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1 Introduction
The existing socioeconomic conditions analysis was developed using SARTA’s service area (identical to the Stark County Boundary) and with data obtained from the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS), the Stark County Auditor’s Office, and the United States Census Bureau. The demographic indicators will be used to determine the areas in Stark County with the greatest potential for transit ridership and the results will guide the findings and recommendations in this plan.

The majority of the population of Stark County resides in the Canton-Massillon Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA forms a triangle between Canton, Massillon, and North Canton. Alliance, the other larger city in Stark County, is located 21 miles to the east, and is located outside of the Canton-Massillon MSA. According to the 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the population of Stark County is 375,348.

2 Socioeconomic Conditions

2.1 Population Density
Population density varies throughout Stark County. The highest densities are concentrated in and around the downtowns of the larger cities in the county: Canton, Massillon, and Alliance, as well as in North Canton. A second layer of moderate population density, typical of suburban areas, is located outside of the downtown areas to the north and northwest of Canton. South of US-62, the population density drops off considerably heading into the rural parts of the county. Figure 1 below shows the population density for Stark County.

Existing SARTA service appears to serve most of the highest density areas in the County. Two large areas of medium-high population density, one directly north of downtown Canton, the other directly east of downtown Massillon, are lacking service. Because of the higher population density in these areas, additional transit service may be warranted here. These areas will be investigated more closely in later analysis.
Figure 1: Stark County Population Density

SARTA Transit Development Plan
Population Density

LEGEND

People per Square Mile
- 0 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 2,000
- 2,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 12,500

Source:
American Community Survey, 2009 - 2013
2.2 Employment Density

Employment density in Stark County mostly mirrors its population density. The highest concentrations of employment density are in the downtown areas of Canton, Massillon and Alliance. North Canton along Interstate 77 is the other area of high employment density. Similar to population density, employment density drops off away from the city centers. Pockets of moderate employment density stretch to the northwest of downtown Canton, along the Interstate 77 corridor. South of US-62, employment density drops off quickly. Figure 2 shows the employment density and the major employers in Stark County.

The major employers in Stark County are those that employ over 250 people, according to the Stark County Development Board, and include Walmart, Kent State College at Stark, Marathon Oil, Heinz, and Timken Steel, among others. These employers are spread throughout the county, but are concentrated in Canton, Massillon, Alliance and North Canton, and most appear to be near existing SARTA bus routes.

Figure 2: Stark County Employment Density and Major Employers
2.3 Median Household Income
Median household incomes in the SARTA service area range from about $8,400 per year to over $147,000 per year. The areas of lowest median household income are located around the downtown areas in Canton and Massillon. Other pockets of low median household income can be found around the outskirts of Alliance and on the southern edge of Stark County. The highest median household income block groups are located to the west of North Canton and around Hartville Village. These areas have median incomes greater than $80,000 per year. Figure 3 shows the median household income distribution for Stark County.

Figure 3: Stark County Median Household Income
2.4 Per Capita Income

The per capita income of Stark County generally increases as the distance from the city centers increases. Downtown Canton has areas with the lowest per capita income, ranging from $0 - $10,000 per person. Central Massillon and Alliance have slightly higher per capita incomes ranging between $10,000 and $20,000 per person. The areas with the highest per capita income can be found northwest of Canton and northeast of Massillon, as well as east of Hartville Village. The more rural areas to the south and east of Canton generally have a per capita income of between $20,000 and $30,000, with a few pockets of higher and lower income. Figure 4 shows the per capita income by block group of Stark County.

Figure 4: Per Capita Income of Stark County
2.5 Percentage of Households below the Poverty Line
The percentage of households living below the poverty line is heavily concentrated in the center of the cities of Canton, Massillon, and Alliance. In downtown Canton, south of downtown Canton, and in central Alliance, the percentage of households living below the poverty line is greater than 45%. Outside of the urban centers, the percentage of households living in poverty drops to between 15% and 30%. In the more suburban and rural areas of Stark County, the percentage of households below the poverty line is scattered. Figure 5 shows the percentage of households living below the poverty line in Stark County.

Figure 5: Percentage of Households below the Poverty Line in Stark County
2.6 Zero Car Households

Mirroring the Median Household Income data is the location of Zero Car Households. The highest proportions of households without access to a car match up with the block groups with the lowest median household income. The areas with the greatest number of zero car households are located in or near the downtown areas of Canton, Massillon and Alliance. In the heart of downtown Canton and on the west edge of Alliance, over 35% of the households do not have access to a car. In the more affluent suburbs of Canton and Massillon and in North Canton, the percentage of households without access to a vehicle is less than 5%. Figure 6 shows the percentage of zero car households by block group in Stark County.

Figure 6: Percentage of Zero Car Households in Stark County
2.7 Minority Population Density

For the purposes of this report, minorities are considered to be all non-white individuals. In Stark County, the population density of minorities is highest in the City of Canton, however dense pockets of minorities can be found in Alliance, Massillon and outside of North Canton. Within Canton, the density of minorities is highest closest to the downtown area, and dissipates near the city limits. High densities of minorities also reside on the south side of Massillon and throughout Alliance. Figure 7 shows the population density of minorities in Stark County.

Figure 7: Population Density of Minorities in Stark County
2.8 Senior Population Density

In Stark County, the high concentrations of senior citizens (ages 65 and above) can be found in the triangle between Canton, North Canton, and Massillon. Within this area, there are pockets of very high density and pockets of very low density spread throughout the towns. There does not appear to be a definitive pattern to the distribution of seniors in the metro area. Outside of Canton and Massillon, Louisville and Alliance also have denser pockets of senior population near their downtowns. Following the trend of population density, the senior citizen population density drops off quickly outside of the metro area and south of US-62. Figure 8 shows the senior population density of Stark County.

Figure 8: Stark County Senior Population Density
2.9 Youth Population Density

The youth population (under age 18) in the SARTA service area is concentrated toward the center of the main cities in Stark County. The highest concentration of youth population is located in the area just outside of downtown Canton. A few small regional colleges are located in this area, but most of the County’s universities are located in North Canton along I-77. Within and surrounding the core area of Massillon, there is a high density of youth population as well. The youth population density is similar to senior population density in that the areas of high density are located next to areas of low density. Other areas of higher youth population density can be found in Alliance, North Canton, and on the west side of Hartville Village. Figure 9 shows the population density of those under 18 in Stark County.

Figure 9: Stark County Youth Population Density
2.10 Disability Population Density

As is the trend with many of the socioeconomic conditions, the population density of persons with disabilities is highest near the city centers of Canton, Massillon, and Alliance. The highest density areas of people with disabilities can be found in the center of Canton and extending out along US-62 to the west and Mahoning Avenue to the east. Other areas with dense pockets of people with disabilities can be found on the south side of Alliance and on to the west of downtown Massillon. For the most part, the highest density areas of disabled people are located near existing SARTA bus lines. The disability population density drops off quickly in the more suburban and rural areas of the County. Figure 10 shows the population density of this population in Stark County.

Figure 10: Population Density of Disabled People in Stark County
2.11 Transit Score
Transit score is a ranking of block groups in the SARTA Service Area based on the following characteristics:

- Population Density
- Senior Population Density
- Youth Population Density
- Median Household Income
- Zero Car Households
- Households Living Below the Poverty Line

Each category was ranked from most likely to use transit (higher population density, lower median household income, higher concentrations of zero car households, etc.) to least likely to use transit and given a score from 1 – 3; 1 being “least transit likely” and 3 being “most transit likely.” After ranking each characteristic, the points were tallied up for each block group and used to determine the transit score. The lowest score possible is 6, while the highest possible score is 18. Figure 11 shows the transit score of census block groups in Stark County.

In Stark County, areas with the highest transit score are located near the city centers of Canton, Massillon and Alliance. Other areas with high transit scores can be found extending to the southwest of downtown Canton, along Tuscarawas St. / Lincoln Way between Massillon and Canton, in central Louisville and on the north side of North Canton. Based on the transit score information compiled for Stark County, the existing bus routes appear to be serving areas most likely to use transit in the region. Some additional service may be warranted between Canton and Massillon where some of the block groups show higher scores.
Figure 11: Transit Score for Stark County
3 Land Use

Land use in Stark County varies throughout the County. The urbanized area of the Canton/Massillon MSA, as well as the City of Alliance, features a greater diversity of land use than the rest of the County. The major land use in this area is residential, followed by an equal share of commercial and industrial land. Exempt land accounts for the least amount of the developed land in the MSA. Agricultural lands are few and far between in the MSA. Outside of these areas, the rural areas are characterized by mostly agricultural land, with some industrial, commercial, and residential sites scattered throughout.

The majority of the SARTA routes are located within the areas of land use where people need to go – residential, commercial and industrial areas – connecting jobs, services and residences. However, on the south side of Canton is a large tract of industrial and commercial land uses that are home to many of the manufacturing jobs in the region. Few of SARTA’s routes travel down in this area where jobs and more residential areas are located. Figure 12 shows the land use for Stark County.

Figure 12: Stark County Land Use
4 Trip Generators/Activity Centers
Trip generators in Stark County match up well with the major employers, since many of the activity centers in the region are also large places of employment. Many of the activity centers are clustered around the city centers of Canton, Massillon and Alliance, as well as a large cluster near North Canton by the Belden Village Mall and Kent State University at Stark. Outside of the cities in Stark County, there are very few activity centers. However, almost all of the activity centers are located on or very near SARTA bus routes. Figure 13 shows the locations of various activity centers in Stark County.

Figure 13: Activity Centers in Stark County
5 Regional Travel Patterns

5.1 County to County Worker Flow
Each day Stark County has many residents and employees traveling to and from the County for work. The largest exchange of workers is from Stark County to Summit County. According to 2010 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) information, 23,679 workers commute from Stark County to Summit County and 9,961 workers travel from Summit County to Stark County. Other large County-to-County work trips occur from Tuscarawas County into Stark County (6,037), Carroll County into Stark County (3,896), and Columbiana County into Stark County (3,114).

Currently SARTA bus service extends north toward Summit County from Canton and a commuter route is running between Akron and Canton, connecting Summit and Stark Counties. As there are also relatively high numbers of commuters coming from Tuscarawas and Carroll Counties, Park-and-Ride service may potentially be warranted here and will be discussed in greater detail in later analysis. Figure 14 shows the inter-county work trips into and out of Stark County.

Figure 14: Inter-County Work Trips in Stark County
5.2 City to City Worker Flow

The City to City worker flow within Stark County shows the basic travel patterns of those who live and work in Stark County. Figure 15 shows the major commuter travel patterns between Canton and the other communities in Stark County, as well as work trips between Canton and Akron and Cleveland.

The two largest commuter travel markets into and out of Canton are from Massillon and North Canton. Almost 3,200 people commute into Canton from these two cities each day and about 2,300 people leave Canton each day for work in Massillon and North Canton. 755 workers from Akron travel to Canton for work each day, while 1,296 workers commute to Akron from Canton. The commuter market between Cleveland and Canton is not very high. 177 workers commute to Canton, while about 330 Canton residents travel to Cleveland for work. These numbers suggest that the current service geography is in the correct area and connecting the cities within Stark County. Additional service between Canton and Akron may be warranted due to the high number of Canton residents traveling to Akron for work.

Figure 15: City to City Work Trips in Stark County
6 Stark County Employment

Much of Stark County’s employment is centered on three main industry sectors: Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade. These three industry sectors employ 53% of the workers in Stark County. Other industry sectors with large numbers of employees are Administration and Waste Management Services, Finance and Insurance, Construction and Wholesale Trade. Table 1 shows the breakdown of employment in Stark County by NAICS Code industries.

Table 1 – Stark County Employment by NAICS Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>NAICS Code</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total for all sectors</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>139,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>31 – 33</td>
<td>24,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>44 – 45</td>
<td>20,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing</td>
<td>48 – 49</td>
<td>2,139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1,768</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and technical services</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1,754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28,598</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7,749</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013 US Census: County Business Patterns

a: 0 – 19 employees
f: 500 – 999 employees
7 Summary
The following are the findings of the socioeconomic conditions analysis:

- Stark County has a distinctive urban/rural development pattern. Outside of the Canton-Massillon MSA, which holds most of the county’s population, the county is mostly rural. The City of Alliance is the one exception of a population center outside the metro area.
- Downtown Canton and North Canton are the largest job centers in the county and appear to be about equal in size. Activity centers and jobs in North Canton are mostly retail and education, while Social Services and some manufacturing are located in and around downtown Canton.
- Median household income and per capita income share the same pattern of distribution. Low income concentrations are located near the centers of Canton and Massillon and higher income concentrations are found in the suburban areas of the MSA.
- Zero car households and households living below the poverty line are located in the same areas of low household and per capita income, with high concentrations of these characteristics near the city centers.
- Seniors (65+) and youths (under 18) are concentrated in the areas surrounding the downtowns in Canton and Massillon. Outside of this area high and low concentrations of seniors and youths are scattered throughout the County.
- The highest concentrations of persons with disabilities in Stark County are located along US-62 to the west of downtown Canton and along Mahoning Rd. to the east of downtown Canton.
- The highest transit scores can be found near the downtowns and core areas of Canton, Massillon and Alliance. Pockets of high transit scores exist in North Canton and in the suburban area between Canton and Massillon.
- The highest inter-county work trips are between Stark and Summit Counties with almost 34,000 daily commuters traveling between the two counties.
- Almost 5,500 workers travel between Canton and Massillon, and Canton and North Canton each day.
- 53% of those employed in Stark County work in Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing and Retail Trades.