

SARTA-Wayne County Transit Program

SARTA and CAW/M propose the following program to gradually expand the availability and quality of public transportation offerings in Wayne County to meet the needs of specific market segments, including:

- Providing initial transportation services for new workers and connections to employment markets to support Wayne County employers
- Transportation for Wayne County residents enrolled in post-secondary education or training.
- Intra-and inter-county services for disabled residents.
- Intra-and-inter-county services for all residents without access to a private vehicle.
- Transportation services for Wayne County residents who have business with the county or municipal court system

All proposed services would be implemented initially as pilot programs. These programs would operate for a pre-determined, limited time period (such as \or one year). The programs also would have a pre-determined budget that would prevent the funding agencies from being exposed to cost overruns. In the event that funding is expended more quickly than expected, and the program expends its funding before the end of the pilot period, the funding agencies would have the option of adjusting the parameters of the program to reduce expenditures; suspend the program while considering adjustments to the program; or terminating the program before the end of the time period.

The pilot programs would be evaluated against performance measures established before their implementation. These performance measures would be based on the County's goals and objectives for the program, and would evaluate the services based on quantifiable and objective measures such as the productivity and cost-effectiveness of the service, whether the service is reaching the target populations and is addressing identified transportation needs. This evaluation would allow the funding agencies to evaluate their performance quantitatively and qualitatively during and at the end of the pilot period, at which time the funding agencies would seek to expand the program, refine it to improve its performance, suspend or terminate the program based on the evaluation, public input, and available funding.

Pilot programs would be developed and implemented over the next several years to address various transportation needs, based on availability of funding from the various local, State of Ohio and federal funding sources and programs, and the ability of SARTA, CAW/M and the other agencies and private operators to develop the various programs.

2021

Public Dial-a-Ride Pilot Program

Beginning in Summer 2020, SARTA will work with CAW/M and other governmental and non-profit agencies in Wayne County to secure \$500,000 in funding for operation of an initial pilot transit program. This program will supplement the existing services in operation in Wayne County, funded and operated by various private and governmental sources. The proposed pilot program would focus on several groups of Wayne County residents currently in need of additional mobility services:

- New workers who need trips to and from their jobs throughout Wayne County,

- Elderly and disabled residents who reside outside Wooster who need rides to medical services within Wayne County and to other counties in Northeast Ohio
- Residents who need rides to court appearances at various county and municipal courts, primarily in Wooster.

SARTA would secure this funding from various federal and state programs, including the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program and an Ohio Public Transit (OPT) grant through the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Provided that these funds are secured, service would begin in January 2021. SARTA would contract with CAW/M to provide the proposed service through local providers that would be competitively procured. The grant also would provide CAW/M with funding for a temporary dispatcher to supplement their existing dispatching capacity, anticipating higher volumes of calls and trips. These contract operators would be required to meet requirements for the quality and availability of their fleet; operator screening and training; insurance; and other aspects of their operation as indicated in CAW/M's contract with the operators. This is to protect the safety of customers and the financial interests of SARTA and other public and private agencies involved in the program. It would also ensure compliance with state and federal requirements.

The private bus operator would propose a per trip cost or mileage charge as part of their bid proposal.

Customers could access the service by contacting CAW/M or by referral to CAW/M by public and private medical or social service agencies, courts, or employers. Service would require a minimum 24 hours advance scheduling; many work trips would be pre-scheduled on a subscription basis. Trips would be dispatched by CAW/M using their existing scheduling and dispatching system. Since passengers would have to be pre-registered, payment would be made in advanced of the trip or billed on a credit card or agency account. This would reduce the need for fareboxes on board vehicles.

Investigation of Consolidated Scheduling

Beginning in late 2020 or early 2021, SARTA plans to begin a joint program with other area transit agencies and NEORide to investigate the feasibility of a consolidated demand-response dispatching system for paratransit services in northern Ohio. Akron METRO, PARTA, Medina County Transit and other transit operators in the region. SARTA will consider the potential for Wayne County's inclusion in this consolidated dispatching system. The potential benefits to Wayne County would likely include better integration of demand-response services with those of surrounding county, an easing of scheduling of intercounty trips, and possible cost efficiencies through sharing of demand response services across county boundaries.

2022

Wooster-Orrville Fixed-Route Service

Depending on demand patterns and travel volumes on the proposed demand response service to be implemented in 2021, SARTA would assist Wayne County and CAWN in evaluating the feasibility of extending fixed-route bus service to connect Wooster and Orrville. Analysis indicates a relatively strong connection between the two cities, with hundreds of daily work trips and thousands of total trips between the two cities. Operating a fixed-route service that offered regular daily trips between Orrville

and Wooster would promote employment trips among transit-dependent people, and potentially reduce demand for demand-response service between the two areas.

SARTA would analyze potential travel volumes and develop an operating plan for the proposed service, which could be operated as a stand-alone service or as an extension of one of the existing Wooster Transit shuttle routes that serve the City of Wooster. The plan will include proposed routing, stops, travel times, estimates of hours and miles of service, and cost estimates, and potential funding for the proposed service. This service would be planned in 2021 and early 2022 and implemented as a trial, pilot service in 2022. The service would be evaluated in the Fall of 2022 before commitment is made to continue operation in 2023.

2023

Wooster-Orrville-Massillon and Wooster-Orrville-Rittman-Wadsworth Services

With successful implementation of a fixed-route extension to Orrville, SARTA would lead the investigation of potential extensions of fixed-route services to Massillon, and from Orrville to Rittman and Wadsworth. These potential inter-county services would connect transit-dependent people in Wayne County's largest towns to jobs, training opportunities, medical services and shopping in both Stark and Medina Counties, and potentially could reduce the number of more costly demand response trips to those areas. Like the Orrville-Wooster services, these services would be operated initially as trial, pilot services operating in 2023 for potential renewal in 2024.

