

CHAPTER 5

Roles, Updates & Funding Structure

Roles and Responsibilities

The Ohio Department of Transportation has partnered with MVRPC to be the Regional Coordinating Agency (RCA) to draft a Regional Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan which will assist transportation providers to maintain or improve the existing levels of service available to riders. This plan will also assist ODOT with allocating project funding.

MVRPC will work in partnership with the Region's Mobility Managers to make funding recommendations to ODOT; however, ODOT will remain the final deciding factor when awarding project funds. Recommendations will be based on applicant and project eligibility which are detailed in the "Participation" section of this chapter.

MVRPC as the RCA has developed the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan in partnership with health and human service providers, public transit agencies, mobility managers and local elected leadership to identify the needs and gaps in service for transit users in the counties as well as identify goals to move the region forward in providing stronger transportation. Annually, MVRPC will facilitate the process to update the SWOT Analysis with the GRMI Council to determine if the region's characteristics or needs have changed. Additionally MVRPC will work with the GRMI Planning Sub-Committee to update the entire plan as required by federal and state regulations.

The GRMI Council is comprised of local elected leaders, public transit agencies, health and human services providers, and member representing seniors and individuals with disabilities. The GRMI Council will meet quarterly to discuss transportation issues at a regional level and work to develop projects or programs to implement the plan goals and strategies. They will also be part of the process in providing annual updates to the plan.

The GRMI Council will appoint one representative from each county to be part of the Planning Sub-Committee for a term of 2 years . The sub-committee will also include mobility managers from counties within the region and representation of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The Planning Sub-Committee will assist the RCA in data collection, updating transit provider information and gathering input from stakeholders. This sub-committee will be responsible for assisting the RCA to revise the plan every four years as required by the FTA Circular: FTA C 9070.1G, "Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance and Application Instructions" as well during the annual plan updates.

Participation

Transition of the local Transportation Coordination Councils and phasing out of plans will occur in 3 phases. In Phase 1, counties will continue to hold local Transportation Coordination Councils as local Human Service Transportation Coordination Plans continue to be effective. In Phase 2, MVRPC as the RCA will assist transportation providers and Mobility Managers in each county begin to transition to utilizing the GRMI Plan. By Phase 2, counties will no longer be required to have individual Human Service Transportation Coordination Plans and all providers seeking Section 5310 funding will be required to utilize the goals and strategies outlined in the **GRMI Plan Chapter 4: Goals and Strategies** to identify which goal and strategy their project is included. The final Phase 3 will ensure all counties have transitioned to utilizing the GRMI plan for regional coordination and local funding prioritization.

It is strongly encouraged for all transportation and health and human service providers to attend the GRMI regional coordination meetings; however, MVRPC recognizes there may be varying levels of participation by county or transit providers in the coordinated plan depending on individual circumstances. As such, this plan outlines minimum levels of participation at the county level and at a regional level. Funding eligibility requires the following:

Regional Coordination Participation:

Providers or counties that wish to be eligible for additional funding and participate in projects encouraging regional coordination must at a minimum meet the following criteria:

1. Attendance by an agency representative to at least 75% of the Regional Coordinated Council meetings;
 - a. one of the attended meetings must be the annual update of the SWOT analysis
2. The project requested for funding must be listed as a strategy in the "Goals and Strategies" chapter of the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan. The strategy must list the FTA Section 5310 grant as a potential funding source;
3. The agency requesting funding must actively participate in stakeholder activities such as completing surveys, providing data and information about programs, services or inventory as requested.

These criteria will apply to those counties which are located in sub-region 2a and sub-region 2b seeking funding for regional projects.

Local Coordination Participation:

Providers or counties that are seeking funding for projects which benefit a single county within the boundaries of sub-region 2a will be required to meet the following criteria:

1. Attend local county Transportation Coordination Council meetings should a county choose to hold separate sessions from the GRMI Council meetings. Please refer to local Transportation Coordination Council guidelines for the required number of meetings for participation;

- a. Should a county choose to abstain from holding an individual county Transportation Coordination Council meeting, providers may then fulfill this requirement by meeting Criteria 1 under Regional Coordination Participation
2. The project the agency is requesting funding for must be listed as a strategy in the Goals and Priorities section of the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan. The strategy must list Section 5310 as a potential funding source;
 - a. All projects whether benefiting the local or regional level must identify how they are included within the Greater Regional Plan. ODOT will utilize the regional coordinated plan when reviewing projects to determine priority and eligibility when awarding funding.
3. The agency must actively participate in stakeholder activities, such as completing surveys, providing data, and providing information about programs, services or inventory when requested for the local Transportation Coordination Council;
4. Abide by any and all additional criteria that have been set forth by the local Transportation Coordination Council for participation requirements

MVRPC, as the RCA, will work in partnership with the local lead agencies to determine which transportation providers are participating at the local level coordination meetings as well as ensure all provider information is updated and submitted for plan revisions. MVRPC will also confirm whether or not projects align with the goals and priorities as is stated within the Regional Plan.

Inter-Region Partnerships

As ODOT continues the effort to implement regional transit planning across the State of Ohio, inter-regional partnerships will be critical to successful transit planning. The Greater Region borders three additional regions within the state, Region 1 which includes counties in southwestern Ohio, Region 3 including counties in west central Ohio, and Region 6 which includes counties in central Ohio as referenced in **Figure T**.

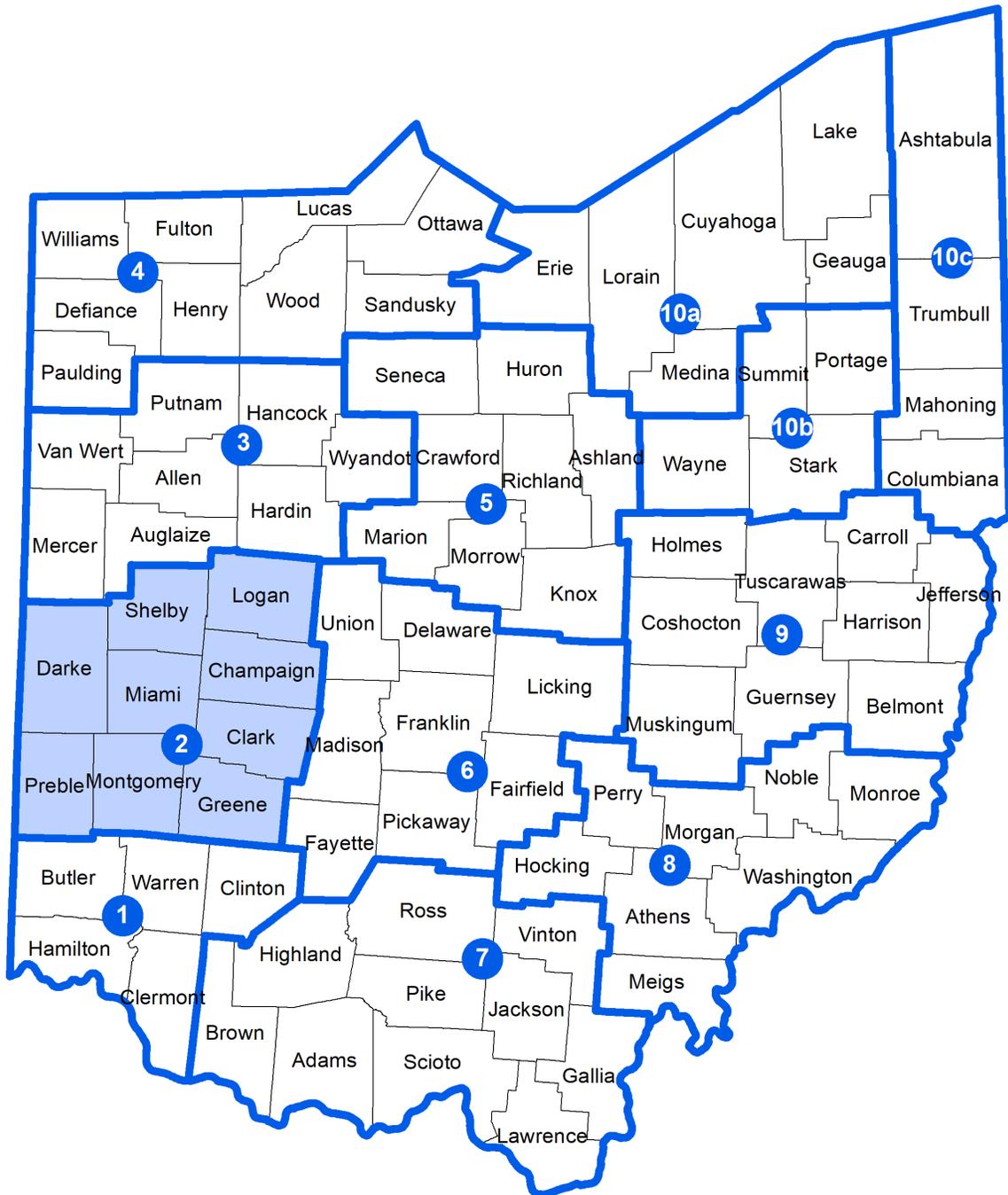


Figure T: ODOT HSTC Regions

Source: MVRPC

Figure U shows just over 5% of the trips taken daily are outside of the region. The majority of the trips are to Region 1, Region 3 and Region 6 with over 3.5% of those traveling outside of the Greater Region to Region 1, this likely due to the rapid growth in Butler and Warren counties.

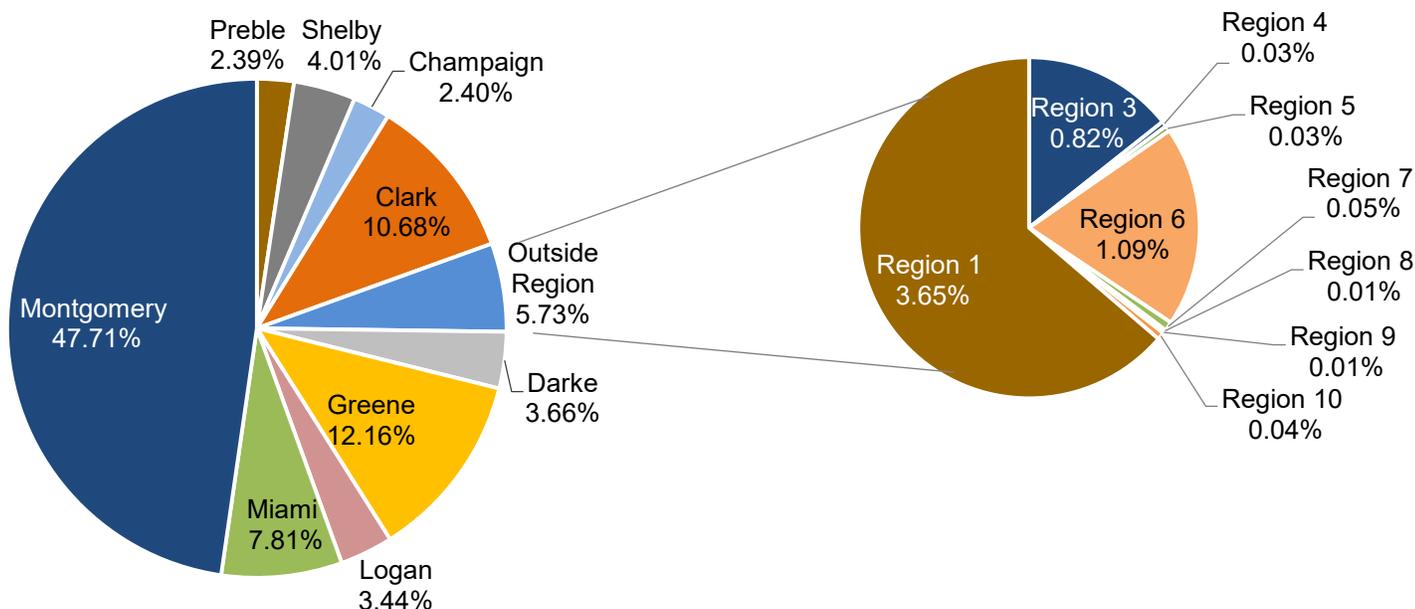


Figure U: Region 2: Trip Origins

Source: ODOT Office of Statewide Planning and Research

MVRPC plans to include the Regional Coordinating Agencies for the three neighboring regions as partners in the planning process when updating and revising the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan. MVRPC will also provide guidance and assistance to other RCAs as regional plans are established throughout the state. Information will be shared regarding best practices and lessons learned from the pilot stage of this program.

Part of the regional funding structure will also allow for counties outside of the Greater Region to participate in projects that may benefit cross county lines. Should a project arise that benefits counties cross regionally, a lead agency will be established to receive the grant funding and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drafted detailing out roles and responsibilities for each agency. These partnerships will attribute to stronger coordination not only within neighboring regions, but provide additional mobility opportunities for transit users to access the essential services the need.

Plan Revision, Updates, and Amendments

Revisions will be required every four years to the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan per the FTA Circular: FTA C 9070.1G, “Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance” which will be facilitated through the RCA with the support of the GRMI Council Planning Sub-Committee.

Revisions will consist of reviewing demographic data, a review of the available services and provider inventory, conducting new surveys and hosting focus groups to review rider needs, prioritizing the region’s needs, executing a SWOT analysis, and drafting new goals and strategies to address the needs and gaps within the region. The formal public participation will be followed for plan revisions and the plan adoption process outlined in Chapter 6: Plan Adoption will be required.

As mandated by ODOT the Greater Region Transportation Coordination Plan will be updated once every year. These updates will be to evaluate the SWOT analysis as well as the goals and strategies for overcoming identified challenges and needs to mobility within the region. The RCA and mobility managers will facilitate the annual process of updating the SWOT analysis during a quarterly regional council meeting to determine if the identified characteristics within each category are still a reflection of the region. The RCA will also work with the Planning Sub-Committee to provide updates on the status of the implementation of the goals. The updates will be clearly outlined in the plan document and submitted to ODOT for review.

Additionally, the GRMI Council or Planning sub-committee may determine there is a need to update this plan outside of the annual update or four year revision requirements. As such, the RCA will assist the council and sub-committee to determine if these updates will be significant enough to require an amendment or do not have enough impact on funding determinations to require the formal amendment process.

The following updates will not require the formal amendment process:

- Updates to Geographic Data
- Adding additional providers or services
- Adjustments to descriptions of services
- Minor changes such as fixing spelling or grammar

The RCA will identify the updates made in the plan document and will ensure a copy is shared with the Planning Sub-Committee which may be done electronically.

The following updates will require a formal amendment process:

- Identified Needs
- Prioritization of needs
- Goals, strategies to address goals
- Prioritization of goals or strategies to address goals

The amendment process must include an opportunity for input from plan participants, but does not require general public outreach or engagement. Should the formal amendment process be required the following steps should occur:

1. The RCA will provide to all Planning Sub-Committee members a summary of the proposed amendment. This may be done electronically. This summary must include:
 - a. A summary of the changes requested
 - b. Rationale of why the changes are needed
 - c. Potential impact of the changes
2. The RCA will allow 30 days for comments. The RCA is required to ensure that all comments received are shared with the other members of the Planning Sub-Committee, MVRPC Technical Advisory Committee, and the MVRPC Board of Directors.
3. The RCA will request approvals or rejections of the plan amendment from the following:
 - a. Planning Sub-Committee
 - b. MVRPC's Technical Advisory Council
 - c. MVRPC's Board of Directors

Should GRMI Planning Sub-Committee consist of more than one individual from the same agency, each agency will get a single vote for a plan amendment. If a majority of the responses received are to approve the amendment by the above committees, the RCA will consider the amendment approved.

4. Once the amendment is approved the RCA will add the amendment to the plan, including:
 - a. A summary of the amendment
 - b. Rationale for why the amendment was needed
 - c. Potential Impact of the amendment
 - d. Date Amendment was adopted and coordinated plan updated

Funding Structure

The Greater Region Mobility Initiative provides guidance to transit and health and human service providers in eight counties by sharing information regarding common challenges to providing transit while coordinating efforts to work in partnership to overcome these challenges. Additionally, part of the challenge is to also determine how to provide a regional coordinated funding structure within sub-region 2a and sub-region 2b.

The Ohio Department of Transportation will provide funding to all public transit providers, health and human service transit providers, and mobility managers within sub-region 2a. They will work through the RCA to determine applicant eligibility as well as gather recommendations regarding projects to fund. ODOT will remain the primary funding decider when selecting projects to award with Office of Transit funds.

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission will provide funding to public transit providers, health and human service transit providers, and mobility managers within sub-region 2b which are eligible for Section 5310 funding. The agency will take steps to align the Section 5310 funding application cycle with the ODOT timeline. MVRPC will review applications and award grant dollars to those providers within sub-region 2b boundaries in accordance with the Program Management Plan for Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.

MVRPC and ODOT Office of Transit will work in coordination to review the amount of funding received for the Section 5310 grant program through each agency. Part of the implementation process for this newly established regional transportation coordination plan will be to identify a process to administer funding to projects on a regional scale, projects that benefit transit users and providers within sub-regions 2a and 2b.

