



# Comprehensive Transit Study

October 2024

10/25/2024 DRAFT

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# Acknowledgments

### City Council

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# 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.

### Tier 3

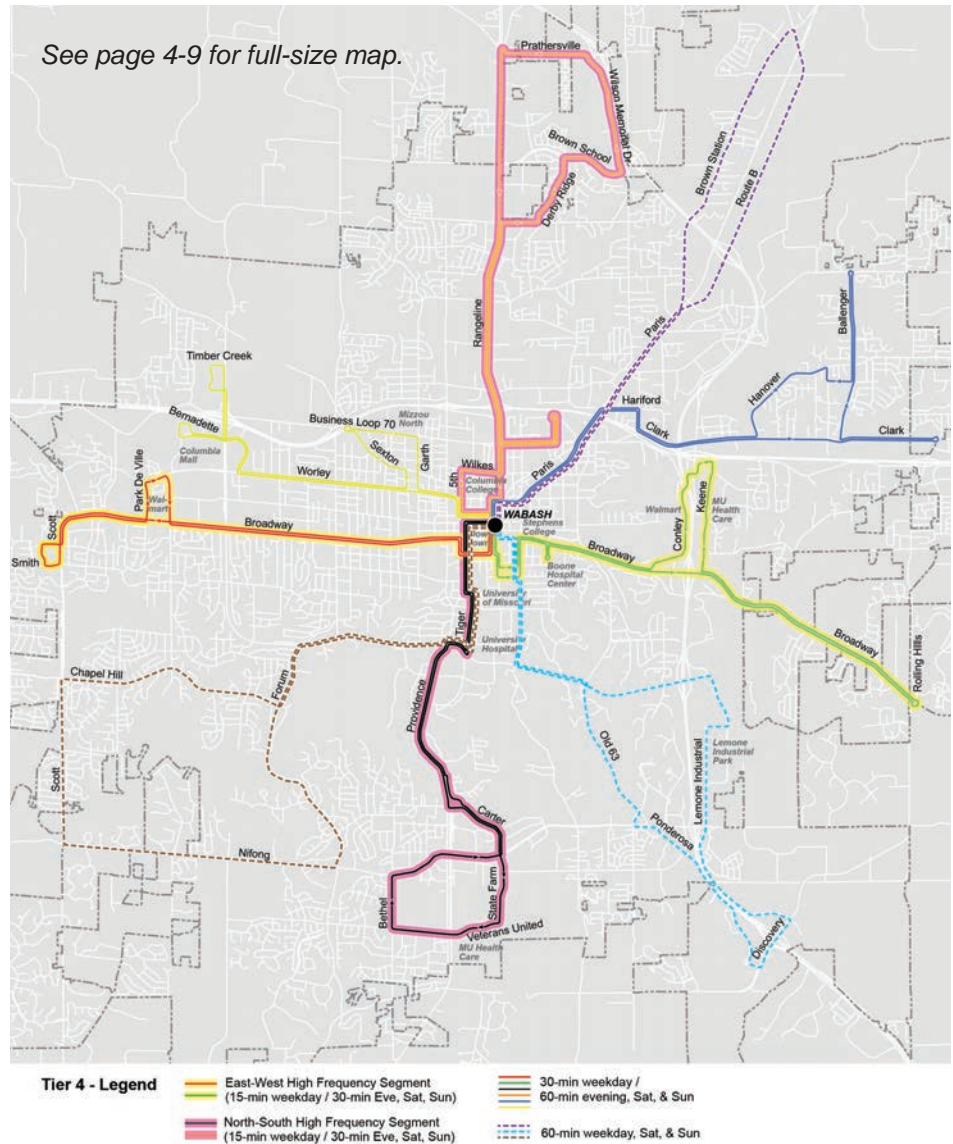
Recommendations in Tier 3 complete the process of converting the entire Go COMO system to a network of routes operating every 30 minutes on weekdays and 60 minutes on evenings and weekends. Additionally, Sunday service is added for the first time. Similar to routes improved in Tier 2, these routes are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

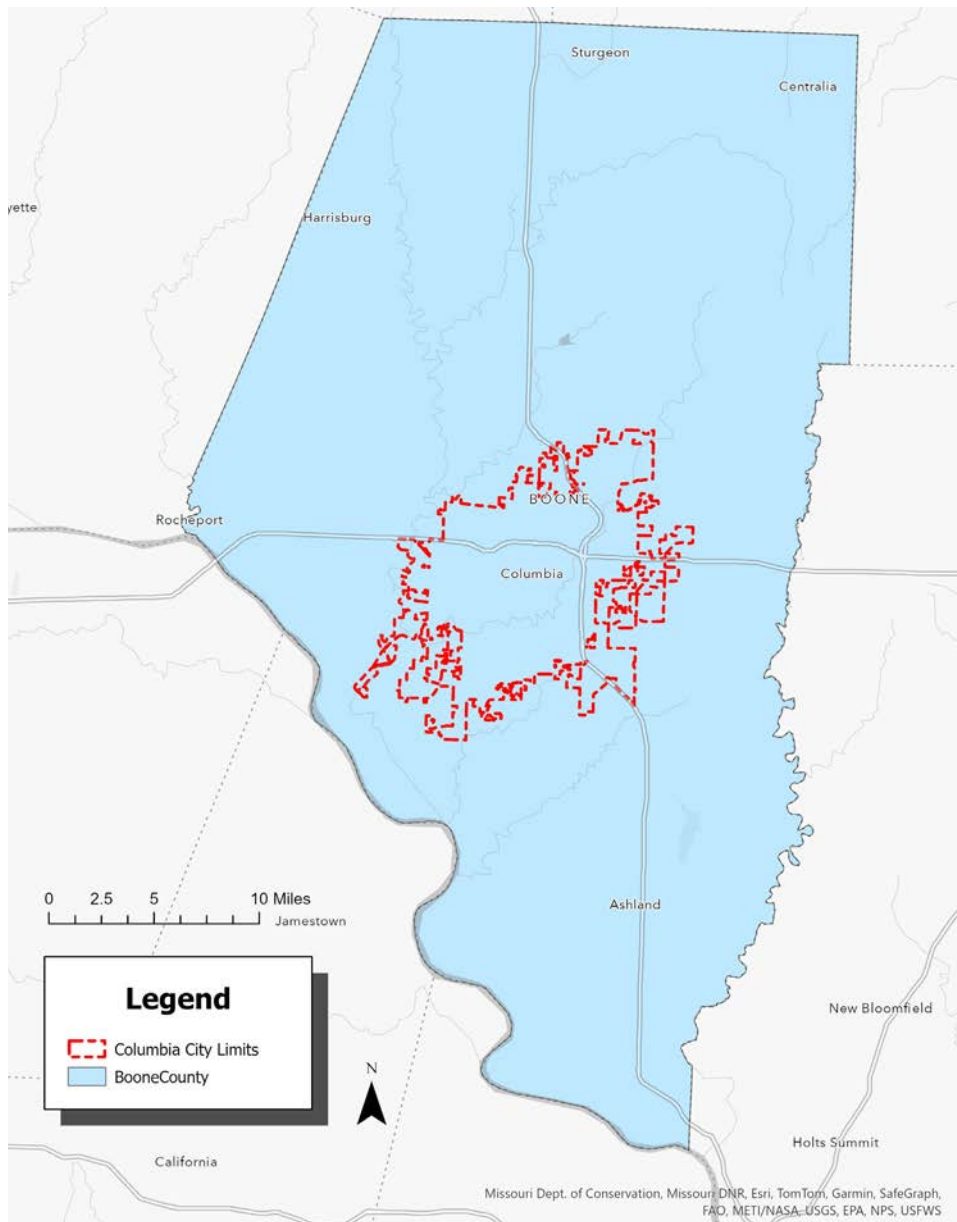
To understand and plan for improvements to transit services, “Core” and “Regional” geographies have both been defined in the Comprehensive Transit Study. The Core Service Area is the City of Columbia. As a city department, Go COMO’s primary responsibility is serving city residents and taxpayers who rely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





### Transit Service Planning

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.

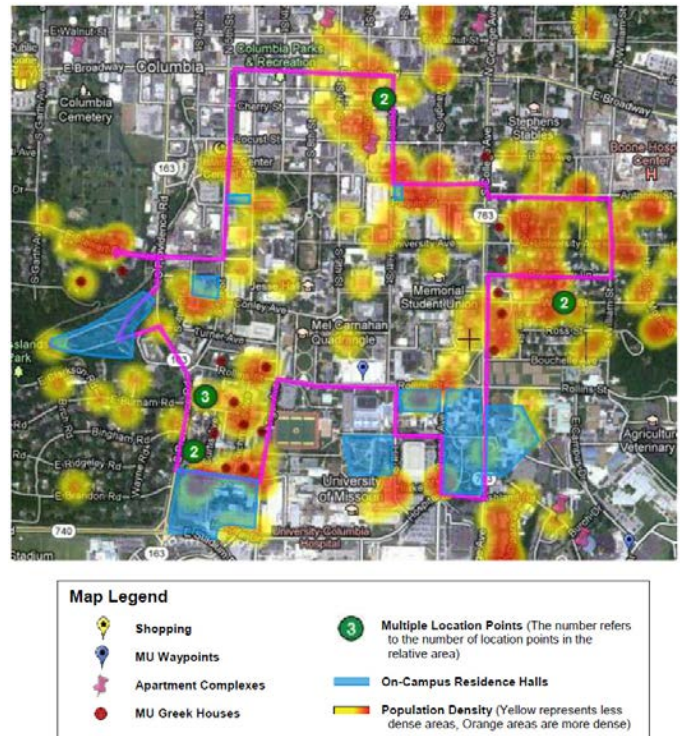
In 2012, the University of Missouri commissioned a **Campus Mass Transit Study**. This comprehensive transit system evaluation allowed the university to develop recommendations for a detailed mass transit operations plan. The aim was to identify primary and secondary goals for the university population, 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)**

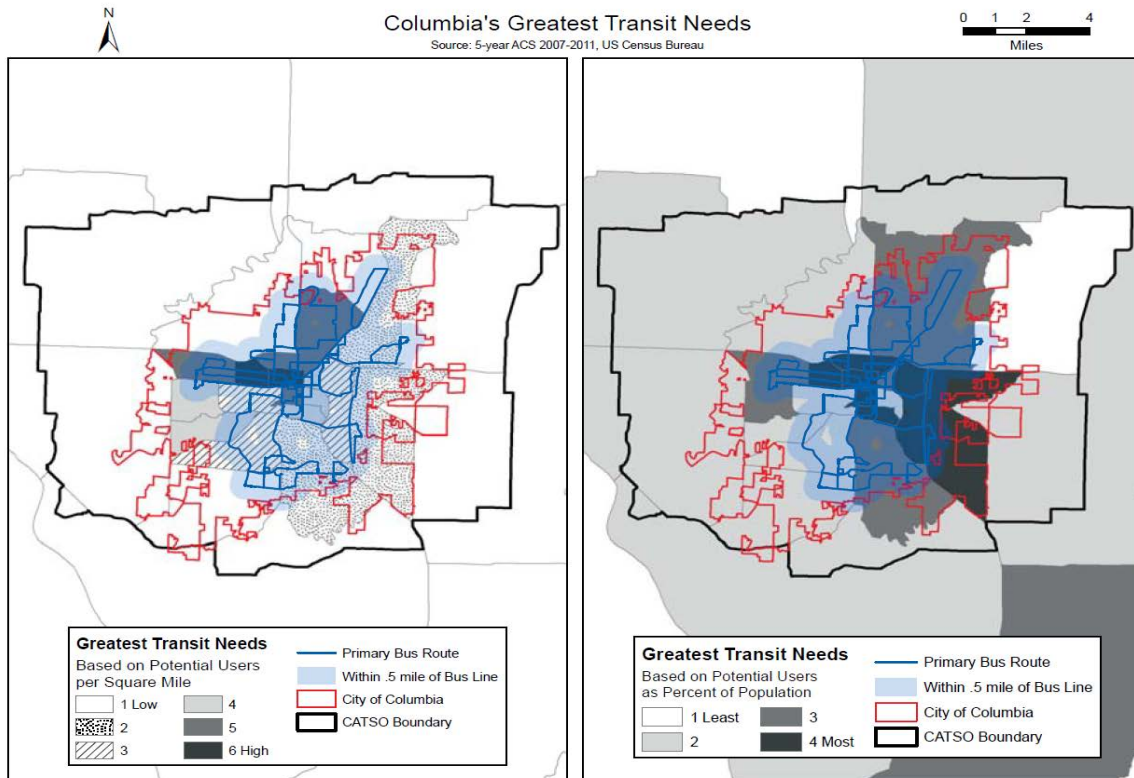
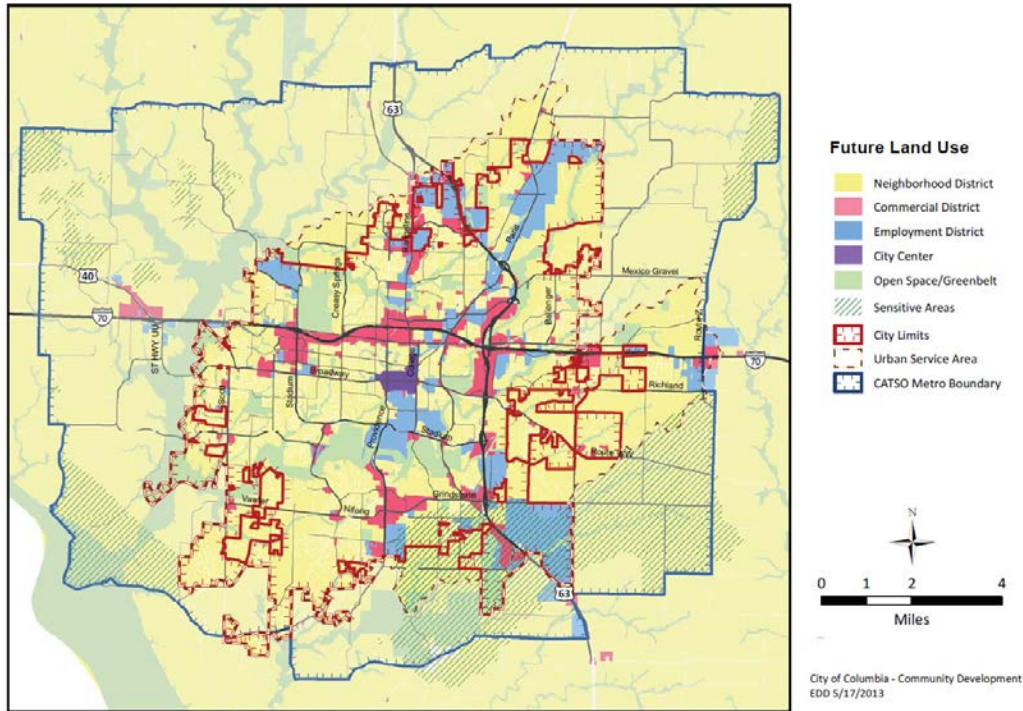


Figure 1.4: Future Land Use Map from Columbia Imagined (2013)



### 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

Table 14A - City of Columbia Revenues/Funding Summary - Go COMO Transit Projects									
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025-2029	2030-2039	2040-2049	Total
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

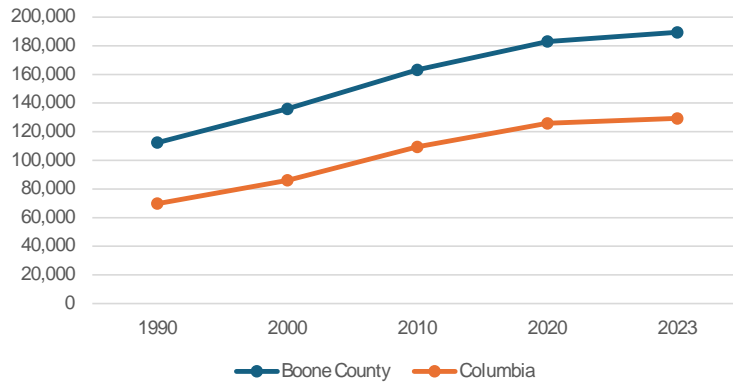
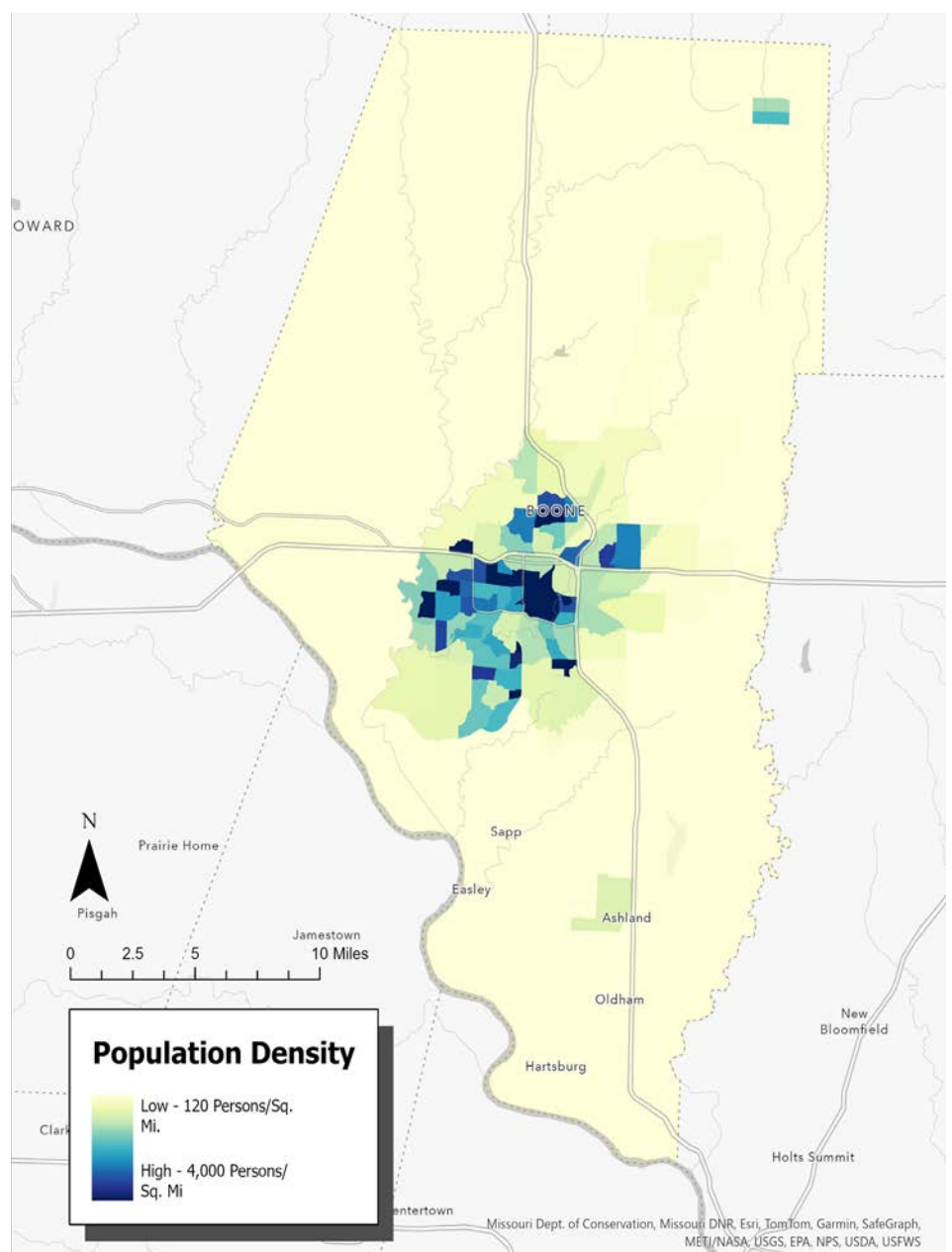


Figure 1.7: Population Density Map



Source: U.S. Census, 2020.

## 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.

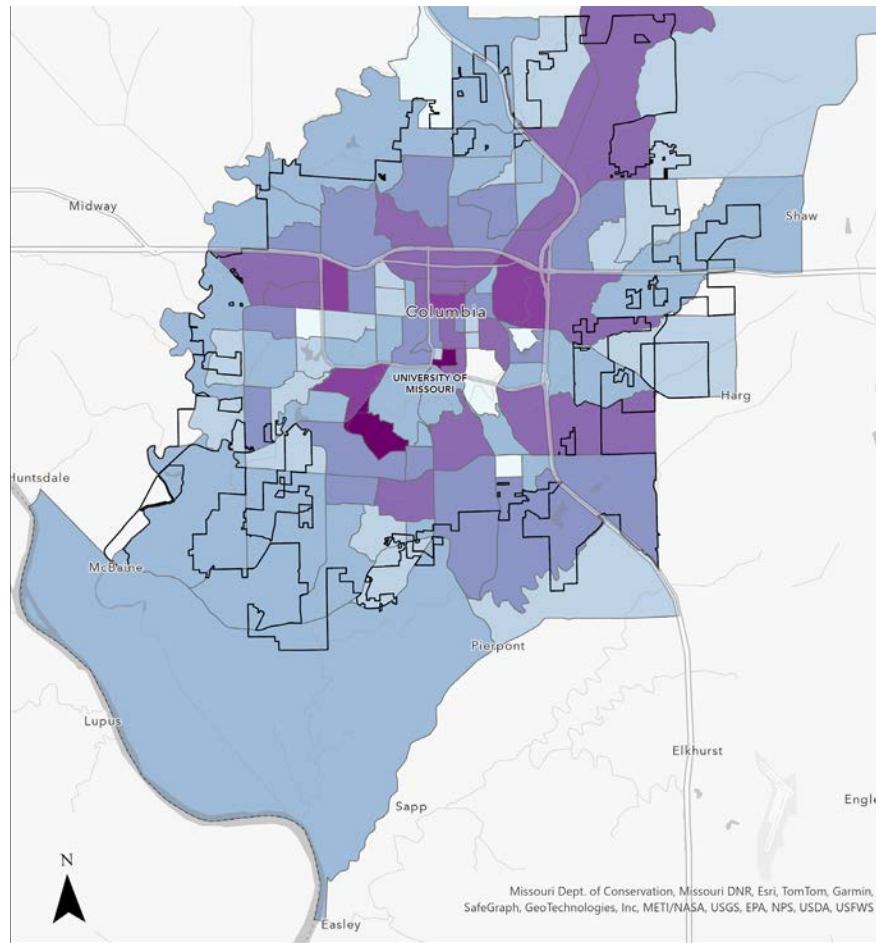
**Table 1.1: Largest Employers in Columbia**

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**



0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

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.

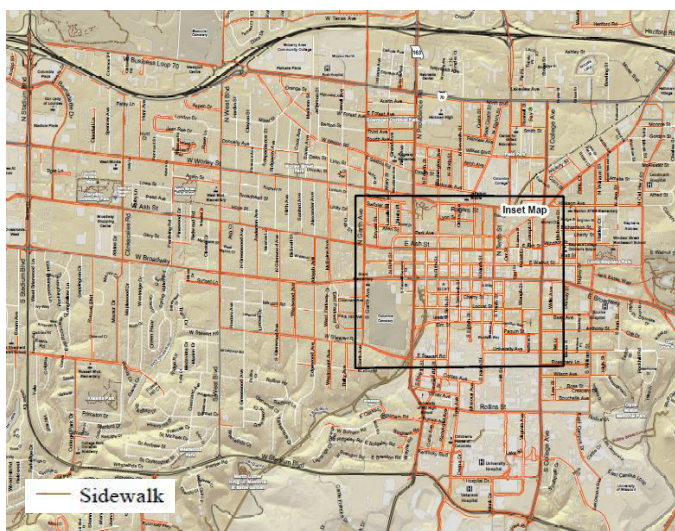
*Figure 1.9* below shows sidewalks in the Center City of Columbia. While arterial and collector streets tend to have sidewalks, many local/residential streets do not. This can present a challenge for those walking or using a wheelchair to get to or from a bus stop.

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.

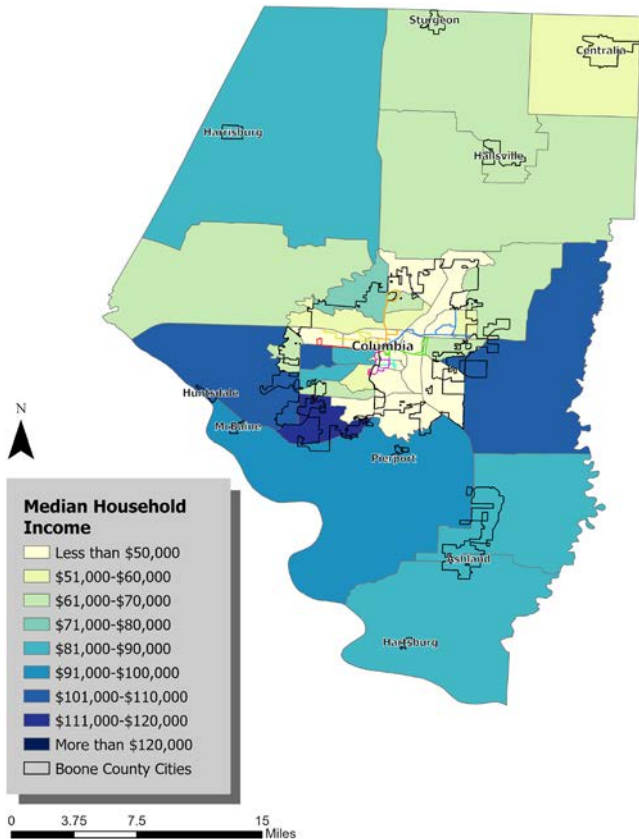


### Low Income Population

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



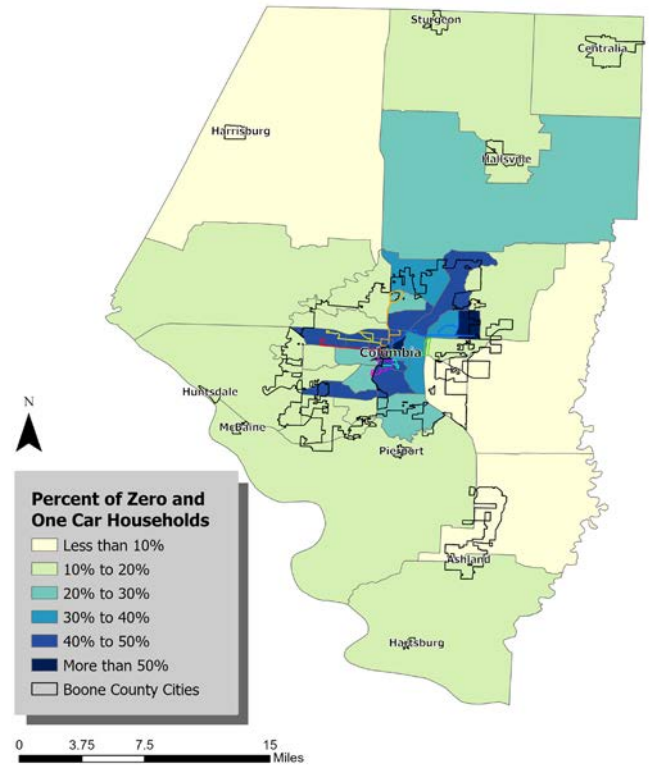
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

### 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

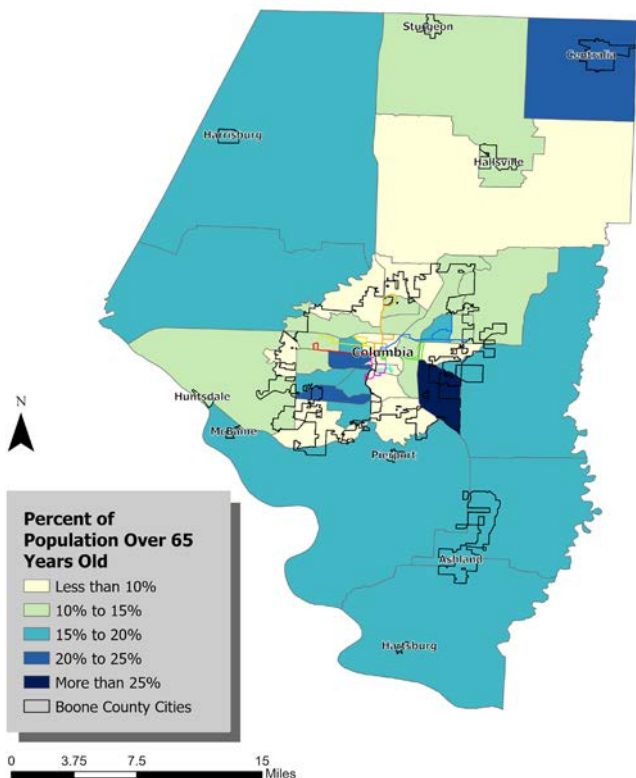
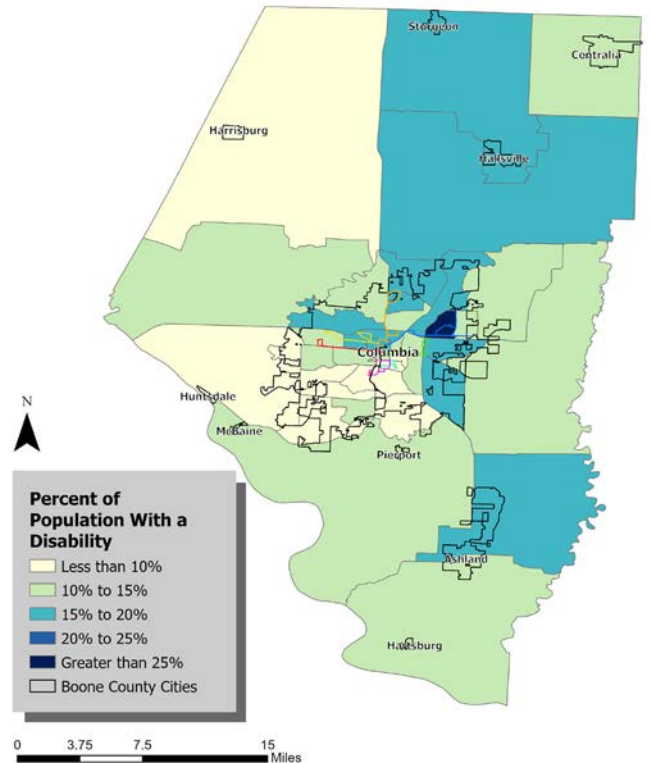


Figure 1.14: Disabled Population Map



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.

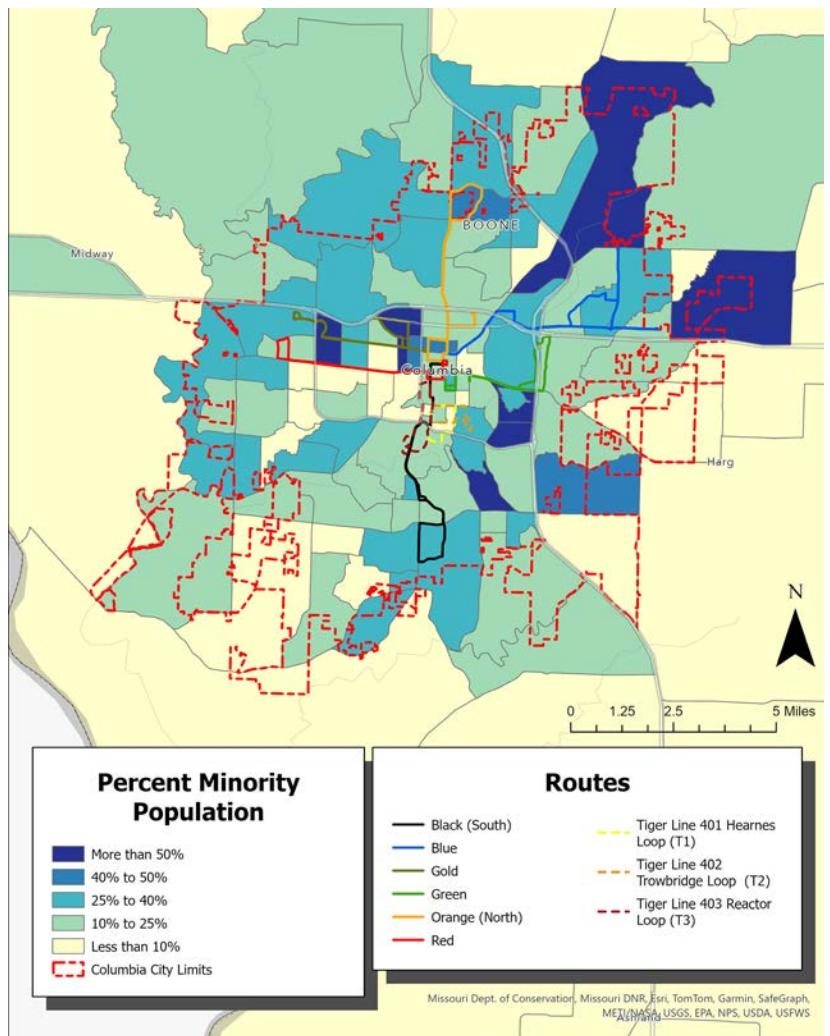
Figure 1.15 below shows the minority population distribution (by Census Block Group) in and around Columbia. Minority populations are highest in portions of the north and east core of the city, as well as areas in the city's northeast quadrant. Minority populations are generally lowest in the city's 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, with Go COMO operating 45-minute routes for the full year.**

Figure 1.16: Peer Agencies Map



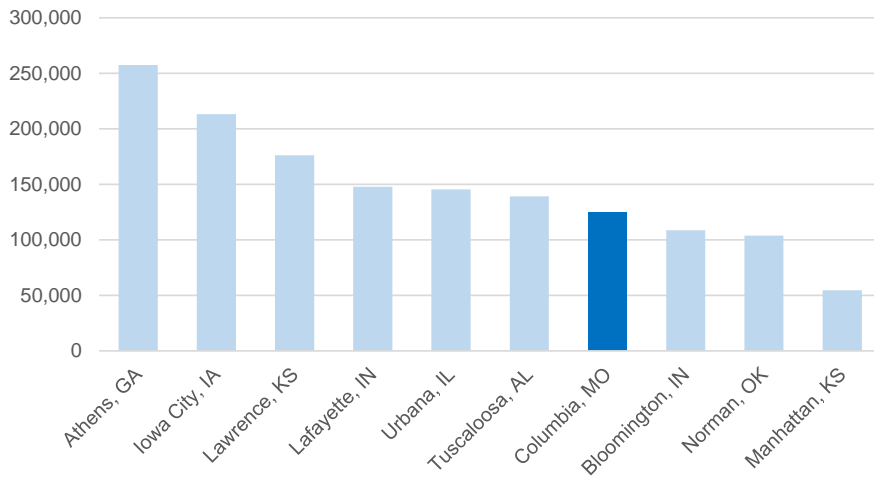
Table 1.8: Peer Agency Summary

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)

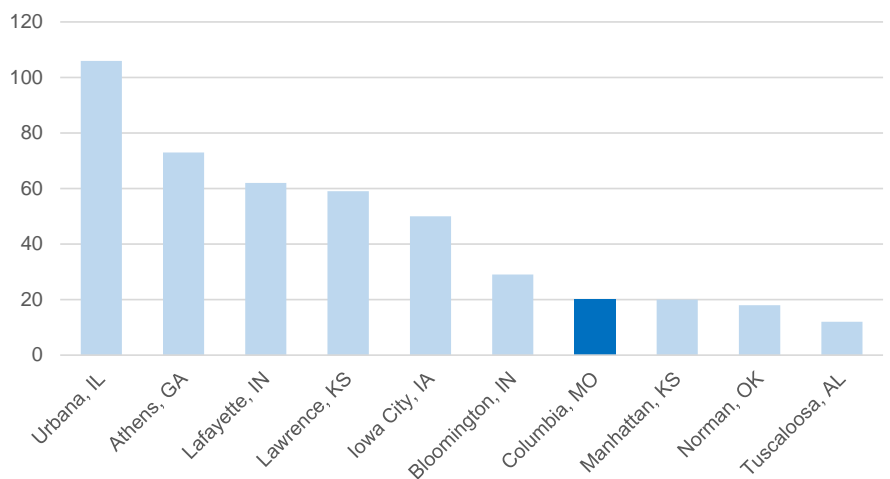


Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

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 20 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 106, by far the most of Columbia’s peers.

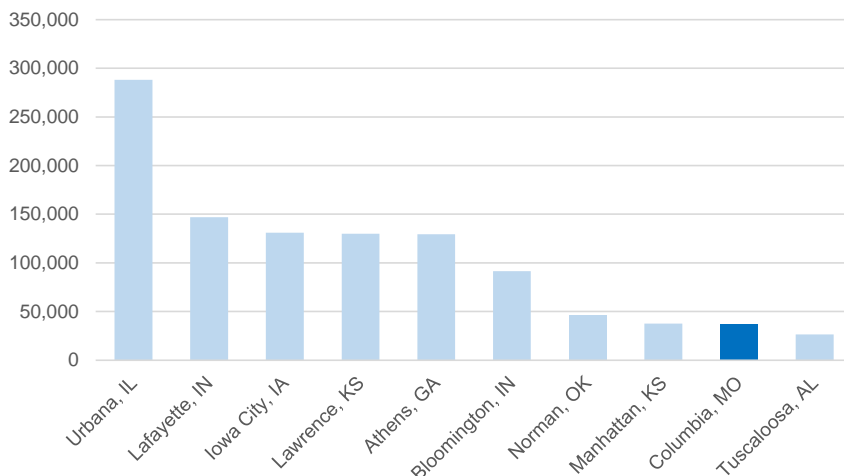
Similarly, the 477,211 annual vehicle revenue hours (VRH) operated in Columbia trails most of its peers. Only Tuscaloosa has fewer annual vehicle revenue hours. There is a significant clustering of peers around 130,000 annual VRH. Again, Champaign-Urbana leads all peers with 288,182 annual VRH, by far the highest. 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, which this analysis was conducted, 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 (2021)



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

### Vehicle Revenue Hours (2021)

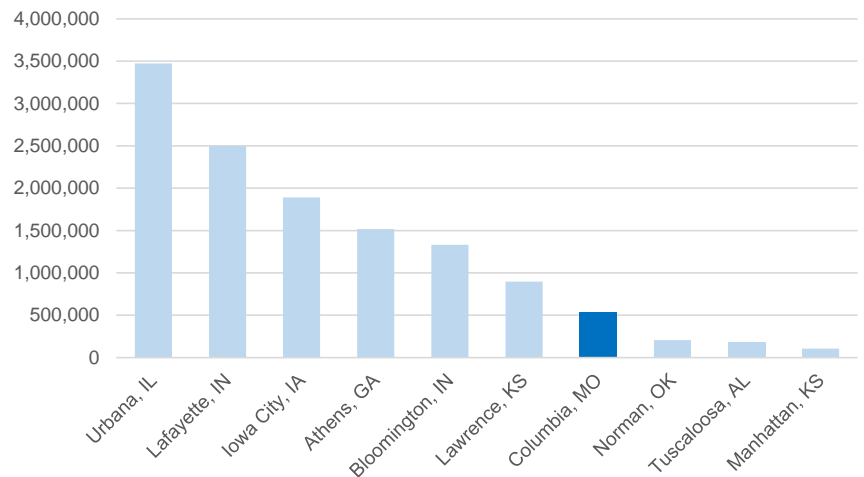


Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

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.

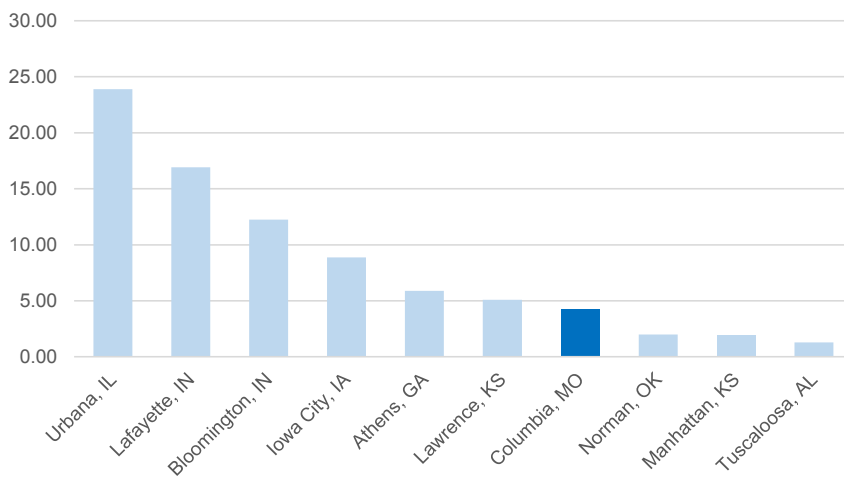
As would be expected with lower levels of service, as documented by VOMS and VRH statistics, Columbia also has lower transit ridership than most peers. In 2021, Columbia's 534,898 unlinked passenger trips (UPT) ranked 7th out of 10 peers. However, this number is more than twice as much as the three lowest: Norman, Tuscaloosa, and Manhattan. Unsurprisingly, peers with the highest ridership numbers are those with the most service provided: Champaign-Urbana followed by Lafayette and Iowa City.

Unlinked Passenger Trips (2021)



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

Unlinked Passenger Trips per Capita



Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

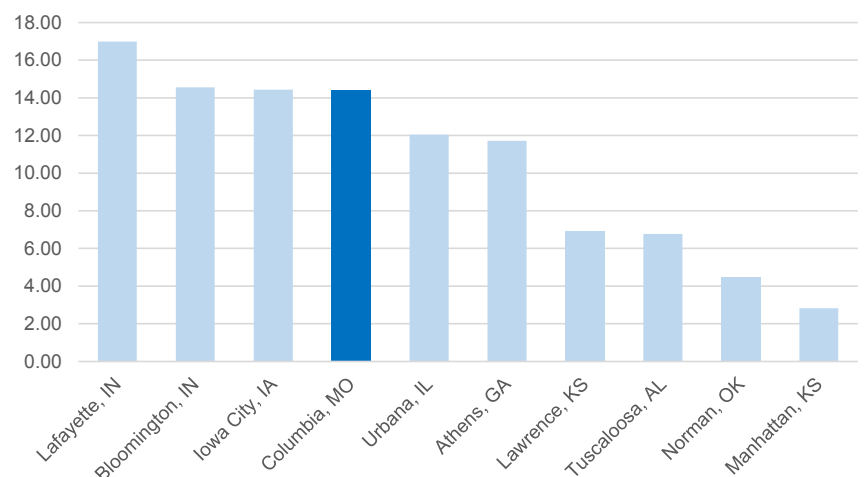
Statistics are similar when comparing UPT per UZA population, or the number of transit riders per capita. Columbia again ranks 7 out of 10, and the other peers rank similarly as with prior metrics. This analysis finds that service levels (VRH) is a more significant determinant of ridership than UZA population. 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 4th 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.

Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Rev. Hour



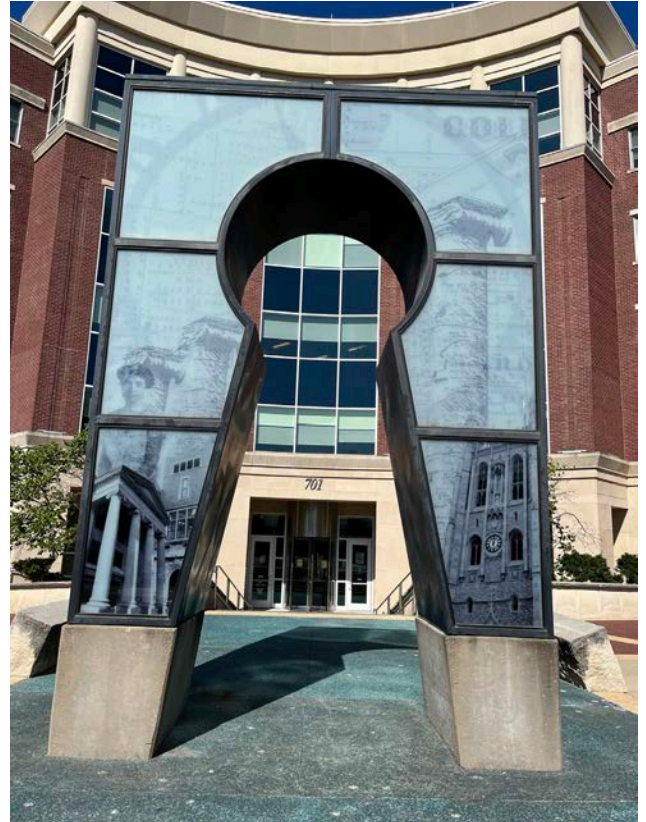
Source: National Transit Database, 2022.

## 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)
<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>
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.

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# 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

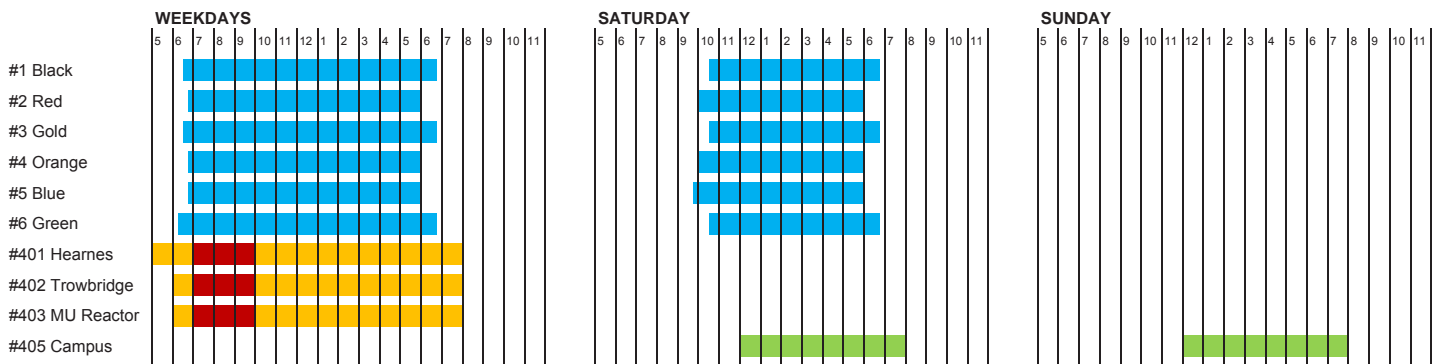
operate at a higher frequency with most routes operating at 20 minute service during the weekday and 10 minutes during morning times. Additionally, the #405 Campus Loop provides service every 30 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays.

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

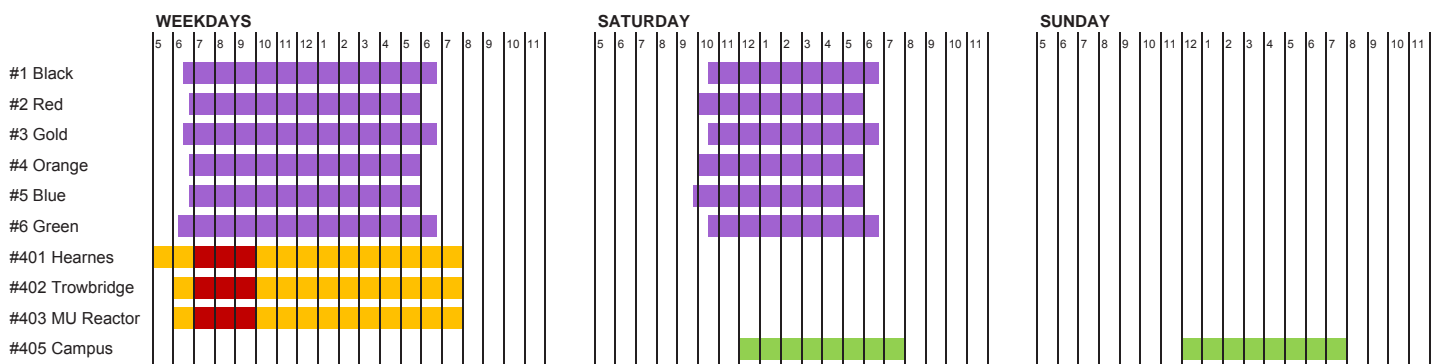
### Baseline Service

*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.

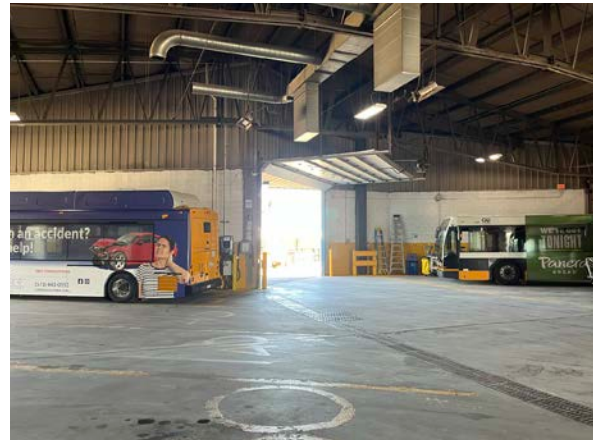


### *Grissum Building*

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.

**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>	



Typical bus stop sign provided at Go COMO stops.



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:

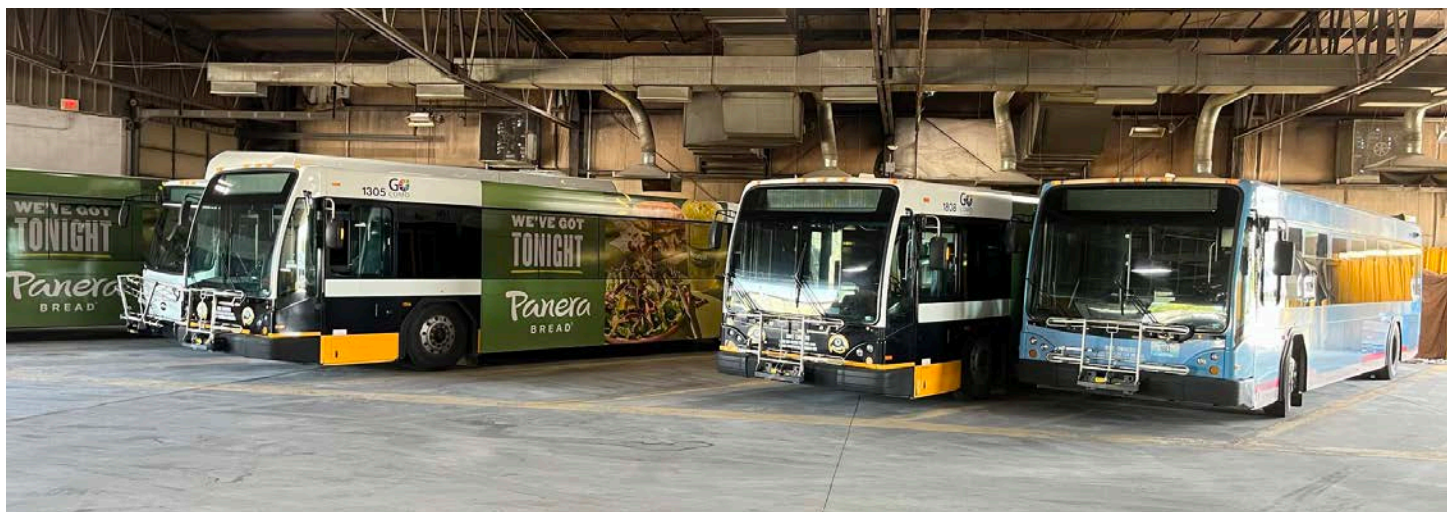
- Fixed Route (Go COMO): 12 buses
- Paratransit: 15 buses
- Campus (Tiger Line): 14 buses

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 \$.0.77. 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.

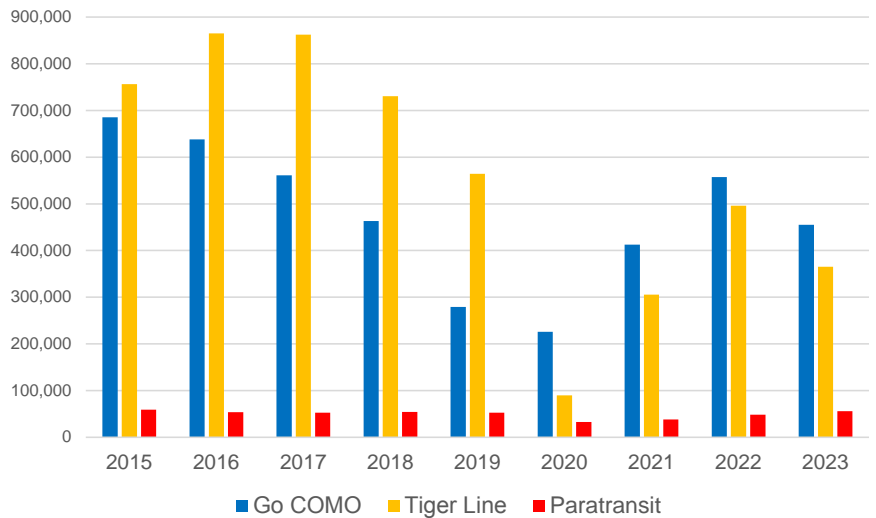
### Ridership by Route

**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.

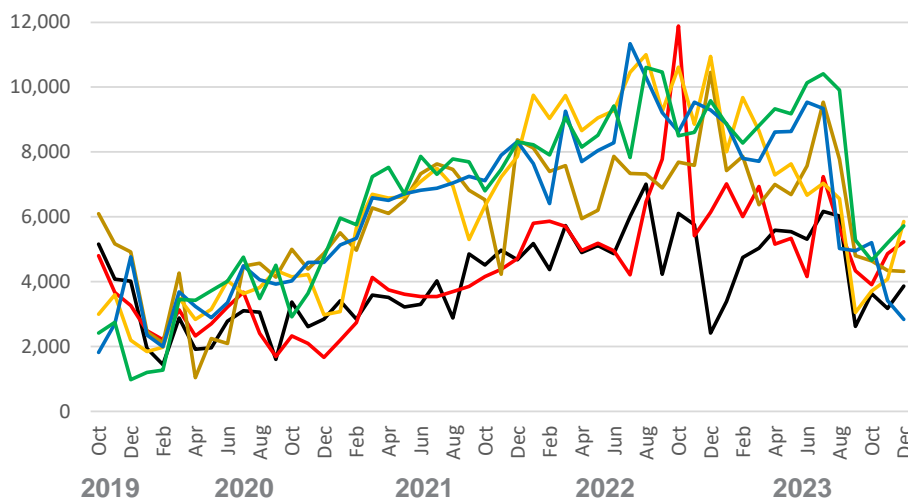
**Green Route** – The Green Route has shown positive ridership gains during period of 2020 to 2022. In 2020 there were 41,158 trips provided, while 2022 there were 106,880 trips. This route currently ranks as the highest for productivity with 95,768 trips in 2023.

### 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)

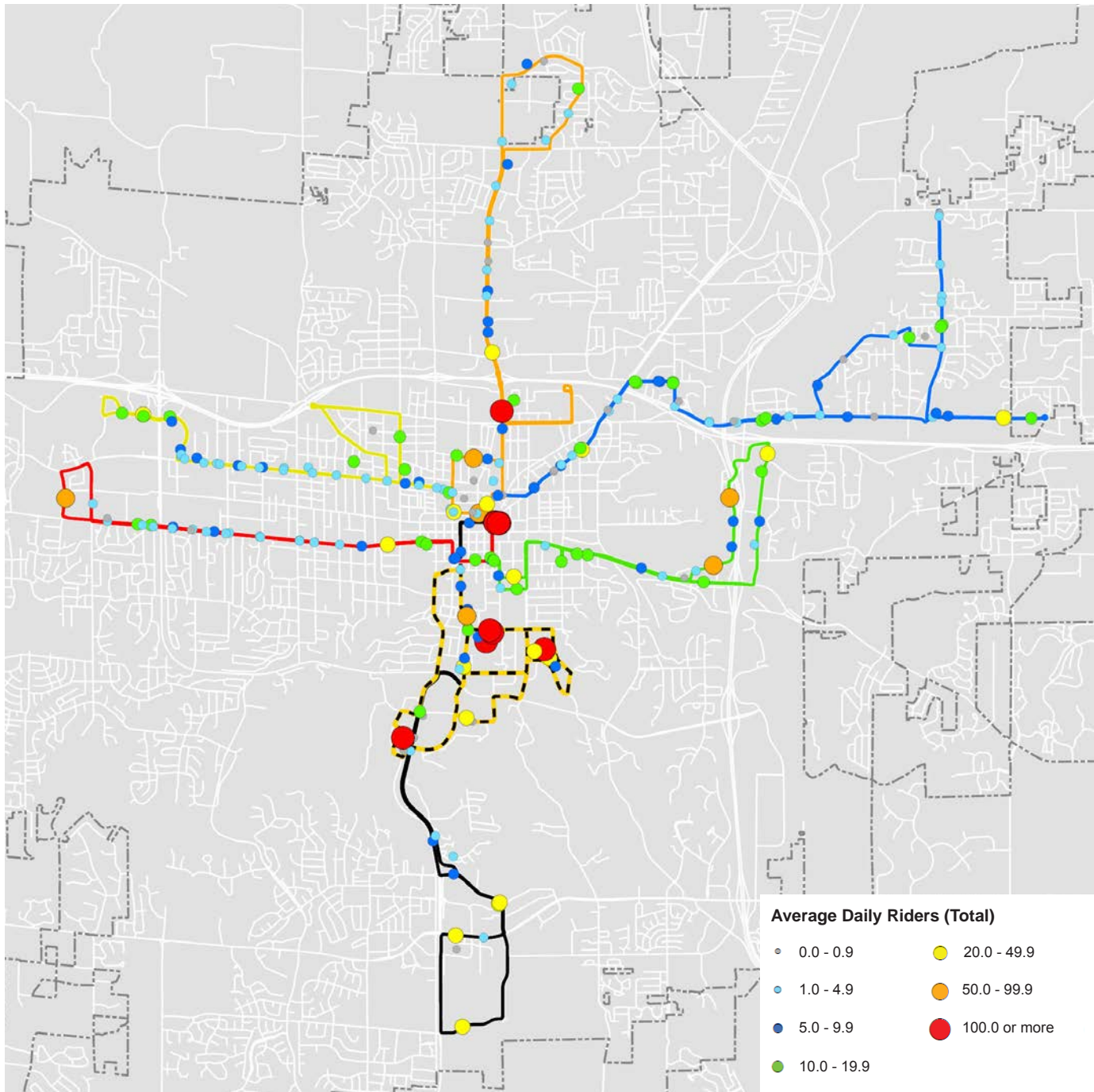


### Ridership Patterns

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 Hearnes	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 Hearnes	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

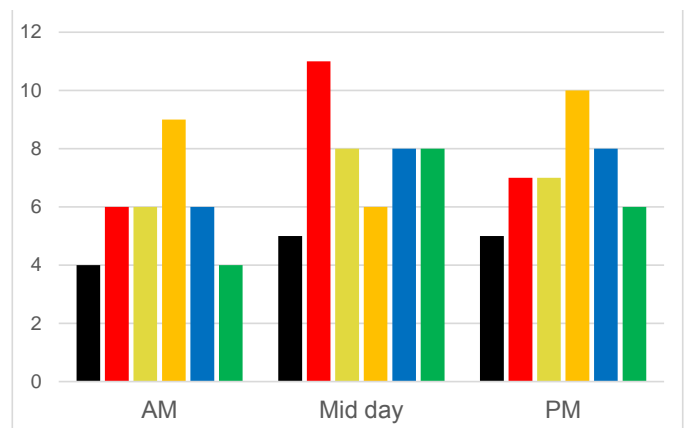
**Ridership by Day and Time**

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.

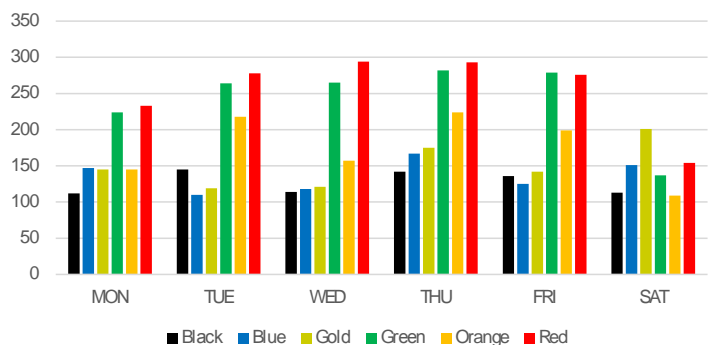
There is also a significant variation by route. The Red route sees the highest midday peak with an average load of 11 passengers. The Orange route is the only route with AM and PM passenger loads that are higher than midday loads.

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

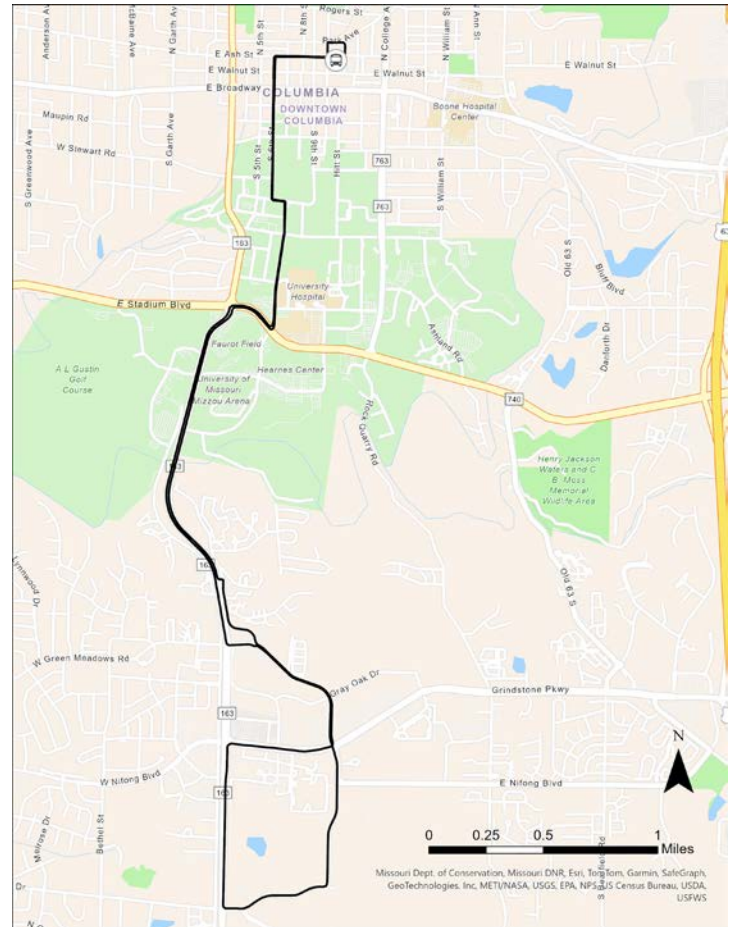
# Route #1 – Black (MU/Providence South)

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 Southampton 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)

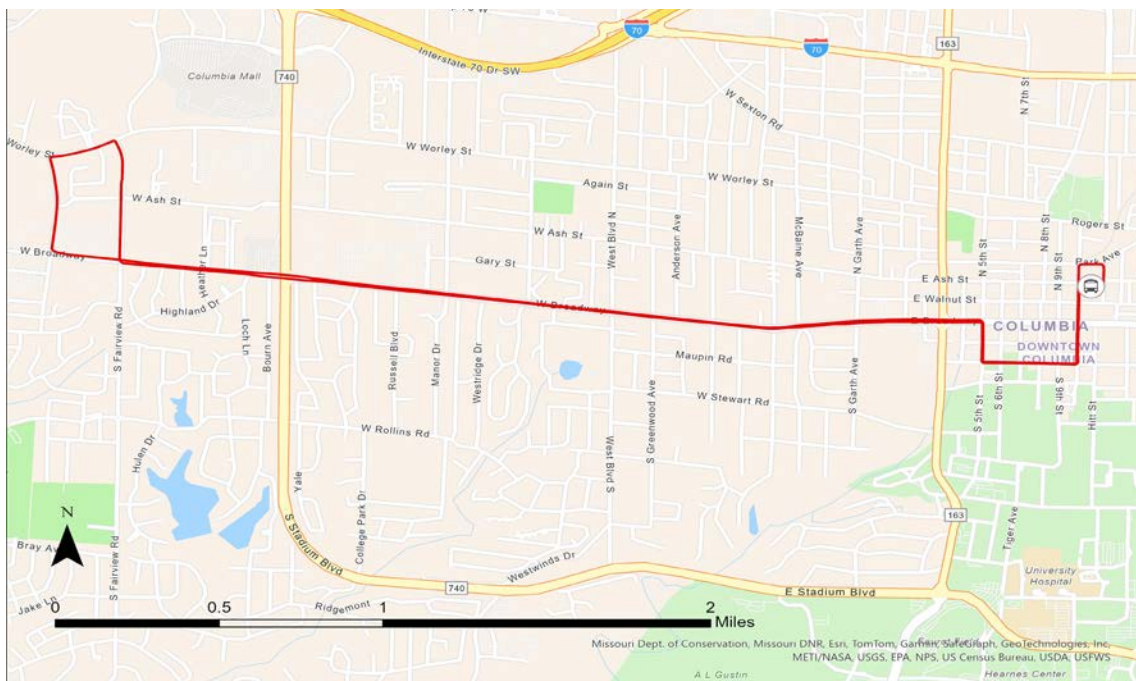
The #2 Red Route offers service in Western region of Columbia along Broadway. Along this corridor it provides bi-directional service to Walmart and Crossroads shopping center. The Red Route is interlined with #6 Green Route. The Red Route ends with a terminal loop along Park De Ville Drive and West Worley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

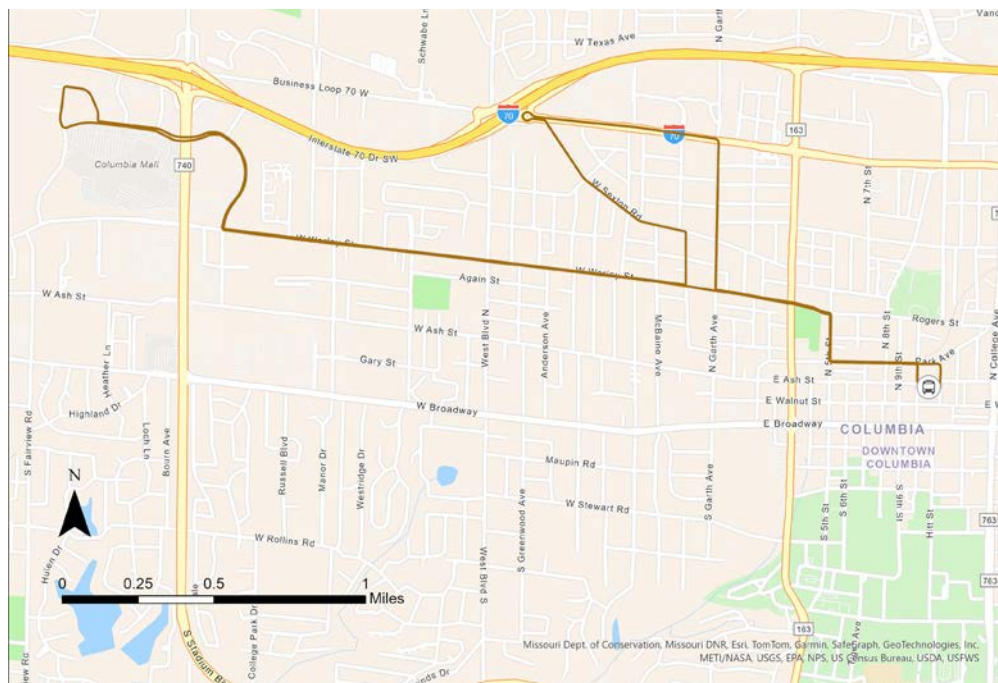
The #3 Gold Route serves the Northwest region of Columbia with bi-directional service along Worley Street. The Gold Route is interlined with the #5 Blue Route. This route also serves neighborhoods and shopping areas via a one-way loop along West Sexton Road, Business Loop and Garth Avenue. Key destinations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



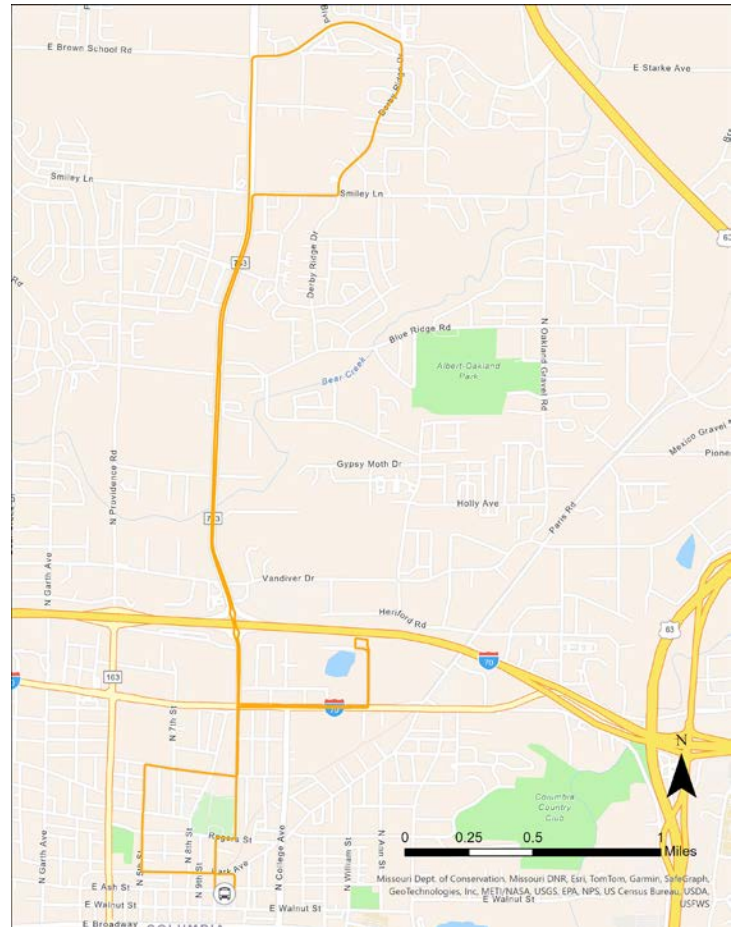
## Route Profiles

# 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)

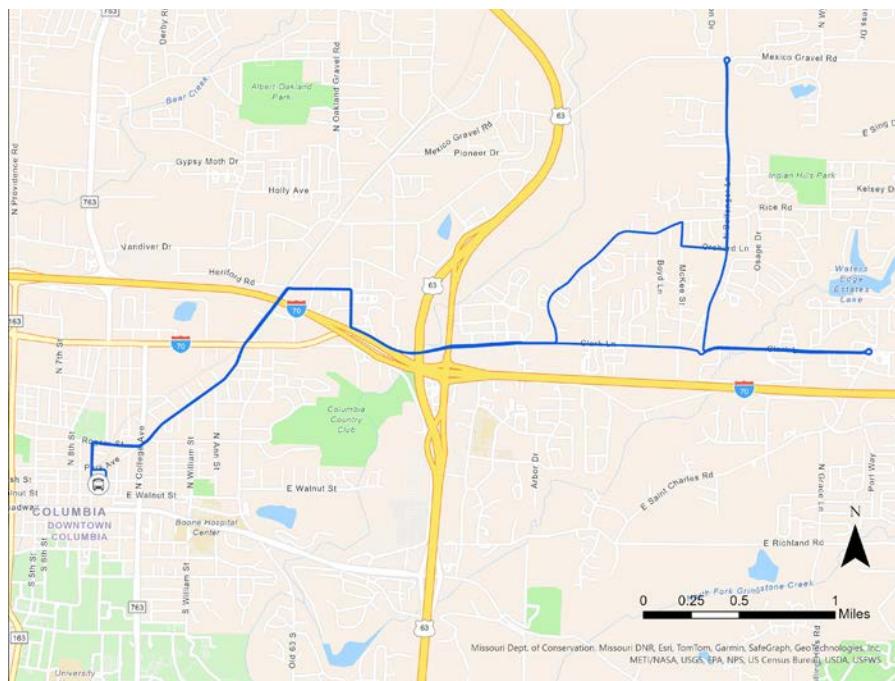
The #5 Blue Route is located in the Eastern area of the city providing service to industrial and employment centers. This route operates bi-directionally along Paris Road, Whitegate Drive and portion of Clark Lane. This route covers neighborhood and shopping areas with one directional service inbound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

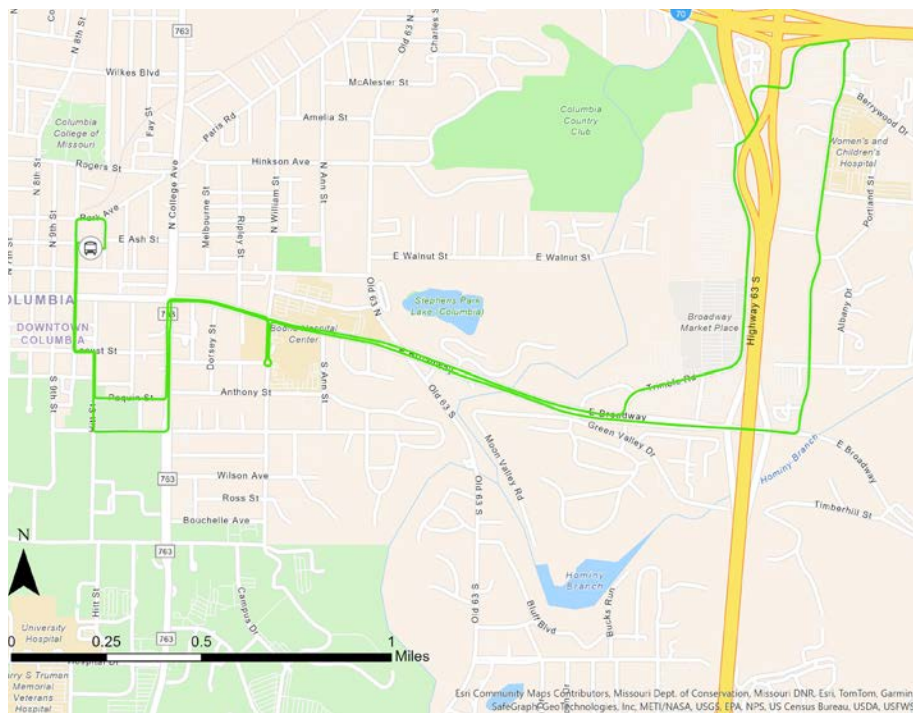
The #6 Green Route provides service to the Southeast area of Columbia along Broadway. This route ends with a one-way loop around medical and shopping areas along Keene and Conley Road. The Green Route is interlined with #2 Red Route. Key destinations for this route include University of Missouri, Stephens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

Hearnnes 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	

Hearnnes 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

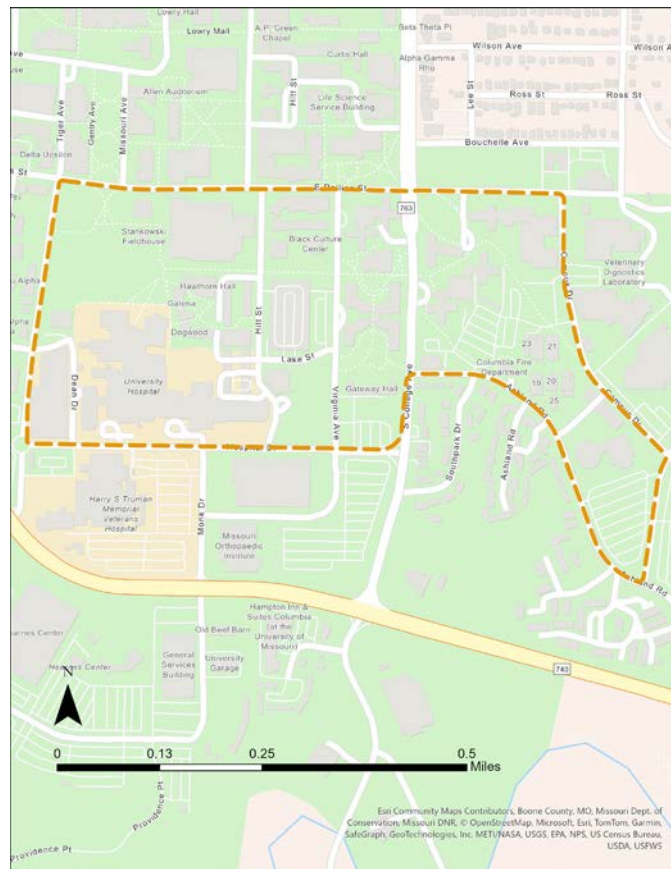
Route #402 is a Tiger Line day route operating during weekdays only. This route operates on the east side of campus and runs along Rollins Street, Ashland Road and Hospital Drive. Activity centers include the Recreational center, residence halls, and apartment complexes.

### 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

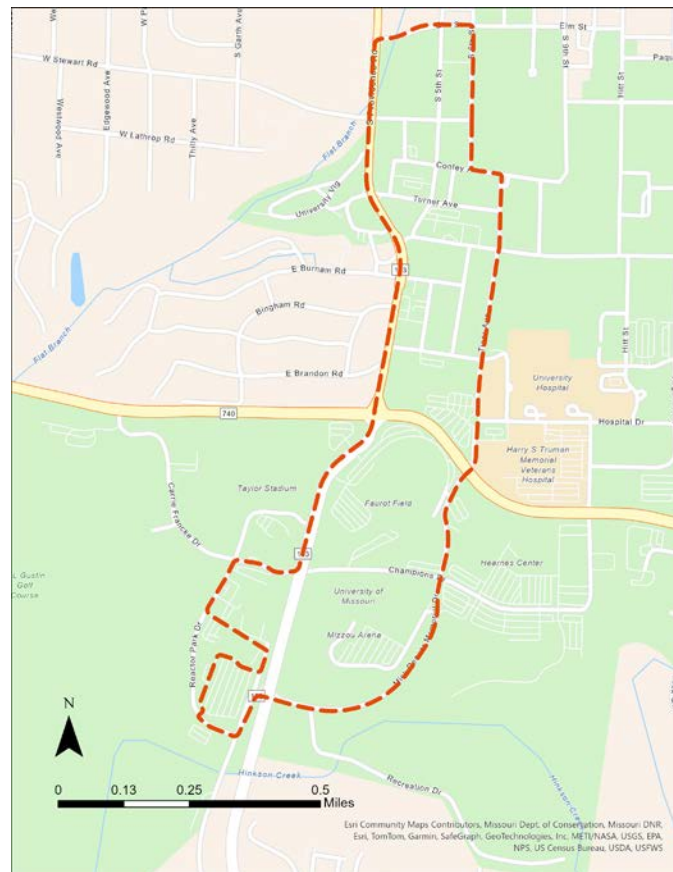
Route #403 operates during weekdays and provides service till 8:00 pm. This route travels north and south, serving the western portion of the MU campus and connecting activity centers such as Memorial Stadium, Mizzou Arena, and several student housing complexes.

**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, Hearnes 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

## Engagement Process Overview

- » 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.

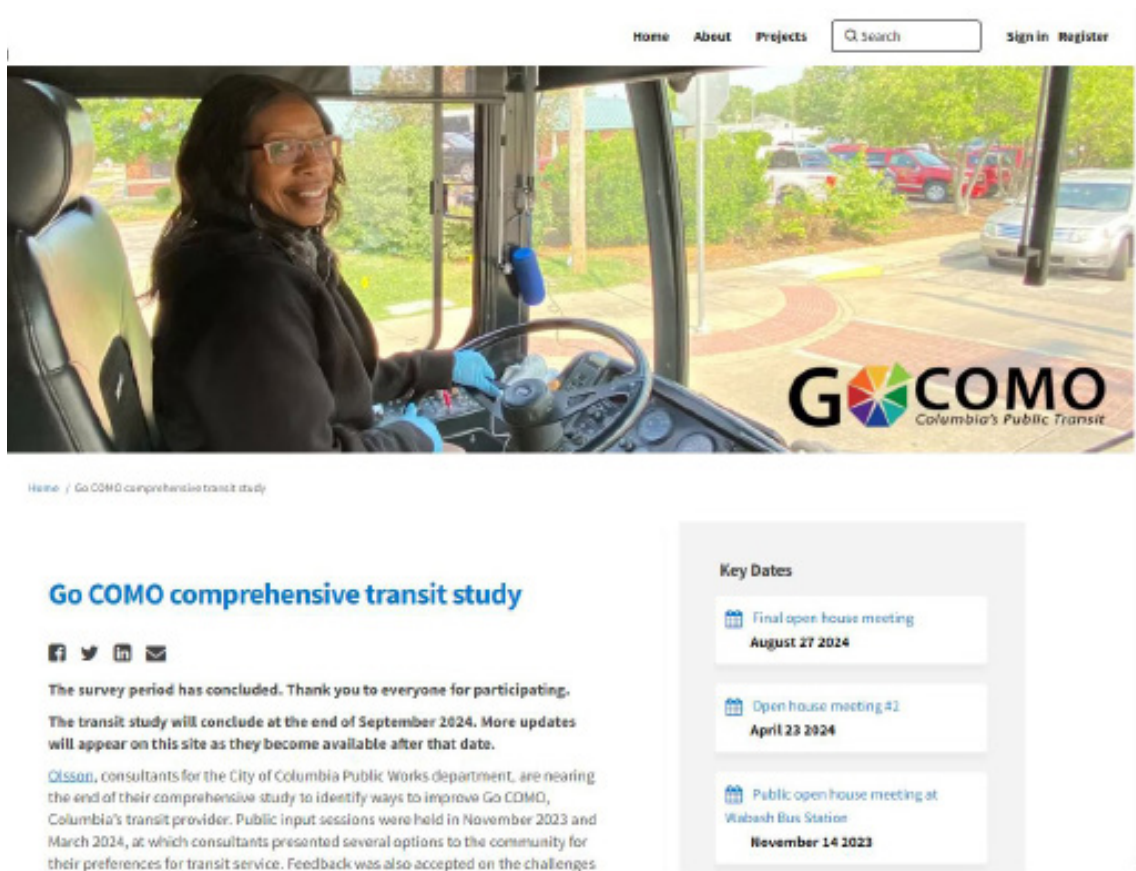
Additionally, the City's Climate Action Plan defines lofty goals for "mode shift" targets, where a larger share of residents walk, bike, or use public transportation. Specifically, the plan defines a goal of 17 percent of residents using transit to get to work or school by 2035, and 40 percent by 2050.

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

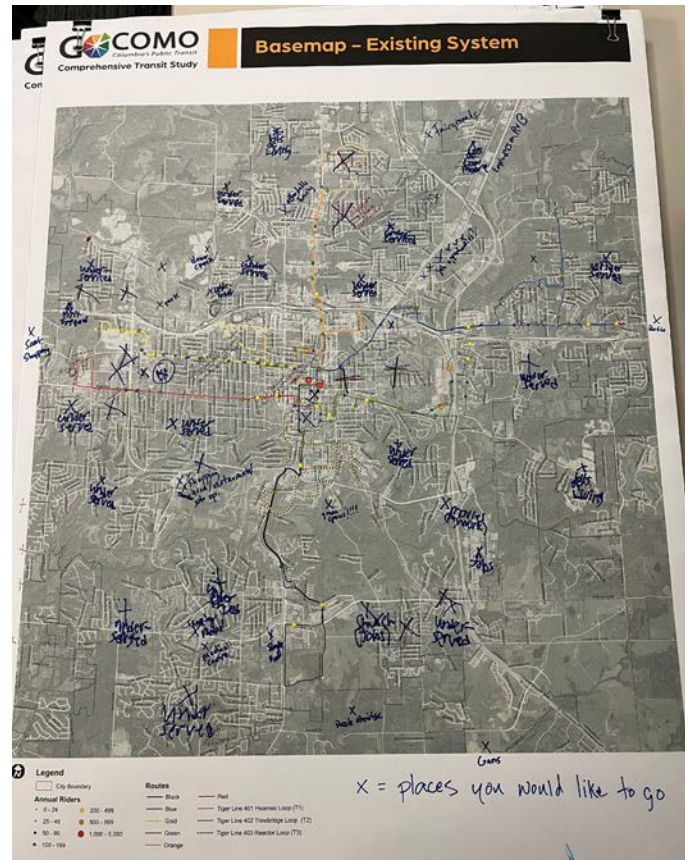
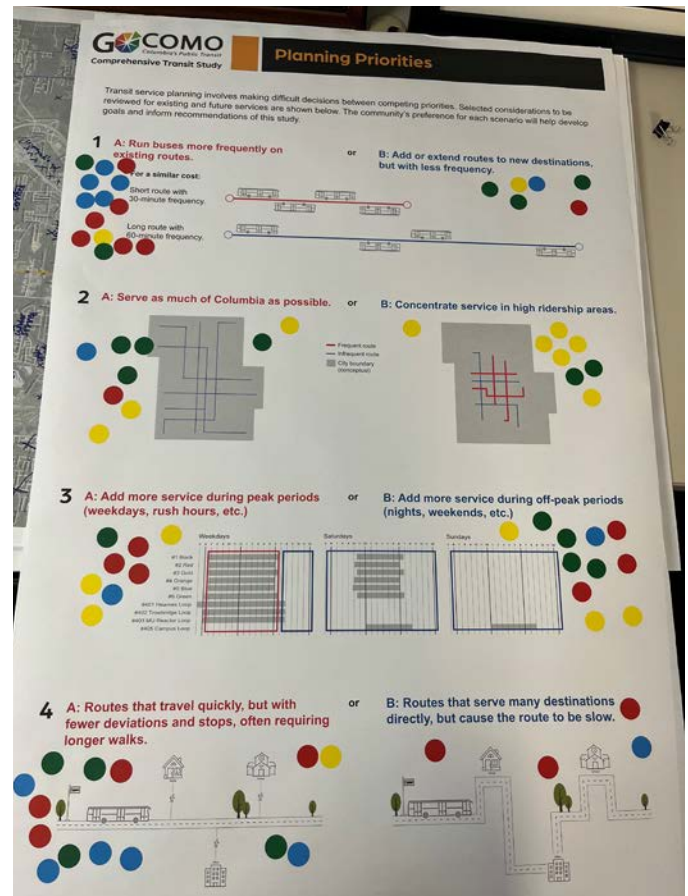
connecting point for all routes in the system. Meetings were held from 4 to 6 p.m. on weekdays when all routes are running. Each meeting was a “come-and-go” event where attendees could come anytime within this two-hour window.

Each of these meetings are summarized below. Outputs of these meetings used to formulate service recommendations are integrated into the summary of Service Strengths & Challenges as well as into Section 4 to illustrate the transit strategies that were evaluated.

**Public Open House #1: November 2023**

The first public meeting focused on “discovering” the needs, issues, opportunities, and ideas for transit in Columbia. This began by defining the problems that the study is intended to solve. Initial input was obtained on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing transit system. The project team shared the initial “in-progress” results of the Market Analysis (Section 1) and Comprehensive Operations Analysis (Section 2). Participants were asked to document their primary concerns with the system, the study process, and their top priorities that need to be addressed in the study.

Additionally, a series of potential planning priorities were presented to “drill down” on more specific objectives that impact transit system design. These planning priorities require the participant to choose between two contrasting choices, relating to ridership goals, geographic coverage, and the span and frequency of bus routes. These planning priorities are detailed in Section 4. The results of this meeting, combined with PTAC guidance, on-board survey results, and online comments, allowed the project team to proceed with preparing a series of service concepts to illustrate different ways to resolve the issues and challenges identified.

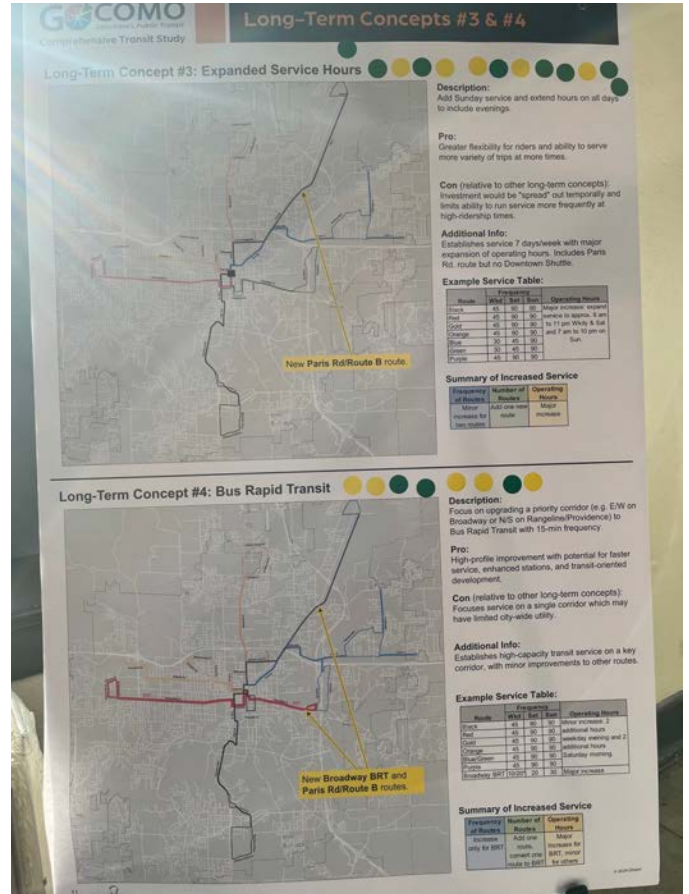




## Public Open House #2: April 2024

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.



**Long-Term Concept #3: Expanded Service Hours**

**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 "sprinkled" out temporarily 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	Start	End	Operating Hours
Major	4:30	10:30	Major routes, expanded
Paris	4:30	10:30	Service to approx. 8 am
Other	4:30	10:30	to 11 pm Week & Sat
Orange	4:30	10:30	and 7 am to 10 pm on Sun.
Green	4:30	10:30	
Blue	4:30	10:30	

**Summary of Increased Service**

Frequency	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
Increased for Sun routes	1	Major
Increased for other routes	1	Major

**Long-Term Concept #4: Bus Rapid Transit**

**Description:** Focus on upgrading a priority corridor (e.g. E/W on Broadway or NB on Kingshigh/Providence) 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	Start	End	Operating Hours
Major	4:30	10:30	Major routes, expanded
Other	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Orange	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Green	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Blue	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Paris	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Other	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Orange	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Green	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Blue	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Paris	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2
Other	4:30	10:30	Additional hours 2

**Summary of Increased Service**

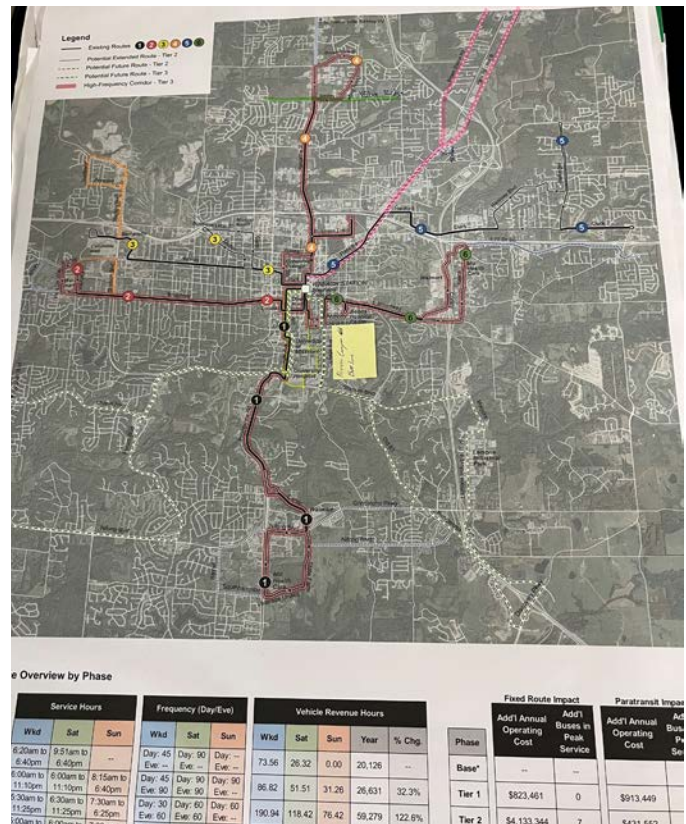
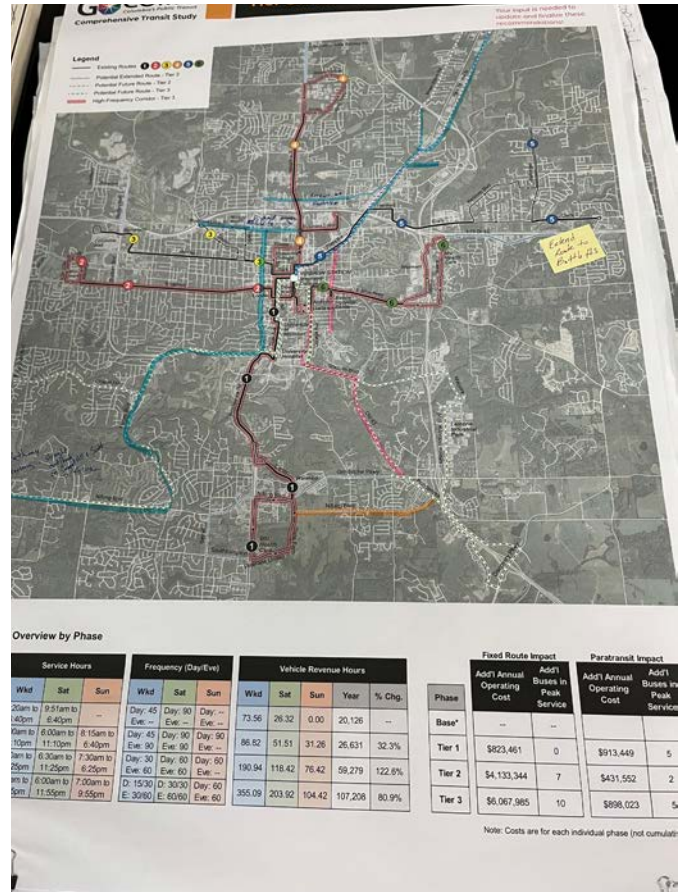
Frequency	Number of Routes	Operating Hours
Increased for BRT	1	Major
Increased for other routes	1	Major



### 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.

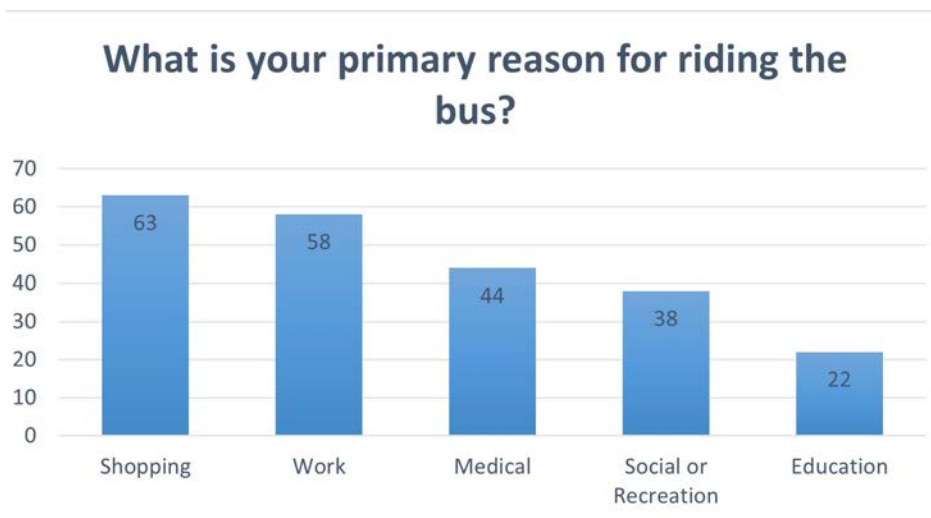
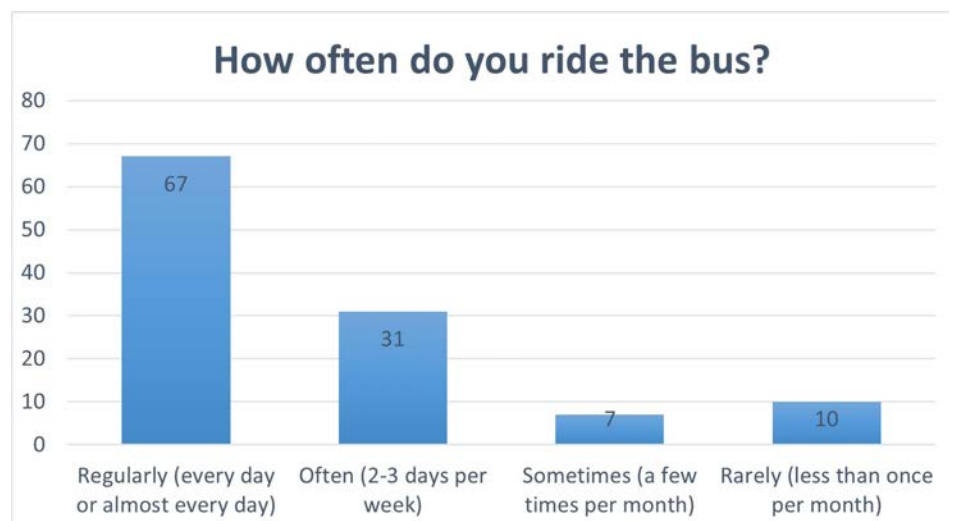
### Rider & Trip Characteristics

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)

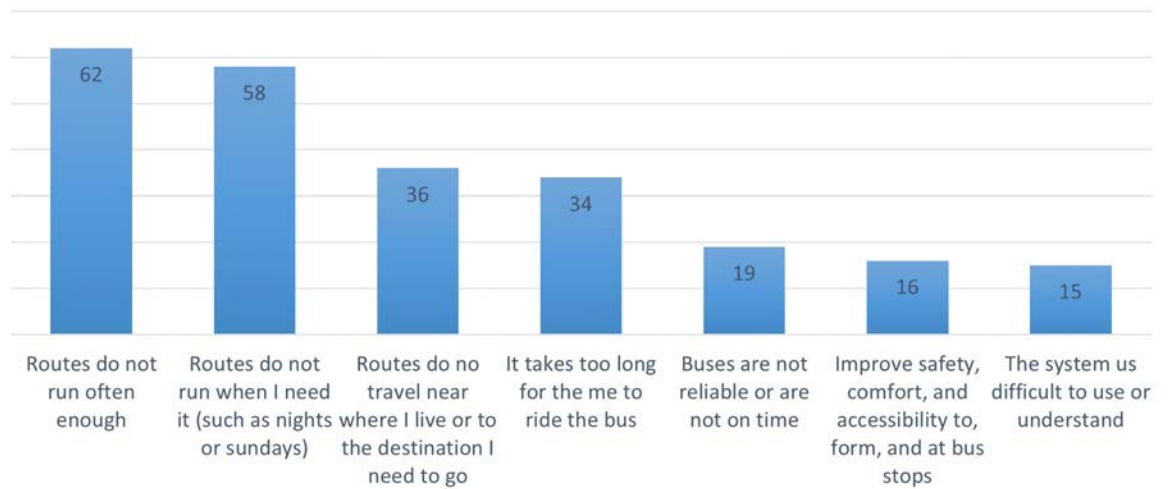
While multiple other issues were identified, such as route coverage and travel time, these two issues are a recurring theme throughout public input received in multiple formats.

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

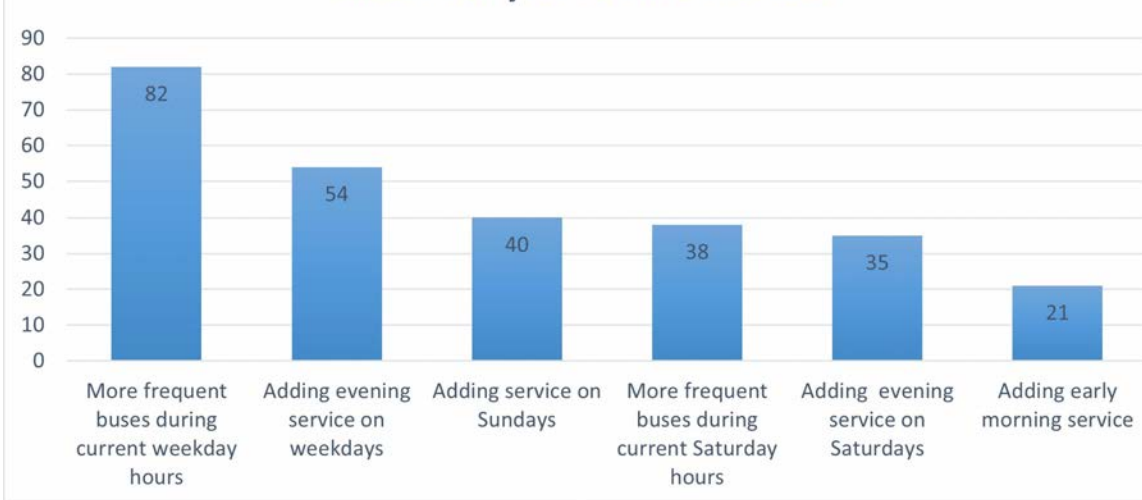
“adding evening service on weekdays” are the two highest-priority improvements that would make it easier for them to ride the bus. In discussions with riders, many noted the difficulty and inconvenience that the current 90-minute routes have caused for their transportation needs, and expressed a desire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

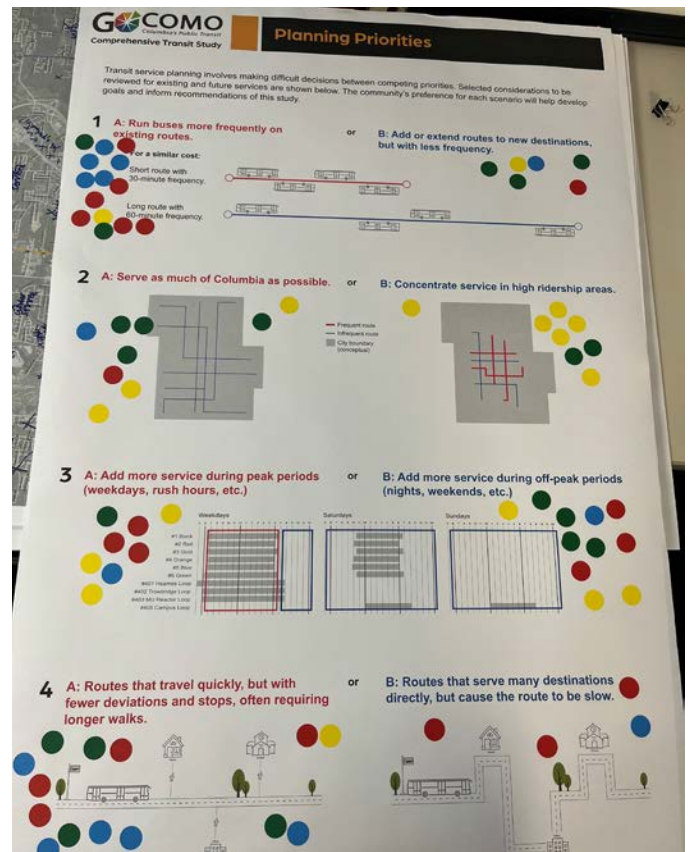
- Continue coordination with OATS to help plan for and meet transit needs for residents living outside of Columbia.
- Follow and update the CATSO Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation plan which outlines coordination activities and service improvement priorities to fill gaps in transit 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

- |  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
| <p><b>1</b> <b>A: Run buses more frequently on existing routes.</b></p> <p> <b>Strong Preference</b></p>  | or | <p><b>B: Add or extend routes to new destinations, but with less frequency.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>2</b> <b>A: Serve as much of Columbia as possible.</b> or <b>B: Concentrate service in high ridership areas.</b></p> <p><b>Roughly Equal Preference</b></p>  |    |  |
| <p><b>3</b> <b>A: Add more service during peak periods (weekdays, rush hours, etc.)</b></p>  | or | <p><b>B: Add more service during off-peak periods (nights, weekends, etc.)</b></p> <p> <b>Strong Preference</b></p> |
| <p><b>4</b> <b>A: Routes that travel quickly, but with fewer deviations and stops, often requiring longer walks.</b></p> <p> <b>Strong Preference</b></p> | or | <p><b>B: Routes that serve many destinations directly, but cause the route to be slow.</b></p>   |

## 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

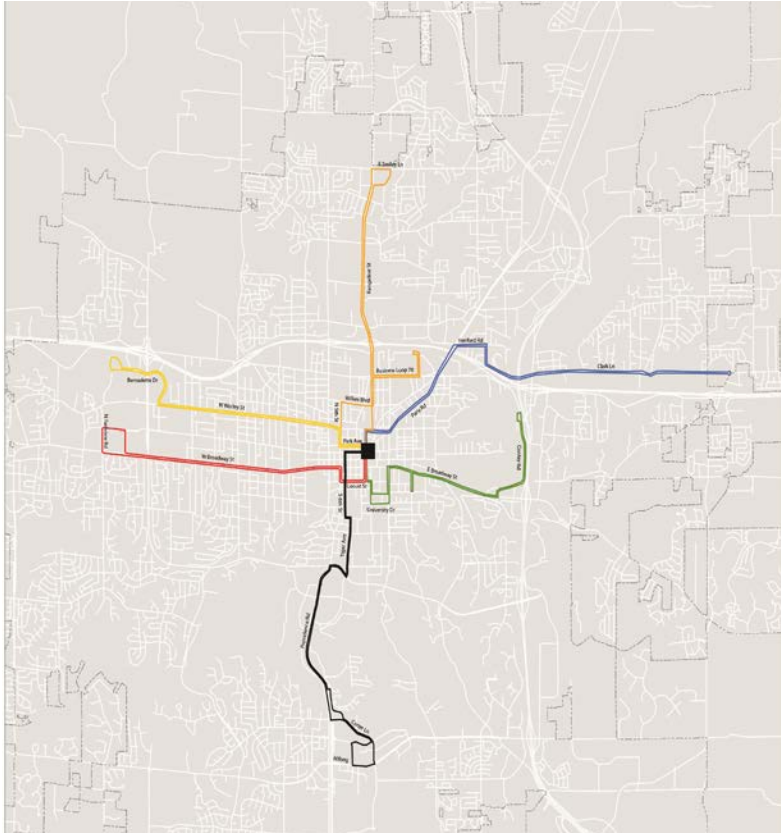
- The majority of participants indicated a preference for Concept #1. While this concept has significant drawbacks—requiring the shortening of routes—this feedback illustrates that frequency of service is the community’s top concern.
- Concept #3 is the least-supported. As noted, this concept is not 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

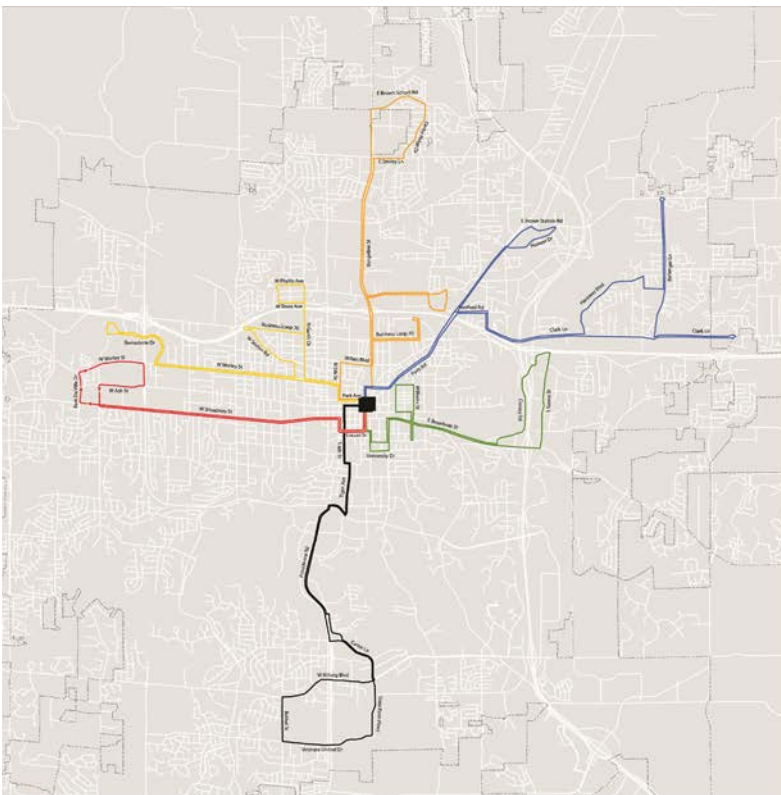
**Con:**  
Routes would serve less area, likely trimmed near ends of routes

**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

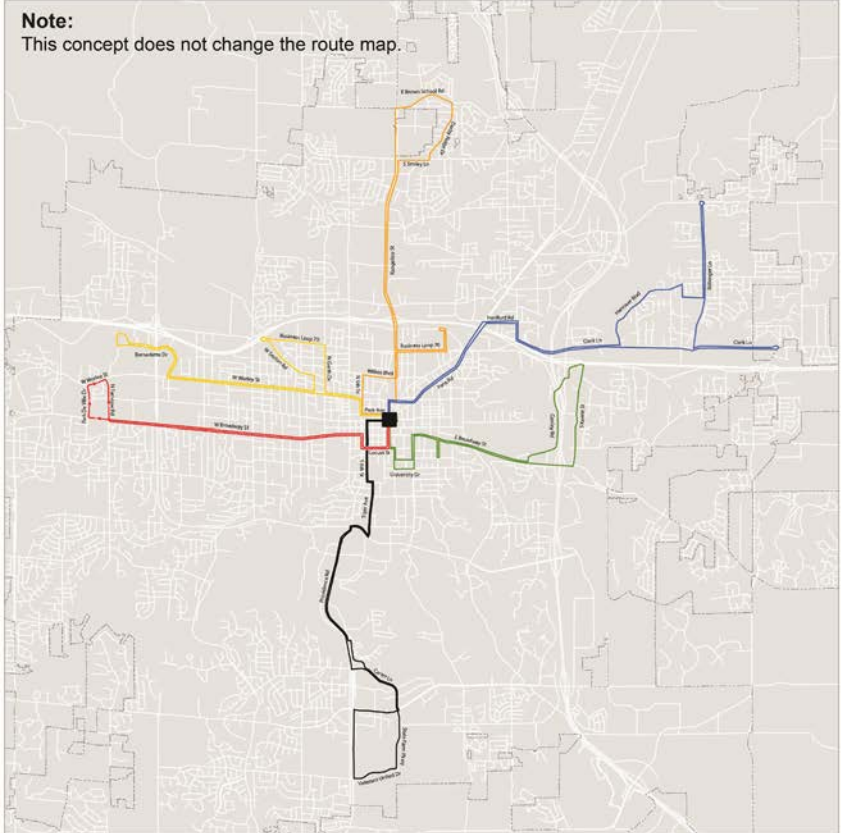
**Con:**  
Less frequent service = less convenience and flexibility for riders

**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

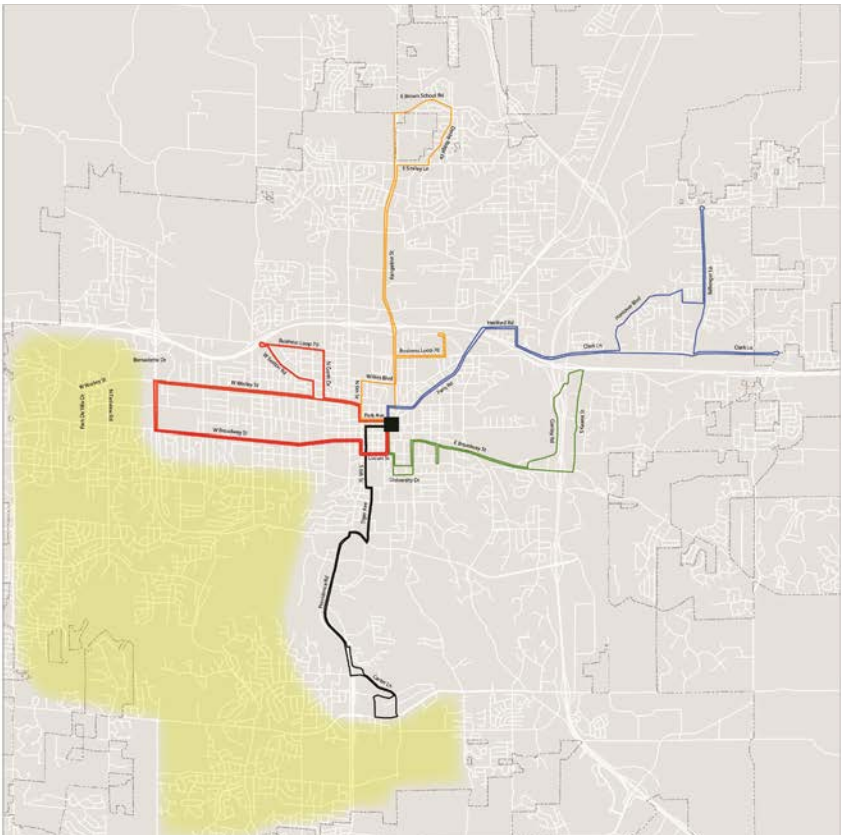
**Additional Info:**  
This option is not operationally feasible, but presented to illustrate the cuts that would be required to provide Evening & Sunday service.

**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	
Red/Gold	90	
Orange	45	90
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.

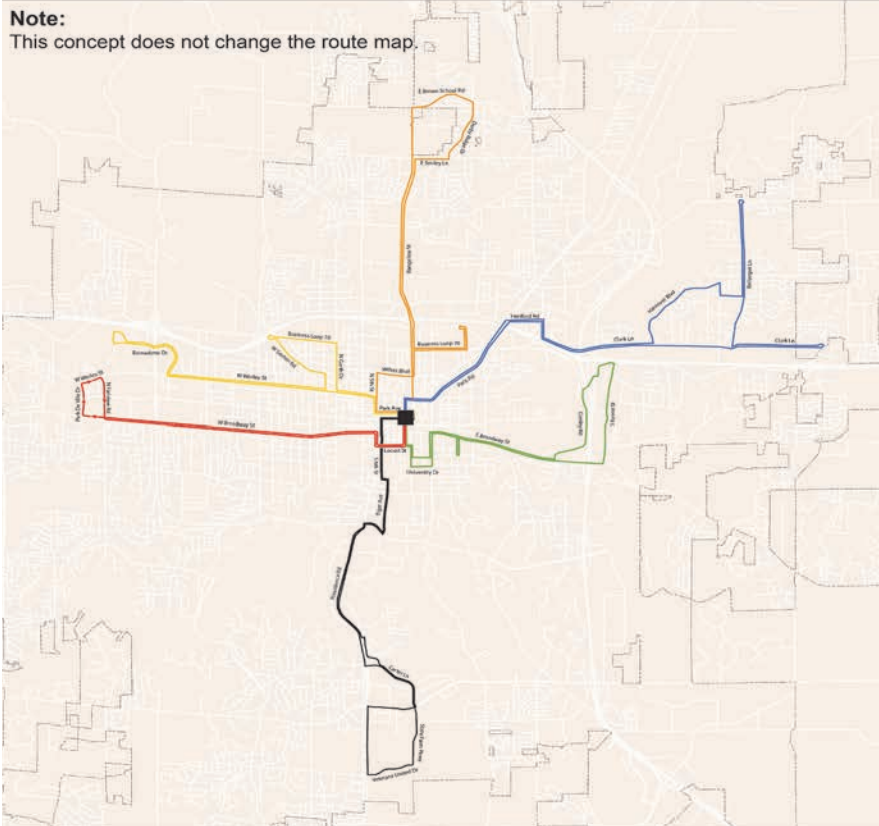
## Takeaways

- 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.

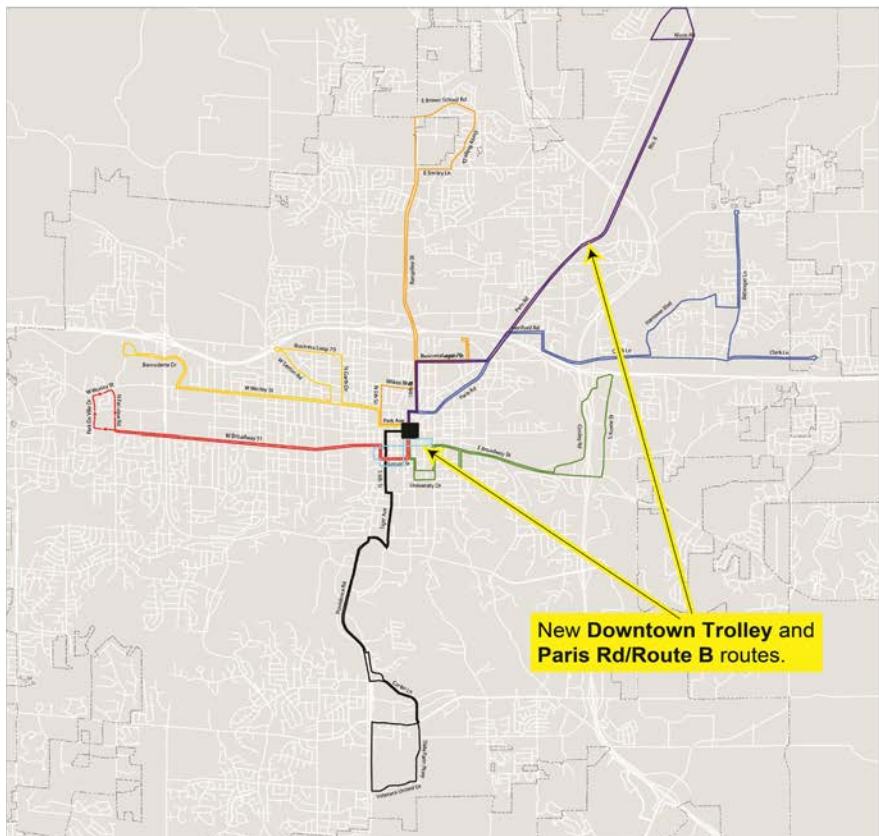
**Example Service Table:**

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

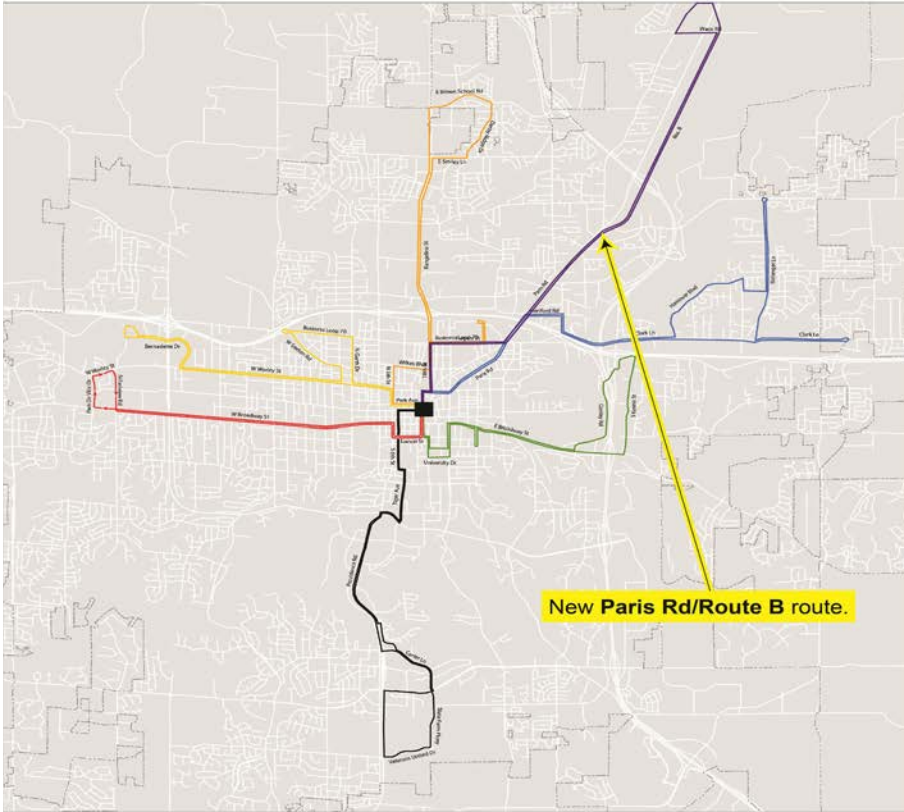
**Example Service Table:**

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

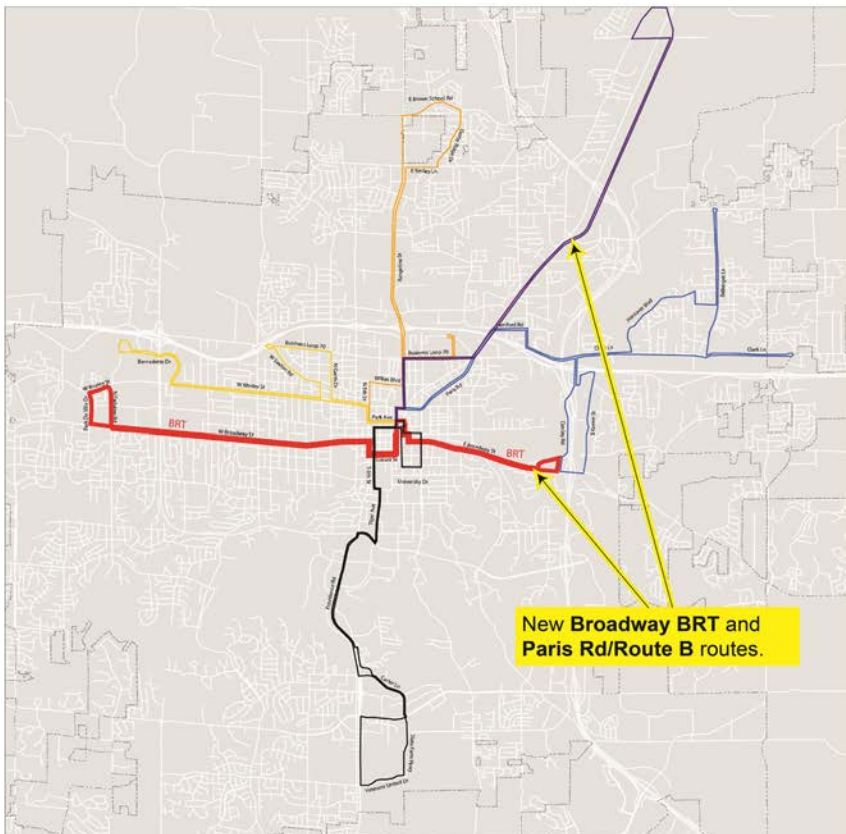
**Example Service Table:**

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/Providence) 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
Red	45	90	90	additional hours
Gold	45	90	90	weekday evening and 2
Orange	45	90	90	additional hours
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.

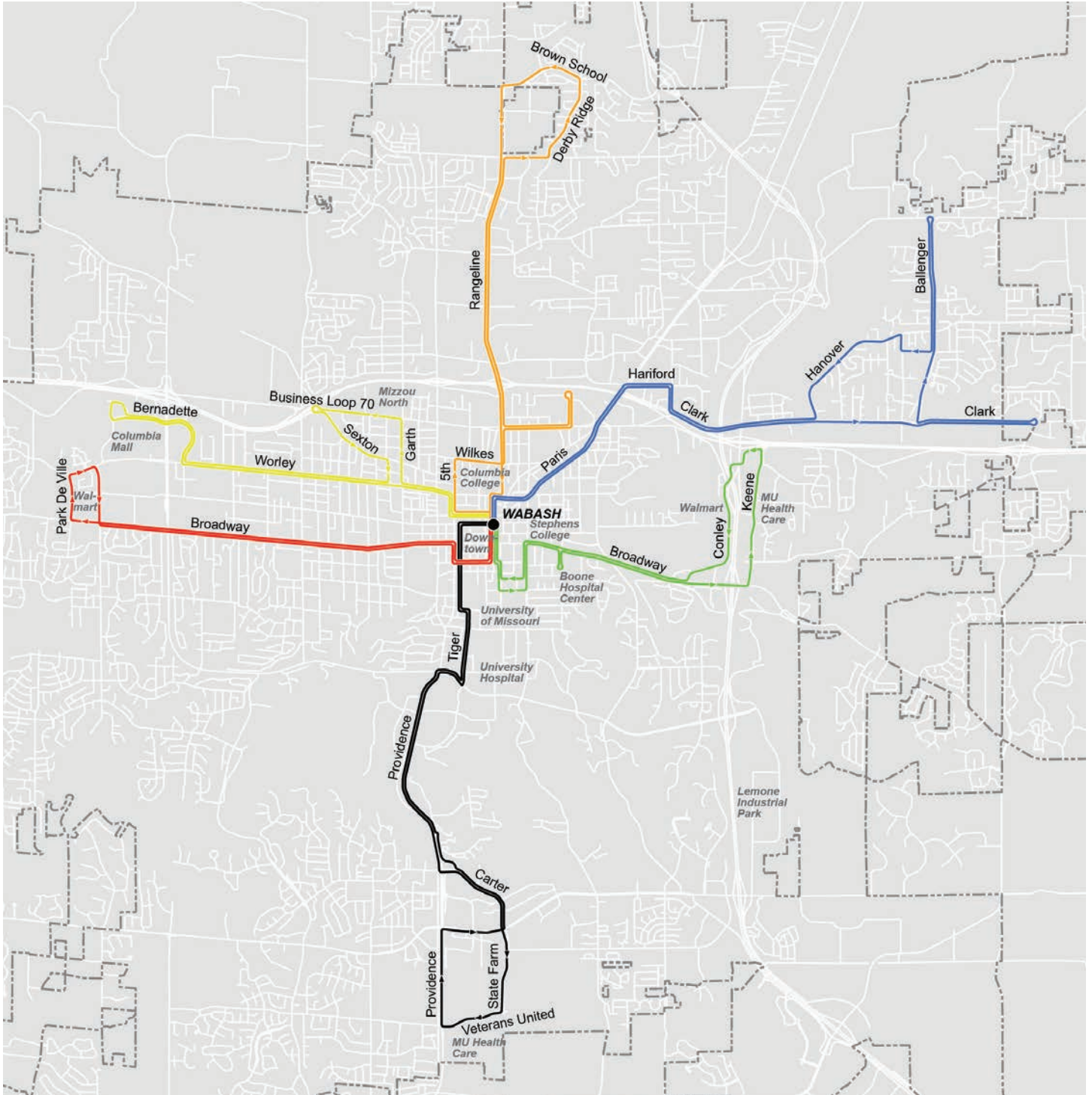
- Routes & Alignments: No changes.
- Weekday: Begin service at 6:00 a.m. (full first trip starting at Wabash).
- Weekday: Add evening service using "combined" 90-minute routes, until 10:25 p.m.
- Saturday: Expand hours to 6 a.m. to 10:25 p.m., same routes and frequency (90 minutes).
- Paratransit Impact: 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	20,126
Tier 1	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	24,124



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.

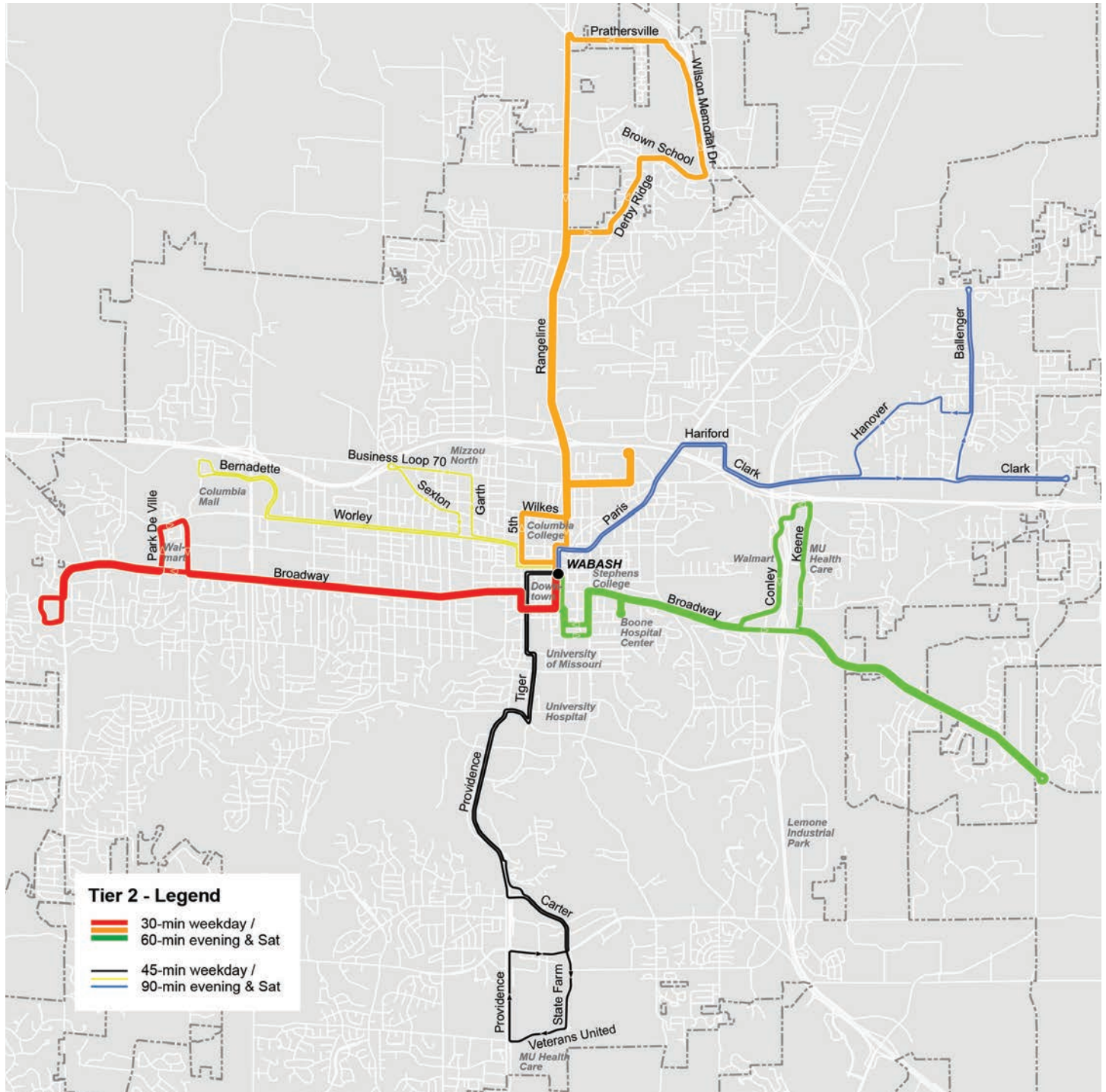
Prior to implementation in the future, ridership patterns will need to be re-assessed to verify these are the optimal routes to expand service during this interim step. The prevailing purpose of this implementation phase is to begin the restructuring of service to a higher frequency network, but only 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	20,126
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	24,124
<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	6/6	39,202

Figure 4.2: 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 4.3 and Figure 4.3.

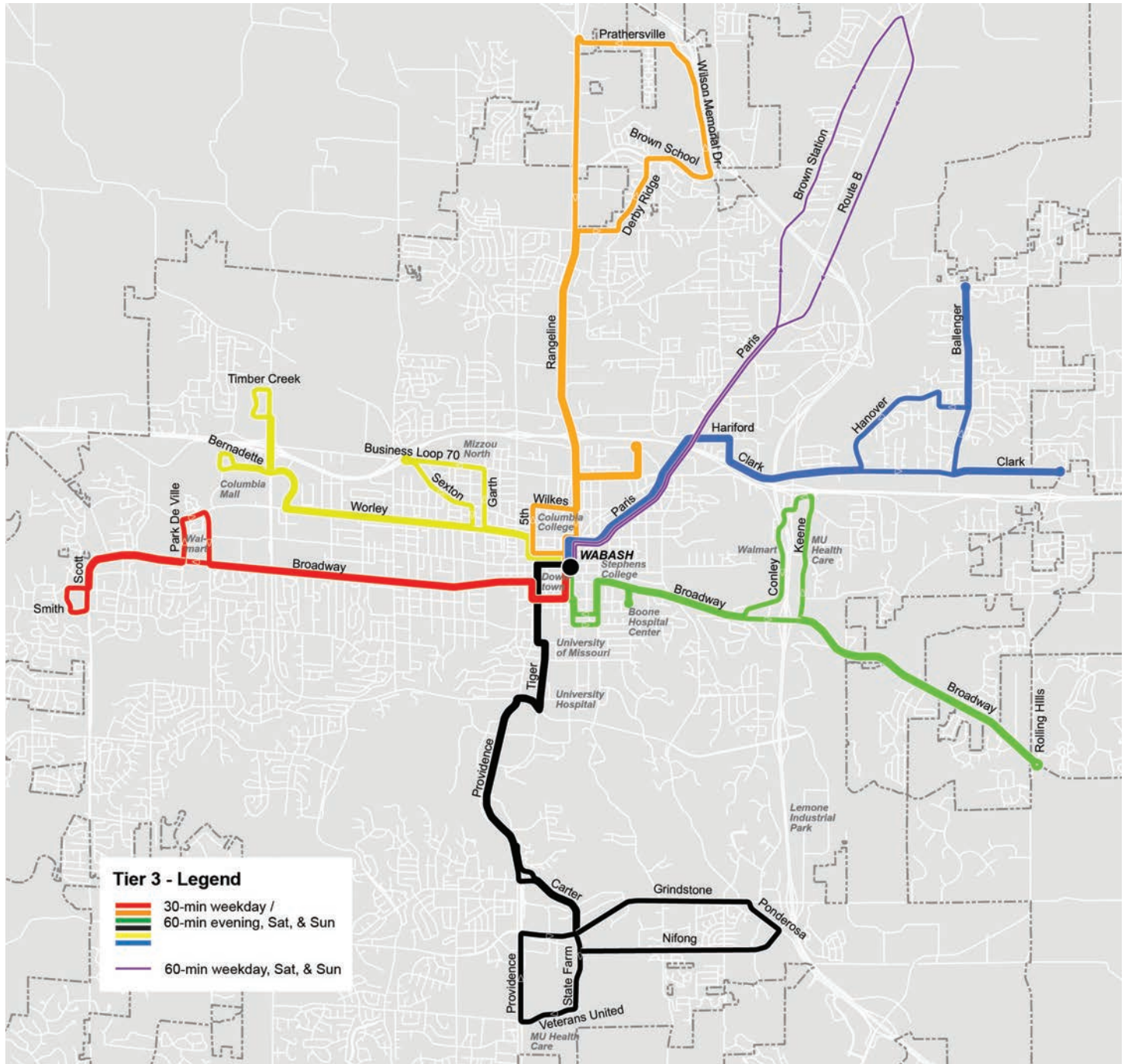
- Routes & Alignments: Add new route on Paris Rd/ Route B corridor. This route would extend from Wabash Station to the intersection of Route B and Brown Station Road in the northeast corner of the city.

- 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 4.3: 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	20,126
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	24,124
<b>Tier 2</b>	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	7:30am to 6:25pm	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	6/6	39,202
<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	59,279

Figure 4.3: 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

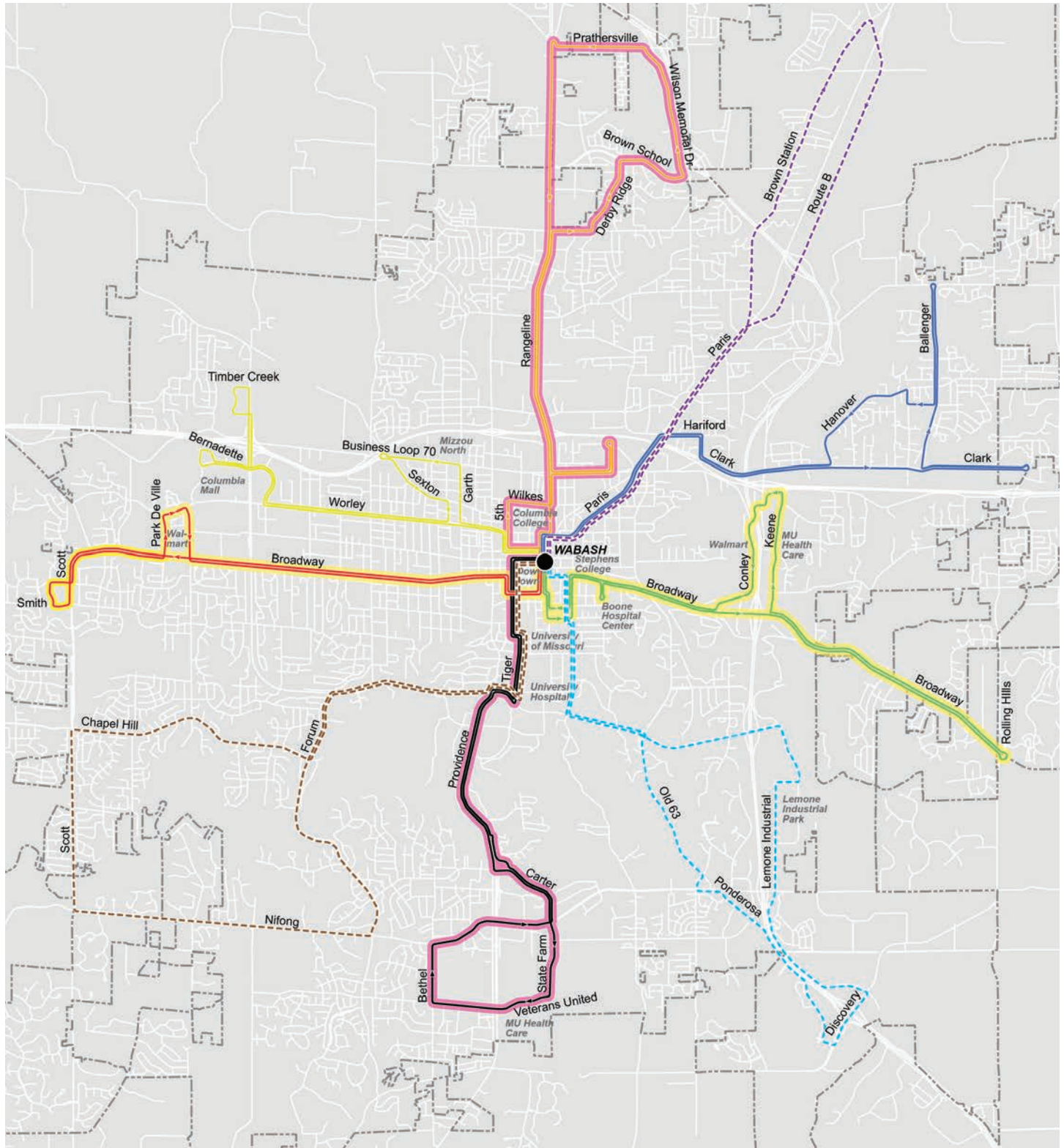
incrementally to be useful for more late-shift work trips and recreational transportation use. Specific service recommendations are as follows, and as depicted in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4.

- **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 4.4: 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	20,126
<b>Tier 1</b>	6:00am to 10:25pm	6:00am to 10:25pm	--	45/90	90/90	--/--	6/3	3/3	0/0	24,124
<b>Tier 2</b>	5:30am to 10:25pm	6:30am to 10:25pm	7:30am to 6:25pm	30/60 45/90	60/60 90/90	--/--	9/6	6/6	6/6	39,202
<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	59,279
<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		107,208

Figure 4.4: Tier 4 Recommendations



**Tier 4 - Legend**

- |   |   |   |                            |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | East-West High Frequency Segment<br>(15-min weekday / 30-min Eve, Sat, Sun)   |  | 30-min weekday /           |
|  | North-South High Frequency Segment<br>(15-min weekday / 30-min Eve, Sat, Sun) |  | 60-min evening, Sat, & Sun |
|   |   |  | 60-min weekday, Sat, & Sun |

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.

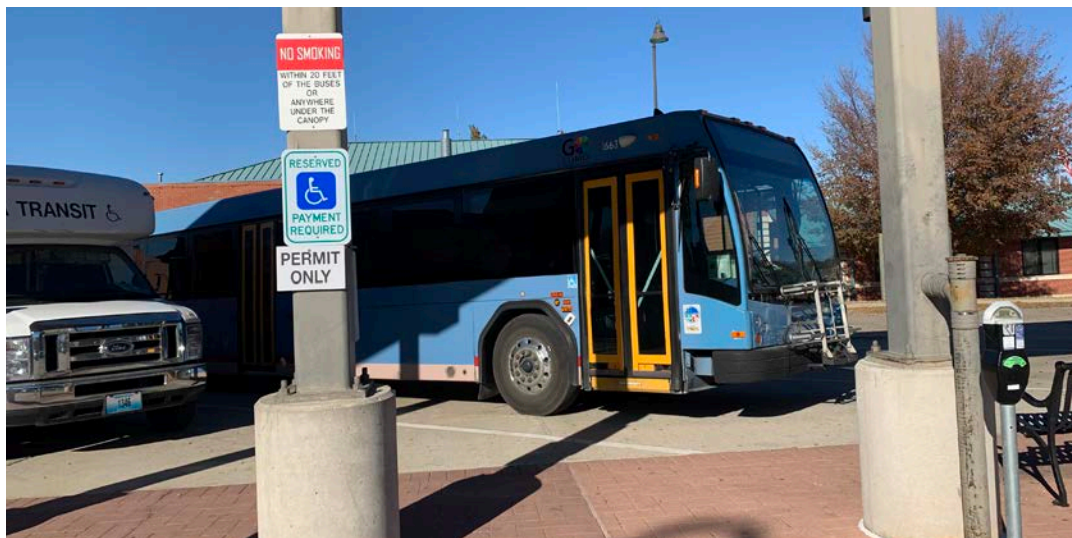
- Frequency and service hours were the top two concerns of public participants in the study process. These upgrades are prioritized in the initial tiers of implementation, and are more fully realized after Tier 4.

#### 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 of a potential regional service connecting Columbia to Jefferson City, via Boone County destinations including the Columbia Regional Airport and Ashland.



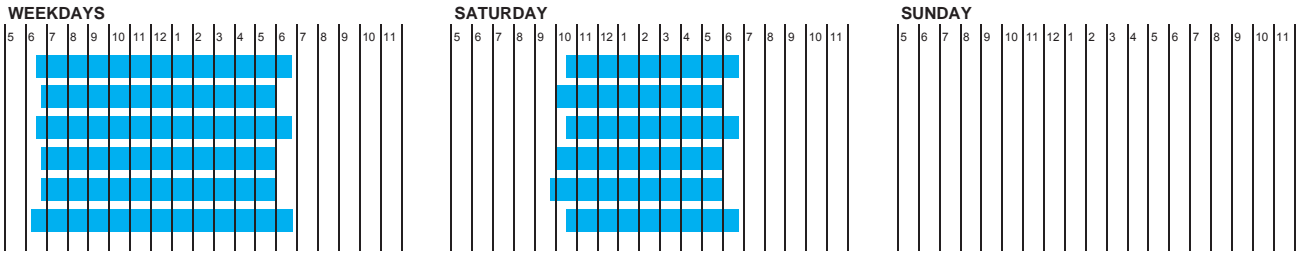
*Recommended transit improvements will continue to utilize Wabash Bus Station as the principal hub of the transit network in Columbia. The location of this hub and convenience of transferring between routes is seen as one of the key strengths of the current system that should be maintained in the future.*



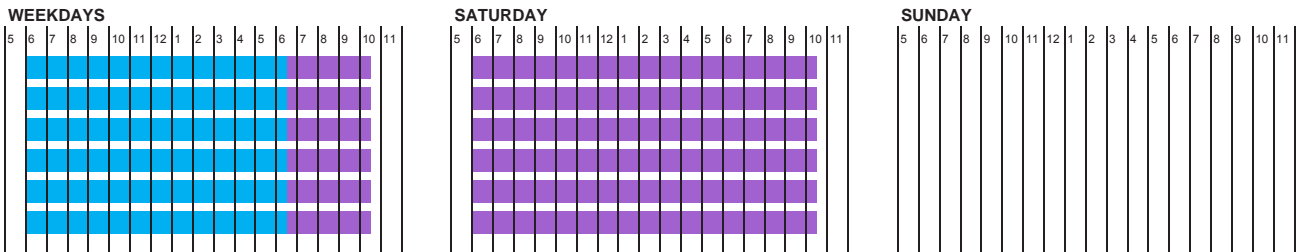
Figure 4.5: Span & Frequency Tables

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

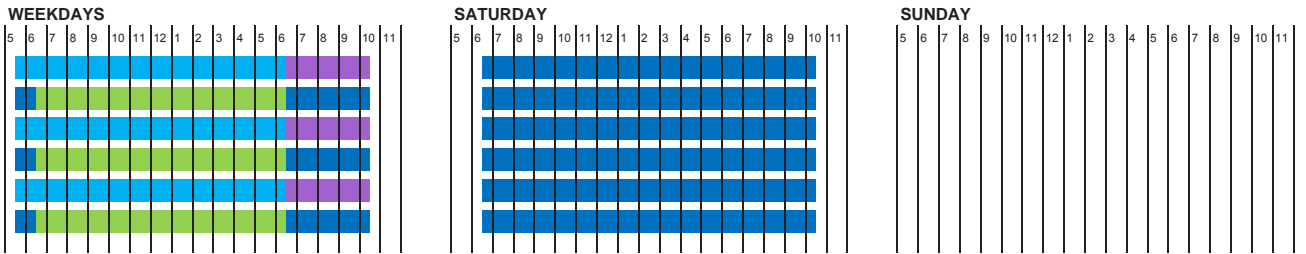
Baseline



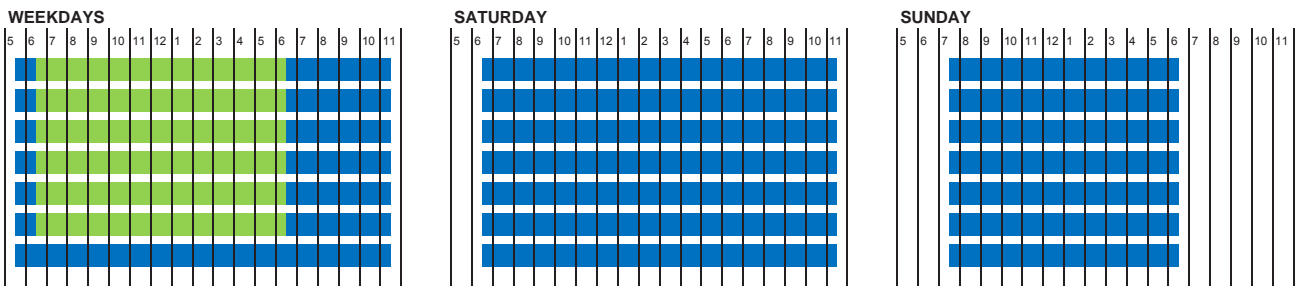
Tier 1



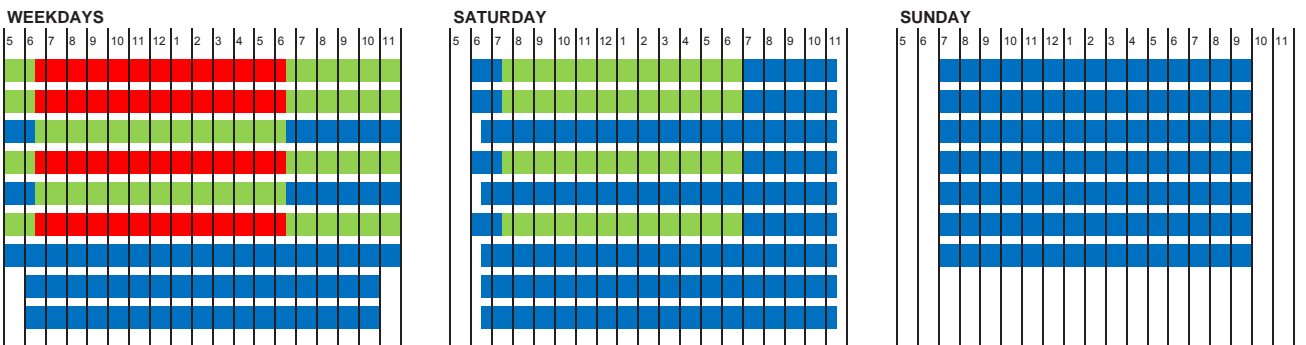
Tier 2



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.

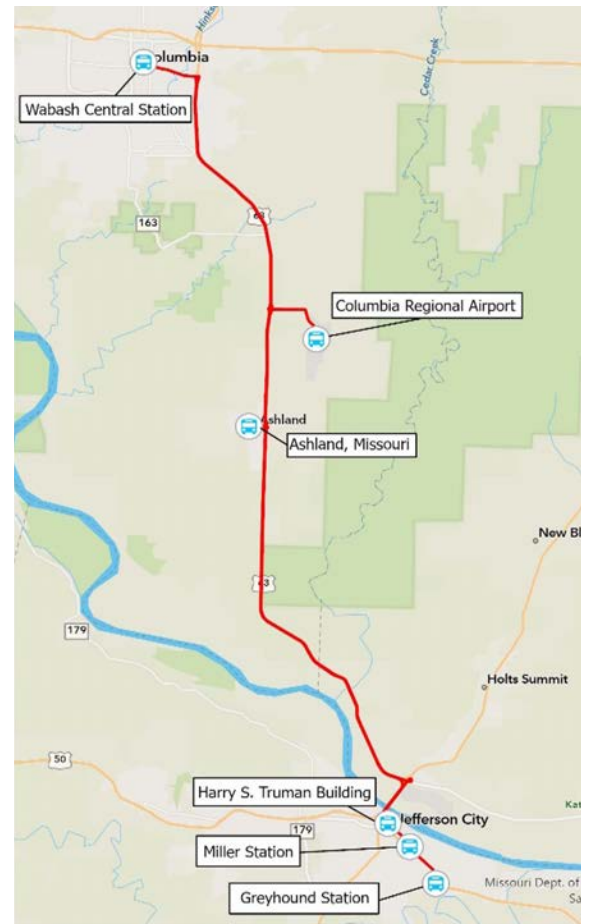
The following proposed bus stops are an initial list for consideration; however, it is not all inclusive and other stops will be considered as the alternatives are vetted throughout this study process. Table 1 provides a description of the proposed stops. Figure A shows the proposed route for the intercity 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

**Table 4.5: 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

**Table 4.6: Potential Route Map**



**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 4.6: 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 4.7: 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>	20,126	--	\$2,548,075	\$1,938,950	<b>\$4,487,025</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	24,124	19.9%	\$3,054,154	\$2,791,119	<b>\$5,845,273</b>
<b>Tier 2</b>	39,202	94.8%	\$4,963,143	\$3,488,341	<b>\$8,451,483</b>
<b>Tier 3</b>	59,279	145.7%	\$7,504,880	\$4,197,869	<b>\$11,702,749</b>
<b>Tier 4</b>	107,208	80.9%	\$13,572,865	\$5,671,741	<b>\$19,244,606</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 2024 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

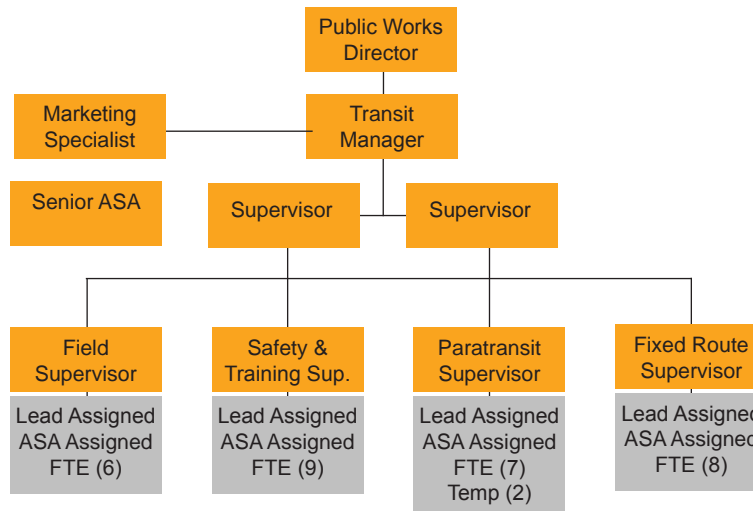
The expansion of Go COMO services for the community requires each tier to have additional staff to meet the needs, manage staff and services, and provide oversight and compliance for the agency. The COVID-19 pandemic created a challenge for Go COMO and for transit agencies across the country. As communities 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**



**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.*

### 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.

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

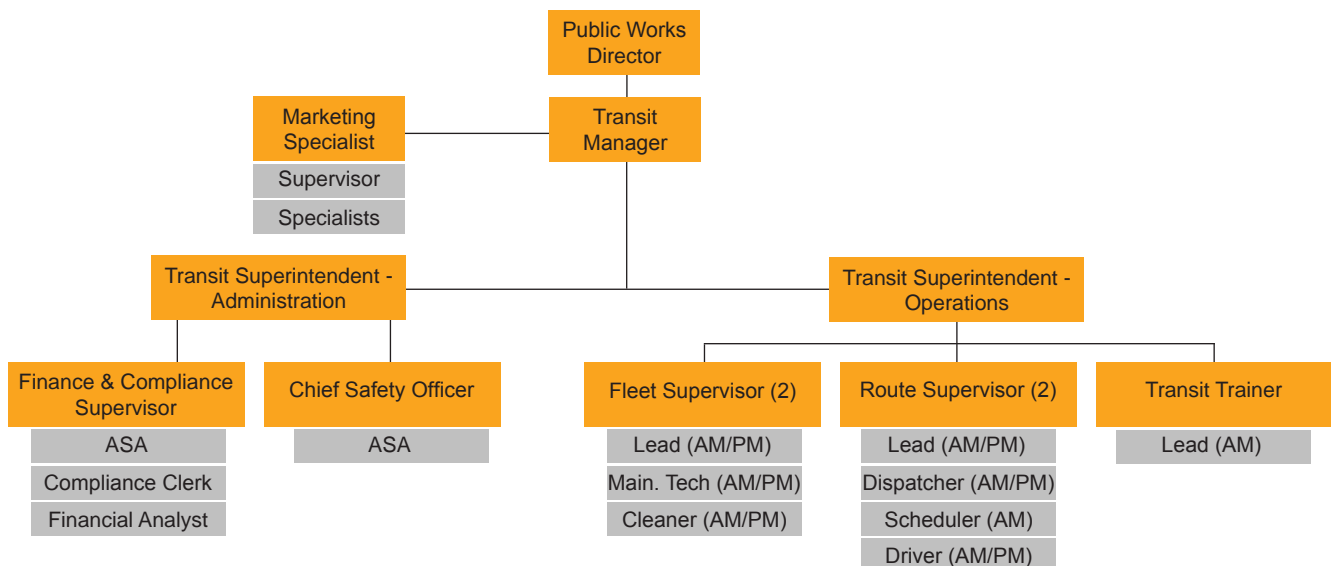
Providing oversight and management of a growing agency is an exciting opportunity for Go COMO. Knowing the future growth plan, the agency must be realistic with management staffing and responsibilities of the agency. Today, three management are in place for all oversight. Three management staff were 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.

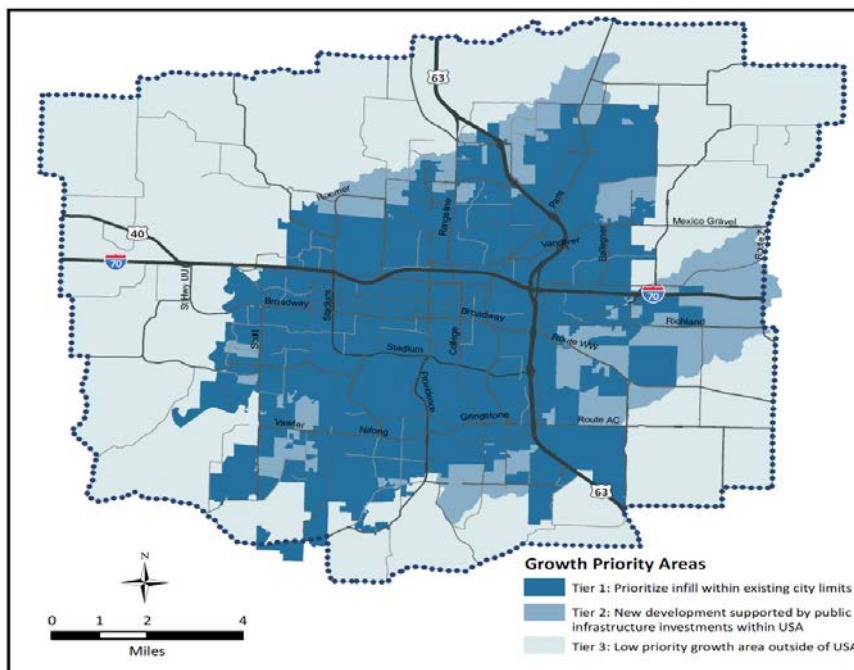
Additionally, CATSO’s Long Range Transportation Plan provides guidelines for the region’s transportation planning process for the 2050 horizon year. The Existing conditions section of this plan includes the City of Columbia’s policy on providing transit service as follows:

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	Connect bus routes with trails and greenways  Pursue new technologies and efficiencies to enhance the system  Encourage compact development near transit corridors and commercial hubs to support transit feasibility
	Expand the existing transit system to meet ridership needs	Evaluate the existing transit system and opportunities for system improvements based upon ridership surveys  Evaluate different route designs and models  Explore diversification of funding sources
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

## 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 5.2 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**

Steps	'24		2025				2026				Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	3-5yrs			
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**