

Warren County Transit Committee

Preliminary Action Plan

THE ACTION PLAN IS AN IMPLEMENTATION-ORIENTED POLICY GUIDE FOR TRANSIT IN WARREN COUNTY. Presently transit in Warren County is provided by Warren County Transit Services (WCTS) and by diverse county and nonprofit organizations. These service providers are allocating their resources as efficiently as possible to transport their clients, users, and consumers.

The actions in the Action Plan aim to help these service providers allocate their resources even more efficiently by sharing resources, exploring fixed routes (which changes federal funding to the County's benefit), improving scheduling, working with the private sector to provide transportation, and implementing other actions that contribute to more effective transit opportunities for County residents.

POLICY TERMS

Strategy: A detailed policy

Action: An action that implements the strategy

TIME FRAMES

Short Term: Less than 6 months

Medium Term: Less than 12 months

Long Term: Less than 18 months

ACRONYMS

BCRTA: Butler County Regional Transit Authority

BOCC: Board of County Commissioners

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

Greene CATS: Greene County Area Transit System

MHRS: Mental Health and Recovery Services (of Warren & Clinton Counties)

ODOT: Ohio Department of Transportation

RPC: (Warren County) Regional Planning Commission

SORTA: Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority

UTS: Universal Transportation Systems

WCBDD: Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities

WCED: Warren County Economic Development

WCJFS: Warren County Jobs and Family Services

WCMH: Warren County Metropolitan Housing

WCTS: Warren County Transit Services

WCVSO: Warren County Veterans Service Office

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Strategy 1. Coordinate with County agencies to contract with Warren County Transit Services				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Work with UTS to provide a single call center for all public transit users	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO	•All agencies or individuals would call WCTS 48 hours in advance of the ride	some	short-term
B. Coordinate with County agencies to contract with WCTS	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO	•If an agency calls to schedule a trip, but WCTS is full, the ride will “roll over” to a higher rate on-demand service, called complementary paratransit service. Each ride would start in the \$20’s.	some	short-term
C. Contact the FTA to determine if there is a limit on how much the transit service can be reserved for specific groups to the exclusion of the general public.	•WCTS/RPC	•Susanne or I will contact the FTA to determine what the maximum percent of transit service reserved for certain groups.	not much	short-term
D. Determine when/where agency users have consistent needs to create fixed routes.	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO	•These fixed routes can be once a day or once a week eg. a trip from Otterbein to the Atrium. Regular WCTS rates would apply.	not much	short-term

Notes on Strategy 1: Coordinate with County agencies to contract with Warren County Transit Services

- The higher rate on-demand service would be most beneficial at peak travel times (6-9am and 3-6pm)
- The cost of the UTS “taxi” service would start in the \$20’s. A “real” privately operated taxi would be cheaper, probably starting around \$6-7 with an additional fee based on mileage and/or time.
- If agencies do contract WCTS services, it would only work if they request fixed routes (from A to B at a consistent time of day). Contracting with WCTS to provide on-demand service would not get them any improvement in service quality than calling in like anyone else.

Strategy 2. Discuss the possibilities of providing a “taxi” service				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Contact a private taxi service provider and the City of Lebanon to navigate an approval process.	•City of Lebanon, Private Taxi Service provider, ODOT	A private taxi service provider attempted to start service in Lebanon, but gave up due to a lengthy approval process.	some	long term
B. Discuss with UTS an “on-demand” taxi service using smaller vehicles that is funded according to a different formula than the rest of WCTS.	•UTS	•The service would be require a higher rate of payment to make sure it is economically justified to UTS.	some	medium term
C. If a UTS “taxi” service is made available, operate it at later hours than the typical transit service.	•UTS, WCTS	•Consider in conjunction with Strategy 4 •UTS and WCTS would need to alter the contract to operate the complementary paratransit service at later hours than the typical transit service.	some	short term
D. Explore approving a list of drivers that are part of an app-based transportation network such as Uber or Lyft.		•This action can only be made a reality if the County could approve a list of drivers (conduct background checks, verify they have the correct insurance) •An app based transportation network would be valued by County agency users	some to a lot	long term

Notes on Strategy 2: “Discuss the possibility of providing a “taxi” service.

•Strategy 2 is addressing two kinds of possible taxi service. One is a true taxi service provided by the private sector operating at market rates (this is Action “A”). Actions “B” and “C” are referring to a complementary paratransit service that is billed at an hourly rate - this is the kind of service that UTS could theoretically provide through WCTS. It might be possible to provide a complementary paratransit service if WCTS can amend its contract with UTS. Even if this is provided through WCTS, users of the complementary paratransit service would pay the higher rate (i.e., starting at ~\$20).

Strategy 3. Explore possibilities of fixed routes where transit needs are greatest				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Create preliminary map of fixed routes based on when and where there are spikes in ridership demand.	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO, WCED, RPC, GIS, WCTS	•Maps will be based on input received from the Transit Committee and on data on trip origin/destination, trip purpose, and time of day	a lot	medium term
B. Consult with UTS to determine how many resources are needed to run vehicles at certain distances, frequencies	•UTS, WCTS	•If fixed routes are pursued as part of this action plan, we'll discuss what frequencies and costs are possible for different routes.	some to a lot	medium term
C. Create possible budget based on a revised funding formula	•WCTS	•Fixed routes will changing the federal funding formula, allow WCTS to allocate more for operations.	some	short term
D. Consider using flex routes when exploring fixed route options	•WCTS, UTS	•Flex routes allow vehicles to make limited detours along a fixed route to pick up and drop off riders.	some to a lot	medium term
E. Identify concentrations of employment and residences which help improve efficiency of a fixed route.	•GIS, RPC	•Refer to Census data	some to a lot	short term
F. Show a walk-time analysis for possible fixed route stops where there are concentrations of businesses or households	•GIS, RPC		some	short term
G. Identify once-a-day fixed routes	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO, WCED, WCTS	•Once a day fixed routes primarily benefit agency consumers seniors. •There are regularly scheduled, recurring routes that are de facto "fixed" routes. This action would make the important ones official.	some	medium term

Notes on Strategy 3:

- Consider using flex routes when exploring fixed route options (flex routes allow vehicles to make limited detours along a fixed route to pick up and drop off riders).
- Identify concentrations of employment and residences which help improve efficiency of a fixed route. Can refer to census data
- Show a walk-time analysis for possible fixed route stops where there are concentrations of businesses or households.
- Identify once-a-day fixed routes (There are regularly scheduled, recurring routes that are de facto "fixed" routes. This action would make the important ones official. Once a day fixed routes primarily benefit agency consumers seniors.)

Strategy 4. Explore the costs of running longer hours (eg. Running one hour later or 6 hours on Saturday)				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Draft a budget based on a scenario allowing for longer running hours.	•WCTS, UTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •WCTS is billed on an vehicle revenue hour basis: ~\$30 per revenue hour plus the cost of fuel. •It may be possible to pay for reduced Saturday service (eg., 2 vehicles operating for 6 hours) •If there are (for example) two people that need rides on Saturday, UTS can provide service through UTS for possibly \$70. 	some	medium term
B. Consult with County agencies and other organizations on when riders are in greatest need for additional operation time.	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Get this information from the Transit Committee by conducting a brief exercise 	some	medium term
C. Explore if agencies can have longer running hours than the general public if as part of a contractual arrangement.	•WCTS, UTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If unsuccessful, determine how an agency can contract directly with UTS. •These agency contracts may be with WCTS or solely UTS 	not much	short term

Strategy 5. Search for funds that are dedicated for subsidizing tickets for low income passengers				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Consult OKI, ODOT, and/or FTA to locate, apply for funding any opportunities.	•WMHA, WCJFS, OKI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss with WMHA if they are aware of any funding opportunities for low income residents. •RPC will handle any applications or other tasks that need to be completed 	some	medium term
B. Pursue Title 20 funds, if eligible	•WMHA, WCJFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Need to create a clear process to determine rider eligibility. 	some to a lot	medium term

Notes on Strategy 5:

- WCJFS stopped using Title 20 funds, probably because there was no set process for how the funds were awarded to riders. If there was a process, it might be possible to use it again.

Strategy 6. Offer bulk ticket sales to agencies or individuals				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Sell tickets in packets of 10 or 20	•UTS, WCTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourages ridership •Tickets sold in booklets may be convenient for frequent users. •Tickets would not expire 	some	long term

Strategy 7. Collaborate with adjacent counties to identify extra-territorial hubs that can be served				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Assess if there is any need for service to extra-territorial hubs	•All Committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conduct a zipcode survey of where business' employees live, or use census bureau data. •Martin from Economic Development can ask employers where they need routes or on-demand transit services when he conducts business retention visits. 	not much	short term
B. Consult partner transit services in neighboring Counties	•BCRTA, (Dayton) RTA, SORTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Staff thought Union Center, (future) Liberty Center, Austin Pike, and a point near employment areas along I-275 are areas with possible greatest demand. •Adjacent transit agencies need to be consulted before establishing a map of potential fixed routes 	some	medium term
C. Consult with passengers, agencies to determine if there is a time of day when need is greatest.	•All Committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consult Transit Committee members using quick exercise. 	some	medium term
D Discuss if extra-territorial hubs should be included on any fixed routes	•All Committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“Fixed routes” could be very low frequency, eg. 4 times a day, or every two hours. •Consult with FTA to determine if extra-territorial services affect County funding. 	some	medium term

Strategy 8. Consult major employers to determine if/how WCTS can help their employees commute				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Work with WCOED to contact employers most likely to have a workforce who can benefit from regularly scheduled employment trips.	•WCOED, major employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss employers with greatest needs with WC Economic Development Office •UTS can strive to provide a consistent fixed route for workers where needed, even if it is only twice a day. •This strategy should be started early in the process (prior to establishing fixed routes, if fixed routes are pursued) 	not much	short term

Strategy 9. Ensure future development and redevelopment is capable of supporting transit				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Create Guidebook for best practices on designing walkable, transit compatible development/redevelopment	•RPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Base guidebook on best practices •Should be a very short document with graphics 	some to a lot	long term
B. Create scoring system to assess transit compatibility of new development or redevelopment.	•RPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May address items such as sidewalks, number of people in a given area. 	some to a lot	long term

Strategy 10. Collaborate with agencies to recommend/advertise WCTS to their users				
Actions	Potential Partners	Notes	How much Staff Time will this take?	Timeline
A. Remind agencies and organizations that WCTS is available for their consumers use.	•WCJFS, WCBDD, MHRS, WMHA, WCVSO	•This step should not be implemented until WCTS has adequate resources to meet existing demand.	not much	short term
B. Advertise on WCTS website availability for different areas at different times of day.	•WCTS, UTS, RPC	•Relatively remote parts of the County do not have access to the on-demand system at all times of the day.	some	medium term
C. Use a more striking paint scheme for WCTS vehicles.	•UTS, WCTS	•The current paint scheme, while attractive, does not catch the eye and is unnoticed by much of the public.	some	long term