



**TARTA** | **Next** ▶  
It's Go Time.

**Final  
Report**  
September 2022



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
	Study Goals .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>STATE OF THE SYSTEM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	Overview of TARTA .....	6
	Transit Performance .....	8
	Fixed Route Key Findings .....	8
	TARPS/Call-A-Ride Key Findings .....	10
	The Market for Transit in the Toledo Area .....	12
<b>3</b>	<b>COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
	Overview .....	15
	Summary of Fall engagement (Phase 1) .....	16
	Summary of Spring engagement (Phase 2) .....	17
	Community Survey .....	18
	Key Outreach Themes .....	19
<b>4</b>	<b>TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>FUNDING TARTA AND TARTA NEXT.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	Overview .....	27
	TARTA Next .....	28
<b>6</b>	<b>TARTA NEXT - THE TRANSIT VISION .....</b>	<b>31</b>
	TARTA Next Vision Plan .....	32
	Improve Urban Mobility .....	36
	Streamline and Simplify All Routes .....	36
	Maintain and Expand the Core Network .....	38
	Provide a Base Level of Service on Local Routes .....	40
	Strategically Expand Service to Jobs and Services .....	42
	Provide New Crosstown Connections .....	44
	Update TARPS Eligibility and Service Area .....	46
	Expand Regional Connections .....	48
	Provide On-Demand Microtransit Service .....	48
	Support Other Regional Mobility Enhancements .....	52
	Strengthen the Customer Experience .....	53
	Connection Points .....	53
	Bus Stop Improvements .....	56
	Service Classification .....	57
	Route Naming .....	58
	Future Fare Collection Improvements .....	59
	Low Emission Fleet .....	60
	Rapid Bus on Monroe Street .....	61
<b>7</b>	<b>NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS.....</b>	<b>63</b>
	Mid- and Long-Term Improvements .....	70





# Introduction

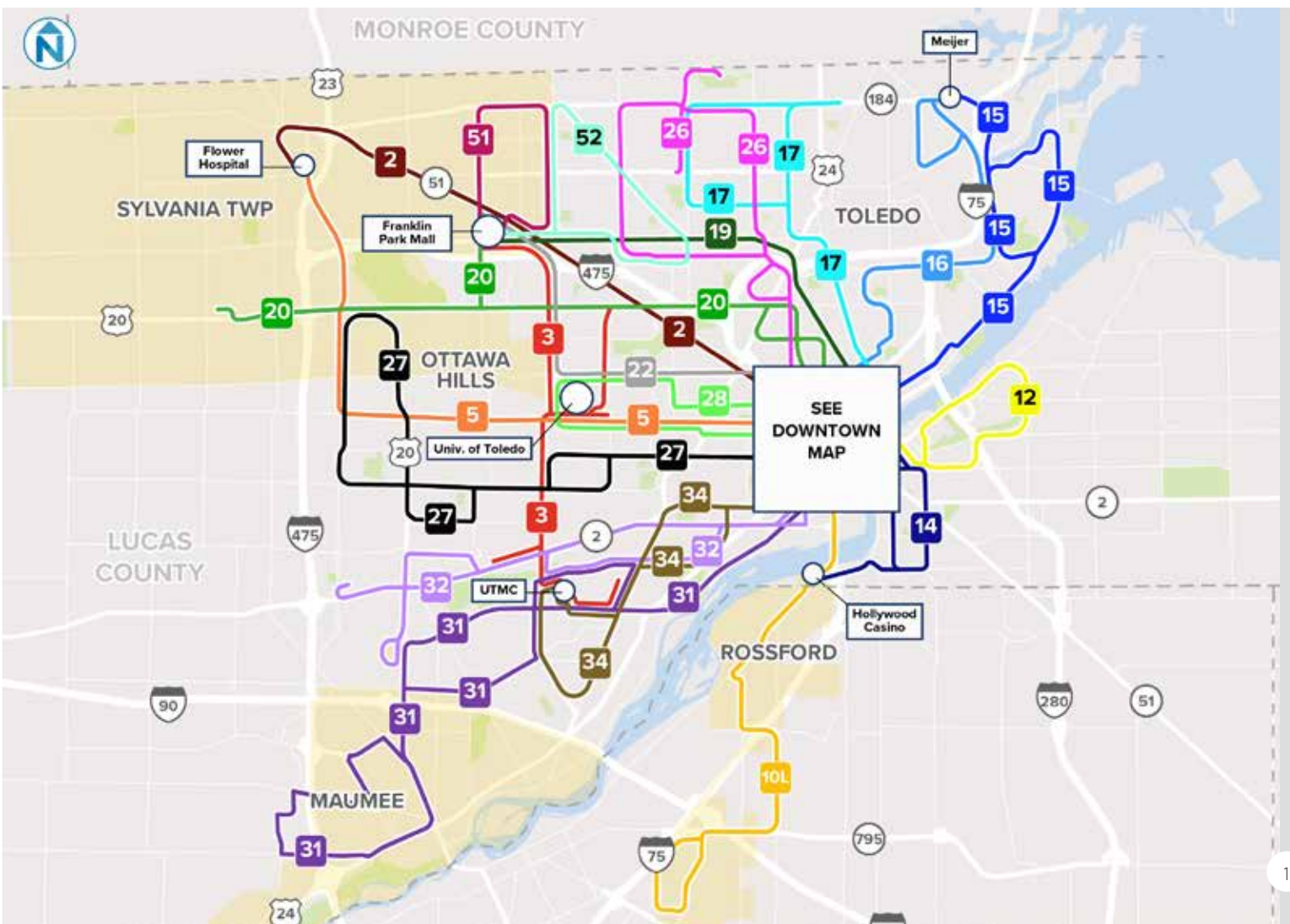
# 1 Introduction

In 2020, TARTA embarked on a transformational journey to **develop a strategic plan to guide regional investment and service development over the next 10 years.** The strategic plan focused on increasing community value, as well as the agency's long-term financial stability. The goal of the new vision was to modernize and energize TARTA to ensure public transit services in the Toledo area make a positive impact on residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



One outcome of TARTA's Strategic Planning process was this comprehensive operations analysis (COA) – branded as TARTA Next – that would evaluate both the existing fixed route network and individual bus routes and services, including TARPS and Call-A-Ride. The scope of TARTA Next expanded after the 2021 tax levy passed, expanding TARTA's mission to include all of Lucas County.

TARTA Next responded to this opportunity to create a transit investment plan that considers both improvements to transit within its current service area (City of Toledo, Maumee, Sylvania, Ottawa Hills, Sylvania Township in Lucas County and Rossford in Wood County) and throughout Lucas County.



## STUDY GOALS

While the focus of the plan has shifted somewhat following the 2021 tax levy, TARTA Next has adhered to the following study goals established at the beginning of the project:



**Provide better access and connections** to jobs, health care, educational institutions, and other communities



**Respond to new developments**, employers' workforce transportation needs, emerging technology, and changing travel preferences



**Increase TARTA ridership**, including attracting new customers to TARTA's services



**Enhance accessibility** to destinations and key employment sites outside the downtown core



**Transform the public transit system** with a broader range of service types and better utilization of system assets



**Adopt "next generation"** public transit service delivery

## What's Changed Since TARTA Next Started?

**Successful passage of Issue 12** that transitions TARTA away from property tax to a local ½ cent sales tax as the primary source of local funding



**New leadership** on TARTA's executive management team and Board of Trustees.



**The federal infrastructure bill passed**, promising additional funding for all transit agencies for both capital and operating



**Sunday service** was reinstated in March 2022



**A modified fare structure** approved by Board of Trustees will begin collecting fares on August 1, 2022



**Challenges** with workforce shortages and vehicle availability



**Recruitment** has become a serious consideration toward service expansion





## Building Support for Enhanced Transit

Several important documents have helped guide TARTA over the past several years and events have led to the development of TARTA Next.

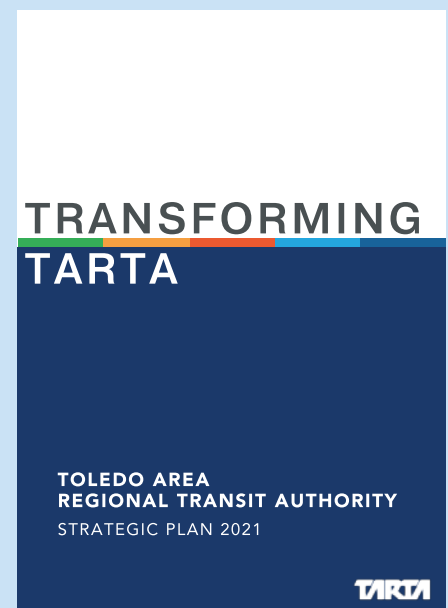
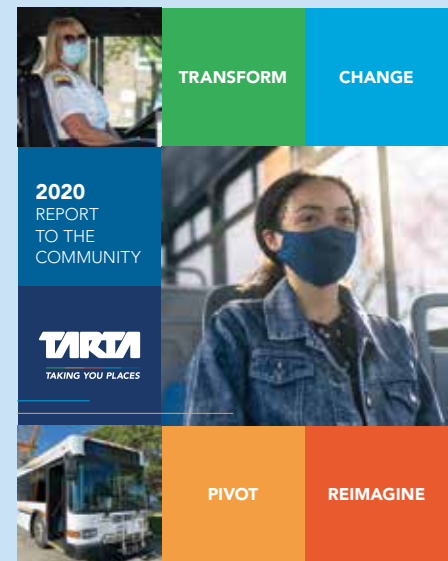
**2020 Report to the Community.** This plan focused on four themes that will move TARTA beyond the funding challenges of the past: Transform, Change, Pivot and Reimagine. This Comprehensive Operations Analysis is a critical element of the vision to reimagine and redesign the next generation of transit service in the Toledo region.

**TARTA Strategic Plan (2021).** The Strategic Plan outlines the highest priority projects for TARTA over the next five years. The primary values driving the plan are a focus on high-quality customer service and providing value to taxpayers. A series of strategic priorities are defined for the agency, along with metrics that are aligned with each strategic priority.

**2021 Tax Levy.** When TARTA Next was initiated, TARTA's primary local funding source was a 2.5 mills property tax levied among seven member communities. However, faced with years of declining property tax revenues, increasing costs and deferred capital needs, TARTA knew that future budget deficits were imminent and that a more stable local funding source was necessary. This led to Issue 12 being placed on the November 2021 ballot, which would transition TARTA away from property tax to a ½ cent sales tax throughout all of Lucas County and Rossford in Wood County. Issue 12 was approved by the voters, which begins the transition away from property tax to sales tax that will occur in 2022 and remain in place for a 10-year period. Because the ½-cent sales tax will be collected throughout all of Lucas County, this plan includes the introduction of new transit service that will be available throughout Lucas County as well as in Rossford.

**Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan and Zero Emission Fleet Transition Plan.** These plans prepare TARTA for future vehicle and facility needs over the coming years to ensure agency assets remain in a state of good repair. TARTA is planning to replace all existing diesel and gasoline vehicles with a zero-emission fleet (battery electric and fuel cell electric) by 2035.

**COVID-19 has been – and continues to be – a major disruption to our lives. Locally and nationally, transit ridership was substantially affected by the pandemic.** As some workers shifted to working from home and non-essential trips were avoided, transit ridership dropped precipitously. At the same time, the pandemic demonstrated that transit is critical for many people, especially essential workers, but also residents who rely on public transit to get to work, school, and other activities. As our communities recover from COVID and transition to a “back to work” economy, the impact and value of TARTA has never been clearer.







# State of the System



## 2

## State of the System

TARTA Next started with a **State of the System** analysis (included in the Appendix) that provides a detailed evaluation of existing services and an understanding of transit markets, demand, and service needs in the Toledo area.

To understand the strengths and opportunities associated with the existing system, this document provides an overview of:

- **Existing services**, route network, and operating characteristics
- **Existing ridership** trends and performance
- **Transit markets** defined according to population, employment, and socioeconomic characteristics as well as activity centers and commute patterns
- **How well existing services are matched with demand** and community needs

The State of the System concludes with a description of opportunities for transit improvements for residents and people who visit, work, live and travel in the Toledo area .

The State of the System analysis is largely based on data collected in the Fall 2021. While the Fall was a relatively stable period in the pandemic, given ongoing public health disruptions and the fact that TARTA was not charging fares during this time, it is worth noting that the data reflects a single point in time. It is the best information available and, at the same time, recognizes that future conditions will continue to evolve in unpredictable ways .





## OVERVIEW OF TARTA

TARTA's transit network is largely focused on the City of Toledo as the major city in Northwest Ohio. The network also connects the neighboring communities of Maumee, Sylvania, Ottawa Hills and Sylvania Township in Lucas County and Rossford in Wood County. The network operates largely as a "hub-and-spoke" model with most bus routes beginning or ending in downtown Toledo. The network is supported by a handful of routes that provide "crosstown" service and that connect to other transit centers outside of downtown Toledo (such as the Franklin Park Mall and the University of Toledo).

TARTA's fixed route and Call-A-Ride services include the following services:

- **Twenty weekday** fixed routes, many of which have different branches designated as separate routes (e.g., 31C, 31G, and 31H). Most routes also operate on weekend days.
- **One University of Toledo** campus route that operates only when the university is in session.
- **Three Call-A-Ride zones** that offer general-public demand response service throughout the area and to transfer locations with the fixed route network.

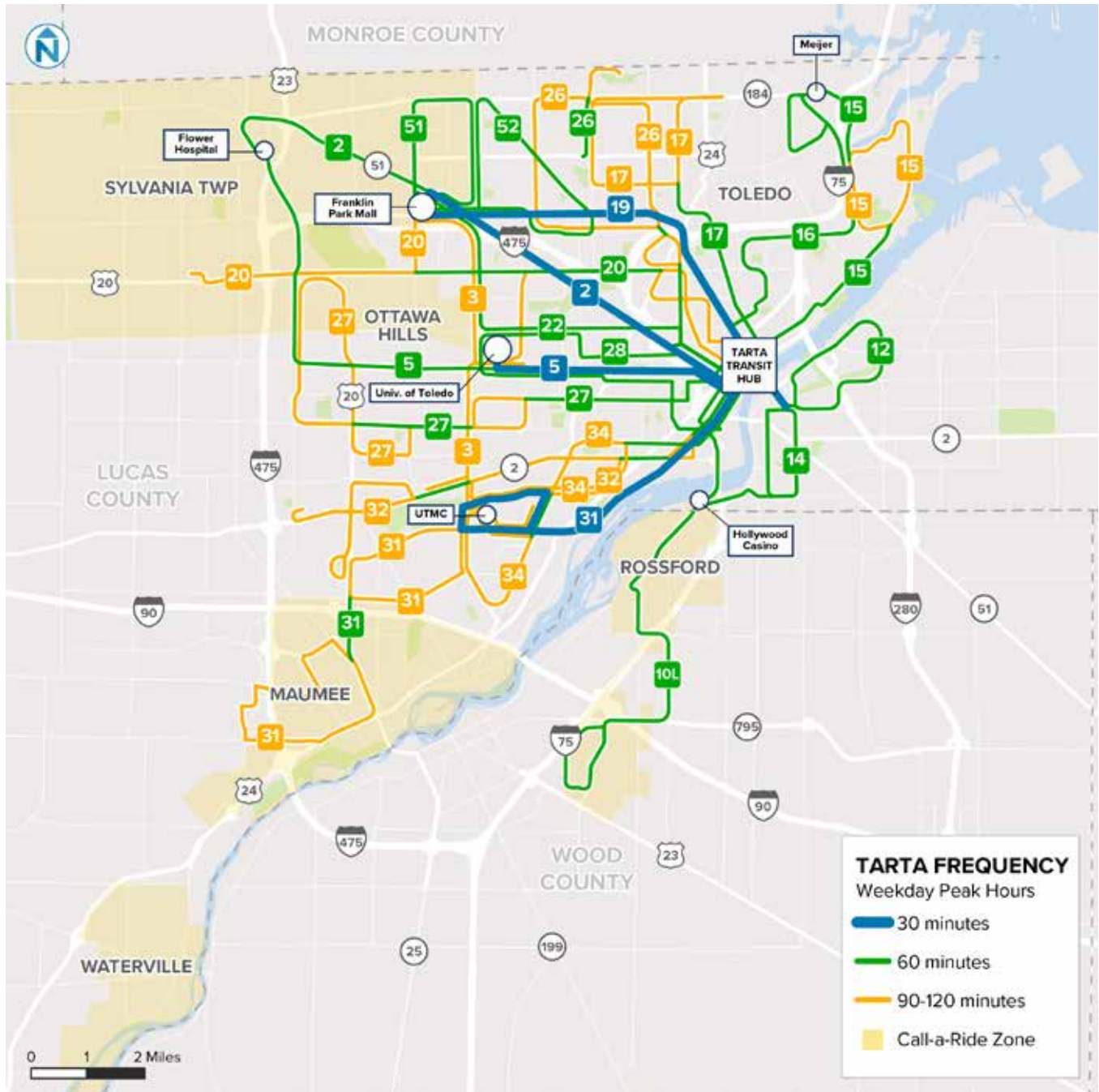
In addition to the fixed route and Call-A-Ride services, the Toledo Area Regional Paratransit Service (TARPS) provides the ADA complementary paratransit service in the Toledo area serving the same communities as the fixed route services.

As shown in the map on the opposite page, weekday fixed route service frequency varies throughout the system. Five corridors have service every 30 minutes on weekdays:

- **The Monroe corridor (Route 2/2C)** from downtown Toledo to Franklin Park Mall
- **The Cherry/Sylvania corridor (Route 19)** from downtown Toledo to Franklin Park Mall
- **The Dorr Street corridor (Route 5/5C)** from downtown Toledo to the University of Toledo Transit Center
- **The Broadway corridor (Route 31C/31G/31H)** from downtown Toledo to the UT Medical Center via Glendale Avenue and Detroit Avenue.
- **The Main Street corridor (Routes 12 and 14)** from downtown Toledo to Starr Avenue in East Toledo.



### Existing TARTA Fixed Route and Call-A-Ride Zones (Weekday Frequency)





## TRANSIT PERFORMANCE

### Fixed Route Key Findings

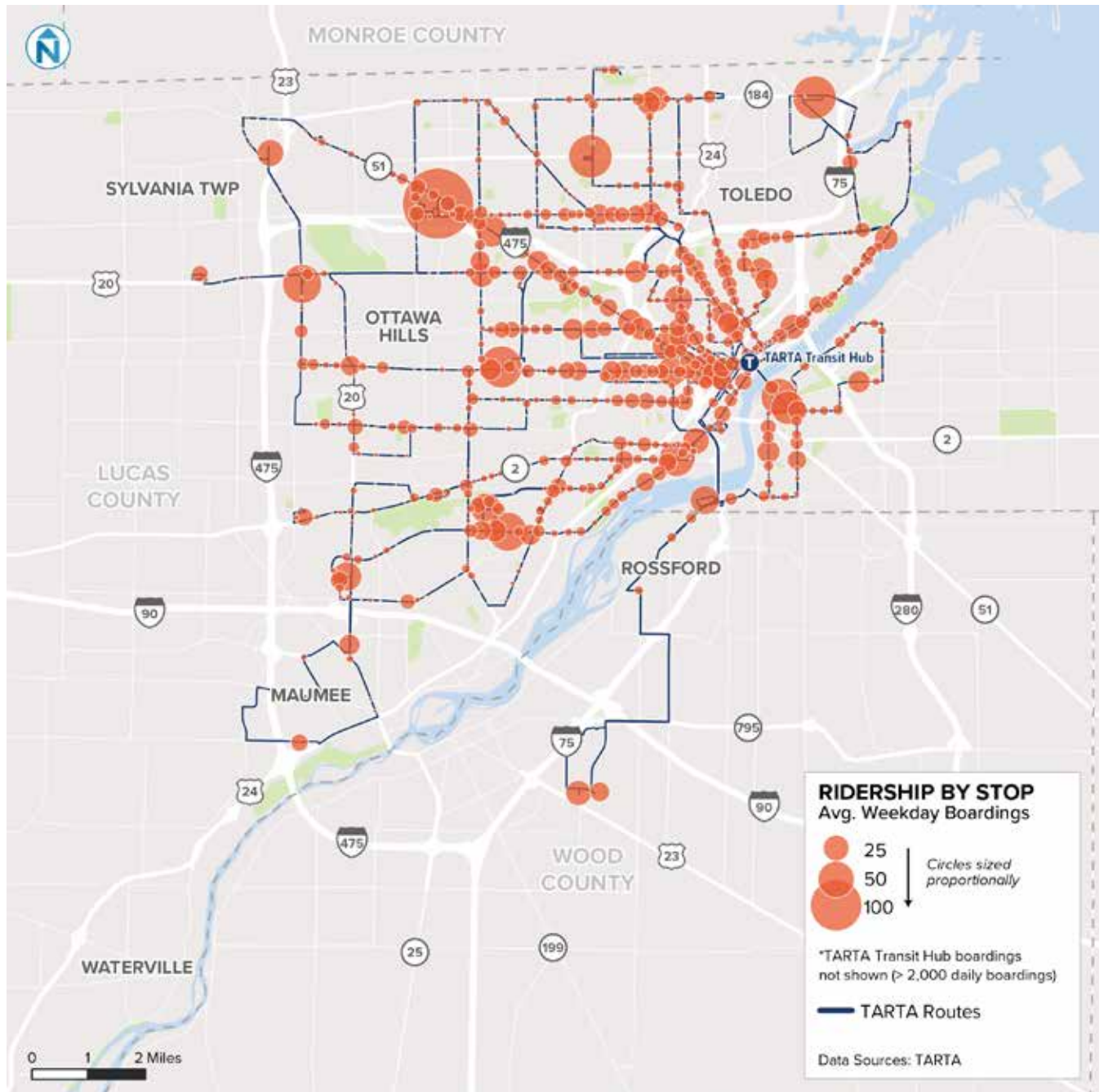
Based on the evaluation of TARTA's existing fixed route services, key issues and findings include:

- **More riders use frequent routes.** Routes that operate with the highest frequency, serve the most developed corridors and carry the most riders. (Routes 2, 5, 19 and 31). Ridership is much stronger on the more urban portions of these routes. Three of these routes (2, 5 and 31) operate with alternating patterns with longer and shorter versions, so that more service is available on the higher demand portions of the route.
- **Routes 14 and 12 in East Toledo are TARTA's most productive routes as measured by passengers per revenue hour.** Both routes operate hourly on weekdays and Saturday. Strong productivity on bus routes with hourly service demonstrates a high need for access. Route 14 is also the fifth highest ridership route in TARTA's network.
- **About half as many riders use TARTA on Saturdays as compared with weekdays. Lower ridership reflects a handful of factors, including** fewer routes operating and lower frequency. On the other hand, productivity (passenger per hour) is higher on Saturday than on weekdays.
- **Ridership is oriented around "peak" transit travel periods.** Most routes have consistent ridership during the midday period with the peak travel period from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.
- **TARTA's buses operate on-time.** While several routes have some modest issues with running late, most routes are either on-time or even running early. It should be noted that routes that are consistently running early may need to have time removed from their schedule.

As shown in Figure 2-2, the highest weekday ridership stop (outside of the Hub, which is not shown for clarity) is Franklin Park Mall. Other major stops include the University of Toledo Transit Center, Miracle Mile, the Meijer on Alexis Road, Walmart on Central/Holland-Sylvania Road, Walmart on Glendale Avenue, and several stops on Main Street in East Toledo.



## Weekday Systemwide Ridership by Stop





## TRANSIT PERFORMANCE

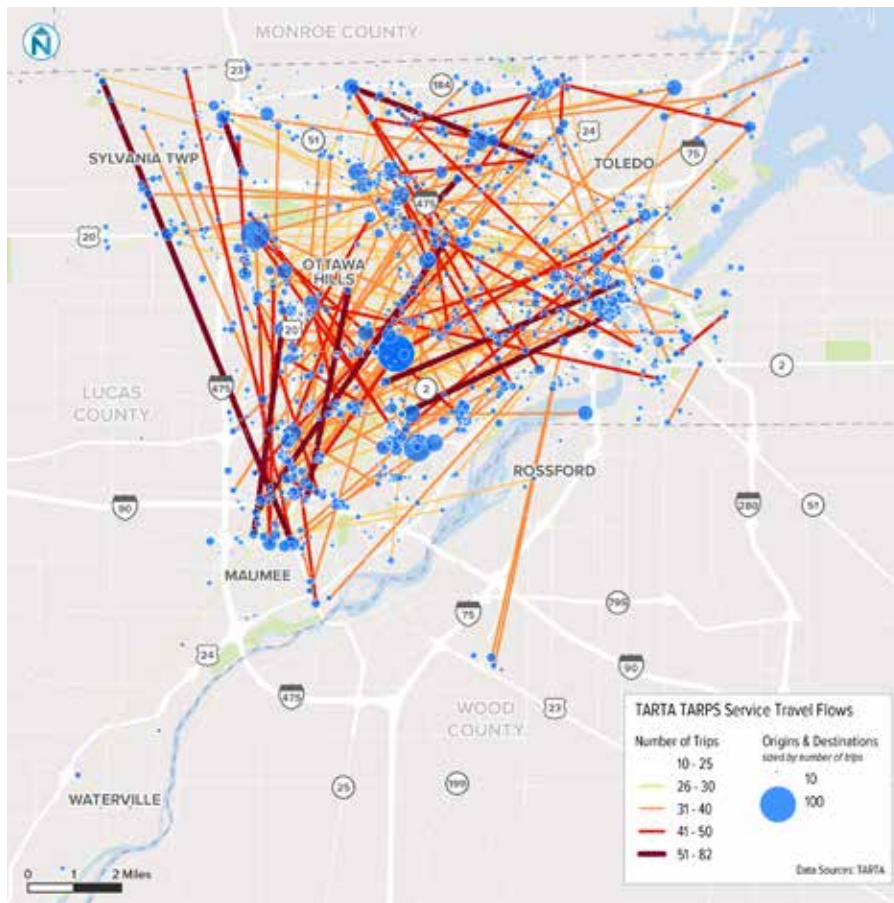
### TARPS/Call-A-Ride Key Findings

The analysis of TARPS and Call-A-Ride is based on monthly data in 2019, 2020 and 2021. This data shows:

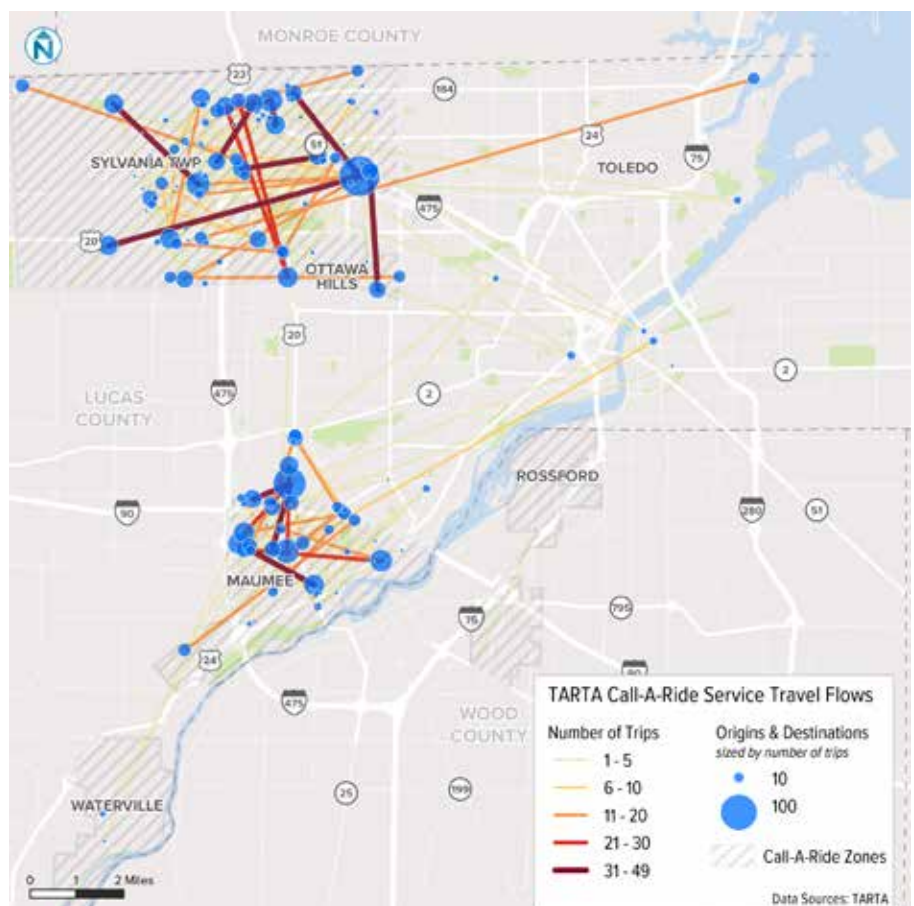
- **Ridership on TARPS has largely recovered from the pandemic.** While ridership dropped in 2020, as was common on nearly all transit services in the country, ridership on TARPS is at or near 2019 levels (see top map, opposite page). It is important to note that this finding reflects a single month rather than an annual data, so on an annual basis, 2021 ridership was likely lower than 2019. Also noteworthy, TARPS operated fare free in 2021, which may have influenced how often some customers traveled. ADA requirements mean all reasonable requests for service must be accommodated.
- **Unlike TARPS, Call-A-Ride service is not well utilized.** Ridership on Call-A-Ride is relatively low and averages just 4 rides per hour (down from an average of 5.25 per hour in 2019; see bottom map, opposite page). The Sylvania-Sylvania Township-Ottawa Hills Call-A-Ride is the most popular Call-A-Ride service, followed by Maumee and Rossford (that has very few daily riders). The low ridership on Call-A-Ride could be related to possible duplication with fixed route services (that are also fare-free), the need to book trips in advance, or the lack of an app-based trip booking platform.
- **Ridership on TARPS peaks in the morning and again in the afternoon,** which is typical of paratransit services. The peak demand period on TARPS is 2:00 PM. Call-A-Ride ridership peaks in the morning and slowly decreases throughout the day. These trends are like previous years but 2021 volumes are lower than 2019.



## TARPS Ridership and Travel Flows (October 2021)



## Call-A-Ride Service Ridership and Travel Flows (October 2021)



## THE MARKET FOR TRANSIT IN THE TOLEDO AREA

### Areas with Strong Local Transit Demand

The State of the System examined the underlying demand and need for transit services using current and future population and employment density together with the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the population. This information shows us:

#### **Downtown Toledo, while not as prominent as it once was, remains an important destination**

and has relatively high transit demand both in 2020 and 2035. The concentration of office, civic and entertainment activities downtown drive the need for transit service. Trips within the downtown area are expected to increase by 2035, even as the need for connections to and from downtown Toledo softens over time.

**The Monroe Street corridor** between downtown and Sylvania is the region's primary artery, especially from the ProMedica Toledo Hospital to Flower Hospital in Sylvania. This corridor is expected to remain important well into the future.

**Many central Toledo neighborhoods** show strong transit demand, largely due to neighborhoods that are lower income and households without access to a vehicle. This includes East Toledo, West Toledo, the La Grange, Warren Sherman and Old Town neighborhoods, as well as the Southside neighborhood.

**The Franklin Park Mall and Westgate areas** are major draws in the region for shopping and services and is where many people in the older residential neighborhoods travel for jobs and essential services. These areas are expected to maintain their importance in the future.

**The University of Toledo and UT Health Sciences Campuses** are both strong generators of transit demand. The main UT campus tends to have more localized and internal demand, whereas the Health Sciences campus generates more regional demand.

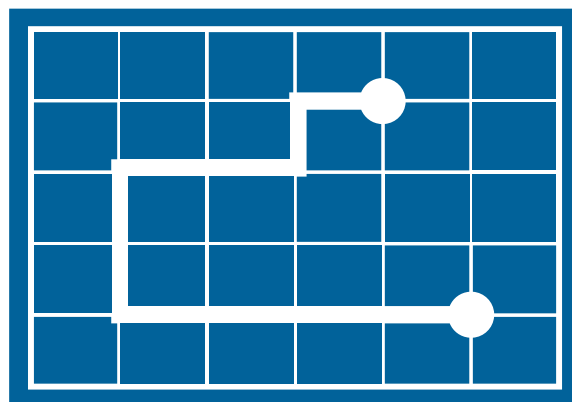
**The northern part of Maumee and southwest Toledo** also has strong current and future transit demand, largely due to a mix of commercial uses, medical facilities and jobs. This area includes the Amazon fulfillment center in Southwyck.

### Areas with Lower Local Transit Demand

**Most of the rural parts of Lucas County** is not a strong market for traditional fixed-route transit services, largely due to lower population and employment density, but also based on propensity for populations to use transit. This is especially true for areas west of I-475 (except for pockets of demand in Holland and Sylvania) and the eastern part of Lucas County (most of eastern Oregon and points further east). Other types of transportation services could be successful here but would not be expected to generate significant ridership.

**There are also several locations throughout the region** that are large regional trip generators but are either difficult to reach with transit service or are located further away from population centers. Some of these facilities also operate in shifts that generates demand at some times, but far less demand at other times. These areas include:

- Fiat Chrysler Automobile Plant
- GM Powertrain Plant
- Owens Community College in Perrysburg
- Amazon Distribution Center in Rossford



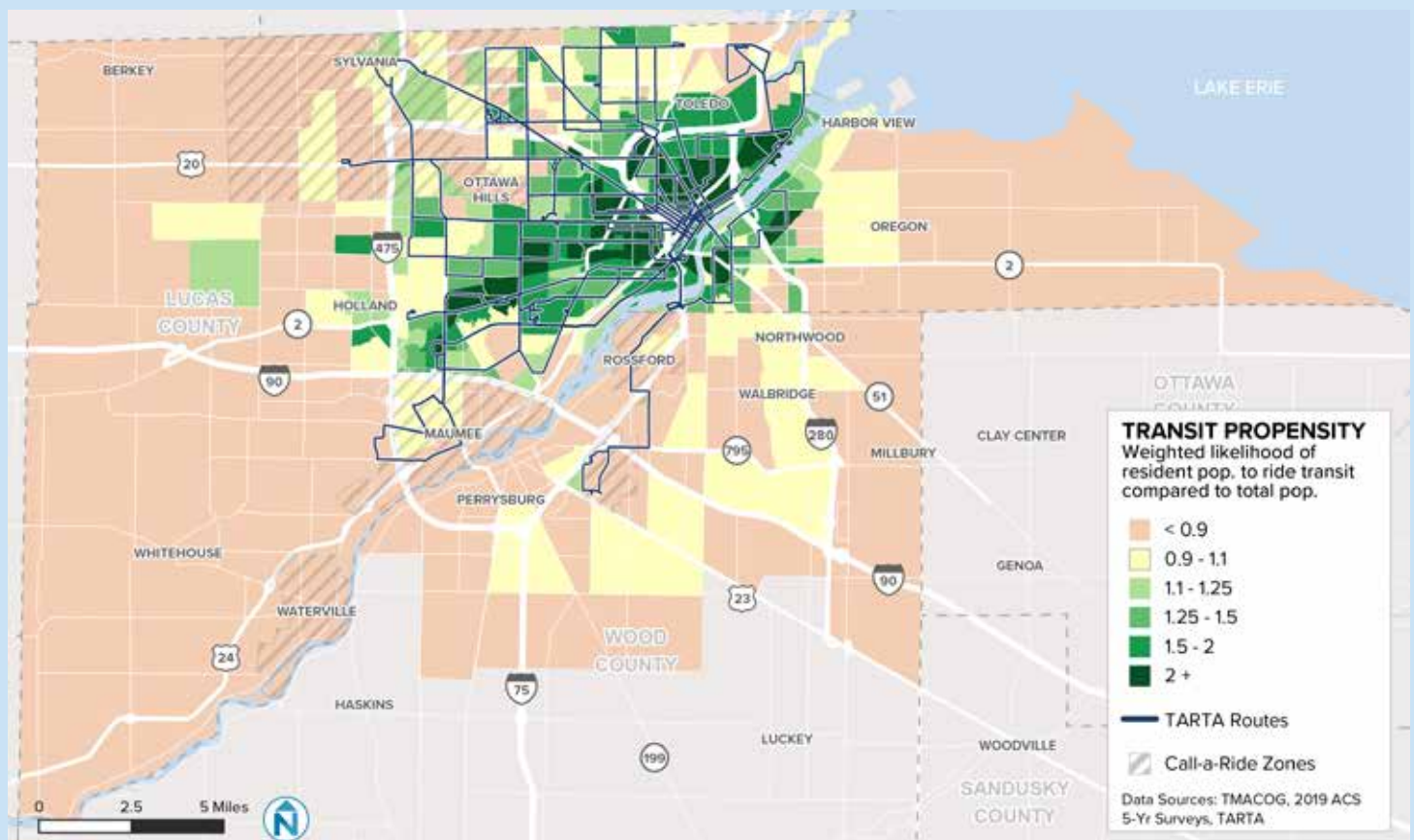


## Transit Propensity

TARTA Next recognizes that certain demographic and socioeconomic characteristics influence people's propensities toward using transit, such as people of color, low-income households, and households without access to a vehicle. As such, the underlying demand for transit in these areas may be higher than is captured by just looking at population density. Conversely, in areas where transit-supportive groups have lower representation, the transit demand may be lower than what is captured purely by population density.

Taking these factors into account, the project team calculated a measure called the Transit Propensity Adjustment Factor, which measures the relative demand for transit in different areas of the Toledo region based on demographic characteristics. The map below shows the effect the transit propensity adjustment factor has on population density for Lucas County and the northern portion of Wood County.

### Transit Propensity (2020)





# Community and Stakeholder Engagement



## 3

# Community and Stakeholder Engagement

## OVERVIEW

TARTA Next is designed to create a balanced, equitable and efficient transit network that better serves existing riders and attracts new riders to the system. It was also designed to build a broad coalition with community, political and financial support reflecting the interests of a diversity of stakeholders and communities.



TARTA Next's initial phase focused on existing conditions and developing a state of the system analysis to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the existing network together with rider needs and travel patterns. The initial phase also included extensive stakeholder and community engagement with goals of:

- **Creating awareness** about the TARTA Next project
- **Understanding rider and non-rider perceptions** about TARTA's existing services, including what's working well and what's working less well
- **Collecting feedback** on underlying transit service design options (or trade-offs)

The project included three phases of engagement:

- **Phase 1 (Fall 2021)** - Study awareness, gather community goals/priorities
- **Phase 2 (Winter 2022)** - Share draft recommendations/service improvement opportunities
- **Phase 3 (Spring 2022)** - Formal presentations to local communities and key stakeholders
- **Phase 4** - Share and collect feedback on draft recommendations





## SUMMARY OF FALL ENGAGEMENT (PHASE 1)

TARTA Next's phase 1 engagement focused on developing a state of the system analysis to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the existing network together with rider needs and travel patterns. The initial phase also included extensive stakeholder and community engagement with goals of:



- **Creating awareness** about the TARTA Next project
- **Understanding rider and non-rider perceptions** about TARTA's existing services, including what's working well and what's working less well
- **Collecting feedback** on underlying transit service design options (or trade-offs)

The Fall engagement associated with TARTA Next included a multi-faceted effort that included:

- **Developing project branding, collateral, and outreach infrastructure** including launching a project website, project fact sheets and other "infrastructure" to encourage awareness and share information.
- **Establishing a TARTA Next Advisory Committee (TNAC)** to bring together community stakeholders to guide and provide feedback on the project findings and help promote the project regionally.

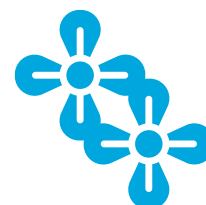
- **Conducting "in reach" with TARTA Board members and staff**, including transit operators.
- **Holding two community meetings and multiple "pop-up" events** to collect feedback on TARTA services and discuss transit service design options.
- **Administering surveys with community members and transit riders.** While both surveys were designed to collect similar information as the community meetings, the rider survey also asked additional questions about travel patterns.
- **Convening a stakeholder "transit planning workshop"** for participants to consider their priorities and values for transit service improvements





## SUMMARY OF SPRING ENGAGEMENT (PHASE 2)

Spring 2022 engagement activities included a multi-faceted effort to gather feedback on two service scenarios of fixed-route service and the introduction of microtransit concepts. It also introduced for the concept of county-wide service made possible by the passage of TARTA's levy in November of 2021.



Highlights of Spring engagement activities include:

- **Expanding the TARTA Next Advisory Committee (TNAC)** to bring together new and old community stakeholders to guide and provide feedback on the Service Scenarios and present the initial findings for the earlier phases in the project
- **Conducting "in reach" with TARTA Board members and staff. The TARTA Next team made presentations to the TARTA Board and facilitated a discussion about draft recommendations.**
- **Holding two community meetings and multiple "pop-up" events** to collect feedback on TARTA services and discuss transit service design options.
- **Administering a community survey** to solicit input on two Service Scenarios. More than 200 people completed the survey, providing roughly 400 comments and ideas.
- **Formal presentations to all of TARTA's local city councils as well as key stakeholders** like the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, Community Advocates for Transportation Rights (CATR), Warehouse District, and TMACOG.

## ON-BOARD SURVEY

In October 2021 an on-board survey was conducted to understand trip characteristics, customer priorities, and customer characteristics of existing riders. Detailed findings from the survey can be found in the Appendix; key findings include:

- **TARTA's ridership is highly transit dependent and low-income**, with many customers using the service every day without reliable access to a vehicle.
- **The majority of customers use TARTA to travel to/from work**, but they also rely on TARTA to travel for shopping, school and medical appointments.
- **The highest ranked priority for service improvements was keeping costs low**, followed by increased service frequency, faster and more direct routes, and more comfortable bus stops.

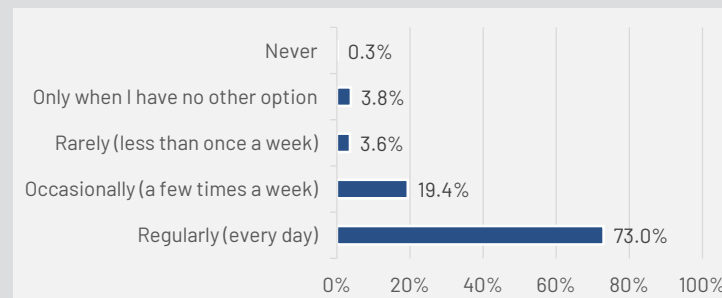
## COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online community survey was conducted for approximately two months beginning in late August 2021. Key findings from the survey include:

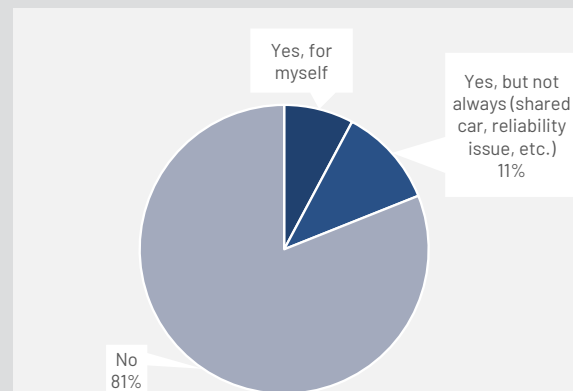
- **Respondents have a positive view of TARTA**, which supports the voter approval of Issue 12 in November.
- **Respondents wanted TARTA to operate service on Sunday** as well as expanding weekday service hours later in the evening.
- **Most respondents were focused on improving basic services** (such as weekend service and later evening service) over providing more frequent service.
- **Service to Oregon and Holland** (specifically the Spring Meadow shopping area) were the two most common service expansion requests.
- **Many respondents said that the physical condition of passenger amenities** (stops, shelters, and the buses themselves) needs improvement.
- **Respondents familiar with TARPS requested additional service hours on the weekends**, later evening service, and improvements to the reservation process.

## Select Survey Results

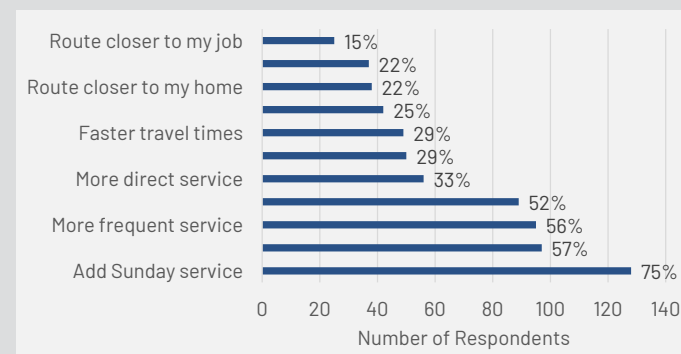
### Trip Frequency



### Vehicle Availability



### Vehicle Availability







## KEY OUTREACH THEMES

Key findings from the engagement process is summarized below. This process has been pivotal in shaping the TARTA Next Vision (presented in Chapter 5) that better reflects current travel patterns and provides transit service that is faster, more direct, and easier to understand. The Vision Plan also includes a variety of new transportation options that will enhance mobility throughout the region.

### Summary of Fall Engagement Findings

- **Monroe Street is Toledo's most important corridor for transit service.** It travels through the heart of the urbanized areas with potential for connections/routes to other important parts of the community.
- **While East Toledo has some transit service, both stakeholders and riders suggested strengthening the service** with faster, more direct connections into Toledo, but also connections to closer shopping and employment on the east side of the Maumee River.
- **Sunday service is one of the most widely voiced themes and desires**, expressed across at nearly every venue. (Note: TARTA started providing service on Sunday in March 2022.)
- **Riders also expressed an interest in crosstown service** to avoid traveling into downtown Toledo to transfer between routes. An example of a good crosstown route is Route 3 that connects Franklin Park Mall with the UT Medical Center area and the VA on Detroit Avenue.
- **Riders asked for more and better equipped bus stops**, including more information at the bus stops. People said that there aren't

enough enclosed shelters or dry waiting areas for passengers.

- In terms of specific service improvements, riders suggested that TARTA:
  - **Add more service to the Rossford area** (past the casino) to serves jobs in the area.
  - **Early trips to downtown on Route 5 needs to start further west.** Right now, they start at the University of Toledo but there are riders further west who need earlier service.
  - **Provide service via Douglas** to the Miracle Mile.
  - **Strengthen and improve service in East Toledo and Oregon**

### Summary of Spring Engagement Findings

- **There was overwhelming support for expanding fixed-route service to East Toledo and Oregon**
- **Riders and stakeholders generally preferred Scenario A**, the scenario that focused on generating ridership over Scenario B, the scenario that focused on geographic coverage. While this conflicts with earlier input from the Community Survey where restoring basic services was more important, more frequent service was preferred when faced with a more tangible choice.
- **The public was supportive of the microtransit options but had questions** about how it would be integrated with fixed-route and paratransit services.

## TARTA PLANNING GAME







## Overview of Planning Game Workshop

In Fall 2021, the project team facilitated a “transit planning game workshop” with a group of regional stakeholders. While the primary goal of the workshop was to allow participants to “plan out” a conceptual future transit network, the real value of the workshop was helping participants understand the difficult tradeoffs associated with providing transit service. There were five groups in the workshop, each with approximately 5 participants. At the end of the workshop, each group shared the network they developed with the larger group. Key themes from the workshop include:

- **Service is a must** on Monroe Street, Cherry Street, Sylvania Avenue and Dorr Street, and service should be frequent and operate all day. Nearly all participants desired the best service on Monroe between downtown and Franklin Park Mall.
- **Expansion of service to Oregon and Spring Meadows** is strongly desired.
- **Crosstown services** were desired so that customers didn’t have to travel through downtown for all longer regional trips.
- **Demand response zones** were desired by in suburban/rural areas
- **A downtown circulator route** was desired by some participants





# Transit Opportunities



# 4

## Transit Opportunities

The State of the System report together with stakeholder and community input led to a series of service improvement opportunities for TARTA.

### Build on Strengths of the System

Several of existing TARTA' bus routes (e.g., Routes 2, 5 and 19) are direct, serve a primary corridor serve important destinations and carry a lot of riders. Building on the success of these routes is fundamental to TARTA Next.



### Sunday and Evening Service

Riders want and need Sunday service. This was the most widely requested service improvement bidirectionally along major corridors. Indeed , TARTA implemented Sunday service in March 2022. Other parts of the network that need more investment are the hours when service available.



### More Crosstown Service

While downtown Toledo will remain an important regional destination, travel patterns and activities have changed in the region and most of the shopping and services are now spread throughout the region rather than concentrated in downtown. For this reason, more crosstown opportunities have been identified in the TARTA Next Vision.



### Keep it Simple

Many routes in the existing system have one-way loops, route variations, or a long and short line (e.g., Routes 5 and 5C). While it is sometimes difficult to avoid these design features (especially in low-density areas), existing customers and community input made it clear that a simplified route network is desired.



### Connect Everyday Destinations

Existing routes that connect important everyday destinations, like grocery stores, shopping malls, colleges and schools, and medical centers carry more riders. They are also places where people go to work and access services. TARTA Next should strengthen and improve connections to these destinations.



### Connect Regional Destinations

Sporting and entertainment destinations (like the Mud Hens stadium, Toledo Zoo, and Walleyes' arena) may not generate "everyday" trips, but are still important regional destinations. Similarly, universities and major medical centers are regional destinations that transit customers may not travel to every day. It is important for TARTA to continue serving these regional destinations.



### Schedule Consistency

An important element of high-quality transit service is schedule consistency – both in terms of headways (time between trips) as well as consistency of service on weekdays and weekend days. Consistent service is how people plan their lives, and consistent service all days of the week is increasingly important for transit riders. The TARTA Next Vision recommends consistent schedules and service that operates no less than every hour (and better on core routes).



### Bus Stop Information and Amenities

As the "front door" to transit, bus stops are perhaps the most visible element of transit besides the buses themselves. The TARTA Next Vision recommends enhanced facilities throughout the system, especially at major destinations or stops with high ridership activity.



### Enhance Safety of Transfers at the Hub

The Hub will likely remain TARTA's most prominent and visible facility for many years and is where most riders both wait and transfer between connecting routes. While TARTA encourages customers to use marked crosswalks at Cherry and Huron, it is natural for transferring customers to take the most direct path and cross Huron Street mid-block. Because this is a low-volume street, the TARTA Next Vision encourages TARTA and the City of Toledo to consider restricting access on this section of Huron Street to transit vehicles only.



### Customer Information

TARTA Next recognizes that an important element of high-quality transit is marketing and information. Signage at bus stops should clearly identify the bus stop and convey important information that customers. Because stop locations and route alignments inevitably change, signage should be simple and easy to update. While static information like bus stop signage and schedules are important, digital platforms have arguably become the most effective way to disseminate transit information to most customers. Several digital platforms are already available for TARTA services, including Moovit, Google Maps and the Transit app as well as EZfare for electronic fare payment. These platforms should continue to be supported and be seamlessly integrated with static information to ensure consistency of the brand.



### Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

In some parts of the region, sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure are lacking, which makes using transit much more challenging and could result in making route alignment decisions that facilitate safe access over direct service. TARTA Next emphasizes the importance of this issue and to advocate for better access to and from transit throughout the region.



### On-Demand Services (Call-A-Ride and Microtransit)

Operating effective, efficient on-demand transportation services is an important opportunity, and a key recommendation of TARTA Next, which calls for transitioning the existing Call-A-Ride service to a new on-demand service that would also offer new service to expanded areas of the service area.



### TARPS Paratransit

TARPS' ADA complementary paratransit service must consider the needs of people with disabilities while also responding to the underlying fixed route network changes. The TARTA Next Vision recommends some expansion of the service area to respond to changes to the fixed route network, but also recommends modifications to the eligibility process over time.



### Partnerships

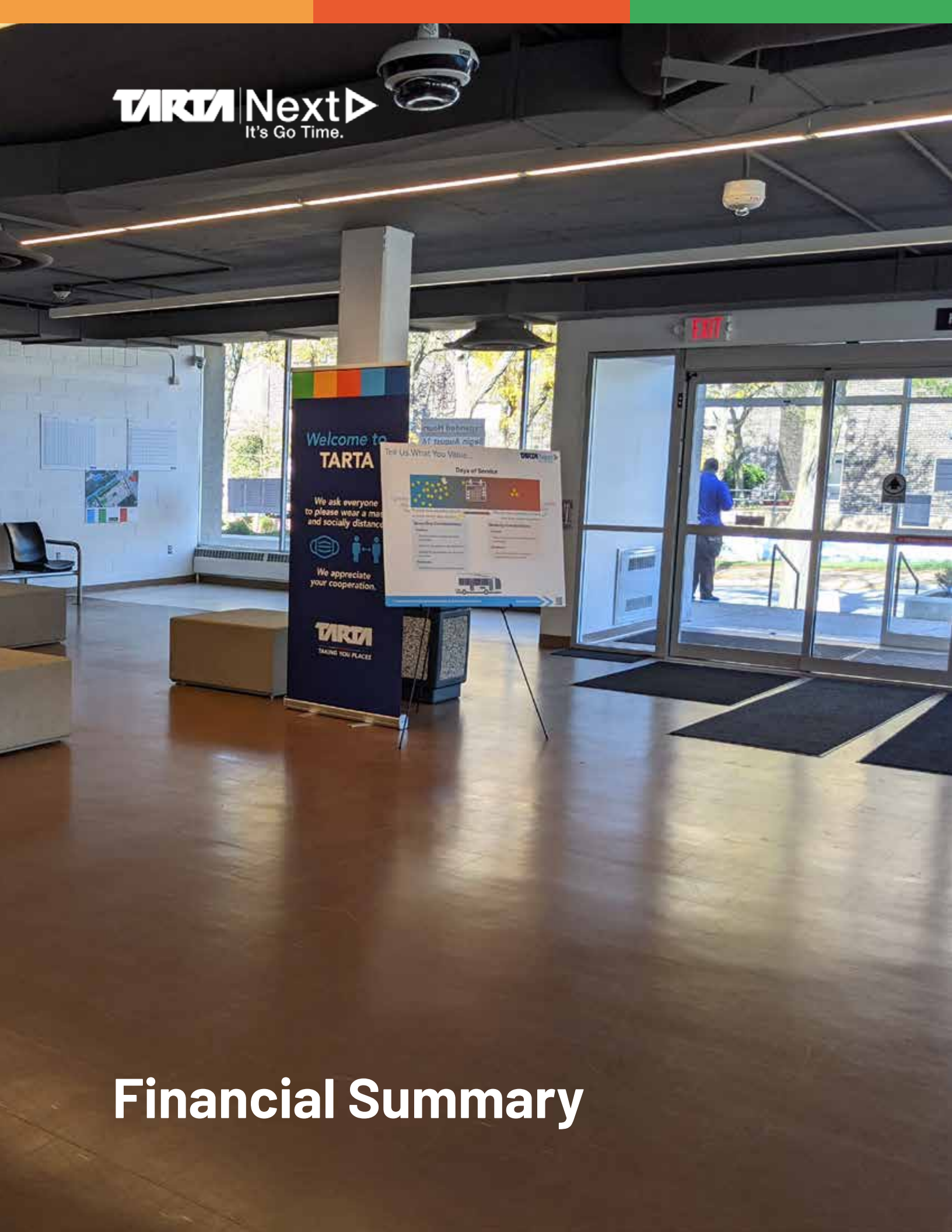
Partnerships are an important element to all successful transit agencies. TARTA has developed strong community and stakeholder partners in the Toledo region, which helped bring the region's successful ballot initiative. Broadening and continuing to strengthen these partnerships is a fundamental part of the TARTA Next Vision.











# Financial Summary



## 5 Funding TARTA and TARTA Next

### OVERVIEW

Transit agencies in the United States are publicly supported services like other transportation infrastructure of roads, bridges and highways. While Ohio transit agencies earn revenue from passenger fares and service contracts, most of the revenue used to fund transit services comes from federal and local sources. In 2022, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) only provided approximately \$70 million for more than 65 transit agencies across the state.

Public transit agency budgets are also separated into operating and capital funds. Operating funds support the ongoing day to day elements of transit service, like staff wages, fuel costs and vehicle maintenance. Capital funds support purchases like buses, passenger facilities and maintenance facilities.

TARTA receives funds from a combination of federal, state, and local grants plus some contracted revenue. Prior to the pandemic, TARTA also collected passenger fares and raised revenue from contracts with the City of Toledo public schools. During the pandemic, TARTA suspended fares and also stopped contracting for school service. TARTA

continues to provide on campus transportation service to the University of Toledo's students, staff and faculty.

Federal and state funds primarily support TARTA's capital budget, while local funds largely support TARTA's operating budget. Through June 2022, TARTA spent roughly \$16.9 million operating service and invested just over \$5.6 million in capital projects. Local funds accounted for about 40% of TARTA's budget.

Historically, TARTA was funded through a property tax millage levied on parts of the urbanized area (Toledo, Ottawa Hills, Maumee, Sylvania, Sylvania Township, Waterville, and Rossford). In November 2021, residents in Lucas County approved a half-cent sales tax. This sales tax will be effective for 10-years and replaces the property tax. The sales tax offers a handful of advantages over the property tax, including that it creates a clear consistent service area (all of Lucas County); the sales tax is also expected to raise about \$32 million annually, more than double the \$13.5 million collected from the property tax millage. Given TARTA's funding portfolio, the sales tax will increase TARTA's revenues by about 35%.



## TARTA NEXT

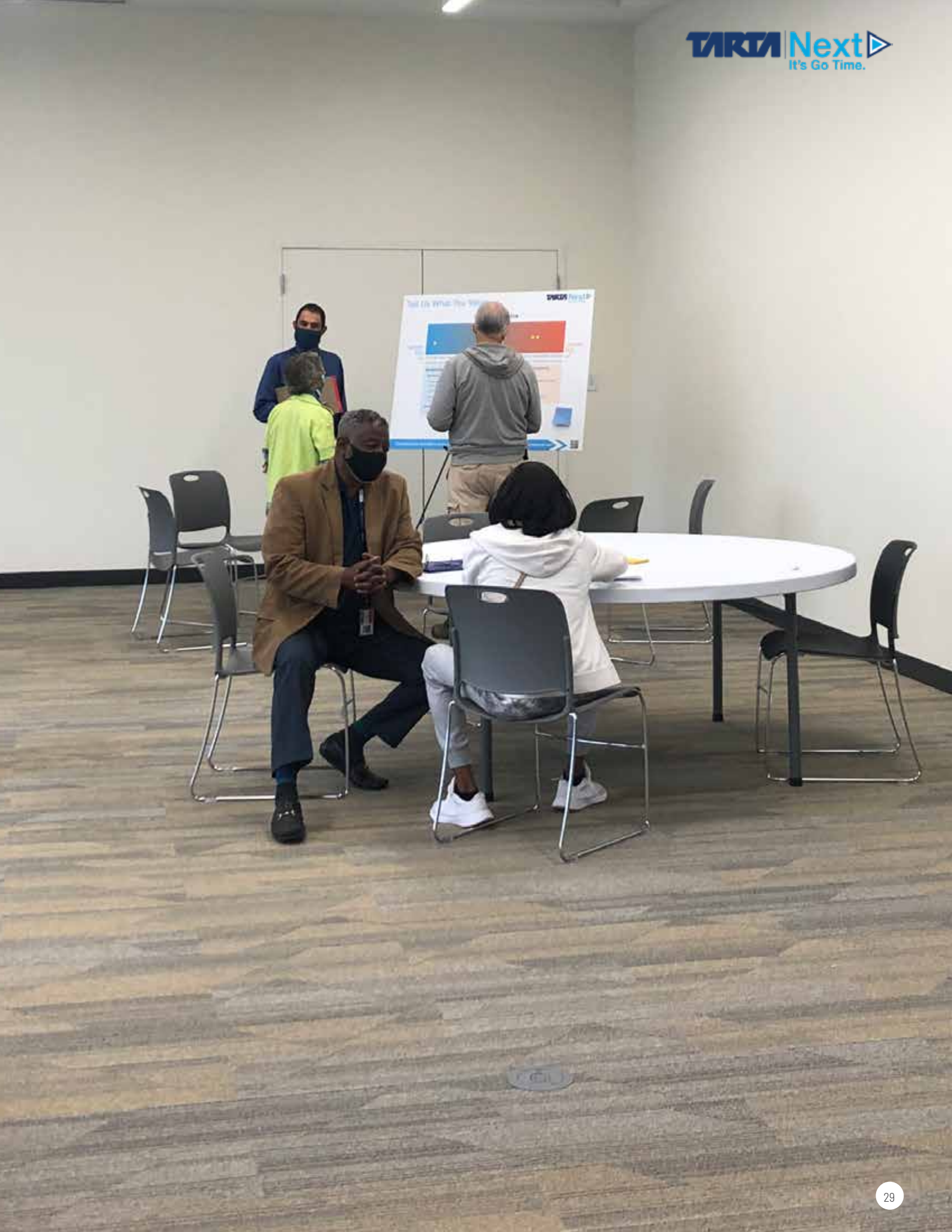
TARTA Next identified a series of recommendations for TARTA to invest in, both to fulfill the need to provide countywide transit services and to improve the quality of existing services. Existing revenues, even with the new sales tax revenues, are not sufficient to implement all the recommendations laid out in this document. Several recommendations, however, may be carried forward.

Over the past few years, TARTA made strategic investments in its workforce, Sunday service and capital program:

- 1. Workforce** – Transit operators, dispatchers, mechanics and other staff are at the core of TARTA's business. Investment in the TARTA workforce had been deferred by nearly a decade in some cases. After a transit industry analysis, in 2022, TARTA increased its investment in staff with higher wages and benefits. These investments added about \$1.5 million annually to TARTA's operating costs. This increase in wages and benefits, will also help TARTA address the current workforce shortages that exist in northwest Ohio and in the transit industry.
- 2. Sunday Service** – In spring 2022, TARTA re-instated Sunday service, which cost roughly \$1.1 million for a half year of service in 2022 and \$2.2 million for a full year of service in 2023.
- 3. Capital needs** – TARTA is restoring its capital program by investing in new vehicles, technologies, and facilities.

Many of these investments have already started. Transit riders and members of the public have already started to see new buses, as well as updated fareboxes and other investments. TARTA's annual capital program will increase to about \$9 million annually, a significant increase over existing levels of investment.





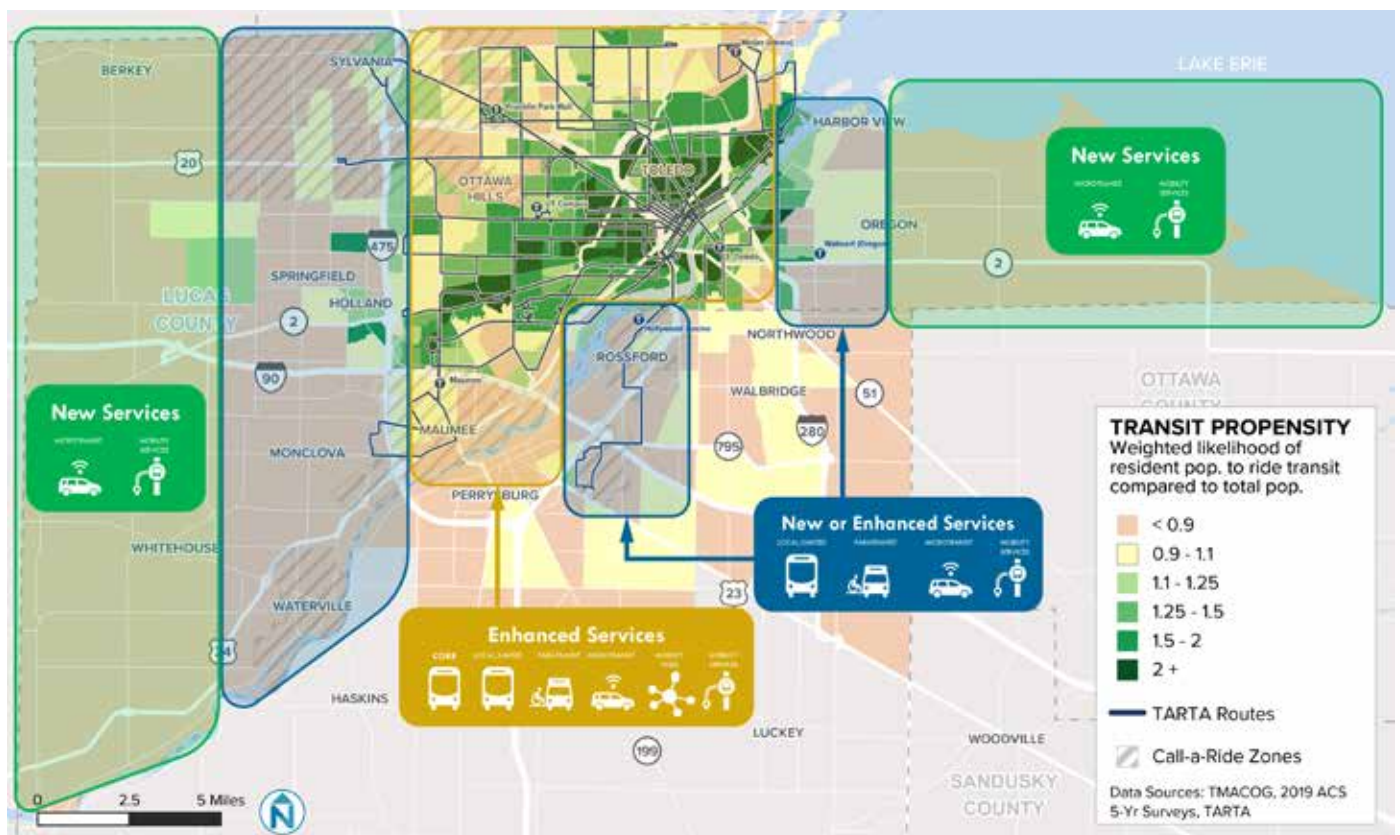


# TARTA Next Vision

## 6 TARTA Next – the Transit Vision

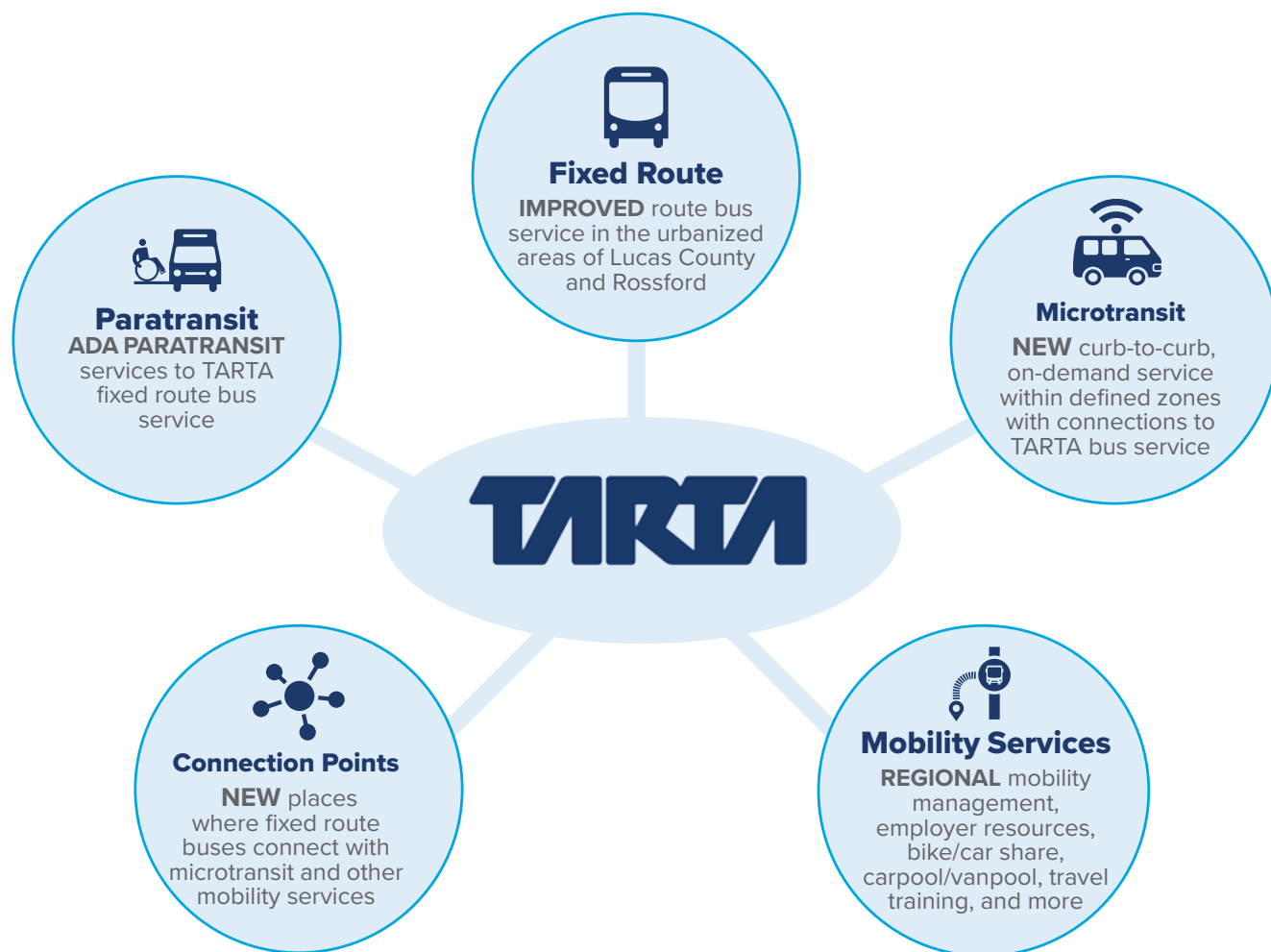
TARTA Next's Transit Vision combines a series of strategies that collectively will expand and enhance mobility throughout Lucas County and parts of Wood County. The Vision Plan matches transit investments to the underlying market for transit so that services are appropriate and cost effective:

- **Central Toledo** primarily includes the City of Toledo and the more urbanized areas of adjacent communities. This part of the service area has the highest density of land uses and contains some 60% of county residents and 65% of county jobs. TARTA Next includes strategies to enhance TARTA's fixed route service, introduce microtransit in key areas, add more passenger amenities, and expand regional mobility options.
- **Suburban/Exurban Toledo**, an area that includes communities to the west of Toledo, like portions of Sylvania, Holland, Monclova Township, Springfield, and Maumee as well as Oregon in eastern Lucas County and Rossford in Wood County. These areas have moderate density land uses and are experiencing new residential and commercial development. Most – but not all – parts of suburban Toledo are currently served by TARTA. Service improvements will primarily include some new and/or expanded fixed route connections, new microtransit services and new regional mobility options.
- **Rural Lucas County** includes the western portion of the county (Berkey, Swanton, and Whitehouse) as well as the eastern end of the county along Lake Erie. This area has primarily rural land uses with relatively low levels of population and employment. Rural Lucas County was not part of TARTA's service area prior to 2022, so service improvements will focus on introducing new flexible, demand response service to rural residents, as well as offering access to new regional mobility options.



## TARTA NEXT VISION

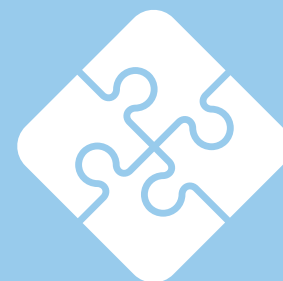
Public transit is important because it provides access to opportunities. It is valuable when people use it to get to work, school, appointments and visit family and friends. Our goal, therefore, is to create a network of services that provide these opportunities in a way that is appropriate and cost effective. We do this by matching service investments with markets, demand and need.



## Timing and Prioritization

It should be noted that the strategies presented in this section represent a long-term vision and are not intended to be implemented in their entirety or all at once. In other words, the TARTA Next Vision is not a traditional service plan that provides a prescriptive step-by-step plan for implementing the plan. Rather, the Vision Plan has been developed more as a framework plan that offers TARTA the ability to improve transit services over the next 10 years as community needs dictate. This approach also allows TARTA to respond to frequently changing conditions, such as budget, staffing levels, and equipment availability.

However, recognizing that some of the strategies presented in the Vision Plan have strong community support, the final chapter presents several near-term improvements that could be implemented in the next 12-18 months. These strategies are presented as considerations to show progress towards implementing the plan as TARTA's financial picture becomes clearer and the region continues to recover from pandemic-era reductions.





## Service Scenario Options

TARTA Next evaluated existing transit ridership, market needs, and regional travel patterns combined this information with input from the community to identify service needs and priorities. We developed two scenarios and shared them with the community through a survey and community meetings to understand preferences and priorities (see maps below). The scenarios offered contrasting ways that transit could be provided:

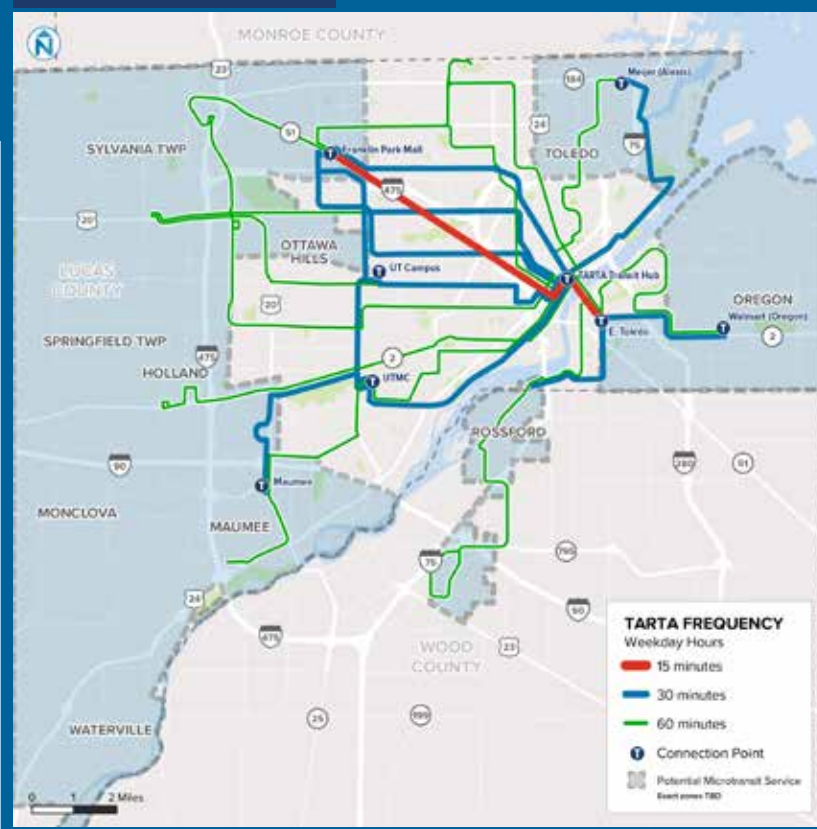
**Scenario A** –concentrates fixed route service along the region’s most important corridors that have the greatest potential to generate ridership. On-demand transit services are also included that connect to the fixed route network.

**Scenario B** - serves more corridors but with less frequent service. On-demand transit services are also available but may be less extensive where fixed route service is available.

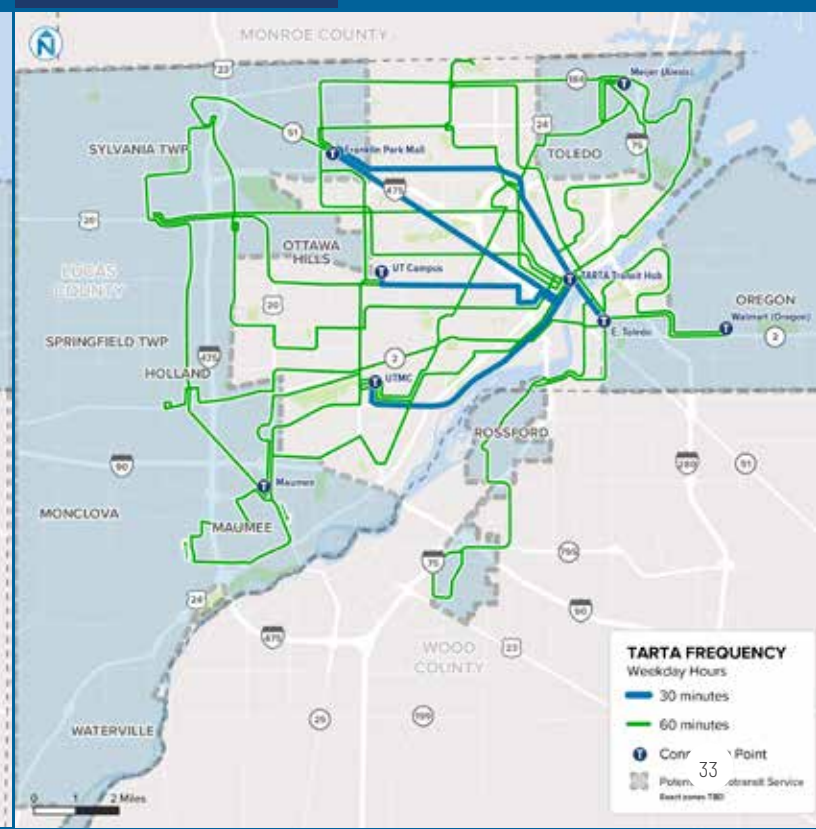
### Service Scenario Input

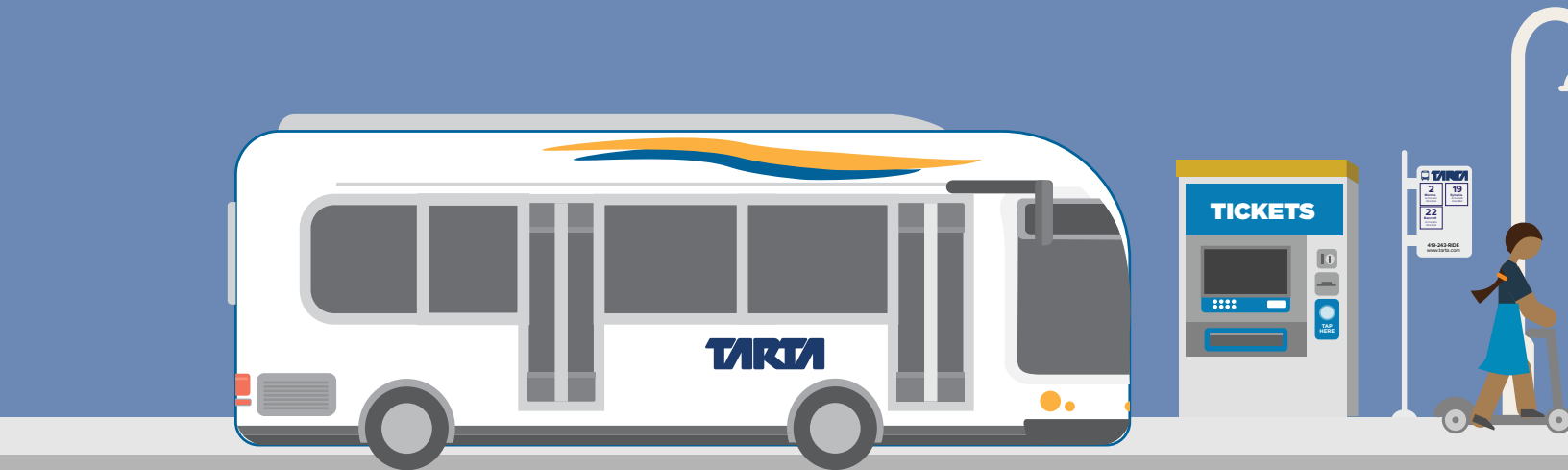
Based on over 200 responses to the survey, respondents slightly favored Scenario A over Scenario B, noting that the more frequent and direct service was somewhat more desirable than geographic coverage. Still, many respondents approved of the expanded geographic coverage, especially service to Oregon and the Spring Meadows area. Similarly, new crosstown services received favorable reviews among some respondents. Respondents also expressed an interest in microtransit, and many of them noted that this type of service would provide a more flexible and nimble service in low-density areas. Finally, a notable number of respondents requested express routes operating either to special events or that would provide non-stop (or limited stop) service between suburban communities and Toledo. Features from both scenarios informed the final concept and recommendations presented in this section.

#### Scenario A



#### Scenario B





TARTA Next's Vision for Transit is organized around three main themes.

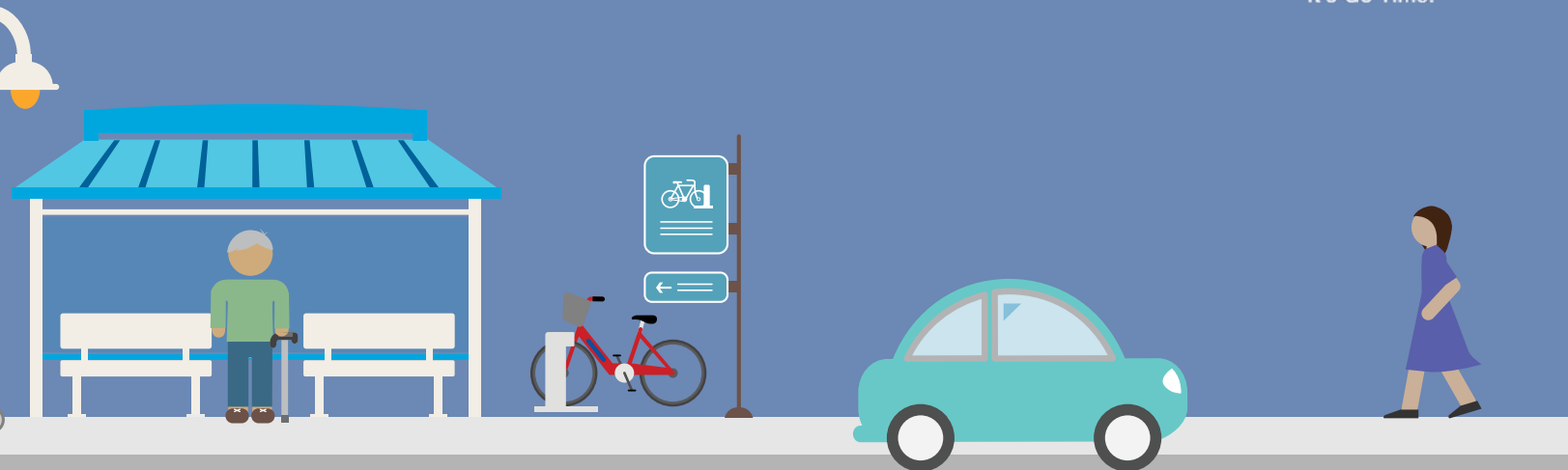
### 1. Improve Urban Mobility

Prior to 2022, TARTA's fixed-route bus service focused on the City of Toledo and adjacent urbanized communities in Northwest Ohio (Maumee, Sylvania, Sylvania Township, Ottawa Hills, Rossford and Waterville). These communities have population and employment densities as well as land uses that make fixed-route bus services effective. We will invest and strengthen this network by:

- [Streamline and Simplify All Routes](#) (page 36)
- [Maintain and Expand the Core Network](#) (page 38)
- [Provide a Better Level of Service on Local Routes](#) (page 40)
- [Strategically Expand Service to Jobs and Services](#) (page 42)
- [Provide New Crosstown Connections](#) (page 44)
- [Update TARPS Eligibility and Service Area](#) (page 46)







## 2. Expand Regional Connectivity

Successful approval of the 2021 sales tax levy means TARTA will begin providing countywide public transportation services in 2022, and as such, TARTA Next is recommending a strategy for expanding transit services throughout Lucas County. As such, the following regional strategies are recommended:

- **Microtransit** (page 48)
- **Support Other Regional Mobility Enhancements** (page 52)



## 3. Strengthen the Customer Experience

While TARTA Next is focused on improving transit service, investments in the systems and infrastructure that support transit service are critical. Strengthening customer service, for example, includes enhanced amenities at locations where people wait for the bus or transfer to other routes. Other investments can include passenger information systems, such as smart phone applications that allow passengers to plan, book and pay for trips on transit, or new clean fuel vehicle technologies. As part of the recommended service improvements, TARTA Next calls for the following improvements:

- **Connection Points** (page 53)
- **Bus Stop Improvements** (page 56)
- **Service Classification** (page 57)
- **Route Naming** (page 58)
- **Future Fare Policies** (page 59)
- **Zero or Low-Emission Fleet** (page 60)
- **Rapid Bus on Monroe** (page 61)





## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Streamline and Simplify All Routes

Like all people who travel throughout the region, transit riders want to get to their destination quickly and easily. Community input as part of TARTA Next supports this goal – among both existing riders as well as non-riders.

As such, a key theme of TARTA Next is to restructure the existing fixed route network in a way that provides more direct service while still serving key corridors and destinations. A simplified route network will continue to serve 99% of existing riders.

The following themes integrated into the TARTA Next Vision include:

- **Routes are more direct and serve primary corridors**, making them easier to understand and navigate

- **Routes focus on serving and connecting** major destinations in the region
- **Routes begin and end at major destinations**, such as a grocery store, shopping center or medical center
- **Schedules operate with simple, repeating patterns** (e.g., every hour or half hour)

The illustration on the facing page, from the State of the System report, details the primary elements that make up high-quality transit service. In addition to providing direct, simplified service, other factors like safe passenger amenities, good bicycle and pedestrian access, and clear information are also important elements of making transit successful. Some of these supporting elements will be discussed in a later section.

### Service Frequency

Frequency, or how often a bus passes a bus stop, is one of the most important ways to make bus service successful. Frequency is also an expensive and requires making tradeoffs about where to make these investments. (It's not the only way, but it is the most important one.)

Frequency helps riders because:

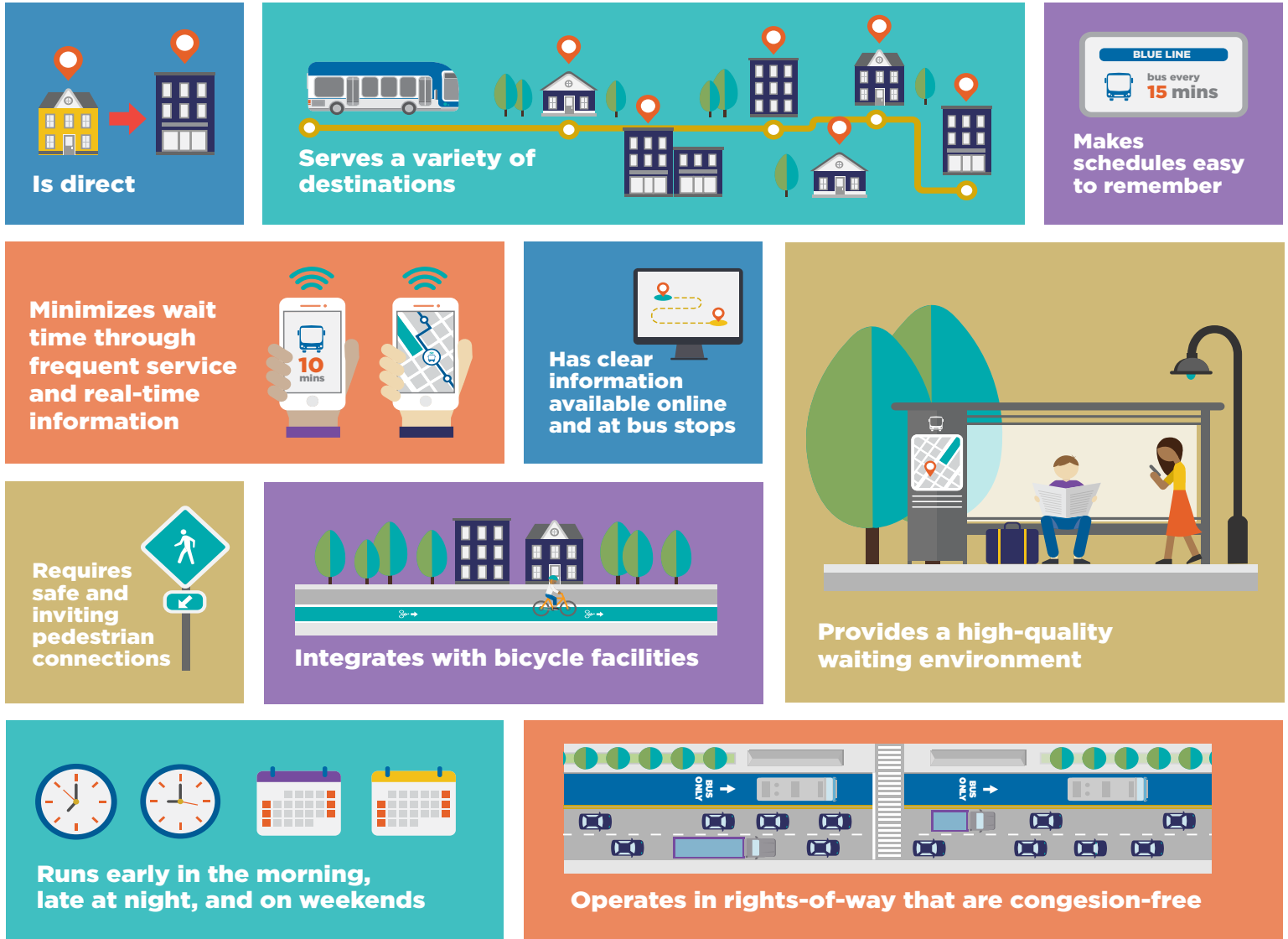
- It reduces waiting time
- It makes connections easier
- It ensures reliability

Buses that come every 30 minutes is the minimum frequency level for useful service. Less frequent service, like hourly bus routes, provides a lifeline for riders, but it is not an attractive option for most trips. TARTA should strive to provide at least 30-minute service on all weekday routes.





## Characteristics of High-Quality Transit Services...





## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Maintain and Expand the Core Network

Currently, TARTA has four “core” routes that operate every 30 minutes for most of the day on weekdays. They also serve Toledo’s primary corridors. Because they serve the primary corridors and operate the most frequently, it is no surprise that the core routes also have the highest existing ridership in the system and make up 37% of system-wide ridership.

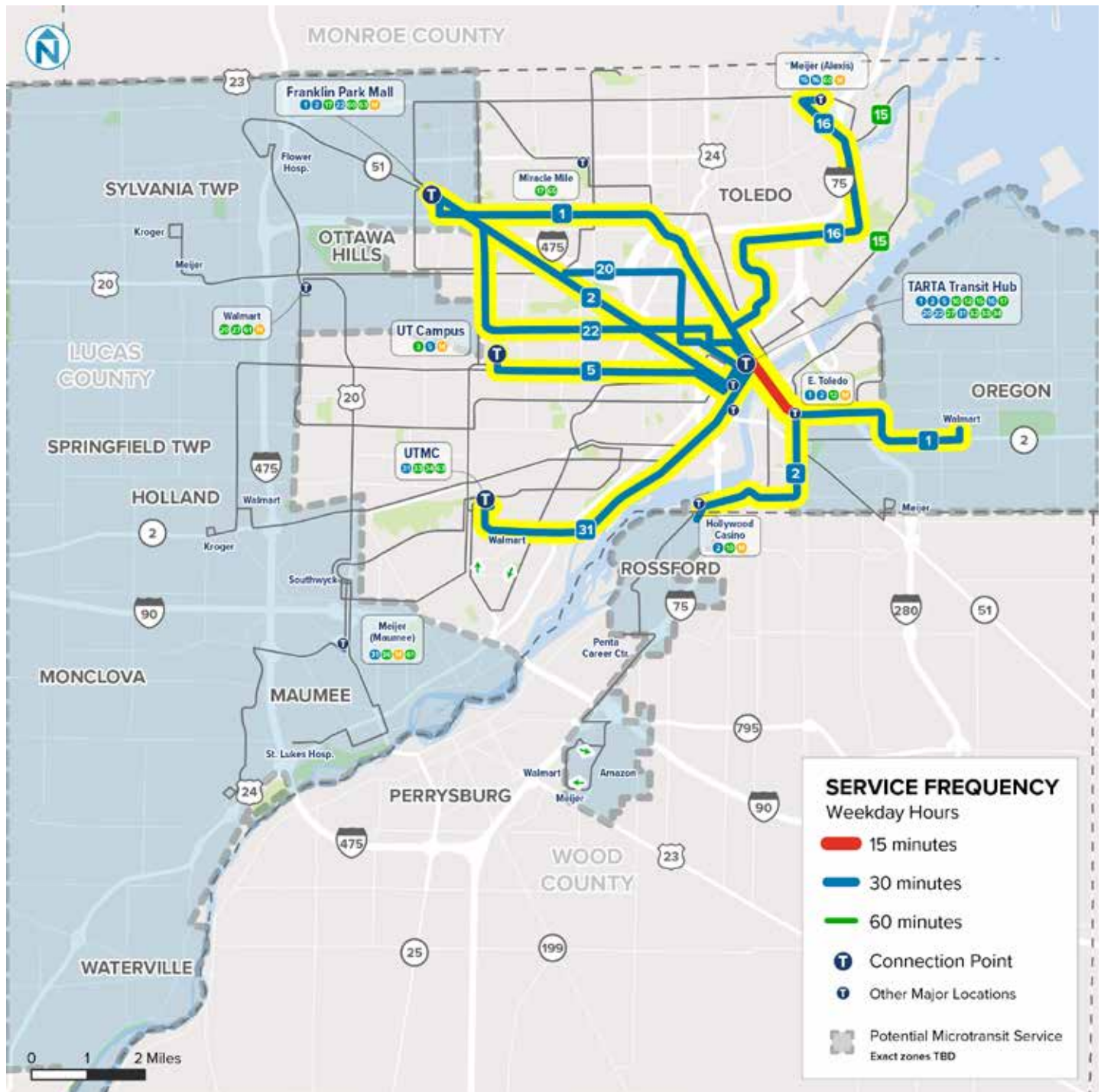
TARTA Next is recommending maintaining most of this core network and expanding it to areas that justify an enhanced level of service based on existing ridership patterns, current or planned land use, or community support.

Key elements of the recommended core network shown on the opposite page include:

- **Expand the network to nine “core” routes** serving corridors and neighborhoods that exhibit the strongest demand for transit and connecting them with major employment destinations and activity centers, like grocery stores, shopping centers, hospitals, and schools.
- **Service on the core routes will operate at a minimum every 30-minutes for most of the day** on weekdays starting at 5:00 AM and operating until 10:30 PM.
- **Weekend service on the core routes would initially operate every 60-minutes from 7:00 AM to 9:30 PM on Saturday and from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Sundays.** While existing ridership on Saturday is about half of an average weekday, service should be monitored on the core routes to determine whether additional frequency is warranted.



## TARTA Next Vision: Core Network Map





## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Provide a Base Level of Service on Local Routes

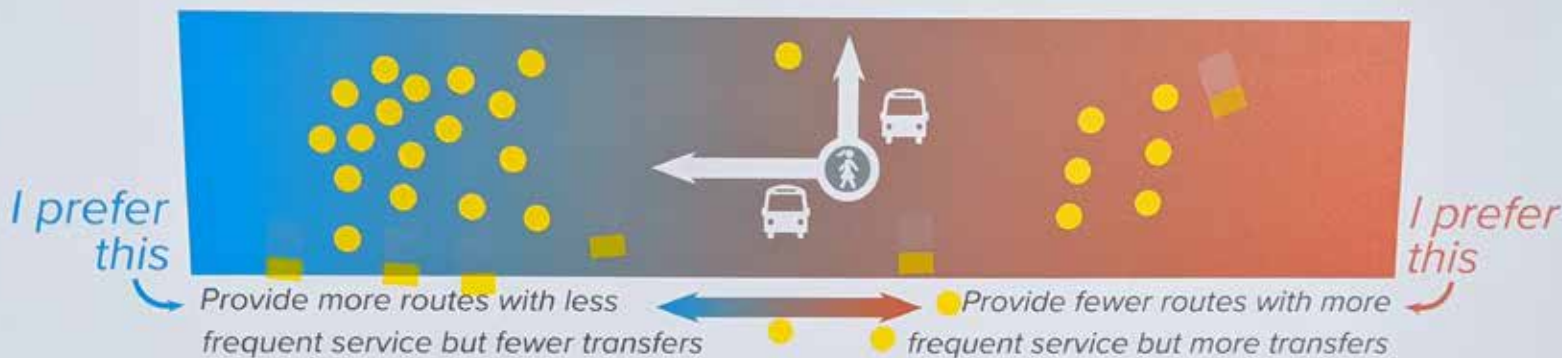
In addition to the “core” network of routes, the TARTA Next Vision includes a network of “local” routes that provide coverage throughout the service area. The local routes largely serve residential areas and neighborhood commercial without many regional destinations, and thus justify lower service levels.

As with the core routes, service on the local routes would be provided from 6:00 AM to 9:30 PM Monday through Saturday and from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Sundays. Local routes would

operate at a minimum every 60 minutes and are intended to connect lower density residential areas with employment, activity centers, and connection points where transfers can be made to other transit services.

The local route network is illustrated on the opposite page.

## Transfers

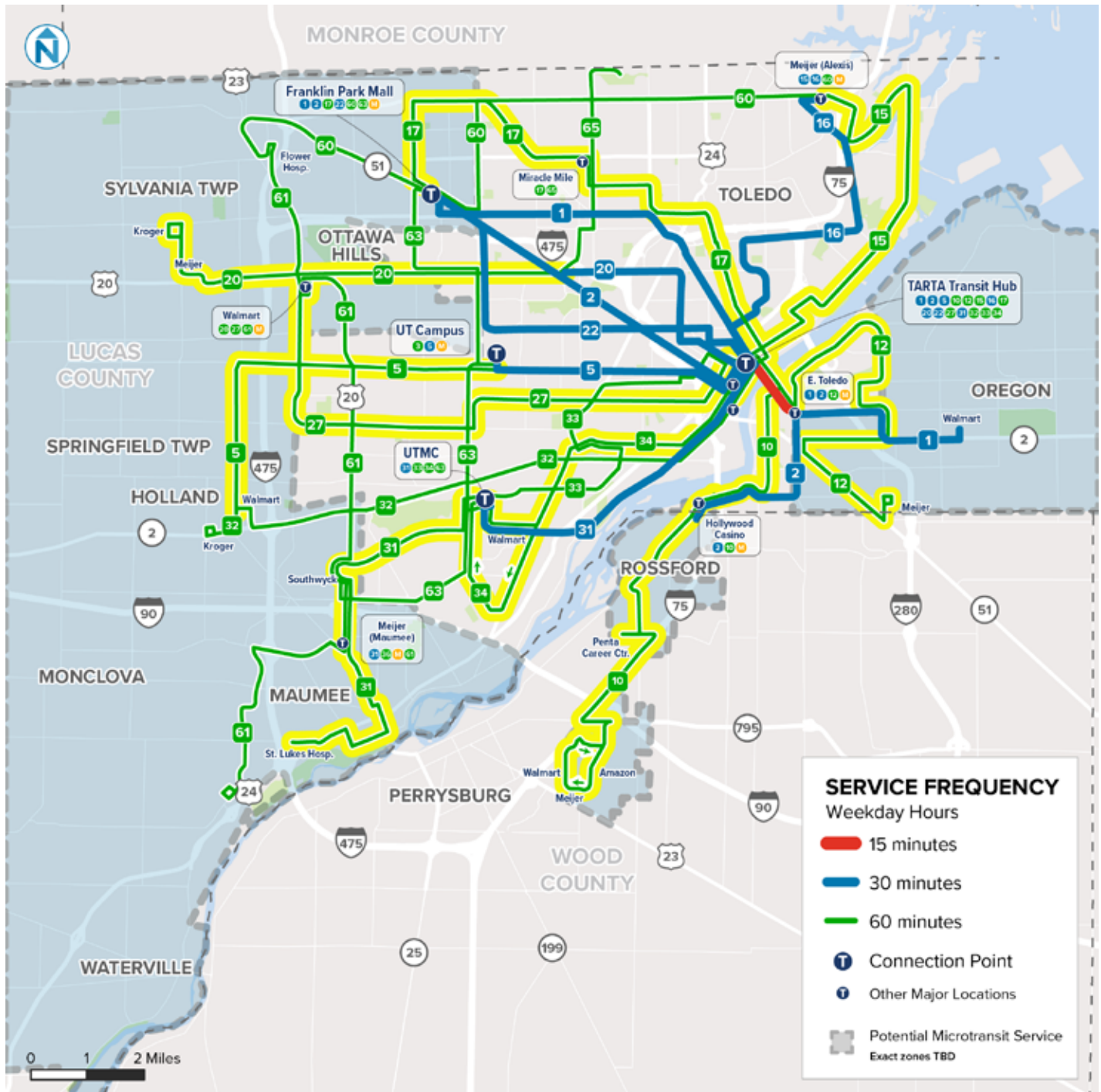


### Transfer Considerations:

- Customers tend to dislike transfers
- Transfers introduce uncertainty
- Frequent service and good connections can reduce these perceptions
- Greater emphasis on one-seat rides can lead to less frequent and lower utilized route



## TARTA Next Vision: Local Route Network







## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Strategically Expand Service to Jobs and Services

An important element of the TARTA Next Vision is to identify areas throughout the TARTA expanded service area that exhibit demand for transit but are either under-served or not currently served. Based on the State of the System evaluation, as well as stakeholder and community input, it was clear that there are several areas that are just beyond the existing fixed-route network and exhibit a strong desire for fixed route service expansion:

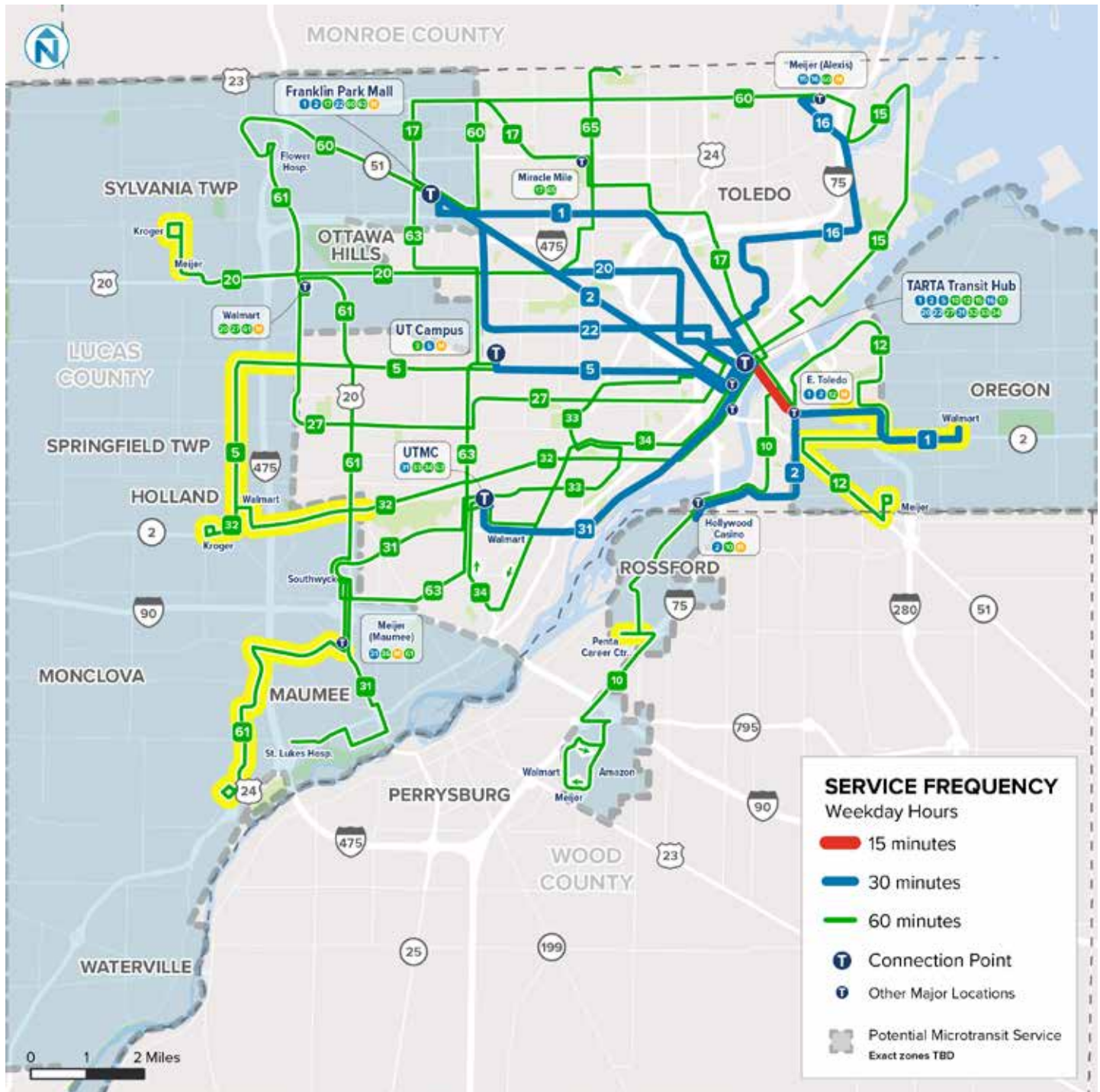
- **Spring Meadows Shopping Center (Holland/Springfield Township).** The area along Airport Highway just west of I-475 is a major shopping and jobs destination in this area. As a result of TARTA's previous funding structure, TARTA's Route 32 terminates at the smaller Springfield Commons shopping center just east of I-475 and is beyond a short (1/4 mile) walk from this area. Major destinations in the Spring Meadows areas include a variety of smaller retail establishments as well as larger destinations like Walmart, Target, Kroger, Menards, and Aldi.

- **Oregon.** Adjacent to East Toledo, Oregon is a large city geographically that has a relatively dispersed and low-density development patterns, especially on the eastern side of the city that is much more rural. Navarre Avenue is the main commercial street in Oregon and has several important regional destinations, including the St. Charles Medical Center, a Kroger grocery store, and Walmart. On the southern edge of the city adjacent to Wood County is another medical center (ProMedica Bay Park Hospital) and a Meijer.

Other areas that are considerations for service expansion include McCord Road between Dorr Street and Holland (Spring Meadows Shopping Center), King Rd/Sylvania Ave (Sylvania), Fallen Timbers (Maumee), and the Penta Career Center (Rossford).

The service expansion priorities included in the TARTA Next Vision are illustrated in the map opposite.

## TARTA Next Vision: Service Expansion Areas





## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Provide New Crosstown Connections

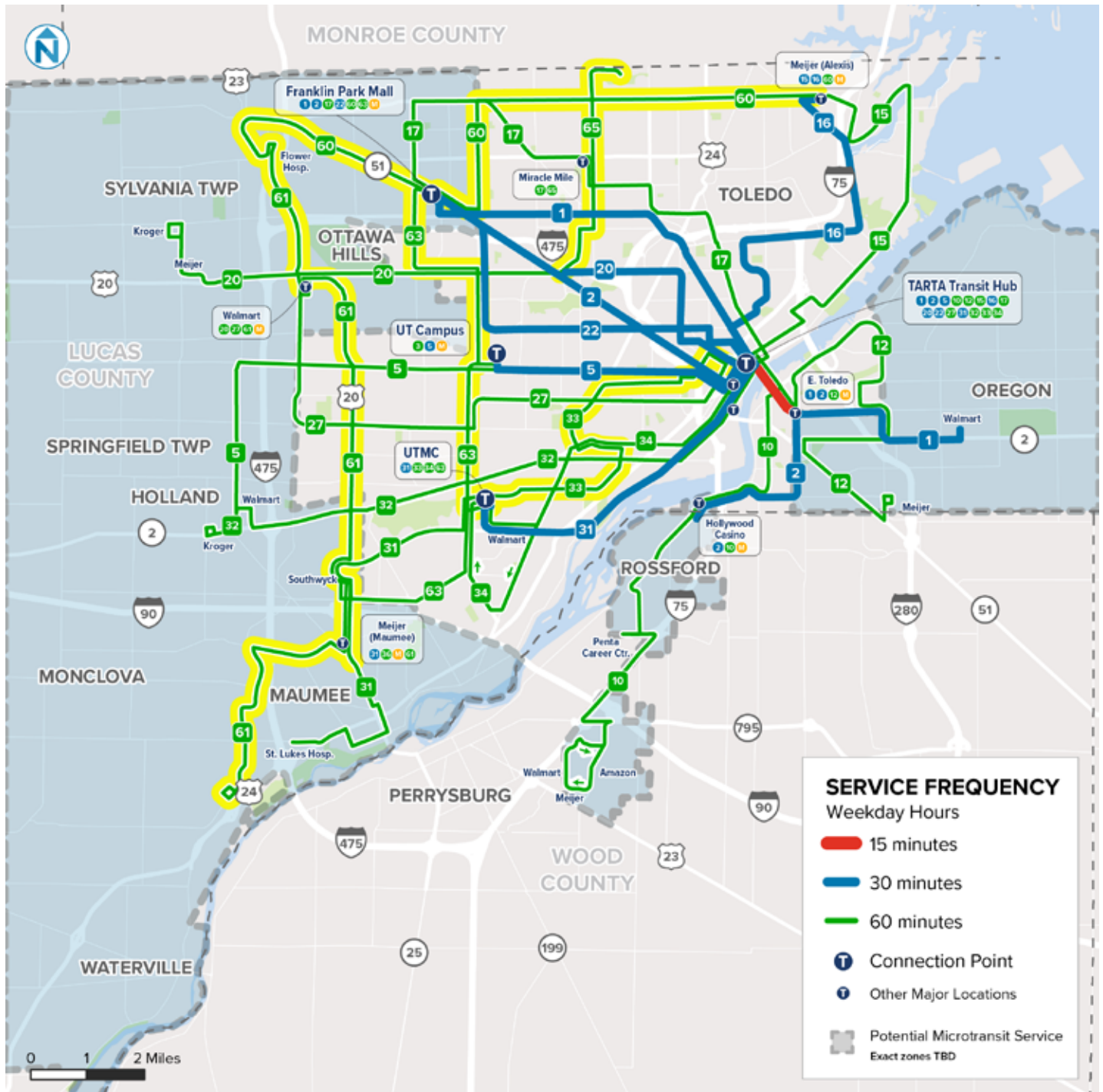
While the TARTA Next Vision recommends service improvements that retain elements of TARTA's "hub and spoke" network design with most bus routes traveling through downtown Toledo and connecting at TARTA's Hub, several new crosstown connections are also included to improve regional mobility (see opposite page).

- Franklin Park Mall to the UT Medical Center via the main UT Campus.
- Maumee to Sylvania (Reynolds Rd corridor)
- Sylvania to Franklin Park Mall and the Alexis corridor.
- UT Medical Center to downtown via Detroit and Indiana
- ProMedica Toledo Hospital to the Alexis corridor.

As with most other routes in the system, the crosstown routes would operate from 6:00 AM to 9:30 PM Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 9:30 PM on Saturday and from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Sundays. Service on the crosstown routes would initially operate every 60 minutes, but the route connecting Franklin Park Mall and the UT Medical Center should be prioritized to operate every 30 minutes as demand warrants.



## TARTA Next Vision: Crosstown Connections





## IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

### Update TARPS Eligibility and Service Area

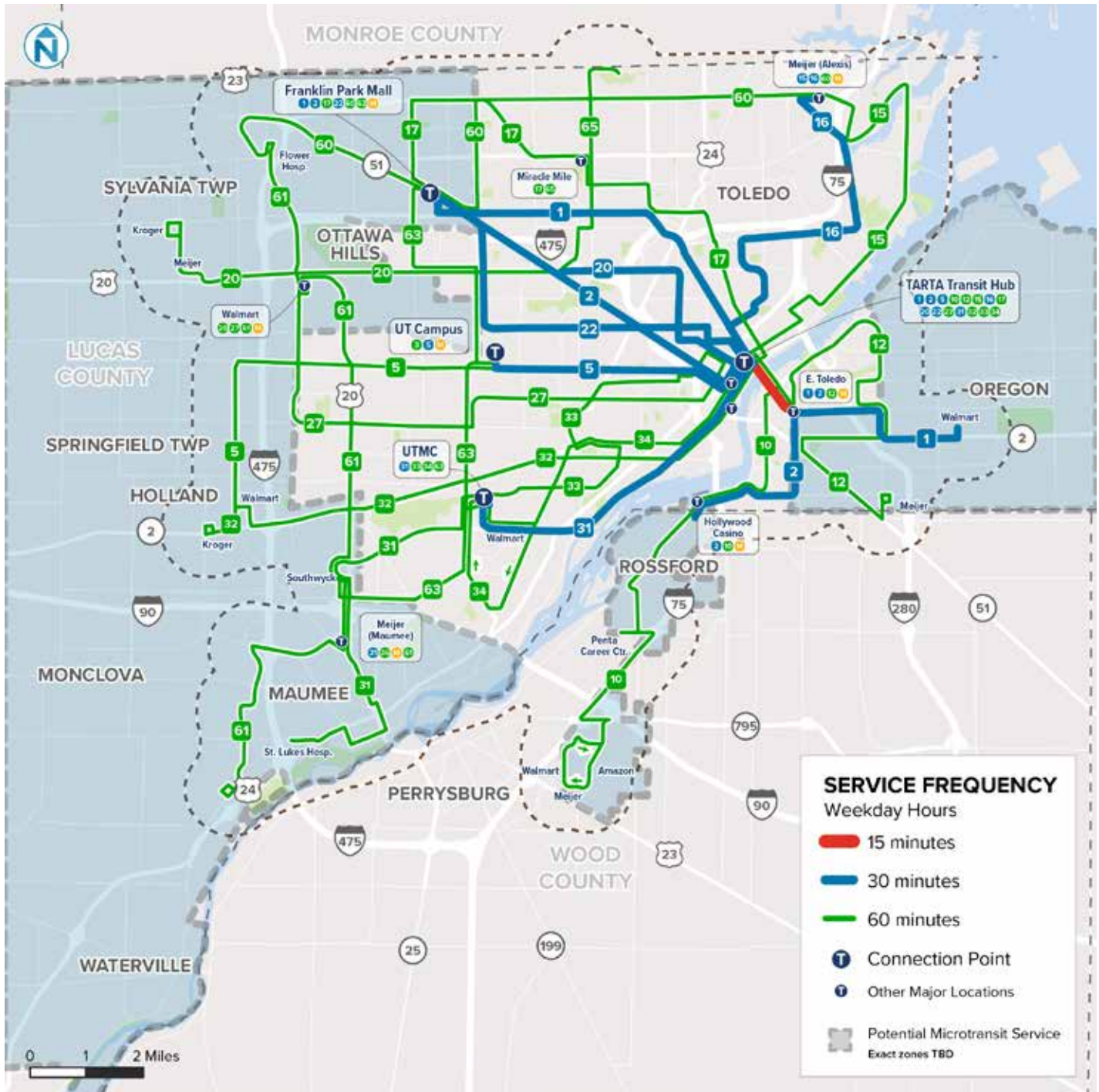
TARPS is TARTA's complementary paratransit service. It is required as part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is available to those who is unable to ride fixed route service because of a disability. TARPS is one of TARTA's most successful services, carrying 750 riders per day and helping people with disabilities lead independent lives.

While major modifications to TARPS are not recommended as part of TARTA Next, minor modifications to the service area are recommended as the fixed route service is modified (see opposite page).

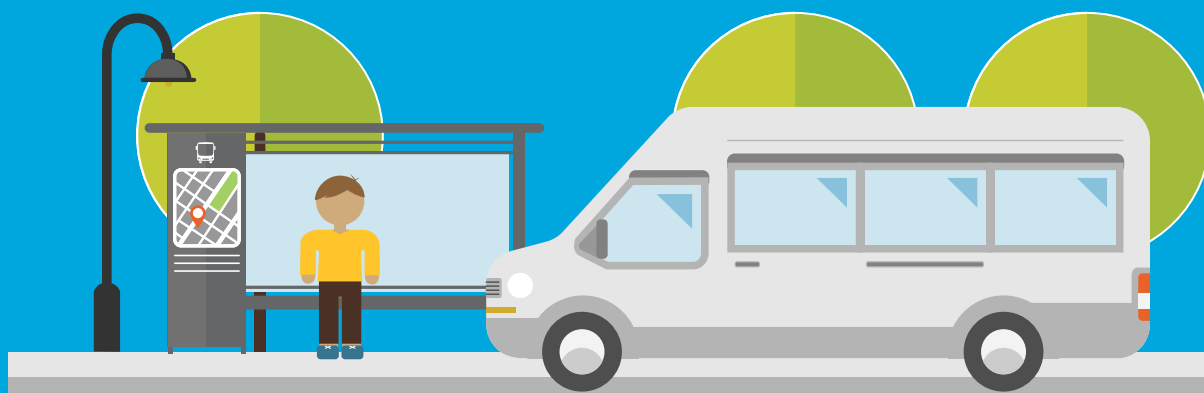
- **Any area currently served by TARPS would continue to be served** in the future.
- **The TARPS service area would be expanded within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile buffer** of new fixed route services that extend beyond the existing TARPS service area.
- **Existing TARPS riders would be grandfathered in** and can ride within the existing and expanded service area.

It is also recommended that TARPS should consider requiring new applicants to assess the physical functional ability to use public transit (functional assessment), or to rely on a similar assessment by an existing regional partner, prior to being certified to use TARPS. Existing TARPS customers would not be required to conduct functional assessments.

## TARTA Next Vision: TARPS Modified Service Area







## EXPAND REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Provide On-Demand Microtransit Service

TARTA operates Call-A-Ride service, a general-public demand response service. It is available in three zones:

- Ottawa Hills
- Sylvania, and Sylvania Township
- Maumee and Waterville
- Rossford

Riders can use the service to travel within the zones and make connections to TARTA's fixed route network. Trips must be scheduled one day in advance.

Even before the pandemic, ridership on the service was low with roughly 50 trips per day for all three zones. Low demand means the cost-effectiveness of the service is poor; in 2021, TARTA spent an average of \$85.00 per passenger carried on the service.

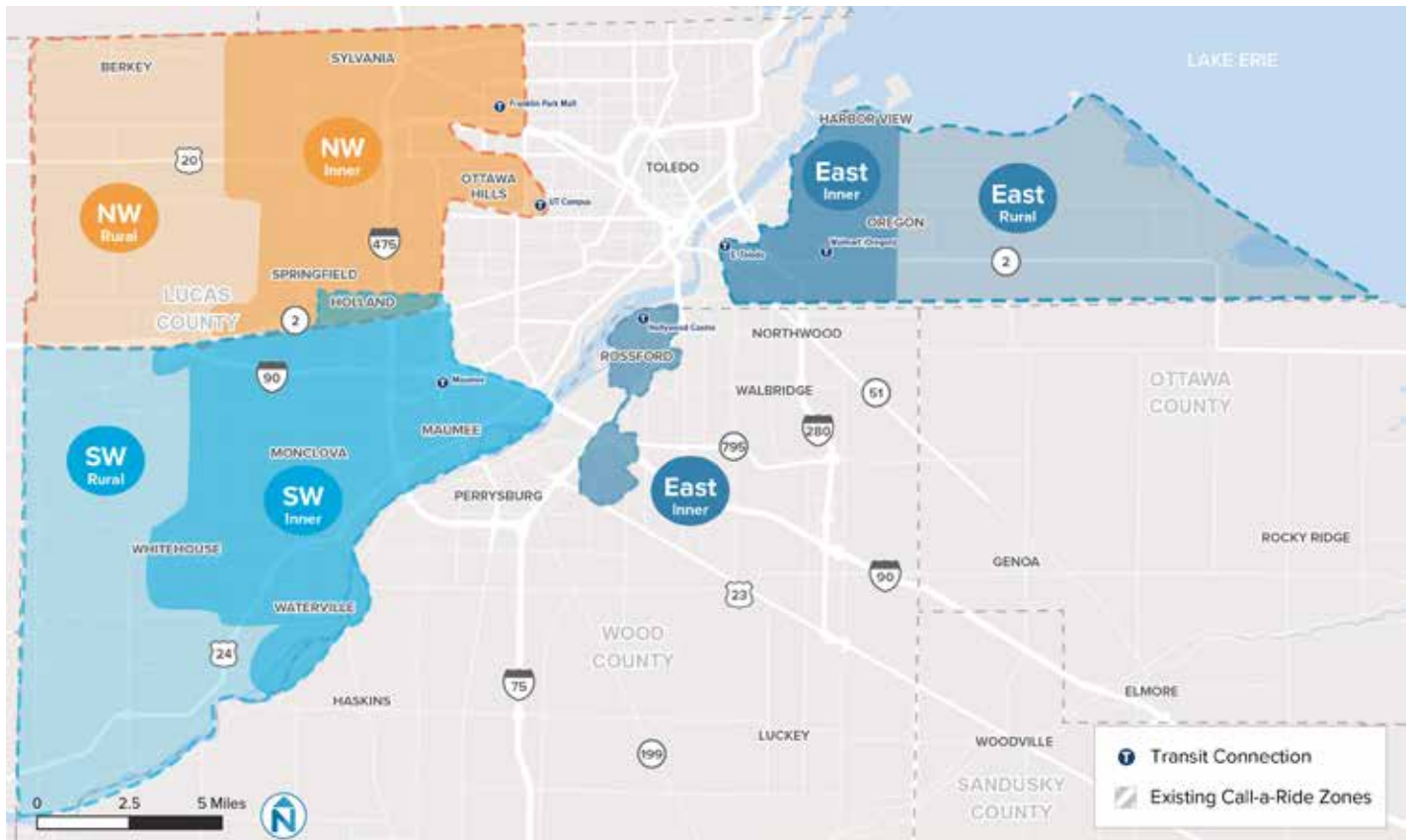
As described earlier, the TARTA Next Vision is recommending a tiered approach to operating public transit services throughout the service area. One of the shared elements in each of the geographic tiers is microtransit. In the urbanized parts of the county, microtransit will replace the three existing Call-A-Ride



zones, while in the suburban and rural parts of Lucas County that do not currently have transit service, microtransit will provide a new mobility option.

TARTA Next recommends establishing three new microtransit zones (see map, opposite page) that will cover areas that are on the edge of the existing fixed route network or where fixed route transit is not available. Within these zones, there are areas that have low and medium population density and areas further away from the urban core that are more rural in nature and exhibit lower transit demand.

## TARTA Next Vision: Microtransit Zones



**Microtransit** is a new service classification for TARTA that provides same-day, on-demand service in defined service zones.

Microtransit allows riders to request a trip when they want to travel and be picked up within a specified wait time. The service offers riders more convenience and flexibility with their travel by using software to dynamically schedule and dispatch trips. Combined with increased demand, dynamically scheduled and dispatched trips should result in lowering the costs associated with providing this service.

Connections between microtransit and other transit services are focused at specific locations in the

system, and customers can be picked up either at an existing bus stop or nearby intersection. Microtransit is available to anyone in the zone and may include a shared ride with other customers.

### Microtransit works best for:



- Serving low-density areas
- Completing the "first or last mile" of transit trips
- Riders who prefer not to walk due to uncomfortable weather
- Providing options for passengers who have limited mobility

## How Microtransit Works

**Request**  
by app/phone/web



**Dynamic**  
routing



**Rider**  
pickup



**Efficient**  
sharing



**Rider**  
drop-offs





**How does the rider experience differ between on-demand microtransit, fixed route service and ADA complementary paratransit?**

RIDER EXPERIENCE FAQ	FIXED ROUTE	PARATRANSIT	MICROTRANSIT
Who can ride?	Anyone can ride	Pre-Approved customers only	Anyone can ride
Where will I be picked up or dropped off?	Bus Stop	Front Door	Nearby Intersection or Defined Bus Stop
Where can I ride?	Trip must begin or end at fixed-route bus stop	Trips must begin/end within 3/4 mile of a fixed route stop	Trips must begin/end within defined on-demand zone
Do I need to book a ride in advance?	No advance booking is required	Day-before booking is required	Same-day booking with up to 60 min wait
Is the service ADA-accessible?	Wheelchair Accessible	Wheelchair Accessible + Assistance Provided	Wheelchair Accessible
Will I share a ride with another passenger?	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes

## Microtransit Service Characteristics

Potential characteristics of a new microtransit service include:

**Travel Between Zones.** Travel would be permitted anywhere within each zone but travel between the zones would only be available by transferring to either another microtransit service (between the NW and SW zones, for example) or to the fixed route network. As a result, riders will not be able to travel directly between Springfield and downtown Toledo, for example, but would use microtransit to travel to a Connection Point (such as the UT Main Campus) where they would transfer to a fixed route bus to get into downtown Toledo.

**Operating Model.** It's helpful to think of microtransit as two pieces. The first piece is the service which includes the vehicles,

drivers, and call takers that all demand response services require. The second piece is the technology that connects the rider to that service, routes the vehicles, and can handle payments. Most microtransit systems operate in a hybrid model where the transit agency provides the vehicle the drivers and the call takers and a separate company provides the technology. This arrangement allows transit providers to do what they do well, while allowing a 3rd party to provide and maintain the specialized software that can keep up with changes in technology. Because TARTA has extensive experience operating on-demand service but is not positioned to develop their own technology, the TARTA Next Vision recommends a hybrid operating model – at least to start.



**Vehicles.** Microtransit will be operated with 100% accessible vehicles, similar to TARPS vehicles (though vehicles could be smaller with lower capacity). It is estimated that between 3 and 5 vehicles would be required per zone. Because microtransit vehicles are accessible, TARTA would not be obligated to operate complementary ADA paratransit service in these zones.

**Response Times.** The response time will vary within each zone but would be less than 60 minutes. In areas closer to Toledo response times are likely to be less than 60 minutes, whereas response times in areas further out from the urban core could be up to 60 minutes. This means TARTA will deploy vehicles so that when a rider requests a trip, they can expect to be picked up in 60 minutes or less depending on their pick-up location. The difference in response time between the inner and rural areas of each zone reflects underlying population density, longer travel times, and lower demand. Expected response times will be included in information distributed to riders.

**Access.** There are two options for passengers accessing microtransit services: corner-to-corner and door-to-door. The inner areas of each zone that are expected to generate more demand would only pick up and drop off at intersections (and could restrict access in some specific locations), whereas the rural areas of each zone would provide door-to-door service, recognizing that it may be difficult to stop in some of these areas and/or require people to get to a corner.

**Fare Structure.** Although microtransit is a premium service, fares should be coordinated with fixed route services and include a reduced fare for seniors (65+), persons with disabilities, Medicare card holders, youth (6-18) with valid ID, veterans, and active-duty military. As with fixed route services, children under 6 should be able to ride for free. An additional fee could be charged for travel between adjacent zones, for example between the NW and SW zones, and a transfer would also be required between zones.

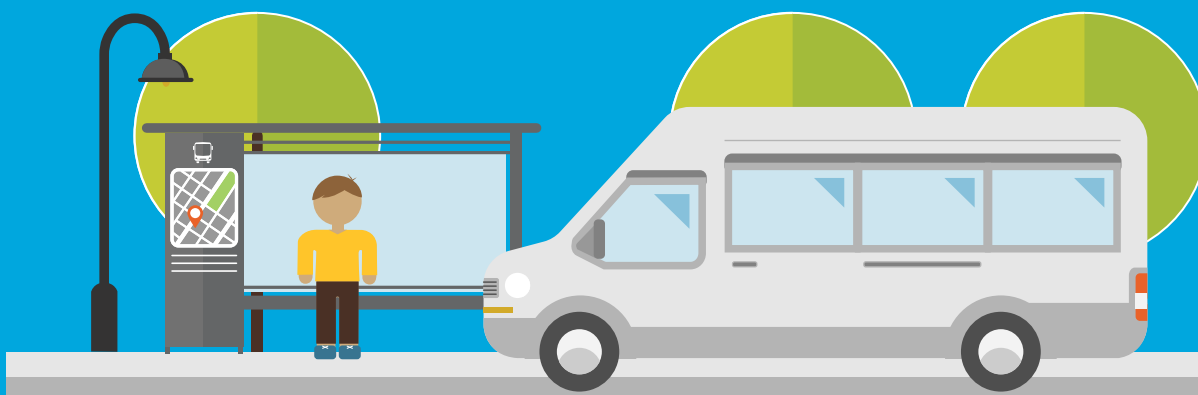
**Service Hours/Days.** To balance meaningful service with demand levels, it is recommended that service initially be from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM in the inner areas of each zone and 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM for rural areas of each zone. Service in all zones would operate Monday through Saturday. The hours and days of operation could be adjusted based on demand and customer input.

**TARPS Riders.** It is recommended that TARPS-eligible riders that are outside of the TARPS service area will be able to use microtransit for trips throughout Lucas County without a transfer. This recommendation is made to minimize the stress of making longer regional trips for eligible passengers.

The table below summarizes potential microtransit characteristics and how they might differ between inner zones and rural zones.

**Summary of Potential Microtransit Service Characteristics**

Service Characteristic	Service Description
Travel Between Zones	Travel permitted anywhere within the zone, but transfers required to travel between zones.
TARPS Riders	Eligible riders can use microtransit throughout the service area without transferring
Operating Model	Hybrid: TARTA operated vehicles and 3rd party trip booking and fare collection vendor
Vehicles per zone	3 per zone (initially); efficiencies could be gained over time by sharing vehicles between zones
Maximum Response Time	Up to 60 minutes
Access	Corner-to-corner or door-to-door, depending on location
Fare Structure	Coordinate with fixed route fares
Service Days	Monday - Saturday
Service Hours	7 AM to 7 PM for inner zones and 8 AM to 6 PM for rural zones



## EXPAND REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Support Other Regional Mobility Enhancements

In addition to providing all public transit services in the region, TARTA also oversees several programs that enhance regional mobility:

- **Share-A-Van** is a regional vanpool program that is overseen by TARTA but operated by Commute with Enterprise, which handles program set up and provides the vehicle. TARTA provides a subsidy for 50% of the program cost, with the remaining 50% being the responsibility of the company and workers who sign up.
- **TARTA's Mobility Management program** focuses on expanding the range of mobility options specifically for seniors and persons with disabilities. Resources available through the program include a "find a ride" service, safe driving education awareness, driving cessation information, volunteer transportation options, ridesharing information, and programs to establish a link between transportation access and wellness.
- And while TARTA currently offers a **travel training program** to help individuals overcome obstacles associated with riding transit independently, this program is being re-imagined and relaunched.

TARTA Next supports these initiatives that enhance regional mobility, promotes affordability and access to transportation, especially for the region's most vulnerable residents. Other considerations that expand these initiatives include:

- **Provide park and ride-based special event services.** These services would provide trips to and from major events, like the Jeep Fest, Mud Hens or Walleyes games, or the Glass City Marathon – just to name a few. TARTA has experience with special event services and recognizes the role they play in reducing congestion at major events, encouraging

people to try transit who may not regularly use it, and expand the image of TARTA as a regional transportation partner. As a specialized service, TARTA could charge a premium fare to help defray the expense of these services.

- **Monitor microtransit performance to assess regional markets for fixed route service.** Several stakeholders and community members noted the desire for transit service to regional destinations and jobs that are currently unserved (such as the airport). Rather than implementing a fixed route service, TARTA Next recommends that performance on microtransit be monitored over the first year of operation to assess the demand for these areas. If microtransit is unable to meet demand to these areas, TARTA should evaluate travel patterns and consider a fixed route service. This service could take the form of regional express routes that, in their initial phase, run only on weekends.
- **Collaborate with regional agencies to advocate for enhanced access to transit.** As TARTA continues to build strong partnerships throughout the region, the agency should continue to educate and advocate for transit access among transportation and community development partners in the region. For example, TARTA could compare high-crash intersections throughout the region with transit ridership to identify areas where safety may be an issue. Similarly, TARTA should continue discussions with other regional destinations in Wood County that are not currently in the service area (e.g., Owens Community College, Perrysburg) to determine the interest and feasibility of being integrated into the system.



## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Connection Points

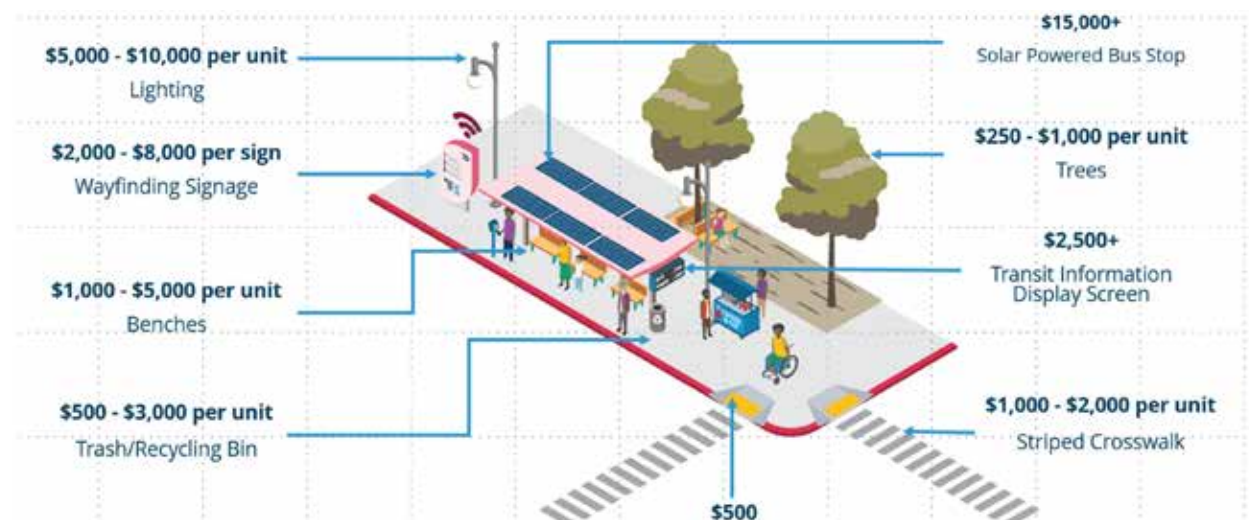
The TARTA Next Vision calls for developing several Connection Points throughout the region. Connection Points are essentially facilities that make connecting between transit services comfortable, safe, and dignified. The image below illustrates the range of improved amenities (and estimated costs) that could be included at Connection Points.

Several Connections Points are envisioned throughout the region (see map, next page) and are presented in the plan as either **Primary** connection points and Other Major Locations. These locations were identified based on average daily boardings that have more than approximately 50 boardings per day, as well locations where transfers between other fixed routes, microtransit or TARPS are expected to be high.

### Primary Connection Points

Primary Connection Points offer the highest level of amenities for transit customers by providing enhanced amenities like clear signage, real-time passenger information, and covered (ideally climate controlled) waiting areas. Primary Connection Points also offer a higher level of comfort and security because they provide buses a location where passengers can easily and safely transfer—not only between other routes, but also between microtransit, TARPS, and other modes like bikes and scooters.

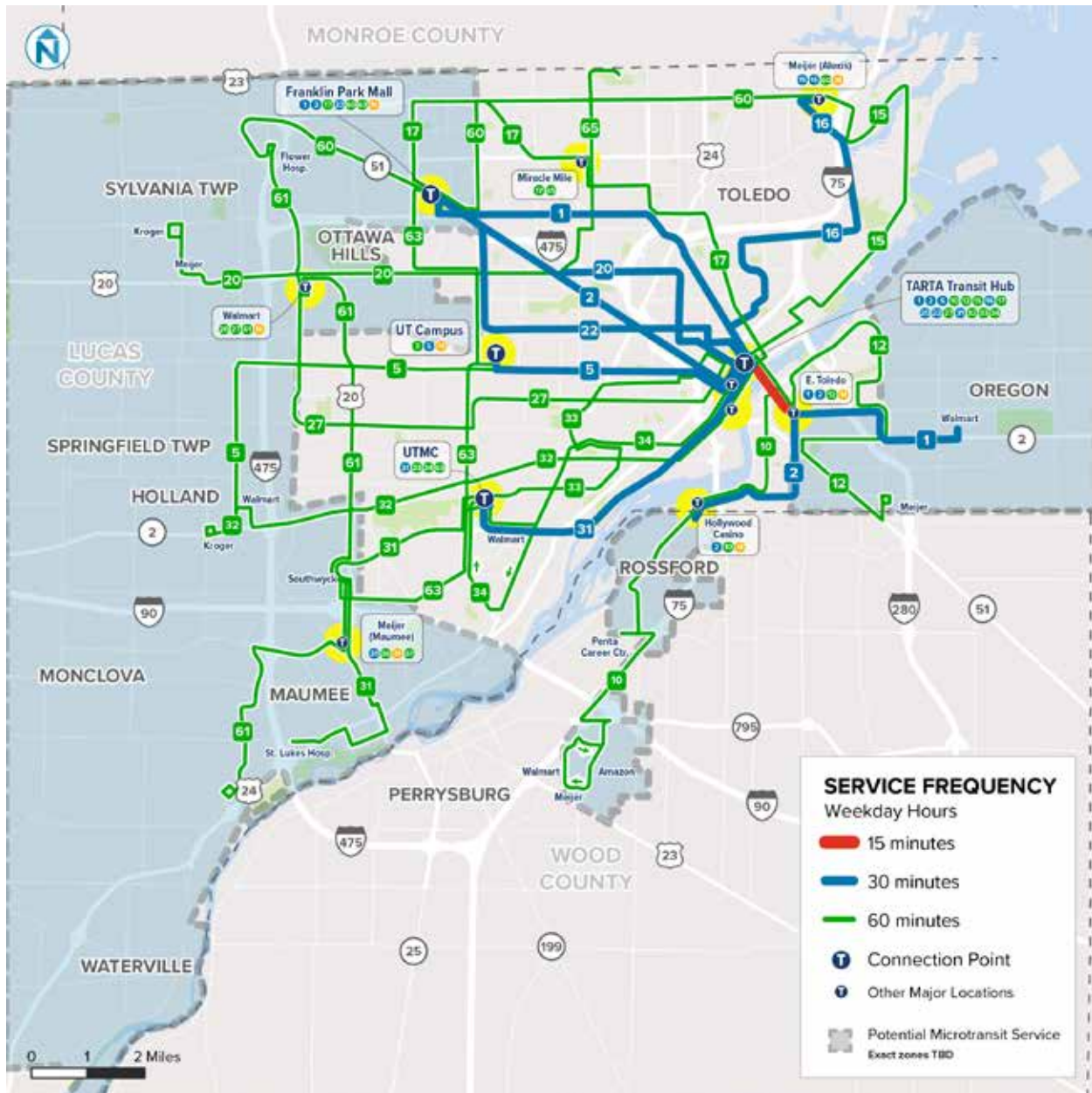
The Hub in downtown Toledo will remain the most prominent connection point in the system, and recent improvements to this facility have made connecting between



*Note: Concrete and utility improvements are not included in these estimates but are likely the single most expensive element that would need to be improved prior to accommodating the elements shown above.*



## TARTA Next Vision: Connection Points



different transit services among the most comfortable location in the region.

Outside of downtown, the Primary Connection Points include the following:

### Franklin Park Mall

Franklin Park Mall is one of the most important activity centers in the region and is anticipated to remain this way for the foreseeable future. Currently, the stop to access the mall and transfer between routes serving the mall, is located on the west side of Royer Rd between Monroe St and Sylvania Ave. The stop has three



shelters, several trash cans, and adequate space for multiple buses to line up and layover. Over 200 transit boardings occur at this location on an average weekday, making it one of the most important destinations in the system.

However, the existing stop requires buses to access this stop on Royer Road only in the southbound direction. This configuration requires routes accessing this stop to make a lengthy clockwise loop around the mall (via Sylvania Ave, Talmage Rd and Monroe St), which adds valuable operating time.

A recommendation of TARTA Next is to explore a new off-street Primary Connection Point near the Franklin Park Mall that would allow faster access to this important destination, offer enhanced passenger amenities, and eliminate the need to make the loop around the mall. Although much more evaluation would be required, a potential location to explore is the underutilized parking lot on the north side of the mall between the mall ring road and Monroe St. This location not only offers easy access to one of the main entrances to the mall, but there are two traffic signals on Monroe St that would allow easy bus access from multiple directions.

### University of Toledo

The existing University of Toledo Transportation Center on the south side of the campus on Towerview Rd (just north of Dorr St) is a well-designed transit facility that offers several shelters, benches, and other passenger amenities. No physical improvements to this facility are required for the foreseeable future and it should remain the major location for accessing the campus as well as transferring between TARTA routes (including the UT Blue Loop) and other services like microtransit. TARTA should consider providing enhanced transit information and real-time arrival information for routes that serve this facility.

### University of Toledo Medical Center (UTMC)

Located south of the main University of Toledo campus, the UTMC is an important regional destination and one of the highest ridership stops in the system (with about 50 boardings on an average weekday). While existing routes serve several streets throughout the

medical center campus, the TARTA Next Vision recommends concentrating service to serve two stops via counterclockwise direction: 1) Transverse Dr (west of Hospital Dr) and 2) Hospital Dr south of Arlington Ave. While these two stops already have shelters and offer good pedestrian access to campus facilities, TARTA should consider providing enhanced transit information and real-time arrival information for routes that serve these stops.

### Other Major Locations

There are also important destinations in the redesigned network but are not intended as major transfer locations. Because of their role in the redesigned network as well as existing and anticipated future boarding activity, TARTA Next calls for these locations to include at a minimum a shelter, trash can, passenger information, and level boarding platforms. Lighting should also be provided if it isn't already in an area that is well lit.

- **Hollywood Casino.** This stop has about 100 average weekday boardings and includes an off-street turn-around.
- **Meijer on Alexis Road.** This stop has about 75 average weekday boardings and includes a shelter, trash can and off-street turn-around.
- **Main Street in East Toledo.** The combined stops at Main St/4th St and Main St/Starr Ave have about 75 average weekday boardings. Only one shelter is provided at Main St/4th St.
- **Miracle Mile.** This stop has over 70 average weekday boardings and includes a small shelter.
- **Holland-Sylvania Walmart.** This stop has about 50 average weekday boardings and includes a shelter, trash can and an off-street turn-around.
- **Meijer in Maumee.** This stop currently does not generate significant ridership but is anticipated to connect several routes in the future.
- **Fifth Third Field and MLK Plaza/Amtrak Station.** These two downtown locations are important regional destinations.



## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Bus Stop Improvements

Many of TARTA's existing bus stop signs are not well marked or easy to find. The example to the right shows a typical bus stop sign that includes a small TARTA logo with a phone number placed above a much larger no-parking sign. As the "front door" to transit, enhancing bus stop signs not only provides valuable information to customers, but elevates the rider experience and sends the message that transit is an integral part of the region's mobility network. TARTA should consider implementing new bus stop signage that prominently shows the TARTA logo, the routes that serve each stop (with removable decals to accommodate route changes) and the phone number/website. The image to the right conceptually shows what a redesigned bus stop sign might look like.

Other amenities that are most valued by transit riders include shelters, seating, lighting, real-time information displays, and wayfinding. Bus stops that generate at least 25 boardings per weekday are suitable candidates for bus shelters. Premium amenities such as heating or cooling systems and real-time information displays, should be reserved for either Connection Points or bus stops that have (or are expected to have) at least 50 boardings per weekday.







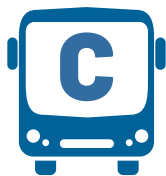
## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Service Classification

To distinguish between various routes and services that have different purposes, the TARTA Next Vision recommends services be classified into one of five groups as discussed below. Classifying transit services not only makes it easier for customers to understand the network, but it also allows TARTA to set different service standards for each service type.

The five recommended service classifications are as follows:

**Core routes** provide the best service in the network and only operates in higher-demand corridors that justify the higher investment in service. Frequencies on Core routes are generally every 30 minutes (or better) on weekdays and between 30-60 minutes on weekend days. Core routes generally operate only on major corridors and connect the primary destinations in the region with direct and bidirectional service. To provide faster service, stop spacing on Core routes is generally  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile, but may be wider in some areas (up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile). Core routes are expected to generate the highest ridership in the system.



**Local routes** provide less frequent service (generally every 60 minutes on weekdays and weekend days) and operate on both major corridors and local streets. Local routes connect major destinations and Connection Points, but the route purpose is less about generating ridership and more about providing geographic coverage for customers who need



the service the most. Local routes are generally bidirectional and as direct as possible but may also deviate to expand geographic coverage or operate in just one direction (typically at the end of the route). Stop placement on Local routes is based on the context but are typically  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile apart.

#### Express/special event routes

operate only during certain times and are intended to provide direct and very limited stop service to major destinations or events.

Express or special event routes also serve park and ride facilities throughout the region.



#### TARPS (Toledo Area Regional Paratransit Service)

is the complementary paratransit service to the fixed route network and must comply with all ADA standards, including service that must start and end at least within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed route. Customers must be certified to use paratransit and service can be reserved the prior day. Like microtransit, some trips may include a shared ride with other customers.



**Microtransit** is a new service classification for TARTA that provides same-day, accessible, and on-demand

service in defined service zones. Microtransit is different from TARPS service because it allows riders to request a trip when they want to travel and be picked up within a specified wait time, estimated between 30-60 minutes. Connections between microtransit and other services are focused at Connection Points in the system.





## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Route Naming

Most transit systems utilize either letters or numbers (or both) to organize transit systems into identifiable routes or services. Route identification systems are also often associated with corridors, neighborhoods, or major destinations that they serve. Some transit systems also use a different identification system by mode (bus, rail, etc.), or have special branding that distinguishes between higher investment services, like the bus rapid transit (BRT) routes in Columbus (CMAX) and Grand Rapids (Silver Line). There is no right answer. The important thing is to be consistent so that customers can easily navigate the system.

TARTA's route identification system currently ranges from 2 to 52 and utilizes both numbers and letters to distinguish between different routes or service types. Routes are also identified with either a community or major destination and the major corridors (or area) served by the route. Not all routes utilize the letter after the number, as with Route 12 that serves East Toledo.

Many routes, such as Route 31, use different letters to identify the primary street that branch of the route operates on (e.g., 31G via Glendale and 31H via Heatherdowns). Route 31C covers a smaller area; the three routes combine for more frequent service in the core area.. Only one route in the system (Route 10L connecting Toledo and Rossford) uses the "L" designation to refer to the "limited" stop

service. An "X" has been used in the past (e.g., 28X) to designate an express route.

It should be noted that the Toledo area has a rich transit history, and some route numbers have greater significance for the neighborhoods or communities they serve. For example, the existing Route 5 on Dorr Street has long been associated with Toledo's African-American community. As such, every effort has been made to maintain route numbers, corridors or neighborhood names. New routes included in this plan will maintain a similar identification system as existing routes.

This plan recommends eliminating letters from the naming system to simplify the system and instead focus on the route number, route identification and major street served. The following is an example of the recommended naming system for Route 2. The route identification and major street would change depending on the direction of the route, and the Major Street could rotate to include multiple corridors.



**31C** UTM via Broadway/  
Glendale

**31G** Maumee via  
Glendale/Southwyck

**31H** Maumee via  
Heatherdowns/  
Southwyck



**12** Birmingham via  
Main/Starr/Front

Route Number	Route Identification	Major Street
2	Downtown /Franklin Park Mall	via Broadway/Main via Monroe
2	Downtown /Hollywood Casino	via Monroe via Main/Broadway



## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Future Fare Collection Improvements

Starting in August 2022, TARTA will have new fareboxes and will start collecting fares again. TARTA will also be testing out a new fare structure that is simpler and offers more discounts to vulnerable individuals. This fare structure will remain in place for a six-month pilot period, during which TARTA will complete public outreach on fare changes and a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis. Both the public outreach phase and Title VI Analysis will allow the agency to create a data-driven fare structure shaped by community needs. Based on the public input and findings from the Equity Analysis, the agency will develop a long-term fare structure for implementation in February 2023.

The TARTA Next Vision also identified several long-term recommendations that further simplify fare collection and takes advantage of new technology further advance TARTA's equity

efforts and longer-term access to vulnerable groups. These long-term recommendations are summarized in a separate memo included in the Appendix. They include:

- Adding a **reduced-fare day pass**
- Implementing **fare capping** for fixed-route passes
- Exploring options for **expanding pass programs for low-income riders**
- Exploring opportunities to **partner with local employers** to subsidize transit for their employees
- **Expanding a cash-loading sales network** where riders are able to load cash onto their transit accounts

Printing tickets and barcodes

Scanning magnetic tickets and IDs

Cash and token collection

Account-based mobile and smartcard payment



TARTA's new fareboxes





## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Low Emission Fleet

The TARTA Next Vision recommends beginning to transition the vehicle fleet to zero- or low-emission vehicles over the next ten years. Transit vehicle technology is changing quickly, some of the most common new vehicle technologies include Battery Electric Buses (BEBs), diesel-electric hybrid vehicles, and Hydrogen Fuel Cell buses.

TARTA has adopted a zero emission fleet plan by 2035 would transition the entire fleet away from diesel/gasoline vehicles. Some of the considerations for TARTA as they transition to zero emission vehicles include:

- **Cost (purchase vs. lifetime).** While the purchase price of standard diesel buses is less expensive than no- or low-emission vehicles, diesel buses may be more expensive over time as maintenance costs are typically higher and fuel prices are variable. Vehicles purchased with federal grants must also comply with FTA Buy America requirements.
- **Charging/refueling requirements.** Zero- or low-emission vehicles require an entirely different approach to charging and refueling constraints compared to diesel buses. As a result, the costs of transitioning a fleet must consider charging or other fueling infrastructure. In addition, new vehicle technologies will require accommodations and in some cases, upgrades to bus maintenance facilities.
- **Training/maintenance requirements.** Zero- and low-emission vehicles would be a new



technology for TARTA, and therefore staff would require specialized training on how to operate and maintain them.

- **Operational considerations.** Deploying zero- or low-emission buses requires operators to account for the vehicle charge time, or the number of miles the vehicle can travel before charging or refueling. The range of some vehicles can also vary related to temperature, acceleration (operator behavior), heavy loads, or steep grades.



## STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### Rapid Bus on Monroe Street

Rapid Bus — or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) — represents a high-quality transit service that is designed to make using transit faster and more reliable. Rapid Bus is usually implemented on corridors with the greatest ridership potential, and its amenities can range from bus stops with enhanced passenger facilities (like weather protection, comfortable seating, passenger information, etc.), to full-featured stops that emulate light- or heavy-rail stations. To make service faster and more reliable, rapid bus services have bus stops that are spaced further apart than standard bus routes (approximately every ½ mile compared to every ¼ mile or less) and may include transit priority treatments such as queue jump lanes, transit signal priority (TSP) or exclusive transit lanes. Rapid bus vehicles are often higher capacity than standard transit vehicles, offer all-door boarding for faster stops, and are branded separately from other routes.

While rapid bus is not recommended in the near-term, as the improvements presented in the TARTA Next Vision are implemented over the next 10 years, TARTA should explore the feasibility of rapid bus service in the Monroe Street corridor connecting downtown Toledo with the Franklin Park Mall area. The Monroe Street corridor has the highest existing ridership in the network, has the greatest concentration of destinations along the route (e.g., the Toledo Art Museum and Toledo



Hospital) and offers the most direct connection between major destinations. Rapid bus service can also support redevelopment of the Monroe Street corridor, including transit-oriented and mixed-use development. It should also be noted that to be eligible for various FTA funding programs, BRT service must meet specific criteria related to service levels, right-of-way, accessibility, and station/stop amenities.<sup>1</sup>

Several nearby transit agencies evaluated as part of TARTA Next have implemented BRT service, including the CMAX line in Columbus and the Silver Line in Grand Rapids.

<sup>1</sup> More information can be found here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/final-capital-investment-grant-program-interim-policy>



# Near-Term Improvements



## 7



















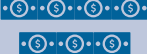








## Near-Term Improvements

Many of the recommendations included in the TARTA Next Vision require broad route and schedule changes that will take years to fully implement, therefore this section presents smaller, incremental improvements that could be implemented in the near term (within 12 to 18 months).

These near-term improvements are based on extensive input from the community and stakeholders, as well as ongoing discussions with TARTA staff guiding this project. The near-term considerations are summarized below and include high-level estimates of operating cost

increases, additional vehicle requirements, additional operators required, stakeholder support, and ridership impacts. A more detailed description of each service improvement consideration is provided below.







### Near-Term Improvements


Near-Term Considerations	Operating Costs	Additional Peak Vehicles	Additional Operators Required	Stakeholder Support	Ridership Impact	New Areas Served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Microtransit to western Lucas County</li> <li>Discontinue Call-A-Ride 1 and 8</li> </ul>						Holland/Springfield Township Western Lucas County <i>(192 additional sq. miles)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Microtransit to Oregon and Rossford</li> <li>Discontinue Call-A-Ride 10</li> </ul>						Oregon Eastern Lucas County <i>(62 additional sq. miles)</i>
<b>South Toledo Restructuring and Extension of Service to Holland (Spring Meadows)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Route 32</li> <li>Simplify Route 34</li> <li>New Route 33</li> <li>Discontinue Route 28</li> </ul>						Holland/Springfield Township <i>(2 additional sq. miles)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADA Paratransit</li> </ul>						Holland/Springfield Township <i>(4 additional sq. miles)</i>
<b>Restructure Service in East Toledo, Extend Service to Oregon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Route 19 extension, rename as Route 1</li> <li>Discontinue Route 51 due to low ridership</li> </ul>						Oregon <i>(2.5 additional sq. miles)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADA Paratransit</li> </ul>						Oregon <i>(5 additional sq. miles)</i>

 = 1,000 annual vehicle revenue hours



Near-Term Improvements (continued)

Near-Term Considerations	Operating Costs	Additional Peak Vehicles	Additional Operators Required	Stakeholder Support	Ridership Impact	New Areas Served
Explore New Connection Point Facility at Franklin Park Mall	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A
Implement Standing Stakeholder Committees	—	—	—		N/A	N/A
Special Event Service		—	—			Varies

 = 1,000 annual vehicle revenue hours

Implement Microtransit as a Pilot

As noted in Chapter 5, a new on-demand microtransit service in the less urbanized and rural parts TARTA's service area is one of the highest priority improvements recommended in the TARTA Next Vision. Because demand for this type of service is difficult to estimate, and long-term community support is unknown, it is recommended that this service be implemented as a [one-year or 18-month pilot](#) that can be monitored and assessed over time. The pilot would be aligned with fixed route service extensions to Holland/Springfield and Oregon, at which time the existing Call-A-Ride services in these areas would be discontinued. On both the east and west part of Lucas County where microtransit would be implemented, there would be inner zones in the more urbanized areas and rural zones outside of these areas.

Immediate next steps for TARTA include:

- **Research and procure a contract with a 3rd party platform** to be used for dynamic trip booking/payment platform.

- **Draft and formalize policies** associated with using microtransit service (zone boundaries, fares, response times, corner-to-corner versus door-to-door access, service hours, etc.)
- **Estimate capital and infrastructure costs**, including the cost of additional vehicles, marketing materials, signage, etc. This will be contingent on the desired zone boundaries, response times and service hours.
- **Develop unique branding** for the service, such as "TARTA Flex" or "TARTA On-Demand," add program information to the existing [TARTA.com](#) website, and prepare outreach efforts associated with the service launch.
- **Assess performance** during the pilot period, prepare monthly reports, and modify services as necessary.

Image from Flickr user Judith Jackson

## South Toledo Restructuring and Extension of Service to Holland (Spring Meadows)

Another important element of the TARTA Next Vision is extending service to the Holland/Spring Meadows area. As part of extending service to Spring Meadows, TARTA can also simplify service in south Toledo. The following route modifications are presented as near-term considerations:

- **Route 28.** This route would be discontinued due to low ridership and redundant coverage from new Route 33.
  - This modification would result in a savings of 4,700 annual service hours and save one peak bus.
- **Route 32.** The existing Route 32 has two variations (32H and 32R) that provides service to south Toledo neighborhoods, the UT Medical Center, and Airport Hwy. One branch (32R) terminates at Southwyck and the other branch (32H) terminates at the Home Depot on Holland-Sylvania Rd. Near-term route modifications to this route include:
  - *Simplify service* by operating out and back on the same alignment (e.g., downtown Toledo to Spring Meadows via Broadway, South Ave, and Airport Hwy). In Holland, the route would use Spring Meadows Dr (serving the Walmart), N Mall Dr, S McCord Rd to Airport Hwy before making a terminal loop via Holloway Rd and Spring Meadows Dr W (serving Kroger and Aldi).
  - *Service would operate hourly seven days a week.*
  - *This modification would add an estimated 2,700 annual service hours* and require one additional peak bus.
- **Route 33 (new route).** This new route connects the UT Medical Center to

downtown Toledo, serving several functions:

- *Provides service to several neighborhoods in south Toledo that are no longer served* because of the restructuring of existing Routes 32 and 34.
- *Provides a new crosstown connection* between south Toledo and the Junction neighborhood (extending west of the Uptown neighborhood along Dorr Street, Indiana Avenue, and Nebraska Street).
- *Service would operate hourly on weekdays and every 90 minutes on weekends.*
- *Provides coverage to the highest-ridership segments of discontinued Route 28.*
- *This new route would add an estimated 6,600 annual service hours* and require one additional peak bus. This estimate assumes an interline with another route in downtown Toledo.
- **Route 34.** The existing Route 34 provides service from downtown Toledo to the UT Medical Center via a large one-way loop on Detroit Ave, Copeland Blvd, Byrne Rd, Arlington Ave, and Glendale Ave. On the north end of the route, the outbound and inbound service is split between Airport Hwy/Detroit Ave (outbound) and Spencer St/Arlington Ave (inbound). Near-term recommended route modifications include:
  - Because the new Route 33 would provide bidirectional service on Arlington Ave and Spencer St, *Route 34 would provide service on Detroit Ave, Airport Hwy, Western Ave and Broadway* in both the inbound and outbound directions.
  - *This modification is cost neutral* and will make using this route simpler.





## Restructure Service in East Toledo and Extend Service to Oregon

The existing routes serving East Toledo (Routes 12 and 14) are among the most productive services in the TARTA system, despite providing low levels of service and indirect alignments. Based on the market analysis, East Toledo also has some of the highest demand or need for transit services, with poor access to local services, like grocery stores. And as noted throughout this report, Oregon is one of the highest priority areas desired for service expansion. To address these needs in the near-term, the following route modifications are offered for consideration:

- **Route 19.** The existing Route 19 connects downtown Toledo with Franklin Park Mall via Cherry Street and Sylvania Avenue. This is one of TARTA's core routes, operating every 30 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekend days. Near-term route modifications to this route include:
  - *To provide a direct connection to Oregon, and enhanced service to parts of East Toledo,* this route could be extended to Oregon via Main Street, Starr Avenue, Wheeling Street and Navarre Avenue and terminating in the vicinity of Walmart on Navarre Avenue.
  - *Service would be provided every 30 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekend days.*
  - *This extension would add an estimated 7,000 annual service hours* and require two additional peak vehicles.

## Explore New Connection Point Facility at Franklin Park Mall

As noted earlier, Franklin Park Mall is a major regional destination and an important connection point for transit riders. Because new transit facilities can take years of planning, design and development, TARTA Next recommends that TARTA start exploring options for an off-street Connection Point in this area. Immediate next steps include identifying potential sites for an expanded passenger facility, conducting a site development feasibility analysis, and selecting a preferred site to evaluate further.

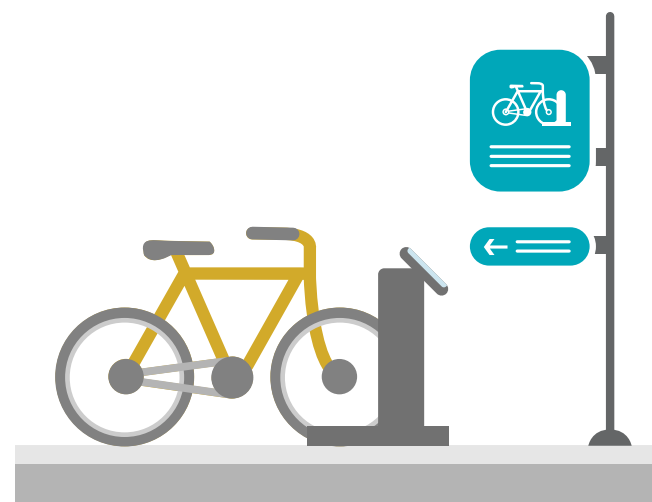




Image from Flickr user Judith Jackson

## Implement New Standing Stakeholder Committees

TARTA Next engaged a variety of regional stakeholders to provide input and suggestions on how to improve transit services in the Toledo area. To maintain this momentum, TARTA should form a new community advisory committee – or a series of advisory committees – to assist staff and the Board of Trustees in making policy and service decisions.

This committee (or committees) would meet regularly and at a cadence that maintains interest in the committee. This committee may need to meet more regularly as elements of the TARTA Next Vision are being implemented and then less frequently over time once major improvements have been implemented.





## Special Event Service

TARTA provides special transportation services for a variety of community and sporting events throughout the year. In 2022, TARTA has offered special transportation services for the Glass City Marathon, the Jeep Fest, and the Independence Day celebration in downtown Toledo. In the past, TARTA has offered special transportation services for Mud Hens games (the Muddy Shuttle) as well the Art Loop that operated within downtown Toledo serving a variety of arts-related venues.

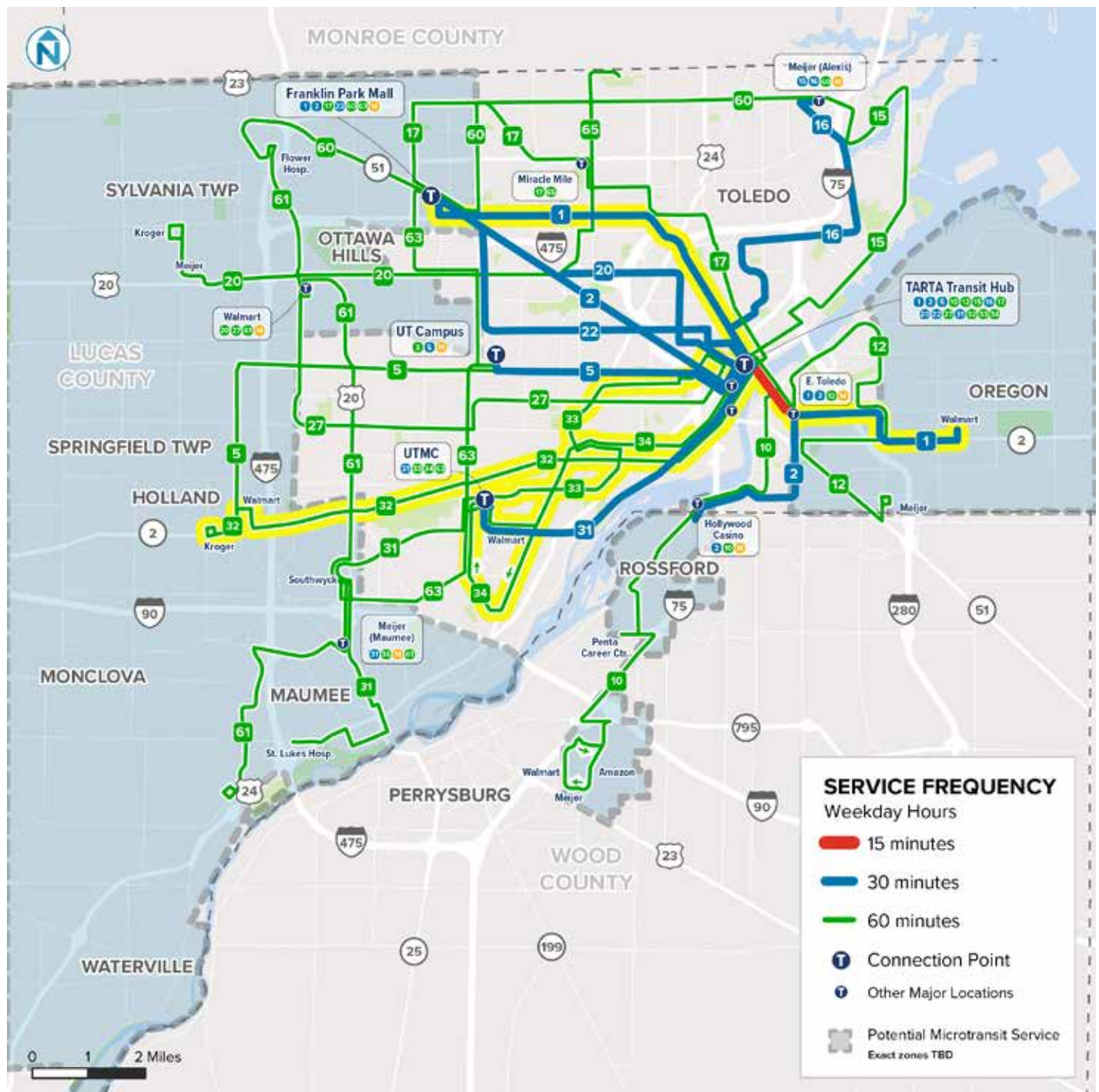
In the near-term, it is recommended that these special transportation services continue and be expanded. Because these are special events, TARTA could charge a premium fare to help offset the costs rather than use the existing fare structure. It is recommended that at a minimum the following special event services could be provided:

- **Mud Hens Home Games.** This would include express service from different locations around the region to downtown Toledo. Service would be provided for approximately six Mud Hens home games per month from April through September.
- **Walleye Home Games.** This would include express service from different locations around the region to downtown Toledo. Service would be provided for approximately six Walleye home games per month from November through April.
- **Glass City Marathon.** This would include service between hotels throughout the region and downtown Toledo. This would only be provided one day per year.
- **Independence Day celebration.** This would include service from several shopping centers throughout the region and provide service to downtown Toledo. This would only be provided one day per year.
- **Jeep Fest.** This would include service between Franklin Park Mall and downtown Toledo. This would only be provided one day per year.





## TARTA Next Vision: Near-Term Improvements



## MID- AND LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

As noted earlier, the TARTA Next Vision will take years to implement. As such, this section provides a series of service and capital improvements that would need to be implemented to fully implement the plan. The improvements listed below are broken into improvement “packages” that include service changes that would need to be implemented

together. The improvement packages are broken into the mid-term and long-term timeframe based on community input, but within each timeframe the improvements are not listed in order of preference. Additional community input will be required to determine how these improvements are phased in over time.

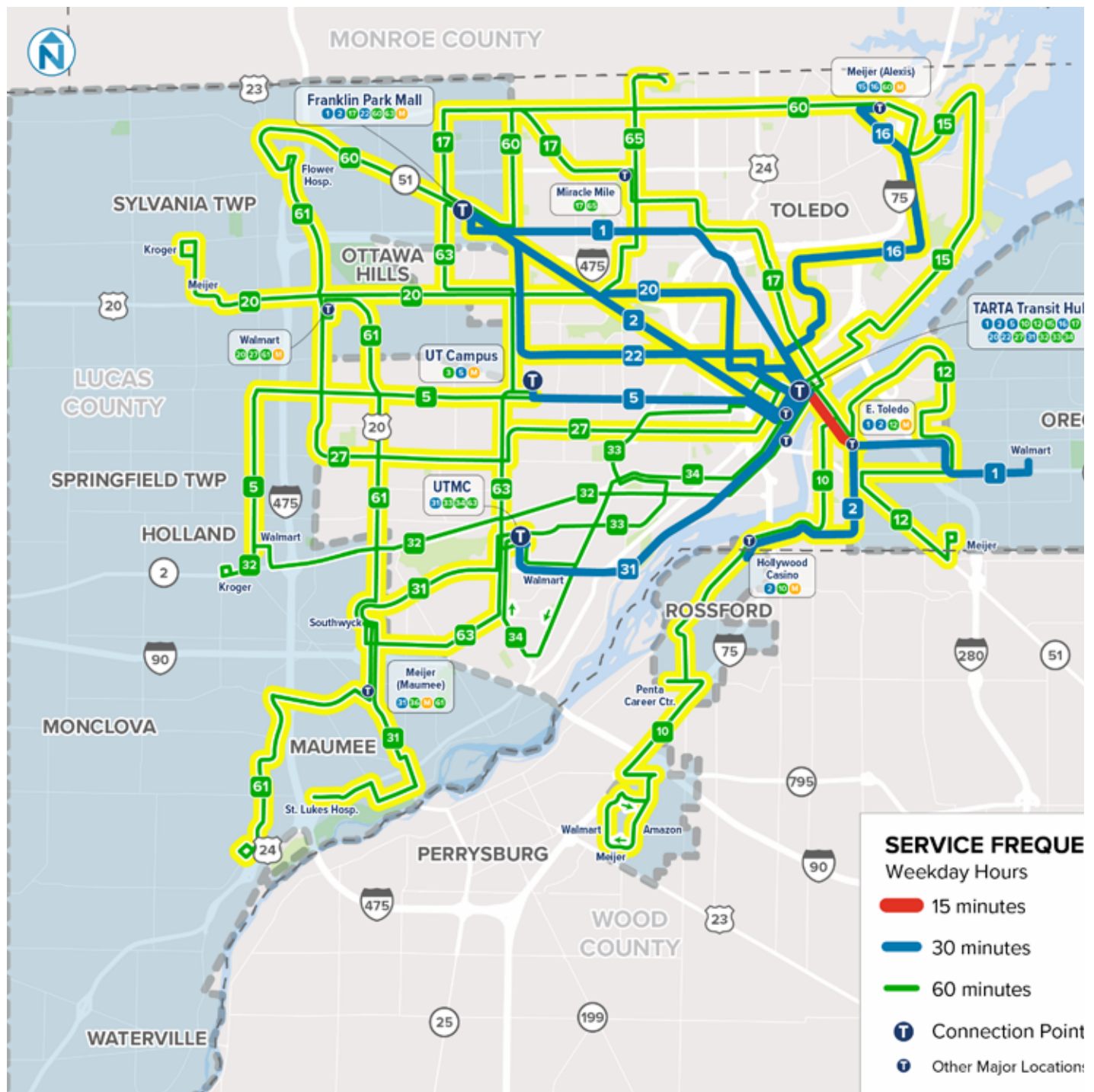
### Mid-Term Improvement Packages (3-5 years)

- Extend Route 2 to E. Toledo/Hollywood Casino; Modify and extend Route 12 to Meijer/ProMedica Bay Park in Oregon; Implement new Route 60 on Alexis Rd; Modify existing Route 10L to serve E. Toledo (and rename as Route 10)
- Discontinue Route 14
- Extend microtransit to eastern Lucas County
- Improve frequency on Route 22 (30 min)
- Extend Route 20 to Kroger in Sylvania Twp.; Implement new Route 65; Extend existing Route 17 to FPM
- Discontinue existing Route 52
- Modify existing Routes 15 and 16; Improve frequency on Route 16 (30 min)
- Modify Route 31 to extend to St Luke’s Hospital; Implement new crosstown Route 63
- Discontinue existing Route 3
- Modify Route 27
- Extend Route 5 to Spring Meadows; Implement new crosstown Route 61
- Continue progress towards TARTA’s zero emission fleet plan
- Continue supporting other regional mobility enhancements

### Long-Term Improvement Packages (5-10 years)

- Improve weekday frequency on Route 10 (30 min)
- Improve weekday frequency on Route 15 (30 min)
- Improve weekday frequency on Route 17 (30 min)
- Improve weekday frequency on Route 27 (30 min)
- Improve weekday frequency on Route 32 (30 min)
- Improve weekday frequency on Route 34 (30 min)
- Future fare collection improvements
- Continue progress towards TARTA’s zero emission fleet plan Continue supporting other regional mobility enhancements

## TARTA Next Vision: Mid- and Long-Term Improvements







**Summary and Next Steps**

## 8

# Summary and Next Steps

TARTA Next identified a series of service improvement opportunities that will make the system easier to understand, easier to use, and attract more riders. These strategies are discussed in the previous pages with more information available through the technical materials included in the appendices.

TARTA Next also started the process of identifying a preferred service scenario and how individual bus routes could be realigned to meet the larger goals of the project. Some of these ideas were shared with the public as part of the March 2022 outreach, but more analysis and community input is needed.

TARTA will continue this work over the coming months and years as the highest-priority improvements are implemented and future priorities are identified through ongoing community engagement.





