



# North Central Area Transit Comprehensive Operations Analysis

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Prepared on behalf of North Central Area Transit and the City of Ottawa, Illinois by SRF Consulting Group, Inc.



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# Executive Summary

The City of Ottawa and LaSalle County are growing transit markets in north central Illinois. Home to over 108,000 resident, LaSalle County encompasses the heart of the Illinois Valley and includes the developed cities of Ottawa (the county seat), LaSalle, and Peru. The City of Ottawa operates North Central Area Transit (NCAT) to serve the County's public transportation needs.

While NCAT's Monday through Friday, door-to-door, demand response service has served county residents and visitors well over the years, it has become evident that growing ridership has begun to strain the agency's ability to provide top quality service within the current funding, governance, and service provision models. In order to find a better path forward in the long run, NCAT began a strategic planning process in the summer 2024. The NCAT Strategic Plan will position the City of Ottawa, LaSalle County, and NCAT to prioritize and implement transit improvements that meet government and stakeholder expectations. The Plan will focus on addressing the growing demand for public transportation in LaSalle County while maintaining fiscal sustainability and resilience in operations.

This Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) represents the first major deliverable of the NCAT Strategic Plan. The purpose of this report is to synthesize the existing conditions in which NCAT operates utilizing quantitative data analyses, qualitative research, observations, as well as input from the community and stakeholders.

Looking at NCAT operations and ridership data, NCAT has undergone significant growth and transformation in recent years, driven by increasing demand and a more diverse rider base. Ridership has more than doubled over the past four years, expanding beyond its initial focus on medical trips to encompass employment and education-related travel, with notable participation from a wider range of age groups. While there has also been growth in service provision (total revenue miles and hours), the rapid expansion has also strained operational capacity, leading to rising instances of late arrivals and trip cancellations, indicating a need for system adjustments to maintain efficiency and reliability.

Geographically, NCAT travel patterns reveal high-density corridors, such as north-south routes between Mendota and LaSalle-Peru; north-south travel between Ottawa and Streator; and east-west connections between Ottawa, Marseilles, and LaSalle-Peru. Popular destinations include medical centers, low-income and senior housing, major commercial hubs like Walmart, and industrial complexes such as Nucor and Eakas. While zero-vehicle households and individuals with limited English proficiency are mostly concentrated in the developed municipalities, seniors, youth, and minority populations appear in both developed and rural parts of LaSalle County.

By analyzing employment and general travel data, potential opportunities for NCAT to provide service for more residents and visitors can be gleaned. Jobs in LaSalle County are concentrated in population centers like Ottawa, Peru, and LaSalle, with outliers including the Sheridan Correctional Center and a nuclear energy plant near Marseilles. A slight majority of LaSalle County's workforce commutes to jobs outside the county, predominantly in the Chicago metropolitan area, creating a net outflow of workers. Despite this, most trips within the county are short, with most under 20 minutes and four miles in distance, and 80% of trips starting and ending within LaSalle County.

Building on the findings in this COA, stakeholder and public engagement have been critical to the project thus far. Engagement to date has included participation in various community events and fairs; meetings with senior groups; open house meetings at the Illinois Valley Community College and the YMCA in Ottawa; a rider and community survey; a meeting with the NCAT Transit Advisory Group; and a meeting with the Ottawa City Council. Through this engagement with the community and NCAT staff, the project team identified the following goals of the Strategic Plan:

- Develop strategies to meet the increasing ridership needs, which have grown over 40% since pre-pandemic levels, while maintaining service quality
- Create a financially responsible plan that supports reliable and adaptable transit operations for future growth
- Incorporate input from residents, staff, and partner organizations to align transit improvements with community values and priorities
- Strengthen partnerships with local governments and organizations to improve accessibility and mobility across LaSalle County
- Provide practical, data-driven strategies for NCAT's organizational and service enhancements
- Empower long-term success as a leading transit provider in the Illinois Valley through strategic planning and policy development

Using the findings of this COA as a baseline, and the goals as a guiding light, the project team will continue the strategic planning process through future phases, which will include a thorough review of governance and funding, development of a future service framework, and completion of the final strategic and implementation plan in summer by summer of 2025.

# Introduction

The North Central Area Transit (NCAT) Strategic Plan will position the City of Ottawa, LaSalle County, and NCAT to prioritize and implement transit improvements that meet government and stakeholder expectations. The Plan will focus on addressing the growing demand for public transportation in LaSalle County while maintaining fiscal sustainability and resilience in operations.

The goals of the NCAT Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Develop strategies to meet the increasing ridership needs, which have grown over 40% since pre-pandemic levels, while maintaining service quality
- Create a financially responsible plan that supports reliable and adaptable transit operations for future growth
- Incorporate input from residents, staff, and partner organizations to align transit improvements with community values and priorities
- Strengthen partnerships with local governments and organizations to improve accessibility and mobility across LaSalle County
- Provide practical, data-driven strategies for NCAT's organizational and service enhancements
- Empower long-term success as a leading transit provider in the Illinois Valley through strategic planning and policy development

This project includes the first comprehensive analysis conducted for NCAT, which will focus on developing performance measures and planning approaches that NCAT can continue to use in the future as transit markets continue to grow and change. This Comprehensive Operations Analysis Report lays the groundwork for future transit planning, policy development, and public engagement over the next ten years.

The Comprehensive Operations Analysis Report details the state of transit in the Illinois Valley in the following sections:

- **Review of Existing Plans:** An assessment of past and ongoing plans developed by key entities in and around LaSalle County to synchronize transit service recommendations with broader regional goals.
- **Neighboring Transit Systems:** A review of nearby transit service providers with an emphasis on gaining a greater understanding of NCAT's regional opportunities.
- **Analysis of Existing Service:** A quantitative, data-focused evaluation of the underlying conditions and performance of each element of the transit network.
- **Service Area Profile and Market Analysis:** An exploration of demographic characteristics, employment trends, and travel flows in and around LaSalle County.
- **Peer System Analysis:** A comparative analysis of Illinois and national peer groups to better understand agency best practices in similar operating and policy environments.
- **Summary of Findings:** A review of key lessons from this report.

# Review of Existing Plans

As part of the evaluation of operations, a review of existing plans throughout LaSalle County was conducted. The following plans were found to have information relevant to the NCAT Strategic Plan:

- Amtrak Connects Us
- City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plan
- City of LaSalle Comprehensive Plan
- Greater Peoria Rail Feasibility Study
- IDOT Statewide Public Transportation Plan
- NCICG Human Service Transportation Plan - Region 3
- LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan
- City of Marseilles Comprehensive Plan
- City of Streator Comprehensive Plan

Specific findings for each report can be found below in Table 1. Notable information from the plans included interest in improved transit service, details on the proposed Peoria-Joliet Amtrak line, and demographic changes to the county and specific municipalities within.

The population in LaSalle County has recently begun shrinking, something which has been occurring in individual municipalities throughout the county for a couple decades now. The population is also aging, with median ages in municipalities like LaSalle and Marseilles increasing and the number of people under the age of 19 decreasing in Streator. These demographic changes can impact transit needs, with older residents potentially needing transportation to medical services.

There is also a growing Hispanic population in the county, which may indicate that outreach efforts for transit would benefit from translation and targeted outreach to ensure the participation of this growing community.

Only a couple of the plans reviewed include plans for NCAT. First, the City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plan and the LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan recommend expanding NCAT services, particularly the service hours. Also, the NCICOG Human Service Transportation Plan – Region 3 includes several plans for facility upgrades, fleet improvements, and technology enhancements, which are described in more detail below.

**Table 1. Review of Previous Plans**

Plan Title	Year	Author	Key Findings
Amtrak Connects Us	2021	Amtrak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal of reducing trip times for the Lincoln Service between Chicago and St. Louis, passing through Joliet, the closest Amtrak station for some of LaSalle County.</li> </ul>
City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plan	2022	City of Ottawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key transportation recommendations included:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expand NCAT service hours.</li> <li>○ Provide a new express bus commuter route between Joliet and LaSalle-Peru, with a stop in Ottawa and providing connections to the Metra station in Joliet.</li> <li>○ Consider a new passenger rail service between Joliet and LaSalle-Peru, with a stop in Ottawa.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ottawa has a median age (38.7 years old) below that of the county (42.5 years old). This has fallen from 2010, when it was 40.2 years old.</li> <li>• Between 2010 and 2020, Ottawa was the only larger city in LaSalle County that grew in population, from 18,768 to 18,840.</li> </ul>
City of LaSalle Comprehensive Plan	2014	City of LaSalle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population is expected to decline.</li> <li>• The population is aging, with a current median age of 38.8 and forecasted (2017) median age of 39.3.</li> <li>• There is a growing Hispanic population, 14.7 percent in 2012, expected to increase to 17.2 percent in 2017.</li> <li>• NCAT operates in the area, currently “primarily serving Illinois Valley Community College and area hospitals,” with expected expansion.</li> </ul> <p>LaSalle Township operated demand-response service (this service has been discontinued).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois Valley Community Hospital offers rides for patients.</li> <li>• Illinois Valley City Cab operates in the area.</li> </ul>
Greater Peoria Rail Feasibility Study	2022	IDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed route running from Joliet to Peoria.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed stations in Morris, Ottawa, North Utica, LaSalle-Peru, and Peoria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated between 440 and 820 daily riders (average of 600).</li> <li>• Estimated to cost \$2.54 billion.</li> <li>• The route would have 5 daily roundtrips between Peoria and Joliet.</li> </ul>
Statewide Public Transportation Plan	2018	IDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discusses gaps in transportation within the state of Illinois.</li> <li>• Identified the potential for rail service between DeKalb, Ottawa, LaSalle-Peru, and Chicago. “The longest of these routes, to LaSalle-Peru, is less than 50 miles beyond the border of the RTA district. The biggest challenge is the lack of an institutional/funding structure for a new Metra service beyond the six county Northeast Illinois RTA District.”</li> <li>• Potential bus routes listed include Peoria–Normal, improved Springfield–Decatur–Champaign service, and service between Chicago and De Kalb, Oswego, and LaSalle-Peru. “Service could either be operated under contract with intercity bus operators or by rural or urban operators in the area.”</li> </ul>

Plan Title	Year	Author	Key Findings
Human Service Transportation Plan – Region 3	2023	North Central Illinois Council of Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included a list of current NCAT capital projects and potential future capital projects.</li> <li>• Current: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adding a roof to the parking lot structure to minimize the impact of weather on the vehicles.</li> <li>○ Renovate space within the main building into a maintenance garage.</li> <li>○ Major renovation of the office building to enhance safety and security.</li> <li>○ Create a more energy efficient and sustainable building.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Solar panels.</li> <li>○ Geothermal heating and cooling.</li> <li>○ Replacement and expansion transit vehicles through the CVP program or other funding.</li> <li>○ Electric vehicles and charging stations.</li> <li>○ Onsite automatic vehicle wash bay by converting an existing garage on the west side of the property.</li> <li>○ Formal needs assessment and feasibility study to determine if converting some routes to a deviated-fixed route would be beneficial or, if moving towards a ride-hailing, ride-sharing program would be a better option.</li> <li>○ Upgrade communications with vehicles (Automatic Vehicle Location, route tablets, and mobile phones or radios, etc.)</li> <li>○ Upgrade Wi-Fi on buses for remote viewing of the mobile surveillance system.</li> <li>○ Mobile surveillance system upgrades and technology upgrades specific to ride requests and fare payments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan	2023	LaSalle County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 2010 and 2020, the population decreased for the second time in history.</li> <li>• Only 3 municipalities (Ottawa, Sheridan, and Dana) grew between 2010 and 2020.</li> <li>• The passenger rail options within the county include the Mendota Amtrak station, with service from Chicago to San Francisco, and the Joliet Amtrak/Metra station, with service to Chicago and St. Louis.</li> <li>• Goal of “Explore opportunities to expand or create new multi-modal transportation opportunities.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explore extending Metra and Amtrak service.</li> <li>○ Expand NCAT service.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
City of Marseilles Comprehensive Plan	2014	City of Marseilles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population grew between 2000 and 2010. It had been shrinking previously.</li> <li>• The population is aging, the median age rose from 35.4 in 1990 to 38.5 in 2010.</li> <li>• There is a growing Hispanic population, 1.1 percent in 1990 up to 5.6 percent in 2010.</li> <li>• The median household income did not increase between 2000 and 2010 (~\$38,500)</li> <li>• NCAT demand-response serves the area.</li> <li>• The nearest passenger rail stations are found in Mendota (38 miles away) and Joliet (39 miles away). The Mendota station provides access to service from Chicago to San Francisco on Amtrak. The Joliet station provides access to service from Chicago to St. Louis on Amtrak and into Chicago on Metra.</li> </ul>

Plan Title	Year	Author	Key Findings
City of Streator Comprehensive Plan	2014	City of Streator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population shrank between 2000 and 2010, despite statewide population growth.</li> <li>• The number of residents under the age of 19 fell.</li> <li>• There is a growing Hispanic population.</li> <li>• Goal carried over from previous plan: "Continue making Streator an accessible destination for all forms of pedestrian, vehicular, and rail transportation."</li> <li>• Policy recommendation carried over from previous plan: "Support and encourage coordinated efforts to provide transportation alternatives for individuals without access to their own vehicles including the elderly, disabled, and low-income people."</li> </ul>

# Neighboring Transit Systems

To put NCAT services into context in the region, Table 2 summarizes NCAT’s services as well as the service of neighboring transit systems. Except for SHOWBus<sup>1</sup>, which operates schedule bus routes, neighboring transit systems are like NCAT. They all provide countywide curb-to-curb demand response service. They also provide some service to towns beyond their county lines, including into LaSalle County.

These services mostly operate on weekdays during roughly the same hours as NCAT. The one exception is TransVAC in DeKalb County which operates until 10PM on weekdays and has Saturday service. The fare structure is also similar across these agencies with in-town trips ranging between \$2.00 and \$3.00, and out of town trips costing more, depending on the distance. Like NCAT, \$15.00 is the highest fare charged for the longest trip.

Each of these services requires a reservation in advance, however several indicate that same day reservations will be granted if there is availability. Some systems have a reservation window of only one day, while NCAT and others have a two-day window or longer depending on the service.

**Table 2. Service Summary of NCAT and Neighboring Transit Systems**

System	Service(s)	Service Area	Schedule	One-way Fares	Reservation Window
<a href="#">North Central Area Transit (NCAT)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Throughout LaSalle County, in town	Mon-Fri 6:30AM-6:30PM	\$2.50	By 10AM two days before; same day if available
		Throughout LaSalle County, out of town		\$2.50-\$7.00, depending on location	
		Premium fares between select in-county locations	Days vary by location, 6:30AM-6:30PM	\$4.00-\$12.00, depending on location	
		Premium fares to out-of-county locations (including Morris, Spring Valley, and other towns on the county border)			
		Premium fares to Peoria	2nd & 4th Wednesdays 9AM-12PM	\$15.00	

<sup>1</sup> The management of SHOWBus may change, which could result in changes to service.

System	Service(s)	Service Area	Schedule	One-way Fares	Reservation Window
<a href="#">Bureau &amp; Putnam Area Rural Transit (BPART)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	In Town	Mon-Sat 6AM-9PM	\$2.50	24 hours in advance and by noon the business day before a trip
		Throughout Bureau and Putnam Counties		\$4.00	
		From Bureau and Putnam Counties to neighboring county border		\$4.50	
		To/from Illinois Valley Community College	Drop-off and pick-up: 4:45AM, 11AM, 1PM, 4:30PM	\$4.00	
		To/from Ottawa	Monday only	\$15.00	
		To/from Peoria	1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, 9AM-noon	\$15.00	
<a href="#">Grundy Transit System (GTS)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Throughout Grundy County	Mon-Fri 6AM-6PM	\$4.00	Suggested 2-3 days in advance, but same-day reservations are possible based on availability
		To/from Joliet		\$6.00	
<a href="#">Kendall Area Transit (KAT)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Within Kendall County	Mon-Fri 6AM-6:30PM	\$3.00	2-6 days in advance, 2-14 for medical trips
		To/from outside of Kendall County (Aurora, Joliet, Naperville, Plainfield, Sandwich, and more)		\$5.00	
<a href="#">Reagan Mass Transit District (RMTD)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	In town within Lee and Ogle Counties	Mon-Fri 6AM-6PM	\$2.00	24 hours in advance for in-town trips, 48 hours for out-of-town trips
		Out of town within Lee and Ogle Counties		\$0.35 per mile	
<a href="#">TransVAC in DeKalb County</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Within DeKalb County and locations within 60 miles of the Sycamore location (limited to Illinois)	Mon-Fri 6AM-10PM	\$1.00	2-14 days in advance
			Sat 8AM-4PM		

System	Service(s)	Service Area	Schedule	One-way Fares	Reservation Window
<a href="#">Marshall-Stark Transportation</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Round-trip in town	Mon-Fri 8AM-4PM	\$3.00	24 hours in advance
		Round-trip in county		\$5.00	
		Round trip under 15 miles one way (leaving county)		\$6.00	
		Round trip greater than 15 miles away		\$15.00	
		Day trip (Peoria, Peru, and Bloomington)		\$10.00	
<a href="#">SHOWBUS Livingston County Service</a>	Scheduled Routes	Within Livingston County	Mon-Thurs, specific departure/arrival times for each destination (leaves in the morning, returns in the afternoon), serves destinations within the county (including Streator, which is also in LaSalle County) and trips to Bloomington & Normal	\$5.00	Before 9AM the day before riding
		Outside of Livingston County		\$7.00	
	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Request-based	TBD	TBD	TBD
<a href="#">We Care (Woodford County)</a>	Curb-to-Curb Demand Response	Morton, Rural Tazewell County, and Woodford County	Mon-Fri 6AM-5PM	TBD	48 hours in advance (Mon-Fri only)

# Analysis of Existing Service

## Service Description

North Central Area Transit (NCAT) provides door-to-door demand response public transportation to those living or visiting LaSalle County, Illinois. Transit service is offered Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM for all trip purposes. Trips may be taken within a single municipality (“in town”) or beyond to the rest of the county (“out of town”). NCAT also provides trips to Peoria, Illinois twice a month. Passengers call to schedule rides two days before their requested trip, although same day trips may be provided as capacity allows. NCAT has a complex fare structure based on trip distance, with fares payable by cash or transit pass.

## System Performance

This section takes a detailed look at several metrics describing NCAT’s operational statistics and performance, including changes in ridership, revenue miles and hours, on time performance, and origin-destination data. Where available, operational data is examined over a four-year period from FY 2021 through FY 2024.

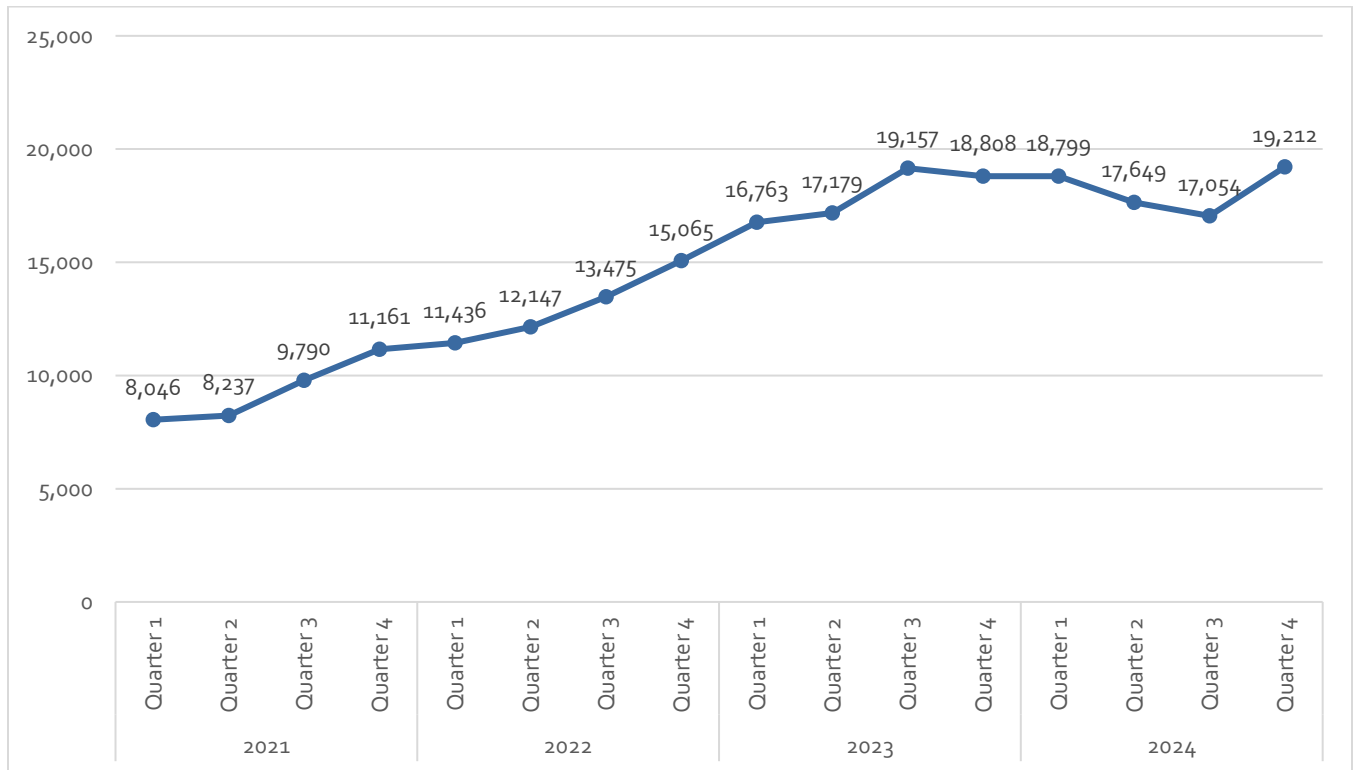
### Transit Ridership

Ridership encompasses all the trips passengers have made using the NCAT system. Breaking down ridership statistics by time of day, trip purpose, age, mobility status, and developed/rural status offers insights not only into how the absolute number of passengers has changed, but how the underlying mobility needs of NCAT users have evolved as the usage expands.

## Total System Ridership

Figure 1 shows quarterly NCAT ridership for FY 2021 through FY 2024. Ridership on the NCAT system has grown steadily over the past four years, except for a slight decline in the first three quarters of FY 2024, which then rebounded in the fourth quarter. Passenger trips in Q4 of FY 2024 were 138% greater than in Q1 of FY 2021, increasing by more than 11,000 trips.

Figure 1. Quarterly NCAT Ridership – FY 2021 through FY 2024



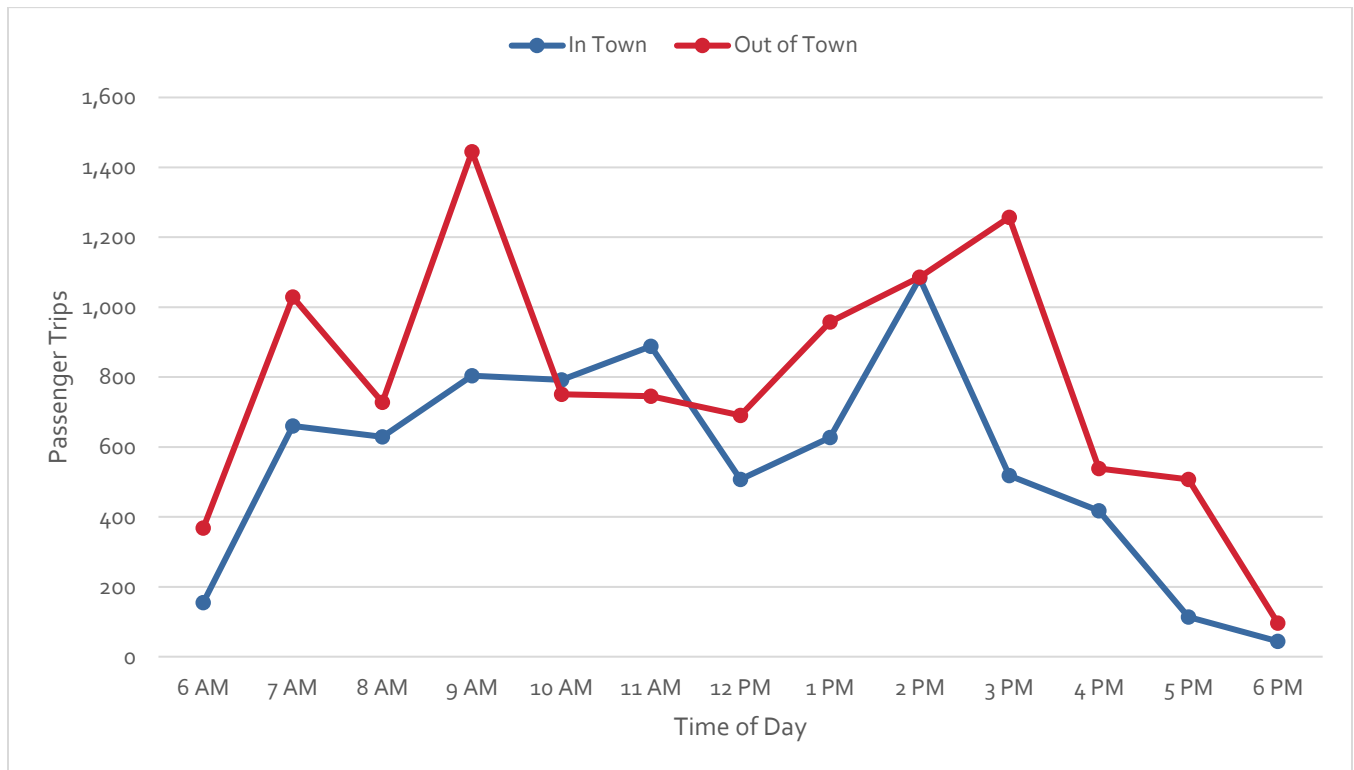
Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Ridership by Time of Day

Figure 2 shows the distribution of daily passenger trips on the NCAT system by time of day, subdivided by in town trips and out of town trips. Out of town trips, which form a slight majority of NCAT trips, exhibit strong peaks, especially around 9 AM and 3 PM, but maintain considerable levels of ridership from 6 AM to 5 PM.

In town trips are less peaked in the morning, with relatively consistent boardings from 7 AM to 11 AM. A strong afternoon peak of 2 PM is evident, with in town trips dropping off after 3 PM.

Figure 2. CY 2024 Passenger Trips by Time of Day

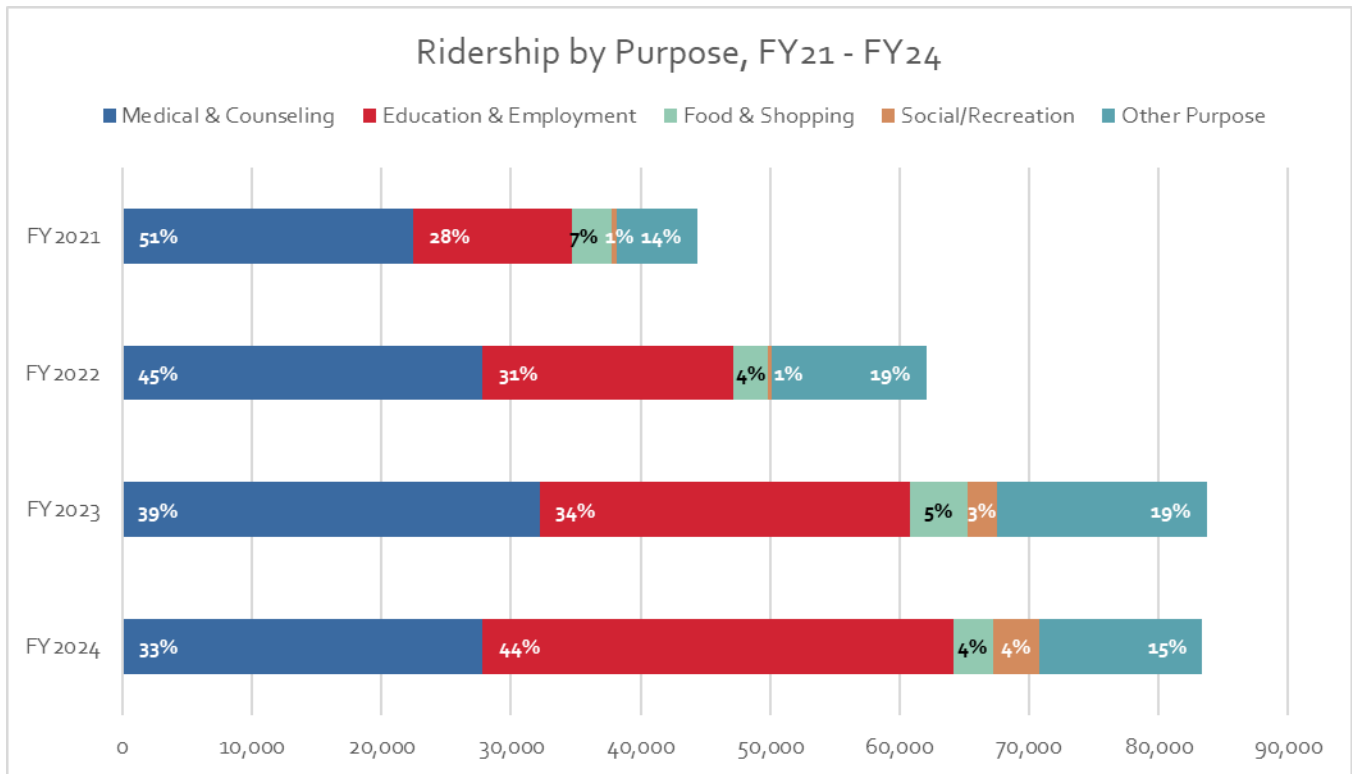


Source: NCAT Long-Lat Reporting – Provided by NCAT

## Ridership by Purpose

Figure 3 shows NCAT annual ridership by trip purpose from Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2024. Other than the increase in overall ridership across these four years, the most notable change is a steady increase in trips relating to education and employment, helping NCAT to grow beyond a medical-oriented provider to a more general-purpose public transit service. Social and recreational trips have also steadily grown in terms of percentage since FY 2021. All trip categories have seen absolute increases between FY 2021 and FY 2024, except for food and shopping trips which have remained about equal to FY 2021 records.

Figure 3. NCAT Ridership by Trip Purpose – FY 2021 through FY 2024

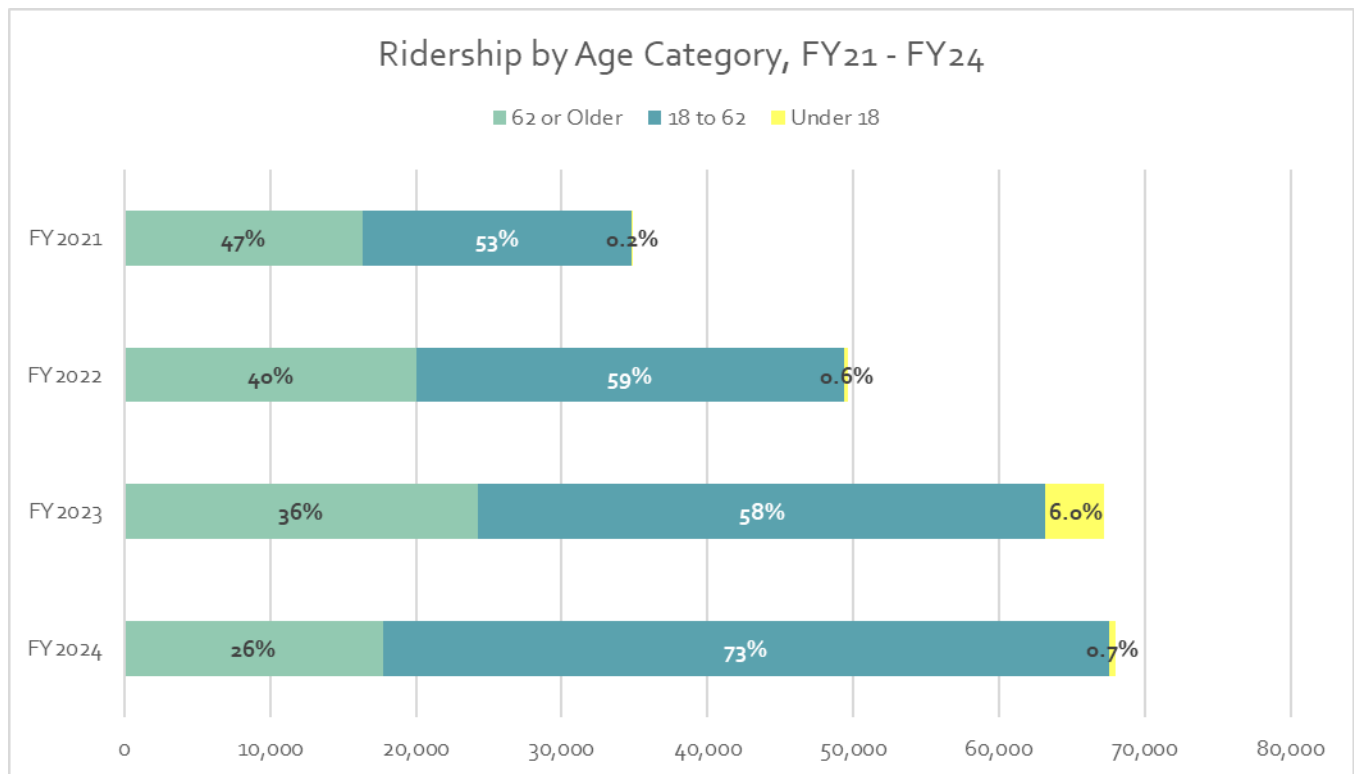


Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Ridership by Age

Figure 4 shows NCAT annual ridership by age category from Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2024. While in absolute terms all age categories have grown between FY 2021 and FY 2024, the 18 to 62 category in particular has seen the majority of new ridership over the four-year period, while also growing to represent almost three-quarters of total ridership on the NCAT system. This aligns well with the proportional increase in education and employment trips as seen in Figure 3. Youth ridership, comprising those under 18 years old, have grown steadily from about 75 riders in FY 2021 to about 450 riders in FY 2024, although in FY 2023 youth ridership had an outlier total of about 4,000 riders.

Figure 4. NCAT Ridership by Age Category – FY 2021 through FY 2024

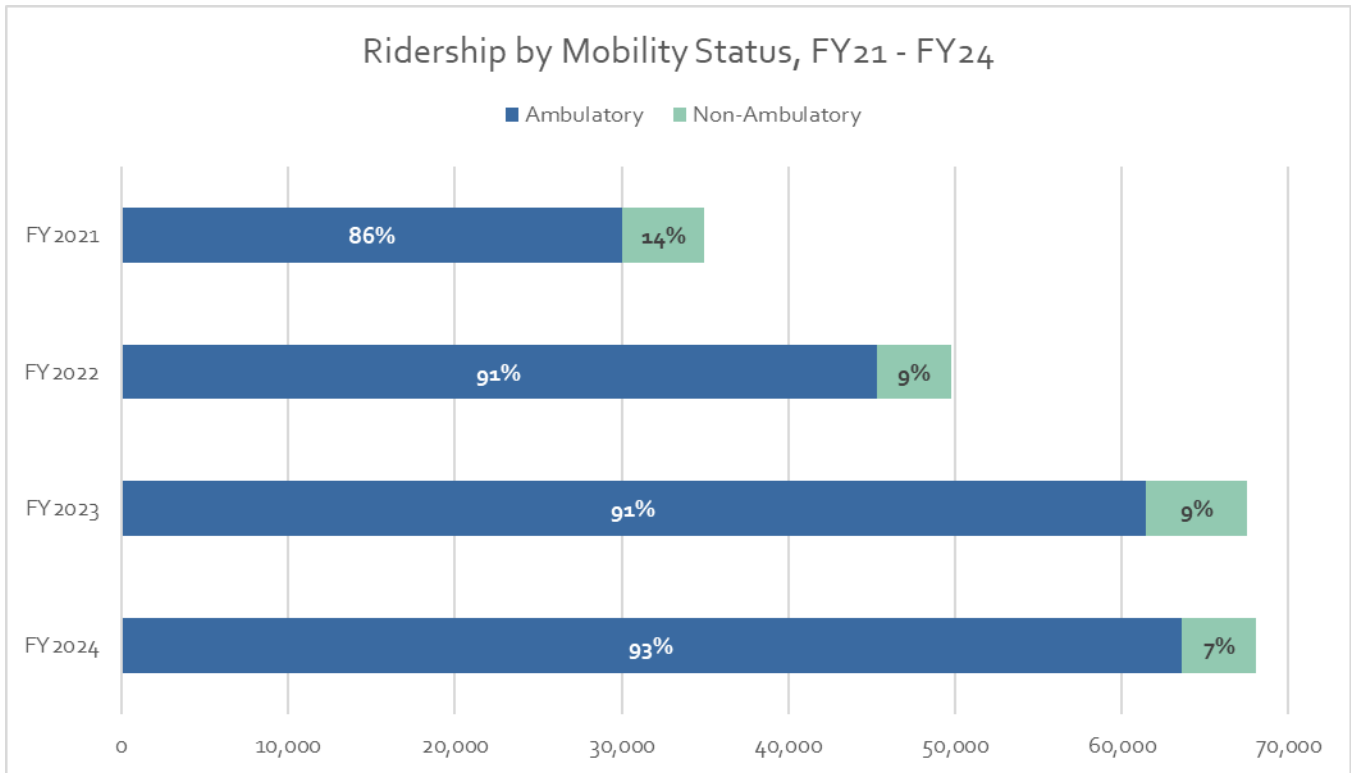


Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Ridership by Mobility Status

Figure 5 shows NCAT annual ridership by mobility status from Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2024. The absolute total of non-ambulatory NCAT riders has remained somewhat stable over the four-year period, starting at about 5,000 riders in FY 2021 and ending at about 4,500 riders in FY 2024, with an outlier total of 6,000 riders in FY 2023. This suggests that ridership growth since FY 2021 has largely been driven by growth in ambulatory ridership.

Figure 5. NCAT Ridership by Mobility Status – FY 2021 through FY 2024

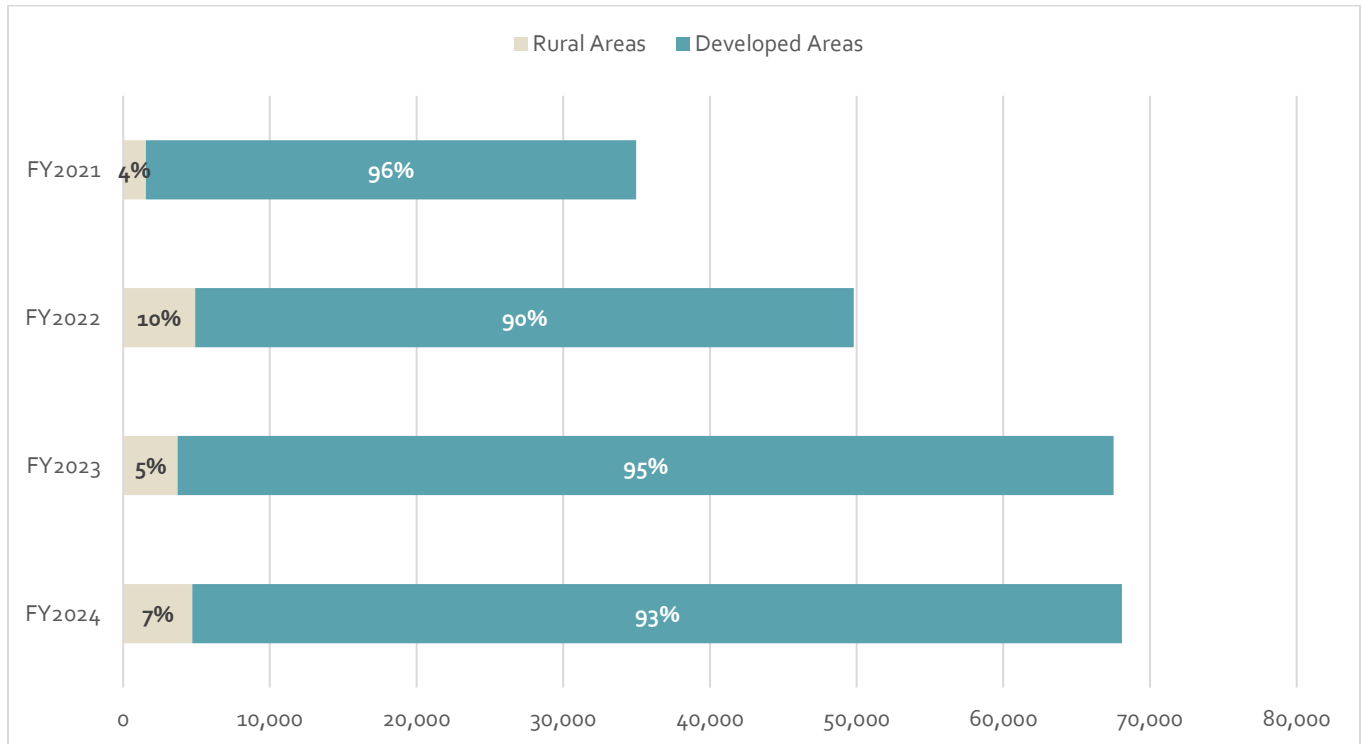


Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Ridership by Home Address

Figure 6 shows NCAT annual ridership by home address type from Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2024. While in absolute terms rural ridership has about tripled from FY 2021 to FY 2024, this tripled total still only accounts for 7 percent of overall NCAT ridership. Most of the new ridership gained over the four-year period is from home addresses in developed areas, which may be a contributing factor to NCAT's better-than-average cost-efficiency among state and national peers, discussed later in the Peer System Analysis section.

Figure 6. NCAT Ridership Home Address Type – FY 2021 through FY 2024



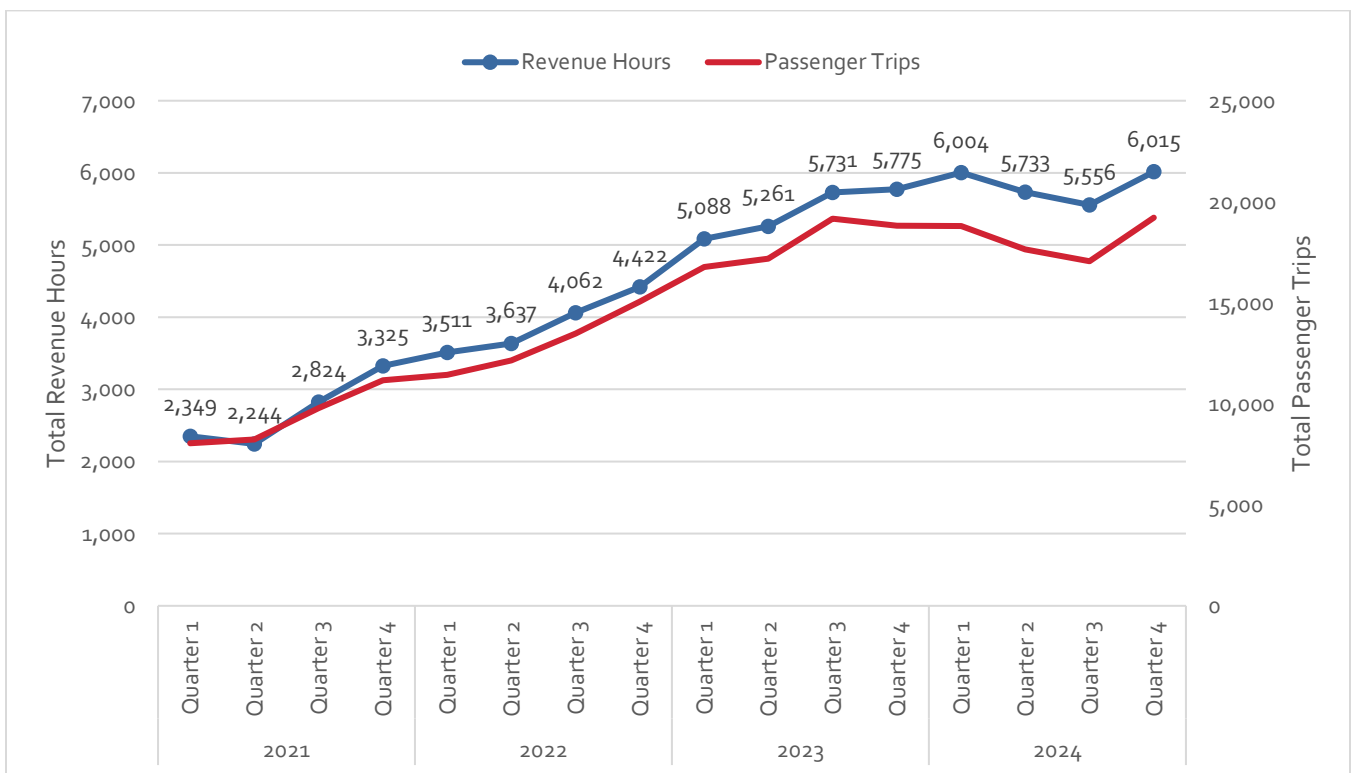
Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Revenue Hours and Miles

Measuring changes in revenue miles and hours, that is, the time and distance NCAT vehicles travel while in revenue service, offers a look at how the operational needs of the NCAT system have changed in response to growing demand.

Figure 7 shows quarterly total revenue hours from FY 2021 through FY 2024, with comparison to quarterly ridership totals over the same period. Between Q1 of FY 2021 and Q4 of FY 2024, total revenue hours increased by 156%, increasing by about 3,600 hours per quarter. Growth in revenue hours generally followed growth in ridership but began to outpace ridership growth in Q4 of FY 2021, and even more so starting in Q3 of FY 2023. This difference suggests that not only has the number of trips increased over past four years, but average trip duration has also increased over the same period.

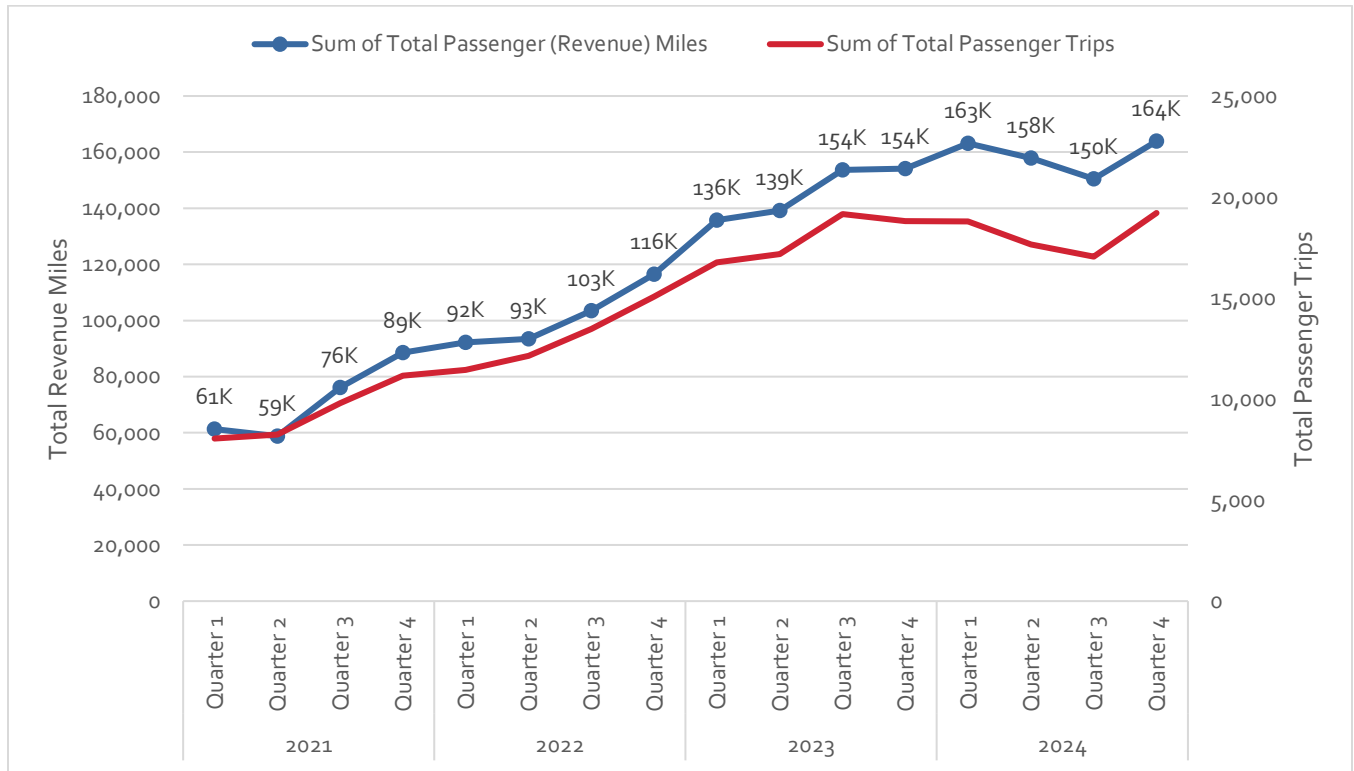
Figure 7. Total Revenue Hours vs. Passenger Trips – FY 2021 through FY 2024



Source: NCAT Passenger & Vehicle Data – Provided by NCAT

Figure 8 shows quarterly total revenue miles from FY 2021 through FY 2024, with comparison to quarterly ridership totals over the same period. Between Q1 of FY 2021 and Q4 of FY 2024, total revenue miles increased by 167%, increasing by about 102,600 miles per quarter. Growth in revenue miles generally followed growth in ridership, but began to outpace ridership growth in Q3 of FY 2021, and even more so starting in Q1 of FY 2023. This difference suggests that, as with average trip duration, average trip distance increased considerably over the four-year period.

Figure 8. Total Revenue Miles vs. Passenger Trips – FY 2021 through FY 2024



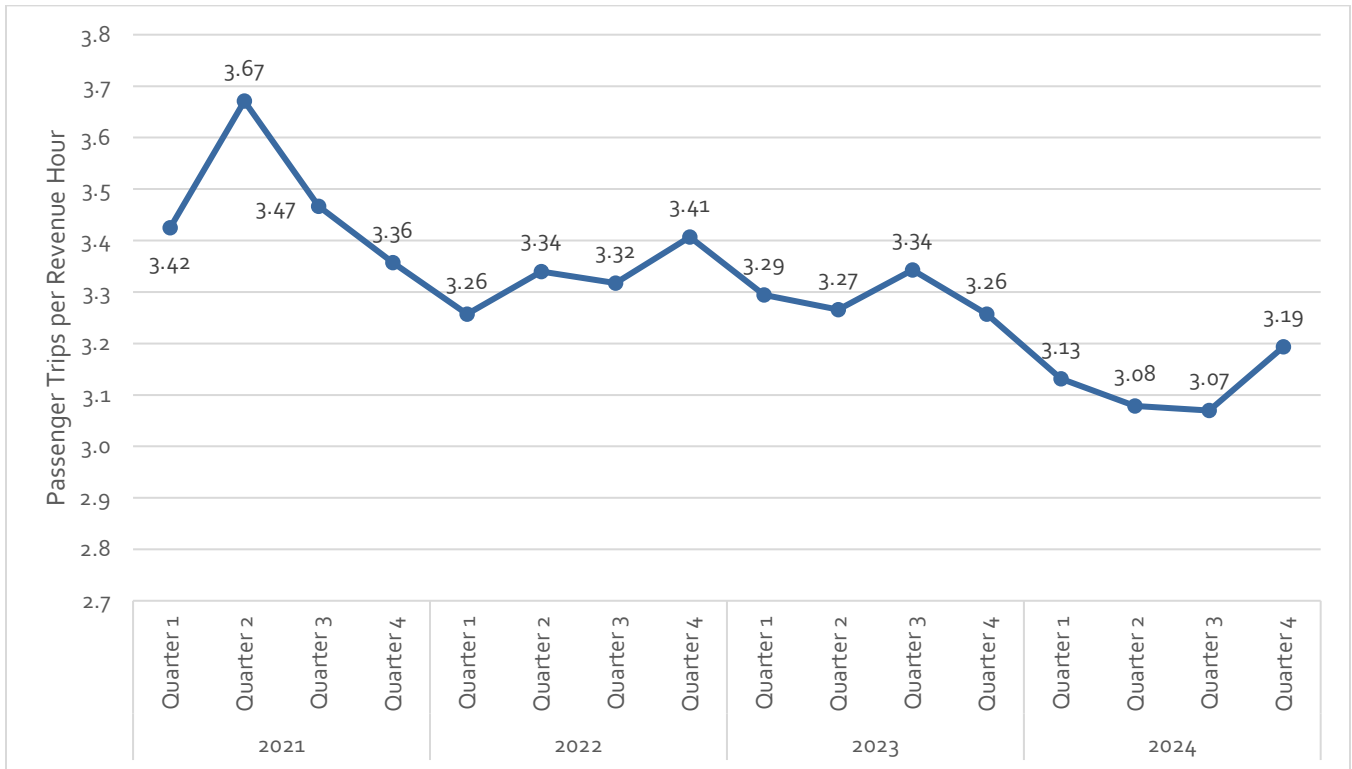
Source: NCAT Passenger & Vehicle Data – Provided by NCAT

## Productivity

Just as measures of revenue hours and miles describe changes in NCAT’s operational needs, comparing these metrics directly to passenger trip volumes can further describe how efficiently NCAT uses its operational resources.

Figure 9 shows the trend of passenger trips per revenue hour by quarter from FY 2021 through FY 2024. Passenger trips per revenue hour varied somewhat quarter-to-quarter, but have generally shown a downward trend over the four-year period. Between Q1 of FY 2021 and Q4 of FY 2024, there was a decrease of about 0.23 trips per revenue hour, or about a 6.7% decrease. While not a major decrease especially in relation to the more significant changes in ridership over the same period, the general downward trend may be an early indicator of passenger demand beginning to catch up to operational capacity.

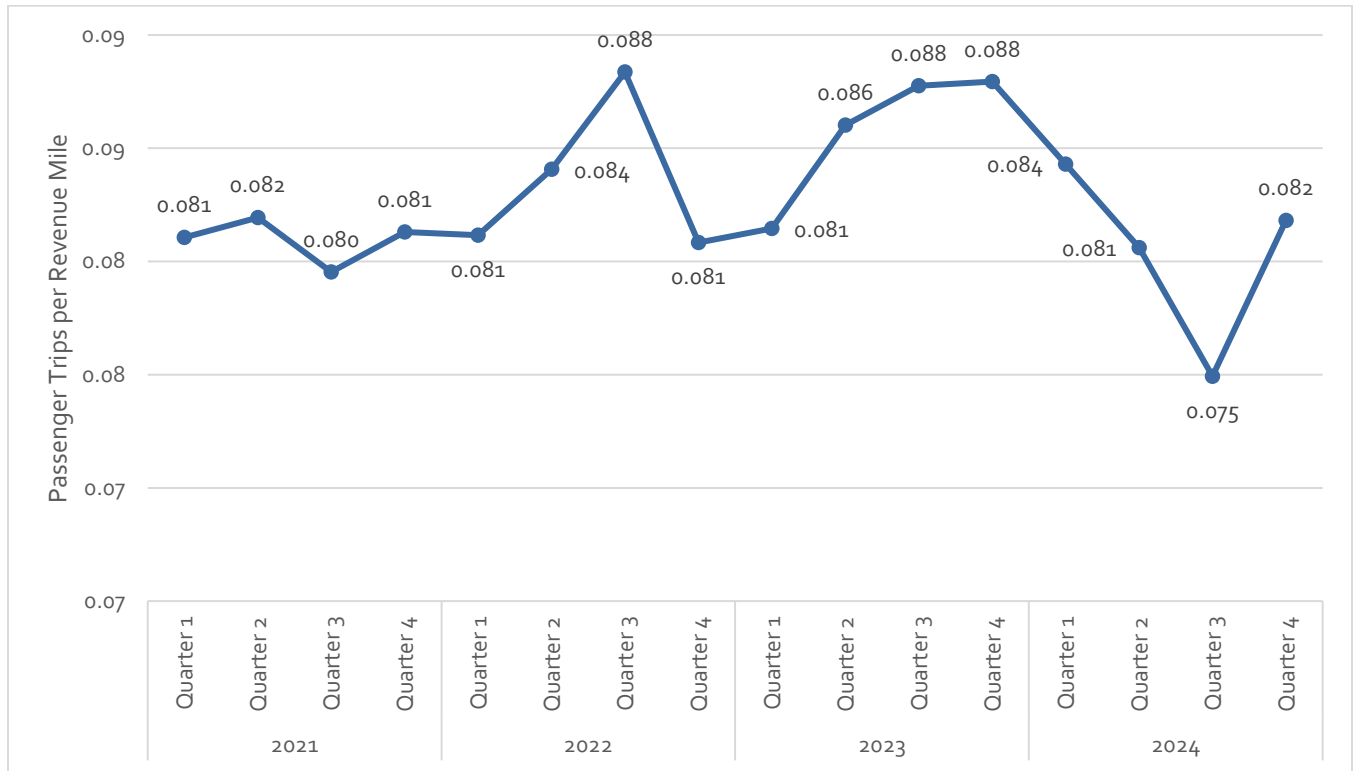
Figure 9. Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour – FY 2021 through FY 2024



Source: NCAT Passenger & Vehicle Data – Provided by NCAT

Figure 10 shows the trend of passenger trips per revenue mile by quarter from FY 2021 through FY 2024. In contrast to the trend of passenger trips per revenue hour, trips per revenue mile displayed a much less linear trend across the four-year period. The change in trips per revenue mile between Q1 of FY 2021 and Q4 of FY 2024 was minimal, increasing by only 0.001 trips per miles, or about 1.2%. However, quarter-to-quarter metrics varied considerably, ranging from a low of 0.075 trips per mile in Q3 of FY 2024 to a high of 0.088 trips per mile in Q3 of 2022.

Figure 10. Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile – FY 2021 through FY 2024

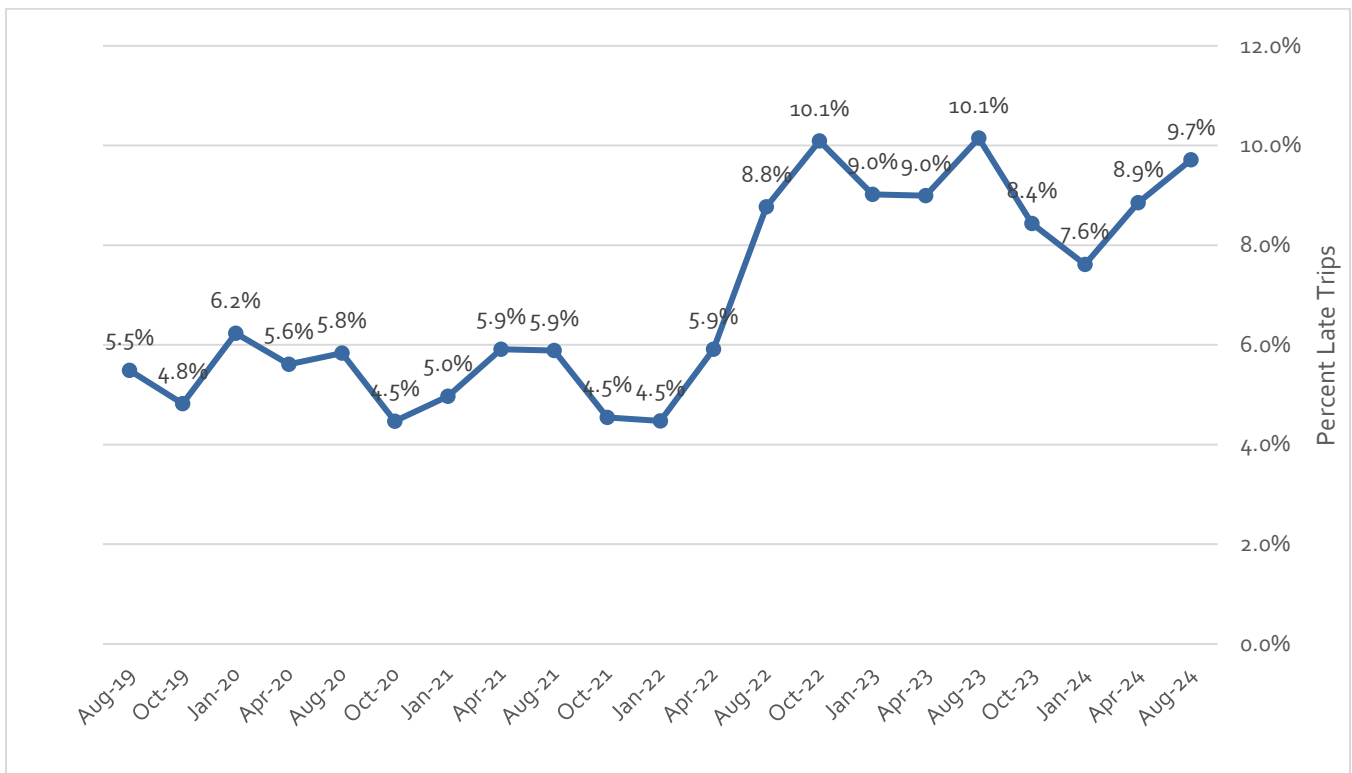


Source: NCAT Passenger & Vehicle Data – Provided by NCAT

## On-Time Performance

On-time performance is a measure of NCAT's ability to provide service to the specific temporal needs of its users. NCAT's service standards define an arrival window of 15 minutes before and after a trip's scheduled priority time. To assess NCAT's ability to provide on time arrivals and drop-offs, historic origin-destination trip data was used to calculate punctuality for the months of January, April, August, and October from 2019 through 2024, as shown in Figure 11. With some variance, generally about 4-6 percent of trips were late between August 2019 and April 2022. Starting in August of 2022, the percentage of trips considered late rose sharply to about 9%, with trips thereafter ranging between 8 and 10 percent late. As with average trip duration and trip cancellation, the increasing rate of late trips may indicate ridership growth is beginning to outpace NCAT's current operational capacity.

Figure 11. Quarterly Late Trip Percentage – CY 2019 through CY 2024

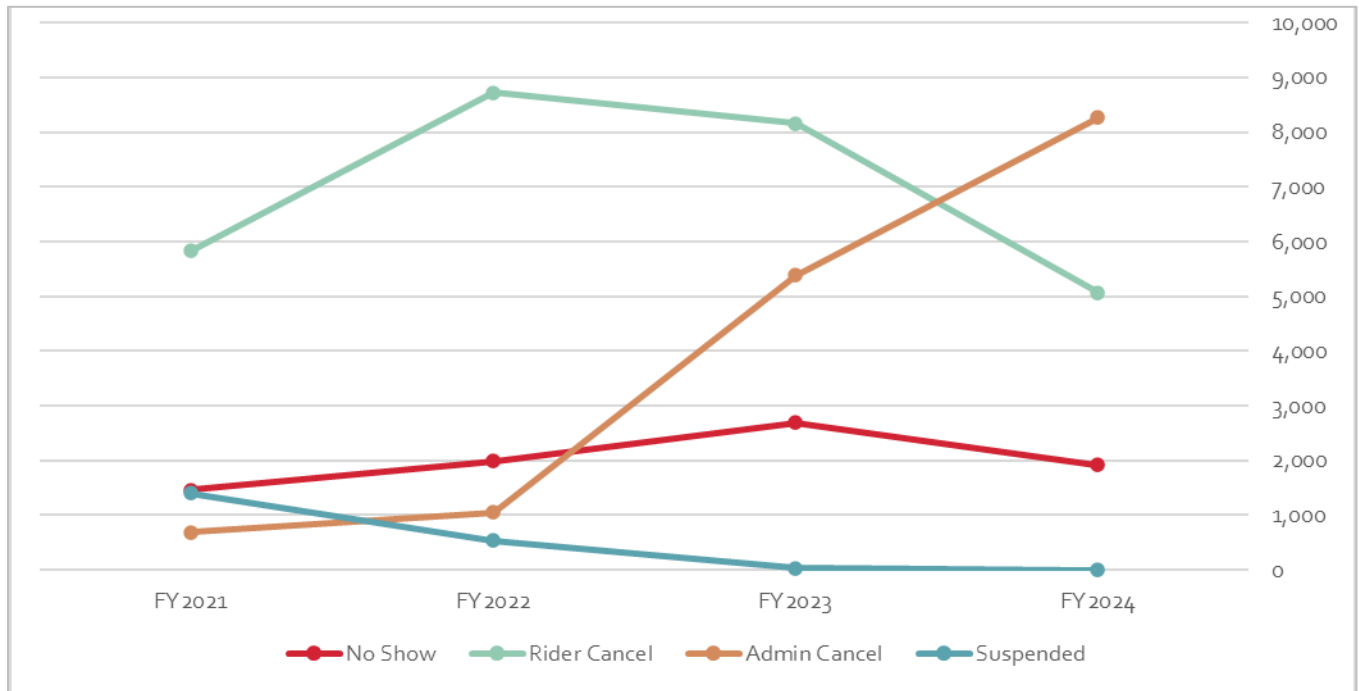


Source: NCAT Long-Lat Reporting – Provided by NCAT

## Trip Denials and No-Shows

The trend of trip cancellations and no shows on the NCAT system is shown in Figure 12 from Fiscal Year 2021 to Fiscal Year 2024. Between FY 2021 and FY 2024, rider cancellations dropped slightly while admin cancellations rose sharply. The increase in admin cancellations was both absolute and proportional, with admin cancellations comprising 10 percent of scheduled rides in FY 2024 compared to only 2 percent of scheduled rides in FY 2021. If these cancellations primarily represent trips that could not be made according to the request of the rider, this may be an indicator of ridership growth starting to outpace the operational capacity of the system.

Figure 12. NCAT Trip Cancellations & No-Shows – FY 2021 through FY 2024



Source: NCAT Passenger & Trip Details – Provided by NCAT

## Origin and Destination Analysis

NCAT origin-destination trip data is recorded for the months of January, April, August, and October for the years 2020 through 2024, detailing each trip made in those months by day, pick up and drop off time, and fare payment account. Note: October 2024 data was not available at the time of writing this report.

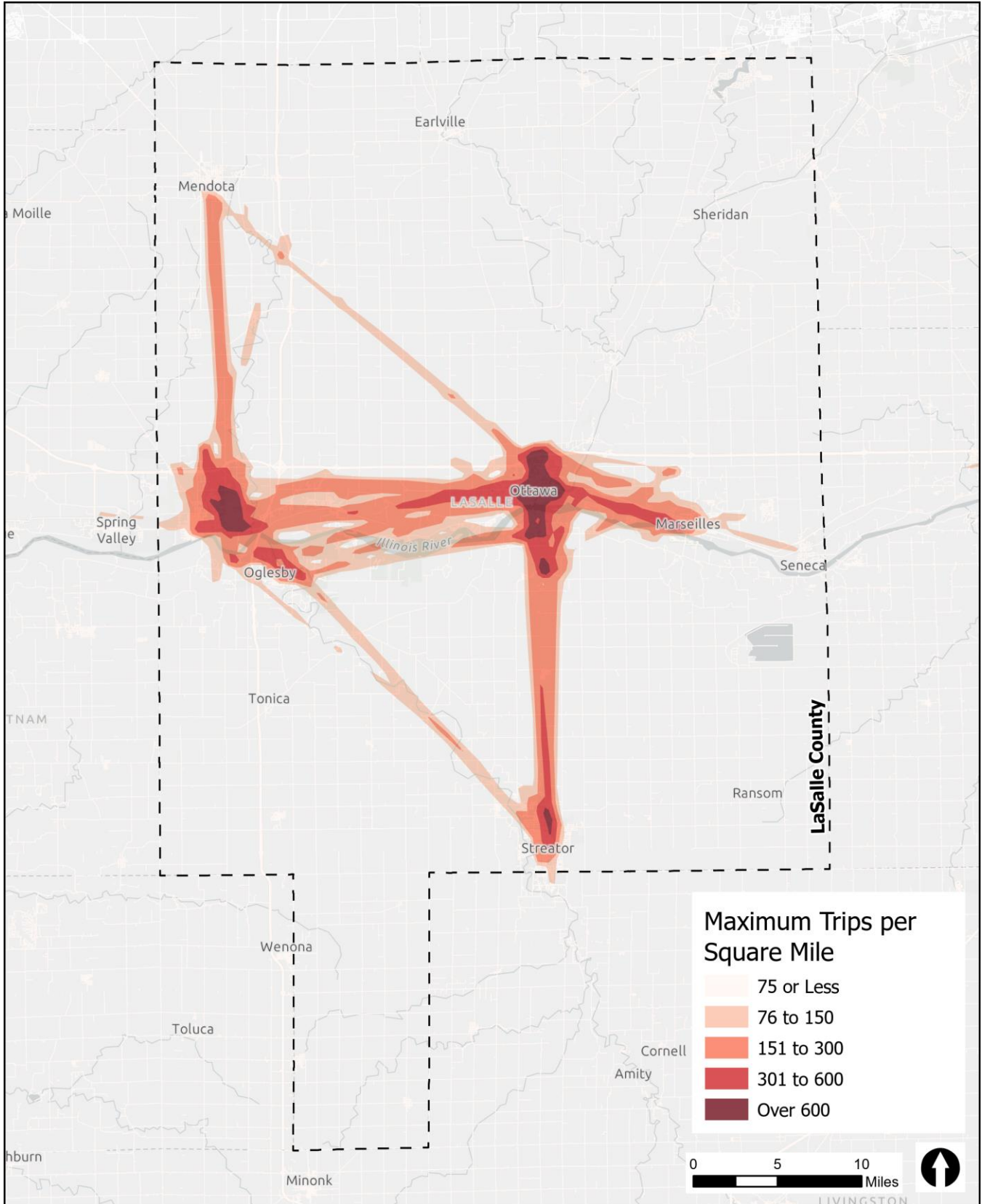
### **Trip Patterns**

Figure 13 shows the results of a line density analysis on CY 2024 origin-destination lines across the NCAT service area, weighted by total trips. This analysis goes beyond a simple representation of pick-up and drop-off locations to show where discrete trips overlap, thereby suggesting common travel patterns for NCAT riders. Several key corridors display particularly high densities of overlapping travel flows:

- North-south trips across the City of Ottawa, especially to and from Ottawa Friendship House in Stoneyville.
- Northwest-southeast trips across LaSalle-Peru
- East-west trips from North Utica and Marseilles to Ottawa
- East-west trips between LaSalle-Peru and Ottawa
- North-south trips between Ottawa and Streator
- North-south trips between Mendota and LaSalle-Peru

Generally, out of town trips most densely follow the corridors of US Highway 6 connecting LaSalle-Peru, Ottawa, and Marseilles; Illinois Highway 23 connecting Ottawa to Streator; and Illinois Highway 251 connecting LaSalle-Peru and Mendota.

Figure 13. NCAT Origin-Destination Line Density – CY 2024



Source: NCAT Long-Lat Reporting – Provided by NCAT

## Trip Locations and Land-Use

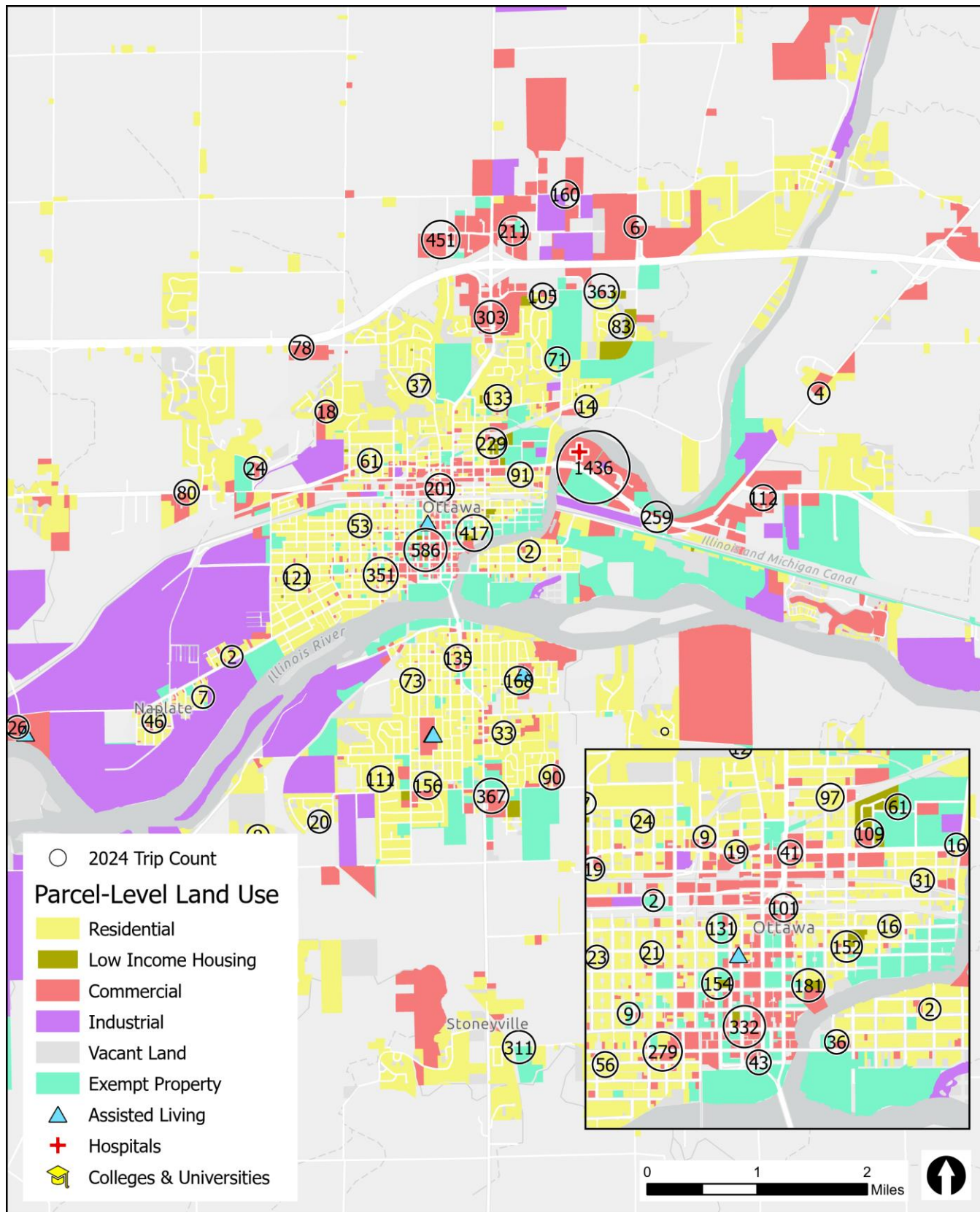
This section compares densities of passenger trip locations in CY 2024, overlaid with land use data as classified by LaSalle County's parcel level tax data. One modification to this data was made, reclassifying parcels owned by public housing authorities as 'low-income housing' to make these locations more visibly detectable.

### OTTAWA

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Trip densities overlaid with parcel-level land use data are shown for the City of Ottawa in Figure 14. The highest density of passenger trips in both Ottawa and the NCAT service area as a whole is found at OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, which is especially popular for out of town trips. Other major trip densities include low-income housing, comprising both senior housing and public housing, particularly at higher density locations like 900 Paul St, Heritage Woods, and Anthony Place Senior Apartments. Additional trip densities are found north of I-80, particularly at Walmart, the DMV, and other commercial and industrial facilities. Major destinations identified as 'exempt property' in the land use data include the Ottawa Friendship House in Stoneyville and North Central Behavioral Health Systems on Etna Road. Trips to other residential and commercial destinations make up a major share of trips but are more spatially dispersed.

Figure 14. CY 2024 Passenger Trip Clusters vs. Parcel Level Land Use – Ottawa

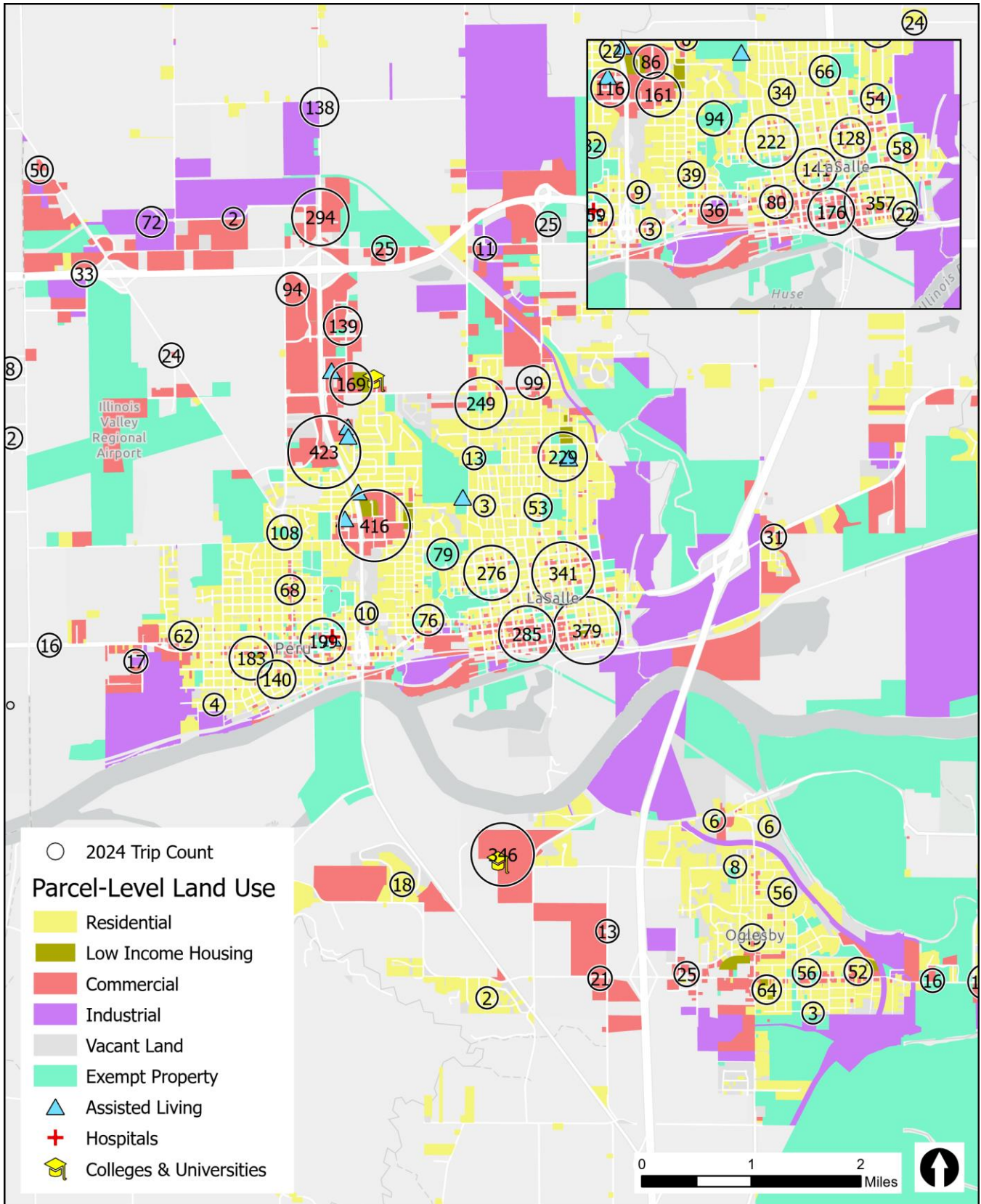


## LASALLE-PERU

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Major trip densities in the cities of Peru and LaSalle (Figure 15) include downtown LaSalle, particularly at the Housing Authority facilities at 1040 2<sup>nd</sup> St, as well as the various apartments and senior housing developments near the intersection of Shooting Park Road and Highway 251. The greatest density of trips in LaSalle-Peru is at the intersection of Midtown Road and Highway 251, where Hy-Vee, an OSF clinic, and various assisted living facilities create a high intensity center of varied trip purposes. As in Ottawa, the Walmart north of I-80 proves a very popular destination for NCAT users. The Eakas Facility further north also indicates some commuter usage for employment. South of the Illinois River, the largest density of trips is at Illinois Valley Community College, followed by low-income housing sites in Oglesby.

Figure 15. CY 2024 Passenger Trip Clusters vs. Parcel Level Land Use – LaSalle-Peru

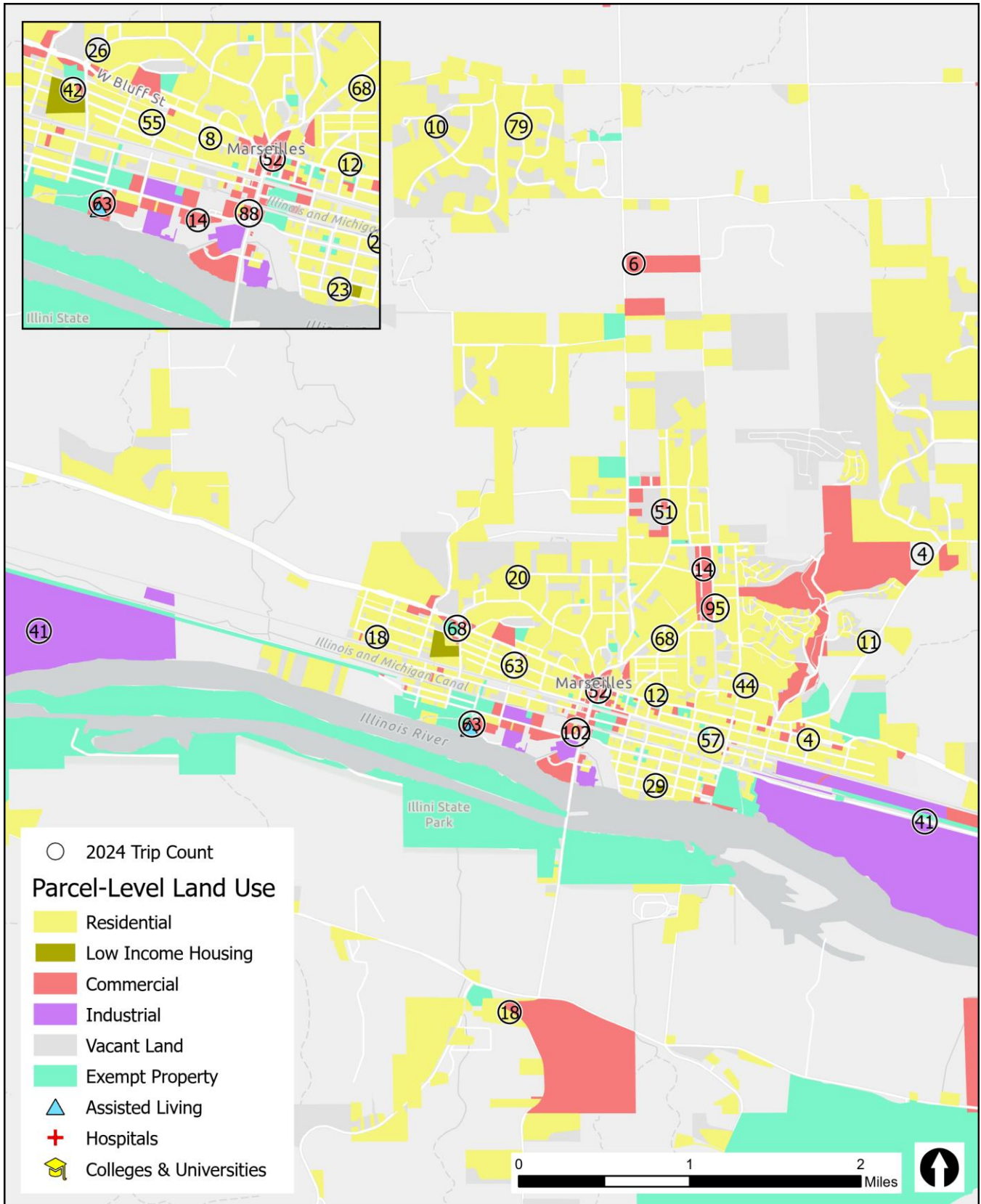


## MARSEILLES

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In Marseilles (Figure 16), major trip locations include Downtown Marseilles, Goldwater Care Marseilles, and the apartment complexes at the corner of Orange Ave and Colorado Street. Low-income housing facilities such as River City Apartments and Guerrini Homes also attract a decent density of trips. Nucor Tubular Products and SABIC Innovation show a decent amount of commuter ridership at either end of Marseilles.

Figure 16. CY 2024 Passenger Trip Clusters vs. Parcel Level Land Use – Marseilles

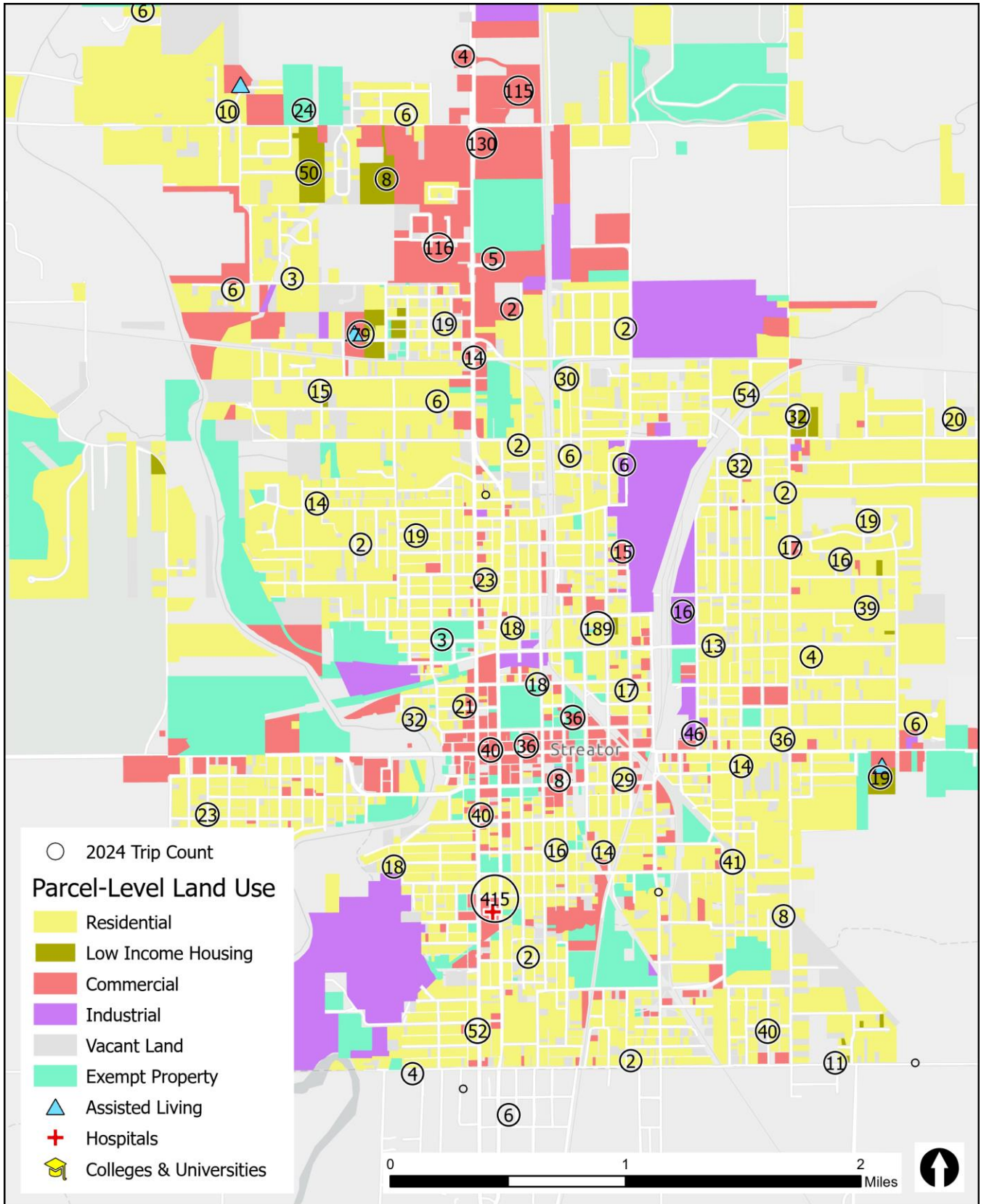


## STREATOR

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As in Ottawa, the predominant trip destination in Streator (Figure 17) is the OSF Health Care facility on Spring Street, reflecting NCAT's high ridership share for medical trips. At the corner of Everett and Morrell Streets, high densities of trips are found from the Housing Authority of LaSalle's low-income housing complex and the Fornof Manors senior living center. At the intersection of Bloomington Street and Marilla Park Road, the Walmart Supercenter once again yields a high density of trips, along with the Kroger and other commercial buildings in the vicinity. To the west on Meadow Lane, a number of assisted living facilities also generate a significant number of trips. As in other cities, a significant number of trips are distributed across the remaining residential and commercial properties in Streator, albeit generally at a lower density than other high-intensity land uses.

Figure 17. CY 2024 Passenger Trip Clusters vs. Parcel Level Land Use – Streator

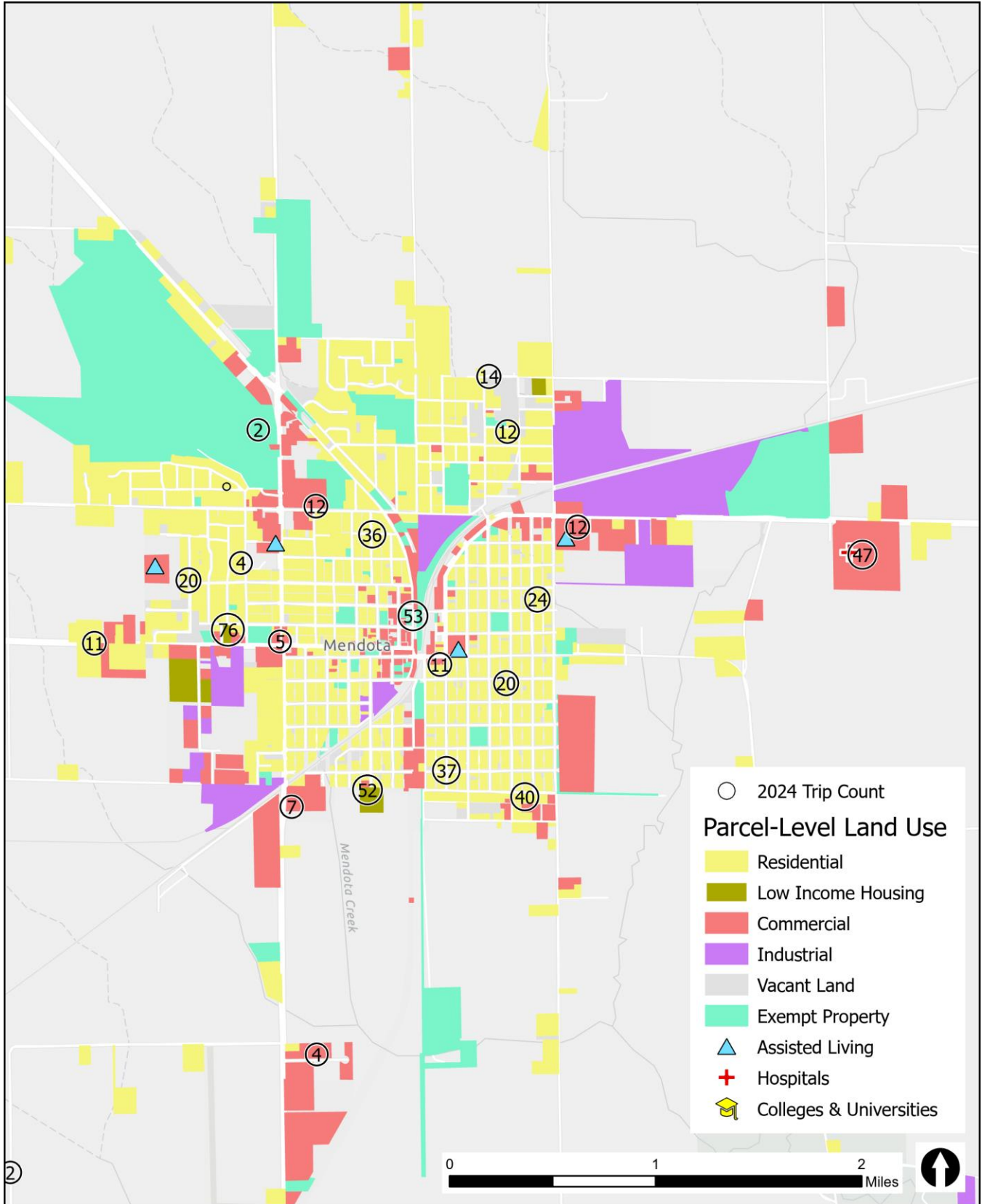


## MENDOTA

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The greatest density of NCAT trips in Mendota (Figure 18) is found at the multifamily low-income housing on Meadowview Drive in western Mendota. Another high density of trips centers around the low-income apartment complex at the southernmost end of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In the east, OSF Saint Paul Medical Center yields a sizable number of medical trips. The remaining trips are distributed amongst the residential and commercial properties of Mendota.

Figure 18. CY 2024 Passenger Trip Clusters vs. Parcel Level Land Use – Mendota



## **Key Takeaways**

The NCAT system has seen considerable growth, with ridership more than doubling over the past 4 years with associated increases in revenue miles and hours. The nature of NCAT's rider base is also evolving, growing from a predominantly medical service to a multi-purpose system, with major gains in employment and education related trips, as well as an increase in riders across every age group. The effects of a rapidly growing system have strained operational efficiency. In particular, the percentage of trips arriving late, and the percentage of trips being cancelled by administrators have both increased significantly over the four-year period, suggesting the beginnings of increased strain on the NCAT's operational capacity.

Key corridors with high densities of overlapping trips include north-south routes in Ottawa, LaSalle-Peru, and Streator, as well as east-west connections between cities like Ottawa, Marseilles, and LaSalle-Peru. While a majority of NCAT trips are distributed across single family residential and light commercial land uses, certain destination types exhibit particularly high densities of trips over limited area. Such major destinations include medical centers like OSF in Ottawa, low-income and senior housing, and commercial hubs such as Walmart and downtown areas. In Peru and Marseilles, additional trip densities are correlated with major industrial complexes such as Eakas, Nucor Tubular Products, and SABIC.

# Service Area Profile and Market Analysis

LaSalle County is located just southwest of the Chicago metropolitan area, abutting the Chicagoland Counties of Grundy, Kendall, and DeKalb. LaSalle County, however, is not included in the Chicago metropolitan area for statistical purposes. Ottawa, the county seat, is located approximately 85 miles (driving distance) from Chicago's central business district. LaSalle and the surrounding counties are mostly rural with a few small municipalities.

This chapter describes the demographic and employment characteristics of LaSalle County. Data were gathered from various US Census Bureau products, including the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2020 Decennial Census, and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey. The data presented in this chapter are presented in two parts: Demographics Analysis and Employment Analysis.

## Demographic Analysis

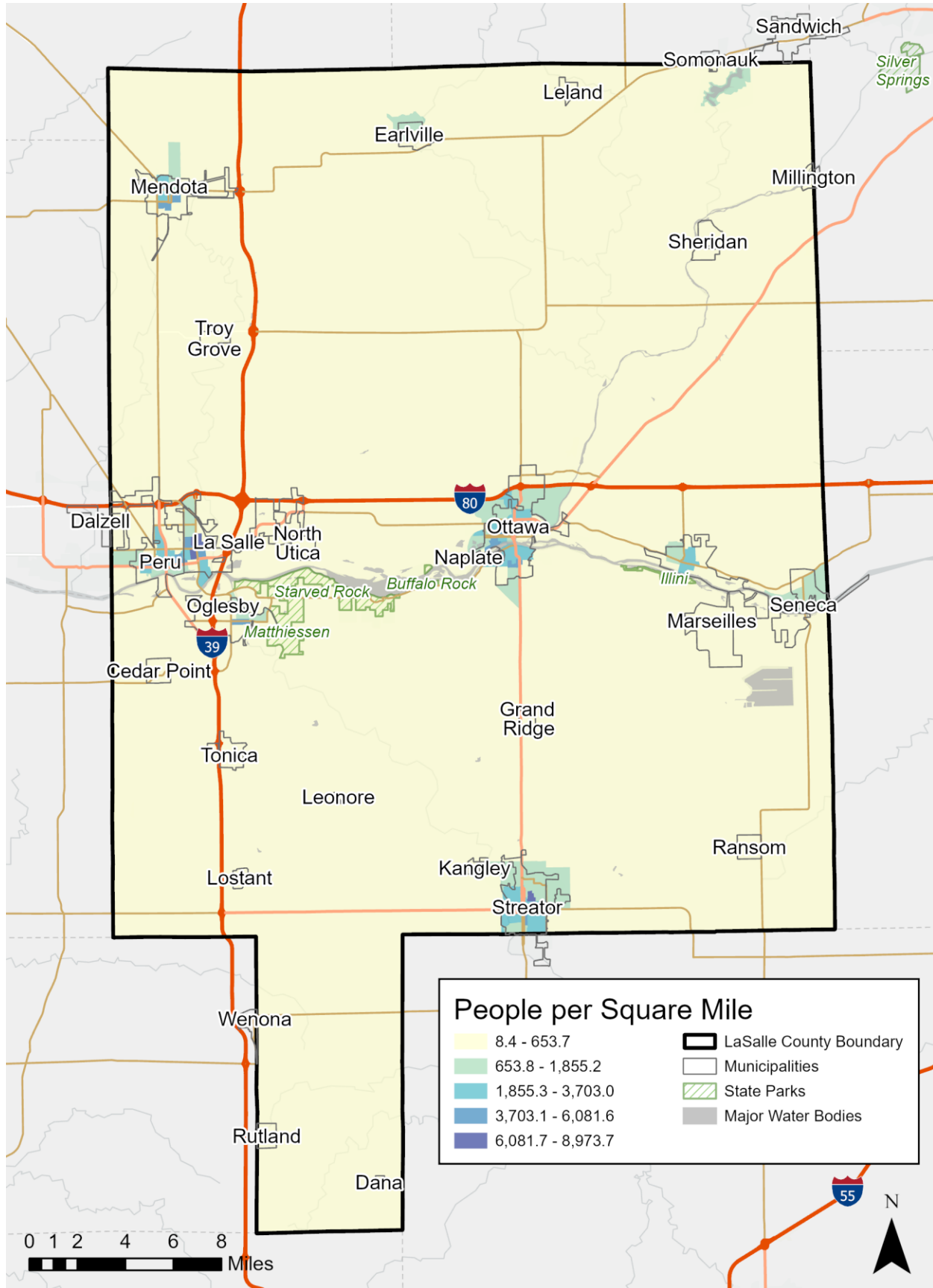
Demographic analysis is useful in transit planning to provide context and insight into the geographic locations where likely riders live. This information can be used to develop future service plans that efficiently provide transit service to the most people. Demographic data that help to indicate higher propensity to use transit include:

1. Population Density/Distribution
2. Zero-Vehicle Households
3. Low-Income Population
4. Minority Population
5. Population Age 65+ (i.e., Seniors)
6. Population Under Age 18 (i.e. Youth)
7. People with Disabilities
8. Immigrants/New Americans
9. Limited English Proficiency

## Population Density/Distribution

LaSalle County is a mostly rural county, with small population centers located around the county typically near major waterways. Many of the larger communities (such as Ottawa, LaSalle, Peru, and Marseilles) are located along the Illinois River, which flows west across the county and bisects it into northern and southern areas. Some other population centers are located along tributaries to the Illinois River, such as Mendota (along the Little Vermillion River) and Streator (along the Vermillion River). Figure 19 contains a map of the population density of LaSalle County by census block group, which helps illustrate where population is geographically concentrated in LaSalle County. This map also helps provide context for the demographic data presented in the rest of this section.

Figure 19. Population Density of LaSalle County by Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101

## Zero-Vehicle Households

Households without access to a vehicle are frequently considered “transit-dependent” due to household members’ lack of an ability to drive a personal vehicle for regular transportation needs. This demographic is of particular importance in transit service planning, as people without access to automobiles have among the highest need for transit services.

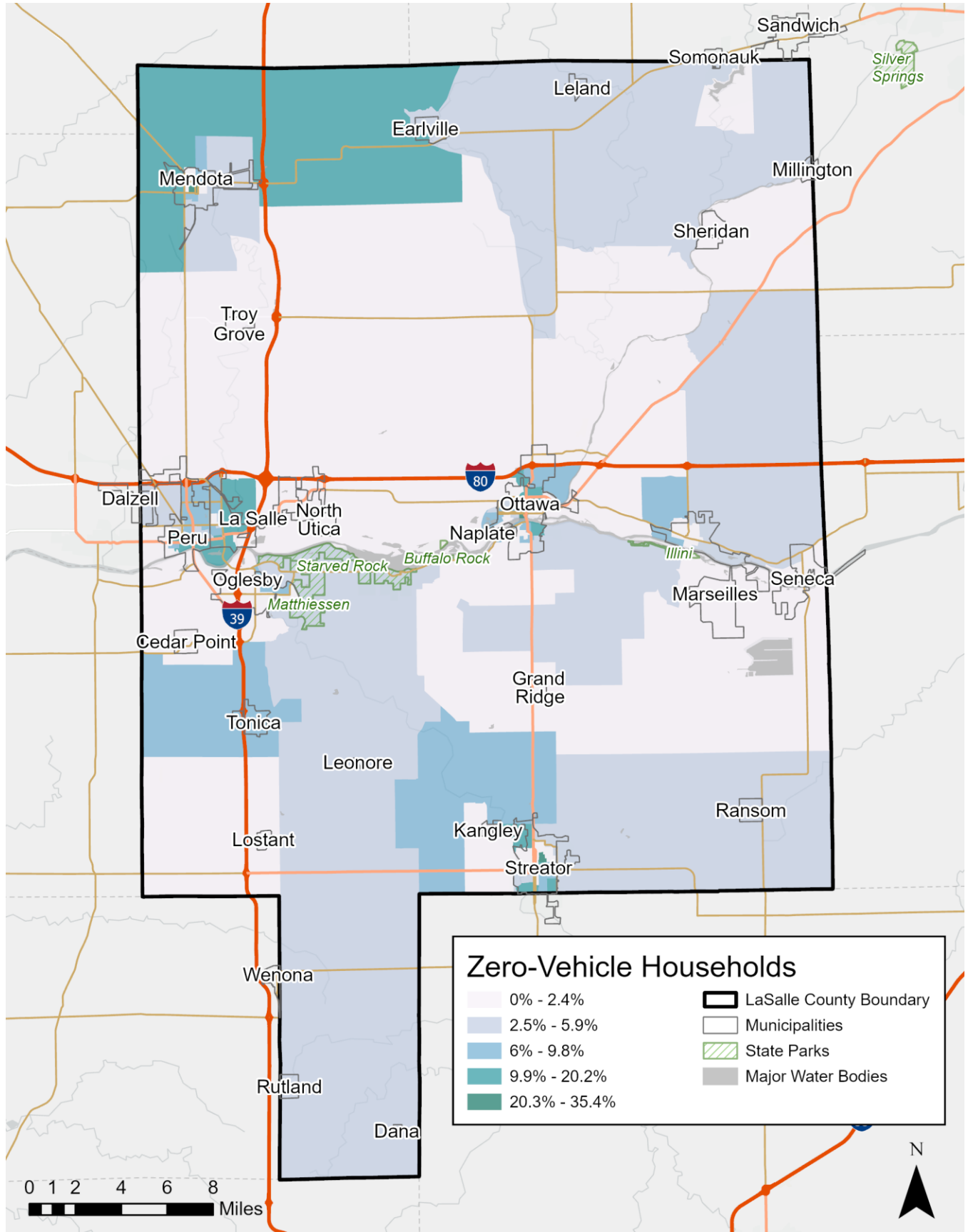
About six percent of LaSalle County households lack access to vehicles. Within the county's major population centers, places like LaSalle, Mendota, and Streator have particularly high rates. Some rural block groups in south central, southwest, and northwest LaSalle County also exhibit relatively high rates of households lacking vehicle access. Table 3 compares the rate of car-free households in the six largest municipalities in LaSalle County with the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 20 shows the geographic distribution of zero-vehicle households in LaSalle County.

**Table 3. Zero-Vehicle Households, 2022**

Jurisdiction	Households with No Vehicle Available	Households with No Vehicle Available (percent)
Illinois	537,346	10.8%
LaSalle County	2,649	5.9%
Ottawa	584	7.6%
Peru	334	7.6%
LaSalle	421	10.3%
Mendota	257	9.2%
Marseilles	57	3.3%
Streator	544	9.3%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B08201

Figure 20. Map of Zero-Vehicle Households by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B08201

## Low-Income Populations

While many definitions of low-income populations exist, this study considers people living below the federal poverty line. Lower incomes tend to correlate with higher rates of transit usage, so low-income populations are particularly important to consider in transit planning.

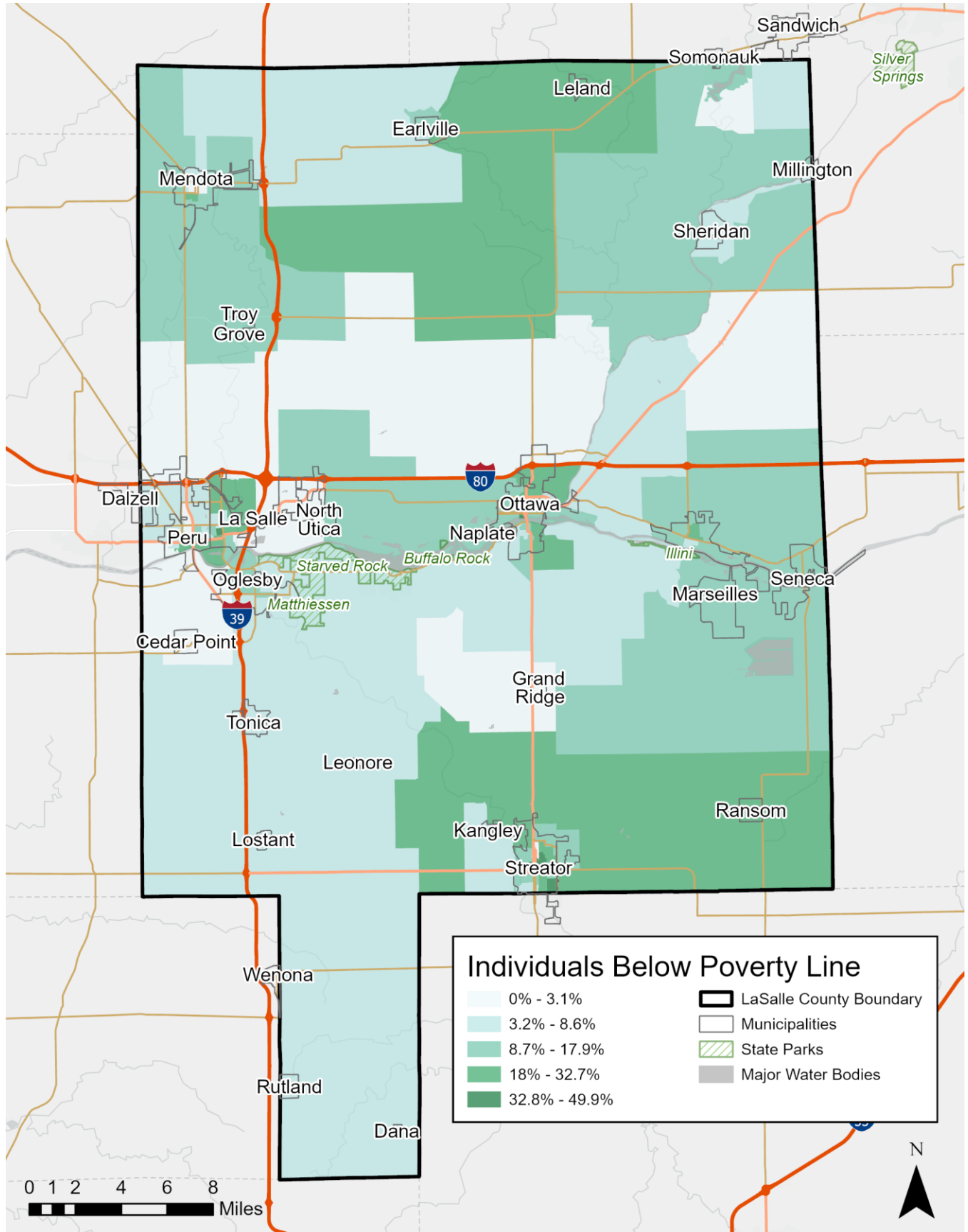
About 14 percent of LaSalle County residents live in households below the poverty line, which is slightly higher than the statewide average. Some communities in LaSalle County have higher poverty rates than the county as a whole, including Ottawa (18.3 percent), LaSalle (19.7 percent), Marseilles (15.6 percent), and Streator (22.0 percent). Some rural block groups in north-central and southeast LaSalle County also exhibit relatively high poverty rates. Table 4 compares the rate of persons living in households below the federal property line in the six largest municipalities in LaSalle County with the both the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 21 shows the geographic distribution of low-income individuals in LaSalle County.

**Table 4. Individuals Living at or Below Poverty, 2022**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Individuals Living at or Below Poverty</b>	<b>Individuals Living at or Below Poverty (percent)</b>
Illinois	1,467,893	11.8%
LaSalle County	14,495	13.7%
Ottawa	3,303	18.3%
Peru	666	6.9%
LaSalle	1,840	19.7%
Mendota	635	9.4%
Marseilles	636	15.6%
Streator	2,663	22.0%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Figure 21. Map of Individuals Living at or Below Poverty by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

## Minority Populations

Minority populations include all people of color, including anyone who self-identifies as any race other than “White alone” for Census purposes, and anyone who identifies as being of Hispanic or Latino origin for Census purposes. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal assistance. Because NCAT receives federal funds, the agency is required to ensure that its services are provided in a manner that does not discriminate against the minority population.

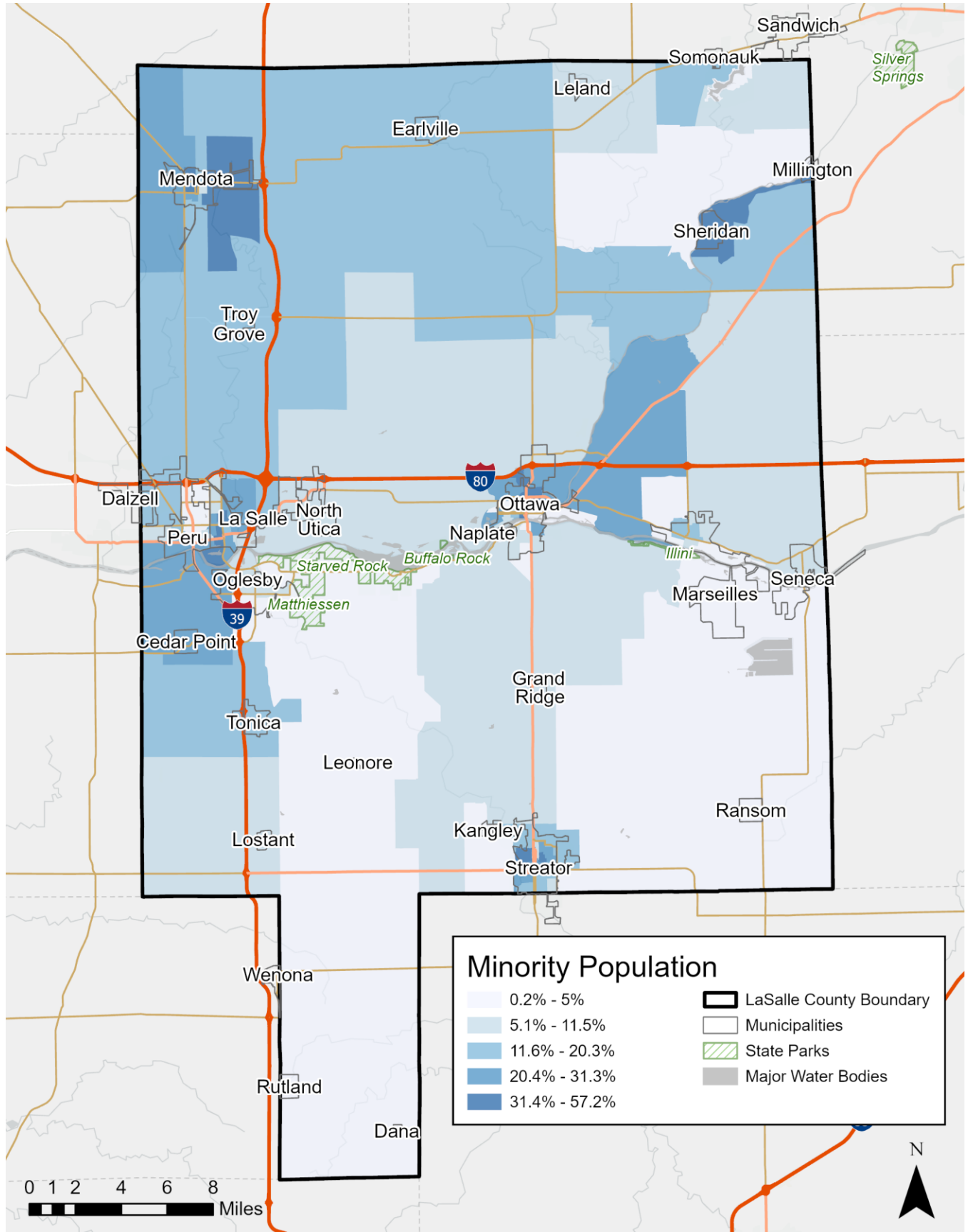
The minority population in LaSalle County represents about 16 percent of the population, which is significantly lower than the statewide average. Within LaSalle County, communities such as Mendota, LaSalle, Streator, and Ottawa have minority populations higher than the countywide rate. Populations in smaller towns such as Sheridan and Cedar Point also contain relatively high percentages of minorities, as do some rural block groups east of Ottawa and in parts of northern and northeastern LaSalle County. Table 5 compares the percentage of minority individuals in the six largest municipalities in LaSalle County with the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 22 shows the geographic distribution of minority individuals in LaSalle County.

Table 5. Minority Population, 2022

Jurisdiction	Minority Population	Minority population (percent)
Illinois	5,156,019	40.4%
LaSalle County	17,844	16.3%
Ottawa	3,355	17.9%
Peru	1,123	11.4%
LaSalle	2,623	27.4%
Mendota	1,898	27.3%
Marseilles	472	11.4%
Streator	2,936	23.9%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Figure 22. Map of Minority Population by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

## Seniors

Older adults, or seniors, is a demographic category that refers to people aged 65 and over. Older adults tend to use transit more often than the general population due to age related barriers to driving a vehicle (decreased vision quality, physical mobility limitations, slower reaction times, medication side effects, etc.). Transit is an essential mobility option particularly for older adults who are unable to drive and do not have another way of getting around. Transit may also be the mode of choice for older adults with disabilities, as public transportation systems offer ADA-compliant services. Quality transit additionally helps to keep seniors connected to their community and social networks regardless of their ability to drive a car, thus reducing isolation among this group.

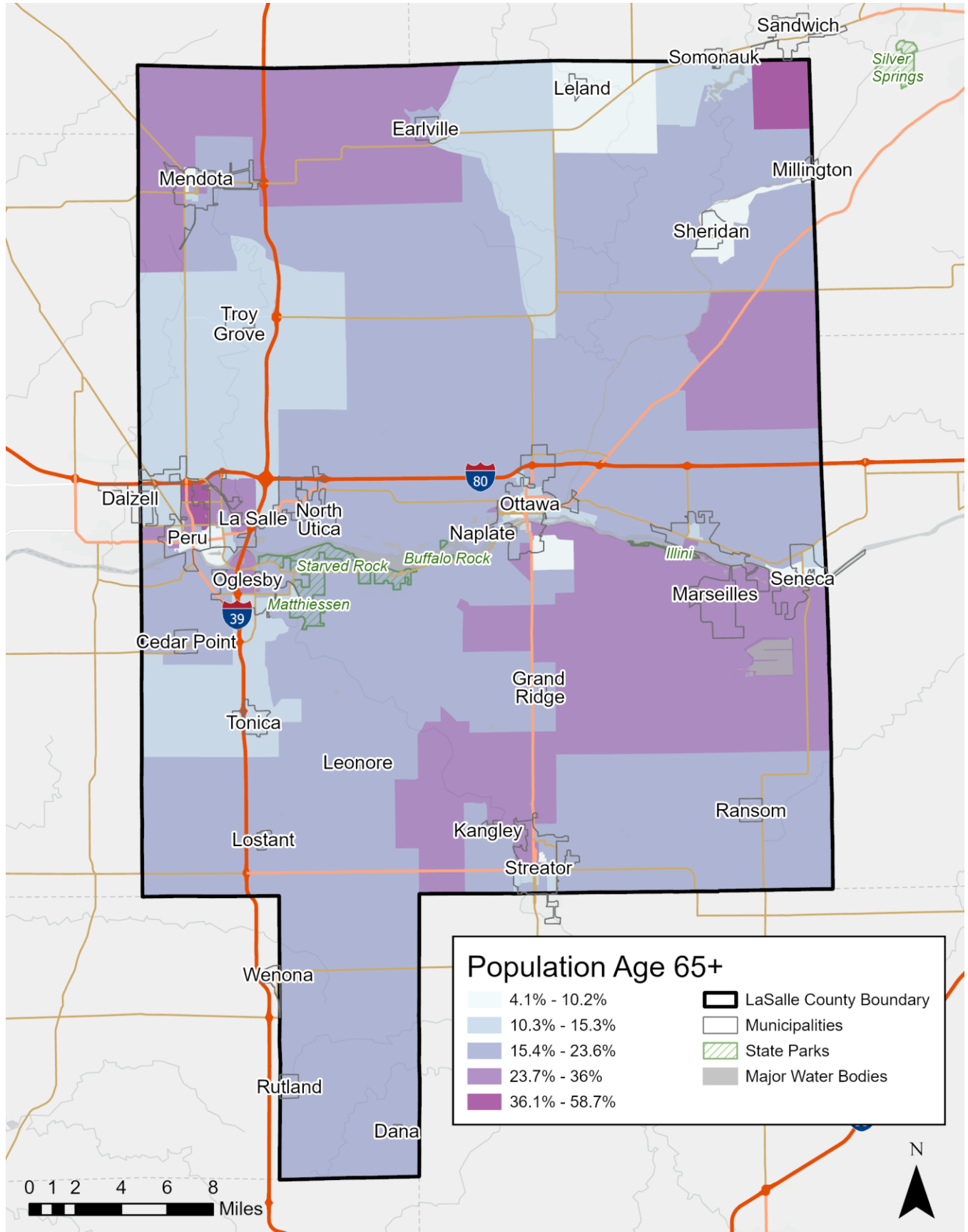
LaSalle County's population has a higher percentage of older adults (about 19 percent) than the State of Illinois at large (about 16 percent). Communities such as Peru, Mendota, and Streator have slightly higher rates of seniors relative to the countywide percentage. Many rural areas also exhibit high proportions of seniors in their populations, especially in south central, eastern, northeastern, and northwestern LaSalle County. Table 6 compares the percentage of older adults in the six largest municipalities in LaSalle County with the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 23 shows the geographic distribution of older adults in LaSalle County.

Table 6. Older Adults Age 65+ in LaSalle County, 2022

Jurisdiction	Individuals Age 65+	Individuals Age 65+ (percent)
Illinois	2,070,907	16.2%
LaSalle County	20,944	19.1%
Ottawa	3,040	16.2%
Peru	2,286	23.3%
LaSalle	1,903	19.9%
Mendota	1,406	20.2%
Marseilles	813	19.6%
Streator	2,629	21.4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Figure 23. Map of Older Adults by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

## Youth

People under age 18 fall into the “youth” demographic category. Youth under the age of 16 are unable to drive independently in Illinois, making transit a way for many youths to get around their community. Additionally, many youths between the ages of 16 and 18 are increasingly waiting to get their driver’s license. According to Governing Magazine, Federal Highway Administration data indicates that the share of teenagers aged 16-19 with a valid driver’s license declined from 64 percent in 1995 to under 40 percent in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Due to the decrease in driving among youth, transit can be an essential mode of transportation to and from school, work, and other activities for younger people.

LaSalle County’s population has a slightly lower percentage of youth (about 21 percent) than the State of Illinois at large (about 22 percent), though some individual communities exceed the statewide rate (including Ottawa, Mendota, and Marseilles). High concentrations of young people also exist in certain pockets of rural LaSalle County, such as in north central and south central LaSalle County, in addition to areas near smaller towns like Leland and Tonica. Table 7 compares the percentage of young people in the six largest municipalities in LaSalle County with both the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 24 shows the geographic distribution of youth in LaSalle County.

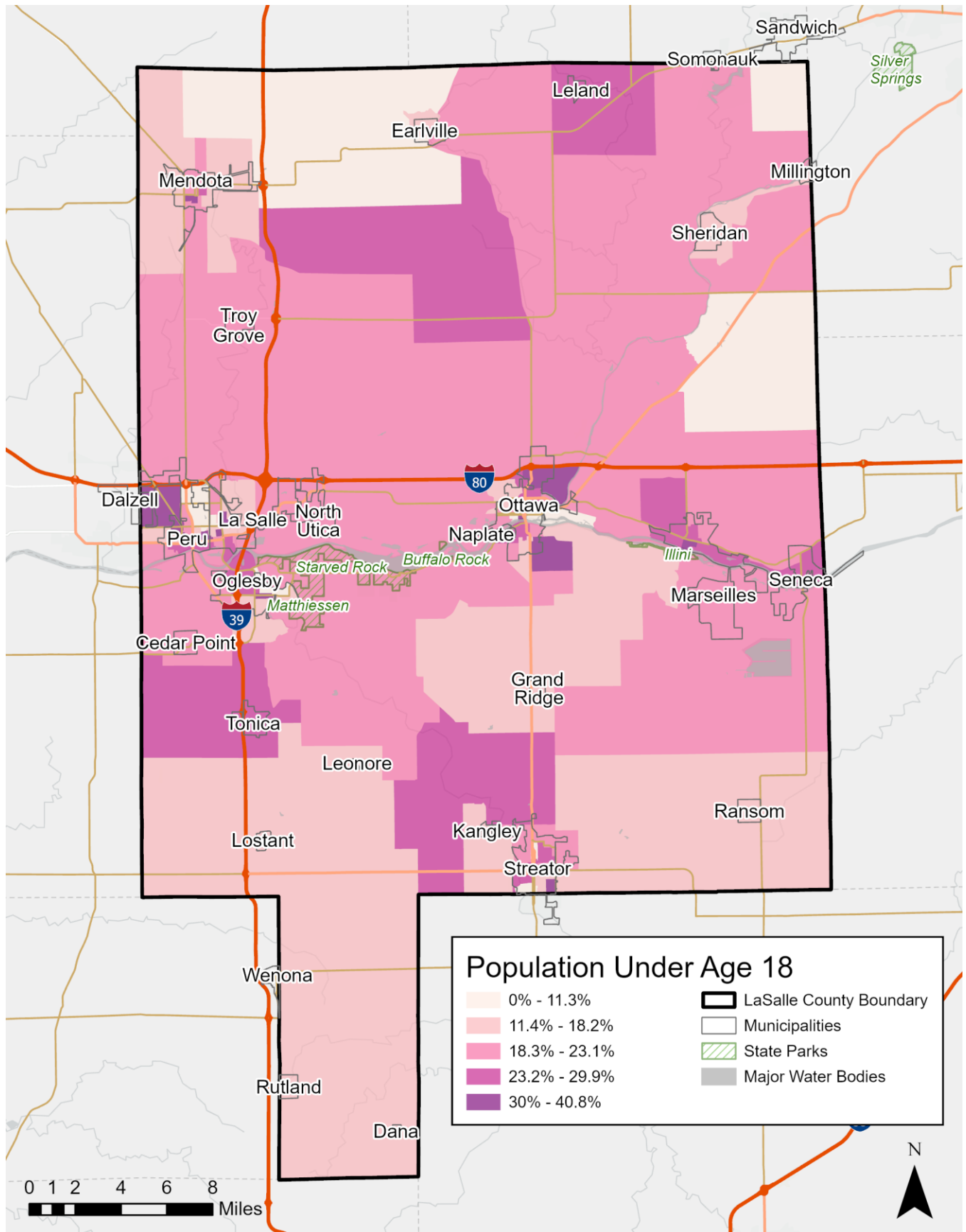
Table 7. Youth Under Age 18 in LaSalle County, 2022

Jurisdiction	Individuals Under Age 18	Individuals Under Age 18 (percent)
Illinois	2,820,477	22.1%
LaSalle County	23,231	21.2%
Ottawa	4,436	23.8%
Peru	2,098	21.3%
LaSalle	2,014	21.1%
Mendota	1,599	23.0%
Marseilles	1,037	25.0%
Streator	2,424	19.7%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.governing.com/management-and-administration/new-drivers-are-waiting-longer-to-get-their-licenses>

Figure 24. Map of Youth Population by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

## People with Disabilities

The Census Bureau collects and reports data on the number of noninstitutionalized people living with disabilities in the United States. The types of disabilities included in census data include people living with:

- A hearing difficulty
- A vision difficulty
- A cognitive difficulty
- An ambulatory difficulty
- A self-care difficulty
- An independent living difficulty

Each of these types of disabilities can make it difficult or impossible for a person to drive a car, meaning many people in this demographic category rely on public transit services to move around their community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving federal assistance. Aside from simply being available to people with disabilities, all aspects of transit service must be designed to meet or exceed basic accessibility guidelines required by law. In addition to being a legal requirement, accessibility enhances the rider experience for people with disabilities and makes it more likely that people with disabilities will choose to use transit for their mobility needs.

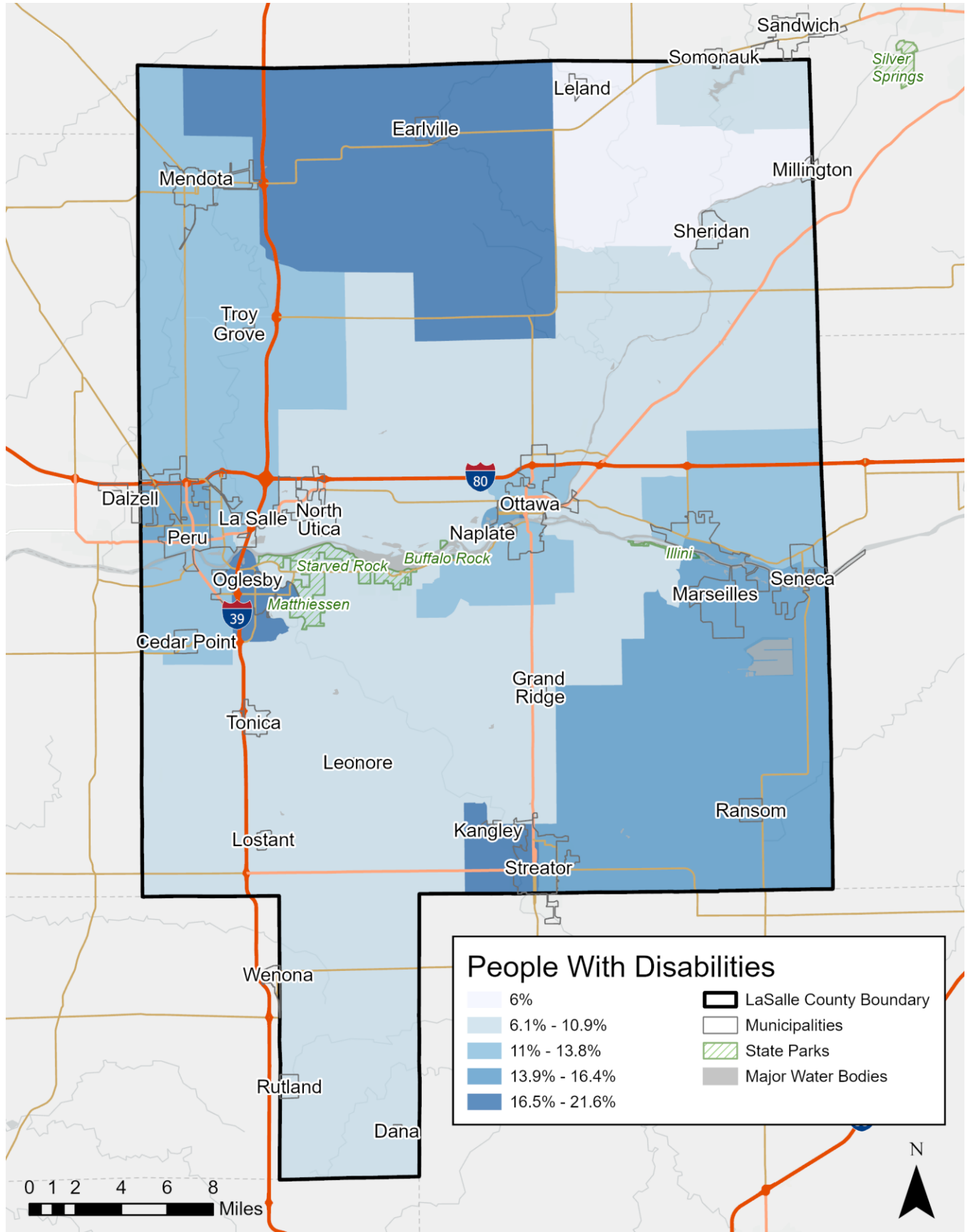
LaSalle County's population has a higher percentage of people with disabilities (13.6 percent) than the State of Illinois at large (11.6 percent), with some communities like Streator, Peru, and Marseilles having particularly high disability rates relative to the county. Rural tracts in north central, northwest, and southeast LaSalle County also exhibit high disability rates. Table 8 compares the percentage of people with disabilities in LaSalle County's six largest municipalities with both the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 25 shows the geographic distribution of people with disabilities in LaSalle County.

**Table 8. People With Disabilities, 2022**

Jurisdiction	Individuals with a Disability (among non-institutionalized population)	Individuals with a Disability (percent of noninstitutionalized population)
Illinois	1,455,892	11.6%
LaSalle County	14,473	13.6%
Ottawa	2,429	13.2%
Peru	1,577	16.3%
LaSalle	1,255	13.4%
Mendota	889	13.1%
Marseilles	692	17.0%
Streator	2,168	17.9%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1810

Figure 25. Map of People with Disabilities by Census Tract, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1810

## Immigrants / New Americans

Immigrants, sometimes referred to as New Americans or foreign-born Americans, are a group of people who were not born in the United States and have moved to the United States from another country. Many people who move to the United States from other parts of the world do not bring automobiles with them and may not have the resources to immediately purchase an automobile upon settling into their new communities. To access work, shopping, and other critical destinations, many immigrants may need to utilize public transit services. This is especially true of immigrants who live or work in areas not easily accessible by other non-auto modes. Many immigrants may require extra assistance navigating the transit system, especially if they do not understand English well (discussed further in the next section). Additionally, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on national origin in all programs and activities receiving federal assistance, meaning that transit agencies must ensure that immigrant populations have equitable access to transit services.

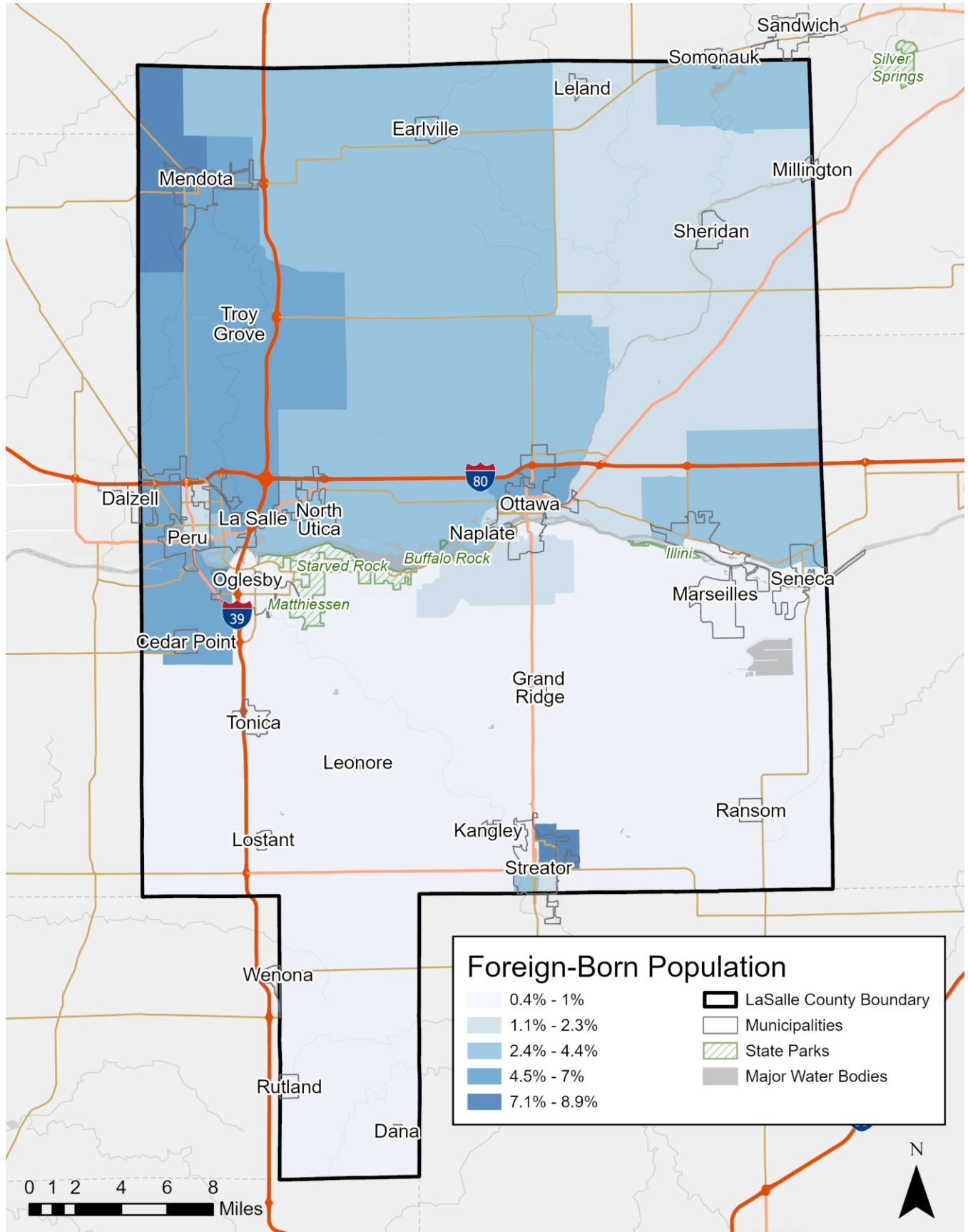
In general, LaSalle County's population has a lower percentage of foreign-born Americans (about 3.4 percent) than the State of Illinois (about 14.1 percent). Immigrants' proportion of the population varies geographically around the county, with Mendota having the highest share of immigrants (about 8.4 percent) among the county's largest communities. Geographically, there is a significant divide in the immigrant population, with rural areas north of the Illinois River exhibiting relatively high rates of immigrants in the population. South of the Illinois River, the rate of immigrants in the population is very low, except in the Streator area and near Cedar Point. Table 9 compares the immigrant population in LaSalle County's six largest municipalities with both the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 26 shows the geographic distribution of immigrants in LaSalle County.

Table 9. Foreign-Born Population, 2022

Jurisdiction	Foreign-Born Individuals	Foreign-Born Individuals (percent of total population)
Illinois	1,804,681	14.1%
LaSalle County	3,683	3.4%
Ottawa	625	3.3%
Peru	343	3.5%
LaSalle	526	5.5%
Mendota	584	8.4%
Marseilles	168	4.0%
Streator	523	4.3%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP02

Figure 26. Map of Foreign-Born Population by Census Tract, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP02

## Limited English Proficiency

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a demographic category that includes individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, or speak English. LEP populations are important to analyze due to their unique communication needs. LEP populations have significant overlap with immigrant communities, meaning that Title VI nondiscrimination requirements typically apply to this population. Additionally, Executive Order 13166, signed on August 11, 2000, requires that LEP populations have meaningful access to federally funded programs and activities. As it applies to transit, an agency may need to offer official communications in one or more non-English languages and or take other reasonable steps to ensure LEP populations have meaningful access to transit services, depending on whether certain factors warrant such steps.

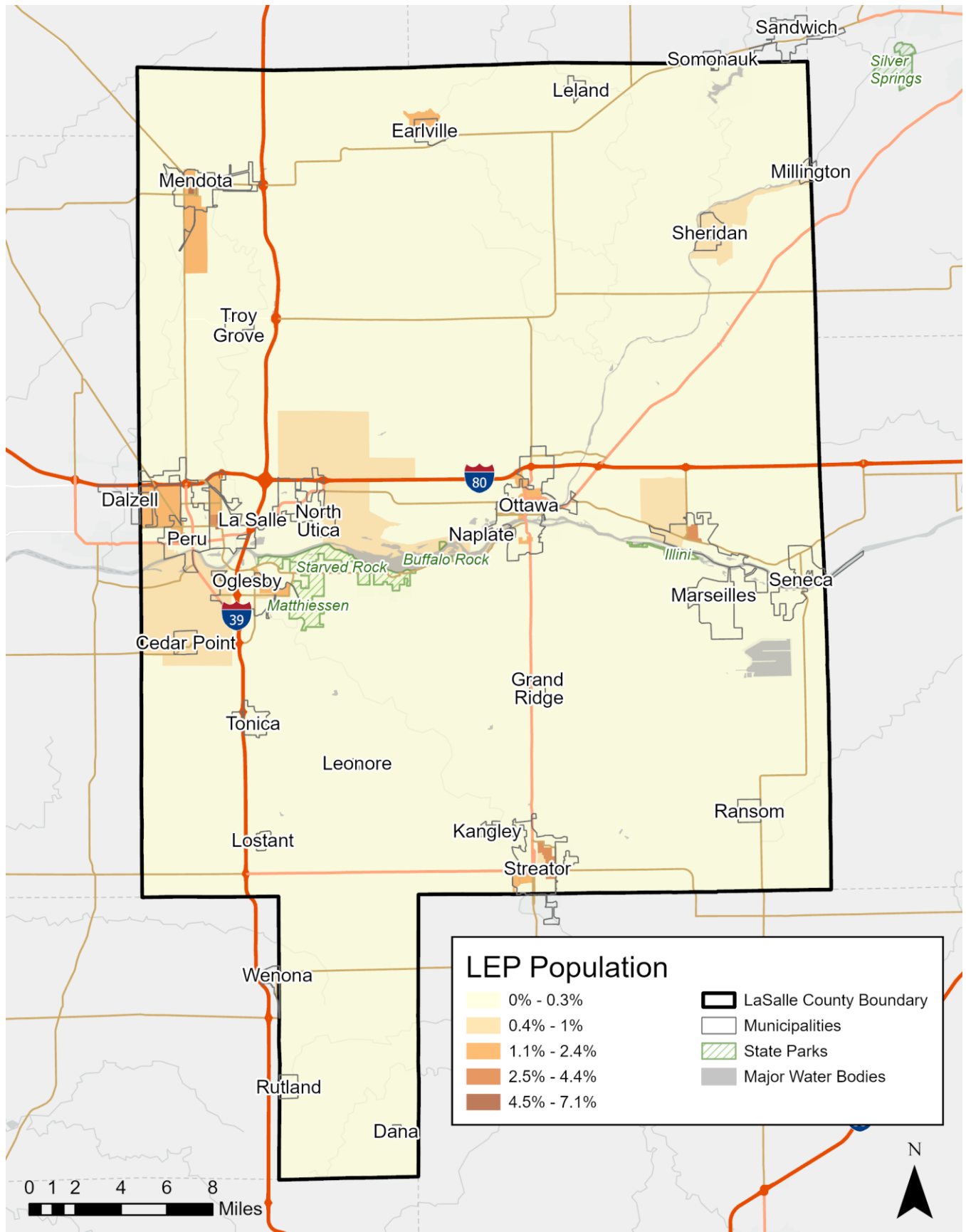
LaSalle County’s population has a lower percentage of people with limited English proficiency (2.7 percent) than the State of Illinois overall (8.6 percent). The LEP population’s distribution varies around the county, with Mendota having the highest share of LEP individuals among the county’s largest communities. LEP populations are fairly uncommon in rural areas of the county, though some rural block groups in places like Sheridan, Earlville, and around Cedar Point have relatively high LEP rates. Table 10 compares the LEP population in LaSalle County’s six largest municipalities with both the countywide and statewide rates. Figure 27 shows the geographic distribution of the LEP population in LaSalle County.

Table 10. Limited English Proficiency, 2022

Jurisdiction	Speak English less than “very well” (among individuals age 5+)	Speak English less than “very well” (percent of individuals age 5+)
Illinois	1,030,616	8.6%
LaSalle County	2,767	2.7%
Ottawa	398	2.3%
Peru	311	3.3%
LaSalle	459	5.1%
Mendota	515	7.8%
Marseilles	116	3.0%
Streator	422	3.7%

Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP02

Figure 27. Map of LEP Population by Census Block Group, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP02

## Key Takeaways

The population of LaSalle County is varied, with diverse populations that may be inclined to use transit services located in both cities/towns and rural areas around LaSalle County. The demographics of the county can be summarized as follows:

- Approximately six percent of LaSalle County households lack access to a private vehicle
- Approximately 14 percent of LaSalle County residents live in households below the poverty line
- Minorities account for approximately 16 percent of LaSalle County's population
- About 19 percent of the county population is age 65 or older
- About 21 percent of the county population is under the age of 16
- About 14 percent of the county population reports having a disability
- Slightly over three percent of the county population was born outside the US
- Slightly under three percent of the county population has limited English language proficiency

Each of the demographics above vary in their geographic distribution across the county. Some, such as zero vehicle households and LEP populations, are more commonly seen in the major population centers around the county. Others, such as seniors, youth, and minorities, are seen at high rates in both population centers and some rural areas. Immigrants have a particularly interesting geographic distribution, with rural areas north of the Illinois River tending to have higher rates of foreign-born individuals compared to the rural areas south of the Illinois River, which have very low immigrant populations (the immigrant population is more heavily concentrated in and around Streator and Cedar Grove).

Because high-transit-propensity demographic groups exist in such varied patterns around the county, providing transit service with limited resources can be a major challenge. The demographic indicators, along with other data such as employment and travel flow, will be used to help create recommendations for future transit service enhancements within the NCAT system.

# Employment Analysis

Employment information is important for transit agencies to consider, as work trips often make up a substantial proportion of the trips made using transit. For some people, transit agencies serve as a vital connection to economic opportunity. Data from the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey is available through the US Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool and is used in this section (alongside limited data from the 2020 Decennial Census) to help frame the employment characteristics of LaSalle County. Employment data is divided into the following sections:

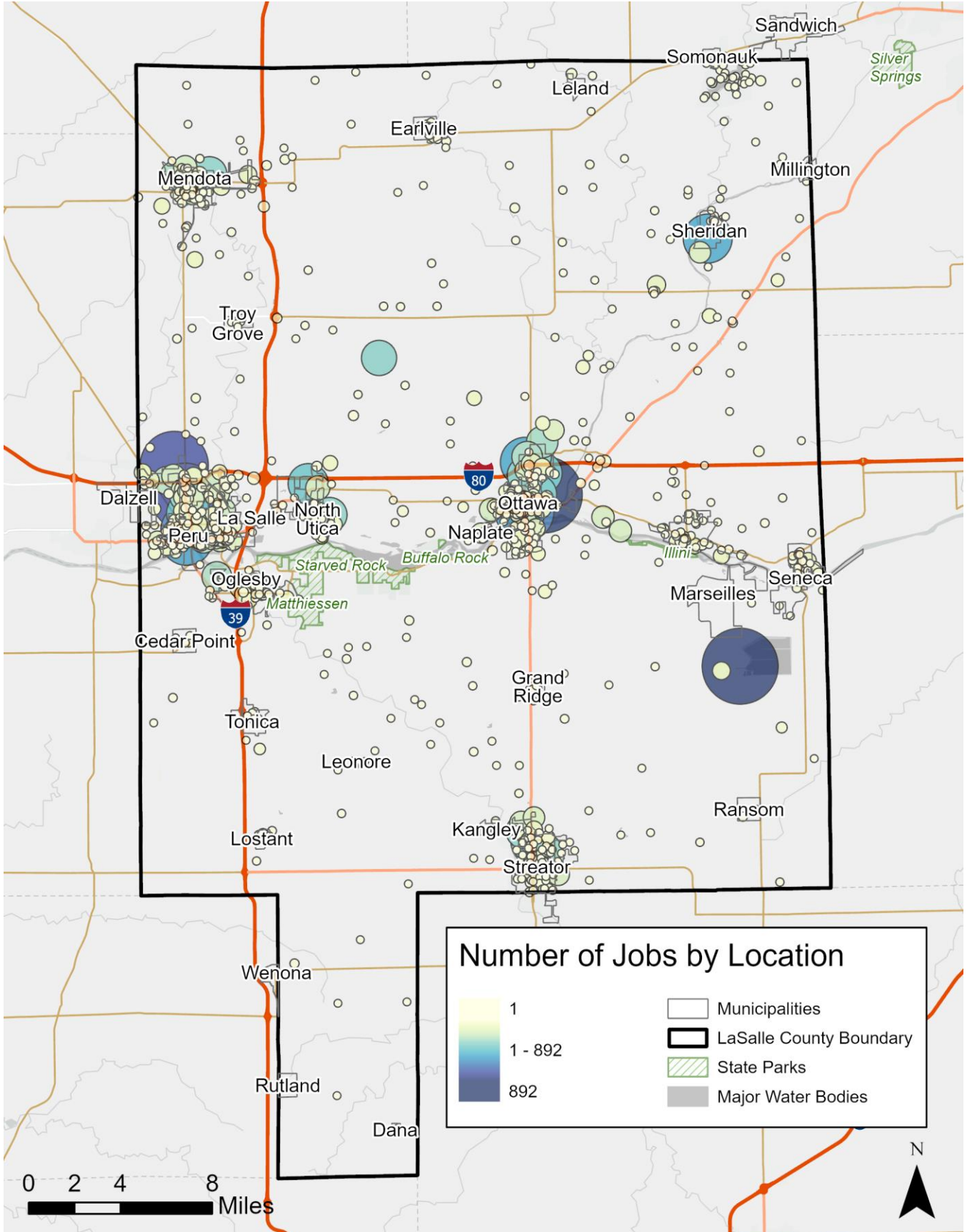
1. Work Area Profile/Work Area Comparisons
2. Work Destinations
3. Commute Distance and Direction
4. Worker Inflow/Outflow

## Work Area Profile

OnTheMap's Work Area Profile data provides information on the characteristics of all jobs located within a selected area. LaSalle County had 38,963 jobs actively filled by employees in 2021, the year for which the most recent data is available. Most jobs are concentrated in and around population centers along I-80, such as Ottawa, LaSalle, and Peru, with additional employment centers in Mendota and Streator. Figure 28 contains a map of job concentrations at the countywide level, and Figure 29 shows the geographic distribution of jobs in LaSalle County's larger employment centers.

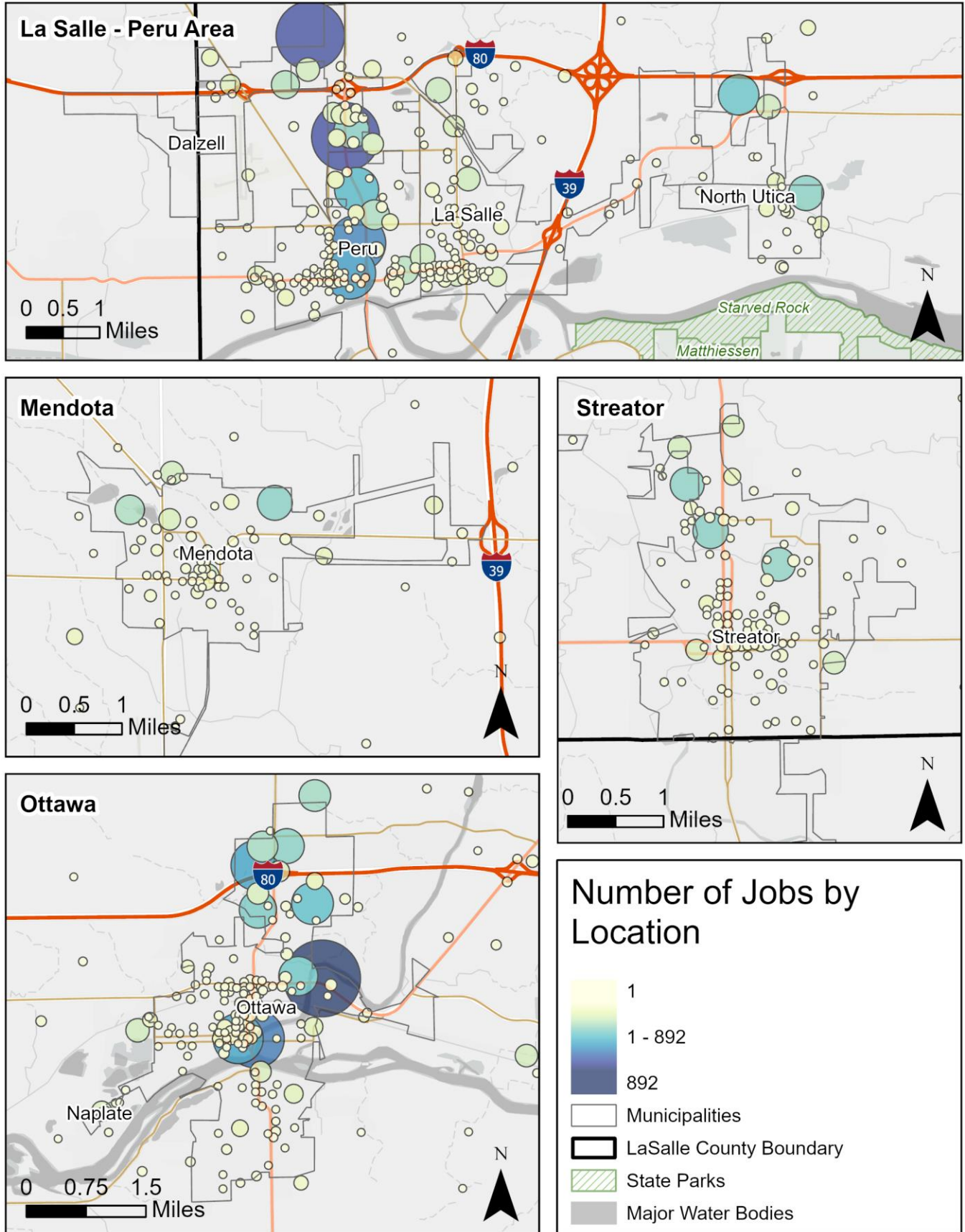
This section contains county-level information on worker age, earnings, and educational attainment, as well as a breakdown of jobs by industry sector. Additionally, this section contains information from OnTheMap's Work Area Comparisons data that illustrate the geographic trends in the LaSalle County job data.

Figure 28. Map of All Jobs in LaSalle County by Location, 2021



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Figure 29. Jobs by Location in LaSalle County's Major Employment Centers, 2021



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Total Jobs by Community

The number of jobs in each community in LaSalle County is generally correlated with how many people live in the community. LaSalle County's largest city, Ottawa, has the largest number of jobs. Table 11 shows the number of jobs located in each of LaSalle County's six largest cities.

Table 11. Number of Jobs in Six Largest LaSalle County Communities, 2021

Jurisdiction	Number of Jobs
Ottawa	9,458
Peru	8,617
LaSalle	3,607
Mendota	2,630
Marseilles	839
Streator	3,960

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Jobs by Worker Age

LEHD data classifies workers into three age groups: 29 or younger, 30 to 54, and 55 and over. A majority (50.3 percent) of jobs in LaSalle County are filled by workers between the ages of 30 and 54.

Approximately 26.9 percent of jobs in LaSalle County are worked by employees aged 55 and older, while the remaining 22.8 percent of jobs employ people aged 29 or younger. Table 12 outlines this data.

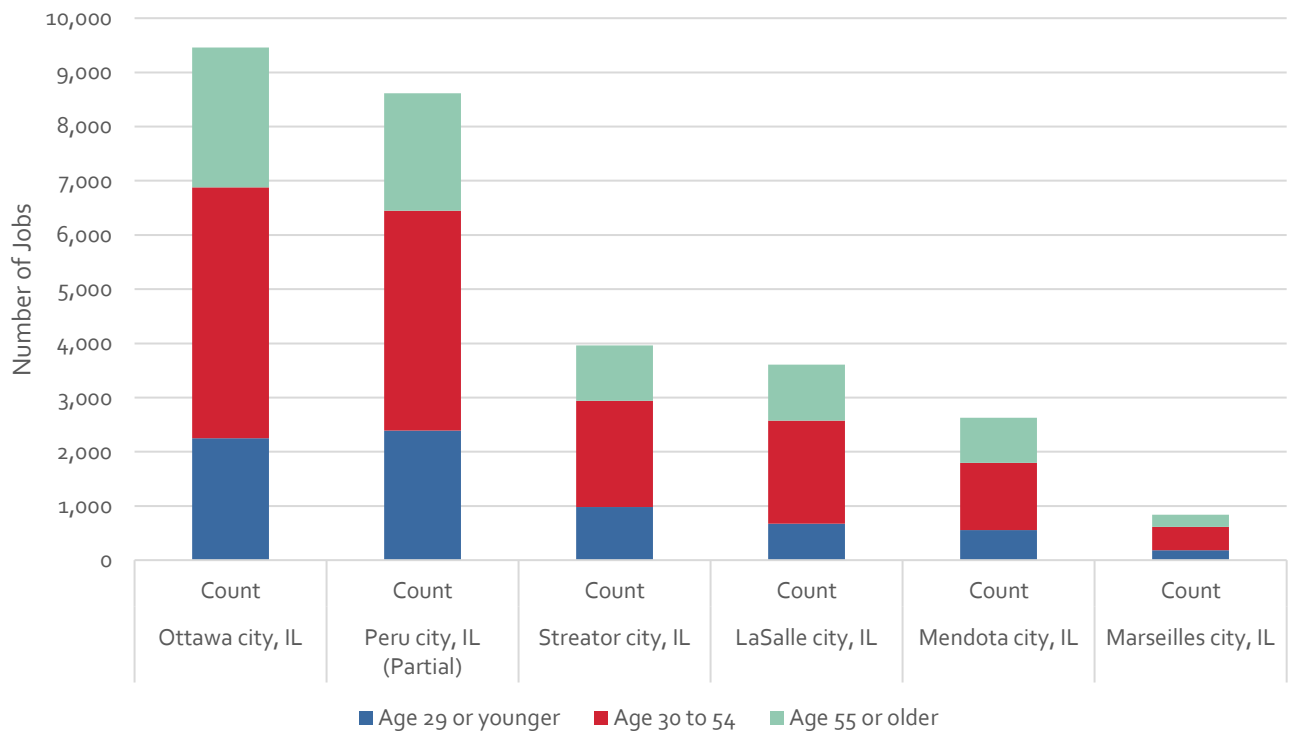
**Table 12. Jobs by Worker Age in LaSalle County, 2021**

Age Group	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	8,875	22.8%
Age 30 to 54	19,605	50.3%
Age 55 or older	10,483	26.9%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Across the six largest communities in LaSalle County, the largest group of workers employed in each jurisdiction falls into the 30-54 age group. This is consistent with the countywide age distribution among employees. Figure 30 illustrates this data.

**Figure 30. Jobs by Worker Age (Largest Six LaSalle County Communities), 2021**



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Jobs by Earnings

LEHD data classifies jobs into three earnings categories:

1. \$1,250 per month or less (low income)
2. \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month (middle income)
3. More than \$3,333 per month (high income)

A plurality of jobs within LaSalle County has employee earnings of more than \$3,333 per month, although a majority of jobs fall into the two lower income categories. Table 13 outlines this earnings data.

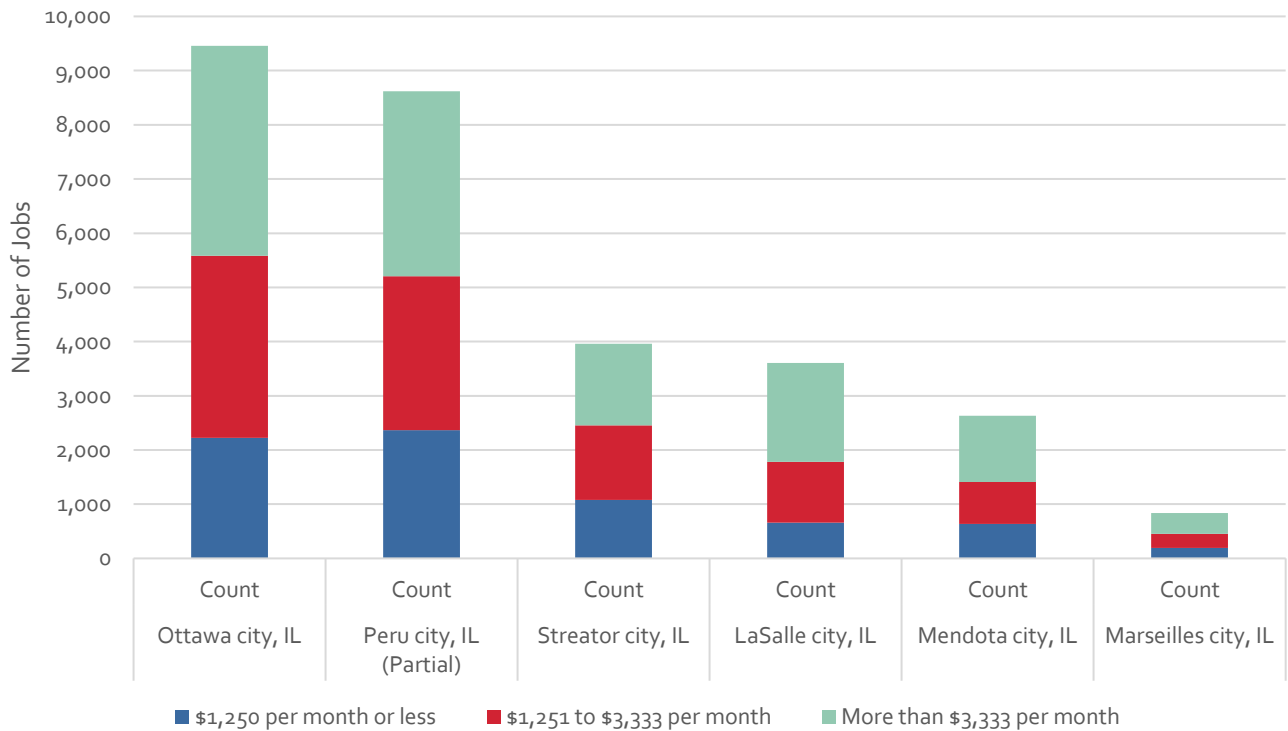
**Table 13. Jobs by Earnings in LaSalle County, 2021**

Earnings	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	9,030	23.2%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	12,155	31.2%
More than \$3,333 per month	17,778	45.6%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Across the six largest communities in LaSalle County, a majority of jobs fall into the middle and upper monthly earnings categories defined in LEHD datasets. However, a sizeable percentage of jobs in each community fall into the category of earnings of \$1,250 or less per month – ranging from about 18 percent of jobs in LaSalle to about 27 percent of jobs in Peru. Figure 31 illustrates this earnings data.

**Figure 31. Jobs by Earnings (Largest Six LaSalle County Communities), 2021**



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector

LEHD data contains counts of the number of jobs in each industry sector, as classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The top five employment sectors in LaSalle County by proportion of total jobs are:

1. Manufacturing
2. Retail Trade
3. Health Care and Social Assistance
4. Educational Services
5. Accommodation and Food Services

Table 14 shows the full breakdown of employment by industry sector in LaSalle County.

**Table 14. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector in LaSalle County, 2021**

NAICS Sector	Count	Share
Manufacturing	5,721	14.7%
Retail Trade	5,417	13.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,786	9.7%
Educational Services	3,364	8.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,358	8.6%
Public Administration	2,379	6.1%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2,289	5.9%
Wholesale Trade	2,100	5.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,876	4.8%
Construction	1,649	4.2%
Finance and Insurance	1,543	4.0%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	1,410	3.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,099	2.8%
Utilities	978	2.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	697	1.8%
Information	356	0.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	288	0.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	268	0.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	245	0.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	140	0.4%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Across the six largest communities in LaSalle County, the largest industry sectors vary from city to city. In Ottawa and Peru, the largest industry sector (based on number of employees) is retail trade. By contrast, wholesale trade is the largest industry sector in LaSalle and Marseilles, while manufacturing is the largest in Streator and Mendota. As the county seat, Ottawa contains the most public administration jobs in LaSalle County. Table 15 shows the number of people employed in each industry in LaSalle County's six largest communities, with the largest industry in each community indicated by green-shaded cells.

Table 15. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (Largest Six LaSalle County Communities), 2021

NAICS Industry Sector	Ottawa	Peru	Streator	LaSalle	Mendota	Marseilles
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	4	1	0	0	0
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	27	52	4	33	0	0
Construction	216	108	267	237	146	35
Manufacturing	852	1,864	692	431	593	85
Wholesale Trade	566	194	137	477	241	132
Retail Trade	1,355	1,957	605	303	319	88
Transportation and Warehousing	319	410	112	247	10	2
Information	58	60	41	40	12	66
Finance and Insurance	481	103	207	202	262	26
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	88	63	8	5	6	3
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	482	268	29	70	66	17
Management of Companies and Enterprises	28	69	0	0	0	34
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	967	587	309	104	9	3
Educational Services	653	177	423	434	348	112
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,080	1,168	462	497	185	92
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	32	53	58	21	16	3
Accommodation and Food Services	763	990	426	184	243	77
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	421	333	75	228	102	30
Public Administration	1,070	157	104	94	72	34

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

\*Green-shaded cells indicate the largest employment industry in each city

Geographically, the locations of jobs vary by industry sector in LaSalle County. The general trends for the county's five largest industries are as follows:

- Manufacturing jobs cluster most heavily in Peru, and smaller clusters of manufacturing jobs exist in Ottawa, Mendota, and Streator.
- Retail Trade jobs cluster most heavily near the I-80 and Columbus Street interchange in Ottawa and along Highway 251 in Peru.
- Health Care and Social Assistance jobs tend to cluster near major medical facilities in Ottawa and Peru.
- Educational Services jobs tend to be more evenly distributed around the county, with major employment clusters appearing near schools and school district administrative offices.
- Accommodation and Food Services jobs tend to cluster around I-80 interchanges in Ottawa and Peru, where many lodging and dining businesses are located. This industry is also heavily concentrated along the Highway 251 corridor in Peru, and smaller clusters exist within many cities and towns as well.

## Jobs by Worker Educational Attainment

LEHD data contains information about the educational attainment status of people employed in LaSalle County. A majority of the jobs in LaSalle County are filled by people with at least some college or an associate degree. However, about a third of the jobs are filled by people that have a high school diploma or less. Table 16 shows data on jobs by worker educational attainment in LaSalle County.

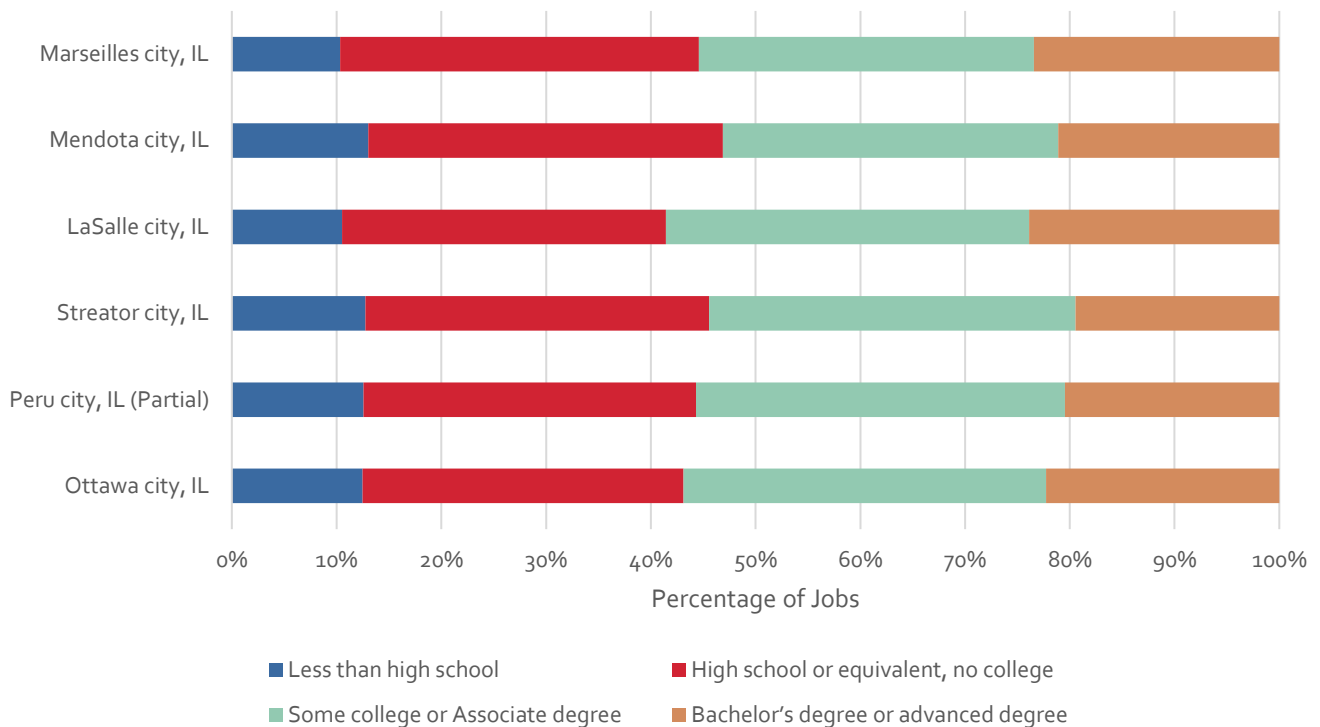
Table 16. Jobs in LaSalle County by Worker Educational Attainment, 2021

Worker Educational Attainment	Count	Share
Less than high school	3,580	9.2%
High school or equivalent, no college	9,508	24.4%
Some college or Associate degree	10,358	26.6%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	6,642	17.0%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	8,875	22.8%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Educational attainment levels tend to be similar across the workforce in each of LaSalle County's six largest communities. In each community, a majority of the workforce for whom the educational attainment level is known has completed at least some college or an associate degree. LaSalle has the highest rate of workers with bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees, while Mendota has the highest rate of workers who have completed high school or less. Figure 32 shows a breakdown of educational attainment for workers in each of LaSalle County's six largest cities.

Figure 32. Jobs by Worker Education Attainment (Largest Six LaSalle County Communities), 2021



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Work Destinations

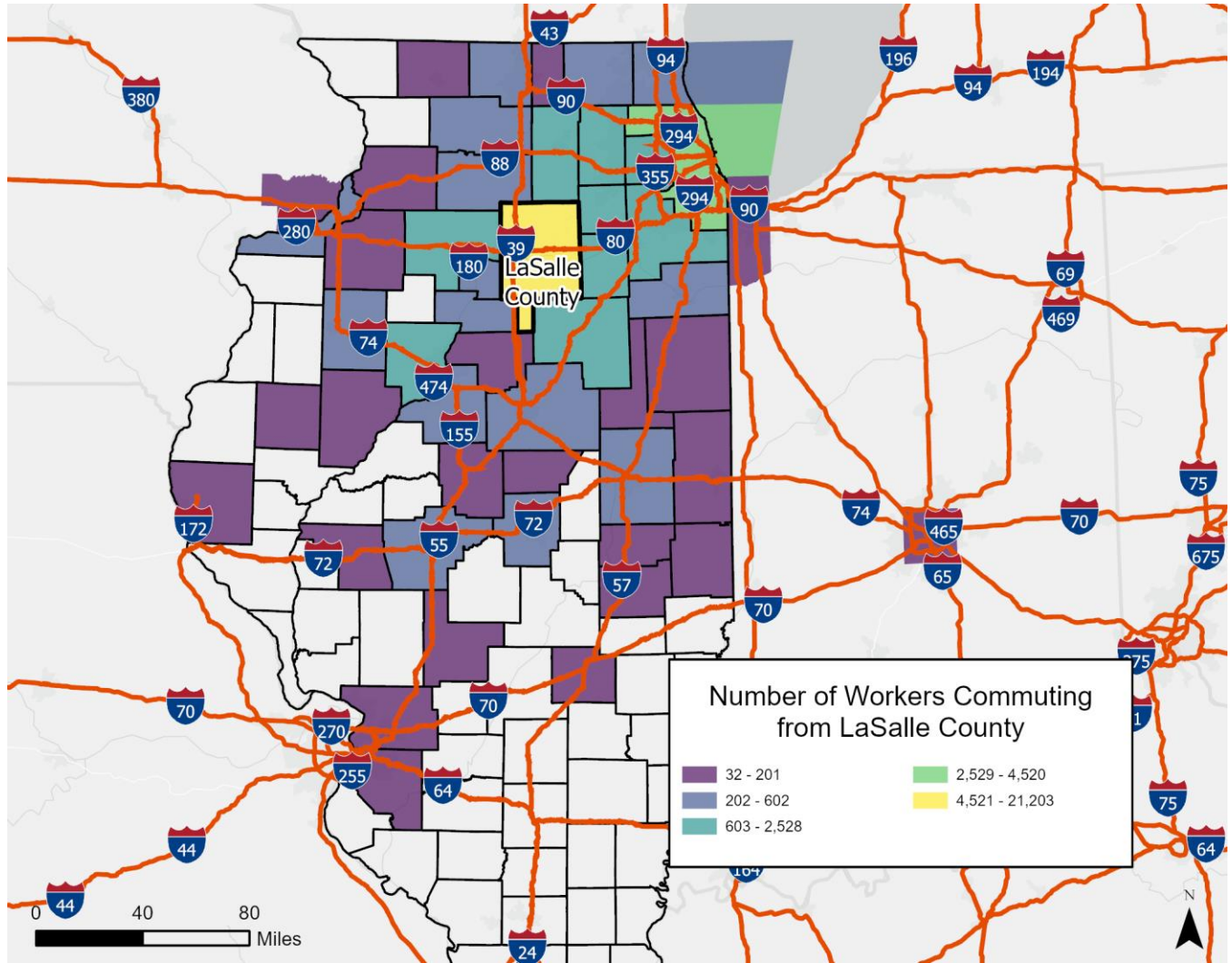
Based on LEHD data, a slight majority (56.2 percent) of workers who live in LaSalle County commute to locations outside the county for work. The top out-of-county destinations for employees living in LaSalle County are Cook County, DuPage County, and Will County, all of which are part of the Chicago metropolitan area. Table 17 summarizes all commute destinations for workers living in LaSalle County. Figure 33 contains a map of the top 50 destination counties for LaSalle County commuters.

Table 17. Commute Destinations from LaSalle County, 2021

Commute Destination	Count	Share
LaSalle County, IL	21,203	43.8%
Cook County, IL	4,520	9.3%
DuPage County, IL	2,528	5.2%
Will County, IL	2,329	4.8%
Grundy County, IL	1,774	3.7%
Kendall County, IL	1,616	3.3%
Kane County, IL	1,439	3.0%
Bureau County, IL	1,215	2.5%
Peoria County, IL	1,212	2.5%
DeKalb County, IL	1,135	2.3%
All Other Locations	9,475	19.6%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

Figure 33. Top 50 Commute Destinations for Workers Living in LaSalle County, 2021



Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Commute Distance and Direction

LEHD Distance/Direction Analysis data is useful for understanding the magnitude and direction of work commutes. The data in this case represents commute distances for workers living in LaSalle County. According to LEHD data, in 2021 over 48,000 workers lived in LaSalle County. This group of workers includes county residents who work both inside and outside of LaSalle County. The largest portion of this group commutes less than 10 miles, closely followed by workers who commute greater than 50 miles. Table 18 shows the number and percentage of workers in each of the four commute distance categories contained in LEHD data.

**Table 18. Job Counts by Commute Distance**

<b>Commute Distance</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Total All Jobs	48,446	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	15,518	32.0%
10 to 24 miles	10,673	22.0%
25 to 50 miles	6,997	14.4%
Greater than 50 miles	15,258	31.5%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Worker Inflow/Outflow

LEHD data indicates that LaSalle County experiences a net outflow of workers, meaning that more workers leave the county every day to go to work than those who come into the county for work. In 2021, approximately 18,000 people entered LaSalle County for work while approximately 27,000 LaSalle County residents left the county for work.

### Outflow Job Characteristics

LEHD inflow/outflow data contains information on the characteristics of outflow jobs, or jobs outside of LaSalle County worked by LaSalle County residents. In 2021, about 27,243 jobs fell into this classification. A slight majority out-of-county jobs filled by LaSalle County residents had the following characteristics:

- Workers fell into the 30-54 age group
- Workers earned more than \$3,333 per month
- Workers were employed in industries other than “goods producing” and “trade, transportation, and utilities”

Table 19 contains detailed outflow job characteristics.

**Table 19. Outflow Job Characteristics**

Job Characteristic	Count	Share
External Jobs Filled by Residents	27,243	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	6,351	23.3%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	14,090	51.7%
Workers Aged 55 or older	6,802	25.0%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	5,056	18.6%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	8,108	29.8%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	14,079	51.7%
Workers in the “Goods Producing” Industry Class	5,534	20.3%
Workers in the “Trade, Transportation, and Utilities” Industry Class	8,048	29.5%
Workers in the “All Other Services” Industry Class	13,661	50.1%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Inflow Job Characteristics

LEHD inflow/outflow data contains information on the characteristics of inflow jobs, or jobs located inside LaSalle County filled by workers living outside the county. In 2021, about 17,760 jobs fell into this classification. These jobs exhibit the following trends:

- A slight majority of workers (50.8 percent) fall into the 30-54 age group
- A slight majority (50.4 percent) of workers earn \$3,333 or less per month,
- About 55 percent of workers are employed in either the “goods producing” or “trade, transportation, and utilities” industry classes

Table 20 contains detailed inflow job characteristics.

**Table 20. Inflow Job Characteristics**

Job Characteristic	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	17,760	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	4,330	24.4%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	9,029	50.8%
Workers Aged 55 or older	4,401	24.8%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	3,794	21.4%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	5,161	29.1%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	8,805	49.6%
Workers in the “Goods Producing” Industry Class	3,411	19.2%
Workers in the “Trade, Transportation, and Utilities” Industry Class	6,357	35.8%
Workers in the “All Other Services” Industry Class	7,992	45.0%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Interior Flow Job Characteristics

LEHD inflow/outflow data contains information on the characteristics of interior flow jobs, or jobs located within LaSalle County filled by workers who live in the county. In 2021, about 21,203 jobs fell into this classification. These jobs exhibit the following trends:

- Nearly half (49.9 percent) of workers fall into the 30-54 age group
- The largest group of workers (42.3 percent) earn more than \$3,333 per month, though no income group reaches a majority
- A majority (57.8 percent) of workers are employed in industries other than “goods producing” and “trade, transportation, and utilities”

Table 21 contains detailed interior flow job characteristics.

**Table 21. Internal Flow Job Characteristics**

Job Characteristics	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	21,203	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	4,545	21.4%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	10,576	49.9%
Workers Aged 55 or older	6,082	28.7%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	5,236	24.7%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	6,994	33.0%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	8,973	42.3%
Workers in the “Goods Producing” Industry Class	4,944	23.3%
Workers in the “Trade, Transportation, and Utilities” Industry Class	4,014	18.9%
Workers in the “All Other Services” Industry Class	12,245	57.8%

Source: OnTheMap (US Census Bureau), 2021 LEHD data

## Key Takeaways

LaSalle County is home to approximately 39,000 jobs. Jobs in LaSalle County tend to be located in and around the county's major population centers, including places like Ottawa, Peru, LaSalle, Streator, Mendota, and Marseilles. Some higher concentrations of jobs are also seen in less highly populated areas, such as in Sheridan (associated with the Sheridan Correctional Center) and at the nuclear energy plant south of Marseilles.

Segments of the LEHD data can be summarized as follows:

- Most workers in LaSalle County fall into the 30-54 age group, as classified by the Census Bureau's employment data.
- A majority of jobs in the county also offer earnings in the top two of the LEHD dataset's three monthly earnings categories, though the lowest earnings category has the single largest job count of the three categories.
- A majority of jobs around the county are filled by people with some college education or an associate degree or higher.
- The top industry sectors by overall employment counts in LaSalle County are Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Health Care and Social Assistance; Educational Services; and Accommodation and Food Services.

A slight majority of workers who live in LaSalle County commute outside the county for work, although many county residents' commutes stay in-county. Among those who commute out of the county, most travel to the northeast to jobs in counties that make up the Chicago metropolitan area.

On a typical day, more people leave LaSalle County for work than those who enter LaSalle County from elsewhere for work. While LaSalle County experiences a net outflow of workers, LaSalle County maintains a sizeable employment base that can be served by NCAT. The detailed employment characteristics of LaSalle County in combination with demographics and other factors will be used to help develop recommendations for future service enhancements within the NCAT transit system.

# Travel Patterns

Travel pattern data helps to define broad trends in travel behavior in a particular area. In the case of LaSalle County and its local transit system, travel flow information can help NCAT understand where, when, why, and how people travel. This information is valuable for service planning purposes, as it can guide the process of making decisions about where in the county to focus more on providing transit services. Travel flow data can also help to define areas that may have high enough travel demand to justify adding a fixed route service that could reduce strain on NCAT's demand response services.

This section presents LaSalle County travel flow data from Replica, a third-party provider of transportation data. Data specifically comes from Replica's seasonal trip table dataset.<sup>3</sup> This dataset is created through the use of "seasonal, high-fidelity simulation that accurately represents the population and its travel patterns for the whole country." The model is built using mobile location data, consumer/resident data, built environment data, and economic activity data, and it is validated using "ground truth" data (i.e. real-world observations). Seasonal datasets are generated using Replica's model twice a year (once in spring and once in fall) and represent typical seasonal trip patterns. This dataset is highly valuable in travel flow analysis, as it offers an accurate representation of highly granular travel behavior without sacrificing personal privacy (because every trip in the dataset is simulated).

The travel flow data in this section comes from Replica's fall 2023 trip table for the Great Lakes region and represents typical travel behaviors on both weekdays and weekends during that time. Travel patterns in this chapter are organized into two broad categories: trips originating in LaSalle County and trips terminating in LaSalle County. Within each group, trip data is summarized for both weekdays and weekends with the following individual data points:

- Trip duration and distance
- Trip origins and destinations
- Trip starting hour
- Amtrak usage
- Top destinations by county
- Trip purpose
- Mode share
- Work trip characteristics
- Characteristics of travel between LaSalle County and Cook County

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<sup>3</sup> <https://documentation.replicahq.com/docs/disaggregate-trip-tables>

# Trips Originating in LaSalle County

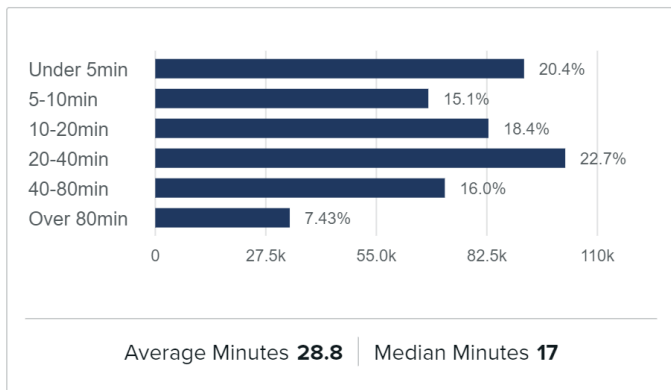
Trip data can be divided into two broad categories: trips that originate in LaSalle County and trips that terminate in LaSalle County. Many trips fit into both categories, but some trips may only fit into one. To determine if there are any significant differences in travel patterns between the two categories, data for each are analyzed and presented separately. This section provides data that describe the characteristics of all trips originating in LaSalle County, including all purposes and all modes, on a typical weekday and a typical weekend.

## Weekday Trips

### Trip Duration and Distance

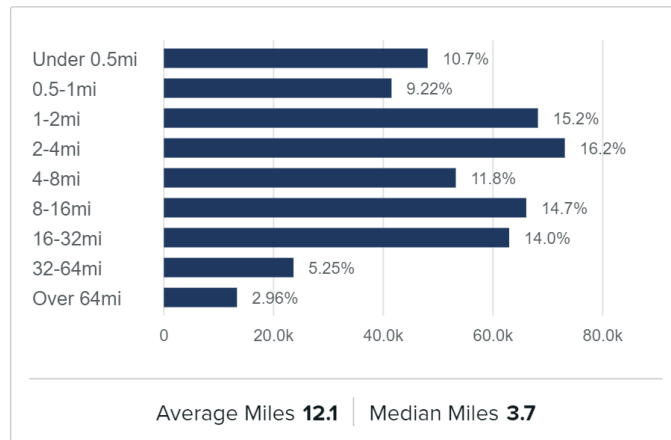
The median trip originating in LaSalle County on a weekday takes 17 minutes and covers a distance of 3.7 miles. This suggests that most people beginning their trips in LaSalle County tend to stay in LaSalle County, and this is confirmed by origin-destination data (presented below). Figure 34 and Figure 35 illustrate trip duration and distance for weekday trips made in LaSalle County, respectively.

Figure 34. Duration of Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 35. Distance of Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

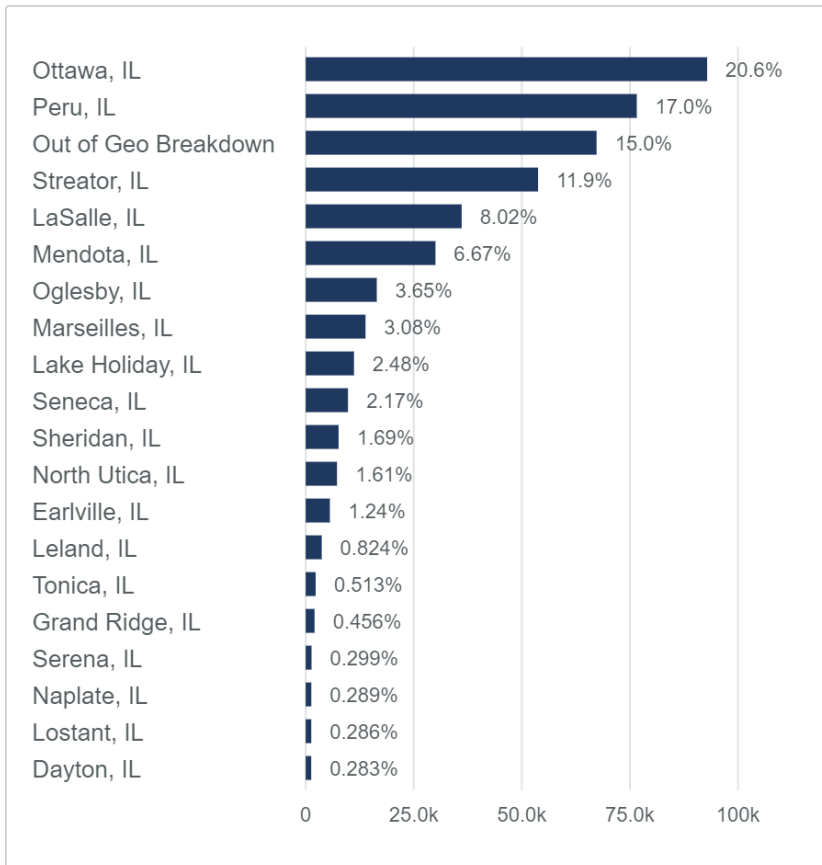


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Origins and Destinations

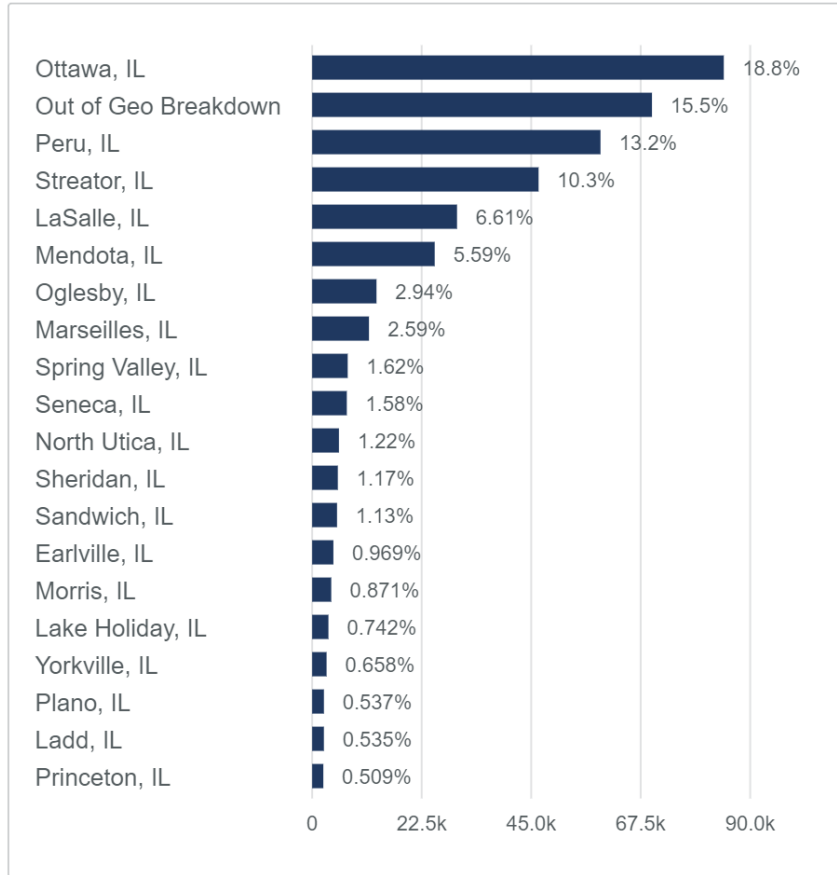
As mentioned above, the median trip originating in LaSalle County is relatively short, suggesting that most trips starting in-county also end in-county. Origin and destination data show that this is accurate. Figure 36 and Figure 37 provide data on the top origin and destination communities for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County, respectively. Figure 38 shows number of trip destinations by census block group for all trips originating in LaSalle County on a typical weekday.

Figure 36. Top Origin Cities for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



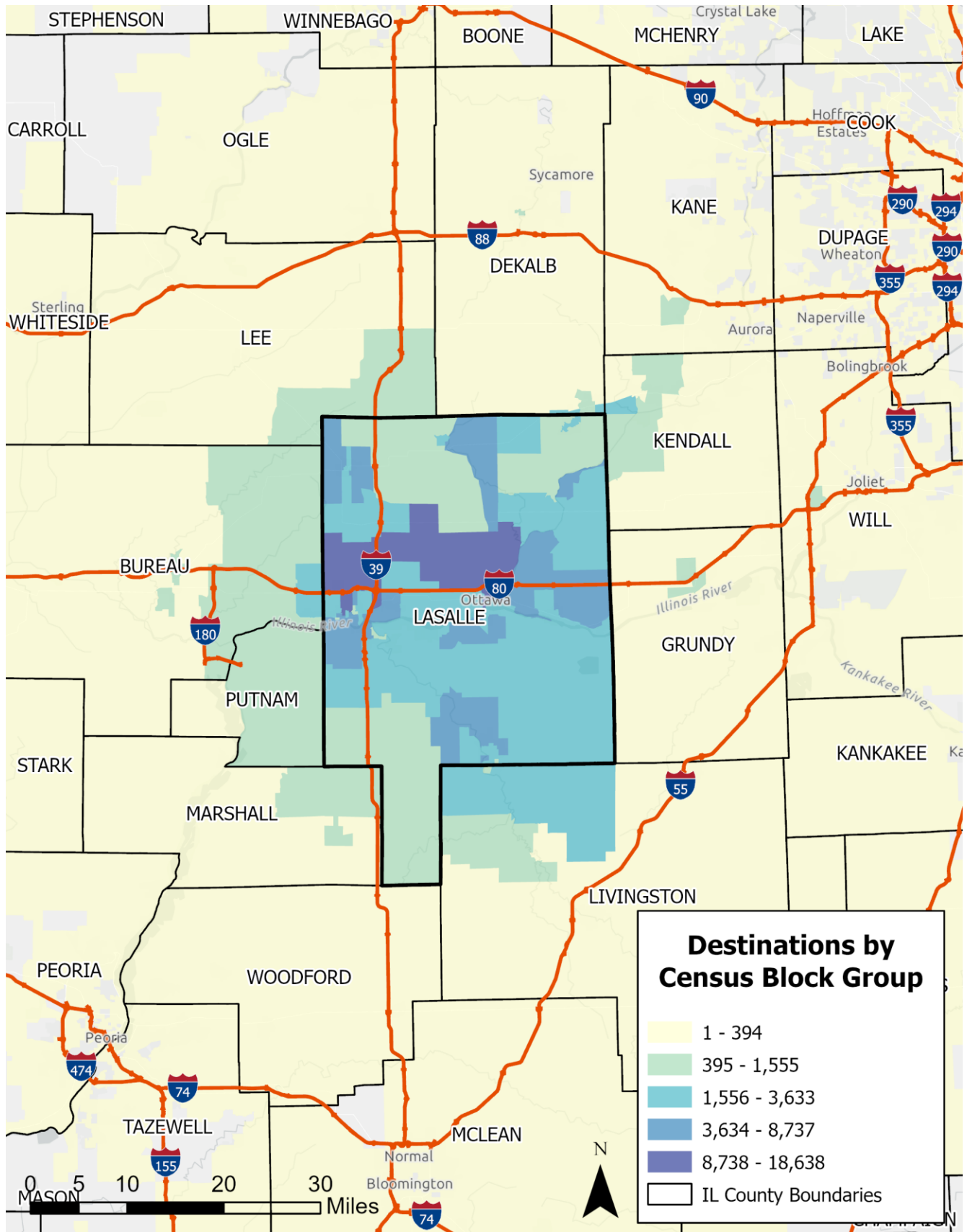
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 37. Top Destinations for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 38. Destinations for All Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

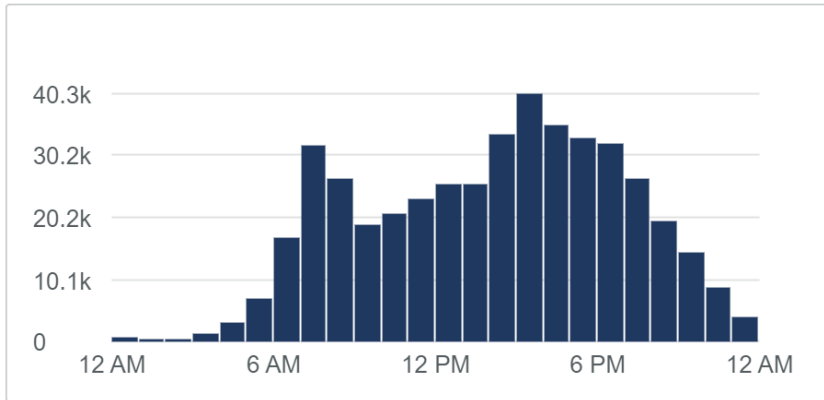


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Starting Hour

The start times for trips originating in LaSalle County on weekdays exhibit a pattern typical of weekday trips in most communities. The data in Figure 34 show that there are peaks in trip activity in the morning and afternoon, likely correlating with commute periods for workers.

Figure 39. Starting Hour for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

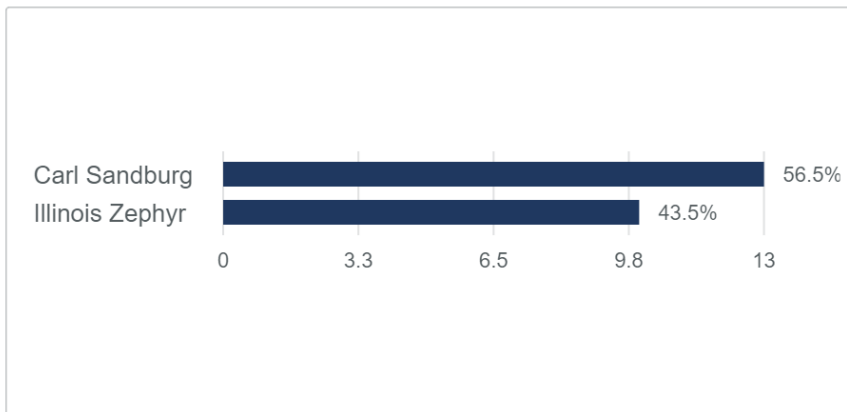


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Amtrak Usage

Replica provides transit trip data only for fixed route transit. The only fixed route transit currently operating in LaSalle County are the Carl Sandburg and Illinois Zephyr Amtrak routes, which both run in the same corridor and stop in Mendota. People starting trips in LaSalle County on a typical weekday appear to ride the Carl Sandburg route slightly more (about 13 boardings per day) than the Illinois Zephyr (about 10 boardings per day). See Figure 40 for Amtrak usage data.

Figure 40. Amtrak Usage for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Top Destinations by County

Over 80 percent of trips beginning in LaSalle County on a typical weekday also end in LaSalle County. Among those that leave the county, most of the top 10 destinations are located in counties that make up the Chicago metropolitan area. Cook County (home to the City of Chicago) is the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular destination for trips ending outside of LaSalle County. Table 22 shows the top destinations by county for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County.

Table 22. Top Destinations by County for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

Destination	Trips	Percent of Total
LaSalle County, IL	361,254	80.6%
Bureau County, IL	19,926	4.4%
Kendall County, IL	10,074	2.2%
DeKalb County, IL	9,340	2.1%
Livingston County, IL	7,349	1.6%
Grundy County, IL	7,127	1.6%
Will County, IL	4,714	1.1%
Putnam County, IL	4,414	1.0%
Lee County, IL	3,460	0.8%
Kane County, IL	3,131	0.7%
Cook County, IL	3,125	0.7%
Marshall County, IL	2,498	0.6%
DuPage County, IL	2,374	0.5%
McLean County, IL	1,698	0.4%
Woodford County, IL	836	0.2%
Ogle County, IL	717	0.2%
Peoria County, IL	647	0.1%
Winnebago County, IL	575	0.1%
Whiteside County, IL	429	0.1%
Henry County, IL	362	0.1%

Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

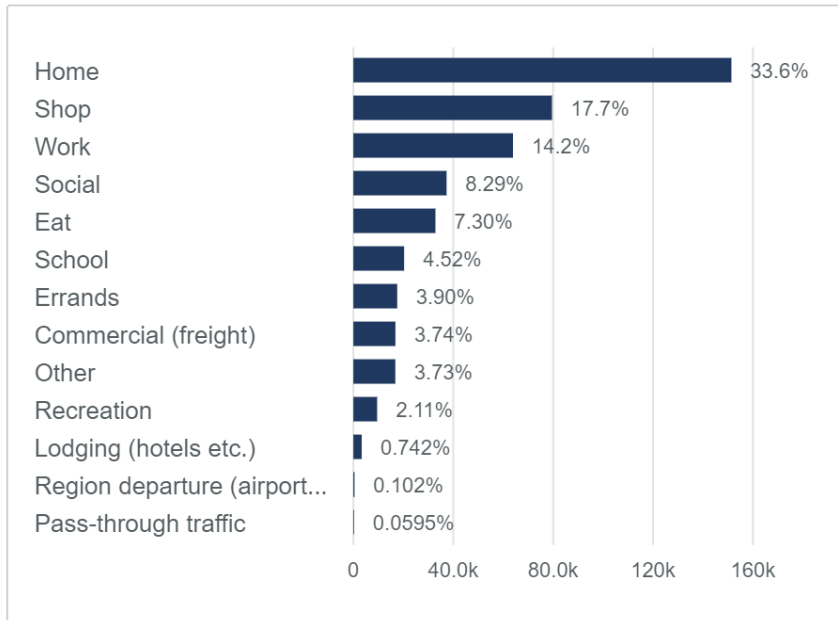
## Trip Purpose

Replica trip data includes information on the purposes of all trips made within a particular selection area. In this section, trip purposes are provided for trips based on whether they start or end in LaSalle County and whether the trips occur on weekdays or weekends. In all cases, “home” is the largest category of trips, making up about one third of the total trips. This category is largest because every person who makes a trip must return home at some point. After home trips, the top trip purposes vary.

Aside from home trips, the top trip purposes for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County include work trips and trips made for various commercial and social activities. Work trips making up a high proportion of total trips is expected for weekday trips. School trips make up a somewhat small proportion of trips on weekdays compared to work trips, but they represent a larger share of trips on weekdays compared to

weekends. Figure 41 shows a full breakdown of trip purposes for all trips originating in LaSalle County on weekdays.

Figure 41. Purposes of Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



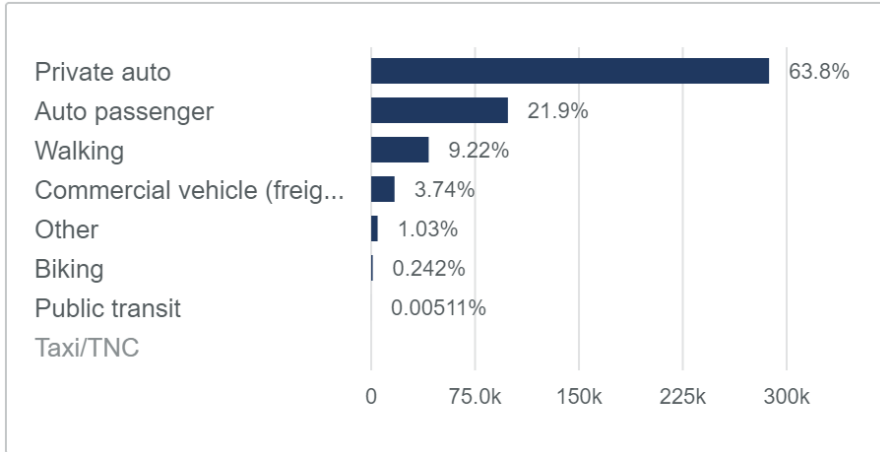
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Mode Share

Replica data offers information about the primary modes of transportation used to make each. This data can help to describe the modal preferences of a transit provider’s service area. The modal split data provided by Replica is fairly limited in its relevance to NCAT transit services, as Replica only counts trips on fixed route transit under its “public transit” category. The only fixed route transit service available in LaSalle County is Amtrak, which offers service in Mendota on the Carl Sandburg and Illinois Zephyr routes. However, Amtrak passengers may wish to travel to/from the train station in Mendota via transit, and the data presented in this section help to define how much opportunity there may be to make connections between NCAT and Amtrak.

Among all trips originating in LaSalle County on weekdays, the vast majority are made by car (about 85.7 percent of all trips fall into the “private auto” or “auto passenger” categories). Approximately nine percent of trips are made on foot, and nearly four percent of trips are made with commercial vehicles, such as freight trucks. Public transportation trips (i.e. Amtrak passengers boarding in Mendota) represent a very small portion of overall trips (23 trips out of approximately 450k total). Figure 42 shows mode share data graphically for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County.

Figure 42. Mode Share for Weekday Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



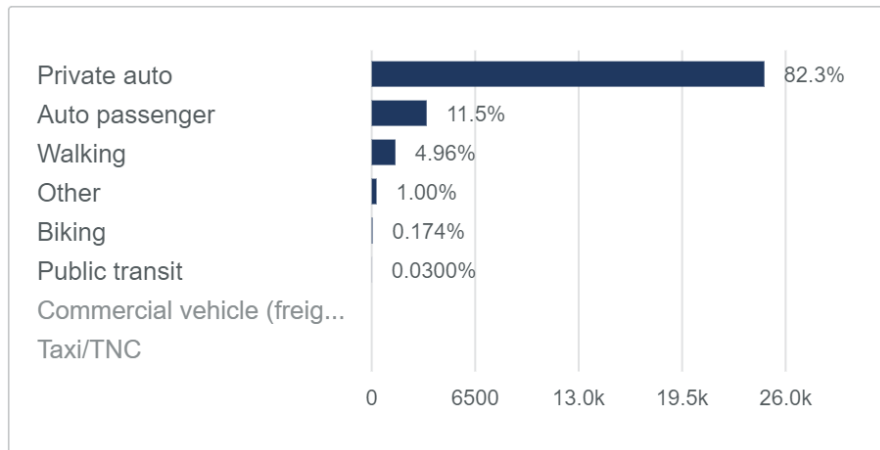
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Work Trips in Five Largest Industries

### PRIMARY MODE

Commuters in LaSalle County’s top five industries who begin their work trips in-county on weekdays overwhelmingly access their jobs by car, with private auto and auto passenger making up 93.8% of these trips. Approximately five percent of these trips are made by foot, with all other modes being much smaller. Notably, because Replica’s transit trip classification only includes trips made on fixed route transit, a handful of people beginning their commutes in LaSalle County do so by Amtrak. Figure 43 shows the primary transportation mode for weekday work trips beginning in LaSalle County made by people employed in the county’s five largest industries.

Figure 43. Primary Mode of Weekday Work Trips starting in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

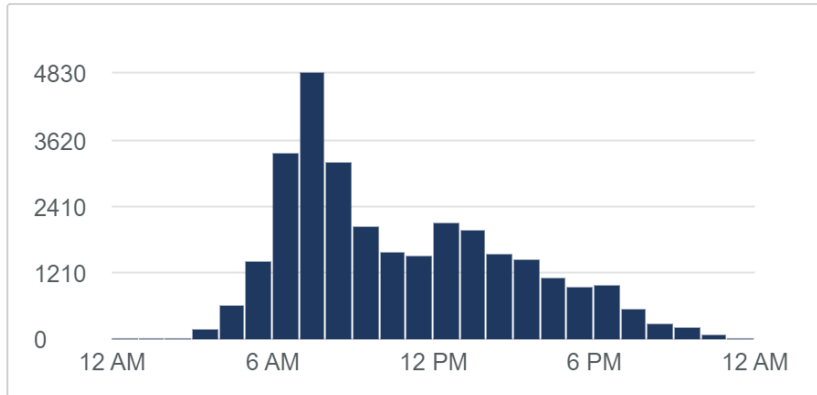


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## STARTING HOUR

Commuting patterns among workers in LaSalle County’s top five industries indicate that there are two travel peaks among trips starting in LaSalle County on weekdays—one in the morning around 7:00 AM and another around noon (see Figure 44). These trips represent only trips made to work, not trips going home from work, which explains why an afternoon/evening peak is not observed. The small peak in trips around noon may reflect trips made by workers returning to their job site after having lunch at an offsite location or individuals working the second shift.

Figure 44. Start Times for Weekday Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

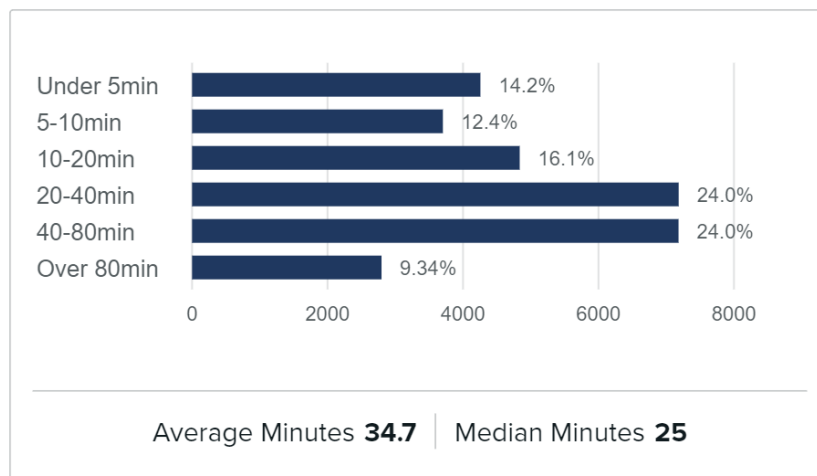


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## TRIP DURATION AND DISTANCE

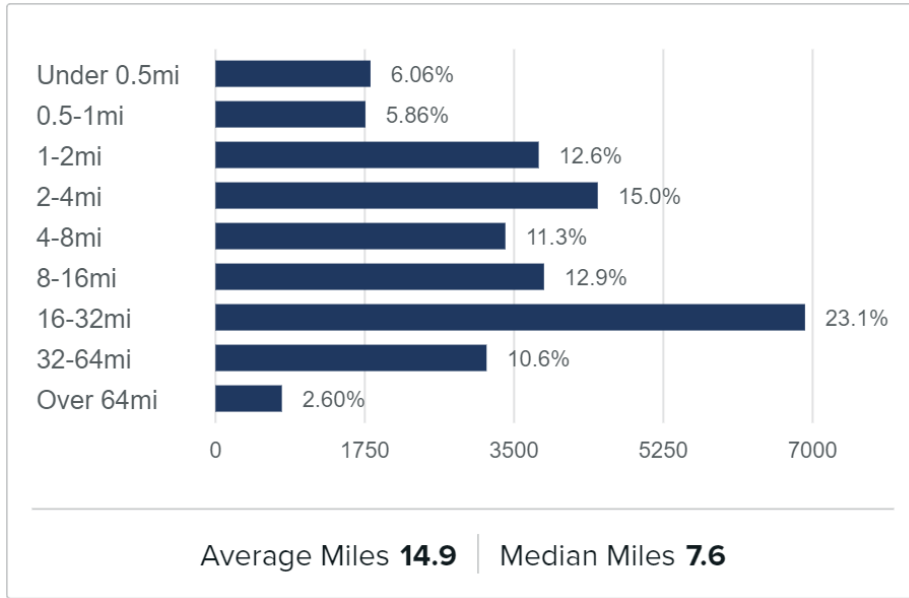
The median commute trip beginning in LaSalle County on weekdays (among workers in the county’s top five industries) takes about 25 minutes and covers a distance of 7.6 miles. This is significantly longer than the duration and distance of all trips (Figure 34 and Figure 35), which suggests that commuters may be willing to travel farther to access a jobsite than for other trip purposes. Figure 45 and Figure 46 show the trip duration and distance data for weekday work trips originating in LaSalle County among workers in the county’s top five industries.

Figure 45. Duration of Weekday Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 46. Distance of Weekday Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

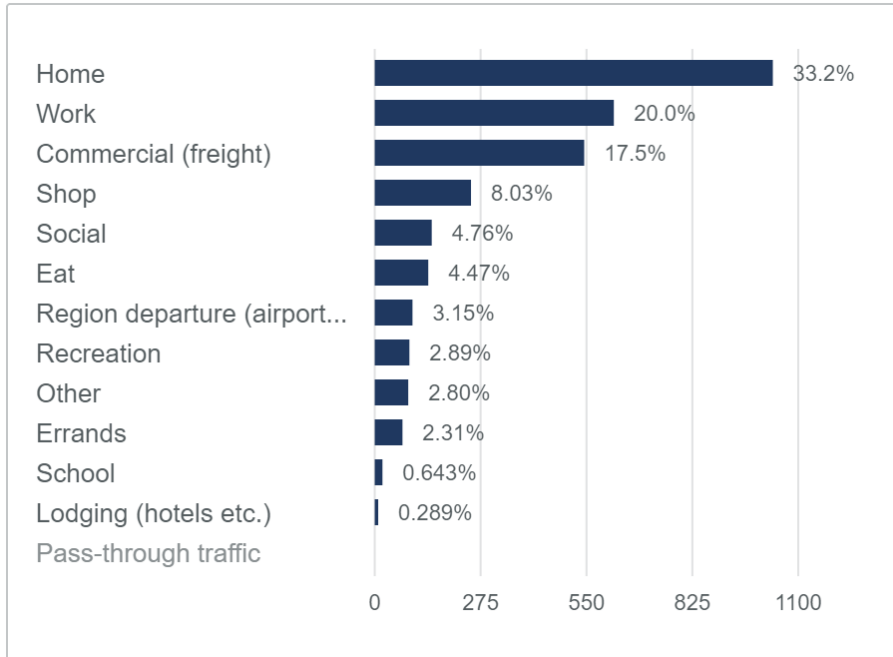
## Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County

Replica’s capabilities include the ability to filter trips data for trips between specific locations. LaSalle County is located directly outside the Chicago metropolitan area, where the highest concentration of jobs and non-work destinations is found in Cook County. Replica travel flow data and LEHD work commute data indicate that Cook County is a relatively common destination for commuters and others traveling out of LaSalle County. This section explores the trip purposes and starting hours for weekday and weekend trips between LaSalle and Cook Counties.

### TRIP PURPOSE

Aside from home trips, work trips appear to be the most common reason for travel from LaSalle County to Cook County, making up about one-fifth of all trips. Commercial freight traffic represents the next most common trip purpose (about 17.5 percent), likely a product of LaSalle County’s connections to Chicago via freight railroads and Interstate 80 (a major shipping corridor) and Chicago’s status as a major national multimodal logistics hub. Other top trip purposes include mostly commercial activities (e.g. shopping and dining) and social purposes, as well as trips made to airports in the Chicago area. Figure 47 highlights the proportion of all trip purposes.

Figure 47. Purpose of Weekday Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County, Fall 2023

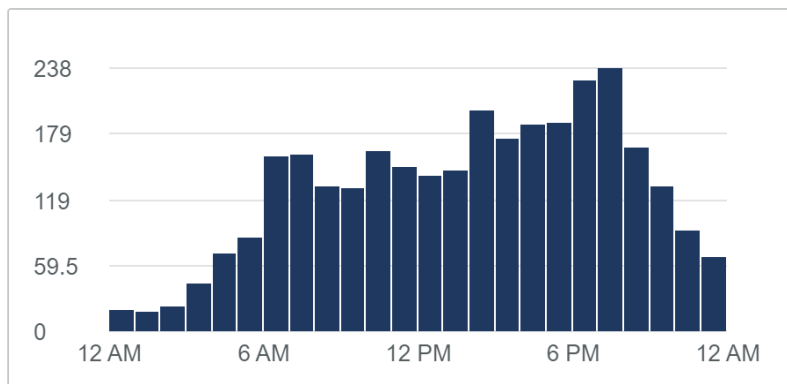


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## STARTING HOUR

Weekday trips from LaSalle County to Cook County are relatively well distributed between about 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM, with the highest peak in the evening around 7:00 PM. Figure 48 shows the temporal distribution of all trips.

Figure 48. Starting Hour of Weekday Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County, Fall 2023



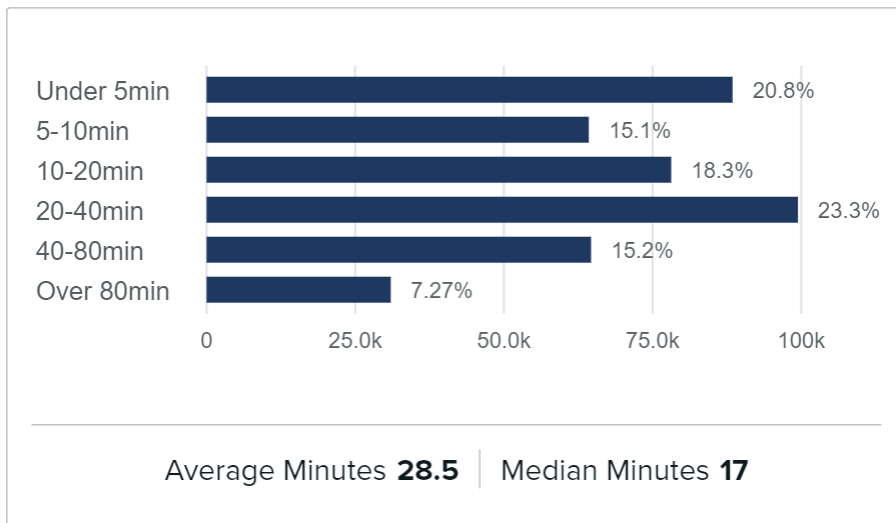
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Weekend Trips

### Trip Duration and Distance

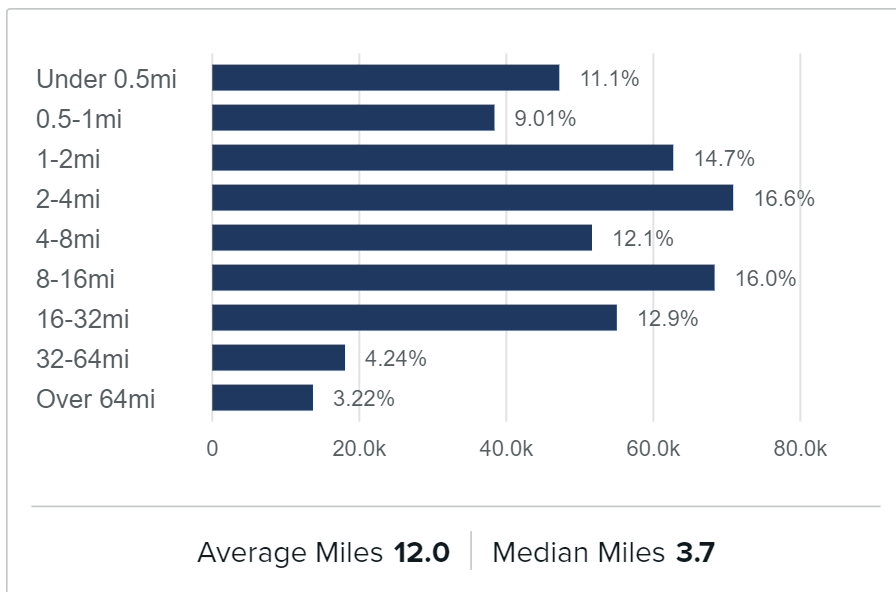
The median trip duration and distance for all weekend trips originating in LaSalle County are equal to those of weekday trips (though the averages vary slightly). The average weekend trip starting in-county takes 17 minutes and covers a distance of 3.7 miles. Similar to weekday trips, the relatively short trip distances and durations suggest that many trips tend to stay within LaSalle County rather than leaving the county. This is seen in the origin and destination data (presented below). Figure 49 and Figure 50 show trip duration and distance data for all weekend trips originating in LaSalle County.

Figure 49. Duration of Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 50. Distance of Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

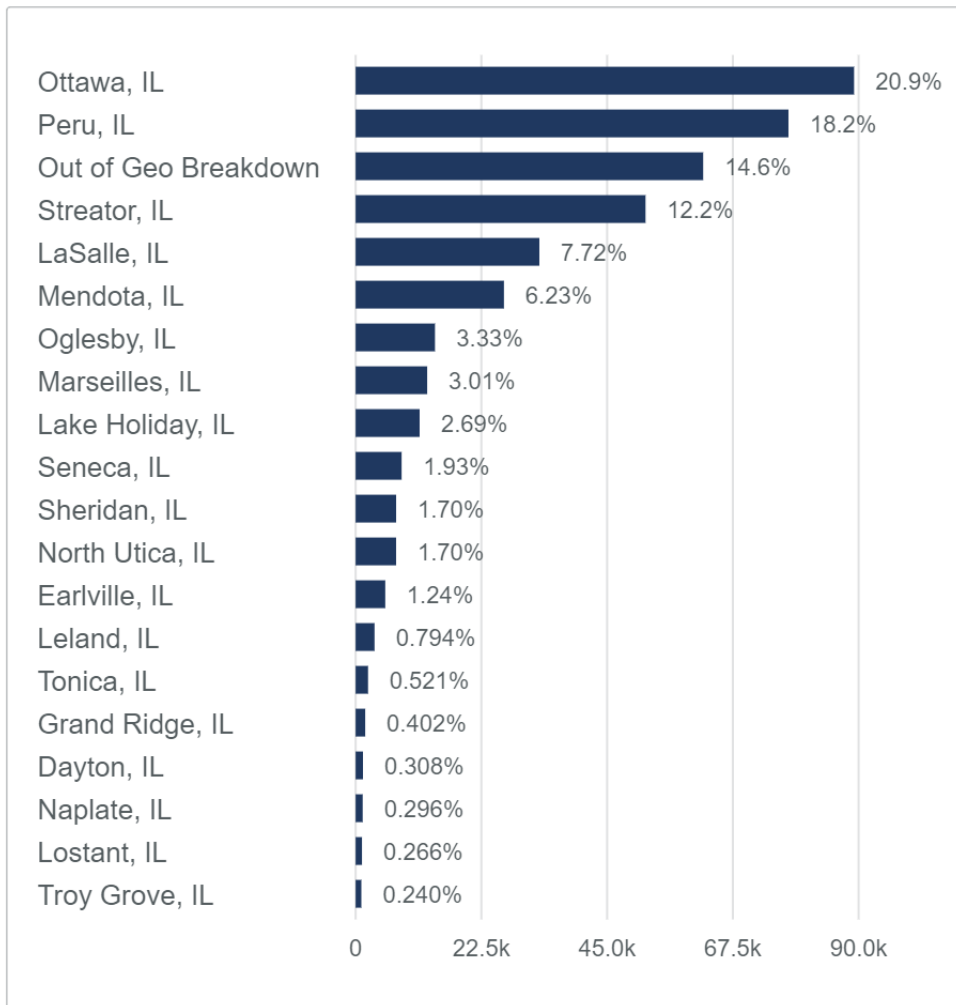


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Origins and Destinations

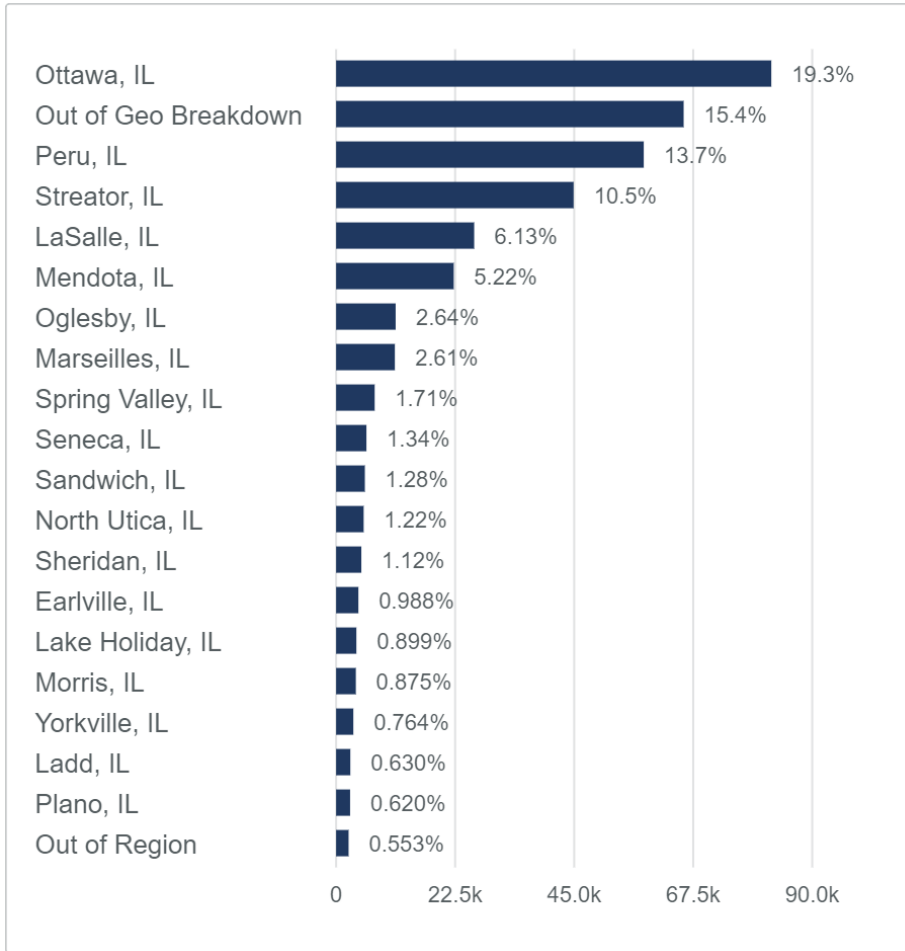
As mentioned above, the median trip originating in LaSalle County is relatively short, suggesting that most trips starting in-county also end in-county. Origin and destination data show this to be the case. Figure 51 and Figure 52 provide data on the top origin and destination communities for weekend trips originating in LaSalle County, respectively. Figure 53 shows the number trip destinations by census block group for all trips originating in LaSalle County on a typical weekend.

Figure 51. Top Origin Cities for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



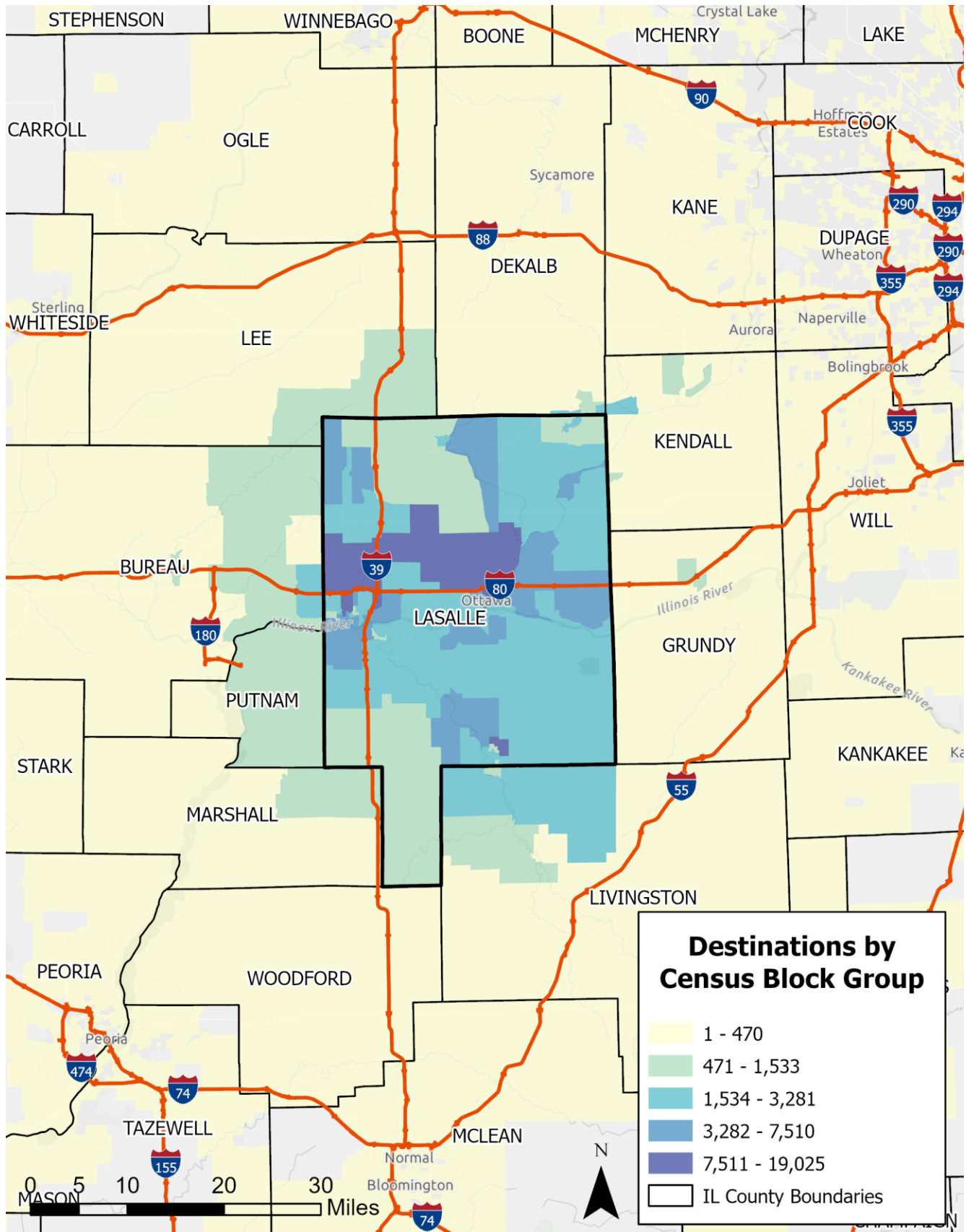
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 52. Top Destinations for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 53. Destinations for All Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

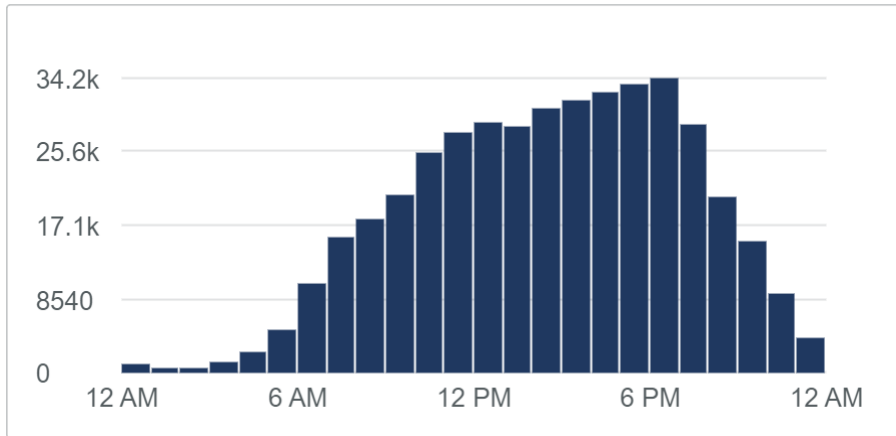


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Starting Hour

The start times for trips originating in LaSalle County on weekends exhibit a pattern typical of weekend trips in most communities. The data in Figure 54 show that many trips begin in the afternoon hours with a single peak around 6:00 PM, after which the number of trips drops sharply.

Figure 54. Start Times for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

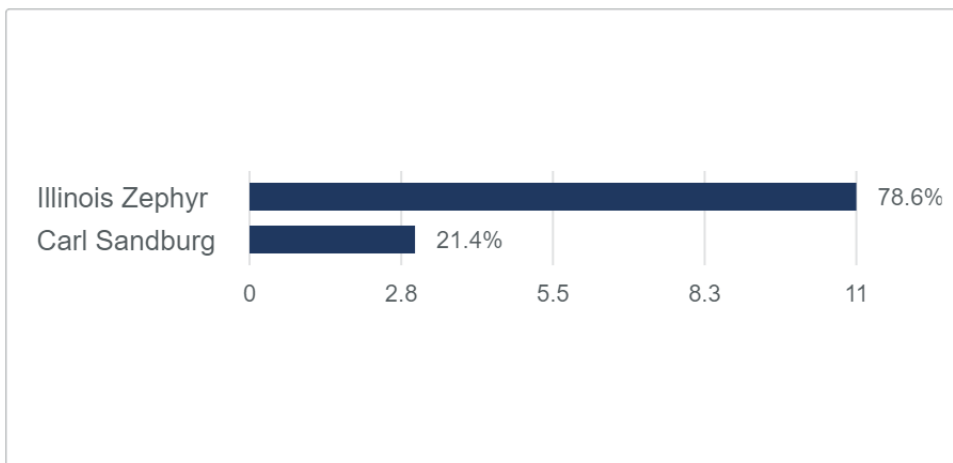


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Amtrak Usage

Replica provides transit trip data only for fixed route transit. The only fixed route transit currently operating in LaSalle County are the Carl Sandburg and Illinois Zephyr Amtrak routes, which both run in the same corridor and stop in Mendota. Unlike on weekdays, people starting trips on Amtrak in LaSalle County on a typical weekend appear to have a strong preference for the Illinois Zephyr, which sees about 11 riders per day compared to the Carl Sandburg route's three (approximately). See Figure 55 for Amtrak use data.

Figure 55. Amtrak Use for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Top Destinations by County

Over 80 percent of trips beginning in LaSalle County on a typical weekend also end in LaSalle County. Among those that leave the county, most of the top 10 destinations are located in counties that make up the Chicago metropolitan area. Cook County is the 9<sup>th</sup> most popular destination for trips ending outside of LaSalle County, receiving about 0.8 percent of all trips originating in LaSalle County. Table 23 shows the top destinations by county for weekend trips originating in LaSalle County.

**Table 23. Top Destinations by County for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023**

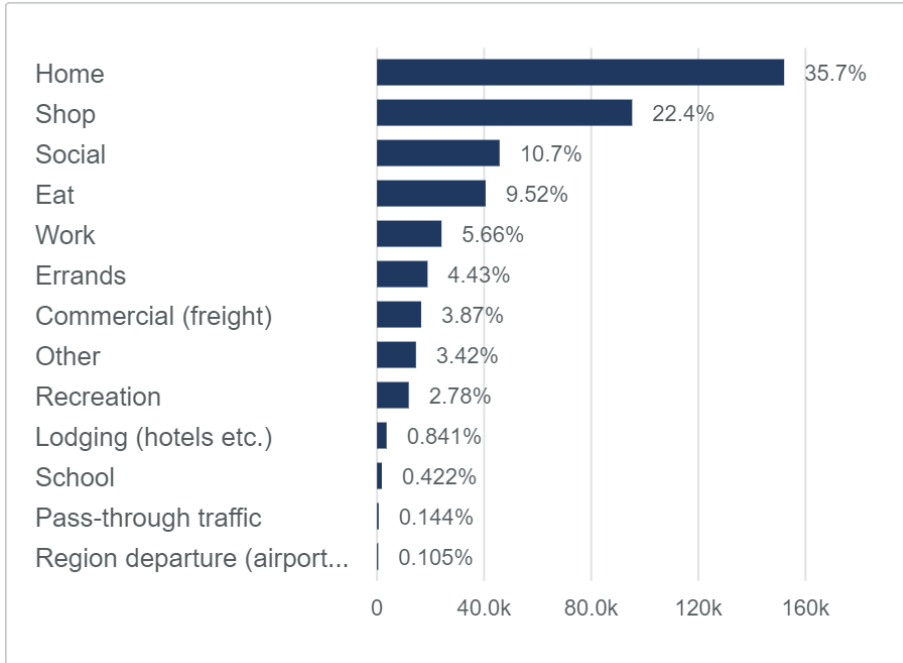
Destination	Trips	Percent of Total
LaSalle County, IL	340,486	80.4%
Bureau County, IL	20,047	4.7%
Kendall County, IL	10,432	2.5%
DeKalb County, IL	8,495	2.0%
Livingston County, IL	6,585	1.6%
Grundy County, IL	6,262	1.5%
Putnam County, IL	4,930	1.2%
Will County, IL	3,729	0.9%
Lee County, IL	3,540	0.8%
Cook County, IL	3,526	0.8%
Marshall County, IL	2,550	0.6%
Kane County, IL	1,919	0.5%
DuPage County, IL	1,852	0.4%
McLean County, IL	1,448	0.3%
Peoria County, IL	676	0.2%
Woodford County, IL	652	0.2%
Ogle County, IL	621	0.1%
Winnebago County, IL	550	0.1%
Henry County, IL	362	0.1%
Tazewell County, IL	314	0.1%

Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Purpose

Aside from home trips, the top trip purposes for weekend trips starting in LaSalle County are for commercial and social purposes, including shopping, eating, and errands. Work trips make up a sizeable percentage of weekend trips, although their share of the total trips is less than one third of the share of work trips on weekdays. School trips drop to very low numbers on weekends (less than one percent of all trips). Figure 56 contains a full breakdown of trip purposes for all weekend trips originating in LaSalle County.

Figure 56. Purposes of Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

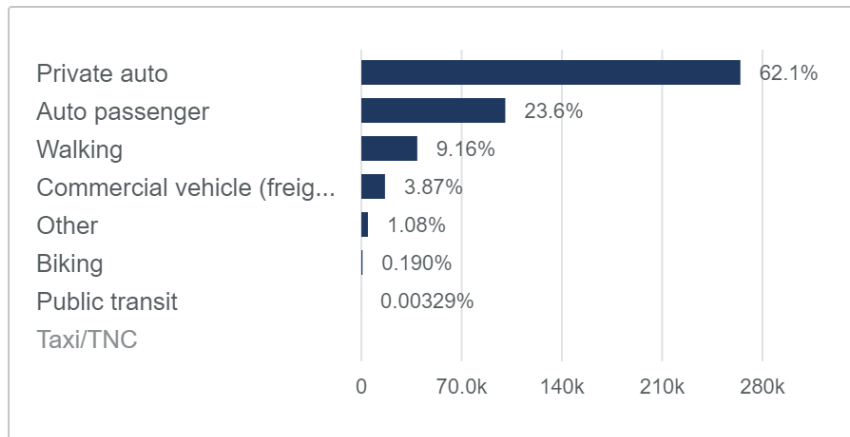


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Mode Share

Weekend trips originating in LaSalle County exhibit similar mode shares as weekday trips, as the vast majority are made by car (about 85.7 percent of all trips fall into the “private auto” or “auto passenger” categories). Approximately nine percent of trips are made on foot, and nearly four percent of trips are made with commercial vehicles, such as freight trucks. Public transportation trips (i.e. Amtrak passengers boarding in Mendota) represent a very small portion of overall trips (16 trips out of approximately 426k total). Figure 57 shows mode share data graphically for weekend trips originating in LaSalle County.

Figure 57. Mode Share for Weekend Trips Originating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



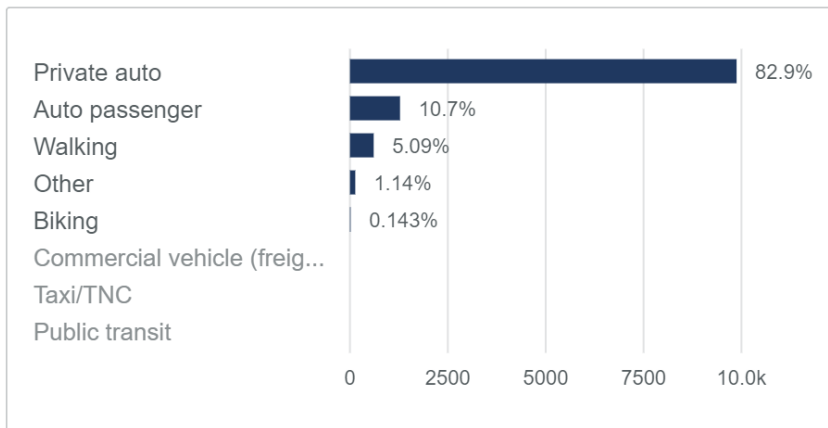
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Work Trips in Five Largest Industries

### PRIMARY MODE

Commuters in LaSalle County's top five industries who start their work trips in-county on weekends overwhelmingly access their jobs by car, with private auto and auto passenger making up 93.6% of these trips. Approximately five percent of these trips are made by foot, with all other modes making up a much smaller share. Notably, no work trips ending in-county are made by fixed route transit (i.e. Amtrak) on weekends, unlike on weekdays when a handful of people arrive to work in LaSalle County by Amtrak. Figure 58 shows the primary transportation mode for weekend work trips originating in LaSalle County made by people employed in the county's five largest industries.

Figure 58. Primary Mode for Weekend Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

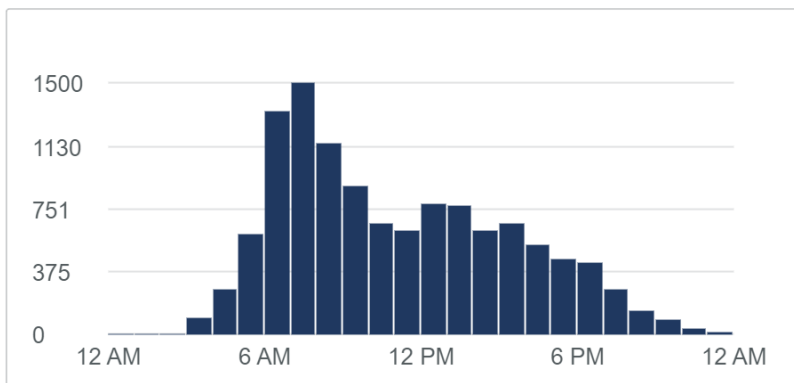


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

### STARTING HOUR

Commuting patterns among workers in LaSalle County's top five industries indicate that there are two travel peaks among trips starting in LaSalle County on weekends—one in the morning around 7:00 AM and another around noon (Figure 59). These trips represent only trips made to work, not trips going home from work, which explains why an afternoon/evening peak is not observed. The small peak in trips around noon may reflect trips made by workers returning to their job site after having lunch at an offsite location or starting work on a second shift.

Figure 59. Starting Hour for Weekend Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

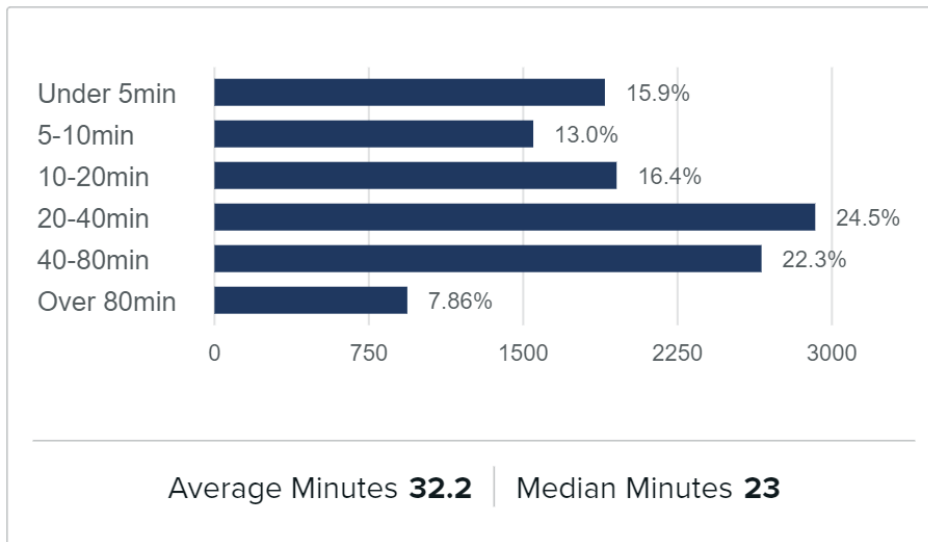


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## TRIP DURATION AND DISTANCE

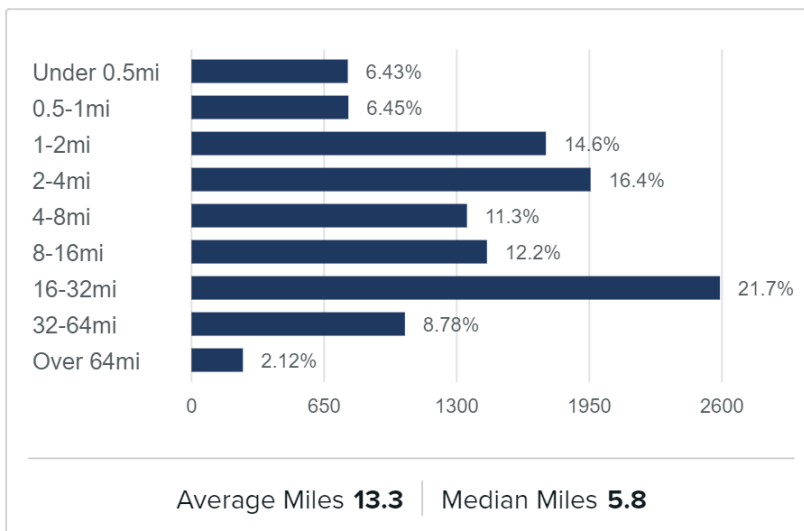
The median commute trip starting in LaSalle County on weekends (among workers in the county's top five industries) takes about 23 minutes and covers a distance of 5.8 miles. This is significantly longer than the duration and distance of all weekend trips starting in LaSalle County (shown above), which suggests that commuters may be willing to travel farther to access a jobsite than for other trip purposes. Trip duration and distance on weekends are, however, slightly shorter than those on weekdays. Figure 60 and Figure 61 show the trip duration and distance data for weekday work trips originating in LaSalle County among workers in the county's top five industries.

Figure 60. Duration of Weekend Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 61. Distance of Weekend Work Trips Originating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



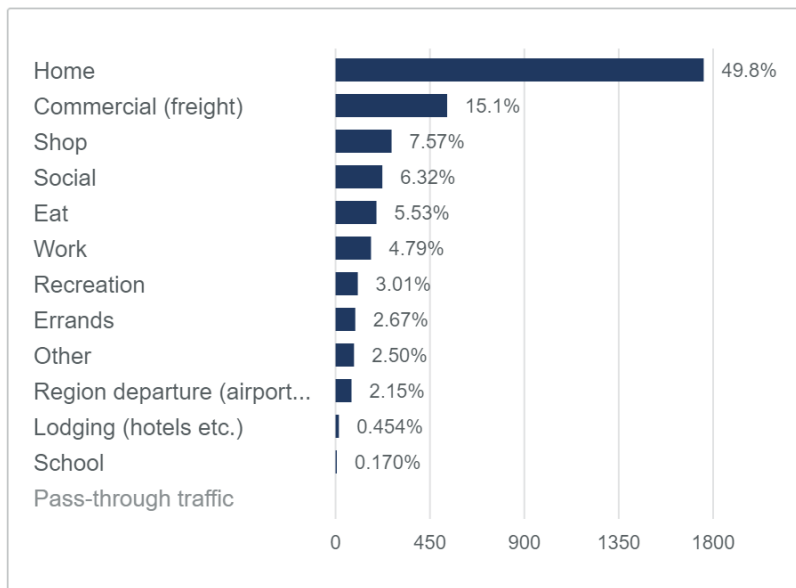
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County

### TRIP PURPOSE

Aside from home trips, the most common reason for a trip to be made from LaSalle County to Cook County on a weekend is for commercial freight, representing over 15 percent of trips. Work trips become significantly less common on weekends, representing less than five percent of trips. The other top trip purposes revolve around commercial activities (e.g. shopping and dining) and social activities, which is to be expected of weekend trips covering the distance between LaSalle County and Cook County. Figure 62 shows the purposes of all weekend trips from LaSalle County to Cook County.

Figure 62. Purposes of Weekend Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County, Fall 2023

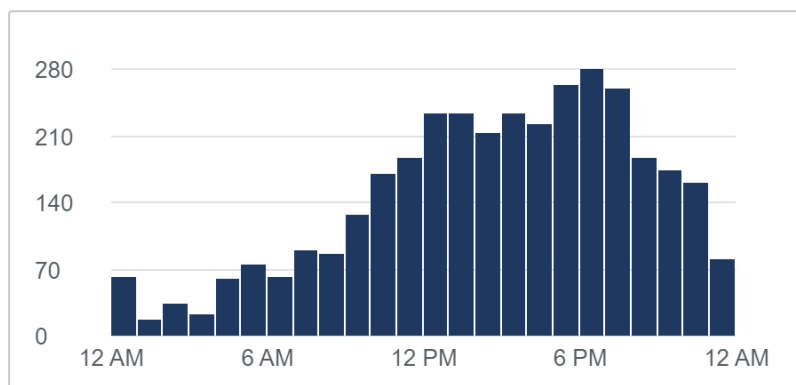


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

### STARTING HOUR

Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County are less evenly distributed on weekends compared to weekdays. Most trips tend to occur in the afternoon, with a slight peak in the 6:00 PM hour (see Figure 63). A similar pattern is observed in the data on all trips originating in LaSalle County on weekends.

Figure 63. Starting Hour for Weekend Trips from LaSalle County to Cook County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

# Trips Terminating in LaSalle County

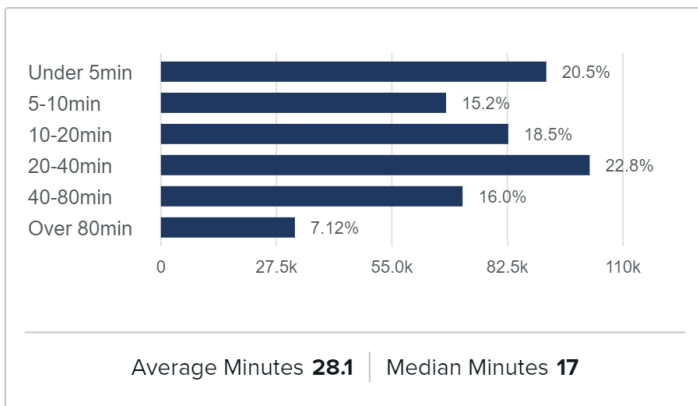
Trip data can be divided into two broad categories: trips that originate in LaSalle County and trips that terminate in LaSalle County. Many trips fit into both categories, but some trips may only fit into one. To determine if there are any significant differences in travel patterns between the two categories, data for each are analyzed and presented separately. This section presents data that describe the characteristics of all trips terminating in LaSalle County on a typical weekday and a typical weekend.

## Weekday Trips

### Trip Duration and Distance

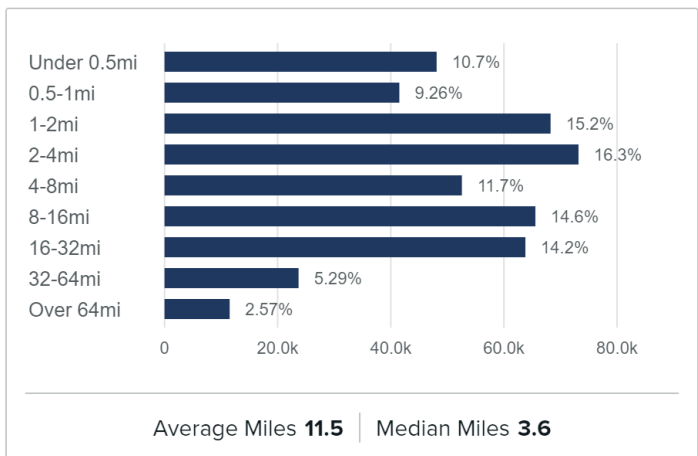
The median weekday trip ending in LaSalle County takes 17 minutes and covers a distance of about 3.6 miles. This is very similar to the metrics for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County. The median trip tends to be relatively short, which suggests that most trips ending in LaSalle County also start in LaSalle County. This is confirmed by origin and destination data (presented below). Figure 64 and Figure 65 show trip duration and distance data for all weekday trips ending in LaSalle County, respectively.

Figure 64. Duration of Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 65. Duration of Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

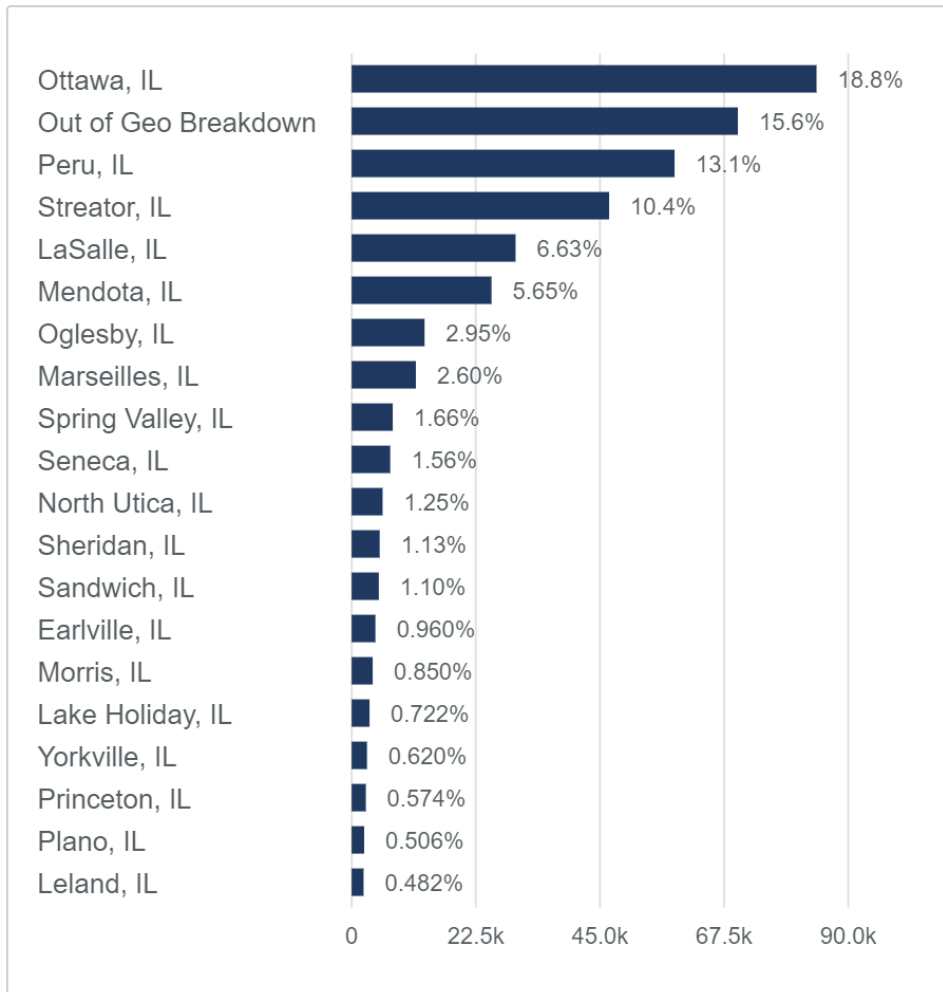


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Origins and Destinations

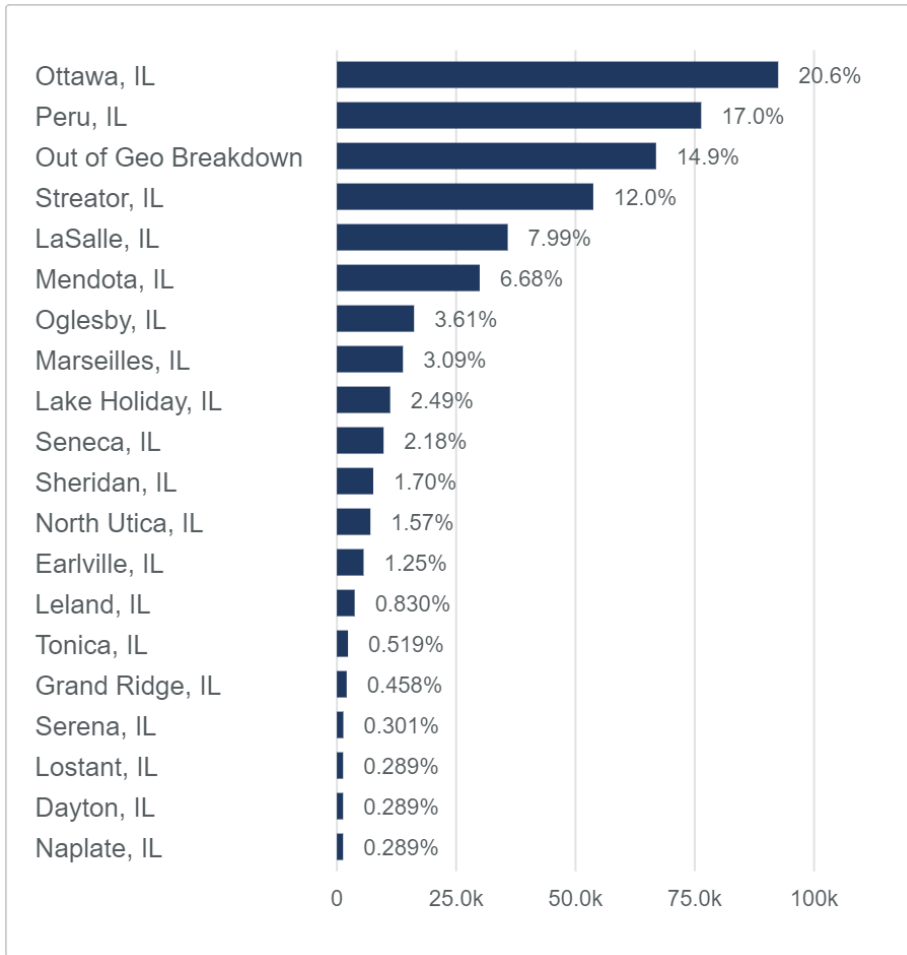
As mentioned above, the median weekday trip ending in LaSalle County is relatively short, suggesting that most trips ending in-county also start in-county. Origin and destination data show that this is accurate. Figure 66 and Figure 67 provide data on the top origin and destination communities for weekday trips terminating in LaSalle County, respectively. Figure 68 shows the number of trips originating and ending in each census block group among all trips that terminate in LaSalle County on a typical weekday.

Figure 66. Top Origin Cities for Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



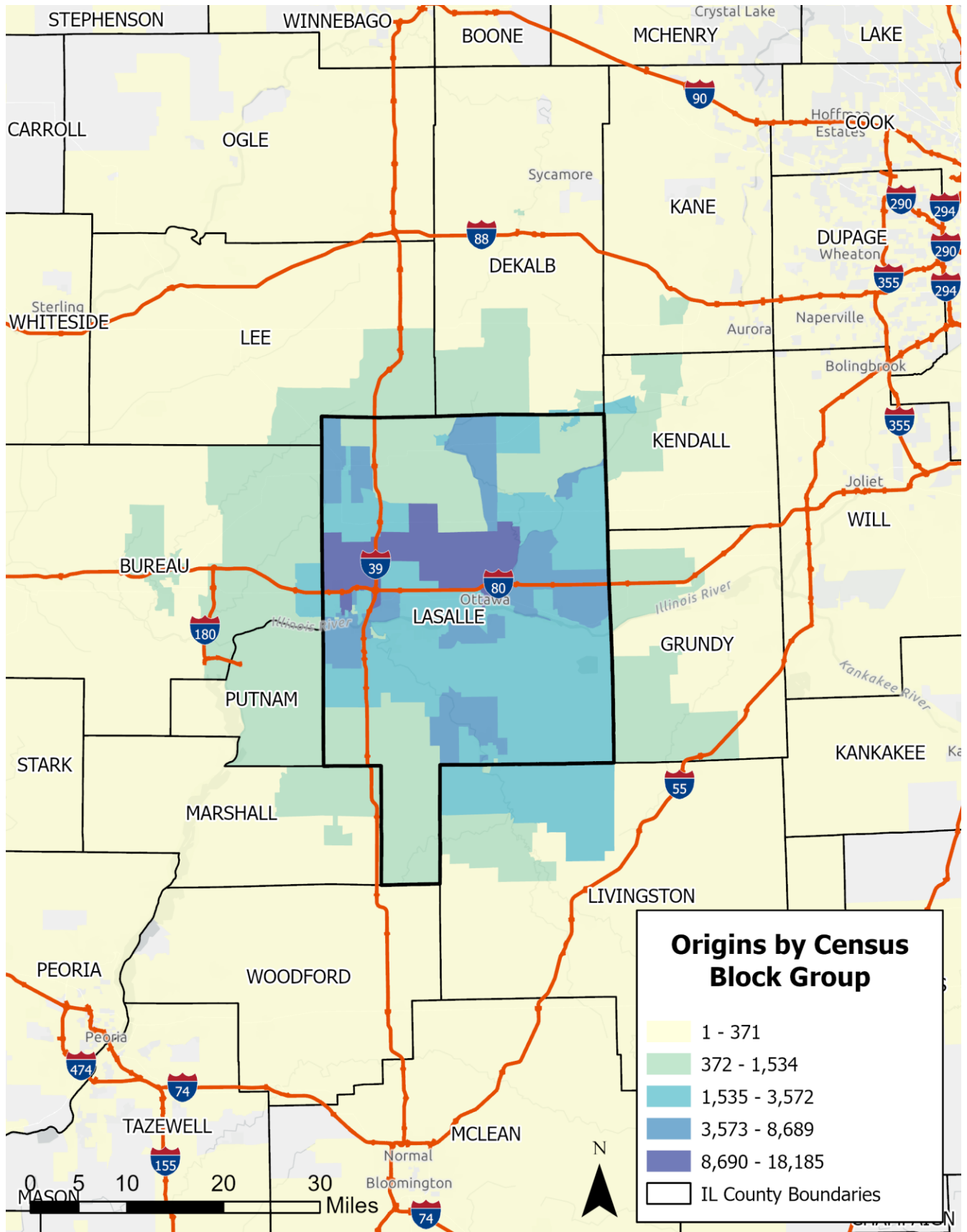
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 67. Top Destination Cities for Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 68. Origins for All Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

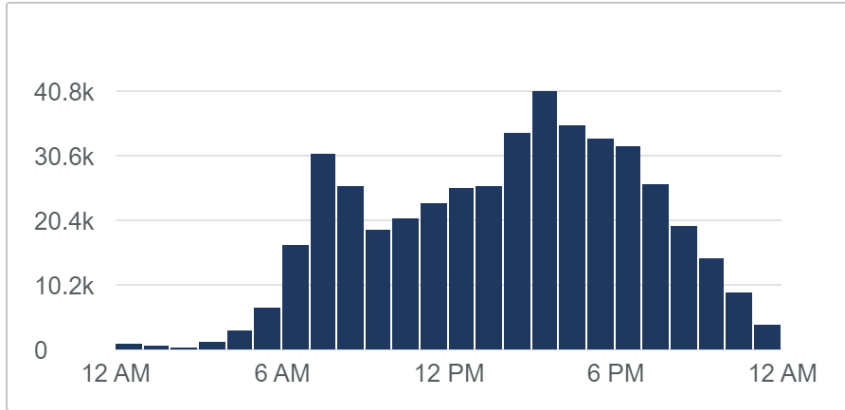


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Starting Hour

The start times for trips ending in LaSalle County on weekdays exhibit a pattern typical of weekday trips in most communities. The data in Figure 69 show that there are peaks in trip activity in the morning and afternoon, likely correlating with commute periods for workers.

Figure 69. Start Times for Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

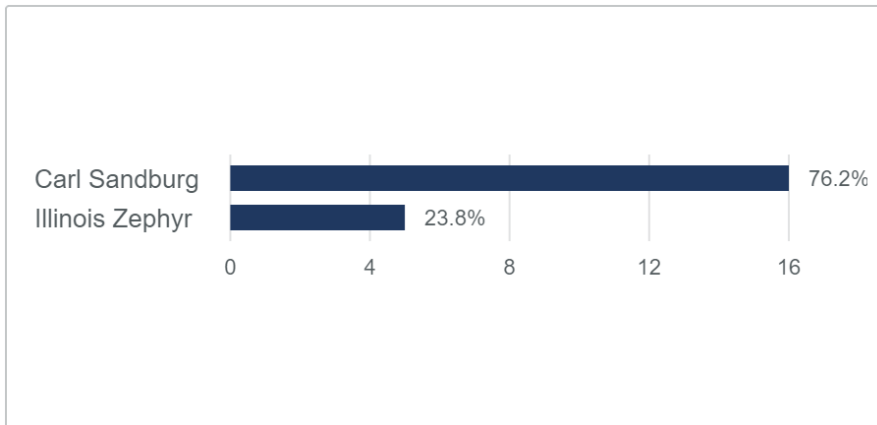


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Amtrak Usage

Replica provides transit trip data only for fixed route transit. The only fixed route transit currently operating in LaSalle County are the Carl Sandburg and Illinois Zephyr Amtrak routes, which both run in the same corridor and stop in Mendota. People arriving in LaSalle County on an Amtrak train on a typical weekday appear to have a strong preference for the Carl Sandburg route, which sees about 16 alightings per day compared to the Illinois Zephyr's five. See Figure 70 for Amtrak use data.

Figure 70. Amtrak Use for Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Top Origins by County

Over 80 percent of trips ending in LaSalle County on a typical weekday also start in LaSalle County. Among those that start outside the county, most of the top 10 origins are located in counties that make up the Chicago metropolitan area. Cook County is the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular origin for trips ending in LaSalle County, representing about 0.6 percent of all trips ending in LaSalle County. Table 24 shows the top destinations by county for weekday trips originating in LaSalle County.

**Table 24. Origins of Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023**

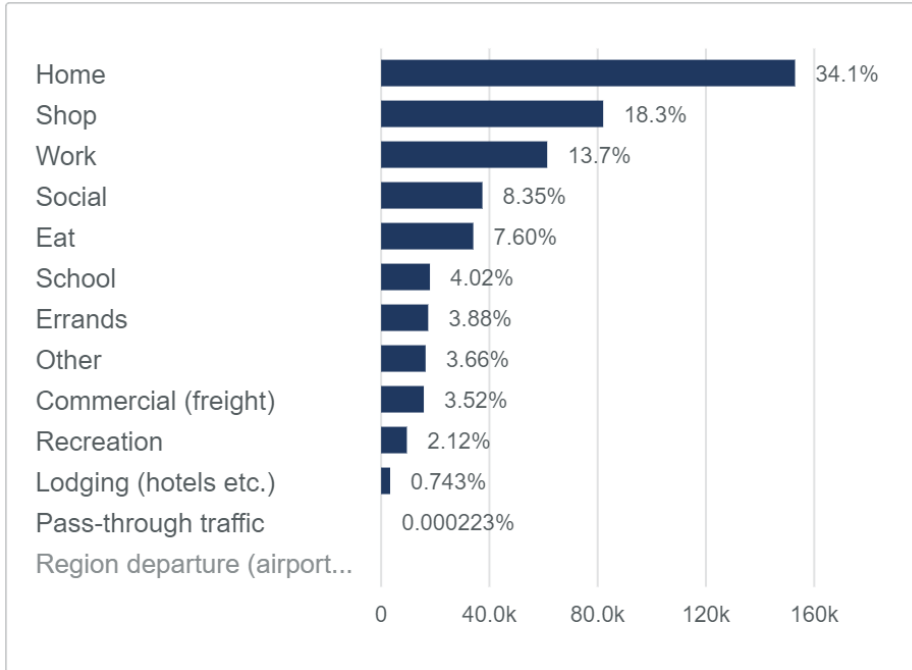
Origin	Trip	Percentage of Total
LaSalle County, IL	361,254	80.7%
Bureau County, IL	19,871	4.4%
Kendall County, IL	9,682	2.2%
DeKalb County, IL	9,084	2.0%
Livingston County, IL	7,420	1.7%
Grundy County, IL	7,061	1.6%
Will County, IL	4,624	1.0%
Putnam County, IL	4,408	1.0%
Lee County, IL	3,541	0.8%
Kane County, IL	3,260	0.7%
Cook County, IL	2,891	0.6%
DuPage County, IL	2,514	0.6%
Marshall County, IL	2,495	0.6%
McLean County, IL	1,672	0.4%
Woodford County, IL	788	0.2%
Ogle County, IL	722	0.2%
Peoria County, IL	609	0.1%
Winnebago County, IL	549	0.1%
Henry County, IL	483	0.1%
Whiteside County, IL	371	0.1%

Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Purpose

While the percentages vary slightly from weekday trips originating in LaSalle County, the top trip purposes for trips terminating in LaSalle County rank in the same order, with work and school trips in particular being higher proportions of total trips compared to trip purposes on weekends. Figure 71 shows the full breakdown of trip purposes for weekday trips terminating in LaSalle County.

Figure 71. Purposes of Weekday Trips Ending in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

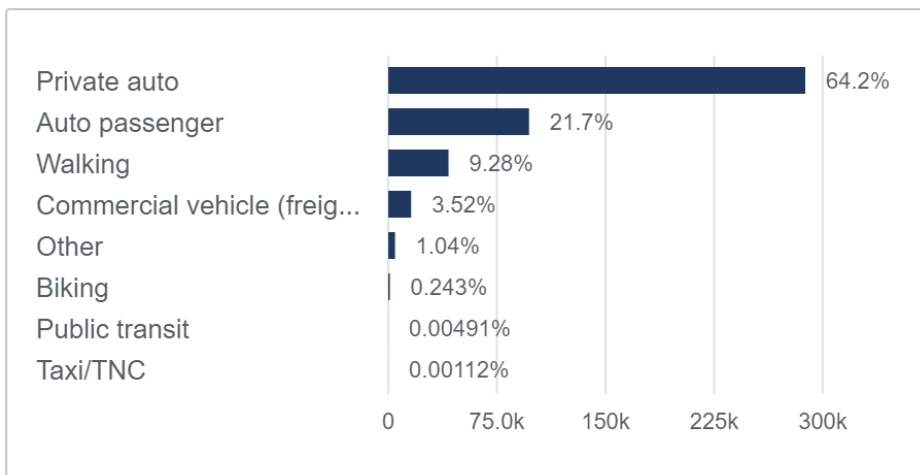


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Mode Share

Much like weekday trips originating in LaSalle County, the vast majority of weekday trips terminating in LaSalle County are made by car (about 85.9 percent of trips fall into the “private auto” or “auto passenger” categories). About nine percent of trips are made on foot, and about 3.5 percent are made with commercial vehicles, such as freight trucks. Public transportation trips (i.e. Amtrak passengers arriving in Mendota) represent a very small portion of overall trips (22 trips out of about 448k total). Figure 72 shows mode share data graphically for all weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County.

Figure 72. Mode Share for Weekday Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



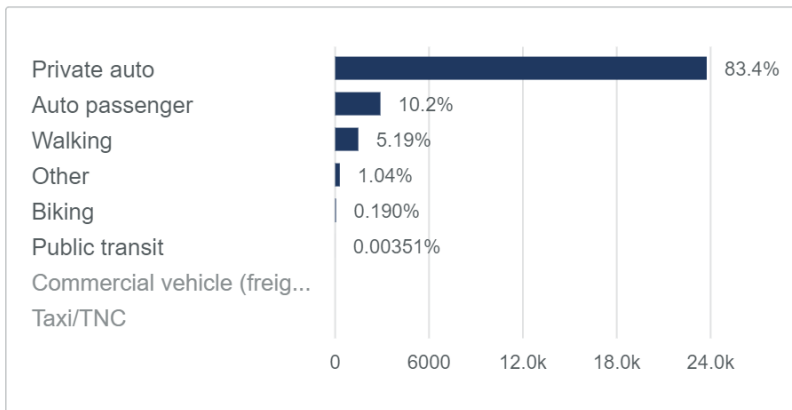
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Work Trips in Five Largest Industries

### PRIMARY MODE

Commuters in LaSalle County's top five industries who end their work trips in-county on weekdays overwhelmingly access their jobs by car, with private auto and auto passenger making up 93.6% of these trips. Approximately five percent of these trips are made by foot, with all other modes making up a much smaller share. Notably, because Replica's transit trip classification only includes trips made on fixed route transit, a handful of people ending their commutes in LaSalle County do so by Amtrak (the only fixed route transit available in LaSalle County). Figure 73 shows the primary transportation mode for weekday work trips ending in LaSalle County made by people employed in the county's five largest industries.

Figure 73. Primary Mode for Weekday Work Trips Ending in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

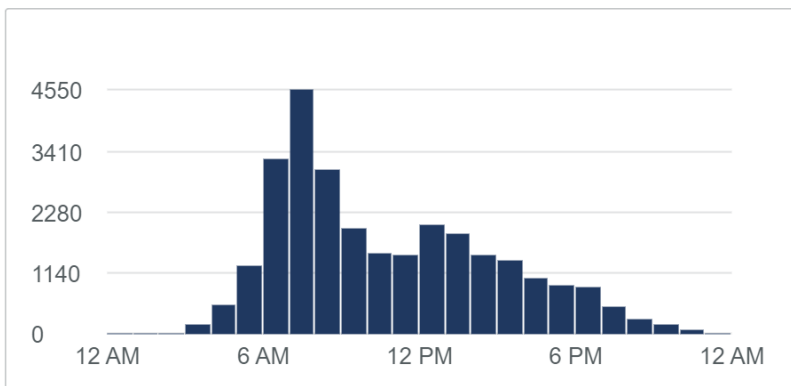


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

### STARTING HOUR

Commuting patterns among workers in LaSalle County's top five industries indicate that there are two travel peaks among trips ending in LaSalle County on weekdays—one in the morning around 7:00 AM and another around noon (Figure 74). These trips represent only trips made to work, not trips going home from work, which explains why an afternoon/evening peak is not observed. The small peak in trips around noon may reflect trips made by workers returning to their job site after having lunch at an offsite location or starting work on the second shift.

Figure 74. Starting Hour of Weekday Work Trips Ending in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

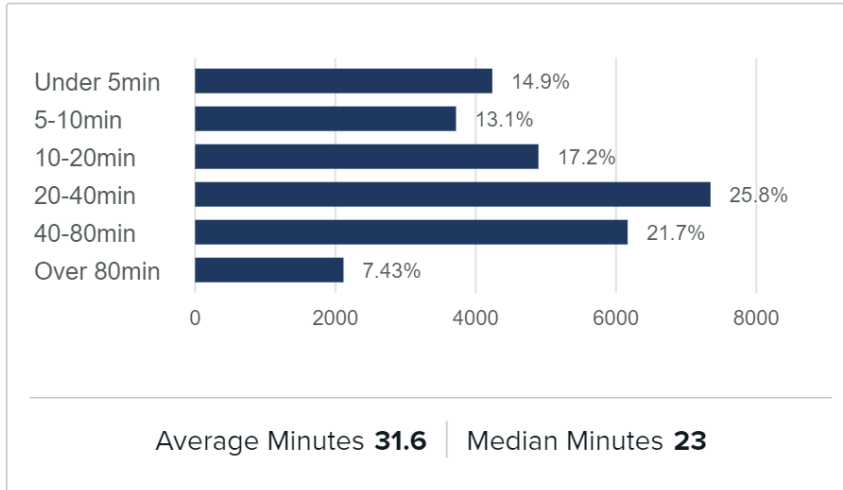


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## TRIP DURATION AND DISTANCE

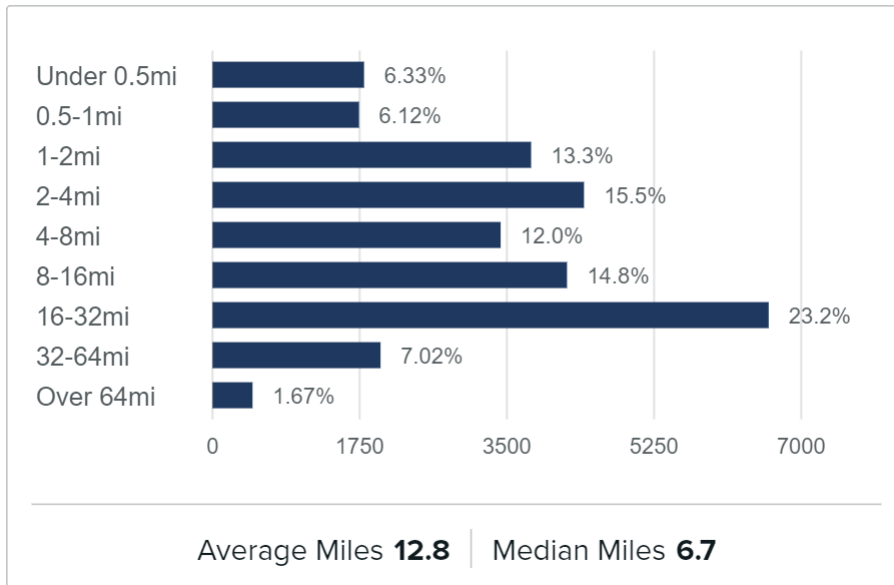
The median commute trip ending in LaSalle County on weekdays (among workers in the county's top five industries) takes about 23 minutes and covers a distance of 6.7 miles. This is significantly longer than the duration and distance of all weekday trips ending in LaSalle County (shown above), which suggests that commuters may be willing to travel farther to access a jobsite than for other trip purposes. Figure 75 and Figure 76 show the trip duration and distance data for weekday work trips terminating in LaSalle County among workers in the county's top five industries.

Figure 75. Duration of Weekday Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 76. Distance of Weekday Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



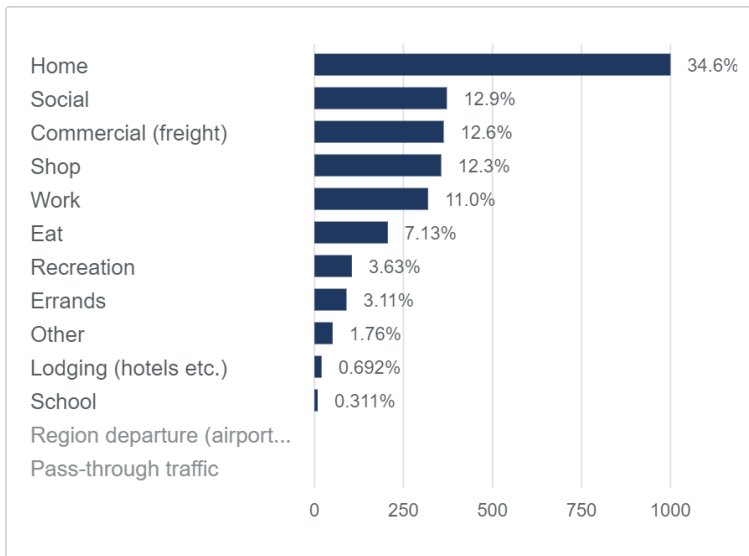
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

# Trips from Cook County to LaSalle County

## TRIP PURPOSE

Aside from home trips, the most popular purpose of weekday trips from Cook County to LaSalle County is social (12.9 percent), followed closely by commercial freight (12.6 percent) and shopping (12.3 percent). About 11 percent of trips are made for work purposes, suggesting that LaSalle County employers sometimes draw talent from the Cook County labor market. Over 3.5 percent of trips from Cook County to LaSalle County are made for recreational purposes, which may partially represent Cook County residents traveling to visit LaSalle County’s state parks. Figure 77 shows trip purpose data.

Figure 77. Purpose of Weekday Trips from Cook County to LaSalle County, Fall 2023

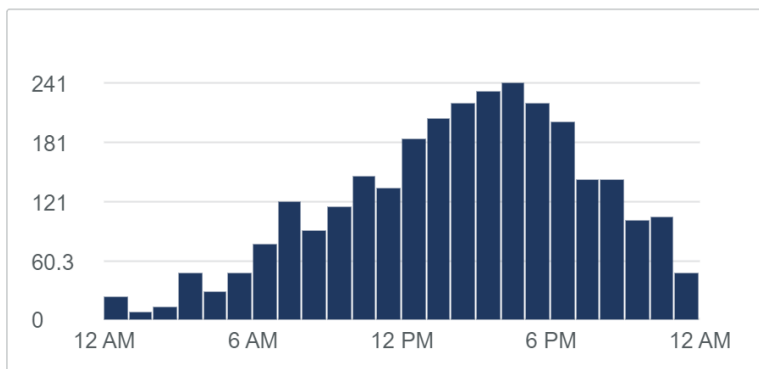


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## STARTING HOUR

Unlike weekday trips from LaSalle County to Cook County, weekday trips in the opposite direction appear to exhibit characteristics more similar to weekend trips, with most trips occurring in the afternoon and evening hours and peaking around 4:00 PM (see Figure 78). This is indicative of people returning home to LaSalle County from working in Cook County.

Figure 78. Starting Hour for Weekday Trips from Cook County to LaSalle County, Fall 2023



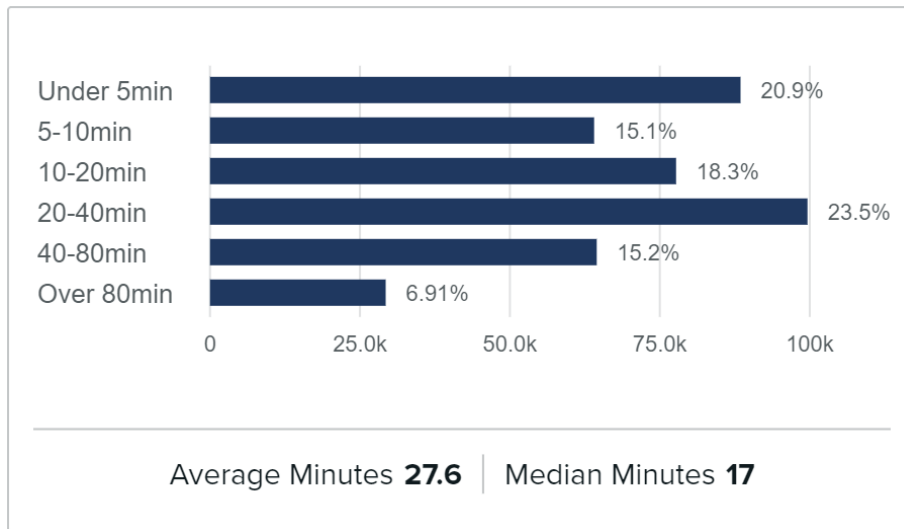
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Weekend Trips

### Trip Duration and Distance

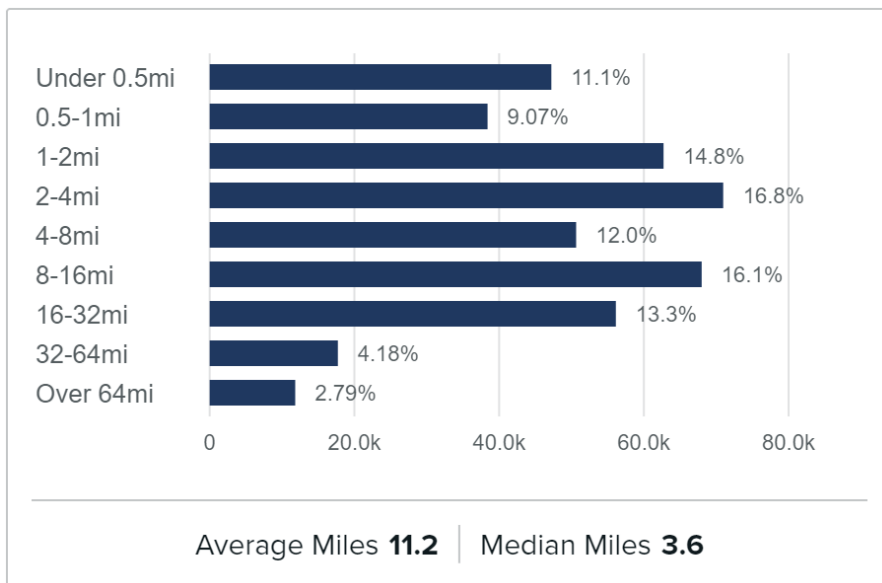
The median weekend trip terminating in LaSalle County takes 17 minutes and covers a distance of about 3.6 miles, which is very similar to the metrics for weekend trips originating in LaSalle County. Because most trips are relatively short, it is likely that most trips ending in LaSalle County also start in LaSalle County. This is verified with origin and destination data (presented below). Figure 79 and Figure 80 show duration and distance data for all weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County.

Figure 79. Duration of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 80. Distance of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

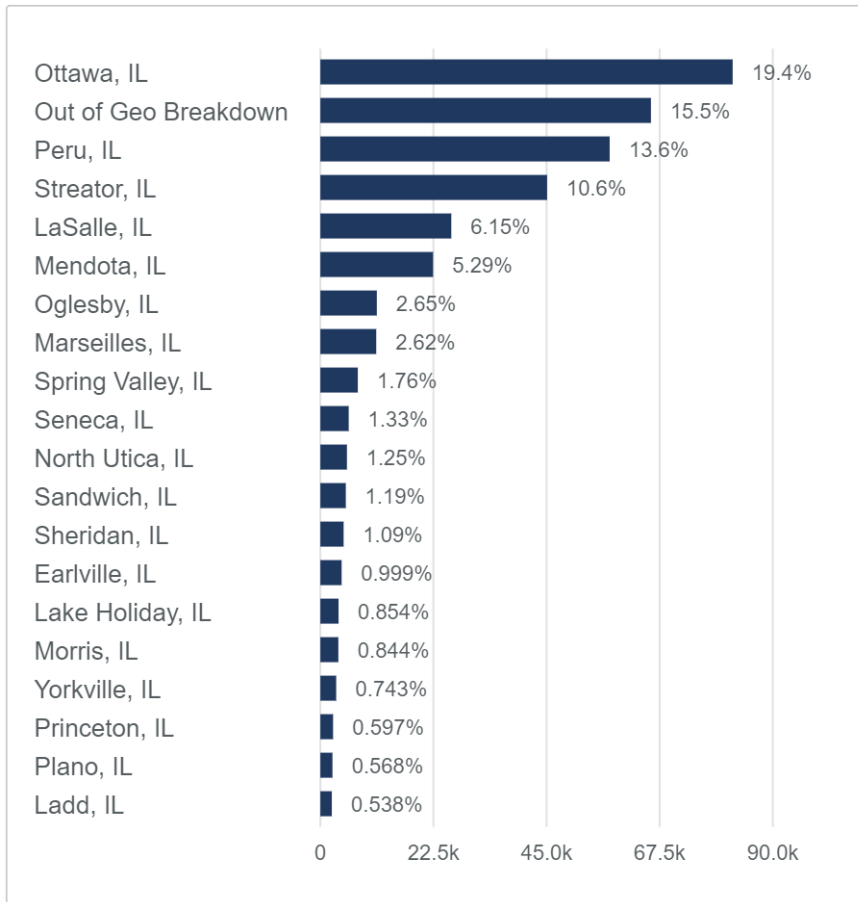


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Origins and Destinations

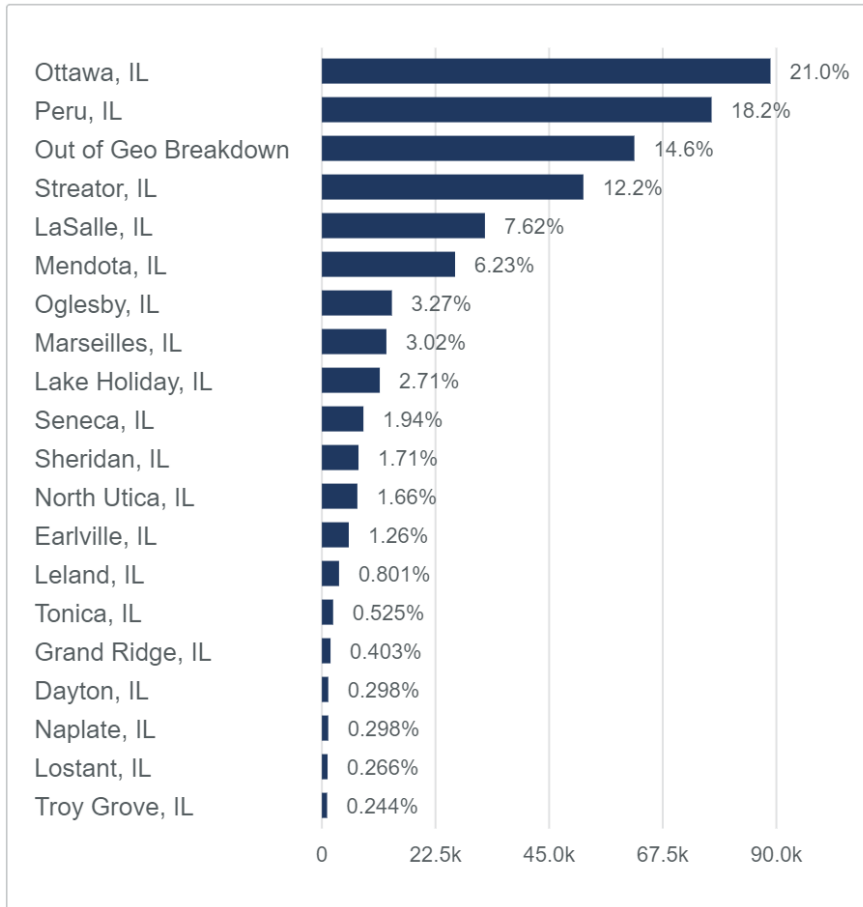
As mentioned above, the median trip terminating in LaSalle County is relatively short, suggesting that most trips ending in-county also start in-county. Origin and destination data show this to be the case. Figure 81 and Figure 82 provide data on the top origin and destination communities for weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County, respectively. Figure 83 shows the number of trips originating and ending in each census block group among all trips that terminate in LaSalle County on a typical weekend.

Figure 81. Top Origin Cities for Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



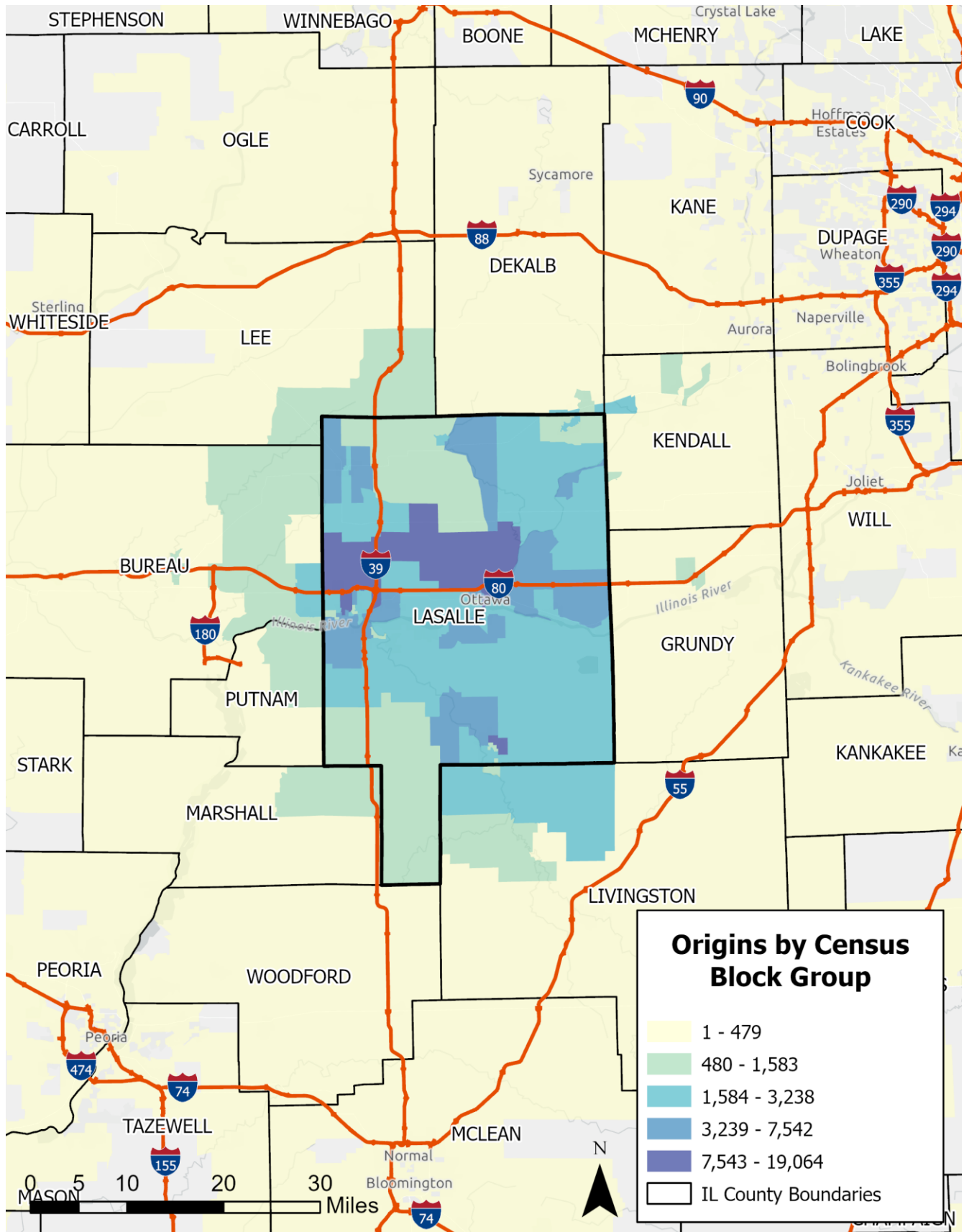
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 82. Top Destination Cities for Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 83. Origins for All Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

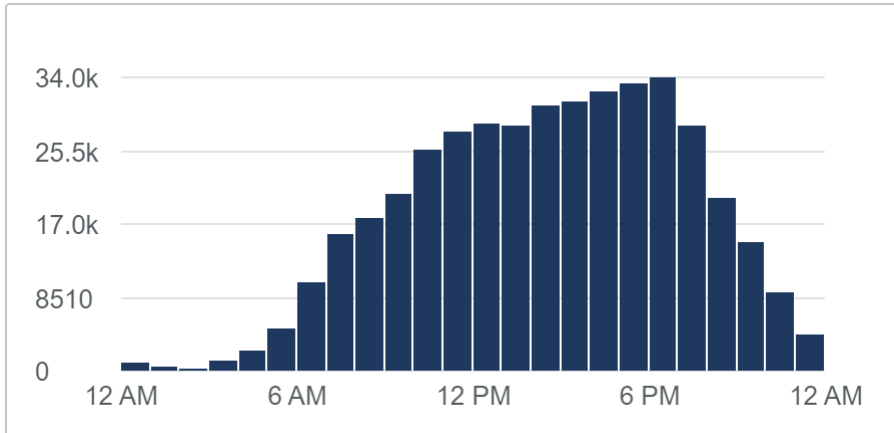


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Starting Hour

The start times for trips ending in LaSalle County on weekends exhibit a pattern typical of weekend trips in most communities. The data in Figure 84 show that many trips begin in the afternoon hours with a single peak around 6:00 PM, after which the number of trips drops sharply.

Figure 84. Starting Time of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

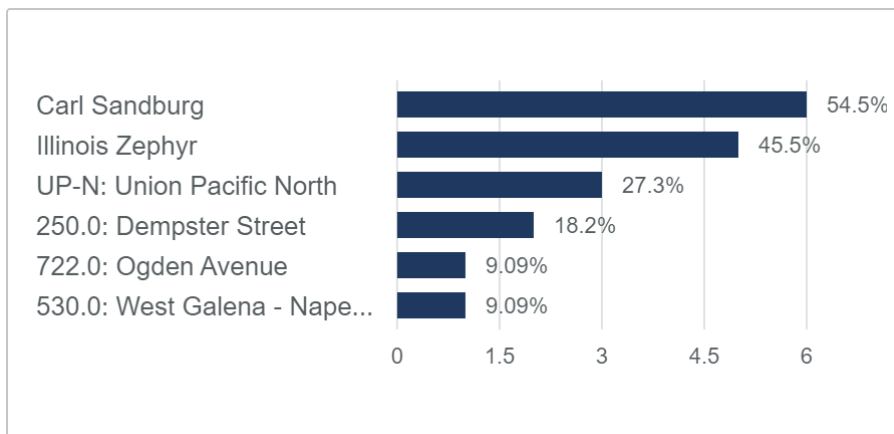


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Transit Usage

Replica provides transit trip data only for fixed route transit. The only fixed route transit currently operating in LaSalle County are the Carl Sandburg and Illinois Zephyr Amtrak routes, which both run in the same corridor and stop in Mendota. People arriving in LaSalle County on an Amtrak train on a typical weekend appear to have a preference for the Carl Sandburg route, which sees about 55 percent of alightings per day compared to the Illinois Zephyr's 45 percent. The Replica data for weekend trips ending in LaSalle County also indicate that some travelers arriving on Amtrak in Mendota begin their trips on buses and/or commuter rail in the Chicago metro area. See Figure 85 for transit use data.

Figure 85. Transit Use for Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Top Origins by County

Over 80 percent of trips ending in LaSalle County on a typical weekend also start in LaSalle County. Among those that start outside the county, most of the top 10 origins are counties that make up the Chicago metropolitan area. Cook County is the 9<sup>th</sup> most popular origin county for trips ending in LaSalle County, representing about 0.8 percent of all trips ending in LaSalle County. Table 25. Origins of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County shows the top origins by county for weekend trips ending in LaSalle County.

Table 25. Origins of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

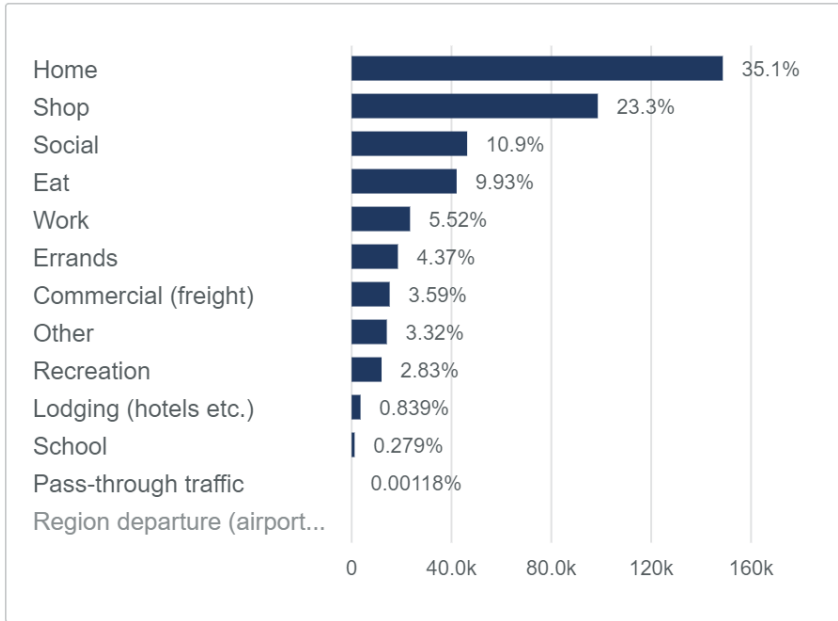
Origin	Trips	Percent of Total
LaSalle County, IL	340,486	80.5%
Bureau County, IL	19,847	4.7%
Kendall County, IL	10,137	2.5%
DeKalb County, IL	8,194	1.9%
Livingston County, IL	6,602	1.6%
Grundy County, IL	6,294	1.5%
Putnam County, IL	4,961	1.2%
Lee County, IL	3,573	0.8%
Will County, IL	3,537	0.8%
Cook County, IL	3,225	0.8%
Marshall County, IL	2,536	0.6%
Kane County, IL	2,170	0.5%
DuPage County, IL	1,880	0.4%
McLean County, IL	1,447	0.3%
Peoria County, IL	696	0.2%
Ogle County, IL	651	0.2%
Woodford County, IL	619	0.1%
Winnebago County, IL	540	0.1%
Henry County, IL	355	0.1%
Whiteside County, IL	308	0.1%

Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Trip Purpose

While the percentages vary slightly, the overall ranking of trip purposes for weekend trips ending in LaSalle County is the same as for weekend trips starting in LaSalle County. Figure 86 shows the full breakdown of trip purposes for all weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County.

Figure 86. Purposes of Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023

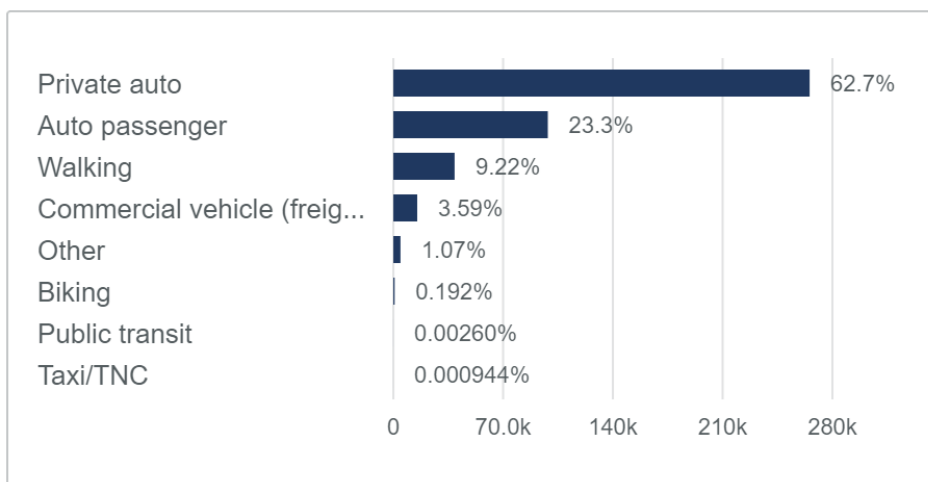


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Mode Share

Like the other three categories of trips in this section, weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County exhibit a highly car-heavy mode share, with 86 percent of these trips falling into the “private auto” or “auto passenger” categories. Walking makes up about nine percent of trips, while about four percent of trips are made with commercial vehicles (such as freight trucks). Public transportation trips (i.e. Amtrak passengers arriving in LaSalle County) represent a very small portion of overall trips (11 trips out of about 424k total). Figure 87 shows mode share data graphically for weekend trips terminating in LaSalle County.

Figure 87. Mode Share for Weekend Trips Terminating in LaSalle County, Fall 2023



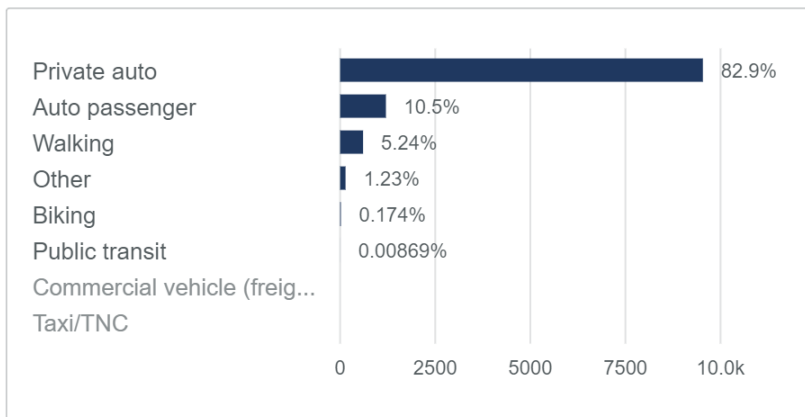
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Work Trips in Five Largest Industries

### PRIMARY MODE

Commuters in LaSalle County's top five industries who end their work trips in-county on weekends overwhelmingly access their jobs by car, with private auto and auto passenger making up 93.4% of these trips. Approximately five percent of these trips are made by foot, with all other modes making up a much smaller share. Notably, a small handful of work trips terminating in LaSalle County are made by Amtrak, the only fixed route transit in the county that falls under Replica's definition of transit. Figure 88 shows the primary transportation mode for weekend work trips ending in LaSalle County made by people employed in the county's five largest industries.

Figure 88. Primary Purpose of Weekend Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

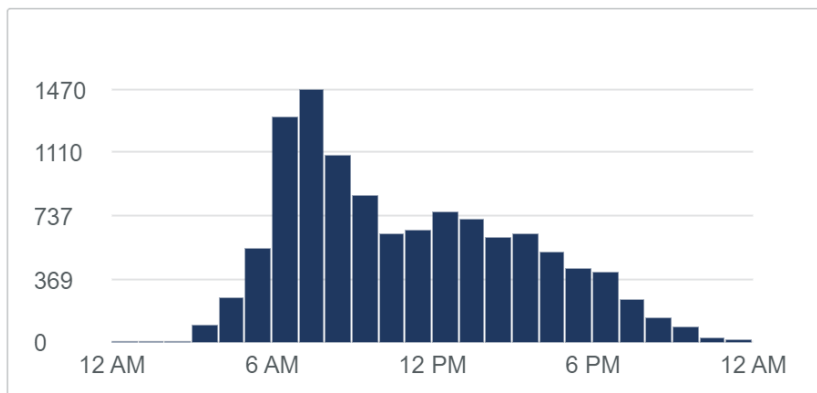


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

### STARTING HOUR

Commuting patterns among workers in LaSalle County's top five industries indicate that there are two travel peaks among trips ending in LaSalle County on weekends—one in the morning around 7:00 AM and another around noon (Figure 89). These trips represent only trips made to work, not trips going home from work, which explains why an afternoon/evening peak is not observed. The small peak in trips around noon may reflect trips made by workers returning to their job site after having lunch at an offsite location or starting work on the second shift.

Figure 89. Starting Hour of Weekend Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023

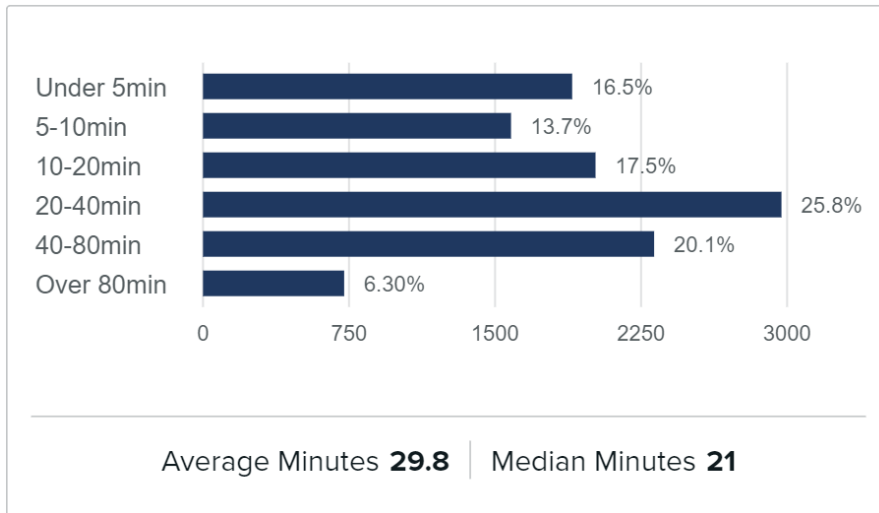


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## TRIP DURATION AND DISTANCE

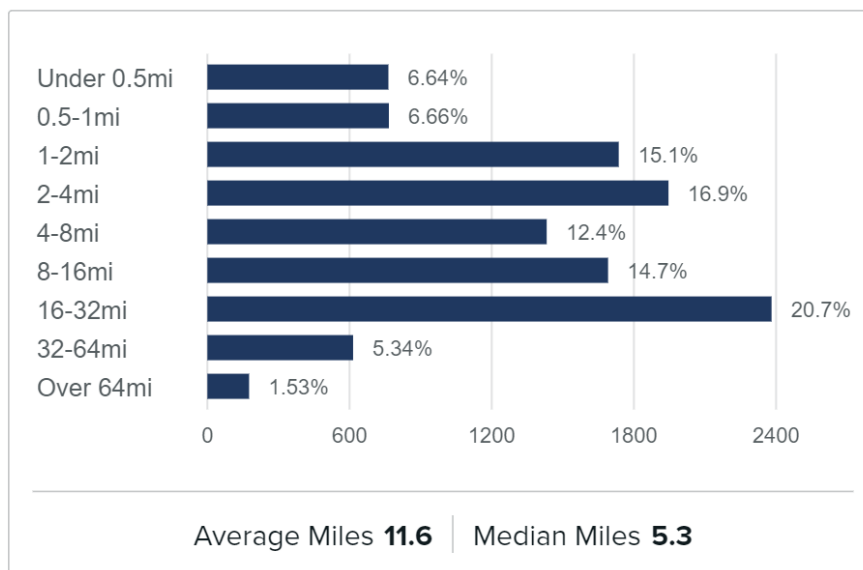
The median commute trip ending in LaSalle County on weekends (among workers in the county's top five industries) takes about 21 minutes and covers a distance of 5.3 miles. This is longer than the duration and distance of all weekend trips ending in LaSalle County (shown above), which suggests that commuters may be willing to travel farther to access a jobsite than for other trip purposes. Trip duration and distance on weekends are, however, slightly shorter than those on weekdays. Figure 90 and Figure 91 show the trip duration and distance data for weekday work trips originating in LaSalle County among workers in the county's top five industries.

Figure 90. Duration of Weekend Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

Figure 91. Distance of Weekend Work Trips Terminating in LaSalle County (Top Five Industries), Fall 2023



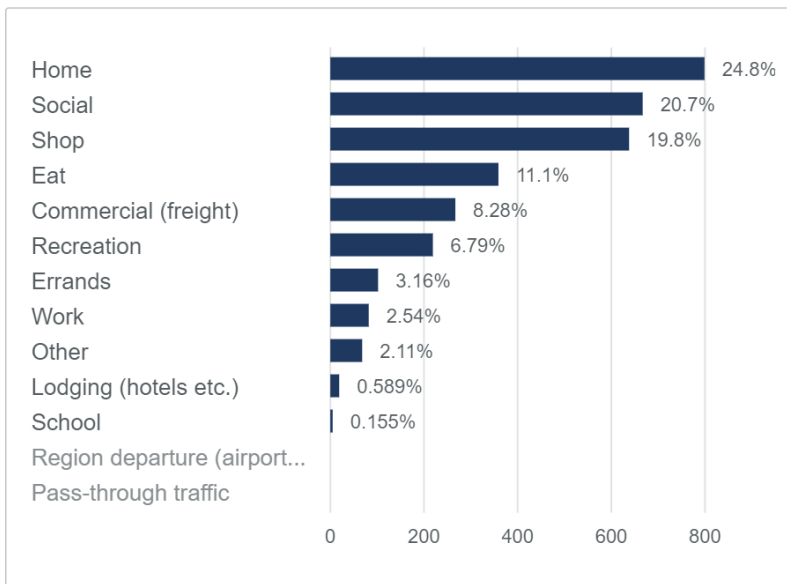
Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

# Travel Between LaSalle County and Cook County

## TRIP PURPOSE

Aside from home trips, the most common purpose for making a trip from Cook County to LaSalle County on a weekend is social (20.7 percent), followed closely by shopping (19.8 percent). Commercial freight traffic represents slightly over eight percent of trips. Recreation trips from Cook County to LaSalle County are relatively popular on weekends (nearly seven percent of trips), which may indicate that LaSalle County's state parks draw people from the Chicago area. Figure 92 shows all trip purposes for weekend trips from Cook County to LaSalle County.

Figure 92. Purpose of Weekend Trips from Cook County to LaSalle County, Fall 2023

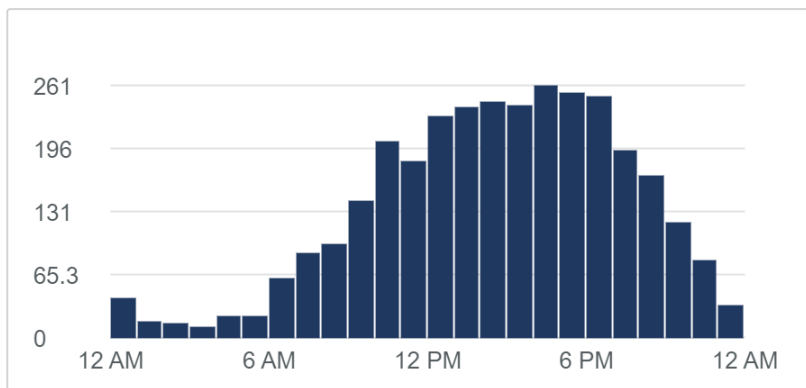


Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## STARTING HOUR

Weekend trips from Cook County to LaSalle County exhibit a mostly typical weekend starting hour pattern, with most trips occurring during the afternoon and evening and peaking around the late afternoon and early evening (see Figure 93).

Figure 93. Starting Hour for Weekend Trips from Cook County to LaSalle County, Fall 2023



Source: Replica Seasonal Mobility Model, Fall 2023

## Key Takeaways

Travel flow patterns in LaSalle County are typical of a small, mostly rural county in the United States. Even so, the data from Replica offers a useful insight into the transportation characteristics of the NCAT service area. Below are key points that stand out from the data:

- Trips that start and/or end in LaSalle County tend to be relatively short, with the majority of trips being under 20 minutes in duration and less than four miles in distance.
  - Work trips tend to be somewhat longer than the average of all trips, suggesting that workers are willing to travel further to access employment versus other destinations.
- Trips tend to stay within LaSalle County or areas immediately outside the County. Popularity of individual origins and destinations drops off quickly with distance from the LaSalle County boundary.
  - Around 80% of trips that start in LaSalle County end in LaSalle County, and a similar percentage of trips ending in LaSalle County also start in LaSalle County, regardless of the day of the week.
  - Trips that start in LaSalle County and end elsewhere tend to terminate in counties immediately abutting LaSalle County, or counties in the Chicago metropolitan area (especially southwestern suburban counties).
  - Trips that end in LaSalle County after starting outside the county typically originate in neighboring counties or counties in the Chicago metropolitan area (especially southwestern suburban counties).
- Trip starting hours generally fit common expectations, with morning and afternoon peaks observed on weekdays, and a single peak in the afternoon/evening on weekends.
- The vast majority (approximately 86 percent) of trips in LaSalle County are made by car. The second most common mode is walking (typically between nine and ten percent of trips).
  - Work trips tend to be made by car at slightly higher rates (typically over 90 percent)
- Aside from home trips (which are always the most common, since people always need to return home), top trip purposes on weekdays tend to involve work, shopping or other commercial activities, and socializing. School trips are also somewhat common on weekdays.
- Weekend trip purposes are more oriented around shopping, socializing, and other commercial activities, with work trips making up a much lower percentage compared to weekdays. Recreation trips are also slightly more common on weekends.
- Amtrak accounts for a handful of trips originating and terminating in LaSalle County on both weekends and weekdays. While not a significant percentage of total trips, the Amtrak station in Mendota represents a potential source of ridership for NCAT, as departing train passengers may not wish to drive to the train station, and arriving passengers may consider transit to reach their final destination.
- Travel between LaSalle County and Cook County (the core of the Chicago metropolitan area) are a small but important portion of overall trips. Trip purposes for both directions of travel tend to include work, shopping, and socializing, much like local trips within LaSalle County. On weekends, recreation trips are relatively high among trips made from Cook County to LaSalle County (nearly seven percent of all trips), possibly suggesting that LaSalle County's state parks draw people in from the Chicago area. Another key distinction among trip purposes between LaSalle County and

Cook County is the prevalence of commercial freight trips (representing between eight and 18 percent of total trips, depending on day and direction). This is likely indicative of freight moving between LaSalle County and intermodal facilities and/or railyards in the Chicago area.

Many travel flow patterns in LaSalle County align with the typical expectations of weekday and weekend trips in a small, mostly rural county in the United States. Because the vast majority of trips stay within the boundaries of LaSalle County (the NCAT service area), much opportunity exists for NCAT to expand its service and serve a larger portion of intra-county travel demand. The travel flow data presented in this section will be used to help develop recommendations for future transit enhancements within the NCAT system.

# Peer System Analysis

This analysis covers the recent performance of NCAT service relative to that of peer systems. Since there are no recognized industry standards for most measures of transit system performance, widespread practice is to compare the performance of a system to the average values of a peer group of systems. Data used in this report come from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) National Transit Database (NTD), a repository of data about American public transit systems.

The following peer analysis compares NCAT demand-response performance to an Illinois peer group and a national peer group in five categories using eight specific measures (Table 26).

**Table 26. Performance Objectives and Performance Measures**

Performance Objective	Performance Measure
Cost Effectiveness	Operating Expenses Per Passenger Trip
Cost Efficiency	Operating Expenses Per Revenue Hour
Service Effectiveness	Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour
Market Penetration	Passenger Trips Per Capita
	Revenue Hours Per Capita
Passenger Revenue Effectiveness	Average Fare Per Passenger Trip
	Operating Ratio (Passenger Revenues Per Operating Expenses)
	Subsidy Per Passenger Trip

Each measure in Table 26 is used to assess NCAT performance in two ways:

- **Single Year: Comparison to peer average for most the current year.** Year 2022 NTD data are used. This is the most recent year for which NTD data was available for all peer systems at the time of analysis. Performance will be considered “satisfactory” within one standard deviation of the peer average. The system’s performance is considered “outside the satisfactory range” (unsatisfactory) if it falls more than one standard deviation from the peer average.
- **Multi-Year Trend Analysis: Comparison to peer average for annual rate of change.** NTD data from 2018 to 2022 are used. The annual rate of change from 2018 to 2022 is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Annual rate of change} = (\text{Value}_{2022}/\text{Value}_{2018})^{1/4} - 1$$

For the trend analysis, the system’s annual rate of change is compared to that of the average of the peer group. Again, the system’s trend performance is considered “satisfactory” within one standard deviation of the peer group average. Beyond one standard deviation from the peer group average, the system’s trend performance is considered “outside the satisfactory range.”

# Peer Groups

The selection of the peer groups for NCAT was based on a review of rural demand-response bus systems in NTD. NTD was used because its data are readily available and consistently reported. Two peer groups were selected for comparison: an Illinois peer group and a national peer group (Table 27, Table 28). Systems offering only countywide demand-response service were used in this analysis. A spatial representation of the peers selected is given below in Figure 94.

Figure 94. Selected Illinois and National Systems for Peer Analysis

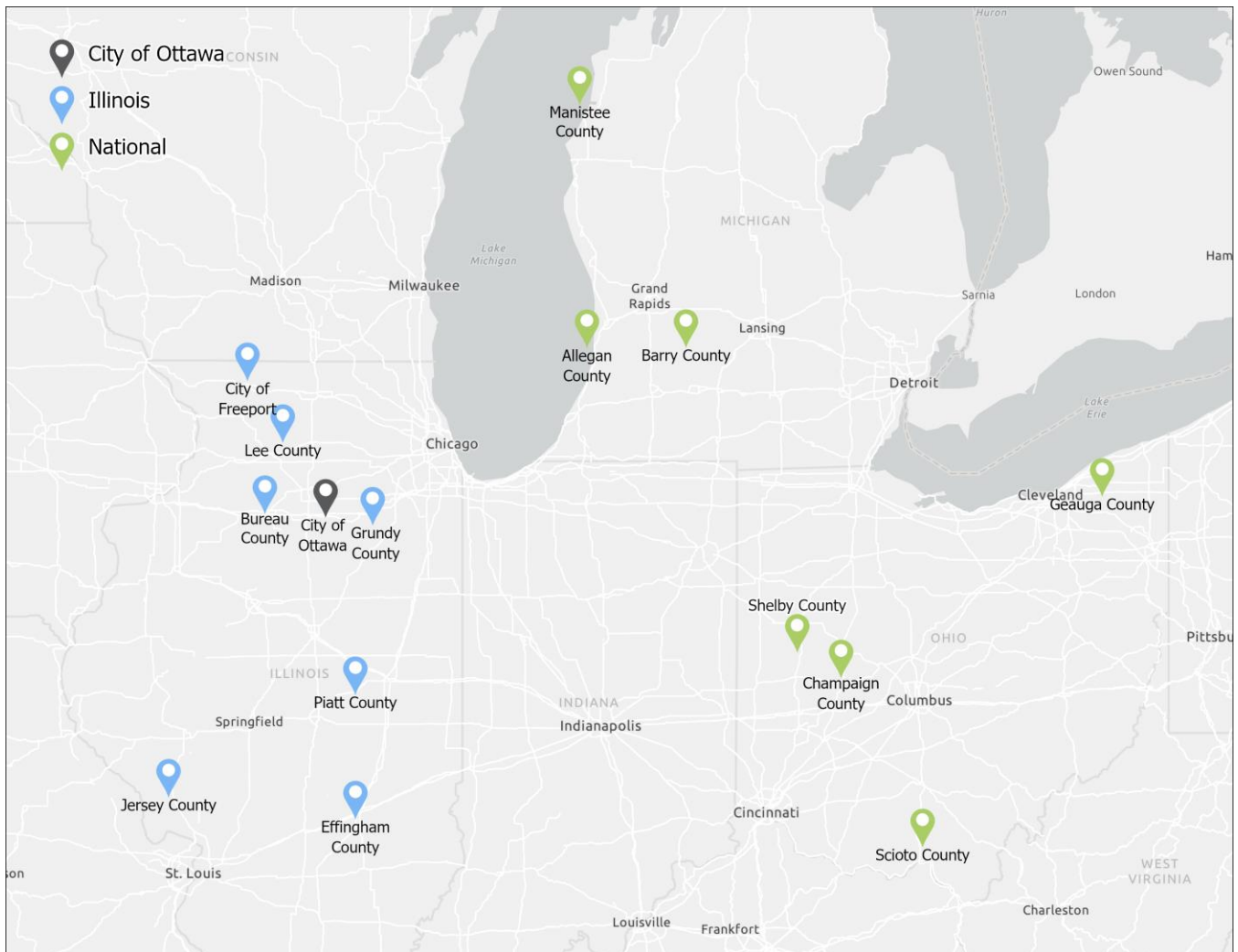


Table 27 contains 2022 operating statistics for NCAT and the selected Illinois peer systems. This review recognizes the limitations of using other Illinois bus systems for peer comparison. Each system operates in a different environment, serves different markets, and has a unique management structure. However, Illinois peer systems also provide context for operating conditions within the state.

**Table 27. 2022 Operating Statistics – Illinois Peer Group**

System Name	County/City	Revenue Hours	Passenger Trips	Operating Expenses	Fare Revenue	Service Area Population	Service Land Area Size (sq mi)
Bureau & Putnam Area Rural Transit	Bureau and Putnam Counties	17,432	57,948	\$1,525,139	\$65,170	33,244	1,030
Pretzel City Area Transit	City of Freeport	15,895	41,508	\$945,001	\$62,693	44,630	565
Central Illinois Public Transit	Effingham, Christian, Clay, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby Counties	15,848	31,210	\$525,905	\$14,190	34,668	4,170
Grundy Transit System	Grundy County	9,564	13,442	\$642,658	\$36,647	52,533	420
Tri-County Rural Transit	Jersey, Greene, and Calhoun Counties	13,632	26,430	\$829,716	\$40,745	11,985	1,165
Reagan Mass Transit District	Lee and Ogle Counties	21,017	78,058	\$2,210,406	\$57,619	51,788	1,485
Monticello	Piatt County	14,506	30,394	\$1,171,080	\$34,438	16,673	440
North Central Area Transit	City of Ottawa	<b>15,632</b>	<b>52,123</b>	<b>\$1,895,339</b>	<b>\$128,370</b>	<b>109,658</b>	<b>1,135</b>
Average		15,413	41,389	1,218,156	54,984	44,397	1,301
NCAT as Percent of Average		101%	126%	156%	233%	247%	87%

Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

In the development of the national peer group, an attempt was made to select peer systems in cold-weather states in the Midwest; specifically, those with relatively similar service area and transit service provided. The Rural Integrated National Transit Database (Rural iNTD) was used to develop an initial list of national peers.<sup>4</sup> This initial list was filtered to include only the most applicable peers, based on the criteria listed above and previous MPR peer analyses.

The national peer group includes systems in Ohio and Michigan. Table 28 contains 2022 operating statistics for NCAT and the selected national peer systems.

**Table 28. 2022 Operating Statistics – National Peer Group**

System Name	County/City	Revenue Hours	Passenger Trips	Operating Expenses	Fare Revenue	Service Area Population	Service Land Area Size (sq mi)
Shelby Public Transit	Shelby County, OH	11,959	26,857	\$790,679	\$46,656	48,230	410
Access Scioto County	Scioto County, OH	14,455	43,824	\$772,837	\$23,841	74,008	615
Champaign County Transit System	Champaign County, OH	10,382	23,962	\$573,978	\$29,759	38,714	430
Barry County Transit	Barry County, MI	21,218	63,001	\$1,656,718	\$115,216	62,423	580
Manistee County Transportation, Inc.	Manistee County, MI	37,436	118,304	\$4,377,221	\$121,814	24,738	1,280
Geauga Transit	Geauga County, OH	18,999	29,056	\$1,212,101	\$97,148	95,397	410
Allegan County Transportation Services	Allegan County, MI	22,157	34,483	\$1,638,244	\$92,356	118,927	830
North Central Area Transit	City of Ottawa	<b>15,632</b>	<b>52,123</b>	<b>\$1,895,339</b>	<b>\$128,370</b>	<b>109,658</b>	<b>1,135</b>
Average		19,030	48,951	1,614,640	81,895	71,512	711
NCAT as Percent of Average		82%	106%	117%	157%	153%	160%

Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

## NCAT Five-Year Summary

Table 29 and Table 30 show NCAT operating statistics and performance measures, respectively, for 2018 through 2022. The average annual rate of change for the five-year period is calculated for each statistic and measure.

It is recognized that during the NTD reporting period available for this report, transit systems across the United States experienced significant operational impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Variations in system performance may in some cases reflect differences in policies related to social distancing, capacity limits, fare collection, and service availability, in addition to broader travel disruptions. However, available

<sup>4</sup> Rural iNTD is a tool developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), based on Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) research. <https://www.nationalrtap.org/Technology-Tools/Rural-iNTD>

data may still yield insights into performance relative to peer groups, and additional data may be available for context in future years.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NCAT saw increases in ridership and fare revenue between 2018 and 2022. While passenger trips decreased in 2020 and further in 2021, ridership in 2022 surpassed even that of 2019. Operating costs have also increased at about the same rate as fare revenue.

**Table 29. Operating Statistics – NCAT, 2018-2022**

Operating Statistic	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Annual Rate of Change
Revenue Hours	17,108	16,845	15,009	10,742	15,632	-2.2%
Passenger Trips	49,786	51,948	46,761	37,244	52,123	1.2%
Operating Expenses	\$1,199,716	\$1,260,305	\$1,465,104	\$1,381,459	\$1,895,339	12.1%
Passenger Revenue	\$90,107	\$83,655	\$70,967	\$89,553	\$128,370	9.3%
Service Area Population	-	-	-	-	18,708	-

Source: National Transit Database, 2018-2022.

Operating expenses per revenue hour have increased considerably across the five-year period as have operating expenses per passenger trip. Despite this, average fare per passenger trip improved in 2021 through 2022, limiting the impact of increased costs on the operating ratio.

**Table 30. Performance Measures – NCAT, 2018-2022**

Performance Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Annual Rate of Change
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	\$24.10	\$24.26	\$31.33	\$37.09	\$36.36	10.8%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	\$70.13	\$74.82	\$97.62	\$128.60	\$121.25	14.67%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	2.91	3.08	3.12	3.47	3.33	3.5%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	-	-	-	-	0.48	-
Revenue Hours Per Capita	-	-	-	-	0.41	-
Average Fare Per Passenger Trip	\$1.81	\$1.61	\$1.52	\$2.40	\$2.46	8.0%
Operating Ratio	7.51%	6.64%	4.84%	6.48%	6.77%	-2.6%
Subsidy Per Passenger Trip	\$22.29	\$22.65	\$29.81	\$34.69	\$33.90	11.1%

Source: National Transit Database, 2018-2022.

## NCAT Performance Relative to Peer Groups

This section summarizes the results of the single-year (2022) and multi-year (2018-2022) analyses of the eight performance measures reviewed in this peer review. NCAT is compared to its Illinois and national peer groups for each of the eight performance measures (Table 31 and Table 32, respectively). A summary of NCAT performance across all measures is presented in Table 33 later in this document.

Table 31. Illinois Peer Performance Measures Summary

System Name	County/City	Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	Passenger Trips per Capita	Revenue Hours per Capita	Average Fare per Passenger Trip	Operating Ratio	Subsidy per Passenger Trip
Monticello	Piatt County	\$38.53	\$80.73	2.1	1.82	0.87	\$1.13	2.94%	\$37.40
Reagan Mass Transit District	Lee and Ogle Counties	\$28.32	\$105.17	3.71	1.51	0.41	\$0.74	2.61%	\$27.58
Tri-County Rural Transit	Jersey, Greene, and Calhoun Counties	\$31.39	\$60.87	1.94	2.21	1.14	\$1.54	4.91%	\$29.85
Grundy Transit System	Grundy County	\$47.81	\$67.20	1.41	0.26	0.18	\$2.73	5.70%	\$45.08
Central Illinois Public Transit	Effingham, Christian, Clay, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby Counties	\$16.85	\$33.18	1.97	0.90	0.46	\$0.45	2.70%	\$16.40
Pretzel City Area Transit	City of Freeport	\$22.77	\$59.45	2.61	0.93	0.36	\$1.51	6.63%	\$21.26
Bureau & Putnam Area Rural Transit	Bureau and Putnam Counties	\$26.32	\$87.49	3.32	1.74	0.52	\$1.12	4.27%	\$25.19
<b>North Central Area Transit</b>	2022	<b>\$36.36</b>	<b>\$121.25</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>\$2.46</b>	<b>6.77%</b>	<b>\$33.90</b>
	Five-Year Trend	<b>10.83%</b>	<b>14.67%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	-	-	<b>8.01%</b>	<b>-2.55%</b>	<b>11.05%</b>
Average	2022	\$31.04	\$76.92	2.55	1.23	0.51	\$1.46	4.57%	\$29.58
	Five-Year Trend	12.66%	12.09%	-0.48%	-	-	11.55%	-1.16%	12.85%
Standard Deviation	2022	\$9.12	\$26.12	0.77	0.65	0.32	\$0.74	1.61%	\$8.56
	Five-Year Trend	8.00%	13.64%	9.75%	-	-	16.59%	10.75%	7.92%
Acceptable Range	2022	\$40.16	\$103.04	1.77	0.58	0.19	\$0.72	2.96%	\$38.14
	Five-Year Trend	20.66%	25.73%	-10.23%	-	-	-5.04%	-11.91%	20.78%
NCAT Performance Compared to Peers: 2022		Within satisfactory range	Outside Satisfactory Range	Better than average	Outside Satisfactory Range	Within satisfactory range	Better than average	Better than average	Within satisfactory range
NCAT Performance Compared to Peers: Five-Year Trend		Better than average	Within satisfactory range	Better than average	-	-	Within satisfactory range	Within satisfactory range	Better than average

Table 32. National Peer Performance Measures Summary

System Name	County/City	Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	Passenger Trips per Capita	Revenue Hours per Capita	Average Fare per Passenger Trip	Operating Ratio	Subsidy per Passenger Trip
Champaign County Transit System	Champaign County, OH	\$23.95	\$55.29	2.31	0.62	0.27	\$1.24	5.18%	\$22.71
Shelby Public Transit	Shelby County, OH	\$29.44	\$66.12	2.25	0.56	0.25	\$1.74	5.90%	\$27.70
Geauga Transit	Geauga County, OH	\$17.64	\$53.47	3.03	0.59	0.20	\$0.54	3.08%	\$17.09
Manistee County Transportation, Inc.	Manistee County, MI	\$37.00	\$116.93	3.16	4.78	1.51	\$1.03	2.78%	\$35.97
Barry County Transit	Barry County, MI	\$26.30	\$78.08	2.97	1.01	0.34	\$1.83	6.95%	\$24.47
Access Scioto County	Scioto County, OH	\$41.72	\$63.80	1.53	0.30	0.20	\$3.34	8.01%	\$38.37
Allegan County Transportation Services	Allegan County, MI	\$47.51	\$73.94	1.56	0.29	0.19	\$2.68	5.64%	\$44.83
<b>North Central Area Transit</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>\$36.36</b>	<b>\$121.25</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>\$2.46</b>	<b>6.77%</b>	<b>\$33.90</b>
	<b>Five-Year Trend</b>	<b>10.83%</b>	<b>14.67%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8.01%</b>	<b>-2.55%</b>	<b>11.05%</b>
Average	2022	\$32.49	\$78.61	2.52	1.04	0.42	\$1.86	5.54%	\$30.63
	Five-Year Trend	10.73%	7.97%	-2.20%	-	-	-8.22%	-17.16%	13.60%
Standard Deviation	2022	\$9.27	\$24.65	0.67	1.42	0.43	\$0.87	1.72%	\$8.61
	Five-Year Trend	7.51%	7.88%	8.42%	-	-	16.80%	13.68%	7.85%
Acceptable Range	2022	\$41.76	\$103.25	1.85	-0.38	-0.01	\$0.99	3.83%	\$39.24
	Five-Year Trend	18.24%	15.86%	-10.63%	-	-	-25.01%	-31.84%	21.45%
NCAT Performance Compared to Peers: 2022		Within satisfactory range	Outside Satisfactory Range	Better than average	Within satisfactory range	Within satisfactory range	Better than average	Better than average	Within satisfactory range
NCAT Performance Compared to Peers: Five-Year Trend		Within satisfactory range	Within satisfactory range	Better than average	-	-	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average

## Summary

The symbols in Table 33 indicate the measures for which NCAT was better than average, worse than average but satisfactory, or outside satisfactory range. Table 31 and Table 32 display NCAT performance measure results relative to all Illinois and national peers in greater detail.

Table 33. Summary of NCAT Performance Relative to Peers

Performance Objective	Performance Measure	Single Year: 2022		Trend Analysis: 2018-2022	
		IL Peer Comparison	US Peer Comparison	IL Peer Comparison	US Peer Comparison
Cost Effectiveness	Operating Expenses Per Passenger Trip	●	●	▲	●
Cost Efficiency	Operating Expenses Per Revenue Hour	▼	▼	●	●
Service Effectiveness	Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	▲	▲	▲	▲
Market Penetration	Passenger Trips Per Capita	▼	●	-	-
	Revenue Hours Per Capita	●	●	-	-
Passenger Revenue Effectiveness	Average Fare Per Passenger Trip	▲	▲	●	▲
	Operating Ratio	▲	▲	●	▲
	Subsidy Per Passenger Trip	●	●	▲	▲
Key to Symbols	▲	Better than peer average			
	●	Worse than peer average, but within satisfactory range (+/- one standard deviation)			
	▼	Outside satisfactory range			

In 2022, NCAT performed better than average or within a satisfactory range for six of eight measures compared to state peers and seven out of eight national peers. NCAT performed particularly well in attracting passengers per revenue hour and in collecting fares, resulting in an effective service with less subsidy than its peers. Despite this, NCAT fell outside the acceptable range for operating costs per revenue hour for both state and national peers, as well as passenger trips per capita when compared to state peers. This suggests that while NCAT does well to attract riders with its current operational capacity, there is opportunity for further penetration into its existing service area.

When viewed over a five-year period, which necessarily centers on the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on transit ridership and its consequent recovery, NCAT performed better than average in three categories compared to Illinois peers and four categories compared to national peers. These include a lower-than-average trend in operating expense per passenger trip and subsidy per trip, and a higher-than-average trend in operating ratio and passenger trips per revenue hour. These further suggest that NCAT has done well to maintain a cost-efficient service over the past five years.

Overall, the peer analysis suggests that NCAT has been conservatively operated to provide a cost-efficient transit service to the City of Ottawa and LaSalle County, both in recent years and over a five-year trend. While cost-efficiency remains high, NCAT's market penetration remains lower than its state peers, and future efforts may be best directed at attracting more passengers from the existing service area.

# Conclusion and Key Findings

The following section summarizes the key findings of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (Table 34). This document serves as a foundation for the remainder of the NCAT Strategic Plan process by equipping the project with the background information necessary to understand current transit service and identify locations and population groups that can benefit most from transit. These findings enable NCAT and the project team to conduct further analysis identifying current challenges and opportunities for improvement, based on both this report’s outcomes and public outreach efforts.

**Table 34. Key Findings of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis Report**

Section	Key Findings
<b>Review of Existing Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plan and the LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan recommend expanding NCAT services, particularly the service hours.</li> <li>The NCICOG Human Service Transportation Plan – Region 3 includes several plans for facility upgrades, fleet improvements, and technology enhancements.</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis of Existing Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCAT ridership has more than doubled over four years, with corollary increases in revenue miles and hours.</li> <li>The rider base has diversified, expanding from primarily medical trips to include employment, education, as well as a greater variety of age groups riding NCAT.</li> <li>Rapid growth in ridership may be impacting operational efficiency, with rising late arrivals and administrator-cancelled trips, indicating strain on capacity.</li> <li>High-density trip patterns include north-south routes in Ottawa, LaSalle-Peru, and Streator, and east-west connections between Ottawa, Marseilles, and LaSalle-Peru.</li> <li>Major trip destinations are medical centers, low-income and senior housing, Walmart, downtown areas, and industrial complexes like Eakas, Nucor, and SABIC.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Area Profile and Market Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero vehicle households and LEP populations are more commonly seen in the major population centers around the county than in rural areas.</li> <li>Seniors, youth, and minorities are seen at high rates in both population centers and some rural areas.</li> <li>Rural areas north of the Illinois River tend to have relatively high rates of foreign-born individuals compared to rural areas south of the river.</li> <li>Jobs in LaSalle County tend to be in and around the county’s major population centers, but exceptions include the Sheridan Correctional Center and at the nuclear energy plant south of Marseilles.</li> <li>The top industry sectors in LaSalle County tend to employ workers who may be likely to use public transit services.</li> <li>A slight majority of workers who live in LaSalle County commute outside the county for work, primarily to the Chicago metropolitan area, resulting in a net outflow of workers.</li> </ul>
<b>Trip Patterns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trips that start and/or end in LaSalle County tend to be relatively short, with the majority of trips being under 20 minutes in duration and less than four miles in distance.</li> <li>Around 80% of trips that start in LaSalle County end in LaSalle County.</li> <li>The vast majority (approximately 86 percent) of trips in LaSalle County are made by car.</li> <li>Weekend trip purposes are more oriented around shopping, socializing, and other commercial activities, with work trips making up a much lower percentage compared to weekdays.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer System Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2022, NCAT performed better than peers in minimizing operating costs per hour, collecting fares, and maximizing passenger trips per revenue hour.</li> <li>NCAT fell outside the acceptable range in operating costs per revenue hour, revenue hours per capita, and passenger trips per capita when compared to state peers.</li> <li>While cost-efficiency is high, NCAT’s market penetration remains lower than its state peers, and future efforts may be best directed at attracting more passengers from the existing service area.</li> </ul>