



# Comprehensive Transit Study

## September 2025 Update

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# Acknowledgments

### City Council

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Barbara Buffaloe, Mayor | Nick Foster     |
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| Roy Lovelady            |                 |

### Public Transit Advisory Commission

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Matt Wright, Chair | Donald Jackson      |
| Sarah Johnson      | Joy Rushing         |
| Dawn Zeterberg     | Jack Russell        |
| Tammy Teel         | Joan Ferguson       |
| Katharine Meagher  | Randal Meyer        |
| Adam Thorp         | Christine Schneider |
| Gabi Jacobs        |                     |

### City Staff

- De'Carlton Seewood, City Manager
- Shane Creech, Public Works Director
- Mike Sokoff, Transit and Parking Manager
- Shannon Hemenway, Transportation Supervisor
- Adnan Halilovic, Transportation Supervisor
- John Ogan, Public Information Specialist

### Consultant

**olsson**<sup>®</sup>



# Executive Summary



## Plan Purpose

The City of Columbia initiated the Comprehensive Transit Study to evaluate opportunities and needs for improving Go COMO transit services. Goals of the study include:

- Determine ways to increase transit service and ridership.
- Evaluate funding mechanisms and partnership opportunities.
- Conduct a comprehensive operations analysis to identify ways to improve service efficiency, technology, staffing, facilities, and other aspects of transit operations.
- Through community engagement, determine goals for public transit, and metrics to track progress toward these goals over time.
- Review policies and opportunities for transit-oriented development and integration with other modes of transportation, both locally and regionally.
- Address the potential for flexible on-demand (micro-transit) services, as a potential method for growing service

## Plan Process

The planning process combined community input--via open house meetings, surveys, and online forums--with technical review tasks to develop plans to improve existing routes and expand services in the future. The sections of this study are each an overview of the process and outcomes:

1. A **Market Analysis** including demographic and transportation data, planning background, and peer agency review
2. An **Operations Analysis** to evaluate the existing conditions and performance of existing transit services.
3. A **Goal Setting & Strategies** process to create a vision for transit, review service concepts, and identify key strategies.
4. **Service Recommendations** that outline multiple phases of specific service improvements.
5. An **Implementation** plan to guide action steps, funding decisions, and staffing needs to enact the transit improvements.

## Community Vision

Developing a community vision, and a plan to realize that vision, requires participation and input from a broad spectrum of residents representing diverse experiences and opinions. Special attention has been given to making sure that existing bus riders have the opportunity to help develop the vision and provide input throughout the project.

### Community Engagement

Public engagement efforts occurred in three specific phases:

- **Phase 1: Discovery** (Fall 2023): Identifying issues, challenges, and ideas for the project team to address during the course of the study.
- **Phase 2: Exploration** (Spring 2024): Evaluating service concepts prepared by the project team, and assisting with prioritization of multiple transit alternatives.
- **Phase 3: Affirmation** (Summer 2024): Reviewing draft recommendations and identifying modifications to enhance the prospects and impact of plan implementation.

Each phase included a **Public Open House Meeting** held at Wabash Bus Station to provide an opportunity for bus riders and the greater community to interact with the project team, provide ideas, and review materials. The City's **Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)** served as the stakeholder committee for the project, providing guidance for the development of materials and interpreting community input.

### Vision Statements

Based on the guidance and feedback received from public and stakeholder events, a series of vision statements was created to guide the study. These vision statements define the goals and objectives of the plan, as determined by those who use or are impacted by the City's transit services. Identifying the vision is critical to the planning process, as it can be referred to as a guide for recommendations and implementation. For each vision statement, a set of strategies provide more specific items to pursue in support of the vision.

#### Vision Statement #1

Focus on recruitment and retention of transit staff needed to operate, maintain, and manage transit services.

#### Vision Statement #2

Meet the needs of riders who need transit services the most.

#### Vision Statement #3

Prioritize near-term actions on improving existing services, through route frequency and service hours.

#### Vision Statement #4

Align long-term transit visioning with community growth and development.

#### Vision Statement #5

Take advantage of opportunities to add county-level and regional services.

*Public "open house meetings" (three in total) were held at the Wabash Bus Station waiting room to maximize access for transit users.*





## Service Recommendations

Due to the likely incremental nature of acquiring the critical resources for transit service--staff, vehicles, and operating funds--the study recommends a phased approach for implementing service improvements. Accordingly, recommendations are organized into four tiers. **These steps would occur after the restoration of Baseline service** that existed prior to reductions in August 2023.

### Tier 1

Tier 1 is a near-term step designed to be implemented with a comparatively small investment in operations, and few additional capital needs. While frequency or service area improvements cannot occur in this lower-cost phase, Tier 1 expands service hours on all routes into evening and night hours, with a frequency of 90 minutes. Service is extended to 10:25 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays for all Go COMO routes as well as paratransit services.

### Tier 2

This tier is intended to bridge the gap between items that can be accomplished with a fairly minor cost increase and items that require a major influx of funding, capital needs, and staffing. It was added late in the process to provide a smaller step between tiers. Tier 2 is an interim step in between the existing 45-minute/ 90-minute route structure to a 30-minute/60-minute structure recommended in later tiers. In essence, half (three) of the routes are converted to this higher-frequency service, as well as extended to serve new destinations. *(Note: An alternate Tier 4 recommendation is provided that offers a lower level of service increase on existing routes in order to add a new route on the Paris Rd./ Route B corridor.)*

### Tier 3

Recommendations in Tier 3 complete the process of converting the entire Go COMO system to a network of routes operating every 30 minutes on weekdays and 60 minutes on evenings and weekends. Additionally, Sunday service is added for the first time. Similar to routes improved in Tier 2, these routes are extended to serve new destinations as well. Finally, a new route is added to cover employment

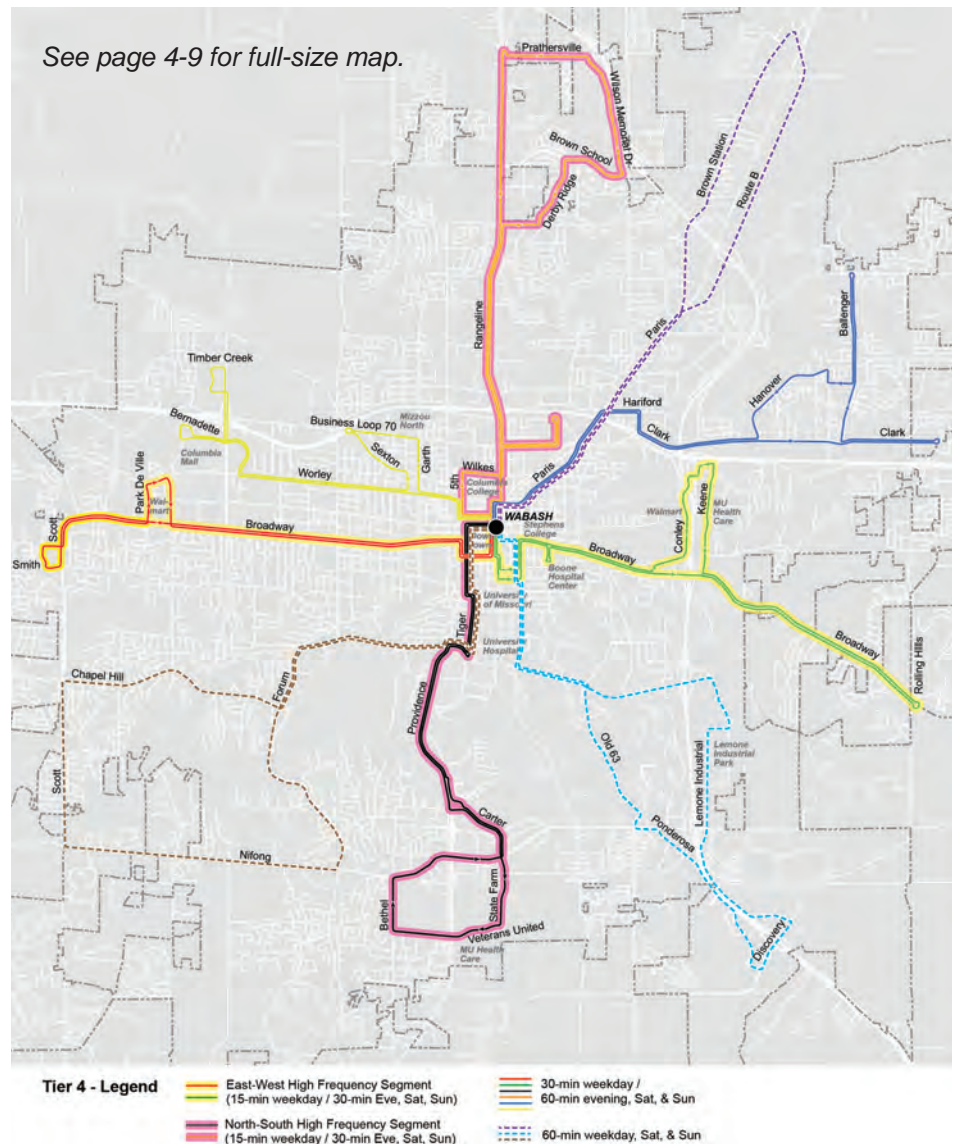
and residential areas along the Paris Road and Route B corridor.

### Tier 4

This final tier represents the vision of transit in Columbia, with the understanding that the cost, staffing, and capital resources needed will take longer to implement.

This tier identifies a north-south corridor and an east-west corridor on which to upgrade to “high-frequency” service, operating every 15 minutes on weekdays and 30 minutes in off-peak periods. Additionally, new routes are added to cover portions of the city that are currently unserved. Service hours are further extended to allow for a greater variety of trips on transit.

Figure ES.1: Tier 4 Recommendations Map



## Implementation

Implementing the recommendations of this study will require substantial investment in transit well beyond current allocations, especially in the long term. Recommendations are categorized into tiers to allow for implementation in smaller steps that are more financially feasible yet still working toward the overall transit vision.

### Cost Estimates

In addition to the cost of expanding fixed route service, expanding service hours and system coverage also must include expanding paratransit services to the same hours and geographic extent.

Estimated operating costs of each phase are provided in Table ES-1 below. These estimates include both the operations of fixed route and paratransit services (but do not include Tiger Line services). Cost estimates range from approximately \$1.4 million annually in Tier 1 to \$7.5 in Tier 4, and a total investment of \$14.7 million across all four recommended tiers.

### Staffing

In addition to financial resources, additional staff are needed to enact the recommendations of this study. Based on the growth of service hours envisioned in this plan, additional staff will be needed. For example, implementing the full long-range vision of the plan (Tier 4), an estimated

185 additional staff will be needed to manage, operate, and maintain transit services and capital assets.

This growth requires a reorganization of Transit department management to oversee a larger system. Additional supervisors will be needed to ensure service effectiveness and reliability. Responsibilities for finance, grants management, customer service, information technology, marketing, planning, and oversight of operations and maintenance will increase as the service grows. A restructuring will be needed to allow for efficient workflow, required federal reporting, and continued financial sustainability of the service.

### Development Strategies

It is difficult for transit services to keep up with the low-density horizontal growth of the city. Such development patterns spread origins and destinations more widely, increasing costs and travel times for transit. This often makes transit impractical for many users and to fund sustainably. Integrating transportation and land use planning efforts can help to increase the number of people living, working, or going to school, in close proximity to transit. This condition can help to meet numerous community goals as defined in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and regional Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Table ES.1: Operating Cost Estimates and Peak Vehicles by Tier (Does not include Tiger Line)**

Phase	Veh. Rev. Hrs.		Annual Operating Cost			Peak Vehicles		
	Year	% Chg.	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Total	Fixed	Para	Total
<b>Baseline*</b>	20,126	--	\$2,548,075	\$1,938,950	<b>\$4,487,025</b>	6	12	<b>18</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	24,124	19.9%	\$3,054,154	\$2,791,119	<b>\$5,845,273</b>	6	13	<b>19</b>
<b>Tier 2</b>	39,202	94.8%	\$4,963,143	\$3,488,341	<b>\$8,451,483</b>	9	14	<b>23</b>
<b>Tier 3</b>	59,279	145.7%	\$7,504,880	\$4,197,869	<b>\$11,702,749</b>	13	17	<b>30</b>
<b>Tier 4</b>	107,208	80.9%	\$13,572,865	\$5,671,741	<b>\$19,244,606</b>	23	22	<b>45</b>

*Study recommendations maintain Wabash Bus Station as the primary hub of transit services. The location and function of Wabash was cited as a key strength of the existing system by community participants in the study.*





## 1

# Market Analysis



## Introduction

The City of Columbia provides multiple modes of public transportation services to the community, including:

- Go COMO fixed routes
- ADA Complementary Paratransit demand response
- Tiger Line fixed route services by contract with the University of Missouri

Combined, these services provide reliable transportation alternatives to a variety of residents in the city. However, it is widely acknowledged within the community that the quantity of service provided is not fully meeting transportation needs. Additionally, service levels are significantly lower than many peer agencies. This challenge has been exacerbated by a sustained shortage of staff, particularly bus operators. This has led to a temporary reduction of service beginning in August 2023, which essentially cut the amount of Go COMO fixed route services roughly in half. This was an unfortunate, but necessary change to ensure that scheduled service can be operated reliably.

In 2023, the City initiated a Comprehensive Transit Study to set transit goals and evaluate ways to improve transit service. This includes defining options to upgrade frequency and expanding hours on existing system, increase geographic coverage, identify opportunities for greater operational efficiency, and develop a long-term vision for growth after the initial improvements are made.

The first phase of this process is a Market Analysis that evaluates the Columbia community, including population, employment, demographics, travel patterns, and peer agencies. Understanding the community based on data collected on each of these factors is the first step toward being able to evaluate and recommend improvements to the transit system. This section defines the study area and provides an analysis of the local market for transit services, and the needs and opportunities that the remaining sections of this plan will explore from other angles.

## Study Area

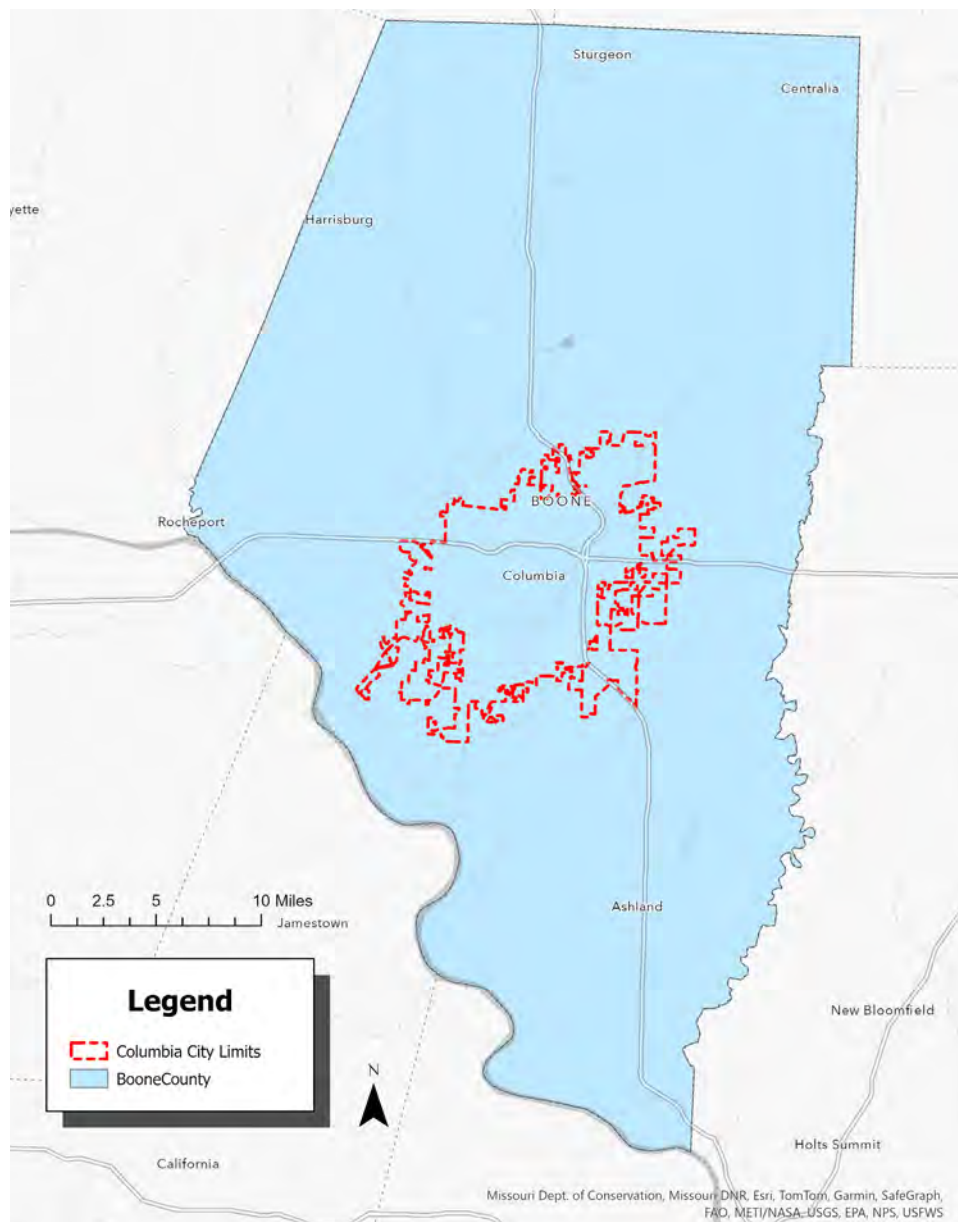
To understand and plan for improvements to transit services, “Core” and “Regional” geographies have both been defined in the Comprehensive Transit Study. The Core Service Area is the City of Columbia. As a city department, Go COMO’s primary responsibility is serving city residents and taxpayers who rely on city services.

However, Columbia is the economic center of a larger area, and transportation patterns ignore jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, the Regional Study Area includes all of Boone County, in order to assess transit needs adjacent to city boundaries and throughout the county. These service areas are shown in *Figure 1.1* below.

## Planning Context

This process builds upon numerous past planning efforts that have evaluated transportation and land use at both the local and regional levels. These efforts include past analyses of Go COMO transit services, an assessment of transit for human services transportation, a university-specific transit study, a parking review, and regional transportation plans and programming that frame transit services within multi-modal transportation network throughout the Columbia region. Plans and documents reviewed and considered throughout this process are summarized on the following pages.

**Figure 1.1: Core and Regional Study Areas**





Go COMO Transit and other regional partners have completed multiple plans, evaluations, and reports that analyze transit services in detail.

In 2016, the City of Columbia began a transit service evaluation study, the **Go COMO Bus Service Evaluation**, to ensure the COMO bus system provided efficient service and met the needs of community members. The outcome of this study is an updated transit vision for the Columbia area reflecting community input, population changes, technical analysis, and other supporting documentation. The study outlines four categories of funding to support the updated transit vision and emphasizes the importance of safe, accessible, and convenient connections for people walking and bicycling to transit connections.

The CATSO 2018 **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan** is maintained by the Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission. The plan was developed through public meetings and interactions with transportation and human service providers. It identifies services, needs, and service gaps, as well as analyzing the service capabilities to develop priority goals. The key goals include increasing efficiency through coordination and education, increasing accessibility of existing services, and addressing healthcare and employment-based mobility needs in the region. Each goal has associated strategies including fostering regional dialogue, enhancing the flexibility of and funding for existing services, and fostering partnerships between various stakeholders.

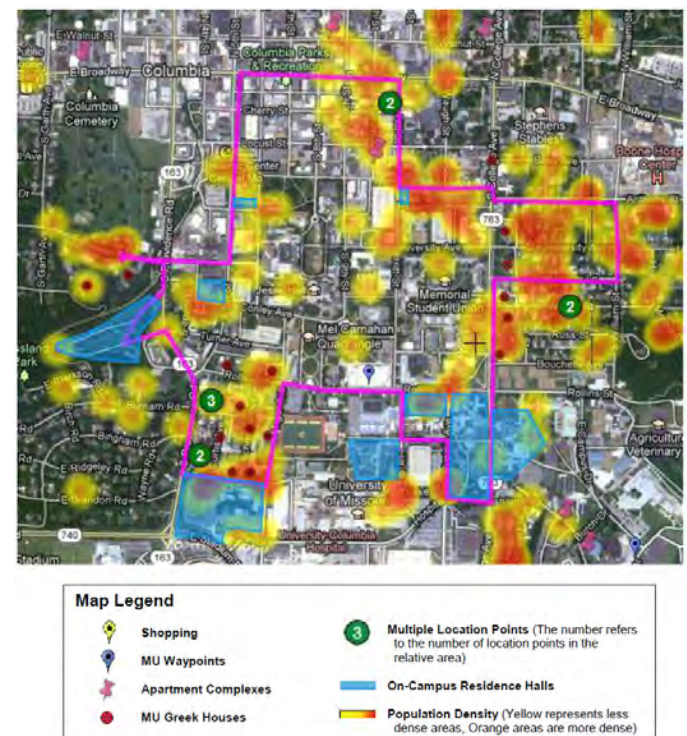
In 2012, the University of Missouri commissioned a **Campus Mass Transit Study**. This comprehensive transit system evaluation allowed the university to develop recommendations for a detailed mass transit operations plan. The aim was to identify primary and secondary goals for the university population, establish a baseline for existing transit service, and develop a roadmap for future transit needs. This effort found that students desired GPS/AVL technology on all Columbia Transit buses, including University-provided routes. The study also identified a need for a more collaborative process between the University and the City. Route changes and adjustments were discussed to better meet the needs of the student population.

Recognizing a need for change and improvement, the Columbia Transit System, in association with the Boone County/ Columbia Department of Health and Human Services and The PedNet Coalition, conducted a survey of transit needs. This **Analysis of the Public Transportation System** outlined budgetary changes based on increasing weekly service hours, making it apparent that funding is necessary to implement these

changes. The analysis found that strengthening the weekday service hours is the most cost-effective solution because changes can be made without forcing the current system to drastically change. Based on comprehensive survey and data analysis, it was recommended that the transit system increase service hours by adjusting the hours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The additional service hours would require additional funding from the Public Transportation Fund of \$450,000 and an increase in bus fare to \$1.50. The primary goal of this analysis project was to meet or exceed the current and future public busing transport needs.

In 2015 the **Community Conversations about Transit** report was developed based on community conversations held about transit in the city. The conversations were initiated by the City of Columbia and the University of Missouri to address community concerns. The report summarizes the feedback received from the community during these conversations. The goal was to foster understanding and collaboration between the city, university, and community members. The report emphasizes the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration between the city, university, and community members. It calls for ongoing efforts to address the concerns and recommendations presented in the report.

### Figure 1.2: Campus Mass Transit Study (2012)



## Local Planning

In 2019, the City and Parking Advisory Commission engaged a consultant to perform a **Parking Utility Baseline Review**. The review process identified opportunities for improvement that address stakeholder and City concerns. Recommendations were also made for consideration that, if implemented, may enhance the policies, procedures, and operating methodologies used to manage and maintain the Utility. Key recommendations included eliminating the permit waiting list and offering permits to all applicants, reviewing and possibly eliminating reserved parking permits, and reevaluating fees charged for permit parking.

Columbia's Comprehensive Plan, titled **"Columbia Imagined – The Plan for How We Live & Grow,"** adopted in October 2013, is meant to guide the city's growth until 2030. It builds upon public engagement efforts from the former comprehensive plan, including outreach to over 80,000 citizens. During outreach efforts, the public expressed concern with the lack of access to public transit options and neighborhoods that lacked connectivity.

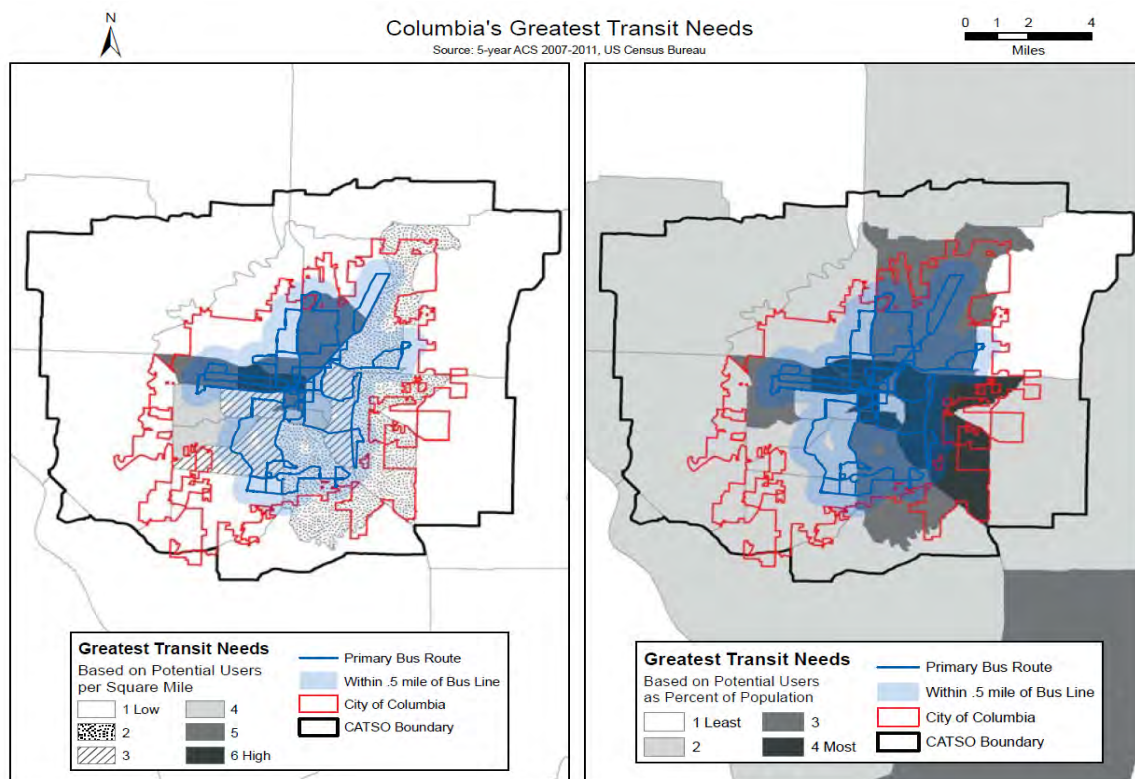
The plan's Livability Vision asserts that Columbians will live in neighborhoods "that are supported by citywide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems." The mobility, connectivity, and accessibility objectives of the plan include promoting and enhancing transit, reconsidering

funding mechanisms for transit, focusing on accessibility and safety of the transportation network, and considering regional public transit. These objectives support the following goals:

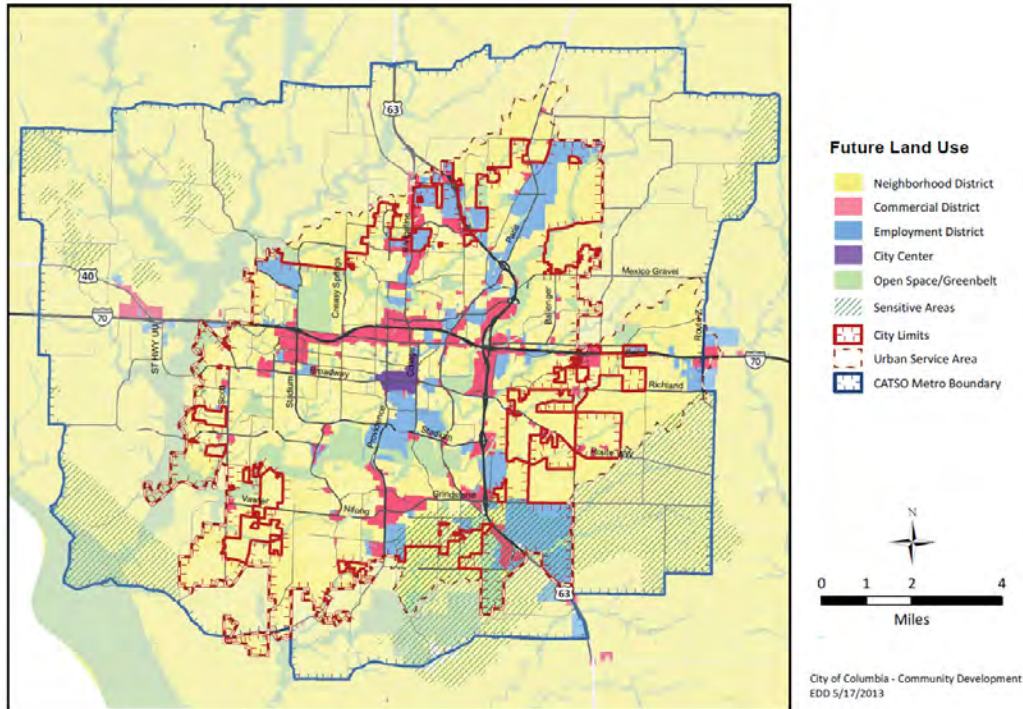
- Columbia is a fully accessible and efficient community for all modes and abilities.
- Employ a reliable and equitable mechanism to develop and maintain all transportation systems.
- Columbia will have a comprehensive, interconnected trail and walking/bike path system that allows people to move around the city efficiently by walking, bicycling or wheelchair.
- Ensure that public transit fits the needs of all people who do or could use it.
- Promote public transportation system expansion with regional considerations.

The plan notes that achieving the policy of improved transit service to the extent desired will be difficult due to budgetary constraints. The mobility management concept is referenced as an example how improved coordination among transportation providers could reduce costs and better leverage resources. Other suggested strategies include supporting and promoting the public transportation system through bus route connections, new technologies, and compact development and expanding the existing transit system to meet ridership needs.

**Figure 1.3: "Columbia's Greatest Transit Needs" from Columbia Imagined (2013)**





**Figure 1.4: Future Land Use Map from Columbia Imagined (2013)**

### *Regional Transportation Planning*

Go COMO's bus service operates within the context of a larger regional multi-modal transportation network within Columbia and surrounding communities.

CATSO is responsible for creating and maintaining the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and related processes or programs to implement this plan including the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). CATSO coordinates planning activities across jurisdictions. Plans and processes impacting transit services have been evaluated and incorporated into this process.

In 2019, CATSO adopted the **2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**. The plan aims to provide a modern transportation system for Columbia and central Missouri, allowing citizens to move freely using various modes of transport. The plan emphasizes a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making. Additionally, the plan recommends identifying additional funding sources for transit and emphasizes regional collaboration.

Recognizing that connectivity of streets is a major concern for public transit, the plan encourages roadway design provisions for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities. Some degree of multi-modal activity occurs on most facilities Columbia, but transit use is affected by corridors with high volume and high-speed traffic. These create a

barrier for pedestrians looking for access to the system. Finally, it is recognized that viable transit systems must be supported through dense and mixed-use land uses.

One of the goals of the LRTP is for a public transportation system that is a viable transportation option throughout the metro area. This goal is supported by the following objectives:

- Promote a mobility management public transportation system whereby all providers of public transportation work together to maximize efficiency and resources.
- Support and promote the public transportation (bus) system through expansions in funding sources, mechanisms, budget amounts, marketing efforts, partnerships, and improved public awareness/approval of the bus system.
- Expand and redesign the existing transit system to meet ridership needs.

The LRTP identifies and prioritizes specific projects with estimated timeframes. Investing in long term solutions to existing transportation needs and providing adequate capacity to accommodate future growth while preserving the existing investment in transportation infrastructure is the priority. A list of transit projects is shown on the following page.

**Figure 1.5: 2050 LRTP Transit Projects**

<b>Table 14A - City of Columbia Revenues/Funding Summary - Go COMO Transit Projects</b>									
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025- 2029</b>	<b>2030- 2039</b>	<b>2040- 2049</b>	<b>Total</b>
Estimated Federal (FTA Sec.5307) Transfers for Go COMO Operations/Maintenance	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000	\$13,000,000	\$26,000,000	\$26,000,000	\$78,000,000
Estimated State (MoDOT) Transfers for Go COMO Operations/Maintenance	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$160,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$960,000
City of Columbia 1/2 cent Transportation Sales Tax Revenue Transfers for Operating	\$2,670,043	\$2,516,872	\$2,516,872	\$2,516,872	\$2,516,872	\$12,584,360	\$25,168,720	\$25,168,720	\$75,659,331
Other Local Revenues - Fees, etc.	\$1,525,925	\$1,525,925	\$1,525,925	\$1,525,925	\$1,525,925	\$7,629,625	\$15,259,250	\$15,259,250	\$45,777,750
CIST & TST Transfers for Capital Projects	\$291,872	\$300,351	\$300,351	\$300,351	\$300,351	\$1,501,755	\$3,003,510	\$3,003,510	\$9,002,051
Other Transfers (Reserves, etc.)	\$282,273	\$282,273	\$282,273	\$282,273	\$282,273	\$1,411,365	\$2,822,730	\$2,822,730	\$8,468,190
Transfers for Capital Project Match	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,402,113</b>	<b>\$7,257,421</b>	<b>\$7,257,421</b>	<b>\$7,257,421</b>	<b>\$7,257,421</b>	<b>\$36,287,105</b>	<b>\$72,574,210</b>	<b>\$72,574,210</b>	<b>\$217,867,322</b>

The CATSO **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**, most recently updated for FY2024, outlines grant-related programs and goals for the Columbia metropolitan planning area for the upcoming fiscal year. Short-range transportation planning encompasses activities related to immediate or near-future transportation concerns, covering all modes of transportation.

Work in the Transit Planning program area is concerned with review and implementation of transit operational strategies for the Go COMO bus system. Work products for FY 2024 include:

- American Rescue Plan funds will provide the ability for Go COMO to operate without depending on fare box revenues.
- Revenue from the state of Missouri General Fund has increased to ~\$125,000 that will be used for matching funds for federal grants insuring operational solvency for FY2024.
- Monitoring of Asset Management in accordance with the 2018 Transit Asset Management Plan. Anticipated completion date – ongoing. Responsibility- Go COMO Staff.
- Additional training for Go COMO Supervisors and Safety compliance will be completed. Enhanced safety training for all transit staff will be completed. Anticipated completion date – ongoing.
- Participation in the Statewide Transit Asset Management Plan. Anticipated completion date – ongoing.
- A Comprehensive Transit Study (this study).

The CATSO **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is a schedule of intended transportation

improvements covering a four-year period, including projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). CATSO develops the TIP in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and affected transit operators. Regional priorities emphasize the need for diverse transportation options. There's an increased public demand for non-motorized transportation options, addressed through the Non-Motorized Pilot Project, known as GetAbout Columbia. There is also a focus on integrating all travel modes, public transportation, coordinating land use and transportation planning, and ensuring safe and secure facilities. There are 11 total transit projects listed in the draft 2024-2027 TIP. These include:

- Go COMO Maintenance of existing operations and facilities & equipment (5307)
- Go COMO Low Emission No Emission Grant (5339)
- Go COMO Bus Replacement FY 2013 (5339)
- Go COMO Bus and Van Replacement FY 2014-17 5339 (5339)
- Go COMO Capital Purchases Grant No. 1825-2021-1 (5307)
- Go COMO 2020 Allocation of 5339 Statewide Funds (5339)
- Alternative Community Training Purchase of four lift-equipped mini-vans (5310)
- OATS, Inc. Purchase of lift-equipped vehicles (5310)
- OATS, Inc. Elderly & Disabled & beyond ADA (5310)
- OATS, Inc. Bus and Bus Facilities (5339)
- OATS, Inc. funding for general public transportation in rural Boone County.



## Population Profile

This Comprehensive Transit Study provides an analysis and recommendations for services in the City of Columbia and Boone County. The city's estimated 2023 population is 129,328, and 189,463 for Boone County. Both numbers represent steady growth since the 2020 Census population, about 1.8% annual growth for both jurisdictions. Longer term, both the city and county have grown considerably in the last three decades, as shown in Figure 1.6.

As in many growing cities and counties, this growth has outpaced the ability of the transit system to keep up.

Specifically, growth of population, employment, and activity centers have primarily followed a pattern of outward expansion from the city center. Especially when these locations are low-density and poorly-connected, quality transit service is not feasible.

Figure 1.7 shows how population is distributed around the city and county. While population densities are still highest in the core of the city, the periphery of the city, as well as areas immediate outside of the city, have relatively high densities as well. Smaller pockets of higher density Census Block Groups are also found in Ashland and Centralia.

Figure 1.6: Population Trends

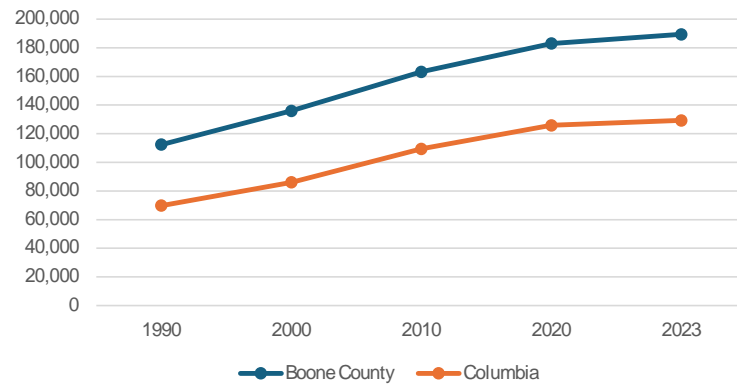
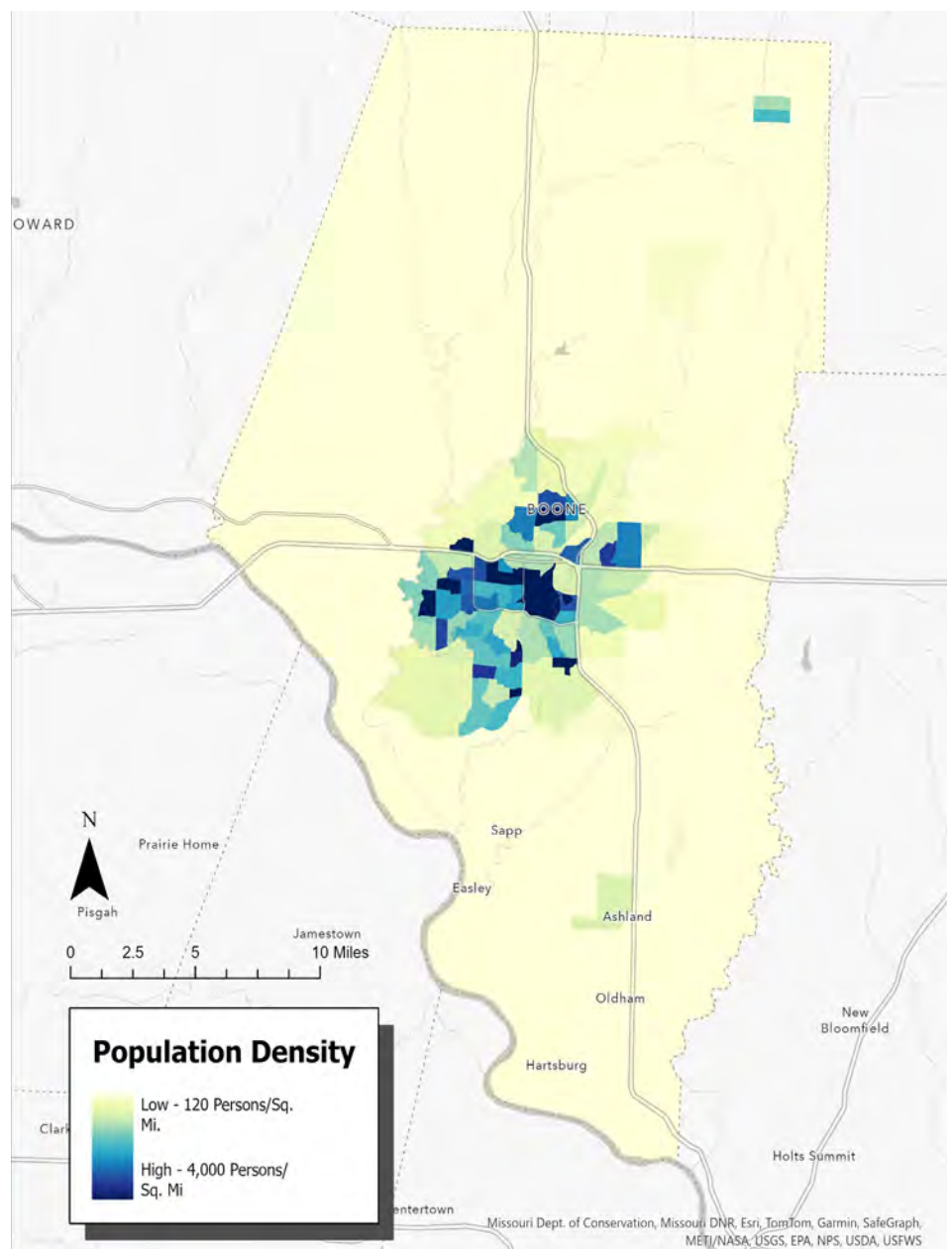


Figure 1.7: Population Density Map



## Employment Profile

Employment is a common use of transit among Go COMO riders. In the on-board survey conducted as part of this study (detailed in Section 3) about 50 percent of riders use transit for trips to work, among other uses. The distribution of jobs across the city is shown in *Figure 1.8* below. While the largest concentration of employment is the University of Missouri, nearly all portions of the city, with the exception of the far southwest portion of the city, have significant employment nodes.

As shown in *Table 1.1*, Columbia's largest employer is the University of Missouri. Two of the city's other top five employers, University Hospital and Clinics and Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital, are located on the south end of the MU campus as well. Other top employers--Veteran's United Home Loans, Boone Hospital Center, Shelter Insurance Companies--are located in other parts of the city and are all served by Go COMO routes.

Two significant employment centers stand out as lacking transit service: the Paris Rd./Route B corridor to the northeast and the Lemone Industrial Park to the east.

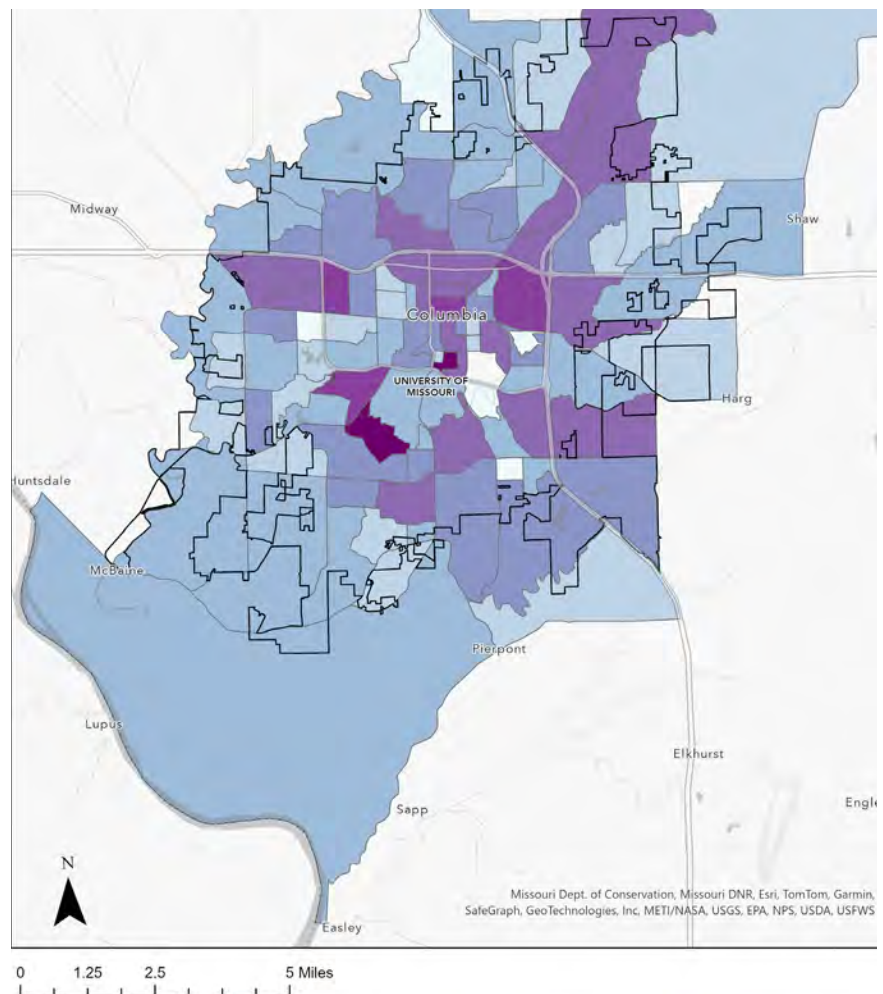
**Table 1.1: Largest Employers in Columbia**

Employer	Employees
University of Missouri	8,709
University Hospital and Clinics	5,092
Veterans United Home Loans	3,474
Columbia Public Schools	2,650
Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Hosp.	1,779
Boone Hospital Center	1,581
Shelter Insurance Companies	1,375
City of Columbia	1,323
Hubbell Power Systems, Inc.	751
Joe Machens Dealerships, Inc.	611

*Note: Numbers represent the number of full-time benefitted employees each company employs in Boone County only.*

*Source: 2024 Columbia Community Profile & Resource Guide, Columbia Chamber of Commerce.*

**Figure 1.8: Employment Map**



Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), Version 8.





## Transportation Profile

As is the case throughout Missouri and surrounding states, the majority of people in Columbia and Boone County travel primarily by private automobile, as shown in *Table 1.2*. About 84 percent of Columbia residents commute by automobile, either as a driver or passenger. Only about 1.6 percent of Columbia residents use transit to get to work. This is higher than the county and state as a whole, but lower than national averages. However, walking (2.8 percent of trips) and bicycling (0.9 percent), two modes that closely relate to transit use, are more commonly used in Columbia than county, state, or national averages.

While the percentage of non-automobile commuters is relatively small compared to drivers, the numbers represent people that have a need and a right to travel throughout the city to access critical needs such as employment, shopping, and healthcare. Additionally, increasing the transit “modeshare” has documented health, environment, and social benefits to a community. Investments in transit service and infrastructure also expands transportation choice, and overall mobility for the community.

## Multimodal Connectivity

The safety and comfort of active transportation infrastructure—sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, trails, etc.—has a major impact on the success of a fixed-route transit service. The vast majority of riders access transit service by walking to a bus stop. Trips to and from a bus stop are often a challenge, either due to the condition of infrastructure, and/or the distance required to make this connection. While newer developments and public works projects typically provide sidewalks, many areas of the city are lacking sidewalks on some streets.

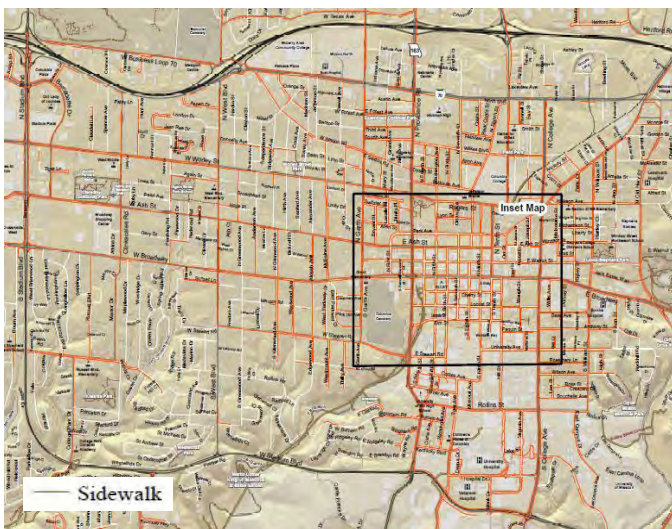
*Figure 1.9* below shows sidewalks in the Center City of Columbia. While arterial and collector streets tend to have sidewalks, many local/residential streets do not. This can present a challenge for those walking or using a wheelchair to get to or from a bus stop.

Columbia has a growing network of bicycle lanes and off-street trails that can help extend the reach of transit access. *Figure 1.10* below shows current bicycle infrastructure available in the city.

**Table 1.2: Commuting Characteristics (Means of Travel to Work)**

Jurisdiction	Drove alone	Carpooled	Public transport.	Walked	Bicycle	Taxi, motor cycle other	Work from home
<b>City of Columbia</b>	75.9%	8.3%	<b>1.6%</b>	2.8%	0.9%	0.5%	9.9%
Boone County	76.1%	9.7%	<b>1.1%</b>	2.0%	0.6%	0.6%	9.8%
Missouri	75.4%	7.9%	<b>0.8%</b>	1.6%	0.2%	1.1%	12.9%
United States	68.7%	8.6%	<b>3.1%</b>	2.4%	0.5%	1.5%	15.2%

**Figure 1.9: Sidewalks in Central Columbia**



Source: Clipped from Columbia Sidewalk and Trail Map, City of Columbia

**Figure 1.10: Trails and Bikeways Map**



Source: Clipped from Columbia Trail System Map, City of Columbia Parks & Recreation

## Transit Propensity

Based on peer agency and industry research, certain population groups exhibit a greater likelihood to utilize transit services. These groups are generally characterized by having mobility limitations, either through a disability or lack of access to a vehicle. Transit services are most successful, and useful to a community, when providing a reliable transportation alternative for these populations. These “transit propensity” factors include:

- Low-income population (households below poverty level)
- Households with zero vehicles (households with one

vehicle are also included in this analysis.

- Elderly population (above age 65)
- Disabled population

Citywide and countywide statistics for these populations are shown in the tables below. Additionally, the following pages review the geographic distribution of these populations in Columbia and Boone County.

**Table 1.3: Poverty Status & Median Household Income**

Jurisdiction	Population*	Below Poverty Level	Percent	Below 200% Poverty Level	Percent	Median Household Income
<b>City of Columbia</b>	<b>119,315</b>	<b>26,845</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>41,732</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>\$58,067</b>
Boone County	178,029	31,181	17.5%	52,547	29.5%	\$62,567
Missouri	6,005,542	791,030	13.2%	1,798,198	29.9%	\$64,811
United States	325,521,470	40,951,625	12.6%	92,319,944	28.4%	\$74,755

\* Population for whom poverty status is determined.

**Table 1.4: Zero and One-Car Households**

Jurisdiction	Total Households	No vehicles	One vehicle	No or One vehicle	Percent
<b>City of Columbia</b>	<b>63,414</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>15,552</b>	<b>16,756</b>	<b>26.4%</b>
Boone County	93,359	1,762	19,794	21,556	23.1%
Missouri	2,935,789	86,723	587,557	674,280	23.0%
United States	158,971,826	6,985,802	33,406,659	40,392,461	25.4%

**Table 1.5: Population Age 65 and Older**

Jurisdiction	Total Population	65 years & older	Percent	Median Age
<b>City of Columbia</b>	<b>128,545</b>	<b>13,628</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>28.6</b>
Boone County	187,690	25,564	13.6%	32.4
Missouri	6,177,957	1,113,136	18.0%	39.1
United States	333,287,562	57,822,315	17.3%	39.0

**Table 1.6: Disabled Population**

Jurisdiction	Population*	With a disability	Percent
<b>City of Columbia</b>	<b>126,887</b>	<b>14,632</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
Boone County	185,901	23,379	12.6%
Missouri	6,071,333	913,707	15.0%
United States	328,309,810	44,146,764	13.4%

\* Total civilian non-institutionalized population

Source (all tables): U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

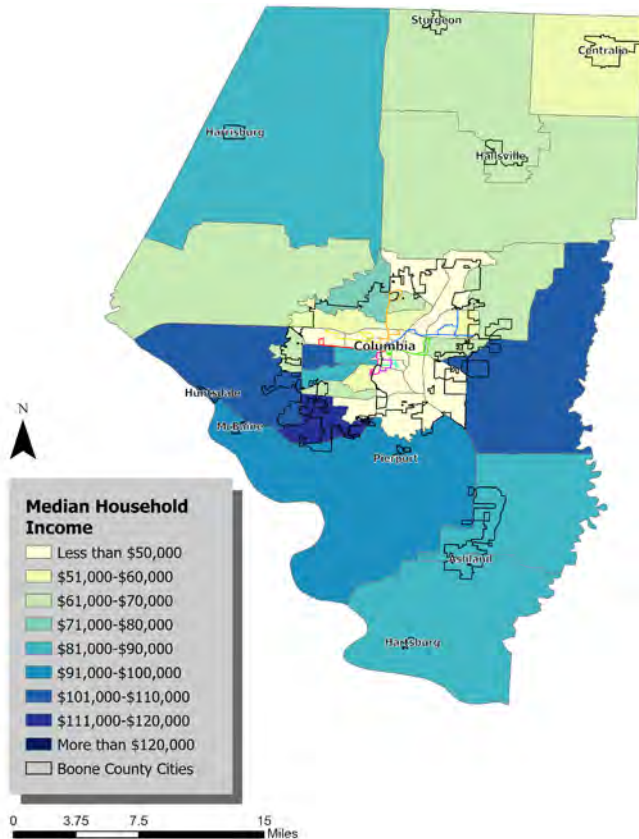


## Low Income Population

The City of Columbia's median household income of \$58,067 is lower than statewide and national averages. A large student population likely has a significant impact on these figures, depending on their residency status. This figure indicates a transit need based on income.

As expected, the University of Missouri campus area shows the highest percentage of families living below the poverty level (*Figure 1.11*) and the lowest household incomes in the city. Areas to the north and east of Columbia--as well as in Boone County as a whole--tend to have lower median incomes (yellow and light green), while areas south and west generally display higher incomes (dark blue).

**Figure 1.11: Median Household Income Map**



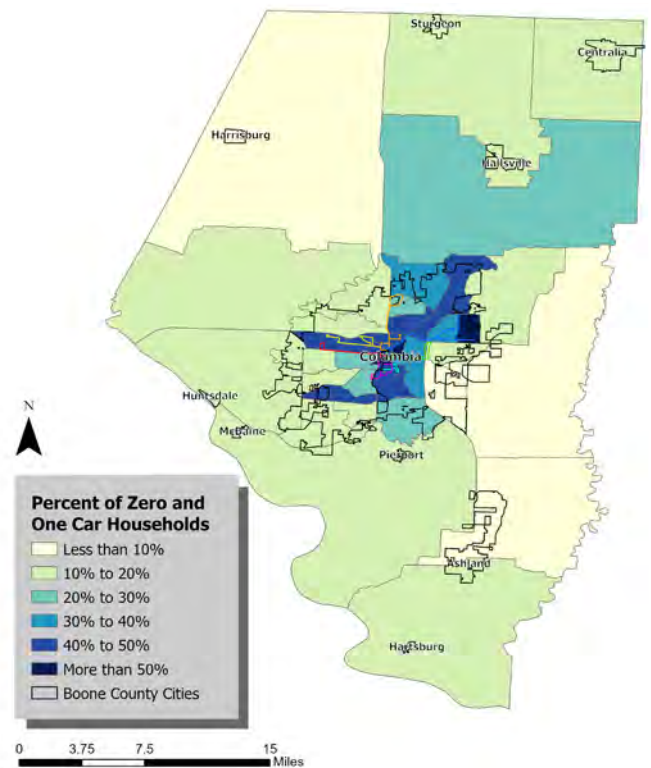
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

## Zero and One Vehicle Households

Households with limited access to a vehicle may depend on public transportation to get to school, work, essential shopping, or other services. Limited vehicle access often overlaps with lower income households. The percentage of zero-car households in Columbia and Boone County (at 1.9 percent) is smaller than state and national averages. However, the number of households with one car or less is higher (at 26.4 percent) than state and national averages, again likely due to the number of students that are likely single-person households.

As shown in *Figure 1.12*, within the community, zero and one-car households tracks closely with household incomes, with the largest percentages of these households around the MU campus, east Columbia, and some areas to the west in the city's core.

**Figure 1.12: Zero and One-Car Households**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

## Elderly Population (65+ Years)

Due to declining abilities related to vision, coordination, and reaction times, as well as the cost of maintaining a personal vehicle, seniors are generally more dependent on transit for mobility. Personal mobility closely relates to a person's sense of independence and well-being. Providing reliable and consistent transportation to this demographic group can drastically improve their quality of life. The percent of elderly population living in Columbia is significantly lower than county, state, and national averages. However, there are still more than 13,000 seniors in the city, many of whom may benefit from transit services.

Figure 1.13 shows that the elderly population in Columbia is more concentrated in the south and west portions of the city. Additionally, the percentage of elderly population is generally higher in portions of Boone County outside of Columbia, in rural areas and smaller communities.

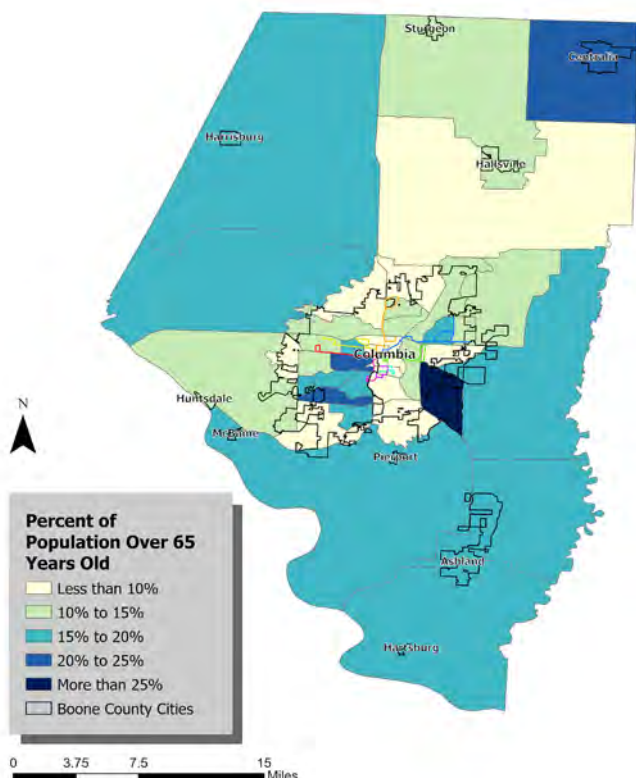
## Disabled Population

An estimated 11.5 percent of the city's population is considered disabled. This figure is slightly lower than county averages and significantly lower than national averages. However, there are more than 14,000 disabled individuals in Columbia.

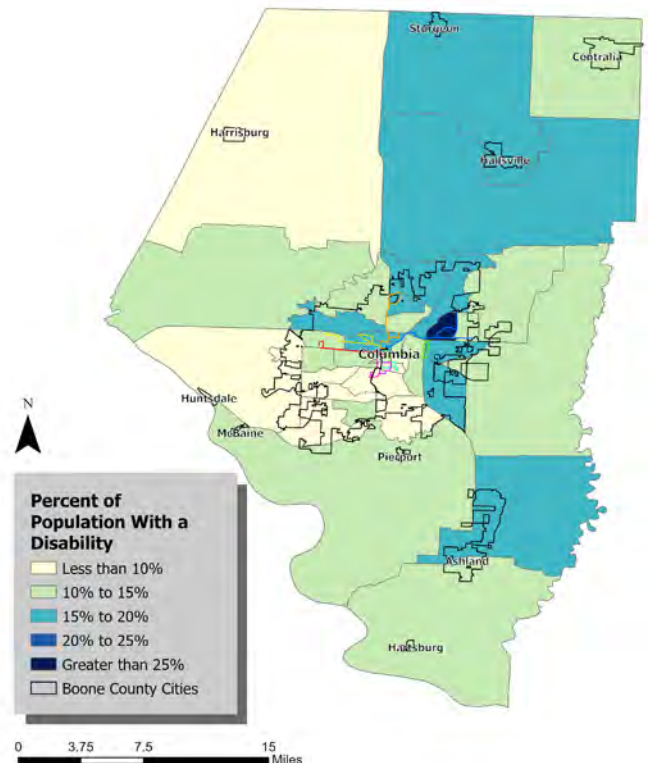
The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey has acknowledged six disability types since 2008: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty. The data used for this study identifies all individuals regardless of disability or age.

Figure 1.14 shows the population density of individuals with disabilities in the city and county. Concentrations of this group are seen on portions of north and east Columbia, as well as the northeast quadrant of Boone County.

**Figure 1.13: Elderly Population Map**



**Figure 1.14: Disabled Population Map**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.



## Title VI Populations

The City of Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the provision of transit services, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

As required by the Federal Transit Administration, the City maintains a Title VI Program that documents the policies and procedures the City follows to ensure non-discrimination. Service changes must be implemented in a way that does not disproportionately impact minority populations as compared to non-minority populations. It is therefore important to understand the geographic distribution of minority populations throughout the Go COMO service area.

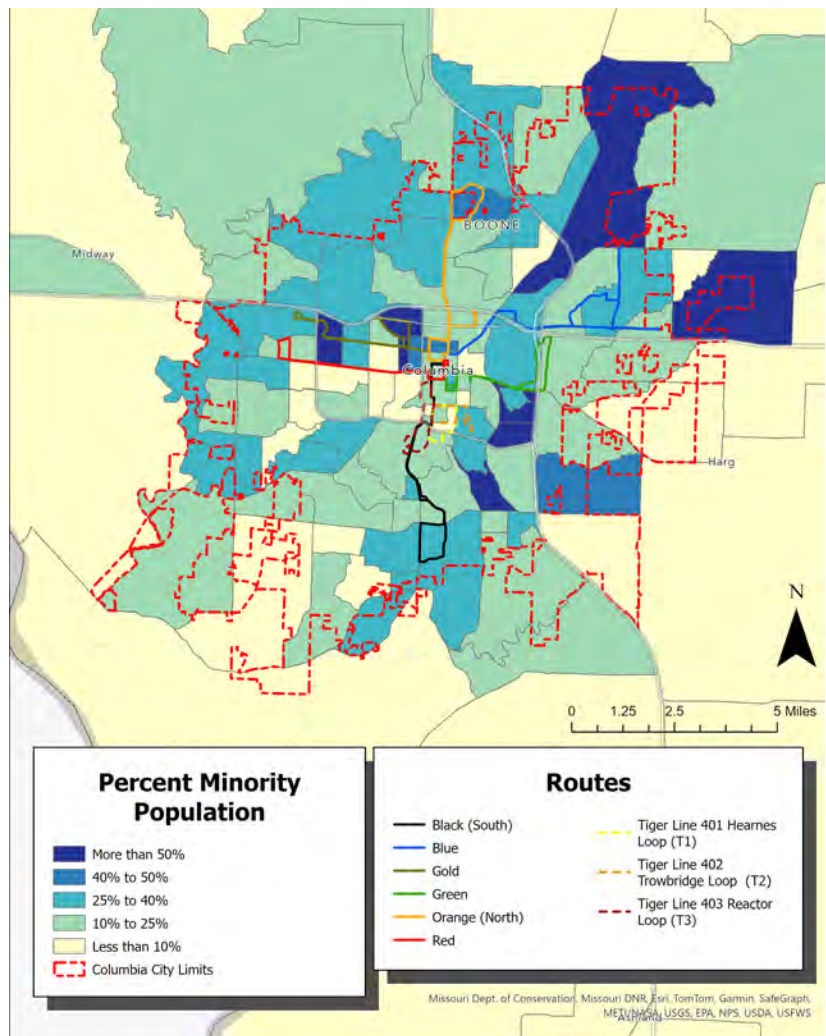
Figure 1.15 below shows the minority population distribution (by Census Block Group) in and around Columbia. Minority populations are highest in portions of the north and east core of the city, as well as areas in the city's northeast quadrant. Minority populations are generally lowest in the city's southwest areas. Existing Go COMO services are overlaid on the map. Geographically, areas with higher minority populations are better served with transit than areas with lower minority populations. Services recommended in this study should be careful to maintain and enhance this distribution of services to minority areas.

**Table 1.7: Minority Population**

	City of Columbia		Boone County	
	Num.	Pct.	Num.	Pct.
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>124,342</b>		<b>182,170</b>	
White	93,981	75.6%	145,668	80.0%
Black or African Amer.	14,352	11.5%	16,717	9.2%
American Indian	251	0.2%	448	0.2%
Asian	7,409	6.0%	8,046	4.4%
Pacific Islander	179	0.1%	189	0.1%
Other	948	0.8%	1,513	0.8%

Source: U.S. Census, 2020.

**Figure 1.15: Minority Population Map**



Source: U.S. Census, 2020.

## Peer Agency Review

As part of the Market Analysis, a peer review of transit agencies around the country similar in size and service to Columbia was conducted.

This peer agency review synthesizes performance metrics from various transit agencies, highlighting the nuances in operational efficiency and service delivery across urbanized areas with university populations. The review compares agencies based on service area population, vehicle revenue miles, unlinked passenger trips, and efficiency metrics such as unlinked passenger trips per capita and per vehicle revenue hour.

A total of nine agencies were included in this peer analysis. These agencies are summarized in *Table 1.8* below. These agencies are from diverse regions and organizational structures, such as city, county, or local government units, independent public agencies, and a private non-profit corporation. Importantly, most of these peer agencies operate in cities with large university populations similar to Columbia, and therefore have shared characteristics and unique set of challenges and opportunities in public transit.

Among peers, urbanized area (UZA) population ranges from 54,622 to 147,725, with the average of 147,098 slightly higher than Columbia's population. University enrollment as a percent of UZA population ranges from 12.8% to 39.3% among the agencies, which could correlate with the demand for transit services, peak travel times,

and necessary service accommodations like night or weekend service. Columbia, with a UZA population of 124,748, has an enrollment of 33,622, accounting for 27.0% of its UZA, which is consistent with the median value of the peer agencies.

**Note: This Peer Agency Review was conducted using National Transit Database 2022 data. While 2023 data is available, 2022 information represents Go COMO's "Baseline" service levels, operating 45-minute routes for the full year.**

Figure 1.16: Peer Agencies Map



Table 1.8: Peer Agency Summary

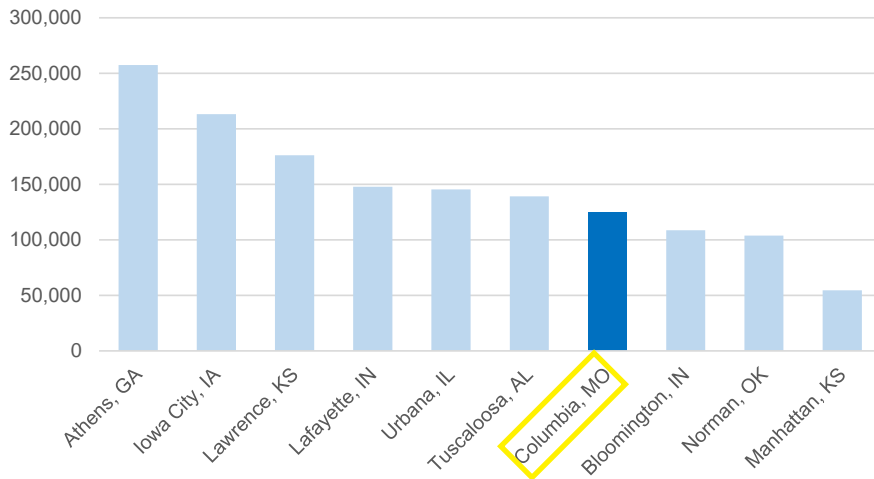
Agency	City	UZA Pop.	Enrollment	% of UZA
Athens-Clarke County Transit Department***	Athens, GA	257,508	38,927	15.1%
City of Iowa City, dba: Iowa City Transit***	Iowa City, IA	213,242	31,630	14.8%
City of Lawrence***	Lawrence, KS	176,106	22,625	12.8%
Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corp.	Lafayette, IN	147,725	42,809	29.0%
Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District	Urbana, IL	145,361	40,477	27.8%
Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Auth.	Tuscaloosa, AL	139,114	38,506	27.7%
City of Columbia, dba: Go COMO	Columbia, MO	124,748	33,622	27.0%
Bloomington Public Transportation Corp.	Bloomington, IN	108,657	36,708	33.8%
City of Norman	Norman, OK	103,898	24,910	24.0%
Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency, Inc,	Manhattan, KS	54,622	21,472	39.3%

\*\*\* These providers have University entities in the same City that report to NTD separately. University service and ridership data is added for these providers.

Note: Enrollment is based on metropolitan statistical area (except Norman, OK is city only)



UZA Population (2021)

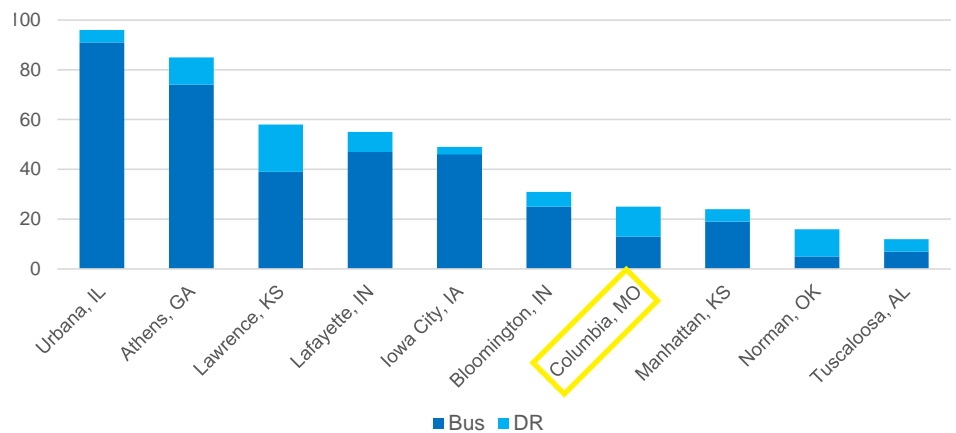


Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

The number of vehicles operating in maximum service (VOMS) in Columbia is lower than many of its peers. A smaller number of vehicles operating service results in lower service levels, either in terms of geographic coverage or service frequency, than in peer cities. Columbia's 25 VOMS is most similar to Bloomington, Manhattan, and Norman, all three of which have a smaller UZA population than Columbia. Despite a similar UZA population, Champaign-Urbana, IL has a VOMS of 96, by far the most of Columbia's peers.

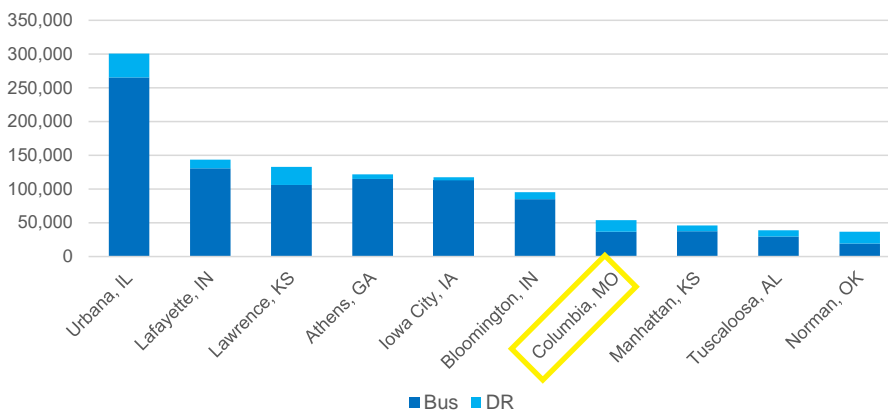
Similarly, the 53,779 annual vehicle revenue hours (VRH) operated in Columbia trails most of its peers. Only Tuscaloosa has fewer annual vehicle revenue hours. There is a significant clustering of peers around 130,000 annual VRH. Again, Champaign-Urbana leads all peers with more than 300,000 annual VRH. Notably, the state of Illinois provides much higher levels of funding for transit than other states included in this peer agency review. As of FY 2021, Illinois provided \$62.19 of state funding for transit per capita, compared to only \$0.28 in Missouri (Source: 2023 Errata for Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation, AASHTO).

Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (2022)



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

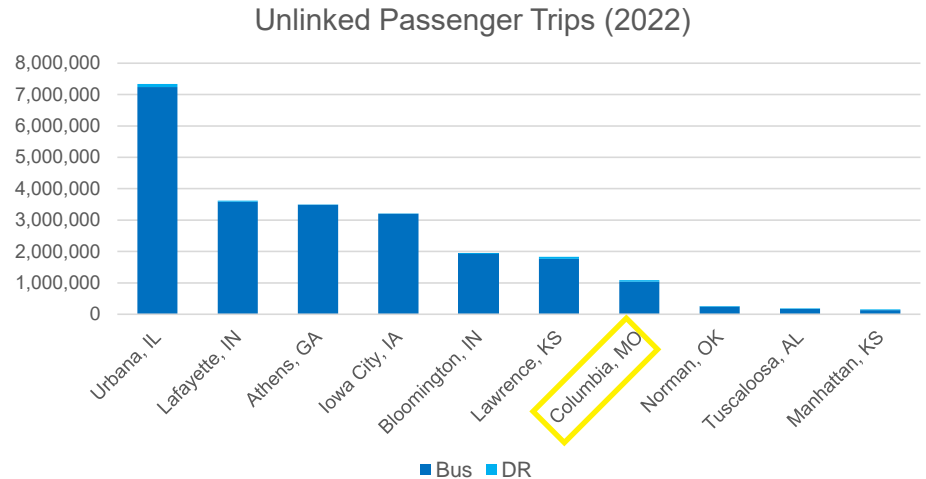
Vehicle Revenue Hours (2022)



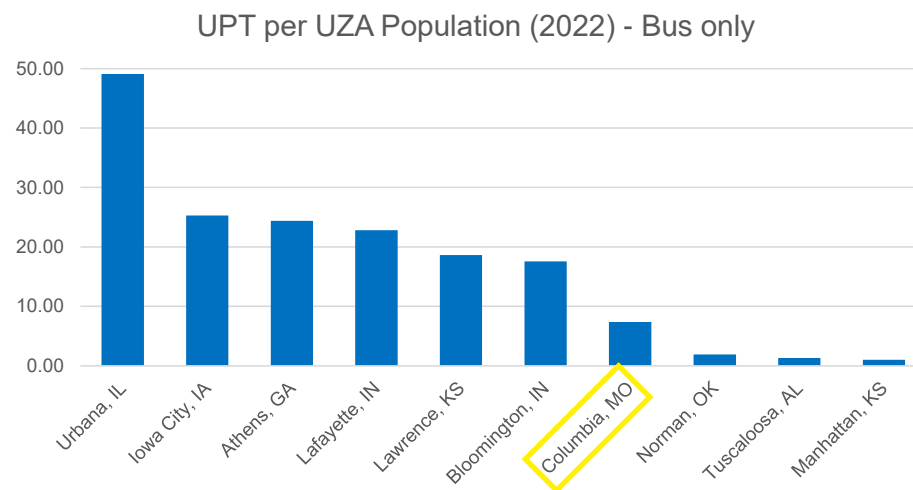
Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

However, Missouri's funding for transit has improved significantly since 2021. According to the Missouri Public Transit Association, as of 2023 Missouri's state transit funding has improved to \$1.89 per capita.

As would be expected with lower levels of service, as documented by VOMS and VRH statistics, Columbia also has lower transit ridership than most peers. In 2022, Columbia's 1,089,440 unlinked passenger trips (UPT) ranked 7th out of 10 peers. However, this number is more than four times as much as the three lowest: Norman, Tuscaloosa, and Manhattan. Unsurprisingly, peers with the highest ridership numbers are those with the most service provided: Champaign-Urbana followed by Lafayette, Athens, and Iowa City.



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.



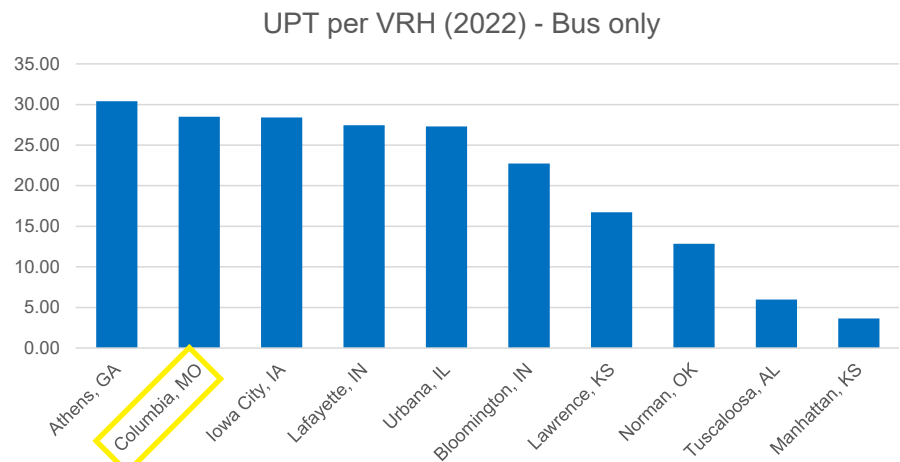
Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

Statistics are similar when comparing UPT per UZA population, or the number of transit riders per capita. Columbia again ranks 7 out of 10, and the other peers rank similarly as with prior metrics. This analysis finds that service levels (VRH) is a more significant determinant of ridership than UZA population. For example, Tuscaloosa has a slightly higher UZA population than Columbia, but consistently ranks lower on service and ridership metrics.

## Key Finding

A different story becomes apparent when comparing unlinked passenger trips per vehicle revenue hour. This is a measure of efficiency, or how well a transit service provides trips per hour of service. On this metric, Columbia exceeds most peers, ranking 2nd out of 10.

This means that while service levels are low, the service that is provided is well-used, and Go COMO is getting great value for the funding provided. This statistic also indicates untapped potential for additional ridership, if more services were provided.



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.



## City-University Considerations

The data from the peer agencies provide valuable insights into the relationship between university enrollment and transit service demand. Go COMO is well-positioned to leverage this data for service optimization to better meet the needs of university populations. Continuous monitoring of enrollment trends and ridership satisfaction will be essential for maintaining and improving service quality.

In Columbia, with a substantial 27% of the UZA population being university students, strategic planning could focus on:

1. **Service Frequency:** Aligning bus schedules with university class times to handle peak demands efficiently.
2. **Extended Service:** Considering late-night or early-morning services to accommodate students' schedules, as well as weekend services for social and recreational activities.
3. **Route Planning:** Ensuring that popular destinations for students, like shopping centers, medical facilities, and recreational areas, are easily accessible.
4. **Marketing and Outreach:** Tailoring communication and engagement efforts to the student population, leveraging digital platforms commonly used by students.



**Table 1.9: Peer Agencies Service Overview**

City	Transit Provider	# of routes	Weekday span	Saturday span	Sunday span	Weekday freq.	Saturday freq.	Sunday freq.	Base Fare (single ride)
Columbia, MO	City of Columbia, dba: Go COMO	6	6:30am-6:30pm	10:00am-6:30pm	No service	45 min.*	45 min.*	No service	Free
Athens, GA	Athens-Clarke Co. Transit Dept.	20	6:00am-9:45pm	7:00am-6:45pm	7:00am-6:45pm	60 min.	60 min.	60 min.	Free
Iowa City, IA	City of Iowa City, Iowa City Transit	13	6:00am-10:00pm	7:00am-7:00pm	No service	30 min.	60 min.	No service	Free
Lawrence, KS	City of Lawrence	18	6:00am-8:00pm	6:00am-8:00pm	No service	20 min.	20 min.	No service	Free
Lafayette, IN	Greater Lafayette Public Transp. Corp.	23	5:45am-12:30am	6:45am-7:40pm	8:45am-6:40pm	30 min.	30 min.	60 min.	\$1.00
Urbana, IL	Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District	22	6:20am-1:00am	6:30am-1:00am	9:00am-3:00am	30 min.	30 min.	60 min.	\$1.00
Tuscaloosa, AL	Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit	7	5:00am-6:00pm	No service	No service	60 min.	No service	No service	\$1.00
Bloomington, IN	Bloomington Public Transp. Corp.	11	6:30am-9:30pm	7:30am-6:35pm	No service	60 min.	60 min.	No service	\$1.00
Norman, OK	City of Norman (EMBARK Norman)	5	7:00am-10:00pm	10:00am-7:00pm	No service	30 min./60 min.	30 min./60 min.	No service	Free
Manhattan, KS	Flint Hills Area Transp. Agency	8	7:00am-7:00pm	9:00am-7:00pm	No service	60 min.	60 min.	No service	\$1.00

\* This table, and all peer review comparisons in this section, are based on Go COMO's 45-minute routes operating prior to August 2023.

**Table 1.10: Missouri Agencies Service Overview**

City	Transit Provider	# of routes	Weekday span	Saturday span	Sunday span	Weekday freq.	Saturday freq.	Sunday freq.	Base Fare (single ride)
<b>Columbia, MO</b>	<b>City of Columbia, dba: Go COMO</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6:30am-6:30pm</b>	<b>10:00am-6:30pm</b>	<b>No service</b>	<b>45 min.*</b>	<b>45 min.*</b>	<b>No service</b>	<b>Free</b>
St. Louis, MO <sup>^</sup>	Metro Transit/Bi-State Development	47	5:00am-12:00am	5:00am-12:00am	5:00am-12:00am	20-30 min.	30-40 min.	60 min.	\$1.00
Kansas City, MO <sup>^</sup>	KCATA	38	4:30am-12:30am	5:00am-12:30am	5:00am-12:00am	15-60 min.	15-60 min.	30-60 min.	Free
Springfield, MO	City Utilities of Springfield	10	6:00am-9:45pm	6:00am-9:45pm	8:00am-5:00pm	30 min.	60 min.	60 min.	\$1.00
St. Joseph, MO	City of St. Joseph	8	5:30am-7:00pm	5:30am-7:00pm	No service	30 min.	60 min.	No service	\$1.00
Joplin, MO	City of Joplin	3	6:00am-6:00pm	No service	No service	60 min.	No service	No service	\$2.00
Jefferson City, MO	City of Jefferson City/JEFFTRAN	9	6:00am-6:00pm	No service	No service	40 min.	No service	No service	\$1.00
Cape Girardeau, MO	Cape Girardeau County Transit Auth.	1	8:00am-4:30pm	No service	No service	30 min.	No service	No service	Free

Notes:

<sup>^</sup> St. Louis and Kansas City information includes only bus services operating in Missouri. Rail service and service in Illinois and Kansas are not included.



# 2 Operations Analysis



## Overview

Go COMO, a department of the City of Columbia, provides multiple modes of public transportation services to the community. These include a total of 10 fixed routes, as well as paratransit services, all operating within Columbia. These are summarized below.

### Go COMO Fixed Routes

Six fixed routes are operated throughout the City of Columbia (as distinct from campus-focused routes discussed later), each designated by a color and route number. These routes operate six days per week and operate with similar schedules. All routes use the Wabash Bus Station as the primary hub and central terminus, with routes emanating from this hub in a radial pattern. Go COMO fixed routes include:

- 1 Black (MU/Providence South)
- 2 Red (West Broadway)
- 3 Gold (West Worley)
- 4 Orange (Rangeline North)
- 5 Blue (Paris/Clark/Ballenger)
- 6 Green (East Broadway/Keene)

### Paratransit

Go COMO also operates Paratransit, a federally-required demand response service for certified riders that are

unable to use fixed routes due to a disability or health condition. It is an ADA Complementary Paratransit service, provided to medically-qualified individuals within 3/4-mile of fixed routes and with the same operating hours. Area outside this 3/4-mile boundary is served on a “first-come, first-served” basis. To use Paratransit, riders must complete an application and be ruled to be eligible for the service, and then reserve trips to receive origin-to-destination curb-to-curb service.

### Tiger Line

Go COMO also operates four “Tiger Line” routes in and around, and funded by, the University of Missouri. These routes primarily provide transportation from outlying parking lots and residence halls to destinations on campus, and therefore are relatively limited in geographic coverage. These routes include:

- 401 Hearnes Loop
- 402 Trowbridge Loop
- 403 MU Reactor Loop
- 405 Campus Loop

Schedules vary based on the MU academic calendar. Additionally, Go COMO provides shuttle service to MU home football games, from the Downtown area and from major hotels.

## Existing Services

Go COMO routes operate weekdays and Saturdays. Weekday routes operate generally from 6:30 a.m. to either 5:55 or 6:40 p.m. Saturday routes start later in the day, at either 9:55 or 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Service spans for the Tiger Line routes vary slightly by route. The # 402 Trowbridge Loop and #403 MU Reactor Loop operate from 6 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on weekdays, whereas the #401 Hearnes Loop starts service at 5 a.m. and ends at 8:00 p.m. *Figure 2.1* below shows the span and frequency of each route in the system on all days of the week.

All GO COMO routes are operated at a temporarily-reduced 90-minute frequency. As previously noted, the goal is to get back to providing 45-minute frequency as soon as staffing levels allow. The Tiger Line routes

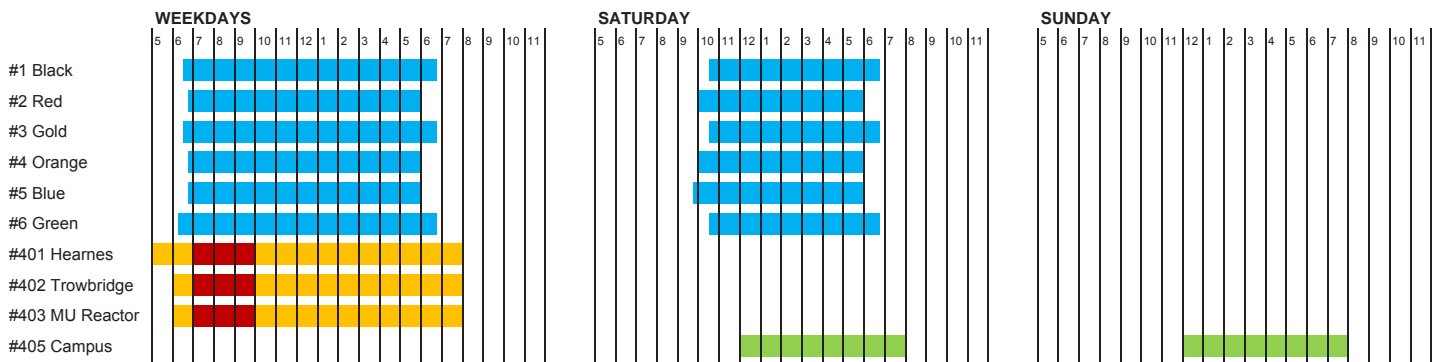
operate at a higher frequency with most routes operating at 20 minute service during the weekday and 10 minutes during morning times. Additionally, the #405 Campus Loop provides service every 30 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays.

All Go COMO routes operate as a “pulse” system with layovers and transfer activity at Wabash Station. Each route operates a 40 minute loop, returning to Wabash Station. Each route has a 5-minute scheduled layover at the end of each trip to allow riders to transfer between routes. When a route comes into Wabash Station, it will go out as a different route thereby creating a 90 minute frequency on each individual route.

**Figure 2.1: Span & Frequency Chart**

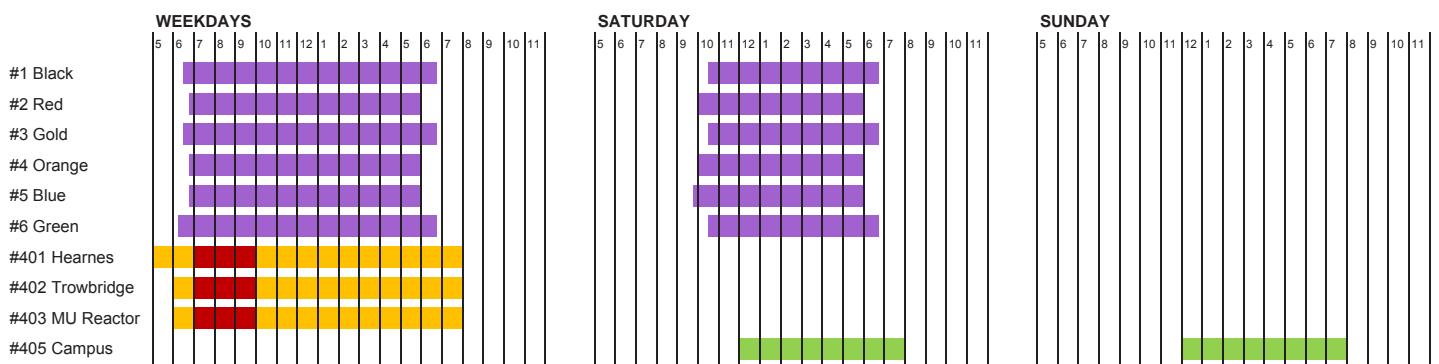
### Baseline Service

*Planned & Funded service levels with full staffing.*



### Existing Service (since August 2023)

*Temporarily reduced from Baseline levels due to staffing shortage.*



#### Legend

Frequency (in minutes): 10 15 20 30 45 60 90

## Existing Facilities

Go COMO's primary facilities consist of a vehicle storage, maintenance, and fueling facility (Grissum Building) and an operations and transit hub facility (Wabash Bus Station). Bus stops, with a variety of conditions and amenities, are located along routes throughout the community. The following section summarizes these facilities, as well as the department's current fleet of vehicles.

### Wabash Station – Downtown

The Wabash Railroad Station at 126 North 10th Street is a historic train station in Downtown Columbia. It serves as Go COMO's primary transit center and where daily operations are conducted. The building was constructed in 1909; passenger rail service ended in 1969. The City of Columbia purchased the station in 1982 and began using it for bus operations. The building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, underwent renovation and restoration in 2007. This project included construction of an administrative wing and a large canopy-covered bus port extending into the rear lot.

All six of Go COMO's current routes use Wabash Station as the primary hub. Buses "pulse" from the station every 45 minutes (currently 90 minutes) and passengers can make transfers between routes. After a period of closure, the interior lobby of the historic train station was reopened for customers in 2024. The transit superintendent, supervisors, and dispatch for the fixed-route operation are located at the Wabash Station.



### Grissum Building

Go COMO, under the purview of the Public Works Department, shares daily operations and storage facilities with other departments within Public Works at the Grissum Building, which is located at 1313 Lakeview Avenue. The building was built in the early 1960s and houses most of Public Works Department's equipment, including Go COMO buses. Other departmental equipment includes that for streets, fleet operations, and traffic operations.

All buses are washed, fueled, and stored indoors at the Grissum Building. The majority of transit staff also park personal vehicles on-site. The Grissum Building facility accommodates current Go COMO transit vehicles but has limited space for expansion.

In 2023, Go COMO was awarded \$23.1 through the USDOT's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program to remodel and expand the Grissum facility. Existing lean-tos will be replaced with an expanded garage to house the entire fleet and accommodate growth. A number of safety, security, accessibility, and structural upgrades will be included as well.





## Bus Stop Infrastructure

While Wabash Bus Station is the focal point and hub of the Go COMO system, there are numerous other key bus stops throughout the city. At selected bus stops with observed high ridership or near critical transit destinations, the City has invested in bus stop infrastructure to improve the safety and comfort of passengers while waiting on a bus.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of bus stop infrastructure in the Go COMO system. As of 2023, there are 37 stops with shelters. The City desires to increase the number of amenities for riders. However, this often proves challenging due to site constraints, available right-of-way, maintenance costs, and securing approval from adjacent property owners.

The recommendations of this study, particularly in near-term phases, seek to continue use of these shelters by maintaining, and improving service to these locations. Where feasible, new and improved services should include a capital funding component to provide accessible bus stops, with amenities for riders at locations anticipated for significant ridership. An accessible bus stop requires an unobstructed 8-foot by 5-foot concrete pad at the vehicle boarding location, and connected to an “accessible path” (sidewalk). Public and private construction projects along bus routes should incorporate these accessibility improvements at bus stops.

**Figure 2.2: Selected Bus Stops**



*West Columbia Walmart bus stop.*



*Typical bus stop sign provided at Go COMO stops.*

**Table 2.1: Go COMO Bus Stop Amenities**

Amenity	# of stops	% of stops
Streetlamp	152	66.7%
Sidewalk	186	81.6%
Wheelchair Access	156	68.4%
Freestanding Pole	163	71.5%
Shelter	37	16.2%
Trash Can	48	21.1%
<b>Total Stops</b>	<b>228</b>	



*MU Health Care (Keene St.) bus stop.*

## Fleet

The City of Columbia currently owns a total of 41 buses that are used for revenue service. Each bus is assigned to operate a specific service. These include:

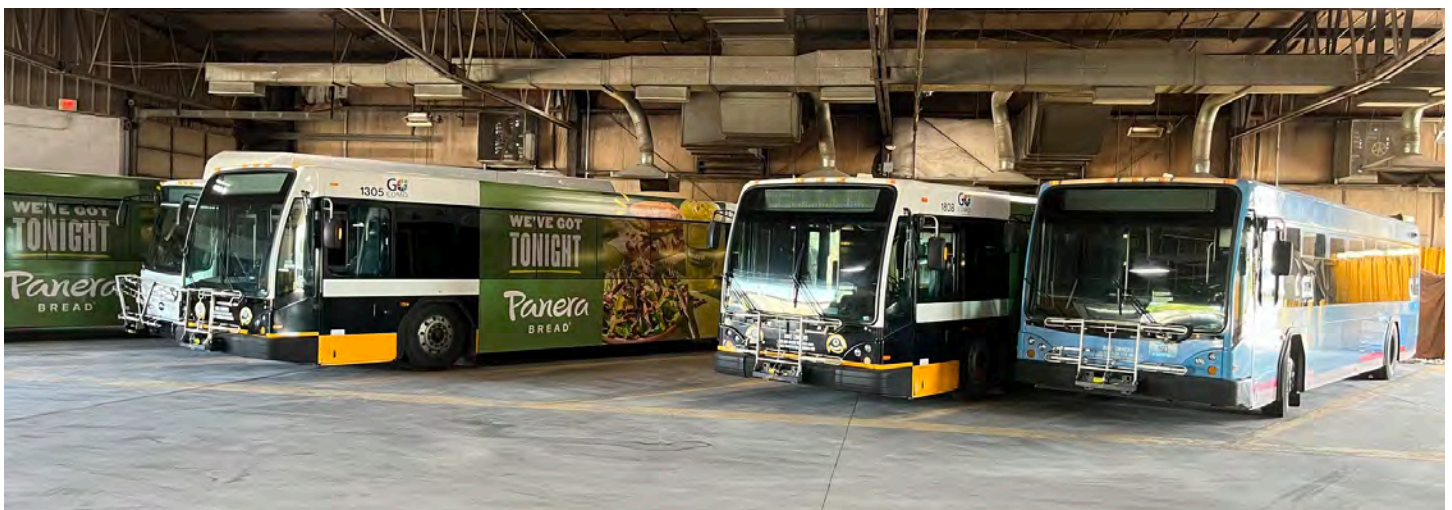
- Fixed Route (Go COMO): 12 buses
- Paratransit: 15 buses
- Campus (Tiger Line): 14 buses

The fleet consists of a wide range of vehicle types, as well as fuel types. Go COMO utilizes a mix of 40-foot, 35-foot, and 30-foot buses for Fixed Route and Campus services, and cutaway buses for Paratransit services. A variety of fuel types are employed as well, with gasoline, diesel, compressed natural gas (CNG), and electric buses utilized all in the system. The full fleet of vehicles is summarized in *Table 2.2* below.



**Table 2.2: Current Go COMO Fleet**

Service	Make	Model	Fuel	Qty.
Fixed Route	Gillig	35 Foot	Diesel	4
Fixed Route	Gillig	40 Foot	Disel	2
Fixed Route	Gillig	40 Foot	CNG	3
Fixed Route	Gillig	35 Foot	Electric	6
Fixed Route	BYD	35 Foot	Electric	6
Fixed Route	BYD	K7 30 Foot	Electric	4
Fixed Route	New Flyer	30 Foot	Diesel	1
Paratransit	Ford	V10	Gas	14
Support	Ford	Explorer	Gas	1
Support	Ford	E450	Gas	2
Support	Chevrolet	Tahoe	Gas	3
Support	MV	MV1	CNG	2





## Financial Capacity & Staffing

Go COMO is funded through a variety of grants, local sales taxes, and local fund transfers. As of the 2024 fiscal year budget, Go COMO's annual operating expense is approximately \$8.4 million, with an additional \$3.4 million allocated for capital projects. The majority of local funding comes from a one-half cent transportation sales tax. This tax has traditionally been allocated with 50 percent toward transit, 25 percent towards streets, and 25 percent toward the airport. These amounts are not determined by statute and may vary from year to year.

Federal (predominantly) and state grants are second highest source of funding at 34 percent of total revenue. Fees and service charges, primarily user fares, are another source of funding. *Table 2.3* shows the agency's sources of funding by category in FY 2024.

Since 2021, Go COMO has been operating fare free, thus contributing no fare revenues to its overall revenue sources.

### Fares

*Note: There are currently no fares on GO COMO services, but an evaluation of prior fare recovery statistics is helpful to understanding the potential of this revenue source in the future.*

The farebox recovery ratio—the percent of revenue that is generated by fares—is one measure of financial effectiveness in terms of operating costs recovered from fares. To get a picture of prior farebox performance, data

was averaged for FY 2018 and 2019. The average fare collected for these years was \$.077. Similarly, farebox recovery rate for both fixed route and paratransit services averaged 17% for both these years.

Go COMO plans to continue the fare-free program in FY 2024. If fares are at some point reinstated, Go COMO will need to reallocate staff or hire staff to reconcile farebox collections. Additionally, updated fareboxes will be needed to keep pace with technology and can offer additional payment methods for customers.

Subsidy per passenger boarding is a way to consider the financial performance of service. Net subsidy per boarding measures the additional cost to Go COMO required to cover operating costs, after farebox revenue is accounted for. In 2019, prior to the COVID pandemic and the beginning of free fares, the weekday and Saturday average for bus and paratransit services was approximately \$4.88.

### Staffing

The goal for Go COMO is to provide 45 minute frequency on all routes, as it operated up until August 2023. The biggest challenge in achieving this goal is hiring bus operators to provide this level of service. Like many transit agencies across the country GO COMO has experienced driver shortages since COVID. Recent efforts to hire additional bus operators has been positive, however, retaining staff has been an issue.

**Table 2.3: FY 2024 City of Columbia Transit Budget**

#### Total Appropriations (Expenditures)

	Adopted FY 2024	Anticipated FY 2024
<b>Operating</b>		
Personnel Services	\$5,374,885	\$4,460,185
Materials & Supplies	\$1,097,277	\$1,097,277
Travel & Training	\$5,000	\$5,000
Intragov. Charges	\$1,206,980	\$1,206,980
Utilities	\$124,457	\$124,457
Services & Misc.	\$561,684	\$561,684
Transfer	\$43,335	\$43,335
Capital Additions	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>\$8,413,618</b>	<b>\$7,498,918</b>
Capital Projects	\$3,431,942	\$3,431,942
<b>Total Appropriations (Exp.)</b>	<b>\$11,845,560</b>	<b>\$10,930,860</b>

#### Dedicated Funding Sources

	Adopted FY 2024	Anticipated FY 2024
Revenue from other Govt.	\$2,445,644	\$2,445,644
Transfers	\$3,799,824	\$3,799,824
Fees & Service Charges	\$882,454	\$882,454
Investment Income	\$37,388	\$37,388
Misc.	\$10,331	\$10,331
<b>Total Dedicated Funding</b>	<b>\$7,175,641</b>	<b>\$7,175,641</b>
<b>Authorized FTE</b>	<b>59.03</b>	<b>59.03</b>



## Ridership

Similar to most other transit agencies, ridership on Go COMO fixed route system is recovering from impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Ridership on Go COMO routes have experienced an increase of 20.3% from 2018 to 2022. During this same period TIGER Line routes experienced a 32% decrease in ridership. Since a pandemic-related dip in 2020-2021, paratransit ridership has grown substantially, with 2023 paratransit ridership 48 percent higher than in 2021.

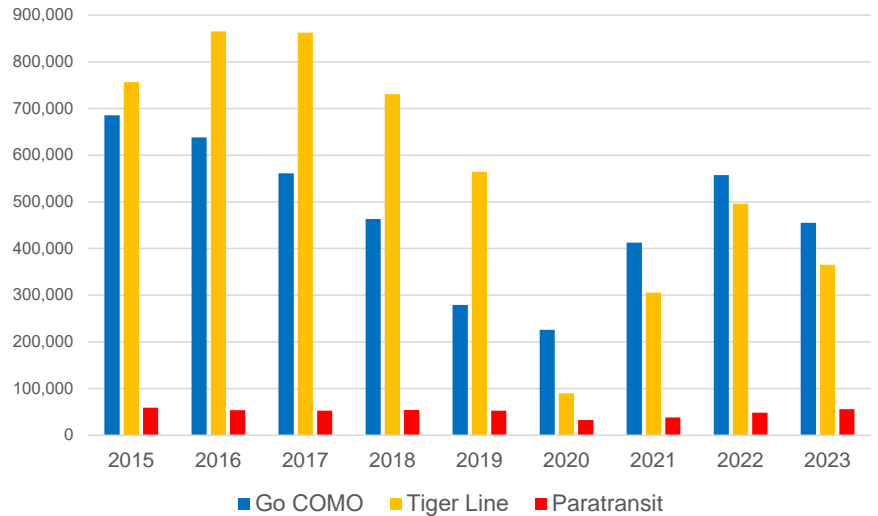
### Ridership by Route

**Black Route** – This route has experienced ridership decreases during periods of 2020 to 2022 while ridership levels for 2023 are similar to 2019 levels. In 2023, this route provided 55,127 trips compared to 53,647 trips provided in 2019. This route ranks at the bottom for productivity in 2023 when compared to 2016 when its ridership was 191,435 trips.

**Red Route** – Ridership has grown over the past few years with 2021 showing highest usage of 74,386 trips provided. During COVID year of 2020, this route experienced a low of 29,968 trips but current ridership levels have since doubled.

**Gold Route** – The Gold Route has experienced positive ridership gains in the past few years with 2022 showing over 90,000 trips. Since the route reductions took place in 2023 the Gold Route has experienced an 11% decrease in ridership.

Figure 2.3: Annual Ridership by Service Type



**Orange Route** – During 2021 to 2022 the Orange Route experienced a 52% increase in ridership. For 2023 there were 78,248 trips provided. However, since this time ridership has decreased to 2021 levels due to the route reductions that occurred in August 2023.

**Blue Route** – Since 2016 this route has experienced some ridership gains with highest level in 2022 with over 105,000 trips. This route experienced a 29% increase from 2021 to 2022. The route ranks as the second most productive with 2023 ridership at 81,959 trips. Compared to 2016 ridership at 41,832, ridership has nearly doubled.

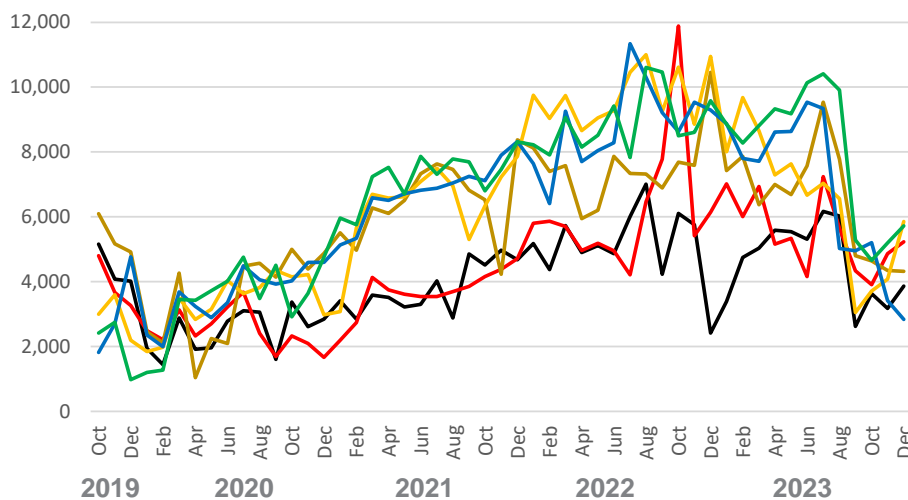
**Green Route** – The Green Route has shown positive ridership gains during period of 2020 to 2022. In 2020 there were 41,158 trips provided, while 2022 there were 106,880 trips. This route currently ranks as the highest for productivity with 95,768 trips in 2023.

### TIGER Line Routes

The highest usage for these routes was during 2016 and 2017 with approximately 860,000 trips provided. During these years there were six bus routes that provided service to the University, whereas today there are four bus routes. Ridership for 2023 shows the Tiger Line Routes provided a total of 364,989 trips.

The pandemic year of 2020 significantly impacted TIGER line routes as “in person” classes were stopped at the University. In 2018 these routes provided 730,721 trips, whereas in 2020 there were 89,988 trips, an 88% decrease.

Figure 2.4: Monthly Ridership by Route (2019–2023)

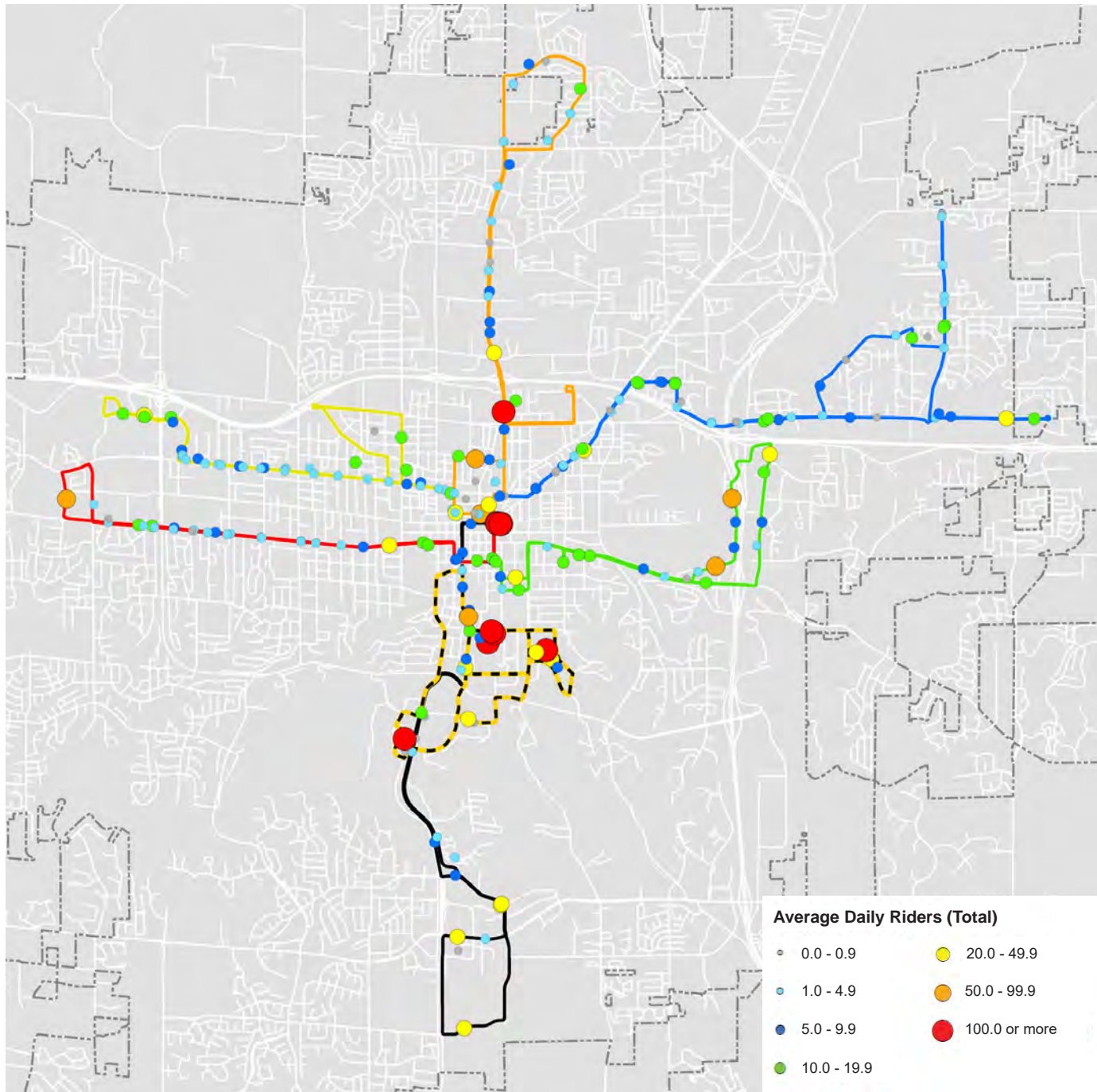


## Ridership Patterns

Figure 2.5 below shows annual ridership numbers for each bus stop in Columbia, during the 2023 fiscal year. GoCOMO routes have remarkably consistent ridership across all routes and segments of routes. While certain specific stops may have low ridership, no specific route segments (spanning multiple stops) stand out as being

unproductive service from a ridership perspective. Table 2.4 on the next page provides a list of the highest ridership stops. As the hub of the system that is served by all routes, Wabash Bus Station has by far the highest ridership. A total of 12 stops in the system have ridership that averages over 50 daily riders.

**Figure 2.5: Ridership by Stop (April 2023)**



*Note: April 2023 data is used for this analysis because it provides the most complete APC data and the clearest view of ridership across all routes, primarily due to a full month of MU classes with no breaks (as most other months have) and generally good weather.*

**Table 2.4: Highest Ridership Stops**  
*Individual Stops/Routes*

STOP	ROUTE	ON	OFF	TOTAL
DOBBS GROUP RES HALLS / TIGE	401 Hearnese	312	313	625
ROLLINS GRP RES HALLS / ROLL	402 Trowbridge	201	179	380
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	6 Green	151	140	291
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	5 Blue	149	137	286
MU STUDENT CENTER / ROLLINS	402 Trowbridge	106	147	253
MU STUDENT CENTER / ROLLINS	401 Hearnese	37	194	231
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	4 Orange	89	107	196
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	3 Gold	68	90	158
REACTOR PARKING LOT / RP10	403 Reactor	87	66	153
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	1 Black	75	76	151
BOONE ELECTRIC @ RANGELINE	4 Orange	63	52	115
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	2 Red	81	0	81
PARK AVE / 8TH STREET	3 Gold	43	35	78
NOYES HALL / 6TH ST	403 Reactor	28	45	73
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	2 Red	0	58	58
WILKES BLVD & 7TH ST	4 Orange	21	38	58
CONLEY ROAD / WALMART	6 Green	24	31	55
CONLEY ROAD / HY VEE	6 Green	37	18	55
PARK DE VILLE / ASH STREET W	2 Red	27	24	52

*Consolidated by Stop*

STOP	ON	OFF	TOTAL
WABASH STATION / 10TH ST	613	608	1,221
DOBBS GROUP RES HALLS / TIGE	329	329	658
MU STUDENT CENTER / ROLLINS	143	343	486
ROLLINS GRP RES HALLS / ROLL	213	212	425
REACTOR PARKING LOT / RP10	87	66	153
BOONE ELECTRIC @ RANGELINE	63	52	115
PARK AVE / 8TH STREET	59	49	108
NOYES HALL / 6TH ST	31	48	79
WILKES BLVD & 7TH ST	21	38	58
CONLEY ROAD / WALMART	24	31	55
CONLEY ROAD / HY VEE	37	18	55
PARK DE VILLE / ASH STREET W	27	24	52

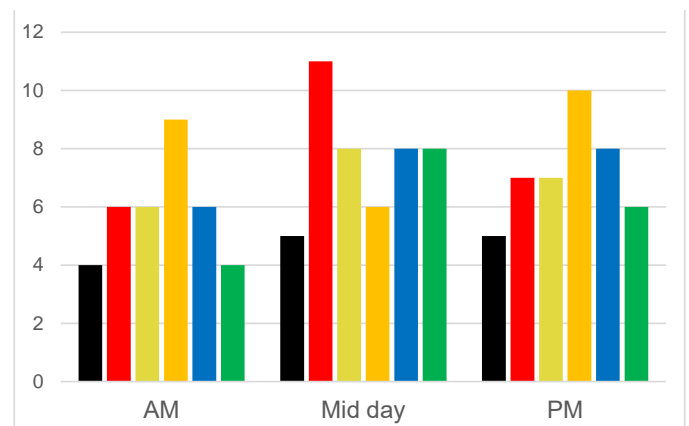
### Ridership by Day and Time

Ridership on the Go COMO system is fairly consistent throughout the service day. There is no peak-hour peaking indicative of an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. office workday. In fact, ridership is highest during midday hours, with an average of 7.7 average passenger load, compared to 7.2 in the PM peak hours and 5.8 in the AM peak hours.

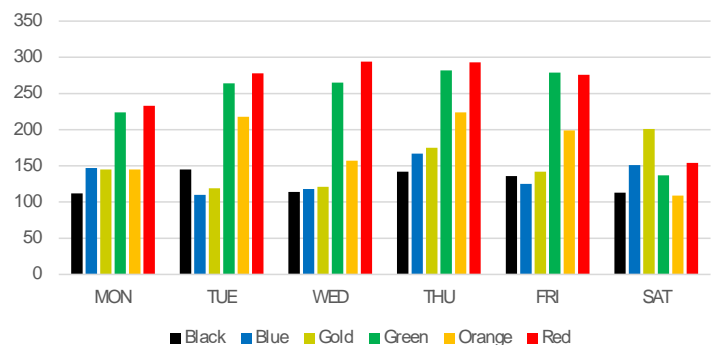
There is also a significant variation by route. The Red route sees the highest midday peak with an average load of 11 passengers. The Orange route is the only route with AM and PM passenger loads that are higher than midday loads.

When ridership is viewed by time of day, Monday through Friday all exhibit similar levels of ridership, ranging from 1,006 (Monday) to 1,283 (Thursday) average riders per day. Saturday is notably lower (865) but still more than 76 percent of the Weekday average.

**Figure 2.6: Ridership by Time Period**



**Figure 2.7: Ridership by Day**





## Route Profiles

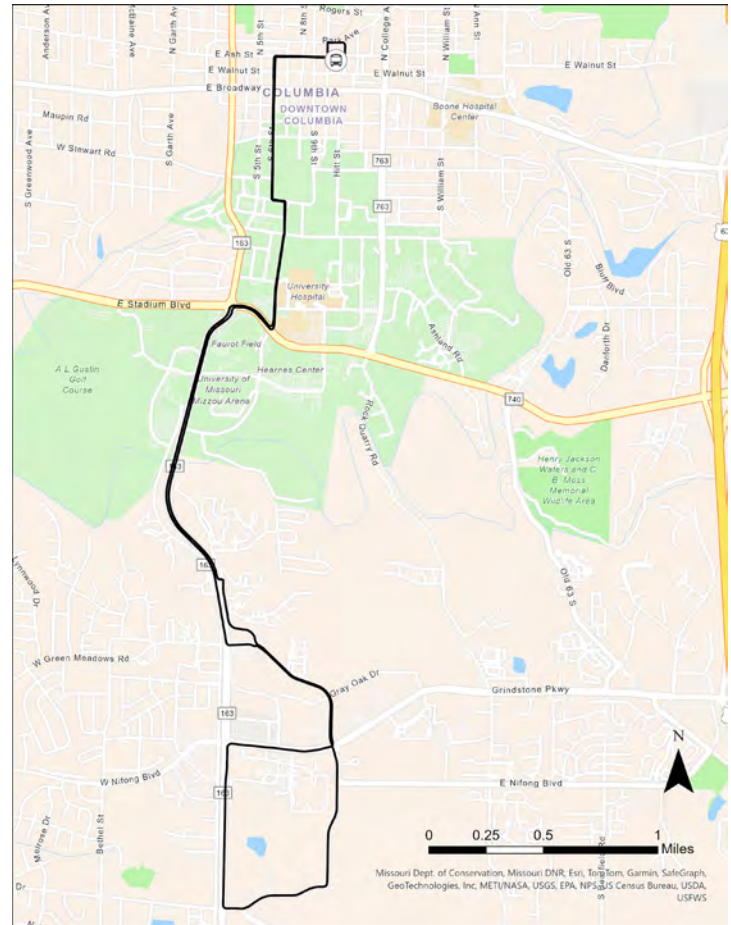
# Route #1 – Black (MU/Providence South)

The #1 Black Route operates in the South region of Columbia serving key destinations such as University of Missouri, Veterans Hospital, shopping centers and South Providence Medical Plaza. This route is interlined with the #3 Gold Route. The Black Route provides bi-directional service on Ash Street, 6th Street, Tiger Avenue and Providence Road. This route operates a one way loop around Southamptton Drive and Providence Road.

### Key Findings:

- Ranks near the bottom for ridership
- Has high usage of wheelchair boardings
- Ranks highest for cost per passenger

Black Route #1		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	81	3.50%
Revenue Miles	179.95	9%
Revenue Hours	12.25	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	4	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	2.2	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	6.5	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$368,970	7%
Cost per Passenger	\$18.23	
On time performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	4	
Mid day	5	
PM	5	
Route Average Load	5	
Highest # Observed	23	



Black Route #1	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:30 a.m. - 6:40 p.m.; Saturday: 10:30 a.m. - 6:40 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 81 Saturday: 71
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	6.5
Annual Cost Per Route	\$442,419

## Route Profiles

# Route #2 – Red (West Broadway)

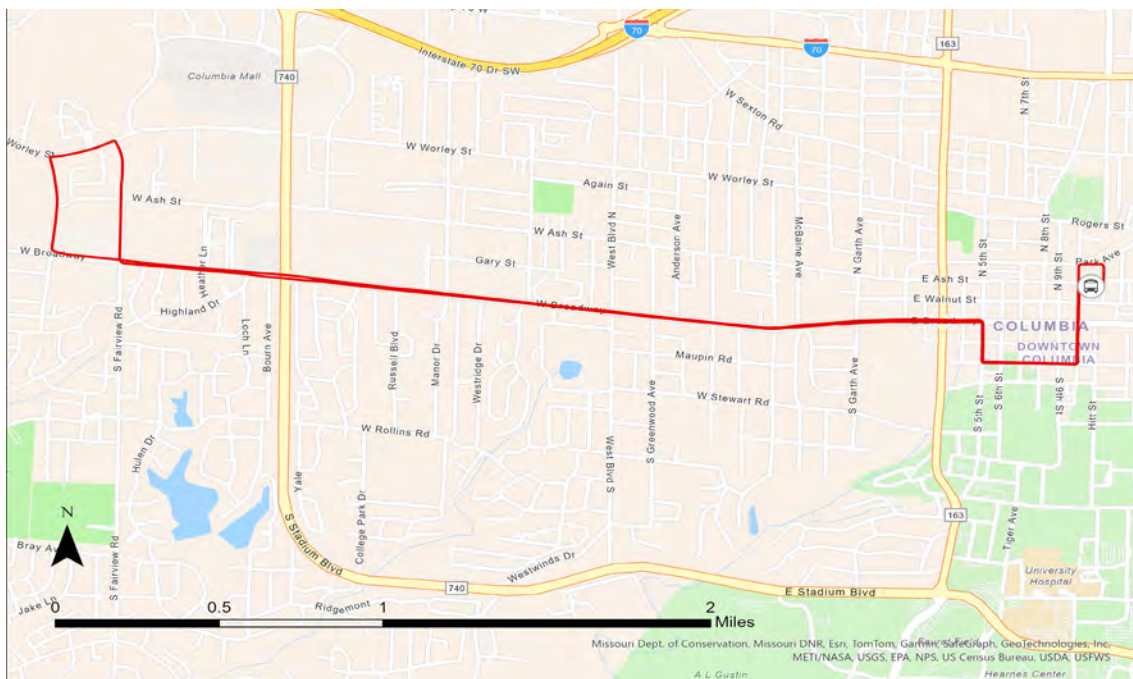
The #2 Red Route offers service in Western region of Columbia along Broadway. Along this corridor it provides bi-directional service to Walmart and Crossroads shopping center. The Red Route is interlined with #6 Green Route. The Red Route ends with a terminal loop along Park De Ville Drive and West Worley Street.

### Key Findings:

- Average cost per passenger is slightly above system average
- Highest performing route for passengers for hour for Go COMO Routes

Red Route #2		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	171	7.50%
Revenue Miles	132.6	12%
Revenue Hours	12.33	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	3	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	0.77	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	13.8	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$371,379	7%
Cost per Passenger	\$8.65	
On-time Performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	6	
Mid day	11	
PM	7	
Route Average Load	8	
Highest # Observed	26	

Red Route #2	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:40 a.m. - 5:55 p.m.; Saturday: 9:55 a.m. - 5:55 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 171 Saturday: 96
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	13.8
Annual Cost Per Route	\$444,829



## Route Profiles

# Route #3 – Gold (West Worley)

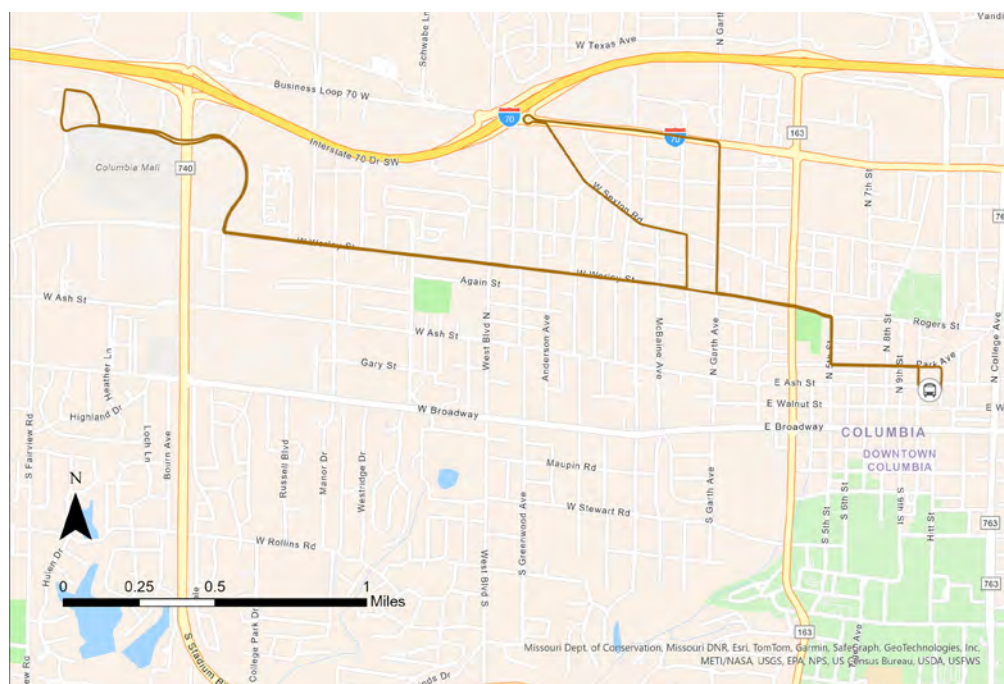
The #3 Gold Route serves the Northwest region of Columbia with bi-directional service along Worley Street. The Gold Route is interlined with the #5 Blue Route. This route also serves neighborhoods and shopping areas via a one-way loop along West Sexton Road, Business Loop and Garth Avenue. Key destinations include Columbia Mall, Public schools, Public Health Department and Oak Tower apartment complex.

### Key Findings:

- Ranks near the bottom for ridership

Red Route #2		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	171	7.50%
Revenue Miles	132.6	12%
Revenue Hours	12.33	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	3	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	0.77	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	13.8	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$371,379	7%
Cost per Passenger	\$8.65	
On-time Performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	6	
Mid day	11	
PM	7	
Route Average Load	8	
Highest # Observed	26	

Gold Route #3	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:26 a.m. - 6:40 p.m; Saturday: 10:30 a.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 87      Saturday: 125
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	7.1





## Route Profiles

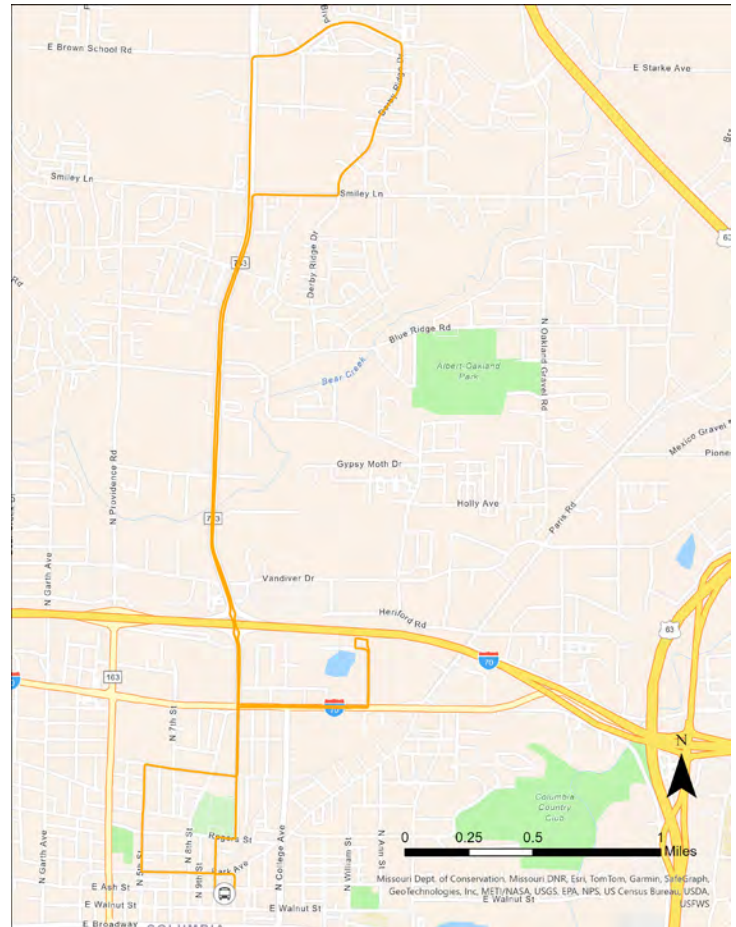
# Route #4 – Orange (Rangeline North)

The #4 Orange Route provides bi-directional service along Rangeline Street serving Northern Columbia. The Orange Route is interlined with #1 Black Route. This route starts with a one way loop around 5th and Wilkes Boulevard that serves Columbia College and provides direct service to Ashley Street Center. The Orange Route ends with a one way loop to serve neighborhoods in North Columbia along Derby Ridge Drive and Smiley Lane.

### Key Findings:

- Has highest wheelchair boardings of all routes

Orange Route #4		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	117	5%
Revenue Miles	155.05	10%
Revenue Hours	12.17	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	5	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	1.3	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	9.6	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$366,560	7.20%
Cost per Passenger	\$12.45	
On-time Performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	9	
Mid day	6	
PM	10	
Route Average Load	8	
Highest # Observed	40	



Orange Route #4	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:40 a.m. - 5:55 p.m.; Saturday: 9:55 a.m. - 5:55 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 117      Saturday: 68
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	9.6
Annual Cost Per Route	\$384,030

## Route Profiles

# Route #5 – Blue (Paris/Clark/Ballenger)

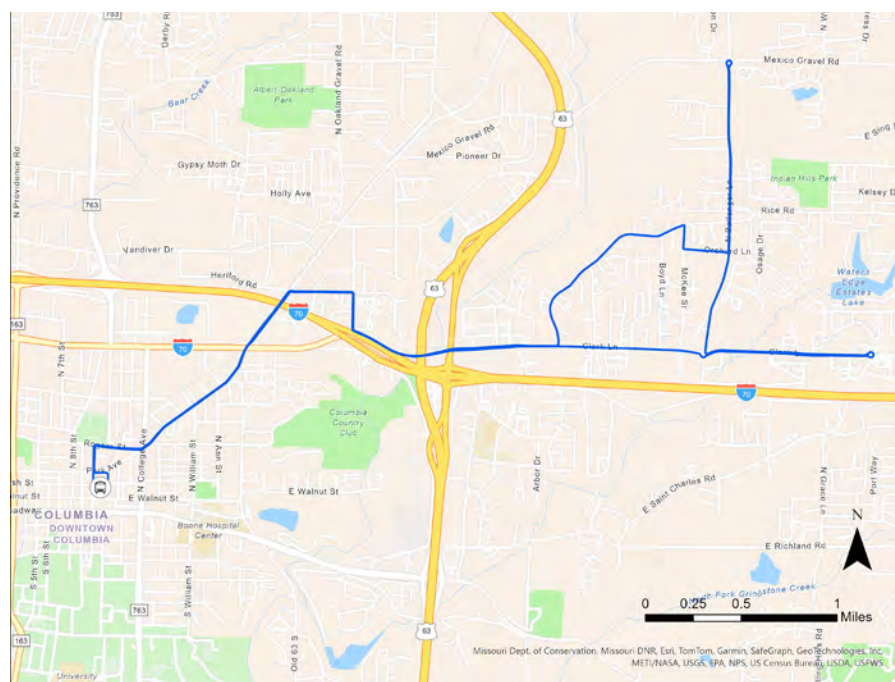
The #5 Blue Route is located in the Eastern area of the city providing service to industrial and employment centers. This route operates bi-directionally along Paris Road, Whitegate Drive and portion of Clark Lane. This route covers neighborhood and shopping areas with one directional service inbound along Hanover Boulevard. The Blue Route is interlined with the #3 Gold Route.

### Key Findings:

- Ranks on the lower end of ridership
- Has highest annual miles among Go COMO Routes

Blue Route #5		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	83	4%
Revenue Miles	218.1	7%
Revenue Hours	12.25	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	1	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	2.6	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	6.7	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$368,970	7.25%
Cost per Passenger	\$17.72	
On-time Performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	6	
Mid day	8	
PM	8	
Route Average Load	7	
Highest # Observed	26	

Blue Route #5	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:40 a.m. - 6:10 p.m.; Saturday: 9:51 a.m. - 5:55 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 83 Saturday: 94
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	6.7
Annual Cost Per Route	\$386,439



## Route Profiles

# Route #6 – Green (East Broadway/Keene)

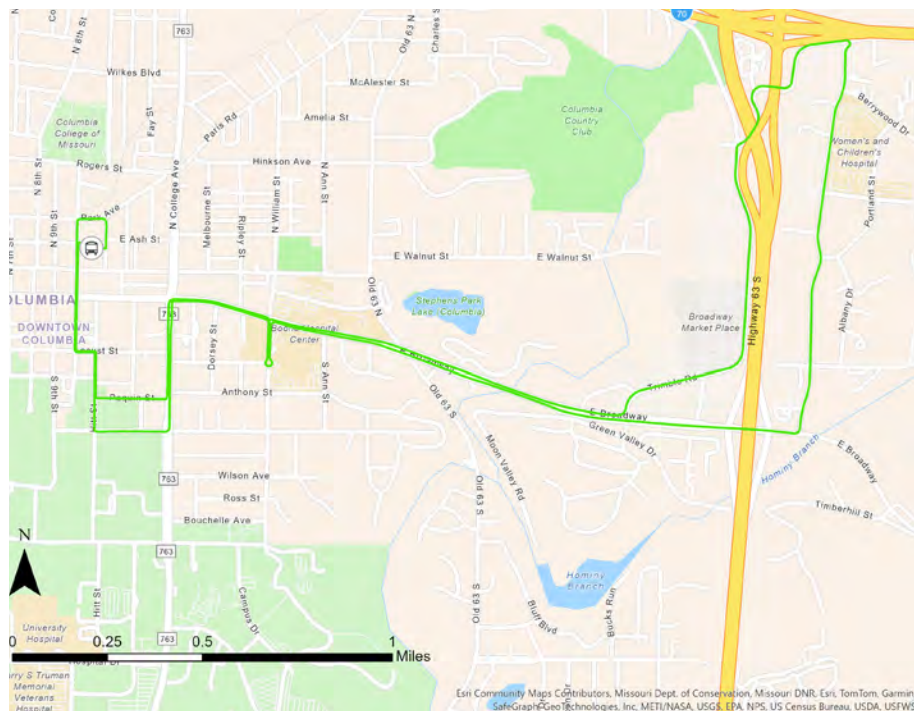
The #6 Green Route provides service to the Southeast area of Columbia along Broadway. This route ends with a one-way loop around medical and shopping areas along Keene and Conley Road. The Green Route is interlined with #2 Red Route. Key destinations for this route include University of Missouri, Stephens College, Women's and Children's Hospital, Walmart and hotels.

### Key Findings:

- Has lowest annual miles among Go COMO Routes
- Ranks in the middle for ridership and passengers per revenue hour

Green Route #6		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	163	7%
Revenue Miles	139.55	12%
Revenue Hours	12.33	12%
Wheelchair Boardings	3	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	0.85	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	13.2	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$371,379	7.30%
Cost per Passenger	9.06	
On-time Performance		
Average Passenger Load by Time of Day		
AM	4	
Mid day	8	
PM	6	
Route Average Load	7	
Highest # Observed	30	

Green Route #6	
Frequency	Weekday: 90 minutes; Saturday: 90 minutes
Service Span	Weekday: 6:45 a.m. - 6:10 p.m; Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	1
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 163 Saturday: 85
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	13.2
Annual Cost Per Route	\$388,849





## Route Profiles

# Tiger Line #401 – Hearnese Loop

Route #401 is one of the four Tiger Line routes operating weekdays only. Route #401 serves the center of the MU campus and runs north and south between the activity centers of Hearnese Center and the Recreation Center. Morning headways for Route #401 start at 10 minute intervals then operate at 20 minutes service the rest of the day.

### Key Findings:

- The second highest performing route for ridership

Hearnese Loop #401		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	850	23.8%
Revenue Miles	106.65	24%
Revenue Hours	18.17	13%
Wheelchair Boardings	0	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	3.3	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	22.8	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$710,139	7.24%
Cost per Passenger	\$5.25	

Hearnese Loop #401	
Frequency	Weekday: 10 minutes, 6:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.; 20 minutes, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Service Span	Weekday: 5 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Peak Vehicles	2
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday:
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	22.8
Annual Cost Per Route	\$710,139



## Route Profiles

# Tiger Line #402 – Trowbridge Loop

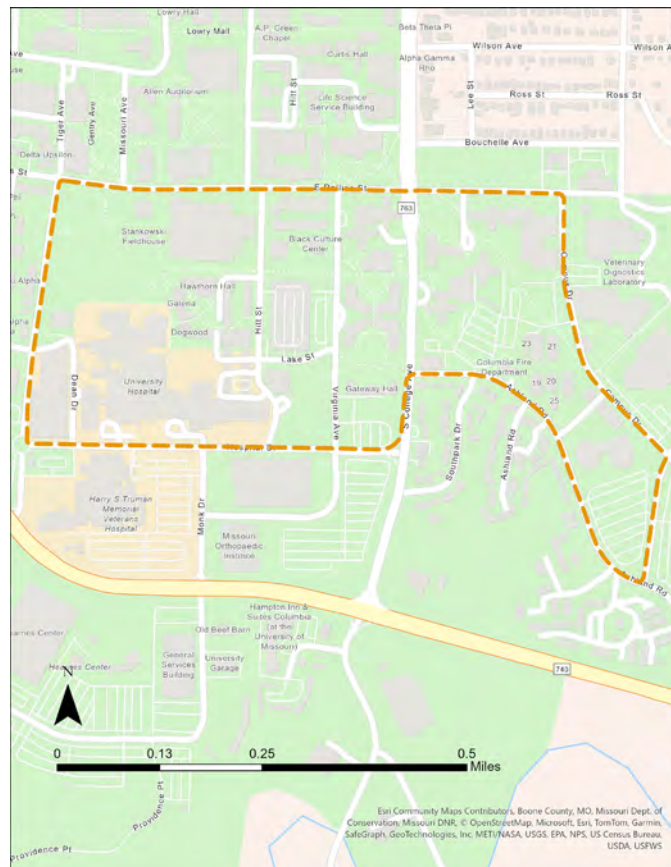
Route #402 is a Tiger Line day route operating during weekdays only. This route operates on the east side of campus and runs along Rollins Street, Ashland Road and Hospital Drive. Activity centers include the Recreational center, residence halls, and apartment complexes.

### Key Findings:

- Ranks as second highest for passengers per revenue mile
- Highest performing route for passengers per revenue hour

Trowbridge Loop #402		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	1,142	31.8%
Revenue Miles	119.45	21%
Revenue Hours	17	14%
Wheelchair Boardings	0	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	5.6	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	39.8	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$546,979	6.8%
Cost per Passenger	\$3.01	

Trowbridge Loop #402	
Frequency	Weekday: 10 minutes, 6:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.; 20 minutes, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Service Span	Weekday: 6 a.m. - 8 p.m
Peak Vehicles	2
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday:
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	39.8
Annual Cost Per Route	\$546,979



## Route Profiles

# Tiger Line #403 – MU Reactor Loop

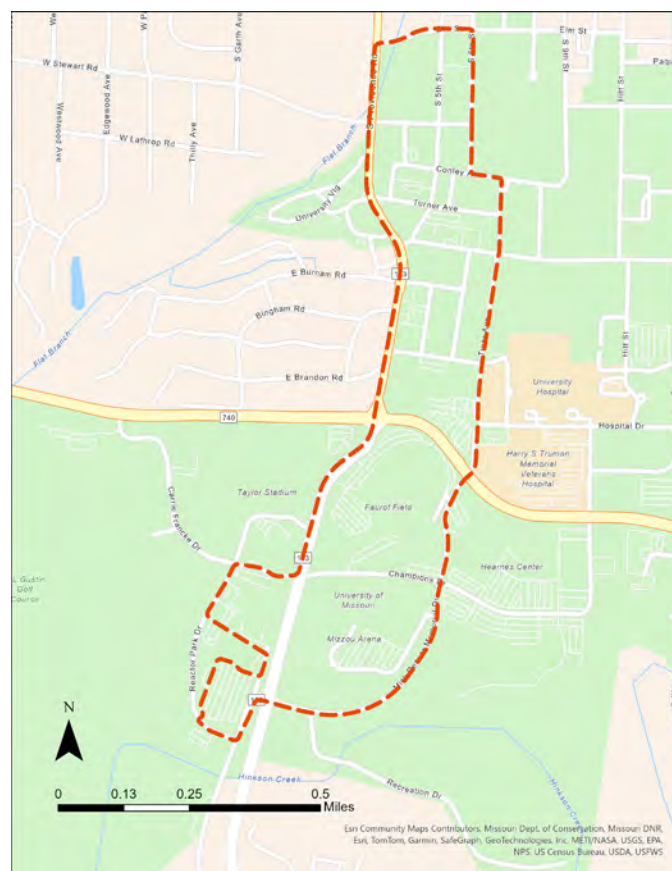
Route #403 operates during weekdays and provides service till 8:00 pm. This route travels north and south, serving the western portion of the MU campus and connecting activity centers such as Memorial Stadium, Mizzou Arena, and several student housing complexes.

### Key Findings:

- Ranks on higher end for ridership

MU Reactor Loop #403		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	347.6	9.70%
Revenue Miles	203	13%
Revenue Hours	21	11%
Wheelchair Boardings	1	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	1	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	9.9	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$352,340	8.30%
Cost per Passenger	\$12.07	

MU Reactor Loop #403	
Frequency	Weekday: 10 minutes, 6:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.; 20 minutes, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Service Span	Weekday: 6 a.m. - 8 p.m
Peak Vehicles	2
Average Daily Ridership	Weekday: 347.6
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	9.9
Annual Cost Per Route	\$352,340





## Route Profiles

# Tiger Line #405 – Campus Loop

Route #405 operates only on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 8:00 PM. This route has 30 minute frequencies serving MU student center, Hearn Center and Trowbridge area.

Campus Loop #405		
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Ridership	126.8	3.50%
Revenue Miles	44.8	1.76%
Revenue Hours	4.42	1.90%
Wheelchair Boardings	N/A	
Passengers per Revenue Mile	6.3	
Passengers per Revenue Hour	26	
Performance Indicator	Average Weekday	% of Total
Total Operating Cost	\$78,228	1.84%
Cost per Passenger	\$1.00	

Campus Loop #405							
Frequency	Saturday: 30 minutes: Sunday: 30 minutes						
Service Span	Saturday & Sunday: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.						
Peak Vehicles	1						
Average Daily Ridership	Saturday:						
Average Weekday Passengers per Revenue Hour	26						
Annual Cost Per Route	\$244,628						

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# 3

## Goal-Setting & Strategies



### Existing Community Goals

Existing community goals for transportation are primarily captured in The City's Comprehensive Plan (Columbia Imagined) and in CATSO's 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan. These plans are detailed in Section 1; transit-focused goals are summarized below.

Columbia Imagined includes two specific policies focused on improving transit service and promoting mobility management. Specific strategies within these goals include:

- Support and promote the public transportation system: connecting bus routes with trails and greenways, pursuing new technologies and efficiencies, and encouraging compact development along transit corridors to support transit feasibility.
- Expand the existing transit system to meet ridership needs: evaluate the existing system for system improvements, including different route models and funding diversification
- Promote public transportation system expansion with regional considerations: a transit service between Columbia, Columbia Regional Airport, and Jefferson City
- Identify funding to support regional transit

development and create partnerships between regional stakeholders to produce an integrated transportation system: coordinate with MU and other educational institutions, social services, major employment centers, and Boone County.

The 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan includes similar goals that seek to identify funding to expand and optimize public transportation services. Specific goals and objectives include:

- The Columbia MPA will have a first class street, highway and non-motorized network that meets the short and long-term needs of the MPA. This includes designing streets and highways that are safe and efficient to move vehicular traffic and accommodate transit, pedestrians and bicyclists with minimal environmental impacts.
- The public transportation system will be a viable transportation option throughout the MPA. This includes:
  - » Promote a mobility management public transportation system whereby all providers of public transportation work together to maximize efficiency and resources



- » Support and promote the public transportation system
- » Expand and redesign the existing transit system to meet ridership needs

Both plans, as well as other supporting plans covered in Section 1, acknowledge the need for additional, and diversified, funding sources to meet these goals and objectives over the plan horizon.

Additionally, the City's Climate Action Plan defines lofty goals for "mode shift" targets, where a larger share of residents walk, bike, or use public transportation. Specifically, the plan defines a goal of 17 percent of residents using transit to get to work or school by 2035, and 40 percent by 2050.

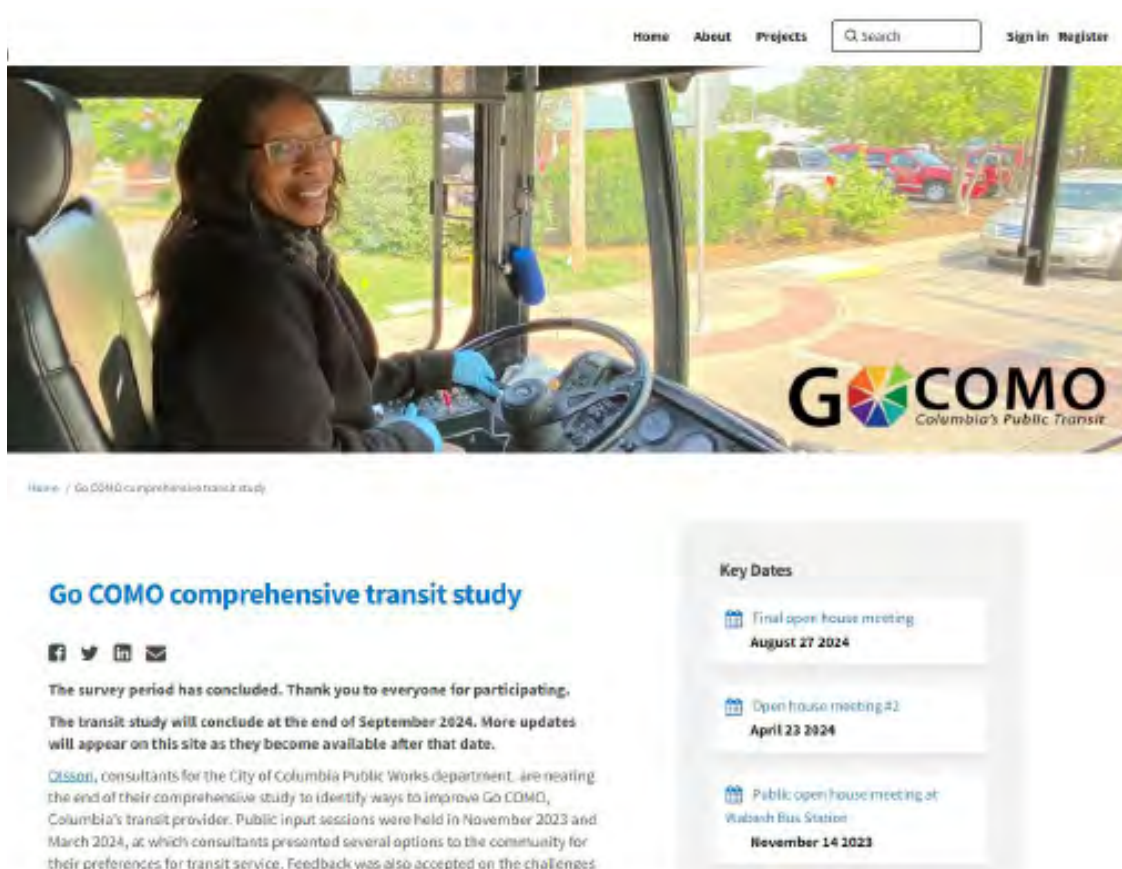
## Engagement Process Overview

While the above goals serve as a guide for the Comprehensive Transit Plan process, updated and more specific goals are needed to develop actionable transit service plans moving forward.

The vision for transit in Columbia must be based on the input and support of local residents who, use, pay for, or are impacted by existing and future transit service. Special attention has been given to making sure that existing bus riders have the opportunity to help develop the vision and provide input throughout the project. This input was obtained by two primary methods: three public open house meetings located at Wabash Bus Station and an on-board survey of rides.

In addition to active transit users, the public open house meetings gathered input and ideas from the broader community. This includes residents who may not use services now, but have an interest or need for transit, or who otherwise benefit from or are impacted by transit services. Additionally, the project website provided the same materials as used in the open house meetings, and provided an additional means for residents to provide comments on the project.

**Figure 3.1: Comprehensive Transit Study "Be Heard" Webpage**



*A webpage provided on the City's "Be Heard" website provided project materials, collected public comments, and promoted public meetings throughout the duration of the project.*

Public engagement efforts occurred in three specific phases:

- **Phase 1: Discovery (Fall 2023):** Identifying issues, challenges, and ideas for the project team to address during the course of the study.
- **Phase 2: Exploration (Spring 2024):** Evaluating service concepts prepared by the project team, and assisting with prioritization of multiple transit alternatives.
- **Phase 3: Affirmation (Summer 2024):** Reviewing draft recommendations and identifying modifications to enhance the prospects and impact of plan implementation.

Developing a community vision, and a plan to realize that vision, requires participation and input from a broad spectrum of residents representing diverse experiences and opinions. Every phase of the Comprehensive Transit Plan process includes facilitated discussion and guidance with a group of stakeholders as well as seeking both general and targeted input from bus riders and the general public. In particular, the development of the vision presented in this section is derived from public and stakeholder engagement efforts conducted in October 2023, April 2024, and August 2024.

## Public Transit Advisory Committee

These activities were guided by the City's Public Transit Advisory Commission (PTAC), which served as both the steering and stakeholder committee for the plan. The PTAC heard and assisted the project team with refining messaging and project materials for each phase of public engagement.

The PTAC consists of 13 members, with one member appointed by the University of Missouri administration, and twelve members appointed by the City Council. The committee advises City staff and Council with regard to transit policy. Through monthly meetings, PTAC is knowledgeable and engaged in transit issues and needs in the City. This includes ridership patterns, funding and budgeting, operational considerations, and other aspects of transit management. By representing numerous interests throughout the community, the Committee was an invaluable sounding board and source of critical thinking and idea development for the study.

The project team presented project materials at several key milestones of the project, generally occurring a few weeks prior to public open house meetings and other engagement activities. Through collaborative discussion,

PTAC provided input necessary to refine project materials including plan goals, service concepts, and draft recommendations.

## Elected Officials & Stakeholders

In addition to PTAC guidance throughout the process, the project team met with several other stakeholders who are involved with, or impacted by, Go COMO transit services. These meetings were primarily during Phase 1 of the public engagement process to help define the issues and opportunities for the study to review and address. These meetings included:

- **City of Columbia Mayor and City Council:** Individual meetings were held with the Mayor and each council person to understand their views and ideas for transit policy and goals for the study.
- **University of Missouri:** As part of its Campus Master Plan process, MU leadership has an interest in increasing transit services in order to reduce traffic and increase development opportunities.
- **Boone County Commission:** The project team met individually with all three Boone County Commissioners to learn about county-wide needs, both interns of rural connectivity as well as accessibility from outside the city into Columbia.
- **City of Columbia Planning, Parks, and CATSO staff:** This meeting provided additional knowledge and guidance for how transit is integrated with land use and parks planning efforts, and how the study could accomplish inter-departmental goals.
- **Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT):** Conversation with MoDOT Multimodal Division staff was focused on understanding recent work, including a public survey, for a potential Columbia-Jefferson City inter-city service.
- **First/Last-Mile Valet Service:** The project team learned about a public/private partnership and pilot service that is filling a transportation gap in the community, particularly to employers in the city's Route B corridor.

## Public Open House Meetings

Three public open house meetings were held during the project to provide an opportunity for riders to engage with the project team, provide ideas and input, and review project materials. These meetings were in addition to online and on-board engagement elsewhere described in this section. To maximize access for current transit users, all meetings were held at the Wabash Bus Station, the



**COMO**  
Community of Metropolitan  
Comprehensive Transit Study

# Planning Priorities

Transit service planning involves making difficult decisions between competing priorities. Selected considerations to be reviewed for existing and future services are shown below. The community's preference for each scenario will help develop goals and inform recommendations of this study.

**1 A: Run buses more frequently on existing routes.**

**2 A: Serve as much of Columbia as possible.**

**B: Concentrate service in high ridership areas.**

**3 A: Add more service during peak periods (weekdays, rush hours, etc.)**

**B: Add more service during off-peak periods (nights, weekends, etc.)**

**4 A: Routes that travel quickly, but with fewer deviations and stops, often requiring longer walks.**

**B: Routes that serve many destinations directly, but cause the route to be slow.**

**GO COMO**  
Columbia's Public Transit  
Comprehensive Transit Study

**Basemap - Existing System**

Can

**Legend**

**City Boundary**

- 0 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100 - 199

**Annual Ridership**

- 0 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100 - 199

**Routes**

- Blue
- Green
- Orange
- Red
- Tiger Line 401 (Horseshoe Loop) (71)
- Tiger Line 402 (Horseshoe Loop) (72)
- Tiger Line 403 (Horseshoe Loop) (73)

**x = places you would like to go**

3-4

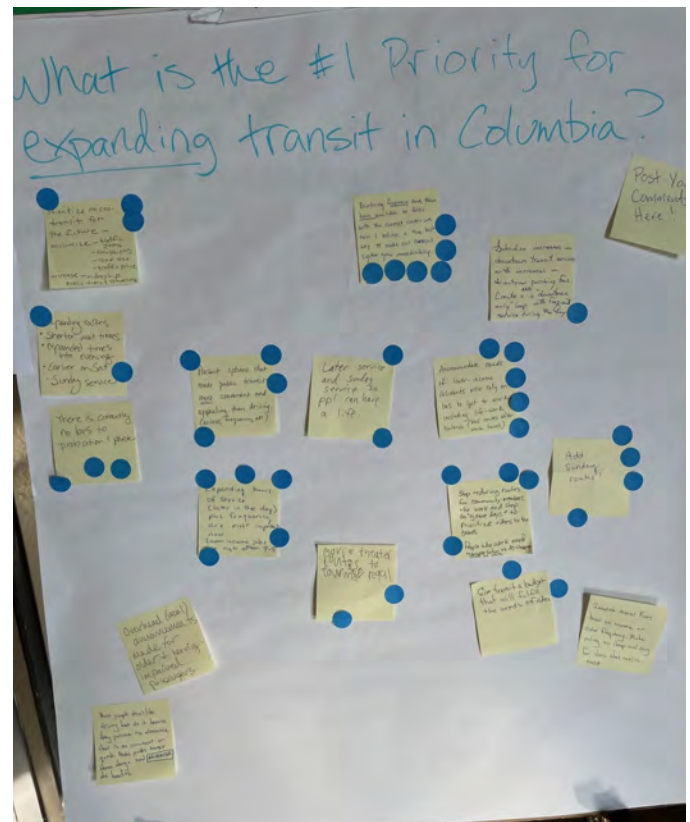
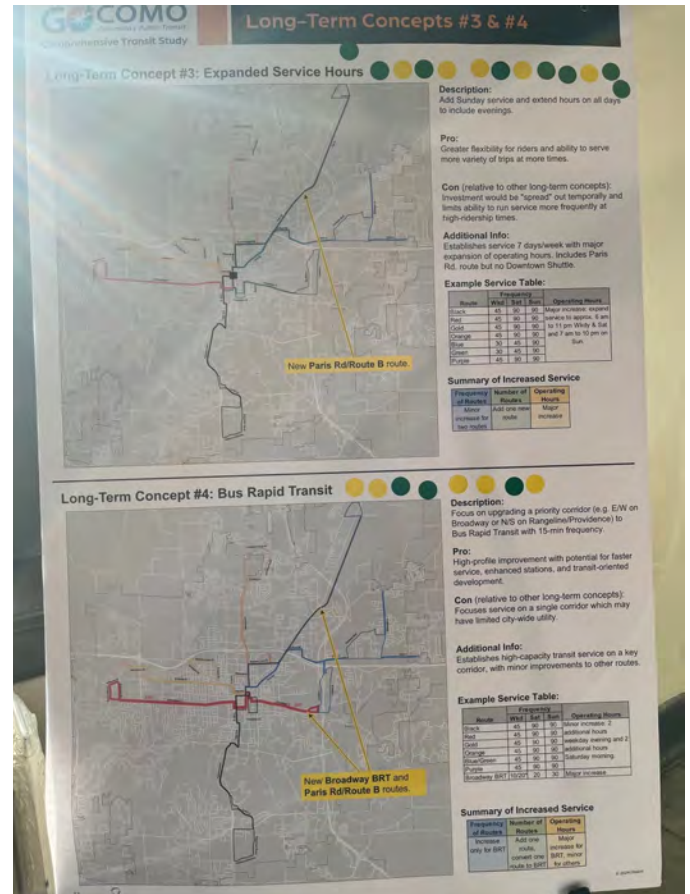
3-4





The second public open house meeting had two primary goals: to affirm project direction based on earlier feedback, and to present a series of service concepts that illustrate multiple potential ways to address identified challenges. These service concepts were intended to illustrate different methods of transit system design that could be utilized to address the documented issues and challenges. The concepts are not recommendations. Rather, they are meant to communicate ideas, and to highlight the differences between competing approaches to service design.

Two sets of concepts were prepared: one for near-term (budget-neutral) and one for long-term (a vision for growth). Participants were asked to select the concepts that they were most interested in for both near- and long-term. Additionally, participants were asked what is their top priority for expanding transit in Columbia. These results allowed the project team to develop more specific service alternatives, based on actual operating conditions, and to select appropriate alternatives for potential implementation at different timeframes.

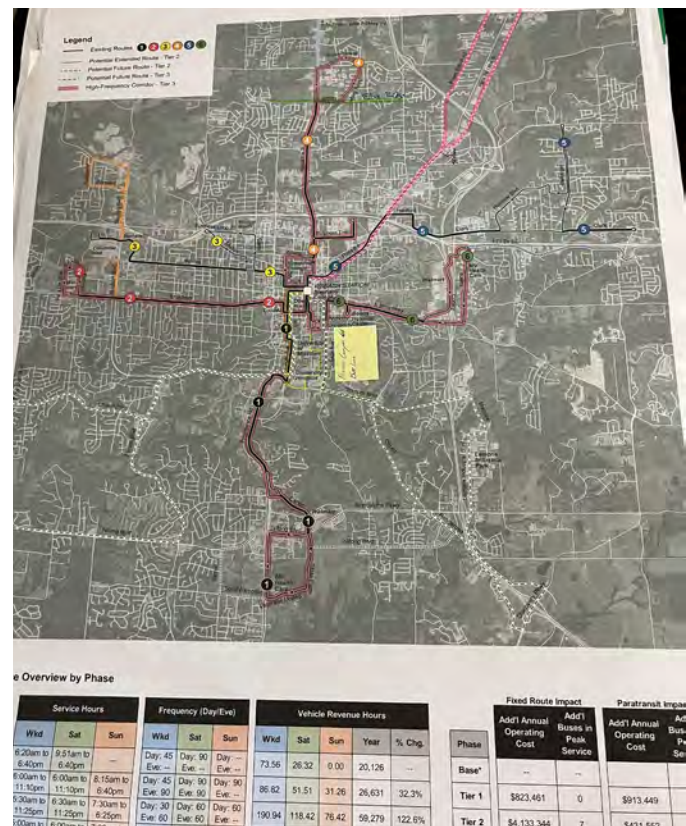
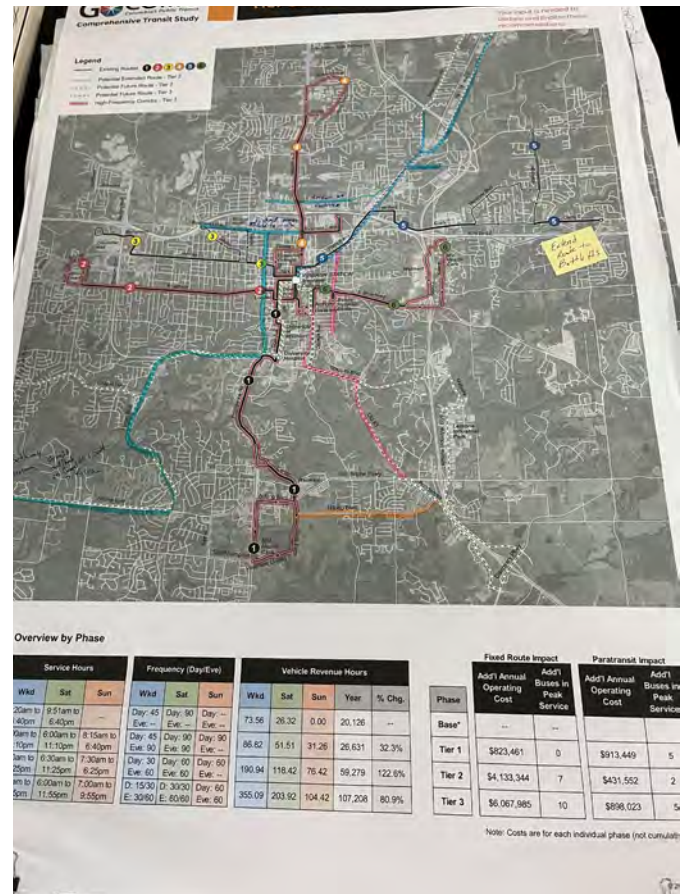




## Public Open House #3: August 2024

At this point in the project, draft service recommendations had been prepared for review and consideration by the public. These draft recommendations tie directly back to the results past project phases, and the open house meetings in particular. Meeting materials included a recap of prior project phases for context, including a summary of input received and the impact on project direction. Concepts reviewed in Meeting #2 were developed into a series of more detailed service alternatives that represent multiple phases of implementation.

Draft recommendations were presented in three “tiers” that represent near-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation. These tiers are based on the feasibility of service based on timeframe, with regard to anticipated funding, staffing, and capital needs including fleet and facilities. This meeting served as the final step prior to recommendations being integrated into a full plan document for City staff and governing body consideration. Any additional needs or considerations were documented, and served as an important step of making adjustments to recommendations to improve the feasibility of the plan.



## On-Board Rider Survey

As part of the first phase of public outreach, surveys were conducted on-board GO COMO buses, coordinated with the first public open house event. Surveys were conducted on all six routes, both in the morning and afternoon. A total of 116 surveys were collected. In addition to the surveys, observations of transit service in operation, and engagement with bus operators, were both important resources in plan development. These surveys were conducted in-person with riders on-board buses, and therefore are intended to be a quick snapshot of riders characteristics and opinions, not a detailed consideration of alternatives or recommendations.

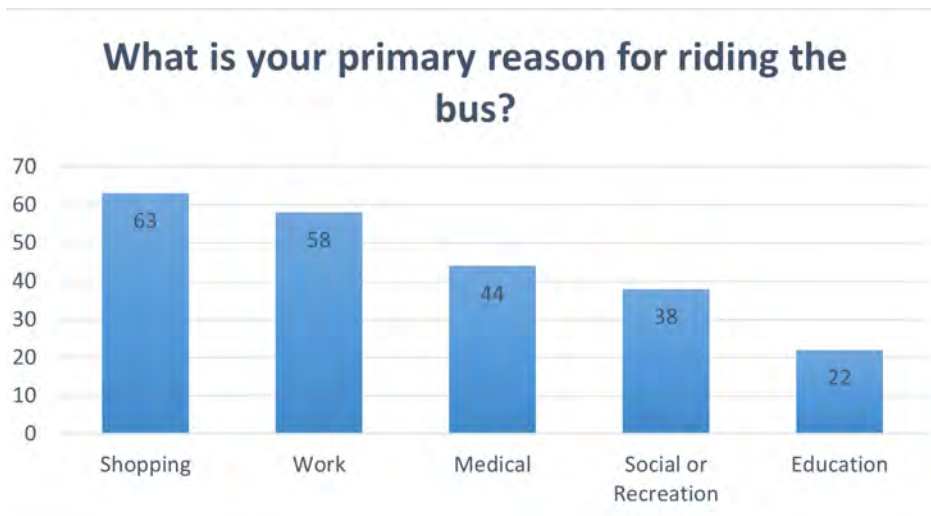
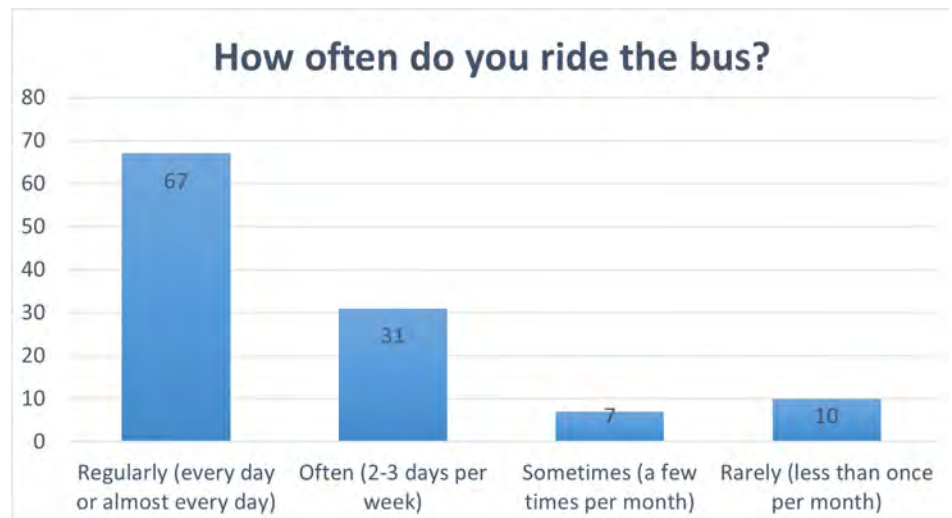
### Rider & Trip Characteristics

The majority (58 percent) of Go COMO riders are regular transit-users, using the service every day or almost every day. This is indicative of a population that relies heavily

on transit services, and may have no or limited other transportation options. Another 27 percent of riders use the service two to three days per week.

Riders use the service for a variety of trips, with no specific trip type accounting for the majority of trips chosen by respondents. Shopping is the most common trip type (28 percent), followed loosely by work trips (26 percent). However, services get substantial use for medical, social/recreation, and education as well.

Service satisfaction among riders is decidedly mixed, but more riders are satisfied (46 percent, includes “Very Satisfied” and “Satisfied”) than dissatisfied (31 percent, includes “Very Dissatisfied” and “Dissatisfied”), with 22 percent neutral. In discussions with riders, dissatisfaction of service primarily relates to the frequency of bus routes.





## Issues & Improvements

Riders surveys identified a clear top two issues with the existing system:

- Routes do not run often enough, and
- Routes do not run when I need it (such as nights and weekends)

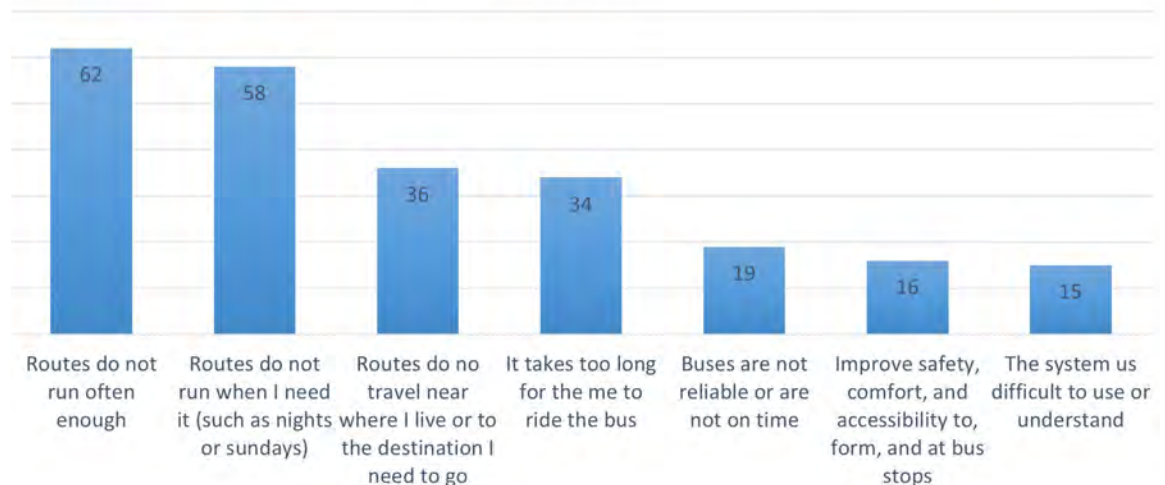
While multiple other issues were identified, such as route coverage and travel time, these two issues are a recurring theme throughout public input received in multiple formats.

Accordingly, survey respondents responded that “more frequent buses during current weekday hours” and

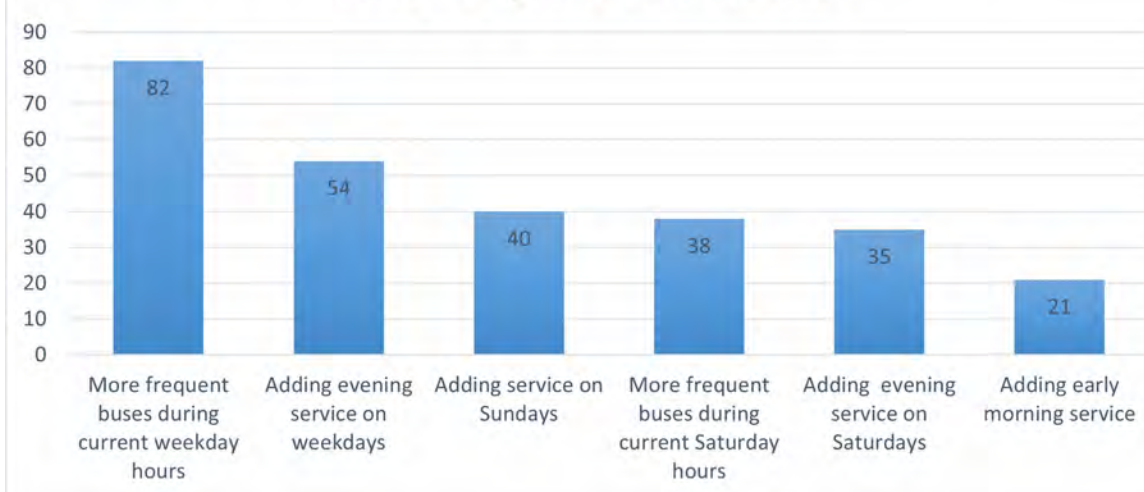
“adding evening service on weekdays” are the two highest-priority improvements that would make it easier for them to ride the bus. In discussions with riders, many noted the difficulty and inconvenience that the current 90-minute routes have caused for their transportation needs, and expressed a desire to return to the 45-minute routes as soon as possible.

The transit strategies detailed in Section 4 are focused on developing ideas and scenarios to make address these key challenges, as well as seeking improvements to other aspects of transit services in the near- and long-term.

### What is currently the biggest issue with Go COMO bus routes?



### Which of the following improvements would make it easier for you to ride the bus?



## Community Direction

Public input gathered through multiple means—open house meetings, project webpage, direct feedback from riders on buses, and PTAC meetings—indicate the community's vision for transit. This section summarizes some of the major themes that emerged from the public and stakeholder engagement activities conducted in late 2023 and early 2024. Broadly, residents who participated in the planning process have a desire for expanding transit services so that a greater number and variety of trips can be made by transit.

This desire is demonstrated in several key takeaways from the public engagement process:

- There is general agreement that services are more limited than they should be, given the city's size and growing transportation needs.
- Accordingly, recruitment and retention of staff is a high priority, to enable restoration of regular service and growth of service in the future.
- Current routes, while limited in quantity of service, structurally make sense given existing resources, and serve many key destinations that riders need to go.

These takeaways led to an affirmation of the following planning priorities for the project:

- Upgrading frequency and expanding hours on the existing system are the most critical near-term needs.
- Increased coverage, and expanding service more broadly is desired, but secondary to improving existing services.
- Service planning should seek targeted opportunities for more direct service and travel time savings on routes, including for riders making a transfer.
- A longer-term vision for growth is needed, as a roadmap after initial improvements are made.
- There are specific employment access needs to address, most notably along the Paris Rd./Route B corridor

## Vision Statements

Based on the guidance and feedback received from public and stakeholder events, a series of vision statements has been created as a framework for the next phases of the project. These vision statements define the goals and objectives of the plan, as determined by those who use or are impacted by the City's transit services. Identifying the vision is critical to the planning process, as it can be referred to as a guide for recommendations and implementation of the Plan.

For each vision statement, a set of strategies provide more specific items to pursue in support of the vision. These strategies are the starting point of developing service guidelines and alternatives for improving transit in Columbia, and are a precursor to the eventual findings of the Plan. Additionally, types of metrics are provided for each vision statement and set of strategies. To ensure that the vision is being implemented, the City must periodically evaluate services based on these metrics.

### Vision Statement #1

**Focus on recruitment and retention of transit staff needed to operate, maintain, and manage transit services.**

Discussion: The recommendations of this plan cannot be enacted without talented and well-trained staff available to serve the public.

Strategies:

- Ensure that wages are competitive in the transportation industry, across private and public sector employers. Periodic wage adjustments will be needed, as occurred in October 2023.
- Continue providing a quality workplace for employees, where needs and ideas are heard, and employees have opportunities for advancement.

### Vision Statement #2

**Meet the needs of riders who need transit services the most.**

Discussion: A majority of Go COMO riders use the service every day, or nearly every day, to meet most or all of their critical transportation needs. Without transit, these residents would have difficulty meeting their needs and contributing to the local economy. Transit service planning should first consider the needs of these core riders, as the backbone of the system.

Strategies:

- Maintain close communication and collaboration with social service organizations representing and

serving populations with mobility challenges, whether relating to disability, income, or other factors.

- Utilize stop-level and time-period ridership data during service planning efforts to ensure minimum impact to those that need the service the most.
- Review Paratransit ridership data and trip manifests to determine opportunities to serve existing paratransit riders with the fixed-route system.
- Continue matching services geographically with areas of higher propensity, as evaluated in the Market Analysis section.

### **Vision Statement #3**

**Prioritize near-term actions on improving existing services, through route frequency and service hours.**

Discussion: While expansion of the transit system is a desire and need in Columbia, initial phases of implementation should focus on strengthening existing routes and making them more useful for a greater variety of trip purposes and populations. Routes serve many of the key destinations of the City, but it is difficult for residents to rely on these services due to limited frequency and service hours.

Strategies:

- Incremental expansion of service hours based on observed demand and customer communication of needs.
- In the near-term, add a bus to the highest-ridership routes, as funding allows, and eventually to all routes, to allow for improved frequency of service.
- Ensure that route changes provide for schedules that include adequate layover and recovery time at Wabash Bus Station to preserve schedule reliability and convenient transfers.
- Continued monitoring of stop-level ridership data to find opportunities to streamline routes in places with no or very limited ridership impact.

### **Vision Statement #4**

**Align long-term transit visioning with community growth and development.**

Discussion: The challenge of providing transit service to an expanding region with predominantly low-density development patterns has been noted throughout the study process. Transportation and land-use planning efforts should work collaboratively to maximize the number of residents that have meaningful access to transit services, through appropriate density and accessibility features.

Strategies:

- Macro-level: The impact of “sprawl” development patterns on transit accessibility should be evaluated in the development review process. This includes the expansion of housing, as well as jobs, located increasingly far from the city’s core.
- Micro-level: Development review and street or sidewalk projects should include providing adequate bus stops and accessibility to stops at locations along a fixed route service. Locations not along existing fixed routes should be evaluated for the ability to easily add stops in the future.
- Prioritize walkability in public spaces and in private developments to improve access to transit.
- Evaluate specific opportunities to increase density at appropriate locations along fixed routes, to create transit-oriented developments.

### **Vision Statement #5**

**Take advantage of opportunities to add county-level and regional services.**

Discussion: Columbia is the seat and economic center of Boone County, but transit needs extend beyond the city’s boundaries. The University of Missouri and other employers and institutions are transportation destinations for many county residents, as well as some other nearby communities. Similarly, some key destinations for Columbia residents are located outside of the city.

Strategies:

- Continue coordination with OATS to help plan for and meet transit needs for residents living outside of Columbia.
- Follow and update the CATSO Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation plan which outlines coordination activities and service improvement priorities to fill gaps in transit services.
- In coordination with MoDOT and Jefferson City, pursue funding for inter-city bus service connecting Columbia and Jefferson City, potentially including other key locations such as Ashland and Columbia Regional Airport.

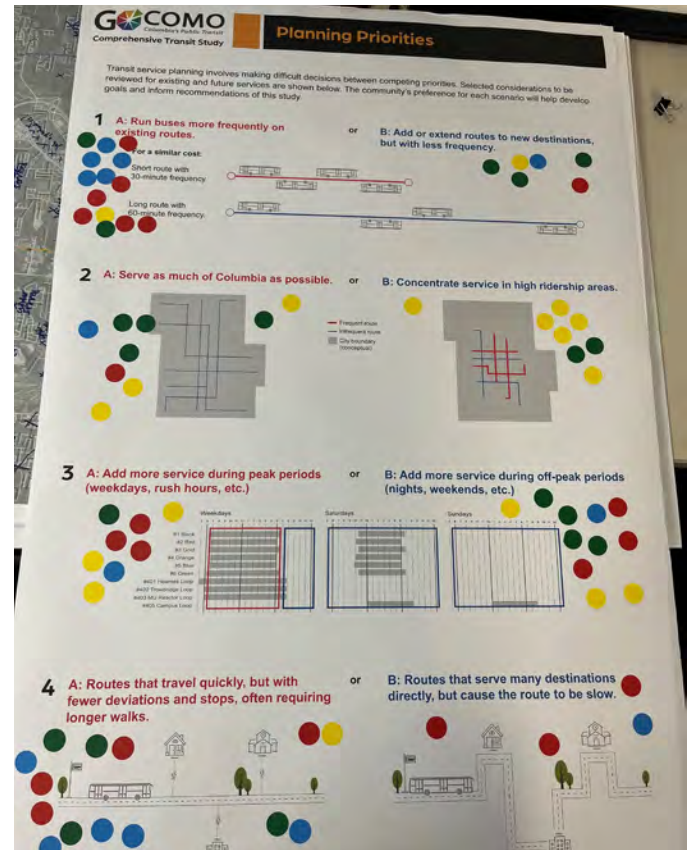


## Service Concepts

With these vision statements in mind, the next step of the Comprehensive Transit Study process included providing “service concepts” that illustrate the challenges and opportunities of the Go COMO transit system. These concepts show different methods of modifying transit services, and how the system would look in each of these different methods.

*Note: These concepts are not proposed alternatives, nor recommendations. Rather, the concepts are intended to illustrate the benefits and drawbacks of different methods of service changes. For example, what would the system look like if routes were operated more frequently, but shortened, in a cost-neutral scenario?*

These service concepts were created in two categories: near-term and long-term. Importantly, all near-term concepts were based on an assumption of being “budget-neutral”, requiring no additional operating or capital costs than current services. For the long-term scenarios, additional funding for services and capital needs are assumed. Each concept illustrates different levels of funding and service options to be considered with this funding.



The first phase of public engagement included presenting four questions intended to determine priorities for use in transit planning efforts. These questions pose two opposing priorities and ask the respondent to choose between them. These answers provided the project team with direction on how to plan services and allocate resources across the system. The results of this prioritization process is shown in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Planning Priority Feedback

### Planning Priorities: Public Input

**1** A: Run buses more frequently on existing routes.

or

B: Add or extend routes to new destinations, but with less frequency.



Strong Preference

**2** A: Serve as much of Columbia as possible.

or

B: Concentrate service in high ridership areas.

Roughly Equal Preference

**3** A: Add more service during peak periods (weekdays, rush hours, etc.)

or

B: Add more service during off-peak periods (nights, weekends, etc.)



Strong Preference

**4** A: Routes that travel quickly, but with fewer deviations and stops, often requiring longer walks.

or

B: Routes that serve many destinations directly, but cause the route to be slow.



Strong Preference

## Near-Term Service Concepts

The budget-neutral assumption is a significant constraint and therefore all of the near-term service concepts have major drawbacks. They illustrate the reality that, with no additional resources, adding or expanding a service requires a proportional cut somewhere else. Therefore, none of these concepts adequately meet the transit vision of the community. However, each illustrate trade-offs in transit planning and serve as a decision-making tool for more fully-formed alternatives and recommendations presented in the plan.

The near-term concepts (summarized in *Table 3.1*) seek different ways to address some of the key themes heard during public engagement process: 1) more frequent service; 2) increase span of service, and 3) service to new areas. The concepts are as follows:

**1. More frequent service** - Improve weekday headways to 30 minutes and Saturday headways to 75 minutes. To achieve this, each route would have unproductive segments eliminated, removing access to key destinations.

**2. More coverage** – Expands route coverage to new areas of city. For example, the Blue route would be extended to serve Northeast area of city to serve industrial area. Under this concept riders would have longer wait times.

**3. Evening and Sunday service** – Adds weekday evening service for riders and some limited service on Sunday. To accomplish this, weekday service would need to be eliminated during the mid-day, and Saturday span of service would need to be reduced to only four hours.

**4. Microtransit** – Introduces an on-demand service that use pooled shuttles or vans to provide flexible scheduling and routing. This service would operate in an on-demand zone in Southwest portion of city where route segments of Black, Gold and Red routes would be eliminated.

**Table 3.1: Near-Term Concepts Summary**

Concept	Description	Pros	Cons
1. More Frequent Service	Shorten routes and run more frequently (every 30 min) with existing Mon-Sat hours	More frequent service = more convenience and flexibility for riders	Routes would serve less area, likely trimmed near ends of routes
2. More Coverage	Extend routes and run less frequently (every 60 minutes) with existing Mon-Sat service hours	Routes will cover more area and can serve some new locations	Less frequent service = less convenience and flexibility for riders
3. Evening & Sunday	Eliminate some Mon-Sat daytime service (reduce hours or remove routes) to allow for evening and Sunday service	New service available nights and Sunday	Major impact to existing riders relying on current daytime service, or on certain routes
4. Micro Transit	Reduce service on two routes (to 90-min.) to allow for one vehicle to provide limited “micro transit” service	Provides new flexible service option that can cover more area	Less service for existing riders on current routes

## Community Feedback

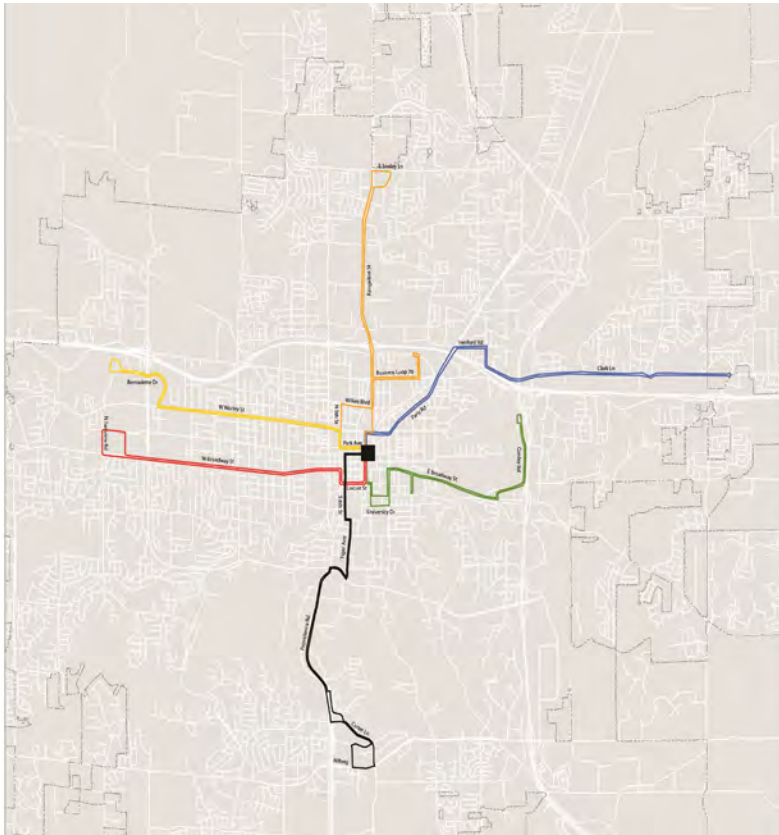
- The majority of participants indicated a preference for Concept #1. While this concept has significant drawbacks—requiring the shortening of routes—this feedback illustrates that frequency of service is the community’s top concern.
- Concept #3 is the least-supported. As noted, this concept is not operationally feasible. However, this result is useful by suggesting that adding evening and Sunday service should not come at the expense of reduced weekday or Saturday service.

## Takeaways

- While preferences were provided, the overwhelming response to these near-term concepts is that none would provide substantive benefits for improving transit, due to the major drawbacks of each.
- Accordingly, recommendations should allow for a small increase in cost. Existing service levels are low enough, that any significant change that does not increase service levels is not worthwhile as a plan recommendation.
- While none of these concepts are, as a whole, carried forward to recommendations, several important lessons were learned:
  - » Frequency is the most critical need. Riders were more willing to sacrifice the length of routes than to have longer routes running less often.
  - » Concepts that maintain the basic structure of the system, rather than a major schedule restructuring or a combining of routes, are preferred in the near term. Riders value the ease-of-use and familiarity of existing services.
  - » Discussion concerning micro transit services focused on this alternative as more suitable for longer-term implementation. Existing fixed routes are productive enough to where micro transit should be supplemental, not a replacement.



**Figure 3.3: Near-Term Concept #1**



**Description:**

Shorten routes and run more frequently (every 30 min) with existing Mon-Sat hours

**Pro:**

More frequent service = more convenience and flexibility for riders

**Con:**

Routes would serve less area, likely trimmed near ends of routes

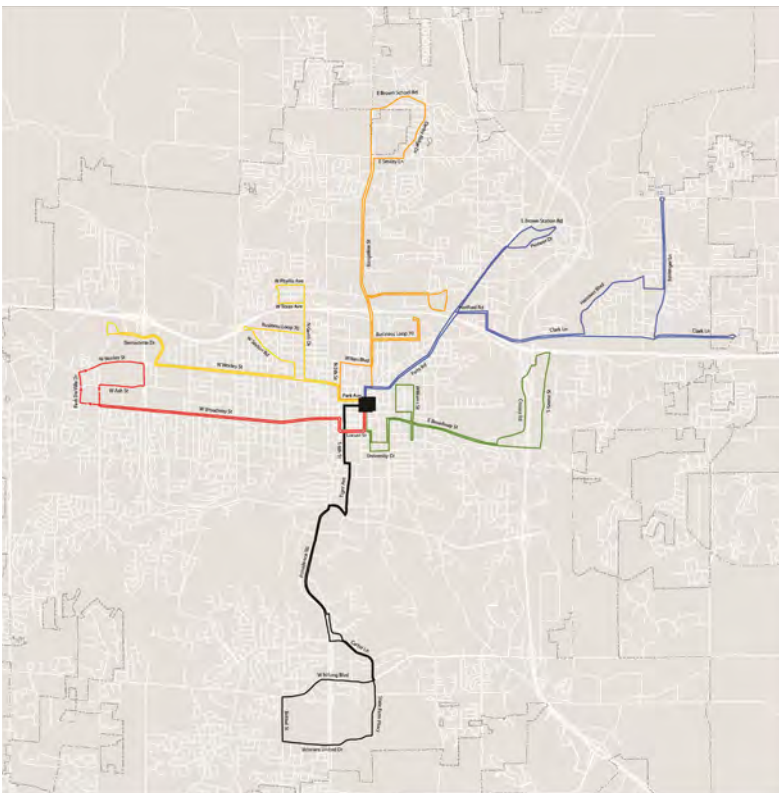
**Additional Info:**

Running buses more often means that routes must be shorter.

**Example Service Table:**

Route	Headways	
	Weekday	Saturday
Black	30	
Black/Orange		75
Red	30	
Red/Green		75
Gold	30	
Gold/Blue		75
Orange	30	
Blue	30	
Green	30	

**Figure 3.4: Near-Term Concept #2**



**Description:**

Extend routes and run less frequently (every 60 minutes) with existing Mon-Sat service hours

**Pro:**

Routes will cover more area and can serve some new locations

**Con:**

Less frequent service = less convenience and flexibility for riders

**Additional Info:**

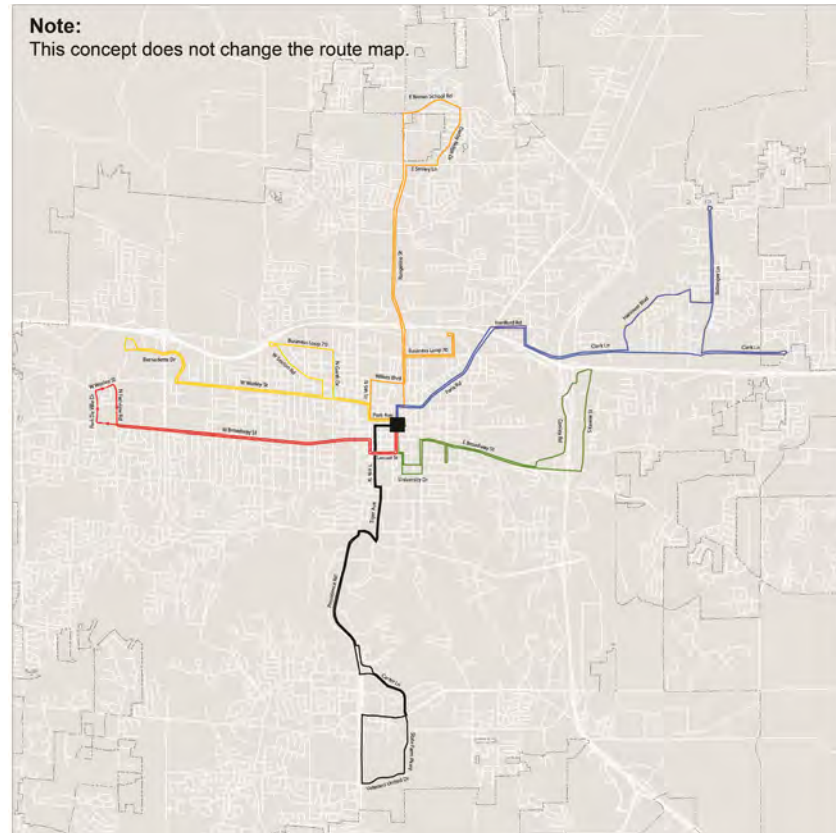
Extending routes means that buses cannot serve each stop as often.

**Example Service Table:**

Route	Headways	
	Weekday	Saturday
Black	60	
Black/Orange		105
Red	60	
Red/Green		105
Gold	60	
Gold/Blue		105
Orange	60	
Blue	60	
Green	60	



**Figure 3.5: Near-Term Concept #3**



**Description:**

Eliminate some Mon-Sat daytime service (reduce hours or remove routes) to allow for evening and Sunday service

**Pro:**

New service available nights and Sunday

**Con:**

Major impact to existing riders relying on current daytime service, or on certain routes

**Additional Info:**

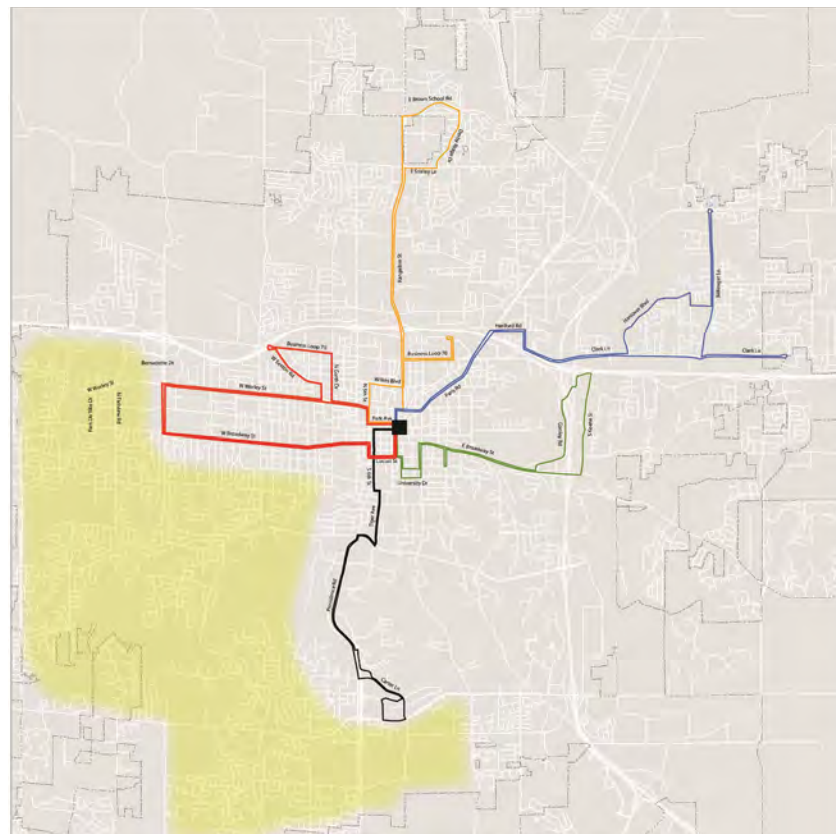
This option is not operationally feasible, but presented to illustrate the cuts that would be required to provide Evening & Sunday service.

**Example Service Table:**

Route	Headways		
	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Black	45*		
Black/Orange		90*	90
Red	45*		
Red/Green		90*	90
Gold	45*		
Gold/Blue		90*	90
Orange	45*		
Blue	45*		
Green	45*		

\* Weekday schedules would have a 2-hour gap in service and Saturday schedules would be cut to 4 hours.

**Figure 3.6: Near-Term Concept #4**



**Description:**

Reduce service on two routes (to 90-min.) to allow for one vehicle to provide limited "micro transit" service

**Pro:**

Provides new flexible service option that can cover more area

**Con:**

Less service for existing riders on current routes.

**Additional Info:**

Adding micro transit service requires reducing service on an existing route, to be able to have a vehicle and driver available to operate.

**Example Service Table:**

Route	Headways	
	Weekday	Saturday
Black	45	90
Red/Gold	90	
Orange	45	
Blue	45	
Green	45	
Microtransit	on-demand service*	

## Long-Term Service Concepts

This set of concepts aligns with peer service levels and requires additional resources and capital investments to implement and operate. The long-term concepts will require a 10 year horizon, or longer, to effectively initiate. Each concept is phased, with service levels increased at each phase. This is done to build momentum in the system and address recommendations heard from public input process. The concepts are as follows:

**1. More frequent service** – Provides increased frequency on all weekday and Saturday routes, earlier Saturday start time and later evening service. No adjustments to the routes would be needed under this concept.

**2. New NE Route, Downtown Trolley & Sunday service** – This concept introduces a new route to serve the northeast area of city, a downtown trolley, and provides service on Sunday.

**3. Increase Frequency and Evening Service** – Increases frequency of high ridership routes, Green and Blue. Also provides later evening service for riders.

**4. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Increase Frequency** – Introduces BRT that would operate along Broadway replacing portions of the Red & Green route and provide 20 minute headways. BRT offers more capacity and reliability for riders. This concept further increases frequency on all routes.

## Community Feedback

- Feedback on the long-term concepts was more mixed than for the near-term. Combining survey and public meeting feedback, concepts 1, 2, and 3 all received similar levels of support.
- Concept 3 with added frequency on the highest-ridership routes received the most overall interest.
- Responses were positive to the idea of a downtown circulator route, providing frequent access in the downtown area and northern part of the MU campus.

## Takeaways

- Community feedback generally preferred options that create widespread improvements in service span and frequency, as a preference compared to focusing a high-level of capacity on only one specific route or corridor.
- Concepts that maximize overall service levels are preferred to best align Columbia with local transit needs and with peer agencies reviewed.
- Frequency and service hours remain the top priorities. Once improved levels are achieved, geographic expansion of service is desired.

**Table 3.2: Long-Term Concepts Summary**

Concept	Description	Pros	Cons (relative to other concepts)
1. More Frequent Service	Focus on improving frequency, with no route shortening. At least 30-min. on all routes and 20-min. on high-ridership routes.	More frequent coverage throughout system, equitable distribution throughout network.	May not focus investments in areas of highest ridership potential or need. System would remain with limited geographic reach.
2. Add New Routes/Coverage	Focus on adding new routes. For example, a new Northeast route on Paris Rd./Route B, a Downtown Trolley, or Micro Transit coverage.	New routes serving areas with ridership potential, expands reach of transit system.	Investment would be "spread" out geographically and limits ability to upgrade existing services.
3. Expanded Service Hours	Add Sunday service and extend hours on all days to include evenings.	Greater flexibility for riders and ability to serve more variety of trips at more times.	Investment would be "spread" out temporally and limits ability to run service more frequently at high-ridership times.
4. Bus Rapid Transit	Focus on upgrading a priority corridor (e.g. E/W on Broadway or N/S on Rangeline/Providence) to Bus Rapid Transit with 15-min frequency.	High-profile improvement with potential for faster service, enhanced stations, and transit-oriented development.	Focuses service on a single corridor which may have limited city-wide utility.



**Figure 3.7: Long-Term Concept #1**



**Description:**

Focus on improving frequency, with no route shortening. At least 30-min. on all routes and 20-min. on high-ridership routes.

**Pro:**

More frequent coverage throughout system, equitable distribution throughout network.

**Con** (relative to other long-term concepts):

May not focus investments in areas of highest ridership potential or need. System would remain with limited geographic reach.

**Additional Info:**

This option preserves existing route structure and focuses on running routes more often, with a small increase in operating hours.

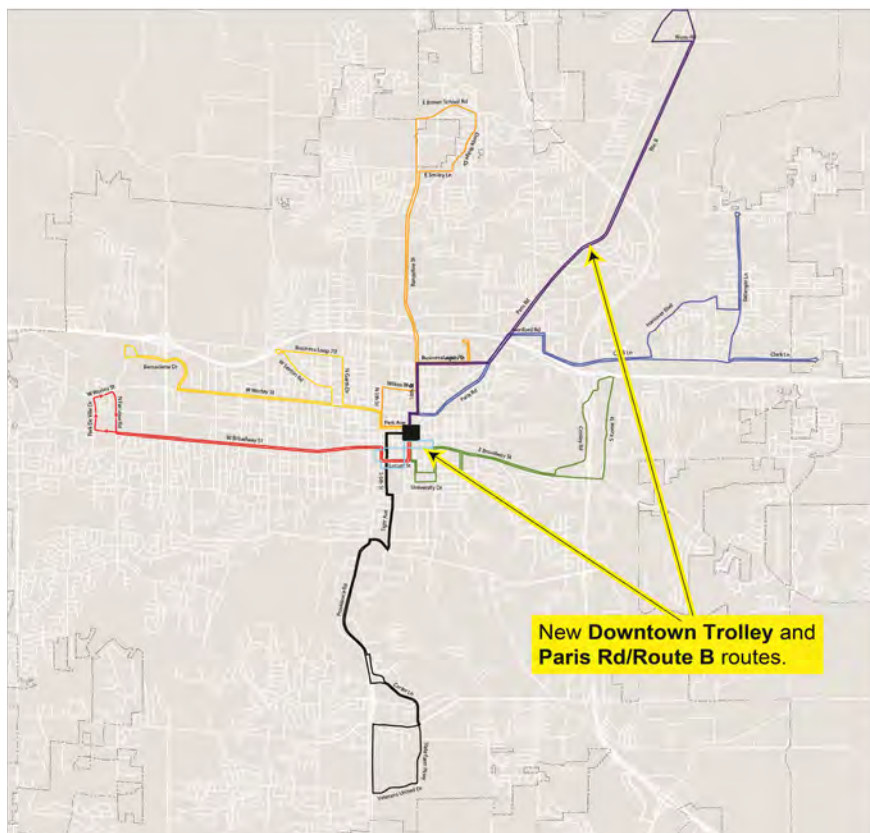
**Example Service Table:**

Route	Frequency			Operating Hours
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Black	30	45		Minor increase: 2
Red	30	45		additional hours
Gold	30	45		weekday evening and 2
Orange	30	45		additional hours
Blue	20	45		Saturday morning.
Green	20	45		

**Summary of Increased Service**

Frequency of Routes	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
Increase all routes	No increase	Minor increase

**Figure 3.8: Long-Term Concept #2**



**Description:**

Focus on adding new routes. For example, a new Northeast route on Paris Rd./Route B, a Downtown Trolley, or Micro Transit coverage.

**Pro:**

New routes serving areas with ridership potential, expands reach of transit system.

**Con** (relative to other long-term concepts):

Investment would be "spread" out geographically and limits ability to upgrade existing services.

**Additional Info:**

Expands number of routes operating, opening new markets and expanding reach of system.

**Example Service Table:**

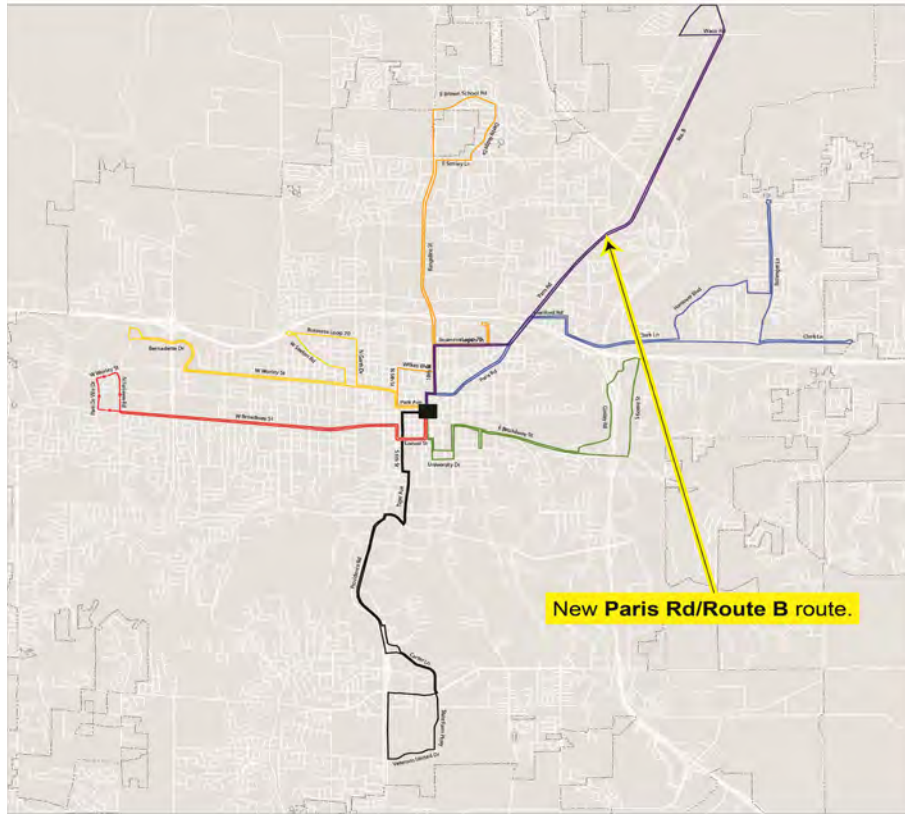
Route	Frequency			Operating Hours
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Black	45	90		Minor increase: 2
Red	45	90		additional hours
Gold	45	90		weekday evening and 2
Orange	45	90		additional hours
Blue	45	90		Saturday morning.
Green	45	90		
Purple	45	90		
Downtown	20	30		

**Summary of Increased Service**

Frequency of Routes	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
No increase	Add two new routes	Minor increase



Figure 3.9: Long-Term Concept #3



**Description:**

Add Sunday service and extend hours on all days to include evenings.

**Pro:**

Greater flexibility for riders and ability to serve more variety of trips at more times.

**Con (relative to other long-term concepts):**

Investment would be "spread" out temporally and limits ability to run service more frequently at high-ridership times.

**Additional Info:**

Establishes service 7 days/week with major expansion of operating hours. Includes Paris Rd. route but no Downtown Shuttle.

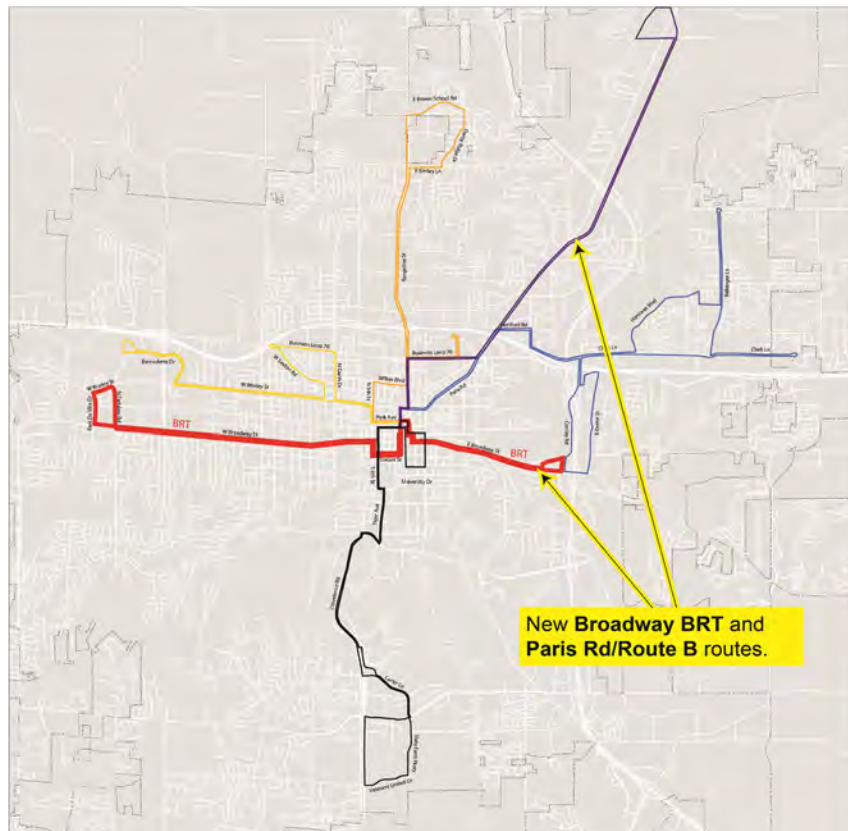
**Example Service Table:**

Route	Frequency			Operating Hours
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Black	45	90	90	Major increase: expand service to approx. 6 am to 11 pm Wkdy & Sat and 7 am to 10 pm on Sun.
Red	45	90	90	
Gold	45	90	90	
Orange	45	90	90	
Blue	30	45	90	
Green	30	45	90	
Purple	45	90	90	

**Summary of Increased Service**

Frequency of Routes	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
Minor increase for two routes	Add one new route	Major increase

Figure 3.10: Long-Term Concept #4



**Description:**

Focus on upgrading a priority corridor (e.g. E/W on Broadway or N/S on Rangeline/Providance) to Bus Rapid Transit with 15-min frequency.

**Pro:**

High-profile improvement with potential for faster service, enhanced stations, and transit-oriented development.

**Con (relative to other long-term concepts):**

Focuses service on a single corridor which may have limited city-wide utility.

**Additional Info:**

Establishes high-capacity transit service on a key corridor, with minor improvements to other routes.

**Example Service Table:**

Route	Frequency			Operating Hours
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Black	45	90	90	Minor increase: 2 additional hours
Red	45	90	90	
Gold	45	90	90	weekday evening and 2 additional hours
Orange	45	90	90	
Blue/Green	45	90	90	Saturday morning.
Purple	45	90	90	
Broadway BRT	10/20*	20	30	Major increase

**Summary of Increased Service**

Frequency of Routes	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
Increase only for BRT	Add one route, convert one route to BRT	Major increase for BRT, minor for others

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# 4

## Service Recommendations



### Key Considerations

The Columbia community has provided clear direction to expand transit services to better meet the needs of the city and the region. This direction is established in the vision statements and the takeaways from the service concepts process as detailed in Section 4. As a summary, key priorities for the improvement and growth of services include:

- As a first step, to be implemented as soon as staffing levels allow, service should be restored to pre-August 2023 levels (See “baseline level” note below).
- Upgrade service frequency over time to allow for shorter wait times and more convenient travel for more trip purposes.
- Expand service hours, to include the addition of Sunday service and expanding service hours into evenings on all days.
- After making process on service frequency and hours, expand the system to more destinations in the city and region.
- Eventually, establish “high-frequency” service prioritizing transportation in the city’s core and to high-ridership destinations. Such service may take the form of “bus rapid transit” or other enhanced service models, and as a collaboration with land-use planning to maximize the access to, and potential of, this service.

*Note: Throughout this section, “Baseline” service refers to service operating prior to August 2023, with six Go COMO routes operating at 45-minute headways. It is the intent for Go COMO to return to these service levels as soon as possible.*

*This Study provides recommendations for service improvements beyond this “baseline” service level.*



## Recommendations Overview

Implementing transit service improvements, to the level desired by residents, will take time. This is due to primarily to funding limitations, which impact Go COMO's ability to:

- Operate and maintain services and infrastructure on an ongoing basis, with annual appropriations that can be relied on for continued service.
- Purchase capital resources such as buses, new or expanded facilities, and a variety of supplies needed for maintenance of fleet and facilities.
- Hire and retain high-performing employees that provide and administer safe, reliable, and customer-friendly transportation services.

It is not anticipated that a sudden influx of funds, or the availability of trained staff, will allow transit service in Columbia to meet the community's vision in a single large step. Additionally, ridership takes time to develop. Riders generally use new services gradually, as they learn about service availability, try out riding, and eventually ride more often before becoming regular customers.

Therefore, recommendations will need to be implemented incrementally. As such, recommendations in this Study are provided in four tiers, or phases, of implementation. These tiers are designed to build on each other, with each tier taking another step toward the full vision for transit in Columbia.

## Tier 1 Recommendations

Tier 1 is a near-term step designed to be implemented with a comparatively small investment in operations, and minimal additional funding needed for capital expenditures. This tier is built on the "Service Concepts" finding that the expansion of frequency and service hours is desired, but the reducing the length of routes required for this to be cost-neutral is not feasible or sustainable.

Frequency improvements can not be achieved at a low cost. Any improvement to frequency beyond Baseline levels requires allocating a second bus to a route, roughly doubling the cost of operating the route. Therefore, frequency improvements are recommended in future phases. Expanding service hours is achievable with a lower marginal cost, and therefore is the primary aim of Tier 1.

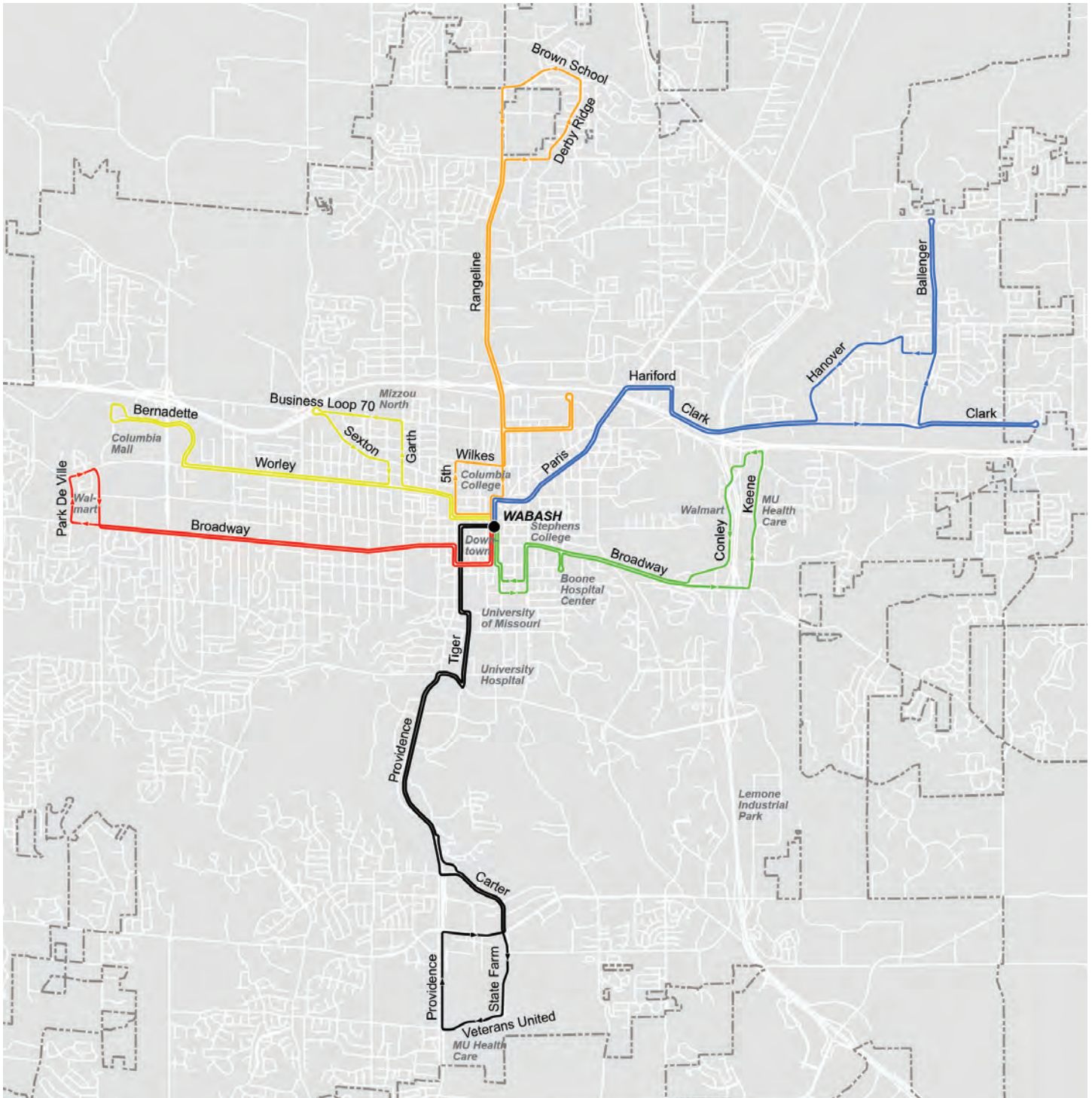
Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1.

- Routes & Alignments: No changes.
- Weekday: Begin service at 6:00 a.m. (full first trip starting at Wabash).
- Weekday: Add evening service using "combined" 90-minute routes, until 10:25 p.m.
- Saturday: Expand hours to 6 a.m. to 10:25 p.m., same routes and frequency (90 minutes).
- Paratransit Impact: Major increase to paratransit service hours.

Table 4.1: Tier 1 Recommendations

Phase	Service Hours			Frequency (Day/Eve)			Buses (Day/Eve)			Annual VRH
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Baseline*	6:20am to 6:40pm	9:51am to 6:40pm	--	45/--	90/--	--/--	6/0	3/0	0/0	19,780
Tier 1	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	23,687

Figure 4.1: Tier 1 Recommendations



*Note: Tier 1 recommendations do not change the route map; all routes will maintain existing alignments and stop locations.*

## Tier 2 Recommendations

The second tier of implementation is intended to bridge the gap between items that can be accomplished with a fairly minor cost increase and items that require a major influx of funding for operating and capital costs and staffing. Tier 2 is an interim step in between the existing 45-minute/90-minute route structure to a 30-minute/60-minute structure recommended in Tier 3. In essence, half (three) of the routes are converted in Tier 2.

While additional cost, as well as capital resources, will be required, Tier 2 represents an incremental step toward the overall vision of this Study. In Tier 2, routes are significantly modified. Existing alignments and stops are mostly preserved, but certain routes are extended to new destinations, and a bus added to high-ridership routes to improve frequency.

The system's three highest ridership routes, 2 Red, 4 Orange, and 6 Green, will have a second bus added to each route on weekdays. This allows for each route to (a) improve frequency to 30 minutes, and (b) an additional 10-15 minutes of runtime per trip, allowing each route to serve new destinations. In order to limit overall cost impact, routes 1 Black, 3 Gold, and 5 Blue would maintain current route alignments and frequency.

Prior to implementation in the future, ridership patterns will need to be re-assessed to verify these are the optimal routes to expand service during this interim step. The prevailing purpose of this implementation phase is to begin the restructuring of service to a higher frequency network, but only taking a half step due to lower cost impacts and capital needs. Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in *Table 4.2* and *Figure 4.2*.

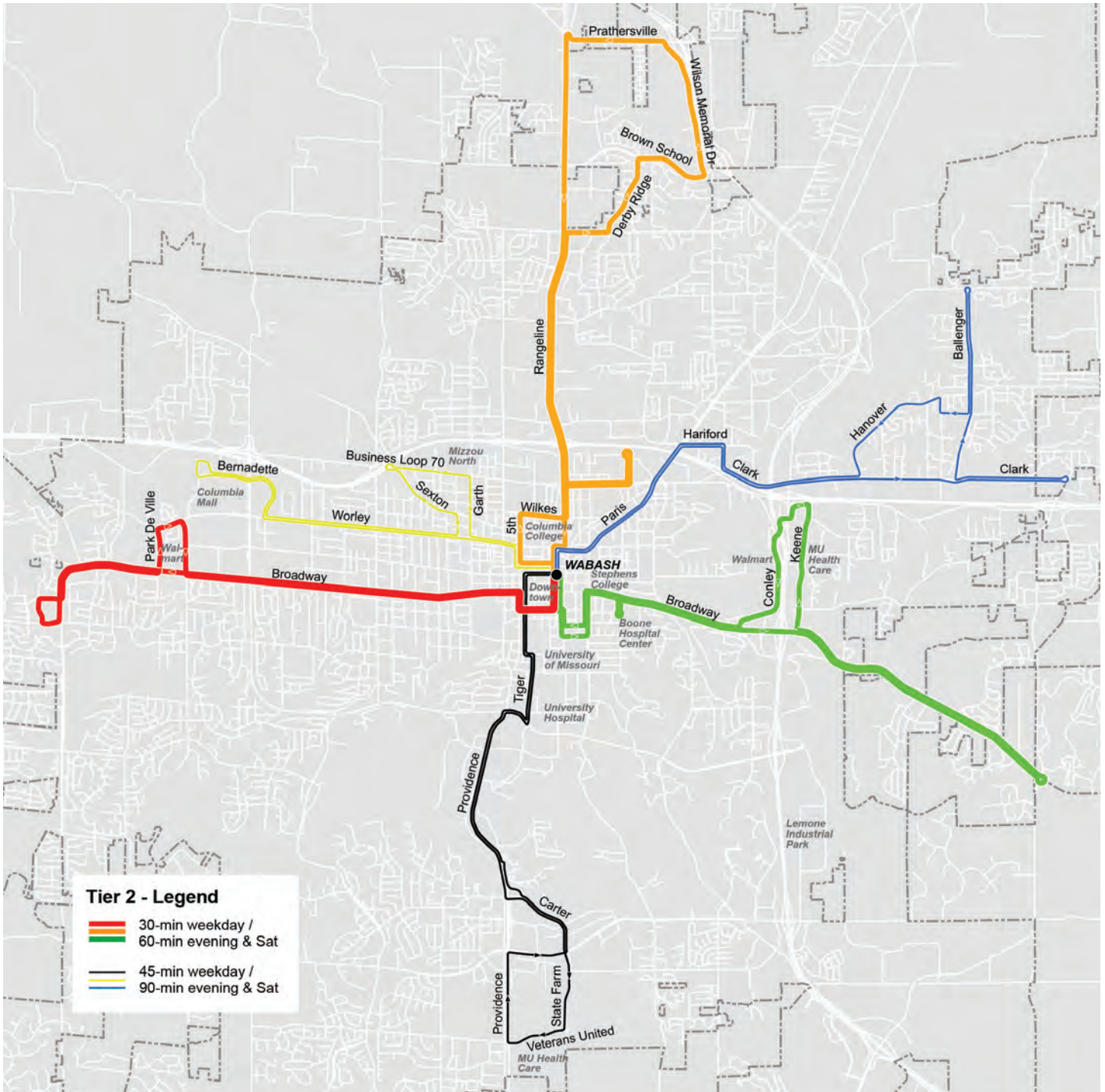
- **Routes & Alignments:** No new or removed routes. Routes 2 Red, 4 Orange, and 6 Green are extended to new areas (see Figure 4.2).
- **Weekday:** Convert routes 2 Red, 4 Orange, and 6 Green to 30-minute frequency in daytime hours and 60-minute frequency in evenings.
- **Saturday:** Convert routes 2 Red, 4 Orange, and 6 Green to 60-minute frequency on Saturdays.
- **Paratransit Impact:** Moderate increase to federally-required paratransit service area (3/4-mile of fixed routes); no change to paratransit service hours.
- **Negative Impacts:** Creates different headways on different routes. With three routes operating at 30 minutes, and three routes at 45 minutes. Not every route will be at Wabash at the same time on every trip. Some transfers will have a 15-minute wait.

**Table 4.2: Tier 2 Recommendations**

Phase	Service Hours			Frequency (Day/Eve)			Buses (Day/Eve)			Annual VRH
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
<b>Baseline*</b>	6:20am to 6:40pm	9:51am to 6:40pm	--	45/--	90/--	--/--	6/0	3/0	0/0	19,780
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	23,687
<b>Tier 2</b>	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	--	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	0/0	38,474



Figure 4.2: Tier 2 Recommendations



## Tier 2 Recommendations – Alternate Scenario

After initial consideration of the scenarios for the four recommended tiers of implementation, the need for an alternative option for Tier 2 became apparent. This alternative seeks to implement a new route on the Paris Road/Route B corridor in Tier 2 (rather than as recommended in Tier 3). In order to maintain a similar overall level of service and operating cost, adding this new route requires a lower level of service increase for existing routes, as compared to the other Tier 2 option.

Specifically, accommodating a new “Purple” route on the Paris Rd/Route B corridor requires reducing the service hours on other routes. Rather than improve frequency on three Go COMO routes, this Tier 2 alternative would only be able to improve two routes from 45 to 30-minute frequency (Orange and Green, based on current ridership levels). Additionally, all routes would need to be trimmed by one hour in the evening, with service ending at 9:25 p.m. While this is still an improvement compared to Tier 1 service (ending at 6:40 p.m.), it falls well short of the intended Tier 2 span (until 10:25 p.m.). Saturday service would operate from 6:30 a.m. to 8:25 p.m.

However, these changes allow new service to begin on the high-employment Paris Rd./Route B corridor, operating six days per week. This need was voiced by the community as documented in the community engagement process in Section 3.

Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in *Table 4.3* and *Figure 4.3*. (These descriptions are compared to Tier 1 recommendations.)

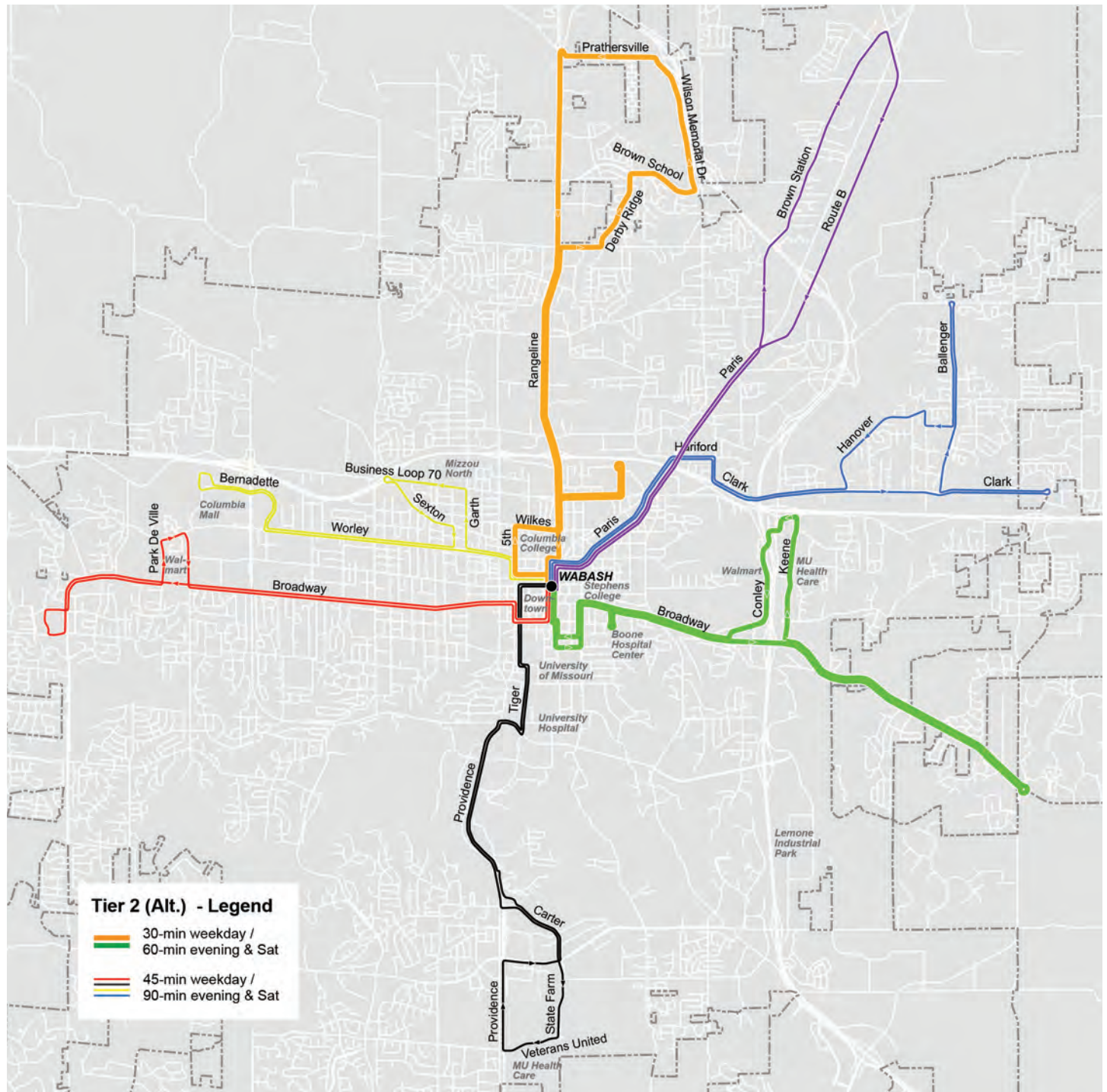
- Routes & Alignments: New “Purple” route on Paris Rd./Route B (see Figure 4.2).
- Weekday: Convert routes 2 Red and 4 Orange, to 30-minute frequency in daytime hours and 60-minute frequency in evenings.
- Saturday: Convert routes 2 Red and 4 Orange to 60-minute frequency on Saturdays.
- Paratransit Impact: Major increase to federally-required paratransit service area (3/4-mile of fixed routes); minor increase to paratransit service hours.
- Negative Impacts: Creates different headways on different routes. With three routes operating at 30 minutes, and three routes at 45 minutes. Not every route will be at Wabash at the same time on every trip. Some transfers will have a 15-minute wait.

Table 4.3: Tier 2 Recommendations – Alternate Scenario

Phase	Service Hours			Frequency (Day/Eve)			Buses (Day/Eve)			Annual VRH
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
Baseline*	6:20am to 6:40pm	9:51am to 6:40pm	--	45/--	90/--	--/--	6/0	3/0	0/0	19,780
Tier 1	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	23,687
Tier 2	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	--	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	0/0	38,474
Tier 2 Alternate	5:30am to 9:25pm	6:30am to 8:25pm	--	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	7/7	6/6	38,819



### Figure 4.3: Tier 2 Recommendations





## Tier 3 Recommendations

Recommendations in Tier 3 complete the process of converting the entire Go COMO system to a network of routes operating every 30 minutes on weekdays and 60 minutes on evenings and weekends. Additionally, Sunday service is added for the first time. Finally, a new route is added to cover employment and residential areas along the Paris Road and Route B corridor.

If resources allow, Tier 2 should be skipped and Tier 3 fully implemented, as Tier 3 represents a more useful and consistent structure across routes, which is justified based on current ridership patterns and trends. Routes 1 Black, 3 Gold, and 5 Blue, unable to be implemented in Tier 2 due to cost, are converted in this phase. With a second bus added to each of these routes, an additional 10-15 minutes of runtime can be added, allowing new areas to be served.

Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4.

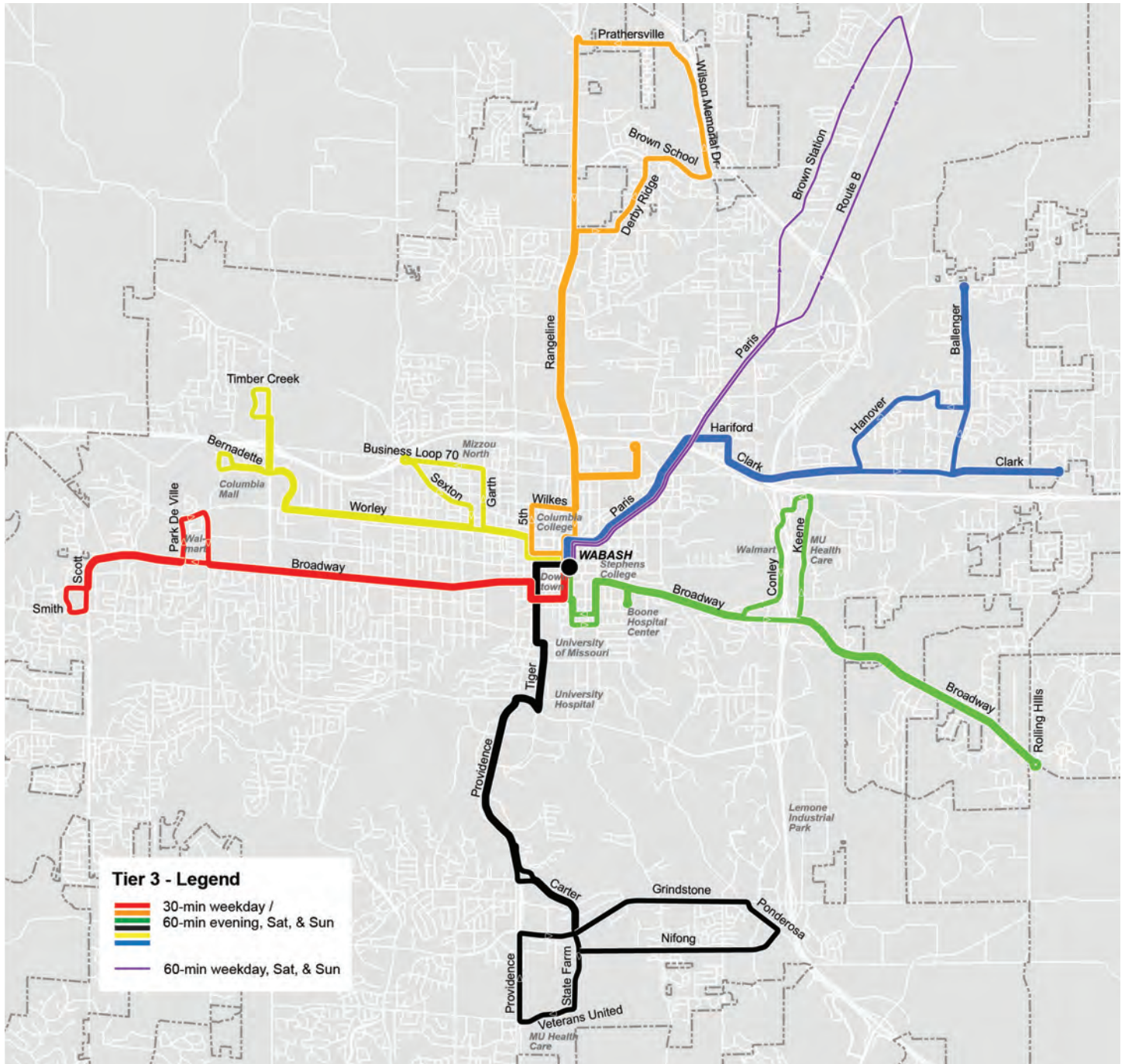
- **Routes & Alignments:** Add new route on Paris Rd/ Route B corridor. This route would extend from Wabash Station to the intersection of Route B and Brown Station Road in the northeast corner of the city.

- **Routes & Alignments:** Extend existing routes 1 Black, 3 Gold, and 5 Blue to new destinations (adding 10-15 minutes).
- **Weekday:** Increase frequency on all routes (except new Paris Rd/Route B route) to 30 minutes in daytime hours and 60 minutes in the evening.
- **Weekday:** Minor extension of service hours: 5:30 a.m. to 11:25 p.m. This provides for coverage of more service, retail, manufacturing, warehousing, and other jobs
- **Saturday:** Increase frequency to 60 minutes on all routes.
- **Saturday:** Minor extension of service hours: 5:30 a.m. to 11:25 p.m., to match weekdays.
- **Sunday:** Add new service from 7:30 a.m. to 6:25 p.m., with all routes operating at 60-minute headways.
- **Paratransit Impact:** Major expansion of federally-required service area with three extended routes and one new route. Add new service say (Sunday), so paratransit will operate 7 days per week.

**Table 4.4: Tier 3 Recommendations**

Phase	Service Hours			Frequency (Day/Eve)			Buses (Day/Eve)			Annual VRH
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
<b>Baseline*</b>	6:20am to 6:40pm	9:51am to 6:40pm	--	45/--	90/--	--/--	6/0	3/0	0/0	19,780
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	23,687
<b>Tier 2</b>	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	--	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	0/0	38,474
<b>Tier 3</b>	5:30am to 11:25pm	6:30am to 11:25pm	7:30am to 6:25pm	30/60	60/60	60/--	13/6	7/7	7/7	56,291

Figure 4.4: Tier 3 Recommendations



## Tier 4 Recommendations

This final tier of implementation is intended to represent the longer-term vision of transit in Columbia, with the understanding that the cost, staffing, and capital resources needed will take longer to implement.

Tier 4 recommendations seek to establish a more complete network of frequent routes, as well as establish new coverage services extending throughout the city. These new coverage services are recommended at this type to be in the form of new fixed routes, but could also be implemented, perhaps as a pilot, as on-demand micro transit services that allow for service flexibility collection of origin and destination data.

A key component of this vision is to identify a north-south corridor and an east-west corridor on which to upgrade to “high-frequency” service, operating every 15 minutes on weekdays and 30 minutes in off-peak periods. At this level of weekday frequency, riders can use transit spontaneously (without consulting a schedule) and never experience a long wait for the bus.

Additionally, new routes are added to cover portions of the city—southwest and southeast Columbia—that are currently unserved. Service hours are further extended

incrementally to be useful for more late-shift work trips and recreational transportation use. Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5.

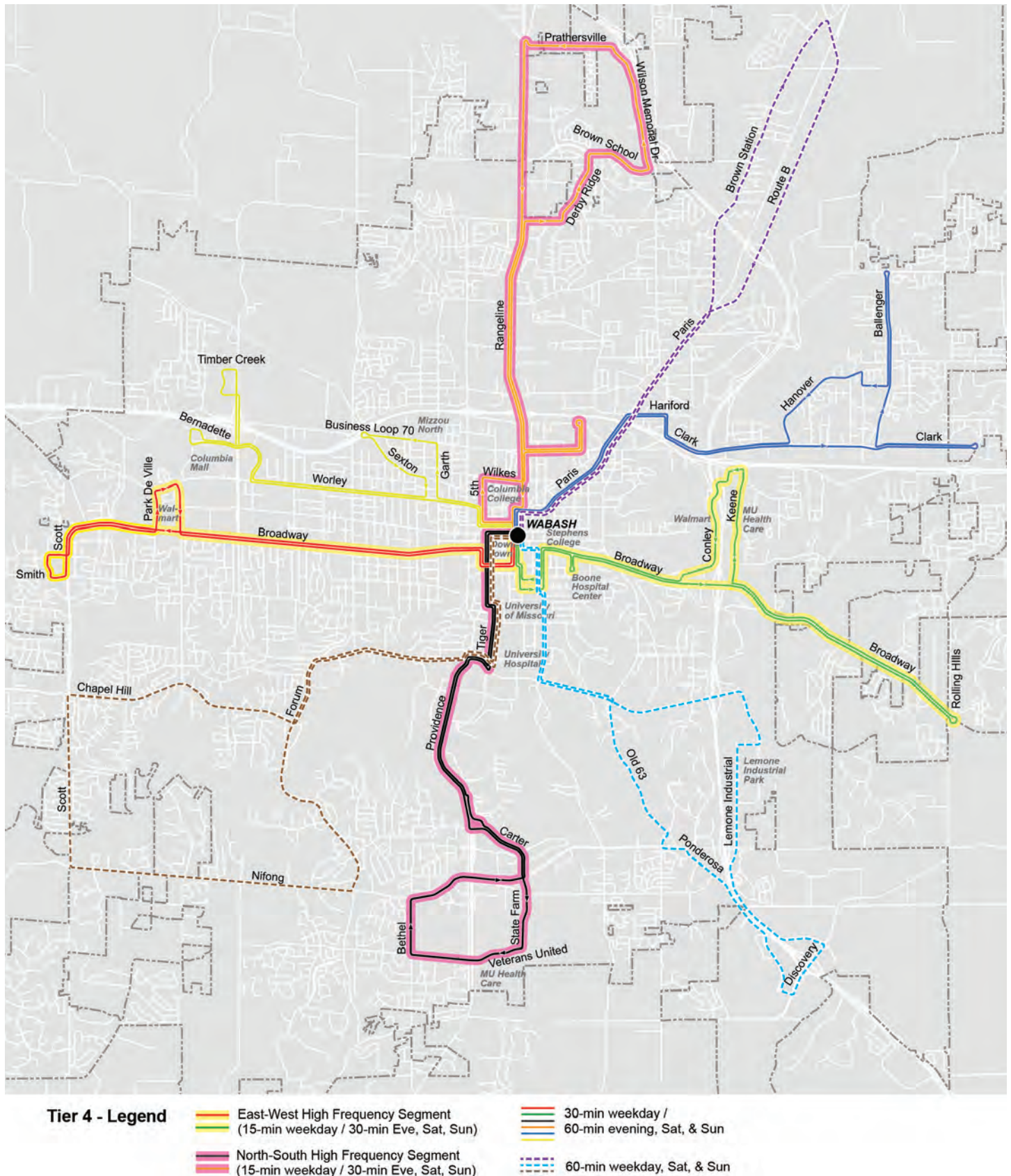
- **Routes & Alignments:** Add new routes in southwest Columbia and southeast Columbia. Minor alignment adjustments may be considered to other routes as part of service frequency upgrades, due to changing community needs and travel patterns.
- **Weekday:** Increase frequency on highest-ridership routes to 15 minutes in daytime hours and 30 minutes in evening hours.
- **Weekday:** Minor extension of service hours: 5:00 a.m. to 11:55 p.m.
- **Saturday:** Increase frequency on highest-ridership routes to 30 minutes all day.
- **Sunday:** Minor extension of service hours: 7:00 a.m. to 9:55 p.m.
- **Paratransit Impact:** Major expansion of federally-required service area to include much of southwest and southeast Columbia. Minor increase to paratransit service hours on all service days.

**Table 4.5: Tier 4 Recommendations**

Phase	Service Hours			Frequency (Day/Eve)			Buses (Day/Eve)			Annual VRH
	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	Wkd	Sat	Sun	
<b>Baseline*</b>	6:20am to 6:40pm	9:51am to 6:40pm	--	45/--	90/--	--/--	6/0	3/0	0/0	19,780
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	23,687
<b>Tier 2</b>	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	--	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	0/0	38,474
<b>Tier 3</b>	5:30am to 11:25pm	6:30am to 11:25pm	7:30am to 6:25pm	30/60	60/60	60/--	13/6	7/7	7/7	56,291
<b>Tier 4</b>	5:00am to 11:55pm	6:00am to 11:55pm	7:00am to 9:55pm	15/30 30/60	30/30 60/60	60/60	23/13	13/9		102,665



### Figure 4.5: Tier 4 Recommendations



*Note: During implementation of this tier, the extent of high-frequency service may be modified based on updated ridership patterns.*

## Recommendations Summary

Tiers 1 through 4 are each intended to build on prior phases of investment, with each taking a meaningful step toward the community's vision for transit. The final tier of investment represents a five-fold (538%) increase in the amount of transit service provided on Go COMO fixed routes. Combined with Tiger Line services, these service levels would put Columbia above most of its peer agencies evaluated in the market analysis. This service expansion will allow Columbia's residents to more feasibly live in the city comfortably without owning a car.

### Connection to Plan Goals

Guidance for study recommendations comes from the Vision Statements established through public input. This section describes ways that the tiered recommendations address each vision statement. Some vision elements require an increase to overall service levels, and therefore are more emphasized in later project phases. Earlier project phases must be careful not to make these elements more difficult to achieve in the future.

#### **Vision Statement #1: Focus on recruitment and retention of transit staff needed to operate, maintain, and manage transit services.**

- This item is addressed in the Implementation section (Section 5), which estimates staffing levels needed as well as organizational components to enhance department efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **Vision Statement #2: Meet the needs of riders who need transit services the most.**

- First and foremost, the plan focuses on improving service for existing riders. Investment in span and frequency of existing routes (Tier 1 and 2) occur

prior to making significant changes or expansion to route alignments (Tier 3 and 4). In addition, these expansions focus on connecting new locations that riders with limited transportation options need to access across the city.

#### **Vision Statement #3: Prioritize near-term actions on improving existing services, through route frequency and service hours.**

- Frequency and service hours were the top two concerns of public participants in the study process. These upgrades are prioritized in the initial tiers of implementation, and are more fully realized after Tier 4.

#### **Vision Statement #4: Align long-term transit visioning with community growth and development.**

- The most significant connection with this statement is the creation of high-frequency service in Tier 4. This level of transit service, alongside investments in bus stop/station infrastructure, can drive transit-oriented development and maximize the number of people living, working, or visiting areas in close proximity to high-capacity transit.

#### **Vision Statement #5: Take advantage of opportunities to add county-level and regional services.**

- The next page of this study provides a summary if a potential regional service connecting Columbia to Jefferson City, via Boone County destinations including the Columbia Regional Airport and Ashland.



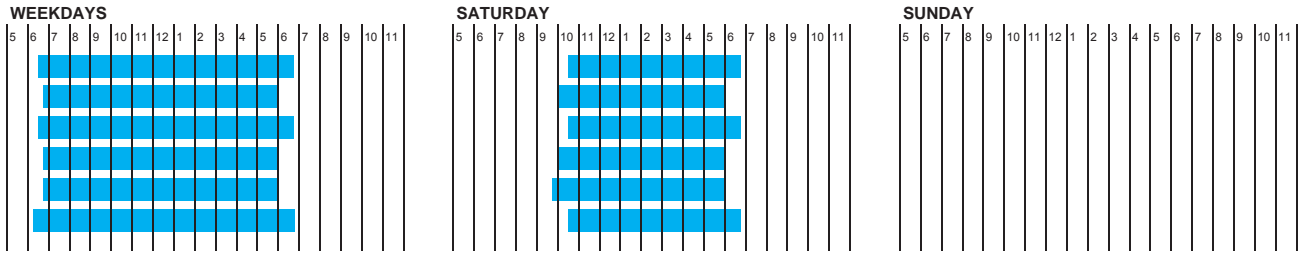
*Recommended transit improvements will continue to utilize Wabash Bus Station as the principal hub of the transit network in Columbia. The location of this hub and convenience of transferring between routes is seen as one of the key strengths of the current system that should be maintained in the future.*

Figure 4.6: Span & Frequency Tables

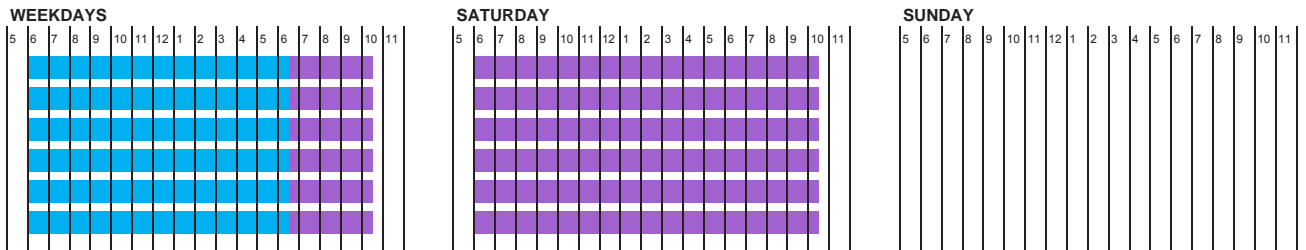
Legend Frequency (in minutes):



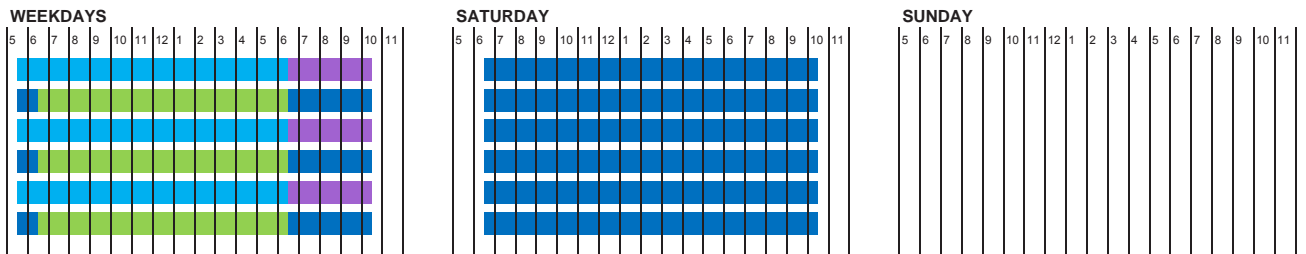
Baseline



Tier 1

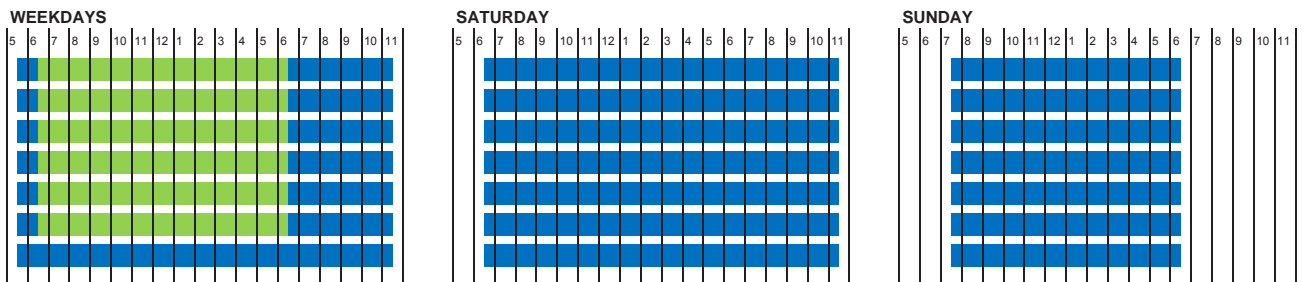


Tier 2

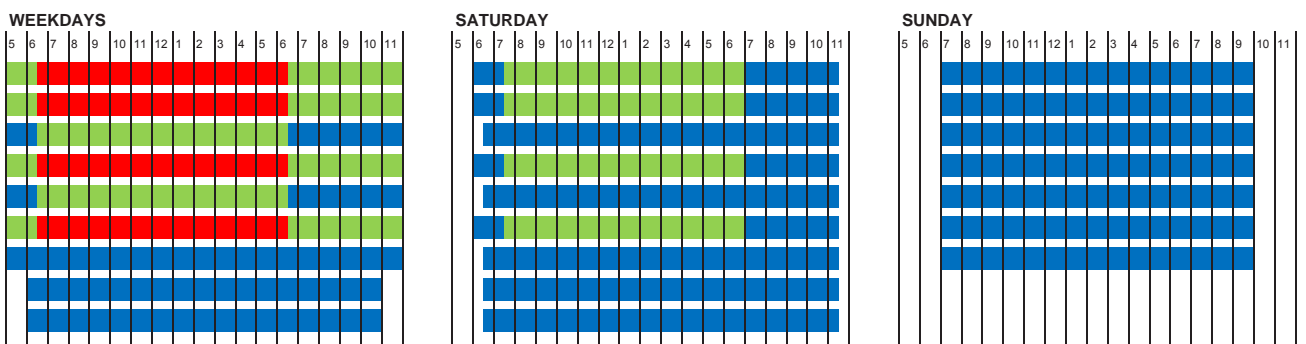


Note: Tier 2 Alternate option would reduce the frequency of the Red route, end all routes one hour earlier, but add a new #7 Purple route

Tier 3



Tier 4





## Regional Services Alternative

A specific service idea brought up through this study's public engagement process is the desire for a regional transportation service that links Columbia and Jefferson City. This section includes an assessment of this potential service. While this is not included in any of the recommended service tiers, it should be considered a potential alternative for implementation alongside Go COMO local service improvements. Coordination with other partners—including JeffTran in Jefferson City and MoDOT—would be needed as well.

### Potential Service Options

Many factors were considered in the development of alternatives. Some are constraints, others are wishful. Taking into account as many of these factors as possible, the study team developed an initial set of basic service alternatives, which will be vetted to local staff, the technical committees and the communities for feedback and comments.

#### A. Columbia/Jefferson City Intercity Bus Service

Transit service between Columbia and Jefferson City is not a new concept and has been discussed for many years. As part of a statewide effort to improve connectivity between modes of transportation, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) initiated the Columbia—Jefferson City Express Bus Study to explore potential transit service between downtown Columbia, Jefferson City Amtrak, and intermediate points. In order to better understand travel needs along the U.S. 63 corridor, U.S. 63, MoDOT commenced a public survey asking about current travel preferences and desires for a future bus route between the two cities. This survey showed that there may be an unmet need for this type of service as well as a population of individuals who responded as interested in taking the service if it is offered.

Columbia is one of the top five largest communities in the state with over 120,000 persons and the connection to Jefferson City, the Missouri state capital, is a key corridor to employment, health care, educational facilities, and workers. Today, Greyhound Lines offer residents and visitors two trips per day traveling northbound and reaches Wabash Station in Columbia at 2:40 p.m. and 8:20 p.m. A second stop is located in Columbia at Midway Travel Plaza with arrival times of 10:15 a.m. and 8:35 p.m. One southbound trip from Columbia to Jefferson City leaves at 2:40 p.m. and arrives in Jefferson City at 3:50 p.m. This service is offered seven days per week and costs approximately \$10-\$15 per one-way trip.

One potential service option is to enhance the existing national intercity bus network in place today and serve the needs identified by our public engagement meetings.

Goals of the project are to develop and implement increased service, raise community awareness of the service, and provide passenger bus stop infrastructure. A key design element will be to provide smooth, seamless connections with Go COMO and JeffTran transit services.

Benefits of the enhanced intercity bus connection for residents and visitors in the Columbia and Jefferson City corridor are listed below.

- Columbia and Jefferson City have a high concentration of labor markets, in which enhanced bus service can increase employee participation and raise the region's connectivity to the statewide economy.
- Intercity bus service can help facilitate access to higher education with the University of Missouri in Columbia and Lincoln University in Jefferson City and several community colleges. There is strong evidence in academic and community-based research that increased levels of education leads to higher incomes and increased employment opportunities for those who live in rural communities.
- Access to medical facilities can enhance health benefits for those seeking specialized medical care.
- Reductions to greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved through an alternative to a single occupancy vehicle. According to the American Public Transportation Association, a single person commuting 20 miles per day can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 4,800 pounds per year by using public transit.

Economic development benefits could also be provided through enhance intercity bus service. Investments in public transit stimulate economic activity along the transit corridor as routes provide increased access to businesses and communities. Secondary economic benefits include residents' opportunities to access better employment, increased wages through higher education, including increased skills to facilitate growth in their local communities, and to live a healthier lifestyle with reduced medical costs. A final benefit of the intercity service is the opportunity to relax while someone else drives, enjoy the scenery, read, or work until they reach their destination. The largest economic benefit to the communities along the corridor includes providing access to employment, allowing persons to support themselves and spend money locally. In addition, education and training trips provide the economic benefit of long-term employment at decent wages and job stability.

The potential intercity bus service option is eligible for Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) funding providing the proposed route has connections to the rural communities between Columbia and Jefferson City and has meaningful connections to the existing national intercity bus network, operated by Greyhound. Intercity bus service is a vital link between rural communities and larger urban areas for services, employment, and connections to family and friends across the nation. The FTA 5311(f) rural intercity bus assistance program allows the use of funding for services that connect rural (non-urbanized) areas to the national network of intercity bus services. No minimum number of non-urbanized stops is defined by FTA, but services that connect urbanized areas to urbanized areas, with no non-urbanized stops, could not be funded under this program.

Current gaps in the national intercity bus network in Missouri include connections to remote rural communities. Today, the national network focuses on large cities; however, in Missouri, both Columbia and Jefferson City have limited service available. The proposed future intercity route discussed above supplement existing services and continue to build the Missouri statewide bus network.

### Service Characteristics

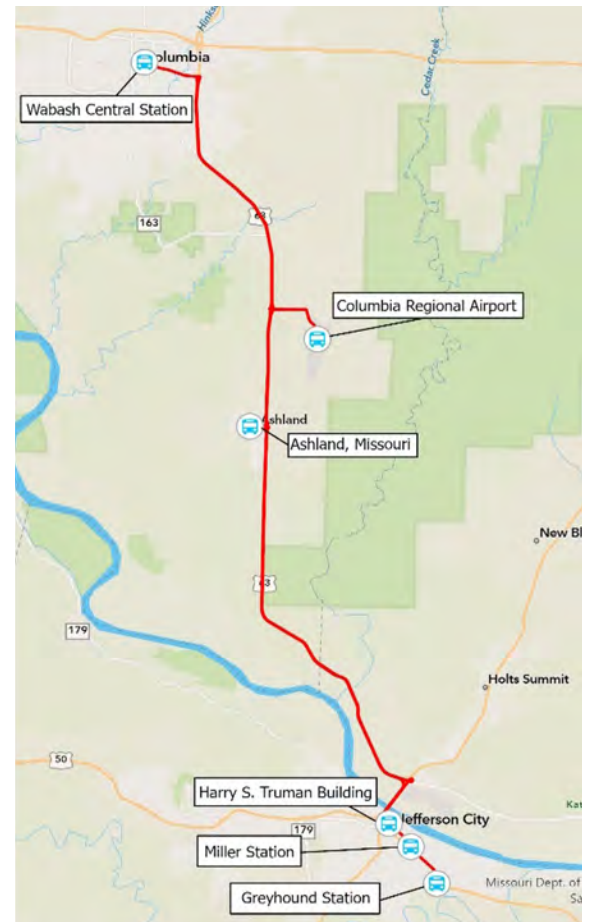
The intercity bus service will provide morning, mid-day, and evening trips departing Columbia and Jefferson City. The route will include connections to Ashland, the rural community along the corridor, in addition to the primary

transportation providers, including Go COMO, Greyhound network, and JeffTran.

The following proposed bus stops are an initial list for consideration; however, it is not all inclusive and other stops will be considered as the alternatives are vetted throughout this study process. Table 4.6 provides a description of the proposed stops. Figure 4.7 shows the proposed route for the intercity service.

- Wabash Bus Station in Columbia
- Columbia Regional Airport
- Ashland, MO
- Jefferson City Airport
- Harry S. Truman State Office Building in Jefferson City
- JeffTran Miller Street Bus Station in Jefferson City
- Greyhound stop in Jefferson City

**Figure 4.7: Potential Route Map**



**Table 4.6: Proposed Intercity Bus Stops**

Stop Location	Purpose	Park & Ride
Wabash Station, Columbia	Connections with Go COMO routes and Greyhound	No
Columbia Regional Airport	Airport	Yes
Ashland, MO	Connection to Rural Community and OATS Rural Transit service.	Yes
Jefferson City Memorial Airport	Airport	Yes
Harry S. Truman Office Building, Jefferson City	State employees and access to State Capitol	No
Miller Street Station, Jefferson City	Direct connection to Amtrak and JeffTran bus routes	No
Greyhound Stop, Jefferson City	Intercity bus service	No

## Travel Time

Providing reliable and timely intercity bus service along the Columbia/Jefferson City corridor will be key to building ridership. The travel time in a car is just under 60 minutes. The bus route will need to provide a comparable travel time to attract residents and visitors to the service. Having approximately five to eight stops adds time to the schedule, but the goal of the service is to not be more than approximately 20 minutes more than an auto trip.

Travel times between each stop has been estimated. In total, runtimes are estimated at 81 minutes in each direction. Based on this estimate, example schedules are provided below. This schedule assumes a total of six trips each weekday in each direction.

## Cost Estimates

Revenue hours, miles, and operating costs have been measured based on the anticipated stops, travel time assumptions, and conceptual schedule below. The statistics below represent service with six daily trips in each direction.

- One-Way Miles: 76.1
- Daily Revenue Hours: 19.2
- Annual Revenue Hours: 4,864
- **Estimated Annual Operating Cost: \$616,356**

**Table 4.7: Potential Route Schedule**

Southbound – morning and mid-day			
Wabash Station	5:30 A.M.	6:00 A.M.	1:30 P.M.
Columbia Airport	6:00 A.M.	6:30 A.M.	2:00 P.M.
Ashland, MO	6:15 A.M.	6:45 A.M.	2:15 P.M.
Jefferson City Airport	6:40 A.M.	7:10 A.M.	2:40 P.M.
Harry S. Truman Bldg.	6:50 A.M.	7:20 A.M.	2:50 P.M.
Miller St. Station	7:00 A.M.	7:30 A.M.	3:00 P.M.
Greyhound – Jeff. City	7:10 A.M.	7:40 A.M.	3:10 P.M.*
Southbound – evening			
Wabash Station	4:00 P.M.	4:30 P.M.	5:00 P.M.
Columbia Airport	4:30 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	5:30 P.M.
Ashland, MO	4:45 P.M.	5:15 P.M.	5:45 P.M.
Jefferson City Airport	5:10 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	6:10 P.M.
Harry S. Truman Bldg.	5:20 P.M.	5:50 P.M.	6:20 P.M.
Miller St. Station	5:30 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6:30 P.M.
Greyhound – Jeff. City	5:40 P.M.	6:10 P.M.	6:40 P.M.

Northbound – morning & mid-day			
Greyhound – Jeff. City			
Miller St. Station	5:30 A.M.	6:00 A.M.	1:00 P.M.
Harry S. Truman Bldg.	5:40 A.M.	6:10 A.M.	1:30 P.M.
Jefferson City Airport	5:50 A.M.	6:20 A.M.	1:45 P.M.
Ashland, MO	6:15 A.M.	6:45 A.M.	2:10 P.M.
Columbia Airport	6:30 A.M.	7:00 A.M.	2:20 P.M.
Wabash Station	7:00 A.M.	7:30 A.M.	2:30 P.M. *
Northbound – evening			
Greyhound – Jeff. City	4:10 P.M.	-----	-----
Miller St. Station	4:20 P.M.	4:30 P.M.	5:00 P.M.
Harry S. Truman Bldg.	4:30 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	5:10 P.M.
Jefferson City Airport	4:40 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	5:20 P.M.
Ashland, MO	5:05 P.M.	5:15 P.M.	5:45 P.M.
Columbia Airport	5:20 P.M.	5:30 P.M.	6:00 P.M.
Wabash Station	5:50 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6:30 P.M.

\* Intercity bus aligns with Greyhound stop at Wabash station at 2:40 PM

**Table 4.8: Transportation Provider Connections**

Transportation Provider	Type of Provider	City Stop location(s)	Nearby Destinations
Greyhound	Intercity	Columbia, MO Wabash Bus Station	Jefferson City, MO Hannibal, MO Warrensburg, MO Troy, MO Bowling Green, MO Clinton, MO Quincy, IL
		Jefferson City, MO 701 Eastland Dr	Columbia, MO Hannibal, MO Warrensburg, MO Troy, MO Bowling Green, MO Clinton, MO Osceola, MO
Oats Transit	Public Transportation (5311)	Ashland, MO Columbia, MO Jefferson City, MO	Connections to 87 counties in Missouri
Amtrak	Intercity	Jefferson City, MO 101 Jefferson Street	Kansas City and St. Louis



# 5 Implementation



## An Actionable Plan

Feasibility of implementing recommendations has been a primary concern and consideration throughout the Study process. A plan that cannot be implemented has no real or lasting value to the community.

A major aspect of this feasibility is adopting a plan that is supported by those that use and are impacted by transit services, as well as the community at large. While unanimous agreement on the direction of transit is not possible, this Study conducted multiple phases of public and stakeholder engagement to:

- Fully understand and document transit needs and goals.
- Pursue multiple ideas, framework concepts, and specific alternatives for achieving these goals
- Selecting the best alternatives for implementation and affirming near-term action steps as well as the long-term vision for transit.

Because the recommendations of this study are anticipated to occur in multiple phases, implementation actions and strategies will vary. All recommended tiers of implementation have associated operating costs to expand services. Tiers 2, 3, and 4 also have additional capital costs (fleet, facilities, and bus stop improvements) that will also need to be funded.

In addition to determining revenue sources for these increased costs, additional staff will be needed to operate and manage services.

To guide implementation, this section provides:

- Operating and capital cost estimates for implementing each Tier.
- An organizational and staffing plan to ensure services can be implemented and operated reliably.
- Action steps for implementing the changes, including integration with other transportation modes and providers.

## Financing & Investment

Implementing the recommendations of this study will require substantial investment in transit beyond current allocations, especially in the long term. To support this investment, this study documents the needs as understood through community input and technical review. With this in mind, recommendations are categorized into tiers to allow for implementation in smaller steps that are more financially feasible. These tiers are designed to build on each other, with each working toward the overall vision. In addition to the cost of expanding fixed route service, expanding service hours and system coverage also must include expanding paratransit services to the same hours and geographic extent.

Estimated operating costs of each tier are provided in Table 5.1 below. These estimates include both operations of fixed route and paratransit services (but do not include Tiger Line services; for this purpose Tiger Line routes are assumed to continue as-is).

Tier 1 requires an investment of approximately \$1.4 million annually above Baseline service to cover additional operating costs, or about a 20 percent increase. Tiers 2 and 3 add another \$2.6 million and \$3.2 million, respectively,

to complete more substantial and widespread service enhancements. Tier 4, the long-term transit vision, requires about \$7.5 million of additional investment, for a total of \$14.7 million above current operating costs.

Table 5.2 estimates capital costs for implementing the plan. These costs include: replacement of existing fleet, fleet expansion for new services, passenger facilities (bus stops), and administrative facilities. Fleet needs for Tier 1 are minimal, with only an estimated one additional vehicle in peak service needed for paratransit services due to anticipated increased demand. Vehicle needs become more substantial beginning with Tier 2, where five additional vehicles are required (includes both fixed route and paratransit services). 12 additional vehicles are needed for Tier 3 and 27 vehicles are needed for Tier 4. *(Note: Increasing service span has much less of an impact on the number of vehicles needed to operate service than increasing route frequency or service area.)*

Capital costs become substantial beginning in Tier 2, at an estimated \$8.5 million, growing to \$10.1 million for Tier 3 and \$22.7 million for Tier 4.

**Table 5.1: Vehicle Revenue Hours & Operating Cost Estimates by Tier**  
(Does not include Tiger Line)

Phase	Veh. Rev. Hrs.		Annual Operating Cost		
	Year	% Chg.	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Total
<b>Baseline*</b>	19,780	--	\$2,579,283	\$1,997,119	<b>\$4,576,402</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	23,687	19.8%	\$3,088,827	\$2,874,853	<b>\$5,963,680</b>
<b>Tier 2</b>	38,474	94.5%	\$5,017,099	\$3,592,991	<b>\$8,610,090</b>
<b>Tier 3</b>	56,291	137.6%	\$7,340,463	\$4,323,805	<b>\$11,664,269</b>
<b>Tier 4</b>	102,665	82.4%	\$13,387,633	\$5,841,893	<b>\$19,229,527</b>

**Table 5.2: Peak Vehicles & Capital Cost Estimates by Tier**  
(Does not include Tiger Line)

Phase	Peak Vehicles			Estimated Capital Cost (for entire phase)				
	Fixed	Para	Total	Bus Replace	Addl. Buses	Bus Stops	Facilities	Total
<b>Baseline*</b>	6	12	<b>18</b>					
<b>Tier 1</b>	6	13	<b>19</b>	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Tier 2</b>	9	14	<b>23</b>	\$4,200,000	\$3,800,000	\$297,000	\$180,000	<b>\$8,477,000</b>
<b>Tier 3</b>	13	17	<b>30</b>	\$4,300,000	\$4,650,000	\$693,000	\$420,000	<b>\$10,063,000</b>
<b>Tier 4</b>	23	22	<b>45</b>	\$8,500,000	\$11,650,000	\$1,692,000	\$780,000	<b>\$22,622,000</b>

**Notes:**

- Costs are in 2025 dollars.
- Grissum Building RAISE project is assumed to meet the vehicle maintenance and storage facility needs of each tier. Facilities costs estimate Administrative facility upgrades to accommodate additional staff.
- Bus Stops category in Tier 4 includes Wabash passenger facility upgrades to accommodate more routes and buses per day.

## Funding Options

The scale of desired investment in the long-term will require extensive planning and intergovernmental coordination to determine and allocate funding. This includes continuing to utilize formula and competitive grant programs to assist with these operating and capital costs, each of which require a match of local funds. Concurrently, the City of Columbia will need to evaluate and establish mechanisms, and work with local partners, to obtain new revenue to support this growth in a reliable and sustainable manner.

### Federal Funding

Go COMO already makes use of multiple Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs to fund capital and operating expenses for transit services. These will continue to be important sources to continue meeting operating and capital needs.

The **Urbanized Area Program Funds (5307)** formula program is utilized both for transit capital and operating assistance. While there are numerous programs available for capital projects, 5307 is the primary federal source for operating assistance in urbanized areas. A 50 percent match is required for operating assistance, while a 20 percent match is required for capital assistance. Funds are distributed to urbanized areas based on a complex formula involving population, vehicle revenue miles, and ridership. Go COMO will continue utilizing this source of funding, which will increase as population, transit services, and ridership increase over time, as envisioned in this plan.

The **Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program (5310)** can also continue to be utilized by Go COMO, primarily for purchasing vehicles used to operate paratransit services.

One federal program not currently utilized that may have the potential to assist with service expansion is the FTA Formula Grants for Rural Areas (5311) formula program. While the vast majority of GO COMO's transit services will continue operating within the Census-designated Columbia, MO urbanized area. (and therefore not eligible for 5311), future regional services outside of the urbanized area, such as in rural portions and smaller cities in Boone County, could utilize 5311 funding when operating in rural areas. The federal share is 80 percent for capital projects and 50 percent for operating assistance.

Additionally, the **Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program** has been utilized by Go COMO for buses and related equipment, with a 20 percent local match. This will continue to be an important source of funding for vehicles and related capital needs, and can also be utilized for future new or expanded facilities that will be needed in the Long-Term Plan.

FTA, and the US Department of Transportation as a whole, provide additional competitive grant opportunities that often assist transit agencies, primarily for capital projects. These include:

- The **Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program** includes additional funding for competitive grants, for buses and bus related facilities.
- Also as part of the Buses and Bus Facilities program, the **Low or No Emission Vehicle Program (5339(c))** is a competitive grant program that provides funding for low or no emission buses and related facilities enhancements, including electric buses that could supplement Go COMO's existing and expanding electric bus fleet.
- The **Areas of Persistent Poverty Program** provides for planning, engineering, and development of plans to improve transit services or infrastructure within USDOT-designated "Areas of Persistent Poverty" and "Historically Disadvantaged Communities"
- The **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)** discretionary grant program can provide funding for transit infrastructure projects, such as facility expansion or new transfer centers and other bus stop improvements.

### State Funding

In both 2022 and 2023, the State of Missouri has significantly increased transit funding. According to the Missouri Public Transit Association (MPTA), state transit funding has increased from approximately \$1.7 million in 2021 to \$8.7 million in 2022, and approved for \$11.7 million. This represents a 580 percent increase in the past two years. This new funding provides opportunities for the state to assist with expanding services that did not previously exist. State transit assistance funding can be utilized for operating and capital costs. This is a welcome development in a state that has historically had a very low per-capita investment in transit as compared to neighboring states.



## Local Funding

While federal and state sources are helpful for providing funding for transit services, local funding is necessary to match these funds, and to provide services beyond the funding amounts provided by non-local programs. This is true both for capital and operating funds. However, because fewer federal programs are available for operating assistance than for capital projects, local funding for operations is generally the greatest challenge for an agency that desires to expand services. Local funds are currently provided by the City of Columbia, from local taxpayers. The majority of funding comes from a portion of a one-half cent Transportation Sales Tax.

One potential alternative is **an increased, or new, dedicated tax to support transit services**. Many transit agencies receive local funding from a dedicated sales tax or property tax levy. This can be levied on the entire service area or local jurisdiction, or within a specific corridor or designated area such as through a Transportation Development District (TDD). A TDD would be most applicable for a specific corridor project, such as for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or other enhanced services and infrastructure on a defined route. This could potentially include one or both of the “high-frequency corridors” envisioned in Tier 4 recommendations. Adopting a new tax would require voter approval within the designated jurisdiction or area.

**Private funding** could potentially provide operating or capital assistance for a specific service, location, or corridor. This could be in the form of funding provided by one entity, for example a large employer with employees in need of transit service, or by a group of businesses pooling resources within a specific geographic boundary in the form of a **Transportation Management Association (TMA)**. Specific funding mechanisms can be customized based on specific needs and resources.

Lastly, operating costs for services expanding outside of the City of Columbia should be paid for, at least in part, by local jurisdictions receiving the new service. This may include Boone County, or other cities in the county such as Ashland or Centralia. This will allow new services to be added to the system without reducing existing services, allowing for real growth of the system. However, it is unlikely that these other communities could financially support a robust fixed route service; however, demand-response service, perhaps in coordination with OATS, may be able to meet rural and inter-city transportation needs.

## University Partnerships

University partnerships could be further explored as a way to provide additional funding for transit services and a added benefit for students. The University of Missouri already supports transit services by contracting with the City to provide Tiger Line shuttles. However, these routes are confined to the university campus and primarily (though not entirely) serve as parking shuttles. Additional partnerships with MU could result in additional services that better connect the university to the city, potentially more of a blending of the Tiger Line and Go COMO services. A focused planning effort would be needed to develop this partnership further.

Additionally, partnerships could be explored with Stephens College and/or Columbia College, to better facilitate transportation for students, faculty, and staff of these institutions as well.

## Staffing Plan

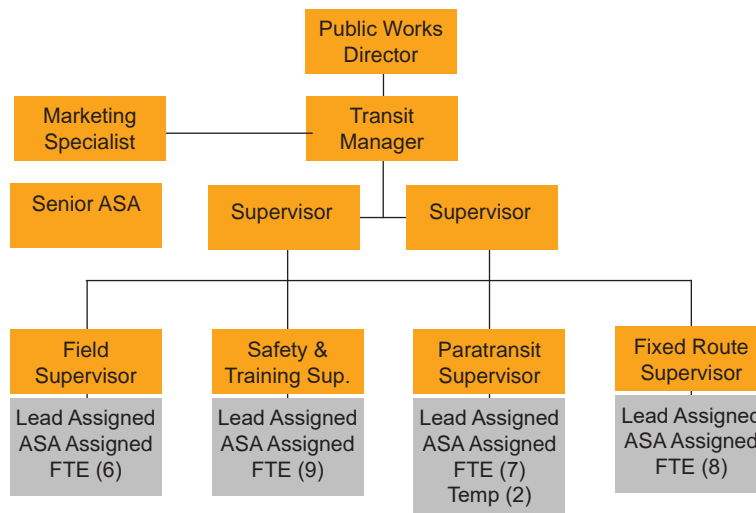
The expansion of Go COMO services for the community requires each tier to have additional staff to meet the needs, manage staff and services, and provide oversight and compliance for the agency. The COVID-19 pandemic created a challenge for Go COMO and for transit agencies across the country. As communities suspended travel for health safety, transit agencies were greatly affected, with service cuts and suspension of service. Go COMO continues to build back the transit service and transit staff to service levels prior to the pandemic.

Staffing and workforce planning refers to adjusting staff levels when impending changes are coming in the future and wanting to avoid short-staff scenarios, service lapses, and keeping overtime to a minimum. In the past year, Go COMO has had success in filling driver positions and

retaining driver staff. To date, not all driver positions are filled; however, the agency has had a steadier stream of driver candidates coming in to complete applications.

Go COMO recently completed the required Federal Transit Administration Triennial Review process, which occurs every three years for all transit agencies in the US. Multiple findings were cited, which is common; however, the Go COMO findings directly relate to having more and adequate staff and management to monitor processes and procedures and documentation. The following section provides recommendations to address the existing gaps in management and shows recommended staffing levels for the future growth. The existing organizational chart for Go COMO is shown in Figure 5.1 below, representing management and operations.

**Figure 5.1: Existing Go COMO Organizational Chart**



## Future Service Plans

The future service plans begin with existing services today, which is represented by Baseline, followed by Tier 1, 2, 3, and 4. The detailed service plans for each of the Tiers are described in Section 4 (Recommendations).

The primary information used to estimate Go COMO future staffing includes historical data, vehicle revenue hours, and peak vehicles in service. Table 5.2 shows the projected service levels.

**Figure 5.2: Future Service Plan Data**

Phase	Annual VRH	Peak Vehicles
<b>Baseline*</b>	37,828	18
<b>Tier 1</b>	41,825	19
<b>Tier 2</b>	60,702	23
<b>Tier 3</b>	76,980	30
<b>Tier 4</b>	124,909	45

*Note: These inputs represent Go COMO and Paratransit services.*

To assist in projecting the future number of drivers needed for each Tier, the existing number of projected annual revenue hours was divided by the number of drivers in place today, which is 37. The number of drivers projected in the future is shown in *Table 5.3*.

**Table 5.3: Driver Projections**

	Baseline	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Annual VRH	41,825	41,825	60,702	76,980	124,909
Peak Vehicles	18	19	23	30	45
Drivers	37	41	59	75	122

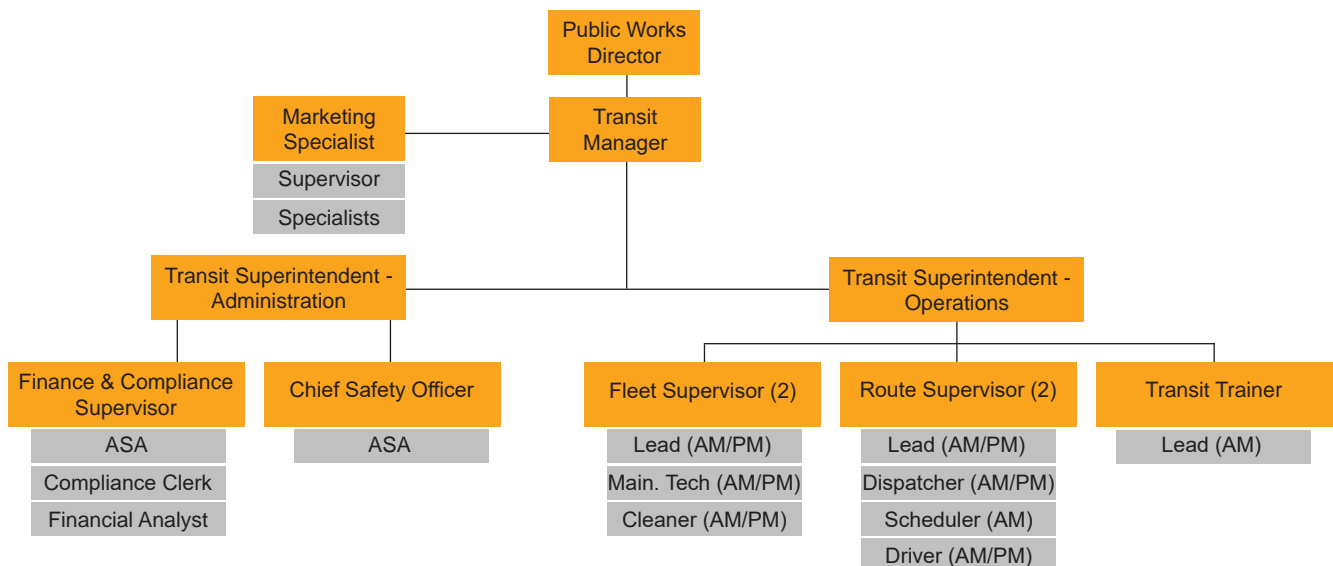
Providing oversight and management of a growing agency is an exciting opportunity for Go COMO. Knowing the future growth plan, the agency must be realistic with management staffing and responsibilities of the agency. Today, three management are in place for all oversight. Three management staff were adequate during the pandemic. However, today and in the future, Go COMO, should have four management positions to ensure all operations are monitored, staffed, and meeting regulations of the state and Federal Transit Administration.

The overall agency future staffing plan is shown in *Table 5.4*. An example organizational chart for future restructuring of staff is shown in Figure 5.1. Supervisors will play a critical role in the future service expansions, primarily because of oversight, on-time performance, driver safety, dispatch, scheduling, extra board oversight, and many more. These duties continue to be more complex as additional staff and services begin.

**Table 5.4: Future Staffing Plan**

Positions	Baseline	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
PW Director	1	1	1	1	1
Management/Superintendent	4	4	4	4	7
Supervisors/Finance/Safety/Trainer	5	5	5	6	10
Staff/Dispatch/Drivers	52	55	80	95	165
<b>Total Management</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>183</b>

**Figure 5.1: Future Organizational Chart**





## System Integration & Development Strategies

As documented in Section 1, the City's comprehensive plan acknowledges the close relationship between land use and transportation, as well as offers goals to improve transit and transit-supportive development. Specifically, the plan calls for mixed use, walkable neighborhoods with multi-modal access to services and community amenities and improvement in public transit. For the public transit section of this plan, it states "The system should implement vehicles and transit stops accessible to persons with disabilities. This transit network needs to include a sufficient number of routes across the community to ensure that all residents may access it."

The plan identifies Growth Priority Areas (Figure 5.2) which provide guidance for infill development and where development is most supported by public infrastructure investments. The plan also includes a number of implementation activities that support the plan's policies. Some key strategies that support transit such as land use, zoning and development are shown in Table 5.5.

Additionally, CATSO's Long Range Transportation Plan provides guidelines for the region's transportation planning process for the 2050 horizon year. The Existing conditions section of this plan includes the City of Columbia's policy on providing transit service as follows:

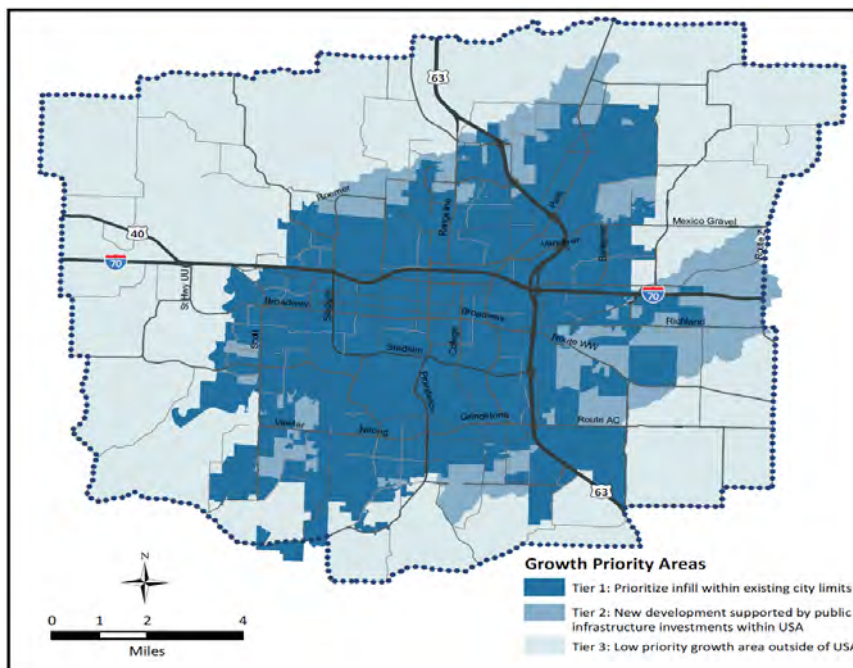
1. Provide public transportation in the most cost efficient manner possible

2. Develop public confidence in the public transportation system
3. Establish and maintain a direction for growth of the public transportation system and a level of commitment to future service; and
4. Encourage the use of public transportation as an alternative to travel by automobile to promote the preservation of the environment through the conservation of fossil fuel resources and improved air quality, as well as decreased congestion.

The LRTP was developed based on various land use and transportation plans that advocate making basic changes in the way the community grows and functions in the future. Some of these changes include guiding development into new compact patterns that will enable public transit to compete with the automobile, ensuring the connectivity of existing and proposed roadways, and preserving the character and quality of the area while accommodating its anticipated growth and development. Adopting these changes will allow for more convenient and cost-effective transportation choices and make the urban area more livable. (Source: Columbia Area Transportation Study Organization FY 2050 Long-range Transportation Plan, 2019.)

**Figure 5.2: Growth Priority Areas**

*From Columbia Imagined: the Plan for How We Live and Grow (2013)*



**Table 5.5: Transit and Transit-Supportive Policies, Strategies, and Actions**
*Based on Columbia Imagined: the Plan for How We Live and Grow (2013)*

Policy	Strategy	Actions
Support diverse and inclusive housing options	Promote construction of affordable housing	Require a mix of housing types and price ranges within new subdivisions to provide options for integration of affordable housing and non-traditional family units.
Support mixed-use	Identify service gaps and support zoning and development decisions to provide walkable local commercial service and employment nodes	Incentivize mixed and desired/needed uses in key locations (zones and nodes).
Prioritize infill development	Incentivize infill	Explore opportunities to make infill projects more attractive to developers, including regulatory and financial incentives.
	Remove incentives that favor suburban sprawl	Stop spending taxpayer dollars to fund infrastructure extensions that serve only new suburban residential development.
Accommodate non-motorized transportation	Encourage interconnectivity between neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment centers using non-motorized networks	Enforce the ordinance that requires landowners to maintain public sidewalks adjacent to their properties.
Improve transit service	Support and promote the public transit system	<p>Connect bus routes with trails and greenways</p> <p>Pursue new technologies and efficiencies to enhance the system</p> <p>Encourage compact development near transit corridors and commercial hubs to support transit feasibility</p>
	Expand the existing transit system to meet ridership needs	<p>Evaluate the existing transit system and opportunities for system improvements based upon ridership surveys</p> <p>Evaluate different route designs and models</p> <p>Explore diversification of funding sources</p>
Promote a mobility management public transportation system	Promote public transportation system expansion with regional considerations	Focus on developing a transit system between Columbia, the Columbia Regional Airport, Jefferson City, and the Jefferson City Amtrak Station
	Identify funding to support regional transit development and create partnerships between regional stakeholders to produce an integrated transportation system	Coordinate with MU, Columbia College, Stephens College, social service agencies, major employment centers, and Boone County

## Transit-Oriented Housing

With expanded transit services implemented over multiple tiers, there is an opportunity to more closely align private development, especially multi-family housing, with transit investments. With more people living in close proximity to high-quality transit services, community housing and transportation options are mutually improved, and build on the success of each other.

### Transit-Oriented Development & High Capacity Transit

Transit-oriented development (TOD) promotes smart growth, leverages economic development, and caters to shifting market demands and lifestyle preferences. Common TOD traits include compact, mixed-use development near transit facilities and high quality walking environments. Joint development is a form of TOD that is often project specific, taking place on, above, or adjacent to transit-agency property.

TODs are most commonly found in and around heavy-, light-, and commuter-rail stations. However, examples of public-private joint ventures can be found among bus-only systems as well, normally in the form of multimodal transfer and commercial-retail space at central-city bus terminals or along Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors. [1]

### Benefits of TOD

- **Improved Access to Transit:** TOD focuses on creating dense, mixed-use neighborhoods around transit stations, making it easier for residents to access public transportation. This proximity encourages higher transit ridership and reduces the need for personal vehicles.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** By promoting public transit use and reducing car dependency, TOD helps lower greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. It also encourages walking and cycling, contributing to a healthier environment and community.
- **Economic Development:** TOD can stimulate local economies by attracting businesses and increasing property values. The demand for housing and services near transit hubs often leads to vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods that support economic growth.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** TOD promotes walkable communities with access to amenities such as parks, shops, and recreational facilities. This design fosters a sense of community and improves the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Cost Savings:** Living near transit can significantly reduce transportation costs for residents. Studies

have shown that individuals living close to transit can save hundreds of dollars annually on transportation expenses.

- **Social Equity:** TOD can improve access to jobs and services for under-served communities, providing equitable transportation options and fostering inclusive growth. This approach helps address disparities in access to public transit and economic opportunities. [2]

Additional information on examples of TOD is provided in **Appendix A**.

### TOD Funding Opportunities

There are several Federal Transit Administration programs that can be utilized for TOD planning or implementation. These include:

- The **Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning** provides funding to local communities to support comprehensive planning efforts that integrate land use and transportation around new or expanded public transit systems. This grant program prioritizes projects that address affordable housing, environmental justice, climate change mitigation, and underserved communities. In FY2024, the FTA awarded approximately \$10.5 million to 11 projects across 10 states. These grants help communities plan for projects that improve access to transit and affordable housing.
- For implementing TOD projects toward design and construction, the FTA provides financial assistance through the **Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)** and **Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Loans**. These programs provide credit assistance for TOD project implementation, including construction and development phases.
- The **FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG)** program provides discretionary federal funding to support fixed guideway public transit capital projects, ranging from new systems to expansions of existing ones. BRT projects can be funded through CIG programs, which include New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity for major capital projects implementation.
- FTA's competitive grant program, **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)**, is another funding mechanism to support TOD projects.

Additional information on TOD funding opportunities is provided in **Appendix A**.



## TOD Opportunities in Columbia

This section explores some TOD possibilities in Columbia by identifying supporting plans and processes and identifying potential areas of focus for TOD. These opportunities are viewed with regard to the Tier 4 transit service levels envisioned in this Plan. High levels of transit service--in terms of service frequency, span, and reliability--are a necessary component of successful TOD.

As described in **Section 4**, Tier 4 recommendations include a north-south corridor and an east-west corridor in Columbia that have high frequency levels, and potentially could be implemented as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects with capital components that help facilitate TOD investments.

Land use and housing plans in the city and county support the need for housing with access to quality transportation. These include:

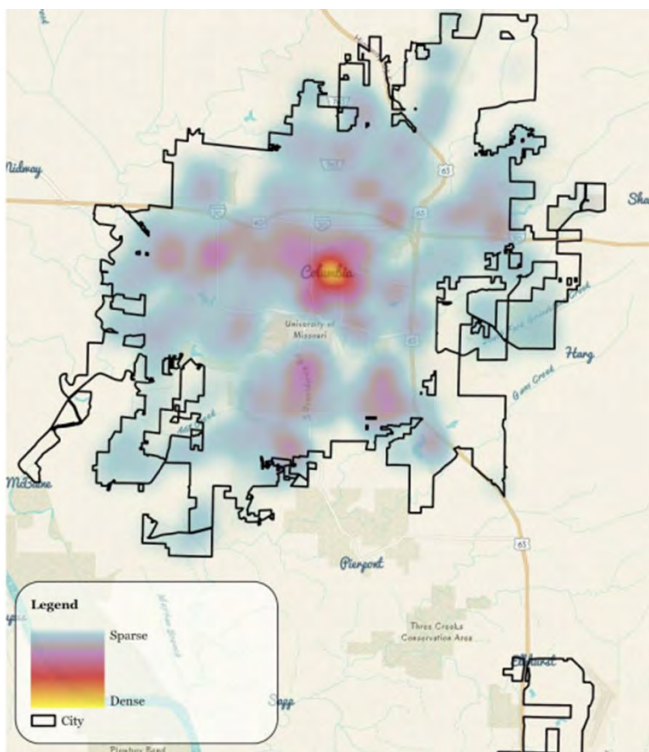
- **Columbia's Comprehensive Plan – Columbia Imagined** supports mixed-use development that create walkable, mixed-use nodes – areas where residential, commercial, and employment uses are integrated. In particular, “this policy has positive implications for public transportation services by encouraging the location of high-density residential and commercial services along major corridors that are easily served by public transit.” [3]

- The 2024 **Boone County Housing Study** examined housing in the City and County. Existing housing density determined from this study is shown in Figure 5.3. This study recommends that “new development in Columbia should be built at relatively higher densities (including single-family detached neighborhoods) and every opportunity should be taken to build on infill sites as opposed to undeveloped greenfield sites on the edge of the City. Developing this way will leverage existing zoning allowances for higher density development, capacity in the infrastructure and utility networks, and potential transit service.” [4].
- The City's **Unified Development Code** provides a regulatory framework for mixed-use development in four designated mixed-use districts, most notably in Downtown Columbia (M-DT Mixed Use-Downtown district) which includes form-based codes that prioritize the pedestrian-oriented nature of downtown. Higher-density and mixed-use development is encouraged. Other mixed-use districts, including M-C Mixed Use-Corridor permit larger buildings and less required parking at the intersections of arterial streets where transit is present.

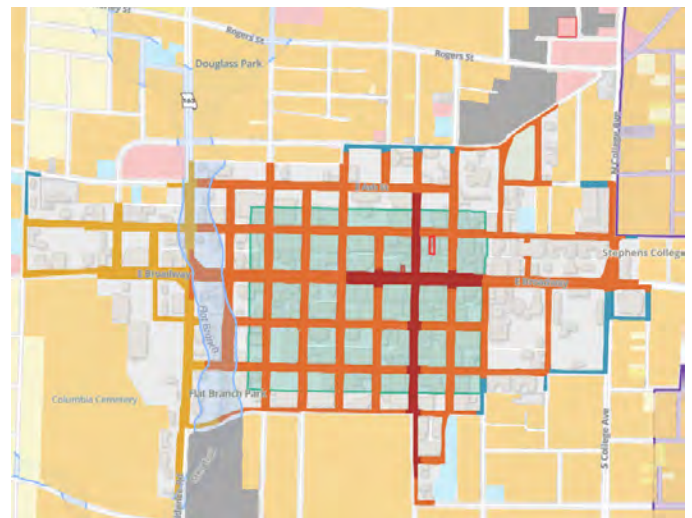
Downtown Columbia provides the highest potential for TOD development due to its proximity to the city's existing and future transit hub at Wabash Station, both high-frequency long-term transit corridors, and favorable existing development patterns and regulatory conditions for future development.

Other potential areas of focus for TOD opportunities include along the future east-west and north-south high-

**Figure 5.3: Housing Density in Columbia**  
From Boone County Housing Study (2024)



**Figure 5.4: City of Columbia Zoning Map**  
M-DT Mixed Use-Downtown District & CH-O Overlay District

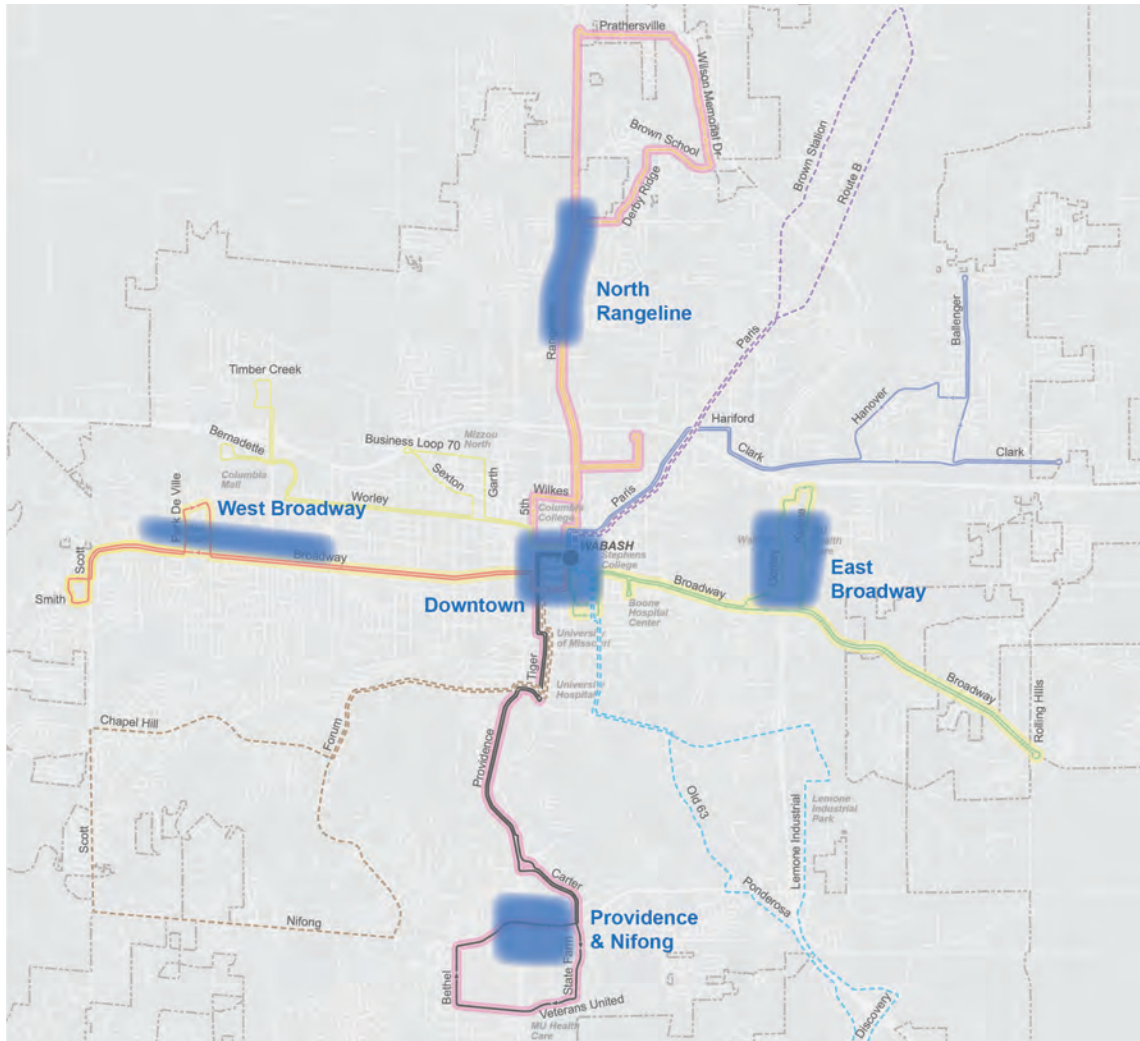


frequency transit corridors generally along Broadway, Range Line, and Providence. Areas along these corridors with existing mixed-use zoning and large undeveloped or underutilized tracts of land may be suitable for higher-density TOD development that provide needed housing in the community in close proximity to high-quality transit services. Figure 5.4 below shows some potential opportunities along these corridors. However,

many other areas along these corridors, through infill development, may also be suitable for smaller-scale TOD.

To fully assess these opportunities and facilitate such development, a focused Transit-Oriented Development Plan will be needed to appropriately align policies, incentives, and development actions in the city.

**Figure 5.4: Transit-Oriented Housing Opportunities in Columbia**  
Based on Tier 4 Recommendations



Sources for Transit-Oriented Housing Section:

- [1] Cervero, R., Murphy, S., Ferrell, C., Goguts, N., Tsai, Y., (2004). *Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects* (TCRP Report 102). Transportation Research Board. [trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp\\_rpt\\_102.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_102.pdf)
- [2] The Peebles Corporation, “The Evolution of Transit-Oriented Development”. [peeblescorp.com/the-evolution-of-transit-oriented-development](http://peeblescorp.com/the-evolution-of-transit-oriented-development), February 11, 2025
- [3] City of Columbia. (2013). *Columbia Imagined: The Plan for How We Live & Grow*. <https://www.como.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ColumbiaImagined-FINAL.pdf>
- [4] Boson, D., (2024). *Boone County and the City of Columbia Housing Study*, City of Columbia., <https://www.como.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/boone-county-columbia-housing-study.pdf>

## Action Plan / Implementation Matrix

Tier 1 recommendations, due to limited capital needs, can occur similarly to Go COMO's standard process for implementing route changes from an operational standpoint. However, the scale of changes, and the coordinated nature of the changes, will require additional time for this process to take place. This includes time for public outreach once detailed schedules have been created for revised routes. Table 5.6 below outlines the steps to be taken to implement these changes.

Because longer-term phases represent a substantial growth in services and capital needs, multiple planning activities will be needed to prepare for this growth and to procure the necessary resources to implement. For example, design services will be needed for new and expanded facilities, a fleet evaluation will be needed to identify and procure vehicles to operate service, and grants will need to be pursued to assist with these costs. Concurrently, the City of Columbia will need to evaluate and establish mechanisms, and work with local partners, to obtain new revenue to support this growth.

For these reasons, a detailed implementation matrix cannot be provided for longer term tiers (2, 3, and 4). Timelines are more difficult to determine, but assumed ranges are as follows:

- Tier 1: 1 to years
- Tier 2: 3 to 5 years
- Tier 3: 5 to 10 years
- Tier 4: 10 to 20 years

All of the elements needed to implement Tier 1 will also apply to later tiers as well. However, the amount of work and cost of most steps will be significantly larger, due to the degree of service and capital expansion needed. For example, the procurement and delivery of vehicles will take multiple years. Upgraded facilities and new bus stops will need planning, engineering, and construction services. Therefore, Table 5.6 does not estimate a specific timeline for these steps.

**Table 5.6: Implementation Matrix**

	'25	2026				2027					Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Steps	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q		3-5yrs	5-10yrs	10-20yrs
1. Finalize/adopt study													
2. Pursue local funding commitments													
3. Vehicle procurement													
4. Draft scheduling													
5. Community engagement													
6. Staff restructuring													
7. Title VI analysis													
8. Scheduling, runcut, rostering													
9. Driver picks & training													
10. Marketing and outreach													
11. Service testing (mock Go-Live)													
12. Update passenger information													
<b>13. Effective Date / Go-Live</b>													
14. Service monitoring & adjustment													





## **Comprehensive Transit Study**

## Appendix

# A

# Additional Peer Review



## Introduction

This document provides additional information on peer agency transit service and ridership data provided on pages 1-14 through 1-16 of the Comprehensive Transit Study. The purpose of this update is to affirm or adjust key takeaways from how the Go COMO system compares to its peer agencies in similar-sized cities with a major public university.

*to staffing limitations. While this impact is important to understand, as cited in the Study, this is not the “Baseline” service level that should be used for peer evaluation or for planning improved services.)*

Additionally, after reviewing updated NTD data, this analysis provides an overview of agency funding sources, as well as an overview of peer agencies who are operating on-demand (or micro transit) services. This overview was requested by members of the Columbia City Council at the November 4, 2024 study session.

## Methodology

The analysis in this appendix provides additional detail for data cited and summarized in the report documents. For most metrics, data for both “Bus” and “Demand Response” modes are included. Some metrics, such as Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour, are shown for the Bus mode only.

*(Note: As of the date of this report, the NTD has 2023 agency data available for use. However, using such data will capture the results of cuts in August 2023 due*

## Data Update – Key Takeaways

### Ridership & Service Levels

Compared to 2021, each agency, including Go COMO, saw improved ridership in 2022. This is due to continued recovery from the COVID pandemic, which severely impacted 2021 ridership. Similar to 2021, Go COMO is in the lower half—7th out of 10 for most factors—compared to peer agencies in terms of vehicles operated in maximum service, operating hours, ridership, and riders per capita. Ridership numbers, relative to other providers, fall roughly in line with service levels.

### Service Effectiveness

Also similar to 2021, Go COMO ranks significantly higher in the “riders per revenue hour” metric. In fact, in 2022, Go COMO ranked second out of all ten peer providers, with 28.5 riders per hour for the Bus mode. The Comprehensive Transit Study noted that while Columbia has less ridership due to less service, the service that does operate is highly effective and well-used by riders. The updated 2022 data reflects this to an even greater extent, and affirms that Go COMO services are efficiently operated and effectively serving passengers, albeit at lower service levels than desired.

### Funding

Additional information evaluated in 2022 included the operating budget of each agency, and the sources of funding for operations. As with many other metrics, Go COMO ranks 7th out of 10 in terms of total operating funds expended for transit services, with an operating budget of just over \$6 million in 2022. Compared to most providers, Go COMO’s directly-generated funds (in this case, funds from the University of Missouri for Tiger Line services) are a higher percentage of the agency’s budget than most peers. The most significant outlier among peers—Urbana, IL—reflects the inequity of state funding for transit services, as the state of Illinois provides significantly more funding for transit than all other states included in this review. In fact, state funding alone accounts for the entire difference in funding between Urbana and the next four largest peer agencies.

### Tables and Charts

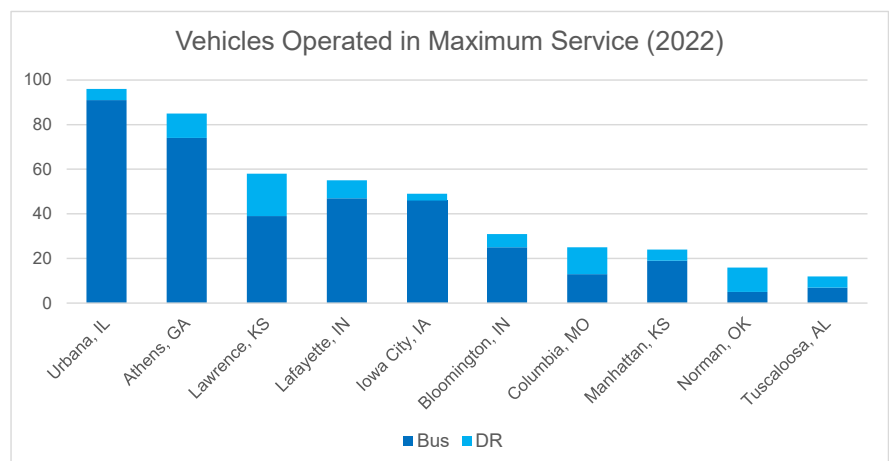
Metrics evaluated on the following pages include:

- Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS)
- Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH)
- Unlinked Passenger Trips (UPT)
- UPT per UZA Population
- UPT per VRH
- Source of Operating Funds Expended

## Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS)

Figure A.1: Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (NTD, 2022)

City	Bus VOMS	DR VOMS	Total VOMS
Urbana, IL	91	5	96
Athens, GA	74	11	85
Lawrence, KS	39	19	58
Lafayette, IN	47	8	55
Iowa City, IA	46	3	49
Bloomington, IN	25	6	31
Columbia, MO	13	12	25
Manhattan, KS	19	5	24
Norman, OK	5	11	16
Tuscaloosa, AL	7	5	12

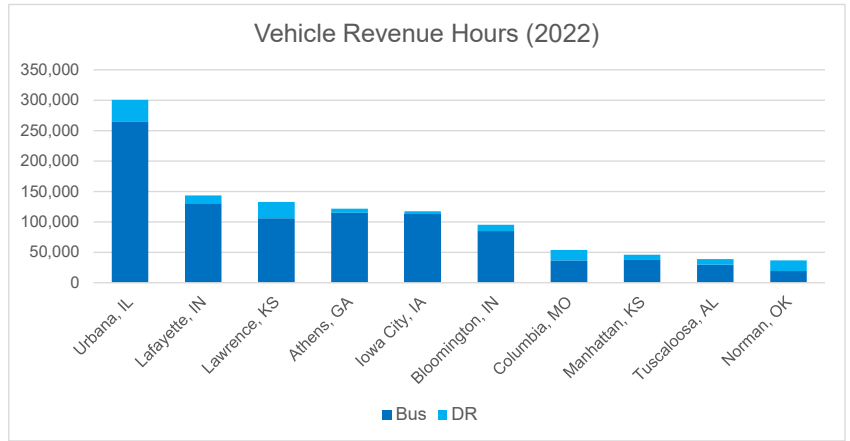




## Service Provided

Figure A.2: Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours (NTD, 2022)

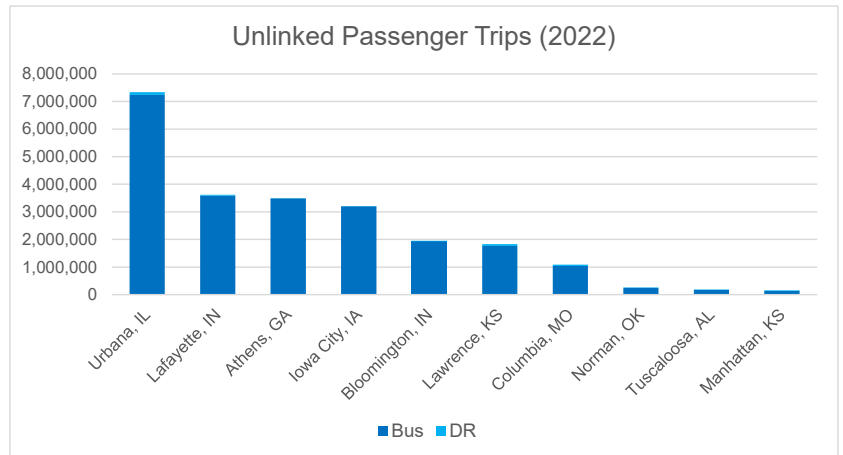
City	Bus VRH	DR VRH	Total VRH
Urbana, IL	265,135	35,665	300,800
Lafayette, IN	130,670	12,844	143,514
Lawrence, KS	105,850	26,989	132,839
Athens, GA	114,817	6,912	121,729
Iowa City, IA	112,875	4,416	117,291
Bloomington, IN	85,010	10,098	95,108
Columbia, MO	36,615	17,164	53,779
Manhattan, KS	37,290	8,679	45,969
Tuscaloosa, AL	29,618	9,069	38,687
Norman, OK	19,019	17,768	36,787



## Ridership

Figure A.3: Unlinked Passenger Trips (NTD, 2022)

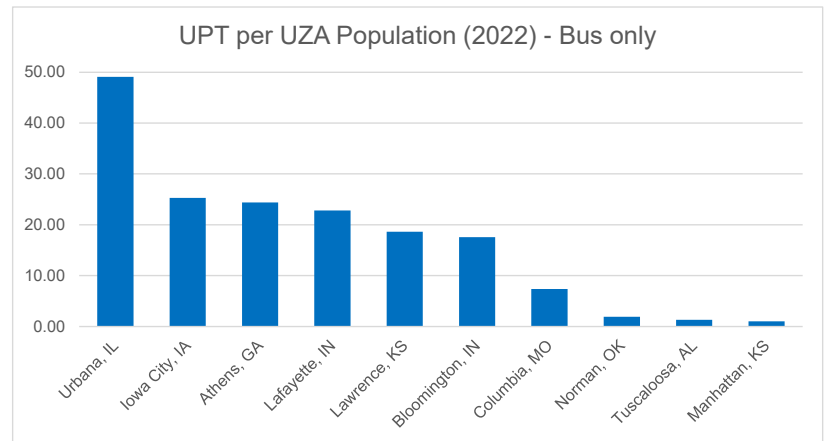
City	Bus UPT	DR UPT	Total UPT
Urbana, IL	7,237,864	98,805	7,336,669
Lafayette, IN	3,585,964	34,184	3,620,148
Athens, GA	3,489,904	10,166	3,500,070
Iowa City, IA	3,204,728	5,193	3,209,921
Bloomington, IN	1,931,935	23,323	1,955,258
Lawrence, KS	1,769,952	64,667	1,834,619
Columbia, MO	1,043,315	46,125	1,089,440
Norman, OK	244,482	21,625	266,107
Tuscaloosa, AL	176,860	11,793	188,653
Manhattan, KS	135,610	18,994	154,604



## Ridership per Service Area Population

Figure A.4: Unlinked Passenger Trips per Urbanized Area Population (NTD, 2022)

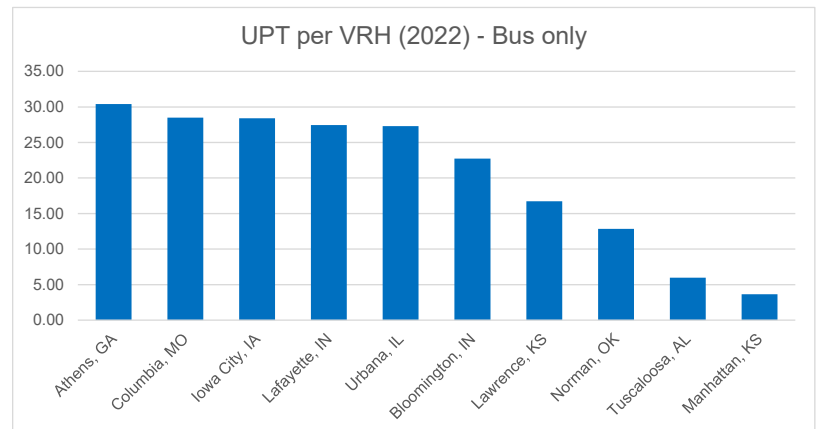
City	Bus UPT	UZA Pop.	UPT per Pop.
Urbana, IL	7,237,864	147,452	49.09
Iowa City, IA	3,204,728	126,810	25.27
Athens, GA	3,489,904	143,213	24.37
Lafayette, IN	3,585,964	157,100	22.83
Lawrence, KS	1,769,952	94,998	18.63
Bloomington, IN	1,931,935	110,103	17.55
Columbia, MO	1,043,315	141,831	7.36
Norman, OK	244,482	128,026	1.91
Tuscaloosa, AL	176,860	136,487	1.30
Manhattan, KS	135,610	136,821	0.99



## Ridership per Service Hour

Figure A.5: Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour (NTD, 2022)

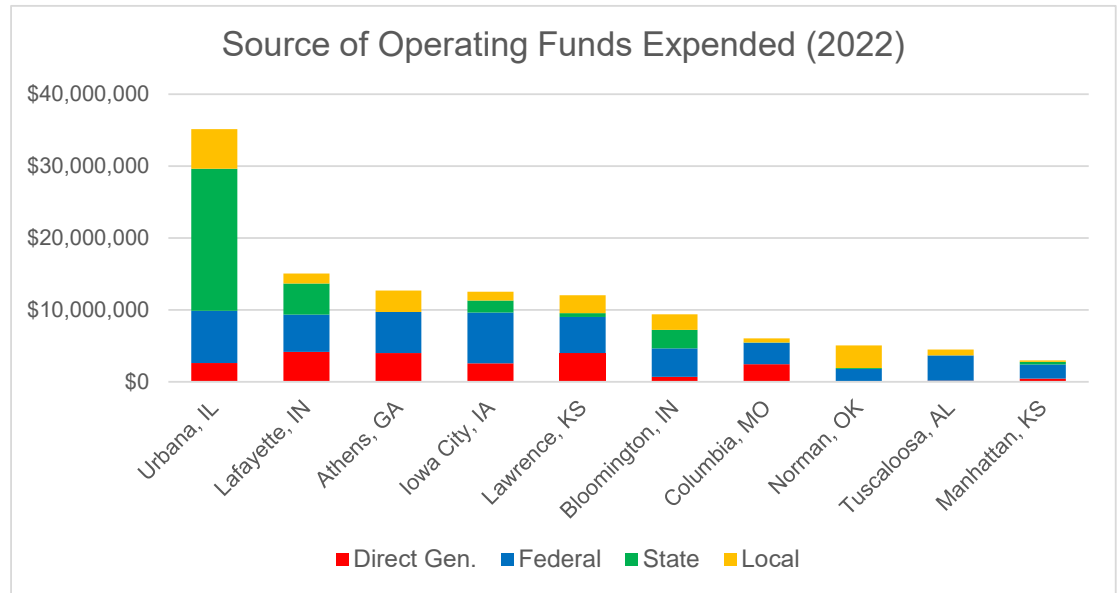
City	Bus UPT	VRH	UPT per VRH
Athens, GA	3,489,904	114,817	30.40
Columbia, MO	1,043,315	36,615	28.49
Iowa City, IA	3,204,728	112,875	28.39
Lafayette, IN	3,585,964	130,670	27.44
Urbana, IL	7,237,864	265,135	27.30
Bloomington, IN	1,931,935	85,010	22.73
Lawrence, KS	1,769,952	105,850	16.72
Norman, OK	244,482	19,019	12.85
Tuscaloosa, AL	176,860	29,618	5.97
Manhattan, KS	135,610	37,290	3.64



## Funding

Figure A.6: Source of Operating Funds Expended (NTD, 2022)

City	Direct Gen.	Federal	State	Local	Total
Urbana, IL	\$2,616,418	\$7,237,448	\$19,750,222	\$5,547,875	\$35,151,963
Lafayette, IN	\$4,152,753	\$5,192,510	\$4,308,802	\$1,390,979	\$15,045,044
Athens, GA	\$4,005,060	\$5,705,239	\$22	\$2,965,528	\$12,675,849
Iowa City, IA	\$2,568,981	\$7,039,721	\$1,674,903	\$1,221,911	\$12,505,516
Lawrence, KS	\$3,994,430	\$5,018,246	\$517,651	\$2,477,751	\$12,008,078
Bloomington, IN	\$661,730	\$3,965,022	\$2,579,272	\$2,148,114	\$9,354,138
Columbia, MO	\$2,425,385	\$2,986,099	\$50,639	\$555,000	\$6,017,123
Norman, OK	\$13,350	\$1,770,015	\$134,285	\$3,118,592	\$5,036,242
Tuscaloosa, AL	\$144,763	\$3,494,902	\$0	\$835,343	\$4,475,008
Manhattan, KS	\$432,999	\$1,967,471	\$346,631	\$234,891	\$2,981,992



The funding data summarized in Figure A.6 reveals the reason for the biggest outlier among Columbia's peers. Champaign-Urbana, Illinois operates far more transit service and serves far more riders than any peer, primarily due to the presence of state funding for transit. State funding accounts for 56% of the agency's budget, whereas in Columbia state funding accounts for less than 1%. Lafayette and Bloomington, in Indiana, also exhibit higher-than-average state funding levels, with state funding accounting for 27-29% of total revenue for these providers.

Among peers, Columbia reports the highest share of directly-generated revenue as a percentage of total revenue. However, this is primarily due to limited revenue from other sources, as Columbia ranks 6th out of 10 with regard to total directly generated revenue. Among this set of peer agencies, directly-generated funding includes service contracts with universities, in addition to fare revenue.



## State Funding Comparisons

As shown in Table A.6, Go COMO receives less state funding than most peers. As a whole, and on a per capita basis, the State of Missouri's investment in transit is lower than the states of other peer agencies. In 2021 (Figure A.7), Missouri ranked next to last among states with a peer agency.

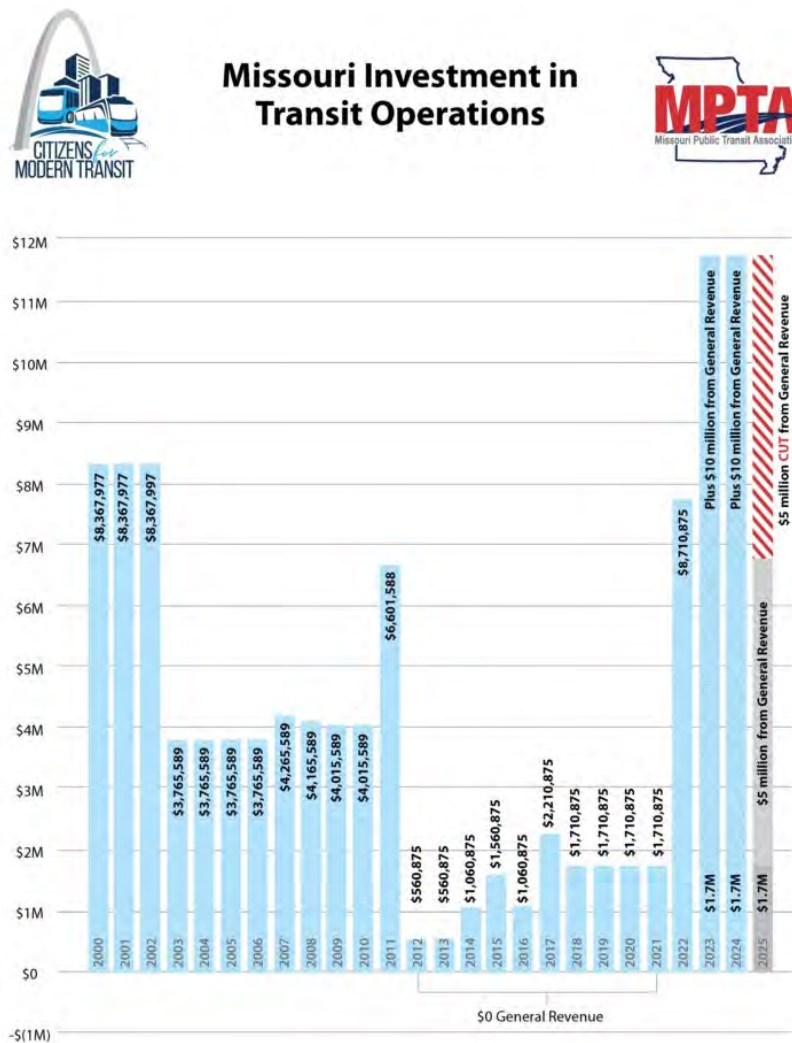
However, state funding increased in 2022, and again in 2023, and held steady in 2024. As of March 2025, the state's budget request would reduce funding back to under 2022 levels. Figure A.8 provided by the Missouri Public Transit Association shows Missouri state funding trends since 2000.

Figure A.7: Reported State Investment in Public Transit (FY 2021)

State	Total Funding (in millions)	Population	Per Capita
Illinois	\$788.97	12,686,469	\$62.19
Indiana	\$62.36	6,813,532	\$9.15
Iowa	\$18.23	3,197,689	\$5.70
Kansas	\$11.00	2,937,922	\$3.74
Georgia	\$16.03	10,788,029	\$1.49
Oklahoma	\$5.75	3,991,225	\$1.44
Arkansas	\$3.49	3,028,122	\$1.15
Missouri	\$1.71	6,169,823	\$0.28
Alabama	\$0.00	5,094,846	\$0.00

Source: 2023 Errata for Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation, AASHTO).

Figure A.8: Missouri Investment in Transit Operations (2000-2025)



Source: Missouri Public Transit Association and Citizens for Modern Transit

## Funding Model Comparisons with Other Missouri Transit Providers

Missouri's other fixed-route transit providers have varied funding models. Transit providers in St. Louis and Kansas City are bi-state agencies with a wide variety of services and multiple participating jurisdictions. Cape Girardeau is a county transit authority pursuant to Missouri state statutes. Other fixed-route providers in the state are functions of city government or public utilities.

*Note: The providers listed below only include those providing fixed route services (as well as paratransit services). The state of Missouri includes many other transit providers that operate demand-response services. The most notable--and by far the largest--of these is OATS Transit, which provides services in 87 rural Missouri counties, including "deviated fixed route" (or flex-route) services in some Missouri cities.*

### St. Louis

St. Louis Metro's operating budget is funded by sales taxes from the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County and the St. Claire County Transit District. A majority of Metro's Operating budget comes from these three jurisdictions. Other funding is from federal and state resources, with fare revenue making up the remainder. This funding helps to ensure Metro Transit continues to operate the MetroBus, MetroLink and Metro Call-A-Ride services in all three jurisdictions.

Metro Transit is governed by the Bi-State Development Agency, an interstate compact between Missouri and Illinois. Bi-State Development has maintained operating expenses with an average growth rate of 1.98% over the last 6 years. The FY25 budgeted operating costs are 4.4% higher than the prior year due mainly to increased labor and benefit costs. [1]

### Kansas City

The Kansas City region has five fixed-route transit service providers, three of which are located in Missouri: the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), the Kansas City Streetcar Authority, and the City of Independence.

KC Streetcar operations are funded through a Transportation Development District (TDD) which extends approximately 1/3-mile from the streetcar route. In 2025, this TDD is being extended to include a larger area to support the opening of the Main Street Extension.

The City of Independence contracts with KCATA to operate one fixed route connecting Kansas City and

Independence. Additionally, the City contracts with a private vendor to operate six circulator routes within the city. These services are both funded through the city's General Fund, with no dedicated source for transit.

KCATA, a bi-state agency and the area's largest provider, has contracts with 10 local jurisdictions to provide services. The only city with dedicated funding for transit, via two sales taxes, is Kansas City, Missouri. A 1/2-cent sales tax and a 3/8-cent sales tax. No other jurisdiction has a dedicated source of funding; funds are allocated from each city's General Fund.

### Springfield

Springfield is the only city in Missouri, and one of only a few in the nation, where public transit services are operated by a public utility. City Utilities of Springfield, in addition to providing electricity, gas, and water, operates fixed route and paratransit services throughout the city. Local funding for this service is provided through utility customer's rates for electric, natural gas, and water services, and supplemented by fare revenue. In 2025, City Utilities' expenditures for transit operations and maintenance are approximately \$6 million annually.

### St. Joseph

St. Joseph Transit is a division of City of St. Joseph Public Works and Transportation Department and serves the city of St. Joseph, Missouri and Elwood, Kansas. The core of funding for St. Joseph Transit is FTA grants, to include Section 5307 urbanized area grant and Section 5311, for rural transit services. State funding provides additional funding including, State Transit Assistance Program, Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP). This program provides funding specifically for elderly and disabled populations. A smaller portion of state funds come from the Missouri Department of Transportation in the form of formula based grants. [2]

### Joplin

Joplin Transit is a division of City of Joplin Public Works Department and serves City of Joplin, MO. The majority of operating and capital funding comes from the Federal Transit Administration. Local government and state funds make up about a quarter of operations for Joplin Transit, with fares making up the remainder of operating budget. A transportation sales tax provides funding for operation of paratransit services in Joplin. [3]

## Jefferson City, MO

JEFFTRAN, is the transit provider for Jefferson City and a division of City of Joplin Public Works Department. JEFFTRAN provided services within the City of Jefferson City, MO. Federal Transit Administration grant funds and local government subsidies make up the majority of JEFFTRAN's operating budget with the remainder of funding from state assistance and fare revenues. Local funding is provided through the City's general fund. [4]

## Cape Girardeau, MO

Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority (CGCTA) provided fixed route and demand response services in Cape Girardeau county area. CGCTA funding consists of FTA grants, local government contributions, community organization funding and donations. The agency is governed by the Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority Board, which provides budget oversight. Approximately half of the operating budget consists of Federal Transit funding. Local, state government and fares, donations make up the remainder of funding for the agency. [5] Recent service expansion includes a partnership with Southeast Missouri State University. [6]

### Sources

[1] (2024, September 20). *Bi-State Development Operating & Capital Budget Approved by Key Funding Partners*. <https://www.metrostlouis.org/news-release/bi-state-development-operating-capital-budget-approved-by-key-funding-partners/>

[2] *City of St. Joseph (2025, June 9). City of St. Joseph Missouri: Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26*. <https://www.stjosephmo.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/772>

[3] *National Transit Database Agency Profile. (2023). 2023 Annual Agency Profile: City of Joplin (NTD ID 70040)*. [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit\\_agency\\_profile\\_doc/2023/70040.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit_agency_profile_doc/2023/70040.pdf)

[4] *National Transit Database Agency Profile. (2023). 2023 Annual Agency Profile: City of Joplin, (NTD ID 70043)*. [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit\\_agency\\_profile\\_doc/2023/70043.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit_agency_profile_doc/2023/70043.pdf)

[5] *National Transit Database Agency Profile. (2023). 2023 Annual Agency Profile: Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority, (NTD ID 70051)*

[6] *Missouri Public Transit Association. (2025, May 14). Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority Expands Services Through New Partnership with Southeast Missouri State University*. <https://mopublictransit.org/2025/05/14/cape-girardeau-county-transit-authority-expands-services-through-new-partnership-with-southeast-missouri-state-university/>

## Fare Comparisons

Go COMO has operated fare-free since 2020. While many transit providers temporarily eliminated fares during the COVID-19 pandemic, most had reinstated fares by 2022. Four other peers are still offering free fares: Athens, Iowa City, Lawrence, and Norman. Four other peers have a \$1.00 base fare, and one (Bloomington) charges \$2.00. Among Missouri providers, two provide free fares while others range from a \$1.00 to \$2.00 base fare.

Peer Agencies	
City	Base Fare
Columbia, MO	Free
Athens, GA	Free
Iowa City, IA	Free
Lawrence, KS	Free
Norman, OK	Free
Lafayette, IN	\$1.00
Manhattan, KS	\$1.00
Tuscaloosa, AL	\$1.00
Urbana, IL	\$1.00
Bloomington, IN	\$2.00

Other Missouri Providers	
City	Base Fare
Cape Girardeau	Free
Kansas City	Free
Springfield	\$1.00
St. Joseph	\$1.00
St. Louis	\$1.00
Jefferson City	\$1.50
Joplin	\$2.00



## Microtransit – Peer Review

### Peer Agencies Operating On-Demand (Micro Transit) Service

Several of Go COMO's peers operate on-demand—also known as “micro transit”—services, with most of these programs starting in the past several years. These programs include:

- Norman (OK) On-Demand
- Lafayette (IN) CityBus FLEX
- Lawrence (KS) Transit On-Demand
- Bloomington (IN) Transit Blink Microtransit & Late Nite On Demand
- Champaign-Urbana (IL) MTD West Connect and Northeast Connect

Each program is summarized below.

### Norman On-Demand

Norman On-Demand is a pilot micro transit service which launched for late night & Sunday service in core Norman in 2023. This is a turnkey app-based public transit pilot program service. The Norman On-Demand program provides access to safe, affordable public transportation through technology, particularly during evening hours and on Sundays when other public transit options are limited. The Norman On-Demand app will continue to power the University of Oklahoma's SafeRide program, which is designed to provide safe and free late-night transportation to OU students

Service Hours are 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Monday-Wednesday and 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday. OU SafeRide hours are 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Fares for Norman On-Demand are \$2.00 for the first passenger and \$1.00 for each additional passenger. OU SafeRide is free for OU students.

(Source: <https://www.normanok.gov/residents-visitors/transit-parking/norman-demand>)



### Lafayette CityBus FLEX

CityBus serves southside Lafayette residents of Wabash Avenue and Elston Road with CityBus FLEX, an on-demand micro transit service that operates similarly to ride-sharing services. CityBus FLEX connects riders within the FLEX zone to the fixed route network at the CityBus Center.

(Source: <https://www.in.gov/citybuslafayette/services/flex/>)



### Lawrence Transit On-Demand

Lawrence Transit On Demand is a shared ride service that operates within the city limits. You can expect to see the same friendly bus drivers in our smaller buses that are all ADA accessible and equipped with bike racks. Service is curb-to-curb, meaning you can schedule a ride between any two places in town. Trips can be scheduled up to five days in advance. Lawrence Transit On Demand operates during the day on Sunday (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and during overnight hours on all days (8 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 12 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Sunday)

The service can pick riders up and drop them off at any address within the city limits of Lawrence. All buses are free in 2024. This includes fixed route, T Lift, and Lawrence Transit On Demand.

(Source: <https://lawrencetransit.org/on-demand/>)



## Bloomington Transit BLink Microtransit & Late Nite On Demand

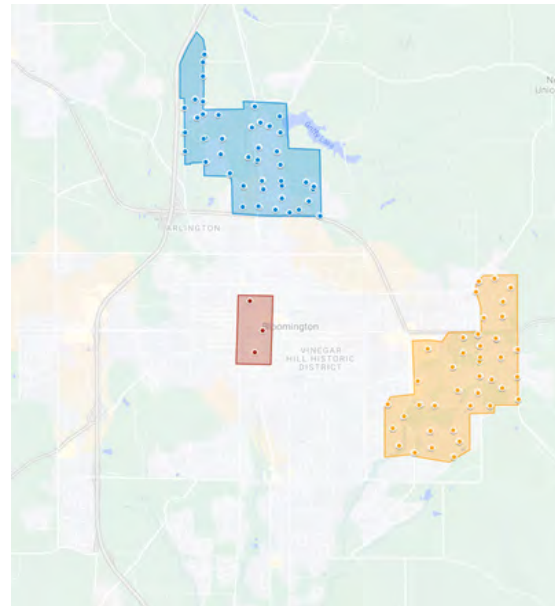
BLink is the new face of demand-response public transportation provided by Bloomington Transit. BLink is comprised of three distinct service types: paratransit (“BTAcess”), microtransit, and late nite on-demand.

In addition to our BTAcess Paratransit services, BLink offers a direct route to and from designated stops for riders in any of the three BLink zones. No eligibility is required to use BLink microtransit. Download the BLink app from the Apple App or Google Play stores or visit [book.blink.rideco.com](http://book.blink.rideco.com) to book your ride.

BT late-nite on demand is a partnership program with Uber and Lyft to provide discounted rides to passengers between 9pm and midnight Monday through Friday. Users can use the BLink app to book an Uber late-nite trip.

Service operates in three zones: Downtown zone, North Zone, and East Zone. BLink rides are \$2 per one-way trip. BLink operates Monday through Friday from 6am to 7pm. Rides may be booked up to 24 hours in advance.

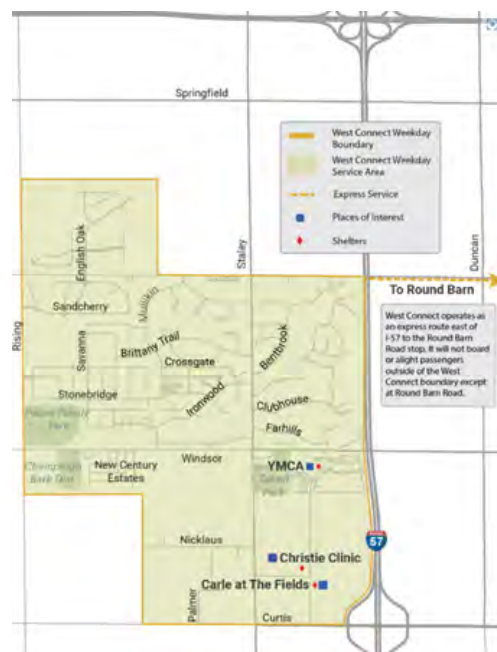
(Source: <https://bloomingtontransit.com/blink/>)



## Champaign-Urbana MTD West Connect and Northeast Connect

West Connect and Northeast Connect are van services that operate within designated service boundaries in southwest Champaign and in northeast Urbana not served by fixed routes. Both services provide curb-to-curb service that connects outlying areas to fixed route service. West Connect operates Monday through Friday 6:40 AM to 6:30 PM. Northeast Connect operates Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM. Like MTD's fixed-route service, West Connect and Northeast Connect one-way trips cost \$1, including a transfer.

(Source: <https://mtd.org/maps-and-schedules/routes/west-connect/>)



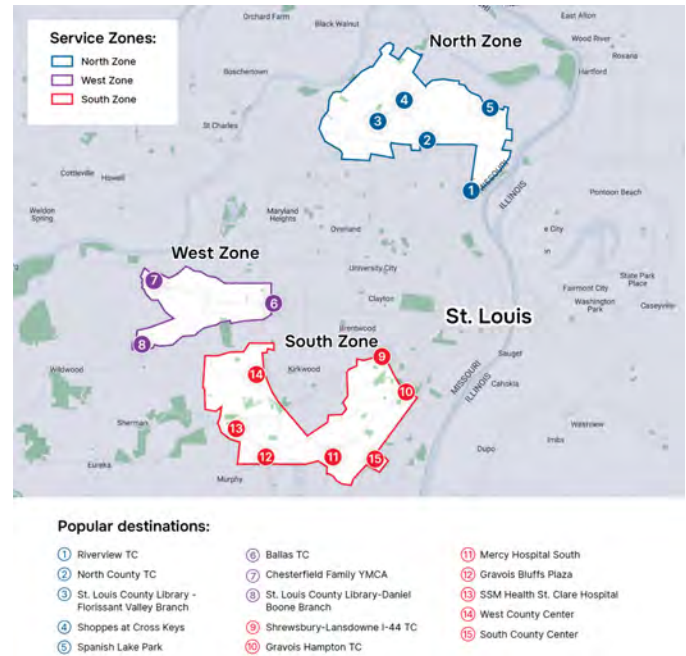


## Missouri Example: St. Louis

Metro Transit in St. Louis offers Via Metro STL microtransit service in portions of St. Louis County. This app-based shared-ride service operates in three zones:

- North Zone
- West Zone
- South Zone

There is a maximum trip distance of seven miles. Fares are \$2 per ride. Popular destinations include connections to MetroBus transit centers are MetroLink rail stations.

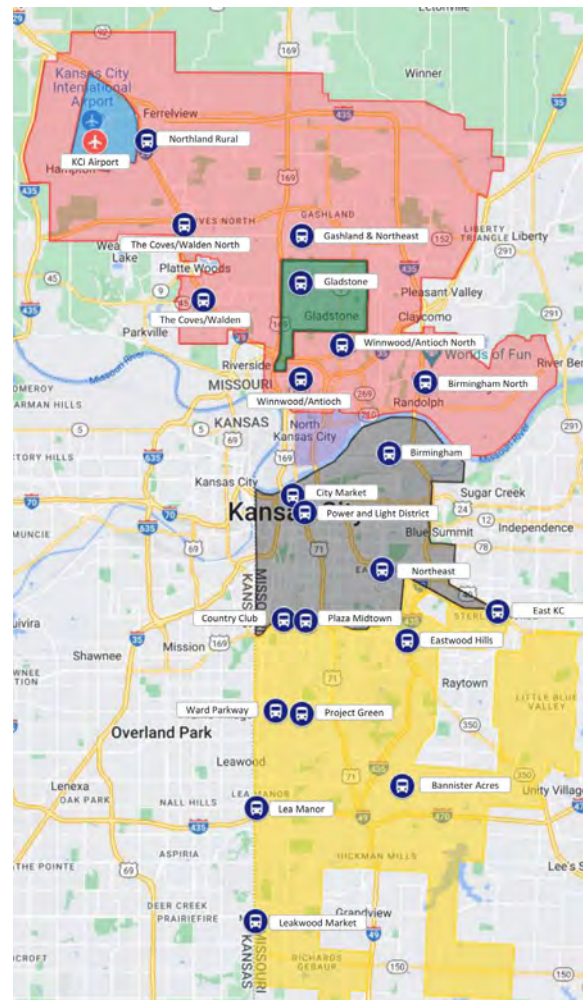


## Missouri Example: Kansas City

There are multiple paratransit services operating in the Kansas City region. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Unified Government (Wyandotte County, KS) Transit, and Johnson County (KS) Transit all provide microtransit services.

Among these, the largest and the only one operating in Missouri is IRIS, provided by KCATA and utilizing a private contractor for operations. IRIS is an app-based on-demand service initially opened through a partnership with the City of Kansas City, MO, but now also available in several other Missouri cities, including Independence, North Kansas City, Gladstone, Riverside, and Liberty. In Independence, IRIS replaced a system of six circulator routes in the city in January 2025.

Fares are \$3 or \$4 per person per trip (depending on zone) within a designated zone, but free if connecting to a designated IRIS transfer point within a zone. Trips from any Northland zone to KCI airport are \$10.



## Peer City–University Partnerships

This section provides an overview of Columbia’s peer transit agencies with respect to their services and partnerships with the major university in their service area. Each peer, and their relationship with the university, is profiled.

### Columbia, MO

Go COMO, the transit provider for the city of Columbia, operates 10 bus routes and paratransit services within city limits. Four of these routes serve the University of Missouri. The University funds the four “TigerLine” routes through student fees and has an annual contract with Go COMO to operate the service. Much of Go COMO’s ridership consists of university riders, at approximately 44% of total riders (based on Tiger Line ridership as compared to total ridership). A Public Transit Advisory Commission provides guidance and recommendations for the Go COMO system. Representation on this commission consists of members appointed by the City Council, a University of Missouri student, and representatives from other colleges in Columbia -University of Missouri, Columbia College and Stephens College.

### Lawrence, KS

The City of Lawrence and the University of Kansas are separately funded. The City funds transit locally with a 0.2 cent sales tax, matched with KDOT transit formula funds and federal 5307 formula funds. The University funds transit with student fees and has recently received administrative funding to bolster student fee reductions.

Each organization is separately governed. The City’s governing body is the City Commission, with oversight from the Connected City advisory board. The University’s governing body is the Student Senate, with oversight from the KU Transit & Parking Committee.

Since 2009, the City and University have selected a third-party operator for their services through a joint process, ending with separate contracts between the third party and the University and third party and the City. This operator is currently Transdev, but has been First Transit and MV Transit in prior years.

Other features of City and University services include:

- The third-party operator administration, dispatch, maintenance, and drivers work from a KU-owned facility that the City of Lawrence pays an annual fee toward.

- Annual route alignments and frequencies are separately planned and decided by each agency, but are presented to the public in a single public engagement process.
- The City develops a single GTFS file for both organizations.
- The City develops a single printed ride guide for both organizations.
- Each organization agrees to short- or long-term temporary use of each other’s vehicles, although City vehicles cannot be used in university charter service.
- The University handles all fuel procurement.
- The City and University jointly fund two routes.

### Champaign-Urbana, IL

The transit provider, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD), located in Urbana, Illinois, provides a high level of service for the University of Illinois. This partnership started in 1989 with a current agreement totaling \$20,743,692. According to the current agreement this partnership was formed “to combat two overriding issues on campus. The first was a student-initiated service to provide options for evening mobility, particularly from a safety perspective. The second was the Campus administration’s desire to avoid building more and bigger parking garages to thereby avoid, as long as possible, money-losing decks.” [1]

The Champaign-Urbana MTD is funded through a combination of federal, state, and local sources. This partnership funds seven campus routes and the after-hours Safe Ride program for students and faculty. Students, staff, and faculty ride free on all MTD routes by showing an “i-card”. The university is able to fund these services through student fees and other university funds. Approximately 80% of MTD ridership is comprised of University of Illinois usage.

Each organization is separately governed. A Service Advisory Committee (SAC) is established to review university transit services. The SAC includes university faculty, students, and MTD employees. Final decisions regarding university transit services are made by MTD.

## Lafayette, IN

The Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corporation, known as City Bus, serves the towns of Lafayette and West Lafayette, and is a division of local government. City Bus is led by a Board of Directors. Funding for City Bus is covered by earnings from fare sales, contract services, and advertising, in addition to federal, state and local tax revenues. City Bus has partnered with Purdue University for over 25 years to provide on-campus transit services. As of April 2025, this agreement ended and Purdue University has contracted with a third-party transportation provider with a three year agreement, totaling \$7.8 million for campus services that include operation of four campus routes.

Prior to this new agreement with a 3rd party provider, the City Bus and Purdue University partnership included:

- Four campus routes. Students, staff, and faculty rode for free for the campus routes.
- The university funded the transit services through parking revenues.

## Iowa City, IA

Iowa City Transit is a division of Iowa City Government and is funded through federal, state, and local revenues. The agency has been fare-free since 2023 and funding for the fare free program comes from parking fees. Iowa City Transit provides five bus routes to the University of Iowa. No formal partnership exists between Iowa City Transit and the University. The University of Iowa operates its own transit system, called CamBus, which serves the university. CamBus is free fare and is operated by student drivers, so operating costs are significantly lower than those of Iowa City Transit.

## Athens, GA

Athens-Clarke County Transit (ACC Transit) is a department of unified government of Athens and Clarke County that provides public transportation throughout the Athens Urbanized Area. The fixed route service consists of 20 routes. ACC Transit is a fare-free system. ACC Transit receives funding from a variety of sources at federal, state, and local levels. The levels of funding vary over the years due to capital purchases in the department. As is typical of most transit agencies, the largest share of funding is from federal programs.

There are two fixed route transit service providers in Athens-Clarke County, which includes ACC Transit and the University of Georgia (UGA) Transit System.

Currently, ACC Transit operates 18 weekday fixed routes and accompanying paratransit service, with service running Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 9:45 PM. Weekend service operates nine routes and runs from 7:15 AM through 6:45 PM. Service to the UGA campus is provided by five bus routes.

The UGA Transit System operates 12 fixed routes, as well as paratransit service to the students and faculty of the university community. The UGA system serves the campus area and is free and open to the general public.

Since 1977, Athens-Clarke County Government (ACCGov) and the University of Georgia have partnered to provide public transportation services to the Athens-Clarke County community. This partnership benefits the entire community by removing single occupancy vehicles from congested roadways and serving community members in need of alternative forms of transportation. In 2011, the partnership was further extended when both systems completed reporting to the National Transit Database (NTD), generating additional Section 5307 funding for the community through the Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) apportionments from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). An agreement between Athens-Clark County and UGA details a 60/40 split of the federal funds. FY 2025 FTA Small Intensive Cities funding was \$2.05 million.

- According to the Athens-Clark County Transit webpage ([www.accgov.com/2114/ATS-and-UGA](http://www.accgov.com/2114/ATS-and-UGA)) “there are mutual benefits of the student transportation agreement between the University of Georgia (UGA) and Athens-Clarke County. This agreement:
- Avoids the need to use limited space within the central campus for parking facilities, thus freeing its use.
- Improves operational efficiency by minimizing the duplication of services provided by ACC and UGA and reducing the cost of transit services to both systems for academic needs.
- Increases pedestrian safety by reducing automobile traffic.
- Lessens congestion on Athens-Clarke County roads.
- Lessens parking needs at UGA and the related cost.
- Lessens the need to construct new roads.
- Provides a safer mode of transportation for students.
- Provides students with access to and from off-campus housing.
- Provides student mobility throughout most of Athens-Clarke County.



- Provides student transportation to jobs, recreational opportunities, medical services, social activities, and community services.
- Reduces air pollution.
- Reduces vehicle congestion on campus.
- Reduces parking problems downtown and the related cost.
- Reduces the need to add additional lane miles to existing roadways.
- Stimulates economic growth for the community.

### *Bloomington, IN*

Bloomington Transit (BT) is operated by the Bloomington Public Transportation Corporation (BPTC) in Bloomington, Indiana. The transit system consists of fixed route bus routes operating seven days a week and a paratransit system focused on transportation for those who are not able to ride the fixed route system.

Bloomington Transit provides vital transportation for Indiana University (IU) students and connects the community to destinations within the City of Bloomington. A Board of Directors provides guidance for all matters related to the transit system.

The main source of revenues for Bloomington Transit consist of federal, state, and local funding. They also receive some property tax levy and local income tax funds, as well as contract revenue through the Indiana University. IU students, faculty, and staff ride for free with ID card.

Bloomington Transit provides six bus routes that serve Indiana University. Three of these routes are funded by the university. A one-year agreement is in place between BT and IU at approximately \$1.3 million to Bloomington Transit for these three bus routes and unlimited access on BT routes for students, staff, and faculty.

Bloomington Transit and the university meet regularly to monitor the performance of these routes. BT has final authority for determining service levels for these routes.

Indiana University operates six bus routes to the campus, free of charge for all riders. During summer and when IU is not in session, these routes do not operate.

### *Norman, OK*

The City of Norman provides fixed route and paratransit services through a partnership with the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority, doing business as Embark Norman. The City of Norman has five local routes

that serve various destinations in the community six days a week, and a limited-service route to the Moore Social Security Office is provided twice a week. In addition, a commuter route (Norman Express route 024) to and from Oklahoma City is offered Monday through Friday by EMBARK OKC. The service is operated fare-free, except Norman Express route.

Prior to Embark operating transit services for Norman, the University of Oklahoma operated transit services, then, in 2019, the City of Norman created the Transit & Parking Division to take over the service. In 2023, Embark took over the transit service for City of Norman.

No formal partnership for transit services exists between the University and Embark. Embark has two bus routes that serve the OU campus.

The University of Oklahoma operates its own bus system called, Campus Area Rapid Transit (CARTS). CARTS operates five campus routes Monday – Friday, and buses are free for OU students.

### *Manhattan, KS*

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (ATA Bus) plans, manages, and operates public transportation services within the Manhattan Urbanized Area, Junction City, Riley County, Pottawatomie County, and Geary County. A public transit board was formed through an interlocal agreement between local governments of the City of Manhattan, Riley County, Pottawatomie County and Kansas State University for the purpose of planning, managing and operating public transit as the Direct Recipient of Section 5307 Urban Formula Funds for the Manhattan Urbanized Area.

The partnership between ATA bus and Kansas State University began in 2009, and since then, the two entities partnered to provide free on-campus transportation to students, faculty and staff. Two campus routes are provided as part of this partnership and serve student park and ride lots. Approximately 51% of fixed route riders are KSU affiliated.

In 2019, an interlocal agreement established the FHATA Board, a partnership between Kansas State University, the City of Manhattan, Riley County, and Pottawatomie County to coordinate public transit services and secure federal funding.

KSU, as well as Riley and Pottawatomie counties, contribute to the local match for federal funding, such as 5307 grants. Exact revenue figures from KSU to FHATA are not publicly disclosed in budget reports.

## Tuscaloosa, AL

The Tuscaloosa Transit Authority, or TTA, began operation in 1971 and is a local, government-owned bus system based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Tuscaloosa Transit Authority serves the city of Tuscaloosa and also operates a trolley service in the downtown district.

TTA is governed by a seven-member board. The agency operates six fixed routes, paratransit services, and football shuttles on gamedays. Three of these bus routes serve the University of Alabama campus.

Tuscaloosa Transit Authority operates a university shuttle route in partnership with Crimson Ride, the official transit service of the University of Alabama. This route links the

Downtown Intermodal Facility with multiple stops on the UA campus and surrounding areas, completing a full loop approximately every 30 minutes. The University Shuttle route is free for students by showing valid school ID. No figures for UA's revenue contributions to TTA were publicly disclosed.

The University of Alabama operates its own transit service, Crimson Ride, that operates 15 campus routes. Limited service is provided during summer months.

## Peer Agency Added: Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, NC

Transit services in the Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill region are provided by several transit providers, each offering a range of services to meet the needs of the community. The key transit provider in the region is GoTriangle. GoTriangle operates regional bus and shuttle service, paratransit services, ridematching and vanpools; provides commuter resources and an emergency ride home program.

According to GoTriangle website, the agency works closely with local universities to provide benefits to the thousands of students, faculty, and staff who live, work, and play in the Triangle. Such universities include: Duke University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina, and Wake Tech Community College.

Other transit agencies in the region include:

- a. Chapel Hill Transit – Chapel Hill operates fixed route and paratransit services in towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and the University of North Carolina. Chapel Hill operates fare free due to contractual agreements with these two towns and the university to share annual operating and capital costs. UNC pays a significant portion of operating costs for campus-serving routes and late-night shuttles. For FY 2024, Chapel Hill Transit has an annual budget of \$32 million with \$10.6 million in revenues from UNC. Chapel Hill operates 20 fixed routes with half of these routes serving the UNC campus. A partnership between the two entities has been in place since 1970.

Chapel Hill Transit is a department of the Town of Chapel Hill and is advised by the Chapel Hill Transit Public Partners Committee. The Committee provides policy and financial guidance for the department. This committee consists of Council members, City staff and UNC representatives.

- b. GoCary – GoCary is the fixed route and paratransit provider for the Town of Cary, NC. It also operates transit service under contract with communities in Wake County to include Morrisville and Apex. There are 10 bus routes that serve the community with connections with GoRaleigh and GoTriangle routes. No major colleges or universities are located in Cary.
- c. GoDurham - GoDurham is the fixed route and paratransit provider for the Town of Durham, NC. GoDurham currently operates 19 bus routes. A contract provider, RATP Dev USA, provides management, operations, and maintenance for GoDurham. A service agreement is in place between GoDurham and Duke University which allows students unlimited rides on all bus routes at no cost.  
  
Duke University operates its own campus service consisting of seven routes and an on-demand, late night van service available for students.
- d. GoRaleigh - GoRaleigh is the fixed route and paratransit provider for the City of Raleigh, NC. GoRaleigh currently operates 33 bus routes. Approximately eight of these routes serve North Carolina State University. There is no agreement in place between GoRaleigh and NC State.

## Peer City–County Partnerships

The following section identifies peer agencies with regard to county-level participation in funding, operating, or otherwise partnering in the provision of transit services.

### *Lawrence, KS*

Lawrence Transit operates 20 bus routes and paratransit services within the city limits of Lawrence. In addition to Lawrence Transit routes serving the main transfer hub, Central Station, where Greyhound has a bus bay at this station. For use of this bus bay, Greyhound pays the City a monthly fee. The Central Station also serves the K-10 Connector route, operated by Johnson County transit. The K-10 connector serves area colleges in adjacent Johnson County. There is no agreement or partnership between Lawrence Transit and Johnson County for this connector route.

### *Champaign–Urbana, IL*

MTD, located in Urbana Illinois, provides transit services only within city limits. County-level participation occurs in the selection of the Board of Trustees of MTD. The Champaign County Board is responsible for selecting members to the MTD Board of Trustees. There is no county-level participation in funding or partnerships with the transit agency.

### *Lafayette, IN*

The Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corporation, known as City Bus, serves the towns of Lafayette and West Lafayette, and is a division of local government.

City Bus offers a vanpool program called, CityVan, operated in partnership with City Bus and Commute with Enterprise. This program is for coworkers or commuters who live near each other and travel the same route to work. The program uses 7-15 passenger vehicles. Commuters who work in Tippecanoe, Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, White or Warren counties, can participate in the program.

As part of this program City Bus covers up to \$600/month. Some employers offer additional subsidies to further lower costs. It is not known if employers in nearby counties participate in this program to help with subsidies.

### *Iowa City, IA*

Iowa City Transit is a division of Iowa City Government and is funded through federal, state, and local revenues. The transit provider operates within city limits. A partnership exists between Iowa City Transit and Johnson County SEATS program for operating paratransit services for the transit agency. Vehicles are provided by Iowa City. Iowa City Transit, as well as other area towns, help fund Johnson County SEATS program.

### *Athens, GA*

Athens-Clarke County Transit (ACC Transit) is a department of unified government of Athens and Clarke County that provides public transportation throughout the Athens Urbanized Area.

ACC Transit provides some fixed route services in adjacent counties of Madison and Oconee county. For example, ACC Transit runs a bus route that serves a VA clinic in adjacent Madison county. No other county-level participation in funding or partnerships exists with the transit agency.

### *Bloomington, IN*

Bloomington Transit is operated by the Bloomington Public Transportation Corporation (BPTC) in Bloomington, Indiana. Bloomington Transit provides transportation for Indiana University students and connects the community to destinations within the City of Bloomington. No county-level participation in funding or partnerships exists today with the transit agency.

### *Norman, OK*

The City of Norman provides fixed route and paratransit services through a partnership with the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority, doing business as Embark Norman. The City of Norman has five local routes that serve various destinations in the community. Embark operates an express route from Norman, located in Cleveland County to Oklahoma City, which is located in Oklahoma County. There is no county-level participation or operation of this express route.



## *Manhattan, KS*

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (ATA Bus) plans, manages, and operates public transportation services within the Manhattan Urbanized Area, Junction City, Riley County, Pottawatomie County, and Geary County. ATA Bus operates both fixed route services and on-demand services. Part of this on-demand service includes traveling to those nearby counties listed above.

A public transit board was formed through an interlocal agreement between local governments of the City of Manhattan, Riley County, Pottawatomie County and Kansas State University for the purpose of planning, managing and operating public transit as the Direct Recipient of Section 5307 Urban Formula Funds for the Manhattan Urbanized Area. Representatives from these governments each have voting privileges for matters relating to use of 5307 funded projects.

County-level funding comes from Riley, Geary and Pottawatomie counties. In 2023 ATA received approximately \$145,000 from these counties. ATA bus also receives funding from the City of Manhattan and Junction City.

Chapel Hill Transit receives significant funding from Orange County through sales tax revenues, vehicle registration fees, and other county-generated funds, which support both its operational and capital expenses. Chapel Hill Transit also has park and ride locations in Orange County.

## *Tuscaloosa, AL*

The Tuscaloosa Transit Authority (TTA), is a local, government-owned bus system based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Tuscaloosa Transit Authority serves the city of Tuscaloosa and also operates a trolley service in the downtown district. There is no county-level participation in funding or partnerships with the transit agency.

## *Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, NC*

GoTriangle is the regional public transportation provider in the Research Triangle, which includes cities of Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill. In FY2025, GoTriangle's budget incorporates funding from several counties as part of the regional transit plans it administers. These counties include Durham (City of Durham), Orange (Chapel Hill), and Wake counties (Raleigh). Total county-level funding from these counties to Go Triangle is over \$4 million for FY 2025.

GoTriangle is also governed by a 13-member Board of Trustees including representation from each city and county the transit agency serves.

## Staff Recruitment & Retention

Transit agencies across continue to face driver shortages that impact service delivery. Many agencies have had to reduce service levels while trying to hire staff during a competitive job market. Drivers are leaving for better paying jobs in other sectors.

Recruitment strategies include enhanced compensation, targeted outreach and training. Retention strategies include ensuring a work-life balance, career development and a supportive work environment.

While the U.S. public transportation industry has long had a significant bus operator shortage, it has been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has not only exacerbated existing trends, but also introduced new labor market dynamics.

### Causes of Shortage

- 1. Aging workforce** – The transit industry comprises an older bus operator workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average age of workers in the bus service and urban transit sector (52.4) is substantially higher than that of U.S. workers overall (42.3), with a large proportion of the workforce nearing retirement age. [1]
- 2. Competitive job market** - The post-COVID-19 economic recovery has been characterized by low-unemployment and high job churn, meaning that agencies face more competition for the same pool of potential workers.
- 3. Regulations** - Rules about drug and alcohol testing, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements, criminal background checks, and driving records extend the hiring process and exclude otherwise qualified applicants.

### Best Practices

While ridership has rebounded and many agencies have restored service levels over the last year, systemic challenges exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic continue to impact public transit workforce recruitment and retention. This section provides a summary of best practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining transit workers from the American Public Transit Association. [2]

#### Increasing Compensation

Increasing compensation is the most common strategy agencies have adopted to respond to the workforce shortage, according to an APTA survey. Most agencies

report having increased pay for new and existing employees; nearly as many have offered bonuses for new hires and referrals of new workers.

Higher paying jobs is a main factor for transit employees leave for other positions. Compensation packages such as benefits, flexible scheduling, leave time, health and life insurance, retirement and wellness programs are also factors for attracting employees to other positions. Public sector organizations offer better benefits than private sector companies. However, new applicants may not be aware of the array of such benefits when weighing different employment offers. A good practice for transit agencies is to highlight these benefits and quantify the value of these benefits, particularly to younger workers who tend to be focused on salary.

Other strategies for recruitment and retention include performance-based bonuses, student loan payback programs and tuition assistance. Benefits like tuition assistance or student loan payback programs may be more important to younger workers and can be used as a tool for longer retention.

Finally, having a clear policy about how and when pay increases occur can help employees know what to expect and when. For example, pay increases have consistently been ranked one of the most important recruitment and retention practices in the trucking industry.

#### Improving Worker Schedules

A survey conducted by APTA indicated that few agencies have implemented changes to work schedules. Many agencies are considering work schedules, however, changing such schedules is more difficult and takes longer than increasing pay. Some agencies have moved from a seniority based schedule to a system in which drivers choose between groups of runs. Agencies may consider offering differential pay to workers driving less desirable runs.

#### Creating A Positive Work Environment

Creating a supportive working environment with growth opportunities is increasingly important as agencies attempt to hire a younger generation. Mentorship programs are important for retaining new hires, as mentorship provides a structure to make sure that employees are supported and integrated into the organization.

#### Demonstrating A Clear Path To Promotions Or Raises

As noted above, it is helpful to provide a clear path to obtaining a promotion or raise. This can help applicants understand what their future compensation and career

will look like at the agency. Younger workers may be even more concerned with career growth than older generations were, making this a growing factor in recruitment and retention.

### Ensuring Worker Safety

Agencies have reported an increase in driver harassment and assaults in past years. An FTA report found a four-fold increase in assaults per unlinked passenger trip between 2009 and 2020. In addition, representatives from labor organizations have sounded the alarm about the frequency of assaults against operators and their impact on their mental health.

Given the significance of safety to workers well-being and workplace morale, agencies should see what else they can do to protect their most-exposed personnel.

### Providing Ongoing Training

A review of workforce development literature suggests that training is key for worker retention, but public transportation agencies provide, on average, less training time than private-sector agencies. Throughout their careers, frontline workers need training in communicating with the public, engaging in conflict resolution, and communicating with persons with disabilities, especially those with mental health issues. Vehicle operators may also need training in emergency response, as they could face any number of emergency situations. In addition, frontline workers may need training in verbal and written communication as well as leadership and supervision, which can also help them obtain future promotions.

### Adopting More Effective Hiring Practices

A review of literature by APTA suggests that transit agencies should consider modernizing and standardizing hiring practices to reach a range of applicants. This begins with the application itself. Examples include allowing employees to use their phones to complete a job application or allowing older workers to complete a paper application, other than utilizing a computer.

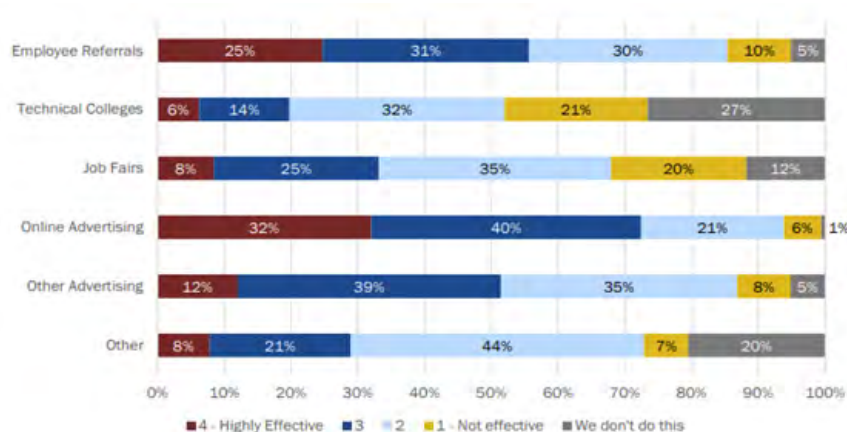
Implementing an internship and apprenticeship program can also help agencies attract younger workers who may not have much experience and train them for specific jobs. In order to help speed up the hiring process some agencies have provided assistance to employees with the CDL process, such as helping them sign-up, prepare, and pay for the test.

### Adopting More Effective Recruiting Practices

A review by APTA suggests that employee referrals and social media are among the two most effective means of recruiting transit workers, a finding that is supported by agencies' survey responses.

The agency survey found considerable variation between the reported effectiveness of recruitment strategies by agency size. For example, only 33 percent of agencies rated job fairs as 4 or 3 in effectiveness; among the top 50 agencies by ridership, that figure rises to 68 percent. Similarly, 40 percent of the top 50 agencies reported success from their outreach to technical colleges; among the full sample, only 20 percent reported success. [2]

**Frequency and Effectiveness of Outreach Strategies, Agency Survey**



American Public Transportation Association., (2023, March) *Transit Workforce Shortage: Synthesis Report*. <https://www.apta.com/aptau-workforce-clearinghouse/transit-workforce-shortage-synthesis-report/>



## Case Studies – Recruitment and Retention Examples

### Regional Transportation District, Denver, CO

Challenges faced by RTD included low wages, low labor pool, an increasing Hispanic population and undesirable shifts for employees with less seniority. Recruitment and retention efforts included increasing wages, implementation of a Leadership Academy for career growth, reduced split shifts by 5%. Other efforts included implementing premium pay for split shifts, hiring a bilingual HR representative, and offering English language courses to employees. [3]

### Orange County Transportation Authority, Orange, CA

Due to a high number of employees retiring, a competitive job market, scheduled overtime increases, and understaffing OCTA implemented an employee referral program and increased recruitment efforts. An entirely new website was developed focusing on bus drivers that included video interviews with drivers, wage information posted and a job comparison with competitors. Advertising efforts included buses wrapped with pictures of bus drivers and “Now Hiring” advertised on headway signs. The outcome of these recruitment efforts included 100 bus drivers recruited with 68 drivers passing certification. [3]

### StarTran, Lincoln, NE

In order to fill bus operator positions the StarTran bus system launched a bus driver campaign called, “Next Stop, Get Hired”. This campaign included a heavy social media presence, radio ads, a billboard and an interactive website that offered a visual experience to learn about working for the transit agency. StarTran also held a one-day hiring event where applicants complete an application, do an interview, and potentially be hired on the spot. As a result of this one-day event, 23 applicants were offered positions with the agency.

### Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Cleveland, OH

Similar to many transit agencies the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) faced challenges in recruitment efforts over recent years. To address these issues, GCRTA incorporated strategies including addressing CDL requirements, partnering with community organizations, and a robust career growth program. For addressing CDL issue the agency relaxed requirements for recruits to have a permanent CDL to be hired. GCRTA partnered with a local community college to provide temporary CDL Learners Permit training, until the bus

operator receives their permanent CDL.

### River Cities Public Transit, Pierre, SD

This small transit agency employs a marketing and media professional whose duties include advertising open bus operator positions on social media, online job boards, and through local workforce centers. Rivers Cities Public Transit (RCPT) runs an incentive program with its bus and paratransit operators to bring in referrals. Employees receive \$500 when a bus operator is hired and another \$400 after the bus operator has been with the transit agency for 6 months. RCPT fosters a family-oriented workplace by regularly holding safety meetings with frontline staff, hosting a number of special events for workers and families and holding an annual Bus Rodeo. [4]

### Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Kansas City, MO

KCATA has implemented a number of successful recruitment and retention efforts amid a challenging labor market. Strategies include:

- Making job applications easier to read
- Community outreach focusing on local groups and organizations such as Hispanic Centers, Goodwill, and churches
- Host job fairs in local communities can complete a job application and an interview on the spot.
- \$500 referral bonus and a retention bonus for employees passing their probationary period.
- Reducing some shifts from 8 hours to 6 hours to reduce sitting for long periods of time.
- Aggressive marketing campaign to include social media, newspaper ads, bus billboard ads, yard signs. [5]

### Resources available:

Federal Transit Administration Workforce Development Initiative. The FTA Workforce Development Initiative provides resources and support for public transit agencies to recruit, retain and train transit workers to ensure the transit industry has the workforce needed for today and in the future. Elements of the initiative include:

- Cooperative agreements with transit agencies to develop innovative workforce projects
- Reports and information on the results of those projects
- Meetings and conferences to gather information about public transit agency workforce issues/concerns

- A new transit workforce technical assistance program

The FTA has provided over \$20 million to fund innovative workforce grants. This initiative also ensures that agencies can upskill, reskill, and hire workers for current and new jobs emerging through advanced technologies.

The FTA provides funding for the Transit Workforce Center, a technical assistance center for transit workforce development. The Transit Workforce Center provides on-site training for transit agencies on a variety of workforce development topics.

<https://www.transitworkforce.org/>

American Public Transportation Association. APTA has a number of research reports available on workforce development and data from transit agencies across the country.

<https://www.apta.com/>

#### Sources:

[1] Kreider, B., Wang, X., Nevins, D., (2022, April). Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention in Challenging Times. Transit Workforce Center. [https://www.transitworkforce.org/resource\\_library/briefing-reportbus-driver-recruitment-and-retention-in-challenging-times/](https://www.transitworkforce.org/resource_library/briefing-reportbus-driver-recruitment-and-retention-in-challenging-times/)

[2] American Public Transportation Association., (2022, October) Transit Workforce Shortage: Root Causes, Potential Solutions, and the Road Ahead. [https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Transit-Workforce-](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Transit-Workforce-Shortage-Report.pdf)

[Shortage-Report.pdf](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Transit-Workforce-Shortage-Report.pdf)

[3] American Public Transportation Association., Presentation: Recruiting & Retaining Bus Operators: APTA Emerging Leaders Group 1. [https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Team-1\\_Recruiting-and-Retaining-](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Team-1_Recruiting-and-Retaining-Bus-Operators.pdf)

[Bus-Operators.pdf](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Team-1_Recruiting-and-Retaining-Bus-Operators.pdf)

[4] Transit Cooperative Research Program., TCRP Research Report 240, (2023) Bus Operator Workforce Management: Practitioners Guide.

[5] Missouri Public Transit Association., (August 30,2023), MPTA Peer Round Table Highlighted KCATA Recruitment Story. <https://mopublictransit.org/2023/08/30/mpta-peer-round-table-highlighted-kcata-recruitment-story/>

## Transit-Oriented Development

### *Transit-Oriented Development and High-Capacity Transit Corridors*

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has attracted interest as a tool for promoting smart growth, leveraging economic development, and catering to shifting market demands and lifestyle preferences. TOD is viewed and defined differently throughout the country, with its most common traits being compact, mixed-use development near transit facilities and high quality walking environments. Joint development is a form of TOD that is often project specific, taking place on, above, or adjacent to transit-agency property.

A rich mix of TOD can be found across America today, and all indications are that the numbers and types of TOD will grow in years to come. Over 100 TOD projects currently exist in the United States, found overwhelmingly in and around heavy-, light-, and commuter-rail stations. However, examples of public-private joint ventures can be found among bus-only systems as well, normally in the form of joint intermodal transfer and commercial-retail space at central-city bus terminals. [1]

### *Benefits of TOD*

- **Improved Access to Public Transit:** TOD focuses on creating dense, mixed-use neighborhoods around transit stations, making it easier for residents to access public transportation. This proximity encourages higher transit ridership and reduces the need for personal vehicles.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** By promoting public transit use and reducing car dependency, TOD helps lower greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. It encourages walking and cycling, contributing to a healthier environment and community.
- **Economic Development:** TOD can stimulate local economies by attracting businesses and increasing property values. The demand for housing and services near transit hubs often leads to vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods that support economic growth.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** TOD promotes walkable communities with access to amenities such as parks, shops, and recreational facilities. This design fosters a sense of community and improves the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Cost Savings:** Living near transit can significantly reduce transportation costs for residents. Studies have shown that individuals living close to transit can save hundreds of dollars annually on transportation expenses.

- **Social Equity:** TOD can improve access to jobs and services for underserved communities, providing equitable transportation options and fostering inclusive growth. This approach helps address disparities in access to public transit and economic opportunities. [2]

### *TOD Examples*

Most non-rail TOD projects are centered around Bus Rapid Transit systems. Here are a few U.S. examples:

#### **Cleveland, Ohio – Euclid Avenue BRT (Healthline)**

- Over \$5 billion in investment along the corridor
- Revitalization of downtown and university districts
- Mixed-use developments and improved pedestrian access

#### **El Monte, California – El Monte Transit Village**

This TOD Project centers around a major bus terminal that include:

- Mixed-use development including housing, retail, and public spaces
- Designed to reduce car dependency and enhance walkability

#### **Omaha, Nebraska – ORBT (Omaha Rapid Bus Transit)**

Omaha's ORBT line has catalyzed TOD along Dodge Street:

- Estimated \$450 million in economic impact
- Planning for future land use policies to support TOD
- Focus on maximizing public infrastructure investment

### *TOD Funding Opportunities*

The Federal Transit Administration provides funding opportunities for planning TOD initiatives. The **Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning** provides funding to local communities to support comprehensive planning efforts that integrate land use and transportation around new or expanded public transit systems. This grant program prioritizes projects that address affordable housing, environmental justice, climate change mitigation, and underserved communities. The goal is to promote development that is:

- Economically vibrant
- Environmentally sustainable
- Accessible by multiple modes of transportation



In FY2024, the FTA awarded approximately \$10.5 million to 11 projects across 10 states. These grants help communities plan for projects that improve access to transit and affordable housing.

For implementing TOD projects toward design and construction, the FTA provides financial assistance through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Loans. These programs provide credit assistance for TOD project implementation, including construction and development phases.

The FTA **Capital Investment Grant (CIG)** program provides discretionary federal funding to support fixed guideway public transit capital projects, ranging from new systems to expansions of existing ones. It funding includes heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit, ferries, and corridor-based BRT that emulates rail features. FTA's competitive grant program, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), is another funding mechanism to support TOD projects.

#### CIG Project Eligibility and Types:

- **New Starts:** New fixed-guideway transit projects or extensions with total capital cost  $\geq$  \$400 million and requesting CIG funding  $\geq$  \$150 million.
- **Small Starts:** New fixed-guideway projects or corridor-based Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects with total capital cost  $<$  \$400 million and requesting less than \$150 million CIG funding.
- **Core Capacity:** Expansion projects to increase capacity by at least 10% in an existing fixed-guideway corridor currently at or nearing capacity (within 10 years).

New Starts and Small Starts programs are rated on these main criteria:

- Cost-effectiveness (measured by cost per rider relative to federal share)
- Economic development effects (consideration of transit-supportive plans, policies, and affordable housing)
- Existing land use (extent of transit-supportive land use in the project corridor)
- Mobility improvements (number of linked transit trips, with transit-dependent trips weighted double)
- Environmental benefits (impacts on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy savings, and safety)

- Congestion relief (evaluation of project's effect on traffic congestion)

This section explores some TOD possibilities in the Columbia region with identifying areas of the city that could be future locations for TOD. The starting point for this research is a long term outlook that uses the Tier 4 service recommendations and future growth areas of Columbia.

### *Tier 4 Recommendations*

As described in chapter 4 of the Go COMO Comprehensive Transit Study, Tier 4 recommendations create a more complete network of frequent routes and expand service coverage throughout the city. This tier identifies a north-south corridor and an east-west corridor that have high frequency levels.

### **Columbia's Comprehensive Plan – Columbia Imagined**

The City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes fiscally sustained growth, meaning development should:

- Be cost-effective for public services and infrastructure.
- Promote compact and connected neighborhoods.
- Encourage mixed-use development and infill rather than sprawl.
- Protect natural resources and open spaces.
- Align with community values and public input.

The Comprehensive Plan supports mixed-use development that create walkable, mixed-use nodes – areas where residential, commercial, and employment uses are integrated. "This policy has positive implications for public transportation services by encouraging the location of high-density residential and commercial services along major corridors that are easily served by public transit, thereby decreasing reliance on automobiles as a means of accessing basic commercial services." [3]

### *Areas for Potential TOD*

The future land use Columbia identifies areas intended for high-density development such as downtown Columbia, along Broadway and Stadium Boulevard. These areas support walkability, transit access and have a mix of residential and commercial uses.

- Downtown Columbia- area surrounding the Wabash bus station include a mix of housing and commercial

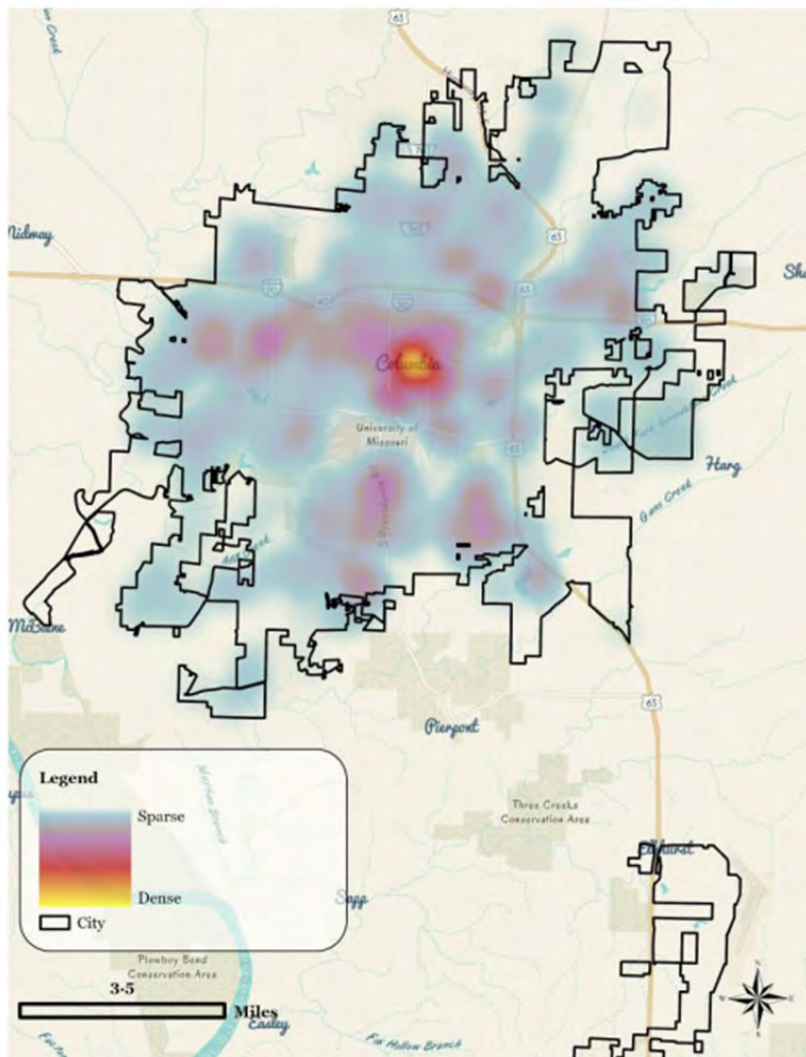
space (see Map #1). There is also high density housing along Locust street that could positively support transit (Map #2).

- Other potential areas of focus for TOD opportunities include along the future east-west and north-south high-frequency transit corridors generally along Broadway, Range Line, and Providence. Areas along these corridors with existing mixed-use zoning and large undeveloped or underutilized tracts of land may be suitable for higher-density TOD development that provide needed housing in the community in close proximity to high-quality transit services. However, many other areas along these corridors, through infill development, may also be suitable for smaller-scale TOD.

The 2024 Boone County Housing Study examined housing density in the City of Columbia and found that most density is centered in the downtown area and just north of the University of Missouri, with additional pockets of density to the west and south [4]. Provided below is a housing density map from page 109 of this housing study.

## Housing Density in Columbia

From Boone County Housing Study (2024)



Transit-Oriented Development Section Sources:

[1] Cervero, R., Murphy, S., Ferrell, C., Goguts, N., Tsai, Y., (2004). *Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects* (TCRP Report 102). Transportation Research Board. [trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp\\_rpt\\_102.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_102.pdf)

[2] The Peebles Corporation, "The Evolution of Transit-Oriented Development". [peeblescorp.com/the-evolution-of-transit-oriented-development](http://peeblescorp.com/the-evolution-of-transit-oriented-development), February 11, 2025

[3] City of Columbia. (2013). *Columbia Imagined: The Plan for How We Live & Grow*. <https://www.columbia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ColumbiaImagined-FINAL.pdf>

[4] Boson, D., (2024). *Boone County and the City of Columbia Housing Study*, City of Columbia., <https://www.columbia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/boone-county-columbia-housing-study.pdf>

## Paris Road/Route B Opportunities

The City of Columbia has experienced significant development and employment growth in the northwest portion of the city, along the Paris Road/Route B corridor in particular. Many of the largest private employers in Columbia are located along this corridor, including:

- Solventum (formerly 3M)
- Kraft-Heinz
- Schneider Electric
- Watlow
- Swift Prepared Foods
- Numerous other industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and transportation employers.

### Transportation Needs

However, in part due to the large amount of land needed by these operations, these employers are located away from the core of the city and the reach of the Go COMO transit system. While there are a large number of jobs, and a significant need for work-based transportation, these locations are only accessible by car.

This challenge is not unique to Columbia. This “sprawl” of employment away from developed cities is a feature seen in many cities, who are similarly challenged to provide transportation services to these locations. In Missouri, a similar phenomenon can be seen in suburban areas in both the Kansas City and St. Louis regions, for example. Transit providers are often asked to extend service to these locations, but without additional resources to do so. The result is either to make service cuts elsewhere in the system—often well-established and high-performing services—or to leave these growing employment centers unserved.

### Corridor Outreach

In addition to stakeholder and public comments received over the course of the Comprehensive Transit Study in 2023-2024, additional outreach occurred in 2025 to employers along the Paris Road/Route B corridor to better understand transportation needs. These efforts included:

- The Comprehensive Transit Study project team attended a Facility Manager’s Lunch organized by the City of Columbia and Regional Economic Development, Inc. in May 2025.
- Based on feedback during the study and additional outreach, a survey was prepared to gather more specific feedback both from facility managers and from employees. As of August 2025, this survey is still being marketed and results have not yet been finalized.

## Potential Transportation Solutions

### Fixed Route Transit

Public and stakeholder engagement identified this corridor as a high-priority for future transit services. In Section 4 of this Plan, a new “Purple” route is included to serve the corridor as a Tier 3 (or Tier 2 Alternate) recommendation. While the number of jobs on the corridor, as well as significant residential neighborhoods that the proposed route would connect as well, ridership for new transit services takes time to fully develop. This is especially true in suburban areas with lower population densities. Fixed route service also has limited flexibility, not fully able to meet the needs of a dispersed workforce. However, once ridership develops, fixed route service can provide high capacity and a large number of trips per service hour, maximizing the productivity and efficiency of the service.

### Vanpool

Vanpool may be an attractive alternative for employers in the Paris Road/Route B corridor as an interim, and cheaper, step prior to initiating fixed route services in the future. This service model can also help the City and local employers more clearly understand the demand for transportation services, and the geography and temporal nature of this demand.

For vanpool services, employers may begin their own vanpool programs or contract with a third-party provider. In either case, employees interested in vanpooling are matched according to where they live and their shift at work. These employees share the responsibility of driving a van and split the costs of fuel and maintenance. This transportation option saves money for commuters and provides reliable transportation for employers. Vanpools can operate as an alternative to, as well as a supplement of, public transit services.

### Micro Transit

Micro transit is an on-demand, shared-ride service model that utilizes technology for real-time booking, similar to private rideshare companies but with a public subsidy to reduce the cost for riders. Micro transit has limited capacity, only able to provide a few rides per hour of service, but has the benefit of high flexibility for the user. Micro transit can provide curb-to-curb transportation from anywhere within a designated zone. Similar to vanpools, micro transit can also be implemented as an interim step toward fixed route service, helping to better understand transportation demand and specific origin and destination points. Micro transit can also be utilized to supplement fixed route service by providing “first and last-mile”



connections, extending the reach of transit. While micro transit is not recommended in any of the tiers in this Plan, this model should be considered as public and employer needs change and are better understood.

## Innovative Funding Models

### Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)

In addition to the funding sources and programs summarized in the Comprehensive Transit Study, the formation of a TMA may be a suitable option for the Route B corridor in the long term. While the level of support and potential for a TMA will need substantial outreach and engagement prior to pursuing, this model could allow multiple interested employers to pool together private funding sources to support new or extended transit service.

According to the *TMA Handbook: A Guide to Successful Transportation Management*, the recommended definition of a TMA is “an organized group applying carefully selected approaches to facilitating the movement of people and goods within an area. TMAs are often legally constituted and frequently led by the private sector in partnership with the public sector to solve transportation problems.”

TMAs typically pool funding from multiple entities to fund a variety of transportation improvements or services that provide mutual benefit to these entities. Funding transit or ridesharing services are among the potential uses of a TMA. TMAs exist in a wide variety of settings across the United States, including in downtowns, suburban areas, or designated districts.

In Columbia, if further engagement leads to interest among multiple employers, particularly on the Route B corridor, a TMA could be formed to provide or supplement transportation services, whether fixed route, vanpool, or on-demand/micro transit services. These services can be tailored toward the specific needs of these employers. The TMA could contract with a transportation service provider—whether Go COMO or a private contractor—to operate services.

### Examples of TMAs in Employment/Industrial Parks or Corridors

There are several existing examples of TMAs that are formed by employers in predominately industrial or business park settings, with similarities to Columbia's Route B corridor. These include:

McClellan Park TMA in Sacramento, California. This TMA serves the McClellan Business Park, which is primarily comprised of industrial employers. TMA-funded services include:

- A \$65 per month subsidy for commuters using public transportation. The business park is served by fixed route and flex services.
- Bicycle resources including bicycle lockers and racks and a bike trip planner.
- Electric vehicle charging throughout the business park.
- Providing resources and information for multiple transit services, existing vanpool programs, and the NorCal Go carpool program.

Source: <https://tma.mcclellanpark.com/>

The Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC), Pennsylvania has a variety of projects to improve transportation for commuters. TMACC serves a diverse range of employers, including those in industrial parks. They provide transit services, rideshare matching, and other commuter programs.

TMACC operates two bus lines that serve parts of Chester County not covered by SEPTA: the Coatesville Link and SCCOOT routes.

Source: <https://tmacc.org/>

Seaport TMA in Boston, Massachusetts focuses on the Seaport District, which includes many industrial and commercial employers. They offer shuttle services, bike-sharing programs, and other transportation solutions. Specific programs include:

- CommuteSeaport carpool program utilizes an app to help find a carpool match and track commuting to earn points and prizes.
- Try Transit: a program for TMA member companies that will pay \$50 of an employee's transit pass each month.
- Guranteed Ride Home program which provides a free rideshare ride home in the event of an emergency, illness, or unexpected work schedule change.
- Complimentary bike checkups during summer months.
- Employees of a Seaport TMA member company can try the Seaport Ferry for free (generally \$5 per ride).
- Discounted Zipcar car sharing rates.

<https://www.seaporttma.org/>



## Comprehensive Transit Study

## Appendix

# B Tiger Line Survey Results



### Introduction

To collect data from passengers utilizing Go COMO's Tiger Line service, surveys were conducted on-board Tiger Line routes 401, 402, and 403 routes. These surveys were conducted in April and early May 2025, during the university's Spring 2025 semester.

The goal of this survey was to collect ridership data determining the purpose of trip, frequency of ridership, affiliation with the University, and interest in utilizing Go COMO for off-campus locations. The survey was kept brief so as to be taken quickly, while on a short trip between outlying university parking lots and the center of campus.

A total of 81 surveys were collected, which include virtual and physical surveys.

### Methodology

In order to gather data across each of the Tiger Line routes, surveyors rode multiple trips on each route across multiple time periods: morning peak, midday, and afternoon peak. Each of the following routes were surveyed:

- 401 Hearnese Loop
- 402 Trowbridge Loop
- 403 MU Reactor Loop

Survey activity occurred on the following days:

- Thursday, May 17, 2025 on routes 401, 402, and 403.
- Thursday, May 1, 2025 on routes 401, 402, and 403.

During each survey period, surveyors boarded buses and rode the length of the route. Flyers with a QR code linking to an online survey were handed out, with paper surveys available as well. Surveyors encouraged riders to take the survey to provide valuable feedback on the Tiger Line service.



## Survey Instrument

Figure B.1 shows the survey questions that were included in the survey. Surveys were provided online (via SurveyMonkey) and on paper, to maximize responses.

**Figure B.1: Tiger Line Survey**

### GoCOMO Tiger Line Survey

1. How are you affiliated with the University of Missouri?

☐ Student

☐ Faculty

☐ Staff

☐ Not affiliated

☐ Other (please specify)

2. How often do you ride the Tiger Line bus?

☐ Less than once per week

☐ 1-2 times per week

☐ 3-4 times per week

☐ Most days, every day

3. Do you also ride the City's bus (Go COMO) Fixed Routes or Paratransit?

☐ Yes, fixed routes - see next question

☐ Yes, Paratransit

☐ No

4. If yes, which routes?

☐ Black

☐ Red

☐ Gold

☐ Orange

☐ Blue

☐ Green

☐ None of the above

5. How interested are you in using transit to or from off-campus locations?

Not interested at all   Slightly interested   Somewhat interested   Very interested   Extremely interested

6. For which purposes would you be interested in using Tiger Line or Go COMO buses? (select all that apply)

☐ Education (directly from home to MU campus, not from the MU parking lot)

☐ Work/employment

☐ Shopping/groceries

☐ Healthcare/appointments

☐ Social/recreational

☐ Other (please specify)

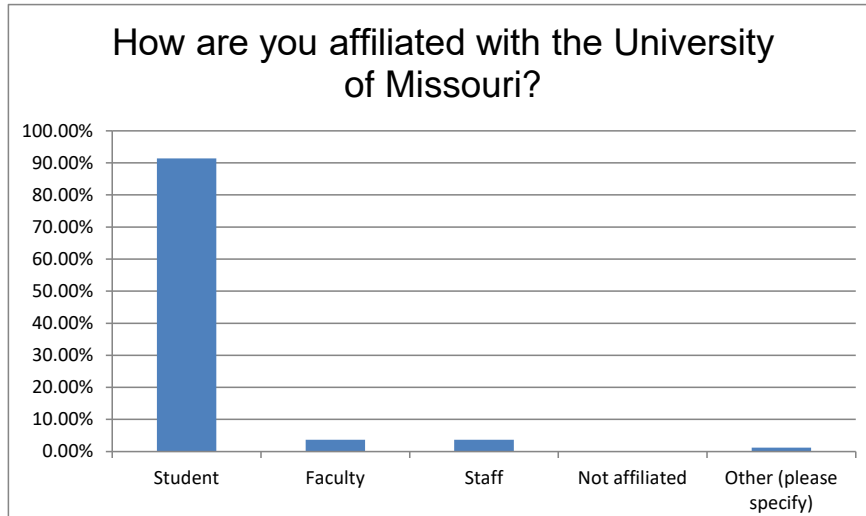
## Survey Responses

### University Affiliation

The survey data reveals that the majority of respondents (91%) are students at the University of Missouri, with 74 out of 81 participants identifying as such. Faculty and staff each accounted for 4% of the responses, representing a small portion of the total. No respondents indicated

they were not affiliated with the university, and only one individual selected “Other.” Based on this data, nearly all riders of the Tiger Line service are affiliated with MU, and mostly comprised of students.

**Figure B.2: University Affiliation Responses**

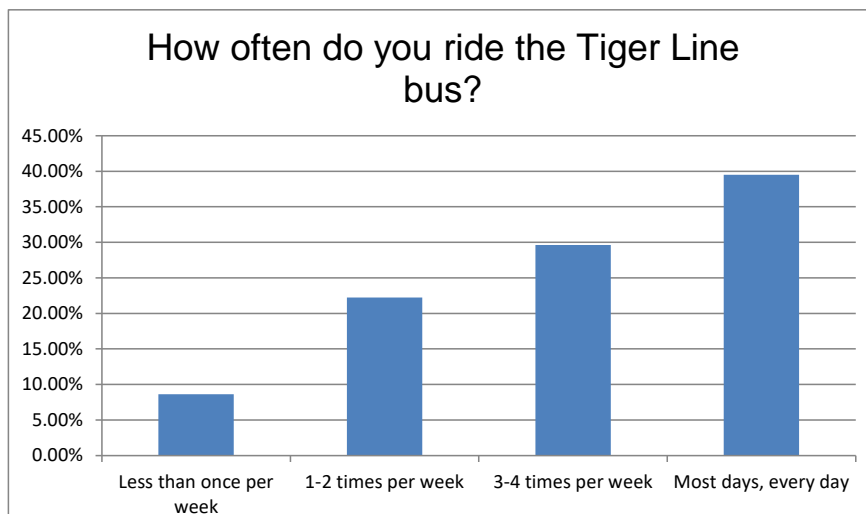


### Frequency of Use

The survey results show that most respondents ride the Tiger Line bus frequently, with nearly 40% using it “most days, every day” and 30% riding it “3–4 times per week.” Another 22% use the service “1–2 times per week,” while only 9% ride it “less than once per week.”

These findings suggest that the Tiger Line bus is a heavily utilized transportation option, particularly among regular commuters.

**Figure B.2: Frequency of Use Responses**

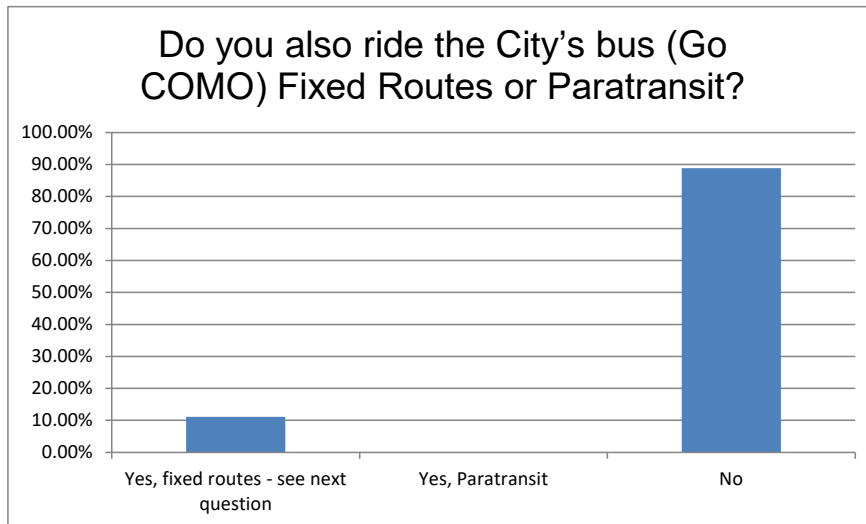


## Use of Go COMO Service

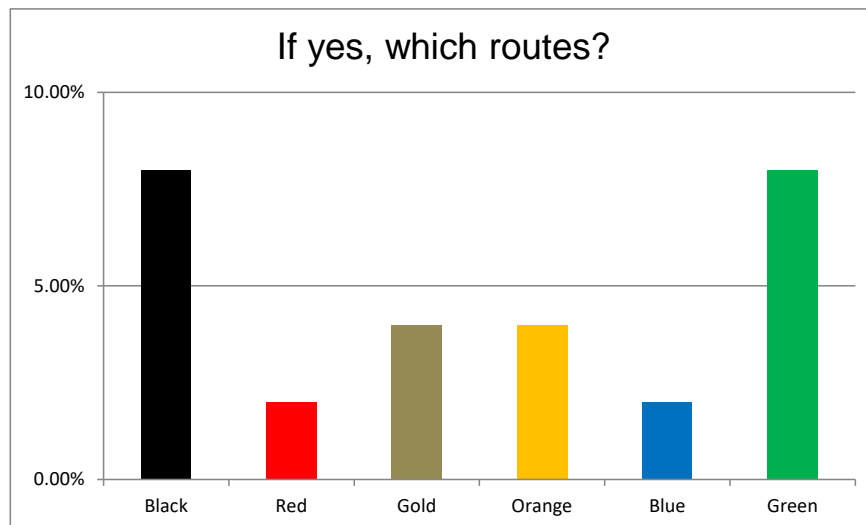
The majority of survey respondents (89%) reported that they do not ride the City's Go COMO Fixed Routes or Paratransit services. Only 11% indicated that they use the fixed route services, while no respondents reported using Paratransit. This suggests that most participants, such as

the Tiger Line bus for trips to campus and other options for trips to off-campus locations. Of the respondents that reported Go COMO use, the Black and Green routes were the most utilized (four respondents for each).

**Figure B.3: Use of Go COMO Service Responses**



**Figure B.4: Go COMO Routes Used**



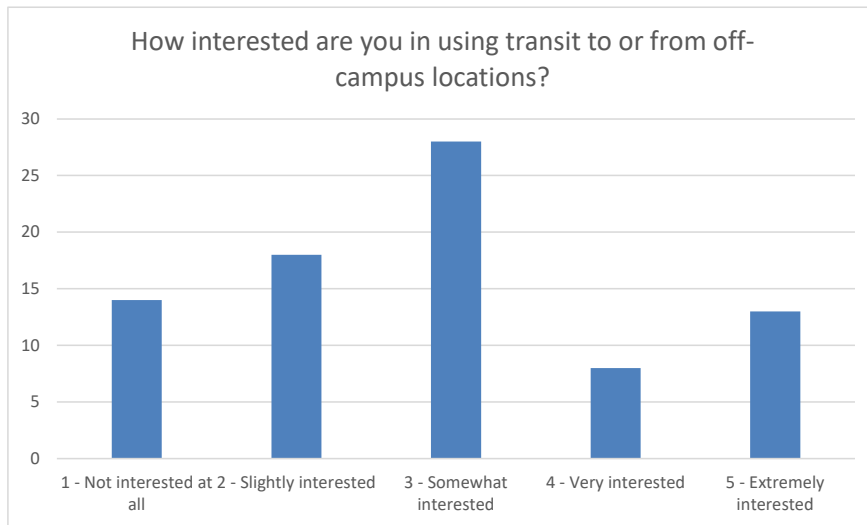


## Interest in Go COMO Services

Out of 81 participants, the largest group (35%) indicated they were “Somewhat interested,” followed by 22% who were “Slightly interested.” A smaller portion expressed stronger interest, with 16% “Extremely interested” and 10% “Very interested.” Only 17% reported being “Not

interested at all,” resulting in a weighted average interest score of 2.85 out of 5, suggesting a moderate overall interest in transit options among respondents. In total, more than half of respondents (60%) indicated at least being “somewhat interested” in using transit to off-campus locations.

**Figure B.5: Use of Go COMO Service Responses**

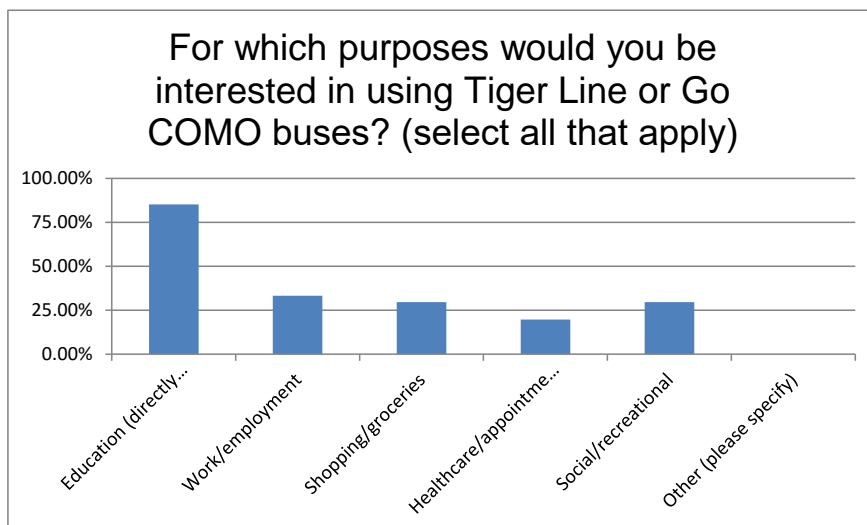


## Go COMO Services – Trip Purpose

The survey asked respondents about the purposes for which they would be interested in using Tiger Line or Go COMO buses. The most common response was for education-related travel directly from home to the MU campus, selected by 85% of respondents. Other notable

uses included work/employment (33%), shopping/groceries and social/recreational purposes (both at 30%), followed by healthcare/appointments at 20%.

**Figure B.6: Go COMO Services – Trip Purpose Responses**



## Survey Conclusion

### Key Findings

The Tiger Line survey revealed several key findings:

- Nearly all Tiger Line riders are affiliated with the University of Missouri, with the vast majority of these riders being students. While open to the general public, there is limited utility of the Tiger Line routes for those not affiliated with the university.
- Few Tiger Line riders also utilize other GoCOMO services. This limited use has likely been exacerbated by the staffing limitations that have reduced the frequency of Go COMO routes.
- Despite limited existing use, there is significant interest from Tiger Line riders in using public transit more broadly for off-campus trips. 60% of respondents reported being at least “somewhat interested” in such transit use.

### Potential Solutions

These findings present an opportunity for evaluating how GoCOMO services could be adjusted or expanded to encourage more off-campus use. However, such considerations must not degrade the availability and

usefulness of existing Tiger Line routes at efficiently transporting riders from outlying parking lots to campus.

Potential sets of options include:

- Extend Tiger Line routes to nearby housing and destinations. This can be done so that the frequency and directness of service between parking lots and campus is not impacted. Such service will require a considerable cost and staffing increase, given the high-frequency at which existing Tiger Line routes operate. However, this cost may be able to be somewhat reduced through alignment and scheduling solutions, such as by only extending some trips beyond current routing.
- Expand or adjust one or more Go COMO routes to more directly serve the university, with expanded service levels. Currently, the Black route most closely does this, but is lacking span and frequency of service to be effective at attracting students to ride on a regular basis.
- Provide a new route dedicated to providing students more direct access to community destinations, with appropriate marketing and branding of such service.