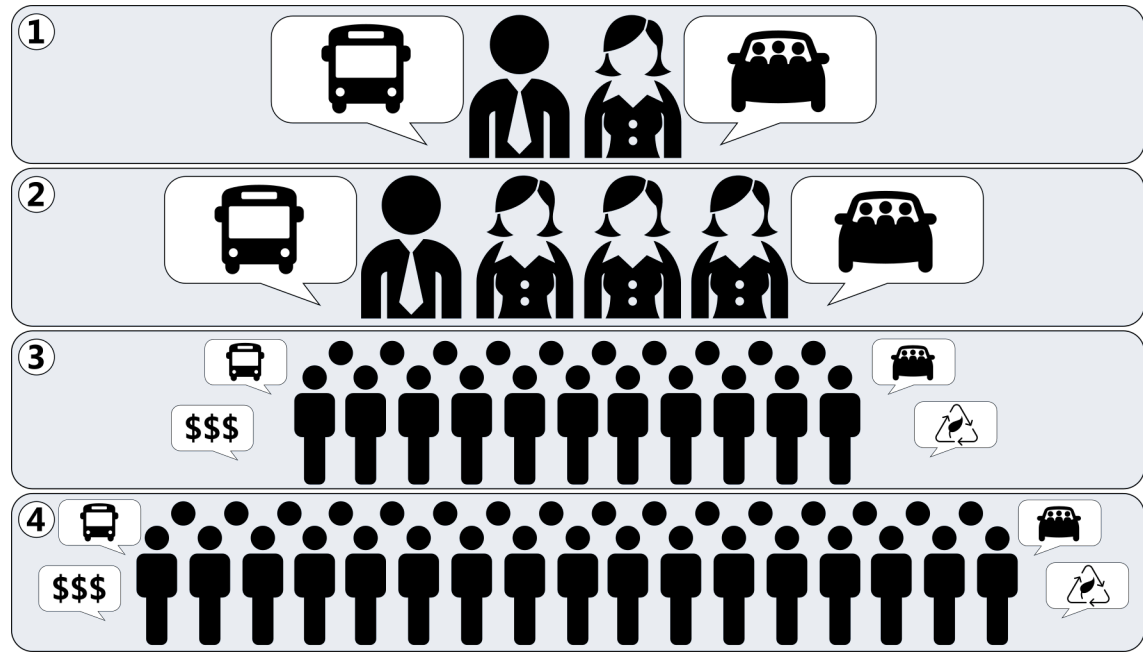


Rideshare Program Assessment: Essential Elements



- 1. A regional non-profit or public transportation authority communicates information about the available rideshare program and the benefits of ridesharing to employers.
- 2. Employers relay information about the rideshare program to their employees.
- 3. Employees are made aware of the rideshare program and begin to explore what transportation options are available.
- 4. Friends and relatives of employees become aware of the rideshare program and continue information sharing.

Implementation Strategy

Foundation	Building	Fully Functional
<div>1. Identify key partnerships for implementation (e.g. land owners, employers, educational institutions, etc.).</div> <div>2. Develop new park & ride facilities based on the priority locations identified in the rideshare feasibility study.</div> <div>3. Begin general education campaign on benefits of ridesharing.</div>	<div>4. Develop ridematching software program to facilitate carpooling and vanpooling.</div> <div>5. Initiate targeted, expanded marketing campaign to promote ridematching service and use of new park & ride facilities.</div> <div>6. Use ridematching software to encourage carpooling and grow awareness of the rideshare program.</div>	<div>7. Use ridematching software to encourage vanpooling.</div> <div>8. Incorporate park & ride locations into fixed route transportation systems.</div> <div>9. Continue rideshare program as self-sustaining entity through dedicated funding, organized staffing, and regional partnerships.</div>

Northwest Commission
Rideshare Program Feasibility Study



About the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission

The Northwest Commission is a regional planning agency serving a 5-county area. The mission of the Northwest Commission is to provide leadership and assistance as well as collaborate and cooperate with partners in strengthening business and job growth and improving the environment for economic and community development across the Northwest Pennsylvania region. For additional information on the Northwest Commission and regional planning efforts, visit <http://www.northwestpa.org>.

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Northwest Commission Rideshare Program Feasibility Study

Executive Summary

Introduction

In a region as expansive and rural as the 5-county Northwest Pennsylvania region, commuting and travel in general can be a challenge. The region has limited alternative transportation available, such as fixed route bus service, or even formal rideshare programs to help facilitate the sharing of transportation resources through carpools and vanpools.

The Northwest Commission administered a Rideshare Program Feasibility Study to conduct an analysis of regional stakeholders and supporting data to determine the potential feasibility of introducing such a program to the region.

The goal of the study was to determine the potential for ridership, between and within the region's counties, and the logistics and costs involved in the start-up, operation, and sustainability of a regional rideshare program.

In documenting the report's conclusions, it is organized into four broad sections of analysis, including:

- **Rideshare Demand Analysis** – measuring the level and demand for travel between places
- **Transit Linkages Assessment** – examining existing fixed route service across the region
- **Park & Ride Assessment** – identifying conceptual locations where either dedicated or shared park and ride locations could be sited or considered
- **Rideshare Program Structure Assessment** – challenges, opportunities, and feasibility in maintaining a regional rideshare program for the region.

What is Ridesharing?

- **Fixed route public transportation**, where vehicles follow a predetermined route on a defined schedule.
- **Carpooling**, where a group of vehicle owners determine a travel arrangement in which each owner in turn drives the others to and from a designated area.
- **Vanpooling**, which is a defined group of commuters who share a large vehicle with membership fees.
- **Park & rides**, which are a common site where commuters transfer to a carpool, vanpool, or public transportation system.

Rideshare Demand Analysis



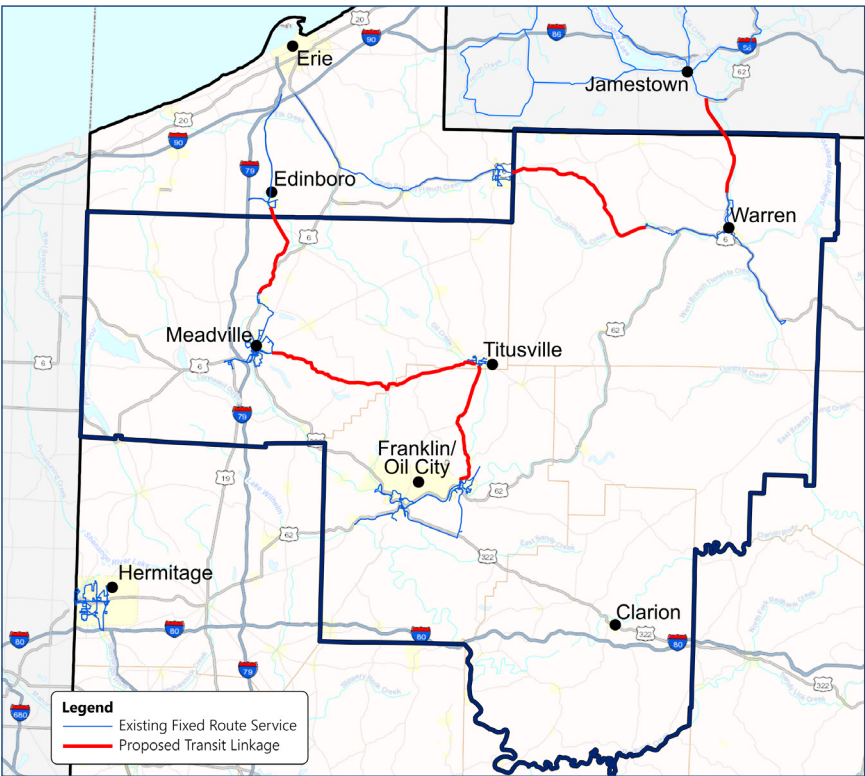
The U.S. Census Bureau has detailed employee travel pattern data available. This dataset was used to identify the highest volume of daytime travel between Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in the Northwest region and in adjoining communities. The top MSA journey-to-work connections that were determined through this analysis include:

1. Meadville to Erie
2. Warren to Erie
3. Warren to Jamestown
4. Franklin/Oil City to Meadville
5. Clarion to Franklin/Oil City
6. Franklin/Oil City to Clarion
7. Franklin/Oil City to Erie
8. Clarion to Brookville
9. Titusville to Franklin/Oil City
10. Titusville to Erie
11. Franklin/Oil City to Titusville
12. Meadville to Franklin/Oil City
13. Franklin/Oil City to Grove City
14. Franklin/Oil City to Warren
15. Meadville to Shenango Valley

Transit Linkages Assessment

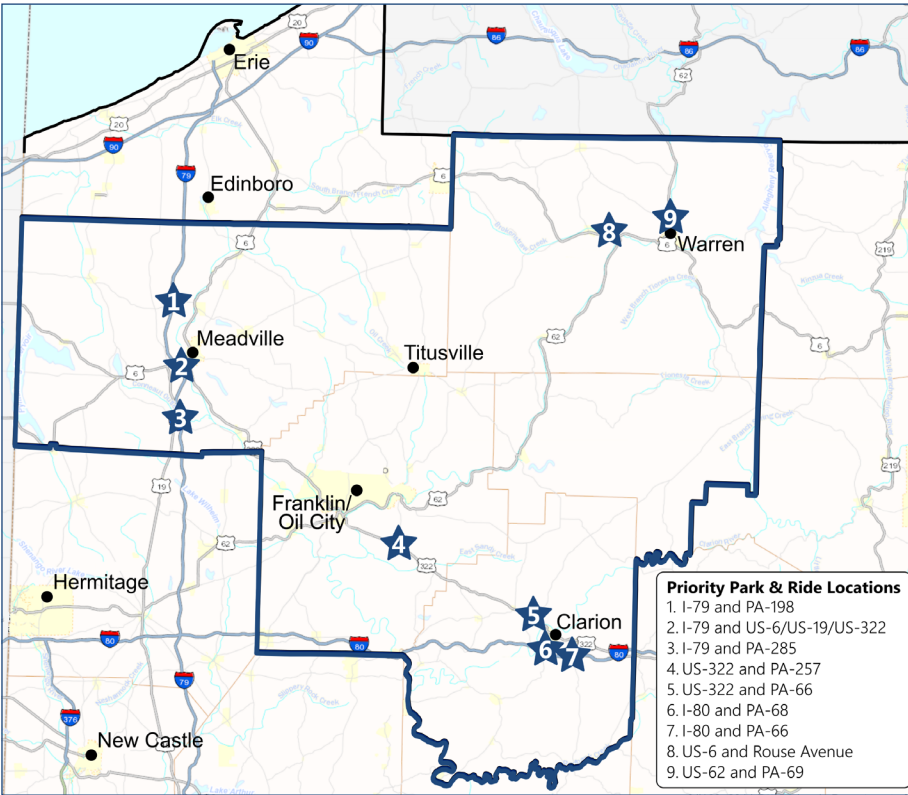
There are currently three fixed route transit service providers in the Northwest PA region. The available transit systems are centralized around higher-density service centers in Franklin, Meadville, Oil City, and Warren. In reviewing socioeconomic factors contributing to potential transit usage and existing journey-to-work data, five major service gaps were identified. To improve accessibility for individuals who do not live near fixed route transit systems, the following transit linkages should be further assessed:

- Meadville to Edinboro
- Meadville to Titusville
- Titusville to Oil City
- Warren to Corry
- Warren to Jamestown, NY



Park & Ride Assessment

Park & ride facilities are an integral component of a multimodal transportation system because they encourage ridesharing and public transportation service. There is currently one park & ride lot in the Northwest PA region, located on I-79 (Exit 154) in Crawford County. An initial list of recommended new park & ride facilities was developed using available resources, including US Census LEHD data and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) traffic volume data.



Benefits of Ridesharing

- **Financial Savings:** By sharing expenses with other travelers, individuals can save money on fuel, car maintenance, and parking fees.
- **Stress Reduction:** Splitting driving responsibilities with other commuters provides a break from the stressors that often accompany driving alone.
- **Environmental Considerations:** Less cars on the road mean less airborne pollution, specifically carbon emissions that contribute to climate change and poor air quality.
- **Reduced Traffic Congestion:** Ridesharing can help mitigate traffic congestion and improve the overall effectiveness of the roadway network by decreasing travel times and lessening the need for expensive capacity-adding roadway improvements.