

# Collaborating on Transportation: Getting Us Where We Need to Go

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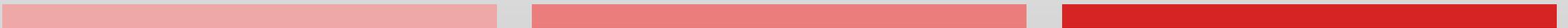
American Planning Association  
Pennsylvania Chapter Annual Conference  
October 21, 2019 | Reading, PA



# **The Institute**

**for Public Policy & Economic Development**  
**at Wilkes University**

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***Senior Research & Policy Analyst***



# Transportation Equity

## EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

# Transportation Equity

*The Institute*  
**What do we mean by transportation equity?**

# Transportation Equity

## **What do we mean by transportation equity?**

A working definition:

Transportation equity is a condition in which transportation is accessible, affordable, convenient, and safe to all people in a community or region.

# Transportation Equity

The Institute

**Why does transportation equity matter?**

# Transportation Equity

## **Why does transportation equity matter?**

Diverse barriers to transportation:

Family situations, age, language barriers, socioeconomic status, education level, health, disabilities, and many other factors affect all of our ability to get where we need to go.

# Transportation Equity

*The Institute*

**What does transportation equity look like?**

# Transportation Equity

## **What does transportation equity look like?**

- Multifaceted: multiple modes, varied solutions
- Filling gaps in existing transit systems
- User-focused, and addresses the needs of vulnerable populations
- Collaboration between stakeholders
- Working to break down systemic barriers

**This all sounds great, but how do we do it?**



# NEPA MOVES

*Because Every Life Has a Destination*

VIVIAN WILLIAMS

NEPA MOVES PROJECT COORDINATOR

# Scranton Area Community Foundation

- ▶ Established in 1954 with a mission to enhance the quality of life for all people in Lackawanna County through the development of organized philanthropy.
- ▶ Act as a community grant-maker, convener, steward and.....

## As a Catalyst

by mobilizing community leadership in response to issues.



# Community Needs Forum

*Listening to our community partners and moving the Northeastern Pennsylvania region forward*

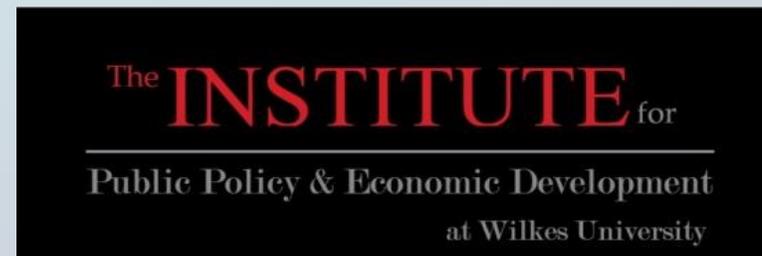
- Designed to informally survey nonprofit organizations in NEPA to solicit their input as vital partners and stakeholders in SAF's work
- Each organization discusses organizations programs/services, barriers and challenges, with SAF staff and board members have a chance to comment and ask follow up questions.
- Issue specific Roundtables are conveyed to gather supplemental information
- The meetings serve to fill in the gap on topics areas that weren't sufficiently presented, in order to continue to gain a comprehensive community picture to provide insight to other foundations, donors and philanthropic partners.

# WHY TRANSPORTATION?

- Through community needs assessments, area nonprofits and community leaders expressed that a common barrier among their clients continues to be access to reliable transportation.
- In nearly every discussion held by the SACF, access to reliable transportation was discussed as a necessary component of economic mobility and quality of life.
- Many residents in northeastern Pennsylvania — especially lower-income or elderly residents — couldn't access employment, were missing doctor's appointments, couldn't get their children to child care, and couldn't participate in social, religious, and cultural events, all as a result of the lack of transportation of life.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION

- Data and reported experiences demonstrated crucial links between transportation mobility and economic opportunity.
- Developed two research projects — one in partnership with the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University and one led by Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia
- Both studies reported that transportation is truly a barrier to connecting unemployed or underemployed individuals to family sustaining jobs.



# ESTABLISHING NEPA MOVES

- As an independent anchor institution, SAF decided to create a collaborative, diverse group of stakeholders and catalyze change at a **regional** level
- February 2017-- Established as the NEPA Equitable Transit Council which began with 12 attendees
- Defined council structure, including committee workflow and processes.
- Refine mission and define short- and long-term goals.
- Feb 2018 – Hired Dedicated Project Coordinator for initiative
- August 2018 – A community-wide branding design contest was held in where over 35 qualified entries to transform our council’s brand. From the entries, we formed a new identity—NEPA Moves—complete with our new logo and tagline.

# NEPA MOVES -- VISION AND GOALS

## Vision Statement

“All Northeast Pennsylvania residents feel part of a thriving region thanks to a comprehensive and equitable transportation system that creates and expands opportunities. Life is better because everyone has access to possibilities.”

## Goals

Creating economic and workforce development and improving access to health care and social services through the development of a more equitable and comprehensive transportation system in our region.



**NEPA  
MOVES**

*Because Every Life Has a Destination*

# COUNCIL LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Nearly 100 partners from diverse sectors across the region, including, but not limited to, local county transit agencies, health and social service providers, funders, regional metropolitan and transportation planning organizations, and local chambers of commerce serve on NEPA MOVES.

**Legislators include:** U.S. Senator Bob Casey, U.S. House Representative Matt Cartwright, PA State Senator John Blake and PA House Representatives Marty Flynn and Kyle Mullins

- **Public Sector include:** Geisinger Health, Scranton Primary, United Neighborhood Centers, The Wright Center and AmeriHealth Caritas
- **Business/Economic Sector:** The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, NEPA Alliance and Northeast PA Industrial Resource Center

# NEPA MOVES -- FOCUS AREAS

Health and Social Service

Communications and Amplifiers

Workforce & Economic Development

Community Development

# *Northeastern Pennsylvania Equitable Transportation Study*

The **INSTITUTE** for  

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Public Policy & Economic Development  
at Wilkes University

*A partnership among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton & Wilkes University*

# Equitable Transportation Study

## **Purpose:**

Collect data on access and barriers to transportation for the region's vulnerable populations. These include: the impoverished, those living in rural areas, seniors, immigrants, those physically or otherwise challenged, and parents (including single parents) of children.

## **Methodology:**

- Primarily qualitative, with supplemental questionnaire
  - 12 focus groups held around region
- Partnered with community organizations to recruit participants to ensure that vulnerable populations were well represented
  - Data analyzed to identify systemic barriers

# Participant Profile

## Participant Demographics: Transportation Circumstances

	Number	Percent
Uses public transportation always	18	19.6%
Uses public transportation most of the time	12	13.0%
Uses public transportation some of the time	22	23.9%
Uses public transportation rarely	21	22.8%
Uses public transportation never	19	20.7%
Valid driver's license	49	53.3%
With access to a car	36	39.1%
Without access to a car	11	12.0%
No valid driver's license	43	46.7%

# Key Findings (1/4)

- Those without a car feel that they have limited or non-existent choices when it comes to transportation
- Drivers enjoy greater mobility and face fewer transportation barriers than those who do not drive
- Financial reasons were most frequently cited barriers to car ownership.

# Key Findings (2/4)

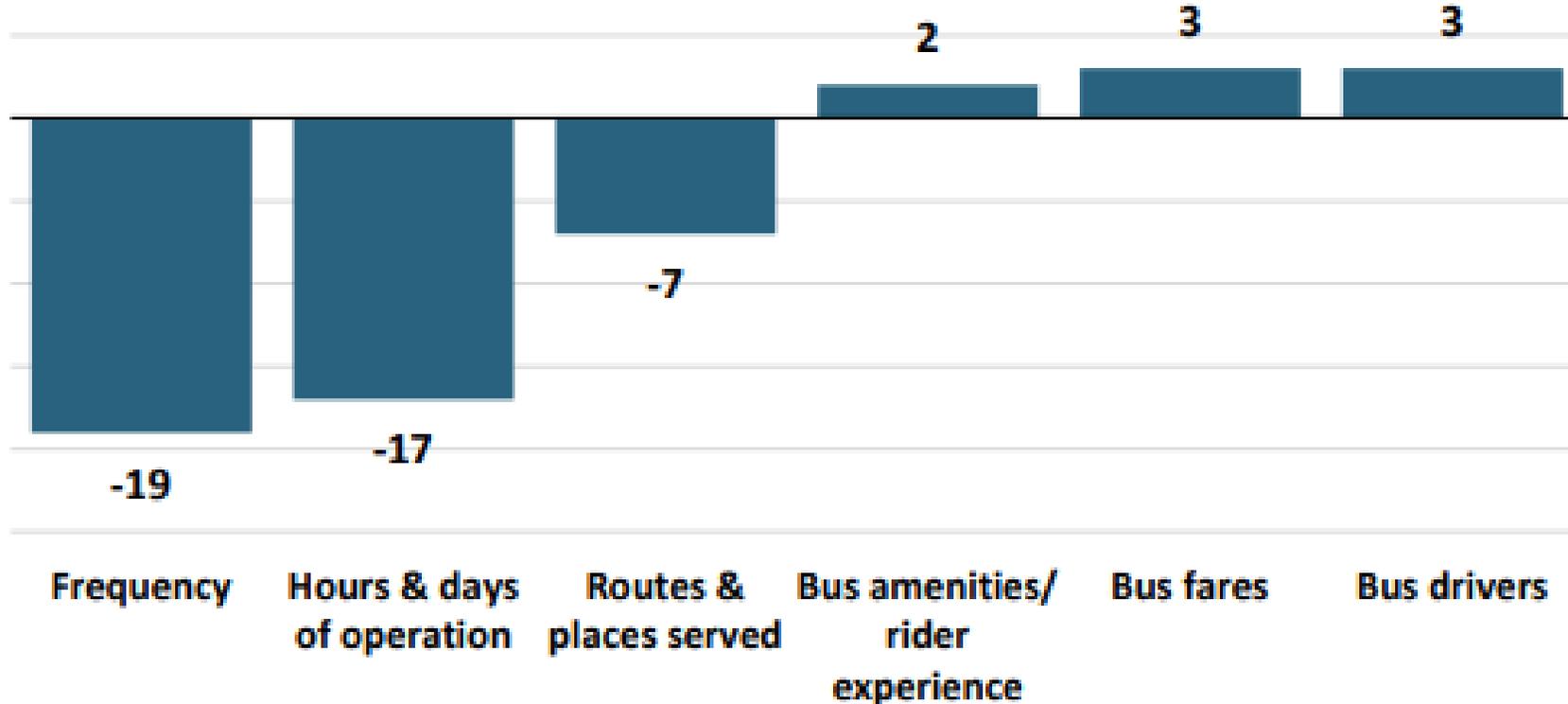
- Lack of transportation is a major barrier to employment
- Dissatisfaction with bus frequency, hours of operation, and weekend service
  - Existing fixed-route bus service not viable for many working outside of traditional 9-5 hours or on weekends.
- The most difficult to access places tend to be outside the region's urban core
  - Many desirable jobs and some health care facilities are located in areas harder to reach without a car

# Transportation & Employment

Average Transportation Needs Rating by Work Characteristics			
	Group size	Average score	% Rated 4 or 5
Among all participants:		3.073	33.7%
Not employed, unable to work, or retired	50	3.200	40.0%
Employed	27	2.741	29.6%
Works weekdays only	16	2.813	31.3%
Works Saturdays/Sundays	11	2.727	27.3%
Works daytimes only	13	3.231	46.2%
Works early morning, evenings, or late night	14	2.357	21.4%
Drives alone to primary job	16	2.938	37.5%
Rides with coworker, friend, or family member	9	2.625	33.3%
Commutes via other mode, including walk, bike, or bus	7	2.000	0.0%
Daily commute is 20 minutes or more	13	2.615	38.5%
Daily commute is less than 20 minutes	11	3.091	27.3%

# Attitudes Toward Bus Service

**Net Sentiments Toward Various Aspects of Bus Service,**  
differential between number of positive and number of  
negative statements



# Key Findings (3/4)

- Transit cost and rider experience are not the most significant barriers
  - Fare costs reported to be lower than larger cities
  - Favorable outlook on comfort, cleanliness, and driver friendliness
  - Situation-specific challenges, such as difficulties riding with young children
- Accessible transit options play an important role.
  - Paratransit and shared ride services are valued
  - However, several mentioned that scheduling service in advance can make using the service more difficult.
  - These services are often used by seniors and those with disabilities with a cost subsidy, which may be one explanation for participants over 55 assigning higher-than-average ratings to how well their transportation needs are met

# Key Findings (4/4)

- Need for more awareness about transit service
  - Desire for more real-time information
  - Language barriers
- Not just about getting to work: the need to get to healthcare and shopping destinations transcend demographic groups and communities



# Accessing Economic Opportunity

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## Public Transit, Job Access, and Equitable Economic Development

**Kyle DeMaria**

Community Development Research Analyst

American Planning Association  
Pennsylvania Chapter Annual Conference  
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The views expressed here are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia or the Federal Reserve System.



The **Economic Growth & Mobility Project (EGMP)** is a new initiative of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia dedicated to promoting **equal access to economic opportunity for all.**

**Infrastructure  
Equity**

*Transportation  
Affordable Housing  
Broadband*

**Workforce  
Development**

*Education  
Barriers to Employment  
Skill Development*

**Job Creation**

*Equitable Development  
Entrepreneurship  
Creating Quality Jobs*



By leveraging the research produced by the Federal Reserve System and others, EGMP will convene **Research in Actions Labs**: catalytic partnerships among public, private and philanthropic stakeholders in the Third District that address specific issues of economic mobility.





## Research Goals

- Compare access to transit and jobs in three medium-sized regions: York County, PA; Northeast Pennsylvania; and Atlantic County, NJ.
- Share the Research In Action innovations with regions facing similar challenges

## Research Questions

- Are bus stops located near where people live?
- What percent of the region's jobs are accessible by transit in a reasonable amount of time?
- What percent of residents can access regional employment centers?

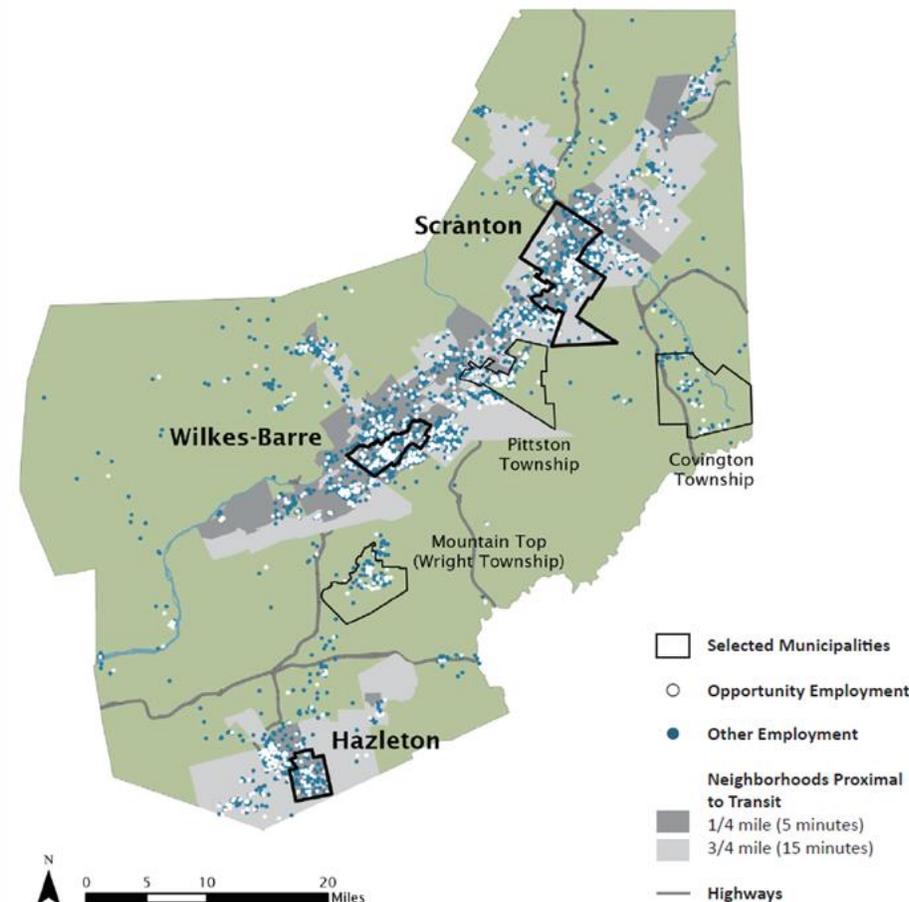
### **Opportunity Employment**

Jobs that pay above the median wage  
but do not require a four-year college degree



## Access to Transit

- About 71% of NEPA residents live within a 15-minute walk of a bus stop.
- About 98% of residents of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in NEPA live within a 15-minute walk of a bus stop.

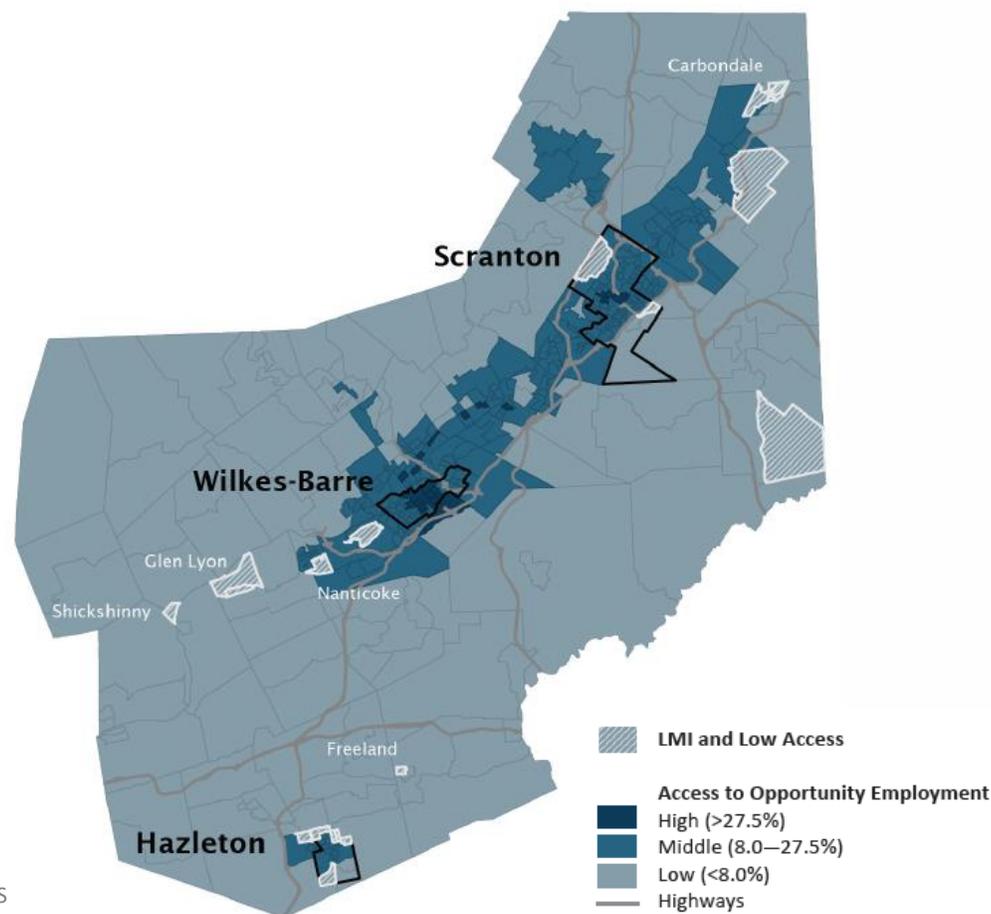


Sources: Authors' calculations using data obtained from County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS), Hazleton Public Transit (HPT), Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), Open Street Map (OSM), ACS PUMS (2011–2015), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Regional Price Parities (RPPs) (2011–2015), LEHD LODS (2015), U.S. Census TIGER/Line Shapefiles, and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)



# Access to Jobs

- The average NEPA resident can access 12% of regional opportunity employment using transit.
- Focus on network connectivity as an equitable transportation strategy

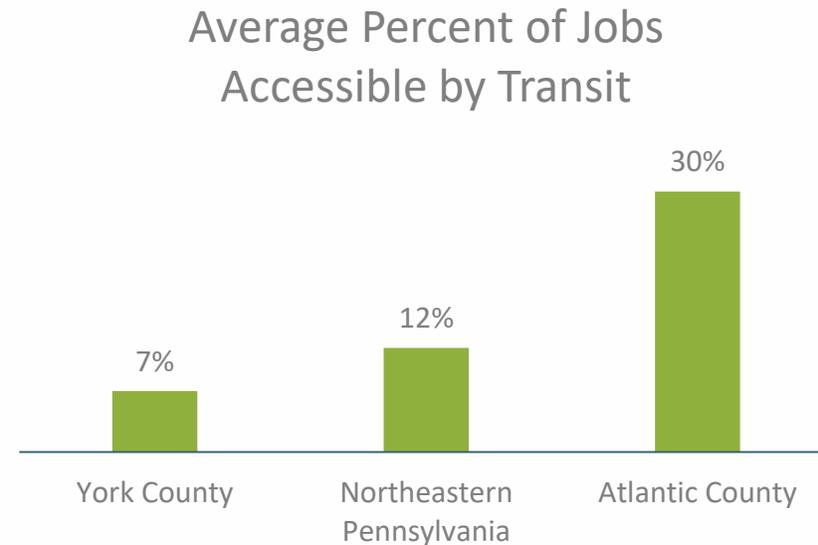


Sources: Authors' calculations using data obtained from COLTS, HPT, CNT, OSM, ACS PUMS (2011–2015), BEA RPPs (2011–2015), LEHD LODES (2015), U.S. Census TIGER/Line Shapefiles, and PennDOT



# Accessing Economic Opportunity

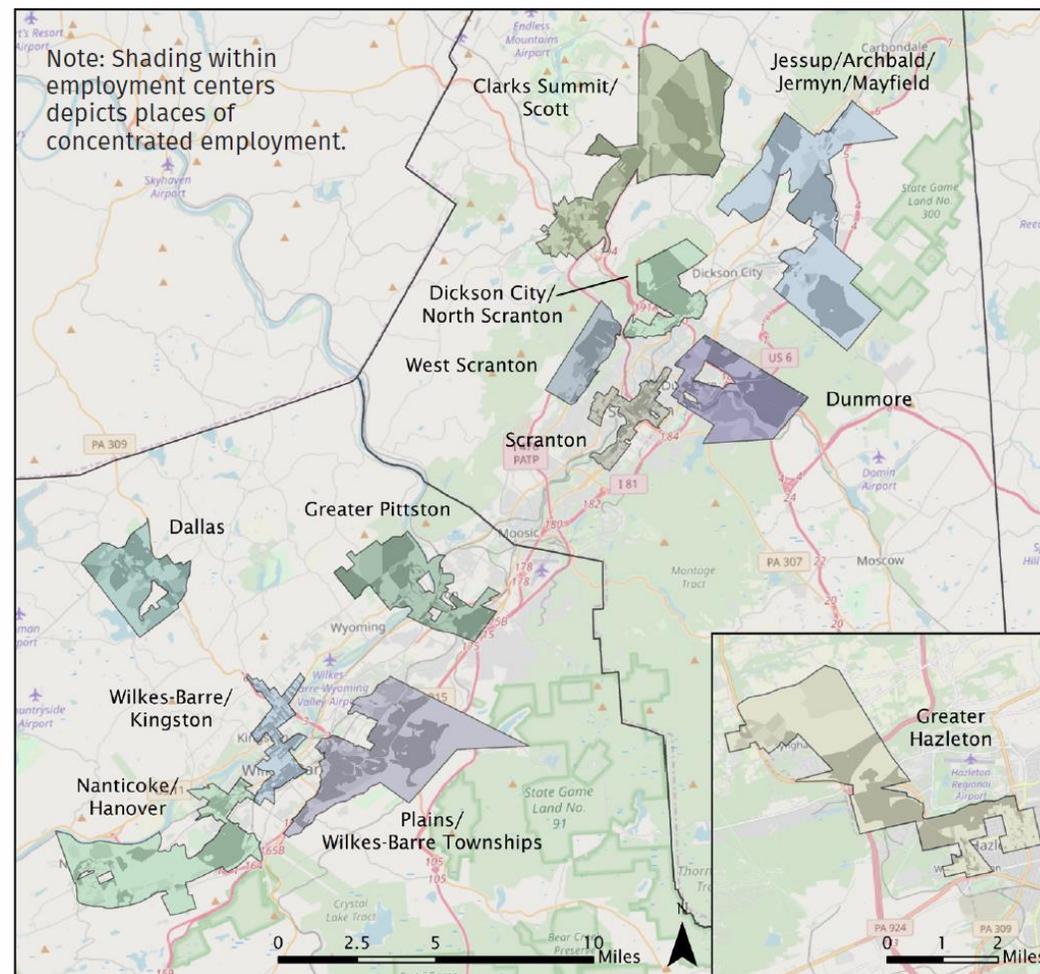
- How do access to transit and access to jobs vary across medium-sized regions in the Mid-Atlantic?
- Where are jobs concentrated within each region?
- How accessible are employment centers to their region's labor force?





## Employment Centers

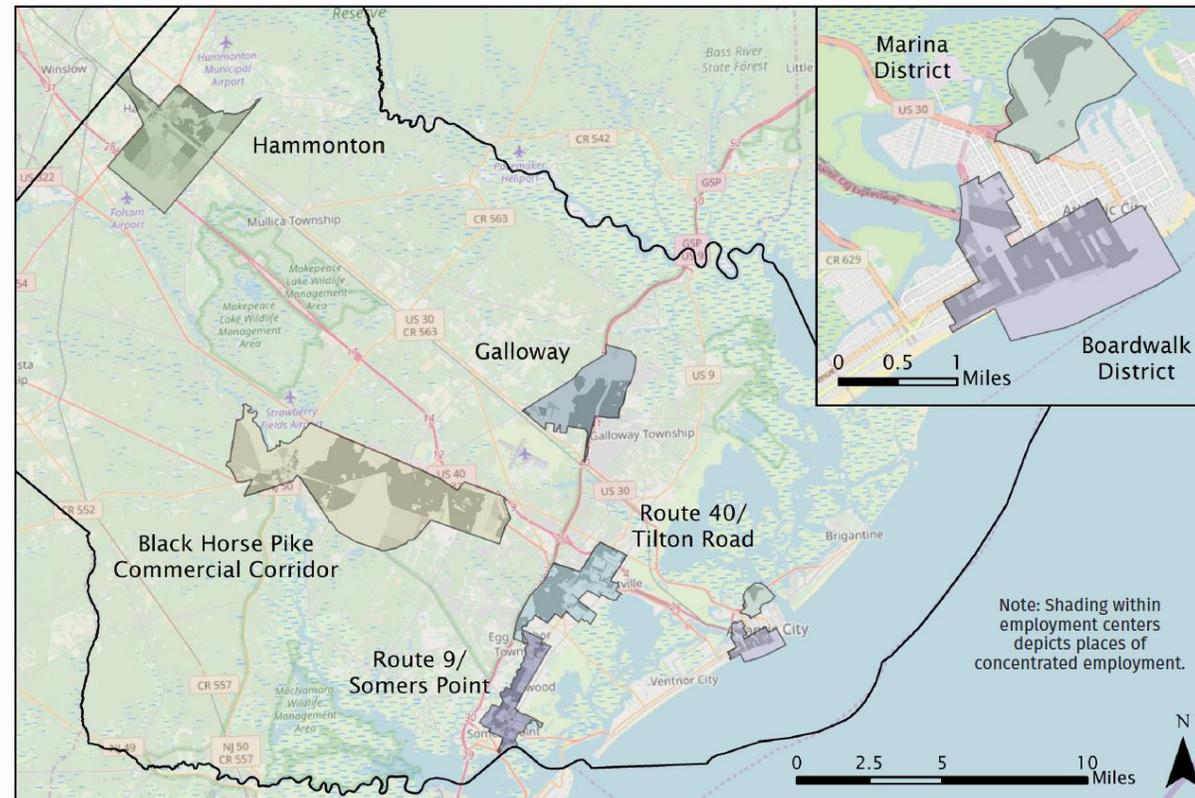
- A tool for understanding employers' access to talent
- Conglomerates of census block groups
- Defined as places of greater than expected job density given the distance from the central business district (CBD)
- Meet a minimum employment threshold



Sources: Authors' calculations using data obtained from rabbittransit, CAT, COLTS, HPT, CNT, NJT, CCC, OSM, ACS PUMS (2011–2015), BEA RPPs (2011–2015), LEHD LODS (2015), and U.S. Census TIGER/Line Shapefiles

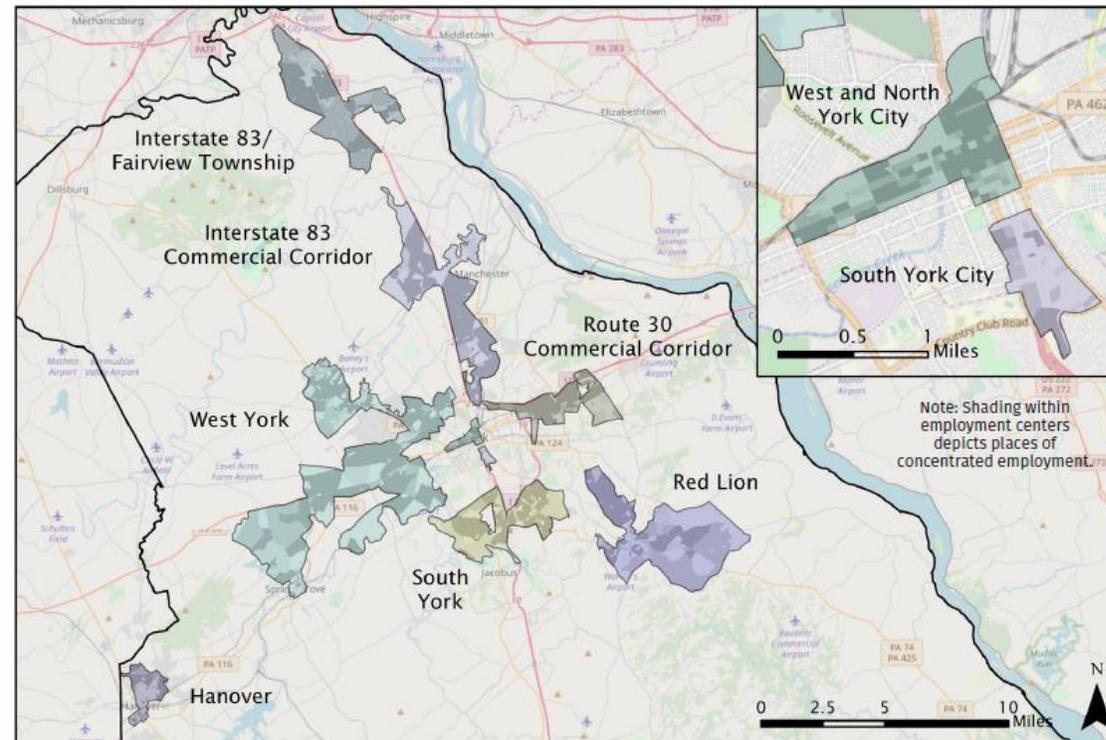
## Employment Center Concentration

- Employment is more concentrated in Atlantic County than in York County or NEPA.
- Whereas 60 percent of Atlantic County jobs are in employment centers, only 51 percent of York County jobs and 53 percent of NEPA jobs are in employment centers.



## Employment Center Location

- The largest employment centers are not always centrally located in the downtown of a major city.
- The two York city employment centers are the sixth- and seventh-largest centers by total employment in York County.
- Scranton and Wilkes-Barre/Kingston are the second- and third-largest centers by total employment in NEPA, after Plains/Wilkes-Barre Townships.

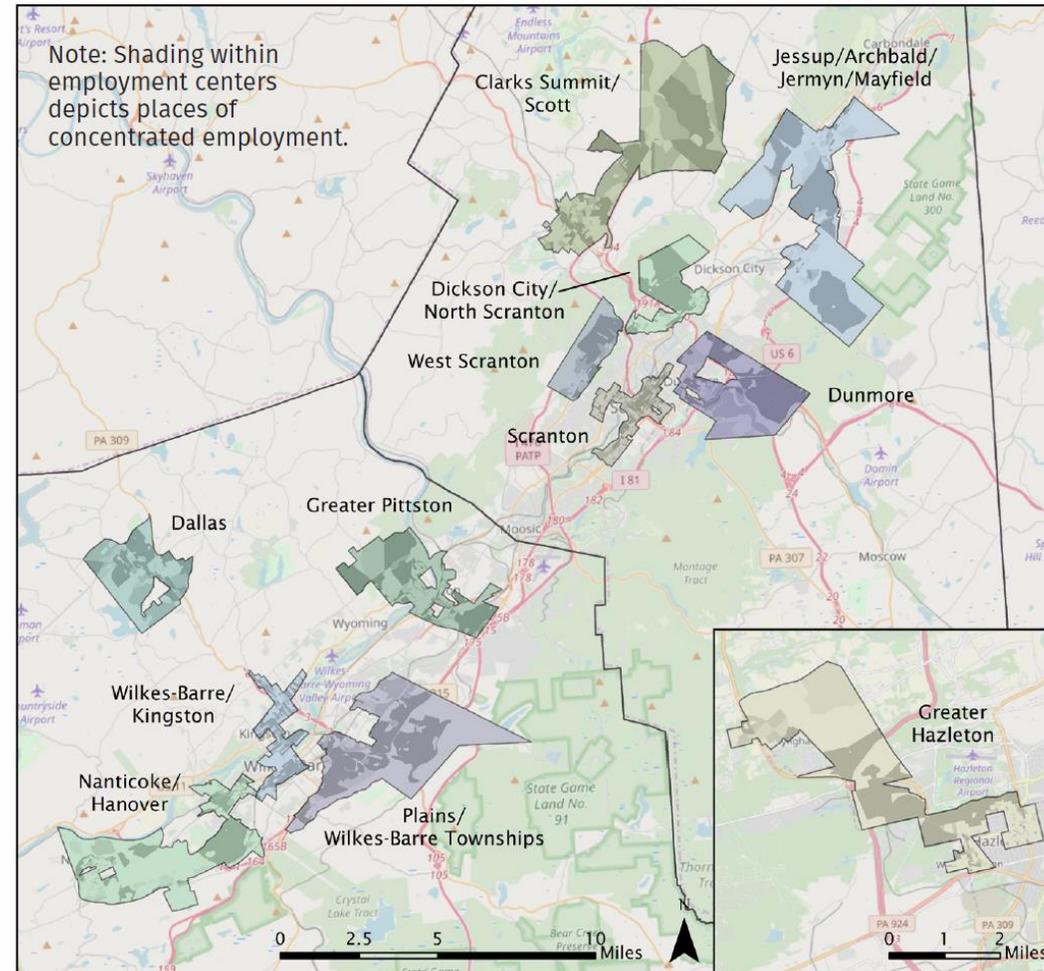




## Employment Center Accessibility

- The largest employment centers are not always the centers most accessible by prime-age residents and residents of LMI neighborhoods.
  - 6% of prime-age residents can access Plains/Wilkes-Barre Townships.
  - About 30% of prime-age residents can access each Scranton and Wilkes-Barre/Kingston.
  - 17% of prime-age residents can access Greater Pittston.
- Employment center access by residents in LMI neighborhoods is generally greater than access by prime-age residents.

Sources: Authors' calculations using data obtained from rabbittransit, CAT, COLTS, HPT, CNT, NJT, CCC, OSM, ACS PUMS (2011–2015), BEA RPPs (2011–2015), LEHD LODES (2015), and U.S. Census TIGER/Line Shapefiles





## Discussion and Policy Implications

- The structure of public transit and land use affect neighborhood job access.
- Focus on network connectivity as an equitable transportation strategy
- Economic development practitioners and private firms have the potential to further equitable economic development in their regions by considering the transit accessibility of future employment centers, among other factors, when determining the location of employment growth.
  - Private firms can partner with public transit agencies to evaluate extending public transit to existing employment centers.



# Thank You

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# Getting to Work on Time

Public Transit and Job Access in Northeastern Pennsylvania

Kyle DeMaris\*  
JANUARY 2018

# IN ACTION

# Northeastern Pennsylvania Equitable Transit Study

OCTOBER 2017



ECONOMIC GROWTH & MOBILITY PROJECT

# Accessing Economic Opportunity

Public Transit, Job Access, and Equitable Economic Development in Three Medium-Sized Regions

Kyle DeMaris and Alvaro Sanchez\*  
DECEMBER 2018

# Growing the Workforce through Improved Transportation

Abstract  
The Scranton Area Foundation and Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Roundtable of Business Leaders

Prepared by:

A collaboration among Getzinger, Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Mansfield University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center, University of Scranton & Wilkes University

ECONOMIC GROWTH & MOBILITY PROJECT

ECONOMIC GROWTH & MOBILITY PROJECT

This paper was prepared for the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and Scranton Area Community Foundation by the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development at Wilkes University. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia or the Federal Reserve System.

# GIS MAPPING EXPANSION

With over 19,000 households in Northeastern Pennsylvania not having a car and reporting that work is the most difficult location for them to access and residents only able to access only 14% of total employment opportunities using public transportation, seek to:

- Facilitate engagement and build relationships with public transit agencies and private/public sector partnerships through the utilization of the mapping tool.
- In partnership with NEPA Alliance, GIS mapping features and services are being developed that will provide relevant data to employers particularly in the industrial parks in the region
- End goal is to identify service gaps that exist and to develop partnerships, collaborative pilots, and last-mile solutions that will bring job opportunities to more in the community.

# WORKFORCE EVENT

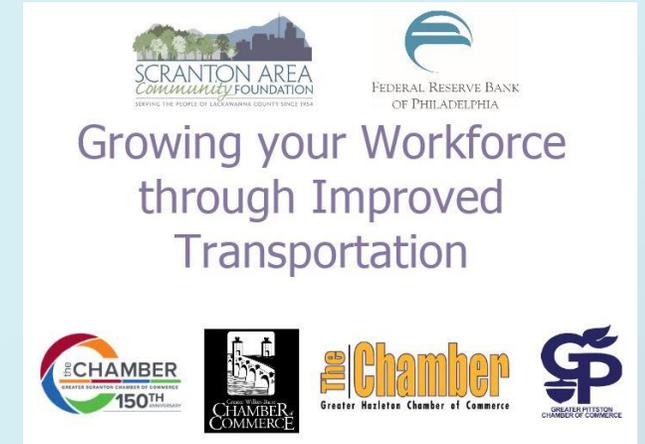
Held in partnerships with the regions Chamber of who invited business leaders from Luzerne and Lackawanna counties, nearly 50 business leaders attended.

## Goal:

- To create awareness of transportation's connection to workforce
- Provide best practices and case studies
- Seek solutions through stimulating willingness in developing both public-private partnerships and solutions through facilitated conversations.

## Common Thread

- Participants felt that it was hard to get employees to and from their late or overnight shifts due to the fact that the transit services stop running by the time their employees' started/ended work.
- A number of companies had very long hours (12 hour shifts), which also resulted in their employees not being able to take the bus because it was not running. The hours of service the company has along with the hours the bus runs had an effect on retention and recruitment.



# DEVELOPED A WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

- Survey developed from Workforce event in partnership with The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development
- Developed and distributed separate transportation surveys to each human resource professionals and businesses in region through a partnership with Northeast PA Industrial Resource Center
- The goal is to better understanding employee transportation needs and to identify individualized barriers that businesses anticipate when recruiting new talent such as current transportation mode, work schedule and commute time.
- Surveys are distributed through a personalized link customized to each business that participates and contains 12-15 questions

# PUBLIC TRANSIT TOOLKIT

The goal of this Public Transit Toolkit is to serve as a guide to the transportation options available currently in NEPA.

Its purpose is to help the reader understand how to utilize mass transit—from where to purchase bus passes, how to read a bus map, and how to locate bus stops through-out the region—in addition to providing useful information on alternative, perhaps more unconventional, transportation options.

## NEPA MOVES

*Because Every Life Has a Destination*

### **A Public Transit Toolkit for NEPA Employers**



**Fall 2018**

# **PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENTS**

The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development qualitative and quantitative studies produced evidence-based research that gave NEPA the ability to establish stronger cross-sector partnerships along with communicating the immediate need of addressing transportation to help facilitate economic growth within our region.

# NEPA MOVES & WILKES BARRE CONNECT

- Provide business-specific transportation resources and personalized transportation solutions for businesses facing workforce challenges in the newly-developed Hanover Industrial Park.
- Work with individual businesses located within the newly-developed industrial park in Luzerne County to identify specific transportation barriers affecting the ability to attract and retain workforce and will develop and help implement customizable and cost-effective transportation solutions for participating businesses.



# DEVELOPED SOCIAL CAPITAL

**NEPA MOVES 90 + community members has elevated the importance of transportation equity to business leaders, health-care systems, and community development organizations across county lines.**

- NEPA Moves was recognized as a model collaborative by a variety of regional and national leaders.
  - On a state level, **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Secretary Leslie S. Richards** addressed NEPA Moves in October and commended NEPA Moves for its phenomenal work to date, calling it a **unique collaborative model not only for the state of Pennsylvania but a model nationally** for cross-sector partnerships advancing transit equity.
  - On a national scale, members from NEPA Moves' leadership team were panelists at numerous conferences including the **Rail~Volution Conference** in Pittsburgh and the **Federal Reserve Bank's Reinventing Our Communities: Investing in Opportunity Conference** in Baltimore, Maryland.

# Questions & Answers

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