

3 Community Engagement

Between February and April 2024, input about public transportation needs in Hardin and Meade Counties was collected in the form of public surveys and stakeholder interviews from residents, employers, and public officials.

Stakeholder Interviews

Representatives from the MPO met with 13 stakeholders, including major employers, public transportation providers, local officials, schools, the Chamber of Commerce, and medical providers. Some key themes recurred across multiple stakeholder interviews, and the project team learned several lessons from stakeholders that inform potential service developments:

Interest in Carpooling



Many commuters and students are open to carpooling or vanpooling, and some employers already have programs to facilitate carpools. Carpooling and vanpooling can originate at either private residences or at regional park-and-ride locations.

Existing Transportation Options Leave Significant Gaps



Major destinations are decentralized across a wide area, making mileage-based fees prohibitive for many students, medical patients, and commuters.



A lack of transportation options is significantly impacting residents' abilities to seek or complete the kind of education and training that would help fill much-needed jobs in industrial and healthcare positions. These transportation barriers are also impacting potential tax revenues.



Longer service hours are needed for students, medical patients, and employees working second and third shifts.

Broad Support for Expanding Public Transportation



With new industries and large employers moving into the region, the time is right to invest in public transportation.



TACK is willing to partner with REMPO and stakeholders to take the next steps for expanding and enhancing public transportation services to Hardin and Meade Counties.



Local government officials are open to providing assistance with signage, benches, talking with business owners, coordinating with KYTC about park-and-ride facilities, and potentially addressing funding needs.

Public Survey

A public survey was conducted from March 5 to April 5, 2024, through an online survey platform as well as paper copies. Over 1,400 members of the public responded to the survey, which was offered in both English and Spanish. The survey results showed support for increased public transportation options:



1/6 of respondents don't own a personal vehicle



Only half of respondents usually drive themselves to the majority of their destinations

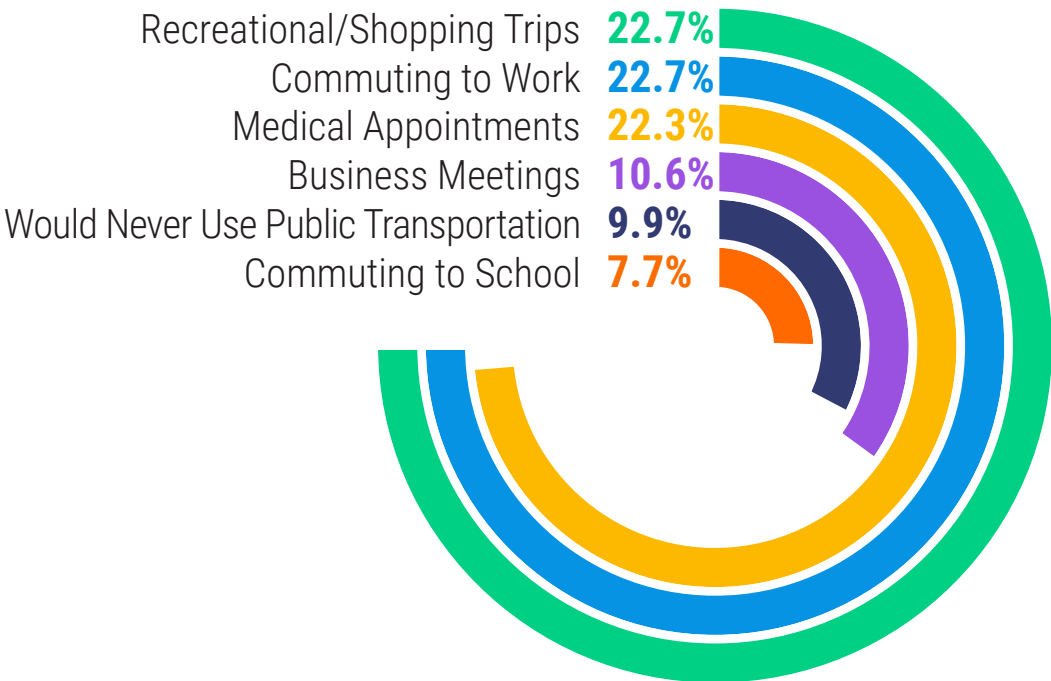


More than 1/3 of respondents said they valued having a reliable alternative if other transportation was unavailable



1/4 of respondents said that they don't use shared mobility options (taxis, Uber, Lyft, etc.) because they're too expensive

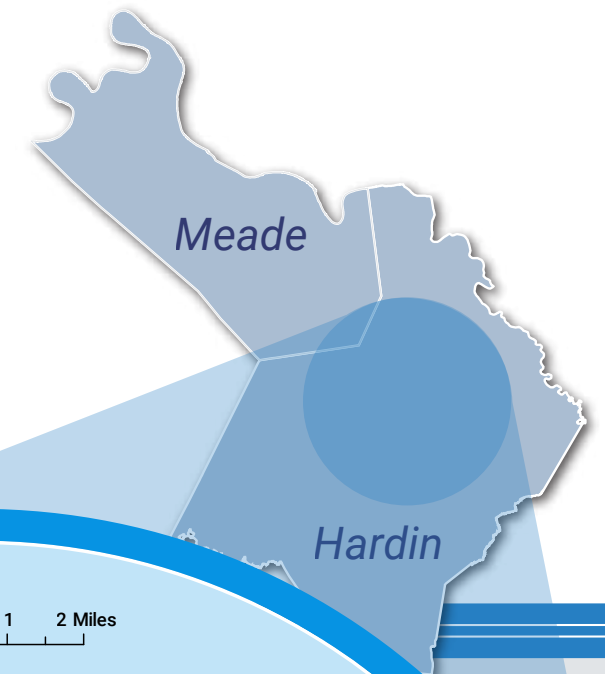
"What types of trips would you consider making if public transportation were more readily available?"



4 Strategies for Public Transportation

PHASE 1 (2025) Coordinate Vanpools

- Coordinate with industries such as Baptist Health, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, BlueOval SK, and Fort Knox to organize vanpools with TACK's existing vanpool fleet
- Advertise commuter options to employees
- Consider replicating the Every Commute Counts program to create incentives for employees and students to use the vanpool

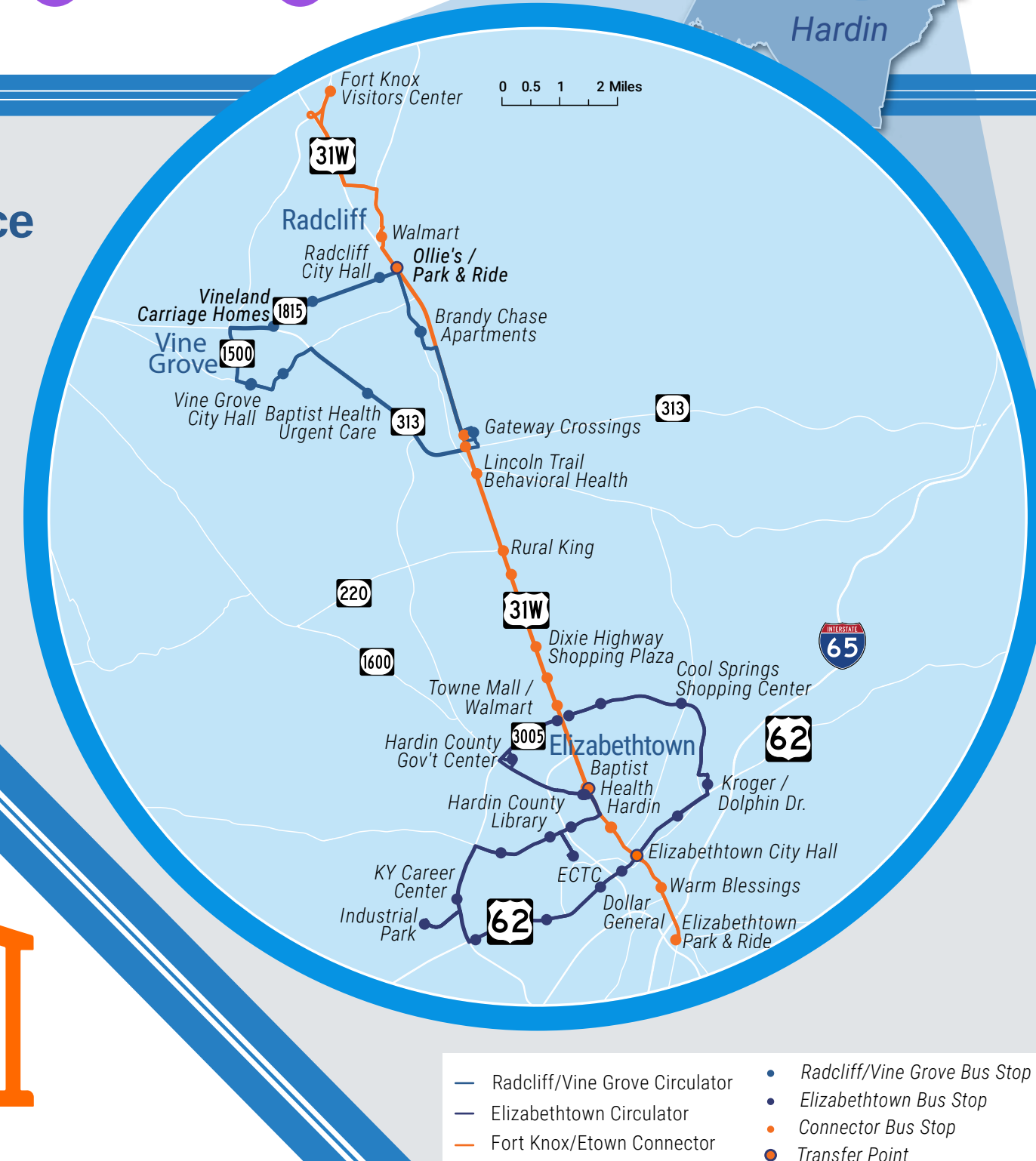


PHASE 2 (2026-2028) Implement Fixed-Route Service

- Purchase between six and nine 14-seater cutaway buses
- Coordinate with stakeholders to identify annual operating funds
- Implement fare-free bus routes with the new cutaway buses
 - Elizabethtown Circulator
 - Radcliff/Vine Grove Circulator
 - Fort Knox/Elizabethtown Connector
- Extend TACK's paratransit service coverage to include evening and weekend hours for the ¾-mile areas around the fixed routes
- Install signs at all new bus stops
- Install bus shelters and benches at key bus stops

PHASE 3 (2030+) Expand Service

- Purchase or build a new vehicle storage and maintenance facility
- Invest in pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks and signalized cross walks
- As funding and demand allow, extend the Fort Knox Connector south to Glendale and north to West Point, incorporating BlueOval SK and the Glendale industrial park
- Consider adding a Brandenburg Connector to connect locations in Brandenburg with Fort Knox or Radcliff



5 Financial Analysis

TACK can offset the annual operating costs of new fixed-route bus service by using previously untapped federal grants. These grants supply 80% of the necessary funds for capital expenses (new vehicles, bus stops, etc.) and operating expenses (driver wages, vehicle maintenance, fuel, etc.). This leaves only 20% of the total costs to be supplied from local sources or other federal programs like Medicaid.

Investing in Public Transportation



Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$5 in economic returns



Every \$1 million invested in public transportation supports and creates approximately 50 jobs



Home values are up to 24% higher near bus systems than homes in areas without public transportation

Available Funding Sources

- Federal Grant for New Vehicles (5339(a) Program)
- Federal Grant for Operating Funds (5307 Program)
- Funds from Local Governments
- Funds from Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Revenue from Advertisements
- Service Agreements with Major Employers

PHASE

1



Hire one additional TACK staff member dedicated to coordinating vanpool service (\$40k - \$50k per year)

PHASE

2



New funding needed for one-time capital expenses and for ongoing operating expenses

Capital Expense	Total Cost	Funds Required after Federal Grant
75 bus stop signs	\$5,625	\$1,125
7 bus shelters	\$70k	\$14k
6-9 new cutaway buses	\$876k - \$1.31 million	\$175k - \$263k
Operating Expense	Total Annual Cost	Annual Funds Required after Federal Grant
Elizabethtown Circulator	\$743k	\$149k
Radcliff/Vine Grove Circulator	\$508k	\$102k
Fort Knox/Elizabethtown Connector	\$440k	\$88k

PHASE

3



Funding needed to purchase or lease a five-acre bus facility

Expense	Total Cost	Funds Required after Federal Grant
Land Purchase	\$640k - \$822k	\$128k - \$164k
Facility Construction (10k sqft.)	\$1.75M	\$350k
Annual Price to Lease (10k sqft.)	\$100k	\$20k