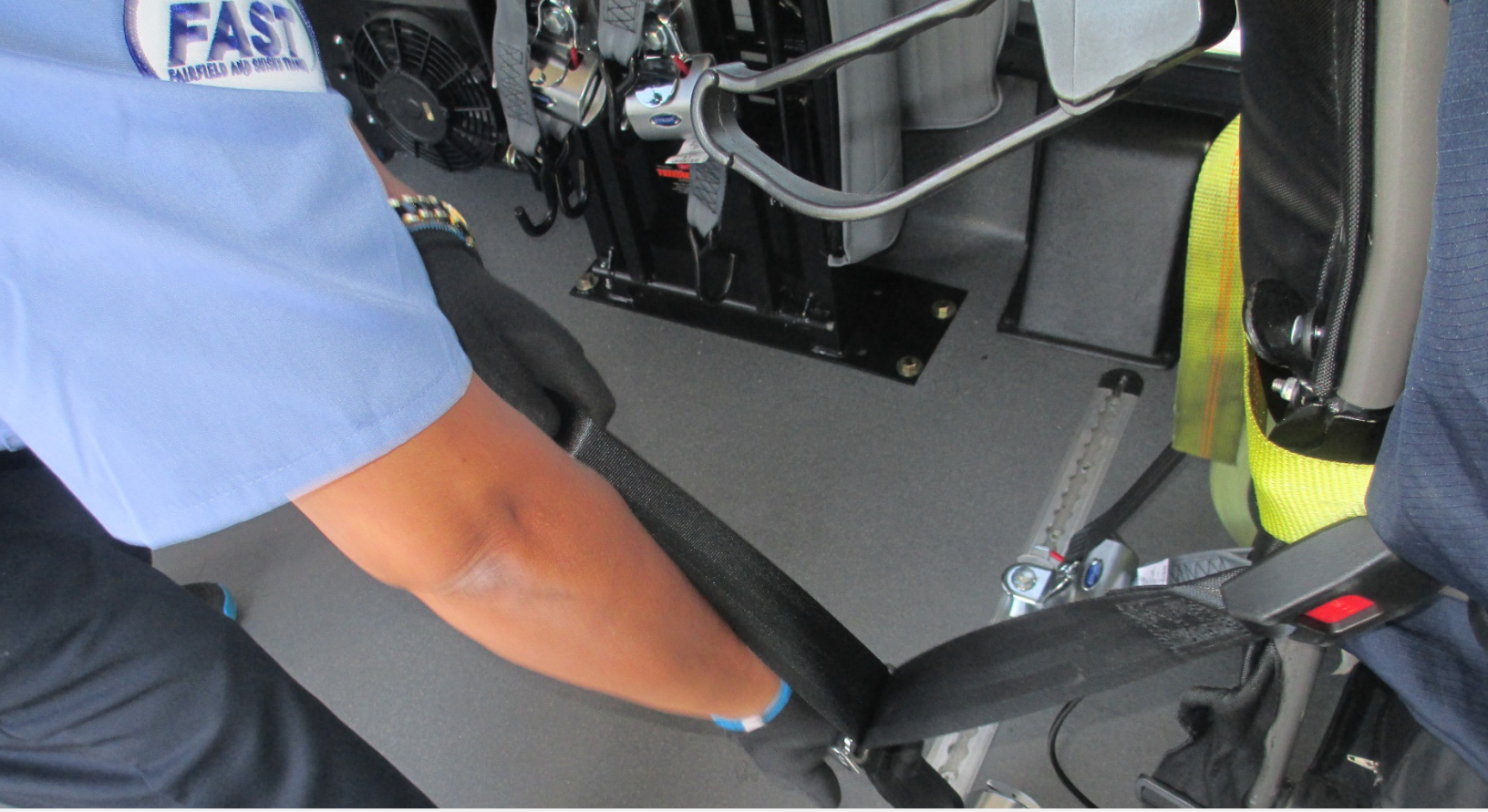
APPENDIX D

Recommended Strategies



ONHAND
Expanding Transportation Access
Across Southeast Michigan

Recommended Strategies

October 2020

NELSON
NYGAARD

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

This booklet includes a series of proposed strategies to improve human services transportation coordination in the OnHand region (Oakland, Macomb, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties). Strategies are organized by the associated goal. Each strategy addresses needs identified throughout the course of this project's community outreach and engagement and technical research. The list of strategies is intended as a reference guide for public, nonprofit, and private transportation providers in Southeast Michigan who serve older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals.

For purposes of the OnHand project and the strategies, the term "community transportation" services and community transportation service providers are used to denote locally oriented, publicly funded transportation services. We use this term instead of human service transportation providers because in Southeast Michigan it is the largest network of publicly funded transportation services. Most community transportation programs operate as demand responsive services but may include other delivery models, including deviated fixed route service. They may be available to members of the public but in most cases are oriented around the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities. Community transportation services differ from public transit service providers with more reliance on demand responsive services (as compared with fixed route) and a smaller reach, either in terms of population or geographic coverage. They also primarily serve suburban and rural communities.

Identifying Local, Regional, and Agency Needs

The needs addressed in this plan derive from the following sources:

- **Previous Coordinated Plans:** Recipients of federal transit funding for older adults and people with disabilities (Section 5310) are required by the Federal Transit Administration to prepare a coordinated human services transportation plan. DDOT, SMART, and Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) (includes TheRide) have each completed CHSTPs, these strategies and recommendations for service and capital improvements.
- **Stakeholders:** In the early phase of this project (Fall 2019), the OnHand project team conducted in-person and phone interviews with representatives from fixed-route transit agencies, local and community transit providers, non-profit agencies, and other social service organizations. Stakeholders shared valuable insights rooted in first-hand experience about what is needed to improve human services transportation.
- **OnHand Technical Working Group:** The OnHand Technical Working Group represents stakeholders from each transit agency within the OnHand's four-county region, as well as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), WATS, RTA, and other organizations. To date, the TWG has met eight times over the course of this project to guide the research process and ground truth the project team's findings.
- **OnHand User Survey:** In Winter 2019-2020, the OnHand project team launched a survey to understand transportation patterns, needs, challenges and barriers, especially related to ADA paratransit and demand response services. TWG members and other human and social service industry stakeholders helped distribute the survey to collect over 1,100 responses, including over 700 responses from people representing OnHand target populations (e.g. older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals).
- **OnHand CHSTP Technical Analysis:** The OnHand CHSTP process includes a market analysis, service inventory, and funding analysis. These technical memos provided the quantitative data to understand the current state and trends in the region's demographics, transportation services and quality (service span, geographic coverage, etc.), and funding sources and uses.

Developing and Implementing Strategies during COVID-19

Midway through this project, the novel coronavirus became an official pandemic, and statewide stay-at-home orders were implemented on March 23, 2020. The OnHand project team incorporated COVID-19 considerations into the development of the strategies included in this booklet. COVID-19 has triggered stay-at-home orders and impacts to transit service, ridership, and demand.

There will be myriad uncertain and unanticipated impacts associated with COVID-19 and travel demand, including necessary changes to service delivery protocols to improve public health, such as wearing face masks, support enhanced sanitation and safe physical distancing. Based on early outcomes in the pandemic, disproportionate impacts to target populations are expected, particularly among Black and Latinx communities, and older adults that are at a higher risk. The disproportionate impact reflects long-standing systematic health and social disparities[1]. People with disabilities of all races are also experiencing disproportionate impacts from COVID-19, including higher infection rates and deaths[2].

Best Practices in Strategy Development and Implementation: Strategies, programs and projects included in OnHand are designed to improve mobility for older adults, people with disabilities and individuals with low incomes. Strategies were identified in responses to needs identified through surveys and input from older adults, people with disabilities and people with low incomes.

A best practice associated with strategy implementation is to **include users in program design and development.** This means, for example, making sure people with disabilities are consulted as part of designing programs like travel training or bus stop amenities. Users should also be invited to test early iterations of programs or services and encouraged to provide feedback. An effective practice would be to consult existing ADA paratransit riders as well as other people with disabilities, including people with physical and cognitive disabilities.

The COVID pandemic therefore simultaneously makes safe, accessible travel both more important and more difficult. The extent to which transit agencies and providers will be able to implement the strategies included in this plan may depend on recovery efforts and available local, state, and federal funding.

[1] Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minor Groups ((https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html))

[2] COVID-19 Infections and Deaths Are Higher Among those with Intellectual Disabilities (https://www.npr.org/2020/06/09/872401607/covid-19-infections-and-deaths-are-higher-among-those-with-intellectual-disabili)

Advancing Transportation Equity

It is essential to understand transportation equity in the context of coordinated human services transportation planning. Acknowledging and addressing equity in the plan will both help to make a fairer and more inclusive transportation system; it can also help to de-institutionalize inequities in the planning process. This plan suggests how equity can be measured and offers examples of how strategies included in this plan can advance transportation equity.

Defining Transportation Equity

Transportation equity refers to how the fair distribution of transportation costs, resources, and benefits improve mobility and access to opportunity. Transportation resources refers to things like funding, but also transit services or vehicles. Transportation planning and policy decisions directly influence resource distribution and in turn, people's ability to access economic and social opportunities. Equity can refer to fairness between individuals and groups with equal abilities and needs (*horizontal equity*) or favoring economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged groups (*vertical equity*).

Deep, structural biases and racially discriminatory practices have plagued the United States since its founding. The result is cumulative vertical inequities normalized over time by dominant groups in society that do not personally experience the negative effects of these decisions and investments.[3] Historically, transportation planning has perpetuated discriminatory practices making it critical for plans to promote equity and intentionally remove barriers from transportation policy.

Coordinated human service transportation (HST) planning is inherently a process to address equity because it focuses on vulnerable populations: people with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals. The OnHand project, which considers HST at the regional level, is even more important for examining transportation needs and available services across a large geography and population, which in turn can emphasize broad disparities that may not be as apparent within a county-level or agency-level coordinated plan.

[3] Note: These inequities are not specific to transportation, but also affect other public services and industries including but not limited to education, housing, employment, healthcare, and public safety.

Applying an Equity Lens in Coordinated Planning

Equity can be applied at all stages of the coordinated planning process:

Advancing Equity

As a coordinated plan, OnHand cannot undo years of structural inequities and harm, however, it can acknowledge the issue and begin to alter the status quo and advance transportation equity in the four-county region. There are two approaches to address transportation equity: *programmatic* and *structural* solutions.[4] Programmatic solutions target services and protections to specific disadvantaged groups, while structural solutions affect overall policies and planning activities. Programmatic solutions are often the easiest and most cost-efficient to implement, however structural changes yield more lasting and broad benefits. They complement each other, and OnHand includes both types of strategies.

Among the many strategies identified for this project, the following strategies specifically and directly address inequities in public and community transportation service quality, access, and delivery:

[4] Litman, Todd. (June 2020). Evaluating Transportation Equity. Available at: https://www.vtpi.org/equity.pdf

- Increase funding in service-poor areas.
- Tracking the impact of existing and new services on racial minorities and low-income individuals. This may for example involve setting outcome-based metrics for racial minorities, such as tracking the rate (or number) of missed medical appointments due to report transportation related issues.
- Targeting marketing and outreach efforts, including strategies like travel training and subsidy programs at the most disadvantaged members of the target populations, especially Black and other people of color.
- Shifting administration of the Section 5310 program to the regional level so that regional as well as local priorities are considered when allocating resources (See 5310 program management report).
- Capping fares to limit the maximum spending per trip as part of any pass program.

These strategies, along with others are discussed further in this booklet.

The OnHand includes some strategies that offer an opportunity to address structural equity. These include performance evaluation. As part of advancing performance metrics, the region may opt to include qualitative measures that capture specific equity goals and the experiences of impacted residents. This could mean, for example, that a program that made sure people with disabilities were able to reliably get to work, or ensured older adults who are also racial minorities could get to medical services may be subjected to a different performance standard for cost effectiveness.

The OnHand program also considered structural equity as part of designing grant programs. Advancing equity goals in this context may mean lowering match requirements for communities with certain demographics or income disparities and/or providing additional support for grant making, such as grant application workshops and materials (or other technical assistance). Other opportunities include providing mentorship or project support during first 18 months of operations for new providers. Technical assistance and pre-application workshops are part of the proposed changes to region's 5310 program; more in-depth mentoring or project support can also be considered. Other options include:

- Requesting specific information from applicants about the racial, ethnic, and economic characteristics (income, auto ownership) of their communities and considering that information when scoring applications on the "Need and Benefits" selection criterion.[5]
- Including projects that serve disadvantaged communities or address issues of transportation inequity to the list of "highly competitive projects" that are eligible for additional points during 5310 application scoring.

OnHand will conclude with a pilot project to advance some of these specific strategies, including possible enhanced travel tools, business planning for improvements to myride2, or conceptual development of a possible regional eligibility and travel training center. As pilot projects advance from concept to implementation, the region should ensure they advance equity goals. The recommended strategies and implementation of a future pilot program recognize the critical role that regional coordinated planning plays in creating a more equitable

[5] At present, the draft application asks for the number of seniors/older adults in the proposed service area.

transportation system, and that it is just one small step toward repairing decades worth of systemic racism that ultimately impacts OnHand target populations.

OnHand Goals

The overarching goals in response to these needs are below. Strategies are organized by the following:

	**Goal 1:** **Increase Local and Regional Mobility**	Provide more and better transportation options, and create fewer service restrictions to expand options and addresses service disparities.
	**Goal 2:** **Improve Coordination Among Providers**	Enhance quality of service operations and delivery, support shared resources, and standardize scheduling and eligibility protocols for a better customer experience.
	**Goal 3:** **Increase Awareness of Existing Services**	Ensure riders know and understand how to use their fixed route and demand response transportation options, and can easily access schedule information and trip planning tools.
	**Goal 4:** **Streamline Funding, Reporting, and Performance Measures**	Creating more consistent performance measures and systems to fairly distribute financial resources among agencies, their subrecipients, and transit customers.
	**Goal 5:** **Develop Partnerships for Supportive Physical Infrastructure**	Work with municipalities, regional agencies, and developers to address infrastructure gaps and wayfinding needs to ensure people of all ages and abilities can independently access transit services, and safely reach key destinations.

Strategy Prioritization

The RTA and OnHand partner agencies will not be able to take on each of these strategies at once. As indicated in each strategy's dashboard, strategies may be near-, mid-, or long-term based on the level of need, associated costs, and implementation feasibility. Further prioritization of strategies will take place in partnership with project stakeholders, service advisory committees and coordinating councils, and the Technical Working Group in August. A set of priority strategies will be included in the final report.

GOAL 1: INCREASE LOCAL AND REGIONAL MOBILITY

Increasing local and regional mobility is at the heart of the OnHand plan. It is the plan's first goal and the strategies identify ways to improve, diversify and expand transportation options for older adults, persons with disabilities and individuals with low incomes. Strategies advance local and regional mobility by creating fewer travel restrictions by time of day, day of the week, cost, and origin or destination. They also offer ways to expand access to jobs and make services more affordable. Combined, strategies recognize the diverse transportation needs that exist across the region, and addresses service disparities, especially among target populations.

The Need

- One of the most frequently voiced mobility challenges relates to cross-jurisdictional trips, especially ADA paratransit trips but also among people using community transportation providers.
- Early in the OnHand study, stakeholder interviews indicated that riders are challenged to access services beyond their own community. Southeast Michigan residents need to access jobs, healthcare providers, and social and commercial activities regionally, but often face inadequate (e.g., low frequency, strict eligibility) or no available transportation options.
- Finding rides on evening and weekends was another common transportation barrier reported among OnHand survey respondents from each target group. The most challenging types noted by respondents include medical and shopping trips. This indicates a significant need for more service options to meet a wider variety of trip purposes (evenings, weekends, social trips, or non-medical errands).
- The OnHand team also repeatedly heard comments about service affordability. Some riders could find transportations services but were challenged to pay the fares.
- Needs existed before the COVID-19 pandemic; in the wake of the pandemic these needs will almost certainly intensify. These needs include increased demand for reliable, affordable transportation options for job access. Economic recovery will rely on workers being able to get to work. In Southeast Michigan this means providing reverse commute services and offering solutions for alternative work schedules, such as service on evenings and weekends.

Sources of the Need

Previous CHSTPs	Stakeholders	OnHand Technical Working Group	OnHand User Survey	OnHand CHSTP Technical Analyses
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strategies

#	Title	Need Addressed
1.1	Improved Cross Border Trips	▪ Develop programs and policies that make it easier to travel across jurisdictional borders, especially for riders using ADA paratransit services.
1.2	Flexible Voucher / Subsidy Program	▪ Use subsidies to broaden access to services when or where service is unavailable, limited, or otherwise too costly
1.3	Reverse Commute and Rideshare Programs	▪ Provide increased transportation to suburban job locations
1.4	Volunteer Driver Program	▪ Use volunteers to provide a low-cost transportation service option that are difficult for traditional demand response providers
1.5	Shared On-Call Service Delivery for Evenings and Weekends	▪ Alternate service coverage among providers to include more evening and/or weekend service hours
1.6	Regional Fare Capping Program	▪ Gives riders a "pay as you go" option to realize bulk purchase discounts for frequent travel (i.e. 7-day or monthly pass)
1.7	Alternative ADA Paratransit Service Delivery Models	▪ Increase the flexibility and quality of ADA paratransit service for riders and reduce the cost of service for transit providers.
1.8	Maintain Existing Services	▪ Ensure existing mobility is not eroded by continuing to invest in existing services and service levels.

Successes to Build Upon

Not only are there already collaborations among community transit providers to create efficiencies and share services among municipalities, but there are also local pilot programs to leverage microtransit and transportation network companies (TNCs) to expand mobility. Detroit piloted a program called NightShift to subsidize transportation to/from DDOT bus stop for non-traditional shift workers. People traveling between 11 pm and 5 am can receive a subsidy of up to $7.00 for a ride to and from their bus stop. To access the programs, riders text DDOT and are then asked if they prefer to schedule a ride from Lyft or Detroit Cab. Based their preference, ride will receive a code to get the subsidy.

1.1 Improved Cross Border Travel

Overview

The OnHand region includes four counties (Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, and Washtenaw), three ADA paratransit operators (DDOT, TheRide and SMART) plus numerous locally oriented community transportation service providers. Each transportation service provider, including SMART, which is covers the largest geography, has a unique service area. This can make it difficult for people to make connections between services and travel across municipal borders. This strategy is focused on making cross- border trips easier.

Needs Addressed

Make cross-border trips easier, especially connections on ADA paratransit services between DDOT and SMART, but also other community transportation providers.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
There are a handful of ways that cross border trips could be easier: ▪ Assign cross border trips to lower-cost service providers using either the subsidy program or partnerships with transportation network service providers (see Strategies 1.2 and 1.6). ▪ ADA service providers jointly contract with another service provider to provide regional ADA paratransit trips, which would be dispatched by the contracted provider. ▪ Operate ADA paratransit service regionally, potentially by consolidating operations under one of the existing operators. ▪ Further improve scheduling and dispatching between ADA paratransit service providers with real-time vehicle tracking systems to improve transfers.	▪ Travelers in Southeast Michigan, including people with disabilities, want and need to destinations that other providers serve without having to make transfers. The current system requires riders to change vehicles when they cross municipal borders. The problem is particularly challenging for riders transferring between MetroLift and SMART Paratransit. ▪ Making cross-border travel easier would significantly increase access to jobs and services for people dependent on ADA paratransit and other community transportation services.	▪ Regional service delivery requires improved regional partnerships between DDOT and SMART, between SMART and TheRide, and with other community providers. ▪ There are numerous regional efforts designed to improve/strengthen service coordination: – The integrated online booking and trip management platform funded by the Michigan Mobility Challenge will streamline trip reservations and alleviate challenges in booking interagency trips. – The Dart regional fare program creates consistent fares across DDOT and SMART. Extending this program to ADA services, would make coordinating trips easier. – OnHand Strategy 2.2 recommends developing consistent policies and standards for all ADA service providers. This step will make it easier for riders to access regional ADA services.

Precedents

Public transportation services in the Phoenix metropolitan area are funded and delivered through a combination of regional and local services. People living in Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe, for example, pay local and regional taxes. Local taxes support services within municipal boundaries, while regional taxes that supports regional, cross-jurisdictional services. While both local and regional fixed route services are branded as Valley Metro, they are operated independently. Paratransit services, however, are operated as a shared service; Valley Metro is the service providers with member cities contributing funds and participating in service management and oversight. Note both local and regional services are branded as Valley Metro (see Strategy 3.1: Regional Branding and Marketing).

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Regional	Medium	Long-Term	DDOT SMART TheRide RTA (for regional models)

1.2 Flexible Voucher / Subsidy Program

Overview

Subsidy programs give individuals vouchers or other type of financial assistance to take trips with private transportation providers like taxi services or transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft. Ride subsidies can fill gaps in services, especially for unscheduled trips or trips not otherwise offered at low cost.

Needs Addressed

In some parts of the OnHand region, residents can only travel at certain times with prior reservations and cannot travel at the last minute or for non-medical reasons such as shopping or social activities. Other residents do not meet the eligibility requirements (i.e., age or disability). Survey respondents also reported challenges traveling across jurisdictional boundaries and/or during evenings and on weekends. Some of these trips are difficult for community transportation providers because operating service during times with low demand is expensive. Offering a subsidy for clients to use with private providers, therefore, can be cost effective solution that offers flexibility for riders.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Subsidy or voucher programs are used by human service and public transit providers to offer flexible options for riders who need ad hoc and unrestricted access to service. ▪ Agencies have historically worked with taxi providers, but with the availability of TNCs like Uber and Lyft, subsidy programs may be expanded to include these types of flexible demand response providers. ▪ Subsidy amounts may vary by type of trip or rider. Some programs offer a fixed subsidy (e.g., up to $5 per trip) while others pay a portion of trip costs (e.g., up to 50%). Subsidy rates could vary based on travel or eligibility criteria. ▪ Administrative methods may also vary by agency. Subsidies could be provided as reimbursements or directly via transportation service providers.	▪ Not all vulnerable riders are eligible for available transportation services either due to age or ability. ▪ While many areas in the OnHand region have some demand response services available, many providers limit their service area to within their jurisdiction or to specific destinations. ▪ Private services are available at a price that is unaffordable to many. Subsidies or vouchers increase geographic options and time flexibility for travelers at a more affordable price. ▪ For some agencies, offering subsidies is a way to meet some demand without directly providing the transportation service. ▪ Subsidies also provide a lower-cost option for serving last-minute needs and travel outside of service hours.	▪ Similar programs already exist in the OnHand region, including the City of Detroit (see precedents). ▪ Agencies may consider partnerships with TNC services such as Lyft or Uber for the Woodward2Work program funded by the New Economy Initiative. ▪ Program implementation involves developing clear rules for program participation (eligibility, amount of subsidy, methods to receive subsidy or reimbursement) and negotiating with service providers. ▪ Successful implementation would also require addressing fare and service discrimination by private and TNCs. These include ensuring equitable fares, refusing service based on trip origin or destination and denying service for individuals based on disabilities. ▪ While there are gaps in service regionwide, the need is greatest in Detroit and the more rural parts of Washtenaw County. ▪ The costs of program can be controlled by the transportation provider. This makes it easier to implement as a pilot or demonstration project.

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges

Precedents

Detroit piloted a similar effort, called NightShift, to subsidize transportation to/from DDOT bus stop for non-traditional shift workers. People traveling between 11 pm and 5 am can receive a subsidy of up to $7.00 for a ride to and from their bus stop. To access the programs, riders text DDOT and are then asked if they prefer to schedule a ride from Lyft or Detroit Cab. Based their preference, ride will receive a code to get the subsidy.

Other cities also provide examples of microtransit and TNC pilots to cover service gaps and specific trip needs.

- COMET, the transit system serving Columbia, SC, has a partnership with Lyft that subsidizes the first $5 of TNC fares for rides to and from grocery stores. The program, known as COMET to the Market, is intended to reduce the time spent travelling from food deserts[6].
- Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority in St. Petersburg, FL piloted a transportation disadvantaged to support low-income residents through the provision of a low-cost bus pass. Funding is provided by the State of Florida through their Qualified individuals with a job shift beginning or ending between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. are eligible for on-demand trips to/from work if fixed-route transit service is unavailable.
- The Village of Deerfield, IL has a taxi subsidy program in place for older adults and people with disabilities. The program allows the registered participants to get discounts on metered taxi. The Village works with two taxi providers to provide the service. Eligible registered participants get up to 50 one-way coupons monthly. When a coupon is provided, in-town trips cost only $1and out of town trips are discounted by $5, except airport trips.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Agency	Medium	Long-Term	DDOT SMART TheRide

[6] http://catchthecometsc.gov/whats-new/take-the-comet-on-the-go-partnership-with-lyft/

1.3 Reverse Commute and Rideshare Program

Overview

Most transit systems are oriented around service to urban cores; this can make getting to jobs in suburban areas challenging. In Southeast Michigan, this means providing opportunities for people in Detroit to reach jobs in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counites as well as Ann Arbor.

Opportunities to improve connections to employment include first mile/last mile connections from existing transit sites, employer specific shuttle services and ridesharing/vanpool programs, along with other transportation demand management strategies such as guaranteed ride home programs. Ideally reverse commute and ridesharing programs would address workers needing rides to work on second (late afternoon until late night) and third shifts (late night till early morning).

Needs Addressed

Access to employment opportunities. Improved service coverage. Transportation opportunities for low-income individuals. Also helps expand regional access.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Reverse commute strategies help link workers in urban areas with suburban job markets. Strategies include a variety of tools such as first mile/last mile connections, employer shuttles and ridesharing services. ▪ Transit agencies or other funding entities work with employers to provide targeted connections between residential and employment locations. Employers may also provide cost share to help support projects. ▪ Can include fixed routes, shuttles, vanpools, ride subsidies or vouchers. ▪ May also include a guaranteed ride home program or subsidy for emergency situations when riders must travel outside of regular service hours.	▪ Many of Southeast Michigan's largest employers are in suburban locations that are not always easily accessible by transit. ▪ Lack of transit access means many suburban jobs are inaccessible for workers without reliable vehicle access, especially people living in Detroit and Wayne County. ▪ Transit links to employment sites benefit employers who have access to a larger pool of workers. ▪ Low cost, reliable commute options will be an important part of the region's economic recovery post-COVID.	▪ Southeast Michigan is a geographically expansive area that has multiple activity hubs and large employers. ▪ Reverse commute services can be difficult to provide. They need to be planned with precision to match worker and employer needs. ▪ Some existing SMART routes provide reverse commute services from downtown Detroit to Oakland and Macomb counties. One option is to build off these services and provide first mile/last mile connections to employment locations. ▪ May also expand on DDOT's Night Shift program (see introduction) as example of connecting workers and jobs through a TNC subsidy program. The City of Detroit is also designing a microtransit pilot to the Detroit Wayne County airport. ▪ May be expanded to include access to jobs at Detroit Wayne County Regional Airport and University of Michigan facilities. ▪ For areas where job locations are not currently well served by existing transit may require developing new routes. ▪ Any new service needs to be affordable for daily riders.

Precedents

Through the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada' Workforce Mobility Program, employees of the sports merchandise company Fanatics are able to use Lyft at a reduced rate to the employer for first and last mile service to and / from RTC bus service. The program uses geofencing to limit access to13 bus stops. Part of the success of the program is that it shares costs across partners (RTC, Fanatics, Lyft, and the employee) and is affordable to all. Prior to COVID, the program was going to be expanded to include a nearby Amazon Fulfillment Center.

Employer operated shuttles can also provide connections to locations where volumes are too low for traditional services and where destinations are dispersed but the times people are travel are highly concentrated. CrossTown Connect, a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in suburbs west of Boston operates a handful of reverse commute shuttles that connect passengers traveling by rail and bus from downtown Boston to suburban jobs. Shuttles are funded through a combination of federal grants, employer subsidies and passenger fares.

The Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP) operates a reverse commute vanpool program. PUP pays for gas and insurance; vans are driven by vanpool members.

Pace, in suburban Chicago, operates an extensive vanpool program throughout its vast service area. Pace supplies the vehicle and covers costs, including fuel, tolls, insurance, maintenance, roadside assistance, and van washes. One of the programs within the vanpool program is the Advantage Van program. This program provides vans to nonprofit organizations that work within the Pace service area and hold a State of Illinois Developmental Training Certificate (or equivalent). The program stipulates that vans are used to provide work-related transportation services to people with disabilities at a rate of $250/month (July 2020).

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Short-Term	DDOT SMART RTA

1.4 Volunteer Driver Program

Overview

Volunteer driver programs match volunteers with clients who need to travel, often as a door-through-door service. Because labor represents between 70% and 80% of the cost of a transportation service, using volunteer drivers significantly reduces program costs. Using volunteer drivers is especially helpful on longer trips, helping agencies stretch limited resources. Most programs register riders though an eligibility process. Some programs offer free rides and many request donations or seek membership dues. Trained and screed volunteers receive a mileage reimbursement.

Needs Addressed

More service options, including geographic and time of day at a lower cost. Offers options to vulnerable residents living in rural communities. Adaptable to rider needs and offers lower-cost options, particularly for longer trips.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Volunteer driver programs are typically sponsored by nonprofit organizations, transit agencies, or local governments. Sponsors recruit, train and dispatch volunteer drivers and schedule rides as needed. ▪ Volunteer drivers typically use their own vehicle, but insurance is provided by the program sponsor. ▪ Some volunteer driver programs have an escort component where volunteers provide door-through-door service.	▪ Volunteer driver programs can fill needed gaps in service and are often the only option in rural areas, for certain trip purposes and on certain days/times. ▪ Eliminating/dramatically reducing labor costs makes service delivery for longer trips more productive. ▪ Volunteer drivers also typically provide a higher quality (door-through-door) level of service.	▪ Requires agency sponsor. ▪ Volunteer drivers are generally designed for seniors and people with disabilities and fill ad hoc needs, which are otherwise difficult to fill. ▪ Recruiting and retaining volunteer drivers is a persistent challenge and one likely exacerbated by COVID-19. Volunteer driver pools have been decreasing nationally. ▪ Washtenaw County is working with a "Mobility as a Service" service provider, which includes development of volunteer driver resources and including of volunteer driver options in the trip planning option. ▪ Volunteer driver programs are not usually available for low-income individuals or veterans who are not also seniors or disabled.

Precedents

ITN*America* is a nonprofit dedicated to senior mobility. As a national organization, ITN*America* provides a variety of programs and services, but it began as a volunteer driver organization. Its national reach is achieved through a combination of partner and affiliate organization. In Detroit, these partners include Independence Riders plus two affiliate organizations, one in Detroit (Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers) and in Ann Arbor (Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County). Independence Rides provides "door-through-door" and "arm though

arm" service for older adults and vision impaired adults traveling in the greater Detroit area. Rides are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be scheduled for any purpose. Independence Riders does charge a fare - $5.00 for the pickup plus $1.00 per mile with higher fees for off-hours. The service is entirely volunteer driven, with most drivers using their own vehicles. Other local organizations that work within the ITN*America* umbrella, including Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, which has over 100 volunteer drivers, who log roughly 80,000 miles providing rides to medical appointments, shopping, and other essential errands. The Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County offers transportation services through a combination of paid and volunteer drivers.

Volunteer Drivers Assisting Seniors (VAST) is the volunteer driver program sponsored by Tri-Valley's Senior Support Program in Pleasanton, California. The program meets the needs of seniors who have essential but non-urgent medical appointments and have exhausted all other options to obtain a ride. The program does not provide emergency or same-day transportation. All rides are provided free of charge and available weekdays by appointment. Volunteers are local community members interested in helping seniors. The drivers are recruited, screened, trained, and supervised by Tri-Valley staff.

Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) in Middlebury Vermont has maintain a robust volunteer driver program for several years. Volunteers provide an invaluable service for county residents providing access to healthcare and critical services for residents who have no transportation and cannot use ACTR's regular service. Volunteers are reimbursed for mileage and are a critical part of ACTR's team. They offer a volunteer packet that provides details about how the program works.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Short-Term	MyRide2 County community services agencies

1.5 Shared Service Delivery for Evenings and Weekends

Overview

One of the largest gaps in Southeast Michigan's existing community transportation network is the lack of service on weekends and evenings. While the services are needed, lower demand on weekday evenings and weekend days mean services will be less productive (and more expensive) for transportation providers. One potential option would be to share responsibility for evening/weekend service with neighboring service providers.

Needs Addressed

Provide demand responsive on weekday evenings and weekends.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Most community transportation providers limit service to traditional business hours (i.e. weekdays between 8 am and 4 pm). Travel outside these times is unavailable at an affordable cost. ▪ Transportation providers are reluctant to provide evening and weekend day services because demand is generally low, making these services less productive and more expensive. ▪ This strategy calls for individual transportation service providers to create regional (or sub-regional) partnerships where each provider agrees to operate service (for example) one weekday evening each week and/or one weekend each month. ▪ Riders would need to schedule trips in advance. Rides may not be provided through their traditional services, but service would be available.	▪ Travel outside of traditional weekday hours is an important and oft requested need. This strategy starts to address the need. ▪ A pilot project could collect information about demand, including location, timing, and trip purpose to determine where travel gaps must be filled. ▪ Provider collaboration for such an initiative can build long-lasting partnerships to meet other mobility needs.	▪ Requires collaboration across multiple transportation providers, which might be difficult. ▪ Amount of service will likely still be low and unlikely will be sufficient for employment trips. But it could support late evening medical trips and/or trips for weekend activities. ▪ There is the potential for increased demand from faith-based organizations. ▪ Washtenaw County's mobility as a service pilot will include a trip planning tool that lets transportation providers offer (or bid) to carry out specific trips. Providers get to set their own price. This tool could encourage some providers to begin operating evening or weekend services, although fares may be high. ▪ Such an effort would help providers understand the demand for evening and weekend day service. ▪ May also be combined with other strategies, like volunteer driver and/or subsidy programs.

Precedents

While shared service delivery models are less common, there are examples where community transportation providers contract with each other:

- Medical Motor Services in Rochester, NY works with three NY State Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) providers to pool client and trip data. Medical Motor Services uses its scheduling software to identify "rideshare" trips (i.e., trips for clients of different providers riding on same vehicle). The goal was to shorten ride times for customers and reduce duplication/cost. After a somewhat lengthy effort to consolidate data, the coordination partners began to identify trips that could be more efficiently scheduled on other providers' vehicles.
- The Lower Savannah Council of Governments in Aiken, SC expanded service to two unserved counties by collaborating with existing transportation provides. Trips are scheduled through a local mobility manager who matches travel needs with availability on existing transportation providers. The mobility manager also handles accounts and billing. The service provides roughly 1,000 rides per month.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Short-Term	Human Service Providers

1.6 Transit Fare Capping Program

Overview

SMART, DDOT, and TheRide offer the largest and most comprehensive network of transportation services. Increasing use of this existing services and making them as accessible as possible is the most cost-effective way to improve regional mobility. Transit operators in the OnHand region currently offer discounts for frequent riders through their monthly pass. However, buying the pass requires an upfront payment that can be difficult for low income riders.

Fare capping programs let riders pay single trip fares up to the maximum fare levels for 7-day and 31-day passes. For example, if a DDOT rider traveled round-trip seven days per week, instead of paying $21 for 14 individual fares, after the 11th trip purchased (total of $16.50), they would pay $.50 for the 12th trip and ride for free for the rest of the week.

Needs Addressed

Increase use of the fixed route system; reduce the cost of transportation for lower cost riders.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Fare capping recognizes that some riders cannot afford to take advantage of fare discounts because they are unable to afford the cash outlay for the full cost of a monthly (daily or weekly) pass. Fare capping allows riders to essentially purchase a monthly pass through a series of single ride fares. ▪ Fare capping increases access to transit, makes it affordable and essentially extends discounts to lower income riders. ▪ Fare capping requires the use of mobile apps and/or prepaid fare cards so fare payment can be tracked. To make fare capping widely available and equitable, transit operators would need to invest in prepaid fare cards.	▪ Fixed route service is the most cost effective and comprehensive transportation network in Southeast Michigan. Encouraging use of the network by making it more affordable to more riders is an efficient use of resources. ▪ Fare capping encourages spontaneous use of public transit.	▪ Fare capping can be a difficult concept to communicate to a wider audience of stakeholders. Successful implementation will require effective marketing and developing and easy and consistent message. ▪ Transit agencies that have implemented fare capping have lost fare revenue. TriMet in Portland recorded a roughly 1 to 2% decline in fare revenues. ▪ The Dart regional transit pass is an excellent vehicle for implementing fare capping. It already reflects an agreed upon fare structure and could extend the discount across multiple services. ▪ Human service organizations are potential partners in the implementation of fare capping. They may be able to help communicate the program and offer riders prepaid cards.

Precedents

Portland, OR and nearby Vancouver, WA offer region-wide services by bus, light rail, commuter rail and streetcar. The services are offered through a multi-agency partnership among several transit providers,

including TriMet, the regional bus provider. A single regional bus trip on TriMet (for example) costs $2.50 for an adult, while a day pass costs $5.00. After accruing the equivalent of a day pass, the fare is capped at $5.00. Adult passengers paying for two trips in a day will not pay for the third or subsequent trip no matter how many times they ride. The same is true for a monthly pass. TriMet identified multiple benefits from the program including 1) an equity based incentive to use transit; 2) elimination of the burdensome upfront cost of a monthly pass, replacing it with a "pay as you go" system; and 3) removing the need for riders to figure out the "right" fare.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Regional	Medium	Medium term	Transit Agencies

1.7 Alternative ADA Paratransit Service Delivery Models

Overview

This strategy encourages DDOT, SMART and TheRide to experiment ` (or expand their experimentation with) alternative service delivery models for their ADA paratransit service. In 2020, DDOT uses a combination of dedicated and non-dedicated vehicles to deliver ADA service, which partially explains their relatively lower cost per trip. TheRide dispatches some trips to taxi services, but most service is provided by dedicated ADA paratransit vehicles and drivers. (Dedicated vehicles and drivers are assigned to provide ADA paratransit services, where nondedicated vehicles are taxis or other resources that can be assigned to ADA trips as needed).

In other parts of the country, the practice of dispatching ADA trips to non-dedicated vehicles, like taxis has been widely used. Some agencies also dispatch trips to Uber and Lyft as well as community transportation service providers. These models offer some potential for Southeast Michigan. The coordinated portion of this strategy would be for regional transit operators, especially SMART and DDOT to contract with the same providers to provide ADA services.

Needs Addressed

ADA paratransit service is a critical part of the transportation service network safety net for people with disabilities. However, service is expensive for transit operators to provide. It can also be cumbersome for riders. Experimenting with alternative service delivery models, including dispatching trips to non-dedicated vehicles, like Transportation Network Companies and community transportation providers could both improve service quality and reduce service costs.

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Alternative ADA service delivery models involves using contractors to provide some or all the ADA trips. DDOT does this already as does TheRide. ▪ This strategy would expand the use of these alternative models to include TNCs and other partners, potentially including community transportation service providers. ▪ Transit agencies may also use a pilot program to offer comparable service for ADA riders (see precedent) by letting them use demand response service providers like Uber or Lyft to provide trips. Service is not technically ADA paratransit services but allows riders experiment with different types of service, which may offer a higher quality service for the rider and lower or comparable cost for the transit agency.	▪ A one-way ADA paratransit trips in Southeast Michigan costs between $34.50 and $95.15. ▪ The high cost of service is prohibitive for the transit providers and prevents them from making other investments. At the same time, the quality of the service for many riders is not always optimal. ▪ Alternative service delivery models offer an opportunity to both improve the quality of the service and reduce the cost.	▪ Integrating taxis into ADA service delivery programs offers some promise for Southeast Michigan. DDOT already dispatches a portion of its trips to local taxi providers. To date, the strategy has been successful and helped DDOT lower its cost of service. ▪ ADA paratransit service delivery is governed by federal requirements (i.e., drug and alcohol testing), some of which can be difficult for TNCs and local service providers to meet. However, other transit agencies are exploring how to use TNCs to lower costs. These models can be reviewed and considered for Southeast Michigan. ▪ Southeast Michigan – especially Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties have a vast network of community transportation network. Building partnerships with these agencies to provide some local ADA services requires new systems and technologies but could benefit all parties.

Precedents

The MBTA in Boston, Massachusetts has an on-demand paratransit pilot project that lets users of the MBTA's ADA paratransit service (The RIDE) use Uber or Lyft for some trips. The pilot offers riders a lower fare for some trips – riders pay the first $2.00 and the MBTA pays the next $13. Any costs over $15 are paid by the rider. For most trips, this means riders pay $2.00 instead of the paratransit fare of between $3.35 or $5.60 for a one-way trip. Riders also benefit from the flexibility that comes with same day booking, shorter wait times, and faster trips. Many vehicles are wheelchair accessible. The service is not ADA paratransit; instead, offers an alternative for RIDE eligible riders. To date, the pilot has proven to be less expensive for both riders and the MBTA.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Agency	Medium	Medium-Term	DDOT SMART TheRide

1.8 Maintain Existing Service Levels

Overview

Southeast Michigan has a robust network of fixed route, ADA paratransit, demand responsive and community transportation resources. Maintaining these existing services is an important part of ensuring local and regional mobility is sustained.

Needs Addressed

Maintains existing service levels.

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Recognize the importance of existing services, including fixed route, ADA paratransit, demand responsive/dial-a-ride, and community transportation services. ▪ Prioritize maintenance of existing services before additional services or programs are added. ▪	▪ Ensures mobility levels are maintained.	▪ Use available funding to maintain existing service levels before investing in new service models, mobility programs or other investments. ▪ Need to ensure that existing services provide value for money and are an effective use of limited funding for transportation services. Southeast Michigan – especially

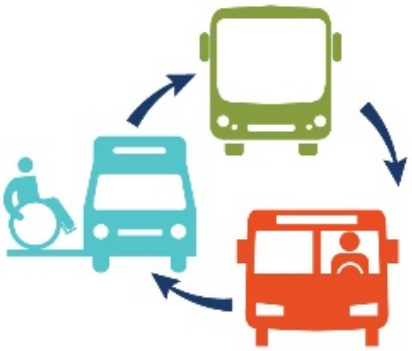
Precedents

N/A

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Low	Agency	Medium	Short-Term	DDOT SMART TheRide

GOAL 2: IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG PROVIDERS

Over 100 agencies provide transportation in the OnHand region, including public transit agencies, publicly sponsored community transportation services and non-profit agencies. In addition, there are numerous private providers, including medical transportation companies as well as ridesharing services (Uber, Lyft) and private shuttles and taxi services.



Even with a vast network of providers, riders, caregivers, organizations, and service providers all described geographic and temporal gaps in service. One of the challenges facing both the OnHand project and the individual transportation providers is to better coordinate services to strengthen overall mobility. The region has some success stories, but additional opportunities remain.

The Need

- Increasing service coordination in the OnHand region can achieve multiple goals, including expanding the availability of service (increased mobility) and reducing costs for the region and for individual providers. Better coordination can make the network of services easier to understand and use, easier to communicate to funders and riders, and easier to operate.
- In SMART's service area (Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties), of the 128 communities, 76 "opt in" to SMART and thus participate in the Community Partnership Program, which includes SMART's Connector service. Local services in these opt-in communities are either operated independently (31 communities) or in collaboration (44 communities). The opt-out communities do not receive fixed route or SMART connector service. Of these, 28 collaborate with another community, 16 operate service directly, and the remainder receive no transit services.
    - The collaboration is largely achieved by groups of communities working together to create a shared service. For example, the Richmond Lenox E.M.S. community service serves residents of nine communities. Shared service delivery is typically more cost effective and efficient, in part because many trips cross community borders, but also because there are cost efficiencies in larger agencies.
    - In other parts of the OnHand region, individual communities' contract with the same service provider. An example is provided by People's Express in Washtenaw County. Five individual townships contract with People's Express to provide transportation to their residents. While services operate independently, the agency achieves some efficiencies through shared operations, such as vehicle maintenance, testing and training and scheduling software (for example).
- Recommended coordination strategies for the OnHand region focus on
    - Improving collaboration with a regional forum to advance coordination strategies and initiatives, including mobility management and technology investments.
    - Streamlining service delivery through common service standards, policies, and procedures. It may also include consistent information formats.
    - Using coordination strategies to collaborate on health care needs and transportation access, especially for racial minorities and low-income individuals.
- Collaborating on service delivery, such as medical trips and vehicle sharing.

Sources of the Need

Previous CHSTPs	Stakeholders	OnHand Technical Working Group	OnHand User Survey	OnHand CHSTP Technical Analyses
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strategies

#	Title	Need Addressed
2.1	Regional Coordinating Councils	• Fosters learning and exchange between providers within and across counties.
2.2	Service Standards for Community Transportation Providers	▪ Creates a more universal set of rider eligibility criteria to make it simpler for people to qualify and use services.
2.3	Common ADA Paratransit Terms and Definitions	▪ Creates a consistent set of explanations and description of ADA paratransit services terms, like conditional eligibility.
2.4	Aligned ADA Policies and Practices	▪ Develops consistent policies and procedures among SMART, DDOT, and TheRide for eligibility, appeals, no-shows, and late cancellations to simplify the rider experience and improve coordination.
2.5	Shared Regional Technology Investments	▪ Coordinates technology procurements among agencies to improve service coordination and access across all mobility providers.
2.6	Shared Scheduling and Traveler Information Technology	▪ Develops consistent scheduling tools across providers to simplify trip-planning on the backend.
2.7	Enhanced Coordination with Medical Facilities	▪ Improves service quality and reliability for people with chronic or ongoing medical care needs (e.g. dialysis)
2.8	Vehicle Pooling Among Providers	▪ Reduce the costs and administrative burdens associated with vehicle procurement and maintenance.

2.1 Regional Coordinating Councils

Overview

Coordinating councils are responsible for advancing coordination between transportation providers. Coordinating councils are typically comprised of transportation providers, funding agencies, consumers, and human service agencies whose clients use the services. Regional coordinating councils also create a forum to discuss and evaluate historic and current inequities in the existing transportation network and develop strategies to correct them.

Needs Addressed

Southeast Michigan currently has local coordinating councils organized around counties and transit service delivery areas (DDOT, SMART, TheRide), but no regional group meets to discuss coordination needs. A regional coordinating council would focus on regional needs, which is aligned with the proposed FTA 5310 program management strategy.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Regional coordinating councils tend to be comprised of representatives from human services, transit, employers, and medical facilities. They collectively work together to enhance transportation services for those with specialized mobility needs. ▪ Responsibilities vary based on needs and implementation plans. In Southeast Michigan, the OnHand project will provide guidance and priorities for regional collaboration. ▪ Authority and direction for regional coordinating councils should be provided by a regional authority, such as the RTA, SEMCOG, or WATS. ▪ A Regional Coordination Council in Southeast Michigan could also function as an avenue for individuals and organizations trying to solve problems spanning multiple jurisdictions.	▪ Transportation in Southeast Michigan is regional in nature, but most community transportation systems are locally focused. ▪ One of the largest needs/concerns raised by users is cross county trips. ▪ Regional coordinating councils help providers and funders consider regional needs. ▪ Allows providers to share best practices, experiences, and ideas about transportation operations in the region. ▪ Helps overcome regional silos and provide opportunities for communication, coordination, and collaboration between providers. ▪ Regional coordinating councils also create a forum to engage health departments to participate and share community health needs/priorities regarding transportation access.	▪ The OnHand project is serving the role of a regional coordinating council. The current Technical Working Group could be established as a formal committee to consider regional HST needs. ▪ Regional coordinating councils need a champion and staff resources to organize and fulfill their mission. ▪ Southeast Michigan has multiple jurisdictions involved in transportation. An RCC could help individuals and organizations cut through red type, but success also assumes the RCC has sufficient resources and authority to solve problems. ▪ Regional coordinating councils also work best with clear direction, responsibility and ideally, funding. Participants need to feel their time is well spent.

Precedents

The Bay Area Partnership Accessibility Committee (BAPAC) is a council of the 16 paratransit providers in the San Francisco Bay Area in northern California. BAPAC was created to help coordinate ADA paratransit service in the nine-county region. The group has been critical in establishing procedures and processes for

coordinating service between providers to ensure riders can travel throughout the region. The BAPAC is active in the adopting technology to improve efficiency and the quality of service for paratransit riders.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Short-Term	RTA SEMCOG WATS

2.2 Service Standards for Community Transportation Providers

Overview

As mentioned, the OnHand region has 48 independent community transportation service providers and numerous collaborations. Most of these providers have unique service standards, including hours of operation, eligibility, trip reservation policies, fares, and information (for example). A first step in service coordination would be to create common (or core) service standards for community transportation providers. Common service standards can reflect a minimum level of service that is consistently available regionally; individual communities may at their discretion go beyond these minimums.

Needs Addressed

The OnHand region has a vast and extensive set of community transportation service providers. Currently, most services set their own service delivery standards and rider guides. This approach reflects the fact that most community services were designed with residents and needs in mind. The challenge with this approach, however, is that the regional network is fragmented and difficult to understand. As a result, local services do not consistently tie into regional public transportation services, users have a hard time understanding what is available for them, and service delivery to regional destinations is redundant and inefficient.

One step to moving towards more cohesion in the system is to create common service standards for a more consistent transportation network.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Develop common or core service standards that all regional community providers agree to maintain. ▪ These standards should encompass hours of operation, user eligibility (age, disability, residency), fares (could also be integrated with voucher programs), and/or time required for advance reservation. ▪ Create an order of priorities among all trips (such as medical, shopping, work, physical therapy, etc.) that are provided by the services.	▪ Having access to simplified, consistent, and current information will reduce complexities and increase overall satisfaction. ▪ It will also allow users to access services with ease. ▪ Common service standards will also make it easier for providers to coordinate service.	▪ It is a relatively straight-forward, low-cost strategy that can lead to improved coordination. ▪ With so many service providers, trip coordination can be difficult. Organizing the information and maintaining it requires an ongoing commitment to this strategy. ▪ Transportation providers might not be inclined to uniform operating standards since it can be seen as taking away their operating freedom.

Potential Service Standards

Service standards can be developed to reflect existing operating practices of Southeast Michigan's community transportation network. The following standards, for example, are already met – or nearly met – by

most community transportation providers in the OnHand region. Most of the service providers outside of these standards need to expand service hours or shorten the advance reservation requirement[7].

Potential service standards based on analyzing the existing systems and the user survey results include:

- **Service Hours:** Monday – Friday (9 am to 5 pm); Saturday/Sunday (optional, 12 pm to 6 pm)
- **Fares**: Free/up to $5 (within the locality), up to $10 (adjoining localities), up to $1 per mile (trips outside the locality)
- **Service Eligibility:** Older adults (60+), and/or people with disabilities
- **Advance Reservation**: 2 days prior
- **Trip Types** (high-to-low priority):
  - Medical appointments
  - Shopping or personal errands
  - Physical therapy or exercise classes
  - School, classes, or educational activities
  - Work trips
  - Social trips (visiting friends and family)
- **Applicable Areas**: These standards would be applicable only on services provided in suburban and rural areas. The standards for providers serving urban areas would be up to individual agencies.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Medium-Term	RTA SMART

[7] Of 78 Tier 2 providers in the OnHand database/Service Provider Inventory, 45 already meet (or are very close to meeting) the standards for days, hours, fares and age of eligibility, Most of the rest offer fewer days of service or shorter service hours. About 10 have longer reservation requirements. The ones with the biggest lift are Bellville, Ecorse, FISH, Royal Oak, Southgate, Sterling Heights, Sumpter, Waterford, and Wyandotte.

2.3 Common ADA Paratransit Terms and Definitions

Overview

Per the Americans with Disabilities Act, public transit operators operating fixed route service must provide complementary paratransit to individuals unable to use fixed route service because of a disability. The OnHand region has three ADA paratransit service operators: DDOT, SMART, and TheRide. ADA paratransit service is regulated by the FTA, transit operators have some discretion over how the service is provided and operated.

In part because it is defined and regulated by the FTA, ADA paratransit service relies on a series of somewhat complicated and bureaucratic terms that define who is able to use the service (among other things). Examples include complicated terms like functional assessments and conditional eligibility. Another example is when riders are eligible for ADA paratransit when the weather is cold; this strategy recommends using the same term, such as "extreme cold" or "seasonal winter eligibility" and then defining it in the same way (e.g., temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit). Developing common terms and standard definitions will create consistent information materials about ADA paratransit services and when agencies explain service functions, like letters to riders about their eligibility and use of the service. This strategy is an interim step to Strategy 2.4, which calls for aligning ADA policies and practices.

Needs Addressed

Establishing common terms and definitions will simplify ADA paratransit service for riders. A rider who is conditionally eligible for service in Detroit will receive the same letter explaining what "conditionally eligible" means if they also apply for ADA paratransit service in Ann Arbor. Establishing common terms and definitions can also make program administration easier.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Develop a shared, regional set of terms and definitions for describing and talking about ADA paratransit service. ▪ Agency letters of determination, and appeal procedures (and related communications) could be the same across all providers. ▪ Develop common communication materials, like letters and rider guides, that describe program policies to riders (see also Strategy 2.4).	▪ ADA paratransit is a complicated program with service-specific terms and definitions. ▪ When more than one entity is operating in a region, defining similar functions differently is confusing for riders and caregivers.	▪ Requires a lead agency, but there is no clear authority or significant benefit or taking on the task. Strategy maybe initiated by a Regional Coordinating Council (see Strategy 2.1) or potentially the RTA. ▪ Strategy could be accomplished in conjunction with Strategy 2.4, which recommends aligning regional ADA policies and protocols.

Precedents

In the Chicago metropolitan the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA manages the ADA paratransit program for some of the regional service providers, including the Chicago Transit Authority and Pace. The RTA provides leadership on ADA paratransit services, including managing the application and eligibility process. This leadership creates a uniform, regional approach to both how the services are described and communicated to riders, and how they are administered.

GOAL 2: IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG PROVIDERS

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champions
Low	Regional	Low	Short-Term	SMART TheRide DDOT RTA

2.4 Aligned ADA Policies and Practices

Overview

Per the Americans with Disabilities Act, public transit operators operating fixed route service must provide complementary paratransit to individuals unable to use fixed route service because of a disability. The OnHand region has three ADA paratransit service operators: DDOT, SMART, and TheRide. ADA paratransit service is regulated by the FTA, transit operators have some discretion over how the service is provided and operated.

Accordingly, DDOT, SMART, and TheRide have independent and inconsistent policies and procedures for how ADA services are provided. This strategy works to establish consistent policies and procedures across regional ADA services. Focus areas include eligibility, rider policies, and operational procedures tied to the rider experience such as reservations and cancellations, no-shows and service suspensions, and trip coordination where services overlap.

Needs Addressed

Delivering ADA paratransit service is costly. In Detroit, service overlaps between SMART and DDOT mean that some riders use both systems. Confusion about availability of service and how to obtain information was identified as a concern in the OnHand survey. Measures that simplify travel options and make programs consistent will help to reduce confusion.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ For individuals or currently ADA paratransit eligible or those seeking eligibility, this strategy aims to establish regional consistency among providers. ▪ The goal would be to create consistent policies, procedures, and materials for regional ADA services. This may mean, for example, shared eligibility, e.g., an individual eligibility for ADA service with one provider would be eligible for all providers. It may also include similar fares and trip reservation processes among other strategies. ▪ Agency eligibility determination practices, letters of determination, and appeal procedures (and related communications) could be the same across all providers. ▪ Rider policies for reservations, late cancellations, no-shows, and suspensions as well as other policies could also be the same. ▪ Transit operators could share materials, so that public-facing materials, including	▪ Complementary paratransit required by ADA serves as a safety net for those that cannot use fixed route bus service because of a disability. It is intended to serve those who need it most and as such, the process for determining who is ADA paratransit eligible is inherently complex. ▪ When more than one entity is operating in a region, having separate eligibility procedures and rider policies can lead to inefficiencies and rider confusion. Simplifying rider policies and related programs helps to make the system less confusing and potentially less costly to deliver. ▪ SMART and DDOT are working to improve the rider experience and reduce operational inefficiencies with respect to coordinated travel between the two service areas.	▪ Regional coordination initiatives are ongoing. The Dart fare care program available to DDOT and SMART fixed route riders represents one such instance. ▪ The Michigan Mobility Challenge is funding an integrated online booking and trip management platform to improve coordination and reduce burdens on riders. This presents an opportunity to further improve coordination and the rider experience. ▪ When transit agencies have different policies and processes for determining ADA paratransit eligibility, the agency with the strictest process will likely ask partner agencies to apply the same requirements. And while strictly limiting eligibility is a tenet of the DOT ADA regulations, doing so can require more resources and training.

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
applications, rider guides, policies, web pages, and other documents, are the same for all providers.	Consistent rider policies can support these efforts.	

Precedents

Public transportation services in the Phoenix metropolitan region are operated through a combination of regional and local services. This structure reflects local taxing history, where after a regional transportation and transit tax, several municipalities passed local taxes. A regional tax ultimately passed, which led to Valley Metro, a regional transportation service provider. Recognizing the potential for fragmented service delivery and a confusing system, the region agreed on some common elements of service delivery, including delivery of ADA paratransit services.

Valley Metro in Phoenix, Arizona undertook the process of evaluating, designing, and then implementing regionally consistent policies. Valley Metro uses joint technical committees to support interagency coordination on regional issues, including technical committees on capital investments, funding, marketing, and service planning. This effort has led to adoption of regional service standards and integrated fare systems to promote consistency and a quality customer experience, including ADA paratransit.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champions
Medium	Regional	Medium	Medium-Term	SMART TheRide DDOT

2.5 Shared Regional Technology Investments

Overview

Transit agencies in Southeast Michigan have invested in technology for more than 25 years. However, in most cases investments reflect individual provider needs for operational efficiency and customer service. Coordinating technology procurements among agencies can improve service coordination and access across all mobility providers.

Needs Addressed

Currently, the major transit providers use various technologies to facilitate operations, customer service, and traveler information. These technologies are not meeting their full potential since their proprietary nature limits their integration across providers, and some small HST or demand response providers do not have any technology. Purchasing new technology is beyond the capability of many smaller agencies. Collaboration and/or join purchasing broadens the number of entities that can take advantage of available tools, including open source technology. A regional technology investment plan can provide a roadmap for joint technology planning, procurement, and implementation.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Conduct a regional business and technical needs assessment, to identify priority technologies that should be considered for procurement and implementation. ▪ Research non-proprietary technologies that could meet the needs identified in the regional needs assessment. These could include straight-forward computer-assisted scheduling and dispatching (CASD) software. ▪ Explore the feasibility of community providers remote use of technologies already in use at SMART, DDOT and TheRide. Utilizing existing technology may be less expensive than procuring new technology.	▪ A regional approach to technology planning, procurement, and deployment will result in improved service coordination and customer service at a lower cost than if each agency explored technology individually. ▪ Many HST and small service providers lack the resources, expertise and/or experience to explore, plan, procure and implement technology. ▪ A regional technology investment strategy will facilitate the pursuit of funding and integration of traveler information.	▪ A regional technology investment strategy increases opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and connection ▪ The use of technology in HST / small service providers can be challenging from an organizational change perspective due to a lack of experience. ▪ A regional technology investment strategy will take advantage of economies of scale – the cost of technology procured by small agencies independently will be higher. ▪ A regional approach may foster innovation among the service providers and encourage adaptation to changing customer needs and transportation ecosystem.

Precedents

The Raleigh-Durham region in North Carolina prepared a Regional Transit Technology Integration Plan at the end of 2019.[8] The Regional Transit Technology Plan was developed by the GoForward partners to ensure that they would optimize future technology investments. The Plan includes a technology roadmap that will help the partners ensure that technology investments are:

- Aligned with regional and agency goals and objectives
- Reflect best practices and industry trends
- Consider agency priorities and available resources,
- Identify synergies and opportunities to capture greater value, and
- Consider opportunities for early wins

The Regional Transit Technology Integration Plan presents recommended action strategies over the next five years with an estimated capital funding range of $25 to $50 million. The Plan builds a pathway for the region to follow over the next five years and beyond.

One key Plan recommendation is the creation of a technology investment process that reviews and approves the recommendations of the Technology Advisory Committee at the General Manager or senior staff level in the participating agencies. The overall intent of the Technology Investment Process is to set policy, prioritize the investment in information-related technologies, and help ensure that technology investment is in the best long-term strategic interests of the region.

The recommended technology investment process is as follows:

- Step 1: Annual Budget Process - Identify Mission, Goals and Objectives
- Step 2: List all Technology Projects
- Step 3: Prioritize Projects based on Mission, Goals and Objectives – Cost Benefit Analysis
- Step 4: Project Management Process – Establish Manager and Team
- Step 5: Performance Monitoring Process – Specific Manager and Team
- Step 6: Project Completion – Assess additional project requirements

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Medium-term	RTA

[8] https://nmcdn.io/e186d21f8c7946a19faed23c3da2f0da/8bfec28a290449a7b10eb1fee3a0e264/files/about-us/committees/wake-county-transit-planning-advisory-committee-tpac/2019-12-31_GoForward-Regional-Technology-Strategy_FINAL.pdf

2.6 Shared Scheduling and Traveler Information Technologies

Overview

Identify and adopt a scheduling platform for community transportation providers. Simple, easy to understand and use open source technology for community transportation providers will make it easier for individual operators to efficiently plan and schedule service. Using the same technology will make it easier for transportation providers to share information and book trips with neighboring providers. Shared technology will also be easier for riders because they will see the same information when they plan, reserve, pay for and make their trip.

This strategy may also include traveler-based navigational technologies that help people with disabilities find their way around public transit. Some technologies are specifically designed to aid people with cognitive disabilities, while others focus on people with visual impairments, but rarely are the systems mutually exclusive, i.e., the region may explore and adopt multiple systems.

Needs Addressed

With the number of different mobility services provided throughout the OnHand region, it can be difficult for travelers to understand what services are available and can meet their needs. Further, existing technology varies widely through the region among the larger agencies, making it challenging to integrate information about the individual services. There are open source technologies available for the small HST / demand response providers to schedule rides as well as provide a platform for travelers to plan, reserve and make their trips. Providing app based navigational aids helps people with disabilities safely use the fixed route network. The development of these apps can also be integrated with travel training programs (see Strategies 3.2 and 3.3.)

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Explore and potentially implement an open source computer-aided scheduling and dispatch (CASD) software system to meet the needs of small scale HST / demand response agencies. For example, RidePilot could be considered to fill this need. It is an open source, web-based scheduling, reporting, and dispatch application. Because the software is open source, it is inexpensive. It is also simple and easy to use. ▪ Use the automatic vehicle location (AVL) component of open source CASD systems with an application that can be loaded onto Android tablets or phones for drivers and passengers. ▪ Explore the integration of open source CASD software with similar systems used by the large demand	▪ Some small HST / demand-responsive operators are relying on cumbersome tracking methods involving spreadsheets, whiteboards, or index cards. ▪ Developing a consistent platform for use by small mobility service providers will facilitate information exchange among service providers. ▪ Access to a platform to schedule rides as well as obtain information about their trip will make it easier for travelers to plan and book trips. ▪ Open source CASD software is customizable to reflect local operations. ▪ Open source CASD software is not subject to ongoing licensing fees, can support multiple regional providers, and can be integrated with other related open source	▪ The MyRide2 database was developed with scheduling capability. This requires providers to participate in shared scheduling. However, this feature has not yet been used. A potential pilot program would evaluate whether how shared scheduling can work within existing platforms. ▪ A system like RidePilot is designed to be centrally administered by a larger agency on behalf of many providers. Given the organization of HST / demand response providers in Southeast Michigan, this type of open source CASD software is ideal. Encouraging all independent operators to adopt the technology, however, will likely be challenging. ▪ This CASD software provides a scheduling system for door-to-door service including:

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
response transportation providers (SMART, DDOT, TheRide). ▪ Transit agencies or disability organizations can collaborate on development of app based navigational tools.	software, such as one-call/one-click software. ▪ App based traveler navigation systems help people with disabilities safely use the fixed route transit system, improving their mobility.	▪ Ability to setup and automatically schedule recurring runs and trips ▪ Tracking and generating federally required reports ▪ AVL component that can be loaded onto Android tablets or phones ▪ Moving to CASD software from simpler, manual methods could pose a challenge for agencies that do not have experience with technology ▪ App-based navigational systems designed for individual users can be developed and implemented relatively easily. This is one element of the Michigan Mobility Challenge effort to incorporate the "What3Words" concept to reduce several of the first and last mile challenges in transit associated with finding the bus stop and locating the rider.

Precedents

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) implemented a computer aided scheduling and dispatch (CASD) software system to meet the needs of small-scale community transportation agencies. They deployed RidePilot, an open source, web-based scheduling, reporting, and dispatch application to fill this need. UTA participated in a joint software development project to build upon RidePilot's original functionality and expanded it to meet the needs of human service agencies in the Wasatch Front region. These enhancements include tracking drivers' credentials, vehicle maintenance compliance, daily trip scheduling and tracking, and accountability reporting. In a subsequent phase, UTA, in conjunction with a consultant, incorporated new features and updates including drag and drop scheduling, vehicle capacity tracking, driver availability matrix, subscription/recurring run and trip creation/scheduling, and new reporting options. A complementary Android mobile app includes pre-trip inspection, driver manifest, and vehicle tracking (AVL).

By increasing the number of providers using RidePilot, UTA enhanced the range of direct booking options available on its portal and streamlined the process of using specialized transportation service.

In Boston, the Perkins School for the Blind launched a crowd-sourcing project in collaboration with the MBTA to use iPhones to collectively locate and describe bus stops throughout the system. Users of the Blindways app describe the characteristics of each bus stop thy visit with the goal of providing auditory queues for those with visual impairments to navigate to the bus stop's ideal boarding location near the front sign.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Medium-Term	RTA AAA-1B

2.7 Enhanced Coordination with Medical Facilities

Overview

This strategy enhances cooperation between transportation providers and medical providers offering ongoing outpatient care. The goal is to improve service reliability and the quality of care by enabling patients to travel to needed appointments without incurring transportation challenges.

Needs Addressed

People who need ongoing treatment for chronic conditions must regularly schedule in-person visits and therefore travel to and from medical facilities. Those undergoing dialysis and cancer treatment must travel to each week, often more than once per week. When transportation for these visits is not well coordinated, patient care can suffer. Similarly, providers must schedule such recurring appointments and sometimes face challenges when appointments for multiple clients begin at the same time or are independently scheduled leading to inefficiencies and higher transportation costs. Data suggests that there may be increased health access impacts on particular communities, including racial minorities. Coordination with medical facilities could help address and correct these inequities.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Create a working group to increase cooperation between the region's medical facilities and HST providers. ▪ Develop informational materials that explains the services and role of HST providers for medical providers to consult. ▪ Establish a set of effective coordination procedures around reservations, scheduling, and protocols for managing drop-offs and pickups for riders who need assistance. ▪ Consider developing a concierge platform for medical providers to schedule trips and monitor client transportation. ▪ Consider tracking missed appointments due to reported transportation-related issues with specific tracking for racial minorities.	▪ Many HST services already serve medical facilities. While some trips are occasional, an increasing number are recurring. ▪ As the population of clients needing ongoing medical treatment grows, having efficient coordination practices in place will help to stretch already limited resources. ▪ Medical providers dedicate time to organizing patient transportation and HST providers serve these trips in increasing numbers. ▪ Increased transparency will help create better consensus on the needs and limitations of HST	▪ The existing system is not designed to encourage collaboration between providers. ▪ Medical providers need an incentive to work with information providers and mobility managers. ▪ In funding constrained environments, this is often a lower priority, even though the investment of time and resources can lead to cost savings. ▪ As transportation software platforms continue to advance, service coordination through concierge models is becoming more widespread.

Precedents

Hopelink in Redmond, WA worked with a local hospital to address challenges with discharge times and arranging transportation. Hopelink worked with the hospital to establish a pickup time each day at 3 p.m. Doing this allowed the hospital to arrange discharge times in line with a reliable transportation schedule. The hospital also agreed to staff a "waiting room" which would allow for discharged passengers to wait in comfort.

Setting a fixed schedule or scheduling policy helps to create reliability and reasonable expectations for systems (medical and transportation) and passengers. In this example, both the hospital and transportation providers were able to create a more stable and reliable discharge service. Because of this, passengers were able to make better arrangements and have practical expectations regarding their transportation needs and medical discharge concerns. See https://www.hopelink.org/need-help/transportation. (Source: Industry Standards & Best Practices: Coordination of Medical Transportation by Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, www.ctanw.org)

Ride Connection in Portland OR established a transportation program directly with local dialysis centers. As a result, patients kept their regular appointments, appointment scheduling became easier, and patients began to build community and support opportunities among themselves. Patients were able to share rides and ultimately involve volunteer drivers. (Source: Industry Standards & Best Practices: Coordination of Medical Transportation by Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, www.ctanw.org)

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Medium-Term	AAA-1B SMART DDOT TheRide

2.8 Vehicle Pooling Among Providers

Overview

Vehicle pooling is designed to reduce unnecessary vehicle expenses, resulting in a smaller regional fleet. This strategy allows providers with complimentary vehicle requirements to share vehicles. For example, an agency that needs to use vehicles in the peak period can be paired with one needing vehicles during mid-day periods or on weekends.

Needs Addressed

Supports expanded service for small and medium providers by coordinating vehicle procurements, vehicle maintenance and storage. Supports use of federal funds such as Section 5310, 5339 and other grant programs to invest in more efficient transit service through coordination.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Two or more entities would jointly purchase one or more vehicles that would be shared between them. ▪ Arrangement requires agreement between agencies about cost allocation and terms for sharing use. It also requires a lead agency who assumes responsibility for storing vehicle and providing maintenance and insurance. ▪ Agencies would be responsible for providing trained and licensed drivers and for fueling vehicle based on use. ▪ A centralized vehicle storage and maintenance facility would be responsible for the fleet maintenance and storage.	▪ Builds regional capacity efficiently and cost effectively ▪ Reduces complexity of administration and operations for some transportation service providers ▪ Increases the vehicle availability, reduces maintenance cost, while increasing fleet longevity ▪ Formalizes and decentralizes maintenance activities for smaller providers, like SMART's vehicle program	▪ Agreements between agencies and funding partners may be challenging. Agencies often have different insurance policies and driver requirements. They are also likely differences in cost sharing, protocols for reporting and repairs. ▪ Bridging some of these challenges will pave the way for a more standardized and coordinated network overall. ▪ The initial infrastructure is capital intensive and requires strong leadership and cooperation between agencies ▪ Vehicle pooling will reduce the number of vehicles needed to provide service.

Precedents

The GoRide vehicle sharing program at Valley Ride (Valley Regional Transit, or VRT) in Idaho is a pool of vehicles for human service agencies and non-profit organizations in Ada and Canyon counties to use when needed. The pool of GoRide vehicles includes a variety of vehicle sizes and vehicles with wheelchair lifts. Agencies and organizations can join the GoRide vehicle sharing program and must have a least one driver certified. All drivers operating a GoRide vehicle must be approved prior to the agency or organization requesting a vehicle.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Medium-Term	RTA SMART DDOT TheRide

GOAL 3: INCREASE AWARENESS OF EXISTING SERVICES

Available fixed route and demand response transportation services are only meaningful if people both *know* about them and *feel confident* to use them. Broadening awareness of existing transportation services would make fixed route and demand response services more top-of-mind for potential riders and help address unmet travel demand.

The Need

- As documented in the Service Inventory Technical Memorandum, Southeast Michigan has a broad network of available public and private transportation providers. Some of these services overlap, and many have unique eligibility requirements and operating characteristics. This leads to confusion and lack of awareness about what exists, especially demand response services.
- The OnHand survey showed that among all target groups and the overall sample, identifying available services is one of the top two challenges people experience, second only to finding rides on evenings and weekends.

Strategies

#	Title	Need Addressed
3.1	Regional Branding and Marketing	▪ Creates and promotes a cohesive and recognizable brand across all counties for human services transportation under an "umbrella" brand
3.2	Mobility Management and Travel Training Enhancements	▪ Standardizes the quality and consistency of available transportation resources and travel training programs, and expand those programs
3.3	School Based Travel Training Program Expansion	▪ Increases awareness and confidence using the fixed route network as soon as people start traveling independently
3.4	Demand Response Transportation Integration with Trip Planning Tools	▪ Integrates open source software into trip planning tools via websites and smartphones
3.5	MyRide2 Provider Database Enhancements	▪ Improves the functionality of MyRide2 website and service with possible trip scheduling integration

Sources of the Need

Previous CHSTPs	Stakeholders	OnHand Technical Working Group	OnHand User Survey	OnHand CHSTP Technical Analyses
✓	✓		✓	

Successes to Build Upon

Transit in the OnHand region has gained national recognition in recent years for making significant strides in rebranding (DDOT), partnering across agencies to advertise regional services (FAST bus), and creating unified fare payment between DDOT, SMART, and the QLine.[9] The following strategies can build on this momentum to extend public awareness and advertising of services beyond fixed-routes services to elevate demand-response services and the target audiences they intend to serve.

[9] Macomb Daily. (February 2020). SMART FAST bus service has seen ridership increase rapidly. https://www.macombdaily.com/news/local/smart-fast-bus-service-has-seen-ridership-increase-rapidly/article_d8448c2e-482b-11ea-bd0e-ff621559a21d.html

GOAL 3: INCREASE AWARENESS OF EXISTING SERVICES

3.1 Regional Branding and Marketing

Overview

Regional branding provides a recognizable look and feel to community transportation options in the OnHand region. It can also start to tie together the network of providers spanning the four counties. Shared branding also lends itself to a cohesive marketing strategy that can grow awareness of services designed for demand-response and ADA riders.

Needs Addressed

The OnHand service inventory identified over 50 community transportation providers across the four-county region (not including services provided by SMART and TheRide). Many of these services overlap and/or connect, which can create confusion for riders trying to find the service that best suits their needs and eligibility. Although SMART's Community Partnership Program providers include SMART branding, there are other demand-response providers in the same service area, and others in Detroit and Washtenaw County that are excluded and appear to be independent operators. This causes confusion about what services are available. The 2018 WATS CHSTP cited marketing for transportation services as an unmet need, recommending a comprehensive customer education and marketing program. Despite the many providers and service options, the appearance of a fragmented system with similarly uneven advertising and marketing contributes to a lack of understanding and awareness of what is available.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Develop an "umbrella" regional logo and color scheme that builds off SMART's (or other regional entity, such as the RTA) logo and creates a unified brand that ties community transportation providers together. ▪ Apply branding to vehicles, websites, brochures, and apps for all services. ▪ Create consistent schedule formats across providers within the OnHand region. ▪ Materials may also be available via the same website, either through myride2 or SMART. ▪ Continue to support local and community-based providers and community partnership programs their own local branding, paired with the regional logo and tagline.	▪ The extent to which eligible demand-response users are aware of available demand-response programs is unknown, yet transit providers express a sense that there is unmet need and demand for travel using both fixed and non-fixed route service ▪ Many community providers do not widely advertise their services and limit marketing due to limited resources and concern they would not be able to accommodate more demand. ▪ A unifying, regional brand could simplify the community transportation network for potential users and build recognition of other providers. This coordinated sharing of demand will ultimately benefit providers.	▪ Building trust among providers is important in developing a cohesive brand. A regional coordinating council (discussed under Goal 2: Improve Coordination Among Providers) could facilitate the development of a regional brand. ▪ Working to create an engaging and inclusive brand links independent providers, attracts riders, and links otherwise independent services. ▪ While a uniform brand promotes simplicity, it can be challenging to develop a brand that appeals to people across the region and diverse providers. At the same time, regional branding could begin with simple shared marketing elements, like color schemes, logos or other marker of the regional network. ▪ Uniform branding and messaging will require dedicated staffing to ensure consistency and compliance across all providers. If select providers opt out, the effort will be much less effective.

Precedents

Public transportation services in the Phoenix metropolitan region are operated through a combination of regional and local services. This structure reflects local taxing history, where after a regional transportation and transit tax, several municipalities passed local taxes. A regional tax ultimately passed, which led to Valley Metro, a regional transportation service provider. Recognizing the potential for fragmented service delivery and a confusing system, the region agreed on some common elements of service delivery, including developing a regional brand. The regional "unified" brand sets standards for color schemes and logos but allows individual operators within the Valley Metro umbrella to apply them in different ways. This approach creates consistency across public transit vehicles but also allows for some customization.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Regional	Medium	Short-Term	RTA

3.2 Mobility Management and Travel Training Enhancements

Overview

This strategy further develops, provides, and maintains consistent information and training resources for professionals assisting clients needing human services transportation. It supports programs that help people with disabilities and older adults use fixed route and demand response transportation.

Needs Addressed

In many parts of the OnHand region, overlapping services with different eligibility requirements, hours of operation, and fares make the human services transportation system difficult to understand. While some resources are in place to facilitate travel planning, the level of usage is not commensurate with the demand for travel. Respondents to the OnHand survey who stated they have difficulty with travel noted identifying available services as a key factor. Those who work directly with human services clients need consistent, simple, information on what services are available and how to use them. AAA-1B, which operates the MyRide2 database and call-in line, noted that they receive approximately 30 inquiries per day. For those who have never used public transportation, even riding a bus can be intimidating. The goal of travel training is to teach people to maintain their independence—especially people with physical and/or cognitive disabilities—by using the transportation services available to them.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Develop a template for all HST providers to consistently describe service characteristics (eligibility, application process, areas served, hours of operation, fares, and contact information). ▪ Using an online form that can be updated over time, ask all providers to supply minimum necessary information as a condition of receiving funding. ▪ Develop a simplified information document for human services professionals (social workers, case managers, travel trainers, and others) explaining resources and how to use them, including centralized referral number and website (e.g., MyRide2) for more details. ▪ Continue to invest in travel training programs and "train-the-trainer" efforts to broaden adoption of training activities. ▪ Promote these resources through outreach and continuing education.	▪ As demand grows, more people seek transportation. New clients often seek support for human services non-transportation channels. Educating those working directly with clients will simplify access to information and improve use of existing mobility management resources. ▪ Having access to simplified, consistent, and current information will reduce complexities and increase overall satisfaction. ▪ Overcoming the fear of using Transportation is key to increasing Transit use in senior and disabled communities.	▪ The existing resources developed for MyRide2offer an excellent launching point for expanding access to mobility information. ▪ Broadening distribution of consistent information will help the program grow. ▪ With so many resources available, trip planning can be difficult. Organizing the information and maintaining it requires an ongoing commitment to this strategy. ▪ Travel training is a low-cost investment with multiple benefits, including increased ridership, higher customer satisfaction and improved community support for service. ▪ Travel training programs should consider nontraditional locations to maximize reach and impact. ▪ Transportation providers need an incentive to work with information providers and mobility managers. ▪ In funding constrained environments, this is often a lower priority.

Precedents

Considerable research has been completed on effective mobility management and travel training programs as documented in TCRP Report 168 – Travel Training for Older Adults.[i] Longstanding programs with successful mobility management and travel training include Ride Connection in Portland, OR and The Kennedy Center in Trumbull, CT.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Short-Term	AAA-1B (+DDOT, SMART and TheRide)

3.3 School-based Travel Training Program Expansion

Overview

This strategy would expand existing travel training programs that are designed and implemented in partnership with regional schools and programs for students with disabilities. The strategy is designed to encourage and train young people, especially young people with disabilities to use fixed route services. Travel training will help people become confident in using fixed route services, which offers the most flexibility and independence.

Needs Addressed

Encourages use of fixed route services for people with disabilities, especially people with cognitive disabilities and especially for regular travel like trips to school and work. Reduces use of ADA paratransit and other community-based transportation services.

Effective implementation could combine travel training with a broader school transportation access strategy that included school districts across Southeast Michigan. A regional strategy could look at access to bus passes combined with non-motorized options to improve student opportunity regardless of district.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Fund travel training programs used in schools and independent living programs for people with disabilities, including people with cognitive and mobility disabilities. ▪ Program already exists in Southeast Michigan (see precedent). This strategy would be to expand strategy to include more high schools and engage more staff. ▪ Travel training that is tailored to specific populations that may have access to other funding sources (Medicaid or Workforce funds) creates opportunities for partnerships and coordination.	▪ Transportation is often a barrier for people with disabilities who want to live independently within their own communities. Learning how to safely use fixed route transit is an important part of removing this barrier. ▪ Travel training programs that work with people with disabilities at a young age have proven to be especially successful at teaching people how to use fixed route services for some or all their travel. ▪ Being able to use fixed route transit services maximizes rider flexibility and freedom, making it easier to live independently.	▪ SMART and Programs to Educate all Cyclists (PEAC) have a successful travel training program in Southeast Michigan. Regional stakeholders leverage this experience to expand or copy successes. ▪ Opportunities exist to bring school-based travel training throughout Southeast Michigan. ▪ Travel training is a low-cost investment with multiple benefits, including increased ridership, higher customer satisfaction and improved community support for service. ▪ In funding constrained environments, this is often a lower priority. There may, however, be opportunities to partner with other funding programs that support people with disabilities, including public school districts, Medicaid, and job training programs. ▪ School based travel training can be combined with other strategies and technologies included in OnHand.

Precedents

Program to Educate all Cyclists (PEAC) and SMART collaborate on a travel training program aimed at working with high school students with disabilities to teach them how to ride bikes and use fixed route public transit. The program provides "real world" training for using the bus, so people remain confident if there is a lack of signage and/or if they get lost or confused while trying to navigate the system. The program brings students into the field on multiple trips and tracks proficiency according to 17 benchmarks, including attributes like safety, storing, personal belongings, using a fare card and using a sidewalk[10].

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Low	Regional	Low	Short-Term	Transit operators/ADA paratransit programs

[10] "Learning to Take Transit Despite a Disability", Detroit Free Press, November 2016

3.4 Demand Response Transportation Integration with Trip Planning Tools

Overview

Open source transit trip planning for community transportation and demand response service can enable flex-route, hail-a-ride, and other services to be incorporated into itinerary planning applications. An origin-destination addressed-based online trip planner for fixed and flexible transit services allows universal access to critical transportation information, especially for persons with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and low-income individuals.

Needs Addressed

One of the most consistent messages received during the OnHand process was challenges associated with getting information about available transportation services available to them—especially for trips outside of their community of residence. This challenge persists even though riders have access to MyRide2, which provides information, referral, trip planning and booking services. MyRide2 has limitations including limiting searches to a single zip code. An online trip planning tool (based on a consensus standard) that covers all of the flexible transportation services in Southeast Michigan such as dial-a-ride, hail-a-ride, and deviated fixed-route trips will allow travelers to have a complete picture of their mobility options when planning a trip.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ This strategy would adopt a mobile and desktop platform developed as part of a Federal Transit Administration Mobility on Demand Sandbox project that uses OpenTripPlanner (open source) software that can also read GTFS-flex data, meaning that both fixed and flexible services would be discoverable within a single application. ▪ Technology services that aggregate travel options based on origins and destinations are also referred to as Mobility as a Service (MaaS). This platform would include a full suite of application programming interfaces (APIs) and several open source front-end user interfaces (UIs). ▪ The platform could be integrated into MyRide2 to allow a traveler to see the full menu of demand response services available (including public and private) using a single search.	▪ Better knowledge of and access to flexible and demand response services will make it easier for people to understand their travel options. ▪ More accurate trip planning for HST / demand response services, will improve equity of service planning and delivery. ▪ Improved trip planning tools may encourage participation by agencies that are reluctant to share their service information.	▪ By integrating this platform into MyRide2, this new trip planner elevates the value of the existing MyRide2 system. ▪ Travelers used to the MyRide2 system may find it challenging to transition to a new trip planner. A marketing campaign targeted at travelers who currently use the MyRide2 system, as well as non-users can overcome this challenge. ▪ Ensuring that all participating agencies keep their information updated on the trip planner platform could be challenging. ▪ This approach has been used by many HST and demand response transit agencies, and some state DOT's for regional or statewide trip discovery. As such, there are lessons learned and precedents to use as models. ▪ Screening for rider eligibility is not a feature of currently available open trip planners.

Precedents

Washtenaw County is working with Foenix Rising to develop a trip planning tool (Ride@50+) that combines a combination of transportation services into a single trip booking and payment tool that is available via the web, mobile phone app and a telephone call center. Depending on the final design, the trip planning and booking tool can include public transit options (fixed route), demand response services and private options, like taxis and transportation network companies. Travelers can compare options based on travel time, cost, and convenience.

An online trip planner tool (based on a consensus standard) has been implemented in Vermont (statewide), Tulare (CA) County Area Transit, Oregon DOT and several agencies taking part in the Valley Flex/Vamos Mobility project in California's San Joaquin Valley. The cost of the Vermont project was $480,000. However, after the VT project was concluded, other agencies have used the technologies developed by VTrans and further developed their own trip planning tools.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Medium-Term	RTA

3.5 MyRide2 Provider Call Center and Database Improvements

Overview

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B's (AAA-1B) MyRide2 call center and database is a helpful resource to travelers who are searching for information about transportation services, driving safely, or how to use public transportation. There are opportunities to revamp and strengthen both the call center and database, so it is easier to use and more accessible to more people. In particular, the goal should be to simplify the trip booking process so travelers can make one-call or one-click and book a trip.

Needs Addressed

MyRide2 has limitations as a one-call, one-click mobility management service. Those calling MyRide2 use the mobility management service to identify potential options, but ultimately must still make a second call to reserve a trip directly with providers. This is in part because although the MyRide2 software has a scheduling module, AAA-1B has been unable to persuade providers to adopt this feature. In addition, users seeking information via the website are asked to provide zip codes of origin and destination rather than street addresses.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ A further developed one-call, one-click system would include a virtual "trip aggregator" that assembles information about available modes (e.g., fixed-route public transit, private, rideshare, carpool, volunteer, paratransit, and walking and biking). ▪ This type of platform makes information directly available to travelers through easy-to-use mobile websites, and indirectly available through other applications that support trip reservations, booking and scheduling. ▪ These enhancements, which could be accomplished through integrating open source scheduling, will ensure that anyone seeking to reserve a ride on a regional service provider will be able to do so directly from the one-call, one-click system. ▪ This type of trip aggregation or coordination may also be achieved through lower tech methods, like assigning staff from DDOT and SMART to spend all or part of their time at myride2. Ideally staff will have access to scheduling systems associated with their home systems so they can schedule trips on SMART or DDOT	▪ A true one-call, one-click system can simplify the trip planning process by assessing eligibility requirements and traveler needs, enabling them to evaluate their options, and providing call center staff with the necessary information to identify options that meet the needs of all travelers. ▪ Successful one-call, one-click systems provide required functionality including reporting, account management, agency administrative functions and traveler feedback. ▪ Integrating staff at the call center who have the ability to directly book trips on their service (i.e. on ADA services operated by DDOT or SMART) offers a partial, lower-tech solution that can be implemented in the short term. Assigning staff to the myride2 call center also provides valuable training for all participants and leads to better understanding of the regional network for all staff collaborating at the call center.	▪ Assigning DDOT and SMART staff to the myride2 call center can be implemented in the short term as existing call center staff can be reassigned at low or no cost to the providers. ▪ One-call, one-click systems can facilitate mobility management for travelers, mobility managers, mobility service providers and healthcare providers. ▪ MyRide2 may learn from and/or may be coordinated with the Washtenaw trip planning and booking platform. ▪ Trip planning options can be tailored to specific needs, choices, and schedules for each traveler, based on factors including age, physical mobility limitations, Medicaid eligibility, veterans' eligibility, and tradeoff preferences for time, cost, and convenience. ▪ A further developed one-call, one-click system can operate on all computing devices, support the major web browsers, and may use open map platforms such as Google Maps and OpenStreetMap.

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
services while working at the myride2 call center.		

Precedents

FindMyRidePA is a Pennsylvania-based service designed to help anyone identify and evaluate options to meet their transportation needs. In some cases, users can even book a trip directly. Currently, FindMyRidePA is available in seven counties (Adams, Cambria, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon, and York) and will be available in additional counties soon. At this time, the transportation services available through FindMyRidePA are limited to local public transportation options (i.e., fixed-route buses that operate on fixed schedules and shared-ride services) but will be expanded over time to include commercial services (e.g. taxi, train, private bus carriers etc.) and other non-profit transportation services.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Low	Regional	Low	Short-Term	RTA SMART

GOAL 4: STREAMLINE FUNDING AND REPORTING

One of the strengths of the community and human service transportation networks in the OnHand Region is its complexity. As noted, the region has more than 50 independent operators, all of whom rely – at least partially – on the same handful of funding sources. While some coordination occurs at a sub-regional level (e.g., groups of abutting townships), other providers operator largely independently. As a result, overall, the network is fragmented and inconsistent.

Strategies streamline funding and reporting are designed to create consistent building blocks at the financial level, such as coordinating requirements for grants, establishing clear standards and using simple performance metrics.

The Need

- While the expanse of the community transportation service network in Southeast Michigan is its strength, the lack of integration of individual services plus transparency into services and operations are examples of the network's weaknesses.
- The region does not have a clear, simple, and universally applied set of performance metrics or expectations for service productivity. As a result, it is difficult to identify best practices or recommend strategies to help improve performance.
- Creating universal performance metrics can also help streamline measurements, which may make it easier for transportation service providers coordinate services and collaborate on service delivery.
- Publicly funded transportation service providers build and expand support by articulating their value to their local community and partners. Performance measures help confirm these stories and are particularly effective when used in conjunction with qualitative material about how transit has helped specific individuals and groups of individuals.

Sources of the Need

Previous CHSTPs	Stakeholders	OnHand Technical Working Group	OnHand User Survey	OnHand CHSTP Technical Analyses
✓	✓	✓		✓

Strategies

#	Title	Need Addressed
4.1	Performance Measurement System	▪ Creates and standardizes a handful of performance measures to track the productivity and efficiency of both individual transportation providers and the network overall.
4.2	Regional Capital Plan	▪ Inventories and prioritizes community transportation capital investments at a regional level.
4.3	Regional Fare Integration	▪ Permit community transportation providers to participate in Dart regional fare program.
4.4	Packages of Funding for Community Transportation Services	▪ Combine grants into larger funding packages that are easier to administer and reduce matching requirements

4.1 Performance Measurement System

Overview

Performance measures help taxpayers, funders and transportation operators understand the relative and absolute productivity of their services. Public transportation providers, like DDOT, TheRide and SMART, are required by federal funders (FTA) to track and report performance. However, there is no similar system of performance measures used by community transportation providers. As a result, the OnHand region spends more than $15 million on community transportation services (inclusive of publicly operated services and nonprofit agencies) but has only limited insights into the value associated with that investment, or changes in value over time.

Performance measures can help accomplish multiple goals. At a basic level measuring performance and productivity will help transportation providers understand the effectiveness of their existing services. These performance measures are relatively straight-forward and commonly used across transportation service providers. The OnHand region may also use performance measures to track and measure the quality of service and their impact on improving access to opportunities, services and goods. There are fewer standard measures for service quality and access to opportunity, but mapping tools make this possible.

In both cases, performance measures help transportation providers communicate their success and efforts to funders and members of their community.

Needs Addressed

Leads to greater understanding of how system works and the value it brings to riders and communities. Reduces administrative burden for transportation providers by developing a uniform approach to measuring and defining performance and productivity. Creates a path to address potential inequities across the region. Supports benchmarking and tracking.

Performance measurement systems can also be incorporated to other efforts, including addressing historic and structural inequities in regional transportation investments. For example, data collected by the OnHand project suggests increased health access impacts on particular communities, including racial minorities. The region could track and measure access who is using transportation services to access health care and conversely, changes in the racial profile of individuals who miss medical appointments due to transportation related issues.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Funding agencies, including the RTA of SEM, State of Michigan and SMART (at least) develop a shared set of performance metrics that must be reported as part of receiving grant funding. ▪ Funding agencies provide clear guidance on how to record and report on requested data. ▪ As part of accepting funding, transportation service providers agree to record and report performance data.	▪ Performance metrics help funders and transportation service providers understand their relative performance and productivity and changes over time. ▪ Performance measure can also be used to track and report on transportation's impact and contribution to other regional goals, such as access to health care. ▪ Performance measures also communicate value for money to taxpayers and elected officials. They	▪ While a logical step, implementing performance measurement systems is often challenging. Agencies being measures often balk at the idea of being compared against other agencies, or even themselves. ▪ It can be difficult to develop a set of metrics that feels fair/equitable to transportation providers with varying service areas, client types and missions. ▪ There are strategies to overcome these challenges, including

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Funding agencies develop dashboard or other method of recording and reporting on performance metrics. ▪ Funding agencies may use performance measures for other purposes, including advancing coordination strategies, benchmarking, and tracking progress over time.	can also be used as a guide to identify best practices and service providers that may benefit from additional support. ▪ Measuring and demonstrating value for money is also an important strategy to increasing the amount of money available for services.	categorizing agencies into similar groups and/or being clear about not directly tying future funding to specific performance gains. Transportation provides may also be encouraged to demonstrate and report success using qualitative metrics.

Precedents

The State of Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) monitors the performance of all routes and services operated by the state's transit providers. This information, the Public Transit Route Performance Review is prepared annually and reported to the state legislature. VTrans uses this process to ensure public transit investment is well spent by comparing performance at the route level to an appropriate standard and identifying routes and services that need improvement. Standards are developed based on peer groups, which are established for each category and then routes/services are compared to those standards. The information is used to report on statewide trends and network productivity (overall ridership, total costs, cost per trip) as well as route level performance and productivity (boarding per mile, boarding per hour) and cost effectiveness (cost per passenger). Each year, the performance review identifies routes and services classified as "underperforming" and any routes that moved from "underperforming" to "acceptable". Routes and services that are categorized as "underperforming" for multiple years are subject to study and/or may lose state funding.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champions
Medium	Agency	Medium	Short-Term	SMART RTA TheRide

4.2 Regional Capital Plan

Overview

This strategy calls for a regional capital plan that inventories and prioritizes capital investments needed to support the community transportation network. It includes identifying vehicle replacement needs.

Capital investments are an essential part of supporting an active, reliable public transit and community transportation network. Traditional transit capital investments include vehicles, as well as passenger amenities (shelters, benches), transit facilities (maintenance facilities) technology systems (scheduling software) and other equipment needed to support transit. Coordinated human service transportation capital projects include mobility management and some operating assistance). Once needs are identified, capital plans prioritize these purchases according to need and available funds. The main advantage of developing a capital plan regionally as opposed to individually is it allows for more equitable allocation of resources. As part of coordinated planning, strategies that support vehicles and related equipment for demand response transportation are essential elements in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations.

Needs Addressed

Vehicle-related capital planning is a key element of coordinated planning as Section 5310 funding supports the purchase of vehicles. Integrating capital needs for demand response services into an overall regional capital plan will help to sustain and grow service. Can also lead to shared purchases.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Community transportation providers collaborate to develop a detailed inventory of capital items (vehicles, facilities, equipment, and infrastructure) in the region with identified needs. ▪ The regional capital plan would be presented to RTA and other governing bodies for approval and become the basis for local, state, and federal grant funding efforts.	▪ The creation of a regional capital plan places the region in a position to compete for larger federal grants. ▪ Having a comprehensive plan allows providers to work together for funding and reduces interregional competition for grants. ▪ Developing a regional capital plan helps facilitate collaboration and coordination among existing providers by encouraging them to work together to identify and prioritize needs.	▪ Grants through FTA and other funding sources are regularly available, and a process for coordinating regional responses to these requests will be beneficial. ▪ ▪ The data collection efforts can be challenging and will require additional support for smaller providers. ▪ There is value in creating a picture of regional needs that is accessible to everyone. It helps build trust between providers, stakeholders, and elected officials.

Precedents

The Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority (BARTA) in Pennsylvania provides fixed route and demand response shared ride services. BARTA undertakes capital planning annually and coordinates closely with the local metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Its capital program broadly addresses system maintenance and system expansion. Lessons learned from this and other systems in Pennsylvania include:

- Utilize a rational capital planning process

- Conduct capital planning annually
- Make decisions based on a long-term investment strategy
- Use standard metrics to determine when assets should be replaced
- Gain support of public officials at all levels of government
- Partner with the MPO
- Be active in your local community

Source: Capital Planning for Small and Medium-sized Transit Systems, A Resource Guide, August 2006, prepared for Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champions
Low	Regional	Low	Ongoing	RTA

4.3 Regional Fare Integration

Overview

Southeast Michigan's regional fare payment system, called Dart, allows travelers to purchase fare media and passes that can be used on SMART and DDOT fixed route buses, as well as the QLINE streetcar. Currently, Dart includes several fare products that are available at a discounted rate for the disabled, youth (ages 6 to 18), and seniors (65 and older). This strategy would broaden use and acceptance of the Dart system to include demand response providers, potentially including SMART funded community transportation agencies.

Needs Addressed

The RTA's 2045 Vision, which identified the need for expansion and improvements in community transit, included a goal of incorporating community transit programs into a future regional fare payment system. This is also a recommendation of RTA's 2019 Seamless Fare Integration Project – Concept of Operations. While the initial Dart system has already moving forward with SMART and DDOT as lead agencies, it covers three of the regional fixed-route systems and only provides passes, a future program can include both passes and contactless payment systems for all participating providers. Expanding the regional fare system will move the RTA and regional transportation partners closer to mobility solutions, such as Mobility as a Service.

Strategy Detail

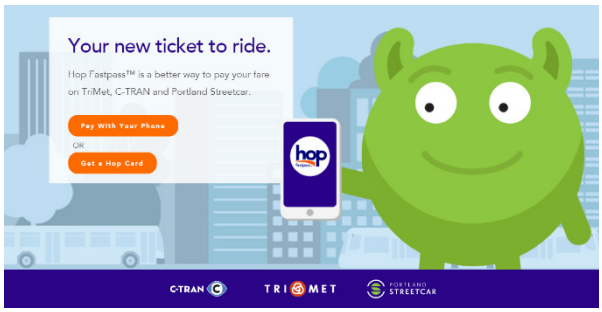
What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ An integrated fare collection system that includes regional fixed route and demand response services. It allows a traveler to pay for any regional transit or paratransit service using the same fare media (e.g., a smartcard, a mobile phone app, or a credit card). ▪ Equity and accessibility are critical to the success of a regional fare collection system. The integrated system should allow travelers to add value to their accounts using cash at local establishments (e.g., retail outlets, pharmacies, libraries, transit centers). The RTA may also want to consider "fare capping" which creates a pay as you go option for travelers unable to purchase a monthly transit pass outright. (See Strategy 1.5.) ▪ Integrated fare payment systems facilitate travel on any participating regional transit or demand response service and has the potential to be used for other mobility services such as car	▪ Regional fare systems create efficiencies through a shared back office solution rather than individual systems. ▪ Regional fare systems reduce revenues lost due to fareboxes that are out of service due to mechanical issues. ▪ For fixed route buses, fare cards or fare media speed the boarding process, which in turn can improve on-time performance. For on-demand services that collect fares, the fare collection process is also simplified. ▪ A regional fare collection system also facilitates regional travel incentives and discounts, such as fare capping, incentives for traveling on certain days (e.g., air quality days), and rewards for using the system.	▪ The existing Dart fare collection system will need to be enhanced to offer fare accounts that can be loaded by using cash, including provision of discounts for specific groups such as seniors, students, low-income riders and more. Options to load cash into fare accounts enables cash-paying customers to participate in regional mobility services (e.g., bike share). ▪ Integrated fare payment systems can facilitate a variety of fare policies such as fare capping, in which a traveler will pay the lowest possible fare. They will never pay more than the cost of a daily, weekly, or monthly pass (once they reach this threshold, their rides are free). Further, travelers do not have to determine the correct fare when fare capping is implemented. (See Strategy 1.5.) ▪ In addition to providing travelers with the opportunity to load their accounts using cash via systems such as PayNearMe and PayPal, other payment methods could be accepted, such as credit and debit

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
sharing, bike sharing, scooter sharing, parking, etc.		cards, Google Pay, Apple Pay and Android Pay. ▪ A regional approach to fare collection provides opportunities to partner with retail merchants to provide incentives for using mobility service providers in SE Michigan.

Precedents

Regional integrated fare systems that cover both fixed route and demand response services exist in a few regions in the U.S. One of the best examples is the system operated in the Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA area. This open payment system covers three regional transit agencies in two states.

- Contactless credit and debit cards, account-based smart cards, and a virtual transit fare card (called Hop Fastpass™) stored securely within a smartphone can be used for payment. An account-based system is used because of the flexibility and security it provides for the regional transit stakeholders and their riders. If a Hop card is lost or stolen, it can simply be blocked and reissued. A Hop card can be loaded with cash at numerous locations throughout the region including retail outlets, supermarkets, convenience stores, etc.



- Open architecture allows TriMet to capitalize on changing technologies or falling costs, avoiding expensive, cumbersome negotiations with a proprietary systems integrator that is set-up to profit from changes to the fare payment system over time
- Riders can receive all Hop benefits—including fare capping, autoloading, monthly passes and concession fares—whether they pay by smartphone virtual card, or by a physical smart card (an option important for riders unable to afford a smartphone).

Users of both physical and virtual Hop cards can add value online by visiting regional transit ticket offices, making a phone call or via mobile app. Users of physical Hop cards can also add value at more than 500 stores throughout the Portland region that are art of the Hop retail network.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Regional	High	Medium term	DDOT and SMART

4.4 Packages of Funding for Community Transportation Services

Overview

Community transportation service providers in Southeast Michigan are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local programs. In most cases, each of these programs are administered independently, making it complicated and administratively burdensome for small community-based transportation providers. One potential strategy would be to combine funding sources into a jointly administered program that distributes larger packages of funding. Packaging grant funds is also a strategy to leverage funding from other sources, such as public health, education or medical service provides.

Needs Addressed

Jointly administering funding programs would make it easier for community transportation providers to manage services and free resources for service design and development (and coordination).

Packaged funding, especially across non-transportation funding programs, coordinates service delivery.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Instead of administering federal and state grant programs that fund similar (or the same) type of activities, programs could be combined. ▪ Combining programs would be easier to administer for both local agencies overseeing grant administration and for local community transportation service providers. ▪ Jointly administering programs can also facilitate coordination and collaboration across agencies.	▪ Reducing administrative costs simplifies the complexity of managing and operating transportation services. It will also ▪ Insufficient funding will also limit the ability to operate services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable travelers. ▪ The region's population is aging, meaning more people will ultimately retire from driving and become dependent on both fixed route and demand response transportation. ▪ Providers that rely on multiple funding sources to operate service face cutbacks when funding is not sustained.	▪ Federal and state restrictions can make it difficult to jointly administer funding programs and the process of working through these challenges can be daunting. ▪ However, the benefits, especially if the region prioritizes certain needs (i.e. job access and reverse commute strategies), the benefits can be significant.

Precedents

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) combines federal 5311, 5307 and state 85.24 TEAM funds (Transportation Employment and Mobility Program) into a consolidated program called the Wisconsin Employment and Transportation Program (WETAP) to fund capital and operating projects for low-income residents seeking employments. WisDOT accepts applications for this grant program on annual program. By combining programs funds, WisDOT offers larger grants with lower matching requirements. WETAP was originally developed to coordinate Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and TEAM funds when JARC had its own allocation. The State has continued its investment in JARC activities through this program.

GOAL 4: STREAMLINE FUNDING AND REPORTING

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champions
High	Regional	Low	Medium-Term	RTA MDOT

GOAL 5: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUPPORTIVE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical infrastructure refers to the aspects of the built environment—both publicly and privately owned—that affect how easily people can travel within their community and across the region. For purposes of the OnHand project, this goal refers to the quality and presence of local infrastructure that supports travel without a private automobile. It can include everything from safe and accessible sidewalks and street crossings, to bus shelters, to wayfinding.

The Need

- Transportation and transit-supportive infrastructure is fragmented throughout the OnHand region with gaps in the sidewalk network and insufficient funding available for construction and maintenance. Furthermore, there are significant disparities in infrastructure quality across the four counties.
- Transit agencies and community service providers have some funding dedicated to capital investments and infrastructure. This is typically used for investments like vehicles, bus stops and benches. Transit providers rely on a network of accessible sidewalks and street crossings, typically under the purview of state and municipal agencies. Transportation providers, therefore, rely on others to invest in supportive facilities.
- Not only does the region need to modernize infrastructure to account for new mobility services and technologies, but many older adults hoping to age-in-place have adult children that have moved away—they lack caregiver support to help them navigate physical obstacles getting to transit services.
- The Technical Working Group identified the need to *improve infrastructure* as a top priority, even though it requires municipal or private partnerships, and, although eligible, is an unlikely use of 5310 funding.

Strategies

#	Title	Need Addressed
5.1	Home Ramp Subsidy Program	▪ Provides financial support for at-home ramp construction to enable people using mobility devices to remain in place
5.2	Safe Routes for Seniors / Safe Routes for All	▪ Creates safe and accessible paths to key destinations for older adults and people with disabilities
5.3	Bus Stop and Station Accessibility	▪ Removes path of travel barriers at bus stops and rail stations
5.4	Key Destination Mapping	▪ Crowd sources information about accessible routes to transit facilities
5.5	Mobility Hubs	▪ Develops concentrated and branded transit-supportive amenities that facilitate access to and from bus stops and rail stations
5.6	Eligibility Assessment and Travel Training Center	▪ Provides a regional resource for conducting ADA paratransit eligibility interviews and assessments and travel training

Sources of the Need

Previous CHSTPs	Stakeholders	OnHand Technical Working Group	OnHand User Survey	OnHand CHSTP Technical Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	

Successes to Build Upon

Several cities and transit providers in the OnHand region are making progress in improving their infrastructure for transit and related mobility services. For example, the City of Royal Oak in Oakland County worked with SMART

to locate upgraded bus shelters with LED screens and real-time transit information. Oak Park, Huntington Woods, Berkeley, Ferndale, and Detroit have also partnered with MoGo Detroit bike share to strategically locate stations to support first- and last-mile connections to transit and other destinations. The service expansion launches in June 2020. These types of mobility improvements help travelers by making it easier to walk, bike or take transit.

5.1 Home Ramp Subsidy Program

Overview

This strategy will provide grant funds to older adults and/or people with disabilities to build access ramps at their place of residence (e.g., curbside or at their door). Strategy could also provide recommendations for how to build home ramps, with advice design requirements and contracting with a builder. It may also develop a list of preferred contractors who have successfully developed home ramps.

Needs Addressed

Stakeholders interviewed in the OnHand process noted that people facing a sudden need to use a mobility device can remain in their residences with a ramp installed to facilitate barrier-free access.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ A program that provides people with disabilities the funding and construction assistance to build accessibility ramps at their homes. ▪ Eligible applicants would apply to the champion's office. The office, specifically the coordinator, would determine the level of assistance needed. The assistance would be in the form of a voucher to the partnered construction agency that would install the ramp. ▪ Funding for the program can be through public-private partnership, federal grants (e.g., Medicaid, Department of Veterans Affairs or Housing & Urban Development), and/or city revenue streams.	▪ For those who cannot otherwise travel, an access ramp can facilitate access to transportation services. ▪ Even in communities with door-through-door demand response services, building access is required for those who need it. ▪ The installation of access ramps at residential locations often permit those who need ramps to remain in their homes.	▪ The program could be piloted through aging and rehabilitation services organizations that assist people whose mobility limitations prevent them from traveling. ▪ There would need to be some screening process to ensure funding was directed to appropriate individuals. Screening could be based on ADA eligibility or potentially Medicaid. ▪ If a municipality or non-profit wanted to provide the service or funding, then the major service providers (DDOT, SMART, TheRide) could use their ADA paratransit eligibility screening process to identify eligible riders that may need ramps. ▪ The program could also partner with MyRide2 to market the program on their website. ▪ A funding program would require a coordinator to manage, implement, and evaluate it.

Precedents

The City of Jacksonville, FL has offered wheelchair ramp program since 2013. The city's Disabled Services Division partnered with the Jacksonville Job Corps to construct free wheelchair ramps for Duval County's disabled population. The ramps are funded through parking violation revenue (specifically illegal parking in handicapped spaces). The city has staffed a full-time program coordinator dedicated to this program.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Medium-Term	Human Service Agencies

5.2 Safe Routes for Seniors/Safe Routes for All

Overview

Safe Routes for Seniors (SRFS) is a programmatic strategy to engage older adults to identify obstacles to walking and getting to/from transit services, and collaboratively develop design solutions to improve walkability and safety. SRFS builds stakeholder networks to advocate for safety improvements and works closely with responsible agencies to implement community-generated ideas.

An expansion of this concept would be a Safe Routes for All program that adopts the "8 80 Cities" approach that believes if you design an urban environment that is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, it will be great for all people. An expansion of the 8 80 Cities program would understand that safety is relative to a person's identity and physical location. Creating safe routes for all in Southeast Michigan will need to recognize the needs of communities of color, including barriers to mobility that are not be included in traditional practices and street designs.

Needs Addressed

Members of the target populations, including older adults and people with disabilities comprise a significant portion of Southeast Michigan's population. Individuals aged 65 years or more, comprise roughly 15% of the overall population in Southeast Michigan (~630,000 individuals), while individuals with disabilities represent about 7% of the population. Both populations are spread evenly across counties. The number of older adults is expected to grow quickly regionwide, with 100,000 more older adults projected between 2017 and 2020. One of the most prominent barriers to travel for both populations is the ability to get to and from bus stops. Members of the Technical Working Group and stakeholders interviewed for this study confirmed many parts of the region lack infrastructure that supports people with mobility or physical differences. The lack of infrastructure is even more challenging for older adults that also experience a disability and/or live in poverty.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ SRFS is a program sponsored by public agencies or advocacy organizations to engage senior residents and build a coalition to make changes to the physical environment. ▪ SRFS strategies typically focuses on the "Six E's" including:[11] – **Evaluation**: Collect data on safety issues and locations – **Equity & Empowerment:** Elevate voices of underrepresented groups	▪ Combined older adults and people with disabilities represent between 15% and 20% of the population. Ensuring these individuals have full access to the region's transportation network is essential. ▪ It is also the case that improvements made for older adults and people with disabilities will benefit the overall population by making streets, bus stops and other infrastructure safer and easier to use. ▪ As the population of older adults continues to grow and more people strive to age in place, supportive infrastructure is critical to their ability	▪ The region's aging services agencies (AAA 1-B and AAA 1-A) serve as a natural connector to reach older adults in the region. ▪ Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC), Transportation Riders United (TRU), and Warriors on Wheels (WOW) are local advocacy organizations that have experience engaging people with disabilities and understanding their unique challenges. ▪ The region's expansion into more rural areas will make it more challenging for infrastructure investments to be cost-effective. More populated areas are better candidates for improvements.

[11] SafeTREC (2018). Safe Routes for Older Adults. Available at: https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/srfoa_042518_final.pdf

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
– **Education**: Increase awareness of older adult challenges among decision-makers – **Engineering**: Change the street environment to enhance walking and biking safety – **Enforcement**: Ensure safe driving habits and compliance – **Encouragement**: Promote the normalization of walking and transit travel among seniors	to stay socially and physically active and access the services they need or rely upon. ▪ Although the population of adults over age 65 years as a percentage is similar across the region, there are far fewer older adults 85 years or older in Wayne County due to lower life expectancy. Addressing older adult needs and supporting aging in place strategies may help improve equity in health outcomes. ▪ When communities are designed to safely accommodate older adults, they inherently become safer for everyone regardless of age.	▪ SRFS groups could encourage development policies that locate senior residences near transportation amenities and access.

Precedents

Transportation Alternatives is a pedestrian advocacy organization based in New York City that has a Safe Route for Seniors program designed to support older adults as agents of change. The program collaborates with senior housing facilities, senior centers, and community-based organizations to identify obstacles to walking and develop design solutions to improve walkability and safety.[12] The program successfully prompted the conversion of a small service street into a pedestrian plaza to improve the safety and comfort of a crosswalk at a busy intersection.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Low	Short-Term	AAA-1A AAA-1B

[12] Think Health LA. Available at: https://www.thinkhealthla.org/promisepractice/index/view?pid=3643

5.3 Bus Stop and Station Accessibility

Overview

This strategy proposes identifying locations where bus stops and rail stations have access barriers. It would prioritize those locations in need of improvements and focus on removing any barriers. A key benefit of barrier removal is to enable more people to use fixed route transit and reduce the use of ADA complementary paratransit where feasible.

Transit agencies have bus stop guidelines. In some cases, accessibility is compromised when individual developers build bus stops as part of independent projects that do not directly involve transit agency staff. One potential solution involves scrubbing develop review processes to ensure any investments in transit, bike and pedestrian access facilities meet ADA standards.

Improving bus stop and station accessibility creates an opportunity to address inequities in the exiting transit infrastructure. People of color account for 60 percent of all public transit riders[13]. This implies that neighborhoods with higher percentages of Blacks and other minorities should receive 60 percent of transit investment.

Needs Addressed

Throughout the OnHand region, accessible infrastructure to support connectivity and access to transit stop and stations is inconsistent and lacking. This challenge exists within individual communities as well as where transit crossed municipal boundaries or where roads are under county and state jurisdiction. The WATS CHSTP identified a need to ensure the safety and access of individuals that use all modes of public transportation. It also recommended providing more transit amenities at bus stops and stations and collaborating with road agencies to fill gaps at bus stops during road reconstruction and rehabilitation. Respondents to the OnHand survey stated that getting to/from bus stops is one of the top five challenges to traveling, and people with disabilities were more likely to report challenges compared with other target groups.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Explore mapping and data collection tools to identify access barriers to stations and stops. ▪ Allocate funding to incorporate accessible paths in wayfinding signage and online interactive mapping tools. ▪ Coordinate with providers of transit access and mapping tools (e.g., Transit app, Google maps, etc.) to integrate and	▪ Being able travel safely to neighborhood centers, transit stops, and other activity centers is a fundamental part of mobility. ▪ Identified accessible paths can be used to improve wayfinding signage and serve as a resource for non-profits and human service providers that work with persons with disabilities. ▪ Creating consistency in mapping and accessibility standards across the region can provide some cohesion and efficiencies in	▪ SEMCOG already serves as a clearinghouse for walking and cycling networks throughout the region, providing maps and information about existing and planned facilities.[14] Mapped networks do not yet include an ADA accessibility layer. ▪ Bus stop investments typically follow ridership (i.e. higher ridership stops have more facilities) but do not take community demographics (race) into consideration. The OnHand project did not map bus stop facilities and ridership or community demographics. An

[13] American Public Transit Association (APTA) Who Rides Public Transportation (2017). https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Who-Rides-Public-Transportation-2017.pdf

[14] SEMCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Network. Available at: https://maps.semcog.org/bikepednetwork/?entry=2

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
recommend preferred access routes. ▪ Hold quarterly meetings between local transit agencies and local agency public works departments to create (and revisit) a roadmap for bus stop and sidewalk improvements. ▪ A potential metric to evaluate progress is miles *of accessible paths mapped or built*.	responses, funding, and solutions to address access across regional providers.	important and bus stop facility improvement plan would be to include race as a factor in determining where bus stop investments occur. ▪ Coordination between SEMCOG, WATS, and the region's independent transit providers may present a challenge if bus stop/station information is stored and shared differently. ▪ Potential funding sources may include research grants from local universities (University of Michigan, Wayne State University, or Western Michigan University's Transportation Research Center for Livable Communities) ▪ Based on the large number of communities in Metro Detroit, it will be important to coordinate this work and potentially hire a transit planner to liaise between agencies and municipalities. ▪ Implementing bus stop improvements, especially when they involve construction is complicated. Local, state and federal agencies often require approvals to move forward with simple projects, such as a bus shelter or concrete pad.

Precedents

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) has worked with the University of Nevada and the City of Henderson to pilot the use of LiDAR sensors to collect pedestrian and vehicle trajectories at several intersections and to determine what equipment or countermeasures may be needed to increase pedestrian safety.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regionwide	Low	Short-Term	SEMCOG WATS

5.4 Key Destination Mapping

Overview

Mapping paths to key destinations means clearly communicating ways to access frequently visited regional destination using fixed route transit or demand-response service. Accessible paths emphasize mobility for people with disabilities to help plan safe and successful trips.

Needs Addressed

The OnHand Survey found that walking to and from bus stops and figuring out available services are two of the most common barriers to travel among target population. Once people access transit service, their travel needs do not stop at municipal boundaries. The OnHand service inventory showed that demand response service providers sometimes travel outside their geographic service areas to access major destinations such as hospitals or medical centers, shopping centers or supermarkets, recreation centers, or job centers. This need is reinforced in the RTA's 2016 Transit Master Plan's stated goal of "enhancing livability by providing better access to the region's parks, shopping centers, medical facilities, and educational opportunities."

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Use existing GIS tools to map accessible paths and gaps in the region's pedestrian network, focusing on key destinations. ▪ Engage with members of the disability network to report on their travel experiences, noting the quality and consistency of the infrastructures. This will create a dynamic responsive tool. ▪ While maps can exist as simple hard copy brochures or 1-pagers, they will be more dynamic as a web-based tool. ▪ Provide maps and links to non-profits and human service providers that work with people with disabilities ▪ Pair mapping tools with improved wayfinding signage including information about nearby transit service, transfers and connections, and proximity to major destinations. ▪ A potential metric for this strategy is miles mapped in the app.	▪ Better defined pathways to available services and destinations are critical to increasing transit ridership. ▪ Dynamic maps are important because they ensure people have current information on the quality and consistency of travel paths. ▪ Mapping and sharing accessible paths to bus stops can help people with disabilities used fixed route transit, which increases their flexibility for ad hoc, unscheduled travel, and reduces demand for complementary paratransit services.	▪ OnHand partners can work with local universities to identify technology platforms or explore crowd-sourced options to gather data. ▪ Infrastructure improvements to address gaps in the pedestrian network will likely require more capital investments than are available; using mapping information to help guide people's travel is a lower-cost, near-term action to enhance the travel experience. ▪ Map maintenance over time is important to keep information relevant and up to date (e.g., accounting for transit service changes or new development).

Precedents

The City of Seattle's AccessMap program provides routes that are customized for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, and/or canes. The program is a partnership with the University of Washington's College of Engineering and is complemented by a citywide pedestrian sign plan that integrates braille and wayfinding for people of all ages and abilities. Project Sidewalk in Columbus Ohio and Denver Walks in Denver are also developing crowd-sourced maps of accessible paths.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Low	Regional	Low	Short-Term	SEMCOG WATS

5.5 Mobility Hubs

Overview

Mobility hubs are facilities that concentrate branded transit-supportive amenities to enhance access to and from bus stops and rail stations. Hubs include a variety of amenities and facilitate first and last-mile connections to transit. Mobility hubs can also be used to spur transit-oriented development (TOD) and affordable, accessible housing.

As part of designing mobility hubs it is essential that the design and implementation of multimodal facilities is both fully accessible for older adults and people with disabilities. Achieving this goal requires engaging both older adults and people with disabilities in the design and development process.

Needs Addressed

Connections between one transit service to another can present navigational challenges or long wait times. The WATS CHSTP identified a need to create safe and scheduled transfer pointes between public transit service areas to enable customer access to fixed routes. SMART's CHSTP also recommended funding projects that increase amenities for riders on vehicles and at stations, stops, and transfer points. Survey data and stakeholder interviews indicated that transfers are particularly challenging for people with disabilities, especially when transfers are required between different service providers or when transfers take place on evenings and weekends with reduced service frequencies.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ Mobility hubs are places where multiple transportation services are co-located along with transit rider and pedestrian amenities. ▪ Mobility hubs can vary in purpose and location within a regional transportation network. ▪ Siting criteria may include current and planned transit networks and connections, transit activity (e.g., daily boarding/alighting, transfers), and land uses (e.g., employment and residential density, major institutions. ▪ Criteria an also include access (or the ability to create) affordable housing and accessible infrastructure. Mobility hubs can also be used to spur TOD projects. ▪ The types of hubs and amenities may vary depending on the urban context (e.g., downtown, emerging district, suburban) and types of transportation access (transit-serving, multimodal, auto-oriented).	▪ Mobility hubs can provide much-needed real and perceived coordination between different transit providers. ▪ Hubs can serve as nodes between fixed route services and last-mile services that connect public transit services to nearby job sites so people with low incomes can access job opportunities. ▪ Successful mobility hubs can make transit services an attractive option versus a last resort. ▪ They can also be used to spur community development and encourage TOD investment.	▪ There are numerous locations throughout the OnHand region that make natural sense for mobility hubs where multiple services currently operate/overlap. Indeed, DDOT has developed conceptual plans for mobility hubs and is seeking funding for implementation. ▪ Hubs might present an opportunity to locate private mobility services in locations where lower density may otherwise not support them (e.g., car share, bike share). ▪ Design of the mobility hubs needs to consider the needs and experience of all users, such as people with disabilities and including people with physical and cognitive disabilities. ▪ Mobility hub costs can vary widely depending on its type, purpose, and number of services included (e.g., anywhere from $1 million to $12 million) ▪ Mobility hub development relies on partnerships. Local municipalities, transit agencies and other mobility services ought to work together in the planning,

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
		funding, and development of mobility hubs.

Precedents

The Downtown Station in Austin Texas is an example of a mobility hub that is the intersection of several local bus routes, electric taxi service, car-share, bike share, scooters, and a public plaza. Shops and businesses nearby make it a pleasant space to wait or shop between transfers or legs of trips.[15] Plenty of other cities across the country have mobility hubs with various support services and amenities ranging from food trucks and vendors near transit hubs in Baltimore, Maryland and Boston, Massachusetts; to wayfinding kiosks in New York City, New York; to shared transit stop pilots in Seattle, Washington.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
Medium	Regional	Medium	Medium-Term	RTA DDOT SMART TheRide

[15]Capital Metro. Downtown Station. Available at: https://www.capmetro.org/DowntownStation/

5.6 Regional Eligibility Assessment and Travel Training Center

Overview

A regional eligibility assessment and travel training center is a facility that offers resources for transit agencies, demand response providers, and their customers to participate in interviews and assessments for ADA paratransit eligibility and to learn how to use public transportation services through travel training. It helps transit agencies undertake functional assessments and helps travel trainers work with clients in a simulated environment

Needs Addressed

An eligibility and travel training center would provide a much-needed resource for transit providers, travel trainers, and their clients. Given the size and expanse of the OnHand Region, there may be a need for multiple centers. Such centers are particularly helpful for people who are new to transit, including people with developmental disabilities, and others who may be able to use fixed route or demand response transit for different types of trips but are reluctant to travel via these modes.

Strategy Detail

What is it?	Why is it important?	Opportunities/Challenges
▪ A regional eligibility and travel training center is a conveniently located facility with well-designed indoor and outdoor environments designed to simulate real-world travel conditions. It includes physical features (sidewalks, curb ramps, varied surfaces, ramps, crossings, etc.) that mirror what one might encounter while traveling in the community. It includes transit buses and vans (or mock-ups) used both for functional assessments and travel training. It includes other key features that occupational therapists need to conduct functional assessments. ▪ For administration, eligibility and travel training centers include office space, a reception and waiting area, and meeting and training rooms.	▪ The population of individuals who may need to use public fixed route or demand response transportation is growing. Further, Michigan provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities until age 26 and some families move to Michigan from other states once their children age out of services in the other state (typically age 18). ▪ Effective interviews and functional assessments help to both strictly limit ADA paratransit eligibility and to better understand clients' travel abilities and needs. Co-locating travel training with eligibility assessments helps to encourage more people to use fixed route and other non-ADA services.	▪ Southeast Michigan could benefit from having an eligibility assessment and travel training center. It will be particularly helpful to DDOT and SMART to coordinate and undertake consistent ADA paratransit eligibility assessments. Its location will be very important in terms of equitable access. Given DDOT's and SMART's services overlap in Wayne County, and given the role that Wayne State University may play in supporting functional assessments, a new facility should be sited in Wayne County in an area well served by fixed route transit. ▪ Given the potentially high cost to construct a new facility, outside funding sources will likely be needed. ▪ Could also be expanded to include a "mobile" assessment and travel training program that travels to parts of the region to perform assessments and provide travel training.

Precedents

Numerous transit agencies have invested in centralized assessment and travel training centers. This includes SFMTA in San Francisco, Sam Trans in San Mateo, CA, RTC in Las Vegas, NV, COTA in Columbus, OH, and TriMet in Portland, OR. For further information, see Practices for Establishing ADA Paratransit Eligibility Assessment Facilities available at http://nap.edu/22184.

Level of Effort	Scope	Cost	Timeframe	Champion
High	Agency	High	Medium-Term	RTA SMART DDOT

[i] See http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/171323.aspx