

APPENDIX B

# Document Review

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# 1. Document Review

Multiple documents guide transit service planning and policy in Berks and Lancaster Counties. These documents detail the communities' transportation needs, goals, and future plans. The following plans were reviewed as part of the existing conditions and market analysis.

- Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update (2020) – Berks County
- Imagine Berks Strategic Economic Development Action Plan (2022) – Berks County
- Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Berks County (2022) – Berks County
- Reading Area Long Range Transportation Plan (2022) – Berks County Planning Commission
- Downtown Reading Active Transportation Plan (2022) – City of Reading, PA
- Human Services Transportation Plan – Lancaster County (2012) -- Lancaster County Transportation Coordination Committee (LCTCC) – Metropolitan Planning Organization for Lancaster County
- Places 2040 Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan (2019) – Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Lancaster Active Transportation Plan (2019) -- Lancaster County Planning Commission, Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee, and Lancaster City
- Connects 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Lancaster County, PA (2020) – Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide (2020) – Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Transit Development Plan Update (2018) – SCTA
- Transit Asset Management Plan (2018 and 2021)– SCTA.

A summary of each document is provided below, including the document's purpose and their implications for transit planning in Berks and Lancaster Counties respectively.

## Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update

*Date:* 2020

*Author:* Berks County

### PURPOSE

In 2020, Berks County updated its Comprehensive Plan, originally published in 2013. The document serves as a guide to growth and development in Berks County through 2030.

## SUMMARY

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update documents Berks County’s population, environment, housing, land use, economy, transportation, and more. The plan includes goals, policies, and maps to guide development in Berks County for the next several decades.

The plan’s transportation goals include:

- Provide and maintain a balanced, multimodal transportation system that will safely and efficiently move people and goods.
- Maintain and improve the transportation system and services where financially feasible.
- Keep travelers safe and secure, no matter the mode of transportation.
- Invest in projects that strengthen the ability of Berks County commerce to access national and international trade markets and support regional economic development and tourism opportunities.
- Give travelers a variety of well-designed transportation choices that are in good condition.
- Enhance the performance of the county transportation system in environmentally sustainable ways that increase resiliency to both climate change and vulnerability to natural disaster.

In addition to these transportation related goals, the plan includes one transit specific objective: increase BARTA’s fare-paying ridership in fixed-route bus and special transit services.

## IMPLICATIONS

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan provides a better understanding of the existing conditions in Berks County as well as the County’s growth and development priorities. This will serve as a valuable resource for developing recommendations for the TDP. In addition, the recommendations included in the TDP will help achieve the plan’s transit objective to increase ridership on fixed-route and on-demand services.

# Imagine Berks Strategic Economic Development Action Plan

*Date:* 2022

*Author:* Berks County

## PURPOSE

Imagine Berks Strategic Economic Development Action Plan is an economic development plan for Berks County. The plan lays out a vision and roadmap to bring about economic prosperity for all residents of the county.

## SUMMARY

Imagine Berks Strategic Economic Development Action Plan aims to recognize, uplift, and celebrate Berks County’s diverse assets to ensure economic prosperity for all. Six key principles form the foundation of the plan, which the plan’s goals and strategies are built around.

- Invest in strategies that support the retention and creation of “opportunity jobs.”<sup>5</sup>
  - Prioritize investment in redevelopment activities, including industrial, commercial, and residential projects.
  - Invest in development that increases the tax base of Berks County.
  - Ensure accountability in plan implementation by reporting back on progress.
  - Leverage the County’s position as a regional partner.
  - Recognize the growing diversity of the Berks community.
- The plan is largely focused on economic development, but it incorporates transit into some recommendations. Two of the plan’s strategies are related to transit: 1) Examine existing and potential public transit and ensure it aligns with business and industry growth; and 2) support passenger rail expansion.

## IMPLICATIONS

Imagine Berks Strategic Economic Development Action Plan establishes Berks County’s vision and goals related to economic development and highlights where transit service should be recommended in the TDP.

# Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Berks County

*Date:* 2022

*Author:* Berks County

## PURPOSE

The Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Berks County aims to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities and older adults in the county through a better coordinated transportation system. This plan is required by federal transportation regulations and provides a framework for the development of projects to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities and older adults.

## SUMMARY

The Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Berks County inventories of the existing transportation system in the county, analyzes of the county’s demographic and economic characteristics, and identifies new transportation needs and strategies to maximize existing resources to improve mobility options for seniors and persons with disabilities. In addition to BARTA’s Special Services,

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<sup>5</sup> “Opportunity jobs” are defined in Imagine Berks as jobs that provide benefits and a wage greater than or equal to the county’s living wage.

which provide free and/or low-cost door-to-door service for qualifying passengers, numerous other for-profit and non-profit agencies provide transit to individuals in the County, such as the American Red Cross, Kutztown University, Reading Hospital, and 28 senior citizen facilities and home care agencies.

Several issues with transit for senior populations and persons with disabilities were identified during plan development. Three issues related to public transit were highlighted:

- Mass transit is unavailable in certain areas and during certain times.
- Rural locations are underserved.
- The transit provider’s schedule conflicts with the transit needs of the target population.

The plan recommends that BARTA lead mobility management activities in the county. As the primary provider of public transit in Berks County, BARTA has the technical and managerial expertise to oversee the implementation of a diverse array of transit projects.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in the TDP should align with the findings and strategies laid out in the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. Any fixed-route service recommendations for BARTA should complement other transit services in the county that provide mobility options for seniors and persons with disabilities.

# Reading Area Long Range Transportation Plan

*Date:* 2022

*Author:* Reading Area Transportation Study, Berks County Planning Commission

## PURPOSE

Adopted in July 2022, the Reading Area Long Range Transportation Plan, addresses how Berks County can meet transportation expectations over the next 20 years. This plan will guide transportation planning and programming across the county.

## SUMMARY

The Reading Area Long Range Transportation Plan presents a vision for transportation in Berks County and aims to ensure the county has a balanced, multimodal transportation system that will safely and efficiently move people and goods. The plan presents an overview of the socioeconomic trends in the county that will impact travel, the current state of the county’s transportation network, and the existing and anticipated transportation needs.

Numerous strategies are included in the plan that aim to address the county’s transportation needs. The plan focuses on asset management; most strategies are aimed at helping the county maintain and improve its transportation system while making better use of existing infrastructure. In addition, the plan includes two performance measures related specifically to transit: 1) work with municipalities, PennDOT, and SCTA/BARTA to ensure the safe interaction of vehicles, transit, and bicyclists/pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users; and 2) Support projects that expand the transit network as identified in the SCTA TDP.

## IMPLICATIONS

The Reading Area Long Range Plan provides insights and background on the transportation network in Berks County, which can be reviewed when developing the TDP. In addition, the recommendations implemented through the TDP will help achieve strategies laid out in the Reading Area Long Range Transportation Plan.

# Downtown Reading Active Transportation Plan DRAFT

*Date:* 2023

*Author:* City of Reading, PA

## PURPOSE

The Downtown Reading Active Transportation Plain establishes a vision and plan for active transportation in Berks County. Once complete and adopted by the City of Reading, the plan will lay out a path for creating a more integrated and equitable road network in Reading.

## SUMMARY

The Downtown Reading Active Transportation Plan focuses on six priority corridors for improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in downtown Reading. Recommendations for these corridors include the implementation of sharrows, bike lanes, and improved sidewalks. In addition, the plan also recommends streetscape improvements, including new street lighting, street furniture, trash receptacles, and trees, and advancing Reading’s complete streets policy.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations identified in this plan could be considered in relation to the recommendations for the TDP. The transit recommendations in the TDP should align with the active transportation recommendations, as appropriate, to help facilitate connections between transit, cycling, and walking.

# Human Services Transportation Plan – Lancaster County

*Date:* 2012

*Author:* Lancaster County Transportation Coordination Committee (LCTCC) – Metropolitan Planning Organization for Lancaster County

## PURPOSE

The Human Services Transportation Plan for Lancaster County summarizes the transportation needs for those within the county who have transportation challenges because of disability, low income, or senior status. The plan identifies transportation needs and provides recommendations for addressing those needs thereby improving mobility and access for seniors, low-income, and disabled populations.



## SUMMARY

The Human Services Transportation Plan provides a detailed overview of demographics in Lancaster County, an analysis of trip generators in the county, including major employers, colleges and universities, medical facilities, and senior facilities, and an inventory of existing transportation service in the county. Red Rose Access operates the majority of shared ride services in Lancaster County. This includes designated programs for medical trips, programs targeted at seniors and persons with a disability, and programs that address gaps in access to jobs. The recommendations in the Human Services Transportation Plan center around expanding job access, including expanding existing programs, such as the Metro Region Demand Response Access to Jobs program.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations for the TDP should consider the analyses and recommendations in the Human Services Transportation Plan. However, the plan is more than 10 years old and data is out of date. When a new plan is created, SCTA should be a primary stakeholder and ensure there is consistency between the TDP and the updated Human Services Transportation Plan.

# Places 2040 Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan

*Date:* 2019

*Author:* Lancaster County Planning Commission

## PURPOSE

Places 2040 is Lancaster County's comprehensive plan, which lays out a vision for the future of the county. The plan highlights seven tools and strategies that have the potential to move the county towards the plan's vision.

## SUMMARY

Places 2040 was developed over a three-year period based on a review of Lancaster County's previous comprehensive plan, existing and future trends, and public and stakeholder outreach. The plan is driven by five key themes and policies: creating great places; connecting people, place, and opportunity; taking care of what we have; growing responsibly; and thinking beyond boundaries.

The plan identifies numerous transportation focused strategies. These strategies are largely geared toward creating a more holistic transportation network that well integrates cars, transit, cycling, and walking. Notable transit recommendations include:

- Finding new and innovative ways to reduce congestion
- Making it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car
- Connecting housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations
- Investing in complete streets.

## IMPLICATIONS

The transportation related strategies in this plan should be considered in the context of route recommendations in the TDP. In particular, the TDP recommendations should consider how transit can better connect people to jobs and opportunities and reduce congestion, helping to address Places 2040's transit related recommendations.

# Lancaster Active Transportation Plan

*Date:* 2019

*Author:* Lancaster County Planning Commission, Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee, and Lancaster City

## PURPOSE

The Lancaster Active Transportation Plan puts forth a plan for active transportation (i.e., walking and cycling) in Lancaster County. The plan includes a detailed existing conditions analysis and recommendations to ensure people of all ages and abilities can safely and conveniently navigate the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks in the county.

## SUMMARY

The Lancaster Active Transportation Plan aims to create an interconnected transportation network that helps address the challenges of congestion, obesity, asthma, and air pollution in the county. The plan provides a detailed overview of existing cycling and pedestrian conditions in Lancaster County and highlights several barriers to active transportation, including:

- Long distances between origins and destinations
- Lack of adequate and safe infrastructure
- Inconvenient or infrequent transit.

The plan presents several recommendations to improve active transportation in Lancaster County. Key recommendations related to transit include creating a complete network for each mode of transportation, providing connections between mode, and designing transportation infrastructure to accommodate roadway users – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users – of all ages and abilities.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations identified in this plan should be considered in relation to the recommendations for the TDP. Where possible, the transit recommendations should align with the active transportation recommendations to help facilitate connections between transit, cycling, and walking.

# Connects 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Lancaster County

*Date:* 2020

*Author:* Lancaster County Planning Commission

## PURPOSE

In 2020, The Lancaster County Metropolitan Planning Organization adopted Connects 2040, the metropolitan transportation plan for the region. The plan lays out recommendations for transportation in Lancaster County.

## SUMMARY

Connects 2040 provides an overview of existing socio-economic and transportation conditions in Lancaster County and sets a vision for transportation planning within the county. This vision, to “equitably meet the mobility needs of residents, businesses, and visitors while strengthening the unique identity of Lancaster County through an environmentally responsible, safe, and reliable multimodal transportation system,” will guide transportation planning across Lancaster County.

The plan’s recommendations are centered around eight overarching principles: safety, reliable travel, system maintenance, transportation choices, environmental protection, critical connections, quality of service, and performance goals. Key strategies in the plan related to multimodal travel include:

- Develop an updated Human Services Transportation Plan.
- Modernize public transportation access to jobs and services along key corridors.
- Work with Lancaster County Active Transportation Advisory Committee to implement the Active Transportation Plan.
- Encourage and promote development that supports use of multimodal and active transportation options, including transit, walking, and bicycling.
- Work with municipalities to implement park-and-ride lots in preferred locations.
- Identify existing transit gaps and coordinate with the necessary agencies on feasible, cost-effective solutions.
- Implement regional and local plans that reduce the transportation impacts of land use.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in the TDP should align with the strategies and priorities laid out in Connects 2040. In addition, the transit service improvements implemented through the TDP will help achieve strategies laid out in the Connects 2040.

# Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide

*Date:* 2020

*Author:* Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

## PURPOSE

The Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide provides a common set of tools and resources for municipalities, transit agencies, and the local planning and engineering community to use in planning, designing, and constructing bus stops for fixed-route service.

## SUMMARY

This document compiles best practices and tools for planning, designing, and constructing bus stops for fixed-route service in the State of Pennsylvania, based on design guidelines and best practices found in the state and across the country. The document is broken down into three sections:

- **Planning and Policy Resources**, which provide guidance to incorporate bus stops for fixed-route service into comprehensive plans, land development ordinances, and transportation plans.
- **Design Resources**, which provides guidance on bus stop design, including stop placement, configuration, and amenities.
- **Bus Stop Typologies**, which includes detailed notes and graphical renderings for eight bus stop configurations, illustrating how different bus stops could be used in a variety of contexts.

## IMPLICATIONS

The tools and recommendations provided in the guide can be reviewed in relation to the transit service recommendations for the TDP.

# Transit Development Plan Update

*Date:* 2018

*Author:* South Central Transit Authority (SCTA)

## PURPOSE

In 2018, SCTA completed a Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update for BARTA and RRTA. The document established a plan for service improvements that would improve transit service for existing riders, attract new riders, and improve the efficiency of BARTA and RRTA service over a ten-year period. The TDP is updated every five years.

## SUMMARY

The TDP summarized existing transit in Berks and Lancaster Counties, including available fixed-route service, route performance, and ridership. The plan also presented a transit market analysis for Berks and Lancaster Counties. Recommendations for the TDP were centered around four goals:

- **Sustain:** Provide financially and environmentally sustainable service
- **Enhance:** Make service more convenient
- **Connect:** Connect people to desired location
- **Develop:** improve existing transit services and grow new opportunities.

The plan included short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations. The TDP's recommended scenario aimed to make improvements that addressed major issues and opportunities identified during the study process. Highlights include:

- Streamline service to provide more direct service to eliminate unproductive deviations and make service easier to understand
- Simplify routes that operate multiple service patterns or serve different alignments on different trips
- Improve level of service by increasing frequencies during the day, extending span to the evenings, and expanding weekend service
- Implement new crosstown and inter-county routes to enhance connections between Lancaster, Reading, and employment centers
- Coordinate route schedules along key corridors, and, in the long-term, invest in transit supportive infrastructure (e.g., dedicated bus lanes, enhanced passenger amenities) on these corridors
- Consider demand-response zones in areas where demand does not justify fixed-route service.
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- The service recommendations are supplemented with recommendations for capital improvements. These include:
  - Invest in bus stops to improve the passenger experience while waiting for the bus
  - Consolidate bus stops and ensure stops are spaced appropriately to improve service reliability and efficiency
  - Invest in transit centers outside the downtown cores of Reading and Lancaster to facilitate crosstown connection
  - Explore the feasibility of new park-and-ride locations to expand access to transit
  - Revise route maps and schedules, improve system maps, and publish General Transit Feed Service (GTFS) data enhance information shared with the public
  - Invest in new transit technology, such as automated passenger counters and new fare payment technologies.

## IMPLICATIONS

The 2018 TDP's recommendations can be reviewed to determine which have been implemented and which remain relevant to current needs and service gaps. Although much has changed since this TDP was published in 2018, this document remains a valuable resource for developing this study.

# Transit Asset Management Plan

*Date:* 2018, 2021 (update)

*Author:* SCTA

## PURPOSE

Required by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21), SCTA's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan establishes a performance-based asset management plan for the agency thereby providing a strategic and systematic means of operating, maintaining, and improving public transportation capital assets effectively. The TAM plan provides guidelines for how capital assets should be maintained

or replaced to function and meet their designated useful life. The plan covers a minimum of four years and should coincide with the development of an agency's Transportation Improvement Program.

## SUMMARY

SCTA published its first TAM plan in 2018, with an update published in 2021. The plan contains a number of required elements, including:

- An inventory of the number and type of capital assets valued at \$50,000 or more and an assessment of their condition
- A description of the process or decision-support tools that a provider uses to estimate capital investment needs over time
- A project-based prioritization of investments
- A TAM and state of good repair policy
- A TAM implementation strategy
- A description of key TAM activities that a system tends to engage in over the TAM plan horizon period
- A summary or list of resources needed to carry out the TAM plan
- An outline of how to monitor, update, and evaluate the TAM plan.

Overall, SCTA's capital assets are in good condition. SCTA maintains a fleet of 42 buses and 72 paratransit vehicles in Lancaster and 50 buses and 62 paratransit vehicles in Reading. As of 2018, the average bus age was 5.7 and 9.8 years for Lancaster and Reading respectively. By 2021, the average bus age declined in Lancaster to 4.5 years and in Reading to 7.7 years as a result of a regular bus replacement schedule that takes buses out of service when they reach the end of their useful life, replacing these buses with new models. SCTA's facilities are also in fairly good condition; both maintenance facilities and the transit centers for RRTA and BARTA have undergone renovations in the past twenty years, which addressed numerous issues. In 2021, SCTA's facilities had an average rating of 4.4 out of 5.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations and financial analyses included in the TDP should consider the capital assets discussed in the TAM plan. Any recommendations to fixed-route bus service is likely to impact SCTA's capital assets—additional vehicles may need to be added to the fleet, new or expanded transit centers may need to be constructed—so understanding the existing condition and the process for replacing assets is important.