



## South Central Transit Authority Microtransit Feasibility Study

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shaping the future of public transit in Lancaster County — exploring innovative on-demand mobility options to increase access, flexibility, and equity for residents.

### What is Microtransit?

Book a ride through an app or phone call.

Smaller vehicles (shuttles or vans) provide curb-to-curb service.

Operates within defined zones based on community demand.

The South Central Transit Authority (SCTA), which operates public transportation in Lancaster County through the Red Rose Transit Authority (RRTA), is exploring microtransit — a flexible, on-demand service designed to better serve areas not easily reached by fixed bus routes. Microtransit allows riders to request curb-to-curb shared trips using an app or phone call, with smaller vehicles such as vans or shuttles providing service within defined zones. This feasibility study evaluates whether microtransit could close key service gaps across the county — improving access to jobs, education, healthcare, shopping, and daily needs while enhancing convenience, reliability, and equity for all residents. This transit service would be available to everyone, without eligibility requirements.

## Study Goals & Objectives

To guide this effort, SCTA established clear goals and measurable objectives to ensure that any new service — like microtransit — improves mobility, supports community needs, and delivers long-term value.



### EFFECTIVE

Offer a network that links people to the places they need and want to go

- Enhance the hub-and-spoke fixed-route bus network by filling coverage gaps
- Facilitate connections to regional destinations, employment, healthcare, and between municipalities
- Expand mobility options for rural and underserved communities



### EFFICIENT

Make riding transit reliable and efficient

- Prioritize on-time performance
- Offer more frequent and available service by decreasing the wait time for a trip.
- Align service hours with when people want to travel



### FISCALLY SUSTAINABLE

Operate a service that maximizes available funds and remains well-positioned financially into the future

- Establish and monitor clear performance metrics to assess cost-efficiency and overall service impact
- Adopt a data-focused approach when planning new service
- Improve public awareness and perception of public transit to promote service usage



### INNOVATIVE

Explore new tools and operating models to maximize service quality and efficiency

- Evaluate all viable service delivery models
- Use performance measures to regularly evaluate and refine microtransit service
- Utilize a pilot program to test and refine service offerings before expanding

# WHY THIS STUDY MATTERS + COMMUNITY VOICE

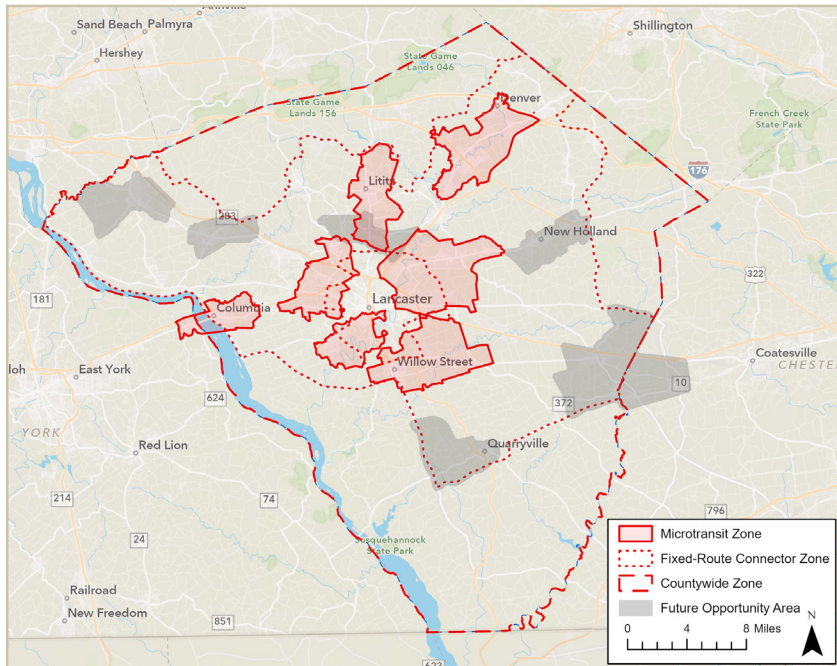
## Why This Study Matters

**Lancaster County is growing —  
but not every community is equally connected.**

- Some residents live beyond walking distance to bus stops.
- Travel needs don't always align with bus schedules
- Older adults and residents without vehicles depend on public transit.

Microtransit can complement RRTA's fixed-route bus network by offering added flexibility, convenience, and improved connectivity.

Microtransit is a flexible tool but not a universal solution for all areas. This study used a data-driven process to identify areas that are most suitable for service based on industry best-practices.



**Red zones** are higher-scoring areas based on the zone analysis.  
**Grey zones** are lower-scoring areas based on the zone analysis, but still have suitable characteristics

## What We Heard from the Community

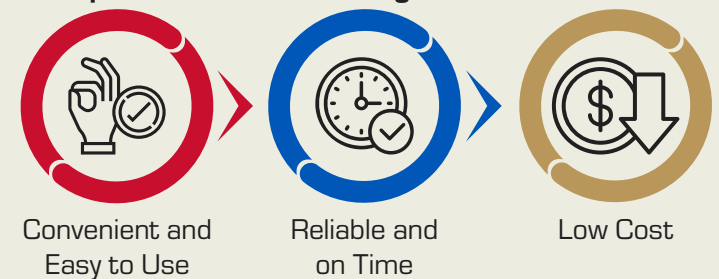
**Public involvement was central to this study.**

SCTA and its consultant team conducted surveys, pop-ups, and stakeholder meetings to understand local needs and preferences.

**Key Findings:**

- 788 survey responses + 5 pop-up events across Lancaster County.
- 51% had never heard of microtransit, education is critical.
- 67% said they would likely use microtransit if available.
- Top destinations: Lancaster City, grocery stores, healthcare, and major employers.
- Preferred booking method: mobile app (86%), but phone option remains essential.
- Barriers: limited smartphone access, wait-time concerns, and language and cultural accessibility needs.

### Top Factors to Encourage Microtransit Use



**Reliable, flexible transit would make a real  
difference for our shift workers and seniors.**

**– Community Member**

# DATA + FINDINGS — PRIORITY ZONES

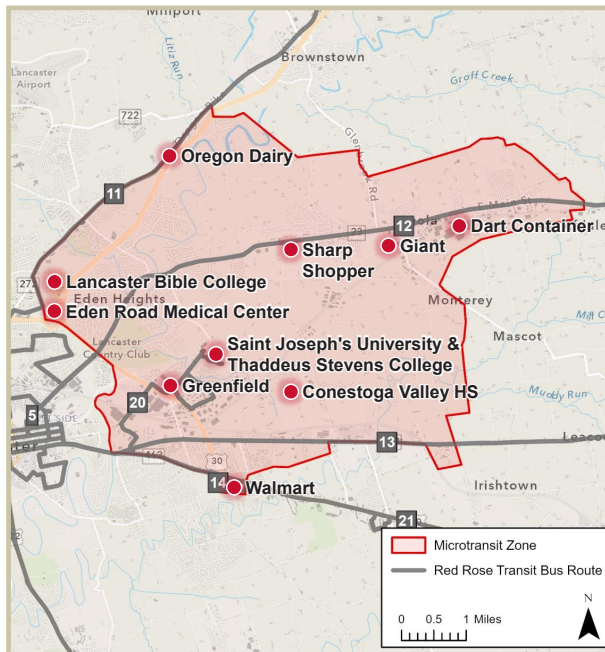
## Data + Community Input Led to the Top Zones

Using data on travel patterns, transit need, population, employment, and survey input, the study prioritized areas best suited for an initial microtransit service (pilot) before considering expansion to other suitable areas in the future.

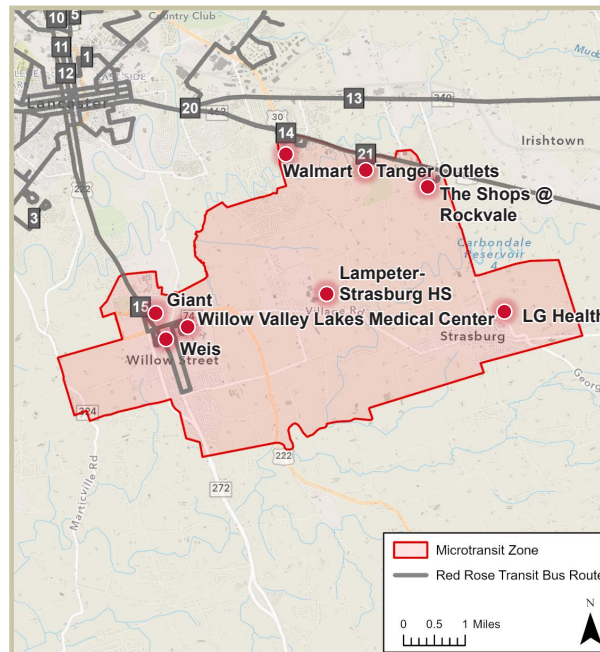
### TOP ZONES RECOMMENDED FOR INITIAL SERVICE (DEPENDENT ON FUTURE INVESTMENT)

These zones demonstrated the strongest potential for ridership, community interest, and connectivity to major destinations.

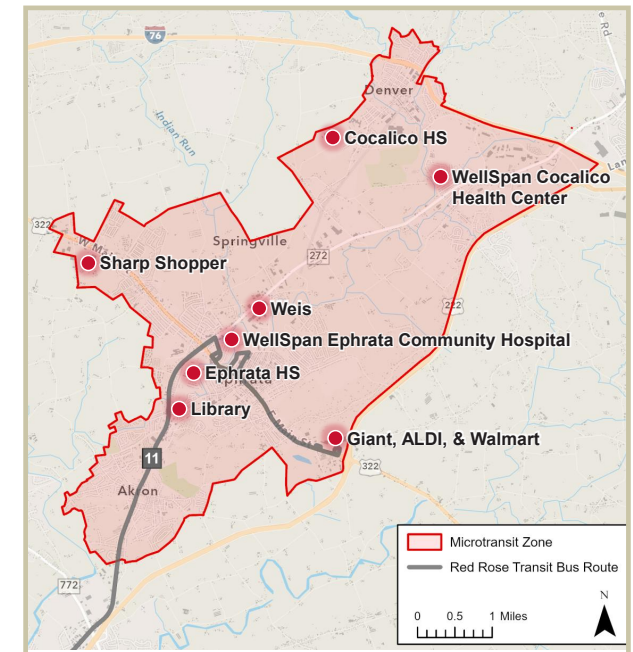
Leola



Willow Street–Strasburg–Outlets



Ephrata–Denver

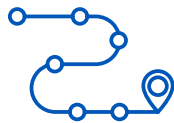


### HOW ZONES WERE SELECTED

To determine where microtransit service could be most effective, SCTA evaluated multiple factors, including:



Transit need  
and population  
and job density



Areas not  
served by existing  
bus routes



Public survey  
feedback and  
desired destinations



Cost and  
operational  
efficiency

### SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

Service characteristics for microtransit were also determined to provide a service in line with community needs and travel patterns:



Fleet



Fare



Transfer  
Policy



Payment  
Method



Booking  
Method



Wait  
Times



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

## UNDERSTANDING LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Whether you're commuting, heading to an appointment, or running errands, several flexible transportation options are available in your community. This guide compares Bus, Microtransit, Paratransit, and Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)—highlighting who each service is for, how to book a ride, typical costs, and hours of operation—so you can choose the option that best fits your schedule, accessibility needs, and budget.

SERVICE TYPE	HOW IT WORKS	BEST FOR	HOW TO BOOK	TYPICAL COST
<b>Bus</b> (RTA)	Fixed routes & schedules — riders board at stops	People near bus routes; daily commuters	No booking — go to stop	~\$1.80 per ride
<b>Microtransit</b> (Currently not a service option)	On-demand shared ride within a service zone	People with limited bus access and flexibility	App or phone call	~\$2–\$5 per ride
<b>Paratransit or Shared Ride</b> (Red Rose Access)	Door-to-door ADA service	Seniors, riders with disabilities, or that meet other program eligibility	Call center (24–48 hr notice)	~\$2–\$8 per ride
<b>Rideshare</b> (Uber/Lyft)	Private, direct ride anywhere	People with immediate travel need or full flexibility	App-based	~\$10–\$30+ per ride

## WHICH OPTION IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

SCTA currently offers several **existing transportation options**, including fixed-route bus service, each designed to serve different needs. While microtransit is still being **studied and is not yet available**, the guide below can help you compare current and future options — whether you're looking for the most affordable ride, need accessibility accommodations, or want direct door-to-door convenience.

### NEED

Budget-friendly shared ride  
Door-to-door service with ADA support  
Immediate or flexible travel

### BEST OPTION

Microtransit *(currently not a service option)*  
Paratransit  
Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)

This feasibility study sets the foundation for a future pilot program — pending SCTA Board review and approval.

If approved, the next steps will include:

- Developing a community-branded service identity
- Selecting technology and operations partners
- Launching public education and recruitment efforts
- Running an 18–24-month pilot program with performance monitoring
- Adjusting the service based on rider feedback and data



## What We're Aiming For

Not just another transit service — a smarter, more flexible mobility solution designed around the way Lancaster County moves.



## Important Note

The findings from this study will be reviewed by SCTA before any decisions are made.

**No pilot service is being launched at this time.**



Visit the website to view the full report.  
<https://bit.ly/SCTAmicrotransit>

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