

# Richland County Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan

## Preface

This document sets forth federal requirements, states local goals and objectives, and describes specific public participation procedures to be followed in the development, implementation, and updating of the locally produced Richland County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan; hereafter referred to as the Coordinated Plan.

This Coordinated Plan is intended to provide policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used for public involvement, planning and coordination activities to be conducted by the Richland County Regional Planning Commission, the Agency Transportation Advisory Committee and local partner agencies to provide coordinated public transit and human services transportation to Richland County, Ohio. Ultimately, it is meant to broaden the dialogue and support further collaboration between local and regional human service agencies and transportation providers to link people with the transportation services that they want and can use.

The description of transportation services and the connections and relationships represented in this report are drawn from discussions with transportation and human services staff, stakeholder interviews, meetings with human service case managers, and input from ATAC, as well as public input meetings facilitated by an outside consultant.

### ***RCRPC Background***

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Mansfield Urbanized area is the Coordinating Committee of the Continuing Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Program. The MPO is organized through the Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC), which operates under the provisions of Section 713.21 & 713.23 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The City of Mansfield and Richland County jointly created the RCRPC in 1959 to undertake coordinated, regional planning. The organization carries on today, still true to its original purpose -- most notably the ongoing focus on issues that *affect the development of the Region as a whole*.

As a result of federal rules and regulations, in 1975, the “Coordinating Committee of the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Study” of the Richland County Regional Planning Commission was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the State of Ohio. In 1983 the federal rules and regulations recognized the differences between large and small urban areas, and that planning programs should be tailored to meet areas’ varied needs.

The Richland County Regional Planning Commission’s transportation planning program has continued through the years to be flexible, and has adapted to changing state and federal requirements, policies, and program emphasis areas. The program also has been flexible in its capacity to adapt to local planning needs, and balancing its appreciation of the local issues, with the requirements from the state and federal level. This approach would seem to support the

concept of the MPO planning, in that local decision makers understand the needs and priorities of an area, and can best decide how limited resources can be allocated to meet these needs.

## **Introduction**

Richland County has a growing variety of transportation needs not provided for adequately by the private automobile or the private sector. Seniors, whether living alone, or in a group setting, need access to vital off-site medical care, often as far away as Akron or Cleveland, as well as trips to shopping and recreation. Unemployed workers without cars need transportation to training and workplaces. Even the least vulnerable of us can face drastically altered transportation needs if we break a leg, or lose our privilege to drive.

These needs, and the services provided for them, can collectively be called Public Transit and Human Services transportation. A variety of services, of varying availability, scope and reach, are available in Richland County, ranging from the local public transit system, Richland County Transit (RCT), to retirement community vans. RCT's fixed route bus service is an example of public transportation, and retirement community van is an example of the human services transportation, providing for "transportation disadvantaged" populations that include the elderly, disabled, low income and children.

While the need for these services continues to increase, funding resources remain limited. Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), has required transit agencies with fixed route service to extend service to people with disabilities. Increased and/or improved coordination of services is one means of potentially increasing the services provided while using the same quantity of resources.

This plan surveys, qualitatively and quantitatively, existing needs, and services, culminating in a list of projects which may be eligible for federal funding.

### ***Need for Plan***

A more fully coordinated transportation system may efficiently provide comprehensive and user-friendly public and private transportation services. Transportation programs may share resources, facilities, and information; and coordinate trip reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and passenger trips.

Currently, many social service programs that serve the elderly, children, low-income, and people with disabilities either operate independent transportation programs, or have no transportation at all. The result is either 1) duplication in transportation services; or 2) people with unmet transportation needs.

# 1. State and Federal Requirements for Coordination

The need for a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan derives from the 2005 Federal Transportation bill, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (**SAFETEA-LU**) requirement. The requirement within SAFETEA-LU comes from earlier, evolving Federal efforts to tackle coordination of multiple sources of transportation funding sources. These recent federal initiatives, including United We Ride, focus on measures to combine and make better use of these public resources.

Development of this Coordinated Plan is required to allow any entities in this area to apply and be eligible for three types of funding: 5310 (Elderly & Disabled), 5316 JARC (Jobs Access and Reverse Commute) and the new 5317 “New Freedom” (Employment Access for disabled, above and beyond ADA). Currently, Richland County receives only 5310 funding. SAFETEA-LU requires that projects suitable for these funding programs must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation services, human services providers and the general public.

The plan will identify the needs of persons who are disabled, elderly and otherwise transportation disadvantaged, outline strategies for meeting needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

Elements required of the Plan include, but are not limited to:

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit) This has occurred using surveys and meetings.
2. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, people with low incomes, and anyone else that is transportation disadvantaged.
3. Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
4. Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

## ***History of transit and coordination in Richland County.***

The current publicly funded, privately operated Richland County Transit (RCT) dates back to 1977. Substantial capitol investment was made in the mid 1990’s with the construction of a bus garage and downtown transit center.

Transportation coordination here in Mansfield/Richland County comes under the auspices of the Agency Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), a committee of the Richland County Regional Planning Commission, made up of representatives of government entities, private and public social service agencies that are currently providing some form of transportation to disabled, elderly or otherwise disadvantaged individuals, and public and private transportation providers. The goal of the committee is to coordinate existing routes and vehicles to bring

efficiency to the roster of transportation services that are available in Richland County. The ATAC transportation broker's office was formed to meet this goal.

Richland County has several decades of transportation coordination history. Before there was any strong incentive to coordinate, such as the Federal Transit Administration's United We Ride coordination initiative, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the 1970s and 1980s encouraged coordination among the various human service transportation providers in the urbanized area. Participation in its human services transportation committee became a requirement in order to procure funding through the 5310 program. When, in 1996, ODOT announced the Ohio Coordination Program (OCP) to support coordinated transportation in Ohio's counties, the Richland County Transit Board applied for and received funding to coordinate the county's transportation services. Richland County was one of seven projects to be funded the first year. ATAC uses the OCP funding to support a transportation brokerage of private, public and human service transportation providers in Richland County.

ATAC specifically monitors transportation services that are available within the county for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The committee provides input regarding the availability and effectiveness of these services within the community, and regarding the need for additional transportation services for this target population.

One of the functions of ATAC is the review of usage of vehicles that have been procured through the 5310 program, and the selection of an agency, or agencies, to submit grants to the Ohio Department of Transportation for the 5310 program. This plan functions as the logical extension of planning for this program.

## **2. Assessment of Transportation Needs**

### ***Plan Development & Public Involvement***

Initial Outreach for development of the plan began with an October 12, 2006, Transportation Summit held at the Mansfield Richland County Public Library. This was the first public outreach and involvement event for the plan. A follow-up meeting was held on December 05, 2006.

Forty-three (43) people, representing twenty-seven (27) agencies or roles, attended the October 12 meeting. Sixteen (16) people representing eight (8) agencies attended the December 5 meeting. A list of invitees and attendees for both is included in Appendix A .

Thirty (30) surveys of major stakeholders were conducted. Small focus group meetings were held, allowing interactive discussion.

Summaries of the various ideas of transportation needs and/or desires that were expressed through these public outreach activities are listed below.

## 1) First Summit

October 12, 2006

***Mansfield/Richland County Public Library***

43 W Third Street, Mansfield, Ohio

At the first meeting, ideas for improving the quality, quantity and coordination of human services transportation were solicited and then grouped and prioritized. Priority needs and activities coalesced around four main topics: Last minute trips, Out of county trips, Expanded service hours, and agency eligibility, funding and vehicle sharing.

### **HIGH PRIORITY NEEDS**

#### *Last Minute Trips*

- Technology (“Real-Time” vehicle info w/GPS)- Simple, Affordable dispatch/routing software to be utilized in common by agencies or Transportation “Czar”
- Educating medical professionals of RCT procedures and other last minute transportation opportunities
- Sharing trip needs with agencies
- List of Agency and contact person that provide transportation services

#### *Out of County Trips*

- Identify Users (type and actual)/Most frequent Destinations (hospitals)
- Identify Providers (eg Greyhound, Veteran’s Administration)
- Regional Inter-County Coordination with neighboring counties
- State-wide coordination- Intra-State travel beyond adjacent counties-

#### *Expanded Service Hours*

- Coordinating existing Transportation Services
- Shared technology
- Work routes-Educate the Public
- Public Awareness-Marketing
- Increase Ridership >>> Increase Revenue >>Increase Services ?? (But can increase in fare box revenue secure more service-NO).

#### *Sharing- funding/dedicated tax; vehicles; eligibility process*

- Change Regulation on Vehicle Restrictions (5% “Other”)
- Enact 0.25% Sales Tax... [for Transit and HST]
- Match “Issue/Concern/Need” with Federal Funding
- Agency Funding
- Umbrella Transportation system/[agency?] to handle ALL transport needs in county

## 2) Second Summit

December 5, 2006

### ***Richland County Regional Planning Commission***

35 N Park Street, Mansfield, Ohio

A second summit was held on December 05, 2006, as a follow-up to the summit held in October. Discussion focused on refining service needs and gaps identified at the earlier meeting. Combination or partnering of services from several providers to serve outlying towns and rural areas was deemed a potential source of future coordination projects.

#### Specific Discussion:

- Agency funding
- Demographic shifts
- Service chasing after population: expanding land use instead of refocusing development in existing built-up areas.

## 3) Agency Survey

A ten page survey was conducted in person with human service agency representatives to develop the baseline transportation services, gaps and needs inventory. Results are compiled later in this plan document.

## 4) Focus Group Meetings with Consultant

In conjunction with a separate study being conducted by the Richland County Transit Board, RCRPC staff held three advertised focus group meetings at varying times and settings in the community, on May 21 and 22, 2007. Because of the much smaller number of attendees, each person had greater opportunity to make their needs heard, and discussed with several transportation professionals representing local agencies.

May 21, 2007

### ***Richland County Department of Job and Family Services***

171 Park Avenue, Mansfield

This meeting was attended by a representative from the City of Mansfield and RCTB member, representatives from the Department of Job and Family Services, a representative from the Ohio Rehabilitation Services, and two members of the general public. The following transportation service improvements were discussed:

- ◆ Weekend RCT service should be restored.
- ◆ Bus destinations that should have service improvements include the Madison Training Center, OSU in the summers, Dollar Store, and the Sherman Elementary School.
- ◆ RCT farebox technology should be upgraded to better track agency client trips.
- ◆ The Springmill and the Bowman route should be combined and run every 30 minutes.
- ◆ Wheelchair boardings take too much time and should be faster.
- ◆ RCT marketing should be improved.

- ◆ The Medical Wellness Center on South Trimble Road should have consistent 60 minute frequencies.
- ◆ Transportation to work in the evenings and weekends needs to be provided.
- ◆ Ohio Rehabilitation Services' Project Search had limited student participation because of a lack of transportation.
- ◆ A travel assistance help line should be provided.
- ◆ Resume hourly service on all routes.
- ◆ Increase capacity on Dial-A-Ride.
- ◆ Improved reliability of taxi/RCT Extra service.

May 21, 2007

***Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center***

445 Bowman Street, Mansfield

Representatives of several human service agencies attended this meeting.

The following comments were made:

- ◆ There are many trips that go outside of the RCT service area that go unmet.
- ◆ Evening bus service is needed.
- ◆ Human service agency staff provides many trips for their client
- ◆ The use of deadhead runs by school buses for public transportation should be investigated.
- ◆ Saturday bus service should be restored.
- ◆ Transportation is needed to Keough Center, which is located near Shelby outside of the current RCT service area.
- ◆ On-demand service is needed for seniors to and from several locations such as Memorial Homes, Dayspring, and the Lexington Senior Center.
- ◆ Church and agency vans should be used for public transportation.
- ◆ Evening and weekend service is needed to nursing homes in Richland County.
- ◆ Improve reliability of RCT Extra service.
- ◆ Saturday transportation service is needed for dialysis.
- ◆ Bus route maps are needed with the schedules.
- ◆ RCT service should be promoted as environmental friendly.

May 22, 2007

***Mansfield-Ontario-Richland County Health Department***

555 Lexington Avenue, Mansfield

Representatives from a number of agencies including Metropolitan Housing, Area Agency on Aging, EMPAC, AIDS Resource Center, and Childrens' Services. Those in attendance made the following comments:

- ◆ Seniors and others need transportation for medical trips including those to out-of-County locations such as the Cleveland Clinic, VA Hospitals, and medical centers in Columbus.
- ◆ Senior housing, such as Mansfield Memorial Homes, need transportation for a variety of purposes.
- ◆ Seniors need transportation for grocery trips and other life sustaining activities.
- ◆ Easy to use service is needed for single moms needing daycare

stops, and then going to work.

- ◆ Many AIDS patients have low incomes and are in need of transportation for medical appointments and other trip purposes.

- ◆ Low-income housing complexes need to be served by public transportation.

- ◆ Transportation is needed for work trips to locations outside of the RCT service area and during evenings and weekends.

- ◆ Job locations without public transportation service include the I-71/U.S. 13 interchange, the airport area, and in Shelby.

- ◆ A wheelchair accessible van is needed for the shared ride taxi service in Shelby.

### 3. Summary of Richland County Demographics

This section presents a basic socio-economic and demographic profile of Richland County and those subgroups most affected by this plan, including persons with disabilities, low income, and elderly.

#### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important to gain an understanding of where the potential users of public transit and human services transportation reside and where their primary destinations are located.

This section includes a description of Richland County's population, demographics and trip generators.



#### POPULATION

Using Census 2000 figures, a plurality of the population in Richland County resides in the City of Mansfield, the largest municipality in the County. Mansfield's 2000 population was 51,692 persons or 38.3 percent of the County's population. The next largest city is Shelby with 9,821 persons or 7.6 percent of the County's total population. The next two largest cities or villages of population concentration are Ontario and Lexington with 5,303 and 4,165 persons, respectively.

According to the 2000 Census, the total population of Richland County in 2000 was 128,852 persons. The population has remained relatively stable since 1980. The 1980 population was 131,205 and the 1990 population was 126,137 persons. This is a loss of 3.9 percent of its population. However, between 1990 and 2000 Richland County population increased 2.2 percent.

The County's population growth is projected to increase slightly over the next two decades. The Office of Strategic Research projects the County's 2030 population at only 132,180, a 2.6 percent increase over the 2000 population. Table 1 illustrates the historic and projected population trends for Richland County through the year 2030.

**TABLE 1**  
**Historic and Projected Population for Richland County**  
**1990-2030**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Mansfield</b>	<b>Shelby</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Lexington</b>
2000 Population	128,852	51,692	9,821	5,303	4,165
2010 Pop.	128,900	NA	NA	NA	NA
2030 Pop.	132,180	NA	NA	NA	NA
Area (sq mile)	500	29.9	5.1	10.9	3.7
Density (pop/sq mile)	260	1650	1920	490	1130

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

***Enumeration Methodology***

Two methodologies using different data sources were used in the development of an estimated count of disabled persons. The process will result in two (2) estimates, or a range, of the disabled population.

***Census-Based Approach***

Direct tabulations of data from 2000 Census Summary File 3 on disability are reported. When available, this total is reported by age cohort. Census-based age breakdowns generally distinguish between working age adults and seniors. Census data, based on the 2000 Decennial Census of Population have been tabulated for the region in Table 2.

As noted previously, Census 2000 data provides an enumeration of a specific type of problem, but due to prospect of multiple disabilities, there is no cumulative number that can be developed from this source. Generally speaking, the category of “outside the home disability” tends to be the single best factor in looking at persons with disabilities who may need public transportation or complementary paratransit services. Based on Table 2, there are a total of 7,375 persons (5.7 percent of the population) in this category in Richland County.

**TABLE 2**  
**Enumeration of the Disabled Population in Richland County, 2000**

<b>Disabled Population</b>		<b>Ages 5-15</b>			
<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Sensory Disability</b>	<b>Physical Disability</b>	<b>Mental Disability</b>	<b>Self-Care Disability</b>
Richland Co.	128,852	197	136	852	137

<b>Ages 16-64</b>					
<b>Sensory Disability</b>	<b>Physical Disability</b>	<b>Mental Disability</b>	<b>Self-Care Disability</b>	<b>Outside Home Disability</b>	<b>Employment Disability</b>
2,020	5,548	3,134	1518	4,073	8,369

Ages 65+				
Sensory Disability	Physical Disability	Mental Disability	Self-Care Disability	Outside Home Disability
2,267	4,617	1,573	1,527	3,302

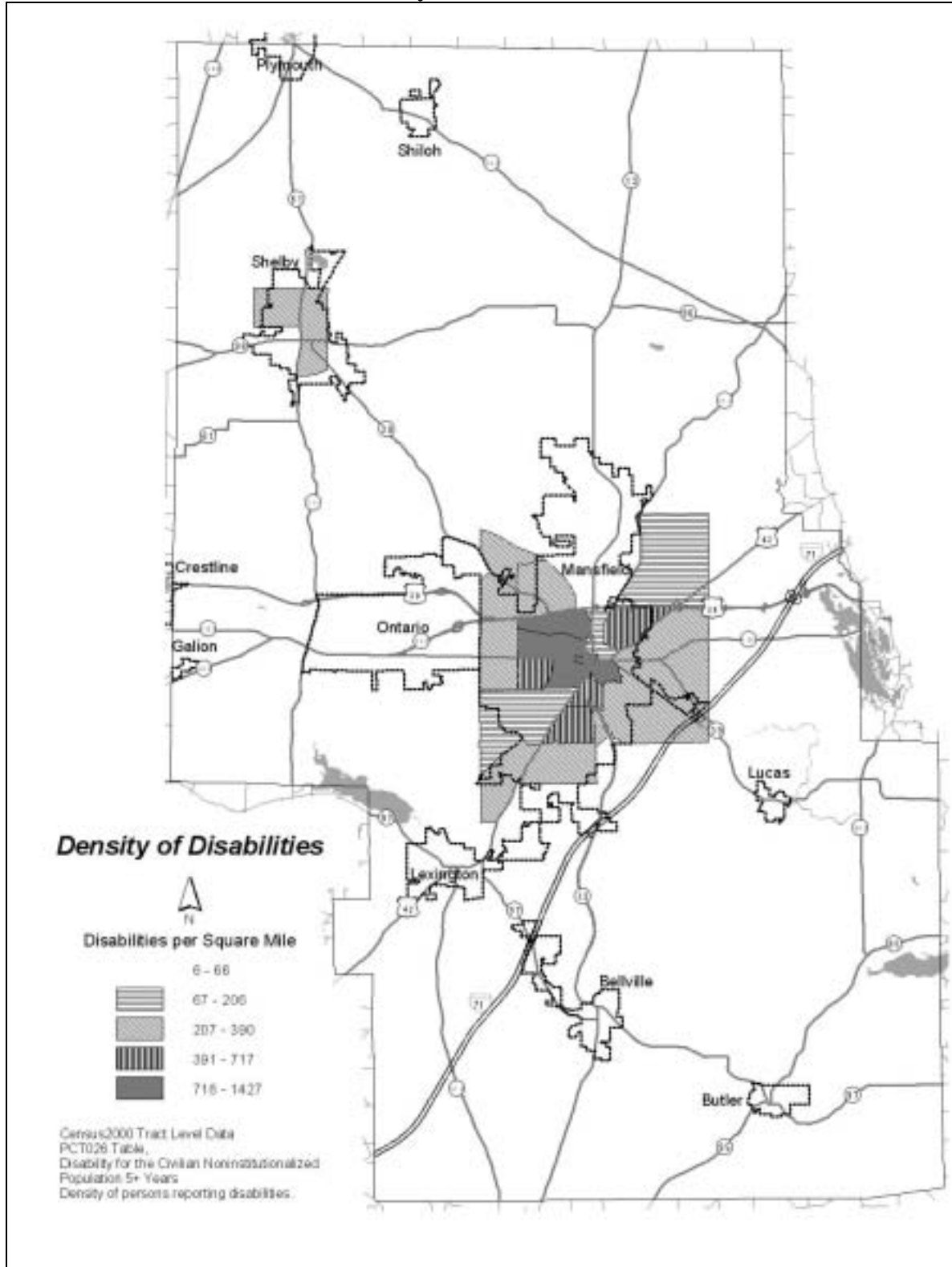
The density of reported disabilities in the County is shown in map form in Map 1. The areas with the highest densities of reported disabilities are located within *Mansfield, Ontario, Shelby and Lexington*.

***Imputed Approach***

Using the indices or incidence rates for specific disabilities derived from the 2002 U. S. Census Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), an imputed estimate of the number of individuals, by age cohort, has been calculated for the County. These estimates are found in Table 3 in Appendix B.

Table 3 also provides a summary of the number of persons with one or more activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living for which assistance was needed. Using the criteria that only one major limitation in activities of daily life is necessary to trigger ADA eligibility for complementary paratransit services and that it is also a strong indicator of transit dependency, *this procedure yields an estimate of 5,868 ADA eligible individuals for Richland County*.

**MAP 1**  
**Density of Disabled Persons**



### ***Projections of the Disabled Population, 2005-2015***

Generally, the overall population is projected and then some assessment of the future incidence rates of various disabilities is used to generate an estimate of the disabled population.

As noted above, population projections (2005-2030) for Richland County were obtained from the Ohio Office of Strategic Research. These projections were available by age cohort (5 year increments) and were used to estimate the number of persons with disabilities for 2005, 2010 and 2015.

Two (2) significant factors dictate this data need. First, Census 2000 data clearly reflect an increasing incidence of disability (all types) by age. Thus, any estimate of the disabled population must take the age characteristics of the population into account. Second, there are significant trends occurring in the United States relating to the aging of the population. It is projected that the number of older adults will be more than double their current numbers.

Further, the Administration on Aging (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) reports that, based on a comprehensive survey of older adults, longevity is increasing and younger seniors are healthier than in all previously measured time in our history. ***Quality of life issues and an individual's desire to live independently will put increasing pressure on existing transit services to provide mobility to this population. This has great significance on the potential need to provide public transit and complementary Paratransit services.***

### ***Methodology***

Using the 2000 SIPP analysis, Table 3, but replacing 2000 numbers first with 2005, 2010 and then with 2015 population projections by age cohort, the number of individuals in the County who are projected to be disabled, defined as an individual with at least one activity of daily living for which assistance is required, is ***expected to grow to 5,921 persons in 2005, 6,064 persons in 2010 and 6,258 persons in 2015 (6.6 percent growth from 2000)***. Tables 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix B provide the estimates of the disabled population for 2005, 2010, and 2015, respectively.

### **ADULTS AGED 65 AND OLDER**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Richland County has a total senior (age 65 and older) population of 18,240 persons or 14.2% of the County's population. This is relatively higher compared to the senior population figure of 13.3% for the State of Ohio and the United States (12.4%). Map 2 illustrates the density of persons aged 65 and older by Census block group for the County. The block groups with the highest density of residents aged 65 and older are in the central and southwestern sections of Mansfield. Areas of high and moderate density of senior citizens are found in northern Mansfield, Shelby, and Lexington. The remainder of the region has relatively low elderly population density. Of note are the population projections by age from the Ohio Office of Strategic Research mentioned previously.

The population aged 65 years and older shows considerable growth between 2000 and 2015. ***The senior population in the County is projected to increase from 18,240 in 2000 to 20,750 (a 13.8 percent increase)***, while the population of Richland County actually declines slightly by 2015, before rebounding.

## **HOUSEHOLDS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL**

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2000 that there were 49,558 total households in Richland County. Of those households, approximately 5,124 households (***10.3 percent***) were living below the Federal poverty level. In the City of Mansfield, 3,044 households (***15.1 percent***) were living below the poverty level. These levels are much higher than the level of households below the poverty level for the State of Ohio (10.6%), ***and much higher than the United States (11.3%). (12.3% in 2006)***

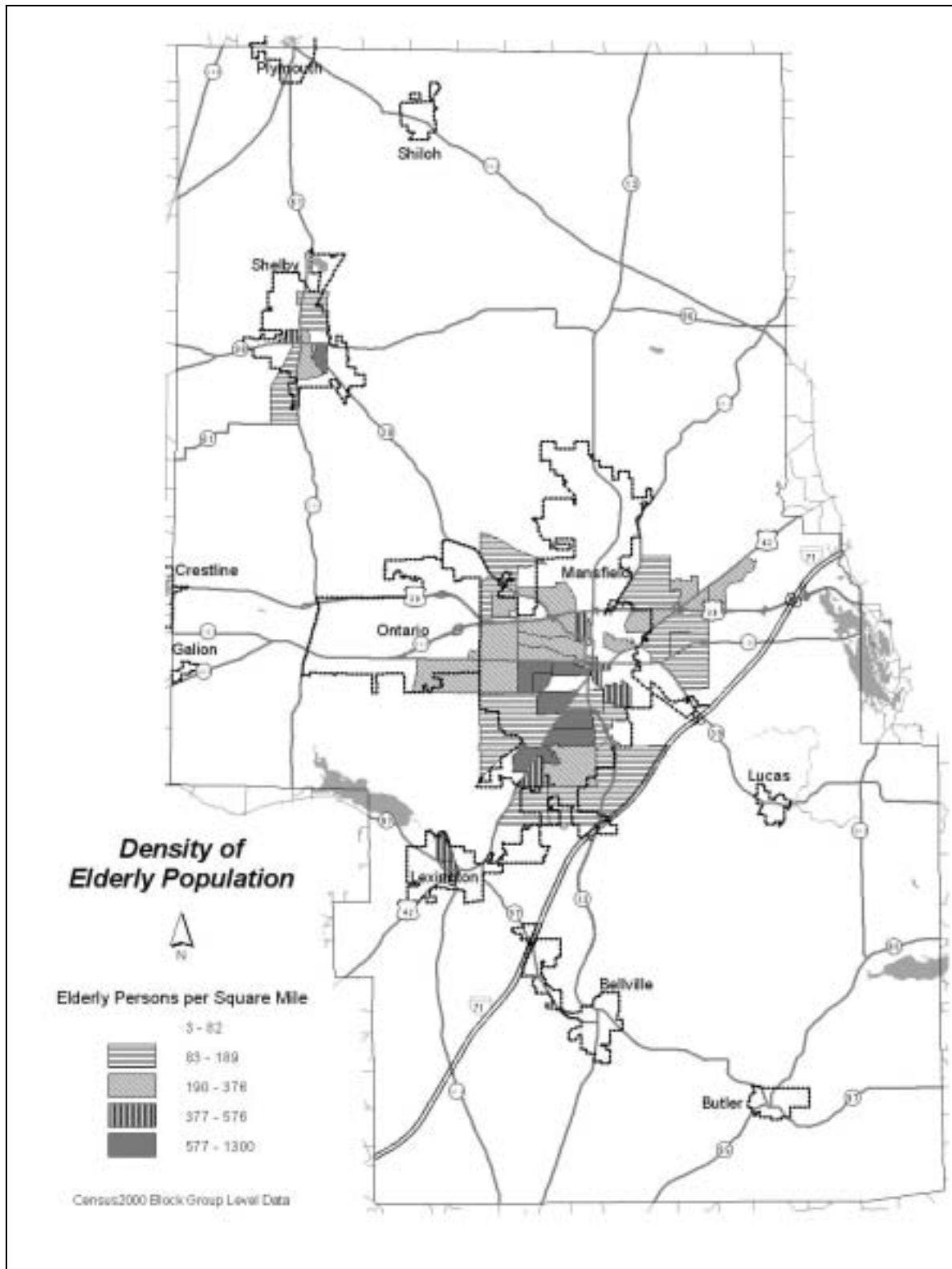
Map 3 illustrates the density of households below the poverty. Areas having a high density (over 525 households per square mile) of households below the poverty level were found in Mansfield and Shelby. Areas of moderate density of households below the poverty level (245 to 542 households per square mile) exist in Mansfield. The remainder of the region had low to very low densities of households below the poverty level.

## **ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS**

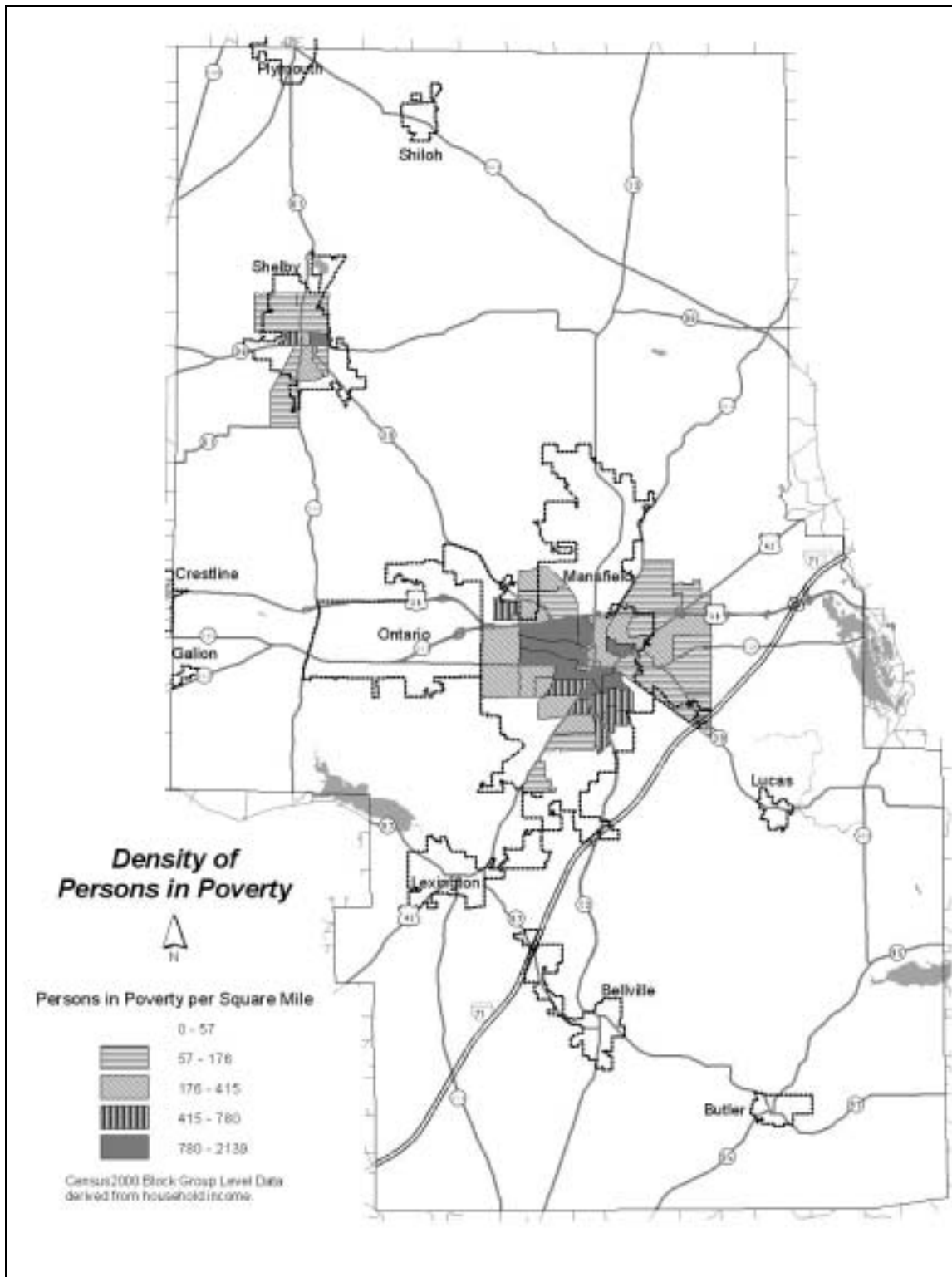
The number of vehicles available to a housing unit can also be used as an indicator of demand for transportation service. There are 3,737 households in Richland County that have no available vehicle. This is 7.5 percent of all the households in the County which is a relatively low percentage compared to the percentage of zero-vehicle households for the State of Ohio (8.6 percent).

Map 4 illustrates the distribution of housing units per square mile that have no available vehicle, according to U.S. Census 2000 data. The block groups with the darkest shading have the highest percentage of housing units with no available vehicles. The block groups with the highest densities of zero-vehicle households are found in Mansfield.

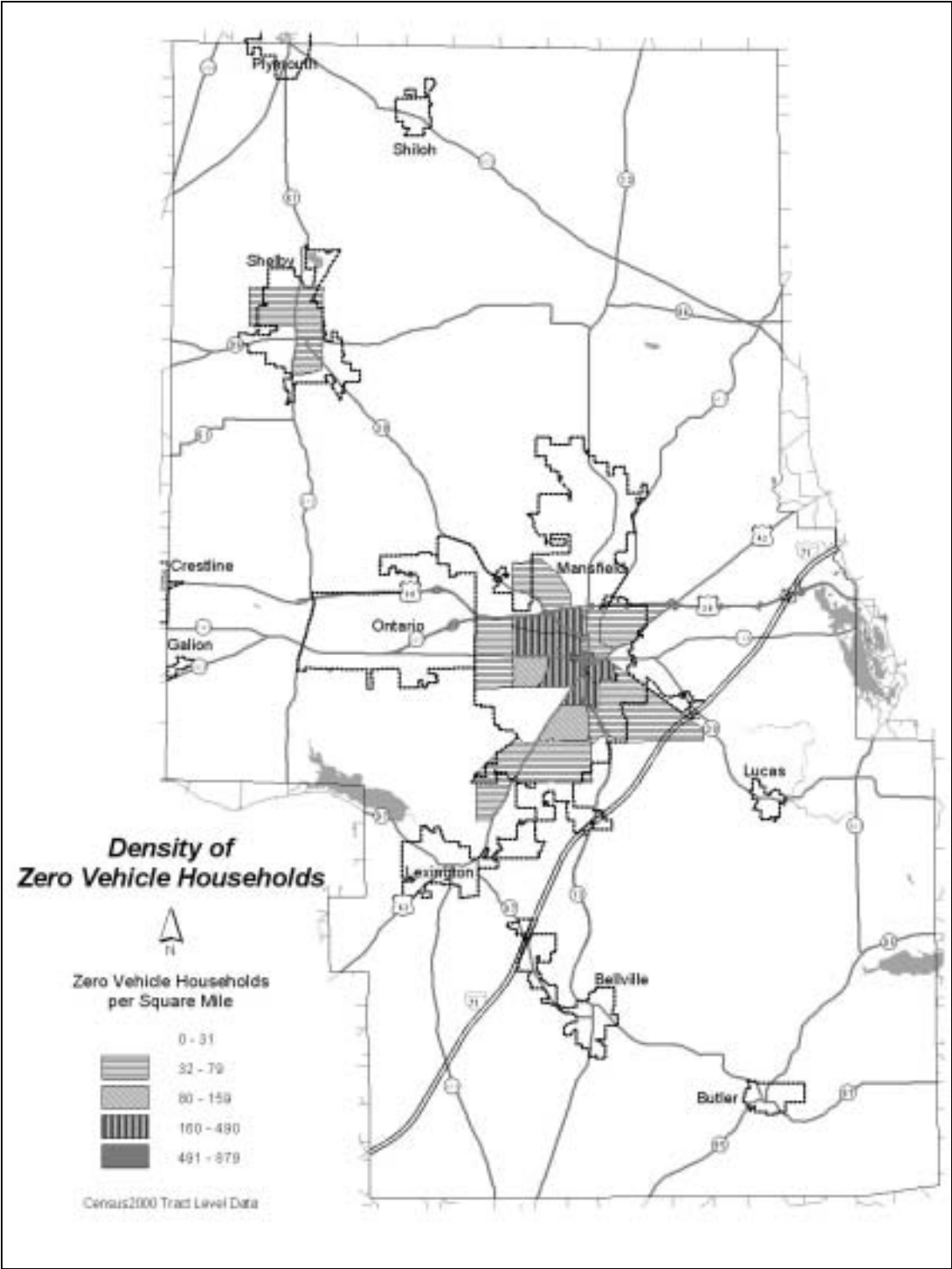
## MAP 2 Density of Persons over 65



### MAP 3 Density of Persons in Poverty



**MAP 4**  
**Density of Zero Vehicle Households**



## Work Related Transportation

This section provides a more general backdrop to work-related transportation for all Richland County residents. It is meant to serve as a context for Plan projects and proposals. Table 7 presents a snapshot of transportation infrastructure available in the county.

**TABLE 7**  
**County Transportation Snapshot**

<i>Richland County</i>	
Interstate miles	20.64
U.S. highway miles	37.62
State highway miles	203.78
County, Twp. and Municipal miles	1326.53
Registered motor vehicles	152,639
Passenger cars	99,269
Transit Routes	13
Transit Service Miles	95
Taxi Services	1
Intercity Transit Service	Greyhound, Lake Front
Commercial airports	3

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

The major employers in Richland County, according to information provided by the Ohio Department of Development Office of Strategic Research, are listed in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**

<b>Richland County Major Employers</b>			
<b>Company</b>	<b>Employment**</b>	<b>Product/Service</b>	<b>City</b>
MedCentral Health System	2700	Healthcare	Mansfield, Shelby
General Motors	1959	Auto Stamping Plant	Ontario
Richland County Government	1474	Government	County- wide
Newman Technology	1100	Automotive	Mansfield
Jay Industries*	943	Manufacturing	Mansfield
Gorman-Rupp	809	Pumps	Mansfield, Bellville
EMBARQ	800	Telecommunications	Mansfield
Therm-O-Disc	721	Thermostats	Mansfield
Mansfield City Board of	700	Education	Mansfield

Education			
DOFASCO Corp. (Copperweld)	666	Seamless Steel Tube	Shelby
Mansfield Correctional (MANCI)	621	Correctional Institution	Mansfield
City of Mansfield	575	Government	Mansfield
Stoneridge Inc. (Hi-Stat)	500	Automotive	Lexington
Modern Tool & Die Co. (MTD)	459	Distribution	Shelby
Richland Correctional (RICI)	443	Correctional Institution	Mansfield
Madison Local Board of Education	410	Education	Mansfield
AK Steel Corp.	389	Specialty Steel	Mansfield
School Specialty	381	Distribution	Mansfield
Wal-Mart	314	Grocer/Retail	Mansfield
Lexington Local Board of Education	313	Education	Lexington
PPG Industries	300	Automotive Glass	Crestline
Kroger Company	300	Grocer/Retail	Mansfield
Crane Plumbing	280	Plumbing Fixtures	Mansfield
DOD 179th Air Wing	275	Military	Mansfield
* Jay Industries includes Broshco, Crestline Plant, Kronis Coatings, Jay & Sarca			
** Full-Time Equivalent			

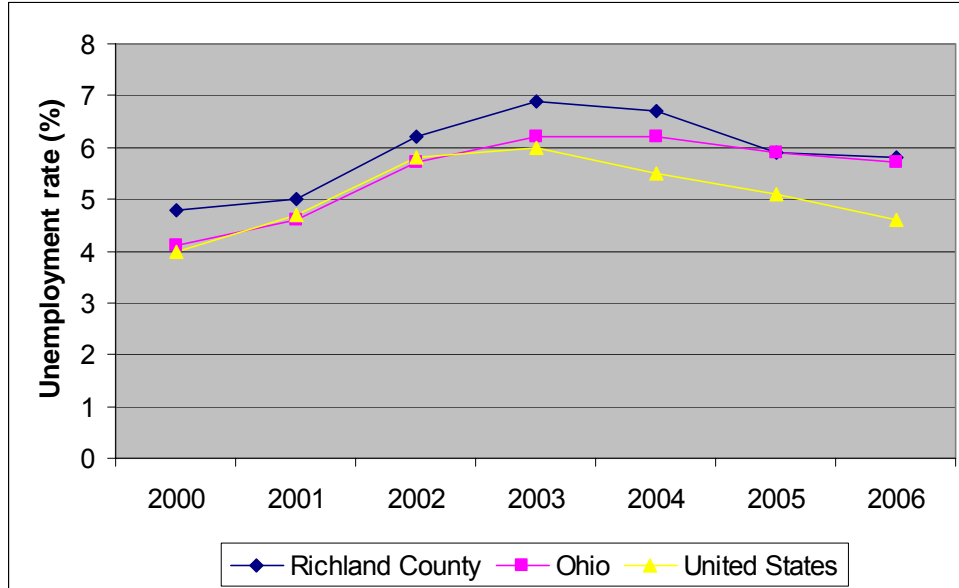
### **LABOR FORCE**

The 2006 labor force consisted of 63,400 individuals according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Workforce Development. The unemployment rate in Richland County has historically been comparable to that of the State of Ohio for the period 2000-2006.

Table 9 illustrates a comparison of historic unemployment rates between Richland County and the State of Ohio and the United States.



**TABLE 9**  
**Historic County, State and National Employment Rates**



Source: Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Office of Workforce Development.

**JOURNEY TO WORK**

The mean travel times to work for the City of Mansfield and Richland County are found in Table 10. The City’s and County’s average commute times are significantly lower than the State of Ohio (22.9 minutes) and the United States (25.5 minutes).

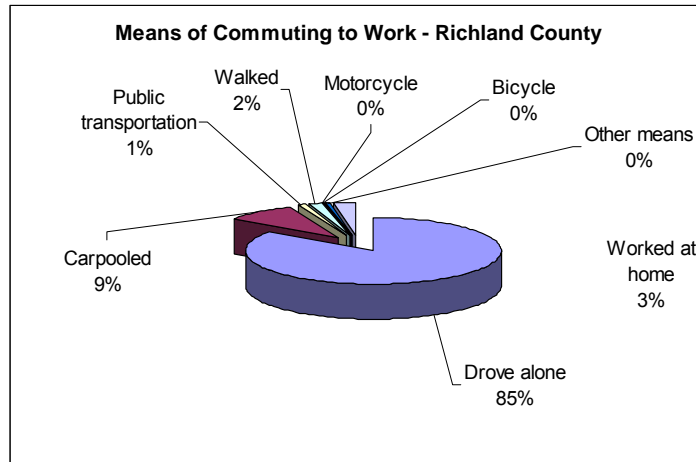
**TABLE 10**  
**Mean Travel Times to Work**

County	Mean Travel Time to Work
City of Mansfield	17.5 minutes
Richland County	20.2 minutes

Additional data was collected for Richland County regarding how many residents are commuting outside of their county to work. In this regard, the data indicates that 15.9 percent (9,066 persons) of Richland County’s labor force travels to surrounding counties for employment.

Table 11 indicates the commuting characteristics of Richland County residents. It is noted that approximately 85 percent of the labor force in the County drove alone to work, nine (9) percent carpoled, while one (1) percent used public transportation.

**TABLE 11**  
**Means of Commuting to Work- Richland County**



**MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS**

The term “trip generators” is used to indicate where a large number of current trips originate or end. These trip generators include medical facilities, employment centers, commercial business centers, educational institutions, and other important trip destinations.

***Medical Facilities***

Medical facilities both within and outside of the County are another of the key destinations for residents. MedCentral Health System is a regional health care facility and the leading employer in Richland County. MedCentral operates two hospitals in the county; one in Shelby and the other in Mansfield. MedCentral – Mansfield now has 326 beds and each year treats more than 46,000 in its emergency department, admits more than 13,000 patients and performs more than 8,000 surgeries; including open heart surgery.

***Educational Facilities***

Richland County is home to higher educational facilities that are destinations for transit users. Those facilities include the following institutions:

- ◆ The Ohio State University-Mansfield
- ◆ North Central State College
- ◆ MedCentral College of Nursing

***Commercial Centers***

Commercial and retail destinations are mostly located in the downtown areas and near the I-71 interchanges. These locations are:

- ◆ Downtown Mansfield
- ◆ Downtown Shelby
- ◆ I-71/SR 13
- ◆ Lexington-Springmill Rd from Park Avenue West to U.S.30

### ***Human Service Agencies***

Many trips have destinations at a human service agency facility.

These include:

- ◆ Newhope Industries – East 4<sup>th</sup> Street Facility
- ◆ Newhope Industries – Longview Facility
- ◆ Richland County DJFS Office
- ◆ Sterkel Blvd/Scholl Rd. Complex including 5 human services agencies and the Mansfield Area Y
- ◆ Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center

### ***Inventory of Transportation Services and Social Agencies in Richland County***

A comprehensive survey was sent to thirty (30) different entities and agencies in the Richland County area in order to gain information on existing transportation programs and services. Information on transportation providers was also obtained from information developed by the Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) and the Richland County coordination program. Those agencies that responded to the survey and either provide transportation services in the region or expressed a need in transportation services are summarized in Table 12, and described in fuller detail in Appendix C.

**TABLE 12**  
**Agency Summary**

Agency	Service Area	Days/Hours of Operation	Vehicles
Richland County Transit Board	Cities of Mansfield, Ottawa, and Shelby, and Madison Township	7:00 a.m. to 6:17 p.m., weekdays	15
Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission	Richland, Ashland, Knox, Morrow, and Crawford Counties.	Varies	0
Mansfield Memorial Homes	City of Mansfield	It operates transportation for its clients on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It also operates on Saturdays from 5:30 a.m. to	2
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Richland County, Inc.	Richland, Crawford, Ashland, Huron, and Knox Counties.	Varies	Transportation is provided by volunteers using their own vehicles.
New Beginnings Recovery	Richland County	Varies	1
Woodlawn Healthcare and Rehabilitation	Richland County	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays	2
Mansfield Area YMCA	Richland County	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays	4
Harmony House Homeless	Richland County	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., weekdays	1
Area Agency on Aging	Richland, Ashland, Crawford, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Seneca, and Wyandot Counties.	Varies	0
Independent Living Center of North Central Ohio, Inc.	Ashland, Crawford, Knox, Huron and Morrow Counties.	Varies	0
Community Action for Capable	Richland County	Varies	0
Richland Newhope Industries	Richland County	6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., weekdays	45
Third Street Family Health	City of Mansfield	Varies	0
Dayspring Assisted Living	Richland County	Transportation to medical and social service appointments is provided on weekdays. Trips for social and recreational activities are provided on	
Richland County Jobs and Family Services	Richland County	7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., weekdays	1
The Center for Individual and Family Services	Richland County	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., weekdays	6
Family Life Counseling	Richland County and surrounding area	Varies	0
Crossroads Center for Change	Richland County and sixteen surrounding counties	7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., weekdays	1
Richland County Veterans Services Administration	Richland County	Varies	13
Richland County Children	Richland County	Varies	15
Butler Clear Fork Adult Center	Belleville, Butler, Worthington and Jefferson Townships	7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays	Not Available
City of Mansfield	City of Mansfield	N/A	N/A
Friendly House	Richland County	Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	4
Lexington Senior Civic Center	Southern Richland County	Weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	3
Mid Ohio Education Services Center	Richland, Crawford, and Morrow Counties	Varies	N/A
Regional Health District	Richland County, except Shelby	Varies	N/A
North Central State College	Richland, Ashland, and Morrow Counties	Varies	N/A
Ohio Heartland Community Action	Richland, Marion, and Crawford Counties	Varies	36
City of Shelby	City of Shelby	Weekday 8 AM- 5PM	1
CHAP- Community Health Action Program	Richland County	Varies	NA
Primrose Retirement	Richland County	Varies	1

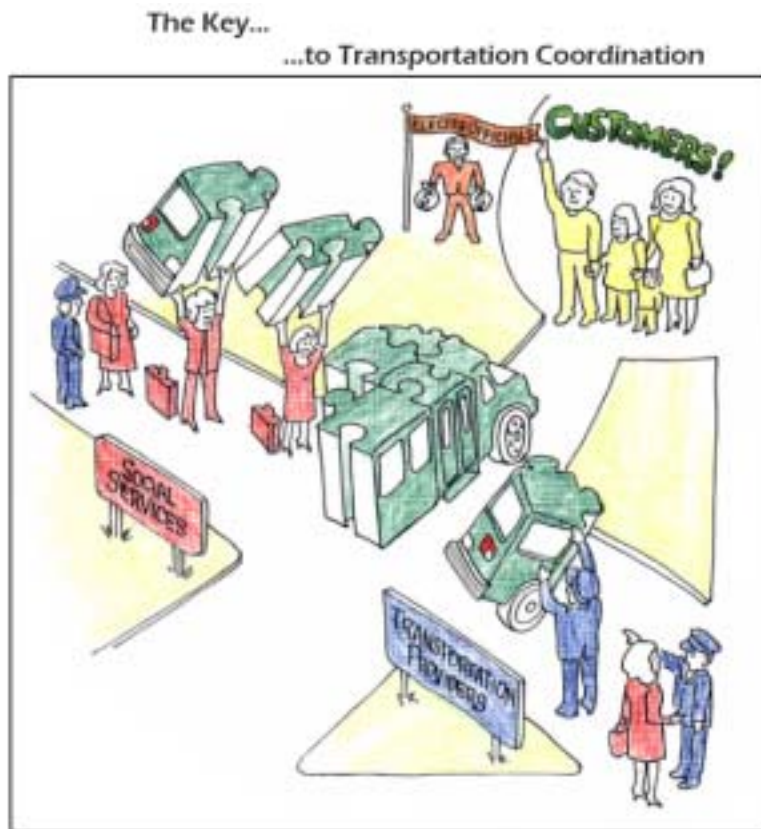
Table 13 provides a suitability taxonomy of travel modes available in Richland County. This can aid in matching customer characteristics, trip purpose, travel modes, agency and ultimately programmed project needs and suitability. Each mode is suitable for certain types of travel. None is a perfect substitute for driving.

**TABLE 13**  
Suitability of Travel Modes

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Non-Drivers</b>	<b>Low income</b>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Most Appropriate Uses</b>
Walking	Yes	Yes	Varies	Varies	Requires physical ability. Limited distance and carrying capacity. Difficult or unsafe in some areas.	Short trips by physically able people.
Wheelchair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Requires sidewalk or path. Limited distance and carrying capacity.	Short urban trips by people with physical disabilities.
Bicycle	Yes	Yes	Varies	Varies	Requires bicycle and physical ability. Limited distance and carrying capacity.	Short to medium length trips by physically able people.
Taxi	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Relatively high cost per mile.	Infrequent trips, short and medium distance trips.
Fixed Route Transit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Destinations and times limited.	Short to medium distance trips along busy corridors.
Paratransit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High cost and limited service.	Travel for people with disabilities.
Auto driver	No	Limited	Varies	Varies	Requires driving ability and automobile. High fixed costs.	Travel by people who can drive and afford an automobile.
Ridesharing (auto passenger)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Requires cooperative automobile driver. Consumes driver's time if a special trip (chauffeur).	Trips that the driver would take anyway (ridesharing). Occasional special trips (chauffeur).
Carsharing (Vehicle Rentals)	No	Limited	Varies	Varies	Requires convenient and affordable vehicle rentals services.	Occasional use by drivers who don't own an automobile.
Tele-commute	Yes	Varies	Varies	Yes	Requires equipment and skill.	Alternative to some types of trips.

## 4. Barriers and Coordination Scenarios, Activities, Strategies, Action, Projects.

National research literature has identified numerous potential obstacles to coordination, and local public involvement has identified those relevant at the local level. This section briefly reviews these national findings, and is followed by local strategies.



### *Summary of National Findings*

Research sponsored by Federal Transit Administration created a framework for identifying and understanding Coordination barriers, using seven categories: Organizational/Structural; Funding; Communication; Information/Data; Operations; Attitudinal; Policy/Regulatory. Example obstacles and challenges to coordination were identified as:

- “Turf” wars or the reluctance to give up ownership and control and allow another entity to provide services to its clients. Atmosphere of competition instead of cooperation
- Sharing funding and the need of additional funding for coordination
- Lack of information and communication at all levels; agency to client, agency to agency
- Some organizations lack infrastructure and technology for scheduling and equipment
- Strong leadership needed to promote collaboration among existing organizations.
- Duplication of some services, but still unmet needs
- No involvement of politicians
- Political and geographic divisions due to city/ county boundaries and the prohibitive cost nature to serve all these areas

- Challenges of maximizing existing capacity
- Establishing a comprehensive infrastructure for coordination, dissemination of information, and scheduling of services
- Reliance on volunteers to deliver services creates challenges because of the high turnover rate
- Liability issues, insurance and beyond
- Lack of resources (staff, time, etc.) to coordinate at individual organizations
- Reporting requirements by funding sources, especially for volunteer-run programs
- Staffing drivers for shared vehicles

### ***Existing Coordination in Richland County***

#### **Agency Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)**

RCTB is the lead agency for a transportation coordination program known as Agency Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC). It provides area agencies, companies, and individuals with information and access to all known transportation resources in Richland County. If an agency is unable to meet a request for transportation, then it contacts the coordinator. The coordinator then attempts to match the trip request to existing resources, schedules the trip, and prepares the billing or fare collection. The following agencies are participants:

- ◆ Richland County Jobs and Family Services
- ◆ Area Agency on Aging, District 5
- ◆ Third Street Family Health Services
- ◆ Community Health Access Program
- ◆ Richland County Board of MR/DD\
- ◆ Richland County Department of Children's Services
- ◆ Richland County Transit Board
- ◆ Village of Lexington
- ◆ Lexington Senior Civic Center
- ◆ Richland County Veterans Service Commission
- ◆ Greyhound Bus Lines
- ◆ The Center for Individual and Family Services
- ◆ Apple Lane Ambulette Company
- ◆ City of Mansfield
- ◆ City of Shelby
- ◆ Mansfield Taxi
- ◆ Dayspring Assisted Living and Care Facility
- ◆ Harmony House Homeless Shelter
- ◆ Med-Central Health System
- ◆ Crystal Care Center
- ◆ Bureau of Worker's Compensation

## ***Coordination Principles and Goals***

A set of national principles and goals has been developed that can guide development of this local plan:

### **Put People First**

- People with special transportation needs should be prioritized first, before program and business needs.
- Terminology used should be sensitive to all people.

### **Increase Service Through Efficiencies**

- Trips to same locations should be grouped, when appropriate.
- Transportation services to people with special transportation needs should be expanded.
- Support structure for transportation providers (*e.g., training, insurance, maintenance*) should be coordinated.
- Trips should be allocated to the lowest cost, most appropriate transportation provider, as determined by the purchaser of transportation.
- Cross-jurisdictional and regional trips should be coordinated.

### **Increase Mobility Options and Include all Transportation Options**

- Mobility challenges facing people with special transportation needs should be addressed.
- All mobility services (*e.g. van pools, car pools, volunteers, school buses*) should be included in the system.
- Public and private transportation providers should be included in the system.
- All providers that meet the minimum standards should be allowed to participate, as long as quality service is maintained.
- Size of transportation company should not preclude the company from being included in the system.

### **Be Viable and Sustainable**

- Agencies and programs should want to voluntarily participate due to the positive benefits of coordination.
- A governing authority should have representation of major transportation purchasers, as well as consumers.
- Participating programs and agencies should be involved in decisions to use technology tools.
- Distribution of costs should be fairly applied to all purchasers of transportation.

### **Promote Equal Opportunities**

- The services of a coordinated transportation system should be available and attractive to everyone in Richland County.
- Policies, procedures, and non-confidential trip information should be openly available.
- Maintain Human Factor
- Positive personal relationships between consumers and staff in the coordinated transportation system should be encouraged.
- Technology should be used as a tool, not a solution or replacement of the human touch.
- Clear accountability should exist, so that consumers do not get lost in a big system.

### **Design it for the User**

- Consumers should be involved in the design of a coordinated transportation system.
- Consumers should have a single-eligibility process and single-entry access to the coordinated transportation system, regardless of funding source.
- Consumer should have the ability to select a provider, when feasible.
- Consumers should have the option to pay for trips that go beyond program or geographic boundaries.
- The coordinated transportation system should be user-friendly, multi-lingual, affordable, sensitive to cultural differences, and flexible.
- The coordinated transportation system should accommodate the unique circumstances of people with special transportation needs.

### **Communicate Access to Services**

- The services of the coordinated transportation system should be communicated and marketed.
- Information on transportation services should be centralized.
- A formal mechanism to communicate, cooperate, and exchange transportation information should be maintained.
- Focus on Performance
- The coordinated transportation system should continually assess the impact and benefits to the residents of Richland County.

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### **Potential Local Activities, Strategies and Projects**

A set of projects and actions and needs for coordinated transportation services for Richland County, supportive of the principles and goals outlined above, emerged from a variety of community outreach as described in this plan.

The outreach methods RCRPC used for the Coordinated Plan produced ideas for further activities and projects to improve transportation resources in the community. Projects listed and described below are meant to be conceptual in nature.

- Trip planning and scheduling software- incorporated with vehicle scheduling? Internet based Transportation Inventory and Trip Planning as a source of transportation service information and planning satisfying the need to continually add and maintain accurate information.
- Develop Jobs And Reverse Commuting program
- Explore establishment of a dedicated funding source or alternative funding sources through public-private partnerships or foundations to pursue transportation coordination efforts.
- Develop Vanpool to be used both as commuter (JARC) service, as well as in conjunction with established human service agencies.
- Expand existing demand response service to larger service area
- Restore Saturday and evening RCT fixed route transit service
- Expand RCT service to growing Lahm Airport industrial and business park, as well as Interstate 71/ Rt 13 interchange, growing location of service sector employment.

- Transit service to/from Shelby and Mansfield Transit Center via NCSC/OSU campus. At least 2 roundtrips (morning and evening).
- Introduction of basic Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology on RCT vehicles (e.g. upgraded farebox and automatic passenger counter (APC)) to better track agency client trips
- Increase intercity/county trip opportunities by working with private sector service providers (Greyhound, Lakefront) to take advantage of joint Transit Center marketing opportunities
- Continued purchase and introduction of low floor vehicles to assist and speed bus boardings for all passengers.
- Improved local funding sources and assistance that includes a dedicated funding source for public transit (e.g. payroll tax; sales tax)
- Coordinate with Emergency Management agencies for emergency evacuation transportation
- Wheel chair accessible van for Shelby shared taxi service.
- Shared service between agencies to better serve rural customers and outlying communities.
- Use Demand Response approach to serve outlying areas, possibly to include the entire county.
- RCRPC to continue to annually recommend projects for the 5310 program to ensure adequate agency operated vehicles to meet unique needs of the Elderly and/or disabled.

### **Long Term High Price Gasoline Scenario.**

Fuel costs are likely to remain a significant and growing cost component for any vehicle-based transportation services provided to Richland County residents. Increasing costs may seriously hamper existing and future services, especially those with low passenger-mile per vehicle-mile ratios. Higher fuel costs may also cause a shift from personal vehicle travel to public transit and human services transportation. In the long term, coordination between planners, elected municipal officials, economic development officials, and developers will be needed to understand and remake the local relationship between transportation and land use decisions. Future new and redevelopment should be directed to existing or future mixed-use, multi-modal, transit-supportive areas served by municipal services

## **5. Implementation and Programming**

### *Prioritization of Implementation Strategies*

#### **Methodology**

Prioritization can be done using various schemes. One common method involves using expert opinion or a citizen's committee to rate each strategy along any number of dimensions (e.g. cost, time, equity) and then to combine ratings into a composite score, from which a ranking is determined. Various point scoring systems may be used (1-5; 0-10; 0-100). Projects are then further placed in a Programming Table which includes agency responsibility, timeframe, and potential costs.

For this plan, and initial prioritization, scoring and ranking was performed on the project list. Survey respondents were asked to prioritize by High, Medium, and Low, and to rank projects from 1 to 17, “1” being the highest. Scores were then summed and divided to arrive at an average score for each project, and placed in a final ranking, found in Table 13.

**TABLE 13**  
**Project Rankings**

<b>Coordinated Plan Projects, Activities and Strategies</b>	<b>Avg Score</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Restore Saturday and evening RCT fixed route transit service	3.9	1
Develop Job Access and Reverse Commuting program	5.3	2
Transit service to/from Shelby and Mansfield Transit Center via NCSC/OSU campus. At least 2 roundtrips (morning and evening).	6.0	3
Develop Vanpool to be used both as commuter (JARC) service, as well as in conjunction with established human service agencies.	6.4	4
Expand RCT service to growing Lahm Airport industrial and business park, as well as Interstate 71/ Rt 13 interchange	6.5	5
Expand existing demand response service to larger service area	7.1	6
Improved local funding sources and assistance that includes a dedicated funding source for public transit (e.g. payroll tax; sales tax)	7.3	7
Shared service between agencies to better serve rural customers and outlying communities.	7.4	8
Explore establishment of a dedicated funding source or alternative funding sources through public-private partnerships or foundations to pursue transportation coordination efforts.	7.6	9
RCRPC to continue to annually recommend projects for the 5310 program to ensure adequate agency operated vehicles to meet unique needs of the Elderly and/or disabled.	8.5	10
Wheel chair accessible van for Shelby shared taxi service.	8.6	11
Use Demand Response approach to serve outlying areas, possibly to include the entire county.	9.3	12
Coordinate with Emergency Management agencies for emergency evacuation transportation	9.3	13
Trip planning and scheduling software- incorporated with vehicle scheduling.	9.4	14
Increase intercity/county trip opportunities by working with private sector service providers (Greyhound, Lakefront)	9.4	15
Introduction of basic Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology on RCT vehicles (e.g. upgraded farebox and automatic passenger counter (APC)) to better track agency client trips	10.5	16
Continued purchase and introduction of low floor vehicles to assist and speed bus boardings for all passengers.	11.1	17

## **Appendices**

- A - Summit Invitees and Attendees
- B - Disabled Population Projections
- C - Detailed Local Agency Information
- D - Richland County Transit Service Route Maps