

TRANSIT

Public transportation forms a key component of the Berks County transportation system. While most travel in the County is by automobile, there is a significant and growing segment of the population that relies on public transportation to fulfill their needs. Public transportation is provided by both non-profit and for-profit organizations, supplying both fixed route and demand response services.

The principal provider of public transportation services in Berks County is [the South Central Transit Authority \(SCTA\)](#). This authority oversees and manages two divisions: the [Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority \(BARTA\)](#) that serves Berks County and the [Red Rose Transit Authority \(RRTA\)](#) that serves Lancaster County.

Headquartered in Lancaster County, the SCTA Board is comprised of five members appointed by Lancaster County Commissioners and five members appointed by Berks County Commissioners. BARTA operates a traditional fixed route bus system operating in the urban area surrounding the City of Reading and a Special Services division that provides demand-response services to elderly and handicapped citizens through the County. BARTA buses continue to be identified with the BARTA colors, name and logo, and all schedule and service information are provided under the BARTA name.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) established new requirements for transit authorities on asset management and investment strategies. The SCTA is required to meet the provisions of MAP-21 and the guidelines provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to prepare a [Transit Asset Management Plan \(TAMP\)](#). This asset management plan is performance based and must include a systematic means of operating, maintaining, and improving public transportation capital assets effectively. The most recent edition of SCTA's Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) was adopted in June 2025. This plan is required to be updated as needed, but not less than every four years per FTA regulations. A separate document also required by FTA is the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan](#). As taken from the [SCTA website](#), by using the principles of Safety Management Systems (SMS), SCTA examines how organizational factors contribute to incidents, accidents, and near misses. SMS is a formal top-down, data driver, organization-wide approach to managing safety risks and assuring the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations. Through this approach, SCTA ensures that the safety of passengers and employees remains a top priority.

SCTA updated [their Transit Development Plan \(TDP\)](#) in March 2024 which included recommendations for changes to occur over time. Goal 2 identified in the 2024 SCTA Transit Development Plan Final Report is to “...offer a network that links people to the places they need and want to go”. Desired locations for many is their jobs and/or shopping. One way to improve access to these locations would be for developers and planners to consider bus stop location early in the design process. As more businesses and jobs come to an area, planners and developers should work with BARTA early in the design process of a new project, rather than placing stops at later stages of construction, with considerations for pedestrian access, existing bus operations, and potential stop facilities.

An example of this type of coordination has been recently seen along the Route 61 Corridor which is serviced by BARTA's Route 20. As more businesses began development along the Route 61 corridor, planners worked with BARTA to add stops along this route and to accommodate the buses needs such as pull offs and larger turning radius. More stops have been added along the Route 61 corridor, BARTA's Route 20, to provide individuals access to new businesses and potential jobs.

The Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association (PPTA) in partnership with PennDOT published the [Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide](#) in December 2020. This resource guide promotes safe access to fixed route bus service and provides municipalities, transit agencies, planners, and designers with resources to encourage consideration and incorporation of transit in planning and design. The review and implementation of strategies from this resource guide is encouraged to provide quality and efficient transit service and ensure bus stops meet the needs of all riders, transit agencies, and the community.

Fixed-Route Operations

BARTA provides fixed route services in the City of Reading, 17 Boroughs, and 15 Townships within Berks County and carries approximately 2.2 million passengers annually. Operating seven days a week, with a fleet of 50 buses, it services 39 bus shelters and nearly 1,500 bus stops on 19 routes with nearly 1.6 million revenue miles per year. According to the SCTA TDP [BARTA Onboard Passenger Survey](#), most passengers (84%) walk or use a wheelchair to get to their bus stop. Overall, 63% of trips surveyed were for either work or school purposes, with the vast majority (59%) made up of work trips specifically. More than one third are made to go shopping (36%), and one fourth (25%) are made for a medical visit or to go to a doctor. The average age of BARTA riders is 44 years old, with 19% being between 25 and 34 years of age. Roughly 62% of riders are employed; mostly all use a cell phone, and 52% use the BARTA GoMobile smartphone App. More than four in ten (44%) of riders identify as white, and slightly less (37%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, or Black/African American (21%). Spanish is the most common second language spoken at home, with 24% speaking it. The most heavily traveled route is Route 1-Temple, which services 5th Street between Reading and Muhlenberg Township.

BARTA Fixed Route Ridership was down slightly for the fiscal year ending in June 2025 but up overall from 2021 to 2025. The COVID-19 Pandemic still limited travel early in 2021, but as restrictions eased passenger traffic increased.

BARTA Fixed Route Service							
Customer Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	# Change 2021-2025	% Change
Farepaying	1,166,756	1,362,473	1,571,523	1,666,351	1,630,300	463,544	39.7%
Senior Citizens	313,268	392,571	409,159	434,544	435,497	122,229	39.0%
Transfers	93,619	49,928	56,839	47,440	54,256	-39,363	-42.0%
Specials	248,425	49,047	42,760	50,116	43,653	-204,772	-82.4%
Total Passengers	1,822,068	1,854,059	2,080,281	2,208,451	2,163,706	341,638	18.8%

Source: South Central Transit Authority, Berks Area Regional Transit Authority Fiscal Year Summaries

BARTA Ridership July 2024 – June 2025 Fiscal Year by Fixed Route	
Route	Ridership

Route 1 - Temple via 5th	463,711
Route 15 - Berkshire Mall	193,014
Route 4 - 10th St / 11th St	191,969
Route 16 - Broadcasting Square	178,470
Route 18 - Schuylkill Ave	147,707
Route 8 - Reiffton / Birdsboro	116,865
Route 14 - Wernersville via Sinking Spring	117,107
Route 3 - Temple via Kutztown Rd	122,868
Route 19 - Riverside / Cotton St	96,850
Route 10 - Brookline	72,456
Route 17 - Glenside	81,441
Route 5 - Albright College	87,612
Route 11 - Mohnton via Shillington	69,533
Route 20 - Rt 61 Hamburg	76,652
Route 7 - Pennside	51,454
Route 12 - Lincoln Park / Reading Hospital	34,343
Route 9 - Grill via Kenhorst	37,105
Route 22 - Lyon Station	18,852
Route 2 - Fairgrounds Square	3,509

Source: South Central Transit Authority Fixed Route Data Summary

Overall, most major trip origins and destinations (major employers, shopping centers, post-secondary schools) are served by BARTA fixed route bus service in and around the area surrounding the City of Reading. Most of the un-served origins and destinations are in the eastern, northeasters, northwestern, and southern peripheries of Berks County, which includes the boroughs of Boyertown and Kutztown.

BARTA's main vehicle servicing and administration facility is located on North 11th Street in the City of Reading. The main transfer point is the BARTA Transportation Center located at North 8th and Franklin Streets in downtown Reading. BARTA also provides service to five (5) Park and Ride lots in the county.

Special Services Operations

BARTA's Special Services Division is responsible for operating and administering most human service transportation in Berks County. These services include the Shared Ride, ADA, and Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). They are specialized, demand-responsive paratransit services and provide public transportation to persons with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transit.

BARTA provided nearly 176,000 trips in FY 2025 between their fleet of 42 paratransit vehicles and a contract with Easton Coach. Like fixed route service, increases in many of the Special Services categories can be attributed to a 'return to normal' after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the SCTA TDP [BARTA Special Services Customer Survey](#), most trips (95%) were for medical appointments, followed by shopping (6%) and Errands/Personal Business (3%). Unlike Fixed Route ridership with an overall increase, Special Services ridership decreased by 19.9%. The average age of the Special Services customer is 70 years old, with over 70% being aged 65 or older. Slightly more than one-half of customers (53%) identify as white, while roughly one third (35%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 9% identify as Black/African American.

Customer Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	# Change 2021-2025	% Change
Senior Citizens	47,508	55,803	62,965	63,777	63,154	15,646	32.9%
DPW-MATP	63,770	96,364	113,508	111,475	110,343	46,573	73.0%
BH/DS	323	4,527	4,555	6,603	5,071	4,748	1,470.0%
ADA Services	12,904	14,512	13,040	14,962	16,640	3,736	-69.6%
Area Agency on Aging	0	0	672	384	1,550	1,550	n/a
Other Agencies	5,633	41,715	37,725	37,221	43,045	37,412	664.2%
Fixed Route Offset	n/a	-67,086	-79,342	-75,183	-63,875	n/a	n/a
Total	130,138	145,835	153,123	158,839	175,928	45,790	-19.9%

Source: South Central Transit Authority Berks Area Regional Transit Authority Fiscal Year Summaries

Inter-City Bus Service

Prior to 2019, Carl R. Bieber, Inc. headquartered in Kutztown, serviced customers throughout the United States, but primarily in central and eastern Pennsylvania, New York City, and New Jersey. With a fleet of 66 buses, it maintained a scheduled line of daily runs to various locations, between Berks, surrounding counties, Philadelphia, and New York City until February 15, 2019, when Bieber's operations ceased. Subsequently there was no intercity bus service serving Berks County. Starting in August 2023 through March 2025, AMTRAK provided twice-daily bus service between the BARTA Transportation Center (BTC) in downtown Reading and 30th Street Station in Philadelphia. The service was not tied to efforts to reestablish passenger rail between Reading and Philadelphia. Though popular with riders – almost 28,000 passengers used the service from August 2023 through December 2024 - AMTRAK discontinued the service. Recently, several private bus operators have initiated limited services. [OurBus](#) is currently offering trips between Reading and Philadelphia as well as trips from Reading to New York City. [FlixBus](#) started offering new service connecting Reading to Philadelphia, Newark and New York City on May 22, 2025. FlixBus is partnering with SCTA by linking the service with the BARTA Transportation Center, giving riders easy connections between local public transit and long-distance transportation options. FlixBus offers three departures and arrivals per day Thursday through Monday and two departures and arrivals per day Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

CommutePA

Berks County joined [CommutePA](#) (formerly Commuter Services of Pennsylvania), a program of the nonprofit Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership in 2009. The program covers nine (9) counties in southcentral Pennsylvania. It is locally sponsored by RATS, BARTA, and Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and offers transportation demand management strategies and assistance to employers and individuals for finding options other than driving alone to work. The program goal is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and to increase the efficiency of the highway system by reducing congestion and improving air quality. Participation in the program is free. Participation in the program has been successful – increasing involvement and reducing VMT since 2009. The program is funded with federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funds through participating MPOs.

As shown below, the CommutePA program continues to thrive in Berks County. The total number of enrollees continues to grow as does the number of employers and organizations that participate. The effects of telework due to/during COVID and subsequent reversal back to in-person work can be seen in the decline of the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) that are removed from the roadway system due to the CommutePA program. It should be noted that, even though VMT reductions are being seen, the 2024 reduction still resulted in 36 Tons of CO2 that were not emitted by single occupant vehicles.

CommutePA – Rideshare Program							
Berks County	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change 2020-2024	% Change
New Enrollees Per Year	243	57	34	183	76	593	n/a
Total Employer/Organization Participation (#)	48	48	54	67	75	27	56.3%

Source: Commuter Services of Pennsylvania

Berks County Performance Measures							
Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change 2020-2024	% Change
Vehicle Miles Traveled Removed	243,437	117,293	78,688	98,137	81,963	-161,474	-66.3%
Commuters Enrolled	2,346	2,403	2,437	2,620	2,696	350	14.9%

Source: Commuter Services of Pennsylvania (2018-2020 VMT Removed numbers are from real time data which was unavailable until 2018)

Taxi Service

There are seven (7) taxicab operators in Berks County as of 2025. All provide 24-hour/7-day service. The importance of the role played by taxi service, for all riders, is likely to grow in the future. Taxicabs operating within Pennsylvania are licensed by the Public Utility Commission but generally are for-profit enterprises. The Public Utility Commission lists the following taxi operators as active in Berks County: Reading Checker Cab Inc, La Mexicana Express Service LLC, Reading Metro Taxicab Inc, Grab A Cab Inc, Dominicana Taxi Express LLC, La Economica Limousine and Car Service, and Reading Yellow Cab Inc. There are also several van services that provide door-to-door transportation between Reading and airports & other transportation hubs in surrounding cities.

Ride Sharing

Many ridesharing companies are emerging across the country. Berks County is presently serviced by Uber and Lyft. Uber began operations in 2015 with a limited-service area in and around the City of Reading shortly followed by the emergence of Lyft. Service statistics are not available.