

WorkLink Stakeholders and Steering Committee

May 29 Meeting Held at Owens Community College 2 PM to 3:30 PM

Meeting Summary

The Wood County Workforce Mobility Study (WorkLink) is focused on identifying projects, programs, and strategies to make it easier for people to get to/from jobs in Wood County. The study is being guided by a Steering Committee, who will meet throughout the project. A larger group of stakeholders will also be invited to weigh in at key project milestones.

The first project meeting was held in person on May 29 at Owens Community College. The meeting agenda included:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Study Overview, Goals and Schedule
- Getting and Staying Involved: Stakeholders, Employers and Community Engagement
- Breakout Groups: Workforce Access Needs and Priorities
- Next Steps and Closing

Welcome and Introductions

Laura Koprowski (TARTA Chief Executive Officer) welcomed everyone to the Wood County Workforce Mobility Study. She thanked people for joining the event and provided an overview of why the study is important and what it will accomplish. Laura turned the meeting to Bethany Whitaker and Paul Lutey from Nelson\Nygaard. Paul welcomed everyone and thanked them for being at the meeting and talked to people through an online polling tool called mentimeter and asked folks to weigh in on a handful of questions.

Bethany walked the group through the agenda, study goals, approach and scheduled. She also shared a high-level schedule for when the Steering Committee will meet over the next 9 months or so. People introduced themselves using the Team's chat function.

Study Overview, Goals and Schedule

Bethany presented an overview of the study goals, talked about how the study area will be divided into three distinct study areas and have a summary of the team's approach to conducting the study. She also walked through the project schedule. Bethany's presentation also included a handful of slides on population, employment, and travel patterns.

Getting and Staying Involved

Liz Webb (Murphy Epsom) led a presentation about how engagement would work with this study. She talked about the roles and expectations, the three round of engagement and the ways people could help



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her with the team. Liz also facilitated a brainstorming session about which employers are most important for this study and upcoming community events that the team should know about.

Breakout Groups: Workforce Access Needs and Priorities

The meeting transitioned into three breakout groups, one for each of the three study areas. These groups talked about needs and priorities for future study goals. All groups agreed that they are hoping the study will result in a set of creative solutions that helps the region connect workers and employers and supports the region's growth.

Key findings from individual groups include:

Study Area 1: 795 Corridor Transportation Priorities and Needs

- The lack of transportation is a challenge for employers and major institutions in Wood County.
- Priority on connecting the 795 corridor with TARTA, especially considering TARTA is so close to many of the major employers, strengthening the connections makes sense.
- There are several resources already available, but we need to leverage them. For example, Penta provides student services, like a food pantry and other resources. Tapping into those resources could help. Other resources include the shuttle between downtown Toledo and Owens Community College and planned transportation investments, like bike and walking paths.

Study Area 2: I-75 Corridor: Transportation Priorities and Needs

- Employers recruit from all over, but especially Toledo.
- Transportation is a challenge for some employers, especially for employers who are further from Toledo. It is a problem for recruiting and retaining employees.
 - Some people are using Uber/Lyft to get to work.
 - Some nonprofits are stepping in and providing transportation
- Perrysburg is an expensive place to live and there is no transportation to/from Perrysburg.
- The most important connections include:
 - Many in the group agreed the workforce for many employers live in Lucas County (specifically East, West and South Toledo)
 - BG is hopeful GoBus will serve NW OH in the next year; this may look like two stops per day in BG and Toledo
 - People are hoping

Study Area 3: Rural Wood County

- No comprehensive solution for transportation needs across the county, especially non-emergency medical transportation.
- Limited access to basic services and jobs for many county residents due to transportation gaps.
- Private or non-profit providers have limited number of accessible vehicles/fleets.



- One-way transportation to Toledo can be available through some services like United Way 211, but return trips are often not.
- Most participants wanted to see a recommendation to establish a Countywide Transit System.

Next Steps and Closing

Sam Wright (Nelson\Nygaard) welcomed everyone back to the meeting. Sam walked through some final polling questions to ask people what they learned in the breakout groups (see summary). Bethany closed the meeting, sharing a few next steps of the project, including a Steering Committee meeting scheduled for June 12.



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Wood County Workforce Mobility Study

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Study Overview, Goals, and Schedule
- Getting and Staying Involved: Stakeholders, Employers and Community Engagement
- Needs and Priorities
- Next Steps and Closing



Instructions

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Study Overview

Goals, Approach and Schedule

Study Goals

01

Enhance Workforce Mobility: Understand transit needs of major transit corridors and underserved job sites.

02

Establish Multimodal Connection Points: Identify and design virtual and physical transit hubs

03

Encourage Regional Collaboration: Leverage partnerships to create shared transit resources

04

Support Economic Growth: Ensure employers have access to a reliable workforce.

Three Geographic Areas / Corridors

795 Corridor

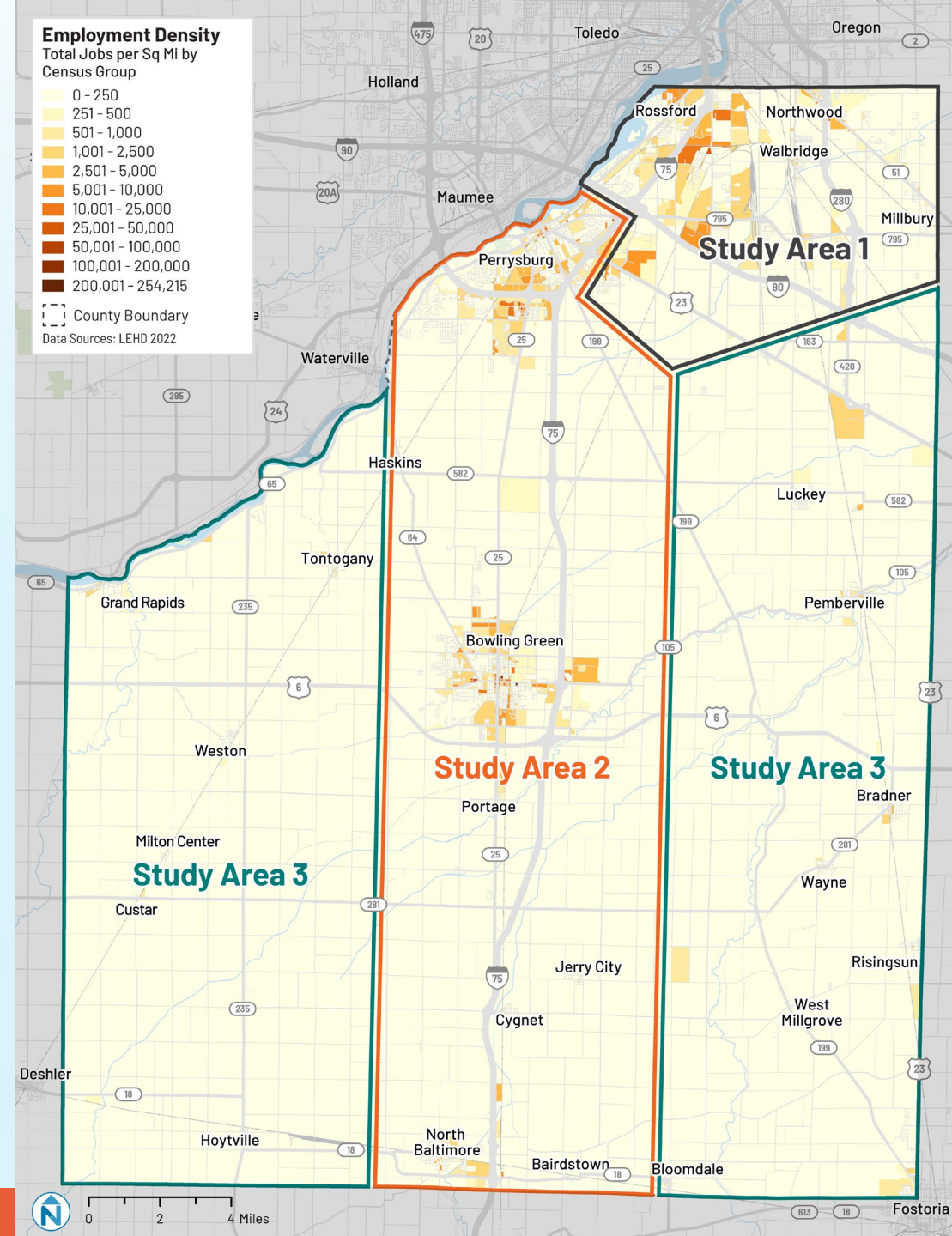
Northwood, portions of Perrysburg Township, Rossford, Wallbridge, Milbury

I-75 Corridor

Perrysburg, portions of Perrysburg Township, Bowling Green, North Baltimore, Middleton Township, Dunbridge, Cygnet

Countywide

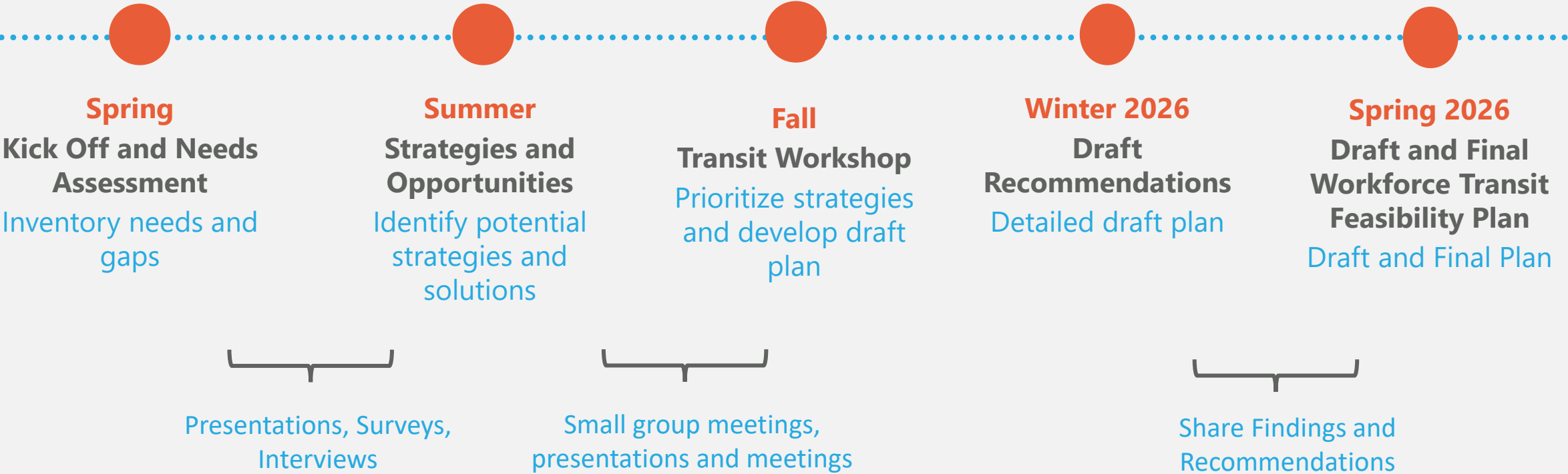
Luckey, Pemberville, Fostoria, Grand Rapids, West Millgrove, Tontogany, Hoytsville



Approach

- **Data Driven Approach** – map demographics, employment, transit services and transit ridership
- **Interview Employers** – hiring and operations
- **Survey Employees** – what challenges they face getting to work
- Combine data and qualitative input to **identify projects and strategies** that can strengthen connections to jobs

Study Schedule: 11-month time frame (May 2025 – March 2026)

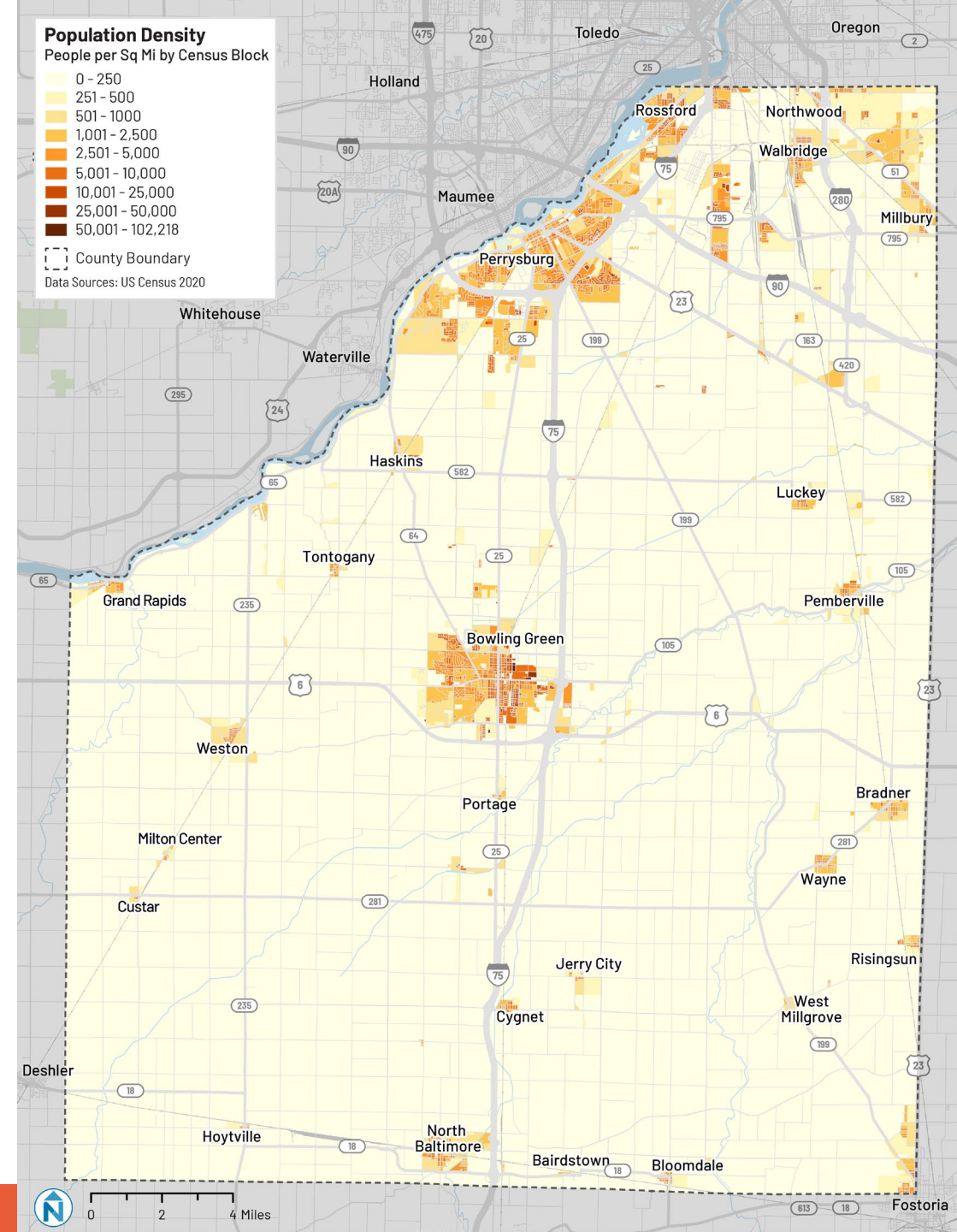


Let's talk about Wood County.....

133,000 people

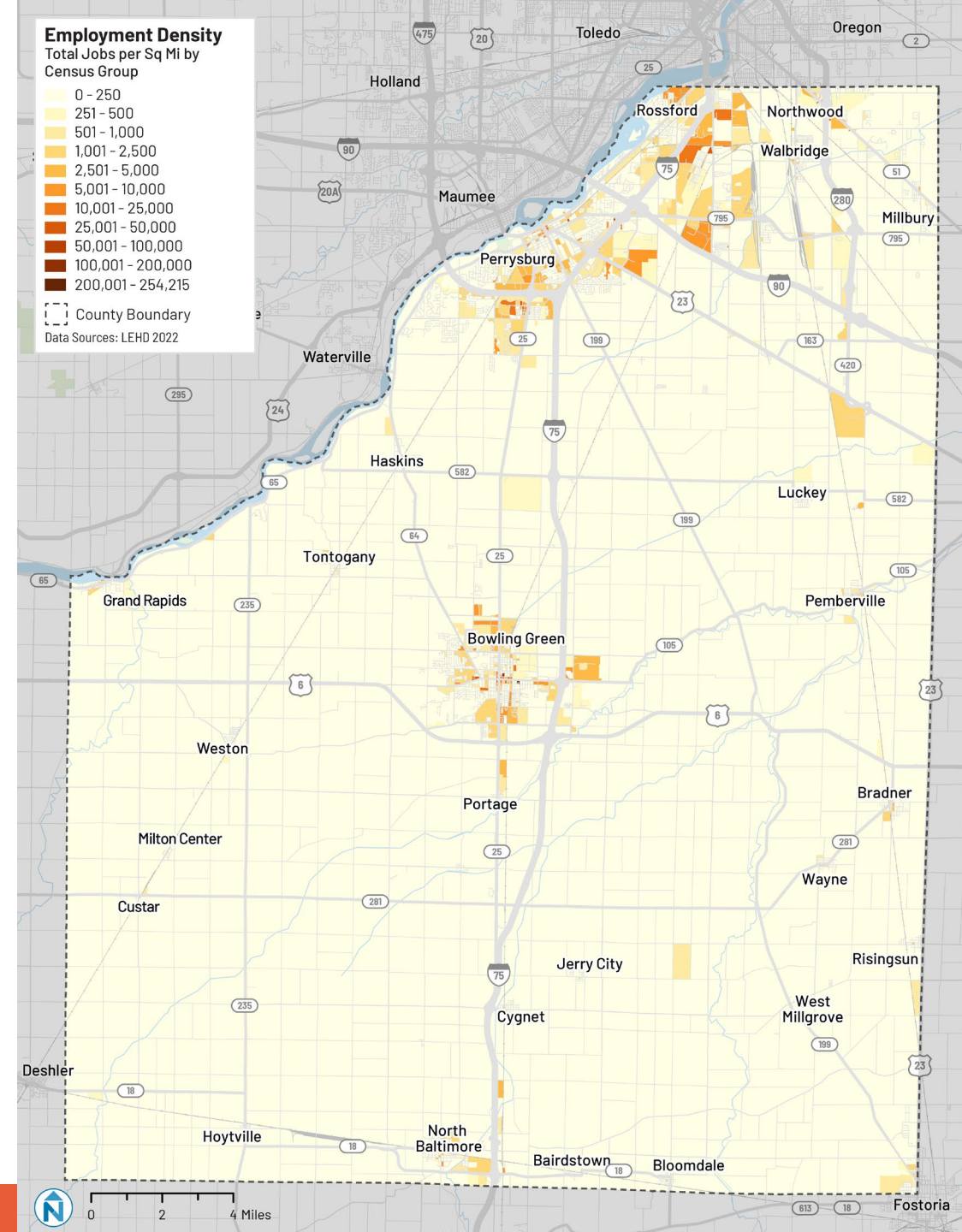
- 40% along the 795 Corridors (including Perrysburg City/Township)
- 25% in Bowling Green
- 40% in Wood County

63% aged 18 to 64, or about 83,000 people of "working age"



68,500 jobs

- # Ratio of people to jobs is 1.22

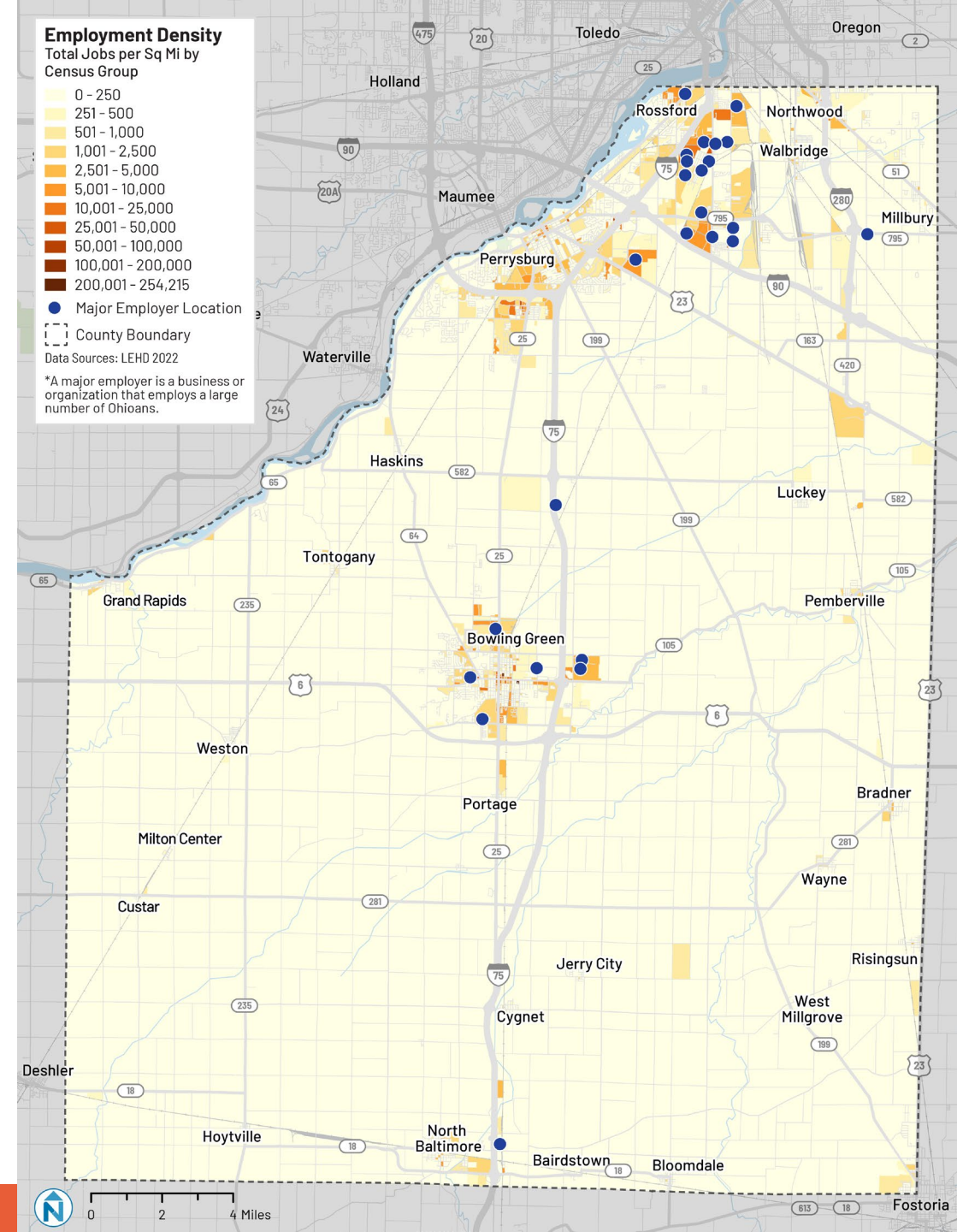


Let's talk about Wood County.....

County's largest 25 employers...

Importance of 795 and I-75 corridors

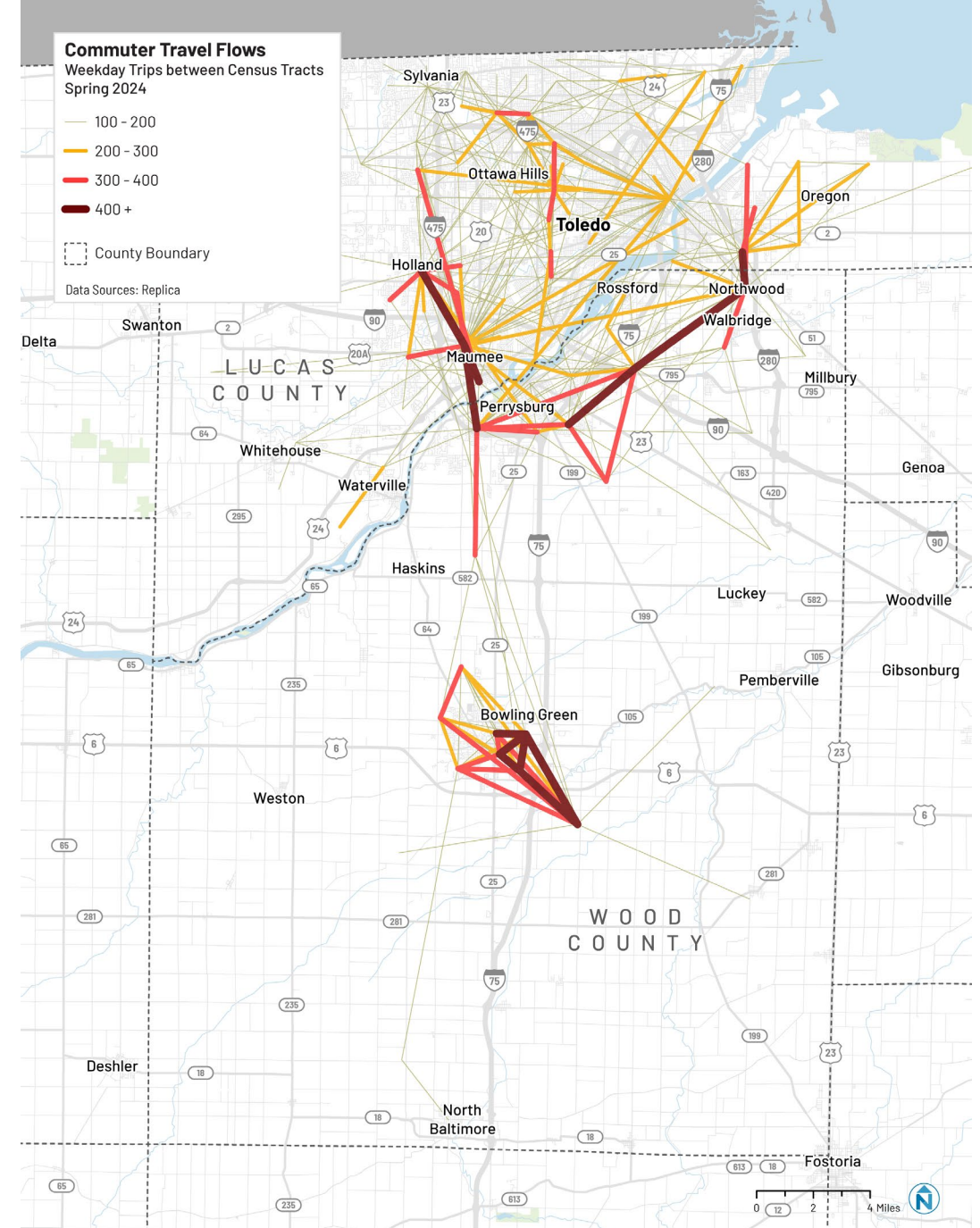
And, North Baltimore



Let's talk about Wood County.....

Commuter travel flows

- Lucas County (Holland and Maumee) and Perrysburg
- Northwood/Walbridge and Perrysburg
- In/around Bowling Green



Getting and Staying Involved

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Roles and Expectations

Steering Committee Members

- Attend up to five meetings
- **Influence study methods and process**
- Provide feedback on draft recommendations
- Help with connections and data collection

Stakeholders

- Attend up to three meetings
- Provide feedback on draft recommendations
- Help with connections and data collection

Three Rounds of Engagement



1. Understanding Needs and Priorities (Summer)

- Presentations with regional partners
- Interviews
- Online surveys with employers and employees



2. Evaluating Options (Fall)

- Presentations with regional partners
- Focus groups/small group meetings with employers
- Online surveys/comment materials

3. Sharing Findings and Recommendations (Spring 2026)

- Presentation and Briefing Book
- Online materials



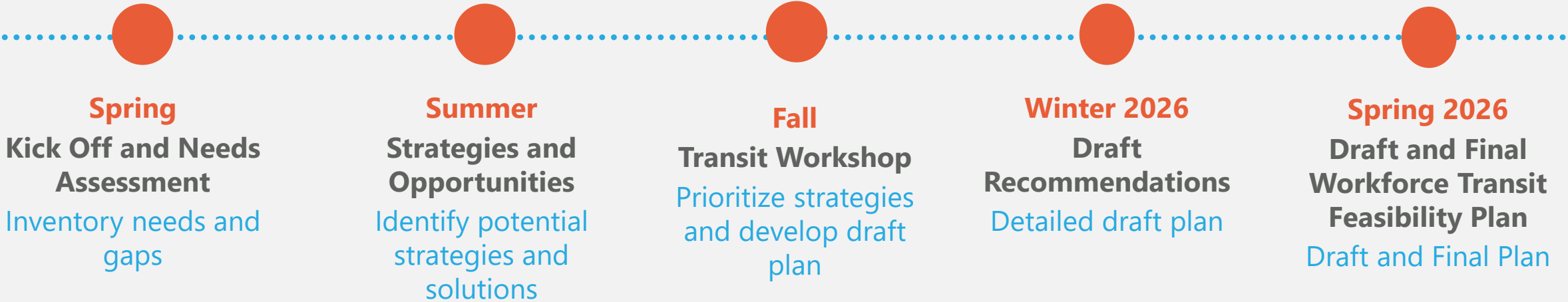
Ways to Help

- Share information about the study
- Help us build a list of employers to interview
- Identify events
- Promote engagement opportunities (surveys, interviews)
- Participate in future workshops, remain engaged with draft and final study recommendations

Schedule (May 2025 – May 2026)



Study Schedule: 11-month time frame (May 2025 – March 2026)



Outreach – Group Discussion

- Major employers
 - 795 Corridor: Owens Community College, Penta Career Center, First Solar, Whirlpool, Chrysler Toledo Machining, FedEx, Norplas, Tri-State, Rudolph Libbe
 - I-75 Corridor: UPS, CSX, NuProduce (Abbott), Lubrizol, KBS
 - Wood County: Home Depot Distribution, Otterbein Senior Living, small businesses
- Community events
- Who are we missing? Who can connect us to HR directors?

Structured Exercise

Kickoff Meeting – Structured Exercise

- Participant introductions and experience
- Goals and expectations for the study
- Understanding needs
 - What are the main transportation challenges?
 - Where are people coming from and where do they need to get to?
 - Are there transportation services available? If yes, what are they?
 - How do you expect your industry to change in the coming years?
 - If you had to pick one thing to get done, what would it be?

Next Steps and Closing

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Thank you!

We'll be in touch soon

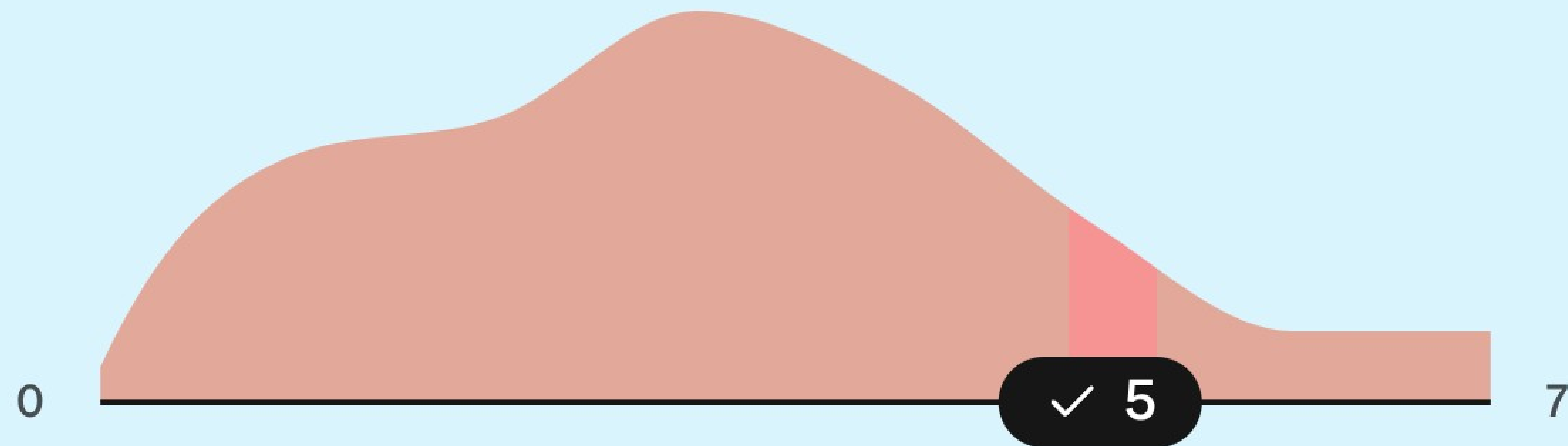
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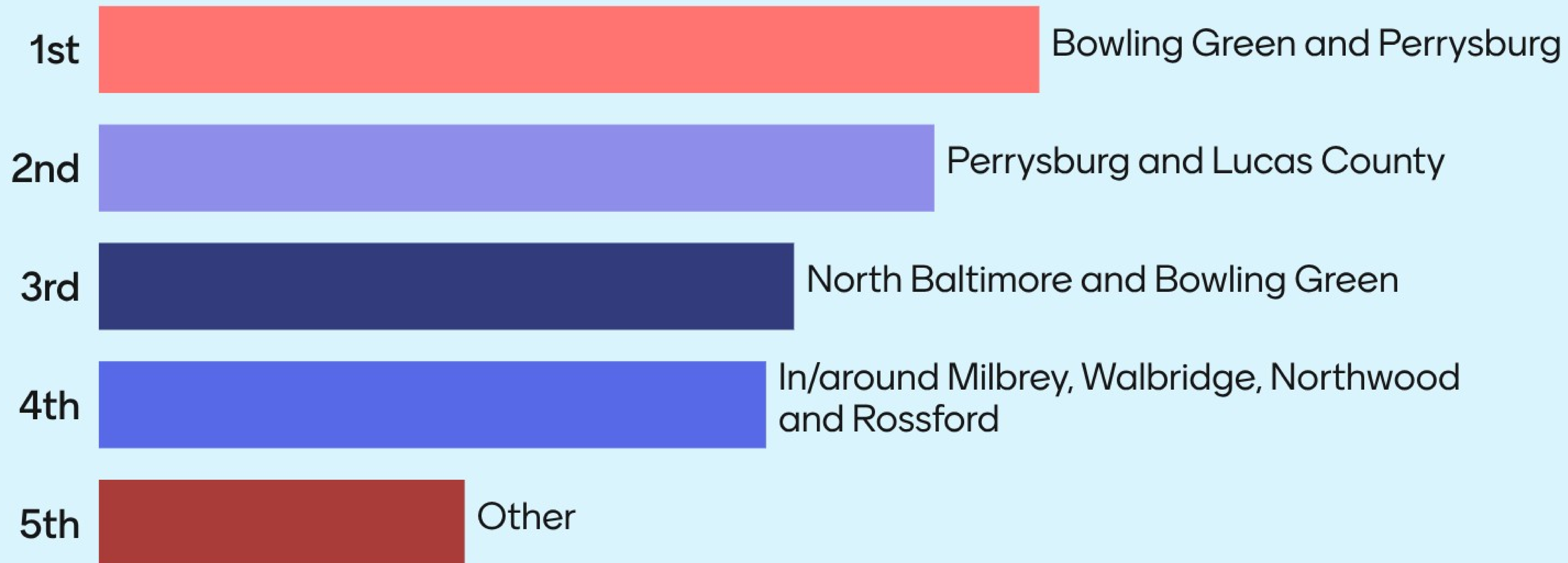
Where have you ridden transit? (e.g. Toledo, Columbus, Washington DC, Chicago, Detroit)



How many transit agencies operate in Wood County?



Wood County's biggest need is connections between:



What did you learn that was new or surprising?

Transportation is a bigger challenge than I realized

The lack of resources for new drivers

Young people don't care for a drivers license

Still struggling with decades old issue.

795 is not walkable... no sidewalks or paths. Very dangerous

There are currently 7 or more agencies currently in Wood Co.

That there are existing transportation systems in Wood County.

Lack of resources for mature drivers/non drivers

What did you learn that was new or surprising?

There is a critical need in the healthcare industry for workers to access jobs in Perrysburg, BG, North Baltimore, etc. not to mention patients, too!

How much employees struggle to find transportation

It is very challenging to get from East and West Toledo to Wood County

I learned there is a great need in the county. This is a big challenge but, with partnership this project could help a large number of people.

The lack of transportation and driver licenses.

Lack of bus stops in smaller towns to be able to get to I-75.

More students need broader transportation options

That transportation problems are across all counties. Working can be very challenging without access to affordable transportation

What did you learn that was new or surprising?

Education centers providing social services type of support.

Students don't want to drive more than 15 minutes.

Lack of connection of employers providing transportation

Eliminate yellow school bus and replace with county bus