

# CONCORD KANNAPOLIS TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETING

February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

CONNECTING COMMUNITY



Concord Kannapolis Area Transit

# CONCORD KANNAPOLIS TRANSIT COMMISSION

## 2/29/2024

- **Call to Order & Quorum**
  - Quorum & Introduction of Guests
  - Public comments (3 minutes)
- **Approval of the December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

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# Microtransit – What It Is

- Microtransit was first conceived as an idea to solve transit’s “First Mile/Last Mile” problem.
- With the rise of Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft, the idea of what Microtransit could be broadened significantly – “Transit Uber”.
- This led to additional complimentary models such as zones in areas where higher density/traditional transit services didn’t make sense/couldn’t operate.
- Most recently, Microtransit has been positioned as a standalone service option replace some traditional transit services (big empty bus syndrome).
- Microtransit is highly attractive to users – smaller, more modern vehicles, private to near private experience, often a much more direct trip than traditional transit.

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# Microtransit – What It Is Not

- Microtransit is not new. On Demand Public Transit has existed for decades – just not instantly on demand.
  - Transit systems have wanted to provide same day/real time service for years – but don't have the funding to be able to provide it.
- Microtransit is more efficient for passengers, but not the community – it leads to more vehicles on the road and more vehicle miles traveled than traditional mass transit options.
- Microtransit cannot, in the long run, carry more people for less money. Promises/contracts that start that way of that are built out as “*Loss leads*” and aren't sustainable.
- Where Microtransit succeeds and ridership does grow, it requires a *significant investment* in Operating costs to do so.

# Microtransit and Rider Transit

- Rider staff has been examining Microtransit for several years
- Numerous product demos and web meetings from a variety of companies such as Via, RideCo and Pantonium beginning in late 2019, early 2020
- Several pitched pilot/demo products, all in the area of \$50,000 for 6 months
- Two (Via and RideCo), agreed to model our data and provide us feedback without paying for a demonstration project first

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# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## VIA's 2020 Analysis and Proposal

- After looking at our geography and Fixed Route ridership data, Via didn't feel that they could effectively replace our Bus service the way they did in Wilson, NC
- What they proposed was to **add** two Microtransit vehicles, per route, to help expand the footprint of our existing service and feed more people into the Bus system

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# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## VIA's 2020 Analysis and Proposal

- Via provided a turnkey rate of **\$89/hr./vehicle.**
- 8 routes x 2 new MT vehicles/route = **16 new vehicles @ \$89/hr.**
- FY 24 Projected Cost, **Existing 8 Fixed Routes = \$3,226,264** (\$79.50/hour)
- New Via Microtransit service,:  
40,584 (current 8 FR bus hours) x 2 x \$89 = **\$7,223,952**
- Total 1 Bus/2 MT vehicle model cost in FY 24 = **\$10,450,022 (+ \$7,223,758)**

# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## RideCo's 2020 Analysis and Proposal

- Keep 4 Concord routes and CCX as Fixed Route
- Convert Brown, Blue and Green Routes in Kannapolis to Microtransit across 1 large zone, using 5-6 vehicles, using three existing Fixed Route 35' buses and three to four new 35' buses or LTVs
- No turnkey cost per hour was provided *at the time*

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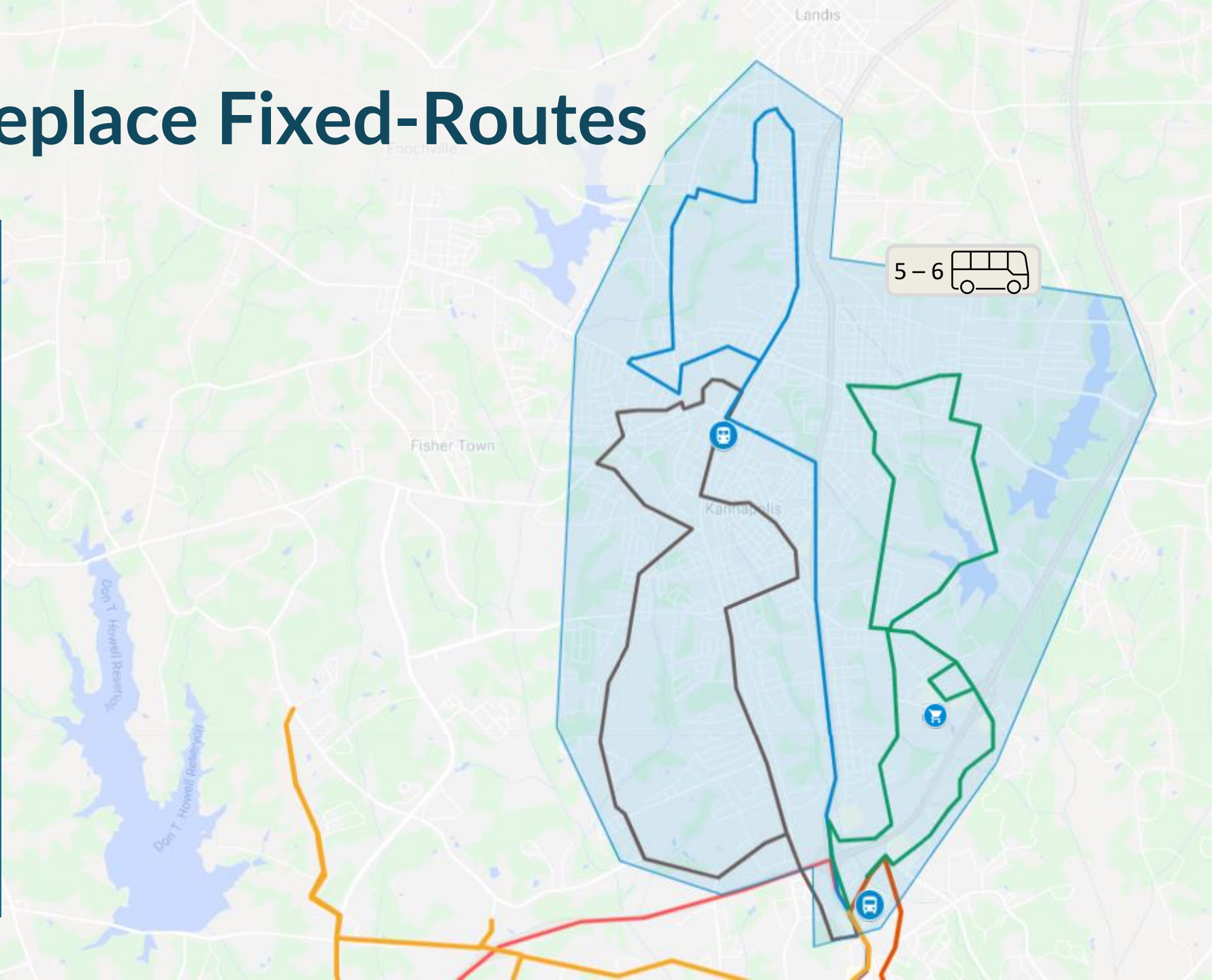


# Kannapolis – Replace Fixed-Routes



**Benefits**

- Repurpose Existing Assets
- Lower Wait Times & Greater Coverage
- Guaranteed Rider Base
- Integrate ADA Service



# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## RideCo's FY 24 Passengers Per Hour Models and Cost Per Hour

- **RideCo**, as a current partner, did provide a **turnkey cost** of **\$80-\$95/hour**
- **Curb to curb** models (lowest Pass/Vehicle Hour) average **1-4 passengers/hour**
- **Stop to stop** models average **4-6 passengers/hour**
- **In 2023**, Rider Transit Fixed Route buses averaged **8.23 passengers/hour**

# Microtransit and Rider Transit

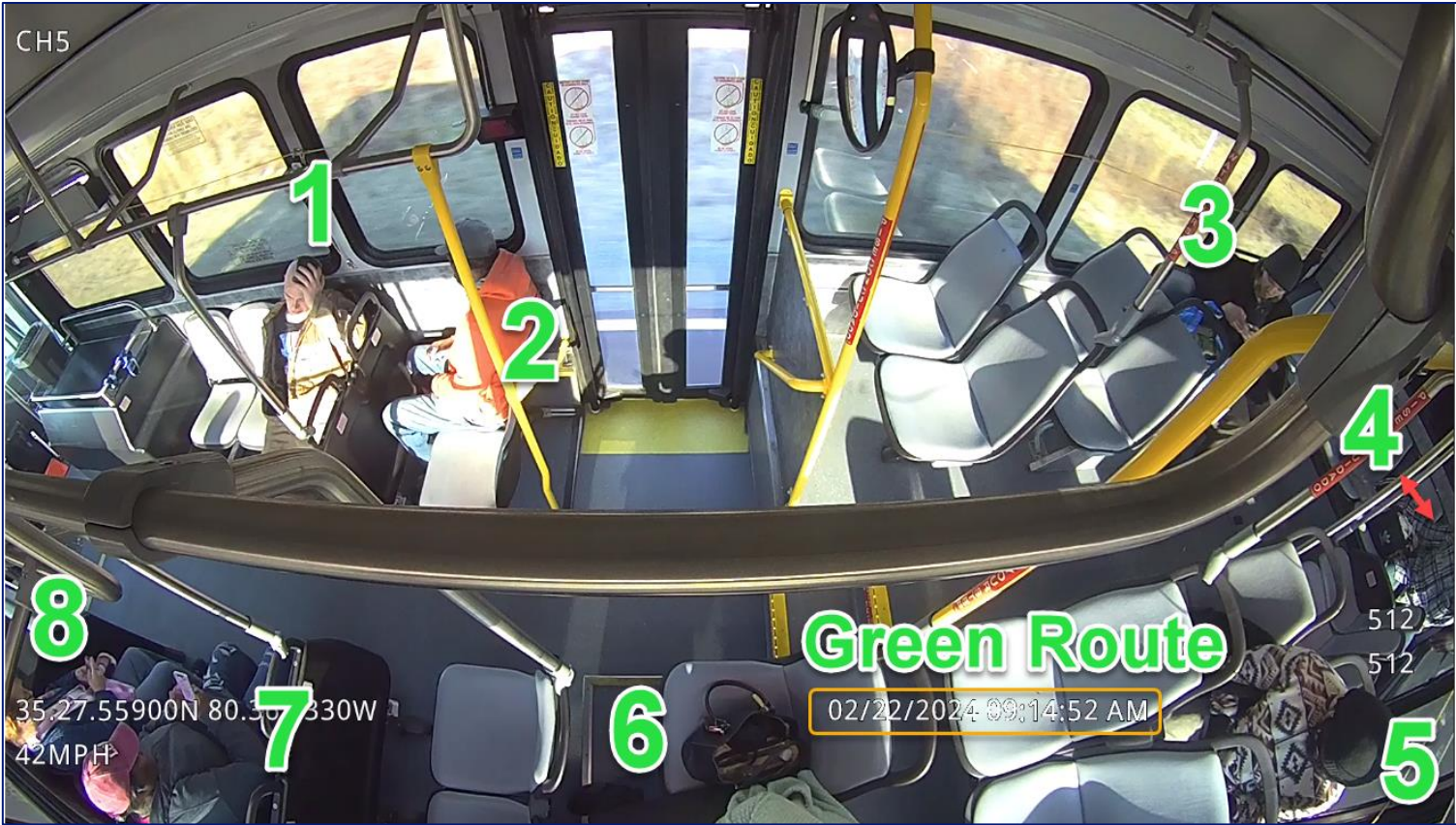
Typical “Empty Bus”, Green Route, February 22nd, 2024  
8:51am





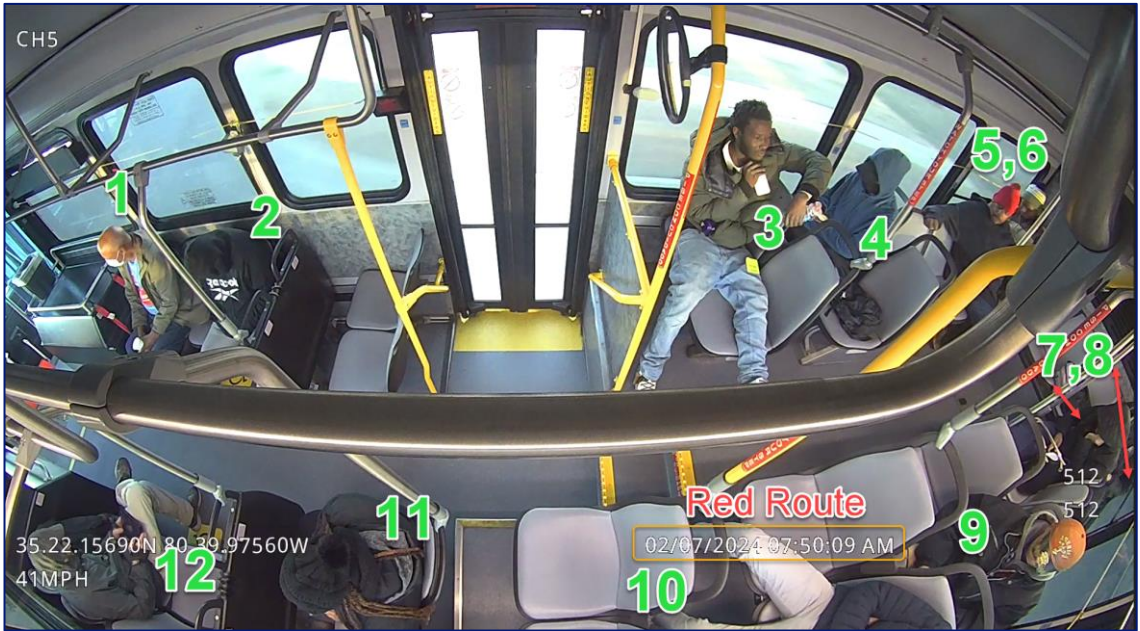
# Microtransit and Rider Transit

Green Route, February 22nd, 2024  
9:15am



# Microtransit and Rider Transit

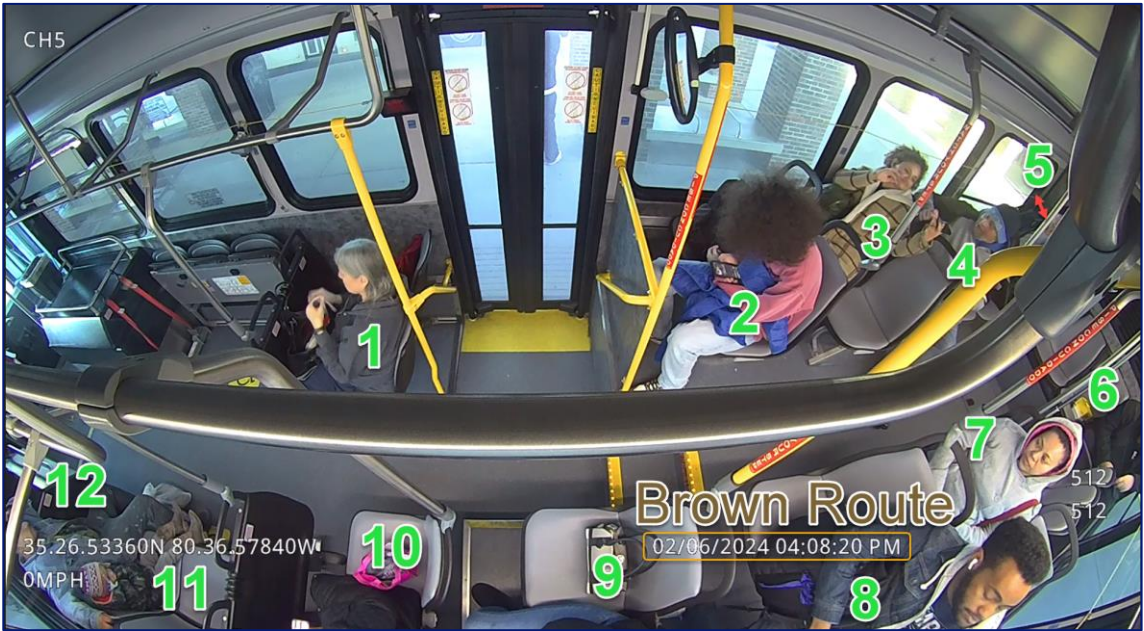
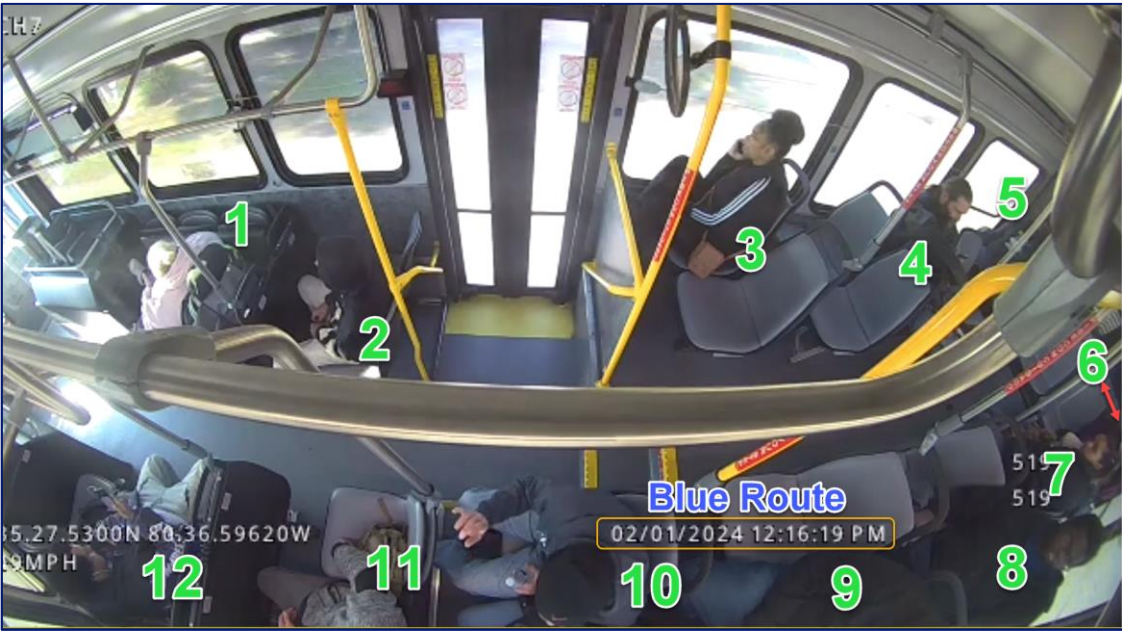
## Assorted Rider Fixed Route Ridership Snapshots, February 2024





# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## Assorted Rider Fixed Route Ridership Snapshots, February 2024



# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## Operating Cost RideCo's 2020 Analysis and Proposal – Using FY 24 Average RideCo Turnkey Blended Cost Per Hour

- **FY 24 Projected Cost, Existing 8 Fixed Routes = \$3,226,428 (\$79.50/hour)**
- **FY 24 Projected Cost, Existing 5 Fixed Routes (Concord) = \$2,016,518 (\$79.50/hour)**
- **FY 24 Projected Cost Savings, 3 Fixed Routes (Kannapolis) = \$1,209,910 (\$79.50/hour)**
- **New RideCo Microtransit service (*Kannapolis only*, 6 vehicles):**  
40,584 (current 8 FR bus hours) x .75 x \$87.50 = \$2,663,325 **(+ \$1,453,415, +120.13%)**
- **Total 5 Bus/6 MT vehicle model cost = \$4,679,843 (+ \$1,453,415, +45.05%)**

# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## RideCo's FY 24 Passengers Per Hour Models and Cost Per Hour, Whole Fixed Route Replacement Modeling

- Cost = **\$80-\$95/hour/vehicle**
- **Curb to curb** model = **3-8 MT vehicles per Fixed Route replaced**
- **Stop to Stop** model = **2-3 MT vehicles per Fixed Route replaced**
- **Curb to curb** = **24-64 vehicles to replace 8 Fixed Route buses**
- **Stop to stop** = **16-24 vehicles to replace 8 Fixed Route buses**



# Microtransit and Rider Transit

## RideCo's FY 24 Passengers Per Hour Models and Cost Per Hour, Whole Fixed Route Replacement Model

- **FY 24 Fixed Route (Current system design) Cost @ \$79.50/hr. of service = \$3,226,428**
- **Stop to stop model, 16-24 vehicles, \$80-\$95 per hour: (+ \$3.267M - \$8.34M)**
  - 16 to 24 MT vehicles x (40,584/8 buses x 2-3) = 81,168 to 121,752 service hours
  - Annual operating cost @ \$80/hr. = \$6,493,440 - \$ 9,740,160 (+ \$3.267M - \$6.51M)
  - Annual operating cost @ \$95/hr. = \$7,710,960 - \$11,566,440 (+ \$4.48M - \$8.34M)
- **Curb to curb model, 24-64 vehicles, \$80-\$95 per hour: (+ \$6.51M - \$27.62M)**
  - 24 to 64 MT vehicles x (40,584/8 buses x 3-8) = 121,752 to 324,672 service hours
  - Annual operating cost @ \$80/hr. = \$9,740,160 - \$25,973,760 (+ \$6.51M - \$22.75M)
  - Annual operating cost @ \$95/hr. = \$11,566,440 - \$30,843,840 (+ \$8.34M - \$27.62M)

# Gastonia - Microtransit Service Model Change

- 7/1/24 – full change over to Microtransit from Fixed Route Buses
- 36-month contract, do not exceed annual cost caps
- More modern, flexible, responsive – 15-minute maximum wait times, curb to curb service
- 14 new smaller, less expensive vehicles to replace 6 bus routes
- Old service = 20 sq. miles, new service will cover all 50 sq. miles
- New service operating cost will be about \$10k less, promising a better experience and increased ridership

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
MICROTRANSIT SERVICES FOR  
GASTONIA TRANSIT**

City of Gastonia  
Public Works Department  
Fleet Services Division  
PO Box 1748, 800 N. Broad Street  
Gastonia, NC 28054

Direct all inquiries to:  
Cindy Forrester  
Division Manager of Fleet Services  
cindyf@cityofgastonia.com  
(704) 836-0039



[www.cityofgastonia.com](http://www.cityofgastonia.com)

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# Gastonia - Microtransit Service Model Change

- Gastonia will provide vehicles, maintenance and a parking facility
- Contractor – River North Transit – is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Broker, not a Service Provider
- All current Bus Operators, making \$17/hr., plus City benefits and State Retirement, will be let go on 6/30.
- New drivers will be Independent Contractors, through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, making \$20-\$22 (WC accessible vehicles) /hr., but no benefits, manage own taxes
- Customer service will be 3<sup>rd</sup> party, online/phone only
- Contractor determines billable hours (\$40.71, \$42.34, \$44.03 over 3 years)
- Contractor can change the rate with notice, but without approval. Gastonia can either agree to pay the higher rate, or cut service to stay under the annual cost cap

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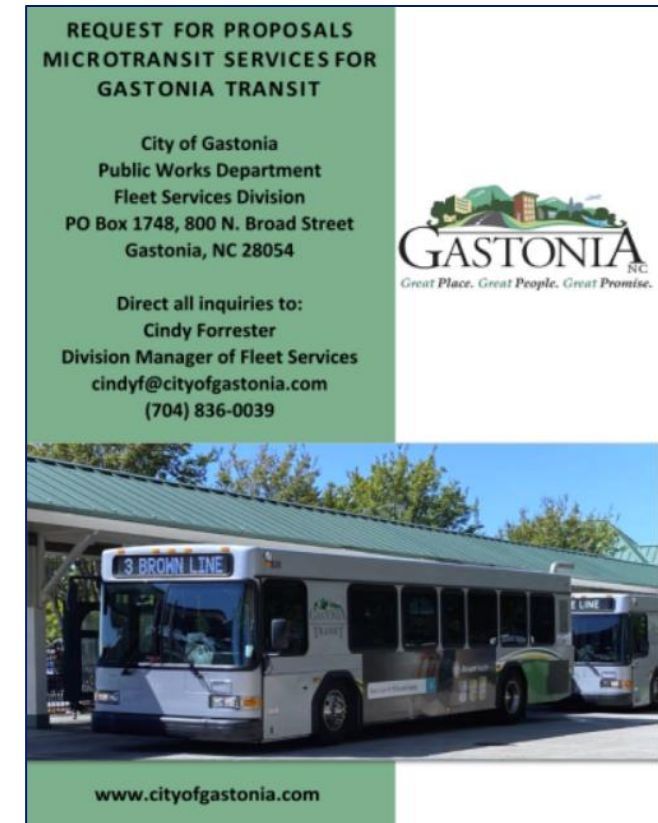
# Gastonia - Microtransit Service Model Change

- General Driver training, Customer Service, Safety & Security, Drug & Alcohol Program, ADA Legal and Sensitivity training all lacking or unaddressed
- All marketing, promotions and press must be cleared and approved by the Contractor
- Drivers will bid/select shifts on Sundays for the upcoming week – no guarantee of hours either way (for drivers or the community)
- Based off industry standards, curb to curb service with an increase in service of 150% - there should be 30 vehicles minimum to start, not 14 – just to carry what buses do today

Wilson, NC (pop. 47,731, 23.4 sq. miles), replaced 8 buses with 8 minivans – service exploded, *now using 25-30 minivans less than 4 years later.*

Gastonia (pop. 81,161, 50 sq. miles) – plus in Centralina region... 4 years = ???



Concord & Kannapolis (pop. 166,386, 96.12 sq. miles)... 4 years = ???



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# Rider Transit Microtransit Pilot

- Began on 9/18/23
- Zone covers the portion of the Orange Route severed by the Lincoln Street Bridge issue
- Allows customers to place same day, real time trip requests via RideCo app or Call Center
- 1 Dedicated vehicle, backed up by Paratransit (RideCo plan for the zone was **2 vehicles**)
- Staff will compare ridership at 6 months and 12 months to pre COVID and post bridge issue utilization data
- Pilot will provide local baseline ridership and cost data for potential future Rider Transit Microtransit projects

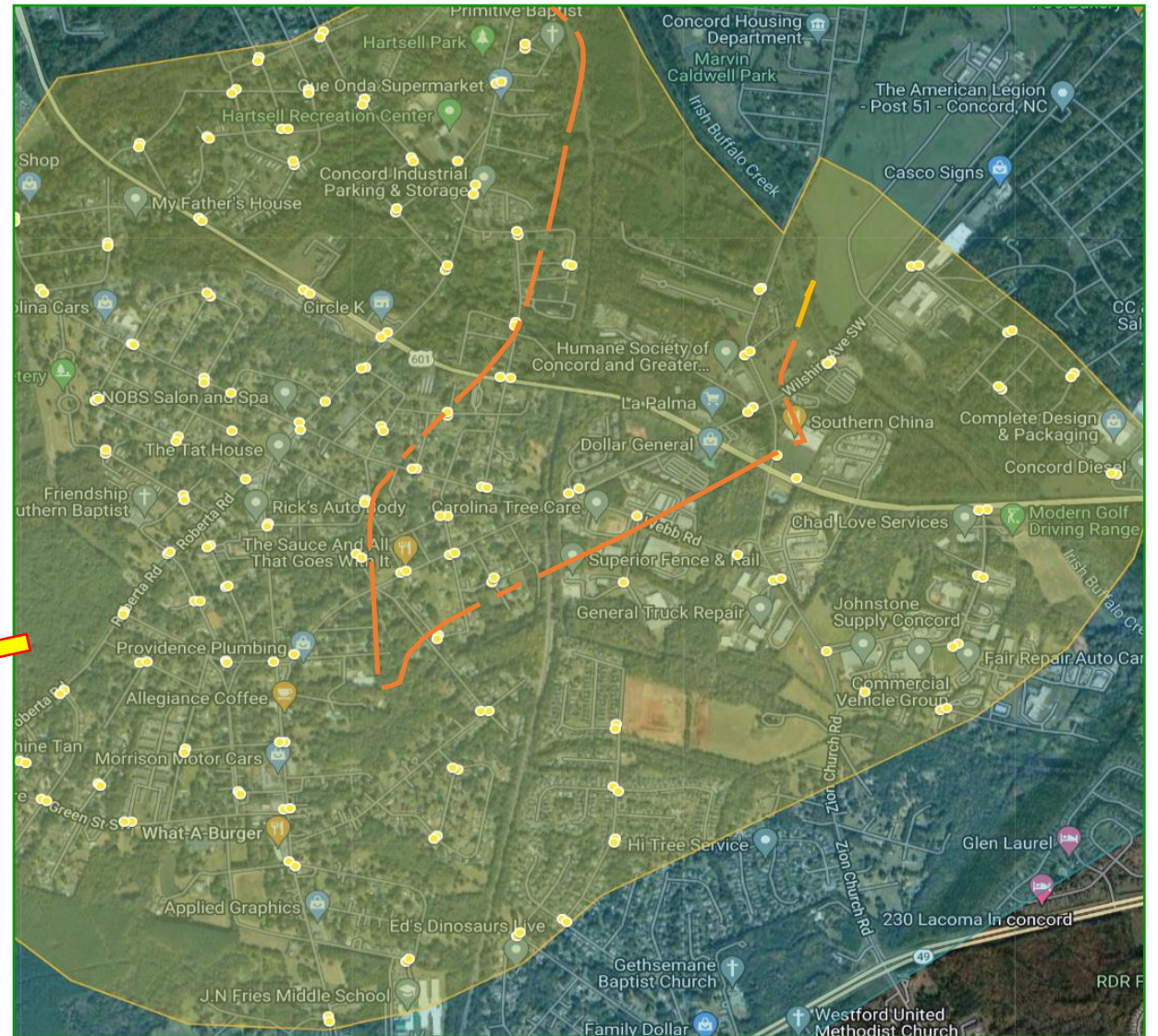
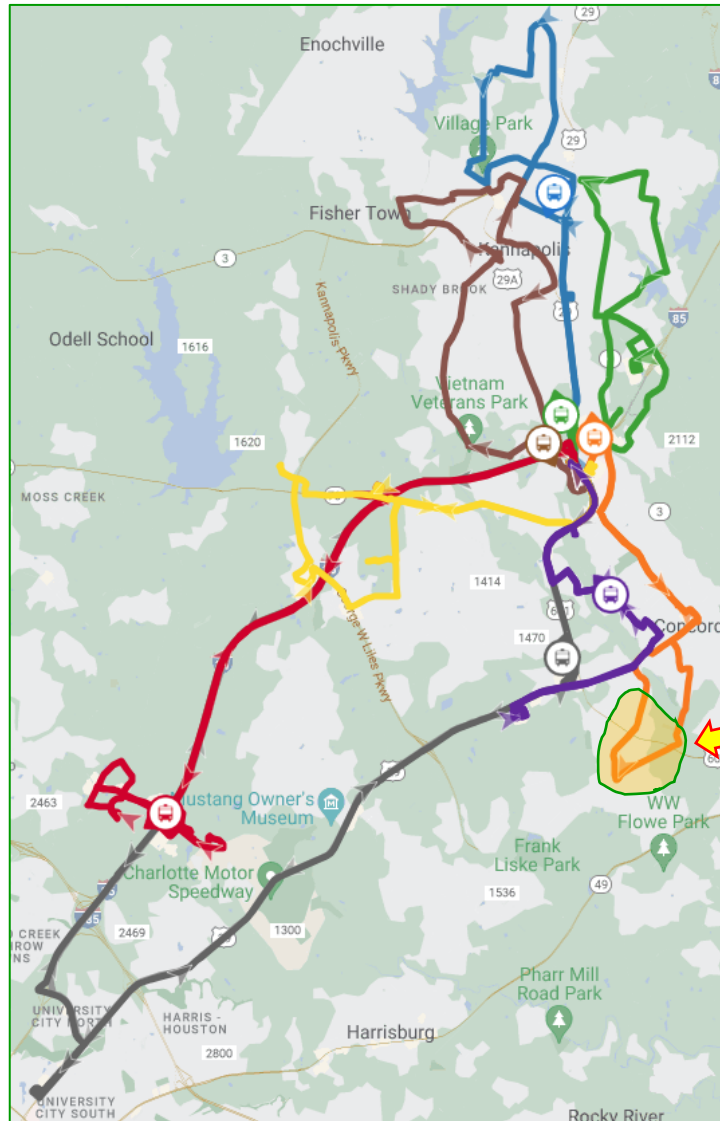


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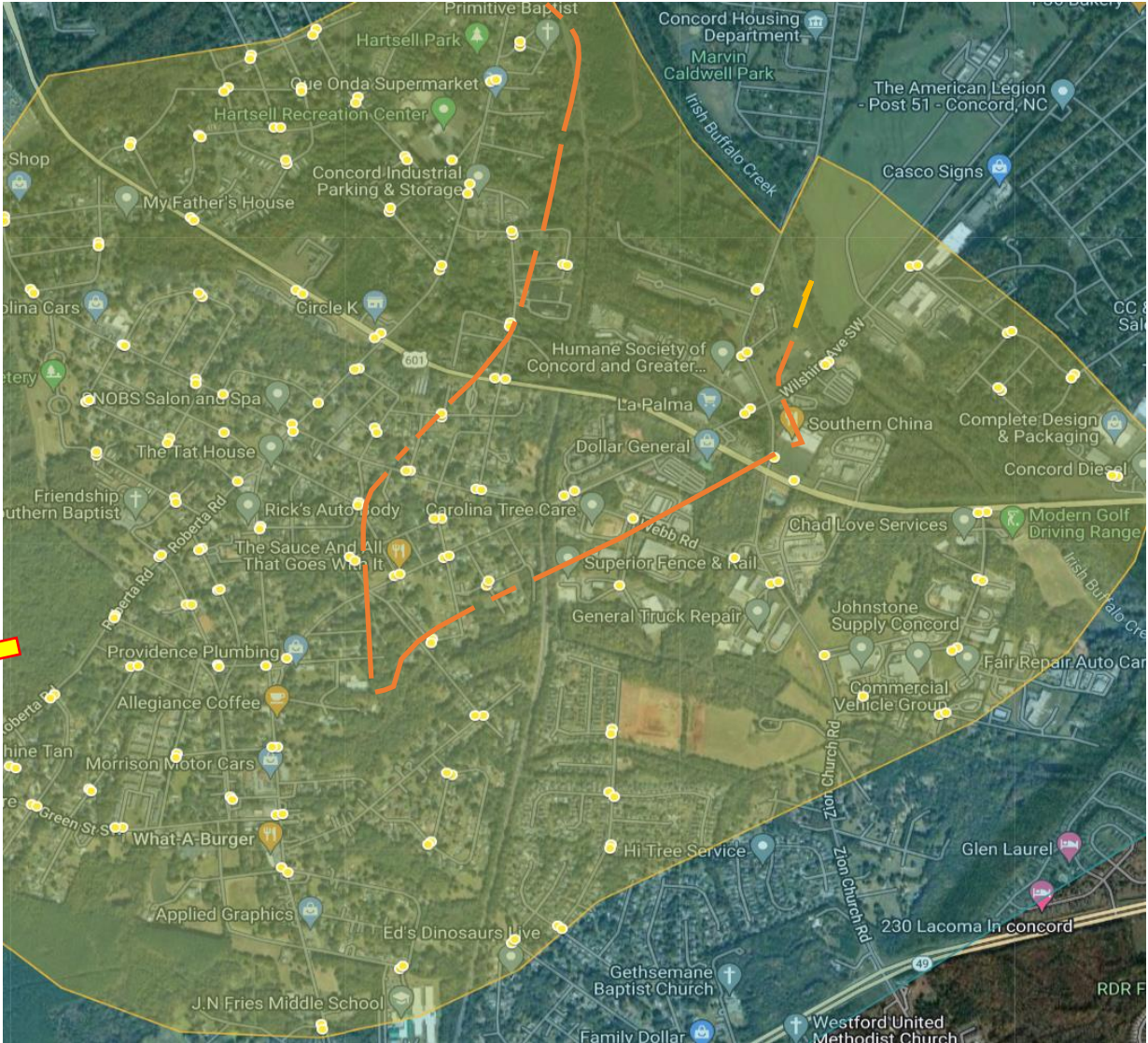
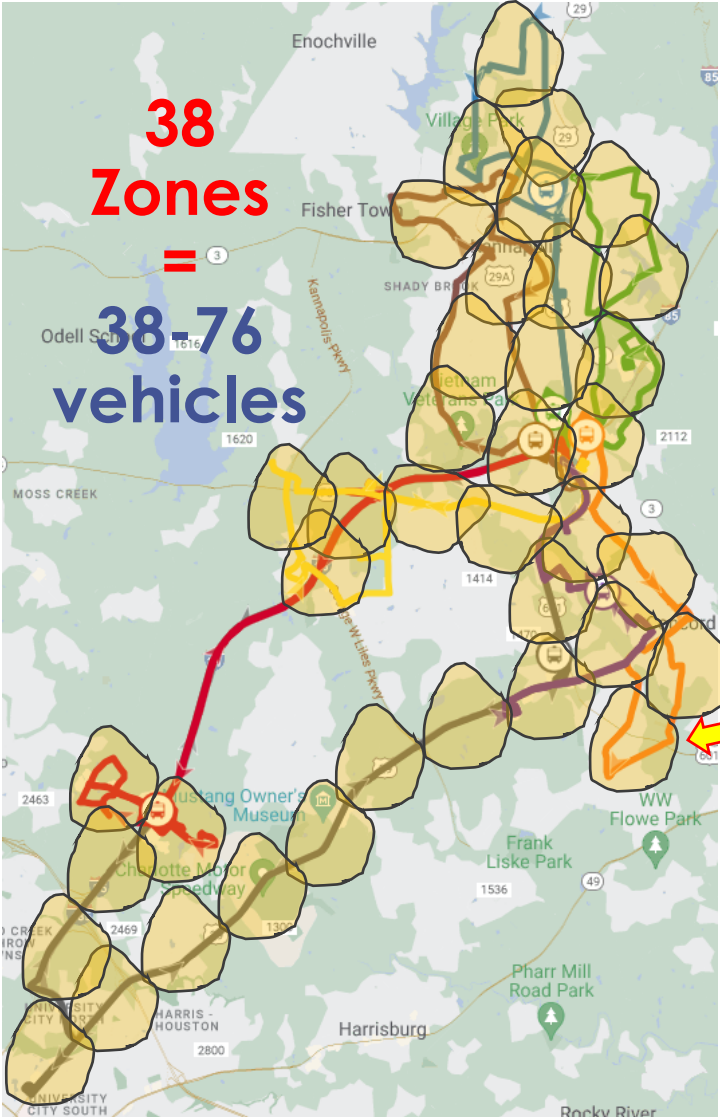
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# Rider Transit Microtransit Pilot





# Rider Transit Microtransit Update and Discussion



# Rider Transit Microtransit Pilot

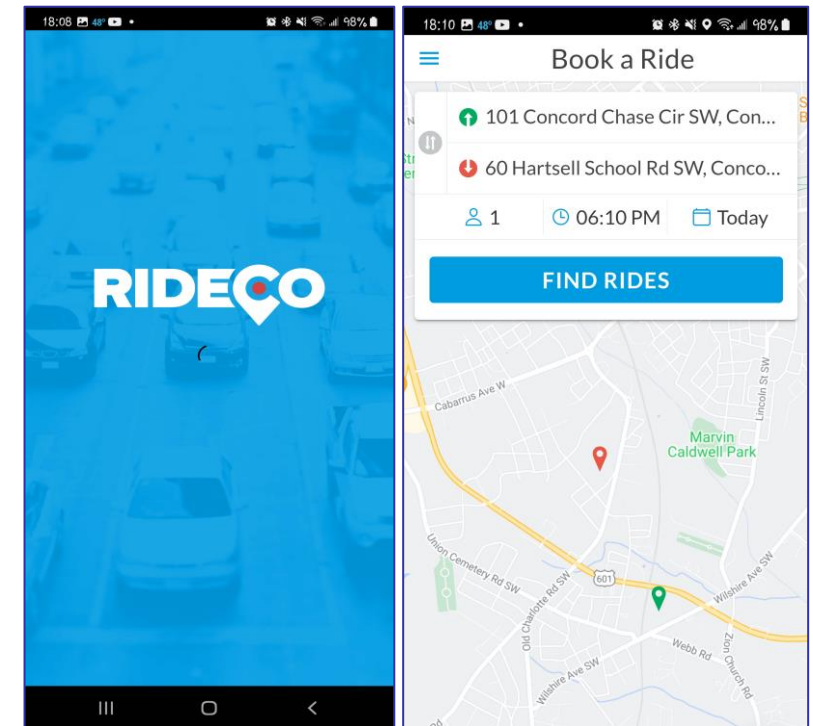
## The First Three Months – A Snapshot

- October ridership was 171, 5.51 ppl/day
- November ridership was 215, 7.41 ppl/day
- December ridership was 218, 7.27 ppl/day

3 months, 657 hours @ 81.25/hr. =  
\$53,381.25

Ave current MT cost/pax = \$92.76

Ave current Bus cost/pax = \$ 8.24



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# NCDOT Microtransit Study – Cabarrus County

- CCTS led, Rider Transit supported grant application
- Cabarrus County one of 7 study grants awarded by NCDOT
- 100% NCDOT funded
- Benesch, one of our current on call transit planning firms, was selected by NCDOT to lead the project
- Kickoff meeting is scheduled for 3/12/24

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# Concord Salisbury VA Express (CSVAX)

- 2021 elimination of the Rowan Express severed access for many Concord, Kannapolis and Cabarrus County residents to access the VA Hospital and associated services in Salisbury
- Rider Transit receives a regular pattern of questions about/requests for service to/from the VA in Salisbury
- We also received a regular flow of questions about service to/from Salisbury and Rowan County in general



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# Concord Salisbury VA Express (CSVAX)

- Staff has developed a service concept to reconnect Concord and Kannapolis with the VA in Salisbury
  - M-F, 8am-5pm, 4 round trips per day to start
  - Express service from the Rider Transit Center to the Salisbury VA via I-85
  - Proposed one mid-route stop in downtown Salisbury to re-open access to everyone between the two urbanized areas and counties
- Propose two new smaller vehicles for the project: EVs may be a viable option
- If CKTC concurs, would like to move the concept to both City Councils to request approval to pursue grant money to start the project.



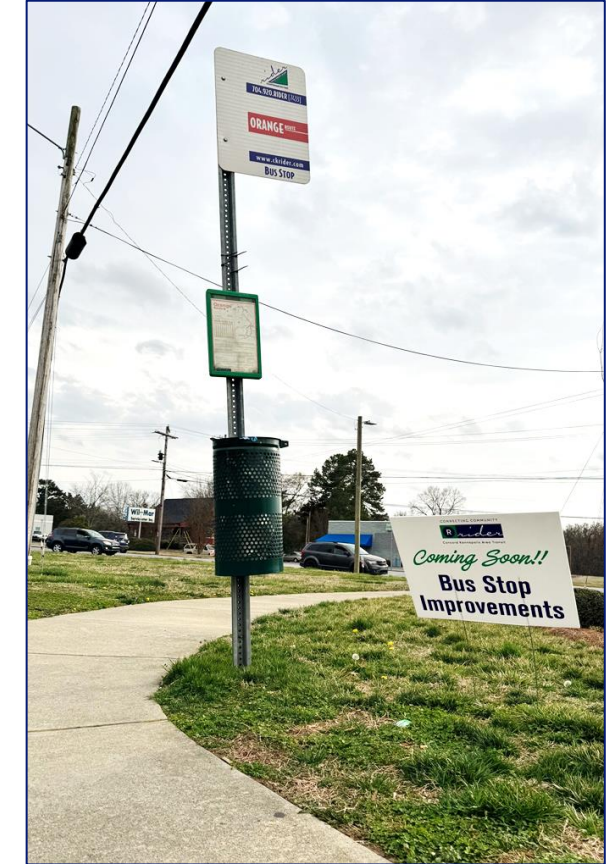
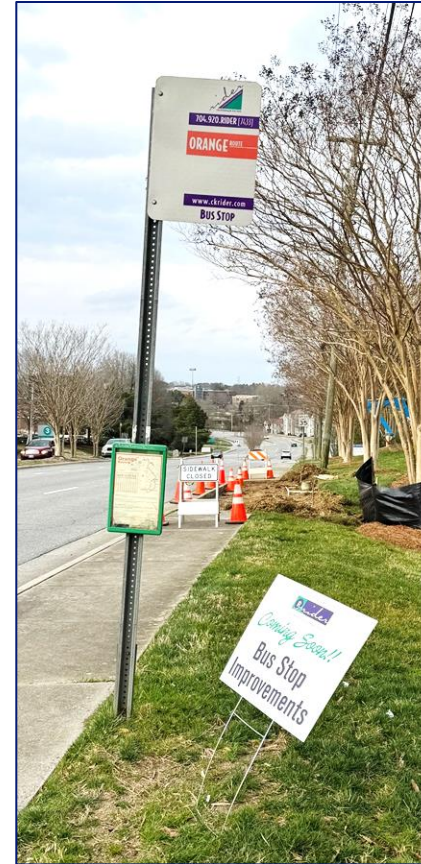
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# Rider Bus Stop Amenity Program Update

- Phase 1 is underway
- Signage was placed at each location to notify users upgrades are coming soon
- 4 of 19 stops are currently under construction



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# Reports / Other Business

- Other business
- Rider Transit Operations Staffing Challenges Update
- Customer Service Satisfaction Survey Update
- 2024 Triennial Review Update
- Busway Concrete Repair Update
- Transportation Simulation 2.0
- 2024 NCPTA conference in April
- Next Meetings – 4/25, 6/27, 8/22, 10/24, 12/19

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# QUESTIONS?

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