



# 2024 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## CITY OF OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

FINAL REPORT - APRIL 2024



Prepared on behalf of GO Transit and the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)  
by SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

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## Executive Summary

The 2024-2028 Transit Development Plan summarizes the current conditions of GO Transit, including the existing bus services and unmet needs. Near-term recommendations include actionable route changes, updates to the system's fare structure, and other policy changes that GO Transit plans to implement in August of 2024. Long-term recommendations will require further planning but will allow the agency to provide substantial improvements for transit customers based on the stated priorities of both the agency and the public.

Critical needs identified in this plan include the following:

- **Provision of transit service during evening and weekend hours.** This need is supported by comments expressed in the rider and community surveys, as well as stakeholder engagement.
- **Service area expansion.** Agency staff, stakeholders, and community members have indicated a need for additional geographic coverage to facilitate ridership growth and access to new destinations. Both fixed-route and microtransit services are potential options to fulfill this need.
- **Enhanced service frequency.** Riders expressed that aside from extending the span of service, increasing service frequency is their most desired system improvement. Engagement efforts revealed that there may be a greater emphasis on enhancing existing service than providing new service.

By implementing the recommendations of this plan, GO Transit will continue to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources invested in fixed-route transit. In the long term, planning for fixed-route and/or microtransit service expansion will position the agency to attract and retain riders as the transportation environment continues to evolve. Leveraging the stakeholder relationships developed as part of the 2024-2028 Transit Development Plan, GO Transit will move forward to improve transit access for riders and the community.

# **PART I**

# **INTRODUCTION AND SERVICE OVERVIEW**

## Introduction

### GO Transit

A service of the City of Oshkosh, Greater Oshkosh Transit (GO Transit) offers fixed route bus service and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit, GO Plus, within the City of Oshkosh. Fixed route service is operated directly by the City, while GO Plus service is operated by Oshkosh City Cab Company and Cabulance through a contract with the City. Additional paratransit services provided by the City include Senior Dial-A-Ride and Access to Jobs (ATJ). GO Transit also provides GO Connect service, a new Microtransit service linking Oshkosh and Neenah, operated by Oshkosh City Cab and Cabulance.

### Project Purpose and Scope

In 2023, GO Transit embarked on its most recent Transit Development Plan, which will guide the agency's implementation of transit system improvements over the next five years. The 2024-2028 Transit Development Plan process includes analysis of existing conditions, extensive stakeholder and community outreach efforts, and recommendations for near-term and long-term improvements.

### Project Team

A multi-organization, multi-disciplinary project team was established at the beginning of the project to guide decision making and collaboratively shape the plan. The TDP Project Team was led by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) and the City of Oshkosh's Transportation Director, with added participation from other City of Oshkosh staff, including the Transit Operations Manager and the Transit Management Analyst, among others. Staff from SRF Consulting, the final members of the TDP Project Team, provided technical expertise and content creation at the direction of the rest of the Project Team. Additionally, the TDP update was overseen by the City of Oshkosh Transportation Committee.

## Transit System Overview

### Fixed-Route Service

GO Transit operates nine fixed routes throughout the City of Oshkosh from 6:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m., Monday through Saturday; there is currently no service on Sunday. All routes begin at their midpoint (the Downtown Transit Center, North or West Transfer Point) and operate on 30-minute headways in a one-way loop. Each route is described in detail in the following section and shown in Figure 1.

#### ROUTE 1

Route 1 serves the eastern side of Oshkosh primarily along Bowen and Hazel Streets. Key destinations served by this route include Aurora Health Center/Doctor's Court, the future Menominee School, and Menominee Park. Route 1 offers transfers to Route 3 at New York Avenue and Bowen Street, Route 4 at Mallard Avenue and Evans Street, and to other routes at the Downtown Transit Center.

## **ROUTE 2**

Route 2 serves the area north of downtown Oshkosh using primarily Main and Jackson Streets. The route serves key destinations including Vel Phillips Middle School, Oaklawn Elementary School, and North High School. Route 2 offers transfers to and from Route 4 at North High School and the Fair Acres Shopping Center and to other routes at the Downtown Transit Center.

## **ROUTE 3**

Route 3 operates as a loop, serving areas largely north and west of downtown Oshkosh via Campbell Road, Sawyer Street, New York Avenue, and Bowen Street. Major destinations served include Fox Valley Technical College, the Oshkosh Senior Center, UW-Oshkosh Titan Stadium, Oshkosh Public Museum, and several primary and secondary schools. Route 3 offers transfers to routes on both sides of the Fox River, including Routes 1, 2, 5, and 6, and to other routes at the Downtown Transit Center

## **ROUTE 4**

Route 4 serves northern Oshkosh via primarily Murdock, Bowen, and Jackson Streets. Popular destinations include Aurora Health Center/Doctor's Court, Affinity Medical Group, North High School, and the St. Vincent De Paul thrift store. While Route 4 does not travel to or from the Downtown Transit Center, it offers transfers to and from Route 1 at the intersection of Mallard Avenue and Evans Street.

## **ROUTE 5**

Route 5 serves Oshkosh's northwest side, traveling along Algoma Boulevard, Omro Road, and High Avenue. It provides access to UW-Oshkosh, and the Oshkosh Public Museum, among other destinations. Transfers to and from Route 7 are available at the West Transfer Point, located on Westowne Avenue and to other routes at the Downtown Transit center.

## **ROUTE 6**

Route 6 serves Oshkosh's west side, traveling primarily along Witzel Avenue, Washburn Street, and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It serves FVTC, numerous primary and secondary schools, and several city parks. It offers transfers to and from Routes 7 and 9 at Walmart and to Route 8 at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ohio Street and to other routes at the Downtown Transit Center.

## **ROUTE 7**

Route 7 serves retail and commercial destinations on Oshkosh's west side. It travels primarily on Washburn and Koeller Streets, which function as frontage roads parallel to INTERSTATE 41. It serves destinations including Aurora Medical Center, Walmart, Affinity Healthcare, and the Oshkosh Center shopping area. While it does not travel to or from the Downtown Transit Center, it offers transfers to and from Route 5 at the West Transfer Point and Routes 6 and 7 at Walmart.

## ROUTE 8

Route 8 serves southwest Oshkosh via Oregon Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and South Park Avenue. This route serves destinations including primary and secondary schools, Wittman Regional Airport, the Oshkosh Center shopping area, and several city parks. Transfers to Route 6 are available at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ohio Street, as well as to other routes at the Downtown Transit Center.

## ROUTE 9

Route 9 serves residential and commercial areas in southwest Oshkosh along Oakwood Road, Witzel Avenue, Cumberland Trail, and Waukau Avenue. Key destinations along the route include the Outlet Shoppes, Mercy Medical Center, the industrial park, and Walmart. While it does not travel to or from the Downtown Transit Center, transfers to Routes 6 and 7 are available at Walmart. On demand service is available to the west side YMCA.

Prior to April 1, 2023, GO Transit also operated Route 10, which provided service to and from Downtown Neenah. This service was discontinued and replaced by the GO Connect on-demand service pilot, described in the Demand Response Service section.



## Demand Response Service

GO Transit provides a variety of demand response services throughout its service area to customers meeting specific eligibility requirements. The programs are funded by the City of Oshkosh, Winnebago County, the State of Wisconsin, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and user fares. These programs include the following:

- **GO Connect:** On April 1, 2023, GO Transit replaced Route 10 with a new demand-response service called GO Connect. Sponsored by Winnebago County, GO Connect offers service to and from the Oshkosh Downtown Transit Center and the Neenah Transit Center with same-day reservations available. GO Connect is operated by City Cab, a local taxi company, and Cabulance, which provides ADA-accessible trips upon request. Trips are available Monday through Saturday between 6:15 AM and 6:45 PM. Trips outside these hours can be made via City Cab at normal taxi rates.
- **GO Plus ADA Paratransit:** This ADA-required program (offered under the brand GO Plus) provides demand response ramp-equipped van or sedan service within the City of Oshkosh to ambulatory and non-ambulatory riders with disabilities. There is no limit to the number of rides taken and trips cannot be denied based on trip purpose. Service is available for residents of the city within  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of fixed routes during the same hours as the fixed-route service (24/7 service is available for an additional fee).
- **GO Plus Senior Dial-A-Ride:** This program provides demand response transportation service within the City of Oshkosh to riders age 60 and older (Dial-a-Ride). The service is currently provided with sedans. Senior Dial-a-Ride service is part of the GO Plus family of programs and intended for use only on trips when GO Transit fixed-route buses are not available. There is no limit to the number of rides taken and there are no restrictions for trip purpose. This program is not required or regulated by the ADA.
- **Rural Over 60/Rural Under 60:** GO Transit offers two programs to rural residents through a partnership with Winnebago County. Rural residents age 60 and over have access to the Rural Over 60 program, which provides sedans and vans service for trips throughout the county, limited to 10 one-way rides per month. Rural residents with a qualifying disability are eligible for the Rural Under 60 program, which offers both sedan and lift-equipped van service for trips throughout the county, also limited to 10 one-way rides per month.
- **Access to Jobs (ATJ):** In addition to the above programs for seniors and customers with disabilities, GO Transit offers Access to Jobs (ATJ), a demand response cab service for use by low-income individuals on trips to and from work. Eligible residents must live and work within the City of Oshkosh, work at least 30 hours per week, and use GO Transit fixed-route buses for work trips when possible. ATJ allows individuals who must travel outside regular fixed-route operating hours, or whose home or work locations are inaccessible via bus, to utilize cab service for work purposes only.

## Fares

In addition to cash fares, GO Transit sells tokens, punch passes, and unlimited monthly and three-month passes (Table 1). The current cash fare, monthly, and three-month pass prices reflect increases that the city implemented effective January 2019, consistent with recommendations contained in the City of Oshkosh 2018 TDP. Discounted (half) fares on fixed-route buses are available for seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. The ADA paratransit fare is set at \$3.00, double the regular fixed-route base fare (Table 2).

GO Transit provides fare-free rides to Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) students per a revenue agreement between FVTC and the City of Oshkosh. The University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh (UWO) purchases punch passes for students in need at a current cost of approximately \$19,000 per year. The Oshkosh Area School District (OASD) has an agreement with the City of Oshkosh to share the cost of providing free rides to all public school students.

Transit passes are available at a variety of community facilities, including GO Transit headquarters, City Hall, Oshkosh Public Library, and several nonprofit organizations. Punch passes are sold on buses; all passes and tokens are available at GO Transit’s headquarters facility.

In addition to cash fares, passes, and tokens, GO Transit also offers mobile fares through the Token Transit smartphone app, which is available on both iOS and Android devices. To use Token Transit, riders simply download the app, purchase the appropriate fare or pass, and show their device to the bus operator when boarding.

Table 1. Fixed-Route Fares

Group	Cash	Punch Pass (20)	Token (20 Pack)	Monthly Pass	3-Month Pass
Adult	\$1.50	\$30.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$90.00
Senior (60+)	\$0.75	\$15.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$90.00
People with Disabilities	\$0.75	\$15.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$90.00
Disabled Veterans	Free	--	--	--	--
Children Under 6*	Free	--	--	--	--

\*Up to three children under 6 per fare paying rider are eligible for the free fare.

Table 2. Demand-Response Fares

Group	During Regular Bus Hours	After Hours	Agency Fare
GO Connect	\$5.00	--	--
ADA Paratransit	\$3.00	\$6.00	--
Senior Dial-a-Ride	\$4.50	\$6.00	\$17.00
Access to Jobs (ATJ)	\$4.00	\$4.00	--
Rural	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$25.00

## Facilities

GO Transit has two primary facilities: the Downtown Transit Center, located at 110 Pearl Ave and the administrative and maintenance facility, located at 926 Dempsey Trail. The latter is where administrative and operations staff are based, and where buses are stored and maintained. It includes two repair bays with bus lifts, parts and tire storage rooms, and a bus wash.

Most GO Transit fixed routes serve the transit center, which features sheltered waiting areas, benches, maps and route information. Constructed in 1989, the facility underwent a renovation in 2021 and 2022, which included the addition of a separate driver break facility, supervisors' office, and customer service window adjacent to the bus loading area (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Downtown Transit Center



The administration and maintenance facility (Figure 3) was constructed in 1968 as the Oshkosh Municipal Incinerator and entered into transit use in 1983. This facility houses GO Transit's administrative, maintenance, and bus storage functions as well as the City of Oshkosh's Electrical and Signs Divisions.

Figure 3. Administration and Maintenance Facility



## **PART II**

# **EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

## Existing Service Review

When studying any transit system, it is important to analyze and understand the underlying conditions and performance of each element of the transit network. This not only provides a baseline to compare the impact of changes to the network, but also helps determine what kinds of changes may be needed. The purpose of this analysis of existing service is to document the strengths of the transit network, identify weaknesses, and illustrate how transit services are performing in their respective contexts.

### Systemwide Ridership

Total system ridership in 2022 averaged about 1,490 daily weekday boardings and 966 daily weekend boardings over ten regular fixed routes and several trippers. Figure 4 shows the seasonal variation of system ridership over the year for both weekday and weekend service. The most notable drop in general ridership occurs in the summer, corresponding to the end of the academic year and a reduction in student riders. This is more severe for weekday boardings than for weekend boardings.

Figure 4. System Boardings by Date and Schedule – 2022

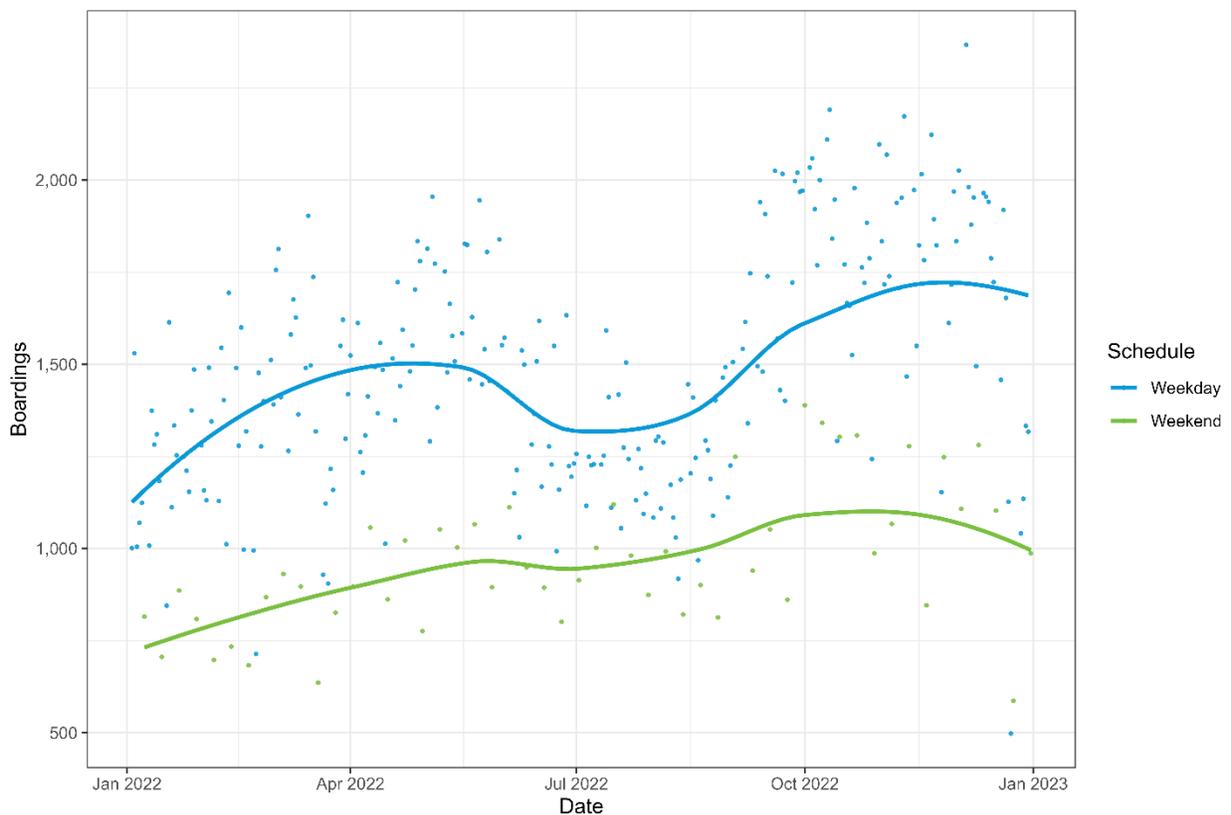
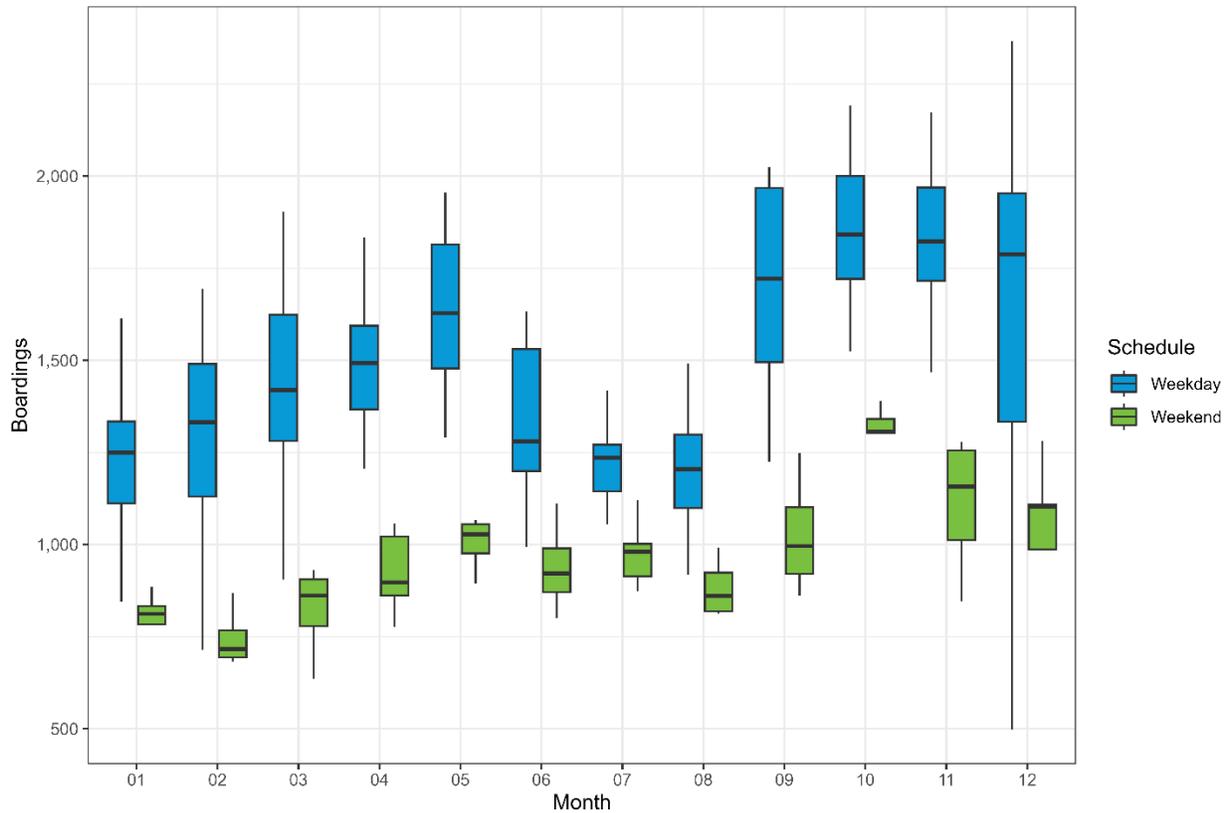


Figure 5 shows the statistical distribution of system ridership by month and service schedule in the form of boxplots representing quartiles of daily boarding data for that month. Among weekdays, the month of December exhibited the strongest variation in boardings, with 50 percent of daily boardings ranging from 1,300 to just under 2,000. July represents the month with the least variation in weekday ridership, with about 50 percent of boardings ranging from 1,100 to 1,250. Weekend ridership is less varied, with 50 percent of all months' weekend boardings differing by no more than 250 riders.

Figure 5. Distribution of System Ridership by Month and Schedule – 2022



System ridership can also be understood spatially through the use of maps. To that end, Figure 6 and Figure 7 show average daily station activity (boardings plus alightings) by stop for weekday and weekend service, respectively. Stops with the highest boardings include the Downtown Transit Center, Walmart, North High School, and Evans St & Mallard Ave near multifamily housing. Results are similar between weekdays and weekends with the exception of major decreases in station activity at schools and a general decrease in ridership at non-major-generator stops.

Figure 6. Average Weekday Bus Stop Activity

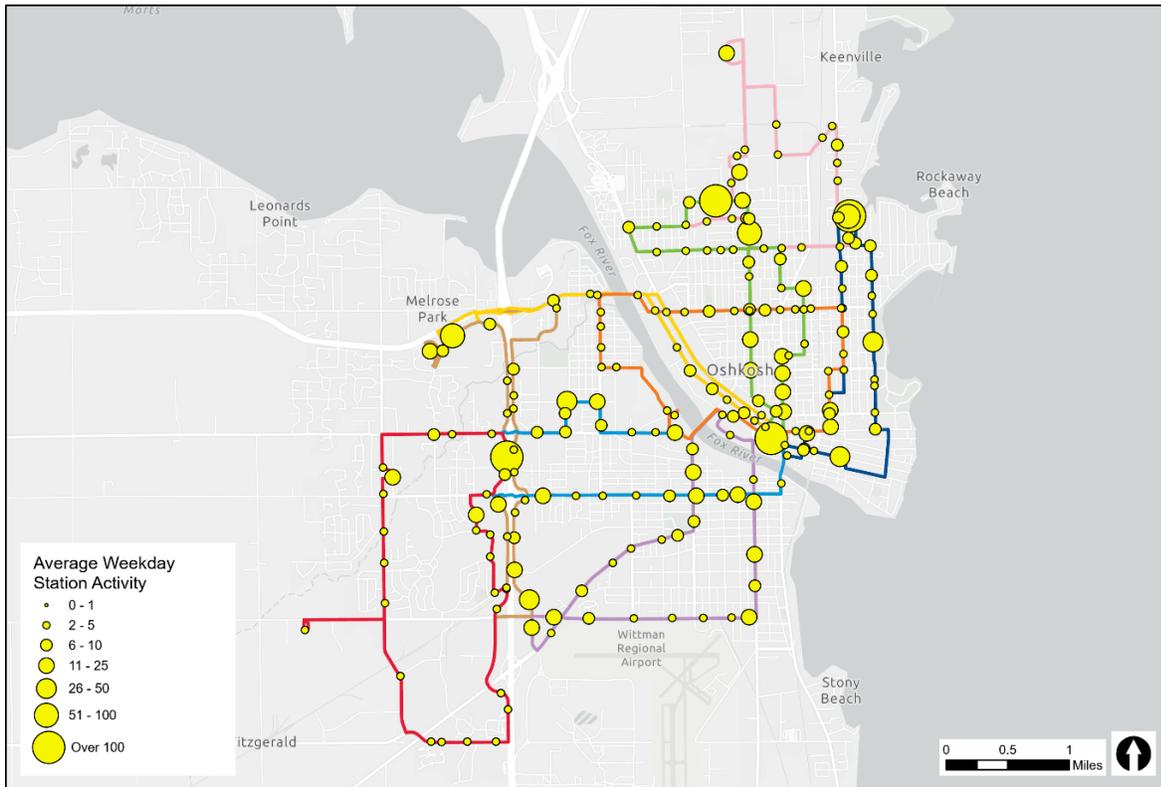
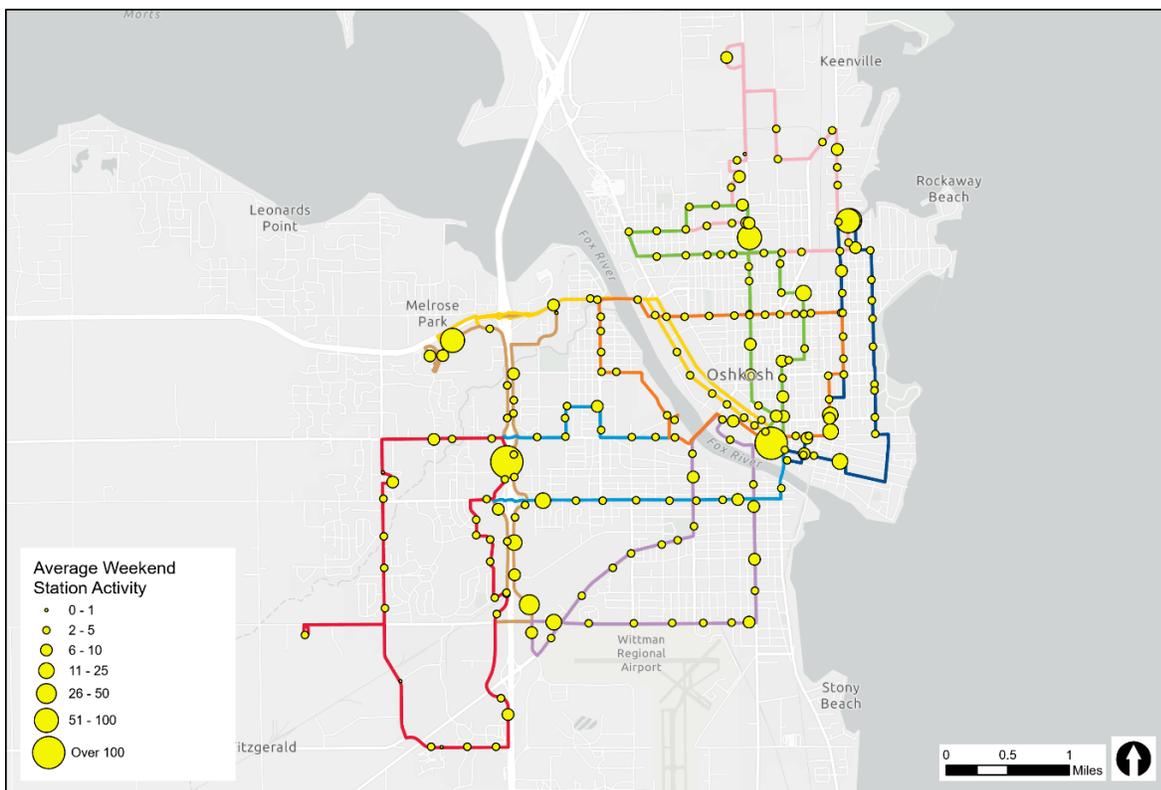


Figure 7. Average Weekend Bus Stop Activity



## Ridership Patterns by Route

Ridership is additionally assessed at the route level for all nine numbered routes and the North Tripper. Figure 8 shows average daily boardings by route and schedule, in which Routes 1 and 2 represent the highest daily figures at about 275-300 average weekday boardings, followed by Routes 6 and 8 at about 250 average weekday boardings. Routes 1, 2, 6, and 8 all average about 175 average weekend boardings. Routes 3, 9, and the North Tripper represented the routes with the lowest daily average ridership, falling below 100 daily boardings for both weekday and weekend services.

Figure 8. Average Daily Boardings by Route and Schedule

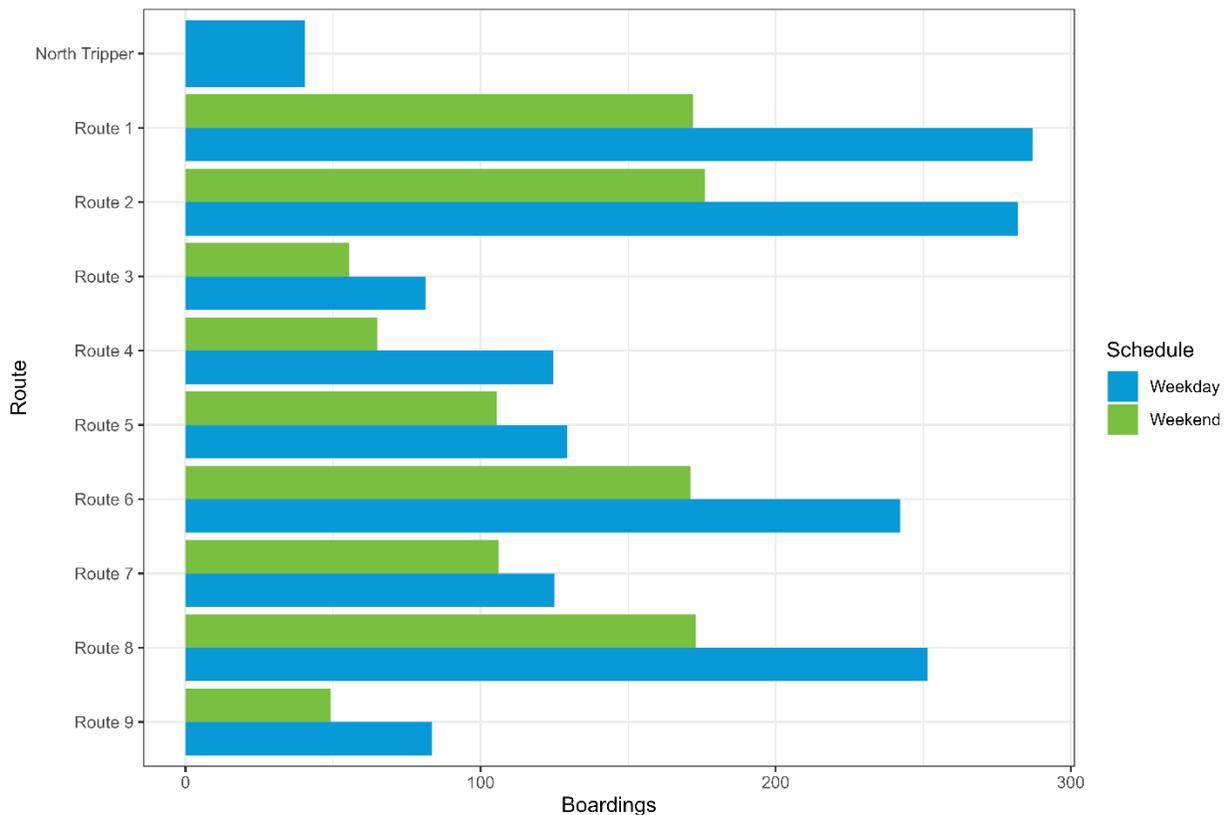
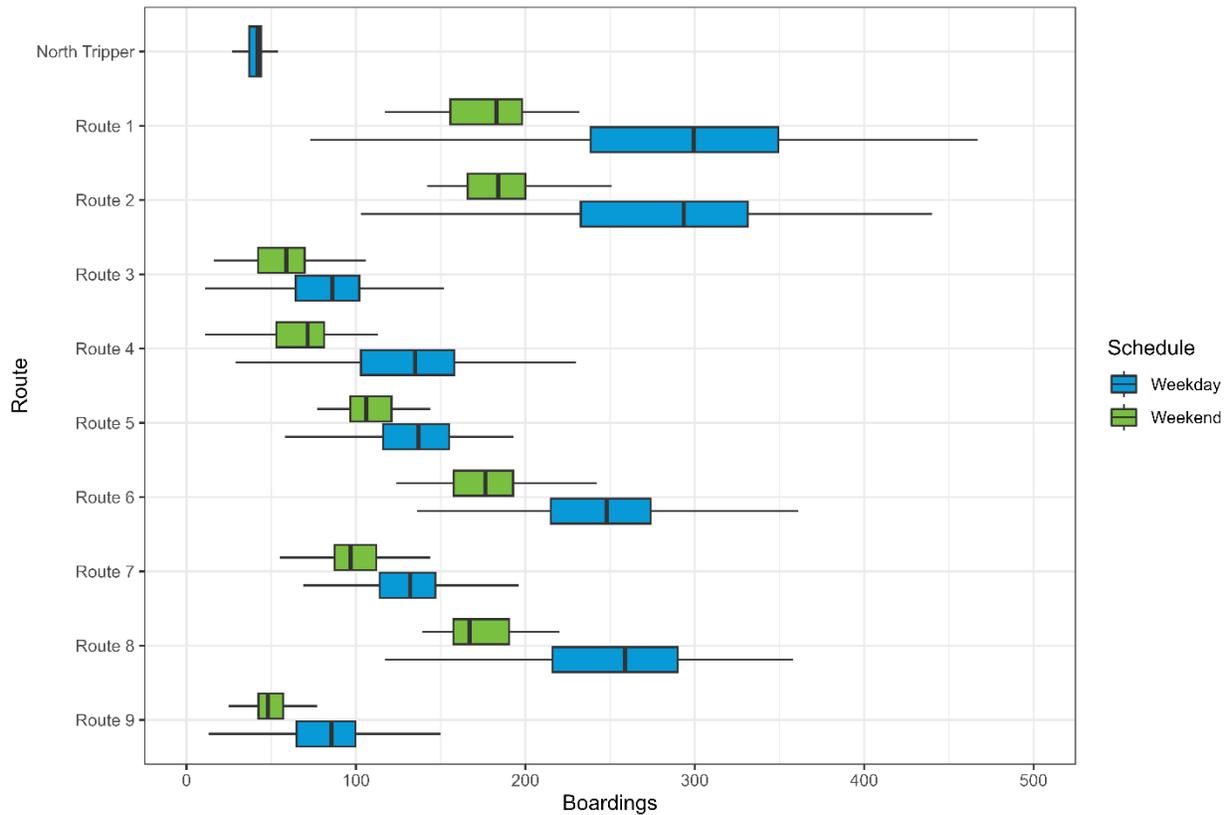


Figure 9 shows the statistical distribution of transit ridership across routes and service schedules. Generally, the routes with the highest average daily boardings (as shown in Figure 8) displayed the greatest variation in overall boardings; Routes 1 and 2 both have 50 percent of their trips ranging from 225 to 350 boardings per weekday, while Routes 6 and 8 have 50 percent of their trips from 225 to 275 daily boardings per weekday. Weekend trips were observed to have similar variation across all routes.

Figure 9. Distribution of Boardings by Route and Schedule



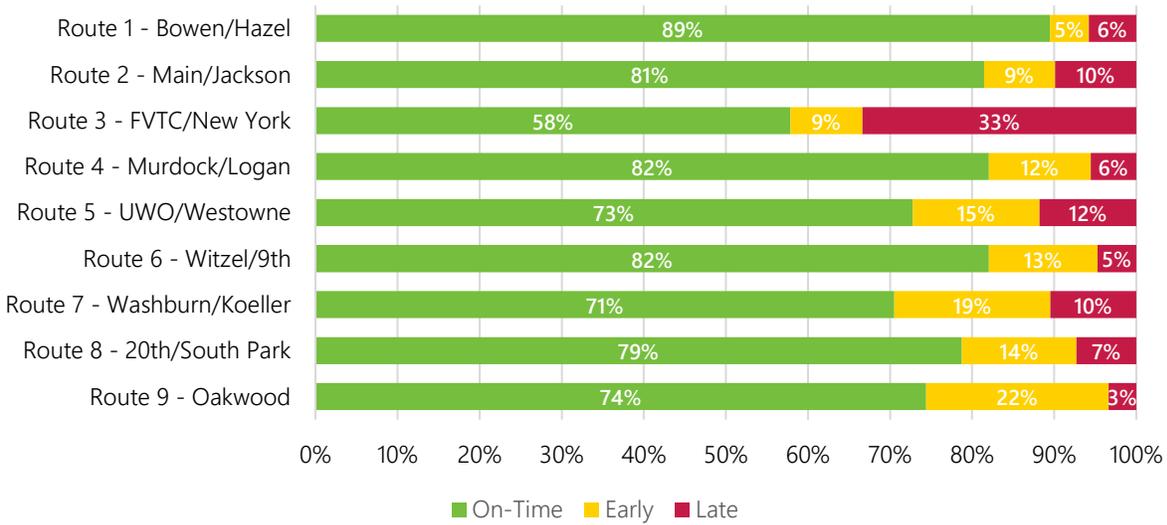
## On-Time Performance

GO Transit regularly reviews on-time performance data that is generated from its automated vehicle locator (AVL) system. In September 2022, GO Transit’s systemwide average on-time performance (excluding trippers) was 79 percent, with 12 percent of stop events occurring early and 9 percent occurring late. Route 1 had the highest on-time performance, at 89 percent; Route 3 had the lowest, at 58 percent (Figure 10).

The majority of routes had more trips occurring early than late, which could indicate that these routes have more scheduled running time than is needed based on current traffic conditions. In the case of Route 3, drivers indicated that the high degree of late trips is in fact an attempt by drivers to avoid being early at later stops on the route. Because of excess running time in the schedule, drivers typically wait at the downtown transit center, departing up to five minutes later than scheduled in order to avoid holding the bus at timepoints later on the route.

In order to improve on-time performance, GO Transit could consider whether there are opportunities to adjust schedules to better match current running times, or take advantage of excess running time to add new destinations to current routes. These questions will be addressed in the recommendations portion of the Transit Development Plan.

Figure 10. On-Time Performance by Route, September 2022



## Transit Needs Assessment

The following section is an analysis of community destinations that may drive transit demand, completed in conjunction with a Census-based demographic analysis to identify areas where residents are most likely to use transit. Cumulatively, this information is used to:

- Identify locations that can potentially generate the highest levels of transit use
- Identify areas to which transit services should be expanded or introduced
- Inform what type of transit service is best suited for an area

Coupled with the ridership and performance data analyzed in the previous section, this Transit Needs Assessment can inform future planning decisions.

### Major Ridership Generators

Major ridership generators in the GO Transit system include a variety of community destinations, including major employment centers, schools and higher education facilities, retail and grocery stores, healthcare facilities, social services, apartments, and civic organizations. Table 3 lists GO Transit’s top 25 stops by ridership and notes the primary destination nearby (if known). Figure 11 through Figure 14 show community destinations as reported by ECWRPC in relation to existing GO Transit bus routes.

Table 3. Top 25 Stops by Average Daily Ridership, 2022

Stop Name	Boardings	Alightings	Total	Rank	Destination
Downtown Transit Center	496.2	471.8	968.1	1	Downtown Transit Center
Walmart	122.9	122.4	245.3	2	Walmart
Mallard Ave. & Evans St.	109.3	89.8	199.1	3	North Transfer Point
West Transfer Point	44.5	44.6	89.1	4	West Transfer Point
North High School	46.1	41.8	87.8	5	North High School
Jackson St. & Gruenwald Ave.	34.0	38.5	72.5	6	Pick n Save/McDonald's
Target	21.0	20.4	41.4	7	Target
West High School	18.1	19.6	37.7	8	West High School
Otter Ave & Mill St.	18.4	11.2	29.7	9	Otter and Mill
20 <sup>th</sup> Ave & Arizona St.	10.1	10.3	20.3	10	Kwik Trip/Retail/ Residential/ Forward Services
Marian Manor	7.2	11.6	18.8	11	Marion Manor
Mercy Medical Center	8.8	8.9	17.7	12	Mercy Medical Center
Goodwill Store	5.1	11.3	16.4	13	Goodwill
Jackson St. & Irving Ave.	8.6	7.7	16.3	14	Jackson and Irving
W Fernau Ave (mid-block)	7.0	8.9	15.9	15	Lakeside Packaging
St. Vincent De Paul	8.0	7.8	15.8	16	St. Vincent De Paul
Monroe St. & Washington Ave.	6.2	9.1	15.2	17	Monroe and Washington
Court St. & Otter Ave.	5.6	9.4	14.9	18	Court Tower
Main St. & Parkway Ave.	6.8	7.7	14.5	19	Downtown/Roxy
9 <sup>th</sup> Ave. & Westfield St.	8.4	6.0	14.5	20	9 <sup>th</sup> and Westfield
Eastman St. & Custer Ave.	8.1	6.2	14.3	21	Eastman and Custer Apartments
Main St. & Church Ave.	7.5	6.3	13.8	22	Rauf Place/Downtown
Court St. & Washington Ave.	4.8	7.3	12.1	23	Winnebago County Human Services/Downtown YMCA
1015 Washburn St.	4.7	6.5	11.2	24	Motel 6/Perkins
9 <sup>th</sup> Ave. & Minnesota St.	6.5	4.7	11.2	25	Downtown/Retail/Residential/ Jefferson School

Figure 11. Community Destinations – Schools and Higher Education

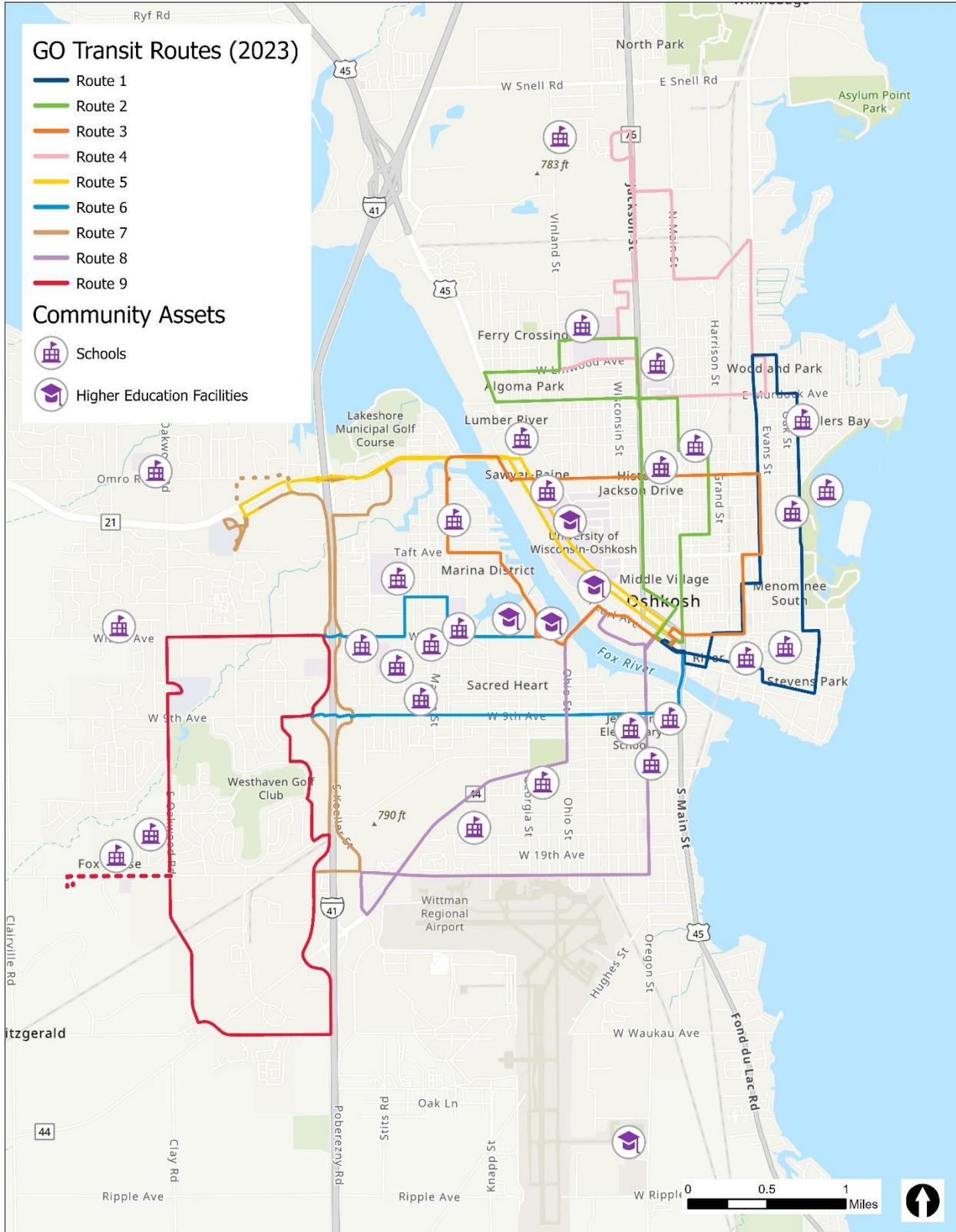
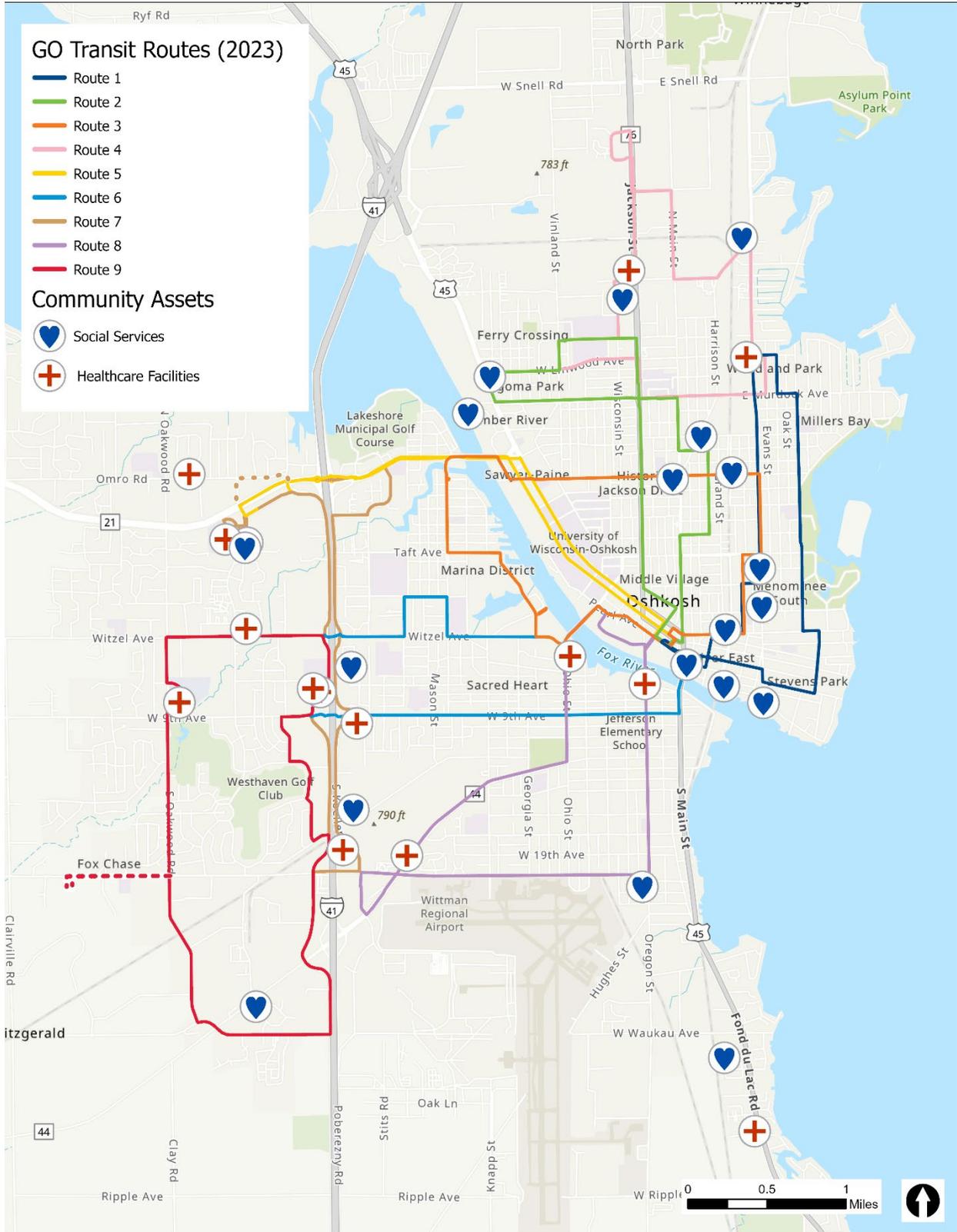




Figure 13. Community Destinations – Healthcare and Social Services





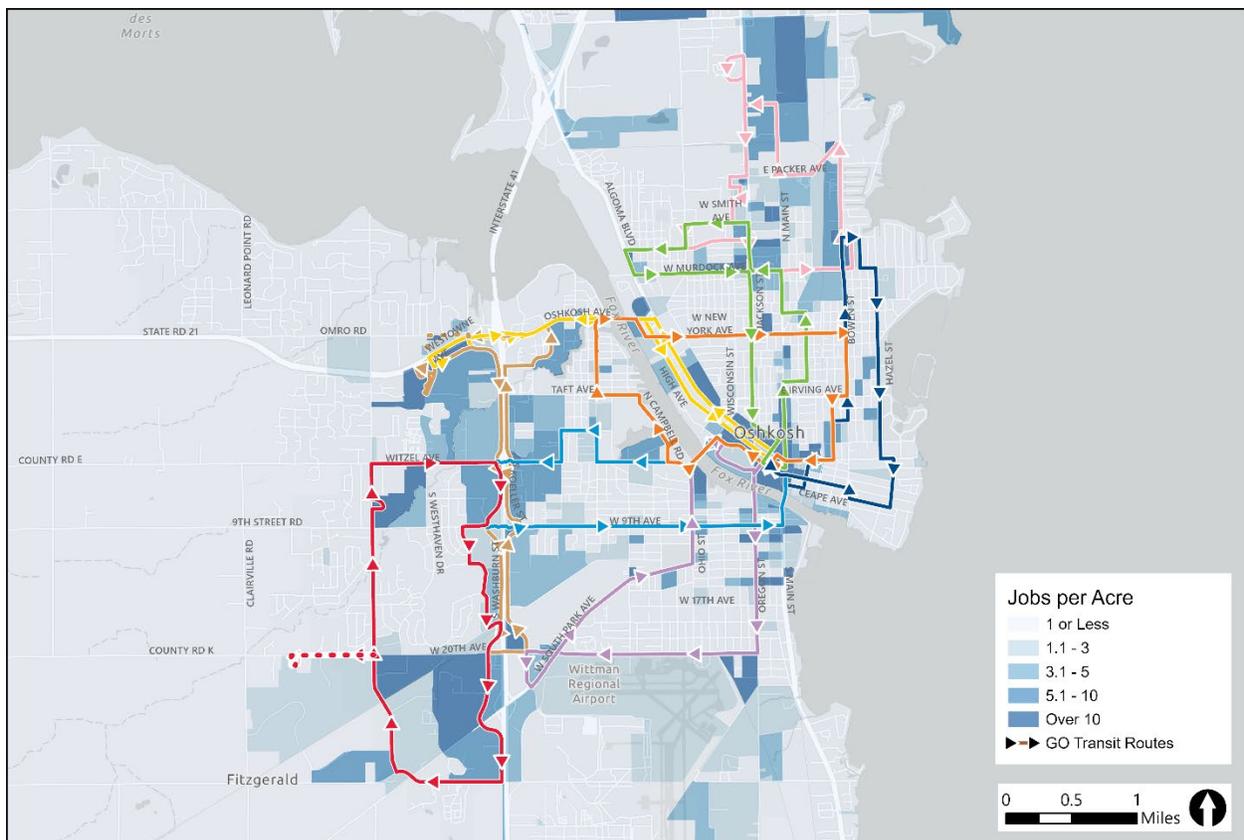
## Transit-Supportive Areas

Several factors are often correlated with and suggest the need for public transit service. Among the most important are employment and population density.

Figure 15 shows the density of jobs by census block in Oshkosh and surrounding areas of Winnebago County based on data from the 2020 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey available from the US Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of transit planning, employment density is considered transit-supportive if it exceeds five jobs per acre. This map shows high employment density in downtown Oshkosh, as well as along the Interstate 41 corridor and areas along North Main Street. One of these areas lies just to the north and east of the existing Route 4, where approximately 2,000 jobs are present. Additionally, the map shows a concentration of jobs in the industrial park in southeast Oshkosh near the airport. GO Transit does not currently serve this area.

Figure 15. Employment Density (Jobs per Acre)



<sup>1</sup> LEHD data typically represents the most complete publicly available information on employment for a given geography. One of the limitations of LEHD data is that an employee's place of work is defined by the physical or mailing address reported by employers. Some employers may list employees from multiple job sites at a single headquarters location.

Just as areas of high employment density attract commuters, including transit riders, areas of high population or household density tend to produce greater numbers of transit trips. For transit planning purposes, densities of at least four households per acre are considered to be supportive of fixed-route transit.

Figure 16 shows the average household density by Census block group for Oshkosh and surrounding areas, as reported in the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 Five-Year Estimates. Transit-supportive densities are seen primarily in the central part of the City of Oshkosh, north of downtown. Nearly all existing areas of high household density are served by existing fixed-route buses.

Figure 16. Household Density (Households per Acre)

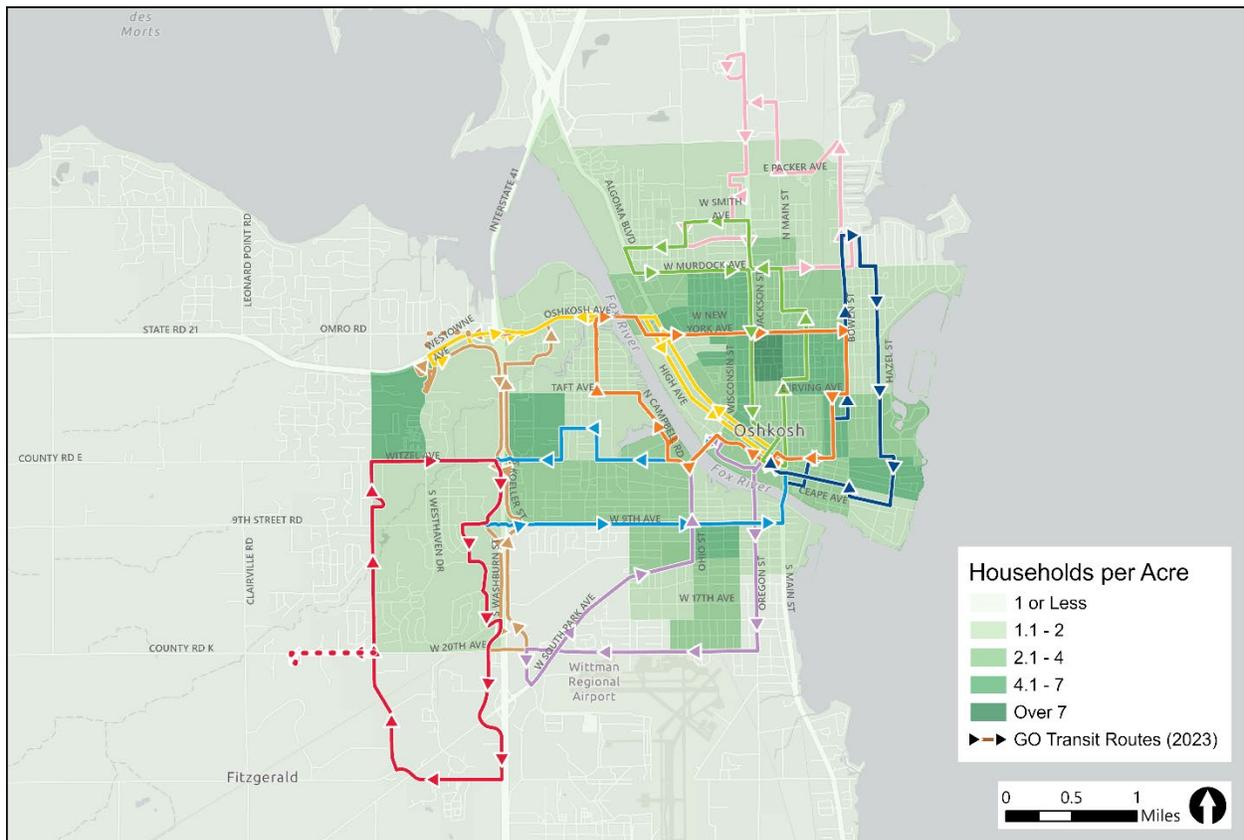
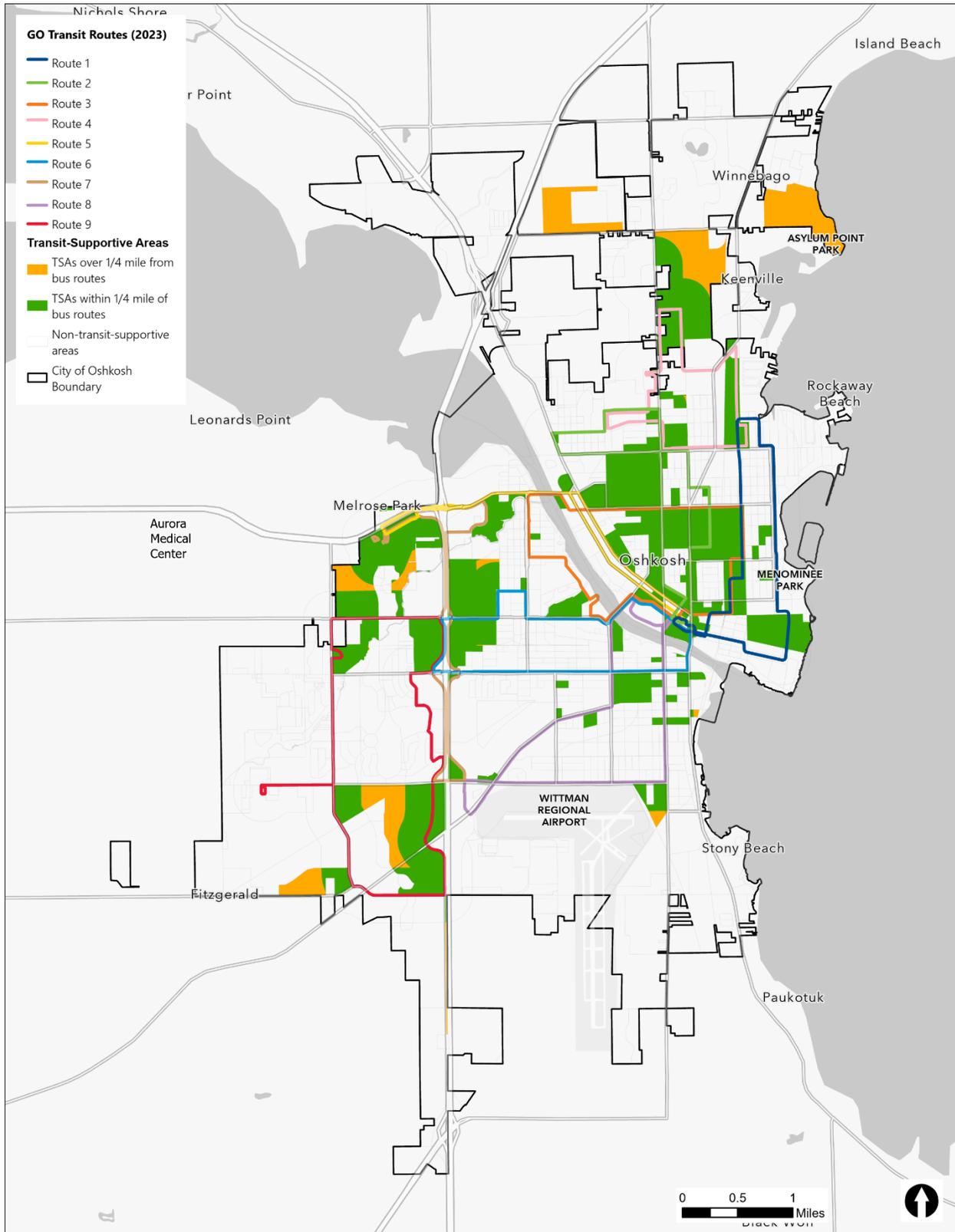


Figure 17 shows the location of transit-supportive areas (TSAs) in the City of Oshkosh in relation to GO Transit fixed-route service. For the purposes of this study, TSAs are defined as locations with at least five jobs and/or four households per acre. Based on this methodology, 81 percent of TSAs within the City of Oshkosh are within a quarter mile of an existing bus route.

Figure 17. Transit-Supportive Areas in Oshkosh



## Demographics

In addition to density measures, several demographic factors are often correlated with transit demand, including income, vehicle ownership, and age. People with lower incomes are more likely to ride public transit, as are those whose households do not own a vehicle. Children and older adults may also benefit from access to transit.

Additionally, it is critical to consider racial equity in the allocation of transit service. Looking at the spatial distribution of BIPOC populations<sup>2</sup> and Hispanic or Latino populations in relationship to existing transit routes can identify potential equity gaps in service.

Other relevant considerations include the spatial distribution of individuals experiencing disability and limited English proficient (LEP) households<sup>3</sup>. Identifying these populations in relationship to transit service can inform planning and resource allocation.

The following pages include maps displaying spatial distribution of the following groups in the GO Transit service area:

- Low-income individuals<sup>4</sup>
- Households without a vehicle
- Adults age 60 and over<sup>5</sup>
- Children under 18
- BIPOC populations
- Hispanic or Latino populations
- Households with at least one resident experiencing disability
- LEP households

Block groups with the highest concentrations of poverty, zero-vehicle households, and Hispanic or Latino residents are in central parts of the city currently well-served by transit. However, residents aged 60 or greater and LEP households both tend to be concentrated in areas outside the central city, where existing fixed-route transit does still exist, but there are fewer routes available. BIPOC and youth populations, though they are both present at above-average concentrations in central Oshkosh, tend to be more scattered throughout the GO Transit service area and have varying levels of service availability.

Figures 18 through 25 show the demographic characteristics of populations in and near the GO Transit service area, while Tables 4 through 11 compare the demographic characteristics of the GO Transit service area to the City of Oshkosh and entirety of Winnebago County. All demographic data were gathered at the Census Block Group level from the 2017-2021 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

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<sup>2</sup> Defined here as individuals who reported any non-White race, regardless of ethnicity.

<sup>3</sup> Defined here as households in which all members 14 years and over have at least some difficulty with English.

<sup>4</sup> Defined here as individuals with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL). In 2021, the FPL was \$12,880 for an individual.

<sup>5</sup> Though age 65 is generally the lower bound when studying demographics related to transit demand, this analysis maintained consistency with GO Plus eligibility requirements.

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## LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS

Low-income populations (Figure 18) in the GO Transit service area tend to be concentrated in central parts of Oshkosh currently served by transit, with several block groups having at least a 35 percent poverty rate. Generally, as the distance from the central city increases, the poverty rate decreases. Areas not served by fixed-route transit have relatively low poverty rates.

Figure 18. Percent of Individuals Below the Federal Poverty Level

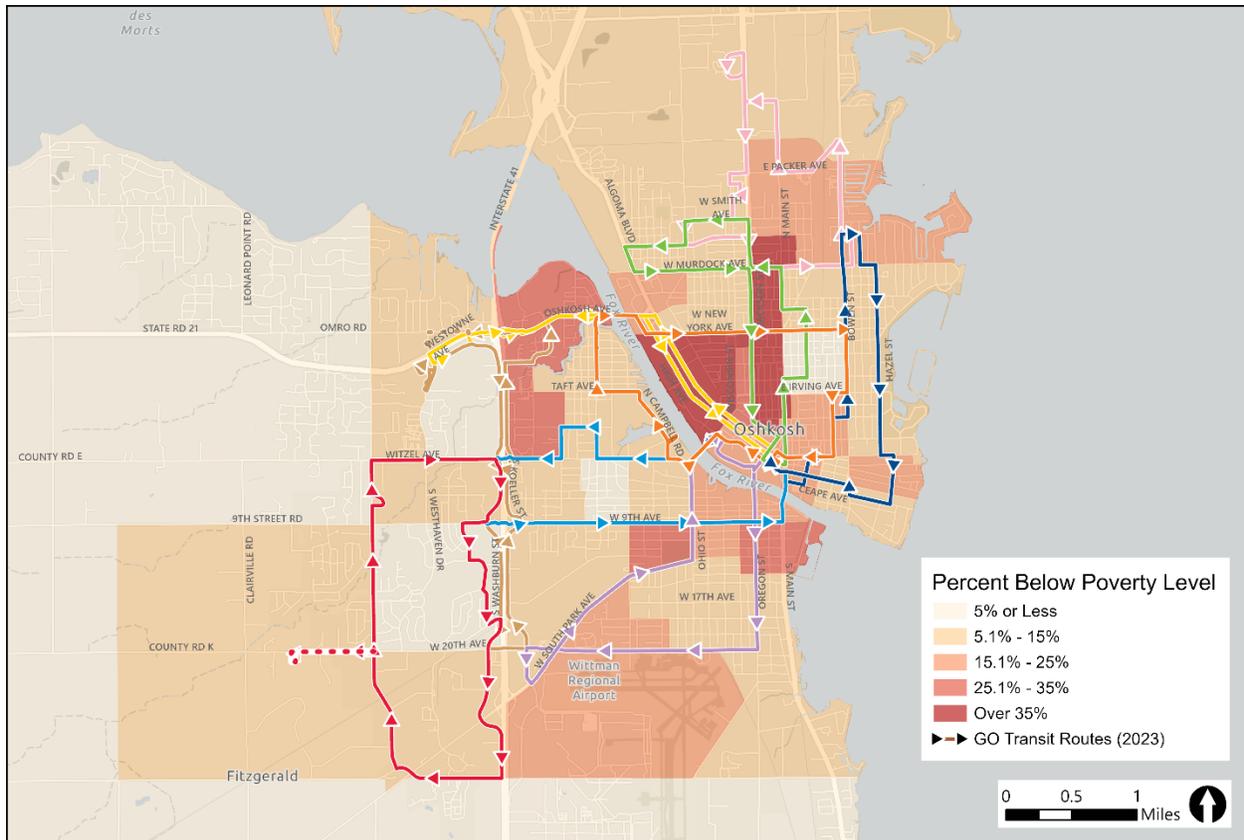


Table 4. Percent of Individuals Below the Federal Poverty Level

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent Below Federal Poverty Level	10.8%	17.3%	18.3%

## ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS

Households without vehicle access (Figure 19) are relatively uniformly distributed across Oshkosh, though a few block groups within the City have rates of zero-vehicle households at or above 20 percent. These areas tend to be well-served by transit, with block groups not served by transit having the lowest occurrence of zero-vehicle households.

Figure 19. Percent of Households without Vehicle Access

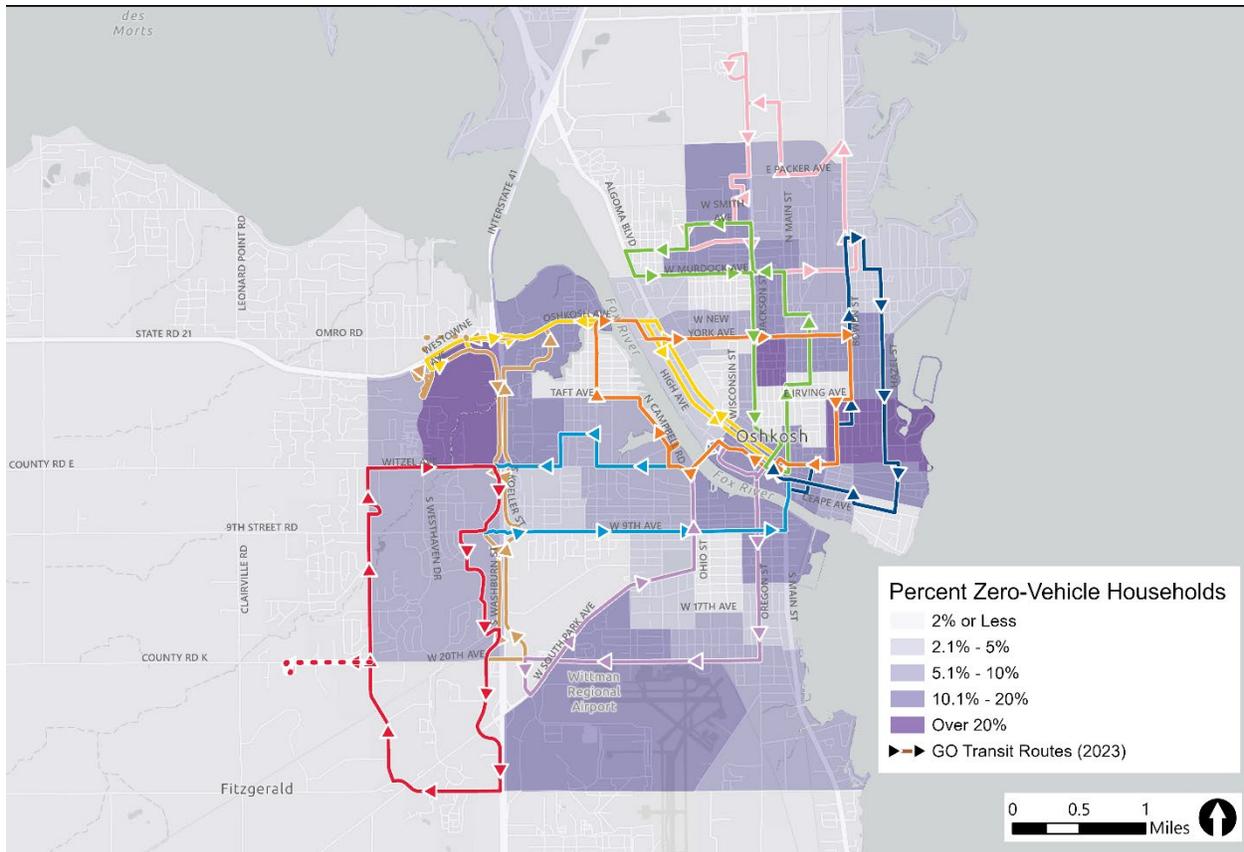


Table 5. Percent of Households without Vehicle Access

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent Zero-Vehicle Households	5.4%	8.4%	9.1%

## AGE

Individuals aged 60 or over (Figure 20) are not generally located in the most central block groups of Oshkosh, with many block groups' populations in the area consisting of less than 15 percent of this age group. Populations of individuals aged 60 and over tend to be concentrated around Interstate 41 and northern Oshkosh. Additional areas of concentration include the airport and rural areas southwest of the city, though these block groups are lower in total population. The current GO Transit system provides coverage to most of the concentrations within city limits, but some areas in neighboring jurisdictions may lack access to transit.

Figure 20. Percent of Individuals Aged 60 Years and Over

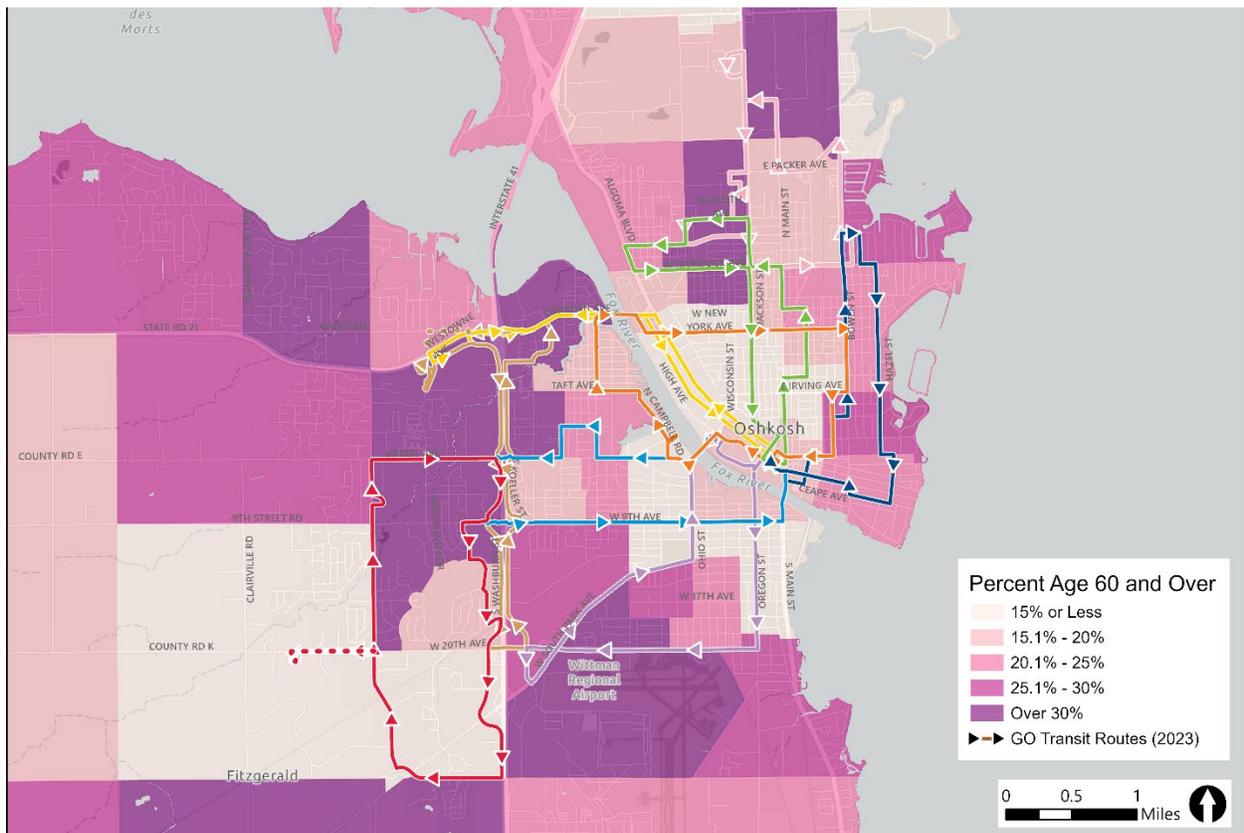


Table 6. Percent of Individuals Aged 60 Years and Over

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent 60 Plus	22.4%	20.4%	20.1%

Generally, Oshkosh's population under 18 (Figure 21) is concentrated in the neighborhoods immediately south of the Fox River, with additional clusters of youth populations in the suburban and rural areas surrounding Lake Butte des Morts. Areas in central Oshkosh surrounding the University and the Downtown Transit Center tend to have populations comprised of less than 15 percent of individuals under 18. Most concentrations of youth populations within the City of Oshkosh are well-served by transit.

Figure 21. Percent of Individuals Under Age 18

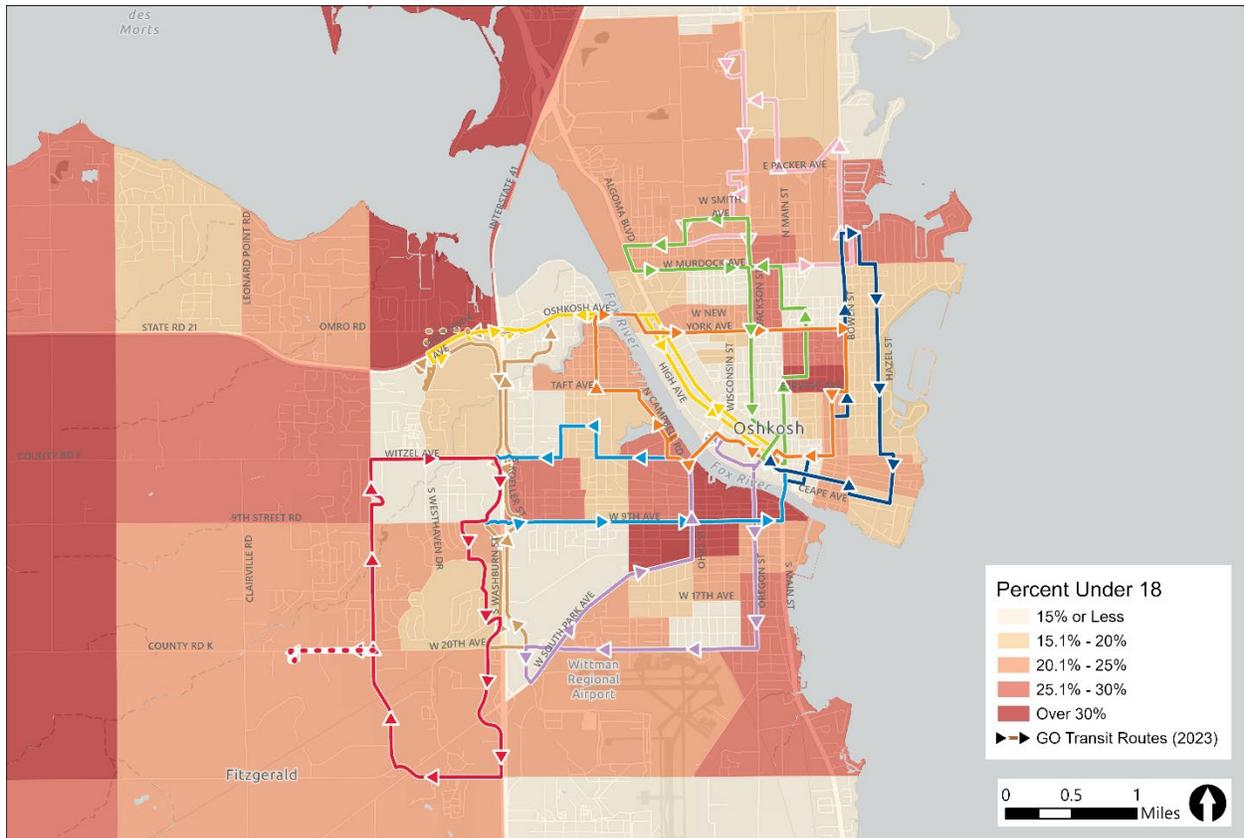


Table 7. Percent of Individuals Under Age 18

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent Under 18	20.6%	17.4%	17.7%

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

BIPOC populations (Figure 22) tend to be highly concentrated in pockets throughout the GO Transit service area, often in contrast with neighboring block groups, and seemingly having no correlation with distance from the city center. Several block groups have BIPOC populations of over 30 percent and are neighbored by other block groups that are at least 95 percent white. However, in central Oshkosh near the Downtown Transit Center, most block groups are comprised of at least 20 percent BIPOC individuals. Generally, these populations live in proximity to existing transit service.

Figure 22. Percent of Individuals Self-Identifying as BIPOC

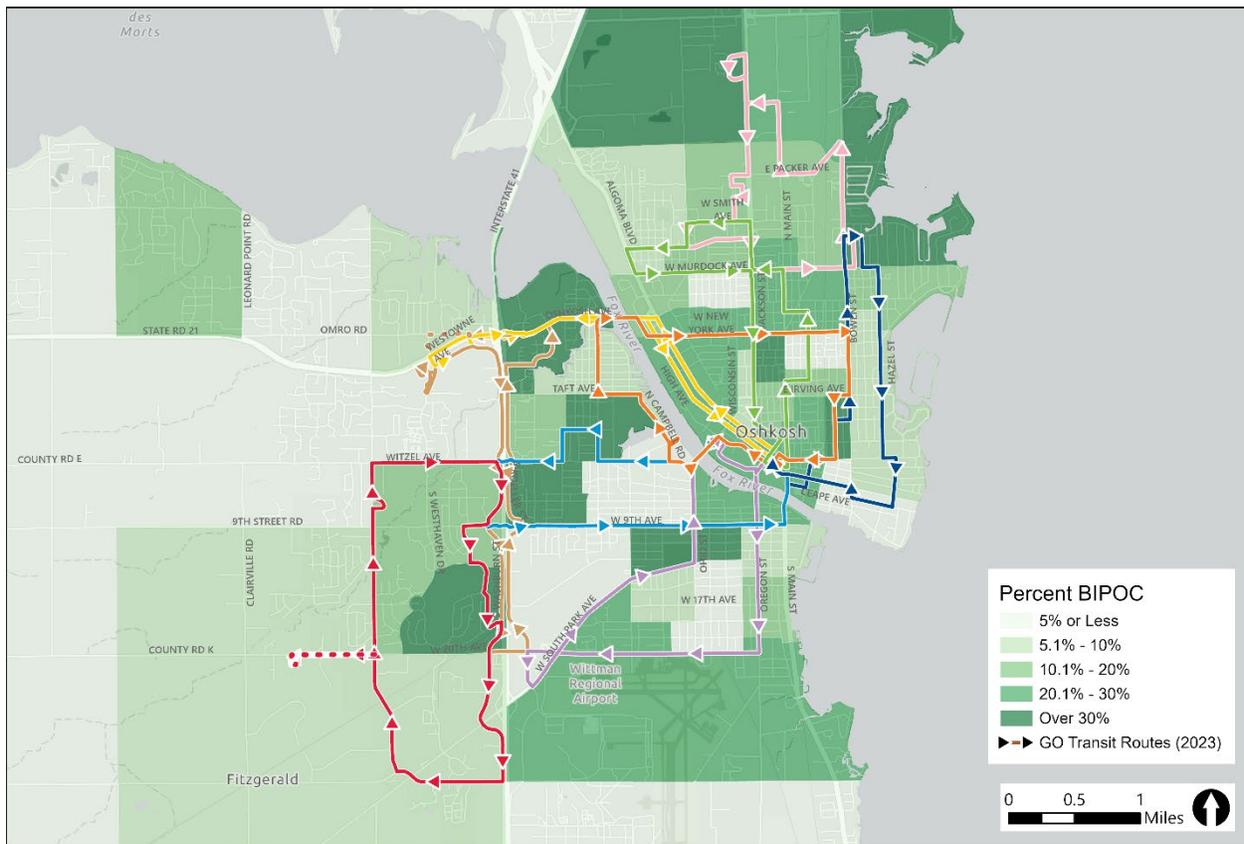


Table 8. Percent of Individuals Self-Identifying as BIPOC

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
BIPOC Populations	10.2%	13.3%	11.6%

Hispanic or Latino populations (Figure 23) are most highly concentrated in the areas closest to the Fox River and Lake Winnebago. Block groups nearest to central Oshkosh and the Downtown Transit Center tend to be between 10 and 15 percent Hispanic or Latino, with some in the Menominee Park area exceeding 15 percent. Multiple bus routes are accessible in these neighborhoods.

Figure 23. Percent Hispanic or Latino Individuals

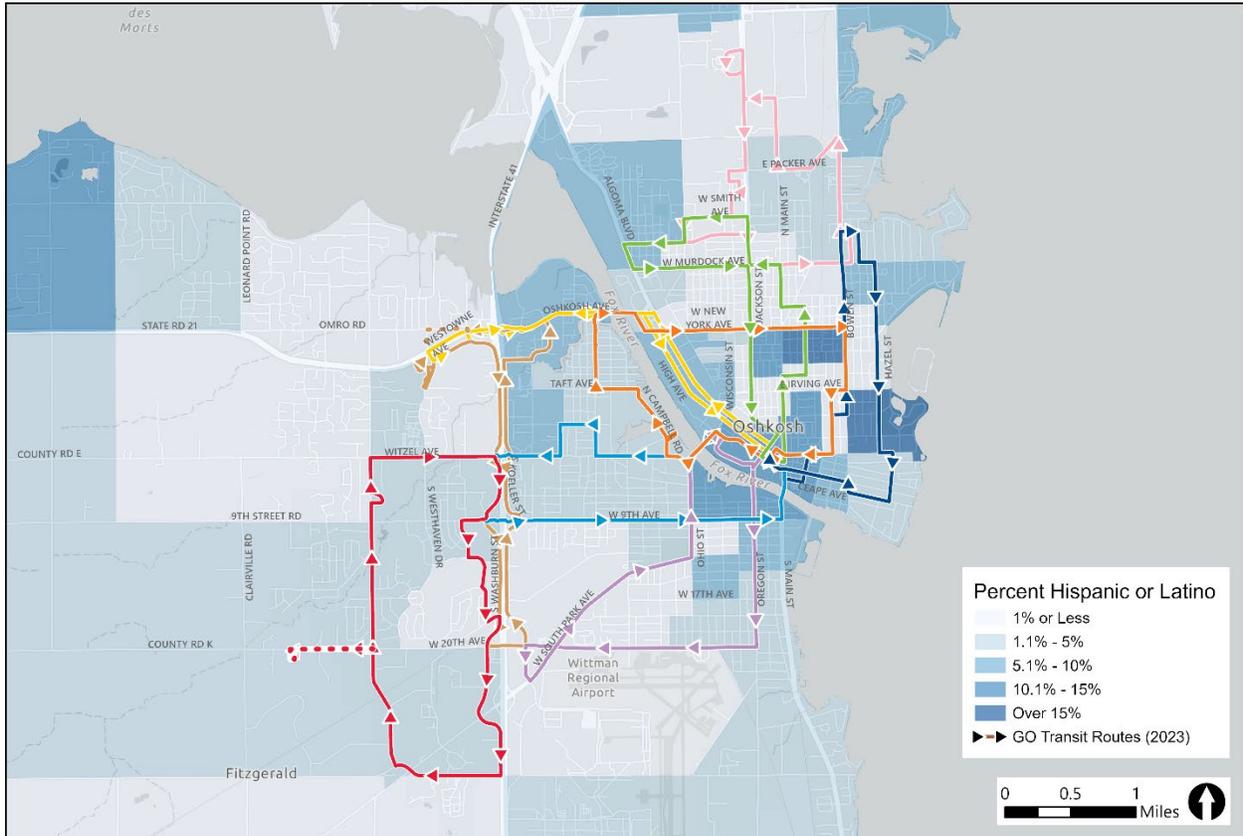


Table 9. Percent Hispanic or Latino Individuals

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent Hispanic or Latino	4.4%	4.2%	4.3%

## DISABILITY STATUS

Individuals experiencing disability reside all around the GO Transit service area, seemingly without any significant pattern or trend—some block groups along Interstate 41 and in the areas of Oshkosh north of the Fox River have a rate of over 40 percent of households with at least one resident experiencing some form of disability, while this rate in most of the city hovers between 10 and 20 percent. However, much of the central Oshkosh area nearest to the Downtown Transit Center has rates between 30 and 40 percent. Areas with the highest concentrations (over 40 percent) are well-served by existing transit routes, as shown in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Percent of Households with One or More Individuals Experiencing Disability

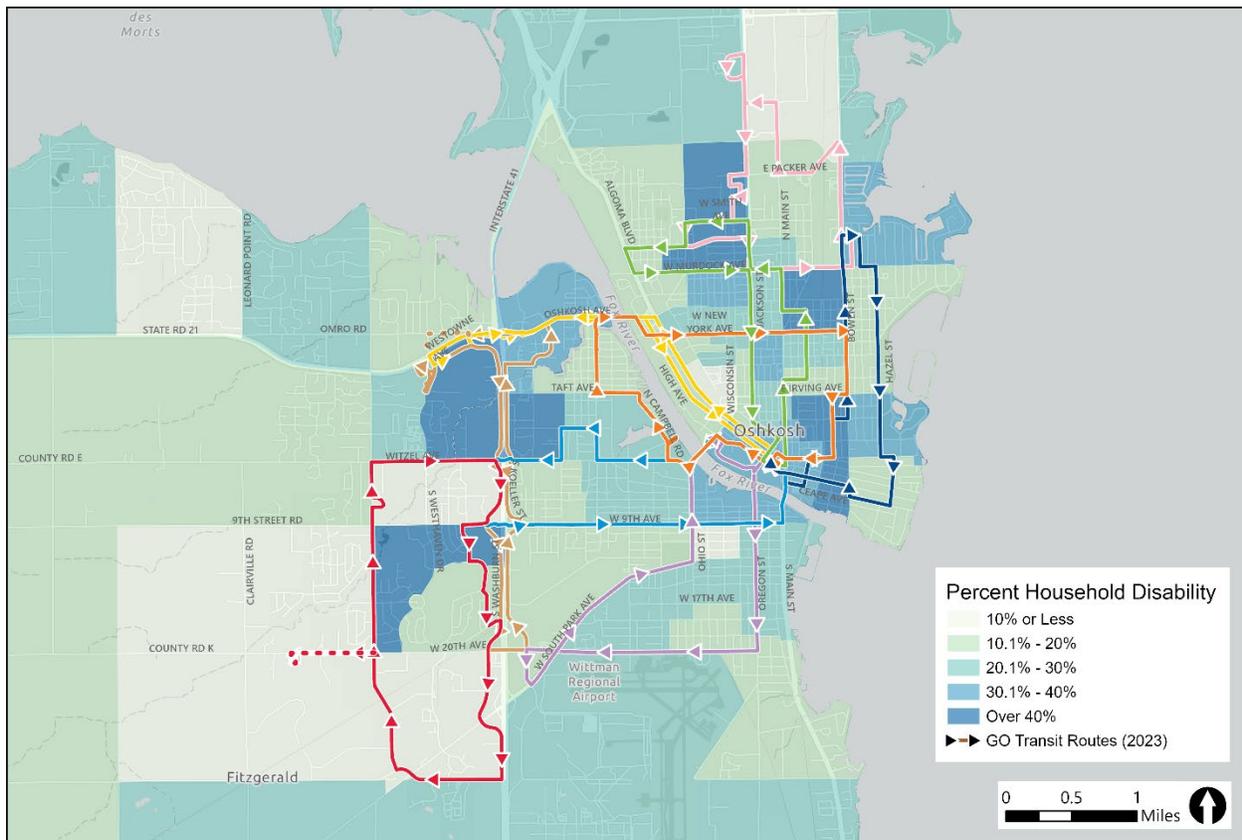


Table 10. Percent of Households with One or More Individuals Experiencing Disability

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent Households Disability	23.3%	25.8%	26.4%

## LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) households generally comprise less than 1 percent of all households in most block groups, though higher concentrations over 3 percent are scattered in block groups around the GO Transit service area, as shown in Figure 25. As with other demographic measures, concentrations of LEP households are above average in the central Oshkosh area near the Downtown Transit Center.

Figure 25. Percent of Households with Limited English Proficiency

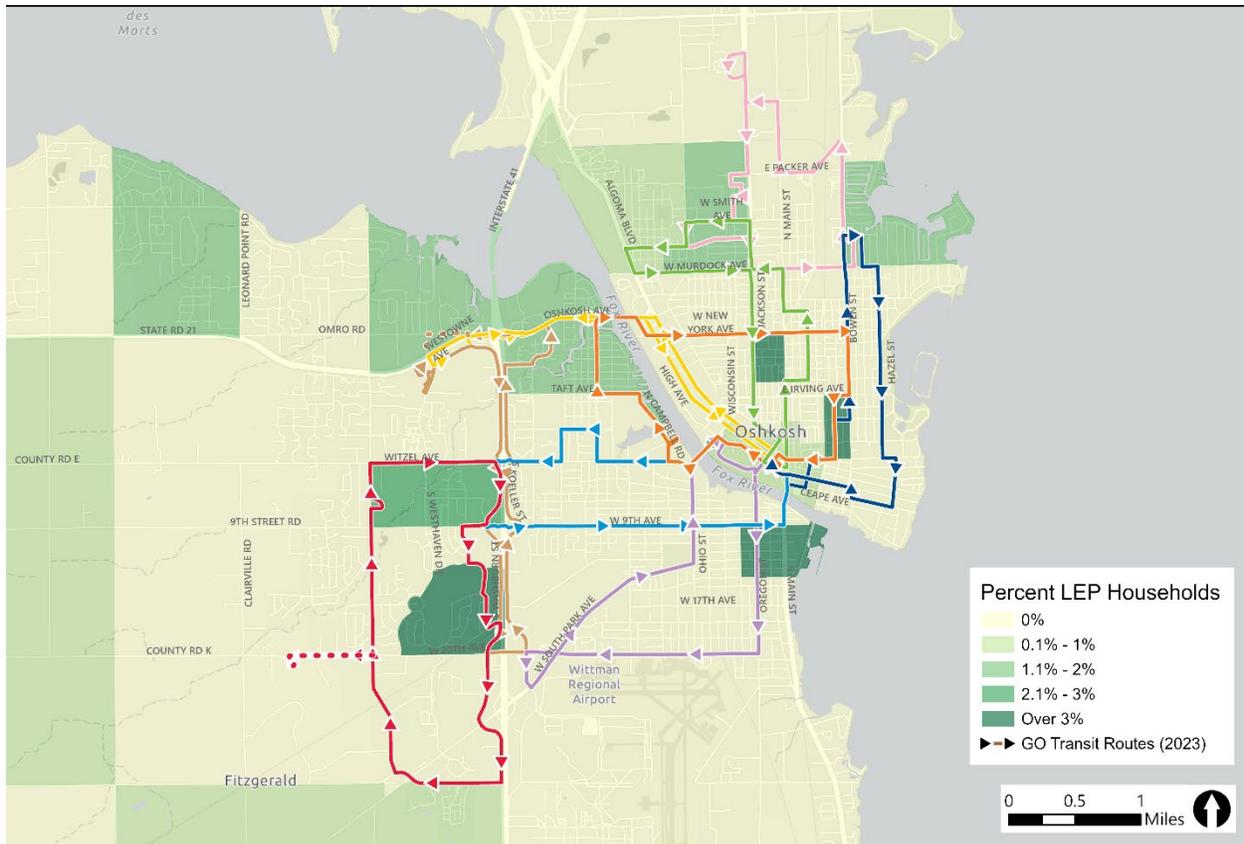


Table 11. Percent of Households with Limited English Proficiency

	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Percent LEP Households	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%

Taken together, the demographic characteristics shown in the preceding pages illustrate the similarities and differences between Winnebago County, the City of Oshkosh, and the GO Transit service area. These statistics are summarized in Table 12 below.

Generally, populations in the City of Oshkosh and GO Transit service area tend to have lower incomes, less access to vehicles, and higher rates of disability. They are more likely to be of working age than residents elsewhere in the county, with lower shares of individuals 60 and over or under 18. Residents of the City of Oshkosh and GO Transit service area are more likely to be identified as BIPOC populations, though the rates of Hispanic or Latino populations and limited-English proficiency are similar.

The GO Transit service area covers the majority of the City of Oshkosh, and generally reflects the income levels, age, and disability rates of the city. However, the existing transit routes cover populations that are 11.6 percent BIPOC, compared to the citywide rate of 13.3 percent. As the Transit Development Plan advances, these demographic and equity factors will inform the design of new or revised transit routes and services, with the goal of prioritizing populations that rely most on transit.

Table 12. Summary of Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Measure (Percent)	Winnebago County	City of Oshkosh	¼ Mile of GO Transit Routes
Low-Income Individuals	10.8%	17.3%	18.3%
Zero-Vehicle Households	5.4%	8.4%	9.1%
60 Plus	22.4%	20.4%	20.1%
Under 18	20.6%	17.4%	17.7%
BIPOC Populations	10.2%	13.3%	11.6%
Hispanic or Latino	4.4%	4.2%	4.3%
Percent Household Disability	23.3%	25.8%	26.4%
LEP Households	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%

## Peer Performance Analysis

This section analyses, quantitatively, GO Transit’s performance over the last several years by comparing the performance of a system to the average values of a peer group of systems. The following peer analysis compares GO Transit’s *fixed-route bus* performance to a Wisconsin peer group and a national peer group in five categories using eight specific measures (Table 13).

Table 13. 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

This peer performance analysis excludes data from demand response or other modes; GO Transit’s fixed-route bus data alone allows for a more direct comparison with peer transit systems in Wisconsin and around the Midwest.

Each measure in Table 13 is used to assess GO Transit’s fixed-route performance in two ways:

- **Single Year:** Comparison to peer average for the most current year. Year 2021 National Transit Database (NTD) data are used. This is the most recent year for which NTD data were available for all peer systems at the time of analysis. Performance is considered “satisfactory” within one standard deviation of the peer average. The system’s performance is considered “outside the satisfactory range” (unsatisfactory) if it fails 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 2017 to 2021 are used. The annual rate of change from 2017-2021 is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Annual rate of change} = (\text{Value}_{2021}/\text{Value}_{2017})^{1/4} - 1$$

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.”

Along with the existing service review and transit needs assessment, this section of the report helps to form a more complete picture of potential opportunities for improvement within the GO Transit system. This section will serve as a foundation for subsequent stakeholder engagement activities and the development of future recommendations.

# Peer Groups

The selection of the peer groups for GO Transit was based on a review of small urban bus systems in NTD. NTD was used because its data are readily available and consistently reported. Two peer groups were selected for comparison: a Wisconsin peer group and a national peer group ( Table 12 and Table 15). Systems’ fixed-route bus data (excluding any other modes operated) were used in the selection of peers and the subsequent analyses.

Table 12 contains 2021 operating statistics for GO Transit and the selected Wisconsin peer systems. This review recognizes the limitations of using other Wisconsin bus systems for peer comparison. Each system operates in a different environment, serves different markets, and has a unique management structure. However, Wisconsin peer systems also provide context for operating conditions within the state. Because it is customary in this review to compare medium bus systems to others in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin peer comparison is included in this review.

Table 14. 2021 Operating Statistics – Wisconsin Peer Group

System Name	City	Revenue Hours	Passenger Trips	Operating Expenses	Passenger Revenues	Service Area Population
Eau Claire Transit	Eau Claire	47,998	432,019	\$4,460,345	\$708,731	77,027
Metro Transit	Green Bay	50,285	495,371	\$5,328,903	\$558,115	176,664
Janesville Transit System	Janesville	28,927	280,299	\$3,589,978	\$338,438	65,615
Municipal Transit Utility	La Crosse	62,356	510,235	\$5,408,836	\$251,832	79,727
RYDE Racine	Racine	73,734	463,652	\$7,005,130	\$583,832	112,100
Shoreline Metro	Sheboygan	35,867	420,503	\$3,185,731	\$237,113	59,490
Metro Ride	Wausau	25,465	284,378	\$3,125,098	\$110,562	216,154
<b>GO Transit</b>	<b>Oshkosh</b>	<b>37,294</b>	<b>472,607</b>	<b>\$3,758,957</b>	<b>\$356,697</b>	<b>66,816</b>
Average		45,241	419,883	\$4,482,872	\$393,165	106,699
<b>GO Transit as a Percent of the Average</b>		<b>82%</b>	<b>113%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>63%</b>

Source: National Transit Database, 2021.

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 mix provided. The Urban Integrated National Transit Database (Urban iNTD) was used to develop an initial list of national peers.<sup>6</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 Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania. Table 15 contains 2021 operating statistics for MTU and the selected national peer systems.

<sup>6</sup> Urban iNTD is a tool developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), based on Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) research. [http://www.ftis.org/urban\\_iNTD.aspx](http://www.ftis.org/urban_iNTD.aspx).

Table 15. 2021 Operating Statistics – National Peer Group

System Name	City	Revenue Hours	Passenger Trips	Operating Expenses	Passenger Revenues	Service Area Population
Altoona Metro Transit	Altoona, PA	45,165	314,830	\$5,446,974	\$523,399	69,608
Battle Creek Transit	Battle Creek, MI	28,122	231,766	\$3,047,174	\$190,369	87,735
		42,088	284,306	\$4,309,351	\$293,043	110,323
The Jule	Dubuque, IA	27,424	278,457	\$2,684,119	\$345	70,085
Jackson Area Transportation Authority	Jackson, MI	23,784	261,108	\$2,520,737	\$280,106	158,308
Lawton Area Transit System	Lawton, OK	23,793	164,757	\$2,001,983	\$85,570	93,714
Sioux City Transit System	Sioux City, IA	42,652	520,346	\$4,556,853	\$459,901	122,128
Metropolitan Transit Authority	Waterloo, IA	29,507	152,992	\$3,799,132	\$137,466	108,519
<b>GO Transit</b>	<b>Oshkosh, WI</b>	<b>37,294</b>	<b>472,607</b>	<b>\$3,758,957</b>	<b>\$356,697</b>	<b>66,816</b>
Average		33,314	297,908	\$3,569,476	\$258,544	98,582
<b>GO Transit as a Percent of the Average</b>		<b>112%</b>	<b>159%</b>	<b>105%</b>	<b>138%</b>	<b>68%</b>

Source: National Transit Database, 2021

## Performance Measures: Results

This section summarizes GO Transit's service relative to peer groups over the five-year period, as well as the results of the single-year (2021) and multi-year (2017-2021) analyses for each of the eight performance measures listed in Table 13.

### GO TRANSIT FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY

Table 16 and Table 17 show GO Transit's operating statistics and performance measures, respectively, for 2017 through 2021. The average annual rate of change for the five-year period is calculated for each statistic and measure.

Table 16. Operating Statistics – GO Transit 2017 – 2021

Operating Statistic	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Annual Rate of Change
Revenue Hours	37,514	37,600	37,858	36,959	37,294	-0.1%
Passenger Trips	901,710	867,598	751,484	424,372	472,607	-14.9%
Operating Expenses	\$3,438,057	\$3,425,117	\$3,551,709	\$3,638,283	\$3,758,957	2.3%
Passenger Revenue	\$476,005	\$483,223	\$595,054	\$407,027	\$356,697	-7.0%
Service Area Population	-	-	-	-	66,816	-

Source: National Transit Database, 2017-2021

Table 17. Performance Measures – GO Transit 2017-2021

Performance Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Annual Rate of Change
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	\$3.81	\$3.95	\$4.73	\$8.57	\$7.95	20.18%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	\$91.65	\$91.09	\$93.82	\$98.44	\$100.79	2.41%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	23.04	23.07	19.85	11.48	12.67	-14.8%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	-	-	-	-	7.07	-
Revenue Hours Per Capita	-	-	-	-	0.56	-
Average Fare Per Passenger Trip	\$0.53	\$0.56	\$0.79	\$0.96	\$0.75	9.3%
Operating Ratio	13.85%	14.11%	16.75%	11.19%	9.49%	-9.0%
Subsidy Per Passenger Trip	\$328	\$339	\$393	\$761	\$720	21.7%

Source: National Transit Database, 2017 – 2021

## PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO WISCONSIN PEERS

Table 18 shows GO Transit performance measures for 2021 compared with those of the selected Wisconsin peers as well as a comparison in five-year trends between GO Transit and its Wisconsin peers.

Table 18. Wisconsin Peer Performance Measures Summary

System Name	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
Eau Claire Transit	Eau Claire	\$10.32	\$92.93	9.00	5.61	0.62	\$1.64	15.89%	\$8.68
Metro Transit	Green Bay	\$10.76	\$105.97	9.85	2.80	0.28	\$1.13	10.47%	\$9.63
Janesville Transit System	Janesville	\$12.81	\$124.10	9.69	4.27	0.44	\$1.21	9.43%	\$11.60
Municipal Transit Utility	La Crosse	\$10.60	\$86.74	8.18	6.40	0.78	\$0.49	4.66%	\$10.11
RYDE Racine	Racine	\$15.11	\$95.01	6.29	4.14	0.66	\$1.26	8.33%	\$13.85
Shoreline Metro	Sheboygan	\$7.58	\$88.82	11.72	7.07	0.60	\$0.56	7.44%	\$7.01
Metro Ride	Wausau	\$10.99	\$122.72	11.17	1.32	0.12	\$0.39	3.54%	\$10.60
<b>GO Transit</b>	<b>Oshkosh</b>	<b>\$7.95</b>	<b>\$100.79</b>	<b>12.67</b>	<b>7.07</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>\$0.75</b>	<b>9.49%</b>	<b>\$7.20</b>
Average		\$10.76	\$102.14	9.82	4.83	0.51	\$0.93	8.66%	\$9.84
Standard Deviation		\$2.27	\$13.57	1.92	1.95	0.20	\$0.41	3.55%	\$2.13
Acceptable Range		\$13.04	\$115.70	7.90	2.89	0.31	\$0.51	5.11%	\$11.96
Average Annual Rate of Change		18.79%	2.89%	-13.18%	-14.80%	-1.82%	2.23%	-13.96%	20.81%
St. Dev. Rate of Change		6.07%	2.45%	4.43%	4.66%	3.56%	12.15%	8.92%	6.23%
Acceptable Range Annual Rate of Change		24.85%	5.34%	-17.61%	-19.46%	-5.38%	-9.92%	-22.88%	27.04%
GO Transit Performance Compared to WI Peers: 2021		Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Better Than Average
GO Transit Performance Compared to WI Peers: Five-Year Trend		Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Within Satisfactory Range	Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Within Satisfactory Range

Table 19. National Peer Performance Measures Summary

System Name	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
Altoona Metro Transit	Altoona, PA	\$17.30	\$120.60	6.97	4.52	0.65	\$1.66	9.61%	\$15.64
Battle Creek Transit	Battle Creek, MI	\$13.15	\$108.36	8.24	2.64	0.32	\$0.82	6.25%	\$12.33
Billings Metro Transit	Billings, MT	\$15.16	\$102.39	6.76	2.58	0.38	\$1.03	6.80%	\$14.13
The Jule	Dubuque, IA	\$9.64	\$97.87	10.15	3.97	0.39	\$0.00	0.01%	\$9.64
Jackson Area Transportation Authority	Jackson, MI	\$9.65	\$105.98	10.98	1.65	0.15	\$1.07	11.11%	\$8.58
Lawton Area Transit System	Lawton, OK	\$12.15	\$84.14	6.92	1.76	0.25	\$0.52	4.27%	\$11.63
Sioux City Transit System	Sioux City, IA	\$8.76	\$106.84	12.20	4.26	0.35	\$0.88	10.09%	\$7.87
Metropolitan Transit Authority	Waterloo, IA	\$24.83	\$128.75	5.18	1.41	0.27	\$0.90	3.62%	\$23.93
<b>GO Transit</b>	<b>Oshkosh</b>	<b>\$7.95</b>	<b>\$100.79</b>	<b>12.67</b>	<b>7.07</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>\$0.75</b>	<b>9.49%</b>	<b>\$7.20</b>
Average		\$13.81	\$106.19	8.90	3.32	0.37	\$0.85	6.81%	\$12.33
Standard Deviation		\$5.05	\$12.11	2.53	1.72	0.14	\$0.42	3.45%	\$4.91
Acceptable Range		\$18.23	\$118.31	6.37	1.59	0.22	\$0.43	3.35%	\$17.24
Average Annual Rate of Change		19.93%	4.16%	-13.07%	-15.04%	-2.13%	-6.57%	-22.07%	-13.96%
St. Dev. Rate of Change		4.31%	3.95%	3.93%	3.72%	4.98%	27.51%	23.06%	8.92%
Acceptable Range Annual Rate of Change		24.24%	8.11%	-17.01%	-18.76%	-7.11%	-34.08%	-22.88%	-22.88%
GO Transit Performance Compared to National Peers: 2021		Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Better Than Average
GO Transit Performance Compared to National Peers: Five-Year Trend		Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Within Satisfactory Range	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average	Better Than Average

## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Overall, GO Transit performs just as well or better than its peers in all measures included in this analysis, which is a positive indicator for GO Transit's performance. The results also yielded a few themes and trends:

**Similar Post-COVID Recovery with Wisconsin Peer Group** – For the most part its five-year trends more closely follow its WI peers, especially after 2019. At that time, most WI peers saw a slight recovery after a sharp decline in most measurements due to disruptions from the COVID 19 pandemic. This was not the same for national peers which saw a less dramatic decline in 2020, but, on average, continued to decline in 2021.

**Average Fare per Passenger Trip was the only measure that GO Transit did not perform "Better than Average" among WI and national peers** – GO Transit's average fare was slightly lower than both peer group averages, but close enough that it's still within the satisfactory range. However, this result may not warrant a change like a fare increase to bring the average up, though it may be worth evaluating how GO Transit structures its fares and which modes and fare types are most utilized compared to peers.

**Performance was less than "Better than Average" for trends that factored passenger trips among WI peers** – for five year performance trends GO Transit was at or just below the peer average for measures that included passenger trips. This could indicate that most operating measurements are doing well except passenger trips. GO Transit could explore methods for increasing trips in the post-COVID era.

**PART III**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

## Public Engagement Overview

To support the TDP effort, SRF, GO Transit, the City of Oshkosh, and ECWRPC staff conducted a variety of public engagement activities. This Public Engagement Summary document outlines strategies that have been used to share information with and gather input from the community. These strategies include:

- Staff meetings
- Bus operator meetings
- Business survey
- Rider survey
- Community survey
- Paratransit rider survey
- Steering committee meetings
- Pop-up engagement events
- Formal public hearings

These public engagement efforts were conducted to achieve the following goals:

- Informing stakeholders about the TDP process and opportunities to contribute;
- Soliciting feedback on customer satisfaction and desired transit improvements;
- Building partnerships among government, nonprofit organizations, and private sector employers whose constituents or stakeholders could benefit from transit;
- Advertising the proposed future fare and service changes to build awareness of the plan; and
- Enabling riders, stakeholders, and Steering Committee members to shape the project from start to finish.

Draft and final recommendations were presented to the City of Oshkosh Transportation Committee in February and March 2024, respectively. The latter presentation also served as a public hearing for the recommendations outlined in the TDP. Recommendations were modified in response to public comment and were unanimously recommended by the Transportation Committee on March 12, 2024.

## Staff Meetings

In June and August of 2023, SRF met with GO Transit staff to discuss route-level challenges and initial suggestions, as well as system-wide topics such as scheduling, operations, partnerships, contracting, and policy.

### Findings

Ridership challenges were discussed, such as students walking to corners for faster bus access on Route 2, occupancy capping, and bike-riding employees competing for limited bus space near a work release facility on the last run of the day.

Schedule issues highlighted the need for recovery time and concerns about safety with 30-minute service intervals, as operators may want to take shortcuts to make up time. Timepoints and midpoints were discussed for route adjustments, as these points are not always aligned with schedules. Interlining, particularly for routes 3, 5, and 7, was also mentioned.

Concerns about operator schedules were raised, emphasizing the complexity and messiness of the current system. Schedule bids every two months may cause repetitive runs for some drivers. Additionally, Routes 4 and 9 operate as independent loops with no opportunity for drivers to go downtown for breaks. Suggestions included starting operators at the transit center in the morning for better scheduling and consistency throughout the week.

Routes and stops were also reviewed, with potential improvements identified for Routes 5 and 7 and the importance of serving specific destinations, like the county jail, Soda Creek (after the discontinuation of Route 10 service), Aurora Medical Center, and the DMV. There was a general desire to stretch service further north. Route 3 was also identified for restructuring, as it currently does not utilize its full running time and often departs late from the transit center to avoid running ahead on all its stops.

Additional comments addressed the need for transit utilization, system efficiency, and the impending redevelopment of the Pioneer Park area. The impact of the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh's withdrawal from the Route 10 operations agreement was discussed, also leading to the suggestion to restructure Route 3 to better serve students.

Paratransit challenges were outlined, including issues with service delivery via the existing contract. Operating paratransit service 24/7 goes above and beyond the federally-mandated service requirements and is a practice exclusive to GO Transit in the region, though this presents additional challenges related to capacity and cost. GO Transit is interested in exploring options to internalize some of these functions, such as dispatch or scheduling; however, taking full control of paratransit may be impractical. Concerns about drug screening costs and high turnover in paratransit contractors were discussed, with GO Transit considering possible changes in the next request for proposals. Microtransit was considered as a potential solution, with a need for further exploration of operational aspects and software requirements.

# Operator Meetings

During the first on-site visit in June 2023, SRF hosted two dedicated meetings with GO Transit drivers to gather feedback on existing route structure and performance. In total, nine operators provided input. Topics for engagement included on-time performance bottlenecks, areas of frequent customer service requests, barriers to pedestrian access or ADA accommodation, and potential route or schedule restructuring ideas. These meetings were scheduled to coincide with shift times to allow for high attendance and participant convenience. Driver feedback was then reported to the Steering Committee at its second meeting and used to develop TDP recommendations. Drivers were subsequently engaged in the development of draft recommendations.

## Findings

GO Transit operators offered input on both positive aspects and challenges within the transit system. Operators highlighted the success of Route 6, which experiences high demand for trips to Walmart, and Route 2, especially for passengers heading to Pick 'n Save. However, challenges were noted on both routes due to school runs, leading to occasional schedule delays. On the downside, operators expressed concerns about worsening customer behavior since the start of the pandemic, with passengers frequently challenging rules. Additionally, reports of disrespectful behavior from students were noted, raising safety concerns for students, other passengers, operators.

Operators provided insights into areas not currently served but desired by the community. Popular destinations mentioned include:

- Department of Motor Vehicles (2301 Omro Rd.)
- Family Dollar (935 N Main St.)
- Soda Creek Apartments (4400 Jackson St.)
- Winnebago County Jail (4311 Jackson St.)
- Bemis Performance Packaging / Amcor Flexibles (3550 Moser St.)
- Kobussen Buses, Ltd. (3034 Omro Rd.)
- Cimarron Court Apartments (101-110 Cimarron Ct.)
- Oshkosh Corp. / Oshkosh Truck (Multiple locations)
- The Wit Apartments (2609-2671 Witzel Ave.)

Discussion also touched upon underused segments and areas where service could be enhanced. For instance, serving Aurora Medical Center was noted as difficult due to congestion, and suggestions were made for optimizing stops and transfer points for increased efficiency. Additionally, Route 8 near downtown Oshkosh was identified; at Marion Road there is only one rider, and upcoming changes to Jackson Street may make route modification necessary. The Jackson Street drawbridge also causes traffic backups for Route 8.

Schedule challenges were acknowledged across Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8, while Route 9 was identified as less affected by traffic, trains, bridges, or detours. Difficulties in maintaining 30-minute schedules were discussed, leading to interest in transitioning to hourly schedules for better flexibility and driver breaks.

Proposed service changes included the elimination of punch passes and transfers due to storage issues and fare structure confusion. Operators expressed interest in introducing day passes to accommodate longer routes, with an emphasis on facilitating downtown transit center layovers. Additionally, there was a suggestion to implement contactless fares and add a fare vending machine at the transit center. For ADA accessibility, operators advocated for automated stop announcements and internal signs indicating the next stop to address distractions on the bus.

## Business Survey

ECWRPC and the consultant team led a survey of area businesses to gauge the perspective of employers on transportation needs. Key questions included the following:

- Do transit routes adequately serve the region’s major employment location(s)?
- Do transit schedules match employer shift times?
- Would employers be willing to contribute to transit that more directly meets their needs, either through microtransit or employer-supported routes?
- How can GO Transit better make employers and employees aware of available transit options?

ECWRPC and the consultant team identified businesses to include in the survey to aid in the development of TDP recommendations. Distribution was conducted with assistance from the Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation (GO EDC) in August and September of 2023. Responses were collected online via SurveyMonkey.

## Findings

The business survey garnered seven responses, most of which indicated a need for transit service beyond existing scheduled trip times and service area boundaries. Awareness of the existing Access to Jobs (ATJ) program is limited, so improving marketing or upgrading this service could offer opportunities to meet more employee transit needs. Additionally, employers requested service to industrial parks beyond the current reach of fixed routes. Service to these destinations can be difficult to provide efficiently using all-day routes, so these areas may be better served by flexible demand-response options like microtransit, as discussed in the Microtransit Service Expansion Options section of the report.

## Rider Survey

One of the most prominent tools used to collect input was a survey for existing transit riders, drafted by SRF, GO Transit, and ECWRPC staff. The survey was distributed online using SurveyMonkey, and paper copies were distributed on buses and at the downtown Transit Center by GO Transit staff. Riders were invited to respond from July to September 2023.

## Findings

In total, there were 91 responses to the rider survey. Questions generally sought to understand transit users' current travel habits and decisions and gather information about their needs and preferences. Riders offered information about their most desired improvements to the system.

## TRIP PURPOSE

Transit riders were asked for information about both the origin and destination of their trip. Figure 26 shows that nearly half of all transit trips began at home (48.3 percent), followed by work (20.7 percent) and stores or restaurants (10.3 percent). Daycares, places of worship, educational institutions, social services, and medical facilities were the least popular response options. Figure 27 shows that among all destinations, work (26.4 percent), home (24.1 percent), and stores or restaurants (20.7 percent) were again the most common responses, while places of worship, educational institutions, and social service agencies ranked lowest.

Figure 26. Rider Survey: Trip Origin

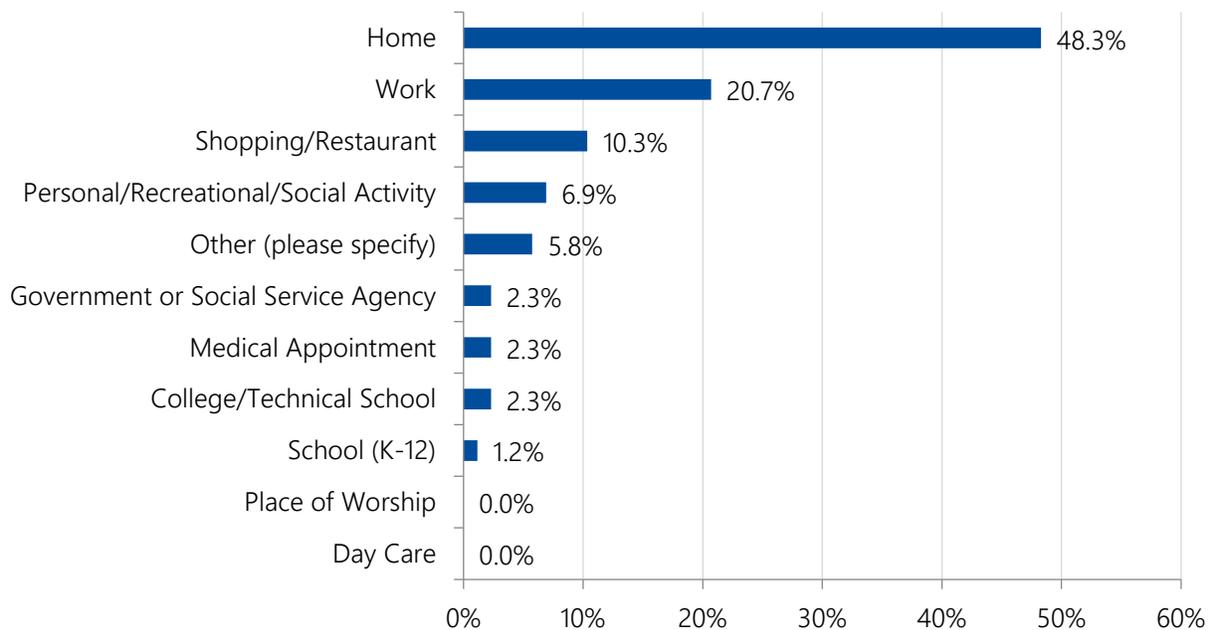
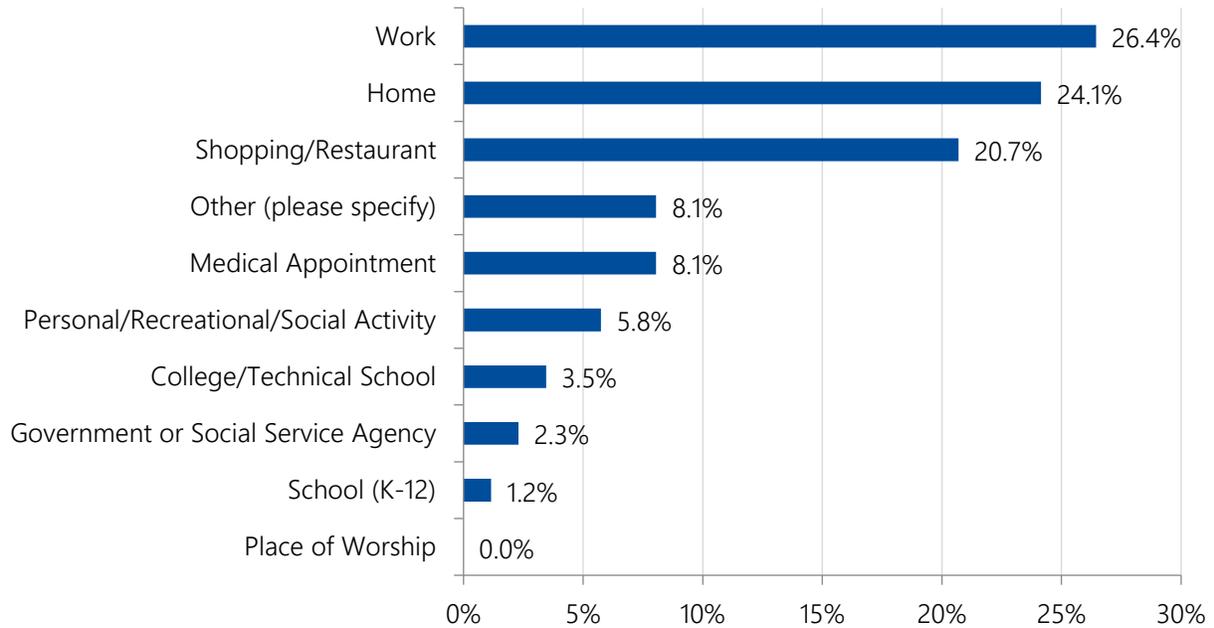


Figure 27. Rider Survey: Trip Destination



The survey also gathered information about transit users' primary reason for riding as opposed to using another mode of transportation (Figure 28) and how often they use GO Transit's services (Figure 29). The survey indicates that the majority of respondents can't drive for various reasons: some do not have a vehicle or valid license (47.1 percent), while others are unable (14.9 percent). Some respondents answered that the bus is more convenient (14.9 percent) or that they prefer not to drive (9.2 percent). Most survey respondents are daily riders of the GO Transit system, with 52.9 percent reporting that they ride 5 or more days per week. In total, over 80 percent of survey respondents reported riding at least two days per week. This indicates that there is a large cohort of regular transit users who responded to the survey.

Figure 28. Rider Survey: Primary Reason for Transit Use

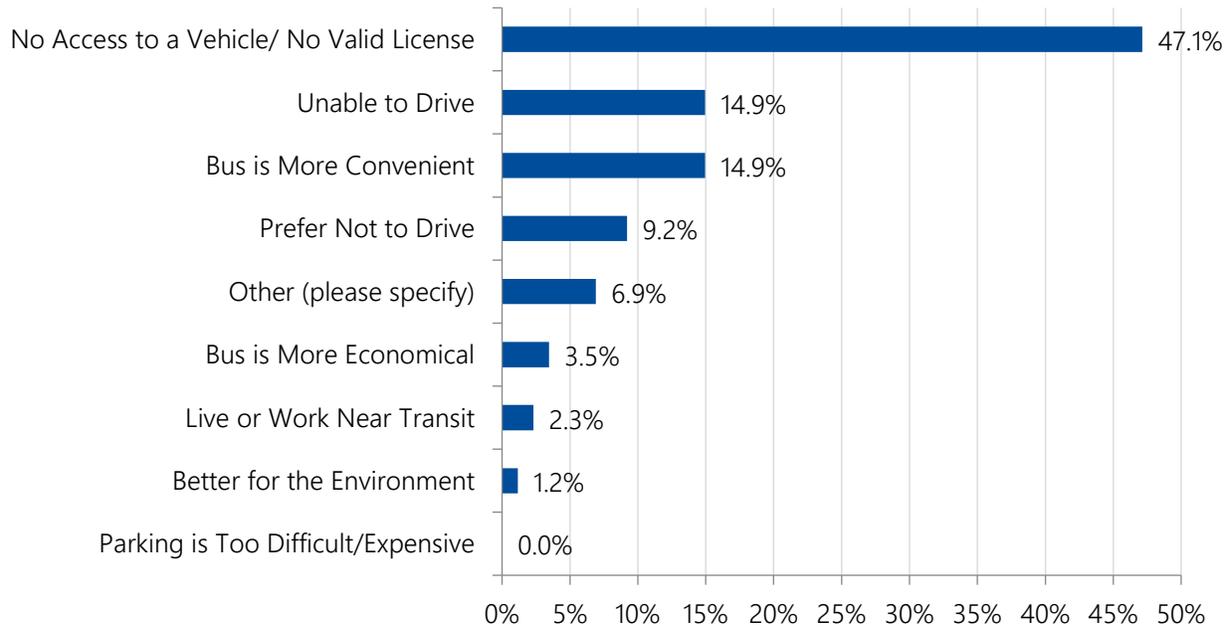
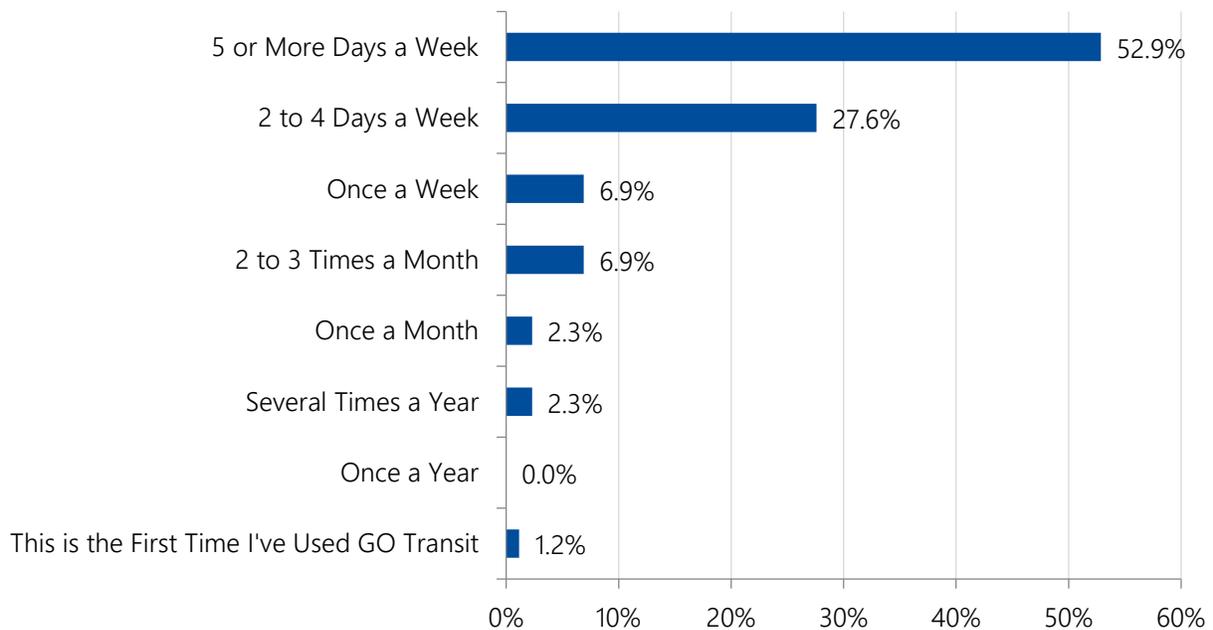


Figure 29. Rider Survey: Frequency of Use



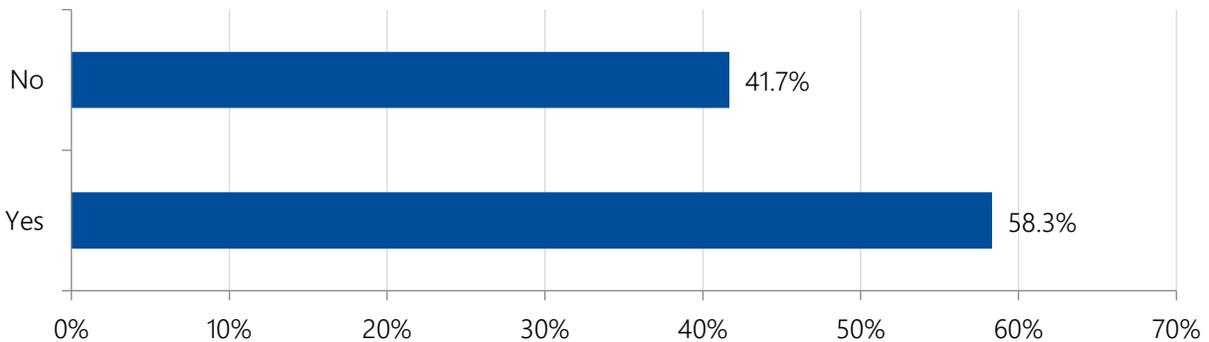
## TRAVEL MODE AND TRANSFERS

Survey respondents were asked to provide their initial mode of access to the bus (first-mile) and to their final destination after exiting the bus (last-mile) from a comprehensive list of options. 94 percent of respondents indicated that they walked to the bus, while 4 percent said they biked and 1 percent said they used a

wheelchair or mobility aid. Last-mile modes included walking (85 percent), biking (5 percent), wheelchair or mobility aid (1 percent), and taxi (1 percent).

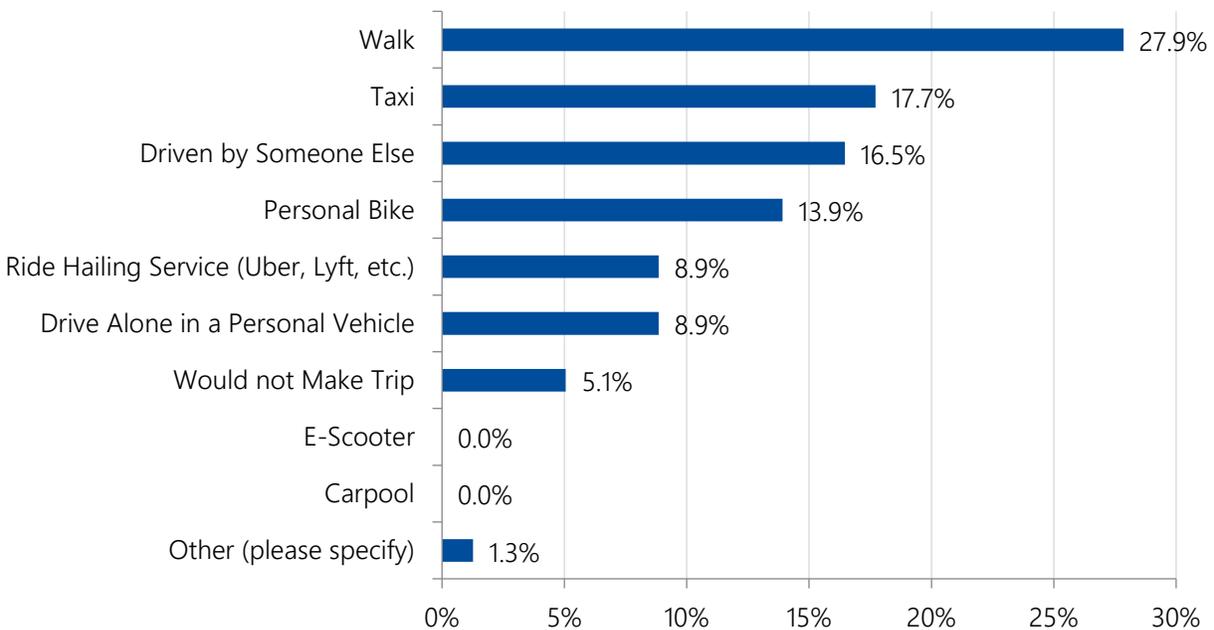
Survey respondents were also asked to report whether or not their current trip included a transfer, with results shown in Figure 30. Over half of the survey respondents indicated that their trip involved at least two bus routes.

Figure 30. Rider Survey: Transfers



Riders were asked to report the mode of transportation they would have used to complete their current trip if GO Transit were unavailable, shown in Figure 31. The most common response was walking (27.9 percent), followed by taking a taxi (17.7 percent) and getting a ride from someone else (16.5 percent). Notably, only 8.9 percent said they would have driven alone in a personal vehicle, indicating that many of the respondents cannot drive themselves as an alternative. Approximately 5 percent would not make the trip at all.

Figure 31. Rider Survey: Travel Mode if Transit Service Were Unavailable



## FARE PAYMENT

Survey respondents were asked questions about their fare payment method (Figure 32) and their opinion of GO Transit's current fare prices (Figure 33). Approximately one-third of survey respondents each (32.9 percent) indicated that they paid for their current trip with cash or with a monthly pass. The Token Transit App and punch pass options were relatively less used. Most respondents (66.2 percent) indicated that the current \$1.50 fare is average, with an equal number of respondents indicating that the fare was either too high or too low (16.9 percent each).

Figure 32. Fare Payment Method

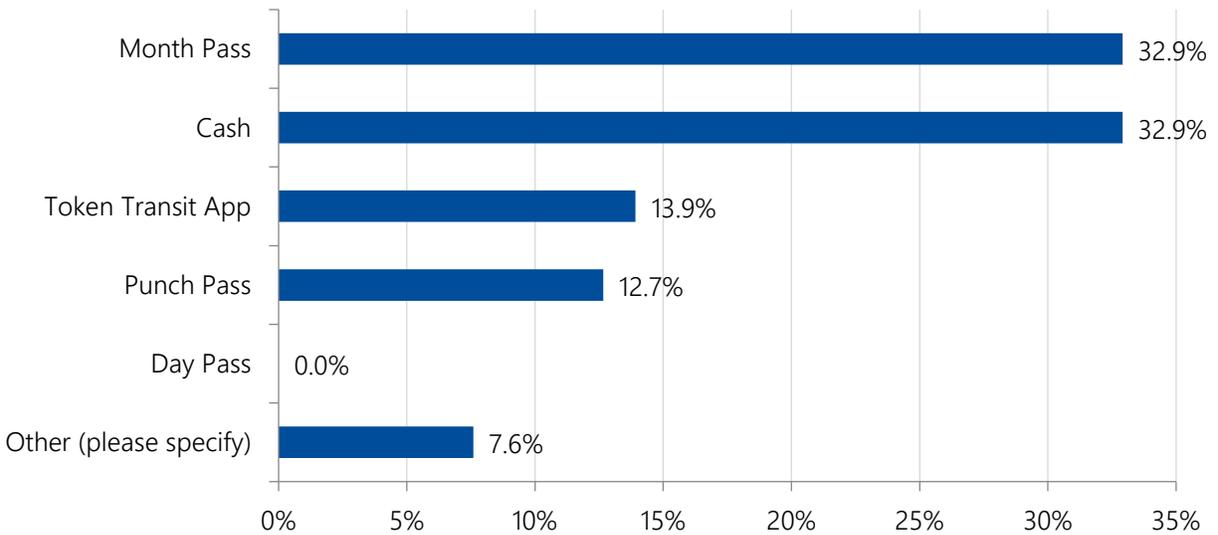
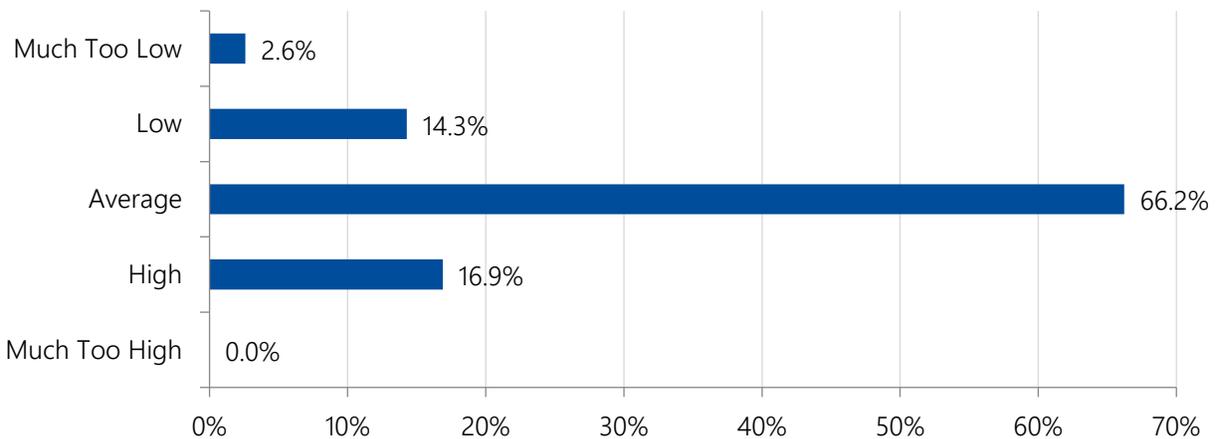


Figure 33. Rider Survey: Perception of Fare Prices



## IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Several survey questions sought to understand current GO Transit riders' priorities for making improvements to the transit system. Figure 34 shows the results of a question where respondents were asked to rank five potential improvements that would cause them to use GO Transit's services more often, with "1" being their top priority and "5" being their lowest priority. Generally, respondents indicated that evening service and increased service frequency were their first and second priorities, respectively, followed in descending order by increased weekend service, faster service, and expanded service area. Among current riders who responded to the survey, there is not as much strong desire to expand the system's geographical coverage, and emphasis is instead placed on improving service in existing areas.

Figure 34. Rider Survey: Ranking of Potential Improvements

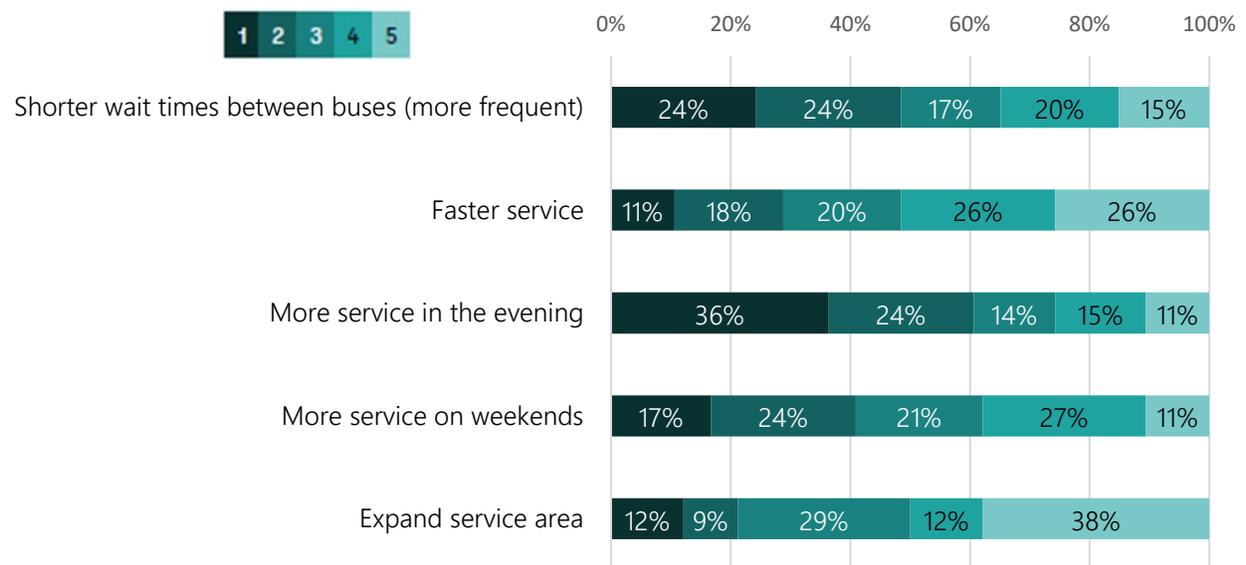


Figure 35 echoes the results from the previous figure, showing that survey respondents prefer frequent service to expanded geographical coverage. Because this engagement effort reached only those who were using transit at the time of receipt of the survey, it was more likely to document the views of those who do not need additional geographical coverage to access the system.

Figure 35. Rider Survey: Frequency versus Geographical Coverage

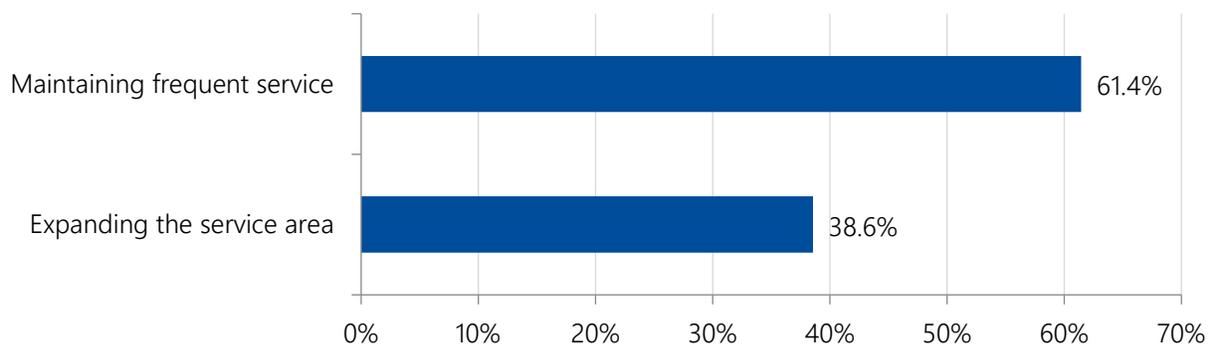
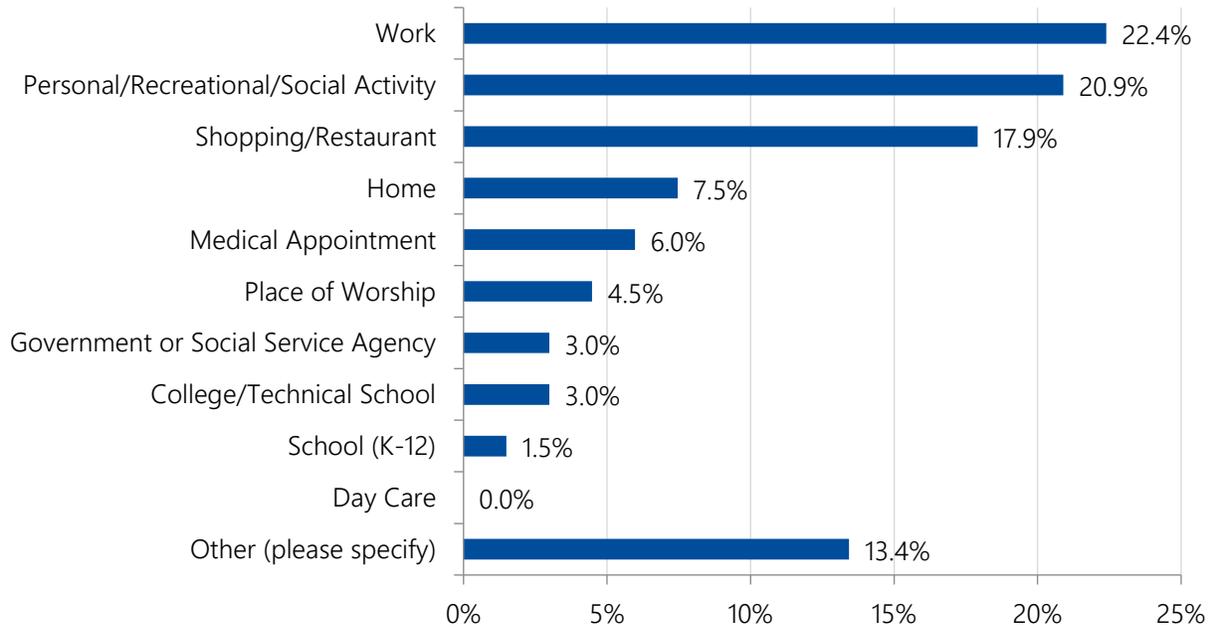


Figure 36 details the top destination type that survey respondents would most prefer to have increased service. The top answers included work (22.4 percent), personal, recreational, or social activities (20.9 percent) and stores and restaurants (17.9 percent). Among survey respondents, there was relatively less demand for increased access to social services or educational institutions.

Figure 36. Rider Survey: Desired Destination Type for Increased Service



## RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics of survey respondents provide additional context into their preferences and needs. Figure 37 shows that there are responses from every age group, with almost half (46 percent) between the ages of 35 and 54. Figure 38 shows an even distribution of responses by gender.

Figure 37. Rider Survey: Age

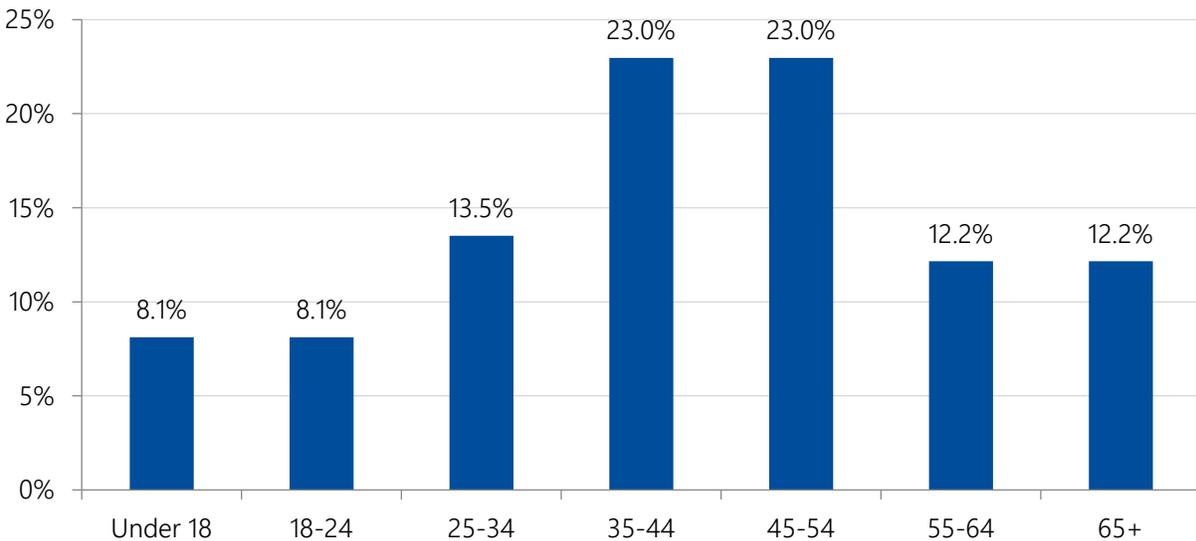
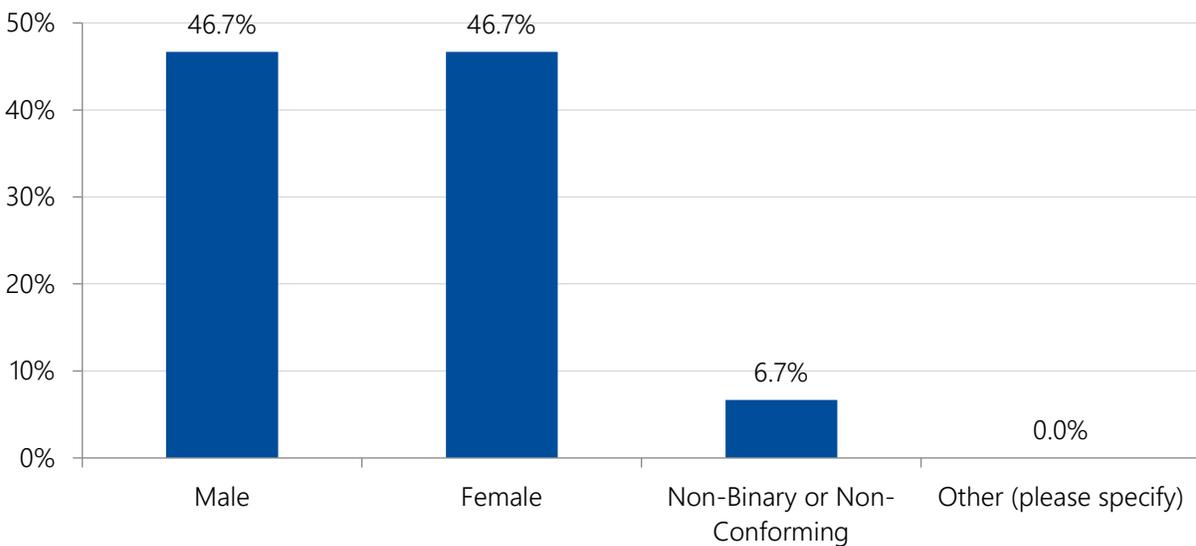


Figure 38. Rider Survey: Gender



Survey respondents' travel decisions are impacted by their ability to drive and by their vehicle access. Figure 39 shows that about two-thirds of respondents (66.2 percent) did not report having a driver's license. Of those with a driver's license, Figure 40 shows that over three-quarters (76.2 percent) did not report having access to a vehicle. Both response sets show that transit riders who responded to the survey generally cannot rely on driving as an alternative.

Figure 39. Rider Survey: Driver's License

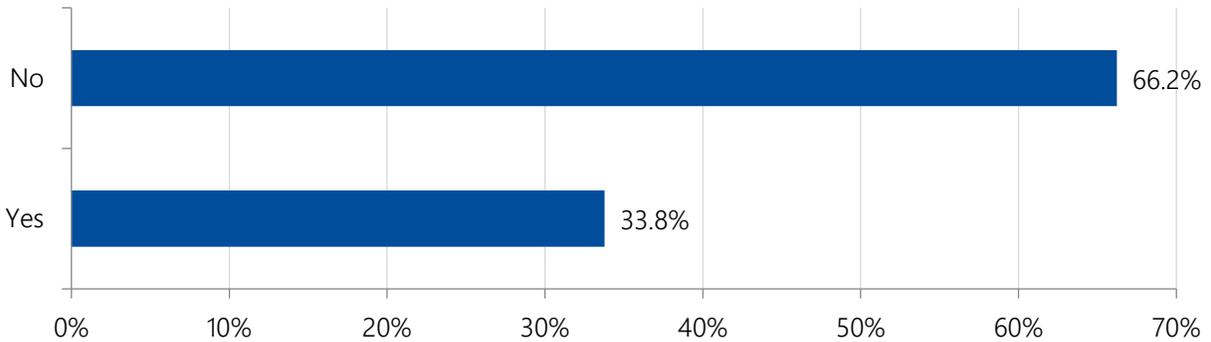


Figure 40. Rider Survey: Vehicle Access

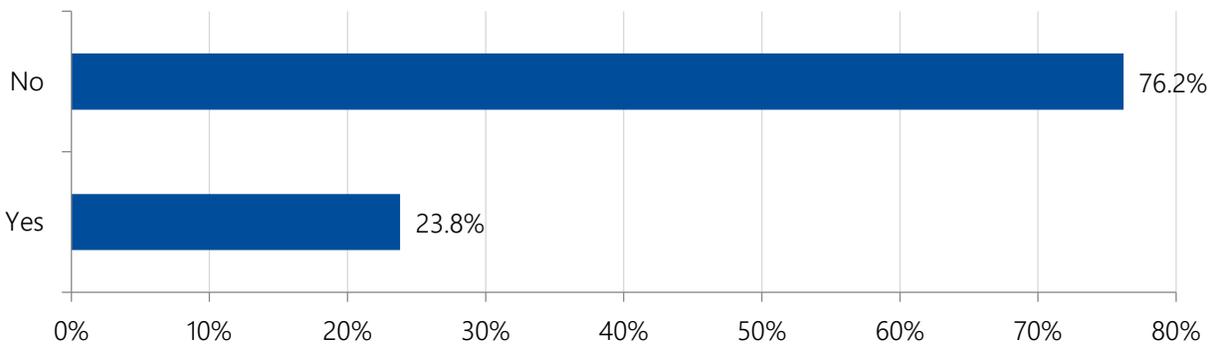


Figure 41 and Figure 42 show respondents' self-reported race and ethnicity, respectively. Respondents were able to select multiple racial classifications as necessary, so results total to over 100 percent. Most respondents identified themselves as White and non-Hispanic or Latino, though 7.9 percent of respondents were Black or African American and 9.1 percent were Hispanic or Latino. Figure 43 shows that all survey respondents stated that they speak English "well" or "very well."

Figure 41. Rider Survey: Race

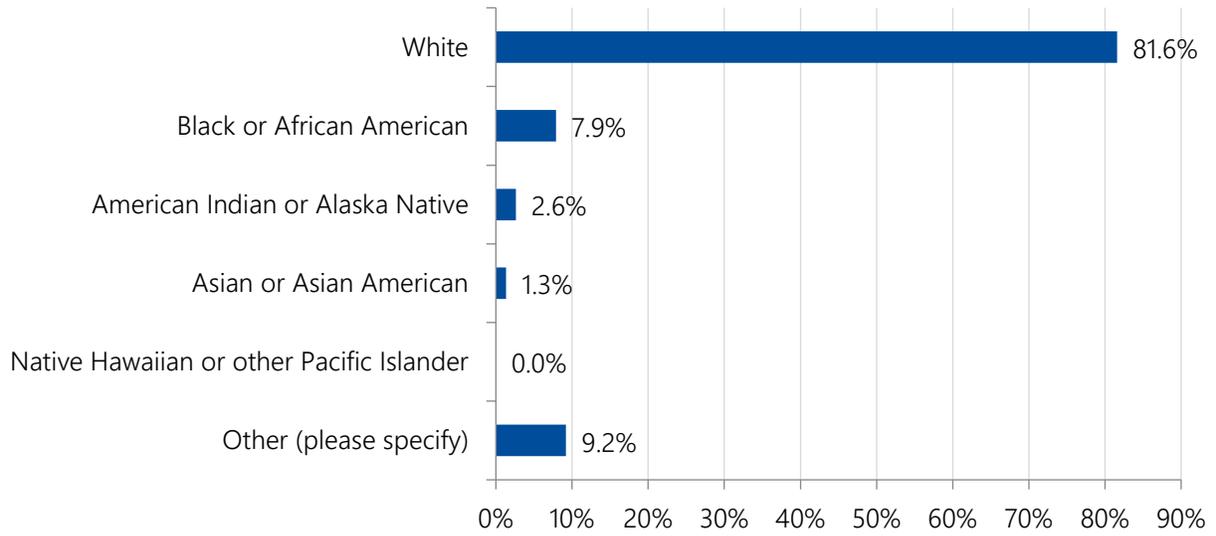


Figure 42. Rider Survey: Ethnicity

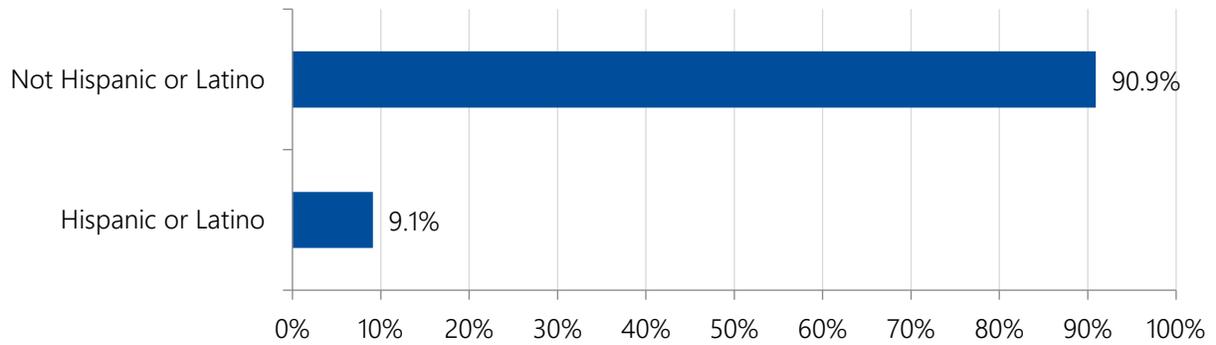
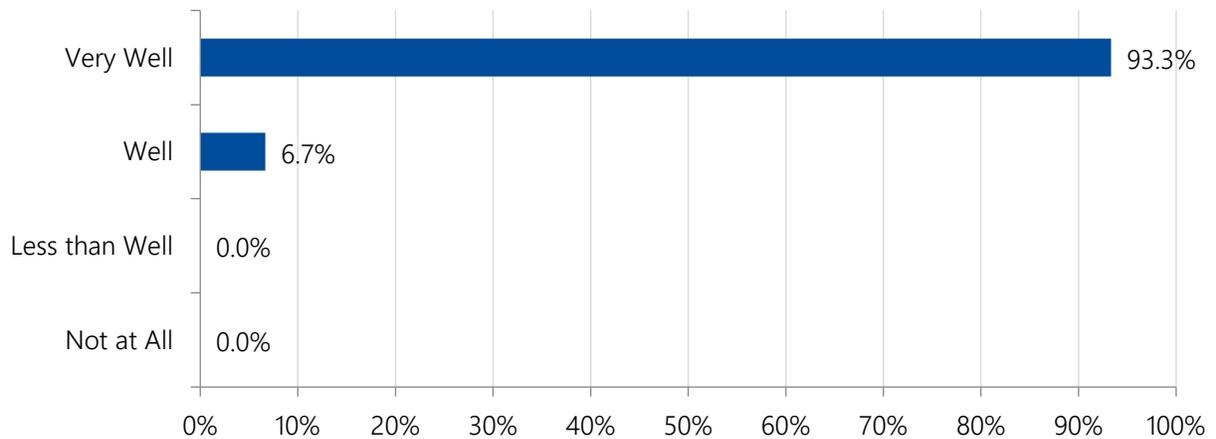
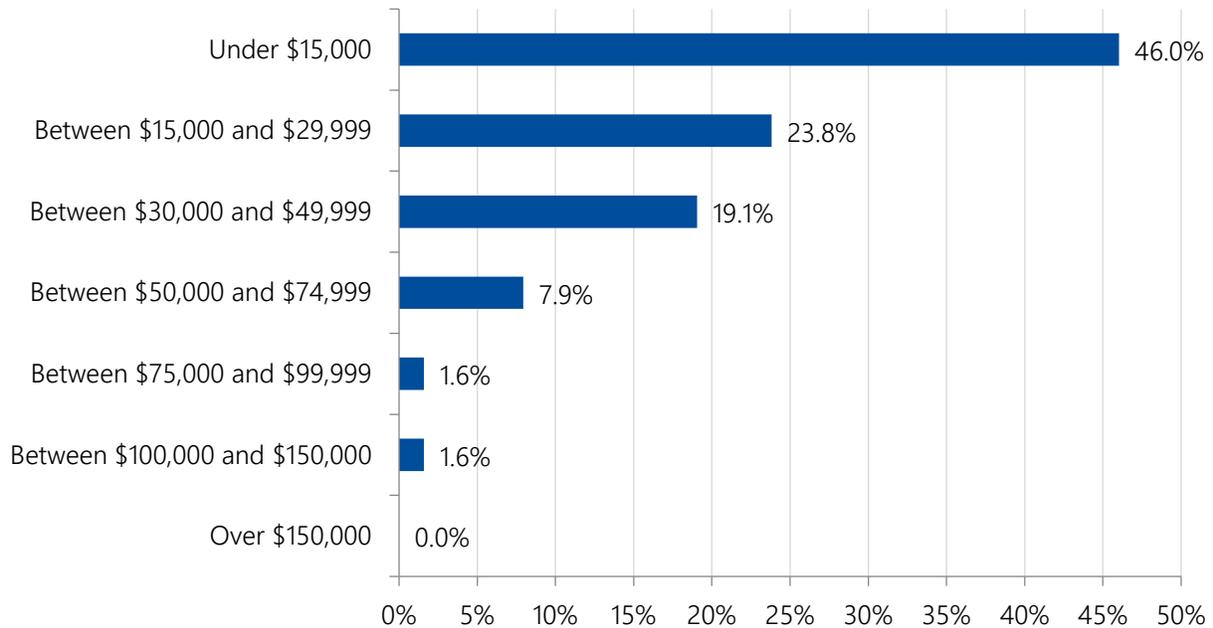


Figure 43. Rider Survey: English Proficiency



Respondents were asked to report their household income in 2022, shown in Figure 44. Almost 60 percent reported incomes under \$30,000 per year, while only 11.1 percent reported household incomes over \$50,000.

Figure 44. Rider Survey: Household Income



## Community Survey

In addition to the survey targeting existing transit riders, SRF also developed a survey to be administered to the community at large. This survey was distributed online using Polco through the City of Oshkosh. Community members responded from August to September 2023.

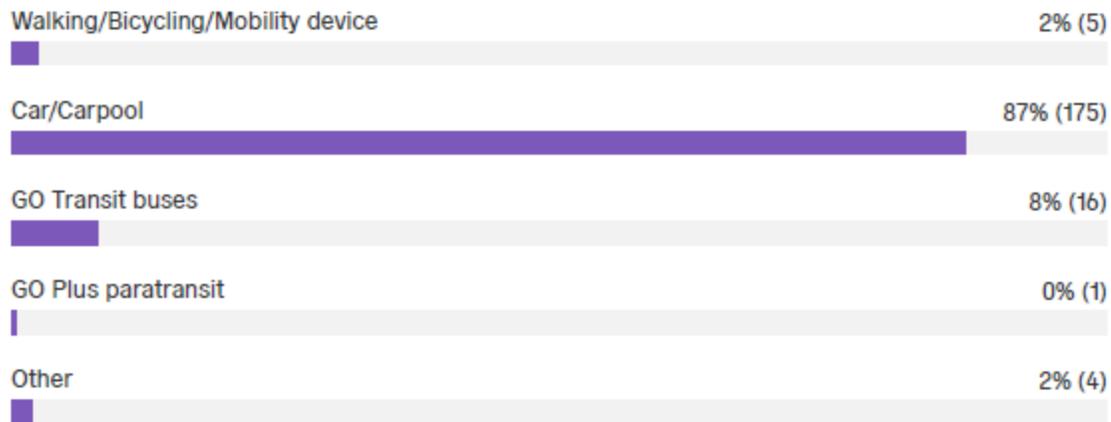
### Findings

In total, there were 201 responses to the community survey. Community members offered information about characteristics of their current travel habits and provided their opinions on what improvements would encourage them to use GO Transit's services more frequently.

### TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS AND GO TRANSIT USE

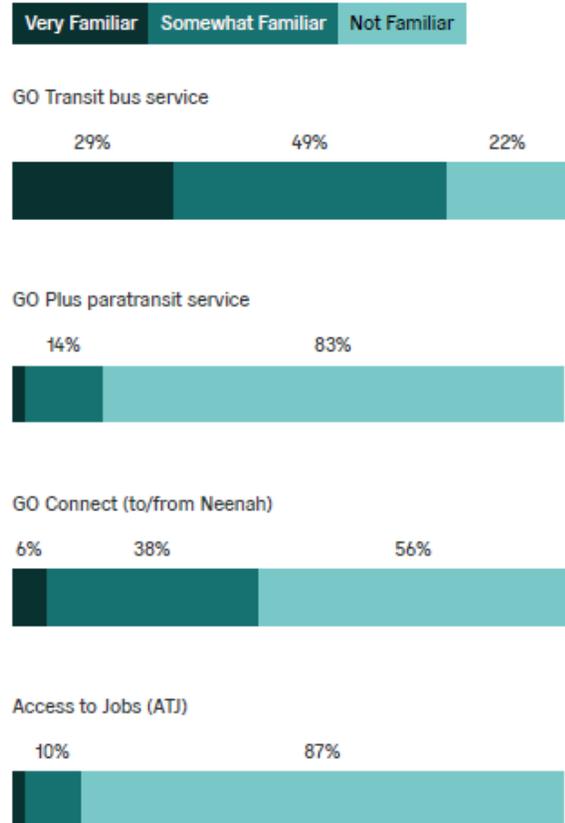
The community survey gathered responses across all transportation modes, including GO Transit buses. Shown in Figure 45, respondents reported driving or carpooling as their primary mode of transportation. "Other" responses not listed included electronic bikes and scooters.

Figure 45. Community Survey: Primary Means of Transportation



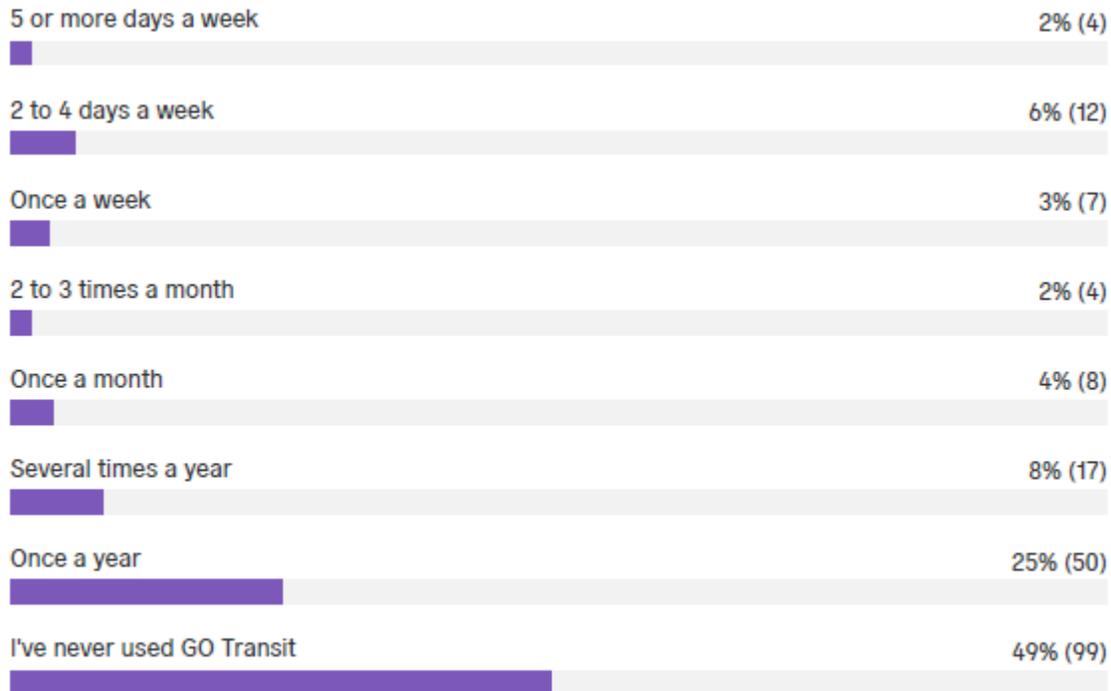
Though 8 percent of respondents reported that the bus is their primary transportation mode, the survey indicates that greater percentage of the community is aware of GO Transit’s services. Figure 46 shows that over three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) are at least somewhat familiar with GO Transit bus service, and almost half (44 percent) are familiar with GO Connect. Fewer respondents reported any familiarity with GO Plus paratransit service or Access to Jobs.

Figure 46. Community Survey: Familiarity with GO Transit Services



As such, many community survey respondents indicated that they have used GO Transit’s services before, even while most respondents primarily drive. Figure 47 shows that over 17 percent of respondents reported using GO Transit’s Services at least monthly, and over half have used the system at least once in the past year. The survey gathered responses from many transit users at varying levels of frequency, though just under half have never used the system at all.

Figure 47. Community Survey: GO Transit Frequency of Use



Community members were asked to select the primary reason they would consider using the bus (Figure 48), as well as any potential destination(s) they would consider using the bus to reach (Figure 49). Respondents largely communicated that the bus is not their preferred option, indicating in their responses that lack of vehicle access, lack of a valid driver’s license, or an inability to drive are their top reasons for potentially using the bus. However, environmental benefits (14 percent) were the next highly ranked selection. Economic benefits of bus use ranked lowest. “Other” responses indicated that some riders see using the bus as a fun adventure (either alone or with their children), for event transportation to areas with limited parking, or as a safer alternative to driving when consuming alcohol.

Respondents reported that destinations they may visit using transit include shopping and restaurants (61 percent), medical appointments (46 percent), recreational and social activities (44 percent), in addition to home (45 percent) and work (42 percent) trips. Educational institutions, daycares, and places of worship ranked lowest. “Other” responses reflect those in the previous question, with many saying that special event locations with limited parking options are a potential transit destination, as well as bars or other destinations where alcohol consumption may occur.

Figure 48. Community Survey: Potential Reason for Transit Use

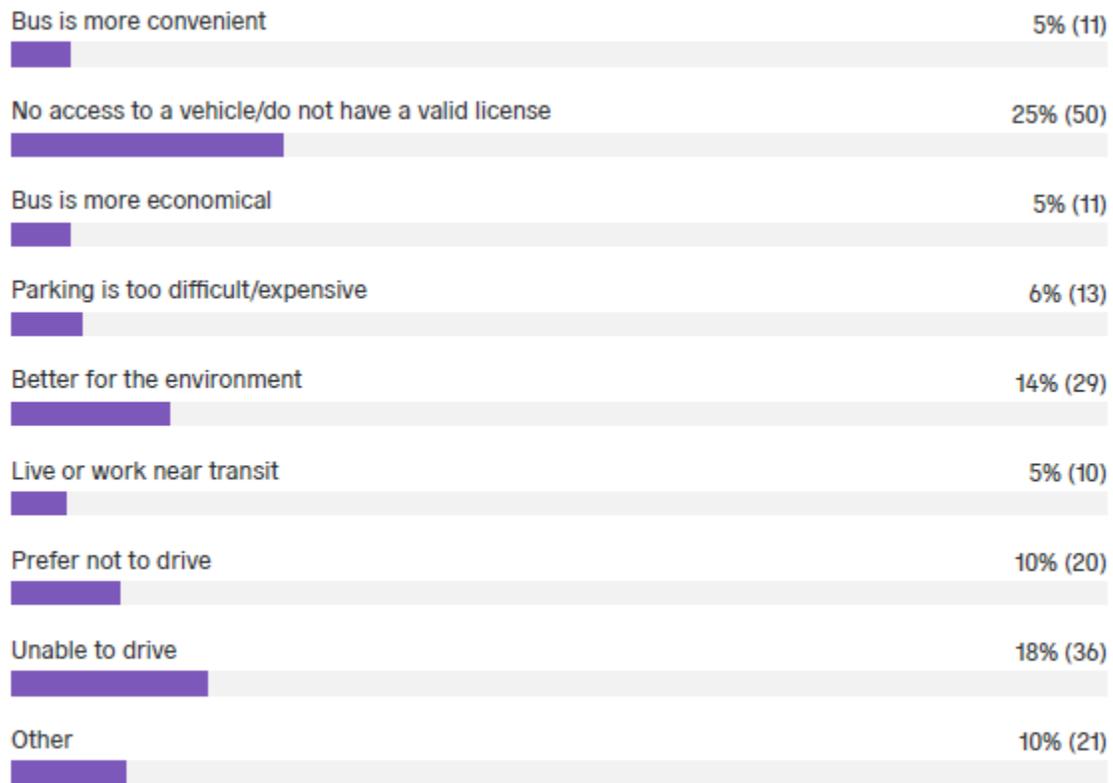
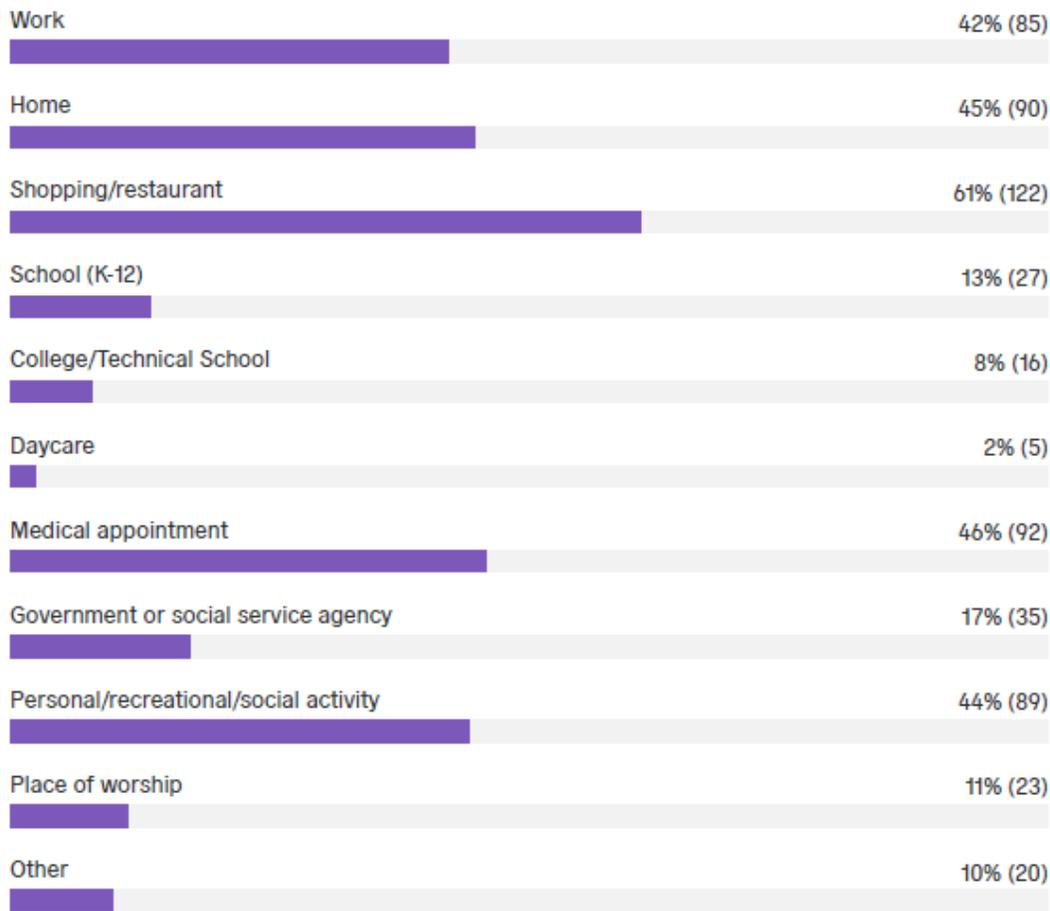


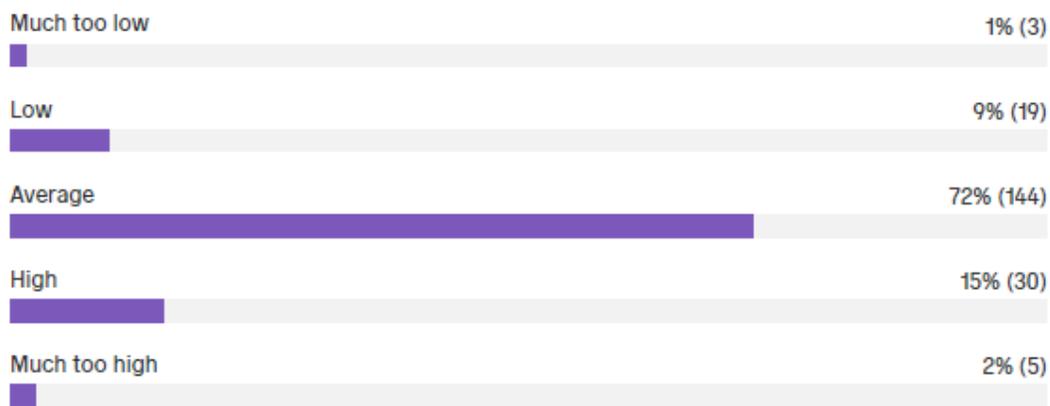
Figure 49. Community Survey: Potential Transit Destination(s)



## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Community survey respondents were asked about their perception of fare prices (Figure 50), with 72 percent sharing that they think fares are average. Approximately 10 percent reported that fares are too low, while 17 percent reported that fares are too high.

Figure 50. Community Survey: Perception of Fare Prices



When asked to rank potential improvements that would encourage them to use GO Transit’s services from 1 (highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority), respondents’ top answer was to increase evening service (Figure 51). Increasing weekend service and the network’s geographical spread were also popular responses, followed by increasing frequency and increasing trip speed. However, Figure 52 contradicts these results slightly, with 55 percent of respondents indicating that they would prefer maintaining frequent service to expanding the system’s geographical reach.

Figure 51. Community Survey: Ranking of Potential Improvements

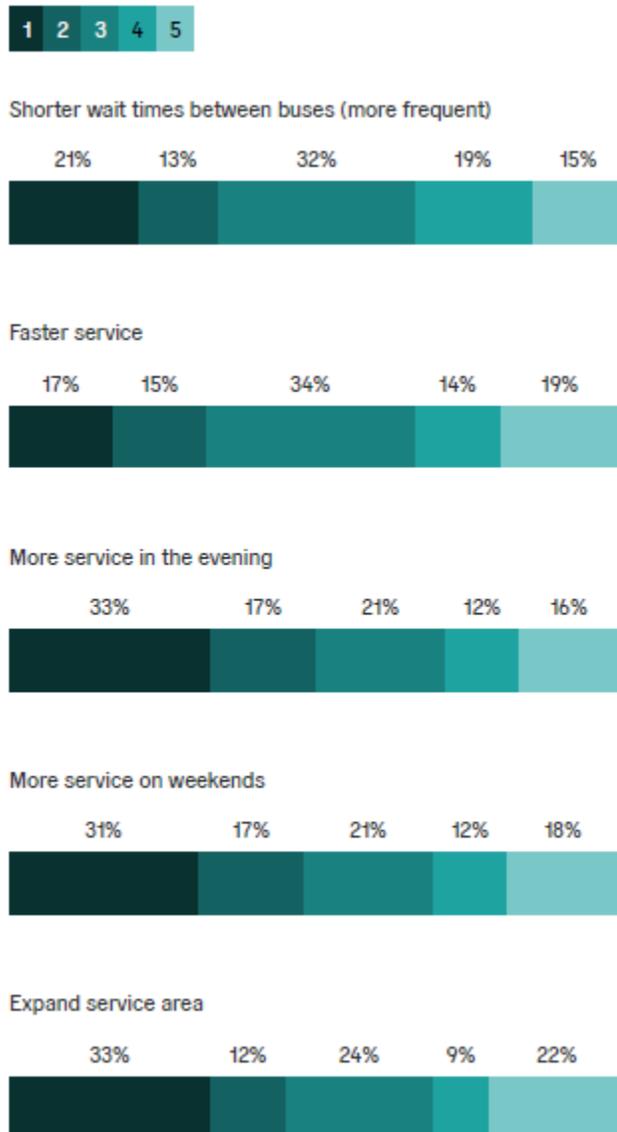
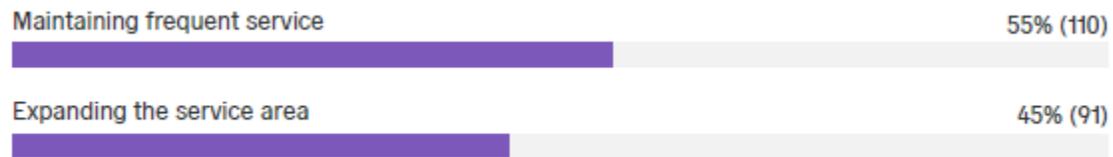
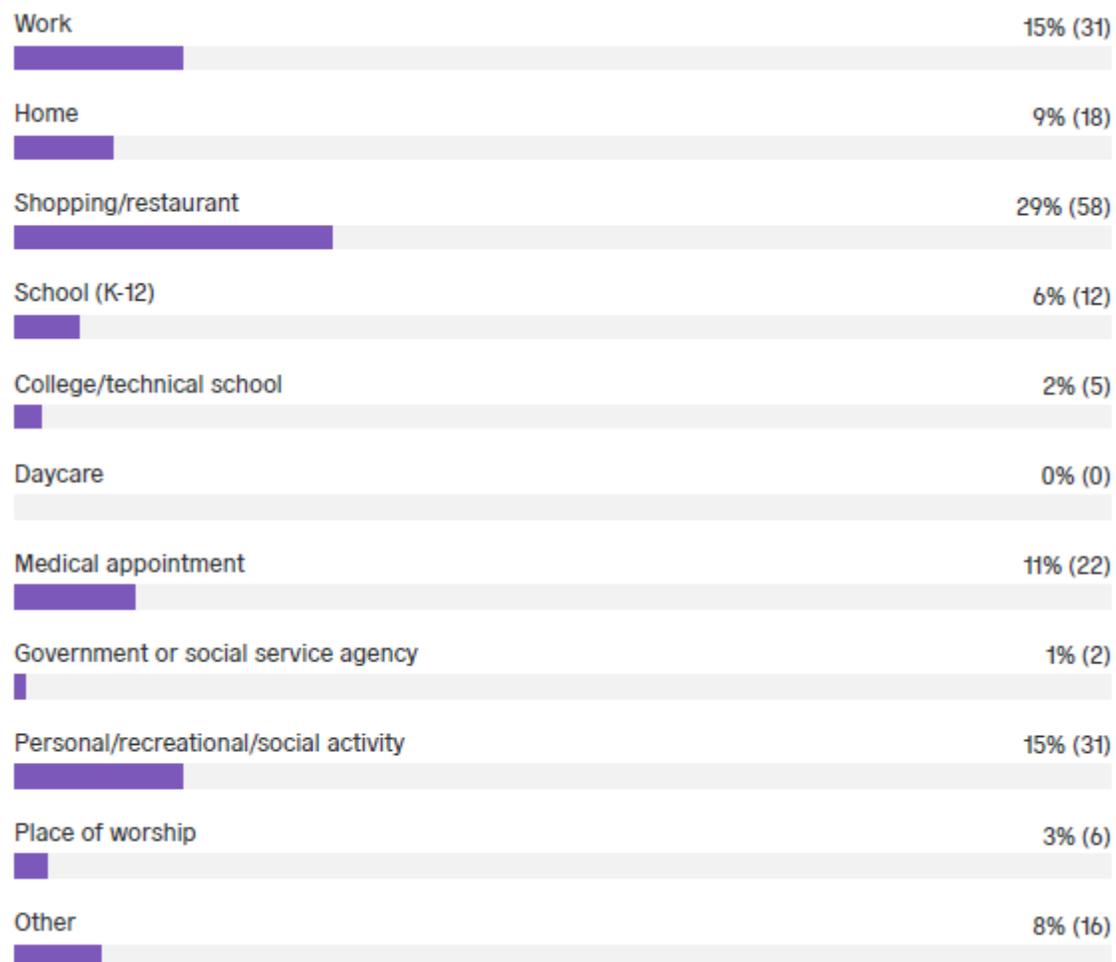


Figure 52. Community Survey: Frequency versus Geographical Coverage



When asked for specific destinations that community members would be interested in reaching with increased service, respondents slightly favored shops and restaurants (29 percent) and personal, recreational, and social activities (15 percent), as shown in Figure 53. Work (15 percent) and medical appointments (11 percent) were also popular choices.

Figure 53. Community Survey: Desired Destination Type for Increased Service



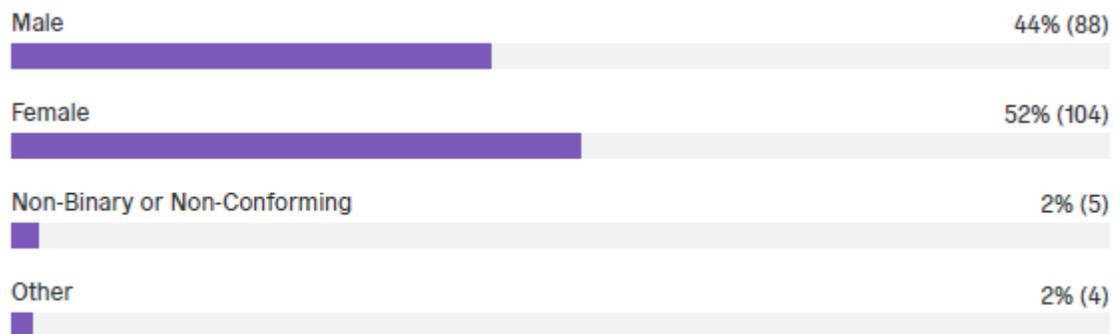
## DEMOGRAPHICS

The community survey reached a different sample of the population than the rider survey did, as evidenced by demographic reporting. Figure 54 indicates that over half of respondents to the community survey (51 percent) were age 55 or older, with only 11 percent under age 35. Approximately 52 percent of survey respondents were women, shown in Figure 55.

Figure 54. Community Survey: Age



Figure 55. Community Survey: Gender



In contrast with the rider survey, 92 percent of community survey respondents reported that they have a driver's license (Figure 56), with 92 percent also having access to a vehicle (Figure 57). This community sample is relatively less likely than respondents to the rider survey to be dependent on GO Transit's services.

Figure 56. Community Survey: Driver's License

### Do you have a valid driver's license?



Figure 57. Community Survey: Vehicle Access

### If yes, do you own a vehicle/have access to a vehicle to drive?



Approximately 95 percent of respondents self-reported their race as white (Figure 58), and 98 percent reported their ethnicity as not Hispanic or Latino (Figure 59).

Figure 58. Community Survey: Race

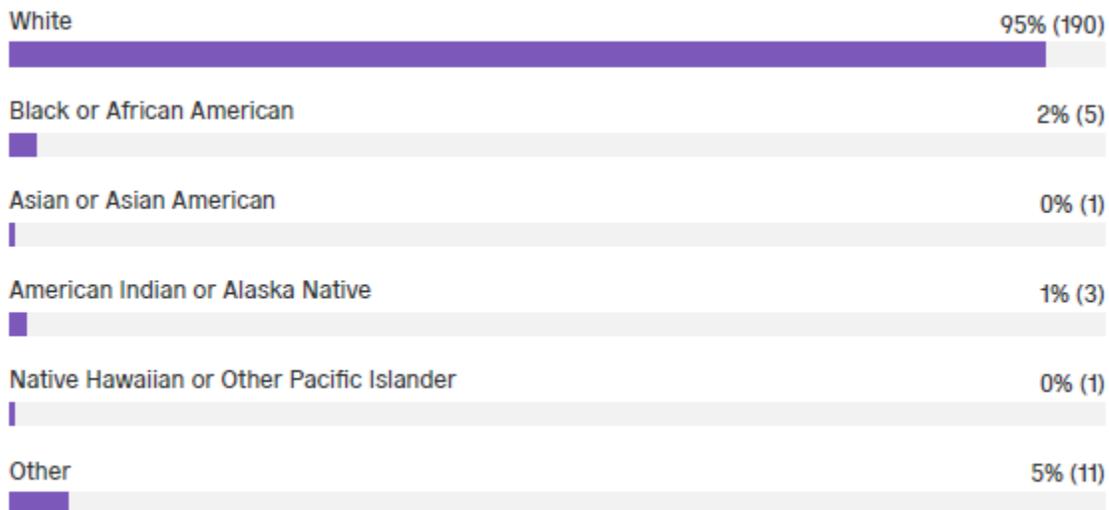
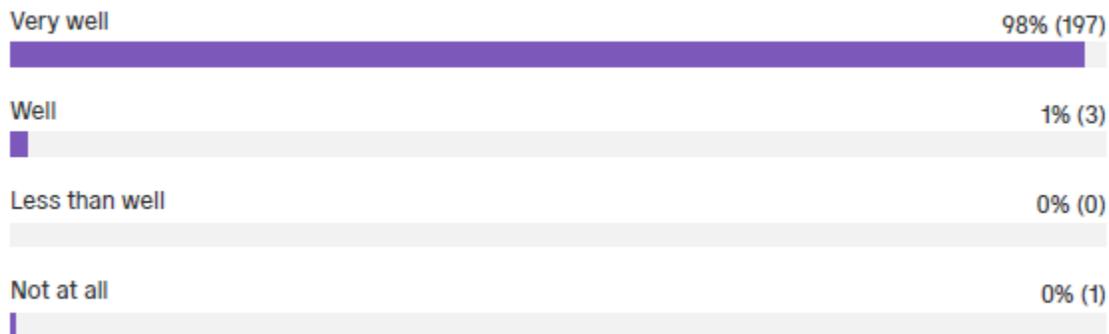


Figure 59. Community Survey: Ethnicity



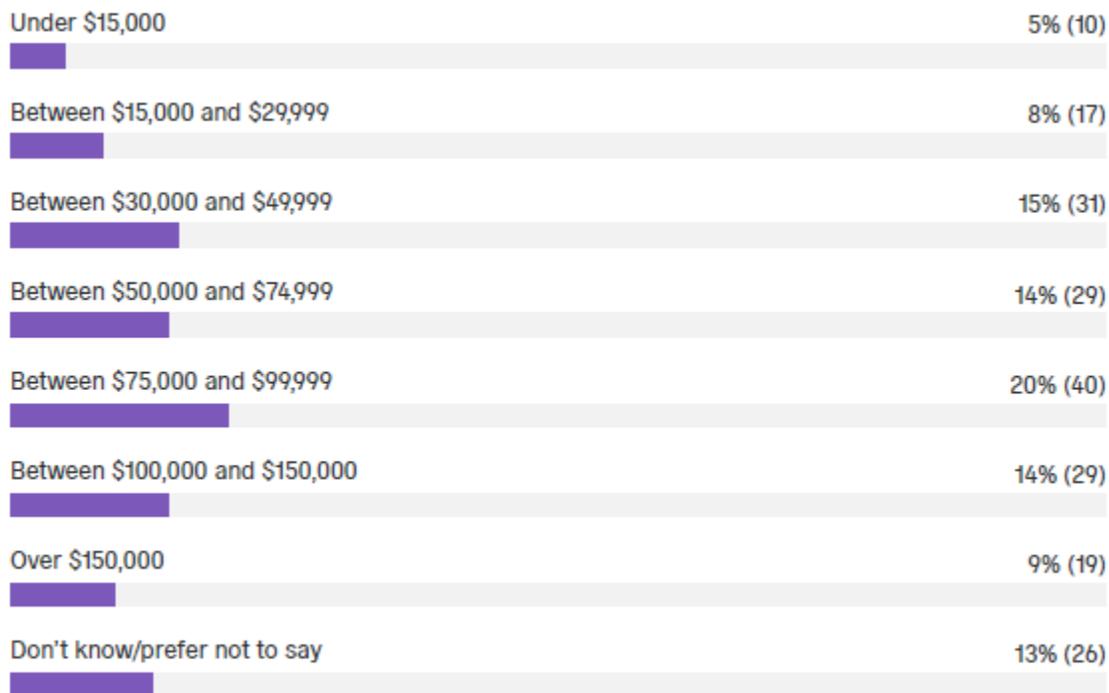
Figure 60 shows that 99 percent of respondents speak English at least “well,” though one person reported that they do not speak English.

Figure 60. Community Survey: English Proficiency



Household incomes in 2022 of community survey respondents were generally higher than those of rider survey respondents, with 56 percent reporting incomes of at least \$75,000. Only 13 percent reported incomes below \$30,000.

Figure 61. Community Survey: Household Income



## Survey Results Comparison

Frequent transit users and community members who may not use transit as often, if at all, may have differing opinions about the effectiveness of transit service. Riders and potential riders alike can agree on certain aspects of transit service that should be prioritized for improvements, but contrasting preferences across these groups can provide agencies with varied input on how to focus resources.

Key differences between the rider and community survey responses include the following:

- **Vehicle Access:** Frequent transit users are significantly less likely to have access to a personal vehicle and more likely to use transit for a variety of purposes.
- **Income:** A much higher proportion of transit riders have moderate or low incomes, with 46 percent making under \$15,000 per year, compared to five percent of community survey respondents.
- **Trip Purpose:** The highest priority for transit riders is increased service to work destinations; non-riders are more likely to desire transit for shopping or recreational purposes.

Despite the variation in demographics and transit use, rider and community survey respondents agree on major priorities for future transit service. These shared priorities include the following:

- **Maintaining service frequency:** Both riders and community survey respondents agree that maintaining current frequency (every 30 minutes) should be prioritized over expanding the geographic footprint of the service area.
- **More evening and weekend service:** Both riders and community survey respondents listed evening and weekend service among their top priorities for service improvements.

These priorities inform the near-term and long-term recommendations included in the TDP.

## Paratransit Rider Survey

In addition to the general rider and community surveys, GO Transit conducted a survey of paratransit riders in fall 2023. Paratransit riders were surveyed regarding their use of fixed routes and ADA complementary paratransit (GO Plus), as well as to determine any transportation needs that are currently unmet.

### Findings

The paratransit survey yielded a total of 45 responses. Of these, 43 respondents indicated that they use GO Plus services multiple times per month, and over half of all respondents reported using GO Plus services multiple times per week. In addition to being registered for GO Plus services, approximately 18 percent of respondents reported using GO Transit fixed routes.

Over half of all respondents indicated that they have been using GO Plus services for at least four years. Over 77 percent of survey respondents reported being at least 55 years of age, and over 67 percent did not have a driver's license. Over 76 percent did not own or have access to a vehicle. Generally, survey respondents were frequent, long-term users of the service who did not have regularly available transportation alternatives outside of being driven by family or friends.

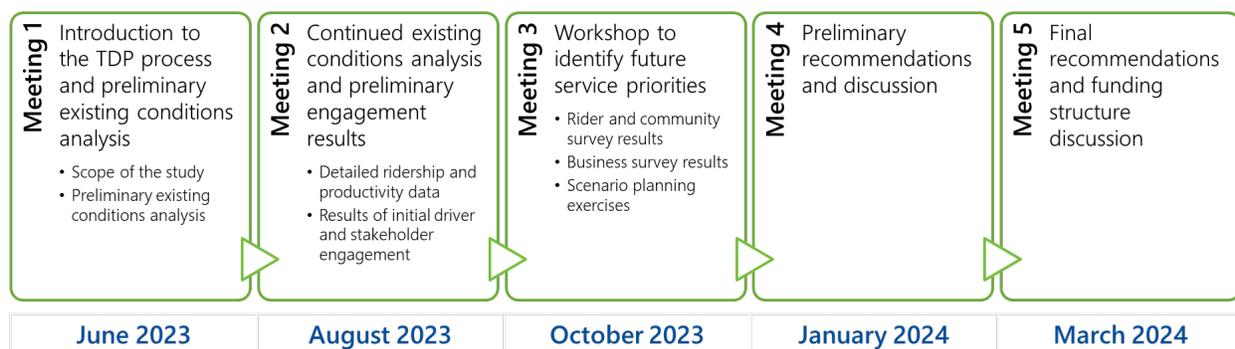
Riders primarily reported using the service to access either medical appointments or employment locations. They generally expressed overall satisfaction with the services offered, expressing that their experiences undergoing the application process to use GO Plus services were positive. Respondents largely indicated that GO Transit is easy to use, moderately affordable, and provides convenient and timely access to the desired destinations.

## Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee consisted of GO Transit stakeholders and funding partners. SRF worked with ECWRPC and GO Transit staff to identify committee members and conducted five site visits to facilitate in-person Steering Committee meetings throughout the project. Participants represented a variety of local and regional stakeholders, including local government, healthcare and social service organizations, schools and higher education institutions, and individuals with disabilities. Stakeholders were identified at the outset of the project and were invited to attend and provide interactive feedback at all five meetings.

The topics of each meeting varied, with the Steering Committee sharing their perspectives and participating in discussion of meeting content throughout, as shown in Figure 62. Meeting 4 afforded participants with the opportunity to comment directly on draft recommendations, and their feedback was considered in the development of the final recommendations presented in this plan. The final Steering Committee meeting consisted of the presentation of these recommendations in their present form.

Figure 62. Steering Committee Meeting Content



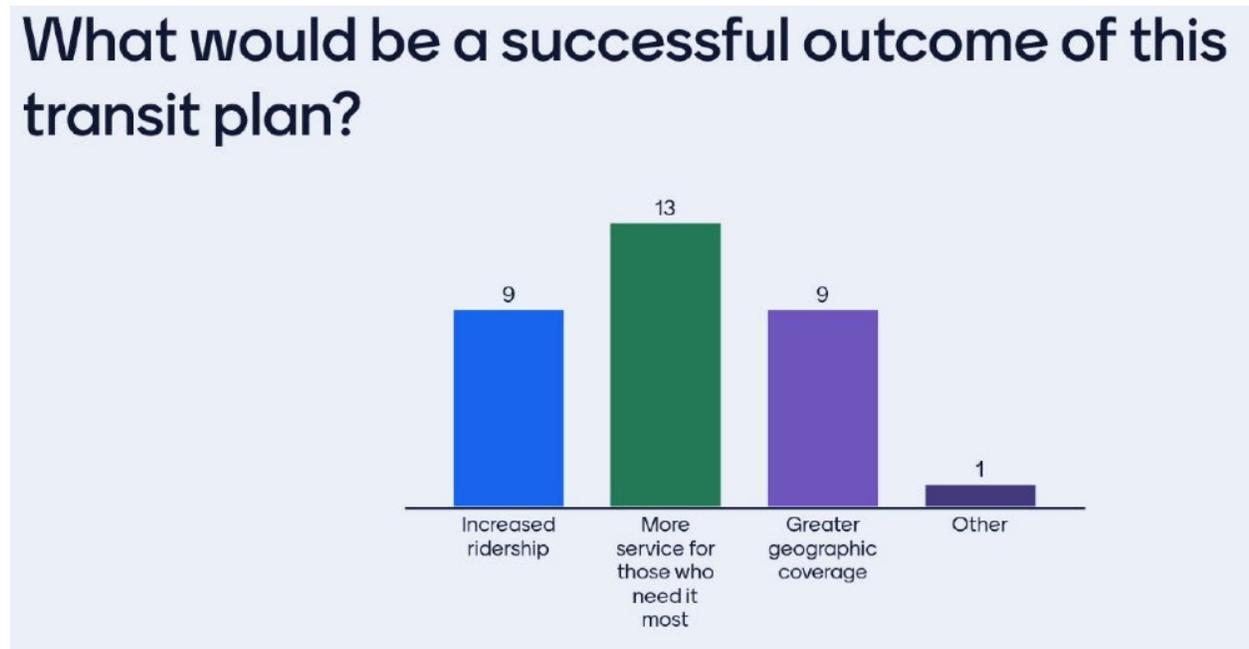
## Stakeholder Priorities

At the third Steering Committee meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>, the Project Team provided themes from operator engagement sessions, the business survey, and the rider and community surveys. The Steering Committee then participated in an activity to share priorities and establish items to be addressed in the TDP. The latter half of the meeting utilized an interactive polling program called Mentimeter to poll stakeholders and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Steering Committee members' priorities for the project and system overall. The questions were sorted into three categories: GO Transit's Outlook, Transit Trade-Offs, and What's Next for GO Transit. Results are described in the following sections.

### GO TRANSIT'S OUTLOOK

Steering Committee members were asked about what they would consider to be a successful outcome of the TDP, with results shown in Figure 63. Stakeholders tended to favor providing more service for transit-dependent populations.

Figure 63. Successful Plan Outcome



The second and third questions in this category asked committee members “What Aspects of GO Transit work well today?” and “Where are there opportunities to improve the transportation system?”. Responses are listed below in Table 20 and Table 21, with duplicates and near-duplicates grouped together. Respondents also had the opportunity to vote in support of posted answers, and those votes are included as well.

As far as what works well, responses were fairly spread out. Many of the responses and votes indicated favorability with the customer service with drivers and the 30-minute frequency as strengths. There were also many responses that indicated coverage and service in the city core as a strength. As far as areas of improvement go, there were many different responses but two of them had the most votes or were submitted most frequently they were longer service hours and more coverage. Several members also responded with specific locations or areas where service should be expanded.

Table 20. Mentimeter: Question 2

“What Aspects of GO Transit work well today?”	
Response	Votes
Friendly Drivers	12
Route frequency	10
Core of city covered well	7
30 minute frequency	6
Affordability	6
New buses and infrastructure	4
Good routes	3
Partnership with schools	1
Access for k-12 students	0

"What Aspects of GO Transit work well today?"	
Routes through UWO campus	0

Table 21. Mentimeter: Question 3

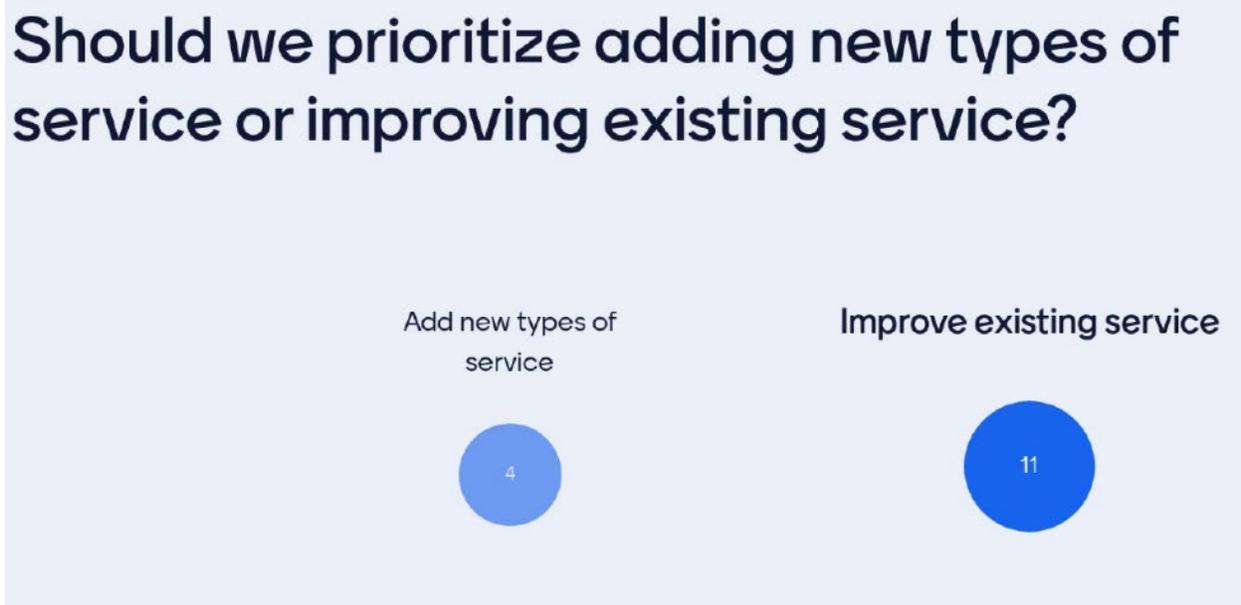
"Where are there opportunities to improve the transportation system?"	
Response	Votes
More coverage (general)	14
Longer service hours	12
Day passes	6
Serve DMV	5
Coverage to large employers	5
Remove punch pass	3
Weekend service	3
Service SE industrial park	3
Collaborate with rural areas	3
Electric buses	1
More payment options at service window	0
Rider education	0

## TRANSIT TRADE OFFS

Three question formats were used to address committee members' service priorities. These trade-off questions were intended to make respondents think critically about which strategies for improving service they support the most even if they wanted to support all of them.

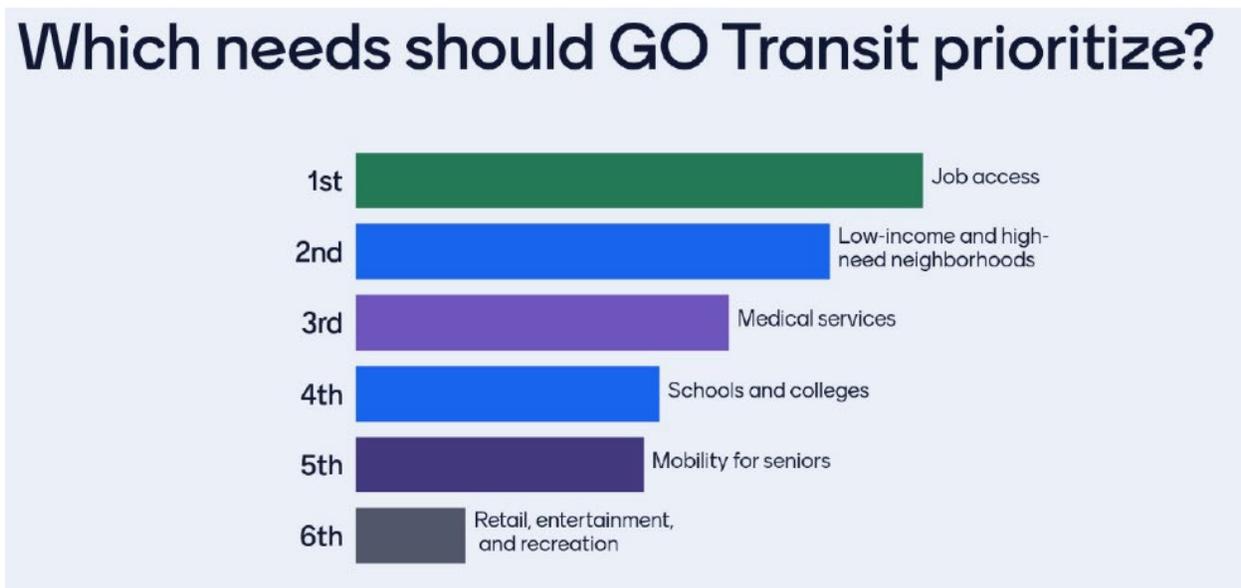
The first question asked if members would prioritize adding new types of service or improving existing service, assuming only one is possible. As shown below in Figure 64, about two thirds responses that they'd prioritize the latter.

Figure 64. Mentimeter Trade-Off 1



The second question listed six potential needs that transit can address and asked members to rank them. The full responses are below in Figure 65. Overall, support was generally highest for access to jobs and medical services and for serving low-income and high-need neighborhoods. These responses indicate that transit is viewed as a critical service for the community.

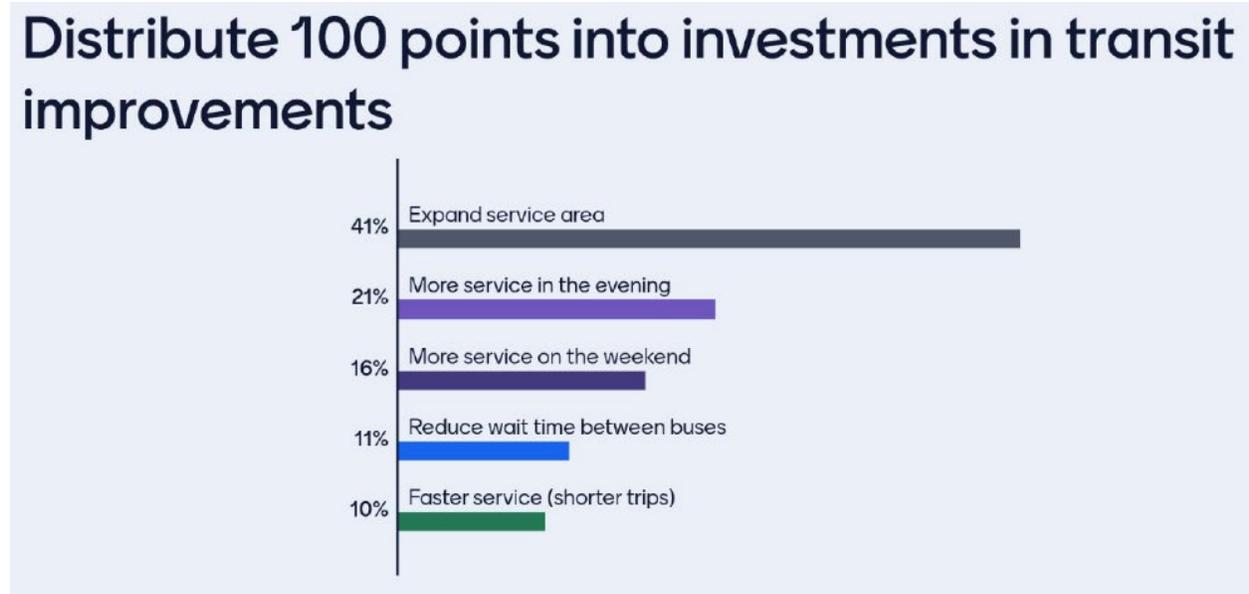
Figure 65. Mentimeter Trade-Off 2



For the third and final question of the section, members were given a hypothetical 100 point “budget” to allocate across five potential investments for GO Transit. The full responses are below in Figure 66. 41 percent of the points in each member’s budget were allocated toward expanding the service area and 21 percent for

extending more evening service. These responses matched those in the previous section when member were asked about what they would improve about GO Transit service.

Figure 66. Mentimeter Trade-Off 3

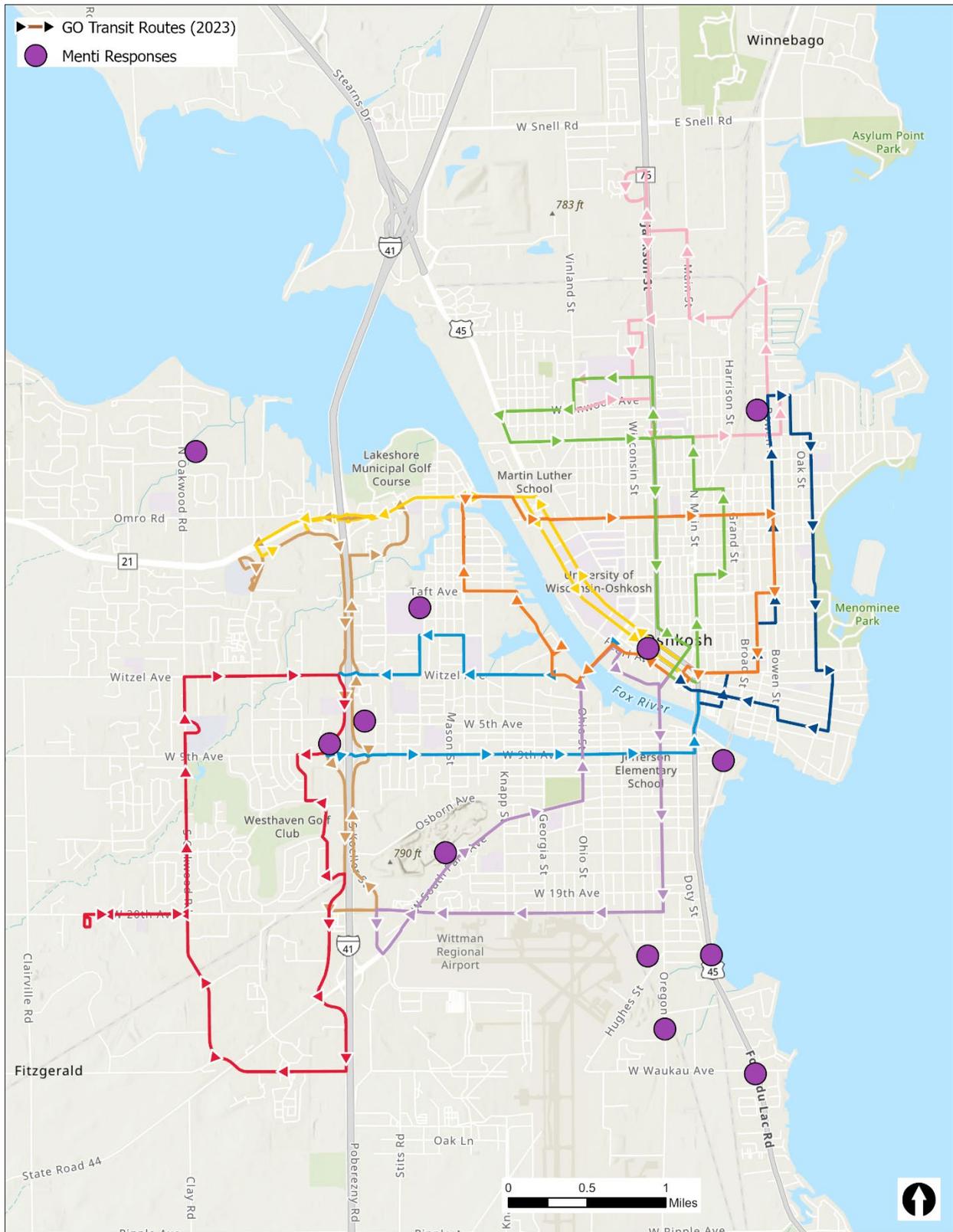


### WHAT'S NEXT FOR GO TRANSIT

The final section of the polling questions had committee members look ahead and think more about specific priorities and service area scenarios.

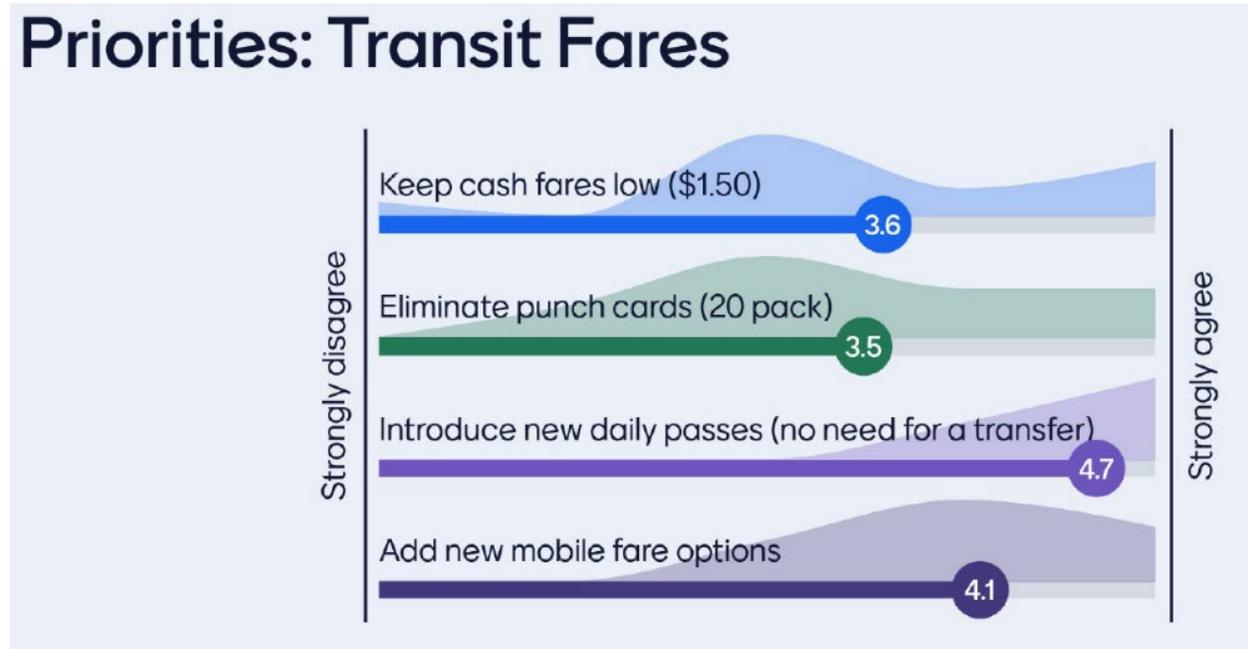
The first question presented members with a map (Figure 67) and asked to place a marker on the map where they would add more service (respondents could only choose one spot). Most locations were on the west side of the river either near retail and services off I-41, the DMV, and the industrial park south of the city.

Figure 67. Locations for Added Service



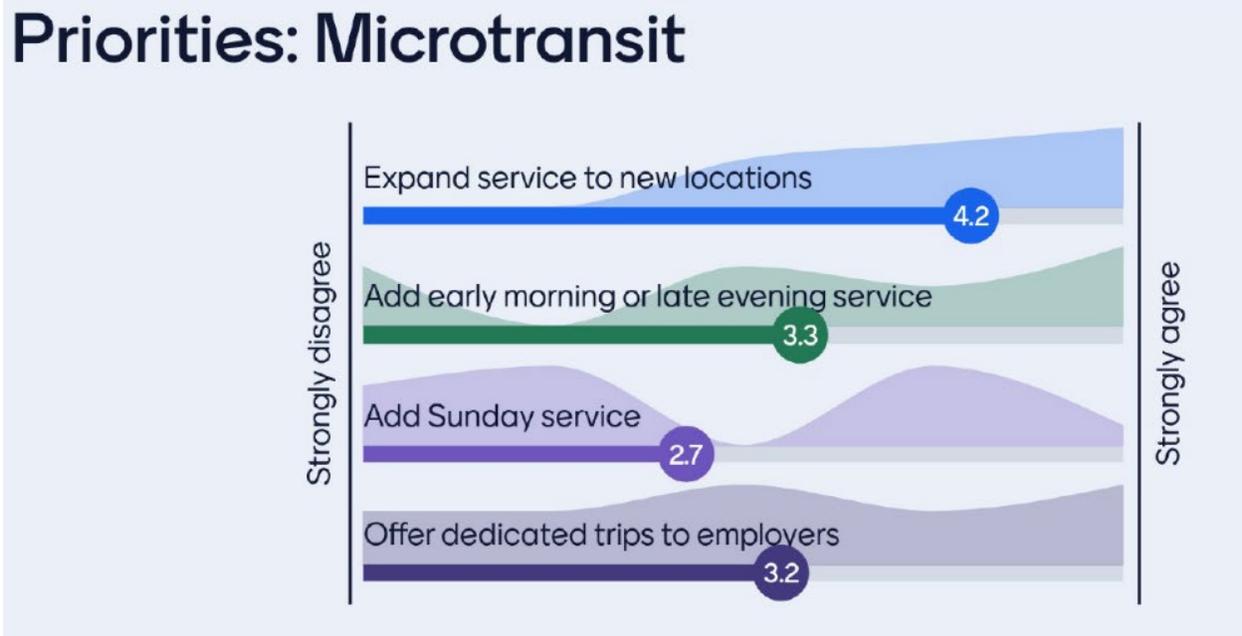
Questions two and three presented alternatives for addressing issues that had previously been identified and asked members to assess their level of agreement with each potential strategy for addressing the issues on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The first question revolved around transit fares, as shown in Figure 68. Members generally agreed or were neutral with each of the strategies. Most supported introducing daily passes and adding mobile fare options.

Figure 68. Transit Fare Strategies



The second question addressed needs that potential microtransit service could be used to address. As shown in Figure 69 below, most members supported using microtransit to expand service to new locations (which was also a high priority in the trade-off section). Responses were split but generally supportive for using microtransit to add service hours and dedicate service for employers, and responses were most polarized for using microtransit to add Sunday service.

Figure 69. Microtransit Strategies



Finally, the polling section of the presentation was wrapped up with a question that asked members what questions they would like the study to answer. The open-ended responses are listed below. There were no votes on these open-ended questions.

- How Microtransit could be used to expand service area?
- How can we meet current need and prepare for future transit changes?
- Where are there deficiencies in our current normal daily procedures that could be changed?
- How can we more sustainably fund transit into the future?
- How to expand service area and minimize transfers?
- How to implement renewable bus passes (tap cards)?
- What are potential funding opportunities with public and private collaborators?

## Summary of Engagement Feedback

The engagement opportunities throughout the development of the TDP accomplished the stated project goals of gathering ideas and contributions from stakeholders, riders, and the community, as well as advertising and communicating proposed changes. These groups' input shaped the project and assisted the project team in developing improvements to the GO Transit system.

Combining all outreach activities undertaken as part of the TDP, several key themes emerge that set the stage for future transit system recommendations.

### Core Customers

Survey data indicates that there is a stable base of long-time users that make up a large segment of the community's transit ridership. By and large, these riders report using the system regularly to meet their needs on a daily or weekly basis, and customer satisfaction is high. There is undoubtedly a culture of transit use for at least some of the community. Along with this customer base, GO Transit has a strong core of high-ridership routes that fulfill their intended functions and facilitate the operation of a transit system that runs smoothly and consistently.

### Service Improvement Priorities

While all stakeholder groups have similar ideas of which system improvements should be implemented in an ideal scenario without resource constraints, priorities vary across stakeholder groups. Existing GO Transit users tend to request augmentation of existing service, perhaps influenced by practicality in their daily lives. Changes such as span of service or frequency improvements are most favorable for those who regularly use transit already. In contrast, the broader community consists of more non-transit users or choice riders who may wish for added destinations to increase the appeal of the system. The Steering Committee echoes this sentiment but with an added emphasis on ADA accessibility and employment-related trips to facilitate improved mobility and economic prosperity for the groups they represent.

### Fare Modernization

Engagement with both GO Transit staff and key stakeholder groups revealed a need to reconsider GO Transit's existing fare structure, which does not currently include a day pass, and relies on some outdated fare media such as tokens and punch passes. There are opportunities to minimize operators' functions as cashiers while updating the available fare media to help address operational inefficiencies. Additionally, riders and community members very seldom expressed concerns about the current one-way fare price, as it is relatively low compared to similar nearby agencies. This indicates a potential for a fare increase to reach the "market rate" of a one-way trip in 2024 in tandem with equity measures to lessen such an increase's burden on the most transit-dependent segments of the existing ridership base and of the population as a whole.

**PART IV**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Scenario Framework

Service recommendations were developed in response to GO Transit goals and objectives, partner and public engagement, existing service review, and transit needs assessment. Service recommendations in this section are organized by route or service theme, and assigned one of two implementation scenarios:

- **Near-Term Scenario:** Recommendations which can be implemented relatively quickly (1-2 years), either without the need for significantly more resources or requiring additional investment in operating funding and/or significant capital purchases, such as vehicles.
- **Long-Term Scenario:** Recommendations which would require the hiring of several additional drivers and supervisors, significant investment in operating and/or capital investment, and/or expand the scale and scope of GO Transit. It is likely that outside funding would be necessary to advance these recommendations in place of the short-term options.

Some of the service recommendations can be made independently, while others require changes be made in coordination with those to other routes. Cost estimates are provided for illustrative purposes to inform implementation and prioritization by Oshkosh policymakers and the Transit Commission.

## Assumptions

### OPERATING COSTS

Annual operating expense estimates for existing and proposed services were developed based on a fully allocated cost per revenue hour drawn from 2021 NTD Data, the most recently available data set at the time of the plan's commencement. This cost per revenue hour is \$100.79.

### ANNUAL SERVICE DAYS

All annual operating cost estimates are based on an assumed annual service calendar, shown below.

Day Type	Number of Days per Year
Weekdays (M-F)	255
Saturdays	52
Sundays and Holidays (no service)	58

## Near-Term Scenario

Recommendations to be implemented in the near-term include changes to the structures of specific routes, as well as policy updates such as changes to GO Transit’s fare structure. The report also discusses the GO Connect service in more detail, highlighting opportunities for continued assessment of service performance in the short-term.

### Route-Specific Changes

Changes to GO Transit’s daily route operations are to be undertaken to increase the overall productivity of the system using only existing resources. Wherever possible, proposed changes were predicated on maintaining all existing service with no net loss in coverage, while simultaneously searching for new efficiencies within the system. The following goals were held in mind:

- **New destinations:** Realign routes to serve destinations near existing routes that are currently underserved.
- **Running time optimization:** Adjust schedules to better match current performance and enable greater reliability.
- **Interlining changes:** Change which routes are “paired” to minimize transfers, including routes which transfer either at the downtown Oshkosh Transit Center or at outlying transfer points. Minimize the number of standalone or non-interlined routes.

Each route experiencing any form of adjustment is shown and elaborated upon individually on the following pages, with changes to each route’s configuration and interlining summarized in Table 22 below.

Table 22. Summary of Route-Specific Changes

Route	Alignment / Stop Changes	Interlining - Current	Interlining - Future
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On outbound trip, travel east to Evans on Irving instead of Parkway, covering section previously served by Route 3</li> <li>• Move North Transfer Point from Mallard/Evans to Bowen/Murdock.</li> </ul>	Routes 1/2	Routes 1/4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline northbound trips via Division and Main.</li> <li>• Reverse direction.</li> </ul>	Routes 1/2	Routes 2/8
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tighten loop to primarily operate on the northeast side of the Fox River.</li> <li>• Add service on 6th Ave to serve new ThedaCare hospital at 6th/Oregon.</li> </ul>	None (Standalone route)	None (Standalone route)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend north to serve industrial park at Snell/Main.</li> <li>• Move North Transfer Point from Mallard/Evans to Bowen/Murdock.</li> </ul>	None (Standalone route)	Routes 1/4
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace current Route 3 alignment west of the river.</li> <li>• Move West Transfer Point to Robin Ave.</li> </ul>	Routes 5/7	Routes 5/7
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	Routes 6/8	Routes 6/9
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add route deviation to DMV on Omro Rd.</li> <li>• Move West Transfer Point to Robin Ave.</li> </ul>	Routes 5/7	Routes 5/7
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move inbound trip from Marion Rd. to Pearl Ave.</li> </ul>	Routes 6/8	2/8

### ROUTE 1

The most productive and reliable GO Transit route in terms of ridership and on-time performance, respectively, Route 1 needs only minimal adjustment – there are a couple opportunities to enable it to operate even more effectively within the broader system.

One such tweak involves modifying the outbound portion of the route for a better fit with changes to other routes. By making a right turn onto Irving Avenue rather than continuing its current alignment by making a right turn onto Parkway Avenue, the route can both utilize a slightly wider road and continue serving a block that will be removed from Route 3, as shown later in this section.

Additionally, the North Transfer Point with Route 4 will also be moved. This transfer point is currently located at Mallard Ave. and Evans St. and will be moved to Murdock Ave. and Bowen St. (one block southwest) in front of Edenbrook. Route 1 will also be interlined with Route 4 in conjunction with this change.

Figure 70. Route 1 Changes



## ROUTE 2

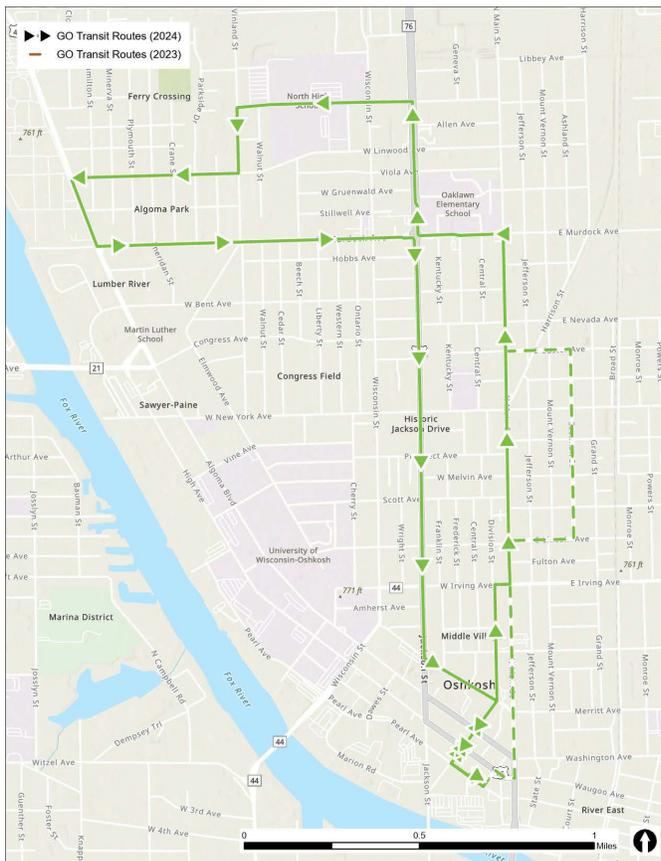
Route 2 is generally high-performing but experiences some issues with schedule adherence on the outbound portion of the route. Drivers have reported difficulties with the left turn after leaving the transit center from Waugoo Avenue to northbound Main Street, and there are also opportunities to simplify the route by establishing a clearer north-south orientation on Main Street.

To address these needs, the project team recommends redirecting the initial northbound movement to Division Street before moving to Main Street north of Irving Avenue. Additionally, eliminating the portion of the route traveling along Eastman St, a residential road, and instead allowing the route to continue northbound through the Main Street commercial area will eliminate extraneous runtime from the front end of the route while providing direct access to new destinations on Main Street.

These changes can be made while retaining all existing coverage of major locations such as Pick & Save and North High School, with replacement service on the eastern end of the old alignment carried out by the realigned Route 3, explained later in the section.

Route 2 is to be interlined with Route 8 (instead of Route 1) to facilitate a one-seat ride between northern Oshkosh and southern Oshkosh.

Figure 71. Route 2 Changes



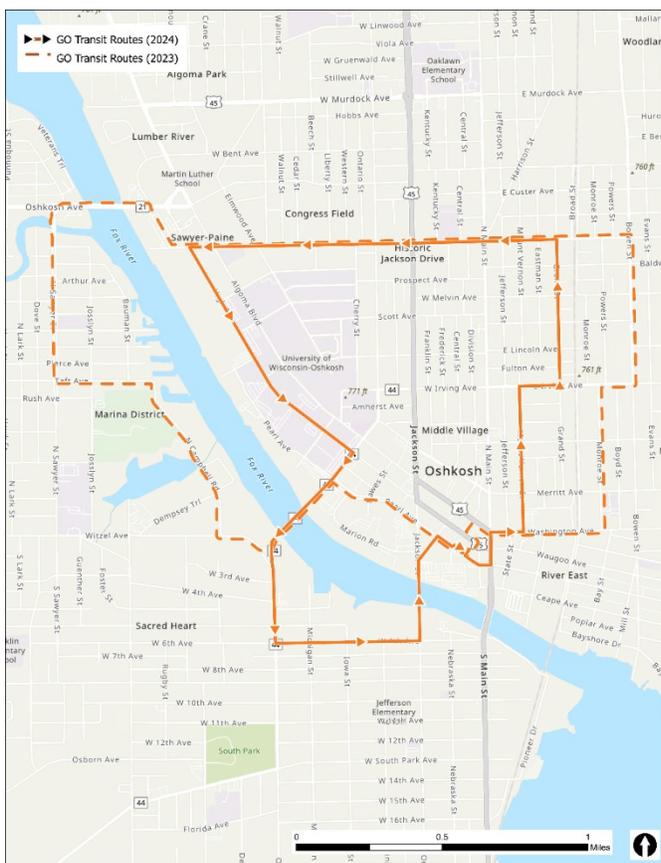
## ROUTE 3

At the outset of the planning process, GO Transit staff identified Route 3 as an opportunity for service improvement. The current alignment intersects with several other routes, but due to the travel direction and the pulse schedule, these intersections are not particularly useful in terms of allowing for transfers. Additionally, the route serves limited destinations while intended to act as a central city circulator.

On-time performance data indicates that Route 3 runs late more often than other routes; however, operators have indicated that there is enough excess runtime in the schedule to justify intentionally running late to the route's stops rather than being excessively early and potentially missing passengers arriving to the stop on-time. This suggests that there is room for the route to add runtime.

The adjusted Route 3 will reverse its direction from clockwise to counterclockwise and to cover a tighter loop via Mt. Vernon St., Grand St., High St., and 6th Ave. By moving most of the route to the north and east of the Fox River, the loop can provide more utility to riders aiming to get around that specific area. The new portion to the south and west of the Fox River will serve a new ThedaCare micro-hospital, while the Campbell Rd. service lost because of these changes will be replaced with adjustments to Route 5. The lost eastern portion of the route is currently served adequately by Route 1.

Figure 72. Route 3 Changes



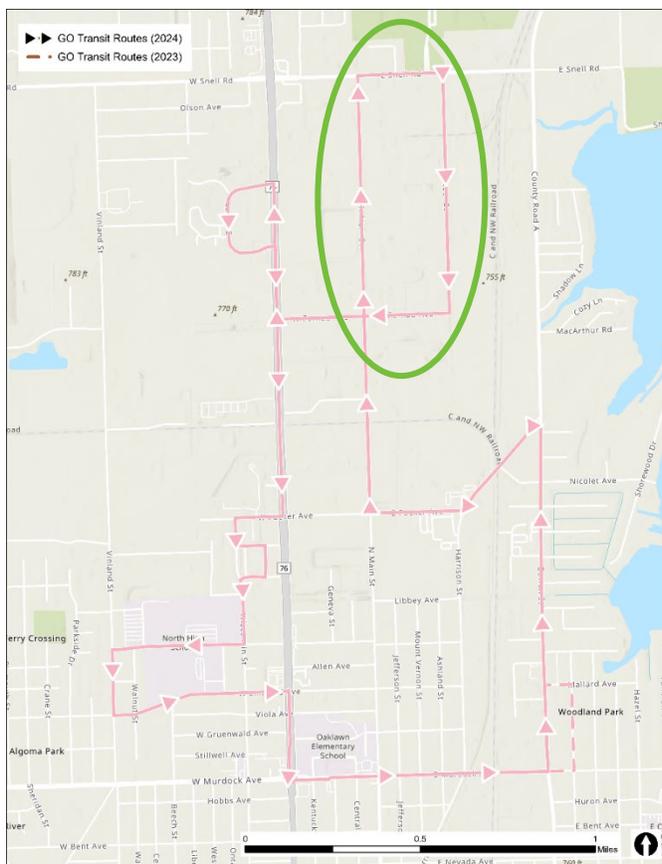
## ROUTE 4

Route 4 presents opportunities for geographic expansion. The northern end of Oshkosh is generally underserved by the current GO Transit fixed-route system, as the April 2023 suspension of the Route 10 connecting Oshkosh to Neenah has left a gap in fixed-route service. Additionally, development patterns in northern Oshkosh are inconsistent, and in some areas, land uses are not as conducive to fixed-route transit as those in other areas of the city. Nevertheless, there are thousands of jobs in this area that are not currently transit-accessible, and Route 4 presents an opportunity to remedy this access issue, as it is underperforming in the broader context of the GO Transit system.

The recommended two changes to Route 4 are shown in Figure 72. First, a new loop at the northern end of the route using Main St., Snell Rd., Moser St., and Fernau Ave. (circled) will serve an industrial park with major employers such as Amcor and UPS. This area of Oshkosh was designated as a Transit-Supportive Area in the Needs Assessment section of this document.

The second change to Route 4 is the location of the North Transfer Point, as outlined earlier in the description of Route 1 changes.

Figure 73. Route 4 Changes



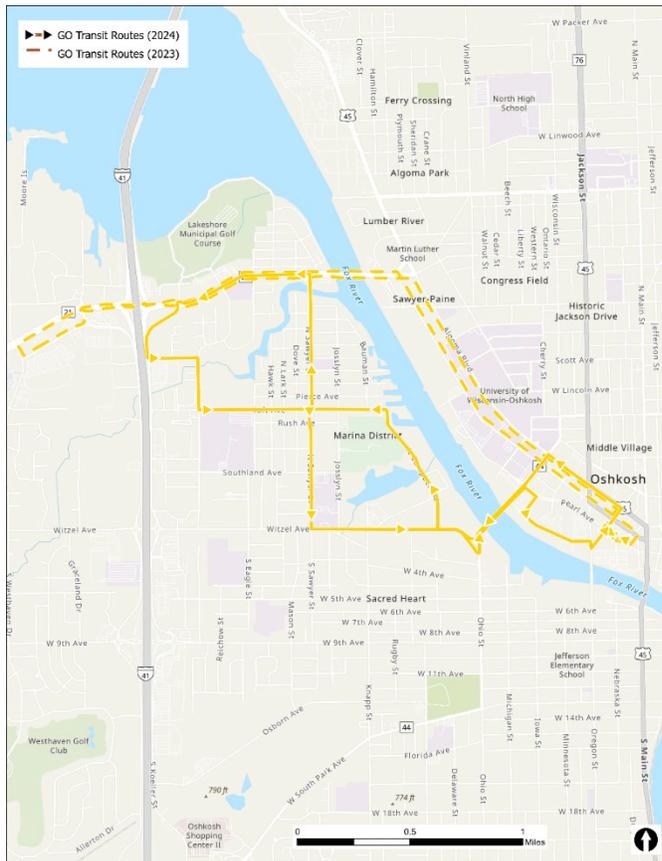
## ROUTE 5

Changes to Route 5 are intended to complement changes to Route 3. The future outbound Route 5 alignment was developed to replace the segment of the current Route 3 alignment that will be removed, so the Route 5 will now serve Oshkosh Seniors Center, Fox Valley Technical College, and West High School. In addition, moving Route 5 away from its current alignment on High Ave. to the east of the Fox River does not result in any substantial loss in service due to the future Route 3 now using that segment.

Included with these changes is the relocation of the West Transfer Point to Robin Avenue east of I-41, where transfers with Route 7 will be available. Moving the transfer point will enable Route 5 to serve more of the city east of I-41 without being short for time. These two routes will be interlined.

On the inbound portion of the trip, the future Route 5 will take a slightly less direct route back to the Transit Center; rather than using Pearl Ave., the route will turn onto Marion Rd. to complete the trip. This change was made to alleviate pressure on Route 8, explained later in this section.

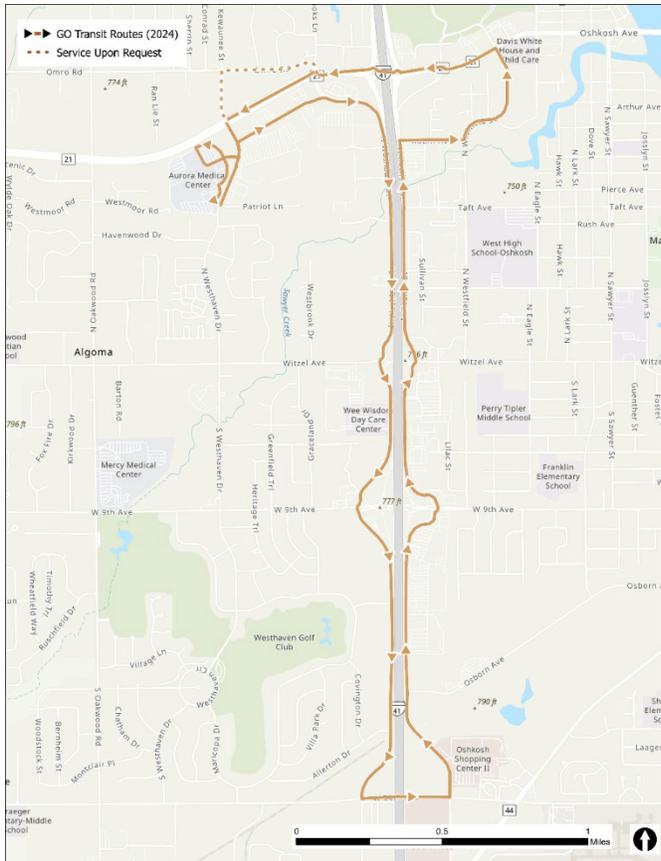
Figure 74. Route 5 Changes



## ROUTE 7

Route 7 performs moderately well, so no significant changes are planned outside of the relocation of the West Transfer Point and interlining with Route 5. However, serving the DMV on Omro Rd. was highlighted as a priority for the TDP. As this is not a regular day-to-day destination for riders, GO Transit is able to provide access to the facility upon request. Passengers will be able to ask drivers to deviate from the regular fixed route to access this destination directly (on-site rather than at a stop on Omro Rd.).

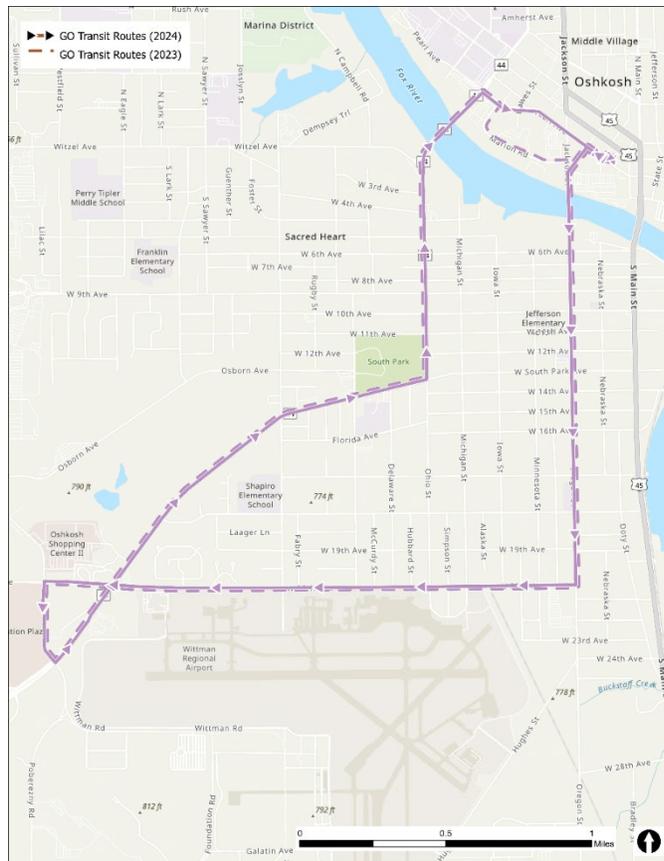
Figure 75. Route 7 Changes



## ROUTE 8

Changes to Route 8 are also minor, as the route performs well. However, there are slight issues with on-time performance on the inbound portion of the trip near downtown Oshkosh, where the route alignment turns off Pearl Ave. and onto Marion Rd. to serve one additional stop. This segment will be reassigned to Route 5, which has slightly more schedule slack at this point in the run, to ensure that Route 8 can arrive to the Transit Center in a timely manner.

Figure 76. Route 8 Changes



## SUMMARY OF ROUTE CHANGES

Figure 76 shows the proposed future system for implementation in 2024. The proposed route network maintains coverage of key population groups, while expanding service to new destinations, as shown in Table 23. Figure 77 and Figure 78 compare the changes in geographic coverage, including coverage of transit-supportive areas in Oshkosh.

Table 23. Summary of Coverage Changes (within 1/4 mile of proposed routes)

Coverage Maintained	Coverage Expanded
Zero-Car Households (5% of all residents served)	Total Employment (+2,000 new jobs served)
Low-Income Population (10% of all residents served)	Transit-Supportive Areas (>80% now served)
BIPOC / Minority Population (10% of residents served)	
Existing Ridership (100% of existing ridership covered)	

Figure 77. Recommended Future System (2024)

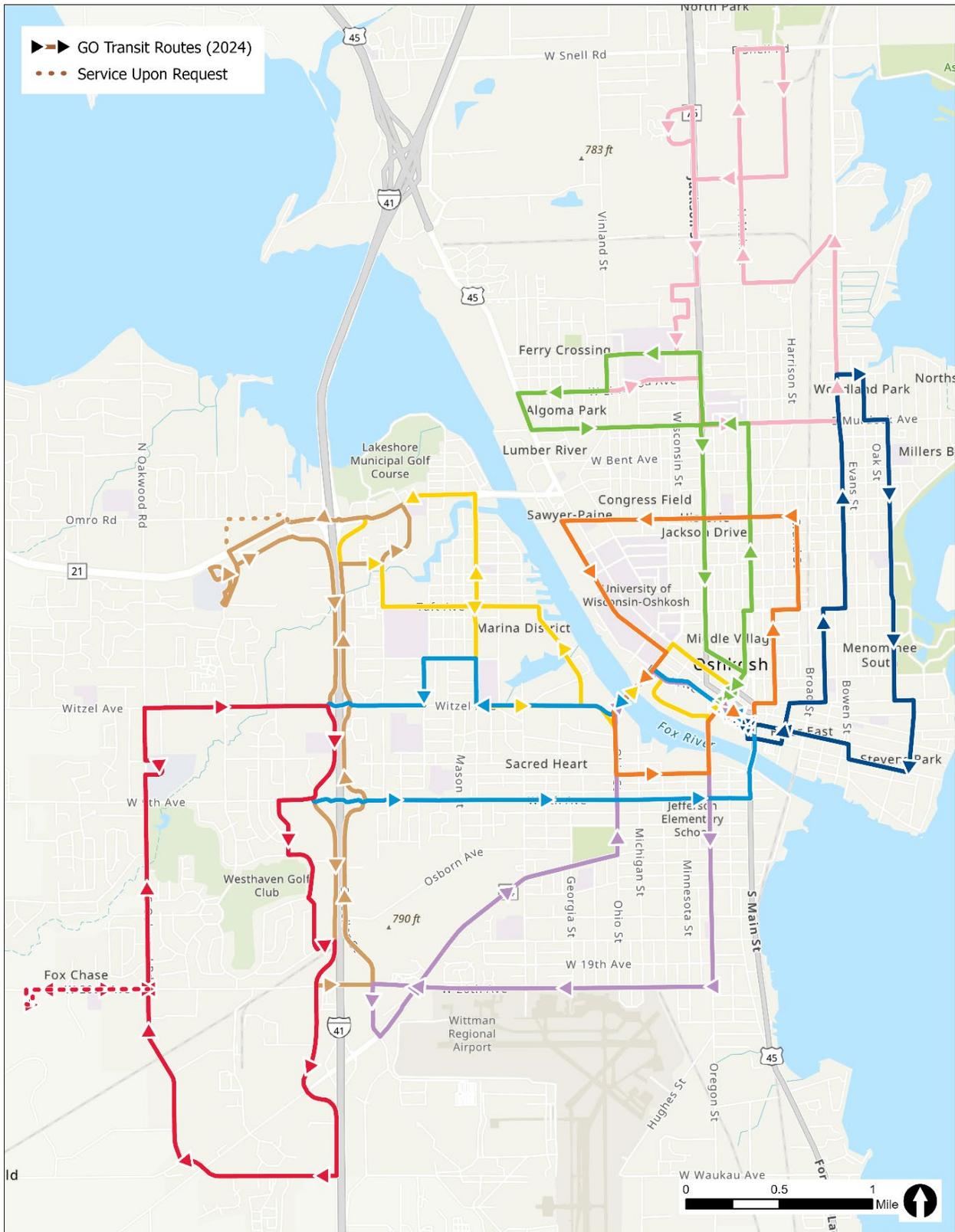


Figure 78. Current Transit-Supportive Area Coverage

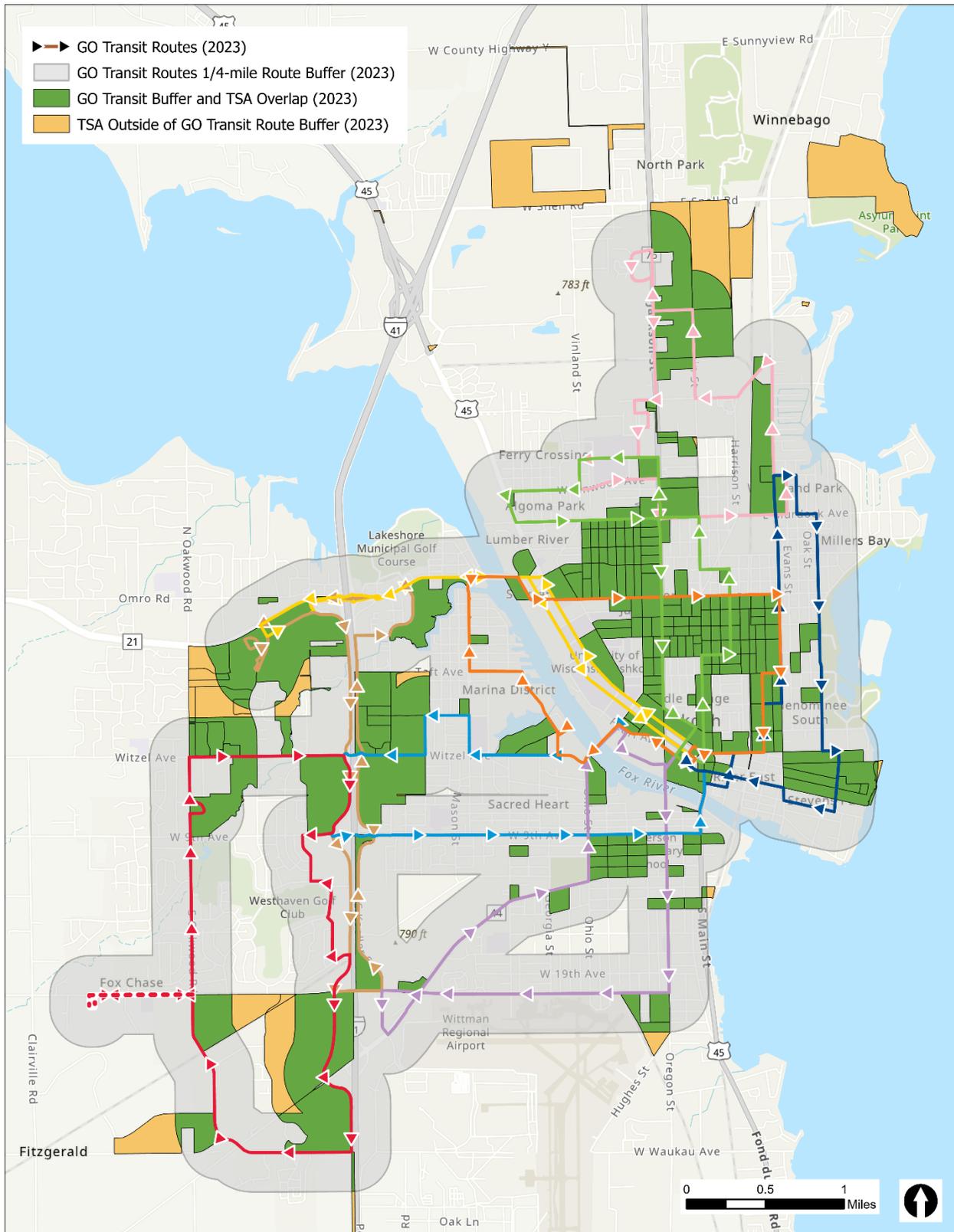
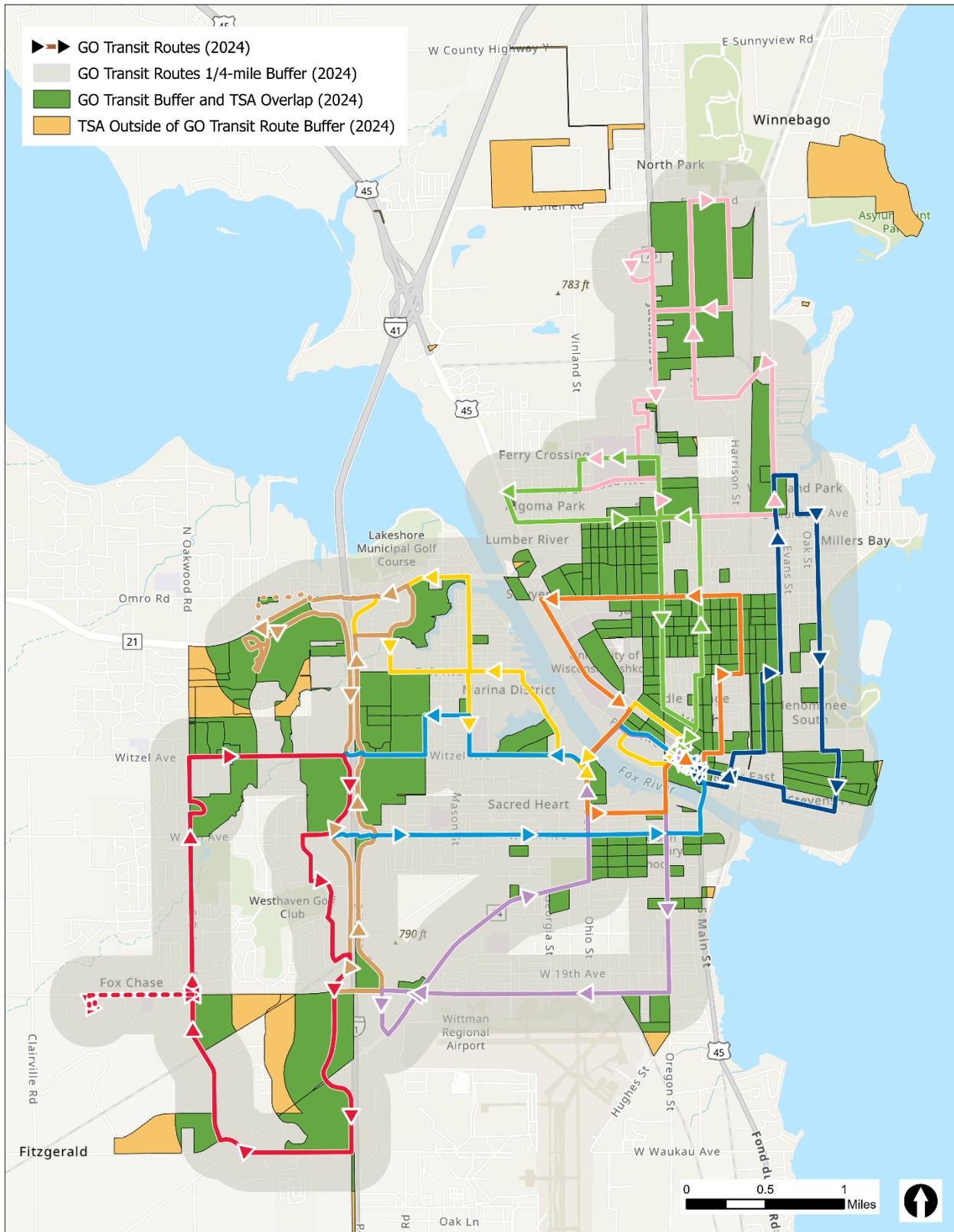


Figure 79. Future Transit-Supportive Area Coverage



## Policy Recommendations

### FARE POLICY

Passenger fares are a significant portion of any transit agency's operating budget, including GO Transit's. Fare policy, fare levels, and fare collection technology are important to consider when determining a strategic direction for a transit agency.

For decades, GO Transit has maintained a low-fare system, consistently offering more affordable rides than peer agencies. Despite a one-way fare increase to \$1.50 in the last TDP (implemented in 2019), GO Transit's fares at each level are still relatively low compared to agencies of similar sizes throughout Wisconsin, particularly those of its closest neighbors: Fond du Lac Area Transit to the south and Valley Transit to the north. Table 23 lists these peer agencies' fares in ascending order by one-way fare, with neighboring agencies highlighted. This data sample indicates that GO Transit continues to undercharge for fixed-route service relative to peers, and to keep up with increasing costs of providing service, it is justifiable to implement a fare increase.

Table 24. Peer Agency Fare Profile

Agency	Location	One-Way Fare	Day Pass	Monthly Pass
Janesville Transit System	Janesville	\$1.50	\$4.00	\$52.00
MTU	La Crosse	\$1.50	--	\$35.00
Eau Claire Transit	Eau Claire	\$1.75	\$3.75	\$50.00
Shoreline Metro	Sheboygan	\$1.75*	\$3.00	\$48.00
Metro Ride	Wausau	\$1.75	--	\$42.00
Fond du Lac Area Transit	Fond du Lac	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$40.00
Kenosha Transit	Kenosha	\$2.00	--	\$60.00
RYDE	Racine	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$65.00
Valley Transit	Appleton	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$60.00
Green Bay Metro	Green Bay	\$2.00*	\$4.00	\$39.00
	<b>Peer Average</b>	<b>\$1.81</b>	<b>\$3.96</b>	<b>\$49.10</b>
GO Transit	Oshkosh	\$1.50	--	\$35.00

\*Fare does not include a free transfer.

In accordance with approval from the project Steering Committee, the City of Oshkosh Transportation Committee, and a public hearing, GO Transit has elected to make the following changes to various fare payment options:

- **One-Way Fare:** Increase from \$1.50 to \$2.00
- **Day Pass:** Introduce new payment option at \$4.00, two times the one-way fare
- **Monthly Pass:** Increase from \$35 to \$40
- **Quarterly Pass:** Offer three monthly passes for a discounted rate of \$105

Other changes to the fare payment system are as follows:

- **Punch Cards:** Eliminate and replace with the day pass
- **Tokens:** Switch from tokens to paper vouchers for healthcare or social service agency fares
- **Transfers:** Retain free transfers for one-day trips
- **Fare Capping:** Explore as part of ongoing fare system procurement process

## CONSIDERATIONS

It is generally understood that changes to fare levels affect ridership, and those changes are most acutely felt by those individuals for whom transit fares are a significant financial burden. In other words, a fare increase can be associated with a decline in ridership, whereas a fare decrease can increase ridership. An industry general guideline is that transit ridership will often increase by 0.3 percent for every 1.0 percent decrease in fares over their previous level (and vice versa). For planning level estimates this is acceptable; however, when looking at specific user groups, it is important to be mindful of the following outcomes of transit fare changes:

- Rider groups that are least sensitive to fare changes tend to be “traditional” commuters traveling to core areas of cities.
- Demand is most sensitive to price at off-peak times, for short trips, in relatively affluent markets, and places without much traffic congestion.
- Ridership loss due to fare increases affects travel behaviors of people with lower incomes more so than more affluent passengers.
- The quality of transit service and the cost of automobile travel and ownership is a much more significant factor when determining transit ridership in comparison to fare changes.

To continue to facilitate the provision of service for low-income riders or those who may be disproportionately burdened by the fare increases, GO Transit has taken several measures (both independently and in response to public feedback) to minimize the financial disruption caused by this policy change.

The new fare structure is set up to reduce the cost burden of transit on regular riders who may rely on GO Transit’s services by offering significant quantity discounts. These discounts incentivize frequent transit usage and help make it more affordable for riders to rely on GO Transit as their primary means of transportation. Key quantity discounts include the following:

- **Day Pass:** The introduction of a day pass will enable riders to make multiple trips throughout the day at a price equivalent to two single-ride tickets. Under this policy, any ride beyond the second per day is effectively free, allowing customers to use transit for more types of trips without additional cost. The day pass is priced at \$4.00, which is the average rate among peer agencies.
- **Monthly Pass:** Monthly pass rates receive a smaller fare increase than single-ride tickets. One-way fare will increase 33%, the one-month pass is set to increase only 14%. The cost of a monthly pass relative to single-ride tickets will decrease, with the monthly pass serving as the most affordable option for any customer making at least 20 monthly trips (down from 24). This quantity discount is even more pronounced with the \$15.00 discount for the purchase of three one-month passes (a quarterly pass). The quarterly pass discount will be maintained by GO Transit in response to public input.
- Add 3 Month Pass paragraph - \$15 discount over buying 3 individual monthly passes

Future fare technology improvements will enable more flexible fare discount options, including the following:

- **Fare Capping:** Fare capping uses technology to ensure that a rider does not pay more than the minimum amount required under the fare structure to complete their rides over a given time period. This may be especially useful in instances where an individual may wish to use GO Transit throughout the month but is not willing or able to pay \$40 as a lump sum – fare capping would prevent this individual from exceeding \$40 of fare payments in the span of the month. Currently, GO Transit does not currently have access to the technology necessary to make this possible system-wide, though it will be explored as part of the ongoing fare system procurement process.

## GO CONNECT

Winnebago County and GO Transit have renewed the GO Connect pilot program contract, extending its operation to at least the end of March 2025. While the service maintains the primary purpose of the former Route 10 in connecting Oshkosh with Neenah, ridership on GO Connect service to Neenah has been low. Additionally, the discontinuation of Route 10 has left a gap in service to destinations *between* the two cities, especially to the Winnebago County Correctional Center, County Jail, and Wisconsin Resource Center, as well as other county facilities. GO Transit should continue to work with Winnebago County to evaluate service performance and explore adding more destinations.

Other improvements can also be evaluated relating to operations, technology, and coordination with other services in the region. Coordination and resource-sharing with other services such as paratransit and potential future Microtransit service will help to leverage efficiencies in dispatch and fleet management. Riders can be directed to the service that best suits their needs.

## Long-Term Scenario

The near-term recommendations described above are meant to address needs that GO Transit may wish or need to address immediately. Based on the findings of this study, these needs may evolve in the future and create a need for expanded services. This section outlines strategies to address potential expanded service needs through fixed-route service expansion and by adding a microtransit program.

### Fixed-Route Service Options

Using fixed-route service, GO Transit could enhance services to meet growing or changing needs in one of three ways: expanding geographic coverage by adding a line, expanding service hours in the evening, or by increasing frequency of service on the system's most productive routes. This section describes each option in further detail including a rough estimate of resources needed to achieve them.

#### EXPAND GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE (NEW FIXED ROUTE)

The first fixed-route enhancement option for GO Transit is the expansion of coverage with the introduction of a new route. The new Route 11, shown in Figure 79, would extend fixed-route service southward, providing access to the industrial parks situated near Wittman Regional Airport, reaching as far south as 35th Avenue. This route alternative would provide primarily bidirectional service, traveling most of its extent on Oregon Street, before completing a small loop using Waukau Avenue, Medalist Drive, and 34th Avenue. This extension would replace the existing Route 8 service on Main Street beyond South Park Avenue. This change would allow Route 8 to be rerouted onto South Park Avenue, which has been identified as an area that would benefit from added service. The revised route for Route 8 would then proceed from South Park Avenue to 24th Avenue via Ohio Street. The new Route 11 schedules could be tailored to accommodate shift times effectively, enhancing accessibility and convenience for commuters to and from the industrial park.

Adding one additional all-day route would cost **1** additional bus and **12** additional revenue hours per day. Annual resource requirements are as follows:

On average there are **255** service days (non-holiday weekdays)

255 service days \* 12 additional revenue hours/day = **3,060** additional revenue hours per year

GO Transit's 2021 operating expense per revenue hour was **\$100.79**

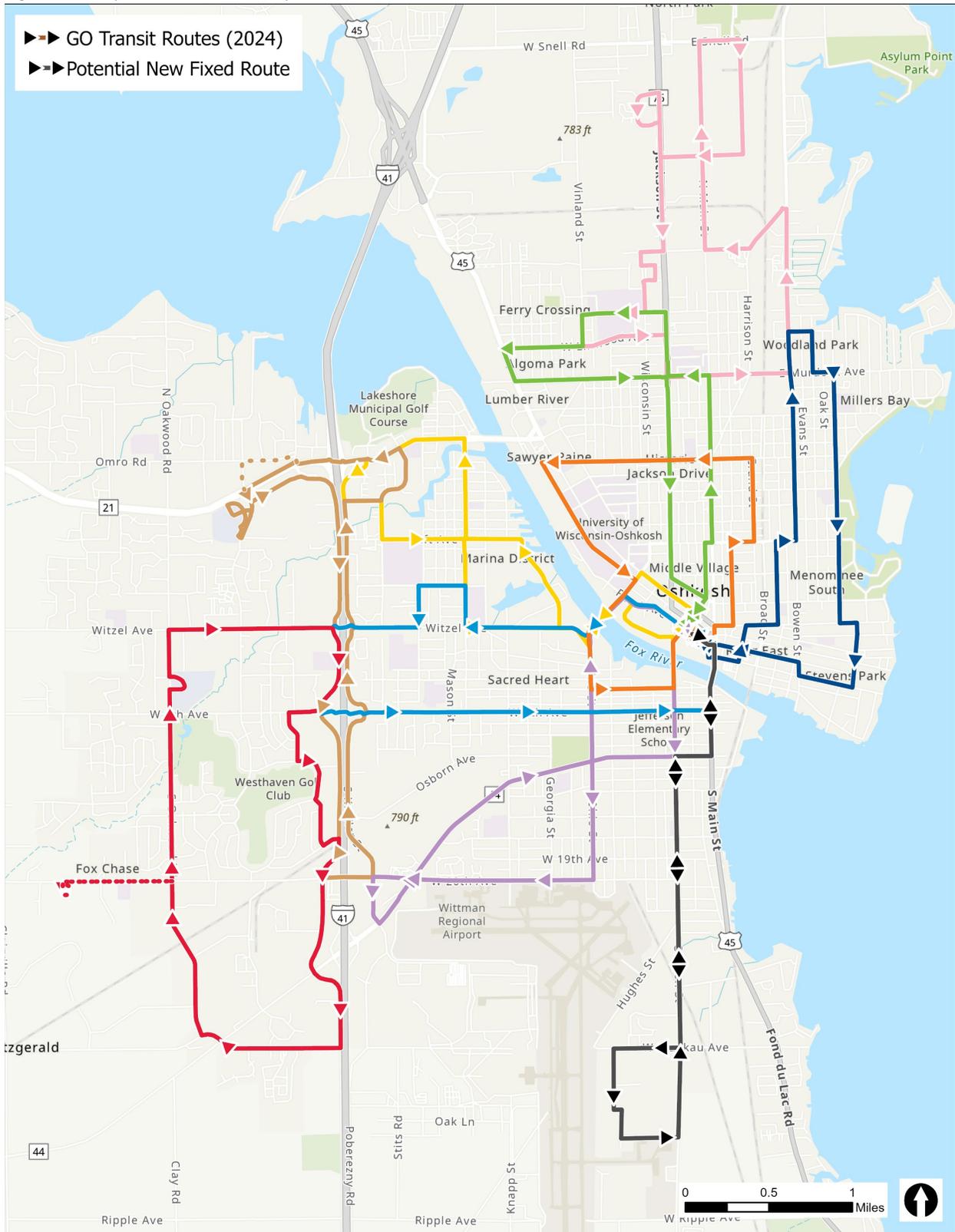
**Operating expense per revenue hour \* additional hours/year = \$100.79 \* 3,060 = \$308,417**

**Added annual operating cost = \$308,417**

Cost of an additional bus (**\$500,000**) \* **1 bus** = **\$500,000**

**One-time capital cost = \$500,000**

Figure 80. Proposed Fixed-Route Expansion



## EXTEND SPAN (EVENING SERVICE)

The second fixed-route long-term service enhancement option is to expand the span of the service schedule later in the evening on weekdays. Currently, fixed-route service ends at 6:45p.m. Extending service hours was one of the top-ranked potential improvements in the community survey. In the rider survey, it was ranked as the #1 priority over all the listed improvement options. Service hours could be extended on any or all routes for as many hours as is feasible. A cost estimation is provided below for a scenario in which all nine routes are extended four hours to 10:45p.m. on weekdays. The scenario assumes no change in frequency for these hours.

Adding four hours of additional service on each route would cost **0** additional buses and **36** additional revenue hours per day. Annual resource requirements are as follows:

255 service days \* 36 additional revenue hours/day = **9,180** additional revenue hours per year

GO Transit's 2021 operating expense per revenue hour was **\$100.79**

**Operating expense per revenue hour \* additional hour/year = \$100.79 \* 9,180 = \$925,252**

**Added annual operating cost = \$925,252**

The cost for expanding service hour span could be more modest if pursued strategically. If GO Transit were to provide evening service on routes that are more likely to have evening ridership (routes that serve UW-Oshkosh, employers known to operate evening shifts, or popular leisure destinations, for example), the cost of providing four hours of evening service *per route* would be approximately \$102,806.

## SERVICE FREQUENCY

The third strategy for enhancing fixed-route service in the long-term is to increase service frequency on existing routes. Increased service frequency was ranked the number one priority for improvements the second most times in the rider survey (after evening service). Like service hour extensions, frequency increases could be applied to all or some of the most productive routes. The cost estimation below is for a scenario where the four most productive routes (1, 2, 6, and 8) are increased to 15-minute headways.

Doubling frequency on four routes would cost **four** additional buses and **48** revenue hours per day. Annual resource requirements are as follows:

255 service days \* 48 additional revenue hours/day = **12,240** additional revenue hours per year

Operating expense per revenue hour \* additional hours/year = \$100.79 \* 12,240 = **\$1,233,670**

**Added annual operating cost = \$1,233,670**

Cost of an additional bus (**\$500,000**) \* **4 buses** = **\$2,000,000**

**One-time capital cost = \$2,000,000**

## Microtransit Service Expansion Options

GO Transit can also pursue long-term service expansion and service improvements by implementing microtransit service. GO Transit has historically provided only fixed-route service to the general public (and Go Connect as a replacement for Route 10 service), and this mode has been the primary focus of the TDP. However, many transit agencies have taken advantage of technological advances to pilot a new generation of demand-response service for the general public known as microtransit or flex zone service. Microtransit uses smaller vehicles to circulate throughout a defined geographical zone, doing pickups and drop-offs at more locations than fixed-route service can serve.

### BACKGROUND

Microtransit passengers typically book trips via a dedicated smartphone application or by calling a customer service line as needed. At the time of booking, a dynamic routing system matches riders traveling in similar directions and assigns them to a shared vehicle, with the goal of offering a truly on-demand experience (no advance reservations needed). Upon reserving a trip, the smartphone application would provide the customer with an estimated pickup and drop-off time. The pickup and/or drop-off locations may include a short walk to ensure an efficient routing for all passengers onboard the vehicle. A smartphone or tablet device onboard each microtransit vehicle would provide turn-by-turn directions for the driver, as well as real-time location information viewable by passengers as the vehicle approaches.

Microtransit services typically operate within a dedicated service area, with transfers to fixed bus routes available at specific locations within the zone. These transfer points enable microtransit to function as an extension of the fixed-route transit network, offering passengers the ability to use microtransit for first- and last-mile trips. Microtransit is typically offered in addition to traditional ADA paratransit, which remains available for advance reservations by eligible customers within the service area.

Like any mode of public transportation, services and software can be purchased or operated internally based on the agency's needs. There are four typical partnership models:

**Software Only** - Agency provides staff. Private sector partner provides software for scheduling to be used by riders and operators. Works well when agency has existing access to vehicles and staff

**Provide Vehicles and Software** - Agency hires and manages operators and administrative staff. Private partner provides vehicles and software. Works well when agency has access to operators but not Microtransit vehicles.

**Provide Operators and Software** - Agency owns or purchases vehicles separately. Private partner provides operating staff and software and data management. Works well if agency has access to vehicles but not enough operating staff.

**Turnkey** - Private partner provides all staff, vehicles, and software and operates within parameters agreed upon with the local agency/government. Works best if agency has not invested in shared use mobility yet.

## MICROTRANSIT EXAMPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

Microtransit, or technologically sophisticated demand-response service for the general public, has been piloted by many transit agencies in the United States. This service uses smaller vehicles to circulate through a defined zone, doing on-demand pickups and dropoffs at more locations than fixed-route service can serve. A typical microtransit system serves one to three passengers per hour, with some serving up to five per hour.

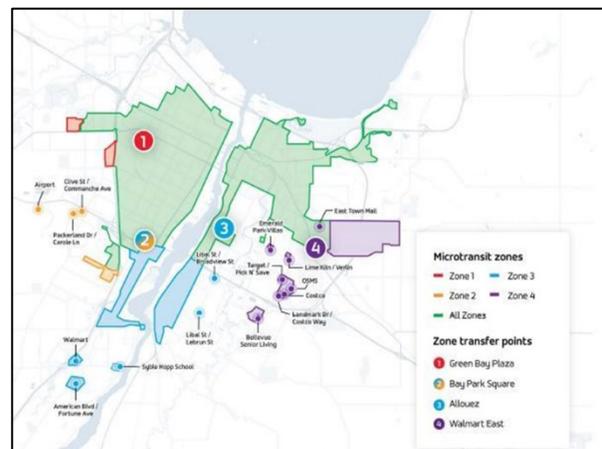
From a planning perspective, the advantage of demand-response service is that vehicles travel only where they are needed, when they are needed. From a rider's perspective, the benefits include flexibility in timing and, potentially, a more direct route from origin to destination. The disadvantage is that both the agency and its customers need to understand this new mode, which differs in significant ways from fixed route.

### GBM ON DEMAND (GREEN BAY, WI)

Green Bay Metro (GBM) On Demand service facilitates travel both within and between zones, (shown in ) improving connectivity throughout to major destinations and transfer points within the transit network. The system's software is provided and maintained by Via – a microtransit technology and service vendor using a mix between a "Software Only" and "Provide Vehicles and Software" model. Via also manages GBM's paratransit service, using a shared fleet model between microtransit and paratransit for resource utilization and service coverage.

Source: Green Bay Metro

Figure 81. GBM On Demand Zone Map

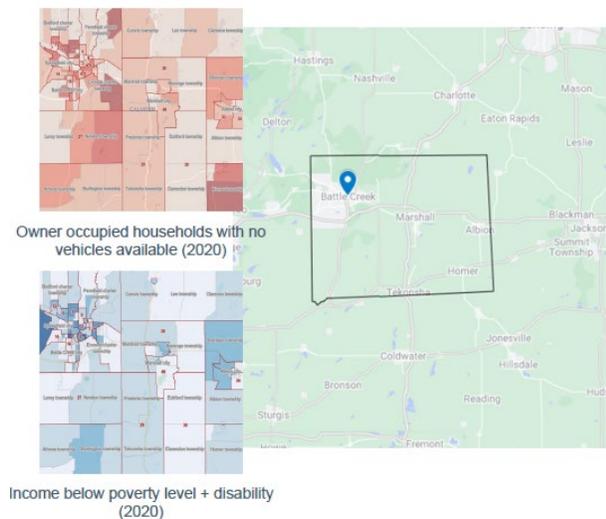


### BCGO (BATTLE CREEK, MI)

BCGo microtransit service in Battle Creek, MI, was an initiative catalyzed by a comprehensive study that identified inadequacies of existing services in meeting the county-wide demand for transit. Battle Creek Transit partnered with collaborating agencies, and LiftandGo software, to pilot a microtransit program called BCGo that could serve all of Calhoun County (Figure 81). Initially launched as a 12-month pilot in 2021, the program's success prompted an extension and continuous expansion, marking its ongoing growth. BCGo's evolution demonstrates the role microtransit service can play in enhancing accessibility and filling critical gaps for transit systems.

Source: Battle Creek Transit

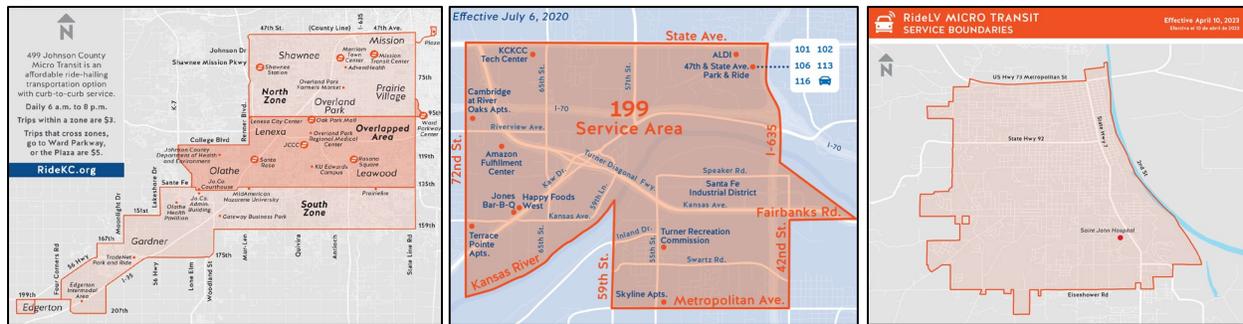
Figure 82. BCGo Service Area and Demographics



## RIDEKC

RideKC microtransit service in Kansas City serves microtransit zones across Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas. Between 2016 and 2017, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) partnered with microtransit vendor Bridj to pioneer a microtransit pilot program called RideKC. The program was discontinued due to underperformance. In 2019, KCATA revamped its approach, partnering with TransLoc, (another vendor) to launch a revised initiative that prioritized extensive public outreach and embraced a more flexible model, departing from fixed routes microtransit service and introducing zones for riders' travel flexibility. Presently, the RideKC service spans Microtransit zones across Johnson and Wyandotte counties, utilizing TransLoc's software, while the City of Leavenworth (RideLV) benefits from local operation supported by KCATA Figure 82). This multi-county and city collaboration demonstrates that appropriate service can take refinement and input from stakeholders.

Figure 83. RideKC (and Ride LV) Service Area Zones

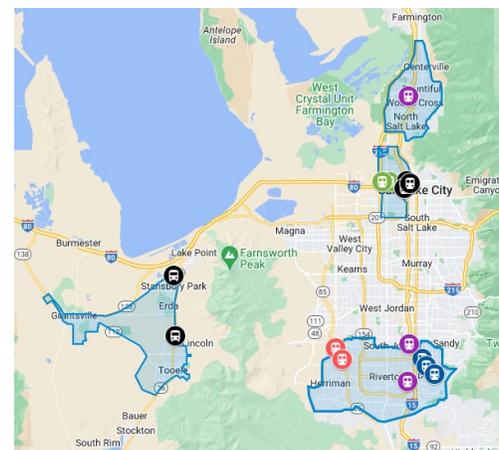


Source: KCATA

## UTA ON DEMAND

UTA On Demand microtransit service in Salt Lake City, UT, began as a pilot program launched by the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) aimed at improving transit accessibility specifically south of the city, (Figure 83). Their service model blends elements of first/last-mile connectivity and coverage-based transport solutions. Embracing a user-centric approach, the system facilitates shared trips to optimize resources and enhance efficiency for passengers. Like GBM On Demand, UTA On Demand uses Via as a vendor but only as a provider of microtransit software. UTA On Demand spans across multiple counties, serving as an example of microtransit's ability to be used to serve a broader regional population and diverse transportation needs.

Figure 84. UTA On Demand Service Zones

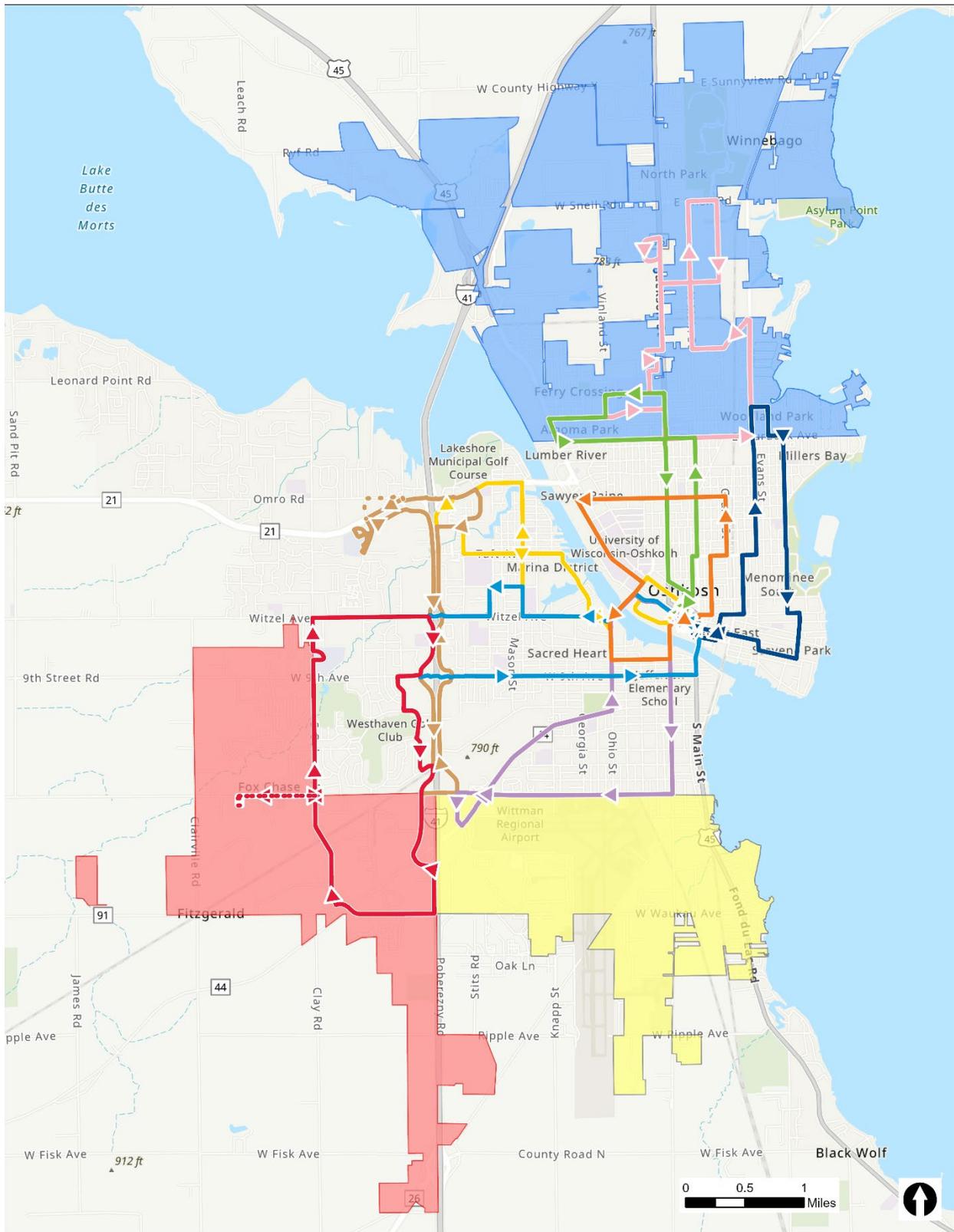


## GO TRANSIT MICROTRANSIT OPTIONS

Three possible microtransit zones are shown in Figure 84. The blue, red, and yellow shaded areas indicate a zone in which trips would need to start and end. The zones would include transfer locations with existing routes. The use of these zones effectively extends GO Transit's existing service that's not served by fixed-route. This scenario assumes the use of one vehicle per zone.

The Blue Zone would cover the Northern industrial park. It would include a transfer at North Transfer Point and have an associated cost of one vehicle operating 12 hours per day. The Red Zone would cover southwest industrial parks and have a transfer at Target and/or Walmart to Route 6. It would also cost an additional vehicle operating for about 12 hours per day. The Yellow Zone would cover southeastern industrial parks and include a transfer point to Route 8. As the area it would cover has been identified as a priority for service expansion, this could serve as an initial test zone for a Microtransit pilot program that GO Transit implement for a year before officially launching a multi-zone program.

Figure 85. Microtransit Flex Zones



**PART V**

**CONCLUSION**

## Conclusion

The 2024-2028 Transit Development Plan summarizes the current conditions of GO Transit, including the existing bus services and unmet needs. Near-term recommendations include actionable route changes, updates to the system's fare structure, and other policy changes that GO Transit plans to implement in August of 2024. Long-term recommendations will require further planning but will allow the agency to provide substantial improvements for transit customers based on the stated priorities of both the agency and the public.

The top improvement priorities identified in this plan as a result of the conducted data analysis, public and stakeholder engagement, and range of service planning activities include the following:

- **Provision of transit service during evening and weekend hours.** This need is supported by comments expressed in the rider and community surveys, as well as stakeholder engagement.
- **Service area expansion.** Agency staff, stakeholders, and community members have indicated a need for additional geographic coverage to facilitate ridership growth and access to new destinations. Both fixed-route and microtransit services are potential options to fulfill this need.
- **Enhanced service frequency.** Riders expressed that aside from extending the span of service, increasing service frequency is their most desired system improvement. Engagement efforts revealed that there may be a greater emphasis on enhancing existing service than providing new service.

By implementing the recommendations of this plan, GO Transit will continue to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources invested in fixed-route transit. In the long term, planning for fixed-route and/or microtransit service expansion will position the agency to attract and retain riders as the transportation environment continues to evolve. Leveraging the stakeholder relationships developed as part of the 2024-2028 Transit Development Plan, GO Transit will move forward to improve transit access for riders and the community.