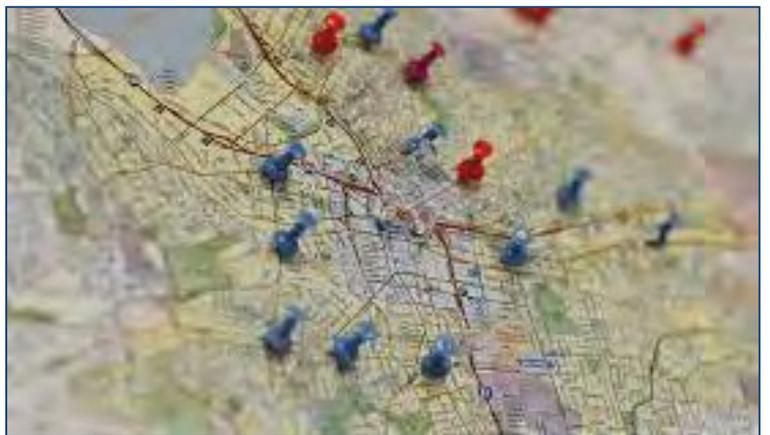


# WORK LINK

## Assessing Transportation Options for Low-Income Workers

July 2017





# Work Link

## Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council



**July 2017**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation options shape and constrain employment opportunities. In the City of Syracuse, the neighborhoods with the highest poverty levels also have the lowest levels of education, the highest unemployment rates, and the lowest levels of car ownership. Without a car, many job seekers must limit their job searches to places and work times that they can reliably reach by bus. Centro's transit service is extensive, with more than 100 routes and over 18,000 riders daily. But in a mid-sized metropolitan area, no fixed-route transit system can run to all employment centers or run all night without being extremely inefficient. As a result, gaps in the transit system are unavoidable, in terms of both where and when Centro provides service.

The Work Link project was based on a few assumptions, which were validated through data analysis and discussions with stakeholders:

- Transit service is most likely to be a problem for workers on second and third-shifts, as well as for jobs that involve weekend hours.
- This creates a problem for workers at the bottom end of the region's pay scale, because they are unlikely to own vehicles and are likely to work in retail or hospitality-industry jobs that require night and weekend work.
- Centro's transit service is running at capacity: adding weekend or late-night bus routes is not an option.

Working with a Study Advisory Committee, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) narrowed an exhaustive list of possible program concepts to five ideas:

- A new version of Centro's 'Rides for Work' program, which previously provided door-to-door vanpool service.
- A modified vanpool, hiring pre-existing, for-profit livery companies to provide rides in vans.
- A car-sharing program, with rates that are affordable to low-income workers.
- Subsidized rides provided by transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft.
- A pool of vans and other vehicles already owned by human service agencies in the region, which are likely to be idle after hours and on weekends.

## Program Benefits Compared

	Low average trip cost to users	Low average trip cost to program operator	Door-to-door service	Neighborhood to employment center service	Easy program to administer	Convenience to Rider
Rides for Work	✓		✓			✓
Modified Vanpool	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Car Share				✓		✓
Cooperative Vehicle Sharing	✓	?	?	✓	?	?
Subsidized TNC Rides	✓		✓		✓	✓

## Recommendations

This study was requested by the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency. Its stated goal is “To begin a comprehensive and collective discussion with member agencies, transportation providers, businesses and non-profit organizations on the feasibility and establishment of transportation to work services for low-income residents.” This report and these recommendations are presented to ensure that future discussions on this subject can focus on practical solutions, rather than on diagnosing problems.

### 1. Invest in Providence Services of Syracuse

Providence Services of Syracuse is the only private, non-profit organization in the SMTC’s planning area dedicated solely to ensuring that transportation is not a barrier to employment. The program has evolved to be cost-effective to the point of requiring only minimal subsidy. As grants have become available, it has enabled the program to offer lower fares to its clients. The organization would benefit from support in the form of marketing and in partnerships with workforce development agencies. The region’s job training programs should be working with Providence Services to resolve transportation issues for their clients.

**2. Work with a TNC to offer subsidized rides to workers**

The advantages of providing rides to workers through TNC software are significant. Both ease of program management and the flexibility this program would give workers make it worth investigating further. The lingering question of whether or not this service would truly be equitable cannot be ignored; any program utilizing a TNC to provide rides should include a means of monitoring and resolving complaints of harassment or discrimination.

**3. Continue to investigate Cooperative Vehicle Sharing**

While complex, the idea of sharing or pooling the vehicles already owned by non-profit organizations is promising. For a number of local human services organizations, helping individuals overcome barriers to personal development – such as finding a way to get to work – is their reason for being. Figuring out the details of how this can be done cooperatively may be difficult, but the long-term benefits to participating organizations and their clients are likely to be substantial.

**4. Test ideas with pilot projects**

This study has focused on five basic approaches to providing rides to work at nights and on weekends. There are many variations on these ideas, as well as on the other approaches identified in this report (see Table 1). Each permutation has its own strengths and weaknesses – no “perfect” solution exists. Making sure people can get to work is a sufficiently important issue in our region to warrant multiple experiments by a variety of entities.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Work Link Study was requested by the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) as part of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) 2016-2017 Unified Work Planning Program (UPWP). The study's goal, as defined in the UPWP is "To begin a comprehensive and collective discussion with member agencies, transportation providers, businesses and non-profit organizations on the feasibility and establishment of transportation to work services for low-income residents."

The City of Syracuse has the nation's highest levels of concentrated poverty among African-American and Hispanic residents. Concentrated urban poverty is a notoriously difficult chicken-and-egg conundrum, with local, national, and even international causes, and a long history of attempted solutions.

While this issue is complicated, there can be no doubt that access to good-paying jobs is a factor that keeps poor workers from transitioning out of poverty. Workers living below poverty make up only six percent of the County's workforce, but make up 26 percent of bus commuters. For a full-time worker making minimum wage, car ownership costs can eat up a third of annual income (based on AAA's 2016 *Your Driving Costs* study) – not an affordable option for most households. And jobs are spread throughout the region: according to a recent study, 60 percent of the region's jobs are more than three miles from Downtown Syracuse (Kneebone, 2013).

Transit is needed to get to jobs, but fixed-route transit service cannot provide service to every major job center around the clock, and on weekends, without massive inefficiencies. Programs designed to fill the gaps for transit-dependent workers (primarily nights and weekends) take a variety of forms around the country. This project will assess possibilities for programs that could be developed or expanded in the Syracuse region.

## II. BACKGROUND

### Project Context

The City of Syracuse has been fortunate in recent years to see major employers relocate from the suburbs to downtown office space. In general, however, the trend is for economic activity to move away from city centers. A 2013 report by the Brookings Institute noted that “between 1998 and 2006, employment—whether growing or declining—steadily moved farther away from downtowns across most major metro areas, in almost every major industry, and especially toward suburban communities at least 10 miles from the downtown.” (Kneebone, 2013)

The tendency of the job market to sprawl out from city boundaries was one of the challenges policy makers faced in the mid-1990s when welfare reform was being considered at the federal level, with the goal of moving welfare recipients into the labor force. One of the pieces of the puzzle that had to be put in place was getting low-income workers – particularly those in large cities – to suburban job centers.

This issue was largely addressed with the inclusion of \$750 million in Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funding in the 1998 transportation bill (TEA-21). In the Syracuse region, this led to the predecessor of *Work Link*: the SMTC’s 2001 *Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan*. The Central New York Regional Transportation (Centro) built on this plan to develop its Rides for Work program, which it operated using JARC funds.

Rides for Work provided door-to-door service seven days a week to clients referred by County social service agencies. The program averaged 12,000 and 14,000 rides annually. Unfortunately, the 2012 transportation bill (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, or MAP-21) repealed JARC funding. While the activities funded under JARC programs can be supported through other federal transit programs, the reality of transit funding is that every available dollar is needed to maintain existing fixed-route service. Without a pool of funds dedicated to job access activities, Centro discontinued the Rides for Work program in 2014.

In March 2015, the US Department of Transportation submitted a memo to Directors of Metropolitan Planning Organizations nationwide, urging them to consider adding projects to their work plans that would address three emphasis areas. One of these emphasis areas was identified as Ladders of Opportunity, and one of the projects suggested under this heading was “developing and implementing analytical methods to identify gaps in the connectivity of the transportation system and developing infrastructure and operational solutions that provide the public, especially the traditionally underserved populations, with adequate access to essential services.”

Also in 2015, a study of poverty and segregation in US cities was published (*The Architecture of Poverty* by Paul Jargowsky) that identified Syracuse as having the nation’s highest rate of concentrated poverty among African-American and Hispanic residents.

It was in this context that the SMTC held a series of focus groups in December 2015, to discuss transportation to work for low-income City of Syracuse residents. Representatives of workforce

development, adult education, and human service organizations provided their input (see Appendix B). Support for further study of the problem of how to get low-income workers who cannot afford car ownership to jobs was unanimous.

The City of Syracuse and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) submitted a joint application for the Work Link project in the fall of 2016, requesting that the SMTC look at the issue of transportation to work. The SMTC initiated the Work Link project in the spring of 2016, with its objective being to assess gaps in the transportation system and recommend feasible solutions.

## Project Process

### Study Advisory Committee

The Work Link project was guided by input from a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) made up of representatives of the following agencies and organizations:

- CenterState CEO
- Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro)
- City of Syracuse, iTeam
- City of Syracuse Department of Public Works
- Empire State Development Corporation
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA)
- Providence Services of Syracuse
- Syracuse Industrial Development Agency (SIDA)
- Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency, City Planning
- Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency, County Planning

Three SAC meetings were held over the course of this project. Notes from these meetings are available in Appendix A.

### Stakeholders

In addition to the focus group meetings held in December 2015, SMTC staff invited stakeholders and interested parties to a meeting in December 2016. SMTC staff presented the results of the technical analysis (described in Section III) and held a brainstorming session to collect a broad range of transportation solutions, as shown in Table 1. (See Appendix B for complete meeting notes.)

Attendees represented a variety of local agencies and organizations, including:

- City of Syracuse I-Team
- City of Syracuse, Department of Neighborhood & Business Development
- CNY Fair Housing
- Darco Manufacturing
- Empire State Development
- Human Services Leadership Council
- JOBSplus!
- Moving People Coalition
- Onondaga Citizens League
- Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency

- Onondaga County Office for Aging
- Providence Services of Syracuse
- Spanish Action League
- Syracuse Housing Authority
- Visions for Change
- Women's Opportunity Center
- Work TrainCenterState CEO

**Table 1 – Program Concept List from December 2016  
Brainstorming Session**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LONG DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Low-Interest Loans</b>	In the JobsPlus 'Wheels for Work' model, TANF recipients & recent recipients got a used car in exchange for a promise to repay a \$1500 loan (regardless of the actual cost of the car) over 15 months.
<b>Rides for Work II</b>	A review of records suggests that the Rides for Work program cost on the order of \$250K annually; this funding could be restored in the future, either through the next round of TIP funding (2021) or through grants.
<b>Bridj Model</b>	For-profit company Bridj currently operates in Boston, & Kansas City. From their website: "...customers sign up, identify their origin and destination points, and then Bridj tells them where to go to meet one of its minibuses. Rather than use the same static routes as your usual city bus routes, Bridj dynamically designs routes that aggregate commuter pickups where demand is highest." <i>[Note: Bridj went out of business in April 2017]</i>
<b>'Village Vans'</b>	Based on program in Olympia, WA run by transit agency. Reservation-based transportation for low-income workers; also works with job training agency to offer on-the-job training for PA recipients as drivers. Drivers are not paid but learn a marketable skill.
<b>Community Centers</b>	Concept: run scheduled and/or on-demand shuttle service from the City's four community centers to specific job sites / centers.
<b>Marshrutka / Publico / Share taxi</b>	Private, for-profit, limited-service van system. For example: three minivans sit at the Transit Hub from 11:30 PM on. One is taking people 'north', one 'south', one 'west'. Cost is \$3 (?) and the van leaves when it is full.
<b>Non-Profit Service Provider</b>	Oswego County Opportunities; Heritage Community Transportation. Small transit system (fixed-route or not) run by non-profit.
<b>Employer-sponsored Shuttle</b>	Tessy Plastics and Marquardt Switches known to have done this.

PROGRAM	LONG DESCRIPTION
<b>vRIDE</b>	From 'MichiVan' description (sponsored by Michigan DOT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 to 15 commuters share a van along an established route</li> <li>• Riders pay a monthly fee as low as \$66.78 per month</li> <li>• vRide provides vehicle, maintenance, insurance &amp; title</li> <li>• Volunteer vanpool member drives van &amp; rides free.</li> </ul>
<b>Employer-sponsored Carpooling</b>	Example: Nike's (Beaverton, OR) commuting program includes two types of carpooling incentives. Carpools have reserved parking areas until 10 AM & carpoolers are eligible for monthly and quarterly prize drawings. ('Nike Bucks' voucher program proved too expensive.)
<b>NY511</b>	NYSDOT to roll out 'local' version in near future; free, state-run system to match riders with drivers.
<b>Non-profit Sector Coordination</b>	Vehicles supplied by a pool of multiple human service agencies; program coordinated by a central office. Drivers could be volunteers.
<b>Transportation Network Company Subsidy (Uber / Lyft)</b>	Various experiments ongoing in other cities: TNC becomes a subsidized extension of transit system. Can be used to get people to/from transit. Can be used as overnight service – currently being considered in Boston. Boston example price scheme per ride: rider cost = \$2.75; employer cost = \$1; Transit Authority cost ranges from \$0.60 to \$6.00.
<b>Modified Vanpool</b>	Non-profit acts as a transportation broker: lines workers up with livery company and subsidizes fares to the greatest extent possible.
<b>Public Subsidy</b>	Subsidized taxi service; has been done in Rochester; clients could be referred from DSS / CNY Works.
<b>Syracuse Car Share</b>	Subsidized ZipCar model; Create a pool of shared vehicles at central location(s); reserve a vehicle and pay on-line.
<b>TNC + Car Share</b>	"G.M. will also work with Lyft to set up a series of short-term car rental hubs across the United States, places where people who do not own cars can pick up a vehicle and drive for Lyft to earn money." <i>NY Times</i> , 1/5/16, "General Motors, Gazing at Future, Invests \$500 Million in Lyft"

**JOBSpus! Clients**

In April 2017, SMTC staff talked to four groups of students at JOBSpus!, Onondaga County's program for temporary assistance recipients who are entering or re-entering the workforce. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the transportation barriers that program participants have encountered as they

search for jobs. SMTC staff gave JOBSplus! clients a short survey, in order to document their transportation barriers. The vast majority of those surveyed (81 percent) were City of Syracuse residents, and two-thirds of those surveyed did not own a car.

Asked about their previous employment, many respondents indicated that they had worked in nursing homes, but restaurants, hotels, landscaping, and trucking companies were also mentioned.

In response to the question “What are some ways you might get to work?” almost all survey respondents said they had used or would use transit to get to work (see Table 2). Even the seven respondents who could drive to work indicated the bus as an option. Walking was also very popular, with more than two-thirds of respondents saying they would walk to work. Biking and calling a cab were the two least popular options.

**Table 2 – JOBSplus! Survey Responses – Means of Transportation to Work**

Means of Transportation	Responses	
	Number	Percent of Respondents
Bus	31	97%
Walk	22	69%
Ask for a ride (friends or family)	17	53%
Carpool	11	34%
Drive Alone	10	31%
Taxi	7	22%
Bike	5	16%

*Respondents were instructed to select more than one answer – the ‘Percent’ shown is the proportion of all respondents selecting this mode.*

Respondents were also asked which of three alternative ways to get to work they preferred. The alternatives provided in the survey were user-oriented versions of the program ideas in Section IV; to someone getting a ride, it makes no difference whether a van that is picking them up is owned by a transit agency, a livery company, or a non-profit. Survey results are shown in Table 3. The idea of using a vanpool or carpool appealed to two-thirds of respondents. Neighborhood-based car-sharing was selected by 38 percent of respondents, while getting a ride from a TNC was selected by half as many respondents.

**Table 3 – JOBSplus! Survey Responses – Preferred Alternative**

Alternative	Responses	
	Number	Percent of Respondents
Join a Vanpool or Carpool	13	62%
Rent a car, with pick-up & drop-off in your neighborhood (\$20 / day)	8	38%
Uber / Lyft	4	19%
<i>(Respondents were instructed to select more than one answer – the 'Percent' shown is the proportion of all respondents selecting this mode.)</i>		

It is worth noting that, in discussing Uber and Lyft, JOBSplus! clients tended to refer to sensationalized, well-publicized crimes in other cities, such as an Uber driver turned serial killer in Michigan. An analysis by the Cato Institute conducted in 2015 concluded that “scare stories about ridesharing’s safety and insurance risks are wildly overblown”, noting that the use of cash-free transactions and self-identified customers reduce the risk of violent crime, compared to traditional taxis. (Feeney, 2015 )

A program utilizing Uber, Lyft, or similar TNCs may have to overcome a bias against them generated by these “scare stories.”

This survey and a summary of survey responses is included in Appendix D.

### Additional Meetings

In addition to the SAC and Stakeholder Meetings, SMTC staff met with numerous local leaders to explore the details of implementing the program ideas discussed in Section IV. Staff also contacted program personnel in other parts of the country in order to get a better understanding of how other regions run their programs.

These contacts included:

- CenterState CEO WorkTrain program staff
- City and County Economic Development staff
- City of Syracuse iTeam
- David Goodness, Workforce Development Institute
- Deb Hundley, Providence Services of Syracuse
- Gifford Foundation staff
- Housing and Homeless Coalition of Syracuse and Onondaga County
- James Fayle, Empire State Development
- Loretta Zolkowski, Human Services Leadership Council
- Ocesa Keaton, Greater Syracuse HOPE
- Rob Simpson, CenterState CEO

- Steve Koegel, Centro
- Brenda Massie, Rochester Mayor’s Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives (by phone)
- Gary Mashaw, Oswego County Opportunities (by phone)
- Jocelyn Martinez, Rio Metro Regional Transit, Albuquerque, New Mexico (by phone)
- Michael Rogers, Summit, NJ (by phone).

### Public Meeting

SMTC staff presented the Work Link project and its findings to the public at the June 6, 2017 meeting of the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC), held at the Southwest Community Center. The meeting was well attended, with more than 20 members of the public present, in addition to REDC members.

SMTC staff also presented the project to a meeting of the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS) Moving People Group on June 29, 2017.

### III. TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

*Note: This section summarizes information explained at length in the SMTC’s 2016 “Work Link Technical Memo: Employment Centers and Transit Service.” Please see this document, provided as Appendix C in electronic and online versions of this document, for details on the methodology and data sources that support the conclusions in this section.*

#### Demographics

For most residents of suburban Onondaga County, car ownership is not a problem. Figure 1 uses data by Census Tract to identify where in the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) workers lack access to vehicles. According to data from the American Community Survey (ACS), two-thirds of the nearly 10,800 workers in Onondaga County who do not own a car live in the City of Syracuse. In addition to households with no vehicles, American Community Survey data show households by number of workers and numbers of vehicles. If there are more workers in a household than there are vehicles, there is likely to be a transportation limitation for someone. The highest concentration of households with more workers than vehicles is in the city.

For commuters who do not own a vehicle, transit is the most popular means of getting to work, with 34 percent of carless workers using transit (United State Census Bureau / American Fact Finder, 2014). Walking is the second most popular commuting method, suggesting that walking distance and transit routes put very definite constraints on where these workers can look for jobs. Twenty percent of workers who do not own a car manage to commute by driving themselves to work – likely by borrowing a vehicle from a friend or relative.

Not owning a car and relying on transit by no means equates to a life of poverty and limited opportunities. As the SMTC’s *Long Range Transportation Plan* notes, people born within the last 35 years are less likely than previous generations to have driver’s licenses. As a lifestyle choice, not driving a car can make both environmental and economic sense. However, combined with other factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and a lack of professional training or post-secondary education, every inaccessible job opportunity can make a significant difference in an already tough job search.

As Figures 2 and 3 make clear, the Census Tracts at the upper extreme for these indicators – the Tracts at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or above for each – are all located in the City of Syracuse. Several City neighborhoods are characterized by high rates of unemployment, high rates of poverty, low rates of car ownership, and low levels of educational attainment

Figure 1 – Households with Limited Vehicle Access

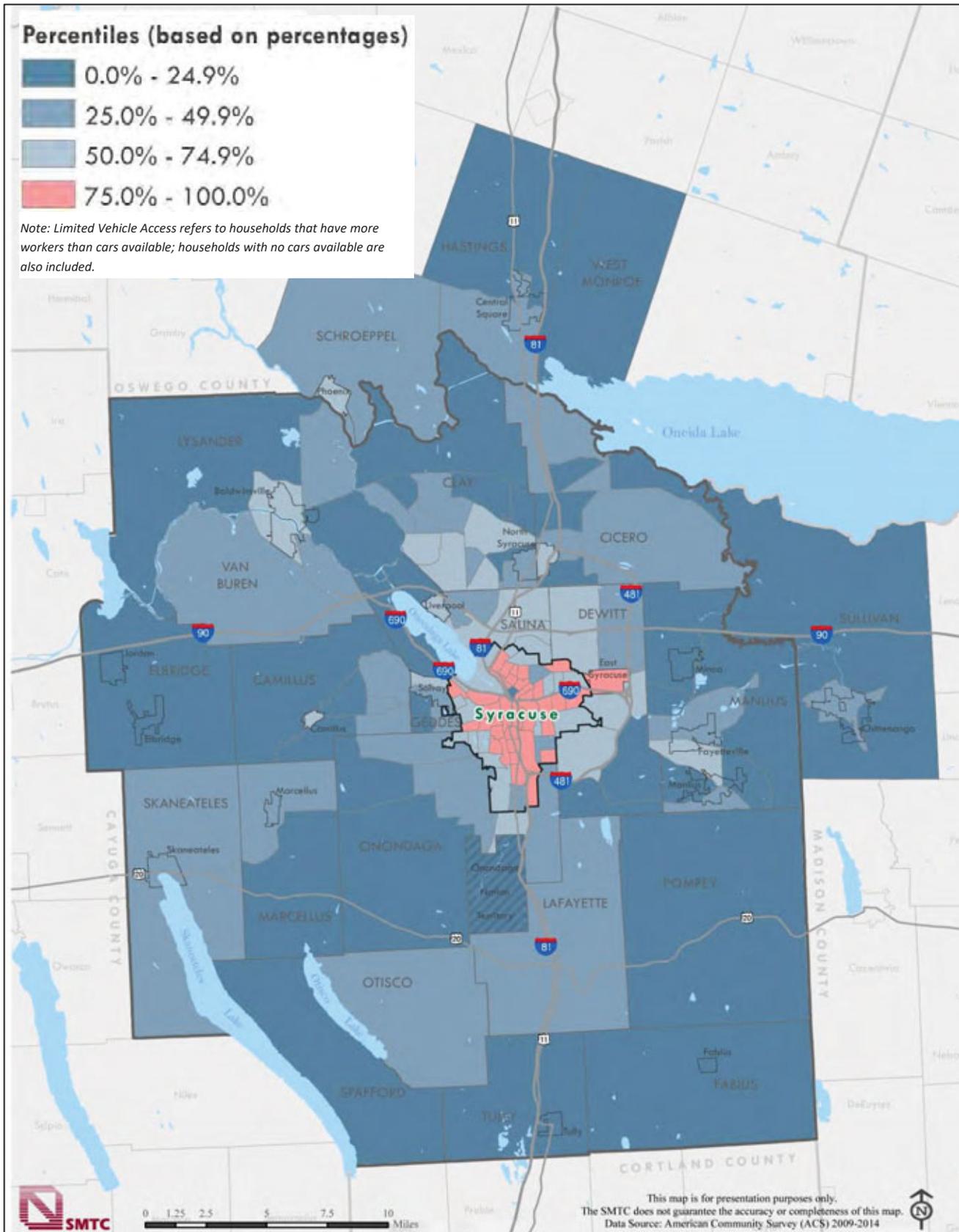


Figure 2 – Demographic Composite, MPA

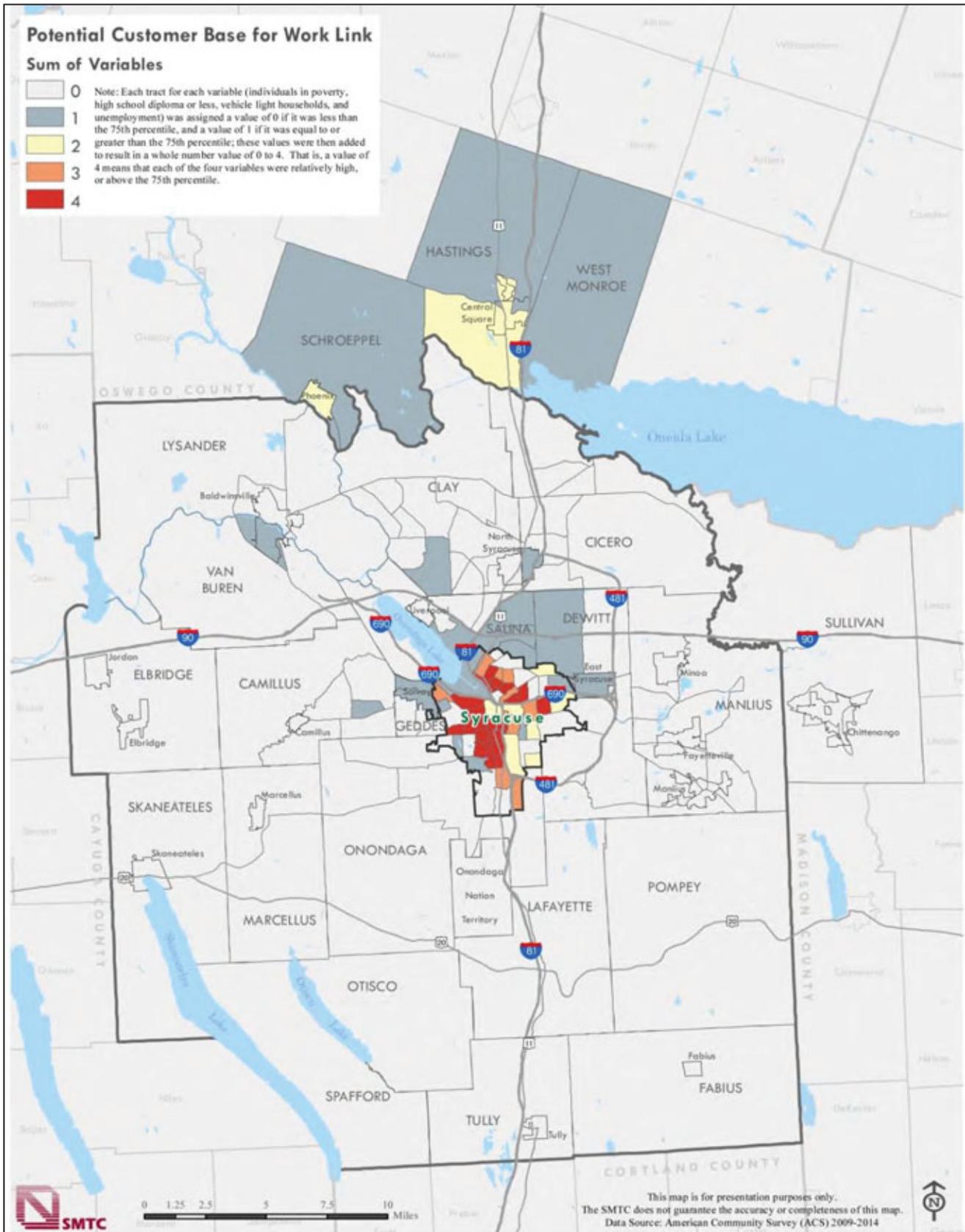
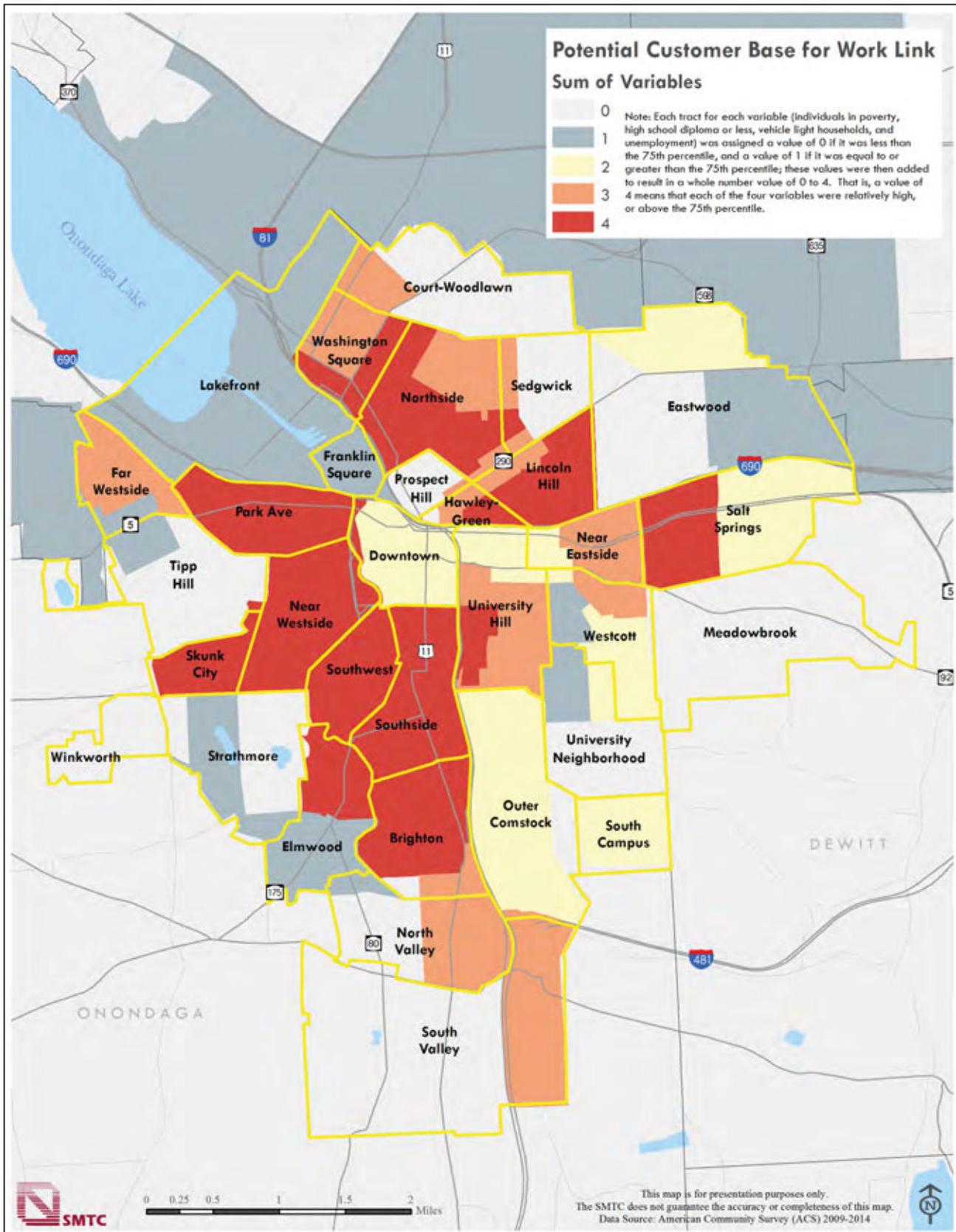


Figure 3 – Demographic Composite, City Of Syracuse



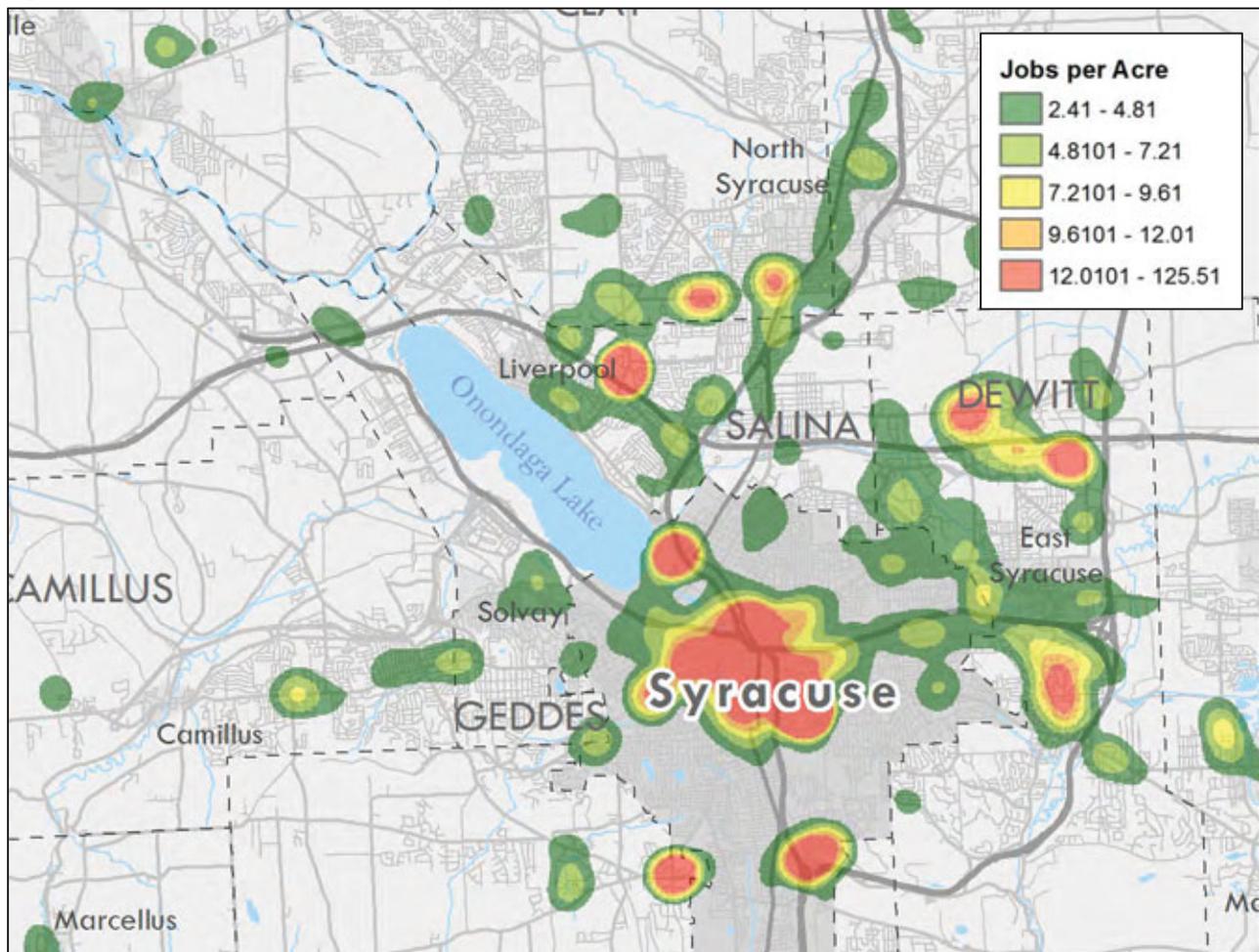
## Employment Centers

According to data from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are approximately 340,050 jobs in the five-county region that includes Onondaga County and adjacent counties – Cayuga, Cortland, Madison and Oswego Counties.

Chapter Three of the SMTC’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides an overview of the employment centers within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The largest single employment center is Downtown Syracuse, followed by University Hill. Together, these two areas are home to nearly 40,000 jobs. The LRTP also identifies the northern portion of the Town of DeWitt and much of the Town of Salina as having high concentrations of job opportunities. Other job centers include Radisson Business Park in the Town of Van Buren, Woodard Industrial Park in Clay, and the I-90 / I-690 junction in Geddes.

A spatial analysis of employment data from private data vendor InfoGroup confirms the findings of the LRTP: Downtown, University Hill, Northern DeWitt, and the Town of Salina see four to five times the countywide average in terms of employment density (see Figure 4). High concentrations also show up along the Erie Boulevard East corridor, at DestinyUSA, and along the Taft Road corridor in the Town of Clay.

**Figure 4 – Concentration Of All Employees**



## Transit Service

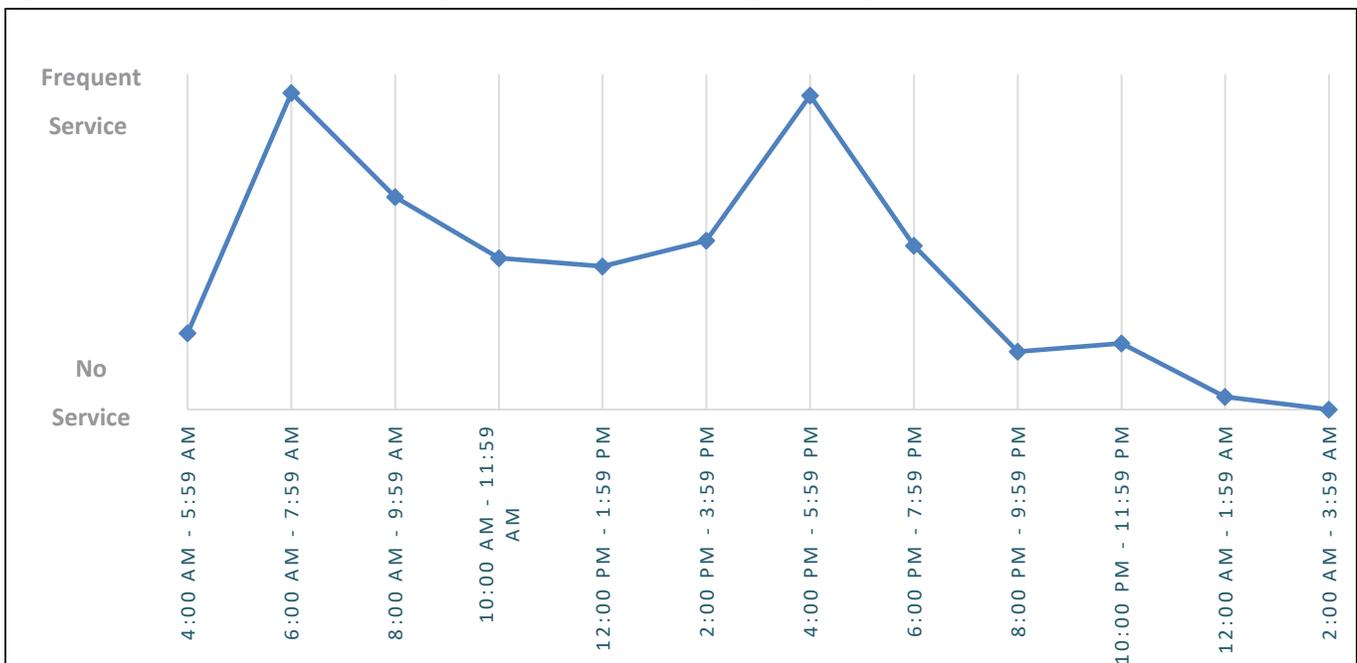
The SMTC's 2015 *Transportation Atlas* includes an overview of Centro's fixed-route transit system, which provides extensive service within the City of Syracuse, to suburban communities, and to major employment centers in the region. All bus routes in the area run into and out of the Transit Hub in Downtown Syracuse. As the SMTC's *Title VI and LEP Report* for 2015 indicates, the City of Syracuse is the area that is best served by Centro's transit routes – including the neighborhoods identified above as having the greatest limitations in terms of transportation and opportunity.

For the purposes of this project, the analysis of the transit system used data for Centro's Syracuse-area service, as summarized in a Generalized Transit Feed Specification<sup>1</sup> (GTFS) file. The GTFS file was processed using a GIS tool called 'Better Bus Buffers.'

Figure 5 shows the number of transit trips in Onondaga County throughout the day. Morning and evening peak commute periods see the greatest transit activity, with a lower, but still substantial, level of activity in between. After 6:00 p.m., transit service declines precipitously.

In a mid-sized metropolitan area like ours, it is not realistic to expect that fixed-route transit service will be provided as frequently or extensively throughout second and third shifts as during the first shift, when three-fourths of workers are commuting. As a result, gaps in transit service are inevitable during some time periods. As would be expected, between midnight and 4:00 a.m., transit service is almost entirely nonexistent.

**Figure 5 – Transit Service Levels by Time Of Day, Onondaga County**



<sup>1</sup> The General Transit Feed Specification is a standardized format for presenting transit system data. For more information, see: <https://developers.google.com/transit/gtfs/>.

## Employment Centers and Transit Accessibility

More than three-fourths of the region's jobs are near bus routes. As would be expected based on the trends in transit service seen above, job accessibility is greatest in the morning and evening peaks. Figure 6 shows the total number of jobs that are accessible by transit in selected time intervals. The 6:00 a.m. to 7:59 a.m. period has the greatest job accessibility, with nearly 146,000 jobs being within ¼-mile of six or more buses in this period. The 4:00 p.m. to 5:59 p.m. period is a close second, with nearly 138,000 transit accessible jobs.

Figure 7 provides an overview of the employers in Onondaga County that are and are not accessible by transit, based on whether or not they are in Bus Stop Zones.

**Figure 6 – Number of Jobs by Transit Service by Selected Time Intervals**

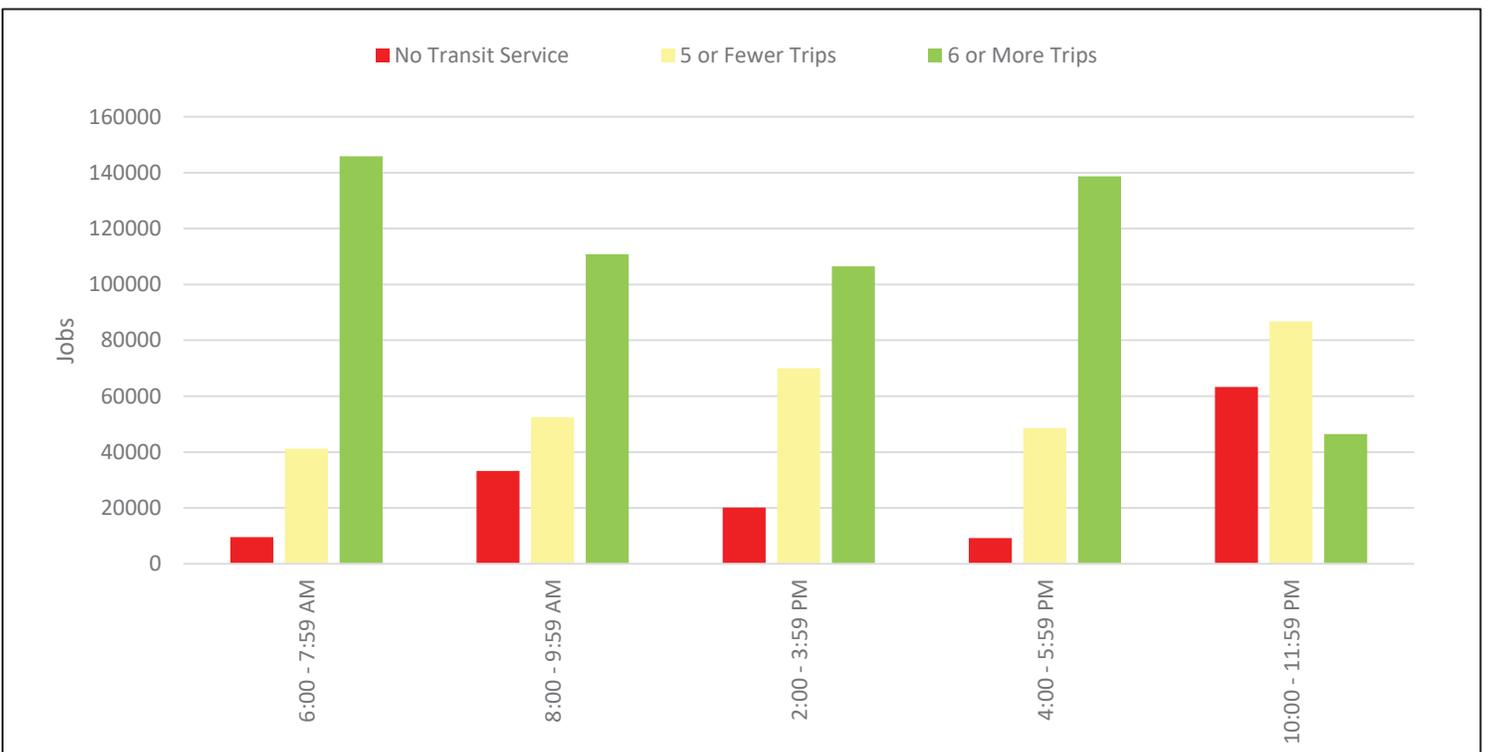
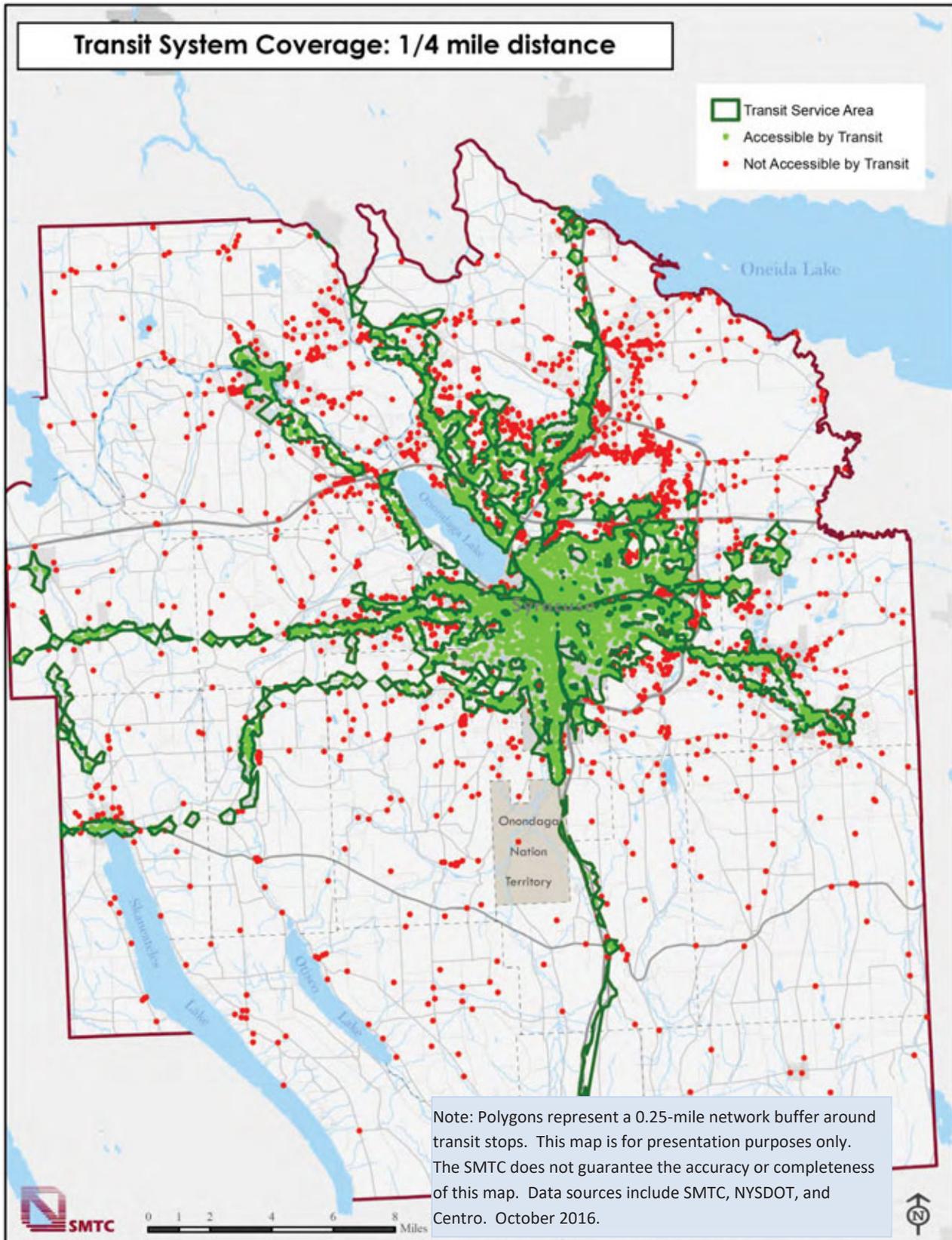


Figure 7 – Employers In and Out of Bus Stop Service Distance



## IV. PROGRAM CONCEPT DETAILS

Working with the SAC members attending a February 2017 meeting, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) narrowed an exhaustive list of possible program concepts to five ideas:

- A new version of Centro’s ‘Rides for Work’ program, which previously provided door-to-door vanpool service.
- A modified vanpool, hiring pre-existing, for-profit livery companies to provide rides in vans.
- A car-sharing program, with rates that are affordable to low-income workers.
- Subsidized rides provided by transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft.
- A pool of vans and other vehicles already owned by human service agencies in the region, which are likely to be idle after hours and on weekends.

### Rides for Work

#### Concept Overview

This program would revive Centro’s Rides for Work program, a reservation-based, door-to-door service using Centro drivers and vehicles, supplemented with taxi service. This model is designed to be free to users, and provided on a temporary basis, with a three-month time limit. Clients would be referred to the program by social services agencies.

Under the guidelines of the original program, riders were not permitted to use the service if a bus was available within three-fourths of a mile of their origin and destination point and available at the appropriate times for pick-up and drop-off. Also, riders were allowed only three “no shows.”

Rides for Work was a highly successful program that filled a critical need in the community. The model was capital-intensive, with federal support on the order of \$250,000 annually through the JARC program. Rides for Work averaged between 12,000 and 14,000 rides annually, with more than 430 customers in a year. Each ride cost an average of \$32.

#### *RIDES FOR WORK - ESSENTIALS*

<b>Hours / Days of Operation</b>	7 days a week, 5 AM – 12 AM
<b>Reservations</b>	Made at least 24 hours in advance, over the phone
<b>Origins/Destinations</b>	Home or daycare / work
<b>Eligibility Period</b>	3 months
<b>Cost to Rider</b>	Free (\$1 for some rides)
<b>Avg. Per Ride Cost to Provider</b>	\$32

#### Strengths

- Makes any job opening in the county accessible to low-income workers.
- Convenient geographically: the original program was structured to allow pick-up and drop-off to happen at a daycare center, rather than at home.
- Convenient temporally: reservations give clients control over departure and arrival times.

- Develops human capital within the transit agency: a person or department is tasked with interfacing with social services agencies and their clients.

### Weaknesses

- Capital intensive and not designed to be self-sustaining, or to ever move in that direction.
- Under the policies of the original program, this model does not allow the client to work an extra unplanned hour and still get a ride: pick-ups and drop-offs must be scheduled 24 hours ahead of time.
- This model is designed to be a short-term solution for workers: eligibility for the program expires after three months. This may not be enough time to arrange an alternative form of transportation.

### Similar Programs in Other Communities

#### *Access to Jobs – South Central Transit Authority, Lancaster, PA*

The South Central Transit Authority's (SCTA) "Access to Jobs" program serves between 3,600 and 13,000 clients a year. To be eligible for the program, applicants' incomes must be under 150 percent of the poverty level, and they must live and work within six miles of Lancaster. Rides are provided by the transit authority.

The Access to Jobs program is currently still using federal JARC resources, although this funding is expected to run out soon. The use of a 50 percent state match has allowed them to stretch their federal funding well past the end of the program. When the federal JARC funds have been exhausted, the agency will likely divert resources from the general operating fund to keep the program running.

Access to Jobs clients pay a fare of \$3 per ride.

#### *Job Access - Albuquerque, NM*

The Rio Metro Regional Transit District operates a "Job Access" program for low-income residents of the Albuquerque area. Taxi companies provide rides and users are required to pay \$1 to \$2, as well as the balance of fares over \$20. However, a 60-day grace period allows workers to ride free while they establish themselves at a job.

Other key features of this program include:

- Program participants receive a free monthly bus pass while they are enrolled in the program, allowing them to ride the bus when it is available.
- Eligibility is based on income: anyone making less than 150 percent of the poverty level is eligible to apply for the program.
- Clients are eligible for the program for up to six months at a time with the option to reapply for a second six month period.
- Reservations are made directly with the taxi company and are made at least two hours prior to pick-up.
- Children under five can be transported to and from day care in the taxi.

- Funding for this program comes from the transit agency’s “Urbanized Area Formula Grant” – federal funds that could otherwise be used for fixed-route transit service.

### Overall Assessment

Without a reliable, long-term source of funding, a local program cannot be built on the “Rides for Work” model. Based on current funding sources, such a program would have to draw on Centro’s federal funding stream, diverting funds away from existing bus routes. Centro does not consider this a viable option, since the agency is working to maintain all of its existing routes and to expand them where possible.

While Rides for Work was, technically, a vanpool, it also operated based on the needs of individual clients, with pick-up times throughout the day and pick-up locations across the county. As a result, the program often functioned like a taxi, with only one or two riders in a vehicle at a time. On a cost-per-ride basis, a door-to-door service operated by a transit agency is likely to be the most expensive approach to providing transportation to work, because of the cost of a Centro driver’s time. In a 2009 report prepared by Cornell’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, a public transit official is quoted as saying: “The largest part of our operating costs sits behind the wheel ... It’s irrelevant whether it’s a jitney or a 40-foot bus.” (Edid & Levitte, 2009)

### Modified Vanpool

Unlike other ideas explored in this section, the ‘Modified Vanpool’ program is not merely a concept: this model is currently in operation in the form of Providence Services of Syracuse.

Providence Services began in 2013 as a program to support refugees on the city’s north side who were looking for work, but who lacked a vehicle, a driver’s license, or both. In 2017, Providence broadened its mission to provide rides to city residents. Rides are provided to workplaces in Syracuse, East Syracuse, and Liverpool.

Providence Services is not designed to be a door-to-door service: there are ten designated pick-up sites in the city, and riders are given a window of time in which they will be picked up.

Providence Services contracts with a livery service for drivers and vehicles. Clients sign up for service on a website. The fare is \$5 per ride.

### Program Strengths

- This is a functioning, nearly self-sustaining program.
- This model balances the need to provide service within the City of Syracuse with the efficiency of centralized pick-up/drop-off points in neighborhoods.
- By contracting with livery companies, this model takes advantage of professional drivers and well-maintained vehicles.

### Program Weaknesses

- Limited service area and workplaces.
- Reservation-based systems reduce workers’ flexibility.

- Does not provide door-to-door service.
- Round-trip fare equates to more than an hour's pay for a worker making minimum wage.

*MODIFIED VANPOOL - ESSENTIALS*

<b>Hours / Days of Operation</b>	7 days a week, 24 hours a day
<b>Reservations</b>	Made in advance on the organization's website
<b>Origins/Destinations</b>	City pick-up points; workplaces
<b>Eligibility Period</b>	Unlimited
<b>Cost to Rider</b>	\$5 / ride
<b>Avg. Per Ride Cost to Provider</b>	Varies based on ridership

**Similar Programs in Other Communities**

There are many permutations on the vanpool concept being utilized in other communities. A few examples are provided below for the purposes of comparison.

*vRide Vanpool*

vRide is a private, for-profit company that provides a van, along with its insurance and maintenance, to a pool of commuters. Riders pay a monthly subscription fee (roughly \$70) and the van is driven by a member of the vanpool. vRide operates in several cities in Upstate New York, including Ithaca, Watertown, and Albany.

A pilot program in the City of Rochester provides subsidized vRide vanpools to low-income residents. This program has been successful in getting a group of workers to a newly-opened casino in Waterloo, New York, using a professional driver to supplement volunteer drivers. While not run by the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transit Authority, the mileage and passenger service data it generates are included in the National Transit Database for the Rochester area. This will make these vanpools eligible for subsidies through the federal funding formula in the future.

vRide incentivizes the formation of carpools, but carpools may not be a feasible solution for workers in food service or other industries with hours and schedules that fluctuate weekly or daily.

*Village Vans, Olympia, Washington*

Village Vans, operated by Intercity Transit in Olympia, Washington, provides free rides to work for low-income workers. In addition to providing rides, it is also a job training program that helps unemployed job-seekers become drivers for Village Vans. This, in turn, provides a cost saving to the transit agency, since the drivers are volunteers receiving on-the-job training.

**Overall Assessment**

The Modified Vanpool approach may be the most cost-effective and flexible approach available, without using either volunteer drivers or donated vehicles. The logistics of scheduling a ride in advance are comparable to those of the Rides for Work program. The key drawbacks from the rider's perspective are the relatively high cost (more than twice current Centro bus fare) and the lack of door-to-door service. From the perspective of providing an efficient and self-sufficient program, these features may be

unavoidable. If Providence Services were to obtain additional financing, this organization may be able to expand its offerings to include door-to-door service.

## Car Sharing

Car sharing is a form of car rental that offers customers greater flexibility than traditional car rental companies can. An organization (typically either a non-profit or for-profit company) owns a fleet of vehicles and handles their insurance, fuel, and maintenance. The two key benefits to customers are flexibility in time and in geography. Car share customers typically rent vehicles by the hour, rather than by the day – making it ideal for a trip to the grocery store or to an appointment that would be difficult to reach by transit. Vehicles are available for pick-up and drop-off in neighborhoods, rather than at a central location such as an airport. Reservations and payment are handled electronically, and car-share members have a device (typically a smart phone app, electronic key card, or key fob) that gives them access to all vehicles. Unlike traditional car rental companies, car share programs are based on a pool of members, who pay either monthly or annually for their membership. Membership rates are scaled, giving frequent users a lower hourly or per-mile rate in exchange for a higher membership fee. Vehicle rental rates are set to make weekend use more expensive than weekday use. In some cases, hourly rates for overnight use are extremely low.

Zipcar is the world’s largest car sharing company, with cars available in more than 300 US cities in 47 states. Zipcar is available to Syracuse University students and employees, with rates varying from \$6.75 to \$7.50 per hour, depending on monthly membership plan.

Enterprise CarShare is comparatively limited in its car-sharing programs available to the public, but has programs in place at 162 colleges and universities across the country.

Car2Go operates in seven US cities and charges users by the minute.

It is improbable that a car share program would be a good fit for most workers’ day-to-day commute, given the costs that even a non-profit car share company would have to charge to stay in business. The most successful non-profit car sharing model in the region is Ithaca CarShare, and their website specifies what kinds of trip their model is and is not likely to work for:

**Common trips:** Grocery shopping, running errands, visiting friends, doctor's visits, airport dropoffs, visiting a local or state park, or picking up kids from school.

**Trips we don't recommend:** Multi-day, long-distance trips, daily commuting, or leaving a car parked at home overnight. (Ithaca CarShare, 2017)

However, car sharing was a popular idea among welfare-to-work program participants surveyed in an informal April 2017 poll (see Table 3). Research has shown that car ownership can make a significant difference in the opportunities available to low-income job seekers, as well making it easier to run other errands and keep appointments. One study found that “Unrestricted access to a household car is the most effective transportation resource in promoting the transition from welfare to work.” But that study also noted that “Despite the usefulness of an automobile in meeting welfare-to-work and family

obligations, [welfare] recipients with a household car report problems related to reliability and cost.” (Paul M. Ong, 2001)

As a low-cost alternative to car ownership, car share programs may fit the needs of low-income workers, particularly if multiple commuters were to split the costs of a daily commute from a neighborhood to a common area of employment.

A non-profit car sharing model for the Syracuse area would need to solve the following problems:

- A new or existing non-profit organization to run and finance the program, including purchasing or leasing a fleet of vehicles and maintaining them, as well as tracking memberships and all of the associated finances;
- An insurance company willing to cover a fleet of vehicles positioned throughout the city;
- Technical issues, such as a smartphone app to track reservations, a website for memberships, and an approach to giving users access to vehicles (such as a key fob);
- Developing an equitable rate structure. The Ithaca CarShare approach includes a membership option for low-income members.
- Possibly working with the City of Syracuse's Public Works Department to identify suitable on-street parking spaces for car-share vehicles.
  - Ithaca CarShare has parking spaces throughout the city, designated by special signs.
  - Other programs, such as Car2Go in New York City, use normal on-street parking spaces for car storage.



*CAR-SHARE - ESSENTIALS*

<b>Hours / Days of Operation</b>	7 days a week, 24 hours a day
<b>Reservations</b>	Made via smartphone prior to vehicle pick-up
<b>Origins/Destinations</b>	Pick-up and drop-off points within neighborhoods
<b>Eligibility Period</b>	Unlimited
<b>Cost to Client</b>	Varies; as low as \$2.50/hour for late night use. As high as \$14 / hour for weekend use.

**Similar Local Programs**

*Cuse Car*

In 2009, Synapse Partners, Inc. won a \$150,000 grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority to run a car-sharing program known as Cuse Car. Like Ithaca CarShare, it was intended to be more affordable than ZipCar, with rates as low as \$5.95 per hour. Cuse Car’s fleet of vehicles was relatively small, 10 or 11 cars, and was primarily concentrated in Downtown Syracuse. Cuse Car is no longer in operation.

## Similar Programs in Other Communities

Over the past decade, and particularly in the past three years, experiments in car sharing have gone in several different directions and have evolved rapidly – more rapidly and widely than will be cataloged in this report. A few examples of interesting programs are provided below.

### *Capital CarShare, Albany, NY*

Capital CarShare is a non-profit car-share company operating in downtown Albany. Capital CarShare has a fleet of eight vehicles available to members, with hourly rates varying from \$8 to \$11, depending on membership level, with a special overnight (1 a.m. to 6 a.m.) rate of \$4 per hour. Insurance is included with vehicle rental costs. Reservations are made online or over the phone, and members use a key fob to unlock vehicles. All trips are round trips: drivers return their vehicles to the places at which they picked them up.

### *Buffalo CarShare*

Buffalo CarShare was a non-profit car-share company that was forced to close in 2015 because of a lack of insurance firms willing to provide insurance. Buffalo CarShare had a fleet of 19 vehicles and, according to the organization's Executive Director the vehicles "have taken over 35,000 trips for over 1 million miles. Most of those trips were taken by members that cannot afford a personal vehicle, and therefore relied solely on CarShare to get to vital destinations." (Galligano, 2015)

### *Sacramento – "Our Community CarShare"*

Launched in May 2017, Our Community CarShare is a pilot project run by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) and funded by a \$1.4 million state grant. This model has several unique features that are worth noting:

- Eight electric vehicles were purchased with the grant.
- The vehicles are assigned to three public housing complexes, where residents can sign up to use them, free of charge, for up to nine hours a week.
- The vehicles are owned and managed by Zipcar, but at the end of the pilot project period, they will be turned over to the agencies that own the subsidized housing complexes.
- Zipcar self-insures its vehicles, including those in this pilot project.

## Program Strengths

Car sharing programs offer numerous potential benefits, including:

- Greatest amount of flexibility in pick-up and drop-off times and locations (assuming a sufficiently large fleet of vehicles).
- Gives the user the ability to do more than commute; opens up possibilities in terms of job training and other educational opportunities, as well as flexibility in scheduling appointments.
- If used as an occasional supplement to other forms of transportation, car-share programs are typically less expensive than car ownership.

- Eliminates the need for central ride planning.

### Program Weaknesses

- Car-sharing is not an affordable way for one person to commute to work daily. It could make a carpool possible, or could enable a family member or neighbor to drive a worker to a job site.
- Lack of a company willing to insure car-sharing programs has been an obstacle in some cities.
- Insurance company policies may add restrictions to the pool of possible members – for example, drivers between 18 and 20 years old may need their own insurance policy and have a “spotless” driving record.
- Program users need a credit card, debit card, or checking account in order to use the system; they must also have access to a computer or smartphone. This may be burdensome to some potential users.
- Managing a membership organization and pool of cars is labor intensive: Ithaca CarShare has a staff of six devoted to keeping a fleet of 25 vehicles in operation.
- Convenience for users depends on the program’s fleet size; the smaller the fleet, the less likely it is that vehicles will be near user’s homes and available for use.

### Overall Assessment

Car-sharing is not, currently, a feasible solution for a low-income worker trying to get to an eight-hour shift at a suburban job site. The cost of having the vehicle sit in a parking lot for eight hours at a time is prohibitive. Sacramento’s program is the exception, since the cars are free to program members, but with a nine-hour-per-week use limit, it would only be useful one day a week.

There are conceivable variations, such as a worker asking a friend, relative or neighbor to use a neighborhood-based vehicle to drive them to or from work, or splitting the cost among a pool of workers. However, one of the issues that makes carpooling unpopular is relying on other people for a ride to work. This approach would not resolve this issue.

At the same time, car-sharing has value for people who cannot afford a vehicle but need to get to appointments, or who want to access grocery stores (particularly discount club stores) or recreational opportunities outside of Centro’s service area.

A small-scale pilot project, particularly one that partnered with one of the city’s subsidized housing complexes, would clearly be beneficial to residents. Once in place, a program sponsor could work with car-share members to gauge their interest in using a shared vehicle for commuting.

### Cooperative Vehicle Sharing

#### Description

A cooperative vehicle-sharing program would take advantage of vans and other vehicles already owned and operated by local human service organizations. In many cases, these vehicles were purchased with state and/or federal grant funds, and are not in use after 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. or on weekends. Using these

vehicles to help low-income workers get to work would align well with the mission statements of several local non-profit organizations, and could lead to greater collaboration in how their clients get from one program / facility to another. In 2012, the SMTC conducted a survey of human service organizations, to assess their transportation resources. Nearly 100 vehicles were identified, belonging to human service, medical, and other organizations.

In April 2017, SMTC staff met with the Human Services Leadership Council (HSLC) to discuss the possibility of pooling vehicles owned by HSLC member agencies. HSLC members include ARISE, Catholic Charities, Contact Community Services, P.E.A.C.E., Inc., the Rescue Mission, and the Salvation Army. A program to provide rides to work would be compatible with the missions of several of these organizations, but it remains to be seen whether these organizations would be willing to pool vehicles. SMTC staff prepared a survey for HSLC members (see Appendix E) to gauge their interest level in this program. It will be distributed to HSLC member agencies at the discretion of the HSLC's Executive Director.

### Program Strengths

- Taps into a pool of underutilized resources already available within the community.
- Vehicle sharing could be combined with job training, to put unemployed workers to work as drivers.
- In many cases, the organizations in question (and their vehicles) are neighborhood-based, such as at the Northeast and Southwest Community Centers, the Salvation Army, or Liberty Resources.
- A locally-developed program using existing resources may be much more flexible than other models.
- Potentially the most cost-effective approach.

### Program Weaknesses

- A mechanism for insuring vehicles and drivers during off-hours use is the single greatest obstacle to developing this program.
- Numerous logistics would need to be agreed upon among several different organizations, including answering such questions as:
- How will a given vehicle owner be compensated for wear and tear on their vehicle?
- How will a vehicle be repaired if damaged during off-hours use, and how will a substitute vehicle be provided to the owner?
- Who drives the vehicles and are drivers paid?
- How are trips requested, scheduled, and coordinated?
- Do riders pay a fare?
- To whom is the service available?
- In some cases, there may be restrictions on how an organization uses a vehicle purchased with grant money, making it unavailable to the program.

## Similar Programs in Other Communities

### *Red Rose Access, Lancaster, PA*

Human services organizations in Lancaster County, PA, have been using a variation on this model for nearly 40 years. Rather than sharing vehicles owned by individual organizations, a brokerage known as Red Rose Access owns vehicles and coordinates their use among multiple agencies and organizations.

As described in the 2007 *Human Services Transportation Plan, Lancaster County, PA*, Red Rose Access is the “single point of contact responsible for brokering all social service transportation demand in the County of Lancaster.”

This brokerage’s history goes back to the late 1970s, when it was known as LISTS:

Lancaster Integrated Specialized Transportation Service was incorporated as a 501 (C)(3) non-profit transportation brokerage in 1979. The formation of LISTS was the result of collaboration between the County and City of Lancaster, Lancaster County Planning Commission, the Office of Aging, Community Action Program, other social service agencies and several private transportation providers. It was agreed, at that time, that all agencies would disband their own transportation programs and that all transportation services would be provided through the coordination of demand made by a variety of programs through the services of LISTS. (Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee, 2007)

This level of centralization involves risks and rewards for individual agencies and programs, since participants lose some control of their own transportation in exchange for reduced transportation costs.

### *GoRide, Valley Regional Transit, Meridian, ID*

Valley Regional Transit’s (VRT) “GoRide” Mobility Programs offer a number of interesting innovations in transportation, including a Vehicle Sharing program designed to be used by non-profit organizations. Under this program, organizations share from a pool of vehicles owned and insured by the transit agency. Members of the pool can donate a vehicle to VRT while maintaining some control over the vehicle. Members can also participate without donating a vehicle by paying a daily fee for use.

## Overall Assessment

Cooperative Vehicle Sharing programs solve one aspect of the transportation problem for low-income workers: getting a vehicle. A program like VRT’s Vehicle Sharing needs to be paired with another program that provides drivers, collects fares, and schedules/coordinates trips.

For a small non-profit organization, however, access to a pool of vehicles might pave the way for a vanpool program – particularly if the thorny issue of how to provide insurance had already been worked out.

## Subsidized Transportation Network Company Rides

### Description

Transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, will be legal in Central New York as of the final approval of this report. A TNC allows anyone with a smart phone application to request and pay

for a ride with a few taps on the phone’s touchscreen. The driver and vehicle are not part of a taxi service or livery company, which reduces overhead costs. Typically, rides provided through a TNC are less expensive than taxi or livery service rates.

Many communities use subsidized taxi rides to provide rides to work for low-income workers. Not only are TNCs less expensive than traditional taxi cabs, but the system for hailing and scheduling rides is almost entirely automated, making program administration less labor-intensive.

*SUBSIDIZED TNC RIDES - ESSENTIALS*

<b>Hours / Days of Operation</b>	7 days a week, 24 hours a day
<b>Reservations</b>	Made on demand via smartphone
<b>Origins/Destinations</b>	Door-to-door service
<b>Eligibility Period</b>	To Be Determined
<b>Cost to Client</b>	To Be Determined; could be capped at a specific daily or monthly amount
<b>Avg. Per Ride Cost to Provider</b>	\$15 - \$20

**Program Strengths**

- On-demand, door-to-door service, giving clients complete flexibility in time of pick-up.
- Minimal administrative burden: no central ride-scheduling or routing function.
- Smart phone use is ubiquitous among low-income workers.
- Theoretically, TNC drivers are available at all times of day in all locations.

**Program Weaknesses**

- Reports of both workplace sexual harassment and harassment of female riders and drivers has eroded Uber's reputation.
- Research has shown a pattern of discrimination against African-American riders among Uber and Lyft drivers.
  - A 2016 study showed longer wait times for riders with African-American sounding names and a cancellation rate that was twice as high as the rate for riders with "white sounding" names. (Racial and Gender Discrimination in Transportation Network Companies, 2016)
- It remains to be seen how many TNC drivers will be available for workers at late-night hours and on weekends.
- While less expensive than taxi or livery service, a ride from a TNC is typically more expensive than a vanpool.

**Similar Programs in Other Cities**

*TD Late Shift, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Florida*

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) began subsidizing Uber rides in 2016, with the goal of solving the “first mile, last mile” problem: efficiently getting bus riders in sparsely-developed areas to

and from bus routes. The PSTA subsidized up to \$3 of the cost of an Uber ride for commuters getting rides to or from bus stops.

In February 2017, PSTA initiated the “TD Late Shift” program, described on Uber’s website as “a transportation disadvantaged program that will let economically disadvantaged riders request up to 23 free rides per month, as long as they are within county lines. Eligible riders can take a trip anywhere in the county between 9:01pm and 5:59am completely free, thanks to the PSTA.”

This state-funded program is open to Pinellas County residents with incomes under 150 percent of the federal poverty level who are not able to get a ride from friends or family.

### *Summit, New Jersey*

In 2016, the city of Summit, New Jersey initiated a pilot program to provide free Uber rides for city residents going to / coming from the city’s train station. The municipal parking garage at the Summit commuter rail station was reaching capacity, with large numbers of both city residents and commuters from the surrounding area parking and riding into New York City. In order to reduce the demand for parking spaces among city residents, they were given free or heavily subsidized Uber rides to and from the train station.

### **Overall Assessment**

TNCs offer a mix of decentralized administration and affordability. With sufficient funding, an agency or non-profit could implement a subsidized ride program for a selected pool of workers with minimal staff resources. The City of Summit’s experience was that the setup phase was not particularly onerous and day-to-day administrative burdens were minimal.

However, if TNC service continues to be plagued by a pattern of racial discrimination and sexual harassment, it is not a workable solution without additional safeguards to ensure equitable service to all users.

## V. CONCLUSION

The need for a supplement to fixed-route bus service for low-income workers is very real in the Syracuse region. Getting out of poverty means being able to take advantage of additional shifts, or being able to hold a job when night or weekend work becomes a necessity. The analysis of Centro's transit system indicates that the temporal gaps in transit service – specifically nights and weekends – are likely to affect more job-seekers than the spatial gaps. Thousands of entry-level jobs are accessible by transit, but entry-level positions often require workers to work second, third, or weekend shifts.

While poverty, unemployment, and lack of a vehicle are issues throughout the region, these problems overlap and reinforce one another in the city's poorest neighborhoods. The highest proportions of households with more workers than vehicles are in Census Tracts in City of Syracuse neighborhoods. Combined with a lack of educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty, the lack of a vehicle means that the already limited pool of job openings for which these residents can apply is further reduced to those that can be easily and consistently reached by bus.

### Program Cost Comparison

Ranked from least to most expensive (assuming a rider utilizes the program for a round trip rather than one way), the programs considered in detail in this study are:

1. Modified Vanpool service (\$5 each way).
2. Car share overnight rental (\$20 (\$2.50 per hour for eight hours)).
3. Subsidized TNC ride (a one-way trip from the Near Westside to Carrier Circle is estimated to cost between \$15 and \$20).
4. Rides for Work (\$32 per trip estimated cost).

The Cooperative Vehicle Sharing model would need to be developed further before a cost per ride can be developed, but since some form of vanpool is envisioned, it would likely be similar to the Modified Vanpool model.

### Program Development & Administration

Program complexity can be as great a deterrent to implementation as cost. The ideas in this study vary from extant and currently functioning in our community to completely hypothetical. "Complexity" cannot be ranked as easily as cost, but in terms of staff time invested in both setting up and running a program, the following is an estimate, from least to most complex:

1. Modified Vanpool: the fact that Providence Services is currently in operation with one full-time and one part-time employee suggests that this is a straightforward model.
2. TNC Subsidies: the experience in Summit, NJ was that after an initial setup period, day-to-day management of this program was minimal.
3. Rides for Work: Centro's Rides for Work program may require a good deal of staff time in terms of day-to-day management (keeping track of reservations and cancellations, as well as ensuring

that drivers and vehicles are on track to make pick-ups), but a template exists for re-creating this service in our community.

4. Car Share: from procuring insurance, to purchasing and maintaining a fleet of vehicles, to managing individual clients' memberships, a car share program is a non-trivial undertaking.
5. Cooperative Vehicle Sharing: as mentioned elsewhere, this is a complicated concept involving partnerships between many organizations.

## Recommendations

This study was requested by the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency. Its stated goal is "To begin a comprehensive and collective discussion with member agencies, transportation providers, businesses and non-profit organizations on the feasibility and establishment of transportation to work services for low-income residents." This report and these recommendations are presented to ensure that future discussions on this subject can focus on practical solutions, rather than on diagnosing problems.

### **1. Invest in Providence Services of Syracuse**

Providence Services of Syracuse is the only private, non-profit organization in the SMTTC's planning area dedicated solely to ensuring that transportation is not a barrier to employment. The program has evolved to be cost-effective to the point of requiring only minimal subsidy. As grants have become available, it has enabled the program to offer lower fares to its clients. The organization would benefit from support in the form of marketing and in partnerships with workforce development agencies. The region's job training programs should be working with Providence Services to resolve transportation issues for their clients.

### **2. Work with a TNC to offer subsidized rides to workers**

The advantages of providing rides to workers through TNC software are significant. Both ease of program management and the flexibility this program would give workers make it worth investigating further. The lingering question of whether or not this service would truly be equitable cannot be ignored; any program utilizing a TNC to provide rides should include a means of monitoring and resolving complaints of harassment or discrimination.

### **3. Continue to investigate Cooperative Vehicle Sharing**

While complex, the idea of sharing or pooling the vehicles already owned by non-profit organizations is promising. For a number of local human services organizations, helping individuals overcome barriers to personal development – such as finding a way to get to work – is their reason for being. Figuring out the details of how this can be done cooperatively may be difficult, but the long-term benefits to participating organizations and their clients are likely to be substantial.

#### **4. Test ideas with pilot projects**

This study has focused on five basic approaches to providing rides to work at nights and on weekends. There are many variations on these ideas, as well as on the other approaches identified in this report (see Table 1). Each permutation has its own strengths and weaknesses – no “perfect” solution exists. Making sure people can get to work is a sufficiently important issue in our region to warrant multiple experiments by a variety of entities.

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## APPENDICES

*Appendices are available with electronic versions of this report. They are also available upon request.*

Appendix A – Study Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Appendix B – Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Appendix C – Work Link Technical Memo: Employment Centers and Transit Service

Appendix D – JOBSplus! Survey Results

Appendix E – Human Services Leadership Council Survey