

MOBILITY 4 ALL PLAN

Connecting Communities Empowering Lives



M4A Preliminary Fall Engagement Summary

Mobility 4 All Plan

Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan

November 2024

rtta
Get On Board

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If you need help accessing or understanding any of the information in this technical memorandum, please contact us at info@rtamichigan.org.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CHSTP	Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan
DDOT	Detroit Department of Transportation
M4A	Mobility 4 All
RTA	Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan
SMART	Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation

1. Mobility 4 All (M4A) Engagement Overview

Mobility 4 All (M4A) is the name chosen this year by the RTA for the region's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP). The purpose of M4A is to find transit solutions for people in Oakland, Macomb, Wayne and Washtenaw counties with a particular focus on assisting those with disabilities, older adults and individuals with limited incomes.

The aim of M4A community engagement is to ensure that these stakeholders have opportunities to share their mobility-related experiences, and to help formulate solutions that address their needs. In total there will be two rounds of community engagement to support the development of the 2024 CHSTP. Round 1 engagement began in August 2024 and concluded in December. Round 2 engagement is expected to begin in early spring 2025, once a draft of the CHSTP is completed. At that time the RTA will call upon stakeholders to review and comment on the document before it is finalized later that year.

The primary outreach tool for Round 1 engagement is a community questionnaire that asks both transit service users and non-users to describe their transportation/transit experiences and aspirations. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix E1.1. Details on questionnaire goals, methodology and findings follow.

Information in this memorandum represents a snapshot of efforts through November 4, 2024.

2. M4A Rider Questionnaire

2.1 Questionnaire Goals

The RTA's Mobility 4 All rider questionnaire sought to find out how well the southeast Michigan transit system is serving residents, especially older adults, people with disabilities, and older and disabled adults with low incomes, and to gauge whether the network's effectiveness varies for different groups.

2.2 Questionnaire Methodology

Beginning in September, the questionnaire went live on the RTA website, on the [Mobility 4 All Plan](#) page. Members of the public outreach team distributed paper copies of the questionnaire as well as postcards with a QR code that linked to the questionnaire at 13 different events that mainly reached older and disabled residents. Through the 60-day duration of the questionnaire, the team received 522 responses out of 500 targeted submissions.

See Appendix E1.3 for details on where we engaged the public for this effort.

2.3 Broad-Brush Findings

Of the 522 respondents, 39% self-identified as having a disability, 62% reported as age 65 or older, and 61% had household incomes under \$75,000. Our survey reached a diverse population of respondents: Among those reporting their race or ethnicity, 46% were white, 34% were Black, 5% Hispanic/Latino; 3% Asian, 0.9% Middle Eastern, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native.

How do you identify your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)

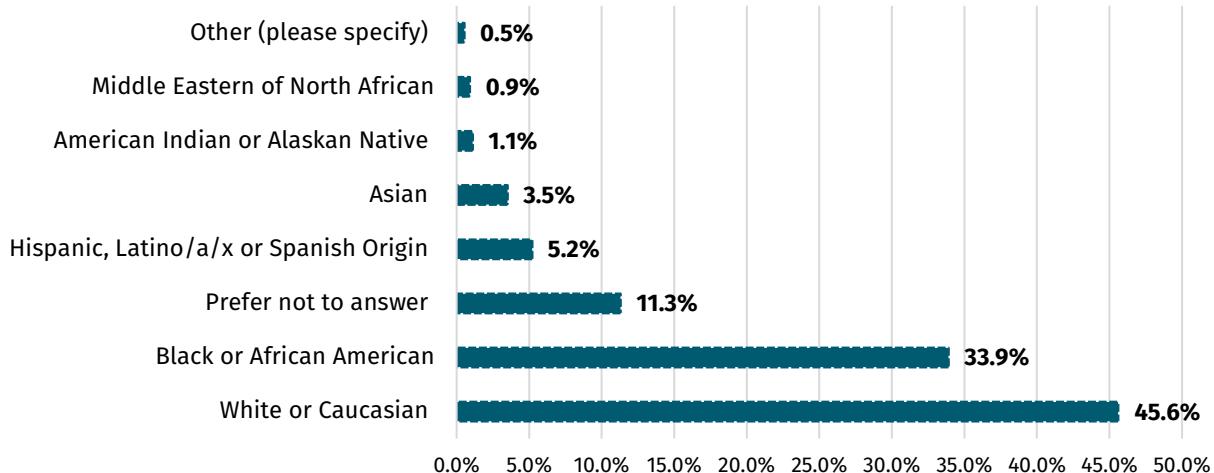


Figure 1. Respondent Results for Question 9 on Ethnicity Identification

Source: M4A Questionnaire

As part of the M4A Existing Conditions analysis, demographic information from the 2020 Decennial Census was collected from the RTA service area of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. The RTA service area population is approximately 5% Hispanic or Latino, 61% white alone, 23% black or African American alone, 6% Asian alone, 0.4% some other race alone, and 4% two or more races. Combined, the American Indian and Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander populations represent less than 1% of the service area population. To date, the questionnaire respondent population does mirror that of the overall service area.

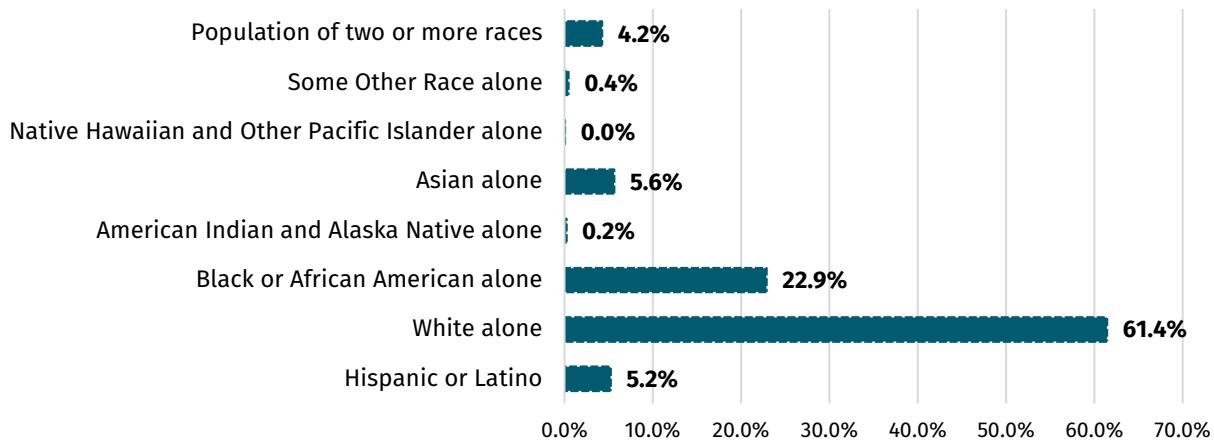


Figure 2. RTA Region Demographics

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.

Preliminary findings of the questionnaire are summarized into the following findings:

- **How respondents travel in southeast Michigan:** In the Motor City, and likewise throughout the region, the car is a majority mode, as this questionnaire affirms, with 61% saying they drive themselves. Smaller proportions cited other transportation options: 30% said they used fixed-route bus or rail services offered by TheRide, SMART, DDOT, the Detroit People Mover or RTA, like QLINE, 30% answered “walking, biking or rolling,” and smaller percentages cited private services like Uber or Lyft, specialized services like the SMART Connector, ADA paratransit, or simply family and friends.

What ways do you travel in Southeast Michigan? (Select all that apply)

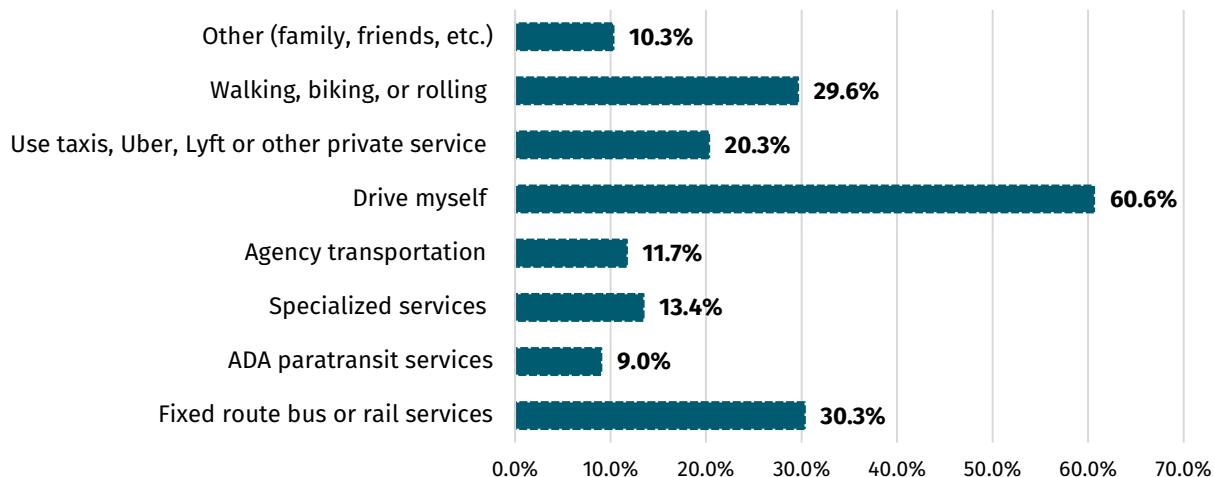


Figure 3. Respondent Results for Question 2 on Travel Method

Source: M4A Questionnaire

- **Which destinations cause the most difficulty:** Among the 459 (87%) who answered a question about which destinations cause them the most trouble, the largest percentage, 30%, named doctor or medical appointments, and next came shopping or personal errands at 26%. Twenty-two percent (22%) reported difficulty visiting friends or family, 18% had trouble getting to physical therapy or exercise class, and smaller percentages named school, classes, and work. Encouragingly, 44% said they don't have any trouble making trips, perhaps because they're among the majority that simply drive themselves.

Do you have trouble getting to certain places or making trips? If yes, which types are difficult to make? (Select all that apply)

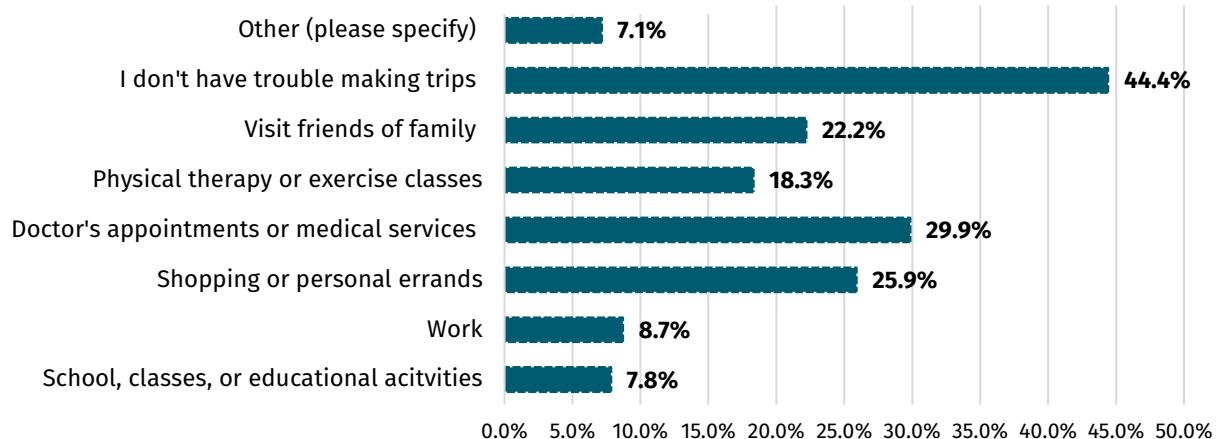


Figure 4. Respondent Results for Question 4 on Difficult Destinations

Source: M4A Questionnaire

- **What makes traveling difficult:** Among the 428 (82%) who responded, answers showed that common travel headaches came from many directions. Cost was cited by 35%; figuring out what services are available was cited by 29%; finding rides on weekends and evenings was cited by 26%; scheduling trips in advance was cited by 24%; calling and scheduling a ride was cited by 23%; and smaller percentages had trouble knowing where to wait for a ride and when the ride is arriving or leaving, getting to bus stops; transferring between services and getting on/off the ride.

What makes traveling difficult? (Select all that apply)

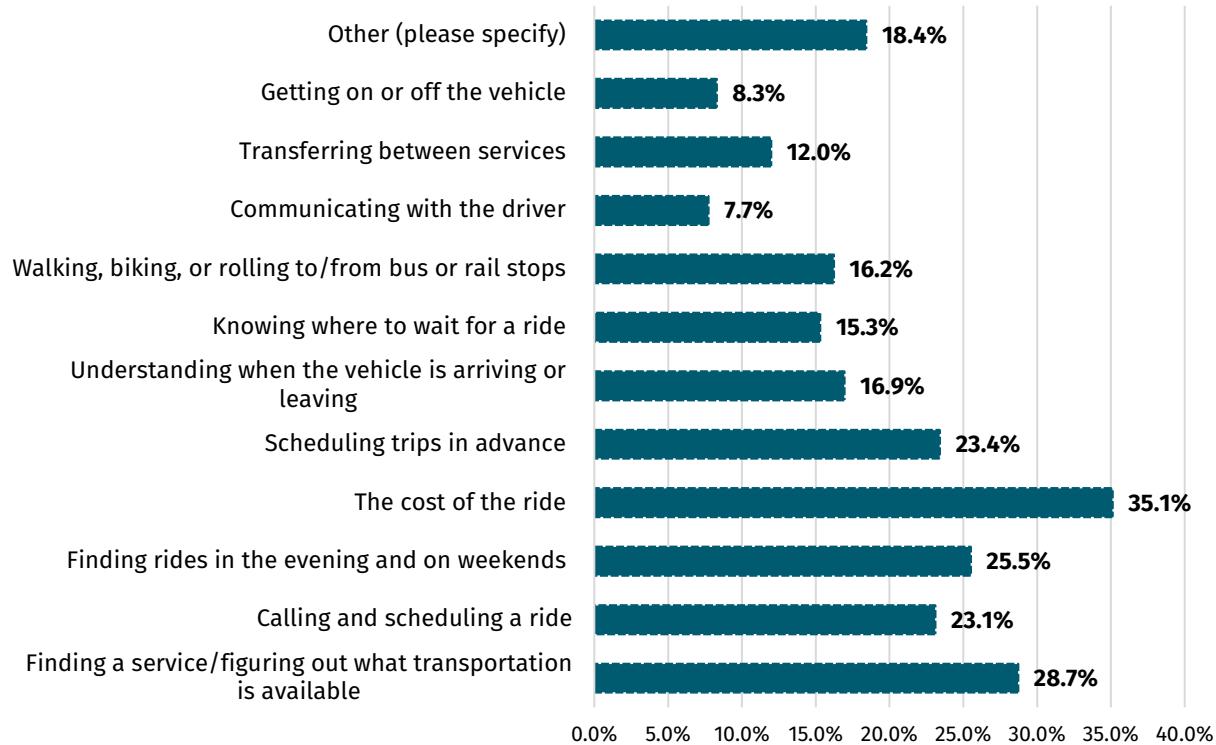


Figure 5. Respondent Results for Question 5 on Travel Difficulties

Source: M4A Questionnaire

- **Technology use:** A large majority, 72%, said they use a personal computer or mobile device to purchase goods and services. That's up significantly from the roughly half who reported computer or mobile device usage in the 2020 OnHand survey.

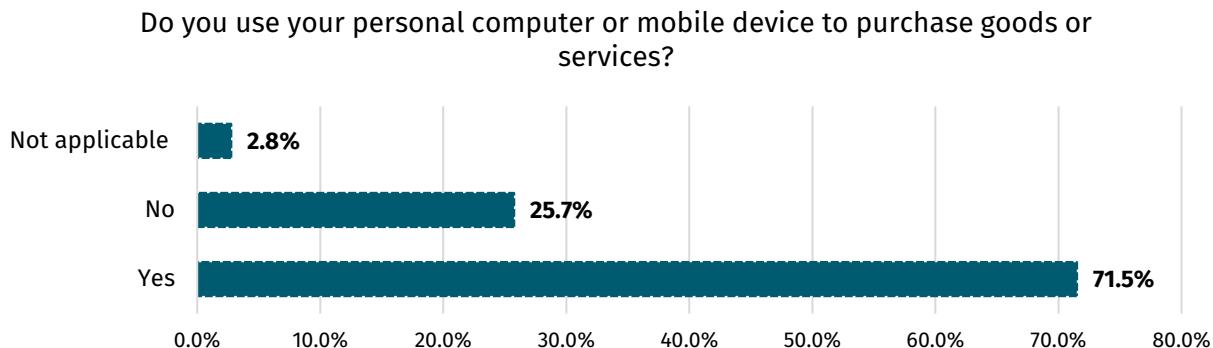


Figure 6. Respondent Results for Question 6 on Technology Availability

Source: M4A Questionnaire

2.4 Word of Mouth

As we staffed large events serving area seniors and the disabled in Detroit, Downriver, Macomb County and elsewhere, residents were more than happy to share their transit woes. Especially among seniors, even those who still happily drive themselves, they recognize a time may come when public transit options will become more crucial to their well-being. Many said they were either unaware of what service options there were or how to access them. At many events we attended, representatives from MyRide2 were also present and we sent them their way. Among people who used the transit services, there is still concern about their inability to make cross-county or regional connections, especially visits to various medical centers around the region.

2.5 Written Input

Questionnaire respondents were asked to share comments or input about their transportation needs or experience. A sampling of those comments are provided below:

- *I would like there to be a transit service between Livingston County and Ann Arbor, and/or Livingston County and Detroit. I would use the D2A2 Bus far more often if it had a stop closer to Wayne State University. I would prefer that the different modes of transit shared a hub (e.g., Greyhound, Amtrak, busses,). I have had excellent customer service with the D2A2 Bus.*
- *I represent a group home and many clients have issues with transportation*
- *Need shuttles to Downtown Detroit to see sports events*
- *Trainer with me to get places*
- *ADA connector has been late or never arrived. Been left at dialysis due to time and no bus. Trips canceled.*
- *We need mass transit to DTW*
- *I drive but would love to take the fixed route bus if it had better frequency and more routes. I am a senior who would use 'senior' transit if it operated nights/weekends and has some day scheduling or real time.*
- *Would like to have convenient bus or van transportation connecting Dexter/Chelsea to Ann Arbor-University Hospital.*
- *We need seamless public transit throughout SE Michigan. One card, one payment. Much greater connectivity. Attractive transit centers preferably multi modal. Keep moving in these directions.*
- *SMART works well for bus needs*
- *I am the only driver for my 19-year-old son, mom and aunt. I take them to all of their appointments. I don't know how to get transportation for them.*

- *I'm on SSI and walk with a cane. I need reliable transportation especially morning appointments. I can't afford Uber or a cab.*

3. Lessons Learned

The data collected to date indicates that stakeholders want and need more transit flexibility and options. This mirrors what we learned in 2020. With respect to flexibility, questionnaire respondents and those we engaged in person at events wished for more service availability on weekends and evening hours. Stakeholders also desired access to more locations and to have more and better regional connections. The key difference between current and 2020 findings was an increase in technology use as described earlier. A more thorough evaluation of lessons learned emerged as we continued to parse this, and other data assembled by the project team.

4. A Roadmap for Round 2 Engagement

With respect to lessons learned about the engagement process, in short, more and wider engagement would be ideal. For example, Round 1 engagement was conducted for just over two months in 2024. Given the size of the region and the scope of the project, more time (and resources) would allow for greater reach. Having more time for Round 2 in the spring -- maybe 3 to 4 months -- could address this to some degree. (Though it is recognized that given the length of the project overall and the time needed by other team members to complete their work, this may be impractical.) One approach may be to include more virtual options for engagement and promote them widely, especially among known service users. Another option worth exploring is whether a second questionnaire, this one built around collecting input on the draft recommendations, would be of value. If that tool was chosen, working with the transit agencies to market it directly to their riders as early as possible will be essential. Finally, many of those who participated in fall engagement were seniors. Their voices are important. We also need to hear increasingly from younger people who already use or need to use these services. Strategies for improving engagement going forward were more fully developed as we began to explore strategies and opportunities for Round 2 engagement in spring 2025.



Appendix E1.1 – M4A Questionnaire

The following copy of the M4A questionnaire was made available online, via Survey Monkey, and as a paper copy during the Fall Engagement period. The online version additionally offered translated versions of the questionnaire in Spanish and Arabic.

Thank you for taking our questionnaire!

The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) is working to improve transit options for residents, especially older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes.

Your input can make a difference! We are looking for information about how you travel, what services you use and your experiences using them. Any information provided will not be shared outside of the RTA project team.

Prefer to take this questionnaire online? Scan the QR code to the right or use the following link:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTASEMI



If you need help filling out the questionnaire, please call 313-261-5059 or email info@rtamichigan.org

1. What ways do you travel in Southeast Michigan? (Select all that apply)

- Fixed route bus or rail services offered by TheRide, SMART, DDOT, the Detroit People Mover or QLINE
- ADA paratransit services
- Specialized services (e.g., SMART Connector Service, SMART Community Partnership Program, or TheRide Gold Service, etc.)
- Agency transportation (e.g., People's Express, NOTA, WOTA, OPC, or another agency)
- Drive myself
- Use taxis, Uber, Lyft or other private service
- Walking, biking, or rolling
- Other (family, friends, etc.) _____

2. About how many trips do you take per week (on all services used, including driving yourself)?

- Less than 5
- More than 5 and up to 10
- More than 10

3. Do you have trouble getting to certain places or making trips? If yes, which trips are difficult to make? (Select all that apply)

- School, classes, or educational activities
- Work
- Shopping or personal errands
- Doctor's appointments or medical services
- Physical therapy or exercises classes
- Visit friends or family
- Other: _____
- I don't have trouble making trips

4. What makes traveling difficult? (Select all that apply)

- Finding a service/figuring out what transportation is available
- Calling and scheduling a ride
- Finding rides in the evening and on weekends
- The cost of the ride
- Scheduling trips in advance
- Understanding when the vehicle is arriving or leaving
- Knowing where to wait for a ride
- Walking, biking, or rolling to/from bus or rail stops
- Communicating with the driver
- Transferring between services
- Getting on or off the vehicle
- Other (please specify) _____

5. Do you use your personal computer or mobile device to purchase goods or services?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

6. What is your age?

- 34 or younger
- 50-64 years old
- 80 years or older
- 35-49 years old
- 65-79 years old

7. Do you identify as having a disability or impairment?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

8. How do you identify your ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish Origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

9. What is your household's annual income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

10. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Third Gender
- Prefer not to answer

11. What is your home zip code?**12. Please share any other comments or input on your transportation needs or experience here:**

**Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire!
Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.**

Questions about RTA? Contact Us

(313) 402-1020



info@rtamichigan.org

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Appendix E1.2 – M4A Public Engagement Materials

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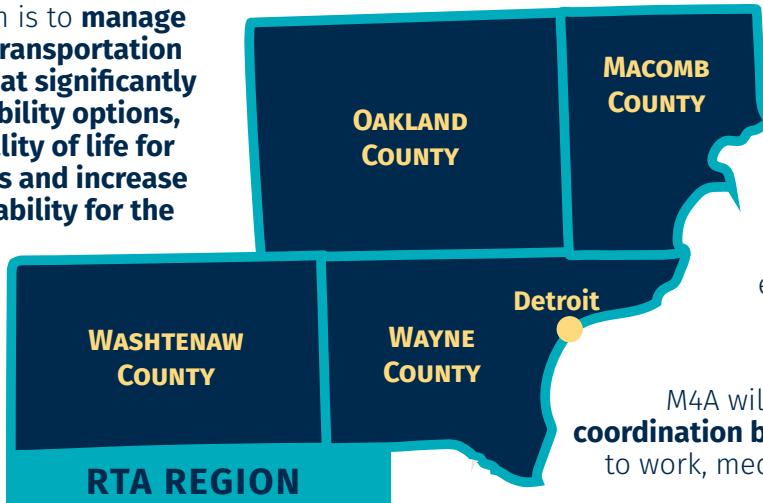
WHO IS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN (RTA)?

RTA plans, funds, coordinates, and accelerates regional transit services, projects, and programs in Southeast Michigan.

RTA is responsible for:

- » leading **regional transit planning**;
- » developing and implementing **new and improved services**;
- » **allocating federal and state funding** to transit service operators;
- » and **securing new regional funding sources** for public transit.

RTA's mission is to **manage and secure transportation resources that significantly enhance mobility options, improve quality of life for the residents and increase economic viability for the region**.



WHAT IS MOBILITY 4 ALL?

Mobility 4 All Program (M4A) is a regional effort to understand how well existing transportation services in Southeast Michigan match the needs of residents, especially older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

M4A will look for opportunities to **increase coordination between services** so people can get to work, medical appointments, and other daily activities.

M4A will **develop a regional strategy** to improve coordination and reliability, and ultimately strengthen regional mobility.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please fill out our questionnaire. We are looking for information about how you travel, what services you use, and your experiences using them.

Thank you for helping us!



If you need help filling out the questionnaire, please call **313-261-5059** or email info@rtamichigan.org

M4A OBJECTIVES

Evaluate transportation needs for residents of Southeast Michigan, especially older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Investigate travel patterns to understand how people move and use transportation services in the region.

Inventory transportation providers to document existing services and to strengthen coordination and collaboration between providers.

Seek feedback and comments from members of the community: riders, potential riders, advocacy groups, and more.

Review and update strategies to improve transportation for vulnerable populations.



M4A OUTCOMES

Refresh the 2020 Plan to prioritize actionable steps for accessible human services and public transportation.

Continue to meet federal and state requirements for the entire region of Southeast Michigan.

Explore and coordinate investments and innovative transit solutions to meet people's mobility needs in the region, while aligning with other ongoing regional transportation initiatives.

Priorities and projects identified in the M4A Plan would be eligible for discretionary federal funding under the **Section 5310 Program**, a U.S. Department of Transportation program that is designed to enhance mobility for older adults and persons with disabilities. M4A will ensure the region has access to these critical federal funds.





The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) is developing its strategies to strengthen regional mobility.

Do you live in the RTA region?
Help us understand how to better meet your transportation needs!

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

We want to hear from you!

Please fill out our questionnaire. We are looking for information about how you travel, what services you use, and your experiences using them.

Scan the **QR code** to the right or use the following link:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTASEMI

If you need help filling out the questionnaire, please call **313-261-5059** or email info@rtamichigan.org!



Transit solutions for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes

..... What is M4A and why is it important?

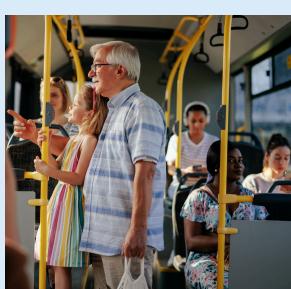
The Mobility 4 All (M4A) Program supports equitable transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities and individuals with lower incomes.

M4A will provide innovative strategies to solve transportation issues, so you can get to work, medical appointments, and other daily activities.

M4A will help RTA better understand how well existing transportation services in Southeast Michigan are meeting your needs.

M4A will develop a regional strategy to:

- » Improve coordination among service providers
- » Reduce duplicative services
- » Strengthen regional mobility



Priorities and projects identified through M4A could be eligible for federal funding to support transportation in the four-county region of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne, including Detroit. M4A will ensure the region has access to critical federal funds.



(313) 261-5059



rtamichigan.org

Transit solutions for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes

Who is RTA? How does RTA help me?

RTA is the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan.

CORE FUNCTIONS



PLAN



FUND



COORDINATE



ACCELERATE

⋮

A region with sufficient and stable funding to support improved public transit options that will advance equity by increasing accessibility; satisfy the integrated mobility needs of Southeast Michigan communities; and promote livable, healthy and sustainable growth.

VISION

MISSION

To manage and secure transportation resources that:

- »»» Enhance mobility options Improve quality of life for
- »»» residents Increase economic viability for the region
- »»»

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Regional

Innovative

Equitable

Coordinated

Sustainable

Equitable

Transit solutions for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes

..... **We want to hear from you!**



Do you live in the RTA region? Help us understand how to better meet your transportation needs!

Your input matters!

:

A key component of M4A is learning from people in the four-county region of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne, including the city of Detroit. How do you travel? What services do you use? What is your experience using them?

:

Please fill out our questionnaire.

Scan the QR code using your smartphone or use the link below:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTASEMI

Need help filling out the questionnaire?

Please call 313-261-5059 or email
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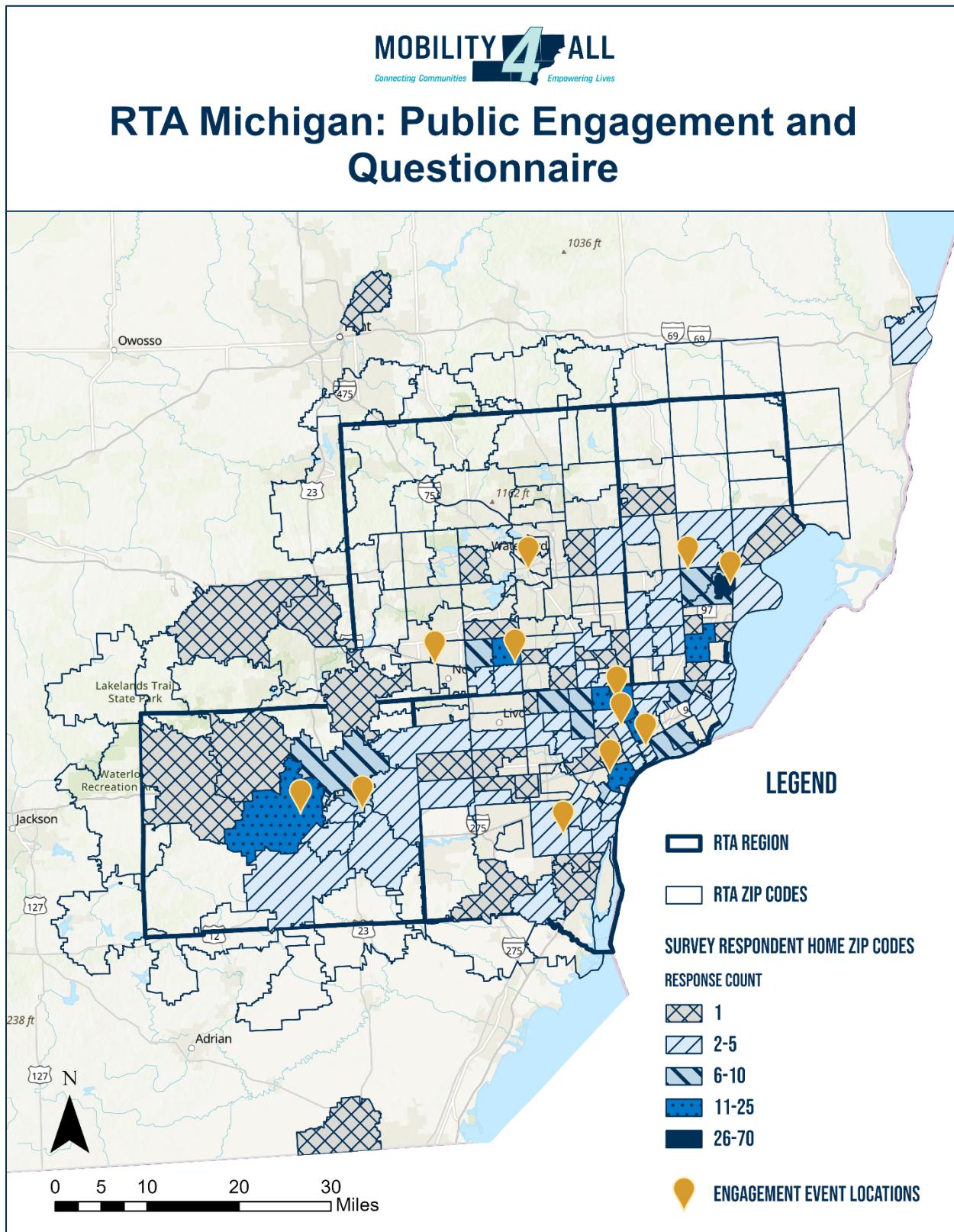


rtamichigan.org/mobility4all

Appendix E1.3 – M4A Public Engagement Events

Where We Performed M4A Public Engagement		
Location	Dates & Details	Level of Engagement
DDOT Local Advisory Committee: Virtual Meeting	Tuesday, August 20, 2024 M4A presentation and discussion with committee members	Approximately 12 participants Pre-questionnaire event
Detroit/Wayne County: Strides for Seniors St. Patrick Senior Center 58 Parsons St. Detroit, MI 48201	Friday, September 13, 2024 Detroit event for seniors	Approximately 200 people 54 questionnaires completed
Macomb County: Senior Fun Fest Lorenzo Cultural Center 44575 Garfield Rd Clinton Township, MI 48038	Thursday, September 19, 2024 Countywide event for seniors	Over 800 people attended 48 questionnaires completed
Detroit/Wayne County: Strides for Seniors Patton Recreation Center 2301 Woodmere St. Detroit, MI 48209	Friday, September 20, 2024 Detroit events for seniors	Approximately 90 23 questionnaires completed
Detroit/Wayne/Oakland Counties: Strides for Seniors Palmer Park 910 Merrill Plaisance St. Detroit, MI 48203	Friday, September 27, 2024 Regional event for seniors	Over 800 attended 138 questionnaires completed
Oakland County: Total Wellness Fair Costick Center 28600 11 Mile Rd. Farmington Hills, MI 48336	Tuesday, October 1, 2024 Local event for seniors	Approximately 120 attended 21 questionnaires completed
Oakland County: Family Caregiver connections: Learn, Lunch, Link Suburban Collection Showplace 46100 Grand River Ave. Novi, MI 48374	Saturday, October 5, 2024 Regional event for seniors	Approximately 250 attended 22 questionnaires completed
Washtenaw County: Senior Living Week Expo Washtenaw Community College Morris Lawrence Building 4800 E. Huron River Dr. Ann Arbor, MI 48105	Saturday, October 5, 2024 Countywide event for seniors	Approximately 250 attended 49 questionnaires completed

Where We Performed M4A Public Engagement		
Washtenaw County: Transition Services Workshops Washtenaw Intermediate School District 1819 S. Wagner Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Tuesday, October 22, 2024 Parents of students with disabilities	TBD
Wayne County: Downriver Transition Council Disability Expo Wayne County Community College Downriver Campus 21000 Northline Rd. Taylor, MI 48180	Friday, October 24, 2024 Downriver area event for people with disabilities	Approximately 50 attended 13 questionnaires completed
Macomb County: Mount Clemens Farmer's Market 141 North River Rd. Mt. Clemens, MI 48043	Sunday, October 27, 2024 Local outdoor market with people of varying ages	Hundreds of people attended. 15 questionnaires completed
Detroit: Community Resource Fair Durfee Innovation Society 2470 Collingwood Detroit MI 48206	Wednesday, November 6, 2024 Detroit-based event for people of varying ages, abilities and incomes	TBD
Oakland County: Golden Opportunity Club Meeting Bowens Senior Citizens Center 52 Bagley St. Pontiac, MI 48341	Tuesday, November 12, 2024 Citywide event for seniors	TBD



Appendix E1.4 – Engagement with Freedom Road Transportation Riders

Freedom Road Transportation is a nonprofit organization that provides transportation assistance for adults 18 and older, including individuals with disabilities, seniors (60+), veterans, and people with an annual income of \$22,000 or less. It offers no-cost mileage reimbursement for riders who have their own drivers.

Freedom Road riders – eager to have their voices heard as part of the spring engagement – found the spring survey complex. So, they were given the option to use the questionnaire from the fall M4A effort instead. Questionnaires were mailed out by Freedom Road, and 15 were returned to the RTA. Here's what they showed.

Overall Demographics Summary

- 80% identify as having a disability (12 of 15 respondents)
- 87% are low-income, with household incomes under \$20,000
- Age distribution spans working age to elderly: 35-49 (33%), 50-64 (33%), 65-79 (27%), 80+ (7%)
- Most are regular transit users: 53% take 5-10 trips per week, 27% take fewer than 5, 20% take more than 10

Key Barriers Identified

Respondents face multiple, overlapping challenges accessing transportation:

- **Evening/weekend service gaps** - checked by 60% as a major challenge
- **Cost barriers** - both ride costs and scheduling difficulties noted by majority
- **Communication challenges** - particularly with drivers and dispatch
- **Safety concerns** - especially traveling alone without supervision
- **Complex booking systems** - advance scheduling requirements create barriers

Major Themes from Written Comments

Dependence on Family and Caregivers

The surveys reveal strong reliance on informal support networks. Comments like "My parent drives me almost everywhere" and praise for Freedom Road Transportation's family mileage reimbursement program highlight how essential family support is for this population.

Safety and Supervision Needs

Multiple respondents express fear about traveling alone. One writes: "I don't have the ability to ride the bus without supervision/guidance," while another states, "I am concerned for my safety when I am alone."

Economic Concerns

Financial constraints are top of mind. "Private companies are too expensive for my OCHA budget" captures the impossible math many face. With 87% earning under \$20,000 annually, even small fare increases can eliminate travel options. Gas costs for family drivers are repeatedly mentioned as a burden.

System Complexity as Barrier

One respondent's wish –"It would be very nice if you could just call someone and get a ride without a lot of hassle" – encapsulates the exhaustion of navigating multiple agencies, eligibility requirements, and booking systems. This further emphasizes the need for raising greater awareness of RTA's myride2 one-



call/click mobility management, regional trip planning, and travel training program/partnerships. Another notes the impossibility of same-day or next-day reservations in their area.

The Value of Relationship and Consistency

Many describe transportation in relational terms. "It is difficult to explain the value of relationships for a person with a disability," one writes. Another praises their Freedom Road driver: "Takes all my worries away. Waits at no added cost." These aren't just rides—they're lifelines provided by trusted individuals.