04% | 11,895         | 88.80% | 61,841            | 85.62% | 247,483                 | 89.15% |
| In County of Residence              | 20,738          | 71.36% | 107,469          | 65.97% | 10,683         | 79.75% | 49,657            | 68.75% | 188,547                 | 67.92% |
| Outside County of Residence         | 3,066           | 10.55% | 42,474           | 26.07% | 1,212          | 9.05%  | 12,184            | 16.87% | 58,936                  | 21.23% |
| Outside State of Residence          | 5,258           | 18.09% | 12,964           | 7.96%  | 1,501          | 11.20% | 10,388            | 14.38% | 30,111                  | 10.85% |
| Means of Transportation to Work     | #               | %      | #                | %      | #              | %      | #                 | %      | #                       | %      |
| Car, Truck, or Van - drove alone    | 21,687          | 74.62% | 111,994          | 68.75% | 10,314         | 76.99% | 54,604            | 75.60% | 198,599                 | 71.54% |
| Car, Truck, or Van - carpooled      | 3,716           | 12.79% | 13,591           | 8.34%  | 1,151          | 8.59%  | 5,676             | 7.86%  | 24,134                  | 8.69%  |
| Public Transportation               | 157             | 0.54%  | 2,405            | 1.48%  | 98             | 0.73%  | 876               | 1.21%  | 3,536                   | 1.27%  |
| Walked                              | 803             | 2.76%  | 4,002            | 2.46%  | 215            | 1.60%  | 1,420             | 1.97%  | 6,440                   | 2.32%  |
| Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, other | 227             | 0.78%  | 1,796            | 1.10%  | 128            | 0.96%  | 1,056             | 1.46%  | 3,207                   | 1.16%  |
| Worked at Home                      | 2,472           | 8.51%  | 29,119           | 17.87% | 1,490          | 11.12% | 8,597             | 11.90% | 41,678                  | 15.01% |

Source: ACS, Five-Year Estimates 2023-2024, Table B08130

**Table 6-4: Top Ten Work Destinations for Western Maryland Residents**

| Allegany County Residents |       |     | Frederick County Residents |        |     | Garrett County Residents |       |     | Washington County Residents    |        |     |
|---------------------------|-------|-----|----------------------------|--------|-----|--------------------------|-------|-----|--------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Destination               | Count | %   | Destination                | Count  | %   | Destination              | Count | %   | Destination                    | Count  | %   |
| Cumberland, MD            | 6,796 | 28% | Frederick, MD              | 26,980 | 19% | Oakland, MD              | 1,851 | 16% | Hagerstown, MD                 | 11,367 | 16% |
| Frostburg, MD             | 1,549 | 6%  | Ballenger Creek, MD        | 9,924  | 7%  | Grantsville, MD          | 546   | 5%  | Frederick, MD                  | 4,280  | 6%  |
| La Vale, MD               | 1,348 | 5%  | Rockville, MD              | 6,640  | 5%  | Cumberland, MD           | 401   | 3%  | Robinwood, MD                  | 2,644  | 4%  |
| Cresaptown, MD            | 727   | 3%  | Gaithersburg, MD           | 5,337  | 4%  | Mountain Lake Park, MD   | 319   | 3%  | Ballenger Creek, MD            | 2,039  | 3%  |
| Baltimore, MD             | 627   | 3%  | Baltimore, MD              | 4,163  | 3%  | Baltimore, MD            | 305   | 3%  | Baltimore, MD                  | 1,882  | 3%  |
| Hagerstown, MD            | 328   | 1%  | Washington, DC             | 3,683  | 3%  | Frostburg, MD            | 161   | 1%  | Halfway, MD                    | 1,843  | 3%  |
| Frederick city, MD        | 242   | 1%  | Bethesda, MD               | 2,981  | 2%  | Accident, MD             | 133   | 1%  | Fountainhead-Orchard Hills, MD | 1,767  | 3%  |
| Bier, MD                  | 203   | 1%  | Germantown, MD             | 2,818  | 2%  | Hagerstown, MD           | 127   | 1%  | Rockville, MD                  | 909    | 1%  |
| Oakland, MD               | 203   | 1%  | Columbia, MD               | 2,673  | 2%  | Frederick, MD            | 102   | 1%  | Washington, DC                 | 768    | 1%  |
| Grantsville, MD           | 189   | 1%  | North Bethesda, MD         | 2,518  | 2%  | La Vale, MD              | 83    | 1%  | Columbia, MD                   | 701    | 1%  |

# Chapter 7

## Development of Strategies and Prioritization Process

### Introduction

A key element required in the coordinated transportation plan involves strategies that address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery. This document presents strategies that were discussed with stakeholders in Western Maryland and then updated based on their comments. The development of these strategies considered input received through two rounds of in-person workshops and online focus groups, along with strategies that were included in the previous plan for the region.

While all the strategies are important and would support efforts to expand mobility, stakeholders provided their feedback on the priorities for the region. This is a key step in the coordinated transportation planning process, as one of the required elements of the plan is priority for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities. Through a survey, stakeholders ranked the strategies based on high, medium, or lower priority, or proposed that they be removed from the list. The individual results were compiled and provided through a priority list in this chapter.

### Strategy Categories

While many of the strategies to improve mobility in the region are interrelated, during the initial development they were categorized by:

- **Coordination Strategies** – It is critical that existing resources are coordinated to reduce any duplication, and therefore these strategies support maintaining and expanding coordination activities so that regional stakeholders have a forum to identify opportunities to connect services and share information.
- **Outreach Strategies** – It is also important that residents in the region are aware of the transportation services and mobility options that are available to them. These strategies support community outreach efforts to help ensure services are marketed effectively.
- **Operating Strategies** – These strategies are focused on efforts to increase mobility options throughout the region, and include efforts to improve public transit services, expand regional connectivity, build upon current human services transportation, and plan and implement on-demand microtransit services.

- **Funding Strategies** – These strategies support efforts to seek ongoing and additional funding to maintain and expand transportation services.
- **Sustainability Strategies** – While many strategies involve efforts to expand mobility in the region, it is vital for current transportation services that are meeting needs to be maintained. This includes operating funds to support existing services, as well as capital funding to replace vehicles beyond their useful life. These strategies also include improvements to the current infrastructure to allow for greater access to existing services.

## Western Maryland Strategies

The potential strategies were prioritized by Western Maryland stakeholders into high, medium, and low priorities. **Table 7-1** displays the results of this process.

**Table 7-1: Prioritization of Strategies**

| Priority | Category       | Potential Strategy   |
|----------|----------------|--|
| High     | Operating      | Advocate for recommendations to improve public transportation identified through detailed county transit development plans.  |
| High     | Funding        | Develop additional partnerships and identify new funding sources to support public transit and human services transportation, including local businesses and municipalities. |
| High     | Funding        | Advocate for additional funding to support public transit and human services transportation through outreach to community and regional leaders and policymakers.             |
| High     | Sustainability | Maintain the current services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.  |
| High     | Sustainability | Acquire vehicles that are more suitable for remote areas of the region.  |
| High     | Sustainability | Continue to support capital projects that meet identified transportation needs in the region—particularly those of older adults and people with disabilities.                |

| Priority | Category       | Potential Strategy   |
|----------|----------------|--|
| Medium   | Coordination   | Improve coordination of services among providers through mobility management activities.   |
| Medium   | Coordination   | Link compatible software programs to share data and allow for trip coordination.   |
| Medium   | Coordination   | Create online forum where different transportation providers can collaborate and share ideas, best practices, and concerns pertinent to regional transportation. |
| Medium   | Outreach       | Establish public outreach events to educate the public and local policymakers.   |
| Medium   | Outreach       | Administer training for human services agency staff, healthcare providers, and other key stakeholders on the use and availability of transportation services.    |
| Medium   | Operating      | Provide additional transportation options to access second and third shift jobs.   |
| Medium   | Operating      | Identify and mitigate barriers in an effort to provide additional trips through the current human services transportation network.                               |
| Lower    | Coordination   | Explore public-private partnerships with ridesharing companies (i.e., Uber, Lyft).   |
| Lower    | Coordination   | Establish and maintain an inter-agency ride-sharing program for long-distance medical trips.   |
| Lower    | Outreach       | Establish or expand travel training programs for new and prospective customers.  |
| Lower    | Operating      | Provide targeted shuttle services to access employment opportunities.  |
| Lower    | Operating      | Use volunteers to provide more specialized and one-to-one transportation services.   |
| Lower    | Sustainability | Consider and implement vehicle repair and car donation programs.   |

## Coordination Strategies

### **Improve coordination of services among providers through mobility management activities. (Medium Priority)**

Mobility management activities play a critical role in helping transportation providers, human services agencies, and healthcare organizations work together more effectively in a rural, multi-county region like Western Maryland. Coordinated planning helps reduce duplication of services, align operating schedules, and ensure that limited vehicles and drivers are deployed where needs are greatest. By improving communication and shared awareness of available transportation resources, mobility management can better connect riders to appropriate services across county boundaries and service types, particularly for medical, employment, and senior transportation.

A more structured mobility management approach would also strengthen connections between public transit systems, nonprofit providers, volunteer driver programs, and demand-response services. Shared service frameworks—such as coordinated scheduling systems and real-time trip visibility between agencies—can improve efficiency and reduce missed trip opportunities. Ongoing outreach, data sharing, and inter-agency planning can also help identify service gaps, emerging travel patterns, and operational challenges such as early-morning employment trips and long-distance medical travel. Strengthening these coordination practices supports a more seamless regional transportation network and maximizes the impact of limited funding and staffing resources.

### **Link compatible software programs to share data and allow for trip coordination. (Medium Priority)**

Linking compatible scheduling and dispatch software across transportation providers can greatly improve the efficiency and reliability of human services and public transportation in Western Maryland. When agencies can view trip demand, vehicle availability, and scheduled services across systems, they are better positioned to reduce duplication, avoid missed trips, and maximize use of limited fleet and driver resources. This is especially important for high-frequency and long-distance medical trips, where multiple providers may be serving similar destinations on the same day.

Shared software platforms also support stronger coordination between public transit providers, nonprofit transportation agencies, and volunteer-based programs. Real-time visibility into trip assignments and capacity allows agencies to shift trips between providers when needed, balance workloads, and respond more effectively to service disruptions. Expanding access to compatible trip management systems across the region would strengthen coordination for medical, employment, and senior transportation while supporting broader mobility management goals through improved data sharing and system integration.

## **Create online forum where different transportation providers can collaborate and share ideas, best practices, and concerns pertinent to regional transportation. (Medium Priority)**

An online collaboration forum for transportation providers in Western Maryland would create a centralized platform for ongoing communication, coordination, and regional problem-solving. With multiple public, nonprofit, volunteer, and private transportation organizations operating across Garrett, Allegany, Washington, and Frederick Counties, there is a strong need for a shared digital space to exchange information in real time. A regional forum would allow providers to share service updates, funding opportunities, policy changes, and emerging transportation needs, thereby strengthening overall system awareness and responsiveness.

Such a forum would also serve as a hub for sharing best practices related to medical transportation coordination, volunteer driver recruitment and insurance requirements, ridesharing partnerships, fuel cost mitigation, and service delivery in rural environments. Providers could use the platform to discuss operational challenges such as early-morning employment trips, long-distance medical travel, fleet maintenance, and staffing shortages, as well as successful strategies being used elsewhere in the region. This peer-to-peer exchange would reduce redundancy, encourage innovation, and accelerate adoption of effective service models.

In addition, an online forum could support long-term regional transportation planning and mobility management efforts by creating a consistent space for collaboration beyond in-person meetings. It could host shared resources such as training materials, grant announcements, data dashboards, and coordinated service pilots. Housing this forum within an existing regional organization would further strengthen its role as a neutral convening space, reinforcing cross-county partnerships and supporting more integrated and efficient transportation service delivery across Western Maryland.

## **Establish and maintain an inter-agency ridesharing program for long-distance medical trips. (Lower Priority)**

A regional ridesharing program for long-distance medical trips would help Western Maryland providers better manage the growing demand for travel to out-of-county and out-of-state medical facilities, including destinations such as Cumberland and Morgantown. Transportation providers in the region face significant strain due to high fuel costs, limited vehicle fleets, and reimbursement structures that make long trips difficult to sustain. These pressures reduce availability for routine trips and constrain agencies' ability to support clients who require frequent travel for services such as dialysis or specialty medical care.

A coordinated approach would allow agencies to pool resources, share trip information, and leverage common scheduling platforms to reduce duplication and improve overall efficiency. Partnerships with medical providers—such as hospitals, dialysis centers, and clinics—can further strengthen this model, as some healthcare organizations already subsidize or reimburse transportation for their patients. Improved data collection on medical trip demand can help formalize these partnerships and

demonstrate the value that transportation providers bring to the healthcare system. A structured, inter-agency ridesharing program would increase the reliability of long-distance medical transportation, reduce operating costs, and improve access to essential healthcare across county lines.

### **Explore public-private partnerships with ridesharing companies (i.e., Uber, Lyft). (Lower Priority)**

Public-private partnerships with ridesharing companies can expand flexible transportation options in areas where traditional public transit and taxis are limited or unavailable, particularly for short notice, off-hour, or specialized trips. While ridesharing availability remains inconsistent in rural portions of Western Maryland, these services are increasingly being used where they are available for medical trips, senior travel, grocery access, and employment-related travel. In some areas, ridesharing is already supporting limited goods movement, such as grocery and food delivery, demonstrating the potential for broader mobility partnerships as service coverage expands.

Existing models that integrate ridesharing into human services transportation programs demonstrate how these partnerships can offset demand on public transit providers and volunteer driver networks. Programs that provide subsidized or discounted rides through nonprofit organizations and local grants allow staff and clients to access on-demand transportation when public transit is unavailable or impractical. Taxi voucher programs offer similar benefits in areas with limited cab service. Expanding these partnerships regionally through coordinated agreements with transportation network companies, healthcare providers, and nonprofit agencies could increase trip availability, reduce service gaps for early morning and late shift workers, and improve access to medical care and essential services without requiring major capital investment.

## **Outreach Strategies**

### **Administer training for human services agency staff, healthcare providers, and other key stakeholders on the use and availability of transportation services. (Medium Priority)**

Providing training to agency staff and healthcare providers ensures that key stakeholders are aware of available transportation options and can help clients navigate services effectively. Many providers in Western Maryland face challenges coordinating trips for clients, particularly for medical appointments, second- and third-shift employment, and specialized populations such as seniors and individuals with behavioral health needs. Trainings can cover the use of demand-response services, volunteer driver programs, ridesharing partnerships, and local transit options.

Staff trainings can also include instruction on scheduling tools and data-sharing platforms that support trip coordination, such as CTS Trip Master. Familiarity with these systems can improve efficiency, reduce duplicate trips, and expand access to critical services, particularly for clients requiring long-distance or

specialized transportation. Ongoing training and updates on grants, funding opportunities, and new service offerings help agencies stay informed and ensure that transportation barriers do not limit access to medical care, employment, or other essential services.

### **Establish public outreach events to educate the public and local policymakers. (Medium Priority)**

Ongoing public outreach is essential to raise awareness about available transportation services and ensure that community members and local decision-makers understand regional needs. Outreach can include demonstrations of transit options, informational sessions on demand-response, schedule reading, volunteer driver programs, and engagement with social service agencies to reach residents who may need transportation. Targeted events help communicate service availability, highlight gaps in coverage, and encourage collaboration among stakeholders, while also building support for local funding and program expansion.

### **Establish or expand travel training programs for new and prospective customers. (Lower Priority)**

Travel training programs help residents gain the skills and confidence to use available transportation services, particularly fixed-route and demand-response options. In Frederick County, targeted travel training programs for seniors have demonstrated success in teaching participants how to read schedules, navigate routes, and use bus services effectively. These programs have also been extended to newly elected officials to increase awareness and understanding of public transit systems. Expanding similar programs across Western Maryland can help ensure that residents in other counties, including Garrett, Allegany, and Washington, are better able to access public and human services transportation.

Implementing travel training in additional counties should consider local needs and resources. For example, some rural areas have limited fixed-route services, and residents are accustomed to curb-to-curb or door-to-door pickups. Training programs could incorporate guidance on using demand-response services, scheduling rides in advance, and navigating volunteer driver networks. Outreach efforts should be ongoing, as transportation needs evolve and new residents or populations—such as older adults moving into age-restricted communities—may require instruction on accessing services.

Coordination with social service agencies and human services staff can enhance the effectiveness of travel training programs. In Washington County, social service partners have supported programs by accompanying participants on transit routes and assisting with instruction. Expanding travel training in partnership with local agencies and community organizations can strengthen awareness, increase ridership, and ensure that residents, particularly older adults and individuals with limited transportation options, are able to access employment, medical appointments, and essential services efficiently.

## Operating Strategies

### **Advocate for recommendations to improve public transportation identified through detailed county transit development plans. (High Priority)**

Ongoing advocacy is essential to ensure that the needs identified through county-level transit development planning are reflected in funding decisions, service design, and long-term investment strategies. Across Western Maryland, funding constraints continue to limit service availability, staffing, and vehicle replacement, even as demand for transportation, particularly for medical and employment trips, continues to grow. Declining state match percentages, rising vehicle costs, and uncertainty around grant programs place added financial pressure on already resource-constrained systems. Advocacy at the regional and state levels can help reinforce the importance of restoring stronger local match levels, stabilizing operational funding, and ensuring that rural counties are not overlooked in statewide funding allocations.

Advocacy is also needed to address long-standing service gaps identified through transit planning efforts, including limited early-morning and late-evening service, restrictive intercounty medical access, and the need for more reliable transportation options in rural and fast-growing areas. Population growth in Frederick County—combined with limited services in areas such as Urbana, along with ongoing vehicle, staffing, and funding constraints in Garrett and Allegany Counties—underscores the importance of translating planning recommendations into funded, implementable improvements. Coordinated regional advocacy through transportation associations, legislative outreach, and partnerships with local governments can help elevate these priorities and increase the likelihood that recommended transit improvements will move from plans and into practice.

### **Identify and mitigate barriers in an effort to provide additional trips through the current human services transportation network. (Medium Priority)**

Human services transportation providers across Western Maryland face a range of operational and financial barriers that limit their ability to provide additional trips, even as demand continues to rise. Fuel costs remain a significant challenge, particularly in Garrett County where prices are consistently higher than those in surrounding areas. Providers that operate on tight per-trip billing structures are especially impacted by out-of-county travel and long-distance trips. In addition, declining state and local match percentages for capital and operating programs place increased strain on agency budgets, making it more difficult to sustain existing services while expanding capacity. Limited funding contributes directly to staffing shortages, service reductions, and constraints on vehicle replacement.

Barriers related to trip purpose and service eligibility also restrict the number of rides that can be provided. Medical transportation, especially for dialysis and out-of-county specialist care, continues to grow and increasingly consumes available resources, reducing flexibility for other trip purposes such as shopping, social services, and quality-of-life travel. Transportation for early morning employment

remains difficult due to limited-service hours, and youth transportation needs related to behavioral health services fall outside allowable uses for some federal programs. Addressing these barriers will require coordinated efforts to stabilize funding, align service eligibility with evolving community needs, strengthen partnerships for medical transportation, and explore flexible service models that allow providers to maximize trip capacity within existing constraints.

### **Provide additional transportation options to access second and third shift jobs. (Medium Priority)**

Access to transportation for second- and third-shift employment remains a significant challenge across Western Maryland, particularly for workers who must report to work before traditional transit services begin operating. Some individuals are required to be at work as early as 6:00 a.m., before most fixed-route, demand-response, and taxi services are available. While targeted employment transportation programs have existed in the past—such as a previous workforce-focused grant program serving a major distribution center in Allegany County—these services are no longer in place, limiting transportation options for early-shift workers.

The loss of these targeted services highlights the need for renewed coordination between workforce development programs, employers, and transportation providers to support non-traditional work schedules. Expanded service hours, employer partnerships, and flexible trip options could help address these gaps while improving job access for individuals who rely on public and human services transportation. Supporting employment-related transportation for off-peak hours also strengthens workforce participation and economic stability across the region.

### **Provide targeted shuttle services to access employment opportunities. (Lower Priority)**

Targeted shuttle services represent a practical strategy to address persistent gaps in access to employment across the Western Maryland region, particularly for shift workers and residents in rural or transit-limited areas. Early morning work schedules remain difficult to serve because many transit systems and taxi providers do not begin operations early enough to support 6:00 a.m. reporting times. Previous workforce-focused services, including grant-funded shuttles to large employment centers in Allegany County, demonstrated the value of employer-oriented transportation but also highlighted the vulnerability of these services when dedicated funding expires.

Targeted employment shuttles could support access to distribution centers, healthcare facilities, industrial parks, and other major job sites that generate consistent travel demand. These services would also benefit workers who do not drive, including staff of human services agencies and other essential workers. Coordinating shuttle services with employers, workforce development programs, and regional partners could improve reliability, reduce operating inefficiencies, and help stabilize workforce participation in areas where traditional fixed-route transit is not feasible.

## **Use volunteers to provide more specialized and one-to-one transportation services. (Lower Priority)**

Volunteer driver programs represent a critical strategy for providing specialized, one-to-one transportation in areas where fixed-route or demand-response transit are not available or cannot fully meet individual needs. These services are especially valuable for older adults, people with disabilities, and residents in rural or transit-limited communities who require door-to-door assistance for medical appointments, shopping, and other essential trips. While some volunteer programs currently operate within the region, participation varies widely by county, and several areas continue to experience limited capacity due to challenges in recruitment and retention of drivers.

A major barrier to expanding volunteer-based transportation is the complexity of liability, insurance requirements, and administrative coordination. Establishing a centralized clearinghouse for insurance information and program guidance could lower these barriers by providing consistent support to agencies and volunteers. Replicable models from within and outside the region demonstrate that volunteer-driven transportation can be an effective, scalable solution when paired with clear insurance frameworks and strong organizational coordination. Strengthening these programs would allow transit agencies to focus resources on higher-capacity services while ensuring that residents with more individualized needs are not left behind.

## **Funding Strategies**

### **Develop additional partnerships and identify new funding sources to support public transit and human services transportation, including with local businesses and municipalities. (High Priority)**

Expanding partnerships with local businesses, healthcare providers, and municipal governments represents a key opportunity to strengthen long-term funding stability for transportation services in the Western Maryland region. Existing models demonstrate that partnerships with medical offices and dialysis providers can offset transportation costs by directly subsidizing trips that support patient access to care. Similar partnership approaches could be expanded to include additional medical providers, major employers, and regional institutions that rely on a consistent workforce and patient base. Local business participation could also be encouraged through sponsorship programs or service-specific agreements tied to workforce mobility and regional economic development.

Additional funding opportunities may also exist through local financing mechanisms and targeted grant programs. Exploring special financing districts in high-activity areas, such as tourism and recreation centers, could generate dedicated revenue for transit services while aligning transportation investment with economic activity. Nonprofit agencies already leverage small quarterly grants for taxi vouchers and ridesharing support, illustrating how flexible funding sources can fill gaps where traditional transit is limited. Together, these partnership-based funding strategies can help diversify revenue, reduce reliance on a single funding stream, and provide greater resilience amid ongoing financial uncertainty.

## **Advocate for additional funding to support public transit and human services transportation through outreach to community and regional leaders and policymakers. (High Priority)**

Advocacy for increased and more equitable transportation funding is critical in order to sustain and expand public transit and human services transportation across the Western Maryland region. Providers continue to face significant financial pressure from rising operating costs, fuel prices, staffing challenges, and increasing local match requirements for capital funding programs. Shifts in match percentages and uncertainty in state and federal support have made long-term planning difficult and have directly affected the agencies' ability to maintain staffing levels, replace vehicles, and meet growing demand for medical and employment-related trips. Coordinated advocacy efforts through regional and statewide organizations can elevate these challenges and help communicate the essential role transportation plays in healthcare access, workforce participation, and quality of life. Continued outreach to community leaders, legislators, and policymakers will be necessary to secure stable, predictable funding and ensure that Western Maryland's transportation needs remain visible at the state and regional levels.

## **Sustainability Strategies**

### **Continue to support capital projects that meet identified transportation needs in the region, particularly those of older adults and people with disabilities. (High Priority)**

Ongoing investment in capital projects remains essential to sustaining transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities across the Western Maryland region. Providers continue to rely heavily on specialized vehicles to accommodate mobility devices, medical transportation, and door-to-door service in rural areas where fixed-route transit is not practical. However, the rising cost of vehicles and increasing local match requirements for capital funding place an additional significant strain on agency budgets. These pressures make it increasingly difficult for agencies to replace aging vehicles or expand fleets to meet growing demand.

Demand for medical transportation in particular continues to increase, especially in more remote areas where residents must travel long distances for dialysis, specialty care, and out-of-county hospital services. Capital investments that prioritize reliability, accessibility, and suitability for rural terrain are critical to maintaining service quality and preventing service reductions. Continued support for vehicle replacement, expansion, and modernization through state and federal capital programs will be necessary to ensure that transportation providers can keep pace with regional needs while continuing to serve the most transportation-dependent populations.

## **Maintain services that are effectively meeting the identified transportation needs in the region. (High Priority)**

Maintaining existing transportation services that are successfully meeting community needs is a critical priority for the Western Maryland region, particularly given ongoing funding constraints and increasing demand. Several counties are already operating at or near capacity, with trip demand exceeding available resources. Medical and employment trips continue to be top priorities, and in many cases, difficult service decisions must be made to ensure these essential trips remain available. As ridership demand grows, particularly for medical transportation, preserving the stability of current services is essential to prevent service gaps from widening further.

At the same time, maintaining service levels is increasingly challenged by staffing shortages, rising operating costs, and uncertainty in grant funding. Some agencies have experienced workforce losses tied directly to budget limitations, reducing the number of trips that can be provided. Protecting reliable, well-utilized services through stable funding, continued operational support, and strategic prioritization will be critical to sustaining mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, and residents who depend on human services transportation for their daily needs.

## **Acquire vehicles that are more suitable for remote areas of the region. (High Priority)**

The geographic size and rural character of much of the Western Maryland region require vehicles that are specifically suited for long-distance travel, mountainous terrain, and dispersed populations. Many medical, employment, and essential shopping trips involve extended travel across county and state lines, including frequent trips to larger medical centers. Vehicles must therefore be durable, fuel-efficient, and capable of handling high daily mileage while maintaining reliability in challenging driving conditions.

Rising fuel costs further emphasize the importance of matching vehicle types to service needs. Agencies operate a mix of buses, minivans, and passenger vehicles to respond to varying trip demands, but fuel expenses in some areas remain significantly higher than in surrounding regions. Acquiring vehicles that are of the appropriate size and more cost-effective to operate can help reduce long-term operating burdens while preserving access to critical services. Continued capital investment in rural-appropriate fleet replacements will be essential to sustaining dependable transportation across the region's most remote communities.

## **Consider and implement vehicle repair and car donation programs. (Lower Priority)**

Vehicle repair and maintenance programs represent a cost-effective strategy for extending the useful life of transit and human services transportation fleets in the Western Maryland region. Agencies operate under tight financial constraints while relying heavily on their vehicles to meet rising demand for medical, employment, and essential service trips. High fuel and operating costs, combined with

limited capital funding and increasing local match requirements, place additional pressure on fleet sustainability. Targeted repair programs could help mitigate these challenges by reducing downtime, lowering long-term replacement costs, and improving service reliability.

Investing in preventive maintenance and repair assistance programs may be especially beneficial for agencies operating in remote and rural areas, where vehicle wear is more intense due to long-distance travel and terrain conditions. Repair programs could also support volunteer-based transportation services that rely on privately-owned vehicles, helping to remove financial barriers for volunteer drivers. By supporting both agency fleets and volunteer vehicles, repair programs can strengthen overall system resilience while maximizing the impact of limited transportation funding.

While opportunities to expand and improve public transit and human services transportation is the primary focus of the coordinated plan update, in rural areas with long trip distances and dispersed populations, a personal car is the most effective travel mode. It is fairly typical that a low-income person will have a car available for their use, but it may be inoperable, and sometimes a repaired automobile is the most cost-effective way to provide a person with access to employment opportunities and to community services. In other instances, a vehicle donation program can be considered through which donated cars that have been repaired can be provided to low-income families.

While the FTA funding programs do not allow funds to be used for vehicle repair or donation programs, this strategy also calls for the consideration and implementation of programs that support and enable car ownership. There are a variety of models across the country that support car ownership and technical training programs, empowering families with financial challenges to achieve economic and personal independence. Some examples of vehicle donation programs include Vehicles for Change, with information available at [Vehicles for Change, Inc. \(nvfs.org\)](http://VehiclesforChange.org), and Second Chances Garage, where more can be found on their website ([secondchancesgarage.org](http://secondchancesgarage.org)).

## Chapter 8

# Ongoing Arrangements

A required step in the local application process for Section 5310 Program funds is to submit part of the application to the appropriate Regional Coordinating Body for endorsement. These Regional Coordinating Bodies are responsible for reviewing local applications before they are submitted to MDOT MTA and endorsing only those applications that are derived from or included in the current regional coordinated transportation plan.

In the Western Maryland Region, Tri-County Council staff will work with MDOT MTA to serve in this review process that also includes:

- Provide input and assist public transit and human service transportation providers in establishing priorities with regard to community transportation services.
- Reviewing and discussing coordination strategies in the region and providing recommendations for possible improvements to help expand mobility options in the region.
- Reviewing and discussing strategies for coordinating services with other regions in Maryland and outside the State to help expand mobility options.
- Facilitating updates of this plan.

## Chapter 9

# Plan Adoption Process

Stakeholders from the Western Maryland area who participated in the coordinated transportation process will have the opportunity to review this preliminary draft plan. Their input was incorporated into a final draft plan that was endorsed by the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland through the following resolution.

TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR WESTERN MARYLAND  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PROGRAM

RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE THE WESTERN MARYLAND COORDINATED PUBLIC  
TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland (TCCWMD) is the Regional Coordinating Body for the Western Maryland region, encompassing the counties of Garrett, Allegany, Washington, and rural Frederick; and

WHEREAS, the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, as the Regional Coordinating Body, has responsibility under the provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Western Maryland area; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Transportation, requires that under the IIJA legislation, the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan for funding through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration requires the plan to be developed by a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of human services transportation coordination is to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. This coordination serves to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration, coordinating with the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, engaged in a public outreach effort and identified eligible programs and activities as the basis for the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan to maximize service to eligible clients; and

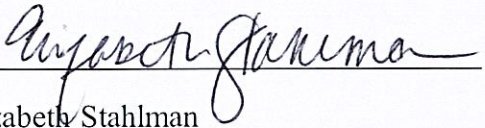
WHEREAS, the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland's endorsement of this Plan is contingent upon apportioned funds for the Section 5310 program to serve the needs of the targeted population; and

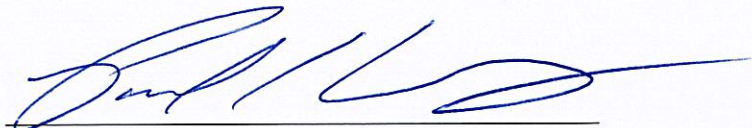
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland Executive Board hereby endorse the Western Maryland Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Western Maryland Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan be forwarded to the Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning

Organization (CAMPO) and the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization for inclusion in their metropolitan transportation planning processes.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland as the Regional Coordinating Body for the Western Maryland region approved the aforementioned resolution at its April 10, 2026 meeting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Stahlman  
Executive Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Paul C Edwards  
Chairman, TCCWMD

4/10/26  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

4/10/26  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Chapter 10

# Helpful Resources

This section provides links to a variety of resources, national technical assistance centers, and other organizations referenced throughout the plan; or that could be helpful with the implementation of the strategies identified in this plan and overall efforts to improve mobility in the region.

- Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM) MDOT MTA Office of Local Transit Support page
  - <https://www.taminc.org/mta-program-and-grant-information>
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program
  - <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-individuals-disabilities-section-5310>
- Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) Federal Fund Braiding Guide
  - <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/ccam/about/coordinating-council-access-and-mobility-ccam-federal-fund>
- American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
  - [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com)
- Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA):
  - [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org)
- National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT)
  - <https://n-catt.org>
- National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP)
  - <https://www.nationalrtap.org>
- Shared-Use Mobility Center (SUMC)
  - <https://sharedusemobilitycenter.org>
- Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC)
  - <https://www.transitworkforce.org>
- National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP):
  - <http://www.trb.org/NCHRP/NCHRP.aspx>
- Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP):
  - <https://www.trb.org/TCRP/TCRP.aspx>