

City of Tiffin and Surrounding Area Bus Transit Development Plan

PHASE II

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Tiffin is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified firms to provide consulting services to produce Phase II of a Transit Development Plan for the Bus System. **All proposals must be received at Seneca Regional Planning Commission, 109 S Washington St, Suite 2002, Tiffin, OH 44883, no later than 2:00 PM EST on Friday, February 3, 2017. Proposals will be publically opened at that time.**

This project will be funded primarily through funds from the City of Tiffin. As such, any contract entered into is subject to the provisions of applicable laws governing said funding. The successful proposer and all subcontractors shall be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Federally required contract clauses are included in the Appendix B.

The budget for this project shall not exceed \$30,000.

II. BACKGROUND

A phase I study was completed by Heidelberg University in 2015 to determine the feasibility of adding a flex route to meet current and future needs in Tiffin. Tiffin has a population of approximately 18,000 people with transportation needs accessing the universities, industrial parks, medical facilities and shopping. The phase I study is attached for your reference.

This phase II study is to develop feasible strategies to meet current and future needs of Tiffin, review financial projections of expenditures and revenue, develop plans for flex routes and locate stops based on the phase I need determination along with stakeholder input.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The overarching goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive analysis of the City of Tiffin Bus System service and operations as well as recommendations to create efficiency and to ensure sustainability. Consultants are encouraged to establish their own methodology or approach to achieving the objectives of this project. However, the following issues must be addressed:

A. Existing Characteristics

The final report must include a community profile and a description of the existing conditions at SCAT (Seneca County Area Transportation).

B. Needs Assessment

Based upon an analysis of current conditions as well as stakeholder, public, and steering committee input, the consultant shall identify SCAT strengths and weaknesses and develop a list and description of SCAT needs, both short and long term. These needs should be prioritized and cover operations and service as well as capital items, based off of the Phase I findings. Issues of consideration include (but are not limited to):

- Demand response service
- Flex route service
- Service to elderly passengers and those with disabilities
- Service to low to moderate income areas
- Services to Tiffin University students
- Services to Heidelberg University students
- Reporting technology
- Local Funding
- Proposed routes
- Proposed terminal stop locations
- Proposed logical schedule

C. Reports and Presentations

1. *Draft Report*

A draft report shall be submitted to Seneca Regional Planning Commission for review and comment approximately 30 days prior to completion of the final report. Five copies of the draft final report shall be submitted to the Executive Director.

2. *Presentation*

The consultant shall present the draft final report to the members of the selection committee and the City of Tiffin Council. All expenses associated with travel, presentation materials, etc. are the responsibility of the consultant.

3. *Final Report*

After incorporating any comments or changes received from the draft, the consultant shall prepare a final report. Ten (10) copies bound, of the final report shall be submitted to the Executive Director of Seneca Regional Planning Commission. The consultant shall also provide an electronic version of the report in PDF format including all text, art, graphics, maps, charts, data tables, etc.

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Six (6) copies of the proposal must be received at the address given by **2:00 PM EST on Friday, February 9, 2017** and shall be enclosed in a package or envelope marked "City of Tiffin Transit and Surrounding Area Development Plan" in addition to the name of the proposer. The consultant shall also provide an electronic version of the proposal in PDF format including all text, art, graphics, maps, charts, data tables, etc. Any proposals received after this date and time will be date and time stamped and will remain unopened.

Submit proposals to:

Seneca Regional Planning Commission

Attn: Charlene Watkins, Executive Director

109 S Washington St

Suite 2002

Tiffin, OH 44883

V. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals shall be typed and submitted on 8 ½" x 11" size white paper, using a simple method of fastening. Proposals should not include any promotional material. Proposals shall not exceed 20 pages in length. Seneca Regional Planning Commission encourages the use of double-sided printing. To provide for comparability between proposals, all proposals must be submitted in the following format:

1. Letter of Transmittal
2. Executive Summary
3. Methodology/Approach to Project
4. Project Schedule
5. Key Project Staff
6. References
7. Related Work
8. Other Considerations
9. Price Proposal

VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT

To ensure that Seneca Regional Planning Commission receives comparable and comprehensive proposals, consultants must address the following topics in the format described in Section V. Proposal Format. Consultants not addressing these topics or not using the prescribed format may be judged as non-responsive.

Proposals and offers should be substantive but brief and concise. Consultants wishing to take exception to specific requirements shall do so in accordance with the requirements of Section VII. Questions and Clarifications of the RFP.

A. Letter of Transmittal

At a minimum the letter of transmittal shall contain:

- The identification of the offering consultant, including the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the prime contact person during the RFP process;
- A statement expressing interest in performing the required services;
- A statement that the scope of work has been read and is understood;
- An acknowledgement of receipt of RFP addenda, if any; and
- The signature of a person authorized to bind the offering consultant to the terms of the proposal.

B. Executive Summary

At a minimum, the Executive Summary shall contain a statement of the consultant's understanding of the project and an overview of the consultant's proposal.

C. Methodology/Approach to Project

This section should contain a description of the approach to be used to accomplish the objectives and to produce the work described in this RFP.

D. Project Schedule

This section should include a detailed timeline or project schedule that includes important milestones that will occur during the project.

E. Key Project Staff

This sections shall include the resumes and other relevant qualifications of the consultant and key staff who will work on this project.

F. References

Provide at least three (3) references of organizations for which comparable work has been performed. At a minimum, the listed references shall include the name and address of the organization as well as the name, title, telephone number, and e-mail of contact person.

G. Related Work

Provide at least 3 examples of previous work that is similar in scope. Describe the work performed and why it is similar to the approach proposed for the City of Tiffin.

H. Other Considerations

In this section of the proposal, identify and describe any other options that SCAT and Seneca Regional Planning Commission should consider. Be sure to identify and include costs for these items in the Price Proposal section of the proposal.

I. Price Proposal

Submit a breakdown of project costs (direct and indirect) for each component of work as well as the overall project cost not to exceed \$30,000. This proposal must include an estimate of staff hours committed to this project.

VII. QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

At any time during this procurement up to January 30, 2017, proposers may request, in writing, a clarification or interpretation of any aspect, or a change to any requirement or of addenda to the RFP. All questions must be in writing via mail or e-mail and should be directed to Charlene Watkins, Executive Director, at cjwatkins@senecarpc.org or 109 S Washington St, Suite 2002, Tiffin, OH 44883. No telephone solicitations will be accepted.

In the event that clarifications or modifications are necessary to the RFP, a written addendum shall be prepared and notification of such addenda shall be sent via postal or e-mail to all prospective proposers who requested an RFP. In addition, any further instructions to proposers, whether as a result of questions raised by proposers are initiated by SCAT or Seneca Regional Planning Commission itself, shall be in written addendum form and notification shall be sent to all parties who requested a copy of the RFP.

Proposers and their representatives shall not make any contact or communicate with any other employees or officials of the City of Tiffin, Seneca County, SIEDC, SCAT, or Seneca Regional Planning Commission in regard to this solicitation. Proposers are reminded that any changes to the RFP will be by written addenda only and nothing stated verbally shall change or qualify in any way any of the provisions in the RFP and shall not be binding on the City of Tiffin, Seneca County, SIEDC, SCAT, or Seneca Regional Planning Commission.

VII. ADDENDUM

Any change in the conditions or terms of this RFP will be accomplished by an addendum in writing. Notification of such addenda shall be sent via postal or e-mail to all prospective proposers who request a bid packet. All such addenda shall become a part of the contract.

IX. RIGHTS OF REJECTION

The Seneca Regional Planning Commission and the City of Tiffin reserves the right to postpone the proposal opening date for its own convenience and to reject any or all proposals for any reason.

X. Responsive Proposers

The Seneca Regional Planning Commission Executive Director shall determine if each proposer is responsive. The responsiveness of each proposal shall be determined by its conformance to the scope of work and requirements of this RFP. Any proposal that fails to conform to the essential requirements of the RFP shall be deemed non-response, and accordingly rejected.

XI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals shall be evaluated by a selection committee comprised of City of Tiffin, representatives from SIEDC, Seneca Regional Planning Commission, SCAT, and staff based on the following criteria:

- General organization and clarity of the proposal
- Proposed project approach and methodology
- Firm's recent experience with providing services of similar size and scope
- Experience of key project staff
- Satisfaction of previous clients
- Project schedule
- Proposed consultant costs

XII. SELECTION PROCEDURES

Proposals will be reviewed by the selection committee and the firms may be invited to discuss their proposals with the committee members. Following this review, the selection committee will forward a recommendation and draft contract to the Tiffin City Council and the Seneca County Commissioners for approval. It is anticipated that a contract will be approved by the City Council and County Commissioners on March 16, 2017 – this date is subject to change based on meeting availability.

All proposals become the property of Seneca Regional Planning Commission upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting the proposal is the sole expense of the proposer. Seneca Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation. Seneca Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to select a firm that is not the lowest bidder. Seneca Regional Planning Commission also reserves the right to negotiate with any qualified candidate, to waive any formality or technicality, or to cancel in part or entirety this RFP. This solicitation for qualifications in no way obligates Seneca Regional Planning Commission to award a contract for services.

XIII. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The anticipated schedule for completion of this project follows. All proposers by virtue of submitting a proposal agree to meet the project schedule.

Issue RFP	January 9, 2017
Proposals due/opened	February 9, 2017
Review proposals and conduct interviews	February 9, 2017 – March 9, 2017
Consultant selection	March 16, 2017
Project startup	March 20, 2017
Project completion	September 11, 2017

XIV. TAXES

Seneca Regional Planning Commission is exempt from payment of federal, state, and local taxes. As such, taxes shall not be included in proposal prices. Seneca Regional Planning Commission shall furnish the necessary tax exemption certificates.

XV. TERMINATION

Seneca Regional Planning Commission may terminate a contract in whole or in part, for its convenience or because of the failure of the consultant to fulfill the contract obligations.

A. Termination for Convenience

Seneca Regional Planning Commission may terminate the contract, in whole or in part, at any time by written notice to the Consultant when it is in the either the City of Tiffin or Seneca County's best interest. The Consultant shall be paid its costs, including contract close-out costs, and profit on work performed up to the time of termination. The Consultant shall promptly submit its termination claim to Seneca Regional Planning Commission to be paid to the Consultant. If the Consultant has any property in its possession belonging to the City of Tiffin, Seneca County, Seneca Regional Planning Commission, SIEDC, or SCAT, the Consultant will account for the same, and dispose of it in the manner that Seneca Regional Planning Commission directs.

B. Termination for Default (Breach or Cause)

If the Consultant fails to perform in the manner called for in the contract, or if the Consultant fails to comply with any other provisions of the contract, Seneca Regional Planning Commission may terminate this contract for default. Termination shall be effected by serving a notice of termination on the Consultant setting forth the manner in which the Consultant is in default. The Consultant will only be paid for the contract price for supplies delivered and accepted, or services performed, in accordance with the manner of performance set forth in the contract.

If it is later determined by Seneca Regional Planning Commission that the consultant had an excusable reason for not performing such as a strike, fire, or flood, events which are not the

fault of or are beyond the control of the Consultant, Seneca Regional Planning Commission, after setting up a new deliver of performance schedule, may allow the Consultant to continue work, or treat the termination as a termination for convenience.

C. Opportunity to Cure

Seneca Regional Planning Commission in its sole discretion may, in the case of termination for breach or default, allow the Consultant an appropriately short period of time, to be determined by Seneca Regional Planning Commission, in which to cure the defect. In such case, the notice of termination will state the time period in which cure is permitted and other appropriate conditions.

If Consultant fails to remedy the Seneca Regional Planning Commission's satisfaction the breach or default of any of the terms, covenants, or conditions of this Contract within ten (10) days after receipt by Consultant of written notice from Seneca Regional Planning Commission setting forth the nature of said breach or default, Seneca Regional Planning Commission shall have the right to terminate the contract without any further obligation to Consultant. Any such termination for default shall not in any way operate to preclude Seneca Regional Planning Commission from also pursuing all available remedies against Consultant and its sureties for said breach or default.

D. Waiver of Remedies for any Breach

In the event that Seneca Regional Planning Commission elects to waive its remedies for any breach by the Consultant of any covenant, term, or condition of this Contract, such waiver by Seneca Regional Planning Commission shall not limit Seneca Regional Planning Commission's remedies for any succeeding breach of that or of any other term, covenant, or condition of this contract.

XVI. APPLICABLE LAW AND VENUE

The work performed by the successful proposer in response to this RFP shall be in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and their respective rules and regulations. This compliance shall be at the successful proposer's expense.

Venue for any legal action arising out of this contract and between the parties herto shall be exclusively in Seneca County, Ohio.

APPENDIX A: LEGAL NOTICE

Seneca Regional Planning Commission

City of Tiffin and Surrounding Area Bus Transit Development Plan PHASE II

Request for Proposals

Seneca Regional Planning Commission is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified firms to provide consulting services to produce a Bus Transit Development Plan PHASE II for the City of Tiffin and surrounding area, located at 109 S Washington St, Suite 2002, Tiffin, OH 44883.

Six (6) copies of the proposal will be accepted at Seneca Regional Planning Commission, 109 S Washington St, Suite 2002, Tiffin, OH 44883 no later than 2:00 PM EST on Friday February 3, 2017.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) document may be obtained at www.senecarpc.org or by contacting Charlene Watkins, Executive Director, at cjwatkins@senecarpc.org (Phone 419-443-7936 ext 123).

Any questions regarding the RFP can be directed in writing to Charlene Watkins at cjwatkins@senecarpc.org or at the Seneca Regional Planning Commission address listed above. Seneca Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted.

APPENDIX B: PHASE I TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Seneca County Agency Transportation

Flex-Route Feasibility Study

Prepared for:

Seneca County Agency Transportation

Mary Habig, Executive Director

August 2015

Heidelberg Business Institute

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Introduction

The Heidelberg Business Institute, a consulting arm within Heidelberg University's School of Business, was approached to conduct a feasibility study on behalf of Seneca County Agency Transportation. The purpose of the study is to estimate demand for a flex-route bus service in Tiffin, Ohio.

The Heidelberg Business Institute (HBI) provides low-cost, or free, consulting services to businesses or non-profit agencies served by Heidelberg University. HBI Director Allen Underwood and student/alumni volunteers including Stacy Wheeler, Zachary Myers, Sofey Fugate, Mitchell Papst, and Jake Slaback performed this study.

The study was based on a similar feasibility study performed by Transystems Corporation on behalf of the City of Gallatin, Tennessee and the Tennessee Department of Transportation in 2005. HBI consultants reverse engineered the Gallatin study to take advantage of unique characteristics of Tiffin, Ohio and incorporate newer research.

This feasibility study will be used by Seneca County Agency Transportation (SCAT) to consider an added flex-route service within the City of Tiffin. If sufficient demand exists, SCAT may choose to apply for grant funds to establish the flex-route service.

It appears that SCAT's existing demand-response service is not serving a significant percentage of the Tiffin population. The existing demand-response service may not provide the flexibility needed to serve working adults and the large college student population in Tiffin. This study will attempt to estimate the number of additional trips that may be provided if a flex-route service were to be introduced.

DEMOGRAPHICS - USERS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

To estimate demand for a flex-route transit service, it helps to have an understanding of who uses public transportation. The American Public Transportation Association published a report in 2007 titled *A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics Reported in On-Board Surveys*. This report includes information gained from over 150 on-board vehicle passenger surveys conducted between 2000 and 2005. Over 496,000 people completed a survey questionnaire. The surveys were designed to collect demographics and travel behavior of those who were utilizing public transportation.

Several key demographic characteristics from those surveys are important for comparison purposes with the City of Tiffin. Those key characteristics include:

Age: Public transportation is ridden primarily by adults with the majority, 59 percent, of trips taken by persons between 25 and 54 years in age. This compares with 43.6 percent of Americans being between 25 and 54 years of age.

Gender: Over 55 percent of all public transportation trips are taken by women.

Household Income: Public transportation riders report a wide range of household incomes. Household incomes less than \$15,000 are reported by 20.1 percent of public transit riders; 45.6 percent report incomes from \$15,000 to \$49,999; 24.8 percent report incomes from \$50,000 to \$99,999; and 9.5 percent report incomes of \$100,000 or more. The median household income of public transit users is \$39,000 while for the population as a whole it is \$44,389. All incomes are in 2004 dollars.

Household Size: Two persons is the most common transit rider household size, reported by 26.4 percent of all public transportation riders.

Occupation: The primary occupational activity of public transportation riders is employment or work, reported by 72.1 percent of transit riders. Student, either attending elementary or secondary schools or higher education, are 10.7 percent of all public transit riders by occupation, followed by 6.4 percent unemployed, 6.7 percent retired, 2.0 percent homemakers, and 2.2 percent other. Occupation refers to the riders usual primary activity, it does not refer to the purposes of the transit trips being taken which are described under "Trip Purpose" in a later section. *A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics, Page 8*

Vehicle Availability for Trip: Less than one-half, 45.4 percent, of public transportation riders have a vehicle available when deciding to make a transit trip.

Vehicles Owned: A majority of public transportation rider's households own or otherwise possess a private vehicle. Less than one-third of public transit rider households are "carless," 30.7 percent, while 29.1 percent of public transit households own one vehicle, 27.1 percent own two vehicles, and 13.2 percent own three or more vehicles.

Travel Characteristics

A second goal of the study was to produce information on the travel characteristics of those utilizing public transportation. The study produced the following travel characteristics:

Access and Egress Mode: The primary means of travel from a person's trip origin to a public transportation vehicle and from a public transit vehicle to their destination is to walk. Fifty-nine and six-tenths percent of transit vehicles are accessed by walkers and for 63.8 percent of riders the next part of their trip from a transit vehicle is made by walking. The second most common overall mode of public transit access and egress is transferring from another transit vehicle; 17.2 percent of access trips and 21.6 percent of egress trips are transfers. Automobiles and other private vehicles account for 21.0 percent of access trips and 12.0 percent of egress trips including automobile drivers, passengers, and persons dropped off.

Alternative Mode of Travel: If public transportation service were no longer available, 55.9 percent of public transit riders would make the same trip by automobile or other personal vehicle: 23.9 percent would drive themselves, 22.1 percent would get a ride with someone else, and 9.9 percent would take a taxi. Besides the resulting increase in traffic, there would also be a substantial reduction in mobility because 21.6 of public transit riders would not be able to make their trips.

Duration of Transit Riding: Most public transportation riders have been riding for an extended period, 57.1 percent have been riding for over two years. At the same time public transit is attracting new riders with 30.3 percent of trips taken by riders in their first year of riding their transit system.

Frequency of Transit Travel: Most public transportation trips are taken by regular riders. Nearly two-thirds, 65.5 percent of public transit trips are taken by persons who ride transit five or more days per week and 81.2 percent of trips are taken by persons who ride 3 or more days per week.

Transfer Frequency: Sixty percent of public transportation trips do not include a transfer between transit vehicles, 29.3 percent include one transfer, 8.4 percent include two transfers, and 2.3 percent include three or more transfers.

Trip Purpose: Commuting to work is the most common reason a person rides public transportation, accounting for 59.2 percent of all transit trips reported in on-board surveys. Trips to school, including elementary, secondary, and college students, account for 10.6 percent of all trips. Shopping and dining is the trip purpose for 8.5 percent of trips, 6.3 percent of trips are for personal business, 6.8 percent are for social purposes, 3.0 percent are medical trips, and 5.7 percent are for other trip purposes.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TIFFIN

Census data for Tiffin, Ohio was evaluated to data found in the American Public Transportation Association study along with data at the state and national level. Those most likely to use public transportation have lower incomes and fewer resources to commute to work or gain access to major areas of shopping.

The following census data significantly was derived from the 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

CENSUS DATA	TIFFIN	OHIO	U.S.A
Population	17,963	11,536,504	311,536,594
Population 19 and under	27.2%	26.2%	26.6%
Population 20 to 64	56.3%	59.4%	60.0%
Population 65 and older	15.8%	14.4%	13.4%
Female %	52.1%	51.1%	56.6%
Average household size	2.29	2.44	2.58
Owner occupied homes	62.7%	67.6%	65.1%
Population in labor force	58.2%	63.9%	64.3%
Mean travel time to work	16.3 minutes	23.0 minutes	25.5 minutes
Work in county residence	75.5%	70.0%	72.5%
median household income	\$35,179	\$48,308	\$53,046
Income under \$50,000	66.3%	51.5%	47.3%
Disability status, any disability, age 16 and older	8.58%	8.61%	12.1%

Means of transportation to work			
car, truck, or van	87.7%	91.5%	86.1
public transportation (not taxi)	0.4%	1.7%	5.0%
walk, bike, etc.	10.4%	3.4%	4.6%
Vehicles available - household			
0	9.63%	8.28%	9.07%
1	39.91%	33.98%	33.78%
2	36.89%	37.85%	37.54%
3	13.57%	19.89%	19.61%

A comparison of census data points out some significant differences. Tiffin has a higher percentage of younger and older residents. For key users of public transportation, those age 20 to 64, Tiffin has a slightly lower percentage of residents.

Tiffin's population has slightly more females, who are a little more likely than men to ride public transportation. Tiffin's household income and household size are also lower than average. Those with lower incomes and smaller households are more likely users of public transportation.

Tiffin's population in the labor force is low. This may be due to the higher than average percentage of the population who is young and percentage who is older. High percentages of people under the age of 19 and older than 65 are not in the labor force.

Tiffin has a very high percentage of the population who walk, bicycle, or use other alternative means of transportation. Tiffin also has a high percentage of people with no vehicle, or only one vehicle.

Overall the data indicates additional public transportation may be well accepted and utilized in Tiffin. Additional public transportation may be key to increasing the percentage of people in the Tiffin labor force and increasing mean incomes within the City. The large percentage of people who walk or bicycle to work may prefer public transportation, especially during cold months of the year. Additional public transportation may also be very valuable for those with limited access to a vehicle, particularly if they don't have the funds to keep up with vehicle maintenance and insurance.

SCAT MANAGEMENT REPORTS

Management reports produced by SCAT were analyzed to find data that may help estimate demand for a flex-route service. More specifically, analysis is focused on data which may help identify those who are not well-served by the existing demand-response system.

The Rural Transit Program Operating Data Report contains information on passengers and unmet needs. Analysis of 2014 data indicates SCAT performed 90,282 general service trips in 2014. SCAT's Ridership Activity Summary indicates elderly/not disabled passengers accounted for 12,555 of the total trips taken in 2014. Elderly passengers are defined as those age 65 and older. Interestingly, elderly passengers accounted for 13.91% of total passengers served in 2014. This percentage is significantly higher than average for the country. The *Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics* indicates elderly passengers constitute 6.7% of overall riders. The study provides a further breakdown which is useful for comparison to Tiffin, Ohio. For cities with populations under 200,000, the percentage of elderly riders increases to 8.0%. This is still significantly lower than the 13.91% of elderly passengers utilizing SCAT.

Our theory for the high percentage of elderly riders in Tiffin is based on further analysis of information in the Profile report. The Profile report states that "Transit is ridden primarily by adults with the majority of trips taken by persons between 25 and 54 years in age." The Profile report states "The primary occupational activity of transit riders is employment or work, reported by 72.1 percent of transit riders." Finally, the Profile report states "Commuting to work is the most common reason a person rides transit, accounting for 59.2 percent of all transit trips reported in on-board surveys."

In other words, working adults are utilizing public transportation to commute to work. SCAT's existing demand-response system is only convenient for those who work a regular shift and can commit to a subscription service. The Profile report indicates 75 percent of people utilizing roadway modes of public transportation make less than \$50,000 per year.

The Population Reference Bureau (<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/us-working-poor-families.aspx>) conducted an analysis of 2011 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. This analysis provides insight into the work environment of the working poor. The report defines low income working families as those earning less than twice the federal poverty line. In 2011, the low-income threshold for a family of four with two children was \$45,622. The report contains the following statement: "Although many people are returning to work, they are often taking jobs with lower wages and less job security, compared to the middle-class jobs they held before the economic downturn," said Mark Mather, a report co-author and PRB associate vice president of Domestic Programs. Many of the fastest-growing jobs, such as those in the service sector, often require working nights and weekends, creating challenges for families who need child care, Mather said.

The importance of the information contained in the Public Reference Bureau report is that the people most in need of public transportation, working adults with incomes below \$50,000, are significantly working in service sector jobs. These jobs typically involve variable working hours, involving both weekdays and weekends. SCAT's current demand-response transportation system is likely not serving these people very well.

A well executed and marketed flex-route system may attract a significant number of riders. The flex-route system should attract low-income working adults who are not utilizing SCAT's current demand-response system. If the flex-route system attracted enough riders between the key ages of 25-54 to get SCAT's percentages in closer alignment with the national average, this would represent an increase of over 66,000 trips per year.

$$(X) \cdot 0.08 = 12,555$$

$$(X) = 156,938$$

$$156,938 - 90,282 = 66,656$$

Sensitivity analysis provides further numbers for consideration. If a flex-route system gained enough riders to get the elderly population to 10 percent of overall riders, which is still significantly higher than national average, this is an increase of over 35,000 trips per year.

$$(X) \cdot 10 = 12,555$$

$$(X) = 125,550$$

$$125,550 - 90,282 = 35,268$$

SCAT's Statistical Report contains other keys to estimating increased passenger traffic from implementation of a flex-route system. In 2014 SCAT encountered 23,110 cancellations and another 2,727 No Go's in 2014.. Cancellations are trips scheduled which are consequently cancelled within allowable time limits. No Go's are trips scheduled which are consequently cancelled outside SCAT's cancellation policy. SCAT currently requires a 48 hour notice to schedule trips. SCAT management is under the impression a large percentage of cancellations and No Go's are the result of the client finding alternative transportation methods during the 48 hour wait. The flexibility afforded by a flex-route system may turn a large percentage of cancellations and No Go's into riders. Various percentage changes provide the following potential new riders as the result of implementing a flex-route service:

<u>Cancellations and No Go's</u>	<u>Conversion Rate</u>	<u>Potential New Riders</u>
25,837	50%	12,918
	75%	19,378
	90%	23,253

FOCUS GROUPS

Community Leaders

On May 15, 2015 Heidelberg Business Institute consultants met with community leaders to discuss public transportation issues in Tiffin and the possibility of an added flex-route service. Those in attendance included: John Detwiler - President and CEO Tiffin Area Chamber of Commerce, David Zak - President and CEO Seneca Industrial and Economic Development Corporation, Aaron Montz - Mayor of Tiffin, Holly Stacy - Seneca County Commissioner, Dr. Haseeb Ahmed - Dean of Heidelberg School of Business, and Mary Habig - SCAT Executive Director.

Several transportation issues were identified during this meeting. One issue is that Tiffin citizens don't understand why they can not flag down a SCAT bus. Introduction of a flex-route system will reduce this problem and improve citizens' view of SCAT service in Tiffin.

Another issue is companies located at Tiffin's industrial parks have trouble attracting employees due to a lack of public transportation. A flex-route system should allow Tiffin companies to attract more employees and subsequently offer the possibility of employment to those who are unemployed due to transportation issues.

Tiffin has a problem with large traffic volumes and limited parking associated with festivals and signature events within the City. A flex-route system should allow improved traffic flow, parking, and possibly higher attendance to these events.

Tiffin has a problem with students walking from campus to the downtown area, or beyond, to patronize local businesses. Sidewalks are close to the street in many areas, making walking during the winter particularly dangerous. Further, students can sometimes get into trouble when leaving downtown businesses late in the evening to return to campus. A flex-route system should provide students with safer transportation and help local businesses to attract student patrons and workers.

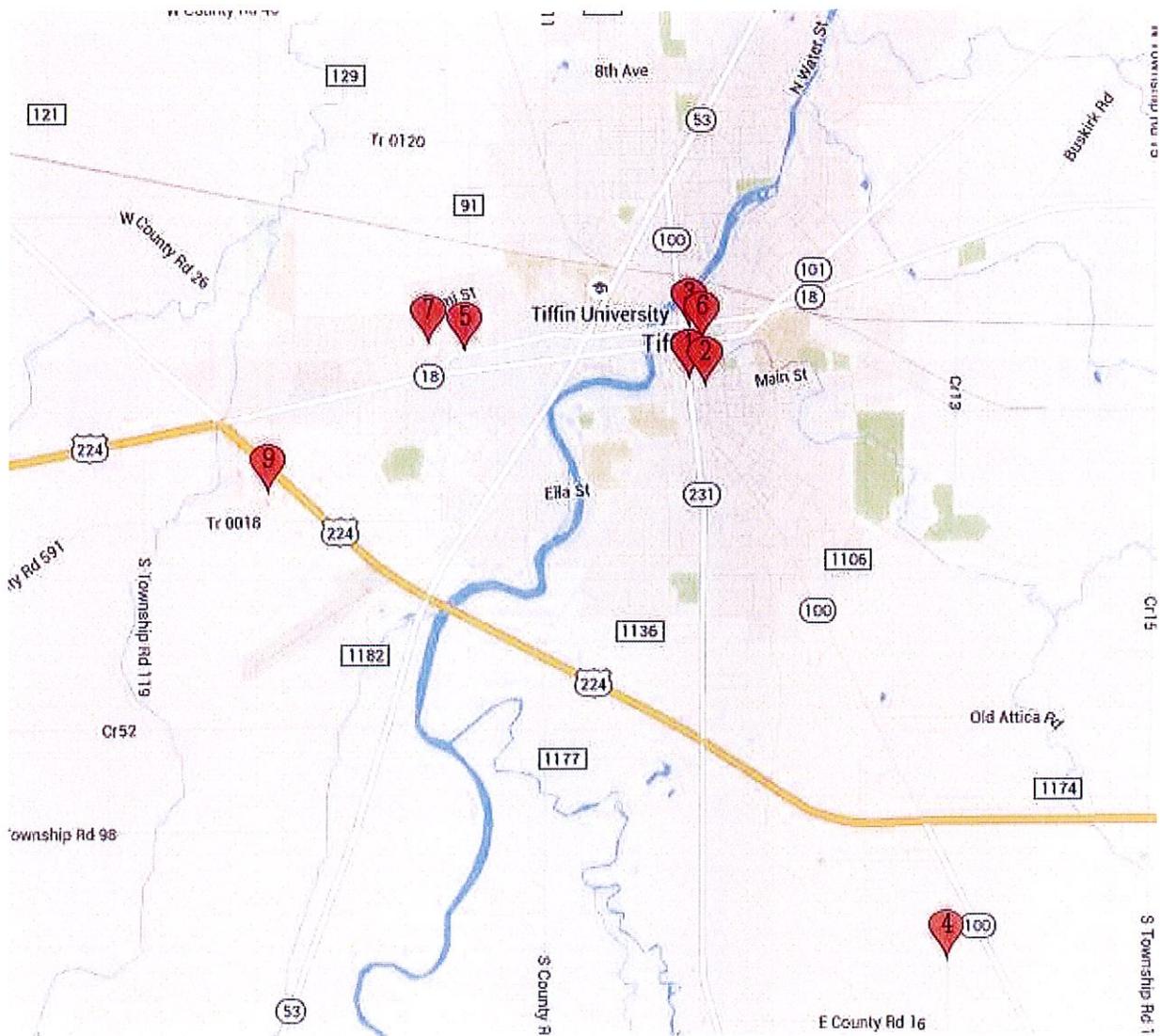
Community leaders are highly supportive of new flex-route services in Tiffin. Citizen feedback is supportive of additional public transportation. In addition, the flex-route service may provide economic benefits in the form of business growth for local businesses, better opportunities for businesses to attract employees, and better job opportunities for the residents and students who reside in Tiffin.

Social Service Agencies

On June 3, 2015 HBI consultants met with members of the Community Task Force. Nine Tiffin-Seneca United Way agencies were represented at this meeting. The Community Task Force identified several issues where a more flexible public transportation system would help the community. Several specific examples were cited, including:

1. First Call For Help, Tiffin-Seneca United Way
2. Alcoholics Anonymous - St. John's UCC
3. Seneca County General Health District office
4. Seneca County Job and Family Services
5. Mercy Family Care - McAuley Center
6. Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court
7. Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services of Seneca County
8. Tiffin-Seneca United Way
9. Mercy Tiffin Hospital

The locations of these agencies are identified on the following map:



<http://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/Social%20Service%20Agencies%20-%20Tiffin%20Ohio>

The map shows the community's social service agencies are spread throughout the city. For example, the distance between Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services of Seneca County and First Call For Help, Tiffin-Seneca United Way is 1.8 miles. The distance between Mercy Family Care - McAuley Center and Seneca County Job and Family Services is at least 4.8 miles. These distances are too long for pedestrians. Many of the people served by social service agencies have disabilities or can not afford to own and maintain a vehicle. Further, the circumstances resulting in the need for the services provided by social service agencies do not always allow 48 hour advance scheduling. A flex-route service will make the services provided by social service agencies more available to people in the Tiffin community, improving the overall quality of life.

Business Community

Tuesday June 9th

The Seneca Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting on June 9 concerning SCAT and the proposed flex-route. All chamber members were notified of the meeting and invited to attend. 16 people attended this meeting. Overall feedback from those attending the meeting was support for adding a flex-route service. Many comments were made concerning how to make the service attract riders and become successful. There were also several comments made regarding needs for this service. Those comments included the following:

- job placement agencies are limited placing people into jobs due to transportation issues
- parking downtown can become problematic, especially while events are taking place
- an airport expansion is in process, possibly creating more demand for public transportation
- the industrial parks need public transportation to help attract and retain workers

This meeting reinforced ideas concerning an added flex-route service to the Tiffin community. Those ideas include:

- the Tiffin community is supportive and finds the service desirable
- a well designed flex-route service will support local businesses need to attract and retain workers
- a well designed flex-route service will help Tiffin residents who can not afford to own and maintain a vehicle to obtain employment

Community Survey

A survey was developed to gauge community demand and support for a flex-route transportation service. The survey was promoted significantly via community facebook postings. 455 people responded to the survey. Key findings include the following:

- 66% of respondents use alternative forms of transportation
- users of alternative forms of transportation show diverse frequency of use
- 65% of respondents have used local taxi service or SCAT
- 57% of respondents would likely or very likely try a flex-route service
- only 18% of respondents would not use public transportation
- 89% of respondents were age 19 to 64, the ages most likely to use public transportation
- Lower income populations were slightly underrepresented in the survey

<u>income level</u>	<u>census %</u>	<u>survey %</u>
\$0 - \$34,999	49.7	42.1
\$35,000 - \$74,999	34.8	40.4
\$75,000 +	15.5	17.5

94% of respondents use a car to travel within the City of Tiffin. However, a very large percentage of those who primarily travel by car also use alternative forms of transportation, including: bicycle, obtaining rides from friends, using local taxi service, using SCAT, and walking. A seemingly high percentage of respondents have used the local taxi service or SCAT. Similarly, a seemingly small percentage indicated they would not use public transportation. This strongly indicates the community is open to using public transportation if it becomes more accessible, especially during colder months of the year when bicycling and walking is more difficult.

The survey findings also appear to be very valid. A large percentage of respondents were in the age range of those most likely to use public transportation. Also, survey responses tended to under represent residents with the lowest income levels, which tend to be the most likely to use public transportation. This gives added weight to the strong response of those who said they were likely or very likely to try a flex-route transportation service.

Student Survey

Recognizing the impact of two Universities and the student population on the Tiffin community, information was collected to assess the demand for a flex route specifically from the student demographic. A survey was distributed through email to students from both Universities, administrators were interviewed and vehicle statistics were collected. A brief description of the survey as well as an analysis of survey results and interview responses follows.

A student survey was constructed at www.surveymonkey.com and a link to the survey was distributed to both Heidelberg and Tiffin University students through campus email. The twelve question survey was designed to collect information to help assess student demand for additional public transportation services. Questions were asked about individuals current use of public transportation both in their hometown and in Tiffin as well as their potential future use of a flex bus route in Tiffin. A total of 150 responses were received and a number of insights were gleaned from the results.

Almost half of the students surveyed who have access to a car use that car daily and another 25% of those with a car use it at least twice per week. This suggests student mobility and points to a basic need for transportation.

Another relevant insight can be drawn from the 39.33% of responding students who have used public transportation in their hometown. While 39% of students have used public transportation in the past, only 17% have used public transportation in Tiffin and only 3.3% have used SCAT services. The fact that more students who already have experience using public transportation don't use the SCAT direct response service or the taxi services already available in Tiffin, suggests a gap in public transportation services. The responses to survey question 4 support this assertion by showing that over 30% of responding students had used a bus service in their hometown - a service not currently available in Tiffin.

In addition, when asked how likely they would be to try a regularly scheduled bus service in Tiffin, 58% of those responding said that they would be likely or very likely to try it. A follow up question asked about frequency of use. 12.67% said that they would use a bus service daily, 20.67% indicated they would use it once per week and 21.33% estimated they would use it twice per week.

University Administrators

Administrators from both Tiffin University and Heidelberg were interviewed about current transportation services offered as well as their thoughts about the need for a flex route bus service in Tiffin. Rachel Crooks, Director of International Student Advising, and Jill Earl, Student Affairs Office Manager, were both interviewed at Tiffin University. They shared information about a service called TU Taxi offered by TU. The service is offered on Wednesdays and trips must be scheduled in advance. It is used mostly by international students. They report that the number of international students at TU is increasing and they believe that the students would appreciate the added convenience of a flex-route service.

Julie Arnold, Director of International Affairs and Studies at Heidelberg also expressed a need for the flex route service. While Heidelberg does provide periodic transportation to shopping in Tiffin for students, Julie stated that there are students, especially international students, who walk across town to do grocery shopping and visit other locations in Tiffin. Sometimes they walk in bad weather and in areas where there are no sidewalks.

TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Transit Cooperative Research Program is a branch of The Federal Transit Administration. Their goal is the timely dissemination of TCRP reports, products, and information for awareness and use by public transportation stakeholders. A key document they produce is TCRP Web-Only Document 49: Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation

(<https://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Documents/Programs/Publication/Rural%20Demand%20Estimating.pdf>)

Document 49 contains several techniques for assessing need and estimating demand for public transportation in rural counties. The TCRP defines a rural county as one having a population density of less than 1,000 persons per square mile. Seneca County has a population density of 103 per square mile (2010 Census).

TCRP also defines an urbanized area as an area consisting of a central place(s) and adjacent territory with a general population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile of land area that together have a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people.

Tiffin has a population density of 2,656 per square mile and residential population of 17,963 (2010 Census). Including Seneca County in the urbanized area brings the overall population to 55,669 (2014 estimate). Tiffin appears to meet TCRP's definition of an urbanized area, so the following calculations should be valid.

NEED BASED ESTIMATES

Population segments

TCRP Document 49 identifies methodology for estimating public transportation needs based on population segments. This method for estimating needs is based on demographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The following worksheets utilize this methodology:

Table 1. Worksheet for documenting persons with transportation needs

Persons residing in households with income below the poverty level	8,593
Persons residing in households owning no automobile	2,557
Estimates of need for passenger transportation services	11,150

Table 2: Example of computation of number of persons resident in households owning no personal vehicle

	No vehicle	Multiplier	Persons resident in households owning no vehicle
One person household	1065	1	1065
Two person household	226	2	452
3 person household	100	3	300
4 or more person household	185	4	740
Total persons			2557

Data calculated from Tables 1 and 2 estimate the need for public transportation in the urbanized area surrounding Tiffin, Ohio. The estimate is 11,150 people need the services of public transportation.

A second method of estimating need is calculating the mobility gap. Mobility gap is defined by TSRP as the difference between the number of trips made by persons who reside in households owning no personal vehicle and the number of trips that would likely be made by those persons if they had access to a personal vehicle.

TSRP instructions for calculating mobility gap are as follows:

Using the data on the number of households owning no vehicle obtained from the American Community Survey data C08201, multiply the gap number for your region from Table 3 by the number of households in your service area owning no personal vehicle. The estimate produced by the mobility gap method is measured in one-way trips.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Daily mobility gap} &= \text{households owning no vehicle} * 1.6 \\ &= 1,576 * 1.6 = 2,522 \text{ one way trips} \end{aligned}$$

DEMAND ESTIMATES

General public rural

TSRP provides several methods to estimate demand for the general public living in rural areas. TSRP advises when preparing estimates of demand for this group, users may wish to apply each of the methods below and then consider which result seems most reasonable. The methods are listed below in order of suggested application:

- Peer data from your system, other nearby systems
- or
- systems in same state
- (Do not forget that your best peer system is your own operation)
- or
- Rural Transit Trips = 0.2 trips per rural vehicle-mile
- or
- use of the non-program trip methodology documented in TCRP Report 3
- or
- Rural Transit Trips = 3.7 trips per rural vehicle-hour
- or
- Trips/person = 1.97 (Vehicle-hours/person) 0.69

The problem with these demand estimate options is that SCAT must propose routes in terms of vehicle-miles or vehicle-hours. It does not take into account important demographic factors that

may cause significant variance in average rural usage of public transportation. Instead of using these calculations as a basis to estimate demand, we suggest they be used as a measure of reasonableness after flex-routes are planned.

Small City Fixed Route

In many rural counties there exist one or more small cities in which a traditional fixed-route, fixed-schedule transit service is operated. Analysis of data from the Rural NTD led to the following function for estimating ridership. This relationship demonstrates the importance, in these small cities, of transit in supporting the local colleges and universities.

TCRP states these calculations are valid to estimate ridership that can be expected on a small fixed-route system in an area of less than 50,000 population. TCRP further states that the methodology may properly be applied to any small city operation that is either fixed-route or deviated fixed-route.

$$\text{Annual Ridership} = 6.22 * \text{College and University Enrollment} + 10.68 * \text{Annual Revenue-Hours}$$

Table 2: Summing college and university enrollment

Name of Institution	Projected Planning Year On-Campus Enrollment (FTEs)
Heidelberg University	751
Tiffin University	1,025
Totals	1,776

- Per Barb Gabel at Heidelberg University, out of 954 full-time students, 557 have residential parking passes. Heidelberg University has about 751 residential students.

$$\text{Annual Ridership} = 6.22 * 1,776 + 10.68 * \text{Annual Revenue-Hours}$$

$$\text{Annual Ridership} = 11,047 + 10.68 * \text{Annual Revenue-Hours}$$

This calculation provides a very conservative estimate of ridership at 11,047 per year. The estimate is very conservative because it does not include additional ridership based on the calculation of annual revenue hours. This figure should be adjusted upward after SCAT establishes flex-route schedules.

Results and Discussion

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) suggests the best estimate of demand is based on existing public transportation operations. Thus, the estimate of demand based on SCAT Management Reports may be the best indicator of demand for an added flex-route service.

Estimates of demand based on SCAT Management Reports range from an additional 35,000 to 66,000 trips per year. This would represent an increase in trips between 39 and 73 percent. This is a significant, but widespread estimate. So supporting data is very important.

The TCRP needs assessment identified 11,150 people in the Tiffin area who likely need public transportation. The top estimate is a total of 156,000 trips per year. When averaged with the needs assessment of 11,150 people, this comes out to only 14 trips per person per year. If an added flex-route service attracts those most likely to use public transportation, which is working adults commuting to work, this number seems quite reasonable.

The TCRP calculation for daily mobility gap comes out to 2,522 one-way trips. If this number is multiplied by the number of days each week SCAT provides service ($5 * 52$), the annual mobility gap could be as high as 655,720 trips. While this number seems very high, it does represent a possible number of trips if maximum flexibility was built into the public transportation system.

Finally, TCRP's calculation for college student demand calculates to be a very conservative 11,047 additional trips. Based on their formula, this estimate will increase significantly once flex-route trips are planned and those numbers can be added to the formula.

Conclusion

The data and analysis indicate a large, unmet need for additional and more flexible transportation exists in Tiffin, Ohio. An added flex-route service would certainly add more options and flexibility for transportation in Tiffin. The increase in trips provided could be very significant. Better service for college students alone may account for well over 11,000 additional trips. Better service attracting more working adults and commuters could gain another 35,000 to 66,000 trips per year. Finally, peak demand for public transportation in Tiffin appears to be over 650,000 trips per year, over 7 times the number of trips currently provided.

The success of a new flex-route service is dependent on successful promotional campaigns, continuous analysis and updates/changes to route design, and the customer service support that goes along with expected increases in trips. With adequate support in these areas, we believe an added flex-route service in Tiffin is needed and will be well-supported by the community.

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