



2027 Oakland County Access to Transit Program Guide

A program to improve community connections

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About the Program

In 2022, Oakland County voters approved the Oakland County Public Transportation millage. This voter-approved, 10-year, 0.95 millage is dedicated to maintaining and expanding public transit services throughout Oakland County. As a result of the millage, Oakland County now contracts directly with five transit providers that provide four different types of public transportation services:

Demand Response



Community Transit

Prebooked door-to-door or curb-to-curb service within a designated area



Microtransit

On-demand app-based rideshare service with pickups and drop-offs at locations assigned by the technology (like Uber/Lyft)



ADA Paratransit

Prebooked curb-to-curb service with pickups and drop-offs within 3/4-miles of bus stops for those unable to use fixed route due to a disability (ADA certification required)



Fixed Route

Schedule-based service along a designated route with pickups and drop-offs at designated bus stops

Door-to-Door

Driver assists the rider to get between the door of the location and the vehicle

Virtual Stop-to-Virtual Stop

Technology assigns the rider a location to walk to for pickup/drop-off to keep vehicles on the most efficient route

Curb-to-Curb

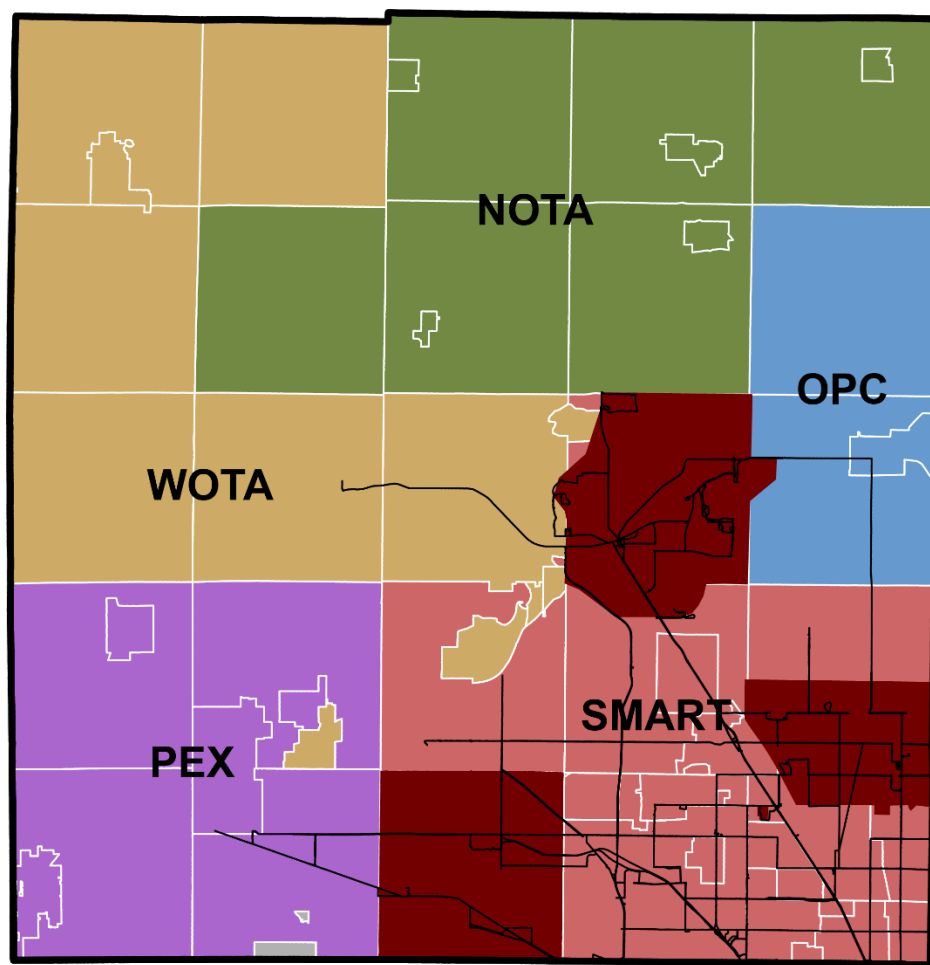
Driver picks up and drops off the rider at the curb of the location (no assistance to the door)

Bus Stop-to-Bus Stop

Location is marked with a signpost where a fixed route can pickup or drop off passengers

The five transit providers are:

- **Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)**, which operates Fixed Route, ADA Paratransit, and Microtransit service and also partners with individual municipalities in its service area to provide Community Transit services.
- **North Oakland Transportation Authority (NOTA)**, which operates Community Transit in northeastern Oakland County.
- **OPC Social & Activity Center (OPC)**, which operates Community Transit in the Rochester area.
- **People's Express (PEX)**, which operates Community Transit in southwestern Oakland County.
- **Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA)**, which operates Community Transit in northwestern Oakland County.



The Oakland County Access to Transit Program was launched in 2024 to fund capital improvement projects that improve safety and access for riders that use SMART, NOTA, WOTA, OPC, and PEX services. The program is geared toward enhancing public transit services, making transit stops easier and safer to get to, and upgrading stop amenities to improve overall user experience. The Access to Transit Program uses limited Oakland County Public Transportation Millage funds to implement publicly supported projects in Oakland County.

Available funds can be used to achieve any of the following program goals:

- Enhance mobility and improve safety.
- Provide additional transportation options for non-driving residents.
- Improve first and last mile connections between stops and destinations.
- Increase transit ridership.
- Help reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Lower instances of driving single occupant vehicles.
- Support transit-oriented development and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.
- Promote public health through active transportation like walking and biking.
- Provide universal access for all riders regardless of age or ability.
- Improve local economic vitality and attract and/or retain businesses.

This program has a competitive application process and each project will be scored on how well it aligns with program criteria, as detailed below. If a project is approved, an interlocal agreement will need to be executed, and the grantee is responsible for project implementation.

Eligible Applicants

Applications for the Access to Transit Program may be submitted by any of the following in Oakland County:

- City, Village, or Township
- Transportation service providers
 - NOTA
 - OPC
 - PEX
 - SMART
 - WOTA
- SMART Community Partnership Program (CPP)
- Downtown Management Organization (DMO)
- Corridor Improvement Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Tax Increment Finance Authority

Multiple entities may partner on a project; however, there can only be one lead applicant per project.

Eligible Projects

The Access to Transit Program seeks applications for capital improvement projects that will foster safe access to public transportation services, which may include but are not limited to:

- **Universal Accessibility Improvements:** Pickup and drop-off areas, curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian-activated beacons and signals, sidewalk connections, key walks and wayfinding signage.
- **On-Road and Off-Road Bicycle Facilities and Amenities:** Bike lanes, cycle tracks, bicycle signal heads, bicycle parking and storage, bike repair stations and bike tire air pumps.
- **Bus Stop Enhancements and Amenities:** Concrete pads, benches, shelters, electronic schedules, bus ticket kiosks, emergency phones, trash and recycling receptacles, and portable device charging station.
- **Intersection Improvements:** Crosswalk pavement markings, curb extensions, refuge islands, pedestrian signal heads, traffic signals, and intersection reconfiguration.
- **Mobility Hub Elements:** Co-location and installation of multi-modal infrastructure including bikeshare stations, and e-scooters.
- **Filling Gaps in Pedestrian Networks:** Connections between segments of shared-use paths, side paths, and sidewalks.
- **Environmental Enhancements:** Green stormwater management systems such as bioswales, Street Trees, Solar Charging Stations
- **Streetscape Improvements:** Placemaking improvements, public art, beautification projects, and walkability enhancements that have transit elements involved.
- **Wayfinding Signage:** Signage and wayfinding systems must prioritize transit access by clearly supporting first- and last-mile connections, facilitating seamless inter-agency transfers, and addressing all other critical touchpoints in the rider journey.
- **Park-and-Ride Enhancements:** Sheltered waiting areas, lights, clear signage directing to transit facilities, bike racks
- **Other Innovative Projects:** Support access to transit improvements such as micromobility programs/infrastructure (contact the Transit Manager before applying if you have a special project in mind).

Project phases eligible for funding include:

1. **Conceptual Design:** Public engagement, design charrettes, topographic surveys, utility location/identification, conditions assessments, project scoping, conceptual site plans, preliminary cost estimate preparation, and/or environmental assessments.
2. **Preliminary Engineering:** Soil borings, construction drawings, final specifications, utility coordination, permitting, environmental review, and/or engineers estimate of costs.
3. **Bidding and Construction:** Prepare final bid documents, project advertising, and costs directly related to construction.
4. **Construction Engineering:** Construction observation/project oversight, contract administration, construction/survey layout, materials testing, final inspection, and prepare as-built construction plans.

Projects should be included in a community plan such as Master Plan, Transportation Plan, Non-Motorized Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, or other related management plan.

The applicant is responsible for providing the public with an adequate opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project. A public hearing is not required; however, the project must be an agenda item at a public meeting of the municipality and open to discussion by the general public. The applicant should hold at least one public meeting to receive input about the project. This meeting must be held within one year of the application deadline. Public meetings focused on review of the community's Master Plan or Transportation Plan will not meet obligations for public input for the application unless the meeting notice and agenda indicate that the meeting will cover both plan review and the specific project.

A resolution supporting the project and committing to matching funds, if the application is selected, passed by the legislative body of the municipality is also required (a sample resolution is provided in Appendix A).

Funding Guidelines

The Access to Transit Program will provide an initial disbursement of 50 percent of the total grant award, which will enable the grantee to initiate the project. The remaining funds will be disbursed as reimbursement at the end of the project. Semi-annual status reports will be required as the project progresses and a final report with documentation of expenses will be required at the end of the project.

In 2027, there is \$2 million available, grant awards vary by project phase.

- **Conceptual Design:** Requests are typically between \$15,000 and \$50,000.
- **Preliminary Engineering:** Requests are typically up to 10 percent of estimated construction costs.
- **Bidding and Construction:** There are no minimum or maximum request amounts.
- **Construction Engineering:** Requests are typically up to 15 percent of estimate construction costs.

With most projects, a 20 percent match is required. Certain communities may be eligible to have the match requirement waived or partially waived – if your project has difficulty identifying a source for matching funds, please contact the Transit Manager.

Acceptable match sources are:

- **General Funds or Local Restricted Funds:** Local cash or budgeted funding from the applicant's general fund or applicable restricted funds such as transportation or recreation.
- **Force Account Labor:** The applicant's paid employees that will work directly on the construction of the project. This value cannot include project administration or supervision costs but may include preliminary/design engineering or other approved professional services.
- **Federal or State Funds:** Federal or State grant funds that have been awarded (or are pending award) for funding within the project period.
- **Private or Philanthropy:** Funds that have been awarded (or are pending award) for funding within the project period through private donations or philanthropic organizations.
- **Cash Donations:** Cash generated from donations, fundraising, or other similar means.

- **Donated Labor/Materials:** Labor or materials directly related to the construction of the project from sources other than the applicant's own paid labor. Donated labor will be valued at minimum wage, unless the person is professionally skilled in the work being performed on the project. When a professional is volunteering professional services, the wage rate that this individual is normally paid for performing this service may be charged to the project. Value of donated materials must be documented.

The value of donated land will **not** be counted as match.

Applicants may use funds from other sources as their local match for the Access to Transit Program, however the grant application or letter of commitment from the external granting agency must be provided.

If funding from the Access to Transit Program is awarded, the grantee shall commit to the following responsibilities:

- Concept design or preliminary engineering projects will subsequently move forward with implementation and construction within a reasonable time frame.
- The project must comply with all federal and state requirements regarding accessibility for people with disabilities.
- The grantee will coordinate with local transit providers, road agencies, and property owners to obtain all necessary approvals, easements, rights-of-way (ROW), and permits within the proposed project timeline.
- The grantee will maintain the project site and any approved project scope items installed for the intended design life. This includes ensuring access that meets or exceeds Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- Any contractor or sub-contractor performing work on the project shall comply with the requirements of the Davis Bacon Act / Michigan Prevailing Wage Act.
- The design professional for the project will be required to certify that all design and/or construction was completed according to industry standards and that all necessary permits were obtained from and approved by the relevant agencies.
- Construction projects must install an Oakland Transit recognition plaque (provided by Oakland County) at the project location and maintain it at that site for a minimum of five (5) years from the date of project completion.

Eligible Expenses

Only those costs directly associated with the design, preliminary engineering, and construction of the project will be reimbursed as identified in the Interlocal Agreement. The grant award received will be based on the information included in the application. The municipality will be responsible for all cost overruns or any additional costs needed to complete the project.

Extension of the project completion time may be granted at the discretion of the Transit Manager as long as changes do not result in an increase in the grant award (for example: project delay due to permitting). Changes which result in an increase to the grant award can only be made by amending the interlocal agreement.

Program administration or supervision expenses will **not** count toward the local match, and the Access to Transit Program will **not** fund right-of-way acquisition or easements or maintenance

equipment. Overhead, maintenance, administration, attorney, and contingency costs are **not** eligible expenses.

Project Selection Criteria

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

Proximity to Transit	
Project proximity to existing or planned public transit services	
10 points	0 to 300 feet (1 block) away from a transit stop or high-demand destinations
5 points	300 feet (1 block) to ¼ mile (5-minute walk) away from a transit stop or high-demand destinations
0 points	Farther than ¼ mile (5-minute walk) away from a transit stop or high-demand destinations
Access Improvement	
How well the project improves access to public transit services	
10 points	Fills a critical gap, addresses a critical barrier to accessing transit, or addresses a documented safety issue
5 points	Fills a gap, addresses a barrier to accessing transit, and/or addresses a safety issue
0 points	Does not fill a gap, address a barrier to accessing transit, or address a safety issue
Safety Improvement	
How well the project improves safety for people accessing public transit services (refer to the Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse)	
10 points	Significantly improves safety (crash reduction factor of 30% or more)
5 points	Somewhat improves safety (crash reduction factor <30%)
0 points	Does not improve safety (no crash reduction factor)
Public Support	
Letters of support and documentation of outreach to members of the general public demonstrating public support for the project (if there is opposition to the proposed project, demonstration of how the applicant is working to address concerns)	
5 points	Thorough public engagement conducted and complete documentation of public support
3 points	Some public engagement conducted and/or some documentation of public support
0 points	No public engagement conducted and/or no documentation of public support
Design	
Alignment with National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) design guidance	
5 points	Closely aligned with NACTO design guidance
3 point	Somewhat aligned with NACTO design guidance
0 points	Not aligned with NACTO design guidance
Ridership Increase Potential	
To what extent the project increases public transit ridership	
5 points	Will significantly increase ridership
3 point	Will somewhat increase ridership
0 points	Will not increase ridership

Equity Community	
Project location proximity to a US Department of Transportation-Designated Disadvantaged Census Tract	
5 points	Within a disadvantaged census tract
3 point	Within 1/2-mile of a disadvantaged census tract
0 points	Farther than 1/2-mile away from a disadvantaged census tract
Long-Term Maintenance	
To what extent a plan is in place for the long-term maintenance of the project once implemented	
5 points	Thorough plan developed for maintenance
3 point	Plan somewhat developed for maintenance
0 points	No plan developed for maintenance
Universal Accessibility	
To what extent the project is built to be accessed by people of all abilities	
5 points	Meets/exceeds Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) with documented engagement with the disability community and/or Universal Design Principles incorporated
3 point	Meets/exceeds PROWAG
0 points	Does not meet PROWAG
User Experience	
To what extent does the project improve the overall experience of individuals accessing transit, as well as addressing barriers to access, and supporting people of varying transportation needs	
5 points	Significant improvements that create a user-focused environment
3 points	Moderate improvements to comfort, accessibility, or convenience
0 points	No improvements made
Total Score	0-65 points

Project Selection Process

All applications submitted will be reviewed and scored by a selection committee consisting of Oakland County Transit and Planning Division staff as well as staff from the transit providers and road agencies. The selected projects will be recommended by the Transit Division to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for final approval. Once a project is approved by the Board of Commissioners, an interlocal agreement will be executed and the sponsoring municipality will be responsible for project implementation.

Timeline

September 21, 2026	Call for Projects and online applications accepted
September 23, 2026	Program Kick-Off Webinar
September 28-October 30, 2026	Schedule Pre-Application Meeting with Oakland Transit Staff
November 20, 2026 by 4:00 p.m.	Applications due
December 2026-January 2026	Applications are reviewed and scored. Site visits and audits are conducted, if needed (applicants may receive requests for additional information).
Q1 2027	Projects are selected and presented to Oakland County Board of Commissioners for funding approval (successful applicants are notified after Board approval). Oakland County executes interlocal agreement with city, village, or township and up to 50 percent initial grant award payment is made.
Semi-annually	Grantees submit a semi-annual status report to Oakland County throughout the course of the project by the following deadlines: • July 31 of the current year (for Jan-June) • January 31 of the following year (for July-Dec)
Within 60 days of project completion	Grantees submit a final report with expense documentation, Oakland County makes final grant award payment, and construction projects receive an Oakland Transit recognition plaque to install at the project location

How to Apply

Authorized officials from eligible organizations can apply for the program at the link located on our website. <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-transit/access-to-transit-program>

Applications must be submitted on or before **November 20, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.**

An authorized official is the applicant's representative who has the authority to obligate the community legally and financially to initiate and submit an application on behalf of the organization. Typically, this is a senior-level, paid staff person of the organization. A contractor who may gain financially from the project cannot represent the organization at either the application or implementation stage.

Applicants may submit more than one project; however, separate applications are required for each project and the applicant must indicate the priority order, with the first application submitted sequentially being the highest priority application. Each application must be a standalone project – that is, not dependent on another project application – in order to be constructed. Potential applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting. Contact the Transit Manager prior to submitting an application.

If a proposed project is located in road right-of-way under the jurisdiction of another entity, such as the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) or the Michigan Department of

Transportation (MDOT), applicants should submit letters of support or interest from those entities with the application. If a project is awarded funding, it is the grantees' responsibility to obtain the required permit(s) from those entities for all work proposed within their rights-of-way.

Contact

Please direct questions about the Access to Transit Program to:

Eli Cooper

Transit Manager
Oakland County Transit Division
248-975-9876
cooperel@oakgov.com

or

Lindsay Wallace

Principal Planner
Oakland County Transit Division
248-452-9749
wallacelr@oakgov.com

Appendix A: Sample Community Resolution

WHEREAS voters passed the Oakland County Public Transportation Millage in November 2022; and

WHEREAS the Oakland County Board of Commissioners appropriated \$2 million of Oakland County Public Transportation Millage to create the Oakland County 2026 Access to Transit Program (the “Program”); and

WHEREAS the Program seeks to assist eligible applicants in Oakland County to further the enhancement and expansion of public transit services by providing limited matching funds to support their efforts in making transit stops easier and safer to get to and more comfortable to wait at; and

WHEREAS the _____ [Applicant’s Name] (the “Applicant”) desires to submit a Program application for _____ [Name of the project] to _____ [Project description and/or scope]; and

WHEREAS the proposed application is supported by the _____ [insert name of community Master Plan or Capital Improvement Plan or other agency plan]; and

WHEREAS the _____ [Applicant Name] has prepared a Program application in the amount of \$_____, based on a total project cost of \$_____, to fund _____ [Concept Design, Preliminary Engineering, Bidding/Construction, and/or Construction Engineering] for the desired and proposed improvements; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the _____ [Council/Board] hereby approves the submission of an application to 2026 Access to Transit Program in the amount of \$XXXX based on a total project cost of \$XXXXXXXX.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the project is approved, _____ [Applicant Name] will enter into an Interlocal Agreement with Oakland County, which will require the _____ [Applicant Name] to make available a local match and other grant funding through financial commitment of \$XXXXX during the 20XX-20XX fiscal years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED if Program funding is awarded, _____ [Applicant Name] agrees to comply Program requirements, including commitment to long-term maintenance of the project site and installed scope items and acknowledges all Project related cost overruns be the responsibility of _____ [Applicant Name], as applicable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that _____ [Name and Title of Person] will be authorized to sign all Program-related documents on behalf of the _____ [Applicant Name] and take any other action necessary or appropriate on the organization’s behalf to participate in the Program.

AYES:

NAYES:

ABSENT:

MOTION APPROVED.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a Resolution duly made and passed by _____ of _____ at their regular meeting held on _____, 20__, at _____ a.m./p.m., with a quorum present.

Clerk

Date